



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Increased Penalties for Red-Light Running Offences

Date:	March 18, 2008
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	PW08002.tmc (AFS No. 7354)

SUMMARY

To report on the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee request for a review of options for increased enforcement, fines, demerit points, licence suspensions and additional red-light cameras.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Transportation Services recommends that:

1. The increased fines and additional penalties itemized in this report be forwarded to the Ontario Minister of Transportation for consideration and implementation;
2. The General Manager of Transportation Services be requested to include sufficient funds in the Transportation Services 2009 Operating budget submission for a traffic safety awareness campaign; and
3. The City Clerk be requested to forward this report to the City of Toronto's partner municipalities (Cities of Ottawa and Hamilton and the Regional Municipalities of Peel and Waterloo) which operate red-light cameras.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At their November 28, 2007 meeting, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee referred to the General Manager of Transportation Services a motion from Councillor Thompson and Councillor De Baeremaeker to report on increased penalties for red-light running convictions, the installation of additional red-light camera sites and to identify additional measures that can increase the safety of both pedestrians and vehicular traffic at problem intersections.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Since the City of Toronto began operating red-light cameras on November 20, 2000, over 74,000 charges have been laid for red-light running at 37 red-light camera locations. Over the same period, the Toronto Police Service laid over 91,000 charges for disobeying traffic control signals. Despite the existing level of enforcement a large number of collisions attributed to red-light running have occurred at all traffic signal locations within the City of Toronto. Since red-light running is a *Highway Traffic Act* offence, application must be made to the Ontario Minister of Transportation to review the current fines and implement other penalties.

COMMENTS

1. Increased Fine and Penalties for Red-Light Running Convictions

When the police apprehend a vehicle driver for red-light running, the driver can be charged under section 144.18 of the Ontario *Highway Traffic Act*. If convicted, the driver will accumulate three demerit points and the set fine of \$180 may be applied.

At red-light camera sites, however, the vehicle owner is charged under section 144.18.1 of the Ontario *Highway Traffic Act*, as the defendant for red-light running offences. If convicted, only the set fine of \$180 may be applied. Demerit points are not accumulated because the vehicle owner, not the vehicle driver was charged with the offence.

Within the Province of Ontario, there is no additional penalty if a vehicle driver or vehicle owner is convicted of multiple red-light running offences or if the red-light running offence results in an injury. In consultation with traffic safety stakeholders, it is agreed that more substantial deterrents are required to reduce red-light running and injuries attributed to red-light running. However, as the establishment of fines and other penalties are associated with the *Highway Traffic Act*, staff have identified the following options for fine and penalty adjustment which should be forwarded for consideration and implementation by the Ontario Minister of Transportation:

Increased Fine / Additional Penalty	Applicable to HTA 144.18 (driver liability offence)	Applicable to HTA 144.18.1 (owner liability offence)
Substantially increase the set fine	√	√
Increase the number of demerit points	√	
Require convicted driver / vehicle owner to attend a traffic regulation refresher training session. The cost of such sessions to be funded by increased fines	√	√
Immediately suspend the drivers licence of a motorist who causes an injury as a result of a red-light running offence	√	
Suspend the drivers licence of drivers convicted of multiple red-light running offences	√	

Increased Fine / Additional Penalty	Applicable to <i>HTA</i> 144.18 (driver liability offence)	Applicable to <i>HTA</i> 144.18.1 (owner liability offence)
Immediately suspend the vehicle licence plate attached to a vehicle which causes an injury resulting from a red-light running offence		√
Suspend the vehicle licence plates of vehicles associated with multiple red-light running convictions		√
Authorize municipalities to publish the licence plate numbers of vehicles associated with red-light running convictions		√

2. Additional Red-Light Cameras

Ten red-light cameras rotated between 37 sites have been operating in the City of Toronto since November 2000.

The use of red-light cameras has resulted in significant reductions in the number of collisions at red-light camera locations. For example, a comparison of the five-year-average before the cameras were installed (1995-1999) to the five-year-average after the cameras were installed (2001-2005), shows a decrease of 17 percent in all property damage collisions and 25 percent in all fatal and injury collisions at the camera sites. The most significant reduction was in angle-collisions, with reductions of 60 percent in property damage collisions and 66% in fatal and injury collisions.

At the same time, comparable statistics for collisions at all signalized intersections in Toronto, show an increase in all types of collisions of 40 percent for property damage and a reduction of four percent for fatal and injury collisions. Angle type collisions at all signalized intersections were reduced by 2.5 percent for property damage and 42 percent for fatal and injury collisions.

In view of the proven effect that red-light cameras have had in the reduction of collisions, in May of 2006 City Council approved an expansion of the program, which has been initiated and is underway in the City of Toronto.

The red-light camera program will be expanded from the initial ten cameras in 37 locations, to a total of 98 cameras in 169 locations by the end of 2009. The phasing of the expansion program is outlined in the table below:

Year	Additional Red-light Cameras	Additional Red-light Camera sites	Total Red-light Cameras	Total Red-light Camera sites
2008	57	63	77	100
2009	21	69	98	169

In approving the expansion of the red-light cameras in 2006, City Council also approved the installation of new cameras based on the following general criteria:

- to place new camera sites on the approach of the intersection with a demonstrated right angle collision history that could be addressed by red-light cameras;
- to ensure that the installation of the new red-light cameras is evenly distributed amongst the City’s 44 wards; and
- red-light cameras are rotated so that at least one camera location per ward is active at any time.

In order to properly determine the impact of the red-light camera expansion program, a minimum of two years of data gathering will be required. Consequently, Transportation Services will report back on the operation of the expanded red-light camera program, after that time.

3. Additional Traffic Safety Measures

In addition to the red-light cameras, Transportation Services is implementing a number of significant initiatives aimed at increasing the safety of all road users. Some of the initiatives underway include:

Traffic Safety Initiative	Description
Pedestrian Countdown Timers	Numeric count down display at signalized intersections indicating the number of seconds remaining for pedestrians to complete their crossing of a road
Pedestrian Crossover Update	Convert 61 pedestrian crossovers (PXO’s) to traffic signals and update 269 pedestrian crossovers
Broad Pavement Markings	Apply “zebra stripes” to pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections, to heighten drivers awareness of the crosswalk
Accessible Pedestrian Signals	Implement accessible signals to assist visually and sensory challenged pedestrians
Safety and Operational Improvement Program	Geometric improvements to roadways designed to alleviate identified safety and operational problems at specific sites
Public awareness campaigns	Increase public awareness of driver and pedestrian behaviors which increase the risk of collision and injury

Increased seat belt compliance and reduced impaired driving are two examples of driving behavioral changes which have been effected through the combination of continuous enforcement and public education. As a cost containment measure, the City’s traffic safety awareness campaign was interrupted in 2007. However, following consultation with the Toronto Police Service, the General Manager of Transportation Services will investigate options to develop an effective traffic safety awareness campaign in 2008.

CONCLUSIONS

Red-light cameras have reduced the number of collisions at locations where they are used. In 2006 City Council approved the expansion of the program to a total of 98 cameras within 169 sites, which will be evenly distributed amongst the City's 44 wards.

While a significant number of red-light running charges have been laid by the program's Municipal Enforcement Officers as well as Police Officers, additional enforcement and penalty options have to be reviewed. The latter are within the purview of the Ministry of Transportation Ontario and a number of recommended options for penalty and fine adjustments should be forwarded to the Minister for consideration and implementation.

Transportation Services, reviews traffic safety on a continuous and regular basis and implements new programs aimed at increasing the safety of all road users.

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