

Envision Amherst 2035

A Master Plan for the Town of Amherst, NH

January 2023

Acknowledgments

The Town of Amherst would like to thank the Master Plan Steering Committee, Town Staff, especially Community Development Director Nic Strong, its consultant Resilience Planning and Design, and the public for participating in and directing the development of Amherst's Master Plan. The Master Plan Steering Committee members include:

- Tracie Adams: Chair, Planning Board Representative
- Dwight Brew: Chair through March 2022, Board of Selectmen Representative
- Tom Gauthier: Amherst School Board Representative
- Jared Hardner: Amherst Conservation Commission Representative
- Joe Ilsley: Citizen Representative through June 2022
- Tim Kachmar: Citizen Representative
- Will Ludt: Heritage Commission Representative
- Danielle Pray: Board of Selectmen Representative since April 2022
- Tom Quinn: Citizen Representative through March 2021
- Chris Yates: Planning Board Representative



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Introduction

Welcome to Envision Amherst 2035 the Town of Amherst's Master Plan.

This plan was developed under the guidance and direction of community members, local officials, and municipal staff. Now taking the place of the 2010 Master Plan, Envision Amherst 2035 presents a vision and critical implementation actions that will guide the community for more than a decade into the future.

Recognized for its heritage and cultural resources, location, natural resources, and quality schools and services, Amherst continues to be known as one of the most desirable places to live in New Hampshire. As a predominantly residential community near larger urban centers, Amherst has prioritized investments in land conservation, historic preservation, and outdoor recreation to maintain the distinct character of the community and overall quality of life that residents desire.

A survey administered by the Town during the Winter of 2020/21 received over 1800 responses calling for continued work on the preservation of the town's character through protection of Amherst's natural resources and open spaces, historic resources, and water resources. Respondents also expressed a strong desire to manage the cost of community services and property taxes, while indicating a commitment to maintaining or improving this infrastructure and the services provided including the schools.

In the Spring of 2021 the Master Plan Steering Committee, with support from Resilience Planning & Design, began preparing existing conditions profiles for the many topics typically explored during a comprehensive planning process. The Committee also developed an outreach and engagement plan to build on the findings of the Winter 2020/2021 survey, and to provide additional opportunities for the residents to inform and direct this planning process. A Buildout Analysis was also completed early in 2022 with assistance from the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. Each of these phases of this planning initiative contributed to the community vision and planning themes used to organize this document, and the resulting implementation action plan.

With all of the inventory data, analysis, and outreach results included in the Appendix, the main body of Envision Amherst 2035 is informed by this earlier work and organized around three broad themes:

1 Our Shared Resources

Amherst recognizes the significance of its natural and cultural resources in determining the character of the community, the resulting pattern and intensity of development, and the potential of these resources to guide how future land use changes will be accommodated.

2 A Connected and Resilient Community

Amherst is committed to planning for a diverse and integrated transportation network, quality municipal facilities and services, access to technology, and the recreation facilities and programs residents are seeking. This will all be accomplished while building a strong and caring community that can bounce back from internal and external challenges.

3 Looking Forward

Amherst's land use pattern, housing supply, and local economy will be guided over the decade ahead in order to strike a balance between resource protection and development, and to reach the vision for the future that is articulated in this Plan.

What is a Master Plan?

The State of New Hampshire directs municipalities to maintain and regularly update a Master Plan through RSA 674:1 with the intent to guide future growth, land use, and development. While the Master Plan is not a regulatory document, it does provide the legal basis for zoning and other land use regulations. It also provides the community a big-picture view of where things are today, and where the community wants to be in the future. As the primary tool for directing land use policy and decision-making in a community, the Master Plan also defines the policies, programs, and actions necessary to achieve the community's vision for the future and provides guidance for public and private investment, including capital improvements, and budget planning.

This plan is an overarching document that includes actions specific enough to provide clear direction, while also allowing some level of flexibility in how they are implemented in the future. In some cases, it identifies issues and opportunities that will require further analysis, study, and discussion that can be further informed by the master plan, but are too focused or detailed to have been resolved during this broader land use planning process.

WHAT IS LAND USE?

The use of land impacts the character and quality of life within the community. The rate, location, and type of growth, along with the preservation of unique features, together influence the evolution of a community's physical appearance and the need for public services and facilities. How a community decides to use its land area has a direct impact on natural resources, community character, transportation infrastructure, and on housing opportunities, the tax base, and the cost of providing services. There are many topics that relate to land use and quality of life that were analyzed in the development of this Plan. These include transportation, housing, public facilities, natural resources, economic development, and others. Appendix A includes a summary report with existing conditions profiles completed for each of these topics.

It will be up to Amherst's public, private, and community-based organizations to help implement this Plan by using it as a guiding framework to achieve the Town's vision of the future. As projects, policies, and programs are evaluated and created, Amherst should ensure that these initiatives are consistent with the vision and policies found in this planning document.

*The Master Plan provides the community a **big-picture view** of where things are today, and where the community wants to be in the future.*

Master Planning Process



Existing Conditions Analysis

A number of topics were inventoried and analyzed to inform the development of this Master Plan document. These include population and housing, transportation, public facilities and services, natural resources, heritage and culture, water resources, transportation, recreation, economic development, and land use and zoning.

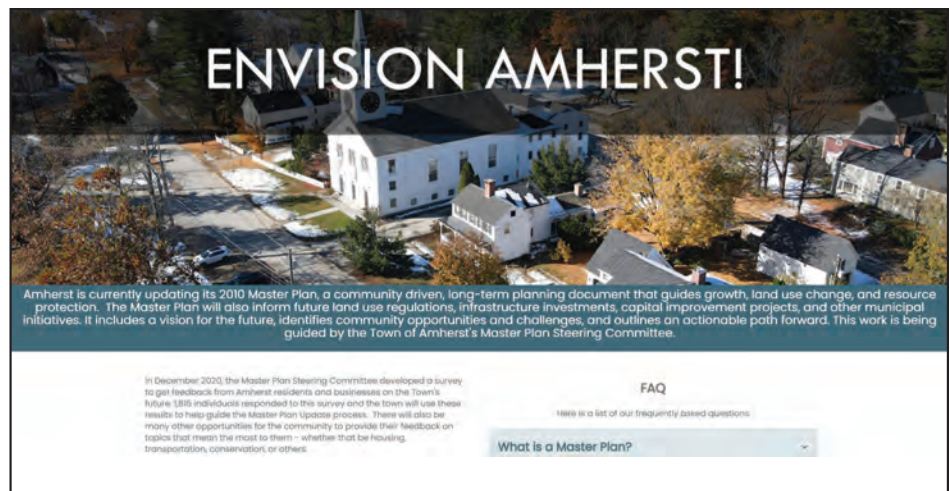
Data, current conditions, observable trends, and emerging issues were explored with the Master Plan Steering Committee during this analysis, and provide a foundation for how the Vision and actions included in this Plan were created. The Appendix includes existing conditions profiles for each of these topics, providing a deeper understanding of Amherst today and some of the issues and opportunities that need attention in the decade ahead.

Community Engagement

Along with the analysis of existing conditions, community desires and priorities should drive the development of a Master Plan. Following the successful survey effort completed during the Winter of 2020/21, the Town of Amherst completed additional public outreach and engagement activities to identify community issues that matter to residents and other community members, and to glean opportunities, challenges, and potential solutions from the public on important local issues. The summary of results obtained through these outreach efforts is included in Appendix B, but here is a summary of the outreach and engagement process overall.

The additional outreach mechanisms used to solicit public input for this master planning process included an in-person Community Forum and an alternative online survey tool. Both of these mechanisms provided participants with summary profiles and maps of the many topics being analyzed. Steps were taken to publicize both of these options and included:

- The creation of an Envision Amherst Project Website
- Master Plan Steering Committee and Staff communications with other municipal boards and committees
- Fliers and postcards
- Social Media posts
- Print Media Articles in the Union Leader, Amherst Citizen, and Milford Cabinet
- A short video explaining the project and how to participate



The information and data presented for both the in-person forum and online survey during the Fall of 2021 were identical. The questions posed were also the same. Because of this, the summary of results for both methods have been combined, and the results are organized by topic area and include the main takeaways for each of the questions the public was asked to consider. The findings of the outreach and engagement efforts have been included in Appendix B and the referenced 2021 Master Plan Survey results have been included in Appendix C.

2021 Master Plan Survey

The results of this community survey helped inform and guide the creation of this Master Plan. The survey respondents indicated strong support for future efforts to protect water resources, and preserving the rural character and feeling of Amherst. Additional priorities that were identified include preserving the historic character of the community while maintaining the recreational infrastructure, expanding trails, and improving roads and infrastructure. Preserving the educational quality of the schools was also identified as a priority for many residents.

When considering future needs a year-round farmers market was a high priority. Other popular needs related to a community center with meeting space, performing and visual art facilities, and additional services for seniors. Additional restaurants were also considered a future need in Amherst. There is a desire by respondents to limit the number of residential units allowed annually in favor of open space protection, aquifer protection, and increased buffers around surface waters. The vision and recommendations articulated in this Master Plan reflect these desires.

Buildout Analysis

“Buildout” is a hypothetical condition that exists in the future when all available and suitable land has been developed for residential and non-residential purposes. A buildout is a data-driven tool that uses mapping software to help local decision-makers to estimate the location and extent of future development based

on different scenarios. The software used considers existing natural constraints (surface waters, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.) and the existing land use and zoning regulations. Using this data the buildout that is produced shows the location, type, and amount of future growth the community is likely to experience over a long time horizon.

Amherst contracted with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to conduct a buildout analysis to inform the updating of the Master Plan. This included a baseline calculation of future development following current regulations and growth rates, and the creation of an alternative scenario where floodplains, wellhead protection areas, and significant wildlife habitat were not developed. The complete Buildout Analysis report is located in Appendix E.

Amherst Today

Known for its historic village center, Amherst is a community that has been actively engaged in community planning for several decades.

This includes developing land use regulations, conserving open space for all to enjoy, protecting cultural resources, constructing trails and recreation facilities, and offering programs that encourage health and wellness. The community also has a history of advocating for housing options while providing quality municipal services and schools to all residents of Amherst. More recently residents of Amherst have started to re-think the land use pattern and transportation infrastructure that is emerging, and have begun to imagine what may be lost or gained as new development takes place in the years ahead. In order to address this the community is striving for balanced and coordinated land development and conservation efforts. The build-out analysis completed for this project will be a helpful resource to understand the potential impacts of future development pressure.



The legacy of land conservation in Amherst has created a greater awareness of the importance of natural resources and the many benefits they provide (clean air, water, habitat, beauty, etc.).

With continued development pressure being experienced in Amherst, this has drawn attention to the remaining water resources and how best to steward this limited resource while allowing its protection to guide the land use plan for Amherst. A land use plan and land use regulations (zoning, site plan regulations, and subdivision regulations) that consider these natural systems is the only way to ensure their protection, guide development activity to the most appropriate areas of the community, and help preserve the character of Amherst. Efforts are also already underway to re-imagine the existing transportation system, and the community is now actively advocating



for transportation infrastructure that safely accommodates bicycles and pedestrians. This is an effort to incorporate healthy and more equitable transportation options for the future.

Although the Town is situated in a rapidly growing region, the residents of Amherst have worked together to successfully maintain the distinct character of the community which is comprised of historic sites and buildings, fields and forests, and the quiet neighborhoods that surround the historic village center and established commercial areas.

As a result, Amherst continues to be a desirable place to live and work for people of all ages. Looking ahead the residents of Amherst are committed to maintaining this practice of working together and planning for the future, while also balancing future economic development opportunities, the demand for housing, and natural resource protection efforts.



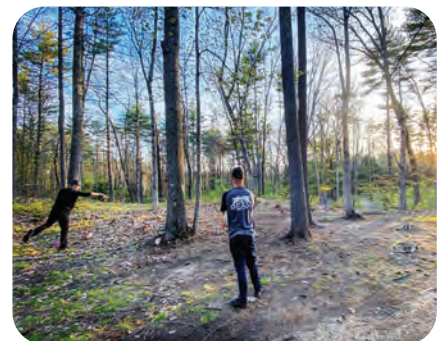
The Vision statement below has been written in the present tense to help readers of this Plan visualize what Amherst will be like in the year 2035. This Master Plan and the many actions identified in the implementation section will then provide the road map for achieving the Vision.

A VISION OF AMHERST IN 2035

The historic architecture, pedestrian friendly streets, and the common in Amherst's village continue to be the heart and civic center of the community, and a place where neighbors meet and build relationships. Radiating out from the village new pathways have been constructed to accommodate a range of transportation and recreation alternatives for people of all ages. These pathways blend in with the landscape and connect neighborhoods to parks, open spaces, heritage sites, and municipal and commercial services. Continued land conservation efforts have created greenways of connected open space that support habitat and recreation, and protect the significant surface and groundwater resources in the community.

Amherst's focus on land conservation and water resource protection has resulted in the creation of enhanced vegetative buffers that blend new residential and commercial development into the community without diminishing Amherst's notable character. The scenic quality and character of the Route 101 corridor has also been preserved as a gateway to the community through thoughtful planning and conservation efforts. Amherst is a town where people of all ages, backgrounds, and stages of life can enjoy the highest quality of living, while having access to housing options that meet their needs.

Amherst's municipal facilities have been updated and maintained to best serve the residents, while incorporating more sustainable design approaches that contribute to the community's overall resilience. These efforts have inspired private property owners to do the same and pursue energy conservation, renewable energy, and landscaping projects that are environmentally friendly and create wildlife habitat. Major infrastructure upgrades and the high level of cost-effective town services have been made possible through the creativity and cooperation of residents and local leaders who identified outside funding sources and public/private partnerships that brought many projects to reality.



Master Plan Themes

This vision is now a reality because of the many implementation efforts of residents, municipal volunteers, and municipal staff under the following themes and topic areas:

1 Our Shared Resources

Natural Resource Protection and Land Conservation

Water Resources

Heritage and Cultural Resources

2 A Connected and Resilient Community

Diverse and Integrated Transportation Network

Recreation Facilities and Services

Municipal Buildings, Facilities, and Services

Telecommunications

3 Looking Forward

Existing Land Use Pattern

Local Economy

Housing Supply

Future Land Use Plan






1

Our Shared Resources

AMHERST'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



Amherst's land area is composed of many individual land uses that have evolved over time, and are woven into a landscape rich with natural and cultural resources. Together these buildings, forests, fields, and stone walls have created a distinct community character that residents appreciate and are striving to protect.

If any element of this ecosystem is lost the community will be forever changed. And yet, change is the only constant across this landscape. The focus of this Master Plan is on how to plan for and work with that change. To do so will require a continued commitment to land conservation, water resource protection, and the documentation and stewardship of the many historic and cultural resources and activities in Amherst.

This Plan also represents an opportunity to educate and engage residents in this important work of planning for the future. These efforts will require adopting some new regulatory tools and non-regulatory strategies that will guide the implementation of this section of the Plan in fulfillment of the community's Vision. This includes a continued commitment to the inventory and analysis of natural resources, and to land conservation initiatives.

Natural Resource Protection and Land Conservation

Balancing development pressures, available open space, and maintaining natural resources can be challenging at the municipal scale. Often, natural resource protection and development are seen as competing forces. This dynamic makes for challenging conversations and often leads to misinformed planning decisions. However, these land uses are being intentionally coordinated in this Master Plan in order to avoid such conflict, and to ensure Amherst implements its Vision of the future. Amherst’s natural resources currently reflect the balance the town has struck between conservation and development, and the resulting pattern plays out differently in the town from south to north.

Amherst’s natural resources also provide a variety of ecosystem services including clean air and water, space for recreation, wildlife habitat, and many other benefits. These resources extend into neighboring communities and are not contained neatly within the municipal boundaries. This means that there is great value in considering what is happening both within Amherst and beyond its boundaries into neighboring towns. Regional conversations and collaborations are extremely important for the preservation of Amherst’s shared resources as they are all part of larger systems and stories.

The Town of Amherst has a total of 4,163 acres of conserved land, which equals 19% of the town’s total land area. Relative to its surrounding towns, Amherst’s total of 19% conserved land is the average amount. The nearby communities of Bedford and Hollis range from 11% conserved land in Bedford to 28% conserved in

NATURAL SYSTEMS AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Natural systems provide many benefits to humans and other species which are often referred to as ecosystem services. These include:

- Clean water
- Clean air
- Wildlife habitat
- Pollination
- Food production
- Soil formation
- Photosynthesis
- Flood control
- Temperature regulation
- Carbon sequestration
- Cultural services including sense of place, aesthetic beauty, and others
- Recreational opportunities

Having an understanding of the many benefits provided by Amherst’s natural areas is important and should inform both land conservation efforts and land use regulations. While many of Amherst’s ecosystem services are provided by land still in its natural state, each property owner has the potential to protect and restore the provision of these services as well. The land use regulations could further emphasize the importance of resource protection and restored habitat connectivity. This can be accomplished through a combination of open space, landscaping, and living infrastructure requirements that will guide and inform future development activity.



Hollis. Conserved lands are defined by NH GRANIT at the University of New Hampshire as “acres that are mostly undeveloped and are protected from future development.” Based on input received through the 2021 Amherst Master Plan survey, it is clear that the Town and many residents place a high priority on land conservation and resource protection.

*Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 91% of respondents agree or strongly agree that **Amherst needs to conserve natural areas to protect open space and natural aesthetics.***

Key Issues

In Amherst, 59% of the town’s land area is forested, and 24% of this forested area is conserved. Forest cover provides wildlife habitat, filters and improves air quality, and provides carbon sequestration that is essential to addressing climate change. Ecosystem types in Amherst includes common forest types such as Appalachian oak pine, and more rare habitat types including grasslands, shrub wetlands, peatlands, and temperate swamps. New Hampshire’s Fish and Game Department identifies and ranks habitat types that have the best ecological condition in the state. This ranking shows communities the distribution and location of these highly important



ecological communities so that they may invest in their protection. These habitats are distinct and are identified based on their biodiversity, the composition of habitat types on the landscape, and how undisturbed they are by human impact. Out of the ranked habitat that exists in Amherst, 31% is conserved. Ranked habitat is evaluated in even greater detail by the distinction of tiers. Tier 1 habitat is the highest ranked habitat in the state, and in Amherst nearly half (42%) of these critical resources are now conserved.

While Amherst is still fortunate to have significant natural land cover, the composition of these natural resource areas across the community has a distinct spatial pattern. There are more natural resources and conserved parcels identified in the northern part of Amherst, and development activity increases toward the southern portion of the community. There are still large unfragmented blocks of land in Amherst that have not been conserved and could potentially be developed. These are areas of the community that are 500-feet away from all existing roads and developed lands, and range in size from 100 acres to nearly 2,300 acres. The larger unfragmented blocks are often found to contain more common but still important habitat types, while the smaller unfragmented blocks often contain the rarer habitat types.

These unfragmented blocks of land are especially significant for a range of wildlife, water resource

protection, recreation, and other important ecosystem services. They also contribute to the overall character of the community that residents wish to preserve. When connected as greenways of conserved land, this open space network provides access for recreation close to where people live and work in Amherst and contributes to the high quality of life in the community.

Similar to the spatial distribution identified above, the larger unfragmented blocks of land area are generally found in the northern part of town and get progressively smaller in size toward the southern portion of Amherst. While all areas of the community have isolated parcels with significant resources worthy of protection, the southern area of the community is also over a large and important aquifer. This amazing groundwater resource is ranked as one of the highest value public water resources in the state and should not be further impacted. Connecting existing conservation lands with these remaining unfragmented blocks and other important natural resource areas is a priority for the town.

SUMMARY

Amherst has a variety of ecosystems and natural communities that exist in town, including forestland, grassland, shrub wetlands, and others. A significant portion of these lands is conserved, however, there is potential for unprotected habitat that is ranked high by the state to be pursued for permanent protection.

While northern Amherst has more natural resources, the southern part of town has more development activity. Managing development activity through low impact development and increasing open space protection throughout town may be a future priority.

There are still large unfragmented blocks of natural land that are not permanently protected from development. These could be a major priority for future conservation efforts.



Water Resources

While all of Amherst's natural resources are important to existing and future residents, the water resources in Amherst are especially significant, and are something the community can address through regulatory, non-regulatory, and voluntary actions. As a result, they are playing a significant role in informing this Master Plan, and will have a role in shaping the future land use pattern and resilience of the town in the future.

Currently, the majority of Amherst's drinking water is sourced within the community and, overall, is of excellent quality. This is not the case for all communities in southern New Hampshire, which highlights what an important asset clean water is in town. Communities that have not taken the necessary steps to understand existing and future threats to their water resources and have not invested in their protection are now experiencing both the environmental and financial impacts of that oversight.

Amherst's water resources contribute many benefits to community members and the natural environment of the town and region. High-quality

groundwater, surface water bodies (such as rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds), wetlands, and other water sources create healthy ecosystems and enhance the quality of life for all community members by providing drinking water, recreational opportunities, and contributing to the character of the community. The existing conditions profile completed for water resources (and included in Appendix A4) included an initial assessment of the condition of Amherst's water resources and an examination of the potential threats to water quality, habitat, flood storage capacity, and more. Some of the highlights from that analysis have been included in this section.

LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE

Living infrastructure refers to a range of low impact development techniques that incorporate soils and plants to provide natural processes within developed areas. These include native landscaping, bioretention systems, rain gardens and swales, green walls and roofs, street trees, and others. Amherst's intact natural resource areas and conservation lands are also critical living infrastructure. However, the developed portions of the community disrupt this network and introduce challenges like stormwater management, heat-island effect, and others that are best mitigated by the inclusion of natural elements. These natural elements break up and cool the impervious surfaces common in developments, soften the appearance, and provide other important ecosystem services.

Although the term has been popularized to describe natural stormwater management solutions, many policymakers and planners across the country are now recognizing that using the term more broadly provides an opportunity to increase the number of ecosystem services provided through each intervention or addition to the open space network. Similar to other nature-based solutions, living infrastructure (also called green infrastructure) land use regulations provide an opportunity to restore natural functions and mitigate climate change while accommodating some additional development activity over time.



Key Issues

Amherst sits at the lower elevations of the larger Souhegan River Watershed. Because of this geographic location, approximately 255 miles of upstream surface water flows into Amherst mostly from the west. Within Amherst, this flow of water is carried by 73 miles of streams of varying size and volume, with the largest being a section of the Souhegan River.

Many of these rivers and streams are also connected to wetland systems that store and filter this water, representing two of the many ecosystem services wetlands provide. In Amherst, 86% of these wetlands are also likely to be associated with vernal pools. This is significant because vernal pools are temporary bodies of water that provide unique, essential habitat for a variety of wildlife. For some species of amphibians and invertebrates, vernal pools are required for breeding, and others, such as Blanding's and spotted turtles, often use vernal pools for foraging or mating. This is a habitat type that is challenging to inventory and monitor and is being lost at an accelerating rate across New Hampshire due to development and land management changes.

Amherst is also home to a large, and highly productive stratified-drift aquifer that lies beneath 8% of the town. In an analysis of the highest yielding areas of Amherst's aquifers, it was determined that 45% of the land above them has already been developed and only 8% of this land has been conserved (see the Water Resources Map for the location of the town's aquifers and developed areas). The land use activities above this groundwater resource present a constant threat to the quality of this water. Future land uses and development activity in this area of the community could be further evaluated and potentially regulated to ensure long-term protection of this shared resource.

Other threats to Amherst's water resources and residents include stormwater flowing off roofs, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces and carrying with it pollutants such as fuel, salt, Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAs), and heavy metals. There are also many potential contamination sites in the larger Souhegan River Watershed. However, many of them enter the Souhegan River before entering Amherst and flow through the Town. A much smaller number of potential upstream sites threaten Amherst's other streams and waterbodies, which is important for better understanding Amherst's general water quality. Based on a New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services assessment, there are currently two impaired lakes, eight impaired streams, and two impaired beaches in Amherst.

In Amherst, 8% of the community also falls within the 100-year floodplain, and an additional 3% of the town is within the 500-year floodplain. Together, 11% of Amherst is prone to flooding, and with the realities of climate change this means that private properties and infrastructure are at risk of future events. These floodplain areas and the many natural resources mentioned earlier in this section also provide important flood storage for communities downstream.

Addressing water resource protection is a primary objective of this Master Plan. Actions that protect water resources in town and promote sound development practices that mitigate harm to water resource quality will provide many benefits to the community of Amherst. These benefits not only ensure access to clean drinking water in the future, but will also yield conserved lands, reinforce Amherst's community character, and will contribute to the rural beauty, quality habitat, recreation network, and air quality.

SUMMARY

Amherst has many water resources in town that are considered to be of very good quality. However, development, polluted stormwater runoff, and other human activities have the potential to threaten the quality of these resources unless sound land use practices, management, and regulations are put in place.

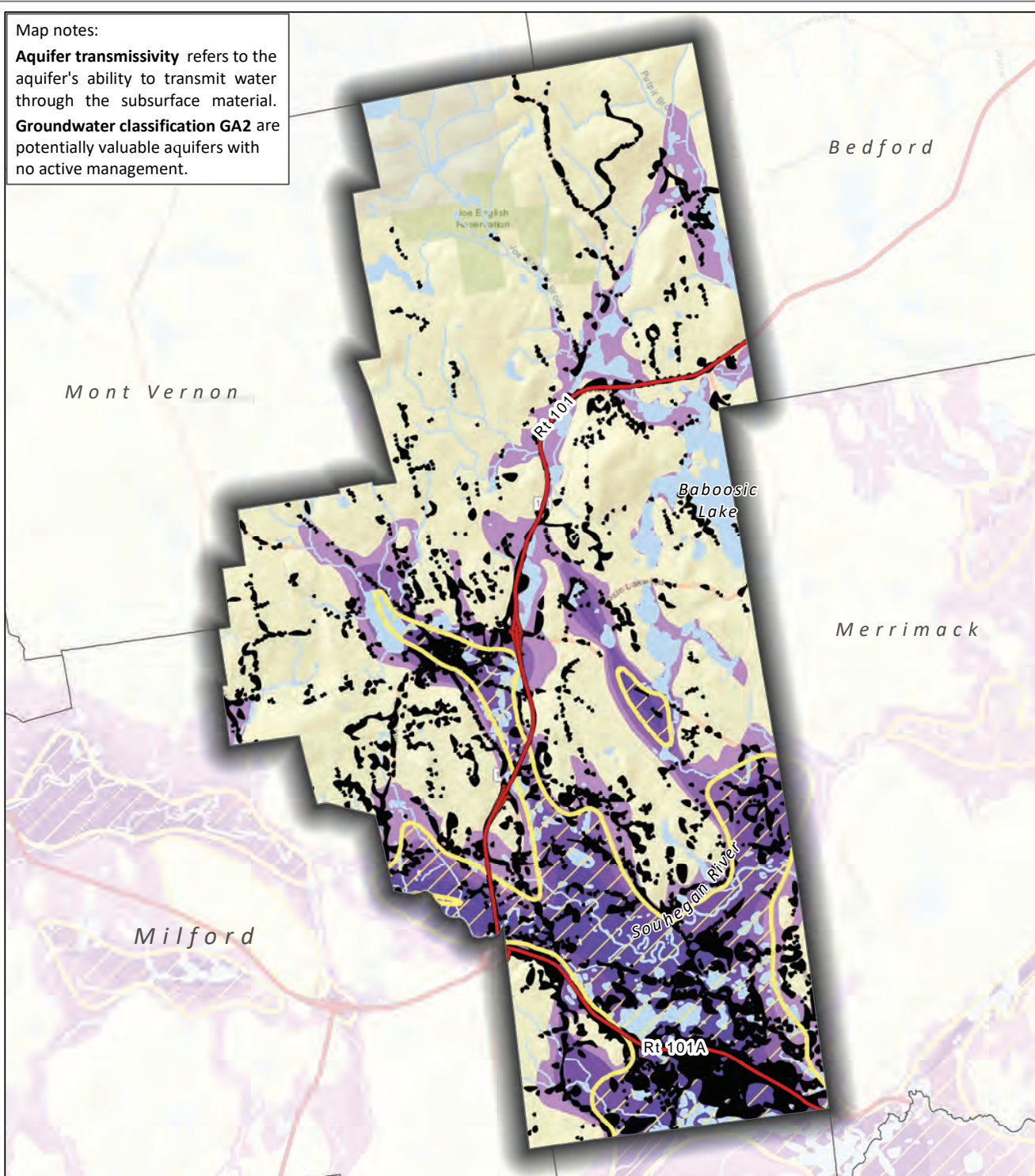
Some of Amherst's wetlands are associated with vernal pools, a unique wetland habitat ecosystem that appears seasonally. These areas are difficult to identify due to their seasonal appearance, and are at risk of being lost to development unless more are protected through conservation and regulation.

Amherst's aquifers represent an important drinking water source that should be protected for the future good of the community. There is an opportunity to conserve more land above the aquifer and to direct future land use activity to protect this water source.

Stormwater runoff polluted by various human activities causes higher levels of contamination in water bodies. Reducing polluted stormwater runoff through regulatory and non-regulatory strategies is important to protect water quality.

More intense and frequent rainstorms associated with climate change represent the likely future for most communities in New Hampshire. Investing in resilient infrastructure and managing floodplain development will ensure Amherst is prepared for what the future holds.

Map notes:
Aquifer transmissivity refers to the aquifer's ability to transmit water through the subsurface material.
Groundwater classification GA2 are potentially valuable aquifers with no active management.



Town of Amherst, NH Water Resources & Development

- Town boundary
- Stream
- Waterbody
- Developed area
- Primary road
- Aquifer productivity: Low
- Aquifer productivity: Medium
- Aquifer productivity: High
- Aquifer productivity: Excellent
- Groundwater classification: GA2

0 1 2 Miles



Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
 Resilience Planning & Design
 September 2022
 Data sources: Town of Amherst,
 GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

Heritage and Culture

Amherst residents have long valued the history and cultural traditions of the community, and have worked hard to preserve, promote and enhance these resources. This includes physical resources such as landscape features, buildings, and archaeological sites, as well as non-physical resources which include organizations, clubs, programs, and traditions. Together this combination of places, items, and events contribute to the story of Amherst as a community (a story that is still being written today). They also contribute to sense of place in Amherst, the community character, and the overall quality of life in the community.

Amherst has a deep and well documented history that helps define the character and identity of the community. It also helps explain how the town has evolved into the place it is today. The existing conditions profile for Heritage and Culture lists the many groups still working to protect and share the historic and cultural resources in Amherst. These resources are well inventoried and stewarded through the efforts of many individuals and organizations. The Amherst Library is also an important resource supporting these efforts.

This work both reinforces the identity and character of the community, and serves to build relationships and strong social networks over time. The information and the process that is keeping it accessible could be leveraged further to inform the land use regulations and non-regulatory initiatives, and to guide future development activity both in terms of location and appearance. This information will also continue to be beneficial to engaging and informing residents, and building community connections.

Key Issues

*Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 83% of respondents agree or strongly agree that **Amherst needs to preserve its historic and cultural resources.***



“Sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, social, and environmental – that provide meaning to a location. Sense of place is what makes one city or town different from another, but sense of place is also what makes our physical surroundings worth caring about.”
-Edward T. McMahon

Amherst's efforts to promote awareness, education, and support for the community's heritage also play an important role in maintaining the character and identity of the community. However, there is work left to do. Amherst's many stone walls are threatened by new development, and the stone wall map that includes data for Amherst is not a complete record of the walls that remain. This is a resource that can be improved with landowner and volunteer participation. Since the 1982 designation of the Historic District, sufficient time has passed to allow properties that were not yet 50 years old to now be considered as contributing. Raising awareness of this opportunity to property owners in the Historic District could result in the protection and careful restoration of some additional structures. The same could be done for Amherst's many historic barns as they reflect the town's agricultural past. However, these structures have not been fully documented, and measures have not been established to ensure their long-term protection.

Municipal infrastructure and telecommunications structures also have the potential to detract from the character of the community, and can be addressed through regulatory and non-regulatory approaches. In some portions of the community, such as the village, public utilities are diminishing the character of the community. Because of this, the town may decide to continue burying of the electrical and data wires where practical, and new developments could be required to do the same. The town could also develop a strategy for managing other telecommunications developments (such as cell towers) to ensure these developments are placed and constructed to be consistent with the character of the town while providing the services many residents desire.

The overall character of new development should also be considered with Amherst's history and culture in mind. It is clear that development along Route 101A does not complement the historic character of

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

While land use planning has traditionally focused on the physical layout of a community, there is an emerging focus on how a community's physical spaces support and promote a town's sense of place and its community vitality. According to Projects for Public Spaces, placemaking refers to a hands-on, grassroots approach for improving our neighborhoods and communities. It inspires collective reimagination of community spaces, including parks, streetscapes, trails, and community centers, to stimulate activity in these spaces, build neighborly connections, and strengthen the connection between people and the places they share. Placemaking is a collaborative process that can facilitate creative patterns of use with particular focus on the cultural and social identity that define a place. A community's heritage and culture can serve as a vehicle for community placemaking initiatives and be reinforced in physical projects in public (and private) spaces throughout a community. These initiatives can inform design standards in land use regulations, but are more often utilized for non-regulatory efforts that reinforce and celebrate a community's identity and history.

Creative placemaking uses the arts, heritage, and culture of the community to build stronger visual and social connections. This also refers to placemaking centered around arts and cultural experiences, activities, projects, or installations. It can also be reflected in more tactical projects that are smaller in scale and test project ideas through temporary, low-cost initiatives. This will further enhance the other implementation efforts resulting from this Master Plan, and make the residents of Amherst more resilient as a connected human community.

Amherst. Future development in this area could also be required to consider water resource protection due to its location over the aquifer. There are also concerns that allowing further development or encouraging areas of higher density along Route 101 East may cause it to suffer the same fate. This is an opportunity to consider how to better regulate the density and design of development and redevelopment efforts along these corridors.

Amherst has numerous sites of archaeological interest, which have not yet been researched, documented, or protected. Protecting these areas from being lost or damaged by development activity is important to the preservation of Amherst's resources and their contribution to the town's story.

Establishing initiatives to research and document these sites, such as the historic corncrib, is one strategy that is needed. The adoption of a metal detecting policy and a demolition delay policy are additional regulatory strategies that could also provide some protection for Amherst's remaining undocumented and unprotected sites and structures.

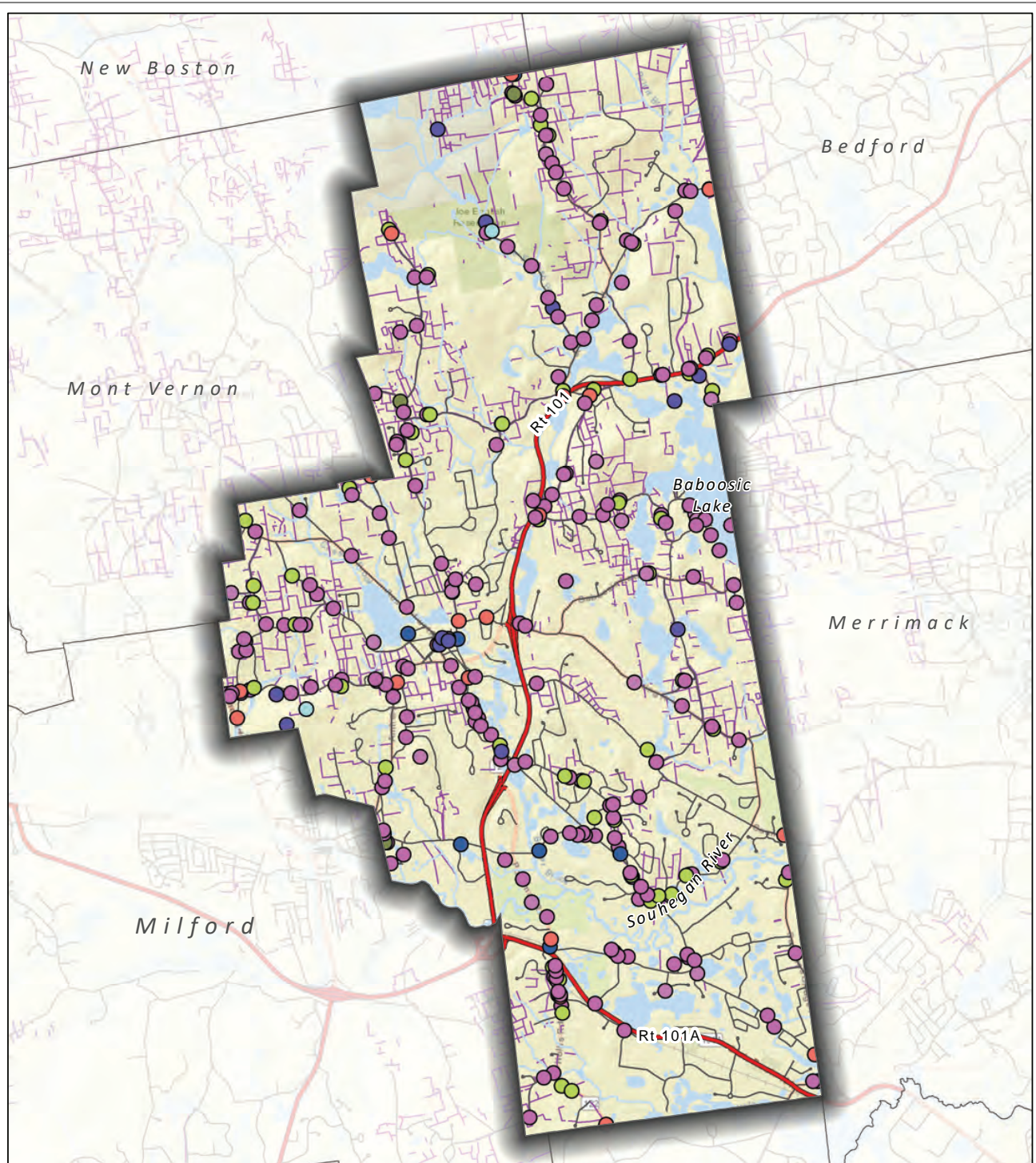
SUMMARY

While the town has documented and preserved many of the historic properties that exist in Amherst, more work is needed to inventory and catalog historically significant archaeological sites, barns, and stone walls.







Re-examining the boundaries and properties within the town's historic district to allow for newly eligible properties to be included may also further protect the historic character of this district.









Development has the potential, if not coordinated appropriately, to tarnish the character of a community by tearing down historic structures and building new development that does not align visually with the character of the community. Amherst should pay special attention to preserving the character of the village and guiding development on Route 101A and 101E to ensure it aligns with Amherst's existing character.

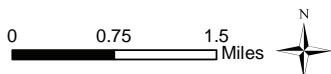
Creative placemaking celebrates a community's cultural and historic assets through community events, education, and public art. This enhances sense of place in a community and contributes to overall livability.



Town of Amherst, NH Heritage & Cultural Resources

-  Town boundary
-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  Primary road
-  Primary road
-  Stone wall

-  Cemetery (7)
-  Distinctive Outbuilding (52)
-  Guidepost & Marker (20)
-  Historic Residence (193)
-  Quarry or Mill Site (3)
-  Schoolhouse (3)
-  Sight or Place of Interest (18)
-  Stone Structure (14)



Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

2

A Connected and Resilient Community

AMHERST'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The network of infrastructure linking Amherst's homes, businesses, and municipal facilities connects community members to each other and the larger world beyond the town's boundaries. This infrastructure and the services provided facilitate travel, communication, access to education and recreation, and ensure the health, welfare, and safety of residents.

The quality of the supporting facilities, infrastructure, and many services provided by the town play a significant role in Amherst's reputation as a desirable community and support the local economy. However, attention should be given to planning for the capacity, configuration, and resilience of these systems. Over the coming decade Amherst may consider opportunities to make design and investment improvements in these facilities and related infrastructure to reinforce the Vision articulated in this Plan. This would provide an opportunity to also address energy consumption and production in an effort to make Amherst a more sustainable community.

The planning process that informed the creation of this Master Plan helped to identify how important new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, high speed internet, recreation amenities and programs, quality schools, and municipal services are to residents. These priorities were also clearly identified in the results of the 2021 Master Plan Survey. Some of the work needed in the years to come can be addressed through policy changes and regulatory tools, but most of these efforts may be best served by non-regulatory approaches and infrastructure investments.

A Diverse and Integrated Transportation System

Amherst’s transportation network includes roadways, bridges and culverts, sidepaths, and trails. The existing roadway network is composed of 164 miles of state, municipal, and private roads. Both NH 101 and NH 101A serve as key corridors for economic development within the Town of Amherst, and function as important regional arterials.

Amherst’s location is in a rapidly growing region and its fairly dispersed development pattern has resulted in an automobile dominated transportation system. However, the majority of Amherst’s roads are municipally maintained which gives the town control over how they are designed and constructed. Given the fact that Amherst’s transportation system provides critical access to residents and businesses within and outside of the community, this system both impacts and is impacted by land use changes and development activity. The Town has made a commitment to plan for and construct a more multimodal transportation system that will better serve residents and visitors of all ages. This means that multi-use pathways and roadways designed to accommodate vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians are critical to Amherst’s future transportation network.

Key Issues

Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 79% of respondents agree or strongly

COMPLETE STREETS AND VISION ZERO

Complete Streets are defined as roadways that are designed and constructed to accommodate all modes of transportation, including automobiles, buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians to the greatest extent possible. For too long, streets have been designed primarily for automobiles and this has had detrimental impacts on public safety, the environment, and our communities. Vision Zero is a strategy used to inform a complete streets policy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation and many other towns and cities have shifted their transportation planning practices to embrace Complete Street designs by creating infrastructure that are safe, convenient, and accessible for all users of the road.

In Amherst, the development of a Complete Streets network could be informed and guided by the 2019 Multimodal Master Plan. This Plan advocates for such an approach and recognizes that the design of Amherst’s transportation infrastructure could be linked to the volume of travelers and the context of the neighborhood. The adoption of a complete streets policy would codify the Town’s commitment to the philosophy of Vision Zero – to achieve zero transportation fatalities on our infrastructure. Smart Growth America and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) have acknowledged that Complete Streets are also Green Streets, which are streets that integrate vegetation and stormwater management systems within the right-of-way. The addition of these natural elements softens the impact of this infrastructure, calms traffic, and provides a range of ecosystem services.

agree that **Amherst needs to improve its roads and infrastructure.**

To accomplish this, the development and improvement of a town-wide network of interconnected paths for all modes and all abilities could continue to be pursued. Such a network could provide alternative transportation infrastructure for our residents that can be consistent with local contexts. Whether through the forest or alongside roadways, these paths could utilize infrastructure treatments that conform to documented safety principles in an effort to employ physics-based protections for all users.

