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News and perspective from Press-Enterprise/PE.com Riverside reporter Alicia Robinson

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NEWS

Police chief on red light cameras: data not conclusive

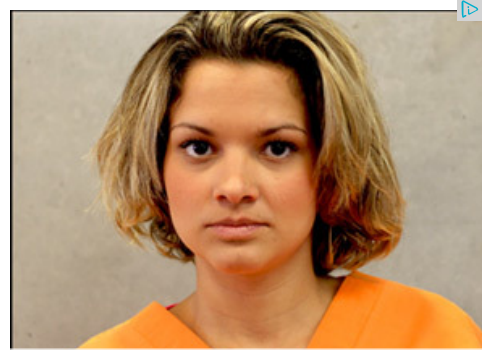
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Published: July 15, 2012 Updated: Aug. 18, 2014 8:28 a.m.

So I called Riverside police Chief Sergio Diaz the other day to ask what's up with the possible relocation of the downtown police station, and I realized I hadn't sought his opinion on the city's [red light camera program](#). Who better to ask than a guy whose job is to keep city streets safe? So I asked.

Diaz isn't really pro- or anti-camera, at least not publicly. Certainly, the statistics show the number of accidents citywide was higher before the camera program, he said, but the addition of the cameras isn't the only variable that's changed. The city has made improvements to streets and intersections, and police have carried out various enforcement programs.



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Riverside police Chief Sergio Diaz is neutral on red light cameras



"It's impossible to attribute causality to one thing. I don't know whether and to what degree the red light cameras have contributed to a reduction in traffic crashes," Diaz said. "It's also the case that there have been a lot of other efforts."

Besides the police department's regular traffic enforcement, there are about a dozen DUI checkpoints every year, which help raise drivers' awareness, Diaz said. The cops don't arrest a huge number of drunk drivers, but everyone knows about the checkpoints - and maybe the existence of cameras and public debate about them has the same effect, he said.

As to the camera program, Diaz said he's willing to collaborate with public works officials to make it more effective. But he's not giving it a thumbs up or down.

"I don't have the final verdict," he said. "That is a council decision and I don't want to usurp their prerogative."



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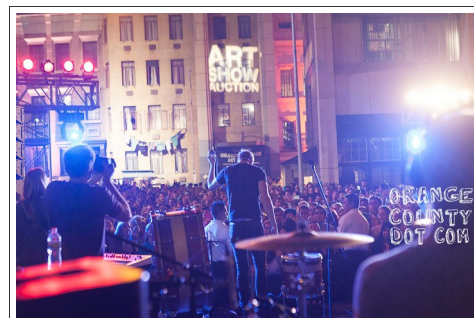
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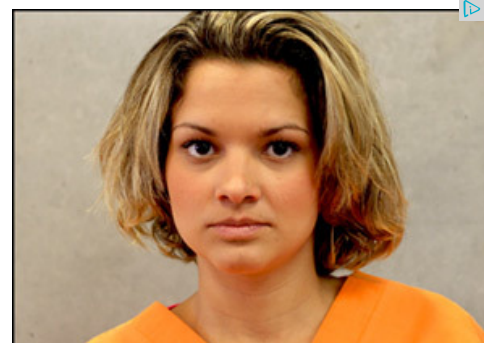
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