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SUBJECT: Automated Enforcement Expansion Update
DATE: October 22, 2025



PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

In April 2025, Public Works Department staff provided a presentation on Tacoma's Automated Enforcement Program to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Council Committee (IPS). The presentation provided an overview of the program, highlighted recent legislative changes, and requested that IPS forward recommended updates to Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 11.60 for full City Council consideration. Staff committed to continuing the discussion with the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Council Committee, including additional information on program financials and revenue, proposed methodology for identifying new automated enforcement camera locations, and education and outreach efforts.

BACKGROUND:

Automated enforcement is an important tool in advancing the City's Vision Zero goal of eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes by 2035. While redesigning roadways for lower speeds and safer conditions remains one of the most effective long-term solutions, automated enforcement provides a more immediate way to improve safety. Research shows this technology reduces average travel speeds, lowers crash rates, and encourages safer driving behaviors at locations where cameras are installed.

The City's use of automated traffic safety cameras dates to 2008. The City's current program is comprised of fourteen cameras, including nine red light cameras, four school zone speed cameras (enforcing two school zones), and one speed camera. On March 26, 2024, the Governor signed into law House Bill 2384, which replaced the previous legislation (RCW 46.63.170) with RCW 46.63.220, which established new requirements and considerations for automated enforcement programs throughout the State.

The new legislation introduces several key provisions governing automated traffic safety cameras. Local governments must now prepare an analysis of proposed camera locations, addressing equity impacts and demonstrating need based on data. Annual reporting requirements have been expanded to include detailed crash, infraction, and financial information. Restrictions were placed on how revenues may be used, limiting use to infrastructure improvements. Beginning four years after installation, 25 percent of revenues must be directed to the state's Cooper Jones Active Transportation Safety account. Authority for camera use has been broadened to include hospital zones, park zones, and higher-risk areas based on excessive speed, with limits tied to population size. Other provisions include increasing the maximum penalty to \$145 (with inflation adjustments) and allowing reduced fines for individuals receiving public assistance.



ISSUE:

The City is working to expand automated enforcement in alignment with recent legislative changes and best practices in traffic safety. To guide this effort, Public Works convened an Automated Enforcement Task Force composed of community members representing a broad range of perspectives, including Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities, Community's Police Advisory Committee, Transportation Commission, Bicycle-Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and geographic diversity. Staff from the Office of Equity and Human Rights, Tacoma Police Department, and Public Works Department participated as well. The Task Force reviewed crash and equity data, examined methodologies for identifying potential camera locations, and considered how outreach and education could support community understanding and trust.

Over the course of six meetings, the Task Force members discussed balancing equity and effectiveness. They emphasized that withholding proven safety tools from communities with higher crash rates could perpetuate inequities, while best practices and research from other cities caution against disproportionately impacting neighborhoods. Overall, the Task Force strongly recommended a data-driven approach to site selection and clear, consistent communication and outreach to support transparency, build trust, and educate the public on the role of automated enforcement in improving safety.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.