



**SANTA ROSA  
POLICE**

# **ORT Prevention Program**

## **Local Evaluation Plan**

Santa Rosa ORT Prevention Program

Submitted by Santa Rosa Police Department

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## Project Background

The City of Santa Rosa is located 55 miles north of San Francisco and is the largest city between San Francisco, California and Portland, Oregon. Santa Rosa spans approximately 47 square miles. The Santa Rosa Police Department (SRPD) was formed in 1867 and the city was incorporated in 1868. There are currently 181 sworn and 76 civilian employees who serve a population of 176,000. The SRPD is composed of three divisions that are overseen by the Chief of Police: Field Services, Special Services and Technical Services.

The SRPD strives to collaborate with all facets of the community to prevent crime and protect individuals while bridging gaps between the department and the community. The SRPD has built strong ties with local community organizations in the city and has continuously increased community policing efforts and outreach activities to maintain genuine relationships with individual community members from all backgrounds.

The proximity of Santa Rosa to major metropolitan areas such as San Francisco, and having Highway 101 as a throughway, makes Santa Rosa an attractive target for organized retail theft (ORT) operations. From January 2020 to April 2023, the SRPD processed 823 cases involving theft or burglary from retail and other commercial establishments. This number was lower than typical due to retail establishments being closed for a large part of 2020 due to the global pandemic. In California, theft is defined as knowingly, intentionally, and wrongfully stealing someone else's property. Burglary, also known as "breaking and entering," is when an offender enters a premise with the intent of stealing property. For a crime to be petty or misdemeanor theft, the value of the stolen property must be \$950 or less.

There were major hotspots of commercial theft and burglary in the city as depicted in Figure 1. Based on incident type, location, and a synopsis review, 129 could be considered ORT. Of these cases, 11 were from [Dicks Sporting Goods](#), (out of 79 total thefts), and nine each from [Ulta Beauty](#), [Victoria's Secret](#), and [Sunglass Hut](#). These incidents occurred throughout Santa Rosa and represent only a fraction of the businesses frequently re-targeted by ORT crews. The economic implications of ORT

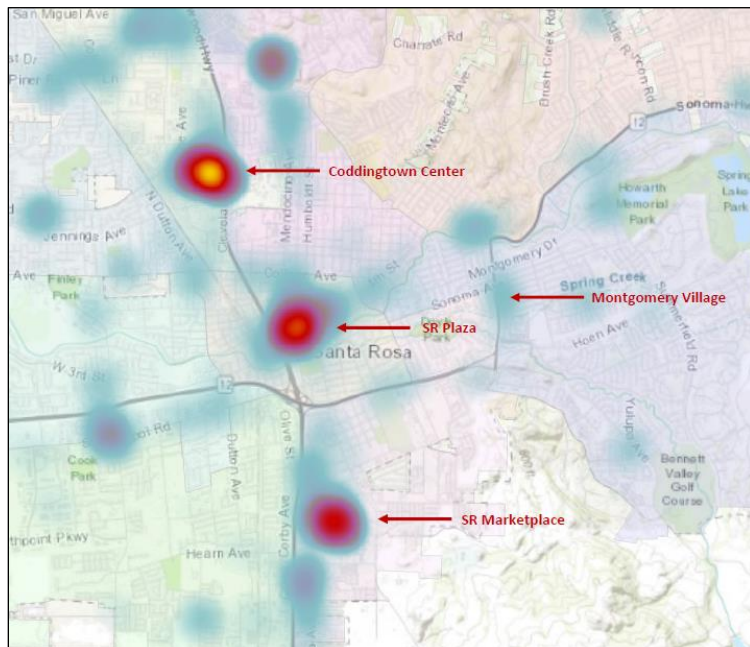


Figure 1. Commercial Theft and Burglary  
January 2020 - May 2023

for business operators in Santa Rosa are significant and far-reaching. The escalating incidents of theft not only result in immediate financial losses due to stolen merchandise, but they also inflict substantial costs associated with increased security measures, insurance premiums, and the need to hire additional personnel to combat these crimes.

