**(The 2009 report is being submitted in 2014 due to an administrative oversight)**

# CITY OF MEDFORD

# POLICE

**<u>Your Police, Our Community</u>**

## Photo Red Light
## Report to the Legislature
## Process and Outcome Evaluation

January 2009

## Background – Legislative Report Requirements

Oregon Revised Statue (ORS) 810.434 requires cities using photo red light equipment to provide a public information campaign to inform local drivers about the use of cameras before citations are issued and to produce a report to the legislature once each biennium. The law reads as follows:

*(3) A city that chooses to operate a camera shall:*

*(a) Provide a public information campaign to inform local drivers about the use of cameras before citations are actually issued; and*

*(b) Once each biennium, conduct a process and outcome evaluation for the purposes of subsection (4) of this section that includes:*

*(A) The effect of the use of cameras on traffic safety;*

*(B) The degree of public acceptance of the use of cameras; and*

*(C) The process of administration of the use of cameras.*

*(4) By March 1 of each odd-numbered year, each city that operates a camera under this section shall present to the Legislative Assembly the process and outcome evaluation conducted by the city under subsection (3) of this section. [1999 c.851 §1; 1999 c.1051 §327; 2001 c.474 §1; subsection (5) of2001 Edition enacted as 2001 c.474 §3; 2003 c.14 §491; 2003 c.339 §1; 2005 c.686 §1; 2007 c.640 §1]*

## Public Information Campaign

*ORS 810.434 (3)(a)*

Public acceptance of photo red light enforcement is exceptionally high in Medford. The City Council is strongly committed to this program. Prior to implementation of the red light program, a public opinion survey was conducted by the Southern Oregon University business department. Results from the statistics gathered demonstrate the strength of public support for the use of photo red light enforcement.

As part of ORS 810.434, the statute requires cities implementing photo enforcement to provide a public information campaign to inform local drivers about the use of cameras before citations were issued. The City of Medford began the photo enforcement information campaign in July of 2002. With the assistance of the local media, this information is an ongoing process. The primary goal of the campaign was to change driving behavior by increasing awareness and educating the public to the dangers of running red lights and exceeding posted speed limits. This continuing educational program has been a successful due to the extreme interest of both the local print and television media. Numerous print articles and television news segments were aired prior to implementation, during construction of the intersections infrastructure, and after the cameras went live.

On an annual basis the Medford Police Department continues its public education efforts on the photo red light program with updates and program explanation on RVTV, which is an educational television program directed to the community informing them of various police related topics. The Medford Police Department also disseminates information on the photo red light program through annual citizen's academies, neighborhood watch newsletters, and the City of Medford website.

## Effect of the Use of Cameras on Traffic Safety

*ORS 810.434 (3)(b)(A)*

### A. Red Light Running Violations

The Medford Police Department has analyzed the red light violation data from each of the photo enforced intersections. The analysis shows that the City's photo red light intersections have realized a 20% increase in red light running violations, comparing the first year of the program through 2008. This increase may be due to variety of factors to include road construction conducted on Barnett and the Interstate 5 interchange which was in progress during 2007 and 2008, as well as a notable population growth from 2006 to 2008. Additionally the data collected for the first twelve months of the program were from intersections at Biddle and McAndrews and Barnett and Riverside. In 2003 the red light cameras at Barnett and Riverside were removed due to the intersection being reconfigured, with new red light cameras being installed at Barnett and Stewart in 2004 and 2005. The cameras at Biddle and McAndrews were inactive from 2004 to 2005 due to a change in photo enforcement vendors. When considering these factors, these are essentially new intersections to the photo red light program for data reporting purposes lacking historical data for accurate analysis. It is also typical to see an increase in the number of violations during the initial implementation of red light enforcement which would be applicable to these intersections.

***Overall Increase in Red Light Running Violations at old Photo Red Light Intersections***

| | First Twelve Months of Enforcement | Average of 2007-2008 | Average Change in Violations |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Red Light Violations** | 2,262 | 2,724 | **+20%** |

However when comparing the data obtained from Biddle and McAndrews and Barnett and Stewart in 2005, to data obtained from these same intersections in 2007-2008, we have realized a 28% reduction in red light violations.

