



PUBLIC SAFETY SUCCESS STORY

Zero Homicides Reported in East Palo Alto in 2023 Due to Effective Policing, Proven Technology, and Community Trust

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CITY	POPULATION	COVERAGE AREA	PRODUCT USED	CUSTOMER SINCE
EAST PALO ALTO, CA	28,847	2.5 SQ. MI	ShotSpotter®	2008

East Palo Alto, once considered the “murder capital” of the United States, is proud to share zero reported homicides for the year of 2023.

SITUATION

“When I joined the department in 2000, East Palo Alto was a completely different world,” said East Palo Alto Police Chief Jeff Liu. “Gunfire was a regular thing, getting shot was a regular thing...that was pre-ShotSpotter, a time when we had to rely on callers to guide us to where gunfire occurred.”

In fact, the grim situation in East Palo Alto back in the 1990’s was a major source of inspiration for Dr. Robert Showen to establish the company originally known as ShotSpotter. While conducting research on the location of earthquake epicenters at the Stanford Research Institute in 1996, Dr. Showen began reading more and more about the prevalent gunfire problem in this nearby city, which is when he had the idea of applying the similar sound wave principles he was using for earthquake research to detect and locate gunshots.

RESULTS

0
Homicides
Reported in 2023

27 years later, the news of zero reported homicides is both a triumphant success for the East Palo Alto Police Department and a full-circle moment for SoundThinking.

Chief Liu is the first to admit that the decline in homicides in the city is due to a combination of factors. “There’s no magic pill,” he said. “In 2022 we had five homicides and our patrol staff worked with our community and we solved every single one of them, and we publicized that, which sent out a strong message to potential offenders. Additionally, the police department and personnel work hard to be visible in the community, letting people know that we’re here to help, in a caring, respectful way.”

Chief Liu also highlighted East Palo Alto PD’s relationship with the Office of the District Attorney, as well as ShotSpotter’s Detailed Forensic Report (DFR), a court-admissible analysis of a shooting incident captured by the ShotSpotter system, as instrumental contributors to the reduction in homicides. “District attorneys prosecute based on the evidence they’re provided with,” Liu said. “Our cops have to gather [evidence] through witness statements, but also, in cases of gunfire, through ShotSpotter data. ShotSpotter data has come to court many times, and our DA’s office and our prosecutors love that evidence. The jury can hear the gunfire, and that makes it real for them.”

“For a small, understaffed department, I really want to continue to look at what technology can do for us,” Chief Liu said, before adding: “I love how SoundThinking is not satisfied with just being a gunshot location system and is constantly leveraging new technology and trying to become more of a comprehensive law enforcement solution.”

How ShotSpotter Benefits the East Palo Alto Police Department

SAVES LIVES

ShotSpotter gives the East Palo Alto PD the ability to go straight to the source of gunfire, allowing them to find victims, render medical aid faster, and save lives in the process.

IMPROVES EVIDENTIARY DATA

ShotSpotter’s Detailed Forensic Reports provide audio gunfire data that prove to be invaluable for district attorneys, prosecutors, and juries in understanding shooting incidents.

FORCE MULTIPLIER

In an era of increasingly limited resources, ShotSpotter makes it easier for the East Palo Alto PD to send officers to the locations where they are needed, when they are needed.

STRONGER COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Faster response times helps deter gun violence, building trust and improving the relationship between the East Palo Alto PD and the community.

How Can Your City Benefit From Using ShotSpotter?

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