



City Connects Live Video to Dispatcher Workflows

City of Newport News Virginia, United States

The deployment of closed-circuit television cameras and video surveillance programs in cities has risen in recent years. For police officers and other first responders, having access to real-time video data offers huge opportunities to increase situational awareness and create safer cities. One city already using real-time video technology to improve public safety is Newport News, Virginia.

With the state's fourth-largest municipal police department, Newport News is home to 180,000 citizens, a major naval shipyard, a joint U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force base, and the College of William & Mary. Newport News is a city with public safety needs and scenarios as diverse as the communities that inhabit it.

After experiencing a significant rise in crime in its southern precinct, Newport News officials deployed video surveillance cameras across the city. While crime rates dropped, operators at the city's public safety answering point (PSAP) found monitoring numerous video feeds cumbersome and inefficient. They also found it difficult to efficiently dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical services based on events monitored via live video feeds.

"We knew the cameras were making a difference," said Alphonso Dale, project manager for the city's E911 and 311 services. "But to make a bigger impact on public

safety and crime, we needed to put our operators' eyes into those high-crime areas, so they could really see what was going on and immediately dispatch the right first responders."

To better serve its community, leaders at Newport News' PSAP identified the need to consolidate live video feeds into a common operating picture for more effective surveillance and situational awareness.

Integrating Video with CAD

Newport News selected Hexagon's Safety & Infrastructure division to help the city achieve more efficient and effective video monitoring and incident management through an integrated solution – one that connects and correlates video surveillance with dispatch capabilities for better awareness, faster response times, and more informed decision-making.

Powered by Hexagon's powerful video surveillance software, Newport News' citywide video network seamlessly integrates with the PSAP's industry-leading computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. Access to live video feeds gives dispatchers real-time insight into events unfolding on the ground, helping them better prepare first responders for emergencies and major events. With the application, dispatchers receive instant

notifications when video is available for an event created in the CAD system. The closest video feed automatically appears, allowing the dispatcher to display multiple feeds simultaneously within the area of the event.

By selecting a camera icon on the CAD map, dispatchers can access, view, and respond to video feeds in real time. Hovering over an icon shows a snapshot of the video feed, making it easier for operators to determine which camera is being viewed. Dispatchers can also record and archive video feeds while pushing information to first responders on the ground – all within the CAD environment.

“Hexagon’s solution has become an essential asset for Newport News’ PSAP,” said Dale. “Our operators are excited because the software brings video right to their CAD workstations; it makes their job easier. For the citizens of Newport News, the application allows us to dispatch service calls quicker, getting the right response to the citizen’s location faster.”



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Alphonso Dale

Project Manager, Newport News E911 & 311 Services

Improving Dispatcher Workflows

Aside from the benefits to situational awareness and investigations, the integrated solution also improved the working environment for dispatchers. Before deploying the solution from Hexagon, dispatchers had to leave their workstations to view video feeds, diverting their attention away from their primary duties and adding an extra burden.

“Our old video monitoring system was centralized, and it was just too cumbersome for the operators,” said Dale. “We didn’t want them to have too many screens to manage; we wanted to bring video feeds into their workstations.”

Hexagon’s video surveillance application consolidates video feeds, enabling dispatchers to simultaneously monitor

multiple feeds on one screen from their CAD workstation. They can monitor areas for activity, gather visual intelligence, and even create CAD events based on incidents spotted on videos – all from a single workstation.

With an integrated display feature, the software combines geospatial maps, tabular data, and other related incident information for users to view. For Newport News, having video feeds in high-crime areas provides a cost-effective way to increase visibility and monitoring without adding more physical patrols. Implementing the solution helps the city maximize this capability, while also minimizing negative impacts on dispatchers.

“We felt that when seconds mattered, having our operators leave their workstations to monitor video screens would reduce their effectiveness to quickly dispatch the right responders, putting our citizens at greater risk with slower response times,” said Dale.

Supporting Multi-Agency Collaboration

Video surveillance technology integrated into the dispatch environment provides Newport News with actionable information beyond traditional law enforcement applications. Since Hexagon’s software merges feeds from disparate systems and allows operators to interface with an integrated solution, it enables seamless monitoring and response for other public service providers as well.

As Newport News continues to grow its video surveillance network, the city is partnering with other agencies and organizations, including schools, public works, the shipyard, and utility and telecommunications providers.

“Expanding these capabilities into other agencies will put civic agencies and leaders one step closer to working together,” said Dale. “I truly believe multi-agency collaboration is critical to how we deliver services to the people of Newport News. It’s imperative to the stability, safety, and longevity of our city.”

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Hexagon’s Safety & Infrastructure division provides software for smart and safe cities, improving the performance, efficiency and resilience of vital services.

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