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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 20, 2023

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“RAPID FLASH” TRAIL CROSSING SIGNS INSTALLED

GREAT FALLS, Montana – The River’s Edge Trail has a new safety feature.

The City of Great Falls, in partnership with the River’s Edge Trail Foundation, has installed new flashing Trail crossing signs on River Drive North.

The new solar-powered signs, referred to as “Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons” or RRFBs, are user activated, similar to a pedestrian button on a traffic light. When pushed, the signs will flash and a voice announces that fact to inform visually impaired users that the crossing lights have been activated. The lights have a flash time of 24 seconds, giving pedestrians and bicyclists ample time to cross. Driver’s are required by law to stop for pedestrians, but the flashing lights bring more attention to the fact that the crossing is actively in use. The Federal Highway Administration has studied the usefulness of RRFBs, and has stated that their use can increase motorist yielding rates up to 98%.

According to Andrew Finch, City Transportation Planner, the River’s Edge Trail Foundation requested the signs to improve the safety of the crossing of River’s Edge Trail on River Drive North near the skate park in Riverside Park. Finch said this Trail crossing was a good candidate for more visible signage because it crosses a roadway with no streetlights, serves a high number of bicyclists and pedestrians, and traffic is relatively heavy with a mixture of passenger vehicles and large trucks.

Bruce Pollington, president of the River’s Edge Trail Foundation, noted “We received a bequest from the estate of Wilbert Graf to improve the safety of the Trail, and this crossing has been on our radar for years. Working with the Montana Department of Transportation and the City, this seemed to be the perfect location for a public/private partnership to make the Trail safer. The State did a study and confirmed the need, the City Park & Recreation Department ordered the signals, the City Street Division’s Traffic Section

installed them, and the Foundation's gift paid for the materials and the labor. We couldn't be more pleased with the results, and hope to install similar signs at two other crossings in the near future."

According to Finch, the River's Edge Trail crossings of River Drive at the Electric City Water Park and at 3rd Avenue South will receive sign upgrades when the new trail segment from Broadwater Bay to the Electric City Water Park entrance is constructed in a few years.

For more information, Contact:

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