

City of Portland
Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing (PCCEP)
Advance Public Comment for 03-01-23 Town Hall

Advance public comment begins after this line.

I feel that although "shot spotter" type devices can be of value, I have never heard of any city that does not use them in a racist or classist way. If you can put them equally across the city I think it would be less of a problem... Also, instead of just letting the PPA off on the BWCs maybe look at other alternatives for the city and the PPA to interact since they seem to be just letting the PPA do what they want. - Patrick

I am disturbed by the deceitful and wasteful efforts that PPB and ShotSpotter have put forth in pursuit of a worthless public safety "intervention". Not only is there no evidence to show that ShotSpotter deters or solves serious crimes, but also there is significant evidence to show that ShotSpotter falsely records gunshot noise when there was none. In a city with record low police officers and record high violent crime - this makes absolutely no sense. Let's put scarce taxpayer dollars toward proven crime reduction programs. Shame on PPB for pushing this garbage forward. – Maggie Hodder

In regards to the Gunshot Detection Pilot under consideration, I strongly suggest you do not move forward with this technology. It has been shown to be inaccurate in other cities where it has been deployed. This leads to unnecessary encounters between police and civilians and a waste of police resources. This type of technology does nothing to reduce gun crime. And the city of Chicago Police is in a lawsuit because police are using this technology in their defense. This is the worst thing that we could spend our money on. Please do not approve use of a questionable inaccurate technology that will do nothing to reduce gun crime and violence. – Jennifer Loomis

I am writing to ask you to oppose the implementation of gunshot detection microphones in Portland. I understand that gun violence is a major problem here in the city, but the solution is not to install listening devices throughout our neighborhoods in a "band-aid" solution. This technology could easily be used outside of its intended purpose in the future, subjecting our communities to unprecedented levels of surveillance. In addition, the accuracy of this technology has not been shown to be particularly high, and false-positives can lead to deadly, civil-rights-violating outcomes. Please oppose this "big tech" solution that we are being sold on as effective. Thank you. – Sean Patrick

Gunshot Detection System(s). I fail to see why spending money on technology (that hasn't, to my knowledge, been shown to work) to carry out an activity (hearing gunshots and calling the police) that is already being done by people makes sense. Both fireworks and gunshots are a relatively common phenomena in my neighborhood. Every single time they happen, Nextdoor blows up with people asking:

Did you hear that? Was it gunshots or fireworks? And multiple people correctly identifying the cause of the noise and a few people identifying the source of the noise and stating they have called 911 and, often, that they were told by 911 that a lot of people were calling it in. Do the police show up? Rarely, as far as I can tell. But, also, it doesn't seem to matter if they show up or not. So it would make more sense to me to spend the money on something that helps people, like Street Response, or solar powered LED lighting for parks, or more neighborhood pools. – Claire Rivers

NO spying with ShotSpotter or any other technology in Portland! We do NOT want microphones violating our privacy. We already have a means to detect gunshots, it's called 911. Fund that better so people don't have to wait on hold at all, ever. The current wait times are unacceptable. Do NOT install these spying devices on our city streets. – Bob Snogbier

I would like to voice my opinion concerning the proposed installation and use of surveillance technology such as ShotSpotter or any other similar tech here in Portland. Personally, I find the prospect of using this surveillance technology to be a bad idea. The following is a list of concerns that I have with this type of device being placed throughout Portland, the place that I call home and because of these concerns and potential issues I would like to submit my opinion on this matter.

- Social implications. This technology is already related to other technology that exists which is failing certain communities within society. When this tech is fueled by data that is our past AND present then what we get is the perpetuation of the same racist bias decisions and protocols that are baked into American systems and society. This is a recipe for disaster. Even though the claim is that they only listen to gunshot sounds I do not like AT ALL the idea that law enforcement will have a surveillance asset placed all over Portland in the form of MICROPHONES. I do not like the idea of that at all, no matter how much proof they may provide that it won't be listening to our conversations I do not want to see a society realized in which we become complacent towards being monitored. (Writing that last sentence I feel so gross. It completely contradicts the determination and perseverance I've expressed in my life the past 2 years with any of the efforts that I've made at trying to expose these invisible perpetrators that interfere with my conscious experience (thoughts, presence, emotions, feelings, freewill) for 2 years and counting (I'm unwittingly augmented human and still waiting for neurorights) but that's a different topic entirely, besides.. Real deal solid microphones that you can see? That's something that everyone will experience and since they'll have physical substance you'll at least have the option to choose whether you accept them or not! Not having neurorights this day and age is actually a MAJOR issue but that's a different topic) Microphones that record only gunshots now... But it could become a precedent, we shouldn't ever feel comfortable with corrupt entities being able to place microphones all over the communities we live in.

- It is my opinion that when police become involved in situations with the public the risk of a negative outcome is increased. I am of the mindset that there is an urgent need to reassess the role that police officers play in society. The image that comes to my mind when I consider police as they are today is very similar to the demeanor and mindset of a soldier. It is much more common to be met with a hostile demeanor rather than a compassionate one. This one aspect alone, of which seems to be the dominant standard for America's police officers, (based off my personal experiences with police throughout my

life), says SO much about how we've got something very wrong with how we go about the vetting and training of those within the profession. So in my mind, having a technology that exists in our neighborhoods that listens all day and night for when a potential gunshot fires off only to immediately have the police notified, of which chances are pretty good the scene will soon be occupied by an officer who is in "action" mode considering they are there in response to a report involving a gun being fired. This means that the amount of instances in which a police officers daily routine sees them on the scene of a "supposed" active shooter situation will increase dramatically. The very nature of the call invites a battle like atmosphere, high alert and as always the officer carries their tool of trade, a handgun; a tool whose entire purpose is to create bodily harm and end life, and out of every single one of these Shotspotter reports of which gives birth to this high tense and potentially deadly scenarios how many are going to provide a result of success in which the tech gives us exactly what we were hoping to gain from its adoption? How many times will in hindsight we look at the result and see a high stress police response scenario that produced no gain that can be attributed to these microphones hiding all over the place? How many times will the call that put officers on a scene that they would never ever have been called too otherwise, (either because no one was harmed by the alleged gunshot and those that live within the community either didn't hear the shot in the first place or they heard it but decided to make a conscious choice to NOT invite the battle ready officer into their community because they deduced that bringing into existence the situation where a police officer, fueled by the prospect for action, set loose into their neighborhood may invite a scenario with a greater risk of danger. It's very clear to me more police and more police gadgets and weapons and surveillance tools is NOT what we need. It's actually the complete opposite of what we need.

- From what I read, and what I heard about 2 other cities that installed and then abandoned Shotspotter because of the poor mix results that they achieved from their investment. Why would we be investing in a technology that has so many different potentially negative impacts on society AND it does not even have a track record of efficacy?? Infact this is yet another reminder of how the institution of the police is corrupt. There is even evidence that this poorly thought out technology, (social and civil rights implications), gained traction because of the technologies owner having a relationship with police employees. Technology that has a DIRECT impact on society should never be given any power or sway in it's chances at succeeding simply because of a commraderie with the one who profits off it and the sole customer base of the product! You've got to be kidding me. The police did the same thing when it was Taser guns. They had police being granted approval to become official Taser trainers that were paid a ridiculous wage to essentially become Taser salespersons. Meanwhile the weapon wasn't even safe... This sounds a whole lot like the same conversation. This cannot be allowed.

– Robert