



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE BEST PRACTICES

Town of Amherst, Massachusetts

Final Report
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OVERVIEW

The Town of Amherst, Massachusetts, is considering establishing a transportation advisory committee, or TAC, to counsel the Select Board and Town Manager on current and proposed transportation policies, initiatives, and improvement projects. The Amherst Transportation Plan was completed in April 2015 and recommends the following next steps to enhance the Town's transportation decision-making process:

- Identify key goals for transportation and develop a clear mission statement;
- Utilize a project prioritization process to establish a mandate for new transportation leadership;
- Establish a new leadership position or body that follows numerical measures and goals with quarterly reporting to existing Town committees and Boards.

Amherst currently does not have a single committee that works across all modes of transportation to carry forward the recommendations of the Transportation Plan. The Public Works Committee reviews street infrastructure projects and programs, advising the Public Works Department. The Public Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee reviews proposals impacting public transportation, produces reports on specific transportation concerns and projects, and advises the Select Board on the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) and general transportation policies that impact the town. The Disability Access Advisory Committee reviews designs and sets policies to ensure transportation infrastructure meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Joint Capital Planning Committee weighs investments in needed transportation projects against other town needs. The inactive Parking Committee has worked in the past to establish parking policies. The Planning Board regularly reviews developments that impact the town's transportation system.

Finally, the Transportation Plan Task Force (TPTF) is an interim committee established in 2012 and charged with choosing a consultant to develop a long term plan for transportation in Amherst and to work with the chosen consultant to develop the content of that plan. The Amherst Transportation Plan was posted on the Town's website in April of 2015. It included a matrix indicating objectives that could be achieved over the course of a few years. The Town Manager, the late John Musante, asked the TPTF to remain in existence to see that the consultant's Plan was effectuated. No change in the official name of TPTF was adopted, but the working title was changed to Transportation Task Force.

A single multi-modal transportation advisory committee or similar entity could coordinate all of these various transportation-related reviews by Amherst's Boards and committees, implement the Transportation Plan's recommendations, and oversee ongoing progress.

PEER REVIEW

In order to help determine the best role and structure of a potential TAC for Amherst, the TPTF sought consulting assistance to identify three models of a TAC or similar organization that might be comparable to what Amherst could implement. Transportation advisory committees serve multiple functions and exist in varied formats. After discussions about the range of traditional municipal transportation advisory bodies present in the United States, the TPTF agreed on a short list of three communities. This report summarizes the utility, organizational structure, and

management of transportation advisory committees in Arlington, Massachusetts, Asheville, North Carolina, and Mansfield, Connecticut. These municipalities were selected for comprehensive review due to multiple shared defining characteristics with Amherst: Arlington and Mansfield feature comparable populations; Arlington’s governmental structure is similar, featuring an executive Board of Selectmen and an appointed Town Manager; and both Asheville and Mansfield are home to academic institutions that uniquely influence their respective transportation networks. Former and current advisory committee and staff members from each municipality were interviewed for this report.

Municipality	Committee Name	Est.	Members	Selection Method
Arlington, MA	Transportation Advisory Committee	2001	11	Appointed
Asheville, NC	Multimodal Transportation Commission	2013	12	Nominated/Appointed
Mansfield, CT	Transportation Advisory Committee	2006	9	Appointed

Additionally, this report analyzes why Arlington, Asheville, and Mansfield created transportation advisory committees, the transportation decisions these committees evaluate, their review and approval authority, reporting formats, and the benefits and deficiencies of their current structures. Organizational recommendations and best practices are also reviewed, to support Amherst’s potential development of a transportation advisory committee. The insight provided by these case studies has led to a recommendation for the Town of Amherst, which is outlined below.

Arlington, Massachusetts: Transportation Advisory Committee

The Town of Arlington, Massachusetts, is located six miles northwest of Boston. It formed a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in 2001 to review parking, traffic, and transportation issues for the Board of Selectmen, the town’s five-member executive branch. A Town Manager is appointed by the Selectmen to oversee daily Town management. The TAC was formed to reduce the burden of transportation related decision-making on the Selectmen and to enhance the Town’s expertise on transportation matters. The Town is served by nine Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) bus routes that connect the town with Cambridge and the MBTA’s rapid transit lines (the “T”). In 2010, Arlington’s population was 42,844.

