



**Agencies**

Department of Public Works	Baltimore City Public School System
Department of Real Estate	Baltimore Development Corporation
Department of Recreation and Parks	City Solicitor
Department of Transportation	Comptroller's Office
Fire Department	Department of Audits
Health Department	Department of Finance
Mayor's Office of Employment Development	Department of General Services
Mayor's Office of Human Services	Department of Housing and Community Development
Mayor's Office of Information Technology	Department of Human Resources
Office of the Mayor	Department of Planning
Police Department	Other: _____
Other: _____	Other: _____
Other: _____	Other: _____

**Boards and Commissions**

Environmental Control Board	Board of Estimates
Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System	Board of Ethics
Labor Commissioner	Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
Parking Authority Board	Comm. for Historical and Architectural Preservation
Planning Commission	Commission on Sustainability
Wage Commission	Employees' Retirement System
Other: _____	Other: _____
Other: _____	Other: _____
Other: _____	Other: _____

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 18-0080R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: President Young, Councilmembers Henry, Burnett, Scott, Schleifer, Pinkett,  
Costello, Bullock, Reisinger, Cohen, Middleton, Clarke, Stokes, Sneed

Introduced and read first time: April 23, 2018

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

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Committee Report: Favorable

Adopted: June 25, 2018

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**A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING**

**Traffic Light Synchronization**

1  
2 FOR the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights  
3 city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box"  
4 program.

**Recitals**

5  
6 On April 18<sup>th</sup> the Department of Transportation announced plans to begin stepped up  
7 enforcement of State law prohibiting motorists from stopping within an intersection. According  
8 to the announcement, this new "Don't Block the Box" program will begin issuing warnings on  
9 May 1<sup>st</sup> and will issue citations with \$90 fines and a license point starting a month later on June  
10 1<sup>st</sup>.

11 Gridlock and excessive delays in traffic are genuine problems in Baltimore, but they are  
12 problems with more than one cause. Drivers who would be subject to this new enforcement  
13 could be one of those causes, but they could also be victims of other problems who unwittingly  
14 become stuck in an intersection.

15 Focusing on only one cause of Baltimore's traffic woes is unlikely to be effective on its own,  
16 and could have unintended consequences. Ensuring that traffic lights city-wide are properly  
17 synchronized ahead of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation's "Don't Block the Box"  
18 program will assist motorists in adjusting to the Administration's new traffic initiative, making it  
19 more likely to succeed in its goal of improving traffic flows and less likely to penalize drivers  
20 inadvertently stuck because of situations beyond their control.

21 In addition to helping motorists adjust to the "Don't Block the Box" program, properly  
22 synchronized lights provide numerous additional benefits to motorists and pedestrians. Research  
23 from the Federal Highway Administration has found that traffic signal management can lead to  
24 improved air quality, reduced fuel consumption, less aggressive driving, and better traffic flow.

25 Until the City has taken steps to ensure that traffic lights are properly synchronized and are  
26 not contributing to gridlock, it would be premature to begin aggressive enforcement actions

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken by amendment

**Council Bill 18-0080R**

1 against drivers that could interfere with their ability to legally operate a vehicle. Taking a  
2 comprehensive approach to Baltimore's gridlock problem is both more appropriate and more  
3 likely to result in real change.

4 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
5 Council calls on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are  
6 properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

7 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
8 Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's legislative liaison to the City Council.

**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL**  
**JUDICIARY AND LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**VOTING RECORD**

Resolution#: CC-18-0080R

DATE: 6/19/18

**BILL TITLE: Traffic Light Synchronization**

MOTION BY: Clarke                      SECONDED BY: Stokes

FAVORABLE

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

UNFAVORABLE

WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

NAME	YEAS	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Costello, E., Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarke, M., Vice Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullock, J.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinkett, L.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reisinger, E.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scott, B.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stokes, R.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>TOTALS</b>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

CHAIRPERSON: C. S. [Signature]

COMMITTEE STAFF: Matthew L. Peters, Initials: [Signature]



# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland  
21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

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Tuesday, June 19, 2018

10:05 AM

Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall

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18-0080R

Continuation of the May 9, 2018 Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Hearing

#### CALL TO ORDER

#### INTRODUCTIONS

#### ATTENDANCE

**Present** 7 - Member Eric T. Costello, Member Mary Pat Clarke, Member Leon F. Pinkett III, Member John T. Bullock, Member Edward Reisinger, Member Brandon M. Scott, and Member Robert Stokes Sr.

#### ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

##### 18-0080R

##### **Traffic Light Synchronization**

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

**Sponsors:** President Young, Bill Henry, Kristerfer Burnett, Brandon M. Scott, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, Leon F. Pinkett, III, Eric T. Costello, John T. Bullock, Edward Reisinger, Zeke Cohen, Sharon Green Middleton, Mary Pat Clarke, Robert Stokes, Sr., Shannon Sneed

**A motion was made by Member Clarke, seconded by Member Stokes, Sr., that this City Council Resolution be Recommended Favorably. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Member Costello, Member Clarke, Member Pinkett III, Member Bullock, Member Reisinger, Member Scott, and Member Stokes Sr.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**







**HEARING NOTES**

**City Council Resolution: 18-0080R**

**Traffic Light Synchronization**

**Committee:** Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

**Chaired By:** Councilmember Eric Costello

**Hearing Date:** June 19, 2018

**Time:** 10:10 AM to 10:15 AM

**Location:** Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber

**Total Attendance:** ~70

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Eric Costello	Mary Pat Clarke	Brandon Scott	
Leon Pinkett	Robert Stokes	John Bullock	Edward Reisinger

<b>Bill Synopsis in the file?</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Attendance sheet in the file?</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Agency reports read?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Evidence of notification to property owners?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Final vote taken at this hearing?</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Motioned by:</b> .....	Councilmember Clarke		
<b>Seconded by:</b> .....	Councilmember Stokes		
<b>Final Vote:</b> .....	Favorable		

**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

None

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**Major Issues Discussed**

1. Chairman Costello opened the proceedings, and briefly described the background for the resolution and its relationship to bill 18-0251 (heard immediately prior to this hearing).

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**Further Study**

Was further study requested?