While anecdotally there seemed to be an ORT problem, prior to this project, SRPD did not commonly assign the specific Organized Retail Theft charge (490.4 PC) to commercial theft and burglary cases. Therefore, the data we report are estimates based on reviewing case files and in all likelihood undercounts. Therefore, to determine the need for addressing organized retail theft in our community, SRPD conducted extensive research to examine the prevalence and impact of this criminal activity. This research encompassed a thorough analysis of reported incidents of retail theft and commercial burglary within the SRPD jurisdiction and consulting local retailers to gain firsthand insights into their encounters with this type of crime. Furthermore, we have explored strategies and tactics employed by other law enforcement agencies to address ORT, including the San Francisco Police Department and the Los Angeles Police Department, which serve as possible models for addressing ORT.

The overall goal of this project is to reduce ORT incidents. We will attempt to meet this goal using a two-pronged approach. First, we will use enhanced surveillance technology. The SRPD will purchase and install 31 Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) at strategic locations throughout Santa Rosa. These locations will include the hotspots of Montgomery Village and city shopping centers like the Plaza and Coddington. The ALPRs will capture license plate data of vehicles entering and exiting the area. The ALPR data platform will allow for the integration of ALPR data with existing camera systems, providing comprehensive coverage of the target area. The platform allows for the real time sharing of license plate reader images, which allows for officers to utilize precision policing techniques to ensure that the correct vehicle and/ or subjects involved in the retail theft are located, stopped, and potentially arrested.

We selected these areas for ALPRs installation based on crime data analysis and patterns related to ORT. We focused on commercial business locations that frequently experience robbery, burglary, and larceny theft/shoplifting. We found that 21% of the locations with theft or burglary accounted for

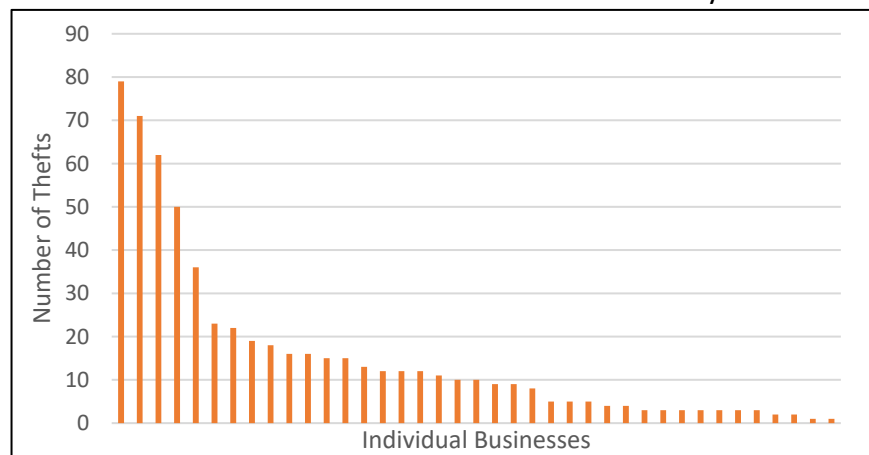


Figure 2. Santa Rosa businesses with one or more retail thefts

61% of the retail thefts/burglaries. The distribution, as seen in the Figure 2, is the typical “J curve” where a small number of locations are accounting for a large percentage of the problem. Additionally, loss value was factored into the analyses, giving greater weight to businesses experiencing higher monetary losses. Data tables and maps were created to visualize the best camera placement location through highest incident concentrations and higher loss value amounts. See Figure 3 for the highest concentration areas of retail crime reports.

