

# 2015 Bedford Economic Development Update

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2015 marked an active year for business in Bedford! Let's step back and reflect on some of the highlights.

## Sample of New Businesses locating to Bedford in 2015:

- Aspen Technology, *High-tech*
- Bedford Research Foundation. *Biotech*
- Bella Maria Cucina, *Restaurant*
- Datawatch, *Data Analytics*
- Exascale Networks, *IT Start up*
- Holi Restaurant. *Restaurant*
- Keurig, *Manufacturing/R&D*
- Red Heat Tavern, *Restaurant*
- Ocean State Job Lot, *Retail*
- Lincoln Liquors, *Retail*
- Live Long Pilates, *Fitness*
- Ninepoint Medical, *Biotech*
- Mayflower Communications, *Communications*
- Multiplan, *Healthcare*

## 2015 Major Commercial Developments

**Bedford Marketplace** – The largest retail project in 2015 included the planned redevelopment of an older 1960s-style shopping center in Bedford Center. The new shopping center will feature a mix of new and previously existing retail stores and restaurants. New businesses include Red Heat Tavern, Comella's, and the new flagship Learning Express Toys and activity center. The redevelopment project includes new buildings, better pedestrian connections to shopping, reconstructing the parking lot with a better layout, upgraded utilities, stormwater management, landscaping, seating and bicycle racks. The project commenced in 2015 with completion anticipated in 2016.

**The XChange** – The largest office/r&d project in 2015 was the redevelopment and revitalization of an office/R&D campus (475,000 sq. ft.) in a phased development at 4 to 18 Crosby Drive, a venture of the Davis Companies. Planning staff worked closely with the developer's permitting team, and responded quickly to changes, as the project evolved. Phase 1 included an expansion of parking areas, façade renovations, addition of an outdoor landscaped area for passive recreation, circulation improvements, and expansion of on premises food business, Phase 2 involved adding structured parking and landscaping, and Phase 3 included a new building.

## Company Highlight: Aspen Tech Economic Impact Award

On November 24, Governor Charles D. Baker, state and local officials, as well as company executives and real estate representatives gathered to recognize the special achievements of companies that have contributed significantly to the state and local economies in Massachusetts.

Aspen Technology, a leading provider of software and services to the process industries, won the Gold-level state economic impact award by MassEcon in recognition of the company's recent relocation and expansion of its new world headquarters here. The



company renovated three buildings totaling a 140,000 square foot campus on Crosby Drive. The new facility demonstrates the latest in contemporary office design with an open floor plan, informal breakout and collaboration areas, and many informal “huddle rooms” throughout the campus.

According to Aspen Technology's Karl Johnsen, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, the Town of Bedford proved to be the right choice for the company's new headquarters:

*“When we began our site search for a new Corporate Headquarters location, Bedford officials were extremely welcoming and receptive to talking with us. Once the decision was made, the Town became a key partner working closely with us, from permitting through construction, to ensure that our occupancy dates were met. In recognition of our new campus headquarters and investment in Bedford, AspenTech recently won a 2015 Gold award from the Massachusetts Economic Development Alliance. We consider the project a great success, and we could not have had a better partner than the Town of Bedford.”*

### **Cultural District and Wayfinding**

The Town of Bedford has a rich cultural heritage and is home to a wide array of cultural and historical resources. As part of the effort to raise the tourism profile of Bedford, and establish better wayfinding, Economic Development Coordinator, Alyssa Sandoval, and Selectman William Moonan assembled a stakeholder group to explore the nomination process to create a cultural district in Bedford. Supporting this as well, is an effort to create better signs orienting visitors at Depot Park (and bicyclists ending their journey there) to Bedford Center and Great Road. Many recreational bicyclists ending their journey at Depot Park are not aware of the historic center as well as many restaurants and stores that are just a quarter mile away. A study group comprised of business owners, Bedford Chamber members, members of the Town’s cultural organizations, and Town staff has been formed to support and guide this effort.

### **Bedford Tree Lighting and Walkabout**



**Buccapellas sing at Bedford Chamber event, Old Town Hall.**



**Higgins Group offers hot chocolate to walkers**

The Bedford Departments, Recreation, the Economic Development office, Healthy Bedford, Police and Public Works, worked collaboratively with small businesses in Town Center to host the first Walkabout to coincide with the Town's annual tree lighting event.

