



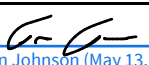
# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Floyd Mitchell  
Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** OPD ShotSpotter Informational Report **DATE:** April 22, 2025

City Administrator  
Approval

  
Jestin Johnson (May 13, 2025 16:07 PDT)

Date May 13, 2025

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From The Oakland Police Department (OPD) On SoundThinking's ShotSpotter Technology.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the October 15, 2024, City Council meeting, the body approved two resolutions regarding the City's Gunshot Location Detection System (commonly referred to as "ShotSpotter"). One resolution approved the renewal of the ShotSpotter contract. The second resolution approved the Annual Report for ShotSpotter and authorized the City to continue to use the technology. As part of its motion approving these two resolutions, [90476 C.M.S.](#) and [90477 C.M.S.](#) the City Council requested that an Informational Report of ShotSpotter's Annual Report be presented at the October 29, 2024, Joint SSOC and Council meeting. Council also requested regular reporting of ShotSpotter and the efficacy of the technology to the Public Safety Committee.

Please see **Attachment A** for OPD's presentation regarding ShotSpotter and OPD ShotSpotter statistics within the last five years.

## **BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

In 2024, the City Council requested a quarterly report from OPD of ShotSpotter and its efficacy.

The ShotSpotter System is composed of outdoor acoustic sensors placed strategically to detect gunshots. The sensors can identify and time-stamp impulsive acoustical noises in the acoustic range of gunshot types; the system triangulates the location of the sound source to within 25 meters and runs features of the sound through machine classification. Review Center (IRC) is staffed by trained experts who confirm the machine classification and publish an alert, typically within 30-45 seconds of the trigger pull (see **Figure 1** below).

Gun-related crimes that occur in Oakland often go unreported, and many times, gunshot reports to OPD dispatch are not accurate. ShotSpotter gunshot detection data shows that less than 1 percent of gunshot alerts are matched by 9-1-1 calls for service received within a reasonable distance and timeframe of gunfire incidents (within 300 feet and 3 minutes of the incident).

Public Safety Committee  
May 27, 2025

**Figure 1 – How the ShotSpotter System Works**



ShotSpotter provides near-instant notifications to officers of gunshot crimes in progress with real-time data delivered to the OPD Communications Section and patrol vehicles. Officers can use their vehicle computers for real-time access to maps of shooting locations and gunshot audio. Between ShotSpotter data and communications with OPD dispatch, patrol personnel also receive actionable intelligence detailing the number of shooters and the number of shots fired; this type of information is incredibly important for officer safety. The system pinpoints precise locations for first responders.

Near-real-time notifications translate into quicker access to gunshot victims – potentially providing a response that means the difference between life and death. In 2024, ShotSpotter alerted OPD to 6,280 unique gunshot incidents – 6,093 (97%) were not called in by the community, and OPD would not have known about them, nor have been able to respond in a timely fashion. There were 125 shooting victims related to ShotSpotter alert notifications, 23 of which were homicides, and 102 were assaults with a firearm. It is highly likely that some of the 125 injured shooting victims may have lost their lives or suffered greater injury without a ShotSpotter notification that leads to a subsequent emergency response. The fact that a rapid and focused response may lead to an injured victim, thus allowing first responders to provide immediate medical aid, ShotSpotter's utilization as a life-saving tool cannot be ignored.

The notifications also allow responding personnel to locate critical gun crime evidence (e.g., guns and bullet casings). ShotSpotter activations in 2024 led to 1,267 crime incident reports; 795 (64%) of these incidents resulted in OPD Crime Lab requests for further firearm forensic analysis. Historically, officers would have to spend a significant amount of time driving the areas and block by block looking for evidence without knowing exactly where to respond. This additional time provides criminals ample time to leave the shooting scene and potentially discard and/or destroy evidence. Additionally, officers need to canvas areas and potentially leave communities feeling uncomfortable with a less focused presence and a much larger police footprint. ShotSpotter activations also lead to the location of expended casings at shooting scenes. Expended casings are then analyzed to determine links between shooting events, providing investigators with intelligence and evidence that often leads to the identification of a shooting series, trigger puller(s), and/or gang/group involvement.

### **ShotSpotter Forensic Reports**

ShotSpotter's forensic reports have provided evidence to support criminal cases as well as evidence in liability cases for the City, such as officer involved shootings. In 2024, ShotSpotter provided seven detailed and enhanced forensic reports for OPD that provided law enforcement and criminal justice professionals with detailed audio and incident analysis. These reports contain scientific, court-admissible evidence and are used in court cases and prosecutions.

### **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

This informational report is presented to the City Council and the Oakland community to provide an update on ShotSpotter's efficacy. This report supports the Citywide priority of holistic community safety and responsive, trustworthy government. Continued utilization of the ShotSpotter System will increase the likelihood of apprehending suspects involved in a violent crime. All Oakland residents and visitors benefit from efforts to decrease crimes using guns. Oaklanders in less advantaged communities often face higher rates of gun violence and thus stand to benefit greatly from these gun violence deterrence efforts.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

An important part of SoundThinking's Customer Success team is their Community Engagement group. Their team engages with Community Groups to help them understand the ShotSpotter technology and its value in saving lives. In addition, they have significant data on the hot spots for gun violence, including the time of day, days of the week, and proximity to schools, etc. This information can be used by community organizations to help them shape their violence prevention strategies. They make concerted efforts to reach impacted communities for discussion. In Oakland, to date, they have met with members of Faith in Action, Youth Alive, the NAACP, and others to educate them on the value of this tool for OPD and public safety.

OPD has presented ShotSpotter annual report to Privacy Advisory Commission annually and the most recent presentation was on April 4, 2024. Since these meetings are also open to the public, interested parties can weigh in by public comment.

### **COORDINATION**

There was no outside agency coordination in the production of this report.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This item is for informational purposes only and does not have a direct fiscal impact or cost.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** Timely response to crime scenes and improved crime analysis capability will result in resource optimization. OPD can focus efforts on crime trends and patterns while enhancing police service delivery. This will provide a safer environment for Oakland residents, visitors, and economic activity.

***Environmental:*** There are no environmental opportunities associated with this report.

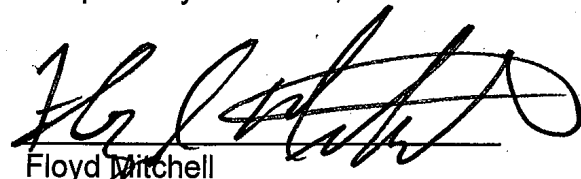
***Race and Equity:*** This report provides valuable information to all residents and visitors to the city of Oakland regarding ShotSpotter technology.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report  
From The Oakland Police Department (OPD) On SoundThinking's ShotSpotter Technology.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Eric Kim, Acting Captain, at  
[ekim@oaklandca.gov](mailto:ekim@oaklandca.gov).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Mitchell', written over a horizontal line.

Floyd Mitchell  
Chief of Police  
Oakland Police Department

Reviewed by:  
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OPD, Research and Planning, BORM

**Attachment (1):**  
A: OPD ShotSpotter Statistics