



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

South Braintree Square

This plan has been made possible through technical assistance provided by the Baker-Polito Administration's Local Rapid Recovery Planning program.



The Local Rapid Recovery Planning (RRP) program is a key part of the Baker-Polito Administration's Partnerships for Recovery Plan, the strategy established to help communities stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy as a result of the economic impacts brought on by COVID-19. The plan invests \$774 million in efforts to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and keep people in stable housing.

In addition to the planning program, recovery efforts include a Small Business Relief Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. This program, which concluded in May 2021, provided more than \$687.2 million to over 15,000 businesses across the Commonwealth, with a focus on businesses located in Gateway Cities, among demographic priorities, or operating in sectors most impacted by the pandemic. Cities, towns, and non-profit entities are using Regional Pilot Project Grant Program funding for recovery solutions that seek to activate vacant storefronts, support regional supply chain resiliency, and create small business support networks. To promote recovery in the tourism industry and support the ongoing My Local MA marketing initiative encouraging residents to support their local economies by shopping, dining and staying local, another \$1.6 million in grants were awarded through the new Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Pilot Program. Through April 2021, MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program has invested \$26.4 million in municipal Shared Streets projects to support public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce.

In support of the overall recovery strategy, the Administration made \$9.5 million in awards for 125 communities to create Local Rapid Recovery Plans, through the MA Downtown Initiative Program. These plans address the impacts of COVID-19 on local downtowns and small businesses by partnering with Plan Facilitators and Subject Matter Experts to pursue locally-driven, actionable strategies.

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Acknowledgements



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Wayfinding and Signage: Selbert Perkins Design

Permit Guide: Revby

Marketing and Branding: Goman+York

**And a special thanks to the generous
business owners who gave us their time
and insight during the planning process
through surveys and focus groups.**

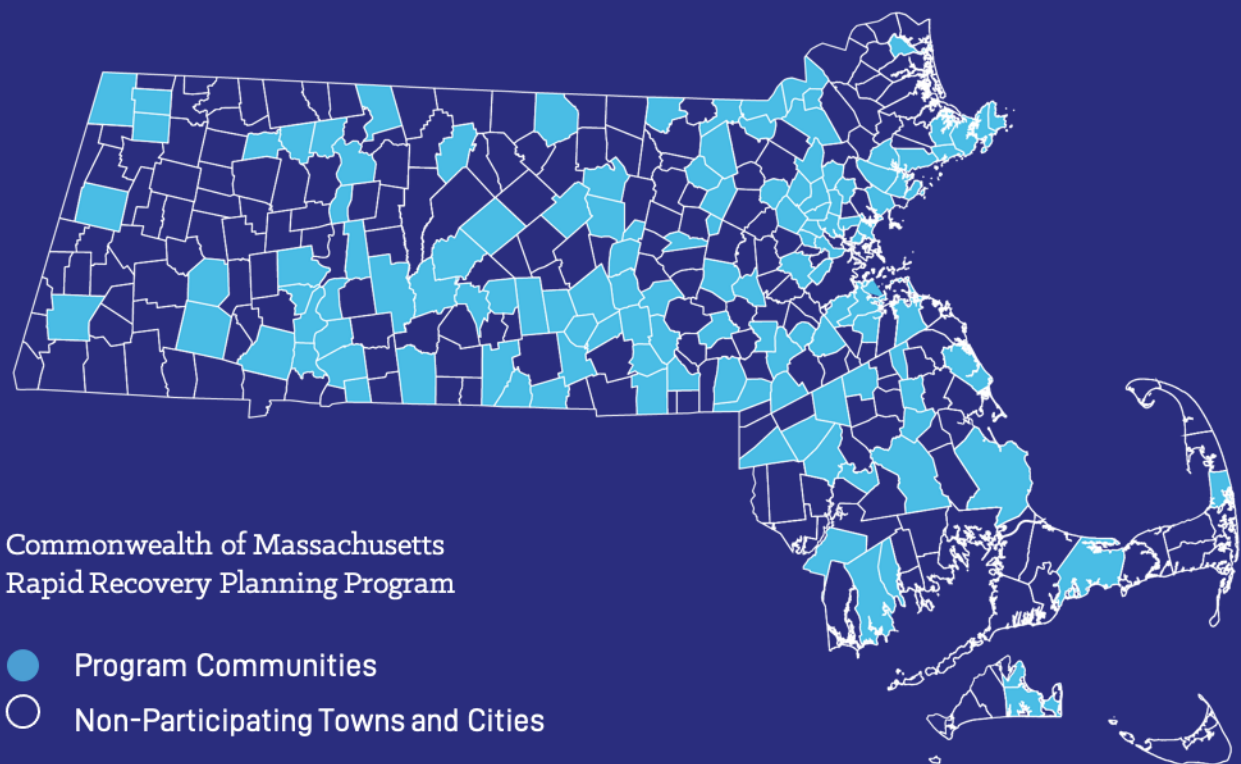
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

52 Small Communities
51 Medium Communities
16 Large Communities
6 Extra Large Communities

Mass Downtown Initiative distributed nearly \$10 million across 125 communities throughout the Commonwealth to assess impacts from COVID-19 and develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges in downtowns, town centers, and commercial districts.



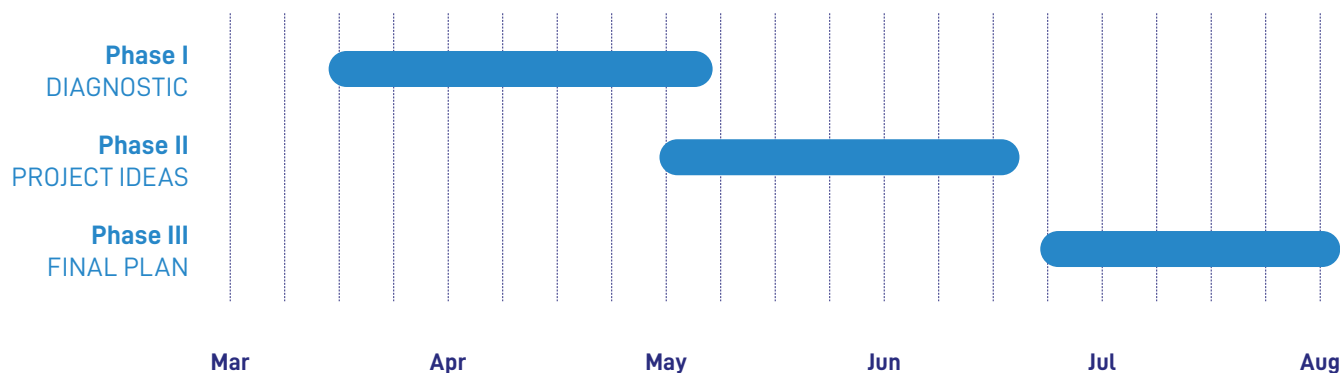
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

The Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program is intended to provide every municipality in Massachusetts the opportunity to develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges and COVID-19 related impacts to downtowns, town centers, and commercial areas across the commonwealth.

The program provided technical assistance through Plan Facilitators assigned to each community applicant (e.g., city, town, or nonprofit entity) and Subject Matter Experts who supported the development of ideas for project recommendations and shared knowledge through best practice webinars and individual consultations.

Communities and Plan Facilitators were partnered through the program to assess COVID-19 impacts, convene community partners to solicit project ideas and provide feedback, and develop project recommendations. The following plan summarizes key findings from the diagnostic phase of the program and includes a range of priority project recommendations for the community.

Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



In Phase 1: Diagnostic, Plan Facilitators utilized the Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework that was adapted from the award-winning Commercial DNA approach as published by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) in "Preparing a Commercial District Diagnostic", and authored by Larisa Ortiz, Managing Director, Streetsense (RRP Program Advisor).

The framework was designed to ensure methodical diagnosis of challenges and opportunities in each community, and to identify strategies and projects that aligned with the interests and priorities of each community. The framework looks at four areas of analysis: Physical Environment, Business Environment, Market Information, and Administrative Capacity - each equipped with guiding questions to direct research conducted by Plan Facilitators.

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



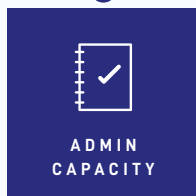
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study



How conducive is the physical environment to meeting the needs and expectations of both businesses and customers?



What are the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses in the Study Area? How well does the business mix meet the needs of various customer groups?



Who are the key stewards of the Study Area? Are they adequately staffed and resourced to support implementation of projects? Are the regulatory, zoning, and permitting processes an impediment to business activity?

Following the diagnostic in Phase 1, Plan Facilitators, in close coordination with communities, developed and refined a set of recommendations that address priority challenges and opportunities. These project recommendations are organized in clear and concise rubrics created specially for the Rapid Recovery Plan Program. Project recommendations are rooted in a set of essential and comprehensive improvements across six categories: Public Realm, Private Realm, Revenue and Sales, Administrative Capacity, Tenant Mix, Cultural/Arts & Others.



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts

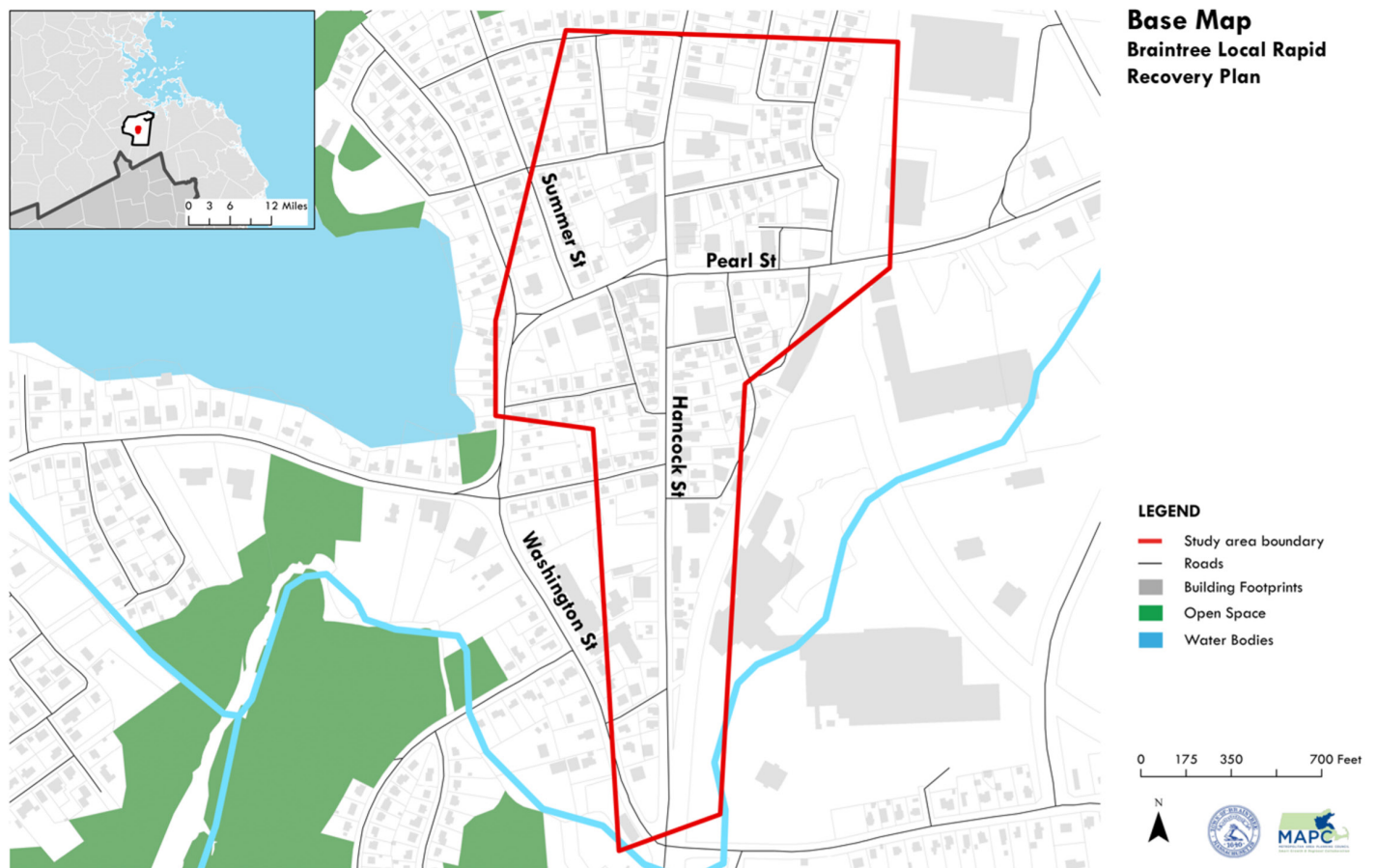


Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The South Braintree Square Rapid Recovery Plan examines market and physical conditions, as well as feedback from the business community, in order to identify strategic projects to support a sustainable and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Given its proximity to Braintree Town Hall and other government institutions, South Braintree Square has historically been the prominent neighborhood business district of the town anchored by local institutions. A basemap of the study area is shown in the figure below.



South Braintree Square

Key Findings

- There are approximately 1,500 parking spaces in and around South Braintree Square based on aerial survey, site visits, and estimates from the Braintree Parking Inventory Study undertaken by Nelson Nygaard and the town.
- Based on site visits and assessments conducted in the months of May-June 2021, it was observed that there was a lack of wayfinding signage, nothing that welcomed visitors to the Square, a need to improve ADA accessibility, and an uncomfortable pedestrian experience to the Square from the Braintree MBTA station located within a mile of the Square.
- The study area also consists of generally high-quality sidewalks, some of which are too narrow to accommodate outdoor dining arrangements. There are ongoing efforts to improve crosswalks and ADA curb cuts.
- Strengths of the public realm in the study area include a strong mix of businesses, signage in the public right of way.
- Lighting is ample and of high quality throughout the study area including street banners.
- Challenges include minimal outdoor dining due to narrow sidewalks along Hancock and Washington Streets (the sidewalk width varies from one side of the street to the other), as well as lack of street amenities such as benches, planters, and trash cans.
- At the time of the study, a total of 130 businesses were observed and the majority of these businesses had storefronts.
- At the time of the study, only two vacant storefronts were observed which was a favorable sign following the significant shutdowns and resulting decrease in businesses due to COVID-19. That said, the low vacancy rates might not represent the true health of businesses with some struggling to remain open.
- Minimal outdoor dining/vending were observed.

Goals and Recommendations

The following are the goals of the plans and the recommendations that were developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council team based on observations, meetings with Town of Braintree officials, two public forums and a focus group, and reports from the Subject Matter Experts that assisted in the planning process.

Goal 1. Enhance transportation accessibility and safety in South Braintree Square.

1. Assess parking availability and the needs of businesses for their customers and employees to expand accessibility and availability of parking spaces.
2. Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to enhance safety.
3. Develop strategies to improve last mile connectivity between South Braintree Square and the Braintree MBTA Station.

Goal 2. Increase development potential in South Braintree Square to attract additional customers to area businesses.

1. Update the zoning bylaw to encourage more infill development in South Braintree Square.

Goal 3. Create gateway to South Braintree Square to increase foot traffic in the Square.

1. Install attractive and helpful wayfinding signage, including directions to public parking options.
2. Improve overall appearance in the district.
3. Establish storefront guidelines and reactivate storefront façade program.

Goal 4. Work to assist businesses in understanding the permitting process.

1. Develop a permitting guide to assist businesses with the process for obtaining required permits and licenses.
2. Increase capacity at the municipal level to focus on economic development.

Goal 5. Develop a marketing plan for local businesses.

1. Create a branding and marketing campaign for the South Braintree Square area.

Diagnostic

Overview

Given its proximity to Braintree Town Hall and other government institutions, South Braintree Square has historically been the prominent neighborhood business district of the town anchored by local institutions. A basemap of the study area is shown in the figure below. The Diagnostic Phase of this plan concentrated on collecting required and additional data to establish baselines and measure COVID impacts on this study area. The information collected throughout this phase aims to inform our understanding of market constraints and opportunities, and to guide the community to strategically prioritize public and private sector investments. That said, we acknowledge that data can only show a part of the picture and can be used as a guide and only in conjunction with the broader context. Data collected is broadly divided into four key categories: physical environment, market information, business environment, and administrative capacity.

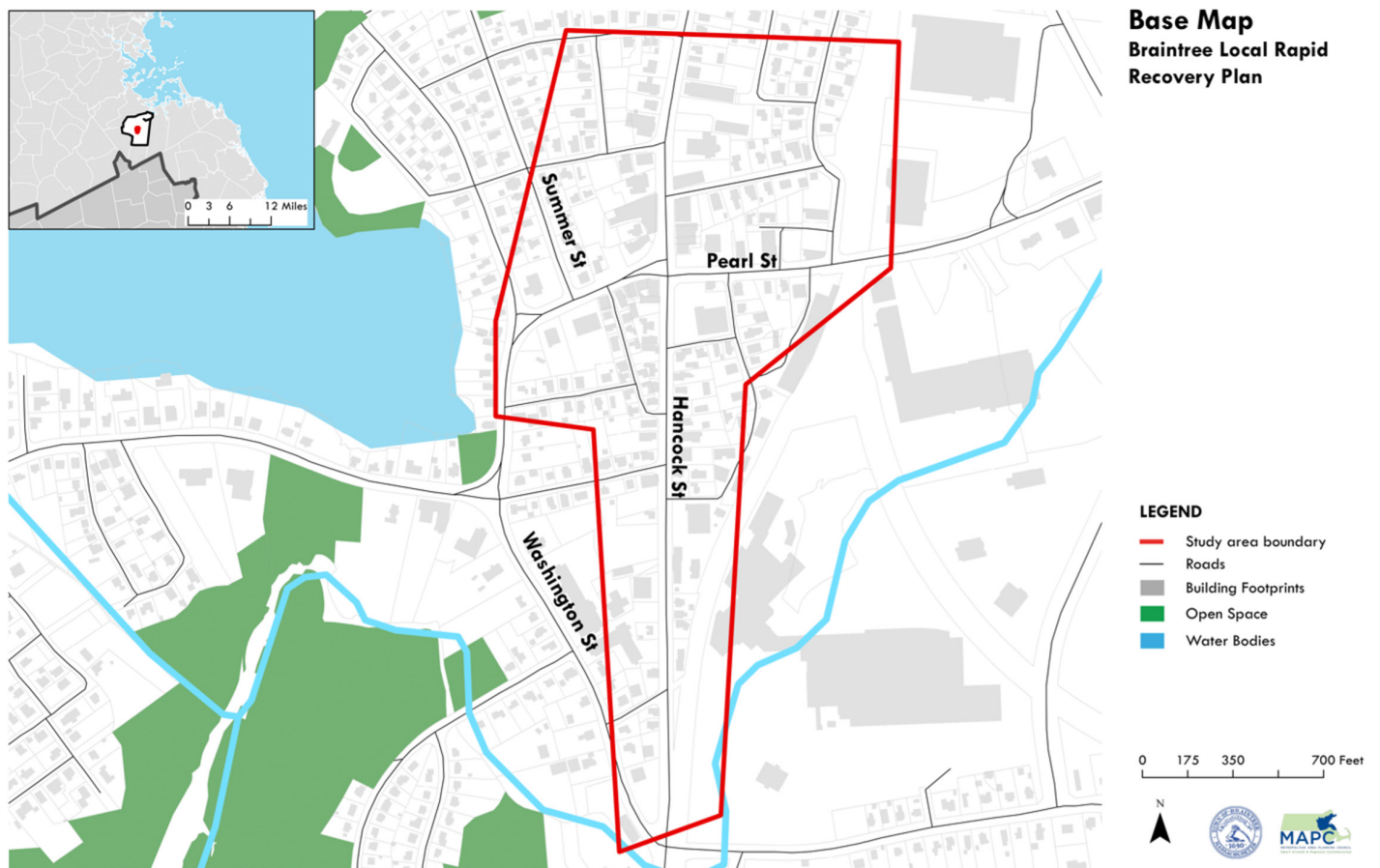


Figure 1: Local Rapid Recovery Plan Study Area: South Braintree Square

Methods

The diagnostic assessment includes data analysis required by DHCD, as well as additional data analysis and community engagement to establish baselines and measure COVID impacts. Primary data was collected through various community engagement efforts between April and June 2021. These included a business survey designed by DHCD and distributed with the assistance of the Town's Planning and Community Development Department, the District 5 Councilor, and the local Chamber of Commerce, assessments during site visits, a virtual public meeting, and focus groups with business owners. Secondary data sources included both paid as well as public data. These sources provide data for various geography levels and time durations. The table below provides information on each of these secondary data sources.

Table 1: Data Sources

Data Source	Time Span	Geography Level	Description
ESRI Business Analyst	2020, 2021 estimates	Study area, intermediate, city level	Paid data source; demographic and socio-economic data for the study area, business locator dataset
Infogroup	2016	Study area	Paid data source; utilized to supplement business list creation
CoStar	2020 estimates	Study area	Paid data source; real estate indicators like rents, vacancy, retail space estimations
Census Bureau (ACS)	2014-2019, 5-year estimates	City, census tract	Public data source; demographic estimates, at-risk population data like households with 1+ person with disability
MassGIS		Study area, city	Public data source, parcel data, building footprints, city boundaries
MassDOT	2019 and 2020	Locations around study area	Transportation Data Management System Database for Average Annual Daily Traffic estimates and mobility dashboard for pedestrian counts.
Town of Braintree		City	Zoning map, GIS resources

Diagnostic



Physical Environment

ACCESS

- Average annual daily traffic (AADT) estimates from the north of the study area along Washington Street, between Gardner Terrace and Woodsum Drive, show approximately a 20% decrease in traffic between 2019 and 2020. Similar trends were observed on the southern end of the study area along the Hancock and Peach Street intersection showing a decrease in AADT estimates by approximately 10% between 2019 and 2020.
- According to the MassDOT mobility dashboard between 2019 and 2020, the Town has seen an overall 43.3% increase in pedestrian counts.
- There are approximately 1,500 parking spaces in and around South Braintree Square based on aerial survey, site visits, and estimates from the Braintree Parking Inventory Study undertaken by Nelson Nygaard and the town. Table 2 below details the parking space inventory and their locations and/or types.
- Based on site visits and assessments conducted in the months of May-June 2021, we observed a lack of wayfinding signage, nothing that welcomed visitors to the Square, a need to improve ADA accessibility, and an uncomfortable pedestrian experience to the Square from the Braintree MBTA station located within a mile of the Square.
- The study area also consists of generally high-quality sidewalks, some of which are too narrow to accommodate outdoor dining arrangements. There are ongoing efforts to improve crosswalks and ADA curb cuts.



Typical crosswalks, April 2021



Table 2: Parking Inventory

Location/Type	Parking Spaces
Church and Private School (no limit)	37
Customer only (no limit)	309
Employee only (no limit)	232
Municipal employees and guests (no limit)	276
Open public (3 hours, no overnight)	70
Resident only (no limit)	64
Unregulated street parking	252
Regulated street parking	89
Total	1,489

The Town is working on a number of physical improvements to South Braintree Square. The work focused on the improvement of intersection operations and ADA compliance. Through the Shared Streets and Spaces program, the Engineering Department received a \$65,000 grant to improve pedestrian crossings. This includes the following:

- Constructing curb extensions at northern end of the study area to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety. Pedestrian crossings are also being upgraded to include tactile plates and ADA compliant wheelchair ramps.
- Repainting on-street parking spaces to add a few more spaces.
- Reducing the number of bus stops from four to two (one on each side of Hancock St.) to reduce traffic delays and improve efficiency. This also allows for the creation of a few more on-street parking spaces.
- Planting new trees to replace ones that have recently died.
- Traffic patterns and flow was redesigned.
- Traffic signals were updated to be both visual and audible.
- Some signage has been updated.

This work is expected to be completed in October/ November 2021.



Empty tree pits, April 2021



Typical sidewalk views, Pearl and Washington Streets

PUBLIC REALM

Strengths of the public realm in the study area include a strong mix of businesses and signage in the public right of way. Lighting is ample and of high quality throughout the study area, including street banners.

Challenges include minimal outdoor dining due to narrow sidewalks along Hancock and Washington Streets (the sidewalk width varies from one side of the street to the other), as well as lack of street amenities such as benches, planters, and trash cans.

There is a need to plant more street trees with some empty tree pits along the study area.

Zoning: The study area and its vicinities are broadly constituted by business districts (GBD and COMM), as well as residential districts (ResB and ResC). Portions of the study area within the GBD are also within the Village Overlay District (VOD). The area also is in close proximity to the Highway Business District (HBD) on the east.

PRIVATE REALM

- At the time of the study, a total of 130 businesses were observed and the majority of these businesses had storefronts. It is important to note that these storefronts differ from the total number of businesses as a few retail offerings or professional services are housed in structures without individual storefronts (i.e. on the second floor of the building).
- At the time of the study, only two vacant storefronts were observed which was a favorable sign following the significant shutdowns and resulting decrease in businesses due to COVID-19. That said, the low vacancy rates might not represent the true health of businesses with some struggling to remain open.
- Minimal outdoor dining/vending were observed.
- Few awnings and updated facades were observed. There is an opportunity to better publicize the town's façade improvement programs to business owners.

