

WELCOME TO



AMHERST, *NEW HAMPSHIRE*

September 2014

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FY 2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

× Community Development Office

+ Departments:

- × Building
- × Code Enforcement
- × Planning
- × Zoning
- × Economic Development

+ Boards:

- × Planning Board
- × Zoning Board of Adjustment
- × Historic District Commission
- × Conservation Commission
- × Heritage Commission
- × Board of Selectmen

VISION FOR 2030

- ✘ Residential: Amherst will preserve and enhance its unique rural, historical, and small town character in residential areas.
- ✘ Commercial/ Industrial: Amherst will have an established vision for the development and redevelopment of its Commercial and Industrial zones that is reflected in daily operations and its image as a business-friendly community.

2014 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

✘ Process

- + Review by Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Historic District Commission
- + Revisions in response to board and commission review
- + Revisions in response to recent turnover within the Office
- + Continuation of dialog with boards and commissions.

2013-2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✘ Water resource ordinance updates
 - + Wetland & Watershed Conservation District
 - + Aquifer Conservation & Wellhead Protection District
- ✘ Septic system ordinance revision
- ✘ Driveway regulations
- ✘ Digitization of office filing system (ongoing)
- ✘ Heritage Commission, Historic resource survey updates (NHDHR grant - ongoing)

STRATEGIC GOAL #1

Goal 1: Amherst will encourage land use which protects open space and rural aesthetics.

Measurable Outcome: Dedicate a minimum of 20% of total land area to permanent open space by 2030, an increase from 14.8% in 2013.

INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #1

- ✘ Revise regulations & ordinances to protect open space, stonewalls and rural landscapes as detailed in 2013 Regulatory Review (FY 2020) (Cost Est.: \$25,000 with consultant)
- ✘ Work with ACC and ALT to incorporate visions, goals and initiatives for open space and natural resource preservation into the Town's Ordinances and Regulations. (FY2017) (Cost Est.: \$2,000)
- ✘ Create construction standards for projects subject to Planning Board approval, to include roadway design, rural/scenic roadway design, drainage, bridge and utility standards (FY2016) (Cost Est.: \$2,000)

STRATEGIC GOAL #2

Goal 2: Amherst will continue to allow for a variety of housing options and to be a leader in the State (and region) in maintaining and managing its Historic District and resources.

Measurable Outcome: Maintain the current residential and Historic District property valuation distribution through 2030.

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #2

- ✘ Continue to allow for a variety of housing options to attract and support all generations of Amherst residents from aging in place to families
 - + Revise regulations to encourage extension of utilities (FY 2017) (Cost Est.: \$5,000)
 - + Continue to support Affordable/Workforce Housing (ongoing) (Cost Est.: No cost)
 - + Complete a Sidewalk, Bike & Trails Master Plan (FY 2018) (Cost Est.: \$2,500 with iTRaC grant or \$15,000 w/o)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #2

- ✘ Support the Historic District Commission (HDC) in its role as district regulator, and provide necessary updates in legislative changes and educational opportunities to its members.
 - + Improve education and communication through website and ACTV (FY 2018-ongoing) (Cost Est.: \$2,000 – requires partnership with ACTV)
 - + Begin proactive enforcement of district (FY 2018) (Cost Est.: See Goal 5.3)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #2

- ✘ Support the Heritage Commission in its role of protection and preservation of non-historic district community resources, and provide necessary updates in legislative changes and educational opportunities to its members.
 - + Support grant applications to expand Historic Resource Study and require use of study in land development applications (**FY 2015-ongoing**) (Cost Est.: Grant)
 - + Improve education and communication through website and ACTV (**FY 2018-ongoing**) (Cost Est.: \$2,000 – requires partnership with ACTV)

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

Goal 3: Amherst will be known as community where businesses succeed and thrive, with clearly established regulations and processes for land development.

Measurable Outcome: Increase the Total Assessed Valuation of Commercial/Industrial property in Amherst to 20% by 2030 and maintain that percent through 2040, an increase from 13.26% in 2013, to shift some of the tax burden from residential to commercial.

