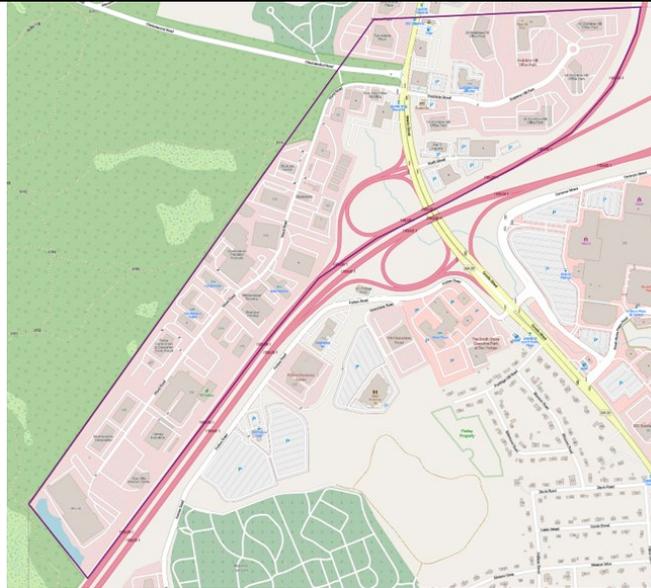


Wood Road Revitalization & Mixed-Use Development Initiative Preliminary Recommendations



*Source: Massachusetts Tier 3 Assessors/ Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
Land Parcel Database, FY2022*

Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Town of Braintree
Braintree Wood Road Core Team
2023- 2024

Wood Road Community Workshop Report

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For questions, comments, or further information, please contact Raul Gonzalez, Senior Economic Development Planner, at RGonzalez@MAPC.org.

Summary

The preliminary recommendations for the Wood Road District have been crafted through a multi-faceted approach involving the Community Survey, Existing Conditions Report, Core Team meetings, Focus Groups, and a Community Workshop. This collaborative process ensured that the voices and concerns of the community were at the forefront of every strategic decision. Below is a summary of the recommendations and the processes that shaped them.

Recommendations

Zoning & Development

1. Analyze and Update Zoning Regulations

- This strategy involves a thorough review and amendment of the existing zoning regulations to better support developments that combine retail, commercial, and recreational spaces within the Wood Road District. The goal is to introduce flexible zoning policies that can adapt to emerging trends and community needs. The review process will also focus on identifying and eliminating outdated or overly restrictive provisions that may hinder development.
- **Actors Involved:** The Planning Board, Planning Department, Legal Advisors, and Planning and Community Development Staff will lead this effort.
- **Resources Required:** Legal and planning consultants will be necessary to guide the review and amendment process.
- **Timeline:** The strategy is expected to take 6-12 months to complete.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by the adoption of updated zoning regulations by the town, ensuring they align with the community's vision for a mixed-use, vibrant district.
- **Priority:** This is a high-priority initiative, as it sets the foundational framework for all subsequent developments within the district.

Commented [CM1]: Examining Base Zoning Regulations to make positive changes within the district with mindfulness that it Applies to other properties outside of the Study Area.

2. Introduce an Overlay Business District

- This strategy aims to streamline the zoning process by proposing amendments and establishing an overlay business district. The overlay district will facilitate flexible and modern development within the Wood Road area, accommodating a mix of retail, commercial, and recreational spaces. The overlay will offer a simplified regulatory environment, enabling quicker approvals for developments that meet the district's vision.
- **Actors Involved:** The Planning Department, local businesses, the Wood Road District Group, and the Planning and Community Development team are key actors.
- **Resources Required:** Public hearings and legal drafting resources will be essential to creating and implementing the overlay district.
- **Timeline:** The strategy will be executed over 6-12 months.

- **Performance Metrics:** The main measure of success will be the approval and implementation of the overlay district, which will pave the way for more dynamic and flexible developments.
- **Priority:** This is a high-priority strategy, crucial for enabling diverse and adaptable developments in the district.

3. Incentivize Development

- This strategy focuses on creating economic incentives to attract developers to invest in the Wood Road District. By offering tax abatements, grants, and other financial incentives, the strategy seeks to ensure that development projects align with the community's needs and visions. The incentives will be designed to encourage investments in areas such as retail, commercial, and recreational spaces, supporting the district's overall revitalization goals.
- **Actors Involved:** Local government, developers, the Wood Road District Group, and the Planning and Community Development team will be responsible for this strategy.
- **Resources Required:** Economic incentives, including tax abatements, grants, and developer agreements, will be essential to attract and secure investments.
- **Timeline:** This is an ongoing initiative, designed to adapt to and attract various development projects over time.
- **Performance Metrics:** The success of this strategy will be measured by the number of development projects initiated within the district.
- **Priority:** This strategy holds medium priority, supporting the overall economic growth of the district but dependent on the successful implementation of foundational zoning regulations.

