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Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

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CITY APPROVES CRIME CAMERA EXPANSION GRANT AWARD

Rawlings-Blake says expansion is a "good first step" towards doubling camera network by 2015

BALTIMORE—Today, Baltimore City's Board of Estimates approved a grant award agreement from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to expand the Police Department's network of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) technology in East Baltimore. The City will partner with East Baltimore Development Inc. (EBDI) to install ten new crime cameras and a fiber-optic connection to the Police Department's downtown monitoring center, Citiwatch. The \$333,000 grant will cover equipment, installation costs and a crime analyst position.

"I would like to personally thank the O'Malley-Brown Administration for working in partnership with the Baltimore Police Department to expand our crime camera network. And, by working with a community partner, EBDI, the City is able to leverage this grant for an even greater impact," Rawlings-Blake said. "This is a funding model that should be replicated in other areas, because it is essential that we continue to expand and enhance this powerful crime fighting tool."

Today, there are more than 480 crime cameras monitored at Citiwatch. Rawlings-Blake has urged continued investment in the City's camera network in order to support her goal of doubling the number of actively-monitored crime cameras by 2015. "This is a good first step, but we need to do more," she said. Rawlings-Blake has called for the use of homeland security and criminal justice grants, asset forfeiture funds and a portion of undesignated surpluses to expand the program by 100 new cameras every year for 5 years.

"Many cities are taking bold action to expand their camera networks this year," Rawlings-Blake said. "Pittsburgh is investing \$4 million on new cameras including gunshot detection technology and license plate software that can scan for stolen vehicles. Buffalo is doubling the size of its network and Chicago's Mayor has pledged a massive expansion by 2016 in addition to their 2000 camera network, which is already the largest in the U.S."

Rawlings-Blake has also urged police officials to investigate new technologies that could increase the flexibility and cost-effectiveness of the camera network. "Fiber-optic cabling works, but it is very expensive to dig up the streets to install cable, and once the cameras are positioned, they can't be moved easily. Hopefully, new high speed, high definition wireless technologies will become available soon," she said.

Last month, the State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City credited Citiwatch camera footage for the successful prosecution of a shooting in Downtown Baltimore. "There is no question that camera footage is a valuable tool to prosecutors," said a City firearms prosecutor.

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