



Same-day smart security to nab a suspect

HOW A POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERCAME BUDGET BARRIERS TO STOP A SHOOTER

A cherished community asset at risk

Edith Morley Park is tucked behind a business park in the peaceful city of Campbell, California (pop. 42,000). It's an oasis of tree-lined paths and soft grass amid a desert of asphalt; a place where stressed-out software designers from nearby tech companies often find a lunch-hour respite. A park where families picnic on weekends, toss a Frisbee to the dog and let the kids run off restless energy in a safe space.

But when darkness fell, someone was using the park for a more sinister purpose.

"We had six reports of gunfire over the course of six months," said Captain Joe Cefalu of the Campbell Police Department (CPD). "And it was escalating. A park-maintenance worker called it in, and from the casings left behind, we were able to link one of the guns used to an attempted murder — a drive-by shooting in a nearby city."

Industry:
Law Enforcement

Location:
Campbell, California

Application:
Real-time video surveillance,
gunshot detection/location,
and license-plate tracking

Products:
V5 GSL, V5 PSU, V5 LPR

Captain Cefalu knew he had to do something, and fast. “It looked like they were using the park’s dumpsters for target practice. That gun had already been used in one attempted murder, and it was still in circulation; which meant it was only a matter of time until they pointed it at someone again.”

Challenge: A force multiplier, without multiplying manpower

As a 21-year veteran with the CPD, Captain Cefalu knew that placing two officers in the park could put them at risk while awaiting the reckless shooters, night after night. “There’s only one way into, or out of, the park,” Cefalu explained. “We already knew the suspects were armed and dangerous, and catching them in the act would quite probably lead to a violent confrontation. We needed a way to arrest them on our terms.”

He has also seen a lot of changes in technology adoption in the police force, such as recording and reporting software, and he knew his department was not shy about embracing new technology. “We’re a fairly quiet city, but our department was one of the first in the nation to adopt body cameras back in 2008,” Cefalu recalled. “I remember one of our cameras was actually stamped serial-number 50; they were that new.”

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— Captain Joe Cefalu,
Campbell Police Dept.

Solution: When short-term doesn’t mean short-sighted

Seeking an immediate, cost-effective solution, Cefalu decided to reach out to an old acquaintance from his early days in law enforcement who he knew was now putting his expertise to work in nearby Fremont at V5 Systems, a company that specializes in quickly deployable security solutions.

“I conveyed our situation to Loyd Kinsworthy that our department didn’t have the budget to buy and install a security system for the park at that time.”

Kinsworthy was familiar with these kinds of problems, one that many local police forces face when confronted with an urgent, out-of-budget case. But Cefalu and Kinsworthy went way back, and it was time to get creative. “So, he offered to rent us a solution.”

As Kinsworthy explained, V5 Systems offered different payment models to accommodate and provide flexibility to different types of customers, in this case a short-term rental. For a budget-friendly rental fee, Cefalu could easily acquire units for as long as he needed to get the job done. And he could get them immediately.

V5 Systems self-powered technology does not require access to fixed power or communications infrastructure enabling deployments in less than 30 minutes per unit. All V5 Systems units have onboard battery power that’s easily recharged by lightweight, bullet-resistant solar panels, eliminating the need for expensive trenching. Additionally, units can be rapidly moved and readjusted to get a better angle on the shooter.

The short-term rental would:

- Come with the same perks as purchased units including the mobile app-based alerts and V5 Multi-sensor Management System; when the need had been addressed, the units could be shipped back.
- Give the Campbell PD the option to assess whether the units actually enhanced police-work before making a longer-term commitment.
- Appeal to Cefalu because it didn't require purchase authorization from the city council; the Campbell PD could use funds from their existing budget without waiting on a drawn-out procurement process. During the time-to-approval, the shooter could move to another location or jurisdiction and would potentially escalate to violence before any new technology bid had been accepted.

"We didn't have time to wait to buy something," Cefalu explained. "I needed a solution that could be deployed ASAP."

