

Preserve Hopedale

Opposition of Proposed Warehouse at 75 Plain Street

February 2, 2022

“We are a community with small-town character, that prides itself on balancing our remarkable past with the importance of looking toward a prosperous future.

*This mission drives our commitment to providing **safety, wellness, and a quality of life**, which meets or exceeds the demands of our citizens, businesses, and visitors. We invite you to see all that Hopedale has to offer!”*

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Introduction

This document was created by several contributors and concerned citizens of Hopedale, none of whom are opposed to business and tax revenue, under the right conditions, but all of whom agree that a mega warehouse does not meet those criteria, and would in fact be a *great detriment* to our town.

While business and tax revenue for the town of Hopedale sounds promising, this document will detail the logical reasons why the proposed **mega warehouse** at 75 Plain Street is not in the best interest of the town. This is a high-stakes proposition that comes with many risks/hazards to the town, strains on infrastructure, actual out-of-pocket costs, and a serious impact on quality of life.

The currently proposed warehouse, by GFI Partners, is planned to be 616,875 square feet, meeting the criteria for being considered a “mega warehouse” ($\geq 200,000$ sq. ft.). To put that in perspective, the warehouse size...

- is equivalent to 10.7 football fields
- would be 57% larger than the site of Fenway Park (built on approx. 392,040 sq. ft. of land)
- is similar to the total size of the Wrentham Village Outlets (660,186 sq. ft. and 616,000 sq. ft. of retail space)

Hopedale is 5.3 square miles, and full of small-town character. In all of Massachusetts, this warehouse would be the **8th largest industrial warehouse** in the **10th smallest town**

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_municipalities_in_Massachusetts)

Address	City	Town/City Size in Sq Miles (total area)	Lot Size	Gross Sq Ft
1180 Innovation Way	Fall River	40.2	53.87 Acres	1,226,340
81 Campanelli Dr	Uxbridge	30.4	88.17 Acres	847,712
66 Saratoga Blvd	Devens	6.8	43.78 Acres	832,622
83 Commerce Way	Woburn	12.9	25.97 Acres	817,638
135 American Legion Hwy	Revere	10.1	29.17 Acres	816,000
192 Mansfield Ave	Norton	29.8	31.45 Acres	650,080
150 Blackstone River Rd	Worcester	38.5	33.04 Acres	629,345
75 Plain St	Hopedale	5.3	144.6 Acres	616,875
90 Salem Rd	Billerica	26.4	21.08 Acres	609,410
165 Flanders Rd	Westborough	21.6	94.26 Acres	584,316

Type: Warehouse - Industrial

Allowance of this mega warehouse will not only change the character of Hopedale, **but set a precedent for what is acceptable** for other areas of town that are ripe for development (Draper Mill site).

Applicable excerpt from <https://www.nhmunicipal.org/town-city-article/secrets-successful-small-communities>

“All development is not created equal. Some development projects will make a community a better place to live, work and visit. Other projects will not. The biggest impediment to better development in many communities is a fear of saying “no” to anything.

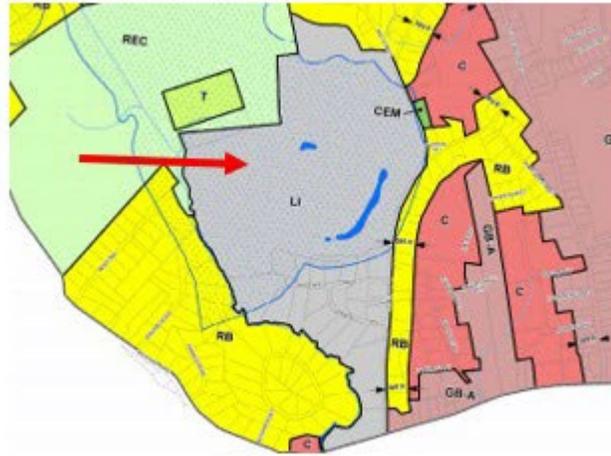
In my experience, communities that will not say “no” to bad development, will get the worst of everything. The proof is everywhere. Communities that set low standards or no standards will compete to the bottom. On the other hand, communities that set high standards will compete to the top. This is because they know that if they say no to bad development they will always get better development in its place.

Too many elected officials have an “it’ll do” attitude toward new development. Worse yet, they’ll accept anything that comes down the pike, even if the proposed project is completely at odds with the community’s well thought out vision for the future. They are simply afraid to place any demands on a developer for fear that the developer will walk away if the community asks for too much. This is especially true when dealing with out of town developers or with national chain stores and franchises.”

Furthermore, a mega warehouse such as this, is in conflict with the stated vision and objectives of:

1. The Master Planning Steering Committee, **“The town of Hopedale’s vision is to preserve our small-town character in each stage of the Town’s development.** Hopedale will balance its past with the importance of looking to the future while being open to new economic opportunities, maintaining community services, advancing our school system, improving the parks and recreational facilities, creating a walkable and vibrant downtown, and protecting Hopedale’s historic architecture.” And specifically, as it relates to Economic Development, **“Develop *responsible* growth incentives for a variety of uses for available commercial and investment property in order to diversify the tax base *without overburdening* town resources.”**
2. The Green Community Certification that the town has invested in achieving, which includes the objectives of eliminating unnecessary idling of vehicles in order to reduce the community’s exposure to exhaust from gasoline and diesel engines and educating about the health and environmental effects of gasoline and diesel exhaust.
3. The Hopedale Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Report, (June 2021: https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf711/f/uploads/hopedale_mvp_report_draft.pdf) which notes concerns about water supply in multiple locations/sections of the report. One such excerpt: *“Public water supply was identified as being compromised and limited in capacity. One water well was taken offline due to reaching the Maximum Contaminant Level, and three other water sources are nearing that level and will inevitably need to be taken offline as well.”*

Notations about the water in #3 above are significant because this entire site lies within the town's groundwater protection overlay district and wellhead protection area (per the 2022 Hopedale zoning map). As Hopedale is currently struggling to keep up with water demand, and seeking additional sources, this existing groundwater protection area becomes even more important to protect and preserve... keeping it free from diesel/oil spills, snow/ice chemical treatments and landscaping treatments/chemicals.



