

# Red-light cameras to become more ubiquitous in Ontario

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## EXTRACT

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## ARTICLE CONTENT

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According to the Toronto Transportation Services Committee, 20 more intersections in cities like Vaughan, Markham and Georgina will likely have red-light cameras installed between now and the end of the summer.

Recently, council members voted in favor of increasing traffic camera enforcement around Ontario in an effort to heighten safety and decrease the number of local car insurance claims resulting from accidents caused by red-light runners.

"We hope it will reduce serious injury collisions region wide," said Nelson Costa, manager of traffic safety, the Toronto Star reports.

The program has been a fairly expensive one for provincial authorities to implement. The paper reports that since the program launched, its cost approximately \$4 million. However, supporters of the program say that the expense has been worth it, based on the number of accidents and lives that have been spared as a result.

But municipalities have also gained revenue from these red-light cameras as well. The City of Toronto notes that in January 2010, provincial authorities increased the penalty for running through a red light from \$180 to \$325. The stiffer price tag appears to have worked, as government officials say that collisions have since fallen by more than 25 percent, with property damage down 18 percent.

The council's report identifies two dozen municipalities that will receive the red-light cameras, most of which will be in Markham along routes such as Mackenzie Drive, McCowan Road, Bullock Drive and 16th Avenue. Aurora, East Gwillimbury and King are a few others of the areas in which the traffic cams are expected to be mounted.

### **Several California lawmakers ending camera programs**

Meanwhile, as Ontario authorities are increasing the enforcement and presence of these red-light cameras, there are several cities in the U.S. that are discontinuing them.

Many of the cities that are doing so are in the U.S.' most-populated state, California. The San Diego Union-Tribune recently reported that Mayor Bob Filner will take down the 21 red-light cameras that have been in operation in the city since 1998.

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Filner told the newspaper that the cameras have not been accurate, as many locals have disputed some of the fines levied after being caught on camera allegedly driving through an intersection without stopping.

"Seems to me that such a program can only be justified if there are demonstrable facts that prove that they raise the safety awareness and decrease accidents in our city," said Filner. "The data, in fact, does not really prove it."

The U.S.-based Insurance Institute for Highway Safety says otherwise. A 2011 study performed by the traffic safety organization found that cities with red-light cameras in place saw a 24 percent rate of decline among all types of fatal crashes compared to years in which they weren't installed.

