



Cars travel through the intersection of Air Base Parkway and Heath Drive, which is one of Fairfield's worst sites for accidents.

Mike McCoy/DAILY REPUBLIC

Rules of the road

How Fairfield handles its paths of transportation

Editor's note: The last in a periodic series.

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FAIRFIELD — Ever since 1896, when Henry Wells's horseless carriage rammed into Evelyln Thomas' bicycle in the nation's first reported automobile accident, cities have grown increasingly aware of dangerous intersections and

rotting roadways.

Awareness, however, doesn't always spark action.

Transportation has been on the minds of city planners since the Roman Empire. But traffic patterns and traffic safety have only been around since the proliferation of the automobile and the post-World War II population boom. Statewide, local roads and major arteries are yet another infrastructure item over-

looked by cities slow to react to population growth.

In Fairfield, major road repairs, digitally connected traffic lights and red light cameras are all scheduled to arrive on city streets within the next few years. Despite the city's ongoing effort to improve transportation, Fairfield and the surrounding areas continue to experience high volume and heavy congestion.

Red light, green light

One method that Fairfield plans to address safety concerns at intersections is installing red light cameras. Earlier this spring, Suisun City began research into using these devices that record the license plate and the driver of the car running a red light. Tickets are sent to the vehicle's owner in the mail.

This week, the department received proposals from camera vendors and on Aug. 9, the department will interview representatives from Lockheed Martin, Nestor Traffic Systems and other companies to determine which bid the city will take to install these lights.

Installation of these lights has sparked a nationwide and a local debate. Suisun City resident Jason Spillman, using evidence from the National Motorists Association, continues to fight against the use of these cameras.

Spillman argues that revenue from these tickets feed the coffers of both the city and the vendors. He also argues that a ticket issued by a camera and not an officer is unconstitutional. Furthermore, he cites statistics that red light cameras do not make intersections safer.

His arguments are backed by Greg Mauz, a member of the NMA and author of a 96-page report on red light cameras. After six years of studying 15 different red light camera programs worldwide, Mauz found that none of these programs prevented accidents at these intersections.

According to Mauz, intersections with red light cameras create more accidents from locals slamming on the brakes to avoid a ticket.

Though activists such as Spillman and Mauz are determined in their efforts, both Fairfield and Suisun City appear well on their way to installing these cameras.