

## Gunfire location technology demonstrated in New Bedford

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NEW BEDFORD — A Silicon Valley company came to New Bedford yesterday to demonstrate how new technology is being employed to put a dent in violent crime.

The ShotSpotter Gunshot Location System of Santa Clara, Calif., uses acoustical sensors, installed on telephone poles or city buildings, to detect gunshots instantly and direct police to their exact location.

According to Gregg Rowland, senior vice president of ShotSpotter, his company's system is the only one of its kind in operation.

"We have 16 systems up and running. The largest one right now is in Washington, D.C.," he said. "It covers 15 square miles and it will be 30 square miles within a year."

The company was awarded a contract in Boston in the past couple of days, Mr. Rowland said, and that system should be in place in a few months.

The sensors in Boston will be integrated with existing surveillance cameras, he said.

At the first sound of gunfire, the cameras will be automatically directed toward its source.

ShotSpotter guarantees the accuracy of its sensors to within 25 meters, Mr. Rowland said, but is more commonly within five to 10 feet of its target.

Mayor Scott W. Lang and Police Chief Ronald Teachman were on hand for yesterday's live demonstration at the police firing range.

As New Bedford Police Sgt. Troy Spirlet moved around the range discharging a Glock handgun, a computer in an adjacent building displayed a corresponding series of red dots on the map within six to eight seconds.

Triangulation of the sensors pinpointed the location of each discharge.

With this system in place, police responding to a report of shots fired can learn how many gunmen there are, where they are and even what type of weapons are being used, according to the presentation.

The sound of gunfire carries for up to two miles, said Jack Pontious of ShotSpotter.

"When people call 911, they are often mistaken about where the shots are coming from because of the echoes," he said.

When Mayor Lang learned about the technology about a year ago, he decided to invite ShotSpotter to New Bedford.

The mayor said he found the demonstration enlightening.

"We're working very hard to get the latest technology into the city, and I think that ShotSpotter, married to cameras, would be very helpful as a preventive measure in keeping the city safe. It would aid the police greatly in apprehending and prosecuting criminals."

ShotSpotter officials also touted the powerful deterrent the system offers.

"Fifty percent of the success comes from the way the city markets its capabilities," Mr. Rowland said.

"If the chief says, 'You shoot a gun and you're going to jail,' you get a very rapid fall-off in gunfire with this system because you get the street credibility after a few arrests."

According to a story about ShotStopper in this month's Wired magazine, Oakland, Calif., paid \$350,000 to install sensors over a 6-square-mile area in October.

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