

Build-Out Analysis Town of Framingham, MA

Objective

- Predict future growth and development patterns of the town based on current zoning
- Determine amount of available open space for public use

Project Description

A build-out analysis is utilized to determine the impact of development for a municipality in the future, based on the current zoning of the designated area. This is helpful to a community because it ensures that the locality is developing in a way that is sustainable and in agreement with its citizenry. There are three phases to this project. The first phase looks at the development potential of land in the town, namely what parcels of land do not have any form of development on them. The next phase looks at what recreational land remains available for public use. The last phase looks at the amount of buildable land as it relates to current zoning.

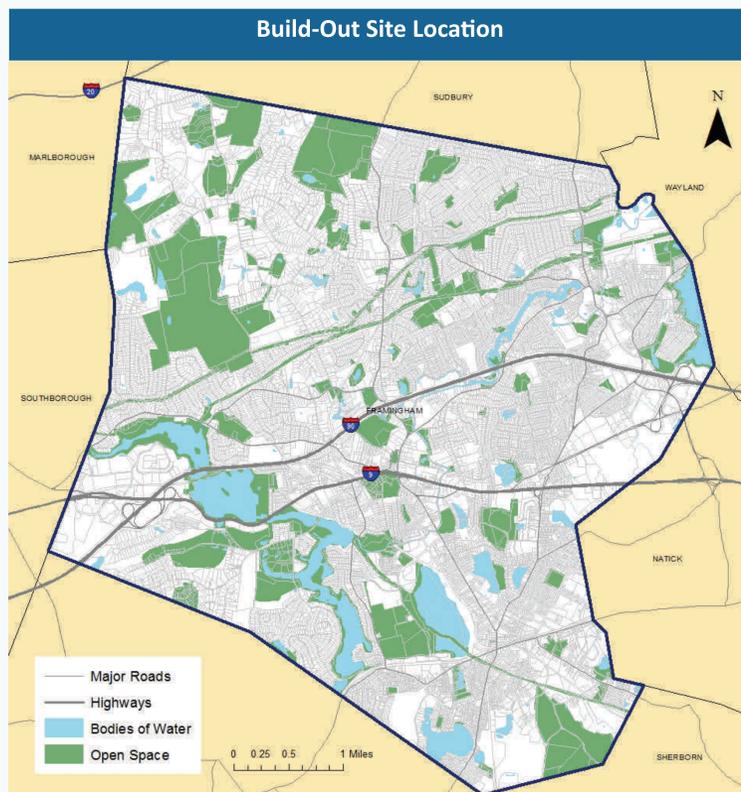
This analysis will serve to inform the town and its residents of where development is slated to take place in the future, based on the current zoning. The end goal is to assist community residents, city officials, and planners determine what patterns of development may need to change. This will allow sufficient consideration to be given to transforming current regulations to comply with better informed decision-making.

Research Questions

- How much land can be developed under the current zoning regulations?
- What is the maximum amount of land that can be developed under existing zoning?
- What are the types of development that can happen on the buildable land?

Site Summary

The town of Framingham is located about 20 miles west of Boston. As a major hub of Middlesex County, Framingham continues to serve as the epicenter of shopping outside of the city of Boston. There is a wide variety of uses housed within the town's 26 square miles. Most commercial development in the town runs along Route 9, a major highway, as well as in the downtown core. Working in tandem with this development is the need to balance the available recreational space for residents.



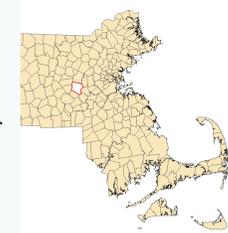
Methodology

First, a base map of the Town of Framingham was created to locate the site of analysis. Next, the current zoning of Framingham was delineated, based on the categorization made available by Mass GIS, the data center clearinghouse for the state of Massachusetts. In this designation, the "Other" category includes Institutional, Health Care, Mixed Use areas, and areas not yet zoned by the town.

Then, any parcel that had undergone any type of development was selected and juxtaposed to areas that had not underwent any development. The resulting map showcased an already quite developed and urbanizing town. Using the erase tool in GIS, development constraints were removed from the base map, including:

- Wetlands
- Bodies of water
- Recreational open space

Lastly, publicly available land was selected from the total amount of recreational open space. This will help city officials determine how much land has been set aside for the town to account for physical activity and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

