

October 24, 2022

Overdale Parkway Association  
Overdale Parkway  
Hopedale, MA 01747

Dear Members of the Hopedale Planning Board,

As residents living on Overdale Parkway, we are opposed to the subdivision and believe the Agreement made between the Town and the Developers is invalid per our Lawyer's letter to the Planning Board dated February 7, 2022. We maintain the development should not proceed on those merits.

This letter is in response to your interest in hearing what the residents of the impacted neighborhood have to say in regard to the requested waivers for the Hopedale Ridge Proposed Subdivision. The general discussions, thus far, have inevitably ended up centering around cost and what would be a healthy bottom line for the developers, instead of the overall impact of the new development to Hopedale and the current residents living on Overdale Parkway, both good and bad. A waiver, as you all know, is relinquishing a right, in this case the rights our town has to request certain infrastructure for a subdivision development that will make our town a safe and better place to live. These rights are in our bylaws for a reason, waiving them should not be taken lightly and would go against the intent of MGL Chapter 41, Section 81M. Given the discussions and actions by the board thus far, we believe you are fully considering the impacts of each waiver request. Thank you!

## **1. Road Width**

The traffic that flows to the nine houses past the intersection with Western Avenue, where the road already narrows, is able to adjust to the current road width. Foot traffic as well as cars passing in opposite directions need to be aware and use caution due to how narrow the road is, but it is manageable with the limited traffic. Assuming 2 cars per household and a couple extra for those already using this parkland entrance, the road services 20 cars at the moment. With 10 more houses to be added as well as the additional 12 parking spots, the traffic will increase to at least 52 vehicles. In our opinion, the current width of the road cannot safely support this additional flow. We certainly would prefer to not widen the road given what would be lost, trees lining the road and the very look and feel of the neighborhood that we originally moved here for. The safety of the residents and the foot traffic to access the parklands should be the top consideration. Safety has been raised as a concern with the narrow road in the proposed subdivision. This safety concern should be applied to the entire length of Overdale Parkway as the sole means to access the proposed Hopedale Ridge Subdivision. The proposed development should not increase the safety concerns with vehicular travel on the developed portion of Overdale Parkway.

## **2. Dead-End Street**

The Hopedale Subdivision Regulations state that dead-end streets should not be greater than 500 ft unless topography or other local conditions warrant an increase in length. In this case, we do not believe these conditions warrant an increase in length. The unpaved portion of Overdale Parkway has not been used by vehicular traffic aside from emergency response

and a forestry project sponsored by the Park Commission in December 2011. During the forestry project, asphalt shavings and gravel were laid down to prevent the large logging trucks from getting stuck. The Park Commission, who controls access through the locked gates, provided the developers a key at the request of the Select Board and the developers have since used vehicles on the unpaved portion. The unpaved portion is not maintained by the town in terms of street cleaning, plows etc. like the rest of Overdale Parkway and is also gated to block vehicular traffic. We believe it is a stretch calling the unpaved portion an existing roadway simply because asphalt shavings and rock were laid down at one point in time. Additionally, extending the dead end beyond 500 ft results in a street length solely to maximize lot development. Per the Hopedale subdivision regulations, street patterns derived solely for the purpose of maximum lot development should be grounds for disapproval.

### **3. Utilities – Electric and Telephone Wiring and Street Lighting**

Utilities underground would offer little benefit to the subdivision if they are still tied into the above ground utilities currently servicing Overdale Parkway.