The Town also supported the Bedford Chamber's successful Small Business event at Old Town Hall. The Walkabout had a great turnout with hundreds coming to Town Common to participate in the Tree Lighting, Laser show, and Old Town Hall event. Residents mingled, listened to live music, and also walked to businesses in Town Center that joined the festivities with goodies, raffles, and family photos for visitors. Santa's arrival on a Bedford Fire Truck to greet everyone was an added bonus. Thank you to our local businesses and the Chamber for helping to make this new event a success!

## Retail Workshop

Together with the Bedford Chamber of Commerce and the Middlesex 3 Coalition, we hosted a best retail practices workshop in April 2015 for Bedford retailers and restaurants. Recognizing the value of small businesses' contributions to our local economy, the workshop serves to support retailers and provide them with easy to employ strategies for how they can best present their product to customers. According to Chris Moynihan, the workshop presenter "when asked where to shop, 70% of consumers say they'd choose to shop local." She further noted that shopping locally keeps 67 cents per dollar within the local economy. We think that community economic development results in not only more jobs, but also more vibrant streets.

## Business Outreach and District Improvements

We continue to focus on building relationships with businesses and property owners to re-energize our commercial areas. We meet regularly with Wiggins Avenue and Crosby Drive companies, which has led to the continued growth of commuter shuttle service from Alewife to Crosby Drive through the Middlesex 3 Coalition and the REV shuttle from Alewife to Wiggins Avenue.

More recently, the Department of Public Works and Economic Development Office worked on a project to install new landscaping in the three prominent medians along Crosby Drive. Like medians in many business districts, they had been installed with grass and small trees initially but, without regular watering from a sprinkler system, had fallen into poor shape. National Development, owner of the Crosby Center business park, took the lead in designing a landscape plan incorporating a series of beautiful but drought-tolerant plant species. Property owners contributed the funds to purchase landscaping materials and Bedford Public Works worked diligently over the summer of 2015 to install the landscaping and a sprinkler system. The project not only beautifies the streetscape but also provides visual cues to drivers and pedestrians that create a sense of arrival to the district.



**Crosby Drive Median Landscaping Project demonstrates drought-tolerant, sustainable design.**

Andrew Gallinaro, Vice President at National Development, is optimistic about future collaboration with the Town:

*“We are very pleased to have been able to participate in the Crosby Drive median improvement project. Not only has the landscaping upgrade been a real benefit to property owners on Crosby Drive and the general public alike but the process of working with the Town of Bedford could not have been better. Because of this experience, I am confident that we will continue to find ways to collaborate with the Town towards a positive outcome for all.”*

## Permitting Matters

New restaurants are always a much discussed topic of conversation in Bedford as residents and company employees are keen to try the next new place. Because restaurants often require more permits because of state requirements about health and alcohol, we developed a special two-page guide for new restaurants looking to open up in Bedford.

After receiving feedback from restaurant managers who attended the Annual Alcohol Training in October 2015, Bedford Police streamlined the process for restaurant employees to obtain ID badges by allowing electronic applications instead of in-person applications to be submitted.

Meeting with new businesses that open in Bedford is our priority so we can ensure we can make the process of licensing and permitting as seamless as possible. We are developing a business guide specifically aimed at minimizing delays for businesses opening up in Bedford.

## 2016 Business Initiatives: A Look to the Future

Here are just some of the initiatives we will be looking at as we open the book on 2016.

- Develop a print and web-based “How to Open a Business in Bedford” guide targeted to small businesses wishing to locate/expand in Bedford
- To attract new businesses, assist with “branding” of industrial and commercial areas, i.e. Crosby Drive District; Depot District; Wiggins Avenue Life Sciences District; and Cultural Center
- Continue our collaboration with businesses organizations, the Bedford Chamber of Commerce and the Middlesex 3 Coalition, to further economic development and transportation goals
- Meet with Middlesex Turnpike property owners to ensure regular communication and project coordination regarding the Middlesex Turnpike Improvements Project, Phase III
- Highlight visitor/cultural resources in Bedford on the Economic Development website
- Develop outreach events to businesses to gather feedback on proposed zoning changes to encourage appropriate redevelopment and investment in our business areas
- Encourage community events centered in Bedford’s commercial areas, such as the Walkabout
- Explore a lunchtime shuttle service for employees to Bedford restaurants and shops

**Questions or Comments?** Feel free to reach out! Contact Alyssa Sandoval at [asandoval@bedfordma.gov](mailto:asandoval@bedfordma.gov) or 781-275-1111