

WELCOME TO THE
CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



*Choose Framingham Newsletter
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**Zoning for Marijuana
Finalized in Framingham**

Marijuana represents new business opportunities for Framingham, in the sectors of marijuana retail,

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manufacturing, independent testing laboratories, processing, and cultivation. Such marijuana establishments are making a big impact in communities within the Commonwealth. Although Registered Marijuana Dispensaries (RMD) and other medical marijuana related industries have been in operation since 2015, Framingham's first RMD opened in 2018 (Temescal Wellness). Also in 2018, two marijuana independent testing laboratories obtained Host Community Agreements (HCA) from the City. One of the two marijuana independent testing laboratories, which was an existing marijuana independent testing laboratory (MCR Labs), expanded its business in Framingham and is now offering testing for both medical and adult use marijuana.

In 2016, the Commonwealth voted to legalize marijuana establishments, and in 2018, after the transition from a Town to a City, Framingham started working on regulations for marijuana establishments. Not until November 2018 did the first two marijuana retail establishments open within Massachusetts (in the communities of Leicester and Northampton). Since November, several other marijuana retail establishments have opened, including one in Salem.

Framingham's endeavor in marijuana establishments commenced in Spring 2018, when the City's Marijuana Establishment Task Force started working on both zoning and general by-law regulations. Such efforts to regulate marijuana establishments included efforts from the Mayor, various municipal departments, the City Council, the Planning Board, Petrini & Associates, citizens at-large, and the school committee. On October 5, Mayor Spicer signed the Marijuana Zoning By-Laws, General By-Laws, and amendments to the Zoning map, which were her first public ordinance signing since taking office earlier in 2018.

Below is an overview of [marijuana regulations](#) within Framingham:

- The General By-Law regulations will allow for up to six recreational marijuana retail establishments in the City.
- Marijuana retail establishments may only be located within the Marijuana Retail Establishment Overlay District.
- Marijuana independent laboratories, processing,

Expansion Fueled by New Housing, Commercial Development

Record Number of Permit Fees Recorded

The City of Framingham experienced significant growth, fueled in large part by housing and commercial development in the Downtown area, in 2018, according to data from the City's Division of Community and Economic Development. In total, 2 residential real estate projects broke ground, which will result in 466 units of new housing for the City. These new commitments build on a 16-unit project begun in 2017, which is nearing completion. This year, the City recorded more than \$4 million in permit fees, a record number for Framingham.

"Framingham is growing in all of the right ways, which anyone driving through Downtown can see every day," said Dr. Yvonne Spicer, the Mayor of Framingham. "It is an exciting time to be in the Commonwealth's newest city, where we are seeing new homes being built, businesses expanding, and innovation growing."



In April, Wood Partners broke ground on [Alta Union House](#) at 75 Concord Street. The \$60 million mixed-use project, which will bring 196 new units of housing to Downtown Framingham, was

the first to move in a long-dormant real estate market that is currently undergoing growth and revitalization. Alta Union House recently received an award from Smart Growth America at the organization's LOCUS New England Leadership Summit, recognizing both Wood Partners and the project as an innovative and sustainable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

The City also recently received an award from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association for its effort to create a TOD strategy for Downtown Framingham to encourage redevelopment there. The strategic effort, which began in 2009, culminated in a renaissance both in commercial and residential redevelopment in the last few years. Since the neighborhood was rezoned in 2015 to encourage new housing, almost 900 units of housing have been permitted for Downtown. Additionally, there has been more than \$50 million invested in commercial development from both public and private sources over the last several years.

"It is gratifying for the City to be recognized for the many years of hard work and careful planning, which we are seeing come to fruition in 2018," said Arthur Robert, director of the City's Division of Community and Economic Development. "The investment of time many people have put into this process is resulting in an investment of resources, too."

In addition to the residential growth taking place in Downtown Framingham, portions of the city were designated an Opportunity Zone by Governor Baker's administration and

cultivation, and manufacturing facilities may be located in zoning districts with like uses.

- All marijuana establishments must obtain approval from the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) and RMDs must obtain approval from the Department of Public Health (DPH) (until the process is taken over by the CCC).
- All marijuana establishments and RMDs must meet with the Marijuana Advisory Team (MAT) to be reviewed and provided recommendation for a Host Community Agreement (HCA) from the Mayor.

Framingham looks to ensure that marijuana establishments and RMDs provide local preference when hiring, in addition to maintaining a diverse workforce that reflects the Framingham community. And in addition to the conditions of the HCA established for both marijuana establishments and RMDs. Framingham will receive a 3 percent sale tax of marijuana establishment sales.

