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TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Corren Johnson, Director – Department of Transportation
DATE	October 21, 2024
SUBJECT	23-0377 Surveillance Technology – Procurement

Position: Defer to Law Department

Introduction

For the purpose of creating the Community Advisory Commission on Surveillance; providing for the membership and duties of the Commission; requiring City Council approval for the purchase of certain equipment; requiring City agencies to submit certain reports; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the City’s procurement of surveillance technology.

DOT Analysis

City Council Bill 23-0377 looks to comprehensively regulate the City’s use of surveillance technology. The proposed legislation provides specific definitions for surveillance technology and pursues the establishment of a Community Advisory Commission on Surveillance tasked with leading regulatory efforts.

The Department makes extensive use of automatic license plate readers, which are essential to the City’s network of traffic cameras. The Automated Traffic Violation Enforcement System (ATVES) operates an extensive network of automated enforcement cameras designed to capture identifying information of vehicles associated with violations related to speeding, red-light running, and prohibited commercial vehicle traffic. Data collected through the ATVES program has consistently demonstrated a pattern of reduced prevalence of speeding on corridors where automated speed enforcement cameras have been implemented. The speed cameras on I-83 have contributed to significantly reduced speeds downstream of the cameras.

The Department’s ATVES follows a strict standard operating procedure and is operated in accordance with an active memorandum of understanding with the Baltimore City Police Department. In addition, the ATVES staffs an Ombudsman



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and quality assurance team who are tasked with reviewing each automated citation to ensure accuracy. ATVES cameras are owned, maintained and operated by private vendors approved by the Board of Estimates and overseen through the ATVES program.

Furthermore, the Department operates various CCTV cameras aimed at monitoring real-time traffic conditions of major corridors in the City. These cameras assist the Department's efforts to adequately deploy resources in the case of emergencies, special events, and pronounced instances of traffic congestion. In 2024, the Department applied for two grants to expand CCTV camera coverage and to improve its on-demand signal response. Improving on-demand signal response would allow the Department to re-time signals in response to live traffic data. Additionally, connected vehicle technology is an emerging field of interest that could eventually facilitate communication between "smart" signals and connected and automated vehicles (CAV) to improve traffic operations in real time. The legislation may limit the Department's ability to deploy this new technology.

The ATVES program is already highly scrutinized at the local and state level; new obstacles to the procurement and operation of the program could hurt the Department's ability to fulfill the high demand for camera enforcement. In addition, the Department is at the procurement stage of an effort to establish a bus lane enforcement system aimed at deterring the illegal use of bus lanes by private vehicles. New barriers to implementation could significantly delay project delivery, therefore hurting the City's credibility and apparent ability to utilize favorable legislation among State elected officials-.

Conclusion

The Department finds that the legislation could create barriers to the effective operation of the ATVES program and CCTV traffic monitoring operations but defers to the Law Department on the legality and potential implementation of Council Bill 23-0377.