



**Mayor
Charles C. Kokoros**

Department of Planning and Community Development

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MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Jennifer Wadland, Chair
Amy Holmes, Vice Chair
David Cunningham, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Peter C. Herbst, Member
Justine Huang, Member
Thomas Kent, Member
Shelley North, Member
Elizabeth Page, Member
Joseph Reynolds, Member
Rayna Rubin, Member

IN LIEU OF ACCEPTANCE BY MPSC

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

Thursday – October 19, 2023 – 7:00 PM

Location: Cahill Auditorium, Braintree Town Hall, 1 JFK Memorial Drive

Meeting came to order at 7:04 PM

Members Present:

Jennifer Wadland, Chairperson
Amy Holmes, Vice Chairperson – arriving late
David Cunningham, Resident
Julia Flaherty, Town Councilor, District 1
Peter Herbst, Business Owner
Justine Huang, Resident
Thomas Kent, Planning Board Representative
Elizabeth Page, Resident
Rayna Rubin, Resident

Staff Present:

Melissa SantucciRozzi, Director-PCD
Connor Murphy, Asst. Director-PCD

Consulting Firms

Flavio Vila

Members Absent:

Shelley North, Business Owner
Joe Reynolds, Town Councilor, District 2

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM and attendance was taken. Chairwoman Wadland also noted that David Storlazzi from the Planning Board was also in attendance.

Discussion and Comments –Draft Master Plan – Presentation on Revisions to Date (Draft #2)

Flavio Vila

Flavio Vila, Community Planner for Land Use and Urban Design at JM Goldson, states he already addressed some of the comments that we had over the week. There are some things that have already been addressed in this second draft.

Director SantucciRozzi was reviewing some comments that came in from Member Kent, and she refers to where life science sector is mentioned. She explains that Mr. Kent thought that we were putting all our eggs in one basket when mentioning life science. The Director doesn't know if we want to broaden that term. We do have MAPC that is going to be working on our Wood Road Revitalization Project. That will be all-encompassing. The Director had suggested that we could remove the "life science sector" and add "commercial and industrial" or "in addition to" to broaden that position. Member Page agrees with that suggestion, and she thinks it is a good idea to change it to commercial or something along that idea. Member Kent also agrees with broadening the description.

Mr. Vila begins reviewing Chapter 3, and Member Page asks to go slow on this section as she has several comments. Mr. Vila states he can zoom in on some of the paragraphs. Chair Wadland states hardcopies would be good, and she emailed some suggestions, but she wasn't sure if they were made. The Chair also suggests that Mr. Vila highlight any suggestions made for each page. Mr. Vila notes that he added a sentence at the end of the "Introduction" that states: "Although the town adopted a city form of government, to retain its suburban character, the city is named "Town of Braintree". That was one of the comments we received during the week. The handouts do not show all the updates. Chair Wadland feels it is the character of a town not just the name. She states although we took on a mayoral form of government, the town is still characterized as a town and not a city. There are 13 communities that are not characterized as a city in the state of Massachusetts.

Member Huang states we talk about the growth of the population; can we also add a sentence where we talk about the growth of the ethnicity of the residents, which also changed in the last ten years. Chair Wadland points out that it is in the second paragraph of Housing and Demographics, but it isn't in the Introduction. Chair Wadland confirms that Member Huang wants it in the Introduction. Mr. Vila states there was a slight confusion between the statement under Phase II referencing 2400 points of engagement and the 2500 points referenced in the Engagement Process, which includes Phase I, II, and III. So, there was a sentence added under Phase III description that references 2500 total touch points.

Member Page refers to wording under the **Housing and Demographics** section that refers to the increase in housing units. She states it is 5.73 and asks why would you round it down to 5. It should either be rounded up to 6 or state 5.73. Chair Wadland asks Flavio to define BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color). Chair Wadland refers to the median income rising 7% since 2000. Mr. Vila states that comes from the Existing Conditions Report. He can double check the data source. The Director thinks the number might be 2010 because we talked about the incomes in Braintree not growing as quick as the region. Chair Wadland thinks we might need to dive deeper into that fact because we have a large population of seniors, which skews the numbers. The Director thinks it doesn't really because students would also impact that growth. Member Page states you want this to be an "easy read"; people shouldn't have to go to an appendix. If we are going to point out these things, we should qualify it. She thinks we need to have consistency in the data that we're putting out to support the information, and it should be easily available to the reader. Member Page thinks, if we are going to define the average income, we should define something about the demographics that might lend the reader to understand it more easily rather than having to look into an appendix to figure it out. Chair Wadland asks Flavio to clarify some of the demographics and explain it is a strong senior population. Director SantucciRozzi refers to the statement under **Economic Development** where it states, "the fastest growing population is expected to be 65 to 74". There are different statements in different sections, and if you choose to read one section, you're not going to really get the full meaning of how all the Master Plan elements really tie together. Chair Wadland was thinking, when we say the median household income really hasn't risen, it is attributed a lot to the seniors. The Director points out that this paragraph is tying it to housing cost. The intent is to say that, as house prices continue to rise, income doesn't rise at the same rate. Member Page states, on that same note if we are going to be talking about the cost of houses rising, it should be also qualified with the entire state of Massachusetts. This is not an anomaly to Braintree. Mr. Vila has added this reference.

