



Amherst Master Plan – 2010



Amherst Planning Board

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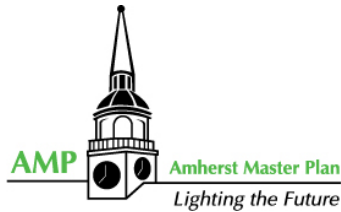


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Executive Summary

This brief summary of the master plan includes a description of the plan's purpose, the key elements of the vision and goals behind the plan's recommendations, and a map that summarizes the major plan recommendations.

Purpose

The Amherst of today is not the same as it was thirty years ago, and the Amherst that residents will cherish tomorrow will not be the same as it is today. The challenge for any master plan, and particularly for this one, is to identify policies and actions for managing the future changes so that unmanaged growth does not destroy a community's heritage.

Acknowledgements

The Amherst Planning Board would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who have assisted in the preparation of the Amherst Master Plan. The following volunteered to assist in particular roles as noted:

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In addition, numerous citizens participated in public meetings, roundtables, questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups, or commented on drafts of the plan or through the web site. Their thoughtfulness and contributions are greatly appreciated.

Community Preservation Associates, Brian Barber, Daphne Politis, and Bill Giezantanner with Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, Rick Taintor of Taintor Associates, and AECOM's Jeffrey Maxtutis served as consultants and assisted the Planning Board in coordinating and developing the plan.

Vision and Goals

The vision for Amherst's future serves as a foundation for goals and recommended actions.

Amherst's Vision

Amherst will preserve and enhance its unique rural and small town character.

Amherst will guide development in a manner that is ecologically sustainable and protective of the environment.

Amherst's Master Plan Goals

The following goals were developed as a result of incorporating the input of Amherst residents, guidance from the Master Plan Steering Committee, and expertise from the consultant team.

The goals are organized by Master Plan Elements. Some are necessarily overlapping and thus are referred to in more than one element. Each Master Plan Chapter will include more specific goals and actions to achieve them.

Land Use



Goal 1: Strengthen and Clarify Land Use Regulations

Goal 2: Encourage Sustainable Development

Goal 3: Manage Residential Development to Protect Natural Resources

Goal 4: Manage Commercial and Industrial Development

Historic and Cultural Resources



Goal 1: Preserve Town Character

Goal 2: Protect Cultural Resources of Village

Goal 3: Encourage Cultural Activities

Natural Resources



Goal 1: Protect Natural Resources

Goal 2: Preserve Habitat Diversity

Goal 3: Protect Water Resources

Housing



- Goal 1: Preserve Town Character**
- Goal 2: Encourage Diversity in Housing**
- Goal 3: Manage Fiscal Impacts**
- Goal 4: Encourage “Green” Residential Growth**
- Goal 5: Encourage the Creation of Additional Villages in Amherst**

Economic Development



- Goal 1: Encourage Higher-value Commercial Development**
- Goal 2: Improve Design of Commercial Areas**
- Goal 3: Encourage Mixed-use Areas**
- Goal 4: Diversify Tax Base**

Circulation and Transportation



- Goal 1: Preserve Town Character**
- Goal 2: Minimize Traffic and Congestion**
- Goal 3: Encourage Alternatives to Driving**

Public Facilities and Services



- Goal 1: Optimize Use of Town Resources**
- Goal 2: Provide Quality Education**
- Goal 3: Provide Needed Facilities and Services**
- Goal 4: Manage Future Growth**
- Goal 5: Encourage Sustainable Development**

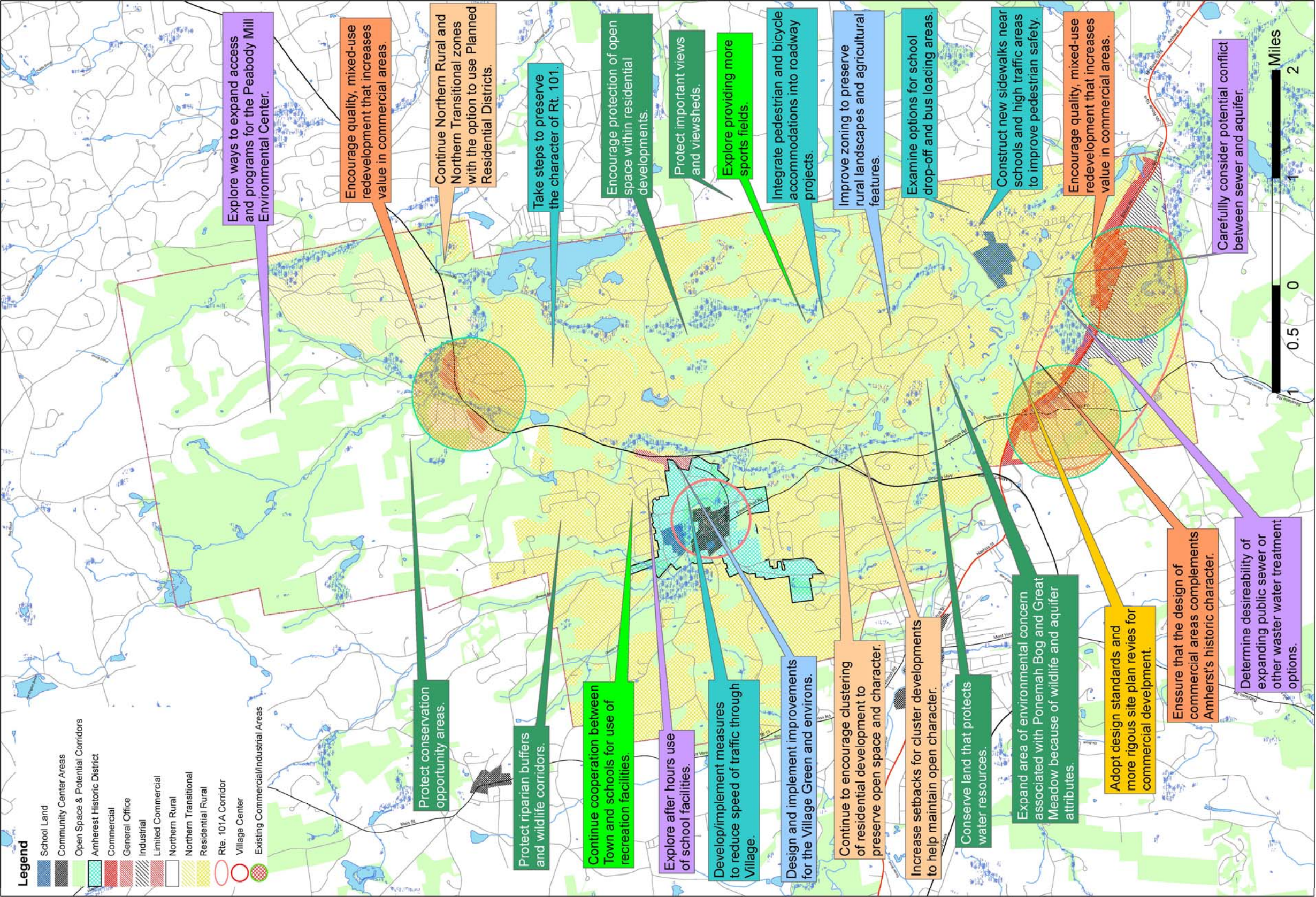
Recreation



Goal 1: Encourage Health

**Goal 2: Provide Needed Recreation
Facilities**

**Goal 3: Develop Town-wide Greenway
System**



Amherst, New Hampshire
2010 Master Plan Recommendations

Ten Key Master Plan Recommendations That Can Shape Amherst's Future

1. Ensure that new development and redevelopment respect Amherst's natural resources and complement the Town's existing character.
2. Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources throughout Amherst.
3. Continue to preserve Amherst's natural resources and rural landscapes including aquifers, prime agricultural soils, forests, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, and water and air quality for the sustainable health, safety and welfare of current and future generations.
4. Protect Amherst's extensive water resources for the benefit of residents and the environment, including surface water features, groundwater, and aquifer areas.
5. Save open space in residential development.
6. Encourage redevelopment that enhances the appearance of existing commercial and industrial areas.
7. Improve the ease and convenience with which residents can walk and use bikes for recreation, shopping, commuting and going to school.
8. Provide educational facilities that support quality education for the town's students.
9. Recognize the importance of recreation for health by providing needed facilities.
10. Continue to develop greenways and trails in order to provide a town-wide and inter-town system of recreational trails.

Introduction

A Master Plan serves as a guide for development and management of a town. It is developed in consultation with town officials, civic leaders and the citizens. It covers many of the topics for which towns bear some direct or indirect responsibility.

A Master Plan contains information on current conditions, trends and opportunities for future development. It is guided by careful deliberation about appropriate goals for town development, and realistic appraisal of how goals may best be achieved.

Topics covered in a Master Plan include public facilities and services, public utilities, economic development, natural and cultural resources, housing, recreation, historic preservation, land use and transportation. The Plan also contains a program of implementation, identifying the actions and agencies and organizations responsible for carrying out the Plan.

Process of Preparing the Plan

The Planning Board; consisting of Chairman Arnold Rosenblatt, Vice Chairman, Sally Wilkins, Gordon Leedy, and Michael Dell Orfano; assembled a large Master Plan Committee to work with the consulting team, Community Preservation Associates to prepare this plan.

A Vision Statement for the Plan was prepared as a first step, through a public meeting that was attended by more than fifty residents. This was further confirmed by additional discussions, distributing a questionnaire, providing suggestions

boxes, visioning with high school students, and soliciting comment through the web.

A series of inventory reports describing existing conditions on each of the topics needed for the Plan was prepared by consultant staff, in cooperation with key Master Plan Committee members, using available data and reports. Source material was obtained from Town, regional, state and federal publications and data bases. These inventory reports were combined into a Phase I report and are summarized at the beginning of each plan element section.

A series of workshops were held around the plan elements to develop recommendations and actions for achieving the goals articulated in the vision.

These steps resulted in an extensive list of goals, recommendations and associated actions and parties responsible for such actions in each of the topics. This list was reviewed by Planning Board and revised to become the Plan's recommended implementation program.

Amherst Yesterday

Prior to 1675, groups of native people inhabited what would become New Hampshire. The largest group, the Pennacook, was centered in the Merrimack Valley, and the Souhegan tribe was centered near what would become Amherst. Many place-names remind us that the Pennacook lived in villages and hunted and farmed the surrounding lands.

Between 1735 and 1741 settlers began to arrive in the Souhegan Valley and built homesteads. One of their first tasks was to establish a burial ground. The "Old Burial Ground" is believed to be the oldest public

cemetery in New Hampshire. In 1739 they built a meetinghouse at the northeast corner of the village, and two years later, hired their first minister, officially forming the First Congregational Church. The settlers also established a large open area for grazing animals and for training militia in the center of the village and referred to it as “The Plain.” In 1760, Amherst Village incorporated as the Town of Amherst.

Because of its location at the intersection of three routes (Portsmouth to Keene, Boston Post Road to Boston, and the New Hampshire Turnpike north to Vermont), Amherst was the transportation hub for inland New Hampshire. In 1770 Amherst became the seat of the courts for southern New Hampshire and location for the county jail. In 1774 residents converted the first meetinghouse into the county courthouse, and built a new meetinghouse on The Plain.

At the time of the Revolution, Amherst was the largest, most significant town in New Hampshire west of the Merrimack River. Many notable politicians and government officials participated in court activities within the town. Prominent among these was Daniel Webster, who, in 1805, made his first legal plea here in the Second County Courthouse (now a residence on Foundry Street). The town had several mills, stores, factories, and a printing establishment. Horace Greeley was born in Amherst in 1811 and his birthplace is still extant. Franklin Pierce, who would be elected President in 1852, was practicing law in Amherst during the Federal Period. In 1834, he married Jane Means Appleton, at the Means House on the corner of Pierce Lane and Court House Road.

Accompanying this growth of civic and commercial activity was a surge in construction. Many existing houses in the Village were built, reflecting Georgian styles. In 1825, the Third County Courthouse was built adjacent to the Old Burial Ground. It would later become the Town Hall.



Peabody House, Amherst Street

In the 1800s Amherst became a rural retreat for urban dwellers from New York and other large cities, traveling by train and coach and staying on farms and in small inns and hotels.



