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ACTION CALENDAR

January 30, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Humbert (Author), Councilmember Bartlett (Co-Author)
Subject: Budget Referral: Additional Security Cameras at Intersections Experiencing Increased Violent Crime

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Authorize the City Manager to install additional security cameras, prominent signage, and increased lighting in the public right-of-way at intersections experiencing a rise in violent crime and/or which include arterial streets offering entry/exit points for Berkeley.
2. Refer costs for security cameras and lighting to the next budget process.

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 continuous surveillance purposes. Cameras should ideally be compatible with those already in use at San Pablo Park under Contract Nos. 31900080 and 31900205 and those deployed at other intersections throughout the city.

Priority intersections for security camera installation would include:

- Alcatraz and College
- Woolsey and Telegraph
- Woolsey and Shattuck
- Alcatraz and Adeline
- Alcatraz and Sacramento

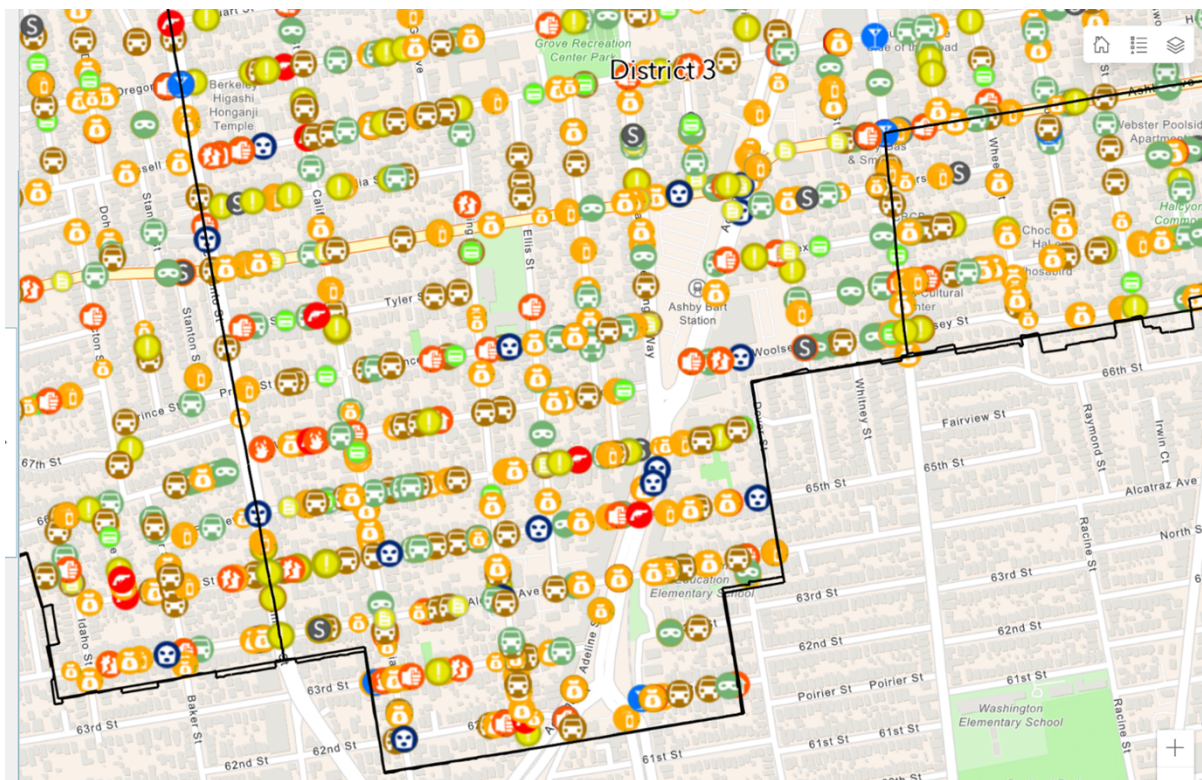
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Estimated one-time costs to install cameras, signage and lighting are likely to range from \$83,000 to \$167,000 per intersection, plus \$44,000 annually for data, software and maintenance. Total costs would vary based on the number of intersections selected. Specifically, total one-time costs for prioritizing the five intersections recommended by the authors would be \$415,000 to \$835,000 plus ongoing data, software and maintenance costs of \$220,000.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

According to data from the Berkeley Police Department (BPD), 2023 saw 357 robberies in Berkeley, a 31 percent increase from 2022.¹ A considerable number of these robberies targeted elderly victims with violent attacks, such as the one that took place in December 2023 near College and Alcatraz.² In this particular case, a private security camera recorded the suspect subsequently stealing a car, and the footage proved instrumental in their later apprehension.³ Violent muggings of elders and women have also recently taken place in the vicinity of the Ashby BART station.