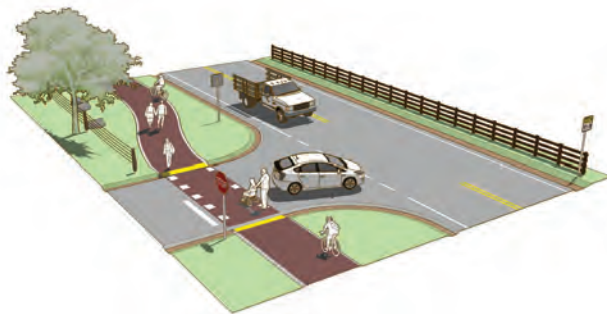
Future road improvements may be planned for by documenting them in the road improvement schedule and capital improvement planning process. This might also help address concerns related to scattered and premature developments in Amherst. These improvements could be designed and constructed to accommodate more modes of transportation (pedestrians, bicycles, etc.), and designed to fit the context of the roadway and neighborhood as identified in the 2019 Multimodal Master Plan. To further strengthen this commitment, the Town could evaluate the adoption of a complete streets policy or suitable best practices identified by the Federal Highway Administration, if this term is no longer used. Such a policy could reinforce the vision of the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan, guide its implementation, and, if adopted, it would be incorporated into the land use regulations.

The town-wide network could then be expanded in a gradual and cost-effective manner by adding new

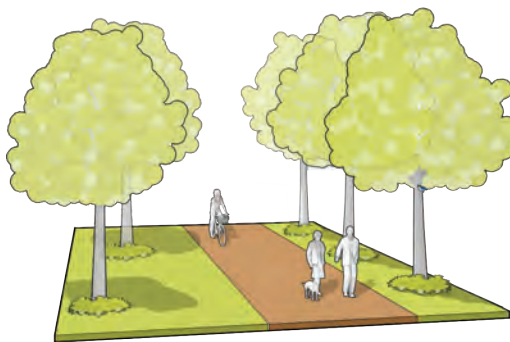
COMPLETE STREET EXAMPLES FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION RURAL DESIGN GUIDE



Above: Shared Street - Many neighborhood streets already operate informally as shared streets. By removing the formal distinctions between spaces dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorized vehicles, the street is shared by everyone, with each user becoming increasingly aware and respectful of the others. These treatments often use psychological and physical traffic calming techniques, such as interlocking pavers, to self-govern motor vehicle speeds and define the space from other types of roads.



Above: Sidepath - These facilities are the same as shared-use paths, just that they happen to be adjacent to roadways. Similar to sidewalks but wider, sidepaths are bidirectional facilities that can offer a high-quality experience for users of all ages and abilities as compared to on-roadway facilities, allow for reduced roadway crossing distances, and maintain rural and small town community character. This particular type of treatment is most appropriate alongside medium-to-higher volume roads.



Above: Shared Use Path - These facilities provide a travel area separate from motorized traffic for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users. Often running along rail beds or through the woods, shared use paths can provide a low-stress experience for a variety of users using the network for transportation or recreation.

segments or retrofitting existing segments when scheduled improvements or developments occur. As roadway improvements or new roadways are designed and constructed it is important to ensure that the Town's road construction standards will include multimodal treatments for all users and apply context-sensitive facilities consistent with the need for natural resource protection and rural character. Adding such treatments at the time of road work offers a significant cost-savings opportunity, making the installation of such treatments more achievable. In keeping with the theme of striking a balance, a review of Amherst's Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations could be completed with an eye to reducing pavement widths where safe to do so, but with sufficient right-of-way to provide facilities for alternative transportation modes. This would help retain the natural topography and mature trees as much as possible, and while this may help retain the community's rural character it might also result in less impervious surfaces and the many impacts they introduce to a community. Additionally, the Hazard Mitigation Plan references the review of site plan regulations in Amherst to identify areas where new or amended regulations, such as preserving or increasing tree canopy, could help in alleviating impacts of the heat island effect (which refers to the elevated levels of heat that high amounts of impervious surface cause).

Access management planning and policies could be evaluated for Amherst's highest volume roadways to ensure that vehicle access points are coordinated and conflicts are minimized. This would help preserve the capacity of the roadway and improve the safety for all travelers. Such an effort is best informed by a corridor study that examines the existing land use pattern and zoning, and results in regulations that guide access management strategies when new developments are proposed. There was also interest from survey respondents in improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in these areas in order to better access existing businesses without a vehicle. Business owners responding to the survey identified a preference for improved pedestrian and bicycle access (68%) over parking (12%).

Traffic calming is another transportation strategy that could be further evaluated for use in Amherst. It is considered a critical component of a complete street policy, and calls for the use of physical and psychological traffic calming tools, such as street trees and other design elements, to help regulate and self-enforce the speed of vehicles. This ensures that roadways are designed and constructed for the vehicle speeds desired in existing neighborhoods and proposed development areas. It also provides an opportunity to make the transportation infrastructure fit the context of the area rather than detract from its character and function.

Amherst's residents and businesses currently have good access to the regional transportation system, but limited access to public transit options. Over time, this could be addressed through expanded services if they become available. Such an expansion of services is typically tied to ridership and coordinated pickup locations. This requires long term coordination with land use planning and efforts to create mixed use nodes of development that are much more conducive to public transit solutions.

The impact of land use decisions on the transportation system should continue to be a focus of the development review process in order to identify and mitigate potential impacts, and ensure that new development activity contributes to the improvements in the transportation system the town desires.

This also presents an opportunity to create new non-motorized connections between popular destinations. This new infrastructure can also serve as critical recreation infrastructure, and can be coordinated with open space planning to reinforce Amherst's vision for the future.

The establishment of a town-wide network of paths is an initiative that will likely take decades to accomplish. In funding alternative transportation improvements, there are grants and other funding opportunities available that can offset costs to the Town. Thus, the prioritization of routes that could achieve a contiguous spine of such a network could be identified and emphasized. The Town of Amherst has identified four major projects that could represent such an opportunity and will continue the expansion of this multimodal transportation network. They include:

- **Baboosic Greenway**

A regional, 21-mile initiative to interconnect Amherst, Bedford, Brookline, Merrimack, and Milford with safe, separated multimodal infrastructure to enhance safety, accessibility, and mobility mostly along the former Manchester and Milford Branch and Brookline-Milford Branch rail beds.

- **Amherst Pedestrian Bikeway**

A project engineered in 2001 to establish two multimodal districts in town, the Amherst Village and the Southern School Campus, connected with a shared-use path.

- **NH 122 Systematic Safety and Multimodality Project**

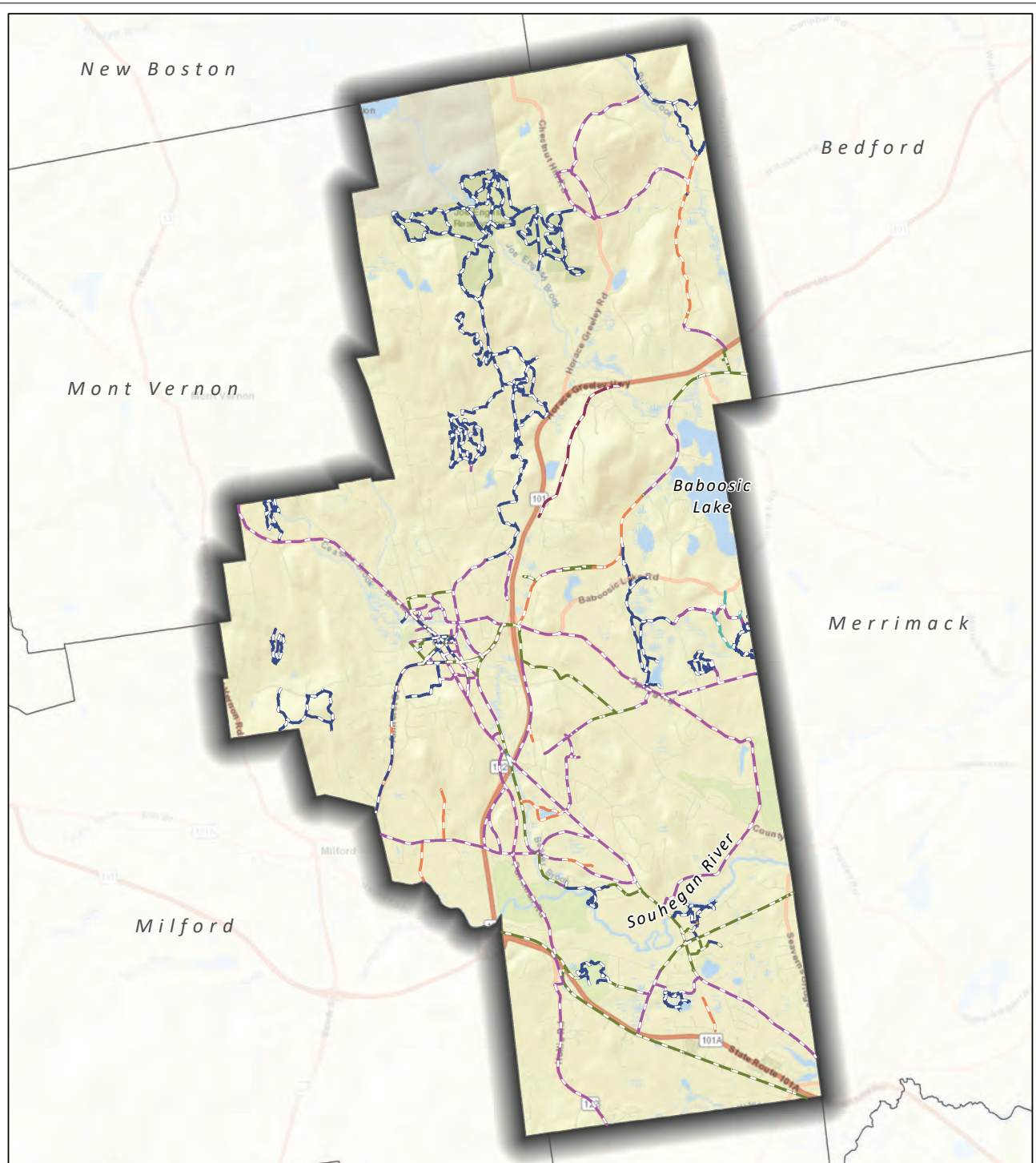
A regional project started in the New Hampshire State Senate in 2020 to connect Amherst with Hollis along New Hampshire Route 122, a state highway. This 12.6-mile project was proposed to be an example for how multimodal infrastructure could be implemented in a cost-effective manner, gradually over many years by retrofitting the roadway and crossings with a 10-ft shared-use path at the time of scheduled construction.

- **Souhegan Valley Rail Trail**

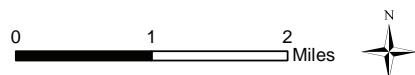
A regional initiative pioneered by the non-profit organization the Friends of the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail and sponsored by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission to explore a 16.36-mile rail-with-trail alongside the active Hillsborough Branch rail line to connect Amherst, Merrimack, Milford, Nashua, Hollis, and Wilton. This project could be a significant amenity and economic opportunity for the region as within just one mile of this route are: 150,000 residents; 63,400 jobs; and 3,000 zero-vehicle households.









- **Village Area Shared Streets Project**

A project to improve public safety, mobility, and comfort of all users of the Amherst Village by exploring the use of traffic calming and shared street designs to regulate motor vehicle speeds in a manner consistent with the context of the Amherst Village, a national historic district.



Town of Amherst, NH Multi-Modal Transportation



-  Town boundary
-  Existing project
-  Existing unimproved project
-  Project underway
-  Funded project
-  Potential project
-  Proposed project
-  Other



Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

Recreation Facilities and Services

Recreation opportunities in Amherst are provided through a variety of infrastructure and programming including sidewalks within the village, hiking and mountain biking trails, public beaches, multi-purpose athletic fields, game courts, and town-sponsored recreational programs.

Within Amherst, recreation facilities and programs have played an important role in resident's lives. This importance is highlighted in the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey where 73% of respondents identified recreational infrastructure as either a high priority or the highest priority when planning for the future. It was clear during the public outreach phase of this project that trails and access to natural areas, along with playing fields and more formal recreation opportunities are both something residents desire. It was also clear that the construction of multi-use pathways serving pedestrian and bicycle travel would provide health and wellness infrastructure, and could connect Amherst's many recreation destinations.

Key Issues

*Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 63% of respondents agree or strongly agree that **Amherst needs to increase its number of recreational trails.***

The Amherst Parks and Recreation Department offers more than 40 programs for all ages at 16 different sites throughout town. These recreation sites are a combination of built structures, designed open spaces including athletic fields, and natural areas like Baboosic Lake. There are also 43 miles of trails in Amherst offering a diversity of recreational opportunities that include but are not limited to hiking/walking/

running, bicycling, skiing, and equestrian pursuits on over 16 unique trail systems. User data suggests high recreational usage also on many of Amherst's roads and trails throughout the year including Joe English Preserve and Buckmeadow trail systems. Also worth noting are Amherst's trail network connections to neighboring towns. This includes significant trail links to Milford and



Merrimack, and plans to connect to Bedford as well. The two canoe launches along the Souhegan River are also actively used, and provide an opportunity that neighboring towns currently do not. The Library also plays a role in offering programs to residents of all ages. These take place within the building and at other venues around town.

Amherst’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is a sub-committee of the Board of Selectmen charged with improving/ expanding the network of multi-use paths in Amherst. Their mission is to facilitate a town-wide network to enhance and encourage safe, multi-use transportation for connectivity, recreation, and health through the development of strategic and actionable plans. Their work is guided by the 2019 Amherst Multimodal Transportation Plan, which will be used to inform the design of any proposed municipal, state, or private transportation projects to build out a network of multimodal pathways as efficiently as possible. Prior to this local effort the New Hampshire Department of Transportation identified 25.9 miles of recommended paved bicycle routes, and an additional 1.8 miles of recommended unpaved bicycle routes in Amherst.

The Town could consider investing in a study of recreation resources to analyze whether the existing facilities and programs are meeting the community needs. Additionally, this study could also determine whether existing funding for recreational facility maintenance is adequate, and how well formal recreation spaces and other open spaces in the community are coordinated and connected. An open space and recreation study such as this would then inform land conservation and recreation facility investments for years to come.

NATURE-BASED PLACEMAKING

Outdoor recreation assets, including trails, rivers, parks, forests, and more, can also reinforce community and economic development efforts, while improving the quality of life for residents. Nature-Based Placemaking is the interaction and integration of a community’s nature-based outdoor recreation assets, the quality of life associated with those assets, and the culture of the community towards both the assets and activities. The nature-based placemaking concept is not brand new, but this strategy provides an opportunity to blend a variety of needs into one thoughtful and practical approach. It is the next generation of an outdoor-based community development strategy, and builds on the many existing natural and cultural elements across the landscape.

The first step in creating a nature-based place is to recognize and embrace the natural and cultural assets as essential to the quality of life of residents, and possibly as generators for economic activity. This includes inventorying the trails, rivers, viewsheds, and protected lands across the community. The nature-based placemaking approach takes into consideration the demographic, socio-economic, and behavioral characteristics of both current residents and potential visitors. It also works to bring together the local leadership of the community with the various stakeholders of the business, land conservation, heritage, and recreation communities. This approach could be used to reinforce Amherst’s vision while guiding local business growth, transportation and recreation investments, and resource protection.

Municipal Buildings, Facilities, and Services

The municipal facilities and services within Amherst support the needs of residents, and are directly impacted by the pattern and intensity of development in the community. As the town continues to grow, municipal services will need to continue to change to reflect the needs of the community.

Amherst's municipal facilities and services include the Town Hall, Police Department, Public Safety Communications Center, Fire Rescue, Town Offices, Schools, Public Works, the Library, Parks and Recreation, and others.

Key Issues

Over time, aging or inadequate facilities may need to be upgraded or replaced, and staffing levels may need to be evaluated to match the demand for services. Existing town facilities and services may also need to be adjusted and adapted to meet applicable codes, changes in technology, and changes in available methods for increased efficiency. New services and facilities may also be needed to accommodate changes in the resident population, for instance, the increasing senior population.

All of these changes would impact the way in which services are provided, the buildings

which house them, as well as their capital needs, and therefore, the town budget. This is important because the 2021 Master Plan survey results indicated that Amherst residents value high-quality public facilities and services including schools, roads, and recreation spaces. Municipal departments will continue to assist with this by being proactive in tracking and performing maintenance on the town's buildings, infrastructure, facilities, and open spaces. Using the information gathered and analyzed by each department allows municipal staff to prioritize projects and report their performance. Over time, new asset management software could also be invested in to track facility and infrastructure maintenance efficiently, and to inform the town's planning for larger capital improvements. This is now an identified best practice for facilities management and has become the practice of other New Hampshire communities.

The restructuring of Public Safety buildings over the last few years (i.e. moving EMS from



the Police Station to the Fire Station), and the renovation of the Police Station has greatly improved and addressed public safety space needs. The Library is celebrated as a community resource and provides valuable programming for all residents throughout the year. However, there is an identified gap in senior services in Amherst which includes activity space, transportation, and diverse housing options. Some of this could be addressed by the town, but other partners may be needed to assist in addressing the transportation and housing needs for this segment of the population.

There is also an identified need for indoor recreation and activity space. The creation of a multi-purpose community and senior center could meet multiple goals in Amherst including improvements to aging in place, providing recreation for all ages, and enhancing social and meeting space that can serve everyone. Such a space would foster connections between residents and build a sense of community. These community connections and the bonds formed

between individuals are the best strategy for building community resilience. They create a caring community and prepare residents to work together to address any hardships the town may face in the future.

While the school system is the responsibility of the School Board and School Administration, it is certainly significant to Amherst residents and decision makers. The quality of Amherst's schools is an important factor that attracts many residents to the community, and the taxes generated by land use and development activity are necessary to support the facilities and educational services the schools provide. The efforts of the School Board are informed by their District vision and updated periodically. The vision for the school facilities is articulated by the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee and available at: www.SAU39.org.



Telecommunications

Telecommunications refers to communications systems that use electrical signals or electromagnetic waves including the telephone network, radio broadcasting system, computer networks, and the Internet.

Business class internet service is available to all commercial and industrial areas of town. However, continued improvements to this broadband service was identified as a need by business owners that responded to the 2021 Master Plan Survey.

Key Issues

This demand for better broadband and cellular service may be related to the fact that there have been areas of Amherst where home-based businesses are located that these services have been either unavailable or unsuited to the needs of the residents. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has represented Amherst and other communities as part of the New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program. This program seeks to better understand specifically where broadband, or

high-speed internet access, is currently available in New Hampshire and how it can be made more widely available in the future.

This program is also seeking ways to encourage increased levels of broadband adoption and usage. A telephone survey that was conducted by the University of New Hampshire for NRPC revealed that there are a few areas in the NRPC region that are underserved by high-speed internet and face broadband coverage gaps. The northeast corner of Amherst was identified as one such area. In 2022, the remaining areas of Amherst were provided access to broadband service. However, some areas of Amherst are still experiencing poor cellular coverage. Ongoing monitoring of the capacity and speed of both the cellular and broadband telecommunications infrastructure will still be important to ensure that residents and businesses are well served over the coming decade.

BROADBAND

Broadband is a term representing “high speed internet access” and it has become an integral component of the local economy. Access to high-speed internet is critical to the lives of residents as it supports their access to public safety, education, healthcare, employment, and impacts their overall quality of life. The state of New Hampshire is actively promoting expanded broadband access and adoption in order to remain competitive with neighboring states, and many communities are looking at this issue as an infrastructure priority. Since 2014 the Nashua Regional Planning Commission has been assessing broadband access and needs across member communities. The intent of this initiative has been to “provide reliable, affordable, high-speed internet access to all 13 member communities”.

3

Looking Forward

AMHERST'S LAND USES AND LOCAL ECONOMY

In Amherst, residential development represents the largest land use type and is generally found throughout the community. Commercial and industrial development has been limited to certain areas of the community due to zoning requirements and the lack of available water and sewer infrastructure in the town.

Over time, the pattern of land uses that has evolved in Amherst has resulted in the creation of three distinct areas of the community: the northern portion, the village area, and the southern portion. While each of these areas has its own distinct character and mix of land uses, the entire community will need to play a role in addressing the need for both **conservation and development** in the years ahead. This may include finding innovative ways to accommodate development in locations that will not diminish the community's natural resource network and distinct character. This may also require that the vision and recommendations articulated in this Plan are used to evaluate the existing land use regulations so that new standards and tools can be identified and considered for adoption. All of this would aid the community in striking a balance between natural resource and water resource protection, new housing solutions, and supporting the local economy.

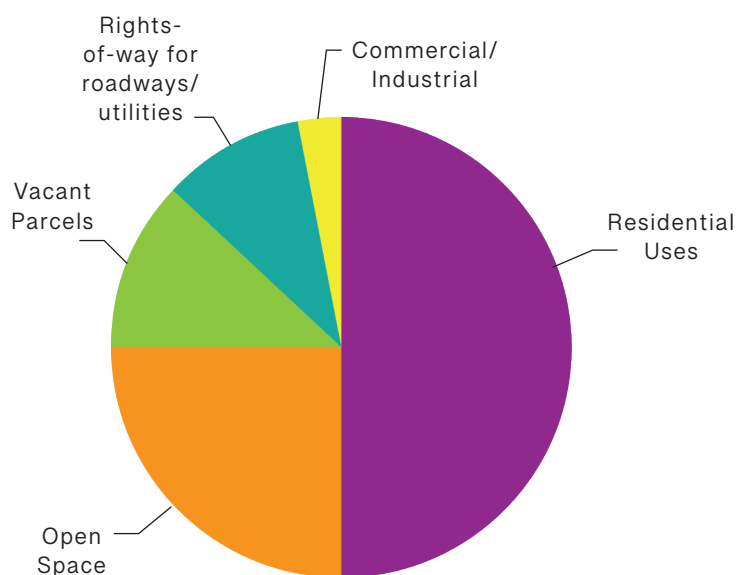
A baseline buildout analysis completed as part of this Master Plan was instrumental in providing an understanding of the potential impact that future development activity could have in Amherst under the current land use policies and anticipated growth rate. A second natural resource focused buildout scenario was then completed and illustrates the importance of directing development away from sensitive natural resources, and instead to areas that can better accommodate future housing units and businesses. The addition of open space, visual buffers, and other design and performance standards within the land use regulations would then ensure that new development is carefully integrated into the community. This would also require sensitivity to private property rights and collaborative action that will benefit the entire community.

Existing Land Use

The majority of land uses in Amherst are residential and open space related. Over 50% of the town's land area is currently identified as a residential use, and about 25% is identified as an open space or agriculture related use. Approximately 3% of the town's area is in a commercial or industrial use, and vacant parcels represent 12% of the town's area. The remaining land area is primarily dedicated to rights-of-way for roadways and utilities.

The pattern of development and mix of land uses in Amherst illustrates the significance of single-family residential properties across the community. Along with these residential uses, large areas of open space also exist throughout town and efforts are being made to connect these parcels to form greenway corridors. Single-family residential properties account for the majority of Amherst's residential land area, and the average size of each of these properties is 2.8 acres. For the purpose of this Master Plan, each of these parcels is labeled for its primary use even though only a portion of each lot is actually developed.

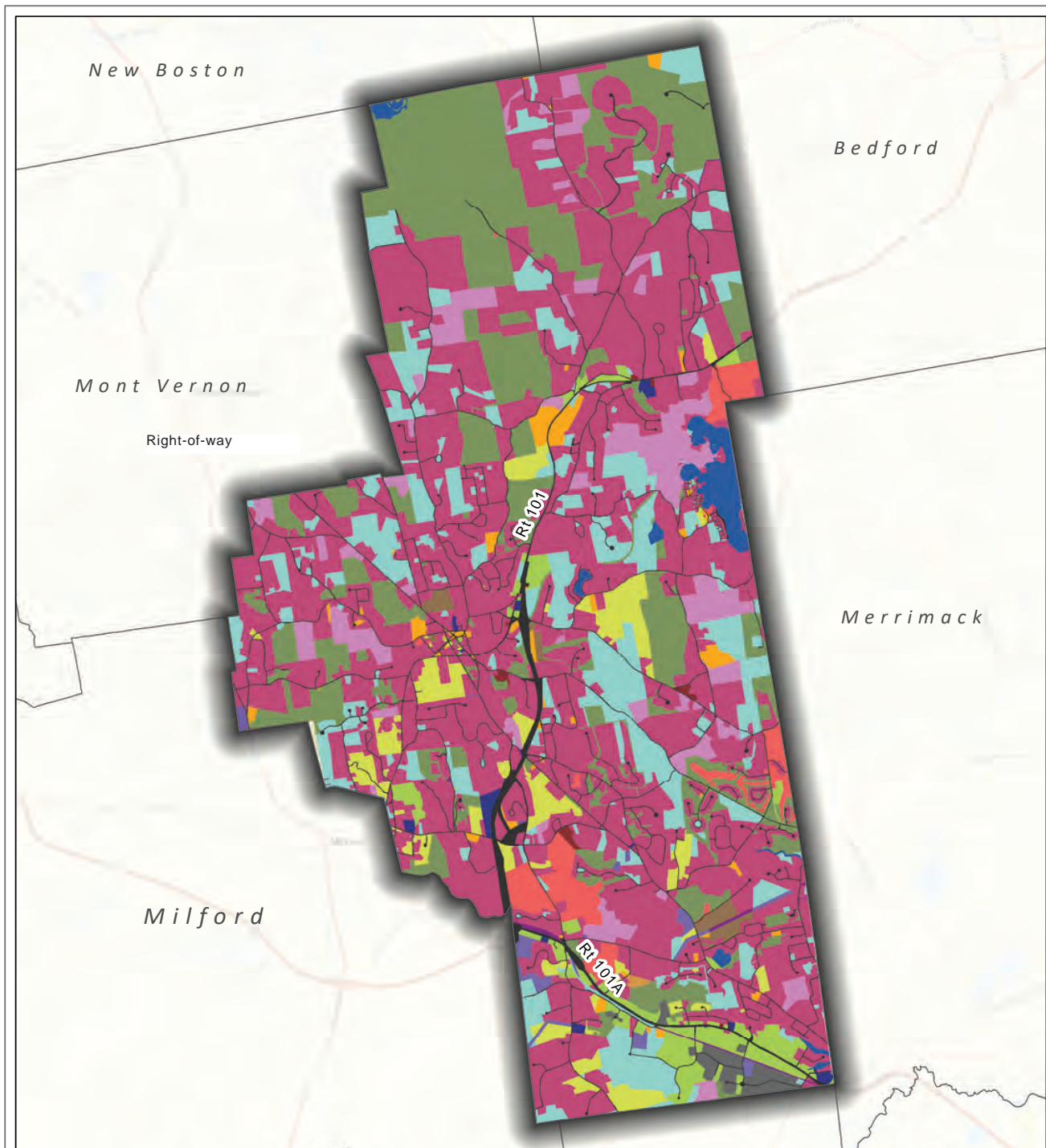
Multi-family residential parcels are generally scattered throughout the southern two-thirds of town which include the village area and southern portion of Amherst, and tend to be located within one mile of Routes 101 and 101A. These properties have an average lot size of 9.7 acres. Most commercial and industrial uses are found in the southern third of town, and many are located near Route 101A. Several smaller commercial parcels are also found along northern sections of Route 101. Examples include Salzburg Square, Labelle Winery, and the Patio Barn. Vacant parcels, currently undeveloped and not permanently protected, are scattered throughout the town with an average lot size of 6.9 acres. These undeveloped parcels currently account for 12% of Amherst's land area and could be further analyzed. This analysis could help determine which are



publicly or privately owned, and how they could best contribute to the town's vision.






Key Issues

With an understanding of the existing distribution of land uses in town, this master planning process provided an opportunity to better understand and evaluate the current pattern of development, residents' desires for the future of the community, and the variety of actions that may be needed to reach the identified Vision for Amherst in 2035. With the assistance of the buildout analysis, it was possible to visualize how the existing land use policies and practices are likely to guide future development, what the resulting development pattern will look like, and how it may impact the demand for future infrastructure and services.



Town of Amherst, NH

Existing Land Use

 Agricultural	 Municipal Facility	 School
 Commercial	 Other Government	 Residential: Single Family
 Group Quarters	 Permanent Open Space	 Residential: Multi Family
 Industrial	 ROW	 Utility
 Institutional	 Recreation	 Vacant
 Mixed Use	 Road	 Water



Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D



0 1 2 Miles

Local Economy

Implementation of this Master Plan will guide future development and infrastructure investments in a way that will help the community realize its Vision for Amherst in the future. To do so, it is important to document and understand the existing business and economic activity in Amherst, and residents' desire for additional development over time. Together this information will help inform and guide the future land use planning for the community.

Currently, there are clearly defined commercial areas along Routes 101 and 101A, but limited infrastructure is available (no water or sewer service) so the density of future development will be somewhat limited. The existing land use regulations and transportation infrastructure are currently playing important roles in guiding and supporting the location and extent of non-residential development activity, and should continue to do so in the future.

Key Issues

*Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 63% of respondents agree or strongly agree that **Amherst would benefit from business friendly regulations, permitting, and inspections.***

Amherst has no dedicated municipal staff to take the lead on economic development initiatives. Unless funding can be secured so that

a staff person can be added to the Community Development Department, it may be best to engage a group of knowledgeable residents and existing municipal board members as an Economic Development Commission. Such an effort could be established by the Board of Selectmen, supported by the Planning Board and Town staff, and over time could help coordinate needed infrastructure improvements through the Capital Improvement Plan process and through impact fee expenditures. A Commission could also coordinate direct outreach to businesses, and coordinate marketing and recruitment efforts on behalf of the community.

While residents have expressed some interest in additional non-residential development for the potential services they could provide, and to support the tax base of the community, where and how that development takes place is critically important to the future of Amherst. It was clear from the survey responses that residents feel that maintaining the rural character and overall feel of



Amherst is a high priority, but they also indicated that limiting commercial density within Amherst was less of a priority. This potential conflict could be addressed by the fact that the majority of respondents felt that promoting community design standards which reflect Amherst's natural and historic character was also an important priority.

While there was limited interest in additional commercial services, including professional services, there was interest in additional restaurants and a year-round farmer's market as well as locally grown products. Linked to this desire there was great interest in encouraging agri-business (community supported agriculture, small farms, etc.) and agri-tourism (vineyards, corn mazes, pumpkin picking, etc.). There was less interest from survey respondents in encouraging new light industrial development (assembly, manufacturing, etc.), new office development, or new retail development. However, another significant aspect of the local economy is represented by home businesses and remote workers. Currently this accounts for at least 20% of the resident labor force in Amherst, and supporting and accommodating this population of workers might be a priority for the community in the future. The majority of business owners responding to the survey also stated that they plan to continue their businesses as is or possibly expand their operations in coming years.

In 2012, the town worked with the State of New Hampshire to establish four economic revitalization zones (ERZs). The ERZs were established to stimulate economic redevelopment, expand commercial and industrial uses, create new jobs, reduce sprawl, and increase tax revenues by encouraging economic development in designated areas. This program, which is detailed in NH RSA 162-N, serves as an economic development and revitalization tool by offering individual businesses State Tax Credits towards their business profits and business enterprise taxes for improving infrastructure and creating jobs in designated areas of the municipality. Maps of Amherst's ERZ's can be found on pages 38-39.

The ERZs Amherst has identified for new development activity include an area located along the extent of Route 101A in the vicinity of the existing commercial and industrial development. The other three are located along Route 101 in the vicinity of The Meeting Place, Pine Road, and the Labelle Winery. In an effort to protect Amherst's shared natural resources and community character, these locations could be further evaluated for zoning changes and new site design standards. Key elements to consider for new regulatory standards in these areas include requirements for multi-story buildings that reflect the historic architecture of the community, site designs that reduce impervious surface area, and increased green space requirements. If any of these areas are found to no longer be suitable for development new locations could be identified for mixed use development at a scale, density, and with design standards that fit the context of the community.

Given the reality that public water and sewer infrastructure are not likely to be available, future development will continue to rely on private wells and septic systems. The desired location and type of business activity has implications for other municipal infrastructure investments, transportation choices, future housing opportunities, and may need to be further incorporated into the land use regulations (zoning, site plan review, and subdivision regulations) and adopted locally. To further inform this work corridor studies have been suggested for Route 101 and Route 101A. This type of analysis looks across the many parcels bordering the roadway to identify and coordinate areas best suited for development and areas with important natural and cultural resources better suited for conservation. It also provides an opportunity to coordinate transportation system access and improvements, and to identify ways to reduce

the visual impact of development while working to retain the community's distinct visual appeal and function.

One regulatory tool that could be further studied for the areas identified and zoned for future commercial or mixed-use development is a form-based code. It differs from traditional zoning by placing more emphasis on the size, positioning, and design of new buildings, and places less emphasis on the allowable uses. This type of land use regulation is also a more visual regulatory tool with an easy to understand and predictable set of design standards. Several communities in New Hampshire have adopted a form-based code for areas where revitalization or new development activity are prioritized, and community character is also a priority. Examples of communities with such regulations in place include Concord, Dover, Lancaster, Londonderry, and Portsmouth.

Once the location, mix of uses, and character of design are identified for future commercial and mixed-use development areas in Amherst additional economic development tools can be considered as well.

During the outreach for this Master Plan residents also expressed interest in ensuring business-friendly regulations, permitting, inspections, and understandable business requirements. There was also interest in greater collaboration between the Town and members of the local business community on marketing and identifying future business locations.

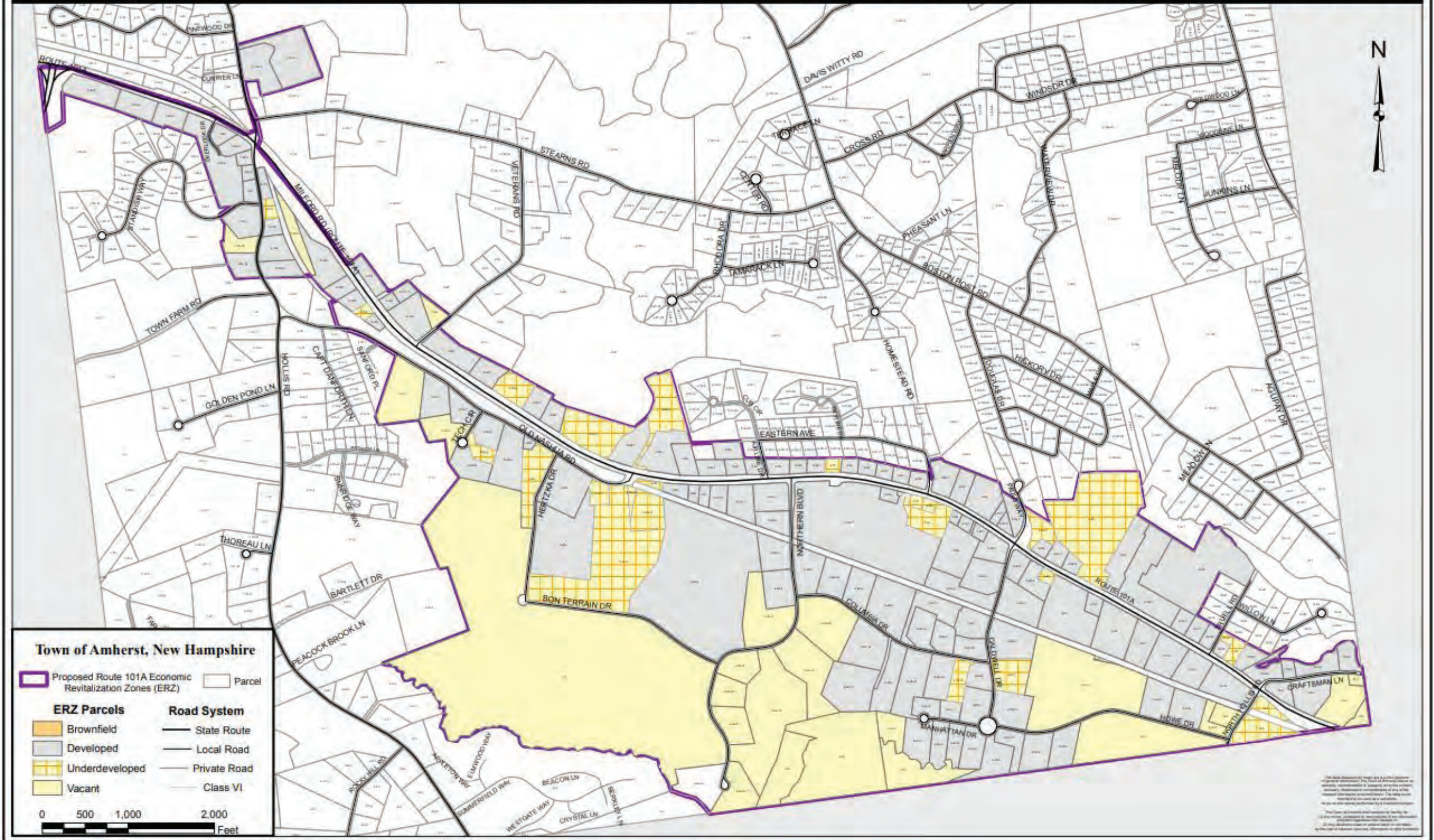
WHAT ARE TRANSITION AREAS? AND WHAT IS A TRANSITION ZONE?

Conceptually, transition areas are the intersections between zoning districts. In transition areas, the size and height of buildings generally get smaller as you move (or transition) away from commercial areas into neighborhood residential areas. Transition zones can simply be the zoning categories assigned to parcels or lots in a defined geographic transition area.

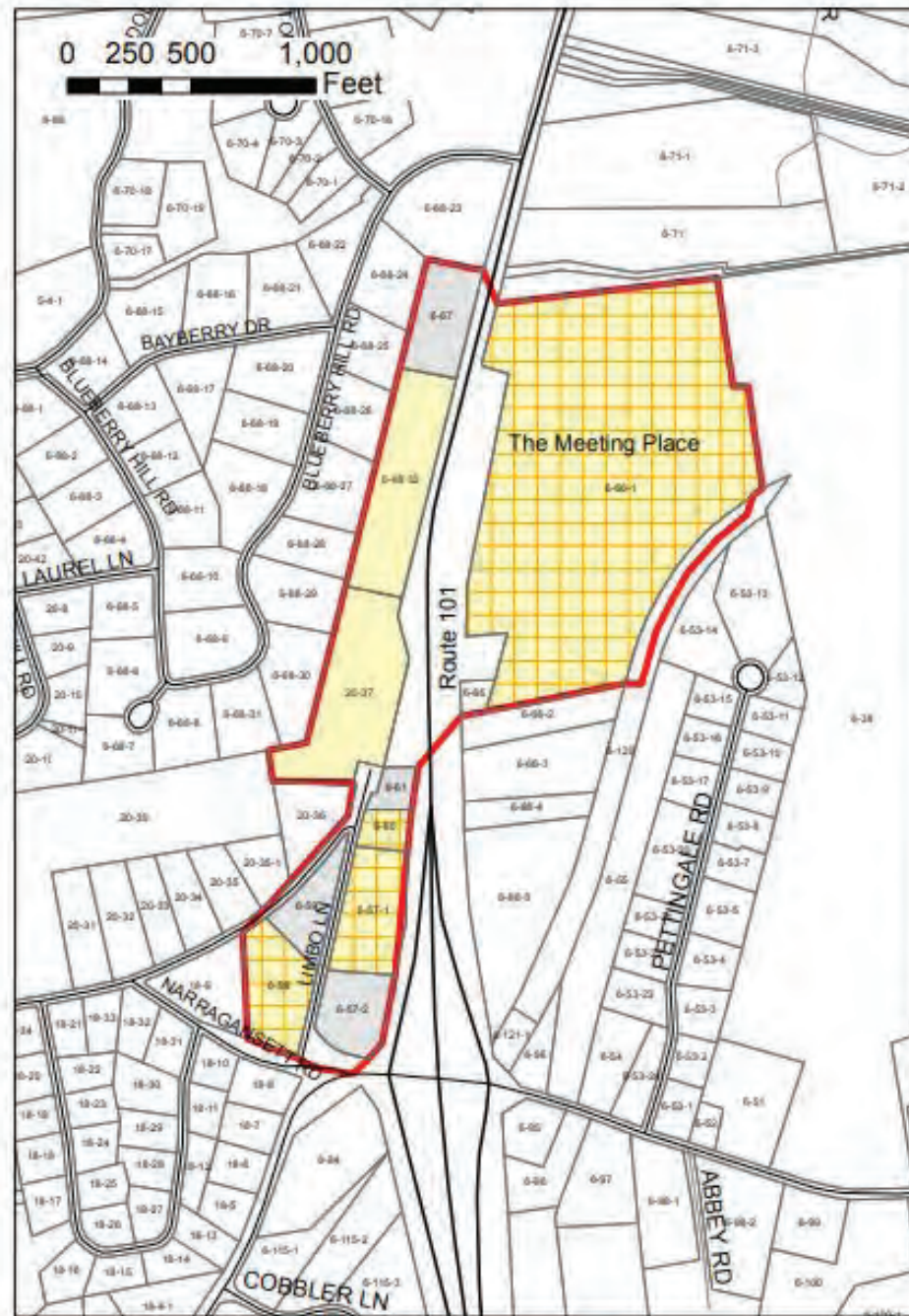
WHY ARE TRANSITION AREAS IMPORTANT?

Transition areas can help address housing supply and manage traffic congestion over time. They can provide a location for some additional housing options or lower traffic non-residential uses. Transition areas could be strategically located within a ten-minute walking distance to commercial goods and services, as well as major multimodal roadways (aka transportation corridors).

