

WELCOME TO THE
CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



*Choose Framingham Newsletter
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Will an Effective Diagnostic Tool for the Zika Virus be Developed in

In October, the City of Framingham received welcome [news](#) in the form of a \$250,000 Housing Choice Community Capital Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The grant, which was awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), will support Downtown redevelopment by improving the drainage system in the vicinity of the streets of Kendall, Freeman, Frederick, and Howard, close to where residential real estate developer Wood Partners is building Alta Union House.

In May, Framingham was one of 67 municipalities selected by the state as a "[Housing Choice](#)" community. The Housing Choice designation allows Framingham access to the capital grants program, as well as giving communities a "leg up" in competing for other state grant and capital funding programs. "Our Administration's Housing Choice Initiative aims to maximize collaboration between state agencies, support innovation and data-driven policies, and provide cities and towns across the Commonwealth with tools to drive housing production in their communities," said Governor Charlie Baker in an announcement in May.

The grant will go towards improving operations and maintenance of the storm drainage system, reducing flooding, and improving water quality. The project is of particular importance since it is near the neighborhood's first Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), Alta Union House. That development will bring 196 new units of housing to Downtown and is considered an important part of revitalizing the area. As part of the development, Wood Partners is funding streetscape improvements along Kendall Street and intersection safety improvements at Kendall, Freeman, and Frederick Streets. The proposed budget for the stormwater capital improvements is \$275,000.

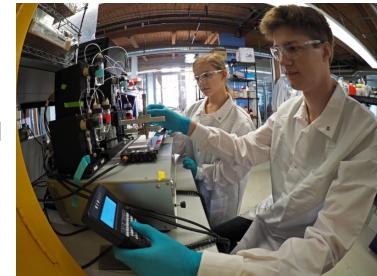
"It's exciting to see the state give Framingham and our efforts to redevelop Downtown a vote of confidence with this Housing Choice grant," said Arthur Robert, director of the City's division of Community and Economic Development. "This project is significant to improving the infrastructure of the neighborhood and we have no doubt it will contribute to the success of this important TOD development."

Framingham?

Framingham Attracts Another Start Up Life Science Business to Downtown

"I'm hoping that we can be a nucleus for this kind of development in Downtown Framingham," says Andrew Levin, Ph.D, President and Scientific Director of [Kephera Diagnostics](#). He's talking about setting up shop in the old Dennison building in Downtown Framingham, but he's also discussing his experience establishing the first biotech company in Boston's Seaport District. In addition to founding Kephera, which develops diagnostic tools for emerging and neglected infectious diseases, he established Immunetics, which became a pioneering life sciences company by locating in the now-thriving Seaport.

Kephera was founded in 2016, but only recently found its permanent home in Framingham in June 2018. With advances in technology and methodologies, life sciences companies like Kephera can develop diagnostics tools in a short amount of time, which can help to save lives and promote public health. Right now, the company is working on developing a product that would test for the Zika virus, which remains a threat to pregnant women and people at risk for certain auto-immune diseases. Additionally, the company is creating a test for Chagas disease, a parasitic disease transmitted by an insect in Latin America, and another for pork tapeworm.



The company currently employs five people and is located in the Grant Street facility near another growing life sciences firm, [Alira Health](#). In looking for permanent space, Levin was looking for a facility that would allow them to build a laboratory, which is critical to their work. He was able to sublet lab space from Alira, while building out his new office and laboratory, which will be completed by the first of the year. Levin notes that he shares the vision of Alira CEO Gabriele Brambilla, who is part of an effort to establish the [MetroWest Life Sciences Network](#).

Of Framingham as a location in comparison to Boston and the Seaport, Levin says, "Framingham has a lot of factors in its favor for siting a life sciences company. Companies in our industry, especially start-ups, need lab-friendly space but they don't want to pay Boston prices." He notes that the area has the resources that many biotech companies might be looking for, including

proximity to Route 128. Levin chose the Grant Street location in part because of how close the building is to the city's downtown train station and the natural advantages - high ceilings, many windows, tremendous amounts of indoor space - of an older industrial building.



Andrew Levin, President and Scientific Director, Kephera Diagnostics

"This building provides a great environment - it has a sense of

Twenty New Businesses Calling Downtown Framingham Home

As the City of Framingham continues working to attract new businesses to the city, and works to revitalize the Downtown area, [Choose Framingham](#) is highlighting the businesses that have made the decision to call Downtown Framingham home in the last two years.

If you haven't visited them, be sure to take some time to check them out!

- **[Kephera Diagnostics](#)**. In June 2018, this life sciences startup, which develops new tools to detect infectious diseases, moved into 1 Grant Street.
- **[Braza Grill Union House](#)** at 672 Waverly Street is perfect for lunch, dinner, and plenty of entertainment in the lounge!
- **[FATEC USA University](#)** opened a satellite campus in Downtown Framingham at 47 Franklin Street. It serves as an anchor institution by educating hundreds of future business managers and technology experts.
- **[PitBull Jeans](#)** at 31 Hollis Street sells the hippest, most fashionable men's and women's apparel that makes an immediate impression.
- **[Pantaneira Fashion](#)** at 29 Hollis Street displays a strong collection of shoes, accessories and other trendy apparel.
- **[Pollo Royal](#)** at 18 Irving Street not only serves delicious chicken, but it has a vast array of Mexican meals and healthy salads.
- **[Merengue Restaurant](#)** at 55 Frederick Street gives a Dominican fine dining experience and supports catering needs.
- **[IK Images with Downtown Hub](#)**, owned by Itala Keller, is a professional headshot studio. They also run the Downtown Hub, a co-working hub in this location, where individuals can rent a dedicated desk.
- **[Sbruzzi Bakery](#)** is a Brazilian bakery featuring wonderful soups and baked goods. The family-owned business enjoys responding to community

history, location, architectural details, and is a centerpiece for the area," says Levin. "At the same time, it makes us feel connected to a tradition of productivity. Dennison was a company that was manufacturing products here for almost a century. In addition to our offices, we're going to have a lab where we are aiming to develop and produce useful diagnostic products, so in a way we're trying to continue that tradition."

For more information on Kephera Diagnostics and their work, please visit their website at www.kepheraadx.com.

Alta Union House wins LOCUS New England Project of the Year



On October 24th, Smart Growth America named Framingham's [Alta Union House](#) as its Project of the Year winner. This honor was given at the organization's [LOCUS New England Leadership Summit](#), where it recognized both the residential developer, [Wood Partners](#), and the project as an innovative and sustainable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

Alta Union House (AUH) is a mixed-use, mixed-income development in the heart of Downtown Framingham. AUH includes 196 apartment homes, 2,587 square feet of retail space, and a structured parking garage with 304 parking spaces, including electric vehicle charging (EVC) stations. The project is across the street from a revitalized downtown common and a three minute walk from Downtown Framingham's commuter rail station. Despite the tight urban site, the project features two cloistered courtyards providing a private urban oasis. AUH is complete with a swimming pool, outdoor cooking areas, and ample spaces for entertainment, and its interior amenities include spaces for residents to work from home, a community club room, and a fitness room including a yoga/group fitness studio.

This development is significant because it was the first to construct multi-family housing in Framingham's Downtown in over 40 years. Other housing developers have begun to appreciate Framingham's undergoing growth and modernization.

Wood Partners worked closely with the City of Framingham to develop a successful public-private partnership in order to demonstrate the potential strength of Downtown Framingham as a real estate market. The city offered a tax-increment finance package for the project through the Urban Center Housing Tax-Increment Financing (UCH-TIF) program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Framingham was the first community to utilize the new UCH-TIF regulations and was able to work closely with DHCD and Wood Partners to ensure the project's success.

"LOCUS New England's award recognizes Wood Partners' Alta Union House as the best in New England," said Arthur Robert, director of Framingham's Community and Economic Development division. "The award also highlights Framingham's successful strategy - including in-depth research, rezoning, and incentives - to drive pioneer projects in our Downtown."

Downtown Framingham is undergoing a renaissance both in

feedback by providing highly demanded desserts and lunches.

- **[Sweet Home Furniture](#)** has a large selection of quality, name brand furniture and mattresses.
- **[Minas Market](#)** is a one-stop shop for the best cuts of meat, fresh produce, and other groceries.
- **Rincon La Cabana** is the only Ecuadorian Restaurant in Framingham. This family-owned business serves a variety of sweet coffees along with traditional Ecuadorian cuisine.
- **[La Pupusa Loca Grill](#)** serves both Salvadoran and Mexican dishes, including flavorful breakfasts all day. The family-owned restaurant holds twenty seats with beautiful artwork featuring community scenes from Latin America.
- **[The Sofa Cafe](#)** relocated from Newbury Street in Boston to Concord Street, bringing an attractive, high-end coffee venue to the Downtown.
- **[Miranda Bread](#)** is an artisan bakery in Downtown Framingham across from the Framingham MBTA Station.
- **[BRZ Insurance](#)** was founded by three young entrepreneurs in Downtown Framingham and focuses on a diverse range of insurance products. They have invested in a modern, high-design façade for their prominent retail storefront location on Concord Street.
- **[RR6 Kitchen & Bar](#)** is a family restaurant offering the wonderful flavors of North, Central, and South American cuisine with high quality and attractive pricing.
- **[CommCreative](#)**, a unified marketing company, opened its expanded facility at 75 Fountain Street. The company chose the Downtown location to take advantage of nearby commuter rail access and emerging Downtown amenities.
- **[Jack's Abby Brewing](#)** completed its expansion, creating a second tap room. The commitment provides a second attractive Downtown amenity for the award-winning brewing company.
- **[AliraHealth](#)**, a global health care consultancy, established its headquarters at 1 Grant Street. The company, with

commercial and residential redevelopment. Since the neighborhood was rezoned in 2015 to encourage new housing, nearly 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.

Framingham Hosts Inaugural Downtown Oktoberfest



On Saturday, October 13th, [Downtown Framingham Inc.](#) held the [2018 Inaugural Downtown Framingham Oktoberfest](#), which got residents and visitors alike moving along the neighborhood's main corridor, from Franklin Marval's new mural at 199 Concord Street a half-mile to the Amazing Things Arts

Center, where street performers entertained audiences. Five areas along the route were activated with performers, activities, and displays.

This event enabled downtown businesses to utilize the neighborhood's sidewalks; Braz Optical passed out hot chocolate, Urbano's Furniture featured a face painter, and Atlantis Dental handed out more than 200 dental kits. The event was designed to allow attendees to window shop and meet local business as they traveled from one performance area to another. Additionally, comic mime Robert Rivest was part of the route, where he weaved in and out of the crowd and brought smiles to the faces of children and adults alike.

The Downtown Oktoberfest beer garden was highly successful, and a safe way to activate the parking lot at the intersection of routes 126 and 136. The beer garden featured the teams from Framingham's own Jack's Abby/Springdale and Exhibit 'A' Brewing Company, major sponsors from Avidia Bank and MutualOne, and Downtown mural artists Sorin Bica and Franklin Marval. The event also featured antique cars and fire trucks, courtesy of Framingham's local Rousseau family. Attendees were able to take photos while hopping inside the various vehicles.

Downtown Framingham, Inc. is working with City stakeholders to craft a Sidewalk Usage Ordinance along the Central Business District, and this event helped encourage those businesses to practice using those sidewalks in active ways. The nonprofit also wishes to thank Framingham's Police Department and Department of Public Works, which played major roles in helping them hold a successful event that demonstrated the very best of the city's walkable urban core.

offices in several European capitals, plans to create expanded lab space, as well as incubator space for introducing European life sciences companies to the North American market.

- **Exhibit 'A' Brewing**, a second microbrewery, opened for business at 81 Morton Street.

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.

STAY CONNECTED

