

Community Development Plan for the Town of Hopedale, Massachusetts



Prepared for the Town of Hopedale by:

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
and the
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition

March 2004

**Hopedale, Massachusetts
Community Development Plan**

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Executive Summary

The Town of Hopedale completed this Community Development Plan in March 2004, with assistance from the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition (MWC) and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). This effort was funded through the Executive Order-418 Planning Program.

The Community Development Planning Process in Hopedale: The Master Plan was prepared by the Hopedale Community Development Planning Committee, which was appointed by the Hopedale Board of Selectmen. The small Committee was comprised of members from the Planning Board, Council on Aging, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, and other interested citizens and was led by Board of Selectmen member Alan Ryan. The Committee met seven times in all over the course of a year, and all meetings were open to the public.

To further increase the public's involvement in the Community Development Planning process, the Committee hosted a "visioning" forum on April 9, 2003. At this forum, citizens were asked to help the Committee prepare the Assets and Liabilities Inventory that is included herein as Section Two of this document. The public input from the forum was critical in guiding the Community Development Planning process in Hopedale and informed the Committee's deliberations as it set forth its planning program on the topics of housing, economic development and the natural environment.

HOPEDALE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SECTION TWO: ASSETTS & LIABILITIES INVENTORY

A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE TOWN OF HOPEDALE PUBLIC FORUM

**HOPEDALE, MASSACHUSETTS
APRIL 9, 2003**

Introduction: The attached represents the findings of the participants at the Public Forum held at General Draper High School on April 9, 2003. Listed are assets (strengths) and liabilities (weaknesses) that are perceived to exist in Hopedale concerning housing, economic development, the environment and transportation. The findings were taken from the written comments of the participants as they were presented. In other words, no judgments were made concerning accuracy.

Housing Assets

1. Community character is an asset.
2. The Town has a vibrant history.
3. From a regional perspective, housing in Hopedale is affordable.
4. Hopedale is a bedroom Community.
5. The architectural design of housing in Hopedale is unique and contributes to the Town's character.
6. The communal quality of housing is an asset.
7. There is a good housing mix in Hopedale (single family, condominiums, multi-family, etc).

Housing Liabilities

1. There is not much developable land left in Hopedale.
2. A low percentage of the Town's housing stock meets the Chapter 40B definition of affordable housing. Any developer proposing low and moderate-income housing could potentially build in any zoning district, regardless of suitability.
3. There is a lack of housing options for the elderly.
4. There is a lack of housing suitable for single young adults.
5. Draper Mill is not utilized for housing.
6. There is a lack of Town support for affordable housing.

Economic Development Assets

1. The Draper Mill has redevelopment potential that could promote economic development in Hopedale.
2. Hopedale Airport is an asset to the community.
3. The Route 140 Office Park is an asset.
4. Charles View Road Industrial Park.
5. Undeveloped Industrial land along the Upton Town line.
6. The Draper Place is an economic development asset.
7. The Town has an educated work force.

Economic Development Liabilities

1. The site conditions at Hopedale Airport Industrial Park could use improvement.
2. The Town is experiencing an economic downturn.
3. The Town lacks jobs and there are few employers in the community.
4. Lack of space for commercial and industrial development.
5. The tax rate is high for commercial and industrial businesses.
6. The well being of Hopedale's economy is closely tied to housing construction jobs for residents.

Environmental Assets

1. Draper Park (and other Town Parks) benefit the community.
2. The Golf course at the Country Club.
3. Hopedale Pond and the Mill River.
4. Hopedale Village Cemetery and the Town Cemetery.
5. The general layout of the Town and its streets.
6. Churches located in the community.
7. Mellen Field.
8. The three Town wells

Environmental Liabilities

1. Draper Mill is an environmental liability.
2. There is a lack of sewer capacity in the Town.
3. Treated sewage is discharged into Mill River.
4. Eutrophication of ponds is a problem for the community.
5. There is a need to protect open space around water resources to promote water quality.
6. Industrially zoned land and industrial uses are located next to natural resources.
7. On-site septic systems in Hopedale are an environmental liability.
8. Pesticide use near water resources is a threat to the environment.
9. Gas lines in the community are a liability.
10. Geese are degrading the water quality of the Town's ponds.
11. The Town does not have a Cluster Zoning bylaw to help preserve open space.
12. There is a need to protect more land from development.
13. There is a lack of open space resource protection in the community.
14. There is a need to protect land around aquifers and rare species habitat.
15. Apparently, the Town does not have a walking history trail. If there is one, some residents are not aware of it.

Transportation Assets

1. Route 16 and Route 140 are transportation assets.
2. Services in the community are within walking distance for many Hopedale residents.
3. The Town's Highway Department does a very good job.
4. The train tracks could potentially be used as a rail trail. Transportation would be enhanced as a result.
5. The Hopedale Airport is an asset.
6. Hopedale is in close proximity to the commuter rail.

Transportation Liabilities

1. There is a lack of local and regional public transportation.
2. Hopedale residents resist using public transportation.
3. Air pollution caused by automobiles is a liability.
4. Hopedale does not have direct highway access.
5. There are no bike racks at public facilities.
6. Currently, there isn't a regional trail system.

Other Assets

1. The Statue of Hope at the Bancroft Memorial Library.

HOPEDALE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SECTION THREE: GOALS & POLICIES

-Vision Statement-

In the year 2013, we envision Hopedale to be a cohesive and vibrant community in which people can enjoy living and working together throughout all the stages of their lives.

Hopedale will achieve this vision by providing quality educational and municipal services, and by creating an environment that encourages participation in community life, while maintaining its rich historical character.

Housing – Goal

- Increase Housing Opportunities for a Broad Range of Income Levels

II - Housing – Objectives

- Promote Housing Affordability
- Increase the Supply of Affordable Rental Units and Subsidized Units
- Improve the Condition of Hopedale's Housing Stock
- Promote Homeownership

Economic Development – Goal

- Maintain Stability and Manage Commercial and Industrial Growth in Order to Expand the Local Tax base and Employment Opportunities for all Hopedale Residents including those with low and moderate incomes

III - Economic Development – Objectives

- Increase Employment Opportunities for Hopedale Residents
- Increase the Tax Base by Promoting Controlled Commercial and Industrial Development
- Maintain a Quality Educational System that Produces a Professional and Educated Population that is able to fulfill the Regional Economy's Emerging Employment Needs

Resource Protection - Goals

- Sustain and Restore Water Resources in Town
- Retain Habitats, Open Spaces and Scenic/Unique Resources
- Promote Community Involvement
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities and Facilities

IV - Resource Protection – Objectives

- Continue enforcement of Wetlands Protection Act
- Preserve riverfront buffers through Rivers Protection Act reviews, and encourage conservation restrictions as part of riverfront projects
- Protect Hopedale and Milford well fields using Zone II regulations
- Develop watershed management plan for Hopedale Pond, which includes research on previous land uses to determine the need for analysis of potential pollutants in pond sediments
- Mitigate pollution from storm water discharges to rivers and ponds
- Manage aquatic weeds in Hopedale Pond and Spindleville Pond
- Verify potential vernal pools for certification with Natural Heritage Program
- Prepare conservation plans for industrial and commercial areas
- Avoid removal of trees and vegetation beside waterways and ponds
- Identify methods to reduce impacts of mosquito control on fish and wildlife
- Develop Greenway Plan for the Mill River Corridor
- Expand Parklands and protect rare habitats in north Hopedale;
- Preserve historic buildings and small-town character of Town Center
- Sponsor public awareness programs on open space and resource protection
- Form committees to work with Town boards and state agencies
- Encourage partnerships with community groups to manage Town resources
- Create trail system to link the Parklands, Town center and riverfront areas
- Provide improvements to Parkland trails for hiking, biking, skiing and equestrian uses, which also preserve the forest character of the Parklands
- Consider creation of a skateboarding facility in Town
- Foster public open spaces and recreation uses as part of proposed land uses

HOPEDALE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SECTION 4: HOUSING ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Hopedale Community Development Plan is funded through Executive Order 418, a State-sponsored initiative aimed at increasing housing opportunities for a broad range of income levels by helping towns proactively plan to meet housing, economic development, open space protection, and transportation needs.

The Housing Element of the Hopedale Community Development Plan first assesses and analyzes housing related trends including population and housing unit growth, average household size, population by age group, age of housing stock, housing occupancy, and type of households. A housing demand assessment and needs analysis documents the demand for housing in Hopedale, the housing needs of local residents and what is actually available (and affordable).

Findings from the housing assessment and analysis set Hopedale's housing goals and objectives as well as recommendations designed to fulfill them over the next 10 years and beyond. Based upon this information and coupled with open space and natural resources mapping, land use suitability for future development in the Town of Hopedale will be identified and mapped and short-term and long-term numerical goals concerning housing will be determined.

1. Housing Assessment and Analysis

A. Population Trends

The 2000 Census counted 5,907 residents in Hopedale, an increase of 241 persons from the 1990 Census count of 5,666 residents. With a relatively small total landmass that consists of 5.2 square miles, Hopedale has a population density of roughly 1,145.8 people per square mile. The Census Bureau has designated Hopedale's downtown area as a Census Designated Place (CDP), essentially a term given to a high-density urban cluster. According to the 2000 Census, 4,158 Hopedale residents (or 70.39% of the Town's total population) live in the downtown area. The table below presents Hopedale's growth in population over the years, as well as the town's projected population for the year 2010.

Table 1
Hopedale Population Growth

Year	# of People	Numerical Change	% Change
1920	2,777	---	---
1930	2,973	196	7.1%
1940	3,113	140	4.7%
1950	3,479	366	11.8%
1960	3,987	508	14.6%
1970	4,292	305	7.6%
1980	3,905	-381	-9.0%
1990	5,666	1,761	45.1%
2000	5,907	241	4.3%
2010 Projection*	6,101	194	3.3%

Sources: US Census Bureau; *forecast for 2010 provided by the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission.

Table 1 shows that Hopedale has been experiencing dramatic fluctuations in population since 1960; between the years of 1970 through 1980 the town's population decreased by 9% but over the next decade (1980-90) the town grew by more than 45% (1,761 persons). The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's (CMRPC) population forecast indicates that Hopedale's population rate will experience a modest increase (3.3%) over the next ten years. It should be noted that the projection is based on 2000 US Census data and past trends. However, recent subdivisions in Hopedale have accelerated the pace at which development is occurring. Therefore, it is a realistic assumption that this projection will be surpassed.

Table 2 indicates that Mendon, Millville, Sutton, and Upton all experienced significant growth from years 1980 to 2000 while growth slowed for Hopedale and Millis from 1990 to 2000. The population forecast indicates that growth could be highest in Mendon, Sutton, and Upton over the next decade.

Table 2
Population Growth and Percent Change – Comparable Communities

Year	Hopedale	Mendon	Millis	Millville	Sutton	Upton
1980	3,905	3,108	6,908	1,693	5,855	3,886
1990	5,666 (45.1 %)	4,010 (29%)	7,613 (10.2%)	2,236 (32%)	6,824 (16.5%)	4,677 (20.4%)
2000	5,907 (4.3 %)	5,286 (31.8%)	7,902 (3.8%)	2,724 (21.8%)	8,250 (20.9%)	5,642 (20.6%)
2010	6,101 (3.3%)	6,101 (15.4%)	7,412 (-6.2%)	2,968 (8.9%)	9,728 (17.9%)	7,145 (26.6%)

Sources: US Census Bureau; forecast for 2010 provided by the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission and MISER (Town of Millis)

B. Housing Unit Growth

Tables 3 and 4 show how the housing stock has grown over the years and allows for a comparison against the growth in population. Please note that Tables 3 and 4 refer only to year-round occupied housing units.

Table 3
Housing Unit Growth in Hopedale

Year	# of Occupied Housing Units	Numerical Change	% Change
1970	1,282	---	---
1980	1,331	49	3.8%
1990	1,978	647	48%
2000	2,240	262	13.2%

Source: US Census

Table 4
Housing Unit Growth – Comparable Communities

Year	Hopedale	Mendon	Millis	Millville	Sutton	Upton
1980	1,331	1,036	2,333	548	1,854	1,369
1990	1,978 (48%)	1,362 (31.4%)	2,832 (21.3%)	787 (43.6%)	2,261 (21.9%)	1,810 (32.2%)
2000	2,240 (13.2%)	1,815 (33%)	3,004 (6%)	923 (17%)	2,811 (24.2%)	2,042 (12.8%)

Sources: US Census.

Taken together, Tables 2, 3 and 4 indicate that the housing stock of Hopedale and the comparable communities is growing at a faster rate than their populations. The periods between 1980 and 2000 saw a high increase in the number of housing units throughout the region and according to MISER (See Table 5) there has been significant new housing

development recently in Hopedale and the comparable communities. For example, in the year 2002 there were a total of 37 building permits issued in Hopedale, 42 in Mendon, 26 in Millis, 24 in Millville, 62 in Sutton, and 45 in Upton.

Table 5
Annual Number of Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits: 1998-2002

Year	Hopedale	Mendon	Millis	Millville	Sutton	Upton
1998	73	62	15	9	68	28
1999	31	60	26	10	69	42
2000	27	47	28	14	75	54
2001	33	37	20	25	54	59
2002	37	42	26	24	62	45

Source: MISER

It is anticipated that housing units will continue to increase faster than the population grows. However, according to the Hopedale Build-Out Analysis prepared by CMRPC in 1999, there are only 961 developable acres remaining in Hopedale. Given existing zoning bylaw lot size requirements and environmental constraints, vacant residentially zoned land could have yielded 334 new residential lots. According to this analysis, if all of these lots were developed it would mean 914 additional residents in town. Table 6 provides a summary of residential build-out related data. As building lots become scarcer in Hopedale, housing costs could escalate and continue to make the development of larger houses on remaining lots a more attractive alternative to developers.

Table 6
Hopedale Residential Build-Out Statistics

Developable Acres	961
Housing Units	334
New Residents	914

Source: Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Notes:

1. The number of "Residents" at buildout is based on the persons per household figure derived from the 1990 US Census.

C. Average Household Size:

As previously indicated, Hopedale's housing stock has and continues to grow at a faster rate than its population. This is not surprising when one considers the national trend towards smaller household sizes. Couples are having fewer children today and many households are the single parent variety.

Hopedale's US Census data confirms this trend. In 1980, the typical Hopedale household contained 2.8 people. By 1990, the persons per household figure had declined to 2.79 and by 2000, to 2.58 persons per household.

Another factor contributing to smaller household sizes is “the graying of America,” that is, our nation’s elderly population is expanding. The Census data clearly demonstrates that this national trend is taking place in Hopedale. In 1970, the median age of Hopedale’s population was 33.7 years of age. By 1990, the median age had increased to 34 years of age, and the recent year 2000 Census show the median age has continued to increase and now stands at 38.7 years of age.

Table 7 displays change in age of the town’s population from 1990 to 2000. The number of very young children (under 5 years) declined by 10.8% during the decade, while children between 5 and 19 years of age increased by 128 or 11.6%. The increase in the number of school age children is borne out by the growth in the Town’s school population. In fact, the number of Hopedale school-aged children has grown so dramatically in recent years that the school is not going to allow in any “school Choice” students for the fall 2004 kindergarten class because Hopedale students have filled all of the available slots. New residential development (such as the Harmony/Green Mill Estates project) have boosted the Town’s school-aged population.

The data also reveals a large population increase occurred among those aged 35-54 (436 persons or approximately 28% and ages of 55-64 (136 persons or 44.6%). This indicates that buyers of homes must wait to enter their high wage-earning years before being able to afford a home. Conversely, one may also infer that it has become more difficult for young adults (20-34 years) to afford to live in Hopedale and that there are insufficient rental units since that age group rapidly declined by 473 persons or 34.3%.

Those aged 65-74 increased very slightly by 3.5%; this age group represents Depression Era births, when the birth rate was low due to severe economic factors. As these residents move into their more elder years, there is unlikely to be a significant increase in the 75 and over population. However, during the last decade, those 75 and over experienced rapid growth, 231 persons, for an increase of 87.2%. This may be partly explained by advances in health care, as residents are now living longer lives, and that there are alternative living arrangements for the elderly to continue to live in Hopedale.

Table 7
Population by Age Group

Year	Under 5	5 – 19	20 – 34	35 – 54	55 – 64	65 – 74	75 +
1990	480	1100	1380	1,554	305	432	265
2000	428	1,228	907	1,990	441	417	496
Change	-52	128	-473	436	136	-15	231
% Change	-10.8%	11.6%	-34.3%	28%	44.6%	3.5%	87.2%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

D. Housing Unit Inventory

Table 8
Type of Housing Units - Year 2000

Type of Unit	Number of Units	Percentage of Total
One Unit (Detached)	1,295	56.6%
One Unit (Attached)	375	16.4%
Two Units	271	11.8%
Three or Four Units	112	4.9%
Five or More Units	236	5.6%
Mobile Homes	0	0%
TOTAL	1,988	100%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Note: One Unit Attached is defined by the US Census bureau as a 1-unit structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures.

Table 9
Type of Housing Units in Comparable Communities - Year 2000

Town	One Unit	Two Units	3-4 Units	5+ Units	Mobile Homes
Hopedale	1,670 (73%)	271	112	236	0
Mendon	1,676 (88.9%)	143	22	39	6
Millis	2,268 (73.9%)	213	169	416	0
Millville	702 (73.3%)	131	87	24	4
Sutton	2,634 (89.3%)	154	93	61	8
Upton	1,698 (81.5%)	71	100	215	0

Source: 2000 US Census.

Please note that Tables 8, 9, and 10 include all housing units in Hopedale, including vacant houses and seasonal houses. Tables 8 and 9 indicate that 73% of Hopedale's housing stock is of the single-family home variety and 27% is of the multi-family variety. None of the comparable communities has a higher percentage of multi-family units. In comparison to similar communities, Hopedale has a slightly healthier mix of housing opportunities for Hopedale residents, especially when one considers that the majority of multi-family units are rental properties. The Town's housing mix has been fairly stable over the past twenty years, although the percentage of single family homes did grow at a faster rate than multi-family housing units during this period.

E. Age of Housing Stock

Table 10 indicates that more than one third of Hopedale's housing stock was built before World War II (35.7%). Table 11 shows that Hopedale has an older housing stock when compared to similar towns in the region. Furthermore, it is above the State average of 34.5%. With one third of Hopedale's housing stock being over 60 years old, it is safe to say that many of Hopedale's residential dwellings would not meet the State's current building code or pass muster with the Town's Building Inspector.

