



# Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program

Follow-up Report

January 8, 2026

Edward Michel, CIG

Inspector General





January 8, 2026

Re: Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program Follow-up Report

I certify that the inspector general personnel assigned to this project are free of personal or other external impairments to independence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward Michel".

Edward Michel  
*Inspector General*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Since 2007, the City of New Orleans (City) has operated a Traffic Camera Safety Program (TCSP) with the stated purpose of reducing traffic violations and improving road safety. The program used cameras to identify potential traffic violations, for which vehicle owners were assessed a fine. Given the program's potential impact on public safety, as well as the finances of both the City and individual citizens, it was important that the program operate effectively and in compliance with all relevant laws and policies. This was made more complicated by the complexity of the program, which spanned several City departments and entities.

In January 2020, the Office of Inspector General for the City of New Orleans (OIG) issued a report titled "Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program."<sup>1</sup> Based on the findings of that report, the OIG made the following recommendations:

1. City officials and program stakeholders should develop and implement an appropriate management and oversight structure consistent with the ordinance and any other legal requirements. This management structure should ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability, facilitate communication and coordination among stakeholders, and use data to monitor and continually improve the program;
2. Program officials should assign responsibility to identify and obtain information on school calendars and closures, and coordinate with schools and with the traffic camera contractor to develop ways to reduce the issuance of invalid school zone tickets;
3. The program should revise its controls and processes to ensure that all citations are issued in accordance with the ordinance, including training program staff on the relevant legal deadlines. The NOPD should strive to improve timeliness of reviewing citations and should track appropriate performance measures;
4. The [New Orleans Police Department] should update its policies for review of citations, implement quality controls on approved citations, and work with [Automated Traffic Solutions] to obtain appropriate data

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<sup>1</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program* (New Orleans: Office of Inspector General, 2020), [https://nolaoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Traffic-Camera-Safety-Program-Final-Report-2020-01-30\\_reduced.pdf](https://nolaoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Traffic-Camera-Safety-Program-Final-Report-2020-01-30_reduced.pdf).

for monitoring officer performance to ensure a thorough review of tickets;

5. The Adjudication Bureau should develop processes to ensure the removal of suspensions. The City should promptly impose penalties for delinquent camera ticket holders who fail to appear at hearings. The Traffic Camera Safety Program also should develop clear lines of accountability to resolve future problems promptly; and
6. The [Department of Public Works], Project Delivery Unit, and Finance Department, in consultation with the Law Department, should collaborate to refund overpaid money as appropriate; develop systems that comply with the Louisiana Uniform Unclaimed Property Act; and provide notice about overpayments to drivers. They should assign employees the responsibility to review data reports, including the overpayment liability report, so the City can identify and solve emerging problems.

The City accepted or partially accepted all six recommendations and proposed corrective actions to address each one.

The current report is a follow-up to the OIG's 2020 report. The purpose of the follow-up was to determine whether the City implemented corrective actions and if the deficiencies identified in the original report still existed.

After review, evaluators found that the City fully implemented two of the OIG's recommendations and partially implemented the other four recommendations by 1) modifying policies and strengthening NOPD controls on camera ticket reviews, 2) assigning responsibility for compiling school calendars, and 3) improving analysis and monitoring of the program overall. However, some changes, especially within the Central Adjudication Bureau (CAB), were only recently initiated, and the management structure remained informal. Specifically, evaluators found that:

1. The City changed the TCSP's management structure and improved coordination among involved entities, contractor oversight, and data analysis and monitoring. However, the new management structure remained ineffective in ensuring these efforts would be sustained over the course of the program.
2. The City assigned responsibility for identifying and obtaining information on school calendars, reducing the risk of issuing invalid citations, though opportunities for improved communication and accuracy remained.

3. The NOPD revised its policies to ensure that almost all citations were issued within the legal timeframe, and the department improved the overall timeliness of citations issued.
4. Although the NOPD updated its policies for review of citations and implemented measures for quality control and performance monitoring, the time spent reviewing individual tickets still raised concerns.
5. While the CAB reduced the number of suspended citations, staff and hearing officers still sometimes failed to enter dispositions properly, and 19 percent of hearings had no disposition recorded.
6. The City initiated a one-time process to issue refunds for overpayments and surrender unclaimed property to the State Treasurer. However, the process was not ongoing and the City began to accrue overpayments again, leading to a balance of over \$770,000 at the time of the follow-up evaluation.

Moving forward, the City should continue to strengthen these efforts and build a sustainable program infrastructure that will allow for ongoing improvements to the program.

## I. OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODS

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The Office of Inspector General for the City of New Orleans (OIG) conducted a follow-up to its January 2020 report “Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program.”<sup>2</sup> The objective of the follow-up was to determine the extent to which the City of New Orleans (City) implemented the report’s recommendations for improvements to the Traffic Camera Safety Program.

The scope of this follow-up included all citations for violations from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. In addition, evaluators reviewed changes the City made to its policies and procedures since the original evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

Pursuant to Sections 2-1120(12) and (20) of the Code of the City of New Orleans and La. R.S. 33:9613, evaluators interviewed staff from the Department of Public Works, New Orleans Police Department, Central Adjudication Bureau, Chief Administrative Office, and Bureau of Treasury, in addition to staff from Verra Mobility, the contractor responsible for administering the traffic camera program. Evaluators also reviewed relevant documents from the City, including contract documents, policies, and procedures. Evaluators also reviewed data reports available from the contractor’s computer system and analyzed trends in the complete set of violation data for all events in 2024.

