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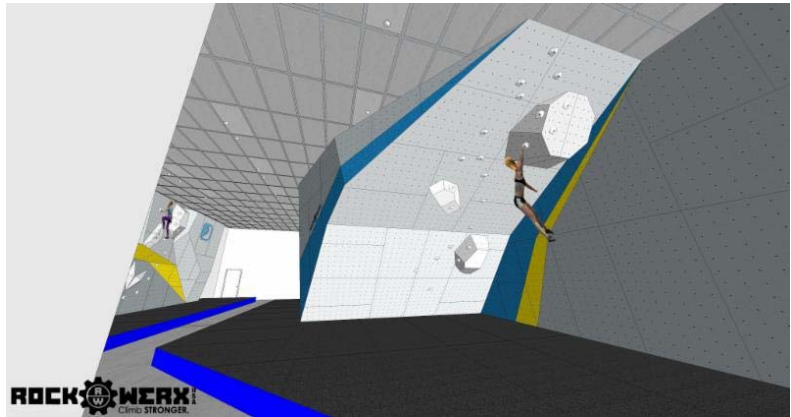
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## on Economic Development Master Planning

As part of the goals laid out by Framingham's Master Land Use Plan, Framingham has taken an important next step in its economic development by launching a Comprehensive Economic Development Master Plan project.

"Over the past several years, it has become apparent that we should approach Framingham's future growth and redevelopment in a systemic way," said Arthur Robert, Director of Framingham's Division of Community and Economic Development. "For example, many of the community's villages and/or neighborhoods are in need of review and rezoning, there is a strong need for programming regarding economic development, and a strong desire to build on Framingham's existing strong foundation. Finally, we need to consider the development impacts of Framingham's best growth opportunities, and coordinate effective mitigation, to enhance our great quality of life. To be effective, we need to review Framingham's economic status and future projections, as well each of the individual neighborhoods."

In November, Framingham issued a request for proposals on Phase One of the economic development planning project, and in the coming weeks will report on the findings from this phase. The primary focus of Phase One will be to:

- Provide research, background information, and data collection that will inform the Comprehensive Economic Master Plan and future economic programming;

## Chocolate Therapy offers sweet treats on Valentine's Day and all year 'round



Valentine's Day is only a few weeks away, and that means it's time for some high quality chocolate. Luckily for Framingham, one of the region's most unique chocolatiers, [Chocolate Therapy](#), is located right here on Route 9 and once again, the store is offering unique gifts and experiences for the holiday.

Chocolate Therapy was established in 2011 by Pamela Griffin and her husband David. They initially had a small retail space at Legacy Place in Dedham but moved to Framingham in 2012, when they realized they needed more space both for manufacturing and events. In addition to the retail and manufacturing operations, the store also includes event space for groups, including birthday parties. Once a month, Chocolate Therapy hosts a gathering for local Girl Scout troops, who learn about the origins of chocolate and are able to see how the operation works.

Originally from the Chicago area, Pam and David Griffin moved to Massachusetts for work. Pam's background included working for Starbucks, and she drew on that experience when she and David decided to open up their own business. "We decided to do something for ourselves, and we stumbled on chocolate," said Pam Griffin. "You can get chocolate anywhere, and we thought if we had to do it, let's do it our way."

Working with their chocolatier, Pam and David often brainstorm ideas for flavors that will pair well with chocolate, including offbeat flavors such as pomegranate, cayenne, goat cheese and pistachio. Their best-seller, however, is a salted caramel, which has been consistently popular since the store opened.

For Valentine's Day, Chocolate Therapy will bring back some traditional flavors, and they will also offer heart-shaped truffles, heart-shaped candies on a stick, and most interestingly, chocolates that can be paired with wine. "Nothing goes better for me than a big box of chocolates and wine," said Griffin. The store also encourages individuals, couples, and groups to peruse their [wine and chocolate event options](#).

As for their experience in Framingham, Pam Griffin notes that they are also residents of the city, not just business owners. "We love that we have been able to be in the community, that Framingham has that community feel," Griffin said. "We like that we get to work with the schools, with other local businesses and community groups."

