



**Mayor
Charles C. Kokoros**

Department of Planning and Community Development

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MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Jennifer Wadland, Chair
David Cunningham, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Peter C. Herbst, Member
Amy Holmes, 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 – June 22, 2023 – 7:00 PM

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

Meeting came to order at 7:00 PM

Members Present:

Jennifer Wadland, Chairperson
Peter Herbst, Business Owner
Amy Holmes, Business Owner
Justine Huang, Resident
Thomas Kent, Planning Board Representative
Elizabeth Page, Resident
Rayna Rubin, Resident

Staff Present:

Melissa SantucciRozzi, Director-PCD
Connor Murphy, Assistant Director – PCD

Consulting Firms

Jenn Goldson
Elana Zabar

Members Absent:

David Cunningham, Resident
Julia Flaherty, Town Councilor, District 1
Shelley North, Business Owner
Joe Reynolds, Town Councilor, District 2

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM and attendance was taken.

MPSC Member and Staff Announcements:

Chairwoman Wadland introduces and welcomes two new members of the Steering Committee. Thomas Kent, who has a very impressive resume, was most recently working in finance, and he is our representative on the Planning Board. Amy Holmes, who is a local business owner of the Casual Cup, has been working with Chair Wadland to come up to speed on all the Master Plan materials.

Chairwoman Wadland asks if there are any staff announcements. Director SantucciRozzi advises that they will be sending the formal invitation to the Planning Board and Town Council for the Thursday, July 20th, meeting next month. If anybody is watching at home, the July 20th meeting would be a larger meeting with more appointed and elected officials here.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: January 19, 2023 and March 13, 2023

Chairwoman Wadland asks for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 19, 2023, and March 13, 2023.

Member Rubin **MOTIONS** to approve the meeting minutes from the January 19, 2023, and March 13, 2023, meetings; seconded by Member page; voted 5:0:0. New Members Holmes and Kent are not voting on this matter.

Committee Organization – Election of Vice-Chair

Chairwoman Wadland advises that we have a long meeting tonight; therefore, this matter is being tabled until the next meeting.

Ideas and Strategies Discussion and Review Vision and Goals for Alignment with Strategies – Jenn Goldson

Jenn Goldson begins the Strategies Discussion and explains that they will be moving the committee through a pretty detailed discussion. She will be trying to get the committee to come up with a short list of strategies. They have provided a lot of raw data, as well as some aggregated data, and they will be going over what methodology was used. They will answer questions about why they chose to do things in certain ways. She advises that there are lots of ways to look at data. They chose to do their analysis in a way they felt made sense. They provided a list on how these things were ranked based on the analysis of Road Shows that went out to boards and committees, the technical working sessions where we asked key technical experts in the community to come together around each Core Theme, and the department managers working session. The consulting team provided a list based on what they understood these groups to be telling us. Then, the consulting team provided a questionnaire, and Ms. Goldson thanks the committee for the quick turnaround on a holiday weekend. The Consulting team used the information from this questionnaire and took the responses that were from the majority of committee members. Ms. Goldson would like to limit the discussion of methodology to 15 minutes because she wants to have enough time to go through the strategies. She wants to know if the committee thinks that the strategy shortlist is appropriate. Are there things that are not on the shortlist that members want to advocate for? Are there things on the shortlist that are deal breakers that you want off that list. There is lots of information, and the consulting team is not going to dictate how the committee makes those decisions. When Ms. Goldson refers to the shortlist of strategies, she means the strategies that will be put in the plan. She also mentions that “wordsmithing” can be done. They hope to walk away with a new shortlist based on tonight’s discussion. Ms. Goldson mentions that they added the overall Vision Statement, as well as for each Core Theme. She wants committee members to look back at that vision tonight, now that we have gone through the process of figuring out what the strategies are and say does it still make sense. Are we talking about something in our vision that we don’t have a strategy for? If that is the case, should we add a strategy? Or do we want to change our vision? Ms. Goldson is asking Elana Zabar to present the methodology, and this is being provided not to dictate what members do but to provide information.

Methodology – Elana Zabar

Ms. Zabar explains that there were three different methods for how they received information: (1) the technical working sessions; (2) the Road Shows; and (3) the department head meetings. For the technical working sessions, they looked at the exit polls, and looked at how many people voted for the strategy of one, two, three, four, etc., and they averaged that to create this result from the technical working sessions. Only a handful of strategies went through the technical working session process. For the strategies that did, they received that technical working session average, which is based on the exit poll that was conducted when committee members did the facilitation. For the Road Shows, as you know there were multiple Road Shows, there were 15 modules that were the individual boards and committees and organizations that members went to. The consulting team averaged how many people voted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 from Modules 5, 6, and 12, and they created this Module 5 average, Module 6 average, and Module 12 average.

The reason they did this was because the intention of the Road Show is to understand how committees feel rather than a specific individual on a committee. They view each committee as one actor. To create their board average, they averaged the members throughout those Road Shows. The average of each Module was then averaged together to get an average for the Road Shows. For 1V they are averaging Module 5 at 4.25, Module 6 at 3.25, and Module 12 at 4.56. This comes out to be the Road Show average of 4.02.

Then we had the Department Head meetings, which essentially, we ran a similar exercise as we did with the Road Shows, where Department Heads were looking at the strategies that best suited their purview, and they got to decide. They rated them using the same five-point scale. Some strategies may overlap departments, but the consulting team understands that Department Heads have this unique knowledge of what their department is capable of and what is feasible. The consulting team is relying on that knowledge of their department. Ms. Zabar explains how department heads from similar areas had to collaborate and come up with a “top five” list of most important strategies. Those strategies received the department head “boost”, which essentially is an extra 5.0. The consulting team did this because they truly value the knowledge that the department heads have and how they view what needs to happen in their community and what they need to be able to facilitate the change.

Chair Wadland states that, regarding the residents’ votes, they feel strongly and understand the community very well, as well as the department heads. So, wouldn’t it make sense to also give the residents’ votes a “boost” as well. There are residents that have lived here all their life and have a knowledge of the community. Why not give a boost to the residents when this is the residents’ master plan.

Jenn Goldson reiterates that you could argue lots of different methodologies. Working with staff, the consulting team chose a methodology after looking at different options, but they gave the committee all the raw data. Ms. Goldson states if the committee wants to see it done in a different way, she encourages them to “slice it” anyway they want. She mentions that if the committee feels that the residents of the North Braintree Group, for example, valued something highly that is not on the shortlist, she would just cut to the chase rather than going back and analyzing it all over again. Just say it needs to be on the shortlist. Chair Wadland agrees and is fully prepared to do that, and she mentions that the results from meetings with the seniors as well as a town-wide meeting did not get into the aggregated data. Ms. Goldson clarifies a conversation she had previously with Chair Wadland and explains that Elana Zabar had included everything from the Senior Center and the North Braintree group; she included everything that was in the module that they had been asked to review. Chair Wadland explains what was reviewed with the senior group, and she states that she doesn’t expect the consultants to know the community as well as the residents. She wanted to make sure that the elderly people in the town had a voice about things that made sense and things that they found important, not necessarily what you might think is important. Ms. Goldson agrees and thinks if we focus on what the committee wants to change tonight, we can move past the methodology.

Member Page asks for clarification on the raw data. Elana Zabar clarifies that the aggregate data does include the strategies that were part of the module for the senior center and the North Braintree Civic Association. Ms. Zabar adds that they did look at the data with additional strategies, and it did not influence or change the results. Member Page disagrees, as she thinks it would. Chair Wadland thinks we should move on and get to the strategies. Chair Wadland reminds that we will be using the same five-finger vote, with a fist if there is a strategy that you cannot live with. In addition, you don’t have to comment on a strategy. Ms. Goldson explains that we are going in order of Core Theme. Core Theme 1 has 14 strategies.

Member Rubin asks if we are looking to reduce the number, as 14 strategies seems like a lot. Ms. Goldson states you don’t have to. Some of the strategies can be consolidated because they are related. The committee members don’t have to worry about that. The consulting team will figure that out. Ms. Goldson states if members have any specific advice for consolidating, they should email the Director, and she will let the consulting team know. Ms. Goldson advises that they will be creating an Action Plan for ten years. They will be working on that in Phase 4.

Member Rubin confirms that there will be opportunities to work on strategies over Phase 4, and Ms. Goldson confirms that this is not the final say.

Core Theme 1: Strategies

Chair Wadland asks the committee members if anyone has an issue with Strategies 1A through 1JJ. Member Page responds with a question related to 1B. She asks for clarification on the phrase “and ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan”.

Ms. Zabar clarifies that any of the red-line edits were comments that the consultants received, and they didn’t receive a lot of comments as part of this process. This strategy is about making sure people have access to enjoy the Open Spaces in Braintree. The Director clarifies that the town, through our ADA Coordinator, and a consultant has done a plan of all the town buildings and what upgrades that need to be made. The next step is to do sidewalks, etc. This phrase makes sure that the ADA is addressed at the same time.

Member Herbst mentions that 1X does not appear on the short list, and he confirms that is because it did not get the correct number of votes. Ms. Zabar confirms that it needed three votes from the committee survey, but it only received three votes, which was not 50%. Ms. Zabar suggests that Member Herbst advocates for this if he sees fit. Member Herbst states this one stood out because, but for the score on the Road Show, it looks like the department head and the technical working session would have voted for it. He is looking at the Exit Pole from Sustainable Braintree; it was not asked during that Road Show, and he thinks if it was, people would have voted for it. Member Herbst would encourage us to add it to the list. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has a problem with Strategy Code 1X shown below:

Consider increasing the Community Preservation Act surcharge, which is currently 1%, to fund the Town’s open space, recreation, historic preservation, and community housing goals.

Chair Wadland would have a question about what “housing goals” are. Director SantucciRozzi clarifies that “housing goals” are one of the four categories you can spend Community Preservation money on. Chair Wadland thinks it’s a good addition, and she asks if anyone else has an issue with it. Ms. Goldson explains that Alana will be making “live” changes.

Member Page refers to Strategy Code 1K:

Adopt new local policy to consider 10-year projections for new growth, potential changes in population and employment, and the impacts of climate change.

She states this strikes her as a “cookie cutter” phrase that’s thrown into many of the different sections, and she would like to remove this because she thinks it’s words that don’t mean an awful lot. Member Wadland asks if anyone has an issue with removing it. Member Rubin does have an issue because, in looking at the raw data, it was pretty popular and had a high score. Member Page states it only had the high scores in the Road Shows. Member Rubin points out that it had high scores in the Department Head Meetings. Member Page doesn’t know that the general population thought it was important. She thinks the general population felt like it was just words. Chair Wadland asks what a “new local policy” means. The Director clarifies that it is not an ordinance, but it is more like guidelines or something like our stormwater regulations, that are fairly new and take into effect the MS4 requirements and low impact development. Now we are talking about climate change, but nobody was talking about that 10 or 15 years ago. As those things change, we should be changing our regulations and how we approach different things in the community. The Director points out that this strategy scored really high.

Member Page asks what regulations are changed, as she doesn't know where this strategy fits. The Director points out we have the zoning bylaw and the general ordinances; for example, we just created our tree policies through the general ordinances that require hearings for removing public shade trees, and they require one-for-one plantings. We will accompany that with a zoning piece, as well. That is something new that addresses making sure we maintain our canopy and making sure, when we remove trees, we plant new ones. The Director states the stormwater regulations are an example, and she thinks the word "policy" is a broad term. Some things are policy, some things are regulations, and some things are ordinances. There are different ways, as municipalities, we implement local best practices.

Member Rubin agrees with what the director is saying, but maybe this is a strategy that gets consolidated with another because it is vague. Maybe it will get incorporated in where it makes more sense. Member Page thinks it probably makes sense in this section about sustainability. Member Huang agrees with Member Page that this is vague, and it includes other sections like populations and employment. This section is focused on climate change and environmental and recreation. That is why Member Huang is not sure it fits here. The Director states she must be honest and even if that strategy is removed the town is going to do what they need to do to stay current. These policies, like the stormwater regulations, are often federal mandates. We must do what we need to do to be in compliance with those things. Ms. Goldson suggests revising it to focus just on climate change.

Member Holmes refers to an issue with 1Z:

Consider hiring an additional Planner in the Planning and Community Development Department to advance the Town's environmental and historic preservation goals.

Member Holmes states that we have existing staff in these departments; why not have them do more outreach instead of hiring additional staff, thereby saving funds that need to be applied to these departments. Chair Wadland feels like this wasn't asked of the public; it was asked of the departments. She thinks it probably requires broader or more specification. Member Holmes believes we are well staffed but may not be applying staff appropriately. Member Holmes thinks that should be removed. Member Rubin states, if we want to move forward on some of these things, she thinks we would be considered understaffed to do them effectively. Considering what we want to do, this strategy would make sense. She does think we are understaffed in some of the economic development areas. Director SantucciRozzi clarifies that there are two unfunded positions in the department that she runs. So, we are significantly understaffed already, and we have had a vacant position for probably three years. Our department is lacking in a variety of disciplines. Different communities do different things and get a variety of results. Chair Wadland confirms that we have Sustainable Braintree for environmental and a Historic Committee for the historical. The Director clarifies that Sustainable Braintree is not a town-staffed organization; it is a non-profit group. The Historical Commission is a regulatory board. Member Huang has difficulty saying that we are hiring somebody from a strategy perspective. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has an issue if we take it out. Member Herbst refers to the first word that says "consider". All we're asking is that people have a conversation whether the hiring of an additional planner is necessary. It is not saying that one of the strategies is to add to the payroll. It is saying, can this be met by current staff or should a new person be made. Member Herbst doesn't see it as being a problem. Chair Wadland asks if we can say "evaluate the need". Director SantucciRozzi explains that the town staffing and how departments are made up is dictated by the mayor. They add positions all the time. Chair Wadland asks if this should be in here? The Director explains that sustainability and these other topics are new topics, and some communities are getting ahead of these topics. The Director states we are chugging along, but we don't have that expertise. We don't have lead technology bylaws. It is more far reaching than an employee in a department; it is something that reaches the whole community. Ms. Goldson states that they have revised it to say, "evaluate the need for". Member Kent comments that a Planner for Community Development Environmental and a Planner for Historic Preservation goals don't seem to be closely related. Alana Zabar explains that originally, they were considering the need for two separate roles, and part of the feedback they received, which was very limited, was that it would be unlikely to fund two new roles.

Ms. Zabar explains that in the Economic Development section there is also a need for an Economic Development Planner that would go into the Planning Department, as well. So, it would be unlikely to fund three new planning positions. That is why this one was combined. Ms. Goldson suggests that another possibility would be to hire two part-time planners – one with an expertise in environmental and one with an expertise in historic.

Chair Wadland states there is an additional strategy idea section. Is there anything anyone must see from that list move up into the short list. Personally, Chair Wadland favored: **Work with Braintree Historical Society to develop a curriculum to integrate Braintree’s local history into the K-12 public school system.** She states that we have a rich historical town, and she thinks it would be great to integrate. The fifth-grade classes used to go to the Thayer House. Chair Wadland asks how people feel about that. Member Rubin states she is on the Historical Commission, and her recollection is that it is already done and didn’t need to be a “strategy”. The Director wants people to understand that the “Society” is not the town; it is a separate group. Member Rubin doesn’t think anyone was against it, but there may have been a lack of interest because it is already being done. The Director wonders why limit it to the schools. She mentions doing events at the society such as doing a “kids day”, giving tours, and promoting the historic sites more to encourage activity and involvement. Member Kent advises that he is on the board of the Historical Society, and the Society is in transition right now. There are a number of programs they would like to re-up and re-do. There are visitation programs and several other items they will try to get back on the agenda when they get their house in order. Member Huang agrees with the Director, and she mentions that when she ran her Chinese-American Association, she has been checking out the websites about Braintree’s history, and they are excited to learn about it. She wishes there was multi-language for people that come into town as a newcomer so they can understand the history that the town has. Chair Wadland asks if there are any objections to changing it as suggested by the Director. Ms. Goldson advises that it has been changed to: **Work with the Historical Society to integrate and celebrate Braintree’s local history in the community through events and programming, preferably with access in multiple languages.**

Chair Wadland asks if there is anything else that anybody wants changed or moved up before we move on to Core Theme 2.

Core Theme 2: Strategies

Chair Wadland opens the discussion to any strategies that members want altered or removed. Elana Zabar would like to facilitate a conversation regarding 2D: **Target industrial users being priced out of Boston/Cambridge/Somerville such as, but not limited to, food manufacturers, cold storage facilities, fresh produce and seafood distribution, logistics and warehousing.** This was a strategy that she had missed when she created the survey. She wants to make sure we have a conversation about it because it didn’t end up in the survey. Overall, it received a 3.5; so, it should have been in that survey. She wants to give the members the opportunity to support it or not support it. It is not on the shortlist until you have a conversation about it. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has an issue with 2D being in the shortlist. It is clarified by the Director that we only have light manufacturing, which is the only manufacturing use that we have. The Director explains that we have some of these businesses in town now; they fall into a variety of categories such as manufacturing or warehousing. It is suggested that “industrial users” be replaced with “businesses”. Chair Wadland confirms that no members have an issue with that strategy. Chair Wadland confirms that members do not have any issues with any strategies in this section.

Chair Wadland comments on 2C that begins “**Attract life sciences tenants to underutilized commercial properties....**”. She states we don’t want to be limited to life sciences; in fact, she thinks we might have missed some of the opportunities there. She thinks we should write “Attract commercial tenants” and not focus on one. Director SantucciRozzi mentions there is a big desire to work towards getting a mini cluster here on the life science side. Does 2D satisfy because that is just businesses in general. The Director asks what needs to be changed with 2C. The Chair would like to say “Attract life sciences and other commercial businesses” because there has been a lot written about life sciences lately, and we might have missed that little opportunity. She thinks

Commercial brings in a lot more tax revenue, and Braintree needs more tax revenue. Ms. Zabar asks if it would be appropriate to take out “life sciences” and just say, “Attract commercial tenants to underutilized commercial properties”. Member Huang is concerned because there is a big objection to an Amazon warehouse coming to town. Chair Wadland asks if that comes up elsewhere; the Director clarifies that it comes up under 2T with “last mile delivery facilities”. Chair Wadland confirms that Member Huang is okay with 2C.

Chair Wadland refers to 2E: **Proactively market city’s resources to desired industry sectors; land inventory/site readiness, demographic/employment pipeline, infrastructure, clarity of development/business permitting processes to change local perception.** Ms. Zabar notes that she added this in after the Chamber of Commerce’s Road Show where the consensus was that folks were feeling like there was a perception, especially from potential business owners, that Braintree is anti-business and Braintree doesn’t have a stream-lined process for new businesses to come. Ms. Zabar asks Member Herbst, who facilitated that Road Show, to jump in. Ms. Zabar wanted to add that to highlight that notion of what was brought up in that Road Show. It was to help streamline the process to change that perception. Member Page would like to strike the phrase “to change local perception”. She thinks it comes across condescending. Chair Wadland agrees. Member Rubin agrees that it is not necessary to put that in a strategy.

Chair Wadland states that 2P: **Coordinate with Simon Properties to create a community-supported plan envisioning the transformation of South Shore Plaza site by establishing priorities for new/redevelopment (e.g. Healthcare, Bio incubator, open-air components, residential),** strikes a chord with her as it seems like it was altered to add “open air components”, which is great and “residential”, which is really controversial in town. Chair Wadland is not sure any survey or data she has seen supports the two people that might have said that. She would like to strike that. Director SantucciRozzi suggests taking out those terms and just putting in “mixed use”. Chair Wadland thinks that is the same, and she is not satisfied with that. Member Rubin asks where this strategy came from. Ms. Zabar clarifies that the changes came from the Technical Working Sessions, specifically calling out the need to coordinate with Simon Properties and then adding into the strategy what that new redevelopment might look like, including healthcare, bio incubator, open-air components (Derby Street was the model that people brought up both in the survey and in the Technical Working Session), and residential use. Member Rubin would support it if it was broader or if it was to look at how we can better manage it. She doesn’t know that she wants to call out Simon Properties in the plan. Director SantucciRozzi mentions that she thought this was a big issue at the public forums. Ms. Zabar mentions that specifically the idea that there needs to be some town involvement with South Shore Plaza. If we take this strategy out, it is the only strategy about the South Shore Plaza that made the short list. You would be taking out the only mention of South Shore Plaza. Member Rubin states maybe we are talking about transformation, and she notes that it had a pretty high score so she would hate to take it out entirely. Member Page doesn’t know that we want to get so specific about coordinating with Simon Properties because Simon Properties has not really been receptive to working with the town, but maybe we could say “coordinate to get a community response plan to the transformation of the South Shore Plaza”. Member Page doesn’t think we need to give examples because it leads into too controversial of a topic. She suggests removing Simon Properties and just talking about the transformation of South Shore Plaza with a community-supported plan. Member Huang agrees with Member Page because what if Simon sold the property in the next couple of years. Chair Wadland confirms that the re-wording “**Create a community-supported plan envisioning the transformation of the South Shore Plaza site by establishing new priorities for redevelopment**” is acceptable to everyone.

Member Page states that 2R: **Eliminate all instances of split zoning that occur on individual parcels to encourage redevelopment of existing underused parcels, taking care to mitigate the impact of uses incompatible with residential uses and to preserve and expand protective buffers,** is just a big red herring. She refers to eliminating all instances of split zoning on individual parcels and states we have an instance with split zoning, and it was separate parcels, yet the developer bought it anyway.

She would like this to be removed because it is something that is very much a hot topic and very much an item of controversy right now. She doesn't see where eliminating that right now as being anything that would be protecting the residential neighborhoods. Basically, she feels that is what we're supposed to be doing here today. Member Page would like to strike 2R, and Chair Wadland agrees with her. Director SantucciRozzi would like to make a distinction that this strategy wouldn't apply to that. This primarily applies to the properties along Liberty Street where the front yard is Residential B, and the backyard is Residential A. There are a lot of properties along Granite Street and Pond Street where the backyards are commercially zoned. There are quite a few on Washington Street that are split between Residential C and Residential B. For a point of information, when you meet the split law provisions, it's fine because the lesser of the two restrictive apply, but when you don't it's awkward owning a piece of property in two different zoning districts. The Director would like people to pause and think about how you would manage if you owned that property. Chair Wadland asks if it could be specific to residential homeowners, so that if homeowners are faced with a split lot, it can be addressed. Chair Wadland thinks the Plaza is a split zone. The Director clarifies that it is not; it is separate lots. A split zone is when there is one parcel of land, and the zoning line goes through the middle of it. It is not three or four parcels owned by the same person and some parcels are in one district and the others are in another district. The Plaza is not even on the radar with this particular strategy. Chair Wadland doesn't understand the terminology around "encourage redevelopment of existing underused parcels". The Director suggests we wordsmith it, but she states allowing the split lots to be cleaned up is something that would benefit those property owners. She suggests looking at the GIS system at some of these lots. She explains that for some reason in the 50's the town decided they were going to go along these streets and zone back a certain distance of residential. Unfortunately, that is what created a lot of problems off Pond Street because that area would have been all commercial. Now, you have those homes, and behind them is Golfer's Warehouse and Bay State Drive. It is not ideal, and the Director wanted to clarify that the South Shore Plaza is not a split lot. Ms. Goldson asks if it would work to say: **Eliminate all instances of split zoning that occur on individual residential parcels taking care to mitigate the impact of uses incompatible with residential uses and to preserve and expand protective buffers.** Ms. Goldson asks if it is only residential properties. The Director wants to give an example that will be familiar. It is the new CVS on Liberty and Grove. It was formerly a gas station. The gas station was in General Business, Residence A and Residence B. It was evaluated to determine what was needed to make a normal corner for a normal business to function. That is what was done to rezone it to General Business. That is an example of something that was a gas station that was non-conforming in a residential district. Now they have their pre-existing non-conforming use, and they can expand and alter it by going to the Zoning Board of Appeals, or they went for the rezone where we created a small piece, and we kept the rest of the residential in the back. Now there will be a 12,000 square foot CVS on that piece. The Director explains that there are instances where it is not to overdevelop, but it's to get to a better product in the end. Member Huang sees what the Director is saying, but she thinks the wording encourages redevelopment of the existing; "underutilized parcel" is what the concern is. Member Huang discusses if she had Granite Street property and made it Commercial, her neighbor would have big issues. The Director explains that she couldn't do that because it would be split zoned. The Director explains that cleaning up the split lots is far more important than the redevelopment part. Member Page asks if there is a problem in town when someone owns a split zone lot to get it redefined. She asks if this strategy is something that will move the town forward as an action item, or are we talking about people that want to come forward and have their split zone lot zoning changed? The Director states they have had minimal instances of people coming forward. There have been more instances of trying to explain this matter at the counter. The Director explains what applies in a split zone. Another good example is on Washington Street next to the Verizon building. There is a succulent plant place that just went in there. That is zoned C, B, and General Business. That has been business there forever, and it is a residential zone. You can have an apartment in Residence C and General Business. Member Page understands what the Director is saying, but she doesn't see the urgency to it, but she could live with it if we removed the section "to encourage redevelopment of existing underused parcels". Chair Wadland confirms that everyone agrees with removing that phrase.

Chair Wadland has comments about 2V: **Conduct a study to understand Braintree's ability to attract new commercial, life sciences and other industries with attention to workforce housing needs.**

The Chair states that in the Housing Section, “workforce housing” references were removed because she doesn’t think anyone was really concerned about workforce housing. She mentions that when her company was looking for a new office in San Jose, they were not concerned with the number of people that live in San Jose proper. She doesn’t think it’s a thing; she thinks it’s a fad. She would like to move to strike 2V. She thinks Workforce Housing wasn’t supported anywhere in this process by residents or in the Housing Section. Chair Wadland asks if other members have comments. Member Rubin doesn’t have a strong feeling about having one more study. Chair Wadland asks if anyone wants to advocate to keep it. There are no responses. Member Page agrees.

Member Huang would like to remove 2BB: **Create/enhance public transit connections to/from South Shore Plaza to other transit options.** She states we currently have two buses that go to South Shore Plaza already, and she is not sure how much we need. Member Rubin asks if this was about making more local private bus routes to reduce car traffic. Ms. Goldson states Juliet, the transportation coordinator, added this because she looked at the bus routes, and the current bus routes do not make a direct connection for people who work there. Ms. Goldson states it could be changing bus routes or doing something with the businesses, and she says this could be clarified or we could list both as examples. Chair Wadland states they heard that a lot at the Senior Center; they would like to see transportation throughout the town. Member Huang thinks, for the senior center, they need to schedule transportation more aggressively from the senior center. Member Huang agrees with the Director in terms of overall transportation throughout the town but not specific to South Shore Plaza. Chair Wadland states it might need to be privately funded; Member Huang agrees but states unless the MBTA can get more trains scheduled. The Director states we can take out the South Shore Plaza reference and just say: **Create/enhance public transit connections.** Ms. Zabar states initially this was put in the Economic Development section because it was about transit to the South Shore Plaza. If we are striking that, would you prefer to move it to Core Theme 3, which is the Transportation Core Theme? The Director suggests that there might be some other ones in that section that we could link this up to or condense. Member Rubin discusses the senior’s ability to get around to local businesses. Chair Wadland states there is a shuttle, but it is limited. Member Huang states it could be combined with Strategy 3Y. Chair Wadland confirms that everyone agrees with changing it to be broader, putting it under Core Theme 3, removing South Shore Plaza, and putting “businesses and services”. Member Huang states 3Y already covers this. The Director states it might not be the MBTA. If you have the right type of businesses in your community, those will shuttle residents or employees around. Staff provides examples of those in other communities. Member Huang has a problem with the wording and putting it under resources vs. it being a requirement when a business is a certain size. The Director thinks if we leave it more open-ended, we can try to find something that works here for the community; she suggests linking up with Quincy and Weymouth to get something more regional. Chair Wadland asks if we can put “public transit connections to local businesses and business parks”.

Member Holmes asks about 2W and 2X being removed from the strategies. Ms. Zabar explains that they were not removed; Strategies 2W, 2X, and 2Y were consolidated into one strategy. The Director explains that they were all put into one because they’re all interconnected.

Member Huang would like to add Strategy 2FF back to the short list, if it is re-worded. She thought it was important during the pandemic to get grant funding for small businesses. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has an issue with adding: **Conduct outreach to local business owners to provide information about existing public programs including funding programs that support local business needs.** No one has an issue.

Core Theme 3: Strategies

Chair Wadland asks if anyone has any issues in Core Theme 3. Chair Wadland states she doesn’t like 3T: **Complete a feasibility study for expanding/modifying existing on-demand bus service.** She doesn’t think we need a whole study. If we want to embark on the journey, we should do it. The Director doesn’t think we have any on-demand services, and this is tied into the one we just modified. Chair Wadland states the spirit would be not to have a study, but if we want to embark on the process to engage with a company. Ms. Goldson clarifies doesn’t the Council on Aging run an “on-demand” service, and she is wondering if it is referring to that.

The Director thinks we need to look at this from several aspects: businesses, seniors, and moving people around the community in a more efficient manner. There are a variety of options we can investigate. Chair Wadland states maybe instead of a study, we can combine several strategies into one. Member Rubin is not so big on the study, but she likes the idea of making sure it's feasible because a lot of times there can be prohibitive economic costs. Ms. Goldson states we can start it with: **Consider feasible options to....**

Member Herbst refers to 3F: **Add or expand existing bicycle parking at all municipal buildings in Braintree.** In both Road Shows that Member Herbst attended people were supportive of that. That is where that 4.27 came from. He is wondering if we could add to 3B, which did make the cut: **develop criteria for prioritizing capital investments including safe routes and bicycle parking.** He suggests somehow adding "bicycle parking" inside of 3B. Ms. Zabar clarifies that 3B did not make the cut. Member Herbst asks if there was one that covered bikes. It is clarified by Ms. Zabar that it is in the Vision and not the Strategies; it is one of the things she highlighted because it wasn't addressed, except for in 4B where we talk about walkability and bike-ability of neighborhoods. Under 4B, bike-ability was added based upon comments. As of now, biking is not found in the strategies. Chair Wadland asks Member Herbst if he wants to move 3B up. The Director states 3B is a great one, and she thinks there actually might even be some school route things going on through DPW. Member Herbst states it seems odd that our theme language has bicycles in it, but none of our strategies support bicycles. He suggests adding 3B and including "bicycle parking". Member Huang thinks it was removed because the school is already implementing bicycle racks. Director SantucciRozzi explains how businesses are being asked to include bike racks. She gives an example of how Town Hall does not have bike racks. Chair Wadland confirms that no one has an issue with adding 3B back in. Ms. Zabar confirms wording currently is: **Develop criteria for prioritizing capital investments for bicycle and pedestrian facilities including safe routes to school and first and last mile connections to Transit stops.** She asks if we could change "bicycle and pedestrian facilities" to "bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure". Ms. Goldson thinks we should be more specific about bicycle parking because a lot of people might not know that bicycle infrastructure includes bike racks.

Member Huang has questions about 3AA: **Develop a town-wide guide for sidewalk materials and construction to increase accessible walkability in Braintree, assuming material availability.** She asks what is considered "material availability". Ms. Zabar explains this was a conversation in both the Road Shows and the Department Heads meetings wanting to change the word "standards" to "guide" so it's not a requirement but rather a heavy suggestion, and it is assuming that the construction materials specified in the guide are available. It provides flexibility in case those materials are not available. Member Huang asks if we are talking about all streets being standardized roads and curbs. Director SantucciRozzi provides examples of how certain areas (like Washington Street) might have sidewalks with a wider path to promote higher levels of walking and bike traffic. That could be a guide. There have been situations where people get upset because somebody got a better sidewalk in front of their house. Then, some people don't like the granite curb, and they prefer the more low-key berm. The Director explains that there are basic construction standards you need to meet the ADA requirements. This strategy could be more of criteria or a guide. This might be done for sidewalks on major roadways throughout town like Quincy Avenue, Union Street, Washington Street, or Granite Street. There are other areas where you can add a brick inlay, which adds softness. The construction is standard in meeting construction standards and ADA standards, but it can be modified for the type of corridor that you are on. Member Huang wonders about using the word "material", as that may change over time. Member Huang asks to remove "assuming material availability". Ms. Zabar explains that was asked for because they didn't want to be locked into specific materials that were put into this guide. Chair Wadland wonders why, as a town, we wouldn't want standards for our sidewalks across the entire town. She thinks that "guide" is a cop-out, and we should be held to the same standards town-wide. Member Herbst states, when his street was repaved, 20 neighbors got together and they opted out of sidewalks because, even though the standard was to bring in sidewalks, they felt it was going to be too disruptive. He likes the word "guide" because it seems like there is more flexibility. There may be cases where sidewalks in a small neighborhood just don't make sense, and it would be too disruptive to everybody's front yard.

Chair Wadland asks if we could say “standard” and “supported by the neighborhood”. Member Herbst confirms with the Chair that she doesn’t like the Cape Cod berm look. She gives the example of Howie Road, and how when they did the sidewalks over it changed the whole street. It just looks beautiful. Member Kent mentions widening the sidewalks, for example on Liberty Street, may still have telephone poles and fire hydrants in the middle, which doesn’t increase accessibility for baby carriages. The Director explains that, in some locations where there isn’t enough room for the pavement width, they may obtain easements of somebody’s front lawn for that sidewalk. Based on Member Herbst’s comment, the Director likes “guide”. Member Page suggests “sidewalk guide compatible with neighborhood consensus”. She gives an example from her neighborhood where some residents wanted pavement all the way to the granite curbing, and some wanted a patch of grass before the granite curbing. Member Rubin recollects the discussion on this matter, and she thinks some of it was from Public Works where they felt that they would like to have more standards and guides, so they don’t get pressured. Member Rubin recognizes that the standards for a busy street are not going to be the same for a more residential location. The Director agrees that people want different things, and to Member Rubin’s point, it’s helpful for the town to have something that is more standardized. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has an issue if we remove “assuming material availability”. Chair Wadland also asks if anyone wants to move any of the other two strategies forward. Member Holmes thinks we really need to fix **“Establish a process for enforcing parking violations such as adding resident charges to property taxes.”** Member Holmes states it’s not so much the residents causing the issues with parking, and we don’t enforce any of it currently. In her business area, a ton of money was spent on signs, and they are not paid attention to. There are people that park in front of her store for 5-6 hours at a time and nothing happens. She fought hard to get 15-minute and 30-minute parking spaces in front of her shop. She feels something needs to go, and she doesn’t think the residents should be charged for this. The wording on this needs to be fixed. Chair Wadland states we don’t have to add this to the short list. Ms. Zabar clarifies that, if a resident was the offender, any additional parking fee violation charges would be added to resident property taxes. Member Holmes is advocating for the enforcement of parking violations. Ms. Goldson suggests saying: **Establish a process for enforcing parking violations.** The Director advises that they did a rapid recovery plan with MAPC, and one of the takeaways was that we have a decent supply of parking, but it’s just that people don’t transition out of parking spaces quickly. Member Holmes states that people stay in parking spaces for hours. The Director states she would put parking meters in. Member Holmes mentions that she and her workers are trying to carpool, so they don’t take up parking spaces. Ms. Zabar states that was the consensus behind the other strategy that references on-street parking: **Develop an on-street parking plan for public roads with considerations for revenue generation.** Parking meters were a consideration for revenue generation. Based on that conversation, Ms. Zabar was curious if we would also like to discuss moving that onto the short list. Both Member Holmes and Director SantucciRozzi think that would be a great idea. The Director mentions that one of the ideas to develop the on-street parking was that employees might park a few blocks out of the square on side streets; these areas would be designated, and employees would have stickers for a small/reasonable fee. This would save the prime spots for the customers. Member Page asks the Director if she is suggesting that these people park in front of other people’s residences. The Director says “yes”. Member Page states, if she lived in front of one of those houses, she might want to park her own car in front of the house. The Director states it is already happening. Member Holmes states some of the side streets, like Tremont and French, are scary to drive and walk; she suggests parking on only one side. There is a discussion between Members Page and Holmes about slowing down traffic on side streets. Member Holmes states we must work on a better way to enforce the parking situation, as the town could make a fortune on it. The Director states some of the businesses have a lot of extra parking; they could be willing to work with an agreement with the community, as their lots may have extra spots. Member Holmes discusses having someone to go to at the Town level to address issues and work on grant applications with. Ms. Zabar confirms that these will be moved onto the short list, and Chair Wadland confirms no one has opposition.

Chair Wadland states we are now moving onto Core Theme 4.

Core Theme 4: Strategies:

Chair Wadland suggests we start with anyone that has an issue, a change, or a concern.

Member Page asks what everyone thinks of adding back in Strategy 4A: **Explore the acquisition of wooded areas in residential neighborhoods to preserve buffers from incompatible uses.** This is something that would probably be near and dear to the people around St. Thomas More. Chair Wadland states they did hear that quite a bit at the Senior Center and from NBCA. People are concerned in different neighborhoods. Member Herbst states this was discussed at the Conservation Commission and some of the low scores were because they felt that, if the town acquired that property, it would just turn into a dumping zone. Member Herbst suggests incorporating some policing mechanism so that they don't just turn into where people dump their leaves. The Director advises that there is a Ranger position out of the planning office that works six hours a week patrolling our open space areas. Some areas get bad. We could use more hours to keep the areas clean and patrolled. The Director clarifies if Member Page means by the town acquiring that land. Member Page states it could be the town or a trust. She was also thinking the town could encourage high school students going onto college to do some type of community service and use that service to clean up some of these properties around town. You could also encourage Boy Scout or Girl Scout clubs to do community service for this type of thing.

Director SantucciRozzi wants to clarify this strategy with respect to St. Thomas More. In that case, the areas are both residential; are we saying that residential and residential are incompatible? Member Page states that is one example. Another example is a wooded lot on Storrs Avenue; the top of it is on Washington Street, and then it goes behind the residential homes on Storrs Avenue. There may be access on Washington Street to that property, but there may be wetlands back there. Chair Wadland agrees. The Director clarifies that there are two pieces of land – one is owned by a group of nuns, and it has no frontage; so, it is not developable. The Director clarified that those pieces are all zoned residential. Chair Wadland asks if those properties could be rezoned, and the Director confirms they could. The Director asks again if residential and residential are incompatible, and the Chair clarifies that different types of residential could be – for example a four-story multi-family built behind single-family homes. The Chair confirms that no one has an issue with adding this strategy to the shortlist.

Chair Wadland has an issue with 4AA; she asked for this strategy to be included, and she wrote this strategy. The intent has been completely destroyed, and she wants to be clear of what the intent was and make sure we bring it back because every group she has been in has shown major support for this. She would like Strategy 4AA to read: **Amend zoning requirements to strengthen protections for neighborhoods that abut potential developments by: a. increasing neighborhood buffers to a minimum of 150 feet, and b. limiting vehicular and pedestrian access to already established neighborhoods.** Chair Wadland would like to delete C and D, which read: **c. ensuring appropriate size and scale of new buildings that do not detract from the already established neighborhood, d. encouraging increasing height allowances as development transitions away from residential use,** which have nothing to do with her intent. Director SantucciRozzi asks Chair Wadland for an example of increasing neighborhood buffers to a minimum of 150 feet. Chair Wadland gives the example of a two-foot buffer related to the ZOM project. The Director clarifies that is a set-back, and there are some sections in the ordinance that deal with buffers, and they are to zone lines. The Director wants to understand if this relates to the section that says, “if you are a residential zoning district and you abut a highway business or a commercial district, you need to be 100 feet from that zone line”. The Chair wants to increase that to 150 feet. The Chair states that protecting residential neighborhoods was the number one goal of the Master Plan. The Director clarifies that there is already a buffer requirement of 100 feet between zoning districts in the books, and she thinks this strategy needs to be clarified to specify “to a zone line”, which is where one zoning district ends and a new one starts. The Director highlights this on the zoning map. Member Rubin clarifies that a setback is related to where your house is located on your lot, so your house cannot be too close to your neighbor. Assistant Director Murphy provides information on setbacks for a conforming lot in a Commercial District: front yard = 35 feet; side yard = 20 feet; rear yard = 35 feet. If you are putting a structure on a conforming lot, you need to meet all those setbacks to get a building permit.

The Director provides examples of buffer requirements between different districts. The buffer is squares is ten feet because they are much denser areas. Chair Wadland asks if it would be appropriate, since residential neighborhoods are a major focus of this entire plan, to specify in this plan as a strategy to enforce setbacks between incompatible land uses. The Director clarifies that it would not be appropriate, because anyone in Massachusetts can ask for a Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals. This is a state law that we must follow. Chair Wadland asks if a strategy could be “to enforce setbacks between incompatible land uses when it can affect the impact on a residential neighborhood negatively”. The Director clarifies that would be criteria for the Variance to be denied. The Director explains, after 20+ years of experience working in Braintree, people that are getting the Variance for setbacks are residential. There are a lot of non-conforming properties and a lot of people that want to go into those setbacks. On the non-residential side, Variances are mostly for signs and recently a few for density. Member Page asks if it would be possible to enforce setback when it is a dramatic increase in density. The Director explains that the worst thing you can do is have reactive zoning. She thinks you should talk about what a community likes and promote that. Member Page’s concern is when someone is buying a property, and they know all the stipulations around it, and yet they want to change the zoning to fit their property. When you’re going from a residential neighborhood to a dramatic change in density, is there any way of saying dimensional setbacks should be enforced. The Director explains that is “a given”. The Director explains that there are a lot of communities in Massachusetts where it is impossible to get a Variance, but those communities work on their zoning and improve their zoning. If a community is constantly seeing the same Variance, something is wrong with the zoning. It doesn’t work. People might not want to hear that, but that is something as planners, if somebody keeps coming for the same thing, maybe there is something wrong with those criteria. Member Page states maybe there is a trend in development that doesn’t fit in the town. The Director explains that you want zoning in your community to be reflective of the built environment and how you want to see that environment adapt.

Member Rubin asks for clarification on “limiting vehicular and pedestrian access”. She also wants to talk about C and D, and maybe we should deal with them differently. Member Rubin doesn’t want to eliminate them entirely. She was curious about how we could limit vehicular access. Would this be by speed bumps or signs? She assumes the Chairwoman means beyond the people that live there. Chair Wadland doesn’t think a complex belongs there. Member Rubin states this is just about access. Member Page refers to the Holland Project on Storrs Avenue next to Archbishop Williams Football Field. They are having an entrance come in on Washington Street next to Dependable Cleaners. It will exit onto Storrs Avenue. Member Page states what is being created is a thruway. Director SantucciRozzi clarifies that it would have been a condition to be a right-turn only. Member Page feels like you are going to get people that would use that as a “cut-through” and creating a new thoroughfare. Chair Wadland doesn’t think a business, or an apartment belongs in a single-family neighborhood. Member Rubin asks how would you limit it? Member Huang thinks the intent was “how could a single-family neighborhood be protected from development?”. Chair Wadland thinks large developments should not exit into single-family neighborhoods. Director SantucciRozzi asks for an example of developments that do. Chair Wadland states the ZOM project would. The Director clarifies that there is no exit into the neighborhood. The Chair states there is a gate, and in the drawings that gate is open. The Director states the gate will never open. Chair Wadland doesn’t believe it. The Director wants to clarify if this is being included to prevent something or is it because there is an example of this already happening. The Director states that an excellent example of this is where Member Rubin lives at Jonathan’s Landing, which exits and enters on John Mahar Highway and not into a neighborhood. There is a gated emergency exit onto Plain Street that has only been used in fire emergencies. All the developments that the Director can think of exit out onto main streets. The Director thinks that “pedestrian” needs to be crossed out, as you cannot tell people where they can and can’t walk. These are public streets, and streets are laid out for cars to travel. Ms. Zabar states that there was support for this strategy from the Technical Working Sessions; they supported A and C, and D was added based upon comments. It was B (limiting vehicular and pedestrian access) that folks really had the issue with. Member Holmes suggests removing “pedestrian” and just limiting vehicular access. Chair Wadland asks if anyone objects to 4AA with A, B, and C.

Ms. Zabar did want to clarify, because the intention is to protect neighborhoods, that item D would, in fact, help protect your neighborhoods. The idea of D is to step up height allowances, meaning that the height next to the residences must be the same height as the residences, and you cannot go any higher, but, as you move away from the neighborhood, there is potential for higher allowances. Ms. Goldson thinks this is just a clarification issue. She suggests flipping it and saying: “encourage decreasing height allowances as development moves closer to residential uses”. Ms. Zabar clarified that folks talked about developments blocking the sun, and this idea came out of that discussion.

Chair Wadland asks if there are issues with any other strategies under Core Theme 4. Member Huang asks why “design” is being deleted under item C. The Director explains, if the community is interested in residential design guidelines or any kind of design guidelines, that is completely separate and in addition to your zoning requirements. They are typically regulated by a separate board; some communities create them, and they use a consultant to do the review for that. The Director wants people to understand that design guidelines are more shape, form, color. Ms. Goldson clarifies that it will be architectural style and materials. The size and the scale are typically regulated by zoning. The design would be a separate process, and you’d probably establish a Design Review Board with architects and people like that on it. We had an example from the Town of Arlington that created very tailored design guidelines for every neighborhood in Arlington. Ms. Goldson recalls that reference to design guidelines was taken out, as it was not favored. Ms. Zabar states they heard in the Technical Working Sessions that people were not interested in design or more regulations for what people could do and what buildings could look like. Chair Wadland asks if this would be a house or a building. Ms. Goldson states it depends on how you write it; the one in Arlington looks at all neighborhoods. So, if you have a new house, and if there is a lot between two existing houses that’s developable, the design guidelines would apply to that new house. It could be a new single-family house that a Design Review Board, with architects, would look at and approve the design for. It depends on how the guidelines are written, but they could also approve an addition to a house. Chair Wadland is thinking about the metal, awful garage on Brewster Avenue in the Highlands. If there were design guidelines, a metal, huge structure wouldn’t be able to go in between three nice single-family homes. The Director mentions there are additional strategies that include: **Consider amending zoning ordinance to include provisions for regulating accessory structures.** There was something included in the Comprehensive Rezone that mentioned that accessory structures needed to be looked at in this community. There are a lot of them, and they are very big. The Director mentions that it is very difficult to work with homeowners when they are going before the Zoning Board because they want to build large. The Director thinks if we gave some basic recommendations around materials might be helpful, but she doesn’t recommend getting into deep design guidelines. Chair Wadland likes this additional strategy, and she asks if anyone objects to moving it up to the shortlist. Everyone agrees with moving it up to the shortlist. Chair Wadland asks if there is anything else.

Member Page asks for clarification on Strategy 4N: **Use Public Improvement Special Permit process to offer flexibility in use and/or dimensional requirements for Town owned developments that create public gathering spaces for the Braintree community at-large, such as to assist with extending the Monatikquot River Walk.** The Director would like to weigh in and then offer a small revision. The Director explains that this is a widely used tool. Let’s say you have a development, and they want to build exactly out to the setbacks. It’s a four-story district, and they are four stories. Communities will work with developers to get amenities on the ground, open space areas, gathering areas, art walks. They will say, shrink the building up a little bit on the first floor. Let’s open these amenities so that development now interacts with the public – not just for the people that live there or the people that work there, and they will let the developer go up one story. Ms. Goldson clarifies that it is not usually “town-owned” developments. The Director explains that it is a trade-off; you’re getting something that serves the community, and the developer is getting something in return. Member Page states what she has heard from residents and what she saw during the comprehensive zoning plan was that residents were very much against raising the building height requirements. The Director explains that height was just an example, but it can be a popular one because when you eliminate building space on the first floor for public spaces that is where the opportunity opens up. Member Page doesn’t see that being something that residents are looking for.

Members Huang and Holmes discuss concern about community voices being heard when votes are being held on certain issues related to zoning. How can we regulate that the community is actually being considered in the approval process. Director SantucciRozzi explains that the Town Council is the one that approves zoning amendments, and the Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) in Braintree. The Director explains this strategy is an awesome tool; it gets public benefits for people, but if people are not interested in that then they're not interested. If people are interested, she would delete "town owned", as it should be all developments, and not confine it to just the Riverwalk.

Member Rubin states there is always a series of public hearings on projects, and, with this kind of a tool, there is an additional review process. That would be where people would have input, and there would probably be more than one opportunity. There would be public hearings. Member Rubin understands that other committee members hear what people want, but she also hears what people want, and she hears that people like this idea because it will be a nice use of properties – especially underutilized properties that now could give back something that would be nicer for the public. Member Rubin states people do like this too – even though other committee members may not hear it. Member Rubin does not want to take this strategy out. She is okay with modifying it a little bit. Member Huang explains she just wanted to know how the community's voice will be counted. Chair Wadland expresses her concern that not all town officials and boards listen to the residents, and she thinks it's concerning. She wouldn't want to rely on this, and she has an issue with it. She thinks it could be described better. Ms. Zabar brings up something she heard earlier where we talked about getting developers to help pay for public improvements. This is the process they are recommending the town adopt where you get developers to help pay for public improvements. Ms. Zabar also refers to 4Y: **When developing housing regulations, policies, or programs, include a broader representation of community members particularly those most impacted by the decision-making process**, which she feels captures what committee members are trying to say if both of those move forward. Ms. Zabar states it sounds like the members' issue isn't necessarily with the public improvement part of it; it's whether the community agrees with the public improvement piece. Chair Wadland is concerned with making a blanket statement to developers. The Director explains that it wouldn't be a blanket statement; they would have to apply for this flexibility, and there would be a permitting process. Chair Wadland proposes saying: **Use Public Improvement Special Permit process to offer flexibility in use and dimensional requirements that are community and neighborhood supported for developments that create public gathering spaces for the Braintree community at-large.** Chair Wadland thinks we are built out pretty well, and there are not tons of land for developers to come in and build apartment complexes. They tend to encroach, and she wouldn't want to sacrifice her neighborhood or any other neighborhood. Chair Wadland states it was clear that people want their neighborhood to be respected. Member Page states that, when the comprehensive zoning plan was being considered, the building height requirements was a huge issue; people did not want these raised. This is what Member Page is hearing, and she really feels like she must represent the concerns. Member Page feels like she has gone through many of the public hearings, and she feels there are people that don't care, there are lawyers that bully their way through, there are board members that don't listen to some residents, and this just gives them one more tool to ignore concerned residents. Member Page cannot support this at all, and she would like it to be removed. Member Herbst asks for clarification where it says, **"to offer flexibility in use and/or dimensional requirements"**, and he asks if that means a variance of a height requirement or within an existing height requirement. Director SantucciRozzi is glad Member Herbst asked for clarification because she wanted to comment on that. Now the applicant goes to get a variance, and the town gets nothing. That is what happens. In the General Business District, we have three stories, but a 50-foot height limitation. If you look at floor plates, you are looking at 12 feet on a residential structure. So, that gets you to 36 feet, but the 50-foot height limitation is really a four-story building. People build within the 50-foot height limitation, and they come and get a variance for that fourth floor. With this strategy, we would say have it at three-story, lower the height, and if people want to go to four-story by Special Permit, it's tied to something that creates an improvement in that development that serves the public vs. the developer is going to four-stories, and they have their variance.

Chair Wadland asks why developers can get an extra story when homeowners cannot, and the Director explains that it is because they are within the 50-foot height limitation. Member Rubin explains that we are not saying make the limitation bigger, we are saying maybe we can get something back. Member Rubin states it is better than we are doing now. Member Page expresses her objections. The Director suggests we should move on; this strategy is widely used and is very successful for integration and placemaking, which are things that a lot of communities care about. Ms. Goldson suggests a middle ground that says: **Consider options to incentivize public improvements and benefits from private developers.** You can figure out the details later, but you want a public benefit paid by the private developer. Chair Wadland asks if we can add “community supported by those affected” so that a neighborhood across town isn’t dictating what is in your neighborhood. Member Rubin thinks this may be difficult to define. Member Rubin would agree with Ms. Goldson’s suggestion. The Director suggests we move forward. Chair Wadland thinks we should continue to work on this and get some verbiage that people can live with or strike it. Member Huang suggests wording that says, “with community approval”. Member Page states it is a “deal breaker” for her. She wants it out. The Director clarifies that the whole thing is geared toward public improvements on private property and benefits from a development that reached more than the people living there. Member Kent brings up a perfect example with the development at 44 Allen Street that is the renovation of the old BELD site. The Director explains they got height relief for a public river walk. They will deed back to the town a little bit over an acre of land. Member Page states if there is already a vehicle for this, why is it being added as a strategy. The Director clarifies that it is only available in The Landing District. Chair Wadland asks how we put some guard rails on this; the Director explains that would be when it is crafted in the zoning. Ms. Zabar explains that to make zoning changes the community needs to support them. Chair Wadland states the community doesn’t vote, and they are not always heard by those that do vote. Chair Wadland states that we are looking at a bunch of people who don’t trust the process. The Director explains that these are all very introductory ideas; everything in this requires more work, and it’s not going to happen tomorrow. She thinks members should look at the development mentioned and look at the zoning. Chair Wadland feels like it’s not defined; the Director clarifies that it is defined in the zoning. Member Huang is willing to leave it here, but she needs some wording to indicate that the community has a voting right in the Special Permit. Ms. Zabar asks if Strategy 4Y captures that. She mentions this is a collective list that goes together. The Director explains, respectfully, that the community will never have the right to vote on a Special Permit; that is a regulatory process laid out by the state that is dictated either to the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals or a Town or a City Council under state statute. That is the law, and we cannot change that. In this town, it is under the Planning Board because of the statutory requirements. Ms. Zabar is wondering if we ensure that 4Y comes first, where the community members, especially those most impacted by the decision-making process, are involved in developing housing regulations, policies, and programs. Whenever 4N comes into play, they must also use 4Y. Chair Wadland suggests somehow combining 4Y with 4N so that the impact is stronger. Member Page states that 4Y already exists. We have had meetings where 400 residents show up, and there is a broad representation of community members who are impacted by the decision-making process, and the decision-making process ignores the residents and tells them “Don’t clap your hands”. Their behavior doesn’t speak to listening to neighborhood residents. There are so many residents that are actively involved in things that will dramatically impact their neighborhood. Unfortunately, it hasn’t gone well. Member Page states she will not support 4N, and it is a deal breaker for her. Member Herbst thinks the “Consider” language that Ms. Goldson suggested isn’t saying that we’d like it one way or another, but it’s something that the community should consider since it has worked well in other communities and the one time it was used here it was used successfully. Member Herbst thinks it would be rash to just delete it entirely knowing that it has worked well here and in other places. Member Page feels like it hasn’t worked well, and she has heard that from many residents. She feels that residents are ignored at meetings; she states there is broad representation at meetings, but we need protection for residents. She doesn’t have trust in the system. Member Herbst thinks it doesn’t make sense to not accept assistance from private development to make public improvements because of that concern. Member Page states we don’t know how much we are sacrificing. Director SantucciRozzi states that the improvements in The Landing and the Riverwalk are worth millions of dollars, and then they’re donating the land back. The Director would encourage people to look at that.

Member Page, once again, brings up the ZOM project, and the Director points out that isn't a Special Permit; it is a rezone process. Member Page states what they were promoting as their community gift for the residents was a community walkway that was so insignificant. The developer was saying that was going to be for the benefit of the community. The Director points out that is not a Special Permit process; that is not even a process that is at the same level in having to meet the criteria of a Special Permit, which is very different than the criteria of rezoning. Member Page understands what the difference is; she is just saying one person's vision of a bonus to the community isn't always truly a bonus to the community. Ms. Goldson states that Member Herbst has a good idea to table this one. It seems like this is a deal breaker on both sides. People feel strongly on both sides, and this is the only one we haven't been able to resolve yet by talking through it. Ms. Goldson reminds that we are meeting next month, and she suggests that we call out 4N and 4Y, which are related in terms of community engagement issues as well as the incentives for developers. When the new shortlist is created, she suggests we call these out as being tabled. Ms. Goldson doesn't think we are resolving it tonight, and it is late. Chair Wadland agrees that we can move forward, but she feels that this needs to be addressed at some point with something everybody can live with. Ms. Zabar asks if the committee would be comfortable with them coming to the next meeting with a couple of variations of new ways to word this as well as examples of how this has worked in other communities. Chair Wadland thinks that is a good idea.

Member Page asks for some clarification on 4P: **Study potential benefits of revising residential dimensional standards to match historical development patterns of existing neighborhoods to encourage appropriately scaled new homes on vacant lots to encourage more small-scale housing options.** The Director explains, using East Braintree as an example, there are 15,000 square foot requirements there for the lot, but there might be only one 15,000 square-foot lot from Quincy Avenue all the way to the water. Zoning that is consistent with that built pattern of development is what this is related around. She also calls out the lower Walnut, Francine, Joseph neighborhoods, where there is an existing pattern of smaller single-story homes. Member Page doesn't understand what would be done in these neighborhoods. The Director explains we would be doing zoning amendments so that those districts are more in line with what is built there to ensure that the requirements are more in line with what is actually constructed. Another example is the Watershed Protection District. We have a one-acre minimum up in the Highlands. Most of the lots there are 8's and 12's. The Director explains that what our bylaw says and what we have and how this town was developed and built out is very different, and that is what everyone goes to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Chair Wadland asks if that means someone on Francine Road couldn't add a second floor onto their home. The Director explains that Braintree zoning allows for a flat-roof, triple-decker in Residence B District. The Director explains that Strategy 4P would protect a neighborhood. We want to allow a little bit of flexibility, but we want to preserve the historical pattern of existing neighborhoods. You will have smaller homes that stay smaller, which will preserve affordability and character. Chair Wadland asks if there are any further comments on Core Theme 4 Strategies.

Ms. Goldson wants to mention that the way the vision and the goals were written, we talked about including age-restricted housing, veterans housing, service-enriched housing, housing options that are accessible to mass transit, and increasing the affordable housing stock to reach the state's goal of 10%, and the consulting team doesn't believe there are any strategies in the list that support those goals. So, the question will be are you saying you want to take those goals out, which I don't think many people will support. The team has heard through the various engagements that these were important, which is why they are in there. The question is how you want to address those with strategies if you are going to keep them in. The Senior Center liked 4F and 4T; 4F is related to veterans housing, and 4T is related to Assisted Living developments. Chair Wadland reads 4F: **Identify opportunities to support housing specifically for veterans in Braintree.** And 4T: **Identify and consider amendments to the zoning bylaw that facilitate Continuing Care Retirement communities and Senior Assisted-Living developments.** Ms. Zabar states that the biggest thing they heard about veterans housing was that it wasn't housing that veterans needed but services. Chair Wadland thinks the seniors don't think that, but maybe some of the other groups do. Chair Wadland acknowledges that the Veterans Center is opening, but she thinks housing is what the seniors had wanted. She asks if anyone has objections or modifications, and can we add them to the list?

Director SantucciRozzi comments, tying into what we had in the Vision and 4-O related to accessory dwelling units, she would like to note the beginning part which states: **Encourage more small-scale housing options and create opportunities for multi-generational housing.** The Director notes that we know multi-generational housing is going on; it is unregulated. We have no requirements in this community whatsoever for in-laws. You get a Building Permit, you add the in-law, and there is a missing component. The Director thinks we need to think about how we want to regulate in-laws because when the in-laws are no longer residing there, a door goes up and it becomes an illegal two-family. We are not building the amount of housing that correlates with how the population is increasing. The Director thinks it's because there are a lot of people living in a home, which impacts the build pattern in the neighborhood. Chair Wadland asks if Massachusetts is in the top ten of decreasing populations. The Director points out that Braintree's population did not decrease. The Director is proposing adding **"by implementing in-law zoning regulations"** at the end of 4-O. We need to understand what is happening in the community with these in-laws. The Director explains this would make requirements regarding the size – for example if you have a 2000 square-foot home, you cannot put a 2000 square-foot in-law on. You can put a 500 square-foot in-law on or limit it to two bedrooms and one bathroom. The Director knows people are not interested in the detached units, and she would delete that reference from 4-O. Chair Wadland confirms that committee members agree. Ms. Zabar confirms with the Director that reference to Residence A and B can also be removed from 4-O. There is discussion around what issues to be concerned with related to in-law dwellings, such as size, visibility, parking.

Chair Wadland asks about 4K: **Consider community-supported refinements to the Zoning Bylaw to promote residential and mixed-use zoning. Refinements should recognize the reality of parcel sizes, should be compatibly scaled, and should consider site access.** Chair Wadland asks where this would be promoted, i.e. in what zone? The Director would say in General Business – in the squares. Ms. Zabar states it is related to finding out where the community would support mixed-use zoning and then moving forward. The Director suggests adding reference to "community supported" at the beginning of this Plan rather than having a concern that it needs to be referenced throughout the entire document.