Table 10
Age of Hopedale Housing Stock

Year Structure Built	Number of Units	% of Housing Stock
1990-2000	247	10.7%
1980-1989	599	26.2%
1970-1979	106	4.6%
1960-1969	69	3.0%
1940-1959	450	19.7%
1939 or earlier	818	35.7%

Sources: US Census

Table 11
Age of Housing Stock (1939 or Earlier) in Comparable Communities - Year 2000

Town	Number of Pre-1940 Units	% of Housing Stock
Hopedale	818	35.7%
Mendon	399	21.2%
Millis	519	16.9%
Millville	376	39.2%
Sutton	711	24.1%
Upton	528	25.3%
Massachusetts	905,698	34.5%

Source: 2000 US Census.

F. Housing Occupancy

In 1990, there were a total of 1,546 owner-occupied housing units and that figure increased to 1,747 in the year 2,000. During the same time span, rental units increased from 432 units to 493 Table 12 indicates that 78% of Hopedale's housing stock is owner-occupied. In terms of the percent of occupied housing units versus the percentage of vacant units, the 1990 Census indicated a 1.21% homeowner vacancy rate and a 4.18% rate for rental property. The 2000 Census reported that the homeowner vacancy rate is 0.3% while the rental vacancy rate is 2.4% indicating a more competitive housing market.

Table 12
Type of Occupancy (Owner/Renter - 2000)

Type of Occupancy	Number of Units	Percentage
Owner Occupied Housing	1,747	78.0%
Renter Occupied Housing	493	22.0%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Table 13 indicates that, outside of Millis, Hopedale has the largest supply of rental units. Only Millis has a higher percentage of rental units (23%) and none of the other comparable communities get past 20%. Once again, this indicates that Hopedale fairs well in the provision of rental units when compared with similar communities in the region.

Table 13
Type of Occupancy in Comparable Communities (Owner/Renter - 2000)

Type of Unit	Hopedale	Mendon	Millis	Millville	Sutton	Upton
Owner	1,747 Units (78.0%)	1,606 (88.5%)	2,312 (77.0%)	739 (80.1%)	2,498 (88.9%)	1,683 (82.4%)
Renter	493 Units 22.0%	209 (11.5%)	692 (23.0%)	184 (19.9%)	313 (11.1%)	359 (17.6%)

Source: 2000 US Census.

G. Types of Households

Table 14
Hopedale Households by Type (2000)

Household Type	Number of Households	Percentage
Family Household	1,573	70.2%
Non-Family Household	667	29.8%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Table 14 indicates that more than 70% of Hopedale's households consist of families. This represents a decrease since the 1990 Census when family households accounted for 78.9% of all Hopedale households. There has been a further increase in the number of households headed by females. The 1990 Census counted 145 households headed by females while the 2000 Census counted 198 such households.

Table 15
Households by Type – Comparable Communities (2000)

Household Type	Hopedale	Mendon	Millis	Millville	Sutton	Upton
Family Household	1,573 (70.2%)	1,451 (79.9%)	2,164 (72.0%)	720 (78%)	2,283 (81.2%)	1,562 76.5%
Non-Family Household	667 (29.8%)	364 (20.1%)	840 (28.0%)	203 (22%)	528 (18.8%)	480 (23.5%)

Source: 2000 US Census

Table 15 indicates that of the comparable communities Sutton, Mendon, and Millville have the highest rate of family households while Hopedale has a lower percentage. Normally, communities with a higher number of multi-family units and rental units will have a lower percentage of family households due to the fact that non-family households usually rent.

H. Housing Demand Assessment & Needs Analysis

The following analysis will document the demand for housing in Hopedale, the housing needs of local residents and what is actually available (and affordable) for housing opportunities. Before going any further, it is important to outline the assumptions used in this analysis.

- The analysis makes use of year 2000 statistics so that they may be cross-referenced to the 2000 US Census data.
- The median family income for the Boston, MA-NH Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA), as determined by the federal Department Housing & Urban Development (HUD) HOME Program income limits for the year 2000 is \$65,500.
- Hopedale's poverty-level income figure was obtained from the 2000 US Census.
- Housing demand and need was calculated for poverty-level households, low-income households (poverty-level to 50% of the area median income), low-to-moderate income households (50-65% of the area median income), moderate-to-middle income households (65-80% of the area median income), middle-income households (80-150% of the area median income) and upper income households (above 150% of area median income).
- It was assumed that households making up to 65% of the area median income would not be in the market to buy a home but instead would most likely rent housing.
- It was assumed that households making more than 65% of the area median income would most likely be in the market for buying a home. (NOTE, this bullet is not formatted the same as the others)
- For renters, it was assumed that 30% of their annual income would go toward rent.

- For homebuyers, it was assumed that 28% of their monthly income would go toward a house mortgage principal and interest. It was further assumed that homebuyers would make a down payment of at least 10% and have a 30-year mortgage at 7%.
- The number of rental units and their price ranges were estimated from the 2000 Census.
- Year 2000 home sales data was obtained from the Hopedale Assessors Office and only arms-length home sales were considered qualified in the ensuing analysis. An “arms-length” sale is a sale between a willing buyer and a willing seller with no unusual circumstances involved (i.e. sale between members of the same family, sale in proceedings of bankruptcy, etc.).

The table on the following page provides an affordability analysis for Hopedale rental units. The table outlines the various renter income categories, the number of Hopedale households fitting the income categories, the number of rental units in Hopedale that are affordable to the various income categories and the gap/surplus for such rental units.

Table 16
Rental Unit Need/Demand Analysis

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Rent	# of Households	# of Actual Units	Deficit/ Surplus
Poverty	\$13,290 and Below	\$332 and Below	209	113	- 84
Poverty-to-Low	\$13,290 - \$32,750	\$332 - \$818	316	177	-139
Low-to-Moderate*	\$32,750 - \$42,575	\$818-\$1,064	175	103	- 101

* = Households earning between 50-65% of the area median income.

Table 16 indicates that Hopedale has a shortage of rental units that are affordable to poverty-level households as well as low and moderate-income households. The 2000 US Census further supports this assertion as 99 Hopedale households were identified as paying more than 30% of their monthly income toward rent. It is generally assumed that renters paying more than 30% of their monthly income toward rent are exceeding their affordability.

In terms of homeownership opportunities, there were 193 residential property sales in Hopedale during the year 2000, of which 83 were arms-length single-family home sales and 33 were arms-length condominium sales. Table 17 provides an analysis of demand for homeownership in Hopedale. The table outlines various homeownership income categories, the number of Hopedale households in each category and the median sales price of various types of housing units in Hopedale for the year 2000.

Table 17
Homeownership Need/Demand Analysis

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Housing Prices	Number of Households
Moderate – to – Middle	\$42,575 – 52,400	\$166,111 - \$203,888	206
Middle – to – Upper	\$52,400 – 98,250	\$203,888 - \$393,333	844
Upper	\$98,250 and above	\$393,333 and above	450

Year 2000 Median Sales Price For Single Family Home: \$274,644

(83 arms-length sales in 2000)

Year 2000 Median Sales Price for Condominium: \$153,198

(33 arms-length sales in 2000)

* Please note that an analysis was not done for two-family or multi-family dwellings; there was only one arms-length two-family sale, and one arms-length multi-family dwelling sale during the year 2000.

Table 17 indicates that homeownership in Hopedale was within the grasp of all the various income groups in the year 2000 that could participate in the homebuyer market with those households that earn at least 65% of the median area income restricted to purchasing a condominium. Thus, homeownership in Hopedale is moderately affordable when considered within the regional context. According to Assessor Records dated from January through October of 2002, the median sales price of a condominium increased to \$195,000 and the single-family median sales price increased to \$309,500.

However, the median area income also increased, to \$74,200. Coupled with lower interest rates (approximately 6% to 6.5%) those households earning 65% of the median area income can still afford to purchase a condominium and those earning 100% of the area median income could afford a single family home.

I. Supply of Subsidized Housing

In 1969, the state passed M.G.L. Chapter 40B with the goal of increasing the amount of affordable housing in communities throughout the Commonwealth. It contains two major components which are meant to assist developers who wish to build housing that meets the affordable housing criteria as outlined within the law. The first component is the Comprehensive Permit process, where several local permit applications are consolidated into a single application to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The ZBA is authorized to grant waivers from zoning and other local regulations to make a project economically viable. The second component gives developers the right to appeal ZBA decisions to the Massachusetts Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) in communities where the percentage of affordable housing units falls below 10% of the year-round housing units (See DHCD Web Site for affordable housing units that are eligible to contribute towards a community's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory www.state.ma.us/dhcd/ch40B).

Table 18
Supply of Eligible Housing Units Contributing Towards Chapter 40B
Subsidized Housing Inventory

Year	Total Year-Round Housing Units	Total Chapter 40B Units	% Subsidized Base
1990	2,055	80	3.89%
2000	2,284	80	3.50%

Source: Mass. DHCD

Table 19
Location and Type of Eligible Housing Units Contributing Towards Chapter 40B
Subsidized Housing Inventory

Address	Total Units	Chapter 40B Units	Type
98-106 Hopedale Street	40	40	Chapter 667 Program Elderly/Handicapped
110-120 Hopedale Street	40	40	Chapter 667 Program Elderly/handicapped

Source: Hopedale Housing Authority

As Table 18 illustrates, Hopedale's percentage of eligible housing units contributing towards Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory did not change between 1990 and 2000. With the number of year-round units increasing during the decade, the percentage of affordable units decreased during the ten-year period. Table 19 shows the locations and types of the 80 affordable units. All of the rental units are owned and managed by the Housing Authority.

The waiting list of the Hopedale Housing Authority supports the need for affordable rental units:

- Elderly/Handicapped Housing Units (DHCD Program 667): There is a current waiting list of 47 people (0 local residents and 47 non-local).

The Hopedale Housing Authority's waiting list indicates a significant demand for elderly/low-income/disabled housing. Local residents are served first. However, the substantial number of non-local people on the waiting list indicates that the demand is more regional in nature. However, in terms of affordable rental units, Hopedale ranks fairly well when compared to the region. The Year 2000 DHCD Housing Certification Program lists an affordable monthly rent figure of \$1,635 (30% of area median family income) for the Boston, MA-NH PMSA. According to the Year 2000 US Census, there were only 53 rental units in Hopedale (out of a total of 491 rental units) that had monthly rents \$1,500 or more. Thus, Hopedale's rental units are relatively affordable when considered within the regional context.

2. Housing Goal and Objectives Statement

Below are Hopedale's Housing Goal and Objectives. They are based upon findings from the preceding Housing Assessment and Analysis. The Recommendations that follow are designed to help fulfill the Town of Hopedale's Goal and Objectives over the next ten years and beyond.

GOAL

- Increase the housing opportunities for a broad range of income levels.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote housing affordability.
- Increase the supply of affordable rental units and subsidized units.
- Improve the condition of Hopedale's housing stock.
- Promote home ownership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue #1. Hopedale has a limited supply of buildable land and housing can be expensive.

According to the buildout analysis conducted by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, there is a limited supply of land that can be developed for residential purposes in Hopedale. According to assessor records, the median sales price for a single family home increased from \$274,644 in the year 2000 to \$309,500 through October 2002. Also, single-family residences that have been constructed in Hopedale over the past few years tend to be larger and more expensive than the existing housing stock. As lots become scarcer, the cost of new homes will most likely continue to increase.

What can the town do to promote housing affordability with its limited supply of buildable land and the increasing cost of new homes?

Adaptive Reuse. The Town should consider the reuse of any abandoned, underutilized, or obsolete property. This could also be a way of preserving and/or restoring unique architecture in the community, which can also be of historical significance.

The Town should inventory publicly and privately owned property, vacant, underutilized, deteriorated land and/or buildings with residential reuse potential now. Occasionally, such properties can be acquired through tax taking, donation, negotiation, distress sale, and bank foreclosure, or brownfield remediation. In addition, a variety of housing options such as elderly housing, condominiums, and apartments should be given consideration in any future redevelopment efforts concerning the Draper complex; studies conducted on the redevelopment of the Draper complex have indicated that it is so large that it is unrealistic to expect that it would be used for just one use. Currently, the owner of the Draper complex is working with a redevelopment expert on a re-use plan that will include over-55 housing opportunities (including housing that will meet the State's affordability guidelines) as well as some retail and recreation space.

The Community Preservation Act is a good tool to promote adaptive reuse projects while simultaneously preserving open space and historic resources. Under this program, a community that adopts the Community Preservation Act establishes a municipal Community Preservation Fund. Monies collected come from a surcharge of up to 3% on local property taxes. The state provides matching funds – no less than 5% but no more than 100%. Communities must allocate at least 10% of all funds raised to open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. The remaining 70% may be allocated to any of the three without a percentage restriction. Additional information on the Community Preservation Act can be found on the state's website at www.state.ma.us/dhcd.

Self-Help Housing. The Town could explore Self-Help Housing programs, perhaps in conjunction with adaptive reuse. Self-Help programs involve sweat-equity by the homebuyer and volunteer labor of others to reduce construction costs. Some communities have donated building lots to Habitat for Humanity to construct affordable single housing units. Under the Habitat for Humanity program, homebuyers contribute between 300 and 500 hours of sweat equity while working with volunteers from the community to construct the home. The homeowner finances the home with a 20-year loan at 0% interest. As funds are paid back to Habitat for Humanity, they are used to fund future projects. Habitat for Humanity might be willing to visit Hopedale and make a presentation if invited. The Greater Worcester Habitat for Humanity, located in Worcester, MA can be contacted at (508) 799-9259.

Issue #2. Rent is expensive for lower income groups

The U.S. Census indicates that 99 Hopedale households were identified as paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards rent, which is excessive. In addition, there is a deficit of rental units affordable to poverty, and low-income to moderate-income individuals (See page 10, Table 16).

Hopedale's population is also growing older. Most elderly individuals are on a fixed income, which often makes it very difficult to continue to maintain their home throughout their retirement years. Hopedale's 75-and-over population has grown from 265 to 496 persons between the years 1990 and 2000, representing an 87.2% increase. Hopedale's next generation of senior citizens (55-64 population) has grown by 44.6% since 1990.

The segment of the Town's population aged 35-54 has grown by 28% over the last decade. Therefore, coupled with healthcare advances, it is anticipated that Hopedale will have a shortage of affordable elderly housing and will be dealing with this issue for some time to come. Furthermore, the Hopedale Housing Authority manages two senior housing developments (98-106 Hopedale Street and 110-120 Hopedale Street), and the Authority's waiting list indicates a strong demand for senior housing. This need may be filled if the Draper complex reuse plan is realized.

How Can the Town help house these Hopedale residents?

The Town could include senior housing provisions in the Zoning Bylaw. Hopedale's Zoning Bylaw does not contain any provisions that directly address the need for senior housing alternatives. Many communities in Massachusetts have adopted senior housing bylaws within their zoning framework. Such bylaws can take the form of senior residential communities, retirement communities, as well as assisted living and residential care facilities (both are governed by State regulations). The Town needs to give serious consideration to the type of senior housing alternative that best meets its elderly housing needs, whether it be a senior residential community, retirement community, assisted living facility or a residential care facility. In general, most types of housing development in a community have a negative impact on municipal finances. However, senior housing can sometimes have a positive impact; very few school age children would reside in this type of housing.

To provide an incentive for developers, a density bonus could be allowed for this type of housing with a special permit. This increase in density would be offset by the fact that seniors typically make fewer automobile trips generating less traffic and at off-peak hours. The Draper complex reuse plan, if brought to fruition, will help fill this need in Hopedale.

The Town should encourage the use of the existing accessory apartment provision within its zoning bylaws. Hopedale already has an accessory apartment bylaw; one accessory apartment may be permitted by special permit of the Board of Appeals in all residential districts subject to conditions. Accessory apartments allow elderly people to live in close proximity to their family while living independently at a low cost, as well as young people who cannot afford their own home at the time. Accessory apartments also allow the primary homeowner to collect a bit of rent, thus helping them cope with property taxes. The town should raise awareness of the possible use of the existing Accessory Apartment Bylaw as a way to increase the number of rental units in Hopedale.

Issue #3. Hopedale has a shortage of affordable housing and does not comply with MGL Chapter 40B.

Chapter 40B of Massachusetts General Laws outlines a municipality's responsibilities regarding the provision of low and moderate-income housing. Chapter 40B states that at least 10% of a community's housing stock must consist of housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income households. Communities that do not meet the 10% threshold

can be subject to a Comprehensive Permit housing proposal whereby a developer can have the project exempted from local zoning and subdivision requirements as long as 25% of the new units are affordable to low and moderate-income households. Many communities were unpleasantly surprised to have comprehensive permit applications thrust upon them in very inappropriate locations. Hopedale does not have an abundance of developable land; the Town could be susceptible to this in the future.

The DHCD Web Site for affordable housing units that are eligible to be counted towards a community's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory can be found at www.state.ma.us/dhcd/ch40B). Please note that not all subsidized, low or moderate-income housing in the community is listed because Section 8 mobile voucher and Massachusetts MRVP voucher do not qualify for the inventory.

Looking at the average home sale price and average contract rent in Hopedale, the town does provide some opportunities for affordable housing (see Housing Demand Assessment, pages 9). However, poverty and low-income people cannot afford to buy a house in Hopedale and many renters pay more than 30% toward rent. Furthermore, according to the Housing Assessment and Analysis, housing prices have increased substantially over the last two years making homeownership more difficult. While existing homeowners benefit from this price escalation, the local and regional economy will suffer if potential employers are unable to fill vacancies due to the high cost of housing.

Currently, only a handful of municipalities in Massachusetts have achieved this 10% threshold (DHCD Website for Subsidized Housing Inventory at www.state.ma.us/dhcd/). At the present time, only 3.50% of Hopedale's housing stock is meets the Chapter 40B definition, and these units consist of the elderly/handicapped units managed by the Hopedale Housing Authority. While these circumstances are not unusual for a community like Hopedale, the town should make a good faith effort to provide its share of affordable subsidized housing for its citizens.

How Can Hopedale increase its supply of affordable housing and make a good faith effort to comply with Chapter 40B?

1. Working with developers to bring in the type of housing the town's residents need: Hopedale officials are currently working with officials from DHCD as well as the owner of the Draper complex to discuss possible housing scenarios that will allow for the development/reuse of the Draper facility in a way that benefits the community and its citizens and also brings us closer to our 40B goals.

- a. Non-Regulatory Options: The Town could review its non-regulatory options for providing low and moderate-income housing and make every effort to ensure that 10% of Hopedale's housing stock consists of low and moderate-income housing.
- b. Grant Programs: The Town should take a closer look at the State's Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the various housing

grant programs offered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) (See Recommendation under Section 4, for more detail concerning grant programs). The Board of Selectmen may opt to establish a Local Housing Needs Committee to assist in this effort.

