

From: Cathie Raine <cjrdd@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 1:41 PM
To: City Clerk's Office
Subject: Public Comments for City Council meeting (2/25/25)

These statements are being submitted for the 'Public Comments' section of the February 25, 2025 City Council meeting concerning Ordinance No. 29022.

Dear Mayor Woodards, Deputy Mayor Daniels and Council Members:

This Ordinance No. 29022 is written to provide a 6 month extension of the "temporary moratorium on the nomination and designation of new Historic Special Review Conservation Districts" (The Amended Ordinance No. 28962 1 year moratorium enacted in May 2024 and to expire in early May 2025).

The Growth Management Board, however, has determined that the "City's adopted work plan did not provide sufficient detail to meet the requirements of RCW 36.70A.390." The City's deadline..for providing a more detailed/"revised" 'work plan'...to the Growth Management Board is now March 12th, 2025. The Growth Management Board would then require some time (within a 180 days time period) to provide a 'decision' to the City of Tacoma officials regarding the 'work plan' associated with this original Ordinance No. 28962.

This request for the extension of Ordinance No. 28962 (Ordinance No. 29022) is premature...especially ahead of any decision by the Growth Management Board. Is this moratorium extension (on the nomination and designation of new Historic Special Review Conservation Districts) appropriate or valid based on what is currently known about the 'work plan' situation?

It is possible that this 6 month extension could also be followed by another 6 months extension request..as the Planning and Development Services Dept works on updating the Comprehensive Plan based on the Growth Management Board decision/findings. It is concerning that extensions with 'moratoriums' (i.e. the multiple..2 1/2 yrs of moratorium time seen with the STGPD code updates) has already been part of a 'work plan strategy' used by the PDS Dept Planners (See Ordinance No. 29020 on tonight's City Council Agenda). While a STGPD Moratorium has been needed given the 'timeline/timing'... the current 'restrictions' with this STGPD moratorium have been inadequate (no restrictions on impervious surfaces,etc) to prevent potential adverse impacts to the groundwater situation over the past 2 1/2 yrs.

The Memorandum submitted on this Ordinance No. 29022 states under 'Fiscal Impact':
"There is no fiscal impact related to extending this Moratorium". Is this really an accurate statement..with this proposed extension...?

Business districts that are trying to attract further commercial development could miss out on the financial benefits gained with the historic buildings/structures historic district designations...if this Ordinance No. 29022 (extension) is approved. 'Business Improvement Area' arrangements are currently being encouraged with some of the 'Multi-use' neighborhood areas in Tacoma. This 'extension' is being requested at a time that would be working against the economic development plans of some of the neighborhood areas of Tacoma.

Based on my above statements and information presented, I urge you to NOT APPROVE this Ordinance No. 29022..especially at this time...while a 'decision' from the Growth Management Board is still pending.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathie (Raine) Urwin

From: Ixia Tile Tacoma <ixiatile@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 9:53 AM
To: Sustainability; Farmer, Lakecia; Trees; Smyth, Geoffrey; City Manager; City Clerk's Office; PSpring@cityoftacoma.org; Klynette@cityoftacoma.org; Kenny, Lisa; RHerbert@cityoftacoma.org; Crain, Nathan; CJenkins@cityoftacoma.org; Carey, Mike; Hines, John; Scott, Jamika
Subject: conflicting tree care instructions from city departments

Please forward to The Sustainable Tacoma Commission as well

Hello

According to my understanding, Tacoma Municipal Codes 9.18, 9.19, 9.20, are now in effect as LAW. We see trees butchered and abused all over town. For a while, I tried to record these issues with the code enforcement team. That pretty much leads nowhere, is not responded to and no corrective action can/would be taken on tree abuse/butchering/elimination is what I have learned. So I gave up on the city with those violations.

Yesterday, many city residents received a card from city environmental services (see below image) that directly instructed us to prune city trees 14 feet up, and cut away all tree parts above curb. I will not obey and I refuse to butcher our well cared-for plants. No mention of permit, not mention of professional or educated pruning. Just grab a chainsaw, everyone!

Can anyone please explain this instruction from environmental services and how it is or is not directly contradicting city law?

