

## Belmont Begins Crosswalk Flag Pilot Program to Increase Pedestrian Safety

To increase the safety of pedestrians in Belmont, especially near our schools, Belmont is starting a crosswalk flag pilot program at four locations along popular school walking routes. The project is being launched by Belmont Safe Routes to School Community Working Group, in collaboration with the Town of Belmont, including Belmont Public Schools, Belmont Office of Community Development, Belmont Police Department, and Belmont Department of Public Works.

The crosswalk flag program is a low-cost, low-tech tool designed to help increase pedestrian visibility and driver awareness in Belmont. Here's how the flags work: A pedestrian picks up a brightly colored flag from a canister located near one end of a crosswalk and holds it in front of them, clearly signaling their desire to cross the street. When traffic has stopped, the pedestrian crosses the street while holding the flag, then places it in the bucket at the other end of the crosswalk. The use of flags does not eliminate a pedestrian's responsibility to take all normal safety precautions. And the flags are not intended to replace crossing guards.

The pilot program is scheduled to begin the week of Sept. 21st at each of the four crosswalks. Volunteers will demonstrate how to use the flags at the [following locations](#):

- On Gale Road at Watson Road
- On Lexington Street at Sycamore Street
- On Cross Street at Broad Street
- On Payson Road at Oakley Road

*There will be a demonstration beginning at 8:15 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22, at Cross and Broad streets.*

The crosswalk flag pilot program is funded with a generous grant from Be Well Belmont, a project of the Belmont Food Collaborative. Be Well Belmont is a coalition of leaders in the Belmont community dedicated to the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Belmont Safe Routes to School Working Group will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the program over the coming months.

Belmont joins other communities with crosswalk flag programs, including Seattle, Salt Lake City, Lexington, and Arlington, which has been a helpful adviser. Formal studies and anecdotal evidence support the idea that crosswalk flags are effective in encouraging pedestrian safety. [A report](#), available through the Transportation Research Board, describes research that shows flags to be an effective tool in prompting motorists to yield to pedestrians.

About the Belmont SRTS Community Working Group: The Working Group convenes community stakeholders to share best practices and to improve both safety and participation of student walking and cycling. It is co-organized by Kate Bowen (Chair, Sustainable Belmont) and Melissa Green (Regional Coordinator, SRTS). Representatives of each elementary school, Chenery, Belmont Police Department, the Office of Community Development, Belmont Health Department, School Committee, Traffic Advisory Committee, and Sustainable Belmont participate. Please contact Kate Bowen at [SustainableBelmont@gmail.com](mailto:SustainableBelmont@gmail.com) for more information or [www.sustainablebelmont.net](http://www.sustainablebelmont.net).

