

**REAL TIME CRIME CENTER (RTCC)**  
**BEST PRACTICES WHITE PAPER**



**NATIONAL REAL TIME CRIME CENTER ASSOCIATION (NRTCCA)**  
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## **Executive Summary**

Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) development began around 2005. RTCCs are, for the most part, unique to law enforcement agencies. Since approximately 2015, law enforcement agencies have begun adding RTCC units to their strategic plans, with implementation going live sometime within the next five to ten years.

Most law enforcement agencies allowed for such a protracted implementation goal to allow for adequate preparations for budgeting, technology, staffing, and physical building acquisition. This White Paper aims to provide agencies with best practices and techniques to help create departmental priorities. More importantly, it aims to highlight how an agency can implement an RTCC with the right personnel, a desk, and a computer. In other words, RTCCs can be established without initially having a physical building.

Creating the right team to lead this project is vital for every agency. It must include supporters in command staff and city leadership to help navigate challenges along the way.

Identifying the most appropriate staffing, choosing the right technology that fits each agency's needs, and locating the perfect place to house the RTCC are the three major priorities for implementing an RTCC program.

We would like to thank the all of the representatives from over 20 law enforcement agencies with Real Time Centers throughout the United States who dedicated their time to our Best Practices Working Group. It was decided among all of the members of this working group that this was not about one agency and the best practices white paper would be created under the National Real Time Crime Center Association (NRTCCA).

## **What Defines an RTCC**

An RTCC is a public safety group staffed with sworn officers, professional staff, or a combination of the two that serves as a centralized location for criminal information and intelligence analysis within a public safety organization. The purpose of an RTCC is to manage real-time data and intelligence to proactively mitigate crime, reactively investigate crime, or provide situational awareness to increase officer and citizen safety. Ancillary purposes include department statistical analysis, production, and internal and external communication creation.

### **RTCC vs. Crime Center**

It's important to note that there are differences between Crime Centers and RTCCs. While they may be visually identical, the contrast is in their function and mission. Crime Centers are reactive and offer a more traditional crime analysis perspective on criminal intelligence and investigations. RTCCs are more proactive and focus on real-time analysis of rapidly developing situations within the public safety realm.

### **Types of RTCCs (Tactical Dispatch)**

Some agencies start an RTCC using a designated Public Safety Dispatcher (PSD) with the skill sets to be a Tactical Dispatcher. These dispatchers have the training to query multiple data sets, including investigative databases that detectives or analysts can access. These additional database queries and analyses by a PSD are ancillary tasks not routinely seen or required in everyday dispatch responsibilities. Because of the ever-changing staffing challenges experienced by dispatch centers across the country, the ability to assign and complete these extra duties often depends on current staffing numbers.

### **Levels of RTCCs**

This working group has identified five levels of crime centers to assist agencies with determining agency needs and establishing an RTCC. The levels factor in duties, coverage, technology, and staffing.

#### **LEVEL ONE**

Level One has the most limited staffing coverage. It includes one or two dedicated professional staff, sworn staff, or a combination of both, covering between eight and fifteen hours per day on specific days each week. The assigned staff in a Level One RTCC can be supervised by an existing supervisory staff within the agency.

The RTCC staff duties in a Level One center focus on proactive participation with in-progress calls for service. Responsibilities at this level range from searching local, state, and federal databases to support patrol responses to incidents and monitoring radio traffic to identify calls for service to assist. Duties may also include creating and disseminating crime bulletins internally and externally and researching calls for service at the request of dispatch or patrol.

A Level One RTCC should have access to all government entity-owned cameras, including traffic cameras.

LEVEL TWO

After establishing a Level One center with one or two dedicated staff who report to a departmental supervisor, additional staffing, technology, and duties may be layered to begin scaling up the RTCC responsibility footprint.

Most RTCCs that fall into this level have deployed sufficient staff to provide seven-day coverage for approximately eight to fifteen hours per day. At this level, a full-time dedicated supervisory-level employee would supervise a staff of up to eight line-level employees. The goal of a Level Two RTCC should be to staff two employees per shift, covering eight to fifteen hours per day, seven days per week.

This type of staff coverage can be accomplished by deploying a 4/10-style shift model with a single overlapping day for employees.

Level Two RTCC staff duties would encompass all duties from a Level One RTCC and would include proactively researching calls for service and developing leads for patrol. Staff should also seek active investigations to develop investigative leads on cases using investigative resources such as crime bulletins. They should also be performing reactive or investigative low-level camera operations and research related to active investigations.