Back in 2008/2009 I and several residents, participated in long meetings regarding tree protection ordinance. All that planning ended up in some staff's desk drawer. 15 years and many theoretical plans later, actual tree protections are still toothless. The concept of 30 by 30 is an old one. Yet city only managed to plant some 1,720 trees a year, over the last 4 years. Many of these trees are dead within months.

At this rate, it will take about 167 YEARS to get to 30% canopy coverage.

It would be so amazing if city, parks, TPU and schools could work together to train each other on basic tree planting, care and maintenance. Yet we see horrid things being done on public grounds all over the city, by city staff and city hired fly-by-night tree cutters.

Can you imagine city would handle plumbing, electrical, clerical or engineering work the same unprofessional and untrained way?

City itself recommends Plant Amnesty for tree care instruction. Take your own advice, please!

Tacoma has the lowest canopy coverage of our region as you well know. We are also an extraordinarily large climate harm contributor due to port, military, chamber interests, and general laissez-fair for the toxins industry. Let's step up our responsibility!

Ciao

Claudia Riedener



DID YOU KNOW
Street sweepers
against litter e

When the street sweepers are in your area, please help us by:

- Moving all vehicles and removing waste containers from the street.*
 - Pruning tree branches even with the curb and up to 14 ft. above the street.
 - Not raking, blowing or creating piles of yard debris in the street.
- * Owners who leave their vehicles parked in the area do so at their own discretion and responsibility.**

**Keeping Tacoma clean
is a Team Effort**

9.20.210 Street tree permit – pruning.

A. Applicability - pruning.

Unless an exemption under this chapter applies, TMC 9.20.210 shall govern requests to prune street trees.

B. Prohibition – street tree permit required - pruning.

1. Permit required. Unless an exemption under this chapter applies, it shall be unlawful for any person to, in any manner, prune any street tree without having first obtained a street tree permit from the Director as provided in this chapter; provided that, an authorized agent may prune a street tree in conformance with a valid street tree permit issued to the abutting owner, a utility, a public transportation agency or the City.

2. Compliance. Unless an exemption under this chapter applies, it shall be unlawful for any person, or authorized agent on behalf of a person, issued a street tree permit to, in any manner, prune any street tree except in conformance with the terms and conditions of such street tree permit and this chapter.

C. Street tree permit application – pruning.

From: Rebecca Stith <rstithlaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:28 AM
To: Woodards, Victoria; Daniels, Kiara; Hines, John; Rumbaugh, Sarah; Diaz, Olgy; Scott, Jamika; Sadalge, Sandesh; Bushnell, Joe; Walker, Kristina
Cc: City Clerk's Office; Junger, Paul; Pauli, Elizabeth
Subject: TIME-SENSITIVE-ShotSpotter: Community Concerns & Recommendations
Attachments: ShotSpotter-community orgs ltr to council 2.24.25.pdf

Dear Mayor Woodards and City Council Members:

The attached letter is submitted to the Council on behalf of the community organizations listed below and as signatories on the letter.

As preparation for your March 4 Study Session agenda item on ShotSpotter, we strongly urge you to review the attached letter, which extensively details our concerns and recommendations regarding ShotSpotter, its pending deployment in the Hosmer neighborhood, and surveillance technologies generally. The letter, which was collaboratively prepared by community members who have researched this acoustic gunshot technology, will help you craft questions for the invited representative from ShotSpotter's vendor SoundThinking and the invited representative of the Tacoma Police Department.

We also strongly urge you to invite speakers who can present other perspectives on ShotSpotter to a Study Session before a decision is made on whether or not to deploy ShotSpotter.

Thank you.

Rebecca Stith on behalf of:
Tacoma Coalition for Policing Accountability
Institute for Black Justice
350 Tacoma
The Conversation 253
Indivisible Tacoma
Native Daily Network
A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) Tacoma
Black Panthers Party of Washington
Tacoma & Pierce County DSA
Climate Alliance South Sound (CASS)

TACOMA COALITION FOR POLICING ACCOUNTABILITY

February 24, 2025

Sent via email:

vwoodards@cityoftacoma.org, kdaniels@cityoftacoma.org, jhines1@cityoftacoma.org,
srumbaugh@cityoftacoma.org, odiaz@cityoftacoma.org, jscott8@cityoftacoma.org,
ssadalge@cityoftacoma.org, jbushnell2@cityoftacoma.org, kwalker@cityoftacoma.org

Dear Mayor Woodards and City Council Members:

As community groups and organizations dedicated to advancing civil rights and community safety, we write to express our significant concerns regarding the ongoing ShotSpotter pilot in Tacoma. The following points highlight our concerns and recommendations for prompt action.

