

7-12-14

For City Staff: Please distribute this email to the members of the City Council

Subject: Red light cameras - California's experience

Honorable Council Members:

I understand that you are considering the installation of red light cameras. I am in California and would like to pass along to you some of the things we have learned after having had red light cameras here for more than a decade.

1. On June 13 the Yuba County Grand Jury in Marysville, California published a dissection (60 pages long) of the nine-year-old red light camera system in Marysville. I think you will find their report very interesting, as well as a possible model for portions of any upcoming reports to yourselves, by your staff.

The Marysville report is available on the Grand Jury's site:

<http://www.yubacourts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/GrandJury/GJR2013.pdf> .

2. Once upon a time California had more than 100 cities with red light cameras. Now we are down to less than 50, with recent major closures being the systems operated by Redflex in the Cities of Hayward, Oakland, Santa Ana, Inglewood, and Riverside. In some of those cities the local authorities made on-the-record statements about the efficacy of the cameras, and I have pasted those statements below, for your consideration.

Regards,

Jim Lissner

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cc: Media, Chamber Board

Attachment :

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City of Laguna Woods, California (cameras installed in 2005, closed June 2014): "Staff studied incidents over a 10-year period of time and found that the number of collisions related

to signal violations at the two photo enforced intersections fluctuated slightly, but did not change in any significant manner after initiation of the red light photo enforcement program." City Manager Christopher Macon in staff report prepared for 5-28-14 council item.
<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsLagunaWoodsContr2014MayStaffRep.pdf>

City of Walnut, California (cameras installed in 2007, removed in 2014): "The statistical review of the RedFlex camera program did not reflect a reduction of traffic accidents, nor could the data support the cameras made the intersections safer." Mayor Tony Cartagena in 5-19-14 San Gabriel Valley Tribune article <http://www.sgvtribune.com/general-news/20140519/walnut-city-council-votes-to-end-red-light-camera-program>

City of Riverside, California (cameras installed in 2006, closing Sept. 2014): "Upon review CalTrans has determined that the accident rates do not warrant the camera systems at any of the five CalTrans locations and has requested their removal." Riverside Director of Public Works/City Engineer Thomas J. Boyd, in report prepared for Public Safety Committee meeting of 6-18-12, page 2-3.
Source: <http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsRivers2012JuneStaffRepCloseProg.pdf>

More from Riverside: "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." Chief of Police Sergio Diaz.
Source: 7-14-12 Press Enterprise article <http://blog.pe.com/2012/07/14/police-chief-on-red-light-cameras-data-not-conclusive/>

More from Riverside: "I have spoken publicly against the program several times in the past, once before the public safety committee and twice before the entire council. Each time, I expressed my dislike of the general concept of the program, the unethical tactics used to collect fees, inconclusive data regarding their effectiveness and the realization of corporate profits at the expense of our citizens. My position on these matters has not changed." Retired 28-year Riverside fire captain, in letter submitted for the Oct. 2, 2012 city council meeting.
Source:
<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsRiversideContractOpinionByRetdFireCapt.pdf>

City of Emeryville, California (cameras installed in 2004, removed in 2012): "Staff also analyzed the number of accidents for the same seven year period and found that the red light cameras did not significantly impact the number of accidents." "Finance has estimated that elimination of the program would result in a \$200,000 per year savings to the City." Chief of Police Kenneth James, in reports submitted for 5-15-12 city council meeting. Source:
<http://web01.emeryville.org/sirepub/pubmtgframe.aspx?meetid=87&doctype=agenda>

City of Los Angeles (cameras installed in 2000, removed in 2011): "It was completely

wrong." "It was strictly designed to bring in revenue and didn't do anything for public safety." Councilmember Dennis Zine, who prior to his twelve years (termed out) on the council served 28 years with the LAPD, 18 years of which was on motors. Source: Los Angeles Daily News, 3-27-12, <http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20120328/red-light-scofflaws-will-catch-a-break>

City of San Bernardino, California (cameras installed in 2005, removed in 2012): "It was the consensus of the Council that the City has lost business because of the red light cameras and they're not making the City any safer." Minutes, 1-24-11 city council meeting. <http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsSanBernContr2011JanMins.pdf>

City of El Monte, California (cameras installed in 2003, removed in 2008): "A comparison of traffic collisions at Redflex monitored intersections vs. non-Redflex monitored intersections revealed that there is no statistical difference in the number of traffic collisions because of Redflex monitoring." Chief of Police Ken Weldon, in memo presented at 10-21-08 council meeting. <http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsElMonteContrTerminateWeldonMemo.pdf>