Poor Farm Bridge, 1907

With the opening of the west, the building of railroads, and the development of new large industrial cities (such as Manchester and Nashua), Amherst’s commercial activity declined. By 1864, the county court, jail and records had been moved from Amherst. Amherst’s population remained sparse, and began dropping into

the early 1900s. By 1920, Amherst had only 868 residents.

In the 1950s, migration away from cities began, and towns in southern New Hampshire became desirable as residential communities. Amherst's population grew from 1,174 in 1940 to 9,476 in 1980, and increased 44% between 1970 and 1975 alone. Many of the town's farms underwent conversion to residential housing, as demand for suburban real estate increased. Fortunately, in 1970, residents had the foresight to establish the Local Historic District and in so doing, preserved one of its most valuable assets, Amherst Village.

Amherst Today

Largely because of its rich historic and cultural resources, location, and quality schools, Amherst is one of New Hampshire's most desirable places to live. It offers breathtaking vistas and magnificent open spaces.



Town green

Many residents run small businesses in town, while others work in neighboring towns or commute further south to jobs in Massachusetts. Amherst maintains a striking balance of historic rural ambience and contemporary business establishments.

Fourth of July parades, Christmas tree lightings, and band concerts occur on the Town green due to considerable public volunteer work. In fact, the town is known for its community spirit that is highlighted by these and other events.



Memorial Day Parade

The community prides itself on preserving its colonial flair, the centerpiece of which is the village green in the center of town. The town center is filled with a bounty of historic architecture, including antique colonial homes, the Brick School, the Village Market, Amherst Town Hall, small offices, and the Congregational Church.

Most of the community's industry and commerce is located on route 101A, outside the center of the town.



Amherst Tree Lighting Ceremony

Many would say that Amherst's commitment to historic preservation is

evident by its diligent planning, as this attractive community has handled the accelerated growth of the area with intelligence and style. Still others hark back to a time before so much growth. Many would agree that controlling growth will continue to be one of the Town's most pressing problems.

Strict zoning, excellent schools, fine town services, recreational facilities, and conservation land and open space add to the pleasure of life in Amherst.

"Current conditions" throughout the master plan refers to data collected in 2006.

Amherst Tomorrow – Vision

The vision for Amherst is the foundation for the master plan goals. It was developed through a series of meetings, roundtables, and discussions.

Residents emphasized the following factors about the town that they wished to see continued in the future:

- Traditional holiday spirit
- Rural beauty
- Open space
- New England architecture
- Local businesses
- The historic Village
- Neighborly townspeople
- Good schools
- Recreation
- Family-focus

Amherst will preserve and enhance its unique rural and small town character.

Amherst will guide development in a manner that is ecologically sustainable and protective of the environment.

These two statements are the core of Amherst's vision for the future. Its small town character is typified by an aesthetic, a "feel", characterized by open spaces, historic New England architecture, and land uses that contribute to the town's unique sense of place.

Future development needs to be carefully guided to preserve the town's character and to assure that while providing for human needs it is also sustainable. To be sustainable it must preserve the town's natural resources and ecosystems.

Priority Actions

First priority actions in each master plan category are listed below. The chapter on implementation has a listing of recommended lead agencies.

Land Use

Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision and site plan regulations to reflect current practice and to provide clear guidance for land use management.

Ensure that the **design** of commercial areas complements Amherst's historic and semi-rural character.

- Revise the Non-Residential Site Plan Review Regulations to promote the development of new links between parcels in the Commercial, General Office and Industrial districts, to minimize the increase in turning movements on Routes 101 and 101A to ensure consistence with Corridor Plans.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Continue to preserve and **protect rural landscapes** that define and contribute to the town's identity, including farms, fields, barns, fences, etc.

- Continue to develop an inventory of rural landscapes including farms, water bodies, shorelines, important view-sheds and ridgelines in conjunction with town-wide land conservation efforts.
- Improve creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize preservation of rural landscapes in conjunction with town-wide land conservation efforts.
- Continue to preserve and protect **historic and cultural resources** throughout Amherst.
- Continue to develop a comprehensive inventory of significant natural resources and habitat types and prioritize them for their importance to the well being of wildlife and Amherst residents.
- Protect habitats of rare species of plants and animals.

Protect Amherst's extensive **water resources** for the benefit of residents and the environment, including surface water features, groundwater, and aquifer areas.

Natural Resources

Continue to preserve Amherst's **natural resources and rural landscapes** including aquifers, prime agricultural soils, forests, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, and water and air quality for the sustainable health, safety and welfare of current and future generations.

- Protect important views and view-sheds, including ridgelines, which help define the town's character.
- Continue to protect agricultural landscapes and other conservation opportunity areas, as they are major determinants of the town's character.
- Strengthen creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize the preservation of open space associated with residential subdivisions.

Preserve a diversity of habitat types for the benefit of residents and the environment, including both large and small tracts of agricultural and forest lands, grasslands, wetlands, vernal pools, and other natural habitats.

- Conserve land that protects water quality and water quantity including land overlaying aquifers, watersheds and buffers adjacent to surface waters such as streams, lakes, and wetlands.
- Ensure that development does not compromise (degrade) water quality.
- Protect shoreline (riparian) buffers that filter out pollutants before water discharges into lakes, streams and wetlands.
- Assure that proper erosion control measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water are in place when land use alterations occur.
- Continue to carefully manage development within the 100-year floodplain to be consistent with guidelines set forth by FEMA - NFIP.
- Participate in inter-municipal water resources management efforts.
- Encourage legislation to protect water supplies for public use and protection of the environment.
- View development in light of the town's role as a watershed steward, considering the critical

combination of water and land resources.

designs that will be consistent with Amherst historic character.

Housing

Maintain the **semi-rural character** of the northern sections of town.

- Continue Northern Rural and Northern Transitional zones with the option to use the Planned Residential District

Save **open space** in residential development.

- Continue to encourage clustering of residential development and preservation of open space in all parts of town as a means of maintaining existing character.
- Encourage developments in neighborhoods (some with two units in a structure) that require common land assuring that significant portions of the property are left open, exclusive of areas for buildings, parking and septic systems.
- Increase setbacks for cluster developments and require additional landscaping to help maintain existing open character.

Economic Development

Encourage redevelopment that **enhances the appearance** of existing commercial and industrial areas.

- Ensure that future commercial development will adhere to principles of good planning and design.
- Adopt design standards and guidelines and apply more rigorous site plan review for commercial development.
- Adopt design guidelines for signs and landscaping to help assure

Circulation and Transportation

Improve, operate, and maintain the roadways within the town to provide safe, efficient, cost-effective service while **maintaining the scenic qualities** and character of the Town.

- Improve roadways to increase their safety and capacity using Context Sensitive design standards.
- Develop/implement measures to reduce the speed of traffic through the Village.
- Continue Road Surface Management System.
- Take steps to preserve the character of Route 101.

Manage traffic volumes and speeds on local and neighborhood roads to discourage their use as “cut-through” routes.

Reduce congestion and improve travel times along major arterials, at major intersections, and near major trip generators.

- Examine options for improving public school drop-off and bus loading areas.
- Require Impact Studies and mitigation Impact Fees for significant projects.

Improve the ease and convenience with which residents can **walk and use bikes** for recreation, shopping, commuting and going to school.

- Explore options for funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Establish bicycle and pedestrian design standards.

- Integrate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into roadway projects.
- Join NHDOT Safe Routes to School Program.
- Construct new sidewalks near schools and high traffic roadways to improve pedestrian safety.

Public Services and Facilities

Improve comprehensive, **long-range planning** so that expenditures are planned and phased in a reasoned and cost-effective manner.

- Periodically update the Master Plan and relate its recommendations to capital and operating budget expenditures
- Explore possibility of sharing town-owned space in creative ways.

Provide additional opportunities for **meeting and gathering**

- Explore possibility of developing a community center (including regional option).

Provide **educational facilities** that support quality education for the town's students.

- Provide life-long learning opportunities.

Provide services and facilities for the town's **elderly residents** to support them to "age in place."

- Explore regional relationships with neighboring communities (e.g. Milford).
- Explore ways of providing opportunities for intergenerational interaction.
- Support the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) in their efforts to identify

senior needs and transportation options.

- Explore options for providing such activities as community gardens, places to gather, and recreation.
- Explore after hours use of school-owned property

Provide **teenagers** with wholesome and healthy **alternative** activities to choose during their free time.

- Explore developing new facilities that provide activities for teens and form a teen task force to involve teens in planning for facilities and activities.
- Explore ways of expanding recreation and environmental education for teens (including expanding access and programming at Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC)).

Coordinate the provision of **infrastructure and services** so that it supports the desired location and degree of development.

- Determine desirability of extending public sewer and explore options (conduct feasibility study and explore alternatives [including package treatment plants, on-site sewage disposal, and provision of regional services with neighboring communities]).
- Participate in inter-town water resource management efforts.
- Explore ways of ensuring water sovereignty.
- Carefully consider protection and potential conflict between sewer & aquifer.

Ensure that new development pays its fair share of the **cost of public facilities**.

- Analyze build-out potential, infrastructure capacity, and public facility needs in order to provide the basis for expanded implementation of impact fees under the zoning ordinance.
- Explore providing more fields for soccer, lacrosse etc. to meet local demands.
- Continue cooperation between the Town and schools for use of recreation facilities.

Ensure that in the future, Amherst is developed in a manner that is **sustainable**, energy saving, and with reduced impacts on global warming.

- Consider:
 - Ways of maximizing recycling
 - Training municipal staff in sustainability.
- Support the Sustainability and Energy Committee.
- Implement green energy use in public buildings and vehicles.
 - Conduct energy audits of town buildings
 - Build future facilities with the goal of incorporating LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles.
- Develop public education on sustainable development and energy conservation.
- Support steps to form an energy committee as suggested by the NH Climate Change Resolution.

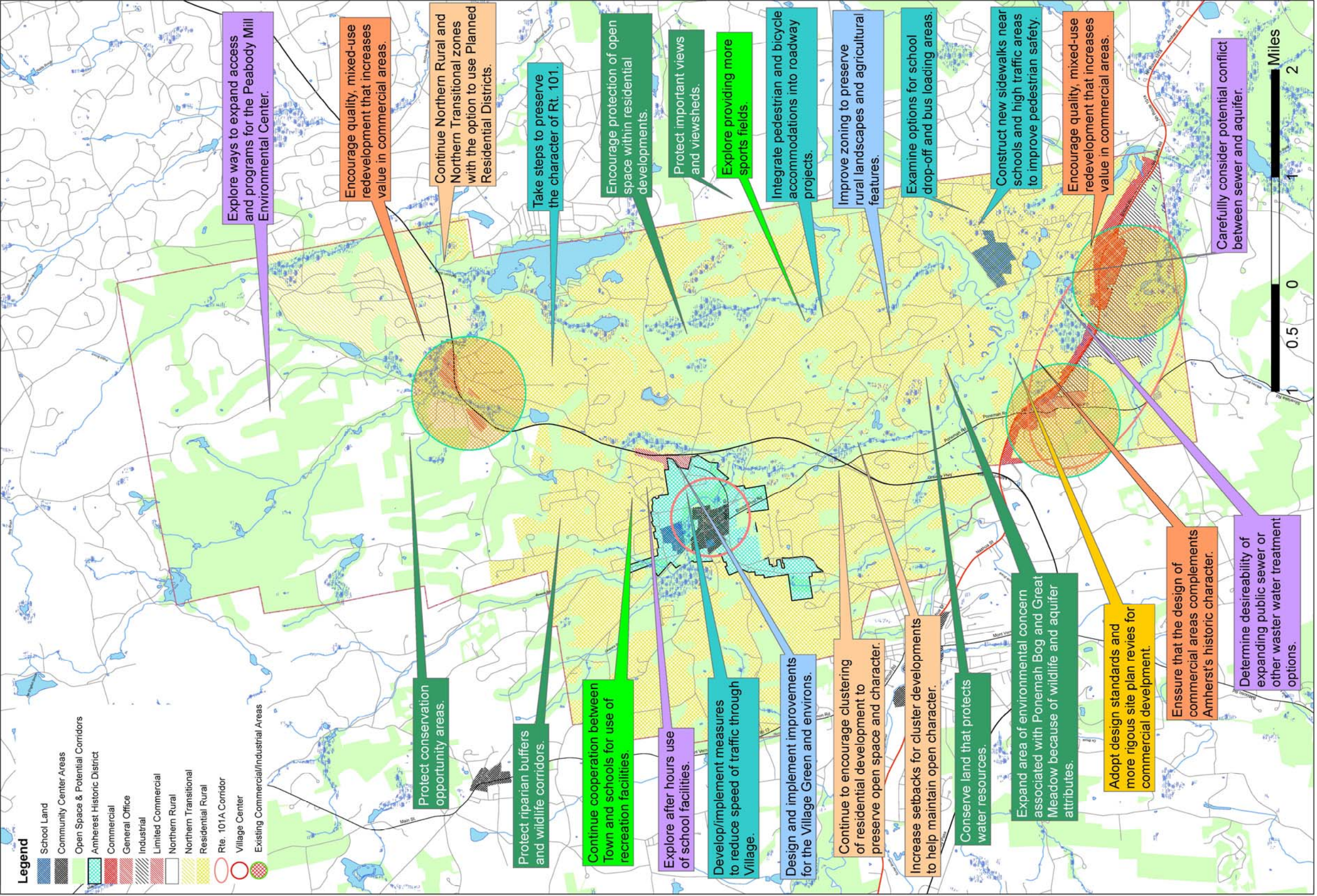
Continue to develop a diversity of informal **recreation facilities** and programs for the health and benefit of all residents.