Management and Authority

The TAC is comprised of at least 11 members. The Selectmen appoint eight citizen members to serve on the TAC: three representing specific precincts, three at-large members, one appointed by the School Committee, and one appointed by the Chamber of Commerce. The following three members represent specific Town departments: the Chief of Police (or designee), the Director of Public Works (or designee), and the Director of Planning and Community Development (or designee). The committee periodically accepts non-voting “Associate” members, who are not assigned specific duties. Citizen membership terms are four years, and they are staggered so that two member terms expire each year.

Within the TAC, three elected members represent the Executive Committee as officers, serving the following positions: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Officers serve a two-year term, but no restrictions limit the number of leadership terms served.

The Selectmen serve as the ultimate traffic authority for Arlington and approve all roadway modifications; a Parking Sub-committee is responsible for reviewing parking issues and requests and reporting recommendations to the Selectmen. With the exception of parking management, all transportation-oriented requests presented to the Selectmen are referred to the TAC. Within the TAC, ad-hoc subcommittees (also referred to as working groups) are appointed to research transportation issues referred to the TAC by the Selectmen. Working groups consist of two to six members and typically include a traffic engineer, although study timelines may vary substantially depending on the issue. Each working group produces a written report summarizing study results, and it issues a formal recommendation to the Selectmen. The TAC also occasionally provides consultation and makes recommendations for the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) and the School Committee, and it reviews traffic impact analyses.

TAC members actively coordinate with four Arlington constituent advocacy groups: the Arlington Bicycle Committee, Walking in Arlington, the Arlington Council on Aging and Senior Association, and the Arlington Commission on Disabilities. Designated TAC members serve as liaisons with the aforementioned advocacy groups, regularly attend meetings, and maintain communication with the group's chairperson. TAC meetings are open to the public, and they include a designated period for public comments. Transportation complaints and concerns are often referred to the TAC by citizens, but many are referred directly to the Selectmen, which judge the issue's relevance.

Periodic friction between town staff (engineer) and TAC members was noted as an occasional, but largely uncommon issue. The town engineer and traffic police receive a disproportional number of complaints (emails and phone calls), as compared to what is received by the Board of Selectmen. As a result, this influences their perspective and shapes their objectives while serving on or working with the TAC.

The most recent TAC project reports available online (from 2014) concern the placement of a stop sign and a review of traffic volume and safety concerns along a residential street.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Arlington's Transportation Advisory Committee is well organized, high-functioning, and inclusive of myriad community perspectives. The committee's objectives are directed by the Town's Board of Selectmen, which results in a simplified and beneficial authority hierarchy. Additionally, the committee's rules for governance clearly define the organization's purpose, membership structure, administrative oversight, and details protocol for meetings, working groups, and amendments. Committee members represent specific civic interests, advocacy organizations, and geographic regions, which ensures that multiple community perspectives and viewpoints are represented. The committee publishes meeting agendas, minutes, reference documents, and reports, recommendations, and guidelines on the Town's website.

Asheville, North Carolina: Multimodal Transportation Commission

The City of Asheville, North Carolina, established a Multimodal Transportation Commission (MMTC) in 2013 to create a centralized, comprehensive committee that concentrates on

reviewing and supporting multimodal transportation initiatives, policies, and investments. The commission represents all modes of transportation in Asheville, including transit, automobiles, greenways, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The City is home to two colleges: the University of North Carolina Asheville (UNC Asheville) and Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB-Tech). Located one mile north of downtown, UNC Asheville is a liberal arts institution with an enrollment of 3,700 students. AB-Tech is a public, two-year community college serving Buncombe and Madison counties, with an enrollment of more than 9,000 commuter students. Public bus service is operated by the municipally-owned Asheville Redefines Transit (ART). ART operates 17 bus routes and serves Asheville and Buncombe County. In 2013 the city's population was 87,236.

The impetus for the formation of the MMTC was manifold. City staff, concerned with the prioritization and operation of multimodal improvements within public right-of-way (ROW), realized the need to assess the City's transportation system from a broader scope, and analyze the interaction of assorted modes. Additionally, the City's three preexisting transportation-related committees weren't functioning collaboratively, operated with compartmentalized dynamics, and issued conflicting recommendations. No formal nexus existed to coordinate or prioritize transportation improvements. The need for a singular, coordinated transportation commission was proposed to the City Council in 2012, and was heavily supported by the incumbent Executive Director of Planning and Multimodal Transportation.

