

Editorial: Give green light to technology

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A decision is due today at Amarillo City Hall over whether to install cameras that catch motorists running through red lights at intersections.

The City Commission would be wise to proceed with the devices - even if it means scaling back from a citywide violation-monitoring program.

At issue this afternoon will be whether to go ahead with a plan to install the cameras as part of a contract with American Traffic Solutions. ATS is asking for a five-year commitment, requiring the city to pay the company \$1,800 monthly for each camera installed.

The five-year commitment has stuck in some city commissioners' craws. But that opened to the door to a possible compromise: Why not install just a few cameras, try them out, and see if they stem the incidents of collisions at intersections involving motorists running through red lights?

The issue all along has been motorist safety, officials have said. They should not be dissuaded from this effort by complaints of the few and the loud about the cameras.

Studies have shown the cameras to be an effective deterrent against those who run red lights. Will they fatten the city's coffers? No, according to city officials. But the issue all along has been about safety - not about revenue.

A consultant recommends placing the cameras at nine intersections. If cost is the issue, as stated by City Commissioner Jim Simms, the city can opt for fewer locations just to try them out. If they work, the city can expand their use.

The problem of motorists ignoring traffic signals isn't unique to Amarillo.

The city, though, can join the growing ranks of communities that use technology to assist in identifying lawbreakers.

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