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #3

- ✘ Define and implement a Board of Selectmen approved Town Vision for Economic Development
 - + Define a Economic Development vision (FY 2016) (Cost Est.: \$2,000)
 - + Appoint an Economic Development Committee to define and implement a work plan and communications strategy for Economic Development in partnership with the Community Development Office (**FY 2017**) (Cost Est.: \$70,000 (annually) to support an entry level Planner for daily, Planning/Zoning support while allowing Director to focus on EDAC. This would also reduce a majority of consulting needs for Ordinance and Regulation updates. Current Staffing cannot support another committee and budget allocations do not currently support growing this division of the Community Development department.)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #3

- ✘ Ensure the development and redevelopment of Commercial and Industrial properties aligns with the design standards articulated in the Economic Development Vision
 - + Revise the, Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations and Subdivision Regulations to align with the 2013 Regulatory Review suggestions: (FY 2016) (Cost Est.: \$30,000 unless secure NRPC iTRaC project grant then cost would be closer to \$2,000)
 - + Revise the Sign Ordinance (FY 2017) (Cost Est.: \$30,000 with consultant)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #3

- ✘ Encourage and provide infrastructure expansion (transportation, utilities, and workforce) to meet the needs of the businesses in the Commercial and Industrial Districts.
 - + Partner with Pennichuck, Liberty (gas), PSNH and Comcast to ensure infrastructure is maintained, future connections are available as needed and Town regulations reasonably encourage the extension of utilities (water, gas lines, broadband, cable, underground electric, etc.) to new development. (FY 2017) (See Goal 2.1) (Cost Est.: No cost)
 - + Partner with NRPC through TTAC to ensure existing transportation infrastructure maintained and future connections are available as needed. (ongoing) (Cost Est.: No cost)
 - + Partner with local non-profits and community groups to ensure multi-modal transportation options as required by businesses and residents to support workforce. (ongoing) (Cost Est.: No cost)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #3

- ✘ Explore and implement a sewer utility to serve the Commercial/Industrial zones to protect water resources and encourage development.
 - + Partner with neighboring communities (Merrimack, Milford and/or Nashua) to examine the feasibility of extending sewer infrastructure down Route 101A corridor. (FY 2016) (Cost Est.: \$5,000 for Baseline feasibility study)
 - + Create and implement a Sewer Master Plan to build support for and outline the community's goals for the expansion of sewer (FY 2017) (Cost Est.: \$80,000).
 - + Implement partnership agreement with neighboring community to expand existing sewer system and build public-private partnership to share the cost (engineering and construction) (FY 2018-2021) (Cost Est.: \$20-40,000)
 - + Engineering of sewer expansion (FY 2020-2021) (Cost Est.: \$400,000 or \$200,000 per year)
 - + Project Construction (FY 2022-2025) (Cost Est.: \$40 million)

STRATEGIC GOAL #4

Goal 4: Amherst will maintain safe drinking water and protect water resources.

Measurable Outcome: Protect ground and surface water resources to maintain 100% of the Safe Drinking Water Act standards for drinking water supplies, and support Pennichuck in meeting its Strategic goal of a maximum phosphorous load in Pennichuck Brook Watershed of 30 ug/l.

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #4

- ✘ Revise Water Resource Regulations (Wetlands, Watershed, Aquifer, Floodplain, and Water Pollution Control Ordinances) to simplify and align with BMP's as defined in 2013 Regulatory Review
 - + Combine, simplify and update the Wetlands Protection District and Watershed Protection District (**COMPLETE**) (Cost Est.: Grant)
 - + Update the Water Pollution Control Regulations to reflect current BMP's (**COMPLETE**) (Cost Est.: Grant)
 - + Update the Aquifer Protection District to include Well-head/Ground Water Protection, current BMP's and supporting administrative processes (i.e. sampling requirements, design standards, etc.) (**COMPLETE**) (Cost Est.: Grant)
 - + Work with the State DOT, DES and federal EPA to ensure Amherst meets Stormwater quality regulations. (ongoing) (Cost Est.: No cost)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #4

- ✘ Provide proactive enforcement for local water resource related ordinances including Wetlands, Watershed, Aquifer, Groundwater/Well-head, Floodplain, and Water Pollution Control Regulations (**FY 2018**) (See Goal 5, Initiative 3.b)

STRATEGIC GOAL #5

Goal 5: Amherst will ensure quality construction, and will fairly and equally enforce regulations.

