

Position Paper

September 2009

Intersection Speed Enforcement

Measuring Speed with Intersection Safety Devices (ISDs)

Purpose

In an effort to reduce speeding and increase safety at signalized intersections, the Alberta government passed Bill 49, the *Traffic safety Amendment Act 2007*, on December 5, 2007. This legislation, also referred to as 'Speed on Green', allows the use of ISDs, commonly known as red light cameras, to monitor and enforce speeding violations through intersections during all colour phases of the light.

This paper presents CRISP's position on the approved legislation and the actions of partner municipalities.

Background

Motor vehicle collisions are a leading cause of injury-related death and disability among Capital Region residents. Each year, more than 25,000 collisions occur in the region and more than one-quarter result in injury or death. Two out of three of these injury collisions occur in intersections. To address this critical problem, several stakeholders in Alberta's Capital Region have combined efforts to reduce the frequency and severity of intersection collisions.

The Capital Region Intersection Safety Partnership (CRISP) was formed in 2001 and is comprised of the following traffic safety and injury prevention stakeholders: City of Edmonton, City of St. Albert, Strathcona County, Edmonton Police Service, RCMP – St. Albert and Strathcona County detachments, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Motor Association.

CRISP partners share resources and expertise to implement on-going, collaborative and integrated intersection safety initiatives to reduce the frequency and severity of intersection collisions in the Capital Region. Initiatives involve integration of best or leading practices in the areas of education, engineering and enforcement strategies followed by an evaluation of the results. CRISP focuses on four target priorities: red light violations, pedestrian safety, speed and high-risk crash locations.

CRISP's mandate is to research, recommend and support tools for intersection road safety and advocate for their use. Following an intersection speed enforcement review, CRISP has drawn the following conclusions:

- Common speed related collisions including following too closely, left turn across path and failing to observe traffic signal account for one-third of collisions at intersections.
- High-risk crash locations are difficult for conventional enforcement due to multiple lanes, the volume of vehicles and the safety of motorist and law enforcement personnel.
- ISDs in use today in the Capital Region have the capability to monitor speed in intersections.
- A 2002 CRISP Pedestrian Survey reported that 72% of Capital Region respondents support the use of ISDs to fine owners of vehicles that are speeding through intersections.



The CRISP Position on Intersection Speed Enforcement

CRISP supports the use of ISDs as a means of reducing the number and severity of intersection collisions at high-risk crash locations by enforcing speeding violations. CRISP is a strong proponent of using ISD legislation and technology to monitor traffic safety at high-risk crash locations. Speed enforcement is a fundamental component of any road safety strategy and ISDs are a cost-effective tool to safely enforce speeding infractions, in particular at high-risk crash locations, and improve traffic safety in the Capital Region.

Council for all three CRISP municipalities – City of Edmonton, City of St. Albert and Strathcona County – have approved the use of ISD technology to reduce the number and severity of fatal, injury and property damage collisions at signalized intersections. Enforcement in all three municipalities has already started.

Intersection speed enforcement can reduce collisions, injuries and casualties at intersections by influencing driver behavior. To do that successfully, and for the long-term, CRISP believes an approach that integrates road safety communication activities to raise public awareness and relay the benefits of reducing speed with an enforcement component is necessary.

CRISP supports the use of ISDs to measure speed in intersections, specifically the following criteria:

- Public be informed of where ISDs are operating through permanent and temporary signs to reinforce the high-risk crash locations and further deter drivers from speeding through intersections.
- Intersection speed enforcement be enhanced with an integrated public awareness campaign that educates drivers about the risks associated with speed in intersections and emphasizes the benefits of the technology.
- Intersection speed enforcement be deployed at high-risk crash intersections where:
 - fatal, injury or property damage collisions is shown to be a major road safety concern and/or
 - multiple-lane roads and high traffic volumes make conventional enforcement by police unsafe.
- Ongoing evaluation be used to measure the impact of the technology on lowering speeds and reducing the number and/or severity of collisions.