Proposed 101A Economic Revitalization Zones



Proposed 101 Economic Revitalization Zones



The Meeting Place ERZ



Town of Amherst, NH

Parcel

Proposed Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZ)

- The Meeting Place ERZ
- Route 101 ERZ
- LaBelle Winery ERZ

ERZ Parcels

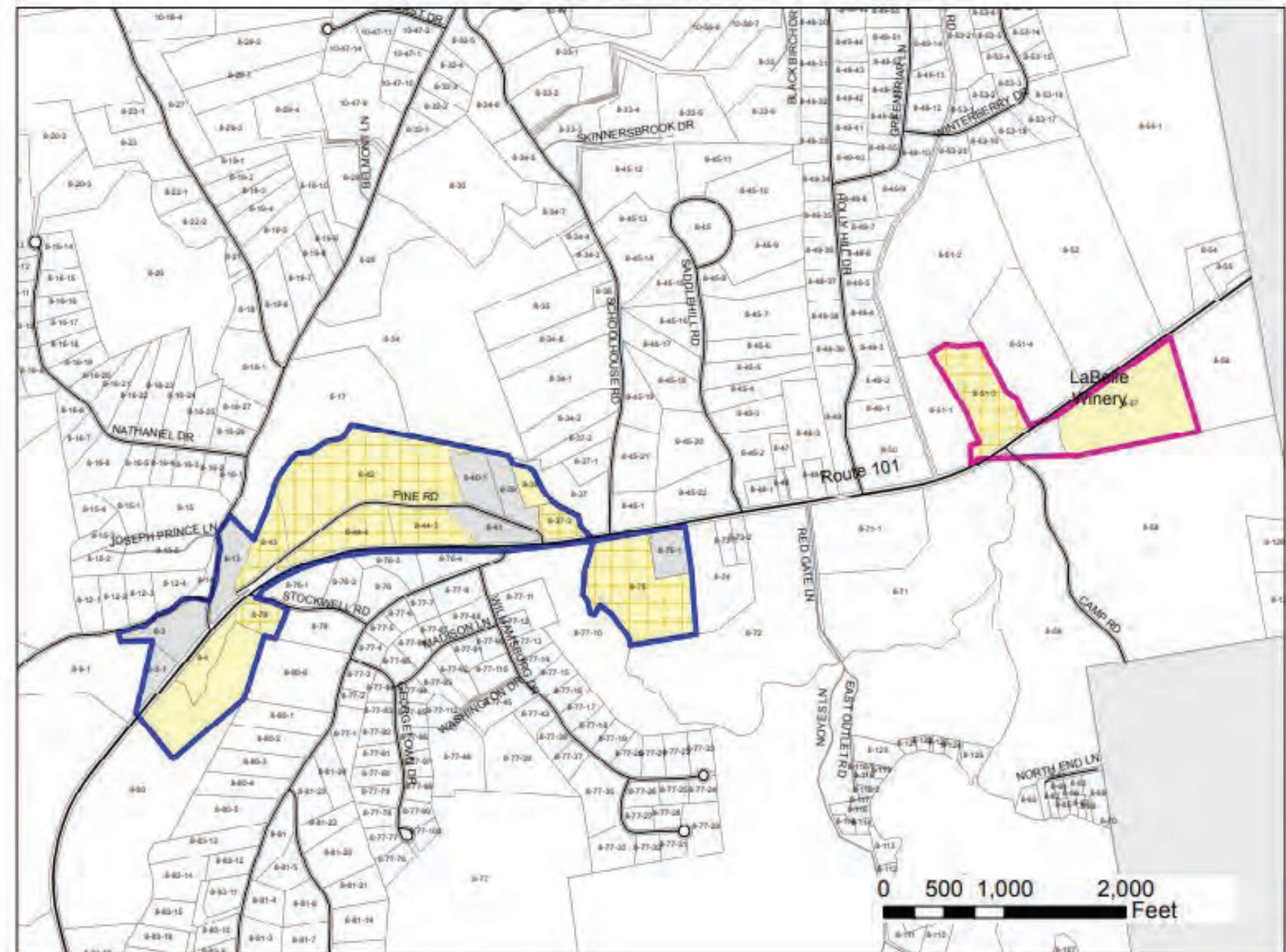
- Brownfield
- Developed
- Underdeveloped
- Vacant

Road System

- State Route
- Local Road
- Private Road
- Class VI



The Route 101 ERZ and the Labelle Winery ERZ



Housing Supply

Amherst's demographic and housing realities reflect the evolution of the town's population over time in addition to local, state, and national policies and trends. These demographic and housing characteristics are intertwined: the available housing stock influences who can or is interested in living in the community, and the existing demographics and demographic trends will influence housing demand and the market response into the future. However, the housing situation in New Hampshire is changing and Amherst will need to decide what new housing opportunities the community can accommodate.

A June 2022 Housing Market Report released by NH Housing identified that New Hampshire's housing market is in a state of turmoil due to an inadequate number of available and affordable housing units. This is challenging both existing and potential residents to find housing that satisfies their households needs. In July of 2022, the State launched the InvestNH Program to incentivize the construction of additional housing units that will help address this demand. Through these initiatives, all New Hampshire communities are being asked to consider how and where they can best accommodate new housing units.

Key Issues

Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 35% of respondents agree or strongly

*agree that **Amherst should encourage housing for all ages and income levels.***

The population in Amherst is fairly stable and has been increasing slower than it did prior to 2000. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for Amherst, the year-round population is 11,333 and is estimated to increase to nearly 12,000 residents by 2030. Amherst's resident population is well educated and has a higher median income than both the County and the State. The median age in Amherst is 45 years old. This is older than New Hampshire's median age of 43, and the median age in Hillsborough County which is only 40. While Amherst has a healthy distribution of residents across age groups. All age groups under 55 years old have decreased or remained stable since 2005. The number of households in Amherst has increased over the



last twenty years, and yet the number of residents in each household has decreased. School enrollment numbers have also been decreasing.

The existing housing supply in Amherst is primarily composed of owner-occupied single-family homes, and this owner-occupied housing stock is more expensive than other communities in the surrounding County. Compounding this issue is the fact that the number of housing units available for rent in Amherst has decreased since 2005, and the vacancy rate in Amherst and the surrounding region is extremely low. It is likely that the demographic diversity of the community is linked to this lack of existing housing unit diversity. If there is still interest in the community to address this issue, the location and type of new housing units could be further examined and accommodated in the land use regulations. While the rate of growth projected for Amherst over the coming decade is similar to recent decades (twenty to sixty units per year), there is an increased demand for new housing units (owner-occupied and rental) throughout New Hampshire. This increased demand and the State's recent commitments to addressing it means Amherst is likely to experience interest in creating additional housing units in the coming years.

Regardless of the types of units identified and the regulatory mechanisms suggested to direct or incentivize the creation of these units, all future housing units should be well integrated in the community's land use pattern with site design standards in order to minimize their impact on the community's visual character. These efforts could include promoting the construction of accessory dwelling units, identifying areas most appropriate for duplexes and other multi-family structures such as townhouses and cottage style developments, mixed-use projects that include residential units adjacent to and/or above commercial units, or other approaches. Amherst's land use regulations could then provide clear direction and any necessary incentives for the construction of affordable housing units. To accomplish this, the Master Plan and any changes to the land use regulations that follow could generate greater developer and land owner buy-in while being easy to understand and navigate.

This need for future housing opportunities in the community should be balanced with other efforts in the community to conserve natural and cultural resources. In order to accomplish both objectives, avoiding sprawl and minimizing infrastructure impacts may be a priority. Some of Amherst's future housing units could be directed to mixed use areas where some new commercial development may also be taking place. In the more rural areas of the community, where new residential developments may be proposed, modifications to the zoning may be investigated to ensure open space preservation. Other alternatives to consider include the use of a soil-based lot sizing provision, or the adoption of lot size averaging regulations.

Design standards can also be further developed for multi-family structures to ensure they resemble farmhouses and other buildings currently found in Amherst. This will help integrate these larger buildings into the community and make them more attractive to the residents living within them. As indicated in other areas of this Plan, the examination and updating of regulations related to housing could be addressed by a policy and regulatory audit. This would help to identify where the existing land use regulations are not aligned with the new Master Plan. If a regulatory audit is complete, it might be beneficial to also speak with developers about the realities of developing new housing units in the region, and to use these findings to draft new regulatory standards. Ultimately, it is through efforts like this that Amherst can best achieve its Vision and identify how to carefully integrate new housing units at a variety of densities, locations, and price points.

Future Land Use Plan

This Master Plan was developed to clarify a vision for Amherst that can both inspire and direct the implementation effort that will be necessary to put this policy document into action. The future land use pattern that will result from this work will represent a community that has woven together the need to balance land conservation efforts, natural and cultural resource protection, delivery of quality municipal facilities and services, and future development opportunities for both housing and economic development.

This work will require a sense of unity and community, and will be more successful if residents care about what is happening in all areas of the town and not just in their neighborhood. To further inform the creation of this future land use plan the Town contracted with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to complete a buildout analysis. This collaboration with the NRPC included the development of a baseline buildout analysis which was calculated using the current land use regulations and recent growth rates.

With this data, the NRPC was able to forecast how development may continue across the community over the decades ahead. The analysis itself is not helpful in identifying the specific parcels that will be developed. Instead, the results of this analysis are helpful because they indicate development trends and patterns that are the likely outcome in various areas of the town if no regulatory changes are made. This baseline analysis helped illustrate how and where future development is likely to consume land in Amherst, how this land use change will further disperse development, and what impact this will have on the community over time. As a “business as usual” approach it appears that development would continue to spread out across the community, and this would result in greater fragmentation of remaining open space that would have negative impacts to natural resource areas. Given these changes, it might also

impact the visual character of the community as well.

A second buildout scenario was then completed with a greater focus on natural resource and water resource protection. To inform this alternate analysis no new development was allowed on properties in the 100 and 500-year floodplains. The wellhead protection areas were also removed from the potential developable land area, and the undeveloped parcels located in a significant wildlife habitat area according to New Hampshire’s Wildlife Action Plan were also set aside. This highlighted a possible need to address these areas through changes to the land use regulations, and through non-regulatory efforts to permanently protect these areas of the community. The results of this second analysis better aligned with feedback received from the public, and the findings of the existing conditions analysis. Future development sprawled out far less than in the baseline analysis, and fewer units were created overall. This was an indication that increased resource protection can be achieved while accommodating new development in ways that will not diminish the character and quality of life in Amherst.

To guide the implementation of this land use plan over the coming decade, a policy and regulatory audit could be completed. This type of analysis entails reviewing the new Master Plan against

the existing land use regulations to determine what regulatory changes may be needed and where there are disconnects between the Master Plan and the land use regulations. Regulation changes can then be drafted and presented to the public. This would provide an opportunity to address some of the issues identified during the master planning process such as reduced development within floodplains, over wellhead protection areas, and on lands with critical wildlife habitat. It could also include an investigation into the use of alternative types of zoning such as a form-based code for the mixed-use and non-residential development areas of the community.

The review and analysis process could also provide an opportunity to identify the site design standards needed to continue to preserve the community's character, and the shared natural and cultural resources. Updated site design standards could include a reduction in the area of impervious surface allowed over significant aquifers, requiring vegetated buffers along public roadways, architectural design requirements, and other standards. The result of these combined regulatory efforts would direct future residential and commercial development activity to identified areas where open space and natural resource impacts can be minimized. They would also inform and shape future developments so they reflect the distinct characteristics of Amherst's landscape and contribute to the unique identity of the community. This work would require publicizing planning and zoning efforts, and encouraging involvement and volunteerism on all boards and commissions. Engaging residents in the zoning amendment process would also help inform the new regulations well ahead of their adoption and any new development proposals that may follow.





Future Considerations

The section of this Master Plan includes a record of the major recommendations identified during this community informed planning process. Achieving Amherst's Vision of the future will likely require a combination of municipal regulations, non-regulatory municipal investments and initiatives, and the efforts of many volunteers and property owners. These are the three primary pathways New Hampshire communities use during the implementation of a master plan and are further explained below.

Regulatory Action: Includes the use of Amherst's land use regulations to guide and inform future development activity. Typically, this is done through the zoning ordinance, site plan review regulations, and subdivision regulations.

Non-Regulatory Action: Outside of the common regulatory pathways used to implement a Master Plan are the more flexible and equally important non-regulatory initiatives. These include municipal funding provided through the Capital Improvement Plan, topic specific studies, and board and committee outreach efforts.

Landowner/Volunteer Action: This master planning process has engaged a large segment of the community and highlighted their interest in the future of Amherst. While not everyone may want to sit on a municipal board or committee, every Amherst resident can play a role in bringing this plan to life through simple actions that contribute to the shared vision.

The implementation phase of this master planning initiative will ultimately require the collaborative effort of residents, volunteers, local organizations, and town staff over the next decade. To coordinate the implementation of this Master Plan, the following recommendations are provided:

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

#	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Status of Action
Regulatory Actions					
1	Consider the completion of a policy and regulatory audit of Amherst's land use regulations against the new Master Plan to provide greater insight and direction on regulatory disconnects, barriers, and opportunities across all three planning themes.				
2	Consider drafting and adopting a revised aquifer protection overlay district that will guide future development and redevelopment activity while ensuring Amherst's drinking water resource is protected to the greatest extent possible. This could include a decrease in the allowable impervious surface area, and, if allowable, new standards for private wells that exceed the state standards to ensure all residents have access to safe drinking water.				
3	Review the existing economic revitalization zones in Amherst and identify regulatory changes that could be considered in these areas to accommodate future development while protecting the character and resources of the community.				
4	Review and identify land use regulations that could guide the creation of a variety of housing unit types that serve different housing needs.				
5	Consider the adoption of natural infrastructure focused development design standards in the site plan and subdivision regulations to ensure water quality protection and other benefits are incorporated in the design and construction of future developments.				
6	Continue to require open space set-aside requirements for new development to ensure that Amherst's natural resources and open space corridors are protected, and the community's character is preserved as land uses change. An increase in the existing requirement could also be evaluated.				

#	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Status of Action
7	Consider the adoption of a demolition delay requirement for all public and private structures built prior to 1960 to aid in the preservation of Amherst's historic resources.				
8	Consider the adoption of a metal detecting policy for all municipal properties.				
9	Consider the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy to reinforce the vision of the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan, guide its implementation, and to ensure it is incorporated into the land use regulations.				
10	Consider researching and developing access management strategies and policies for Amherst's highest volume roadways to ensure that vehicle access points are coordinated and conflicts are minimized.				
11	Consider the completion of corridor studies along NH 101 and NH 101A to better understand the existing land use pattern, zoning, natural resources, and economic development opportunities. The findings of these studies could then be used to create regulations that will guide new, possibly mixed use, development activity in these areas while protecting the viewsheds and natural resources that contribute to the community's character.				
12	Investigate and consider the adoption of a form-based code for commercial and mixed-use zoning districts in the community.				
13	Consider updating the land use regulations to reference the Multimodal Master Plan and ensure that street right-of-way widths and other roadway design requirements are incorporated in future developments. Traffic calming is another transportation strategy that could receive greater design consideration and implementation in Amherst. It is a critical component of a Complete Street Policy, and could be addressed in the land use regulations to ensure street trees and other design elements are utilized to regulate vehicle speeds.				

Non-Regulatory Actions					
#	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Status of Action
14	Consider updating the town's broad conservation strategy to guide continued land and habitat conservation efforts with an emphasis on aquifer protection, climate resilience, watershed protection, conservation of unfragmented blocks of land, agricultural lands, and critical habitat areas that provide greenways of connectivity across the community.				
15	Consider completing a study of all surface and ground water resources to inform the development of land use regulations and to guide future land conservation initiatives in the community.				
16	Consider the creation of a map and related analysis to identify areas with low or very low potential for septic absorption, and consider how this information may inform regulatory changes.				
17	Consider researching and identifying additional innovative strategies for stewardship of water resources and management of stormwater in Amherst (as required by the MS4 permit, Salt Reduction Plan, etc.). This will also require implementation and tracking that requires staff time to ensure results.				
18	Consider inventorying and analyzing the vacant parcels across the community to better understand their distribution, ownership status, and how they should be addressed during the implementation of this Master Plan.				
19	Consider the completion of additional studies and documentation of historic and archaeological sites throughout the community for their protection and enjoyment. This could include establishing priorities for research, documentation, and protection of sites; and steps to promote and share Amherst's heritage and its role in maintaining the rural character of the community.				
20	Given the time that has passed since the last Master Plan it would be beneficial to assess any possible parcel or boundary additions or changes to the Historic District.				

#	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Status of Action
21	Consider developing a municipal strategy for managing technological developments (i.e., cell towers and broadband) and ensure these developments are implemented in a way that is consistent and harmonious with the character of Amherst.				
22	Research and evaluate the need for hiring of an economic development staff person, and/or consider the creation of an Economic Development Commission.				
23	Consider conducting a town-wide (including schools) fiscal impact analysis or cost of community services study, and keep this resource up to date. Such a resource could help to determine when the rate of growth is impacting the community negatively and should be addressed.				
24	Continue to use the capital improvement planning process to ensure municipal facilities and infrastructure improvements are scheduled to reduce the financial impact on taxpayers. Over time this may also include the use of impact fees or other strategies to fund improvements.				
25	Consider using the Capital Improvement Plan to construct a more multimodal transportation system over time that will better serve residents and visitors of all ages.				
26	Consider completing a study of the existing recreation facilities and programs to gauge how well they are meeting community needs. Additionally, this study could also determine whether existing funding for recreational facility maintenance is adequate, and how well formal recreation spaces and other open spaces in the community are coordinated and connected.				
27	Consider researching and evaluating the potential for a multi-purpose community and senior center that would meet multiple goals in Amherst including improvements to aging in place, providing recreation for all ages, and enhancing social and meeting space that can serve everyone.				

#	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Status of Action
28	Consider researching and adopting a decision-making framework that can be utilized internally by municipal staff during the project development process to ensure all future municipal sites and facilities reflect energy conservation and sustainable design goals. This framework could include the use of an asset management program for informing capital investment planning.				
29	Consider using the Capital Improvement Plan to implement solar installations on municipal buildings and to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure.				
Landowner/Volunteer Related Actions					
30	Consider creating public outreach and education materials and initiatives related to land conservation, water resource protection, and the protection and enjoyment of heritage and cultural resources.				
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider developing fact sheets to inspire action on private property including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to document and care for stonewalls and historic sites; Habitat regeneration and forest and grassland management activities; Stormwater management strategies (see Stormwater Coalition Resources); How and why to conserve your land and critical natural resources; Invasive species control. 				
32	Consider engaging volunteers in the preservation and digitizing of additional resource documents from the Town Vault for public enjoyment.				
33	Encourage the public to assist with and participate in the planning of cultural celebrations focusing on honoring Amherst's past.				
34	Considering creating an outreach and education campaign related to available open spaces and recreation resources with details on how and when to access them for a variety of recreational activities.				

#	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Status of Action
35	Consider recruiting volunteer assistance on trail maintenance and beautification of municipally maintained properties.				
36	Consider creating demonstration sites on municipal properties to feature sustainable design strategies and technologies in municipal structures so that residents can visit and learn about changes they can make on their own properties. Fact sheets could further detail how to translate these projects to a residential scale.				
37	Consider broadening the communication strategies used in Amherst to ensure that all residents and businesses are regularly informed of municipal initiatives and related news.				



Appendix

A. Existing Conditions Profiles

The Appendix includes the following Existing Conditions sections which provide an overview of Amherst during the time of this Master Plan development.


1. Population and Housing
2. Heritage and Cultural Resources
3. Natural Resources
4. Water Resources
5. Transportation
6. Economic Development
7. Recreation
8. Public Facilities and Services
9. Land Use and Zoning

B. Outreach and Engagement Report

C. 2021 Master Plan Survey Results

D. Maps

E. Build-Out Analysis Report



Population and Housing Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- The population in Amherst is fairly stable and increasing slower than it did prior to 2000.
- Amherst's resident population is well educated and has a higher median income than both the County and the State.
- While the number of households has increased, the size of these households (including families) has decreased.
- The existing housing supply is primarily owner-occupied single-family homes.
- The existing owner-occupied housing stock is more expensive than the surrounding County.
- The percent of housing available for rent in Amherst has decreased since 2005, and the vacancy rate is extremely low.
- School enrollment numbers have been decreasing in Amherst.
- The demographic diversity of the community may be linked with the existing housing diversity.
- Increasing demand for housing (owner-occupied and rental) in New Hampshire will likely place additional pressure on Amherst for new units.
- In Amherst 8% of the population identify as living with a disability, and this has both housing and transportation related implications.

DATA SOURCES

- American Community Survey Fact Finder
- NH Housing Data
- NH Housing Resources
- SAU 39 - School Enrollment Numbers
- Town of Amherst - Building Permit Data

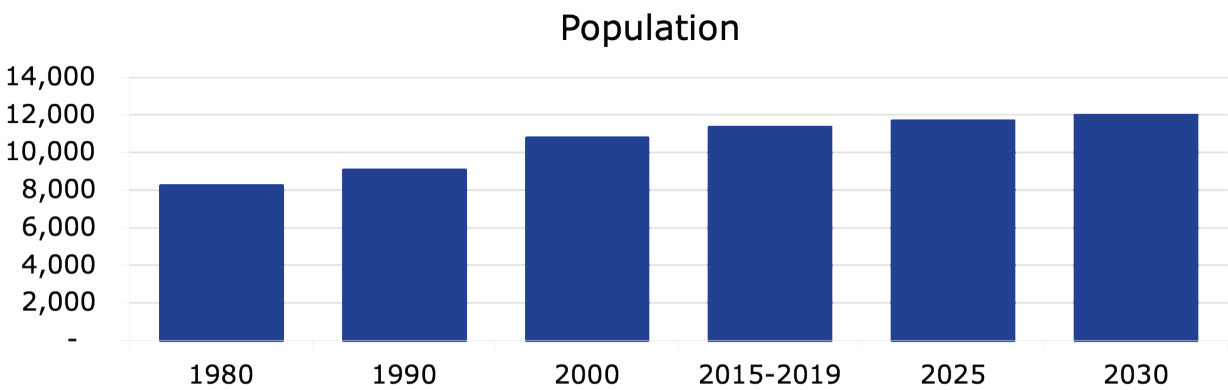
INTRODUCTION

The demographic and housing characteristics in Amherst are intertwined: the available housing stock influences who can or is interested in living in the community, and the existing demographics and demographic trends will influence housing demand and the market response into the future. Amherst’s population and housing realities reflect the evolution of the town’s population over time in addition to local, state, and federal policy. At the time this existing conditions data was collected the full 2020 Census was not available. As a result, five year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates were used to indicate trends in the community. While this data is based on a sample of the community and has a margin of error it is often used in community planning to understand demographic and housing trends overall.

POPULATION

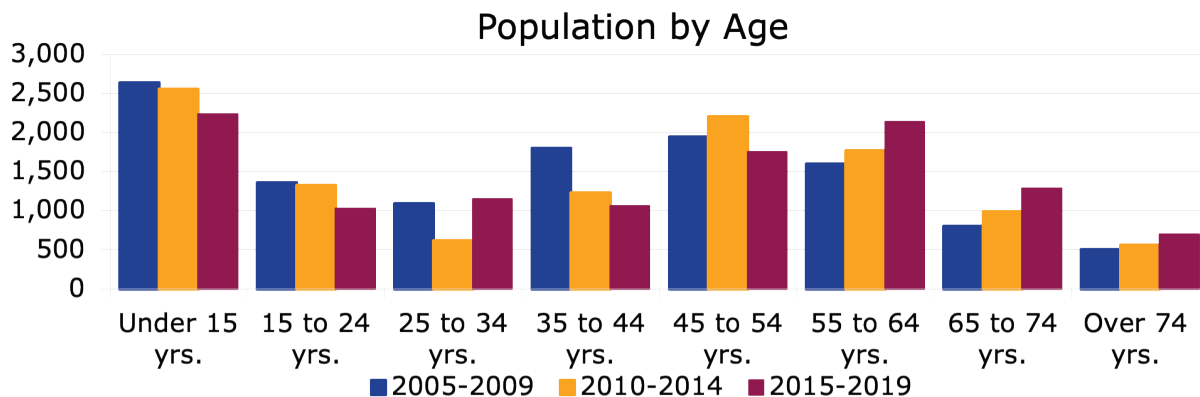
According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for Amherst, the year-round population is 11,333 and is estimated to increase to nearly 12,000 residents by 2030. Late in this planning process some of the 2020 census figures became available and the population was identified as 11,753. The 1980s and 90s saw greater rates of population growth than recent decades in Amherst. While the rate of growth projected for Amherst is similar to recent decades, there is an increased demand for new housing units throughout New Hampshire. This increased demand means Amherst is likely to experience interest in creating additional housing units in the coming years.

Table 1: Population Trends	
Year	Population
1980	8,243
1990	9,068
2000	10,769
2015-2019	11,333
2025	11,690
2030	11,973



POPULATION BY AGE

The median age in Amherst is 45 years old. This is older than New Hampshire’s median age of 43, and the median age in Hillsborough County which is only 40. While Amherst has a healthy distribution of residents across age groups, all age groups under 55 years old have decreased or remained stable since 2005. During this fifteen-year period residents 55 years and older have increased in number, but only 17% of residents are 65+ plus. This is slightly lower than the average for the State at 18%. Residents in the “family forming” age group of 25 – 44 years old represent 20% of the population in Amherst, and this is lower than the state figure of 23% for this age group.



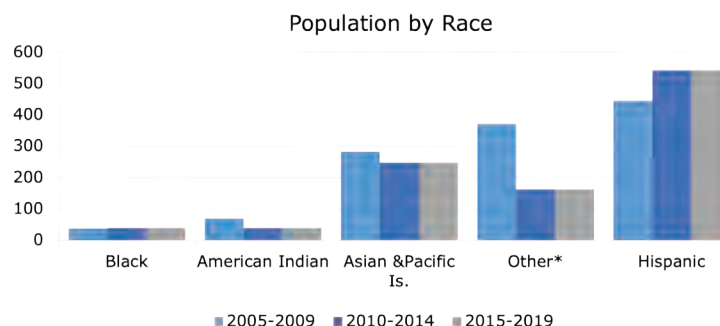
POPULATION BY RACE

While the majority of Amherst residents (96%) identify as only one race, white, there is some diversity represented by residents of other races. This is a higher figure than the State of New Hampshire at 93%.

Race(s)	Population
White	10,835
Black/African American	35
Asian	204
Other	25
White and Black/African American	32
White and American Indian and Alaska Native	9
White and Asian	167

Table 2: Age Categories in Amherst

Age	Estimate	Margin of Error	% of Population
Under 15 yrs.	2,235	+/-312	19.7%
15-24 yrs.	1,025	+/-216	9%
25-34 yrs.	1,148	+/-214	10.1%
35-44 yrs.	1,062	+/-200	9.4%
45-54 yrs.	1,747	+/-241	15.4%
55-64 yrs.	2,135	+/-248	18.8%
65-74 yrs.	1,285	+/-182	11.3%
Over 74 yrs.	696	+/-149	6.1%
Median Age yrs.	45.8	+/-1.3	

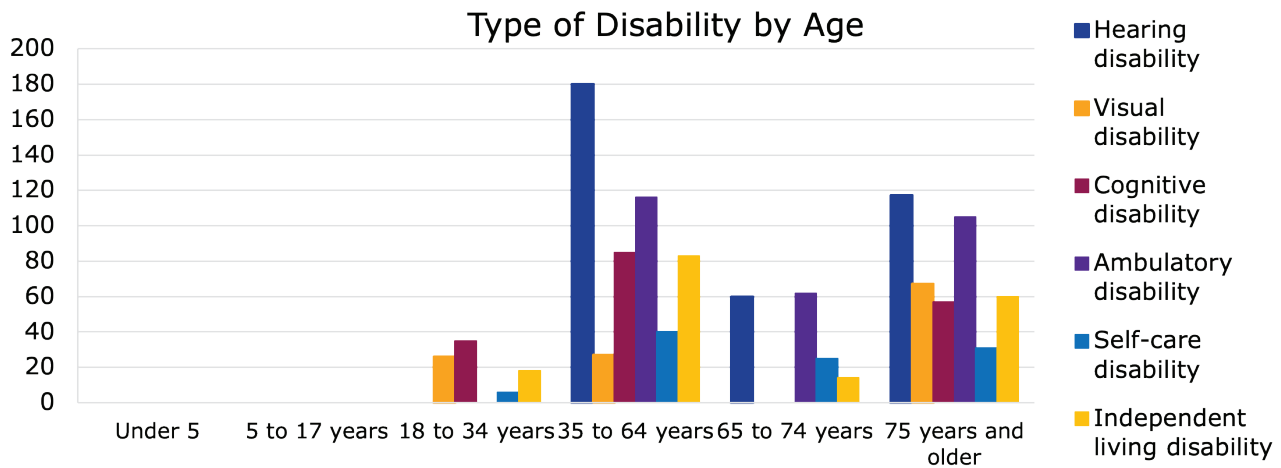


POPULATION AND LANGUAGE

According to the estimates provided by ACS, 5% (or 530) of Amherst residents over 5 years of age speak a language other than English at home.

Table 4: Language Spoken at Home

Language	Population (5 yrs. and over)
Speak only English	10,085
Spanish	186
Other Indo-European Languages	249
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	85
Other Languages	10



POPULATION LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

In Amherst 8% of the population, 877 individuals, identify as living with a disability.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to the ACS, 99% of Amherst residents have completed high school, and 63% of these residents went on to complete a Bachelor's Degree or higher degree.

POPULATION BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

While the census data for Amherst indicates a slight reduction in school age children since 2005. It is interesting to note that 25% of Amherst's existing population is engaged in school related learning of some type. This includes adult learners.

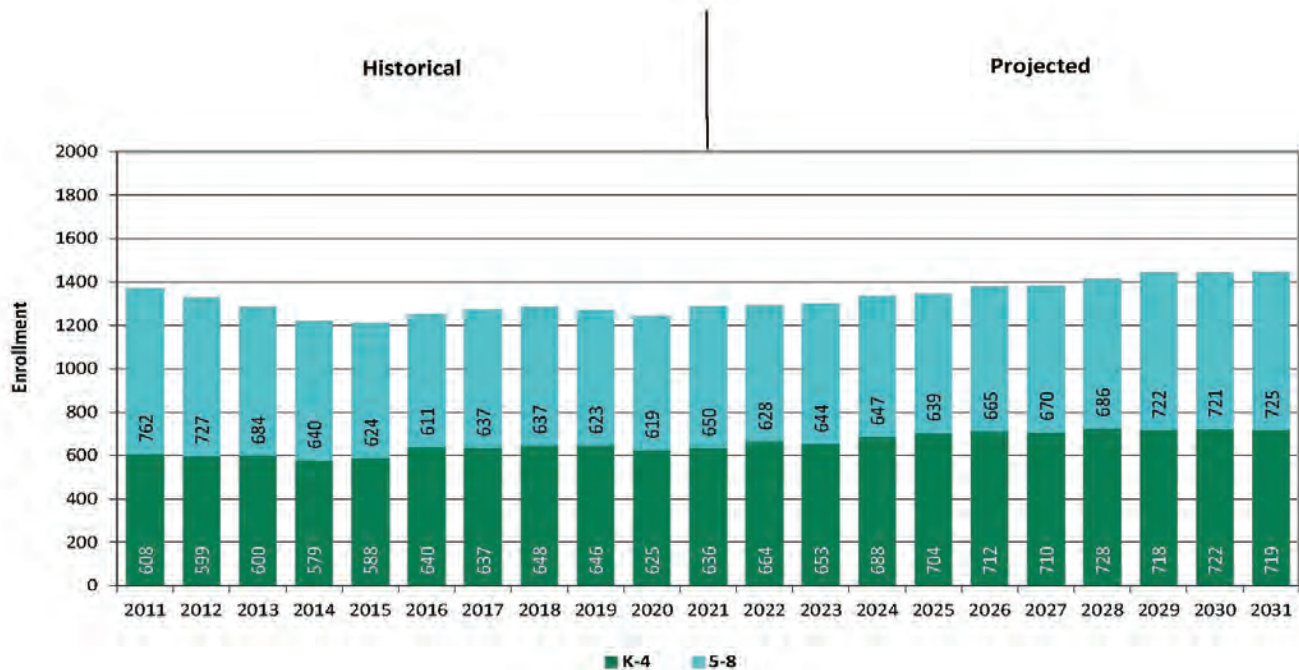
The following are population records and forecast results from the Amherst, NH Enrollment Projection Model created by staff at SAU 39. The model is based on an analysis of Historical Amherst Home Sales, Historical Enrollment Performance, and Amherst Resident Birth Rates. The moderate growth in overall enrollment is principally driven by a recent increase in home sales. SAU staff have calculated the Predictive Error % to be on the order of 3%

Table 5: Educational Attainment Levels in Amherst	
Level of Educational Attainment	Population 25 yrs. and over
Less than high school graduate	82
High School Graduate (and equivalency)	1,001
Some college or associates degree	1,920
Bachelor's degree	2,991
Graduate or professional degree	2,079

Table 6: Population by School Enrollment	
Grade	Population 3 yrs. and over enrolled in school
Nursery School/pre-school	211
Kindergarten	177
Elementary - grades 1-4	508
Elementary - grades 5-8	659
High School - grades 9-12	647
College, undergraduate	448
College, professional school	131

at the Grade/Year level for the first 2 projection years. It increases arithmetically in projection years 3-5; from 5-10%. As part of this project, they also evaluated the 'Cohort Survival' forecast technique and found it to be viable for use with Mont Vernon enrollment projections but not for those of Amherst.

It is important to note that projections are generally more reliable when they are closest in time to the current year. Projections four to ten years out may only serve as a guide to future enrollments. Births increased by +3 from a previous ten-year average of 87 to a projected average of 90. Over the next three years, K-4 enrollments are projected to increase by a total of +52 students.



Historical Enrollment By Grade																			
Birth Year	Births*	School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-8	PK-8
2006	96	2011-12	18	97	107	127	139	138	152	185	223	202	0	0	0	0	0	1370	1388
2007	104	2012-13	23	97	115	113	135	139	140	149	222	216	0	0	0	0	0	1326	1349
2008	90	2013-14	26	109	119	112	121	139	148	142	171	223	0	0	0	0	0	1284	1310
2009	98	2014-15	33	92	131	119	116	121	135	147	185	173	0	0	0	0	0	1219	1252
2010	83	2015-16	36	96	119	130	124	119	130	137	172	185	0	0	0	0	0	1212	1248
2011	83	2016-17	33	125	121	128	138	128	129	137	176	169	0	0	0	0	0	1251	1284
2012	80	2017-18	35	108	138	116	132	143	136	142	174	185	0	0	0	0	0	1274	1309
2013	89	2018-19	33	126	122	140	123	137	148	144	166	179	0	0	0	0	0	1285	1318
2014	68	2019-20	39	97	142	128	140	139	138	154	168	163	0	0	0	0	0	1269	1308
2015	84	2020-21	19	109	104	144	125	143	130	137	186	166	0	0	0	0	0	1244	1263
2016	93	2021-22	42	119	121	122	146	128	150	134	178	188	0	0	0	0	0	1286	1328

*Birth data provided by Public Health Vital Records Departments in each state.

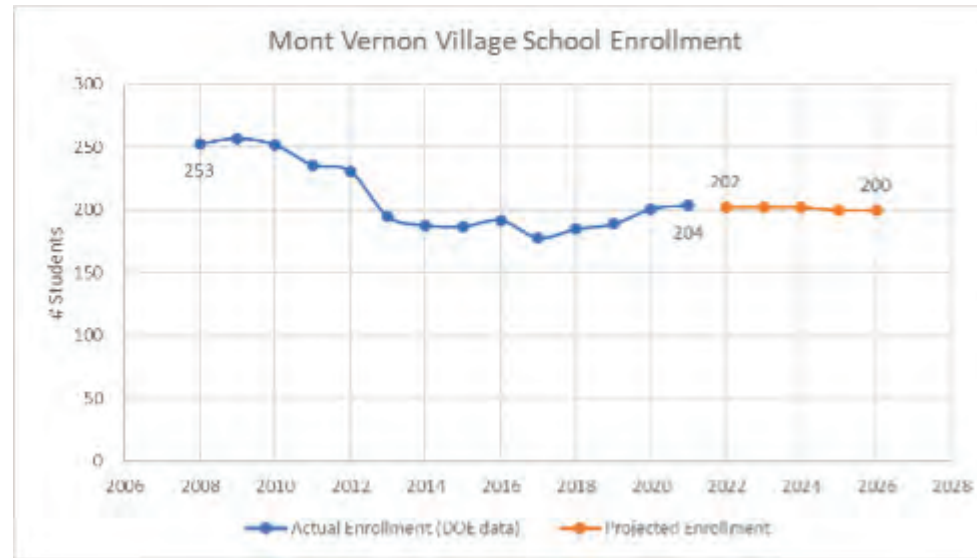
This Model projects the following changes in SAU 39 Enrollment from 2022 through 2026:

	Actual Enrollment Changes (NHDOE)															Projected Enrollment Changes				
Enrollment Change Category	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
KG Adds (Births and Migration):		108	92	90	97	97	109	92	96	125	108	126	97	109	131	137	119	134	121	
Grades 1-12 Migration Changes:		---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	79	66	50	45	41	40	39	
Seniors Graduating:		-256	-251	-221	-233	-232	-219	-212	-204	-203	-225	-233	-183	-201	-192	-182	-167	-174	-198	
MVVS Additions:		---	---	46	32	47	31	37	24	30	30	26	21	29	33	26	29	31	28	
Net Student Enrollment Changes:		-47	-94	-92	-74	-88	-30	-50	-18	39	-21	-36	14	3	22	26	23	31	-10	

Enrollment by Grade; ASD (Dist #17) + Souhegan Coop (Dist #493)

Enrollment by Grade; ASD (Dist #17) + Souhegan Coop (Dist #493)															PROJECTIONS					
Grade	FY:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
KG		101	108	92	90	97	97	109	92	96	125	108	126	97	109	131	137	119	134	121
Grade 1		142	129	147	113	107	115	119	131	119	121	138	122	142	103	115	136	142	124	138
Grade 2		174	145	134	134	127	113	112	119	130	128	116	140	128	144	108	120	140	146	128
Grade 3		184	178	153	137	139	135	121	116	124	138	132	123	140	126	150	114	125	146	151
Grade 4		161	186	184	155	138	139	139	121	119	128	143	137	139	143	131	155	118	129	149
Grade 5		190	169	189	185	152	140	148	135	130	129	136	148	138	129	148	135	158	122	132
Grade 6		185	196	165	189	185	149	142	147	137	137	142	144	154	134	134	152	139	162	125
Grade 7		210	221	216	208	223	222	171	185	172	176	174	166	168	185	170	163	184	173	192
Grade 8		229	215	224	216	202	216	223	173	185	169	185	179	163	164	188	173	166	186	175
Grade 9		233	229	207	211	207	199	214	224	177	188	178	182	180	160	168	192	177	169	190
Grade 10		223	238	226	207	210	192	204	217	231	181	194	177	188	178	163	171	194	179	171
Grade 11		248	224	237	225	210	205	197	197	220	237	182	198	181	190	180	165	173	196	181
Grade 12		256	251	221	233	232	219	212	204	203	225	233	183	201	179	192	182	167	174	198
Total:		2,536	2,489	2,395	2,303	2,229	2,141	2,111	2,061	2,043	2,082	2,061	2,025	2,019	1,944	1,978	1,995	2,002	2,040	2,054
Clark-Wilkins:		762	746	710	629	608	599	600	579	588	640	637	648	646	625	635	662	645	679	688
Amherst Middle School:		814	801	794	798	762	727	684	640	624	611	637	637	623	612	640	623	647	643	626
<u>Souhegan Cooperative:</u>		960	942	891	876	859	815	827	842	831	831	787	740	750	707	703	710	710	718	739
Total:		2,536	2,489	2,395	2,303	2,229	2,141	2,111	2,061	2,043	2,082	2,061	2,025	2,019	1,944	1,978	1,995	2,002	2,040	2,054

The Model includes incorporation of the Mont Vernon Village School students into the Amherst Middle School in Grade 7.



			Enrollment by Grade - MVVS (District #367)																			PROJECTION				
			Grade	FY:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026			
			KG		27	28	27	28	27	18	23	23	20	18	31	26	26	27	27	22	25	25	23			
			Grade 1		32	34	31	31	24	29	20	27	27	21	23	27	28	28	30	29	24	27	27			
			Grade 2		46	34	32	28	33	25	28	24	28	29	23	28	29	27	29	31	31	25	29			
			Grade 3		38	48	32	35	31	30	27	29	25	28	29	27	28	32	28	31	32	32	26			
			Grade 4		49	36	48	33	35	30	29	27	32	24	29	30	28	30	32	28	31	33	32			
			Grade 5		24	52	32	48	33	35	28	31	27	32	23	30	32	27	30	32	28	31	33			
			Grade 6		37	25	50	33	48	28	33	26	33	26	27	21	30	33	26	29	31	27	30			
			Grade 7 (at AMS)		-	-	-	46	32	47	31	37	24	30	30	26	21	30	33	26	29	31	28			
Mont Vernon Village School Total:					253	257	252	236	231	195	188	187	192	178	185	189	201	204	202	202	202	200	200			

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

The number of households in Amherst has increased by 15% since 2000, and yet the average household size decreased from 3 to 2.74. The same trend is evident in families which increased by 11% but saw a decrease in average family size from 3.29 to 3.03. The result of these trends are a demand for more housing units while housing fewer people in each unit. NH Housing reports that 17.9% of households in Amherst from 2014-2018 were occupied by non-family households. The U.S. Census' American Community Survey defines "non-family households" as a household that consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

HOUSING

There are 4,279 total house units in Amherst. Eighty-five percent of the homes in Amherst were built since 1960. The largest group (25%) were built in the 1970s.

