

CONSENT CALENDAR
Oct. 12, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Taplin (Author), Councilmember Kesarwani (Author)

Subject: Budget Referral: Security Cameras in the Public Right Of Way at Intersections Experiencing Increased Violent Crime, and Environmental Safety Assessment for High Crime Areas

RECOMMENDATION

In order to deter gun violence and obtain evidence to solve criminal investigations, adopt the following recommendations:

1. Authorize the City Manager to install security cameras, prominent signage, and increased lighting in the public right-of-way at intersections experiencing a rise in violent crime, including appropriate arterial streets serving as entry into and exit out of the City of Berkeley;
2. Refer to the City Manager an environmental safety assessment of the high crime areas specifically in South and West Berkeley;
3. Refer costs for security cameras and lighting to the Annual Appropriations Ordinance (AAO) #1 budget process.

We note that the security camera footage would be used solely for the purpose of solving criminal investigations. The cameras are not intended and would not be used for any kind of surveillance purposes whatsoever.

Key intersections entering and leaving Berkeley for security camera installation could include those listed below. Arterial intersections along University, Ashby and Alcatraz in close proximity to gun violence in South and West Berkeley should be prioritized.

- 6th/University
- 7th/Ashby
- San Pablo Ave./Ashby
- Sacramento/Alcatraz
- Alcatraz/Adeline
- Ashby/Telegraph
- Gilman/6th
- College/Alcatraz
- Ashby/Domingo
- Ashby/Claremont

Other locations within Berkeley may include the following:

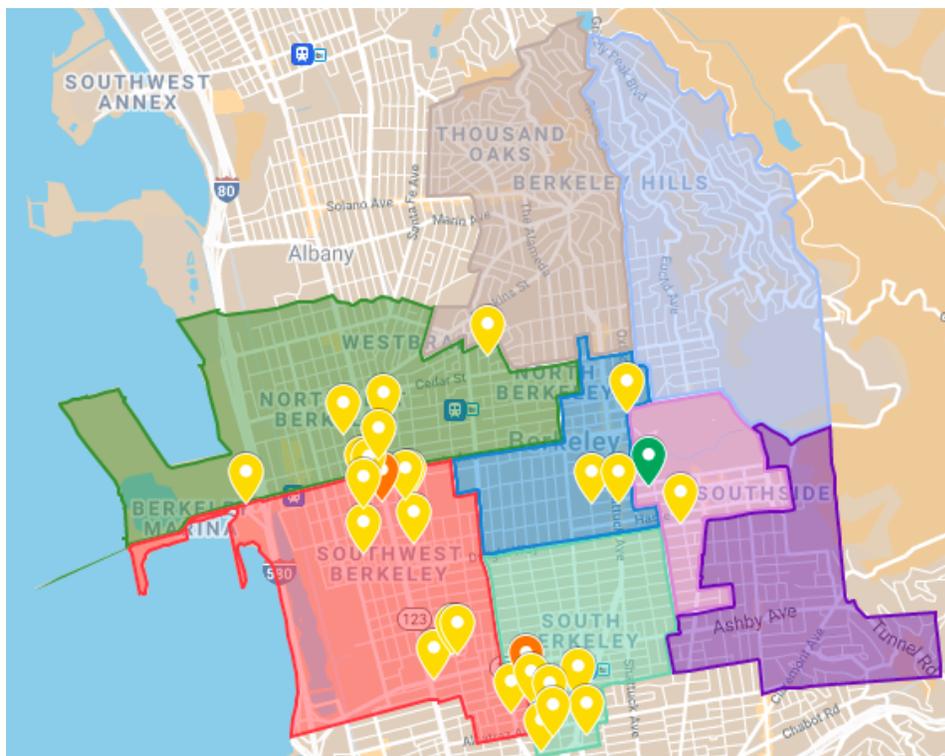
- University/San Pablo
- University/Sacramento
- Sacramento/Ashby
- George Florence Park
- 10th/Bancroft
- 8th/Channing
- 8th/Addison