Concerns:

- **Effectiveness Issues:** Independent studies consistently show that ShotSpotter fails to distinguish gunshots from other noises in most deployments, resulting in frequent false alerts and wasted police resources.
- **Community-Police Relations:** ShotSpotter deployments increase police presence and community tensions, potentially leading to overreactions and unnecessary use of “stop and frisk,” or worse, as seen in other cities.
- **Vendor Ethics:** Past allegations of unethical conduct and racial bias by ShotSpotter's vendor, SoundThinking, raise serious concerns about its deployment in Tacoma and will undermine community trust and the technology's integrity.
- **Civil Rights Implications:** ShotSpotter's surveillance capabilities have intruded on residents' reasonable privacy expectations and civil rights in other cities and could potentially violate the Fourth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when deployed here in Tacoma.
- **Financial Viability:** While the 3-year pilot is grant-funded, the Council, City Manager, and acting Police Chief – before even considering whether to extend its use in Tacoma – must undertake a thorough examination of potential incidental and long-term costs to the City, including, but not limited to, police overtime and legal liabilities, as seen in other municipalities.
- **Data Trustworthiness:** Because it overlaps with the TPD's Violence Reduction Project, there will be significant doubts about the reliability, validity, and independence of data produced during the ShotSpotter pilot, highlighting the need for unbiased evaluation by experts not affiliated with the vendor.

Recommendations:

- **Halt the ShotSpotter Pilot:** We request the City Manager and acting Chief of Police to halt the ShotSpotter pilot immediately due to its documented shortcomings and risks to community safety, privacy, and civil liberties.

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- **Pass a Surveillance-Technology Ordinance:** Pass an ordinance similar to Seattle's 2018 ordinance to establish rules and guidelines for acquiring and using surveillance technologies, including (but not only) ShotSpotter. Protect residents' civil rights and privacy and prevent such technologies' misuse in marginalized communities.
- **Community Engagement:** Prioritize community input and engagement in decisions regarding surveillance technologies, ensuring that policies align with community values and priorities.

If halting the pilot now is not feasible, then we recommend:

- **Quarterly Updates and Transparency:** Pass a resolution requiring the City Manager and TPD to provide detailed quarterly updates on the pilot's progress and any related contracts with ShotSpotter and its vendors. This transparency is crucial for informed decision-making and public accountability.
- **Independent Data Analysis:** Engage an independent consultant, in addition to the consultant Dr. Jessica Huff, who is associated with the vendor SoundThinking, to design and implement a methodology for capturing, tracking, and organizing data from the pilot. This ensures greater transparency and reliability and enables more meaningful public scrutiny.

In light of these serious concerns and the precedents set by other cities, which are detailed below, we urge Tacoma to prioritize community safety, civil liberties and rights, positive community-police relations, and fiscal responsibility by terminating the ShotSpotter pilot or passing the resolution described above if termination is not feasible, and enacting robust oversight measures including, as soon as practicable, a surveillance-technology ordinance.

Sincerely,

Tacoma Coalition for Policing Accountability

Institute for Black Justice

350 Tacoma

The Conversation 253

Indivisible Tacoma

Native Daily Network

A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) Tacoma

Black Panthers Party of Washington

Tacoma & Pierce County DSA

Climate Alliance South Sound (CASS)

cc: epauli@cityoftacoma.org, [pjunker@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:pjunger@cityoftacoma.org), cityclerk@cityoftacoma.org

Introduction

As community groups and organizations working to advance civil rights and community safety, we urge you to immediately request the City Manager and the acting Chief of Police¹ to halt the ShotSpotter pilot for the reasons set forth below and in the many written and testimonial public comments that you have received. Regardless of whether they refuse to stop the pilot, we further urge you to promptly pass a resolution requesting the City Manager to provide frequent (at least quarterly), detailed updates on the City of Tacoma's current 3-year (2025-2027) pilot study of the ShotSpotter acoustic surveillance technology² in the Hosmer neighborhood. Initial reporting should include any and all information and documents related to the award of the grant and City contracts with ShotSpotter's vendor, SoundThinking, retained consultants, and other private entities and governmental agencies.