Management and Authority

The MMTC has no official decision making authority, but makes recommendations to City Council on a range of transportation related issues. No transportation decisions are expressly outside of the MMTC's review authority. Multiple factors direct the commission's decision to review specific projects, including the issue's complexity (e.g. exercise of judgment or an application of technical standards), the necessary timeframe, and the commission's capacity.

The MMTC performs three primary functions: advising, advocacy, and education.

- **Advise:** The commission researches and reviews multimodal transportation initiatives, consults on multimodal prioritization for funding through the Capital Improvement Plan, helps develop the city's multimodal transportation system, and issues formal recommendation on multimodal issues to the City Council.
- **Advocacy:** The commission works closely with the Mayor and City Council to help guide the city's transportation policies and vision.
- **Education:** The commission periodically attends neighborhood meetings, public events, and serves as ambassadors and educators for multimodal transportation.

The commission's structure includes nine voting members and three non-voting members, all of who are Asheville residents. Two members each represent transit, greenway, and bicycle/pedestrian interests, the remaining three serve as at-large members. One representative from each of the following advocacy groups serves as an ex-officio non-voting member: the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, Planning & Zoning Commission, and the Sustainability Advisory Committee on Energy & the Environment. While no designated MMTC members specifically represent either UNC Asheville or AB-Tech, one current MMTC representative is a faculty member at UNC Asheville. The commission convenes monthly; MMTC meetings are open to the public, and a period is reserved for public comment.

The Greenway Committee and Transit Committee are standing committees within the MMTC. Each committee features between seven and 11 representatives, and meets monthly; members are appointed by the commission and serve terms of three year. The Greenway Committee advises the MMTC and City staff on the implementation of greenways within Asheville, ensures integration between city and county parks and transportation plans, and engages with the public to increase greenway awareness and advocate for funding. The Transit Committee advises the MMTC and City staff on issues concerning transit systems and operations. Additionally, the Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force functions as an interrelated, but independent, citizen's advisory committee.

All members of the commission must be Asheville residents, and are required to serve on either the Transit or Greenway Committee prior to joining the MMTC; committees nominate individual members to fill MMTC vacancies, whom are formally appointed by the City Council. The commission actively encourages and seeks geographic diversity, but no requirement exists; the majority of applicants are from two quadrants of the city, which was noted as an ongoing frustration. As a result of the membership development process, newly appointed commission representative are organized, familiar with the commission's protocols and are high functioning.

In the past year the MMTC has provided input on a wide range of studies and projects, including Asheville's new multimodal transportation plan, several street closures, and revisions to the city's Complete Street policy; the commission has also worked to develop a sidewalk prioritization program, a pedestrian safety study with NCDOT, and a traffic calming program.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The MMTC was created with an overly broad mandate, and lacked precise guidance and organizational expectations from the City. While this allowed the MMTC to establish its own agenda, the commission experienced preventable coordination hiccups with the City, and led to a prolonged process to establish the organizational structure. Additionally, City staff expected the Transit and Greenway Committees would self-regulate, but significant staff consultation is required for both committees, specifically to advise the Transit Committee on system regulations and requirements.

However, since overcoming these initial complications, the MMTC has fostered a strong partnership and coordination between City staff and the commission's leadership. City planning staff actively involves the commission in related transportation plans, and the MMTC is regularly enlisted to function as an oversight steering committee. The MMTC is required to provide City Council with an annual written report summarizing the commission's activities. Periodic recommendations on policy decisions are also requested, which are generally approved orally at MMTC meetings and relayed to Council through city staff.

Lastly, the commission's unique and centralized structure necessitates multi-organizational collaboration to organically determine the best transportation use of publicly available ROW.

Mansfield, Connecticut: Transportation Advisory Committee

The Town of Mansfield, Connecticut, established a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in 2006 to efficiently address and review proposed regional transportation projects, and to provide direct recommendations to the Town Council. In addition, the TAC was formed to establish an educated and informed consultative committee to receive citizen testimonials and to actively

address citizen interest and concern towards alternative modes of transportation (biking, walking, and transit). The TAC primarily focuses on improvements to the town's bus service, and bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.

Mansfield's government structure is council-manager; the Town Council serves as the legislative and policy-making body, and the Town Manager is the chief executive officer. The town's population of 26,543 is amplified by the University of Connecticut (UConn). UConn's Storrs campus is located in Mansfield, and the university's 30,000 student enrollment places additional stress on the town's transportation network. Public transit is provided by the Windham Region Transit District (WRTD), which operates bus service between Storrs and Willimantic, and UConn's Transportation Services, which operates seven mid-week bus routes, a late night shuttle, and a weekend shuttle.