Member Huang refers to the area where it states the Asian population has increased; she would be more comfortable if you add “English at home or a secondary minority other than Chinese being the most common.” She feels we should add a secondary that the town would need to serve. Director SantucciRozzi would like to clarify if she means the second most popular “non-English language”. The Director thinks the top few are all different Chinese dialects, and she thinks the second one is Portuguese. Member Huang asks, under Economic Development, is there a contradiction when we talk about growing faster, being younger, wealthier, educated, but the fastest growing is the senior age group. The Director states, when we talk about these trends and you look at the census data in ten-year increments, to her that means the seniors are here and they are staying, and they are aging. But it also means that there are young families coming and the young families are the ones with the money and the ones that can buy the houses. The older population doesn’t have those incomes, but if you look at the age groups and the incomes or the percentages of people in different income brackets, that is starting to change in the community. Braintree was very affordable for a long time. You could buy a home here and live a wonderful life on not a large income. That has changed a lot – even in the last 20 years. Mr. Vila states he could frame it like that (i.e. “Despite the fastest-growing population group is the 65-74 age group, there are young people coming to Braintree which is making the population wealthier”). Member Huang points out that compared to neighboring towns and state level income increasing it’s not that we are getting wealthier, but due to economic growth everybody’s income is growing. Mr. Vila states everything happening at a state level is also happening here in Braintree. He states one of the comments they received during the week is that it is not unique to Braintree and is common throughout the state of Massachusetts. Chair Wadland thinks this phrasing is good. Councilor Flaherty had a minor revision to this wording. Director SantucciRozzi has one minor comment. In her discussion with Mr. Kent, she took all his notes down today. She states, in the sidebar, second paragraph, last sentence, it states “Despite being a small town, it benefits from close ties to the Boston Metropolitan area attracting commuters.” The Director doesn’t know if “small town” is the best way to describe Braintree. We have continually been described as a “mature suburb”. We are fairly built out. We are suburban, but we are not a community that has a lot of build-out available. She would suggest changing that to “mature suburb”. Member Cunningham states he couldn’t agree more; Braintree hasn’t been a small town in 100 years. Mr. Vila points out that we used “life sciences” in this section, and he asks if we want to change it. Chair Wadland states she thinks we want to keep it broad.

Mr. Vila now moves to pages 14 and 15. Vice Chair Amy Holmes arrives. Chair Wadland asks if there were any changes to this page. Mr. Vila made some revisions to the first sentence. Member Huang states she has been learning a lot about Braintree history and the fact that Braintree was the founding town of two presidents. She is only seeing the reference to Native Americans but not seeing a reference to the historical piece about presidents. Member Page agrees and thinks we have neglected talking about the historical significance of the presidents that were born in Braintree, General Sylvanus Thayer, and John Hancock. Member Page thinks those are very important. It is the story of our town and needs to be recognized and put in this. Councilor Flaherty agrees with the last comment and states we have to paint it in very broad strokes. We should begin with Native American history because chronologically that’s where things start, but then we should also talk about the colonial role of the community and also, it’s role in the early industrial revolution. We were a mill town for a while. Chair Wadland asks if we could get some information from Historical Society, as she thought it was a farming town. She didn’t know anything about the mills, but she has just been here for about 20 years. Member Page states we also should acknowledge that it was a farming town. Member Rubin thinks we could get a short synopsis from the Historical Commission or the Historical Society. Director SantucciRozzi states we can pull something together, and she states that the geographic area of Braintree has changed substantially. Staff will work with Flavio on getting the elements suggested today incorporated into that section. Member Kent points out that 19 historical structures are not managed by the Historical Commission; they are regulated. The Historical Society manages its own properties.

