



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

News from the USA...Red light cameras too good & some cities rethink devices as drivers pay heed, reducing fine revenue.

By Alex Johnson, Reporter, MSNBC, March 21, 2008

Last week, Dallas officials reviewed the numbers and decided that **a quarter of the cameras they had installed to catch motorists running red lights were too effective. So they shut them down.**

They are not alone. Faced with data showing that drivers pay attention to cameras at intersections — resulting in fewer ticketable violations and ever-shrinking revenue from fines — municipalities across the country are reconsidering red light cameras, which often work too well.

At the heart of the discussions taking place in city councils and county commissions is tension between the twin benefits that were touted when local governments began installing cameras about a decade and a half ago. **Officials were promised that the cameras** — which take snapshots of busy intersections, capturing the license plates of any cars that are running the light — **would simultaneously save lives and generate millions of dollars in extra fines.** The first half of that equation is arguably true: A federal study found a small but measurable reduction in injuries nationwide in accidents at intersections monitored by cameras, though there was an increase in some kinds of collisions.

Citywide statistics obtained by NBC affiliate KXAS-TV found that red light cameras do reduce accidents. That is a good thing. But they do it by reducing red light violations, by as much as 29 percent from month to month at particularly busy Dallas intersections. On the face of it, that, too, is a good thing — but not, necessarily, if you **rely on traffic fines to make up a healthy chunk of your budget.** Dallas lawmakers originally estimated gross annual revenue of **\$15 million from their 62 cameras.** But City Manager Mary Suhm estimated last week that the city would fall short by more than \$4 million. So last week, the city turned off about a quarter of the least profitable cameras, saying it couldn't justify the cost of running them.

City officials in Charlotte and Fayetteville, N.C., recently turned off all of their red light cameras, concluding that a state law **diverting much of the revenue they generate in fines to schools** meant their general funds were actually losing money, NBC affiliate WNCN of Raleigh reported. In Lubbock, Texas, the City Council shut down all its cameras last month, **citing a report that showed statistically significant increases in rear-end collisions at intersections, including those with cameras.**

The PPP comments...at least they are openly dishonest A great safety aid when they are profitable but suddenly a report says they don't work to reduce incidents when the fines have dried up. Note some of the money was going to good causes...schools, whilst in the UK it now goes into the governments bottomless pit.