



Peaks Parkway leads the way

CASE STUDY

3M Average speed cameras have been introduced to cut accident figures at Peaks Parkway

Eight average speed cameras are being used to assist speed enforcement along the urban section of the A16 through Grimsby, known locally as Peaks Parkway, since October 2013. According to Mick Harris, Partnership Manager for Safer Roads Humber, the project has already proved its worth. "Early data suggests that the cameras have been very successful in reducing accidents. Although we have had only a few months to look at, the initial signs are good."

In a five year period before the cameras were installed, there had been 33 injury collisions on the section of road covered by the cameras, resulting in 60 casualties. Since enforcement started almost one year ago, there have been five injury collisions, resulting in 9 casualties overall. From a statistical point of view, this data is obviously not robust enough to draw any meaningful conclusions, but alongside evidence that average speeds have been reduced, the overall picture is one of improvement.

History of speeding

As an urban highway, Peaks Parkway has a 30mph speed limit, and has done since it was built in 1998. Nonetheless, many drivers have been in the habit of exceeding the limit, despite several tricky light controlled junctions along its course. Built along the length of a former railway line, this section of the A16 is a wide single carriageway, walled on both sides for part of its route. The fact that it is largely straight probably explains the temptation to speed, but the accident record, especially at the expansive junctions where the single lane often widens to three, presents a strong argument for keeping speeds below the limit of thirty.

Of course, excess speed is a major factor in both causing accidents and in increasing the severity of injury when collisions occur. Before the cameras were introduced, data from a speed monitoring study conducted three years ago, suggested that an average of 2700 offences per day were occurring on this road. Now the average figure is more like 50 per day.



Motivated by safety

However, speed reduction and speed enforcement per se is not the rationale behind installing the cameras. "If there wasn't a history of collisions and accidents we would have no interest in using the cameras," says Mick. "Our only motivation is casualty reduction, and the 3M Average Speed Cameras have been very successful in this respect."

There are four cameras on both sides of the road, meaning eight in total. This creates a variety of zones that Safer Roads Humber can monitor. Average speeds can be assessed from a vehicle entering at camera 1 and exiting at camera 2, or between cameras 2-3, 1-3, 2-4 etc. The 3M cameras were chosen for the scheme after a successful trial on the A180, which demonstrated their ease of installation, their reliability in number-plate recognition and accuracy in the collection of time-fixed data. Looking ahead, Mick is hoping to install a similar system to replace fixed cameras at another site in East Yorkshire.

Improving flow

Aside from the key conclusion that the cameras have helped reduce the number of collisions and brought average speeds down, data from the system has also shown that there have been ancillary benefits in simply improving the flow of traffic in the area. Some opponents of the cameras had argued that their presence would create rat-runs as drivers sought to avoid them, but that simply has not happened. "The evidence is that vehicle numbers are unchanged, and flow is generally better."

Overall the picture is one of great success, despite some local opposition. "Our view is that observing the 30mph limit is essential for keeping the accident rate down, and we are very happy that the cameras are helping us to achieve our target of reducing casualties on this vulnerable stretch of road," concludes Mick.



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