



SIX ISSUES WITH SHOTSPOTTER¹

August 2022

Marita Ky, Policy & Research Analyst

ShotSpotter is a for-profit law enforcement technology designed to detect gunshot sounds and notify police of the event and location. Here are six issues with this technology:

1. ShotSpotter lies about their impact & accuracy.
2. ShotSpotter wastes public resources.
3. ShotSpotter exacerbates existing racial disparities.
4. ShotSpotter puts our neighbors at risk of additional police violence and surveillance.
5. Detroiters deserve to feel safe. The answer is not ShotSpotter.
6. Cities across the country have cut or rejected their ShotSpotter contract.

1. SHOTSPOTTER LIES ABOUT THEIR IMPACT & ACCURACY.

- There is no evidence that ShotSpotter improves safety, reduces crime, or promotes positive relationships between communities and police.
- ShotSpotter claims a 97% accuracy rate while ignoring instances where their technology mistakes other loud noises like firecrackers, cars backfiring, construction noises, and helicopters, as gunfire.
- 88-89% of police responses to ShotSpotter alerts in Chicago found no evidence of gun-related incidents.²

2. SHOTSPOTTER WASTES PUBLIC RESOURCES.

- Based on data from Chicago, ShotSpotter led to thousands of police deployments hunting for gunfire in vain due to its ineffectiveness.³ Consequently, a ShotSpotter contract could also call for higher policing costs and expanding police budgets.
- In 2016-2017, police responded to 2,614 service calls from 911 for “shots fired” with an average total incident time of 65min.⁴ At \$33/hr maximum hourly pay⁵, DPD officers potentially wasted over \$180,000 per year (assuming two officers responding to each “priority 1” call) responding to ShotSpotter alerts that resulted in <1% arrest rate during the 15 month pilot.⁶
- ShotSpotter costs up to \$95,000 per square mile per year with a 3 square mile minimum.⁷ The current proposal includes using American Rescue Plan Act funds, intended for COVID and economic relief, to cover the cost of expanding the Shotspotter contract.

3. SHOTSPOTTER EXACERBATES EXISTING RACIAL DISPARITIES.

- Policing technologies reproduce systemic racial & economic biases.
- Cities are predominantly deploying ShotSpotter in Black and Latine neighborhoods which leads to more contact with police in communities that are already over-policed and disproportionately affected by the US criminal legal system.

4. SHOTSPOTTER PUTS OUR NEIGHBORS AT RISK OF ADDITIONAL POLICE VIOLENCE AND SURVEILLANCE.

- ShotSpotter erodes presumption of innocence & puts all community members who happen to be in the vicinity of a ShotSpotter alert at risk of police violence.
- ShotSpotter sends police racing on high alert into communities expecting to be faced with gunfire, even though nearly 9 out of 10 times police don't turn up evidence of gun violence OR ANY crime at all.⁸
- The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General's analysis found that ShotSpotter alerts led police to significantly increase unlawful stop-and-frisk operations, furthering the over-policing of Chicago's communities.⁹



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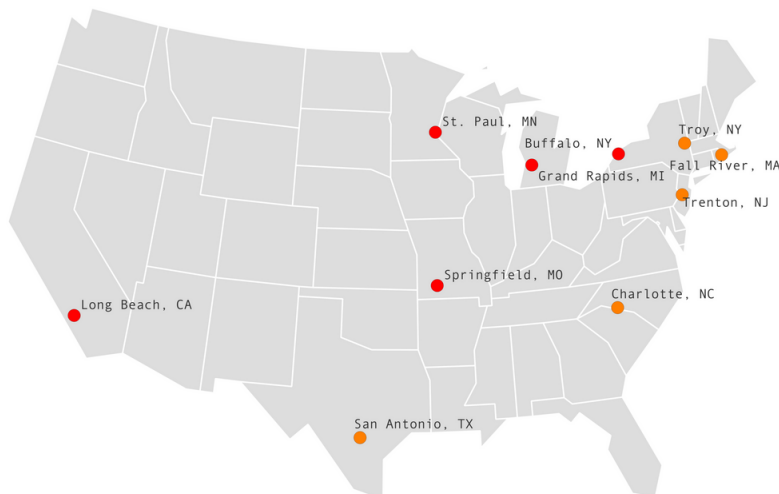
5. DETROITERS DESERVE TO FEEL SAFE. THE ANSWER IS NOT SHOTSPOTTER.

- In a recent poll, Detroiters were asked “which would you prefer Detroit spend \$7,000,000 on: ShotSpotter or housing relief?” and 74% of respondents said they preferred spending on housing relief.¹⁰
- We know what keeps us safe: living in communities where people of every color and background have fair wages, great schools, and affordable healthcare, where we address problems with proven solutions like social support instead of ever more militarized police.

6. CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE CANCELED OR REJECTED THEIR SHOTSPOTTER CONTRACT.

- San Antonio, TX; Troy, NY; Charlotte, NC; Fall River, MA; Trenton, NJ have already canceled their ShotSpotter contract.¹¹
- Grand Rapids, MI; Buffalo, NY; St. Paul, MN; Long Beach, CA; & Springfield MO outright rejected a ShotSpotter contract.¹²
 - "Crime prevention is about investment in things like our economic development, is about investment in people who are closest to the pain of shootings, is investment in neighborhoods that are strong and secure where we don't watch each other, but we see each other and we support each other as neighbors." – Grand Rapids Second Ward Commissioner Milinda Ysasi.

CITIES THAT HAVE CANCELED OR REJECTED THEIR SHOTSPOTTER CONTRACT.



CANCELED CONTRACTS | REJECTED CONTRACTS

SOURCES

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