Lastly, it's also important to note, from a big picture perspective, that there are currently 2 other proposed, and 1 approved, new warehouses in the area (Mendon & Bellingham) that would all be sending tractor-trailer traffic onto Hartford Ave (in addition to current warehouse traffic as a result of the existing warehouses on Depot St in Bellingham). A warehouse at 75 Plain St in Hopedale would impact these towns, shared intersections, and their residents as well. For reference, the new warehouses proposed/approved are:

Bellingham:

152 Depot St.

211,600 sq ft warehouse

380 daily vehicle trips (254 passenger cars; 126 tractor-trailers)

Mendon:

23 Cape Road

231,660 sq ft warehouse

35 Cape Road (approved, though currently being appealed by resident)

31,000 sq ft warehouse

Fiscal benefit

Tax revenue is truly the ONLY benefit to this proposed project, but a \$1M/year windfall is not realistic, nor an accurate picture. Per the documentation, the *estimated* annual property taxes would be \$1,004,366 (see below). However, this uses last year's tax rate. If we adjust for 2022 (replacing \$28.80 in the figure below with this year's \$27.66), the estimated annual property tax revenue becomes **\$964,609**.

Estimated Property Taxes: Based upon a review of regional market conditions for large scale warehouse buildings, as detailed in Table One, the proposed 616,875 square foot building is estimated to be assessed for \$34,873,803 and generate **\$1,004,366** in annual property tax payments.

Table One

Industrial Warehouses	Blg. Area	Assessment	Assessment/Sq. Ft. ¹
7 Picker Road - Sturbridge	40,000	\$2,028,000	\$50.70
150 Blackstone River - Worcester	616,385	\$25,547,100	\$41.45
160 Mechanic St - Bellingham	345,000	\$26,811,600	\$77.71
300 Financial Park - Franklin	300,000	\$19,976,800	\$66.59
869 Quaker Hwy - Uxbridge	611,316	\$32,345,600	\$52.91
1 Distribution Center Circle - Littleton	480,000	\$28,557,500	\$59.49
Totals - Average	2,392,701	\$135,266,600	\$56.53
Proposed Project	616,875	\$34,873,803	
Estimated Property Taxes @ \$28.80		\$1,004,366	

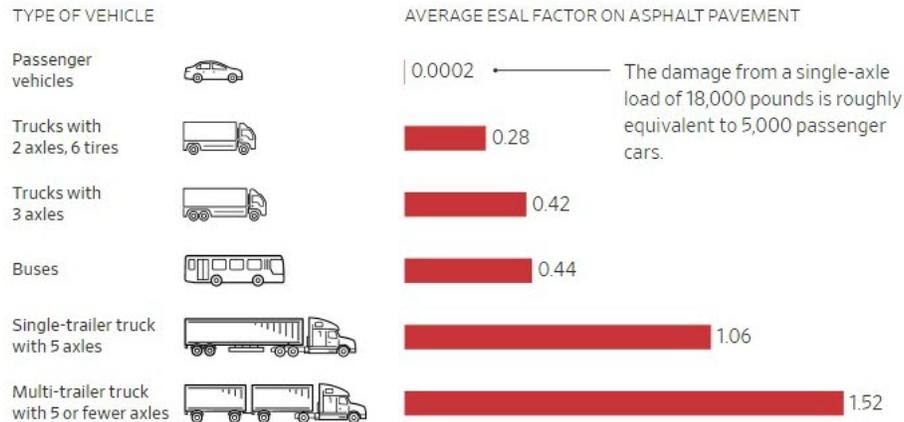
- The subject site's assessment will increase from \$1,884,300 to \$34,873,803 and property taxes will increase from \$54,259 to \$1,004,366 as outlined in Figure One.

On the *assumption* that the assessment estimate is not inflated, we must subtract the following ...

- Minus the existing \$54,259 tax revenue from Rosenfeld, as this is not 'new' money
- Minus actual out-of-pocket costs such as a new traffic signal at Plain/Hartford/Talbott Farm – estimated conservatively at \$350,000 (average range is \$200,000 - \$500,000) and then an estimated \$8,500 per year in electric & maintenance costs for a total of \$358,500 in year 1.
- Minus the increased costs of maintaining and repairing the roads on which the tractor-trailers travel. The damage from a single-axle load of 18,000 pounds is roughly equivalent to 5,000 passenger cars. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trucks-roads-damage-traffic-supply-chain-11643210764>)

Road Damage

The equivalent single-axle load (ESAL) factor is the damage a vehicle will inflict on pavement by driving over it, relative to a pass by a 18,000-pound single-axle load.