Table 8: Units in Households

# of Units	Population
1-unit structures	95.5%
2 or more unit structures	4.1%
Mobile homes and all other types of units	0.3%



Table 7: Household Size

Household Characteristics	Population	% Change 2010-2019
Total Households	4,129	5%
Average Household Size	2.74	-4%
Total Families (as households)	3,388	6.5%
Average Family Size	3.03	-5.9%

Family vs. Non-Family Households in 2014-2018

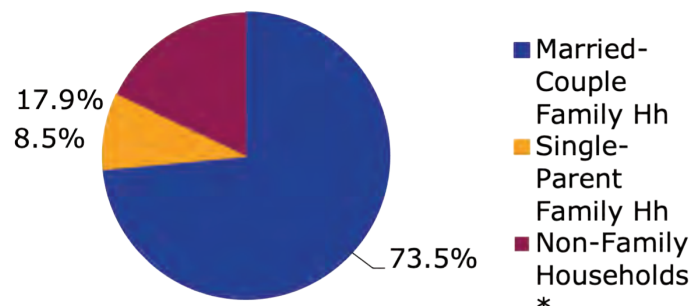
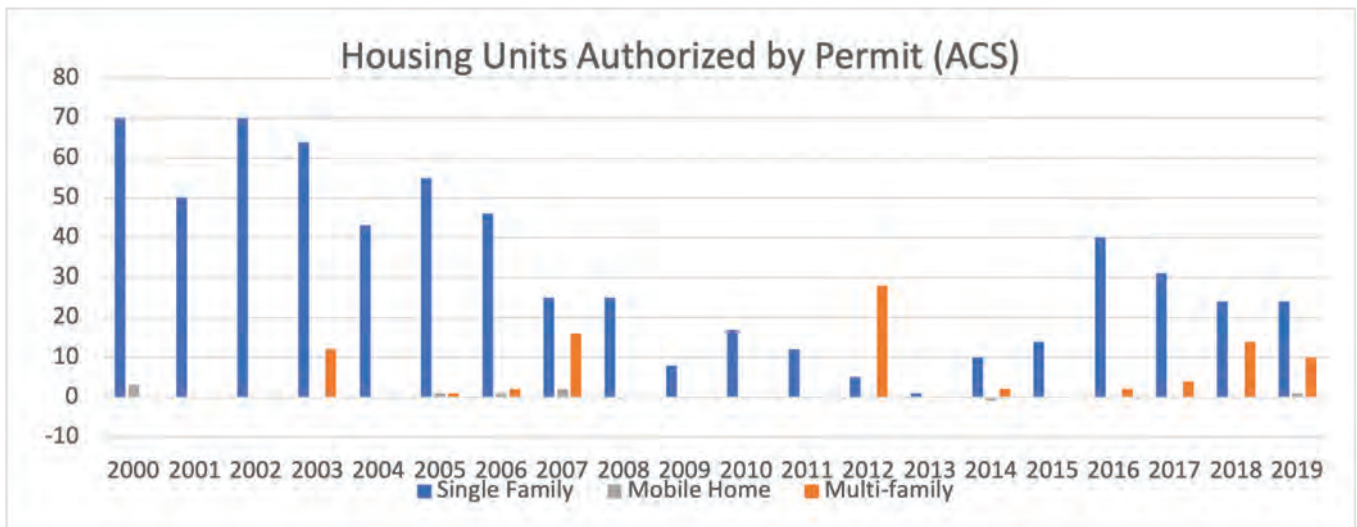


Table 9: Units by # of Bedrooms (2015-2019)

# of Bedrooms	Estimate	Margin of Error	% of Total
1 bedroom	130	+/-68	3%
2 bedrooms	688	+/-65	16%
3 bedrooms	1,536	+/-97	36%

Table 10: Units by Year Built

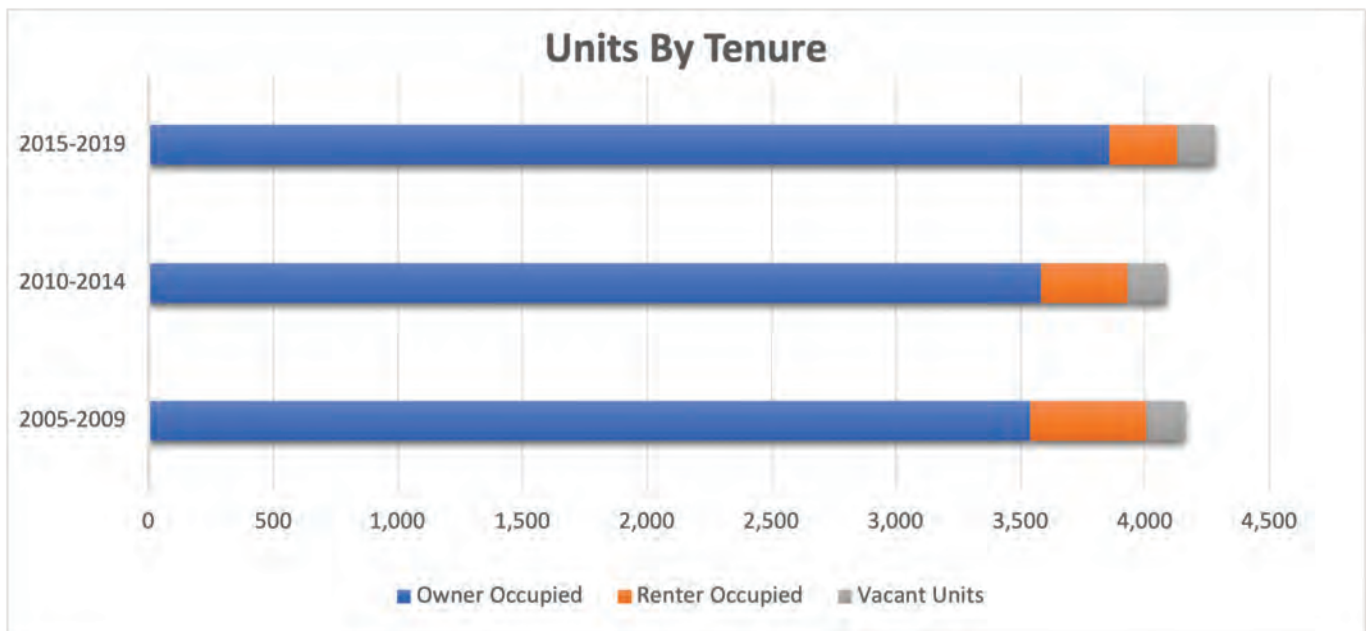
Year Built	Units	% of Total
2014 or later	21	0.5%
2010-2013	67	1.6%
2000-2009	465	10.9%
1990-1999	574	13.4%
1980-1989	688	16.1%
1970-1979	1,099	25.7%
1960-1969	721	16.8%
1950-1959	148	3.5%
1940-1949	83	1.9%
1939 and earlier	413	9.7%

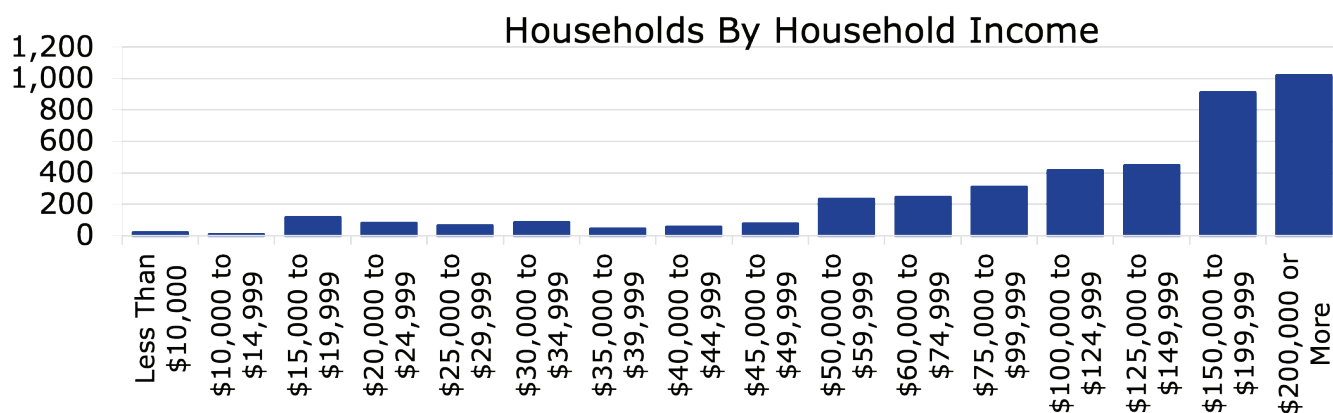


These are primarily single-family homes, and although new home construction has continued the past decade has not seen as much activity as it did from 2000 – 2010. It is also important to note that the vast majority of the housing units in Amherst (76%) have three or more bedrooms.

HOUSING TENURE

The majority of housing units in Amherst (10,731 or 93%) are owner occupied. Compared to 71% for the State. The percent of rental units (533 or 7%) has been declining since 2005, and is significantly lower than the state figure of 29%. This reduction indicates that even as new rental units were constructed, existing units transitioned from renter occupied to owner occupied at a greater rate.





INCOME

While the per capita income in Amherst is \$62,321 it is only \$35,376 in Hillsborough County. Median household income in Amherst is \$138,994, median household income in Hillsborough County is \$81,460, and in New Hampshire it is only \$76,768. The percent of Amherst residents living below the poverty level is also significantly lower than the surrounding region.

HOUSING COSTS

With a firm understanding of the existing housing supply, and the income levels of Amherst residents, it is important to look at current home values and housing costs. The median value of owner-occupied housing in Amherst is \$354,200. This translates to a median monthly cost of ownership (with a mortgage) of \$2,471. For those without a mortgage the median monthly costs are still \$1,109. As of 2019 the median home purchase price in Amherst was \$100,000+ greater than the County.

Table 11: Individual Income in 2019

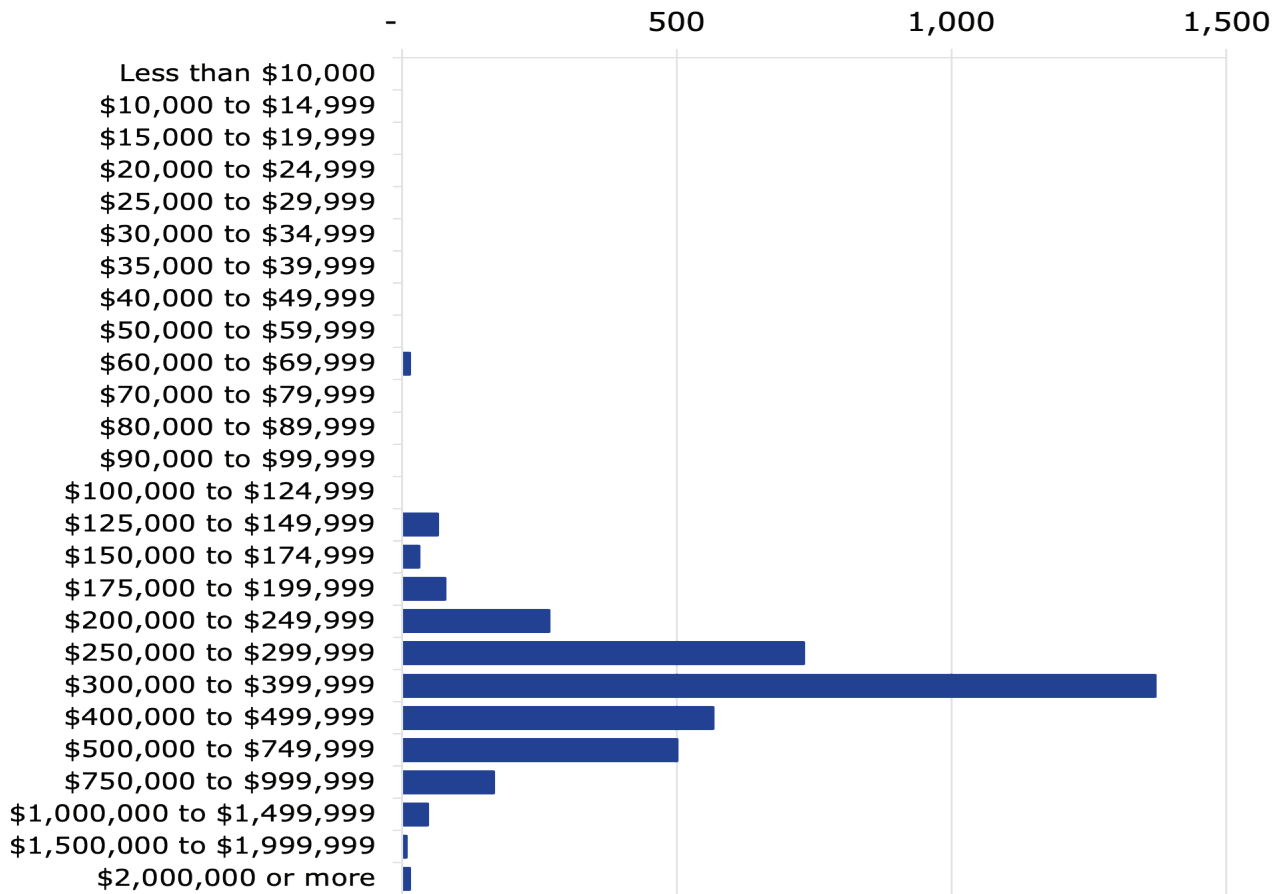
Income Categories	Population 15 years and over
\$1 to \$9,999 or loss	1,106
\$10,000 to \$14,999	421
\$15,000 to \$24,999	809
\$25,000 to \$34,999	766
\$35,000 to \$49,999	821
\$50,000 to \$64,999	877
\$65,000 to \$74,999	377
\$75,000 or more	3,189

Table 12: Residents below the Poverty Level

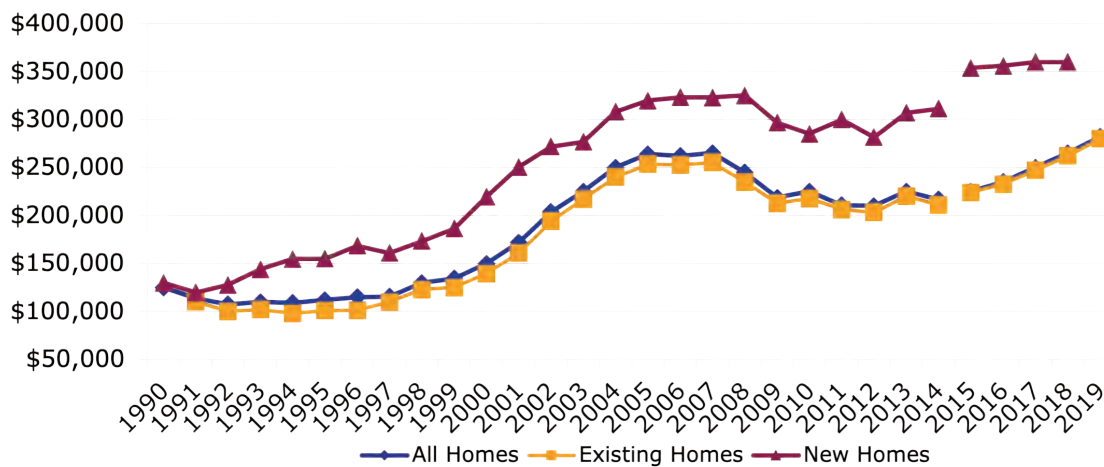
Geographic Area	% of Individuals Below Poverty Level
Amherst	1.9%
Hillsborough County	7.8%
New Hampshire	7.6%

For renters in Amherst the median monthly rent is \$1,246. Median Gross rental costs in Hillsborough County were even higher at \$1412 as of 2020. This is up from \$1,148 in 2015. Housing costs in Amherst are compounded by a low vacancy rate for rental units across Hillsborough County. At 1% the rental vacancy rate has returned to the low rates experienced in the early 2000s. A healthy vacancy rate range for rental units is 7 – 9 %.

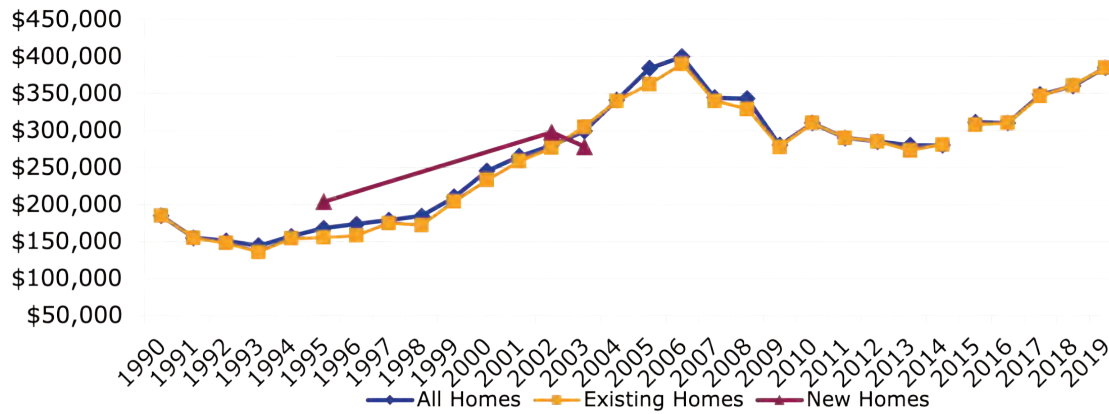
Owner Occupied Housing Value Distribution in Amherst



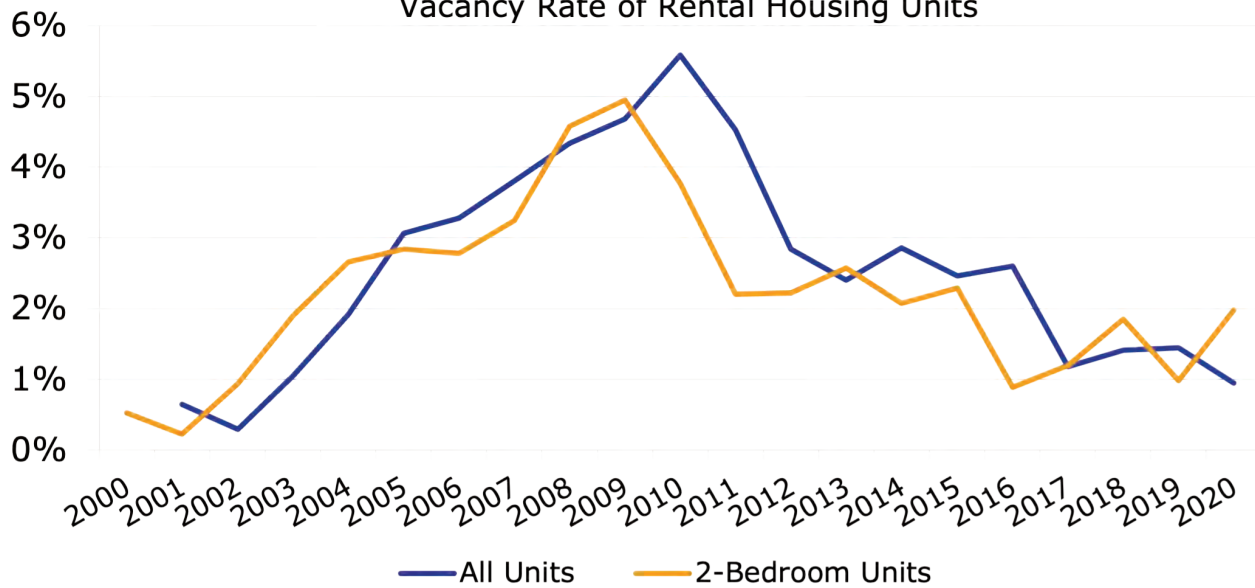
Median Home Purchase Price - Hillsborough County



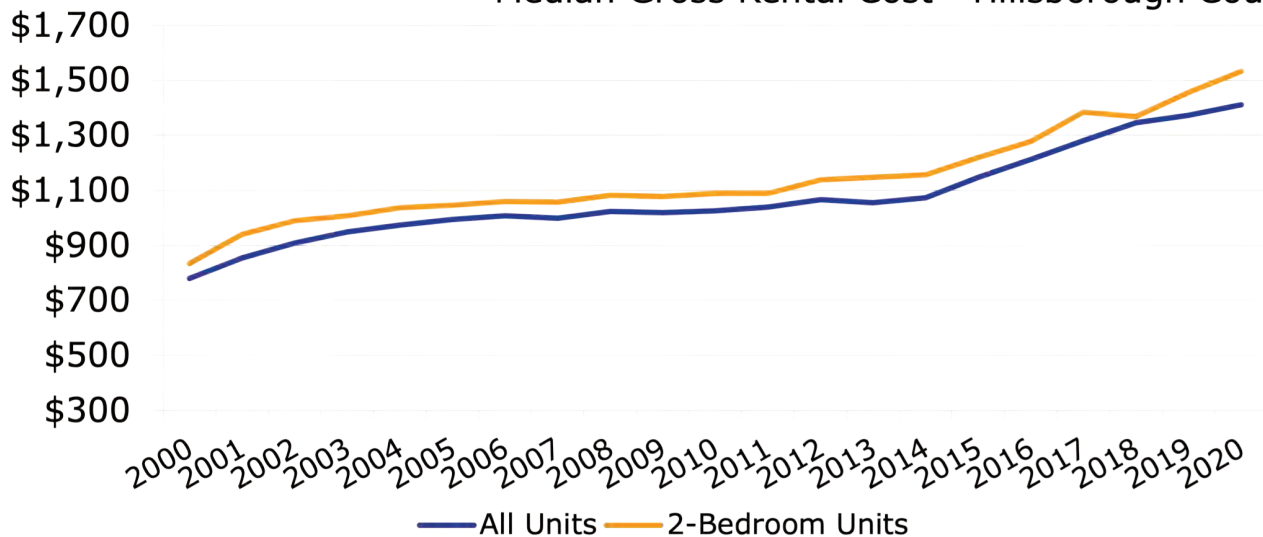
Median Home Purchase Price - Amherst, NH



Vacancy Rate of Rental Housing Units



Median Gross Rental Cost - Hillsborough County



WORKFORCE COMMUTING

The commuting patterns of Amherst residents over 16 years of age are related to their employment and their need for housing. The majority of working residents commute alone by automobile to their jobs. The total number of Amherst workers 16 years and over is 5,798. Prior to the pandemic it was reported that 12% of Amherst residents worked from home while only 2.7% of Hillsborough County residents reported the same. It will be interesting to see how this has changed. While most Amherst residents work in New Hampshire (80%) and many in Hillsborough County (73%) the mean travel time is 33.5 minutes. Ninety-two percent of residents also have access to two or more vehicles.

Table 13: Means of Transportation to Work

Transportation Mode	% or # Commuters
Car, truck, van	84%
Drove alone	78%
Carpooled	6.1%
In 2-person carpool	3.9%
In 3-person carpool	1.9%
In 4-person carpool	0.2%
Workers per car/truck/van	1.04
Public transportation (excluding taxi cab)	0%
Walked	0.3%
Bicycled	0.5%
Taxi cab, motorcycle, or other means	2.3%
Worked from home	12.8%

Table 15: Vehicles Available

# of vehicles available	% of population
No vehicle available	0.8
1 vehicle available	7.1
2 vehicles available	45.4
3 or more vehicles available	46.6

Table 14: Place of Work

Transportation Mode	% or # Commuters
Worked in state of residence	80%
Worked in county of residence	73.6%
Worked outside county of residence	6.3%
Worked out of state of residence	20%

Table 16: Travel Time to Work

Transportation Mode	% or # Commuters
Mean travel time to work in minutes	33.5
Less than ten minutes	7.1%
10-14 minutes	13.3%
15-19 minutes	13%
20-24 minutes	14.5%
25-29 minutes	5.9%
30-34 minutes	10.1%
35-44 minutes	9.2%
45-59 minutes	9%
60 or more minutes	17.9%

Heritage and Culture Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- Amherst has extensive historic and cultural resources that are well inventoried and stewarded through the efforts of many individuals and organizations. This information could be used to inform the land use regulations and inform future development.
- Amherst's many stone walls are threatened by new development, and the stone wall map that includes data for Amherst may not be a complete record of the walls that remain.
- Since the 1982 designation of the Historic District, sufficient time has passed to allow properties that were not yet 50 years old to now be considered contributing.
- The public utilities are overwhelming the character of the village. Because of this, the town could continue the burying of electrical and data wires where practical.
- Farms and historic structures that were central to Amherst's history are slowly disappearing or are threatened.
- Amherst could continue to retain the many historic barns as they reflect the town's agricultural past. These have not been fully documented, and measures have not been established to ensure their long-term protection.
- Traffic through the Village, particularly along the Boston Post Road, continues to increase and presents safety concerns and noise pollution within the Village area.

DATA SOURCES

- Historic District Commission webpage
- Heritage Commission webpage
- Historical Society of Amherst
- NH Preservation Alliance
- National Register of Historic Places
- 2008 Historical and Cultural Resources Inventory (Amherst Master Plan)
- Stonewall Mapping Tool from NHDHR and NHDES
- Freedoms Way National Heritage Area

SOURCES USED TO COMPILE THE 2008 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES DATA:

- Bacon, Charles L., compiler, Public Burying Ground by the Town Hall, Amherst, NH (alphabetical listing of gravestone inscriptions), 1976.
- Day, Rev. Gardiner M., A Brief History of Amherst: How Souhegan West became Amherst; from a "Howling Wilderness" to a Busy Village. Amherst, NH: The United Church of Christ, 1972.
- Farmer, John, Historical Sketch of Amherst, 2nd Edition. Concord, NH: Asa McFarland, 1837.
- The Historical Society of Amherst, NH, Amherst: A Commemorative History, 1760-1960, revised and updated to 1976. Amherst, NH: The Historical Society of Amherst, NH, 1976.
- The Historical Society of Amherst, NH, Amherst, New Hampshire 1881/1982: A Sleeping Town Awakens. Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 1982.

- Development along Route 101A does not complement the historic character of Amherst. There are also concerns that Route 101 East may be next.
- The town has not developed a strategy for managing technological developments (such as cell towers) and ensuring these developments are implemented in a way consistent with and harmonious with the rural character of the town.
- Consider establishing a metal detecting policy and demolition delay policy to aid in the preservation of Amherst's historic resources.
- Amherst has numerous sites of archaeological interest, which have not been researched, documented, and protected from destruction from land development. Establish priorities to research and document these sites, such as the historic corncrib and others.
- Consider additional future actions, along with the pending Storymap, that focus on promoting awareness, education, and support of Amherst's heritage and its role in maintaining the rural character of the community.

- Marshall, Jackie, Cemetery Survey, Cricket Corner, Amherst, NH, 1998.
- National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Amherst Village Historic District, 1982.
- Rotch, William B., Rambles About Amherst. Amherst, NH: Farmer's Cabinet Press, 1870.
- Rowe, Robert H., and William P. Veillette, Amherst Historical Moments, Amherst, New Hampshire. Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall Publisher, LLC for the Historical Society of Amherst New Hampshire, 2004.
- Secomb, Daniel F., History of the Town of Amherst, Hillsborough County, NH. Concord, NH: Evans, Sleeper & Woodbury, 1983.
- Town of Amherst, NH Master Plan, 1988.
- 4 Farmstead CLG Grant

INTRODUCTION

This profile identifies and describes Amherst's many historic and cultural resources and the efforts underway to preserve, promote and enhance them. Historic and cultural resources include both physical resources (landscape features, landscapes, and archaeological sites (both historic and pre-historic), as well as non-physical resources (organizations, clubs, programs, and traditions), both of which contribute to the quality of life in the town.

Amherst has a deep and well documented history that helps define the character and identity of the community. The master plan and resulting land use actions could be sensitive to these resources and ensure they continue to distinctly define Amherst.



*Congregational Church of Amherst in Amherst Village's Historic District
Source: David Vogt Digital Media*

RECENT AND PENDING EFFORTS

Since the adoption of the 2010 Master Plan many individuals and organizations in Amherst have continued to work on documenting, protecting, and celebrating the towns historic and cultural resources. The following are recent efforts related to this work:

HISTORIC DISTRICT REGULATIONS UPDATE

Since 1991, the Amherst Historic District Regulations have been developed to support the preservation and enhancement of historical sites, buildings, landscapes, and structures, and the surrounding environment within the Amherst Village Historic District. The most recent update of these regulations and guidelines was completed and adopted in 2009. Regulation updates are being reviewed and considered in 2022.

FREEDOM'S WAY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Encompassing 45 communities in North Central Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire, Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (FWNHA) was established by Congress in 2009 to foster a close working relationship between local and regional partners, governmental agencies and the private sector to preserve the special historic identity of the region. National Heritage Areas are places that tell a rich and distinctly American story. Usually managed by a partnership of organizations and local governments with a single coordinating body, they combine resources (cultural, natural, and financial) to promote and conserve a region. To date, there are 49 National Heritage Areas within the United States.



Amherst Village Common consists of well-preserved historic structures and is part of the National Park Service's designated Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

Source: Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

AMHERST HISTORIC DISTRICT HISTORIC PRESERVATION SURVEY AND EVALUATION

This 2019 report summarizes work done for the Amherst Historic District re-evaluation that was enabled by a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (NHDHR). The purpose of this report is to create a holistic overview of the regulatory district in Amherst and also to provide a regulatory and informational document for the Historic District Commission, the Town, and residents. The Amherst Historic District is centered on the 1982 National Register Historic District. That core area is surrounded by an Expanded Local Regulatory District that was created in 1986. Together these two areas comprise the locally regulated district of [314](#)

[properties](#) overseen by the Amherst Historic District Commission. Each of these two areas is distinct in appearance and significance, although the properties are subject to the same regulations.

HERITAGE SITES AND INVENTORY MAP

The Heritage Commission created an interactive map in 2019 to share the many heritage sites that have been documented in the Heritage Resource Survey. While the 2010 Survey was used to inform the interactive map, Commissioners also added additional text and photos documenting known and newly identified heritage sites as appropriate. When additional funding is received through the current Certified Local Government grant, this interactive map will be further enhanced. An image of the interactive map can be found to the right.

STONEWALL MAPPING TOOL

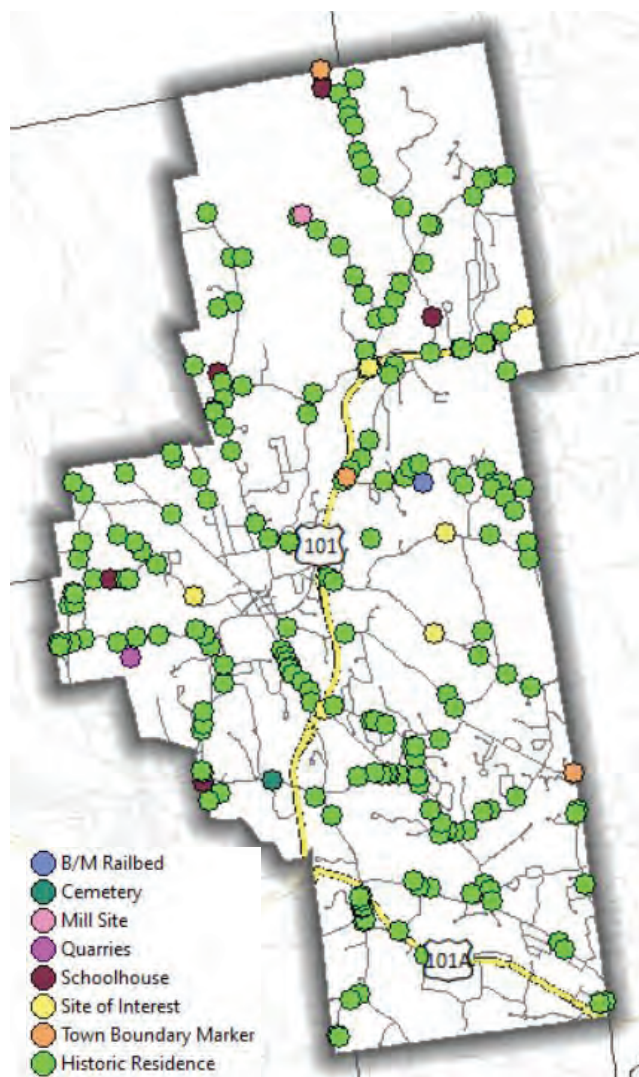
The NH Department of Historic Resources and the Department of Environmental Services have partnered with NH Granit and others to offer an interactive New Hampshire Stone Wall Mapper. The tool uses Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) images from across NH to map existing stone walls, even in areas that are completely forested. LiDAR provides a detailed map of the land surface elevations representing the “bare earth” as though treeless, rather than the aerial satellite imagery we are accustomed to.

The [NH Stone Wall Mapper](#) provides an opportunity for the public to trace stone walls right onto LiDAR images while panning and zooming across the state on their computer screens. The mapping interface has been designed to be easy to use and only requires access to a web browser and the internet. This data is “open source”, meaning the public creates the data. This data is not a stone wall inventory and does not necessarily represent exact locations of stone walls in Amherst. With that said, there are a total of 169 miles of stone walls in Amherst, most of which are found in the central and northern parts of town. 32 miles of the stone walls in Amherst are on conserved land accounting for 19% of all stone walls. A map of these stone walls can be found on the following page.

HERITAGE COMMISSION STORYMAP

This pending project is still waiting on funding from the Department of the Interior, through the NH Department of Historical Resources Certified Local Government grant. The Commission started this project in 2021 and will be completing it in 2022.

AMHERST HERITAGE PROPERTIES



HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND TRADITIONS

Amherst has several historic and/or culturally oriented organizations, and holds many cultural traditions. These are listed on the following page:

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Amherst's Historic District Commission (HDC) was founded in 1970 when the village Local Historic District was established (now a total of 238 properties; referred to hereafter as the Historic District). The Historic District Commission is comprised of five members and five alternates, all of whom are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The purpose of the Commission is to oversee the preservation of historical and cultural resources for the Town, to educate the public on matters of historical interest and to work with other Boards, Committees, and Commissions to assure responsible development within the Historic District that reflects the Town's Master Plan. Up until 1986, the HDC had no authority within the Town's zoning ordinance (but in the first 15 years or so of the district being established, not a lot of change was proposed). In 1986, an ordinance was passed that gave the HDC some authority. At the same time, a brief set of Historic District guidelines was developed. These were updated again in 2009. Information about the HDC, rules, regulations and guidelines are available on the [town's website](#).

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMHERST

The Historical Society of Amherst, NH is a private non-profit membership organization established in 1957. The Historical Society manages a collection of Amherst-related historical material and operates two museums in the Village (the Wigwam and the Chapel). The Wigwam, an 1839 brick structures located on Middle Street, is owned by the Society and houses some of its larger artifacts including the Concord Coach (which ran between Ponemah Station and Amherst Village around the turn of the 20th century), the original jailhouse door, Horace Greeley's desk, and much more.

The Chapel, built in 1858 by the Congregational Church for its winter services, is now owned by the Amherst School District and leased to the Society for a nominal amount. Its collection includes maps, photos, scrapbooks, clothing, furniture and other small artifacts, many from prominent Amherst families (such as the Melendy and David families, who operated the whip manufacturing factory). It also houses an organ that was once used there. The Society maintains a [website](#) at, and continues to grow a database of the organization's holdings. Its endeavors include a digitized historic photograph collection (available on-line), publications relating to Amherst's history, scholarships for high school

AMHERST'S STONE WALLS



students, a bi-monthly newsletter, and “Antiques on the Green,” its annual fundraiser. The Society also works cooperatively with the Amherst Town Library which contains a wealth of information on the town’s past, and continues to record oral and written histories and maintain scrapbooks of town events and citizen accomplishments.

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Established in 2002, the Heritage Commission consists of six members and up to five alternates, all of whom are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. In addition there is one ex-officio voting member each from the Board of Selectmen and the Historic District Commission. The commission’s primary role as a municipal board is to inventory the entire Town for historic and cultural resources as well as assist homeowners in preserving Amherst’s heritage. They also promote historic resources needing preservation, pursue grants, and promote Amherst’s heritage.



Amherst Town Library
Source:

Since its inception, the commission has accepted an historic corncrib from a developer (with blacksmith shop on the same property. The commission also led the effort to create an improved roadway and setting in front of the Town Hall, devising a conceptual plan, guiding it through the approval process, and securing \$200,000 in grant monies for its implementation. They’ve also received multiple grants through the state of New Hampshire’s Certified Local Governments Program for education and historic preservation.

AMHERST TOWN LIBRARY

Established in 1892 and governed by a Board of Trustees, the Amherst Town Library plays a major role in collecting, displaying, and disseminating cultural information to the town. In addition to collecting, cataloging and circulating books and periodicals, the library holds informational programs, displays the work of local and regional artists, and shares information about its historical collection, housed in the Local History Collection.

ARCHIVES ROOM OF THE AMHERST TOWN LIBRARY

The Library’s Archives Room maintains written histories of Amherst, historic resource inventory forms, the National Register of Historic Places nomination, town master plans and other studies, Amherst Annual Town Reports, Congregational Church records, cemetery surveys, oral histories, and the Howard Locke Collection of historic homes. It also offers patrons access to the Historical Society’s database software and collaborates with the society on other efforts. Teaming with the Heritage Commission, five rare documents from the Town Hall were recently digitized and preserved.

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, CAPTAIN JOSIAH CROSBY CHAPTER

This local chapter of the DAR includes members from the Towns of Milford, Mont Vernon, and Amherst.

Established in 1885, this non-profit organization has undertaken many preservation efforts during its history in Milford.

AMHERST VILLAGERS AND NIPMUG CHAPTER OF THE QUESTERS, INC.

The Questers, Inc. is a national organization dedicated to preserving the past. Amherst's local chapters are the Amherst Villagers and Nipmugs. In 2000, the Amherst Villagers created the Historic Amherst Coloring Book.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

The Southern New Hampshire branch of the AAUW is based in Amherst. This international organization provides scholarships and hosts book discussion groups for women of all ages from Amherst and surrounding towns. Members must hold a degree or associate degree from an accredited college or university.

AMHERST JUNIOR WOMEN'S CLUB

Established in the 1960s, this group of over- 21 women organizes and holds educational events in Amherst, working with the public schools. The Club also provides clothing, food and other services to community members in need.

AMHERST LIONS CLUB

This group of Amherst men and women volunteers its time to further humanitarian causes locally, nationally, and internationally. Lions is a national organization, and the Amherst club is part of District 44-N.

AMHERST DESTINATION IMAGINATION

This internationally based program teaches students from kindergarten through high school creativity through teamwork. Teams form and compete on regional, state and national levels.

AMHERST TOWN BAND

The Town Band is a group of adult and student musicians that regularly performs classical pieces, show tunes, big band pieces, marches, polkas, contemporary songs and novelties at Amherst's Memorial Day and 4th of July celebrations, August "Concerts on the Amherst Green," as well as at events outside Amherst.

SOUHEGAN VALLEY CHORUS

This community-based group of vocalists includes participants ranging from high school students to seniors. The Chorus typically performs two concerts per year in the Souhegan High School auditorium, often centered on a theme. In 2007, the Chorus chose "Pioneers and Prairies" in celebration of American western expansion, and included Red River Valley and Sunset in the concert program. Concerts are recorded, and the organization maintains a music library.



*The Amherst, NH Garden Club
Source: Amherst Garden Club*



Peabody Mill Environmental Center

Source: Town of Amherst

SOUHEGAN VALLEY WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND NEWCOMBER'S CLUB

Souhegan Valley Women's Social and Newcomers' Club is a non-profit, social group for women of the Souhegan Valley. They hold monthly social events, soirées and other functions from September through June.

AMHERST GARDEN CLUB

The Amherst Garden Club tends both public and private property and teaches its members about gardening and environmental conservation. The Club maintains several "civic" garden spaces, including the plots in front of the Town Library, Town Hall, the Wigwam, the intersection of Main and Amherst Streets, the Brick School, and at three traffic triangles: the "North Triangle" (across from the Police Station), the "122/Ponemah South Triangle," and the "Sunset Road Triangle."

PEABODY MILL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

Located on 7.5 acres at the end of Brook Road at the site of the Peabody Saw Mill (originally built in 1809), this small nature museum is part of the 600-acre Joe English Reservation. Established in 1997, the Center hosts adult, school and summer environmental education programs. Refer to the Public Facilities and Natural Resources inventories of this plan for more detailed information about the Center.

AMHERST UNIT OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF SOUHEGAN VALLEY

Based in Milford, the Boys and Girls Club of the Souhegan Valley provides leadership and enrichment programs to youth throughout the Valley. The Amherst Unit provides cooking, drama, and other programs to Amherst children.

YEARLY CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the established historical/cultural organizations, Amherst holds several annual events that contribute to the sense of tradition and quality of life in the town. Such happenings include annual parades, an Easter egg hunt, a Fourth of July celebration, "Trick-or-Treat in the Village" at Halloween, tree lighting on the Village Green at Christmas time, and veteran collaborations.

AMHERST CHURCHES

Amherst has several churches, many of which host cultural activities. The Women's Association of the Amherst Congregational Church provides an example - the group holds workshops, sponsors

craft projects and organizes fundraising events to help support efforts of the church and community of Amherst. Their annual Holiday Fair and rummage sales are well-attended Amherst events. Other churches include the First Baptist Church of Amherst, St. Luke's Anglican Church, Christ Church of Amherst, Souhegan Congregational Church, Messiah Lutheran Church, Amherst Christian Church, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Christ Covenant Reformed Church.

2021 SURVEY RESULTS

Early in 2021 the Town of Amherst conducted a survey to solicit feedback from the public that will guide the development of a master plan update. The questions related to historic and cultural resources found that many residents (40%) feel it is important to preserve the historical character of Amherst including stonewalls, cellar holes, foundations, granite mile markers, barns, town events, and celebrations. Some of these same respondents (30%) also supported the continued protection of historic resources. Some respondents (20%) also credited the historic district and historic preservation efforts as reasons for residing in Amherst. However, only 10% of survey respondents supported the establishing of additional Historic Districts or Neighborhood Heritage Areas in Amherst.

2008 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES DATA

The following information was compiled and presented in Amherst's 2008 Inventory Report that preceded the 2010 Amherst Master Plan. It has been included here for easy reference during the writing of the 2022 Master Plan.

AMHERST'S HISTORY AND INVENTORY OF EXTANT HISTORIC RESOURCES

- **PRE-HISTORICAL, CONTACT & PLANTATION PERIODS (BEFORE 1675)**

Prior to 1675, four principal groups of Algonquian-speaking native people inhabited what would become New Hampshire. The largest group, the Pennacook, was centered around the Merrimack Valley, and the Souhegan tribe centered around what would become Amherst. While little remains of their settlements, many place-names remind us that the Pennacook lived in villages and hunted and farmed the surrounding lands. New Hampshire was originally part of the northern frontier of Massachusetts, and during King Philip's War (1673-1675), the Massachusetts governor promised land to seven companies of militia in return for their service. Even though King Philip was defeated in 1675, the Narragansett land grants were not passed until the 1730s.

- **COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)**

Between 1735 and 1741 fourteen families arrived in the Souhegan Valley of Southern New Hampshire and built homesteads. One of their first tasks was to establish a burial ground and they did so in 1735 on "the high ground above Beaver Brook." The "Old Burial Ground" is believed to be the oldest public cemetery in New Hampshire. In 1739 they built a meetinghouse on the hill at the northeast corner of the village (known as Upper Flanders), 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 militia training in the center of the village and referred to it as "The Plain." In 1742, New Hampshire was officially separated from Massachusetts, and in 1760, Amherst Village incorporated as the Town of Amherst. (Prior to that time, it was called Souhegan West, for the river that meandered through the township.)

In 1770 Amherst was chosen as the shire town of Hillsborough County, making it 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. Amherst was the transportation hub for inland New Hampshire, 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). Extant historic resources from the Colonial Period include the Hildreth- Jones Tavern (c. 1750), Hobson- Chickering Place (c. 1750), Old Burial Ground, Common, Congregational Church (Second Meetinghouse), and the Boston Post Road itself.

- **FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)**

At the time of the Revolution, Amherst was the largest, most prosperous and most significant inland town west of the Merrimack River in New Hampshire. It housed the first area bank – the Hillsborough Bank (1806) and was home to the area’s principal newspaper, the Village Messenger, established in 1798. It became the Farmer’s Cabinet in 1804 (while it moved to Milford in 1891, it continued to be produced as the Milford Cabinet. In 1982 it was still being published and at that time was believed to be the oldest newspaper in the US in continuous publication by the same family. In 2005 it was sold to Independent Publications, Inc.) Amherst continued as the center of law courts in southern New Hampshire, and many notable politicians and government officials participated in court activities within the town. Prominent among these officials 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 three corn mills, five sawmills, one mill for dressing cloth, four trading stores, three cotton and wool manufactories, and one 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, granddaughter of Colonel Robert Means, at the Means House on the corner of Pierce Lane and Court House Road.

Accompanying the growth of civic and commercial activity in Amherst during the Federal Period was a surge in building construction. Many of the extant houses in the Village were built, reflecting Georgian (Robert Means House-1785; Stewart House- 1790; Stewart-Spalding House-c. 1750; Isaac Brooks House-1800; Hildreth- Jones Tavern-1750), and Federal (Moses Hills House-1815; Samuel Vose House--1820; Farmers Bank Building- 1806) styles. Many buildings were moved during the period (as many as 40% in the village were moved from their original sites), as at that time, labor was far less expensive than materials, and moving a house cost much less than constructing a new one. In 1825, the Third County Courthouse was built adjacent to the Old Burial Ground. It would later become the Town Hall.

By 1827 the Old Burial Ground had grown to capacity. The town purchased land on Foundry Street to establish a new public burial ground called Meadowview Cemetery. Developed in the garden cemetery style, Meadowview continues to serve as the town’s principal burial place today.

In 1828, the separation of the church from the town took place, and in 1832 the Congregational Church and Society was organized, buying the church property from the town, the terms of sale being: “1st The Town to reserve the right to use the house for all Town Meetings as long as they may wish to use it for the purpose – 2nd The Town to reserve the Bell, Clocks and Belfry or Tower as the property of the Town – the purchaser to have the right to pass and re-pass through the west doors as now used – Also the right to ring the Bell for funerals, public worship and other public occasions without expense to the Town,” etc. The building was removed to its present site and

many changes made within. Services of re- dedication were held in 1836.

