

Sudbury Star front page story on August 14th 2017.

A newly formed group dedicated to making Greater Sudbury safer is advocating for the use of automated speed enforcement in the city.

Sudbury Citizens for Safety intend to make a presentation to the Greater Sudbury Road Safety Committee calling for the technology, also called photo radar, to be used in designated community safety zones with speed limits under 80 kilometres per hour, a practice permitted through provincial legislation passed this spring.

"Most of our roads within the municipality are 80 kilometres or under," said John Lindsay a member of the SCFS executive alongside Lionel Rudd, John Gaul and Tom Price. "It's possible that any road where there's speeding taking place, depending on the municipality, because they have to give the approval and determine that it would be an area that could use the automated speed control devices."

SCFS also favours the use of red-light cameras.

Lindsay said members have already discussed the idea with Ward 2 Coun. Michael Vagnini, chair of the Greater Sudbury Police Services Board, as well as Greater Sudbury Police Chief Paul Pedersen and the city's traffic department.

"What they recommended is that would be the first step, to go before the road safety committee, to determine what the interest might be and whether they want to explore it any further," Lindsay said. "It was also recommended to us that while some of us were proponents, but if there was a group, perhaps that would give more credence to the whole idea."

SCFS will not focus solely on traffic safety and citizens are encouraged to come forward with other concerns, "but right now, we're really concentrating on being able to present proposal to the road safety group and to see if it has any legs," Lindsay said.

Ontario introduced a photo radar enforcement program in 1994 under Bob Rae's NDP government, which allowed speed traps on Ontario highways, but it lasted only 11 months before it was cancelled by the Progressive Conservatives under Mike Harris.

Lindsay pointed to some examples of successful automated enforcement in Canadian cities, however, including Edmonton, where traffic officials say photo radar has brought down speed and speed-related collision by roughly 20 per cent. In the first year of operation, collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists dropped off 71 per cent and those causing severe injury were down 41 per cent.

Edmonton's traffic cameras collected \$52 million in 2015 alone. The money goes into a special reserve for the office of traffic safety and the city police, traffic safety initiatives and third-party infrastructure programs.

"Edmonton has probably created a bit of an embarrassment, because of the amount of money collected has more than paid for the cost of the machines, and it's where does the money go?" Lindsay said. "It's not supposed to be a cash cow. It's meant to make things more efficient and serve the more honourable purpose of reducing speeding. There are many roadways here in Sudbury where our residents have complained for years that there's too much excessive speed and we know a lot of accidents are caused by speed, but the question is how enthusiastic will citizens be if it does go through?"

In Gatineau, Que., 20 portable units netted 7,200 tickets in three months, totalling more than \$700,000 in fines. Police in that city have reported seeing drivers slow down and be more careful when they know there are cameras around.

While no Ontario municipality has set up an automatic speed enforcement system so far, Ottawa's 20 red-light cameras brought in revenue of almost \$4 million last year, at \$260 per fine, and the city plans to install 20 more.

Lindsay said anyone interested in getting involved with SCFS or contact the group for more information should call 705-507-6037, email contact.scfs@gmail.com or visit www.friendlysudbury.ca.

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I agree with the Sudbury Citizens for Safety in their call for the use of automated speed enforcement cameras in the form of photo radar. I have witnessed first hand the running of yellow and often red lights around town while walking and driving. I can only assume that excessive speed is the cause, but unfortunately I think people run the lights because it is a habit "i they can do it and they do not get caught.

Recently, I had family visiting from out of town and I had warned them to beware of drivers here and to drive defensively. During their visit last week, we were waiting on York Street at Paris Street for the green light to change so we could make a left turn. The light turned green for us to turn, but luckily my brother, who was driving, noticed a the driver of a white BMW barrelling southbound on Paris and realized he was not going to stop for their red light. This person sped through the red light and had my brother not been cautious, there would have been four casualties that day.

This is also the same intersection where my husband and I had almost been hit by a driver running a red light a few years ago. Had my husband not noticed him or her at the last minute and stopped us abruptly in the middle of the intersection, our children would have been orphans.

York Street, which has a 40-km speed limit, is notorious for speeding drivers. There is a hill and a bend on this short street between Paris and Regent where there is no visibility as you approach either. There could be a child crossing to the playground, someone backing out of their driveway or crossing the street on the other side. Yet drivers speed along, throwing caution to the wind.

I can understand police cannot be everywhere monitoring intersections and speeders, so why not introduce the photo radar to assist in this task? I believe that close monitoring or ticketing through photo radar are definite deterrents. No one can argue with the need to encourage safer driving habits. The revenue will just be an added benefit.

***Pearl Duff
Sudbury***

Re: " Citizen group favours photo radar," Aug. 14.

Attempts to enforce the speed limits are comparable to a game of cat and mouse. When the cat (police) is away the mouse (irresponsible drivers) will play. That play leads to increased risk on our roads and sadly to increased carnage.

Our society views impaired and distracted driving as socially unacceptable. In my opinion, speeding should be viewed through the same lens.

It is time to implement photo radar to increase safety and to ease the burden on our law enforcement bodies. If the cat is never away, the mouse will not come out to play or, at minimum, will always "pay to play."

***Anthony Rossini
Hanmer***

I am a retired police officer and read with interest the article concerning the above. I wrote to the mayor of Sudbury and copied the Chief of Police last year about installing red light cameras in Sudbury and provided statistics from Ottawa and other cities, including the cost of installing the cameras and the revenue they would produce. I think it is a fantastic idea and should be pursued, because there is very little enforcement being done in this city by uniform police including traffic officers due to quite simply, not enough traffic officers, and I mean officers dedicated to the traffic enforcement branch using radar. Unfortunately I did not even receive a response to my letter from the mayor or the Chief. If you would like to discuss this further, please advise. Brian Grisdale retired police inspector.

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