Management and Authority

Mansfield's TAC is comprised of nine members: two from the Town Council, representatives from the Department of Planning and Zoning, and at-large citizen members; citizen members are appointed by the Town Council. A representative from the Department of Public Works, typically the Director, serves as the committee's designated staff liaison.

There is no direct coordination or representation between UConn and the TAC. Town Council refers transportation projects to the TAC for review, the TAC studies the project in detail, and the TAC issues a formal recommendation to the Town Council in the form of a memo. TAC meetings are held quarterly, and are advertised and open to the public; meeting agendas and minutes are posted online.

Unless the Town Council refers a specific project, the TAC serves more as a policy advisory committee, and is not directly involved in traffic design or safety issues. Multiple transportation-related committees function independently of the TAC: the Parking Steering Committee advises the Town Council on parking management and the Traffic Authority regulates the Town's roadway infrastructure, including speed limits, traffic signals, parking signs, and intersection and street design recommendations. The TAC has no standing subcommittees, but the TAC is considering creating a subcommittee to help develop the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which was mandated in the town's recently adopted Plan of Conservation and Development.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Mansfield's TAC successfully performs its intended role: review proposed transportation improvement projects and advise Town Council, serve as a "sounding board" for the town's planning and transportation staff members, and provide a direct outlet for community input and citizen testimony. Furthermore, connecting members of the Town Council with staff members from the Department of Public Works and the Department of Planning and Zoning is beneficial and provides the TAC with a reasonable and balanced perspective.

The committee's direction, prioritization, and meeting attendance were highlighted as weaknesses. Explicit goals and objectives should be established for the TAC by the Town Council to avoid studying transportation improvements that are either undesired by citizens or financially infeasible. For high priority projects, the TAC should maintain closer communication with Town Council; however, attendance is historically lower when there are fewer pressing transportation issues for the committee to discuss.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on a review of these peer communities; interviews with former and current transportation advisory representatives and staff members in Arlington, Asheville, and Mansfield; and several discussions with Amherst's Transportation Task Force, a structure for a Transportation Advisory Committee in Amherst is recommended below. Prior to establishing a TAC, it is imperative to determine the organization's purpose, scope, and structure – these are summarized below and described in greater detail further below.

The committee's primary purpose should be to support Amherst's existing transportation services and assist with future planning efforts. Consideration should be given to how the committee will support existing transportation-related planning and infrastructure activities by aiding the decision-making of the Select Board, the Public Works Department, the Planning Department, and other Boards and committees in Amherst. The region's five colleges and universities significantly impact Amherst's transportation service, and formal coordination should also be established.

It also is envisioned that the TAC will help facilitate greater and clearer public involvement, ensure a transparent and thorough review process, and foster collective action across multiple bodies to resolve and address existing transportation obstacles.

Purpose and Primary Responsibilities

The TAC would function as a lateral organization that serves as a natural, fair arbiter for transportation issues in Amherst. Today, only the Select Board works across all modes of transportation to enact policies and projects. Transportation issues are debated and resolved in a number of entities, including the Select Board, the Public Transportation Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee, the Public Works Committee, the Disability Access Advisory Committee, the Joint Capital Planning Committee, the Planning Board, and various Town Departments. The Town also recently established a Downtown Parking Working Group. In addition, the Transportation Task Force is a recent interim committee used to create the recent Transportation Plan. However, it has no further mandate past the Plan's completion, and no entity is tasked with implementing the Plan. A single TAC can work with all Town committees, Town staff, and the Select Board to make the decision-making process clearer and transparent; to implement policies and projects, including the Transportation Plan's recommendations; and to oversee continued progress on transportation-related efforts in Town.