This follow-up was conducted in accordance with the Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General for Inspections, Evaluations, and Reviews.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program* (New Orleans: Office of Inspector General, 2020), [https://nolaoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Traffic-Camera-Safety-Program-Final-Report-2020-01-30\\_reduced.pdf](https://nolaoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Traffic-Camera-Safety-Program-Final-Report-2020-01-30_reduced.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> While the data reviewed were limited to 2024 violations, evaluators also reviewed and considered changes to policies and procedures both prior and subsequent to that time period.

<sup>4</sup> Association of Inspectors General, “Quality Standards for Inspections, Evaluations, and Reviews by Offices of Inspector General,” *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* (New York: Association of Inspectors General, 2022).

## II. INTRODUCTION

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Since 2007, the City of New Orleans (City) operated a Traffic Camera Safety Program (TCSP). According to the City's website, the purpose of the program was "to deter red light violations, reduce speeding violations, increase traffic situational awareness, and reduce collision severity."<sup>5</sup> Under this program, camera systems, either stationary or mobile, recorded potential red light or speeding violations. Records from the cameras were reviewed to determine whether a violation actually occurred, and the owner of the vehicle received a citation requiring them to pay a fine.

The TCSP involved several departments and city contractors, each with different roles. The Department of Public Works (DPW) was responsible for maintaining traffic signage and flashing beacons in school zones, as well as coordinating with schools and other TCSP staff regarding school calendars. A contractor, Verra Mobility, operated and maintained the traffic cameras and managed camera ticket operations, including maintaining a database of all citations and their current status, as well as accepting payments to be remitted to the City. Verra Mobility staff reviewed the information collected by the traffic cameras and verified whether a violation occurred. The New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) then reviewed the photos and videos from the cameras and approved or rejected the citation. Analysts from the Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) office analyzed and monitored the program.

Once a citation was issued, citizens had the option to pay online through a website operated by Verra Mobility, or request an administrative hearing to dispute their citations. If citizens requested a hearing, the City's Central Adjudication Bureau (CAB) handled that process. Unpaid citations were sent to collections, handled by a separate vendor, Duncan Solutions.

On January 30, 2020, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) published an evaluation report titled "Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program,"

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<sup>5</sup> "Traffic Camera Safety Program," City of New Orleans, last modified September 10, 2025, <https://nola.gov/next/public-works/topics/traffic-camera-safety-program/>.

which examined the overall functioning of the TCSP.<sup>6</sup> This original report identified several weaknesses within the program, including the following findings:

1. The NOPD failed to administer the Traffic Camera Safety Program as required by ordinance. Specifically, the program lacked defined and delineated management responsibilities for communication, oversight, and program monitoring. As a result, the difficulty of properly identifying and correcting problems prevented the program from achieving its full potential as a public safety mechanism;
2. The TCSP erroneously issued tickets in school zones when schools were not in session, violating local ordinance;
3. The TCSP sometimes issued citations more than 30 days after the registered owner of the vehicle was identified, in violation of the local ordinance. While the NOPD reviewed most citations within the timeframe indicated by its internal policy, this timeframe exceeded the best practice suggested by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration;
4. NOPD officers reviewed 94 percent of citations faster than the NOPD's internal policies allowed, jeopardizing the quality of the review process;
5. The TCSP violated the ordinance by not imposing late fees and other penalties on drivers who failed to appear for ticket hearings. This failure created a loophole that permanently suspended action on tickets, denied the City revenue, and was unfair to drivers who paid their tickets or followed the hearing process; and
6. By failing to notify drivers of overpayments on traffic camera citations and proactively refund their money, the City potentially violated the Louisiana Uniform Unclaimed Property Act and put the City at risk of penalties.

To address these issues, the OIG made six recommendations, as will be discussed in detail below. The City accepted or partially accepted all six recommendations and proposed corrective actions to address each one.

Since the time of the OIG's initial report, speed cameras in the City were concentrated almost entirely in school zones, where citations were issued for

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<sup>6</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program* (New Orleans: Office of Inspector General, 2020), [https://nolaoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Traffic-Camera-Safety-Program-Final-Report-2020-01-30\\_reduced.pdf](https://nolaoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Traffic-Camera-Safety-Program-Final-Report-2020-01-30_reduced.pdf).

exceeding the school zone speed limits during posted school hours. Due to changes in state law in 2025, speed cameras were only permitted in school zones, and the City could only issue citations on days when a school was in session. Cameras could only operate for one hour before and one hour after a school's start time, and one hour before and one hour after its end time.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this follow-up report was to determine whether the City implemented the corrective actions it proposed in January 2020 and if the deficiencies identified in the original report still existed. While there have been changes to the TCSP over the past years, the scope of this report is limited to the issues identified in the original report.

The OIG staff was greatly assisted in the preparation of this follow-up report by the full cooperation of City employees, as well as the third-party contractor responsible for the traffic camera system.

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<sup>7</sup> La. R.S. 32:43(A)(3); La. R.S. 32:46(B).

### III. FOLLOW-UP ON RECOMMENDATIONS

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The TCSP had both public safety and financial impacts for both citizens and the City. The program issued over 300,000 citations for traffic camera violations committed in 2024, and it brought in millions of dollars in revenue for the City and other public entities each year. In reports to the City Council, the City reported \$3.7 million in net revenue for the period between May 21, 2024 and April 30, 2025, which was shared with schools and the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans.

