



Case Study

Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bringing Crime to its Knees

“Sixty-nine ShotSpotter calls in the first 30 days resulted in:

- 3 felony arrests*
- 3 misdemeanor arrests*
- 2 recovered weapons*
- 1 recovered stolen car*
- Information used in homicide, robbery and shooting investigations.”*

*- Lt. Gary Reinhardt,
Minneapolis Police
Department*

Minneapolis, the largest city in Minnesota, has seen immediate and dramatic results since it implemented the ShotSpotter Gunshot Location System (GLS) in two neighborhoods. In some areas, complaints of shots fired dropped 30% over the previous year.

Problem Overview

Minneapolis is the largest city in the state of Minnesota and one of the 50 largest cities in the country. Straddling the Mississippi River and adjoining Saint Paul, the state’s capital, the City boasts impressive natural resources, Fortune 500 businesses, professional sports teams and respected schools. Residents enjoy a high quality of life compared with other US cities, and the City is host to a vibrant nightlife. Unfortunately, some of the neighborhoods that border the entertainment district have become accustomed to an atmosphere of crime. Some areas in North Minneapolis have seen an 80% increase in crime over last year.

According to Deputy Chief Robert Allen of the Minneapolis Police Department’s Professional Standards Bureau, “Minneapolis in 2005 saw a huge increase in violent crime and shootings. Two areas in particular – North and South Minneapolis – were especially hard hit by gun violence and shots fired.”

Police data show that violent crime in Minneapolis was up last year at six times the national rate of increase in murders, rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults. The City’s surge helped drive up violent crime in the Midwest by 5.7 percent, the steepest increase of any region, according to the FBI. Minneapolis residents and leaders, although grateful that the actual figures are lower than the high levels seen in the mid-1990s, are concerned that violent crime rates have risen each year since 2001. They want to reverse this trend.

About ShotSpotter

ShotSpotter, Inc., the world leader in gunshot location and detection systems for the public safety and military markets, is based in Santa Clara, CA. ShotSpotter’s patented, award-winning solutions are proven to reduce violent crime and gunfire, and thus homicide rates. For more information on ShotSpotter visit www.shotspotter.com, call us at (888) 274-6877 or (408) 329-9200, or email us at info@shotspotter.com.



Minneapolis
City Hall

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“Without the grass-roots support we would not have obtained city tax dollars to pay for the system. This initiative really came from the ground up - the community came to us.”

- Deputy Chief Scott Gerlicher, Minneapolis Police Department



Police rely heavily on community involvement

Searching for Solutions

Minneapolis relies heavily on a combination of active police work, citizen involvement and technology in its efforts to thwart crime. Community involvement is strong and citizens are not reluctant to call to 911 to report suspected crime. Police activity is equally strong: this past year, Minneapolis added 100 police officers and increased the amount of arrests by 22%, with convictions of chronic offenders up 60%. In addition, Minneapolis streets are already provisioned with cameras that watch every move. However, these measures alone were not making enough of a dent in crime. Police began looking for technologies that could augment the measures already in place.

Police officials researched technological solutions and came across articles written about ShotSpotter, the only field-proven solution of its type. They contacted the vendor and arranged for a demonstration to include police leaders, City Council members, and members of the community. After a successful demo, Minneapolis authorities contacted police agencies in cities that had deployed ShotSpotter, gaining an understanding of the reliability and cost-effectiveness of the product.

Plans were drawn up to implement ShotSpotter to cover the four square miles of the City that are responsible for 50% of the more than 5,000 “shots fired” calls coming to police each year. It was hoped that this additional capability, in conjunction with other technology, police work and citizen involvement, would lead to a dramatic reduction in violent crime. Based on the results seen in cities across the country, Minneapolis officials expected to see faster response times, more accurate location information, and an overall impact on violent crime.

