

The Canton Repository – <https://www.cantonrep.com/news/20191220/wi-fiber-installation-to-begin-in-canton>



BUY PHOTO

HIDE CAPTION

Wi-Fiber CEO Adair Grover goes up in a lift to demonstrate the placement requirements for the company's modular street head system. (CantonRep.com / Aaron Self) - None

CANTON The installation of new technology to aid police was scheduled to begin this week.

Wi-Fiber's CEO Adair Grover, who said he was in Canton on Tuesday to perform network diagnostics, expects several city intersections to soon have a "smart city platform," a street light fixture that performs a combination of video and audio surveillance.

The city contracted with Wi-Fiber to replace ShotSpotter in 2020. Grover said Canton will be the first city in Ohio to use the Maryland-based company's technology.

Wi-Fiber selection

Earlier this year, Canton police and Wi-Fiber administrators presented City Council with wifi-connected cameras, shot detectors, license plate readers and platforms capable of multiple functions. They said the system, which attaches to existing street poles, would cost less over time and be more versatile than ShotSpotter.

“The more and more we dug into it, we saw that it was going to be probably more of a cost-effective solution,” Canton Police Chief Jack Angelo said. “Plus, we could increase it in the city.”

The department began researching alternatives to ShotSpotter about a year ago, Angelo said. He’d heard about Wi-Fiber and read an article about the company’s Consumer Electronics Show award.

Police administrators contacted and then met with Wi-Fiber representatives, who provided equipment for the city to test at the impound lot and a few other places.

“If it didn’t work with the proof of concept, we wouldn’t have moved forward,” Angelo said.

ShotSpotter v. Wi-Fiber

Canton City Council appropriated \$239,600 from the general fund for Wi-Fiber — in separate votes for phase one and two — and also designated a \$31,000 Project Safe Neighborhoods grant for devices in southeast Canton.

Because council approved both phases before installation, it took longer than expected to finalize an agreement with Wi-Fiber that combined them, Capt. John Gabbard said. The Canton Police Department expects to pay a reoccurring fee of \$5,000 a month after the initial equipment and startup costs.

“Comparatively speaking, ShotSpotter was \$13,000 per month,” Gabbard said.

Canton in 2013 entered a three-year contract with ShotSpotter for \$360,000. When faced with a \$5.1 million general fund deficit in 2016, Canton City Council switched to an annual contract for \$135,000.

ShotSpotter, headquartered in California, cost the city \$148,838 this year and was expected to increase its rate by 5% next year, according to city administrators.

ShotSpotter uses sensors that cover about 3 square miles around the city’s core. Acoustic experts analyze suspected gunfire and alert agencies that subscribe to the service.

About 100 cities currently use ShotSpotter, according to the company’s website.

Tech specs

– Wi-Fiber will tie into existing copper and fiber infrastructure to establish a wireless mesh network, said Dominic DeMark Jr., senior consultant for The Digital Decision, a project management company assisting Wi-Fiber.

- There are 14 initial locations police will cover with Wi-Fiber. “There is a little bit of play in that,” Gabbard said. Detection equipment might be placed in neighborhoods and parks once more is known about the network’s reach beyond intersections. The department plans to start at 12th Street and Gibbs Avenue NE and “build out from there,” he said.
- The city will have pan, tilt and zoom cameras and gunshot detection at the 14 locations. Gabbard said there also are license plate readers for three locations.
- Dispatchers, supervisors and a crime center officer who monitors cameras in real time will be able to receive email alerts when gunfire or a loud noise is detected, Gabbard said. The department also plans to hire a civilian crime analyst to allow for two shifts on the crime center desk next year.
- The sounds prompting an alert can be adjusted with “fine-tuning,” Gabbard said. “What we hope to capture is gunfire and car crashes for right now.”
- Video will be stored for at least 30 days on Microsoft Azure. Angelo said the department will keep video for 45 days at the outset, and police will have the ability to download files for evidence.
- Wi-Fiber works with a cyber security partner to ensure the network is secure, Grover said.

Related content

By [Kelly Byer](#)

CantonRep.com staff writer

[@kbyerREP](#)

Posted Dec 20, 2019 at 2:30 PM