Measurable Outcome: Continue recent improvements in enforcement to increase the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) ISO rating from a 4 issued in 2013 to a 3 by 2030.

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #5

- ✘ Provide timely and accurate access to information and data stored within the department.
 - + Create digital copies of archived data to be stored on Town server (FY 2016) (Cost Est.: \$8,000-10,000 to complete)
 - + Invest in and install a paper file management system which will accommodate all archives and foreseeable future documentation, in an organized, safe and efficient manner. (FY 2015-2018) (Cost Est.: \$15,000)
 - + Provide public internet access to permits, data and files. (FY 2018) (Cost Est.: \$5,000 to add customer portal into current Community Development software system)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #5

✘ Ensure quality construction

- + Ensure all building permit applications meet current code specifications (2009 ICC Codes, as amended) and are processed within 7 to 14 days of complete information submission. (**ongoing**)
- + Ensure all construction meets or exceeds current code specifications.
 - ✘ Ensure inspections can be scheduled with 24-48 hour advance notice for inspection (**ongoing**) (Cost Est.: No Cost).
 - ✘ Utilize subcontracted, certified, Building Inspector on an as-needed basis to provide support during vacations, and keep inspection scheduling within 24-48 hour advance notice. (**ongoing**) (Cost Est.: \$5,000 – 10,000 for FY 2016-2017 for subcontracted building inspector)
- + Ensure all existing properties comply with relevant codes, regulations and ordinances via adopted Code Enforcement procedures (**ongoing**) (Currently 2-3 hours per week on complaints/enforcement.)

RELATED INITIATIVES FOR GOAL #5

✘ Fair and equal enforcement of regulations

- + Ensure compliance with Code enforcement policy and reasonable response times to written complaints. (ongoing) (Cost Est.: No Cost)
- + Provide Staff time and resources for proactive enforcement (**FY 2018**) (Cost Est.: \$85,000, Current Staff levels do not allow for proactive enforcement. Current time allocation allows for approximately 2 hours per week on complaints.)

BUDGET IMPACT SUMMARY

Community Development Office - 5 Year Budget Initiatives

Goals and Initiatives - Budget Impact years	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Goal 1: Encourage land use which protects open space and rural aesthetics					
1.1 Revise regulations and ordinances	0	0	0	0	25,000
1.2 Incorporate ACC and ALT goals and initiatives into regulations	0	2,000	0	0	0
1.3 Create construction standards	2,000	0	0	0	
Goal 2: Variety of housing options and leader in maintaining and managing historic district and resources					
2.1 Continue to allow for variety of housing options	0	5,000	2,500	0	0
2.2 Support Historic District	0	0	0	2,000	0
2.3 Support Heritage Commission	0	0	0	2,000	0
Goal 3: Community where businesses succeed and thrive with clearly established regulations and processes for development.					
3.1 Design and implement Economic Development Vision	2,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
3.2 Design standards for Commercial and Industrial	2,000	30,000	0	0	0
3.3 Infrastructure expansion	5,000	80,000	10,000	20,000	210,000
Goal 4: Maintain safe drinking water and protect water resources					
4.1 Revise water resource regulations	0	0	0	0	0
4.2 Proactive enforcement of water resource regulations	0	0	0	0	0
Goal 5: Ensure quality construction and fairly and equally enforce regulations.					
5.1 Access to data and information	8,000	0	20,000	0	0
5.2 Ensure Quality Construction	5,000	5,000	0	0	0
5.3 Fair and equal enforcement	0	0	85,000	85,000	85,000
Totals	\$24,000	\$192,000	\$187,500	\$179,000	\$390,000
Proposed Operating Budgets \$294,010 \$304,862 \$316,275 n/a n/a					
Total (Initiatives and Operating Budget) \$318,010 \$496,862 \$503,775 \$179,000 \$390,000					

DISCUSSION

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