Yes  No

If yes, describe. N/A

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**Committee Vote**

E. Costello: ..... Yea  
M. Clarke: ..... Yea  
J. Bullock: ..... Yea  
L. Pinkett: ..... Yea  
E. Reisinger: ..... Yea  
B. Scott: ..... Yea  
R. Stokes: ..... Yea

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Matthew L. Peters, Committee Staff

Date: June 19, 2018

cc: Bill File  
OCS Chrono File





# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland  
21202

## Meeting Agenda - Final

### Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

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Tuesday, June 19, 2018

10:05 AM

Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall

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18-0080R

Continuation of the May 9, 2018 Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Hearing

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

18-0080R

Traffic Light Synchronization

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

Sponsors:

President Young, Bill Henry, Kristerfer Burnett, Brandon M. Scott, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, Leon F. Pinkett, III, Eric T. Costello, John T. Bullock, Edward Reisinger, Zeke Cohen, Sharon Green Middleton, Mary Pat Clarke, Robert Stokes, Sr., Shannon Sneed

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**



CITY OF BALTIMORE

CATHERINE E. PUGH, Mayor



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

LARRY E. GREENE, Director  
415 City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
410-396-7215 / Fax: 410-545-7596  
email: larry.greene@baltimorecity.gov

## BILL SYNOPSIS

**Committee: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations**

**City Council Resolution 18-0080R**

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**Traffic Light Synchronization**

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**Sponsor: President Young, et al**

**Introduced: April 23, 2018**

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

**Effective: Upon Enactment.**

**Hearing Date/Time/Location: June 19, 2018/10:05 a.m./Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber**

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### AGENCY REPORT

Department of Transportation

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### ANALYSIS

**Current Law**

Article 31, § 2-5 of the Baltimore City Code authorizes the Director of Transportation to install and maintain signals to control vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and to determine the design, timing, type, size, and location of those signals.

**Background**

This resolution calls on the Baltimore City Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the

Box" program. On April 18, 2018, the Director of the Department of Transportation announced that the Department will launch a "Don't Block the Box" program to cite motorists who enter an intersection without first making sure that they will be able to move all the way through before the light turns red. According to the Department, "[b]locking an intersection causes traffic congestion and delays by preventing other vehicles from passing through, and also creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists."

During a May 9, 2018 hearing on the resolution the Department of Transportation described its plans to synchronize traffic lights before it issues citations for blocking intersections. At the close of the hearing the Committee requested a written explanation of the following from the Department by May 18, 2018:

(1) The legal basis for DOT's 'Don't Block the Box' enforcement program—including the law that drivers will be cited for violating, the penalties for the violation, DOT's authority to issue citations for the violation, and whether fines are paid to the City or State—with references to the applicable State and City Code provisions.

(2) The amount of funding needed for traffic signal system upgrades compared to the amount requested in the FY2019 budget, including the specific service number(s) and line item(s) in the budget.

The Department provided the attached memoranda in response to the Committee's requests.

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### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Fiscal Note:** None

**Information Source(s):** Code of Maryland, Baltimore City Code, Department of Transportation, Resolution 18-0080R.

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Analysis by:



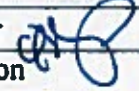

Matthew L. Peters

Direct Inquiries to: (410) 396-1268

Analysis Date:

June 14, 2018



<b>F R O M</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	Michelle Pourciau, Director 	<b>CITY of BALTIMORE</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	Department of Transportation 417 E Fayette Street, Room 527		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	Don't Block the Box		

**TO: The Honorable Bernard "Jack" Young,  
Chairman Eric Costello,  
Vice Chair Mary Pat Clarke, and  
The Honorable Members of the City Council**

**May 10, 2018**


**The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present the current status and immediate improvements being implemented on our Traffic Signal System during the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Hearing (18-0080R) on May 9, 2018.**

**Our goal is to give Council confidence that the traffic signals at the proposed enforcement locations are properly optimized so that the signal timing doesn't encourage motorist to block the box. Additionally, the Department is committed to moving away from the utilization of Maryland State Statute §21-201(a)(1) and we are enthusiastic to work in conjunction with the Baltimore City Council to ensure that the citation used for enforcement carries a fair penalty that will not include a point on any citizen's license. Department officials will be meeting with Council President Young's Legislative Director next week to discuss citation or legislative options.**

**Public safety is our primary concern and the objective of the Don't Block the Box program is to modify unsafe driving behavior which endangers pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists and creates gridlock. We will continue to work collaboratively with the Council to develop a program that will be in the best interest of all users of our roadways.**

**cc: Karen Stokes**



<b>F R O M</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	Michelle Pourciau, Director <i>MP</i>	<b>CITY of BALTIMORE</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	Department of Transportation (DOT) 417 E Fayette Street, Room 527		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	Don't Block the Box	<b>M E M O</b>	

TO: Chairman Costello, Council President Young  
 FROM: Department of Transportation  
 RE: "Don't Block the Box"

DATE: May 18, 2018

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present the current status and immediate improvements being implemented on our Traffic Signal System during the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee Hearing (18-0080R) on May 9, 2018. Per the request of the Council, BCDOT is providing further clarification of the "Don't Block the Box" campaign.

**BACKGROUND**

Approximately 10 years ago, BCDOT implemented a similar initiative to modify unsafe driving behaviors which endangered pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, and created gridlock. Due to the limited authority given to the Traffic Enforcement Officer's (TEO's) to write citations for moving violations, it was decided that BCDOT would use the following statute:

- **Statute:** Maryland Code of Statutes, Transportation Article §21-201(a)(1) states "Subject to the exceptions granted in this title to the driver of an emergency vehicle, the driver of any vehicle, unless otherwise directed by a police officer, shall obey instructions of any traffic control device applicable to the vehicle and place in accordance with the Maryland Vehicle Law."
- **Statute Penalty:** District Court of Maryland 21.201.a1: Driver failure to obey properly placed traffic control device instructions carries a minimum penalty of a \$90.00 fine and one (1) point on the violator's driver's license.
- **Enforcement Capabilities:** Article 19, Subtitle 72-2(b) provides that TEO's are authorized to issue moving violations for "...failure to obey lawful traffic directions and control devices."
- **Revenue:** Accrues to the State.

**MOVING FORWARD**

BCDOT and Council President Young's office met this week to work collectively on a path forward due to the concerns surrounding issues of a citation that carried a point on the driver's license. The following alternative legislation within the Baltimore City Code is being considered:

- **Code:** Article 31, § 36-4(2): "Obstructing or impeding the free flow of traffic within an intersection or a marked crosswalk or by a commercial vehicle..."
- **Code Penalty:** Carries a \$250.00 fine.
- **Revenue:** Accrues to the City of Baltimore.

We are aware that there are concerns regarding the \$250 fine amount; therefore, BCDOT and Council President Young's office are working collaboratively in an effort to legislatively lower the fine and to clarify some of the confusing language regarding commercial vehicles.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

BCDOT was requested to provide further details on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) allotments discussed at the hearing. The Traffic and Signal CIP budget is \$22 million dollars, and can be broken down into four overall categories:

- **Traffic Signal Reconstruction:** (CIP 512-077) - Approximately \$9.1 million has been allocated to Traffic Signal Reconstruction.
- **Intelligent Transportation System Improvements:** (CIP 512-078) – Approximately \$7.2 million has been allocated to Intelligent Transportation System Improvements.
- **Traffic Management Center Upgrades:** (CIP 512-005) – Approximately \$4.5 million has been allocated to the Traffic Management Center Upgrades.
- **Traffic Safety Improvements:** (CIP 512-080) – Approximately \$1.2 million for Traffic Safety Improvements.

