

ITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Recommended amendments to Bellevue City Code Chapter 11.49 to update the City's regulations on automated traffic safety cameras for consistency with state law and review of the recommended list of speed safety camera locations as part of the City's speed safety camera program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**DIRECTION**

Staff will present the recommended Bellevue City Code Amendment (BCCA) and an accompanying resolution identifying seven higher-crash risk sites where speed safety cameras are warranted due to excessive vehicle speeds. Following discussion, staff seek Council direction to prepare an ordinance and resolution for final action at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider directing staff to finalize the Bellevue City Code amendment ordinance and accompanying resolution deeming seven locations higher-crash risk sites where it is suitable to locate speed safety cameras for final action at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

In 2024, the Legislature replaced RCW 46.63.170 with RCW 46.63.210–.260, expanding and updating provisions for automated traffic safety cameras to enhance traffic safety while ensuring accountability. In response, staff will present recommended amendments to Bellevue City Code Chapter 11.49 to align the City's regulations with state law and review the recommended 2026 expansion of speed safety camera locations.

Program Overview

Bellevue has operated automated traffic safety cameras since 2009, following adoption of Ordinance 5868 (BCC 11.49). The program currently includes six red-light and three school speed zone cameras (Attachment A).

Policy Foundation

The recommended Bellevue City Code amendments (BCCA) and program expansion support Council's Vision Zero commitment and the Safe System framework adopted in 2020 (Resolution 9769). Expanding the use of speed safety cameras is a key strategy in the City's Speed Management Plan (2024), which identifies cameras as an effective, around-the-clock tool to address dangerous speeding on arterial streets and complement proactive police traffic enforcement.

Funding and Research

Bellevue received \$2.8 million in federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) funding for the Bellevue Safe Access for Everyone (B-SAFE) Project. A portion supports a Speed Safety Camera Program Operations Guide to ensure equitable implementation. Speeding contributes to 15 percent of Bellevue's fatal and serious injury crashes. Research shows speed cameras can reduce total crashes by up to 54 percent and injury crashes by 47 percent.

Public Engagement

Three rounds of outreach and multiple community meetings informed program design (Attachment B). Across surveys, most participants expressed concern about speeding and supported cameras in locations with a history of severe crashes. Key takeaways from outreach include:

- **Community Panel Survey** (349 responses): 43% support citywide use; top priorities—streets with a history of severe crashes (65%), school zones (63%), and street racing areas (62%).
- **Engaging Bellevue** (241 responses): 74% concerned about speeding; 62% believe cameras are effective at reducing speeds; 73% support cameras in high-crash areas and school zones.
- **Proposed Location Survey** (269 responses): 39% feel locations address safety issues; 38% see fair distribution; 47% support adding three or more cameras per year.

Recommended Code Amendments

To expand the speed safety camera program, local codes must be updated to be consistent with changes to state law (RCW 46.63.210–.260). The recommended BCCA (Attachment C) would:

- expand use of cameras to high-risk areas beyond school zones;
- require safety and equity analyses for site selection;
- establish criteria to deem sites at higher risk of crashes due to excessive vehicle speeds;
- allow civilian review of citations issued through automated enforcement; and
- update fine amounts to align with regional practices.

Consistent with state law, net camera revenue—after administrative costs—will fund traffic safety projects that reduce speeds and improve safety for people walking and biking. Investments will prioritize lower-income areas and locations with above-average crash rates, updating the current practice of depositing revenues into the General Fund.

Recommended Camera Locations

Using a data-driven process, staff evaluated 95 candidate sites (Attachment D) using crash, speed, and citation data. Thirty-seven locations scored highest for safety and equity outcomes (Attachment E). From these, seven sites are recommended for 2026 implementation (Attachment F). The accompanying resolution identifies higher crash risk sites for 2026 implementation; however, the proposed BCCA establishes criteria to identify sites at higher risk of crashes, thus allowing future program expansions to occur administratively.

Community feedback also identified several corridors for future consideration that did not meet the initial scoring threshold. Staff will develop a data-driven process to review these requests in future program updates.

Next Steps

Pending Council approval of the BCCA and the accompanying resolution, staff will proceed with a phased 2026 rollout:

Q1 2026

- Issue Request for Proposals and select a safety camera contractor
- Council awards contract

Q2 2026

- Install advance warning signs and speed safety cameras
- Conduct public outreach to notify nearby residents and businesses

Q3 2026

- Activate cameras (30-day warning period)
- Begin issuance of citations

Q4 2026 – Early 2027

- Monitor operations and evaluate program outcomes

Staff will provide periodic updates to Council summarizing program performance and potential future expansions.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan aims to ensure that "Moving into, around and through Bellevue is safe, reliable and predictable." (Transportation Element Vision). Further policy direction includes:

- TR-31. Monitor and implement as appropriate, emerging technologies that are intended to improve mobility, safety, efficiency and people-moving capacity on existing and planned transportation network facilities.
- TR-50. Maintain and enhance safety for all users of the roadway network.
- TR-56. Assess arterial speed limits and address concerns related to safety through appropriate speed limits, countermeasures and other techniques.

Fiscal Impact

For 2026, program expansion costs will be funded through the existing 2025-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. Beginning in 2027, expenses related to camera operations, enforcement, and program administration will be covered by citation revenues. Net revenue will be reinvested in traffic safety projects—such as pedestrian, bicycle, and accessibility improvements—that reduce speeds and enhance safety.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to finalize the BCCA ordinance and the accompanying resolution deeming seven locations higher-crash risk sites where it is suitable to locate speed safety cameras, for final action at a future meeting.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Map of current red-light and school speed zone camera locations
- B. Community input received
- C. BCCA strike draft
- D. Analysis of candidate speed safety camera locations
- E. Analysis of proposed speed safety camera locations
- F. 2026 recommended program expansion
- G. Draft Resolution approving 2026 proposed camera locations

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

SEPA Environmental Checklist and SEPA Determination