



# 2018 Storefront Survey & Commercial Areas Update

Presentation to  
**BROOKLINE SELECT BOARD**  
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## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

- Why do we monitor storefront vacancy rates?
- What do we track?
- What do we do with this information?



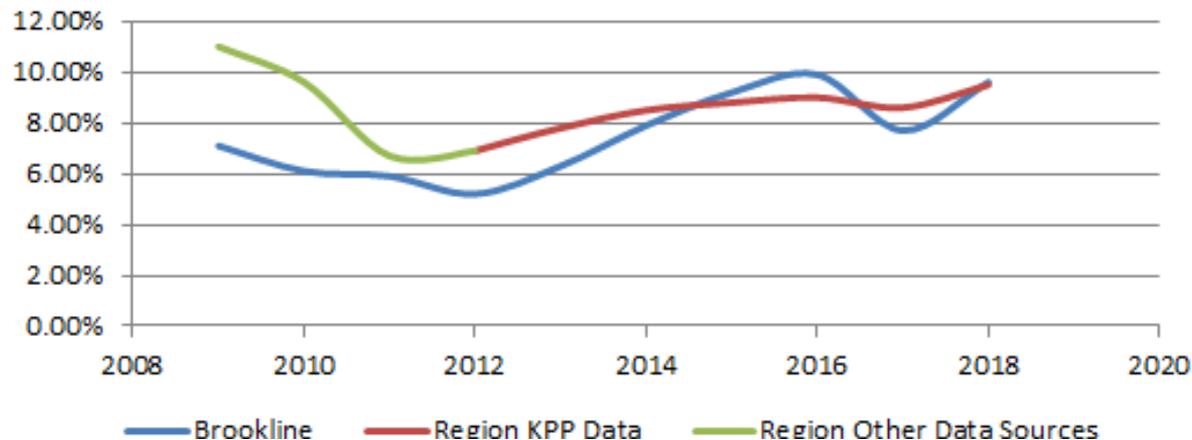


## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

2018 Vacancy Rate: **9.6%**

Up from 7.9% in 2017, this increase in the town-wide vacancy rate is consistent with regional trends.

### Retail Vacancy Rates: Brookline v. Regional Trend (2009 - 2018)



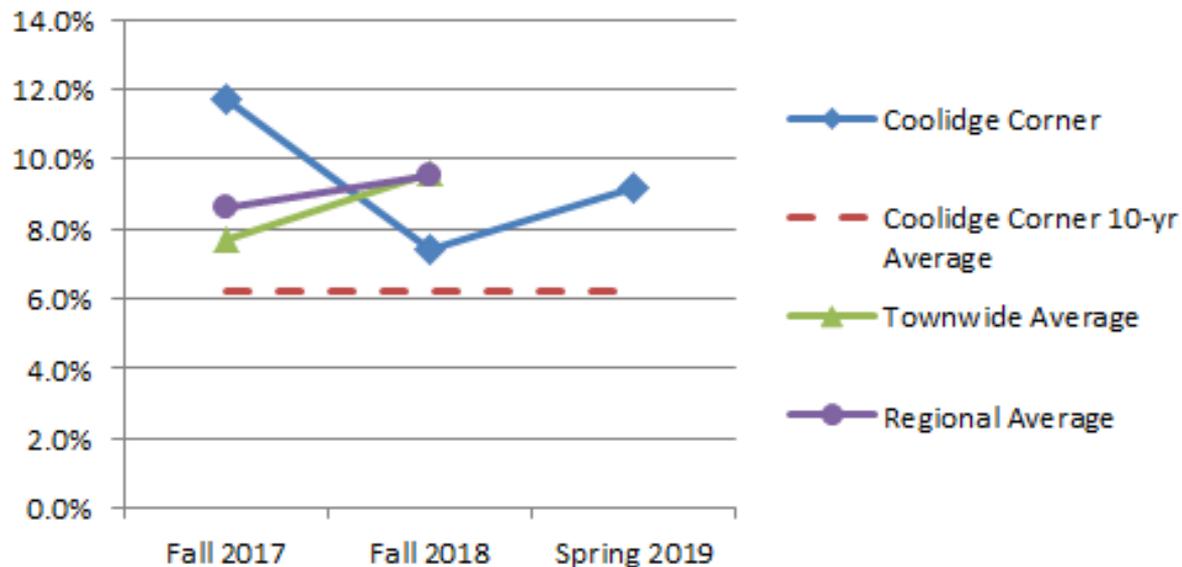


## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

### Coolidge Corner

Brookline's largest commercial area with 222 storefronts.

