

THE DAC FAQ

Q. What is DAC?

A. DAC is the acronym for the Domain Awareness Center. The DAC is a "surveillance hub" for the Port and City of Oakland. It is supposed to integrate data from public and private cameras, license plate readers, sound recordings and other sensors into a mass surveillance system.

Q. Isn't privacy dead?

A. The National Security Agency (NSA) believes privacy is dead. We'd like to believe it's still on life support and has a chance of recovery.

Q. Won't DAC help stop crime?

A. **There is no solid evidence that mass surveillance such as being proposed by the DAC prevents crime** - especially violent crime. This is a myth propagated by companies that want to sell DAC technologies to every city and town across the country, making bazillions in profits from your tax dollars to no effect. It is a myth that is eagerly lapped up by police and politicians who want to "do something" about crime instead of investing long-term in education and living-wage jobs, the real crime reduction strategies.

Q. What's the problem with having a DAC?

A. Some interesting thoughts:

"Video surveillance is used to monitor our lives and to control our actions. Comprehensive monitoring is the most visible manifestation of the ubiquitous eye of the state, done under the guise of society's basic need for security."

"The gaze of the cameras does not fall equally on everyone but on those who are predefined as potentially deviant, or through appearance and demeanor, are singled out by operators as un-respectable..."

"Surveillance will become a tool of injustice through the amplification of differential and discriminatory policing."

"Even surveillance of legal activities can inhibit people from engaging in them."

"A core purpose of all surveillance is social control... we are inhibited, chilled by the eye in the Internet watching."

Giving agents of the state the ability to monitor our every move and keystroke, let alone having this information available to DHS, the FBI and the NSA forever is simply unacceptable.

Q. How did the DAC project start?

A. DAC began with a grant from the Dept. of Homeland Security in 2008 to the Port of Oakland to secure port facilities "from terrorists." (C.f: <http://tinyurl.com/qf7nsd4>)

Q. How did it turn into something citywide, not just for the Port?

A. We're not sure exactly. In June of 2009 City of Oakland representatives signed a document to "Explore the Development of a Joint Port-OPD-OFD-OES Domain Awareness Coordination Center" In September, the Federal government tentatively approved a grant to the Port for \$2.9M to implement the Joint City/Port DAC. In July, 2010 the City Council approved the grant and in early 2012 the final documents were signed.

Who made the decision to mutate the project from Port security to citywide surveillance is unclear. Ultimately the buck stops with ex-Mayor Quan and former City Manager Santana, who allowed the City of Oakland's proud progressive traditions to be trampled on with bribes of DHS money so that it could become a guinea pig for mass surveillance on an unprecedented scale.

Q. How far along is the DAC project?

A. In Oct. 2012, Oakland sent out a Request for Proposal (RfP) for Phase I. The project was awarded to SAIC, completed in Spring of 2013.

Q. What did SAIC put together during Phase I?

A. Computers, software and information feeds. What was contracted for was built at the City's Emergency Operations Center at 17th & MLK.

Q. What about phase II?

A. In May, 2013, the Port of Oakland approved transferring "Port Security Grant" monies to fund Phase II of the DAC. In late July, the Oakland City Council approved receiving these funds (some \$2M) and gave a sole source, non-bid contract to SAIC to implement Phase II.

Q. Did anyone notice? Were there protests?

A. Yes! Opponents made City Council members aware of the true nature of SAIC (as in they had

settled a fraud case with NYC for \$500M), and testified to make them aware of what it was they were voting on. To no avail. The only bone opponents were thrown was an amendment stipulating that the DAC would not go live until a privacy policy, due to be written by March 2014, was approved by the Council.

Q. So SAIC built Phase II of the DAC?

A. No. In August, 2013 City staff "discovered" that SAIC was involved or affiliated with nuclear weapons technology research or support.

Q. Well, duh. Who didn't know that? They're a military contractor. So what?

A. In 1992 the City Council passed an ordinance (<http://tinyurl.com/n5jfdq>) restricting the City in its dealing with companies associated in certain fairly broad ways with nuclear weapons technology.

Q. Oops. **A.** Oops!

Q. Did Oakland then junk the whole project?

A. No. But the City decided they couldn't use SAIC. They also realized they couldn't go back and do an entire round of Requests for Proposal (RFP) for Phase II - they were in danger of timing out on the grant money if they went through the whole process again. City Manager Santana decided to ask the Council to give permission to choose a Phase II contractor from the set of four Phase I contractors whom they had rejected in favor of SAIC last year.

Q. Why did you put "discovered" in scare quotes?

A. Because we procured documents using a Public Records Act request that show SAIC and City officials knew in Feb., 2013 that **SAIC was performing work in violation of the ordinance.** The East Bay Express (EBX) published an expose detailing how SAIC perjured itself and how City officials were complicit in the cover-up. http://tinyurl.com/po4frc9_

Q. What happened to Santana's request?

A. On November 19th, 2013 the City Council considered the matter. Some 70+ people signed up to speak against the DAC - again to no avail. The vote was 6-1 to approve the new procedure for hiring a Phase II DAC contractor.

Q. And then?

A. Santana chose Schneider Electric. This choice was presented to the City Council Public Safety Committee on Jan. 28, 2014; the vote was 3-0-1 to forward the recommendation to the City Council. It came before the Council on Feb. 18th.

Q. So Schneider isn't a nuclear contractor?

A. Schneider claims it has no current nuclear contracts, only past ones. Based on Schneider's claims Santana opined that Schneider was in conformance with the NFZO.