- **EARLY INDUSTRIAL, LATE INDUSTRIAL AND EARLY MODERN PERIODS (1830-1915)**

1830-1915 was a quiet period for Amherst. Up until the Civil War, the town had supported small mill and agricultural operations, but with the opening of the west to farming, the building of railroads along major river corridors, and the development of new, large industrial cities (such as Manchester and Nashua), Amherst's commercial activity declined. The Industrial Revolution essentially bypassed the town. By 1864, the county court, jail and records had been removed from Amherst and relocated in the larger industrial cities, though the court continued to hold sessions here periodically through 1879. Amherst's population remained sparse, and began dropping into the early 1900s. By 1920, Amherst had only 868 residents.

Despite its declining influence on regional government and commerce, Amherst's community resources endured. A number of community and civic organizations were active, such as the Souhegan Grange, the Amherst Lyceum, and the King's Daughters. In 1892 the Amherst Town Library opened to the public. Collections of books had been gathered up to that time by several individuals and private organizations, but the opening of the town library building allowed those collections to be housed under one roof and made accessible to the public.

Also in the late 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. The most prominent inn was the Hotel Ponemah (1884-1921), located on 40 acres near Ponemah Springs. Several examples of Greek Revival architecture from the early part of this period remain in Amherst. Among these are several vernacular structures, as well as the homes of Dr. Pettingill (c. 1840) and Joseph Vaughan (before 1840), the Congregational Church Parsonage (1846), and the Amherst Brick School (1854). The Town Library (1892) reflects the eclectic turn-of-the-century style.

- **MODERN PERIOD (1930-2010)**

In the 1950s, migration away from cities began, and the 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 its Local Historic District and in so doing, preserved one of its most valuable assets, Amherst Village. Today, Amherst is one of New Hampshire's most desirable places to live, and much of this desirability stems from its many rich historic and cultural



Amherst's historic town center, which is a designated Freedom's Way National Heritage Area
Source: Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION EFFORTS TO DATE

The following timeline of Amherst's preservation activities was developed from resources at the Town Library's Archives Room, the Town's website, information offered at visioning workshops, a presentation to the Amherst Questers, and interviews with individuals interested in historic and cultural resource protection in Amherst.

- c. 1740: Amherst established the "The Plain," a large open space at the center of their village. From the 1770s through the early 1800s, it held the meetinghouse. When the meetinghouse was moved in the early 1800s, "The Plain" became the first designated open space and later became known as the "Big Common," and "Village Green."
- 1892: The Town Library officially opened.
- 1920: Local electrician Howard Locke took histories from older town residents and compiled an inventory/story of many houses in town. Housed at the Amherst Library, this collection includes reference maps and loose leaf notebooks, and is known as the Howard Locke Collection.
- 1957: The Historical Society of Amherst was established.
- 1962: Amherst completed its first Master Plan.
- 1960s: The Amherst Junior Women's Club was formed.
- 1970: The town created a 171-property Historic District in the village; planning for the Amherst Garden Club began, with the organization incorporating in 1973.
- 1975: Charles L. Bacon compiled an alphabetical listing of the gravestone inscriptions in the Old Cemetery behind Town Hall.
- c. 1980: Amherst began teaching local history in the third grades.
- 1982: The Historic District was designated a National Register District.
- 1986: The town passed an ordinance permitting the HDC to oversee changes within the Historic District; and expanding the Historic District to 238 properties.
- 1988: The town completed an update of the 1962 Master Plan. While historic and cultural resources were not addressed in the plan as a separate element, they were included in environmental resources. Recommendations pertaining to historic/cultural resources included the following:
 - Amherst's historic character should be immediately identifiable upon entering the town. To accomplish this, the town could act on the following: extend the Historic District to include three specific approaches: (1) along Amherst Street and Manchester Road to Route 101; (2) along the Boston Post Road to Route 101; and (3) along Amherst Street to the Milford Town Line (with the possible inclusion of one property in Milford).

- 1992: Souhegan High School was built including space for cultural activities
- 1998: A survey of the stones in the Cricket Corner Cemetery was completed. This report, prepared by Jackie Marshall, includes each stone listed with a number. The survey does not include a map.
- 1997: The Peabody Mill Environmental Center was purchased by the Town.
- 1999: The town appropriated \$30,000 to restore the Town Steeple atop the Congregational Church.
- 2000: The Town appropriated an additional \$200,000 to repair the steeple, and the town amended the Historic District guidelines.
- 2002: The Town created the Heritage Commission.
- 2003: Work began on an extensive renovation and preservation of the Town Hall.
- 2004: The town celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Brick School. The Amherst Heritage Commission oversaw the restoration of the Corn Crib on Baboosic Lake Road.
- 2005: The Boys and Girls Club of the Souhegan Valley was formed.
- 2007: New granite curbing was installed in front of the Old Burial Ground to protect the tombs.

RECENT INITIATIVES

Since 2009, the following Historic and Cultural Resources have been able to further enhance preservation activities, education and cultural events. The following are a brief snapshot of these activities and events:

- The Heritage Commission completed the town-wide survey of historic resources. Data collection started in the spring of 2009 and was completed in December 2009. Over 350 new historic resources have been identified in the town-wide survey. Federal funds for the project have been secured through the New Hampshire Department of Historic Resources. The Historic Resource Survey will be forwarded to the Amherst Planning Board and be part of the town's master plan.
- Coordinated the activities with over 60 individual town organizations and offices working together for Amherst's 250th Anniversary Celebration (1760-2010) in 2010. The year long celebration was kicked off with the lighting of the celebration tree and a special opening ceremony event at the Congregational Church on 17 January 2010. The celebration continued all year long with organizations planning and executing their own activities celebrating the 250th anniversary. The celebration was capped with a three-day Heritage Days event on 24-25-26 September 2010. The village green was open for activities during the event, with hundreds of happy faces participating. The closing ceremony took place on 17 January 2011 with the Board of Selectmen and the 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee Chair, Carolyn Quinn, giving sincere thanks and appreciation for all of our town residents who participated during the year. The celebration tree lights were extinguished by 15 of our town's youths, thus bringing a close to the celebration.
- Coordinated the activities with the Heritage Commission, the Historical Society of Amherst, and the Amherst Garden Club in the restoration of the Village Water Trough near the Town Hall. The

Historical Society of Amherst has generously donated funds to cover the restoration from proceeds and donations from their activities during the 250th Anniversary celebration.

- Drafted a Demolition Review Policy for structures of historic value within the town of Amherst. Submitted a petition warrant article with 47 signatures to the Board of Selectmen. The Demolition Review Policy was on the ballot at the March 2012 town meeting. Unfortunately, the Demolition Review policy was not approved by the town vote. The Demolition Delay policy is in line with the Amherst Master Plan in an effort to maintaining the rural character of the town.
- Worked in conjunction with the Conservation Commission in clearing land for a potential agricultural farm interpretive-education center at the existing Corn Crib land on Baboosic Lake Road.
- The Heritage Commission conducted a training session in April 2014 on Graphical Interface System (GIS) mapping techniques. The training was conducted by Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) with over 30 people in attendance.
- In June 2014, sponsored a hands on archaeological training session at three key Amherst dig sites. The training was provided by New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (NHDHR) Archaeological Branch with two expert staff members. The training provided will prepare the Heritage Commission to properly document and account for future site recordings. Over 20 people were in attendance for the one day training event.
- In 2014, the Heritage Commission received a grant from NHDHR to survey and document four farmsteads in the town. The research grant is intended to provide education and understanding of rural farm life in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The grant ran through the end of September 2015. On 10 September 2015, a public session was conducted to brief the results of the grant, with 35 people in attendance. The results concluded that of the four farmsteads, three are eligible for National Register of Historic Places recognition and one farmstead is eligible for State Register of Historic Places.
- The Heritage Commission was awarded a small grant from the Bertha Roger's Trust Fund for the Town Hall Vault project. The goal is to properly inventory, catalogue, store and identify documents in need of future preservation and digitization activity. The grant will run through 2017 with a public meeting scheduled in the future to summarize the results of the project.
- The Heritage Commission sponsored, with support from the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, several events during the year- a snow shoeing/hiking event at PMEC/ Joe English Reservation



Heritage Commission and Conservation Commission members jointly clearing land on Baboosic Lake Road (October 2013)

Source: William Ludt, Chair of the Amherst Heritage Commission (2021)

as part of a joint “Connecting Communities” program on 29 January 2017 and the “Hidden Treasures” events at Lindabury Orchard and Village Walking tours in May 2017.

- Conducted two educational site visits to Amherst historical sites. 1) Climbed up to the town owned steeple at the Congregational Church on 13 April 2017 and 2) visited the Luther and Lucinda Melendy historical site on 8 June 2017. Luther and Lucinda Melendy were well know abolitionist in the mid-19th century who resided in Amherst. Both are buried at the Meadowview Cemetery.
- Completed a Moose Plate License grant from the New Hampshire State Library, a Division of the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, for conserving, digitizing and microfilming five archive documents from the town vault and the Amherst Town Library. The digitized documents can be reviewed under the Heritage Commission web page, under the pull down tab “Amherst Heritage Commission Moose Plate Grant”.
- The Heritage Commission was tasked by the Board of Selectmen to develop a Metal Detecting Guidance Policy for their consideration. The policy will cover all publicly owned land property within Amherst.
- Brick School Front Porch Window: The Heritage Commission, with a donation of funds from the Villagers Chapter of Questers, repaired and preserved the front porch window of the Brick School. Ongoing efforts to complete the Foyer Project continue.
- On Site Visit to the Patch Hill Quarries: In June 2019, the Heritage Commission attended a lecture and tour of the Patch Hill stone quarry, off of Lyndeborough Road, given by James Gage of StoneStructures.org. The tour and presentation was the first “Beyond the Common” video for the Heritage Commission filmed by Joe Cummings.
- Completed an Assessment of the Cooperage near the Corn Crib. An assessment study of the stability and historic significance of the Cooperage was performed by Robert Adam Preservation Services of Shirley, MA. After the study, the Heritage Commission voted unanimously to undertake a two year project of fund raising and preservation of the structure.
- 100th Anniversary Celebration of Women’s Suffrage. The colors, purple and gold, of the American women’s suffrage movement, shown high on August 26, 2020 for the Women’s Suffrage Centennial



*Historic marker at Melendy Farmstead
Source: William Ludt, Chair of the Amherst Heritage Commission (2021)*



*Granite foundation at the Melendy Farmstead
Source: William Ludt, Chair of the Amherst Heritage Commission (2021)*

Commission's nationwide Forward Into Light campaign, named in honor of the historic suffrage slogan, "Forward through the Darkness, Forward into Light".

- Supervisor of the Checklist Voter Register-October 1920 Found. The commission compiled a List of Amherst Eligible Women Voters in the 1920 Presidential Election. Research and documentation was found at the NH Archives in Concord, NH that identified 131 Amherst women, which represented 35% of Amherst voters, who were eligible to vote for the first time in the 1920 Presidential election.
- Coordinated efforts to have a Black History Month Hike to the Melendy Farm foundation in Jan-Feb 2021: The event will be held in February 2021 with a hike starting in the New Boston AFS grounds, heading to the Melendy Farm.
- The Amherst Library conducted two Town Hall Burying Ground tours in 2021.



Forward into Light Celebration at the Town Hall (August 2020)

Source: William Ludt, Chair of the Amherst Heritage Commission (2021)

AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Natural Resources Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- For many natural resource analyses, Amherst is average relative to its neighboring towns. This puts Amherst in a unique position of determining which direction it will go in the future. The data includes:
 - 19% of Amherst is conserved.
 - 59% of Amherst is forested, of which 24% is conserved.
 - 31% of all of Amherst's Ranked Habitat is conserved. Ranked habitats show where habitats in the best ecological condition in the state are located, based on biodiversity, arrangement of habitat types on the landscape, and lack of human impacts.
 - 42% of Amherst's Tier 1 Habitat - the highest ranked habitat in the state - is conserved.
- The composition of natural resources across Amherst has a distinct spatial pattern – there are more natural resources identified in the northern part of town and development activity increases as you go further south.
- The amount of surface area in natural habitat within Amherst is substantial – 75%. This includes common forest types such as Appalachian oak-pine, and more rare habitat types including grasslands, shrub wetlands, peatlands, and temperate swamps.
- There are significant unfragmented blocks in Amherst, which are areas in town 500-feet away from all existing roads and developed lands.¹ The larger unfragmented blocks contain more common, but still important habitats, while the smaller unfragmented blocks contain the rarer habitat types. Larger unfragmented blocks are generally found in the northern part of town and get progressively smaller as they go south.

DATA SOURCES

- NH GRANIT, Conservation/Public Lands
- NH Wildlife Action Plan
- Conservation Plan for Amherst, NH, October 2019
- March 9, 2021 Land Conservation Warrant Article
- Soil Survey of Hillsborough County, Eastern Part
- 2010 Amherst Master Plan Inventory

¹ Unfragmented blocks are defined in greater detail on page 6.

INTRODUCTION

Balancing development pressures with available open space and maintaining natural resources can be challenging. Often, natural resources and economic development are seen as competing forces causing challenging conversations and planning decisions. Amherst's natural resources reflect the balance the town has struck thus far between these two land uses and play out spatially in town – north to south – and relative to neighboring towns. Rivers, streams, grasslands, soils, aquifers and nearly all natural resources have their own demarcation methods that do not fit within municipal boundaries, and there is value in exploring what's happening both within Amherst's boundaries and beyond its boundaries into neighboring towns.

CONSERVED LANDS

In this document, conserved lands are defined as "acres that are mostly undeveloped and are protected from future development." Based on the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, 91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that expanding conservation areas is the second highest natural resource priority (behind aquifer protection). It's clear the Town and its residents place a high priority on conservation.

The Town of Amherst has a total of 4,163 acres of conserved land amounting to 19% of the town's area. Relative to its surrounding towns, Amherst's total of 19% conserved land is almost exactly average. Ranging from 11% in Bedford to 28% in Hollis, Amherst is near the median of all neighboring towns (average being 20%).

When we look at the ownership of conserved lands in Amherst, we find that out of the total of 4,163 acres of conserved land, 65% is owned by the Town of Amherst, 18% is owned by the US Government (Department of Defense), 1% by abutting municipalities, and the remaining 16% by many public and private agencies including the Amherst Land Trust.

Towns	Total Acreage	Conserved Acres	Percent Conserved
Bedford	21,156	2,259	11%
Milford	16,299	2,760	17%
Merrimack	21,412	4,008	19%
Amherst	22,025	4,163	19%
Mont Vernon	10,820	2,495	23%
New Boston	27,654	6,842	25%
Hollis	20,668	5,863	28%

Towns	Total Acreage	Total Conserved Acres	Conserved Acres Owned by Town	Percent Conserved By Town
New Boston	27,654	6,842	1,163	17%
Hollis	20,668	5,863	2,271	39%
Mont Vernon	10,820	2,495	1,393	56%
Bedford	21,156	2,259	1,329	59%
Amherst	22,025	4,163	2,695	65%
Milford	16,299	2,760	1,894	69%
Merrimack	21,412	4,008	2,807	70%

AMHERST CONSERVATION PRIORITIES MAP



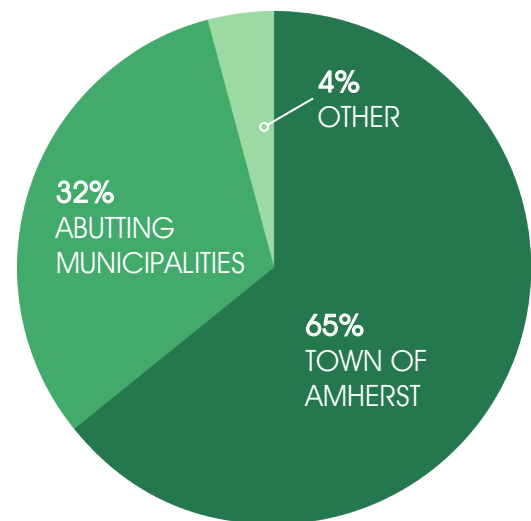
When we look at the ownership of conserved lands in Amherst we find that of the total 4,163 acres of conserved land, 65% is owned by the Town of Amherst, 32% by abutting municipalities, and the remainder by many other public and private agencies, including the Amherst Land Trust. Putting those numbers in context to Amherst's neighboring towns, Amherst's 65% owned conserved lands is above average. A good comparison is the Town of Hollis – although they have the highest percentage of conserved land relative to abutting towns at 28%, only 39% of those lands are owned by the Town of Hollis. Comparatively, Amherst has 19% conserved lands with 65% of those acres being owned by the Town of Amherst.

What this shows is Amherst has an active and engaged conservation mindset and the town and its residents are willing to invest in these types of resources. Related to this commitment, Amherst recently passed a warrant article on March 9, 2021, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000,000 to purchase land and easements or other property interests within the Town of Amherst for conservation purposes.

The 2019 Conservation Plan prepared by the Amherst Conservation Commission identified several major zones of priority for conservation and provides explanations for how they were prioritized: (1) North Amherst, (2) Pond Parish and Grater Woods, (3) Southern Hydrologic Zone.

Additionally, the plan identified other locations of priority that include, but are not limited to: (1) The Great Meadow, (2) Lindabury Orchard, (3) Managed grasslands. This master planning process will help refine these priorities to

OWNERSHIP OF CONSERVED LANDS



Owner	Acres	Percent of Conserved Lands in Amherst	Owner Class	Percentage of Conserved Lands by Class
Amherst	2,695	65%	Town of Amherst	65%
Bedford	747	18%	Abutting Towns	32%
Merrimack	354	9%		
Milford	136	3%		
Mont Vernon	76	2%		
US Dept. of Defense	55	1%	Other	4%
US Air Force		1%		
NH Dept. of Resources and Economic Dev.	46	0%		
Amherst Village District	21	0%		
Amherst Land Trust	16	0%		
Audubon Society of NH	12	0%		
Bedford Land Trust	3	0%		
Society for the Protection of NH Forests	1	0%		
Other (property management companies, homeowners associations, etc.)	0.5	0%		
Total	4,163	100%		100%
Percent Conserved		19%		

further focus conservation efforts in Amherst.

Ideally, the material covered in this document will offer many items for the Town and Conservation Commission to consider when actively pursuing the purchase of fee owned lands or securing conservation easements especially with the passing of the March 9, 2021 warrant article.

Table 3: Abutting Towns - Forested Land					
Towns	Total Acreage	Acreage of Forested Land	Percentage of Town	Conserved Acres	Forested Percent Conserved
Merrimack	21,412	9,712	45%	2,742	28%
Bedford	21,156	10,305	49%	1,448	14%
Milford	16,299	9,475	58%	1,982	21%
Amherst	22,025	13,006	59%	3,153	24%
Hollis	20,668	15,525	61%	2,901	23%
New Boston	27,654	20,214	73%	5,261	26%
Mont Vernon	10,820	7,912	73%	1,936	24%
AVERAGE		83,158	60%	19,423	23%

LAND COVER – FORESTED LAND

This section is based on the National Land Cover Database (NLCD) 2016 and is used to understand the amount of forested lands in Amherst. Although the NLCD resolution is 30m x30m, it can provide a helpful overview at the municipal scale. Amherst is 59% forested, which is combined deciduous, evergreen, and mixed forests. A total of 3,153 acres of forested land in Amherst has been conserved, which accounts for nearly one quarter (24%) of the forested land in the community. The spatial makeup of forested lands in Amherst is worth noting - most forested lands exist in the northern two-thirds of town with limited forested land in the southern third. Most of the conserved forested land lies in the northern third of town.

When compared to neighboring towns, Amherst has an average amount of forested land of 59%. The percentage of forested lands in abutting towns ranges from 45% in Merrimack to 73% in Mont Vernon with an average of 60%. When it comes to conserved forested lands, we again see Amherst is almost exactly average at 24% versus the average of 23%.

WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN – HABITAT TYPES & RANKED HABITATS

The NH Fish & Game Department, along with many partners across the state, updated the Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) in 2020. The WAP includes two sets of data:

1. Habitat land cover – shows where the different types of wildlife habitat are located throughout the state; and
2. Highest ranked habitat by ecological condition – shows where habitats in the best ecological condition in the state are located, based on biodiversity, arrangement of habitat types on the landscape, and lack of human impacts.

HABITAT TYPES

Appalachian oak-pine is most common in Amherst in 36% of the town, of which 19% has been conserved. This habitat type is common below 900' elevation in the southern part of the state and is known for a diverse age and vegetative structure promoting wildlife diversity. Because of their

expansiveness, many large wildlife species depend on this habitat for part or all of their life cycle including black bears.

- *Threat* – Intense development has fragmented the forest type and reduced the prevalence of naturally occurring fires, which routinely change the age and structure of the forest.
- **Action** – Incorporate habitat conservation into land use planning, prioritizing protection of unfragmented blocks, and encouraging sustainable forestry practices.

The second largest habitat type is Hemlock-hardwood-pine which covers 21% of Amherst and happens to be the most common forest type in New Hampshire covering nearly 50% of the state. These forests are dominated by hemlock, white pine, beech, and oak trees and have a highly variable composition considering their ability to occur on different elevations, soil types, and topography. In Amherst 37%

of these forests are conserved and, when conserved in large unfragmented blocks, can provide important habitat for some of New Hampshire's largest fauna including black bear and bobcat.

- *Threat* – Development and fragmentation. Additionally, because these forests are so common, they are often overlooked for conservation efforts, which is a threat.
- **Action** – Incorporate habitat conservation into local land use planning, protecting unfragmented blocks of land, and educating homeowners.

Grasslands make up 1,345 acres in town, which is 6% of the total land area, and 9% of all grasslands in Amherst are conserved. Considering only 8% of grasslands in New Hampshire are currently under conservation easements (<https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/habitat/types.html>), Amherst is slightly above the state average. Comprised of grasses, sedges, and wildflowers, grassland communities provide ideal habitat for state endangered and threatened species of wildlife including the eastern hognose snake and northern harrier. Grasslands have been considered important habitat in Amherst

Towns	Total WAP Acres	Total Percent of Town	Total WAP Conserved Acres	Total WAP Percent Conserved
Bedford	4,956	23%	1,470	30%
Milford	8,500	52%	2,151	25%
Merrimack	8,581	40%	2,796	33%
Amherst	10,852	49%	3,385	31%
Mont Vernon	7,567	70%	2,145	28%
New Boston	22,783	82%	6,324	28%
Hollis	12,360	60%	4,612	37%
RANGE		23-82%		25-37%
AVERAGE	10,800	54%	3,269	30%

Towns	Total Acreage	Tier 1 Acres	Percent Tier 1 in Town	Tier 1 Conserved Acres	Tier 1 Percent Conserved
Bedford	21,156	906	4%	447	49%
Milford	16,299	2,958	18%	1,003	34%
Merrimack	21,412	1,358	6%	553	41%
Amherst	22,025	3,381	15%	1,431	42%
Mont Vernon	10,820	2,383	22%	1,170	49%
New Boston	27,654	9,443	34%	3,423	36%
Hollis	20,668	4,637	22%	2,112	46%
RANGE			4-34%		34-39%
AVERAGE		3,581	18%	1,448	42%

and were cited as part of the conservation priorities from the 2019 Conservation Plan developed by the Amherst Conservation Commission.

- *Threat* – Development and natural forest succession.
- **Action** – Reclaiming and maintaining grasslands on private land.

Several rarer habitat types are found in Amherst including the following:

- **WET MEADOWS/SHRUBLANDS**, which are often grouped into three broad habitat categories: wet meadows, emergent marshes, and scrub-shrub wetlands. These habitats are important for flood management, are typically controlled by groundwater, and are vital food sources for many threatened and endangered wildlife species. In Amherst, there are 1,262 acres of wet meadows/shrublands accounting for 6% of the towns area, of which 31% has been conserved.

- *Threat* – Development mostly from driveways and roads that change the flow of water across wetland systems and the influx of invasive plant species like purple loosestrife and Japanese knotweed.
- **Action** – Restoration and conservation mostly from private landowners.

- **PEATLANDS**, which the state has determined are of extreme importance for carbon sequestration and vital to many rare plants and wildlife species that depend on them. This habitat type makes up 2% of Amherst's area – 372 acres – and 35% has been conserved.
 - *Threat* – Development, altered hydrology, unsustainable forestry practices, and intrusion of non-point source pollutants including road salt and lawn fertilizers are the threats to peatlands.
 - **Action** – Establish vegetated buffers around this habitat to minimize threats.

- **TEMPERATE SWAMPS**, contain four Atlantic white cedar communities in New Hampshire and

Towns	Total Acreage	Tier 2 Acres	Percent Tier 2 in Town	Tier 2 Conserved Acres	Tier 2 Percent Conserved
Bedford	21,156	1,526	7%	515	34%
Milford	16,299	3,655	22%	788	22%
Merrimack	21,412	4,030	19%	1,222	30%
Amherst	22,025	4,219	19%	1,222	30%
Mont Vernon	10,820	2,606	24%	529	20%
New Boston	27,654	7,811	28%	1,916	25%
Hollis	20,668	4,783	23%	1,781	37%
RANGE			7-28%		20-37%
AVERAGE		4,090	20%	1,156	29%

Towns	Total Acreage	Tier 3 Acres	Percent Tier 3 in Town	Tier 3 Conserved Acres	Tier 3 Percent Conserved
Bedford	21,156	2,524	12%	508	20%
Milford	16,299	1,887	12%	360	19%
Merrimack	21,412	3,193	15%	1,021	32%
Amherst	22,025	3,252	15%	610	19%
Mont Vernon	10,820	2,578	24%	446	17%
New Boston	27,654	5,529	20%	985	18%
Hollis	20,668	2,940	14%	719	24%
RANGE			12-24%		17-32%
AVERAGE		3,129	16%	664	21%

pitch pine-heath swamps, which are rare and typically associated with Pine Barrens. Additionally, hemlock is common in temperate swamps throughout New Hampshire. In Amherst there are 327 acres (1% of the towns area) and 13% have been conserved.

- **Threat** – habitat degradation from invasive wildlife species including hemlock wooly adelgid, and the increased presence of pollutants from fertilizers, insecticides, and general sedimentation.
- **Action** – support the Division of Forests and Lands in the implementation of the hemlock woolly adelgid action plan and working with foresters to use Best Management Practices outlined in the document ‘Good Forestry in the Granite State’.

(Note: The 2019 Conservation Plan has a similar habitat type percentage breakdown for Amherst that is based on the 2015 Wildlife Action Plan and should not be compared to numbers outlined in the 2021 Master Plan Update, which are based on the 2020 Wildlife Action Plan. Procedures and protocols changed in the 2020 data update, which is one factor for the change in habitat type calculations.)

Ranked habitats were also examined relative to neighboring towns. For Tier 1 habitats, those that are highest ranked in New Hampshire, Amherst has just below the average amount of land, however 42% of those Tier 1 habitats have been conserved, which also is the average among abutting towns. For Tier 2 habitats (lands that are highest ranked in the biological region), Amherst has exactly the average amount relative to abutting towns. 32% of those Tier 2 habitats have been conserved, which is just above average compared to neighboring communities. For Tier 3 habitats, known as supporting landscapes, Amherst has an average amount relative to its neighbors, and 19% has been conserved (which is also close to the average). Looking at the total amounts across all tiered habitats, 31% of Amherst’s ranked habitats are conserved, which is also almost exactly average.

Block Size	Number of Blocks	Total Acreage	Percent of Town	Conserved Acreage	Percent Conserved
100-200	11	1,531	7%	489	32%
200-300	0	-			
300-400	1	334	2%	71	79%
400-500	0	-			
500-1000	1	768	3%	444	42%
1000-2000	0	-			
2000+	1	2,271	10%	1,515	33%
TOTAL		4,904	22%	2,519	49%

UNFRAGMENTED BLOCKS

For this study, unfragmented blocks were identified by using a multi-step process. First, 500-foot buffers were created around all existing roads (DOT) and developed lands (NLCD). Second, areas beyond the 500-foot buffer were identified and categorized into classifications based on the acreage of the patch of land. The 2010 Amherst Master Plan Inventory points to a scientific literature review showing “that habitat patches of 55 hectares (137.5 acres) may meet the needs of 75% of birds, mammals, fishes, invertebrates, and plants.” It was with this in mind that, lastly, areas smaller than 100-acres were removed from the list to identify the largest and potentially most viable unfragmented blocks.

Unfragmented blocks larger than 100-acres make up nearly one quarter (22%) of the land in Amherst. Of the 4,904 acres of unfragmented blocks, 49% of them have been conserved. When block size

classifications are examined further, 32% of the smallest blocks have been conserved compared to 75% of the largest blocks (see table titled “Unfragmented Blocks”). The spatial makeup of unfragmented blocks in Amherst is worth noting – the largest unfragmented blocks are in the northern third of town, several small to medium blocks occur in the middle third of town, and one small block exists in the southern third of town. When habitat type from the Wildlife Action Plan is examined within the unfragmented blocks, some interesting patterns form. Block size 100-200 acres contain the most diverse habitat types including substantial amounts of rarer habitats including 5% of grasslands, 21% of peatlands, 34% rocky ridges, 7% temperate swamps, and 9% wet meadow/shrub wetlands. Conversely, the largest block size 2,000+ acres contains smaller percentages of each of those rare habitat types. It does, however, contain 33% of hemlock-hardwood-pine habitat.

Point of conversation

When considering block size classifications, it's better to look at percent not conserved to get a sense of where to focus conservation efforts. Currently, 68% of small blocks are not conserved versus only 33% of the largest block is not conserved. What should be the focus? Amherst needs to decide on expanding existing large block conservation or focusing on the protection of more, smaller blocks.

CONSERVATION TAKEAWAYS

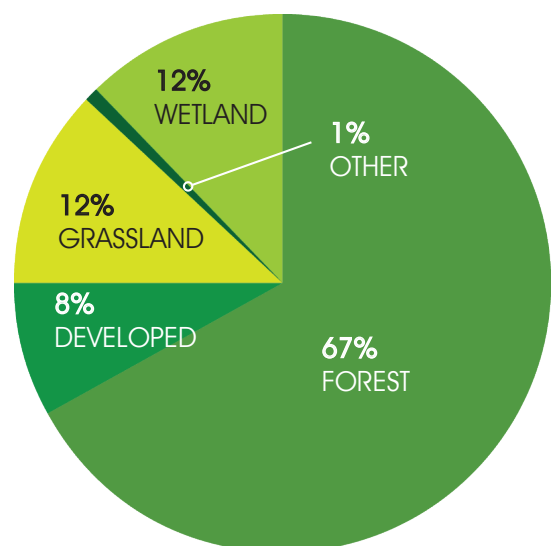
- If looking to conserve the rarer habitats, focus could be on smaller unfragmented blocks.
- If looking to conserve more common but also important habitats, focus could be on the largest unfragmented block size.
- This also provides the opportunity to target specific unfragmented blocks for conservation based on specific habitat type priorities. For example, if the town wants to conserve peatlands, they can identify the unfragmented block(s) with the largest amount of peatland and focus efforts there.

AGRICULTURE & AGRICULTURAL SOILS

The 2008 Master Plan Inventory Report provides an explanation of the important role agriculture has played in Amherst and the challenge of knowing exactly how much active farmland exists in town. With that in mind, an exploration of agricultural land use and habitat type was conducted to get a sense of what land cover exists on lands that have been identified for agricultural viability.

Habitat Type	Acres	Percentage
Appalachian Oak Pine	482	42%
Hemlock Hardwood Pine	295	25%
Floodplain Forest	1	0%
Developed Impervious	13	1%
Developed or Barren Land	81	7%
Grassland	135	12%
Open Water	7	1%
Peatland	8	1%
Rocky Ridge	0	0%
Sand/Gravel	0	0%
Temperate Swamp	60	5%
Wet Meadow/Shrub Wetland	76	7%
TOTAL	1,158	100%

HABITAT TYPE ON EXISTING AGRICULTURAL LAND



Currently, there are 1,158 acres of existing agricultural land use in town. However, it is important to recognize that although these areas are considered agricultural use, they may not necessarily be in active agricultural production. Case in point, two-thirds (67%) of these agricultural lands are forested. Beyond that, 12% is wetland, 12% is grassland, 8% is developed, and 1% is made up of other land cover types. So, despite there being 1,158 acres of agricultural land use in town, the amount of active agricultural production is likely substantially lower.

Agricultural soils are separated into two primary groups – prime farmland soils and farmland soils of state and local importance. Prime farmland soils, including prime farmland soils if drained and if protected from flooding, account for 4% of Amherst’s area, of which 10% has been conserved. When forested lands (NLCD) are included, 34% of prime farmland soils are either conserved or forested, which provides a better understanding of the state of the soil classification. Farmland soils of state and local importance make up 41% of the Town’s area with 17% of them being conserved. When forested lands (NLCD) are included, 69% of farmland soils of state and local importance are either conserved or forested.

It’s important to note that land cover categorized as “agricultural lands” does not necessarily mean that it’s in active agricultural production. **The Town may want to work with NRCS to determine what lands in Town are in current agricultural production and map its distribution across town.**

GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY, AND SOILS

The 2010 Master Plan’s Natural Resources Inventory includes comprehensive information about the geologic landscape of Amherst. These features have not changed significantly since 2010, so this important information is summarized and compiled below.

SURFICIAL GEOLOGY

Considering geology moves at large temporal scales, there likely have been no geologic changes since the previous inventory. The 2010 Amherst Master Plan Inventory explains surficial geology as the underlying basis for both natural systems and human development and provides important information about an area’s environmental and economic potentials and vulnerabilities.

The glaciers that covered New England more than 12,000 years ago left their mark on Amherst. The advance of the mile-thick layer of ice scraped some hills down to bedrock and its retreat left deposits of till, a mixture of stones, clay, and other material. Glacial till tends to have moderately or poorly drained soils with many stones and rocks. Areas of sand and gravel, which were deposited as outwash as the glaciers melted and retreated, lie between most of these till deposits and areas of bedrock. Floodplain alluvium deposits settled out onto flat areas or wetlands, like areas along the Souhegan River, after the glaciers retreated. These low-lying, water-borne deposits are generally not suitable for development. Because of the town’s glacial legacy, many of the soils in Amherst tend to be poorly drained or rocky with the exception of those soils that developed over the sand and gravel and some till deposits.

TOPOGRAPHY AND SLOPE

Topography and slope are intertwined with surficial geology and likely have not changed. The 2010 Amherst Master Plan Inventory explains topography as the general form of the land surface. Elevation and slope are the two major components of topography. Elevation is the measure of the height of

a given point of land relative to mean sea level. Slope is a measure of the pitch or steepness of land between two points.

Amherst has a maximum elevation of about 860 feet above mean sea level on Chestnut Hill at the New Boston/Amherst line. The lowest point is about 200 feet on the Souhegan River as it flows into Merrimack. Elevations of 300 - 500 feet above mean sea level are more common throughout the town. In general, slopes are gentle to moderate and provide interest by offering views and variety in the landscape. The southern and central sections of town are generally low and flat with an extensive floodplain along the Souhegan River. Slopes tend to be a bit steeper in the northern and eastern parts of town.

Slope is one of the limiting factors for development. Increases in slope generally result in more difficulty and costs for development. Slopes from 0% to 3% are usually associated with wetlands and are not well drained. Areas with slopes from 3% to 8% and favorable soils are generally ideal for development. Construction on slopes from 8% to 15% will require extra care to provide proper drainage and soil stabilization. Slopes over 15% (about 15% of the town's total area) provide significant limitation to many types of development but usually none that can't be overcome. The Amherst bylaws exclude land over 20% from computations of minimum lot size. Topography and slope also have major influences on the landscape and the appearance of Amherst. The town's landscape is composed of valleys with lowlands separated by ridges and uplands. While steep slopes, as noted above, are subject to erosion, the sides and crests of ridges are often visible from many places in town and many also provide views. Amherst's hills are a significant part of the town's scenic character. As flatter land becomes less available, there will be increasing pressure for development on hills and ridges.

SOILS

Soils, similarly, rarely change in the span of time since the last Master Plan. The 2010 Amherst Master Plan Inventory explains soils as a principal determinant of the land's development capability, particularly in areas that rely on subsurface waste disposal (conventional septic systems). Depth to water table and bedrock and susceptibility to flooding affect the suitability of a site for roads, buildings and septic systems.

Most of Amherst's soils fall into the Canton-Paxton-Woodbridge-Hinckley-Scituate and Windsor groupings. Soil types and their general limitations for development are presented [in the 2010 Master Plan Inventory] (note the dark gray indicates limitations for development due to slope and dark green indicates limitation due to poor drainage). It is important to note that the development limitations cited below are from the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) descriptions of each soil class. The development limitations described by NRCS are frequently associated with the ability to utilize such soils for on-site septic systems. Most sewage disposal systems in Amherst are on-site septic systems; this adds importance to understanding soil type when developing land. Most mapped soils include small, scattered areas of other soil types with properties that may differ substantially from the dominant soil. Because of these limitations, the information provided in the Soil Survey is most useful for general planning purposes like this Master Plan. On-site soil evaluations could be conducted to ascertain the suitability of a specific site for a proposed use.

STEEP SLOPE AND POOR DRAINAGE LIMITATIONS

According to the U. S. Natural Resources and Conservation Service, these soils include Canton, Chatfield-Hollis Rock outcrop, Windsor, Paxton, and muck, and peat soil types and have severe to

moderate limitations for development because of wetness and slopes. These limitations do not always hold for a particular site.

The development limitations imposed by soils include high groundwater, which may limit the installation of septic systems and basements; stones or boulders, which may increase construction costs; or shallow soils over bedrock, which may limit construction and increase costs. The largest areas with few limitations are southwest and north of the town center. Since some of these areas north of the town center overlie sand and gravel deposits they may present a hazard for contamination of groundwater if they are used for septic system absorption fields. Many of the soils in these areas readily absorb but do not adequately filter septic system effluent.

To assist communities in planning for future development based on soil capabilities, the Hillsborough County Conservation District devised a rating system to indicate the relative potential of a soil for development, Soil Potentials for Development Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, March 1986. Soils were evaluated in four categories, septic tank absorption fields, local roads and streets, dwellings with basements and overall development. Five rating classes, very high, high, medium, low and very low, were established based on a numerical comparison of the soil with a theoretical reference soil. Since the entire town is served by septic systems, the septic tank absorption field category is most significant for Amherst. The characteristics of the reference soil for the septic system absorption field include: the area is located on a gently sloping area of five percent slope; the depth to the high water table and bedrock is greater than ten feet; the area is not subject to flooding; there are less than three percent surface stones; and the soil has a percolation rate of twelve to fifteen minutes per inch. In Amherst, approximately 7,720 acres (25% of the town's total area) are rated as having a low or very low potential for septic absorption fields.

Water Resources Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- Amherst sits at the lower elevations of the larger Souhegan River Watershed and there are approximately 255 miles of upstream water that flows into Amherst.
- Stream orders are a way to measure the relative size of streams/rivers (first order being the smallest, fifth order being the largest). Within Amherst, there are 73 miles of streams of varying stream orders including 6 miles of the 5th ordered Souhegan River, one of the largest rivers in the state.
- Many of Amherst's wetlands (86%) are likely to be associated with vernal pools.
- A large, highly productive stratified-drift aquifer lies beneath 8% of Amherst. Of the highest transmissive areas of Amherst's aquifers, 45% of the land above them has been developed, with 8% conserved.
- Many potential contamination sites exist in the larger Souhegan River Watershed. However, many of them enter the Souhegan River before entering Amherst, meaning a smaller number of upstream sites impact Amherst's other streams and waterbodies.
- Based on NH DES assessments, there are two impaired lakes, eight impaired streams, and two impaired beaches in Amherst.
- In Amherst, 8% (1,658 acres) of town is covered by the 100-year floodplain and an additional 3% (523 acres) by the 500-year floodplain.

DATA SOURCES

- Assessments of Public Water Sources
 - Baboosic Brook Watershed: Lake Assessments and River Assessments
 - Souhegan River Watershed: Lake Assessments and River Assessments
 - Pennichuck Brook Watershed: Lake Assessments and River Assessments
- Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA) Summary
- NHDES's Guide to Groundwater Reclassification
- NHDES's Guide to Groundwater Protection
- NHDES's Total Maximum Daily Load for Baboosic Lake, Amherst, NH, January 2011
- NHDES's Water Quality Testing June 29, 2021
- NH Fish and Game's Identifying and Documenting Vernal Pools in New Hampshire
- NHDES's Ground-Water Resources in New Hampshire: Stratified-Drift Aquifers
- Pennichuck Water Works' Study of Urban Non-Point Source Pollution: Stump Pond Brook Subwatershed
- NHDES's Assessments of Public Water Supply Sources – Amherst
- NHDES's Drinking Water Source Assessment Program (DWSAP) Plan
- Conservation Plan for Amherst, NH, October 2019
- 2008/2010 Amherst, NH Master Plan Part I – Existing Conditions
- 2021 Envision Amherst: Master Plan Update Survey
- 2020 Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM)
- Amherst's Stormwater Management Program webpage
- Regulated MS in New Hampshire Communities
- Hollis Small MS4 General Permit Year 2 Annual Report
- Merrimack Small MS4 General Permit Year 2 Annual Report
- State seeks to reduce road salt use as chemical builds up in environment
- NHDES Road Salt Reduction
- Salt Reduction Plan For: Beaver Brook Watershed Within the Boundaries of the Town of Londonderry

INTRODUCTION

Amherst's water resources contribute many services that benefit community members and the natural environment. High-quality groundwater, surface water bodies, wetlands, and other water sources create healthy ecosystems and enhance quality of life for all by providing drinking water, recreational opportunities, and a rural town setting. This existing conditions profile includes an assessment of the condition of Amherst's water resources and an examination of the potential threats to water quality, habitat, flood holding capacity, and more.

WATERSHEDS

The larger Souhegan Watershed covers the majority of Amherst and is made up of a number of smaller subwatersheds including Headwaters Souhegan River Watershed, Blood Brook-Souhegan River Watershed, Stony Brook Watershed, Purgatory Brook-Souhegan River Watershed, Souhegan River Watershed, and Baboosic Brook Watershed. The subwatersheds covering Amherst include Baboosic Brook Watershed, Souhegan River Watershed, and the Pennichuck Brook Watershed, which is part of the larger Nesenkeag Brook-Merrimack River Watershed. It is important to recognize the Town of Amherst lies at the lower elevations of the larger Souhegan River Watershed and is subject to approximately 255 miles of upstream water flowing into its boundaries from elsewhere. A 2014 study titled "Upstream Water Resource Management to Address Downstream Pollution Concerns" by Taeyeon Yoon, Charles Rhodes, and Farhed Shah states:

...strategies that disregard water's unidirectional flow tend to bring about degradation in downstream quality for two reasons. First, such water quality depends on considerable pollution discharge from an upstream watershed. Second, excessive upstream water withdrawals reduce the dilution capacity of a river and may thereby significantly degrade water quality of downstream river reaches.