High-quality images of suspects and their vehicles would provide valuable investigative leads to assist efforts to bring accountability for violent gun crimes. Shootings often involve suspects who flee the area of the crime in their vehicles. Police investigating the crime often rely on private security cameras owned by residents and/or businesses to obtain video evidence. For these reasons, the City Council already approved funding for and installation of multiple security cameras across the city. Installing additional high-quality cameras at major arterials would expand access to video and allow investigators to check the footage for suspects fleeing the crime area in their vehicle.

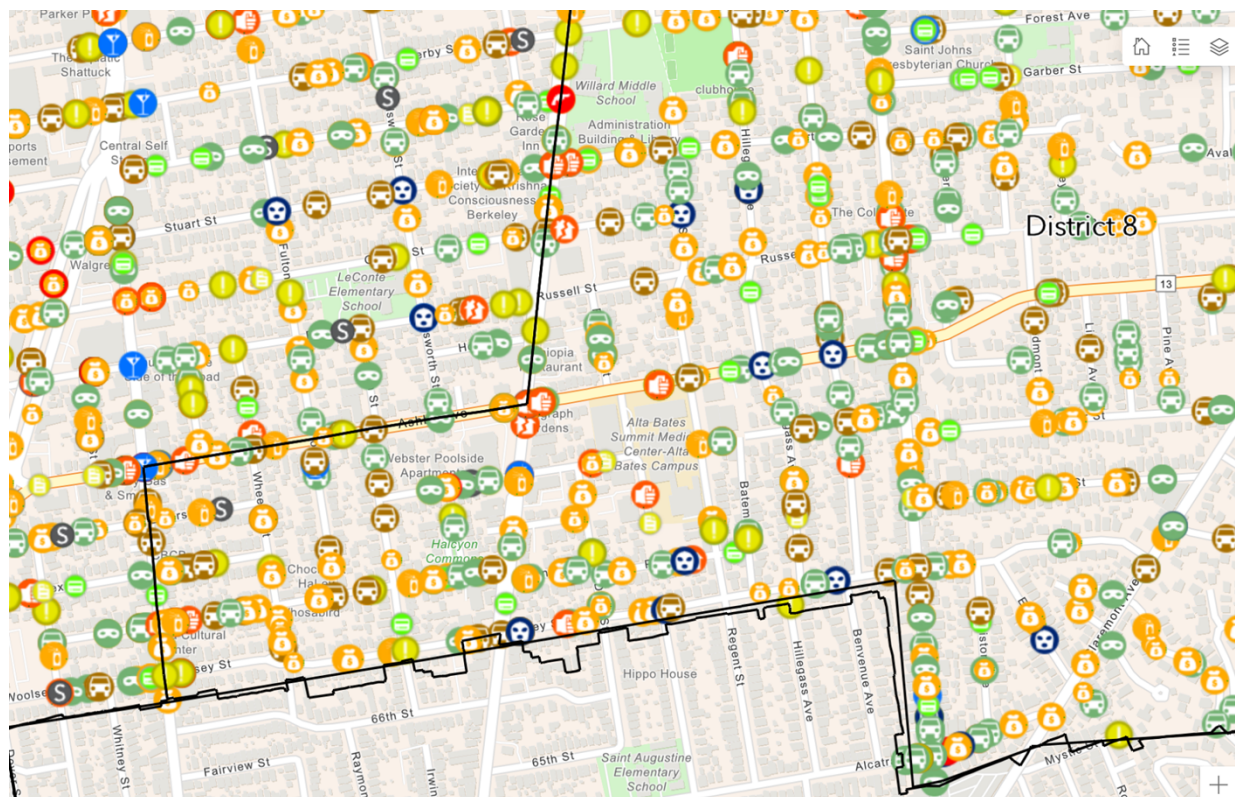


Map showing 1-year of crime data in vicinity of southern District 3. (From BPD Transparency Hub)

¹ Gecan, Alex N. (2023), *Catalytic converter thefts went down in Berkeley this year, but robberies went up*, Berkeleyside, <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2023/12/29/berkeley-crime-data-2023>

² NBC Bay Area (2023), *Berkeley woman speaks out after being mugged, car stolen by thieves*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skMisXDQTJk>

³ Raguso, Emilie (2023), *Berkeley robbery suspect facing new charges after car theft*, <https://www.berkeleyscanner.com/2023/12/27/arrests/berkeley-robbery-suspect-new-charges/>



Map showing 1-year of crime data in vicinity of southern District 8. (From BPD Transparency Hub)

The City already urges private property owners with security cameras to register their cameras with BPD to assist in criminal investigations, and property owners readily avail themselves of this resource. According to the Department, as of 2021 a total of 283 security cameras owned by private citizens and businesses are currently registered with BPD. 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 continuously 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 (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.

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. Moreover, an experiment conducted at the University of Twente in the Netherlands finds evidence that the presence of security cameras can encourage “prosocial” and “helping behavior” among bystanders.⁵

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.

⁵Van Rompay, T. J., et al. (2009). The eye of the camera: Effects of security cameras on prosocial behavior. *Environment and Behavior*, 41(1), 60-74. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.844.4026&rep=rep1&type=pdf>