More from El Monte: "We're spending a lot of staff time on this just to gain \$2000 a month." "It doesn't reduce accidents -- that's what our studies and results have come back." City Manager James W. Mussenden. Source: Granicus video of council meeting of 10-21-08, at 1:28:40, available on City's website at <http://www.ci.el-monte.ca.us/IWantto/View/VideosonDemand.aspx>

City of Upland, California (cameras installed in 2003, removed in 2009): "The system appears to have little influence on the number of red light related collisions at monitored intersections. At times, rear end collisions have actually increased." Chief Steve Adams, in memo presented at 3-9-09 council meeting. Source: <http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsUplandStaffReport2009Mar9.pdf>

City of Whittier, California (cameras installed in 2004, removed in 2010): "Initially, the red-light program did change behaviors because it did lessen the number of red-light violations but over the long term it didn't appear to lessen the number of injury accidents." Assistant City Manager Nancy Mendez. Source: 12-6-10 Whittier Daily News <http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsWhittierArticleProgTerminated.pdf>

City of Loma Linda, California (cameras installed in 2006, removed in 2010): "I believe these red light cameras are ways for city governments to legally extort money from their citizens." "The month after we lengthened the yellow light by one second, the number of violations that we have seen dropped by 90 percent." Mayor Rhodes Rigsby, M.D.

Source: KABC - TV, 12-3-10,

http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=news/local/inland_empire&id=7824510

City of Gardena, California (cameras installed in 2005, removed in 2011): "Our research in Gardena has revealed there is no significant traffic safety impact as a result of the use of the red light cameras. At almost every intersection where we have cameras, collisions have remained the same, decreased very slightly, or increased depending on the intersection you examine. When combining the statistics of all the intersections, the overall consensus is that there is not a noticeable safety enhancement to the public." Chief of Police Edward Medrano, in memo presented at 2-9-10 council meeting. Source:

<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsGardenaContr2010staffRepFull.pdf>

City of Bell Gardens, California (cameras installed in 2009, removed in 2012): "To date, 95% of the funds collected from verifiable violations have been paid to RedFlex Traffic Systems for operating the cameras. The remaining 5% of funds collected have been utilized to partially offset costs of personnel to manage the system. The red light camera program has contributed to a moderate decrease in the overall number of accidents; however, no change in the overall number of injury accidents. Furthermore, the police department has recognized unanticipated personnel costs to manage the program. Based on this analysis, the red light camera program is not significant enough of a community safety benefit to justify the continuation of the program beyond the existing three (3) year agreement term that expires on March 29, 2012." Staff report presented at 9-26-11 council

meeting. <http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsBellGdnsContr2011staffRep.pdf>

City of Hayward, California (cameras installed in 2008, removed in 2013): "In response to Council Member Zermeño's question for reasons why cities chose to drop out of the Red Light Camera program... City Manager David commented that another reason was the lack of strong evidence in the industry that red light cameras were effective in reducing collisions." Minutes, 10-11-11 council meeting.

<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsHaywardStaffRep2011Oct11mins.pdf>

More from Hayward: "There is no concrete data that supports the fact that red light cameras are supposed to reduce collisions." "That's not been our experience here in Hayward. We've had much better results with a redeployment of our motor officers. I think that having that personal contact with our community members makes a lasting impression. It's an opportunity for us to change behavior when it's wrong versus getting a ticket in the mail 2-4 weeks down the road." Hayward Police Chief Diane Urban, during 3-6-13 city council

meeting. <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2013/03/06/hayward-to-get-rid-of-red-light-cameras/>

City of Hawthorne, California (cameras installed in 2004, still operating as of 2014): "The hope is that driving behavior is corrected, not just through that intersection but through the rest of the time you're driving here." "You need to study accidents overall. Some of the data that you don't have is accidents for their entirety in our city. You know what, you're right, they're not going down. I wish they were." Hawthorne Police Captain Keith Kauffman, during 3-13-12 city council meeting.

<http://highwayrobbery.net/redlightcamsdocsHawthMain.html#Council2012>

City of Escondido, California (cameras installed in 2004, removed in 2013): "Staff's analysis is, the data on accident rates is inconclusive." "We didn't find any change between photo enforced intersections and citywide. You're just as likely to be injured at a photo enforced intersection as you are citywide. So we didn't find anything to demonstrate that severity had been reduced." "Photo enforcement has the highest cost of all the countermeasures."

