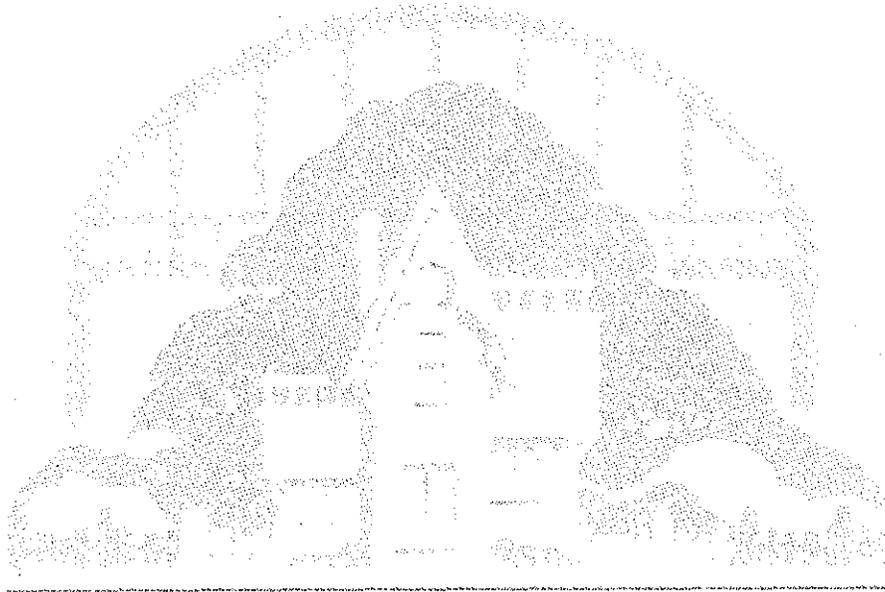


CITY OF ALBANY



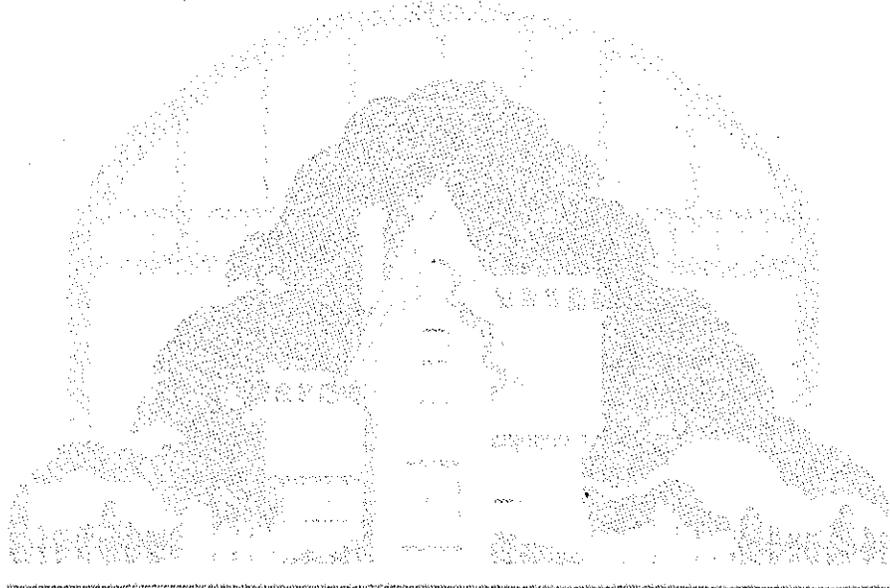
CITY OF
Albany

PHOTO RED LIGHT REPORT TO LEGISLATURE Process and Outcome Evaluation

FEBRUARY 2009

***Photo Red Light Enforcement
Project Evaluation***

***City of Albany
February 2009***



CITY OF
Albany
NEW YORK

Project Manager
Eric Carter, Captain

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to comply with ORS 810.434 and provide the Oregon State Legislature a process and outcome evaluation for the City of Albany Photo Red Light Program.

BACKGROUND

On February 26, 2007, the City of Albany entered into an agreement with Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc. for Red Light Photo Enforcement Services. Based on traffic accidents, citations and community input, the first intersection selected was Queen Avenue and Geary Street. This intersection ranked in the top ten intersections that the citizens of Albany identified as a traffic safety concern. Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc. coordinated a video survey to validate the safety concerns and the location's suitability for installing red light cameras. The video survey showed that there were 96 red light violations in a 12-hour span on February 26, 2007.

The red light cameras at Queen Avenue and Geary Street have been operational for 18 months. The Albany Police Department began authorizing Warning Letters on September 1, 2007. The Warning Period ended on December 19, 2007 and the Albany Police Department began authorizing Citations on December 20, 2007.

THE EFFECT OF THE USE OF CAMERAS ON TRAFFIC SAFETY

Red light cameras have not been in operation long enough in the City of Albany to definitively quantify their impact on traffic safety. Three sets of data assist in measuring red light camera effectiveness. Violation rates measure the degree of driver behavior modification. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) crash data for disregarding a Red-Amber-Green signal specifically measures crashes as a result of running red lights. Albany Police Department traffic accident data for a 250-foot radius around the intersection measures the positive umbrella effect of the red light cameras and accounts for possible negative effects of the cameras such as an increase in rear end collisions.

For the intersection of Queen Avenue and Geary Street, violation data appears to be the best measurement for behavior modification. Figure 1 shows historical citation data for calendar year 2003 through 2007. During this time the average number of citations issued for running a red light each year was 10, with a high of 13 citations in 2004 and a low of seven citations in 2006.

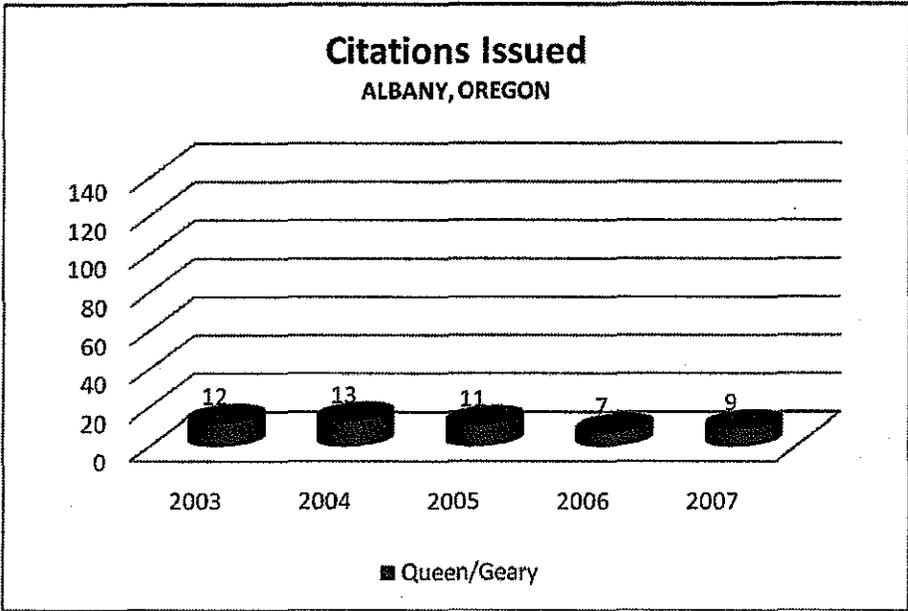


Figure 1. Red light citations issued from 2003 through 2007.

