

Community Services Report to
Regular Meeting of Council
2025 March 18

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
C2025-0277

Impacts of Photo Radar Restrictions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Calgary Police Commission a forum to share with Council the anticipated impacts of a police budget shortfall that has been caused by provincial restrictions on the use of photo radar and for Council to respond to the situation. The report also provides information about The City of Calgary's traffic calming measures.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

On 2025 February 25 Council passed EC2025-0230, a Notice of Motion that sought possible approaches to addressing a funding shortfall in the Calgary Police Service budget caused by provincial restrictions on the use of photo radar. Administration was also directed to support the Calgary Police Commission in bringing a report to the 2025 March 18 meeting of Council, to support the Commission's advocacy to the Government of Alberta, and to inquire as to the Police Commission's desire to separate fine revenue from the police budget. Additionally, Administration was to compare traffic calming and photo radar.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council:

1. Authorize the "Police Services" service line to access additional funding up to \$28 million in 2025 from the Fiscal Stability Reserve to offset the revenue shortfall from changes in traffic fine revenue.
2. Direct Administration to work with the Calgary Police Commission and return to the 2025 November Adjustments to the 2023 – 2026 Service Plans and Budgets with a plan and funding approach to separate fine revenue from budgeted police expenditure.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager Katie Black and acting Chief Financial Officer Les Tochor concur with the contents of this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Provincial restrictions on the use of photo radar are forecast to result in a revenue shortfall of up to \$28M in the Calgary Police Service budget in 2025.
- The Calgary Police Commission requests that Council provide funding to match the fine revenue shortfall and supports the removal of fine revenue from the police budget as soon as practical.
- To avoid police service level reductions, The City of Calgary proposes to authorize up to \$28M in additional funding to offset whatever actual fine revenue shortfall materializes in 2025 from the Fiscal Stability Reserve.
- Photo radar and traffic calming through roadway redesign address speeding in different environments, and one cannot replace the other.

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DISCUSSION

Calgary Police Service Funding

In December 2024 the Government of Alberta issued interim guidance instructing municipalities to begin removing photo radar sites immediately and requiring full compliance by 2025 April 1. These further restrictions on photo radar use limited the traffic safety enforcement options available to the Calgary Police Service. The number of tickets issued has decreased, reducing the total traffic fine revenue coming to the police budget. A more detailed history of provincial restrictions on the use of photo radar is provided in Attachment 1.

Without an alternate source of funding, the Calgary Police Service will need to reduce expenditures, which will result in service impacts. The Calgary Police Commission has provided an overview of potential impacts in the memorandum that forms Attachment 2 of this report.

In order to avoid reductions to police service levels, Administration recommends that the 2025 fine revenue shortfall be offset by a one-time recovery of up to \$28 million from the Fiscal Stability Reserve. The final amount to be recovered would depend on the actual fine revenue shortfall, which will be known at year-end.

In the Attachment 2 memorandum, the Calgary Police Commission takes the position that including fine revenue in the police budget undermines public trust in policing by causing a real or perceived conflict of interest and results in unpredictable funding.

In pursuit of greater predictability in police funding, Administration recommends investigating the removal from the Calgary Police Service budget of all fine revenue and its replacement with base budget funding, starting in 2026. That proposal would be considered as part of the 2025 November Adjustments to the 2023 – 2026 Service Plans and Budgets.

Data and Advocacy

In Attachment 2, the Police Commission highlights that the Calgary Police Service and The City of Calgary continue to work closely in sharing data and information about traffic safety and are preparing business cases to apply for additional photo radar locations when the Government of Alberta opens the application process. The Commission also appreciated of The City's offer of advocacy in seeking to modify the provincial regulations restricting the use of photo radar. Administration, the Commission, and the Calgary Police Service are already working together to coordinate advocacy positions.

Comparing Traffic Calming to Photo Radar

Photo radar and traffic calming are both important elements in traffic safety and address speeding in different environments - one cannot replace the other.

Traffic calming refers to strategies used to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety that often focus on pedestrians and cyclists, but also result in safer outcomes for vehicle occupants. These measures are designed to make streets safer and more pleasant for all users by improving pedestrian accessibility and comfort in the public realm.

Traditionally, traffic calming has been applied to lower volume roads like residential streets and low volume collectors, where the elements used have included road narrowing and traffic circles, speed cushions/humps, and cut-through reduction measures. These locations include many school and playground areas where children are often present. An average of \$3M per

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year is spent on traffic calming through Mobility's Safety Improvements budget. The unfunded value of traffic calming projects around schools is between \$48M and \$97M. Unbudgeted city-wide improvements envisioned through the broader Safer Collector Framework totals \$400M to \$600M. There is a sizable gap between the current level of funding assigned and the demand for traffic calming and roadway redesign in Calgary.

Photo radar is a tool that can be deployed along a wide range of road types but is particularly important in higher speed environments where in-person speed enforcement by police officers is unsafe or impractical and traffic calming is not suitable. From 2022 to 2023, 65% of Calgary's injury collisions occurred on higher speed road types, with the remaining 35% split between residential, collector, and urban boulevard road types. The restriction of the use of photo radar on these types of roadways removes an important tool that could be used for traffic safety enforcement.

Installing photo radar cameras at appropriate intersections results in a significant decrease serious collisions. Using a baseline of one year before photo radar cameras were installed and comparing to ten years afterwards, collision rates at those Calgary intersections were an average of 33% lower, injury collisions were down by 55% and the frequency of fatal collisions was reduced by 75%.

Traffic calming and photo radar are both important tools in improving safety on Calgary roadways. Both discourage speeding and are best applied in different environments.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

The Calgary Police Commission and Calgary Police Service were consulted in the development of this report.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Maintaining the Calgary Police Service's planned level of expenditure reduces the likelihood of additional crime and social disorder occurring due to lack of enforcement capacity. According to the Calgary Police Commission's memo in Attachment 2, if other funding is not provided, preventive programs and activities delivered by the Calgary Police Service could be compromised, potentially undermining the social wellbeing and safety of Calgarians.

Environmental

Dedicating more resources to making community streets safer for active transportation makes it more practical to take short neighbourhood trips without a car, reducing pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, more use of active transportation will help improve the physical and mental health of Calgarians.

Economic

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Avoiding service level reductions at Calgary Police Service improves the chances of local businesses and their customers continuing their economic activities unaffected by crime and social disorder.

Service and Financial Implications

Existing capital funding - one-time

Avoiding a reduction to police service levels would require a combination of expenditure reductions, which are identified by the Police Service and directed by the Police Commission, and revenue increases, which could be provided by City Council.

Making one-time funding available to the Calgary Police Service that is equivalent to their actual fine revenue shortfall in 2025 will reduce the need for service cuts. The amount recommended to backstop the fine revenue shortfall is up to \$28M and would be sourced from the Fiscal Stability Reserve.

RISK

If Council decides not to approve the proposed funding backstop, there is a risk that Calgarians will experience negative public safety outcomes due to service reductions required by the Calgary Police Service to avoid exceeding their available budget.

Removing fine revenue from the police budget reduces the risk of public trust in policing being eroded. This would remove a source of real or perceived conflict of interest, emphasizing that enforcement decisions are only being driven by public safety considerations.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attach 1 – Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Attach 2 – Calgary Police Commission Memo
3. Attach 3 – Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Ravi Seera, A/Director	Operational Services	Consult
Doug Morgan, General Manager	Operational Services	Inform

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