



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR ED GAINEY

September 17, 2023

The Honorable Wayne Langerholc Jr.
Senate Transportation Committee Chair
Rm 281 Main Capitol Building

The Honorable Marty Flynn
Senate Transportation Committee Minority Chair
Rm 184 Main Capitol Building

Dear Senate Transportation Committee Chairs and Members,

Mayor Ed Gainey, Pittsburgh's Department of Mobility & Infrastructure, and the Department of Public Safety are pleased to offer joint support for HB No. 1284, a bill that would grant our city the authority to implement an Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program. This legislation represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to enhance road safety, reduce the occurrence of serious injuries and fatalities in Pittsburgh, and to allow our highly trained police officers to focus their time and expertise on violent crime. We further believe that the harm cause by traffic crashes and the success of ASE programs are both sufficiently well-established to warrant a bill that allows us to move immediately to implementation without a five-year pilot period.

Speed safety cameras (SSC), sometimes referred to as automated speed enforcement (ASE), are a proven safety tool to target speeding related safety problems. Speed safety cameras (SSCs) are included in FHWA's newest set of Proven Safety Countermeasures and are estimated to reduce roadway fatalities and injuries by 20 to 37 percent. In addition, the automation of enforcement for routine expands our capacity to deter speeding and in doing so, frees our officers to focus on threats to public safety that no camera can handle.

In Pittsburgh, traffic calming is the number one demand of our citizens, who fear for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists. We invest a significant portion of our budget each year in speed humps and other measures to reduce speeding. We struggle, however, with enforcement and often only penalize drivers for speeding after they have crashed. No municipality can sustain a police force capable of continually monitoring roadways, nor is it the best and highest use of sworn officers to pull over speeders, though we know deterrence will save lives. And ASE program allows us to address a known and ongoing public safety threat in a proactive and cost-effective way.

We know that ASE programs work. In 2020 Philadelphia established an ASE pilot along Roosevelt Boulevard, a pilot which was studied thoroughly and resulted in an overwhelmingly positive evaluation. (The 2022 report is available at https://philapark.org/wp-content/uploads/Automated-Speed-Enforcement-Camera-Report-FY-2022.pdf#_ga=2.144847476.1579387971.1694963764-1397018170.1694963763.) Comparing data from one year prior to implementation (2019) to one year after (2021) and found that the pilot was a success in achieving its objectives. During the COVID-19 pandemic total crashes fell city-wide 6 percent due to lockdowns, while they fell 36 percent along Roosevelt Boulevard, all building on existing safety infrastructure and without the addition of a single officer. Traffic crashes are not a minor issue in our city and indeed can rival gun violence as the leading cause of death in some demographics. Nation- and population-wide, motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of preventable injury related deaths. To understand the potential safety benefits of an ASE program in Pittsburgh, The Department of Mobility & Infrastructure (DOMI) analyzed 5-year crash data for fatal or severe crashes where speed and aggressive driving played a role. Between 2018 and 2022 these crash types accounted for 1,960 total crashes, 211 of which were categorized as serious, and 51 of which were fatal. We also know that serious crashes and fatalities are on the rise, due in part to the increasing size and weight of the vehicles we drive and in part due to the increased prevalence of speeding. While the first factor is impossible for a municipality to control, speed is something we can reduce with an effective ASE program.

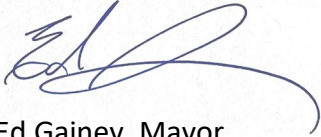
Pittsburgh's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure and our Department of Public Safety are prepared to implement an ASE program. In Pennsylvania we have the ability to learn from the Philadelphia pilot. In addition, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) recently released a Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide which provides a rigorous framework to navigate the landscape of ASE program implementation. (That guide is available at <https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/Speed%20Safety%20Camera%20Program%20Planning%20and%20Operations%20Guide%202023.pdf>) Both can offer practical guidance that will assist us in developing a program that not only improves safety but also ensures fairness, transparency, excellent policing and community engagement.

HB 1284's provisions, particularly those related to public notice, monitoring, and reporting, align perfectly with our city's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the safety of our residents and visitors. It also complements our Chief of Police's commitment to focusing the capacity of our police bureau on those public safety problems that only police can handle, namely reducing violent crime. We believe that the implementation of automated speed enforcement measures is an essential and proven strategy to address the pressing issue of traffic-related injuries and fatalities without distracting police from their unique responsibilities.

Permitting the City of Pittsburgh to take advantage of the proven and important benefits of an ASE program – and to do so in a robust and rapid manner – represents a giant step forward in protecting our citizens from harm, the first responsibility of municipal government. The Gainey Administration and the people of Pittsburgh are fully supportive of this measure, and DOMI and

Public Safety are prepared to implement an ASE program in an informed and professional manner. We urge you to pass the bill in its most expansive form as lives are on the line.

Yours in Service, ✓

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed Gainey', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ed Gainey, Mayor
City of Pittsburgh

Pronouns: He/Him/His