

**Town of Needham
Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee
Minutes for Monday, September 8, 2025
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 OCTOBER 20, 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 Guus Driessen, Stephen Frail, Tyler Gabrielski, James Goldstein, Wooseong Kwon, Carys Lustig, Shane Mark and Justin McCullen joined via Zoom.
- 6:01 p.m. Public Comment Period
No public comments were heard.
- 6:01 p.m. Approve Minutes from July 14, 2025:

Mr. Gabrielski noted several changes submitted by Mr. Goldstein:
- Additional details about the location of the bike lane improvements on Great Plain Avenue
 - Additional language about the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Transportation Committees and that the three committees would meet shortly to develop joint suggestions for the current round of goal-setting by the Select Board. There was additional discussion whether there was a vote or consensus on this topic. Mr. Bulger will review this and bring these minutes for approval at the next meeting.
- 6:02 p.m. DPW Construction Update

Mr. Gabrielski provided an update on construction maintenance work, detailing the roadways, type of work, and additional areas of concern:
- Planned projects completed
 - Handicap ramps and paving completed near Volante Farms; ramp connection to Rolling Lane
 - Additional handicap ramps and paving in Tillotson/Damon/Tanglewood/Hollow Ridge/Pythias Cr neighborhood
 - Rosemary Street from Highland Ave to Parish Road included handicap ramps and paving
 - Tower Ave: redesign of intersection with Paul Revere delayed from 2024; presented to Select Board and largely in support of the project; continue to

be responsive to feedback and plan for berm area landscaping. Feedback has included concerns about the narrow width of the new road layout.

- Handicap ramps, paving, rubber chip seal treatment, micro surfacing treatment, and paving completed on many roadways.
- Great Plain Ave (Harris Ave to Peacedale Rd) and Harris Ave (Webster St to Great Plain Ave) – micro surfacing treatments pushed to spring to ensure bike lane proposal is considered
- Webster St – Fox Hill to Dedham Ave – bidding out with Chapter 90 funds
- Coolidge Ave, Prince St, Harris Ave – sidewalk work has been delayed until spring or summer 2026
- Old Farm Rd, Longacre Rd, Lawton Rd – handicap ramps and paving
- Charles River St – paving after Eversource work

Mr. Bulger asked about questions from residents about concrete versus asphalt and the desire for more consistency. Ms. Lustig responded the plan is to utilize asphalt; she emphasized the need for resident communication for the reasons why asphalt is preferred over concrete. Mr. McCullen raised concern about a crosswalk that has not be re-added after the road was paved over at Central Ave and Marked Tree Road. Mr. Goldstein identified Stevens Road as a location where much of the sidewalk was repaired with concrete and asked why this was the case. Discussion concluded with Mr. Gabrielski noting that the Hunnewell intersection project is progressing.

6:25 p.m. GPI Updates on Central Ave at Great Plain Ave and Marked Tree Road

Central Ave at Great Plain Ave

John Diaz, GPI, presented on the updates on Central Ave at Great Plain Ave and Marked Tree Road. He described the main challenges related to safety, traffic backup, and the historical properties and Article 97 protected land surrounding the intersection. Mr. Diaz explained plans to use land from the church to create a right turn lane as vehicles enter Town, lengthen some of the turn lanes, and update the signals while taking into consideration pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Discussion ensued regarding Article 97, whether a rotary was considered, and the utility of Noyes Park for the public benefit. Committee members also discussed adding signage that could potentially direct northbound traffic turning right towards Needham Center through Noyes Street instead to lessen traffic backups on Central Ave and specific areas of concerns for pedestrian and bicyclist safety at this intersection. The addition of a right turn lane was also discussed, including the process for using the land, what alternatives the land could be used for, and what would add the most value. Mr. McCullen posited that alleviating the backup traffic from Wellesley on Great Plain Ave will prevent the safety issue of drivers crossing over the double yellow line to turn left onto Central Ave during peak traffic hours.

Marked Tree Road

Mr. Diaz then reviewed the results of the survey conducted in the spring regarding sidewalks on Marked Tree Road, with respondents preferring a sidewalk on the southern side. There will also be a focus on traffic calming in this area, with a raised crosswalk at Avalon and sidewalk extension here as well. The subsequent step is to meet with abutters to discuss any changes that may be necessary to driveways and drainage concerns. Funding for this project is Chapter 90 funds which are already available. Mr. Goldstein suggested that a follow-up meeting with residents occurs to communicate progress regarding their traffic calming concerns.

7:08 p.m. Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Update

Mr. Gabrielski presented the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan for remaining projects as outlined below and described the priority ranking process. Additional projects proposed for consideration were also included in his presentation. Discussion included the commitment of time and resources to complete items that are listed as partially complete, as well as the possibility of forming neighborhood coalitions, for example on South Street, with related issues such as equity concerns and costs to restructure drainage systems and relocate utility poles. Mr. Goldstein asked about when the Town will reapply for the next round of funding; Mr. Gabrielski will check on the timing for this which he anticipates this fall.