Ms. Goldson doesn't think the committee solved the problem of getting to your 10% of affordable housing stock. The Director mentions that the Planning Board made a favorable recommendation on an inclusionary zoning bylaw. There were some concerns about it related to feasibility. We were able to secure a grant, but the entity that we got the grant from asked us to not announce it until their announcement. We will be pursuing a consultant to do that study. Another point of information is related to the 44 Allen Street project, will be done as an LAU (Local Action Units). We will be partnering up with them; they will get the consultant, and we will work together. Once it is approved as an LAU, those units, when they are ready and available for occupancy, will go on the inventory, and we will be over 10% on the 2020 census. It's a lot to be proud of; we have put in a lot of hard work as a community, but we need to maintain it. We got there before, and we didn't have an inclusionary. Regarding the 10%, the inclusionary bylaw is an absolute must. Secondary would be to emphasize our Community Preservation funds and the opportunity to use those. That money is there for affordable housing. Ms. Goldson states it sounds like you're about to reach 10%, but what if you say: "maintaining the affordable housing stock or maintaining the goal of 10%". Ms. Goldson states she doesn't think we have an inclusionary zoning strategy, so we can put that strategy in to help maintain that 10%, and we can have another strategy, as the Director suggested, saying "encourage the use of Community Preservation Act funds to continue to maintain our 10% on the SHI (Subsidized Housing Inventory)".

Core Theme 5: Strategies:

Chair Wadland wants to make a note that, under the combined Strategy of 5H and 5JJ, the Elder Affairs location does not want to share their space as an inter-generational site. That was a "lead balloon". She would like to delete the bullet item **"Potential to combine with additional idea re: intergenerational center"**. No members object.

Chair Wadland states, under 5Q, she doesn't think it should be a "temporary" Master Plan Implementation Committee, as somebody must monitor it, and that didn't happen before. She thinks there should be a collection of people that continually work with the Planning Board and the Planning Department and other departments. Ms. Zabar states that the feedback they received was that this was for a ten-year period – that is why it says, "creating a temporary committee through 2033". Chair Wadland asks if the Implementation Committee can go until the next Master Plan? There is agreement that it wouldn't have to be the same people for the duration. Member Huang refers to a "Hypercare" process. (Note definition of "**Hypercare**": the period immediately following a system Go Live where an elevated level of support is available to ensure the seamless adoption of a new system")

Chair Wadland doesn't think we can consolidate our neighborhood schools under 5R. She doesn't think the people of Braintree agree with that. Chair Wadland states, according to Mayor Kokoros, we also have certain funding tied to having all the schools open. The Director suggests removing the word "**consolidating**". The Director points out that this scored high with the Road Shows and not the Department Heads. Ms. Zabar notes that it was voted as a 4.7 by the School Committee and a 4.0 by the Town Council. Chair Wadland refers to 5GG, **restore school program cuts put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic**, and states that is a school budget issue and cannot be in this Master Plan, as the schools manage their budget. Ms. Zabar asks if there would be the same argument for 5HH? The Director states these were very highly scored, and she suggests making a general statement related to "**restoring town services and funding**".

Ms. Goldson states it is true that this will be a ten-year plan, but some things will be done in one year and some things will be done in year five. She states, when we do the Action Plan, we can put restore funding back to pre-COVID levels in Year One.

Ms. Zabar states that one of the potential strategies was to "**Fund a Personnel Plan to evaluate department staffing capacity and priorities**". There is potential of combining this strategy with some sort of evaluation of department budgets for the potential of restoring budgets to pre-pandemic levels if folks wanted to move that into the shortlist. The Director points out that is under 5Y. Ms. Zabar states 5Y and 5EE are about evaluating staffing, facilities, and salaries, and perhaps these can be combined. She also suggests consolidating 5GG and 5HH with these to include looking at department budgets, as well as staffing and capacity. Member Page asks if there are union positions included. The Director states that some of them are. Member Page asks if they are negotiated by the union and not really within the purview of the Master Plan. The Director explains that from time-to-time municipalities do an evaluation. Does this department have too many people? Does this department not have enough? Are we competitive and attractive to people? Member Huang asks why they are in the strategies list if it is the typical practice for a town? The Director states it is not the typical practice for this town. Member Huang confirms that the proposal is to do something overall versus each individual department. Ms. Zabar states it can be consolidated into one thing, but she asks generally, are folks comfortable with moving the idea of a Personnel Plan forward? Member Kent states it can be included in the Master Plan, but this would be going on anyway as you must be competitive. Ms. Zabar asks which strategies we would look to combine – her recommendations were 5Y and 5EE, which relate to salaries, benefits, ensuring adequate staffing, facilities, and transportation services. We are also considering including 5GG (school program budget) and 5HH (Licensing and Inspections Department). Ms. Zabar asks if folks are comfortable putting all of those together or are their pieces that don't fit? The Director notes that all those strategies scored high. Member Huang agrees with consolidation, but she would like to add wording related to being compatible to comparable communities (size, population, permitting).

Member Huang is not sure she understands 5B: **Complete a space needs study to identify ways to accommodate more flexible event/program space and remove visual barriers for safety of all patrons**. Ms. Zabar cannot remember the specifics of this, but she knows that it came from RKG who was doing facilities discussions. Ms. Zabar states in some locations there are blind spots that impact the safety of folks in municipal facilities. This is about removing those blind spots.

The Director talks about the availability of conference rooms for municipal meetings and events, and this would be about looking at what we have as a community to host events and do different things and whether it is adequate. Member Huang mentions combining 5A and 5B. She agrees with seeing what's available and what can be used, but she doesn't understand removing visual barriers. Ms. Goldson states they could ask Eric Halverson of RKG to clarify, as he wrote this. Assistant Director Murphy adds that we have some recreational facilities that are land locked, and they are difficult for accessibility. We have a soccer field off Washington Street with no direct connection from Washington Street.

Member Huang states we have electrical funding for electrical vehicle safety, and she is looking at 5K: **Implement a fleet management / replacement plan for vehicles as part of the CIP / annual budget process.** She asks if that is a duplicate, and does each department have their own budget for that? Ms. Zabar explains that certain departments have vehicles, and as those need to come offline and be replaced, it is essentially creating a plan to make sure that those vehicles are updated and include that as part of the budgeting process.

Member Page refers to 5W and 5X and feels that 5W should be more the School Department's responsibility and 5X should be addressed by the role of Human Resources. She wonders if we need a new hire to do this when we have an HR Department. Wouldn't this fall under their purview? Ms. Zabar states that some municipalities are hiring a DEI (Diversity Equity Inclusion) Coordinator in the HR Department to assist with this piece. Member Page states there are so many departments that need so many people, and she feels this is part of HR's job. Ms. Goldson explains it is broader than that. We are not just talking about the workforce for the town. We are also talking about language access. Member Huang has talked about how there aren't Chinese translations on things. That is part of it. The DEI Coordinator looks at all of that. They make people feel welcome in engaging with the town government. Member Page still feels like that is something that HR handles. The Director explains that the HR Department is three people: a Benefits Person, a director, and one support staff for the entire town. Member Page states every department would say they need more people, but we just can't we need to hire more. The Director explains that the language access and making the town the same interface for every person in this community, HR does not do that. It's about an equal municipal experience for everybody. Chair Wadland asks if the town has a Marketing Department. The Director states we do not. This is another thing that goes along with sustainability. There are new things that come up and become very important. Member Huang suggests changing the wording from "hiring" to say "expand town service" so that you don't need to hire someone, but you could outsource it to a community service. The Director questions why we don't have a Building Inspector that speaks a second language. Member Huang suggests that we have interpreter services as a contractor vs. as a hired town employee. The Director thinks it should be geared to providing the service vs. who provides it. Chair Wadland confirms that everyone agrees. There are no further issues with Core Theme 5 Strategies.

Ms. Zabar mentions that she had highlighted pieces that were not included in the strategies that were included in the goals in the Core Theme Vision. Chair Wadland asks what we are missing. Ms. Zabar states the biggest thing in Core Theme 1 is water protection and urban heat islands. There were two things that were moved to Core Theme 4 and are no longer in Core Theme 1. Would the committee like to move those goals to Core Theme 4 and do they make sense in Core Theme 4? That was preserving and protecting residential neighborhoods through the acquisition of wooded areas to provide buffers from incompatible use. Ms. Goldson asks for some authority to remove any goals that became strategies. Chair Wadland agrees that it makes sense. Chair Wadland states instead of going through this right now, could we have a list for the next meeting and then decide. There is discussion between Ms. Zabar and Chair Wadland related to adding strategies that were not added.

Ms. Zabar states the next step was to clean this up and put it on the website for public comment. She asks how the committee would like them to handle the inconsistencies, as we move forward with public comment. Chair Wadland states we haven't evaluated them so that we should leave them off until we do. Ms. Goldson states when this is posted they can add a note that this is in process, and we know there are some inconsistencies. We need to

also make note about the tabled strategy. Chair Wadland states we should then read the public comments and take public comments at the next meeting. Chair Wadland confirms that the Director said Planning Board and Town Council will be attending the next meeting. The Director states they are invited.

The Director asks if anybody wants to start earlier than 7:00 PM? Chair Wadland asks if that works for committee members. It is decided that they will start the next meeting at 6:00 PM. The Director will see if it is possible for other attendees.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Member Page to adjourn the meeting; **SECONDED** by Member Holmes; voted 7:0:0. The meeting adjourned at 11:07 PM.

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