

Memo

To: Atkinson County Public Schools, Interested Parties, General Public

From: Transportation and Environmental Staff, Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Cc: Chelsea Weldon, Georgia SRTS School Outreach Coordinator – South Georgia

Date: 2/4/2021

Re: Vehicle Crashes near Schools in Atkinson County

Introduction

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the state of Georgia's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program partner with local governments and agencies to determine how to make roads and public rights-of-way safer for all users. Traffic safety around schools is a key concern due to a combination of vulnerable road users (in particular, children who walk or bike to school), periods of high traffic volume (e.g., school pick-up and drop-off times), high-risk drivers (e.g., high school students), and school bus traffic. The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding traffic safety around schools in Atkinson County. This information may be used to help determine future investments in transportation infrastructure; to identify priorities for road user education and law enforcement; and to inform future transportation plans and policies. This memo examines crash trends for locations within 1/2 mile of public and private schools in Atkinson County. Over the five-year period from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2020 according to data provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Atkinson County experienced 767 crashes in the public right-of-way. Out of this total, 116 occurred within 1/2 mile of a school. Due to Covid-19, many schools shut down in March of 2020 until the end of the school year leading to much fewer crashes during this time period due to a significant decrease in road traffic.

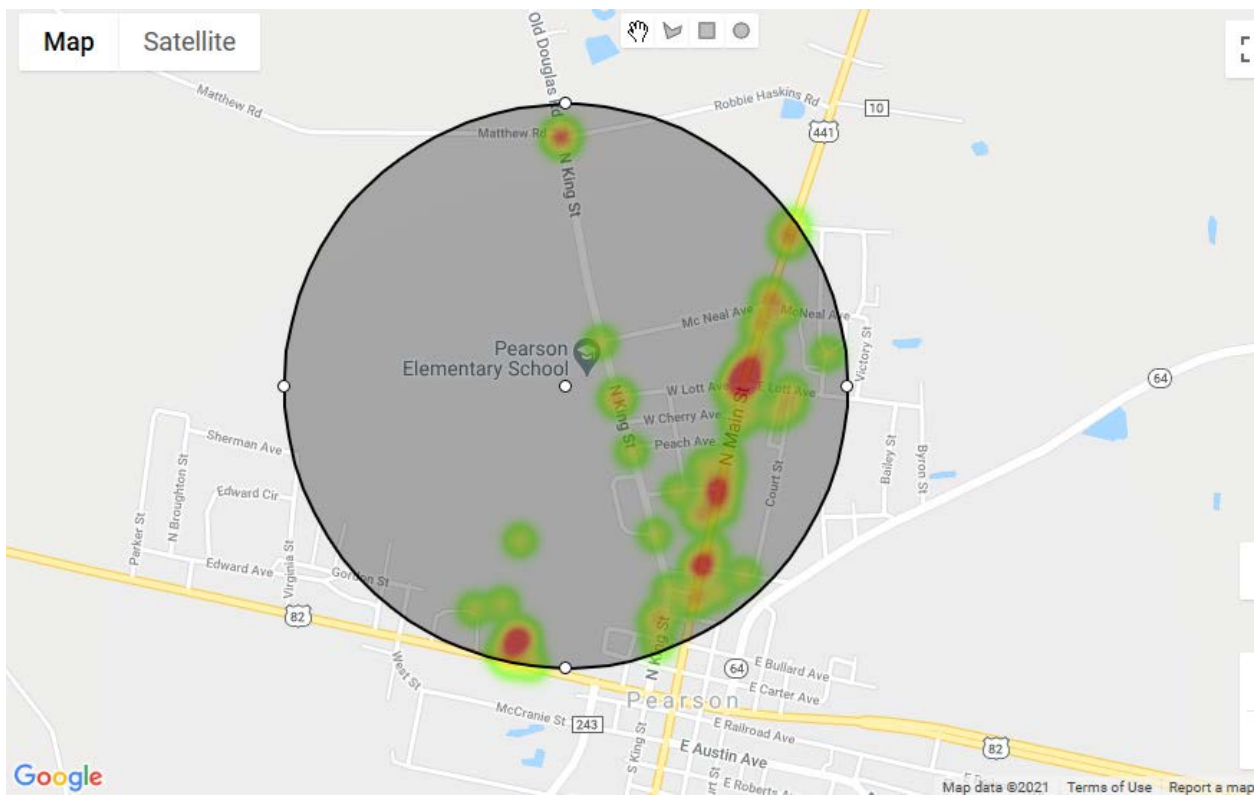
Atkinson County Schools

There are 3 schools in Atkinson county which include 1,648 students altogether. These consist of 2 elementary schools and 1 middle/high school. School in Atkinson County starts at 7:50 and students get picked up at 2:15, so we will assume for this study that drop off hours are from 7:00-8:00am and the pickup hours are 2:00-3:00pm.

