




City Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Mark Wright, Chief of Police 
For Information Contact: Officer Jay Froboese at 461-6302
Date: October 18, 2005
Subject: Contract for installation of automated video red-light camera system

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to sign a 5 year contract with Nestor Traffic Systems for the installation, maintenance, and operation of a video based automatic red light camera system at specified intersections within the city of Murrieta

BACKGROUND

California law provides for local governmental agencies who meet strictly specified requirements to operate automated traffic enforcement systems at intersections within their governmental jurisdictions that are controlled by traffic signals. The purpose of the automated traffic control systems, which are capable of capturing photographic and/or video recordings of red light traffic violations at the intersections, is to provide a deterrent to prevent drivers from driving through red lights and identify both vehicles and their drivers if cars do drive through a red light. Red light camera systems are both a prevention tool and an enforcement tool designed to make intersections safer for all vehicular traffic.

The police department currently utilizes marked patrol units and traffic officers to monitor city intersections for red light compliance. On September 20th, 2005 City Council approved the purchase of up to 20 "Rat Lights", a non-photo enforcement tool, which will assist in these efforts by allowing current officers to safely position themselves beyond the "Rat Light" equipped intersections to observe violations at intersections equipped with these devices. Yet, officers must be at the actual intersection to observe the violation when it occurs and are prevented from accomplishing other duties when they are monitoring an intersection. Additionally, officers cannot monitor intersections on a 24 hour basis. An automated camera system can assist officers in their efforts by providing a complete 24 hour video surveillance of any violations which occur at intersections equipped with camera systems.

It is impractical to equip every intersection in the city with a camera system. Yet empirical evidence of violation counts at various intersections taken within the community over the past six months has identified 3 initial intersections that will immediately benefit from the presence of automated camera systems. Staff recommends that automated Video Camera Systems be installed at the following three intersections; Clinton Keith at Nutmeg, Murrieta Hot Springs at Whitewood, and Murrieta Hot Springs at Margarita. Traffic counts at these intersections revealed above average red light violations.

Staff's research and findings regarding automated red light camera system manufacturers and operational issues impacting their viability has found that Nestor Traffic Systems meets every staff concern regarding; current city traffic signal equipment compatibility, the installation process, the 24 hour operation of the cameras, the initial screening of the photographs, computer linkage to the camera system vendor in place, the maintenance and repair of the cameras, inclusion of our local court system in the implementation, education, and training court personnel for an automated system, identifying red



light violation fines as they relate to internal city finance department procedures and contract fee disbursements, ensuring a contractual cost neutrality to the city, ensuring all legal obligations associated with an automated system are met, and ensuring for the proper training for traffic officers who administer the program, as well as understanding what administrative program duties are entailed in hours per week. Only Nestor Traffic Systems met all of staff's concerns and program needs.

Nestor Traffic Systems will own the equipment they install and bear the entire cost of the installation and maintenance of their equipment. The city will only have a fixed cost per intersection approach which is by specified within the contract. This fixed cost is paid to Nestor Traffic Systems each month based entirely on automated red light violation fines received from the courts. However, the city will not be obligated to pay any deficiencies to meet the agreed upon fixed costs should insufficient red light violations occur. If Nestor Systems is unable to generate enough fees to cover their installation, maintenance, operational and equipment costs they absorb the difference, not the City of Murrieta. Therefore, there is no up-front cost to the city or potential unfunded monthly costs associated to the city for the installation or operations of the system as long as the contract is in place. The proposed contract guarantees complete cost neutrality to the city unless the city breaches the contract in which case Nestor Systems recoups the cost of their investment as specified by the contract.

The Public Safety and Traffic Commission has been presented with a presentation regarding staff's findings concerning automated Red Light Camera Systems and has recommended that the City proceed with the installation of an automated red light enforcement system. Staff has prepared a public presentation for council which will be delivered during the public hearing regarding this proposal. In addition, a representative from Nestor Systems will be available at the scheduled public hearing to answer any direct questions.

BUDGET IMPACT _____

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Nestor Traffic Systems contract