At this level, agencies should begin enhancing the technology stack within the RTCC to include all city-owned cameras, including traffic cameras, as well as implementing an Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR or LPR) program. Other technologies layered into this level would include specialty equipment or platforms such as mobile RTCC cameras, mobile LPR cameras, Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS or Drone), or other specialty equipment needs.

Finally, this level also includes employing live video ingestion and use of an Open Broadcast Software platform to live stream the ingested video to stakeholders in the field or commanders who may be on or off-site.

LEVEL THREE

Level Three RTCCs layer in more robust staffing models. These staffing models are typically created after an analysis of department needs. Factors for this analysis include real-time camera operations and successes, real-time intelligence and data analysis successes or identified needs, and internal communication needs, including digesting data to curate a purposed communication product to disseminate to staff. These communications products could include safety bulletins, intelligence bulletins, crime bulletins, general department announcements, and similar products.

Additional staffing would include up to twelve line-level employees, four specialty position employees, and two supervisory employees. This Level of RTCC would have dedicated shifts of RTCC staff working seven days per week and covering fifteen to twenty hours per day. There would typically be one supervisor during daytime hours and one during the evening or nighttime hours most of the week. Two line-level employees would be assigned per shift to work as operations staff.

A specialty staff position per shift would be included at this level. The specialty position would be dedicated to assisting with special event planning and operations, drone operations, assisting with investigative operations such as search warrants or other specialty equipment operational needs for the RTCC.

General RTCC staff duties for Level Three include all duties listed for a Level One or Two RTCC as well as real-time camera monitoring of known high-crime locations within the jurisdiction. Additionally, staff will generate calls for service from the RTCC related to proactive camera monitoring of high-crime locations while communicating real-time intelligence to field personnel as needed. Level Three RTCC staff will proactively and reactively utilize ALPR fixed cameras during investigations and in-progress calls for service.

Level Three RTCC technologies include all the technologies from Levels One and Two, in addition to 26-50 ALPR cameras placed throughout the jurisdiction. Agencies should create more partnerships throughout the community to access cameras and other sensors at Critical Infrastructure & Key Resources (CIKR), such as schools, malls, event locations, retail locations, banks, hotels, and tourism locations.

Additional Specialty Equipment such as mobile RTCC cameras, UAS/drones, shot detection platforms, body-worn cameras, in-car cameras, or other specialty equipment needs can also be implemented in Level Three RTCCs.

LEVEL FOUR

Most RTCCs will be Level Two or Three. Many agencies throughout the country do not have the day and nighttime population, voluminous crime, and other internal needs to staff an RTCC as robustly as the last three levels.

Level Four includes all the staffing, duties, and technologies in the first three levels. It adds staffing to allow for dedicated shifts covering 20 to 24 hours per day, seven days per week. To accomplish this staffing level, a total of up to 16 line-level employees, up to eight specialty position employees, three supervisory employees, and one manager-level employee would be needed. The span of control for the supervisory employees would be split into daytime, swing shift, and nighttime coverage responsibility.

Having 16 line-level and up to eight specialty employees will allow for overlapping coverage during peak hours, as identified through crime analysis and trends. An example of shift coverage for this level could include:

- Shift 1A – 0700-1700 (Monday to Thursday)
- Shift 1B – 0700-1700 (Thursday to Sunday)
- Shift 2A – 1200-2200 (Tuesday to Friday)
- Shift 2B – 1200-2200 (Friday to Monday)
- Shift 3A – 1600-0200 (Saturday to Tuesday)
- Shift 3B – 1600-0200 (Wednesday to Saturday)
- Shift 4A – 2200-0800 (Sunday to Wednesday)
- Shift 4B – 2200-0800 (Wednesday to Saturday)

There should be one specialty RTCC staff member per shift performing the specialty staff duties listed in Level Three.

Agencies with Level Four RTCCs would have approximately 51-75 ALPR cameras and have a robust and RTCC-accessible city-owned camera network, which includes traffic cameras. These RTCCs should be involved in live streaming ingested video, drone video, and other videos to field personnel and command staff.

**LEVEL FIVE**

The final level moves into a 24-hour, seven-day-per-week coverage model. Additionally, it operates in support of another regional agency's needs periodically or as a standing norm. A Level Five RTCC may be a standalone center that supports other agencies or a regional center staffed by personnel from several participating agencies.

Staffing would require up to 24 line-level employees on overlapping shifts extrapolated out from the example listed in Level Five, sixteen specialty position employees, six supervisory employees, two manager-level employees, and one director-level employee. The director-level or commander-level employee would have overall management responsibility for the RTCC. One of the manager-level employees would have supervisory coverage for an administrative supervisor, the weekday daytime and weekday swing shift supervisors. The second manager-level employee would have supervisory coverage of the daytime weekend, swing shift weekend, and nighttime shift supervisor. Level Five RTCCs would see a need for three or more line-level employees per shift, along with two specialty employees per shift.

Level Five RTCC technologies should include access to all regional cameras owned by every city or county participating in the RTCC's region. Additionally, there should be 76 or more ALPR cameras throughout the region.

**Placement of the RTCC within an Organizational Chart**

Each department with an RTCC will have different missions, but all of them have one common goal: to support patrol with active calls for service. Polling multiple agencies that have an RTCC, approximately 95% of them were organizationally assigned to a sworn command staff member of their department. The poll respondents indicated their RTCC was assigned to one of the following bureaus, listed in order from most common to least common:

1. Investigations Bureau
2. Patrol Support Bureau
3. Administrative Bureau
4. Office of the Chief

RTCCs tend to perform tasks that benefit multiple, if not all, command areas within an agency. Placement of the RTCC is often a formality to allow for organizational reporting and authority. Agencies are encouraged to perform evaluations of their RTCC's organizational placement after being open for a period of time, which provides for performance and task data to be analyzed by command staff. This analysis should allow command staff to determine appropriate long-term organizational placement.

### **Physical Placement of Your RTCC**

The physical placement or building location of an RTCC within an agency may vary depending on the overall mission that would best benefit the agency. Budget, staffing, physical space, and other obstacles may limit or impact this mission.

Based upon these limitations and considerations, and after polling multiple agencies across the country, the top areas that an RTCC physically placed in the department, listed in order from most to least, were:

1. Investigations
2. Isolated location
3. Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

### **INVESTIGATIONS**

This option seemed most prominent in agencies that utilized their RTCCs as combined Crime Analysis Units. Being housed in Investigations allows for proximity to detectives and investigators for case assistance while providing real-time functionality with Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) call accessibility and radios.

### **ISOLATED LOCATION**

The Real-Time Crime Center can be isolated from other units to be driven by its focus without interruptions. Isolation may limit direct interactions with officers, deputies, detectives, investigations, and others. However, this option may allow for the most space and focus without distractions.

Technology has been a game-changer because RTCC employees can hear live 911 calls, interact with CAD, respond on the radio, and much more from any physical location in the agency's city or county. Choosing the right site will be another key to the overall success of any RTCC.

### **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

EOCs were developed as physical places for command staff, finance, logistics, operations, and planning personnel to go when there is an emergency or disaster to mitigate. The EOC facilities are seldom used throughout the year. There has been a trend across the country for police departments and sheriff's offices to transition their EOCs into functioning RTCCs. The equipment, space, and most technology platforms are already there to start an RTCC. Once the transition occurs and an RTCC is embedded into the physical EOC facility, it allows police leaders to show up to the RTCC and manage multiple incidents across the city from a single location.



Each location (Investigations, Isolated, EOC) has proven successful for various jurisdictions and agencies. There is no right or wrong method—just whatever works to meet the defined mission objectives based on staffing and other logistical considerations.

There are trends where cities have multiple situations throughout the city, and on-duty patrol watch commanders respond to the RTCC to manage all the incidents from inside the RTCC. Creating the best physical location for your RTCC is imperative for the success of your RTCC and your department.

### **Identifying the Mission and Vision of the RTCC**

Agencies establishing RTCCs should identify the mission of the RTCC. RTCC missions are typically focused on two approach types – reactive, proactive, or a combination of the two.

When first starting, the reactive approach is the easiest method to implement. Being reactive means that, as a call for service is received, either dispatchers or responding sworn personnel determine whether the RTCC can assist based on its available resources. RTCC participation can include utilizing city or county cameras, privately owned cameras, license plate readers, facial recognition, software databases, and other systems. The desired outcome of achieving a reactive RTCC is to aid in solving crimes.

Once it is well-established to react to calls for service, some agencies may strive for RTCCs to serve a proactive function. Rather than relying solely on calls for service that are received, RTCC staff will monitor cameras, license plate readers, as well as other systems for crimes or suspicious activities. Establishing and maintaining a proactive RTCC that aids in preventing crimes from occurring in the first place is the goal.

A combination of the reactive and proactive approaches would assist with calls for service and monitor any suspicious activities to solve and reduce crime.

Previously mentioned were various software technologies to aid in real-time functions. Most agencies looking to establish RTCCs have already established crime analysis units. Though the functionality will differ, both missions will use similar databases. These databases may include but are not limited to phone subscriber information, license plate checks, photo identification, and several others.