Although there may not be many substantial water withdrawals upstream of Amherst, a look into potential upstream contamination sites shows areas of concern. Amherst's own water quality and potential contamination sites will be discussed in later sections. **To fully grasp how, and by how much, Amherst's water resources are impacted by upstream actions, further study is required and could be an implementation action identified in the Master Plan.**

AMHERST'S UPSTREAM AND DOWNSTREAM WATERS



The Souhegan River Watershed includes 53% of Amherst with the Baboosic Brook Watershed covering another 38% and the Pennichuck Brook Watershed covering 8%. Pennichuck Brook Watershed is located in the southern section of town. It has the least amount of conserved land at 1%, the highest percentage of developed land at 45%, and the lowest percentage of forested land at 32%. Conversely, Baboosic Brook Watershed in the northern part of town has the highest percentage of conserved land at 29%, the highest percent of forested land at 71%, and the smallest percentage of developed land at 7%.

The Souhegan River Watershed covers the majority of central-southern Amherst. It lies in between the northern Baboosic and southern Pennichuck sub-watersheds, both geographically and statistically, and is 15% conserved, 54% forested and 23% developed. There is a strong geographic component to these subwatersheds and it is clear that northern watersheds are more conserved and forested and the more southward in town the more development increases.

SURFACE WATER

Amherst has approximately 73 miles of streams and rivers including 6 miles of the Souhegan River, considered a 5th ordered stream. The larger the number, the larger the stream or river. As a point of comparison, the Connecticut River is classified a 7th ordered stream for most of its length between Vermont and New Hampshire (the Connecticut River is a 5th ordered stream in the Town of Pittsburg in extreme northern NH). There are only 732 miles of 5th ordered streams in New Hampshire. The breakdown of Amherst's stream orders is found in Table 1.

Stream Order	Miles	Percent of Streams
1	39	54%
2	11	15%
3	9	13%
4	7	10%
5	6	8%
TOTAL	72	100%

More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents to the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey agreed or strongly agreed that increasing buffers around surface waterbodies is a priority, making it the third highest natural resource priority from the survey. The Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA) includes all lands within 250 feet of the following waterbodies:

- All lakes and ponds greater than 10 acres.
- All 4th order and greater streams and rivers and most designated rivers, including sections less than 4th order.
- All waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide.

There are seven ponds and lakes greater than 10 acres in Amherst, most being found in the northern parts of town. Together, they total 322 acres. These waterbodies range in size from 10-acre Weston Pond to 228-acre Baboosic Lake, which is the largest waterbody in Amherst. A list of ponds and lakes in Amherst can be found in Table 2 on the following page. A 250-foot Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act buffer is applied to those waterbodies, and all designated streams accounting for 20% of the town (see SWQPA Buffers map). More than one-quarter (27%) of the SWQPA area has been conserved, which is a higher percentage than total conserved lands in town (19%) and wetlands that have been conserved (24%).

The National Wetlands Inventory, managed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, is the most comprehensive dataset on wetland abundance, distribution, and detailed characteristics. This dataset identifies permanently flooded areas like lakes and ponds as well as other wetland types. Amherst has 438 acres of permanently flooded waterbodies accounting for 2% of the towns area. Seasonally flooded/saturated wetlands account for 8% of the town, of which 27% are conserved. Several other wetland types exist in Amherst like semi-permanently flooded and temporarily flooded. Worth noting is that nearly one-quarter (24%) of all wetlands in Amherst have been conserved. Relative to abutting towns, Amherst is just below the average percentage of conserved wetlands with Milford at 18% of wetlands conserved and Hollis with 42% of wetlands conserved.

VERNAL POOLS

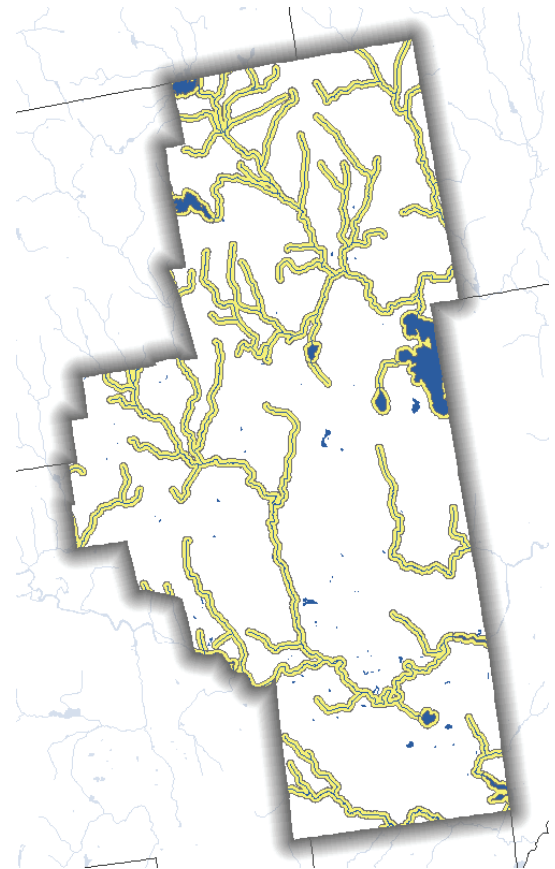
The document “Identifying and Documenting Vernal Pools in New Hampshire”, published by the NH Fish & Game Department, describes sources for vernal pool data. Although no vernal pool specific data exists statewide, the National Wetlands Inventory provides wetland classifications “that are most likely to be associated with vernal pools” including the following wetland types:

- PUB – palustrine, unconsolidated bottom
- PSS – shrub wetland
- PFO – forested wetland
- PEM – emergent marsh

Based on these wetland classifications, 86% of Amherst’s wetlands are likely to be associated with vernal pools and account for a total of 2,121 acres. More than one-quarter

Water Body	Size
Jakes Pond	4 acres
Glen Echo Pond	5 acres
Beaver Brook - Woolford	5 acres
Damon Pond	9 acres
Stump Pond	9 acres
Lincoln Pond	10 acres
Dream Lake	10 acres
Honey Pot Pond	12 acres
Weston Pond	15 acres
Vijverhof Pond	34 acres
Joe English Pond	36 acres
Baboosic Lake	228 acres

AMHERST'S SWQPA BUFFER



Town	Wetland Acres	Percent of Town	Acres Conserved	Percent Conserved
Bedford	1,439	7%	304	21%
Milford	859	5%	153	18%
Merrimack	2,209	10%	668	30%
Amherst	2,480	11%	606	24%
Mont Vernon	709	7%	203	29%
New Boston	1,973	7%	615	31%
Hollis	2,075	10%	877	42%
AVERAGE	1,678	8%	489	28%

– 27% – of these wetlands have been conserved. The 2008 Existing Conditions Report from the Amherst Master Plan provides good descriptions of vernal pool habitat and the types of species found within them. **If the Town wants to better understand the location and distribution of vernal pools, further study could be required and should be identified as an implementation action in the Master Plan.**

Table 4: Wetland Classes Most Associated with Vernal Pools			
Wetland Type	Acres	Acres Conserved	Percent Conserved
PUB	201	55	27%
PSS	805	219	27%
PFO	872	194	22%
PEM	243	99	41%
TOTAL	2,121	567	27%

GROUNDWATER

Stratified-drift aquifers are primarily layers of sand and gravel deposited by glacial meltwater from retreating glaciers (Ground-Water Resources in New Hampshire: Stratified Drift Aquifers). Nearly 40% of Amherst is underlain by stratified drift aquifers. An aquifer’s ability to transmit water is known as transmissivity. The document “Ground-Water Resources in New Hampshire: Stratified Drift Aquifers” further explains the complex concept of transmissivity:

...the higher the value of hydraulic conductivity, the more readily water can flow through the aquifer material. Aquifers that have a large saturated thickness, and are composed of material with high hydraulic conductivity, will have a high transmissivity and can readily transmit water to wells.

With this understanding, 8% of Amherst is underlain by the highest aquifer transmissivity. Relative to surrounding towns, Amherst has the highest percentage of stratified drift aquifers with this level of transmissivity. Most of Amherst’s aquifers, including those with the highest transmissivity, are in the southern third of town. This area coincides with the areas of Amherst that are most developed. Looking at development, 32% of the land above the aquifers in town has been developed (National Land Cover Database). Even more importantly, 45% of the most transmissive aquifers have developed land above them, with 8% conserved. These numbers align with the spatial makeup of Amherst with most developed land occurring in the southern third of town and the most conserved and forested land in the northern third. There are many variables that determine the impact of development atop aquifers including specific pollutant compounds, upstream contaminants, and soil type to list a few. For a description of the locations of aquifers in Amherst, municipal well pump rates from specific aquifers, and the 1985 bedrock aquifer study from Wagner and Associates, Inc. refer to the 2008 Existing Conditions Report.

AMHERST’S AQUIFERS



Transmissivity	Total Acres	Percent of Town	Cons. Acres	Percent Cons.	Acres, Dev., Open Space	Acres, Developed, Low/Med/High	Total Dev. Land	Percent of Aquifer Dev.	Acres of Forested Land	Percent of Aquifer Forested
Less than 1,000 sq. ft./day	3,434	16%	435	13%	312	441	753	22%	1,316	38%
1000-2000 sq. ft./day	1,360	6%	206	15%	206	271	477	35%	410	30%
2000-4000 sq. ft./day	1,965	9%	322	16%	242	446	688	35%	561	29%
Greater than 4000 sq. ft./day	1,667	8%	132	8%	248	503	751	45%	340	20%
TOTAL	8,426	38%	1,095	13%	1,008	1,661	2,669	32%	2,627	31%

If the Town wants to better understand the impact development has on its aquifers, further study would be required and could be identified as an implementation action in this Master Plan update. One place to start would be with a windshield survey through the NH DES Drinking Water Source Assessment Program, which identify hydrologic areas of concern.

Considering 93% of residents agree or strongly agree with the need to protect Amherst's aquifers, making it the highest natural resource priority (2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey), there are many measures the Town can explore. Municipalities are authorized to develop local groundwater protection programs, a result of New Hampshire's Groundwater Protection Act from 1991. In 2011 and 2015, the state undertook a process of reclassifying groundwater areas from GA2 (certain high-yield stratified-drift aquifers) and GB (all other areas) to GAA or GA1, representing certain levels of additional protections from local bodies. In 2021, 51% of Amherst's aquifers have not been classified. The remaining 49% are classified GA2 as potentially valuable stratified-drift aquifers with no active management ("A Guide to Groundwater Reclassification").

For approaches to groundwater protection refer to the NH Department of Environmental Services Guide to Groundwater Protection and to understand the process to reclassify groundwater to GAA or GA1, refer to the NH Department of Environmental Services A Guide to Groundwater Reclassification.

FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains exist in Amherst along the Souhegan River in the southern part of town and extending northward along its tributaries including Beaver Brook and Joe English Brook. There are three primary flood zone types in Amherst including:

- Zone AE (code 1001) – 1% chance annual flood (commonly referred to as the 100-year floodplain)
- Zone X (code 2000) – 0.2% chance annual flood (commonly referred to as the 500-year floodplain)
- Zone X (code 4002) – area of minimal flood

In Amherst, 8% (1,658 acres) of town is covered by the 100-year floodplain and an additional 3% (523 acres) by the 500-year floodplain, which means that 89% of town is considered minimal risk. When it

comes to floodplain areas that has been conserved, 16% of the 100-year floodplain and an additional 11% of the 500-year floodplain have been conserved. Conversely, higher percentages of both floodplains have been developed (NLCD) – 18% (296 acres) of the 100-year and an additional 22% (114 acres) of the 500-year floodplain. Most floodplain development is in the southern third of town along the Souhegan River.

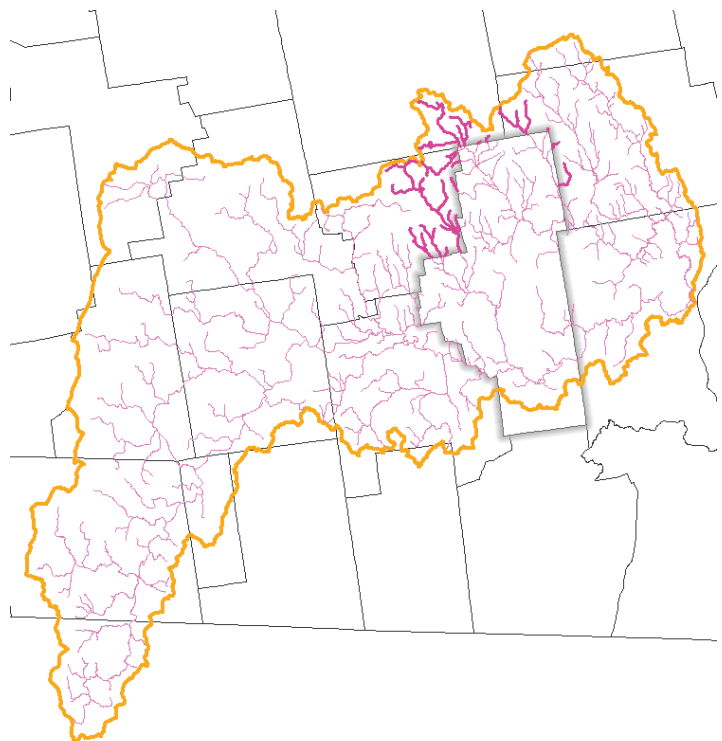
POTENTIAL CONTAMINATION

Considering the earlier section on watersheds and the potential upstream impact to downstream water resources, it is important to first explore Amherst relative to the larger Souhegan River Watershed. As stated earlier, there are approximately 255 miles of streams and rivers in the Souhegan River Watershed upstream of Amherst. Additionally, there are approximately 68 waterbodies over 10 acres in size upstream of Amherst in the Souhegan River Watershed. Applying the same 250-foot SWQPA (Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act) buffer to those upstream streams and waterbodies creates an area of 17,281 acres or 12% of the Souhegan River Watershed. Table 6 shows the percentage of various potential contamination sites upstream of Amherst within the Souhegan River Watershed and within the SWQPA. On average, 28% of all potential contamination sites are within the SWQPA buffer upstream of Amherst.

While potential contamination sites within the SWQPA may impact surface waters, there may also be a large threat to groundwater contamination. However, the site-specific nature of groundwater contamination (i.e., type of contaminant, contaminant viscosity, subsurface medium, soil depth/depth to bedrock) makes it difficult to generalize the potential impact. For example, contaminants that are highly soluble, such as salts, can move quickly through certain subsurface materials. However, contaminants that are less soluble may take longer to penetrate subsurface material. The Town could consider contacting NH DES to better understand the site-specific impacts of potential contamination sites on groundwater resources.

Upon closer examination of the water upstream of Amherst, the vast majority, 88% or 225 miles, enter the Souhegan River before making their way to Amherst. Conversely, 30 miles of upstream water (12%) flows into Amherst before entering the Souhegan River. When this is accounted for, while the number of potential contamination sites upstream of Amherst does not change, the potential impact to Amherst's water resources beyond the Souhegan River may. There are ten potential contamination sites within the 250-foot SWQPA buffer flowing into Amherst before entering the Souhegan River and they are listed here:

AMHERST'S UPSTREAM WATER THAT FLOWS INTO SOUHEGAN RIVER



- Hazardous waste generator – inactive
 - Buchanan Robert Residence – RCRA_: NHD510003759
- Solid waste facility – inactive
 - New Boston Space Force Station Landfill #2 Pre 1981 – unlined landfill – SWF_LID: 2829
- Remediation site – closed
 - Robert Buchanan Property – SITE_NO: 199202050
 - Kincaid Residence – SITE_NO: 200404049
- Remediation site – other
 - Yarrish Residence – SITE_NO: 200803034
 - Mont Vernon Town File – SITE_NO: 100100162

Table 6: Souhegan River Watershed SWQPA

Site Type	Total active number in watershed	Number active in watershed	Percent active in watershed SWQPA
Aboveground Storage Tank	66	10	15%
Air Facility Systems	11	3	27%
Automotive Salvage Yards	4	1	25%
Hazardous Waste Generators	70	16	23%
Local Potential Contamination Sources	72	10	14%
NPDES Outfalls	5	4	80%
Solid Waste Facilities	8	1	13%
Underground Storage Tank	305	83	27%

Table 7: Potential Contamination Sites in Amherst

Site Type	Number Active	Number Inactive	Number Declassified	Other	Total Number
Aboveground Storage Tank	10				10
Air Facility Systems	4				4
Asbestos Disposal Sites	0				0
Automotive Salvage Yards	0				0
Hazardous Waste Generators	21	43	10	4	78
Local Potential Contamination Sources	47				47
NPDES Outfalls	1				1
Remediation Sites		61			108
Solid Waste Facilities	1	3		47	4
Underground Storage Tank	29				29

Table 8: Potential Contamination Sites on Land Subject to the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA)

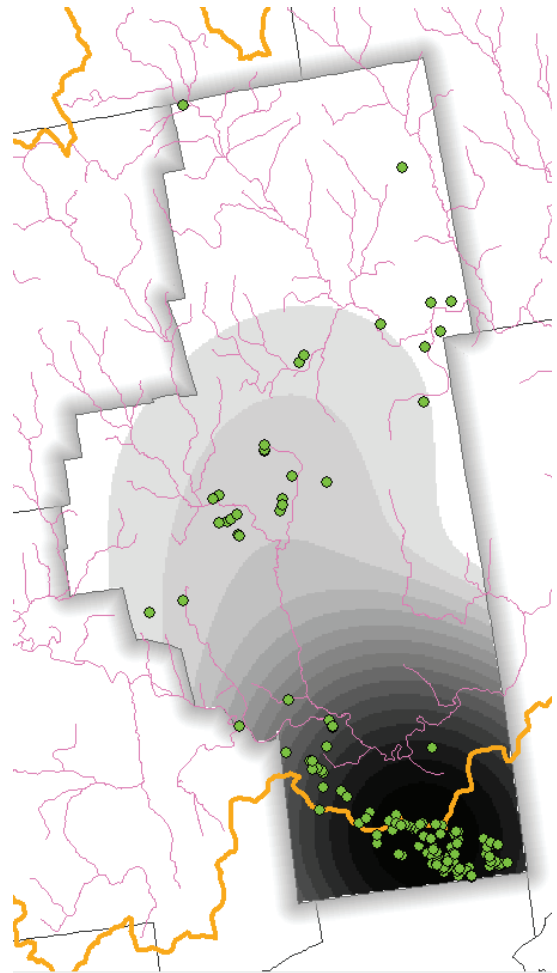
Site Type	Total Number Active in Watershed	Number Inactive in Watershed SWQPA	Percent Active in Watershed SWQPA
Aboveground Storage Tank	10	0	0%
Air Facility Systems	4	0	0%
Hazardous Waste Generators	21	1	5%
Local Potential Contamination Sources	47	0	0%
NPDES Outfalls	1	1	100%
Solid Waste Facilities	1	0	0%
Underground Storage Tank	29	1	3%

- Hydraulic Oil Release – SITE_NO: 201708027
- New Boston Space Force Station (x3) – SITE_NO: 198710027

AMHERST'S POTENTIAL CONTAMINATION SITE LOCATIONS AND DENSITY

Table 7 shows the potential contamination sites in Amherst. However, Table 8 compares the number of active potential contamination sites in Amherst with those that are within the 250-foot SWQPA buffer – these numbers look very different.

Geographically, the distribution of potential contamination sites in Amherst is clear – the majority are in the southern third of town with the highest density in the extreme southern part of town. This pattern follows what has been discussed in previous sections – most development in Amherst is congregated in the south and becomes progressively less developed the further north in town. The map on the following page shows the density of active potential contamination sites.



WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The Surface Water Quality Assessment Program from the NH Department of Environmental Services provides a thorough report card of water quality assessments every two years for many of the state's rivers, lakes, and beaches. Each waterbody is assessed on (1) aquatic life integrity, (2) fish consumption, (3) potential drinking water supply, (4) primary contact recreation, (5) secondary contact recreation, and (6) wildlife. The image at the bottom of the page describes the rankings. In a cursory exploration of the 2020 Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM), which provides a full understanding of how the Surface Water Quality Standards

		Severe	Poor	Likely Bad	No Data	Likely Good	Marginal	Good
		Not Supporting, Severe	Not Supporting, Marginal	Insufficient Information – Potentially Not Supporting	No Data	Insufficient Information – Potentially Full Supporting	Full Support, Marginal	Full Support, Good
CATEGORY	Description							
Category 2	Meets standards						2-M or 2-OBS	2-G
Category 3	Insufficient Information			3-PNS	3-ND	3-PAS		
Category 4	Does not Meet Standards;							
4A	TMDL* Completed	4A-P	4A-M or 4A-T					
4B	Other enforceable measure will correct the issue.	4B-P	4B-M or 4B-T					
4C	Non-pollutant (i.e. exotic weeds)	4C-P	4C-M					
Category 5	TMDL* Needed	5-P	5-M or 5-T					

* TMDL stands for Total Maximum Daily Load studies

Water Body ID#	Water Body Name	Watershed	Aquatic Life Integrity	Fish Consumption	Public Drinking Water Supply	Primary Contact Recreation	Secondary Contact Recreation	Wildlife	Assess. Unit Category
NHLAK700060905-02	Damon Pond	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHLAK700060905-03	Joe English Pond	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHLAK700060905-04	Lincoln Pond	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHLAK700060905-05	Weston Pond	Baboosic Brook	3-PAS	4A-M	2-G	3-PAS	3-ND	3-ND	3-PAS
NHLAK700060906-01	Honey Pot Pond	Souhegan River	5-P	4A-M	2-G	5-P	3-ND	3-ND	5-P
NHLAK700060906-03	Dream Lake	Souhegan River	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHLAK700061001-03	Stump Pond	Pennichuck Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHIMP700060905-03	Glen Echo Pond Dam	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHIMP700060905-02	Vuwerhof Pond Dam	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHIMP700060905-13	Greentree Res Dam	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHIMP700060905-12	Jakes Pond Dam	Baboosic Brook	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND
NHIMP700060906-10	Beaver Brook - Woolford Dam	Souhegan River	3-ND	4A-M	2-G	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND

are translated into assessments, there was no discussion of the impact from agricultural pollution/runoff. **For Amherst to better understand the role of agricultural pollution/runoff, consider reaching out to NHDES for more information.**

Table 9 shows the overall assessment for the ponds/lakes within Amherst. All waterbodies received a poor grade for fish consumption because of mercury and although many of the waterbodies do not have data, all of them received a good assessment for potential public drinking water supply.

Baboosic Lake has poor aquatic life integrity and primary contact recreation but has good secondary contact recreation. A 2011 study on Baboosic Lake by AECOM Environmental and NHDES concluded that loads of phosphorus needed to be reduced by 35% to meet the target level (Total Maximum Daily Load for Baboosic Lake, Amherst, NH, January 2011). According to the 2020 NHDES Water Quality Assessment for Baboosic Lake, phosphorous levels are classified as “likely bad” citing “Limited data available – the data that is available suggests that the parameter is ‘Potentially Not Supporting (PNS) water quality standards’ based on samples from 2017.” In contrast, Weston Pond has likely good aquatic life integrity and primary contact recreation.

A study from 2002 identified sediment and non-point source pollutants as issues for Stump Pond and recommended the construction of “a small sediment forebay and vegetated swale with check dams to slow stormwater velocity.” (Study of Urban Non-Point Source Pollution: Stump Pond Brook Subwatershed). Following up on pollutant levels in Stump Pond from the 2020 NHDES Water Quality

Table 10: Stream Name		
Water Body ID #	Stream Name	Watershed
NHRIV700060905-10	Baboosic Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-30	Joe English Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-31	Joe English Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-03	Joe English Brook - Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-06	Joe English Brook - Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-21	Joe English Brook - Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-11	Pulpit Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-22	Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-23	Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-24	Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-25	Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-32	Unnamed Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-09	Unnamed Brook - Between Little Baboosic Lake and Washer Cove Baboosic Lake	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-02	Unnamed Brook - From Ice Pond to Joe English Pond	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-05	Unnamed Brook - From Vijverhof Pond to Glen Echo Pond	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-08	Unnamed Brook - To Damon Pond	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-04	Unnamed Brook - To Vijverhof Pond	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700060905-07	Unnamed Brook - To Joe English Brook	Baboosic Brook
NHRIV700061001-07	Pennichuck Brook - Witches Brook	Pennichuck Brook
NHRIV700061001-04	Unnamed Brook - From Carriage Place Pond	Pennichuck Brook
NHRIV700061001-02	Witches Brook	Pennichuck Brook
NHRIV700060906-01	Beaver Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-03	Beaver Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-02	Beaver Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-05	Hartsthorn Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-20	Muskrell Brook - To Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-18	Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-16	Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-14	Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-27	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-28	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-29	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-35	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-39	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-38	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-37	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-36	Unnamed Brook	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-17	Unnamed Brook - To Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-06	Unnamed Brook - To Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-19	Unnamed Brook - To York Pond	Souhegan River
NHRIV700060906-45	Unnamed Trib. to the Souhegan River	Souhegan River
NHIMP700060906-11	York Pond Dam	Souhegan River

Assessment provided no further information due to lack of available data. Honey Pot Pond received severe ratings for aquatic life integrity and primary contact recreation. For additional information on each waterbody, refer to NHDES's Watershed Lake Assessments. The number and quality of rivers/streams flowing into Amherst and within Amherst is prohibitively large to summarize here, but the list of stream names and ID number has been included in Table 10 on the following page.

The Souhegan River's water quality is regularly monitored and e.coli levels can rise to unhealthy levels, especially under certain weather conditions. Representatives of the Amherst Conservation Commission could continue to participate in this water quality monitoring and look into ways the Town can manage non-point source pollution of the river.

Although not every river/stream reach was examined for this document, every assessment that was viewed received a poor grade for fish consumption because of the presence of mercury and a good grade as a public drinking water supply. For detailed assessments of each stretch of river/stream, refer to the Watershed River Assessments referenced on page 1 under Data Sources. An interactive web map, the 2020 Surface Water Quality Assessment Viewer, can be found here. This tool allows users to identify particular lakes and rivers and their associated assessment every two years dating back to 2008.

There are two lakes/ponds and eight rivers/streams considered impaired based on the NHDES assessments. They are listed in Tables 11 & 12. Additionally, there are two impaired beaches in Amherst which are listed in Table 13 on the following page.

Table 11: Impaired Lakes in Amherst			
Water Body ID#	Water Body Name	Impairment: Aquatic Life Integrity	Impairment: Primary Contact Recreation
NHLAK700060905-01-01	Baboosic Lake	(1) pH	(1) Cyanobacteria hepatotoxic microcystins
NHLAK700060906-01	Honey Pot Pond	(1) pH	(1) Chlorophyll-a

Table 12: Impaired Streams in Amherst			
Water Body ID#	Water Body Name	Impairment: Aquatic Life Integrity	Impairment: Primary Contact Recreation
NHRIV700060906-01	Beaver Brook	(1) Aluminum, (2) pH	(1) Escherichia coli
NHRIV700060906-18	Souhegan River	(1) Aluminum, (2) Dissolved oxygen concentration, (3) pH	(1) Escherichia coli
NHRIV700060905-09	Unnamed Brook - Between Little Baboosic Lake and Washer Cove Baboosic Lake	(1) PH	
NHRIV700060905-25	Unnamed Brook	(1) PH	
NHRIV700060906-20	Muskrell Brook - To Souhegan River	(1) Dissolved oxygen saturation, (2) pH	
NHRIV700060906-16	Souhegan River		(1) Escherichia coli
NHRIV700061001-02	Witches Brook	(1) Dissolved oxygen concentration, (2) pH	(1) Escherichia coli
NHRIV700061001-07	Pennichuck Brook - Witches Brook	(1) Dissolved oxygen saturation, (2) Dissolved oxygen concentration, (3) pH	(1) Escherichia coli

Table 13: Impaired Beaches in Amherst			
Water Body ID#	Water Body Name	Impairment: Primary Contact Recreation	Impairment: Secondary Contact Recreation
NHLAK700060905-01-02	Baboosic Lake Town Beach	(1) Cyanobacteria hepatotoxic microcystins, (2) Escherichia coli, (3) Excess Algal Growth	(1) Escherichia coli
NHLAK700060905-01-03	Baboosic Lake - Young Judaea Beach	(1) Cyanobacteria hepatotoxic microcystins	(1) Chlorophyll-a

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Town of Amherst's Stormwater Management Program website explains the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and why Amherst filed for a permit. The Town's Stormwater Management Program webpage explains:

Local drainage systems, whether natural or constructed, are important features that generally carry stormwater runoff away from developed areas to undeveloped areas, waterbodies, and wetlands. Although these drainage systems help to manage stormwater in our built environment, they are also a primary source of untreated pollutants in receiving waters including bacteria, nutrients oil, trash, and many other pollutants. These untreated pollutants in stormwater runoff are defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as "nonpoint source pollution", meaning that the source of the pollution is not directly attributable to a single spatial point or polluter. Stormwater runoff from streets, parking lots, and lawns picks up and carries contaminants as it moves across the ground surface before entering into local drainage systems.

A municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) includes the stormwater collection, conveyance, and outfall structures within a city or town. These structures include (but are not limited to) catch basins, drain manholes, culverts, stormwater basins, and swales. As with approximately sixty other municipalities in NH, the Town of Amherst MS4 is regulated under the EPA Clean Water Act (CWA) and requires a permit for discharges to the environment.

BACKGROUND

The Stormwater Phase II rule was promulgated in 1999 and was the next step after the 1987 Phase I rule in EPA's effort to preserve, protect, and improve the nation's water resources from polluted stormwater runoff. The Phase II program expands the Phase I program by requiring additional operators of MS4s in urbanized areas through the use of a NPDES permit, to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff. Phase II is intended to further reduce adverse impacts to water quality and aquatic habitat by instituting the use of controls on the unregulated sources of stormwater discharges that have the greatest likelihood of causing continued environmental degradation. Under the Phase II rule all MS4s with stormwater discharges from census-designated urbanized areas are required to seek NPDES permit coverage for those stormwater discharges.

On May 1, 2003, EPA Region 1 issued its final General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (2003 Small MS4 General Permit) consistent with the Phase

II rule. The 2003 Small MS4 General Permit covered “traditional” (i.e. cities and towns) and “non-traditional” (i.e. federal and state agencies) MS4 operators located in the states of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. This permit expired on May 1, 2008, but remained in effect until operators were authorized under the 2017 NH Small MS4 General Permit, which became effective on July 1, 2018. The Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) describes and details the activities and measures that will be implemented to meet the terms and conditions of the 2017 NH Small MS4 General Permit. The SWMP document could be updated and/or modified during the permit term as activities are modified, changed, or updated to meet permit conditions. The main elements of the SWMP are (1) a public education program in order to affect public behavior causing stormwater pollution, (2) an opportunity for the public to participate and provide comments on the stormwater program, (3) a program to effectively find and eliminate illicit discharges within the MS4, (4) a 1 - 2 program to effectively control construction site stormwater discharges to the MS4, (5) a program to ensure that stormwater from development projects entering the MS4 is adequately controlled by the construction of stormwater controls, and (6) a good housekeeping program to ensure that stormwater pollution sources on municipal properties and from municipal operations are minimized.

The 2019 Amherst Stormwater Management Plan will be updated in 2021. The Notice of Intent for coverage under Small MS4 General Permit dated September 28, 2018 can be viewed here: <https://www3.epa.gov/region1/npdes/stormwater/nh/tms4noi/amherst.pdf>.

Looking to other MS4 regulated communities in New Hampshire can provide helpful insight into specific actions that may be worth exploring. Several neighboring towns to Amherst are MS4 communities including Hollis and Merrimack and below represent some of the targeted actions their respective towns implemented because of the MS4 program from their 2020 Year 2 Annual Reports:

TOWN OF HOLLIS

Items completed:

- Phase 1 of system mapping.
- Developed a written catchment investigation procedure and added to the Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP).
- Develop written procedures to require the submission of as-built drawing and ensure the long-term operation and maintenance of completed construction sites and added these to the SWMP.
- Enclosed or covered storage piles of salt or piles containing salt used for deicing or other purposes.
- Developed an inventory of all permittee owned facilities in the categories of parks and open space, buildings and facilities, and vehicles and equipment and added this inventory to the SWMP.
- Developed written SWPPPs, included in the SWMP, for all of the following permittee owned or operated facilities: maintenance garages, public works yards, transfer stations, and other waste handling facilities where pollutants are exposed to stormwater.

Items not yet completed:

- Develop written operations and maintenance procedures for parks and open space, buildings and facilities, and vehicles and equipment and added these procedures to the SWMP.
- Completed a written program for MS4 infrastructure maintenance to reduce the discharge of pollutants.

MERRIMACK

Items completed:

- Distribution and promotion of a tri-fold flyer that outlines simple recommendations to keep lawns healthy while reducing water quality impacts - including proper fertilizer techniques and disposal of

grass clippings.

- Distribution and promotion of “Every Drop” flyer with proper pet waste management, impacts of improper management, pet waste ordinance, and disposal requirements messaging.
- Distribute and promote informational flyer, with messaging about impacts from yard waste to waterbodies, alternatives to dumping yard waste and laws against dumping yard waste near or in waterbodies.
- Distribute and promote brochure directing to website to educate New Hampshire homeowners with septic systems on how to identify, locate and maintain those systems.
- Review checklists with developers and construction contractors prior to beginning of construction project (pre-construction) to identify responsible parties, erosions control practices, other best management practices, and requirements for EPA Construction General Permit as appropriate.

All MS4 regulated communities in New Hampshire are found here <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/regulated-ms4-new-hampshire-communities> with their associated Notice of Intent, authorization letter, and associated annual reports.

Worth noting relative to pollutant runoff is road salt. While road salt is an effective safety measure for New Hampshire’s winter roads, it poses significant threats to surface and groundwater resources and stormwater management. The number of chloride-impaired water bodies increased from 19 in 2008 to 50 in 2020. NHDES reports that “at concentrations exceeding 230mg/l, chloride can be toxic to some aquatic species and can impart a salty taste in drinking water supplies.” (source: <https://www.des.nh.gov/land/roads/road-salt-reduction>) In response to these concerns there are three items that should be mentioned.

The first is that the NH Department of Transportation is reducing their road salt usage by 20% per lane mile from fifteen years ago on Interstate-93 (source: <https://www.wmur.com/article/state-seeks-to-reduce-road-salt-use-as-chemical-builds-up-in-environment/31027472>). **The second is a program being offered by NHDES known as the Green SnowPro Program that trains snow and ice professions in salt reduction practices prioritizing public safety while reducing overall salt usage.** Of particular interest is that NHDES certified applicators, and property owners or managers who hire them, are provided protection from damages because of snow and ice conditions. **The third item for Amherst to consider is developing a Salt Reduction Plan, something the Town of Londonderry approved in 2011.**

WATER SUPPLY

Amherst’s water supply is important to its residents and is evidenced by many concerns expressed in the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey. Concerns range from protecting water sources along with open space to ensuring developments consider water supply when considering projects, and not allowing pollution prone activities within distances of water supplies.

There are seven community groundwater wells in Amherst. The NH Department of Environmental Services assesses all public water supply sources and provides vulnerability scores of High, Medium, and Low based on the fourteen criteria.

The Amherst Village District community groundwater well received two high vulnerability rankings for proximity to septic systems and urban land cover. The Bon Terrain community groundwater well received three high vulnerability rankings for the presence of septic systems, urban land cover, and agricultural land cover.

Souhegan Woods community groundwater wells received high rankings for septics and agricultural land cover. The remaining Gowing Woods and Ridgewood Estates community groundwater wells received one high mark for septics. All community groundwater wells received a high score because of septics, and three of the six also received a high score for agricultural land cover.

There are seven non-transient, non-community groundwater wells in Amherst evaluated with the same fourteen criteria. All non-transient groundwater wells received at least two high scores with most receiving three or more. Additionally, all received a high score for proximity to highways/RRs. The Meeting Place non-transient groundwater well received four high rankings for highways/RRs, septics, urban land cover, and sanitary radius. The Amherst Christian Church received three high scores for highways/railroads, agricultural land cover, and sanitary radius. The Salzburg Square groundwater well received three high scores for highways/railroads, septics, and sanitary radius. The Amherst Professional Building received three high scores for highways/railroads, urban land cover, and agricultural land cover. Colonial Park received three high scores for highways/railroads, septics, and urban land cover. The Carriage Depot non-transient groundwater well received two high scores for highways/railroads and urban land cover.

In Amherst, there are six transient groundwater wells. Four of the six transient groundwater wells in Amherst received high scores for PCSs (potential contamination sources in the vicinity of the source) and highways/railroads. Camp Young Judaea/The Grove transient groundwater wells received low scores for all criteria. The Amherst Country Club and Amherst Country Club Pool transient groundwater wells received three high scores for PCSs, highways/railroads, and pesticides. The Amherst Plaza transient groundwater well received three high rankings for well/intakes, PCSs, and highways/railroads. The Black Forest Café transient groundwater well received two high rankings for PCSs and highways/railroads.

Additional information on all Amherst groundwater wells can be found in the Assessments of Public Water Supply Sources - Amherst referenced on page 1 under Data Sources and more information on the NHDES assessment approach can be found in the Drinking Water Source Assessment Program (DWSAP) Plan that was approved by the EPA in May 1999.

Transportation Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- Amherst's transportation system is composed of a rural and suburban roadway network with some regionally important state routes carrying higher traffic volumes.
- Amherst's location is in a rapidly growing region and its fairly dispersed development has resulted in an automobile dominated transportation system.
- Amherst has been forward thinking in planning for a more multi-modal transportation system, and the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan (2019) is an important resource for future planning and infrastructure improvements.
- No complete street policy has been adopted in Amherst to reinforce the vision of the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan (2019).
- Amherst's residents and businesses have good access to the regional transportation system, but limited access to public transit options currently.
- Three of Amherst's bridges are structurally deficient and have been scheduled for replacement.
- The impact of land use decisions on the transportation system needs to continue to be a focus of the development review process in order to identify and mitigate impacts.
- The Master Plan could identify opportunities to combine recreation infrastructure needs and open space planning with the need for additional bicycle and pedestrian transportation infrastructure.

DATA SOURCES

- NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Data
- Nashua Region MPO Project Viewer
- Nashua Region Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) Regional Plan
- Vehicle Accident Data - Amherst Police Department
- Accidents at Intersections and by road - Amherst Police Department
- Amherst Zoning Ordinance – Scenic Roads
- NRPC Traffic Counts
- 2020 NHDOT Bridge Data
- NRPC Bike and Ped Planning
- Amherst Bike and Ped Advisory Committee
- Amherst Roads Commission
- Amherst Highway Safety Committee
- Amherst Multimodal Master Plan
- Traffic Studies: Clearview / Jacobson, Clearview, and Carlson Manor
- Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative
- Public Works Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

Amherst's transportation system provides critical access to residents and businesses within and outside of Amherst. This system both impacts and is impacted by land use changes. The Town is currently looking to develop a more multi-modal transportation system that will better serve residents and visitors of all ages.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADWAYS

Amherst's transportation network includes roadways, bridges and culverts, sidewalks, and trails. The existing roadway network includes 163.7 miles of state, municipal, and private roads. The length of state routes through Amherst is 16 miles. This includes NH 101, NH 101A, NH 122, and a small segment of Route 13. Both NH 101 and NH 101A also serve as key corridors for economic development within the Town of Amherst. The majority of Amherst's roads are municipally maintained which gives the town control over their design and maintenance, but also the responsibility to maintain this infrastructure.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of this roadway network by roadway classification according to available the state's Geographic Information System (GIS) data. Class 0 roadways are private, Class I and II are state maintained, Class IV and V are municipally maintained, and Class VI are unmaintained roadways. The majority of these roads are paved, but given the rural nature of parts of the community there are still dirt roads to maintain. In speaking with the Department of Public Works Director, it appears that Amherst has approximately 125 miles of paved, municipal roads, and 9 miles of unpaved municipal roads.

According to NHDOT in 2020, the State roadway segments in Amherst have good quality surfaces. The one exception is a short segment at the intersection of Boston Post Road and Amherst Street. Municipal roads are managed through a seven-year Road Plan, and the Town is currently in year three of implementation. The goal is for 70% of the municipal roads to be rated as "good" according to an industry standard pavement condition index (PCI) at the end of the seven-year period. This signifies a commitment by Amherst residents and leaders to plan ahead and invest in care of transportation infrastructure.

TRANSPORTATION RELATED GOALS

The following goals appear to be reflected in Amherst's transportation planning efforts to date:

- Accommodate vehicular traffic safely as the community and region continue to grow.
- Preserve/improve the capacity and efficiency of existing roadways/ infrastructure.
- Accommodate all users with a variety of transportation options over time.
- Ensure transportation infrastructure is constructed and maintained to fit within the context of the community and to withstand natural hazards.

Table 1: Miles by Classification

Class	Miles
0	18
I	12.5
II	6
III	0
IV	0.2
V	123
VI	4
TOTAL	163.7

Table 2: Miles by Surface Type

Type	Miles
Paved	139
Unpaved	24
TOTAL	163

BRIDGES AND CULVERTS

There are twenty-five bridges in the Town of Amherst. This includes 15 municipal bridges and 8 state-maintained bridges along Route 101. Three of them have been identified as being structurally deficient and all three are scheduled for replacement. The State redlisted bridge on Baboosic Lake Rd. is out to bid in 2021 (Project #41413). The two remaining bridges are also scheduled for replacement and are addressed in the pending projects section of this document.

Table 3: Bridges in Amherst		
Location	Status	Deficiency
Mont Vernon Road over Ceasars Brook	Municipal Redlist	Structurally Deficient
Baboosic Lake Rd.	State Redlist	Structurally Deficient
Thornton's Ferry Road over Beaver Brook	Municipal Redlist	Structurally Deficient

It is important to also maintain culverts as critical water crossings and to ensure the integrity of the transportation system. Amherst currently has 1,789 culverts, and has a plan to increase culvert size as roads are rebuilt and culverts are replaced. The driveway regulations call for a 15" minimum size culvert under driveways to help accomplish this. Increased culvert size will accommodate larger storms and ensure climate resilience while also improving habitat connectivity. The Town has identified four culverts in need of replacement through the municipalities Capital Reserve Fund. These include twin culverts at 485 Boston Post Road, one on Northern Boulevard, and one on Thornton's Ferry Road #II at Spring Road.

SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS

A network of sidewalks is located along many of the roadways in the vicinity of the village. This makes this portion of Amherst a very walkable area of the community. Sidewalks are also provided within the campuses of Souhegan High School and Amherst Middle School, and along a segment of Boston Post Rd. Sidewalk segments in the vicinity of Lowes and Michaels provide some pedestrian accommodation along Route 101A, but there are still deficiencies in this area of the community from a pedestrian and bicycle perspective. Overall, Amherst lacks safe pedestrian infrastructure along the higher volume roadways, and this was recognized and addressed in the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan (2019).

Table 4: Sidewalks and Trails	
Type	Miles
Miles of known pedestrian trails	42.1
Miles of known bike trails	22
Miles of known horse trails	29.9
Miles of known ski trails	35.5
TOTAL	42.9

The existing network of trails in Amherst includes 25 miles of trails maintained by the Amherst Conservation Commission. Table 4 shows that a total of 42.9 miles of trails exist town-wide and accommodate a range of users currently. The NH Department of Transportation has identified the potential for 25.9 miles of paved multi-use trail in Amherst, and an additional 1.8 miles of unpaved multi-use trail. These new facilities are addressed later on in this Transportation Profile under pending projects.

