



City of Baltimore

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

Legislation Text

File #: 08-0092R, Version: 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: President Rawlings-Blake

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Lighting Quality and Wattage

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

Recitals

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

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

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

As more cities refurbish their lighting schemes, some officials are taking a more comprehensive approach to crime

prevention through a new concept - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED. One of the main strategies of this concept, as defined by the National Crime Prevention Institute, is Natural Surveillance, “a design concept promoted by features that maximize visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets, front porches, and adequate nighttime lighting”.

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

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

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

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

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