

Town of Needham
Transportation Safety Committee

Minutes: March 12, 2025

Location: Training/Community Room, Public Safety Bldg., 88 Chestnut St.

Livestreamed on Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/ 815 5709 6612](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81557096612)

ADOPTED MAY 14, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Guus Driessen, Tyler Gabrielski, Justin McCullen, Lt. John McGrath,
Barry McNeilly, Tom Ryder, Rebecca Tarantino
MEMBERS ABSENT: Donna Mullin
STAFF REMOTE: Robert Wilson
GUEST: Meredith Benedict, 1180 Great Plain Ave.; Bryan McCorry, 61 Bradford St.

1. INTRODUCTION, ROLL CALL, CALL TO ORDER

At 7:03 p.m., J. McCullen called the meeting to order, took roll call, and disclosed the video recording.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2025

R. TARANTINO MOVED AND G. DRIESSEN SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF 2/12/25.

VOICE VOTE: G. DRIESSEN, AYE; T. GABRIELSKI, AYE; J. MCCULLEN, AYE; J. MCGRATH, AYE;
B. MCNEILLY, AYE; R. TARANTINO, AYE; T. RYDER, AYE. UNANIMOUS. **MOTION CARRIES: 7-0**

3. OLD BUSINESS/ STATUS UPDATE REPORT - R. WILSON

BESS RD. - SPEED STUDY

DPW Eng. cited statistics of the ADT Speed Study between March 3-17 at the intersection near Nardone St.

- During peak hour, 85% of 157 daily cars traveled under the Statutory 30 MPH speed limit in either direction at 23-25 MPH.
- For 15 minute intervals over the course of two hours, the peak hour volume was three times what it is normally. This could be attributed to traffic being diverted through the intersection from either Great Plain Ave. or Nehoiden St.
- Dynamic signal timing at 75 second signal changes have had a positive effect.

MANNING ST. - STOP SIGN (NEAR POWERS ST.)

DPW cited statistics of the ADT Speed Study. A 2021 comparison was made with little difference.

- During peak hour, 85% of 1,650 cars traveled at the Statutory 30 MPH speed limit in either direction.
- In a 2021 study, 85% of 1,800 cars traveled under the Statutory 30 MPH limit in either direction at 28 MPH.
- In the previous Speed Study on Powers St., a total volume of 803 cars in both directions was half the volume of Manning St.

In summary, the All-Way Stop Sign was not previously approved for the Study on Powers St. where traffic volume was nearly half that of Manning St. The MUTCD Manual requires collecting pedestrian count and 5 year accident history. Based on current data, an All-Way Stop Sign would not be approved. Long-term traffic calming measures are being considered.

ACTION: DPW Engineering will record the pedestrian count.

ACTION: Lt. McGrath will review the 5 year history of traffic accidents.

BROAD MEADOW RD. - SCHOOL ZONE 20 MPH SIGN (NEAR BROADMEADOW SCHOOL)

DPW Eng. requested clarification on School Zone 20 MPH Sign Assembly locations. Newer Speed Limit Zone Signs will be installed on Broad Meadow Rd. School Crossing Signs on Bird St. will be set back 150 ft. from the intersection of Rockwood and Broad Meadow Rd. to allow space for School Zone Speed Sign Assemblies. This is made possible due to amendments to the MUTCD Manual.

Members agreed these remedies will be implemented at these locations. As the Budget allows, flashing may be considered. The townwide 25 MPH speed limit remains an outstanding issue.

SUNITA WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY - SCHOOL ZONE SIGNS

The school's signage, which did not comply with MUTCD guidelines, was replaced with signs indicating the School Zone Speed Limit applied during certain hours on school days.

SCHOOL ST. AT LINCOLN ST. INTERSECTION

Review of previous traffic volume history indicates that in the year 1950, the original Stop Signs were placed on School St. and not Lincoln St. In 1987, a Stop Sign was added to School St.

Members discussed the area's asymmetry. Hospital egress is entirely on Chestnut St. and not at the rear. **ACTION:** This should be re-evaluated because the Stop Sign is not asymmetrical.

HILLSIDE AVE. AT WEST ST. - OBSERVATION OF THE INTERSECTION ALL-WAY STOP

During peak morning hours, most cars cleared the intersection quickly and ran through Stop Signs, with some stopping at Railroad Crossing markings rather than the Stop Sign.

4. PETITIONER, BRYAN MCCORRY- SPEEDING ON BRADFORD ST.

DPW Eng. noted that Speed Radar Signs are still in the process of recording data. The Petitioner suggested drivers can avoid 3 traffic lights by using Bradford St. along Great Plan Ave. down to Dedham. He has noted an increase of speeding cars and distracted drivers. He requested traffic calming measures in addition to the Stop Sign at Bradford St. and Cleveland St., Gordon St., and Glenwood St. as speeding and distracted drivers increase during school drop-off hours into the rush hour.

The MUTCD Manual indicates that Stop Signs may not be used as a speed control device. The purpose of the Stop Sign at the intersection is to indicate which driver has the right of way. Four-way Stop Signs are used when the traffic is symmetrical. Two-way Stop Signs are used in areas that are not symmetrical. People are parking on the street to calm the traffic. There would be space constraints with parked cars if the street were a two-way street. The road dimension naturally reduces speeds.

The State Statutory speed limit in a thickly settled area is 30 MPH. Unless there is a Regulatory speed limit with a black and white sign, the speed limit is Statutory at 30 MPH.

One strategy to control speeds is to paint stripes on the road. Neighbors do not want stripes.

