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Private and Public Sources Have Invested \$56 Million in Downtown Framingham

Town Has Seen Significant Investment in Downtown, Including New Investments Driven By TOD Rezoning

Framingham, MA – Downtown Framingham has experienced \$56 million in investment from both public and private sources in the past few years, the Town of Framingham announced today. Those numbers include transportation and utility infrastructure upgrades as well as expansion by private businesses and nonprofit organizations. Last year, Special Town Meeting members approved new zoning plans, which has driven some of the new investment.

“It is encouraging to see so many entities, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to private commercial developers, recognize that Downtown Framingham is a good investment,” said Bob Halpin, Town Manager of the Town of Framingham. “We anticipated that rezoning would attract new investment. It is good to see it happening.”

In October 2015, by overwhelming numbers, Special Town Meeting members 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 in the Town of Framingham discouraged developers from creating the kind of new units that appeal to young professionals and others who may otherwise be attracted to Framingham. Town officials see the rezoning as critical to encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD) in Downtown Framingham, and will move their efforts forward to encourage this kind of residential development

“Framingham residents took an important step last year in approving rezoning,” said Arthur Robert, Director of the Town of Framingham’s Division of Community and Economic Development. “The fact that Downtown is attracting significant reinvestment indicates that their initiative is being rewarded. With resources coming from the state and from commercial developers, we are also looking forward to more investment from residential real estate developers in Downtown.”

The strategy approved by the Town recommended making changes to the existing Central Business District zoning to encourage this development while also maintaining the neighborhood's distinctive urban downtown. With new residential and commercial development, the rezoning will ultimately increase the Town's overall tax base while not placing an additional burden on Town services. Based on development projections for three hypothetical parcels in the Downtown, the Town and MAPC project new development could accrue up to \$950,000 in additional commercial and residential property taxes for the Town of Framingham.

Examples of new dollars being invested in Downtown Framingham include:

- **Route 126 Corridor/Downtown Road Work and Utility Upgrades** – the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Transportation has spent \$10 million as part of a multiyear project to repair the streets and roads in downtown Framingham. Eversource has invested \$30 million in utility infrastructure upgrades.
- **MetroWest Medical Center** – MetroWest Medical Center provides high quality medical services to residents of the region. The center has announced a \$7.6 million expansion that includes enhancements to its main lobby located in Downtown Framingham.
- **New and Expanding Business Upgrades**
 - **Jack's Abby Brewing Company** – the acclaimed brewing company is doubling the size of its new facilities in the Downtown area. Currently at 67,000 square feet, Jack's Abby will add another 63,000 square feet at 102 Clinton Street and 25 new full- or part-time employees to its 100 person workforce in the coming months. The company spent \$6 million in upgrading its facilities when it moved to its current facilities this past January. This expansion reflects an estimated additional \$500,000 in new investment from the company.
 - **Deluxe Depot Diner and Pho Dakao**– the upscale diner, which is located in the former H.H. Richardson rail station in Downtown, and the Vietnamese restaurant both opened in the last two years, after significant investments from their owners.
 - **CommCreative** – the integrated marketing agency has invested just over \$2 million in an expanded presence in Downtown with its new headquarters.

"The progress we have made in Downtown Framingham shows what we can achieve if we all work together towards a common goal. As long as these collaborative efforts continue, I'm confident that we will succeed in revitalizing our Downtown area," said Cheryl Tully Stoll, Board of Selectmen Chair.

"As a lifelong resident of Framingham, it is so encouraging to see this kind of attention to Downtown Framingham," said Mike Gatlin, chair of the Town's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC). "We can see the value that Downtown Framingham can bring to businesses through public and private investment, which ultimately broadens the tax base. Framingham's Department of Public Works has been a driving force behind these efforts, which demonstrates the commitment the Town has made to revitalizing Downtown."

For more information, please visit the Framingham Community and Economic Development website (<http://www.framinghamma.gov/103/Community-Economic-Development>) or contact the Division of Community and Economic Development at (508) 532-5455.

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