An effective, well-run program may generate much-needed revenue for local government entities while simultaneously improving road safety. A program that isn't fair, transparent, and effective, however, runs the risk of posing unfair burdens on citizens, damaging public trust, and failing to provide the desired safety benefits.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning in 2024, the Louisiana Legislature passed several laws concerning the operation of traffic camera programs in the state, including heightened rules on signage in school zones, revenue sharing requirements with schools, and requirements that school zone cameras be tied to the school's schedule and calendar (see Follow-up 2 for more information).<sup>9</sup> In addition, state law classified intentional failure to comply with these sections as malfeasance in office.<sup>10</sup>

#### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

The TCSP was a complex program spanning several departments and entities with interconnected responsibilities, which posed several challenges regarding the coordination and oversight of operations. Effective management was critically important to ensure that all of these entities were operating together effectively.

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<sup>8</sup> See Kimberly A. Eccles, et al., *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 729: Automated Enforcement for Speeding and Red Light Running* (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2012), 4, 42, 56, 67-68, <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/22716/automated-enforcement-for-speeding-and-red-light-running>.

<sup>9</sup> Act No. 103, 2024 La. Acts; Act No. 107, 2025 La. Acts.

<sup>10</sup> Act No. 107, 2025 La. Acts.

**Recommendation 1: City officials and program stakeholders should develop and implement an appropriate management and oversight structure consistent with the ordinance and any other legal requirements. This management structure should ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability, facilitate communication and coordination among stakeholders, and use data to monitor and continually improve the program.<sup>11</sup>**

*This recommendation was accepted by the City, which proposed the following corrective actions:*

- 1. “The City will continue to improve the Traffic Camera Safety Program by assigning the proper resources for program oversight. This includes designating the proper hierarchy that will operate in accordance with all departmental obligations in the Home Rule Charter and be responsible for program coordination and monitoring, data reporting and analysis, communications, and issues resolution.”*
- 2. “Additionally, the City is in the process of launching the Office of Business and External Services (OBES). The goal of OBES is to enhance city services provided to the public with an emphasis on improving the public’s customer service experience, creating more efficient City processes, and enhancing inter-agency coordination. The City is currently evaluating all customer-facing functions across divisions and departments that may have responsibilities shifted to OBES for greater program accountability and performance. Because of the heavy public access through the adjudication and hearing processes, TCSP is categorized as a customer-facing function. Considerations are underway for the best way to centralize external services, such as TCSP, within the OBES portfolio while continuing to provide these services in accordance with all departmental obligations in the Home Rule Charter.”*

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<sup>11</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 8-14.

**Follow-up 1: The City changed the TCSP's management structure and improved coordination among involved entities, contractor oversight, and data analysis and monitoring. However, the new management structure remained ineffective in ensuring these efforts would be sustained over the course of the program.**

The 2020 OIG evaluation found that the program was largely siloed, with the majority of the program operations outsourced to a contractor and each participating department focusing solely on its own roles and responsibilities in the process. There was a lack of written job descriptions, and no staff member within the program had been given clear responsibility for the overall operation of the TCSP. The OIG also observed that the organization of the TCSP did not accurately reflect the structure laid out in the City Code, which assigned ownership of the program to the NOPD.<sup>12</sup>

The lack of an appropriate management structure caused weaknesses in communication and coordination among entities, contractor oversight, and program monitoring and evaluation. It also decreased the likelihood that staff would identify and correct problems that arose in the program, since these might be missed if they did not fall neatly into one department's area of responsibility.

#### **MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT CHANGES**

At the time of the original report, ticket adjudications were handled within an Adjudication Bureau in the DPW, and the Administrator of the Adjudication Bureau was the person with the most responsibility for overseeing the program. Shortly after the OIG released the report, however, the City shifted responsibility for traffic camera hearings to the CAB, which was housed in the newly created OBES within the CAO's office. This move was consistent with the corrective actions proposed by the City at the time of the report.

The CAO's office and the CAB had also begun to plan improvements to the City's oversight of the program. In the past year, staff reviewed the Business Rules Questionnaire, which governed the operation of the program. At the time of the OIG's follow-up review, some of the information in the document was extremely

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<sup>12</sup> Code of the City of New Orleans, Sec. 154-1701.

outdated and CAO staff was in the process of revising it. City employees also had more comprehensive discussions with Verra Mobility regarding the overall operation of the program, as well as their data needs for monitoring the TCSP.

The City improved communication and coordination across the program. At the time of the follow-up evaluation, the CAO's office was in the process of setting up a shared email address for program staff, so everyone involved was aware of any issues within the program. Interviews with staff further revealed increased communication between the CAO's office, the DPW, and the CAB related to issues that had been identified in the OIG's original report. The effectiveness of these efforts, however, will depend on whether program staff make use of the resources and take action when necessary.

Additionally, TCSP staff reported increased efforts to monitor and evaluate the program within the past year. Managers across the CAB, CAO's office, and NOPD used Verra Mobility reports to varying degrees for analysis. A data analyst within the CAO's office was tasked with examining the program, and City staff requested additional data from Verra Mobility that would allow them to more closely monitor program operations. At the time of this follow-up evaluation, for instance, the data analyst was developing a dashboard, pulling from the contractor's dataset, that would help to monitor whether each camera was operational and send alerts to program staff about possible issues. The analyst was also working to develop reports that would help ensure the City complied with new state laws and Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs) regarding traffic camera ticket revenue sharing with schools and the Sewerage and Water Board. The TCSP analyst's priority going forward was on auditing the program, including NOPD review times and compliance with ordinance timelines, and creating sustainable automated reports that anyone could use, regardless of skill level.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT**

While the City made progress in monitoring and oversight of the TCSP and ensuring the program operates efficiently and in accordance with the relevant legal framework, most of these changes occurred within the past year, and in response to amendments in state law regarding traffic cameras. These new laws led to an increased focus on TCSP operations within the City.

