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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: January 9, 2009

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: Photo Radar Speed Enforcement for Traffic Safety

At the Board meeting of January 6, 2009, where a one-year pilot contract for traffic safety photo radar speed enforcement was approved, questions arose regarding the principle policy objectives of the traffic safety photo radar speed enforcement program. The purpose of this memorandum is to restate the traffic safety policy reasons for adopting the one-year pilot program.

Between the period of January 1, 2007 and October 31, 2008, 7,188 traffic crashes occurred in unincorporated Pima County. Of these crashes, 47 percent were due to speeding. More importantly, 63 percent of fatal crashes were caused by speeding (36 percent of fatal crashes were caused by "excessive" speed, 20 miles per hour or more over the speed limit). Speeding, in particular "excessive" speeding, is a particular problem in the unincorporated area. The resources of the Pima County Sheriff for traffic speed enforcement are limited, and the Sheriff prefers to deploy his law enforcement resources to more serious offenses such as burglary, theft, robbery, armed robbery, rape and murder. Photo radar enforcement is a proven law enforcement technique and is designed primarily as a deterrent to recurring civil traffic offenses.

"Excessive" speeding on the County's arterial highway system is a long-standing safety issue. The County, when reconstructing the arterial highway system, installs automatic traffic counter stations for traffic volume measurement. To date there are 34 traffic counter stations located throughout the County. These stations record traffic volume occurring each hour of the day. Long-standing results of actual traffic speed monitoring the Department of Transportation has conducted have shown that there is significant speeding by individuals on our arterial roads. On average, the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling at or below) typically exceeds the posted speed limit by 10 miles per hour or more.

A traffic safety policy designed to improve overall arterial highway system performance from a safety perspective is to consistently set speed limits on the arterial system throughout the County. In Pima County that simply means that most rural and urban arterial speed limits with some exceptions are established at 45 miles per hour.

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Traffic safety photo radar enforcement programs establish a reasonable limit before a violation is recorded. In Pima County, photo radar cameras will be set not to detect or record a violation until a particular vehicle exceeds the posted speed limit by 11 miles per hour. This is a reasonable standard and allows most individuals, even those who may be temporarily distracted, from receiving a speeding citation. The purpose of photo radar speed enforcement is to reduce all speeding, in this case defined as 11 or more miles per hour over the posted speed limit. Of the statistics cited previously related to automobile crashes, the most astounding statistic relates to the percentage of all fatal crashes that involve speeding. In the data measured during 2007 and 2008, 63 percent of all fatal crashes occurred due to speeding, and 47 percent of all injury crashes occurred because of this same reason. Injury and fatal accidents are extremely costly, obviously to the individuals involved, but also to the general community. In order to deter speeding, the Board adopted a pilot program for traffic safety speed enforcement that is a reasonable, measured and prudent action.

CHH/jj

Attachment

c: The Honorable Clarence Dupnik, Pima County Sheriff  
John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works  
Priscilla Cornelio, Transportation Director



# MEMORANDUM

Department of Transportation



DATE: January 7, 2009

TO: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator

FROM: Priscilla S. Cornelio, P.E., Director

SUBJECT: Speed Analysis for Photo Radar Traffic Enforcement

As per your request, we are providing a break down of the speed-related crash history as maintained in the Pima County Department Traffic Engineering Division database (January 1, 2007 to October 31, 2008) from reports received from the Pima County Sheriff's Department:

SPEED-RELATED CRASH HISTORY					
January 1, 2007 - October 31, 2008 <sup>1</sup>					
	All Crashes	All Speed-related Crashes <sup>2</sup>		Crashes >20 mph over Speed Limit (A.R.S. 28-701.02)	
Injury Severity	Crashes	Crashes	% of Total Crashes by Severity	Crashes	% of Total Crashes by Severity
Property Damage Only	4946	2302	46.5	111	2.2
Injury Crash	2186	1034	47.3	106	4.8
Fatality	56	35	62.5	20	35.7
<b>Total Crashes</b>	<b>7188</b>	<b>3371</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>3.3</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based on crash reports received from the Pima County Sheriff's Department.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Violations/Citations for "Too Fast for Conditions" (A.R.S. 28-701A) and "Exceeded Lawful Speed Limit" (A.R.S. 28-701.02)

Based on our analysis, nearly 63 percent of our fatal crashes are speed-related. Nearly 36 percent of the fatalities involve vehicles travelling 20 mph or more over the posted speed limit. Overall, nearly 47 percent of the reported crashes are speed-related.

If you need additional information, please let me know.

PSC:AQ:sap

- c: John M. Bernal, Deputy County Administrator – Public Works
- Annabelle Quihuis, Community Services Manager
- Albert Letzkus, Traffic Engineering Division Manager |