Database compliance with state standards may vary, e.g., specific Florida databases must meet FDLE & CJIS compliance to maintain accreditations.

### **RTCC Staffing**

Typical RTCC staffing consists of sworn officers, professional staff, a hybrid of sworn officers and professional staff, and light-duty sworn employees. What works in one agency may not be ideal for all agencies, as not every option will work depending on staffing, budget, and other variables.

Technology helps drive the RTCC function. But it's impossible to go anywhere without the right driver in the seat. Choosing the right staffing of qualified individuals to help drive a center to the next strategic benchmark is crucial to an RTCC's success.

### **SWORN OFFICERS**

Sworn officers provide a unique aspect to allow members of an agency's sworn personnel to see from a bird's-eye view. They receive annual training in active shooter scenarios, terrorism, human trafficking, case law, and city ordinances and can articulate identified crimes in progress. Some patrol officers prefer to hear from other sworn personnel working in an RTCC. One identified drawback of having sworn employees in an RTCC is personnel costs, e.g., two sworn officers may be the cost of three professional staff. Additionally, not all sworn personnel like to stay in one place or assignment for an entire career, which may result in turnover in the Center.

### **PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

Having dedicated professional staff in an RTCC creates opportunities for long-term staffing stability for the Center. Turnover is less common with professional staff because of limited opportunities to move around within an agency. Career paths can also be created for professional staff, such as RTCC Director, RTCC Manager, RTCC Operator, RTCC Specialist, RTCC Technician, RTCC Investigator, and RTCC Analysts. Potential drawbacks may include: less experience, especially due to a lack of in-depth training compared to that received by sworn employees.

### **HYBRID MODEL**

This model is one of the preferred and most successful models. Having the joint perspective of sworn and professional staff members provides for different viewpoints. Together they can conquer many calls as they have different perspectives and resources they use for calls for service. Drawbacks to this model include a need for more staffing and higher budgets.

### **LIGHT DUTY OR TEMPORARY MODIFIED DUTY PERSONNEL**

When employees can work while injured, opportunities in the RTCC will allow them to help their squad as they can work in the RTCC on their normal shifts. Utilizing light-duty employees can lead to a newly-formed bond between patrol personnel and the RTCC.

When the light duty employee returns to their permanent assignment, they function as another marketing member for the RTCC, as they can share all the resources that RTCC has with their squad, ultimately leading to legitimacy and buy-in.

### **RTCC Technology**

RTCCs throughout the country are individually unique, but one thing they all have in common is they are technology-driven. This section will discuss different types of technologies used in an RTCC.

While remaining vendor-neutral, we will highlight RTCCs with these types of resources in their centers and identify various technologies as a resource. Agencies are encouraged to connect with other RTCCs throughout the country that might be using a technology or platform that would fit within the operating RTCC's mission. Due diligence in vetting platforms and companies is crucial to the successful deployment of any platform.

### **Physical Technology Equipment**

#### **AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER (ALPR OR LPR)**

An ALPR camera is a camera technology that will scan license plates as vehicles drive by the camera. Some cameras can scan more than one traffic lane at various speeds depending on the technology.

In a recent RTCC Survey of about 100 RTCCs, over 95% of them answered "yes" when asked whether they had an ALPR camera. Most of them stated that it is the most used service they offer to their department. ALPR cameras are game-changers for law enforcement. They help find victims, missing people, criminals, and more, sometimes in minutes.

Most RTCCs will begin by placing ALPR cameras near a border entry or point of ingress to their city. When doing so, most will face them to capture inbound traffic to the city or county so that if a vehicle that is alerted drives by the camera, the patrol resources in an RTCC's jurisdiction can be directed to the vehicle by using other non-ALPR cameras to track the movement of the vehicle.

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For the notification to be received by your RTCC, vehicles must be entered into a local electronic hotlist, the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), or local state equivalent systems. Once an ALPR camera scans the vehicle entering a city, the RTCC will receive an alert. Once the alert is received, RTCC employees will use other resources, such as traffic cameras, to attempt to locate this vehicle beyond just the ALPR scan. As directed by all NCIC hits for wanted people and vehicles, agencies must always take time to run the vehicle first to verify it is still stolen or wanted. Then it is time to find the vehicle.

Having two or more employees per shift in an RTCC has been identified as a desired best practice. One employee can verify the vehicle's status while the second employee starts working on cameras to attempt to locate the vehicle once confirmed. Dispatch centers and other department employees can also confirm the status of a vehicle if there are not two or more employees in the RTCC.