- Develop a comprehensive recreation plan.

Recreation

Continue to develop a diversity of formal **recreation facilities**—fields, courts, playgrounds, etc.—and programs for the health and benefit of all residents.

- Develop a comprehensive inventory of existing recreation facilities and programs and analyze their adequacy for current and future generations of Amherst residents.



**Amherst, New Hampshire
2010 Master Plan Recommendations**

1

Amherst's Land Use & Zoning Current Conditions

How We Use the Land

Land Use Distribution

- Total Area—21,986 acres
- Total Developed Area—13,346 acres (62%)
- Residential—10,430 (87% of developed area)
 - ◊ Single-family—10,112 acres
 - ◊ Other Residential—318 acres
- Commercial & Industrial—711 acres (6% of developed area)
- Public & Institutional—251 acres (2% of developed area)
- Recreation—644 acres (5% of developed area)
- Roads—1,312 acres (10% of developed area)
- Protected Open Space—2,966 acres—14% of total area)
- Vacant & Agriculture—5,372 acres (25% of total area)

Residential Parcel Sizes

- Less than 1 acre—1,321 parcels, 803 acres
- 1 to 2 acres—1,189 parcels, 1,730 acres
- 2 to 2.5 acres—337 parcels, 749 acres
- 2.5 to 5 acres—546 parcels, 1,904 acres
- 5 to 10 acres—307 parcels, 2,015 acres
- More than 10 acres—146 parcels, 2,910 acres

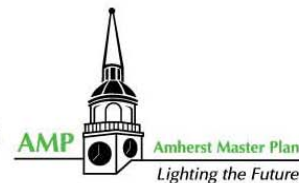
Land Use Regulations

- 93% of Amherst is zoned for low-density residential. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of this area allows lots of 2 acres or more, and about $\frac{1}{4}$ requires lot sizes of at least 5 acres.
- Commercial/industrial—7% primarily along Route 101A
- Overlay districts to protect historic and natural resources—Historic, Aquifer Conservation, Floodplain, and Watershed Protection Districts
- Several regulations designed to minimize the impact of development—Planned Residential Development, Mixed-use Development, subdivision and site plan controls

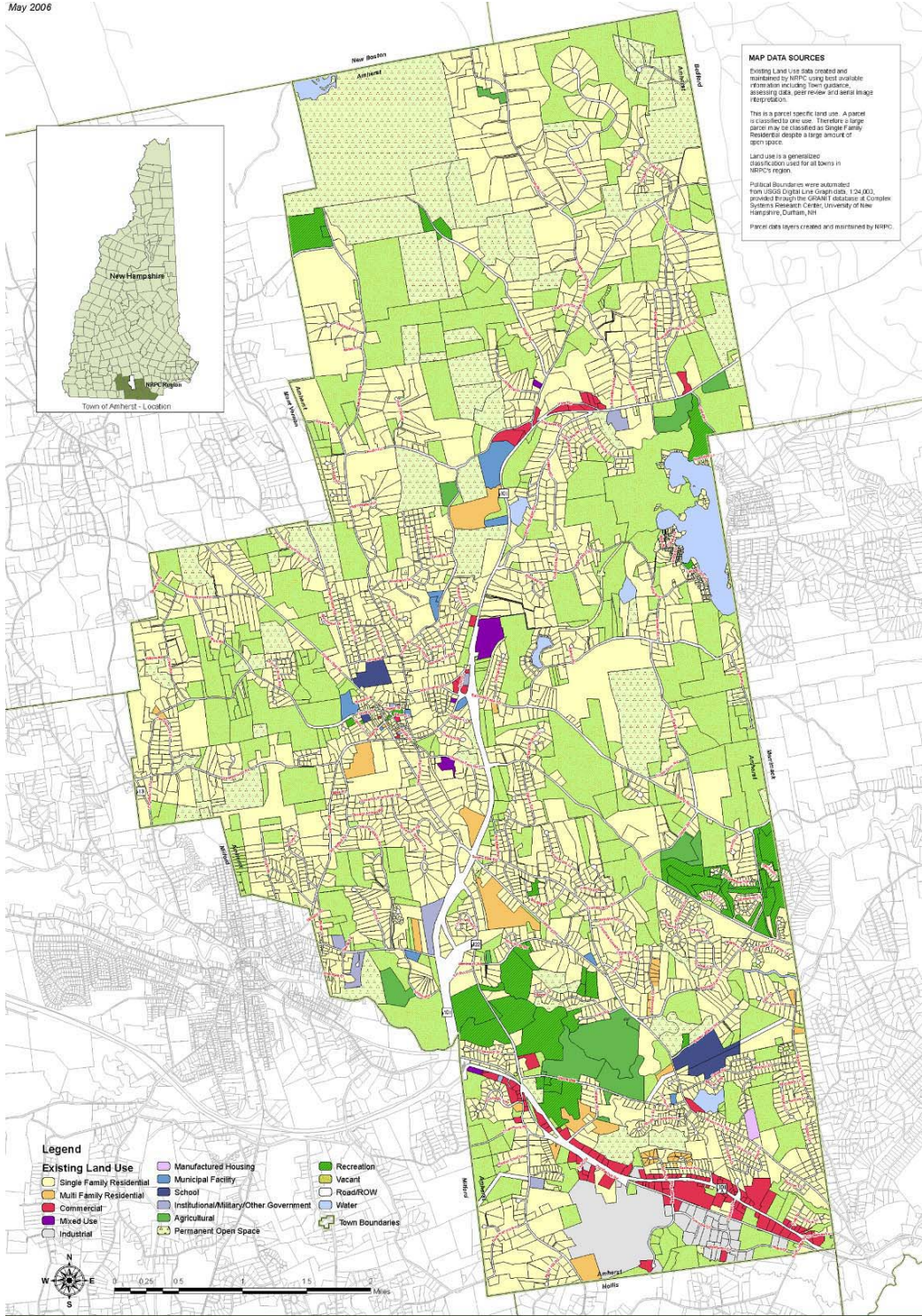
What Does It Mean?

- More than 60 percent of the town's land is already developed to some extent, and 14 percent is permanently protected. Thus, 25% of the town is available for new development or further conservation.
- Although the smallest lot area permitted in Amherst is 2 acres, 25% of the single-family residences in town are on lots with less than this minimum area.
- Only 75 agricultural and vacant parcels in Amherst are 20 acres or more in area, but these parcels represent almost 70 percent of the unprotected open space in the town (3,704 acres).
- Parcels with at least twice the largest required lot area constitute nearly 30% of the land used for single-family residences, representing another 2,900 acres that could potentially support further residential growth through subdivision.

See Land Use section of Amherst's 2009 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



May 2006



Map prepared for the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and for public review by NHPC. Map data derived from multiple sources of various scales of accuracy. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made for the use herein. No use, or its interpretation.

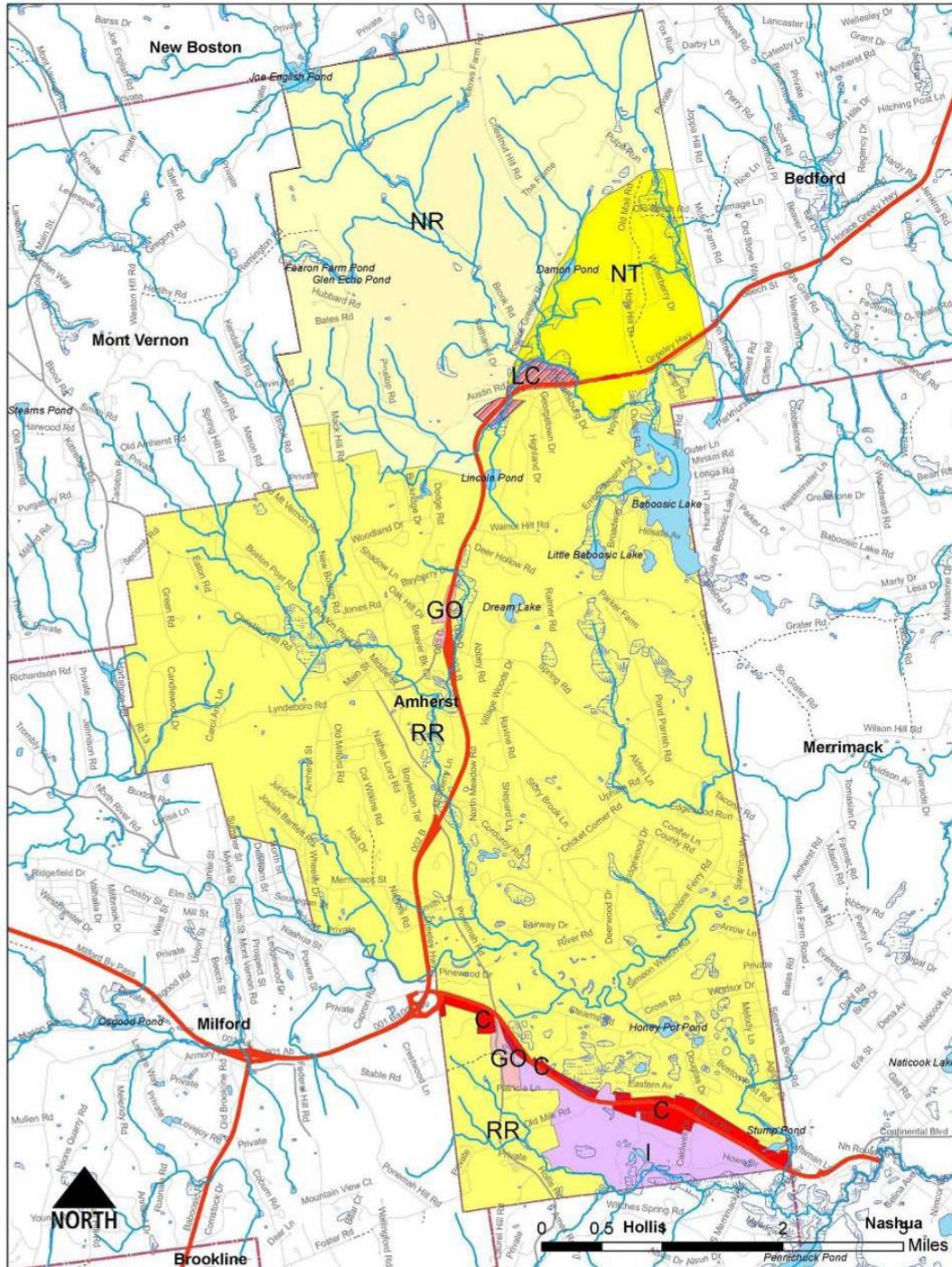
Prepared by NHPC, 100-0000
Project Number: 2005-0000/Town_Map/Amherst/Amherst_Land_Use/Amherst



Nashua Regional Planning Commission
115 Main Street PO Box 847 Nashua, NH 03061
www.nashuarpc.org

Existing Land Use

(See Part 1 Inventory Report for additional details)



Existing Zoning
(See Part 1 Inventory Report for additional details)

RR – Residential / Rural
NR – Northern Rural
NTR – Northern Transitional
LC – Limited Commercial

C – Commercial
GO – General Office
I – Industrial

1

Amherst's Land Use & Zoning What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"Amherst's rural land seems to be disappearing and residential subdivisions seem to be appearing everywhere. Development is not controlled. Amherst is not a rural town anymore—it is becoming a suburb."