Further, the management structure of the program remained informal. Despite the City's assurances in 2020 that it would "designat[e] the proper hierarchy,"

there still was no clear ownership of the program.<sup>13</sup> The department responsibilities remained siloed, with the NOPD largely confined to the operation of mobile cameras and ticket reviews, while the CAB tried to limit its involvement in the TCSP to issues related to adjudication. Likewise, the CAO's office recently took on many of the responsibilities for data analysis, program monitoring, and oversight in the process of ensuring compliance with the new laws, but the extent to which they were formally accountable for program operations remained unclear.

Moving forward, the City should formally document which department and personnel is responsible for program management and oversight of the TCSP, so that these functions are not adversely impacted by changes in personnel or priorities. Ongoing, sustained program management is critical to ensure that the City is identifying and addressing issues proactively, regardless of external factors necessitating changes. The OIG understands that some of this assignment of responsibility may be in flux for the near future, as a new mayoral administration may change the structure of the CAO's office considerably. This makes it critical to adopt proactive management practices, so that current efforts are not lost when changes are made.

Whatever management structure is ultimately finalized, the City should ensure that it complies with all legal requirements. The ordinance governing the TCSP places responsibility for the program on the NOPD, for instance.<sup>14</sup> If the City assigns management responsibility for the program to the CAB or CAO's office, the Law Department should ensure that this ultimate structure meets all legal requirements.

Finally, the stated goal of the TCSP is to improve public safety. Therefore, the City should consider monitoring the effectiveness of the program towards that end. Guidance from the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, for instance, recommended monitoring a program's impact on crashes "on a regular basis, such as annually."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Code of the City of New Orleans, Sec. 154-1701.

<sup>15</sup> Eccles et al., *Automated Enforcement for Speeding and Red Light Running*, 21.

**Recommendation 2: Program officials should assign responsibility to identify and obtain information on school calendars and closures, and coordinate with schools and the traffic camera contractor to develop ways to reduce the issuance of invalid school zone tickets.<sup>16</sup>**

*This recommendation was **partially accepted** by the City, which proposed the following corrective actions:*

1. *“DPW’s Administrative Hearing Center has hired an analyst, who is tasked with coordinating the various school schedules with NOPD, hearing officers, and the traffic camera contractor, including various times of instruction and holiday schedules of the 184 schools in New Orleans. These schools generally operate independently, without a system-wide, consistent schedule. Assuming accurate schedules are provided by the schools and updated when amended, this coordination should reduce the issuance of invalid school zone citations.”*
2. *“DPW’s Project Controls Division is currently conducting a citywide audit to help ensure accurate school zone enforcement in accordance with the City Code, including a log of all school zone camera locations with GPS coordinates, verification of school operations, location and information adjustments, appropriate signage, and proper camera operation.”*

**Follow-up 2: The City assigned responsibility for identifying and obtaining information on school calendars, reducing the risk of issuing invalid citations, though opportunities for improved communication and accuracy remained.**

School zone speed limits were only in effect during designated arrival and dismissal times on days when a school was in session, meaning the TCSP was only legally permitted to issue citations for school zone speeding violations during those times.<sup>17</sup> At the time of the OIG’s original report, the City instructed Verra Mobility to program school zone cameras to issue citations based only on the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) schedule, even though it did not accurately

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<sup>16</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 17-20.

<sup>17</sup> La. R.S. 32:46(B); Code of the City of New Orleans, Sec. 154-534.

reflect the calendars of the City's many charter, private, and parochial schools. This resulted in the TCSP issuing school zone speeding citations when schools were not in session, which violated the governing ordinance. If a citizen notified the DPW that tickets had been issued on a day when a school was not in session, the department would dismiss tickets issued on that date in that school zone. However, this put the burden on citizens to determine if citations were invalid.

At the time of the OIG's follow-up, an employee within the DPW was tasked with collecting schedule information from all schools where cameras were installed. This employee created a centralized calendar with information on school start and end times and dates, holidays, and early dismissal days. The DPW then provided the calendar to Verra Mobility and relevant City departments. Verra Mobility used this information to individually program each camera in compliance with the new state law.

While the new communication methods and the traffic camera dashboard under development in the CAO's office (see Follow-up 1) demonstrated progress towards ensuring tickets were only issued when schools were in session, there was still opportunity for improvement. The responsibility to coordinate with schools was not part of any particular job description. The need for a detailed job description became clear when the DPW employee previously tasked with this responsibility reported that he planned to continue compiling school zone calendar information despite being reassigned to a different position within the department. He was unaware of anyone else being assigned this role.

The lack of dedicated personnel tasked with communicating with schools was also an issue when schedules unexpectedly changed due to inclement weather or other unforeseen events. In those instances, the City depended on the schools to notify them of changes, but TCSP staff indicated that schools generally did not provide this information.

In the future, the City should formally assign coordination with the schools to a particular position and include the responsibility in the job description. Similarly, adopting protocols for dismissing invalid citations would ensure a more robust process.