Considerations to keep in mind when considering ALPRs include hardwired or solar, air card or connected directly to your city fiber/internet, and attachment (e.g., free standing or attached to a light pole or other devices).

Multiple agencies across the country have implemented ALPR cameras in their RTCCs with great success and continue to add new ALPR cameras every year in their centers.

### TRAFFIC CAMERAS

Traffic cameras are the most common cameras that RTCCs use, as they were often already in place before the RTCC was created. Most traffic cameras are used by city internal Traffic Management Centers (TMC) daily.

There are two types of traffic cameras, Fixed and Pan, Tilt, and Zoom (PTZ). Most cities use PTZ cameras because TMC employees need them to identify traffic patterns that they may need to put a traffic signal to either speed up or slow down traffic.

A best practice is to have these cameras connected to a recording device, allowing recorded video to be accessed days, weeks, or months later, depending on state and municipal laws and the agency's retention schedule. For example, Florida has the Sunshine Law, which requires 30-day retention.

Traffic cameras open doors for law enforcement agencies to partner with TMCs on future camera purchases, including cameras that work at night or zoom in farther. Most traffic cameras provide clear footage during the day, but not so much at night because the camera's main purpose is to be operational during the day when TMC employees work. Most TMCs are closed at night, so the traffic cameras are no longer essential for their purpose. Partnerships between TMCs and law enforcement agencies open the door to buying newer and better equipment to fit their needs and RTCC needs on using traffic cameras.

Many agencies have implemented traffic cameras inside their RTCCs and use them for nearly every call for service. Some have also partnered with their TMC to purchase cameras together through various grant opportunities.

### UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS/DRONES

Drone use has expanded over the years in private and public spaces. Public safety agencies across the country have used drones to help find missing people, survey collision scenes, map out criminal incident locations, and much more.

Some agencies allow patrol officers to check out a drone just as easily as a radar gun. This officer will respond by launching a drone if an incident occurs in the city.

Drones are pieces of physical technology that complement an RTCC. Drone pilots should share the live video feed from the drone with an RTCC to view and potentially livestream out to other stakeholders.

Before launching a drone program, RTCCs should consult with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in their respective city or county.

Chula Vista (CA) Police Department has created a term called the Drone as a First Responder Program (DFR). Their program launches drones on calls for service that they have identified as "requiring a drone." Launching drones to respond to calls for service allows first responders to make decisions based on what the drone sees before arriving on the scene. These earlier decisions can determine whether more patrol officers, a canine, a helicopter, or other types of resources are needed for this call for service.

The Santa Monica (CA) and Redondo Beach (CA) police departments have recently begun DFR operations. The Beverly Hills (CA) Police Department launched a DFR program where the remote pilots are housed in their newly-created Real Time Watch Center.

RTCCs with DFR programs and those that have access to live drone video incorporate streaming this video to responding officers, incident commanders, and other stakeholders in their RTCC operations. Streaming allows responders and others to have immediate video intelligence and not rely on intelligence relayed from a drone team/pilot to responders.

### SHOT DETECTION

Cities across our nation are impacted differently by gun violence. All cities impacted have one thing in common, which is that guns are often used to hurt people or are misused. Having a gunshot detection resource in the city will allow an agency to be immediately notified if someone fires a gun in that city.

This resource will be able to determine if the shot detected was a gunshot, fireworks, or a backfire from a vehicle. Gunshot detection platforms can be even more exact in identifying the specifications of a firearm such as a handgun, shotgun, or rifle.

These detection tools can get even more precise through triangulation to identify where the shot was detected from some programs determining that the shooter was less than three feet from where the shot was fired. Notification is sent to your RTCC, Communications Center, or Patrol in the field to identify the shot's location.

### IN-CAR CAMERAS

Most patrol officers are assigned a police vehicle for their shift, which means they will do some driving during their shift. Placing a camera in the vehicle, also known as an In-Car Camera (ICC) or Dash Camera, will provide another view to protect police employees.

ICCs have evolved to include embedding other technology inside of them, such as license plate reader technology. As patrol officers drive their vehicles around, these cameras will record what is happening in front of the vehicle and scan license plates. Some technology will also scan the lane in front of them and the other lanes next to them.

ICCs can be sent live to an RTCC, allowing employees in your RTCC to see another view of what may be going on at the call for service.

These cameras are another way a department can protect employees by adding additional viewpoints or perspectives to situations. Allowing an RTCC to see a new view of an incident, especially when the patrol officer is away from their vehicle, provides additional intelligence.

