Written by Tim Rosenberger, Reporter
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More police cameras may be put up in downtown Bloomington as part of a three-year plan from 2013-15 in order to increase traffic enforcement and safety.

The purpose of the additional cameras is to increase assets and resources without assigning more police to the streets, Jack McQueen, the group supervisor of the crime analysis unit at the Bloomington Police Department, said.

The Police Department's intention is not to view the cameras live, but to use them as a resource during the aftermath of an accident or crime.

The cameras, of which there are currently five, went live in a test phase in August 2012 and have omnidirectional coverage.

The five cameras are located at the intersections of Main and Market streets, Main and Mulberry streets, and Main and Monroe streets.

Each intersection typically has two cameras, one pointing left and the other right. A four-way intersection may need four cameras to cover everything.

The amount of cameras is based on the need of a particular area, McQueen said.

If it is a high-traffic area or a lot of accidents and crimes happen there, more cameras might be added.

It is also determined by the wireless network infrastructure downtown, he said.

Part of the new plan includes pushing the cameras farther south, toward Washington Street and the old courthouse.

The plan would comprise of eight to 10 extra camera locations.

Where exactly the cameras will be placed in these areas will not be made obvious to drivers and pedestrians, McQueen added.

While a specific date has not been set, McQueen thinks more cameras will start to be put up sometime in 2013, hopefully before the warm weather comes and activity on the streets picks up.

A contributing factor to adding cameras was the technology becoming more affordable in the past few years, McQueen said.

If the technology goes in the right direction, McQueen would like to be able to give squad cars

the ability to view nearby camera footage when there is an accident.

The most recent plan has four main goals.

"The biggest one is improving the quality of life within the neighborhoods across Bloomington and enhance the partnerships we got with the community," McQueen said.

The other goals include increasing the efficiency of the Police Department and its employees.

The plan's focus on traffic enforcement in all of Bloomington has caused the amount of tickets to rise from 4,310 in 2011 to 6,484 in 2012, most of which were issued from May onward.

The Police Department discussed the cameras with City Council at a meeting last week.

Clay Wheeler, interim Bloomington police chief, said the police and city council "work hand-in-hand."

"They give us input of what their goals are and what they would like [to] see done," Wheeler said.

"We [then] go about trying to do it for 'em," Wheeler added.

The council has been supportive of the new cameras, Wheeler said.