

Behind The City Scene



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Ward IV**

Upon my election as the Ward 4 Council Member, I quickly learned that concern regarding traffic law enforcement was one of the constituent's top priorities. Specifically speeding and screaming motorcycles. One of the Heather Ridge communities expressed significant frustration to me at an HOA meeting. In response to these expressions I learned that as of June the Traffic Division of the Police Department out of a total number of 665 commissioned officers consisted of 1 Lt. supervisor , 14 motorcycle officers, 19 traffic officers, 3 DUI enforcement, 7 investigators, and 5 Photo Red photo review officers. When you factor in vacations, sick leave, court appearances, etc. we are stretched pretty thin. During inclement weather the motorcycle officers transition to regular patrol vehicles. At one point this summer there were 65 pending requests for enhanced community traffic enforcement. Exasperating the situation was a temporary focus on very high speed violators on I-225. This program has ended frankly due to the significant decrease in ticket revenue. A year to date 2015/2016 decrease of 20% or \$602,262. A bunch of clamoring Council Members also may have contributed to a return to normal operations. In Aurora generally speeding tickets are only issued for exceeding the speed limit by 10 mph, but there are many exceptions so don't rely upon my representation.

The Department has a number of portable speed display/recording devices that are strapped to existing signs and trees. When a Council Member requests enhanced enforcement these devices are often deployed. Data is collected. In my limited time these devices demonstrate that actual recorded speeds are less than human perceived speeds. Of course the presence of one of these flashing speed signs does have a temporary impact on driver's behavior. Nevertheless I have asked for actual, albeit temporary, enforcement at the complained about location by ticket issuing officers. When you see one of these devices you should assume the location has been identified as a priority area.

Candidly with school back in full session much of the resources have been appropriately deployed to school zones meaning less availability to respond to Council Member requests. I also learned that screaming motorcycles can be ticketed only when the originally installed muffler equipment has been modified. Our officers do not carry noise monitoring devices. Should one of these motorcyclists refuse to pull over I can confidently state that, absent other much more serious criminal charges, no high speed pursuit would be authorized. Non traffic division officers can and do issue traffic tickets but obviously their emphasis must be on responding to the many pending general calls for service.

Next month I will comment upon my views of the City budget priorities which should engender some robust debate.