We look forward to our continued partnership as we work collectively to make our City safe and accessible to all people using all modes of transportation.

# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland  
21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

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Wednesday, May 9, 2018

5:00 PM

Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall

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18-0080R  
CHARM TV 25

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

**Present** 7 - Member Eric T. Costello, Member Mary Pat Clarke, Member Leon F. Pinkett III, Member John T. Bullock, Member Edward Reisinger, Member Brandon M. Scott, and Member Robert Stokes Sr.

#### **ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

18-0080R

##### **Traffic Light Synchronization**

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

**Sponsors:** President Young, Bill Henry, Kristerfer Burnett, Brandon M. Scott, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, Leon F. Pinkett, III, Eric T. Costello, John T. Bullock, Edward Reisinger, Zeke Cohen, Sharon Green Middleton, Mary Pat Clarke, Robert Stokes, Sr., Shannon Sneed

The hearing was recessed. Additional hearings may be scheduled at a later date.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**





**HEARING NOTES**

**Bill: 18-0080R**

**Traffic Light Synchronization**

**Committee:** Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

**Chaired By:** Councilmember Eric Costello

**Hearing Date:** May 9, 2018  
**Time (Begin):** 5:05 PM  
**Time (End):** 6:00 PM  
**Location:** Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber  
**Total Attendance:** ~30

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Eric Costello                      Mary Pat Clarke                      Brandon Scott  
Leon Pinkett                      Robert Stokes                      John Bullock                      Edward Reisinger

Bill Synopsis in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Attendance sheet in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Agency reports read? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Motioned by: .....	N/A		
Seconded by: .....	N/A		
Final Vote: .....	N/A		

**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

- Muhammed Khalid, Department of Transportation
- Raj Sharma, Department of Transportation
- Katelyn McCauley, Department of Transportation
- Toby Goodwin, Department of Transportation
- Eboni Wimbush, Department of Transportation

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## Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairman Costello called the meeting to order, and introduced the members of the Committee and other Council members in attendance.
2. President Young explained the reasons for the Resolution and the need to synchronize traffic lights prior to beginning 'Don't Block the Box' enforcement. He also indicated that the Council was surprised by the Department of Transportation's announcement of the 'Don't Block the Box' program, and that Council members would appreciate advance notice in the future so they can be prepared to respond to constituent inquiries.
3. Muhammed Khalid, Deputy Director and Chief Engineer for the Department of Transportation presented on the City's traffic signal system and 'Don't Block the Box' program (presentation slides in file). The presentation identified 13 intersections where initial 'Don't Block the Box' enforcement will occur. Mr. Khalid also stated that the Department has already begun work to synchronize the signals at and around those intersections, and that the work will be complete within 30 days (by June 14, 2018).
4. President Young and Chairman Costello asked whether the Department will begin 'Don't Block the Box' enforcement before the light synchronization is complete. Eboni Wimbush, Chief of Staff for the Department confirmed that it would not issue citations with fines or other penalties until the lights at and around each intersection are synchronized, but stated that it may issue warnings before synchronization is complete.
5. Chairman Costello asked about the total funding needed to upgrade the traffic signal system (\$90 million stated vs. \$102 million indicated in the presentation) and whether it could be done all at once instead of spaced out over six years. Mr. Khalid indicated that the upgrades do require some time to design, but that they could be done over a much shorter time if the funding was available. Chairman Costello also asked Mr. Khalid to explain the Mayor's budget request of \$50 million for signal system upgrades as it relates to the estimates in the presentation (see Further Study, below).
6. Councilwoman Clarke asked the representatives from the Department to explain what signal synchronization means, and how the Department adjusts signal timing. Department representatives explained that they collect data on the volume of cars traveling in all directions through an intersection, and through nearby intersections, and use computers to determine optimal timing for the signals. They also explained that currently around 400 of the City's 1400 signals can be adjusted remotely from the central command center. The other 1000 must be adjusted individually, onsite.
7. Councilwoman Clarke and Chairman Costello asked the Department to explain the legal basis for the Department to issue citations for blocking intersections, the associated penalties, and where the money collected for fines will go (City or State). Chairman Costello also asked how the Department decided between citations based on Maryland law that carry a \$90 fine and one point on the driver's license and citations based on Baltimore City ordinance that carry only a \$250 fine. The representatives from the Department indicated that they would respond in writing by Friday, May 18, 2018 (see Further Study, below).
8. President Young expressed concern about the Department's plan to assess points on drivers' licenses for 'Don't Block the Box' violations, and stated that the Mayor had told him there would not be points assessed for violations. President Young suggested that the committee recess the hearing, and reconvene at a later date to address the issue of points for violations if needed.



- 9. Chairman Costello asked how much was budgeted for capital improvements this year, and whether the representatives from the Department knew the applicable line item(s). The representatives from the Department did not have the information available (see Further Study, below).
- 10. Chairman Costello noted his recent experience with unacceptable travel delays downtown that were not caused by traffic, and recessed the hearing.

**Further Study**

Was further study requested?  Yes  No

If yes, describe.

By Friday, May 18, 2018, the Department of Transportation will send a written explanation of the following to Chairman Costello, Kara Kunst, Matthew Peters, and Kyron Banks:

- (1) The legal basis for DOT's 'Don't Block the Box' enforcement program—including the law that drivers will be cited for violating, the penalties for the violation, DOT's authority to issue citations for the violation, and whether fines are paid to the City or State—with references to the applicable State and City Code provisions.
- (2) The amount of funding needed for traffic signal system upgrades compared to the amount requested in the FY2019 budget, including the specific service number(s) and line item(s) in the budget.

**Committee Vote**

E. Costello: .....

M. Clarke: .....

J. Bullock: .....

L. Pinkett: .....

E. Reisinger: .....

B. Scott: .....

R. Stokes: .....

*Matthew Peters*

Matthew L. Peters, Committee Staff

Date: May 14, 2018

cc: Bill File  
OCS Chrono File





# CITY OF BALTIMORE

## CITY COUNCIL HEARING ATTENDANCE RECORD

Committee: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

Chairperson: Eric Costello

Date: May 9, 2018

Time: 5:00 PM

Place: Clarence "Du" Burns Chambers

Subject: Resolution - Traffic Light Synchronization

CC Bill Number: 18-0080R

**PLEASE PRINT**

**IF YOU WANT TO TESTIFY PLEASE CHECK HERE**



FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ST. #	ADDRESS/ORGANIZATION NAME	ZIP	EMAIL ADDRESS	TESTIFY	FOR	AGAINST	YES	NO
John	Doe	100	North Charles Street	21202	Johndoebmore@yahoo.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ROBERT	LIBERTY		DOT AVES		Robert.Liberty@baltimorecity.gov	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desmond	Colie		DOT Traffic		desmond.colie@baltimorecity.gov	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raymond	Taylor		DOT Traffic			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TBD	Goedwin		DOT			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Katchyn	McCawley		DOT			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Kenneth	Lehalick		DOT			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ray. Sharma	Sharma		DOT		ray.sharma@baltimorecity.gov	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eboni	Wimbush		DOT			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRANK	MURPHY		DOT			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethan	Melrod		Baltimore Fishbowl			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(\*) NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD. REGISTRATION IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION AND FORMS, CALL OR WRITE: BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ETHICS, C/O DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE, 626 CITY HALL, BALTIMORE, MD 21202. TEL: 410-396-4730. FAX: 410-396-8483.

