City of Sherwood Photo Red Light Program

2015 Legislative Report

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City of Sherwood Police
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Introduction & Background

Introduction

The City of Sherwood implemented a Photo Red Light Camera Enforcement Program in October 2010 to improve traffic safety at selected intersections in the city. While red light cameras are not the end all solution for intersection safety problems, the use of Photo Red Light Cameras has been shown to reduce the number of red light violations, which in turn reduces red light related crashes. Red light running is a precursor to angle and turning crashes, which result in more severe injuries than other types of crashes. The red light cameras will enhance traffic safety and will be a part of the City of Sherwood's overall approach which includes education, enforcement and engineering.

In response to what appeared to be a growing disrespect for traffic laws in general and intersection red lights in particular, the Oregon Legislature enacted a law in 1999, with subsequent expansions and revisions in 2001 and 2003, to help Oregon communities like Sherwood effectively enforce and reduce red light running.

The City of Sherwood has determined that the running of red lights is an issue of public safety for our community and one that presents unique enforcement challenges. Cars that run red lights place themselves and others in peril and to pursue them requires a police car to proceed through the intersection against the same red light, thus increasing the danger. This situation is mitigated to some degree with the use of police motorcycles because they can position themselves better than a police car, but even with a police motorcycle the ability to observe and then pursue those that run red lights is a challenge to the City of Sherwood Police.

The City of Sherwood operates Photo Red Light Cameras at the following intersections;

1. Pacific Highway (99W) at SW Tualatin-Sherwood Rd.
2. Pacific Highway (99W) at SW Sunset Blvd.

Both of these intersections are located within the corporate city limits of Sherwood and both of these intersections have one or more state highway approaches that are controlled by the Oregon Department of Transportation, which approved the program and the use and placement of the cameras.

Background

The City of Sherwood encompasses 4.31 square miles in Washington County and has a population of 18,884 as of July 2013.

A significant issue facing the City of Sherwood is traffic management. There are two factors that have a significant impact on the traffic volume in the area;

1. The City of Sherwood's population has grown by over 8,500 people since 1999
2. Pacific Highway (99W) has become a major north-south regional route and Tualatin-Sherwood Rd. has become a major east-west route, both of which run through Sherwood.

As a result of these factors, the community feels the impact of local traffic and significant regional traffic. With the increase in traffic volume, there has been an increase in intersection traffic crashes.

The Washington County Safety Priority Index System (SPIS) List estimates that the above mentioned intersections have an *Entering Average Daily Traffic* of 55,000 at the intersection of Pacific Highway (99W) and SW Tualatin-Sherwood Rd., and 42,000 at the intersection of Pacific Highway (99W) and SW Sunset Blvd.

The City of Sherwood operates red light cameras at the intersections of Pacific Highway at SW Tualatin-Sherwood Rd. and Pacific Highway at SW Sunset Blvd. These intersections were selected based on crash data as obtained from the Oregon Department of Transportation and on observed violations.

Public Information Campaign

The City of Sherwood conducted an extensive and thorough public information campaign regarding the proposed use of red light camera enforcement, before the final decision was made to utilize photo red light and long before any cameras where ever installed. The campaign included presenting and providing information at public meetings, to the local media and through community outreach, as detailed in the following chronological outline;

- October 21, 2008, City Council Public Work Session
- November 2008, Sherwood Gazette newspaper coverage
- December 2, 2008, Sherwood City Council Regular Public meeting
- December 2008, Sherwood Gazette newspaper coverage
- December 2008, Oregonian newspaper coverage
- December 2008, KPTV Fox 12 television and internet coverage
- December 2008 & January 2009, Sherwood Archer city newsletter articles by Chief of Police
- January 2009, Sherwood Gazette newspaper coverage
- January 15, 2009, Friends of Old Town
- February 4, 2009, Photo Red Light Public Open House #1
- March 6, 2009, Sherwood Rotary Club
- March 10, 2009, Sherwood Chamber of Commerce
- March 11, 2009, Photo Red Light Public Open House #2
- March 17, 2009, Sherwood City Council Regular Public meeting
- March 18, 2009, Sherwood Gazette newspaper article

In addition to the above public events and notifications, the City of Sherwood received correspondence from several community members. All correspondence was referred to the Chief of Police, who made personal contact with every person. The City of Sherwood continues to educate the public about the Photo Enforcement System through community discussions, the Sherwood Police Annual Report, City of Sherwood website and media regarding current updates on the photo red light project, including stories on KOIN 6 and OPB.