- **ACTION:** DPW Engineering will conduct a Speed Study.
- **ACTION:** T. Gabrielski will send the Petitioner the speed data in advance of the next meeting.

5. PETITIONER, MEREDITH BENEDICT - HIGHLAND AVE. AT ROSEMARY ST. AFTER HIGH SCHOOL DISMISSAL - The Petitioner submitted an Observation and not a Complaint.

Members discussed ways to improve intersection safety during high school dismissal times.

The Petitioner frequently visits the Library and returns to home or work via Highland Ave. but encountered waiting through 5 traffic light intervals when attempting to turn left. when students are being dismissed at the end of the school day.

Lt. McGrath observed the intersection at Rosemary St. by the church, where students started pulling out of the lot at 2:40 pm. He found no problems. The volume of traffic created a funnel-like atmosphere for less than 10 minutes. The intersection cleared at every light cycle. He observed the crosswalk and pedestrian cycles at each street. There are a lot of students crossing. Everything works the way it should. Stationing a Police Officer at the intersection would not help.

Members discussed signal optimization during the 10-15 minute period when school is dismissed. Newer signal technology uses cameras based on throughput. The signal can be set to parameters based on volume of traffic.

ACTION: T. Gabrielski will forward the Petitioner's observation to the Highland Ave. Roadway Project.

6. TSC EXPENSE ACCOUNT AND FUNDING REQUESTS

Members reviewed approved expenses not yet encumbered, spent, or on hold from the TSC Meeting Packet <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

Future items for consideration include:

- Brookline St./Manning St. - Approved Speed Radar Signs
 - Quote amended to include brackets, taller sign posts at \$200 each x 2. Update figure to \$400

7. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION - SCHOOL CROSSINGS IN FRONT OF POLLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Harris Ave. - Seasonal Speed Cushions
 - A quote of \$4,800 was obtained for 4 anchored, seasonal speed cushions (two in either direction, bi-directional) to accommodate an emergency vehicle. The speed cushions would be removed before the winter for snow removal.
- Pinewood Rd. Speed Cushions
 - Duplicate Harris Ave. seasonal speed cushions. Install a speed cushion before the driveway. Add a legal Regulatory "No U-Turn" Sign, "No Left Turn" prohibition between the hours of 7:00 to 8:00 am as well as 2:00 to 3:00 pm to prevent cars from crossing the intersection so the Crossing Guard can manage both crosswalks.

In the interest of pedestrian safety, members discussed the possibility of giving the Crossing Guard jersey barriers or closing Stevens Rd. which idea the school opposed; however, the barriers are difficult for one person to move. Close Pinewood Rd. as the barrels did not work. The easiest solution is to implement Regulatory prohibition signage to eliminate traffic flow except buses and emergency vehicles. The School will cooperate as the parking lot is present. The plan was to implemented as a pilot for one year.

J. MCCULLEN MOVED AND LT. MCGRATH SECONDED TO PROPOSE A REGULATORY CHANGE FOR HARRIS AVE. AND PINEWOOD RD. BI-DIRECTIONALLY TO INCLUDE A NO LEFT-HAND TURN ON PINEWOOD RD. AND NO LEFT TURN OR U-TURN OFF HARRIS AVE. WESTBOUND, NO LEFT TURN OR U-TURN ON HARRIS AVE. EASTBOUND BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 7:00 TO 8:00 A.M. AND 2:00 TO 3:00 P.M. ON EACH SIDE OF HARRIS AVE. WITH NO LEFT-TURN OFF MAYO AVE., WITH APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE TO PREVENT TURNING

MOVEMENTS TO GO THROUGH THE HARRIS AVE. MEDIAN BETWEEN 7:00 TO 8:00 A.M. AND 2:00 TO 3:00 P.M. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SCHOOL BUSES. THIS SHALL INCLUDE A BARRIER AT THE INTERSECTION OF HARRIS AVE. AND PINEWOOD RD. AS DEEMED NECESSARY BY POLICE. **VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS.**

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Members discussed when to remove raised crosswalks and temporary speed bumps on December 1 placing them back on February 28 or March 1.

Ask FinCom for \$200,000 or \$300,000 to put into the roads.

LT. MCGRATH MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO PURCHASE SPEED CUSHIONS FOR HARRIS AVE. AND PINEWOOD RD. VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

ACTION: T. Gabrielski will obtain current Crosswalk quotes as they are custom by location dimensions.

J. MCCULLEN MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO PLACE A STOP SIGN AT THE END OF MAPLE ST. AT THE INTERSECTION OF GREAT PLAIN AVE. VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Members discussed postponing the Urban SDK annual license fee of \$19,000 until July 2025. Do half the Pushbutton Solar now and half later.

Intersection of Hunnewell and Wellesley Ave. - Members discussed postponing the \$31,750 project until July 2025 which would allow TSC to move forward with Urban SDK.

ACTION: By the next meeting, T. Gabrielski will update the Budget spreadsheet to reflect postponing the intersection of Hunnewell and Wellesley Ave.

8. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION (CONTINUED) - TOWNWIDE 25 MPH - To be discussed at a future meeting.

9. JOINT MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEES - SLIDES, PRIORITIES/GOALS, ETC.
Wednesday, May 21 - TSC we will present slides and discuss TSC priorities

10. MATTERS NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE MEETING - None

11. ADJOURNMENT

T. GABRIELSKI MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:47 PM. VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

INFORMATIONAL: The Meeting Packet is available at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>



88 Chestnut St, Needham, Massachusetts

PLEASE SIGN IN

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