

August 3, 2012

To: Sally Clark, Council President
Bruce Harrell, Chair, Public Safety, Civil Rights & Technology Committee

From: Peter Harris, Central Staff

Cc: Greg Doss, Seattle Police Department
Michael Morris-Lent, Seattle Department of Transportation
Monica Simmons, City Clerk

Re: Locations of Traffic Safety Cameras in School Zones

Introduction and summary

The 2012 Budget authorized the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to install eight automated traffic safety cameras to enforce speed limits in four school zones. These cameras are similar in operation to the traffic safety cameras the City uses to enforce red lights at some intersections. SDOT and SPD have completed the analysis of potential new locations for the school zone cameras and are ready to install them.

This year the Legislature passed and the Governor signed Senate Bill 5188, which amended RCW 46.63.170 to require that “[the] appropriate legislative authority must prepare an analysis of the locations within the jurisdiction where automated traffic safety cameras are proposed to be located: . . . (ii) before adding additional cameras or relocating any existing camera to a new location within the jurisdiction.”

I have reviewed the documentation prepared by SDOT and SPD on the methods they used to select the new locations, and have discussed this project with SDOT and SPD staff. The methods they used to select the new locations appear to me to be entirely appropriate and valid.

My understanding is that this memo will satisfy the new state requirement. I will ask the City Clerk to prepare a Clerk File containing this memo and the attached documentation. Unless you prefer an alternative process, no further Council action is required.

Documentation

Attached are:

An August 3 memo from Greg Doss of SPD to me summarizing the process by which SDOT and SPD selected the locations for the school zone cameras;

A two-page paper titled “Photo Enforcement at Schools – Pilot Project,” which describes the process in more detail; and

A table showing the five locations selected, four of which will receive cameras in 2012 and one of which will receive cameras in 2013.

Note also that the Automated Traffic Enforcement Program is described on page 384 of the 2012 Adopted Budget.

Conclusion

If you have any questions, please let me know.

SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

August 3, 2012

TO: Peter Harris, Council Central Staff

FROM: Greg Doss
Seattle Police Department

SUBJECT: **Clerk File for School Speed Zone Cameras**

The Department recognizes the great benefit of enforcing school speed zones, but has had some issues over the years with the mobile van technology it is currently using. For this reason, it paired with SDOT to propose a budget increment last year for ATS to install permanent cameras at four schools. The radar-based devices will issue tickets only when the school beacons are flashing (during school hours). Speed violators will be issued tickets with variable fines that will match the cost of a ticket that would otherwise be issued by an officer.

The Adopted Budget included funds for this project and SPD staff has been working with SDOT and ATS to site the cameras. Both departments realize the benefit of enforcing school zones and have worked together to determine high risk locations.

This siting process began last year when SDOT staff undertook an analysis on 50 schools where they had installed flashing beacons to encourage drivers to go the speed limit through the school zone. SDOT narrowed the list to 15 schools where speeding continued to be a concern, and conducted week long speed studies in all of those locations. The list was eventually narrowed to five schools that would receive the greatest speed reduction / safety benefit from automated enforcement. Last summer, this list of schools was presented to Mayor McGinn.

SDOT and ATS then performed feasibility studies at the locations and determined that they were all good candidates for the cameras. Most recently, SDOT staff narrowed the list to the four schools funded in the Adopted Budget and have requested that the fifth school receive treatment in 2013. There is also another school being considered on the same arterial as the fifth school, but SDOT will need additional time to work with ATS on a design. This request will likely be brought to the Executive at some point in the near future.

Selected sites include: **Broadview-Thomson K-8 School, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, Olympic View Elementary School and Gatewood Elementary School.** The school principals were notified of the plans for automated enforcement and are supportive of the cameras. ATS is currently working with SDOT to permit the sites and should begin construction this month. Barring any significant problems with construction, the cameras should be up and running shortly before the 2012-13 school season. If you have any questions, please contact Greg Doss at 206-615-1230. Thank you.

Photo Enforcement at Schools - Pilot Project

Recently, the State Legislature authorized the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations. Through a Washington Traffic Safety Commission grant, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) experimented with mobile enforcement and achieved some success in 2010 and 2011. The experiences with the mobile enforcement generated the idea and creation of a Budget Issue Paper (BIP) to pilot fixed photo enforcement.

Two programs, Arterial Traffic Calming and Safe Routes to School, within Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) are working with SPD to pilot photo enforcement at selected schools. It is hoped that fixed photo enforcement will become a tool that SDOT can use to address high speeds adjacent to schools. To date, there is no tool available that is as effective as we would like.

