



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

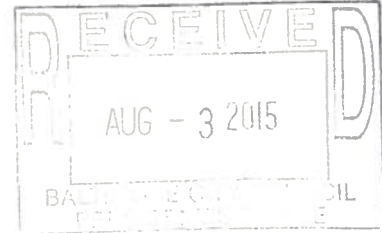


Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

Kevin Davis
Interim Police Commissioner

August 3, 2015

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202



Attention: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

**Re: City Council Bill No. 15-0233R
Allocating Federal Criminal Seizure Funds for Police Van and Body
Cameras**

Dear Council President Young and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD or the Department) has reviewed Council Bill 15-0233R and takes **no position** on this legislation. This resolution calls on the BPD and the Department of Finance to take steps to immediately direct federal criminal seizure funds, or other quickly available funds, towards accelerating the Department's deployment of cameras in all police vans and body cameras for all appropriate officers.

The Department agrees with the bill sponsor's desire to implement both body-worn and transport van camera programs and is taking steps to do so. In fact, both projects are among Commissioner Davis' highest priority technology items. As such, the Department is committed to prompt and successful implementation of both. The Department takes no position on this legislation because revenue from asset forfeiture funds is already being utilized to support body-worn camera implementation to the fullest extent practicable. Furthermore, the City is currently in the process of identifying the funds necessary to install camera systems in the Department's transport fleet. The use of asset forfeiture funds is a likely funding source for this project as well.

Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs)

With respect to BWCs, \$3.6 million of federal Asset Forfeiture funds are being used for the initial purchase of camera hardware, software, and officer training in connection with the launch of a Pilot Program. Last month, the Bureau of Purchases released a Request for Proposals for Body Worn Cameras. According to the timeline laid out in the RFP, the BWC Pilot Program will launch by October 26, 2015. The Pilot will last a minimum of 60 days and will include 155 individual officers, including 15 officers from the Special Enforcement Section and 140 officers divided among three of the City's nine police districts: Eastern, Central, and Western.

Consistent with the report issued by the Baltimore City Working Group on the Use and Implementation of BWCs (the "Working Group"), the Department believes that a Pilot Program is necessary. The Working Group was composed of individuals representing a diverse range of viewpoints, including city officials, community leaders, clergy members, elected officials, local attorneys, the FOP, and the ACLU. As stated in the report, a Pilot would permit thorough review of different BWC models and storage capabilities for ease of use and efficiency. The Pilot will allow officers to test the BWCs in a variety of conditions, allowing the

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no position

Department to evaluate them in different lighting, temperature, and weather conditions, as well as to test their use during arrest and control scenarios. Moreover, the Pilot will allow BPD the opportunity to fully vet policies and practices.

The RFP contemplates that the Contract Award will occur by February 24, 2016. From the time of Contract Award, the BPD will ramp up to full-scale implementation over a two-year period. It is expected that all officers in the nine police districts will receive BWCs, plus all personnel assigned to the Special Enforcement Section. Altogether, a fully implemented program will consist of 2,500 BWCs.

Cameras for Transport Vans

BPD currently has 24 transport vehicles used to transport arrestees. It is imperative that the transportation of individuals be carried out in the safest manner possible. As such, the Department convened an internal working group to explore options to modernize the transport vehicle fleet and enhance the safety of both passengers and officers. The working group identified a number of changes to be made, including the installation of camera systems. As a result, the following changes are being made to a transport van in each of the nine police districts: eliminating the center partition, adding a side-loading option, and adding a camera monitoring system. Camera systems will be added to all 24 vehicles in the transport fleet. BPD is working with the Department of General Services on the safety upgrades and has taken steps to begin the procurement of a camera system. Asset forfeiture funds are a likely source of funding for the camera system.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. The Department looks forward to working with the City Council on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Vetter", written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Vetter
Director, Government Affairs