



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Hans F. Larsen

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON AUTOMATED
CAMERA ENFORCEMENT

DATE: 04-16-10

Approved

Date

4/20/10

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this status report on the implementation of a pilot automated camera enforcement program for red light running violations.

BACKGROUND

A red light running violation occurs when a vehicle crosses the established limit line at an intersection after the traffic signal turns red. Vehicles that are in the intersection when the signal turns red are not in violation. In 2008, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reported that over 760 people were killed and an estimated 137,000 were injured nationwide in crashes involving red light running violations. Although San José is one of the safest large cities in the nation in terms of traffic safety, red light running violations continue to occur within the city. In 2009, over 410 people were injured in San José in crashes associated with red light running violations, including one fatality.

Red Light Camera (RLC) automated enforcement technology has been identified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as an effective intersection safety tool. California State law authorizes government agencies to operate a RLC automated enforcement system under specific criteria, and there are about 100 California communities currently utilizing cameras for automated enforcement of red light violations.

On May 19, 2009, the City Council accepted a report provided to the Transportation and Environment Committee recommending the development and implementation of a pilot RLC automated enforcement program for up to six signalized intersections. The pilot program would be used to evaluate the effectiveness of RLC technology as a traffic safety tool in San José to reduce crashes caused by motorists running red lights, and the incidence of red light running violations, with the goal of improving the safety of motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. The Approved FY09-10 Capital Budget includes \$200,000 to develop the pilot program.

ANALYSIS

Activities that have occurred this fiscal year in collaboration with the Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU) of the Police Department include:

- Analysis of intersections with high crash activity associated with red light running violations and/or a high incidence of reported red light running activity.
- Benchmarking of current technology and programs in other cities with active RLC programs.
- Reviewed best practices for development and implementation of a RLC program as recommended by the FHWA.
- Met with the Santa Clara County Superior Court administration to discuss the potential implementation of the first RLC program in the county.
- Worked with the Finance Department to develop and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP).

Request for Proposal Process

The RFP for RLC Automated Enforcement services was issued on February 18, 2010 with a submittal deadline of March 26, 2010. The three proposals received in response to the RFP are currently being evaluated by a panel consisting of staff from DOT, TEU and a representative from the Los Gatos Police Department. The evaluation criteria is based on the technical capabilities of the vendor's RLC system, their experience and customer service, cost, and both local business and small business preference. It is anticipated that the review process, which may include interviews with one or more of the vendors, will be completed by the end of May.

Pilot Program Implementation

The RFP will result in a contract that will provide for the collection and review of a 12-hour video survey by the selected vendor to document the extent of red light running activity at the proposed RLC intersections, and to finalize the selection of the six intersections. This data will also be used to assess the effectiveness of the RLC program.

The contract will also be structured to implement the pilot program in phases with RLC systems being installed and operated at three intersections for a period of 6 months prior to the installation of the next three intersections. This phased approach would enable staff in both DOT and TEU to better assess the effectiveness of the RLC equipment and to make any necessary program adjustments in the early phase of the pilot before expanding the program to all six intersections.

Staffing and Budget Considerations

For each RLC system installed, the selected vendor would be compensated on a flat monthly fee basis. State law prohibits compensating a supplier of RLC equipment based on either the number of citations issued or revenue generated. Another outcome of phasing the RLC

equipment installation is that the vendor fees would only be applied once each RLC system becomes fully operational.

In Santa Clara County, the fine for a red light running violation is \$456. The City's share for a violation captured through a RLC system is \$141. While it is anticipated that the pilot program would ultimately be self-funding (cost neutral), there is currently no identified budget to provide for the upfront program costs in either the General Fund or Traffic CIP, especially appropriation of funding for a contract award.

Further, due to the extensive budget challenges the City is facing, the City Manager's Proposed 2010-11 budget includes substantive program and staffing reductions throughout the City, including within DOT and the Police Department. In addition to the direct loss of staff associated with the reduction or elimination of programs, many existing programs will be impacted due to the movement of employees both within and between departments.

Given the significant resources that will be required in both DOT and PD with regards to various program reductions and/or elimination, the reorganization of existing staff and training of new staff, and the budget realities of limited funding for a RLC contract, the initiation of the pilot RLC program will need to be deferred. Staff will continue with the current RFP process and request all three vendors to keep their proposals open for a certain period of time, not to exceed one year, to allow the City to award a contract when both staffing and funding is available to fully implement, manage and evaluate the program. It is unknown at this point whether the vendors will agree to keep their proposals open for a certain period of time, not to exceed one year, or whether the City will need or elect to issue a new RFP at a later date. At this time, staff expects to reevaluate opportunities to proceed with the pilot program in the Fall 2010.

Once a determination is made to proceed with award of a contract, the primary staff work associated with implementing and managing the pilot program after the contract is executed will include:

Program Initiation

- Finalize RLC system locations for first 3 intersections
- Review of vendor design and oversight of conduit and camera system installation
- Installation of state mandated signage
- Develop and implement public awareness campaign
- Finalize business rules with vendor
- Coordinate program implementation with the Superior Courts
- Ensure only warning notices are issued during first 30 days of camera operation
- Ensure signal phasing complies with state minimums
- Obtain training in vendor's system

Program Oversight

- Regular review of RLC system operation
- Regular review of vendor compliance with contract provisions
- Regular inspection of equipment and signage
- Ongoing public awareness campaign as the program is expanded
- Review of all potential violations and approval of citations by law enforcement
- Coordination with the Superior Courts. Attend court when citations are appealed
- Reconcile court activity with violation activity
- Regular review of signal phasing
- Respond to all community inquiries
- Assessment of RLC program effectiveness, including whether to proceed with additional 3 intersections. If needed, finalize RLC system locations for additional intersections

Conclusion

The RLC program represents a new opportunity to improve traffic safety in a cost effective manner. However, due to current cutbacks on budget and staff resources, it is not recommended that the City start a new program at this time.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the Police Department, the City Attorney's Office and the Finance Department.

/s/

HANS F. LARSEN
Acting Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Laura Wells, Deputy Director of Transportation, at 975-3725.