- c. Inventory of Privately Owned Property: The Committee could inventory vacant, underutilized, deteriorated buildings and/or land with the potential of supplying subsidized housing and work with the property owner to help secure state funds.
- d. Publicly Owned Property: The Committee should also conduct an inventory of any publicly owned buildings/land that might be suitable for subsidized housing. Substandard lots that don't meet the Town's current zoning requirements (frontage, width, depth requirements, etc.) should also be given consideration. If the proposed project didn't pose negative impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, approval could potentially be granted by the local Zoning Board of Appeals under a special permit or, the comprehensive permit could be used. There is a variety of State sponsored funding options that can be used to develop/rehabilitate publicly owned properties that have the potential to be converted to subsidized housing.
- e. Public Education: The Committee should work to educate the public about current and future housing needs, the social and economic benefits associated with it, and that it is important to achieve community acceptance of different forms of affordable housing. Municipalities can play a critical role in providing and facilitating public education in order to develop the community support critical to the success of affordable housing policies and initiatives. Municipalities have a variety of approaches available to help educate the public, ranging from workshops and public presentations to major media campaigns.

2. Chapter 40B Housing Proposals: The Zoning Board of Appeals should seek out opportunities concerning training on how to deal with Special Permits as they relate to low/moderate income housing projects as defined by Chapter 40-B of Massachusetts General Laws. The Town should also develop review criteria for Comprehensive Permits. The UMass Extension's Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) offers classes on this subject on an annual basis and will even provide customized training sessions to individual communities. In addition, DHCD has prepared a procedural "how to" booklet for local communities. The Zoning Board of Appeals would be the responsible municipal entity to establish review criteria for comprehensive permit proposals. The Massachusetts Housing Appeals Committee Web site has guidelines and examples of model by-laws.

3. Inclusionary Zoning/Incentive-Based Zoning: These methods require a strong real estate market with high housing costs making them practical options for the Town of Hopedale to investigate. The general purpose behind inclusionary zoning and incentive-

based zoning is to increase a community's affordable housing stock. Inclusionary zoning can be seen as the "stick" approach, while incentive-based zoning is the "carrot" approach. An inclusionary zoning bylaw is one that requires new subdivisions to set aside a certain percentage of new housing units as below-market units, i.e., units that can be counted toward the town's affordable housing unit inventory under Chapter 40B. Typically, inclusionary bylaws require that anywhere from 10% to 25% of new housing units consist of below-market units. The Massachusetts Zoning Act does not explicitly authorize inclusionary zoning, however, many Commonwealth communities have inclusionary zoning bylaws on the books and have made the case that such bylaws are legally valid under the State's "Home Rule" authority. Chapter 40B is an example of an inclusionary requirement. Massachusetts courts have generally approved of inclusionary zoning; however, they have frowned on assessing fees in lieu of providing actual affordable housing units.

Incentive-based zoning attempts to increase the affordable housing stock by offering incentives to developers to create below-market units as part of their developments. Such incentives can include higher densities, reduced frontage, reduced setback requirements, a reduction in the required roadway width, reduced infrastructure connection fees, and other incentives that can improve a developer's bottom line. Incentive-based zoning is an example of giving something to get something. Incentive-based zoning is explicitly authorized within the Massachusetts Zoning Act. Incentives only become an effective tool when there exists a strong demand so that developers are willing to build the additional units in return for higher profits. The Town may wish to take some pro-active steps to bring its affordable housing unit inventory closer to the 10% required under Chapter 40B. Towards that end, Hopedale should investigate both inclusionary zoning and incentive-based zoning and determine which approach would work best for the Town. The responsible municipal entity would be the Planning Board.

Issue #4. Hopedale has an older Housing Stock.

As indicated in the Housing Assessment and Analysis (Page 7, Table 10), almost 36% of Hopedale's housing stock was built prior to 1940. It is quite likely that many of these older residences would not meet today's various housing codes (plumbing, electricity, weather-proofing, building code, etc.). Aesthetic improvements could also be made, which would also serve to enhance the visual appearance of neighborhoods throughout the community.

What could the town do to improve the condition of its Housing Stock?

The Town could further investigate various grant opportunities to see if they make sense for Hopedale and its property owners. Funds could also be sought to maintain/modernize existing subsidized housing units.

In many instances, Hopedale is currently at a disadvantage in regard to obtaining State grants. Because of a shortage of housing throughout the Commonwealth, the Governor enacted Executive Order 418 (E.O. 418). One element of E.O. 418 involves Housing

Certification. Currently, Hopedale is not Housing Certified. It is recommended that Hopedale attain Housing Certification status in order to improve its eligibility for a variety of State grant opportunities. Information on Housing Certification can be found on the State's Department of Housing and Community Development web-site: (www.massdhcd.com/eo418/homepage2.htm).

While the Town may not have the time or resources to apply for many grant opportunities, there are numerous private sector planning consultants that would be more than willing to work with Hopedale on specific grant applications. Another option would be to utilize the grant writing services of its Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). As a member of CMRPC, Hopedale is eligible to receive 24-hours of planning assistance every year. Many member communities have utilized their 24-hours of planning assistance for the purpose of having CMRPC assist them with a particular grant application.

There are numerous grant opportunities for housing rehabilitation projects, especially when they benefit low and moderate-income families. The following is a brief description of available federal housing rehabilitation grants that can be utilized by the Town.

- *Community Development Block Grant Program:* This program was developed at the federal level by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is implemented at the State level by DHCD. Funds for housing rehabilitation (code violations, roof and chimney repairs, siding, etc.) are available on an annual basis. Other activities are also eligible under this program. Community Development Block Grants are very competitive; historically, less than 50% of applications submitted are funded. Communities that have been Housing Certified by DHCD receive bonus points when applying for Community Development Block Grant funds.
- *The Housing Development Support Program:* The Housing Development Support Program is a component of the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by DHCD. The program is designed to assist with project-specific affordable housing initiatives with the emphasis on small-scale projects that might otherwise go unfunded. Typical projects include housing rehabilitation, new construction, reclamation of abandoned properties, elderly and special needs housing, and the conversion of obsolete and under-utilized buildings for housing. Funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, site work and related infrastructure. Projects are limited to a maximum of seven housing units, 51% of which must be affordable to and occupied by low and moderate-income households (households earning up to 80% of the area's median household income).
- *The Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust Fund:* The Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) was established by an act of the State Legislature and is codified under Chapter 121-D of the Massachusetts General Laws. The AHTF operates out of DHCD and is administered by MassHousing with guidance

provided by an Advisory Committee of housing advocates. The purpose of the fund is to support the creation/preservation of housing that is affordable to people with incomes that do not exceed 110% of the area median income. The AHTF can be used to support the acquisition, development and/or preservation of affordable housing units. AHTF assistance can include:

- Deferred payment loans, low/no-interest amortizing loans;
- Down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers;
- Credit enhancements and mortgage insurance guarantees;
- Matching funds for municipalities that sponsor affordable housing projects;
- Matching funds for employer-based housing and capital grants for public housing.

Housing developments financed by the AHTF can include market-rate units, but the Trust Fund cannot be used to support such units. The level of assistance provided by the AHTF to a specific project must be the minimum amount necessary to achieve the desired degree of affordability. Housing units created through the AHTF can be counted towards the Town's 10% threshold for affordable housing under Chapter 40-B.

- *The Local Initiative Program:* The Local Initiative Program (LIP) is administered by DHCD and was established to give municipalities more flexibility in their efforts to provide low and moderate-income housing. The program provides technical assistance and other non-financial assistance to housing developed through the initiative of local government to serve households below 80% of the area's median household income. The program limits the State's review to the most basic aspects of affordable housing: the incomes of the people served, the minimum quality of the housing provided, fair marketing and level of profit. LIP projects must be initiated by the municipality, either through zoning-based approvals (rezoning, special permits, density bonuses, etc.), financial assistance and/or through the provision of land and/or buildings. LIP projects can include new construction, building conversion, adaptive re-use and building rehabilitation. LIP projects are usually administered at the local level by a local housing partnership and approved by the Board of Selectmen. Affordable housing units created by a LIP project will be counted towards the municipality's 10% low and moderate-income housing goal under Chapter 40B.
- *The HOME Program and the Housing Stabilization Fund:* These programs are offered by HUD (managed at the state level by DHCD) and are designed to support the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing structures. Acquisition funds are only available to low-income families. Eligible projects include: property acquisition; housing construction and/or rehabilitation; connecting to public utilities (sewer & water); and making essential improvements such as structural improvements, plumbing improvements and energy-related improvements. These programs are offered every two years. Once again,

interested communities need to do a substantial amount of advance work prior to submitting a grant application.

- *The ‘Get the Lead Out’ Program:* This HUD-sponsored program is managed at the State level by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). This is a lead abatement program available to single family homes and 2-4 family properties. Offered on an annual basis, these funds are generally easier to apply for than the above referenced CDBG funds.
- *Home Improvement Loan Program:* Another HUD program managed by MassHousing, this program offers funds to eligible owners of one-to-four unit residential properties so that they can make necessary improvements to their residential structures. Eligible improvements include: sewage disposal systems and plumbing needs; alterations and renovations that will enhance property safety; energy-related improvements and repairs designed to bring the structure up to local building codes. Offered on an annual basis, these funds generally have an easier application process than the above referenced CDBG funds.
- *Community Septic Management Program:* This program was developed at the federal level by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is administered at the State level by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The program makes available to homeowners loan money (at 5% interest) for repairing failing septic systems.
- *Weatherization Assistance:* HUD provides funding assistance to regional non-profit organizations for fuel assistance and weatherization programs. The Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. is the regional agency that provides such services for Worcester County communities. In order to be eligible for the weatherization program, the applicant must receive some form of federal fuel assistance benefits.

Issue #5. Many Hopedale Residents are not yet Homeowners

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 493 renter occupied housing units in the Town of Hopedale making up 22% of all occupied housing units (see Housing Assessment and Analysis, Page 8, Table 12). Owning a home is still the goal of most Americans, and research suggests that homeownership has a positive influence on families, neighborhoods and the economy. With more than 22% of Hopedale residents renting their housing, some could be unaware that homeownership is within their grasp.

How can the town help to promote homeowners?

1. Homebuyer Counseling, Education. Homebuyer Counseling and Education are valuable marketing and outreach tools that can help Hopedale residents bridge the information gap and prepare them for a successful application and ownership experience. The Town of Hopedale could either plan a first-time homeownership initiative by

partnering with an agency or institution that provides homebuyer counseling or simply make it known to Hopedale residents that such educational organizations exist.

There are many nonprofit agencies that offer this service and most have information brochures that could be displayed at Municipal Offices. They are trained, monitored and certified by the Massachusetts Homeownership Collaborative, which is coordinated by the Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). They provide “soup-to-nuts” information about the home-buying process, from how to budget or repair damaged credit to the many types of mortgage products and downpayment assistance programs. Many also sponsor, or participate in, homebuyer fairs. The CHAPA website (www.chapa.org) maintains a list of counseling agencies and their current and planned activities. Many conventional lenders conduct similar programs.

2. Soft Second Loan Program. The Town of Hopedale already participates in the Soft Second Loan Program and should continue to do so in years to come. This is a program sponsored by both the public and private sector that combines a conventional first mortgage with a subsidized second mortgage to help low- and moderate-income households qualify for a mortgage and purchase a home for the first time. The first-time homebuyer must make a 5% down payment (2% needs to be their own money). A standard 30-year fixed rate mortgage covers up to 75% of the purchase price of a home, avoiding the additional expense of private mortgage insurance. A publicly subsidized second mortgage covers the remaining 20%. The borrower makes reduced, interest-only payments on the second mortgage for 10 years. For the first 5 years, public funds will cover up to 75% of the monthly payments on the second mortgage. Over the next five years, the amount of subsidy gradually decreases until it is fully phased out by year 10. By year 11, the homeowner will be paying the full principal payments on the second mortgage.

3. Senior Work-Off Abatements. The Town’s Senior Work-Off Abatement Program has been very successful over the years and the Town should continue to promote it. After retirement, some senior citizens need to sell their home due to a reduction in income. By continuing to promote the program, the Town will help to reduce the local property tax liability of seniors in exchange for volunteer service to the municipality allowing seniors to maintain homeownership.

SUMMARY: Several recommendations are made in this report to assist the Town of Hopedale address the housing needs identified in the Housing Assessment and Analysis. These needs include enhancing affordability, assisting lower income groups and the Town’s growing elderly population, increasing the supply of subsidized housing, improving the physical condition of the housing stock, and promoting homeownership. The following is a housing strategy that the Town could implement to meet its housing needs.

- First, the Board of Selectmen should form a Local Housing Needs Committee to work on implementing housing recommendations made in this report. Participating committee members could range from interested citizens, local

municipal board members, the Council On Aging, members of the private sector i.e. mortgage officers, developers, etc. It is also recommended that the town attain Housing Certification status.

- An inventory of public and private land/buildings suitable for adaptive reuse and subsidized housing should be conducted. Self Help programs i.e. Habitat for Humanity, can also help to reduce construction costs to promote affordable housing opportunities. A variety of housing options should be considered concerning any future redevelopment plans for the Draper complex.
- The Local Housing Needs Committee should also investigate grant opportunities, including those that would improve the physical condition of the housing stock. To improve its chances of obtaining state grant funds, or even to qualify in some instances, it is recommended that the Town achieve Housing Certification status. In particular, a highly viable recommendation that can be implemented now would be to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for Housing Rehabilitation.
- The Town should consider implementing a Senior Housing bylaw. Hopedale's older population is increasing dramatically. This would provide housing for a segment of the population that is not adequately served by Hopedale's housing supply. Also, senior housing probably wouldn't result in a negative fiscal benefit to the town since very few school age children would reside in this type of housing.
- There are more than 493 occupied rental units in Hopedale and most Americans strive towards the goal of owning their own home. Furthermore, homeownership promotes stability, has a positive impact on neighborhoods, and is good for the economy. The town should continue its participation in the Soft Second Loan Program and senior work-off abatements, and should consider displaying homebuyer counseling and education pamphlets and brochures at Municipal Offices. Self-help housing could also help to promote both affordability and homeownership opportunities.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals should seek out training sessions relating to the comprehensive permit process and establish review criteria on how to deal with Comprehensive Permits. If the Town is subjected to a Comprehensive Permits in the future it would be better prepared.
- Multi-family dwellings should be encouraged in areas with existing infrastructure, in part through adaptive reuse. Higher density housing can be more affordable and would also alleviate some pressure to develop housing in more rural areas.
- Over the long term, as the real estate market continues to strengthen and housing costs escalate in Hopedale, the Town should begin to investigate

more complex housing strategies such as inclusionary zoning/incentive-based zoning.

- Finally, the town should work to educate the public about its housing needs and the social and economic benefits associated with different forms of affordable housing. The Town could provide and facilitate workshops and public presentations to enhance community support for affordable housing policies and initiatives.

3. Housing unit production and land use suitability

According to the Housing Assessment and Analysis, the Town of Hopedale is expected to grow by 194 persons between the years 2000 and 2010 (See Page 2) and the typical Hopedale household contains 2.58 persons (See Page 4). Taking into consideration the trend towards smaller household sizes, an additional 86 housing units will need to be produced between the years 2000 and 2010 (or approximately 9 units per year) in order to house the expected population increase. Although the long term expected increase in housing units will very likely be exceeded due to development in Hopedale that has taken place over the last few years, future residential growth in Hopedale will most likely be relatively slow; according to the build-out analysis results (see Page 4), Hopedale has just a small amount of developable land left.

The State Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) Year 2004 Housing Certification Program lists the median family affordable purchase price for a new home in the Boston, MA-NH Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA) at \$375,123 (based upon 150% of the median family income). Approximately 11 out of 25 (about 44%) units created in Hopedale over the twelve-month period met the affordable criteria in the Year 2004 Housing Certification Program. In terms of Housing Certification and the town's housing unit production goals (a requirement of Housing Certification), the town should try to maintain this balance; the town's short-term numerical goal for affordable housing unit production should be four (4) new units that meet the affordable housing purchase price or approximately 44% of the projected nine (9) housing units per year.

The town currently has a relatively healthy mix of rental units (22% of the housing stock) in comparison to similar communities (see page 8) and should strive to maintain this balance. Out of the additional 86 total units to be produced by the year 2010, approximately 22% or 19 units should be rentals. The Housing Assessment and Analysis indicates that much of the housing stock in Hopedale is somewhat affordable, at least from a regional perspective (see page 10). However, only 3.5% of the town's housing stock contributes towards the State's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (see page 11). While this is not unusual for a community like Hopedale, there is a shortage of affordable rental units for poverty and low-and-middle-income groups and the town's elderly population is growing. The town should make a good faith effort to increase its supply of subsidized units over the next ten years.

Land Use Suitability: The following identifies development potential throughout the Town of Hopedale. It is to be used together with the preceding recommendations, housing unit production goals, the Resource Protection Element of this plan, and the Housing Suitability Map. The Housing Suitability Map locates those areas of town that are best suited for various types of land uses.

The Draper complex is an enormous structure that is vacant and unproductive. The greatest challenge facing the town is to develop a viable re-use for this building. Studies conducted on the redevelopment of the Draper complex have indicated that it is so large that it is unrealistic to expect that it would be used for just one use. In conjunction with any potential commercial/industrial/institutional uses, a variety of housing options (elderly, condominiums, apartments, etc.) should be considered in any future redevelopment efforts. Surrounding the Draper complex is the Town Center, institutional buildings, Town Hall, some small commercial uses, Hopedale Pond and near-by recreational facilities.

Residential units located in the Draper complex would be an ideal location to serve young adults, empty nesters, small families, elderly and special needs citizens, and others seeking smaller than traditional housing.

New home construction in Hopedale is very limited in all zoning districts. The RB District is the Town's largest lot district, requiring a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. This has led to a more rural, low-density development pattern. Although Hopedale's build-out scenario (conducted in 1999) indicated that this district has the highest development potential (229 buildable lots), substantial residential development has occurred over the past few years (Harmony subdivision). The Hopedale build-out scenario indicated that the following zoning districts have little new development potential; RA Zoning District (48 buildable lots), RA-1 Zoning District (40 buildable lots), and the RP-1 District (15 buildable lots). Therefore, the primary focus for future new residential development in Hopedale should be on adaptive re-use when such opportunities arise. According to current zoning, adaptive re-use could consist of higher density housing; two-family dwellings are allowed by special permit in the RA, RA-1, and RA-2 zoning districts. Higher density housing in these districts would help to serve young adults, empty nesters, small families, the elderly and special needs individuals, and others seeking alternatives to single-family housing.

Around the town center are older residential neighborhoods that once housed the workers who supplied labor for the Draper Complex. The houses, many of which are two-unit structures, offer accommodations that are more affordable compared to the newer homes being built in the town. However, it is quite likely that many of these older residences would not meet today's housing codes. While a Community Development Block Grant Housing Rehabilitation Program (See Page 19, CDBG funds) could be a town-wide program, the town may wish to target certain areas in particular, such as around the town center.

