

# THE YALE HERALD

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Around Town

## Gunshot technology next step in crime reduction

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New Haven's streets may be approaching a new era of safety. The city has begun looking into a gunshot detection system capable of pinpointing the location of gunfire through high-tech sound-recognition software, enabling police forces to get to the scene of the crime faster than ever before. With an average of 400 to 500 reports of gunfire each year, New Haven would undoubtedly benefit from crime-reducing technology, but the system's high price tag may be a financial stretch for the city.

The system, manufactured by Shotspotters of Santa Clara, Cal., utilizes acoustic triangulation, a technology based on audio sensors that pick up sound waves to instantly identify shooting sites. When shots are fired within the designated coverage area, the sensors transmit gunfire location and number of shots fired to computers in a matter of seconds.

With this system, lag time between gunfire and police response could be drastically reduced, and unreported gunfire within the coverage area could potentially be eliminated. Furthermore, Shotspotters' ability to dispatch police to the scene quickly can ensure not only capture of the shooter but also aid for the shooting victim. "I think, as we continue to look at crime, that we've got to think about technology and the role of technology to help us reduce violence," New Haven Police Chief Francisco Ortiz, Jr. told the New Haven Register. Cities looking to purchase the system also have the option to upgrade from microphones to cameras.

Although officials have recently looked into purchasing the product, the city is considering how to cover the costs, estimated to be in the range of \$1 million. Although a thorough examination of the capital budget is a necessary first step, federal grants and state funds are being investigated as possible options.

The technology has already become a popular safety option, and is currently in use by 17 cities across the country. Communities that have made the purchase have already reported significant decline in gunfire activity. According to the Shotspotters website, these decreases range from 60 percent to 90 percent in covered areas, with an overall accuracy of 40 feet over one square mile. "We're interested in learning a little bit more about the technology before we steam ahead, but it does sound very interesting and very promising," Rob Smuts, the city's chief administrative officer told the Register.

In a college city that is in no way unfamiliar with dangerous encounters, Shotspotters' technology will only add to the efforts of the New Haven and Yale police departments to keep citizens protected, as computers will allow police forces to get to the scene of the crime so quickly that the shooter may still be firing. **Y**



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Chicago bought Shotspotters. Is New Haven next?