

Cases Using Streetlight Footage

The San Diego Police Department uses certain technologies to conduct investigations, enhance response to critical incidents and public threats and safeguard the lives of community members that must comply with the City of San Diego's Surveillance Ordinance.

Prior to the deactivation of the original Smart Streetlight Program in 2020, evidence from Smart Streetlights had been obtained by detectives 322 times, with the evidence being described by them as critical or helpful in criminal investigations in 185 instances.

The following cases detail how the Department has utilized this technology previously to aid in criminal investigations.

More on SDPD technologies can be found online at sandiego.gov/police/technology.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 1

Case #1

On November 12, 2019, at 12600 Carmel Country Road, a suspect exposed himself to community members. Smart Streetlights provided evidence to enhance this investigation and obtain additional details. Additionally, crimes such as these, where area station detectives do not have direct access to Smart Streetlights and require evidence to complete a thorough investigation, can be pursued by a Commanding Officer who can request evidence from Smart Streetlights based on the serious impact a crime or series of crimes has on a community.

Case #2

On April 10, 2020, at 12800 Carmel Canyon Road, investigators used Smart Streetlights to help investigate a fatal vehicle collision where a vehicle left the roadway and struck a tree, killing the driver and injuring his passengers.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 2

Case #1

On January 20, 2019, a female alleged she was sexually assaulted on her way home from a bar on Bacon St. The female lived within walking distance of the bar and alleged the crime occurred somewhere between the two locations. Investigators were able to use Smart Streetlights to determine whether the female was untruthful in her claims and refute her allegations against a suspect.

Case #2

On October 22, 2018, a fatal collision occurred at 3800 Clairemont Dr and Balboa Avenue involving two vehicles. Smart Streetlights showed one of the motorists, who was killed in the collision, had entered the intersection against the red traffic signal.

Case #3

On April 20, 2019, an assault with a deadly weapon occurred at 2500 India Street near West Laurel Street and Smart Streetlights produced evidence the District Attorney called “crucial” in the prosecution of this matter. The defendant received a 6-year prison sentence as a result.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

Case #1

On October 10, 2018, Ghedeer “Tony” Radda was shot and killed during a brazen robbery at his flooring supply business, located at 1015 G Street. Mr. Radda was a well-respected businessman in the downtown community. Surveillance video from within the store showed two suspects entered the business wearing Halloween-style masks. Investigators were able to access video surveillance footage in the days following the murder, as they waited for the Smart Streetlight evidence to be retrieved. The private video surveillance footage was beneficial but did not provide the clues necessary to identify the suspects. Within hours of receiving the Smart Streetlight evidence, investigators were able to identify the suspects, which quickly led to their arrests. The images captured by the Smart Streetlights were critical in solving this case.

Case #2

On November 5, 2018, at 400 13th Street, a female victim was pulled into a dark area while she walked to her car from a nearby business and was sexually assaulted. Smart Streetlights captured details of this violent crime. Detectives were able to use evidence from the cameras to determine if the suspect entered a nearby store, which later led to his identification and arrest. The suspect had a history of committing sexual assaults in California and outside the state but was never successfully held accountable for his crimes. The suspect pled guilty to this violent assault and received a 10-year prison sentence. Without Smart Streetlights, detectives would not have been able to corroborate details from the victim or identify the suspect.

Case #3

On December 28, 2019, Ernest Buchanan was working at the Alpha Project Homeless Shelter, located at 17th Street and Imperial Avenue, when he was shot and killed in an unprovoked attack. The shooting was captured by Smart Streetlights, which quickly led to the identification and arrest of two suspects. This shooting shook the downtown community, having occurred at the entrance of the shelter, which had been opened to serve our most vulnerable community members. Without evidence from Smart Streetlights, this case would likely still be unsolved.