4. Flexible Development

- This strategy encourages the development of spaces that are flexible in their use, particularly those that include amenities like restaurants, stores, and the potential for vertical growth. The goal is to create a zoning environment that allows developers to optimize the use of available space, accommodating a variety of uses that can evolve over time. This approach supports the creation of a vibrant, adaptable district that can respond to changing market demands and community needs.
- **Actors Involved:** Urban planners, architects, developers, the Wood Road District Group, and the Commission on Disabilities are the primary actors in this strategy.
- **Resources Required:** Architectural design consultations and the establishment of flexible zoning guidelines will be necessary.
- **Timeline:** The strategy will be implemented over 12-24 months.

- **Performance Metrics:** The effectiveness of this strategy will be measured by the increased utilization of space and the approval of flexible development designs that meet the community's needs.
- **Priority:** This strategy is of medium priority, aimed at optimizing space usage while allowing for diverse development options.

Infrastructure, Accessibility & Open Space

1. Promote Traffic Improvements

- This strategy focuses on collaborating with state and private partnerships to analyze and improve current traffic patterns within the Wood Road District. The objective is to identify and implement solutions that alleviate congestion and improve the overall traffic flow in the area, making it more accessible and safer for both residents and businesses.
- **Actors Involved:** MassDOT, the Traffic Division, Braintree Police Department, and Public Works will be the key players.
- **Resources Required:** Traffic analysis and infrastructure funds are critical resources needed to carry out this strategy.
- **Timeline:** The implementation of this strategy is expected to take 12-24 months.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by a noticeable reduction in congestion and improvements in traffic flow.
- **Priority:** This is a high-priority strategy, essential for ensuring that the infrastructure can support the district's growth.

2. Promote Public Transportation

- This strategy aims to enhance public transportation options within the Wood Road District by collaborating with local transit authorities. It includes plans to introduce shuttle services that connect the district to nearby train stations, making it easier for residents and visitors to access the area without relying on personal vehicles. The strategy supports a reduction in traffic congestion and promotes sustainable transportation options.
- **Actors Involved:** The MBTA, Wood Road District Group, local businesses, and the Commission on Disabilities are involved in this effort.
- **Resources Required:** Public transit funding, shuttle service contracts, and transit planning resources are necessary to execute this strategy.
- **Timeline:** The strategy will be carried out over 12-24 months.
- **Performance Metrics:** The success of this strategy will be indicated by increased public transit usage and a reduction in car dependency.
- **Priority:** This is a medium-priority strategy, focusing on improving accessibility and reducing traffic through enhanced public transportation.

Commented [CM2]: Implementing TDM Practices on new development projects.

3. Shared Parking Solutions

- This strategy explores the possibility of shared parking solutions to maximize space utilization and improve access within the Wood Road District. The plan could involve creating central parking facilities that serve multiple businesses, reducing the need for individual parking lots and freeing up space for other uses. This approach supports efficient land use and enhances the overall accessibility of the district.
- **Actors Involved:** Local businesses, real estate developers, and the Wood Road District Group will collaborate on this initiative.
- **Resources Required:** A feasibility study and funding for the development of central parking facilities will be needed.
- **Timeline:** The strategy will be implemented over 12-18 months.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by the successful implementation of shared parking facilities that effectively serve the district.
- **Priority:** This strategy is of low priority, focusing on optimizing parking efficiency but considered less critical than other infrastructure projects.

Commented [CM3]: Include Property Owners. Possibel proof of restriction/easement/agreement needed.

4. Develop Parks and Pathways

- This strategy seeks to enhance the Wood Road District’s recreational appeal by developing parks and pedestrian pathways. The goal is to leverage natural assets like the Blue Hills, improving access and connectivity while providing residents and visitors with more green spaces. These developments will contribute to the overall quality of life in the district and make it a more attractive place to live and work.
- **Actors Involved:** Public Works, Recreation & Community Events, the Recreation Advisory Commission, community-based organizations (e.g., Friends of the Blue Hills), and the Wood Road District Group are the key actors.
- **Resources Required:** The strategy will require land acquisition, funding for park development, and environmental assessments.
- **Timeline:** The project is expected to take 18-36 months.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by the increased availability of green spaces and improved access to natural assets in the district.
- **Priority:** This is a medium-priority strategy, balancing infrastructure improvements with the enhancement of recreational spaces.

Commented [CM4]: Please Rmeove - Encompassed under DPW. Please add Community Preservation Committee.

Retail & Business Support

1. Modernize Existing Retail Spaces

- This strategy involves working with property owners to update and diversify the current retail spaces within the Wood Road District. The aim is to make these spaces more appealing and accessible, attracting a wider range of businesses and customers. By

modernizing the retail environment, the district can become a more vibrant and economically active area.

