

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Written Testimony provided by the City of Philadelphia

Friday, September 15, 2023

Public Hearing, Monday, September 18, 2023

Pennsylvania State Senate Transportation Committee

Dear Chair Langerholc,

On behalf of the City of Philadelphia, I offer this testimony on automated speed enforcement.

Automated speed enforcement works – it is saving lives every day on Roosevelt Boulevard. Renewing and expanding the program will make sure we continue to see safety improvements on the most dangerous roads in the city.

In 2018, Act 86 established a five-year pilot program to install speed cameras on Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia and in active work zones statewide. The Act implemented common sense limits on how data captured from the speed camera program are used and how revenue from fines is directed, drawing on the success of the automated red light enforcement program. These limitations ensure that saving lives is the singular goal of the program.

Historically, Roosevelt Boulevard has been the most dangerous roadway in Philadelphia, accounting for 14% of all crashes and 62 fatalities from 2014 to 2017. Since the installation of speed cameras, we have seen extraordinary results in reducing speeding, crashes, and fatalities and serious injuries.

- Roosevelt Boulevard saw 21% fewer fatal and serious injury crashes and 64% fewer fatal pedestrian crashes, all while these trends increased citywide.
- Speeding violations fell 95% from the program's introduction through November 2022, again while we saw speeding increase as a factor in crashes citywide

The Pennsylvania State Transportation Advisory Committee's (TAC) evaluation of the automated speed enforcement program on Roosevelt Boulevard strongly endorsed the renewal and expansion of the program. They also advised that PennDOT should be involved in selecting

expansion corridors. The City also supports this. The City is also prepared to fund and carry out public awareness campaigns about automated speed enforcement and its benefits, as well as support the reinvestment of funds gathered from speed cameras into improving roadway safety. These were also recommendations from the TAC report.

Eliminating the sunset dates of Act 86 will ensure that the life-saving automated speed enforcement program on Roosevelt Boulevard continues. More lives will be saved by the expansion of automated speed enforcement to additional corridors in Philadelphia like Roosevelt Boulevard that experience a disproportionate rate of speeding-related crashes and fatalities. Expanding the use of the carefully circumscribed automated speed enforcement program to appropriate locations citywide will enable the use of a critical tool for eliminating preventable deaths from traffic crashes on Philadelphia streets.

Philadelphia's automated speed enforcement program is a model program that should be expanded to help address our traffic safety challenges. [Philadelphia urges passage of a bill renewing and expanding the program.](#)

How Automated Enforcement Works in Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA) has been operating an automated red light enforcement (ARLE) program since 2005. The program has been highly successful and expanded to 34 locations, operating 146 cameras as of the 2023 annual report. Existing legislation includes key limitations on the use of data captured by automated red light cameras protect individuals' rights and ensure the program is intended only as a deterrent to unsafe driving behavior. In addition, any financial surplus (beyond program expenses) from the program is directed to a restricted account in the Motor License Fund, to be used solely for the Transportation Enhancement Grants Program.

With strong bipartisan support, Act 86 of 2018 authorized a 5-year pilot of speed safety cameras in active work zones on Federal aid highways and on the Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia.

Beginning in 2020, PPA deployed speed cameras on Roosevelt Boulevard. The safety program is not intended to be punitive:

- Violations result in no points
- Fines are set relatively low to discourage speeding.
- Recorded images may not be used for surveillance purposes or any legal proceeding not directly related to the ASE violation.
- Any financial surplus (beyond program expenses) is dedicated to safety projects on or near the Boulevard or for technical assistance for safety projects.

Safety Impacts of the Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program

Speed cameras saved lives on Roosevelt Boulevard. One out of three people in Philadelphia live within a mile of Roosevelt Boulevard. Tens of thousands of people use it for travel each day. Safety cameras installed since 2020 have benefited both residents and travelers. Since the introduction of speed cameras in June of 2020, data show:

- **Fatal and serious injury crashes decreased 21%** in the two years after installation, compared to the two years prior (Source: PennDOT crash data, 2018 - 2022).
- Reduced speeds resulted in less severe crashes. Across Philadelphia, speeding and aggressive driving have driven a rise in fatalities since 2020. Over the same time period, on the Boulevard, **speeding-related crashes dropped 22%** and **aggressive driving crashes dropped 39%**. While **pedestrian fatalities** continue to rise citywide, they **fell 64%** on the Boulevard.
- **Monthly speeding violations fell 95%** from the program's introduction in June 2020 to November 2022¹ (Source: Philadelphia Parking Authority).
- Average vehicle speeds decreased in all but four speed camera locations, with many decreases of 10% or more (Source: PA State Transportation Committee).

