

**Town of Needham
Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee
Minutes for Monday, February 10, 2025
HYBRID**

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

or

<https://needham-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/81086838535>

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Webinar ID: 810 8683 8535

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 12, 2025

- 6:00 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, Guus Driessen, Tyler Gabrielski, James Goldstein, and Carys Lustig. Stephen Frail, Moe Handel, and Shane Mark joined via Zoom. Mr. Handel left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- 6:02 p.m. Approve Minutes from January 13, 2025:

Motion by Mr. Driessen to approve the meeting minutes from January 13, 2025.
Second: Mr. Allen. Unanimously approved 5-0.
- 6:04 p.m. Sidewalk Maintenance Plan/Removal Pilot (Continued):

Discussion continued among MPCC members regarding the Sidewalk Maintenance Plan/Removal Pilot. Mr. Gabrielski began drafting an invitation to a Town Summit for this program, focusing on how to create resident buy-in around this program. He discussed that mid-March may make the most sense for the timing of the Summit. Mr. Gabrielski also discussed the possibility of using a betterment/cost-sharing program for this program. He referenced Newton as a municipality that has used a betterment/cost-sharing program. Mr. Mark offered further detail on how this program works. Ms. Lustig noted that the government structure of Needham would require funding requests to be in place around four months before Town Meeting. MPCC members also raised the neighborhood dynamics and discussions that would need to take place. Ms. Lustig recommended that Mr. Gabrielski outline a detailed policy regarding what the cost-sharing would be in this type of arrangement.

Mr. Frail pointed out the equity issues with the cost-sharing program in different parts of the Town. He recommended separating the two different programs: repair and maintenance of existing sidewalks and the addition of sidewalks. Particular challenges are the staffing levels and cost challenges of doing asphalt work and curb work due to labor and supply shortages. Committee members discussed how to prioritize maintenance versus removal efforts and other relevant stakeholders in

these conversations and decision-making. Mr. Bulger emphasized that sidewalk removal is part of the charge of the MPCC as the first step in reducing the backlog and then addressing maintenance through an increased budget. The Committee determined that next steps include identifying talking points when presenting to residents.

6:56 p.m. Revisions to DPW Spring & Summer Construction Schedule

Mr. Gabrielski presented several changes to the prior construction schedule due to funding changes. The first block of work from April to June includes roads that are going to be paved and includes updates to ADA ramps. Mr. Gabrielski provided further details about the intersection improvements at Brookside Road near Volante Farms. There are four handicapped ramp upgrades as part of this project. The Tower Avenue project is planned to occur in July with neighborhood meetings ahead of this project. This project is also along one of the School Walking Routes in Town, which makes it a priority for improvement.

Committee members reviewed the other paving projects that are planned for the upcoming construction season, asking questions about certain locations, particularly where there are concerns about traffic calming and pedestrian safety.

7:25 p.m. Updates re: Highland Ave TIP Project, Marked Tree Road Reconstruction, and Envision Needham Center:

Highland Ave Roadway Improvement Project (TIP Project)

Mr. Gabrielski reported that the Town has applied for inclusion on the Boston Region MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan for the next five fiscal years. The application has been submitted accompanied by a letter drafted by Mr. Bulger. It is currently under review. Mr. Gabrielski has also launched the project webpage designed in conjunction with a consultant which is now live. The website includes the timeline of the project as well as a link to a survey for feedback on the bike lane. There will be a public visioning workshop on February 26 in Powers Hall, at which the plan to date will be presented, as well as the features of the project and the process. Once the survey is closed, further work on design will take place using the feedback and then will be presented to the Select Board for their feedback as well.

Mr. Bulger asked at what point in the process the MPCC will have an opportunity to provide feedback. Mr. Gabrielski responded that it seems appropriate for the MPCC to provide feedback before the presentation to the Select Board.

Marked Tree Road Reconstruction

Mr. Gabrielski reported several data points from the survey completed. Priorities include speeding and lack of sidewalk accommodations, as well as what traffic calming measures would be supported. The vast majority of respondents responded that they would prefer sidewalk only on the South side of the street. The consultant is at work incorporating this feedback into the next round of design proposals.

Envision Needham Center

Mr. Gabrielski reported that there was a successful set of walking tours and an Open House for residents to give feedback on the elements and feel of the project and give feedback to consultants about specifics of design such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and other elements.

7:48 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Driessen that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, February 10, 2025.

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

The next Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 10, 2025 at 6 p.m.