

CITY OF SALEM



Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program

2023 Legislative Report

Salem Police Department
Sgt. Scott Kofoid

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Oregon Legislature enacted a law in 1999 allowing for the use of photo enforcement technology by select cities. The law allowed jurisdictions to enforce capture and enforce traffic light violations. With revisions to the law in 2001 and 2003, additional Oregon communities were provided the opportunities to implement photo enforcement programs with the intention of improving overall traffic safety. In 2017, the Oregon Legislature again revised the law allowing for photo speed enforcement at intersections by jurisdictions.

The use of Photo Enforcement technology has been shown to reduce the overall number of red light and speeding violations. These types of violations are the leading contributing factors to motor vehicle and pedestrian involved collisions within, or near, intersections.

This technology provides several benefits. The technology is capable of monitoring an intersection 24 hours a day and does not require an officer to be at the location. Additionally, the system does not require an officer to conduct a traffic stop in response to a violation. This increases safety for the community, officers and aids in decreasing congestion.

When the Photo Enforcement Technology captures a violation, four photographs and a video are mailed to the violator. The four photographs provide an overview of the violation, the license plates of the involved vehicle and a close up view of the driver's face.

BACKGROUND

The City of Salem encompasses 48.45 square miles in both Marion and Polk County and has an estimated population of 177,487 as of 2022 (US Census Bureau). The City of Salem has had a growth rate of more than 28% in the last twenty years and data indicates the increase in population will continue.

A significant issue facing the City of Salem is vehicular traffic management. There are several major factors contributing to this problem along with the increase in population:

1. There is a significant commuting traffic increase during normal business hours from Monday to Friday.
2. Mission St (Hwy 22E) is a major east-west thoroughfare for motorists, which connects to Hwy 22W for travelers trying to get to the Oregon coast.
3. Motorists also use Commercial St as a major north-south thoroughfare to connect from I5 to Hwy 22W.

As a result of these factors, the community feels the impact of an increase in both local traffic and regional traffic. With the increase in traffic volume, there has been an increase in intersection related traffic crashes.

IMPLEMENTATION

In March of 2008, the City of Salem implemented a Photo Red Light Program with the intention of improving traffic safety. In Q4 of 2019 the City of Salem added one fixed Speed on Green Photo Enforcement at one of the existing Photo Red Light Camera intersections. In Q3 of 2020 the City of Salem added three more Photo Red Light cameras at three new intersections. With the addition of speed enforcement, the program is now called the Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program.

The intersections were selected in part based on crash data obtained from sources such as the Salem Police Department's internal Records Management Systems and Oregon Department of Transportation.

All of these intersections are located within the corporate city limits of Salem. Two of these intersections have a state highway approach that is controlled by the Oregon Department of Transportation. Requests were made to the Oregon Department of Transportation to allow for the placement of the cameras prior to installation.

When the program was first initialized, the vendor chosen by the City of Salem was Redflex Traffic Systems. Since that time, another company, Verra Mobility has acquired Redflex. This has not resulted in any changes in operations.

Current Photo Monitored Intersections:

The City of Salem operates Photo Red Light Traffic Enforcement Cameras at the following intersections:

1. Center St NE at Hawthorne Av NE
2. Commercial St NE at Marion St NE.
3. Commercial St SE at Madrona Av SE
4. Commercial St SE at Kuebler Blvd SE
5. Mission St SE (Hwy 22E) at 25th St SE
6. Silverton Rd NE at Fisher Rd NE

The City of Salem operates Speed on Green Traffic Enforcement Cameras at the following intersections:

