# 2015 Photo Red Light Report to the Oregon Legislature City of Fairview

**City of Fairview Police Department**

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**February 25, 2015**

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## BACKGROUND

The City of Fairview is a small community of approximately 9,200 residents located forty blocks from Portland, Oregon (the largest city in the state) and sharing a boarder with the City of Gresham (the fourth largest city in the state). Interstate 84 divides the town and contributes to a high traffic volume traversing our community.

The main entrance into the City of Fairview is exit 14 from Interstate 84. This is a common exit used for those traveling to Gresham, Mount Hood and Eastern Oregon. The first intersection encountered, after exiting the freeway off ramp, is Fairview Parkway and North East Halsey Street. According to Fairview Police Officers', this particular intersection was dangerous due to the high number of red light violations. Officers were unable to safely enforce red light violations at this intersection because there was no safe place to monitor the intersection and there was significant risk when attempting to catch up to a red light violator.

After an extensive public information gathering and outreach campaign, the Fairview City Council passed Resolution 37-2011 on September 7, 2011, authorizing a photo red light camera program. On May 3, 2012, the red light cameras were activated for three approaches at Fairview Parkway and NE Halsey Street. A thirty (30) day warning period was followed, as per state law. Fairview Police began issuing citations for photo red light violations on June 2, 2012.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

During the past two years, the City of Fairview has performed the following public education and outreach program related to the Intersection Safety Program:

2/21/13: Program update given to the Public Safety Advisory Committee (public meeting).

3/2013: Fairview Chief of Police Ken Johnson participated in a public safety video (PSA) entitled: "Oregon Through the Lens: Traffic Safety Cameras."

4/5/13: Oregon Association Chiefs of Police posted the video "Oregon Through the Lens: Traffic Safety Cameras" on the Association's Facebook.

9/18/13: One year review presented to the Fairview City Council during regular meeting (televised).

9/19/13: One year review presented to the Public Safety Advisory Committee (public meeting).

10/2013: Article in City of Fairview newsletter giving citizens a one year program review.

3/11/14: Fairview Chief of Police Ken Johnson was a guest panelist at a televised League of Women Voters forum and discussed the Photo Red Light: Intersection Safety Program.

8/5/13: Booth at National Night Out had continuous loop playing of the PSA- "Oregon Through the Lens: Traffic Safety Cameras."

11/15/14: Red light camera update was given at a Fairview Town Hall meeting.

1/28/15: Red light camera information was given at a Mayor's Town Hall meeting.

2/5/15: Request for public input on the Photo Red Light project was requested on the social media web site "Nextdoor Neighbor."

2/5/15: Request for public input on the Photo Red Light project was requested on the Fairview Police Department's Facebook social media site.

On Going:

- The Fairview Police Department web page includes a link to the PSA- "Oregon Through the Lens: Traffic Safety Cameras." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHaB57c2Cxs&feature=youtu.be

- The Fairview Police Department web page has a link to a document entitled, "Myths of Photo Red Light Enforcement." http://www.fairview.or.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2541

- The Fairview Police Department web page has a link to a document entitled, "Red Light Camera Brochure." http://www.fairview.or.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1341

- Fairview Police Department web page has a section that explains how the program works:

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Intersection Safety Camera Program

In May 2012, the City of Fairview Police Department launched a new traffic safety program focusing upon the problem of red light running at intersections in the Fairview community. The first Intersection Safety Cameras, also known as photo red light, were installed at the busy Fairview Parkway/Halsey Street intersection.

Intersection Safety Cameras are installed at specific intersections in order to enforce traffic laws by photographing drivers when they run the red lights. The cameras are connected to the traffic signals as well as sensors that monitor the traffic flow at the intersection's crosswalks. The traffic signal is continuously monitored by the system and the cameras are triggered when a vehicle enters the intersection at a pre-established minimum speed and following a specific amount of time after the signal has turned red. Cameras record the date, time of day, time elapsed since the beginning of the red signal, and vehicle speed.

The cameras do not capture those drivers that enter the intersection against a yellow light, only those that enter against a solid red light, the most egregious offenders. The system does not issue citations to the drivers. All "suspected" violations are reviewed by a City of Fairview Police Officer who must agree and then issues the citations, which are processed the same as any other citation issued, except they are mailed. The fine for a photo citation is the same as any hand delivered citation for the same offense.

Questions? Contact the Fairview Police Department at (503) 674-6200.