#### Coolidge Corner Vacancy Rate





## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE



### Coolidge Corner: Trends & Updates

#### Storefront Trends & Clusters:

- Eyelash extension studios
- Asian restaurants
- Pizza restaurants

#### Updates:

- Business Improvement District (BID) exploration
- CCMA Cafe Tables Program
- EDAB outreach to brokers and property owners

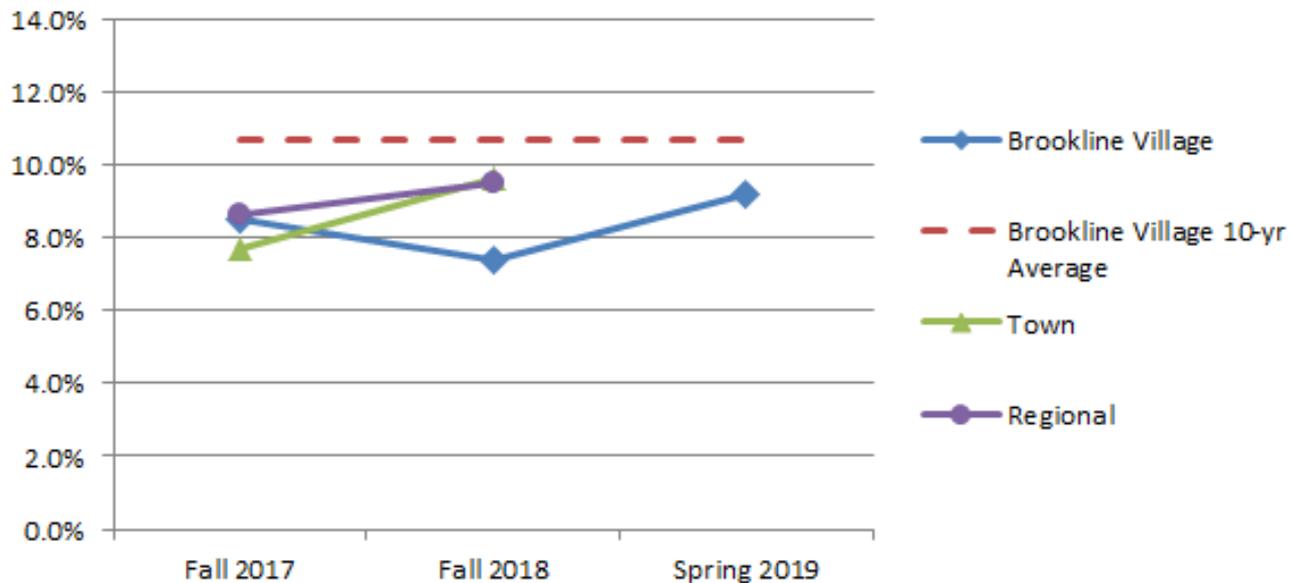


## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

# Brookline Village

Brookline's 2nd largest commercial area with 203 storefronts.

