

Town of Needham
Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee

Minutes for Monday, February 12, 2024

HYBRID

Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building
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or

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ADOPTED MARCH 11, 2024

7:02 p.m. Call to Order:

A meeting of the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee was convened by Justin McCullen, Chair. Those present in-person were Timothy Bulger, James Goldstein, Moe Handel, Carys Lustig, and Paul Molta. Duncan Allen and Bryan Plummer were present via Zoom.

7:02 p.m. Introductions:

Moe Handel: appointed by Select Board, citizen of Needham

Carys Lustig: Director, DPW

Tim Bulger: resident at-large

Paul Molta: resident at-large

Tyler Gabrielski: incoming Director of Streets & Transportation for DPW

Justin McCullen: Transportation Advisory Committee

James Goldstein: Rail Trail Advisory Committee

7:04 p.m. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Goldstein asked two points of clarification on prior minutes:

- Update on Downtown Phase II: four pre-qualified engineering firms have submitted proposals, and these firms will present to the Select Board on February 27 and March 12. Evaluation criteria will include prior design process and prioritization, ability to follow feedback and guidance, creative thinking, and plan for communications and outreach. This phase is focusing exclusively on the Great Plain Ave corridor with the consultant selected by the end of March.
- Discussion of Rail Trail at Junction Connection: Mr. Bulger clarified that he raised the topic as a way of ensuring that the topic was discussed but no specific actions were made thus far. Ms. Lustig clarified that this Committee is more about policies and procedure-setting as opposed to specific action items. The rail trail can be discussed in the transportation plan during this meeting.

Motion by Mr. Handel that approve the meeting minutes from November 27, 2023 and January 8, 2024.

Second: Mr. Bulger. Unanimously approved 6-0.

7:11 p.m. Update on Transportation Plan Scoping Grant from MAPC:

Ms. Lustig introduced the new Director of Streets and Transportation, Tyler Gabrielski. She noted that Mr. Gabrielski has a background in city planning and transportation and is interested in mobility and planning, demonstrated through his participation on the Transportation Safety Committee.

Mr. Gabrielski thanked Ms. Lustig for the introduction and reported that the department submitted a technical assistance program grant application for assistance with scoping in order to conduct a road network inventory and classification. This inventory will enable the Committee to form a guide on how to act in any given situation. Ms. Lustig noted that the Committee will potentially hear about the status of the grant before the Committee's March meeting.

7:16 p.m. Review of Goals of the Committee to Identify Areas of the Transportation Plan:

Mr. McCullen asked the Committee what can be worked on in conjunction while the transportation plan is developed. This may include:

- General categories of what the Committee would like the transportation plan to address than can then become more specific over time
- Assisting in classification of streets, different treatments for different types of streets
- Transform priorities into deliverables for the Town, including safety, multimodal transportation, and speed limits

Discussion also ensued about communication with residents. Ms. Lustig noted the factors affecting communication with residents, most significantly changes that occur shortly before planned work, including Eversource work and weather. Several Committee members noted the importance of increased communication with residents when changes may affect how they experience their daily life. Potential ideas for communication methods include a template for publicizing information, QR codes for triaging the necessary level of engagement with residents in a specific neighborhood or area, and determining the best format for gathering feedback. Work will begin on developing a Standard Operating Procedure for DPW communications for initial written communication with further information available online and via telephone for residents in neighborhoods where work is occurring.

School Zones and Safety Zones:

Mr. McCullen introduced the topic of school and safety zones and educating the public about these zones. Mr. Gabrielski raised the idea of creating an FAQ. Communicating clearly about why decisions have been made and educating the

public about these decision-making processes is an important part of community outreach.

7:40 p.m. Discussion of Semi-Annual Joint Meeting:

Mr. McCullen noted that the Charter requires two town wide meetings per year. Discussion continued about the organization of the semi-annual meetings of the transportation committees (Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee, Transportation Safety Committee, and Rail Trail Advisory Committee). The purpose of the joint meetings is to align activities, projects, and planning initiatives to facilitate public awareness of current and planned Public Works projects. These meetings will constitute a regular committee meeting for each committee. Both Town and DPW will use social media to promote the public forum. The Committee discussed the timing of the meeting with Ms. Lustig noting that this is usually the time of year when DPW begins finalizing the project list. Ideas for the structure of the public forum includes a presentation from DPW and from each committee, educational components, and outreach. Mr. Goldstein asked if the transportation plan would be introduced and discussed at the public forum. Several committee members advocating for showing examples and goals of standardization in the Town but not presenting a specific vision or list of priorities to the public at this time. Committee members agreed that this public meeting provides a productive opportunity for public comment and to answer questions. The Committee settled on March 21 at 7:00 p.m. in Powers Hall for this town wide meeting.

Committee members also discussed that the transportation plan should include non-roadways as well as different types of roadways and sidewalks. This creates a classification document that includes various layers including the roads, bike lane network, and pedestrian network.

8:07 p.m. Adjourn:
Motion by Mr. Handel that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, February 12, 2024.
Second: Mr. Bulger. Unanimously approved 6-0.

The next Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.