Town Of Hopedale Housing Suitability Map

ZONING CODE DESCRIPTION

CODE	DISTRICT
C	Commercial
CEM	Cemetary
GB	General Business
HMF	Historic Multi-Family
I	Industrial
LI	Light Industrial
RA	Residential A
RA-1	Residential A-1
RA-2	Residential A-2
RB	Residential B
RC	Residential C
REC	Recreational
RP-1	Residential Performance 1
T	Town Land

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Zoning Boundary
- Developed Land
- Slopes > 25%

TRANSPORTATION

- Active Rail
- Abandoned Rail
- Local Road
- Major Road

HYDROGRAPHY

- Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- 100' River Protection Act Buffer
- Floodplain
- Water Body

OPEN SPACE

- Municipal
- Permanently Protected

Consider Establishing Target Area(s)
for Housing Rehabilitation, Including
Areas Around the Town Center

Promote the Use of Accessory Apartments

In Conjunction With Other Uses,
Consider a Variety of Housing Options
in any Future Draper Factory Redevelopment
Efforts

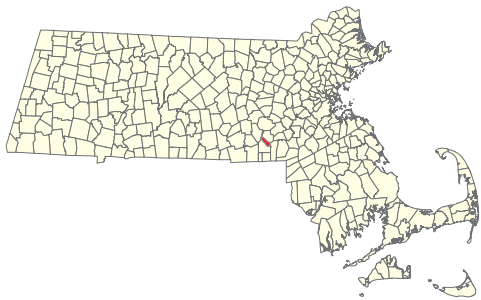
Promote Adaptive Re-Use,
Particularly in Zoning Districts With
Little or No Developable Land,
if such an opportunity arises

Encourage Two-Family Dwellings:
RA, RA-1 and RA-2 Districts

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only.
This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition,
regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution
intrepreting positional accuracy.

Produced by the GIS Center at
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.
35 Harvard Street, Second Floor, Worcester, MA 01609-2801

Source data:
New land use and miscellaneous undevelopable lands were developed by CMRPC.
Subdivisions and zoning districts were developed by CMRPC and the town of
Hopedale. Open space developed by CMRPC, the town of Hopedale, MassGIS,
and other state agencies. MassGIS 1:25,000 hydrography was derived from USGS
Digital Line Graph files. River Protection Act buffers were developed by CMRPC.
All other data are from MassGIS.



HOPEDALE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SECTION 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Assessment of Hopedale's Current Economic Base

1. Hopedale's Labor Force

The number of employed Hopedale residents has grown steadily since the economic recession in the early 1990's, growing from a low of 2,629 employed people in 1992 to 2,897 people by the year 2001 (an overall increase of 10.19%). Conversely, Hopedale's local unemployment rate dropped from a high of 8.4% in 1991 to 2.1% by the decade's end. The second half of the 1990's saw the largest increase in the number of employed Hopedale residents, along with a concomitant drop in the Town's unemployment rate. However, Hopedale's unemployment rate has been creeping up since the year 2000. Hopedale's unemployment rate is closely tied to that of the state and the state as a whole saw a similar jump in its unemployment rate. Hopedale's unemployment rate (as well as the State's) has continued to rise into 2002. It can be noted that Hopedale's unemployment rate has been consistently lower than that of the State, suggesting that Hopedale residents have been slightly less prone to layoffs than other communities when the State's economy declines.

Table 1
Employment Status of Hopedale Residents

Year	Total Hopedale Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Hopedale Rate of Unemployment	State Rate
1990	2,979	2,782	197	6.6%	6.0%
1991	2,875	2,633	242	8.4%	9.1%
1992	2,846	2,629	217	7.6%	8.6%
1993	2,906	2,707	199	6.8%	6.9%
1994	2,875	2,737	138	4.8%	6.0%
1995	2,811	2,689	122	4.3%	5.4%
1996	2,815	2,717	98	3.5%	4.3%
1997	2,909	2,801	108	3.7%	4.0%
1998	2,923	2,835	88	3.0%	3.3%
1999	2,975	2,905	70	2.4%	3.2%
2000	2,950	2,887	63	2.1%	2.6%
2001	2,992	2,897	95	3.2%	3.7%
2002	3,152	3,001	151	4.8%	5.3%

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

Note: Employment within Table 1 is measured by place of residence

2. Number and Types of Jobs in Hopedale

The Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training is the State entity in charge of tracking the changes taking place in the various sectors of the State's economy at both the state and local levels. The table below presents the changes that took place in Hopedale's local economy from 1990 to 2001.

Table 2
Employment and Wages in Hopedale

Year	Total Annual Payroll	Avg. Annual Wage	# of Establishments	# of Workers Total	Agriculture, Forestry Fishing	Government	Construction	Manufacturing	*TCPU	Whole/ Retail Trade	*FIRE	Services
1990	\$37,169,803	\$24,358	125	1,526	21	208	84	339	311	137	8	418
1991	\$37,318,045	\$25,215	119	1,480	19	237	66	271	310	174	conf	398
1992	\$38,483,761	\$25,845	117	1,489	23	208	68	241	300	179	conf	469
1993	\$40,627,670	\$27,322	115	1,487	23	188	74	248	288	178	conf	485
1994	\$44,253,966	\$28,477	134	1,554	27	190	84	241	287	197	conf	525
1995	\$45,377,867	\$28,648	132	1,584	27	196	71	266	236	227	conf	556
1996	\$51,174,229	\$29,857	143	1,714	21	198	141	291	219	262	6	576
1997	\$51,243,216	\$31,808	142	1,611	conf	225	130	290	conf	159	5	574
1998	\$52,119,986	\$33,092	147	1,575	12	235	159	291	218	121	4	535
1999	\$56,780,742	\$34,707	151	1,636	18	250	161	305	201	146	29	526
2000	\$63,617,838	\$36,859	150	1,726	conf	273	203	308	228	140	54	504
2001	\$65,414,742	\$38,730	147	1,689	12	274	109	250	236	207	65	536

*TCPU = Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities

*FIRE = Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

conf = data suppressed due to confidentiality

Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training

Note: Employment data contained in Table 2 is measured by place of employment rather than place of residence.

Table 2 indicates that the number of business establishments operating in Hopedale have been slowly but steadily increasing since 1993 (32 additional establishments), while the number of workers (or jobs in Hopedale) increased by 202 in the same time span. The most notable increases in jobs took place in the service sector (51 jobs), government (86 jobs), and the construction trades (35 jobs).

Out of a total of 1,689 jobs in Hopedale (year 2001), 31.7% were service oriented and 14.8% were in the manufacturing industry. Growth in the service sector has also been a national trend and employment in the construction sector increased as a result of an improving national economy and low interest rates to finance new construction projects. The Town of Hopedale's total manufacturing job base remained relatively stable in contrast to the rest of the CMRPC region where almost 7,000 such jobs were lost in the 1990's. The region, the state, and all of New England for that matter, lost a significant amount of manufacturing jobs.

While updated data concerning Hopedale's largest employers is unavailable, according to the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce there are 36 companies that employ a total of 279 persons located in the Hopedale Airport Industrial Park along the northern end of Hopedale. The size of these businesses ranges from a minimum of two employees to a maximum of 30 (HFP Sprinkler).

Table 2 also indicates that the total annual payroll increased by approximately 71%. The average annual wage also increased significantly from \$24,358 in 1990 to \$36,859 by the year 2000 (more than a 51% increase). This wage increase was ahead of the inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index, which increased 33% during that same period. Since local wages increased, Hopedale residents had more disposable income to spend on housing and goods and services in the local area.

The Table below allows for a comparison of the types and number of jobs for similar-sized communities in the region. The table also provides a year 2001 employment and wages comparison for Hopedale and comparable communities.

Table 3
Employment and Wages – Year 2001 Comparison

Town	Total Annual Payroll	Avg. Annual Wage	# of Establish-ments	# of Workers	Agri./ Forest/ Fish	Govern-ment	Con-Struc-tion	Manu-facture	TCPU *	Whole/Retail Trade	FIRE *	Service
Hopedale	\$65,414,742	\$38,730	147	1,689	12	274	109	250	236	207	65	536
Mendon	\$40,203,950	\$29,518	155	1,362	21	238	238	38	0	433	29	361
Millis	\$67,461,105	\$31,363	237	2,151	47	303	166	374	89	676	56	440
Millville	\$5,110,213	\$23,768	40	215	c	121	20	14	0	0	7	9
Sutton	\$50,750,848	\$33,149	184	1,531	58	259	160	332	0	247	31	427
Upton	\$38,848,626	\$27,390	158	1,039	3	416	147	36	0	185	20	217

TCPU = Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities

FIRE = Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

conf = data suppressed due to confidentiality

Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training

Note: Employment data contained in Table 3 is measured by place of employment rather than place of residence.

The previous table indicates that Hopedale has the highest average annual wage of the comparable communities and the highest number of service sector jobs. Millis has the largest annual payroll, number of establishments, and the highest number of jobs by far in the Wholesale/Retail trade.

3. Where Hopedale and Comparable Community Residents Work

Table 4
Location of Work (In-Town, Out-of-Town)

Municipality	Total Workers	Worked in Municipality	% Worked in Municipality	Worked outside Municipality	% Worked outside Municipality
Hopedale	2,993	358	12.0%	2,635	88.0%
Mendon	2,818	461	16.4%	2,357	83.6%
Millis	2,523	297	11.8%	2,226	88.2%
Millville	1,391	95	6.8%	1,296	93.2%
Sutton	4,291	544	12.7%	3,747	87.3%
Upton	2,725	388	14.2%	2,337	85.8%

Source: 2000 US Census

The above numbers indicate that roughly 358 persons or approximately 12% of Hopedale's employed people worked in Town during the year 2000, while roughly 2,635 people or 88% worked out of town. In contrast, 14.5% of Hopedale workers worked in town in 1990. Furthermore, travel time to work increased from 25.6 minutes in 1990 to 30.6 minutes in the year 2000. In fact, all comparable communities experienced an increase in travel time to work over the last ten years.

The highest percentage of residents who worked in their municipality was the Town of Mendon at 16.4%, then Upton (14.7%), and Sutton (12.7%) while Millville had far fewer (only 6.8%). Like Hopedale, the Towns of Upton, Sutton, and Millville also had fewer residents working in-town in the year 2000 than in 1990. The Town of Mendon was the exception; just 13.3% of residents worked in Town in 1990.

4. Measures of Wealth

There are measures of wealth that reflect the health of the local economy by describing the incomes of local residents: per capita, median household and median family incomes, as well as the percent of people for whom poverty status was determined.

Per capita income is equal to the total incomes generated by a population divided by the number of persons in that area. Communities with higher number of persons per household or smaller household incomes would likely have smaller per capita income figures. The per capita income for the State of Massachusetts, using the 2000 U.S. Census, was \$25,962, while that of Hopedale was \$24,791, about 4.5% below the State average. Hopedale's per capita income was also lower than that of the comparable communities with the exception of Millville (See Table 5).

Table 5
Measures of Wealth, 2000 for Hopedale and Comparable Communities

Community	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	% People Living Below Poverty
Hopedale	\$24,791	\$60,176	\$68,571	4%
Mendon	\$27,693	\$71,164	\$79,337	4%
Millis	\$27,957	\$62,806	\$72,171	2.9%
Millville	\$20,497	\$57,000	\$61,513	5.8%
Sutton	\$27,490	\$75,141	\$81,000	4.4%
Upton	\$34,924	\$78,595	\$89,251	3.5%
Massachusetts	\$25,952	\$50,502	\$61,664	9.3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Another measure of wealth in a community is its median income, which is based on the type of household. In Table 5, family incomes are differentiated from other household incomes. For example, a single student living alone is considered a household but not a family. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Hopedale's median household income and median family income are both less than that of the comparable communities (once again, with the exception of Millville). However, it should be noted that both the median household income and median family income were both well above the state rate of \$50,502 (Massachusetts median household income) and \$61,664 (Massachusetts median family income). In addition, it should be noted that the percentage of people living below poverty in Hopedale (just 4%) is substantially lower than the state rate of 9.3%.

Any effort to increase economic activity in Hopedale should focus on increasing wages and creating new jobs for the Hopedale labor force. There are several ways in which economic development efforts can support these goals. They include attracting and retaining businesses with good-paying jobs; stabilizing residential property tax rates; encouraging local entrepreneurship, and providing social services, such as subsidized daycare and pre-schools to support single-parent families and households with two working parents.

5. Education

As shown in Table 6, residents with a high school diploma, but no higher education, represent the largest segment of the Hopedale population in terms of educational attainment. The second largest group (22.6%) has some college education, followed closely by residents with a bachelor's degree (19.3%). The state percentages reveal how the population in Hopedale compares to the overall state population in terms of educational attainment. As in Hopedale, the largest segment contains those with a high school diploma, but no higher education (27.3%). However, the second largest group is those with a bachelor's degree (19.5%) followed by those with some college (17.1%). The state data contains higher numbers in the groups at both ends of the educational

attainment spectrum than the Hopedale data. More than 15.2% of the state's population is reported to have less than a high school education – almost twice the rate of Hopedale (7.8%), and the proportion of residents with a graduate or professional level degree in Hopedale (8.7%) is less than the state rate of 13.7%. This is perhaps due to Hopedale's growing elderly population whom in general are less likely to have attained a graduate or professional degree.

Table 6
Educational Attainment - Population 25 Years and Over

Municipality	No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Hopedale	7.8%	31.9%	22.6%	9.6%	19.3%	8.7%
Mendon	6.8%	26.8%	20.7%	9.9%	25.1%	10.8%
Millis	5.9%	25.3%	21.6%	9.7%	26.5%	11.0%
Millville	14.4%	37.3%	20.7%	7.2%	15.4%	5.0%
Sutton	9.6%	24.8%	19.9%	9.7%	22.6%	13.3%
Upton	9.6%	24.3%	14.4%	6.8%	33.0%	11.9%
Massachusetts	15.2%	27.3%	17.1%	7.2	19.5%	13.7%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

6. Economic Sector's Contribution to the Local Tax Base

In fiscal year 2002, Hopedale levied a total of \$6,340,439 in taxes, based on a local tax rate of \$14.66 per \$1,000 (Residential) and \$23.88 per \$1,000 (Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property) of assessed valuation. Hopedale homeowners accounted for approximately 87% of the total 2002 tax base (\$6,340,439), while the business and industries accounted for approximately 10% of the tax base (\$642,845). The remainder (3%) was derived from taxes on personal property (\$192,464). The next two tables look at how Hopedale compares to similar communities in the region in terms of the commercial and industrial tax base.

Table 7
Commercial Tax Base Comparison

Community	FY 2002 Tax Rate	Commercial Taxes Levied	Assessed Valuation	% of Total Tax Levy
Hopedale	\$23.88	\$443,566	\$18,574,803	7.0%
Mendon	\$11.34	\$346,279	\$30,536,060	5.62%
Millis	\$15.14	\$711,102	\$46,968,402	6.85%
Millville	\$15.06	\$44,656	\$2,965,225	1.79%
Sutton	\$16.62	\$427,712	\$25,734,800	4.43%
Upton	\$11.32	\$201,211	\$17,774,800	2.80%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section.

Table 7 indicates that Millis's commercial development nets the highest amount of tax dollars of the comparable communities in terms of actual dollars. However, Hopedale has the highest percentage of the Town's total tax levy (7%) followed by Millis at (6.85%).

Table 8
Industrial Tax Base Comparison

Community	FY 2002 Tax Rate	Industrial Taxes Levied	Assessed Valuation	% of Total Tax Levy
Hopedale	\$23.88	\$199,279	\$8,345,000	3.14%
Mendon	\$11.34	\$58,613	\$5,168,700	.95%
Millis	\$15.14	\$211,645	\$13,979,220	2.04%
Millville	\$15.06	\$19,267	\$1,279,350	.78%
Sutton	\$16.62	\$226,212	\$13,610,800	2.34%
Upton	\$11.32	\$58,730	\$5,188,200	.82%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section.

Table 8 indicates that Millis and Sutton raise far more tax dollars from their industrial sectors than comparable communities. However, Hopedale has the highest percentage of total tax levy (3.14%). Accordingly, when the industrial and commercial tax levies are combined, Hopedale has the highest percentage of non-residential tax levies out of all the comparable communities, followed by Millis.

7. Vacant, Developable Industrially Zoned Land

CMRPC completed a buildout analysis for the Town of Hopedale in December 2000. A build-out analysis is a planning tool that determines the amount of vacant, developable land in town and assesses the potential impacts if this land were fully developed under the town's existing zoning standards. A buildout analysis does not attempt to determine when a community will reach full buildout, rather, it simply attempts to determine what the community would look like if it were fully built out according to the town's current zoning policies. In the case of Hopedale, a moderate amount of vacant, developable commercial /industrial land was identified (roughly 243 acres) within the town's commercial and industrial zoning districts. The table below presents a rough breakdown of the amount of vacant, developable land in each of the town's non-residential zoning districts and how much commercial/industrial floor space could be created if the land were fully developed under the town's current zoning standards.

Table 9
Non-Residential Buildout Analysis

Zoning District	Developable Land	Potential Floor Space	Potential New Jobs*
Commercial	103.5	600,871 sq. ft.	2,403
Light Industry	37.26	304,412 sq. ft.	1,217
Industrial	102.87	1,232,647 sq. ft.	4,930
TOTAL	243.63	2,137,930 sq. ft.	8,550

Source: CMRPC Buildout Analysis for the Town of Hopedale

*The new jobs figure is based on four employees per 1,000 square feet of floor space (multiplier supplied as part of the EOEA buildout methodology).

Table 9 indicates that 8,550 new jobs could be created under a full build-out scenario. However, that figure is somewhat dubious, as a full build-out of Hopedale's vacant commercial/industrial land is quite unlikely. With 1,726 jobs existing in Hopedale as of the year 2000, this would mean that Hopedale would have 9,276 jobs if the Town were fully built out under its current zoning standards. Again, this is highly unlikely. Zoning standards will likely change periodically, new development can render backland unusable and land protection efforts can effectively preclude development on certain properties. Again, a full buildout of the commercial/industrial districts is highly unlikely in the near future.

It should be noted that, unlike many communities throughout the Commonwealth, vacant commercial/ industrial land limitations might not pose a significant problem to the town in years to come depending upon what becomes of the Draper complex.

8. Home Occupations and Accessory Retail Uses

Hopedale's existing zoning scheme currently allows a variety of home occupations. It is a trend of our modern-day economy that more people are establishing home businesses and/or working from their homes. Increased numbers of people are employed by a company and yet spend a good deal of their workweek working from home or "telecommuting." The Internet and advances in home computers have created conditions where people can be quite productive working out of their homes. In fact, according to the 2000 census, 3.4% of Hopedale residents worked at home compared to 2.4% in the year 1990. There are no definitive rules or regulations that govern telecommuting and the practice is still evolving. Hopedale can expect to see an increase in the number of people working from their homes, whether they are starting home businesses or simply telecommuting.