The resolution should require that an independent consultant be retained to design and implement a methodology for capturing, tracking, and organizing data in a meaningful way that members of the public can understand and to which they can respond. It should also strongly recommend that the City Manager and acting Chief of Police cease the ShotSpotter pilot - *during* the pilot - if the data and community input show an excess of false alerts, no meaningful reduction in gun-related violence, and/or no meaningful increase in gun-related crime resolutions or a detriment to the well-being of residents.

Just as importantly, we urge you to pass a surveillance-technology ordinance similar to that passed by Seattle in 2018³ and by dozens of other cities around the country⁴ to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of our City's residents and visitors and to ensure that surveillance technologies, including ShotSpotter, are stopped or declined if too costly and ineffective, and not misused against Black, Brown, and other community members if acquired.⁵

All of the data, documents, and other sources of information collected during the pilot will be necessary for you to review in-depth as you decide whether or not to approve a contract to continue ShotSpotter when the pilot ends in 2027, and, during this first year of the 3-year pilot, as you consider and draft an ordinance regarding the acquisition, use, and potential misuse, (and adverse environmental impact⁶) of ShotSpotter and other surveillance technologies

¹ Deputy Police Chief Paul Junger is currently the acting Chief of Police until Patti Jackson is sworn as the interim Chief of Police, which is expected to occur sometime in March 2025.

² https://www.cityoftacoma.org/whats_going_on/shot_spotter_f_a_qs;

³ https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT14HURI_CH14.18ACUSSUTE;

⁴ <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2021/05/community-control-police-spy-tech>; for a list of cities that have used and/or rejected ShotSpotter, go to <https://cancelshotspotter.com>

⁵ Seattle has a Community Technology Advisory Board (CTAB) to study and make recommendation regarding information and communications technology. <https://seattle.gov/community-technology-advisory-board>The Tacoma City Council could create a similar board with additional responsibility for study and make recommendations regarding TPD's and other City departments' acquisition and use of surveillance technologies.

⁶ ShotSpotter and virtually all surveillance technologies use artificial intelligence, aka "AI." See, e.g., <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/public-safety/tacoma-police-to-implement-gunshot-detection-technolo>

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(including several already in use by the Tacoma police such as license-plate readers and Stingray cell-site simulators).

Many members of the public have spoken at the Council's Community Forum and have provided research and other information to Council Members via meetings, emails, and letters on the glaring shortcomings of the ShotSpotter technology, which carries with it numerous and serious risks—to community safety, to civil rights, and municipal finances and liability—and offers few, if any, demonstrable benefits. To protect the civil liberties and civil rights of our City's residents and to minimize financial and other costs to our City and community, we exhort you to pass such a resolution promptly and such an ordinance as soon as practicable during this calendar year.

ShotSpotter is ineffective at reducing violent crime and solving crimes.

Independent research shows that the technology yields no actionable evidence of gun crimes in the vast majority of ShotSpotter-initiated police deployments and does not lead to a meaningful reduction in gun-related crimes. It is well-known that the ShotSpotter technology cannot consistently distinguish between gunfire and other loud noises, such as backfires and firecrackers, and frequently deploys police where no gunfire has occurred. In two recent studies of ShotSpotter, police were unable to confirm that gunfire occurred in [over 89% of ShotSpotter deployments](#) in Chicago and [over 83% of deployments](#) in New York City. Frequent false deployments initiated by ShotSpotter prevent police from responding to actual emergencies, waste time and resources, and increase 911 response times.

In fact, a multi-year study of ShotSpotter in St. Louis concluded that resident-initiated reports – such as 911 calls - of gunshots were over seven times more useful to police than ShotSpotter alerts, and [fewer people make phone calls about gunshots](#) to police once Acoustic Gunshot Detection Systems (AGDS) are in place. A more recent study of ShotSpotter in Chicago found that the use of ShotSpotter slowed police responses to 911 calls and decreased the likelihood of arrests resulting from such calls.⁷

[gy-trial-basis/281-9ba7a80b-0de1-46b1-97a5-070610c773cd](https://www.sciencetrialsjournal.org/2021/1/1/281-9ba7a80b-0de1-46b1-97a5-070610c773cd). (“ShotSpotter is a technology that uses artificial intelligence to detect gunshots and alert police to potential gun-related incidents”). AI is projected to exponentially increase electricity consumption. “[D]ata centers currently account for about [1 to 1.5 percent of global electricity use](#)...by 2027 [the projected] 1.5 million servers, running at full capacity, would [consume at least 85.4 terawatt-hours of electricity annually](#)—more than what many small countries use in a year, according to the new assessment. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-ai-boom-could-use-a-shocking-amount-of-electricity/>

⁷ Denis Mares and Emily Blackburn, “Acoustic Gunshot Detection Systems: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation in St. Louis, MO,” *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, June 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-019-09405-x>; Michael Topper and Toshio Ferrazares, “The Unintended Consequences of Policing Technology: Evidence from ShotSpotter,” October 29, 2024,

https://michaeltopper.netlify.app/research/jmp_michael_topper.pdf

(ShotSpotter had “substantial consequences [on 911 call responses in Chicago] — officers are dispatched to calls slower (22%), arrive on-scene later (13%), and the probability of arrest is decreased 9%. Consequently, police departments must evaluate their resource capacities prior to implementing technologies”).

ShotSpotter exacerbates community-police tensions.

ShotSpotter sends police into communities more frequently due to false alerts and often anticipating violent situations and individuals.⁸ This can lead police to overreact and use unnecessary force, such as in [the killing of 13-year-old Adam Toledo](#), who was shot by a police officer on a ShotSpotter deployment just 19 seconds after the officer got out of his patrol car. Frequent false alerts inevitably increase aggressive contact between police and the community without reason, making people less likely to call 911 in actual emergencies.

ShotSpotter is also used as a proxy for probable cause, [giving police a pretext to stop and frisk](#) people near deployment locations, thereby increasing incidents of harassment. Finally, surveillance-based policing has been shown to negatively impact both [public health](#) and [community trust](#).

ShotSpotter's vendor has engaged in unethical and racially biased conduct.

ShotSpotter sensors are [placed disproportionately in communities of color](#), contributing to the overcriminalization of Black and Brown communities and deepening distrust between communities of color and their city governments. Its vendor, SoundThinking, has a history of colluding with police to [change their data in order to frame Black men](#) for [crimes they did not commit](#). This alone should be disqualifying for entering into a contract with the City, and the fact that Tacoma is presently willing to partner with such a company will only deepen community perceptions that our police department is overtly discriminatory toward Black and Brown members of our community.

Over-policing and discrimination were central concerns at a well-attended [community forum](#) on ShotSpotter, held at Evergreen Tacoma on November 10, 2024. The forum included a panel of local experts who have researched Shotspotter and community members who informed attendees about studies and data showing ShotSpotter's poor record at reducing gun violence and solving crimes and lived trauma caused by over-policing. Several other community members and a much-cited ShotSpotter expert voiced their concerns during a recent [Soundside KUOW NPR podcast, including a SoundThinking spokesperson](#).

During this podcast, former Police Chief Avery Moore explained, "Here's what the [guiding] principle is... could we reduce crime in Tacoma without causing harm?" The podcast host also quoted the TPD's statement that if the ShotSpotter program is found "not consistent with the values of the agency, TPD will immediately cease the use of the technology."⁹ Nowhere does the City define these TPD "values" or a process by which community members can ask questions and voice concerns specific to the Shotspotter pilot.

⁸ Michael D. Schlosser, Jennifer K. Robbennolt, Daniel M. Blumberg, and Konstantinos Papazoglou, "Confirmation Bias: A Barrier to Community Policing," Journal of Community Safety & Well-Being, Vol. 6, No. 4 (December 2021), <https://www.journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/219/590> ("[C]onfirmation bias can influence...the ways in which subjects are interrogated").

