

ED/LT PLANNING DIVISION 5-YEAR STRATEGY AND WORK PLAN

Updated 6/12/2018

This plan summarizes the steps that Brookline’s Economic Development and Long-Term Planning Division (ED/LT Planning) will undertake over the next five years to promote the growth, vibrancy, and sustainability of the town’s commercial areas, and to ensure that long-term capital needs are met. It builds on previous planning efforts by Town staff, the Economic Development Advisory Board, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s report “Perspectives and Opportunities for Brookline’s Commercial Areas.” It is expected that the activities outlined in this plan will be refined through future outreach and analysis, and through ongoing assessment of the town’s planning needs.

ED/LT Planning Division Mission *the overarching goals that drive our work*

1. Promote commercial development that enhances tax growth and offsets fiscal burdens for residents so that the Town can provide high quality programs and services
2. Aid in the growth and prosperity of the town’s business community
3. Improve the functional and aesthetic qualities of public space in commercial areas
4. Ensure long-term capital needs are met
5. Update and implement the Comprehensive Plan
6. Reduce climate-changing greenhouse emissions to achieve zero emissions by 2050 and prepare for climate-change impacts

Focus Areas *the topics and areas where we will have a measurable impact over the next five years*

1. Improve Strategic Messaging and Communications: Increase awareness among residents and property owners about the benefits and impacts of new commercial tax growth. Employ new mechanisms to deliver these messages through the use of news, social media, partner organizations, or other tools for communication.
2. Encourage Commercial Development: Facilitate appropriate, market-driven commercial and mixed-use development where neighborhood character, infrastructure capacity, and site conditions are suitable.
3. Promote Business Success: Create and identify resources and programs that support the business community. Encourage messaging and branding for the commercial areas that resonate with residents, visitors, and the business community.
4. Long-Term Planning/Regional Issues: Develop and implement a framework through which future growth might be managed and directed.

Guiding Principles *the core values that underpin all of our work*

1. Inclusiveness: We will intentionally seek and integrate the interests and views of a diverse range of people that live, visit, work, or own property in Brookline.
2. Pragmatic optimism: We will focus the energy and enthusiasm we have as professionals to be the most effective in our work.
3. Innovation: We will bring creative thinking to our work and strive to approach projects with an open mind and fresh perspective, while always seeking novel ways to achieve our goals.

Focus Area: Improve Strategic Messaging and Communications			
Activity/Goal	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021-2023
Develop and revisit Division mission, purpose, and goals to better articulate economic development and long-term planning needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update ED/LT landing page with updated information on mission, purpose, and need for ED/LT planning - Create and/or improve social media presence and ED/LT website - Develop template for and create one-page talking points for all major divisional initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain website as current 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain website as current
Develop and implement metrics for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define metrics and institute evaluating and reporting process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing evaluation and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing evaluation and reporting
Create tools for communicating fiscal impact using outcomes that resonate with citizens (schools, parks, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create infographics and visuals to communicate impact of economic development activities - Increase and formalize relationships with businesses through outreach, marketing, round-table discussions, and events (MAPC**, EDAB*) 		
Research and implement new tools/strategies for outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with EDAB to ensure staff awareness of innovative approaches and tools for ED outreach (ongoing***, EDAB) 		

NOTES:

** Where “(EDAB)” notation appears throughout this document, task may entail substantial EDAB involvement and/or leadership*

*** Where “(MAPC)” notation appears throughout this document, task is taken from MAPC report “Perspectives and Opportunities for Brookline’s Commercial Areas”*

**** Where “(ongoing)” notation appears throughout this document, task will begin in assigned fiscal year and is expected to continue into subsequent years.*

