



MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: KC Kelleher, Director of Communications, Office of the Comptroller

Date: October 17, 2022

Re: 22-0122R Informational Hearing - Public Safety and Surveillance Technology

The Office of the Comptroller (OTC) is herein reporting on City Council Resolution 22-0122R Informational Hearing - Public Safety and Surveillance Technology. The purpose of this resolution is to invite representatives from the Department of Law, the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), the Department of Finance, and other interested parties to discuss the acquisition and use of facial recognition surveillance technology by Baltimore City government, how data from such equipment is used and stored, and any liability the City may face if the technology or its data is misused.

The Office of the Comptroller includes the staff to the Board of Estimates, the Department of Audits, the Department of Real Estate, the Department of Telecommunications, and the Municipal Post Office. OTC does not own and has not attempted to acquire facial recognition surveillance technology. OTC defers to BCIT and Law for the latter two questions posed in the resolution.

Furthermore, the OTC's role in the Board of Estimates process does not include procurement; instead, it provides management of personnel, real estate, budgetary, contractual obligations and other matters of fiscal importance to the City of Baltimore. Any procurement of facial recognition technology by the City starts with the requesting agency and travels through procurement, law, budget, and possibly pre-audits, before it gets to the Board. In other words, the Office of the Comptroller can only provide retroactive oversight of any surveillance software.

A representative from the Office of the Comptroller will attend the hearing for 22-0122R as requested.

CC:

Celeste Amato, Chief of Staff, Comptroller's Office
Adam Abadir, Mayor's Office