PHOTO-BASED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT ATTITUDE STUDY

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Prepared for

City of Scottsdale
Scottsdale, Arizona

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by the City of Scottsdale and conducted by Behavior Research Center (BRC). The purpose of the study was to measure attitudes about the use of photo-based traffic enforcement statewide, and follows a similar study conducted in March 2006.

The information contained in this report is based on 800 in-depth interviews with adult heads of household throughout Arizona. Interviewing was conducted in November 2007 by professional interviewers at BRC's state-of-the-art Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility in Phoenix, where each interviewer worked under the direct supervision of BRC supervisory personnel. Interviews were conducted during a cross-section of late afternoon, evening and weekend hours to ensure that all households had a roughly equal opportunity of being called. A basic sample of 800 interviews were conducted statewide, proportionate to population in each region.

Prior to beginning the interviewing, each interviewer received a thorough briefing on the particulars of the study. During the briefing, the interviewers were trained on (a) the purpose of the study, (b) sampling procedures, (c) administration of the questionnaire, (d) probing protocols for open-ended questions and (e) other project-related issues. In addition, each interviewer completed a series of practice interviews to ensure that all procedures were understood and followed.

When analyzing the results of this survey, it should be kept in mind that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Sampling error, simply stated, is the difference between the results obtained from a sample and those that would be obtained by surveying the entire population under consideration. The overall sampling error for this survey at a 95 percent confidence interval is approximately +/-3.5 percent.

Behavior Research Center has presented all of the data germane to the basic research objectives of the project. However, if City of Scottsdale management requires additional data retrieval or interpretation, we stand ready to provide such input.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results from this study point to a broad base of support statewide for the use of photo radar technology in traffic enforcement. Furthermore, serious concern is expressed with the problem of speeding on freeways, on major surface streets, in residential areas, in school zones and in construction zones; and this concern over speeding can be used effectively to strengthen and reinforce support for photo radar technology.

Major findings from this study include:

- Almost six in ten respondents statewide feel photo enforcement has been effective in improving overall traffic safety in communities where it is employed. Almost two-thirds feel it has been effective in reducing speeding.

- Eight in ten overall admit they are more careful to observe speed limits where photo enforcement is in use.

- Seven in ten overall support the use of photo enforcement, with those in Maricopa County, where it has been used most, now *more* supportive than those in other parts of the state. Among those who support photo enforcement in general, almost all now support its use on freeways as well.

- Respondents are generally divided on the question of whether the state or the city through which the freeway runs should administer freeway photo enforcement.

- While most support the use of photo enforcement, most also feel other Arizonans are either split in their opinions or outright opponents of its use.

- Seven in ten become even more supportive of photo enforcement when told that 35 percent of collisions are the result of speeding, and eight in ten become more supportive when told that collisions drop 20 percent where photo enforcement is in use.

- Strong arguments in favor of photo enforcement are also found when we tested four findings from the Arizona State University study that was conducted following the Scottsdale demonstration project on the Loop 101.

- Roughly eight in ten believe speeding is a serious problem on freeways, on major surface streets, in residential areas, in school zones and in construction zones.

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DETAILED FINDINGS

EFFECTS OF PHOTO ENFORCEMENT

Despite population growth, and increased traffic congestion in the past year, attitudes about the effects of photo enforcement are remarkably similar to those found one year ago. In fact those convinced such technology has done a great deal to cut down on speeding in cities where it is operating has increased three points in that time.

TABLE 1

"As you may know, photo enforcement technology is now in use in several Arizona cities. If you have not heard about them, photo enforcement detection sites can be either fixed – that is, pole mounted – or mobile – vehicle mounted – systems. Depending on the technology used, the systems may use either radar or in-road electronic sensors to calculate speed. From what you know or may have heard, has this program done a great deal, some, only a little or nothing at all to. . ."