⁹ https://www.cityoftacoma.org/whats_going_on/shot_spotter_f_a_qs

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We urge the City Manager, the acting Police Chief, and you on the Council to probe ShotSpotter's actual record of poor results and harm elsewhere and the potential for the same here and to evaluate whether this surveillance technology is in line with TPD's bias-free policing initiative.¹⁰ You must all promptly heed and address the growing concerns of many in the community, including the residents of the targeted Hosmer neighborhood, who are entitled to *effective* violence-reduction measures that do *not* carry a heightened risk of negative interactions with police.

ShotSpotter threatens civil rights.

Legal rights groups [regionally](#) and [across the country](#) have raised serious concerns about ShotSpotter's potential violations of [4th Amendment rights to privacy](#). They have urged the U.S. Department of Justice to [investigate its possible violations of Title VI](#) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. ShotSpotter microphones can and do record more than just loud noises, and in at least two criminal trials, prosecutors tried to introduce as evidence conversations recorded by gunshot detection systems.¹¹ In a national legal context where previously taken-for-granted civil rights are now being *overtly and intentionally threatened*, we must proactively protect Tacomans against efforts to strip them of such rights, particularly, when it comes to ShotSpotter, our Black and Brown residents.

ShotSpotter makes bad financial sense.

The Council may feel its financial impact is not a concern since this pilot is grant-funded. To date, the pilot's budget has not yet been made public. We call on the City Manager and acting Police Chief to make the budget public promptly. We call on the Council to examine that budget and ensure that there are safeguards in place to prevent the ShotSpotter deployment from costing the City excessive police overtime, as has been the case in other cities such as San Antonio, where a 15-month deployment of ShotSpotter cost the city to spend \$378,000 on the technology and another \$168,000 in office overtime to support the program.¹² In addition,

¹⁰ https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/police/policing_accountability___transparency <https://www.stopspying.org/shotspotter#:~:text=Once%20installed%2C%20ShotSpotter%20sensors%20record,police%20demands%20for%20sensor%20audio> ("The eavesdropping devices record anything they hear, including conversations conducted at normal volume up to 50 feet away, according to ShotSpotter's own engineer when testifying under oath," and the "scramble to correct ShotSpotter's mistakes reportedly [has] produced a trail of corrected and re-corrected 'evidence' that prosecutors ultimately withdrew").

¹² Denis Mares and Emily Blackburn, "The Hidden Costs of Police Technology: Evaluating Acoustic Gunshot Technology Systems," *Police Chief Magazine* (2018) <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/the-hidden-costs-of-police-technology> (The "substantial number of additional calls for service must be incorporated into the cost of [acoustic gunshot detection technology], especially in high crime areas where workloads are substantial to begin with"); https://www.abqjournal.com/news/local/is-albuquerque-s-crime-fighting-tool-shotspotter-worth-the-3-million-price-tag/article_e7f10472-681e-5642-85bf-630f76344653.html (According to the head of Albuquerque Police Officers' Association, "[O]fficers don't appreciate the extra workload.... They're understaffed. It's just one more thing for them to do"); <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-police-cut-pricey-gunshot-detection-11824797.php> (In San Antonio, the cost of police overtime pay was 44% of the cost of the technology itself over a 15-month period).

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while SoundThinking currently charges a standard annual subscription rate of \$75,000 per square mile, the company has acknowledged charging as much as \$90,000 annually per square mile.¹³

The \$800,000 grant might not even cover all the costs of deployment in Tacoma. Baltimore County's contract with SoundThinking, which used a similar-size \$738,000 grant for a 2-year [ShotSpotter pilot, did not cover "installation costs, forensic analysis on criminal cases or connecting alerts to other public safety platforms."](#) The possibility of such costs burdening Tacoma taxpayers is another reason that it is essential for the Council to obtain all documentation related to the current pilot, including any contracts with SoundThinking and consultant Dr. Jessica Huff.