1. Center St NE at Hawthorne Av NE
2. Commercial St SE at Madrona Av SE

- 3. Commercial St SE at Kuebler Blvd SE
- 4. Silverton Rd NE at Fisher Rd NE

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

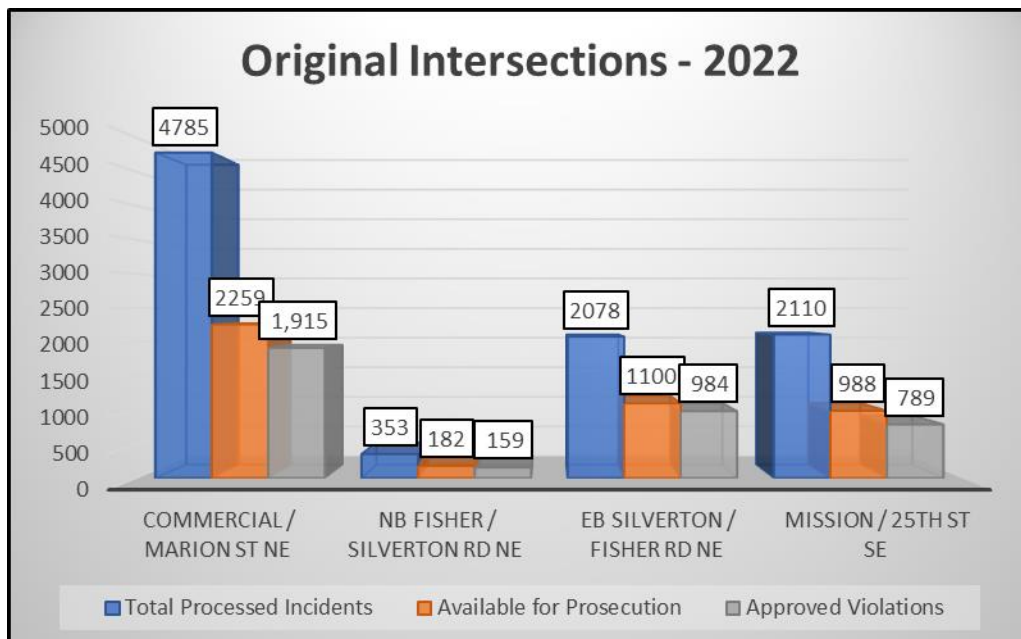
The City of Salem conducted an extensive and thorough public information campaign regarding the proposed use of red light camera enforcement, before the final decision was made to utilize photo red light and long before any cameras were ever installed. The campaign included presenting and providing information through the local media. In 2019, the City of Salem conducted a similar public information campaign prior to adding the new intersections and the fixed Speed on Green enforcement.

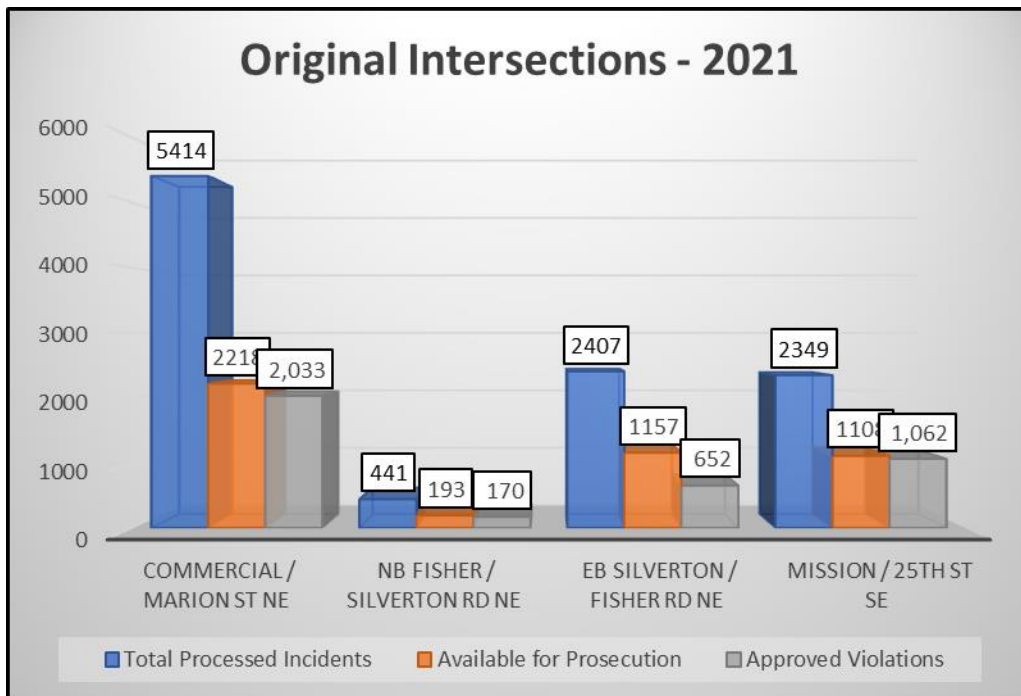
Since the start of the Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program, the City of Salem has maintained public information through their legislative reports. The Police Department also fields calls periodically about the system and process for capturing violations and the secondary process involving the issuance of citations.