- **Actors Involved:** Property owners, the Building Division, retail consultants, the Wood Road District Group, and the Commission on Disabilities will be involved in this effort.
- **Resources Required:** Funding for renovations and design consultations will be necessary to modernize the retail spaces.
- **Timeline:** The strategy will be carried out over 12-24 months.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by the number of modernized retail spaces and the resulting increase in retail activity.
- **Priority:** This is a high-priority strategy, crucial for revitalizing the district's retail environment and supporting economic growth.

2. Small Business Support Programs

- This strategy focuses on developing or expanding programs to support local small businesses within the Wood Road District. The programs will include grants, low-interest loans, and business development services. By fostering partnerships between local businesses and community organizations, the strategy aims to strengthen the local economy and ensure that small businesses can thrive in the district.
- **Actors Involved:** The Chambers of Commerce and the Wood Road District Group will lead this initiative.
- **Resources Required:** The strategy will require grants, low-interest loans, and business development services to support small businesses.
- **Timeline:** This is an ongoing initiative, designed to continually support the growth of small businesses in the district.
- **Performance Metrics:** The success of this strategy will be measured by the number of small businesses supported and the overall economic growth in the district.
- **Priority:** This is a medium-priority strategy, essential for sustaining the local economy but reliant on broader development efforts.

3. Update Signage Bylaws

- This strategy aims to revise the existing signage bylaws to allow for more flexibility and shared ground signs within the Wood Road District. The objective is to enhance the visibility of businesses, making the area more attractive to potential tenants. By updating the signage bylaws, the district can improve its aesthetic appeal and ensure that businesses are easily identifiable.
- **Actors Involved:** The Planning Board, Planning and Community Development team, and the Wood Road District Group will collaborate on this strategy.

Commented [CM5]: Move to Zoning? See comment #2 on email.

- **Resources Required:** Legal drafting and public consultations will be necessary to revise the signage bylaws.
- **Timeline:** The strategy will be implemented over 6-12 months.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by the adoption of revised signage bylaws and the resulting improvement in business visibility.
- **Priority:** This is a high-priority strategy, important for enhancing the district's visual appeal and business accessibility.

Continued Engagement & Collaboration

1. Formation of a District Group

- This strategy involves creating a Wood Road District group composed of representatives from businesses, real estate, hotels, municipal staff, and elected officials. The group will oversee the implementation of development plans, ensure continuous community engagement, and address any emerging issues collaboratively. The formation of this group is essential for coordinating efforts across different stakeholders and maintaining momentum in the district's revitalization.
- **Actors Involved:** Municipal staff, local businesses, real estate developers, and hotels will be involved in this effort.
- **Resources Required:** The strategy requires meeting spaces, coordination resources, and administrative support to facilitate the group's formation and ongoing activities.
- **Timeline:** This initiative is expected to take 3-6 months to establish the group.
- **Performance Metrics:** Success will be indicated by the formation of the district group and the regularity of meetings held to coordinate and advance the district's development.
- **Priority:** This is a high-priority initiative, crucial for ensuring continuous engagement and the collaborative implementation of development plans.

2. Ongoing Feedback

- This strategy focuses on regularly conducting community meetings to gather ongoing feedback from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in the Wood Road District. The goal is to keep the community engaged in the planning process and ensure that the development aligns with their needs and expectations. Continuous feedback will help to adjust plans as necessary and maintain community support throughout the implementation process.
- **Actors Involved:** The Wood Road District Group and municipal staff will lead this effort.
- **Resources Required:** Survey tools, public meeting spaces, and communication channels are necessary to gather and analyze feedback.
- **Timeline:** This is an ongoing initiative, designed to maintain an open dialogue with the community throughout the development process.

- **Performance Metrics:** The success of this strategy will be measured by the frequency and participation in community meetings, as well as the responsiveness to feedback.
 - **Priority:** This is a medium-priority strategy, important for maintaining community involvement but dependent on the formation of the district group.
3. Focus Groups and Workshops
- This strategy involves organizing additional focus groups and workshops to delve deeper into specific issues related to the Wood Road District’s development. These sessions will provide a platform for stakeholders to collaboratively develop solutions to challenges and refine the development plans. The focus groups and workshops will also serve as an opportunity to educate the community about the benefits of the proposed developments and gather detailed input on key aspects of the project.
 - **Actors Involved:** The Wood Road District Group and municipal staff will organize and facilitate these sessions.
 - **Resources Required:** Workshop facilitation, expert speakers, and meeting spaces will be required to conduct these focus groups and workshops effectively.
 - **Timeline:** This strategy will be implemented over 6-12 months.
 - **Performance Metrics:** Success will be measured by the number of focus groups conducted and the actionable outcomes identified during these sessions.
 - **Priority:** This is a low-priority strategy, useful for addressing specific issues and refining plans, but less urgent than broader engagement efforts.