***Overall Reductions in Red Light Running Violations at new Photo Red Light Intersections***

| | 2005 | Average 2007-2008 | Average Change in Violations |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Red Light Violations** | 3,809 | 2,724 | **-28%** |

## B. Reductions in Red Light Running Crashes

The city of Medford has achieved positive results from the photo red light program. Crashes at photo red light intersections have decreased 34%, comparing the first year of the program to the following years.

***Crashes at Photo Red Light Intersections – 2002 through 2008***

| Red Light Intersection | Biddle / McAndrews | Barnett / Stewart |
|---|---|---|
| 2002 | 35 | 26 |
| 2003 | 32 | 15 |
| 2004 | 31 | 14 |
| 2005 | 35 | 19 |
| 2006 | 28 | 12 |
| 2007 | 23 | 5 |
| 2008 | 17 | 11 |

***Overall Reductions in Crashes at Photo Red Light Intersections***

| | 2002 | Average of 2003-2008 | Average Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Crashes** | 61 | 40 | **-34%** |

## Degree of Public Acceptance of the Use of Cameras

*ORS 810.434 (3)(b)(B)*

The City of Medford contracted with the Southern Oregon University to conduct a photo enforcement survey. The survey was conducted in December of 2001. The target market for the survey was comprised of homeowners and renters. 4,000 surveys were divided proportionally between East and West Medford, and sent through seven random mail routes. The overwhelming majority of those surveyed favored the implementation of photo traffic enforcement. It was found that 68% of the respondents either strongly or somewhat favored the program. Only 27% were either somewhat opposed or strongly opposed to photo traffic enforcement. When ask what traffic related items are of most concern to the citizens of Medford, 59% responded that drivers were not stopping for red lights.

The City of Medford Police Department currently measures the public opinion of the Photo Red Light Program based on citizen complaints. This agency has an open and exhaustive complaint process. With the exception of receiving occasional inquires about the program no official complaints were filed this reporting year. In part this can be attributed to the way in which the program is administered, in that only undeniable violations are prosecuted. The number of violations that are rejected demonstrates this fact.

***2007 – 2008 Rejected Incident Summary***

| Processed Incidents | Rejected Incidents | Available for Prosecution |
|---|---|---|
| 8,997 | 3,549 | 5,448 |

## Process of Administration of the Use of Cameras

*(ORS) 810.434 (3) (C)*

The administrative process for photo red light enforcement includes citation issuance, delivery, payment, and adjudication. It also includes the impact of the program on police and court operations as well as fiscal accounting. Photo red light citations have been issued in the City of Medford since 2002. Red light cameras are currently installed at the intersections of McAndrews/Biddle and Stewart/Barnett. This report examines the impact on administrative processes for violations occurring in 2009.

CITATION PROCESSING

Red light violators are issued citations following a multi-step process that ensures that the digital photographs, violations data, and owner information are as accurate as possible. If any of this information does not meet stringent quality control standards, citations are not issued.

Common reasons for citations not being issued are as follows:

-Driver gender does not match registered owner
-Driver is unidentifiable
-License plate cannot be read or identified
-Wrong or no DMV information available
-Driver or plate obstruction
-Sun glare
-Photo red light equipment issue
-Photo alignment
-Funeral procession
-Emergency vehicle with flashing lights

A Medford Police Officer reviews each violation after it has been through the quality control process and determines whether or not a citation should be issued. After the police officer affirms the citations, their electronic signature is printed on the citation. The City's photo enforcement vendor then prints and mails the citation to the registered owner. The defendant receives a copy of the citation in the mail, along with the four photographs of the violation incident, an explanation letter, the advice of rights information normally found on the back of a traffic citation, and a Certificate of Innocence form/Certificate of Non-Liability form (to complete if they were not the driver of the vehicle at the time of the violation).

An important component of Oregon's photo red light statute is that the citation is issued to the registered owner of the vehicle. The registration information is determined through DMV records. Oregon law requires drivers to maintain their updated address information with the DMV. The presumption in Oregon on photo red light citations, as with parking tickets, is that the registered owner of the vehicle is the driver at the time of the violation. It is the responsibility of the registered owner to provide evidence if there were not the driver at the time of the violation, through the process of completing a Certificate of Innocence/Certificate of Non-Liability form. If the registered owner of the violating vehicle completes the form, along with providing the court with a copy of their driver's license, the citation issued to the registered owner is dismissed.