



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT


Office of Audits and Investigations


February 1, 2023

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

TO: Jennifer A. Jenkins,
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt,
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Cassandra Fields 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-008-2023, Private Security Camera Incentive Program

CB-008-2023 (*Proposed and Presented by:* Councilmembers Oriadha, Ivey, and Burroughs)

Referred to the Health, Human Services and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING PRIVATE SECURITY CAMERA INCENTIVE PROGRAM for the purpose of establishing a Private Security Camera Incentive Program that would encourage businesses and homeowners to set up cameras to increase security surveillance.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Additional expenditures for administrative costs and payment of incentives dependent on the amount of the incentive and the number of successful applicants.

Revenues: None anticipated, unless successful in applying for federal and/or state funding to support the program.

Indirect Impact:

Potentially positive.

Legislative Summary

CB-008-2023, sponsored by Councilmembers Oriadha, Ivey, and Burroughs was presented to the County Council on December 12, 2022, and referred to the Health, Human Services and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee.

CB-008-2022 serves to create a Private Security Camera Incentive Program that would encourage and incentivize businesses, non-profits, and homeowners to install cameras on their respective properties to increase security surveillance. The bill specifies eligibility rules and administrative requirements for the program.

Current Law/Background

Subtitle 5 – *Business & Licenses*, Division 25 – *Convenience Stores and Gas Stations*, Section 5-2503¹ of the County Code mandates that convenience store owners and gas station owners without a convenience store shall install a surveillance camera system with a minimum of three highly visible digital, high-resolution color cameras. It requires minimum specifications in order for the cameras to be able to retrieve an identifiable image of an offender. It sets forth areas in which the cameras must be located; that the cameras shall record 24 hours a day and motion sensing cameras shall record when activated; and that the recordings shall be retained for at least 30 days. There are additional provisions governing annual testing; maintenance; and evidence of the prescribed maintenance. Only management shall have access to the cameras. Convenience stores and gas stations are also required to post highly visible window signs in English and Spanish detailing the security measures in place to include that there is an active security system on the premises.

In the 2018 General Session, the Prince George’s County delegation proffered PG 405-18 (HB 231²), Prince George's County - Property Tax Credit for Security Camera Systems. It sought to authorize the governing body of Prince George's County to grant, by law, a property tax credit against the county property tax imposed on residential or commercial real property equipped with security camera systems for the purpose of crime prevention and reduction; specifying the amount of the property tax credit, subject to a limit of \$200 per security camera and an aggregate cap of \$500 for a residential property and \$750 for a commercial property, beginning after June 30, 2018.

¹

https://library.municode.com/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA_SUBTITLE_5BULI_DIV25COSTGAST_S5-2503SESY

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0231?ys=2018RS&search=True>

HB 231 did not successfully make it out of committee during that Session.

Resource Personnel

Brandon Cooper, Chief of Staff/Legislative Aide, District 8

Discussion/Policy Analysis

CB-008-2023

CB-008-2023 creates Section 18-122 of the County Code which sets forth the definitions for the Program. It includes the criteria necessary in order to receive the incentive (which would directly offset the costs associated with the purchase of the security camera). It directs the Chief of Police to promulgate Regulations after consultation with stakeholders, which will include the methodology for designating ‘priority areas,’ the permissible collection, dissemination, use and disposal of images recorded by the security camera, and the minimum standards for the cameras purchased. Additionally, it requires an annual report from the Chief of Police to the Council that outlines an overview of the program to include the number of cameras, amount of rebates awarded, and effectiveness of the Program itself.

Procedural and cost implications

Security cameras range from \$20 to around \$400, but on average, indoor cameras cost around \$100 and outdoor cameras cost around \$200³. This does not include costs associated with cloud or local storage; monitoring costs, as applicable; installation; and maintenance. While rebates and vouchers are under the Program are subject to appropriation (page 2, line 24), it is unknown exactly how many property owners would apply and qualify for the incentive and may be prudent to place a cap on the maximum permissible expenditures associated with the acquisition of outdoor security cameras. A cap on the amount of each rebate, or on the total amount an applicant may receive, may also result in the incentive not covering the full cost of the camera, but being more widely used by effectively spreading the incentive across more eligible applicants.

For example, the District of Columbia provides a rebate for the actual cost of an individual camera (up to \$200) with a maximum rebate of \$500 for residential properties (homes, apartments, condominiums, home offices, etc.) and \$750 for all other addresses. The rebate is only for the cost of the camera, including sales tax. Installation, accessories, and storage are not covered through the program⁴.

³ <https://www.security.org/security-cameras/cost/#:~:text=what%20time%20period,-.Equipment%20Costs,outdoor%20cameras%20cost%20around%20%24200.>

⁴ <https://ovsjg.dc.gov/page/private-security-camera-rebate-program>

The District of Columbia also requires verification of the installation of cameras⁵. There are two methods to do so, one is established for businesses with valid business licenses, and the other is for all other applicants, which requires a site inspection for verification purposes. Dependent upon the policy the Department implements, there may be additional costs associated with on-site inspections for the most appropriate personnel to manage this task. Verifying the cameras are installed properly is seemingly essential to ensure the goal of enhancing public safety is met.