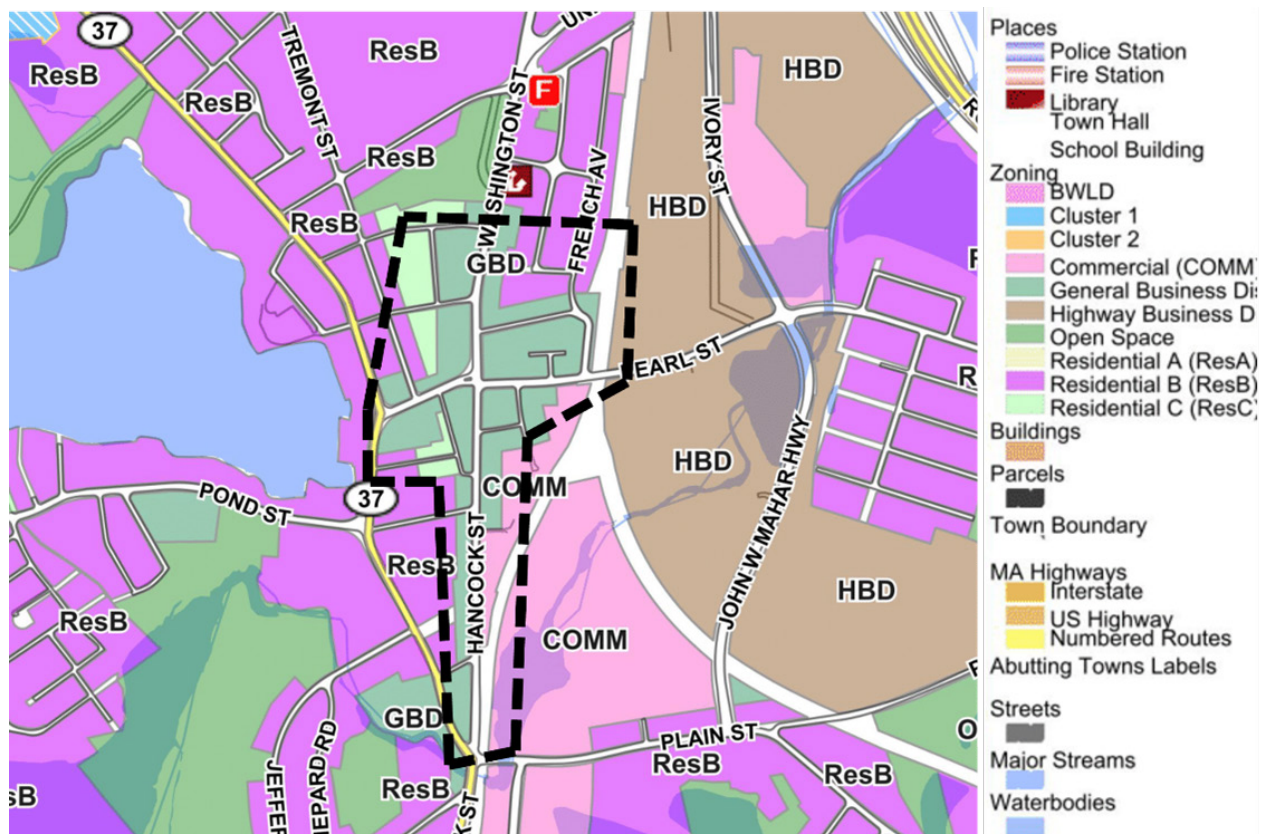


Figure 2: Current zoning in South Braintree Square



Customer Base

We utilized the area within the 1-mile radius to identify the immediate customer base of the district with the center as the intersection of Hancock St and Pearl St. Table 3 shows key demographic and socioeconomic indicators for the study area and its surroundings to identify characteristics of the immediate customer base.

Table 3: Key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics

Indicators	South Braintree Square	*1-mile radius	Town of Braintree
Total population (2020)	**757	9,002	37,917
Median household income (2020)	\$57,413	\$98,878	\$99,975
Median disposable income (2020)	**\$45,073	\$74,516	\$75,168
Average household size (2020)	2.27	2.58	2.59
Employed population, 16+ (2020)	**	4,493	18,859
Minority population (2020)	**	1,824	8,566
Median age (2020)	41.8	45.1	42.9
Unemployment rate (2020)		13.9%	14.3%
Daytime population: workers (2020)	**651	5,339	22,370
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey *Hancock and Pearl St. as center; **note that area is too small			

- South Braintree Square houses approximately 2% of the town's population or 750 persons. Twenty-three percent of the town's population or 9,000 persons reside within a one-mile radius of the town.
- Median household incomes are significantly lower (\$57,413) within the study area as compared to the median income in the one-mile radius (\$98,878) as well as the town (\$99,975).
- The average household size of the study areas is similar to its immediate surroundings and the town, averaging at 2.48.

Table 4 provides information on populations that might have a broader set of needs.

- One in five households within the one-mile radius has one or more persons with a disability within the household.
- Twenty-one percent of the population residing within the one-mile radius of the study area is 65 years of age or older.
- Approximately 19% of the population within the one-mile radius is under 18 years of age.

Table 4: Customer base with a broader set of needs

Indicators	*1-mile radius	Town of Braintree
Households with disability (2019)	663	3,178
Population 65+ (2020)	1,921 (21%)	7,395 (20%)
Households below poverty line (2019)	1.9%	2.3%
Population under 18 years (2020)	1,752 (19%)	7,917 (21%)
Population that does not speak English well or at all (ACS, 2019)	186 (2%)	891 (2%)
Child dependency ratio	32.9	35.0

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey; *Hancock and Pearl St. as center



Business Environment

TENANT MIX AND VACANCY

- Approximately 130 businesses are operational within the study area.
- A note about business lists: Business lists are key elements of business support infrastructure. The Town, along with the Braintree Chamber of Commerce, is looking to build a comprehensive list of businesses including contact information and business types in an updated and sustainable manner.
- Using various proprietary and open datasets available to MAPC, a list of 130 businesses along with the contact information and industry type was curated for the study area. This estimate is however caveated with multiple challenges, including lack of recent and curated business lists, the impact of COVID closures not being documented comprehensively, and lack of comprehensive data sources of minority-owned businesses in the area.
- Vacancy rates of less than 1% were observed.
- The study area's current office, retail, and industrial land inventory (built-up space) is 220,000 sq. ft. with a vacancy rate of 3.7% according to CoStar 2021 estimates. Additionally, this inventory is made up of 35% office, 64% retail, and 1% industrial spaces.
- Based on CoStar estimates, the study area has average asking rents of \$21/sq ft. and \$25/sq ft. for retail and office spaces respectively.

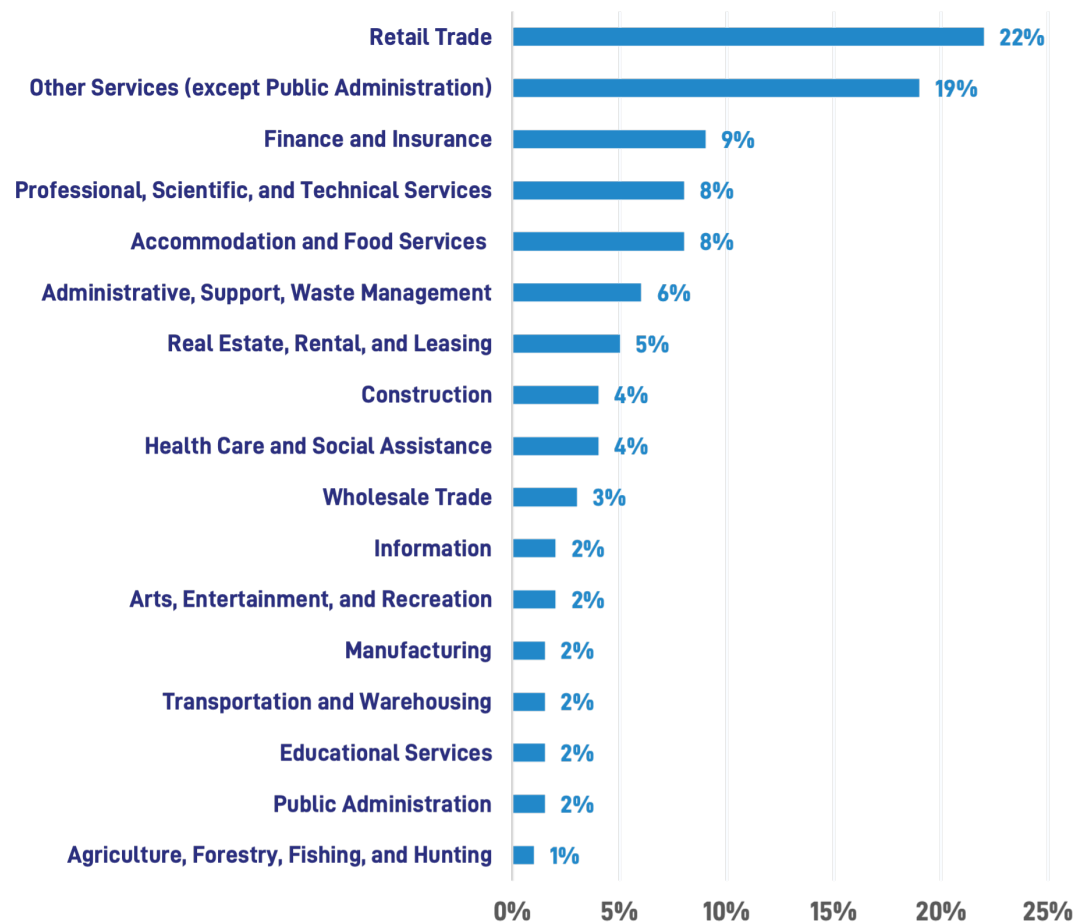


Figure 3: Types of Businesses within South Braintree Square

- Based on our compiled business list, the top three business types within South Braintree Square are mentioned below. Figure 3 provides the distribution of these businesses based on broad categories (2-digit NAICS code).
 - Retail Trade and Food Services: The majority of businesses (30%) within the study area belong to this category. Establishments in these sectors consist of motor-vehicle dealers, furniture or home furnishing stores, food and beverage stores, restaurants, gas stations, and other stores that sell different merchandise.
 - Other Services Sector: 19% of businesses in the study area belong to this sector which includes establishments that are primarily engaged in activities such as equipment repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, and personal care services like nail salons etc. except public administration.
 - Finance and Insurance: 9% of businesses in the study area are engaged in this sector which primarily consists of financial institutions such as banks as well as insurance and loan agents, accountants etc.

FINDINGS FROM BUSINESS SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY DHCD

Key highlights from a business survey administered by DHCD during March and April of 2021 are presented below. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located within the study area to solicit information on the impact of COVID on their operations.

Participant profile:

A total of 19 responses were received from primarily (47%) microenterprises with 5 or fewer employees. The top three categories of industry type the respondents belonged to included – food services and accommodation (32%), retail (16%), and professional, scientific, technical, or legal services (16%). The majority of respondents (84%) rented their space.

Impacts of COVID:

The pandemic had significant negative impacts on the day-to-day operations of the surveyed businesses with 94% of the businesses reporting being impacted by COVID-19.

- 63% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.
- 58% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019 with 16% of businesses reporting revenue declines of 25% or more.
- 64% of businesses had fewer on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

Satisfaction with the regulatory environment:

47% of businesses expressed concerns about the regulatory environment. 42% of those who expressed those concerns cited parking followed by 26% citing signage regulations-related concerns. Business owners reported either "satisfied" or "slightly satisfied" with the following:

- Condition of Public Spaces, Streets & Sidewalks
- Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees
- Condition of Private Buildings, Storefronts, Signs
- Proximity to Complementary Businesses & Uses
- Access for Customers & Employees

Input regarding physical environment, atmosphere, and access-related strategies:

Respondents indicated strategies related to the improvement of streetscape and sidewalks, parking management as well as improvements in safety and/or cleanliness as 'important.

Interest in receiving assistance:

63% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance with the majority (37% each) expressing interest in participating in shared marketing/advertising and low-cost financing for façade improvement.

FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS WITH BUSINESS OWNERS

A focus group of business owners was conducted in August 2021, which was attended by ten people. The focus group provided additional insight into the business environment in South Braintree Square beyond what was covered in the business survey discussed earlier.

- Participants elaborated on the parking issues they face, including the location and number of available spaces. They felt the municipal lot was inadequate since it frequently reaches capacity. There was interest in developing some shared parking arrangements along with the establishment of an employee parking area and valet service.
- Sidewalk width is not uniform throughout the study area. Some businesses are unable to set up outside tables, despite a desire to do so, because the sidewalk is too narrow. That said, there was reluctance to create parklets for outside dining that occupy parking spaces. There was concern that such a setup could pose a safety hazard to workers and customers.
- Generally, participants believed that business permitting was relatively easy, but sign regulations were not up-to-date and inadequate.
- Consider traffic calming measures and address congestion created at drive-throughs.
- Lighting in the Square should be upgraded.



Administrative Capacity

Staff capacity dedicated to business programming and support is somewhat limited in Braintree. There is no dedicated Economic Development Planner or Economic Development Commission. There is a Licensing Coordinator (not a full-time role) and a Board of License Commissioners that handle the bulk of the permits and licenses typically required for new businesses (not including permits required by the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals for new construction). Most inquiries originate at either the Mayor's Office or the Planning and Community Development Department.

Braintree Chamber of Commerce:

The Braintree Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based nonprofit group focused on growing and serving Braintree businesses. The mission of the Braintree Chamber is to be a voice of the business community, advocate among local officials on behalf of Braintree businesses, build customer base, and create and empower connections among peers. The Braintree Chamber is an affiliate of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce. For its members, the Braintree Chamber offers businesses marketing assistance such as ribbon cutting, social media marketing, and networking events. During this South Braintree Square project, the Braintree Chamber contacted the businesses in the Square through its membership resources including an email list and social media and through direct outreach to member and nonmember businesses. The Braintree Chamber helped connect MAPC with current contact information for businesses and helped to promote community meetings. The Braintree Chamber of Commerce is run by its volunteer Board with assistance from staff at the South Shore Chamber. More information can be found at www.braintreechamber.com or <https://www.facebook.com/BraintreeChamberOfCommerce>. The email address is braintreechamber@gmail.com and the current chair, Kim Kroha, Senior Associate with Baker, Braverman & Barbadoro PC, can be reached at 781-848-9610 x 166.

Project Recommendations

GOAL 1.

Enhance transportation
accessibility and safety
in South Braintree
Square.

1.1 Assess parking availability and the needs of businesses for their customers and employees to expand accessibility and availability of parking spaces.

Category		Public realm and private realm
Location	South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198	
Origin	<p>Business survey, interviews with business owners, Planning and Community Development Department, MAPC</p> <p>The project recommendation was developed in consultation with the Nelson\Nygaard. For further detail, see the SME Consultation for "Parking Management Recommendations" in the Appendix.</p>	
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		<p>Short Term (<5 years)</p> <p>This effort should be prioritized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (0-3 months): Meet with town officials and business owners; identify parking locations and number of spaces available for the public• (3-6 months): Update parking map; identify underutilized private parking areas• (6-12 months): Identify areas that can be used for employee parking; develop parking management plan
Risk		<p>Medium risk: The risk of being unsuccessful is moderate. While parking availability has been cited as a specific concern, there are almost 1,500 parking spaces available in the study area (even if they are not conveniently located). That said, business activity can be enhanced by a parking system that is better managed.</p> <p>Potential challenges: The success of this effort depends on the participation and buy-in of partners, particularly if shared parking arrangements are to be encouraged. There are some privately held parcels that have underutilized parking areas and cooperation from those property owners is necessary for this effort to succeed.</p>

Key Performance Indicators

Changes in the number and location of parking spaces

Coordination

- Increase in familiarity and coordination between Town and businesses, as well as property owners
- Increase in the number of partnerships and coordinated efforts between the individual businesses

Partners & Resources

Partners: Town and local property owners

Town funding; MAPC Technical Assistance Program; ARPA (technical assistance to businesses)



On-street parking, Hancock Street



Municipal parking lot



Municipal parking lot



Municipal parking lot

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Parking issues predated the pandemic and are not necessarily related to public health emergencies such as COVID, although it is conceivable that people may be more reluctant to walk greater distances as a way to minimize potential exposure. A comprehensive parking management plan for South Braintree Square could ascertain exactly where existing parking spaces are located, and the number that are under Town control and those that are located on private properties. Additionally, a determination can be made as to how "conveniently located" the spaces are to local businesses.

- The Town of Braintree faces challenges in managing parking supply and demand in the below study area. Challenges include:
- Most spaces are unmanaged and have no meters
- Time limits are sporadic, and short-term parking has been implemented ad hoc for specific businesses
- Curbs are highly utilized and cars sometimes queue into travel lanes
- Not all streets have striped parking
- People circle to find spots closest to their destination
- Many businesses are dependent on parking, particularly short-term and pickup/drop-off parking
- Business employees often park in prime spots and no business parking permit program is in place
- Several private lots are used informally as parking for the area including the CVS, Walgreens, Bank of America, and South Shore Bank lots

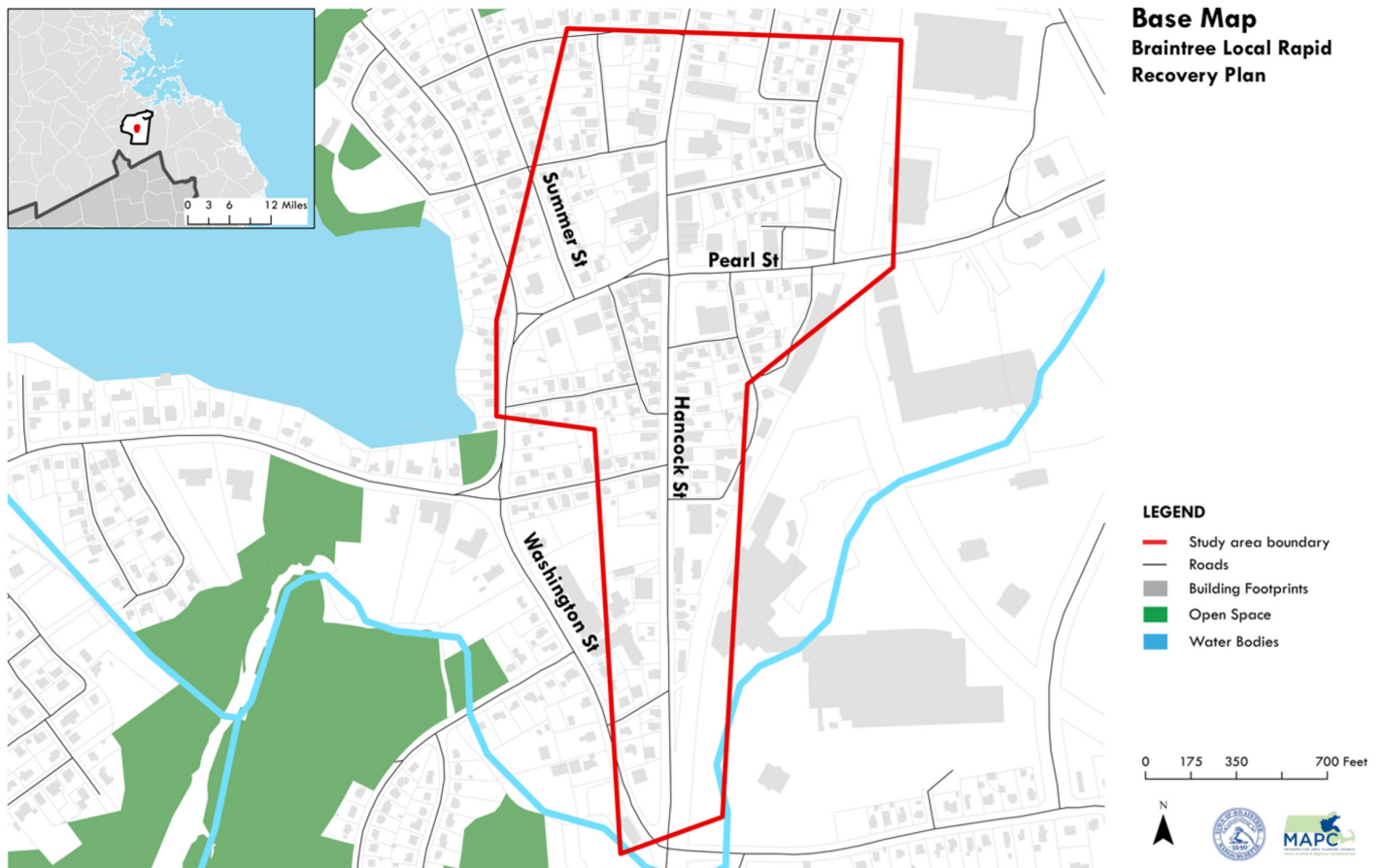


Figure 4: Parking management study area

Parking Supply and Utilization

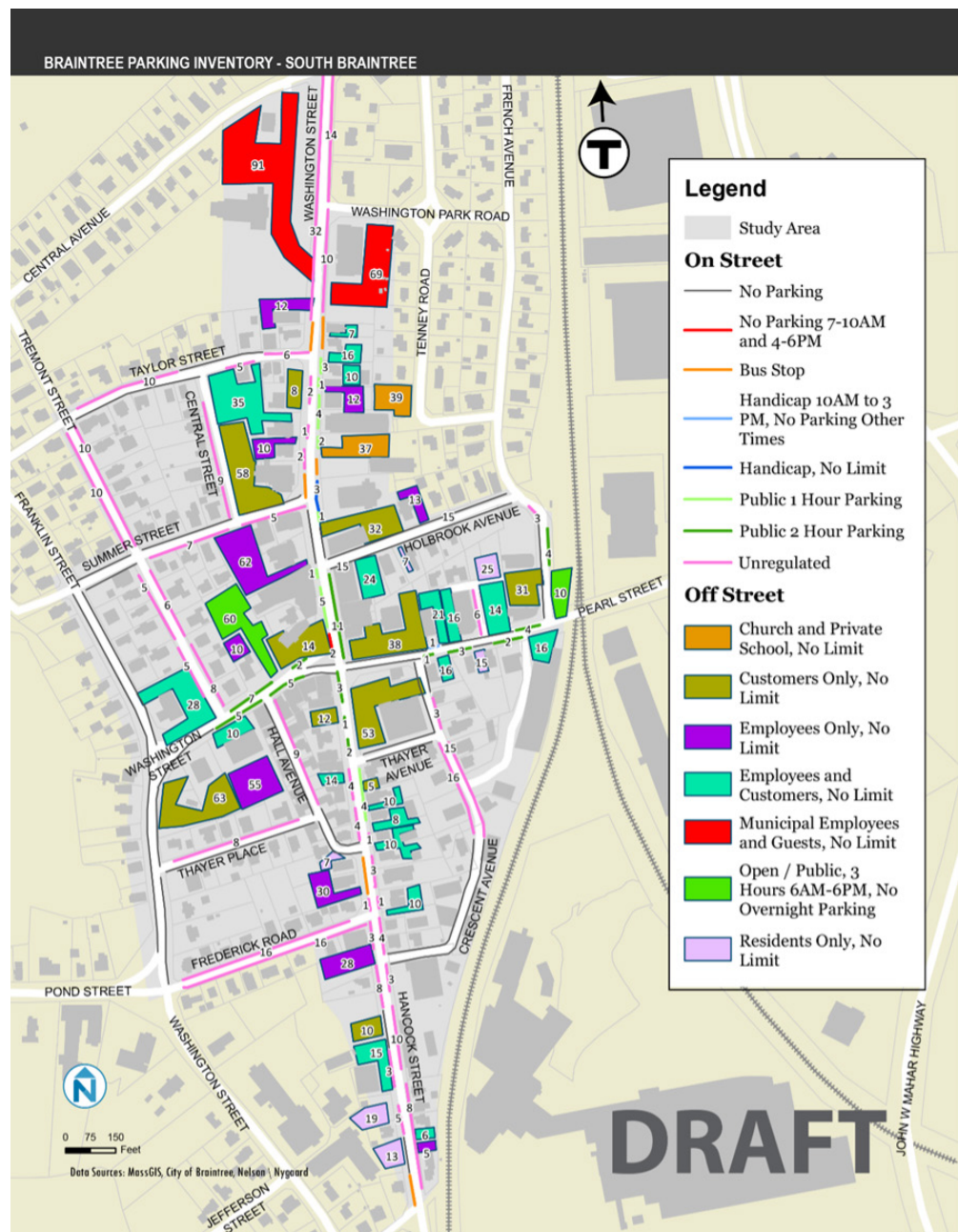
Nelson\Nygaard completed a parking inventory study of this area in 2017 as displayed in Figure 5. The majority of on-street parking in the study area is public parking with a time limit (variable) or unregulated. Off-street parking is primarily private for customers of employees. Two municipal lots for municipal employees and guests exist at the northern end of the study area.

