

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 08-0092R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Rawlings-Blake, Councilmembers Young, Middleton, Kraft, D’Adamo, Henry, Curran, Clarke, Branch, Cole, Reisinger, Welch, Conaway, Spector

Introduced and read first time: November 17, 2008

Assigned to: Community Development Subcommittee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Transportation, Baltimore City Police Commissioner, Downtown Partnership

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Lighting Quality and Wattage**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Director and the Chief of the Maintenance Division of the
4 Department of Transportation to report to the City Council on the number, quality, and
5 wattage of street lighting in Baltimore City; the adequacy of current lighting placement to
6 ensure the safety of City residents, visitors, and workforce; and plans for revamping the
7 City’s infrastructure to meet future needs for economic, adequate, and efficient lighting.

8 **Recitals**

9 The legislation creating the Baltimore Urban Lighting Board (BULB), in 2001, stated: “As
10 seen from above, Baltimore City is sure to resemble the patchwork quilt for which it has been
11 given the “Patchwork Quilt of Neighborhoods” nickname. Unfortunately, far from the bright
12 homey image this nickname evokes, the real patchwork quilt is made up of far less colorful
13 patches. The colors of this quilt range from the bright white lights of the Inner Harbor and more
14 affluent environs, through the dull yellow glow of industrial areas, to the shadowy grays and
15 deepest blacks of the poorest inner city neighborhoods.”

16 The Maintenance Division of the Department of Transportation is responsible for the
17 illumination of the City and for maintaining and preserving a safe and well-lit transportation
18 network, road maintenance and facility repairs. The Street Lighting Division group oversees the
19 installation, maintenance, and repair of all of the 80,000+ street lights throughout the City. In
20 addition, the group installs and maintains lighting and electrical services at City festivals, events,
21 and departmental facilities. One of the stated goals of the Department is to improve City lighting
22 by focusing on major gateways and high crime areas.

23 Research shows that a well-designed public streetlight system enhances public safety while
24 contributing to an enhanced community quality of life. Over the years, public street lighting has
25 proven to be more and more important in the urban environment. Adequate public lighting
26 increases citizens’ perception of safety from crime, facilitates safe operation of traffic, gives
27 citizens a safer pedestrian traveling environment, and promotes night-time use of commercial
28 shopping and service areas.

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

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1 As more cities refurbish their lighting schemes, some officials are taking a more
2 comprehensive approach to crime prevention through a new concept — Crime Prevention
3 Through Environmental Design or CPTED. One of the main strategies of this concept, as
4 defined by the National Crime Prevention Institute, is Natural Surveillance, “a design concept
5 promoted by features that maximize visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances,
6 pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets, front porches, and adequate nighttime lighting”.

7 Media reports, earlier this year, indicated that Baltimore City’s goals to provide adequate
8 lighting to enhance citizen nocturnal activity, to provide pedestrian and traffic safety, and to
9 discourage criminal pursuit may be falling short. In early March 2008, City transportation
10 officials acknowledged that there were approximately 200 locations where equipment awaited
11 replacement parts that, depending on the style of pole and light, could cost as much as \$1,000 a
12 unit to replace. They insisted, however, that even where as many as 3 lights were missing at a
13 major intersection, the locations met the City’s minimum standards for illumination.

14 A review of the current lighting panorama is needed to make sure that the City’s “minimum
15 standards for illumination” are not the norm, but that every measure possible is being taken to
16 facilitate optimum urban lighting practices throughout the neighborhoods of Baltimore City.

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
18 Director and the Chief of the Maintenance Division of the Department of Transportation are
19 requested to report to the City Council on the number, quality, and wattage of street lighting in
20 Baltimore City; the adequacy of current lighting placement to ensure the safety of City residents,
21 visitors, and workforce; and plans for revamping the City’s infrastructure to meet future needs
22 for economic, adequate and efficient lighting.

23 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
24 Director and the Chief of the Maintenance Division of the Department of Transportation, the
25 Police Commissioner, the Executive Director of the Downtown Partnership, and the Mayor’s
26 Legislative Liaison to the City Council.