Note: ESAL factors for trucks and buses are based on observations from interstate highways.
 Sources: Virginia Transportation Research Council (trucks and buses); Virginia Department of Transportation Materials Division's Manual of Instructions (passenger cars)
 Andrew Mollica/The Wall Street Journal

- Minus indirect costs of decreased property values (conservatively 10%) from surrounding residences which may create the propensity for new abatement requests from surrounding/affected residences.
- Minus indirect costs on other town infrastructure – police/fire, water/sewer at a time when the town is already stretched dangerously thin in these areas.

While it's difficult to put an exact dollar value on every direct & indirect expense that would be incurred by this mega warehouse, it seems fair and logical to estimate that it would amount to several hundred thousand dollars per year (and more in year 1).

And then consider that the developer is likely to request a tax abatement. This appears to be a relatively common practice by warehouse developers and has been done by GFI Partners specifically in other locations, here is just one example of several found:

https://www.bloomfieldct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif7551/f/minutes/edc_5.11.21_meeting_minutes.pdf

Although the developer referenced in this case is unknown, the Finance Committee meeting stream from Nov 16, 2020 (at minute 40: https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=56&id=33591) indicates that this may very well be asked of the town, as it seems to be common.

If they were to request an abatement, the request could be anywhere between 50% and 100% for 5 to 10 years or more.

Abatement scenarios	Lost tax revenue from “expected” amount
50% abatement – 5 years	\$2,510,915
50% abatement – 10 years	\$5,021,830
100% abatement – 5 years	\$5,021,830
100% abatement – 10 years	\$10,043,660

In a 100% abatement scenario, if approved, the town is left holding the bag to cover **all** the out-of-pocket and indirect costs with NO warehouse tax revenue to offset those costs for *years to come*.

Conversely, Hopedale expects significant tax revenue from new cannabis businesses (est. approx. **\$100K – 200K/year**) -- viable revenue from **non-disruptive, clean/green** sources that place limited, if any, burden on existing infrastructure.

(slide 42: https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf711/f/uploads/fy22_budget_-_fin_comm_learning_series_final.pdf)

Additionally, Hopedale has \$1.2M in outstanding uncollected receivables per the 2020 Annual report.

(page 93 of the PDF, labeled page 91: https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf711/f/uploads/fy_2020_annual_report_final.pdf)

Between the cannabis tax revenue and the outstanding receivables (\$1.3-\$1.4M), combined, those far exceed any fiscal benefit from a mega warehouse at much lesser detriment/burden on the town and its residents.

The cost benefit of the proposed warehouse is not significant enough to outweigh the negative effects that it will create – which would be a significant disturbance and burden for the town, its infrastructure, and many of its residents, and all the while placing our groundwater protection area at risk.

Location “Comps”, Traffic & Road Safety

As mentioned by many residents, one of the primary concerns of this proposed mega warehouse is the increase in traffic and the public safety concerns that will arise from 1,072 additional vehicle trips per day, approximately 370 of which are predicted to be tractor-trailers. You’ll see below why the proposed location, 75 Plain Street, is not an ideal plot for a mega warehouse with this volume of traffic and truck trips.

On a document provided to the Planning Board by the applicant dated November 22, 2021, 12 regional warehouses were highlighted as being comparable in terms of property and tenants to the proposed mega warehouse at 75 Plain Street. **After reviewing many aspects of the 12 comparable properties there was an alarming trend that began to take shape.** The 12 properties were reviewed not only on their distance to a major highway, but what types of roads they would need to travel on in order to access the highway. These evaluations were then compared to the same metrics for the proposed 75 Plain Street mega warehouse. The results are below and show the difference between an ideal site, and 75 Plain Street.

For the sake of this analysis the term “Interaction” will be used to describe an instance when a tractor-trailer passes a residential driveway or must navigate an intersection within a residential neighborhood. An Interaction should be thought of as not only a noise disturbance for those residences and neighborhoods, but also as potentially being a child waiting for their school bus, a family walking their dog, a child on a bike or chasing a ball, or a family in a minivan at the beginning or end of a road trip.

Address	Sq Footage	Company	Closest Hwy	Distance*	Along route to Highway	
					Approx # of Homes	Intersections with residential streets
300 Financial Park, Franklin	300,000	Imperial Dade	495	1.5	35	5
2107 Broadway (rte 138), Raynham	409,200	(none)	495	1.8	17	4
20 Freedom Way, Franklin	234,664	Owen & Minor/Linermeyr Munroe	495	0.4	0	1
150 Depot St, Bellingham	252,000	Dunkin Donuts	495	2.5	42	14
140 Depot St, Bellingham	238,370	Best Buy	495	2.5	42	14
160 Mechanic St, Bellingham	345,000	TriMark	495	1.6	0	0
190 Mechanic St, Bellingham	210,700	Lindenmeyr Munroe	495	1.6	0	0
165 Flanders Rd, Westborough	540,000	Cumberland Farms	495	2	0	0
45 Commerce Way, Norton	404,960	Horizon Beverage	495	0.5	0	0
81 Campanelli Drive, Uxbridge	800,000	Medline Industries	146	0.1	0	0
500 John Hancock Rd, Taunton	700,000	Martignetti Companies	495	0.5	0	0
450 Revolutionary Drive, Taunton	756,000	Jordan's Furniture	24	0.8	0	0
Averages				1.3	11.3	3.2
75 Plain Street, Hopedale	616,875	(none)	495	3.5	83	16

