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Choose Framingham A Newsletter of the EDIC



Welcome to the Choose Framingham Newsletter

A Letter from Mike Gatlin , Chair of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, and Arthur Robert, Director of the Community and Economic Development Division



Welcome back to the Choose Framingham newsletter! We are devoting this issue to the subject of an exciting new opportunity downtown transit oriented development (TOD). Last month, Framingham residents took a big step forward by voting for zoning changes intended to attract new investment and more people to our downtown. These zoning changes are critical to spurring TOD in Downtown Framingham because they allow the Town and developers the flexibility needed to

build housing that will attract more young people to the downtown.

Over a span of 2 1/2 years, the Town pursued a comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement, market research, and outreach that other municipalities should consider following. We worked with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to assess TOD feasibility, develop a plan, and recommend zoning changes for Downtown Framingham. We then held a number of focus groups and public meetings, listened to residents regarding both their concerns and their hopes for a vital neighborhood, and improved the zoning along the way. Through a variety of ways, throughout the process we communicated with members of Town Meeting, businesses, residents,

and others about the proposed changes and the benefits they will bring to the Town.

In the end, members voted in overwhelming numbers to support the zoning change at the Fall Special Town Meeting. We are grateful for the hard work of all of the agencies and individuals involved. And we are looking forward to working with the business community, residents, and others to transform Downtown Framingham into a vibrant neighborhood where people live, work, and thrive.

Sincerely!

Mike Gatlin
Chair,
[Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#)
Town of Framingham

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Town of Framingham

Transit Oriented Development: A Primer

What is transit oriented development (TOD)? Briefly, TOD creates mixed use, denser communities that encourage people to live, work and shop near transit services and decrease their dependence on driving. When located in urban centers, TOD around transit hubs can help spur revitalization. Downtown Framingham, whose commuter rail station is the 10th most active among 133 stations, is ideally suited for this kind of development.

Examples of peer communities who have transformed neighborhoods through TOD include:

- City of Waltham – over the past several years, the City of Waltham's downtown has become a vibrant, walkable place filled with trendy restaurants and stores. Two developments located near the MBTA commuter rail station – Cronin's Landing and The Merc – have led to a combined total of 550 new units of housing and 53,095 square feet of retail space. Several other projects are in the planning stage.
- Town of Natick – Framingham's neighbor, the Town of Natick, has also pursued TOD opportunities. The Modera Natick Center brought 150 new housing units on a 6 acre site near their Downtown MBTA commuter rail station.
- City of Marlborough – like Framingham, the City of Marlborough has assessed how zoning changes will lead to more housing options for its downtown. The City recently passed zoning changes that will lead to revising design standards, relaxing parking requirements, and redefining allowable uses. All of these are intended to attract more people to live in their downtown. Marlborough currently lacks a public transit connection to Boston, a fact city leaders seek to change.

Communities throughout Massachusetts acknowledge that commuter rail and public transportation options are assets to spurring sustainable development. Examples of successful TOD projects, which have led to reinvigorated neighborhoods, exist across the Commonwealth.

We are looking forward to Framingham joining their ranks.

Framingham Town Meeting Votes to Rezone Downtown Framingham Will Facilitate Transit Oriented Development to Revitalize Downtown

On October 22nd, at a Special Town Meeting, members voted overwhelmingly to approve zoning changes needed to promote transit oriented development in Downtown Framingham. Two warrant articles were approved. The first, approving important zoning bylaw changes, received a vote of 116 to 10 in support. The second, to expand the downtown zoning district, received an approval vote of 129 to 9. Both votes highlight strong support within the community for a revitalized downtown.

The goal of the zoning changes is to make Downtown Framingham an attractive, vibrant, diverse center that will be a hub of economic activity for the MetroWest region. The new zoning will encourage more density for the neighborhood, while also lowering the parking requirements and promoting more flexible use. The zoning changes also simplify requirements, which increases predictability, reduces uncertainty, and encourages investment in the downtown. At the same time, the changes will still protect the unique character of Downtown Framingham through design standards and guidelines and other appropriate controls.



Concord at Howard Street Before TOD

Additionally, members voted to increase the downtown business district to places that are a 10 minute walk from the Downtown Framingham commuter rail station. The expanded area will now join downtown and the Farm Pond region and with the zoning changes, will create a unified, coherent development process for this important part of Framingham.



Concord at Howard Street After TOD

"Residents and officials have long recognized what a treasure Downtown Framingham is to the region," said Art Robert, Director of the Town's Community and Economic Development Division. "We're grateful to Town Meeting members for giving our proposal a tremendous vote of confidence—it sends the signal that new development is welcome here in Framingham. Going forward, we're looking forward to working with developers to create a thriving and vibrant downtown with new residents and business."

Interested in learning more about the Town of Framingham's plans for transit-oriented

development in Downtown Framingham? Watch this short [video](#), courtesy of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.



FraminghamEDIC

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The [Framingham Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#) (EDIC) was established in 1995 to stimulate economic development and expand employment opportunities in the Town of Framingham in accordance with the town's approved economic development plans.

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