Amherst's Multimodal Master Plan (2019) advocates for creating a broader network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities over time. This could include an expansion of the off-road network of trails, and further publicizing of the existing network of trails to encourage residents of all ages to use them for health and wellness and to reduce vehicle trips when possible.

SCENIC ROADS

Amherst has many roads that have been granted a scenic road setback designation. The following scenic roads have this local setback requirement for all structures of one hundred (100) feet from the highway right-of-way:

- Rte 122 from Hollis Town line north to Old Rte 101, Horace Greeley Highway
- Boston Post Rd. from Stearns Rd north to Route 122
- Boston Post Rd. from Beaver Brook north to Mt. Vernon Rd.
- Mt. Vernon Rd. from Boston Post Rd. north to Mt. Vernon Town line
- Amherst Street
- Horace Greeley Highway from Milford Town line north to Bedford Town line
- New Boston Rd. from Boston Post Rd north to Mt. Vernon Town Line
- Christian Hill Rd from Davis Lane to Route 13
- Corduroy Rd. from Merrimack Rd north to Boston Post Rd.
- Merrimack Rd. from Boston Post Rd north to Corduroy Rd.
- Mack Hill Rd. from Manchester Rd north to Austin Rd.

All other scenic roads in Amherst have this setback requirement and also must comply with the State of New Hampshire Scenic Road Statute, which also includes restrictions on the cutting, damage or removal of trees, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, except with the prior written consent of the municipality after a public hearing with the Planning Board. The focus on this protection is on potential impacts from municipal departments and utilities, and does not reduce the rights of private property owners. The State Statute regulated Scenic Roads include:

- Chestnut Hill Rd. from Prokos' driveway (lot # 10-33) to New Boston line
- Eaton Rd. from Christian Hill to Mont Vernon Rd.
- Green Rd. from Christian Hill to Mont Vernon Rd.
- Lyndeboro Road from NH Rte. 101 (Amherst Street) to NH Rte. 13
- Spring Rd. from Bellerose property (Lot #6-46-5) to the Merrimack line
- Austin Rd. from Mack Hill to Horace Greeley Rd.
- Ponemah Hill Rd. from Hollis Road to the Milford Town line
- Old Milford Rd. westerly from NH Rte. 101 (Amherst St.) to NH Rte. 101
- Col. Wilkins Rd. from Old Milford Rd.
- Brook Rd. from Horace Greeley Rd. to the Town Conservation Area
- Dodge Rd. from the water hole below the present Town Dump (lot #6-70) to Austin Rd.
- Baboosic Lake Road from Pavilion Rd. to the Merrimack town line
- County Rd. from the junction with Ravine Rd. to the Souhegan River
- Lynch Farm Rd.
- Pond Parrish Rd.
- Mack Hill Rd.

TRANSIT AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Many segments of Amherst's population would benefit from greater access to public transit options. According to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission Regional Plan, residents in the NRPC region are highly automobile dependent and east-west travel routes are limited. Ride sharing programs are

available and affordable, but additional public transportation options could help alleviate some of the flow of traffic through the region.

While generally congestion levels are low, traffic volumes on route 101A are sometimes very high. The lack of passenger rail and freight rail have also been identified as concerns in the Regional Plan. Many residents of the region think that passenger rail to Boston and other hubs would benefit the region economically. Other needs in the region include a sustainable transportation funding source, investments in alternative travel modes, more flexible land use, and better coordination between transportation and utility providers. Overall, residents have indicated that connectivity in the region is good and they can run errands in relatively short trips but there is a need for more mixed-use development and an improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Currently Amherst is served by the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) which is a grassroots organization of area citizens concerned about transportation options in the Souhegan Valley. SVTC provides “The Blue Bus” a demand response transit service to Amherst residents.

CIRCULATION AND DESIGN

The management of Amherst’s transportation system requires long range planning goals and clear design objectives. These should be based on good data related to vehicle trips and commuting patterns, traffic counts, accidents, traffic calming and access management needs, and identified bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure needs. Fortunately, much of this work has been incorporated in the recent Amherst Multimodal Master Plan which provides a clear vision for how to manage and improve Amherst’s transportation system over time while creating a multi-modal transportation network. The one weakness is the integration of smaller residential projects that do not need to go before the Planning Board for approval. On these projects the Town’s only tool is the driveway permit process and the guidance of Department of Public Works staff.

COMMUTING DATA

As identified in the Population and Housing Profile, the commuting patterns of Amherst residents over 16 years of age are related to their employment and their need for housing. The majority of working residents commute alone by automobile to their jobs. While most Amherst residents work in New Hampshire (80%) and many in Hillsborough County (73%) the mean

Table 5: Miles by Classification			
Location	Total Weekday Vehicles (year)	Total Weekday Vehicles (year)	Total Weekday Vehicles (year)
Route 101 North of Blueberry Hill Road	21,549 (2014)	20,433 (2017)	17,801 (2020)
Route 101 at Bedford Townline	21,408 (2014)	21,317 (2017)	16,770 (2020)
Route 101 North of Baboosic Lake Road	20,544 (2012)	23,758 (2015)	22,017 (2018)
Milford Road East of NH 122	30,418 (2010)	30,665 (2016)	29,804 (2019)
Boston Post Road Over Souhegan River	6,464 (2010)	3,433 (2016)	4,600 (2019)

travel time is 33.5 minutes. Ninety-two percent of residents also have access to two or more vehicles. Additional commuting data from the American Community Survey is available in the Population and Housing Profile.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

Traffic count data for Amherst's major roadways shows little change in volume over the past decade. A few of the locations with 2020 data show a reduction that is likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic and related changes in travel patterns. While volumes are not changing dramatically, development activity continues in Amherst and will contribute to congestion over time if not planned for proactively.

RECENT TRAFFIC STUDIES

Development proposals before the Town of Amherst in 2020 and 2021 required traffic impact studies to better understand the additional trips generated and the impact on the transportation network. The requirement that these studies be completed and reviewed by the Town's planning staff and engineer shows a commitment by the Town to managing the transportation infrastructure and preserving the level-of-service on these roadways. While the focus is on vehicle trips, some consideration was given to other modes of transportation. This expanded vision for a multimodal transportation system should continue to be a critical aspect of land use regulations, future traffic studies, and infrastructure improvements.

ACCIDENT DATA

Between 2011 and 2021 there were 3,558 accidents recorded on Amherst's roadways. Three of these accidents resulted in a total of five fatalities. During this decade, 421 of these accidents resulted in injuries, 23 accidents involved pedestrians, and 13 accidents involved cyclists. Three of Amherst's roadways accounted for 67% of all accidents:

- NH 101 = 648 accidents (18%)
- NH 101A = 1,449 accidents (41%)
- Boston Post Rd. = 274 accidents (8%)

44% of all accidents during this decade were reported at intersections. The roadways with the most intersection related accidents included NH 101, NH 101A, Boston Post Rd., and Ponemah Rd. Boston Post Road is the longest continuous roadway in Amherst so it is not surprising that it is generating a high number of crash locations over its length. Ponemah Road (NH 122) is not a roadway that the Town has any control over, but between 2011 and 2021 a total of 122 accidents were reported.

The intersection of Route 122 and Merrimack Road is a concern due to its current configuration and the lack of driver awareness approaching Route 122. Vehicles on Merrimack Road have a flashing red signal and additional signage has been installed, but this remains a dangerous intersection that needs attention from the State.

FLOOD RISK TO ROADWAYS

Of the 163.7 miles of existing roadways in Amherst, 11.9 miles fall within the designated floodplain and are at risk of impact from flooding. This accounts for over 7% of all roads in town, most of which are in the central and southern areas. Map ____ shows the distribution of roadways that are within the floodplain. While 88% (10.5 miles) of these potentially impacted roadways are in the Residential/Rural Zoning District, their distribution is widespread. The flood impact of these roads could affect residents' abilities to access vital areas of town. Of possible greater concern is the ability for emergency response

vehicles to access all areas of town. Given the distribution of these potentially impacted roadways, there may be neighborhoods that could be completely cut off from access from emergency response. Roadways with significant sections in the floodplain are proximate to the Souhegan River, Beaver Brook, Caesars Brook, Joe English Brook, Baboosic Lake and their respective tributaries. Specific roadways include but are not limited to:

- Area around the Souhegan River:
 - Route 101
 - Route 122
 - Stearns Road
 - Boston Post Road
- Area around Beaver Brook:
 - Route 101
 - Route 122
 - Corduroy Road
 - Thornton Ferry Road
 - Boston Post Road
 - New Boston Road
- Area around Caesars Brook:
 - Boston Post Road
- Area around Joe English Brook:
 - Route 101
 - Horace Greeley Road
 - Embankment Road
- Area around Baboosic Lake
 - Embankment Road
 - Clark Island Road
 - Clark Avenue
 - Broadway
 - Greenwood Road

Worth consideration is conducting a transportation infrastructure assessment for potential flood impacts.

DESIGN STANDARDS

As new development occurs in Amherst and the town makes capital improvements to the transportation network there is an opportunity to incorporate design standards that include traffic calming, access management, and multimodal accommodations. Over time this will help Amherst build out a multimodal transportation network while preserving capacity along major routes and improving safety.

Amherst is also a member of the NRPC Complete Streets Advisory Committee, and is striving to create roadways that accommodate all modes of travel in a way that fits with the context and anticipated volume for each roadway. The Amherst Multimodal Master Plan (2019) is a critical resource to refer to while making changes or additions to the transportation network. However, the Town of Amherst has not yet adopted a complete streets policy. Such a policy would reinforce the vision of the Multimodal Master Plan, and could be expanded to include a green streets policy that addresses additional community and natural resource related goals.

Amherst's Subdivision Regulations identify street right-of-way widths and other roadway design requirements, but would be better served by pointing applicants to the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan as a reference document. The Subdivision Regulations could also reference the 2020 Amherst Stormwater Management Plan to inform the design of new transportation infrastructure

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AND PENDING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Amherst is fortunate to have a Public Works Department, as well as many local committees and boards overseeing the management of the transportation system, its maintenance, and future infrastructure investments. This includes:

- Amherst Roads Commission
- Amherst Highway Safety Committee
- Amherst Bike and Ped Advisory Committee
- Board of Selectmen
- Planning Board

A review of the Town's 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan resulted in the identification of one transportation related expenditure. A Bridge Repair and Replacement Capital Reserve Fund has been created and \$200,000 has been requested annually to fund state aid bridges and town water crossings needing repair or replacement. The Town has also developed a Road Plan that guides maintenance and reconstruction activities on municipal roadways.

A review of the NH Transportation Improvement Plan identified the following pending projects:

- NH Route 101 - Traffic and Safety Improvements – scheduled for 2022
- NH Route 122 over Route 101 – Deck replacement – scheduled for 2023
- Mt. Vernon Road over Caesar's Brook – Bridge replacement – scheduled for 2023
- Thornton Ferry Road over Beaver Brook – Bridge replacement – scheduled for 2025
- Baboosic Lake Road to Walnut Hill Road - Construct rail trail along abandoned B&M Railroad - scheduled for 2029

Longer term transportation projects that are not yet programmed in the state plan but have been identified as needs in the NRPC Regional Transportation Plan or by NHDOT include:

- Widening of NH Route 101 to a four-lane access-controlled highway
- Constructing a multi-use trail in phases from Thornton Ferry Road to the Amherst Middle School
- Constructing bus shelters at various locations along future bus routes in Amherst
- Constructing a 16-mile paved, non-motorized, Souhegan Valley Rail Trail along the NH 101A rail line corridor.

Economic Development Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- The existing areas of the community with business activity are clearly defined, but have different mixes of uses and densities of activity.
- This pattern of development appears to reflect market forces and corresponding land use regulations, but is not the direct result of any specific economic development strategy.
- The four established economic revitalization zones could be reviewed along with the underlying land use regulations for those areas as Amherst creates a new future land use plan.
- There was a small loss of jobs in Amherst overall since 2009, but some significant increases in weekly wages from 2019 to 2020.
- The majority of jobs in Amherst are filled by employees commuting in from other communities.
- The resident workforce is largely employed outside of Amherst.
- Amherst residents working from home (a combination of home occupations and remote workers) account for at least 20% of the resident labor force, and this is four times higher than the national average.

DATA SOURCES

- NH Department of Employment Security
- US Census – American Community Survey
- NH Economic Development
- Greater Merrimack-Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- Town of Amherst

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the existing business and economic activity in Amherst helps inform the future land use planning for the community. The location and type of business activity has implications for infrastructure, transportation choices, housing, and will factor into the land use regulations Amherst decides to employ to guide future land use changes. It is also beneficial to understand what economic development tools are in place to guide and incentivize specific economic activities, and what tools may be needed in the future. To further inform this planning initiative, Amherst is also completing a buildout analysis to understand the existing character and pattern of development, and to forecast how this development pattern is likely to change or expand under different policy scenarios. Additional economic data will be provided through that process, and there will likely be some overlap with this existing conditions profile.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN AMHERST

Currently in Amherst there are three locations with differing levels of economic activity, and there is also some dispersed business activity town-wide. Each of these geographic areas of business activity will be addressed below:

NH ROUTE 101A CORRIDOR

A more traditional commercial corridor, this area of business activity is in the southernmost section of Amherst. The area has direct access to a four-lane section of NH Route 101A and is an extension of the commercial corridor extending west from Nashua. This linear node of business activity is along a well-traveled regional route with fairly high traffic volumes. As a result, it has attracted national chains, big box stores, and other large-scale businesses that need easy access for deliveries and employees. It has also attracted a number of businesses that need larger spaces and square footage for storage and warehousing, and some smaller service-related businesses. This area of the community has few residential structures, and is predominately an automobile-oriented environment.

ROUTE 101 EAST OF NH 122

Three small nodes of commercial activity have been established along this state route that weaves through the middle of Amherst. This includes Meeting Place Plaza which also includes the Post office, Salzburg Square containing a wide variety of small businesses, and Greely Point. Each of these developments house smaller scale locally owned businesses with shared parking areas. Some individual businesses are also scattered along Route 101 in this section of the community, but at a very low density. This includes



Above: A commercial property on NH Route 101A Corridor



Above: LaBelle Winery

restaurants, an outdoor furniture store, a garden center, and a winery.

VILLAGE

Amherst’s village area is predominantly residential, but contains a few small businesses and several municipal and institutional uses. The Town offices, library, and elementary school are located here along with a small market, auto service business, and churches. This area of mixed use activity is extremely pedestrian and bicycle friendly, is easily accessible by automobile, and is rich in architecture and historic character.

HOME OCCUPATIONS AND REMOTE WORKERS

Throughout the community, residents are also working from home and many have established businesses that may include additional employees and low volumes of customers. The Town has a permit process for these businesses, but many are not noticeable from the street unless they have a small sign. This does not include residents working partially or completely from home for a business located outside of Amherst. As a result, those telecommuters or remote workers are harder to estimate. Prior to the Pandemic, the US Census estimated that 20% of Amherst’s employed residents work from home. This was a fairly high number which may have risen further since the shift to remote work for many people during the Pandemic.

AMHERST’S LARGEST EMPLOYERS

The largest employers in Amherst are all primarily located in the southern portion of the community in the vicinity of Route 101A. Other large employees not listed in the table below include the Town of Amherst and the local schools. One of the most interesting things about this list is that these businesses are well established and have been in Amherst for quite some time.



Above: Amherst Town Hall



Above: An example of a home occupation.

Table 1: Largest Employers in Amherst			
Source: NH Department of Employment Security			
Business	Product/ Service	Employees	Established
Walmart	Retail store	200	1992
H & M Metals Inc.	Steel metal fabrication	130	1970
Diacom Corporation	Fabric-elastomer diaphragms	93	1983
Resin System Corporation	Custom cast thermoset plastic	52	1972
Rontex America Inc.	Non-woven fabrics	23	1976
Vibrac Corporation	Torque test instruments	15	1971
Lowe’s	Home improvement center	--	--

AMHERST'S LABOR FORCE

According to the American Community Survey, 68% of Amherst's population is over the age of sixteen and participating in the civilian labor force in Amherst and the surrounding region. While the number of working residents has grown slowly over the past decade there has been an increase in the percent that are actively employed.

Table 2: Amherst's Labor Force Source: NH Department of Employment Security		
Annual Average Labor Force	2009	2019
Civilian Labor Force	6,305	6,369
Employed	5,987	6,218
Unemployed	318	152
Unemployment Rate	5.0%	2.4%

The majority of Amherst's working residents are employed outside of the community. This has potential implications for existing and future businesses in Amherst. The first being that these businesses need to attract a majority of their employees from outside of Amherst. The

Table 3: Amherst Residence Work Commuting Patterns Source: U.S. Census' American Community Survey	
Percent of Working Residents	2015-2019
Working in community of residence	23.4%
Commuting to another NH community	56.6%
Commuting out-of-state	20%

second is that as these workers begin working from home in higher numbers they may have increasing need for local services.

AMHERST'S EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE STATISTICS

The table below is the most recent employment and wage data available for Amherst, and reflects the fourth quarter of 2020 as collected by the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security. It includes both the private sector jobs and government positions. The employment numbers and earnings for jobs in Amherst are shown in the table below for a variety of different industries as

Table 4: Employment and Wages in Amherst - November - December 2020 Source: NH Department of Employment Security						
Percent of Working Residents	Units	Oct. Employment	Nov. Employment	Dec. Employment	Quarterly Employment	Weekly Wage
Total, private plus government	453	4,689	4,682	4,721	4,697	\$1,372.06
Total private	446	4,095	4,103	4,126	4,108	\$1,400.61
Goods-producing industries	86	1,016	1,007	1,014	1,012	\$1,532.65
Service-providing industries	360	3,079	3,096	3,112	3,096	\$1,357.43
Total government	7	594	579	595	589	\$1,173.08
Federal government	1	18	17	17	17	\$1,165.78
State government	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.00
Local government	6	576	562	578	572	\$1,173.30

reported by the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security. During this decade there was an increase in goods producing jobs in Amherst, and a small loss of government jobs. Service providing jobs have fluctuated over this decade and are now at similar levels to 2009. Comparing this table with the previous table of 2020 data it is clear there was a small loss of jobs in Amherst overall, but some significant increases in weekly wages from 2019 to 2020.

Earnings by workers in Amherst have increased slightly over the past decade, and sharply from 2019 - 2020.

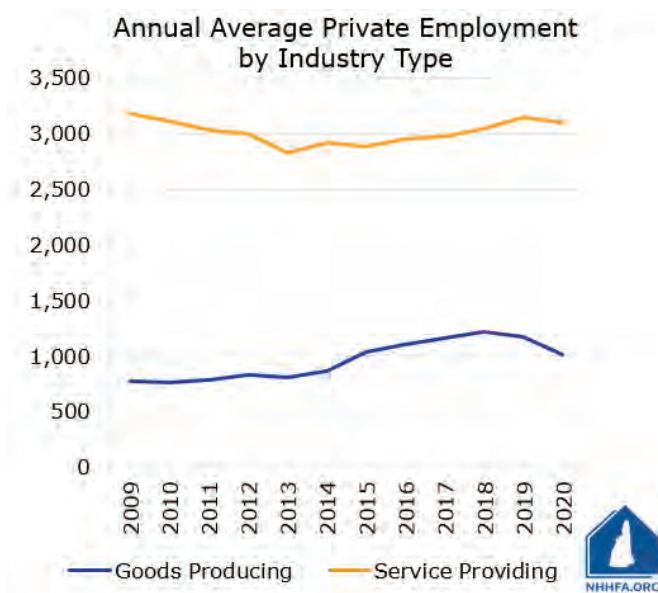


Table 5: Employment and Wages - 2009 and 2019		
Source: NH Department of Employment Security		
Annual Average Covered Employment	2009	2019
Goods producing industries		
Average employment	770	1,172
Average weekly wage	\$895	\$1,188
Service providing industries		
Average employment	3,183	3,140
Average weekly wage	\$744	\$945
Total private industry		
Average employment	3,953	4,312
Average weekly wage	\$773	\$1,011
Government (federal, state, local)		
Average employment	610	589
Average weekly wage	\$906	\$1,005
Total private plus government		
Average employment	4,563	4,900
Average weekly wage	\$791	\$1,010

This increase is reflected in greater detail in the chart and table below as reported by the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security. This data is based on Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program files extracted from Quarterly Employer Tax and Wage reports.

Table 6: Annual Average Covered Private Employment													
Source: NH Housing													
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total Change
Goods-producing industries	770	759	783	832	812	870	1,031	1,105	1,164	1,223	1,172	1,012	242
Service-providing industries	3,183	3,113	3,033	2,993	1,824	2,911	2,884	2,955	2,969	3,046	3,140	3,096	-87
Total private employment	3,953	3,872	3,817	3,825	3,636	3,781	3,916	4,060	4,133	4,269	4,312	4,108	155

Covered Private Employment Average Wages

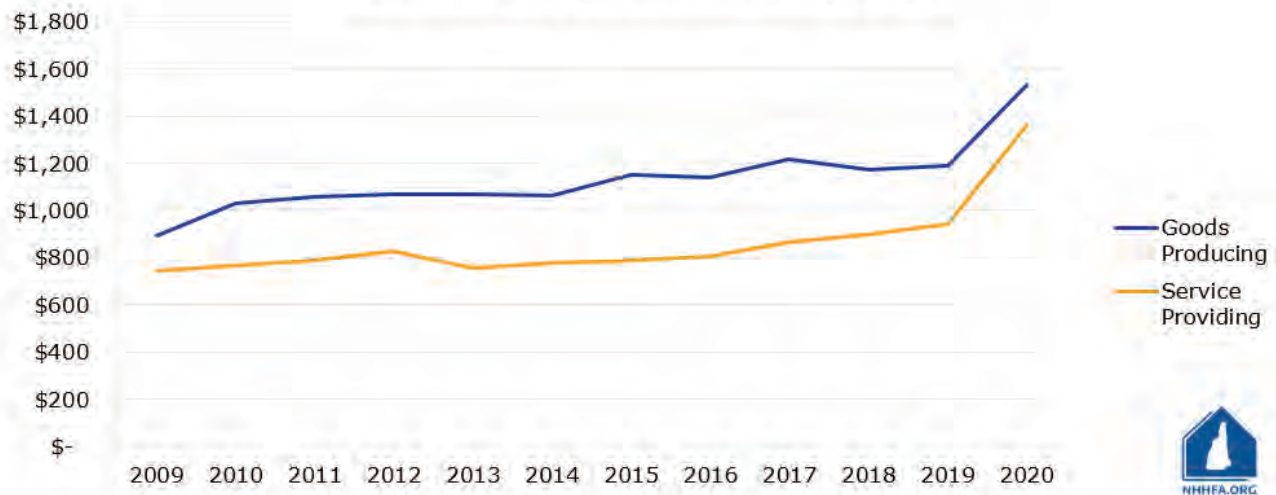


Table 7: Covered Private Employment Wages

Source: NH Housing

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total \$ Change
Goods-producing industries	\$895	\$1,028	\$1,059	\$1,067	\$1,069	\$1,062	\$1,153	\$1,138	\$1,217	\$1,171	\$1,188	\$1,532	\$637
Service-providing industries	\$744	\$765	\$791	\$825	\$757	\$779	\$791	\$806	\$865	\$901	\$945	\$1,357	\$613
Total private employment	\$773	\$817	\$846	\$877	\$827	\$844	\$886	\$896	\$964	\$978	\$1,001	\$1,400	\$627

HOME OCCUPATIONS AND REMOTE WORKERS

The number of residents working from home in Amherst (20%+) is worth noting as it was four times the national average (5%) in 2019. This is likely linked to the high levels of education and annual income reflected in Amherst compared to the surrounding region. It is likely that the available infrastructure that supports working from home also plays a role. The majority of Amherst households have access to a computer and broadband.

The home occupations that compose a portion of these residents working from home are easier to track than the remote workers. Over the past 5.5 years, fifteen businesses have filed with the Town of Amherst for home occupation permits. The types of businesses requesting these home occupation permits include

Table 8: Computer and Internet Use

Source: U.S. Census' American Community Survey

Computer and Internet Use	2015-2019
Households with a computer	97.7%
Households with a broadband internet subscription	96%

Table 9: Home Occupation Permits Granted

Source: Town of Amherst

Year	Permits Granted
2016	1
2017	2
2018	4
2019	3
2020	4
2021	1

a variety of office uses, a family day-care, two bed and breakfasts, a massage therapist, a short-term rental, art and small products producers, and construction related office and equipment storage.

EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND TOOLS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFFING

For a short period of time, the Town of Amherst had an Economic Development Department within the Office of Community Development. The role of this department was to work closely with the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce, which is now the Greater Merrimack-Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties while working to retain the local business base and encourage others to locate here.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Greater Merrimack-Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce promotes the economic vitality and high quality of life of the eleven towns within the Souhegan Valley and the Town of Merrimack, located in southern New Hampshire. The Chamber promotes collaboration, advocacy and economic opportunities for the businesses and organizations that strengthen these communities, with the goal of making the region a dynamic place to live, work, and play. <https://www.gmsvcc.org/>

AMHERST'S ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION ZONES PROGRAM

In the fall of 2012, the Board of Selectmen endorsed and the State of NH has approved the creation of four Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZ) in Amherst. In December of 2017 the State of New Hampshire approved the continuation of the four ERZs in Amherst. ERZs were established to stimulate economic redevelopment, expand the commercial and industrial base, create new jobs, reduce sprawl, and increase tax revenues within the state by encouraging economic revitalization in designated areas. This program, which is detailed in RSA 162-N, serves as an economic development and revitalization tool by offering individual businesses State Tax Credits towards their business profits and business enterprise taxes for improving infrastructure and creating jobs in designated areas of the municipality.

To qualify for these credits the business must expand the communities commercial or industrial base through:

- Development of new buildings, or
- Investment in significant repairs or expansion of existing buildings, or
- Adding machinery and equipment, and
- Hiring new full-time staff

The four designated ERZs in Amherst include:

- Designated properties along NH Route 101A
- Designated properties along portions of the NH Route 101 Corridor
- Designated properties in the vicinity of The Meeting Place
- Designated properties in the vicinity of LaBelle Winery

The following maps depict the designated ERZ's in Amherst in greater detail:

Town of Amherst, New Hampshire

Proposed Route 101A Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZ)

ERZ Parcels

- Brownfield
- Developed
- Underdeveloped
- Vacant

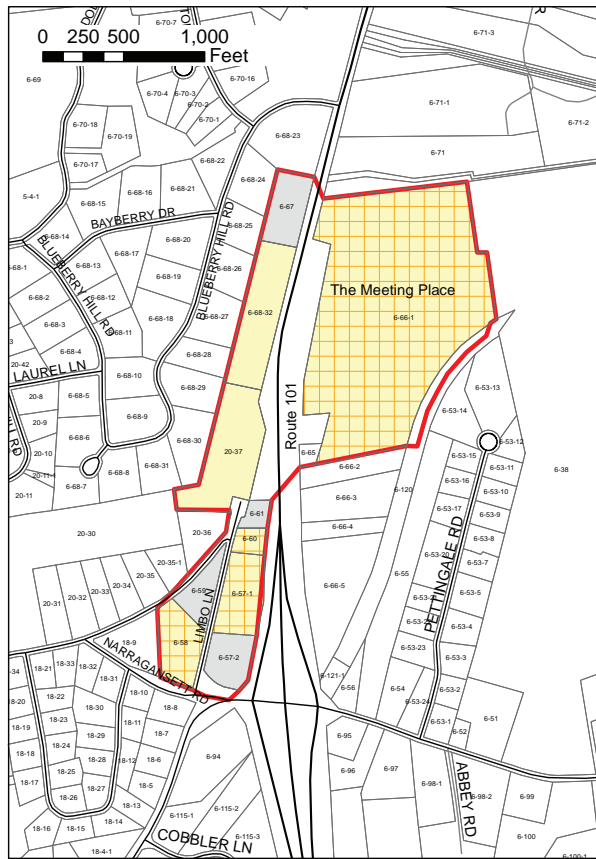
Road System

- State Route
- Local Road
- Private Road
- Class VI

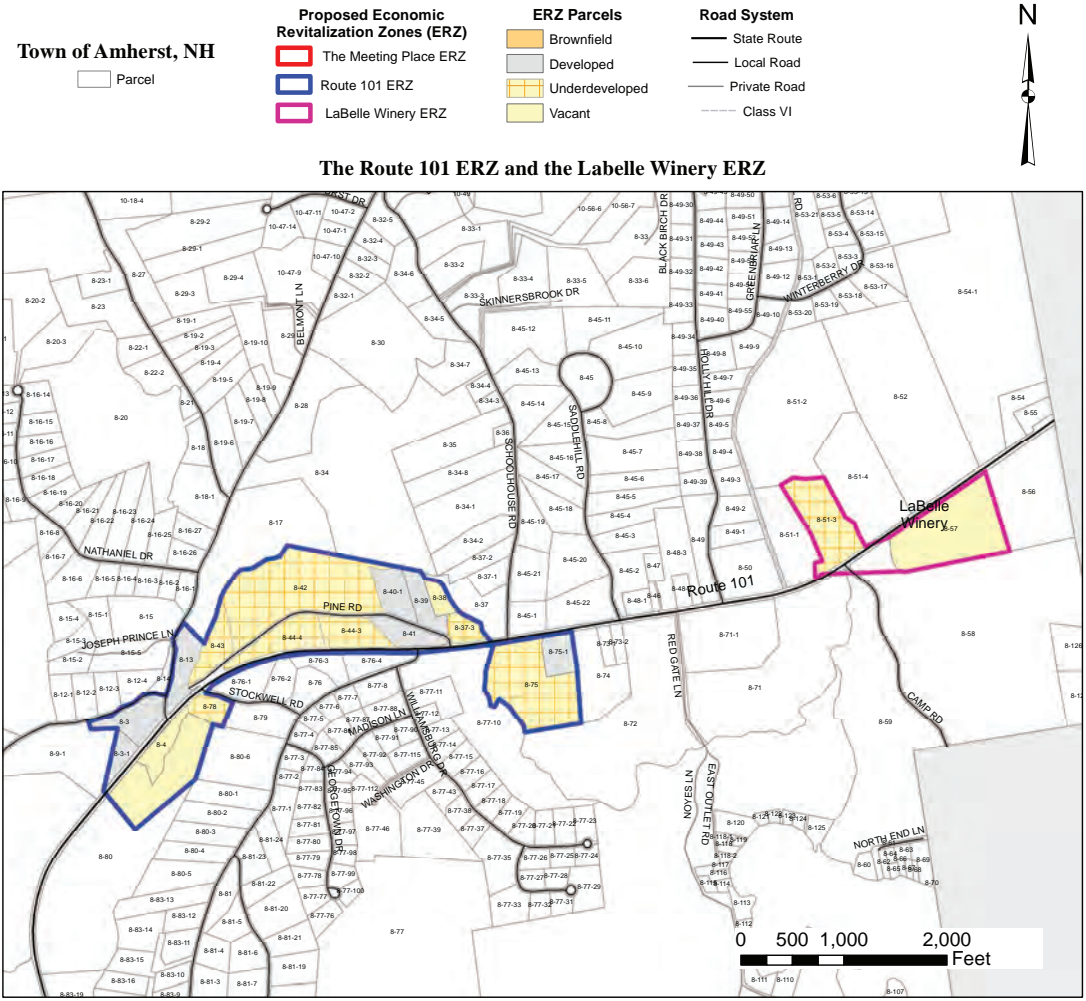
0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

The data displayed on this map is a public resource. The Town of Amherst makes no warranty, representation or guarantee as to the accuracy, completeness or quality of the data displayed on this map. The data is provided for informational purposes only. The data is not to be used for any other purpose without the express written consent of the Town of Amherst. The data is provided as is, without any warranty, representation or guarantee.

Proposed 101 Economic Revitalization Zones



The Meeting Place ERZ



FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Amherst's recent community survey generated valuable feedback on how residents perceive the community and how they would like land use changes and economic development activities guided in the future. It was clear from the survey responses that residents feel that maintaining the rural character and feeling of Amherst is a high priority, but also indicated that limiting commercial density within Amherst was less of a priority. This potential conflict could be addressed by the fact that the majority of respondents felt that promoting community design standards which reflect Amherst's natural and rural character was an important priority.

Half of the survey respondents felt that attracting new businesses to Amherst was important. While there was limited interest in additional commercial services, including professional services, there was interest in additional restaurants and in a year-round farmer's market and locally grown products. Linked to this desire there was great interest in encouraging agri-business (Community Supported Agriculture, small farms, etc.) and agri-tourism (vineyards, corn mazes, pumpkin picking, etc.). There was less interest in encouraging new light industrial development (assembly, manufacturing, etc.), new office development, or new retail development.

Related to existing businesses and the areas of the community where they are located several needs were identified. Improvements to broadband were identified as a need by business owners that responded to the survey. The majority of business owners responding also stated that they plan to continue their businesses as is or possibly expand in coming years. There was also interest from survey respondents in improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in proximity to existing businesses. Ensuring business-friendly regulations, permitting, inspections, and understandable business requirements was also identified as an ongoing need. Lastly, there was also interest in greater collaboration between the Town and business community on marketing and identifying future business locations.

AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Recreation Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- Recreation infrastructure is the fourth highest priority for Amherst residents from the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey.
- The Amherst Parks & Recreation Department offers more than 40 programs for all ages at 16 different sites throughout town. Sites are a combination of built structures, designed open spaces including athletic fields, and natural areas like Baboosic Lake.
- Amherst offers a great number of indoor/outdoor public and private recreational areas.
- There are 43 miles of trails in Amherst offering a diversity of recreational opportunities that include but are not limited to hiking/walking, bicycling, skiing, and equestrian pursuits on over 16 unique trail systems.
- Data suggests high recreational usage on many of Amherst's roads and trails throughout the year including Joe English Preserve and Buckmeadow trail systems. Additionally, data suggests the 2 canoe launches along the Souhegan River are actively used and provide an opportunity that neighboring towns do not.
- NH DOT has identified 25.9 miles of recommended paved bicycle routes and an additional 1.8 miles of recommended unpaved bicycle routes in Amherst.

DATA SOURCES

- 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey
- Amherst Conservation Commission
- Amherst Parks & Recreation Department
- Strava Global Heatmap
- Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Amherst Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

INTRODUCTION

Historically, recreation has played an important role in Amherst and continues to be a vital aspect of residents' activities. This importance is identified in the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey where 73% of respondents believe recreational infrastructure is either a high priority or the highest priority. Based on that, recreational infrastructure is the fourth highest priority for residents. 62% of residents responded that safe bike/walk paths are either a high priority or the highest priority. Additionally, of respondents who chose to write in priority options (Other A and B), approximately 12% of comments referenced recreation as a priority. Here are a few comments from the survey referencing recreation as a priority:

"The trails and recreation in the natural world are very important in this town and a big attraction for many. It's part of what made the decision for us many years ago. And continues to be very important especially as the pandemic has borne out."

"Parks, recreation areas, trails and bike paths build feeling of community for residents. Continue the good work."

"More professional videos of all our wonderful town events and all the outdoor recreation opportunities. Sell these attributes. Make Amherst a real destination for active families, young and old."

Recreation in Amherst is provided through a variety of infrastructure and programming including sidewalks and pedestrian walks, hiking and mountain biking trails, public beaches, multi-purpose athletic fields, game courts, and town-sponsored recreational programs.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Amherst has an active Parks & Recreation Department maintaining and offering many facilities and programs for all ages. Recreation opportunities in town take advantage of the built facilities and some of the natural resources the town has to offer including Baboosic Lake. The full list of sites and facilities offered are found in Table 1 on the following page. **The list of programs offered by the Department are shown in Table 2. The Town could consider investing in a deeper study to analyze whether the existing recreation facilities and programs are meeting the community needs. Additionally, this study could also determine whether existing funding for recreational facility maintenance is adequate.** The Table 3 highlights properties that support recreation in Amherst. The Town of Amherst owns 2,695 acres of conserved land, but that does not include any of the school fields used for recreation.

Table 1: Amherst Parks and Recreation Department List of Facilities		
Site Name	Facilities	Address
Amherst Makerspace at Amherst Middle School	Amherst Makerspace	14 Cross Rd.
Amherst Middle School	Chorus Room Life Skills Room Tennis Courts Art Room #2 Gymnasium Computer Lab Library Cafeteria Softball Field #1 Baseball Field AMS #2 Softball/Soccer Field #3 Flat Field #4 Gaga Pit	14 Cross Rd.
Amherst Recreation Department Office	Office	4 Cross Rd.
Amherst Village Green	Open Space	2 Main St.
Baboosic Lake Town Beach	Beach Pavillion Playground Volleyball Court Waterfront	25 Broadway
Bean Fields	Field #1 Field #2 - Practice Field Field #3 Field #4 - Baseball Diamond	Boston Post Rd.
Birch Park	Disc Golf Course Pump Track	11 Baboosic Lake Rd.
Buchanan Park	Park	13 Middle St.
Davis Lane Tennis Courts	Tennis Courts	Davis Lane
Joshua's Park	Park	37 Courthouse Rd.
Mount Vernon Village School	Baseball Diamon Classroom Gym- Basketball	Hardwood Rd.
Peabody Mill Environmental Center	Large room 1 Large room 2 Large room 3 Small room 1 Small room 2 Book nook Screen porch Lab upstairs Sawyer Cottage Outdoors	66 Brook Rd.

Souhegan High School	Field 1 - baseball diamond Field 2 - baseball diamond Annex classroom Back field 1 - soccer Back field 2 - soccer Back field 3 - soccer Back field 3 Cafeteria Fitness center Front field 1 Front field 2 Gymnasium Room 105 Simeon Wilson Flat Field Simeon Wilson Flat Softball Field Track Calvetti Field	412 Boston Post Rd.
Spalding Field	Field 1 Front Field 2 Back Spalding Field	Davis Lane and Froundry St.
Stearn-Davis Community Garden	Community garden	31 Courthouse Rd.
Wilkins School	Classroom Front field Gymnasium/Multi-purpose room Lower Wilkins Field Upper Wilkins Field A Upper Wilkins Field B Upper Wilkins Fields A & B	Boston Post Rd.
Buck Meadow	Building Fields	31 NH-101A

Table 2: Amherst Parks and Recreation Department List of Programs	
Summer Programs	
Baboosic Lake Summer Camp	Beach Yoga
Outdoor Discover Summer Camp	Paddleboard Yoga
Counselor-in-Training Programs	Summer Sport Camps
Swim Lessons	Specialized Camps (i.e. Girls Empowerment Camp)
Swim Team	Bocce Ball League
Baboosic Lake Town Beach and Boat Rentals	
Sports and Fitness	
Adult and Youth Summer Sports Leagues	Archery
Youth Baseball (Fall and Spring)	Yoga, Pilates, Barre, Strength Group Fitness Classes
Youth Softball (Fall and Spring)	Sports Clinics
Youth Basketball (Travel and Rec Leagues)	XC Ski Lessons
Youth Soccer	Disc Golf Course and Tournaments
Youth Lacrosse	E-Sport Leagues

Youth Cheerleading	Outdoor/Environmental Programming
Mountain Biking Programs and Trips	I Love Nature - toddler program
Ice Skating and Hockey Lessons	Homeschool Science Classes
Youth Dance Classes	Field Trips to PMEC
Outreach Environmental Programs	Backcountry Survival Skills
Full Moon Hikes	Deck the Trails
Scouting Programs	Winter Carnival
Weekly Hiking Groups	
Sports and Fitness	
Amherst Makerspace	Doors on the Green (Halloween event)
Art Classes	February Vacation Camp
Ukelele Classes	Apothecary Classes
New England Trips (museums, Boston Flower Shop, brewery tours, etc.)	Red Cross Courses

Table 3: Properties supporting recreation include, but are not limited to:	
Name of Property	Acres in Amherst
Amherst Middle School	35 acres
Arnold Land	100 acres
B+M Rail Bed	18 acres
Beaver Brook Park	2 acres
Bragdon Farm	77 acres
Ceasar's Brook Reservation	40 acres
Creeley Buchanan Field	0.5 acres
Dacquino Forest	67 acres
Great Meadow	75 acres
Hager and Gelinas Lots	237 acres
Haseltine Land	123 acres
Joe English Reservation	582 acres
Joppa Hill Farm	130 acres
Joshua's Park	4 acres
Lindabury Orchard	46 acres
Pond Parish	166 acres
Prescott	48 acres
Souhegan High School	48.3 acres
Other private properties supporting recreation include, but are not limited to	
Ponemah Greens Golf Course	86 acres
Amherst Country Club	110 acres
Souhegan Woods Golf Course	191 acres
Jasper Valley Swim and Tennis Club	5 acres
Camp Young Judea	168 acres

TRAIL NETWORK

A robust trail network exists in Amherst. With nearly 43 miles of trails, a variety of recreational activities are possible including hiking, biking, skiing, and horseback riding. Many of these trails are located on the open space properties mentioned above and are depicted on the Recreation Trails Map. Worth noting is Amherst's trail network's connections to neighboring towns with significant trail links to Milford and Merrimack and plans to connect to Bedford as well.

Table 4: Amherst Trail Types	
Trail Type	Miles
Miles of known pedestrian trails	42.1
Miles of known bike trails	22
Miles of known horse trails	29.9
Miles of known ski trails	35.5
TOTAL TRAILS	42.9

Amherst's local trail network is broken into several distinct trail system designations, several of which correspond to the publicly accessible open space properties listed earlier in this section. The list of trail systems and their mileage are shown in Table 5 on the following page. Individual maps of different trail systems

are found on the Amherst Conservation Commission website.

AMHERST BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Amherst's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is a local group working to improve/expand the network of multi-use paths in Amherst. Their mission is to facilitate a town-wide network to enhance and encourage safe, multi-use transportation for connectivity, recreation, and health through the development of strategic and actionable plans. Their work is guided by the Amherst Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, which is used to inform the design of any proposed municipal, state, or private projects to buildout a network of multimodal pathways as efficiently as possible.

