

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 09-0107R  
(Resolution)**

---

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

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2009

Assigned to: Public Safety and Health Committee

---

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Commissioner

---

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Performance Measures – “Blue Light Cameras” – Crime Prevention**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore Police Commissioner to report to the City Council  
4 on the status of the CCTV camera program; the phase out of the original blue-light cameras  
5 and replacement with closed circuit units; the increase in certain crimes and decline in  
6 clearance rates; and the measures in place for monitoring the cameras.

7 **Recitals**

8 News that Baltimore Police will be phasing out the familiar blue-light cameras mounted high  
9 above the City streets in high-crime areas has been met with consternation by some  
10 neighborhood residents, despite the fact that they are being replaced by more sophisticated and  
11 effective closed-circuit units.

12 The original cameras, first installed in 2005, have limited technology application that  
13 requires considerable manpower – these movable PODSS cameras have to be monitored on site  
14 by an officer with a laptop style computer or the video stored in the cameras can be reviewed,  
15 although there is often trouble in interpreting the images recorded unattended at an earlier time.

16 The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice reports that Baltimore’s Crime Camera Program has  
17 grown quickly over the past several years. Baltimore currently has 480 CCTV cameras and 100  
18 movable PODSS. Most recently, the City installed 29 CCTV cameras in the Poplar Grove area  
19 at a cost of \$1.4 million. Since 2005, a significant investment has been made in purchasing and  
20 installing cameras, which have a live feed and are monitored at police districts, police  
21 headquarters, and the Atrium.

22 The cameras have been a critical tool in preventing and solving crime. In 2007, overall  
23 crime was reduced by 10% in camera areas as compared to the previous year. In 2008, the  
24 cameras were instrumental in solving and preventing shootings, robberies, and assaults.  
25 Through Citiwatch at the Atrium alone, camera monitors assisted police in making 729 arrests in  
26 the Downtown Business District in 2008 – an increase of 32% from 2007.

27 A closer look at the CCTV camera program will give assurance that this important law  
28 enforcement tool is being fully utilized – that reported cut-backs in personnel have not affected  
29 the monitoring of the cameras; that communities where the “old” blue-light cameras are being

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

**Council Bill 09-0107R**

1 phased out are being properly informed of the better crime-fighting capabilities of the  
2 “new” cameras; and that the statistics accurately reflect the effectiveness of CCTVs in  
3 Baltimore’s most threatened neighborhoods.

4 Furthermore, the Council would like to be briefed on any correlation between rise in  
5 robberies and aggravated assaults and decline in clearance rates. Specifically, the number and  
6 clearance rates of arrests, armed robberies, and aggravated assaults year to date as compared to  
7 last year.

8 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
9 Baltimore Police Commissioner is requested to report to the City Council on the status of the  
10 CCTV camera program; the phase out of the original blue-light cameras and replacement with  
11 closed circuit units; the increase in certain crimes and decline in clearance rates; and the  
12 measures in place for monitoring the cameras.

13 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
14 Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the  
15 Baltimore City State’s Attorney, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.