



Community Path Safety Improvements

Design Strategy Report Summary
City of Somerville Mobility Division, 2026

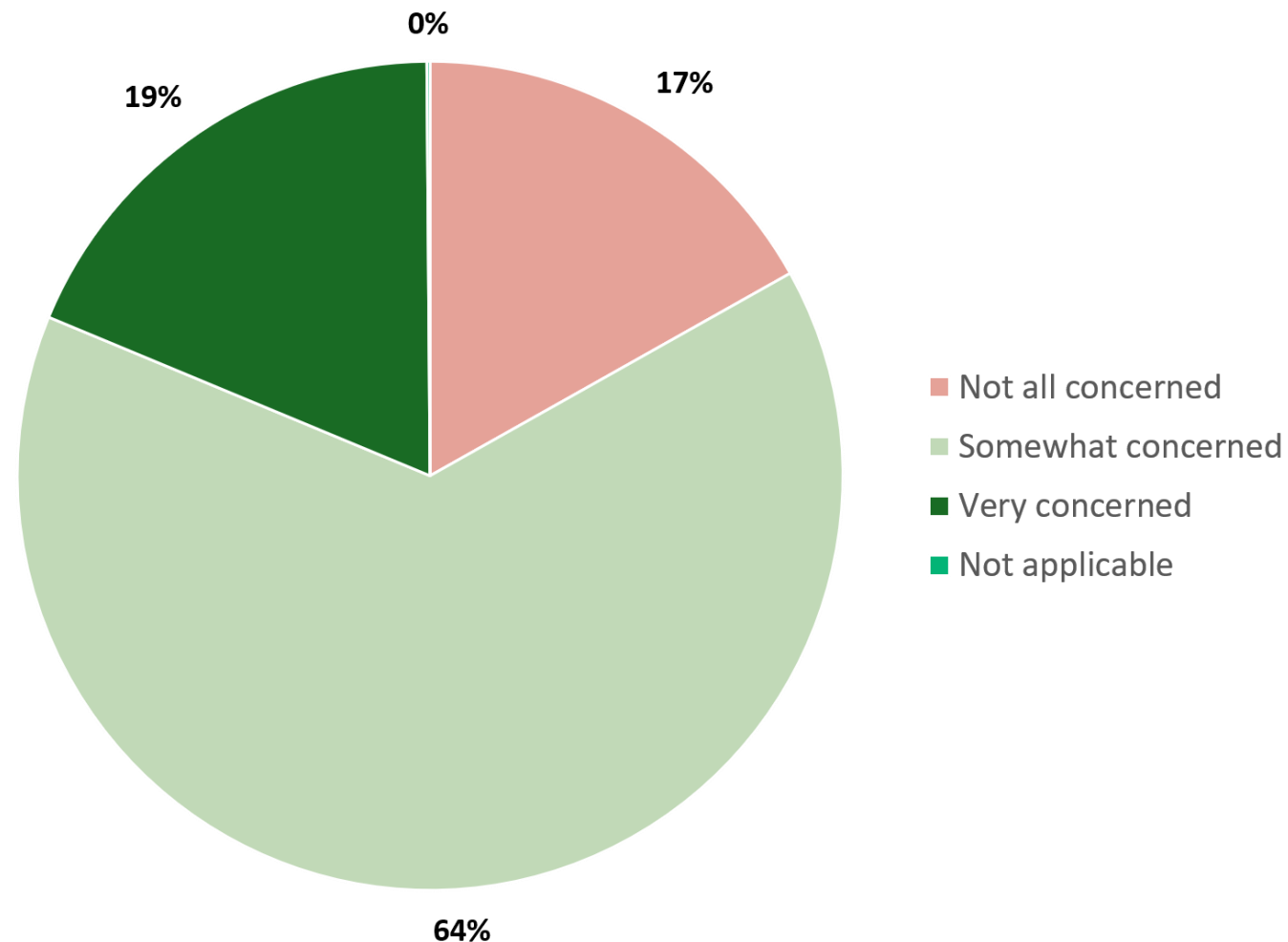
Overview

The Community Path Safety Improvements project launched in August 2025 to address public concerns about safety, particularly between path users and motor vehicle drivers at crossings, and between slower and faster moving path users on the path. From September 8 to October 21, 2025, [we connected](#) with over 1,000 community members to learn about their safety concerns on the Community Path and gather feedback on a set of [potential design tools](#). The following executive summary shares community feedback, revised design treatments, and implementation timeline.