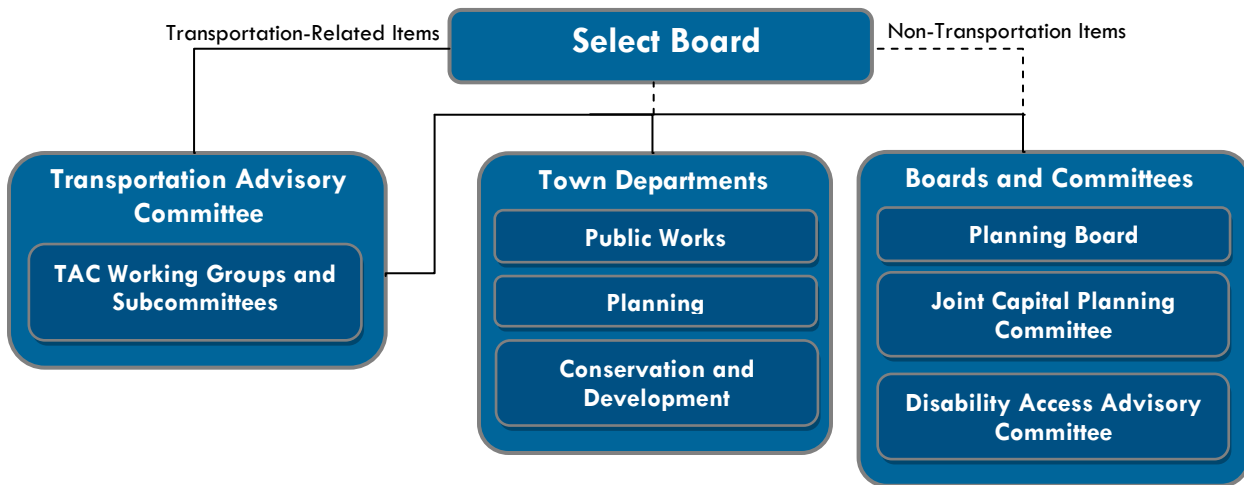
Firstly, a new TAC would work to oversee implementation of the Transportation Plan, ending the interim Transportation Task Force. It is also possible that other committees that represent different aspects of transportation review, such as the Public Works Committee, could dissolve and have their functions assumed by the TAC. The TAC would be able to assign new working groups or subcommittees on an as-needed basis to address issues that require or merit specific comprehensive analysis. For example, rather than the Select Board creating the recent Downtown Parking Working Group committee, the TAC could have instead designated this working group at the Select Board's request to evaluate the merits of a parking garage in Amherst, and an outcome of that process might be a formal standing Parking Subcommittee that advises Public Works on parking decisions in the future. However, as a collaborative body, the TAC does not require the consolidation of existing committees, intending instead to maintain close working relationships with the Amherst Town staff, the Select Board, and all existing Boards and committees with an interest or role in transportation policy and projects.

Specifically, the TAC should have four **primary roles**:

1. Maintain a “Work Program” of costs, timeframes, and responsible parties for each and every transportation policy and project within Amherst;
2. Review, summarize, and then funnel transportation-related requests generated by committees, Boards, Town staff, and the public “upwards” to the Select Board with a recommendation for action;
3. Receive transportation-related directives and requests “downwards” from the Select Board, then review, summarize, and assign responsible party(s) – including Town staff, other Boards, committees, or ad hoc working groups/subcommittees – for detailed review, analysis, or implementation; and
4. Internally generate transportation-related requests of subcommittees, other committees, the Select Board, and/or Town staff as necessary to progress the Work Program and the Transportation Plan.

Under this proposed structure, the Select Board will maintain final authority for transportation-related policies and funding decisions, with the TAC facilitating a clear and open process for making more efficient decisions, involving the public, and advancing the needs of multi-modal transportation as outlined in the Transportation Plan through its Work Program.

Proposed TAC Organizational Hierarchy



Regular Scope of Activities

Working collaboratively, the TAC is not envisioned to replace the functions of other organizations. Rather, it is intended to streamline and coordinate existing disparate functions that are in need of better coordination. Over time, the TAC may subsume other committees’ functions through the assignment of working groups or subcommittees. However, the basic functions that would be part of regular meetings should include:

a) Maintenance of a Work Program

A multi-modal transportation Work Program, possibly drawing from the recently-completed Transportation Plan, should be established and used as a mechanism to track the progress of

implementing the Plan's recommendations and all other transportation-related policies and projects in town. Developed in close coordination with the Select Board, Town staff, and Amherst's other Boards, the Work Program should spell out, at a minimum, the costs, timeframe, and responsible party(s) for each and every policy and project. Ideally, this would also include a system for prioritizing efforts that is reflective of community values and priorities while also being cost-constrained, as described below (an initial suggestion for prioritizing some policies and projects is included in the Transportation Plan). Current, active, and upcoming items on the Work Program would be part of the TAC's meeting agenda.

