



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #300
IN CITY COUNCIL
December 15, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see attached a memo from Department of Transportation Commissioner, Brooke McKenna regarding a response to Awaiting Report 25-65 that asked for recommendations on improvements to connectivity north of Rindge Avenue during the Linear Park Reconstruction project.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager
From: Brooke McKenna, Commissioner
Date: December 11, 2025
Subject: Awaiting Reports 2025-065

In response to Awaiting Report 2025-065 asking that the City Manager examine how to improve connectivity north of Rindge Avenue during the Linear Park Reconstruction project so that vulnerable users can bypass Rindge Avenue and Cedar St, where possible, we report the following:

Project Summary

The Linear Park project includes full reconstruction to rebuild the existing park. The new design introduces a variety of new elements including new lighting, drainage, limited irrigation, plantings, improved soils, and new trees. The project also includes a modest widening of the asphalt path in certain locations to accommodate the high volume of people using the park, and new stone dust side paths and other features for park exploration and play. New park amenities include benches, water fountains, bike racks, wayfinding, and trash receptacles, which were all requested by community members.

Detour Summary

Working with multiple City departments, the City of Somerville, stakeholders, and abutters, staff developed and evaluated multiple detour options for park users to take during construction. To make the detours as straightforward, safe, and comfortable as possible, we implemented the following measures:

- Installed new signs and maps to aid both bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Installed variable message boards ahead of the park closure to inform park users.
- Installed Public Service Announcements posters on area Bluebikes bikeshare stations.
- Posted maps and other information on City social media accounts.
- Temporarily reversed motor vehicle traffic on one block of Dudley Street from Cedar to Mass Ave to accommodate a bicyclist detour.
- To avoid confusion, staff distributed 20+ laminated posters on street signs and 50+ flyers to area homes and businesses before the park closure.
- Temporarily restricted parking on one side of Shea Road from Mass Ave to Locke Street to create a safer contra-flow space available to separate people riding bicycles from people walking on sidewalks, and from mixing with motor vehicle traffic going the opposite direction.

Additional measures were also considered that were ultimately not implemented because we determined they had an unacceptably high level of impact on neighbors. For example, we did not move ahead with temporary removal of all parking on Harvey Street to create more space for people walking and biking. City staff also suggested to the City of Somerville that it add signs on alternative detour options like a private way in Somerville as part of the detour.

New Detour Measures

In response to feedback we have heard, we are currently implementing further measures to increase user safety including:

- Requesting additional enforcement by the Police Department at the pedestrian crossing of Mass Ave flashing crosswalk at Dudley St.
- Installing flex posts instead of construction cones on Shea Road to facilitate use as a contra-flow facility
- Installing approximately 20 additional signs at various locations to help users more clearly understand the different detour routes.
- Installing additional Pedestrian Crossing Warning signs at Clifton St at Dudley St.

We will continue to look at individual intersections for opportunities to improve signage and other methods for making the detour work more safely and comfortably for users.

Exploring Traffic Calming and Bicycle Circulation Improvements

To improve overall safety in the North Cambridge neighborhood and so that people walking and biking do not have to use busier streets like Cedar St and Rindge Ave, staff are exploring additional measures that would make it easier and safer to use other routes.

- Speed Humps – We will continue to review requests made for speed humps in new locations in 2026 to determine if they could slow motor vehicle traffic and possibly aid this detour and the general safety of people walking and biking in the area.
- Intersections – We will continue to review intersections with a focus on crash hot spots. Intersections that are redesigned will be made safer for all modes.
- Neighborways – Neighborways refers to an approach that allows bicycles to travel opposing vehicle traffic on smaller one-way streets. The City of Somerville has installed neighborways on a few of its streets, usually near elementary schools. These streets are too narrow for a full marked contraflow bike lane without removing parking on one side of the street. The neighborway concept consists of a package of pavement markings and signs that signal to the cyclist that it is permissible to use the street in what otherwise would be the wrong direction. The signs and markings are also intended to communicate to drivers that they should expect bicycles in the opposite direction and that they should yield the right of way. Neighborways have not been used in Cambridge yet. We are still considering the safety tradeoffs of allowing wrong-way biking on one-way streets.