

12-10-20

Venue: Hawthorne Council Meeting Dec. 15, Red Light Camera Agenda Item

Subject: The Rosecrans/Hindry Limit Lines are Too Far to the West

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

I believe that the Rosecrans/Hindry limit lines are too far to the West.

I. BACKGROUND

In 2018 the red light camera monitoring the dual left turn from westbound Rosecrans Avenue to Hindry Avenue generated 8240 tickets ¹, three times the number of tickets generated by any other Hawthorne camera, more than thirty times that of the three least prolific cameras in the City, and more than triple that of the most prolific left turn camera elsewhere in California.

During the 17 years 1995 to 2011 (2011 was the last year studied) there were no accidents attributed to red light violations of the type monitored by the Rosecrans/Hindry cameras (northbound rolling right turns, westbound left turns). Rear end accidents have doubled since the cameras were installed². (See also the study appended to the letter I submitted for the 10-13-20 council meeting.) [That letter is online at a link in Set # 9 on the Hawthorne Docs page at highwayrobbery [dot] net]

The Redflex Redlight Offender Statistics reports ¹, or "RROS" - example below - show that violations peak in the late afternoon, and that the average violation is about 0.5 second into the red.

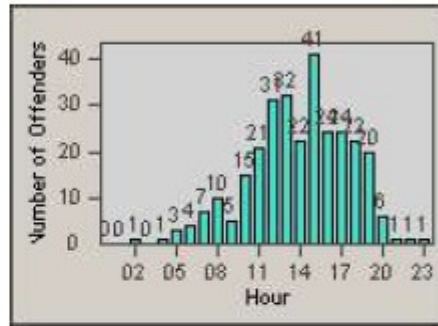
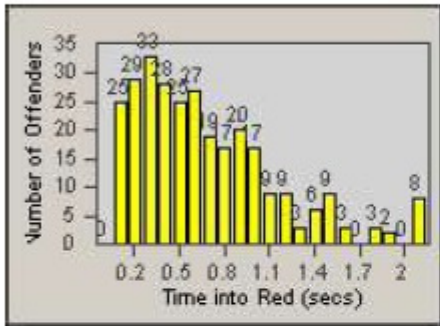
¹ Per official reports obtained from the City, available online as Set # 2 and Set # 3 on the Hawthorne Docs page at highwayrobbery [dot] net.

² SWITRS (CHP) accident data is posted online in Set # 5 on the Hawthorne Docs page at highwayrobbery [dot] net.

Redflex Redlight Offender Statistics

CONTRACT: Hawthorne LOCATION: HA-ROHI-01 Rosecrans
 DATE FROM: 01-Oct-2012 DATE TO: 31-Oct-2012

LANE 1



LANE 2

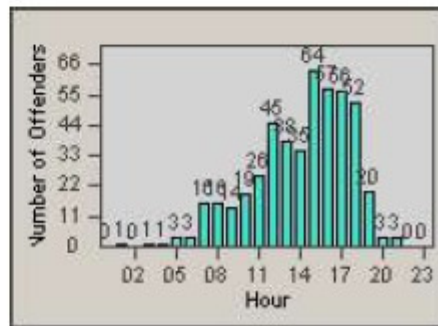
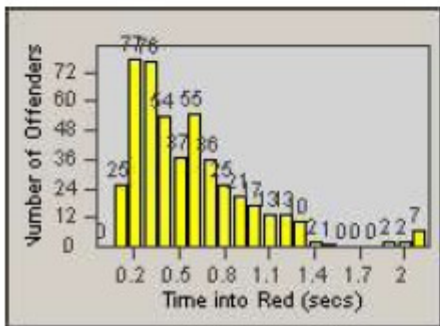


Fig. 1: Portion of the Redflex Redlight Offender Statistics ("RROS") report. More recent RROS reports, up to 2019, are available Set # 3 on the Hawthorne Docs page at highwayrobbery [dot] net.

The length of the yellow light for the westbound left turn has been set at 3.0 seconds, the State and federal minimum, for all of the last sixteen years³.

A visit to the intersection reveals that westbound motorists in the two left turn lanes, when waiting at the red light or arrow, stop unusually far back from the painted limit line. (Fig. 2.)

³ Signal timing per official tables obtained from the Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Works, available online in Set # 1 on the Hawthorne Docs page at highwayrobbery [dot] net



Fig. 2: Looking northward across Rosecrans/Hindry

Google and Bing aerial photos of the intersection (Figs. 3 and 4) show that same distancing from the limit line. The Google photo also permits comparison of the distancing of the westbound cars to the close-up positioning of the eastbound cars.

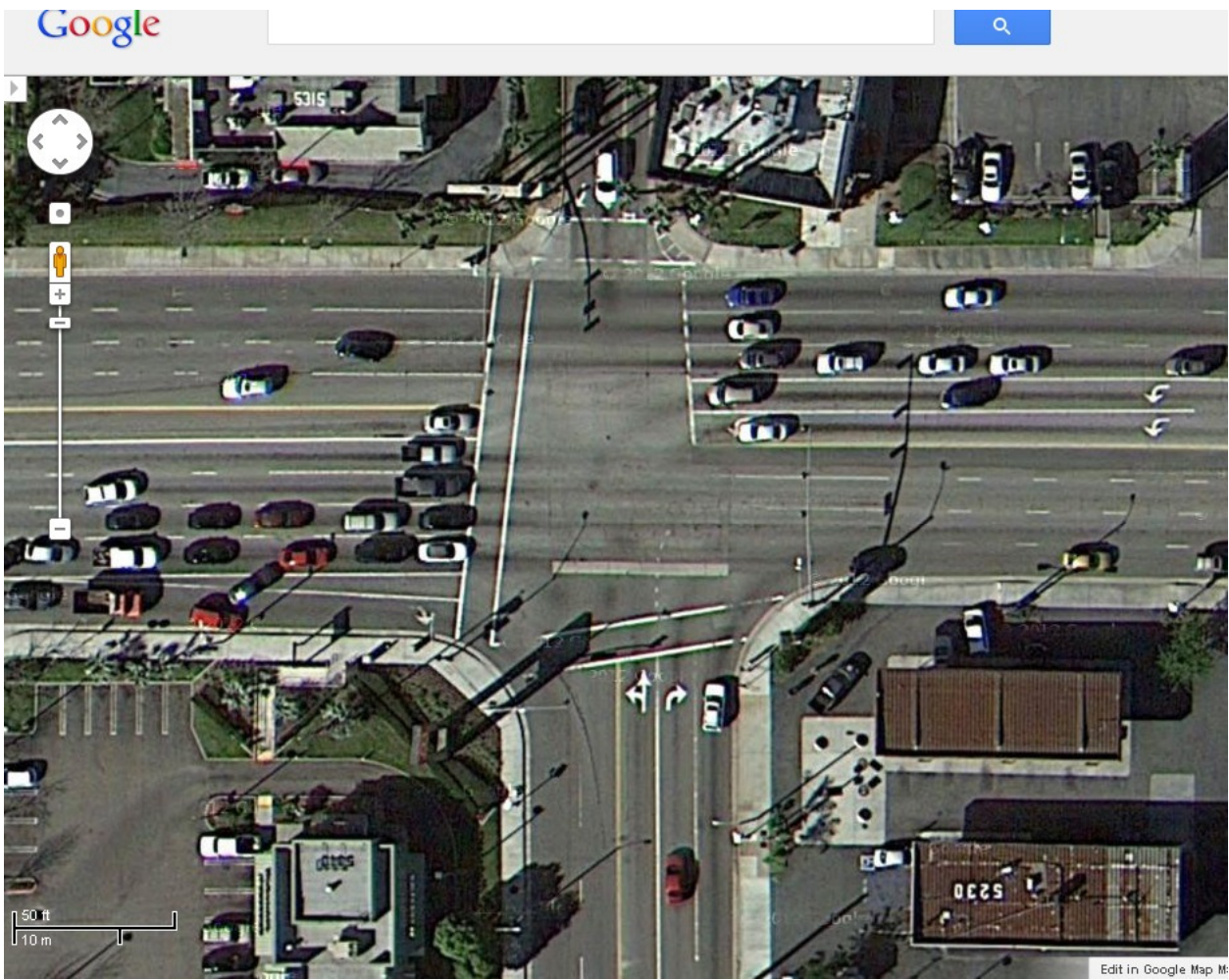


Fig. 3: Google photo of Rosecrans/Hindry

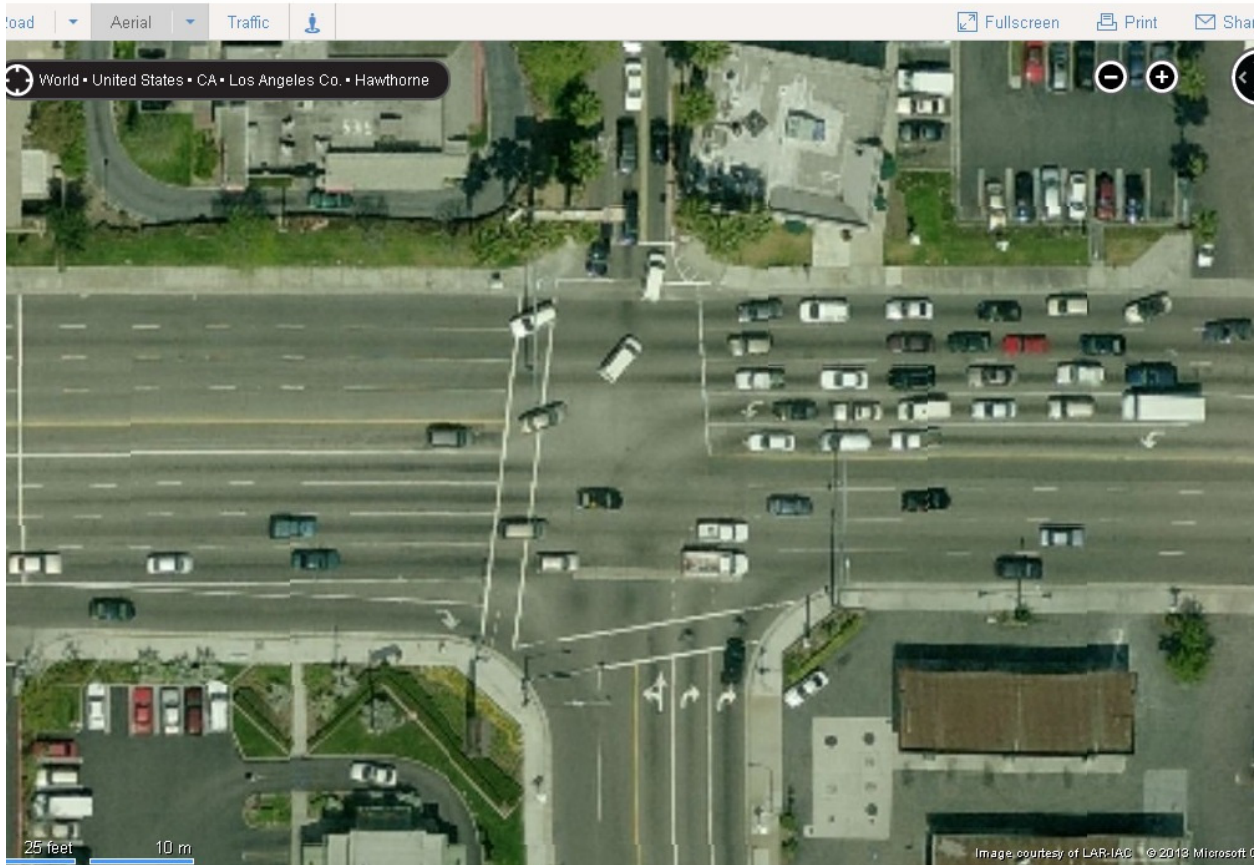


Fig. 4: Bing photo of Rosecrans/Hindry

Most motorists are committing to their left turns well before they reach the limit line, with most driving over the last ten or fifteen feet of the double yellow, per a video⁴ recorded in July 2013. They do it to reduce the otherwise overly tight radius of the turn.