The new state laws concerning school zone cameras increased the necessity for coordination with the OPSB and other school entities regarding traffic cameras, especially related to the mandated revenue sharing agreement. Additionally,

failure to comply with the new regulations would bring penalties to the City. While it is not within the scope of this follow-up to review the City's CEA with the OPSB, the OIG was pleased that the draft version of the document approved by the City Council included language requiring the OPSB to provide school calendars to the City. Moving forward, the City should continue to look for ways to use the CEA process to facilitate the receipt of accurate information regarding school closures.

### **REVIEW AND PROCESSING OF VIOLATIONS**

When the City's traffic camera system recorded potential violation events, the photos and videos were reviewed by Verra Mobility staff, and then further reviewed by NOPD officers working overtime shifts. Once NOPD officers approved a citation, Verra Mobility printed and mailed it to the vehicle owner.

**Recommendation 3: The program should revise its controls and processes to ensure that all citations are issued in accordance with the ordinance, including training program staff on the relevant legal deadlines. The NOPD should strive to improve timeliness of reviewing citations and should track appropriate performance measures.<sup>18</sup>**

*This recommendation was **partially accepted** by the City, which proposed the following corrective actions:*

1. *“NOPD will continue to improve compliance with legal requirements and NOPD policy via continued education, performance audits, more extensive supervisory reviews, and policy updates (see below).”*
2. *“All NOPD officers reviewing photo enforcement citations were trained prior to reviewing citations. Officers were trained how to navigate the review program and how to apply all applicable traffic laws. Beginning in January 2020, NOPD will conduct quarterly continued education training sessions to ensure all officers reviewing citations are aware of current policies and procedures.”*

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<sup>18</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 23-27.

3. *"In May 2019, NOPD increased the minimum number of reviewed citations per hour from 45 to 60, and officers are required to review 60-80 citations per hour worked. The change was implemented to increase output and decrease the amount of time citations remained in the review queue."*
4. *"NOPD currently conducts weekly performance audits. The audits track officers' performance to ensure officers are reviewing an appropriate number of citations in accordance with the ordinance and policy."*

**Follow-up 3: The NOPD revised its policies to ensure that almost all citations were issued within the legal timeframe, and the department improved the overall timeliness of citations issued.**

The City Code required that notice of a traffic camera violation be mailed "no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the date the violation is alleged to have occurred or identification of the registered owner, whichever is later, but in no event more than 60 days after the date the violation is alleged to have occurred."<sup>19</sup>

At the time of the original report, TCSP staff incorrectly believed that the legal deadline was always 60 days after the violation, which resulted in some citations being issued more than 30 days after the registered owner was identified, in violation of the ordinance. While the NOPD had a policy of reviewing citations within 30 days of the violation, a goal they generally met, this timeline was longer than that recommended by best practices. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommended a maximum time of two weeks from violation to citation.<sup>20</sup>

Since the time of the original report, the NOPD updated its policy on photo enforcement review to require officers verify the violation within 30 days of the registered owner being identified, which is the correct legal deadline. The head of the NOPD's Traffic Division said officers received training before reviewing tickets and he periodically checked the queue of pending citations to verify timeliness.

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<sup>19</sup> Code of the City of New Orleans, Sec. 154-1701.

<sup>20</sup> National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, *Speed Enforcement Camera Systems Operational Guidelines* (2008), 39, <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/16481>.

As a result of these policy changes, the NOPD saw a sharp decrease in the number of citations that were issued more than 30 days after identification of the registered owner. Of the more than 300,000 traffic camera citations issued for violations committed in 2024, evaluators found that fewer than 100 citations were issued more than 30 days after the registered owner was identified. Substantially all (99.96 percent) citations were issued within the NOPD's target of 30 days after the violation. Approximately 97 percent were issued within 21 days of the violation, and 79 percent were issued within 14 days, which was the timeframe recommended by the NHTSA in its best practice guidance. These numbers reflected considerable improvement over the processing times discussed in the OIG's original report. Citing the NHTSA, the OIG noted at the time that faster processing times can maximize the public safety benefits of a traffic camera program while minimizing "public disapproval."<sup>21</sup> The implementation of automatic controls and notifications would help the City reduce or eliminate these types of improper citations entirely.

**Recommendation 4: The NOPD should update its policies for review of citations, implement quality controls on approved citations, and work with ATS to obtain appropriate data for monitoring officer performance to ensure a thorough review of tickets.<sup>22</sup>**

*This recommendation was accepted by the City, which proposed the following corrective actions:*

1. *"NOPD will be updating its policies to reflect TCSP changes in progress and current law, including training requirements and officer and supervisor responsibilities."*
2. *"NOPD requested access to approved citations from the contractor to conduct quality control reviews by supervisory personnel. The contractor agreed to honor the request and is currently in the process of granting access."*

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<sup>21</sup> National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, *Speed Enforcement Camera Systems Operational Guidelines*, 39.

<sup>22</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 28-31.

3. “NOPD requested access to the officer’s performance report and was granted access. The report is used to track officers’ performance.”

**Follow-up 4: Although the NOPD updated its policies for review of citations and implemented measures for quality control and performance monitoring, the time spent reviewing individual tickets still raised concerns.**

When NOPD officers approved citations, they were responsible for reviewing the violation photos and video, as well as the vehicle registration information provided by the Office of Motor Vehicles. They verified that a violation had occurred and that the information recorded (such as vehicle, travel lane, date, and time) was correct.