9. Regional Economic Trends

The Greater Worcester Area Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee is the regional entity charged with forging an economic strategy for Central Massachusetts. The Committee is comprised of the Greater Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), and the Worcester City Manager's Office of Economic Development. Every year the CEDS Committee prepares an annual report that outlines its regional economic development strategy, notes trends in the regional economy and highlights successful projects occurring during the previous year. A CEDS Committee is a prerequisite for obtaining grants from the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The CEDS Committee has identified the following trends in the region's economy:

The Regional Economy in General –

- The national recession that began in early 2001 continued to affect the regional economy throughout 2002. Many companies were forced to cutback on hiring and spending, thus placing proposed expansion plans on hold. Perhaps hardest hit were the high technology and information technology sectors, both of which experienced severe declines in revenues and numerous company closings. At the Spring 2002 Economic Outlook Conference sponsored by the New England Economic Project (NEEP), economists predict that the Massachusetts economy will continue to lag behind most of the nation in emerging from the recession because the state is more reliant on the high technology and information technology sectors. The State's revenue crisis has only worsened the situation. Unemployment rose but consumer spending remained strong and local retailers were not adversely affected. The Worcester region, in general, has weathered the recession better than expected due to its diverse economic base. In fact, there were 20 new or expanded manufacturing facilities during 2002, and 43 new or expanded small businesses and eight industrial parks are in the planning stage.

Manufacturing –

- In spite of declines, manufacturing still accounts for 22% of the region's employment base and the following industries are actually on the rise: biotechnology, photonics, plastics, and electronic components.
- Roughly two thirds of the region's manufacturing firms have eventual plans to expand and three quarters have plans to diversify their product lines.

Service Industry –

- The service sector of the regional economy has shown the highest increase in jobs created since the 1980's with the health care industry responsible for the largest amount of job growth in the service sector.

Start Up and Small Businesses –

- Although small businesses are becoming an ever-increasing part of the regional economy, all of the banks still have difficulty making commercial loans under \$10,000 profitably and none of them have micro-loan programs for under \$2,000.

Workforce Development –

- Firms are still having difficulty finding skilled and semi-skilled workers or people with strong engineering skills.
- Many firms are not familiar with area job training programs and yet the Regional Employment Board (REB) has experienced more demand for job training than it has the resources to deliver.

Industrial Space Availability –

- State and regional economic development officials have noted a regional shortage of fully serviced industrial land and many companies have had difficulty finding suitable expansion land in their host community and the region as a whole.
- While water and sewer capacity is sufficient on a regional basis, such infrastructure often does not extend to key parcels of land.
- The region as a whole has done a poor job of cleaning up its “Brownfield” sites due to cuts in State and Federal funding. There are more than 950 such sites scattered throughout Central Massachusetts and less than 50 of them have been cleaned up to an acceptable level.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic Development Goal and Objectives Statement: Below are Hopedale’s Economic Development Goal and Objectives. The Recommendations that follow are an outline of major initiatives that are designed to help fulfill the Town of Hopedale’s Goal and Objectives over the next ten years and beyond.

GOAL

- The Goal of Hopedale’s Economic Strategy is to maintain fiscal stability by promoting commercial and industrial growth that is appropriate to the community in order to expand the local tax base and increase employment opportunities for all Hopedale residents, including those with low and moderate incomes.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase employment opportunities for Hopedale residents.
- Increase the tax base by promoting commercial and industrial development that fits in with the community.
- Maintain a quality educational system that produces a professional and educated population that is able to fulfill the regional economy's emerging employment needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Forming an Economic Development Commission/Business Development

Advisory Board: Currently, the town is in the process of forming a public entity charged with promoting economic development in Hopedale. Such an entity will be of use right now and, over time, it could be instrumental in any future reuse effort concerning the Draper complex. If a formal economic development entity is desired, a Town Meeting article could establish an Economic Development Commission (EDC), with specific goals to guide its actions. Members should be civic-minded and possess a broad range of business interests. The EDC should have a modest budget to enable it to engage in promotional and recruitment activities in order to carry out its mission. A second, less formal option is for the Board of Selectmen to establish an ad hoc Business Development Advisory Board that would have public and private sector representatives. This entity would advise the Selectmen on economic and tax policy, promote high quality development, encourage diversity of businesses, and advocate for changes to make it easier for companies to operate successfully in Hopedale.

In either case, such an entity would serve as a vehicle for communication, where the public and private sectors can debate appropriate economic development policy for the town, seek to develop a consensus, and work to promote economic growth. An EDC would foster a better business climate by increasing communication between the business community and town government. The EDC could interact with land use boards whose decisions have a direct impact on the desirability of the Town for business development. The EDC would advocate for changes in policy, seek economic development grants, encourage the entire community to support local businesses, and seek to attract new businesses to Hopedale. The EDC would also act as a liaison with state economic officials and be alert for new programs and opportunities of which the town may wish to take advantage. State officials would also welcome the ability to have a designated board to contact when companies are seeking sites in the region, or when new programs are available that may be suited to Hopedale companies.

An EDC would also be instrumental in promoting any efforts to redevelop the Draper complex. Hopedale's supply of commercial/industrial land suitable for

new development is limited (see Resource Protection Element, Land Use Suitability Analysis). Most land that hasn't already been developed has a number of environmental constraints and/or no or very little infrastructure. As Hopedale's remaining supply of commercial/industrial land is developed, business attraction and expansion will increasingly depend on reuse of existing buildings and expansion of existing firms.

In the future, the potential revitalization of the Draper complex could produce the most significant economic development results. The Draper complex, situated in downtown Hopedale Center, currently contains almost 1 million square feet of industrially zoned floor space. Both the 1993 Master Plan and a report conducted by the University of Massachusetts in the fall of 1993, Mill Reuse Potential, The Draper Mill Complex, indicated that the building is so large that it is unrealistic to expect that it would be used for just one use and a variety of mixed uses should be given consideration in any future redevelopment efforts including manufacturing, housing, light industry, warehousing, or even re-zoning the property to allow a large institutional use to occupy a portion of the building. Both plans summarized impacts associated with the potential reuse of this structure including traffic, water and sewer services, and parking. Land use impacts throughout the downtown area could also be significant if the Draper complex were redeveloped; small businesses might be established to serve residents and employees i.e. convenience stores, restaurants, pharmacies, etc. In anticipation of this, the Master Plan stated that it might be in the town's best interest to investigate a new type of Village District to diversify permitted activities.

According to a 1996 "Predevelopment Study", any reuse effort will prove to be difficult, lengthy, and time-consuming with many obstacles to overcome. It will also undoubtedly require cooperation between the community and the owner of the Draper complex in order to move forward. Existing town departments would be hard pressed to find the time to adequately deal with the kind of effort that would be required to redevelop the Draper complex. However, even the partial reuse of this building would provide substantial benefits to the town. Therefore, an EDC would be instrumental in terms of exploring mixed-use options while maintaining communication with the owner.

- 2. Streamline the Approval Process:** The review and approval process established for permitting a business expansion or relocation should allow for an objective evaluation of impacts and an opportunity to address issues of concern to the community. In return, such proposals are entitled to a fair hearing and reasonable period of time for local officials to render a decision. Applicants should not be subjected to unnecessary delays or inconsistent messages from municipal departments. Where the permitting process is perceived as inconsistent and confusing, a community may develop a reputation of being too difficult to deal with, and further economic

development may be discouraged. The town might want to consider the possibility of reforming its procedures where expedited approvals can be rendered without sacrificing a thorough evaluation. Good will created among the business community from such efforts will lead to improved relations and a greater willingness to work with local officials.

Hopedale could consider the possibility of establishing a Technical Review Committee (TRC) where proposals can be submitted to resolve technical municipal concerns. A TRC could potentially help to eliminate red tape in getting permits. The TRC could consist of local officials such as the Police and Fire Chiefs, Building Inspector, Water Department, Public Works, and Planning Board consulting engineer if that Board's approval is required. Applicants would submit their proposals to the TRC concurrently with a formal application for a development-related permit. This could include new subdivisions, site plan reviews, and special permit and variance applications. The TRC would present the town's concerns and provide guidance to the applicant in one convenient location. With all department heads in the same room, mixed and conflicting messages would be avoided. If members disagreed on a particular matter, the applicant could work quickly to resolve the differences so that the project could move forward. Upon resolution of engineering issues and departmental requirements, the appropriate board could review the application on its merits. The approving board could incorporate the TRC's recommendations in its decision to insure that all departments' requirements are addressed.

- 3. Promote Small Business Development and Expansion:** Since smaller companies constitute much of Hopedale's economic base, it is important for the Town to do what it can to insure the public sector provides a safe and healthy environment within which to operate such a business. Retention of existing firms, and accommodating expansion needs, is essential for creating a healthy economy. Much innovation in technology occurs in small, start-up companies; once a new product becomes a success, a company's expansion will require larger quarters and hiring of new employees, and generate further benefits to the economy through the purchase of goods and services. Local government can offer incentives to relocate or expand here, eliminate barriers that discourage growth, streamline the approval process to make routine applications predictable, and make improvements to the public infrastructure including the road network, pedestrian connections, and water, sewer, and drainage systems. Maintaining a strong liaison with local entrepreneurs and responding to their needs can make a difference when expansion decisions are made.

Another way the town could promote small business development would be to establish an incubator facility. One of the key strengths of Central Massachusetts is its preponderance of "knowledge-based" workers. The region has a wealth of highly skilled scientists, computer experts, engineers,

and technicians. With a large concentration of companies in innovative technologies, new product development is a constant occurrence and can lead to rapid employment gains. Incubators can provide an inexpensive option for entrepreneurs with a new idea and limited resources. By providing low cost space and sharing of essential services, start-up costs can be kept to a minimum, allowing companies to focus energies on product development. In the long run, it is hoped that a few successful businesses will expand and seek an alternative location in the town or region. An incubator should offer high-speed data transmission capabilities, video conferencing equipment, training classrooms, and the like. Although properties suitable for this purpose are scarce in Hopedale, the town should consider an incubator facility if such an opportunity presents itself.

4. Marketing and Outreach Efforts are essential components of an economic development strategy. Efforts should be directed at preparing marketing materials, which highlight the advantages of doing business in Hopedale and demonstrate any specific parcels that might be available for development. Local commercial realtors are often willing to provide such materials to prospective clients in their own efforts to help businesses find suitable quarters. Included among the marketing tools the town should pursue are:

- Add in information on the existing town web site, highlighting quality of life issues that make Hopedale special, such as the cultural/historic assets that the town has to offer, open space, the community school system, the Hopedale Industrial Park Airport, etc. The town could also prepare a brochure that could be distributed when inquiries are made by site seekers that highlights the strengths of Hopedale and the region of which it is a part. Given Hopedale's rich historical background, this could also serve to promote tourism, which would provide increased opportunities for self-employment, eating establishments, gift and craft shops, while reinforcing and preserving the unique character of the community.
- Hopedale has a limited amount of buildable commercial/industrial property and there are few available vacant buildings that could be used for economic development purposes. Nonetheless, the town should develop and maintain a database of any existing properties. The database should be searchable by parcel size, availability of water and sewer, proximity to major highway, easements in place, and any other information that a potential buyer may find useful. This information could also be placed on site search databases of other entities that promote economic development, including the Mass. Alliance for Economic Development (MAED) and the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. Not only would such a database be very useful to potential businesses, it would show that Hopedale is business-friendly and willing to provide resources in support of new industrial development.

- The Town should work with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Milford Area Chamber of Commerce. Both Chambers are a valuable information resource for local businesses and for businesses considering locating in the Valley, offering business planning assistance, peer-to-peer business counseling, capital planning assistance, export assistance, networking opportunities, educational seminars, and health insurance assistance. The Chambers provide a forum for business owners/operators to talk about the local business climate and economic development in general. The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Public Affairs Department represents the region's business community on Beacon Hill and Capital Hill.

5. Develop the Town's Grant Writing Capacity: Hopedale is eligible for a wide variety of federal and state grant programs, many of which serve to enhance economic development in a community. For example, the Ready Resource Fund, which is part of the Community Development Block Grant Program, can be used to fund technical assistance to small businesses, infrastructure repair or construction to support economic growth, and acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of buildings as long as the project benefits low and moderate income persons and/or eliminates or prevents slums and blight.

Applying for grants can be a time consuming endeavor that requires a great deal of research and narrative writing. Many town departments would like to apply for grants but simply do not have the manpower or time to adequately deal with the application process and must rely on volunteerism. The town should start to cultivate its grant writing capacity so that it can more fully access the significant amount of money that is available through grants.

The town's grant writing capacity could be developed in-house by hiring a professional grant writer, or through establishing a town planner/economic development coordinator position sometime in the future. If the town finds that it simply cannot afford to hire additional municipal staff for the purpose of grant writing/administration, the town could contract with a professional grant writer on an as-needed basis. There are numerous private sector planning consultants that would be happy to work with Hopedale on a specific grant application. Another option would be to utilize the grant writing services of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). CMRPC grant writing services include identifying and helping to select the best opportunities, conducting research and data collection, writing and editing with Town feedback, and delivering proposals. After a community has been awarded a grant, CMRPC will continue with technical, fiscal, and general administration to assure compliance with state/federal requirements, complete quarterly reporting, and handle most of the paperwork involved.

- 6. Workforce Education:** Workforce development is one instance where the town alone cannot solve a larger regional problem; nonetheless, each community can and should do its part to insure that there is an adequate supply of educated and trained workers to meet the needs of business and industry. All employers need access to a skilled and enterprising labor force. Even with the state's superior higher education system, the specialization of many highly technical industries in Central Massachusetts requires that the workforce be educated to meet diverse needs. Training programs are coordinated through Workforce Central, the region's Workforce Investment Board, which provides a "one-stop" access point to employment and training information. Active participation by local officials in such affairs can make members aware of training opportunities that may be invaluable for local companies. The town should work with other organizations to identify labor needs of local businesses and develop work force and training opportunities in those areas to insure that a trained cadre of workers is readily available.

The Mass. Department of Employment and Training currently manages the Workforce Training Fund, which offers grants to employers for worker training. Grants of up to \$250,000, with a dollar for dollar match, are awarded to small and medium-sized companies to provide training in a wide variety of areas. Manufacturing firms are particularly targeted to provide training on the operation of new, high tech equipment intended to improve manufacturing efficiencies. Financed entirely by Mass. Employers, \$18 million is available each year, with several funding rounds held annually. Technical assistance grants are also available to industry associations, labor organizations, colleges, and other entities with technical expertise to assist employers. If the Town had an economic development entity, it could help make local employers aware of this and similar resources to assist companies in staying profitable in a highly competitive environment. In addition, colleges could work with area employers to tailor a technical training program to meet an unforeseen need.

Local and regional employers should be an important player in addressing the needs of Hopedale schools. The business community should be surveyed to identify training and education needs of their companies and whether or not high school graduates have the skills needed by area companies. If the survey points out areas where improvement is needed, appropriate adjustments can be considered. Basic math, good writing skills, and a solid foundation in computer applications are needed in almost any entry-level position today. Employers can also assist the schools by offering internships to students and getting involved in the classroom with discussions of business operations and skills needed in the work place.

- 7. Become Active in Regional and State Economic Development Planning:** Hopedale's economic outlook is closely tied to that of its neighboring communities and the state. Many aspects of economic development require

cooperation on a regional level, and communities working together can insure that the region receives its fair share of state and federal economic development assistance. Therefore, the Town should participate in regional initiatives to insure that the region's economy stays strong and responds to fluctuations in the state and national economies. As one small member community in a larger economic region, Hopedale would not be expected to take a lead role in directing economic development efforts, but the Town can and should become a more active player in regional economic affairs.

There are several State-sponsored and regional economic development programs to which Hopedale has access. The following are just a few existing regional programs that might be of interest to the town.

- **Greater Worcester Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS):** The Greater Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), and the Worcester City Manager's Executive Office of Economic Development staff the CEDS Committee. Benefits of participating include networking with other members, learning of potential economic opportunities, lending the town's voice for initiatives of a regional nature to insure its needs are recognized, helping to formulate regional economic policy, learning of state and federal programs and funding opportunities, and keeping the town and region eligible for state and federal grants.
- **MassDevelopment:** MassDevelopment acts as the State's industrial financing authority. It works primarily with industries and non-profit organizations; however, it does offer several programs that provide technical assistance to municipalities. MassDevelopment administers the Predevelopment Assistance Program that can help municipalities fund projects that will result in economic benefits to the community and the region. MassDevelopment can help with site-specific projects and can assist with appraisals, financing, site planning and architectural services. Under its Economic Development Lending program, MassDevelopment can also assist with the planning and financing of industrial parks. It should be noted that MassDevelopment does have a regional office in Worcester.
- **The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission:** Covering Blackstone communities in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island, The John H. Chafee Corridor was established under the National Park Services' National Heritage Corridor Program. The Program's purpose is to encourage grassroots efforts for the preservation and restoration of significant historic and natural assets within the Corridor, foster compatible economic development (including tourism), and enhance recreational opportunities. The program is

administered at the local level by an Advisory Council comprised of local officials and residents, regional planning agencies and councils of governments, tourism districts and several agencies from both states. The Council has prepared a management plan to guide their efforts. It is anticipated that approximately one million dollars in annual federal funds will be provided to the Council during the current decade. The Corridor's various programs represent a significant economic development opportunity for the Massachusetts communities included in the project area. These communities can work with the Corridor's Advisory Council to obtain significant funds for developing recreation opportunities along the Blackstone River, preserving historic buildings, creating tourism attractions around old mill buildings and other sites of historical significance, and developing other history-related tourism projects.

- **MetroWest Growth Management Committee:** The Town of Hopedale may wish to investigate becoming a member of this Committee or simply attend meetings, which are open to the public. The MetroWest Growth Management Committee facilitates inter-local collaborative planning and problem solving to enhance the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region. This is accomplished by implementing programs and services that include conducting regional impact reviews on proposed development, organizing a monthly Planners Roundtable for professional planners and local planning policymakers, and facilitating public policy taskforces.

8. **Tax Increment Financing:** Hopedale should promote Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to create and retain jobs in town and stimulate the local economy. A TIF is a negotiated agreement whereby a town agrees to abate property taxes for a specified period of time, up to 20 years; in return, the business agrees to expand or re-locate and create a specified number of new jobs. Once local approval is obtained, the company can apply for the state 5% investment tax credit, which is commonly more important for the company than the TIF. A local TIF program can ensure that a certain percentage of jobs for Hopedale residents, local contractors are used for building construction/rehabilitation and that local businesses are used as service providers. Although it takes a few years to reap the tax benefits from any TIF-created projects, the benefits to the local economy would be felt immediately. If Hopedale wants to maintain a low tax rate while still providing quality municipal services, then it has to grow its non-residential tax base, even if the tax benefits get pushed ten years into the future.