In addition to the above costs and unavoidable police overtime pay, the technology carries with it a heightened risk of expensive police misconduct cases stemming from more frequent and potentially hostile police-community interactions. It's no wonder that police themselves often oppose the technology. In San Antonio, [Police Chief William McManus led the effort to cancel the city's contract](#) with ShotSpotter, saying, "We're going to use that money to provide more community engagement, which ShotSpotter can't provide." In Albuquerque, [the president of the police union said of ShotSpotter](#), "What is the actual benefit? What cases can they honestly point to that have been 100% solidified, an individual arrested and prosecuted because of ShotSpotter?... it's a big fat waste of money."

We cannot trust the data this pilot will yield.

On top of all of the problems with ShotSpotter, we cannot even trust the data that the pilot will yield. The ShotSpotter company has a track record of paying for studies that produce biased results about their technology's efficacy. This includes [funding a research center](#) at the institution that currently [employs Dr. Jessica Huff](#), the academic who will evaluate the Tacoma pilot. Therefore, Dr. Huff cannot be considered an independent researcher, and the Council and the City should not rely solely on the results of her analysis and extrapolations. A genuinely independent assessment must also be conducted by an expert *not* associated with Soundthinking or comparable vendors.¹⁴

Additionally, the methodology of the pilot is irreparably flawed, as the study is taking place at the same time as another experimental policing initiative in Tacoma, the Violent Crime Reduction Plan.¹⁵ Conducting two co-located and concurrent experimental interventions means

¹³ https://cdn.muckrock.com/foia_files/2024/06/26/MUCKROCK_foia_2.pdf (Noting \$75,00 standard annual charge per square mile, pp. 18-20); https://web.archive.org/web/20240224014239/https://www.shotspotter.com/system/content-uploads/SST_FAQ_January_2018.pdf (archived SoundThinking FAQ: "[T]he cost for ShotSpotter is \$65-90k per square mile per year").

¹⁴ We can assist the City in finding such an expert and know of several individuals who have examined Shotspotter's effectiveness.

¹⁵ <https://bj.a.ojp.gov/funding/awards/15pbja-23-gg-04150-jagp> (The ShotSpotter pilot "is complementary to the TPD Violent Crime Reduction Plan the TPD is implementing[.]").

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that analysis [will not be able to effectively distinguish between the impacts of the two initiatives](#), opening the results of the pilot to an even greater risk of misinterpretation and manipulation.

As innumerable studies and the experiences of many other cities make clear, the benefits of this pilot are virtually nonexistent, and the risks and costs are enormously high. The City Manager and Chief of Police should halt the pilot immediately. Whether or not they refuse to do so, the Council can, and must, promptly pass a resolution requiring frequent, criterion-specific, detailed reports from the City on ShotSpotter's performance during the 3-year pilot, including any and all documentation related to the grant itself and agreements with SoundThinking, Dr. Huff, any other consultants, and any governmental and/or private entities. In addition, the Council must pass a surveillance-technology ordinance as soon as practicable.

Given such a multitude of concerns and risks, it's no wonder that so many cities have rejected, canceled, or refused to extend contracts with ShotSpotter and have passed surveillance-technology ordinances. *Tacoma must do the same.*

From: Janeen Provazek <provaj@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 3:23 PM
To: City Clerk's Office
Subject: Re immigration rights

Dear Mayor and CC Members,

Our immigrant community and the organizations that support them need our support right now. They are stretched thin and losing funding. They are afraid and need to know their city is here for them. Please reach out to organizations such as [Africans on the Eastside](#), [The Circle](#), [Eastside for All](#), [Hopelink](#), and [4Tomorrow](#) and ask what you can do to help them. Find funding for them. Our city always boasts about our diverse community. Now is the time to step up and show them you care.

*Thank you,
Janeen Provazek,*

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: SENCo <senco253@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 8:53 AM
To: City Clerk's Office; Sadalge, Sandesh; Bushnell, Joe
Subject: RE: Reconciling City's Stance on Surveillance and the Use of ShotSpotter Technology

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express serious concerns about the apparent contradiction between the City of Tacoma's commitment to anti-surveillance principles, as outlined in the proposed Resolution Directing the City Manager to Prohibit Use of City Resources for Federal Surveillance Programs, and the simultaneous implementation of ShotSpotter technology in our community.

