

Town of Acton

John S. Mangiaratti

Town Manager

472 Main St.
Acton, MA 01720



Acton Police Department

Richard Burrows, Chief of
Police

371 Main St.
Acton, MA 01720



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Media Contact: John Guilfoil

Phone: 617-993-0003

Email: john@jgpr.net

Acton Police Department Awarded Grant to Enhance Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

ACTON -- Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti and Police Chief Richard Burrows are pleased to report that the Acton Police Department was recently awarded a grant of \$8,000 from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Office of Grants and Research - Highway Safety Division (EOPSS/OGR/HSD) to improve traffic safety on townroads for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Under the grant, the Acton Police Department will pay for overtime shifts specifically geared toward traffic enforcement and increasing compliance with traffic laws by all road users. The grant also allows Acton to purchase educational materials, bicycle helmets and safety items to help enhance pedestrian and bicyclist visibility at night. More information on potential giveaways and educational materials will be announced shortly.

With close to 6,000 pedestrians killed in 2016 across the country, pedestrians now account for a larger proportion (16 percent) of traffic fatalities than they have in the past 33 years. In Massachusetts, that rate is even higher, with pedestrians representing more than 20 percent of all traffic fatalities. Bicyclists are dying at higher rates nationally as well-the 840 killed in traffic crashes in 2016 are the most since 1991.

"Visibility is a major concern for bicyclists who may not always be easily seen by motorists, and unlike those driving motor vehicles, there is nothing to protect bicyclists during a crash," Chief Burrows said. "We are grateful to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security for this grant and for the opportunity to expand our roadway safety campaigns."

The Acton Police Department is also analyzing crash reports and previous enforcement data to identify potential crosswalks, intersections and roads where additional efforts

will yield the largest impact on overall safety.

The state gave nearly \$700,000 in grants to 93 police departments across the Commonwealth during this round, with funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Media Note: According to NHTSA, 94 percent of crashes can be tied back to a human choice or error. Acton urges journalists to follow the Associated Press Stylebook which suggests avoiding the word "accident" in reference to distracted, negligent, or impaired crashes.

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John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC
8 Prospect St.
Georgetown, MA 01833
617-993-0003