As Braintree considers adding additional parking options or regulations to the curbs in the study area, parking occupancy data should be collected to better understand the usage of the existing parking. A suggested parking occupancy study would collect field data for the entire study area. All parked cars would be counted throughout the area at the following times:

- 1 Weekday (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) in 2-hour increments from 12 PM – 8 PM
- 1 Weekend day (Saturday) in 2-hour increments from 12 PM – 8 PM

Parking data from this field work should be analyzed to determine the overall peak period of parking and to understand how parking demand varies throughout the day. 85% occupied is a desired number for most on-street parking serving businesses as this means parking is used efficiently but some spots are still available.

If parking occupancy in the overall study area or on most public parking blocks exceeds 85% at peak periods, additional regulations should be implemented to control demand.



Parking inventory. 2017

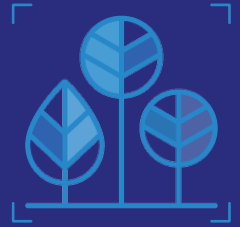
Action Item

In 2017, the Town undertook a parking inventory study with a consultant (Nelson\Nygaard, also the Subject Matter Expert for this planning effort). Since then, businesses have changed, as well as parking demand and supply. Given the strong sentiment that parking is an issue, the Town should retain the services of a parking management consultant to update the prior work and develop a strategy for moving forward. Upon completion of the plan, the Town can update applicable zoning bylaws (including provisions for shared parking)

Process

- Identify existing public and private parking spaces
- Identify underutilized parking areas and coordinate with appropriate wayfinding and signage as described under Goal #3 below
- Survey customers to determine how they get to the Square and where do they park
- Update parking map
- Develop parking management plan with specific strategies
- Establish designated parking for employees of area businesses
- Adopt a bylaw for shared parking and amend other parking related provisions in the zoning bylaw

Shared Parking



Shared parking agreements with private lot operators can expand the available public parking supply at a low cost to the Town of Braintree.

The Town of Braintree should reach out directly to private lot operators who may be interested in sharing parking, such as Walgreens and Bank of America. The Town can propose public parking access during off hours and offer to enforce parking in the lot and/or paying a monthly fee for public access to the spaces. If a mobile payment app is in place, the Town can also offer the private lot operator to charge for parking in their lot using the municipal app, thereby collecting revenue for themselves. This incentivizes participation in the program.



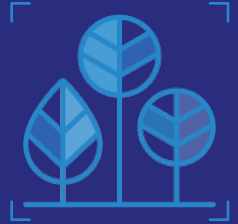
Enforcement, Communications, and Signage

The Town of Braintree should strive to enforce parking and curb regulations in a way which incentivizes compliance.

This may include featuring a first time forgiveness program and leaving informational flyers rather than citations on improperly parked vehicles. Enforcement should be focused during the busiest times when turnover is important.

Signage and local outreach should also be used to encourage enforcement and to maximize usage of all available parking in the area. In many cases, only the most popular spots are full and ample parking exists just around the corner from key destinations. This parking should be advertised and signage should direct users to it whenever possible.

Business cards can be left with local businesses and distributed to customers to inform them on their parking options and link to a short survey regarding parking conditions.



Employee Parking Programs

The Town of Braintree may consider offering an Employee Permit for employees of businesses in the area that do not have off-street parking.





This permit may be purchased directly by employees or by the business. Employee Permits would allow employees to park in specific locations for a discounted rate. This will save employees money on potential meter costs and also incentivize employees to leave prime public parking spots for customers.



Multimodal Transportation

Parking demand can be reduced and business vitality can be increased by improving multimodal transportation options in the study area. Adding safe bike parking and comfortable bike facilities will incentivize local customers to travel by bike rather than by car. Providing improved pedestrian amenities and lighting will make customers feel more comfortable walking in the area or parking further away from their destination.

1.2 Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to enhance safety

Category		Public realm
Location	South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198	
Origin	MAPC, Planning and Community Development Department	
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		<p>Low Risk: Any pedestrian infrastructure will be beneficial, and the Town has already started to upgrade pedestrian road crossings at several intersections to meet ADA requirements. However, additional improvements are needed to complete the project.</p> <p>Potential challenges: One challenge to success is community opposition to infrastructure investments. There may be concerns about the disruption to business during construction, as well as the loss of parking spaces (a significant concern to local businesses). To address concerns during construction, the Town should continue to communicate and include community members. In particular, the Town should focus on mitigating disruptions during construction to support local businesses and maintain safe sidewalks throughout the process. Those property owners is necessary for this effort to succeed.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in foot traffic• Increase in bicycle lanes and racks• Decrease in vehicle speeds• Decrease in collisions and injuries to pedestrians and cyclists	
Partners & Resources	<p>Braintree DPW on installation</p> <p>Funding sources: ARPA; MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places grant; MassWorks Infrastructure Program; Shared Streets and Spaces Program</p> <p>The Town can leverage the Braintree's allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Local and County funding which aims to address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector. The funding also aims to support activities to replace lost public sector revenue to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs and address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the inequal impact of the pandemic on certain populations.</p>	

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Based on site visit assessments, there is a need to improve walking and biking infrastructure, especially given that ADA improvements are ongoing but not complete, there are no designated bike lanes, and few bike racks available in the Square. One of the main goals of this plan is to increase foot traffic to support the local businesses. Accessibility and the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists is necessary in attracting and maintaining foot traffic. An additional goal is to make the Square attractive so that people feel comfortable visiting, and pedestrian and bike safety is a component of that.

Action Item

Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience, with a focus on completing ADA improvements at key intersections, adding crosswalks, installing benches and other street furniture, planting street trees, adding bike lanes, and installing bike racks.

Process

Identify areas where improvements are needed and locations where cyclists can park their bikes while in the Square.



Improve Pedestrian and Biking Infrastructure

Improving pedestrian and biking infrastructure can lead to many useful outcomes including providing an opportunity for the Town to recover from the economic shocks and changing nature of work.

The improvements will directly help increase foot traffic to the businesses in the area, especially those which have been severely impacted by the pandemic.

The pedestrian infrastructure improvements will enhance the vitality of South Braintree Square, giving the town an opportunity to better accommodate uses of public spaces like outdoor dining.

The improvements will encourage healthier practices of biking within the community contributing to the overall wellbeing of the residents which can be critical in a pandemic.

The changing nature of work in the form of remote working arrangements can potentially bear a larger impact on communities such as Braintree that house a large proportion of workers that commute to City of Boston to work. There is an opportunity to improve infrastructure that can reduce retail leakage from the town into other areas and as well as the carbon footprint generated by increased vehicular traffic.

1.3 Develop strategies to improve last mile connectivity between South Braintree Square and the Braintree MBTA Station.

Category		Public realm
Location		South Braintree Square study area (Census Tract 4198), potentially town-wide depending on the scope of any last mile transit solutions proposed
Origin		MAPC, Planning and Community Development Department
Budget		<p>High Budget (Over \$500,000).</p> <p>This would depend on the type of improvements sought after.</p>
Timeframe		<p>Short Term (<5 years).</p> <p>This recommendation would be able to begin immediately. However, it is anticipated that any shuttle service would be implemented over the longer term.</p>
Risk		Medium Risk: Major risks to this program are identifying stable funding sources and reaching political will to implement a major program. This would also be a major undertaking in terms of management and staff resources on the Town level as well.
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in foot traffic connecting to the MBTA station• Increase in bicycle counts from the MBTA station
Partners & Resources		<p>Braintree Department of Public Works, MBTA, South Shore Chamber of Commerce. In addition, other neighboring municipalities could be brought in to develop any shuttle service.</p> <p>Funding could be constituted from multiple sources including ARPA; MassEVIP Fleets; MassWorks Infrastructure Program</p> <p>For streetscape improvements that focus on improving sidewalk connectivity between the study area and the station, a combination of funding from the town and MBTA would help fund this project recommendation. Braintree's ARPA allocation could be utilized to enhance sidewalks and implement traffic calming measures to ease the pedestrian and bicycle connections between the study area and the train station.</p> <p>For any shuttle service, funding for the shuttle fleets could be partially covered by the MassEVIP Fleets incentive program. The South Shore Chamber of Commerce and the Town could also work together and with other neighboring municipalities to create a steady funding source to ensure that the service remains free for riders. In addition, parking revenue generated by the MBTA could help provide a steady source of revenue for this program.</p>

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Based on interviews and focus groups with the South Braintree business community, parking and accessibility remains the number one issue that the area is dealing with. While many of the prior solutions can focus on better asset management and addressing supply with respect to the future growth of the region, South Braintree needs more accessibility options beyond the automobile. With the nearby location of the Braintree MBTA station with both T and commuter rail access into the center of Boston, this presents an excellent opportunity to leverage that accessibility for South Braintree and allow the station to serve as a gateway into South Braintree from the core of the region.

Action Item

Implement a capital improvement program that includes improved sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure that connects South Braintree with the MBTA station.

Work with other communities immediately served by the Braintree MBTA station to consider the feasibility of establishing a shuttle service that provides real-time connectivity between the MBTA station, South Braintree Square, and other key points of interest in Braintree and surrounding communities.

Process

- Hire a design consultant to measure items such as the walkscore and bicycle scores in the area. Measure foot traffic patterns to see the most optimal pedestrian improvements available. From there, develop a capital improvement plan and timeline to implement physical improvements between the two areas in coordination with the MBTA.
- Work with the aforementioned partners to create a steady revenue source to fund the shuttle service. This entity would also release an RFP to vendors with experience in operating a shuttle and bus service. With an operator selected, identify the most optimal route and time schedule to operate the shuttle service to the greatest benefit of the area. Marketing of the service to the business community and residents should be put in place to raise awareness of the ability to utilize the service.

GOAL 2.

Increase development potential in South Braintree Square to attract additional customers to area businesses.

2.1 Update the zoning bylaw to encourage more infill development in South Braintree Square.

Category		Administrative capacity and public realm
Location		South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198
Origin		MAPC, Planning and Community Development Department
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000 - \$200,000)
Timeframe		<p>Short Term (<5 years).</p> <p>This effort should be prioritized. It should be noted that the Town is about to embark on a master planning process and this could be incorporated into that effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Short-term (6-12 months): Meet with town officials and business owners; identify underutilized and vacant parcels along with associated zoning regulationsShort-term (12-18 months): Draft zoning amendments and design regulations; initiate public outreachMid-term (18-24 months): Finalize zoning amendments; conduct public hearings; present zoning amendments to Town Council for approval
Risk		<p>Low Risk</p> <p>The risk of being unsuccessful is low. While the Town believes updates to the zoning within South Braintree Square are necessary, failure to make the zoning changes has no significant consequences other than viable lost opportunities to grow the development potential of the Square. It would be a missed opportunity to make the Square more inviting, productive, and vibrant.</p> <p>Potential challenges: The success of this effort depends on the participation and buy-in of partners, particularly business and property owners in and around South Braintree Square. The process of amending a zoning bylaw is fraught with potential opposition since many people feel "safer" with the status quo and may be averse to change with unknown results.</p>
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Successful adoption of zoning amendmentsGradual change in the mix, style and density of land uses in South Braintree Square
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: Town and local property owners</p> <p>Funding sources: Town budget, ARPA (technical assistance to businesses); MAPC Technical Assistance Program</p>

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

COVID revealed some vulnerabilities in sustainable economic development everywhere and many municipalities are looking to create a more resilient business environment to minimize the negative impacts of circumstances beyond anyone's control such as a pandemic.

South Braintree Square is located within sections of the General Business and Commercial districts. The Village Zoning Overlay District (VOD) is superimposed on selected portions of the existing General Business Zoning District centered around the intersections of Pearl Street, Hancock Street, and Washington Street in the Square.

To that end, examining existing land use patterns and future development potential is an appropriate response. This includes examining the allowed land uses in the district to update them so that mixed use and some additional residential is allowed along with a list of retail, office, and commercial uses. Although the minimum lot sizes are 15,000 sq. ft. for General Business and 40,000 sq. ft. for Commercial, the VOD allows reduced lot sizes (5,000 – 15,000 sq. ft.). Redevelopment should be encouraged pursuant to the VOD, which offers greater flexibility.

An assessment of the study area and the zoning regulations that are applicable to it reveals that there is development potential. Additionally, the establishment of streetscape and design standards can result in a more inviting business district where people may want to live, work, shop and play.

Action Item

The Town should consider retaining a planning and zoning consultant to review the zoning ordinance provisions that encompass South Braintree Square and look at existing lands uses and lot sizes. A consultant can undertake an independent analysis of the zoning to identify barriers to redevelopment opportunities, as well as creating incentives for property owners to consider redevelopment options.

Process

- Identify and map existing land uses and lot sizes in South Braintree Square
- Review Zoning Ordinance
- Conduct public outreach process
- Draft new zoning recommendations
- Hold public hearing with Planning Board
- Consider creating a new zoning district for the Square

Best practices

Examples of model zoning codes include:

- Ashland Downtown District (see https://ecode360.com/12620275_§8.5)
- East Dedham Square Design Guidelines (see <https://www.dedham-ma.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=3852>)
- Dedham Arts Overlay District (see https://www.dedham-ma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/14468/637472577554170000_§12)
- Scituate – Village Center & Neighborhood District (see https://www.scituatema.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3781f/pages/zoning_bylaw_2021.pdf_§580)

GOAL 3.

Create gateway to South Braintree Square to increase foot traffic in the Square.

3.1 Install attractive and helpful wayfinding signage, including directions to public parking options.

Category		Public realm and public realm
Location		South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198
Origin		MAPC, Planning and Community Development Department The project recommendation was developed in consultation with the Selbert Perkins Design Collaborative. For further detail, see the SME Consultation for "Signage & Wayfinding for Towns & Cities" in the Appendix.
Budget		High Budget (Over \$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 12 months) On average, 4-8 months are needed for designing a wayfinding program, and another 3-6 months for fabrication. If a design firm is brought onboard to also oversee fabrication and installation, parts of the process can be run in parallel to shorten the overall timeframe. Signage entering the existing built environment is subject to local ordinances and zoning, so it is advised to plan accordingly for the permitting process to occur if necessary.



Banner, parking, and business signage



Risk



Low Risk

Signage and wayfinding projects are typically considered low risk. The biggest risks to a signage and wayfinding project usually occur during fabrication and implementation. Provided the design and fabrication teams have proper documentation regarding the location of the signage elements, installation risk can be mitigated early in the fabrication process.

Another instance of risk comes with installation, where unforeseen obstacles will prevent signage from being installed in a planned location. Fabrication install teams will usually provide a secondary solution should an issue arise.

Some potential risks and/or challenges to successful implementation include:

- Including businesses on signs that may go out of business or move
- Including only some businesses on signs may indicate a preference for one business over another
- Community opposition to the placement, design, and destinations noted on the signage
- Financial constraints that limit the number and utility of the signage

Key Performance Indicators

- Increase in average daily foot traffic count
- Increase in total annual sales receipts
- Decrease in total number of storefront vacancies
- Survey residents and visitors on any impact the wayfinding signage had on their journeys

Partners & Resources

Partners: South Shore Chamber of Commerce, Planning and Community Development Department

Funding sources: Massachusetts Downtown Initiative; Economic Development Agency Tourism Grants; Commonwealth Places might support wayfinding signage (could be paired with another project); Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant Program (if partnered with the South Shore Chamber of Commerce)

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Improving wayfinding in South Braintree Square will help support businesses in the area and help combat the decline in foot traffic that the study area experienced as a result of COVID-19.

Action Item

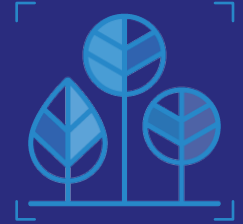
Identify locations for wayfinding signage including gateway signs along the main roadways leading to the Square. Design and install wayfinding to enable residents and visitors of all ages and abilities to find the assets and destinations that the Square has to offer. In addition, consider adding direction and walking distances on the signs, as well as directions to parking areas. Longer term, the Town should develop wayfinding signage to direct people to the Square from the MBTA station (currently under construction but expected to reopen in mid-2022) and to Sunset Lake.

Process

- Prepare wayfinding plan for the South Braintree Square area. Identify existing wayfinding signage and potential points of interest.
- Define the major routes for vehicles and pedestrians, points of interest, town limits, parking & points of entry and exit to assess where signage could be placed.
- Identify sign types and design to be used for the different roles the signs will play (directional, informational, etc.).
- Create wayfinding business directories that list area businesses and locations.
- Procure design and branding for wayfinding elements necessary based on the Wayfinding Plan.
- Procure fabrication and installation services for wayfinding elements.
- Install signs, complete with wayfinding maps throughout the Square and surrounding neighborhoods, including near Town Hall and the MBTA station, and commit to providing relevant, up-to-date information about happenings throughout the area.
- Establish placemaking features in the Square such as street furniture, planters, and public art.

Wayfinding

Braintree, MA



- Given the layout of the town of Braintree relevant to South Braintree Square, any new signage should consider how people enter the square. Coming up from the T station, signage should direct pedestrian visitors up towards Thayer Academy and down the green space in front of Town Hall.
- Signage for South Braintree Square should include directories with walking distance and time to destination information. These metrics will promote the area as having more amenities, and being a walkable area.
- Directory signage should be placed where pedestrians enter the flow of the square. Municipal parking lots would be the place to start emptying this signage. Other small signs that point to the square and include mileage or time to destination are helpful.
- In order to create a bigger impression, some monument signage tilting the area as South Braintree Square should be implemented. Other signage in the area is dominant and people may not think of it as a destination because of this.
- Any opportunity to add green space should be taken. The square itself suffers from congestion, and greenery would provide a good area for people to meet and gives a sense of place.
- A historic walking tour would be a great chance to increase pedestrian foot traffic within this district given the present local history. Map signs and informational panels can make for a great experience that is free to visitors and residents alike.

3.2 Improve overall appearance in the district.

Category



Public realm and private realm

Location

South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198

Origin

Planning and Community Development Department, MAPC

Budget



Low (<\$50,000)

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years).

Risk



Low Risk

There is insignificant risk but much to gain from an aggressive litter removal effort.

Key Performance Indicators

- Decrease in trash within the district
- Increase in trash cans within the district
- Increase in number of trees planted and tree coverage, resulting in cooler temperatures/less urban heat island effect within the district



Public space near Southside Tavern

Partners & Resources

Braintree DPW, South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Funding: Municipal funding, Hometown Grant program. In addition, MassTrails grants could be utilized to help pay for new trees, planters, and other beautification efforts.

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impact

Issues regarding tree plantings and litter were observed during the site visits. There were instances of trash collecting within tree pits, litter in the alleys, and missing trees.

Action Items





- Develop a strategy to increase the number of trees planted within the district
- Increase the number of public trash and recycling cans
- Decrease the amount of litter within the district

Process

The process would focus on purchasing trash and recycling bins for the corridor. Areas of high foot traffic will need to be identified beforehand to ensure that receptacles are placed in the most strategic areas.

In addition, there are programmatic efforts that can be led by community organizations to improve appearance of the district. This includes volunteer days, recruiting members of the community to help plant trees and to do trash pickup at least once a month. Organizations such as the Braintree Historical Society can also program their events around these efforts and contribute volunteers.

3.3 Establish storefront guidelines and reactivate storefront façade program.

Category		Private realm
Location		South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198
Origin		Planning and Community Development Department, MAPC
Budget		Medium (\$50,000 to \$200,000)
Timeframe		<p>Short Term (<5 years)</p> <p>Given that a façade improvement program currently exists, it is anticipated that an update and expansion of the program will take less than two years.</p>
Risk		<p>Medium Risk</p> <p>Potential risks may include property owners not adhering to design guidelines and sign regulations; however, this can be mitigated by offering guidelines and additional financing mechanisms for implementation.</p>
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of participation by businesses• Enforcement activity by the Town
Partners & Resources		<p>Town of Braintree, businesses, property owners, boards and commissions</p> <p>Funding: Town of Braintree Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP), ARPA allocations</p>
Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts		<p>The diagnostic phase of this project identified that there were a few key parcels in South Braintree Square that would benefit from storefront design guidelines, better enforcement, and a façade improvement program. Some storefront windows were covered with internal signage. While a façade improvement program already exists in the Town of Braintree, few businesses are taking advantage of it. Reenergizing the façade program, enforcing sign regulations, and adding the component of storefront guidelines would ultimately help guide consistent design vision within the Square.</p>

Action Item

Establishing storefront design guidelines will help set a cohesive design vision for South Braintree Square. It will also set expectations for the level of investment that property owners will need to adhere to when observing both the town's recommendations.

Reactivating the storefront façade program will require an evaluation of administrative capacity to continue to the program both for staff to operate the program and funding to distribute loans or grants to finance the program. There are several considerations to establishing a loan or grant program. As an example, the Town of Brookline established a façade loan program that has been successful in distributing up to \$10,000 in loans that can be repaid annually in four equal installments. Testimonials from Brookline businesses who received loans indicated that the financing helped address some of the additional capital needed with bank loans or paved the way for future grants. The nature of loans being paid back to the town may also allow for higher amounts. A grant program would allow for smaller amounts to be disbursed within the community with the average amount in neighboring communities being ~\$2,000. The two funding programs can also be combined for maximum effectiveness.

Process

See guidance for the Braintree Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP) in Appendix.

Braintree Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP)

Braintree, MA



As part of its ongoing business retention and development activities, and to improve building aesthetics, the Town of Braintree has established a Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP) to assist the businesses and commercial property owners in three districts (Braintree Square, South Braintree Square, and Braintree-Weymouth Landing Area). The Town was awarded an initial grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (a division of the Department of Housing and Community Development) to prepare program materials and design guidelines. Additionally, the Town has committed money from South Shore Mall mitigation funds to initiate the new Façade and Sign Improvement Programs. Administration of this program is the responsibility of the Braintree Planning and Community Development Department.

The FSIP provides financial incentives in the form of matching grants and low-interest loans to district property owners and businesses enabling them to undertake needed building façade improvements. It is anticipated that improving the appearance of buildings in the three village centers will enhance business development, increase pedestrian and customer traffic, and improve the quality of life of Town residents.

Eligible improvements may include:

- Removal of old signs, awnings, brackets, and other exterior clutter
- Exterior cleaning and painting
- Application of new exterior materials consistent with buildings historic characteristics
- Repair of exterior brickwork, plaster or clapboard
- Installation of new entry doors with handicapped access
- Installation or restoration of display windows
- Installation of new canvas awnings over windows and entries
- Installation of new signage
- Application of ceramic tile or other decorative material on exterior walls to accent openings

FSIP provides for matching grants to building and business owners. In most cases, the maximum façade grant award of public funds will be \$5,000 to be matched by \$5,000 of private funds (a 50/50 matching grant). A 5-year preservation agreement, executed between the building owner and the Town of Braintree, is required to protect the public investment in the façade work. A sign and awning matching grant may be as much as \$2,500 and a 5-year preservation agreement will be required of the business or building owner. In all cases, a private match (50% or more) to public grant funds will be required. The match may be a combination of private funds, sweat equity, or other building improvements to be undertaken by the applicant in conjunction with the façade project.




The Braintree Planning & Community Development Department administers the program and offers technical assistance to applicants in obtaining design approval and processing preservation agreements, construction documents, and administering project funds. Payments for façade and signage grants are contingent upon periodic inspections and project completion satisfactory to the Town of Braintree.

To be eligible for the program, commercial buildings must be located within one of the three FSIP Districts and each structure must be rated in fair, poor, or severely dilapidated condition by the Town. The selection of façade improvement projects will be based on a commercial building's distress level and other factors.

GOAL 4.

Work to assist
businesses in
understanding the
permitting process.

4.1 Develop a permitting guide to assist businesses with the process for obtaining required permits and licenses.

Category		Administrative capacity and private realm
Location		South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198 (but would be useful town-wide)
Origin		<p>Business survey and focus group, MAPC</p> <p>The project recommendation was developed in consultation with the Revby LLC. For further detail, see the SME Consultation for "Creation a permitting guide to better assist business operations within South Braintree" in the Appendix.</p>
Budget		Low (<\$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<12 months)
Risk		<p>Low Risk</p> <p>Successful completion of a permitting guide can improve business relations with the Town and reduce the costs associated with starting a new business and maintaining it over time.</p>
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in the amount of time required by town staff to respond to inquiries from local businesses• Reduction in the amount of time required to obtain licenses and permits
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: South Shore Chamber of Commerce, Planning and Community Development Department</p> <p>Funding sources: Town funding, ARPA, MAPC Technical Assistance Program</p>

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Business owners sometimes expressed frustration with the process and timeline for obtaining permits to operate their businesses. The creation of a permitting guide would assist businesses as they seek to start or alter their businesses. COVID-19 has intensified that need. Staff are bogged down with a high-touch process that could be approached in a more efficient way. Community members have a perception that they can negotiate their way around the permitting process. There is an objective to avoid a permit rather than gain a permit in an efficient and cooperative way.