Funding the Project

Many cities rely on grants to fund initiatives such as this. In Minneapolis, the city was fortunate to obtain a grant early on to help fund the initial project and then was able to rely on city dollars to ultimately fund the entire program. Grant money came from Weed & Seed, a community-based strategy sponsored by the US Department of Justice. This is an innovative, comprehensive approach to law enforcement, crime prevention and community revitalization. The strategy aims to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in high-crime neighborhoods.

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Weed & Seed involves a two-pronged approach: law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in “weeding out” violent criminals, while public agencies and community-based private organizations collaborate to “seed” services such as prevention, intervention and neighborhood restoration programs. The aim of this initiative: to give back hope to residents living in distressed neighborhoods and set the stage for community revitalization.

But this was just the beginning. While early funding came from the US Department of Justice, the real money came from the City itself as a result of the excellent community relations and strong support from citizen groups. “Without the grass-roots support,” according to Deputy Chief Scott Gerlicher, “we would not have obtained city tax dollars to pay for the system. The initiative really came from the ground up – the community came to us.”

ShotSpotter at Work in Minneapolis

ShotSpotter, in conjunction with the City’s existing cameras, serves as electronic eyes and ears for the City. Sensors linked to surveillance cameras can pinpoint a gunshot’s location, and relay that information to police within seconds. “Faster police time means quicker arrests, shorter investigations and a smarter use of our resources in Minneapolis,” said city councilmember Gary Schiff of the 9th Ward. With five to six thousand reports of shots fired in the city each year, hopes were high that the City would see a dramatic reduction in violent crime.

The system can distinguish between gunshots and other loud noises, such as firecrackers and cars backfiring. With ShotSpotter, when shots are fired police do not have to wait for residents to phone in tips, or waste time driving through neighborhoods looking for the location of an incident. Instead, ShotSpotter will put a dot on a map at the 911 dispatch center, pinpointing the location for police. And since the system is tightly integrated with cameras, police can often get even more information about a gunfire incident, helping identify criminals and gather evidence.

“You fire a gun in Minneapolis, and we’re going to hear it and come after you,” Lt. Greg Reinhardt told members of the City Council’s Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee during a meeting in June of 2006. Reinhardt, an 18 year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department, said, “That’s the message we’re going to put out.”



US Department of Justice Weed & Seed Program, a community-based strategy aimed at preventing, controlling and reducing violent crime.

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- Police Chief Tim Dolan

“We saw, in the first 30 days, a 30 percent drop in complaints of shots fired.”

- Minneapolis Councilmember Gary Schiff

Impressive Early Results

Within just six hours of taking ShotSpotter live, the system pinpointed a location where shots were fired. Officers responded and stopped a fleeing vehicle, arresting a documented gang member and convicted felon, and recovering a semi-automatic gun. No one called 911 about the event, so without ShotSpotter, officers would not have been able to make the arrest.

According to police, in the first month alone officers responded to 69 ShotSpotter calls, resulting in three felony arrests, three misdemeanor arrests, two recovered weapons, a recovered stolen car, and information in homicide, robbery and shooting investigations. In that short time, violent crime citywide was down nearly 19 percent compared to the same time a year before.

“We saw in the first 30 days, a 30 percent drop in complaints of shots fired in the third precinct compared with the same period last year,” said councilmember Schiff. Police Chief Tim Dolan concurs, saying that response time to ShotSpotter has been less than a minute. “We’re not just fishing anymore in a big lake,” he said. “Word is getting out how quick officers can get to the scene.”

Final Words

The community remains squarely behind ShotSpotter. “Our number one priority is to keep the place safe for low income families and kids, and I think this will really help. I’m incredibly pleased,” said Minneapolis resident Carol Ann Pass.

THE SHOTSPOTTER DIFFERENCE

Proven, Patented Technology

The only gunshot detection system to be successfully deployed for ten years, with more than a dozen installations across the United States.

Seasoned Management.

Senior management- PhDs, retired military officers and former sworn law enforcement officers provide in-depth subject matter expertise.

Industry Best Practices

Providing expert advice to cities and counties as to gunshot detection, deployment and operational enforcement methodology.