Background

There are around 150 State accredited schools in Seattle; many of which are on arterial streets. SDOT receives numerous complaints weekly about speed and safety. Through the Arterial Traffic Calming Program, SDOT prioritizes speeding concerns City wide and addresses high speed five to ten arterial streets every year.

Due to budget constraints, the Seattle School district is reducing the number of buses, and encouraging parents to have their children to walk to school. Many parents site concern for safety as the reason they do not allow their children to walk to school. Please note that this is mostly based on perception, pedestrian collisions in Seattle are low and driver error is a significant contributor. However, national studies document speed as the major factor in pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. The tools that SDOT is currently using to reduce speeding near schools include:

- Flashing Beacons – generally achieve a decrease of 5 mph in the 85% speed, but the 85% is still 10 mph over the speed limit.
- Mobile Photo Enforcement - generally a decrease of 5 mph to 10 mph in the 85% speed, but the 85% is still 10 mph over the speed limit.
- Radar Speed Signs – generally a decrease of 5 mph in the 85% speed; piloting with flashing beacons on 23rd Ave S by Garfield High School

Initial Review of Speeding near Schools

SDOT has installed approximately 50 flashing beacons with 20 mph signage. The beacons flash for a half hour in the morning and afternoon when students are walking to and from school. Of those 50 locations, SDOT reviewed available speed data and determined that 15 of them may have a speeding concern. The caveat being the data may be old or not directly in the school's 20 mph zone. The Arterial Traffic Calming Program has identified a speeding concern being where the 85% speed is over 35 mph, when the speed limit is 30 mph. The 15 locations by district include:

- NW Seattle – Greenwood @ N 132nd, Fremont @ 39th/40th
- NE Seattle—NE 75th @48th Ave NE, 1st Ave NE @ N 117th, 5th Ave NE @ NE 95th St

- Central Seattle – E Union @ 32/33rd, E Yesler at 12th/14th
- South Seattle – 9th Ave S @ S Henderson St, Beacon Ave S @ Rose/Kenyon, S Orcas @ 28th Ave S, MLK S @ S Judkins St
- SW Seattle – SW Roxbury at 20th Ave SW/30th Ave SW, 35th Ave SW @ SW 104th St, 16th Ave SW @ SW Myrtle, 9th Ave SW @ Trenton/Cloverdale

Selecting Schools for Pilot Projects

Using the selected schools above, SDOT will conduct another speed study at each of the locations. SDOT will review the data and look for schools that have the highest 85% speeds and the highest number of vehicles traveling over 40 mph. The data will be reviewed for both the weekly average and when the beacons are flashing.

SDOT will rank all of the schools and discuss their findings with SPD and the Seattle School District. Based on the ranking and input from SPD and Seattle School District, SDOT will select four schools to participate in the pilot project. SDOT will discuss the pilot project with the Principals and PTA of the selected schools. If the PTA and/or Principals are not fully supportive of the pilot project, SDOT will select another school, assuming that the speeding concerns are comparable.

Review of the Pilot Projects

SDOT will conduct traffic studies approximately 6 months after the photo cameras are installed. That information, as well as enforcement information will be shared with the schools. SDOT will request that the schools conduct a survey of parents' perceptions of the change in speed and safety before and after the photo cameras were installed.

Future of Photo Cameras

If the pilot project achieves the results that are expected, SDOT will partner with SPD on a 2013 BIP for additional cameras. How many cameras is dependent on the results of the pilot project, as well as existing speeding concerns adjacent to the schools. It is important to note that the fixed cameras follow several other traffic calming measures. Feedback from parents of schools where the pilot projects will be installed will also be an important component.

School	AM Beacon flashing time	# cars over 30 on a typical day (eb or sb)	% of cars going over 30 mph	# cars over 30 on a typical day (wb or nb)	% of cars going over 30 mph	PM Beacon flashing time	# cars over 30 on a typical day (eb or sb)	% of cars going over 30 mph	# cars over 30 on a typical day (wb or nb)	% of cars going over 30 mph	@ Study location
Broadview K-8	8:35 -9:45	65	8%	241	43%	3:20-4:20	78	10%	322	44%	Greenwood Ave N and N 132nd St
Olympic View	8:35 -9:35	36	16%	101	35%	3:20-4:20	68	15%	101	24%	5th Ave NE and NE 95th St
Thurgood Marshall	7:45-9:45	181	22%	329	26%	3:40-5:10	153	13%	165	22%	MLK and S Judkins St
Holy Family	7:35-8:35	31	5%	31	70%	2:45-3:45	30	10%	133	18%	SW Roxbury St and 20th Ave SW
Gatewood	8:05-9:05	33	17%	38	11%	2:35-3:35	56	14%	30	16%	Fauntleroy, 150' n/of SW Myrtle St