Virtual Eyes and Ears: A Visionary Solution

The solution Kinsworthy and Cefalu settled on included **V5 Acoustic Gunshot Sensors (V5 GSL)** to be mounted on the rooftops of park buildings, as well as the **V5 Portable Security Unit (V5 PSU)**, and **V5 License Plate Readers (V5 LPR)**.

The V5 GSL locates gunfire in real-time at the edge (on the device itself), validates the alerts with up to 97% accuracy using artificial intelligence (after an initial burn-in period) and notifies officers within three seconds – directly on the officer's smartphone or tablet,

The V5 PSU provides high-definition, real-time video that can be easily accessed on any smart device.

The V5 LPR has onboard computing with built-in software that captures the license plate on any still or moving vehicle, comparing or adding it to a pre-defined list and sending real-time alerts to designated officers.

"From the time I signed the contract until the system was up and running, it was no more than seven days," Cefalu recalled. "Loyd stayed in constant contact with us, and actually came out to reposition the units for better coverage on his own, which I just thought was phenomenal."

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Results: A portable, proactive solution

The gunfire did not return to Edith Morley Park during the time the units were deployed. "The V5 Systems units were up for seven weeks, and there wasn't a single shooting the whole time," he said. "If they came back, I was confident we would have found them and made the arrest at a time and place of our choosing. V5 Systems helped extend our proactive policing while minimizing the possibility of violence." Additionally, the Campbell PD was able to provide peace of mind to residents that the situation was being actively handled with high technology aiding stellar police work.

He credits the ease of use of the V5 GSL, V5 PSU, and V5 PSU-LPR for making converts of his department. "I tasked a sergeant with monitoring the system at the park, and he was impressed that he could get alerts at home or anywhere he was. The whole time the system was up, there was only one false alarm, even with constant rain and the noise of a nearby freeway."

Cefalu also cites the flexibility and portability of V5 Systems' solutions as increasing return-on-investment for his department. "What's amazing is that each unit only weighs 25 pounds. When you add up the equipment an officer wears every day — handgun, magazines, two sets of handcuffs, pepper spray, taser, radio, and bullet-proof vest — it's the same weight," he explained.

A major aspect of that flexibility was the rental service that allowed a small police force like his to rapidly expand security coverage without a cumbersome and time-intensive budget process. "It's easier to get funds when it's a short-term rental, as opposed to securing funds for a large purchase. There's an added appeal if an asset can be shared among jurisdictions," he said.

As Captain Cefalu sees it, embracing new technology was the right choice for reestablishing the park as a safe, relaxing refuge for residents. "V5 Systems offers a high-value solution, both because of the ease of installation and the solid customer service, including law-enforcement expertise. For any police department, this should be a simple decision to make."

Shooter still at large

It had been 10 weeks of peace – seven with the units and three without. In that lull, Cefalu often wondered if the shooter had moved on. While the V5 units had worked without a hitch, there was a lingering sense of unfinished business, a quiet menace.

With a community as small and close as Campbell, what was the likelihood that someone with the propensity to use a business park for target practice would just up and disappear? Then again, maybe Campbell had just gotten lucky.

And then Cefalu got the text. Shots fired.

Click, click. The handcuffs slid into place. A house search, a pursuit and a surrender...stay tuned for how the shooting suspects were captured in **Part 2**.

Summary

Organization:

The Campbell Police Department serves a small, peaceful community of 42,000. Though it had a history of embracing new technology, the department has a fixed budget and limited resources for new expenditures.

Challenge:

A city park in Campbell, California was being taken over by criminals at night, who were using trash receptacles for target practice. Shell casings found at the scene linked the gun with an attempted homicide in a nearby city. The Campbell PD needed to apprehend the shooters without placing officers at risk for a violent confrontation.

Solution:

The Campbell Police Department signed a short-term rental agreement with V5 Systems, outfitting the park with V5 Acoustic Gunshot Sensors with Video (V5 GSL), as well as the V5 Portable Security Unit (V5 PSU), and V5 License Plate Readers (V5 PSU-LPR) for seven weeks — all at one-fourth the cost of paying officers to stake out the park.

Results:

During the seven weeks in which the V5 units were deployed in the park, the rate of shooting incidents fell to zero.