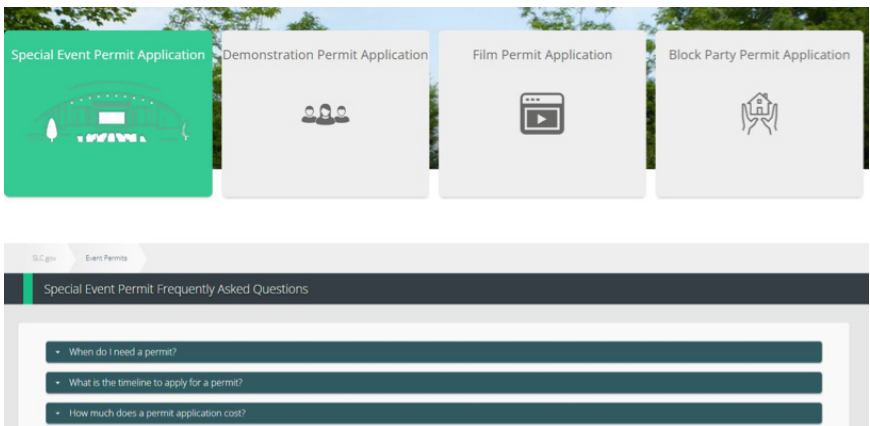
Strategies will be recommended to create a new permitting brochure that clarifies the necessary steps a business must complete to operate successfully within Braintree. The initiative aims to provide businesses a quicker and easier permitting process.

Action Items

There are numerous models for designing permitting process guides and flowcharts, and many of them are now online. Some examples include:

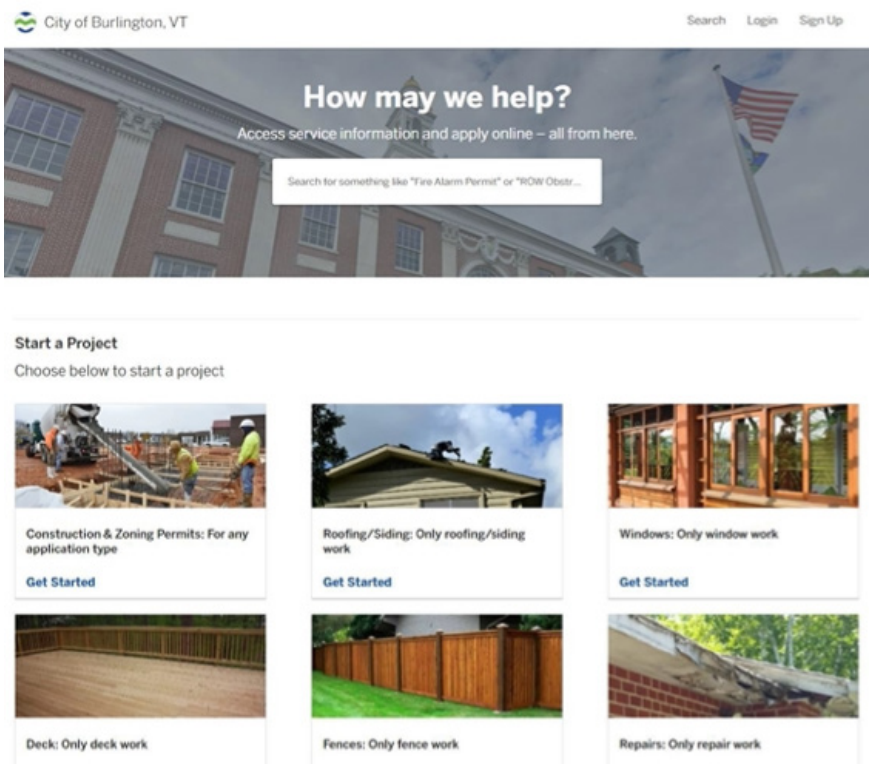
Salt Lake City, UT

It features a self-service portal and permit categories can be adapted to a particular municipality's permit requirements and audience. An FAQ page and video tutorial assist users. See <https://www.slc.gov/eventpermits>



City of Burlington, VT

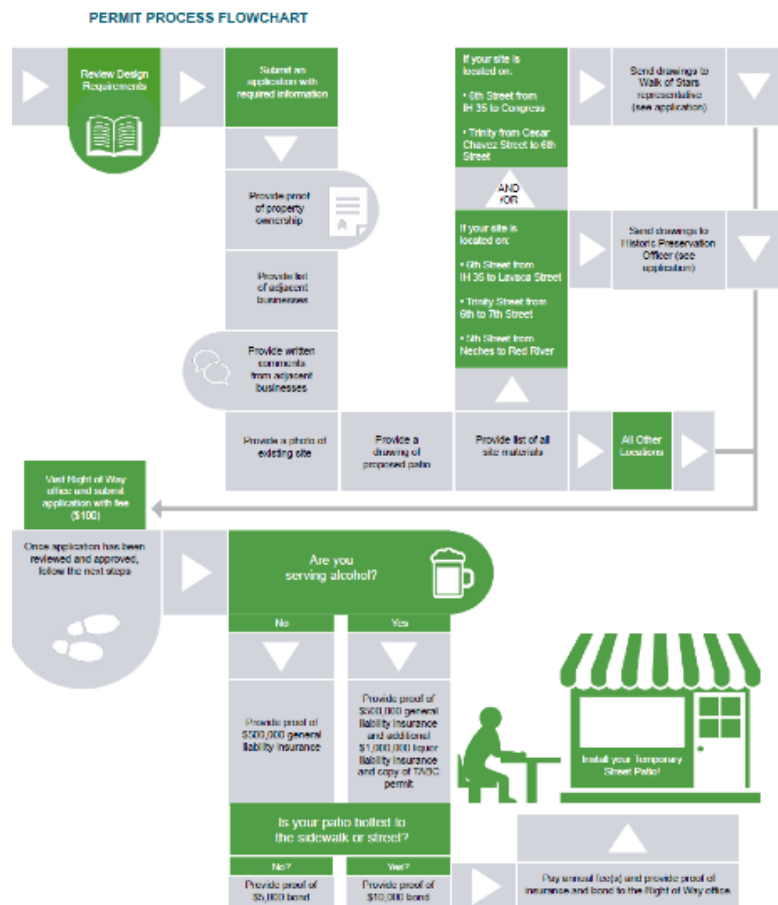
<https://business.burlingtonvt.gov/>



The City uses Viewpoint Cloud from Opengov.com (see <https://opengov.com/products/citizen-services/>)

City of Austin, TX

Handbook with permit process flowchart (see <https://www.austintexas.gov/service/sidewalk-cafes-and-street-patios> and https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Transportation/StreetPatio_Handbook_5_12_2017.pdf for examples).



Process

- Review existing processes for obtaining development permits and business licenses
- Meet with local business leaders to determine where problems or delays exist
- Identify ways in which the permitting process can be improved
- Prepare a hard copy and online step-by-step guide to assist businesses with permitting and emphasize the order in which permits should be obtained.

Model for Streamlined Local Permitting

Massachusetts



The Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies produced a report entitled "A Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting" in 2007.

The best permitting practices fall into four broad categories:

- Fostering better communication among municipal regulatory boards and between those boards and applicants;
- Standardizing forms and procedures to provide efficiency and predictability;
- Providing sufficient resources to enable swift and competent regulatory consideration; and
- Encouraging proactive planning, site selection and pre-permitting to expedite regulatory oversights before specific, time-constrained projects are proposed.

Read the report at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/permittingbestpracticesguidepdf/download?ga=2.53331373.446416647.1630671274-2101568629.1577733122>.

4.2 Increase capacity at the municipal level to focus on economic development.

Category		Administrative capacity
Location		Town of Braintree
Origin		MAPC, Town of Braintree
Budget		Medium (\$50,000 to \$200,000) Funding would be required for new staff person within the Planning and Community Development Department.
Timeframe		Short Term(<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk Requires ongoing Town support and dedicated funding
Key Performance Indicators		Success will be measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New economic development planning efforts and initiatives• Increased efficiency in processing permit applications for new and expanded businesses• Better promotion of businesses in Braintree• Expansion of town's tax base
Partners & Resources		Partners: Town of Braintree, South Shore Chamber of Commerce Funding sources: Town funding, ARPA (at least through December 2024)
Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts		The Town has limited capacity within the Planning and Community Development Department, which tends to be the first place business owners go when they are looking to obtain permits for new businesses. Moreover, unlike many other cities and towns, Braintree does not have an Economic Development Commission to promote and develop the local economy in order to provide good jobs and expand the Town's tax base.
Action Items and Process		Hire and Economic Development Planner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council votes to approve the new position and fund it Create an Economic Development Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council should establish the Commission as a standing committee and work with the Mayor to appoint members• The Planning and Community Development Department should create a mission statement for the Commission and staff its meetings (ideally with a newly hired Economic Development Planner)

GOAL 5.

Develop a marketing plan for local businesses.

5.1 Create a branding and marketing campaign for the South Braintree Square area.

Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		South Braintree Square; Census Tract 4198 (but could be beneficial town wide)
Origin		<p>Business survey and focus group, MAPC, Town of Braintree</p> <p>The project recommendation was developed in consultation with the Goman+York. For further detail, see the SME Consultation for "Creation of a Branding and Marketing Campaign for the South Braintree Square Area" in the Appendix.</p>
Budget		<p>Medium (\$50,000 to \$200,000)</p> <p>Initial set-up during the first year will require non-recurring budget line items for set-up of this ongoing program. Administrative support will also be factored into the budget.</p>
Timeframe		<p>Short Term(<5 years)</p> <p>Engaging a consultant or professional to develop a branding and marketing plan will be short-term; implementing the strategy and identifying funding needed will require ongoing efforts.</p>
Risk		<p>Medium Risk</p> <p>Requires ongoing Town support, dedicated funding, and business participation</p>
Key Performance Indicators		<p>The success of the marketing campaign will be measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in the customer base, both from within Braintree and from outside the town• Increased sales and economic development activity in the area• Increase in attendance at major events within the downtown• Increase in foot traffic• Increase in local business revenue• Number of new businesses• Use of web analytics to measure online aspects of a social marketing campaign
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: Town of Braintree, South Shore Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Funding sources: Town funding, Chamber of Commerce, ARPA, EDA, MA Downtown Initiative Program, Regional Pilot Project Grant program through MA Office of Business Development</p> <p>Funding of this initiative can be derived from sources such as ARPA, EDA and MassDevelopment grants and funding that supports small business sustainability and economic development for growing new businesses and business awareness.</p>

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

According to the business survey administered to the South Braintree business community, 63% of businesses reported they are operating at reduced hours/capacity and 58% reported a loss in revenue from the prior year. In addition, 32% of businesses surveyed expressed interest in participating in a shared marketing program. Such a program would help to mitigate the negative impact that many businesses experienced in the wake of the pandemic.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been discussion among the town and business community on how to develop marketing strategies to assist the businesses with recovery and in the long run.

The makeup of the area is a mix of retail, restaurants and services. The area lost two businesses due to COVID-19. It has been reported that a large pharmacy is vacating their space and a new restaurant tenant will be occupying the space in 2022. There is a new 55+ community coming to the area.

It has been mentioned that the area lacks a cohesive identity – one that lets visitors know “they are in South Braintree Square.” It is anticipated that while developing an identity for the South Braintree Square area, a branding and marketing campaign would help to facilitate the growth of current the small businesses and foster opportunities for new small businesses.

It is important to note that the branding (image, logo, tagline) should be developed prior to the wayfinding project so that it may be incorporated into that project as well.

Action Items

- Through a branding and marketing plan and cooperation between businesses, the goal is to increase retail activity, sales and visitation to the commercial corridor.
- Create a brand identity – based on identity or theme of district; build off branding from other parts of the Town.
- Develop a marketing/branding campaign that utilizes promotion, social media, visual media (advertising, art, murals, lighting, signage/wayfinding, banners, etc.).
- Develop marketing opportunities that focus on what the area has and what does well in the area and those that will increase business participation.
- Encourage business recruitment and growth of new and current businesses through promotion and strengthening of awareness of the district.

Process

Funding - Budget Development

Determine your funding sources for this effort, keeping in mind that this will be an ongoing effort that will need long-term funding. Year 1 will require more funding as the brand and marketing plans are developed. Determine if the Town has the capacity to manage the program or if added staff will be needed.

Branding Efforts

Select a team to work on this effort:

It should be comprised of key stakeholders from the town – officials, cultural representatives, Chamber and business owners. The Chamber of Commerce has indicated that they can be a strong advocate and partner for this program.

Hire branding & marketing professional(s)

Consider using a local designer firm that knows the area and can reflect that in the design that this is a special and unique area, keeping in mind that the design/images used should build off any efforts the Town and perhaps the Chamber has started.

The designer should also be able to apply this new look to your marketing efforts – for various applications and for use by the area businesses.

To get stakeholder and community buy in, hold a community meeting with the business owners to review the branding and marketing strategy.

Brand Uses & Recognition:

Once the brand is established and guidelines have been developed, it can be used in various applications. This should be seen as a starting point for other projects that were proposed through the LRRP initiative (i.e., wayfinding signage, banners, events, advertising, economic development, arts and communications), as they work together in the promotion and recognition of the area.

Marketing Efforts

Engage a consultant (or add staff) to design, review and recommend a multi-year marketing plan and strategy (this may be the same professional that helped to develop your brand); hold a community meeting to get buy in from stakeholders and build on marketing initiatives that are already in place (banners/holiday lighting). This plan should include marketing the area to focus on what you have that would encourage patrons to explore the area. Keep in mind that funding to brand and market the commercial district will also include utilizing the brand to create signage, banners and physical assets for the district.

Build on and complement what has been done in the area:

New and current businesses, culture and amenities of the area should be highlighted in marketing and social media efforts – social media, geo-targeted advertising, sales and events marketing programs will serve to enhance promotion of the district.

Utilize and populate existing social media sites and regional websites and the Town website. A Visitors section on the Town website can be enhanced visually – perhaps adding a business listing, restaurant guide and events calendar (see examples).

Utilizing existing sites will help to solidify the new brand and can be more cost-effective than creating a new website in the short-term.

Utilize the brand to market the area to potential businesses. Add a Doing Business tab to the current website to encourage new business development not only in the Square, but in the entire town.

Concentrate on the excitement in the area:

Focus should be on new and existing businesses, what's great and unique about it and its businesses. If there are signature or successful events build on those or create new events that encourage people to walk "#SouthBraintreeSquare".

What's new, what's here and what's to come. The restaurants and businesses serve as draws for the commercial area. Focus on drawing people to the Square from the other areas in the town and region, paying attention to who's driving through the area and their destinations. You may want to conduct a geo-fencing study to determine this.

Provide training and support for local businesses for marketing their businesses individually and in a shared format

Enabling businesses with the ability to self-promote and better market their businesses will serve to draw more traffic to the area. Business workshops are a great tool not only for the businesses, but a way to form a sense of cohesiveness within the business community. If there are local businesses that can be used to host these – all the better. The Chamber may be able to facilitate some sessions/webinars for district businesses on social media and marketing/promotion.

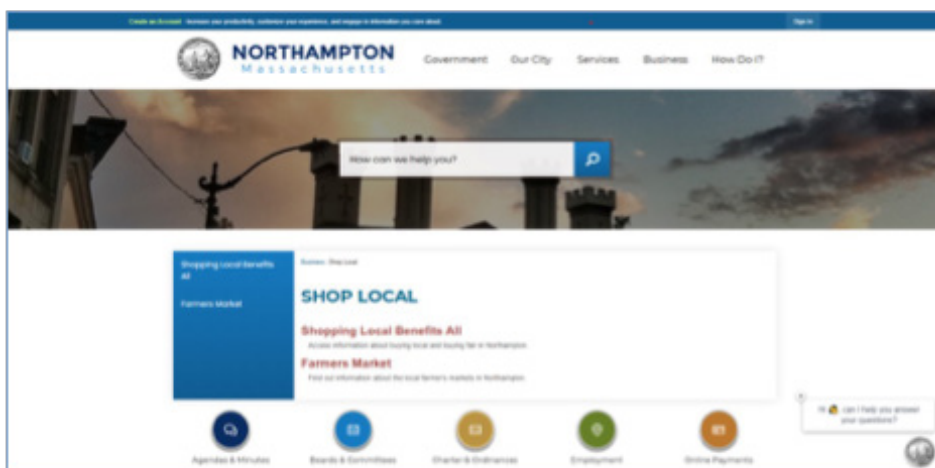
Evaluation

Evaluate your marketing efforts through tracking and analytics – each effort should be critiqued for effectiveness. You should have a plan in place to pivot, delete or add.

Branding



Current Town Website Homepage Credit: www.braintreema.gov



Example – Northampton, MA website Credit: <https://www.northamptonma.gov/1154/Shop-Local>



Liked by veronikak23 and others
downtowngreenville Located in #NomaSquare adjacent to the #HyattRegency. Voted 2016 Best of the Upstate - Buffet. Swipe left for a few... more

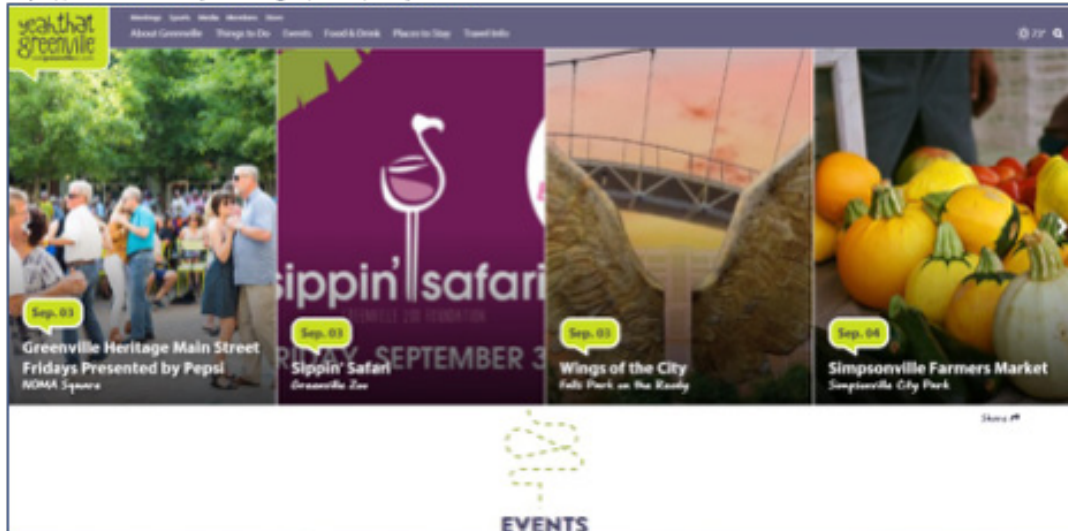


The Visit Greenville SC Facebook and Instagram pages promotes local restaurants

Branding

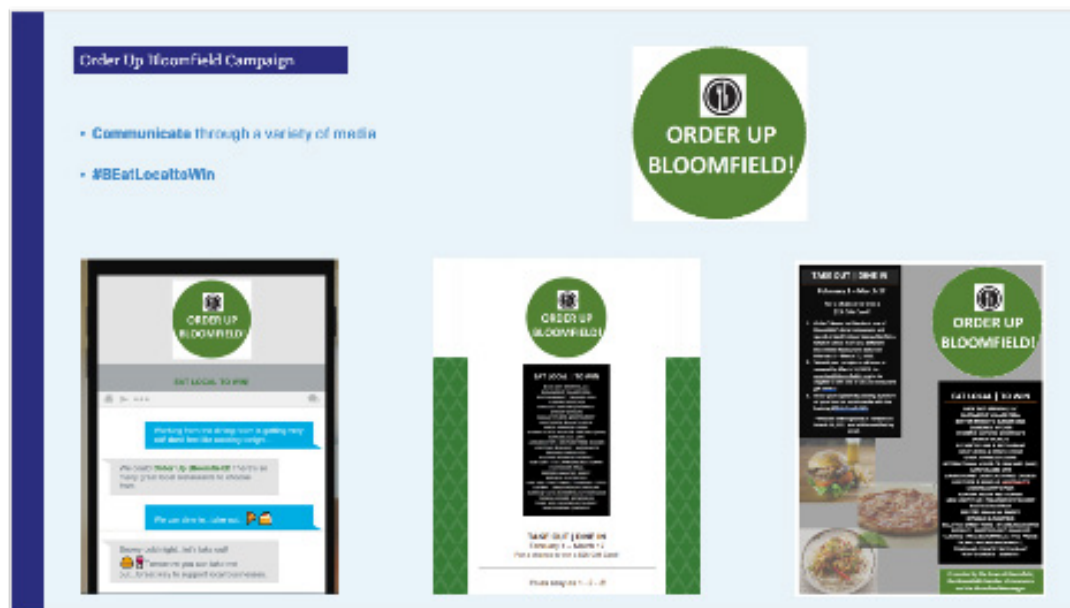


<https://www.northamptonma.gov/1154/Shop-Local>



Example of a Events Calendar the can be added to the website.

Credit: VisitGreenvilleSC.com



Credit: Goman+York Restaurant Promotional Campaign for restaurants

Implementation Matrix

Action Item	Partners	Timeframe	Potential Resources (Technical assistance or funding opportunities)
Goal 1: Enhance transportation accessibility and safety in South Braintree Square.			
Assess parking availability and the needs of businesses for their customers and employees to expand accessibility and availability of parking spaces.	DPW, Planning & Community Development; property owners	Short-term (1 year)	MAPC Technical Assistance Program; ARPA (technical assistance to businesses)
Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to enhance safety.	DPW; Planning & Community Development	Short-term (1-2 years)	ARPA; MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places grant; MassWorks Infrastructure Program; Shared Streets and Spaces Program
Develop strategies to improve last mile connectivity between South Braintree Square and the Braintree MBTA Station.	DPW; Planning & Community Development; MBTA; South Shore Chamber of Commerce	Short- to medium-term (less than 5 years, but more for shuttle service)	ARPA; MassEVIP Fleets; MassWorks Infrastructure Program
Goal 2: Increase development potential in South Braintree Square to attract additional customers to area businesses.			
Update the zoning bylaw to encourage more infill development in South Braintree Square.	Planning & Community Development; property owners	Short-term (2 years)	Town funding; ARPA (technical assistance to businesses); MAPC Technical Assistance Program
Goal 3: Create gateway to South Braintree Square to increase foot traffic in the Square.			
Install attractive and helpful wayfinding signage, including directions to public parking options.	South Shore Chamber of Commerce; Planning and Community Development Department	Short-term (1 year)	Massachusetts Downtown Initiative; Economic Development Agency Tourism Grants; Commonwealth Places might support wayfinding signage; Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant Program
Improve overall appearance in the district.	DPW, property owners	Short-term; ongoing	Town funding; Hometown Grant program; MassTrails grant
Establish storefront guidelines and reactivate storefront façade program.	Planning and Community Development Department; property owners	Short-term; ongoing	Braintree Façade & Signage Improvement Program; ARPA

Action Item	Partners	Timeframe	Potential Resources (Technical assistance or funding opportunities)
Goal 4: Work to assist businesses in understanding the permitting process.			
Develop a permitting guide to assist businesses with the process for obtaining required permits and licenses.	South Shore Chamber of Commerce; Planning and Community Development Department	Short-term (1 year)	Town funding; ARPA; MAPC Technical Assistance Program
Increase capacity at the municipal level to focus on economic development.	Planning and Community Development Department; Town Council; South Shore Chamber of Commerce	Short-term (1-2 years)	Town funding; ARPA
Goal 5: Develop a marketing plan for local businesses.			
Create a branding and marketing campaign for the South Braintree Square area.	South Shore Chamber of Commerce; Town	Short-term	Town funding; Chamber of Commerce; ARPA; EDA; MA Downtown Initiative Program; Regional Pilot Project Grant program through MA Office of Business Development

Appendix

Best Practices and Recommendations: Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and Wayfinding Project Rubric Guide

Branding and Marketing Campaign

Business Survey Report

Façade and Sign Improvement Program

Parking Management Recommendations

Permitting Guide



Local Rapid Recovery Plan

Best Practices & Recommendations; Signage and Wayfinding

Town of Braintree

LRRP – Signage & Wayfinding for Towns & Cities

This guide has been developed by Selbert Perkins Design for use in completing Project Rubrics assigned by the Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP). The goal of the document is to elaborate on best practices, deliverables, & process in relation to any branding development under the DCHD's LRRP Program.



The Process of Developing Wayfinding & Signage

1. Gather Your Assets

When it comes to making an impact with wayfinding, understanding the current state of your town's wayfinding signage is the first step. When the term "wayfinding" is attached to signage, it means the messaging on the sign is directing the viewer towards a destination.

Any maps indicating where current wayfinding signage exists will be very useful, and a beneficial first step. If you don't have this, an audit will likely be required.

Master planning documents that outline goals for the town/city are useful as well, as they will likely be referenced regarding planning around future goals and projects.

While a street sign could be considered wayfinding, the important distinction for this exercise should focus on sign types that include more information about destinations.

Gathering a master list of Points of Interest, or POI is also a good decision. Once the list feels comprehensive for your town, a good idea to categorize or sort this list into groups based on popularity of the given POI as a destination. This should give the wayfinding team a clear idea of goals for the wayfinding program.

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2. Layer the Data



Once the team has any maps, master plans, POI's and traffic maps, the goal should be to layer these sets of information over each other.