In addition to funding this program through the General Fund, other communities which have implemented similar programs have partnered with community-based organizations to provide cameras to residents in ‘priority areas’ at no cost to the property owner. In Chicago, will partner with civic organizations to distribute private security equipment at no-cost in the communities experiencing higher levels of violence⁶. The Chicago Home & Business Protection Program includes rebates for outdoor motion sensor security lighting and vehicle GPS tracking devices too⁷

Other jurisdictions with similar programs

Organization	Program	Max. Benefits \$	Video Retention Requirements	Other
Baltimore City, MD	CitiWatch Community Partnership	Rebate up to \$150 or the cost of the system- whichever is less. Does not cover the costs of installation, accessories, and/or storage.	Retain a minimum of 48 hours of footage.	https://citiwatch.baltimorecity.gov/
Chicago, IL	Home and Business Protection Program	Rebate up to \$225 per camera (cost of camera and tax only). Maximum of 2 cameras. \$450 total disbursement per applicant. It includes one year subscription to cloud-based video storage systems, for a maximum of \$150 per annual subscription.	Store footage for a minimum of 72 hours, either locally, or through cloud-based storage.	https://webapps4.chicago.gov/eforms/hbprebateapplication

⁵ <https://ovsjg.dc.gov/page/private-security-camera-rebate-program>

⁶ <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/csc/home/home-and-business-protection.html>

⁷ <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/csc/home/home-and-business-protection.html>

DC	Private Security Camera System Incentive Program	The program provides a rebate of up to \$200 per camera. There is a maximum rebate of up to \$500 per residential unit, and \$750 for all other eligible addresses. The incentive is solely for the cost of the camera(s), inclusive of tax.	Retain a minimum of 48 hours footage.	https://ovsjg.dc.gov/page/private-security-camera-voucher-program
Montgomery County, MD	Private Security Camera Incentive Program	Rebate to offset the cost of installing a camera on the individual's or business' property.	Parameters are still being established.	https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2022/20220726/20220726_6D.pdf

Potential privacy issues

As similar laws have been discussed and implemented in other jurisdictions regionally and nationally, the question of privacy has continually been raised. An assurance that the placement of cameras by residential or business users only cover public spaces or spaces owned by the resident or business. The regulations should be clear that no camera purchased with public funding should be directed to record activity on private property that is not owned by the business or individual. The concern seems to be addressed by the proposed language in the bill, page 2, lines 14-17.

Council staff submitted the following questions to the Administration to further ascertain any fiscal or operational impact of the Bill. The Committee may wish to explore these inquiries to better assess the impact of CB-008-2023:

- What agency is expected to (or best positioned to) manage this program, if implemented?
- Would implementation require any additional staffing (please explain) and associated costs (beyond the amount of the actual rebate/reimbursement)?

Fiscal Impact

Direct Impact

Enactment of CB-008-2023 could have an adverse direct fiscal impact on the County relating to reimbursement of costs associated with the installation of the security cameras on-site. The Department may seek federal and/or state funding to recover the costs of County funds being spent. For the purposes of discussion, if the County considers \$200 per camera, a \$50,000 allocation would allow for the purchase of 200 cameras in a designated ‘priority area’ exclusive of administrative and other program costs.

There would likely be modest administrative costs associated with the establishment and operation of the Program.⁸ Depending upon whether the County wishes to include a verification of installation process, there could be additional costs associated with the appropriate personnel necessary to conduct the site-visits.

It is important to note again, however, that additional expenditures will be *limited to the amount that Council appropriates* for this program. *Demand* will be contingent on the number of eligible applicants and the purchase price of security cameras eligible for the incentive.

Indirect Impact

Enactment of CB-008-2023 could have a positive indirect fiscal impact, as the incentive and installation of security cameras could ultimately deter the criminal element, leading to a reduction in crime and the associated law enforcement cost savings. Additionally, the availability of more crime scene footage may allow law enforcement to complete investigations more efficiently and with greater success.

Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget

No.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

This Act shall take effect forty-five days (45) after it becomes law.

⁸ Montgomery County recently considered and enacted a bill that was for all practical purposes the same as CB-008-2022 – [Bill 14-22](#). Their Office of Management and Budget, in the Fiscal Impact Statement provided for that bill, provided the following estimates regarding administrative costs:

- “Expenditures for the next six years will depend upon the amount Council appropriates under this bill. Assuming an annual funding level in the range of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000, *it is not expected that additional operational or administrative expenditures would be required.*”
- “Under the assumption of a limited appropriation for incentives, management and *administration of this program can be absorbed into the existing MCPD staffing complement.* However, if the program operates at a higher funding level for multiple years, new software and significant staffing increases could be needed.”

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please call me.