### BODY-WORN CAMERAS

Most patrol officers throughout the country are equipped with a Body-Worn Camera (BWC) or will soon be equipped with one. BWCs provide a transparent aspect of what occurred at the scene.

Many police officers were initially hesitant to use BWC technology and were skeptical of its advantages when it was first introduced to law enforcement applications. Since being introduced, many have embraced this technology because it has benefited them in incidents they have been involved with.

Some BWCs can be fed directly to an RTCC or to other approved people within the agency. This feed can be accessed either historically or live, depending upon an agency's policies and procedures. Agencies that use facial recognition technology must be aware of laws restricting use, such as comparing still shots taken from BWC footage for facial recognition purposes. California's Penal Code 832.19, for example, prohibits using BWC or other officer cameras and is set to sunset on January 1, 2023, unless it is extended by legislation.

### OVERT CAMERA TRAILERS AND VEHICLES

Parts of your city may not have traffic cameras, license plate readers, or even the ability to launch a drone over that portion of the city. Overt camera trailers or vehicles are an excellent resource when other equipment is unavailable.

Overt cameras can be as small as a few feet by a few feet or as large as desired. These trailers can be equipped with a telescoping pole that places a camera at a higher vantage point. It's recommended if using a trailer that another camera is mounted to watch the trailer in case someone tries to commit damage to the trailer. Trailers can also be an opportune place to affix other pieces of equipment to them, including ALPR cameras.

Overt camera trailers have been used for years to protect construction sites from allowing owners to remotely access the property to see if someone is on the property or to review what has occurred there.

Technology has allowed these feeds to be remotely accessible to other locations, including an RTCC.

Trailers can become expensive; this is where vehicles may make more sense to use. Every year agencies have to send vehicles to auction that have outlasted their utility in being beat vehicles. But agencies can repurpose those vehicles to be low-cost solutions for mobile camera assets. Elk Grove (CA) Police Department Real Time Information Center did this. They used an older marked Police SUV and stripped everything from the inside of the vehicle to be installed into a new replacement vehicle. They then placed a pole through the roof of the old vehicle and mounted it on the floor. The pole has two PTZ cameras mounted to the top of it outside. An array of golf cart batteries mounted in the trunk allow the camera vehicle to be continuously powered for up to seven days.

This marked vehicle is deployed throughout their community and serves as a deterrent with markings and cameras.

Elk Grove Police Department thought outside the box to create a new way of using police vehicles and installing cameras on them that can then be viewed in its RTIC while saving thousands of dollars on the cost of a new trailer or vehicle.

### VIDEO WALL

This technology can be either one large screen or several large screens, and it is a "wall of video" connected by television screens. There are various programs and vendors to make a video wall on all one screen or multiple screens, depending on your viewing needs.

Video Walls are used to helping your RTCC employees expand their desktop monitor real estate. Most video walls will display traffic cameras, license plate reader technology, local or national news, and more.

When you're creating your wish list for future planning, put a video wall on it. Most RTCCs have said a video wall is not necessary initially, especially if you need LPRs, traffic cameras, overt cameras, or drones first.

As an RTCC grows from one employee to several employees per shift, adding a video wall at that time would make more sense. Video Walls allow supervisors to see a big picture of what is going on versus shoulder-surfing the employees in the RTCC or other assets across the city.



An additional video wall advantage is that it encourages patrol watch commanders or patrol lieutenants to travel directly to the RTCC to manage scenes virtually instead of being at multiple scenes across the city. Having the ability to see multiple views of a scene will allow patrol supervisors to make quicker decisions for the scene to protect their employees and the community.

Video display processors, which allow a video wall to ingest multiple data feeds and place them on the video wall in the desired format, also allow for video wall images to be pushed or streamed to other locations outside the RTCC. For example, video imagery can be streamed to the dispatch center, watch commander offices, and other locations within the agency.

### **Communication Technology with Customers**

A RTCC is a technology hub for a law enforcement agency. It's important to have streamlined ways that customers can connect with an RTCC.

#### **CREATE A RTCC BRAND**

First, treat an RTCC as a brand and cover some basic necessities. Create a unit email address and phone number. If an agency is the Anytown Police Department, the RTCC email may look like this:

- APDRTCC@anytown.gov
- RTCC@anytown.gov

The phone number should be easy for customers to remember. A great number is (123) 456-RTCC; this is not always possible. Find a number that works best for the RTCC. Once a phone number is set, have that number attached to all positions within the RTCC for incoming calls.

Now that the basics are out of the way, here are some other opportunities to communicate with customers.

