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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Documents Reveal that NYPD is More Intimately Involved in Placement of ShotSpotter Sensors than Previously Known

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society released [emails](#) obtained via a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request which [reveal](#) that the New York City Police Department (NYPD) is intimately involved in the placement of ShotSpotter sensors in New York City.

ShotSpotter, an acoustic gunshot detection and location system, is a series of connected microphones that are constantly “listening” for sounds that could be interpreted as gunshots. The emails prove that the NYPD knows the exact locations of ShotSpotter sensors, which is contrary to ShotSpotter’s prior statements.

In July 2019, NYU School of Law's Policing Project undertook a "[privacy audit](#)" of ShotSpotter. One of their main recommendations was that ShotSpotter not share precise sensor locations with their law enforcement customers. According to the report, this recommendation was "adopted" by ShotSpotter and their policy "clearly states, in both public and client-facing documents, that law enforcement will not have access to precise sensor locations..." Despite the adopted policy, the obtained emails show that high level officers in the NYPD are aware of specific sensor locations.

Additionally, the NYPD’s ShotSpotter Impact & Use Policy [states](#) that “[t]he NYPD does not determine sensor locations and does not have access to a database of sensor locations kept by ShotSpotter.” The Policy leaves out that the police do not need access to ShotSpotter’s database because they already know the sensor locations from their discussions with ShotSpotter. The Policy also omits the NYPD’s involvement in placing sensors at chosen sites.

Legal Aid Society Digital Forensics Staff Attorney Benjamin Burger, stated: “The emails between the NYPD and ShotSpotter reveal that high-level police officials know the precise locations of always-recording microphones deployed across New York City. There is nothing stopping the NYPD from accessing these recordings which have the capability to eavesdrop on the intimate conversations that occur every day. If anything, these emails show that greater oversight over NYPD’s vast surveillance capabilities is critical and urgent.”

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