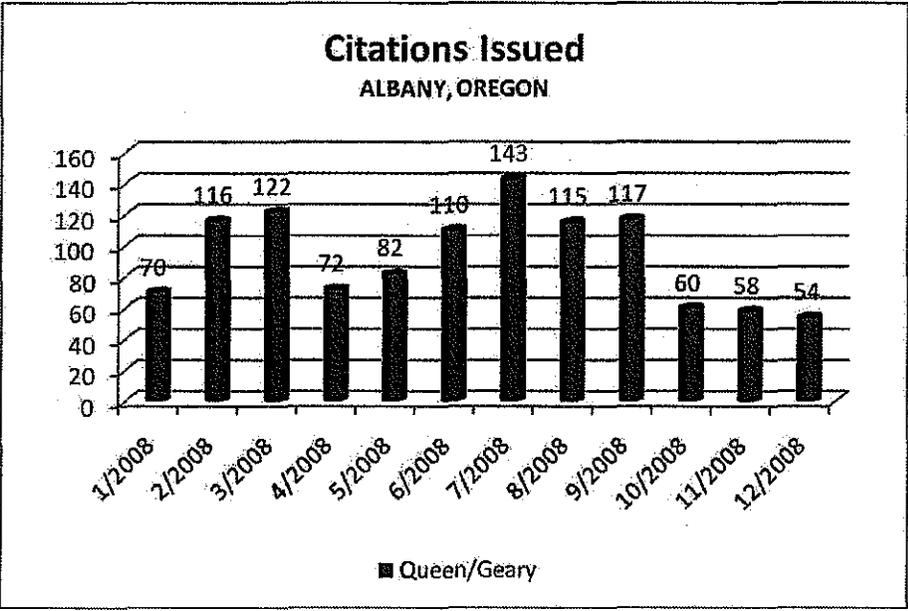


Figure 2. Red light citations issued in 2008.

In 2008, the Albany Police Department issued 1119 citations for running red lights using the red light cameras at this intersection (Figure 2). That is over an 8500 percent increase from 2004, the year with the highest citations for the previous five years. This dramatic increase gives a clearer picture of the true red light running problem that exists at the intersection. While it is still too early to determine the effect of the cameras on driver behavior, citations issued in 2008 will serve as a good basis for future comparisons.

Currently ODOT crash data for disregarding a Red-Amber-Green signal is not available for all of 2008. However, caution must be used when comparing this data when it becomes available. Because of the small numbers of crashes, a small increase or decrease in collision data will

appear as a large percentage change. The historical data for a crash resulting from disregarding a Red-Amber-Green signal is shown in Figure 3.

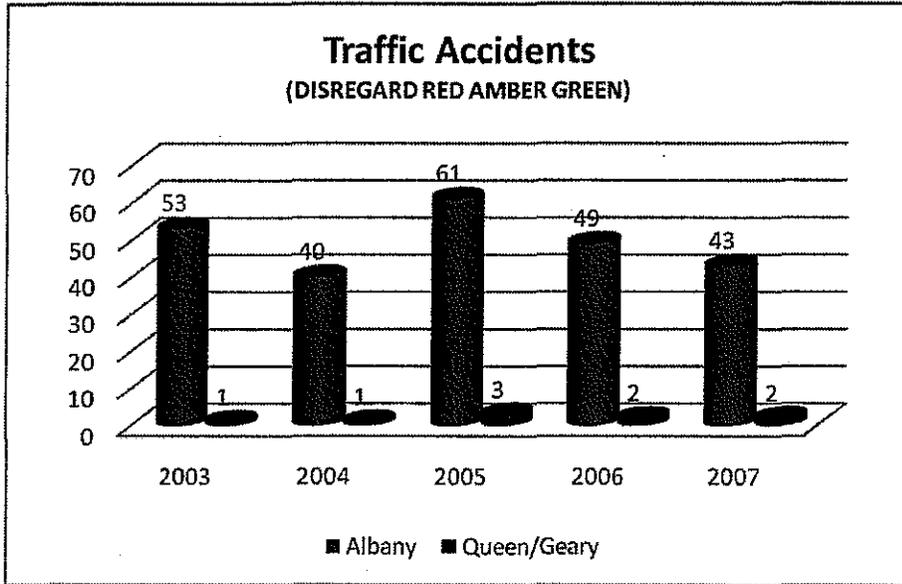


Figure 3. ODOT crash data for disregarding a Red-Amber-Green signal.

Traffic accident data from the Albany Police Department shows a 14 percent decrease in traffic accidents from 2007 to 2008. However, there has been overall downward trend for traffic accidents over the past ten years. Based on the overall trend, it is not currently possible to determine whether the decrease was a result of the cameras or other environmental influences. Historical traffic accident data is shown in Figure 4.

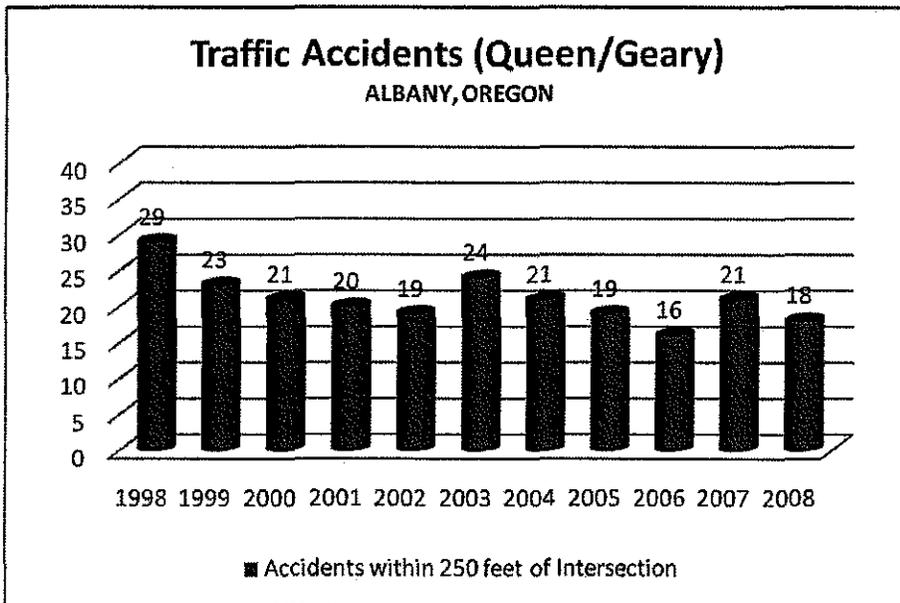


Figure 4. Traffic accidents within 250 feet of Queen Avenue and Geary Street reported to the Albany Police Department.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AND DEGREE OF PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE USE OF CAMERAS

As part of a media campaign, the City of Albany provided public service announcements for local television and radio. The Albany Democrat-Herald newspaper also published a number of articles leading up to and during implementation. Several of these articles are attached. In February 2005 and March 2005, the City of Albany Red Light Photo Enforcement Workgroup sent out a survey to the citizens of Albany. The results found that 62 percent of Albany residents "support" or "strongly support" the implementation of a red light enforcement program. Citizens were also presented with the opportunity to identify the most dangerous intersections and express opinions in favor of or against the program. The survey results are attached.

