

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 18, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #108: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RED LIGHT CAMERA PROGRAM

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This memorandum provides additional information on potential implementation of a Red Light Camera Program, following discussion from the April 1 Public Safety FY 2009 Budget Worksession. As noted in Budget Memo #45, a number of vendors now provide Red Light Camera Enforcement services with a guarantee of cost neutrality to local governments. They include Redflex, American Traffic Systems (ATS), Nestor Traffic Systems, LaserCraft, and Traffipax companies. The following information should be considered preliminary.

If the City proceeds with Red Light Camera Enforcement, responsibility for coordinating the procurement is a team effort. The partnership includes staff from the Police Department, Purchasing, Transportation and Environmental Services, Finance, the City Attorney's Office, and other departments. In addition, Virginia State Police officials would work with the City and the vendor to identify and survey the volume of traffic at busy or problematic intersections, and to approve intersections selected for camera installation.

Based upon research, a likely business model is that each installed, operational camera is estimated to cost approximately \$5,000 per month or \$60,000 per year. Each month the vendor monitors and collects the revenue from each camera to cover its cost, with any surplus going to a City account. If a camera produces less than \$5,000 in revenue per month, the vendor will accrue revenues on a monthly basis for that camera until its costs are covered, or will absorb a shortfall within the terms of the contract. Each camera is permanently installed, and the vendors report that they are rarely disconnected or rotated. If a camera is disconnected, the vendor will assess a fee of \$1,000 per month since that camera is not producing revenue. To move a camera from one location to another would be handled as a new installation, with a disconnection fee charged and a new installation billed at \$5,000 per month. When we operated the program before, from 1997 until 2001 we had one camera rotating among three intersections.

The local government retains responsibility for advertising, posting signs, and notifying the public of the enforcement program. The long term costs to the City for Red Light Camera Enforcement are primarily for Police staff to review, verify and process all camera images, to handle calls and complaints, and to issue summonses to the law enforcement agencies in other

Virginia jurisdictions to be served to violators who do not pay assessed fines. The Police Department must have two Special Police Officers (SPO) at an annual cost of \$115,000 to manage up to three cameras. The cameras would be operational 24 hours per day, so staffing must be adequate to process images and violation notices within the time limits established in State law.

Therefore, if Council wishes to add back the 3 camera Red Light Camera program (which was listed in the Alternative Budget) under a cost neutral contract, the cost to do so is estimated at \$225,000, including \$115,000 for two SRO's and \$100,000 for startup fees (intersection prep, signage, and advertising.) The costs would be more than offset by revenues generated by the program, estimated at \$270,000 which includes gross revenues of \$450,000 for three cameras (\$150,000 per camera) less vendor recovery costs of \$180,000 (\$60,000 per camera). Therefore, total net revenues to the City are estimated at \$45,000 during the first year of the program. If this program is restarted I recommend that it begin as a 3 camera 2 FTE operation, which we could decide to expand at a later date.

Today's edition of the Examiner includes a story about Arlington County's Red Light Camera program, which is expected to be re-introduced on July 9. Under the State Statute Arlington may have as many as 19 cameras, but no final decision has been made on how many cameras Arlington will have. Alexandria is able to have up to 13 cameras under the statute, subject to the selected intersections being approved by the State. As noted above, Staff recommends starting with three cameras if this program is restarted. Staff will contact Arlington to determine if it would be applicable to Alexandria.

Staff:

David Baker, Chief of Police  
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