Town Of Hopedale Economic Development Suitability Map

ZONING CODE DESCRIPTION

CODE	DISTRICT
C	Commercial
CEM	Cemetary
GB	General Business
HMF	Historic Multi-Family
I	Industrial
LI	Light Industrial
RA	Residential A
RA-1	Residential A-1
RA-2	Residential A-2
RB	Residential B
RC	Residential C
REC	Recreational
RP-1	Residential Performance 1
T	Town Land

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Zoning Boundary
- Developed Land
- Slopes > 25%
- TRANSPORTATION
 - Active Rail
 - Abandoned Rail
 - Local Road
 - Major Road
- HYDROGRAPHY
 - Stream
 - Intermittent Stream
 - 100' River Protection Act Buffer
 - Floodplain
 - Water Body
- OPEN SPACE
 - Municipal
 - Permanently Protected

Form an Economic Development
Commission / Business Advisory
Board to Promote Economic
Development of the Draper Complex

Consider a Variety of Mixed-use
Options in any Draper Complex Redevelopment Efforts

Streamline the Approval Process
and Consider Establishing a
Technical Review Committee

Promote Small Business Development
and Expansion in Appropriately Zoned
Districts Where Developable Land is Minimal

Undertake Marketing and Outreach Efforts
Including the Development and Maintenance
of a Database of Existing and Buildable
Commercial / Industrial Properties and
Vacant Buildings

Site of Industrial Park:
Under Development

Airport Industrial Park

Hopedale Industrial Park

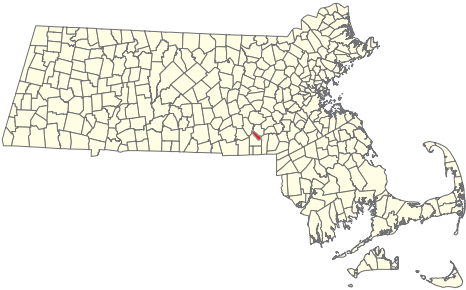
Charlesview Business Park -
Room for Expansion

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This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition,
regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution
interpreting positional accuracy.

Produced by the GIS Center at
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.
35 Harvard Street, Second Floor, Worcester, MA 01609-2801

Source data:
New land use and miscellaneous undevelopable lands were developed by CMRPC.
Subdivisions and zoning districts were developed by CMRPC and the town of
Hopedale. Open space developed by CMRPC, the town of Hopedale, MassGIS,
and other state agencies. MassGIS 1:25,000 hydrography was derived from USGS
Digital Line Graph files. River Protection Act buffers were developed by CMRPC.
All other data are from MassGIS.

Note: This map may be used in conjunction with the map shown in Figure 5.



HOPEDALE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

RESOURCE PROTECTION ELEMENT

Rapid residential growth over the past twenty years has reduced the open spaces in Hopedale, and it places increasing pressures on the town's land, water and wildlife resources. There are significant open spaces remaining north of the town center, as well as undeveloped areas along the Mill River and Charles River that present opportunities for land preservation. Other resource protection priorities include the town Parklands, Hopedale Pond, wildlife habitats, wetland areas and groundwater aquifers that are closely linked with Mill River and Charles River systems.

This Resource Protection chapter includes the following sections:

1. Assessment of the town's open spaces and natural resources.
2. Analysis of land suitable of future development in town.
3. Resource protection goals and objectives.
4. Recommendations for open space and resource protection.
5. Appendices that supply additional information about river corridors, definitions of protected land, and land use suitability criteria.

(NOTE: trying to make this section consistent with other sections—AJR)

<i>Section 1. Open Space and Resource Protection Assessment</i>
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The assessment of open space and resource protection priorities has five map components:

- Water Resources Map that identifies rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, wetlands and wetland buffer areas based on Wetlands Protection Act, public water supplies and their recharge areas, potential high-yield aquifers, major water withdrawals and significant wastewater discharge points.
- Important Habitats Map that identifies areas of rare, threatened and endangered species, areas of significance for biodiversity, potential vernal pools and other significant or unusual natural communities, and riparian corridors that provide important links among waterways, wetlands and upland habitats.
- Open Space Map that identifies permanently protected lands, Chapter 61, 61A, 61B parcels, and large unprotected areas under single ownership.
- Scenic and Unique Resources Map that identifies scenic views and areas, any Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), special historic and cultural features, major recreational resources, and agricultural/silvicultural land uses.
- Land Use Suitability Map that identifies infrastructure (roads/water/sewer), existing environmental constraints and community resources to be protected. This map also identifies areas suitable for future development of housing and commercial or industrial land uses.

This section discusses findings for each of the first four community resource components above. The next section presents the land use suitability analysis.

Water Resources

Similar to many Massachusetts communities, there are two river systems that link all of the water resources in Hopedale. The Mill River is the dominant water feature and flows from the northeast corner of town through Hopedale Pond and the former Draper Corporation complex in Hopedale center to the southeast border with Mendon. After leaving Hopedale, the Mill River flows through the towns of Mendon and Blackstone to its confluence with the Blackstone River in Rhode Island.

The Charles River forms the Hopedale-Milford-Bellingham town line, and continues through numerous cities and towns until it flows into Boston Harbor. The watershed divide between the Charles River system and the Mill River system roughly parallels the Hopedale-Milford town line from Freedom Street to Route 140 at the Mendon border. Approximately one-fifth of the land in Hopedale drains into the Charles River, and the remaining area drains to the Mill River.

Mill River - The Mill River system includes large wetland and floodplain areas that extend north from Hopedale Pond to the Upton town line. Hopedale Pond is the major water body, which served to power the former Draper Corporation and provide water-based recreation for town residents. The Pond is generally considered to be in good condition, although the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan identified the need for a water flow management plan to prevent stagnation, and there are concerns about aquatic weeds in the Pond. Existing and future land uses in the Town of Upton are likely to affect the quantity and quality of the Mill River water that flows into the Pond.

Downstream from the Pond, the River flows underneath the extensive Draper complex. Reuse options for this vacant mill facility include “daylighting” and restoration of the River to help improve its water quality and ecologic functions. The Mill River reemerges south of the mill complex near its confluence with a small leachate stream that flows from the former Draper Mill landfill. Water quality testing of this tributary and the River in 1989 by the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection indicated pollution concerns and recommended additional investigation to evaluate potential problems.

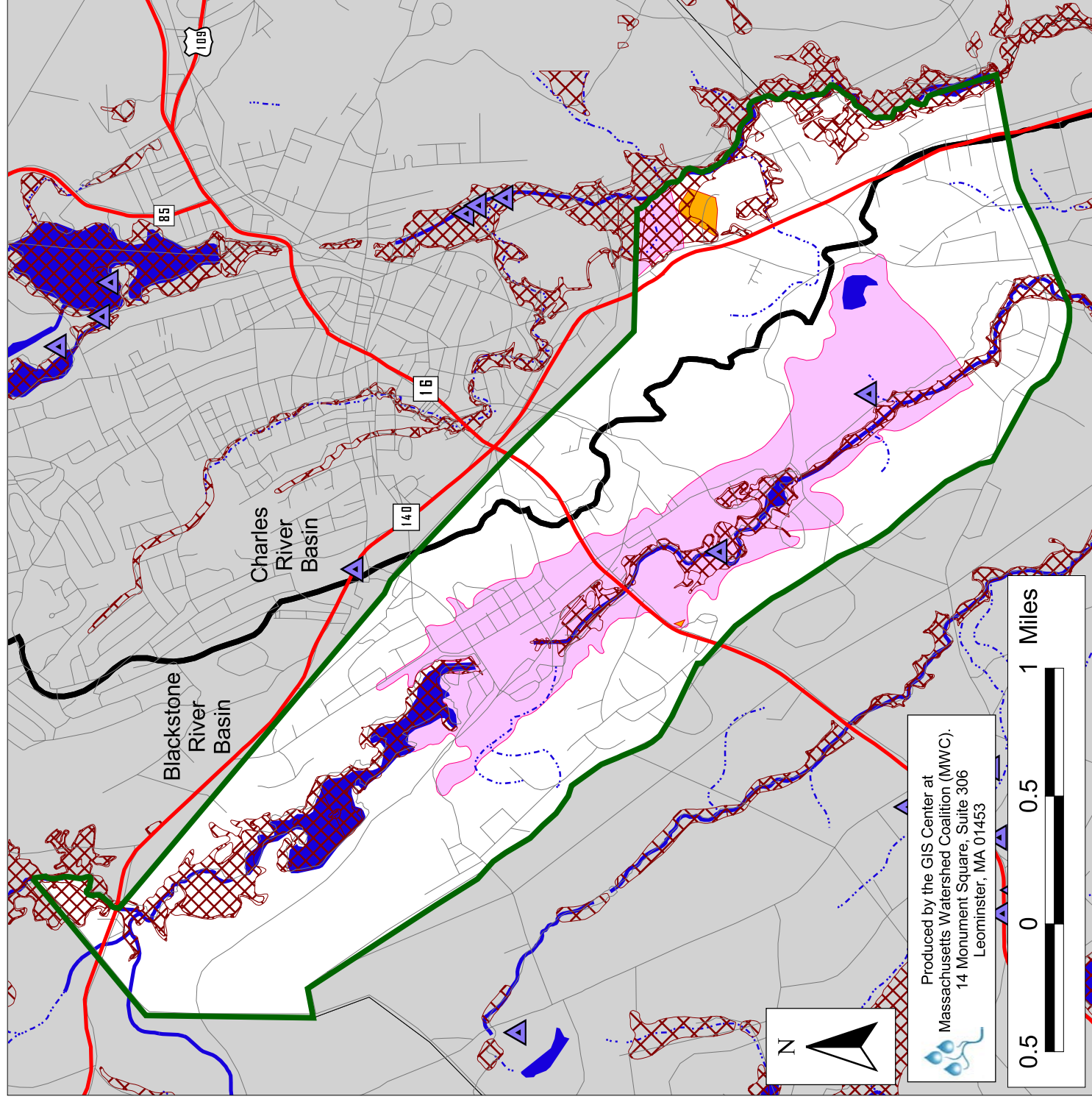
South of Route 16, the River meanders through narrow floodplains that are mostly owned by the Town. The Hopedale Wastewater Facility discharges effluent here and the Town’s well field is located on the opposite bank of the River. The River flows into Spindleville Pond, an important historic site, and continues past the Hopedale County Club, a second Town well field, and several undeveloped parcels until it reaches the Mendon town line. A light industry park proposed for this stretch of the River can be planned to avoid water quality and flooding impacts of storm water discharges from the more intensive uses that will replace the existing woodland buffer. There are also opportunities to protect the river corridor and create a riverfront trail system for Town residents as part of the proposed development. Underlying the Mill River are sand and gravel deposits that extend one-eighth to one-half mile to the east and west of the waterway. The Town’s Zone II Wellhead Protection District includes a portion of this aquifer area from Hopedale Pond to the proposed light industry development off Plain Street (see Figure 1, Water Resource Map). Zone II regulations control land uses to prevent contamination of the aquifer that is the primary source for current and future water supply needs in Town.

Figure 1: Water Resources, Hopedale

- Hopedale
- State Highways
- Local Roads
- Lakes, Ponds, Reservoirs
- Rivers & Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Public Water Supplies - Wells
- Wellhead Protection Areas
- Zone IIs
- IWPAs for Community Wells
- Interm
- Fema Flood Zones
- 100 yr w/o base elev
- 100 yr w/base elevation
- 500 yr
- Solid Waste Facilities
- River Basins
- Surrounding Towns

Map Sources
GIS data sources include the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, the Massachusetts Highway Department, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, MassGIS, other state agencies, and municipalities.

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Charles River – Situated at the Hopedale-Milford-Bellingham border, the Charles River flows through wetlands and floodplains that Hopedale has zoned for commercial and residential uses. The Charles is underlain by sand and gravel deposits that connect to the Mill River aquifer and are a source of Milford's water supply. There is a large wetland beside the Charles where it enters Hopedale, which is zoned commercial and is part of the Milford Zone II Wellhead Protection District. Milford supplies water to Hopedale, and Town enforcement of the state Wetlands Protection Act here will help safeguard this shared water supply. Storm water management is also important to prevent any adverse impacts upon the quality and quantity of waters draining to the Charles from existing and future land uses. The protection of riverfront land can preserve wetlands, floodplains and wildlife habitats along the town line, as well as offer potential hiking and biking trails for the residents of Hopedale, Milford and Bellingham. Appendix A provides additional information regarding the benefits of community protection of riparian corridors.

Important Habitats

The Mill River links terrestrial and aquatic habitats that are vital to its ecologic integrity. The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) is the state agency that is responsible for the conservation and protection of hundreds of species that are not hunted, fished, trapped, or commercially harvested. The agency's highest priority is protecting approximately 190 species of animals and 258 species of plants that are officially listed as Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern in Massachusetts. The NHESP provides maps of these special plant and animal habitats, which show a priority habitat that extends from the Upton town line along both sides of the River and along the west side of Hopedale Pond. There is another small NHESP priority habitat shown along the Mendon town line, which does not extend to the Mill River and may have been affected by recent home building off Moore Road.

In addition, NHESP has prepared a statewide BioMap that identifies "Core Habitat" areas of rare species, and large "Supporting Natural Landscape" areas that buffer Core Habitat and provide habitat for common species in Massachusetts. Downstream of Route 16, the Mill River flows through narrow wetland areas that are identified as "Core Habitat" by the state's BioMap. This core habitat area includes portions of the municipal golf course, a gravel mining operation, and the Plain Street land that is proposed for light industrial development. The state's BioMap identifies the north end of Town as an important "Supporting Natural Landscape" (see Figure 2, Important Habitats Map).

To the east, the Charles River connects a series of wetlands that are important habitats, but have not been identified as priority habitat. In addition, more than twenty potential vernal pools have been identified in Hopedale. Since these sites have not been certified and protected, five potential vernal pools in the Harmony subdivision may have been impacted by recent home building. To prevent loss of these springtime breeding areas, the town can encourage the formation of a volunteer committee to investigate these potential vernal pool sites.

Along with rare habitats identified by NHESP, the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan reported that the woods, swamps, ponds, rivers and developed areas in town provide food and shelter for many species of wildlife and migratory birds. The avian species noted include:

Bluejay, Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, White-Breasted Nuthatch, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Dark Eyed Junco, Mallard, Black Duck, Wood Duck, Canada Geese, Great Blue Heron, Ruffed Grouse, Ring-Necked Pheasant, American Woodcock, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl and various swallows, warblers, and flycatchers. Mammals include: Grey Squirrel, Red Squirrel, Flying Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, Eastern Cottontail Rabbit, Striped Skunk, Virginia Opossum, as well as signs of Mink, Red Fox and White-Tailed Deer that are occasionally seen in the Hopedale Parklands. The 1990 Plan also lists reptiles and amphibians, including: Pickerel Frog, Wood Frog, American Toad, Eastern Newt, Yellow Spotted Salamander, and Garter Snake, as well as a variety of insects that are found in town.

The 2002 Audubon publication, “Inland Fishes of Massachusetts,” provides an inventory of all freshwater species in the state. This Audubon guide shows many common species found in the Mill River and the Charles River, including: Common Carp, Golden Shiner, Longnose Dace, Fallfish, White Sucker, Creek Chubsucker, Yellow Bullhead, Brown Bullhead, Redfin Pickerel, Chain Pickerel, Brown Trout, Brook Trout, White Perch, Pumpkinseed, Bluegill, Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, Swamp Darter, Tessellated Darter and Yellow Perch.

Of special note, the Audubon guide reports the unique occurrence of the American Brook Lamprey that is listed as a threatened species in Massachusetts because of its limited distribution and its sensitivity to environmental change. The maintenance of “...clean, silt-free water, riffle areas for nesting, and backwaters with detritus beds for larval growth ...” will be essential to the continued existence of the American Brook Lamprey in the Mill River. The protection of riparian corridors and the mitigation of impacts from storm water discharges will also be important to sustain the many other fish that now inhabit the Mill River, Hopedale Pond, Spindleville Pond and the Charles River.

Produced by the GIS Center at
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition (MWC),
14 Monument Square, Suite 306
Leominster, MA 01453

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Open Space

As a result of home building over the past two decades, most of Hopedale's farms and forests have been developed. However, large open spaces remain north of Hopedale Pond, along the Mill River below Route 16, and beside the Charles River. With the exception of the Upton State Forest and the Milford filter beds, most conservation and recreation areas are owned by the Town. The status of the remaining open spaces that provide important environmental benefits for the community, are summarized below.

Permanently Protected Land

Publicly owned parcels – Land is considered to be permanently protected if it is owned by: (1) a town Conservation Commission, recreation agency or water department; (2) a state conservation agency; (3) a non-profit land trust; or if (4) the town received state or federal funds for its acquisition or improvement. (Please see Appendix B for additional details regarding lands considered protected or not protected.)

In Hopedale, the only permanently protected, state-owned land is a small parcel on the town line that is part of Upton State Forest. Parcels shown as “Town” or “Recreation” lands on the Hopedale zoning map are under the jurisdiction of various town boards. A change in use or the sale of any property with a value greater than \$5,000 would require review at the Town Meeting. Following is a list of these Town properties (see Figure 3, Open Space Map).

Town owned lands considered to be permanently protected:

- Greene Street well field and Mill Street well field (Water Department)
- Wastewater Treatment Facility property (DPW)
- Hopedale Parklands (Park Commission)
- Hopedale Park and Mellen Street Playground (Park Commission)
- Village Cemetery (Hopedale Foundation)
- Several small parcels of land in the vicinity of Moore Road and Westcott Road, which were transferred to the town as part of the subdivision process. These lands are under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

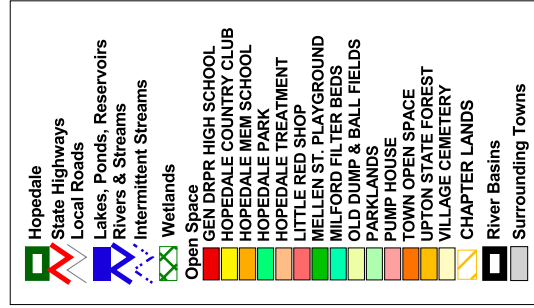
Town owned lands that are not considered permanently protected:

- Hopedale Country Club, which is partially zoned for residential uses (Selectmen)
- School properties, including General Draper High School and Memorial School

In addition, the land beside the Charles River where the Milford filter beds are located is considered permanently protected.

