City of Culver City, California

City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 11/28/2005	Item Number: PH-1
AGENDA ITEM: Public Hearing Regarding an Increase in the Number of Intersection Approaches Utilizing Photo Enforcement Equipment Operated under the Police Department's Automated Traffic Enforcement System.	
Contact Person/Dept.: Lt. Ed Baughan	Phone Number: (310) 253-6320
Fiscal Impact: Yes [X] No []	General Fund: Yes [X] No []
Public Hearing: [X]	Action Item: [X] Attachments: [X]
Public Notification: Publication in the Culver City News on November 3 and November 10, 2005. Master notification List 11/23/05.	
Department Approval: John A. Montanio, Chief of Police	CAO Approval: Martin Cole for Jerry Fulwood 11/15/05
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang 11/16/05	

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council, following a Public Hearing, authorize the installation of red light camera technology at the intersections of Sepulveda Boulevard and Slauson Avenue, Washington Boulevard and Helms Avenue, and National Boulevard and Hayden Avenue, totaling six new approaches.

PROCEDURE:

1. Motion to receive and file the affidavit of publication and posting of notice of Public Hearing.
2. Call for a staff report and/or pose questions to staff.
3. Mayor opens Public Hearing, invites public comments.
4. Motion to close the Public Hearing.
5. Mayor calls for staff responses to questions from the public.
6. Discuss the matter and make your decisions.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

On February 8, 1999, the City Council approved entering into a contract with Tellis Traffic, Inc. for support services associated with the Police Department's automated photographic enforcement of red light violations. The contract was executed on February 28, 1999.

On August 23, 1999, the City Council upon recommendation from the City Attorney and the Police Department terminated the contract with Tellis Traffic. The City Council authorized the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into a new contract with Sensys Traffic AB, doing business as Traffic Safety Systems. On August 24, 1999, the contract was subsequently amended by an interim agreement dated August 1, 2001.

On February 1, 2002, the City of Culver City and Traffic Safety Systems, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Redflex, a California corporation, entered into an amended and restated agreement (Attachment 1). This current agreement calls for the installation of at least 25 photo enforced intersection approaches. The Department currently operates photo enforcement equipment at 20 intersection approaches and recommends increasing that total to 26.

A total of six intersections were recently considered for installation. All are suitable locations for the equipment. The City's Traffic Engineer Manager Gabriel Garcia, was consulted on this matter and endorsed the Police Department's recommendation as one of the most effective countermeasure against red light running.

The incidences of red light running were captured on video. The results of the video survey (Attachment 2) indicate there is a serious red light running problem at the subject intersections. Conventional methods of enforcement pale in comparison to automated means which operate 24 hours a day 365 days a year. For the past year a total of 38 red light citations have been issued at these intersections. Based on the video surveys, it appears that only a small fraction of the actual violators were captured by conventional means and issued citations.

The Police Department staff believes it can successfully prosecute an average of 20 violations per day (7,300 citations annually) at the combined additional approaches. However, more importantly, the Department's staff believes that there will be a reduction in the number of drivers running red lights at these approaches with a decrease of accidents and injuries.

Collision reduction estimates are made based on pre and post red light camera program data analysis. Since inception in 1999, there has been a 45% decrease in collisions at the equipped intersections.

Similar reductions have been reported in other Southern California cities with red light camera installations:

- Oxnard: 55% decline
- Garden Grove: 46% decline
- Santa Ana: 16% decline

In May, 2005, the Orange County Grand Jury report on automated enforcement compared Orange County cities with and without red light cameras. It found that Anaheim (without photo enforcement) reported a 54% increase in traffic collisions.

Within the past six months a number of serious traffic collisions, including one fatality, have occurred in the area of National and Hayden. In October, Department staff met with the City's Traffic Engineer Manager, Mr. Garcia, at National and Hayden to discuss measures to impact the collision problem there. This was in part in response to the urging of the local community to address the recent traffic fatalities. All parties agreed that, although the primary factor related to the fatal collision was not red light related, of all available remedies, a red light camera installation would provide the greatest benefit from both engineering and enforcement perspectives.

It should be noted that four of the six requested additional approaches are in the east-end of the city. These installations would provide a balanced distribution of photo enforcement throughout the city.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The current contract in Section 5(b) calls for a monthly payment of $2,347.10 per intersection approach to Redflex or $563,304 annually. Six new approaches would increase the Department's fixed expenses by $14,082.60 per month or $168,991.20 annually. The increase would raise the annual total intersection approach maintenance fee to $732,295.20.

Non fixed expenses of $40.00 per paid citation are anticipated to increase by $16,800 per month or $201,600 annually based on an estimate of 420 paid citations per month. Under this assumption fine revenue collected by the city will be $63,000 monthly or $756,000 annually.

It is anticipated that revenue generated by the citations will offset the ongoing operational, maintenance, fixed and variable costs. Although it is anticipated that the additional approaches will be revenue positive, that is not the intent of this proposed increase of monitored intersections. The City and the Police Department will incur additional cost savings through a reduction of accidents and a decrease in resulting calls for paramedic, fire, and police services. More importantly, it is expected that these intersections will be safer for motorists and pedestrians due to a reduction in red light violations.

Although adding these additional intersections could potentially increase the workload of the Photo Enforcement Section by an estimated 30%, the Police Department is not requesting an increase in personnel.

It is anticipated that installation will be completed and the additional approaches operating July 1, 2006, requiring an increase in the Department's Automated Enforcement budget for Fiscal Year 2006/07 by approximately $380,600.

Funds budgeted in Fiscal Year 2005/2006 for Automated Enforcement contract expenses are $890,000. Funds budgeted in Fiscal Year 2004/2005 were $944,558.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *Amended and Restated Agreement dated February 1, 2002*.
2. Video survey results table.
3. *Notice of Public Hearing*.

MOTION:

1. That the City council authorize increasing the number of photo enforcement approaches by 6 to a total of 26:
2. That the City council authorize the Police Department to authorize Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc. install photo enforcement equipment at the intersections of Sepulveda Boulevard and Slauson Avenue, Washington Boulevard, and Helms Avenue, and National Boulevard and Hayden Avenue.
3. Authorize the City Attorney to prepare any appropriate documents; and
4. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute any agreements required for the increase in approaches.