

# Agenda Report

January 27, 2025

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Police Department

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SOUNDTHINKING, INC. (FORMERLY SHOTSPOTTER, INC.) TO CONTINUE A GUNSHOT DETECTION SYSTEM SUBSCRIPTION IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$661,500 OVER A THREE-YEAR PERIOD AND AMEND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2025 OPERATING BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$220,500**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b);
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract, without competitive bidding pursuant to City Charter Section 1002(f), for contracts for professional and unique services, with SoundThinking, Inc. for the existing gunshot detection system subscription which includes the necessary equipment, service, and annual subscription fees in an amount not to exceed \$661,500 for three years;
3. Grant the recommended contract an exemption from the Competitive Selection process pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 4.08.049(B) contracts for which the City's best interest are served; and
4. Amend the Police Department's Fiscal Year (FY 2025) Operating Budget by appropriating \$220,500 from the unappropriated fund balance in the Asset Forfeiture Fund 207.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On October 4, 2021, the City Council approved a contract with ShotSpotter, Inc. for a three-year subscription to its gunshot detection system. Now operating under the name SoundThinking, Inc. the ShotSpotter product provides a comprehensive gunfire detection, analysis, and alert system designed to enhance police response and investigations of firearm-related crimes. The system was initially implemented to address an increase in the number of shootings, gun-related calls for service, and gun violence impacting various neighborhoods between the years of 2019 through 2021.

ShotSpotter sensors were installed in early 2022 and became fully operational on February 9, 2022. These sensors detect loud, impulsive sounds, such as gunshots, and generate recorded incidents. Using sound triangulation, the system identifies the precise location of the gunfire within an 82-foot radius. Each incident is sent to SoundThinking's Incident Review Center (IRC) for a two-phase review to verify whether the sound originated from gunfire or another source. Confirmed gunfire incidents trigger alerts that are delivered directly to the cellular devices of authorized personnel/users and to the Pasadena Police Department's dispatch center. This process, which takes 60 seconds or less, enables responding officers to quickly reach the scene, provide medical assistance if necessary, and collect critical evidence.

Since the system's implementation, Pasadena has experienced a significant reduction in gun violence. In 2021, the Pasadena Police Department investigated 73 shooting incidents, resulting in 23 injuries or fatalities. By 2024, these numbers decreased to 25 incidents, with only six Pasadena community members either injured or killed. While multiple factors contributed to this decline, ShotSpotter has played a critical role in enhancing the city's response to gun-related crimes.

Given the system's demonstrated effectiveness, Staff recommends that the City Council authorize a renewal of the subscription with SoundThinking, Inc., for an additional three years of their ShotSpotter gunfire detection system. There are other vendors who offer gunfire detection systems; however, ShotSpotter technology is the only system that offers a multi-level, comprehensive review process of the impulsive sound before sending the alert to officers. This process includes an initial review through artificial intelligence (AI) software and a second review by an acoustics expert who listens to the impulsive sound to ensure it is either gunfire or probable gunfire, before sending an alert. Furthermore, the acoustics experts provide additional information to include alerts of multiple shooters, automatic weapons, or high-capacity weapons have been involved in the gunfire incident. All of this is critical information for responding officers so that they can respond deliberately and safely. Other vendors' systems do not conduct the acoustic expert review but rather rely solely on the artificial intelligence software and do not provide the important tactical response information. For this reason, an exemption from the competitive selection process is justified, as renewing with SoundThinking, Inc. is in the city's best interest to provide safe and efficient responses by officers to gun violence incidents.



This item was presented to the Community Police Oversight Commission (CPOC) on December 12, 2024, at which time that body recommended renewal of the ShotSpotter subscription. It was scheduled to be reviewed by the Public Safety Committee at the January 15, 2025, meeting however, because of the recent Eaton wildfire, that meeting was cancelled. With the current subscription expiring on February 8, 2025, the gunshot detection system was moved to the full City Council for review/approval.

**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The proposed action is consistent with the City Council's Plan goals to ensure public safety.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

CEQA excludes, from environmental review, actions that are not "projects" as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b). Sections 21065 and 15378(b) define a project as an action which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Section 15378 excludes from the definition of "project" continuing administrative or maintenance activities, such as purchases for supplies. The actions proposed herein, authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract for continued purchase of gunshot detecting services, is not a "project" as defined by CEQA. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The total cost of the recommended actions is \$661,500 over a three-year period. The Police Department's FY 2025 Operating Budget will increase by the amount of \$220,500 from the unappropriated fund balance of the Asset Forfeiture Fund 207. Future appropriations will be included in the Police Department's annual budget submission. There are no indirect support costs for this contract and there is no impact to the General Fund.

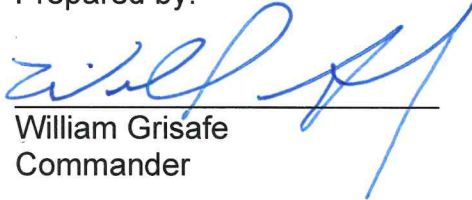
Respectfully submitted,



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