



Why is Amazon a Bad Idea on Grand Island?

Because we live on an island, the ecosystem is fragile and changes to it affect the land, water, air, birds, and other wildlife who live on the Island and around us. A major hazardous spill on Grand Island would not only affect our community, but the towns, waterways, and people all around us and downstream. This is such an important ecological location that the Niagara River Corridor, within which Grand Island resides, has been designated a *Globally Significant Important Bird Area* and is recognized as one of the most important and threatened bird habitats on Earth. The Niagara River has also received a Ramsar designation, a rare distinction indicating a Wetland of International Importance.

Grand Island recently engaged in a long-range planning process to define its cultural, social, and economic vision for the future. A project of this size and nature is inconsistent with our goals, our plans, our health and wellness, and our responsibility to protect and enhance our environment for future generations!

Here are a few of the biggest concerns and why we need to stop this proposed development:

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT!

- Our Community's Water Quality: The run-off from acres of paved parking lots mixed with oil and other chemicals consistent with heavy truck traffic and other vehicles will contaminate the soil and the run-off will end up in the Niagara River.
 - The result is potential degradation of the entire tributary system, including the Niagara River, from discharges of oil, grease and road salt laden waters.
 - Salt laden runoff can change the composition of the insect populations along receiving freshwater creeks and streams, allowing costal salt marsh mosquitos to gain a foothold here.
 - Potential degradation of the riparian zones – river banks, plant life and vegetation – of communities along the Niagara River on Grand Island and beyond.

- **Air Quality:** The proposed project would concentrate diesel powered vehicles within a small footprint. Trucks are often left idling, spewing carcinogenic pollutants and micro-particulates into the atmosphere. Although NYS law prohibits the idling of diesel engines for more than five minutes, enforcement is random at best.
 - Since this facility will introduce heavy truck and vehicle traffic to the Long Road interchange with Route 190, trucks will have to accelerate down the access ramps to achieve highway speed. Diesel exhaust releases large amounts of micro-particulate matter that has the potential to embed itself in the deep tissues of our lungs causing respiratory distress in children, adults and senior citizens.
 - Downwind to this development there is a large apartment complex, residential housing, public campground, a senior citizens living facility and an elementary school.
 - The additive effects of the fast moving traffic on Route 190 and the slowly accelerating diesel truck traffic will likely deteriorate localized air quality within the Grand Island Town Center.
 - Diesel fumes are carcinogenic (cancer-causing)! There are 40 different toxic compounds found in diesel exhaust that can cause immediate and serious health concerns and environmental impacts.
 - These air quality dangers led NYS to transform our toll system to cashless tolling at the GI Bridges.
- **Noise Pollution:** The proposed project is likely – both during construction and following during normal operations – to disrupt the surrounding neighborhoods, homes, and negatively impact wildlife.
- **Habitat Destruction:** The proposed project compromises greenspace and would pollute and adversely affect the natural vegetation, wetlands, and adjacent waterways. The impact on Grand Island’s wildlife would be negative.
- **Endangered Species:** **The developer’s field survey indicates that there are multiple endangered species on or in the vicinity of the site, including the long-eared bat and the short-eared owl. The northern long-eared bat is noted by the developer as a species that should be considered in an effects analysis for the project.**

CONGESTION AND HAZARDOUS DRIVING CONDITIONS!

- The proposed distribution facility will introduce a large number of commercial vehicles into the Long Road interchange with Thruway Route 190. To accommodate the increase truck traffic the entire interchange would in all likelihood have to be redesigned and additional traffic control signals would have to be added. The addition of those signals would cause trucks to back up on the existing ramps where they would idle for a period of time.

INFAMOUS UNETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES!

Although a primary argument for bringing Amazon to Grand Island is the employment opportunities, the criticisms of Amazon’s business practices are extensive and far-ranging.

- **The exploitation of workers by Amazon has been well-documented and a Google search on the terms “Amazon” and “worker exploitation” returns 8.4 million links! Here are a few:**
 - Amazon’s poor treatment of workers is catching up to it during the coronavirus crisis: <https://www.theverge.com/interface/2020/4/1/21201162/amazon-delivery-delays-coronavirus-worker-strikes>
 - ‘We are not robots’: Amazon warehouse employees push to unionize: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/jan/01/amazon-fulfillment-center-warehouse-employees-union-new-york-minnesota>