Of the 12 comparable properties on the list, 7 are located such that tractor-trailers pass 0 residential houses and 0 intersections with residential neighborhoods. Another “comp” passes 0 houses and only 1 intersection. These warehouses are clearly in an appropriate location to be able to access a major highway without creating traffic and safety hazards or excess disturbances. By comparison, a tractor-trailer leaving 75 Plain Street will

pass by 83 driveways and navigate 16 intersections with residential neighborhoods totaling **99** Interactions with each trip. With ~370 projected tractor-trailer trips per day; this comes to around **36,000** residential Interactions each day. As mentioned above, these Interactions on these roads represent real people doing real-life, everyday things. The next closest number of Interactions for any other warehouses on the list of comps was 56 for each of the warehouses located on Depot Street in Bellingham. While the size of the 2 warehouses located on Depot Street are much smaller than the proposed 616,875 sq ft proposed for Plain Street, they are the closest comps on the list in terms of Interactions and distance to the highway. On the table below you can see just how drastic the difference is between 75 Plain Street and Depot Street locations versus the other comps provided by the applicant.

Address	Sq Footage	Company	Closest Hwy	Distance*	Along route to Highway	
					Approx # of Homes	Intersections with residential streets
150 Depot St, Bellingham	252,000	Dunkin Donuts	495	2.5	42	14
140 Depot St, Bellingham	238,370	Best Buy	495	2.5	42	14
75 Plain Street, Hopedale	616,875	(none)	495	3.5	83	16
Average for all others				1.1	5.2	1.0

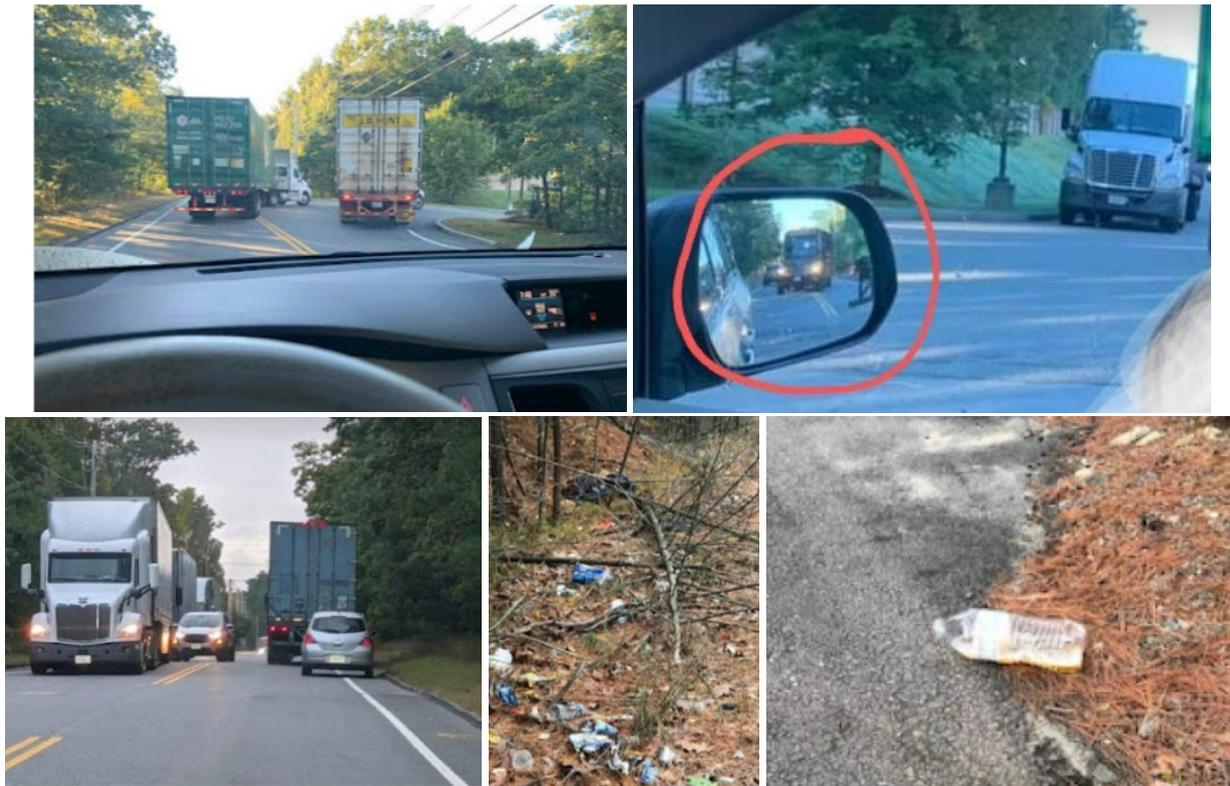
The potential for something terrible happening during any of the 36,000 daily tractor trailer Interactions is greater than normal traffic conditions when you consider the weight and size of a tractor-trailer negatively affects their mobility, stopping distance, and the ability to take safe evasive action. Factor in New England weather creating hazardous driving conditions and the common occurrence of sleep deprivation in the trucking industry and it is only a matter of time before something terrible, and preventable, happens in our, or surrounding, community. The Harvard School of Medicine’s research into sleep deprivation and driving concluded that those who have been awake for 17 straight hours have the same response time and decision-making capabilities while driving as someone with a Blood Alcohol Content between 0.05% and 0.1%... 0.08% is legally intoxicated (<https://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep/whats-in-it-for-you/judgment-safety>). Furthermore, in a study titled “The Sleep of Long-Haul Truckers” published by the National Library of Medicine/National Institute of Health (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2430925/>) a panel of 5 medical professionals found that the truck drivers in the study averaged 4.78 hours of sleep per day despite self-reporting that their ideal amount of sleep needed per day to be and feel their best was 7.1 hours per day.

