

Select Board Goals

FY 2025-26

August 13, 2024

FY 2025-2026 Goals

Goal #1: Healthy and Socially Thriving

Needham residents enjoy plentiful recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities in an environment that upholds human rights, celebrates diversity, and fosters a sense of connection among neighbors, thus strengthening their bond to the community they proudly call home. Needham:

- Cultivates a wide range of recreational, cultural, educational, civic, and social opportunities for all socioeconomic and age groups;
- Supports the physical and mental well-being of its community members;
- Fosters inclusion, diversity, and equity in order to become a culturally responsive, anti-racist, and anti-biased community; and
- Values public art.

Goal #2: Economically Vital

Needham welcomes investment in local businesses and has a thriving local economy that contributes to a growing local tax base to support desirable community amenities and programs. Needham:

- Has a growth mindset and encourages business development and redevelopment;
- Supports an environment for creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship;
- Promotes a well-educated, skilled, and diverse work force that meets employers' needs;
- Fosters a collaborative and resource-rich regional business climate;
- Attracts, sustains, and retains a diverse mix of businesses, entrepreneurs and jobs that support the needs of all community members; and
- Supports financial security and economic opportunity.

Goal #3: Livable

Needham values diversity and a broad spectrum of housing options. The community is supported by well-maintained public infrastructure and desirable amenities that accommodate a variety of community needs. Needham:

- Promotes and sustains a secure, clean, and attractive place to live, work and play;
- Supports an increase of housing, including a variety of types and price points;
- Provides high-performing, reliable, affordable public infrastructure and Town services;
- Encourages and appropriately regulates sustainable development; and
- Supports and enhances neighborhood livability and accessibility for all members of the community.

Goal #4: Accessible and Connected

In Needham, people can easily and affordably travel to their desired destinations without relying solely on cars. Needham:

- Supports a balanced transportation system that reflects effective land use, manages congestion, and facilitates strong regional multimodal connections;
- Offers and encourages a variety of safe, comfortable, affordable, reliable, convenient, and clean mobility options;
- Applies Complete Street principles to evaluate and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety;
- Coordinates with state and federal leaders to ensure access to safe, reliable, and efficient public transit;
- Provides effective infrastructure and services that enables people to connect with the natural and built environment; and
- Promotes transportation options to remain an age-friendly community.

Goal #5: Safe

Needham is a welcoming and inclusive community that fosters personal and community safety. Needham:

- Provides public safety in a manner consistent with community values;
- Provides comprehensive advanced life support level care;
- Plans for and provides equitable, timely and effective services and responses to emergencies and natural disasters;
- Fosters a climate of safety in homes, businesses, neighborhoods, streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, schools, and public places; and
- Encourages shared responsibility, provides education on personal and community safety, and fosters an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

Goal #6: Responsibly Governed

Needham has an open and accessible Town government that fosters community engagement and trust while providing excellent municipal services. Needham:

- Models stewardship and sustainability of the Town's financial, human, information, and physical assets;
- Invests in making Town-owned buildings safe and functional;
- Supports strategic decision-making with opportunities for engagement and timely, reliable, and accurate data and analysis;
- Enhances and facilitates transparency, accuracy, efficiency, effectiveness, and quality service in all municipal business;
- Supports, develops, and enhances relationships between the Town and community and regional partners;
- Proactively reviews and updates Town policies and regulations and ensures compliance;

- Promotes collaboration between boards and committees;
- Values the local government workforce;
- Identifies and implements strategies to hire, support and retain diverse staff at every level of the organization; and
- Prioritizes acquisition of strategic parcels.

Goal #7: Environmentally Sustainable

Needham is a sustainable, thriving, and equitable community that benefits from and supports clean energy; preserves and responsibly uses the earth's resources; and cares for ecosystems. Needham:

- Combats the climate crisis;
- Prioritizes sustainability, including transitioning from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy;
- Encourages the efficient use of natural resources; and
- Protects and enhances the biodiversity and vitality of ecological systems.