"The development of big-box stores and strip malls along Route 101A has detracted from Amherst's historic and rural character."

"Preserve the existing residential nature of Amherst characterized by the village, rural landscape, New England colonial architecture and small town feel."

"Develop clean and aesthetically pleasing commercial/office activities."

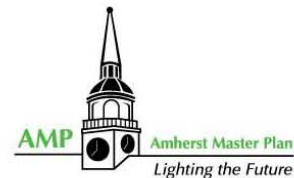
"Adopt stricter commercial design standards."

Goals to Light the Future²

- **Strengthen and clarify the Town's land use regulations.**
 - Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision and site plan regulations to reflect current practice and provide clear guidance for land use management.
- **Encourage sustainable development.**
 - Foster sustainability in design and development.
- **Manage residential growth to protect natural resources.**
 - Manage future development in resi-

dential and rural areas to preserve open space and protect natural resources.

- **Manage commercial and industrial development.**
 - Ensure that the design of commercial areas complements Amherst's historic and semi-rural character.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

1

Amherst's Land Use & Zoning What We Can Do ¹

To Strengthen and Clarify the Town's Land Use Regulations

1. Undertake a comprehensive revision of the Town's zoning regulations, including:
 - Recodify the zoning ordinance,
 - Create a table of use regulations
 - Combine all definitions in one section
 - Separate standards from definitions.
2. Revise the Impact Fee provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to address additional public facilities, based on a more comprehensive Capital Improvement Program.

To Encourage Sustainable Development

1. Revise the Subdivision Regulations and the Non-residential Site Plan Review Regulations to promote the use of Low Impact Development techniques and explore ways to integrate sustainable building standards into Town regulations.
2. Revise off-street parking requirements in Non-residential Site Plan Review Regulations to limit the amount of new impervious surface.

To Manage Residential Growth to Protect Natural Resources

1. Review the Open Space Plan and Planned Residential Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and revise as necessary to better promote clustering of residential development in order to protect natural resources.

To Manage Commercial and Industrial Development

1. Develop commercial and industrial building design standards for new development and redevelopment.
2. Adopt building design standards (mandatory) and/or guidelines (non-mandatory) for new development and redevelopment in Commercial, Limited Commercial, and Industrial districts.
3. Review the sign regulations in the Zoning Ordinance and revise as appropriate.
4. Revise the Non-residential Site Plan Review Regulations to promote the development of new vehicular links between parcels in the Commercial, General Office, and Industrial districts, to minimize the increase in turning movements on Routes 101 and 101A to ensure consistence with Corridor Plans.
5. Work with businesses to design and develop gateways along major corridors and at key entrances to the community.

¹ Potential objectives and strategies

Land Use Alternatives

A series of alternative scenarios for achieving the vision for Amherst were developed in response to discussions with the Master Plan Steering Committee and public input from two public workshops. The scenarios illustrated a variety of ways for Amherst to develop, as a result of adopting different approaches to growth management, while meeting the basic ideas expressed in the vision. The alternatives included:

- Continue current trends
- Reinforce current trends
- Neighborhood concentration
- Strengthen Village/ Diversify 101A Corridor

The two guiding principles of the vision, listed below, were used to evaluate alternatives and prioritize features in each of the scenarios discussed.

- *Amherst will preserve and enhance its unique rural and small town character.*
- *Amherst will guide development in a manner that is ecologically sustainable and protective of the environment.*

Neighborhood Protection/ Mixed Use Nodes

A final land use plan was introduced as a combination of the best features of four alternatives considered. Input received from public participation, review meetings and web site input clearly demonstrated a preference for enhancing/ reinforcing

residential neighborhoods and preserving the current character of the historic Village District.



At the same time, there is recognition that there are opportunities for enhancement of the Town's tax base, improvement of the existing commercial corridor along Route 101A and the ability of the Town to provide additional diversity of housing by guiding potential redevelopment and new development in the existing commercial nodes toward higher value, mixed uses.

New mixed use areas should be concentrated in higher traffic areas such as the existing undeveloped portion of the commercial/industrial districts along Old Nashua Road and Northern Boulevard; the existing commercial concentration surrounding the intersection of NH Route 122 and NH Route 101A; the commercial and residential areas along the easterly portion of NH Route 101A, including Truell Road; and the limited commercial areas surrounding the intersection of Horace Greeley Road and NH Route 101.



2010 Master Plan

The Town remains concerned about maintaining and enhancing the visual qualities of these areas, improving overall quality of design, creating high value development, and providing opportunities for new innovative forms of development and redevelopment. To this end the focus of regulation should be on the following:

- Encouraging “walkability,” and the development of “live, work, play” neighborhoods;
- Encouraging quality development, redevelopment and limited expansion of existing commercial and industrial districts (red hatched areas);
- Higher value uses in the NH Route 101A Corridor (red oval);
- Preservation of the scenic qualities and gateway function of the NH Route 101 Corridor;
- Preservation of the residential character and civic functions of Amherst Village (red circle).

2 Amherst's Historic & Cultural Resources Current Conditions

Historic Resource Highlights

- Well preserved late 18th and early 19th century era village with many historic buildings surrounding a central common, listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Natural beauty, open space, and agricultural land surrounding the village
- Scenic roads shaded by mature trees and miles of stone walls trailing through woodlands
- Dark night skies—lack of light pollution
- One of New Hampshire's oldest burial grounds, dating to 1735, and the birthplace of Horace Greeley
- An historical society that manages a collection of town-related material, operates two museums, and sponsors an array of historical programs
- A heritage commission leading efforts to identify and preserve historical and cultural resources throughout town
- Beauty of scenic roads disturbed by truck and fast moving car traffic
- An unsafe pedestrian and bike environment in the village area and beyond
- A sprawling commercial corridor (Route 101A) that visually conflicts with the town's character

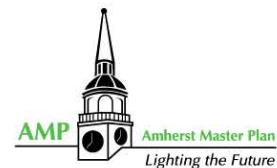
Cultural Resource Highlights

- An excellent public library—the Amherst Town Library—with an array of resources and long hours of operation
- Amherst Town Band, Souhegan Valley Chorus and several other cultural organizations exploring many forms of the performing arts
- Many yearly cultural activities including an Easter egg hunt, Fourth of July celebration, and “Trick-or – Treat in the Village”—that contribute to the quality of life in Amherst.

What Does It Mean?

- Amherst has a rich heritage worthy of pride and protection.
- Amherst's sense of place is largely defined by its historic village and green, juxtaposed against stretches of agricultural land.
- Residents place great value on town's cultural traditions that combine with historic buildings and landscapes to define Amherst's character.
- Many of these historic and cultural assets are unprotected and some suffer from traffic, overhead utilities, and lack of support.
- The character of the town is changing. For many years, it consisted of a central village with many outlying farms centered around one-room schools. Much of the farmland is being developed.
- Uncontrolled development (both commercial and residential) and absence of design standards threaten the historic and cultural character of the town.

See Historic and Cultural Resources section of Amherst's 2008 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



2 Amherst's History & Culture What We Want

Voice of Amherst ¹

"Our historic buildings and landscapes help define our town character."

"Amherst's scenic roads, bridges, stonewalls, country lanes, views, and large tracts of land add to the town's appearance and need protection."

"Truck and fast-moving car traffic through the town and Village have made the pedestrian environment unsafe."

"The development of big-box stores and strip malls along Route 101A has detracted from Amherst's historic and rural character."

"Amherst's rural land seems to be disappearing and residential subdivisions seem to be appearing everywhere. Development is not controlled. Amherst is not a rural town anymore—it is becoming a suburb."

Goals to Light the Future ²

- **Preserve Town Character**
 - Continue to preserve and protect rural landscapes that define and contribute to the town's identity, including farms, fields, barns, fences, etc.
 - Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources throughout Amherst.
- **Protect Cultural Resources of Village**
 - Provide further protection for historic and cultural resources in and around Amherst Village.
- **Encourage Cultural Activities**

- Encourage organized events and other cultural activities that enrich the Town and contribute to community character.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input.

2 Amherst's History & Culture What We Can Do ¹

To Preserve Town Character

1. Continue to develop an inventory of rural landscapes including farms, water bodies, shorelines, important view-sheds and ridgelines in conjunction with town-wide land conservation efforts.
2. Improve creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize preservation of rural landscapes in conjunction with town-wide lands conservation efforts.
3. Expand the existing inventory of historic properties to achieve a town-wide historical/cultural inventory.
4. Identify additional potential areas for historic district designations, including historic residential areas based on this expanded inventory.
5. Identify remaining historic farms and develop strategies for protecting farm buildings, land, stonewalls, and other historic features, also based on this inventory.
6. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance for properties listed on the town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources.
7. Revise Amherst's landscaping requirements so that they better reflect the character of Amherst.
8. Strengthen historic and cultural resource protection provisions in Amherst's zoning ordinance.

To Protect Cultural Resources of Amherst Village

1. Develop plans for preserving/enhancing

entrances to the Village, including removal of utilities, elimination of excess asphalt, installing appropriate street lighting, and other measures as defined in the approved town hall environs improvement plan.

2. Design and make improvements to the Village Green and Town Hall environs.
3. Develop a design and management plan for long-term use and care of the Village Green, including provisions for increased use of the Green for cultural activities.

To Encourage Cultural Activities

1. Take actions that support existing activities and events.
2. Consider support and facilities for expanded set of cultural activities.

¹ *Potential objectives and strategies*



3 Amherst's Conservation Current Conditions

Natural Resource Highlights

Geology, Soils, Topography, and Slope

- Ridge lines and hills separated by valleys provide vistas that enhance the town's appearance and character
- 25% of Amherst's total area is rated as having low or very low potential for individual septic system

Surface Water Resources

- Souhegan River—4.5 miles in Amherst
- Joe English Brook—4.4 miles in Amherst
- Beaver Brook and several tributaries
- Baboosic Lake and several other ponds
- Vernal pools and extensive wetlands

Water Supply

- Amherst has the most productive groundwater resources in the region. The Milford-Souhegan glacial-drift aquifer supplies drinking water for three towns

Habitat and Wildlife

- Extensive forestlands and associated wildlife
- Agricultural landscapes and wildlife
- 7 species of rare plants
- 14 species of rare animals
- Vernal pools contribute to biodiversity
- Amherst Conservation Commission has protected more than 2,400 acres—about 11% of town's total area and maintains more than 24 miles of trails

What Does It Mean?

- Amherst has many areas of natural beauty but many important natural resources remain unprotected
- The potential to create corridors that connect already protected areas remains largely unrealized
- Uncontrolled development is likely to intrude on some of the vistas of ridge lines, hills, forests, and agricultural areas that define much of Amherst's character and appearance
- Amherst's groundwater is a critical regional resource
- Protection of key wildlife habitats is important for maintaining biodiversity
- The future of the New Boston Air Station (more than 700 acres) will be a critical factor in maintaining wildlife habitat and preserving the town's character
- Amherst has a highly motivated, skilled, and active Conservation Commission
- Town has supported land acquisition for conservation

See Conservation section of Amherst's 2009 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



3 Amherst's Conservation What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"Our wildlife and abundant natural resources help define our town's character."

"Amherst's tree-shaded winding roads and stone-walls add to the town's appearance and need protection."

"We need a system of trails and safe walking areas."

"Amherst's rural land seems to be disappearing and residential subdivisions seem to be appearing everywhere. Development is not controlled. Amherst is not a rural town anymore—it is becoming a suburb."