PROCESS AND OUTCOME EVALUATION

The City of Salem’s Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program formally began when the cameras went operational in March 2008. For the first thirty (30) days, the system issued only warnings to those drivers who violated a red light. The system began issuing citations in April 2008. In 2019 and 2020 the City of Salem used a similar format when the speed on green enforcement and three new photo red light camera intersections were added.

Recorded Violations Red Light Violations – Original Intersections 2021/2022:

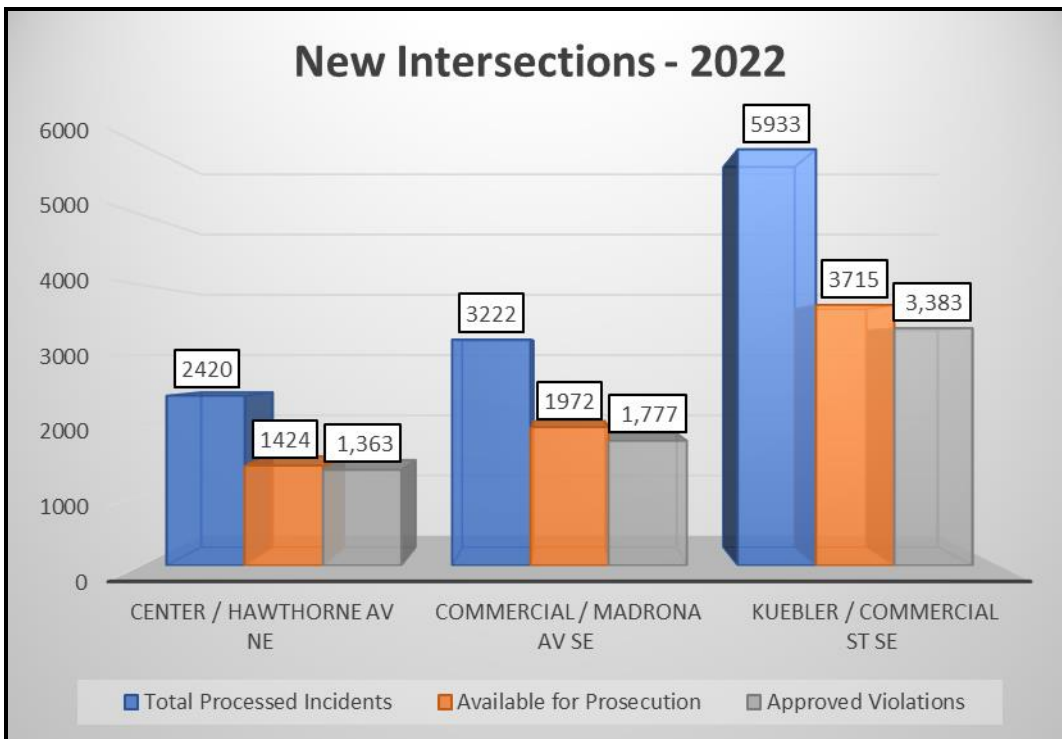
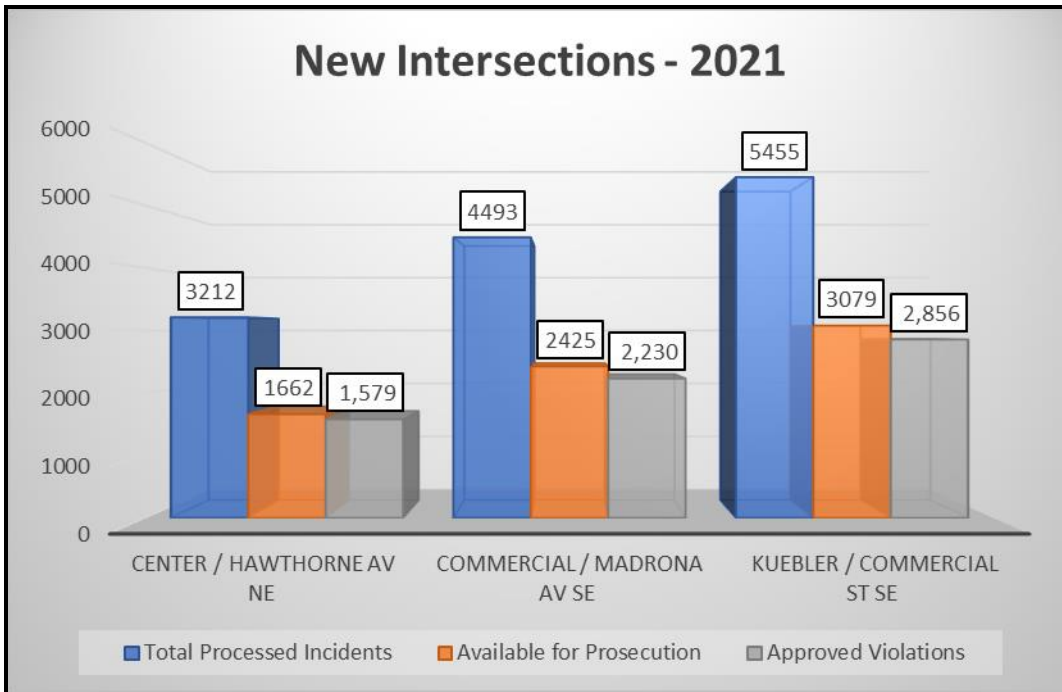