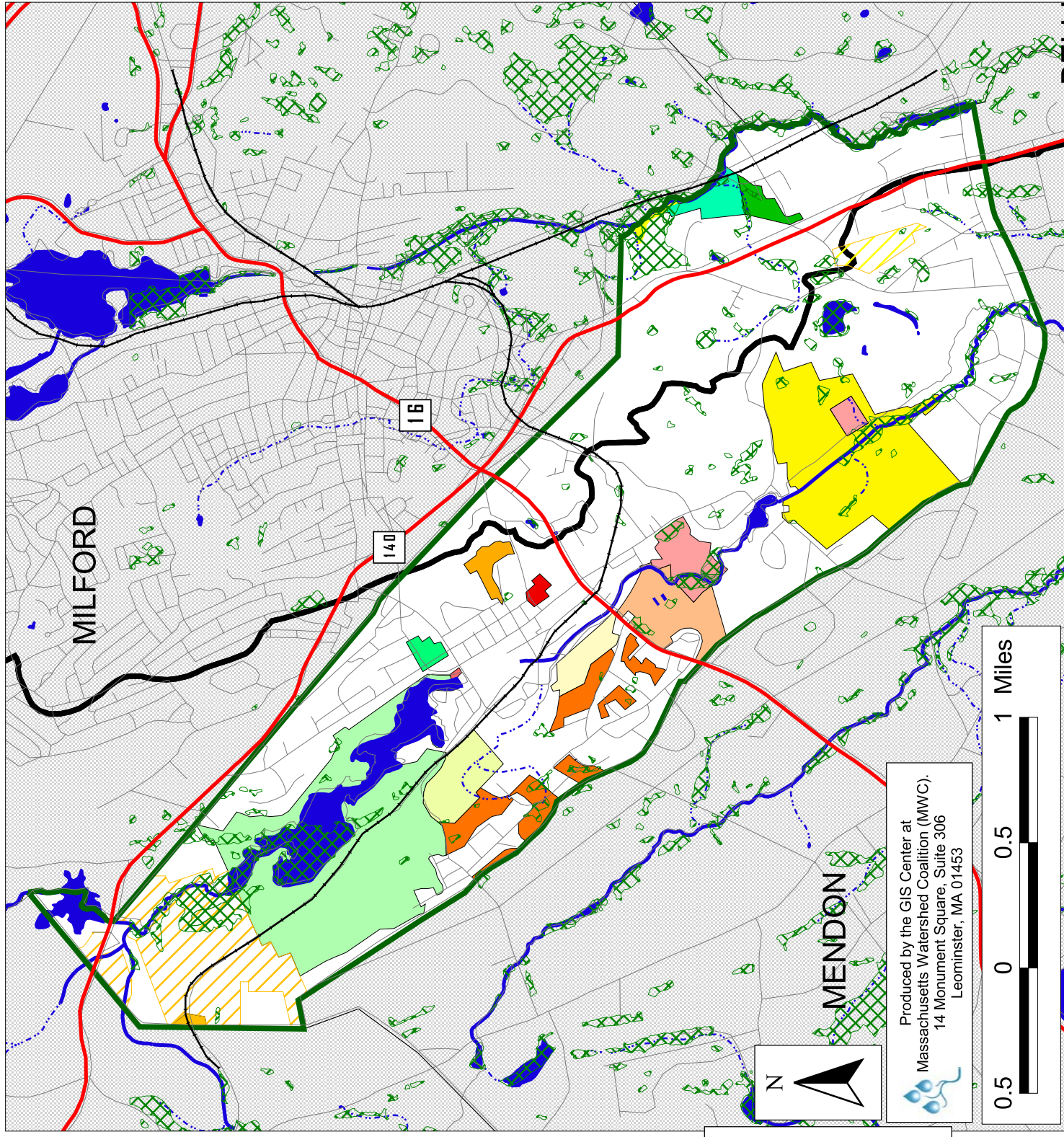
Privately owned parcels – There are no records of permanently protected parcels either owned by a non-profit land trust, or which are preserved by a conservation restriction, wetland restriction, or Agricultural Preservation Restriction. The proposed light industrial park on Plain Street will provide a conservation restriction on land along the Mill River.

Figure 3: Open Space Inventory, Hopedale



Map Sources
GIS data sources include the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, the Massachusetts Highway Department, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, MassGIS, other state agencies, and municipalities.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution in interpreting positional accuracy.



Chapter 61, 61A, 61B Parcels

Many private landowners in Massachusetts participate in voluntary Chapter 61 programs that benefit forestry, agriculture or open space uses. Owners who use ten or more acres of their land for forestry purposes can enroll in the Chapter 61 program, which allows a 95% reduction in property taxes. Owners who use five or more acres of their land for agriculture can enroll in the Chapter 61A program, and owners who use five or more acres for open space/recreation can enroll in the Chapter 61B program. The Chapter 61A and 61B programs also allow a reduction in property taxes. Communities have the right of first refusal on Chapter 61 lands if owners sell or convert to residential, commercial or industrial uses (unless it is a residential use for a family member).

Private stewardship of lands preserves open fields, productive forests and scenic stream valleys in many communities. Often, Chapter 61 lands have been owned by families for generations and have important places in local history. A town's right of first refusal on Chapter 61 properties is an important conservation and recreation opportunity. To be prepared, a town should have a policy and a well-defined process for working with a Chapter 61 landowner who decides to divest the property.

In Hopedale, several properties have been removed from Chapter 61 programs in recent years. Private owners that continue to participate in Chapter 61 include:

- A large forested parcel in the industrial zoned district adjacent to the Town Parklands, which is enrolled as Chapter 61 Forest Land;
- Two smaller parcels off Route 140 in the same industrial zoned district, which abut the Mill River and are enrolled as Chapter 61B Recreation Land; and
- Land surrounding the Hopedale Airport off Mellen Street, which is listed as Chapter 61B Recreation Land.

Large Unprotected Parcels

The most significant unprotected parcels remaining in Town include:

- The large Chapter 61 parcel noted above;
- Lands along Plain Street that are currently used by the Rosenfeld Concrete facility and the Chapter 61B land abutting the Airport.

Additional smaller unprotected parcels are located on the east side on South Main Street. Some of these parcels are situated on wetland and floodplain areas beside the Charles River and have difficult constraints for future development.

Scenic and Unique Resources

Scenic and Unique Features – The 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan notes that, “The major conservation and recreation resource is the Parklands, which cover a wide expanse just north of the center. This large nature reserve, developed by the Draper family and donated to the Town ... is a unique form of publicly-owned natural resource in Worcester County. The Parklands are a treasured feature of the Town and protecting their integrity is one of the Town’s highest priorities.” Along with hiking trails and diverse wildlife habitats, the Parklands provide a wooded buffer that protects the health of the Mill River and preserves the very scenic quality of Hopedale Pond.

In addition to Hopedale Pond, the Mill Street crossing of the Mill River presents scenic views of Spindleville Pond. A downstream stretch of the River seen from Hartford Avenue is an attractive view that can be preserved by protection of the riparian corridor.

Another unique feature is the Grafton and Upton Railroad that once serviced the Draper Mill. The 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan recommended the preparation of an acquisition and improvement plan for the abandoned railroad right of way. The creation of a rail trail could connect the town center, Draper Field, the Parklands and Upton State Forest, as well as offer scenic views of Hopedale Pond and the Mill River.

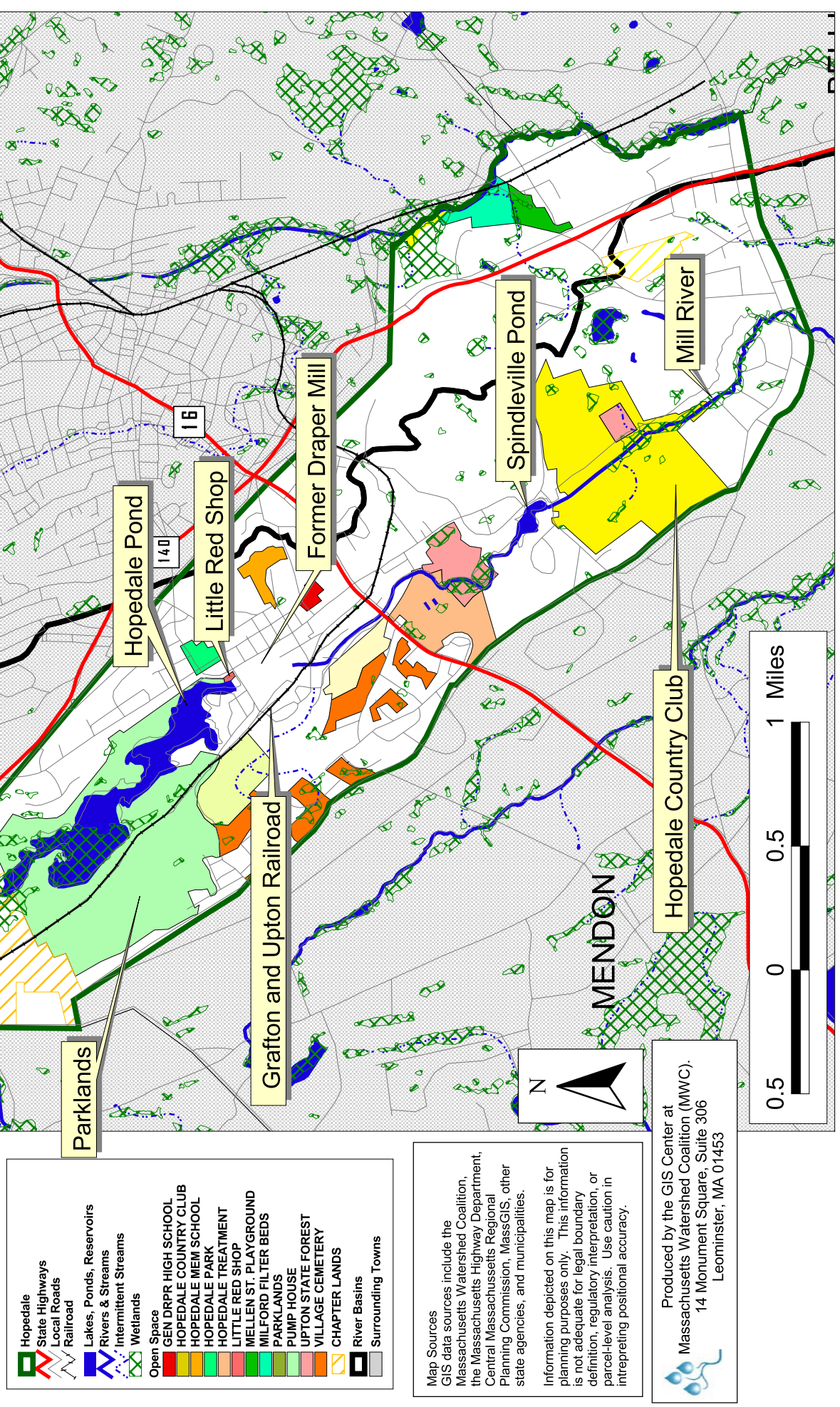
Area of Critical Environmental Concern – An ACEC has not been designated in Hopedale.

Special Historic/Cultural Features – At the April 9, 2003 Public Forum, it was noted that the unique history and the architectural design of housing are very important aspects of the town’s character. The National Register (Historic) District in the center of town includes the stately public buildings built by the Draper family on Hopedale Street, the former Draper Corporation complex, and the Little Red Shop on Hopedale Pond. Other features that contribute to the town’s historic character include the neighborhoods of award-winning duplex homes, Adin Street, Dutcher Street, Adin Ballou Park, the Village Cemetery, the South Hopedale Cemetery and the stone walls along Route 16.

Major Recreation Resources – The Parklands and Hopedale Pond are key resources that provide opportunities for hiking, fishing, swimming, boating, nature study, and passive recreational activities near the center of town. Another significant recreation resource is the Hopedale Country Club, which also preserves open space adjacent to the Mill River. Recreation areas that provide facilities used for team sports include Hopedale Park, Draper Field and the Mellen Street Playground. Recreation needs identified by the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan included hiking, walking and cross-country skiing, which can be addressed by the creation of riverfront trails, additional trails in the Parklands, and a rail trail between Upton State Forest and the town center.

Significant Agricultural/Silvicultural Resources – A large parcel north of the Parklands is enrolled as Chapter 61 Forest Land, but extensive wetlands and steep slopes limit its management for forest products. There are no large areas of prime farmland in town.

Figure 4: Scenic and Unique Resources, Hopedale



Section 2. Land Use Suitability Analysis

This section supplies information about community infrastructure and environmental constraints, which affect the suitability of land for future development of housing and commercial or industrial uses.

Most land in Hopedale is either developed or owned by the town for conservation and recreation purposes. There are few remaining areas of vacant land that are suitable for additional residential, commercial and industrial uses. The industrial zone north of the Parklands is the most significant undeveloped area in town, but many constraints affect the suitability of this land for future development.

Another important area includes the lands off Plain Street, which are zoned for light industrial and commercial land uses. In addition to the light industrial park that is currently under construction there, there is potential for future redevelopment of a current gravel mining and concrete operation, as well as expansion of commercial uses adjacent to Hopedale Airport. This land lacks sewer service and also requires careful planning to protect the Mill River corridor, the town water supply, and core habitat identified by the state's BioMap.

There are several smaller parcels of undeveloped, unprotected land between South Main Street and the Charles River, which are zoned for residential and commercial uses. The protection of wetlands, floodplains and a Zone II water supply area, combined with the limited infrastructure, will pose significant constraints for future land uses here.

In addition, the reuse of the Draper Corporation manufacturing complex presents a very challenging opportunity for future residential, commercial and industrial development. A 1996 "Predevelopment Study" identified many physical and market constraints, and concluded that a mixed-use development will be the most viable option. The study explains this reuse strategy will need public support to overcome competitive disadvantages of the Draper Mill site. Currently, the town is working with the Draper complex owner and the state's Department of Housing and Community Development on plans to revitalize this unused area.

Community Infrastructure

Roads – Hopedale has access to major highways and employment centers, but it is not especially well situated for attracting large commercial and industrial developments. Heading north, Route 140 directly connects Hopedale with the MassPike and Worcester via Route 122. Although Worcester is only 15 miles away, Route 140 passes through congested areas in Upton and Grafton that increase travel time. Heading east, Route 16 passes through congested areas in downtown Milford that lengthen the time required to reach I-495 three miles away. Hartford Avenue also provides access to I-495, but is congested and there is need for a study to improve traffic flow on this important road.

Within Town, local roads in good condition provide easy access to nearly all residential and business areas. However, there are no Town roads into the industrial district north of the Parklands, and road construction here will encounter many constraints posed by wetlands, floodplains, rare habitats and stream crossings.

Water Service - Nearly all homes and businesses have water supplied by the Hopedale Water Department, except the southern part of town that is serviced by the private Milford Water Company. The two water systems connect at Williams Street and South Main Street, which enables Milford to supplement the town's Greene Street and Mill Street well fields. Hopedale purchases about 25 million gallons per year, but the Water Department is taking steps to supply all the town water needs. These activities include increasing the current 425,000 gallon per day (gpd) safe yield with four new wells at the Greene Street facility. If approved by the state Department of Environmental Protection, these new wells could produce an additional 300,000 gpd, which would supply adequate water to meet the current 586,000 gallon maximum daily demand in town.

There is no distribution system for residential subdivisions located off Neck Hill Road in south Hopedale, which have on-site wells. There are also no water lines to the industrial district north of the Parklands. The Water Department is investigating potential well fields in the north end of Town, and successful outcomes could provide a new water source for future industrial uses.

The Water Department is reducing unaccounted water, and charges water rates that encourage conservation to help make the town self-sufficient. However, the total water demand is greater than the town wells yield at present. Additional water needs of future developments in town should be closely coordinated with the Water Department, which prefers industrial uses that tend to require less water than large residential uses.

Sewer Service – Most areas are served by the Hopedale sewage treatment plant that was constructed in 1982 with a twenty-five year life expectancy. A small southeast portion of town is serviced by the Milford sewage treatment plant (there are roughly the same number of Milford households that are served by the Hopedale sewage plant).

Similar to the water system, there is no sewer service provided to the industrial zone in north Hopedale, or to residential subdivisions off Freedom Street and off Neck Hill Road. In addition, there are no sewer lines on parts of Route 140, Mellen Street, Plain Street and Airport Road in south Hopedale. Homes and businesses here have on-site septic systems.

The Hopedale facility has a capacity of 588,000 gpd, and an average demand that ranges from 300,000 – 400,000 gpd. Much higher flows are sometimes received in spring due to infiltration that results from high ground water levels. While the Hopedale plant does service commercial areas, it does not service industrial uses, and no industrial pre-treatment is currently required. The plant has adequate capacity for some additional homes and businesses, but operates near full capacity during high groundwater. Potential high volume uses resulting from redevelopment of the Draper Corporation complex (or other property) may require town investment to increase the plant's ability to handle peak inflows.