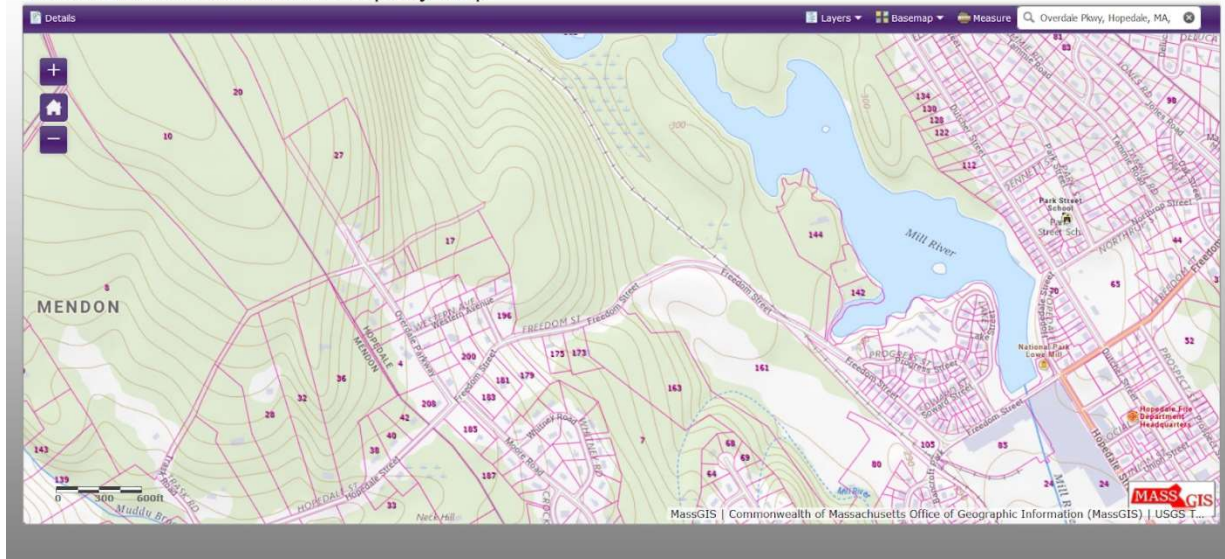
### **4. Sanitary Sewer**

The installation of 10 additional septic systems surrounding the unpaved portion of Overdale Parkway will potentially impact the quality of water in wells located along Overdale Parkway. The developed area of Overdale Parkway was backfilled, however according to the state maps, the area around and including the unpaved portion of Overdale Parkway has not been backfilled (backfilled areas are shown in white in the map below). This likely means there is more ledge to contend with and septic systems require soil to cleanse the discharged water. Is there enough soil present to cleanse the water from these septic systems? How does this impact the water quality for current Overdale Parkway residents? As has been shown, the land will perk, but the development is at the top of a hill and water will always flow downhill.

The amount of ledge has also been brought up as an issue for the installation of the sewer lines. The developer will have to contend with the ledge to install 10 foundations, 10 septic systems, 10 wells as well as the cistern and the retention pond. If the ledge is a problem for a trench to support the installation of sewer lines, why is it not a problem for the rest of the development? The developer proposed a subdivision knowing full well the requirements as laid forth by the town and it is simply the cost of doing business. Additionally, since the land outside of the development (the remaining length of Overdale Parkway) has been backfilled, digging a trench in this area with the backfill will lead to less ledge problems than the digging that will take place in the development itself which has not been backfilled. The methods to deal with ledge were also brought up in some prior meetings and the potential damage that could be caused to homes already built. This same concern should be applied to the development as a whole since ledge will be a greater issue when digging out the other 22 much larger areas (10 foundations, 10 septic tanks, a cistern, and a retention pond) than it will be for a sewer trench up the existing road.

If sewer lines are installed, water lines should be installed since the road will already be dug up. Cost to the developer nor the past decisions to install or not install the sewer/water lines are not a reasonable justification to not require sewer lines now. When the developers proposed the subdivision, they knew the Hopedale Subdivision Regulations required sewer lines as the development is within 2,000 ft of an existing line.

## Massachusetts Interactive Property Map



### 5. Water Distribution

This is our biggest concern. At the very least water lines should be run to service the new development. The 10 proposed new wells will be taking water from the same water supply used by the current residents. The development will essentially be adding 10 more straws to our drinking glass as well as a cistern and retention pond that can collect water. Water is not an infinite resource. The pavement and structures will also impact the current natural water runoff and our wells. The water flow will forever be changed with the amount of soil to be covered and removed for the houses, septic systems, wells, cistern and retention pond. The land movement created by how the developers deal with any ledge they run into could also impact the water veins providing the current residents' wells with water. What happens if the construction starts to cause well failures on the road? Running a water line would offer current residents an option should their wells fail due to the construction and earth movement. If there is no water line provided, current residents could be left with no water supply if their well fails. Many homes on Overdale Parkway would have difficulty finding another location for a well or septic system that fails due to the size or the topography of the lot. If no suitable well relocation is available, the failed well will leave a current resident without a water source.

### 6. Fire Hydrants

The use of a cistern for firefighting is a method used in rural areas where water supplies are not readily available. Water could be made readily available, but this waiver would prevent that. Residential automatic sprinkler systems would be the best fire protection option especially if the developers are intent on keeping the narrow road width. The development with a circle at the end will provide a space for emergency vehicles to turn around, however the narrow road will not allow for them to pass one another going in opposite directions. The ability for emergency trucks to pass one another will be needed as demonstrated by the firefighting exercise conducted in the summer of 2021. The exercise showed the Hopedale Fire Department would need mutual aid from three surrounding towns to provide 37.5 minutes of firefighting using only one of the smallest hose lines delivering 200 gallons per

minute. Even with a cistern depending on its size, which has not been disclosed, a shuttle run of fire trucks bringing water to the fire may need to be used. The fire trucks, being around 10 ft wide, will have difficulty passing one another going opposite ways on the 18-20 ft wide Overdale Parkway. This issue will be further exacerbated if the road width and dead-end waivers are granted for the development. Having a cistern will add an additional water supply but depending on the size of the fire when the firefighters arrive and the size of the cistern it may not be enough. Also, once the cistern is in place, will it be filled with water or rely on rainfall? who will be managing it? Who will be paying for the inspections, the maintenance (ensuring it is full, strainer free from debris, confined space inspections, etc.)? This will likely fall to the Town of Hopedale. Can we afford additional expenses such as this? Residential developments are not known to make money for a town, but instead will cost them more, and this one will have additional maintenance expenses with the cistern and the retention pond. There is no benefit to the town or the development to provide a cistern over fire hydrants, other than cost. Fire hydrants would be a better, safer option for the town of Hopedale, the subdivision residents as well as the current Overdale Parkway residents.