Mr. Vila now moves on to the Transportation Section. Chair Wadland asks if the percentages are confirmed. Mr. Vila explains some were confirmed in the Existing Conditions Report and some were added this week.

Member Huang doesn't know how important these statistics are, but if you are talking about Red Line, where is the commuter rail information? Chair Wadland states there is the commuter rail, which is different than the Red Line but at the same station. The Director points out that it is also in The Landing. Member Rubin points out there are also buses, and they are all at the same station. The Chair asks if we should talk about the need for public transportation to improve, and Member Rubin thinks maybe we can add that under the section that talks about improvements and goals. Member Huang doesn't see anywhere where it talks about our community power plant (BELD) as one of the resources that we benefit from. The Director suggests that we could reference BELD in the Facilities and Services section. Mr. Vila references paragraph two under Facilities and Services, where the schools are mentioned, and he asks if we are good with this wording. Chair Wadland states it would be nice to add "state-of-the-art" South Middle School as a little descriptive because it is a big deal for the school and the taxpayers contributed. The Director is not sure South Middle School has Lead Certification, so she is not sure she would say "state-of-the-art". Chair Wadland asks if "state-of-the-art" has a criterion because she thinks it is more of a general descriptive term saying it has been modernized. She doesn't think there is a certain criterion for "state-of-the-art". Chair Wadland asks if anyone objects to "state-of-the-art".

Director SantucciRozzi has one comment on the Open Space, Natural Resources, and Recreation Section. The first sentence, which states: Braintree has less than 30% of its total land dedicated to protected open space. It is about 25%, and that is referenced in the second paragraph. The Director thinks we should use "about 25%" in both paragraphs. Member Page asks if we said at one point that we were striving to achieve 30% or more. Somehow this comes up in the back of her mind, and she is wondering where that number came from. Mr. Vila states it was from one of the goals. Member Page thinks we want to say "has" rather than "less than".

Member Huang states, during the Master Plan, we talked a lot about the Monatiquot River, and she doesn't know why Cranberry Pond is the only one mentioned, while the river is the most important natural resource for the town. Member Page states, on that note, the Monatiquot River is being re-done by Hollingsworth Pond, and that certainly warrants mention. Director SantucciRozzi states that maybe we can add another paragraph because in this area the Cranberry Pond Conservation Area has different designations. That is what they have called out in this report. She suggests adding another paragraph on our other resources – the Monatiquot River and the Fore River Basin. Member Page asks if there is a reason we don't mention Pond Meadow Park, as that is very big and popular. Member Page explains the attributes of Pond Meadow Park and explains it is a real gem and should be mentioned.

Councilor Flaherty asks why "Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Priority Habitat of Rare Species, Critical Natural Landscape, and Core Natural Habitat" is all capitalized. Mr. Vila explains that it is because they are technical concepts. Mr. Vila states they can put it in lower case. Councilor Flaherty explains that, when you capitalize it, it makes it seem like it's an organization or a title of something. Councilor Flaherty adds Sunset Lake to the list of Natural Resources. They are all important in Braintree, and she doesn't know how to elevate one above any of the others. Director SantucciRozzi states she will coordinate with Kelly Phelan, our Conservation Agent, as we have Town Forest. We can also add "included but not limited to" just in case there is something missed.

Member Huang states, under **Facilities and Services**, can you explain the statement "the town lacks facility assessment for building maintenance planning aligned with a five-year capital plan". Member Huang thought that was in progress already. The Director states that it probably came from the interviews with the Facility Department. The Director doesn't think there are building assessments for every building in this town. Member Huang states also, from the school facility perspective, there is wording that states: "most educational buildings are outdated and in need of modernization and newer technologies", but there is nothing indicating that we have done a lot of fixes – for example the new room at Flaherty School. Member Huang thinks we might want to say something about needing new technology for the school rather than just the building perspective.