The data will begin to form a clear picture of how the wayfinding system should address the topography of your city/town. The team should be able to see major routes for vehicles & pedestrians, POI's, town limits, parking & points of entry and exit. Based on all this information, the wayfinding team can make an educated assessment on where signage can be placed to help specific users find their way through the city/town. Keep in mind that wayfinding users will have different objectives; visitors will have different destinations from residents.

Beyond this, the team should add locations that are instrumental in helping people navigate the environment in an ideal way. Selbert Perkins calls these decision points – they represent a point on a journey that can influence the user to take a more beneficial or easier route.

The resulting maps should outline locations that are likely underutilized for signage and wayfinding.

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3. Identify the Sign Types



When it comes to identifying the signage elements, the first step will be looking at the needs of your wayfinding from a mapping perspective and assessing how those needs can be met with physical signs. Before picking visuals, really deliberate about the role of each sign in each instance.

Wayfinding information will be perceived differently based on context, as users driving have substantially less time to read signs than pedestrians.

Typically, the result of this exercise will lead to a set of signs that each have different roles. Selbert Perkins refers to this as a signage family. These are often shown at scale on a single page and compared to ensure each sign has a specific duty and avoids being redundant to users.

The most common sign would be a directory sign, which is designed for pedestrians. This is placed in high pedestrian traffic situations, normally where most traffic originates. Typically, a map is shown outlining all points of interest in within a certain walking distance. A best practice is to indicate the amount of time it would take to walk to each destination, either in time or distance.

Also commonly seen in wayfinding packages, a vehicular directional sign includes large text, and is meant to indicate direction for top tier destinations. This information is meant to influence wayfinding users that are driving vehicles, so text should read large. These signs should also be placed **before** users have to make turns in their journey – they should have enough time to interpret the signage, make decisions and have time to correct their course before an intersection.

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4. Designing the Signage

Once the sign types have been identified, the visual design can be applied to the signage family. It's important to let the objectives of each sign type to lead in this phase, and not let visuals dictate the overall design. Here, form follows function.



Vehicular and bike signage should be large to allow for large type. All signage should be high contrast and use fonts that are highly legible. In some instances, signs are seen for less than five seconds, and have information on them that will be crucial, like indicating direction to a hospital.

Pedestrian signage can be smaller in size but should be more targeted. Vehicular signage is still relevant to people on foot, and a good directional sign in the proper location will be relevant to all users and can save the town/city money as a more efficient use of budget in the wayfinding package.

5. Fabrication Partners

When the wayfinding package has its locations and signs identified, a fabrication partner can be approached to help bring the project into reality.

Their first step should be coordinating base pricing to establish overall project costs, including installation. This allows the wayfinding design team to make changes in the wayfinding plan to save costs where they can and allow the fabrication team to pursue any discounts based on volume pricing.

A good fabrication team will be an invaluable partner. They can work with the city for any permitting, identify production methods that yield better pricing, and can complete a certain amount of design work. Always bid out to more than one fabricator to ensure even and fair pricing.

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Our Recommendations for the Town of Braintree



On 9/21/21, Cory DePasquale of Selbert Perkins Design met with a group of representatives from the town of Braintree & their LRRP partner Metropolitan Area Planning Council to discuss signage & wayfinding for the town. During our discussion, a few points were made that our team would like to elaborate on.

- Given the layout of the town of Braintree relevant to South Braintree Square, any new signage should consider how people enter the square. Coming up from the T station, signage should direct pedestrian visitors up towards Thayer Academy and down the green space in front of town hall.
- Signage for South Braintree Square should include directories with walking distance and time to destination information. These metrics will promote the area as having more amenities, and being a walkable area.
- Directory signage should be placed where pedestrians enter the flow of the square. Municipal parking lots would be the place to start emptying this signage. Other small signs that point to the square and include mileage or time to destination are helpful.
- In order to create a bigger impression, some monument signage tilting the area as South Braintree Square should be implemented. Other signage in the area is dominant and people may not think of it as a destination because of this.
- Any opportunity to add green space should be taken. The square itself suffers from congestion, and greenery would provide a good area for people to meet and gives a sense of place.
- A historic walking tour would be a great chance to increase pedestrian foot traffic within this district given the present local history. Map signs and informational panels can make for a great experience that is free to visitors and residents alike.

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Signage & Wayfinding; Project Rubric Guide



Per the DHCD's Local Rapid Recovery Plan, each applicable city or town is required to submit a standardized set of metrics in a rubric format. The information below should help plan facilitators and municipal staff determine their responses for the relevant metrics.

Budget & Funding Sources

For budgets related to signage and wayfinding, we advise to expect a range in cost. The budget will fluctuate based on the experience of the design firm, needs of the client, scale of the signage program, the schedule for the deliverables and the cost of fabrication and installation.

Wayfinding Design \$ 25K - \$150K+

- Stakeholder engagement (interviews) \$5 – 15K
- Public Engagement (survey – online or in person) \$10K – \$20K
- Wayfinding Analysis (Circulation Plans, Sign Location Plans, etc.) \$8K – \$18K
- Signage Standards or Master Plan Document (plus above services) \$10K – \$25K
- Concept Design \$15K - \$30K
- Design Development \$15K - \$30K
- Design Intent \$10K - \$20K
- Bidding + Negotiation \$5K – \$10K
- Construction Administration \$10K – \$25K

Fabrication \$75 – \$500K

- Simple metal or vinyl signage \$5k – \$25K
- Illuminated pylons/gateways \$50K - \$200K each
- Non-illuminated, freestanding signage \$25K- \$50K (each)
- General Conditions and Installation \$20 – 175K
- Digital directories \$25K- \$100K
- Mapping \$5K - \$25K

In regards to funding sources, we recommend researching the DCHD's crowdsourced list of funding and grant opportunities at the link below:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrh5rVQMbVbpYLKF/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

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Timeframe

On average, Selbert Perkins prefers 4-8 months for designing a wayfinding program, and another 3-6 months for fabrication. If a design firm is brought onboard to also oversee fabrication and installation, parts of the process can be run in parallel to shorten the overall timeframe. Signage entering the existing built environment is subject to city ordinance and zoning, so we advise to plan accordingly for the permitting process to occur if necessary.

Risks

Signage and wayfinding projects are typically considered low risk. The biggest risks to a signage and wayfinding project usually occur during fabrication and implementation. Provided the design and fabrication teams have proper documentation regarding the location of the signage elements, installation risk can be mitigated early in the fabrication process.

In some instances, signage cannot be fabricated as designed and will incur additional cost to the project. There is also an opportunity in this phase to value engineer signage, thus reducing cost of a signage style.

Signage that requires electricity for illumination, digital displays or interactivity require proper planning. Preliminary site surveys can mitigate the risk, but having to run electrical to signage elements can adversely impact a budget.

Another instance of risk comes with installation, where unforeseen obstacles will prevent signage from being installed in a planned location. Fabrication install teams will usually provide a secondary solution should an issue arise.

Key Performance Indicators

Public surveys can be used to rate the completed signage/wayfinding project and used as KPI. Another KPI would be poll residents and visitors on any impact the wayfinding signage had on their journeys, and if they feel as though it is helpful in navigating their build environment.



Creation of a Branding and Marketing Campaign for the South Braintree area

Prepared with: Goman+York

Project Title	Creation of a Branding and Marketing Campaign for the South Braintree Square area
Origin	Town of Braintree, MAPC Identified through the LRRP diagnostic business survey
Location/Census Tract	South Braintree Square
Budget & Sources of Funding	<p>Medium Budget – initial set-up 1st year will require non-recurring budget line items for set-up of this ongoing program. Administrative support will also be factored into the budget.</p> <p>Funding of this initiative can be derived from sources such as ARPA, EDA and MassDevelopment grants and funding that supports small business sustainability and economic development for growing new businesses and business awareness.</p>
Timeframe	Short-term – Engaging a consultant or professional to develop a branding and marketing plan will be short-term; implementing the strategy and identifying funding needed will require ongoing efforts.
Risks	Medium - requires ongoing Town support, dedicated funding, and business participation
Key Performance Indicators	<p>The success of the marketing campaign will be measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the customer base, both from within Braintree and from outside the town • Increased sales and economic development activity in the area • Increase in attendance at major events within the downtown • Increase in foot traffic • Increase in local business revenue • # of new businesses • Use of web analytics to measure online aspects of a social marketing campaign
Partners & Resources	Town of Braintree South Shore Chamber of Commerce
Diagnostic/ COVID-19 Impacts	<p>According to the business survey administered to the South Braintree business community, 63% of businesses reported they are operating at reduced hours/capacity and 58% reported a loss in revenue from the prior year. In addition, 32% of businesses surveyed expressed interest in participating in a shared marketing program. Such a program would help to mitigate the negative impact that many businesses experienced in the wake of the pandemic.</p> <p>In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been discussion</p>

	<p>among the town and business community on how to develop marketing strategies to assist the businesses with recovery and in the long run.</p> <p>The makeup of the area is a mix of retail, restaurants and services. The area lost two (2) businesses due to COVID-19. It has been reported that a large pharmacy is vacating their space and a new restaurant tenant will be occupying the space in 2022. There is a new 55+ community coming to the area.</p> <p>It has been mentioned that the area lacks a cohesive identity – one that lets visitors know “they are in South Braintree Square.” It is anticipated that while developing an identity for the South Braintree Square area, a branding and marketing campaign would help to facilitate the growth of current the small businesses and foster opportunities for new small businesses.</p> <p>It is important to note that the branding (image, logo,tagline) should be developed prior to the wayfinding project so that it may be incorporated into that project as well.</p>
Action Item	<p>Through a branding and marketing plan and cooperation between businesses, the goal is to increase retail activity, sales and visitation to the commercial corridor.</p> <p>Create a brand identity – based on identity or theme of district; build off branding from other parts of the Town</p> <p>Develop a marketing/branding campaign that utilizes promotion, social media, visual media (advertising, art, murals, lighting, signage/wayfinding, banners, etc.)</p> <p>Develop marketing opportunities that focus on what the area has and what does well in the area and those that will increase business participation.</p> <p>Encourage business recruitment and growth of new and current businesses through promotion and strengthening of awareness of the district.</p>
Process	<p>Funding - Budget Development – Determine your funding sources for this effort, keeping in mind that this will be an ongoing effort that will need long-term funding. Year 1 will require more funding as the brand and marketing plans are developed. Determine if the Town has the capacity to manage the program or if added staff will be needed.</p> <p>Branding Efforts Select a team to work on this effort – it should be comprised of key stakeholders from the town - officials, cultural representatives, Chamber and business owners. The Chamber of Commerce has indicated that they can be a</p>

	<p>strong advocate and partner for this program.</p> <p>Hire branding & marketing professional(s) – consider using a local designer firm that knows the area and can reflect that in the design that this is a special and unique area, keeping in mind that the design/images used should build off any efforts the Town and perhaps the Chamber has started.</p> <p>The designer should also be able to apply this new look to your marketing efforts – for various applications and for use by the area businesses.</p> <p>To get stakeholder and community buy in hold a community meeting with the business owners to review the branding and marketing strategy.</p> <p>Brand Uses & Recognition – Once the brand is established and guidelines have been developed it can be used in various applications – this should be seen as a starting point for other projects that were proposed through the LRRP initiative – i.e., wayfinding signage, banners, events, advertising, economic development, arts and communications, as they work together in the promotion and recognition of the area.</p> <p>Marketing Efforts Engage a consultant (or add staff) to design, review and recommend a multi-year marketing plan and strategy (this may be the same professional that helped to develop your brand); hold a community meeting to get buy in from stakeholders and build on marketing initiatives that are already in place (banners/holiday lighting). This plan should include marketing the area to focus on what you have that would encourage patrons to explore the area. Keep in mind that funding to brand and market the commercial district will also include utilizing the brand to create signage, banners and physical assets for the district.</p> <p>Build on and complement what has been done in the area – New and current businesses, culture and amenities of the area should be highlighted in marketing and social media efforts – social media, geo-targeted advertising, sales and events marketing programs will serve to enhance promotion of the district.</p> <p>Utilize and populate existing social media sites and regional websites and the Town website. A Visitors section on the Town website can be enhanced visually – perhaps adding a business listing, restaurant guide & events calendar. (See examples.) Utilizing existing sites will help to solidify the new brand and can be more cost-effective than creating a new website in the short-term.</p> <p>Working with Economic Development utilize the brand to market the area to potential businesses. Add a Doing Business tab to the current website to encourage new business development not only in the Square, but in the entire town.</p>	
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Concentrate on the Excitement in the area – Focus should be on new and existing businesses, what’s great and unique about it and its businesses. If there are signature or successful events build on those or create new events that encourage people to walk “#SouthBraintreeSquare”.

What’s new, what’s here and what’s to come. The restaurants and businesses serve as draws for the commercial area. Focus on drawing people to the Square from the other areas in the town and region, paying attention to who’s driving through the area and their destinations. You may want to conduct a geo-fencing study to determine this.

Provide training and support for local businesses for marketing their businesses individually and in a shared format

Enabling businesses with the ability to self-promote and better market their businesses will serve to draw more traffic to the area. Business workshops are a great tool not only for the businesses, but a way to form a sense of cohesiveness within the business community. If there are local businesses that can be used to host these – all the better. The Chamber may be able to facilitate some sessions/webinars for district businesses on social media and marketing/promotion.

Evaluation

Evaluate your marketing efforts through tracking and analytics – each effort should be critiqued for effectiveness. You should have a plan in place to pivot, delete or add.

Best Practices

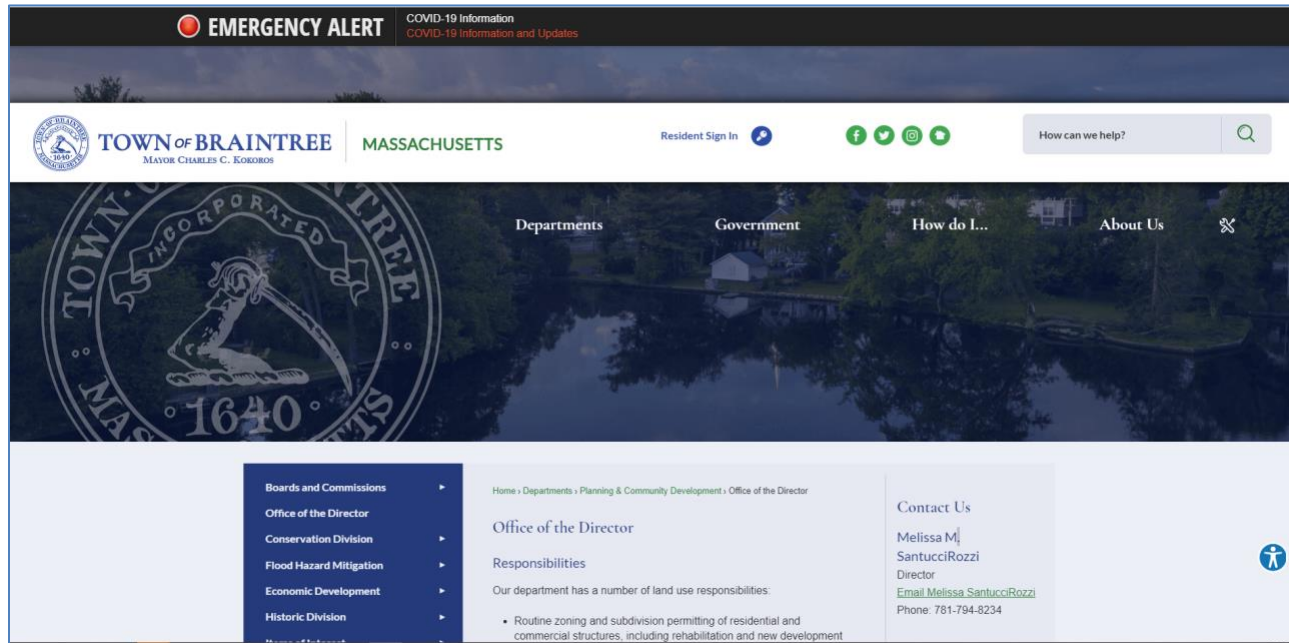
(Example of events from Downtown Stamford, CT [Signature Events | Stamford Downtown](http://stamford-downtown.com/signature-events/) - <http://stamford-downtown.com/signature-events/>. This is a great site that incorporates events marketing and economic development. Note the Business Resources tab on the homepage.



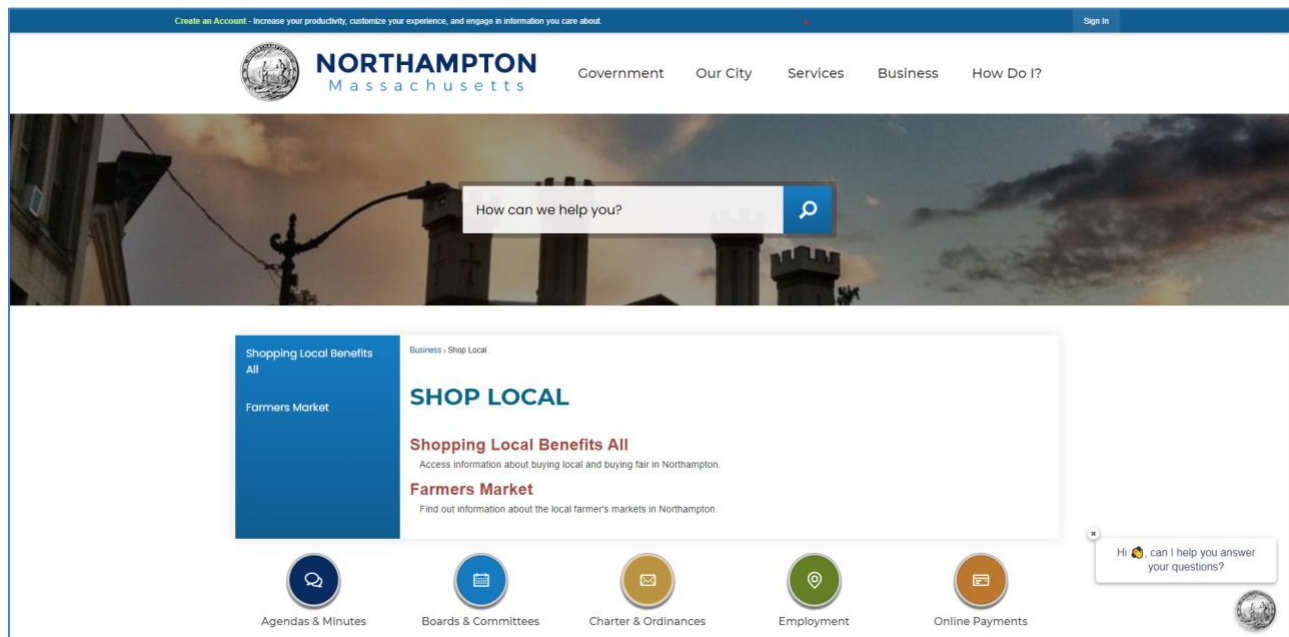
Credit: Visit Greenville SC Facebook Post promoting restaurants



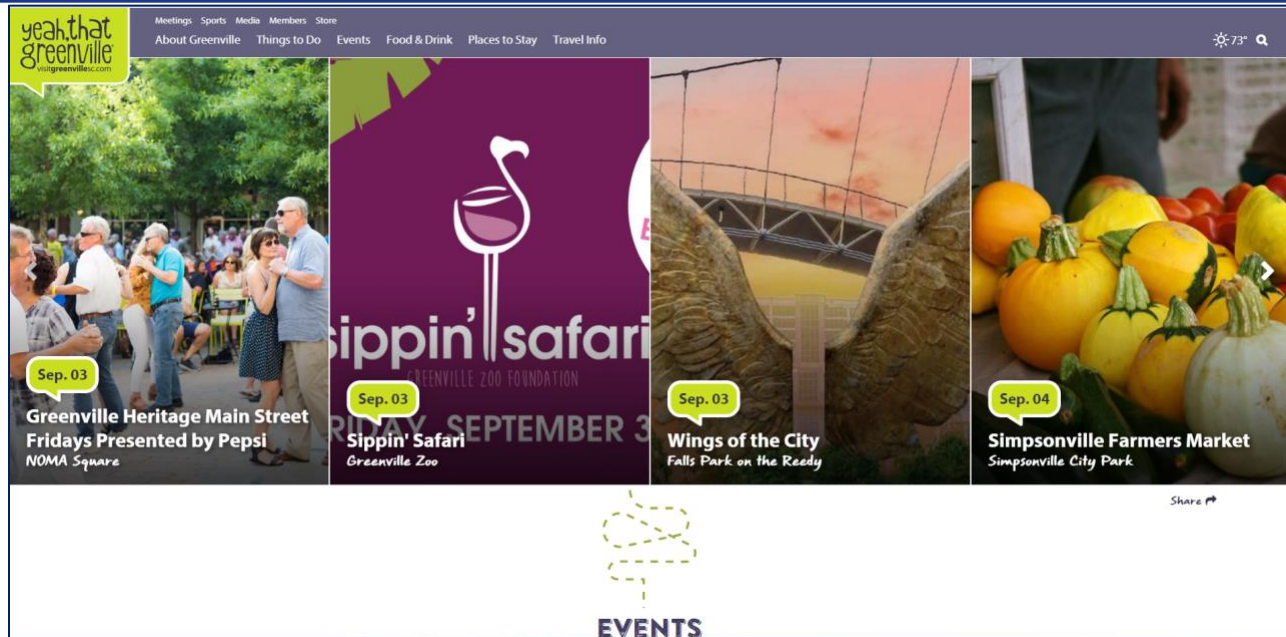
Credit: Visit Greenville SC Instagram Post promoting restaurants



Current Town Website Homepage Credit: www.braintreema.gov



Example – Northampton, MA website Credit: <https://www.northamptonma.gov/1154/Shop-Local>



Example of a Events Calendar the can be added to the website.

Credit: VisitGreenvilleSC.com

Order Up Bloomfield Campaign

- Communicate through a variety of media
- #BEatLocaltoWin

Credit: Goman+York Restaurant Promotional Campaign for restaurants

This report provides the results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021. The survey is part of a program launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted commercial areas. (For Data Tables, see page 9.)

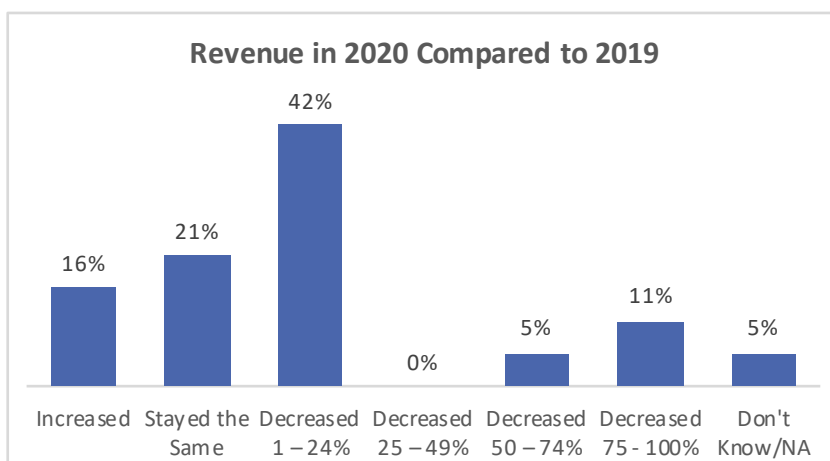
Braintree

South Braintree Square

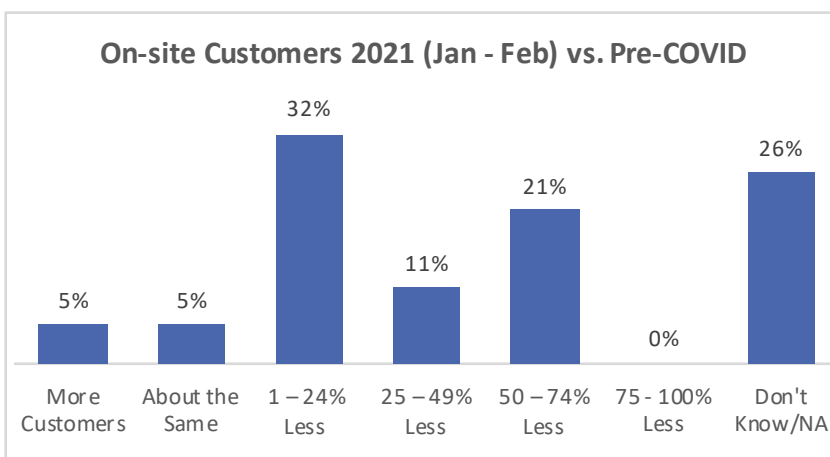
Responses: 19

Impacts of COVID-19**Decline in Business Revenue**

58% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.
For 16% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.

**Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area**

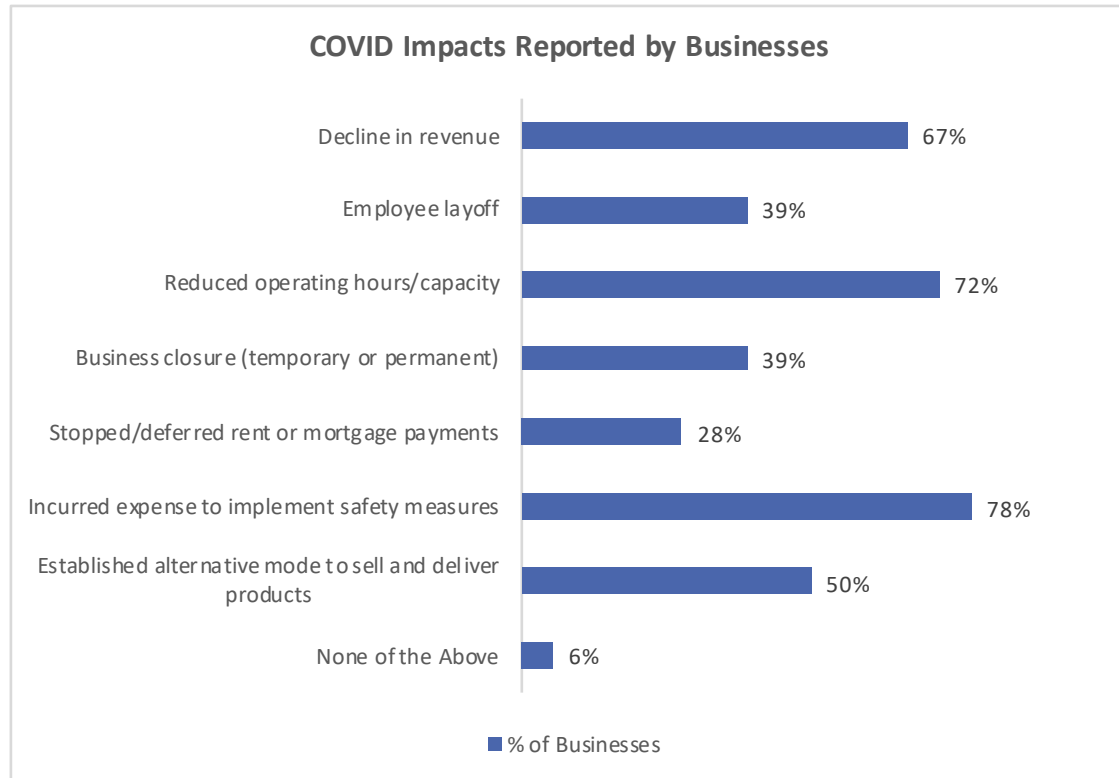
64% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.
32% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

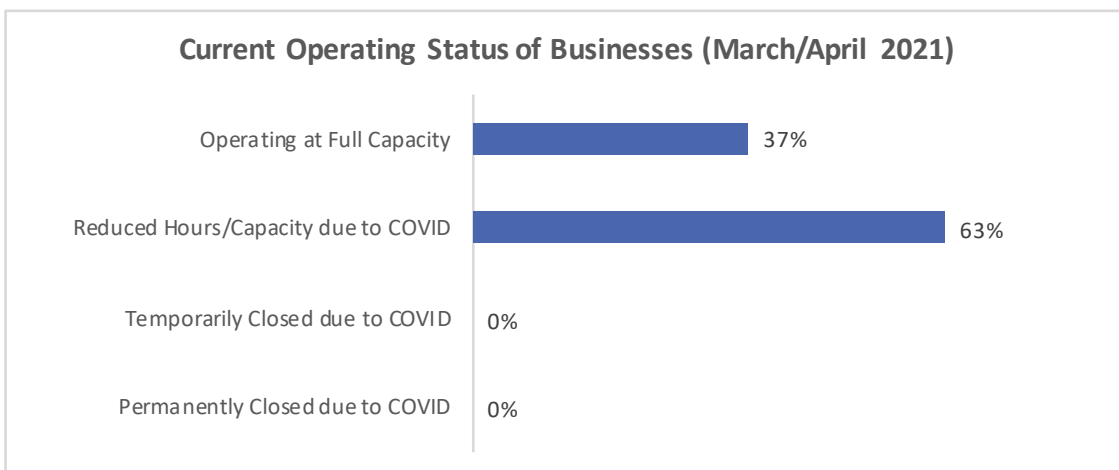
Reported Impacts

94% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



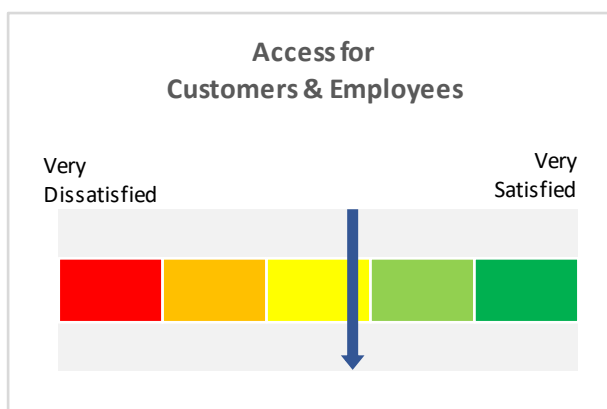
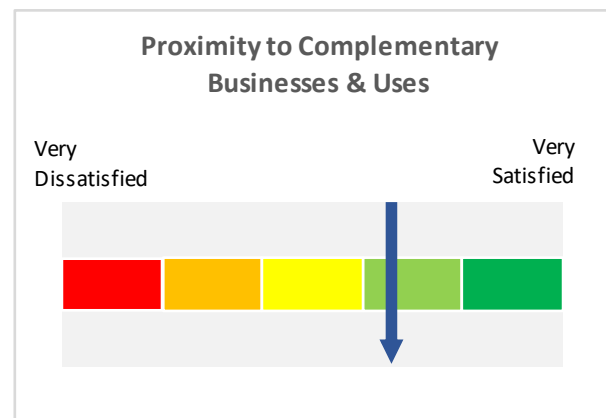
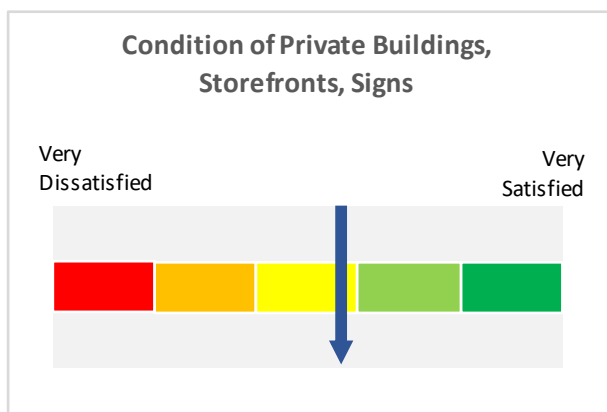
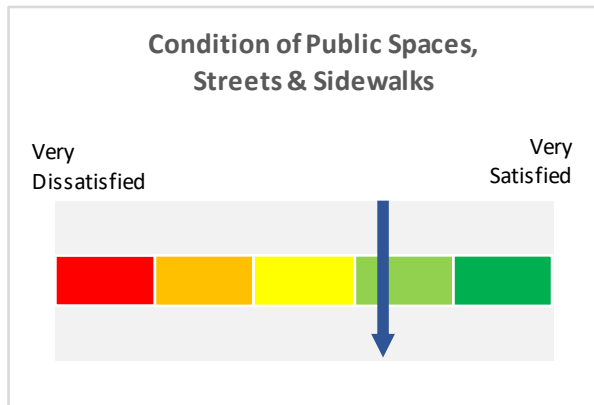
Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 63% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

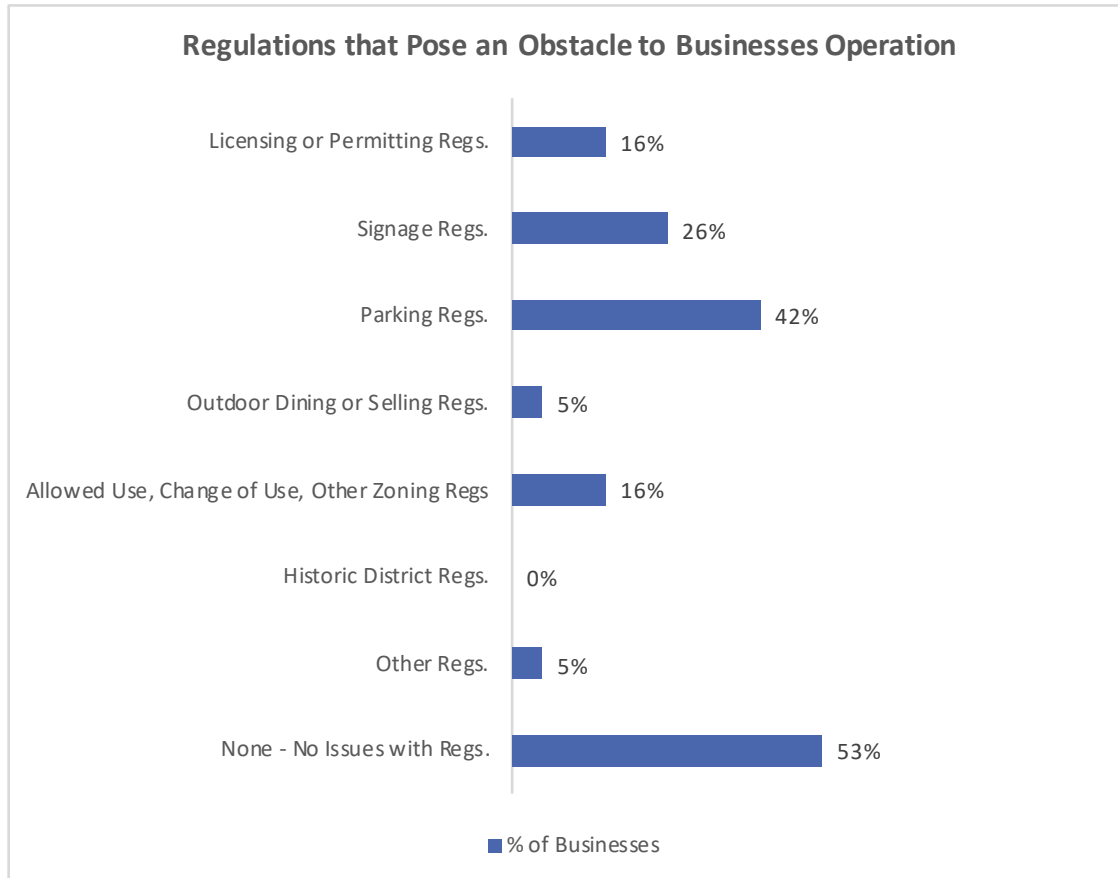
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

Regulatory Environment

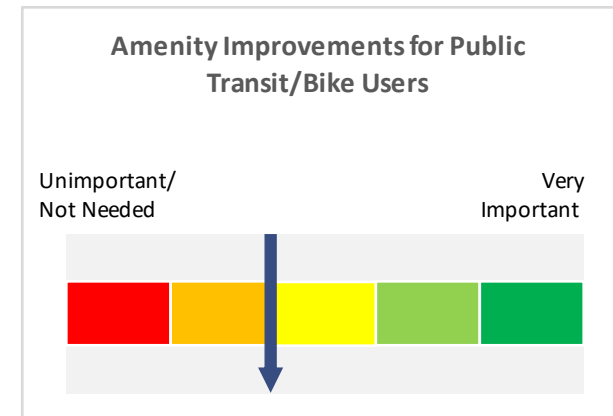
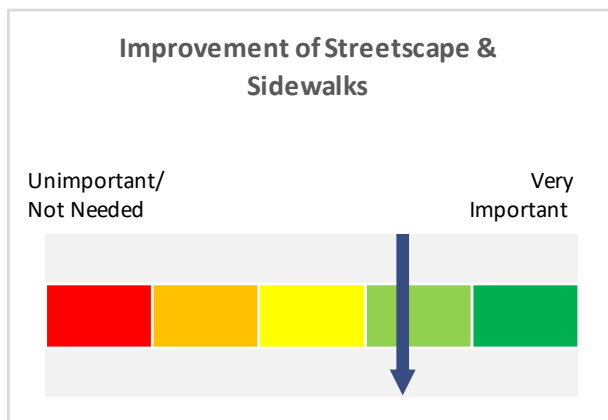
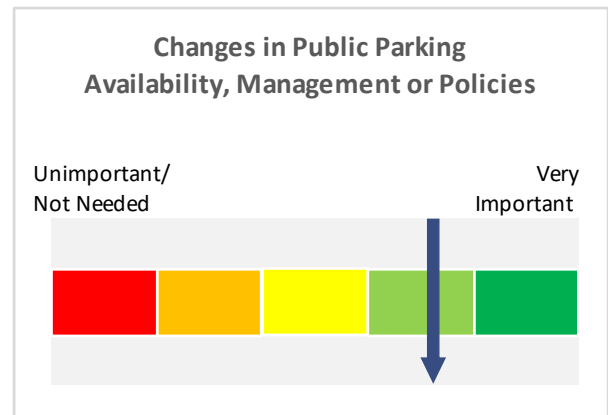
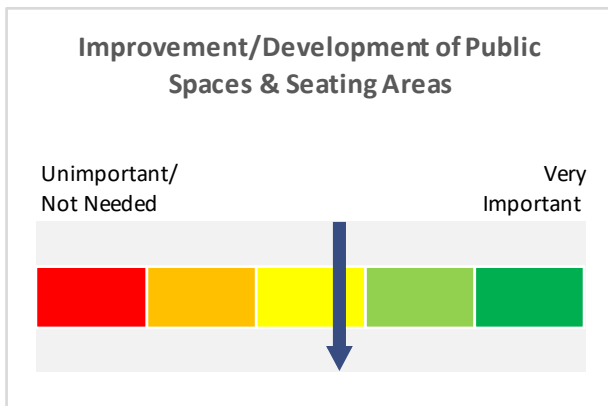
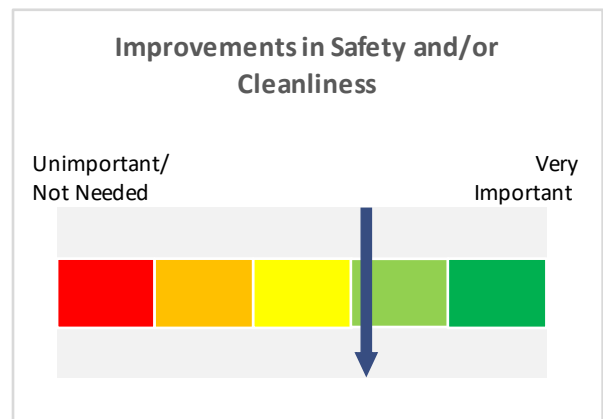
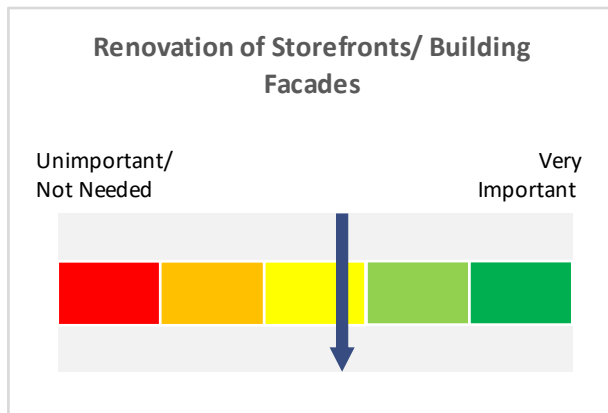
47% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

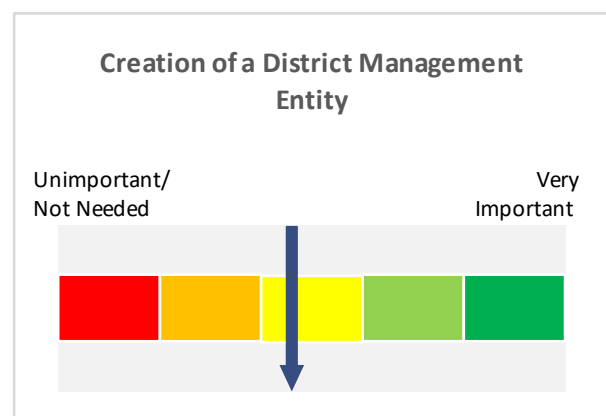
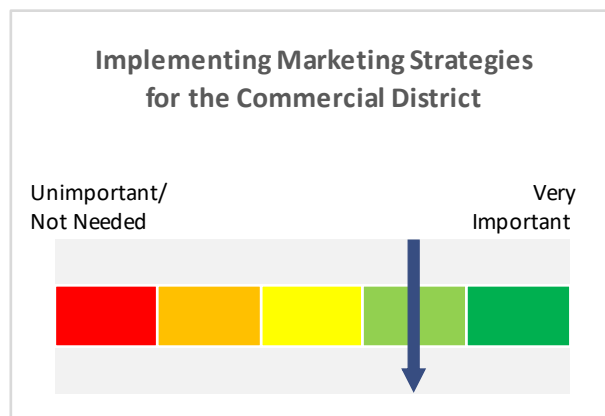
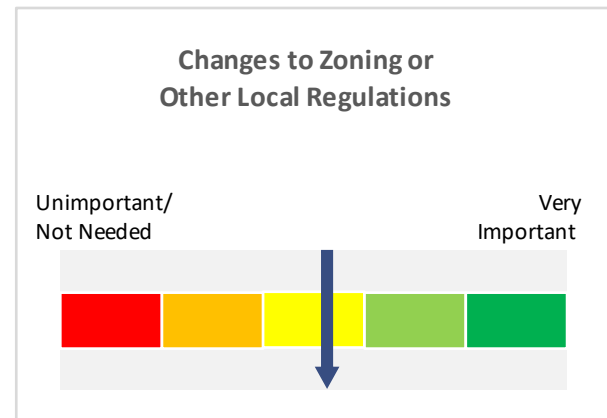
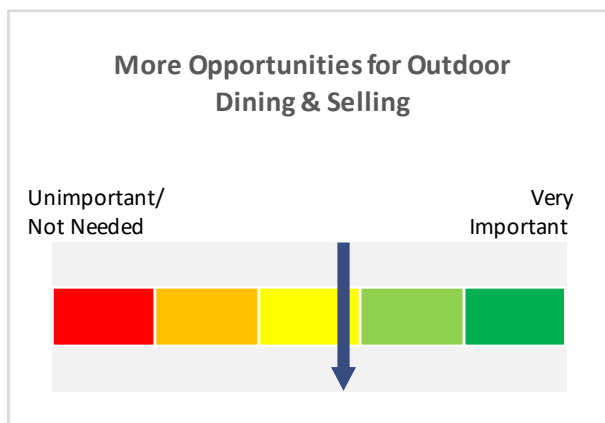
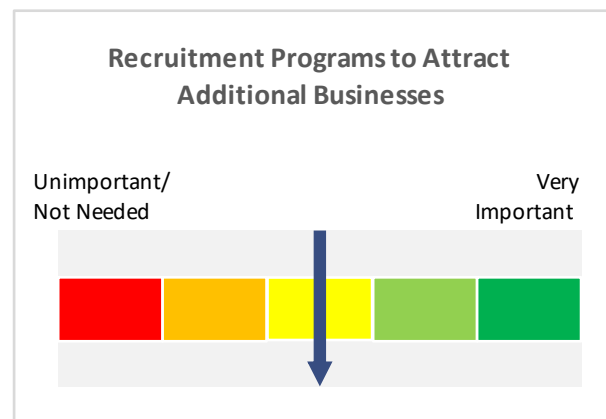
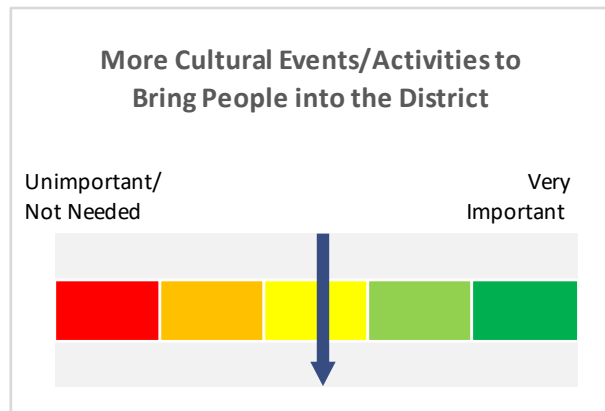
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

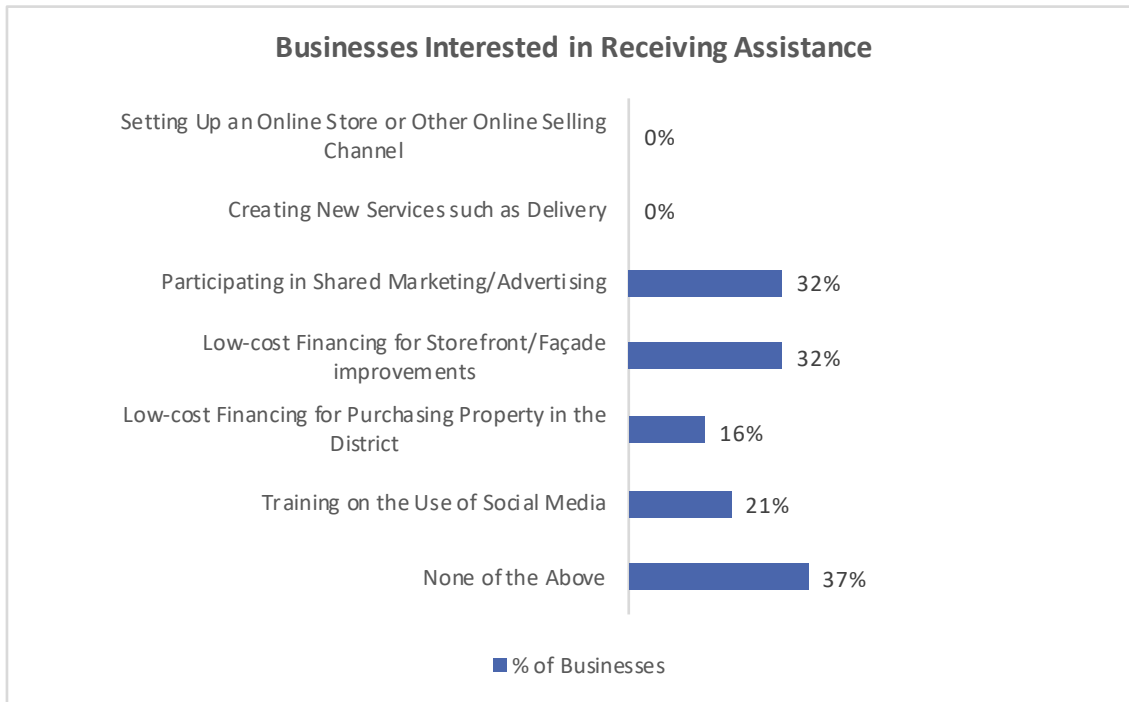
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Businesses Support

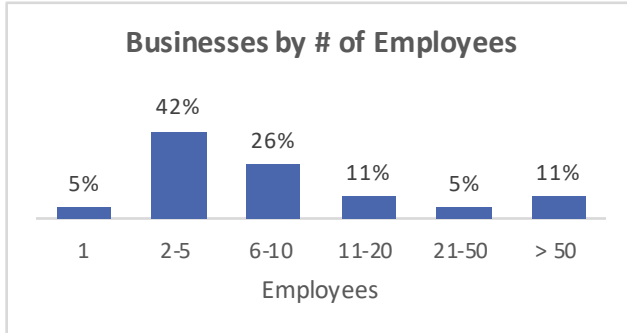
63% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



Business Characteristics

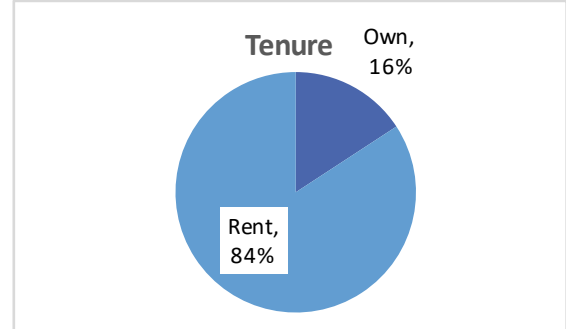
Business Size

47% of businesses are microenterprises (≤ 5 employees).