BALTIMORE CITY  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# Traffic Signal Systems and Don't Block the Box

May 9, 2018



# AGENDA

Comprehensive Signal Elements

Signal System Current Status

Signal System Funded Projects

Dedicated Funding Needs

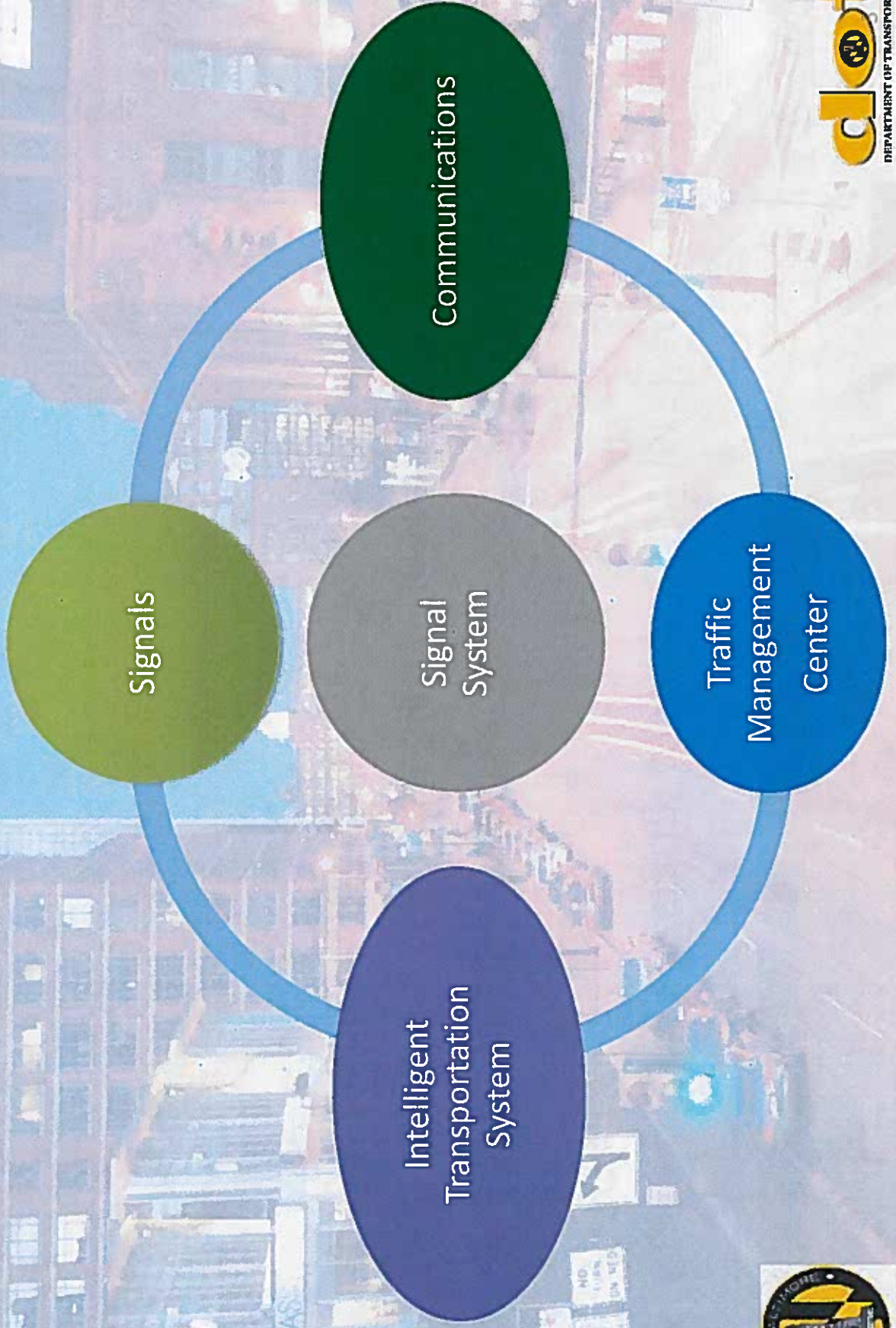
Accomplishments

Don't Block the Box

Signal Optimization Citywide



# COMPREHENSIVE SIGNAL SYSTEM ELEMENTS



# SIGNALS

- State of the art signal system was installed in the mid-1970's.
  - 1395 signalized intersections
  - 3 corridors of Transit Signal Priority (TSP)
  - 2 corridors with Adaptive Signal System



# SIGNALS

- Transit Signal Priority (TSP) in collaboration with Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA)
  - York Road – 28 intersections
  - Loch Raven Blvd. – 19 intersections
  - Howard Street – 16 intersection (Light Rail)
  - Buses and Light Rail retrofitted with TSP system
  - Travel time reduction benefits





# SIGNALS

- **Adaptive Signal Control Technology**
  - **Russell Street:**
    - The system was Installed at Six (6) Signals & Commissioned in October 2017 to:
      - Automatically adapts to unexpected changes in traffic conditions
      - Improve travel time
      - Reduce congestion and fuel consumption
      - Reduce the complaints that agencies receive in response to outdated signal timing
  - **Northern Parkway:**
    - Work is in Progress at Eight (8) Signals



# COMMUNICATIONS

- Enables Traffic Management Center (TMC) to monitor the operational status of a traffic signal
- Enables remote timing changes from the TMC
- Reduces the need for dispatching a technician to the field
- Ensures signals are synchronized



# TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CENTER (TMC)

- State of the Art TMC was Commissioned in 2008
- TMC is a 24 hour operational center
- Serves as the agency's system technology center



CATHERINE F. PUGH  
MAYOR



# INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (ITS)

- ITS supplements our signal operations by means of other technologies
- It allows us to account for travel-time and observe traffic volume meant to aid in efforts to expedite decision making, response, and information dissemination



# TRAFFIC SIGNALS CURRENT STATUS

## Signals

- 1395 signalized intersections
- 3 corridors of Transit Signal Priority (TSP)
- 2 corridors with Adaptive Signal System

## Communications

- Approximately 400 communicating signals

## Traffic Management Center

- 18 monitors dedicated to traffic monitoring
- Equipped with Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS)