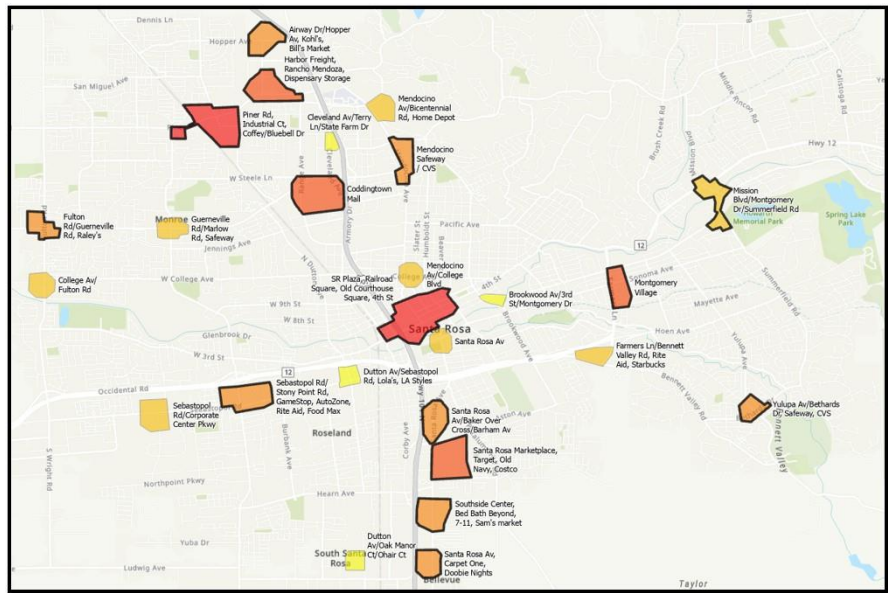


Figure 3. Retail Crime Clusters, January 2018 – August 2023

Those in red have higher loss value amounts and those in yellow have lower loss value. The top 15 loss value areas are outlined in black. Input on potential locations was also solicited through a series of meetings and discussions with community partners and retailers. The target areas are chosen due to a high incidence of retail theft/ORT activity, and the need to deter and prevent further crime.

Second, we will enhance ORT awareness and prevention efforts by delivering education and training programs to retailers and employees in the target areas and target locations (e.g. shopping centers, grocery stores and pharmacies). These programs will focus on recognizing the signs of ORT, implementing preventive measures, and promoting a collective sense of responsibility within the community. The length and frequency of these programs will be tailored to meet the needs of the participants and will be delivered over a set time period to ensure comprehensive coverage and understanding.

### Goals and Objectives

The following are the three goals and seven objectives for our grant:

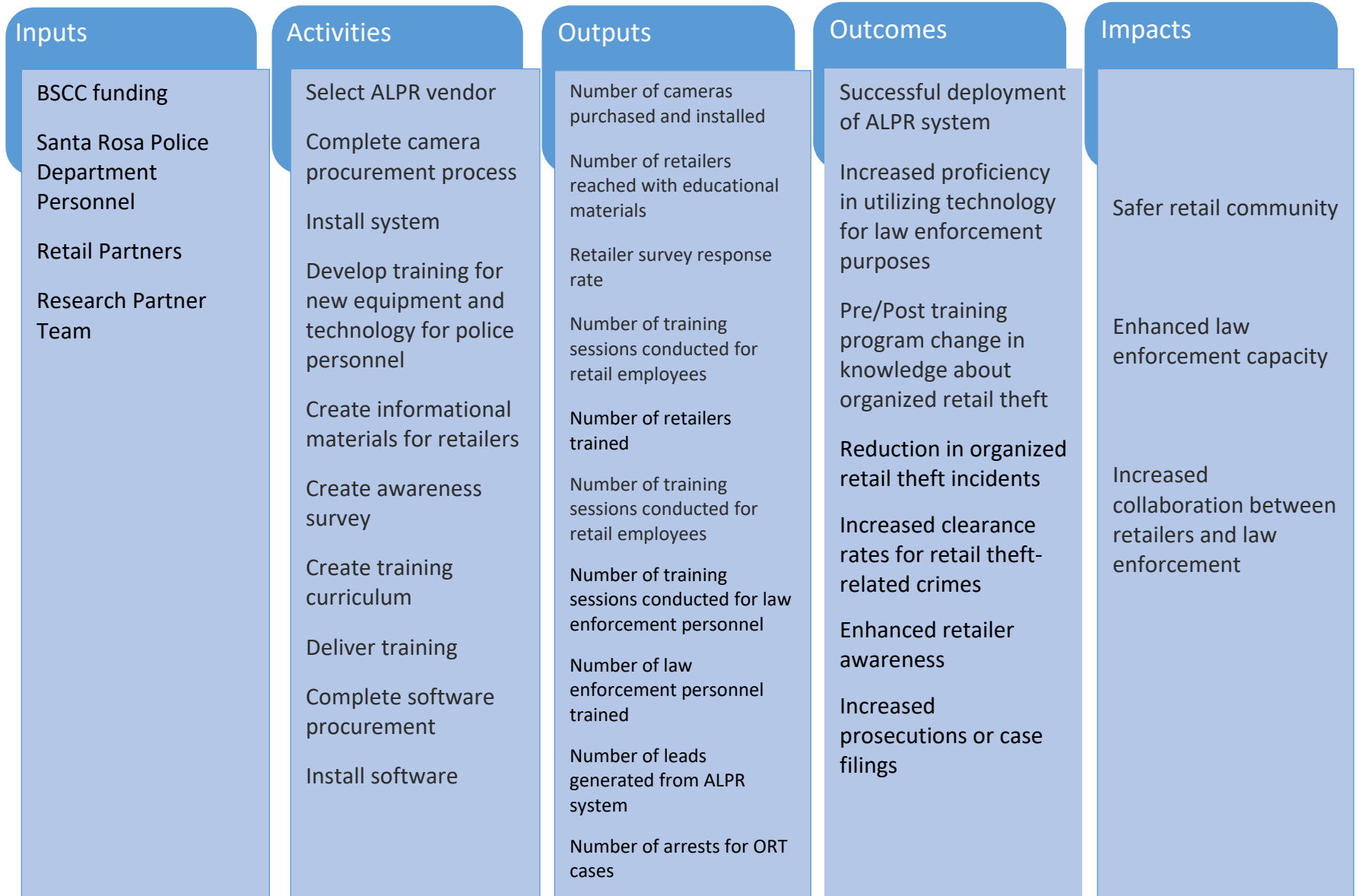
- **Goal 1:** Reduce organized retail theft incidents by implementing preventive measures.
  - **Objective 1.1:** Increase awareness among retailers about organized retail theft and prevention strategies.
  - **Objective 1.2:** Implement training programs for retail staff on recognizing and preventing organized retail theft.

- **Goal 2:** Reduce organized retail theft incidents by enhancing surveillance technology.
  - **Objective 2.1:** Increase the effectiveness of surveillance and monitoring to deter organized retail theft.
  - **Objective 2.2:** Improve the identification and tracking of organized retail theft suspects and vehicles.
  - **Objective 2.3:** Enhance collaboration between law enforcement and retailers through the use of advanced technology solutions.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance organized retail theft case investigations using cellphone extraction tools.
  - **Objective 3.1:** Improve time to identify ORT evidence in cases without cellphone passcodes.
  - **Objective 3.2:** Improve time to identify suspect co-conspirators without cellphone passcodes.

### **Project Logic Model**

As required, we developed logic model for the project (see Figure 2). Logic models are one-page, high-level program depictions that include information about how it works and achieves its intended goals. They are a useful tool to simplify complex relationships between populations and program components for program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Logic models can be used for documentation, communication, coordination, performance tracking, and evaluation, and their development is encouraged (and sometimes required) for projects funded by the U.S. Department of Justice (see [Center for Research Partnerships and Program Evaluation, OJJDP](#)).

Figure 2. Santa Rosa Police Department ORT Prevention Grant Program Project Logic Model



## **Evaluation Method and Design**

A strategic approach to problem solving expands the power of the agencies who are collaborating. The City of Santa Rosa has partnered with Indiana University Bloomington to conduct an evaluation of the project. This collaboration also encourages a local focus driven by data-based problem solving making a research team an important part of the effort.

The research team includes Dr. Natalie Hipple, Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Ms. Julie Wartell, Founder of the Problem Analysis Group. We will employ a mixed methods approach to evaluating this project. We will utilize existing data sources from the SRPD and supplement those data with project-specific primary data collection.

