



Staff Report

AUTOMATED RED LIGHT PHOTO ENFORCEMENT PROJECT - UPDATE

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

This report is an update on the Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement Project which was initially brought before Council in January. This report provides updated information on discussions with vendors and related information for potential implementation of Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement in the City of Belmont.

Background

At the January 24, 2006 City Council Meeting, Staff presented an informational report on Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement. That report outlined how such systems work, their benefits to the City and potential locations where such a program could be implemented. Direction was given by Council at that meeting to continue to pursue the matter and to bring back additional information for potential implementation.

Discussion

Based on the direction received at the February 14, 2006 Council meeting, three vendors were contacted to give initial presentations to staff. Those presentations were as follows:

- April 5, 2006 – Redflex Traffic Systems
- April 25, 2006 – American Traffic Solutions (ATS)
- May 4, 2006 – Nestor Traffic Systems

All three vendors have installations in the Bay Area. Only Redflex is currently operational in San Mateo County, specifically in the City of San Mateo. American Traffic Solutions is working with the City of Millbrae, but has not become operational as of this report.

Essentially the systems presented by the vendors all function in a similar fashion. All monitor traffic controlled intersections and capture red light violations on camera. The processing of citations by the vendor and the police department is the same in all jurisdictions in California and is governed by § 21455.5 through 21455.7 of the California Vehicle Code. Any significant differences between the systems are with the technology used by the vendor.

All of the systems use digital cameras. Of the three (3) systems presented, the one presented by Nestor Traffic Systems presented a low visual impact as Nestor uses a single camera, digital video based system. Both Redflex and ATS use systems which combine both digital video and digital still cameras. In the case of Redflex, three cameras are located in a single large housing, mounted on a separate pole. The ATS system uses a combination of digital video and digital still cameras mounted separately. Both ATS and Nestor can mount on existing poles, when possible (dependant on location and availably). Nestor normally utilizes a small, pole-mounted control box, but occasionally in very large or complex intersections Nestor may install a standard ground mounted control box.

Initial discussions have been conducted with the San Mateo County Court Administration regarding use of a third vendor in the county. No problems are foreseen by either Court Administration or the Court's Information Services Dept.

Three agencies using the same system from Nestor that is proposed for Belmont have been contacted and all state that their dealings with Nestor have been favorable and the systems are functioning as promised. They are the Cities of Roseville, Davis and Los Angeles. In addition, the Yolo County Court, who handles the City of Davis, has been contacted regarding Nestor. They too report positive experiences with Nestor and their product.

Based on information provided at these presentations and follow-up investigation, staff recommends that the City pursue further discussions with Nestor Traffic Systems as a potential vendor for Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement System(s) in the City of Belmont.

General Plan/Vision Statement

Establishment of an Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement Program furthers the Belmont Vision Statement, adopted October 2003 as outlined below:

Key Value - Easy Mobility

- We put a priority on getting out of, into and through town efficiently.
- Bicyclists, walkers, and other nondrivers get where they're going easily and safely.
- We require safe residential streets and smooth-flowing thoroughfares.

Fiscal Impact

Staff has identified four (4) intersections with a total of six (6) approaches, at a base cost of \$4,950 per approach, per month. However, Nestor is compensated only when sufficient revenue is generated to off-set their costs. In other words, Nestor has proposed a "Cost Neutral" contract in which they own, install & maintain all equipment and recover maintenance costs from fine revenue collected. As a result, there is no direct cost to the City for the system.

While the specifics of the contract for Belmont have not been confirmed, the following general terms apply:

- 5 - year term.
- Violation activity at selected intersections will be re-evaluated every six months for the term of the contract. If there are insufficient violations at a given intersection(s) then either the contract terms are renegotiated or the camera is moved to another problem intersection.

There are indirect personnel costs relating to the review of violations, response to citizen inquires and appearance in court on contested citations. These costs are difficult to predict, however after discussions with California agencies already using the Nestor system, Staff estimates approximately five (5) hours per week in personnel time will be needed to review citations responding to citizen inquiries. This estimate may change depending on volume of citations & citizen inquired and method chosen by the City for review by citizens of their violation video (in-house, on-line or combination).

Public Contact

Posting of City Council agenda. This project was initially presented at the February 14, 2006 City Council Meeting, where it was posted on the City Council agenda and that meeting was televised on Ch 27. Since January, 2006, references to Belmont's efforts in this area have been noted in at least four (4) articles on the subject in area newspapers.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Council approve continued discussions with Nestor Traffic Systems as a potential vendor for Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement system(s). If Council approves the recommendation of Staff, the next steps would be as follows:

- Review of proposed contract by City Attorney and Finance Department.
- Return to Council for public hearing, with final list of intersection(s) and presentation of contract for approval. Per § 21455.6 (a) CVC "A city council or county board of supervisors shall conduct a public hearing on the proposed use of an automated enforcement system authorized under Section 21455.5, prior to authorizing the city or county to enter into a contract for the use of the system."
- Survey of four (4) intersections to determine if sufficient violations exist to warrant installation of an Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement system. Based on discussions between Nestor and Staff, the intersections to be surveyed are:

1. Ralston Ave & Hiller St.
2. Ralston Ave & Old County Rd.
3. Ralston Ave & El Camino
4. Ralston Ave & Alameda de las Pulgas

Alternatives

1. Take No Action.
2. Provide Additional Direction

Attachments

- A. Example photograph of typical Nestor camera installation in Northglenn, Colorado

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Halleran
Sergeant

Donald Mattei
Chief of Police

Maureen Cassingham
Interim City Manager

Staff Contact:
Patrick Halleran, Sergeant
(650) 595-7407
path@belmont.gov

Attachment “A”

Nestor Installation – Northglenn, Colorado



Note: this is a large intersection, where 6 lanes are covered by Automated Red Light Photo Enforcement (2-left turn lanes, 3-through traffic lanes, 1-right turn lane). Yellow Arrows indicate the location of the Nestor cameras.

Top: This displays a picture of the context view camera (upper left camera under light pole), which is used to capture up to 10 seconds of video of the violation as the vehicle enters the intersection. Along with Enforcement camera (To the left of street sign), which captures face shot of drivers proceeding through the intersection.

Left: This displays a picture of the left enforcement camera, which captures face shot of drivers making left hand turns.

Center: This displays a picture of the signal view camera, which is used to capture up to 10 seconds of video as the vehicle proceeds thru the intersection. Along with 2 enforcement cameras, which capture the license plate of the vehicle, 1 camera is for traffic turning right, and 1 camera for traffic proceeding thru the intersection. The lights on the left side of the pole are strobe lights.

Right: This displays a picture of the camera that captures the face shot of vehicles turning right.