In addition, with an estimated ~370 truck trips per day, the above mentioned 83 residences would have a tractor trailer pass by their house every 3.5 minutes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This will have an enormous impact on their quality of life and health, possibly resulting in cases of sleep deprivation for these residents, which (according to HealthLine.com) can cause obesity, high blood pressure, weakened immunity, as well as an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease (<https://www.healthline.com/health/sleep-deprivation/effects-on-body>).

140 and 150 Depot Street are also comparable to Plain Street in the sense that they are located in Industrial/Residential mixed use zoned locations, much like Plain Street. Looking into these locations further led us to speaking with residents on Depot Street and neighboring areas of Bellingham. Residents in these

areas have been so negatively affected by the presence of the warehouses and the truck traffic that over the last 3 months they have compiled a gallery of photos and videos to document their quality of life having these comps as neighbors.

These pictures show trucks parked on both sides of the street, private vehicles and school busses being forced to cross the center yellow lines into oncoming traffic just to get by, the sides of the road littered with trash, and even plastic bottles that had been reused as bathrooms and filled with bodily fluids discarded on the side of the road.



We encourage you to view the full gallery with additional photos and videos, which can be found [here](#). (as these warehouses were noted by the developer as being “comps” in terms of property and tenant.)

Even without a warehouse in Hopedale we have experienced some of these safety issues within the last 45 days.

- 12/26/21 – a **tractor-trailer** on Mill St in Hopedale hit a utility pole knocking out power and heat to several neighborhoods for hours in New England winter weather.
- 1/18/22 – a **tractor-trailer** broke down on Hartford Ave in Bellingham, due to the narrow width and lack of shoulders on the road commuters traveling the opposite direction were forced (at the direction of local police) to drive on the front lawn of a residence to allow the flow of traffic in both directions to continue.

- 1/19/22 – according to a social media posting from Hopedale Fire Department a **tractor-trailer** went off the road and into a drainage system near the Hopedale Airport on Hartford Ave rupturing the oil pan and creating a Tier 2 HazMat incident.

75 Plain Street is not an ideal location for a mega warehouse given the distance to the highway and the noise and safety issues that would be caused by tractor-trailers navigating residential roads. As residents in Bellingham have documented, and Hopedale has started to experience, trucks on residential roads can have devastating effects on surrounding neighborhoods.

Another local example of a town struggling with warehouse traffic is Northborough. While this example is Amazon, it's a middle-mile warehouse and is creating headaches and safety issues along bus routes, in school zones, on small local side-streets, all while the tractor trailer drivers are ignoring the restrictions from the town.

<https://arhsharbinger.com/26556/feature/blindsided/>

<https://www.wcvb.com/article/northborough-massachusetts-frustrated-with-truck-traffic-using-local-streets/36256788>

It's not just tractor trailers that we'd need to be concerned with either – there will be the additional traffic headaches of approximately 700 passenger cars in the area, **daily**.

Given there is **no** public transportation in the area, the Transportation Demand Management component of the site plan/proposal holds very little merit, if any. Additionally, bike transportation is highly unlikely given 1) the seasonal nature of this option, 2) the lack of sidewalks or bike lanes in the area of Plain Street, compounded with the tractor-trailers passing by this simply becomes a safety issue, 3) biking is only practical for those potential employees who live very nearby ... therefore limiting this pool of people significantly. Lastly, it seems unlikely that even carpooling would actually occur given the pandemic and the unlikely scenario of employees residing close enough to one-another to make that practical. For all of those reasons, no stock should be placed into this component of the proposal.

Environmental & Other Hazards

The 75 Plain Street property is home to numerous wetland resource areas including water, wet areas, 100-year flood zones, and more. Wildlife and the surrounding natural environment have grown accustomed to a limited disturbance for decades while the Rosenfeld operations remained largely dormant and free of major disruption. While the proposed mega warehouse site appears to strategically evade most resource area boundaries, we are concerned that the development will be fatal for the resource areas and does not represent the best interests of wildlife and environmental preservation.

The entire site at 75 Plain St. lies within Hopedale's Groundwater Protection Overlay and Wellhead Protection District, as well is adjacent to the Mill River.

"The Groundwater Protection District has been established for a number of purposes: (1) to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community by ensuring an adequate quality and quantity of drinking water; (2) to preserve and protect existing and potential sources of drinking water; (3) to conserve natural resources; and (4) to prevent temporary and permanent contamination of the environment. Hopedale Zoning By-Laws §§ 17.1(a)-17.1(d).

*This overlay district is designed to protect many aspects of the environment, but specifically targets stream corridors (such as the Mill River), lakes and ponds, wetlands, watersheds, and aquifers. Since the 1940's, Hopedale has obtained its drinking water through wells that draw water from an aquifer below the surface of the ground. This aquifer recharges over time and faces an ever-present risk of contamination from groundwater. **The overlay district is essential for protecting all of Hopedale's natural water resources and ultimately the health of residents.**"*

https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf711/f/uploads/groundwater_protection_district.pdf

With 370 daily tractor-trailers arriving/departing AND the storage of additional parked tractor-trailers, the risk is certainly there for diesel and/or oil spills. As such, this exact situation occurred elsewhere in Hopedale on 1/19/2022 and required a Hazmat-response, as noted previously.