One recent letter to the editor published in the Albany Democrat-Herald on April 28, 2008 highlighted one citizen's public support for the program as well as the perceived impact of the cameras on driver behavior.

"As I am now noticing that drivers tend to be a little more careful while approaching the intersection of Geary and Queen, am beginning to wonder what other intersections may benefit from the red-light camera technology. It seems as though every single day I notice someone rushing through a light change, or not paying attention to pedestrians who have the cross signal, at the intersection of Elm and Queen.

And what frightens me the most with this one is this is normally in the morning, right before school, when traffic is very heavy coming from every direction. And a quick glance at the cars as they whiz by on a red shows it is not the teenage drivers that are doing this. Please slow down; the seconds you save getting through that light are not worth the risk.

And Albany, consider this intersection next, before someone's child gets hurt trying to cross this busy intersection."

PROCESS OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE USE OF CAMERAS

Red light citations are issued after a multistep process agreed upon by the Albany Municipal Court, the Albany Police Department and Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc. and in compliance with applicable Oregon Revised Statutes.

The red light camera system is connected to the traffic signal. The camera is activated only after the traffic signal turns red. Sensors in the street detect violations, causing the cameras to take pictures and save a 12 second video clip. This information is then encrypted to ensure that it is not tampered with. The vendor downloads violation data on a daily basis. At this point, the vendor takes up to five business days to determine if the violation data meets strict quality control standards. These standards include checking for a clear image of the driver's face, a clear image of the license plate, a clear image of the red light before the vehicle passes the stop line and after the vehicle passes the stop line, and a gender match with the registered owner of the vehicle. Attached is a Customer Management Report from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008 showing violations and the reason violations were rejected.

The vendor presents the violations that have passed the quality control standards to the Albany Police Department for officer authorization. Officers use a secure website to review violation images and a 12 second video of the violation. Officers will also compare violation data to Department of Motor Vehicle data. If the officer determines that a violation has occurred, the officer will authorize a citation. If not, the officer will reject the violation. Officer discretion and the officer determining that there was a safe turn on red or a safe stop comprised 54 percent of all violation rejections. This takes place within three business days of receiving the violation from the vendor.

The vendor will mail the citation on or before the tenth business day. Included in the mailing is the citation, a Certificate of Innocence or Affidavit of Non-Liability in the case of a business, and information explaining how the defendant can view the violation images and video online and a respond-by date.

A Certificate of Innocence is a document that will be included in the mailing of the citation, which will allow the registered owner to fill out stating that he/she was not the driver of the vehicle at the time of the violation. The registered owner will mail the completed Certificate of Innocence to the Albany Municipal Court who will dismiss the original citation. The Court will then forward the Certificate of Innocence to the Albany Police Department, who will compare the violation images to the registered owner's driver's license photograph to determine if a match exists. If the police determine that the registered owner was the driver, they will forward the Certificate of Innocence to the vendor to reissue the citation within ten (10) days of receipt of the form. The citation will contain a new citation number, date of issue and respond-by date. If the police determine that the registered owner was not the driver, no further action will be taken, since the citation was already dismissed by the court. The registered owner is not required to identify the person operating the vehicle.

When a citation is issued in the name of a "business" an Affidavit of Non-Liability is included with the citation. This form will give the registered owner the opportunity to identify who was operating the vehicle at the time of the violation. The Albany Municipal Court will receive the Affidavit of Non-Liability, dismiss the original citation against the registered owner and forward the Affidavit to the Police Department. The police will forward the Affidavit to the vendor together with a cover memorandum directing that the citation be reissued to the named driver. The vendor will update the record to reflect the name and address of the driver as shown on the Affidavit of Non-Liability and process the new citation.

Defendants may also pursue traditional methods to have the citation dismissed. They may plead not guilty, have a court trial and be found not guilty by a judge.

In September 2008, Albany Police Department Traffic Officers, the Albany Municipal Court Judge and the City Attorney reviewed the authorization process. The result was a more stringent standard for approving violations and a focus on the more serious safety issues. Even though they are valid violations, officers will routinely reject incidents in which the defendant stops in the crosswalk or after the stop line and when the defendant comes to an "almost" complete stop.

CONCLUSION

Although it is too soon to quantify the effect of red light cameras on improving traffic safety at the intersection where they are currently installed, early results appear to show some positive impact. The Albany Police Department will continue to closely monitor and evaluate future data in order to determine its overall impact on improving traffic safety for our community.

**CITY OF ALBANY
RED LIGHT PHOTO
ENFORCEMENT WORKGROUP**

**RED LIGHT
PHOTO ENFORCEMENT**

SURVEY RESULTS

October 10, 2005

CITY OF
Albany

Prepared by:

Bill Coburn, Public Safety Commission
Jim Delapoer, City Attorney
Patrick Hurley, Albany Police Department
Ron Irish, Department of Public Works
Allen Pilgrim, Information Technology Department
Mary Stankey, Albany Municipal Court



PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide results and feedback from a public survey by the Red Light Photo Enforcement Workgroup in February and March 2005.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, there were an estimated 259 vehicle accidents at red light intersections in Albany, equating to an estimated \$2,590,000 for bodily injury and \$647,500 for property damage. On October 25, 2004, the Albany City Council approved a workgroup to assess the prospect of Red Light Photo Enforcement. In February and March of 2005, the Red Light Photo Enforcement Workgroup sent out a public survey to the citizens of Albany. The purpose of the survey was to assist the workgroup in assessing the need and public support for a Red Light Photo Enforcement program for the city.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method. Because the workgroup was primarily interested in studying the attitudes and opinions of the public, it decided that a survey was the best way to collect data. A survey also allowed the workgroup to obtain feedback and identify red light intersections which the public perceived as the most hazardous.

Rival Causal Factors. A rival causal factor is an unaccounted for variable which might tend to invalidate the findings. The primary rival causal factor which could have impacted the survey is selection bias. Selection bias can have negative impacts on the ability to infer findings beyond the group studied by failing to use a representative selection of the population for study. The workgroup discussed different ways to eliminate the possibility of selection bias which resulted in selecting three different survey dissemination methods.