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## THE EFFECTS OF THE USE OF CAMERAS ON PUBLIC SAFETY

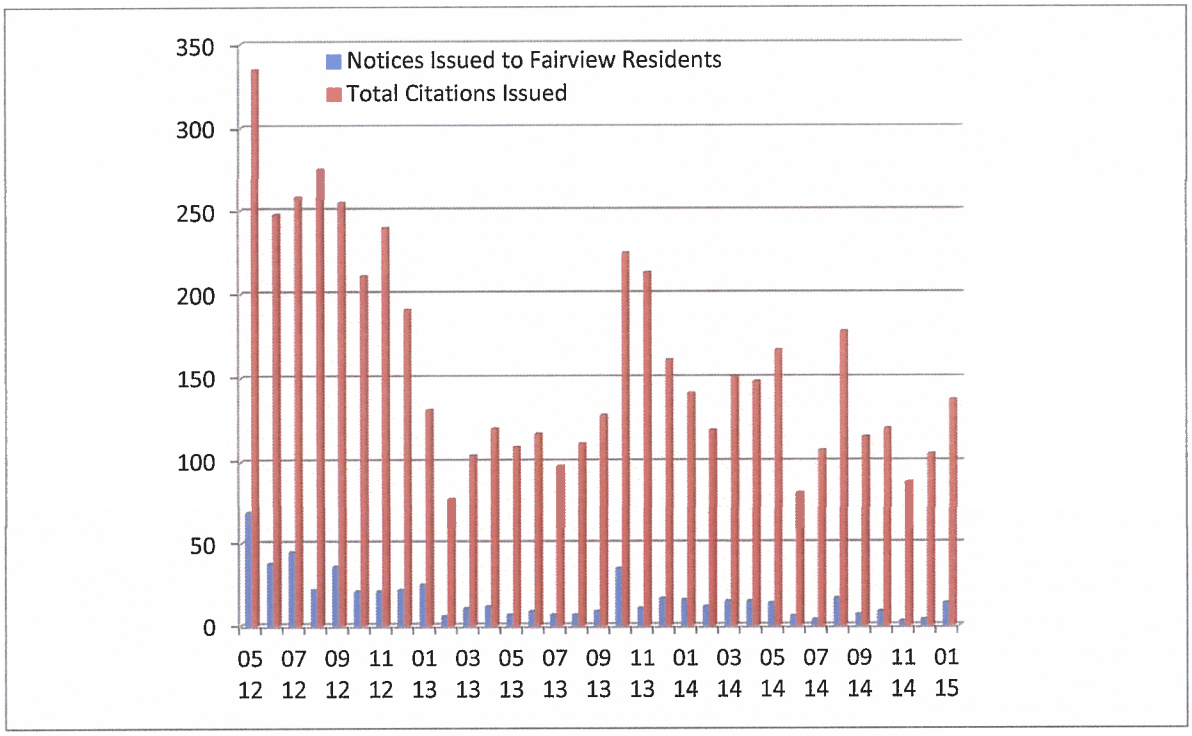
When the Fairview City Council authorized the use of red light cameras, the stated goal was to improve traffic safety by reducing the incidents of drivers running red lights. The best gauge of determining if we are making an impact is to evaluate two factors:

1. Total number of citations issued.
2. Total number of citations issued to Fairview residents.

Comparing 2014 and 2015 data to the first six months of operation shows a significant reduction in the number of drivers failing to stop for the red light at Fairview Parkway and Halsey.

| Month of Violation | Notices Issued to Fairview Residents | Notices Issued to Other Oregon Residents | Notices Issued to Out-of-State Residents | Total Ciations Issued | Percent of Fairview Res. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2012 05 | 69 | 239 | 27 | 335 | 20.59 |
| 2012 06 | 38 | 188 | 22 | 248 | 15.32 |
| 2012 07 | 45 | 181 | 33 | 259 | 17.37 |
| 2012 08 | 22 | 211 | 42 | 275 | 8.00 |
| 2012 09 | 36 | 182 | 37 | 255 | 14.11 |
| 2012 10 | 21 | 164 | 26 | 211 | 9.95 |
| 2012 11 | 21 | 187 | 32 | 240 | 8.75 |
| 2012 12 | 22 | 145 | 24 | 191 | 11.51 |
| 2013 01 | 25 | 86 | 20 | 131 | 19.08 |
| 2013 02 | 6 | 65 | 6 | 77 | 7.79 |
| 2013 03 | 11 | 74 | 19 | 104 | 10.57 |
| 2013 04 | 12 | 96 | 12 | 120 | 10.00 |
| 2013 05 | 7 | 77 | 25 | 109 | 6.42 |
| 2013 06 | 9 | 84 | 24 | 117 | 7.69 |
| 2013 07 | 7 | 74 | 16 | 97 | 7.21 |
| 2013 08 | 7 | 84 | 20 | 111 | 6.30 |
| 2013 09 | 9 | 90 | 29 | 128 | 7.03 |
| 2013 10 | 35 | 152 | 38 | 225 | 15.55 |
| 2013 11 | 11 | 164 | 38 | 213 | 5.16 |
| 2013 12 | 17 | 119 | 25 | 161 | 10.55 |
| 2014 01 | 16 | 102 | 23 | 141 | 11.34 |
| 2014 02 | 12 | 86 | 21 | 119 | 10.08 |
| 2014 03 | 15 | 113 | 23 | 151 | 9.31 |
| 2014 04 | 15 | 111 | 22 | 148 | 10.13 |
| 2014 05 | 14 | 117 | 36 | 167 | 8.38 |
| 2014 06 | 6 | 60 | 15 | 81 | 7.40 |
| 2014 07 | 4 | 72 | 31 | 107 | 3.73 |
| 2014 08 | 17 | 132 | 29 | 178 | 9.55 |
| 2014 09 | 7 | 86 | 22 | 115 | 6.08 |
| 2014 10 | 9 | 90 | 21 | 120 | 7.50 |
| 2014 11 | 3 | 70 | 14 | 87 | 3.44 |
| 2014 12 | 4 | 87 | 14 | 105 | 3.80 |
| 2015 01 | 14 | 100 | 23 | 137 | 10.21 |