The 2025 draft resolution, being introduced by Council Member Sandesh Sadalge, directs that no City funds, facilities, property, equipment, or personnel be used to assist in any federal registration or surveillance programs that target individuals based on race, religion, immigration status, citizenship status, or national/ethnic origin. The resolution aligns with Washington State law (RCW 43.17.425) and is rooted in Tacoma's stated values of equity, inclusion, and protection from discriminatory surveillance practices.

At the same time, the Tacoma Police Department's ShotSpotter pilot program is being deployed in a historically over-policed area, raising serious concerns about racialized surveillance and disproportionate law enforcement presence in communities of color. While ShotSpotter is not explicitly a federal program, its functionality and impact mirror the types of surveillance that the City claims to reject in this resolution.

Key Contradictions and Questions for Council Consideration

1. Tacoma has publicly committed to rejecting surveillance tools that disproportionately target marginalized communities. How does the approval of ShotSpotter align with this principle?
2. The City of Tacoma has acknowledged that discriminatory surveillance harms trust and pushes communities into hiding. Has the Council considered how increased law enforcement presence due to ShotSpotter alerts may do the same?
3. If the Council supports a resolution rejecting federal surveillance programs based on race, religion, or immigration status, does it also acknowledge that local surveillance technology—like ShotSpotter—can lead to similarly biased outcomes?
4. What safeguards are in place to ensure ShotSpotter is not reinforcing the very inequities the City claims to oppose?
5. If ShotSpotter is found to disproportionately impact communities of color or fail in its intended purpose, what is the City's plan for discontinuing its use?

Concerns About the Impact of ShotSpotter

Multiple studies and real-world applications have demonstrated that ShotSpotter does not effectively prevent crime, but instead:

- Increases police presence in already over-policed areas, disproportionately impacting Black and Brown communities.
- Frequently produces false alerts, leading to unwarranted police responses and potential confrontations.
- Does not reliably lead to arrests or convictions, raising questions about its effectiveness as a crime-fighting tool.
- Creates a surveillance environment that contradicts the City's stated mission of fostering trust and

transparency with marginalized communities.

Additional Areas of Concern

1. Evaluation Metrics:

What specific criteria will be used to assess the effectiveness of the ShotSpotter pilot program, particularly regarding racial and demographic impacts?

2. Community Engagement:

How have community members, particularly those in over-policed neighborhoods, been involved in the decision-making and evaluation process? Have only historical groups been engaged? How long was the engagement process? Were residents in apartments engaged?

3. Data Privacy and Use:

What measures are in place to ensure that data collected by ShotSpotter is used responsibly and does not contribute to racial profiling or over-policing?

4. Federal Relations & Legal Preparedness:

If Tacoma is rejecting federal surveillance programs due to concerns about civil rights violations, has the City Attorney's Office assessed the potential legal risks of local surveillance tools like ShotSpotter?

5. Law Enforcement Coordination:

Has the Tacoma Police Department engaged with federal agencies regarding ShotSpotter data? Could this technology inadvertently be feeding data into broader federal surveillance networks?

Request for Clarity and Action

Given the City's explicit rejection of racialized surveillance in its proposed resolution, the community deserves a clear and transparent explanation of how the Council reconciles this stance with the approval of ShotSpotter. If Tacoma is committed to protecting residents from discriminatory surveillance, this commitment must apply to local as well as federal technologies.

I urge the City Council to critically examine this contradiction, clarify its position, and take immediate steps to align its actions with its stated values. If ShotSpotter does not serve community safety equitably, it should not be used at all.

In Community,

Andrea Haug

She, Her, They

*Bonus Content-

<https://www.aclu-wi.org/en/news/shotspotter-leak-shows-surveillance-tech-used-overpolice-black-and-brown-communities>

<https://www.aclu-or.org/en/know-your-tech-shotspotter>

<https://docs.sandiego.gov/municode/MuniCodeChapter02/Ch02Art10Division01.pdf>

Historical ACLU Legal challenges:

Legal Challenges:

- Public Records and Surveillance: In February 2016, the ACLU of Washington filed a lawsuit against the Tacoma Police Department. The suit alleged that the department failed to disclose records related to its use of stingray surveillance technology, which can collect information from all cell phones within a certain range. The ACLU contended that this lack of transparency violated the state's Public Records Act.

*Sent as my singular voice. Emailed from SENCo for historical record.