



ACTION ALERT:

**Let Seattle City Council know you oppose putting ShotSpotter in
the 2024 Budget!**

Public Comment Opportunity November 13 at 5:00 pm

BONUS: Rally outside City Hall at 4:00pm on 11/13!

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE:

1. **Speak during the public comment** period at the Budget Committee Meeting on **November 13th at 5:00 pm** ([sign up 2 hrs prior](#)). You can also submit public comment in person! Click [here](#) for more information ❖ Watch/listen live at [SeattleChannel.org](https://seattlechannel.org) (suggested talking points below)

AND/OR

2. **Call and/or email committee members before November 13th** (contact information at bottom)

AND/OR

3. Word of mouth is the best form of advocacy - **pass this Action Alert on to at least 3 friends**

**PRO TIP: Save the date for additional opportunities to make public comment:
November 21 at 2:00 pm**

Background: For the 2nd straight year, the Seattle Police Department is asking for new budget authority to do a pilot of Shotspotter. Community has already rejected Shotspotter three times: first in [2012](#), then in [2016](#), and most recently last year. **Now, in addition to this acoustic surveillance technology, Mayor Harrell wants to fund SPD video surveillance as well (CCTV cameras in public spaces).**

What is ShotSpotter?

ShotSpotter is a network of microphones installed in public spaces with software that purportedly alerts police to gun violence after it happens by identifying a sound as a gunshot and indicating its location.

After an overwhelming community response rejecting this dangerous and racist technology in 2022, ShotSpotter was removed from the city budget.

Why is ShotSpotter, a product marketed by Sound Thinking, being considered in 2023?

Sound Thinking's motive is profit. [This nefarious \\$232 million company](#) gets 90% of its revenue from law enforcement and has been involved in **a nationwide lobbying campaign for 10 years including [courting our own public officials in Seattle](#)**. Sound Thinking's tactic of [pairing one racist and dangerous surveillance technology with another](#) is nothing new.

Tell City Council to REJECT the Mayor's proposal to implement ShotSpotter and CCTV!

SAMPLE E-MAILS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Get some inspiration here, but remember, writing your own message is always the most effective. If you have a personal story to add in relation to a talking point, even better!

Pro Tip: Keep in mind you will only have 2 minutes for public comment - so pick a few points that resonate with you AND feel free to send a full length email to council with all of your thoughts.

To: council@seattle.gov, dan.strauss@seattle.gov, tammy.morales@seattle.gov, andrew.lewis@seattle.gov, debora.juarez@seattle.gov, alex.pedersen@seattle.gov, kshama.sawant@seattle.gov, lisa.herbold@seattle.gov, teresa.mosqueda@seattle.gov, sara.nelson@seattle.gov,

Dear Councilmembers,

My name is <_>, I am a constituent/resident of Seattle council district <_>, and I support the Solidarity Budget demand to not give the Seattle Police Department money for ShotSpotter and other surveillance technologies. Surveillance creates danger, not safety.

Share your story

We encourage you to answer one or more of these questions when you contact city council:

1. What concerns do you have about Shotspotter and CCTV being deployed in Seattle?
 2. What investments would you like to see instead that would create true and equitable community safety in Seattle? What Solidarity Budget guarantees do you think might assist in this work?
 3. What would make a material difference in your own feelings of safety? (More sidewalks? Knowing all your neighbors were housed and had access to mental health care? More childcare options?)
- ShotSpotter was never designed to prevent gun violence. **There is no evidence that the addition of CCTV changes Shotspotter's 90% false positive rate** (as Mayor Harrell and Deputy Mayor Tim Burgess are claiming) and CCTV has been [researched extensively](#) in the UK (where it is widely used) and has not been found to have a deterrent effect on crime. [The use of auditory gun detection technology + CCTV has been studied specifically - and not been found to increase accuracy](#), but consistent with many other studies of ShotSpotter it showed a drain on police resources - due to the number of false alarms. Many cities have already implemented the combination of Shotspotter and CCTV, including Chicago, New York City, Milwaukee, and Miami, and yet we are still seeing problems of low accuracy and effectiveness, along with over-policing in Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.
 - The company's false claims that it prevents gun violence are not supported by any research or peer reviewed data. ShotSpotter is not new technology. It has been implemented in many cities across the country. As a result, we have significant research. A large meta-analysis examined ShotSpotter in 68 cities from 1999 to 2016 and found that ShotSpotter "[has no significant impact on firearm-related homicides or arrest outcomes](#)". This study is consistent with a [report by the Chicago Office of Inspector General](#) and a [Hartford Study](#) that looked at whether the technology could get victims of gun violence to safety faster and found no benefit, and a [Journal of Experimental Criminology study](#) found that while Shotspotter did not reduce violent crime it greatly increased demands on police resources.
 - ShotSpotter has been implemented primarily in Black and Latinx communities across the country. When technology with a high false positive rate is

implemented it leads to false arrests and creates many unnecessary contacts between police and innocent civilians. Electronic Privacy Information Center is asking the Department of Justice to [review](#) if Shotspotter is being [selectively deployed to justify the over-policing of mainly Black neighborhoods](#). This is a threat to public safety as Black, Indigenous, and people of color are already [subject to disproportionate rates of violence by SPD](#).

