

**Town of Needham
Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee
Minutes for Monday, January 13, 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 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, Carys Lustig, and Shane Mark. Stephen Frail, Justin McCullen, and Paul Molta joined via Zoom.

6:02 p.m. Sidewalk Maintenance Plan/Removal Pilot (Continued):

Mr. Gabrielski provided an update on the Sidewalk Maintenance Plan and Removal Pilot. After reviewing the list of streets that would be proposed for a removal pilot, it was submitted that there is a process for public feedback on the idea of a removal pilot. Mr. Gabrielski identified several locations in which there are sidewalks on both sides and very low pedestrian volume. DPW will evaluate which side of the street is most appropriate to remove in the case of a pilot. The next step will be to arrange a public forum with the opportunity to feedback.

Discussion ensued regarding sidewalk compliance, the conditions of existing sidewalk as a criterion in selecting pilot locations, and how much this pilot would aid the Town in evaluating sidewalk removal. Potential neighborhoods include Blacksmith and Meadowbrook and Grasmere Road among others. Ms. Lustig noted that additional goals for this pilot in addition to removing sidewalk in low volume areas is creating more effective connections between sidewalks in Town for pedestrian connectivity, reducing impermeable surface, and beautifying certain neighborhoods with more trees. Mr. Goldstein asked about how much wider improved sidewalks will need to be meet ADA requirements. There was also discussion regarding the use of concrete versus asphalt for sidewalks and the preference for asphalt for sidewalks in New England although public perception may remain that concrete is superior. Members also discussed sidewalk heaving and the complexities that existing public trees may present when expanding sidewalks on public property.

Mr. Gabrielski proposed tentatively planning for a summit at the end of February or March to begin discussing the pilot with residents.

6:40 p.m. Updates re: Highland Ave TIP Project, Marked Tree Road Reconstruction, and Envision Needham Center:

Mr. Gabrielski provided an update on the projects below.

Highland Ave TIP Project

- Application submitted by the end of 2024 for Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for their five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This runs in parallel with the State's process; the MPO is more appropriate to the scale of this project.
- Consultants working on the project are in Design stage, currently in the process of additional data gathering before the next round of design revisions. A website has been created with information about the project to engage with the public which will likely launch in the next two weeks approximately. An additional survey will include a component regarding the bicycle infrastructure and will be focused on reaching bicycle groups in Town.
- The plan is to hold a summit sometime in February.
- Mr. Frail asked if the schools affected can be included in the feedback process.

Marked Tree Road Reconstruction

- The Town Engineering Department held an abutter meeting a couple of weeks ago with various options for reconstruction for residents. The meeting appeared to be successful with many resident questions; residents also requested a survey, which is also being finalized now and will be posted online. Notification via paper notices will be distributed to the abutters.

Envision Needham Center

- The working group has been meeting and is planning two walkthroughs of the Great Plain Ave/Downtown corridor for the public to provide feedback.
- Mr. Goldstein added it may be helpful to publicize these meetings in The Needham Observer.

Bottleneck Grant

- Currently waiting for approval from the State for the traffic signal upgrades and adjustments in the Downtown corridor and have also applied for the next Fiscal Year's Downtown Bottleneck Grant and have been awarded this. This will be applied to the Dedham Ave and South Street intersection and enhance existing traffic signals and install pedestrian signals/ramps.

6:59 p.m. Joint Transportation Meetings in 2025:

MPCC members discussed delaying the Joint Transportation Meeting originally scheduled for February to the end of March. This will provide sufficient time for each committee to prepare their presentations with the most relevant information for the audience. Committee members discussed what will be discussed at the

meeting, including whether the construction work plan will be solidified at this time and a speed study for Dedham Ave.

7:10 p.m. Approve Minutes from December 9, 2024:

**Motion by Mr. Driessen to approve the meeting minutes from December 9, 2024 with the additions of Meadowbrook Road area at the 7:47 p.m. mark.
Second: Mr. Allen. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:12 p.m. Additional Item:

Mr. Gabrielski reported that Street Design Guide is going out to RFP shortly with revisions from MPCC feedback. The Selection Committee is currently being formed. Consultant to be selected by March meeting.

7:14 p.m. Adjourn:

**Motion by Mr. Driessen that the Mobility Planning & Coordination Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Monday, January 13, 2025.
Second: Mr. Allen. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

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