Survey Dissemination. The workgroup utilized three different methods to disseminate surveys. Approximately 20,000 surveys were mailed with utility bills. 150 surveys were placed at the Main Library, the Downtown Carnegie Library and City Hall and were restocked as necessary. Finally, an internet website was established for individuals who wished to take the survey online. The workgroup issued press releases for radio stations and local newspapers in an effort to gain the largest amount of responses possible. As a result the workgroup was able to reach the greatest number of citizens at a minimal cost.

Survey Design. The workgroup determined six areas that needed to be addressed: level of perceived safety risk, significance of the problem, perceived benefit of a red light photo enforcement program, support for a red light photo enforcement program, suggestions or comments which might aid the workgroup, and identification of problem red light intersections.

Survey Pretest. The workgroup drafted the survey and then presented it to coworkers to check for design, clarity and completeness. This served as a pretest and validation for the survey. The workgroup then made minor modifications. A copy of the survey is attached as Enclosure 1.

Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey Results

Cost. The total cost for the survey was \$1630.26. This money was paid out of the Albany Police Department printing and binding budget.

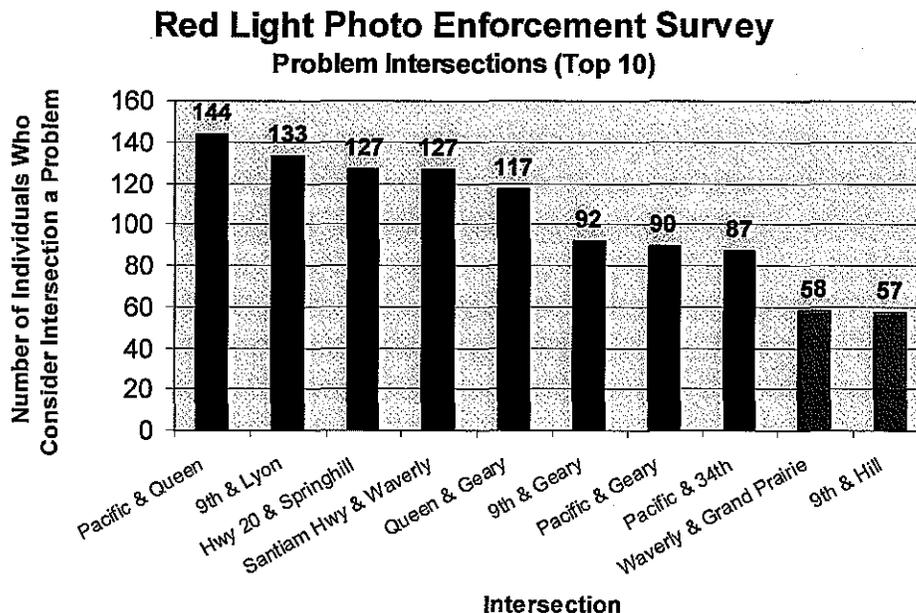
Controls. Internet surveys were tracked by IP address as a control measure against inflating survey results. A member of the workgroup reviewed and analyzed all mail surveys to determine whether there were any indications of attempts to skew the results of the survey. There was only one instance where unique comments indicated that two surveys could have come from the same person. A decision was made to include these surveys in the results.

RESULTS

Based on the results of the survey, about 62% of Albany residents “support” or “strongly support” implementation of a red light photo enforcement program. The high level of support indicates that residents perceive red light running and the associated risk of crashes to be a serious problem within the community. The workgroup received a total of 1751 completed surveys, of which 130 were completed on-line. Based on the number of surveys received, the results have a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 2.38 percent. Charts showing responses to questions dealing with risk, problem, benefit, and support can be found at the end of this report.

PROBLEM INTERSECTIONS

The bar chart below indicates intersections identified by survey respondents as being problem intersections with regard to red light running. The intersections identified by red bars were also identified as being in the Top 10 for problem intersections based on collision and red light citation data from January 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.



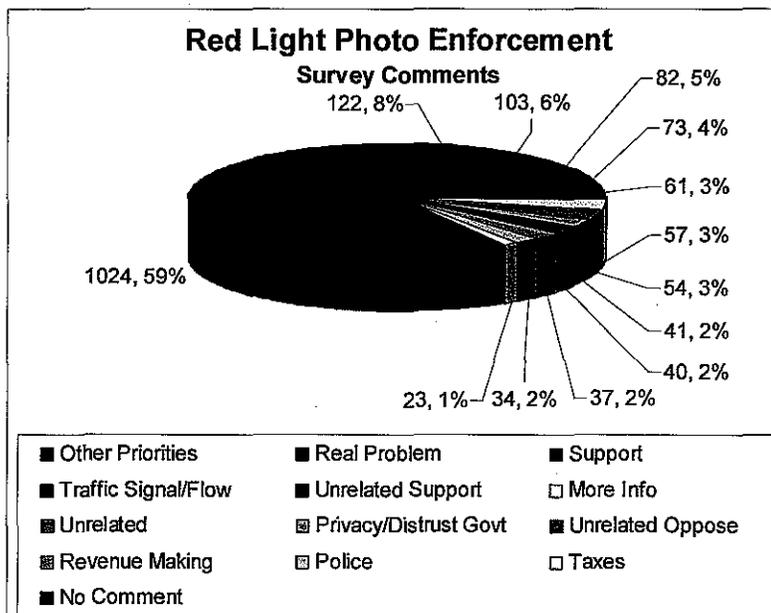
Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey Results

SURVEY COMMENTS

Of the 1751 surveys received, 41.5 percent (727) had comments. A sample of 200 comments was analyzed. From this group, 11 categories of comments were developed. Each of the 727 comments was then placed in one of the categories. The categories are as follows:

Other Priorities.

Comments placed in this group indicated that the City of Albany does not have enough of a problem to warrant a red light photo enforcement program. Individuals in this category generally believed that there were other priorities such as dealing with the drug problem and property crimes. Pursuing the red light photo enforcement program was considered a waste of time and money. This was the primary category for individuals who strongly opposed and slightly opposed a red light photo enforcement program.



Real Problem. Comments placed in this category indicated that the City of Albany has a real problem with red light runners. Individuals generally related a personal story of observing red light runners, nearly getting hit by a red light runner or actually being hit by one. This was the most significant category among those who strongly support a red light photo enforcement program.

Support. Comments placed in this category indicated general support for a red light photo enforcement program but did not address any other area.

Traffic Signals/Traffic Flow. Comments placed in this category addressed concerns about the length of the amber cycle of red lights, delayed red cycles and traffic congestion. Individuals generally stated that if we fixed the signal or congestion problem, the issue of red light running would go away.

Unrelated Support. Comments placed in this category indicated support for a red light program, but commented on other unrelated topics.

Unrelated Oppose. Comments placed in this category indicated opposition to a red light program, but commented on other unrelated topics.

Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey Results

Need More Information. Comments placed in this category indicated the need for more information. In general there were concerns about how the camera system would work and how police would enforce it.

Privacy/Distrust of Government. Comments placed in this category indicated a perceived invasion of privacy or distrust of government. In general, comments referenced "Big Brother," invasion of privacy and constitutional rights.

Revenue Making. Comments placed in this category indicated that the sole purpose for the program was to raise revenue for the city. Individual in this category generally felt that the City of Albany should not be making money and that they already paid too much to the city in taxes and fees.

Police. Comments placed in this category indicated the desire to have police enforce the red light intersections instead of cameras even if it meant paying for additional police officers.

Taxes/Financial Burden. Comments placed in this category indicated concerns about increased taxes to fund the program or whether or not the program would pay for itself.

CONCLUSION

The survey resulted in valuable community feedback. The citizen's of Albany have identified red light running as a high risk problem. They believe that a red light enforcement program will benefit the City and they support its implementation.

A red light photo enforcement program will benefit the City of Albany in several ways. First and foremost is increased safety for both the public and police officers. Red light cameras would allow police officers to focus efforts on the "bigger problems" voiced by many of those who opposed a red light photo enforcement program because there were other priorities. Safeguards are in place to ensure privacy of individuals. For example, red light cameras are only active during the red cycle of the light; they are not continuously taking pictures. Vendors also provide audit trails of everything that happened to photographs from the time the photo was taken to the time the citation is issued. The system is cost neutral to the City and is paid for out of fines obtained from violators. Implementation would not cause an increase in taxes.

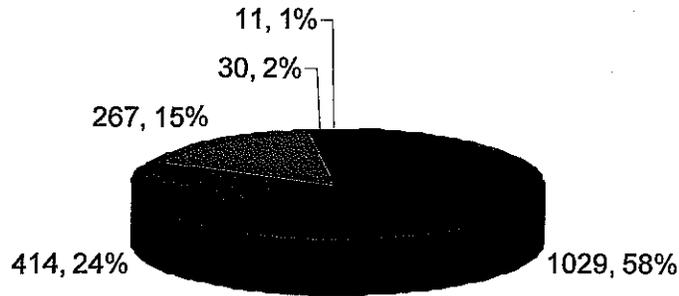
Based on a review of the operation and success of red light photo enforcement programs in other cities and the results of the community survey undertaken in Albany, the workgroup is of the unanimous opinion that Albany should develop and implement a red light photo enforcement program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A threshold question for Council is whether or not the information presented to date and the results of the community survey justify proceeding down the path toward implementation of a red light photo enforcement program. If the answer to that question is "yes", staff recommends Council authorize staff to request proposals from vendors to implement a red light photo enforcement program in Albany. Proposals received would be evaluated by staff and then presented to Council for a final decision on whether to implement a red light photo enforcement program.

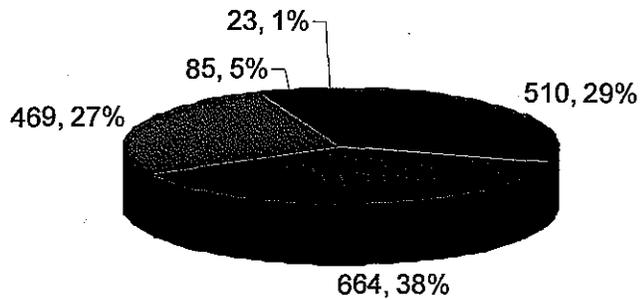
Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey Results

**Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey
Safety Risk**



■ High Risk ■ Medium Risk ■ Low Risk ■ No Risk ■ No Response

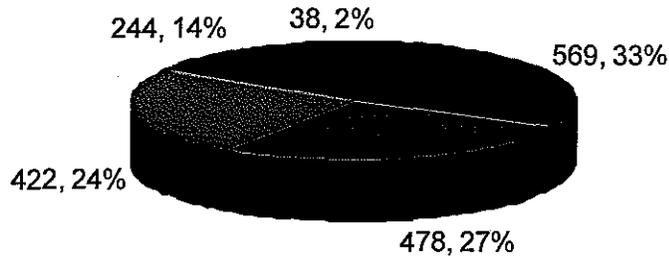
**Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey
Problem**



■ Great Problem ■ Medium Problem ■ Low Problem ■ No Problem ■ No Response

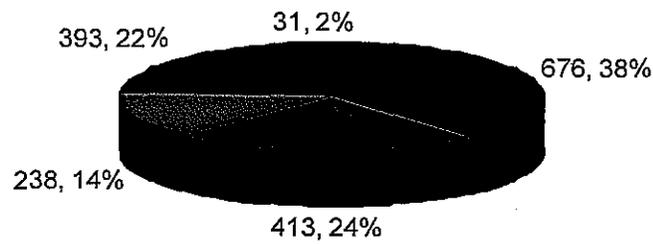
Red Light Photo Enforcement Survey Results

**Red Light Photo Enforcement
Benefit**



■ Great Benefit ■ Medium Benefit ■ Low Benefit ■ No Benefit ■ No Response

**Red Light Photo Enforcement Program
Support**



■ Strongly Favor ■ Slightly Favor ■ Slightly Oppose ■ Strongly Oppose ■ No Response

City of Albany Red Light Photo Enforcement Workgroup



Public Survey

In 2003 there were an estimated 259 vehicle accidents at red light intersections in Albany, equating to an estimated \$2,590,000 for bodily injury and \$647,500 for property damage. On October 25, 2004, the Albany City Council approved a workgroup to assess the prospect of Red Light Photo Enforcement. The workgroup is currently looking into red light photo enforcement options to increase the safety of the community with no additional financial burden. The purpose of this survey is to assist the workgroup in assessing the need and public support for a Red Light Photo Enforcement program. *Thank you for your assistance.*

Please check all of your responses.

1. Do you think there is a safety risk as a result of people running red lights?

High Risk Medium Risk Low Risk No Risk

2. How would you describe the problem of red light running in Albany?

Great Problem Medium Problem Low Problem No Problem

3. How do you think the City of Albany will benefit from a Red Light Photo Enforcement program?

Great Benefit Medium Benefit Low Benefit No Benefit

4. How would you describe your support of a Red Light Photo Enforcement program in Albany?

Strongly Favor Slightly Favor Slightly Oppose Strongly Oppose

5. Please provide any comments or suggestions which might assist the workgroup with its assessment.
(Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

Survey Instructions

You have four options in filling out this survey. You can fill out this form and return it:

- with your utility billing statement
- to City Hall
(333 Broadalbin St SW)
- to the Albany Police Department
(1117 Jackson St SE)

Or you can fill this survey online at:

- www.cityofalbany.net/redlight

Albany may take a year to study red-light cameras

Albany Democrat-Herald

It may be at least a year before a city work group completes a study of whether to install red-light cameras at any Albany intersections, Police Chief Joe Simon said Wednesday.

