



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Greg Scerbak, City Manager

DATE: Sep 21, 2009

FROM: Garry Roth, Program Manager

FILE NO:

SUBJECT: Review of Red Light Camera Program

1. RECOMMENDATION

That administration start negotiations with the City's current intersection safety device contractor to add the equipment and service needed to start carrying out speed enforcement as well at the intersections equipped with red light cameras.

2. BACKGROUND

Collision data indicates that the majority of collisions in Grande Prairie occur at intersections (89%). An analysis was completed which indicated that several intersections represented a higher than average collision rate. The City installed red light cameras (now known in legislation as intersection safety devices) at the seven intersections with the highest collision rates. This system became active on May 17, 2008, with a warning phase in place to June 27, 2008. 400 warning notices were issued during this time. Since June 28, 2008, the system has been used to issue violation tickets to the registered owners of vehicles contravening the red light provisions of the Use of Highways and Rules of the Road Regulation (under the Traffic Safety Act). During this time frame, 6016 violation tickets have been issued (Jun 28, 2008 – Jun 28, 2009).

Following is a summary of the violation tickets issued at each intersection:

100 St @ 84 Ave:	470 (8%)
100 St @ 99 Ave:	2083 (35%)
100 St @ 100 Ave:	1362 (23%)
100 St @ 116 Ave:	1063 (18%)
100 St @ 132 Ave:	155 (3%)
108 St @ 100 Ave:	621 (10%)
116 St @ 100 Ave:	262 (4%)

These can be broken down as follows:

Right turn violations:	3457 (57%)
Left turn violations:	525 (9%)
Straight thru violations:	2034 (34%)

It should be noted that three intersections represent the vast majority of right hand turn violations (55% of all violations). These are 100 St @ 100 Ave, 100 St @ 99 Ave, and 100 St @ 116 Ave. Many of the other intersections also have dedicated right hand turning lanes (without traffic signals).

When the system detects a potential violation, it begins to record the intersection. These video clips are then reviewed by the City's contractor. Any video clips that are clearly not a violation are discarded. The contractor then submits the videos to Enforcement Services where they are reviewed by an officer. Again, the officer may approve or reject a video clip. During this time frame, officers & contractor's staff discarded 1898 events (additional to the tickets issued). The most common reason for rejecting events is that the vehicle was "too close to call" to clearly show if it was a red light violation or not. Administration notes that this does show that a discretionary margin is being utilized.

During this time frame, there were 2963 motor vehicle collisions in Grande Prairie; of these, none were fatalities and 338 were injury collisions. Only 20% of the injury collisions occurred at intersections with red light cameras. This is very comparable to prior years.

Since 2005, the total number of collisions in Grande Prairie has increased by 43%. Since the system has been in effect, the numbers of collisions at these locations has been considerably higher than average:

Location:	Injury Collisions At RLC Intersections:	Previous Average (2001-2005 annual):
100 St @ 132 Ave:	16	4
100 St @ 116 Ave:	9	7.5
100 St @ 100 Ave:	10	4
100 St @ 99 Ave:	6	4
100 St @ 84 Ave:	4	3.5
116 St @ 100 Ave:	6	3
108 St @ 100 Ave:	18	4.5

Injury and fatality collision statistics provide an indication of magnitude and severity of collisions, not necessarily the total trends.

Definitive causes of these collisions have been difficult to determine, due to how the files are captured in the RCMP PROS system. In future, detailed reporting may be available through Alberta Transportation (although this information is at least 1 year after the fact). However, administration notes that a very small number of collisions, in the past year, that are occurring at red light camera intersections are now due to red light violations. Most are as a result of unsafe turns (during green or amber light phases).

In other jurisdictions, increases in rear end collisions were noticed to increase substantially following the implementation of red light cameras. At this point, administration does not have conclusive data to show if there have been increases in rear end collisions at these locations.

3. ALTERNATIVES

- To remain status quo (receive for information);
- To add the additional service of speed enforcement at these intersections.

4. ANALYSIS

1. Legislative Responsibilities

Tickets issued for red light violations are issued under the authority of the Traffic Safety Act. These are accountable through Traffic Court. To date, only two contested red light traffic tickets have been dismissed at trial (due to the accused arguing that the roads were too icy to stop).

The Province recently changed legislation and policy to allow intersection safety devices (like red light cameras) to also record speed violations. Our current system is compatible with this use, however, some upgrades may be required to the equipment at the intersections, if the City were to move in this direction. To date, Edmonton and Calgary have recently started issuing speeding violations using their intersection cameras (too early to determine outcomes). Statistically, speed has also been identified as one of the main contributing factors in injury and fatality collisions in Grande Prairie.

2. Financial Considerations

The total fine value that payable to the City would be \$1.2 million dollars for the offences during this time frame. However, administration also notes that the City also had expenses of \$410,000 and that only approx. \$700,000 of the fines were collected (to date).

In addition, most of the installation costs were paid for by the contractor (included in monthly lease fees to the City). However, the City did make a \$88,000 investment in installing electrical servicing to these intersections.

The City has entered into a 5 year contract that started when the cameras were activated in May 2008.

3. Staff Implications

The process to review tickets and issue them has been completed by the Commissionaires, that are contracted with Enforcement Services (using existing

officers). In addition, there have also been some demands placed on administration staff in terms of assisting the officers, uploading motor vehicle information on behalf of the contractor, and processing out of province vehicle registrations.

While issuing the tickets is a more minor draw on resources, preparing for and attending Court has been a more significant draw. Only a small percentage of these tickets are ever challenged. However, each ticket that is challenged does take at minimum 1 Hr to prepare the Court documents and a min. of 2 Hrs in Court. This component has certainly placed increased pressure on these officers.

4. Communication Strategy

Enforcement Services has promoted red light cameras as a means to reduce collisions. While the collision numbers have not decreased significantly since the cameras have been installed, it is still the position of Enforcement Services that enforcement through the camera technology helps promote safe driving habits that should in the long run have a positive effect on the numbers of people injured or killed at intersection related collisions.

5. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Since the installation of red light cameras in Grande Prairie, the City has issued over 6000 violation tickets since the program was initiated. There have not been significant reductions in collisions, while only a few of these collisions during this time fram, have actually resulted from a red light violation. As well, since the initiation of this program, legislation has been changed to also allow red light camera technology to be used as a tool for speed enforcement as well.

**cc: Supervisor
Director**