Traffic Volume & Citations Issued – Original Intersections:

RED LIGHT NOTICES ISSUED AND TRAFFIC VOLUME - ORIGINAL INTERSECTIONS				
YEAR	TOTAL VEHICLES	PERCENT CHANGE	CITATIONS ISSUED	PERCENT CHANGE
2009	Unknown	Unk	4,333	-
2010	Unknown	Unk	4,095	-5%
2019	22,168,630	Unk	3,753	-9%
2020	18,996,690	-16%	4,048	+7%
2021	19,075,831	<1%	3917	-3%
2022	18,655,517	-2%	3847	-1%

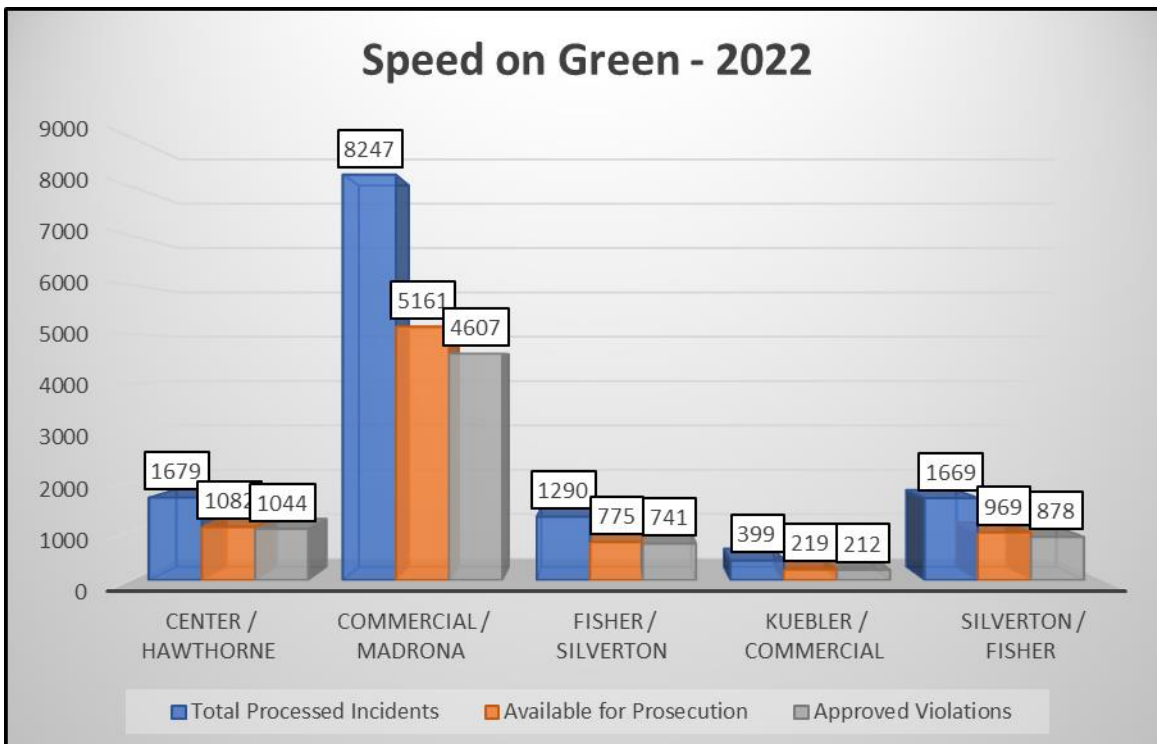
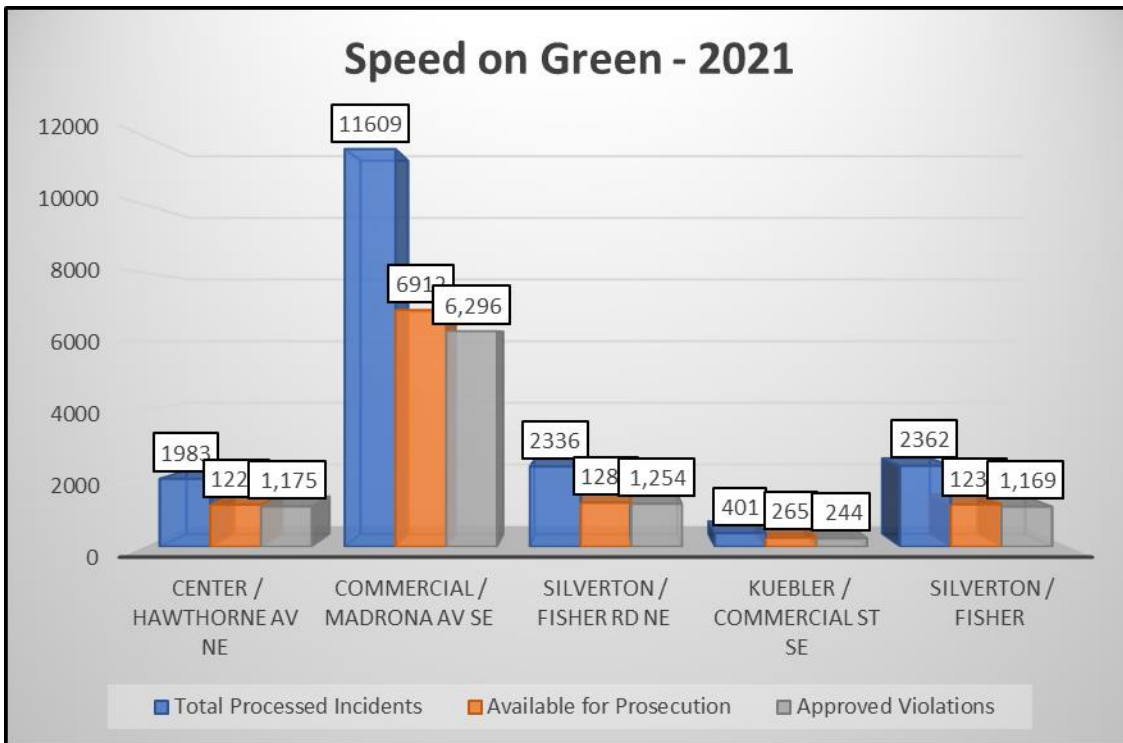
Recorded Red Light Violations – New Intersections 2021/2022:



