



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: July 12, 2006 REPORT NO: 06-093
ATTENTION: Council President and City Council
Docket of July 18, 2006
SUBJECT: Red Light Photo Enforcement Program
REFERENCE: City Manager's Report Nos. 96-08, 96-136, 98-114, 02-203, 02-282,
04-056

REQUESTED ACTION:

Reduce the "grace period" for the Red Light Photo Enforcement program from 0.5 seconds to 0.1 seconds.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the program be modified in order to increase its effectiveness.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of the Red Light Photo Enforcement program (RLPE) is to prevent red light violations and thereby reduce the possibility of collisions that may result from running red lights by modifying driver behavior. Currently, if you run a red light at an intersection that has a red light photo enforcement camera in the City of San Diego within the first 0.5 seconds, you will not be issued a citation. The RLPE program has operated for three years. Statistics show that there are a significant number of motorists in our city running the red light during the red light "grace period", causing risk to other motorists. Of the 36,400 violations that could have been issued, 65% or 23,660 were not issued due to the "grace period".

We have not seen a reduction in red light violations in San Diego. Other jurisdictions experience up to a 40% reduction in violations. Although we have seen a 17% decline in red light-running accidents at the eight existing red light photo locations and a 9% reduction citywide, other jurisdictions in the County have seen accident reductions of 22% to 70%. Our program could be more effective.

Currently, eight cities in the County of San Diego have authorized a photo enforcement program with no “grace period.” They are: Del Mar; El Cajon; Encinitas; Escondido; Oceanside; Poway; Solana Beach and Vista. San Diego is the only city within the County of San Diego that has a “grace period”.

In addition, the California Vehicle Code Section 21453 (a) & (c) prohibits all vehicles from entering an intersection at any point during a red light phase. If a police officer witnesses a red light violation the officer may issue a citation. With our current RLPE policy we have created two standards.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The fiscal year 2007 budget has funding of \$1,522,000 for the program budgeted in the General Fund. The estimated revenue with the grace period for 15 sites for FY’07 is \$926,000. The estimated revenue with no grace period for 15 sites for FY’07 is projected to be \$1,117,000.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

On September 17, 2002, Council authorized the reinstatement of the Red Light Photo Enforcement (RLPE) Program. As part of the reinstatement of the program, Council directed staff to allow a minimum red light “grace period” of 0.5 seconds before a citation is issued to the registered owner who failed to stop at a red light.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

In conjunction with the reinstatement of the RLPE Program, there have been public outreach efforts that explain the purpose and benefits of the red light cameras. As part of the public outreach effort, a brochure on the program has been published and is available for community meetings and requests from the public. Further educational efforts have included two annual National Stop on Red week campaigns that included a media event at Qualcomm Stadium, a Padre poster give-away at Petco Park, and the San Diego Police Department Safety Fair at the Miramar Air Show. On-going educational efforts include the production of a video on the RLPE program and follow-up contacts with community groups.

A RLPE Program web page has been posted on the City of San Diego’s web site. The web page includes the proposed intersections for photo enforcement. The proposed intersections are posted on the City’s website for at least thirty days prior to final decision making, to allow for community input. Engineering staff respond to any questions from the public generated through the website. In addition, there is a short video on the website, explaining how the program operates.

The public has become more receptive to red light photo enforcement programs. They have seen numerous red light violators and are requesting more photo systems be installed to stop this behavior.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

There are currently eight RLPE intersections located in six Council Districts. The program will include the installation of seven additional RLPE intersections located in other areas of the City. Vehicle drivers that run a red light could be impacted (receive a citation).

Originating Department

Deputy Chief/Chief Operating Officer

Chief of Police