

WELCOME TO THE CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



*Choose Framingham Newsletter
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New Comprehensive Economic Development Plan Officially Underway

Mayor Yvonne Spicer Discusses Her Economic Development Vision for Framingham

An initiative that will benefit both

Framingham residents and business owners - the development of a new comprehensive economic development plan - is now underway for the City of Framingham. The project officially kicked off on April 4th with meetings that gained input from Mayor Yvonne Spicer, an advisory working group composed of Framingham business leaders, Framingham boards, and the public.

The plan has three phases. Phase 1 is a city-wide vision and market assessment. The purpose of Phase 1 is to help the City understand its competitive position, identify realistic development opportunities, and identify development impacts that can be mitigated over time. It is being executed as a collaborative effort between the City's Division of Community and Economic Development and the Planning Board. Phase 1 will be accomplished with consulting services assistance provided by the economic development research firm RKG Associates.

Once the assessment is completed, Phase 2 - neighborhood level engagement - will commence. This second phase will build consensus on the best Framingham locations for development opportunities. It will also identify the necessary zoning changes needed to move those opportunities forward and what mitigation will be needed to address the impact. The third and final step will be implementation of the plan.

In the coming weeks, the City will hold focus group meetings with local businesses, conduct extensive background research, and implement a resident-focused web survey. The survey will be launched on May 1st.

Project outcomes are expected over the summer of 2018, and are expected to inform follow-up.

Moving the Golden Triangle Project Forward

In August 2016, Framingham and Natick signed a memorandum of understanding to work together to create a shared future development vision for the Golden Triangle, the area near Exit 13 of the MassPike that straddles both communities. Last

Event Focused on Building Connections Linking Framingham's Business Community, City Hall



Mayor Yvonne Spicer is excited about the opportunities that the newly-minted City of Framingham has to expand its economic development, a message she delivered to more than 75 members of Framingham's business community at an

event at the Sheraton Framingham on Thursday, April 5th.

"We've got great bones, we've got to build the meat on these bones," said Mayor Spicer at the afternoon event, which also featured remarks from Mike Gatlin, chair of the City's [Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#) (EDIC) and Paul Joseph of the [MetroWest Chamber of Commerce](#).

Highlighting the fact that just two days earlier, the City had celebrated the groundbreaking of Alta Union House in Downtown Framingham, Mayor Spicer discussed the fact that Framingham has permitted 877 new units of housing for the community, which will help to revitalize the city as a whole and downtown in particular. Talking about the ebb and flow she's seen with regard to the downtown in the more than 30 years she's lived in Framingham, Mayor Spicer proclaimed the development activity as "exciting."

The mayor also talked about the advantages that the city has, in terms of its location to both Boston and Worcester, and its importance as an economic engine for the MetroWest region. Saying "we are in a sweet spot," Mayor Spicer pointed that more 50,000 workers are employed at Framingham businesses.

Acknowledging that "economic development is a driver of our community," Mayor Spicer also said that "of everything we do, my underlying question is always 'how does it benefit Framingham?'" The mayor concluded the event by fielding questions from the region's business leaders about her plans.

The event, which was organized by the EDIC, was part of an ongoing series of panel discussions and events that the EDIC has held as part of its [Choose Framingham](#) campaign. Previous events have included a look at Framingham's economic development future, a panel discussion on the needs of the Millennial workforce, and keynote remarks and a panel on attracting more Life Sciences companies to the city. If you are interested in learning more about the *Choose Framingham* initiative, please Like us on [Facebook](#) and Follow us on [Twitter](#).

Business Profile: Kano is Focused on Creation, Not Consumption

US headquarters of Kano, which creates computer and coding kits for all ages, is in Saxonville Mills

Could Framingham become the headquarters of a new computer revolution? If [Kano](#) has its way, it will be. [Choose](#)

[April](#), the communities convened a [steering committee](#) for the Golden Triangle project and partnered with Co-Urbanize to develop an online platform where planners could post information and offer insights into areas that need attention.

Over a twelve month period, the communities worked with the steering committee and a consulting team led by [Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge](#), to conduct research and develop concepts. The communities also conducted community outreach. A [draft report](#) is now ready for public review and feedback. Community feedback is essential to the continued success of the project, so even if you have already submitted comments on the plans, your additional insights and observations are welcome.

Both Framingham and Natick have undergone recent changes in leadership, and Framingham has transitioned to a city form of government. Yet the Golden Triangle remains a priority for both communities. Once the report is finalized, both communities will begin implementation activities, engaging with property owners, and reaching out to the appropriate stakeholders to keep the process moving forward.

There is still a lot of work to be done, but we have made great progress, and it would not have been possible without the community feedback we have received. The development of the Golden Triangle will be valuable for both Natick and Framingham.

Review the draft report and submit comments [here](#).

[Framingham](#) caught up with Kano's Gregg Stein, Chief Revenue Officer and the company's North American GM, to hear more about its work making computer and coding kits and what they think about Saxonville Mills, which is now the center for its North American operations.

Framingham's Community and Economic Development Division aided the company in its search. The division was in contact with Stein, who was previously using co-working space at Framingham State University's Entrepreneurship Innovation Center. After discussing his growing company's space needs, the division helped him to identify and then organized - with the help of local brokers - a tour of potential sites. He then settled on the Saxonville Mills complex, a place he felt was best.

Tell us a little more about Kano - what do you do?

Kano is a new kind of computer company, focused on creation, not just consumption. Inspired by a challenge from a 6-year-old, Kano creates computer and coding kits for all ages, all over the world. Its mission is to make technology as simple and fun to create as it is to consume. [Kano launched the first computer anyone can make on Kickstarter in 2013](#) - it raised \$1.5 million, the largest ever ed-tech crowdfunding on the platform, with the backing of thousands of young people, artists, makers and teachers worldwide.

Kano became the UK's fastest growing tech startup in 2016 and [Fast Company's ninth most innovative company](#) in consumer electronics in 2017. With a total headcount of 76 across the UK and US, Kano launched a new line of DIY computing kits in over 4,500 retail stores, partnering with the likes of [Amazon](#), [Best Buy](#), [Indigo](#), [Microsoft](#), [Staples](#), [Target](#), [Toys R Us](#), and [Walmart](#) last year.

[Kano is also the creative computing choice for over 3,000 education programs around the world](#), from code clubs in Kansas to after school programs for refugees in Lebanon, with full curriculum and professional development to empower educators. Kano also has a wide range of ongoing, local, education partnerships such as the [U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development Connect Home initiative](#).

The full range of currently available Kano kits now include the [Computer Kit](#), [Computer Kit Complete](#), [Pixel Kit](#) and [Motion Sensor Kit](#). For more information about Kano, visit the [Press Pack](#) or visit [Kano.me](#).

Kano makes computer and coding kits for all ages, all over the world. What was the inspiration for the business and how do you see it growing?

Co-founded in January 2013 by Yonatan Raz-Fridman, Alex Klein and Saul Klein, Kano was launched on Kickstarter in 2013. Kano has been developed with the help of thousands of young people, artists and teachers worldwide.

Kano shipped the first "computer anyone can make" in September 2014, and is now expanding its retail presence more than four-fold. Our kits are now deployed in more than 3,000 education programs worldwide. Our community of beginner developers, in 86 countries, many as young as six, have shared over 50 million lines of code on our community platform called [Kano World](#). These beginners spend 13.5 hours, close to

Snapchat, on the company's Computer Kits during the first 30 days.

In Q4 2017, we announced a North American mass market rollout into more than 4,500 retail stores, stocking its creative computing kits in every Best Buy and Target, select Walmart stores, Microsoft Stores, Jet.com and The Source, as well as existing partners Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Indigo and Toys R Us. Our expansion was fueled by \$28 million in new funding.

Our Series B round was led by the Thames Trust and Breyer Capital, with Index Ventures, the Stanford Engineering Venture Fund, LocalGlobe, Marc Benioff, John Makinson, Collaborative Fund, Triple Point Capital, and Barclays participating.

What kind of work is being performed in the Framingham facility?

The new office in Framingham is becoming the center of all North American operations, hosting a team focused on sales, marketing, business development, customer success and operations across the region and around the globe.

You're located in the Saxonville Mills complex - tell us what you like about the location there and how you benefit from being in that location.

This is the second start-up that I've brought to Saxonville Mills. Back in 2012, I was lucky enough to launch the Libratone Inc. North American headquarters at the complex. I found the complex to be a strategically located incubator for innovation and the right environment to develop a winning culture.

Kano has now been in at Saxonville for about six weeks. It's been the perfect place to accelerate our growth while being surrounded by so many new businesses bringing a fresh innovative energy. We love the individuality of the Kano space; it fits so well with Kano's creative DIY culture, which we've imported from London.

Ultimately this new Saxonville Mills space will strengthen our existing leadership position at the forefront of the learn-to-code and STEM categories and improves service for customers and partners.

In general, what do you like about being located in Framingham?

As a Framingham resident for nearly 6 years, I've had the fortunate opportunity to start-up and develop several international companies. Framingham has so much to offer. It is a perfect central location without having to go into Boston and attracts good talent.

What's next for Kano?

We are committed to continue building our North American community, on the heels of the mass roll out of Kano kits in retail stores last year.

How can people be in touch with you and learn more about what you do?

We are conveniently located in the Saxonville Mills. Our phone number is 508-619-0000. We would love to hear from you. Feel

free to call us at 508-619-0000 to schedule an appointment. You can reach us via email at sales@kano.me or you can also visit us on Facebook @KanoComputing, on Instagram @teamkano, on Twitter @TeamKano and on our website <https://kano.me/>.

Anything you'd like to add?

Kano is hiring! Apply today at <https://kano.me/>.

Wood Partners Breaks Ground on Alta Union House



Downtown Framingham marked another milestone in April when [Wood Partners](#), a national leader in real estate development and construction, celebrated the groundbreaking of its new residential community: Alta Union House. Mayor Yvonne Spicer was joined by City

Councilor Cheryl Tully Stoll, and Wood Partners Director Jim Lambert at the groundbreaking event on April 3rd.

Alta Union House will include 196 rental units, all rentals, 20 of which will be designated as affordable housing. The community will also include 2,600 square feet of retail space at the ground level and an attached parking garage. The project sits on several parcels that previously contained parking lots, warehouses, a church, and vacant storefronts.

"I can tell you - you have picked the right place to grow. Framingham is a city on the move, and I'm excited to be a part of it," said Mayor Spicer in her remarks at the event. "It is this growth that brought Wood Partners to Framingham. "Downtown Framingham is full of exciting possibilities," said Jim Lambert, Wood Partners Director. "This is a welcoming place for us to do business, and we know it will be a wonderful place for our residents to live, work and play. It has a unique and exciting blend of economic opportunity, cultural diversity, urban amenities, but with a small-town feel."

The Alta Union House is the first large-scale development to be built in Framingham's downtown district in 40 years. In 2015, Special Town Meeting members voted overwhelmingly to



support zoning changes to Framingham's Central Business District with the 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.

The rezoning has been critical to encouraging [transit-oriented development](#) (TOD) projects like Alta Union House. The City of Framingham continues working to attract new businesses and development opportunities to revitalize the downtown area - for current and future residents.

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.