

Freeway Security Network 2019/2020 Fiscal Report

Background

As a result of an increase in freeway shootings occurring in Contra Costa County, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and county law enforcement agencies recognized there was a need for a proactive, collaborative approach to ensure the safety of motorists on the county's freeway system. Since the CHP Golden Gate Division started tracking reported freeway shootings in 2016, there have been 311 reported freeway shootings within Golden Gate Division, with 66 of them occurring in Contra Costa County alone. In 2016, the CHP, in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Contra Costa County District Attorney's office and several Contra Costa County law enforcement agencies, formed the Freeway Security Network (FSN) Committee. The FSN Committee is comprised of the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office, Caltrans, the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office, the CHP Contra Costa Area, and the Chiefs of Police from the cities of Antioch, Hercules, Pinole, Pittsburg, Richmond, and San Pablo. The FSN operates on the Interstate 80 corridor, through the cities of Richmond, Pinole, San Pablo and Hercules. The FSN operates on the State Route 4 corridor, through the cities of Pittsburg, and Antioch.

Network Acquisition and Management

In 2016, The California State Transportation Agency allocated \$3.5 million, from the Caltrans budget, to fund the purchase and installation of the FSN. Based upon the Pittsburg Police Department's current system of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR), ShotSpotter technology, and over 170 internal network cameras, it was decided the FSN project would be hosted and managed by the City of Pittsburg. Future funding for maintenance and licensing fees will need to be obtained by the FSN Committee through other sources. The FSN Committee has garnered support from county and state elected officials to assist with identifying future funding so the FSN can remain operational past the three-year pilot project, which is the period of July 1, 2018, thru June 30, 2021.

With the \$3.5 million¹ allocated to the FSN, the FSN Committee was able to fund the following:

- 24 Situational Awareness Cameras
- 165 ShotSpotter sensors
- 32 ALPR's
- Wireless Backbone Infrastructure
- Associated command center hardware, software, and subscription services for three years

Freeway Security Network Project Development

¹ As of end of Fiscal Year 2019/2020, CALTRANS has spent 2.8 of the 3.5 million allocated. There are still pending installation invoices, maintenance costs and remainder balance of the initial 3-year subscription service, which ends FY 2021.

The FSN project development occurred in three phases. The first phase of the project, which began in 2017, was the design and review of the network, and was completed in June of 2018. The design consisted of ShotSpotter Technology, ALPR's and Situational Awareness Cameras. Additionally, Live Earth, a Geospatial Visualization Management component of the project, was included for multi-agency application of the technology.

Phase two included the installation of 24 Situational Awareness Cameras, complete with pan/tilt/zoom capabilities, which was completed in August 2019. Phase three, the Wireless Backbone, was completed and the FSN was fully operational in October 2019. At this point, the FSN became fully operational, which is when full data collection and reporting requirements were initiated.

Performance Results

Since the yearly total for 2016, reported freeway shootings have shown a trend of declining. For the first half of 2020, an upward trend in freeway shootings has developed:

- o 2016 - 24
 - o 2017 - 12
 - o 2018 - 8
 - o 2019 - 8
 - o 2020 – (Jan 1 to June 30) 14
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- The CHP and the Pittsburg Police Department have used the FSN to assist with the investigation of 14 freeway shootings since October 2019.
 - The CHP and Contra Costa County allied agencies have reported the FSN has resulted in the assistance of recovering 52 felony vehicles since October 2019.
 - One Amber Alert Vehicle was recovered in Contra Costa County by use of the FSN.
 - Twelve Contra Costa County allied agencies have contacted the network administrator, the Pittsburg Police Department, requesting investigative assistance from the FSN since October 2019.

Allied Agency Freeway Security Network Successes

- The FSN alerted officers to a stolen vehicle. Upon further investigation, the FSN connected the suspect to a Contra Costa Sheriff's Office open carjacking case.
- The FSN alerted officers to a vehicle wanted in connection to over 60 robberies throughout Northern California, with a value of over \$1 million worth of product stolen. At the culmination of the investigation, a total of 12 suspects were taken into custody.
- Officers used the FSN as an investigative tool to arrest three suspects wanted for nine gas station robberies in Contra Costa County.
- The FSN assisted officers with the investigation of a shooting which ultimately connected the suspects to additional felony crimes committed in Contra Costa County.

Future Benefit of the FSN

As shown above, the benefit of the FSN as a public safety tool, ensuring the safety of the community, cannot be overstated. The FSN is the first of its kind, not only in California, but in the nation. If future funding from the State is identified for purchasing and installation of similar networks, these systems would provide invaluable services to the public by increasing safety and security on roadways throughout California and aid law enforcement in the investigation of criminal activity.