Case #4

On August 11, 2019, at 1200 6th Avenue, two men engaged in an argument. During the incident, one of the subjects shot the other using a .45 caliber handgun. A round also struck an uninvolved bystander in the right leg, where an artery was severed. Smart Streetlight evidence was obtained and used to successfully identify the suspect. The evidence further showed the suspect's girlfriend removing items from the scene. As a result of this technology, both subjects have been arrested. The female has pled guilty to an accessory charge. The shooter has been offered 22 years by the San Diego District Attorney's Office for this attempted homicide.

Case #5

On June 30, 2019, at 6th and B Street, a victim was stabbed, and there was very little information about the suspect other than the individual's first name. Evidence from Smart Streetlights captured the incident in its entirety. Detectives were able to search for the suspect's first name through ARJIS, and eventually found the true identity of the suspect. Without Smart Streetlights, identification of the suspect would have been highly unlikely, considering the limited information known to detectives. The victim ultimately refused to cooperate, but the District Attorney moved forward with the prosecution because video evidence from Smart Streetlights, in this case, was exceptionally strong. The suspect pled guilty to the stabbing prior to trial.

Case #6

On December 13, 2019, at 1600 K Street, Smart Streetlights captured the vicious stabbing of a homeless female as she slept on the sidewalk. The entire incident was so detailed it helped to identify the suspect and recover evidence from the violent assault. The suspect was sentenced to 8 years in prison.

Case #7

On December 21, 2018, a female victim was sexually assaulted in the vicinity of 32nd Street and Main Street. After the assault, the female called an Uber to take her home. Evidence from Smart Streetlights helped establish a more accurate time for the assault and corroborated the victim's actions and clothing worn during the incident.

Case #8

On April 28, 2020, a pedestrian was initially thought to have been struck and killed by a vehicle in a parking lot at 8th and B Street that fled the scene. Smart Streetlights showed the true nature of this incident and that it was an intentional act. The case was turned over to the Homicide Unit and the investigation is ongoing. Detectives are using evidence from Smart Streetlights to identify the involved vehicle and suspect.

Case #9

On July 14, 2019, a vehicle struck two pedestrians in a marked crosswalk at 300 14th Street then struck a building. After the collision, the suspect driver fled the scene on foot. Smart Streetlights captured the entire collision. They also showed the suspect return to the scene and attempt to steal a police vehicle as officers were attending to the injured parties. The assigned detective was able to identify the suspected driver using this technology.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 4

Case #1

On March 16, 2020, Timothy Stewart was stabbed to death as he walked out of a business in the 5000 block of Logan Avenue. The attack was completely unprovoked. Although there were several witnesses to the murder, they were uncooperative with investigators, which complicated efforts to identify the suspect. The evidence from Smart Streetlights captured images of the suspect and the vehicle he arrived in, which led to him being identified and a warrant being issued for his arrest. Smart Streetlights were critical to solving this case, especially when the witnesses were uncooperative.

Case #2

On March 18, 2019, a fatal collision occurred between two vehicles at 4700 Hilltop Drive. Evidence from Smart Streetlights was obtained showing one of the vehicles had run the red light and collided with the other vehicle, causing the victim's death. Additional Smart Streetlight images showed the suspect's reckless driving prior to the deadly collision, which resulted in felony manslaughter charges being brought against the driver.

Case #3

On December 9, 2019, a fatal hit-and-run collision occurred between a vehicle and a female in a wheelchair crossing the roadway at 100 Euclid Avenue. Using Smart Streetlights, detectives tracked the suspect vehicle to a gas station where they obtained further videos from the business and identified the suspect vehicle and suspect.

Case #4

On November 3, 2018, a fatal hit-and-run collision occurred between a vehicle and a pedestrian at 6600 Imperial Avenue. After the collision, the vehicle fled the scene. Evidence from Smart Streetlights showed the vehicle's path of travel after the collision. This led to detectives obtaining further evidence against the suspect, who later turned himself in voluntarily and pled guilty to felony hit and run.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 5

Case #1

On November 3, 2018, a fatal collision occurred at 12000 Rancho Bernardo Road. Smart Streetlights were a critical component to this investigation. Determination of the person at-fault could not have been reached without them. The Smart Streetlights showed that one driver ran a red light and the other driver was not at fault for a collision that killed his passenger (wife). The evidence led to a prosecution case for manslaughter that would not have been provable otherwise.