In the original report, the OIG found NOPD officers reviewed 94 percent of citations faster than the NOPD’s internal policies allowed and reviewed roughly half of citations in ten seconds or less, with a substantial number reviewed in five seconds or less. These reviews took less time than it would have taken to watch a full red light or speed camera video, which lasted 12 seconds. At the same time, the NOPD did not conduct quality assurance checks of approved citations, and the supervisor did not have the data to easily monitor officer review rates. The NOPD faced conflicting challenges: officers should review citations quickly enough to maximize public safety benefits (see Recommendation 3) but not so quickly that they fail to notice errors.

Since 2020, the NOPD updated its policy to reflect the number of citations management considered reasonable to review per hour. The updated policy required officers to review 60-80 citations per hour (absent documented technical issues). The head of the NOPD Traffic Division confirmed this was an appropriate amount for officers to review.

The NOPD also implemented quality control checks on citation reviews. The Traffic Division supervisor intermittently reviewed a random selection of approved citations. A small number of approved citations, roughly 100 (0.03 percent) of the more than 300,000 citations for violations that occurred in 2024, were subjected to supervisory review. The NOPD supervisors were now also able to generate reports on officers’ citation processing rates, and they reviewed this information

on a weekly basis. CAO staff also began analyzing NOPD officer performance, based on the data generated by Verra Mobility.

Despite these improvements, officer review times for individual citations remained concerningly fast. Based on the time stamp that was automatically applied when officers reviewed and approved each successive citation, 92 percent of citations issued for violations committed in 2024 were reviewed in less than 30 seconds. More significantly, 68 percent of citations were reviewed within 10 seconds, and 23 percent were reviewed within three seconds or less. (See Appendix A for more information on the methodology for these calculations.) In fact, a greater percentage of citations were reviewed extremely quickly in 2024 than in 2017, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Time spent by officers in reviewing individual citations

Time to Review Citations	< 30 seconds	≤ 10 seconds	≤ 3 seconds
2017 Citations	88%	58%	5%
2024 Citations	92%	68%	23%

*Source: 2017 figures are taken from the OIG's original report. 2024 figures were calculated based on data provided to the OIG by Verra Mobility.*

Therefore, although the quality control checks instituted post 2020 may have been successful in limiting the number of citations that could be reviewed per hour, they did not control how quickly officers conducted those reviews.

At these extremely short review times, the risk of issuing an erroneous citation likely increased considerably. While most citations sent to the NOPD for review were probably accurate, the data from Verra Mobility revealed that approximately 300 citations were ultimately dismissed for reasons such as no violation or the license plate was identified incorrectly.<sup>23</sup> While the number of citations found to be erroneous was relatively low in comparison to the total number of citations

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<sup>23</sup> To conservatively estimate citations that may have been erroneously issued, the OIG analyzed issued citations with one of the following as a final status: Entered Intersection on Yellow, Issued in Error, Issued to Wrong Plate, No Violation, Notice Issued in Error, Plate Identified Incorrectly, Rejected – DMV – No Matches or Records, or Rejected – Speed Can Not Be Verified.

issued (over 300,000), they highlighted the importance of careful review. The City should be aware of these possible issues and assess whether the quality controls on ticket review need to be heightened. The City should also determine whether the percentage of citations subjected to supervisory review is adequate.

### **ADJUDICATION AND PAYMENT OF CITATIONS**

**Recommendation 5: The Adjudication Bureau should develop processes to ensure the removal of suspensions. The City should promptly impose penalties for delinquent camera ticket holders who fail to appear at hearings. The Traffic Camera Safety Program also should develop clear lines of accountability to resolve future problems promptly.<sup>24</sup>**

*This recommendation was accepted by the City, which proposed the following corrective actions:*

1. *“In accordance with the City Code and the Administrative Procedures Act, a ticket holder who fails to appear at a scheduled hearing will have their appeal denied administratively, the suspension will be removed, and a notice of determination will be mailed to the ticket holder in order to communicate the disposition.”*
2. *“A new statement will be added to hearing notification letters and violation notices to inform recipients of the consequences should they fail to appear.”*
3. *“DPW’s Parking Division has brought booting operations in house to increase the footprint of enforcement citywide, including four new employees and one supervisor. This will improve enforcement of delinquent ticket holders in coordination with NOPD.”*

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<sup>24</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 33-35.

**Follow-up 5: While the Central Adjudication Bureau reduced the number of suspended citations, staff and hearing officers still sometimes failed to enter dispositions properly, and 19 percent of hearings had no disposition recorded.**

When drivers disputed their traffic camera citations, the citations were suspended until after an administrative hearing, ensuring that they would not become delinquent or accrue late fees while waiting for adjudication. In the original OIG report, evaluators found that 44 percent of scheduled hearings in 2017 were not adjudicated because the citizen failed to appear for the hearing. Although failure to appear was considered an admission of liability that would require the individual to pay the ticket, the Adjudication Bureau did not remove suspensions from citations in these cases. Because the citation remained suspended in the system, it never became delinquent, subject to late fees, or booting if left unpaid.

At the time of the follow-up, the traffic camera system was still structured so that citations remained suspended if no hearing disposition was entered; however, the issue was less prevalent than previously reported. Of citations issued for violations that occurred in 2024, 19 percent of hearings had no disposition recorded.

The CAB director acknowledged that this problem persisted and confirmed that, while there were policies for CAB staff related to parking and photo safety enforcement, there were no policies for hearing officers. Further, the policies for parking and photo enforcement required updating. The CAB was working on additional training for administrative hearing officers and CAB staff, who were responsible for recording dispositions.

CAB analysts also performed weekly audits of cases to verify whether hearing officers had entered results correctly into the computer system. The CAB should develop clear procedures for this process to ensure it operates effectively and meets the program's needs. In general, developing and updating policies and procedures should be a priority in order to ensure the adjudication process is operating appropriately.

