

Streamwood OKs red-light cameras for intersection

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Streamwood police hope to make the village's most dangerous intersection safer by keeping an electronic eye on it 24 hours a day.

Village trustees on Thursday made red-light cameras legal in Streamwood and approved a contract for the firm Gatso USA to install and maintain them at the corner of Irving Park Road and Route 59.

Streamwood Police Chief Al Popp said he's researched the system for about two years and believes it a perfect fit for an intersection that sees more than 50 accidents per year.

He added that his research determined that 70 percent of these accidents were caused by speeding, lane use violations and disobeying signals.

The cameras will be specifically to capture photos of vehicles running red lights and to identify their license plates.

"Photo enforcement is the optimum solution for that intersection," Popp said.

Gatso USA's system, recently approved in neighboring Hanover Park as well, also allows the cameras to be switched over to Amber Alert enforcement. They then search for the license plate of a vehicle involved in the kidnapping or disappearance of a child and immediately notify officers if it's found.

When installed, Streamwood and Hanover Park's cameras can be coordinated to look for a specific vehicle that could be in either village, said Paul Bazzano, vice president of sales for Gatso USA.

The longest delay expected in installing the cameras will be for the Illinois Department of Transportation's permitting process, which Popp believes takes about 15 weeks.

But once that's through, the cameras should be installed within days, Bazzano said.

The installation and use of the cameras carries no cost to the village. But for every \$100 fine the system generates, Gatso USA will receive \$30.

The village's take of these fines will be \$70, just under the \$75 fine for the same violation when an officer writes the ticket in person.

Each day, a traffic commander will go through the data for the previous 24 hours and decide whether a legitimate violation occurred for each tagged incident. This is expected to take only about half an hour.

Trustees are considering in-house adjudication hearings as the way for motorists to challenge these citations.