

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? Won't DAC help stop crime?

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. As for crime, 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 which called for a group to "Explore the Development of a Joint Port-OPD-OFD-OES Domain Awareness Coordination Center at the City's existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC)." In September, the Federal government tentatively approved a grant to the Port of Oakland for \$2.9M to implement the Joint City/Port DAC. In July, 2010 the City Council approved receiving those monies and spending them. In early 2012 the final documents were signed. Why it took so long and who made the decision to mutate the project from Port security to citywide surveillance is unclear.

Ultimately the buck must stop with Mayor Quan and City Administrator Deanna Santana, who allowed the City of Oakland's proud progressive traditions to be trampled on with bribes of Homeland Security 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 October, 2012, Oakland sent out a Request for Proposal to implement Phase I. They ultimately chose Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) from a number of bidders. That work, Phase I, was completed in late Spring of 2013.

Q. What did SAIC put together during Phase I?

A. "Phase 1 included the Design/build that would include equipment, services and the key City systems' integration." For what that jumble is worth. In other words we're not sure. What was done 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 unanimously approved receiving these funds (some \$2,000,000) and gave a sole source, non-bid contract to Phase I contractor SAIC to implement Phase II with that money.

Q. Did anyone notice? Were there protests?

A. Yes! Opponents made City Council members aware of the true nature of SAIC (as in evil - they recently settled a fraud case with NYC for \$500M), and testified in July to make them aware of what it was they were voting on. To no avail. Although the vote was postponed two weeks because the Council was embarrassed to realize it had no clue what it was voting for, at their next meeting they all voted to proceed with Phase II. The only bone opponents were thrown was an amendment by Councilperson Kalb stipulating that the DAC would not go online until a privacy policy – due to be written by March of 2014, by OPD and the same people who will control the DAC (!) – was approved by the Council.

Q. So Phase II is being implemented? **A.** No!

Q. What happened?

A. We don't know exactly. At some point in August, 2013 City of Oakland personnel "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?

A. In 1992 (after a 1988 ordinance was found unconstitutional), the Oakland 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. We don't know what kind of discussions went on after this "discovery," (we are issuing Public Records requests to find out) but what we do know is that the City decided they couldn't use SAIC any

more. 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 City Council to grant her 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. Is that legal?

A. It's questionable. We're looking into this and many other areas for legal challenges.

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

A. Because we procured documents (using a California Public Records Act request) that show that SAIC and officials in City government knew in February, 2013 that SAIC was performing work in violation of the ordinance. The East Bay Express has published an expose detailing how SAIC perjured itself and City officials were complicit in the cover-up. C.f. <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 prior to the meeting's beginning at 6:30. When the meeting began, City Council President Kernighan summarily rejected a request to move the agenda item up the schedule, refusing to even call a vote of the Council on the question. Nonetheless some thirty people stuck around and many of them voiced their objections around 1:00 AM - again to no avail. The Council voted 6-1 (Councilperson McElhaney in the minority) to approve the new procedure for hiring a Phase II DAC contractor. Protesters also "mic checked" the Council about two hours into the meeting, demanding to be heard on the DAC before exhaustion set in. Again, that was refused.

Q. What happens next?

A. The City Administrator had to choose one of four contractors and negotiate some sort of contract with that entity. Santana chose Schneider Electric. This choice will be presented to the City Council Public Safety Committee on Jan 28th, and is tentatively scheduled to come before the full City

Council on Feb 4th.

Q. So Schneider isn't involved in with nuclear weapons, as was SAIC?

A. Not true! If one Google's "Schneider Electric" and "nuclear weapons" it is painfully obvious that SE is a nuclear weapons contractor. In fact research by Darwin BondGraham (<http://tinyurl.com/qhnl5ny>) suggests that all of them - to one degree or another - have a connection to nuclear weapons technology. Whether these ties to nuclear weapons render them ineligible under the terms of the 1992 ordinance, and whether if so the City of Oakland will choose to ignore the links, or seek an exemption, remains to be seen.

Q. Can a decision by the City to ignore such a connection be challenged?

A. Section 526a of the California Civil Code allows taxpayers to challenge a City on illegal use of funds. We think this is the case and are beginning to put together the grounds for a lawsuit.

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

A. Because it is! Orwell was just a few decades premature predicting when technology would realize his dystopian dream. The EBX has exposed the real intent of City personnel in constructing the DAC: the stifling of dissent. C.f. <http://tinyurl.com/p7wbrqk>

Q. Who are you guys? Who wrote this?

A. We're the Oakland Privacy Group. We came together to fight the DAC and, more generally, all privacy and 4th amendment violations by our police-state government.

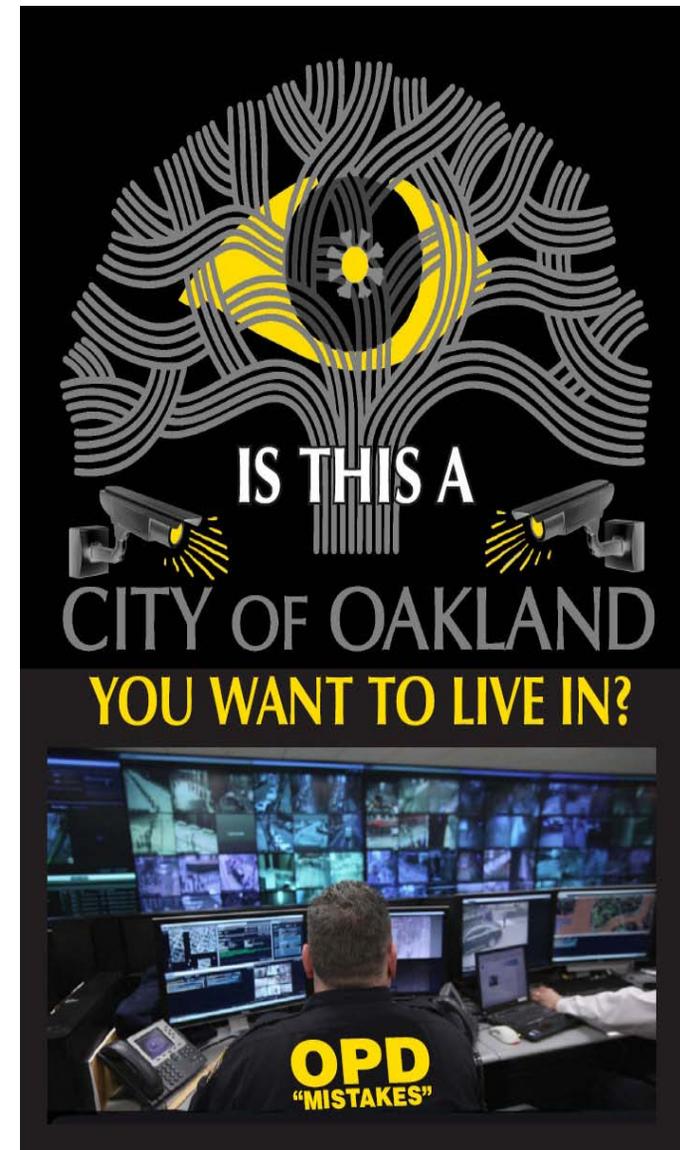
Q. Do you have a website? Meetings?

A. Our meetings should be listed here: <https://oaklandprivacy.wordpress.com/> and here: <http://occupyoakland.org/calendar/>

There's information here:

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

There's also a twitter: @oaklandprivacy



Frequently Asked Questions about
the Domain Awareness Center – DAC

answered by:

the OAKLAND PRIVACY GROUP