

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Override

1. What is a Proposition 2 ½ Override?

- a. *A Proposition 2 1/2 Override allows a community to increase taxes in excess of the maximum annual 2.5% growth established by the 1980 Proposition 2 1/2 . A community may take this action as long as it is below its levy ceiling, or 2.5 percent of full and fair cash value, which Braintree is. When an override is passed, the levy limit for the year is increased by including the amount of the override. The override results in a permanent increase in the levy limit of a community. (source: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/levy-limits-a-primer-on-proposition-2-12-0/download#:~:text=What%20is%20an%20Override%3F,full%20and%20fair%20cash%20value.>)*

2. Why is an Override needed?

- a. *The Mayor has filed for an override to give Braintree residents the decision whether to increase revenues sufficient to avoid the most impactful of spending cuts contemplated for FY25, particularly to education, public safety and public works.*

3. What does a “Yes” vote mean?

- a. *A “yes” vote would permanently increase the annual amount of tax revenues raised annually by the Town Levy (property taxes) by \$8 million.*

4. Why \$8 million? Why not \$18 million? Why not \$2 million?

- a. *The Mayor’s FY 2025 budget calls for \$8 million as the funding required to bring the Town of Braintree’s long-term structural operating budget challenges into balance and avoid the deepest cuts to key Town programs and services. Even with the funding spending reductions and controls must be implemented, but the \$8 million would allow for the Town to be on solid financial footing and get out of the cycle of annual slashing of budgets and services.*

5. What is the impact on seniors, families and businesses?

- a. *By approving Proposition 2 ½ Override voters will be deciding to increase taxes residents pay on their real estate and personal property. For the average single family unit an \$8 million increase in the total Town Levy would result in \$454 additional taxes based on FY 2024 assessment data. A business with an assessed valuation of \$1 million would owe \$1,450 more in taxes under the same assumptions. For seniors or other eligible populations the Town will promote existing state and Town authorized programs for tax relief, most notably the Property Tax Circuit Breaker credit that seniors can file for through their state income taxes. Finally, the Town is reviewing what additional programs might be adopted by the Town to provide tax relief to the Braintree seniors most in need.*

6. Is it true that Braintree has a low tax rate?

- a. *For residential taxpayers, Braintree in FY2024 has the lowest rate adopted by the 28 towns the make up Norfolk county (\$9.48 per \$1,000 of assessed value). This amount is roughly 25% the median Town rate for the County. For commercial rate payers, Braintree’s rate of 20.25% is above the average County rate by roughly 13% above the median community.*

7. What are the notable spending cuts in the Mayor’s budget and what does the override restore funding for?

a. *The table below illustrates the impacts to the largest departments of the Town showing the without (w/o) and with override scenarios.*

Department / Title	W/ o Override	W/ Override
Schools		
Staffing Impact:		
K-4 / Middle School/ High School Staffing	Elimination of approximately 91 teachers and staff positions (estimated layoff of ~75 personnel).	Restores funding for 46 of the positions that would be eliminated (estimated layoff of ~30 personnel)
Program Impact:		
Full-time math and reading specialist for each elementary school	Reduced	Restored
Redistricting at the elementary schools	Effective for 2024-2025 school year	Postponed
Increase elementary class sizes	Effective for 2024-2025 school year	Maintain class sizes for K-2 at 20-22; for 3-4 22-24
Music, art, and PE at elementary level	Reduced	Maintained at current levels
“Teaming” at Middle Schools	Eliminated	Maintained at current levels
5th grade math lab at both middle schools	Eliminated	Maintained at current levels
World Languages	Eliminated in grade 7; reduced at all levels	Maintained at current levels
Art and music opportunities at middle and high school	Drastically reduced	Reduced
Reduce graduation requirements at BHS	Requirements reduced due to fewer class offerings	Maintain current graduation requirements
Media Specialist at BHS	Eliminated, creating need to address accreditation requirements	Restored
BHS class sizes and electives	Teachers ratios and class offerings drastically reduced	Reduced; current offerings maintained
Special Education out-of-district tuition buffer to accommodate potential move-ins	Drastically reduced	Restored \$200,000
BHS support positions in special education/tutoring	Reduced	Restored

Department / Title	W/ o Override	W/ Override
Police		
Officers	Four vacant positions unfilled, officers count falls to 85. Additionally, no funding is provided to support the up front costs of replacing officers that leave, risking that Police will be staffed at numbers well below their long-term target staffing levels.	Restore funding for 4 vacant officers, and invest in bring staffing up to levels necessary to maintain core patrol and public safety response levels.
Traffic Unit	Eliminated	Program Restored
School Resource Officers	No dedicated officers in Schools	Program Restored
Parking Enforcement Program	Eliminated	Program Restored
Non-Mandatory Training	Eliminated	Program Restored
Mandatory Training	Reduced to On-Line / On-Duty Only	Program Restored
Detectives	Assignments Cut	Program Restored
Family Services Unit	Capacity Cut	Program Restored

Department / Title	W/ o Override	W/ Override
Public Works Staffing Impact	Elimination of 35 budgeted positions	Restoration of 15-20 positions that would otherwise be eliminated
Parks and Recreation Braintree Day Fireworks	Eliminated	Restored
Fields Maintenance	Substantial reductions to maintenance schedule and response time delays to requests for repairs, deferred maintenance or projects.	Fields / facilities maintained consistent with FY24 levels
Summer Programs	Splash Pad would not operate in Summer 2024 season; only 2 of 4 neighborhood parks would be staffed; Only summer programming that was funded through fees would continue to operate, including programming at the Art Center and summer camps.	Restore funding for staffing / program for key summer and park programs, such as Splash Pad and neighborhood playground programs.
Highways Roadway Maintenance	Reduction in response time and scheduling for road work maintenance and repairs, pothole filling, brush cutting, traffic signage and road marking repairs.	Restoration of services to levels more in line with FY24 budget.
Environmental Affairs Recycling Center	Reduce days of operation to just Friday and Saturday	Restore to current operations
Compost Site	Restrict site access to just Friday, Saturday and Sunday and no commercial vehicles allowed at site.	Restore to current operations
School Custodians and Town Facilities	Diminished upkeep and cleanliness of our school facilities and delayed response times and schedules for performing small but critical repairs needed within the aging school buildings.	Restoration of services to levels more in line with FY24 budget.
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