b) Public Input

Today, members of the public must determine on their own which staff, Committee, or Board meeting they must attend in order to be heard, often leading to confusion, disenfranchisement, and complaints – all of which frequently are heard by the Select Board. Amherst's TAC should advertise its meetings clearly, broadly, and on a regular basis, maintaining a predictable schedule (such as a certain day of the week in every month or every quarter). Every meeting should have a period for public comment, and TAC members should be willing to rearrange a meeting's agenda to hear public comments at an appropriate time in the meeting that is compatible with the majority of attendees. All public comments should be recorded and summarized in meeting minutes produced within 5 weeks of the meeting, but all agendas and summaries of decisions/actions should be provided the next week for the Select Board meeting, including any necessary communication with Town staff. Ideally, public comment would be a dialogue between TAC members and public attendees, with the goal of fostering open dialogue and avoiding the impression of hierarchy that often leaves public bodies alienated from the public they are intended to serve.

c) Balanced Policy and Project Prioritization

The most important function of the TAC throughout all of its activities should be the advancement of balanced and multi-modal thought processes for all transportation-related efforts in Amherst. Ideally, the TAC would use a community-based set of goals and other inputs to weigh the value of one policy or project versus another. This goal set should derive from broadly-accepted planning documents or surveys that have captured the relative importance of various aspects of transportation and land use planning in Amherst (such as in the 2010 Master Plan and/or the survey results in the 2015 Transportation Plan). The TAC should document and update this set of values and clearly refer to it during any decision-making or Work Program prioritization effort – even to the extent of using a values checklist as a way of conducting and recording decisions. The TAC should seek to update the criteria/checklist and the documents guiding the community's vision as regularly as possible by obtaining or conducting studies, surveys, and other similar planning efforts.

In the course of regular activities, these criteria should guide the TAC's approach to various decisions, including how best to distribute funding, identifying grant opportunities, weighing needed public works projects, evaluating private development opportunities, and weighing the capital programs of Amherst's institutions of higher learning.

d) Decision-Making

The TAC's primary function would be to act as the lead review authority of transportation-related requests and proposals for policies and projects that may impact Amherst's transportation systems. As previously recommended, requests and proposals for review on the TAC's agenda

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could be generated “downwards” from the Select Board, “upwards” from other Town Boards and committees, and “laterally” from Town staff, the public, or within the TAC itself (via a working group or subcommittee). It is not intended that the TAC engage in analysis or extensive evaluation of agenda items – if sufficiently detailed findings or conclusions that would make a decision simple do not accompany a request or proposal, the TAC should refer the item back to the originating entity or to an appropriate Board, committee, or Town staff to develop sufficient detail. If the TAC wishes to engage itself and/or other town residents in further analysis, it should create a working group or subcommittee that would meet separately and report back to the TAC when clear findings and conclusions were ready for a TAC decision.

It is intended that the TAC be the neutral arbiter of all transportation-related decisions that go beyond the regular purview of Amherst’s existing Boards, committees, and staff. TAC decisions would not be binding but would carry the weight of representing the best interests of the community in a fair and open manner that also represents the balanced multi-modal approach of the TAC’s mission. Ideally, the Select Board would defer most transportation-related decisions to the TAC while remaining the official decision-making body of the Town. Final authority could be given to the TAC on behalf of the Select Board for certain activities as long as there is a process in place for appealing decisions back to the Select Board.

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Using a hypothetical example of developing and inter-acting with a new traffic calming program, the TAC decision-making process could function as follows:

Party	Action
Development of a Traffic Calming Program	
Public Works Department	Identifies need for a traffic calming program and brings item to the TAC.
TAC	Determines if a traffic calming program is anticipated on its Work Program or is otherwise needed, and would adhere to the TAC's values checklist; determines that further analysis is required and seeks to form a working group.
TAC	Seeks volunteers for a Traffic Calming Working Group from the public, Select Board, other Boards & committees, and Town staff .
Traffic Calming Working Group	Meets as necessary to develop appropriate elements of a traffic calming program, collaborating with related Town committees and Town staff as needed.
Traffic Calming Working Group	Submits detailed findings and recommendations to the TAC.
TAC	Deliberates working group findings against its values checklist and incorporates the traffic calming program into a draft update to the Work Program, then presents the supported recommendation to the Select Board.
Select Board	Deliberates and reaches a final decision regarding ordinance, funding, staffing, etc.
TAC	Updates Work Program
On-Going Operation of a Traffic Calming Program	
Public Works Department	Sets up program according to the findings of the Working Group and the decision of the Select Board
Public Works Department	Operates the traffic calming program; where conflicts with the decisions of other Town Departments, Boards, or committees exist that are beyond the approved role of the program, Town staff seek the decision of the TAC for resolution.
TAC	Maintains traffic calming projects on its Work Program; deliberates any conflicts with the program that might arise from other Departments, Boards, committees, or the public.

e) Visibility and Transparency

To preserve its legitimacy as a fair and balanced body capable of making prudent decisions that are in the best interest of the entire town, the TAC must maintain a completely transparent process, entirely open meetings, fully-accessible meeting notes, an up-to-date Work Program, and a clear record of the rationale behind every decision. The Town should maintain a public-friendly web page for the TAC on its site that carries the latest agendas and decisions, public comment notes, the Work Program, and the underlying documents which support the decision-making framework that is based on Amherst's values. These documents should be available at meetings for members of the public. Every TAC meeting should be openly advertised and held in an easily-accessed location that ideally accommodates everyone wishing to attend.

f) Balanced Decision-Making Structure

To support the TACs mission and facilitate improved decision-making for Amherst, the membership of the TAC should maintain similar multi-modal values to those shown in public surveys, such as that completed for the Transportation Plan. Members also should practice prudence in deliberating the pros and cons of any item, ensuring greater efficiency in Amherst's transportation-related decision-making processes. Ultimately, the Select Board, Town Manager, and appropriate designees from Town staff should decide on initial membership and future replacements. At a minimum, the TAC should have representation and support from the Planning and Public Works Departments. One member should represent one of Amherst's three higher-learning institutions with the expectation that representation would rotate to the other schools when terms are complete. Members can draw from any source but should be expected to serve as liaisons to related organizations, such as the Planning Board, School Committee, Disability Access Advisory Committee, Redevelopment Authority, and Joint Capital Planning Committee, as well as the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). Total membership would ideally be either 7 or 9 members

Conclusions

Based on the input of members of the TPTF and the research conducted by the consultant, a TAC is recommended as being very beneficial for Amherst. By increasing transparency and collaboration, the TAC will advance a balanced multi-modal Work Program and improve overall transportation decision-making and efficiency, while unloading a time-intensive and technical process for the Select Board.

NEXT STEPS

In order for Amherst to form a TAC, the Town Manager – in coordination with the Transportation Task Force and the Select Board as necessary – should proceed with the recommended steps below, drawing from the content above:

- Establish bylaws for the TAC which:
 - Explicitly define the committee's mission and transportation scope;
 - Clearly delineate the committee's membership structure and recurring roles; and
 - Establish direct and achievable committee goals in the form of a Work Program supported by criteria that reflect current community values
- Define the committee's review authority (essentially any transportation-related item from the Select Board or that goes beyond the authority/capacity of other Boards, committees, and Town staff), and the preferred reporting format to the Select Board, other committees and Boards, Town staff, and the general public (agendas, requests, and decisions, as well as the Work Program)
- Establish membership, terms of service, obligations, and expectations
- Dictate a standard meeting schedule (optimally monthly or quarterly)
- Ensure agendas and summaries of decisions are posted to the Select Board agenda for the Select Board's next meeting
- Ensure all committee materials (e.g. agendas, summaries, full meeting notes, the Work Program, the latest community values criteria, etc.) are publicly accessible on the Town's website

RESOURCES

Amherst

- [Amherst Transportation Plan](#)
- [Public Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee](#)

Arlington: Transportation Advisory Commission

- [Transportation Advisory Committee homepage](#)
- [Transportation Advisory Committee Rules for Governance](#)
- [Transportation Advisory Committee Reports, Recommendations & Guidelines](#)
- [Transportation Advisory Committee Reference Documents](#)

Asheville: Multimodal Transportation Commission

- [Multimodal Transportation Commission homepage](#)
- [MMTC Greenway Committee homepage](#)
- [MMTC Transit Committee homepage](#)
- [Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force](#)
- [Asheville Redefines Transit](#)

Mansfield: Transportation Advisory Committee

- [Transportation Advisory Committee homepage](#)
- [Mansfield Tomorrow: Plan of Conservation and Development](#)
- [Windham Regional Transit District](#)
- [UConn Transportation Services](#)