- Inside the hellish workday of an Amazon warehouse employee: <https://nypost.com/2019/07/13/inside-the-hellish-workday-of-an-amazon-warehouse-employee/>
- Ruthless Quotas at Amazon Are Maiming Employees: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/11/amazon-warehouse-reports-show-worker-injuries/602530/>
- Peeing in trash cans, constant surveillance, and asthma attacks on the job: Amazon workers tell us their warehouse horror stories: <https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-warehouse-workers-share-their-horror-stories-2018-4>
- **Documentaries have detailed and captured many of the most egregious practices and actions by Amazon:**
 - “As Amazon comes under scrutiny for aggressive tactics, treatment of workers and concerns about its market dominance,” PBS released an investigation into *Amazon Empire: The Rise and Reign of Jeff Bezos*: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/amazon-worker-safety-bezos-documentary-watch/>
- **Wikipedia has an extensive listing of criticisms of Amazon:**
 - Topics include: anti-competitive practices, opposition to trade unions, warehouse conditions in the US, working conditions for delivery drivers, coronavirus policies, differential pricing, product substitution, tax avoidance, effect on small businesses, government contracts, environmental impact (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Amazon).
- **Amazon has been accused of fueling racism and engaging in racist practices**
 - In 2018, a report issued by advocacy groups — Partnership for Working Families and Action Center on Race and the Economy — entitled “Delivering Hate: How Amazon’s Platforms Are Used to Spread White Supremacy, Anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia,” details a variety of ways that hate groups take advantage of Amazon’s massive platforms and inconsistently enforced policies (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/amazon-hate-groups-racism_n_5b3f7d5be4b07b827cbfcd43).
 - The John Oliver show “Last Week Tonight” highlighted “‘Racist’ Smears Against a Black Worker” by Amazon and Jeff Bezos (<https://www.thedailybeast.com/john-oliver-appalled-by-amazon-and-jeff-bezos-racist-smears-against-black-worker>).
- **Amazon fights against the improvement of worker conditions by union-busting:**
 - Amazon accused of 'aggressive anti-union tactics' after training video is leaked: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/usa-amazon-accused-of-aggressive-anti-union-tactics-after-training-video-is-leaked-incl-amazons-response-whole-worker-rejoinder>
 - How Amazon is fighting back against workers’ increasing efforts to unionize: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/22/how-amazon-is-fighting-back-against-workers-efforts-to-unionize.html>
 - Fired in a Pandemic Because ‘We Tried to Start a Union,’ Workers Say: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/28/business/coronavirus-unions-layoffs.html>
- **Amazon is repeatedly accused (with evidence) of what Money, Inc. has described as “infamous unethical business practices,” including warehouse abuses, tax avoidance, and creating a toxic work environment. Here are a few examples:**
 - 20 Facts About Amazon’s Business That Are Downright Scary: <https://moneyinc.com/20-facts-amazons-business-downright-scary/>
 - How ethical is Amazon? <https://ethicalunicorn.com/2019/01/12/how-ethical-is-amazon/>
 - The Pandemic Has Ended the Amazon Debate – It’s clearer than ever that supporting Amazon is a tacit endorsement of abusive work policies and more: <https://onezero.medium.com/its-now-100-unethical-to-shop-on-amazon-48d553181a6c>

What can the community do?

- Let Town Officials know that you oppose this project. The Town Board will immediately begin accepting written public comments on the below matters by e-mail at publiccomments@grand-island.ny.us, by fax at 716-773-9618, and by U.S. mail to the Town Clerk at 2255 Baseline Road, Grand Island, NY 14072. Written public comments shall be accepted on a continuing basis.
- Attend the virtual Town Board meetings to voice opposition to this project. The first “Project Olive” public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, June 11th at 7 PM. The public hearings will be held remotely via ZOOM with a telephone dial-in component. The ZOOM public meeting at which the public hearings will be conducted will be accessible either with a computer, smartphone, or tablet with internet connection at the following link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83361891680?pwd=SWQ1eWk3dDk2czZOQ1ZDQkRvZWszdz09>
 - The ZOOM meeting ID number is 833 6189 1680; the password is 011689.
 - This link will be available in hyperlink version on the Town’s website at <http://www.grand-island.ny.us/> so that the meeting may be joined with a simple click. Alternatively, the meeting may be joined by telephone by dialing 646-558-8656 and by entering the passcode 833 6189 1680 when prompted. Instructions on how to access the ZOOM meeting will also be available on the Town’s website.
 - The public hearing will include all aspects of the Project Olive application and all approvals requested, including, but not limited to, the proposed local law changing the zoning designation for the property, the proposed development plan, the proposed subdivision request, and environmental or other impacts.
 - Copies of the application materials are available on the Town’s website: <http://www.grandislandny.us/> and on the website provided by the applicant, www.tcbuffalograndisland.com.

**Together we can define a future for Grand Island
that we can be proud of, and protect our community
and environment for future generations!**