*****Note timing and sequencing may change based on external market force*

Focus Area: Encourage Commercial Development			
Activity/Goal	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021-2023
Promote new commercial development and redevelopment of underutilized sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract or foster creation of CDC or other non-governmental land acquisition/development vehicle (EDAB) - Establish means of retaining real estate legal advice to help advance Town interests in development negotiations (EDAB) - Assist in coordination of permit conditions during construction phase of Brookline Place / 700 Brookline Ave. - Complete community assessment of up-zoning for Waldo-Durgin site - As opportunities arise, pursue redevelopment of key sites (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore feasibility of form-based zoning, in conjunction with zoning changes in commercial areas townwide, including along Route 9 	
Plan for commercial and mixed-use development through corridor studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate process for Complete Streets upgrades and an improved pedestrian realm along Route 9 from Brookline Village to Chestnut Hill (MAPC) - Implement elements of the Route 9 east study “Bringing Back Boylston” on key opportunity sites. - As redevelopment occurs, incentivize and increase open space, plazas, parklets, and community arts spaces in underserved areas (ongoing, MAPC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement elements of the Route 9 east study “Bringing Back Boylston”, including potential for corridor up-zonings to encourage mixed-use and commercial development along Route 9 corridor (MAPC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rezone Chestnut Hill Office Park in conjunction with developer plans - Explore opportunities to up-zone for increased density along Harvard Street / JFK corridor (MAPC, EDAB) - Up-zone one-story commercial buildings and other opportunity sites for mixed-use in Coolidge Corner and Washington Square (MAPC, EDAB)
Attract new businesses that help to diversify our business types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase access to liquor licenses - Study feasibility of new commercial types and develop strategies for attracting them (EDAB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist in zoning recodification to lower permitting burden for businesses by adopting more flexible use classifications 	
Grow employment and broaden tax base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advance local regulations for new business types (e.g., recreational marijuana) and work with businesses seeking to locate in Town 		

Focus Area: Promote Business Success			
Activity/Goal	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021-2023
Explore ways to improve technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refresh and promote technical assistance materials (in conjunction with website update) - Work with businesses who would like to offer later hours and/or diversify dining options and hours for different users - Deliver lease analysis and support to Coolidge Corner Merchant's Association - Continually update the vacancy survey and distribute reports on vacancies in Brookline (ongoing) - Continually identify potential improvements to Town processes to further a business-friendly environment (ongoing) - Continually research and develop new tools, programs, and resources to promote business success (ongoing) 		
Increase funding for business improvement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct outreach to landlords/businesses to promote façade improvement program (in particular along Rt 9/ Chestnut Hill) (MAPC) - Work with EDAB and Chamber of Commerce to communicate with property owners about investment and business diversification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand façade improvement program via CDBG or private funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore tax and other financial incentives for business improvement, including creation of Business Improvement Districts.
Assess and improve parking in commercial areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define scope for and undertake a municipal parking study for commercial areas (Chestnut Hill & Coolidge Corner) (MAPC) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a municipal parking study for commercial areas (Washington Square & Brookline Village) (MAPC)
Promote Arts and Culture in commercial areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist Arts Commission in grants and programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Arts and Culture action plan (MAPC) - Leverage and continue to support key arts and culture institutions to maintain the vitality of commercial areas (ongoing) 	
Enhance identity of commercial areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with business groups to promote and market commercial areas and town as a whole as a destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with Chamber of Commerce to hold rotating series of branding strategy meetings with area businesses and residents (MAPC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop branding strategy for attracting businesses including distinct characteristics and marketing for each commercial area in partnership with business organizations

Focus Area: Long-Term Planning / Regional Issues			
Activity/Goal	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021-2023
Increase efficiency of services through regional partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Town's role in Mayor's Coalition for Housing Production - Review Comprehensive Plan action items for opportunities for regional partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek strategic opportunities to solve cross-jurisdictional issues (ongoing) 	
Increase transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand Bluebikes by installing 5 new stations in town (MAPC) - Assist DPW with loading zone placement to reduce double parking - Assist DPW with communication related to Complete Streets implementation (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance multimodal transportation options, including Bluebikes, app-based rideshare, walkability, and other innovative means of transport. (MAPC) 	
Support sustainability and climate initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend Comprehensive Plan to include Climate Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the Climate Action Plan 	
Plan for 5- to 20-year capital needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Select Board to implement Strategic Asset Plan - Work with Planning Board to implement Major Parcel Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Select Board to implement Strategic Asset Plan - Work with Planning Board to implement Major Parcel Study 	