If Member Huang is looking at the priority for schools, she is looking at giving our students a higher technology and state-of-the-art infrastructure rather than the building itself. Chair Wadland thinks the wording should be verified with the mayor rather than having a department throw that in because there could be a plan. The Director states there is not a plan. Chair Wadland suggests it be verified. Member Page asks, is there not a plan for any buildings? It is a very blanket statement and too broad. Member Page states there probably are plans for some of the buildings – maybe not all of them. Member Page thinks if we are going to talk about the maintenance of the buildings, we should be more specific. When a homeowner owns a home, they don't do everything over all at one time. There is a process and a plan. The Director states this isn't necessarily a plan to do things; it's assessments or a rating system. It determines the condition of all aspects of the building such as roof, windows, heating, plumbing, etc., and using that to figure out what is the most dire need. Then, you come up with a capital plan to address that. The Director is almost positive that has not been done for all the town buildings, but she will double-check that with Facilities. Member Holmes recognizes that the town lacks staff to be able to prioritize this, but this should be made a priority within the Facilities area. Member Holmes states a major point is finding someone that can take on this project. The Director explains that the town's Facilities area has been doing stuff, but they are emergency items that come up. The Director explains this is separate where you bring in a third party and engineers go through all the buildings to come up with a priority list. Member Holmes agrees, but she thinks with everything we are trying to do they are overloaded. Councilor Flaherty thinks that we have facility assessments, but they are very fragmented. For example, we completed an ADA Building Assessment of every single municipal building that we have, and it was very comprehensive. It was solely focused on ADA compliance issues, but it is comprehensive. There are things in existence in the Facilities Department, like punch lists and some sensibilities regarding bringing school maintenance together with town DPW. There was an effort made to get a handle on all the issues, but it is not systematic or comprehensive. Councilor Flaherty thinks the way to modify this statement is to say something like "the town needs a more comprehensive assessment of building maintenance". It is a comprehensive endeavor at this point.

Chair Wadland asks if this is the point to talk about what the town needs or is this just an overview. Mr. Vila thinks we can talk about that in terms of goals and strategies. Member Rubin states that they would go in the goals.

Member Huang states, in the Transportation Section, we have talked about 90% of residents work outside of the town. Is that from a census or where do you get those numbers? Director SantucciRozzi is almost positive, that is in the census. Mr. Vila can double-check the data source.

The review moves on to Chapter 4 where Chair Wadland states that she does not like the picture. The Director explains that she has arranged with the Police Department to be able to go out and take good pictures around town, with police officer stopping traffic if necessary. She has noted where there are blank areas in need of pictures, and she mentions that there were pictures that came from the members that were circulated via email to the committee. We can review those to see if anybody wants to include any of those pictures. Chair Wadland and Member Holmes have taken pictures that they can provide, and maybe they can replace the picture in Chapter 4 with one of those.

Mr. Vila states on the Future Land Use Map on page 18, they added the Quincy Red Line Station, and we extended this multi-modal area to the Quincy Red Line Station. That is the only change here. Member Huang refers to a bridge picture with kids; the Director states she will get a better picture when she goes back out. Member Page states it is an ugly picture, and it should go. Mr. Vila wants to let the committee know that this is the only picture related to transit. Ms. Page thinks we should have a picture of the bridge, as the T station is woefully ugly. Member Holmes has volunteered to take a few pictures on her way tomorrow morning. Member Cunningham states there is a train station in the Landing that is still in pretty good shape. The Director states that it was one of the areas she has in her notes to photograph in The Landing because East Braintree is not well represented in the photos.

Councilor Flaherty states the current photo shows better on the screen than it does on paper. It is an important difference to note. Chair Wadland loves The Landing thought and states it would be great if we could do that.

On page 27, the only change was that there are 22 strategies for Core Theme 1 and not 21. Chair Wadland doesn't like the picture of the Farmer's Market. The Director and Mr. Vila will work on a replacement picture. Member Huang asks if it will be one picture, or could it be a collage of pictures representing different areas. Mr. Vila states, from a design perspective, in chapter pictures, it would be nice if it was just one, but for a full spread he could do a collage. Member Page asks if we were going to get some pictures of the squares, and the Director states that they are on her list.

Chair Wadland would like to ask a question on timeline. She notes we are figuring out the verbiage right now, but as far as the pictures go, will the Director send some pictures to the committee before the next meeting. Mr. Vila thinks he can do that, and he states inserting the photos here is super easy. He can send a draft Master Plan so the committee can see the photos. The committee can weigh in. The Director asks if there is anything in the packet she sent out that members liked. She did have a chance to take some nice pictures of historic structures and French's Common.

Under Chapter 6, Goal 2, Mr. Vila added "**Strive to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.**" Member Huang asks if that is a state requirement or one of the comments we wish for. Member Rubin clarifies that is one of the former governor's and current governor's goals for the state. She would think a lot of the towns are trying to adopt it to the extent that they can. Member Page states, back to what Julia was pointing out earlier, should "net zero" be capitalized. Is it a defined term? Mr. Vila states nothing has changed under Goal 4, Capacity, and nothing has changed under Chapter 7's introduction. Director SantucciRozzi states for the picture for Chapter 7, where we talk about strategic economic development and vibrant local businesses, maybe that would be a good shot for the squares.