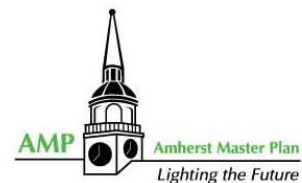
Goals to Light the Future²

- **Protect Natural Resources**
 - Continue to preserve Amherst's natural resources and rural landscapes including aquifers, prime agricultural soils, forests, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, and water and air quality for the sustainable health, safety and welfare of current and future generations.
- **Preserve Habitat Diversity**
 - Preserve a diversity of habitat types for the benefit of residents and the environment, including both large and small tracts of agricultural and forest lands, grasslands, wetlands, vernal pools, and other natural habitats.
- **Protect Water Resources**
 - Protect Amherst's extensive water resources

for the benefit of residents and the environment, including surface water features, groundwater, and aquifer areas.



Photo by Tadd Torborg



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

3 Amherst's Conservation What We Can Do ¹

To Protect Natural Resources

1. Develop a town-wide trail network (see discussion in Transportation and Natural Resources Inventory reports).
2. Increase public access to protected areas where appropriate.
3. Develop a strategy for the passive recreational use and protection of the New Boston Air Station.
4. Protect important views and view-sheds, including ridgelines, which help define the town's character.
5. Continue to protect agricultural landscapes and other conservation opportunity area, as they are major determinants of the town's character.
6. Strengthen creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize the preservation of open space associated with residential subdivisions.
7. Consider the impacts of new land uses on ecosystem function and habitat integrity.

To Preserve Habitat Diversity

1. Continue to develop a comprehensive inventory of significant natural resources and habitat types and prioritize them for their importance to the well being of wildlife and Amherst residents.
2. Protect habitats of rare species of plants and animals.
3. Avoid fragmentation of large forested areas.
4. Plan and protect corridors, connections between existing and future protected areas.
5. Encourage the protection of shoreline (riparian) buffers that are essential for the protection of wildlife.

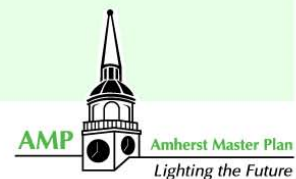
To Protect Water Resources

1. Conserve land that protects water quality and

water quantity including land overlaying aquifers, watersheds and buffers adjacent to surface waters such as streams, lakes, and wetlands.

2. Ensure that development does not compromise (degrade) water quality.
3. Protect shoreline (riparian) buffers that filter out pollutants before water discharges into lakes, streams and wetlands.
4. Encourage the expansion of water quality monitoring programs on Amherst's lakes, streams, and wetlands and its regionally important groundwater aquifers.
5. Assure that proper erosion control measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water are in place when land use alterations occur.
6. Foster the preservation of an intact forest canopy and under story on steep slopes that are susceptible to erosion.
7. Continue to carefully manage development within the 100-year floodplain to guidelines set forth by FEMA - NFIP.
8. Participate in inter-municipal water resources management efforts.
9. Encourage legislation to protect water supplies for public use and protection of the environment.
10. View development in light of the Town's role as a watershed steward, considering the critical combination of water and land resources..

¹ Potential objectives and strategies



4 Amherst's Housing Current Conditions

Housing Facts—How Do We Live?

Total Population—13,668 (2007)

- Projected to grow to 18,071 by 2030

Total Households—3,590 (2000)

- Projected to grow to 6,024 by 2030 or an average of about 2% (81 households) per year
- Only about $\frac{1}{2}$ of households have children under the age of 18
- Householder over age 64 will grow from 7% in 2000 to 16% in 2030
- School age children will increase from 2,986 in 2000 to 3,953 in 2030
- 90.4% of housing units are single-family detached (2000)
- 92% of the housing is owner-occupied

Housing Construction Trends

- Annual average of 74 new housing units per year –1995 to 2006: 100 per year from 1995 to 2000 and about 55 per year from 2000 to 2006
- Condominiums have made up more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the building permits in 2005 and 2006

Age of Housing Units

- About 70% of houses have been built since 1970

Size of Housing Units

- 69% of the housing has 7 or more rooms
- 16% have 5 rooms or less

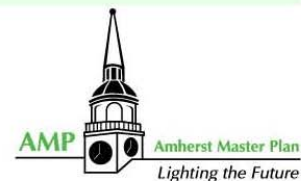
Affordability & Fiscal Impact

- 2006 average house sales price: \$402,827
- About 80% of the households in Amherst could not afford the average sales price
- 1 and 2-bedroom homes have a positive fiscal impact on the town budget, while 3, 4, and 5-bedroom homes have a negative impact.

What Does It Mean?

- There has been a recent shift to smaller 2 bedroom homes, some in two-unit condominium structures, developed under the Planned Residential District provisions of the Amherst Zoning Ordinance.
- 1 and 2 bedroom units will be sought by young adults just starting families and by empty nesters and retirees. These are life cycle categories expected to grow in the future indicating growing markets for smaller housing units.
- The availability of smaller less expensive housing units may help keep some young adults in Amherst, especially those in the 20 to 29 year old category, many of whom leave town.
- Parkhurst Place is the only facility of its kind in New Hampshire, providing 21 subsidized rental units and 21 market-rate rental units for elderly residents. There will be markets and opportunities to create more facilities of this type to add to the stock of housing in Amherst.

See Housing section of Amherst's 2010 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



4 Amherst's Housing What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"Preserve the existing residential nature of Amherst characterized by the village, rural landscape, New England colonial architecture and small town feel."

"Control future residential development."

"Improve aesthetics in residential developments."

"Preserve current separation of residential and commercial uses."

"Maintain Amherst Village as a mixed use limited commercial rural village."

"Explore ways of providing affordable housing, especially for fixed income elderly and young adults."

Goals to Light the Future²

- **Preserve Town Character.**
 - Maintain the semi-rural character of the northern sections of town.
 - Save open space in residential development.
- **Encourage Diversity of Housing**
 - Encourage diversity in housing types to meet the different needs of residents.
- **Manage Fiscal Impacts**
 - Reduce the fiscal impacts of residential development.
- **Encourage "Green" Residential Growth**
 - Publicize programs that offer incentives, such as income tax credits, and utility company rebates, and free home energy audits, for installing and retrofitting energy efficient materials and systems in residential structures.

Encourage the Creation of Additional Villages in Amherst.

- Cluster homes in areas surrounded by open space that buffers the residential area from surrounding land uses. Consider allowing limited mixed uses in the village areas with appropriate zoning changes to village mixed use. Also provide recreational uses for residents.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

4 Amherst's Housing What We Can Do ¹

To Preserve Town Character

1. Continue Northern Rural and Northern Transitional zones with the option to use the Planned Residential District.
2. Continue to encourage clustering of residential development and preservation of open space in all parts of town as a means of maintain existing character.
3. Encourage developments in neighborhoods (some with two units in a structure) that require common land assuring that significant portions of the property are left open, exclusive of areas for buildings, parking, and septic systems.
4. Increase setbacks for cluster developments and require additional landscaping to help maintain existing open character.

To Encourage Diversity in Housing

1. Encourage smaller units on smaller lots in selected neighborhood areas, and allow larger properties in selected areas to be developed with multi-family housing.
2. Encourage the development of such housing on tracts large enough to support a common septic systems.
3. Establish a fund to purchase land for housing and/or to donate town-owned land.
4. Consider establishing a Housing Commission as enabled under RSA 633.4-c.

To Manage Fiscal Impact

1. Promote smaller units that will have positive fiscal impacts (3, 4 and 5-bedroom units have negative fiscal impacts because of the numbers of school children associated with each unit).

2. Encourage smaller units that will be sought by young adults just starting families and by empty nesters and retirees that do not have school-age children.

Encourage "Green" Residential Growth

1. Research the energy efficiency and sustainability programs available from local utility companies and federal and state governments.
2. Prepare and distribute information on energy efficiency and sustainability programs available.

Encourage the Creation of Additional Villages in Amherst

1. Pass village zoning that will encourage village design in village areas that may be created (Excluding Amherst Village where Historic District Zoning accomplishes the same goal).
2. Prepare village zoning design guidelines to use in administering zoning regulations.

¹ Potential objectives and strategies.

5 Amherst's Economy Current Conditions

Economic Profile

Labor Force and Wages

- 5,420 employed workers lived in Amherst in 2000
- 77% of resident labor force work out of town
- 460 worked at home, 829 were self-employed, 571 worked for government, and 4,849 were workers in the private sector
- Amherst's unemployment rate is 3.4%. The town has always had a lower rate than Hillsborough County and the State.
- Median household income was \$89,384 in 2000

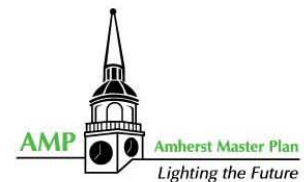
Businesses in Amherst

- Total Employment—4,526 in 2006
 - ◊ Projected to grow to 5,137 by 2010 and perhaps to 7,400 by 2030 if more land were available
- 475 business establishments
- About 75 retail businesses with annual sales of about \$180 million and annual payroll of about \$20 million
- About 35 wholesale businesses with annual sales of about \$170 million and an annual payroll of about \$11.6 million
- About 185 service businesses with annual sales of about \$87 million and an annual payroll of about \$38 million
- 57 vacant lots zoned commercial/industrial would result in about 700 new employees
- Average weekly wage of about \$800/employee
- About 11.5% of Amherst's property taxes are paid by commercial and industrial uses.

What Does It Mean?

- Residents of central & northern Amherst must travel out of town or make round trips of 8 to 10 miles or more to shop for most goods and services.
- Potential for commercial/industrial growth if additional land were available. Current zoning allows about 700 new jobs
- Regional projections of future job growth will provide opportunities for Amherst's further economic development, if the town chooses to provide the appropriately zoned areas and is pro-active about permitting the businesses that want to locate in town.
- Further economic development can contribute to broadening the property tax base for Amherst.
- Increased employment could provide second jobs for Amherst households that want to increase their income.

See Economic Development section of Amherst's 2009 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



5 Amherst's Economic Future What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"Create opportunities for additional commercial development."

"Preserve separation of commercial/industrial development from residential."

"Develop clean and aesthetically pleasing commercial/office activities."

"Prevent continued over-development of Rt. 101A."

"Adopt stricter commercial design standards."

"Maintain Amherst Village as a mixed use limited commercial rural village."

Goals to Light the Future²

- **Encourage Higher Value Commercial Development**
 - Encourage higher value redevelopment in existing commercial and industrial areas to enhance fiscal benefits to the Town.
 - Preserve the character of Rt. 101 corridor.
- **Improve Design of Commercial Areas**
 - Encourage redevelopment that enhances the appearance of existing commercial and industrial areas.
- **Encourage Mixed-use Area**
 - Encourage redevelopment of mixed-use nodes in limited locations along the Route 101A corridor.
 - Allow limited expansion of small-scale mixed-use develop-

ment around existing commercial nodes outside major corridors.

- **Diversify Tax Base**

- Continue industrial development on the few remaining industrially zoned parcels south of Route 101A.
- Support low-impact commercial recreation activities that are based on and respect the town's natural, rural, agricultural and heritage resources.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

5 Amherst's Economic Future What We Can Do ¹

To Encourage Higher Value Commercial Development

1. Provide infrastructure support for higher-value economic development (roads, sewer, etc.).
2. Provide adequate access for development of the Industrial Park.
3. Participate in marketing programs to attract the following types of firms:
 - ◇ Health Services
 - ◇ Information Technology
 - ◇ Financial Management
 - ◇ Alternative Energy
 - ◇ Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

To Improve Design of Commercial Areas

1. Ensure that future commercial development will adhere to principles of good planning and design
2. Adopt design standards and guidelines and apply more rigorous site plan review for commercial development.
3. Adopt design guidelines for signs and landscaping to help assure designs that will be consistent with Amherst's historic character.

To Encourage Mixed-use Areas

1. Expand and diversify existing commercial areas, e.g., Amherst Village (very limited and selective commercial activities) and at the intersection of Route 101 and Horace Greeley Road in North Amherst, and the intersection of Route 101 and Route 122.

2. Encourage increasing the height of existing buildings in commercial and industrial areas, thus filling up the zoning envelopes that already exist.