Community Feedback Summary

Feedback Summary – Safety concerns highlights

- Overall we looked through **about 1,500 distinct comments** regarding safety on the path describing *what* makes people feel unsafe, and *where*.
- Level of concern is independent of what time the path is used.
- People who use any kind of bike indicate a lower percentage for ‘Very Concerned’ (10%-13%) in comparison to people walking/running/rolling 23%-27%.



Safety Concerns Survey Question 7 – How concerned do you feel about yours and others safety on the Community Path? (Total responses: 798)

Feedback Summary – Safety

Distribution of Concerns by Location:

Location	Number	Percentage
Path	654	71%
Road Crossings	228	25%
Station Entrances	35	4%
TOTAL	917	100%

Safety Concerns on the Path:

Safety Concern	Number	Percentage
Bikes speeding	261	40%
Sharing the path	202	30%
Motorized vehicles on path	116	18%
General safety	14	2%
Bikes passing	52	8%
Overcrowding	2	.3%
Pedestrian safety	1	.2%
Visibility issues	1	.2%
TOTAL	124	100%

Safety Concerns at Crossings:

Safety Concern	Number	Percentage
Cars yielding at crossings	48	39%
Bikes yielding at crossings	27	22%
Visibility issues	27	22%
Sharing the path	9	7%
Pedestrian safety	3	2%
General Safety	3	2%
Bikes speeding	3	2%
Bikes and peds yielding at crossings	2	2%
Bikes passing	1	1%
Pedestrian crossing	1	1%
TOTAL	124	100%

Potential Design Treatments - Shared during community engagement period



Signage

Signage can communicate path rules, for example “No Motor Vehicles”. Signs can also provide route information to people using the path.



Bollards

Bollards are vertical posts that can be used to narrow lanes or slow people down. They could be placed at intersections, path entrances, or at station entrances.



Signals

Signals control traffic at intersections. There are different types of signal options. One option is a signal that requires people on the path to push a button and wait to cross a road. Another option is a signal that always allow for people on the path to cross and requires cars to wait.



Barriers

Physical barriers like planters or a gate can be used to block traffic. This treatment will slow down users and prevent motor vehicles from accessing the path.