"We want to do a thorough job on this," he said.

The City Council last week authorized the police department to form a group to study the issue.

Simon said the group has not yet been formed. When it is, he said, it likely will include representatives from various city departments.

"We're probably also going to do a survey of the public," he said.

Red-light cameras take pictures of vehicles that enter an intersection after a traffic signal turns red. The registered owners then may be mailed tickets.

The chief said the Albany study would include a traffic analysis and engineering study at any intersection where such an installation might be considered.

Simon said he disagreed with an editorial in the Democrat-Herald that suggested that lengthening the yellow phase of traffic signals might lessen the number of red-light runners.

No matter how long a signal stays on amber, he said, the number of violations would remain the same.

In his experience, drivers typically run red lights because they are not paying attention and driving too fast, not because they are trapped by the shortness of the yellow phase.

The council authorized a study of red-light cameras as a way to cut down on traffic crashes.

The police department calculated that on average, Albany has 259 motor vehicle collisions a year, with an estimated cost of more than \$2.5 million for injuries and nearly \$650,000 for property damage.

The average crash results in costs of \$10,000 for injuries and \$2,500 for property damage, according to a police memo to the council.

The worst intersections for traffic crashes and red-light violations combined are Santiam and Waverly, Geary and Queen, Pacific and Geary, Ninth and Geary, and Pacific and Queen, according to the department.

The chief emphasized that red-light cameras may not be the answer, depending on what the study finds.

Lake Oswego, he said, had decided against cameras as not being cost-effective.

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Albany still studying red-light cameras

By Hasso Hering
But Albany Democrat Herald

Albany officials have not forgotten about the proposal to install cameras to catch red-light runners at busy intersections.

But a work group studying the issue is taking its time and has not yet reached a recommendation.

The City Council authorized formation of the working group in October.

The most significant activity since then was a survey in March. The city mailed about 20,000 questionnaires.

"We actually got a pretty good turnout," said Patrick Hurley, the crime analyst in the police department who is staffing the red-light study group.

The survey drew 1,751 responses.

Some 1,029 of the respondents indicated they thought there was a high risk to safety at some Albany intersections, and another 414 said the risk was medium-high.

On whether red light running was a problem, 510 said it was a great problem, 664 said a medium problem, 469 said it was a small problem and 85 saw no problem.

Would there be a benefit from having camera enforcement? Five hundred and sixty-nine saw a great benefit, 478 a medium benefit, 422 a small benefit and 244 no benefit.

Would they support the use of red-light cameras? Some 681 indicated strong support, 413 were slightly in favor, 238 were slightly against and 388 were strongly opposed.

The survey form also asked people to rank problem intersections.

Pacific and Queen got 144 votes, followed by Ninth and Lyon with 133, U.S. 20 and Spring Hill with 127, Santiam and Waverly with 127 also, and Queen and Geary with 117.

Hurley said the public's rankings matched up fairly well with accident statistics.

Hurley said he was still compiling the additional comments people made on the questionnaire. But he hoped the working group, composed of city employees involved with safety and traffic issues, could meet again in about a month.

Whatever the working group recommends will then go to the City Council.

Hurley stressed again, as Police Chief Joe Simon has before, that the cameras would not be used for surveillance.

They would be triggered only by a vehicle entering an intersection after the light has turned red. Someone then would read the license plate and send the registered owner a citation.

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HERALD.com**

Print Page

Last modified: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 12:03 PM PDT

Albany panel to report on red-light cameras

By Hasso hering
Albany Democrat-Herald

The city of Albany is about to take the next step in its year-long study of whether to install cameras at some intersections to catch red-light runners.

Last October the City Council authorized the police department to form a work group to study the idea in order to cut down on red-light running and prevent accidents.

Now the group is finishing its report and plans to submit it to the council the first or second week in October, said Patrick Hurley, the analyst in the police department who has been staffing the work group.

The group will recommend that the city ask for proposals for an engineering study to verify that red-light violations are a problem at some intersections, and if the engineers agree that it's a problem, have a contractor install cameras at a couple of intersection.

According to accident data and red-light citations, the biggest problem intersections in Albany are Pacific and Queen, Ninth and Lyon, Highway 20 and Spring Hill Drive, Santiam and Waverly, Queen and Geary, Ninth and Geary, Pacific and Geary, and Pacific and 34th Avenue.

The council will be asked whether it approves of installation of red-light cameras, Hurley said. If not, there would be no point going ahead with the engineering study.

Red-light cameras are triggered when a vehicle enters an intersection after the signal has turned red. After a review of the resulting image by the police, the registered owner gets a citation in the mail.

Hurley said the work group would recommend that a contractor operate and maintain the camera system rather than the city owning it.

Last March the city conducted a survey on the issue, mailing about 20,000 questionnaires and getting 1,751 responses.

Some 681 indicated strong support for red-light cameras, 413 were slightly in favor, 238 were slightly against and 388 were strongly opposed, the city reported at the time.

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Red-light cameras up for city OK

BY CATHY INGALLS
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Red-light runners in Albany, pay attention.

The city is getting another step closer in attempting to crack down on those who persistently or inadvertently run red lights.

On Wednesday, the City Council is expected to pick Redflex Traffic Systems of Culver City, Calif., to supply red-light cameras for use in Albany.

The council meets at 7:15 p.m. at City Hall.

Patrick Hurley, the crime analyst at the Albany Police Department who has researched the possibility of installing the cameras, said today Redflex best meets the city's needs. The city would lease the equipment from Redflex.

He said the company already has cameras working in Newberg, Beaverton and Medford, and Salem probably will hire the firm as well.

As proposed, the contract would be for three years with options to renew each year for seven years. At that point, the city and Redflex could look at renegotiation.

The city and the company would split the revenue from fines.

The city must decide where to place the cameras. Several recommendations are under discussion. State law allows up to eight cameras in cities with more than 30,000 people.

Based on interviews, crash data and observation here is a list of potential sites:

Pacific Boulevard and Queen Avenue, Ninth Avenue and Lyon Street, Highway 20 and Spring Hill Drive, Santiam Highway and Waverly Street, Queen and Geary Street, Ninth and Geary, Pacific and Geary, and Pacific and 34th.

Cameras will snap photographs of vehicles running red lights. The photos will go to the police, who will decide whether to mail a ticket, which would go to the vehicle's registered owner.

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Red-light camera contract gets green light from city

By the Democrat-Herald

Once the deal is signed, intersections will be selected where the cameras are to be installed

Cameras that take pictures of red-light runners now are expected to be installed in Albany in about three months.

Cameras were expected to be on the job last fall. Then the target date was changed to the first of the year and then to early spring.

Albany Police Chief Ed Boyd said contract negotiations are taking longer than expected because of the number of people involved in repeated reviews.

The City Council on Wednesday voted unanimously to authorize Boyd to sign a contract between the city and camera provider Redflex Traffic Systems of Culver City, Calif.

Boyd told the council that once the contract is signed, representatives from Redflex and the police department will drive around the city to select the intersections for the cameras.

Several have been identified as possibilities:

Pacific Boulevard at Queen Avenue, Ninth Avenue and Lyon Street, Highway 20 and Spring Hill Drive, Santiam Highway and Waverly Drive, Queen and Geary Street, Ninth and Geary, Pacific and Geary and Pacific and 34th Avenue.

When the cameras are operating, Redflex will issue tickets to drivers that are photographed entering an intersection after the light has turned red. Police will review the photos before a traffic ticket is mailed to the registered owner.

The registered vehicle owner will be notified by mail of an infraction in 10 days or less. The notification includes photographs, the ticket and a "Certification of Innocence" form. Directions will be included on what to do if the driver believes there was no violation.

At the same time, police have access to a secure Web site and can review potential violations. Police will view four photographs that include pictures of license plates, the vehicle and the driver.

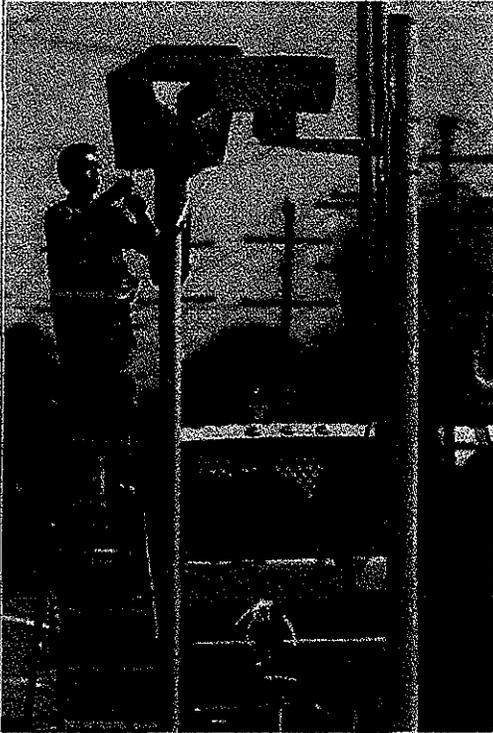
The city will split the fines with the company when they are paid.

Boyd told the council it would be about three months before any cameras are installed.

He also said the public will be notified where the cameras are to be installed.

The exact terms of the contract — such as how many intersections and what percentage of ticket revenue would go to the city and the company, respectively — were not made clear.

City Manager Wes Hare said today the company would install the system at no charge in hopes of earning a profit on ticket revenue.



David Patton/Democrat-Herald
Dave Richardson, a maintenance technician for Redflex Traffic System Inc., installs a red light camera Tuesday afternoon at the intersection of Queen Avenue and Geary Street.

Red light cameras are here

By the Democrat-Herald

The first are installed at intersection of Queen Avenue and Geary Street

Albany is about ready to start snapping photos of drivers when they run red lights.

EC Electric, a local contractor for the camera company Redflex, of Culver City, Calif., has installed cameras on two approaches to the intersection of Geary Street and Queen Avenue S.E.

The cameras may start operating as early as Saturday, police spokesman Eric Carter said this morning. This will be followed by 30 days when anyone the cameras catch will get a warning, not an actual ticket.

Tickets would then start on about Oct. 1.

Ron Irish, the city traffic engineer who has been working on the project, said he was still researching state law about the placement of warning signs.

He believes signs are required at the intersection and possibly at the entrances to town as well.

Under its contract with Redflex, the company bears the cost of installing and operating the system in return for a share of any ticket revenue.

The fine for running a red light is \$302, according to Carter.

Per approach, Redflex will get \$60 for each ticket up to 50; \$50 each for ticket numbers 51 through 100; \$40 each for numbers 101 through 150; and \$25 each for tickets 151 and above.

Two sets of three cameras each will keep watch on the southbound approach to the intersection on Geary Street and the westbound approach on Queen.

An estimated 26,000 vehicles a day go through all four approaches of the intersection, but only two will have cameras.

The city council approved the contract with Redflex in October 2006.

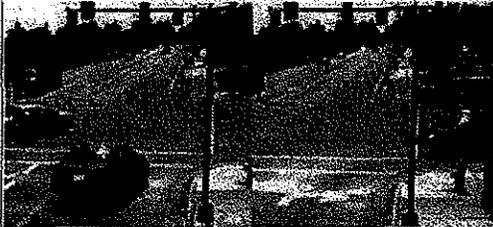
At first, the city picked Ninth Avenue and Geary Street as the first place to install the cameras, but because that involves a state highway, a special application to the state was required, and that has not been filed. No such regulations apply to Queen and Geary.

For now, the city has no plans at present to install cameras anywhere else, according to Irish.

The cameras are tripped when a car enters the intersection after the light has turned red. Drivers should see a flash when their photo has been snapped, Irish said.

Redflex will send the photos to the police for review before the city sends out notices to the registered owners.

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Albany police, who provided these photos, say this dark sedan rolled through a red light while turning right from Geary Street onto Queen Avenue, a violation that was among the 24 captured during the Reflex cameras' first week in Albany. The police blocked out the car's license plate, as well as the face of the driver in the light-colored vehicle turning left from Queen onto Geary.

Red light cameras catch first violations

The first red light cameras in Albany are now snapping photos, but one of them had to be fixed this week and one of the first drivers caught on camera was an on-duty police officer.

The cameras were installed last month on two approaches to the intersection of Geary Street and Queen Avenue S.E., and they began snapping pictures last Saturday.

Twenty-four violations were captured on cameras in the first week, according to Albany police. Twenty of those were drivers who turned right on a red light without stopping first.

The first 30 days of the cameras being operational is a warning period. Any red light runners this month will receive a warning in the mail rather than a ticket.

The cameras take still photos and video.

One camera which is supposed to capture face shots of drivers wasn't working correctly earlier this week and had to be fixed on Thursday. Those violations will be tossed out since the photos didn't turn out.

One of the drivers caught on camera early Friday morning was an Albany police officer responding to an emergency call. The video shows that the officer had his overhead lights on and that he stopped at the intersection before entering on the red light.

The cameras are operated by Reflex of Culver City, Calif. The company bears the cost of installing and operating the system in return for a share of any ticket revenue.

For now, there are no plans to install cameras anywhere else in the city.

Here's how the ticket process works, according to police:

- The red light cameras take four still pictures and a video of the potential violation. The still photos include the license plate, the driver's face, the vehicle behind the crosswalk with the red light and then the vehicle traveling through the intersection with the red light.
- Reflex reviews the photos and tosses out certain incidents for reasons such as not all the photos turned out or it was a police officer responding to an emergency.
- Members of the Albany Police Department — two traffic officers and a sergeant are trained for the job — review the photos and videos online. They determine whether there was a violation and if a ticket should be issued.
- A ticket is sent in the mail to the registered owner. Police say the fine for running a red light is \$302.

By Carrie Petersen

Albany Democrat-Herald

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Red light cameras: Tickets will be in the mail soon

By Carrie Petersen
Albany Democrat-Herald

The red light cameras at Geary Street and Queen Avenue S.E. are still snapping pictures and red light runners can soon expect to see tickets in the mail.

Albany police say they plan to start approving the traffic citations at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday.

Two cameras were installed at the intersection in the summer and began taking photos and videos Sept. 1. That marked the start of a 30-day warning period in which warnings rather than tickets were mailed to suspected red light runners.

That warning period remains in effect.

It was extended while officials made sure the electronic transfer of information between the cameras' operating company, Redflex, the Albany Police Department and the Albany Municipal Court was working.

During October, 204 warnings were issued. In November, 87 warnings were mailed to people.

The decrease "would indicate people are paying attention more," said Pat Hurley, police crime analyst and one of the city officials heading up the project.

Once police start issuing tickets, no more warnings will be sent. However, the police sergeant and two traffic officers who will review each potential violation will have discretion in whether a ticket should be issued.

Hurley said that red light runners can expect to get a citation in the mail within 10 business days of the violation. The tickets are approved by Albany police but mailed by Redflex.

Along with the citation, the driver will get four pictures — the driver's face, the license plate, the vehicle behind the crosswalk with the red light and then the vehicle traveling through the intersection with the red light.

Also, the driver will be given a link to a website to view the video of their violation.

The pictures and the video are the same images that the police review to decide if a violation actually occurred.

If the vehicle's registered owner turns out not to have been the one driving, there is a form he can take, along with photo identification, to court to show he was not the one driving.

Although an officer can stop a driver for going through an intersection on a yellow light, the cameras are only set to trigger when a person enters the intersection on a red light.

The fine for running a red light is \$302.

The cost of installing the cameras has been paid for by Redflex.

The city will pay Redflex a certain amount for each ticket issued, on a per-camera, per-month system:

For each of the first 50 citations Redflex will be paid \$60. For the next 50 tickets, \$50; and the next 50 tickets, \$40. After those 150 tickets, Redflex will received \$25 per ticket.

Hurley said the city will wait a month or two before looking again at Ninth Avenue and Geary Street S.E. as another intersection for red light cameras.

Red-light videos provided by the Albany Police Department

Albany police have released two videos of drivers caught on red light cameras at Geary Street and Queen Avenue S.E.

The cameras have been taking pictures and videos since Sept. 1 but until now only warnings have been sent to drivers suspected of running red lights.

The warning period is scheduled to end Tuesday night. Police say they plan to start approving citations at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday.

Videos, like the two released by police, along with still photos are reviewed by officers to determine whether a violation actually occurred and whether a ticket should be sent in the mail.

The cameras are operated by Redflex Traffic Systems, which will receive a portion of the ticket fines. The fine for running a red light is \$302.

To view the videos, go to http://www.democratherald.com/photo_galleries/.

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Cameras capture cops catching crooks

By Carrie Petersen
Albany Democrat-Herald

Albany police responding to a theft call early this morning were the only drivers caught on a red light camera since the city said it would start issuing tickets to red light runners at Geary Street and Queen Avenue S.E.

The cameras have been taking pictures and videos since Sept. 1. Until now, however, red light violators were issued only warnings.

Starting at 12:01 a.m. today, drivers caught on the cameras as running the signal will be mailed citations.

Police have released two videos of drivers caught on camera during the warning period. The videos can be seen online at www.democratherald.com/photo_galleries.

Videos, like the two released by police, along with still photos are reviewed first by the camera's operating company, Redflex Traffic Systems, and then by Albany police. It is the police that will determine whether a violation actually occurred and whether a ticket should be sent in the mail.

It takes about two or three days from the time of the violation to when police see the images. Red light runners can expect to see a ticket — along with four still photos and an online link to a video — in the mail within 10 business days.

Police said this morning that since midnight there were two "incidents" captured on the camera. They were officers responding to a call about people siphoning gas from vehicles in the 2400 block of Queen Ave. S.E.

The call came in at 2:31 a.m. and the officers went through the intersection at 2:35 a.m. According to a police report, officers stopped a car with five teenagers inside along with a garden hose and plastic liter bottles that smelled of gasoline. Four vehicles in the same area were found with gas caps removed.

Four of the teens were charged with theft.

Police were caught on the red light cameras at least one other time. In September, an on-duty officer responding to an emergency call was seen on video driving with overhead lights on, stopping to make sure there was no danger, then going through the intersection on a red light.

VIDEOS ONLINE

Police have released two videos of drivers caught on camera during the warning period. To view the videos, go to http://www.democratherald.com/photo_galleries.

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Customer Management Report (Albany) Redlight Incidents

01-Jan-2008 to 31-Dec-2008

Operator Id: %

	ALB-GEQU-01	ALB-QUE-01	TOTAL
Total Violations	1572	457	2029
Less Uncontrollable Factors			
Obstruction			
Driver Obstruction/Duckers	9	4	13
Plate Obstruction	25	10	35
Signal Obstruction	3	6	9
Vehicle Obstruction	5	2	7
Police Rejects			
Citation Issued manually	1	0	1
Emergency Vehicle (PD)	41	13	54
Gender Mismatch	53	14	67
Incorrect/Incomplete DMV	50	16	66
Invalid Offense	4	1	5
Police Discretion	328	84	412
Safe Turn On Red	10	6	16
Policy/Weather			
Extended Vehicle	6	0	6
Sun Glare	4	10	14
Weather/Nature	7	1	8
Yellow with Red Light	9	9	18
Registration Issues			
Can Not Identify State	1	0	1
Gender Match	20	11	31
Paper Plates	22	6	28
Wrong or No DMV	1	0	1
Total	599	193	792
Sub Total Violations	973	264	1237
Less in Progress	0	0	0
Available For Prosecution	973	264	1237
Less Rejects			

Camera Malfunction	Databar Unreadable/Incorrect	0-00%	9-03%	9-01%
	Face Camera No Flash	21-02%	1-00%	22-02%
	Image Missing	2-00%	0-00%	2-00%
	Misc Camera Issue	4-00%	0-00%	4-00%
	Plate Not in Frame	1-00%	0-00%	1-00%
	Rear Plate Camera Blurry	0-00%	1-00%	1-00%
	Scene Image Flash Inappropriate	1-00%	0-00%	1-00%
	Scene Image No Flash	4-00%	4-02%	8-01%
	Police Rejects	Driver Unidentifiable images poor	2-00%	0-00%
Vehicle On or Passed Stop Line		49-05%	15-06%	64-05%
Process Issues	Too Old	3-00%	1-00%	4-00%
Total		87-09%	31-12%	118-10%
Notices Printed		886-81%	233-88%	1119-90%