Priority 5 Projects:

1. Highland Avenue/Memorial Field Access
 - a. MPCC discussed the nuances of program funding compared to capital funding. Rosemary Street/Nehoiden Street/Parish Road might be accomplished under the \$500,000.
2. Greendale Avenue/Great Plain Avenue Pedestrian Accommodations and Intersection Improvements
 - a. Going to be requesting funding through the Intersection Improvement Project but to save the Town that money
3. Rosemary Street/Nehoiden Street/Parish Road Intersection Reconstruction (Option A)
 - a. Potential roundabout concept
 - b. Potentially within \$500,000
4. Rosemary Street/Nehoiden Street/Parish Road Intersection Reconstruction (Option B)
5. Hunnewell Street at Hillside Ave Intersection Improvements
 - a. Challenging geometry, visibility issues

Priority 4 Projects:

1. Harris Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodation – Phase 1 (Pollard Middle School)
2. Harris Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodation – Phase 2
3. Central Avenue/Reservoir Street Intersection Reconstruction
4. Great Plain Avenue Bicycle Accommodations
5. Highland Avenue Intersections Reconstruction

6. Central Ave at Cedar Street Intersection Improvements

Priority 3 Projects:

1. Central Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations
2. South Street Sidewalk Link (rename in new plan]
3. Webster Street Bicycle Accommodations – Phase 2
4. Kendrick Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodation
5. Central Avenue at Charles River Street Intersection Improvements
6. Charles River St Pedestrian Improvements
7. Hunnewell Street at Wellesley Ave Intersection Improvements

Priority 2 Projects:

1. Central Avenue/Newman elementary School Pedestrian Accommodations
2. Great Plain Avenue at Hersey Station
3. Needham High School and Webster Street Bicycle Accommodations – Phase 1
4. South Street Pedestrian Improvements – Phase 1
5. South Street Pedestrian Improvements – Phase 2
6. Forest St/Brookside Rd Pedestrian Improvements

Priority 1 Projects:

1. Hillside Street/West Street Intersection Reconstruction
2. Central Avenue/Gould Street Intersection Reconstruction
3. Great Plain Avenue/North Hill Avenue Intersection Improvements
4. Great Plain Avenue/Wilshire Park Intersection Improvements

7:38 p.m. Street Design Guide Update

Mr. Bulger reported that Toole Design will be presenting at the next MPCC meeting after meeting several times over the summer. The team has been going through materials to understand the scope of the project with the consultants. One of the questions they have had is how the MPCC views the Design Guide as being a vehicle for policy recommendations to the Town.

7:41 p.m. MBTA Better Bus Project Bus Shelter Proposals

Mr. Bulger opened discussion on the Better Bus Project. MPCC members discussed the factors involved in joining the program, benefits to the Town, and what resources would be required of the Town. Specifically, their discussion focused on the specific locations of the proposed bus shelters and the feasibility of each of these locations as well as the ridership at each of these locations. These locations include:

1. Highland at Mark Lee (inbound to Watertown)
2. Highland at Avery (outbound to Needham Junction)
3. Highland at May (inbound to Watertown)

Mr. Gabrielski will proceed with responding to the MBTA with potential feasible options.

7:53 p.m. MPCC Goals & Semi-Annual Meeting of the Transportation Committees

Mr. Bulger reported that he, Mr. Goldstein, and Mr. McCullen met as the Chairs of the Transportation Committees and discussed some of the Select Board goals and the MPCC goals that would require capital funds outside of regular maintenance. They wrote a letter to the Select Board about their current goals and what is feasible to recommend in the next year, identifying the Feasibility Study for the Rail Trail Extension and the Newton Greenway as priority items. Mr. Goldstein added that they also recommended initiating formal discussions with the Town of Dover to discuss the longer term connection over the Charles River. He also noted that the MPCC should anticipate what their priorities will be well in advance of the summer and communicate these to the Select Board. Mr. Bulger added that other ideas for initiatives included a school safety zone standardization program, a speed bump townwide project, a traffic calming toolbox, and the creation of sidewalk improvement targets. Mr. McCullen asked if a regional connection between Needham, Dover, and Medfield has been considered; Ms. Lustig responded that discussions with Dover have taken place, but Dover does not have an interest in completing a project that involves paving. There was discussion whether the State provides funding for unpaved trails; Mr. Goldstein clarified that Mass Trails does provide funding for unpaved trails, and while it would not cover the entire cost of the project it would enable regional connectivity, which is one of their goals.

Mr. Bulger then raised the topic of the Semi-Annual Meeting this fall; several MPCC members were skeptical about the public engagement focus of the general meetings although specific project meetings do engage more residents. MPCC members agreed that a general meeting once a year is appropriate for the public to attend and that spring may be the best time of year for this audience. The next joint meeting will be held on November 10, 2025.

8:15 p.m. Future Meeting Availability

Mr. Bulger noted that the next scheduled meeting is on Indigenous Peoples' Day. Committee members agreed that the meeting would be rescheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2025.

8:17 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. McCullen that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, September 8, 2025.

Second: Mr. Goldstein. Unanimously approved 7-0.

The next Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 6 p.m.