**Recommendation 6: The DPW, Project Delivery Unit, and Finance Department, in consultation with the Law Department, should collaborate to refund overpaid money as appropriate; develop systems that comply with the Louisiana Uniform Unclaimed Property Act; and provide notice about overpayment to drivers. They should assign employees the responsibility to review data reports, including the overpayment liability report, so the City can identify and solve emerging problems.<sup>25</sup>**

*This recommendation was accepted by the City, which proposed the following corrective actions:*

1. *“Each year going forward, the City will comply with the Louisiana Uniform Unclaimed Property Act. Throughout the year, the contractor will attempt to notify each person who erroneously overpaid and refund each overpayment as appropriate. DPW will receive a monthly report showing the erroneous overpayments.”*
2. *“Between July 1 and October 31 of each year, the contractor or DPW will issue a letter to each person who is still owed a payment of \$50 or more, attempting a refund for the second time and informing the person of the unclaimed property process.”*
3. *“Each year, the City will file a report with the State Treasurer (La. R.S. 9:159(g)) by November 1<sup>st</sup>, file with the report an affidavit stating that the City has complied with the requirement to send written notice to each apparent owner of presumably abandoned property valued at \$50 or more (La. R.S. 9:159(g)), and pay to the administrator the property described in the report as unclaimed (La. R.S. 9:160).”*

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<sup>25</sup> New Orleans Office of Inspector General, *Management and Operations of the Traffic Camera Safety Program*, 35-39.

**Follow-up 6: The City initiated a one-time process to issue refunds for overpayments and surrender unclaimed property to the State Treasurer. However, the process was not ongoing and the City began to accrue overpayments again, leading to a balance of over \$770,000 at the time of the follow-up evaluation.**

Citizens sometimes overpaid their traffic citations, whether by accidentally paying a ticket twice, paying a ticket that was later dismissed, or paying the wrong amount of money. At the time of the original report, the City owed over \$730,000 to almost 6,000 unique individuals or entities for overpayments on traffic camera tickets since the inception of the program. This was based on an Overpayment Liability Report generated by Verra Mobility and available to the City for review. The City, however, did not monitor this report or attempt to refund this money to citizens. If citizens realized that they had overpaid and were entitled to a refund, they were able to complete a refund request form, but otherwise, the City kept this money as program revenue.

The failure of the City to refund overpayments raised concerns about the City's compliance with the Louisiana Uniform Unclaimed Property Act, which required "a holder of property presumed abandoned" to provide a report to the state treasurer every year on this property, as well as turning it over to the treasurer to be held as unclaimed property.<sup>26</sup> The Act also required the holder of the property to send written notice to the apparent owner if the holder had a record of the owner's address and the value of the property was at least \$50.<sup>27</sup> The OIG found that the City did not take these actions for traffic camera citation overpayments.

At the time of this follow-up evaluation, overpayments remained an issue. Verra Mobility's Overpayment Liability Report showed a total of over \$1.5 million in overpayments as of September 23, 2025. However, evaluators learned that the reported amount of the liability was unreliable as the City began a process of repayments that did not adequately document and reconcile refunds with the contractor.

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<sup>26</sup> La. R.S. 9:159; La. R.S. 9:160.

<sup>27</sup> La. R.S. 9:159.

After the OIG released its original report, the City began to refund the backlog of overpayments. Using the information in the Overpayment Liability Report, the Finance Department wrote refund checks in 2021 to vehicle owners who were entitled to refunds. If the checks were not cashed, the Finance Department turned the money over to the State Treasurer to be held as unclaimed property. After these initial refunds, however, the program and the Finance Department did not set up an ongoing process to provide refunds periodically over time. As a result, subsequent overpayments were not processed as refund checks unless the vehicle owner affirmatively requested a refund, and the money was not sent to the State.

Further, when the City cleared its backlog of refunds in 2021, it failed to notify Verra Mobility of the refunds or otherwise take steps to reconcile the contractor's records. As a result, the program's records still indicated these funds as outstanding overpayments, although they had in fact been paid out. Of the over \$1.5 million reflected on Verra Mobility's Overpayment Liability Report, City records reflected that approximately half of this amount had been refunded or sent to the State Treasurer in 2021, leaving a balance of \$772,942.16 in overpayments. The lack of documentation and a formal process for refunds further meant that program staff within the CAO's office and the CAB were unaware of this earlier round of refunds, since the staff responsible for implementing this recommendation were no longer involved in the program.

Staff at the CAB and the CAO's office said they were currently preparing to refund existing overpayments and coordinating with the Finance Department to ensure unclaimed property was sent to the State Treasurer as required. This confusion and inefficiency highlight the importance of a well-developed management structure (see Recommendation 1).

Despite issues with documentation and refunding of overpayments, the City was in the initial stages of simplifying the process for citizens to request a refund by working with Verra Mobility to change the wording in the notices citizens received if their citations were dismissed. The notice will provide citizens with information about how to obtain a refund if the citation has already been paid. The City was also in discussions with its contractor to develop an automatic refund process that did not require citizens to fill out a request form.

However, the contractor indicated that these changes had not yet been implemented. As of the time of this report, citizens who received notice of a

dismissal were not provided with any instructions as to how to obtain a refund. In fact, the letter informed them that “No further action is required.” Meanwhile, citizens who overpaid for other reasons did not receive any notice about requesting refunds; they needed to recognize independently that they were entitled to a refund, fill out the form online, and then mail it to Verra Mobility.