Mr. Vila states, now that we have been talking about the Life Sciences term, do we want to leave "enhance the town's ability to recruit Life Sciences, Health Sciences, and other types of organizations"? Chair Wadland thinks we decided at a meeting a while ago that we were going to keep it broad. She asks if any members remember that or disagree with that? The Director thinks when you read the entire paragraph it gets broader. She mentions that, in connection with South Shore Hospital, there is a large medical vibe in Quincy, Braintree, and Weymouth. How can we piggyback upon that? She thinks it is broad enough, and she doesn't want to eliminate that. Member Huang states maybe we could add something in terms of attracting new business trends, while eliminating the life sciences and health sciences reference. She gives an example of seeing a lot of micro-breweries coming up. The Director states that she thinks Goal 3 addresses that, and we already passed the zoning for the brewery use and the brewery tap room.

Under Chapter 8, page 40, Mr. Vila states there have been no changes. They are just missing the picture. The Director explains that this is where she was going to put the photo of The Landing Commuter Rail. Chair Wadland doesn't think we need two transit pictures, so will we just use The Landing? The Director states where the other train was is just planning framework, and we could use any type of photo. The Director states that some of the pictures for the engagement process might be good. Member Huang suggests the picture that was taken at the July 4th event where the committee did outreach. The Director states she will find them. Member Page thinks we can have too many pictures of sticky boards and sticky notes. She states there is a nice picture on page 45 of an overview of a presentation. Member Page doesn't think we need to keep having pictures of meetings we did. She thinks we can come up with other ideas. She does like the one on page 44. Mr. Vila thought the photo on page 44 could go to Community Vision under Chapter 4. Chair Wadland states she thinks we don't have enough of Braintree's beautiful locations, historic locations, and sports programs. The Director states some of those are in what was circulated to the members.

Member Huang states we probably need some pictures of parks/playgrounds.

Under Chapter 9, Goal 4, Member Huang asks if we are still stating 10 percent because it changes with the state's requirements. Director SantucciRozzi states the 10% hasn't changed. Member Huang asks what if it does change. The Director states we could say "maintain the state's minimum requirement of affordable housing". Member Page discusses a photo for this section, and states there are so many nice neighborhoods. She asks if you have to get permission if you took a picture of a street and got a long-range view. Mr. Vila and the Director confirmed we don't need permission. The Director states she had suggested last time taking a picture of Independence Manor, which is a massive resource in the community. She asks how people feel about that. Member Page mentions that we are talking about how we are going to protect and prioritize residential neighborhoods; she thinks we need to have a picture of a residential neighborhood. Mr. Vila makes suggestions on where to place pictures of a residential neighborhood vs. Independence Manor. Chair Wadland asks what page that will be, and Mr. Vila states page 50. From a design perspective, Mr. Vila thinks it would be better to have complete photos when we have chapters, and we can have collages in other parts. Member Huang wants to go back to page 49 where we talk about the state minimum under 4C. She wants to make sure we adjust the wording to reflect if the state minimum changes.

Director SantucciRozzi mentions that last time we talked a lot about the housing matrix, and we talked about the zoning amendments that promote neighborhood protection and the annual conversion of single-family dwellings to multi-family. We can track that, but it almost non-existent. She would suggest we put something in there that is more meaningful. Member Page thinks we talked about tracking accidents. The Director states her notes say "injuries, car accidents" and then it says, "Peter – don't track this". Member Holmes states this is the section where we talked about bringing back a monthly newsletter – something that updated everybody to what was going on in the town. The Director clarifies that the discussion was related to an annual report, and Mr. Vila clarifies that it is in Chapter 10, page 52. Member Holmes mentions that the Police Department Facebook posts weekly police logs that include accident reports. The Director is almost certain that you can access any police log in any community. Mr. Vila asks if we are going to replace the metric showing the annual conversion of single-family to multi-family or are we going to keep it?

Councilor Flaherty had a comment about the annual zoning amendments that promote residential neighborhood protection. She states we could make a change and have an annual zoning amendment, but they don't do zoning amendments all the time. They are quite rare. She is not sure they would make an effective metric because they are infrequent. Chair Wadland asks if we want to say, "annual review of what we are doing to protect the neighborhoods". The Director advises that we have done more zoning amendments in the last three or four years than she has in her entire tenure with the town. Member Page states it doesn't strike her as the metric you would be using; you might want to track something. The Director asks for an example of what might be tracked. What are you looking to see in a report?