To Diversify Tax Base

1. Support potential commercial recreation properties such as horse stables, pick-your-own berries and fruit farms, agricultural and antiques fairs, etc.

¹ Potential objectives and strategies .



6 Amherst's Circulation Current Conditions

Transportation—Getting Around

Work Destinations

- 77% of resident labor force work out of town
- Residents working in town increased by 26% between 1990 and 2000

Journey to Work

- % of Amherst residents driving to work alone decreased from 87% in 1990 to 83% in 2000 but is still higher than the state average of 82%

Traffic

- NH Route 101A carries over 38,000 vehicles per day (vpd)
- NH Route 101 carries over 24,000 vpd north of Baboosic Lake Road
- Roadways that carry more than 5,000 vpd
 - ◊ NH Route 122
 - ◊ Amherst Street
 - ◊ Boston Post Road

Congestion

- Souhegan High School
- Cut through traffic on local roads
- NH Route 122 and Merrimack Road

High Accident Locations (>11 crashes/year)

- NH Route 101A and NH Route 101
- NH Route 101A and NH Route 122 (Ponemah Hill Road)
- NH Route 101A and Northern Boulevard

Safety Concerns

- NH Route 101 and Horace Greeley Road
- NH Route 101 and Amherst Landfill Entrance
- Lack of pedestrian/bike facilities between schools and Village

What Does It Mean?

- Travel characteristics have changed during the last 20 years as population has grown and large commercial and retail development has occurred on Route 101A.
- Over 79% of Amherst roadways are classified as “local roads” and are suitable for low volumes of traffic and are not built for through traffic.
- Many scenic roadways and corridors worthy of preservation
- Town has designated 16 scenic roads with a 100-foot scenic setback.
- Some areas with safety concerns could be improved with better design and signs.
- General lack of facilities for pedestrians.
- Needs to preserve options for the future.

See Circulation and Transportation section of Amherst's 2009 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



6 Amherst's Circulation What We Want

Voice of Amherst ¹

"Improve safety and mobility for non-vehicular traffic."

"Maintain and repair our roadways."

"Improve safety and operations around schools."

"There is too much speeding on our narrow country roads."

"We need to improve signs."

"We need more bike and walking paths."

"Students should use buses more and reduce the driving to schools."

"Trucks need to be re-routed so they don't take shortcuts through the neighborhoods and the Village Center."

Goals to Light the Future ²

- **Preserve Town Character**
 - Improve, operate, and maintain the roadways within the town to provide safe, efficient, cost-effective service while maintaining the scenic qualities and character of the Town.
- **Minimize Traffic and Congestion**
 - Manage traffic volumes and speeds on local and neighborhood roads to discourage their use as "cut-through" routes.
 - Manage use of local roads by heavy vehicles.

- Implement recommendations of Route 101A Corridor Management Plan, particularly access management and capacity prevention, and multi-modal transportation.
- Reduce congestion and improve travel times along major arterials, at major intersections, and near major trip generators.
- **Encourage Alternatives to Driving**
 - Improve the ease and convenience with which residents can walk and use bikes for recreation, shopping, commuting and going to school.
 - Ensure that potential future public transportation service needs and options are considered in all transportation decision making.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

6 Amherst's Circulation What We Can Do ¹

To Preserve Town Character

1. Maintain balance and functionality of roadways (arterials, collectors, local roadways) to achieve safe and efficient operation.
2. Improve roadways to increase their safety and capacity using context sensitive design standards.
3. Designate additional scenic roads.
4. Assure that roadway improvements and maintenance protect natural, historic, and cultural resources.
5. Develop/implement measures to reduce the speed of traffic through the Village.
6. Continue Road Surface Management System.
7. Take steps to preserve the character of Route 101.

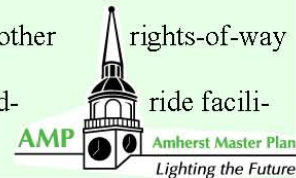
To Minimize Traffic and Congestion

1. Create Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).
2. Develop Roadway Design Standards that are Context Sensitive.
3. Discourage the use of local and neighborhood roads as “cut-through” routes.
4. Develop Access Management Guidelines such as shared driveways, additional through or left turn lanes or two-way left turn lanes; center median extensions with jug-handles to consolidate left turns; parallel frontage roads.
5. Implement measures such as signal improvements and turning lanes along major arterials, at major intersections, and near major trip generators.
6. Consider program to enhance “gateways” to the town.

7. Improve signage and pavement markings to help differentiate between regional and local routes.
8. Examine options for improving public school drop-off and bus loading areas.
9. Require Impact Studies and mitigation Impact Fees for significant projects.
10. Coordinate with NH DOT and NRPC regarding regional transportation issues.

To Encourage Alternatives to Driving

1. Explore options for funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
2. Develop a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle trail system that connects open spaces with schools, recreation area, shopping, and residential areas.
3. Establish bicycle and pedestrian design standards.
4. Integrate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into roadway projects.
5. Join NHDOT Safe Routes to School Program.
6. Construct new sidewalks near schools and high traffic roadways to improve pedestrian safety.
7. Coordinate with regional and state transportation planning agencies to assess future transit needs and potential options for linking to Amherst.
8. Study feasibility and options for providing on-demand para-transit service to meet the mobility needs of handicapped and elderly residents.
9. Preserve rail and other rights-of-way for future transit.
10. Consider park-and-ride facilities.



¹ Potential objectives and strategies

7

Amherst's Public Facilities & Services—Current Conditions

Public Facilities & Services

Education & Schools

- 2 Elementary Schools
- 1 Middle Schools
- 1 High School
- Existing buildings are overcrowded and have several deficiencies
- Enrollments are projected to remain relatively stable

Public Safety

- New state of the art and more than adequate facilities for police, fire, and emergency medical services

Water & Septic

- Ample water supply—regionally important aquifer
- On-site wastewater disposal—no sewer system

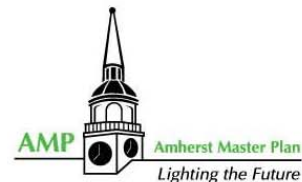
Other Facilities & Services

- DPW garage needs expansion and updating
- Limited cable TV coverage of community events
- Unique environmental and nature education center (Peabody Mills Environmental Center)
- Lack of community center
- Limited services for seniors
- Recreation Department primarily focused on athletics for youth
- Library needs more parking

What Does It Mean?

- Need for upgraded school buildings and additional space to alleviate overcrowding and meet program needs.
- Need for additional public meeting spaces.
- Lack of services and activities for seniors and teenagers.
- Limited recreational opportunities for seniors, adults, and teens.
- Lack of municipal sewer places constraints on development.

See Public Facilities and Services section of Amherst's 2009 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



7 Amherst's Public Facilities & Services—What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"We need to support our excellent education and update our schools."

"Continue environmental efforts such as Joe English Preserve and PMEC.."

"Living in Amherst is expensive, once you add in the cost of housing and the additional cost of services not provided by the municipality."

"Services for seniors are insufficient in this town."

"We need a community center, especially for the elderly and teens."

"There is not enough for us teens to do."

"We need more activities, places to go, reasons to gather."

"There are not enough recreational facilities; needed for all ages."

Goals to Light the Future²

- **Optimize Use of Town-owned Resources**
 - Improve comprehensive, long-range planning to assure that public expenditures are phased in a cost-effective manner.
 - Optimize the use of Town-owned buildings to meet Town needs.
 - Provide additional opportunities for meeting and gathering.
- **Provide Quality Education**
 - Provide educational facilities that sup-

port quality education for the town's students.

- **Provide Needed Services and Facilities**
 - Provide services and facilities for the town's elderly residents to support them to "age in place."
 - Provide teenagers with wholesome and healthy alternative activities to choose during their free time.
 - Update communications systems.
- **Manage Future Growth**
 - Coordinate the provision of infrastructure and services to support the desired location and degree of development.
 - Ensure that new development pays its fair share of the cost of public facilities.
- **Encourage Sustainable Development**
 - Ensure that in the future Amherst is developed in a sustainable, energy saving way, and with reduced impacts on global warming.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

7 Amherst's Public Facilities & Services—What We Can Do ¹

To Optimize Use of the Town's Resources

1. Explore possibility of sharing other Town-owned space in creative ways
2. Continue to use and maintain historic building for municipal purposes.
3. Explore possibility of developing a community center (including regional option).
4. Encourage community activities on the Green and at other Town and school facilities.

To Provide Quality Education

1. Implement the School Master Plan.
2. Provide life-long learning opportunities.

To Provide Needed Services & Facilities

1. Explore regional relationships with neighboring communities.
2. Explore providing opportunities for inter-generational interaction.
3. Support the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) in their efforts to identify senior needs and transportation options.
4. Explore options for such activities as community gardens, life-long learning, places to gather and recreation.
5. Explore after hours use of schools-owned property.
6. Explore transportation options for teens.
7. Explore developing new facilities that provide activities for teens and form a teen task force to involve teens in planning for facilities and activities.
8. Explore ways of expanding recreation and

environmental education for teens (including expanding access and programming at Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC)).

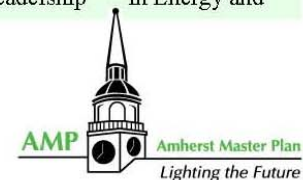
To Manage Future Growth

1. Determine desirability of extending public sewer and explore options (conduct feasibility study and explore alternatives [including package treatment plants, on-site sewage disposal, and provision of regional services with neighboring communities]).
2. Participate in inter-town water resource management efforts.
3. Explore ways of ensuring water sovereignty.
4. Carefully consider protection and potential conflict between sewer & aquifer.
5. Analyze build-out potential, infrastructure capacity, and public facility needs in order to provide the basis for expanded implementation of impact fees under the zoning ordinance.

To Encourage Sustainable Development

1. Consider:
 - ◇ Ways of maximizing recycling
 - ◇ Training municipal staff in sustainability.
2. Support the Sustainability and Energy Committee.
3. Implement green energy use in public buildings and vehicles.
 - ◇ Conduct energy audits of town buildings
 - ◇ Build future facilities with the goal of incorporating LEED (Leadership in Energy and

¹ Potential objectives and strategies.



7 Amherst's Public Facilities & Services—What We Can Do ¹

3. Develop public education on sustainable development and energy conservation.
4. Provide incentives to businesses and home-owners to implement energy saving measures.
5. Support steps to form an energy committee as suggested by the NH Climate Change Resolution

To Update Communications Systems

1. Explore ways of staffing community cable TV (support on-going efforts including high school involvement)
2. Provide broadband and wireless access throughout the community
3. Explore shared communication infrastructure between Town and schools.

¹ *Potential objectives and strategies*

8 Amherst's Recreation Current Conditions

Recreation Resources

Passive Recreation Opportunities

- More than 2,400 acres of conservation land
- 24.5 miles of existing trails

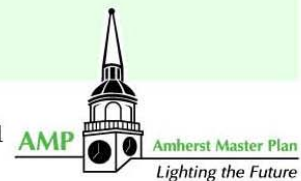
Active Recreation Opportunities

- Recreation Department with active program, especially for youth athletics
- Very few playground/neighborhood facilities
- 17 to 24 playfields depending on configuration
- No community park (minimum size of 40 acres)
- No picnic areas
- 9 baseball/softball fields
- 1 exercise course
- Only 5 public tennis courts
- Baboosic Lake Town Beach
- 2 canoe launches on Souhegan River
- 3 golf courses
- Facilities concentrated around schools
- Some private facilities (tennis, swimming, summer camp)

What Does It Mean?

- Amherst has an active recreation program.
- Lacks neighborhood playgrounds.
- While number of soccer, football and other sports fields meet national standards they don't always meet local needs.
- Seems to be limited active recreational opportunities for seniors, adults, and teens.
- Lack of community park with picnic and other facilities for families may not support desire for community events and activities.
- Future use of Cemetery Fields may be an issue.
- Needs for additional funding for maintaining existing facilities.
- Access to a diversity of recreation facilities for all residents?
- Future of private golf courses?
- Apparent demand for town-wide trail system (see discussion in Circulation and Conservation).
- Some tax-deeded property may serve neighborhood recreation needs.
- May be opportunities to expand use of some existing facilities.

See Recreation section of Amherst's 2009 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



8 Amherst's Recreation What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"The Town Green and other parks help define the town's character."

