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Press Release

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Issued by: Kyle P. Heagney, Chief of Police

Subject: **Updates to Crossing Guard Locations**

**** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****

As the new School year begins next week, the Attleboro Police Department has announced updates to certain Crossing Guard locations for the 2017-2018 school year. These changes have been implemented as a result of a comprehensive study conducted by a Committee established to review the current Crossing Guard locations.

In March of 2017, the Chief Kyle Heagney formed a committee to study the current Crossing Guard locations throughout the City. The primary objective of the committee was to:

1. Examine the current crossing guard locations;
2. Assess whether a Crossing Guard is necessary at said location;
3. Identify other potential unsafe crossing locations; and
4. Provide the Chief of Police with findings and recommendations.

The members of the committee included Captain James MacDonald, Sergeant Leo Fontaine, Retired Patrolman Thomas Wellman, Police Commissioner Glen Marshall, City Councilor Julie Hall, City Councilor Heather Porreca, Former City Councilor Duff White, and Operations Manager of Attleboro Public Schools Shannon Shepherd.

In assessing the Crossing Guard locations the Committee considered several factors relative to examining the specific locations:

1. Traffic conditions (to include number of traffic lanes, speed limits, estimate of vehicle traffic). A high, medium, or low ranking was then assigned based on vehicular traffic.

2. Number of juveniles crossing (each post [both morning and afternoon slots] were monitored on three separate occasions). The results were tabulated on Excel spreadsheets and included separately in this evaluation.
3. Traffic control devices (crosswalk button, marked crosswalk with crosswalk signage, marked crosswalk without crosswalk signage).
4. Sight Distance (conditions measured from the juvenile's and driver's perspective)
5. Crash history (crashes within 200 feet of crossing location). A five year time frame, from 6am to 3pm, was used. The data for each year run was from June 1st through May 31st

Therefore, based upon the Committee's recommendation and the overall evaluation by the Chief Heagney, the following new locations will be staffed with a Crossing Guard for the School year, County St. at Bushee St.; County St. at Thirteenth St.; County St. at Dennis St.; Rathbun Willard Dr. at Green Dr. These locations will be staffed by transferring Crossing Guards from other locations based upon the findings of the study. Those transfer locations are Handy St. at #300; Locust St. at Hickory Rd.; Newport Ave. at Roy Ave.; and South Main St. at Locust St.

It is important to understand that there are many factors that contribute to the need for a crossing guard at a particular location. According to the Safe Routes to School guide, information to consider when identifying guard placement includes:

- The age of the students who are crossing.

Generally, younger children need more assistance than older children because they have a more difficult time judging the speed and distance of approaching vehicles and may be tempted to cross during an unsafe gap.

- The width of the street and the number of lanes of traffic students must cross.

Wide streets with multiple lanes of traffic typically require the use of two or more adult school crossing guards.

- The sight distance at the crossing.

These conditions are measured from the student's and driver's perspectives and for actual vehicle operating speeds. Sight distance can be affected by temporary obstructions, such as parked vehicles and piled snow near the crossing.

- Safe gaps in traffic.

Are the Gaps¹ long enough and frequent enough to allow safe crossing opportunities? The ITE "School Trip Safety Program Guidelines" states that on the average, at least one adequate gap should occur each minute to allow for children to cross without undue delay or risk. However, other factors, such as volume of child pedestrians or pedestrian groups should also be considered

¹ MUTCD 2003 Section 7E.02, A "GAP" in traffic is considered a length of time in which no vehicle, in any direction, conflicts with a school crosswalk, in which a student has to cross from one side of the street to the other. The length of this gap is calculated in seconds and is based on the number of students per crossing cycle. The time required for a student to cross the street is calculated by the width of the roadway at 3.5 feet per second.

when determining the need for adult school crossing guards or other traffic control. If traffic volume during crossing hours do not correspond to enough safe gaps, a method should be used to interrupt traffic, such as a crossing guard or traffic signal.

- Presence of traffic control devices, including traffic signals, signs and pavement.

Are the traffic controls sufficient? For example, a signalized intersection at a school crossing location should always have WALK/DON'T WALK signals, and a pedestrian push button may also be appropriate. Crossing Guards and students need be properly trained on traffic signals relative to safe street crossings.

- The speed of vehicles at the crossing.

Vehicles that travel faster require greater stopping distances, and younger children have more difficulty than adults judging the speed of a fast-approaching vehicle.

- Volumes of traffic and pedestrians.

Local transportation planning or engineering departments can provide or help collect these data. Vehicle counts may be readily available, but pedestrian counts will likely need to be made during this process. The number of students currently using pedestrian facilities as well as the projected pedestrian demand based on school demographics should be determined.

- The attendance boundary and walk zone for each school.

The distances that walk zones extend from schools as well as policies regarding the provision of bus service differ among states and communities. Both can impact the number of children walking to school and the routes they take.

- The distance the crossing is from a school and the type of adjacent land use.

A crossing in close proximity to a school within a residential neighborhood may attract more student pedestrians than, for example, a crossing located further from a school surrounded by non-residential land uses.

- History of Traffic Crashes at the crossing location.

A motor vehicle crash history of the location should be conducted and analyzed.

Moreover, the Attleboro Police Department recommends parents talk to their children about following safety tips provided by the National Safety Council (NSC) when waking to and from school:

- Never walk while texting. If you need to respond to a text, move out of the way of others and stop on the sidewalk.
- Never cross the street while using an electronic device.

- Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street.
- Cross only at crosswalks.

In addition, drivers should be on an increased alert when traveling through School Zones and should **NEVER** text and drive. Additionally, the NSC reminds operators to:

- Stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection.
- Always stop for a Crossing Guards holding up a stop sign and obey school bus signals.
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas
- Do not honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian, even if you have the right of way
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians

**** End ****