The vast majority of the crashes portrayed in this study were merely property damage alone and only a small percentage included any injuries at all. Overall, the crashes within a ½ mile of a given school did not seem to be directly related to school drop off and pickup traffic. Additional education may be appropriate for the awareness of non-motorized vehicles (golf carts, bicycles, etc.) in the community.

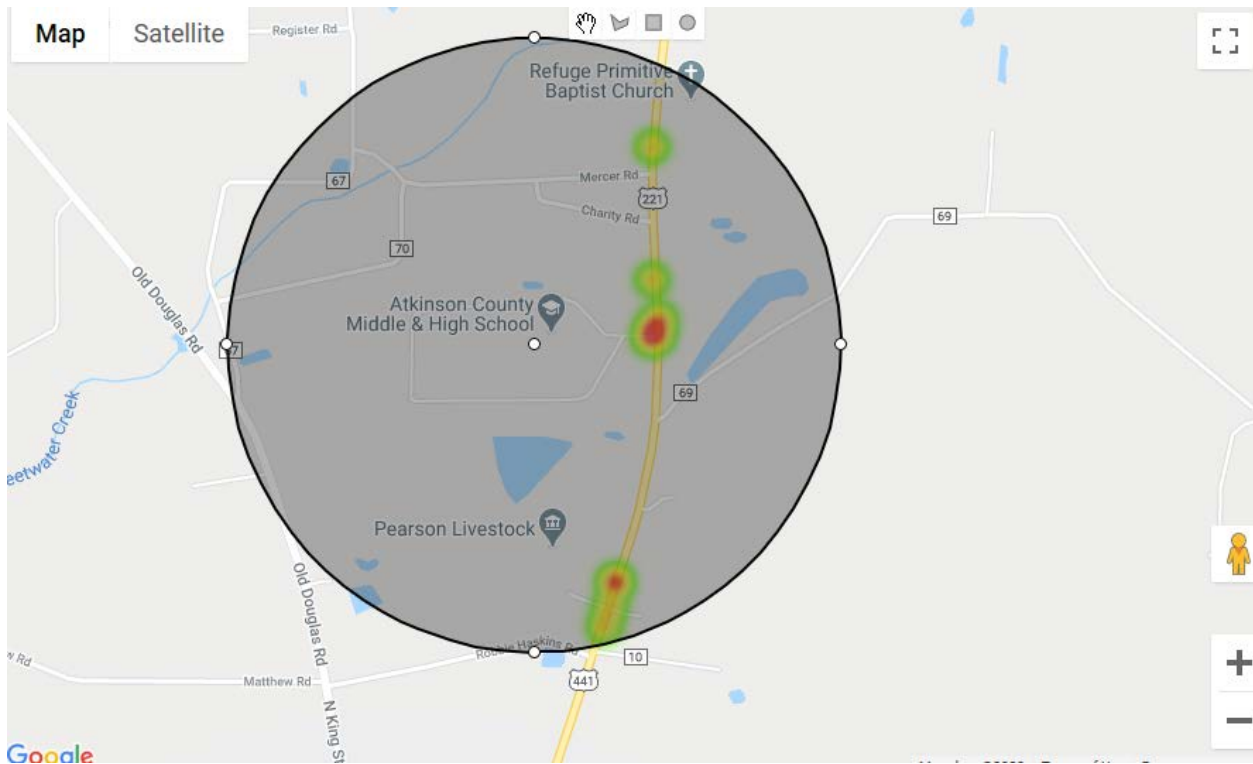
Pearson Elementary School

Pearson Elementary is generally free from major incident. There were 88 crashes in total of which almost all occurred on N Main Street. Of these, 68 included property damage. Only 10 of these crashes involved a minor injury while 2 had a report of a serious injury. During drop off times, there were 2 crashes, and during pickup times there were 8. There was 1 reported injuries in the ½ mile radius during the school hours, it was a 12 year old boy driving a golf cart/go-cart but this has no correlation to the school start and end times.



Atkinson County Middle and High school

Atkinson county Middle and High school was almost entirely free of any crashes at all. There were only 6 crashes in total, of which; 2 resulted in a minor injury, 4 resulted in property damage and there were no deaths. The road that almost all of the crashes occurred on is highway 221. Of the crashes, 1 occurred during the pickup and release times but it was only due to a failure to yield to traffic from a 17 year old turning out of their driveway.



Willacoochee Elementary School

Willacoochee Elementary was generally free of major crashes. There was a total of 22 crashes with property damage, 15 injuries, and 1 fatal crash. The majority of these crashes happened at the intersection of Main Street and Peterson Street. Of the crashes, 2 of them occurred within the school pickup times but they were a result of misjudged clearance and a collision with a non-motorized vehicle.