## **7. Berms**

The proposed subdivision may meet low impact development design standards, however given its location at the top of a hill on ledge, we do not see how this can be a low impact development to the surrounding area. The developers will have to contend with ledge at some point and as previously stated in other waiver concerns, the water runoff will be significantly changed by the development. During storms the road becomes a stream and many flatter areas become pools of water. In the spring and fall, the grassy areas never fully dry out and most of the land here is waterlogged throughout those seasons.

## **8. Sidewalks**

Our concerns regarding sidewalks largely follow the same line of thinking as our concerns with the road width. This is a safety issue. Due to the significant increase in traffic expected, sidewalks should be required on at least one side of the full length of Overdale Parkway. The development can only be accessed via the existing Overdale Parkway and the narrow road and lack of sidewalks would not be safe for the current residents or foot traffic with the expected increase in traffic, not to mention the construction vehicles. If the development requires a wider road and a sidewalk, why would it be ok to leave the only access to the development in an unsafe condition for the current residents given the increased traffic purely created by the development? There are currently families with school-aged children residing in the upper portion of Overdale Parkway. With the addition of ten four-bedroom homes it stands to reason there will be additional children walking to the designated bus stop at the corner of Western Avenue and Overdale Parkway. Sidewalks would provide for safe passage.

## **9. Grass Plots**

We have no concerns related to waiving the requirement for grass plots, but strongly encourage sidewalks to be installed.

## **10. Monuments**

We have no concerns related to waiving granite monuments, but strongly encourage curbing of some kind. Curbing will limit vehicles from parking along the road and blocking access for emergency vehicles with the narrow road width.

## **11. Trees**

We have no concerns related to trees being planted as prescribed by the Hopedale Subdivision Regulations or the waiver request.

## **12. Storm Drains**

Grassy swales along the road to collect stormwater runoff instead of catch basins, manholes, and pipes will further exacerbate the surface water runoff issues already experienced on Overdale Parkway and discussed in the other waiver concerns.

As you can see, the waivers cannot be viewed individually as many are interconnected to some degree. The main concerns we raise deal with the continued water supply and quality to the existing residents' wells and safety. The overall lasting negative impact to current residents will be determined by a number of these waivers should they be approved. The proposed development will use/collect water through 10 additional wells, a cistern, and the retention pond. Each of these will effectively change the flow of water and supply to current resident's well taps. This does not even take into consideration the amount of land that will be paved for the road, replaced with structures, and graded for runoff creating even greater impacts to the current water supply/quality for all residents living on Overdale Parkway. Once complete, the development as a whole should make Hopedale along with the neighborhood a safe and better place to live. If a number of these waivers are granted, that will not happen.

While we still stand strongly in opposition to this development, we look forward to discussing each point made in this letter in detail at the next Planning Board meeting. Thank you for taking our concerns into account as you review and make your decisions on these waivers.

Sincerely,

Overdale Parkway Association

## **Supporting Documents:**

Letter from lawyer M. Bourbeau.



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ard\_re\_contract\_with\_k

Hopedale Fire Department training exercise on Western Ave. in Summer of 2021.

Fire Attack GPM		Sustainability (Minutes)	
200	1 - 1.75" Attack-Line	12.5	1 - 3000 Gallon Tanker Trkc (Hopedale T-2)
400	2 - 1.75" Attack-Lines	11.5	1 - 3000 (Hopedale) & 1 - 2500 Gallon (Mendon) Tankers
700	2 - 1.75" & 1 - 2.5" Attack-Lines	6.7	2 - 3000 Gallon (Hopedale & Upton) & 1 - 2500 Gallon (Mendon) Tankers
1000	2 - 1.75" & 2 - 2.5" Attack-Lines	4.3	3 - 3000 Gallon (Hopedale, Upton & Medway) Tankers & 1 - 2500 Gallon (Mendon) Tanker
700	2 - 1.75" & 1 - 2.5" Attack-Lines	20.1	3 - 3000 Gallon (Hopedale, Upton & Medway) Tankers & 1 - 2500 Gallon (Mendon) Tanker
400	2 - 1.75" Attack-Lines	34.5	3 - 3000 Gallon (Hopedale, Upton & Medway) Tankers & 1 - 2500 Gallon (Mendon) Tanker
200	1 - 1.75" Attack-Line	37.5	3 - 3000 Gallon (Hopedale, Upton & Medway) Tankers & 1 - 2500 Gallon (Mendon) Tanker

Average "Turn-Around" Time (to Fill Site back to Scene - 19 Minutes)

Copy of Highway Department Card on file for Overdale Parkway. Note: Town meeting minutes from 1961 show Overdale Parkway was not accepted.

1977	Accepted 1961		
Overdale Parkway	(park land)	Length: 1500'	Width: 50'
	Roadway: Penetration	Sidewalk:	
1955-Roadway &			
Drainage:	Gravel, grade, penetrate, seal	1500'	\$1713
	Drain pipe installed	Force Acct. + town	payroll
1958-Roadway:	Sealed with sand	1500'	
1963-Roadway:	Sealed with sand	1500'	\$165