



Date: February 14, 2006

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal, First District *BS*
Councilmember Val Lerch, Ninth District *Val*

Subject: Fixed Photo Speed Enforcement

Background

According to a recent article in the Press Telegram, motorists throughout Long Beach were involved in 6,290 reported accidents in 2005, which involved 2,245 injuries and 21 fatalities.

A noticeably higher frequency of these accidents seemingly occurs in central and downtown Long Beach. There may be several reasons for this apparent disparity that include the lack of driver knowledge especially by visitors to our City, and heavy traffic to and from Interstate 710.

Cities throughout the United States, like Scottsdale, Arizona, have implemented photo enforcement technology. Photo speed enforcement technology operates similar to that of "red-light cameras," however, instead of issuing citations for motorists who run a red light, motorists are cited for driving over the posted speed-limits. Unlike red-light cameras, the speed enforcement cameras are placed where vehicles are most likely to be caught speeding. This technology has the potential to significantly reduce traffic violations and collisions in the community, while placing associated costs for the initiative on the violator rather than the taxpayer.

The City of Scottsdale cites a 2004 study by the PA Consulting Group of London of the United Kingdom's (UK) national photo enforcement program. The analysis covers three years of nation-wide (UK) photo enforcement activity from April 2000 to March 2003. The study showed that vehicle speeds at speed camera sites had dropped by around 7% following the introduction of cameras. At new sites, there was a 32% reduction in vehicles breaking the speed limit. At fixed sites there was a 71% reduction, and at mobile sites there was a 21% reduction. Overall, the proportion of vehicles speeding excessively (i.e. 15 mph more than the speed limit) fell by 80% at fixed camera sites, and 28% at mobile camera sites.

Recommendation:

I therefore request, with the support of my colleagues, for a report from the City Manager to look at the feasibility of installing mobile and/or fixed cameras that will address motorist speeds in an attempt to curtail the number of accidents on our City streets.