## **Data Analysis**

Project data will be obtained and reviewed quarterly and annually to ensure accurate and consistent data entry (frequency depends on the specific metric). Data will be aggregated and validated before conducting all required quantitative and qualitative analyses.

NIBRS data will be used to track retail theft. For evaluation purposes we are defining “retail theft” as a criminal incident at a retail business involving one or more of the following NIBRS offenses: shoplifting [23C], theft from a building [23D], other larceny [23H], burglary/B&E [220], stolen property offense [280], and robbery [120]. Those incidents that involved two or more offenders will be sub-classified as ORT.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using [Microsoft Excel](#) or [IBM SPSS](#) analytic software. Descriptive statistics will be employed to characterize incidents, leads, arrests, retailers trained, and other relevant indicators. Contingency tables (i.e., crosstabs) and inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square, t-tests) will be conducted when appropriate to support descriptive findings and ensure data are interpreted appropriately.

All qualitative data will be compiled and digitally archived and then we will code for patterns depending on the data category and outcome measure. The first step is data coding—a process of categorizing the qualitative data elements—starting with “open coding,” where we will develop initial categories and then move to “selective coding” when we have carefully defined the core concepts. After several iterations of initial and selective coding, then the researchers identify and flesh out the details of the core concepts and categories. The overarching goal of these analyses is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the grant activities and perspectives on the extent to which the project is carried out as planned, including what challenges, if any, were experienced and the strategies used to overcome them.

## **Evaluation Metrics**

We seek to answer the overarching question: can enhanced surveillance technology and preventive measures decrease retail theft and specifically ORT? Technology activities include



the purchase, placement, and use of ALPRs and associated law enforcement training. Once these activities are completed, our focus will turn to case investigation and follow-up as well as actions taken by the prosecutor, if applicable. The prevention activities include developing and delivering training to retailers.

The Process Evaluation Matrix (Table 1) and the Outcome Evaluation Matrix (Table 2) display the specific activities related to both goals and all objectives. The combination of improved identification of retail theft/ORT offenders, better evidence to support cases submitted to the prosecutor, and collaboration with law enforcement via prevention education will lead to a reduction in retail theft/ORT and ultimately a safer community.

A comparison site is not practical of this project nor is it possible to do a more rigorous scientific design. Depending on where the cameras are implemented, there may be clusters of businesses without a nearby camera that could be used as a comparison.



Table 1. Process Evaluation Matrix

<b>Input/Resource/Activity/Output</b>	<b>Data Element(s)</b>	<b>Data Source(s)</b>	<b>Frequency of Data Collection</b>
Cameras purchase and installation	Number of cameras purchased Number of cameras installed	Procurement paperwork	Once – beginning of project
Create informational materials	Material produced and disseminated	Material examples Survey about retail theft awareness to be administered to target businesses.	Once – beginning of project
Create training curriculum and deliver training to retailer	Material produced and delivered	Attendance records Pre/post training surveys	Each time training occurs
ALPR system and surveillance technology training	ALPR system user assessment of effectiveness and collaboration	Focus groups	Year 3
ALPR system use monitoring	Number of leads generated using ALPR data Number of suspect arrests using ALPR data	RMS and ALPR system	Quarterly
Case processing	Number of cases filed by prosecutor	Sonoma County Integrated Justice System (IJS)	Quarterly
Cellebrite Premium purchase and install Magnet Axion purchase and install	NA	Procurement paperwork	Once – Fall 2024

Table 2. Outcome Evaluation Matrix

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Frequency of Data Collection</b>
Reduction in reported retail theft incidents	Decrease in the number of ORT incidents reported/called in by businesses/retailers	Case management system	Each time an incident is reported, monthly/quarterly?
Successful deployment of ALPR system	Installation of Automated License Plate Readers at designated locations	Procurement records Installation documentation	Once – beginning of project
Increase proficiency in utilizing technology for law enforcement purposes	Increase in the number of ORT cases being actively worked	Feedback forms RMS and ALPR system	Quarterly
Shorten data retrieval time for cases without cellphone passcodes	Decrease in time from cellphone acquisition to data collection	Cellebrite Premium Magnet Axiom Case Management System	Quarterly