ASE Program Revenue

Per the statute, all revenue from the ASE program minus the operation and maintenance cost to sustain the program is remitted to PennDOT. PennDOT then deposits the amount into a restricted account in the Motor License Fund. The fines deposited into this account are used for the Transportation Enhancement Grants Program, which was established by 75 Pa. C.S. §3116 under the ARLE program ([TAC report](#), p. 21).

ASE-funded grants are treated separately from ARLE grants and prioritize projects located within five miles of an existing Automated Speed Enforcement System ([ARLE Info](#), p. 14)

The program has been operating for three years, during which it collected \$58.3 million from violations of which \$9.9 million was used to cover program expenses and \$46.6 million was remitted to PennDOT.

In [December 2021](#), Governor Tom Wolf announced the first round of investment in traffic safety projects using the new grant funding through the ASE program. He announced the second round of grant-funded project [in January 2023](#). Over the first two rounds, PennDOT awarded \$36.6 million, of which \$34.5 million went to Roosevelt Boulevard and nearby safety

¹ This excludes two new camera locations installed in June 2022, which experienced a spike in violations during the initial warning period. Including violations from the new camera installations, violations fell 88.5% from June 2020 to November 2022.

improvement projects and \$2.1 million went to support the automated work zone speed enforcement (AWZSE) program statewide.

Community outreach and individual privacy

Renewal and expansion of the automated speed enforcement program is endorsed by a wide range of stakeholders and community-based groups. First and foremost, Families for Safe Streets of Greater Philadelphia, which has tirelessly advocated for this program on behalf of their loved ones lost to traffic crashes, including on Roosevelt Boulevard. Members of Families of Safe Streets remind us that traffic fatalities are not just statistics, but our friends, family members, and neighbors.

In addition, the ASE program has strong support from a broad coalition of groups, including the Philadelphia Police Department, AARP PA, AAA Mid-Atlantic, the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, PennDOT, PPA, and the City of Philadelphia, among many others.

Baking in transparency and communication with the public is central to Philadelphia's ASE program. The City held public meetings both prior to and since installation of speed cameras to inform the public of the program and gather feedback. It is widely reported on in local media and the PPA maintains a website with information on the program, including camera locations and annual reports, as required by law. The City is committed to continuing public outreach on the automated speed enforcement and its benefits.

Act 86 is designed to combat the misconception that ASE is a means to generate revenue or an invasion of privacy. By law, the vendor cannot be compensated based on the number of violations issued and fines are remitted to the state to be distributed (see "ASE Program Revenue"). The law also bans taking frontal images of a vehicle or using recorded images for surveillance purposes or any legal proceeding not directly related to the ASE violation. These limitations were initially developed through the non-partisan collaboration of the Transportation Advisory Committee for the ARLE program, subsequently incorporated into law, and have proven successful at deterring unsafe driving behavior without violating individual rights for nearly two decades.

Action Items Requested

1. *Eliminate the sunset dates of Act 86 of 2018.* Act 86 established speed cameras on Roosevelt Boulevard as a pilot. The program has been highly successful in its stated goals of reducing speeding and speeding-related crashes. In particular, serious crashes have fallen significantly and pedestrian fatalities have fallen dramatically. Permitting the program to continue operating on Roosevelt Boulevard will ensure lives continue to be saved.

2. *Permit the City and PennDOT to collaboratively select corridors for ASE expansion.*
Additional corridors in Philadelphia would benefit from speed cameras to address similar trends in speeding-related crashes and fatalities. The TAC report cites locations with pedestrian activity and infrastructure as another important criteria for selecting expansion corridors given the huge safety benefits of slowing vehicles down to the most vulnerable road users.
3. *Revise reporting requirements to no later than September 1 annually.* This will better align with relevant dataset releases and the fiscal year of the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark red ink, appearing to read "Michael Carroll".

Michael Carroll, P.E.
Deputy Managing Director
Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability