

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Red light cameras - for the Encinitas City Council, possibly Aug. 8

Date:Thu, 26 Jul 2018 17:16:58 -0700

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For City staff: Please route this email to the members of the City Council and the Traffic and Public Safety Commission, and make it available to the public along with the other documents for the red light camera item possibly on the Council agenda of August 8.

7-26-18

Subject: Red light cam extension possibly on August 8 Encinitas Council agenda

Honorable Councilmembers:

The City's red light camera program soon will be coming to the Council for final action as earlier this week the Traffic and Public Safety Commission OKayed the program's continuation. Unfortunately, that approval was based upon information which the July 23 staff report (copy attached) repeated from a 2013 staff report (copy attached) which was thoroughly debunked in 2013, within a few days after it was made available to the public. Last month, when the camera issue was on the council agenda, I wrote to you (full copy in thread below):

*Five years ago, on the occasion of a June 26, 2013 Council review of the camera program, staff prepared a study (copy attached) charting accidents over a twelve year period beginning four years before the installation of the cameras. Staff's report claimed that the cameras produced a 57% reduction in red light running collisions. Although there were just a few days lead time, Safer Streets LA [SSLA] prepared and on June 26 submitted to Council a very detailed discussion (copy attached) of the data staff used, and determined that **staff had erroneously overstated - by approximately double - the quantity of pre-camera accidents.** Safer Streets LA concluded: "As a result, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the effectiveness of [Encinitas'] camera enforcement but it is likely that little or no safety improvement has been gained through the use of photo enforcement."*

Both in 2013 and last month (June), Councilmembers had little lead time to actually read the SSLA report and compare it to the claims made in the 2013 and June 2018 staff reports. But now here in late July there is a space of nearly two weeks before the next Council meeting, and I encourage you to review both reports - plus the July 23 staff report - before making your decision.

When it comes to statistics I am a lay person, but even I have noticed that staff's reports are missing a control group - a comparison with camera-free intersections in Encinitas or in nearby communities. The importance

of having a control group was pointed out by a report (copy attached) commissioned in 2016 by the City of San Leandro (also a Redflex client), in which the engineer concluded:

"After reviewing over 13 years of collision data for the two intersections, our findings are inconclusive with regards to an ARLE [red light camera] reducing collisions." "For whatever reason, it appears that the injury plus fatality collision rate at signalized intersections (with or without ARLE) has *decreased* dramatically over the most recent nine year period (when compared to the previous nine year period). ARLE cannot take credit for this reduction, because **the collision rate decreased more at signalized intersections without ARLE.**" (Emphasis added.)

I also want to pass along a Case Western study newly published in the *Social Science Research Network*, in which the authors made an in-depth statistical analysis of the camera programs in Houston and Dallas and found, "... the cameras changed the composition of accidents, but no evidence of a reduction in total accidents or injuries." (Abstract, page 1 of the pdf of the study.) The study further found, "... the model suggests that **the camera program led to a decrease in social welfare.**" (Page 5 of the pdf of the study, line 5, emphasis added.) (A full copy of the study - a large file - is available on the University's website; Google the title, Criminal Deterrence when there are Offsetting Risks: Traffic Cameras, Vehicular Accidents, and Public Safety.)

Visitors

The July 23, 2018 staff report revealed, for the first time, the (high) percentage of tickets going to visitors to Encinitas: 80%. In my March 2013 email (copy below) I wrote about alternatives to cameras:

"Because they won't know or won't remember that there's a camera up ahead, the presence of a camera won't keep the visitors or the distracted/impaired locals from making the dangerous real late runs. To cut those real late runs, a city should install visual cues to make its most dangerous intersections more prominent and to warn motorists, 'signal ahead.' Most of these engineering countermeasures are cheap and quick to do. None of them carry the camera side effect of increased rearenders."

Conclusion

I again suggest:

1. Encinitas should have its stats done by a professional with credentials in the field of statistics and who is independent of other ties or contracts with the City and,
2. Encinitas should investigate countermeasures like those described in my March 2013 email.

Regards,

Jim

Note: The earlier correspondence, going back to 2013, is available in Set # 6 on the Encinitas Docs page at highwayrobbery.net; click the link for the June 2018 email to the council.