The City should develop a formal process to continue handling refunds and unclaimed property on an ongoing basis in the future. Furthermore, the department should ensure that it has accurate records of the status of each account, which will likely require reconciling payment data between the contractor and the Finance Department. Finally, the City should notify citizens of overpayments and how to obtain refunds.

## IV. CONCLUSION

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In 2020 evaluators provided the City with six recommendations to improve the management and operations of the TCSP. Evaluators found that these recommendations were implemented to various degrees.

The NOPD made changes to its policies and procedures and added internal controls to address concerns about the timeliness and accuracy of police review of citations. These steps largely appeared to address the issues identified in the original report, although there were still opportunities for improvement through automated controls or increased quality control monitoring. The City also largely complied with the recommendation to obtain school calendars and reduce the issuance of invalid school zone tickets. However, there was still a need to formalize this process, improve communication and accuracy, and ensure ongoing compliance with state laws.

The City made less progress in addressing the issues of suspended citations and unclaimed property. Because these issues involved the adjudication function and overall management of the program, which underwent several changes in both structure and personnel, clear responsibility for these tasks was not assigned until recently. Program staff had begun to improve these issues, but it was too soon to determine whether their efforts would be successful.

Finally, the City took several steps to improve the management of the program, including data analysis, monitoring and evaluation, communication across entities, and contractor oversight. The CAO's office played a more active role in this process than in the past. However, most of these changes were only implemented recently, and these management processes remained informal. Moving forward, the City should continue to strengthen efforts and build a sustainable infrastructure that will allow for ongoing improvements to the program.

**Figure 2.** Summary of Follow-up Findings

Recommendation	Accepted	Follow-up	Met
City officials and program stakeholders should develop and implement an appropriate management and oversight structure consistent with the ordinance and any other legal requirements. This management structure should ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability, facilitate communication and coordination among stakeholders, and use data to monitor and continually improve the program.	Yes	The City changed the TCSP's management structure and improved coordination among involved entities, contractor oversight, and data analysis and monitoring. However, the new management structure remained ineffective in ensuring these efforts would be sustained over the course of the program.	Partial
Program officials should assign responsibility to identify and obtain information on school calendars and closures, and coordinate with schools and with the traffic camera contractor to develop ways to reduce the issuance of invalid school zone tickets.	Partial	The City assigned responsibility for identifying and obtaining information on school calendars, reducing the risk of issuing invalid citations, though opportunities for improved communication and accuracy remained.	Yes
The program should revise its controls and processes to ensure that all citations are issued in accordance with the ordinance, including training program staff on the relevant legal deadlines. The NOPD should strive to improve timeliness of reviewing citations and should track appropriate performance measures.	Partial	The NOPD revised its policies to ensure that almost all citations were issued within the legal timeframe, and the department improved the overall timeliness of citations issued.	Yes
The NOPD should update its policies for review of citations, implement quality controls on approved citations, and work with ATS to obtain appropriate data for monitoring officer performance to ensure a thorough review of tickets.	Yes	Although the NOPD updated its policies for review of citations and implemented measures for quality control and performance monitoring, the time spent reviewing individual tickets still raised concerns.	Partial
The Adjudication Bureau should develop processes to ensure the removal of suspensions. The City should promptly impose penalties for delinquent camera ticket holders who fail to appear at hearings. The Traffic Camera Safety Program also should develop clear lines of accountability to resolve future problems promptly.	Yes	While the Central Adjudication Bureau reduced the number of suspended citations, staff and hearing officers still sometimes failed to enter dispositions properly, and 19 percent of hearings had no disposition recorded.	Partial
The DPW, Project Delivery Unit, and Finance Department, in consultation with the Law Department, should collaborate to refund overpaid money as appropriate; develop systems that comply with the Louisiana Unclaimed Property Act; and provide notice about overpayments to drivers. They should assign employees the responsibility to review data reports, including the overpayment liability report, so the City can identify and solve emerging problems.	Yes	The City initiated a one-time process to issue refunds for overpayments and surrender unclaimed property to the State Treasurer. However, the process was not ongoing and the City began to accrue overpayments again, leading to a balance of over \$770,000 at the time of the follow-up evaluation.	Partial

## V. APPENDIX A: NOPD REVIEW TIMES METHODOLOGY

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As in the original report, evaluators requested and received data files from Verra Mobility providing information on all violation events that occurred during 2024. These data included information on when each citation was approved or rejected by the NOPD and which officer was responsible for the review. The data did not indicate what time the review of a citation began or how long the NOPD officer spent reviewing each citation.

To gain an understanding of how long officers spent reviewing citations, evaluators used the following process: data entries were sorted by the reviewing officer and placed in chronological order based on the date and time the officer reviewed citations. Evaluators calculated the elapsed time between when an officer reviewed each citation and when that same officer reviewed the prior citation.

This method had some limitations. First, it did not allow evaluators to comment on the possibility of unusually long review times, since an officer may have logged into the system but may not have been actively reviewing tickets. Evaluators' conclusions, therefore, extended only to whether officers reviewed citations unusually quickly. Secondly, these calculations may have been skewed by NOPD officers reviewing citations in multiple browsers simultaneously, an issue that had been raised at the time of the original report due to older computers that took longer to load. The large percentage of citations being reviewed within shorter timeframes led evaluators to conclude that the use of multiple browsers was unlikely to explain the high numbers of citations being rapidly reviewed.