Salem Police to give update on red light, speed camera program: What drivers should know

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Salem Police Chief Trevor Womack will update the Salem City Council on May 12 about several key department programs, including online crime reporting and electronic traffic enforcement cameras.

Womack said in a report the programs supported city goals to increase community safety, livability, efficiency and transparency.

Salem Police will launch an enhanced online reporting system for nonemergency crimes like vandalism, shoplifting, vehicle break-ins and telephone harassment later in May.

Police officials said the system, known as the Desk Officer Reporting System, has benefits like more efficient allocation of staff time, user convenience, streamlined processing, data-driven insights and evidence management.

The department will also expand its use of automated license plate recognition technology.

The Salem Police Automated License Plate Recognition program was initiated in the mid-2000s in the form of cameras in patrol vehicles used to find stolen vehicles.

The department began adding additional cameras that were "location-based rather than patrol vehicle-based" a few years ago, police officials said. "This expansion allowed investigators to broaden the effectiveness and purpose of the cameras from solely looking for stolen vehicles to focusing on community violence and organized crime."

Only license plate information is collected, and the system does not use facial recognition technology.

Police officials said it is only used for law enforcement purposes.

Womack will highlight the expansion of the city's electronic traffic enforcement program.

Salem Police has conducted photo enforcement since 2008. It has expanded and includes red light and speed enforcement at six intersections that have higher traffic volumes and rates of violations and crashes.

According to a Statesman Journal report, Salem has received about $7.5 million from its electronic traffic enforcement program and issued more than 82,000 citations between 2020 and 2024.

In 2024, speed violation detection was added to the existing red light enforcement systems at Commercial Street and Marion Street Northeast and Mission Street and 25th Street locations.

In May 2025, two additional speed and red light violation approaches were added to the existing electronic enforcement systems at Commercial Street and Madrona Street Southeast and Commercial Street and Kuebler Boulevard Southeast.

"With these installations, budgetary authority and staffing capacity for the program is nearly exhausted," Womack said in the report. "A study to identify other potential intersections for the system has been completed, but further expansion will require additional budget authority and staff."

Since the implementation of the program, the city has seen an overall decrease in crashes at intersections with cameras. Other than in 2024, the rate of speed and red light violations has also trended downward.

Womack will update the council on the completion of the department's policy review project.

Salem Police has been conducting an extensive review of policies and procedures to ensure it meets legal and accreditation standards.

"The project is complete, and the updated policies are now posted online," Womack said in the report to the council. "In addition to increased transparency and accountability, the publication of police policies enables the community to understand the standards and expectations of the Salem Police from its entire staff, both sworn and professional."