#### **POLICE RADIO**

Budget, number of simultaneously monitored radio channels, and operations logistics are three considerations when determining the appropriate radio system to use in an RTCC.

A radio console similar to a dispatch center is one option for an RTCC. The console resides inside of a dispatch center, EOC, or where multiple radio channels are used as primary channels for the agency. These consoles are the most expensive option and may require infrastructure improvements to install.

Mobile (the radios installed in police vehicles) or desk radios with headsets can be mounted to the desk inside of the RTCC. These radios transmit with more wattage than a portable radio but are also more expensive and are unable to be accessible from outside of the RTCC. This option allows for a radio channel scanning feature to be used, but transmitting on multiple channels is not as easy as it is when there is a radio console being used.

Portable radios are used in the majority of RTCCs. Portable radios allow employees to roam an RTCC room, attend meetings or make site visits while maintaining situational awareness of what is going on in the city or county. Some portable radios have limited headset options for RTCC employees and are the least powerful transmitting options of the three listed here.

### MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS

When designing the budget for an RTCC, it has been identified as a best practice that if patrol officers are issued cell phones, then the RTCC employees should also be issued department cell phones.

Patrol officers are not always close to their computers in their vehicles, and it's important that some information from the RTCC be shared directly to patrol units via cell phone or radio for officer safety purposes.

However, when Patrol Officers are inside their vehicle(s), CAD messaging functions are also beneficial and a method for communication between the RTCC and officers.

### RTCC COMPUTERS

Purchasing the right computers for RTCC employees is an important component for the setup of the RTCC. There are a number of factors that should be considered when purchasing computer equipment for an RTCC. Computers used by patrol officers to write reports may not be sufficient for RTCC employees. RTCC computers will need plenty of hard drive space and speed—with an emphasis on speed. RTCC computers need a lot of speed to operate, access, view, and provide power to cameras. This varies from agency to agency, and consulting with expert Information Technology analysts to ensure the desktop computers are sufficient for the platforms they operate is essential.

Some RTCCs have desktop computers located in a server room that perform a single task. For example, a single desktop is used for traffic cameras. That desktop computer is then accessed from an RTCC operator's computer. This may alleviate the need for very powerful desktops, depending on the usage loads.

Some considerations to keep in mind:

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- How many hours per day will the computer be used?
- How many cameras will be used on the computer?
- How fast can an operator move from camera to camera and operate those cameras to get to a call for service before patrol arrives on the scene?
- Is there a television wall in the RTCC? If not, maybe consider providing more or larger desktop monitors for RTCC employees.
- How many programs will be operating in the background? There may be license plate readers, city cameras, traffic cameras, community cameras, drones, etc.
- Will the computer support all these programs running at the same time?

### **RTCC Software Technology**

Once an RTCC is equipped with all of the right physical equipment that will allow RTCC employees to be successful in helping customers, then it's time to identify the software resources needed to equip employees and to arm customers with the data they need to make informed decisions.

### **CITY AND INTERNAL DATABASES**

If other city departments share data with the law enforcement agency that may be applicable to calls for services, then start with these resources because there should be no cost to get access to these resources.

### **SUBSCRIPTION DATABASES**

A call for service comes in when someone believes that a loved one wants to kill him or herself or kill someone else, otherwise known as a suicide attempt. The only information provided was that person's phone number or name. A call of this nature can be heard almost every day. What resources would be beneficial to patrol before they arrive?

Having the ability to have access to two or more subscription databases allows an RTCC to check both databases to get personal information on the subject. This information will often include first and last name, date of birth, social security number, address, email address, phone numbers, and sometimes even more information.

It is recommended to have access to two different databases as they will complement each other, or sometimes one may have more current information than the other database.

The best databases will allow you to check for first and last names, phone numbers, dates of birth, addresses, phone numbers, and much more.

### COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

Do dispatchers have technology that can be implemented into an RTCC? Some technology may allow RTCCs to:

- Listen to active 911 calls (listen, not talk to the caller). This allows RTCC employees to listen to apply investigative resources to the call for service.
- Identify where a 911 caller may be, allowing RTCC employees to use RTCC cameras to locate the 911 caller.
- Dispatcher software to see the calls pending, to allow RTCC employees to possibly clear calls prior to PD arriving or even closing the calls so patrol does not need to respond.

### INVESTIGATIVE RESOURCES

Equip RTCC employees with every investigative resource available to analysts and/or detectives. This will allow RTCC employees to apply these resources to more calls for service. Equipping RTCC employees with these additional resources will possibly reduce detective call-outs, reduce detective work to allow detectives to arrive on the scene and equip them with the resources they need right away, and, most importantly, allows resources that were once only used for drug investigations, auto thefts, human trafficking, property crimes to be used for many different calls for service.