Member Cunningham states something he would like to see that is somewhat related to protecting the neighborhoods is the number of law enforcement activities with respect to driving infractions. If we are talking about protecting neighborhoods, and we have cars speeding through the neighborhoods, and they are doing so with impunity, that is a problem. Within the last couple of years, it has gotten worse. For purposes of protecting neighborhoods, structures are far less damaging than vehicles are. Member Cunningham thinks we want to track the accidents and traffic infractions throughout the town, especially with respect to residential sections of the town. Chair Wadland agrees with this but asks if this is about housing. This seems to be about traffic. The Chair thinks we need to determine what we are trying to protect. Is it neighborhoods with buffers? The Director agrees with Chair Wadland, and she would draw the membership's attention to the strategies that we have here.

The metric is supposed to track how we are doing with these strategies. We look at developing housing regulations, policies, and programs. We talk about amending zoning to strengthen protections for neighborhoods. The Director goes on to read the strategies under Goal 1 and Goal 2. A lot of the strategies are related to making changes within our local framework that will protect neighborhoods, that will produce senior housing, that is inclusionary. The Director states, tracking amendments that relate to these strategies is 100% on point. The metric is to track the progress on the strategies.

Member Huang states she would like to see how the percentage of different housing we have changed over the years. For example, apartment complex vs. senior housing vs. different type of variety of housing, and how we measure against what our goal was. For example, if we have 20% of apartments vs. what we wanted at 10%, that perspective for single-family housing. What type of housing has been steadily increasing? Chair Wadland suggests maybe we could add “year over year for the ten-year plan”.

Member Herbst is fine with removing his suggesting on that third metric related to annual conversions, and he thinks maybe for the first metric instead of “annual new” it should be “annual change” so that we can see the ups and downs in each type of housing.

Member Page states everyone has made some great points tonight, but there is one other thing that comes to mind. Living in her neighborhood, they get a “spillover” of crime. They have had shootings, car chases, and drug busts that spill over from South Shore Plaza into her neighborhood pretty regularly. We might want to keep track of crime that is spilling into the neighborhoods because of something else. It is an issue and a big concern. Chair Wadland suggests that it go in the area of public safety. Chair Wadland agrees with the Director, we are trying to address protecting the neighborhoods, increasing buffers, and making sure from incongruent land uses.

Councilor Flaherty states the way she interpreted this was that if we didn’t have a zoning amendment in any given year to promote residential protection in some way, then we would by this definition fail that year. She suggests we talk about the impact of zoning amendments instead of annual zoning amendments. For example, we just passed a tree protection ordinance. She hopes we will see a measurable increase in our tree canopy over time that we could measure. She doesn’t want people to misunderstand the thrust of this, which is not just to pass zoning amendments for the sake of trying to succeed with our master plan, but to pass the ones that we want and see the impact of them so that if we need to make modifications, we can do that.

Director SantucciRozzi thinks we could use zoning amendments, policy, and local decision making. She is looking at a situation where a site is going to be developed, and we are going to be looking to preserve a lot of open space as part of this development. While that might not be through a zoning change, it is still an action that jives with the strategies. She suggests broadening it to “local zoning amendments, policy and decision-making that promote...”, and she thinks that covers it because it might not be a zoning amendment.

Mr. Vila explains that we don’t have a “Safety” section in this Master Plan. If we want to include something about crime or about accidents in neighborhoods, he thinks we could add it under Chapter 10, Goal 4. Member Cunningham suggests under Chapter 9, Goal 1. If we want to protect neighborhoods from the impact of commercial activity, some of which produces crime, Member Cunningham thinks it’s perfectly reasonable to keep it in the Housing Section, under Goal 1. He is also okay if it goes in the next section under Public Safety. People being concerned about the impact of commercial activity on residential sections of the town has been a theme throughout our meetings. Member Cunningham states that people have been concerned about South Shore Plaza for a long time. Whether it is due to traffic issues or crime issues, it is very clear that commercial activity generates traffic infractions and sometimes generates criminal activity. Whether we put it in one section or another doesn’t matter, but it probably should be somewhere in the Master Plan to try to address those concerns. Member Cunningham discusses the traffic infractions and criminal activity that occurs on his street.

Member Huang totally agrees, and states maybe we can add a measurement of public safety due to the impact of economic growth and housing growth. Chair Wadland suggests “or commercial growth”. The Director explains that with the build-out of extensive retail, retail brings in all different kinds of people daily. When you have different people coming every day it lends to individuals that don’t know the roads, speeding, cutting through neighborhoods.