As well, there are risks from other chemicals such as snow/salt de-icing in the parking lots and plowed to the edges in the winter months, and landscaping/fertilizer chemicals in the warmer months. All of this presents a risk to this very sensitive area. At a time when Hopedale is searching for additional sources of water, without success, it makes no sense to put this delicate area in such a precarious position.

The applicant's stormwater management plan is overwhelming in scope and difficult to understand without specialization. This appears to be another strategic move by the corporate conglomerates that are funding this proposal to allude to a caring sentiment for the surrounding wetland resource areas. Much of

the proposed stormwater management plan fails to address concerns about these areas and the wildlife that would suffer from such a development.

While the developer is not *required* to report on expected pollutants and *expects* any tenant, driver, trucker, etc. to adhere to EPA guidelines, 370 daily truck trips WILL create a significant amount of diesel emissions that will negatively impact the abutting neighbors and Hopedale as whole, creating a threat to public health. Diesel fumes have an odor and are a known **carcinogen**. Particulate emissions from diesel vehicles and equipment contribute to health problems that include cardiovascular problems, cancer, asthma, decreased lung function and capacity, reproductive health problems, and premature death (<https://envhealthcenters.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Storing-Harm.pdf>)

And, if there were ever a fire at building of this magnitude, it would be significant hazard and beyond the scope of what the town's thin-stretched fire department could handle – most certainly requiring aid of neighboring towns. The site plan indicates the building would be constructed of Type IIB noncombustible unprotected material. While the potential for fire spreading is on the lower end of the spectrum, the potential for collapse is the highest of all construction:

(<https://www.fireengineering.com/fire-prevention-protection/building-construction-review/#gref>)

	Fire Spread Potential	Collapse Potential
Small	Type I Fire Resistive	Type I Fire Resistive
↓	Type II Noncombustible	Type IV Heavy Timber
	Type III Ordinary	Type V Wood Frame
	Type IV Heavy Timber	Type III Ordinary
	Great	Type V Wood Frame

Noise/Undue Disturbance

In the Hopedale Zoning Bylaws, it states:

“18.5(g) Protection of adjoining property or the Town from any undue disturbance caused by excessive or unreasonable noise, smoke, vapors, fumes, dust, glare, etc.”

Per the developer’s sound study, “The human sense of hearing is subjective and highly variable between individuals”. Stating that a certain decibel level will not cause a disturbance completely ignores what current residential abutters have indicated would cause undue noise disturbance. The town should err on the side of residents’ actual reports vs. computer-calculated assumptions.

Abutting residents have already reported occasional disturbance from the property’s current use caused by back up alarms.

The site plan’s only mitigation to Zoning Bylaw 18.5(g) is “heavily planted landscape berms will be constructed along the Plain Street right-of-way”. However, the majority of residential abutters live on the opposite side of the property, which slopes downwards to the Mill River. What size/scope of landscaping could be large enough and high enough to make truck alarms, facility alarms, screeching, plowing, etc. to a level that will not cause undue disturbance and also not disturb the protected wetlands, Mill River, and town well sites abutting this side of the proposed site?

For the sound study, how is it (or what technology is used) that they were able to emulate the sounds of multiple tractor-trailers (driving, idling, braking, back-up beeping) and the sounds of powering a massive mega-warehouse building, without any of those things actually being present? Additionally, were sensors the only resource used in interpreting those sounds? Were no humans present at different abutting locations to hear? If the entire study consisted of purely computer-generated predictions, we’d argue that it is very much incomplete without any ‘in the field’ data.

As well, it seems that Hopedale has no noise ordinance, so how will infractions be enforced?

Another mitigation strategy discussed is the use of “visual” back up sensors. However, with no tenant identified and the lack of control over trucks coming into the warehouse from other vendors, how can the developer guarantee that no audible back up alarms will be allowed on site?

Conclusion

A mega warehouse such as the one proposed does not belong in a residential neighborhood within a small community, rather it belongs in a large designated industrial park nearer to major roadways/highways. And it certainly does not belong in a sensitive groundwater and wellhead protection area.

Hopedale does not have the resources/infrastructure to monitor and enforce the restrictions/conditions that would be related to any one of the concerning aspects – noise, traffic, pollution, safety, etc., nor will some additional tax revenue solve those problems at the pace with which warehouse-specific issues will arise.