Tactile Pavements

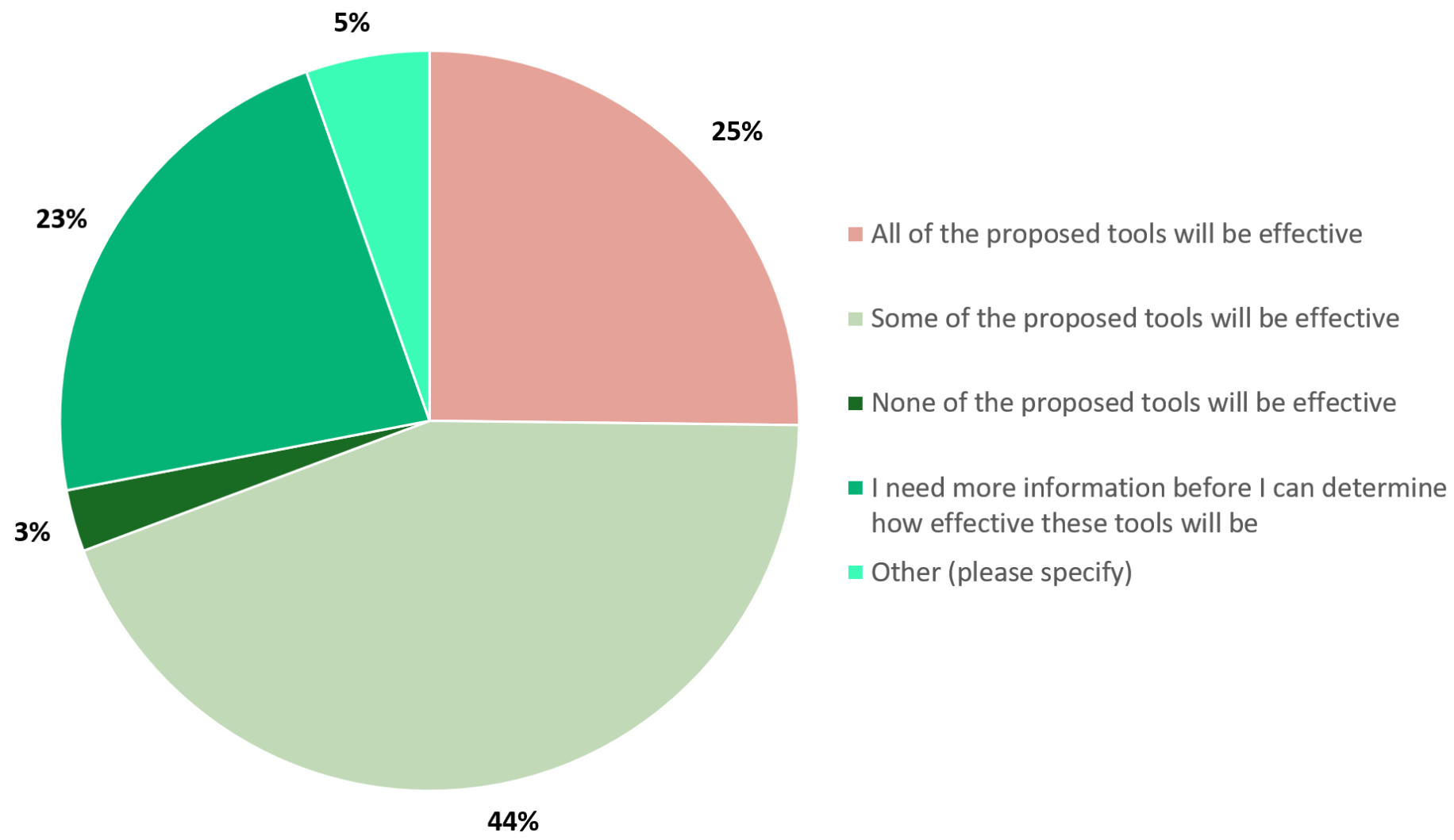
Tactile treatments are physical changes to the path surface. These changes can be achieved through thicker layers of paint, pavers or depressions. Tactile pavements give a visual and physical reminder for users to slow down and/or stay on one side of the path.



Pavement Markings

Pavement markings are lines, symbols, or text painted on the roadway or path. Markings could include “Yield to Pedestrians”, or center lines to show separate directions of travel.

Feedback Summary – Potential design treatments



Safety Concerns Survey Question 12 – The City is considering using the following tools – stop control, bollards, barriers, speed humps/raised crosswalks, tactile pavements, pavement markings, signage and signals – to respond to concerns along the path. In your opinion, will these tools be effective? (Total responses: 812)

Feedback Summary – Potential Design Treatments

Crossing Treatment Options – Community Preference

Design Treatment	Score (% of survey responses)
Stop Control	17%
Raised Crosswalks	17%
Speed humps (road)	16%
Pavement Markings	11%
Bollards	10%
Speed humps (path)	9%
Tactile pavements	8%
Signals	8%
Barriers	4%

We reviewed **about 1,200 distinct comments** regarding potential design treatments.

Path Treatment Options – Community Preference

Design Treatment	Score (% of survey responses)
Signage	40%
Pavement Markings	16%
Bollards	14%
Speed humps (path)	13%
Tactile Pavements	11%
Barriers	6%

Stop Control – Community Preference*

Stop signs for roadway only	65%
Stop signs for both roadway and path	30%
Stop signs for path only	3%

*Survey participants were asked to consider stop control overall, but in the comment field they indicated whether they prefer stop for the roadway, path, or both

Proposed Treatments

Proposed Treatments

Given what we learned from the community process, what design treatments are we prioritizing?