## CHART SHOWING TOTAL CITATIONS ISSUED COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF CITATIONS ISSUED TO FAIRVIEW RESIDENTS



## THE DEGREE OF PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE CAMERAS

When the City of Fairview began consideration of a red light camera at Fairview Parkway and Halsey, there was some discussion and debate about the potential impact the red light cameras would have. A few expressed concern that drivers would avoid the intersection- hurting Fairview businesses.

The traffic count data, supplied by the Multnomah County Traffic Engineer does not support that position. Although there was a dip in the traffic count in some months during calendar year 2013, the traffic count in 2014 would indicate an increase in the number of drivers using this intersection since the beginning of the red light camera program.

### TRAFFIC COUNT FROM INCEPTION OF PHOTO RED LIGHT PROGRAM THROUGH DECEMBER 2014

**Fairview Parkway and Halsey South Bound on Fairview Parkway**

First month of operation (30 day written warning period) was May 2012:

May 2012- 312,869
May 2013- 320,009
May 2014- 321,857

First full month of citations was July 2012:

July 2012- 310,642
July 2013- 262,932
July 2014- 344,983

Last full month of data:

December 2012- 307,925
December 2013- 306,819
December 2014- 319,097

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 general public acceptance of the Photo Red Light Program. But, as with any enforcement based traffic safety initiative, there have been some detractors- including negative feedback from those who have received citations.

This author has personally attended several court sessions and has heard defendants make the following statements to our Fairview Municipal Court Judge:

- "I always run that light. It has gotten into a habit. Thank-you for putting those cameras there, it has made me a safer driver."

- "Your honor, I thought it was OK to slow and look but, after being in court today and seeing these videos, I now realize I made a mistake."

The Fairview Municipal Court Judge had this to say to defendants complaining about making right turns on red without stopping, "In all my years as a driver, lawyer and Judge, I have never heard someone ***who has been in an accident*** say, I looked, saw a car coming and went anyway."

In preparing for this bi-annual report to the Oregon Legislature, this author posted a request on our police department Facebook page and on a large social media web-site Nextdoor Neighbor. I asked for any comments about the red light program, Specially, citizens were asked if they would support or oppose extending the photo red light contract beyond the original three year agreement. Two responses have been received. Both indicating that they felt the intersection was safer as a result of the photo red light cameras and both citizens urged the Fairview City Council to extend the contract.

## THE PROCESS ADMINISTRATION OF THE USE OF CAMERAS

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

- Violation detection- A car must travel across the intersection stop line against a solid red light.

- Quality control checks- Internal checks made by the vendor to insure the system was functioning properly at the time the violation was captured.

- Violation processing- Every violation is reviewed, by the vendor, to insure the violation is valid and conforms to the Oregon Revised Statute (gender match, etc.).

- Police Officer review- Final review of each violation by a City of Fairview Police Officer. The officer will conduct a review to confirm the violation is valid per the statute and that the vehicle did not stop before crossing the stop line. After review, the officer will reject or accept the citation. If the officer approves the citation, the officer will authorize their electronic signature for the issuance of a citation.

Citations issued under this program are processed by the Fairview Municipal Court and are handled in accordance with all applicable laws and court procedures.

The review process is exhaustive and intended to protect the integrity of the program and ensure that only legitimate red light violations are citied. Images captured by the red light camera and the accompanying video, do not equate to an automatic citation. There are a number of factors that cause an image to be rejected. Those factors include: Gender mismatch (driver not the registered owner), sun glare, vehicle stopping past the stop line, paper plates, inaccurate or incomplete DMV information and plate obstruction.

Since the inception of the Fairview program through January 2015, officers have issued 4,809 citations or 39.33% of the total images captured for possible violations. 60.67% of the images captured (possible violations) were rejected.

| TOTAL IMAGES CAPTURED SINCE PROGRAM INCEPTION | TOTAL NUMBER OF CITATIONS ISSUED SINCE PROGRAM INCEPTION |
|---|---|
| 12,225 | 4,809 |

***This report is provided in accordance with ORS 810.434 (4) and ORS 192.245.***