## Intelligent Transportation System

- CCTVs, DMSSs, Counting Stations, Detections,
- 25 CCTVs
- 11 DMS
- Approximately 500 intersection with detections



# TRAFFIC SIGNALS FUNDED PROJECTS

## Signals

- Signal reconstruction (\$7 million)
- Signal rewiring (\$500,000)
- Signal optimization (\$5 million)

## Communication Network

- Communication upgrades (\$4.5 million)

## Traffic Management Center

- ATMS/TMC upgrade (\$4.5 million)

## Intelligent Transportation System

- ITS upgrade (\$1 million)



CATHERINE FUOH

# DEDICATED FUNDING NEEDS

In an effort to modernize our system, we will need, on average, a dedicated \$17 million per year over the next 6 years to sustain our capital improvement projects

## Signals

- Signal reconstruction (\$7 million)

## Communication Network

- Communication upgrades (\$4.5 million)

## Traffic Command Center

- ATMS/TMC upgrade (\$4.5 million)

## Intelligent Transportation System

- ITS upgrade (\$1 million)



CATHERINE Z. FUCHS



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## A Result Of Dedicated Funding

- Optimized 1,000 Traffic Signals
- Constructed 11 Dynamic Message Signs
- Upgraded/Replaced Detection at 168 Traffic Signals
- Reconstructed 59 Traffic Signals
- Replaced 1,300 + Traffic Signal Cabinets and Controllers
- Established an Integrated Central Computer Control System
- Completed Construction of a 5,000 Square Foot TMC
- Replaced 40,000 Incandescent Traffic Signal Bulbs with LED Bulbs
- Equipped Approximately 50 Intersections with Battery Backup Systems
- Established a Video And Data Connection Between The TMC and SHA/CHART
- Established a Link With Traffic and to Allow Public Access To City CCTV Videos as a Public Private Partnership



CATHERINE E. PUGH  
MAYOR





# DON'T BLOCK THE BOX

- **Blocking a signalized intersection prevents the free flow of cross traffic, forcing pedestrians to enter into the intersection**
- **The initiative is meant to ensure the safety of pedestrian and vehicular travelers**
- **Reduction of vehicular congestion, creating bottlenecks in intersections**



# DON'T BLOCK THE BOX

- Field evaluation of the intersection/corridor in progress
- Targeted to optimize within the next 30 days
- Continue follow-up the observations and optimize timing as necessary

## 13 Locations:

- Lombard St. & Light St.
- Lombard St. & South St.
- Baltimore St. & South St.
- Baltimore St. & St. Paul St.
- Baltimore St. & Calvert St.
- Fayette St. & Guilford Ave.
- Pratt St. & Light St.
- Pratt St. & Calvert St.
- Charles St. & Baltimore St.
- Charles St. & Saratoga St.
- Lexington St. & St. Paul St.
- Lombard St. & Calvert St.
- Cathedral St. & Mulberry St.

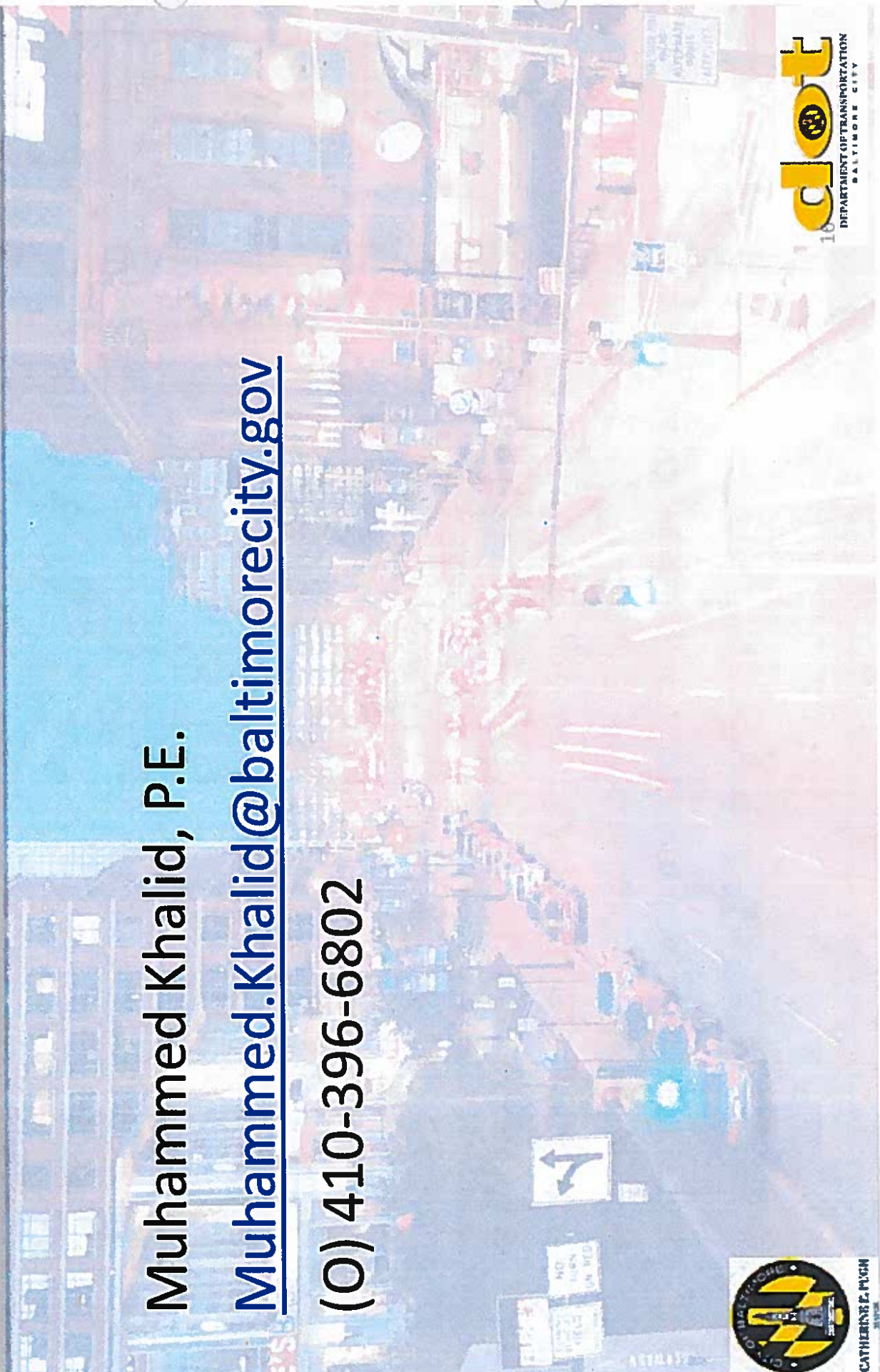


# QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COMMENTS

Muhammed Khalid, P.E.