Councilor Flaherty states what she is hearing from people is that there is a very strong feeling that we want to feel safe in our community. She can certainly identify with that. As far as planting a metric for it in this document, she wants to feel safe everywhere she goes. For that reason, it doesn’t make a lot of sense to place it in with the housing. We have only one strategy that is specifically oriented around the police. That is Strategy 4A under Chapter 10. She hoped if we did that, we could see a measurable drop in crime. That is where she would put that metric. Chair Wadland asks if we would add a strategy, and Councilor Flaherty explains that the strategy is 4A, which is expanding the Police Department. To measure the effectiveness of that, you can track crime statistics. Chair Wadland states you could say “increase neighborhood safety with increased patrols and increased fines for speeding”. The Director isn’t sure they should start adding more strategies, but she thinks if we had a metric that tracks enforcement, that tracks crime, that directly ties to capacity (i.e. does increasing staffing increase enforcement and does it reduce crime), that would be something that would make sense. The Director thinks tracking crime and tracking traffic enforcement are two things she has been hearing about a lot, and it is also a good revenue generator. The Director includes parking in this discussion because of the obstructive way that people park. All that leads to an accident.

Member Page asks what if we put in a metric to track the implementation of speed bumps and neighborhood traffic calming measures. Member Page has had four cars in her family hit in front of her house. She thinks keeping track of various traffic calming measures implemented in various neighborhoods and examining those at the end to see if it’s working or if something else needs to be done.

Mr. Vila points out the metrics found in the Transportation Chapter on page 45. The Director adds tracking complaints isn’t showing progress. She thinks tracking the traffic calming measures, the crime and enforcement. She thinks those three things go very well together. Mr. Vila states he would leave neighborhood crime to the Public Safety chapter. Member Herbst suggests incidents and complaints because it doesn’t matter if we have speed bumps or rotaries if people are going through them at 35 miles per hour.

Member Huang suggests, because of the mall, tracking through holiday season. Director SantucciRozzi states that standard engineering practice is that you never count during the holidays because, if we designed our transportation system for the holiday season, it would be insane. The highway would be double the width; everything would be double. Typically, the best time to get your most accurate reading of traffic is in the spring (March) as schools are in session and in the fall. No one is on vacation. In summer, everyone is gone. Those are the numbers that are typically tracked for transportation planning. When we require traffic studies from people and they gather baseline data, we tell them to look at two weekdays. Don’t do Monday or Friday; do the middle of the week during the school year in the spring or fall. That is when you are going to get the most accurate representation of your typical traffic conditions. On the Planning Board side, when applicants say proposed developments are going to generate “X” number of vehicles, we say once you build it, you come back and tell us exactly how many trips. The Director states there has been one project in her entire tenure with the town that was more than the developer said it was going to be. No one has ever complained about it; it is the CVS at Capon Circle. The Planning Department has a lot of that data and those reports are typically things that result from a Planning Board decision in accordance with our bylaw. We go back to make sure any mitigation we put in place was sufficient. With CVS, there were no operational issues, complaints or recommendations.

Chair Wadland understands that the holiday season is a six-week period, but she thinks we should track the incidents because it is alarming when there are kids outside and cars are flying by. The Director agrees that incidents should be tracked, but she clarified that no one will be counting traffic at the holiday season.

Member Page agrees that we should be tracking incidents, but we should be tracking if there is some sort of positive solution coming about. She states we want to see that we are doing something that is improving the situation. Is there a way we can measure the improvement to see if our traffic calming is effective. Mr. Vila states, ideally, the correlation between those two metrics is going to give you the improvement. These metrics will also work together. The Director suggests they have Mr. Vila put together different measurements to his current point that one shows the improvement of the other and how those can work together to produce safer situations.

Member Huang asks how we can promote public service. The Director agrees and states that it is upsetting that public meetings are not well attended at all. Member Huang refers to Strategy 3B under Chapter 10 and suggests adding “promoting public service involvement so we can measure how we are promoting to our residents the importance of public service”. Chair Wadland requests adding “encourage community input” somewhere. Member Huang states it is more than just coming to meetings; it’s about promoting why people should run for town offices. Member Huang states this is our Master Plan for the next ten years. Are we going to see the same people that show up all the time or are we trying to promote and expand our strategy to increase public service involvement.

