



Select Board Vision, Goals, and Initiatives

FY2026 – 2027

Adopted 08/12/2025

VISION: Needham is a safe and welcoming town that people are proud to call home, where neighbors care, respect differences, and contribute to the global community.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Select Board Goals is to effect positive change, set policy direction for Town government, and guide the development of the budget.

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;
- Fosters inclusion, diversity, and equity in order to become a culturally responsive, anti-racist, and anti-biased community;
- Values public art;
- Encourages physical health and wellness amongst the whole community, including active lifestyles and community nutrition;
- Supports positive mental health throughout the community, including a range of behavioral health services and harm reduction strategies; and
- Provides guidance and support to assist residents as they access the social safety net, including SNAP, Medicaid enrollment, and other programs.

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, affordable 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 and establishes Needham as a HeartSafe community;
- 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;
- Encourages shared responsibility, provides education on personal and community safety, and fosters an environment that is welcoming and inclusive; and
- Prioritizes emergency planning and training for Town staff and the community to increase our collective preparedness and resilience.

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, functional, and accessible to all;
- 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.

FY26-27 Select Board Initiatives

Adopted 08.12.2025

Goal Area	#	Initiative	Timeline	Priority*	Tier**
1 - Healthy & Socially Thriving	1	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.	0 - 18 months		2
1 - Healthy & Socially Thriving	2	Achieve compliance with website accessibility requirements by April 2027.	0 - 18 months		2
1 - Healthy & Socially Thriving	3	Develop and plan community celebration to take place on the Town Common.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	3
1 - Healthy & Socially Thriving	4	Create an action plan for transitioning all Town Buildings to having all-gender bathrooms.	0 - 18 months		3
2 - Economically Vital	5	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.).	0 - 18 months		2
3- Livable	6	Evaluate next steps for use of the Stephen Palmer Building.	0 - 18 months	TOP Priority	1
3- Livable	7	Partner with the School Committee and Permanent Public Building Committee to advance the Pollard construction project through the MA School Building Authority process, including community engagement efforts and financial planning and analyses.	0 - 18 months	TOP Priority	1
3- Livable	8	Encourage and participate in the Planning Board's large house review.	0 - 18 months		1
3- Livable	9	Evaluate the role and composition of the Affordable Housing Trust, including an analysis of the considerations if the Town were to issue bonds and/or loans to non-Town entities.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	2
3- Livable	10	Evaluate RTS Service Delivery Model to guide long-term investment and review operational efficiencies in the short-term.	0 - 18 months		2
3- Livable	11	Upgrade Town Seal to improve graphic quality and historical accuracy.	0 - 18 months		3
3- Livable	12	Update the Town's Noise Bylaw.	0 - 18 months		
4 - Accessible & Connected	13	Complete Quiet Zone feasibility and design and seek funding for noise reduction/Quiet Zone construction.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	1
4 - Accessible & Connected	14	Advance the Highland Avenue roadway project onto the TIP.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	1
4 - Accessible & Connected	15	Update parking payment technologies to allow for credit card and/or app-based payments.	0 - 18 months		2
4 - Accessible & Connected	16	Evaluate and make a final determination of the appropriate plan for Downtown Redesign Phase 2 (Envision Needham Center): Great Plain Avenue from Warren Street to Linden Street.	0 - 18 months		2
4 - Accessible & Connected	17	Update the Town's parking regulations and permit program (including permit rules, time/day regulations, active curb uses and pricing).	0 - 18 months		2
4 - Accessible & Connected	18	Add additional public parking options through public/private agreements and partnerships and partnering with the MBTA.	0 - 18 months		2

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6 - Responsibly Governed	19	Implement the FY2026 - 28 IT Strategic Plan, including cybersecurity initiatives.	0 - 18 months	TOP Priority	1
6 - Responsibly Governed	20	Successfully implement enterprise-wide financial applications software.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	1
6 - Responsibly Governed	21	Review and advance recommendations from the General Bylaw Review Committee.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	2
6 - Responsibly Governed	22	Review voting locations	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	2
6 - Responsibly Governed	23	Create a communications/community engagement toolkit for Town projects, including a matrix for categorizing projects by levels of engagement, pairing each category with relevant strategies and templates, and providing guidance to staff and boards/committees on setting project timelines and milestones.	0 - 18 months		2
6 - Responsibly Governed	24	Develop a communications protocol for the Select Board.	0 - 18 months		2
6 - Responsibly Governed	25	Advance the DPW facilities master plan (phased renovation/construction). Explore alternative facilities planning for DPW, if impacted by Pollard construction site.	0 - 18 months		2
6 - Responsibly Governed	26	Implement successor agreements for expiring contracts.	0 - 18 months	Select Board Priority	3
6 - Responsibly Governed	27	Evaluate ways to increase minority and women-owned business participation in construction, building maintenance projects, and other Town programs.	0 - 18 months		3
6 - Responsibly Governed	28	Review and update Select Board policies as appropriate.	0 - 18 months		3
6 - Responsibly Governed	29	Provide trainings for the Select Board including deescalation and emergency management.	0 - 18 months		3
6 - Responsibly Governed	30	Advance a Home Rule Petition to allow for digital posting of legal notices in place of newspaper publication.	0 - 18 months		3
6 - Responsibly Governed	31	Continue staff recruitment and retention efforts, including analyses of staffing levels and classification/compensation system.	0 - 18 months		
7 - Environmentally Sustainable	32	Strengthen the Town's Stormwater By-Law and prioritize efforts to improve stormwater quality and capacity.	0 - 18 months	TOP Priority	1
7 - Environmentally Sustainable	33	Identify and implement strategies to protect the Town's tree canopy.	0 - 18 months		2
7 - Environmentally Sustainable	34	Explore the option of enabling Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program through MassDevelopment Program and develop supporting programs to drive participation.	0 - 18 months		3
1 - Healthy & Socially Thriving		Launch a Civics Academy to introduce Needham residents to all facets of local government	18 - 36 months		
4 - Accessible & Connected		Evaluate funding options for the Rail Trail extension from High Rock Street to Needham Junction.	18 - 36 months		
6 - Responsibly Governed		Review and update the Sign Bylaw.	18 - 36 months		

* Select Board Priority: 1 - 2 members identified it as a top 1-5 goal; TOP priority: 3 or more members identified it as a top 1-5 goal.

** Tier 1 - 3, with 1 being the highest priority.