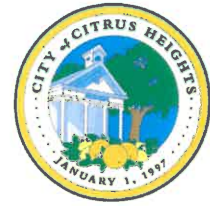




CITRUS HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT



Christopher W. Boyd
Chief of Police

October 1, 2015

Honorable Robert C. Hight, Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 Ninth Street, Department 47
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Sacramento County Grand Jury Report: Red Light Cameras

Dear Judge Hight,

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the following responses are submitted to you regarding the 2014-2015 Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations regarding the Citrus Heights Red Light Camera Program.

Finding 1: Citrus Heights does not uphold its responsibility to operate and monitor its red light camera program.

Response to Finding 1: Disagree

The Citrus Heights Police Department (CHPD) Traffic Unit Sergeant oversees the daily operations and administrative functions of the Photo Red Light Enforcement Program (PRLEP). As well, the CHPD has two officers assigned to this program to review and process violations on a daily basis, attend annual training related to the operations of photo red light enforcement (i.e. updated case law, new and updated technology, etc.), maintain records involving day-to-day operations of the program, and conduct yearly audits of the records and facilities of Redflex Traffic Systems (the photo red light program vendor). Additionally, CHPD writes and annually reviews Business Rules to be followed by Redflex Traffic Systems to include, procedures for receiving, reviewing, and forwarding captures to and from the CHPD. Monthly maintenance is completed by a certified technician and a written report of the results on each PRLEP intersection is forwarded to the CHPD. This monthly maintenance includes a secondary computer system to validate all aspects PRLEP hardware and software at the red light camera intersections.

Finding 2: The CHPD routinely fails to follow its adopted policy and procedures on red light cameras.

Response to Finding 2: Partial Concurrence

The CHPD utilizes Lexipol to "serve as a template for how the Department conducts business, by documenting rules and establishing guides for consistent, efficient, and proper operation" (Citrus Heights Police Department, 2014, Preface). The CHPD Policy 378 establishes the procedures for the PRLEP and consists of five sections (Citrus Heights Police Department, 2014, p. 223-226). As a result of this Grand Jury inquiry, it was discovered that there were two items the CHPD had failed to follow in its Red Light Photo Enforcement policy:

1. Monthly signal light maintenance documents provided by the City engineers including, but not limited to, the amber lighting sequences per the Department of Transportation (DOT) standards.
2. Monthly stopwatch audits confirming the amber light timing.

With respect to item #1, maintaining monthly signal light maintenance documents, the CHPD did not routinely collect this information from the City traffic engineers on a regular basis. This has since been corrected.

For item #2, in *People v. Goldsmith* (2014), the Supreme Court of California concluded photographs and video taken by Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems (ATES) shall be considered an accurate recording of events and does not constitute as hearsay. Furthermore, the Court also stated that a computer system by its very nature is more accurate than a human witness (*People v. Goldsmith*, 2014). Due to this ruling and the fact that all photographs and video of red light captures include yellow light timing, the CHPD discontinued its use of stopwatch audits. Therefore, the CHPD will be removing the requirement of conducting monthly stopwatch audits from its policy.

Finding 3: The accident reduction data used to judge the effectiveness of the program by the CHPD is inconsistent and inaccurate in some instances.

Response to Finding 3: Disagree

All raw data provided to the Grand Jury was compiled from the CHPD's collision database. This database contains all accident reports taken by the CHPD. As such, we are unsure as to what the Grand Jury is referring. However, a City of Citrus Heights Staff Report dated November 8, 2012, was submitted to the Grand Jury which had incomparable data; as the year ranges did not match (pre-camera data was for five years while post-camera data was for four years). In response to this document and to clarify the raw collision data submitted, the CHPD submitted a document showing collisions for five years pre- and post-red light camera for the first five PRLEP intersections. A summary of that data is below:

PRLEP Intersection	Pre-Camera	Post-Camera	Difference	Percent change
Antelope and Garden Gate	60	34	-26	-43.33%
Auburn and Antelope	73	46	-27	-36.99%
Greenback and Fountain Square	44	36	-8	-18.18%
San Juan and Greenback	125	88	-37	-29.60%
Sunrise and Oak	48	17	-31	-64.58%

Recommendation 1: The CHPD should routinely produce and analyze traffic incident data. This information should then be used to judge the effectiveness of the program. This will allow informed decisions such as whether the cameras are placed at intersections that yield the most desired effect.

Response to Recommendation 1: Partial Concurrence

The CHPD prescribes to an on-going crime reduction and collision reduction model, known as Crime and Traffic in Citrus Heights (CATCH). On a monthly basis the CHPD presents monthly statistics in the area of crime and traffic and openly discusses current trends, as well as identify additional problem solving strategies.

While red light camera intersections are not specifically discussed during this meeting, overall collision data is reviewed. As a result of this Grand Jury inquiry, the CHPD will be providing collision data specific to red light camera intersections at this monthly meeting. As for the second point of placement of red light cameras, the CHPD follows its procedures outlined in Policy 378.3 in determining whether to place a red light camera at an intersection. The following information is utilized when making a determination as to where to place the cameras:

- Citizen complaints

- Proximity to school zones
- Proximity to senior housing
- State collision statistics
- Pedestrian/traffic flow
- City Council recommendations
- Staff recommendations


As well, comprehensive surveys of intersections being considered for red light cameras are conducted to determine whether or not a camera is needed. These surveys include: pre-survey, video survey, and if needed, a post-survey. Examples of these surveys were provided to the Grand Jury.

Recommendation 3: Citrus Heights should assign personnel to conduct an on-site physical timing of the yellow signal lights at each intersection where there is a red light camera. A written maintenance log should be kept.

Response to Recommendation 3: Disagree

As stated in the response to Finding 2, in *People v. Goldsmith* (2014), the Supreme Court of California concluded photographs and video taken by Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems (ATES) shall be considered an accurate recording of events and does not constitute as hearsay. As well, the Court went further to say a computer system is by its very nature more accurate than a human witness (*People v. Goldsmith*, 2014). In conjunction with the Court findings, the officers who review the video captures can see the potential violations in real time and could conduct stopwatch audits if they deem necessary. Furthermore, these intersections have built in mechanisms to turn the signal lights to a flash, when the yellow light timing sequence falls below the minimum threshold. Therefore, the CHPD does not feel on-site physical timing of yellow light signals is necessary.

Respectfully,



Christopher W. Boyd
Chief of Police

cc: Becky Castaneda, Grand Jury Coordinator

Attachments: References

References

Citrus Heights Police Department. (2014). Citrus Heights Police Department Policy Manual. Lexipol, LLC.

People v. Goldsmith, No. S201443, (Ca. Sup. Ct. June 5, 2014).