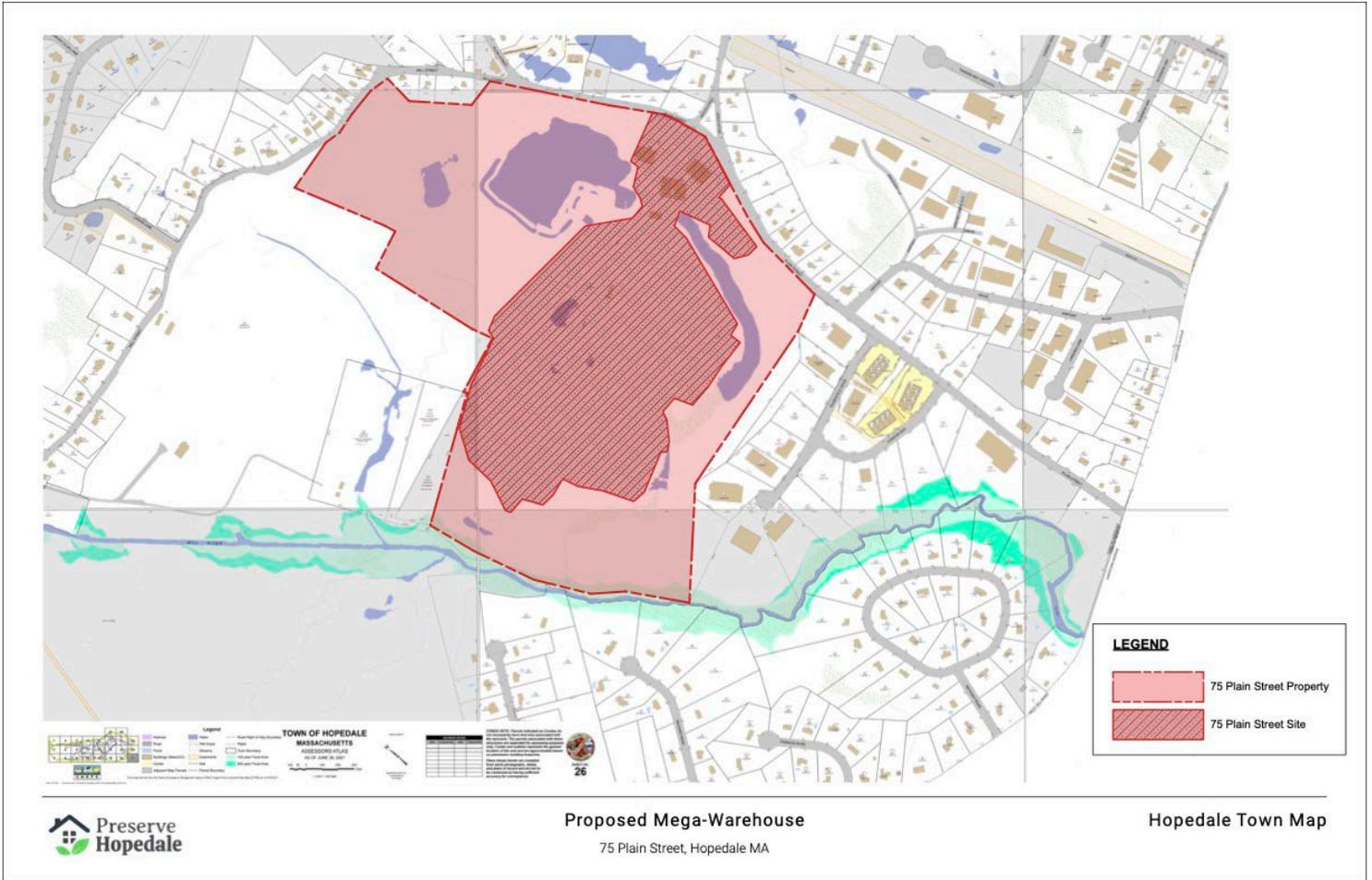
While GFI Partners may have many success stories, in just a brief internet search, it was quick to find examples that they may have tendencies of noncompliance, not honoring their word, and seeking tax abatements (which we can almost count on being the case here in Hopedale). A tax abatement would postpone the ONLY benefit to having a mega warehouse in town *for years*.

GFI Partners has also not offered any ‘good will’ to the town (new fields, parks improvements, etc.) and it stands to reason that their goals are NOT for the best interest of investing in Hopedale. It’s naive to think they will monitor and enforce any such mitigations/conditions/promises after a tenant goes in, at which time all the fallout becomes the town’s problem.

As requested by the 240 (and counting) signed petitions to date, we ALL urge the respective boards to deny the application/site plan and special permits necessary for the project to proceed. Historically, both in Hopedale and other towns, projects that were not favorable or fitting for the town, have been denied (see below), and this scenario is no different. A town’s right to deny a project, such as this, is not unprecedented.

- Hopedale ZBA denial of a Special Permit for locating and operating a non-medical retail marijuana establishment at 54 Mellen St., even though the property is zoned Commercial:
https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf711/f/minutes/zba_minutes_december_9_2020.pdf
- Holliston denial of an 800,400 sq foot warehouse (pg. 10 begins the denial):
https://www.townofholliston.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf706/f/uploads/555_hopping_brook_decision.pdf
- New Jersey Planning Board denies a pair of warehouses in residential area:
<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/bergen/lodi/2018/05/23/lodi-nj-board-rejects-warehouse-application-over-residents-concerns/629743002/>

Appendix – Map



Appendix – Petition Letter

I respectfully urge the Hopedale Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Hopedale Water & Sewer Department, Select Board, Master Steering Committee, and any other involved parties in the Town of Hopedale to **oppose and reject the proposal by 75-131 Plain St LLC / GFI Partners to construct the proposed warehouse on the parcel located at the current Rosenfeld Concrete property located at 75 Plain St Hopedale.**

According to the Hopedale Zoning Bylaw 18.5(g), standards for approval require protection of adjoining property or the Town from any undue disturbance caused by excessive or unreasonable noise, smoke, vapors, fumes, dust, glare, etc. The location of the facility abuts multiple residential areas/properties that would, regardless of any proposed mitigation efforts, be negatively impacted by undue disturbance caused by its construction and ongoing operation including, but not limited to the following concerns:

