



Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

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Needham Receives State Grant from MassDOT to Expand Outdoor Dining

Funds will help create two moveable dining parklets

NEEDHAM – Friday, April 9, 2021 –The Town of Needham has been awarded a \$57,200 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation that will allow the Town to continue its efforts to support local restaurants beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Town's Department of Public Works applied for the grant, which will allow the department to purchase and install two modular parklets, one in the downtown area and one in the Heights. The parklets will allow for increased space for outdoor dining and would include tables and chairs as well as planters and a guard rail. The parklets are portable and can be redeployed in areas that may be underserved by other outdoor dining opportunities.

"This is a really exciting project that will give residents and workers greater opportunities to purchase takeout from Needham restaurants and enjoy eating outside," Select Board Chair Moe Handel. "The demand for these experiences was born out by our experiences during Covid and now will likely be a welcomed permanent addition to our community."

The grant is part of the latest round of funding from the state's Shared Winter Streets and Spaces program, launched last November to provide technical assistance and funding to help Massachusetts cities and towns conceive, design and implement tactical changes to curbs, streets and parking areas in support of public health, safe mobility and renewed commerce, with a special focus on the challenges of winter.

"Working with the Mass. Department of Transportation, I am pleased that the Commonwealth supports the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of the Town of Needham," said Representative Denise Garlick. "The pandemic has shown us that people have sought out spaces where they could safely meet up and dine with neighbors and friends. These parklets will provide residents with more options for outdoor dining, and I hope these new spaces will attract more people who will support our local merchants and restaurants."

The project will be put out to bid by DPW in the next few weeks with the goal of installing the parklets by early summer.

The Town has worked with local restaurants and small businesses throughout the pandemic to find creative ways to continue to support the local economy. Efforts include the free parking meter program, “Dine Around Needham,” a progressive dinner series to encourage local dining; the creation of outdoor dining spaces on Town properties; a partnership with the Newton-Needham Regional Chamber on the Needham 100 Day Challenge and “Shop Local” banner campaign, reduced liquor license renewal fees, the creation of curbside pickup spots and more.

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