

Twin Cities Daily Planet: Local News For Global Citizens

## Minneapolis police partner up with Shotspotter system

By Lisa Yang , [NewsSouth](#)

Six hours after Minneapolis's new ShotSpotter starting operating in South Minneapolis on Dec. 22, it pinpointed the location of gunshots. Within a minute, police officers were on the scene, where they stopped fleeing vehicle, arrested a convicted felon and recovered a semi-automatic gun.

Neighbors are grateful for the change. "We have already seen a radical reduction of gunfire in the area," said Jana Metge, vice chair of Phillips Weed and Seed program.

In its first month, the system led to three felony and three misdemeanor arrests, recovery of three guns and a stolen vehicle, and information used in homicide, robbery, and shooting investigations in South Minneapolis police reported. There have been more than 927 ShotSpotter incidents. This month, the new technology will be implemented along the Broadway Avenue corridor in North Minneapolis.

"ShotSpotter is a better compass to point officers in the right direction," said Lt. Amelia Huffman, who handles media relations for the Minneapolis Police Department.

Since its installation, the ShotSpotter system has received high compliments from city officials and the media.

"ShotSpotter is a good investment in technology to assist police and the community," Huffman said. "MPD will hear it, know where it was fired and will quickly respond to the scene and arrest those responsible."

The ShotSpotter system uses multiple sensors to detect the location of gunfire. The sensors are used to triangulate the position of a gunshot and then alert 911 operators who dispatch police officers to the scene.

"It can pinpoint an address from where gunfire comes and it can distinguish between fireworks and gunfire, Metge explained. "Therefore, a patrol doesn't need to drive around after the fact, but rather get a direct location for gunfire, which will make response much better."

SpotShotter is a partnership between the Minneapolis Police Department, Minneapolis Emergency Communications and community organizations. There currently are 16 cities nationwide that have the system in place, including Chicago, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles.

To fund the system, Mayor R.T. Rybak dedicated \$2 million to public safety technology in Minneapolis over the next two years.

The systems in North and South Minneapolis will cover areas that account for half of the calls on shots fired.

"Residents advocated for it," Metge said. "Both the Phillips and Central Weed and Seed sites contributed the first money in."

"The areas selected for the installation of ShotSpotter were areas most impacted by gunfire," Huffman explained. "Four square miles divided between the south side and the north side, which accounts for less

than 10 percent of the city's area but more than 50 percent of the shots fired calls."

Metge and Huffman said it's too early to analyze which street or corner has had the most change.

"The ShotSpotter system has only been in live operation for two months," Huffman said. "Two months is not enough time to measure significant, long-term changes in the neighborhood."

Security cameras have been installed along Lake Street and Franklin Ave. to help catch crime nearby. The cameras are not part of the ShotSpotter system, but the idea of using both systems sparked interest among police and city officials.

Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak traveled to Chicago last August to meet with Mayor Richard M. Daley and other Chicago officials to study how they pair public safety cameras with ShotSpotter sensors.

"ShotSpotter, cameras and other similar technology amplify police and community resources and should deter a certain amount of gunfire and lead to detection and apprehension of some suspects," Huffman said. "Activities pursued by neighborhood organizations are also important, such as youth programming, the arts and other amenities. And, you can't underestimate the importance of things like good parenting.

"The bottom line is changing criminal behaviors so there are fewer victims of shootings and shot fired events."

"Folks are very, very tired of ducking bullets and gang warfare," Metge said. "There are 13 different nationalities on my block alone, but we are all unified on this one thing: safety for our children."

For a graphic showing how ShotSpotter works, go to <http://www.shotspotter.com/>

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