Traffic Volume & Citations Issued – New Intersections:

RED LIGHT NOTICES ISSUED AND TRAFFIC VOLUME – NEW INTERSECTIONS				
YEAR	TOTAL VEHICLES	PERCENT CHANGE	CITATIONS ISSUED	PERCENT CHANGE
2021	11,162,872	-	6665	-
2022	11,557,587	+3%	6523	-2%

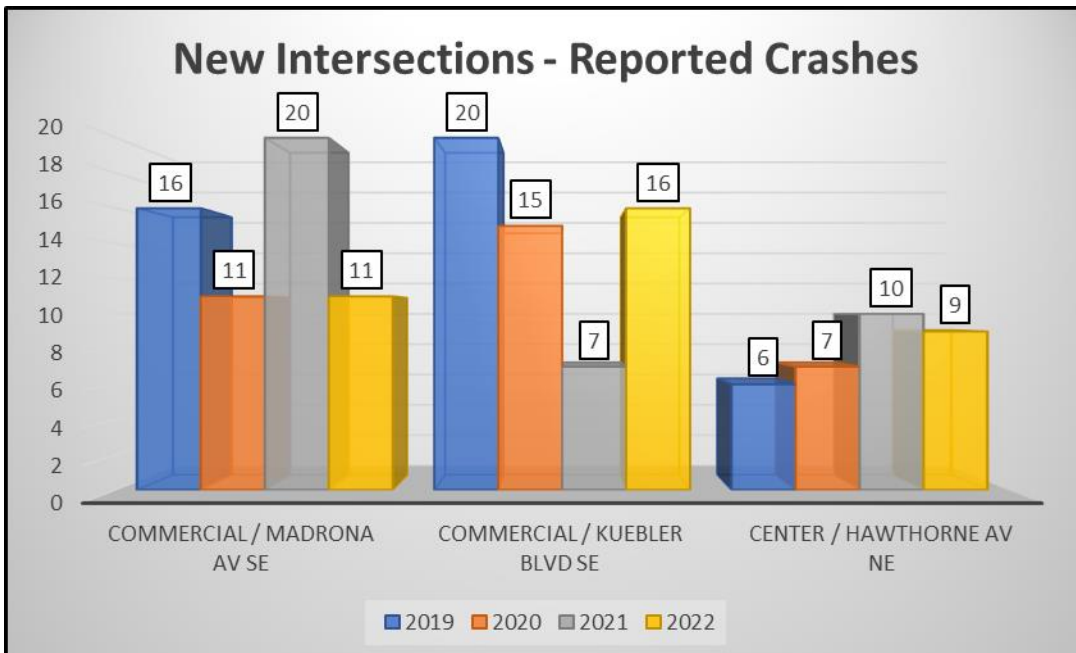
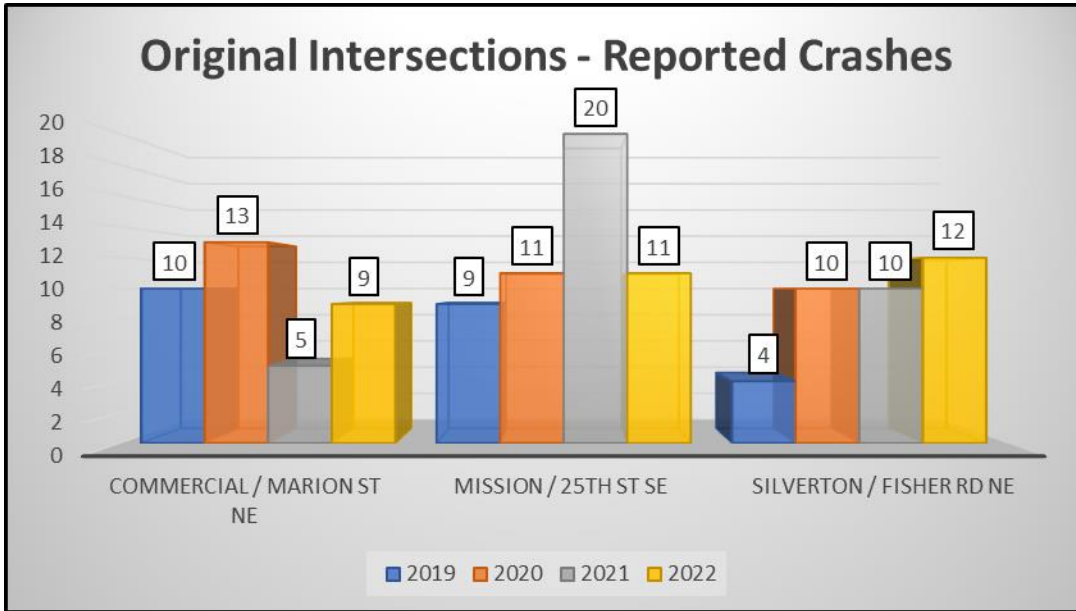
Recorded Speed on Green Violations – All Locations 2021/2022:



SPEED ON GREEN NOTICES ISSUED AND TRAFFIC VOLUME – ALL INTERSECTIONS

YEAR	TOTAL VEHICLES	PERCENT CHANGE	CITATIONS ISSUED	PERCENT CHANGE
2021	16,761,740	-	10,138	-
2022	17,659,014	+5%	7482	-35%

Reported Traffic Crashes:



In 2012, the traffic volume at the three original intersections was recorded to be 7,936,482 per year. In 2022, the traffic volume at the original three intersections was reported to be 18,655,517. The result is a traffic volume increase at the three intersections of 57% in 10 years.

Since the implementation of the Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program, The City of Salem has had an overall reduction of traffic collisions at the original intersections of 87%. Since the initial decrease, the number of collisions associated with each intersection has leveled off with a small amount of fluctuation. This has occurred regardless of the fact the traffic volume has increased significantly.

Public Acceptance:

While there has not been any formal survey conducted recently, informal results obtained throughout the Public Information Campaign and during the early period of the program indicate consistent public acceptance of the Photo Red Light and Speed on Green Program. Public opinion polls have appeared through local media outlets in the past and routinely indicate a belief that the cameras are improving roadway safety in Salem.

Citizen groups that have engaged the Police Department in the past about Photo Red Light have been supportive and some communities have made requests and recommendations for expansion of the program. The Salem Police Traffic Team regularly receives questions from citizens regarding electronic traffic enforcement and how they could have more locations added at other intersections within the city.

As with any enforcement based traffic safety initiative, there have been some detractors. The City of Salem Police Department investigates all formal complaints which it receives. To date, the City of Salem Police Department has not received any formal complaints in regard to the Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program.

The Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program's Administrative Process:

The administrative process of the Electronic Traffic Enforcement Program includes many steps. The process includes;

- Violation detection - This means that a car must travel across the intersection stop line against a solid red light, or speed at 11mph or greater over the posted speed limit on a green light.
- Quality control checks - Internal checks made by the vendor (Redflex) to ensure the system was functioning properly at the time the violation was captured.
- Violation processing - Every violation is reviewed to ensure the violation is valid.

- Police Officer review - The final review of each violation by a City of Salem Police Officer who issues and signs the citation.
- Certificate of Innocence – Document submitted in the event the registered owner of a vehicle receives a citation and was not the driver at the time of the violation.
- Defendant Response – Defendants are offered all standard pleading options as with any other traffic violation.
- Municipal Court – Salem Municipal Court hears all cases involving photo enforced violations in the City of Salem. Whenever possible, defendants are offered the opportunity to view their violations prior to a trial. The court has been upfitted with the technology necessary in order to hear these types of trials.

Throughout this process the City of Salem complies with all applicable statutes, including ORS 810.434 and 810.436. All citations are issued into the jurisdiction of the City of Salem Municipal Court and are handled the same as all other citations.

Prepared by:

Sgt. Scott Kofoid

Salem Police Department

Traffic Control Unit

(503)588-6171

This report is provided in accordance with ORS 810.434 (3, b), (4), and ORS 192.245.

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