

**Town of Needham
Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee
Minutes for Monday, July 22, 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 AUGUST 12, 2024

- 7:00 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, Alex Clee, Tyler Gabrielski, Moe Handel, and Shane Mark. Carys Lustig, Paul Molta, and Justin McCullen joined via Zoom.
- 7:03 p.m. Approve Minutes from June 10, 2024:

**Motion by Mr. Handel to approve the meeting minutes from June 10, 2024.
Second: Mr. Molta. Approved 3-0-1.**
- 7:04 p.m. Update on Transportation Master Plan Scoping Assistance with Travis Pollack, Senior Transportation Planner, MAPC

Travis Pollack reminded the Committee that the project purpose is technical assistance to develop a Scope of Work to select a vendor who will assist the Town in creating and adopting a Street Design and Policy Guide. The first step has been to observe the existing conditions in the Towns in terms of streets and traffic and exploring other similar street design guides and policy guides in Newton, MA and Charlotte, NC. He highlighted key points of the evaluation so far:
- Streets closer/connecting to I-95/Rt. 128 have higher traffic volumes: Highland Avenue, Kendrick Street
 - Light industrial/office area between Kendrick Street and Highway Avenue has more truck traffic, but also is transitioning to office and multifamily
 - Highland Avenue and Great Plain Avenue are key connectors
 - Greendale Avenue parallels I-95/Rt. 128, can be a “cut through” street for some
 - Crashes are not trending downward, pedestrian/bike crashes trending upward
 - Need for more sidewalks, safer walking, bicycling, rolling connections overall
- Mr. Pollack also reviewed some commonalities in similar policy and design guides that might shape the Needham Policy/Design Guide, including:
- Make streets functional for all users (walking, cycling, rolling, transit, drivers)
 - Advance municipal adopted policies on complete streets, expanded sidewalks/trails networks

- Advance traffic safety/zero deaths and serious injury goals
- Integrate designs with local zoning and development, districts
- Include designs and policies for intersections, connections with trails, regional connections
- First set functional classifications for streets based upon connections, development, available R/W
- Set design elements for each, including intersections

Discussion included considerations about how to responsibly maintain pedestrian safety features such as sidewalks, infrastructure inventory management, and the Scope of Work Outline. This outline includes developing the guide purpose, policies, goals, and metrics, existing conditions and policies, develop functional classifications, design elements, GIS mapping, and community engagement. Committee members also emphasized the visibility challenges that utility poles present in the right of way and the logistics of approaching this in project timelines, as well as ensuring the complete streets philosophy is applied in these situations.

7:40 p.m. Update on Dedham Avenue and Webster Street Projects:

Tyler Gabrielski provided an update that the sidewalk expansion under the MTBA has been completed and temporary lane markers have been put down. They are expecting the paving process to begin the first week of August. They are still waiting on the components for the flashing crosswalk beacons at George Aggott Road for the crosswalk, but the other sidewalk-level improvements have been completed. Comments from residents show an appreciation for the improvement. The sidewalk was expanded from 3 feet to 5 feet.

The Webster Street project is making progress as well, with the ADA compliant ramps and curb line changes at the intersection of Webster Street and Rosemary Street being completed. The final 3-inch elevation of the raised crosswalks will occur when paving happens, estimated to occur in September at night. The plan is to designate this as a Safety Zone once a speed study is completed after work is completed. Duncan Allen raised the concern about a potential increase in traffic on Manning Street for individual potentially avoiding Webster Street. Mr. Gabrielski noted that there were several speed studies completed in recent years on Manning Street, and another speed study can be conducted after this project under the new conditions as well.

7:56 p.m. Continued Discussion: Sidewalk Maintenance Plan/Removal Pilot:

Committee members discussed the various factors that would be involved in the ongoing sidewalk maintenance plan and potential removal pilot. Tim Bulger identified Country Lane as an example of a road where there are sidewalks on either side that are not continuous.

Mr. Gabrielski noted that reducing sidewalk inventory is one of the goals of the sidewalk maintenance plan, but it is not the only goal. Justin McCullen proposed that using street designations could be a way of prioritizing sidewalks on certain types of streets, then seeing where these streets feed into. Further investigation is needed into what other municipalities use for sidewalk maintenance in terms of cost.

8:31 p.m. Additional Items:

Duncan Allen noted that Mary Tannenbaum will present to the MPCC at the next meeting regarding ideas for further public transportation in Needham.

Mr. Gabrielski also raised the Rail Trail and how related items should be discussed in the near future.

8:37 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, July 22, 2024.

Second: Mr. McCullen. Unanimously approved 5-0.

The next Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2024 at 7 p.m.