

**Town of Needham
Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee
Minutes for Monday, June 10, 2024**

HYBRID

Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building
500 Dedham Ave, Needham MA 02492

or

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

+1 305 224 1968 US; +1 309 205 3325 US; +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
+1 646 931 3860 US

ADOPTED JULY 22, 2024

- 7:03 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee was convened by Tim Bulger, Chair. Those present in-person were Duncan Allen, Tyler Gabrielski, James Goldstein, Shane Mark, and Paul Molta. Alex Clee and Carys Lustig joined via Zoom.
- 7:04 p.m. Approve Minutes from May 22, 2024:

Motion by Mr. Goldstein to approve the meeting minutes from May 22, 2024. Second: Mr. Allen. Unanimously approved 4-0.
- 7:04 p.m. Old Business:

Duncan Allen reported that he spoke with Mr. Keane and provided a thorough briefing regarding the transportation advocacy group that is currently forming in West Roxbury. Mr. Keane will respond with suggestions for next steps. Mr. Allen will follow up.
- 7:07 p.m. Update on Dedham Avenue and Webster Street Projects:

Mr. Gabrielski provided an update on the curb and sidewalk work that is nearing completion. The permit has been received for the work under the identified bridge from the MBTA. The current issue is insurance threshold that is beyond the Town's default policy. This will require adding external insurance for railroad protective liability insurance. Upgraded pedestrian signals, traffic detection cameras at Dedham/Webster intersection will be installed this week. The vast majority of the project from curb and sidewalk perspective will be completed this week, with paving to follow. Mr. Goldstein asked about the extent of the paving work on Dedham Avenue, which will be from Lincoln Street near the municipal lots down to the Dedham line. The Committee also discussed the width of the sidewalk on Dedham Avenue, which is currently set at 5 feet.

7:20 p.m. MPCC Role in DPW Street Project Planning:

Discussion regarding the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee's role in DPW street project planning addressed standards and policies regarding lane width, sidewalk, bike lanes, and traffic calming, when and where to implement standards to planned projects, and the timing of the Street Design Guide with regard to developing these policies. Themes included the Scope currently in development, using the Scope to plan ahead for future projects, and what will be included in the Scope itself.

Mr. Gabrielski emphasized that the Highland Avenue project, specifically from Great Plain Avenue to Webster Street, will be most influenced by the Street Design Guide and the work of the MPCC in establishing standards and policies. There is currently no default for many standards and policies, therefore ad hoc decisions have often been made regarding roadways. Committee members discussed the process for decision-making until a Street Design Guide is complete. Mr. Mark highlighted that although the Guide may not be developed yet, the DPW plans projects with the goal of Complete Streets. Mr. Gabrielski identified lane narrowing as a potential initial starting point for understanding the context of a particular roadway.

A focus of the discussion was on truck traffic through Needham. Ms. Lustig emphasized not accidentally pulling trucks into neighborhood streets where there are no striping plans when establishing lane narrowing for larger roads such as Highland Avenue. Ms. Lustig also distinguished between full renovation projects and smaller road projects such as striping and road surfacing.

Ms. Lustig added that the Semi-Annual Transportation Meeting in the fall examining the Capital Plan is an opportunity to gain feedback from the public about opportunities for smaller projects, such as paving and striping projects, that would benefit residents. The Street Design Guide could also help in determining where these projects would be necessary and/or effective and with budget planning.

8:10 p.m. Development of Sidewalk Maintenance Plan/Removal Pilot:

The Committee discussed the challenge of maintaining sidewalks in Town. Mr. Gabrielski noted that he receives calls and emails from residents almost daily regarding sidewalks that are in disrepair. At the moment, there is only the capacity to repair reported hazards, and there is no current funding to program to support large scale neighborhood-wide rehabilitation. Mr. Mark added that the current response is to target school sidewalks, sidewalks near schools, and sidewalks on arterial roads. There is currently a more than 40-year backlog on neighborhood sidewalks. Other considerations when removing sidewalks includes maintaining effective interconnections that improve efficiency and safety for pedestrians while keeping in mind that the more sidewalks there are in Town, the more impervious surfaces there are.

The Committee discussed how to determine which streets to start with and to what extent the residents can be involved in the process, as well as the current capacity of DPW staff. The Committee recognized that these decisions are complex and will require effective evaluation, creative ideas, and attentiveness to feedback from the public and the budget and staffing capacities.

9:07 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Allen that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, June 10, 2024.

Second: Mr. Goldstein. Unanimously approved 4-0.

The next Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2024 at 7 p.m.