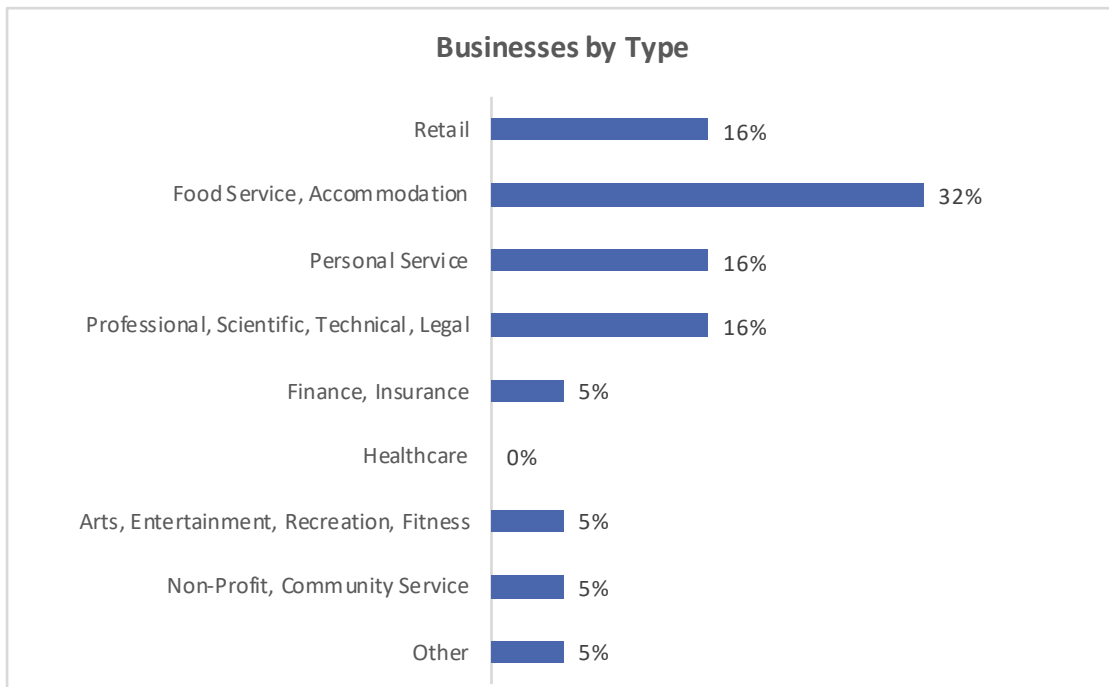
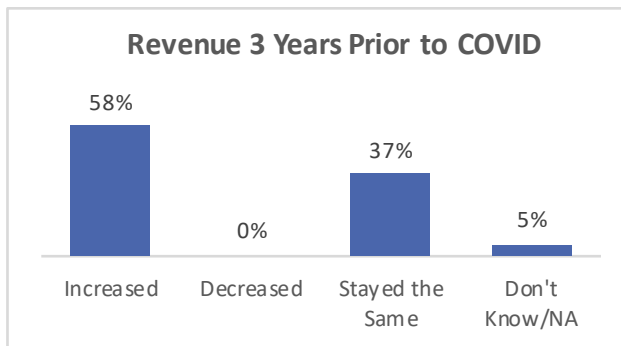
Business Tenure

84% of businesses rent their space.



Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

58% of businesses reported increase in revenue during the 3 years prior to COVID.



Business Survey Results - Data Tables

Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

1. Please select the community where your business is located.

Braintree	19
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Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

2. Including yourself, how many people did your business employ prior to COVID (February 2020), including both full-time and part-time?

1	1	5%
2 to 5	8	42%
6 to 10	5	26%
11 to 20	2	11%
21 to 50	1	5%
More than 50	2	11%
Total	19	100%

3. Does your business own or rent the space where it operates?

Own	3	16%
Rent	16	84%
Total	19	100%

4. During the 3 years prior to COVID, had your business revenue . . . ?

Increased	11	58%
Decreased	0	0%
Stayed about the Same	7	37%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	1	5%
Total	19	100%

5. Please select the category that best fits your business.

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	3	16%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	6	32%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	3	16%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	3	16%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	1	5%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	0	0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	1	5%
Non-Profit, Community Services	1	5%
Other	1	5%
Total	19	100%

6. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the Downtown or Commercial District where your business is located.

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	3	16%
Neutral	2	11%
Satisfied	13	68%
Very Satisfied	1	5%
Total	19	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	1	5%
Dissatisfied	3	16%
Neutral	6	32%
Satisfied	8	42%
Very Satisfied	1	5%
Total	19	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	2	11%
Dissatisfied	3	16%
Neutral	3	16%
Satisfied	10	53%
Very Satisfied	1	5%
Total	19	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	1	5%
Neutral	2	11%
Satisfied	13	68%
Very Satisfied	3	16%
Total	19	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	2	11%
Neutral	6	32%
Satisfied	8	42%
Very Satisfied	3	16%
Total	19	100%

7. Do any local regulations (not related to COVID) pose an obstacle to your business operation?

Licensing or permitting regulations	3	16%
Signage regulations	5	26%
Parking regulations	8	42%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	1	5%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	3	16%
Historic District regulations	0	0%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	1	5%
None - No Issues with regulations	10	53%

Impacts of COVID

8. Did your business experience any of the following due to COVID? Select All that apply.

Decline in revenue	12	67%
Employee layoff	7	39%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	13	72%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	7	39%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	5	28%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	14	78%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	9	50%
None of the Above	1	6%

9. How did your 2020 business revenue compare to your 2019 revenue?

Increased compared to 2019	3	16%
Stayed about the same as 2019	4	21%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	8	42%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	0	0%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	1	5%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	2	11%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	1	5%
Total	19	100%

10. Please estimate how the number of customers that physically came to your business in January and February 2021 compares to before COVID.

More customers than before COVID	1	5%
About the same number as before COVID	1	5%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	6	32%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	2	11%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	4	21%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	0	0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	26%
Total	19	100%

11. At the current time, what is the status of your business operation?

Operating at full capacity	7	37%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	12	63%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	0	0%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	19	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

12. A few approaches to address Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access in commercial districts are listed below. Considering the conditions in your commercial area, in your opinion, how important are each of the following strategies?

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	11%
Moderately Important	7	37%
Important	6	32%
Very Important	2	11%
Total	19	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	16%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	21%
Moderately Important	2	11%
Important	6	32%
Very Important	4	21%
Total	19	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	16%
Moderately Important	3	16%
Important	6	32%
Very Important	6	32%
Total	19	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	16%
Moderately Important	6	32%
Important	3	16%
Very Important	6	32%
Total	19	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	5%
Moderately Important	4	21%
Important	2	11%
Very Important	10	53%
Total	19	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	6	32%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	26%
Moderately Important	2	11%
Important	3	16%
Very Important	3	16%
Total	19	100%

13. A few approaches to address Attraction and Retention of Customers and Businesses in commercial districts are listed below. Considering the conditions in your commercial area, in your opinion, how important are each of the following strategies?

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	37%
Moderately Important	2	11%
Important	4	21%
Very Important	4	21%
Total	19	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	21%
Moderately Important	6	32%
Important	5	26%
Very Important	3	16%
Total	19	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	5%
Moderately Important	4	21%
Important	8	42%
Very Important	5	26%
Total	19	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	32%
Moderately Important	4	21%
Important	4	21%
Very Important	3	16%
Total	19	100%

Changes to Zoning or Other Local Regulations (not related to COVID)

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	16%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	26%
Moderately Important	3	16%
Important	3	16%
Very Important	5	26%
Total	19	100%

Creation of a District Management Entity (Business Improvement District or other organization)

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	21%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	21%
Moderately Important	6	32%
Important	1	5%
Very Important	4	21%
Total	19	100%

14. Are you interested in receiving assistance for your business in any of the following areas? Select All that Apply.

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	0	0%
Creating new services such as delivery	0	0%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	6	32%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	6	32%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	3	16%
Training on the use of social media	4	21%
None of the above	7	37%

15. Please list any specific suggestions or ideas for possible projects, programs or actions that could help support businesses and improve the commercial district. (Optional)

Comments

Atlantic Hot Tubs
—
—
The Martial Art Center for Personal Development
parking situation is horrible
—
—
creation of annual events that highlight and attract consumers to the square
—
Crosswalks, more municipal parking, more trees planted along Hancock Street, more public benches, underground wires
—
—
Cafe Asiana
Public parking, pavement, street and sidewalks repaved,
Designated employee parking for all South Braintree Square businesses. Side streets should have alternate side street parking to help flow with traffic (ex: Tremont St)
—
Need more enforcement of street parking. People park in our curb cut making pulling out into traffic very dangerous.
Pave Crescent Ave. and re direct water flow
create more parking for businesses, employees and customers

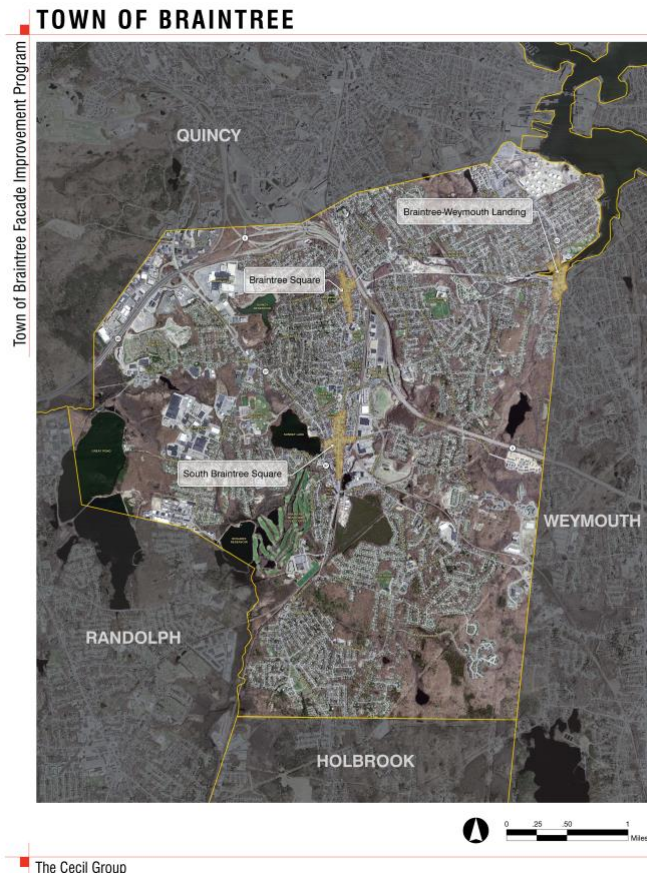
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TOWN OF BRAINTREE VILLAGE CENTERS FAÇADE & SIGN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Braintree Square
South Braintree Square
Braintree-Weymouth Landing

June 2010



INTRODUCTION

The Town of Braintree has three (3) well-established village centers that are critical to the sustainability of many of our small business establishments who collectively are major contributors to our local commercial economy. The three business areas are:

- Braintree Square
- South Braintree Square
- Braintree-Weymouth Landing area

All three areas have played a significant role in the Town's history and economic vitality. Their locations are linked to a progression of economic resources such as rivers, railroads, and major highways that have historically played an important role in the overall development of Braintree's local economy. Today many of these economic resources continue to be present and in some cases have been enhanced such as by mixed use redevelopment, commuter rail expansion, expanded roadway capacity, and streetscape improvements. Like so many other communities, however, Braintree's village centers are struggling to keep business vibrant.

The current economic climate, in addition to the aging building stock, of these business districts are beginning to show stress by declining aesthetics of particular structures, signage and storefront facades. Emphasizing visibility and advertising to the motorists passing by (as opposed to the pedestrian) has forced many business owners to use exaggerated means of advertising to attract attention. While all three village centers are zoned for general business and are located on major arterial streets providing a constant daily stream of vehicular traffic and potential customers, the diminishing façade appearance and clutter of signage provides little incentive for passing motorists to stop and shop.

Several buildings in the three village centers are in various stages of deterioration and include such deficiencies as peeling paint, cracked window casings, deteriorated masonry walls, failing roofs, and entryways that are not handicapped accessible. If improvements are not undertaken in the near future, Braintree risks losing much of its historic fabric and unique "sense of place."

In order to address these needs and as part of its ongoing business retention and development activities, the Town of Braintree has established a **Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP)** to assist the businesses and commercial property owners in these three districts. The Town was awarded an initial grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (a division of the Department of Housing and Community Development) to prepare program materials and design guidelines. Additionally, the Town has committed money from South Shore Mall mitigation funds to initiate the new Façade and Sign Improvement Programs. Administration of this program is the responsibility of the Braintree Planning and Community Development Department.

The FSIP provides financial incentives in the form of matching grants and low-interest loans to district property owners and businesses enabling them to undertake needed building façade improvements. It is anticipated that improving the appearance of buildings in the three village centers will enhance business development, increase pedestrian and customer traffic, and improve the quality of life of Town residents.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Basic Program Requirements

The Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP) provides for matching grants to building and business owners in the Braintree Square, South Braintree Square, and Braintree-Weymouth Landing FSIP Districts (see attached district maps) . In most cases, the maximum façade grant award of public funds will be \$5,000 to be matched by \$5,000 of private funds (a 50/50 matching grant). A 5-year **preservation agreement**, executed between the building owner and the Town of Braintree, and recorded in the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, will be required to protect the public investment in the façade work. Sign and awning matching grant may be as much as \$2,500 and a 5-year preservation agreement will be required of the business or building owner. In all cases, a private match (50% or more) to public grant funds will be required. The match may be a combination of private funds, sweat equity, or other building improvements to be undertaken by the applicant in conjunction with the façade project.

The Braintree Planning & Community Development Department will administer the program and offer technical assistance to applicants in obtaining design approval and processing preservation agreements, construction documents, and administering project funds. Payments for façade and signage grants are contingent upon periodic inspections and project completion satisfactory to the Town of Braintree.

To be eligible for the program, commercial buildings must be located within one of the three FSIP Districts and each structure must be rated in fair, poor, or severely dilapidated condition by the Town. The selection of façade improvement projects will be based on a commercial building's distress level and other factors. The Planning & Community Development Department will use the **Program Criteria Worksheet**, which awards points based on program priorities, including such factors as the degree to which an applicant's project will work to address the buildings deteriorated condition, enhance the historic significance of the building and district, and the projected cost of proposed improvements.

Building owners and businesses leasing space in one of the 3 FSIP Districts are both eligible for program funding. Tenants of commercial properties must be able to provide documentation of the building owner's consent for the improvements and the owner will be required to sign all application forms and materials. Tenants will also be required to provide a copy of their lease agreement, which indicates the lessee's responsibility for property renovation and repair. Owners will be required to execute the facade preservation agreement. Tenants applying for program funds to install new signage and/or awnings will be required to execute a similar preservation agreement to ensure the improvements are maintained over time.

Eligible Types of Improvements

Eligible improvements may include:

- Removal of old signs, awnings, brackets, and other exterior clutter
- Exterior cleaning and painting
- Application of new exterior materials consistent with buildings historic characteristics
- Repair of exterior brickwork , plaster or clapboard
- Installation of new entry doors with handicapped access
- Installation or restoration of display windows
- Installation of new canvas awnings over windows and entries

- Installation of new signage
- Application of ceramic tile or other decorative material on exterior walls to accent openings

Ineligible improvements include:

- Leasehold or other interior improvements
- Purchase of business equipment and supplies

Labor costs are subject to review and approval by Braintree Planning & Community Development Department. All improvements must conform to State Building Codes, the Braintree Zoning Bylaw and the *Braintree Façade and Signage Improvement Program Design Guidelines*. Applicants' proposals will be subject to review by the Design Review Committee. Improvements not directly connected to the proposed façade work that are to be undertaken within three months of application submittal may be recognized in whole or in part as a match on a case-by-case basis. Project improvements started **prior** to the Town's approval cannot be reimbursed.

Application Steps

1. The building owner or tenant receives an application package from the Planning and Community Development Department (PCDD). Prior to completing the application, the building owner or tenant shall meet with a PCDD staff member in a **Pre-Application Meeting** to determine if the proposed renovation activities are within program eligibility requirements and generally consistent with the design guidelines.
2. The building owner or tenant completes the application and returns it to the Planning and Community Development Department. If the applicant is not the property owner, documentation will be required proving the applicant has the **authorization of the property owner** to undertake the façade work. This includes the owner's signature on all application forms and materials. PCDD staff review the application with the members of the **Design Review Committee** to determine eligibility and whether the proposed activities are within program guidelines.
3. Once an application receives preliminary approval by the PCDD and the Design Review Committee, the applicant will be notified and required to pay a **\$250 non-refundable** façade improvement application fee (earnest money). An application fee of **\$100 non-refundable** will be required for proposed sign or awning projects. Upon payment of the application fee, the PCDD may arrange a meeting between the applicant and a **design representative**. The applicant may work with the design representative, who will develop schematics and a description of the proposed façade, signage/awning improvement work, and prepare preliminary cost estimates.
4. The applicant and/or the design representative will appear before the **Design Review Committee** for a complete review of the proposed façade project. The Committee will evaluate the proposed work considering such issues such as architectural treatment of the building, impact on adjoining properties, feasibility, and other program criteria.
5. The applicant will be **notified of the Committee's decision**. If the Committee approves the applicant's project for façade program funding, PCDD staff will work with the applicant to complete final paperwork. In most cases, conditions of approval will include:
 - a) Satisfactory proof of ownership and certification;
 - b) Commitment of a private match (50% or more) to public program funds, which can be in the form

- of cash, sweat equity, or other building improvements to be undertaken by the owner or tenant;
- c) Execution of a 5-year preservation agreement for façade improvements, which will be recorded at the Norfolk Registry of Deeds; and/or
 - d) Execution of a 5-year preservation agreement for sign and/or awning improvements, which will be held in trust by the Town of Braintree.
6. Once all paperwork is in order, PCDD will notify the applicant that the applicant can put the project out to bid. At least two (2) **bids** shall be submitted for the project. The lowest responsive, responsible bid will be accepted by the PCDD. If the applicant wishes to choose a separate, higher bid, then the applicant will be responsible for the cost difference. A construction contract will be prepared by the PCDD and executed by and between the applicant and the selected contractor.
7. The **match funds** required of the applicant will be provided to the PCDD and deposited in an **escrow account**. Typically, PCDD staff will process payment for the façade improvement project, drawing from match funds and public funds equally.
8. The contractor **must obtain all permits** and approvals required by the Town of Braintree.
9. At approximately 50% and 100% completion, the Town will **inspect the work** for workmanship and conformance to the plans. The applicant will be furnished with an inspection report noting any changes that need to be made.

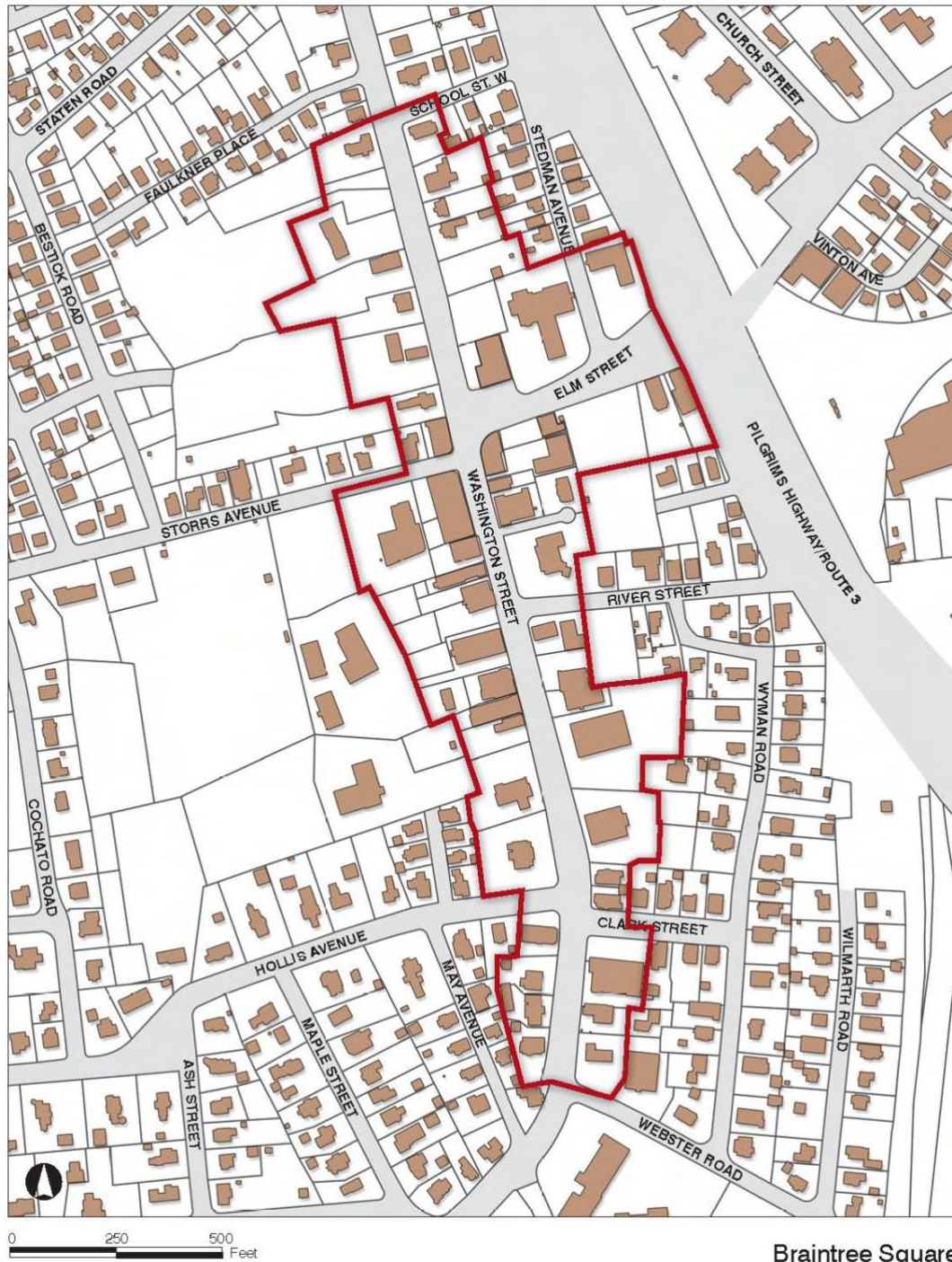
Upon completion of the construction project, the façade preservation agreement will be recorded at the Norfolk Registry of Deeds. In the case of a sign/awning project, the Town of Braintree will maintain the preservation agreement on file.

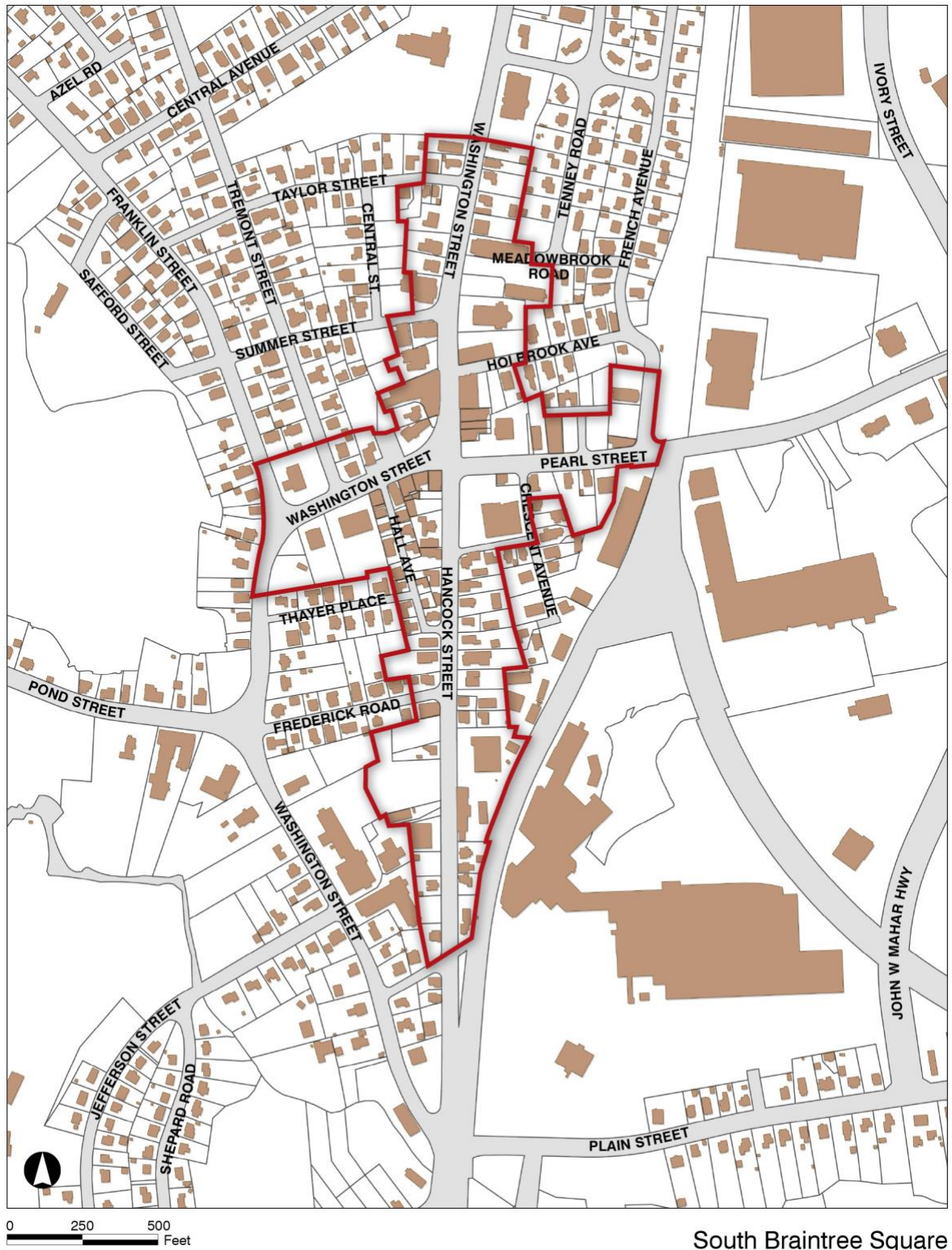
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Planning and Community Development Department at (phone number). The mailing address is Planning and Community Development Department, Planning & Community Development Department, 1 JFK Memorial Drive, Braintree, MA 02184, Tel: (781) 794-8232, Fax: (781) 794-8089.

