



Catherine Pugh
Mayor

BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Kevin Davis
Police Commissioner

January 8, 2018

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. 17-0040R
Increased Transparency About Police-Seized Property**

Dear Council President Young and Members of the City Council:


The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has reviewed Council Bill 17-0040R. This legislation requests the Police Department provide the City Council with a full accounting of all seized guns, drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years. In addition, the bill requests a thorough explanation of how this material was disposed of, how long the disposal process typically takes, and what the best ways to include community representatives in that process may be. The BPD supports this bill.

The BPD is charged with collecting, processing, and storing roughly 100,000 pieces of evidence each year. In fact, the BPD Evidence Control Unit currently houses approximately 3 million itemized pieces of property. This includes everything from biological evidence to seized pinball machines, and includes some items dating back to the early 20th Century.

Strict controls and standards are in place that guarantee the integrity of evidence. There are even higher standards for guns, drugs, and cash. However, while efforts to improve the systems and facilities used for this important function are underway, they are in some cases outdated and not always in line with best practices and expectations because of age and budget.

The BPD has shown its commitment to transparency over the last several years and is always looking for opportunities to improve. Maintaining and updating strict protocols that guarantee the integrity of evidence is paramount to securing legitimate case dispositions resulting in convictions, and thus reducing overall crime. And ensuring a transparent process is critical to this goal. The BPD looks forward to working with the City Council on this important matter.

Sincerely,


James A. Gillis
Chief of Staff