[Muhammed.Khalid@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Muhammed.Khalid@baltimorecity.gov)

(O) 410-396-6802



# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland  
21202

## Meeting Agenda - Final

### Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

---

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

5:00 PM

Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall

---

18-0080R  
CHARM TV 25

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

18-0080R

Traffic Light Synchronization

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

Sponsors:

President Young, Bill Henry, Kristerfer Burnett, Brandon M. Scott, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, Leon F. Pinkett, III, Eric T. Costello, John T. Bullock, Edward Reisinger, Zeke Cohen, Sharon Green Middleton, Mary Pat Clarke, Robert Stokes, Sr., Shannon Sneed

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**





**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
JUDICIARY AND LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**Mission Statement**

*On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the mission of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee is to investigate and study the continuing operations, efficiency, and functions of Baltimore City government in accordance with the laws of Baltimore City, the State of Maryland, and the United States.*

*As a result of its investigations and studies, the Committee will recommend and oversee reforms to improve the operations of Baltimore City's government through legislative, administrative, and/or budgetary processes.*

**The Honorable Eric T. Costello  
Chairman**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

***To Be Televised on Charm TV 25***

**Wednesday, May 9, 2018  
5:00 PM**

**CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

***City Council Resolution 18-0080R  
Traffic Light Synchronization***

## CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

### BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

Eric Costello – Chair  
Leon Pinkett – Vice Chair  
Bill Henry  
Sharon Green Middleton  
Brandon M. Scott  
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer  
Shannon Sneed  
*Staff: Marguerite Currin*

### EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Zeke Cohen – Chair  
Mary Pat Clarke – Vice Chair  
John Bullock  
Kristerfer Burnett  
Ryan Dorsey  
*Staff: Matthew Peters*

### EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Robert Stokes – Chair  
Kristerfer Burnett – Vice Chair  
Mary Pat Clarke  
Zeke Cohen  
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer  
*Staff: Marguerite Currin*

### HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS

John Bullock – Chair  
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer – Vice Chair  
Kristerfer Burnett  
Bill Henry  
Shannon Sneed  
Zeke Cohen  
Ryan Dorsey  
*Staff: Richard Krummerich*

### JUDICIARY AND LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

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Mary Pat Clarke – Vice Chair  
John Bullock  
Leon Pinkett  
Edward Reisinger  
Brandon Scott  
Robert Stokes  
*Staff: Matthew Peters*

### LABOR

Shannon Sneed – Chair  
Robert Stokes – Vice Chair  
Eric Costello  
Bill Henry  
Mary Pat Clarke  
*Staff: Samuel Johnson*

### LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Edward Reisinger - Chair  
Sharon Green Middleton – Vice Chair  
Mary Pat Clarke  
Eric Costello  
Ryan Dorsey  
Leon Pinkett  
Robert Stokes  
*Staff: Jennifer Coates*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Brandon Scott – Chair  
Ryan Dorsey – Vice Chair  
Kristerfer Burnett  
Shannon Sneed  
Zeke Cohen  
Leon Pinkett  
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer  
*Staff: Richard Krummerich*

### TAXATION, FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sharon Green Middleton – Chair  
Leon Pinkett – Vice Chair  
Eric Costello  
Edward Reisinger  
Robert Stokes  
*Staff: Samuel Johnson*  
*- Larry Greene (pension only)*

CITY OF BALTIMORE

CATHERINE E. PUGH, Mayor



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

LARRY E. GREENE, Director  
415 City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
410-396-7215 / Fax: 410-545-7596  
email: larry.greene@baltimorecity.gov

## BILL SYNOPSIS

**Committee:** Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

**City Council Resolution 18-0080R**

---

### Traffic Light Synchronization

---

**Sponsor:** *President Young, et al*

**Introduced:** *April 23, 2018*

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

**Effective:** Upon Enactment.

**Hearing Date/Time/Location:** May 9, 2018/5:00 p.m./Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber

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**Agency Report**

Department of Transportation

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## ANALYSIS

**Current Law**

Article 31, Section 2-5 of the Baltimore City Code authorizes the Director of Transportation to install and maintain signals to control vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and to determine the design, timing, type, size, and location of those signals.

It is not clear that Maryland law currently prohibits vehicles from entering an intersection without the ability to safely and completely proceed through the intersection ("Blocking the Box"). The Maryland General Assembly considered legislation in 2017 (HB0237 and SB0779) and 2018 (HB0672) that would have amended section 21-202 of the Transportation Article to specifically prohibit vehicles from entering an intersection with a green signal "if the vehicle is



unable to safely and completely proceed through the intersection," subject to limited exceptions. However, the General Assembly did not enact that legislation.

Section 21-202 of the Maryland Transportation Article currently provides that vehicles "facing a circular green signal may proceed straight through or, unless a sign at the place prohibits the turn, turn right or left," however, those vehicles must "yield the right-of-way to any other vehicle and any pedestrian lawfully within the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk when the signal is shown." Section 21-1003 (d) of the Transportation Article states that "[a] person may not stop, stand, or park a vehicle in an intersection." It is unclear whether those provisions apply in instances where a vehicle is Blocking the Box due to traffic.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation's authority to impose points on a driver's license for Blocking the Box is also unclear under Maryland law. Section 11.17.13.02 of the Maryland Code of Regulations lists violations for which "[o]ne point shall be assessed against an individual convicted." Certain violations of section 21-202 of the Transportation Article are subject to the point assessment, but violations of section 21-1003 (d) are not.

Current Baltimore City law does prohibit Blocking the Box. Article 31, Section 16-11 of the Baltimore City Code, provides that "[i]t shall be unlawful for the driver of any vehicle to enter a street intersection or a marked crosswalk ... unless there is sufficient space beyond the intersection or crosswalk ... to accommodate the vehicle he is driving or operating without obstructing the passage of other vehicles or pedestrians, notwithstanding any traffic control signal indication to proceed." However, it is not clear that the Department has the legal authority to assess points on a driver's license for violations of Baltimore City law.

Finally, the Department of Transportation has limited authority to issue traffic citations. According to Article 19, Section 72-2 of the Baltimore City Code, Special Traffic Enforcement Officers have "the same authority as a police officer to control and direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic under the Maryland Vehicle Law and under City laws that regulate motor vehicles." However, they have "no power to issue citations for moving violations other than for a failure to obey lawful traffic direction and control devices." It is not clear whether a citation for Blocking the Box would fall into one of those limited circumstances.

## **Background**

This resolution calls on the Baltimore City Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program. On April 18, 2018, the Director of the Department of Transportation announced that the Department will launch a "Don't Block the Box" program to cite motorists who enter an intersection without first making sure that they will be able to move all the way

through before the light turns red. According to the Department, "[b]locking an intersection causes traffic congestion and delays by preventing other vehicles from passing through, and also creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists."