GENERAL:

- **A facility of this size and scope, with expected operation indicated to be 24x7, will overwhelm the community at large and fundamentally change the character of the residential neighborhoods that it borders as well as the town as a whole.** *Would the town be able to monitor and effectively enforce such a facility to ensure no undue disturbances? Enforcement would be after the fact and place a burden on the town's limited resources.*

NOISE:

- **A warehouse business will generate a relentless amount of noise that will have an adverse effect on the quality of life of the citizens of Hopedale and neighboring communities.** The tractor trailer traffic alone will generate substantial noise, as well as significant air pollution from the vehicles' exhaust. Undue noise disturbance can easily be anticipated due to normal operation, snow removal, audible OSHA alarms, idling, unloading, and backup alarms. This will adversely affect abutting resident's use of their property and enjoyment of their homes, adversely impact normal seasonal window opening, sleeping conditions, as well as disturb wildlife in the area. *Can anyone ensure that any amount of noise mitigation efforts will guarantee that no undue noise impacts will be felt such close abutters? If they fail, who will be responsible?*

POLLUTION:

- **Water quantity and quality concerns for Hopedale and the surrounding neighborhoods** has been a persistent problem and would likely be further impacted by the vast water requirements of a facility of this magnitude. According to Hopedale Zoning Bylaw 17.7(c)1, the proposal must in no way, during construction or thereafter, adversely affect the existing or potential quality or quantity of water that is available in the Groundwater Protection District. *How can it be ensured that a warehouse of this size will not impact the area residents currently on private water, as well as, the potential new town wells behind Ben's way? Are there guarantees if the proposed mitigation protections fail? Is the town willing to risk this sensitive environmental area?*
- The noise, traffic, lighting and drainage/runoff from the massive facility will have an adverse impact on the flora and fauna of the adjacent Mill River and operate on a **groundwater protection district and in conservation areas that Hopedale** has diligently sought to preserve.
- **Exhaust from diesel trucks is a known carcinogen.** EPA studies have shown that diesel fumes cause an increase to lifelong health problems, cause lung damage and difficulty breathing, and that children living near high levels of this pollution have a higher incidence of asthma and other respiratory illnesses. *Is Hopedale willing to put the children living near this site at risk?*

TRAFFIC:

- **Vehicle traffic into and out of the site will be a source of significant traffic congestion.** According to the proposal, the warehouse is expected to produce 1,072 daily vehicle trips on a typical weekday. Even with proposed traffic mitigation plans, area roads will see significant increase to traffic on already congested roads such as Plain Street, Mill Street, Neck Hill Road, Hartford Ave, and drivers will likely avoid backups by rerouting through other residential streets.
- **Truck traffic will approach the facility through intersections that already operate poorly and have been sites of vehicle accidents.** These roads are currently used by residents, are along school bus routes, and have already been a source of resident frustration because of issues caused by other area warehouse traffic (i.e. Amazon traffic from Milford facility among others). Impact will stretch beyond the scope of the traffic study and impact Bellingham and Mendon.

There is no doubt that the proposal has been beautifully delivered by a team of professionals and touts a beautification of the property and a major a source of income for the town... *but at what cost?* **The negative impacts of a warehouse of this size greatly outweigh any proposed benefits. Approving this project will create irreversible problems that the entire town of Hopedale will be dealing with for years to come.**

These issues are of extreme importance to us and many other town residents. Please help stop this from occurring, save our quaint town, save the health of yourselves and all Hopedale families. Favoring development in Hopedale is important but must be carefully considered to ensure that Hopedale only positively benefits from its presence in town.

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix – Links to Additional Reading

<https://protectbellingham.com>

<https://www.milforddailynews.com/story/opinion/2021/06/01/commercial-developers-racing-get-mega-warehouses-built/7467942002/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/distributioncenters/home>

<https://www.roadbotics.com/2021/02/11/big-industrys-effect-on-small-town-roads/>

<https://envhealthcenters.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Storing-Harm.pdf>

<https://www.mh-rgc.org/environmental-impacts>

<https://patch.com/connecticut/enfield/councilors-residents-opposed-tax-break-project-developer>

<https://www.milforddailynews.com/story/news/2021/03/18/amazon-driver-charged-destroying-rte-16-traffic-light-hopedale/4736160001/>

<http://www.virtualnorfolk.org/assets/files/dep-notice-of-noncompliance-10-28-21.pdf>

<https://www.communityadvocate.com/2012/08/06/shrewsbury-residents-protest-alleged-trucking-terminal-in-neighborhood/>

http://archive.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/12/16/historic_tavern_for_sale_amid_pledge_dispute/

<https://www.milforddailynews.com/story/news/2021/06/24/amazon-changes-warehouse-milford-traffic-trash-noise-complaints/5323972001/>

<https://www.nbcboston.com/on-air/as-seen-on/amazon-causes-traffic-woes-in-milford-mass/2060053/>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-delivery-warehouse-hub-town-sees-truck-traffic-headaches-report-2021-7>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/diesel-exhaust-and-cancer.html>

<https://pavementinteractive.org/reference-desk/design/design-parameters/equivalent-single-axle-load/>

<https://truecostblog.com/2009/06/02/the-hidden-trucking-industry-subsidy/>

<https://axaxl.com/fast-fast-forward/articles/mega-warehouses-greater-volumes-greater-risks>

<https://www.truckinginfo.com/152892/diesel-spill-threats>