Great examples will include:

- A call for service is created for:
  - A domestic violence call at a hotel in your community between a male and female. Prior to PD arrival, the RTCC identifies the phone number for the male as connected to multiple classified ads involving the female. There is a potential that this domestic violence may be associated with Human Trafficking. A crime that may be undetected as patrol officers do not have access to all of the resources that the RTCC or Detectives have access to.
  - A citizen has located a firearm in their front yard and provided a serial number on the gun. RTCC runs this serial number in a variety of databases and realizes this gun is associated with a subject who is a documented gang member who has a violent past. This information arms patrol with new information that may require another officer to be added to the call just for situational awareness.

## **Community Partners**

When the RTCC opens in your city, first focus on the resources your Center will have access to throughout the city. It is very hard to get community partners involved in the RTCC if you are unable to get connected to your own city building cameras, traffic cameras, or other cameras that are owned by your city.

## **CAMERA RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is identified as a best practice that when you identify a community business partner, you create a legal agreement allowing your law enforcement and city to access their cameras.

## **LEGAL AGREEMENTS**

Partnering with your community is truly important; it is important that law enforcement be open to whatever cameras your community partner would like to share.

Recommended cameras are exterior cameras to help with the movement of the business and visual of any concerns prior to PD arrival.

## **CAMERA PHASES**

Identify stakeholders who will help identify the partnerships you want to be associated with your RTCC. Once you have identified your team, now it's time to identify phases for your community which allows you to be precise and focused on who will be connected to your RTCC.

Examples of Phases will include:

- Phase One
  - Government-Owned Cameras
    - Traffic Cameras
    - City Building Cameras
    - City Hall, Finance, other Important Buildings
    - Your Police Department/Sheriff's Office
    - Airport
    - Libraries
    - City Parking Garages
    - City-Owned Critical Infrastructure & Key Resources (CIKR)
      - Water, Electric, Gas, etc.
- Phase Two
  - CIKR Locations
    - Hospitals
    - Schools
    - Retail Mall
    - Water Facilities

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- Natural Gas Facilities
- Electric Sub Stations
- High Calls For Service Locations
  - Convenience Stores
  - Retail Businesses
  - Other Identified Businesses
- Phase Three
  - Businesses Near an Entertainment District in your Community
    - Hotels and Motels
    - Large Big Box Retail Stores
- Phase Four
  - Car Dealerships, Car Repair/Oil Change, Carwashes
  - Grocery Stores
  - Banks or Other Financial Institutions
  - Restaurants

### MEETING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY PARTNER

Your first initial meeting should be very informative about what your RTCC does; creating this transparency early on creates trust with your new community partner.

You should invite your RTCC leadership team, crime prevention representatives, and a member of your police department technology team. The leadership team will share the vision of RTCC, while crime prevention will be there to share any crime prevention tips and answer any concerns about the nearby property your customer may have. The technology team representative will be able to identify if your RTCC can access the community partner's cameras virtually or if there will be equipment or additional software needed in the RTCC.

Once the initial meeting is completed, and all necessary approvals are obtained, the next step is to complete a legal agreement between your police department/city and the community partner. Please consult your legal advisor for this step.

Once you have a signed legal agreement between both parties now, it is time to complete a full walk-through of the business. On this walk-through it is important that all of your RTCC employees are involved. If they cannot be involved when scheduled, set up another walk-through for those that missed this tour. Allowing every employee to see the camera locations will likely help them recall where they are when there is a major incident at that location.

Ask the community partner if they have maps of their location where the cameras may be on; if not, it is recommended you create an internal map of the property with camera locations. There are also investigative websites that allow you to track camera locations in the event there is a call for service at this property; you can quickly identify the camera you need to go to and access their cameras very quickly.

### CAMERA ACCESS

Once the legal agreement is completed, and the walk-through has been conducted, the final step is obtaining access. Follow your department policies when camera access is given to your RTCC.

Once access is given, be transparent and identify a way to track why you went to their property and what cameras you used. This creates transparency and opportunities to show when and why you accessed their system.

### CONCLUSION

RTCCs represent a key resource in many successful law enforcement agencies and this White Paper suggests that agencies of all sizes and resources can establish and operate an RTCC that matches the agency need with budget and personnel constraints. NRTCCA offers experienced personnel and resources for agencies or law enforcement personnel interested in more information. To learn more please visit the NRTCCA at [www.nrtcca.org](http://www.nrtcca.org).