	A Great Deal	Some	Only a Little	Nothing at All	Not Sure
Improve overall traffic safety in cities where it is operating	**25%**	**31%**	**15%**	**16%**	**13%**
Cut down on speeding in cities where it is operating	32	31	14	10	13
Reduce the number of collisions	22	29	13	16	20
Save taxpayer dollars	15	18	13	28	26

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Table 2 examines the results of the seminal question about the effect of photo enforcement – what it has done to improve overall traffic safety – by demographic group. Here, we note an important shift, with men now more convinced than are women that photo enforcement has done a great deal to improve overall traffic safety in cities where it is operating.

Importantly, Maricopa County residents – those with the most experience with photo enforcement in the state – are more convinced of photo enforcement's effect on traffic safety than are residents of other areas.

TABLE 2 : IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY – DETAIL

"As you may know, photo enforcement technology is now in use in several Arizona cities. If you have not heard about them, photo enforcement detection sites can be either fixed – that is, pole mounted – or mobile – vehicle mounted – systems. Depending on the technology used, the systems may use either radar or in-road electronic sensors to calculate speed. From what you know or may have heard, has this program done a great deal, some, only a little or nothing at all to...?"

	A Great Deal	Some	Only a Little	Nothing at All	Not Sure
TOTAL	25%	31%	15%	16%	13%
GENDER					
Male	28	29	13	16	14
Female	23	32	17	15	13
AGE					
Less than 35	21	25	21	23	10
35 to 54	26	32	12	16	14
55 or over	26	34	15	10	15
ETHNICITY					
Caucasian	23	31	14	17	15
Hispanic	26	28	28	10	8
Other	33	30	10	16	11
COUNTY					
Maricopa	28	35	17	14	6
Pima	23	15	13	24	25
Rural	19	30	13	16	22

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EFFECT OF PHOTO ENFORCEMENT ON RESPONDENT BEHAVIOR

Eight in ten (82%) respondents admit they are more careful to observe speed limits when they are driving in jurisdictions that have photo enforcement in place, an increase of two points in the past year. Among younger respondents, this rises to almost nine in ten (85%).

TABLE 3

"Would you say you would be more careful to observe speed limits when you are driving in cities that have photo enforcement operating?"

	% Yes
TOTAL	82%
GENDER	
Male	79
Female	85
AGE	
Less than 35	85
35 to 54	79
55 or over	82
ETHNICITY	
Caucasian	79
Hispanic	95
Other	82
COUNTY	
Maricopa	87
Pima	69
Rural	78

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SUPPORT FOR PHOTO ENFORCEMENT

Seven in ten (72%) overall support the use of photo enforcement. As may be seen in Table 4, women and those over 55 are most supportive, a pattern that has held consistent throughout the series of studies during which we have tracked this. However, we note a major increase in support of this enforcement among Hispanics.

In addition, while net support for photo enforcement increased four points in Maricopa County during the past year, it fell six points in Pima County and 17 points in rural Arizona during the same period.

TABLE 4

"*In general, do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose the use of photo enforcement?*"

	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure	**Net – Support/ Oppose**
TOTAL	27%	45%	15%	8%	5%	**+49**
GENDER						
Male	23	45	16	11	5	**+41**
Female	29	46	14	6	5	**+55**
AGE						
Less than 35	12	56	21	6	5	**+41**
35 to 54	29	43	12	12	4	**+48**
55 or over	35	40	13	6	6	**+56**
ETHNICITY						
Caucasian	26	45	16	9	4	**+46**
Hispanic	35	50	6	4	5	**+75**
Other	22	41	16	11	10	**+36**
COUNTY						
Maricopa	28	47	12	8	5	**+55**
Pima	25	47	19	5	4	**+48**
Rural	24	40	17	11	8	**+36**

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Those who support photo enforcement in general were then asked whether they support its use on freeways.

TABLE 5

"*Do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose the use of photo enforcement on freeways*?"

AMONG THOSE WHO SUPPORT PHOTO ENFORCEMENT IN GENERAL

(Percentages shown are of total respondents)

	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure	**Total Support**
TOTAL	28%	34%	6%	2%	1%	**62%**
GENDER						
Male	27	31	7	3	0	**58**
Female	29	38	5	1	3	**67**
AGE						
Less than 35	17	39	7	2	2	**56**
35 to 54	27	34	7	2	1	**61**
55 or over	39	31	3	2	1	**70**
ETHNICITY						
Caucasian	28	34	5	3	1	**62**
Hispanic	32	42	6	2	4	**74**
Other	25	25	10	0	2	**50**
COUNTY						
Maricopa	31	35	5	3	2	**66**
Pima	29	31	10	1	0	**60**
Rural	21	36	4	2	1	**57**

Totals do not add to 100% due to photo enforcement opponents not being asked the question.

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SHOULD THE STATE OR THE CITY ADMINISTER PHOTO ENFORCEMENT?

Respondents remain generally divided on the question of whether freeway photo enforcement should be handled by the state or by the city through which the freeway runs.

TABLE 6

"*Whether or not you support photo enforcement, when it is used on freeways, do you feel it should be administered by the State or by the city or county in which the freeway is located*?"

	State	City/ County	Either/ Does Not Matter	Neither	Not Sure
TOTAL	43%	36%	7%	4%	10%
GENDER					
Male	47	33	8	3	9
Female	38	40	7	5	10
AGE					
Less than 35	39	38	6	6	11
35 to 54	42	37	8	4	9
55 or over	48	36	6	1	9
ETHNICITY					
Caucasian	43	36	7	3	11
Hispanic	43	39	8	8	2
Other	35	41	8	6	10
COUNTY					
Maricopa	45	36	8	2	9
Pima	47	32	3	9	9
Rural	32	43	9	3	13

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PERCEPTION OF THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS

Respondents were then asked how they think others in Arizona feel about photo enforcement. As we have found in past studies, most feel others are evenly divided on the issue (39%) or are outright opposed to it (30%). Only four percent feel everyone supports it and 18 percent feel most support it.

TABLE 7

"And thinking about other drivers around the state, which of the following best describes how you think they feel about photo enforcement?"

Most everyone supports it	4%
A majority supports it	18
Net – support	**22%**
Evenly divided between supporters and opponents	39
A majority opposes it	22
Almost everyone opposes it	8
Net – oppose	**30%**
Not sure	9

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EFFECT OF COLLISION STATISTICS ON PHOTO ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT

Next, we asked respondents whether some of the findings from an Arizona State University study of the effects of the Loop 101 photo enforcement demonstration project make them more supportive of photo enforcement. As may be seen in Table 8, all four findings have a significant positive effect, with the weakest effect being found on the economic issue.

TABLE 8

"As you may know, the City of Scottsdale recently conducted a demonstration photo enforcement program on a section of the Loop 101. I am going to read you some things an Arizona State University study found during and after that demonstration, and as I read each, please tell me whether that finding makes you more supportive or less supportive of photo enforcement, or does it make no difference to you?"
(READ EACH; ROTATE SEQUENCE)

	More Supportive	No Difference	Less Supportive	Not Sure
During the photo enforcement project, the severity of all types of crashes decreased	78%	14%	4%	4%
During the photo enforcement project, speeds on that part of the 101 decreased by over nine miles per hour	70	21	6	3
Detection of speeds in excess of 76 miles per hour increased 836 percent after the photo enforcement ended	69	18	9	4
Estimated benefits from photo enforcement on the 101, including crash repair, medical care and related costs, could reach as high as 10 million dollars per year	59	23	11	7

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Studies showing that, where photo enforcement is in use, the number of collisions drops 20 percent has a very positive effect on attitudes toward photo enforcement, with eight in ten (79%) indicating that fact makes them more supportive. This is an increase of 16 percent from a year ago.

TABLE 9

"Studies show that where photo enforcement is in use, the number of collisions drops 20 percent. Does this make you more favorable toward photo enforcement, less favorable, or does it make no difference?"

	More Favorable	No Difference	Less Favorable	Not Sure	**Net - More/Less Favorable**
TOTAL	79%	16%	3%	2%	**+76**
GENDER					
Male	77	17	4	2	**+73**
Female	81	15	2	2	**+79**
AGE					
Less than 35	75	23	2	0	**+73**
35 to 54	79	16	3	2	**+76**
55 or over	84	11	3	2	**+81**
ETHNICITY					
Caucasian	80	15	3	2	**+77**
Hispanic	90	10	0	0	**+90**
Other	63	33	1	3	**+62**
COUNTY					
Maricopa	82	14	2	2	**+80**
Pima	76	20	3	1	**+73**
Rural	74	20	3	3	**+71**

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As well, those indicating they are more favorable toward photo enforcement knowing that speeding increases collisions by 35 percent increases nine points since the last study.

TABLE 10

"*Statistics also show that 35 percent of collisions are due to speeding. Does this fact make you more favorable toward photo enforcement, less favorable, or does it make no difference?"*

	More Favorable	No Difference	Less Favorable	Not Sure	**Net - More/Less Favorable**
TOTAL	71%	23%	5%	1%	**+66**
GENDER					
Male	67	26	6	1	**+61**
Female	75	20	3	2	**+72**
AGE					
Less than 35	68	27	5	0	**+63**
35 to 54	66	26	6	2	**+60**
55 or over	80	15	3	2	**+77**
ETHNICITY					
Caucasian	71	23	5	1	**+66**
Hispanic	84	14	1	1	**+83**
Other	60	28	10	2	**+50**
COUNTY					
Maricopa	71	23	5	1	**+66**
Pima	65	28	6	1	**+59**
Rural	68	25	4	3	**+64**

*Indicates less than ½ of one percent

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SERIOUSNESS OF SPEEDING

Respondents were asked how serious they feel speeding is as a problem on freeways, on major surface streets, in residential areas, in school zones and in construction zones. Roughly eight in ten describe the problem as serious in each, and roughly half describe it as "very" serious in each. Clearly, the message that, statistically, speeding causes so many accidents will reinforce the support for photo enforcement.

TABLE 11

"Would you say that speeding is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, not a very serious problem or not a problem at all on each of the following:"

	Residential Areas	Major Surface Streets	Freeways	Construction Zones	School Zones
Very serious	52%	43%	49%	46%	54%
Somewhat serious	32	38	29	31	22
Net – Serious	**84%**	**81%**	**78%**	**77%**	**76%**
Not very serious	8	10	10	9	8
Not a problem at all	7	8	9	10	12
Net – Not a problem	**15%**	**18%**	**19%**	**19%**	**20%**
Unsure	1	1	3	4	4

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SUPPORT FOR HOLDING THE VEHICLE OWNER RESPONSIBLE FOR CITATIONS

Support for holding the vehicle owner responsible for photo enforcement citations when the driver cannot be identified is identical overall to the findings a year ago.

TABLE 12

"*As you may know, current Arizona law provides that the driver of a vehicle cited for speeding through photo enforcement is charged with the offense, which results in many offenders avoiding responsibility because the vehicle's owner will not identify the driver. In some states, unless the owner identifies the driver, the vehicle owner is responsible for the citation. In general, do you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose holding vehicle owners responsible unless they identify the driver*?"

	Strongly Favor	Favor	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure	**Net - Favor/ Oppose**
TOTAL	35%	23%	16%	21%	5%	**+21**
GENDER						
Male	34	21	16	25	4	**+14**
Female	35	24	17	18	6	**+24**
AGE						
Less than 35	23	26	23	24	4	**+ 2**
35 to 54	37	21	14	25	3	**+19**
55 or over	41	22	15	14	8	**+34**
ETHNICITY						
Caucasian	35	23	18	19	5	**+21**
Hispanic	43	14	17	22	4	**+18**
Other	21	30	9	31	9	**+11**
COUNTY						
Maricopa	34	22	17	21	6	**+18**
Pima	44	18	21	13	4	**+28**
Rural	28	28	10	28	6	**+18**

*Indicates less than ½ of one percent

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