

Halton interested in red light camera for corners

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Halton's planning and public works committee has voted to put the brakes on aggressive driving.

The committee has agreed to send out the message that Halton is in favour of hosting a pilot red light camera project.

If Halton is chosen, the cameras would be set up at intersections plagued by drivers racing through red lights.

But Halton may not be able to afford the cost of policing the cameras, said Burlington Councillor John Taylor.

That's because under Ministry of Transportation guidelines, the project must be coupled with stepped-up police enforcement.

That can mean having an officer on hand to issue tickets to lead-footed drivers who ignore traffic signals.

"The attitude of the Province is that it will require an officer to be tied up at the intersection handing out tickets," said Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor suggested that committee show their willingness to host the pilot project only if it comes at a reasonable or appropriate cost.

There is no dollar value attached to the word 'reasonable,'" argued Halton Chair Joyce Savoline.

"Reasonable is ambiguous," she said. "Both those words can be taken many ways."

Leaving the modifier out leaves Halton vulnerable to any cost, no matter how high, said Mr. Taylor.

"Right now, it's wide open," he said.



"... if red light cameras are put in place, they'll reduce policing costs in the long run. The costs have to be balanced"

— PATRICK MURPHY

Though policing the red light project could mean steep front end costs, fewer infractions could cause costs to plummet in the long run, said Halton's planning commissioner, Pat Murphy.

"In speaking to Chief (Ean) Algar, he's very concerned about the costs," he said. "But if red light cameras are put in place, they'll reduce policing costs in the long run. The costs have to be balanced."

The expense of equipping intersections with red light cameras is about \$200,000. Another \$25,000 will cover annual operating costs.

Drivers are more likely to heed traffic signals if there is a threat of getting a ticket, a staff report on the issue stated. That would likely reduce both the frequency and severity of collisions.

In the end, fewer crashes translates into lower emergency services and health care costs, the report indicated. Should Halton become a test site, one camera would probably be rotated among various intersections.

Chudleigh betters percentage

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According to returning officer Don McMillan, 27 voters officially declined their ballot, while another 67 left the ballot unmarked.

A further 221 ballots were rejected at the polls.

Incumbent MPP Ted Chudleigh held on to the top spot by winning 35,505 votes, or approximately 64 per cent of the vote.

Liberal candidate Mohan Anand took 14,767 votes, or 26 per cent of the vote this year. New Democratic Party candidate Jay Jackson rounded up 2,833 votes,

to receive about 5 per cent.

He was followed by the Green Party's Bill Champ, who grabbed 806, or about 1.4 per cent.

Family Coalition Party candidate Guiseppa Gori collected 755 votes, or about 1.3 per cent of the vote.

In 1995, Mr. Chudleigh won the day with 61 per cent of the votes in the old Halton North riding.

Liberal candidate Walt Elliot received slightly under 21 per cent then, while incumbent NDP candidate Noel Duignan received just under 14 per cent.



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