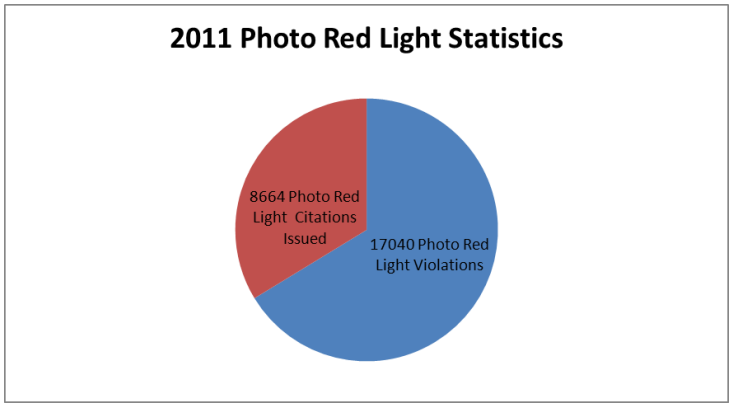
Since the start of the Photo Enforcement Program, the City of Sherwood has maintained public information by publishing violation data and providing video sampling of selected violations. Officers who review captured violations frequently meet with the public to educate them about the Photo Enforcement System. The Police Department also fields daily calls about the system and process for capturing violations and the secondary process involved for issuing citations.

Process and Outcome Evaluation

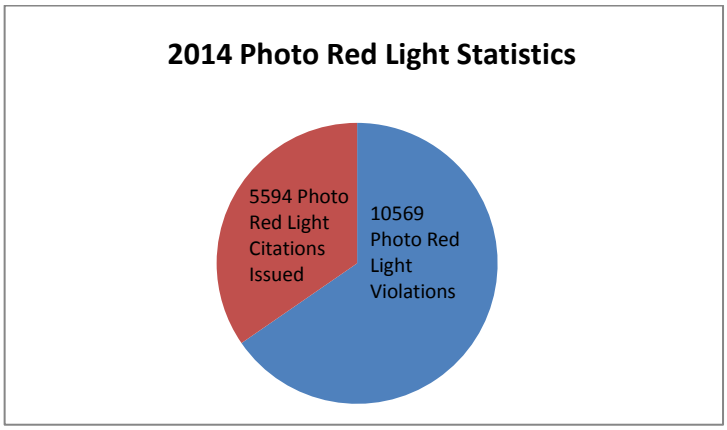
The Effect of the Use of the Cameras on Traffic Safety

The City of Sherwood's Photo Red Light Program formally began when the cameras went operational in October 2010. For the first thirty (30) days, the system issued only warnings to those drivers who violated a red light. The system began issuing citations in November 2010.

The charts below demonstrate the effectiveness of the red light cameras in reducing red light violations, for the two full years it has been in operation.



In 2011, the first full year of Photo Red Light Operation in the City of Sherwood, 17,040 Photo Red Light Violations were captured by the system. Of the violations captured only 8664 citations were issued.



In 2014, the fourth full year of the Photo Red Light Operation in the City of Sherwood, 10,569 Photo Red Light Violations were captured by the system. This was a reduction of 38 % from 2011. Of the violations captured only 5594 citations were issued. This was a reduction of 36 % from 2011.

The Degree of Public Acceptance of the Use of Cameras

While there has not been any formal survey conducted, informal results obtained throughout the Public Information Campaign and during the early period of the program indicate consistent public acceptance of the Photo Red Light Program.

As with any enforcement based traffic safety initiative, there have been some detractors. It has been very obvious that the majority of the negative feedback has come from those that have received citations. The feedback from community groups such as the Sherwood Chamber of Commerce and the Sherwood Rotary has been very positive. The City of Sherwood Police Department investigates all formal complaints which it receives. The City of Sherwood Police Department has not received any formal complaints in regards to the Photo Enforcement Program to date.

The Process of Administration of the Use of Cameras

The administrative process of the Photo Red Light Program includes many steps. The process includes;

- violation detection, which means that a car must travel across the intersection stop line against a solid red light,
- quality control checks, which are internal checks made by the vendor to insure the system was functioning properly at the time the violation was captured,
- violation processing, which means every violation is reviewed to insure the violation is valid,
- Police Officer review, which is the final review of each violation by a City of Sherwood Police Officer who issues and signs the citation.

Throughout this process the City of Sherwood complies with all applicable statutes, including ORS 810.434 and 810.436. All citations are issued into the jurisdiction of the City of Sherwood Municipal Court and are handled the same as all other citations.

This report is provided in accordance with ORS 810.434 (3, b), (4), and ORS 192.245.