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MassDevelopment sells 33.2 acres to GFI - plans to build 200,000 s/f project

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Grafton, MA MassDevelopment has sold a 33.2-acre parcel at 124 Westboro Rd., formerly part of the state-owned Grafton State Hospital, to GFI Partners. The real estate company plans to build two buildings, totaling 200,000 s/f, on the now-vacant site that it will lease for life science or other industrial, flex uses allowed under the local zoning. Construction of the development is expected to begin summer 2024 and be complete Q1 2026.

124 Westboro Rd. is a high-visibility site located near the North Grafton MBTA Commuter Rail station, Tufts University's Grafton Science Park, and Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. The site is zoned for office, research and development (R&D), and light manufacturing uses. Additionally, the site, which was Certified Platinum BioReady by MassBio, has received a campus overlay permit that promotes biotech, medical, and pharma development via expedited project permitting.

The parcel was transferred to MassDevelopment, the state's land bank, from the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in 2017 as part of the state's Open for Business

initiative, with the intention of fostering economic development along the Westboro Rd. (Rte. 30) corridor. MassDevelopment completed surveys, environmental due diligence, and a concept plan and marketed the site for private development. In September 2022, MassDevelopment entered into a Land Disposition Agreement with GFI Partners for the development of 200,000 s/f of new development buildings to attract life science/commercial users.

“Our administration is thrilled to announce the transformation of this former state-owned site under GFI Partners. Their commitment to developing a robust commercial hub will foster job creation and significantly boost economic growth in the region,” said secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao, who serves as chair of MassDevelopment’s board of directors. “We’re excited for the revitalization of this property. With the help of MassDevelopment, this property will become a great economic asset for our Rte. 30 corridor and all of Massachusetts.”

“GFI Partners’ proposed development at 124 Westboro Rd. marks a major ‘win’ for Grafton and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as it looks to reposition formerly state-owned property for new uses that can meet the needs of our communities today,” said MassDevelopment president and CEO Dan Rivera. “Our team at MassDevelopment was proud to step in to ready and market this site for private development that will create new jobs and economic opportunities.”

As the state’s land bank, MassDevelopment is empowered to acquire, redevelop, and sell federal, state, and blighted properties in an effort to maximize job creation, expand the local tax base, and increase the availability of housing in coordination with local economic priorities. Other land bank projects by the agency include Devens, Carriage Grove in Belchertown, Village Hill in Northampton, Myles Standish Industrial Park in Taunton, and the former Wilson’s Department Store in Greenfield.

“Thanks to our longstanding relationship with MassDevelopment and collaboration with the town of Grafton, we are excited to transform this parcel into a 200,000 s/f development which can suit a variety of different tenants,” said Steve Goodman, founder of GFI Partners. “This site offers an excellent opportunity for any tenant due to its vicinity to the Grafton Science Park, Massachusetts Biotech Research Park, The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, UMass Medical School, and a variety of other well-renowned colleges and universities in the area.”

“DCAMM applauds today’s sale, and we are proud to be among the state and local partners who share a commitment to redeveloping the former Grafton State Hospital for the benefit of the community and the Commonwealth at large,” said DCAMM commissioner Adam Baacke. “DCAMM commends MassDevelopment on their stewardship of this property, and we are look forward to the next stages of this important redevelopment process.”

“The Town is excited to see continued growth in North Grafton. The development at 124 Westboro Road will help to broaden Grafton’s industrial industry, and bring a new layer of economic development to our community,” said Grafton town administrator Evan Brassard. “We look forward to seeing the project completed!”