

Breakout 13: Red Light Camera Enforcement

Moderator: Troy Walden, Center for Transportation Safety, TTI

Session Summary:

This session was conducted as an open discussion forum of traffic safety experts specializing in automated traffic enforcement systems, often referred to as red light cameras. The panel of experts was chosen for their expertise in automated traffic enforcement camera systems as well as their professional contributions in the areas of traffic engineering, law enforcement and public policy. The primary goal of the session was to allow different perspectives to be voiced concerning positive and negative views of camera enforcement systems as traffic safety countermeasures. Typically, red light camera enforcement has been a controversial subject sparking heated debate. This forum allowed members of the panel and those in attendance to discuss and interact on issues important to them concerning automated enforcement camera systems. The moderator directed questions to the expert panel for discussion and then allowed follow up questions to be posed by those in attendance.

The following questions were posed and discussed:

- What is red light running and how is it a traffic safety problem for municipal governments and the general motoring public?
- What is a red light camera and how does it operate?
- What are the procedural steps a municipality takes to get red light cameras in place and operational?
- From your professional perspective (Public Policy, Traffic Engineering and Law Enforcement), do you believe that red light camera systems are effective traffic safety countermeasures?
- Do you believe that the general public in your municipality approve of red light camera systems for traffic safety purposes or do you believe the public is opposed to this form of monitoring activity? What are some positive and negative examples of feedback you have received from the public concerning their opinion of red light camera systems?
- Red light camera enforcement has proven to be effective in reducing the incidence of red light running events and the number of right angle intersection collisions. However, research has also shown that crash rates for rear end collisions increase when red light cameras are used. How can municipalities account for installing a “traffic safety” system that in some cases decreases collisions while it increases others? In this same vein, does the Municipality incur vicarious liability because of this?
- When a municipality installs and activates a red light camera system for enforcement purposes, does the city reduce enforcement presence in that area or is the camera system supplemented with manpower? How do these approaches differ in helping reduce the number of crashes at the camera monitored intersection?
- Given the limitations of budget resources within a municipality, Mayors, City Managers and City Council Members emphasize the need to maximize the number of sworn personnel performing enforcement duties at dangerous

intersections. Do you believe that red light cameras add to budget constraints given that the number of officer's remain the same regardless of whether red light camera systems are used?

- One major concern of opponents of red light cameras is the notion that the systems are put in place for the generation of revenue for municipalities. What is your position on the issue of revenue vs. traffic safety?