2018 Year in Review: Business & Property Profiles

Choose Framingham Profiles Framingham Businesses and Organizations

Editor's Note: Framingham has a diverse business community - we're home to major multinational corporations and interesting and innovative start ups. Throughout the year, [Choose Framingham](#) has profiled the businesses, sectors, and organizations that are critical to making Framingham a vibrant community and a great place to do business. As we end 2018, we wanted to make sure you had a chance to read about the people doing interesting work in our city. If you are a Framingham-based business interested in being profiled in Choose Framingham or you know of one, please email us at chooseframingham@framinghamma.gov.

[January 2018 - Chocolate Therapy and Central Rock Gym](#)

We kicked off 2018 with a little chocolate... and a little fitness. In January, we highlighted Chocolate Therapy, which has offered unique

the U.S. Department of Treasury. Additionally, the City received a Housing Choice designation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Both programs allow Framingham to access new resources and opportunities for growth.



The city has also seen increased interest from new businesses, across a variety of sectors. Jack's Abby Brewing Company, recognized as one of the region's premiere micro-breweries, continues to expand in Downtown Framingham.

Additionally, the City is nurturing a cluster of Life Sciences companies, including established companies like Sanofi, Berg, and Alira Health; start up companies like Kephera Diagnostics, Alzheon, and Qura, and growing biomanufacturers like Replimune. In June, Framingham, along with other Metrowest partners, hosted a tour of Life Sciences executives from around the world who were attending the BIO conference in Boston.

Finally, Framingham is growing an ecosystem to support new entrepreneurs. Earlier this year, Red13 Studios won a Collaborative Workspace grant from MassDevelopment, to grow its shared workspace supporting performing and visual artists. This development matches support to new businesses available through a variety of institutions within the city, including Framingham State University's Entrepreneurship Innovation Center, South Middlesex Opportunity Council's Financial Services program, the Framingham Makerspace, and business advisory services provided by SCORE, available through the Framingham Public Library.

"Framingham is proud to host the headquarters of multinational corporations like TJX Companies, BOSE, Sanofi Genzyme, and Staples. And we're also pleased that we can help foster the growth of start ups across economic sectors and support new entrepreneurs. Going forward, we anticipate continuing that record of success," said Robert.

City of Framingham Receives Award from Massachusetts Chapter of American Planning

chocolates from their retail space on Route 9 since 2012.

Additionally, we profiled Central Rock Gym, which opened its 9th location in Massachusetts right in the heart of Framingham in January.

[February 2018 - Mayor Spicer's First Community Conversation and SCORE Boston](#)

On February 28th, Mayor Yvonne Spicer held her first community conversation, which focused on the City's economic development plans and Choose Framingham was there to capture all of the highlights.

We also had a conversation with Barry Charton of SCORE Boston, which provides free guidance to Framingham-area entrepreneurs.

[March 2018 - River's Edge Garden Center](#)

What better way to step into spring than to feature a Framingham institution, River's Edge Garden Center? In March, we spoke to Jennifer Porter of River's Edge, who told us why her parents opened the center in the 1950s and why generations come back year after year.

[April 2018 - Alta Union House and Kano](#)

April was an exciting month for Framingham, in which the first new residential development in downtown in 40 years - Alta Union House - broke ground. Choose Framingham was on hand to showcase this important moment in the City's history.

We also had the chance to catch up with Kano, which creates computer and coding kits for people of all ages, and is headquartered at Saxonville Mills.

[May 2018 - One Clark's Hill](#)

In May, we focused on the Class A office space available at One Clark's Hill. The three story building with more than 100,000 square feet of office space is close to Downtown amenities and Framingham's Transit-Oriented Development options.

[June 2018 - Life Sciences Tour and Modera Framingham](#)

Association Celebrating Its Downtown TOD Strategy



At a luncheon on December 14th, the [Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association](#) (APA-MA) announced that the [City of Framingham](#) received an Outstanding Planning Award for the strategy that the City has implemented developing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in Downtown Framingham.

"We're grateful to the APA-MA for recognizing the City's hard work in successfully implementing a Transit-Oriented Development in Downtown Framingham," said Mayor Yvonne M. Spicer. "The development is essential to revitalizing the downtown area, and we're seeing the vision of economic growth come to fruition."

In October 2015, by overwhelming numbers, the then-members of Special Town Meeting voted to support zoning changes to Framingham's Central Business District with a goal to make Downtown Framingham an attractive, vibrant, diverse center that will be a hub of economic activity for the MetroWest region. Previous zoning laws had discouraged developers from creating the kind of new units that appeal to young professionals and others who may otherwise be attracted to Framingham.

In 2017, Framingham residents approved tax-increment financing (TIF) agreements for two proposed Transit-Oriented Developments for Downtown Framingham and a new Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing (UCH-TIF) plan and zone for Downtown Framingham. In April 2018, Wood Partners broke ground on one of those projects, Alta Union House at 75 Concord Street. The \$60 million mixed-use project, which will bring 196 new units of housing to Downtown Framingham, was the first to move in a long-dormant real estate market that is currently undergoing growth and revitalization. Shortly after, Mill Creek Residential began construction at 266 Waverly Street, which will create 270 new units of multifamily housing and invest \$73 million in Framingham.

"Framingham has worked on rezoning and revitalizing Downtown for decades and in the last 10 years, has thought creatively about the best ways to attract even more businesses and people to the neighborhood," said Arthur Robert, director of the City's Division of Community and Economic Development. "It is gratifying to receive this recognition from planning professionals."

The strategic Downtown TOD effort, which began in 2009, has culminated in a renaissance both in commercial and residential redevelopment in the last few years. Since the neighborhood was rezoned in 2015 to encourage new housing, almost 900 units of housing have been permitted for

Framingham along with other Metrowest partners hosted representatives from life sciences companies from around the world in June and Choose Framingham was there to recap the event.

Additionally, we checked in on the new construction at 266 Waverly Street, where Mill Creek Residential is building Modera Framingham.

[July 2018 - Avidia Bank/Exhibit A Brewing Partnership and Mount Wayte Redevelopment](#)

In July, we looked at the partnership between Avidia Bank and Exhibit A Brewing to create a new beer as part of Exhibit A's first "Demo Tape Fest." A portion of the proceeds were donated to the Rise Above Foundation, which helps young people in foster care.

And we highlighted the new construction that will transform the run-down Mount Wayte Shopping Plaza into 210 new apartments.

[August 2018 - Framingham State University and Berg](#)

For our back to school special in August, we interviewed Framingham State University's President, Dr. F. Javier Cevallos, about all of the exciting things going on at the nation's oldest state university.

Additionally, we learned more about Berg, a part of Framingham's growing cluster of Life Sciences companies.

[October 2018 - Kephera Diagnostics](#)

Will an effective diagnostic tool for the zika virus be developed in Framingham? We spoke to Andrew Levin, Ph.D, President and Scientific Director of Framingham-based Kephera Diagnostics in October, who is seeking to do just that.

[November 2018 - Metrowest Medical Center](#)

In November, Choose Framingham had the chance to interview Andrew D. Harding, RN, DNP, the new CEO of Metrowest Medical Center, who discussed how the hospital system celebrated its 125th year and previewed some upcoming advancements.

downtown. Additionally, there has been more than \$50 million invested in commercial development from both public and private sources over the last several years.

Framingham Makes its Mark in Business, Life Sciences



Framingham continues to make its mark on the Life Sciences and Business community. Earlier this month, the City hosted both the Real Estate team at the Massachusetts Development Financing Agency

([MassDevelopment](#)) and a team from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center ([MLSC](#)) for visits that demonstrate the interest that these important quasi-public agencies have in Framingham's successful growth strategy.

On December 14, MassDevelopment Executive Vice President Richard Henderson came to Framingham with a group of 25 professionals, from around the state, to learn more directly about the City's recent development successes, the community's continuing strengths, and current business opportunities. MassDevelopment is the state's economic development and finance agency that offers bond financing, loans, tax credits and grants to promote economic growth in communities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The group started with a visit to Saxonville Mills where they learned about its transformation from an empty mill to a creative economy hub for the area, made possible in part by grants from MassDevelopment to the Framingham Makerspace and Red 13 studios, both of which are located in the mill complex. Following their tour, they set out for the McAuliffe Branch Library, where Art Robert, the City's Community & Economic Development Director, provided them with an overview of the planning and development efforts underway throughout the city. Additionally, Jim Lambert of Wood Partners presented their award-winning Alta Union House project now under construction at 75 Concord Street in the Downtown. Mr. Robert then led the MassDevelopment team on a walking tour of Framingham's Downtown where they saw firsthand the results of infrastructure investments, many of the area's (20) new businesses, including the expansion of Jack's Abby and the establishment of several Life Sciences companies at 1 Grant Street, and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects - including the Alta Union House site.

After a successful visit from the MassDevelopment team, Framingham also welcomed Chris Gilrein, MLSC's Business Development Director, on December 18. The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center is an economic development and investment agency dedicated to promoting the growth of the Life Sciences sector in Massachusetts.

As part of his visit to Framingham, Mr. Gilrein met with Mayor Yvonne Spicer to talk more about the City, the initiatives underway and opportunities that exist to grow the city's Life Sciences cluster. He went on to meet with a number of different Life Science companies that call Framingham home, including Alira Health, Avison Young, Berg Health, Qura Inc, and Sanofi Genzyme. Each company provided their reasoning for Choosing Framingham, what's next for them and the industry as a whole in the City, and discussed potential opportunities for growth with the support of MLSC. Each of these companies' presence here in Framingham only further demonstrates the strength of the city and our role - and future - in data science and AI opportunities.

If you are interested in learning more about what the City of Framingham is doing to promote economic growth in general and in the Life Sciences sector, please visit our [Community & Economic Development](#) website or the [Choose Framingham](#) website.

Framingham EDIC

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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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