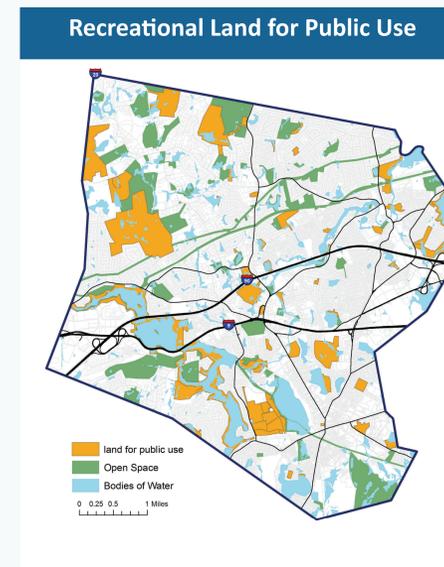
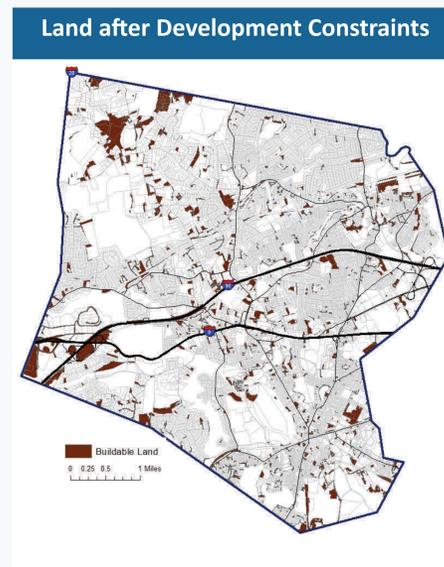
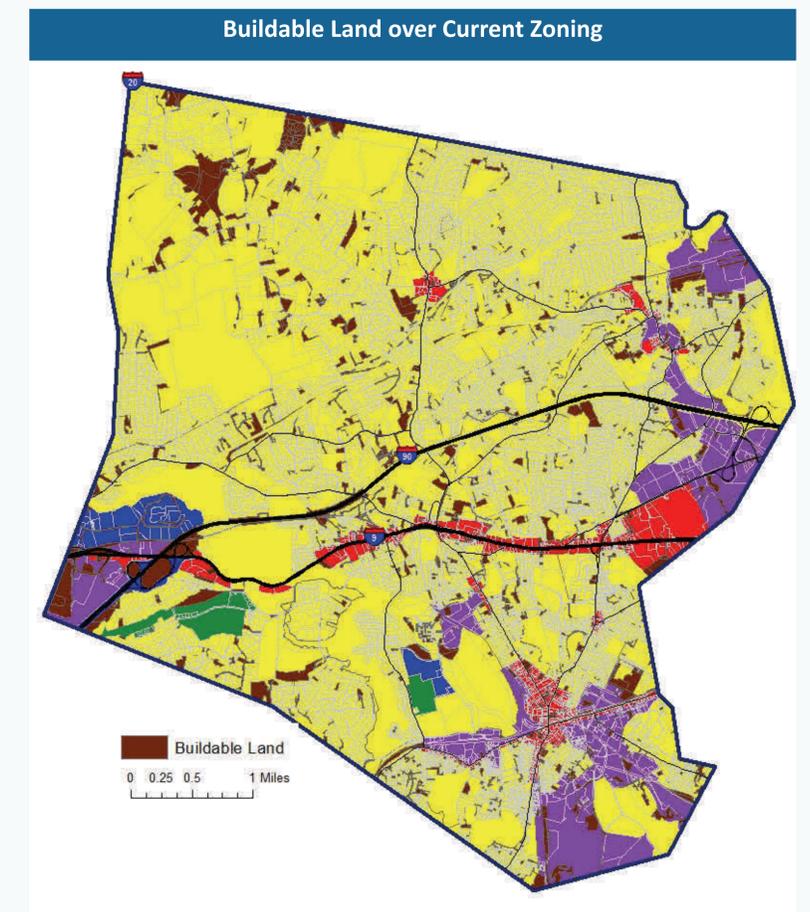
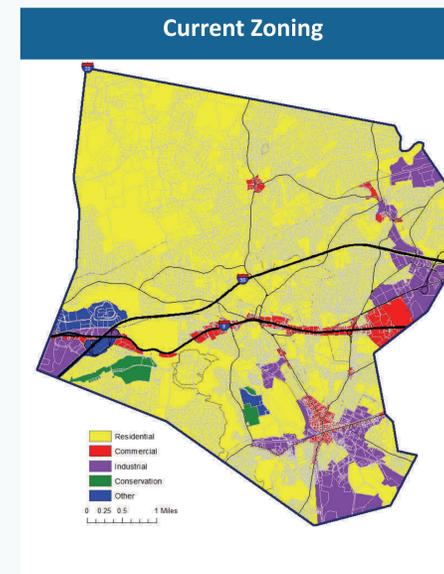
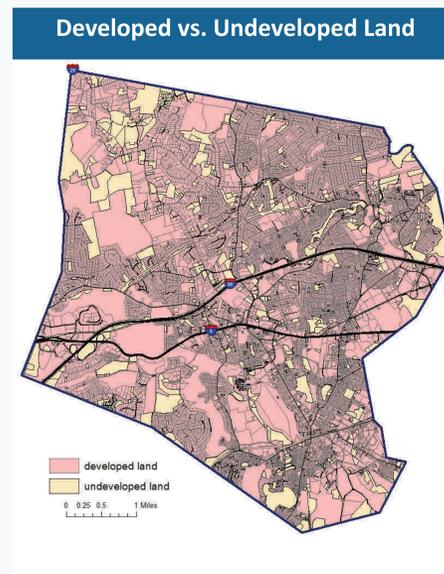


Results and Limitations

Under the current zoning regulations, not much of the land can be developed or made available for public use. Most buildable land, meaning land without development constraints, is located in the northwestern section of the town, while smaller portions of buildable land are not sufficient for development to take place. Furthermore, most of the land made available for public use remains on the northern part of the town, above the two major highways.

The open space available for public use on the southern part of town is comprised mostly of bodies of water and cemeteries. There is not much land set aside under existing zoning regulations for development. The types of development that can happen on the buildable land is mostly residential. There is some room for light industrial development in the downtown core as well as the southwestern corner.

A limitation to this study is the amount of buildable land that is currently zoned residential. Another limitation to this particular study was the lack of data surrounding the acreage of the buildable pieces of land to calculate the maximum amount of land available under existing zoning. Suggestions for future research would be determining the access to recreational facilities throughout the town, as there seems to be an emerging disparity in terms of park availability for residents on the northern and southern parts of the town.



Lenz Bayas

May 9, 2012

Data Sources: MassGIS & Town of Framingham

Projection:

NAD 1983 State Plane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001, Feet