Q. What happened on February 18th?

A. After some 50 people spoke in one voice against the DAC - members of the Lighthouse Mosque eloquently expressing their fear of increased surveillance, the City Council discussed scaling back the system to only handle Port Security and emergencies, then voted 6-0-2 to postpone a decision until March 4th. We and our friends had finally made an impact.

On March 4th, again after unanimous public opposition, the Council voted 5-4, Mayor Quan breaking the tie, in favor of a Port-restricted DAC.

Q. Victory?

A. No. Neither defeat nor victory. **Our goal was and is to kill the DAC, not corral it.** It still exists, and the City Council could at any time extend its capabilities across Oakland. Quan, immediately after the vote, expressed her intent to do so "as soon as privacy issues were resolved."

Q. What happened to the privacy policy?

A. It morphed from a policy to be put together by City staff to an "Ad Hoc" committee, ultimately to being a formal City committee which has met every other week from May, 2014 through March, 2015.

Q. So Oakland's safe from spying til it's approved?

A. Absolutely not. Information about "Stingray", a device the Oakland Police "have access to" has come to light. Stingray is a device that mimics a cell phone tower; your cell phone is fooled into communicating with it. **A Stingray can "listen in" on every cell phone that is using a particular**

tower and locate all cell phones in range - wide-ranging, warrantless surveillance.

<http://tinyurl.com/lha42cq> Shotspotter - a gunshot detection system - has been revealed as capable of listening in on random public conversations.

Q. OMG. What's being done about it?"

A. We are researching filing a lawsuit around this and other matters. The City has refused all our Public Records requests regarding "Stingray." It has refused our requests for contract docs between the City and Harris, the manufacturer (Harris is also a Nuclear Contractor in violation of the NFZO because it has contracts with the City).

Q. It's March, 2015! What's with the privacy policy?

A. It's written. It is a very strong policy; it came before the Public Safety Cmte on Feb. 10th, along with a proposal to create a City-wide privacy policy and an open-process surveillance technology acquisition ordinance. It was all approved "in principle." The proposals were put out to public comment (<http://tinyurl.com/llq3jsa>) and likely will be heard again by the Public Safety Cmte April 28th.

Q. Why does this all sound like the novel '1984' ?

A. Because it is! Orwell was just a few decades premature predicting when technology would realize his dystopian nightmare. Stingray is truly Big Brother watching and EBX has exposed the real intent in constructing the DAC: not for safety but for the stifling of dissent: <http://tinyurl.com/p7wbrqk>.

Q. Who are you guys? Who wrote this?

A. We're the Oakland Privacy Working Group; local activists who came together to fight the DAC and, more generally, all privacy and 4th amendment violations by our police-state government. We are allied with those who fight police militarization. We meet monthly, usually Wed. More info found here:

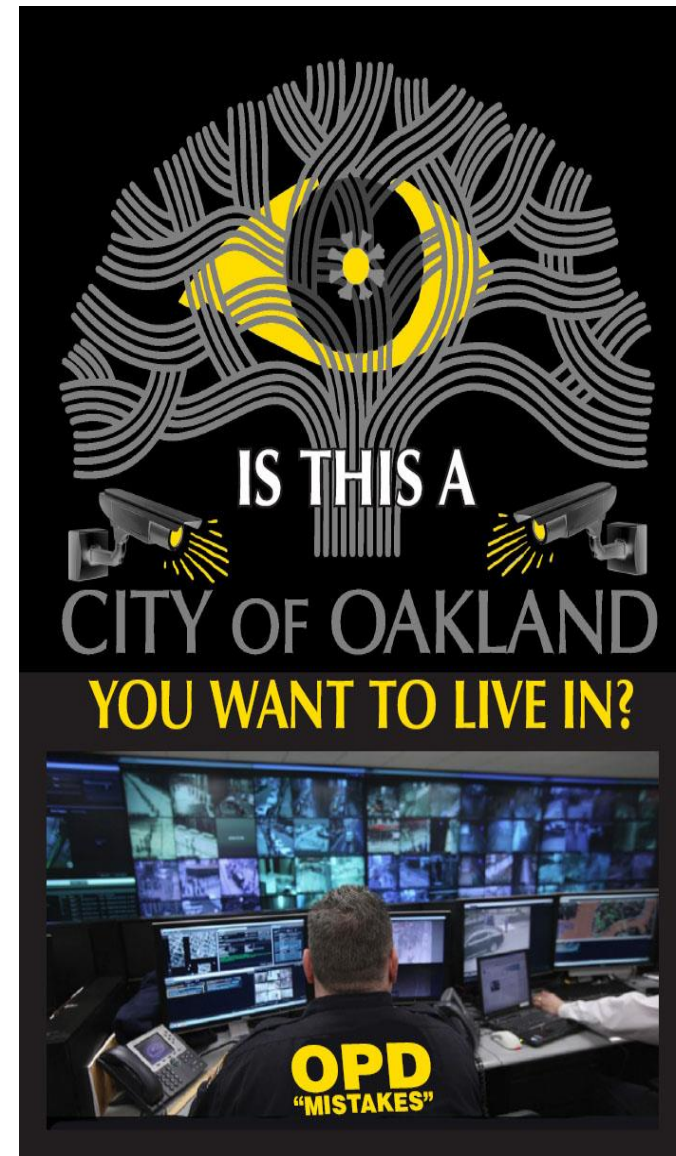
<http://occupyoakland.org/calendar/>

There's information on the Oakland Wiki:

<http://tinyurl.com/kov5sow/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oakprivacy>

Twitter: @oaklandprivacy.



Frequently Asked Questions about
the Domain Awareness Center – DAC

Answered by:

the OAKLAND PRIVACY GROUP