

CCPSA Special Meeting ShotSpotter
Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 6:30pm
St. Sabina (1210 W. 78th Pl., Chicago, IL)

Written public comments can be submitted in person during the meeting or sent to
CommunityCommissionPublicComment@cityofchicago.org.

How to craft public comment for CCPSA meeting

What do I talk about in my comment?

1. Your experiences!
 - a. What is your experience with policing and surveillance and how would canceling the ShotSpotter contract and investing in meaningful violence prevention and intervention impact your life/community? Where would you like to see money invested instead?
2. Our demands:
 - a. Cancel the ShotSpotter contract
 - b. Invest in life affirming solutions to public safety (fully funded public schools, public mental health centers, affordable housing for all, non-police violence interrupters, community restorative justice practitioners, etc.)

Additional talking points you can add:

- The technology doesn't work and we have the data to prove it! Research from Chicago's own Office of Inspector General shows that ShotSpotter does not accurately detect gunfire and is ineffective in preventing gun violence in our neighborhoods.
- The technology increases dangerous interactions between community members and police officers! Research from Chicago's own OIG highlighted that over 2,400 stop-and-frisks linked to ShotSpotter over a period of 18 months, which is likely to be a significant undercount due to poor record-keeping within CPD.
- Mayor Brandon Johnson committed to canceling the contract and since his election has been quiet on the issue. During his campaign, he spoke about the harm that ShotSpotter causes Chicagoans, specifically Black and brown Chicagoans.
- Shotspotter is costing the city millions that they can and should instead use to provide meaningful resources to our communities. Since 2018, the City of Chicago has spent over \$48 million on ShotSpotter with no evidence that it has reduced gun violence in the city.
 - Where would you like to have seen \$48 million invested in your community?
Share that in your public/written comment!
- ShotSpotter is a publicly-traded company. It risks the lives of Black and Brown people to make investors rich and profits off the violence in our city.

Sample Testimony

Hello, my name is [insert your name here] and I'm a [community member, directly impacted person, other role you want to uplift] . I am writing in support of canceling the shotspotter contract. It is imperative that we divest from surveillance and policing and invest in life affirming supports including fully funded schools and public mental health centers. We know this technology does not work and increases dangerous interactions between Chicagoans and police officers. As the body for police accountability, this Commission must use its power and influence to push for actual accountability in all areas of policing, from arbitration to the use of surveillance. It is CCPSA's responsibility to push the Mayor to make the right decision on this matter and urge the City to end its use of ShotSpotter and its relationship with the company behind it immediately.

Additional Context

Since 2018, the City of Chicago has spent over \$48 million on ShotSpotter with no evidence that it has reduced gun violence in the city. Community members have been calling on the City to cancel its contract with ShotSpotter since summer of 2021, based on the actual facts and data on how this technology works and impacts Chicagoans. Research from Chicago's own OIG shows that ShotSpotter works inaccurately: evidence of a gun-related criminal offense was found in just 9.1% of ShotSpotter-initiated deployments and over 2,400 stop-and-frisks linked to ShotSpotter over a period of 18 months, which is likely to be a significant undercount due to poor record-keeping within CPD.

We also know ShotSpotter increases dangerous interactions between CPD officers and Black and brown residents because officers are expecting gun violence when responding to these alerts: Adam Toledo was murdered by an officer who was responding to a ShotSpotter alert in 2021, and Michael Williams was wrongfully incarcerated for 11 months in Cook County Jail until prosecutors were forced to abandon the unreliable ShotSpotter evidence against him. These are just two extreme cases that we know of. Each ShotSpotter alert creates the possibility for a harmful, dangerous interaction that is escalated by responding CPD officers because they are treating everyone in the vicinity as an armed threat. This does not create safety!

Over the past two-plus years of the campaign, we have only learned more and more ways in which ShotSpotter is a waste of resources and an impediment to actual safety. Most recently, we've learned that the implementation of ShotSpotter results in CPD officers being dispatched one-minute slower (a 23% increase) and arriving on-scene nearly two-minutes later (a 13% increase) in response to urgent 911 calls. Delayed response times lead to a decreased success rate in arresting perpetrators of about 9%, especially for domestic battery cases where the rate decreases by 14%. That's right – in addition to not being able to accurately identify gunfire, ShotSpotter actively delays police response times to 911 emergencies.

During his campaign, Mayor Johnson committed to canceling the ShotSpotter contract. He knows about and himself has spoken about the harm that ShotSpotter causes Chicagoans, specifically primarily Black and brown Chicagoans. The contract is set to expire on February 16th but we still haven't heard from Mayor Johnson about whether he will keep his promise to cancel the contract. At this point, we need every person who cares about Black and brown people and about finding solutions to gun violence – especially those that tackle the root causes – to speak up. As the body for police accountability, it is CCPSA's responsibility to speak on issues like that. This Commission holds a weight and power that, unfortunately, the voices of thousands of Chicagoans do not and we expect y'all to use it to push for actual accountability. CPD cannot and should not be allowed to continue using whatever dangerous, racist, and harmful methods of policing and surveillance they want just because they ~say~ it works.

The millions wasted on ShotSpotter would be better spent on programs that have demonstrated evidence of addressing the root causes of gun violence. ShotSpotter cannot and never will be able to prevent gun violence. Black and brown residents deserve investments in life-affirming institutions and programs. ShotSpotter is not that, and CCPSA should not only recognize that but also use its power and influence to push the Mayor to make the right decision on this matter. The City needs to end its use of ShotSpotter and its relationship with the company behind it immediately.