Beginning on May 1, 2018, the Department will issue warnings to motorists caught blocking intersections during red lights. On June 1, 2018, the Department will begin issuing citations that carry a \$90 fine and one point on the driver's license. The Baltimore Sun reported that the Department has not identified specific intersections where "Don't Block the Box" enforcement will focus, but that "traffic enforcement officers will work on foot in teams, citing violators in their cars on the spot."

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Signal Timing Manual notes that "[w]hile most jurisdictions have "don't block the box" laws or policies, [cross intersection blocking] situations are not uncommon in grids and networks with short link lengths." The Manual further states that "[c]arefully controlled green time settings and signal offsets are necessary when mitigating this scenario."

According to an April 30, 2018 article in the Baltimore Sun, Department of Transportation officials have cited the City's "'antiquated' network of traffic signals [as] contributing to congestion downtown and in other Baltimore neighborhoods." The Baltimore Sun reported in the same article that at least \$30 million will be needed to update the system downtown, and that updating the system city-wide will require a much larger amount.

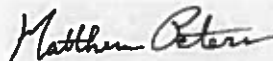
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***Additional Information***

**Fiscal Note:** None

**Information Source(s):** Code of Maryland, Code of Maryland Regulations, Maryland General Assembly, Baltimore City Code, Baltimore City Department of Transportation, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Baltimore Sun, Resolution 18-0080R.

---



Analysis by: Matthew L. Peters  
Analysis Date: May 3, 2018

Direct Inquiries to: (410) 396-1268



**Austin, Natawna B.**

---

**From:** Kunst, Kara  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 10:26 AM  
**To:** Austin, Natawna B.  
**Cc:** Davis, Liam; Huber, Michael  
**Subject:** FW: Blocking the box

Good morning,

Please place the email below in the file for resolution 18-0080R.

Thanks,  
Kara

Protecting Communities  
Creating Jobs  
Strengthening Accountability  
Investing in Youth  
Kara Kunst  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
Office of City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
100 Holliday Street, Room 400, Baltimore, MD 21202  
Office: 410-396-5222 Cellular: 443-934-3817 Fax: 410-539-0647  
Email: [kara.kunst@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:kara.kunst@baltimorecity.gov)  
Website: [www.baltimorecitycouncil.com](http://www.baltimorecitycouncil.com)  
Twitter Facebook Subscribe to Jack's Journal

-----Original Message-----

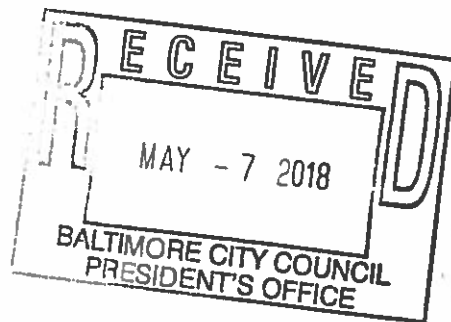
**From:** City Council President  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 9:43 AM  
**To:** Kunst, Kara; Davis, Liam  
**Cc:** Huber, Michael  
**Subject:** FW: Blocking the box

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Hill, Charlie [[mailto:Charlie\\_Hill@troweprice.com](mailto:Charlie_Hill@troweprice.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 9:40 AM  
**To:** City Council President  
**Cc:** Pourciau, Michelle  
**Subject:** Blocking the box

Mr. Young,

This morning traffic coming into Baltimore from Key Highway was extremely slow due to drivers from Conway making a left onto Light Street were blocking the two left lanes of Light Street.





I am routinely blocked heading North on Calvert by people blocking the box heading west on Lombard.

This is a rampant problem all over town, and it needs to be addressed now. Your proposal to have the light timing studied makes little sense to me. No driver should enter an intersection if they cannot get through the intersection - period. It doesn't matter if the light is yellow or green. Don't go in if you can't get out.

The domino affects can be seen all over town. As one intersection gets blocked it has a ripple effect on traffic blocks away.

Please, allow Mrs. Pourciau's plan to move forward. She is on the mark. Your light study is not the issue.

Charlie Hill

Charlie Hill  
Fixed Income | Municipal Bonds  
T. Rowe Price Associates  
100 E. Pratt St, BA-0666  
Baltimore, MD 21210  
\* Office: (410) 345-2023  
\* E-mail: charlie\_hill@troweprice.com

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**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 18-0080R  
(Resolution)**

---

Introduced by: President Young, Councilmembers Henry, Burnett, Scott, Schleifer, Pinkett,  
Costello, Bullock, Reisinger, Cohen, Middleton, Clarke, Stokes, Sneed

Introduced and read first time: April 23, 2018

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

---

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Transportation

---

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Traffic Light Synchronization**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights  
4 city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box"  
5 program.

6 **Recitals**

7 On April 18<sup>th</sup> the Department of Transportation announced plans to begin stepped up  
8 enforcement of State law prohibiting motorists from stopping within an intersection. According  
9 to the announcement, this new "Don't Block the Box" program will begin issuing warnings on  
10 May 1<sup>st</sup> and will issue citations with \$90 fines and a license point starting a month later on June  
11 1<sup>st</sup>.

12 Gridlock and excessive delays in traffic are genuine problems in Baltimore, but they are  
13 problems with more than one cause. Drivers who would be subject to this new enforcement  
14 could be one of those causes, but they could also be victims of other problems who unwittingly  
15 become stuck in an intersection.

16 Focusing on only one cause of Baltimore's traffic woes is unlikely to be effective on its own,  
17 and could have unintended consequences. Ensuring that traffic lights city-wide are properly  
18 synchronized ahead of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation's "Don't Block the Box"  
19 program will assist motorists in adjusting to the Administration's new traffic initiative, making it  
20 more likely to succeed in its goal of improving traffic flows and less likely to penalize drivers  
21 inadvertently stuck because of situations beyond their control.

22 In addition to helping motorists adjust to the "Don't Block the Box" program, properly  
23 synchronized lights provide numerous additional benefits to motorists and pedestrians. Research  
24 from the Federal Highway Administration has found that traffic signal management can lead to  
25 improved air quality, reduced fuel consumption, less aggressive driving, and better traffic flow.

26 Until the City has taken steps to ensure that traffic lights are properly synchronized and are  
27 not contributing to gridlock, it would be premature to begin aggressive enforcement actions

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.



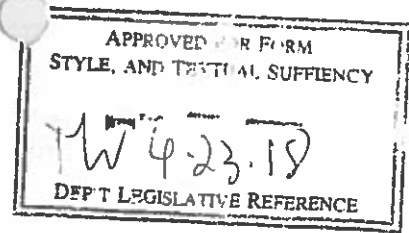
**Council Bill 18-0080R**

1 against drivers that could interfere with their ability to legally operate a vehicle. Taking a  
2 comprehensive approach to Baltimore's gridlock problem is both more appropriate and more  
3 likely to result in real change.

