

Boston developer plans massive film studio complex on Braintree-Weymouth line

The project would put seven sound stages and other facilities at Banner Park

By **Jon Chesto** Globe Staff, Updated June 2, 2023, 6:45 a.m.



Boston developer RISE has a purchase and sale agreement in place to develop a movie studio complex in Braintree. RENDERING COURTESY OF RISE

Boston-based developer RISE is hoping to raise the curtains on a massive movie studio complex in Braintree, with a deal in place to buy a 110-plus-acre industrial parcel that's less than 20 miles from downtown Boston.

RISE said it has reached a purchase and sale agreement with landowner Onshore Properties to acquire the property, which is known as Banner Park. Onshore has spent much of the past two years lining up permits to put up two industrial buildings, together totaling 272,500 square feet, on the site. Those permits will allow for soundstages and other film production uses. Banner Park, off Columbian Street next to the former Massachusetts Lottery headquarters, is currently home to a 20,000-square-foot office building that would be demolished.

“Being born and raised in the great town of Braintree makes this development extra special to me,” RISE executive vice president Anthony Aiello said in a statement. “Not only will this project generate significant tax revenue for Braintree, and support local restaurants, hotels and other business, but it will also create good paying jobs ... during construction and permanent jobs when complete.”

The two buildings, RISE said, would feature seven sound stages, pre- and post-production facilities, and offices to support major TV and film shoots. Plans also call for public walking trails that would be created with New England Wildlife Centers, another next door neighbor. RISE said the project could generate \$8 million in property taxes and \$1.5 million in permit fees for Braintree over a 10-year period.

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“The property benefits from unmatched in-place infrastructure, and [this] effort will drive economic development to the South Shore,” Chris Reale of Onshore Properties said in an e-mail. “We are excited for RISE and I could not think of a better group to execute on their vision for a major production campus.”

Real estate firm Colliers represented Onshore in the deal. Colliers senior vice presidents Caleb Hudak and PJ Foster said that designing the buildings to “Good Manufacturing Practice” standards will enable flexibility for the site’s owners, enabling them to pivot to some other use instead of movie studios if necessary. These kinds of buildings, Foster added, hold their value over time as users’ demands change.

The deal between RISE and Onshore is just the latest example of local investment in the film production industry following [the state Legislature’s decision in 2021 to make permanent a generous film tax credits program](#). Marina Studios founder Marina Cappi remade a former sports facility in [nearby Quincy into a soundstage in 2021](#), and developed a movie studio the following year in Canton.

However, RISE’s move also comes amid massive curtailments in spending among big video streaming companies such as Netflix, Walt Disney Co., and Paramount, as well as [a temporary lull in the action brought about by a Hollywood writers’ strike](#).

New England Studios, which has four soundstages in Devens, has been relatively quiet this year after doing breakneck business for most of the past seven years. General manager Gary Crossen said two indie projects are using the facility now but it does not have a deal yet for a major studio production this year — after being nearly fully booked for the prior six years with the exception of COVID-19 shutdowns in 2020.

Crossen said he’s optimistic that activity at New England Studios will return to the pace he saw a year ago, but he doesn’t know when that will happen.

“There’s a huge shakeout in the industry with every major production company announcing layoffs and major budget cuts,” Crossen said. “The business is real quiet right now, from coast to coast.”

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