Further, many of the motorists exiting the north side shopping center via a southbound to eastbound left turn routinely cut across the # 1 westbound to southbound left turn lane. (Fig. 5.)

⁴ Video, available at link posted online in Set # 5 on the Hawthorne Docs page at highwayrobbery [dot] net or on YouTube by searching using keywords Hawthorne Rosecrans Hindry camera.



Fig. 5: Looking northwesterly across Rosecrans/Hindry

II. DISCUSSION

When a motorist has begun his or her left turn at a point some distance back from the painted limit line and already has the car's left tires on the wrong side of the double yellow, that motorist will fear that if they make a last minute decision to stop at the limit line they will come to rest part way into the lane to their left - which is the # 1 lane of opposing traffic. The motorist may also feel that a last minute attempt to merge all the way back into his or her own lane would risk a collision with a vehicle in the # 2 left turn lane.

Thus there is a No Man's Land, a place where no one feels safe to stop. Because the painted limit line is a significant distance beyond the place motorists find to be the comfortable and safe place to stop, there is an effective shortening of the yellow light, as follows: If the yellow light has come on, a motorist must either stop in his comfortable/safe area, or travel an extra ten or fifteen feet across the No Man's Land to make it beyond the limit line before the light goes red. At 20 mph it will take that motorist an extra 1/3 or 1/2 second to cross the No Man's Land.

The placement of the limit line for the westbound movement at Rosecrans/Hindry is similar in effect to the design used at some intersections in the State of Arizona, where - unbeknownst to some Arizonans and most visitors - the Violation Line a motorist must reach in order to legally enter the intersection is the invisible "prolongation of the curb line," and can be many feet beyond the place most motorists are accustomed to waiting for the light - the first painted

line of the crosswalk⁵. In a 2009 ruling, the Federal Highway Administration found Arizona's design scheme to be illegal⁶.

In addition to dealing with the No Man's Land, a motorist making a left turn from Rosecrans to Hindry must simultaneously deal with a number of other physical challenges.

- a. The turning lanes are narrow.
- b. Because the limit line is too far West, the turning radius is unusually tight and changes as you proceed thru the turn.
- c. A motorist in the # 1 left turn lane must pay close attention to the car in front, in case that motorist slows abruptly to make a U-turn.
- d. A motorist must be on the lookout in case the motorist in front brakes or swerves unexpectedly due to anxiety about potentially receiving an expensive ticket.
- e. While accelerating up to the high speed commensurate with the long turn pocket, a motorist must maintain a reasonable braking distance from the vehicle in front while at the same time keeping that distance sufficiently small so that the green doesn't time out.
- f. To monitor the traffic light on the southwest corner (the other light, on the arm, is vertically and horizontally out of the detailed field of vision of a person about to steer into a dual left turn), a motorist may be looking into the sun.

III. CONCLUSION

Please ask staff to explain why the limit lines for westbound traffic at Rosecrans/Hindry have been placed so far to the West.

Please ask staff to report to you the average age of motorists cited for the Rosecrans/Hindry left turn and how that compares to the age of motorists cited by the other cameras in town.

Sincerely,

Jim

⁵ Crash photos 5 and 6 on the Industry PR page at [highwayrobbery \[dot\] net](#)

⁶ FHWA ruling, available online at a link in this article: [thenewspaper \[dot\] com/news/29/2990 \[dot\]asp](#)