Options that address the highest path safety concerns:

- Speeding
- Motorized vehicles on the path
- Sharing the path

Options that address the highest crossing safety concerns:

- Drivers yielding
- Bicyclists yielding
- Visibility issues

A phased approach to design treatments:

- Quick-build options which are cheaper and faster to implement
- Flexible format allowing testing and evaluation
- More cost and resource-intensive options for later phases

Proposed Treatments – Proposed Implementation Timeline

Phase 1 – Fall 2026

Phase 2 – Spring/Summer 2027

Phase 3 - TBD

Proposed Treatments Phase 1 - 2026

Tactile Pavement – Thermoplastic strips

PHASE 1

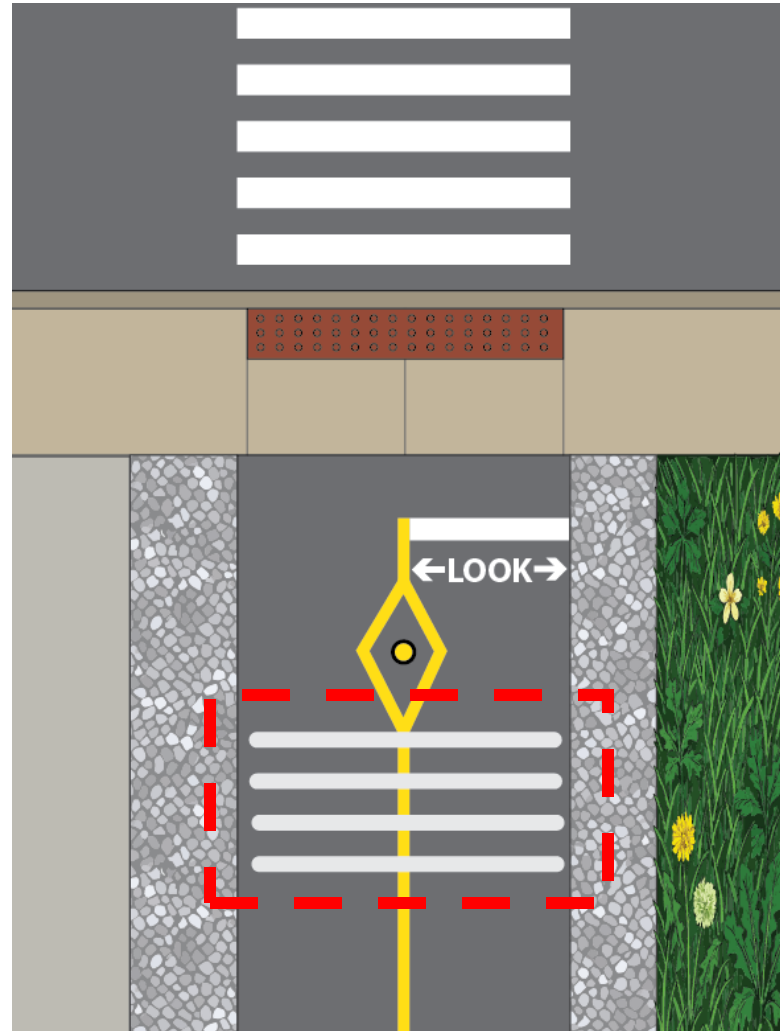
Location: Path crossings, Station entrances, Path access points

Advantages:

- Slows down bike traffic
- Provides tactile feedback approaching a conflict zone
- Compatible with wheelchairs, strollers, and other mobility devices
- Scalable, e.g. already planned for use at floating bus stops on West Broadway and Western Pearl Street Reconstruction projects

Safety Concerns Addressed:

- Speeding
- Bicyclists yielding



Similar example: LA River Greenway Trail

Pavement Markings – "LOOK" and "SLOW" markings PHASE 1

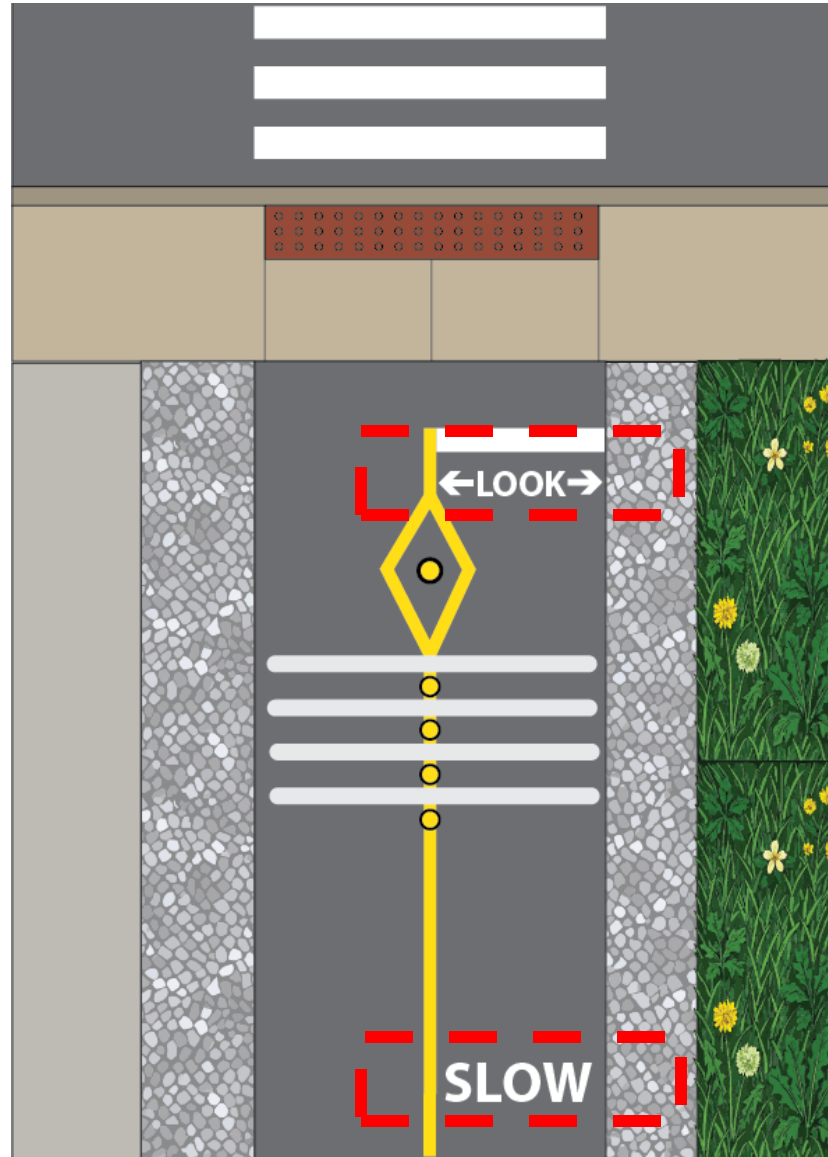
Location: Path crossings

Advantages:

- SLOW alerts path users to reduce speed before a crossing
- In combination with thermoplastic strips, markings may encourage slower speeds
- LOOK provides visual cue to look both ways for sidewalk users, promoting awareness of sidewalk users as cross traffic

Safety Concerns Addressed:

- Bicyclists yielding
- Speeding



Similar example: Charles River Esplanade, Boston

Bollards – Centerline flexpost hardening

PHASE 1

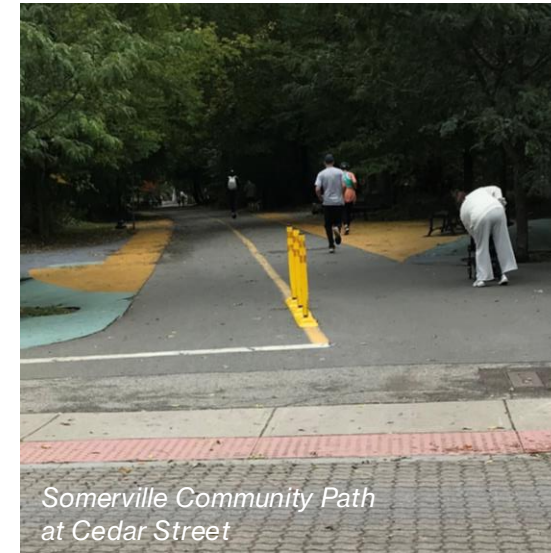
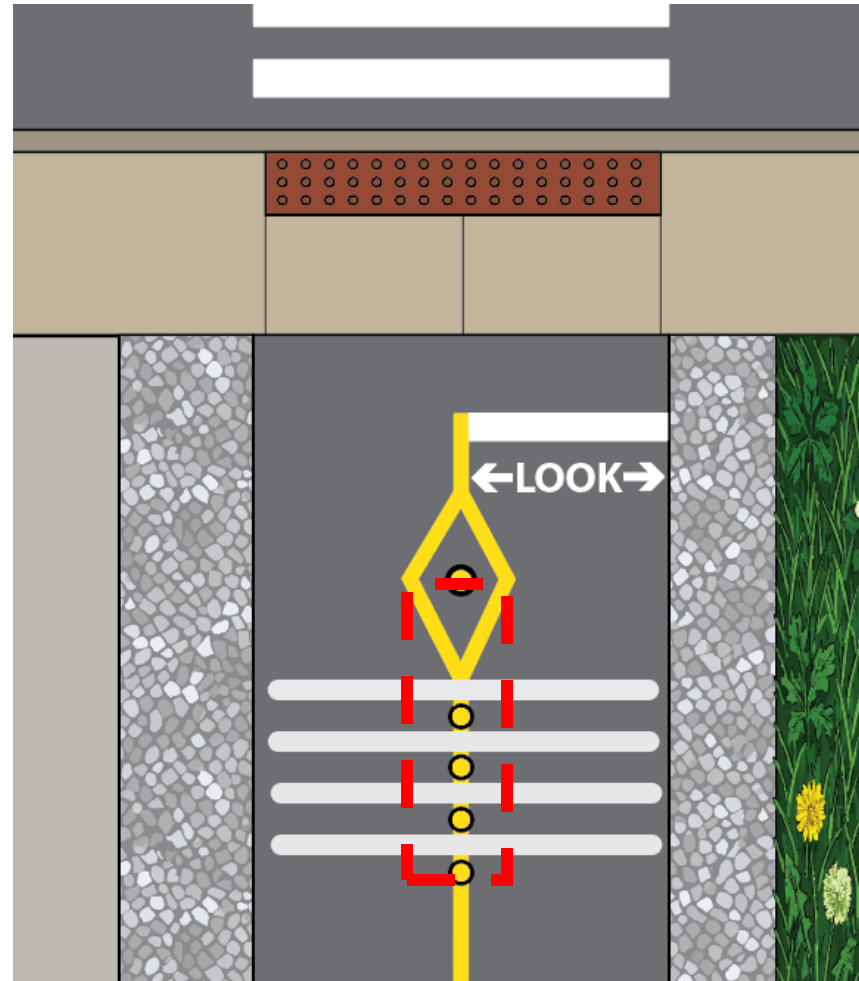
Location: Path crossings

Advantages:

- Provides separation and encourages lane discipline at high conflict areas
- Adds visual cue to pay attention at crossings
- Discourages motor vehicles from entering path

Safety Concerns Addressed:

- Speeding
- Motorized Vehicles on the path
- Sharing the path



Somerville Community Path
at Cedar Street

Signage – New Shared Path Signs

PHASE 1

Location: Along path, path crossings

Advantages:

- Helps people understand expected behavior
- May encourage slower speeds
- Will replace existing 'Bike Route' signs

Safety Concerns Addressed:

- Sharing the path



12" x 18" representative sign – design to be finalized

Signage – Visual “No Motor Vehicles” Path Sign

PHASE 1

Location: Path crossings

Advantages:

- Clearly shows the rules of what vehicles are not allowed on the path
- Graphics add clarity about mopeds
- Will replace existing ‘No Motor Vehicle’ signs

Safety Concerns Addressed:

- Motorized Vehicles on the path



24" x 24" representative sign - design to be finalized

Pavement Markings – Clear Corners/Quick-Build Curb Extensions

PHASE 1

Location: Path crossings

Advantages:

- Slows vehicle drivers
- Reinforces existing restrictions on parking
- Provides better visibility for pedestrians

Safety Concerns Addressed

- Vehicles yielding
- Visibility concerns



Existing temporary installations at Sycamore and Walnut

Proposed Treatments Phase 2 and Phase 3

Potential Future Interventions

Phase 1 treatments will be evaluated and if necessary, Phase 2 and Phase 3 improvements will be considered.

Potential Phase 2 interventions (2027):

- Stop control*
- Pavement murals/art at curb extensions
- Speed board, counters

Potential Phase 3 interventions (2028+):

- Long term monitoring
 - e.g. permanent camera at intersections
- Compliance studies
 - Compliance study at intersections
 - Shared path compliance study
- Speed Humps
 - Develop a speed hump standard specifically for path crossings

**Requires engineering study*

