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## **Taunton Officials to Increase Enforcement of Laws & Ordinances Regarding Unsafe Use of ATVs and Bikes**

### **Heightened Security Measures to be Implemented at Hopewell Park**

TAUNTON — Mayor Shaunna O’Connell and Police Chief Edward J. Walsh report the City of Taunton will be increasing enforcement of state laws and City ordinances pertaining to the use of all-terrain vehicles and bikes in an effort to crack down on reckless and unsafe operations, especially in the area of Hopewell Park.

The Taunton Police Department, with support from the Mayor’s Office and the Parks & Recreation Department, will be strictly enforcing all laws and ordinances regulating the use of ATVs and bikes on public roadways and at City-owned facilities and parks.

“Summer is the time when our kids and families most enjoy the outdoors. Disruptive behavior is not acceptable at our parks and on our streets. We call on parents and guardians to partner with us in ensuring that kids are behaving appropriately and riding their bikes in safe ways. If these bike riders insist on causing problems, there will be consequences,” stated Mayor O’Connell.

The Police Department will be conducting increased patrols in targeted areas, including Hopewell Park and surrounding streets, in addition to their routine patrols to address reports of youth operating all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and bicycles in an erratic manner.

Parks & Recreation Commissioner AJ Marshall has hired a security guard who will be patrolling the Hopewell Park area in addition to police details that will augment security coverage in the upcoming weeks.

“Members of the Taunton Police Department will be working collaboratively with the Mayor’s Office and the Parks & Recreation Department to help resolve the City’s ongoing issue of disruptive and unruly ATV and bike operation on our streets and at our public parks,” Chief Walsh said. “Our roadways and parks are for all to enjoy, and as such our community members should not be disturbed by unlawful and unruly operators. To address this behavior, we will increase our targeted patrols and anyone operating these vehicles and bikes in ways that are not consistent with the rules of the road will be cited by the department.”

### **City Ordinances Regarding ATV and Bike Use**

Chapter 405 of the City of Taunton’s Code of Ordinances states that the prohibited hazardous operation of recreational vehicles, including ATVs and motorized bikes, includes:

riding a recreational vehicle with its front wheel, rear wheel or side wheel raised from the surface of the road or ground while operated in any public space.

riding with feet or knees planted on the seat while operating in any public space.

operating such vehicle in a manner commonly associated with trick or stunt riding.

The Taunton Police Department has the authority to enforce any provision of this ordinance and to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement and enforce this ordinance. Penalties for violating these ordinances include a \$300 fine, when applicable, with each day constituting a separate offense.

The Police Department also has the authority to impound any recreational vehicle found in violation of this ordinance, especially if it impedes traffic, threatens public safety or there is a danger of vandalism and/or property damage to the recreational vehicle. To read more about the ordinance, [click here](#).

In addition to the City ordinance, the Police Department will be enforcing M.G. Law Chapter 85, Section 11B which enumerates a number of requirements for bicycle riders, including any person 16 years of age or under operating a bicycle or being carried as a passenger on a bicycle on a public way must wear a helmet, and the operator of a bicycle cannot park a bicycle upon a roadway or sidewalk in a manner that obstructs vehicular or foot traffic. Bicycles operated by a person under the age of 18 years old in violation of this section may be impounded for up to 15 days.

Parks & Recreation Commissioner Marshall is disappointed that heightened security is needed this summer, "With so many great summer programs in Taunton, there is plenty for our kids to do. And for kids who don't want to go to organized activities, we have parks and Hopewell Pool and other recreational activities. If you're looking for fun, there's plenty to be had without causing trouble."

Taunton City officials remain committed to ensuring Hopewell Park and other City-owned parks and facilities are safe for all residents to enjoy.

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