Land Use Constraints

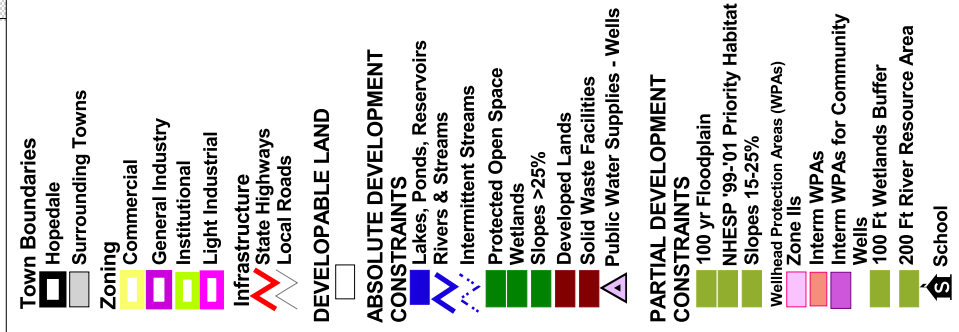
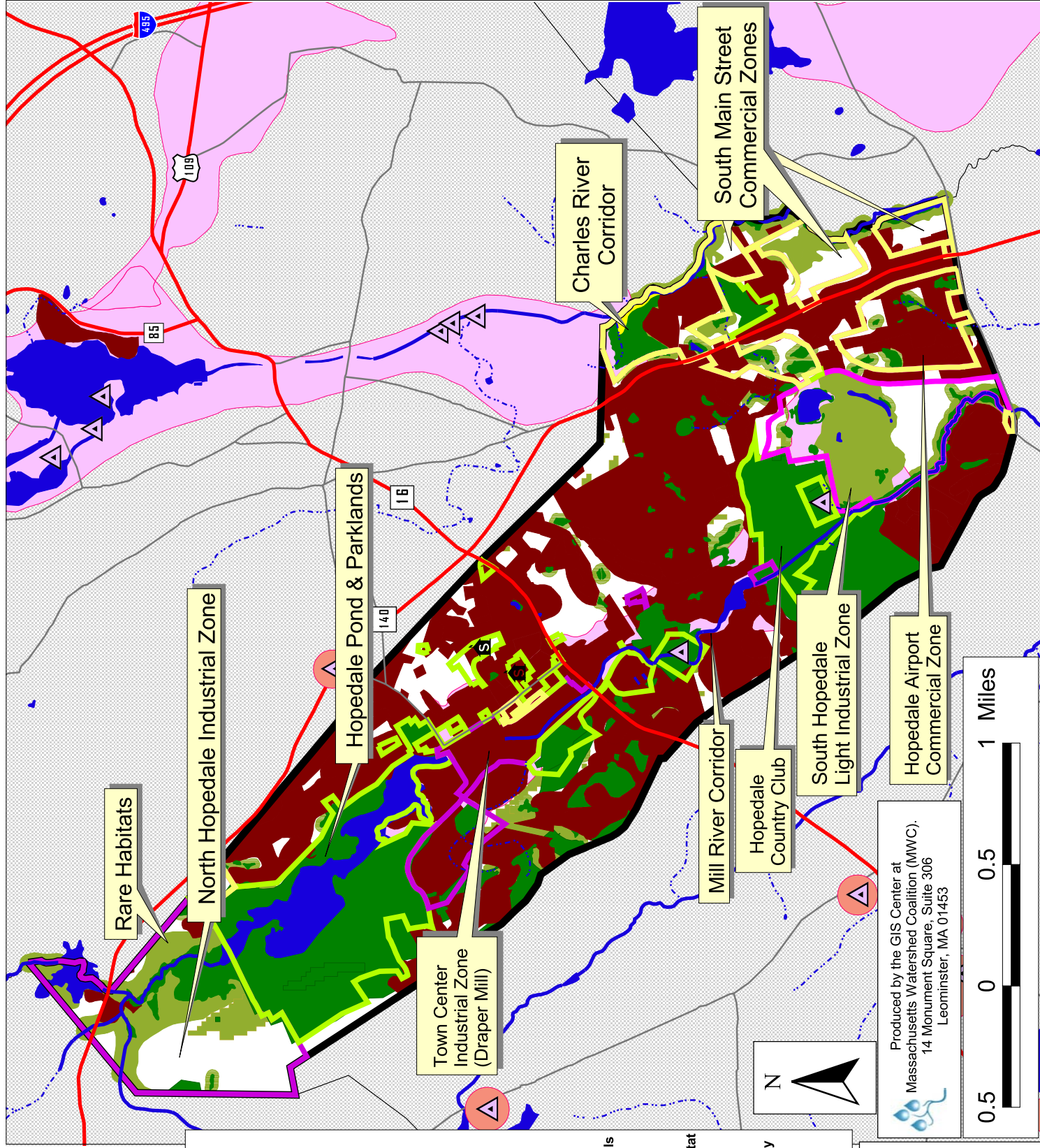
The limitations for future development in Hopedale result from environmental constraints and existing land uses. Major environmental constraints include: wetlands, rivers and streams, water bodies, steep slopes, wildlife habitats, floodplains, and Zone II Wellhead Protection areas. Additional constraints are posed by existing developed areas, protected open spaces and waste disposal sites. (Appendix C lists criteria depicted by Figure 5: Land Use Suitability map.)

The state Wetlands Protection Act affords protection for wetlands, streams, open water bodies and land subject to flooding (100 year floodplain). Any proposed alteration of these resources or land within 100 feet of these resources requires the approval of the Hopedale Conservation Commission. Some alteration of the 100-foot buffer may be allowed by the issuance of an Order of Conditions by the Commission. Additionally, the Rivers Protection Act requires Conservation Commission review of projects within 200 feet of perennial waterways. Estimated habitats of rare wildlife identified by the state Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) are also protected by the Wetlands Protection Act. NHESP will determine if an area to be altered by a development will have an adverse impact on a state-listed species and recommend measures needed to protect the habitat. Steep slopes are another potential constraint for development in town. Slopes in excess of 15% can present severe limitations for the construction of homes and businesses due to unstable soils, shallow depth to bedrock, high water tables, difficult vehicular access and related factors.

Floodplains present other constraints for development, and Hopedale's by-law prohibits new construction or improvements to existing structures within the 100 year floodplain unless there will be no alteration of flood levels from proposed activities. The Zone II Wellhead Protection Districts for the Hopedale and Milford well fields restrict the types of land uses allowed to prevent contamination of these aquifer areas. Most of these environmental constraints are closely associated with areas along the Mill River and Charles River. Upstream of Hopedale Pond, there are extensive wetlands, floodplains and priority habitats that continue into Upton. In addition to environmental constraints, the lack of road, sewer and water infrastructure creates significant hurdles for industrial development here.

Downstream of Hopedale Pond, the 100-year floodplain and the Zone II area beside the Mill River will present partial constraints for the redevelopment of the Draper complex. Below Mendon Street, much of the wetlands and floodplains are preserved by town properties, and most other riverfront areas have already been developed. The light industrial development proposed beside this lower stretch of river will be affected by the wetlands and floodplains, and the protection of these areas can also advance the long-standing community interest in creating a Greenway trail along the Mill River. When considering proposed riverfront projects, the Planning Board can encourage conservation restrictions to preserve the riparian corridor. Similar environmental constraints affect land uses in the Charles River corridor on the eastern boundary of town. Restrictions posed by wetlands and floodplains, combined with the Milford Zone II District, the Milford sewage treatment plant, and the existing railroad line will make it very difficult to locate development in the commercial zone north of Mellen Street. The presence of large floodplains, wetlands and the railroad line in residential and commercial districts south of Mellen Street will pose similar constraints for future development of this stretch of the Charles River corridor.

Figure 5: Land Use Suitability, Hopedale



Map Sources
 GIS data sources include the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, the Massachusetts Highway Department, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, MassGIS, other state agencies, and municipalities.

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Produced by the GIS Center at
 Massachusetts Watershed Coalition (MWC),
 14 Monument Square, Suite 306
 Leominster, MA 01453

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Section 3. Resource Protection Goals and Objectives

The proposed goals and objectives in this section provide guidance for future resource protection activities in Hopedale. The following incorporate the findings in preceding sections, the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the 1992 Master Plan. The recommendations in the concluding section identify actions the town can consider to help achieve these goals and objectives over the next ten years.

Goal: Sustain and Restore Water Resources in Town

- Continue enforcement of Wetlands Protection Act
- Preserve riverfront buffers through Rivers Protection Act reviews, and encourage conservation restrictions as part of riverfront projects
- Protect Hopedale and Milford well fields using Zone II regulations
- Develop watershed management plan for Hopedale Pond, which includes research on previous land uses to determine the need for analysis of potential pollutants in Pond sediments
- Mitigate pollution from storm water discharges to rivers and ponds
- Manage aquatic weeds in Hopedale Pond and Spindleville Pond

Goal: Retain Habitats, Open Spaces and Scenic/Unique Resources

- Verify potential vernal pools for certification with Natural Heritage Program
- Prepare conservation plans for industrial and commercial areas
- Avoid removal of trees and vegetation beside waterways and ponds
- Identify methods to reduce impacts of mosquito control on fish and wildlife
- Develop Greenway Plan for the Mill River Corridor
- Expand Parklands and protect rare habitats in north Hopedale
- Preserve historic buildings and small-town character of town center

Goal: Promote Community Involvement

- Sponsor public awareness programs on open space and resource protection
- Form committees to work with town boards and state agencies
- Encourage partnerships with community groups to manage town resources

Goal: Enhance Recreation Opportunities and Facilities

- Create trail system to link the Parklands, town center and riverfront areas
- Provide improvements to Parkland trails for hiking, biking, skiing and equestrian uses, which also preserve the forest character of the Parklands
- Consider creation of a skateboarding facility in town
- Foster public open spaces and recreation uses as part of proposed land uses

Section 4. Open Space and Resource Protection Recommendations

To a large extent, the priorities for resource protection mirror the environmental constraints discussed in Section 2 above. There are many needs and opportunities for protecting community resources, which are summarized below.

North Hopedale Industrial District – This area of town lacks infrastructure, is comprised of several large parcels, and has many environmental constraints. The 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan recommended: (1) acquisition of additional conservation land north of the Parklands, (2) preparation of a multi-town water flowage management plan to prevent stagnation of the Pond, and (3) development and improvement of hiking/cross country skiing trails in the Parklands and along the abandoned railroad right-of-way. The following resource protection actions are also proposed for this area of town:

- Consider preparing a watershed management plan, which examines previous, current and future land uses affecting aquatic ecosystems and Hopedale Pond. This study can determine if the alteration in water quality and quantity flowing through the Pond will affect the sewage treatment plant discharge permit, and if changes in the Mill River will affect increased water withdrawals from the Greene Street well field. This watershed management plan can also provide guidance for preserving vegetated buffers along the Mill River and Hopedale Pond.
- Consider forming a Parklands committee that can work with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation to expand the Upton State Forest. This committee can also explore opportunities to create a rail trail from the state forest through the Parklands to link with the Draper Mill complex and the town center. This rail trail can link to the proposed Mill River greenway and offer recreational amenities that enhance marketing of the proposed reuse of the vacant Draper complex for multi-use development.
- Consider preparing a conservation management plan for the industrial district north of the Parklands. This detailed plan should consider the suitability of the various soils found here to determine the best locations for industrial buildings, roads, and water and sewer services. This plan should also identify the locations for conservation restrictions to protect wetlands, floodplains, rare habitats, scenic views and Hopedale Pond. In addition, this plan can identify areas that should be protected (via purchase or donation) to connect Upton State Forest with the Parklands and provide access to recreation opportunities for town residents.

Hopedale Parklands and Golf Course – These conservation and recreation resources have been cherished by generations of town residents. Continued community growth will place increasing pressure to use these lands for additional municipal purposes, and a portion of the golf course is zoned for residential uses. The Board of Selectmen and Town Counsel can consider the legal status of these properties to determine if a conservation restriction or other measure is needed to protect these community assets.

Mill River Corridor – Riparian wetlands, floodplains and rare habitats have been partially preserved by town lands. Additional protection and public access to the River can be provided as part of proposed developments, including reuse of the Draper complex and the light industrial

park off Plain Street. The 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan recommended the development of a riverway conservation program for the entire length of the Mill River, including land acquisition/improvement plans. The following resource protection actions are also proposed:

- Consider forming a Mill River committee that will work with town board and state agencies to plan a riverfront trail system that can celebrate town history and connect the Hopedale Pond, Draper Mill, Village Cemetery, Spindleville Pond, municipal golf course and habitat areas identified by the state BioMap.
- Investigate the opportunities for “daylighting” and restoration of the River as part of future redevelopment of the Draper complex to improve water quality and aquatic ecosystems.
- Manage geese and aquatic weeds affecting Hopedale Pond and Spindleville Pond. The state Lakes and Ponds Program offers expertise and financial assistance, which can prevent problems and improve the health of these water bodies.

Vernal Pools and Rare Habitats – More than twenty potential vernal pools are identified in town, but none have been certified. Several significant habitats are also identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). Consider forming a wildlife conservation committee that can work with the NHESP to investigate potential vernal pools and monitor rare habitats in town. This committee can provide information and referral to environmental organizations (e.g. Audubon), which can assist landowners to steward rare habitats and to protect these areas as part of proposed developments.

Water Supply Protection – Continue to implement the Hopedale and Milford Zone II Wellhead Protection Districts, as well as the recommendations of the town’s consultant in the recent assessment of the Mill Street and Greene Street well fields.

Storm Water Management – The development of fields and woodlands for more intensive uses has increased impervious surfaces, which affect the quantity and quality of storm water draining into the Mill River and Charles River. This urban runoff carries sediments and toxic pollutants into community waterways. During summer months, the “first flush” of a passing thunderstorm discharges heated water and concentrated pollutants at road drainage locations, which can prove lethal to aquatic life. Over time, cumulative impacts will reduce the populations and diversity of insects, fish and other organisms found in the Mill River and Charles River. Consider forming a storm water committee to work with the Blackstone River Heritage Corridor Commission and other agencies to identify low-cost measures that can mitigate storm water problems.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update – The state Division of Conservation Services offers competitive grant programs that can help communities acquire conservation land and improve recreation facilities. To be eligible, the town needs a current Open Space and Recreation Plan, which must be updated every five years to meet state eligibility criteria. It is recommended that the Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission form a planning committee to update the town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Appendix A

River and Stream Corridors: Connecting Water, Wildlife, People and Town Heritage

Riparian corridors are cornerstones of ecological health and community livability. The most important environmental concerns are clustered along river and stream corridors. There is widespread public appreciation and support for riparian conservation - local waterways and adjacent lands are among the natural resources that people value most in a community.

Environmental Assessment of Riparian Corridor

1. *Water Supplies:*

- surface water supplies - waterways are sources of all existing/potential supplies
- groundwater - aquifers connect with waterways, and highest yield sources tend to be located in riparian corridors (upland recharge areas also need protection)

2. *Biodiversity:*

- aquatic species depend on productivity, integrity and health of riparian ecosystem
- riparian areas including associated wetlands provide richest habitats for wildlife and birds, as well as key migration routes that connect with large conservation areas
- most rare/endangered species habitats are closely linked with riparian corridors

3. *Historic Sites:*

- mill towns were built around water, farm towns avoided floodplains and riparian areas
- many native American sites are located beside waterways
- rivers were early transportation routes for settlers and location of historic events/sites

4. *Scenic & Cultural Resources:*

- water is especially scenic and attractive to most people
- museums, schools, colleges, parks, restaurants, etc. often use water as focal point for facility design

5. *Recreation & Tourism:*

- waterways offer fishing, boating and swimming
- adjacent riverfront areas provide river access and opportunities for walking, hiking, bird watching and other popular activities
- state/local parks often feature water related activities as these are in greatest demand
- access to water is central to wide array of tourist attractions

6. *Community Development:*

- Wetlands/Rivers Act, Title V, floodplain protection and other regulations pose criteria that tend to make riverfront development difficult (and confrontational)
- local concerns relative to flooding, water supplies, pollution, etc. favor placement of housing, businesses and roads away from riparian areas

- towns can apply variety of tools such as cluster, TDR and funds from Community Preservation Act to offer landowner and developer incentives for riparian conservation

7. *Constituency:*

- there is broad-based, active network of local advocates for riparian conservation, including diverse interests such as watershed groups, land trusts and civic groups
- local landowners and residents greatly appreciate local waterways
- town officials understand need and support efforts to preserve waterways for flood prevention, water protection, recreation, wildlife and other local benefits

Cities and towns across Massachusetts have taken positive steps to enhance waterways for recreation opportunities and tourism attractions. There is federal financial and technical assistance available for communities, ranging from American Heritage Rivers Program to USDA riparian buffers initiative to National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program to FEMA.

Appendix B

Land Considered Protected or Not Protected for Purposes of Massachusetts Open Space and Recreation Plans

Protected

Publicly Owned

- Land owned by town's Conservation Commission or Water Department
- Land owned by a state Conservation Agency (thus covered under Article 97 of the state constitution)
- Land owned by a Non-profit Land Trust
- Properties for which the town received state or federal funds for purchase or improvement

Privately Owned

- Land on which there is a Conservation Restriction in perpetuity
- Land on which an Agricultural Preservation Restriction has been placed
- Land on which DEP (Dept. of Environmental Protection) has placed a conservation restriction as part of the Wetlands Conservancy Program

Definitions:

Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Allows land to be purchased for environmental or conservation purposes.

Non-profit Land Trust is an organization that assists landowners preserve land by a variety of means. A Non-profit Land Trust may hold a conservation restriction on private land.

Conservation Restriction (or Easement) is a legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization (e.g. Non-profit Land Trust) that permanently restricts the type of development on the land to protect its environmental or scenic features. The land remains in private ownership and the CR, which is approved by the Commonwealth, is attached to the deed.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction in Mass. is a special type of CR issued to working farms that meet the Dept. of Food and Agriculture's requirements. It prohibits non-agricultural development or use of the property to preserve it as productive farmland.

Not Protected

Publicly Owned

- Land owned by local school department or local agencies (whose purpose is not conservation)
- Land owned by Department of Defense, Dept. of Corrections, or other state and federal lands whose purpose is not conservation

Privately Owned

- Agricultural lands, including those covered under MGL Chapter 61A
- Forest lands, including those covered under MGL Chapter 61
- Private recreation lands, including those covered under MGL Chapter 61B (golf courses, fishing and hunting clubs, country clubs, marinas, etc.)
- Agricultural Land Incentive Areas
- Institutional holdings, such as schools, colleges, religious organizations
- Corporate holdings, landfills, quarries
- Lands with Deed restrictions, APRs, and other conservation measures which are not in perpetuity or which have other conditions

Definitions:

Chapter 61: Forest Land

Chapter 61A: Agricultural and Horticultural Land

Chapter 61B: Recreational Land

These are voluntary, state programs that allow a landowner to enroll eligible lands and receive a substantial property tax savings. There are specific criteria for eligibility. Penalties are assessed if the land loses eligibility or if the land is withdrawn from the program, but not if land is sold to a new owner who will continue the program. If a proposed development or sale would remove the land from the program, the town or its designee (non-profit land trust or conservation organization) has first right of refusal option to match a buyer's offer.

Other Deed Restrictions include conservation restriction and other easements that are not in perpetuity or that have other limiting conditions.

Prepared by the Barre Open Space Committee
2/22/2001. Intended as summary information only.

Appendix C

Land Use Suitability Criteria

The following land use suitability criteria identify the lands that are suitable for development, the lands that are not suitable for development, and the lands that are suitable for development with certain constraints. These areas are shown on the Land Use Suitability Map (Figure 5).

1. Identify areas with absolute environmental or open space constraints.

These lands are not suitable for future residential, commercial or industrial uses:

- ♦ Wetlands
- ♦ Land with Slopes Greater than 25%
- ♦ Rivers, Lakes, and other Water Bodies
- ♦ Permanently Protected Open Space
- ♦ Public Water Supplies and Zone I Recharge Areas
- ♦ Certified Vernal Pools

2. Identify areas with potential or partial environmental constraints.

These lands are not absolutely constrained from development, but may be undesirable for future development due to potential environmental constraints:

- ♦ 100 Year Floodplain
- ♦ 100 Foot Buffer Area around Wetlands
- ♦ 200 Foot Resource Protection Area Surrounding Rivers and all Perennial Streams
- ♦ Land with Slopes between 15 to 25%
- ♦ Interim Wellhead Protection Zones
- ♦ Aquifer Protection District (Zone II)
- ♦ Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program Priority Habitat and Estimated Habitat areas

3. Identify areas with built or developed land uses.

These lands currently have residential buildings, commercial buildings, landfills and developed land uses. Some of these land uses are absolute constraints, others are partial constraints.

Absolute constraints:

- ♦ Transmission lines
- ♦ Developed Land (except mining)
- ♦ Solid Waste Areas (landfills)

Potential constraints:

- ♦ Mining Lands
- ♦ Brownfield Sites

Appendix D

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