"Athletics and recreation contribute to the spirit of the community."

"We need a multi-purpose recreation center."

"We need more opportunities for recreation for all ages."

"We need to maintain and improve our existing recreation facilities."

Goals to Light the Future²

- **Encourage Health**
 - Recognize the importance of recreation for health by providing needed facilities.
- **Provide Needed Recreation Facilities**
 - Continue to develop a diversity of formal recreation facilities —fields, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, etc.—and programs for the health and benefit of all residents.
 - Continue to develop a diversity of informal recreation facilities and programs for the health and benefit of all residents.
- **Develop Town-wide Greenway System**
 - Continue to develop greenways and trails in order to provide a town-wide system of recreational trails.

- **Assure Access to Recreation Facilities**
 - Work to assure equitable access to recreational facilities.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input.

8 Amherst's Recreation What We Can Do ¹

To Encourage Health

1. Develop an education program on the availability and importance of recreation.

To Provide Needed Recreation Facilities

1. Develop a comprehensive inventory of existing recreation facilities and programs and analyze their adequacy for current and future generations of Amherst residents.
2. Explore providing more spaces for soccer, lacrosse, tennis etc. to meet local demands.
3. Develop a plan to replace the Cemetery Fields when/if the land is needed by the Cemetery Commission.
4. Analyze existing tax-title land in terms of its suitability to meet recreation needs.
5. Explore developing new facilities and programs to meet the needs of many age groups, including teens, families, and seniors.
6. Explore the development of an indoor recreation facility.
7. Continue cooperation between the Town and schools for use of recreation facilities.
8. Explore encouraging private recreation facilities that complement Amherst's rural, agricultural heritage.
9. Explore requiring the inclusion of recreation facilities in new developments.
10. Support and expand programs at Peabody Mill Environmental Center.
11. Work with private providers of recreation opportunities. There may be additional opportunities to use some of their facilities.

12. Develop a comprehensive recreation plan.
13. Explore the development of neighborhood parks and a community park with informal recreation facilities like picnic areas, and playground equipment, and requiring land or support for such facilities in new developments
14. Provide additional and improved access to the river and major ponds and lakes.

To Develop Town-wide Greenway System

1. Develop a town-wide greenway plan that connects open spaces with recreation areas and residential areas with a network bicycle and pedestrian paths.

To Assure Access to Recreation Facilities

1. Locate and develop facilities so they are accessible to all.

¹ Potential objectives and strategies

Implementation

Because the Master Plan is comprehensive it covers all the topics important for future development. A program for all the actions that should be taken to accomplish the goals of the Master Plan has been prepared and extensively reviewed. The program was initially prepared based on recommendations that emerged from the focus groups/workshops, which were in turn, based on vision statements that resulted from public meetings on the Plan.

An extensive list of goals and associated actions emerged from this process. The Planning Board reviewed and revised the statements of goals, actions, and responsibilities desirable for implementation of the Plan. The following topics were covered.

- Land Use
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Circulation and Transportation
- Public Services and Facilities
- Recreation

Responsibility

Most of the actions needed to accomplish the goals involve Town of Amherst participation, either directly, with full responsibility for the actions, or in cooperation with other organizations. Other organizations include regional, state and federal agencies, local civic and neighborhood associations and non-profit groups.

One of the purposes of the implementation program is to assure that actions taken are mutually supportive of, and coordinated with, each other. Duplication and overlap

are avoided, as are omissions. Review by the Planning Board helped assure that this resulted, and also imparted a strong sense of realism to the implementation program, based on the capabilities of the Town and its finances and policies.

Monitoring Progress and Revising the Plan

A Master Plan Implementation Committee should be established to monitor progress and make necessary revisions to achieve the goals of the Plan. The Committee would:

- Meet at least once a year to review the actions that had been taken, and to assure that desirable actions will be taken in the future.
- Prepare a brief report to the Board of Selectmen after each meeting that reviews progress and recommends any needed actions or desirable changes in direction.
- Be composed of Town officials with responsibility for carrying out implementation actions, and of civic leaders who represent various interest groups in the Town

Ten Key Master Plan Recommendations That Can Shape Amherst's Future

1. Ensure that new development and redevelopment respect Amherst's natural resources and complement the Town's existing character.
2. Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources throughout Amherst.
3. Continue to preserve Amherst's natural resources and rural landscapes including aquifers, prime agricultural soils, forests, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, and water and air quality for

- the sustainable health, safety and welfare of current and future generations.
4. Protect Amherst's extensive water resources for the benefit of residents and the environment, including surface water features, groundwater, and aquifer areas.
 5. Save open space in residential development.
 6. Encourage redevelopment that enhances the appearance of existing commercial and industrial areas.
 7. Improve the ease and convenience with which residents can walk and use bikes for recreation, shopping, commuting and going to school.
 8. Provide educational facilities that support quality education for the town's students.
 9. Recognize the importance of recreation for health by providing needed facilities.
 10. Continue to develop greenways and trails in order to provide a town-wide and inter-town system of recreational trails.

Table of Goals and Actions

The following pages show goals, actions, and responsibilities for each of the plans elements: Land Use, Historic and Cultural Resources; Natural Resources; Housing; Economic Development; Circulation and Transportation; Public Services and Facilities; and Recreation.