4 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
5 Council calls on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are  
6 properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

7 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
8 Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's legislative liaison to the City Council.

**INTRODUCTORY\***  
**CITY OF BALTIMORE**  
**COUNCIL BILL \_\_\_\_\_ R**  
**(Resolution)**



---

Introduced by: President Young

---

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

**Traffic Light Synchronization**

FOR the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

**Recitals**

On April 18<sup>th</sup> the Department of Transportation announced plans to begin stepped up enforcement of State law prohibiting motorists from stopping within an intersection. According to the announcement, this new "Don't Block the Box" program will begin issuing warnings on May 1<sup>st</sup> and will issue citations with \$90 fines and a license point starting a month later on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Gridlock and excessive delays in traffic are genuine problems in Baltimore, but they are problems with more than one cause. Drivers who would be subject to this new enforcement could be one of those causes, but they could also be victims of other problems who unwittingly become stuck in an intersection.

Focusing on only one cause of Baltimore's traffic woes is unlikely to be effective on its own, and could have unintended consequences. Ensuring that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized ahead of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation's "Don't Block the Box" program will assist motorists in adjusting to the Administration's new traffic initiative, making it more likely to succeed in its goal of improving traffic flows and less likely to penalize drivers inadvertently stuck because of situations beyond their control.

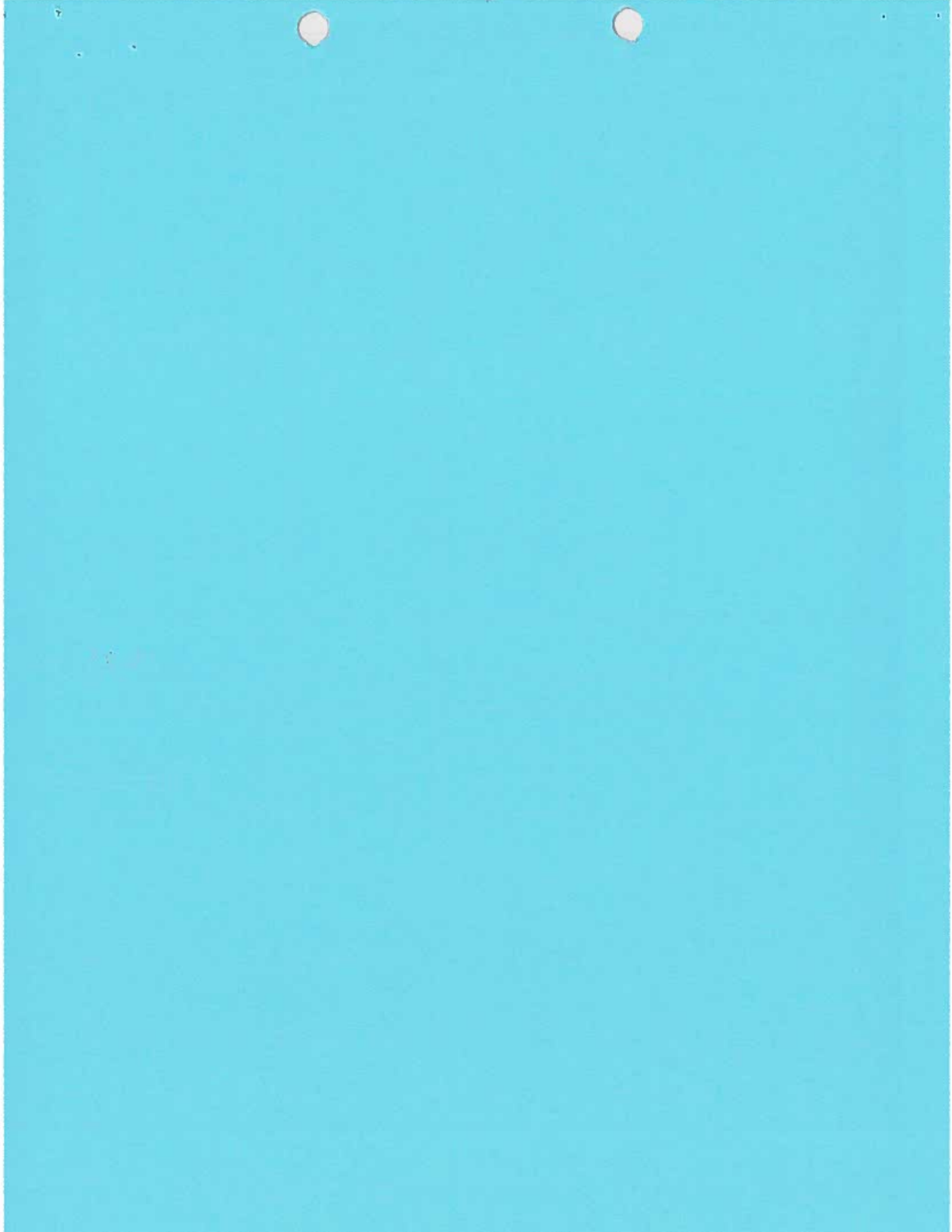
In addition to helping motorists adjust to the "Don't Block the Box" program, properly synchronized lights provide numerous additional benefits to motorists and pedestrians. Research from the Federal Highway Administration has found that traffic signal management can lead to improved air quality, reduced fuel consumption, less aggressive driving, and better traffic flow.

Until the City has taken steps to ensure that traffic lights are properly synchronized and are not contributing to gridlock, it would be premature to begin aggressive enforcement actions against drivers that could interfere with their ability to legally operate a vehicle. Taking a comprehensive approach to Baltimore's gridlock problem is both more appropriate and more likely to result in real change.

\* WARNING: THIS IS AN UNOFFICIAL, INTRODUCTORY COPY OF THE BILL.  
THE OFFICIAL COPY CONSIDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL IS THE FIRST READER COPY.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the Council calls on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's legislative liaison to the City Council.



**ACTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL**

FIRST READING (INTRODUCTION) \_\_\_\_\_ APR 23 2018  
20 \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON June 19, 2018 \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

COMMITTEE REPORT AS OF June 25, 2018 \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

FAVORABLE \_\_\_\_\_ UNFAVORABLE \_\_\_\_\_ FAVORABLE AS AMENDED \_\_\_\_\_ WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*C. S. Hart*  
Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SECOND READING: The Council's action being favorable (unfavorable), this City Council bill was (was not) ordered printed for Third Reading on:

\_\_\_\_\_ JUN 25 2018  
20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING \_\_\_\_\_ ~~JUL 09 2018~~

\_\_\_\_\_ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING (ENROLLED) \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING (RE-ENROLLED) \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

WITHDRAWAL \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

There being no objections to the request for withdrawal, it was so ordered that this City Council Ordinance be withdrawn from the files of the City Council.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk