



Middletown Police Department



Erik M. Costa | Chief of Police

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Good evening, everyone,

First, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of you who have joined us in person this evening, as well as to those participating online. Your engagement in this informational session and in the upcoming vote on the permit process is greatly appreciated.

As your Chief of Police, the safety of every resident in this community is my top priority. This responsibility requires us to be proactive in our efforts to reduce motor vehicle crashes, protect lives, and ultimately enhance the quality of life for everyone here in our great City of Middletown.

Today, I want to emphasize an important step we are taking to improve safety on our streets: the introduction of automated speed cameras in high-risk areas throughout the city.

In September 2024, the Common Council voted to approve our Automated Traffic Enforcement Speed Devices (ATESD) ordinance. This initiative allows the city to invest in automated speed enforcement technology — a critical part of our ongoing efforts to protect the lives of those who live, work, and travel through our community.

There is no question that speeding has become a growing concern across our state. Unfortunately, we've seen firsthand through local news reports that excessive speeds have led to serious injuries and, in some cases, fatal motor vehicle crashes.

As many of you may already know, Connecticut is working toward a statewide goal known as *Vision Zero*, which aims to eliminate all traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. House Bill 5917, which supports this initiative, authorizes the use of automated speed enforcement in high-risk areas with the intent to reduce accidents and save lives.



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Our local efforts align directly with the broader goals of *Vision Zero*, ensuring that Middletown plays a vital role in this important state-wide movement. At its core, *Vision Zero* is about safety – preventing accidents before they occur. By reducing speeding and enhancing enforcement through the use of technology, we are taking tangible steps to protect lives and prevent future tragedies.

Speeding is one of the leading causes of traffic accidents, and too often, these accidents involve pedestrians, cyclists, or property damage, which collectively costs our communities millions each year.

With this initiative, our goal is clear: reduce serious injuries and fatalities by enforcing speed limits and creating safer streets for everyone.

We are taking a proactive approach, aiming to foster a culture of safety that not only addresses dangerous behavior but also works to prevent hazardous situations from arising in the first place.

The Positive Impact of Speed Cameras

Speed cameras have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving safety in other communities. For instance, in Washington, D.C., the introduction of speed cameras at high-risk intersections and school zones led to a 20% reduction in speeding-related crashes and a notable decrease in traffic fatalities within just one year. This model has proven to be successful, and we are adapting it here in Middletown. By targeting areas with a history of accidents, especially near our busiest retail zones and major intersections, we can ensure that speed limits are respected and that traffic-related hazards are minimized.



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Our objective is not simply to issue fines, but to change driver behavior and reduce the likelihood of accidents, ultimately saving lives and fostering a safer environment for all.

We have identified several key locations where speed cameras will be slowly rolled out, based on traffic patterns and accident history:

1. CT 17 South Main Street (Talcott Ridge Drive to Royal Oak Drive)

The reason this area was identified is that it already has been identified on our Traffic Plan from 2020, leading into our busy South Main Street corridor, is home to residential neighborhoods, a major grocery store, and retail centers. Speeding is a frequent concern here, with vehicles reported exceeding 80 mph in a 45 mph zone. This area is also near the site of a fatal crash where the vehicle was traveling at 97 mph. Implementing speed cameras at this location will improve safety and help reduce near-miss incidents.

2. Spencer School Zone (Westfield Street & Charles Mary Drive (School Zone)) This stretch includes a school zone where the speed limit drops to 20 mph as vehicles approach Spencer Elementary. However, many vehicles exceed 70 mph in this area, creating significant danger for pedestrians, particularly children. We will use speed cameras to enforce the 20 mph speed limit in order to protect students and residents alike.

3. Country Club Road & Higby Road (Speed Control Area: Country Club Road between Partridge Lane and Knox Blvd) Country Club Road, with its sharp curves and high traffic volume, presents challenges for traffic enforcement. The road leads to the



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Moody School and is used as a major commuter route. Speed cameras will help control speeding, especially as drivers approach the S-curve and residential areas.

4. CT 66 Washington Street (Speed Control Area: CT 66 Between Harvest Wood Road and Boston Road) the reason this location was identified is that it was location also identified in the 2020 Traffic Plan. This busy stretch of road has a speed limit of 45 mph, but drivers frequently exceed 70 mph, creating hazardous conditions near residential and commercial areas. Middletown Police Department currently conduct significant speed and traffic red light enforcement. This area is extremely dangerous for conduct traffic enforcement activities as you approach eastbound toward the business district of Washington Street. Speed cameras will help enforce the speed limit and reduce the risk of crashes in this area.

- **None of the identified locations fall within the U.S. Census Qualified Census Tracts, which designate areas with a significant proportion of low-income residents.**

Addressing Common Questions

I understand that some of you may have concerns about this initiative, and I would like to take a moment to address a few common questions:

1. Who will administer the program, and will it be effective?

We are partnering with Traffic Logix and Dacra Tech LLC, both of which specialize in automated traffic enforcement. These companies will assist us with the installation, operation, and maintenance of the cameras, ensuring that everything functions smoothly. The program will be overseen by our Traffic Division, and we will adhere to all State of Connecticut reporting requirements.

2. Where does the revenue go, and will this cost taxpayers?



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The revenue generated from the cameras will be reinvested into public safety programs and traffic safety improvements. This initiative will not require additional taxpayer funds. In fact, it will provide a funding source for safety improvements without burdening the city's budget. This program is self-sustainable.

3. Are speed cameras a violation of constitutional rights?

No. Speed cameras, like any other method of traffic enforcement, are designed to help uphold traffic laws. They do not capture personal information; they only capture images of vehicles exceeding the speed limit. The legislation includes provisions for due process, allowing drivers to contest violations through established channels.

4. Are speed cameras a violation of privacy?

No. Speed cameras are placed in public areas, where traffic laws are already enforced. They are not designed to collect personal data, but rather to improve public safety by monitoring speeding violations.

Conclusion: The Road Ahead

Ultimately, the introduction of automated speed cameras is about saving lives. It's not about generating revenue; it's about preventing accidents and ensuring the safety of everyone on the road. By focusing on high-risk areas — especially near schools and congested high traffic and pedestrian areas — we can significantly reduce the potential for injury or death.

I ask for your support as we move forward with this important program. Together, we can build a safer Middletown for everyone.



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Thank you for your time and commitment to improving the safety of our community.