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## Briefing Sheet for Health, Safety, Education and Services Committee

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**Tuesday, December 13, 2011**

**TO:**

**Committee Members:** Councilman Paul Lopez, Chair  
Councilwoman Debbie Ortega, Co-Chair  
Councilwoman Judy Montero  
Councilman Albus Brooks  
Councilwoman Susan Shepherd

**Committee Staff:** Debra Bartleson

**FROM:** Mary Beth Klee, Division Chief of Special Operations, DPD

**SUBJECT:** Photo Red Light Contract Renewal

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At the next committee meeting Deputy Manager of Safety Laura Wachter and I will be on the agenda to request an extension of the current Photo Red Light contract. The Photo Red Light program has been the subject of negative media attention recently and I thought it might be helpful to provide the committee with clarifying information prior to the meeting.

- Denver currently has four intersections that utilize photo red light cameras. They are:
  - 36<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Quebec
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Speer Blvd
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Lincoln
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Kalamath
- **Vendor:** The vendor for the photo red light program is ACS. The program began in 2008 under a different vendor; ACS took over the program in January 2010 and began operating the program in March 2010.
- **Stop line enforcement:** There has been recent negative media attention focused on the police department's policy of issuing photo red light violations once a vehicle's two front tires are **clearly past the marked stop line** prior to the vehicle stopping for the light. This policy was created on the advice of the assistant city attorney assigned to the Photo Enforcement Program. He made his recommendation based on several issues and in concurrence with the Prosecution Section of the City Attorney's Office that the ordinance be enforced as written.
- 1. The first consideration was for the program to be in compliance with **DRMC 54-101(3)(a): "Vehicular traffic facing a steady circular red signal alone shall stop at a clearly marked stop line but, if none, before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection or, if none, then before entering the intersection and shall remain standing until an indication to**

***proceed is shown....*** All four photo red enforcement intersections have clearly marked white stop lines. Whether a vehicle completely fails to stop or stops past the marked stop line, the violation of the ordinance is the same.

- **2.** The second consideration was to insure crosswalk zone safety. Once the two front tires of a vehicle have past the clearly marked stop line, the front of the vehicle has intruded onto the crosswalk. The vehicle's presence in the cross-walk safety zone may result in a significant obstruction to the capacity of the pedestrians, bicyclists and the disabled population to cross the roadway in safety. The Denver Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations/ Denver Office of Disability Rights supports the marked stop line enforcement to insure cross walk protection from vehicle intrusion.
- ***Multi-modal transportation:*** City officials have worked hard to encourage "multi-modal" forms of transportation and as a result there are more pedestrians and bicyclists. Insuring that drivers observe the stop bar at stop lights is an important safety issue.
- ***Impact of Photo Red Light on accident reduction.*** At this time I cannot tell council what safety impact photo red light enforcement alone has had at the four intersections. Traffic Engineering Services is conducting a safety analysis of the Photo Red Light Program to provide the police department with data to show if the program improves safety. I recently met with TES Director Brian Mitchell and Traffic Engineer Michael Finochio who showed me their preliminary data. The three year study showed that right angle crashes, which are considered red light violation crashes commonly referred to as side impact or T-Bone crashes, have decreased significantly at the four intersections that have photo red light enforcement. The study still has to review the impact of the longer yellow light intervals and other signal improvements that TES has made that may have had a similar positive impact at non photo enforced intersections.
- ***Viewing Room:*** Your constituents may be interested to know that the Photo Enforcement Program has a "viewing" room set up at the Traffic Operations Bureau, 3381 Park Avenue West, which allows citizens to come in and view their violation with a photo enforcement agent or supervisor who will answer their questions or explain the program technology or policies. KUSA Channel 9 reporter Anastasia Bolton filmed in the viewing room when she did a news story on photo enforcement.

Thank you for reviewing this information. I look forward to answering any questions you may have at the meeting, or you may contact me at 720-913-6526.

Mary Beth Klee  
Division Chief of Special Operations  
Denver Police Department