APPENDICES

- A. Braintree Façade & Sign Improvement District Maps
 - 1) South Braintree Square
 - 2) Braintree Square
 - 3) Braintree-Weymouth Landing area
- B. Façade & Sign Improvement Program Process Summary
- C. Criteria for Project Selection
- D. Façade & Sign Improvement Program Criteria Worksheet
- E. Façade & Sign Improvement Preliminary Application Form
- F. Façade & Sign Improvement Pre-Application Agreement
- G. Packet of Selected Program Forms
 - 1) Preliminary Application Form
 - 2) Grant Application Form
 - 3) Façade & Sign Grant Review Form
- H. Façade, Sign and Awning Preservation Agreement Form
- I. Façade Improvement Deed Restriction Form
- J. Braintree Village Centers Façade and Sign Design Guidelines

APPENDIX A – FAÇADE & SIGN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS





South Braintree Square



Braintree-Weymouth Landing

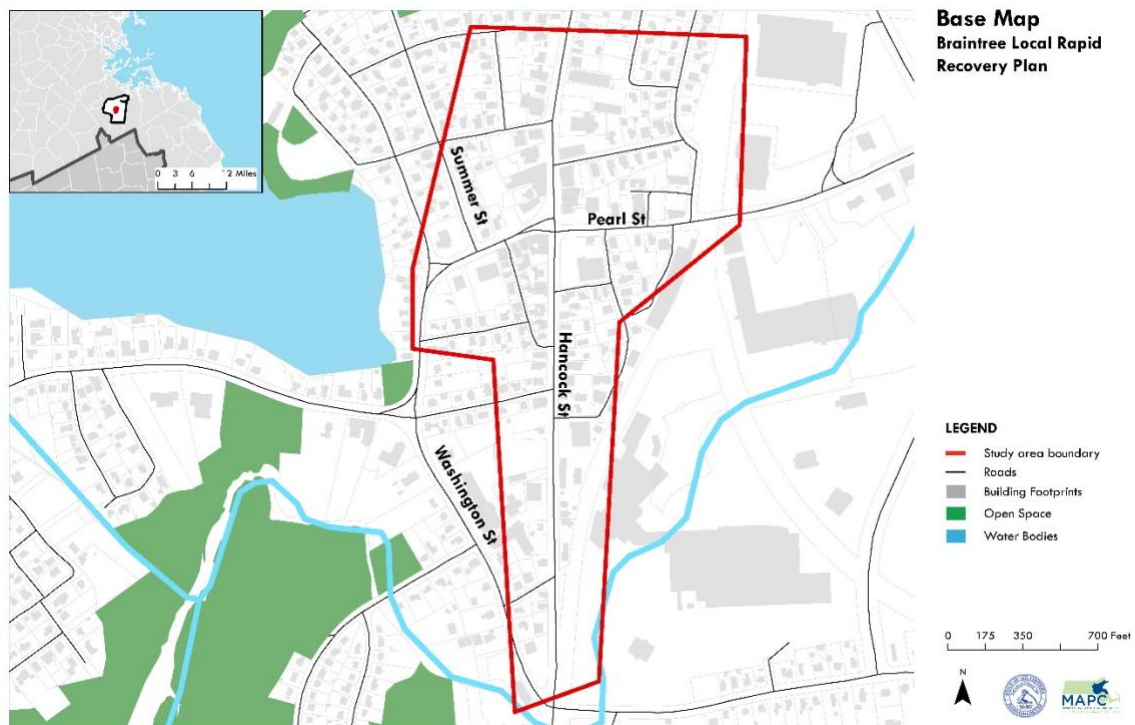
PARKING MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Town of Braintree

The Town of Braintree faces challenges in managing parking supply and demand in the below study area. Challenges include:

- Most spaces are unmanaged and have no meters
- Time limits are sporadic, and short term parking has been implemented ad hoc for specific businesses
- Curbs are highly utilized and cars sometimes queue into travel lanes
- Not all streets have striped parking
- People circle to find spots closest to their destination
- Many businesses are dependent on parking, particularly short-term and pickup/drop-off parking
- Business employees often park in prime spots and no business parking permit program is in place
- Several private lots are used informally as parking for the area
 - Walgreens lot
 - Bank of America lot

Figure 1 Parking Management Study Area



Parking Supply and Utilization

Nelson\Nygaard completed a parking inventory study of this area in 2017 as displayed in Figure 2. The majority of on-street parking in the study area is public parking with a time limit (variable) or unregulated. Off-street parking is primarily private for customers of employees. Two municipal lots for municipal employees and guests exist at the northern end of the study area.

As Braintree considers adding additional regulations to the curbs in the study area, parking occupancy data should be collected to better understand the usage of the existing parking. A suggested parking occupancy study would collect field data for the entire study area. All parked cars would be counted throughout the area at the following times:

- 1 Weekday (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) in 2 hour increments from 12 PM – 8 PM
- 1 Weekend day (Saturday) in 2 hour increments from 12 PM – 8 PM

Parking data from this field work should be analyzed to determine the overall peak period of parking and to understand how parking demand varies throughout the day. 85% occupied is a desired number for most on-street parking serving businesses as this means parking is used efficiently but some spots are still available.

If parking occupancy in the overall study area or on most public parking blocks exceeds 85% at peak periods, additional regulations should be implemented to control demand.

Shared Parking

Shared parking agreements with private lot operators can expand the available public parking supply at a low cost to the Town of Braintree. The Town of Braintree should reach out directly to private lot operators who may be interested in sharing parking, such as Walgreens and Bank of America. The Town can propose public parking access during off hours and offer to enforce parking in the lot and/or paying a monthly fee for public access to the spaces. If a mobile payment app is in place, the Town can also offer the private lot operator to charge for parking in their lot using the municipal app, thereby collecting revenue for themselves. This incentivizes participation in the program.

Enforcement, Communications, and Signage

The Town of Braintree should strive to enforce parking and curb regulations in a way which incentivizes compliance. This may include featuring a first time forgiveness program and leaving informational flyers rather than citations on improperly parked vehicles. Enforcement should be focused during the busiest times when turnover is important.

Signage and local outreach should also be used to encourage enforcement and to maximize usage of all available parking in the area. In many cases, only the most popular spots are full and ample parking exists just around the corner from key

destinations. This parking should be advertised and signage should direct users to it whenever possible.

Business cards can be left with local businesses and distributed to customers to inform them on their parking options and link to a short survey regarding parking conditions.

Employee Parking Programs

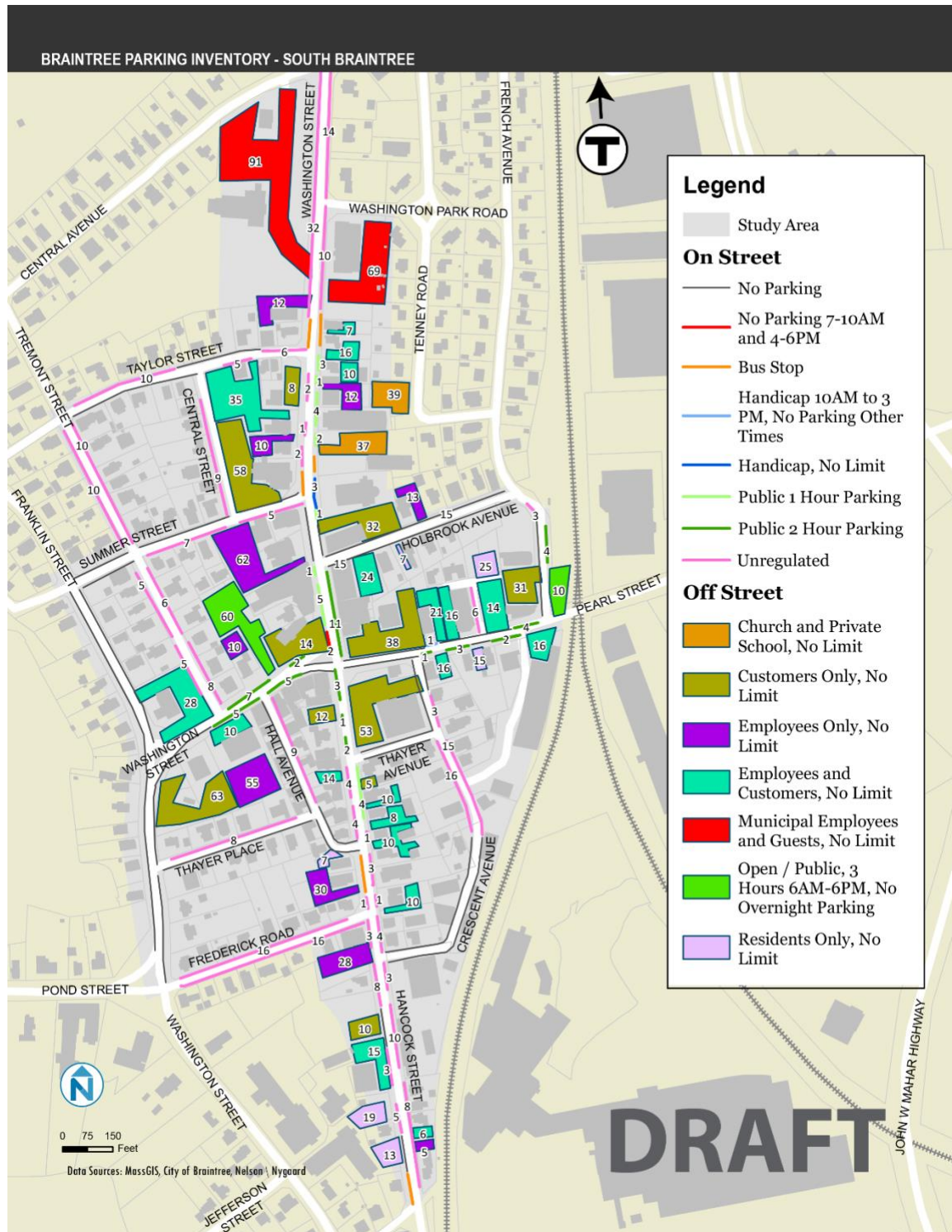
The Town of Braintree may consider offering an Employee Permit for employees of businesses in the area that do not have off-street parking. This permit may be purchased directly by employees or by the business. Employee Permits would allow employees to park in specific locations for a discounted rate. This will save employees money on potential costs and also incentivize employees to leave prime public parking spots for customers.

Multimodal Transportation

Parking demand can be reduced and business vitality can be increased by improving multimodal transportation options in the study area. Adding safe bike parking and comfortable bike facilities will incentivize local customers to travel by bike rather than by car. Providing improved pedestrian amenities and lighting will make customers feel more comfortable walking in the area or parking further away from their destination.

Parking Management Recommendations
Town of Braintree

Figure 2 Parking Inventory, 2017



Massachusetts Local Rapid Recovery Program SME Consultation Report

To: Braintree

From: Revby LLC

Project: Creation a permitting guide to better assist business operations within South Braintree

Recommend strategies to create a new permitting brochure that clarifies the necessary steps a business must complete to operate successfully within Braintree. The initiative aims to provide businesses a quicker and easier permitting process.

Current situation: Staff are bogged down with a high-touch process that could be approached in a more efficient way. Community members have a perception that they can negotiate their way around the permitting process. There is an objective to avoid a permit rather than gain a permit in an efficient and cooperative way.

Need feedback on:

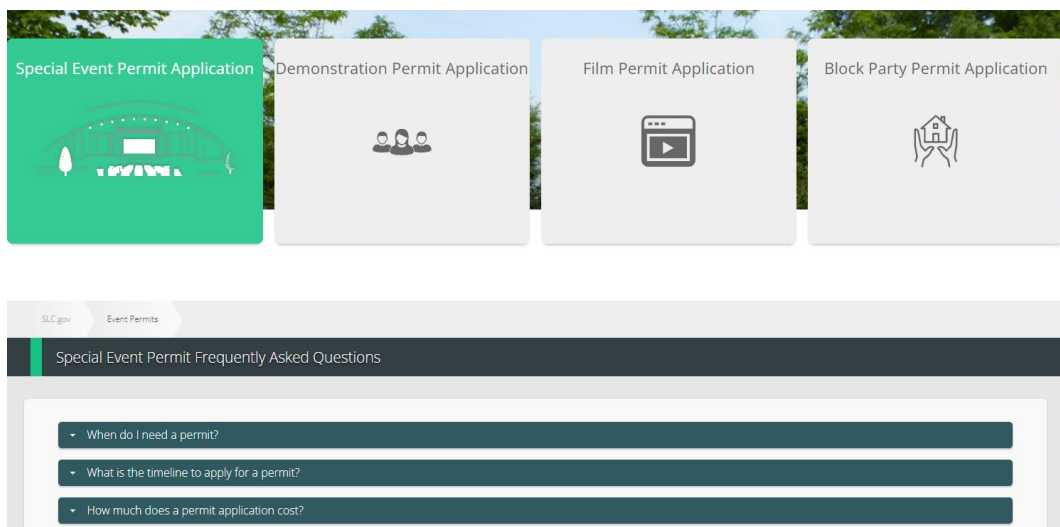
- Examples of solutions for permitting guide / permitting process for constituents / A "how to" for permitting (parklet and pop-up, for example)
- What types of entities could do the work?

Project Considerations and Examples

A. Salt Lake City, UT – Central permit and zoning online resource

“Event organizers in Salt Lake City will soon enjoy a more user friendly, streamlined process for applying for special event permits thanks to an expanded partnership between the City and permitting software provider **OpenCounter**.”

“I can’t wait to see how OpenCounter’s portal improves the permitting experience for organizers and how much it will **minimize processing times on the City’s end**. For the applicant to apply and move directly into working on the conditions in a **self-service model**, rather than waiting for us to manually do it, will accelerate the entire process and alleviate our biggest pressure points,” said Ryen Schlegel, the City’s special event permit manager.



Features the following components:

- Self-service portal; permit categories can be adapted to a particular municipality’s permit requirements and audience.
- FAQ and Video tutorial

Sources:

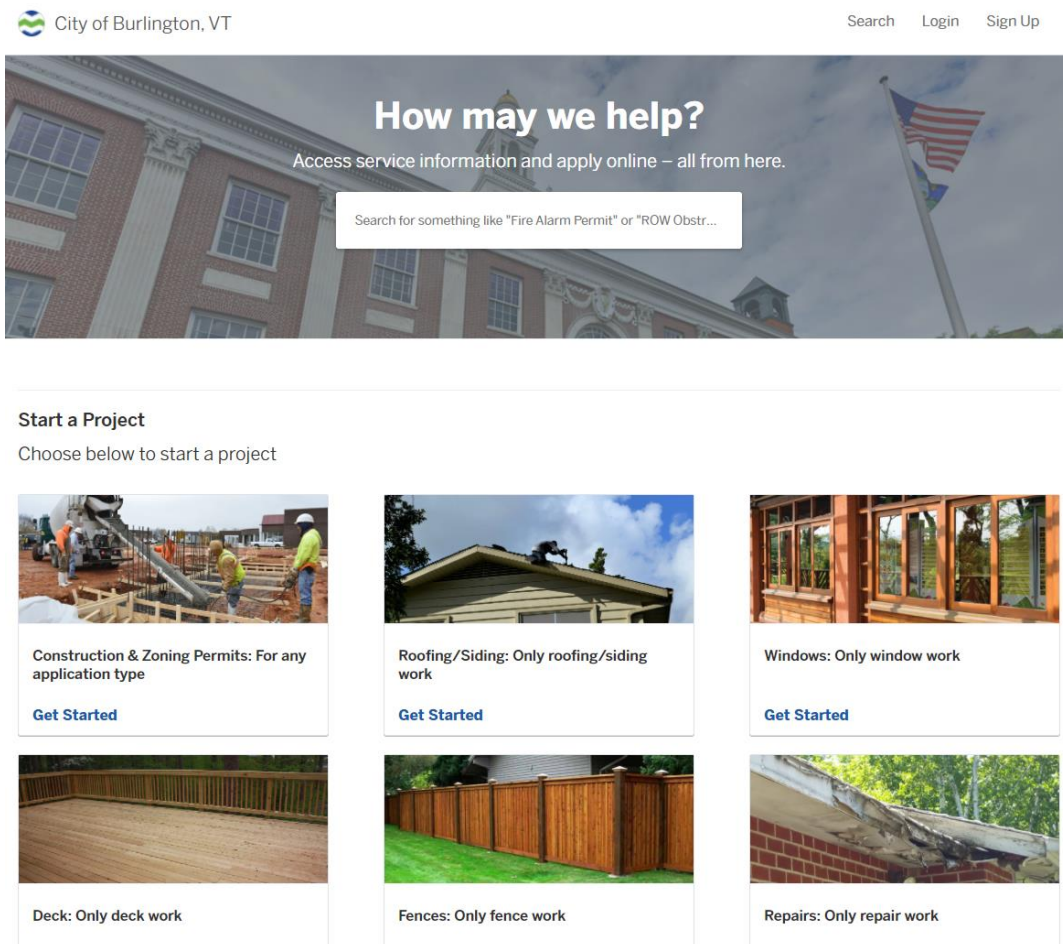
- <https://www.slc.gov/blog/2021/09/16/salt-lake-city-announces-new-special-event-permitting-platform-with-opencounter/>
- <https://www.slc.gov/eventpermits/>
- <https://opencounter.com/>

B. City of Burlington, VT – Central permit and zoning online resource

Creation of an online portal: business.burlingtonvt.gov


"The business portal is great! Super helpful. The process was totally straightforward, and the resource center was also helpful and robust. I think this portal will make gathering the necessary paperwork painless for starting a new businesses." – Travis Bragg, Burlington entrepreneur

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/Press/city-of-burlington-launches-new-online-business-tool-for-startups>



Discover Online Services

Choose below to browse services by department



FAQs

Signing Up, Creating a Profile & Accessing Your Information, Applying for a Permit & Paying Fees + 4 more


[Explore](#)



DPI Zoning Administration

Zoning Certificate of Occupancy Request, Zoning Sketch Plan Review + 1 more


[Explore](#)



DPI Trades Division

Electrical Permit, Mechanical / HVAC Permit + 3 more


[Explore](#)



DPI Administration

Property Research Request, Zoning Compliance Request


[Explore](#)



DPI Housing Division

Rental Inspection, Housing/Zoning Complaint

[Explore](#)




DPW Right-of-Way

ROW Excavation Permit, ROW Encumbrance Permit + 3 more

[Explore](#)



Fire Marshal



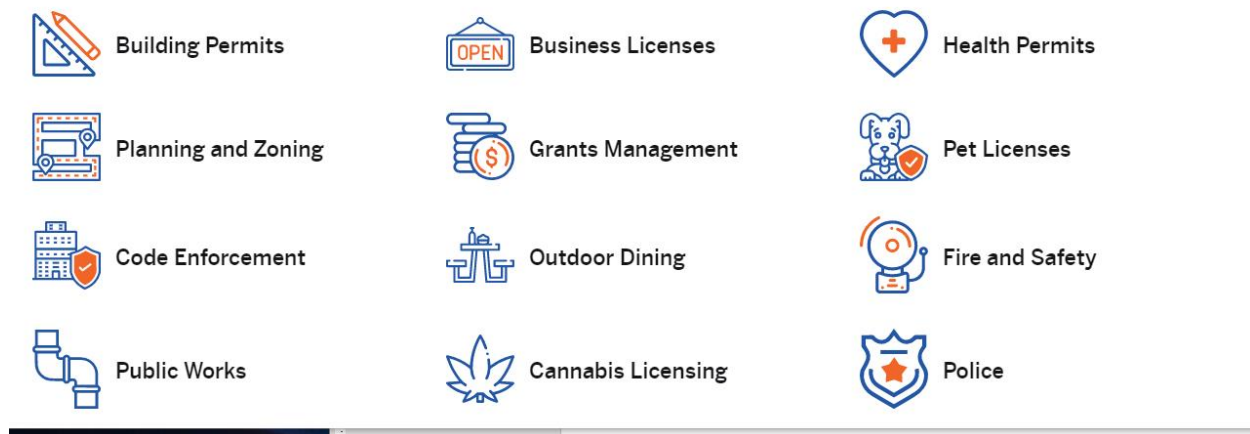
Water Resources

Source: <https://business.burlingtonvt.gov/>

Burlington VT uses Viewpoint Cloud, Opengov.com



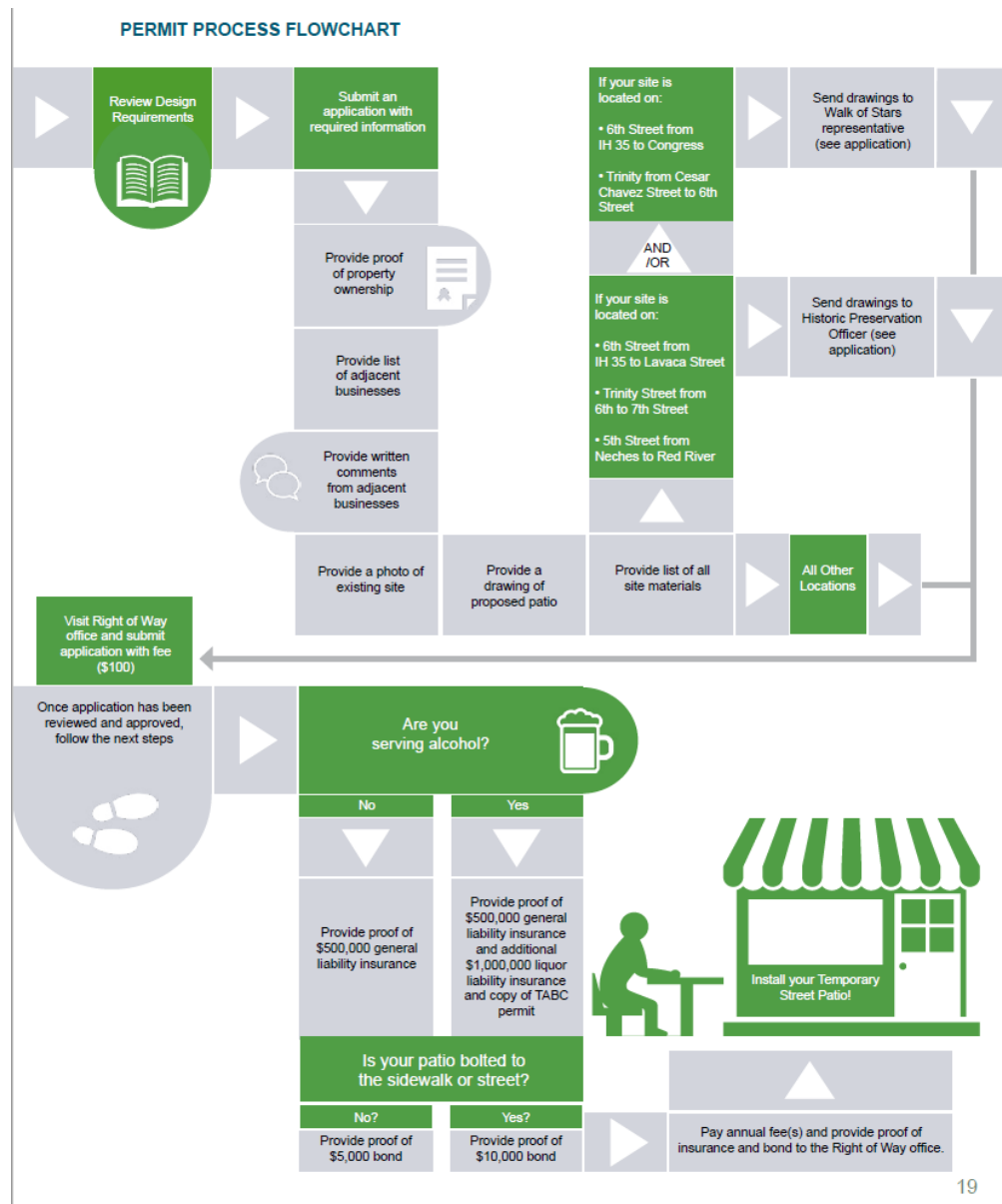
One Cloud Solution to Power Every Permitting and Licensing Workflow



Source: <https://opengov.com/products/citizen-services/>

C. City of Austin, TX – Handbook with Permit Process Flowchart

- Create PDF handbooks for permit-need categories.
- <https://www.austintexas.gov/service/sidewalk-cafes-and-street-patios>
- https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Transportation/StreetPatio_Handbook_5_12_2017.pdf



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