

## **BRAINTREE, MA**

**Mayor Joseph C. Sullivan**

# **A TOWN MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS**

The Town of Braintree is a suburban community with a strong residential character located 10 miles south of Boston. Incorporated in 1640, Braintree has a rich history: it was the birthplace of two presidents, John Adams and John Quincy Adams, as well as John Hancock and General Sylvanus Thayer, the founder of West Point. The Town has a good mix of residential neighborhoods, small clusters of new homes, and several condominium complexes, and it is moving forward in its efforts to become a more inclusive and universally accessible community, recognizing the needs of all of its residents, regardless of their ability.

In 2012, Braintree was named one of the Best Communities for Young People by the America's Promise Alliance. In the years since, the Town has made steady progress in becoming a community of inclusion through several initiatives and programs. In 2013, Braintree began a self-assessment to identify potential impediments to residents' ability to interact with its departments' programs and services. The goal was to ensure that all residents can safely access the Town's infrastructure, schools, parks and park lands.

Based on this self-assessment, the Town drafted a "transition plan" in accordance with the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, an Act that has come to be known as the "civil rights act" of persons with disabilities, which states that: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Section 504)." Highlights of progress toward goals in recent years include the following:

January 2017 – The MBTA, the Boston area's transit system, announced that it would rehabilitate the Braintree MBTA station. The multi-million dollar project will be making accessibility improvements such as creating universal paths of travel, essential elevators, covered walkways, and raised pedestrian connections to the station.

May 2017 – The Town introduced Commonwealth Connect, a regional citizen request management (CRM) system managed by SeeClickFix, which oversees citizen reports and requests to local governments regarding nonemergency issues. Braintree was the first town in Massachusetts on this platform to track ADA compliance requests.

October 2017 – The Town launched Braintree Alerts, a new emergency notification system that helps reach citizens with emergency alerts and community notifications using voice, text or email. Additionally, the Town implemented a social media policy and a new website which follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 standards, so all residents can have equal access to the Town's digital content.

March 2018 – Working collaboratively with the Department of Public Works, the Town launched its Complete Streets initiative, collecting data on all public sidewalk conditions. The Complete Streets data have become a valuable tool for the Town's 100 Roads Program, an annual initiative created by Mayor Sullivan early in his first term in 2008, that identifies roadways in bad condition that are to be rebuilt or repaired during a designated calendar year. This roadway work has been an important part of meeting Braintree's overall goal of becoming a barrier-free community.

May 2019 – The 11th Annual Community Inclusion Awards ceremony was held at Braintree Town Hall. Created in 2009, a year after Mayor Sullivan took office, the awards each year recognize and celebrate several community members who work each day to ensure that everyone in Braintree, despite ability or impairment, is given the opportunity to actively participate in their community.

*Additional information is available from Kristina Ziniti, ADA Coordinator, Town of Braintree, at [kziniti@braintreema.gov](mailto:kziniti@braintreema.gov) or 781-794-8327.*