



CATHERINE E. PUGH
Mayor
250 City Hall, 100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

February 11, 2019

Ms. Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
100 North Holliday Street, Suite 640
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Inspector General Cumming:

On January 18, 2019, I received the Report of Investigation for case 19-0017-I, which related to issues in the Department of Transportation (DOT). Your report noted that there was financial waste regarding the procurement and use of a machine to fabricate signs. It also noted that two employees within DOT's Signs and Markings Section were producing personal artwork using City resources and assets for a side business. I thank you for your thorough report and have reviewed the findings with the Director of Transportation. I concur with your recommendations and offer the following comments:

Procurement of the WaterJet Machine

The WaterJet machine, which uses a high-pressure water stream to cut through metal and other materials, cost over \$215,000 to procure and nearly \$36,000 to repair since 2013. Additionally, you note that it is rarely used and that most of the employees in the Signs and Markings Section are unable to operate the WaterJet machine. This is unacceptable. The justification for its purchase in 2013 was that it would make sign fabrication easier and more efficient. I am directing DOT to appropriately train the employees of the Signs and Markings section on how to safely use the WaterJet machine. I am also asking the Chief of the Bureau of Procurement to review this procurement and advise how such costly items can be better procured. The full, lifecycle costs of items should be understood when purchasing products.

Employee Conduct

Your report also found that a husband and wife employed in the Signs and Markings Section worked on personal projects during City time and used City resources while doing so. This conduct is inappropriate and in violation of clear City policies. I have referred this matter to the Director of Transportation to determine appropriate disciplinary action.

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Again, thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine E. Pugh', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor
City of Baltimore