FY2025-2026 Initiatives

Legend:

Top Priority

Select Board Identified Priorities

Currently Operationalized

Initiatives to Begin Now & Currently Operationalized (0-18 months)

- Healthy and Socially Thriving
 - **Develop and plan community celebration to take place on the Town Common.**
 - Outreach to various identity network groups and ask to meet with them and attend events to understand the work they do and the community they serve.
 - Create an action plan for transitioning all Town Buildings to having all-gender bathrooms.
 - Establish clear guidelines for public art proposals for the Town of Needham, including an outline of the existing process for approval from the appropriate committees to develop a consistent public arts program to serve the Needham community.
 - *Make intentional efforts and identify creative ideas for community outreach to diversify the candidate pool for all appointed Boards and Committees, measure progress.*
 - *Complete the Equity Audit, clarify objectives, and determine next steps.*
 - *Conduct Board and Committee member orientation sessions to include the Town's race equity vision statement and NUARI principles.*

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- *Develop a plan for a community observance of Juneteenth.*
- *Implement Valor Act and consider aligning the administrative process for both the Valor Act and the Senior Corps programs.*
- *Convene NUARI to discuss progress on strategies for ensuring that all members of the community feel welcome as outlined in the NUARI vision statement and guiding principles.*
- Economically Vital
 - *Gather community data from Placer.ai to look at movement and time in location (duration) to target future businesses and amenities (parking lots, parks, etc.).*
- Livable
 - **Work with the Planning Board on next steps related to the MBTA Communities Act.**
 - **Evaluate next steps for use of the Stephen Palmer Building.**
 - **Evaluate the role of the Affordable Housing Trust.**
 - **Evaluate expansion of off-leash dog areas.**
 - **Encourage and participate in the Planning Board's large house review.**
 - *Explore renaming Hemlock Gorge to Nehoiden's Grant.*
 - *Identify funding for School Master Plan projects and participate in the planning process.*
 - *Evaluate RTS Service Delivery Model to guide long-term investment and review operational efficiencies in the short-term.*
 - *Upgrade Town Seal to improve graphic quality and historical accuracy.*
 - *Identify opportunities for expanded active and passive recreation facilities including but not limited to an action sports park and pickleball.*
 - *Improve trailhead access to ensure clear and accessible access.*
- Accessible and Connected
 - **Complete Quiet Zone feasibility and design and seek funding for noise reduction/Quiet Zone construction.**
 - **Evaluate the feasibility of a shared use way between Needham Heights and the City of Newton.**
 - *Evaluate expansion of snow and ice removal efforts, including sidewalk plowing strategies.*
 - *Update parking payment technologies to allow for credit card and/or app-based payments.*
 - *Evaluate and make a final determination of the appropriate plan for Downtown Redesign Phase 2.*

- Responsibly Governed
 - **Collaborate with the Finance Committee about the Town's policies regarding the use of free cash and debt.**
 - Evaluate the possibility of developing a Community Master Plan. Develop an inventory of Town long-range plans and identify overlaps and conflicts, including other Boards of jurisdictions.
 - Capital Facilities: CATH upgrades (including additional parking).
 - Evaluate ways to increase minority and women-owned business participation in construction, building maintenance projects, and other Town programs.
 - Evaluate enhanced benefits to assist in the Town's recruitment and retention efforts.
 - Review and update the Sign Bylaw.
 - Review and update Select Board policies as appropriate.
 - Evaluate options for enhanced data collection by Town Departments to assist the Board in reviewing and evaluating progress toward goals.
 - Explore options for evaluating Town Counsel.
 - *DPW phased renovation/construction.*
 - *Capital Facilities: Library phased renovations.*
 - *Implement successor agreements for expiring contracts.*
- Environmentally Sustainable
 - **Identify and implement strategies to protect the Town's tree canopy.**
 - **Develop Town Zero Emission First policy.**
 - **Explore the option of enabling Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program through MassDevelopment Program and develop supporting programs to drive participation.**
 - ***Strengthen the Town's Stormwater By-Law and prioritize efforts to improve stormwater quality and capacity***
 - Establish a comprehensive Climate Communications Strategy to engage community members and organizations in the implementation of climate actions and continuous evolution of the Climate Action Roadmap.
 - Establish regulations to prohibit non-electric vehicles parking in EV charging spots.
 - *Recommend community energy aggregation*

Initiatives to Begin: Next (18-36 months)

- Healthy and Socially Thriving
 - Launch a Civics Academy to introduce Needham residents to all facets of local government

- Accessible and Connected
 - Pilot converting some on-street parking spaces for more active curb use (e.g., short customer visits, active loading areas).
 - Update the Town's parking regulations and permit program (including permit rules, time/day regulations, and pricing).
 - Evaluate funding options for the Rail Trail extension from High Rock Street to Needham Junction.
- Environmentally Sustainable
 - Consider further opportunities for reducing plastic use in Needham.

Initiatives to Begin: Near (36+ months)

- Economically Vital
 - Evaluate Chestnut Street redevelopment.