### Brookline Village Vacancy Rate





## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

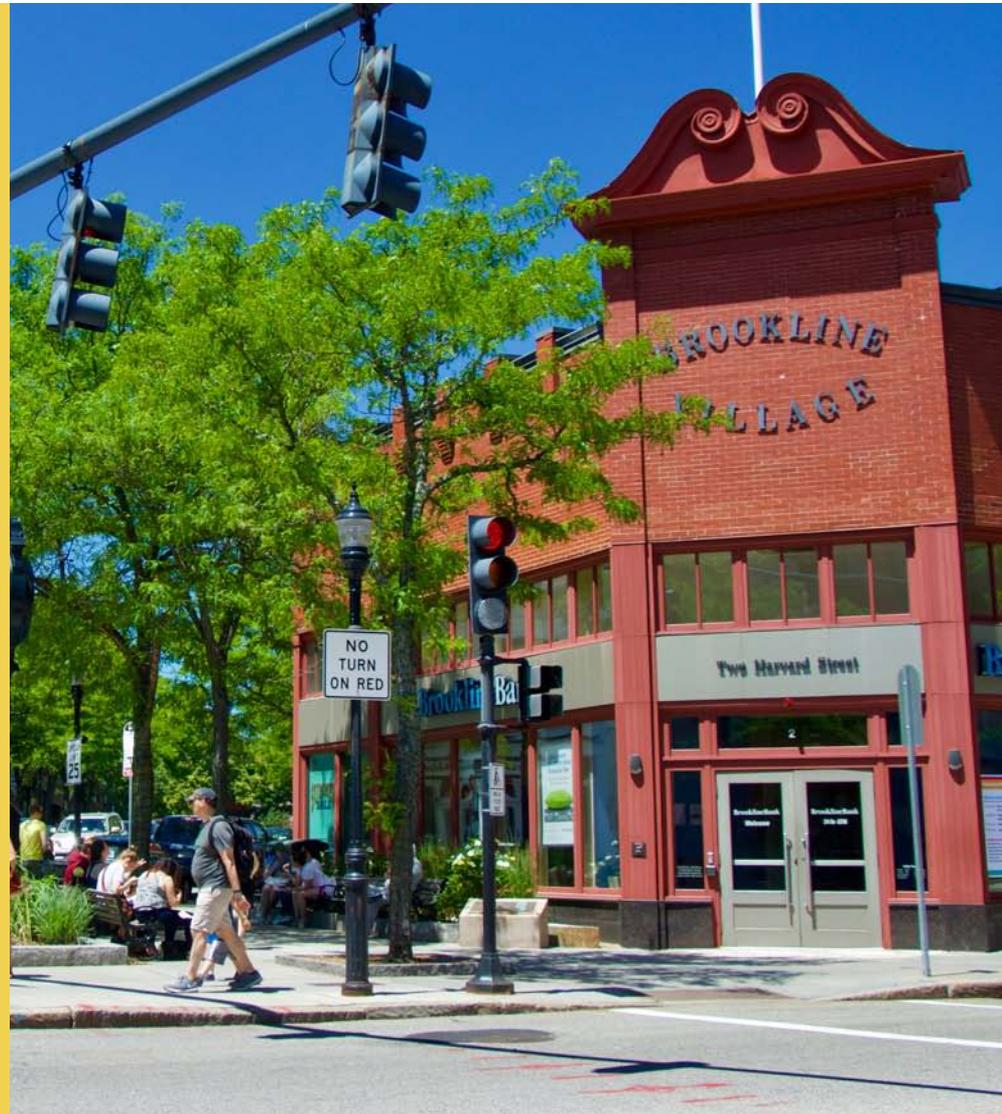
### Brookline Village: Trends & Updates

#### Storefront Trends & Clusters:

- Retail marijuana and marijuana adjacent businesses
- Children's entertainment and activities
- Health and wellness businesses

#### Updates:

- Newly formed Brookline Village Business Association
- Parking Benefits District





## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE



### Washington Square

- Brookline's 3rd largest commercial area with 68 storefronts
- 2018 Vacancy Rate: 7.35%
  - Increased from 6.20% in 2017
- High percentage of restaurants



## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

### Commonwealth Avenue

- Brookline's 4th largest commercial area with 60 storefronts
- 2018 Vacancy Rate: 21.7%
  - Dramatic 16.5 percentage point spike in the vacancy rate from 2017
- Contributing factors:
  - On-going renovation of several storefronts owned by Boston University
  - Residential development project above three existing retail storefronts at 1026-1028 Commonwealth Avenue