- Chicago found that not only did [ShotSpotter increase the number of pat downs, searches, and enforcement actions](#) when officers were responding to ShotSpotter, but some officers used the presence of ShotSpotter in a neighborhood even without an alert from ShotSpotter as reason in and of itself as to conduct “protective pat downs.” ShotSpotter increases biased policing. This is why the [MacArthur Justice Center](#) has filed a class action lawsuit against ShotSpotter.
- [ShotSpotter has manually overridden results to classify sounds as gunfire at the request of law enforcement on multiple occasions](#)
- ShotSpotter is not only costly and ineffective, it is harmful. Many cities that have tried ShotSpotter are now revoking their contracts including [Buffalo](#), [Charlotte](#), [San Antonio](#), [Fall River, MA](#), [Dayton, OH](#), and [San Diego](#) has called for a pause. One of the main reasons is [Shotspotter’s extremely high false alert rate being a massive drain on police departments](#).
- In Chicago, [Danny Ortiz](#) was arbitrarily arrested and jailed by police who were responding to a ShotSpotter alert and 13 year old [Adam Toledo](#) was chased, shot, and killed by a Chicago police officer in response to a ShotSpotter alert. [Michael Williams](#) spent about 11 months in Cook County Jail - contracting COVID twice - after CPD asked ShotSpotter to change the location of an alert in order to charge him with murder. In Rochester the police colluded with ShotSpotter to change evidence to frame [Silvon Simmons](#) for attempting to kill a police officer, after Mr. Simmons was chased and shot three times by a Rochester police officer.
- Not even Shotspotter believes its marketing claims of preventing or helping to solve crime. Shotspotter’s [services agreement](#) states: “ShotSpotter does not warrant or represent, expressly or implicitly, that the Software or Subscription Services or its use will: result in the prevention of crime, apprehension or conviction of any perpetrator of any crime, or detection of any criminal; prevent any loss, death, injury, or damage to property due to the discharge of a firearm or other weapon; in all cases result in a Reviewed Alert for all firearm discharges within the designated coverage area; or that the ShotSpotter-supplied network will remain in operation at all times or under all conditions.”

- By law, this technology would not be able to be purchased or implemented until it goes through a surveillance impact report (SIR), which includes a Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) review. Deputy Mayor Tim Burgess has expressed that the city intends to apply for an omnibus SIR, which would mean the cameras and Shotspotter technology could then be moved at will throughout the city without having to do another surveillance impact report, another Race and Social Justice review, or any oversight from the City Council. This is in spite of the obvious fact that racial impacts from this technology are bound to differ from neighborhood to neighborhood, especially given Seattle's [history of redlining](#).

Is there a better solution? Yes! We need to invest in community and prevent harm from happening in the first place by addressing root causes. Here is a short list of programs we could fund instead of Shotspotter and CCTV.

- Eliminate cuts in the proposed budget to [ADA compliance](#) and make the entire city accessible to everyone
- 24/7 [public bathrooms](#)
- Eliminate cuts to [Vision Zero](#). [Twenty-two](#) people have been killed in traffic collisions so far this year, predominantly people walking, rolling, or biking
- Partially restore cuts to [affordable housing](#) that come from \$84 million of Jumpstart revenue being used to pay for general fund items (¼ of that \$84 million is going to SPD). [Stable housing](#) improves physical and mental health, decreases rates of child abuse, increases engagement in education and employment, reduces rates of criminal convictions, and increases food security.
- Give Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) to about 90 people. GBI is one of the most cost effective ways to [improve health](#) for recipients and their [children](#); increase [income](#), [housing](#), and [food](#) security; [increase employment](#); and reduce [unplanned pregnancies](#), [firearm violence](#), and [addiction](#).
- [Fentanyl deaths](#) in King County are roughly triple the deaths of traffic crashes and gun violence combined. Fund Seattle's first [overdose prevention center](#), a service proven to save lives.
- Food security is safety.
 - Fund an inflationary adjustment for meal providers so they can maintain their level of service next year
 - Provide \$300k for meal programs
- Increase funding for [violence interruption programs](#) which are proven to [effective](#) to reduce violence [by 30-60%](#)
- A University of [Washington Wage Equity Study](#) found human services workers are underpaid by 37%. We cannot continue to ask our human service workers to continue to work for wages so low many are facing their own housing insecurity.
 - Fund an almost 2% raise for human services workers to align with [Resolution 32094](#) which pledged to give human services workers a 7% raise by 2025
 - Add \$858k to include inflation adjustments and wage equity increases for all KCRHA contracts.

- Increase funding for the [Storefront Repair Fund](#)
- Provide \$300k for a program for domestic violence survivors based on an evidence-based model of survivor-driven mobile advocacy, as recommended by the Community Responses to Domestic Violence Workgroup

Please reject this dangerous and racist surveillance technology and instead invest in what we know would work to reduce violence in our community.

Sincerely,

[Your Name and District]

Councilmember Contact Information:

[Find your Council District here](#)

Please contact council members especially if they are your district representative

District 1	Lisa Herbold	lisa.herbold@seattle.gov	206-684-8801
District 2	Tammy Morales	tammy.morales@seattle.gov	206-684-8802
District 3	Kshama Sawant	kshama.sawant@seattle.gov	206-684-8803
District 4	Alex Pedersen	alex.pedersen@seattle.gov	206-684-8804
District 5	Debora Juarez	debora.juarez@seattle.gov	206-684-8805
District 6	Dan Strauss	dan.strauss@seattle.gov	206-684-8806
District 7	Andrew Lewis	andrew.lewis@seattle.gov	206-684-8807
At-large Position 8	Teresa Mosqueda	teresa.mosqueda@seattle.gov	206-684-8808
At-large Position 9	Sara Nelson	sara.nelson@seattle.gov	206-684-8809