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approximately \$500,000 to \$1 million for purchasing security cameras including camera storage and maintenance, as well as signage installation and increased lighting. Estimated one-time costs to install cameras, signage and lighting are likely to range from \$75,000 to \$150,000 per intersection, plus \$40,000 annually for data, software and maintenance.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

According to the Berkeley Police Department, there were 29 shootings in 2021 as of September 6, compared to 22 shootings by the same date in 2020. Only 10 of the investigations on those shootings have been closed with an identified suspect, and the Department has recovered 70 firearms this year so far. 22 of those firearms, including 4 rifles, were recovered during detective follow-up investigations.



*2021 Berkeley Gunfire Map*¹

On the morning of Saturday, September 4, 2021, West Berkeley residents reported 8-10 gunshots from two cars driving on 10th St past George Florence Park.² Panicked parents grabbed their children and ran for cover, but the park is fenced in on 3 sides, and is only open on the side of the street where the gunfire was identified. Police responded to the scene and found evidence of a second shooting just two blocks away at 9th and Allston. This follows recent shootings at 8th and Channing on August 20, and one that injured a man at San Pablo and Allston on August 14.³ Residents of this neighborhood are alarmed by the surge in gun violence and have urged the City to install security cameras in public spaces with high incidence of violent crime, along with other evidence-based policy responses, to ensure safer streets.

Shootings often involve suspects who flee the area of the crime in their vehicles. Police investigating the crime rely on private security cameras owned by residents and/or businesses in order to obtain video evidence. Installing high-quality cameras at major arterials would ensure access to videos and allow investigators to check the videos for suspects fleeing the crime area in their vehicle. High-quality images of suspect vehicles would provide valuable investigative leads. The City already urges private property owners with security cameras to register their cameras with the Berkeley Police Department to assist in criminal investigations, and property owners readily avail themselves of this resource. Valuable public safety resources should not be delegated entirely to the voluntary cooperation of private entities, particularly when violent gunfire has occurred in many public spaces including parks and major intersections.

Strategically placed cameras should be of sufficient quality to capture high resolution video. Cameras would not be equipped with Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR), and would not be monitored. The recordings would be an investigative resource which officers could access while investigating specific crimes and could assist in a reduction of crime. This would be an additional element of our Police Department's crime prevention strategies.

"Stationary security cameras affixed to City property or facilities" are not regulated under the Surveillance Technology Ordinance (c.f. BMC Section 2.99.020.1.i). As a result, stationary camera installation at major thoroughfares would be exempt from the requirements of BMC Chapter 2.99.

¹ Raguso, E. (2021). The 2021 Berkeley Gunfire Map. *Berkeleyside*. Retrieved Sept. 13, 2021 from <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2021/05/22/2021-berkeley-gunfire-map>

² Raguso, E. (Sept. 4, 2021). Police investigate daytime shoot-out in Berkeley on Saturday. *Berkeleyside*. Retrieved from <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2021/09/05/police-investigate-daytime-shoot-out-west-berkeley-saturday>

³ Raguso, E. (Aug. 14, 2021). Update: Man shot in Berkeley is expected to survive; roadway is open. *Berkeleyside*. Retrieved from <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2021/08/14/man-shot-berkeley-traffic-san-pablo-avenue>

Providing security cameras in the public right-of-way is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal to create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city.

BACKGROUND

A 2011 report⁴ from The Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center noted that cameras can be an effective tool for preventing crimes and supporting investigations. These tools appear fiscally prudent both as tools for investigations, and with the installation and maintenance of security cameras being less costly than the costs associated with crimes that may take place without them.

Berkeley’s Police Department has been conducting Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments for neighborhoods throughout the City over the past several years. These assessments include recommendations such as: increased lighting, maintenance of properties, landscaping and signage that can be used to deter criminal behavior.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

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⁴ La Vigne, N. G., et al. (2011). Evaluating the use of public surveillance cameras for crime control and prevention. *Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 1-152.*