# Issues & Pressures Facing the Small Business Community

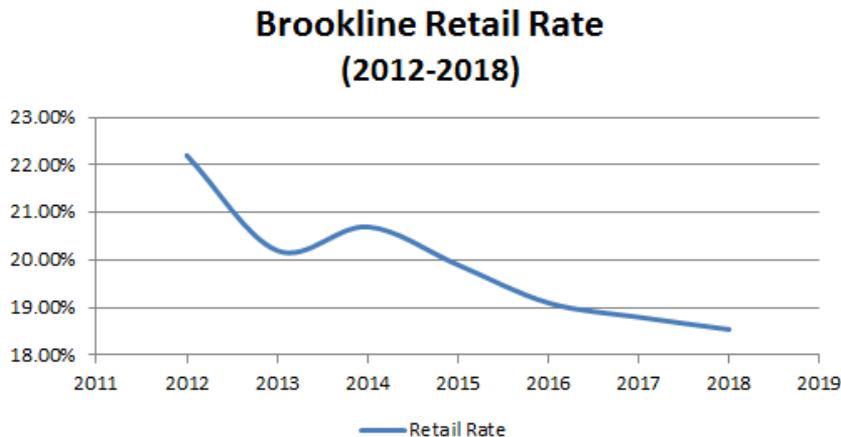
- High labor costs (i.e. rising minimum wage, healthcare, paid time off)
- Changing retail industry
- Managing business image on social media and consumer review websites
- Increase in property tax portion of commercial rents
- Scarcity of parking for both employees and customers
- For restaurants, potential revenue per square foot is limited in some cases by zoning's parking requirements



## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

### Town-wide Trends

Retail is in decline.

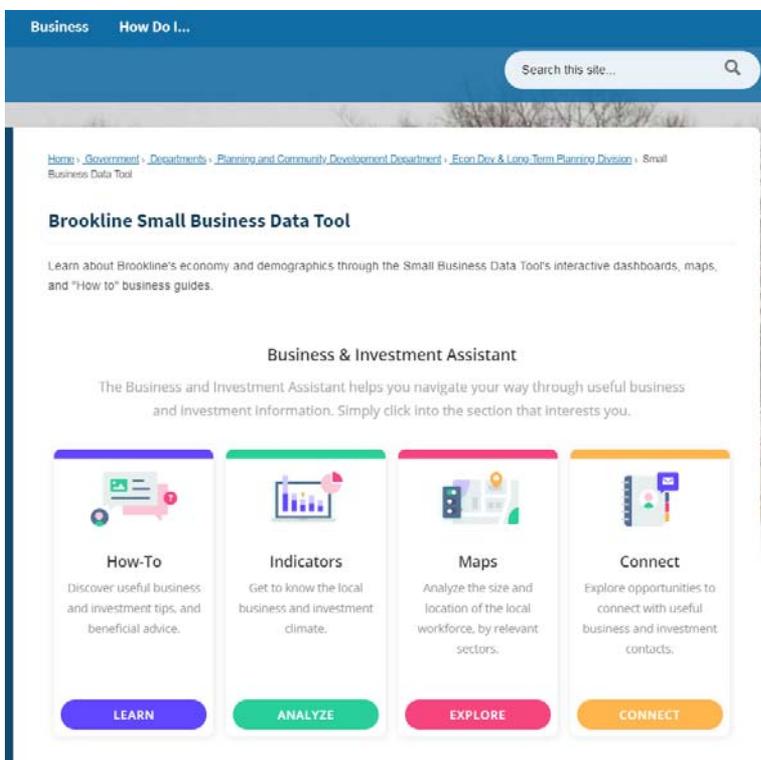


The percentage of independent businesses remains stable at around 68%.



## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

### New Tools and Initiatives



- Local Intel data tool
- Exploration of restarting micro-enterprise initiative with CDBG
- Massachusetts Vacant Storefront District application



## 2018 STOREFRONT SURVEY & COMMERCIAL AREAS UPDATE

### Key Takeaways

- Overall, our commercial areas remain healthy with vacancy rates and trends on par with regional rates and trends.
- Development pressures on land value are starting to impact retail tax bills. This is especially evident in Coolidge Corner.
- The changing retail landscape will require innovative business models, as well as responsive local government.