Member Kent asks if we keep track of how many people access the various web pages or how many people access cable TV for the various board meetings. The Director states they can tell how many people have viewed the meetings. You might be able to see that if you go on BCAM TV on YouTube. You can see how many views there were. She cannot speak to the website or what kind of tracking that does. The Director states, to Member Huang’s point, there have been different reaches for different groups of people. We had a Talent Bank going on a while ago, keeping in mind that we have people that run for office and a lot of the boards and commissions are appointed. The Director has made some suggestions to make up a document describing all of the boards, and you talk about what those boards do. A lot of communities have separate boards that meet with people and make recommendations to the administration. The Director states we have a lot of young working families in Braintree, and it is really hard to participate when you have small kids at home, and you might be on a different schedule than your spouse or partner. You might see younger people volunteering and then older people volunteering because the middle of life gets more hectic. The Director suggests holding a charet reviewing the types of commissions and boards, what they do, what you will be looking at, and educating the population on what the options are for community service. People must know what they are signing up for and understand what the expectations are. Doing education might help more people get involved or it might do the opposite. Member Holmes asks if we have a resource page that describes this on the town website? The Director explains she cannot speak to the other pages on the website, but the Planning Department pages describe the boards and what they do.

Member Huang is trying to find a place to add a strategy related to this subject in the Master Plan. Chair Wadland asks if anyone objects if Flavio finds a place to put this. Mr. Vila states, if we want to find a place, it is here in Goal 3 – Encourage community public service involvement and education (Chapter 10). Councilor Flaherty doesn’t have an objection, but she doesn’t know how we would ever measure it. Member Huang states the measurement is looking at local voting and whether the percentage of voters increases. Another measure might be how many districts have new people running for office. Councilor Flaherty is okay to add a strategy, but it is very hard to measure. She states it is a worthy aspiration.

On Chapter 11, Implementation (page 58), Mr. Vila advises that nothing has changed.

Chair Wadland states on the very last page there were a lot of changes. The Director confirms that all those changes were made. Mr. Vila states that what the committee members have in their handout is the same as on the screen. The Director explains who has been added to the list. Councilor Flaherty states, because our next meeting will be after the election, she thinks it would be worth adding whoever the new District 6 Town Councilor is going to be, as that Town Councilor will change. Director SantucciRozzi clarifies that the Master Plan will be adopted in December by the Planning Board, so that new Town Councilor won't be sworn in until January. The Director explains that these Council Members have been in place the entire Master Plan process.

Chair Wadland asks members to review their names and descriptions to ensure accuracy.

Member Rubin asks for a recap of what is going to happen next (between now and the next meeting).

Director SantucciRozzi explains that Flavio Vila will work on the revisions that were discussed this evening. She will take some pictures. Based on the discussion tonight, she will send the pictures to Flavio, and he can insert them. If there are any pictures in the handout tonight that people like, please let the Director know. There was a request to take some pictures of the Sylvanus Thayer property across the street.

Member Rubin suggests that anyone that has pictures should send them to the Director. Member Huang asks, if we want a collage, should the member make the collage or will Mr. Vila put it together. The Director states that people should send individual pictures to Flavio and he can manipulate the collage. Chair Wadland asks if any of Member Huang's pictures from the New Year celebration worked, as far as the quality. The Director states the one of the parade was a nice one, and there were a couple of shots from French's Common. Chair Wadland had sent some pictures to Flavio, and he will insert them in the software to see the quality.

Member Page states we did not discuss the cover pictures. Are we going to have a couple of choices? Member Page suggests one of Sylvanus Thayer House. Mr. Vila states the last thing discussed over email was that the Director was going to take more pictures to ensure better quality. Member Page wants to make sure that we consider a picture on the front that is more emblematic of Braintree. Member Huang suggests combining pictures of the old and new school buildings for South and East Middle Schools.

Chair Wadland acknowledges that Planning Board Members Grove and Storlazzi are in attendance, and she asks if they would like to speak. They have nothing further to say. Chair Wadland thanks them for coming.

Director SantucciRozzi states we have the draft of the Master Plan on the website with public comment open until November 6, 2023. We will see what comes in for that. The next meeting is November 16th. Chair Wadland wants to make sure we have a quorum for November 16th, and she asks the members who will be able to make that meeting. By a show of hands, there will be a quorum; Chair Wadland and Members Kent and Page will not be in attendance.

Member Huang is not sure people are aware that we are accepting public comments. She thinks there should be an announcement. The Director can ask the mayor to put something on the front page of the website.

Adjournment

Chair Wadland looks for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION made by Councilor Flaherty to adjourn the meeting; unanimously voted 9:0:0; all members were in favor, and no members were opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Louise F. Quinlan, Office Manager, Planning and Community Development