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Land Use				
Goal 1: Strengthen and Clarify the Town's Land Use Regulations				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision and site plan regulations to reflect current practice and to provide clear guidance for land use management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a comprehensive revision of the Town's zoning regulations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recodify the Zoning Ordinance, Create a table of use regulations, Combine all definitions in one section, Separate standards from definitions 		Planning Board and Town Meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the Impact Fee provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to address additional public facilities, based on a more comprehensive capital improvement program. (Also see Public Services and Facilities Goal 1 and Goal 4.) 		Planning Board and Town Meeting	
Goal 2: Encourage Sustainable Development				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster sustainability in design and development. (Also see Public Services and Facilities Goal 5.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the Subdivision Regulations and the Non-Residential Site Plan Review Regulations to promote the use of Low Impact Development techniques and explore ways to integrate sustainable building standards into Town regulations. 		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Land Use (continued)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise off-street parking requirements in Non-Residential Site Plan Review Regulations to limit the amount of new impervious surface. 		Planning Board	
Goal 3: Manage Residential Growth to Protect Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage future development in residential and rural areas to preserve open space and protect natural resources. (Also see Housing Goal 1.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Open Space Plan and Planned Residential Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and revise as necessary to better utilize clustering of residential development in order to protect natural resources. 		Conservation Commission, Planning Board & Town Meeting	
Goal 4: Manage Commercial and Industrial Development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the design of commercial areas complements Amherst's historic and semi-rural character. (Also see Economic Development Goal 2.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial and industrial building design standards for new development and redevelopment. Adopt building design standards (mandatory) and/or guidelines (non-mandatory) for new development and redevelopment in the Commercial, Limited Commercial and Industrial districts. Review the sign regulations in the Zoning Ordinance and revise as appropriate. 		Planning Board Planning Board (all) Town Meeting (for zoning amendments) Planning Board Town Meeting	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Land Use (continued)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise the Non-Residential Site Plan Review Regulations to promote the development of new links between parcels in the Commercial, General Office and Industrial districts, to minimize the increase in turning movements on Routes 101 and 101A to ensure consistence with Corridor Plans.		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with businesses to design and develop gateways along major corridors and at key entrances to the community.		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Historic and Cultural Resources				
Goal 1: Preserve Town Character				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to preserve and protect rural landscapes that define and contribute to the town's identity, including farms, fields, barns, fences, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop an inventory of rural landscapes including farms, water bodies, shorelines, important view-sheds and ridgelines in conjunction with town-wide land conservation efforts. (Also see Natural Resources Goal 1.) 		Conservation Commission & Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize preservation of rural landscapes in conjunction with town-wide lands conservation efforts. (Also see Natural Resource Goal 1, Land Use Goal 3, and Housing Goal 1.) 		Planning Board	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources throughout Amherst. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the existing inventory of historic properties to achieve a town-wide historical/cultural inventory. 		Heritage Commission, Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify additional potential areas for historic district designations, including historic residential areas based on this expanded inventory. 		Heritage Commission & Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify remaining historic farms and develop strategies for 		Heritage Commission & Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Historic and Cultural Resources (continued)				
	protecting farm buildings, land, stonewalls, and other historic features.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a demolition delay ordinance for properties listed on the town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources. 		Heritage Commission & Planning Board Town Meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Amherst's landscaping requirements. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen historic and cultural resource protection provisions in Amherst's zoning ordinance. 		Heritage Commission & Planning Board	
Goal 2: Protect Cultural Resources of Village				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide further protection for historic and cultural resources in and around Amherst Village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for preserving/enhancing entrances to the Village, including removal of utilities, elimination of excess asphalt, installing appropriate street lighting, and other measures as defined in the approved Town Hall environs improvement plan. 		Planning Board, Heritage Commission & Historic District Commission	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Historic and Cultural Resources (continued)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and make improvements to the Village Green and Town Hall environs. 		Heritage Commission & Historic District Commission & Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a design and management plan for long-term use and care of the Village Green, including provisions for increased use of the Green for cultural activities 		Heritage Commission, Historic District Commission, Town Meeting & Planning Board	
Goal 3: Encourage Cultural Activities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage organized events and other cultural activities that enrich the town and contribute to community character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take actions that support existing activities and events. (Also see Public Facilities Goal 1.) 		Historic District Commission, & Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider support and facilities for expanded set of cultural activities. 		Board of Selectmen	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Natural Resources				
Goal 1: Protect Natural Resources				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to preserve Amherst's natural resources and rural landscapes including aquifers, prime agricultural soils, forests, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, and water and air quality for the sustainable health, safety and welfare of current and future generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a town-wide trail network (see discussion in Transportation and Natural Resources Inventory reports). 		Conservation Commission & Transportation Advisory Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase public access to protected areas where appropriate. 		Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy for the passive recreational use and protection of the New Boston Air Station. 		Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect important views and view-sheds, including ridgelines, which help define the town's character. 		Planning Board & Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to protect agricultural landscapes and other conservation opportunity area, as they are major determinants of the town's character. 		Planning Board & Open Space Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize the preservation of open space associated with residential subdivisions. (Also see Land Use Goal 1 and 3.) 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the impacts of new land uses on. 		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Natural Resources (continued)				
	ecosystem function and habitat integrity			
Goal 2: Preserve Habitat Diversity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve a diversity of habitat types for the benefit of residents and the environment, including both large and small tracts of agricultural and forest lands, grasslands, wetlands, vernal pools, and other natural habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop a comprehensive inventory of significant natural resources and habitat types and prioritize them for their importance to the well being of wildlife and Amherst residents. 		Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect habitats of rare species of plants and animals. 		Conservation Commission, Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid fragmentation of large forested areas. 		Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and protect corridors, connections between existing and future protected areas. 		Conservation Commission & Transportation Advisory Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the protection of shoreline (riparian) buffers that are essential for the protection of wildlife. 		Conservation Commission	
Goal 3: Protect Water Resources				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect Amherst's extensive water resources for the benefit of residents and the environment, including surface water features, groundwater, and aquifer areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve land that protects water quality and water quantity including land overlaying aquifers, watersheds and buffers adjacent to surface waters such as streams, lakes, and wetlands. 		Planning Board, Conservation Commission	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Natural Resources (continued)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that development does not compromise (degrade) water quality. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect shoreline (riparian) buffers that filter out pollutants before water discharges into lakes, streams and wetlands. 		Planning Board, Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the expansion of water quality monitoring programs on Amherst's lakes, streams, and wetlands and its regionally important groundwater aquifers. 		Conservation Commission	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure that proper erosion control measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water are in place when land use alterations occur. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster the preservation of an intact forest canopy and under story on steep slopes that are susceptible to erosion. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to carefully manage development within the 100-year floodplain to be consistent with guidelines set forth by FEMA - NFIP. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in inter-municipal water 		Planning Board, DPW	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Natural Resources (continued)				
	resources management efforts.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage legislation to protect water supplies for public use and protection of the environment.		Planning Board Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• View development in light of the Town's role as a watershed steward, considering the critical combination of water and land resources.		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Housing				
Goal 1: Preserve Town Character				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the semi-rural character of the northern sections of town. Save open space in residential development. (Also see Land Use Goal 3.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Northern Rural and Northern Transitional zones with the option to use the Planned Residential Development. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage clustering of residential development and preservation of open space in all parts of town as a means of maintaining existing character. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage developments in neighborhoods (some with two units in a structure) that require common land assuring that significant portions of the property are left open, exclusive of areas for buildings, parking and septic systems. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase setbacks for cluster developments and require additional landscaping to help maintain existing open character. 		Planning Board and voter approval for zoning amendment	
Goal 2: Encourage Diversity of Housing				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage diversity in housing types to meet the different needs of residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage smaller units on smaller lots in selected neighborhood areas, and allow larger properties in selected 		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Housing (continued)				
	<p>areas to be developed with multi-family housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the development of such housing on tracts large enough to support common septic systems. 		Planning Board	
Goal 3: Manage Fiscal Impacts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce fiscal impacts of residential development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote smaller units that will have positive fiscal impacts (3, 4 and 5-bedroom units have negative fiscal impacts because of the numbers of school children associated with each unit). 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage smaller units that will be sought by young adults just starting families and by empty nesters and retirees that do not have school-age children. 		Planning Board	
Goal 4: Encourage “Green” Residential Growth				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize programs that offer incentives, such as income tax credits, and utility company rebates, and free home energy audits, for installing and retrofitting energy efficient materials and systems in residential structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the energy efficiency and sustainability programs available from local utility companies and federal and state governments. 		Energy Committee Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and distribute information on energy 		Energy Committee	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Housing (continued)				
	efficiency and sustainability programs available.			
Goal 5: Encourage the creation of additional villages in Amherst				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster homes in areas surrounded by open space that buffers the residential area from surrounding land uses. Consider allowing limited mixed uses in the village area. Also provide recreational uses for residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass village zoning that will encourage village design in village areas that may be created. (Excluding Amherst Village where Historic District Zoning accomplishes the same goal) 		Planning Board and Town Meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare village zoning design guidelines to use in administering zoning regulations. 		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Economic Development				
Goal 1: Encourage Higher-value Commercial Development				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage higher-value redevelopment in existing commercial and industrial areas to enhance fiscal benefits to the Town. Preserve the character of Rt. 101 corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide infrastructure support for higher-value economic development (roads, sewer, etc.). 		Board of Selectmen, Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate access for development of the Industrial Park. 		Board of Selectmen, Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in marketing programs to attract the following types of firms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Services Information Technology Financial Management Alternative Energy Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. 		Board of Selectmen	
Goal 2: Improve Design of Commercial Areas				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage redevelopment that enhances the appearance of existing commercial and industrial areas. (Also see Land Use Goal 4.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that future commercial development will adhere to principles of good planning and design. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt design standards and guidelines and apply more rigorous site plan review for commercial development. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt design guidelines for signs and landscaping to help assure designs that will 		Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Economic Development (continued)				
	be consistent with Amherst historic character.			
Goal 3: Encourage Mixed-use Areas				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage redevelopment of mixed-use nodes in limited locations along the Route 101A corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and diversify existing commercial areas, e.g., Amherst Village (very limited and selective commercial activities) and at the intersection of Route 101 and Horace Greeley Road in North Amherst, and the intersection of Route 101 and Route 122. 		Planning Board, Selectmen	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow limited expansion of small-scale mixed-use development around existing commercial nodes outside major corridors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage increasing the height of existing buildings in commercial and industrial areas, thus filling up the zoning envelopes that already exist, rather than re-zoning adjacent land. 		Planning Board Town Meeting	
Goal 4: Diversify Tax Base				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue industrial development on the few remaining industrially zoned parcels south of Route 101A. 			Planning Board	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support low-impact commercial recreation activities that are based on and respect the town's natural, rural, agricultural and heritage resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support potential commercial recreation properties such as horse stables, pick-your-own berries and fruit farms, agricultural and antiques fairs, etc. 		Planning Board, Conservation Commission	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Circulation and Transportation				
Goal 1: Preserve Town Character				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve, operate, and maintain the roadways within the town to provide safe, efficient, cost-effective service while maintaining the scenic qualities and character of the Town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain balance and functionality of roadways (arterials, collectors, local roadways) to achieve safe and efficient operation. 		Department of Public Works Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve roadways to increase their safety and capacity using Context Sensitive design standards. 		Department of Public Works Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate additional scenic roads. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assure that roadway improvements and maintenance protect natural, historic, and cultural resources. 		Department of Public Works, and Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/implement measures to reduce the speed of traffic through the Village. 		Department of Public Works	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Road Surface Management System. 		Department of Public Works	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take steps to preserve the character of Route 101. 		Planning Board	
Goal 2: Minimize Traffic and Congestion				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage traffic volumes and speeds on local and neighborhood roads to discourage their use as “cut-through” routes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). 		Board of Selectmen	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Goal 3: Encourage Alternatives to Driving				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the ease and convenience with which residents can walk and use bikes for recreation, shopping, commuting and going to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle trail system that connects open spaces with schools, recreation area, shopping, and residential areas. (Also see Recreation Goal 3.) 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish bicycle and pedestrian design standards. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into roadway projects. 		Department of Public Works, Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join NHDOT Safe Routes to School Program. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct new sidewalks near schools and high traffic roadways to improve pedestrian safety. 		Department of Public Works	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Public Services and Facilities				
Goal 1: Optimize Use of Town Resources				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve comprehensive, long-range planning so that expenditures are planned and phased in a reasoned and cost-effective manner. Optimize the use of Town-owned buildings to meet Town needs. Provide additional opportunities for meeting and gathering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically update the Master Plan and relate its recommendations to capital and operating budget expenditures 		Capital Improvement Plan Committee & Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of sharing other town-owned space in creative ways. 		Planning Board and Board of Selectmen School Boards	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use and maintain historic buildings for municipal uses. 		Planning Board and Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of developing a community center (including regional option). 		Planning Board	
Goal 2: Provide Quality Education				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide educational facilities that support quality education for the town's students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the School Master Plan. 		SAU 39	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide life-long learning opportunities. 		SAU 39	
Goal 3: Provide Needed Facilities and Services				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide services and facilities for the town's elderly residents to support them to "age in place." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore regional relationships with neighboring communities (e.g. Milford). 		Recreation Department, & To be determined	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Public Services and Facilities (continued)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways of providing opportunities for intergenerational interaction. 		SAU 39	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) in their efforts to identify senior needs and transportation options. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for providing such activities as community gardens, places to gather, and recreation. 		Board of Selectmen and SAU 39	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore after hours use of school-owned property. 		SAU 39	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide teenagers with wholesome and healthy alternative activities to choose during their free time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore transportation options for teens. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore developing new facilities that provide activities for teens and form a teen task force to involve teens in planning for facilities and activities. 		SAU 39	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways of expanding recreation and environmental education for teens (including expanding access and programming at Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC)). 		Recreation Department	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Public Services and Facilities (continued)				
Goal 4: Manage Future Growth				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the provision of infrastructure and services to support the desired location and degree of development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine desirability of extending public sewer and explore options (conduct feasibility study and explore alternatives [including package treatment plants, on-site sewage disposal, and provision of regional services with neighboring communities]). 		Planning Board and Department of Public Works	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in inter-town water resource management efforts. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways of ensuring water sovereignty. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully consider protection and potential conflict between sewer and aquifer. 		Planning Board	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that new development pays its fair share of the cost of public facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze build-out potential, infrastructure capacity, and public facility needs in order to provide the basis for expanded implementation of impact fees under the zoning ordinance. 		Capital Improvement Plan Committee, DPW, School District, Planning Board	
Goal 5: Encourage Sustainable Development				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that in the future, Amherst is developed in a manner that is sustainable, energy saving, and with reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ways of maximizing recycling Training municipal 		Board of Selectmen	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Public Services and Facilities (continued)				
impacts on global warming. (Also see Land Use Goal 2.)	staff in sustainability.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support steps to form an energy committee as suggested by the NH Climate Change Resolution. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Energy Committee. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement green energy use in public buildings and vehicles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct energy audits of town buildings Build future facilities with the goal of incorporating LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles. 		Board of Selectmen and Sustainability and Energy Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop public education on sustainable development and energy conservation. 		Energy Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide incentives to businesses and home-owners to implement energy saving measures. 		Energy Committee	
			Energy Committee & Board of Selectmen	
Goal 6: Update Communications Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways of staffing community cable TV (support on-going efforts including high school involvement). 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore shared communication infrastructure between Town and schools. 		Board of Selectmen	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Recreation				
Goal 1: Encourage Health				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the importance of recreation for health by providing needed facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an education program on the availability and importance of recreation. 		Recreation Department	
Goal 2: Provide Needed Recreation Facilities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop a diversity of formal recreation facilities—fields, courts, playgrounds, etc.—and programs for the health and benefit of all residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive inventory of existing recreation facilities and programs and analyze their adequacy for current and future generations of Amherst residents. 		Recreation Department	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore providing more fields for soccer, lacrosse etc. to meet local demands. 		Board of Selectmen, Recreation Department	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan to replace the Cemetery Fields when/if the land is needed by the Cemetery Commission. 		Recreation Department, Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze existing tax-title land for its suitability to meet recreation needs. 		Recreation Department, Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore developing new facilities and programs to meet the needs of many age groups, including teens, families, and seniors. 		Recreation Department	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore supporting the development of an indoor recreation 		Recreation Department	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Recreation (continued)				
	facility.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue cooperation between the Town and schools for use of recreation facilities. 		Recreation Department & SAU 39	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore encouraging private recreation facilities that complement Amherst's rural, agricultural heritage. 		Planning Board, Conservation Commission	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop a diversity of informal recreation facilities and programs for the health and benefit of all residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore requiring the inclusion of recreation facilities in new developments. 		Planning Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and expand programs at Peabody Mill Environmental Center. 		Recreation Commission, Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with private providers of recreation opportunities. There may be additional opportunities to use some of their facilities. 		Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive recreation plan. 		Recreation Department, Board of Selectmen	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the development of neighborhood parks and a community park with informal recreation facilities like picnic areas, and playground equipment, and requiring land or support 		Recreation Department, Planning Board	

GOALS	ACTIONS	Priority	Responsibility	Timing
Recreation (continued)				
	for such facilities in new developments			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional and improved access to the river and major ponds and lakes. 		Conservation Commission	
Goal 3: Develop Town-wide Greenway System				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop greenways and trails in order to provide a town-wide and inter-town system of recreational trails. (Also see Circulation and Transportation Goal 3.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a town-wide greenway plan that connects open spaces with recreation areas and residential areas with a network bicycle and pedestrian paths. 		Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Transportation Advisory Committee	
Goal 4: Assure Access to Recreation Facilities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to assure equitable access to recreational facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate and develop facilities so they are accessible to all. 		Recreation Department and Planning Board	

Appendices

Phase 1 Inventory Reports

Historic and Cultural Resources

Amherst's Natural Resources

Amherst's Housing

Economic Development

Transportation

Amherst's Public Services and Facilities

Recreation Resources

Land Use and Zoning

Note: All sources of data and documents consultant in the preparation of the Amherst Master Plan are cited in the Phase I Reports.

Projected Growth Industries in Amherst

Appendix

Projected Growth Industries in Amherst with Current Employment and Annual Wages

Industry	Employment in Amherst	Projected 10 Year Growth Rate	Average Annual Wage
Health Services	232	35%	\$164,300
Information Technology	33	30%	\$72,900
Financial Management	73	17%	\$91,900
Alternative Energy	n.a.	n.a.	\$86,000*
Educational Services	170	25%	\$28,900
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	93	31%	\$15,800
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	409	21%	\$65,200
Administration & Waste Management Services	67	27%	\$33,200
Retail Trade	996	20%	\$24,900

* Estimate from Houston, TX data

Source: New Hampshire Employment and Labor Market Bureau

It is recommended that Amherst pursue the high wage industries that have the best potential to grow in town. These are:

- Health Services
- Financial Management
- Alternative Energy
- Information Technology
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services