Escondido Assistant Director of Public Works Julie Procopio. Source: Video of council meeting of 8-21-13, at 1:26:50, available on City's official archive site, at

<http://escondido2.12milesout.com/>

Counter Measure	Crash Reduction Factor *	Cost per Intersection /Year
Left Turn Protected Phasing	27%	\$5,000
Retroreflective Backplates	13%	\$2,000
Countdown Pedestrian Heads	20%	\$4,800
Improve Signal Coordination	27%**	\$2,400
Automated Enforcement (RLPE)	12%	\$89,800

* FHWA study estimates
** Right Angle Crashes Only

Slide shown by staff at 8-21-13 Escondido council meeting

More from Escondido: "Some of the best footage of really drastic collisions comes from red light cameras." "The cameras are there, the collisions still happen." Councilwoman Olga Diaz. Source: Video of council meeting of 8-21-13, at 1:30:00.

City of South Gate, California (cameras installed in 2003, removed in 2013): "The most disappointing thing from staff's perspective is the lack of change in behavior at the intersections." "If you look at the statistics that were provided by RedFlex, you didn't see a

dramatic impact in the behavior over the years. In fact, a limited correlation between the implementation of RedFlex and the change in behavior. That's disappointing in the deployment, not just in this city, but everywhere." City Manager Michael Flad at council meeting of 9-10-13. Source: [audio clip](#) [audio of full item](#)

City of Moreno Valley, California (cameras installed in 2008, removed in 2009, City of Riverside camera on shared border removed in 2012 at Moreno Valley's request): "We took the heat without having any control over it." "I'm happy to see all those red light cameras go. ...The few people that like them just haven't looked at the reality of what it does. It takes away the discretion of a police officer." Moreno Valley Mayor Richard Stewart. Source: Riverside Press Enterprise article 8-6-12 <http://www.pe.com/local-news/riverside-county/riverside/riverside-headlines-index/20120806-moreno-valley-red-light-camera-to-be-shut-off.ece>

The San Mateo County (California) Superior Court (beginning in 2005 nine cities in the County installed cameras and five still were operating cameras as of early 2014 but one of the five has ordered theirs removed in Aug. 2014): "Are we doing right by the public?" "It's questionable whether the trade-offs are appropriate." "There's a balance there, and I don't think we have found it." CEO John Fitton, San Mateo Superior Court, on 11-13-09.

Source:

<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsSanMateoCountyArticles2009Nov13CourtExecAngry.txt>

More from the San Mateo Superior Court: "I would advise cities who are contemplating installing red light cameras to move cautiously. I know these systems generate revenue for cities, but safety-wise there are questions about whether the red light cameras reduce accidents." CEO John Fitton, on 2-16-10.

Source: KGO-TV,

<http://www.abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/local/peninsula&id=7280823>

From the San Mateo County Grand Jury: "Based on the data provided by the cities, there was no overall trend indicating a noticeable change in accident rates before and after installation of red light cameras." "Recently, the City of San Carlos [extended the yellow light time to comply with state standards](#) and found that the number of citations fell dramatically." "As a result the revenue from red light citations could no longer cover the associated costs."

Source: 2010 Grand Jury Report

<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsSanMateoGrandJuryFinalRep.pdf>

In Other States

City of Roswell, Georgia: "When you look at the number of crashes before the cameras were installed compared to after, they're virtually the same." Roswell Transportation Director

Steve Acenbrak, in Atlanta Journal-Constitution 11-12-12,
<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/roswell-looks-past-red-light-cameras/nS4N9/>

Collier County, Florida: "Further, statistics have not been presented to support that there is a direct correlation between the use of red light cameras and a reduced number of accidents related to running red lights." From Executive Summary of report presented to the Board of County Commissioners.

<http://www.highwayrobbery.net/TrcDocsCollierCountyReccToTerminateExecSumm.PDF> At their 12-12-12 meeting they voted to terminate the contract signed with ATS in 2009.

Brick Township, New Jersey: "At the end of the day, the statistics I was shown did not convince me that these cameras are making intersections safer." "The strongest argument for keeping the lights is for the revenue they generate, and I feel strongly that government should not be balancing budgets through punitive measures." Mayor John Ducey, in Courier Post 2-10-14, <http://www.courierpostonline.com/article/20140210/NEWS02/302100019/In-one-township-mayor-ends-use-red-light-cameras?>

From: www.highwayrobbery.net