



Office of the Town Manager
1471 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02492
781-455-7500
www.needhamma.gov

May 2025

Dear [name],

The Needham Select Board and Park & Recreation Commission are considering piloting the Rosemary Trail as an off-leash dog area. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of this proposal and to invite you to share your feedback.

The Select Board and the Park & Recreation Commission will be holding a joint meeting and public hearing regarding this pilot on Monday, June 23, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Memorial Park Fieldhouse, 92 Rosemary Street and via Zoom¹. We welcome you to join us.

The Town has been exploring the expansion of off-leash dog areas in Needham in response to requests from community members. The Active Recreation Assets Working Group, established in 2022, to guide the Town in space planning for future active recreational opportunities, recommended Hillside Field, Mills Field, 0 Harris Avenue, and the Rosemary Trail as potential sites for this use. The Rosemary Trail was found to be feasible and has been advanced for consideration as a pilot location.

This meeting will provide you, other abutters, and the broader Needham community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the Rosemary Trail off-leash dog pilot proposal, which is described in more detail on the next page.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, but still wish to share your thoughts and opinions, please email the Park & Recreation Commission at parkandrecreation@needhamma.gov.

Sincerely,

Katie King, Deputy Town Manager
Stacey Mulroy, Director, Park & Recreation

¹ Zoom link for June 23:
<https://needham-kl2-ma-us.zoom.us/j/83404301905?pwd=YsbP3XKuLnvOYkaGnawWWwrXooOV1h.1>

Rosemary Trail Off Leash Dog Pilot Proposal

Purpose: (1) to provide community members with an additional off-leash dog area at Rosemary Trail and (2) to collect community feedback and operational data on the pilot to inform decisions regarding its continuation, whether to expand off-leash dog areas to other locations, and potential bylaw changes.

Timeline: August 1 – December 31, 2025; dawn to dusk

Guidelines:

- Open to residents and non-residents. 3 dogs per person maximum.
- Dogs must always be within sight and under voice control.
- All dogs must be wearing a collar with identification and proof of being licensed in MA.
- All dogs must be spayed/neutered and have a current rabies vaccine.
- Carry in/carry out policy for all waste. Handlers are responsible for bringing waste bags, picking up dog waste, and properly disposing of all trash.
- Keep your dog leashed prior to entering and upon exiting. There will be signage on the trail indicating where the off-leash areas begin and end.
- Recognize that others might not be comfortable around dogs; share the trail and ask first before letting your dog approach others.

Parking:

- All existing parking rules will remain. Rosemary Recreation Complex parking lots are first-come, first-serve and are not monitored for use. On-street parking is allowed on Lake Drive and Garden Street, with no all-day parking at Garden Street and May Street. On-street parking is not allowed on Nehoiden Street, Armen Way, and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Operations:

- Waste: The pilot includes a carry-in/carry-out policy, so the Town will not be providing waste bags, additional trash barrels or collections.
- Signage: The Town will put signage at each trailhead, with guidelines of the pilot program. Signage will also be installed along the trail to mark where the off-leash areas begin and end.

Monitoring & Enforcement:

- The Needham Police Department (NPD) Animal Control Officer enforces the Town of Needham's General Bylaw Section 3.7 Dog Regulations. Concerns about aggressive dogs, dogs on private property, or parking violations should be reported to NPD at 781-455-7570 prompt #3.
- Concerns about waste should be reported through SeeClickFix <https://seeclickfix.com/needham>.
- Staff will walk the trail twice per month during the pilot period to document any trash impacts.
- If any urgent issues arise or excessive waste is left on the trail during the pilot period, the Office of the Town Manager will notify the Park & Recreation Commission and the Select Board for discussion.
- NPD, Park & Recreation, and DPW will track any concerns or issues during the pilot period and will provide a report to the Select Board and Park & Recreation Commission summarizing the information collected with recommendations for future action.