- Collect data for the development of a market analysis of existing and potential commercial/residential/office/manufacturing markets;
- Analyze socioeconomic data of existing and future trends;
- Support the efforts of the Transportation Master Plan (currently under way);
- Collect information that can support economic programming, promotions, and business retention and attraction;
- Determine appropriate uses for certain areas of Framingham;
- Identify appropriate locations for identified targeted uses ;
- Develop future opportunities for Framingham;
- Create and maintain jobs to support Framingham's efforts to expand business and job opportunities; and
- Develop a framework for future economic programming for the attraction and retention of businesses within Framingham.

"It's an exciting time to be in the City of Framingham, as we grow and expand our economic development opportunities," said Robert. "We're looking forward to this analysis and implementing strategies that will continue to make the community a place to live, work, and play."

## Framingham Awarded Federal Brownfields Funding

Framingham was recently awarded \$300,000 in federal funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to continue its work on potential redevelopment of Brownfield sites. \$200,000 of the funding will

If you are interested in learning more about Chocolate Therapy, please visit their [website](#), Like them on [Facebook](#) and Follow them on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

## Central Rock Gym Opens in Framingham

On January 20th, [Central Rock Gym](#) (CRG) opened its ninth Massachusetts location right in the center of Framingham, at 1451 Concord Street. Brothers Joe and Ed Hardy have taken their passion for rock climbing and built an extensive



community at their gyms throughout the state. As the first rock-climbing gym in Framingham, CRG will bring their vibrant and inclusive community for those who want to be involved in both a physical and social setting.

"Framingham is a vibrant city between Worcester and Boston and needed a climbing gym! Rush hour traffic makes it difficult for those in Framingham to make it to our facilities in Worcester or Watertown and our clients have been asking for a Framingham location for years. We are so proud to be able to serve the community at last," said Ed Hardy. Framingham officials worked with Central Rock Gym for more than a year to help them secure a site and move the project forward.

What attracts many participants to CRG is its bouldering-only climbing facility. The climbing walls only reach 16 feet tall and do not require climbers to use climbing ropes. As a result of this design, beginner climbers can come in and get started right away with the support of staff and fellow climbers. Bouldering also makes for a more social experience when climbing, with everyone working together to help one another, share tips, and get to the top.

The Gym offers a variety of options for visitors including adult-only hours and child-specific hours for kids under the age of ten. And, if rock climbing isn't your ideal activity of choice, CRG offers its members access to other amenities such as yoga and fitness classes, weights and exercise equipment. These amenities invite a wide range of people, from those who have never climbed before to those who are highly experienced competitors.

CRG prides itself on providing a great workout and a spirited

focus on Hazardous Materials, with \$100,000 focusing on Petroleum-related work.

The funding will help the City to update previous work, conduct public outreach, and assess potentially contaminated sites, focusing on the downtown and south side area.

[The EPA defines a brownfield site](#) as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."

The funding will help Framingham examine and assess environmental conditions on particular sites in Framingham that are being considered for redevelopment. In addition to conducting environmental testing across the city, the grant funding will also help support the continued work of the [Southeast Framingham Brownfield Plan](#).

Since 2008, Framingham has received \$1.1 million in federal funding for redevelopment of Brownfield sites, all helping to support Framingham's continued efforts to stimulate and promote economic development, restore neighborhoods, increase local job and revenue opportunities, rehabilitate contaminated properties to productive use, and improve the quality of life for residents.

For more information on Framingham's work to rehabilitate Brownfields in the city, please visit <http://www.framinghamma.gov/1535/Brownfields-Redevelopment>

## **Framingham in the News**

"[Mayor of firsts](#)," *Commonwealth Magazine* - January 9, 2018

social environment for members. They may start out as strangers, but members often create great friendships through their time together at the gym. If you find yourself at the gym Monday and Fridays from 5-8 pm, you'll be right in the midst of the gym's "social scene."

Finding an effective workout that is also enjoyable can be achieved at CRG with the help of its friendly staff, motivating community, and unique rock-climbing design. To learn more about Central Rock Gym, check out their website [here](#). You can also Like them on [Facebook](#) and Follow them on [Instagram](#).

Framingham EDIC

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