

**Town of Needham**  
**Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee**  
**Minutes for Monday, January 8, 2024**  
**HYBRID**  
**Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building**  
**500 Dedham Ave, Needham MA 02492**  
**or**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89968969859>

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**ADOPTED FEBRUARY 12, 2024**

- 7:11 p.m.      Call to Order:  
A meeting of the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee was convened by Justin McCullen, Chair. Those present in-person were Timothy Bulger, James Goldstein, Moe Handel, and Carys Lustig. Those present via Zoom were Duncan Allen, Alex Clee, Tyler Gabrielski, Shane Mark, and Paul Molta.
- 7:12 p.m.      Introductions:  
Committee members present introduced themselves, with many of them noting that they are involved because of the interests in improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists in Town. Committee members have a wide range of experiences leading them to be a part of this Committee, including previously representing the Town at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Traffic Management Advisory Committee, and MBTA Advisory Board. Committee members also emphasized the infrastructure investment needed to create an environment that supports multimodality with regard to transportation and the role of citizens' input as the Town develops budgets and programs.
- 7:20 p.m.      Summary of Prior Meeting:  
Mr. McCullen reviewed the prior meeting, including the goal to prioritize the goals of the Committee, acknowledging the extent of project planning involved in many of the goals. Ms. Lustig discussed the process for changes to the right of way and the extent to which abutters have control in decisions. Mr. Handel asked about how soon residents are informed about changes occurring in their neighborhoods and the level of engagement with residents. Discussion ensued about the factors at play in certain neighborhoods, including trees, neighborhood aesthetic, protected bike lanes, and navigating this dynamic with residents as well. At the moment, there is no formal protocol for this decision-making process.
- Mr. Bulger noted that the Committee may be required to assess the need for a comprehensive transportation plan, taking into consideration current traffic patterns and how these change over a significant period of time, as well as the challenges of cut-through streets and the role of Town departments in traffic planning, including Engineering. Further exploration is needed to understand how traffic moves throughout Town and affects mobility and traffic safety. Digital maps

may be helpful in these efforts in order to analyze different permutations of traffic movement.

7:41 p.m.

**Sidewalk Inventory:**

The Committee then discussed the current Sidewalk Inventory, with a specific focus on how the Mobility Committee can give tools to DPW with current funding to maintain 130 miles of current sidewalk. Mr. McCullen raised potential changes that could be made to make the Sidewalk Inventory more sustainable, including removing sidewalks on streets where there are currently sidewalks on both sides of the road and where traffic counts are low. This effort would need to consider school zones and traffic areas as well.

Ms. Lustig noted that an investment increase to maintain the current inventory would be a potential increase from approximately \$1 million to approximately \$6/7 million, which would not include many segments that do not have any sidewalk. She also noted that evaluating the current Sidewalk Inventory does not necessarily mean reducing the amount of sidewalk in Town but may mean redistributing sidewalks more equitably. She noted that this committee can assist in formulating a mechanism to determine how to prioritize which neighborhoods are addressed first and additionally how we can reduce the inventory while identifying other areas of Town that are underserved with regard to sidewalks. Questions were raised regarding how many miles of the sidewalks include sidewalks on both sides of the street, forming a map of sidewalks along school walking routes, and the right of way and property lines when sidewalks are removed. The Committee also discussed the importance of bike lanes when discussing sidewalks and the factors affecting where and how bike lanes are designated and built. A thoughtful conversation followed taking into consideration the needs and perspectives of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

8:08 p.m.

**School Zones and Safety Zones:**

The next topic raised by Mr. McCullen was school zones and safety zones in Town. A major concern raised was the utilization of different signage in each school zone. A principal goal of this effort will be to standardize all school zone signage. Discussion ensued about the success of the existing safety zone at Perry Park and the criteria for safety zones to be identified. Committee members discussed the prioritization criteria for a safety zone and the criteria for establishing a safety zone policy and engaging the Transportation Safety Committee to implement the safety zones. Conversations about reductions in speed limits sought to understand the effects of changing speed limit signage, traffic calming measures, and laws about speed cameras.

8:24 p.m.

**Planning and Funding:**

Ms. Lustig reviewed that DPW is currently seeking funding for a project along the Highland Avenue corridor. Additionally, a reboot of the Downtown Project on Great Plain Avenue is underway, with four engineering firms currently compiling plans and will present to compete for the design contract on this project. Ms. Lustig

also discussed Chapter 90 funding and the factors that contribute to decisions regarding funding for infrastructure projects.

8:30 p.m. Committee Discussion:  
Mr. McCullen outlined a potential approach for the work of the Mobility Committee in an effort to outline the goals and prioritize the efforts of committee members. The initial steps towards a comprehensive plan include individual policies on specific issues, including sidewalks, street management, and Complete Streets. These individual policies may then form a comprehensive strategic plan. Mr. Handel noted it may be helpful to formulate a spreadsheet categorizing the existing plans, the time of their development, and their current status. Committee members agreed that it would be helpful to engage some technical assistance in order to develop a scope and continue the development of individual policies. The Rail Trail at the Junction connection and potential pathways to development was also discussed.

8:43 p.m. Adjourn:  
**Motion by Mr. Handel that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, January 8, 2024.**  
**Second: Mr. Bulger. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

The next Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.