Case #2

On August 25, 2019, a fatal collision occurred at 13700 Black Mountain Road between a vehicle and a pedestrian. Smart Streetlights allowed investigators to identify the driver of the motor vehicle at the time of collision. The driver was subsequently charged with felony DUI and manslaughter.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 6

Case #1

On April 27, 2020, at 9051 Mira Mesa Boulevard, Smart Streetlights were used to help the Metro Arson Strike Team investigate an arson series. The sensors revealed the suspect lighting a substance on fire, which helped facilitate this investigation.

Case #2

On January 30, 2019, at 10300 Vista Sorrento, Smart Streetlights were used to investigate a dump truck that dropped concrete blocks on private property near the parking garage of a federal building and prevented employees from using it. This suspect had been involved in a previous incident at the same building involving felony vandalism. Investigators were concerned over the suspect's continued erratic behavior posing a significant risk to others. The suspect was identified and pled guilty to felony vandalism for his actions.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 7

Case #1

On May 23, 2019, at 6500 Kelly Street, Smart Streetlights, again, proved critical to a homicide investigation. Evidence from them showed the suspect's arrival, helped investigators corroborate important details, and enabled them to identify the suspect's vehicle.

Case #2

On June 15, 2019, a fatal collision occurred at 2300 Camino Del Rio North involving a vehicle and a pedestrian. Evidence from Smart Streetlights was obtained that showed essential details of the collision. They revealed the vehicle was at fault and caused the pedestrian's death. This case resulted in manslaughter charges being filed.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 8

Case #1

On November 6, 2019, 28-year-old Maribel Ibanez was shot and killed while working at the Church's Chicken at 3726 Del Sol Boulevard. Two other employees were also shot during the incident, which began as a dispute with a customer. The customer retrieved a gun from his vehicle and calmly entered the restaurant, shooting at everyone in sight. Investigators were able to access the Smart Streetlights almost instantly and identified a suspect based on the images. The investigators eventually tracked the suspect all the way to Memphis, Tennessee, where he was finally arrested. This case reverberated through a community that had previously suffered one of the most horrific mass shootings in United States history. The images from the Smart Streetlights were the key to quickly solving this case and keeping this suspect from further acts of violence.

Case #2

On January 19, 2020, a fatal hit and run occurred at 1900 Market Street between a vehicle and a pedestrian. After the collision, the vehicle fled the scene. Detectives were able to use Smart Streetlights to uncover evidence that showed the suspect went to a restaurant where he stopped and ordered food. Detectives were then able to obtain video footage from the restaurant of the suspect and vehicle, which led to his identity and arrest for felony hit and run and manslaughter.

Case #3

On March 5, 2020, a fatal hit-and-run collision occurred at 8100 Otay Mesa Road involving a vehicle and a pedestrian. Detectives were able to obtain images from Smart Streetlights identifying the make and model of the suspect vehicle and the direction of travel. This technology also facilitated efforts to obtain further video evidence from businesses in the area where the vehicle was seen. A "Be-on-the-lookout" flier was developed and provided to community members to assist the Department in locating the suspect and hold them accountable for their criminal actions.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 9

Case #1

On May 2, 2019, at 6300 Alvarado Road, investigators were able to review evidence from Smart Streetlights that proved critical to this homicide investigation. The suspects were shown leaving the crime

and their direction of travel was quickly determined. The additional evidence was recovered with the assistance of Smart Streetlights, which enabled detectives to positively identify the involved suspects. They subsequently pled guilty to murder charges.

In addition to the case described above, two additional murder trials are pending from crimes that occurred in Council District 9, where evidence from Smart Streetlights was recovered. The first is near 4000 Van Dyke Avenue, and the other is at 5200 University Avenue. Investigators revealed that Smart Streetlights provided information that enhanced their investigations into these violent crimes.