Pending projects include village multi-modal infrastructure improvements, the Baboosic Greenway project, multi-use pathway projects in the vicinity of the schools, and the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail. While the creation of this network of multi-use trails and pathways will provide critical recreation infrastructure, it will also double as transportation infrastructure increasing the opportunities for additional modes of travel within the community. Additionally, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission is currently

RECREATION TRAILS MAP

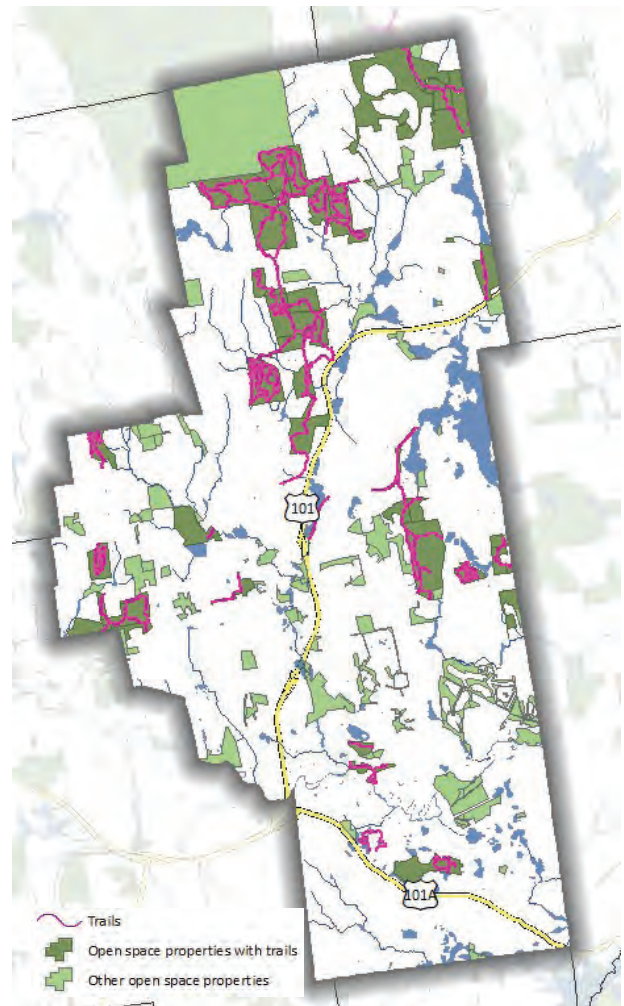


Table 5: Trail Systems	
System Name	Miles
Atherton Land	0.6 miles
Betty Arnold Forest	7.9 miles
Bragdon Farm	0.5 miles
Buckmeadow	1 mile
Cesar's Brook Reservation	1.4 miles
Converse Woods	1.3 miles
Grater Woods	0.7 miles
Hasteltine Preserve	3.4 miles
Hodgman State Forest	0.3 miles
Joe English Reservation	12 miles
Joppa Hill	3 miles
Lindabury Orchard	1 mile
Oxbow Conservation Area	0.9 miles
Patch Hill Conservation Area	1.9 miles
Pond Parish	2.9 miles
Ponemah Bog Wildlife Sanctuary	0.8 miles
Other	3.3 miles

developing a regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan that will provide further direction on establishing a regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities

RECREATION USES

There are innovative ways to assess the popularity or use of existing recreational assets in Amherst for various forms of recreation. Strava, self-described as a “social network for athletes”, tracks and analyzes the activity and movements of its users by connecting to the individual’s device (phone, watch, GPS, etc). Strava collects the locational information of its users, which is public, and provides usage maps (also known as heatmaps) wherever their users recreate. It should be noted that the data provided by Strava represents a slice of recreation users in town and should not be used to represent all recreational users in Amherst.

To learn more about how Strava’s heatmaps are

built, visit <<https://medium.com/strava-engineering/the-global-heatmap-now-6x-hotter-23fc01d301de>>.

The Town-Wide Heat Map represents all forms of recreation in Amherst that Strava collects – bicycle, run/walk, aquatic, and winter activities. It is clear from this map that Strava users are frequently recreating on Amherst’s roads and trails.

Given the number of comments from the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey, the Town could consider expanding the network of sidewalks and bicycle lanes in the center of town and around schools for recreation and safety.

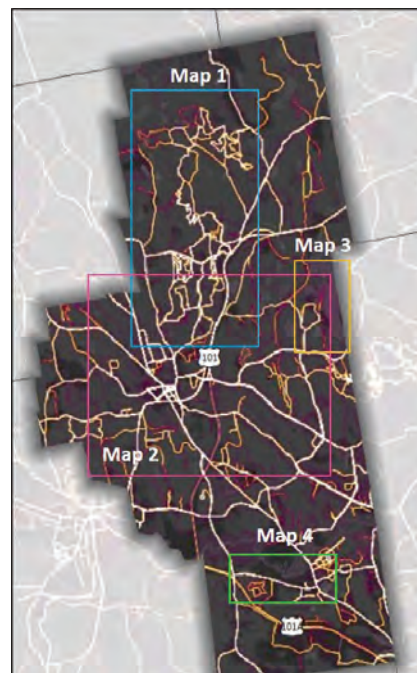
INSET MAP #1



BICYCLE RECREATION USAGE:

Inset Map 1 shows bicycle usage on trails and roads around the Joe English and Haseltine Preserves, which are two trail systems with high usage in town. Other areas like Cesar’s Brook Reservation and Pond Parish have smaller usage levels but are still used by many for recreation. There were several comments from the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey that referenced the addition of bicycle lanes on roads in town for recreation, commuting, and general road safety. Images like this inset map provide visual support to many of these comments pertaining to the need for bicycle lanes on existing roads or developing separate bicycle routes.

TOWN-WIDE HEAT MAP



RUN/WALK RECREATION USAGE

Inset Map 2 shows high run/walk usage along streets in the center of town. Images like this help provide visual support to many of the comments from the 2021 Amherst Master Plan Survey that mention sidewalks in the center of town and around the schools for recreation and safety.

AQUATIC RECREATION USAGE

Inset Map 3 shows the water recreation usage patterns on Baboosic Lake. From this image, it's clear the Amherst Town Beach provides the starting point for the lion share of aquatic recreation on Baboosic Lake. In addition to this extensive aquatic recreation usage, there are two canoe launches along the Souhegan River providing opportunities that are visible on the Strava water heatmap.

It is worth noting that there is a lack of aquatic recreation identified by Strava along the Souhegan River east and west of Amherst. This is an indication that these canoe launches are providing recreation opportunities that neighboring towns may not be. The two canoe launches are:

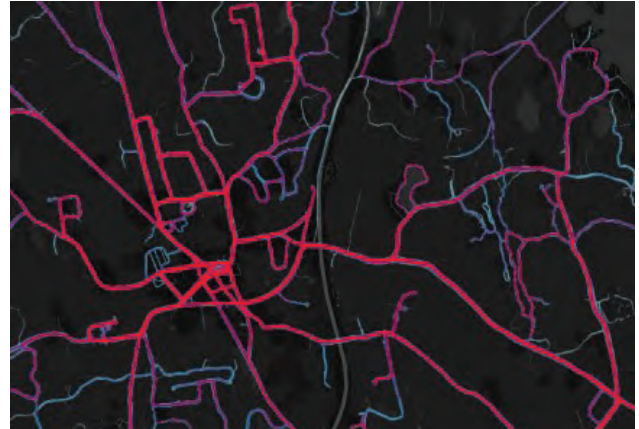
- On land owned by the Amherst Country Club, along Route 122 near the Souhegan River Bridge. A narrow dirt driveway runs from the road to a small parking area by the river.
- Amherst Conservation Commission property is on Boston Post Road, near the Souhegan River bridge.

WINTER RECREATION USAGE

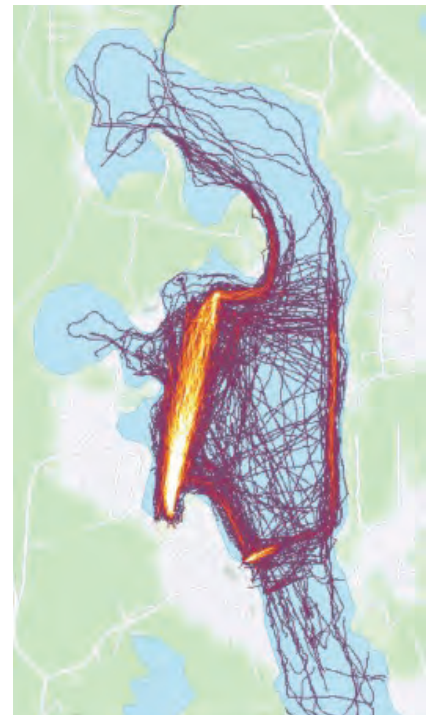
Inset Map 4 shows the highest winter recreation usage along the Buckmeadow trail system with some additional usage at the Ponemah Bog Wildlife Sanctuary. Although there are several other winter recreation areas being used in Amherst including Baboosic Lake and the Betty Arnold Forest trail system, Buckmeadow is receiving the highest usage among Strava users.

All Strava heatmap information can be viewed here: <https://www.strava.com/heatmap#9.00/-71.86802/43.54958/blue/ride>.

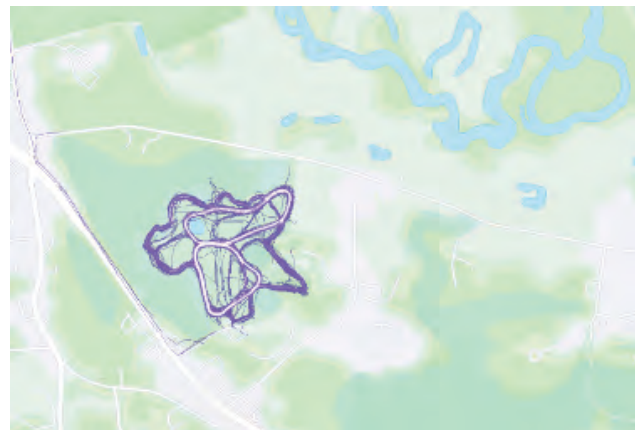
INSET MAP #2



INSET MAP #3



INSET MAP #4



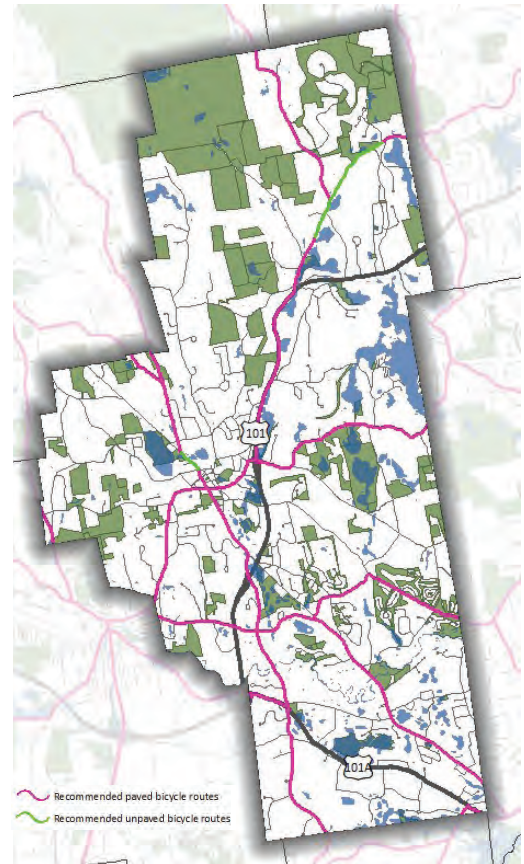
RECOMMENDED BICYCLE ROUTES

The NH Department of Transportation maintains an interactive bicycle route map found [here](#): (click here to visit the page to get the full web address). Included in this map are DOT recommended bicycle routes. In Amherst there are 25.9 miles of recommended paved bicycle routes and an additional 1.8 miles of unpaved recommended bicycle routes. The map of the state's Recommended Bicycle Routes to the right shows these recommended routes, many of which coincide with the Strava street bicycle heatmap.

PROPERTIES SUPPORTING RECREATION

The Town of Amherst owns and maintains many open space properties that support recreation in town totaling approximately 2,778 acres. Table 3 shows some of the public and private properties that support recreation in Amherst.

RECOMMENDED BICYCLE ROUTES MAP



Public Facilities and Services Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- Amherst residents value high-quality public facilities and services including schools, roads, utilities, and recreation spaces.
- Amherst Departments are proactive in tracking and performing maintenance on town buildings, infrastructure, facilities, and open space. Digital systems have been invested in to track maintenance efficiently.
- The structuring of public safety buildings over the last few years (i.e. moving EMS from the police station to the fire station) and the renovation of the police station has greatly improved and addressed public safety space needs.
- There is a gap in senior services in Amherst including activity space, transportation, and diverse housing options.
- There is a need for indoor recreation and activity space. A multi-purpose community and senior center would meet multiple goals in Amherst including improvements to aging in place, providing recreation for all ages, and enhancing social and meeting space.

DATA SOURCES

- 2010 Amherst Master Plan Inventory
- 2020 Amherst Town Report
- 2022-2027 Amherst Capital improvement Plan
- Interviews with Department Heads
- Town of Amherst Website
- Envision Amherst Community Survey
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- School Facilities Public Forum Presentation by the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee

INTRODUCTION

This section identifies and describes the public facilities and services that the Town of Amherst provides to its residents. As the town continues to grow, municipal services will need to change to reflect the needs of the community. Aging facilities may need to be replaced and/or upgraded. Existing town services may need to be adjusted and adapted to meet applicable codes, changes in technology, changes in available methods for increased efficiency, etc. New services and facilities may be needed to accommodate a growing elderly population. These changes will impact the way in which services are provided, the buildings which house them, as well as their capital needs, and therefore, the town budget. The information presented in this section is a compilation of a review of relevant previous studies, documents and information posted on the web and presented in annual Town Reports, and interviews with Department Heads and other contacts.

Public facilities and services covered in this section include:

- Police Department
- Public Safety Communications Center
- Amherst Fire Rescue
- Town Administrative Offices
- Schools
- Department of Public Works
- Public Library
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Peabody Mill Environmental Center
- Senior Services
- Utilities

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Amherst Police Department is located at 175 Amherst Street and was built in 1980, with subsequent renovations/additions in 1988 and 1996, and is now currently undergoing a renovation that began in 2017. The need for additional Police Department space has developed over the last 20+ years, and the use of both levels (and completion of the unfinished third floor) will accommodate current and future needs. The Department has three

SUMMARY OF RESIDENT INPUT

Priorities of Amherst residents related to public facilities and services include:

- High-quality schools
- Well-maintained roads and public infrastructure
- Connected sidewalks
- Senior services
- Ample recreation facilities
- Coordinate broadband internet and communications
- Recycling services



Above: Amherst Police Station

holding cells, office space, storage space, a training/meeting room, locker room, and sally port. The Police use an outside firing range for training located on state land on Route 101A. The Department has 6 marked patrol vehicles; 1 marked SRO vehicle; 1 marked patrol motorcycle; and 4 unmarked vehicles.

STAFFING

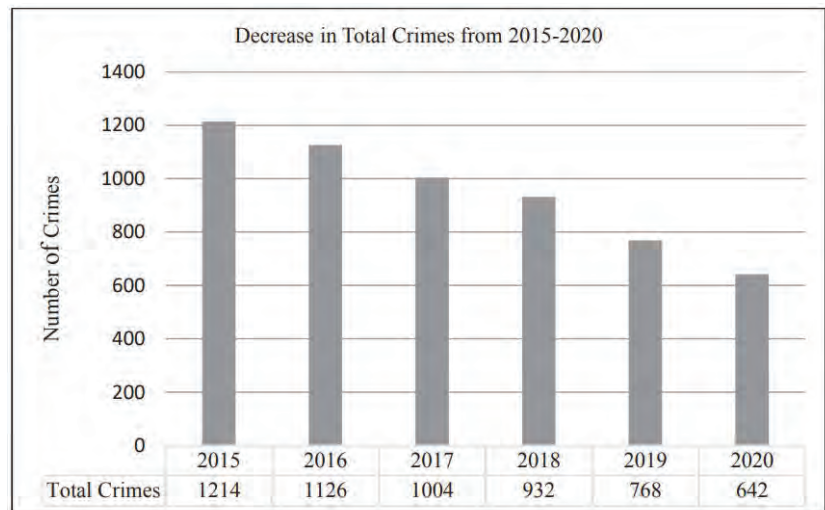
The Police Department has 19 full-time officers (no part-time officers); 2 civilian crossing guards; 1 civilian executive assistant on the Police side; and 5 full-time and 4 part-time dispatchers on the Communications side.

POLICE ACTIVITY AND CALLS FOR SERVICE

In 2020, the Department increased direct patrols of town roads and neighborhoods from 7,278 to 17,336 – a 138% increase. Security checks were also increased for town and commercial buildings from 19,847 to 25,336 – a 28% increase. The goal of these increases is to be more visible throughout town by encouraging an improved sense of safety and security for residents. Since 2015, crime has dropped 53% in town (see top right graph). There were 642 crimes in 2020 representing the lowest overall crime rate in Amherst since 1993. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the Amherst Police Department's annual activity related to miles patrolled, motor vehicle crashes, arrests, crimes, traffic stops, and incidents. In 2020, the Police Department had 60,008 calls for service.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

The Police Department provides a number of community services including: DARE, Good Morning Amherst (a check-in program on



Above: Annual Crimes in Amherst - 2020 Town Report

**Table 1: Police Department Statistics
(2020 Amherst Annual Town Report)**

Activity	2017	2018	2019	2020
Miles of Patrol	231,449	232,875	196,066	207,723
Motor Vehicle Crashes	389	352	332	255
Adult Arrests	378	348	280	245
Juvenile Arrests	56	58	30	29
Total Crimes	1,004	932	768	642
Traffic Stops	10,820	13,580	10,536	6,285
Incidents				
Alarm Calls	536	525	488	441
Animal Complaints	296	283	488	441
Assist Motorists	374	363	268	218
Building Checks	23,820	23,595	19,847	25,366
Vacant House Checks	3,819	3,994	3,874	3,019
School Safety Checks	332	321	305	174
Directed Patrols	9,730	10,059	7,278	17,336
Vehicle Complaints	525	503	515	392
Pistol Permits	800	859	854	749
Police Service	800	859	854	749
Suspicious Activity	357	376	317	338
911 Hang Up	60	49	49	44
Disturbances	76	105	74	101
Fireworks Complaints*	-	-	-	18
Gunshots Heard Complaints*	-	-	-	12

**New record keeping categories, previously included with disturbances*

elderly population), Project Safeguard, RAD (Rape Aggression and Defense) Training for teen and adult women, Code Yellow (registering loved ones with mental health issues such as Autism and Alzheimer's to aid police response), 24/7 drug disposal (for expired and/or unwanted medications), and a Student Resource Officer Program (two school resource officers, FT assignments to Middle and High schools). The Amherst Police Department is also involved with the New Hampshire Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and is one of 40 departments who train and contribute personnel to this group.

AMHERST POLICE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Amherst Police Department and Amherst Fire Rescue utilize the CodeRED Emergency Notification System, which is an ultra high-speed telephone communication service for emergency notifications. The system allows emergency service departments to telephone all registered town residents or specifically targeted areas of the town in case of an emergency situation.

The system is capable of dialing 50,000 phone numbers per hour, delivering a recorded message to a live person or an answering machine, and making three attempts to connect to landlines and cell phones. Code Red is used to notify residents of incidents such as severe weather, substantial utility outages, evacuation notices, missing or lost persons, fires or floods, major roadway issues, significant criminal situations, chemical spills or gas leaks and other community emergencies.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- **Police Station Renovations:** To meet current and future space needs, a two-phase renovation project began in 2017 to relocate the Amherst Emergency Management Service ambulances and personnel into the Amherst Fire Rescue building. Phase One of this project was completed in 2020 and allowed the Police Department to acquire additional space by expanding into the former EMS areas on the lower level. Phase Two is slated for completion in 2021 and will accommodate staff and storage spaces on the second floor. When fully completed, these Phase One and Two updates should serve the town's needs for the next 30 years. The 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan provided an estimate of \$600,000 for three years for the entire project and proposed to be funded through the capital reserve fund at \$200,000 per year.
- **Body Worn Cameras:** Implement a program that promotes body worn cameras on police officers.
- **Fleet Vehicles:** Increase minimum number of marked fleet vehicles.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The Amherst Public Safety Communications Center (APSCC) began operating in 2005 and is the central hub for the coordination and response of our town's emergency services. The APSCC provides police, fire, medical, and public works emergency dispatch services to the residents of Amherst. Direct oversight of the Center is handled by the Chief of Police, while scheduling and day to day operational matters are handled by the Center's Communications Coordinator.

The Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year, and is located inside Amherst Fire Rescue. On average, Amherst's Communications Specialists are responsible for handling and logging 4,500 incidents per month in our dispatch computer system. Incidents include calls for police, fire, and EMS services, general police information notices, and officer-initiated activity such as traffic stops and vacant house checks.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- **Safety Complex Communication Tower Replacement:** The 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan identifies the need for a Safety Complex Communication Tower Replacement. The tower was constructed in the early 1980s and has evolved to serve as the primary radio communications dispatch tower for the town's Fire, EMS, DPW, and Police services. While minor structural improvements were made during recent years, the tower height is an increasing concern as foliage growth continues, and compromised line-of-sight microwave communication interference is inevitable.
- **Safety Complex Communication Dispatch Console:** The 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan identifies the replacement of dispatch center's communications consoles used to dispatch emergency services as a scheduled priority project. The life expectancy of the current equipment is in 2025 and the Center will need updated equipment to perform dispatch services effectively.

FIRE AND RESCUE

Amherst Fire Rescue is located at 177 Amherst Street and is a combined fire and emergency medical service department. Formerly two departments, Amherst Fire & Amherst EMS were merged in 2015 and now operate as Amherst Fire Rescue. This department delivers emergency medical services and fire suppression services to the residents and visitors of Amherst. The Town of Amherst is one of the few remaining towns in the State of NH with a population over 10,000 that continues to provide fire protection and emergency response to its citizens with a predominantly part time/ paid-on-call (volunteer) department.



Above: Amherst Fire Rescue

Fire Rescue also provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) 24/7 services with their staffing of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and Advanced or Paramedic level providers. Both of Amherst's Ambulances are licensed at the paramedic level. Additionally, with the departments dual certified staff, there is an increased ability to handle multiple emergency medical calls that come in at the same time, thus reducing the times we would have a mutual aid ambulance from another community coming in to assist. The Fire Department has automatic mutual aid agreements with the bordering communities; these are Bedford, Hollis, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, and New Boston. The Fire Prevention Office provides education, life safety code enforcement and inspections for all residential and business properties in town.

The Department manages a vehicle fleet that includes 4 Class A Pumpers (fire engines), 1 Tower Ladder, 1 Tanker (3000 gallon's on wheels), a large Forestry truck, and a four-wheel-drive pick-up truck with a skid unit (150 gallon tank and a pump). The Department also has 2 SUV's (Ford Explorer that is used by our EMS staff to respond to emergency calls and a Chevy Tahoe that is a command vehicle), 2 Ambulances, and a Pick-up/utility truck that is used by the fire inspector.

STAFFING

Fire Rescue has three full-time positions including the Chief of Department, Deputy Chief (Fire Inspector / Investigator), and Captain for Fire & EMS Operations. The Chief of Department oversees the entire department which is broken down into two divisions, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The Deputy Chief oversees the fire prevention bureau which includes inspections, prevention, public education, code enforcement and fire investigations. Additionally, they are second in command for daily operations of both divisions. The Captain of Fire/ EMS operations is the direct supervisor for the EMS division and handles the scheduling, staffing, resource/supply management, as coordinating training requirements for both divisions. All three officers respond to emergency calls. Currently, there are 38 paid on-call firefighters that are part of the Fire division.

The EMS division is staffed 24/7 by part-time emergency medical providers providing both basic life support and advanced life support medical treatment. Through a contract agreement, Amherst Fire Rescue also provides EMS coverage to the Town of Mont Vernon. There are also three EMS positions that cover what would be 24/7, 365 days a year full-time spots that the Town uses part time employees for. The Department also has 16 Paramedics, 12 Advanced EMT’s and 7 EMT’s. These numbers are combined from part-time personnel from outside the department and those that are from the paid on-call firefighters with dual certifications. There is currently no administrative assistant on staff.

FIRE STATIONS

The **Central Fire Station**, built in 1988, has two double drive-through bays and three single bays, which are sufficient at this time for vehicles. There is a need for additional space for storage, which the Department is currently investigating options to meet this need. There are 27 on-call firefighters stationed at Central Station.

A sub-station, the **South Fire Station**, located at 62 Stearns Road, was built in 1974 and has not had any major renovations since. The South Fire Station has three bays, which are currently sufficient to meet existing space needs. However, the replacement of the South Fire Station building is currently slated as a capital improvement for 2032. Further evaluation will be needed to determine whether this structure will expand, based on how the town grows and how much additional residential and commercial development occurs in the future. There are 11 on-call firefighters stationed at South Station.

Fire Rescue ensure regular maintenance of the buildings to ensure longevity of it’s facilities. Recently, the Department switched over to power cots/stretchers (battery operated) for the ambulances, which was a significant improvement.

CALLS FOR SERVICE AND RESPONSE TIMES

Fire and Rescue follows fire and emergency response time standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Calls for service over the last six years are show in the table to the right and are broken out by fire and by medical calls. In general, there has been a slight decrease in calls for service over the last several years.

Table 2: Fire and Rescue Calls for Service						
Call Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Fire Calls	553	524	531	503	475	449
Med Calls	840	901	977	1018	974	820

DEPARTMENT/BUILDING NEEDS AND FUTURE PROJECTS

- **Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair Capital Reserve Fund Funding :** According to the 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan, there is a need to adequately and regularly replace fire rescue vehicles and equipment when due for replacement. The Capital Reserve Fund was identified as the best source for these regular expenditures.
- **Vehicle Replacements:** A number of vehicles are due for replacement and are included in the CIP including two fire engines, pick-up truck, ambulance, and tower. Further down the line (2028), a new paramedic response vehicle will be needed.



Above: Amherst Town Hall

TOWN HALL

The Town Hall building, located at 2 Main Street, was originally built in the early 1800's and was the county courthouse until the Civil War. Following the Civil War, the building was converted to Amherst's

Town Hall. The building houses offices for Amherst's town services including Assessing, Building & Code Enforcement, the Community Development Office, the Finance Department, the Public Health Department, Tax Collector, Town Administrator, and Town Clerk. The Town Hall is also where local boards and committees have their meetings including the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and others. The building is maintained by Amherst's Department of Public Works.

Substantial renovations occurred on the first floor between 2003-2007 and the building was outfitted with new HVAC, electrical, and communication systems. An elevator was also installed to make the building ADA compliant. In 2012-2013, the town hall roof/structural beams/columns were refurbished along with a new attic mounted HVAC unit. The handicap entrance ramp (located rear of building) was rebuilt in 2019. Currently, the town hall historic windows and outside shutters are being restored to historic configuration. This project also includes pointing up and repair of exterior brick work, and stripping and painting the wooden addition clapboards and trim.

DEPARTMENT/BUILDING NEEDS AND FUTURE PROJECTS

- Except for the senior and handicap parking on the side of the building, the rest of the Town Hall parking is unpaved.
- The handicap ramp should be protected from weather to improve safety.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for maintaining and overseeing the infrastructure of the town including all town roads, town-owned buildings and land, the cemeteries, the town green and parks, the transfer station, and the Baboosic Lake Community Septic System. The DPW performs and manages all routine electrical, plumbing, HVAC, boiler & pressure vessel inspections, and fire extinguisher maintenance for all municipal buildings. The DPW owns a fleet of vehicles and equipment show in Table 2.

STAFFING

The Department has 16 full-time staff, 4 permanent part-time staff, and a varying number of seasonal/on call staff. Full-time employees include the Public Works Director, the Assistant Director, Buildings & Grounds Foreman, Road Foreman, Executive Assistant, Senior Heavy Equipment Operator, Heavy Equipment Operator, 4 Light Equipment Operators, 3 Driver/Laborers, and 1 Transfer Station Lead Attendant. Part-time employees include 1 (20 hr/wk) Secretary and 3 (29.5 hr/wk) Transfer Station Attendants. Seasonal/On call employees in the summertime include 2 (20 hr/wk) mowers May-Oct., 1 on-call small equipment mechanic May-Oct. (less than 20 hr/wk.), up to 5 (40 hrs/wk) of summer help Mid May to End of August, and 1 summer intern (40 hrs/wk) - mid May to end of August. Since the Covid-19 Pandemic, Public Works has been unable to fill the Summer Help and Intern positions. Three on-call employees are hired in the winter. These include 3 drivers and 1 shoveler (averaging 175 hrs. per winter season).

PUBLIC WORKS GARAGE

The DPW Garage Facility is a cinder block building, built in 1960 and added onto several times. The Garage has five bays divided into three sections. The last renovation completed in 2004 included adding office space. Currently, the building has two offices, a conference area, crew quarters with counter and sink, and three restrooms. There is also a salt barn to which DPW recently added a shed roof, which shelters four pieces of equipment. The front paved apron of the facility has been graded for better drainage, paved and parking relocated to allow for visitor and handicap parking.

A new mechanic's garage building has been erected and final fitting out is in progress. The building includes 3 bays, with one as a drive-through, one for general work and one with an 18,000 lb lift. Seven open storage bays have been erected. Three are small one vehicle bays, 3 are medium one vehicle bays, and 1 is a large two vehicle bay. During the summer, these bays store sanders and equipment and during the winter they store plow trucks fully dressed with sanders mounted. The original 5 bays remain as the only heated fully enclosed bays; however 8 open front unheated bays have been added. The new mechanics garage could house 3 vehicles indoors, but the mechanics garage is intended exclusively for maintenance. The new mechanics garage will handle all municipal inspection needs. It has a lift suitable for pickups and automobiles. Following the completion of the new mechanics garage, several of the existing bays will be re-purposed for better indoor storage of vehicles and equipment.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS:

- Replace Underground Storage Tanks/ System.

ROADS

The DPW maintains 122 miles of road. The DPW maintains and updates a "Seven Year Plan" to track road maintenance and upgrade projects. The road conditions are kept current by updating the Plan at the end of each construction season. Of the 4.6 miles of work planned from the 7-year road plan, 3.51 miles was completed in 2020 and an additional 0.33 miles was added for a total of 3.84 miles. Work

Table 2: Public Works Vehicle Fleet	
Vehicle Type	#
F550 Dump Truck	1
INTL 7400 Dump Truck	3
Ford Dump Truck	1
Pick Up Truck	2
2019 INTL Dump Truck	1
CV515 Truck	1
FRHT Dump Truck	1
F250 Pick Up Truck	2
INTL Drump Truck	2
FRHT Dump 10 Wheeler Truck	1
Ford Taurus	2
Ford Crown VIC	2
REC F550	1
Kubota Tractor	1
Kubota 2 Systems	1
Loader	2
Chipper	1
Grader	1
Backhoe	1

included drainage work (new catch basins and culverts and replacement of catch basins and culverts), headwalls, shoulder gravels, tree work, ditch work, guardrail replacement, improving grades, and improving lines of sight and flood prone sections.

DPW collaborated with the Amherst Conservation Commission and presented a road salt reduction plan to the Board of Selectmen in 2019, which was approved. Following the NH Department of Environmental Services Green Sno-Pro salt reduction program, all DPW employees are trained in these practices, all equipment is calibrated, and consistent records of salt application are kept. According to the 2020 Town Report, despite the increase in length of treated road surface by 4 lane miles, DPW was able to reduce the Town's per storm salt usage by nearly 14 tons. Sand usage was also reduced by 70%. This enables the Town to achieve a permanent savings in catch basin cleaning, street sweeping, and sand and salt purchases.

In 2020, DPW invested in a new mobile work management program (Mobile311) and has begun identifying trends related to labor, materials, and cost based on work order requests that have been submitted, completed, and are in process. Work order requests include potholes, signage, drainage, vegetation management, and other road maintenance requests.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- **Amherst Street:** Rebuilding 1.09 miles and establishing a bike/pedestrian path from the Courthouse to the Milford townline. The bike/pedestrian path will be a separate side path 8 feet in width and paved.
- **Road Rehabilitation:** From 2021-2022, road rehabilitation projects include: Road Rehabilitation – Christian Hill from Green to Rt. 13, Dodge Rd, and Blueberry to Bayberry, Bayberry back to Blueberry and to Rt 101, Church St, Caldwell Dr. from Columbia Dr. to circle, and Manhattan Drive. Totalling over 2.5 miles of newly planned work.

TOWN GREENS AND PARKS

The DPW maintains approximately twenty-five (25) acres of commons and cemeteries. Maintenance activities include limited fertilizing, aeration of sod, mowing, testing soils, and pesticide control. Since 2010, the DPW has added approximately 2 additional acres of mowing for Lindabury Orchard and 2.5 acres of Forestview Cemetery. The Forestview Cemetery (which is the Town's newest cemetery) has a total lot size of 47.85 acres, of which approximately 2.5 acres are laid out for burials and/or well kept grounds. The remainder is maintained as tall-grass fields. Town cemeteries are listed in Table 3 and are overseen by the Sexton and three Cemetery Trustees.

Table 3: Town-Owned Cemeteries
Meadowview Cemetery
Town Hall Cemetery
Chestnut Hill Cemetery
Cricket Corner Cemetery
Potters Field Cemetery
Forestview Cemetery

Part-time seasonal employees mow and maintain eleven acres of commons and grounds around town buildings, with limited assistance from full time. The Amherst Garden Club maintains all the flower gardens, shrubbery and ornamental trees.

TRANSFER STATION

The Transfer Station is located on Route 101 heading east between Walnut Hill and Horace Greeley Roads. Four employees work at the Transfer Station - 1 full time and 3 permanent part time. Amherst is a member of the Souhegan Regional Landfill District, a four-town solid waste disposal district. The transfer station facility provides a place for residents to deposit waste, trash, and recyclable items.

From 2019-2020, Amherst residents generated 2,796 tons of trash at a cost of \$209,722.

The Transfer Station accepts the following recyclable materials:

- #1 PET clear plastic bottles, #2 translucent food containers (aka 'milk jugs')
- Aluminum cans
- Corrugated cardboard
- Glass
- Antifreeze
- Batteries (car, rechargeable, alkaline)
- Brush
- Yard waste
- Clean pallets
- Clothing/textiles
- Electronics
- Fluorescent lights
- Kitty litter
- Magazines and newspapers
- Mixed paper
- Motor Oil
- Paint
- Scrap Metal

The Transfer Station also has a swap shop for residents to leave goods that can be reused and taken for free by other residents. Additionally, the Town partners with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and the Nashua Regional Solid Waste District to participate in their Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program that collects hazardous materials from residents on specific dates during the year. NH Department of Environmental Services estimates the average household annually tosses 15.5 pounds of hazardous waste in the trash which poses contamination and environmental health risks. The Solid Waste District manifested a total of 129,965 pounds of waste during the 2020 collection season.

Of this, 118,529 pounds were hazardous, and 11,436 pounds were universal wastes. This is an increase of 34,164 pounds from the 2019 total (95,801 total pounds of waste in 2019; 83,792 pounds hazardous and 12,009 pounds universal). 59% of Amherst participants were first time users of the Household Hazardous Waste Program. Amherst residents can also purchase composting bins at the Transfer Station. The bins come with a guide on how to compost, what to put in, and what not to put in.



Above: Amherst Transfer Station

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- **Continuous Roof over Transfer Station sorting tables and walkway deck:** According to the 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan, this project is slated for 2022. Protecting the deck and creating a better means of lighting it (in winter months) creates a safer environment for everyone. The Transfer Station was renovated in 2008. Installing a continuous roof over the transfer station will protect the deck walkway from deteriorating further and will prevent weather from making the deck slippery. This pedestrian walkway roof would reduce the chance of a slip/trip/fall in inclement weather, reduce the labor/cost of clearing the existing deck and potentially reduce the cost of disposal. The deck is an inferior material for the purpose.

SCHOOLS

The Amherst Public School System is comprised of two elementary schools, one middle, and one high school. They are part of the SAU-39 school district. The schools include:

Harold H. Wilkins School

Harold H. Wilkins is an elementary school located at 80 Boston Post Road, housing students in grades 1-4. The original school building was built in 1967 and expanded most recently in 2008. There are currently two classrooms in modular settings.

Clark School

The Clark School is an elementary school located at 14 Foundry Street, serving students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. The original building was constructed in 1937 and expanded most recently in 2008. The Clark School is located on 2.5 acres in the historic district of the Town.

Amherst Middle School

The Amherst Middle School, located at 14 Cross Road was built in 1974 to serve 5th – 8th graders from Amherst. A 12-room addition was completed in 2001. The building is now approximately 65,000 square feet – 36 regular classrooms and two modular classrooms, a cafeteria, gym, music room, band room, and shop classroom. The Middle School is located on 26 acres abutting Souhegan High School. Athletic facilities include two baseball diamonds, two rectangular playing fields, and locker room with showers.



Above: Amherst Middle School

Souhegan High School

The High School is located at 412 Boston Post Road. It was built in 1992 after the two towns separated from the school district based in neighboring Milford to serve Amherst and Mont Vernon students in grades 9 through 12. The most recent renovations occurred in 2001. The building is approximately

128,000 square feet, approximately 36,000 of which is for 45 general classrooms. The school has an auditorium/theater, gymnasium with a basketball court, weight room, language lab, art room, band room and science labs.

Brick School

The Brick School, including the School Administration/Superintendent's Office is located in the Village on 1 School Street. The building is in need of repairs, its interior is dated and the wooden features on its exterior are deteriorating. The School Department is willing to consider shifting ownership of the building to the Town.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

Like other towns, Amherst's schools are at the heart of the community. Not only do they provide students with the excellent education expected by our residents, but the fields and facilities are widely used by the community. Events are held year round at the stadium field, other fields, the theater, gyms, and multi-purpose rooms. The Recreation Dept. has partnered with the Amherst schools to manage scheduling of sports facilities and the maintenance of fields. What is important to note is the challenge of keeping aging facilities maintained and updated to meet the ever changing needs of both our students and our community.

Originally constructed in 1937, the Clark School (PK-K) is the oldest educational facility in SAU 39 followed by Wilkins (grades 1-4) which was constructed in 1967 and the Amherst Middle School (grades 5-8) in 1972. (AMS also provides an education to 7th and 8th grade students from Mont Vernon) Souhegan Cooperative High School (grades 9 – 12) which serves both the communities of Amherst and Mont Vernon was built in 1992 and the Annex in 2002.

Over the decades, the school facilities have received basic maintenance as well as numerous additions and patches designed to keep things running without the burden of large investments that the community would be reluctant to support. It should be noted that all of our facilities have struggled with capacity issues in response to fluctuating enrollment and have employed temporary portable classrooms to close the gap of undersized buildings. To this day, Wilkins still maintains four portable classrooms that are not attached to the main building. The bottomline is that despite our best efforts to maintain and keep costs down, we are currently left with facilities with aging infrastructure that no longer conform to modern educational standards nor to energy efficiency standards.

In 2018, in response to calls from parents and community to address the stress on capacity of increasing enrollment as well as to address the aging and/or deteriorating systems, SAU 39 formed the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee to conduct a review of the state of the public school facilities in Amherst. The committee consisted of SAU 39 administrators, school board members from all three boards (Amherst, Souhegan, and Mont Vernon) and multiple citizen volunteers. Architectural and engineering studies were done of all the school facilities. It was the task of the committee to coordinate efforts among the schools of SAU 39 to determine the priorities for interim and long-term facilities needs and to provide recommendations to the various school boards for a plan to address the identified needs with the most cost effective plan.

After review of multiple options, JFAC presented to the voters in March of 2022 a bond to build a new two-story PK – 5 elementary school on the site of Wilkins School employing part of the current building in the construction (the multi-purpose room). Grade 5 would be moved from Amherst Middle

School because it was a better grade configuration and it would free up some much needed space at the Middle School. In addition, there were some much needed renovations to the infrastructure and educational spaces at the Middle School. It was also proposed in this plan to eventually close Clark School with the hope of it being used by the community in some capacity. The Souhegan Board also requested on a separate ballot money to help fund the cost of much needed renovations to 6 science labs. These proposals did not garner enough votes to pass (60% required for a bond). This brings us to the current date. The JFAC Committee will continue its work to find a plan that the voters can support in hopes of addressing the short comings of our educational environments and the very real negative impact on our students and teachers and ultimately our community as a whole. Planning for the school facilities is handled by the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee and updated information on their efforts can be found at www.SAU39.org

LIBRARY

The Amherst Town Library is located at 14 Main Street and was first constructed in 1892 with several substantial renovations. The 1987 renovation expanded the Library to over 13,500 square feet, which is it's current footprint. The Library is an essential community space for Amherst residents of all ages and backgrounds.

The Library provides a variety of educational, informational and recreational programs for adults (currently a mix of in-person and virtual including concerts, performances, lectures, and workshops), as well as story time programs, crafts, performances, and book clubs for children. In FY2019, a little under 3,000 adults attended 70 programs including concerts, cooking demos, art history lectures, living history performances, and others. Over 10,000 kids attended just under 500 programs. The Library serves as a primary social gathering space for a large number of preschool age children and seniors in the community.

The Library also maintains a diverse circulating collection including books for all ages, audiobooks, eBooks and digital magazines, video, DVDs, video games, magazine, newspaper subscriptions, and music CDs. Over 1500 unique individuals check out library items in an average month, making this an important town service. Additionally, they facilitate an interlibrary loan program for materials owned by other libraries, and provide information and research assistance

**Table 4: Library Statistics
(2020 Amherst Annual Report)**

Circulation (total)	116,412
Adult print	27,970
Juvenile print	38,221
Digital/Audiovisual	50,221
Total (physical) items in collection	62,418
Items added	4,195
Items withdrawn	3,576
Active Patrons	5,048
New patrons	351



Above: Amherst Public Library

including article retrieval, general research, local history and genealogy, and homework help. They also offer free and discount coupons to local and Boston-area museums, provide notary services, and maintain publicly accessible computers with high speed Internet access, public WIFI, copies, fax, and a microfilm reader. As a public facility, the Library also provides public meeting room space for community groups and organizations, such as homeowner's associations, writer's groups, political organizations. During FY2019, the Library's meeting space was used 775 times by the community. The Library also maintains a rotating book collection and book club at Parkhurst Place.

The Library also plays an important role in the Town's economy. The Library is a space that is used by remote workers and self employed individuals, since they provide internet access and office tools, as well as powerful e-resources to help people market and grow their businesses. The Library has also collaborated with SCORE to provide education services to people who are starting and/or operating their own businesses. They also assist community members with self-evaluation, skill-building, and job searching as well.

STAFFING

The Library has 7 full-time staff members including a Director, Assistant Director, Youth Services Librarian, Technical Services Librarian, Circulation and Reader Services Librarian, Library Assistant II, and Children's Library Assistant II. There are 8 part-time staff members including seven Library Assistants and one Bookkeeper. There are also 7 page positions (which are paid high-school student positions), however they are currently vacant due to the limited hours and services the COVID pandemic resulted in starting in 2020.

Recent improvements to the library include the renovation of 3,600 square feet of the existing building. The Library has also enhanced services for readers with email reading recommendation newsletters and "Custom-Lit" personalized reading recommendations, established an outdoor "StoryWalk", introduced "craft kits to go" and "bags of books" for kids, and the increase in virtual services that were a result of the Covid-10 pandemic (including virtual programs for children and adults), increased borrowing limits on digital platforms, online services such as registration renewal), and contact-free pickup.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- The Library is continuously looking to make better use of the existing building space to adapt to changes facility needs and uses.
- Currently, the only planned projects at the Library are to repair the rear brick stairs (repoint/mortar), and to replace the freon A/C units with new non-freon units.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Amherst Parks & Recreation Department is located at 4 Cross Road and is a two-story former residential home. The Parks & Recreation Department provides many services to town residents including, but not limited to:

- A diverse cultural community and special event activities for all family members of all ages and abilities
- A full array of informational services of all leisure activities and organizations
- Environmental education and leisure opportunities

- Professional leisure department assistance to all community groups
- Quality leisure opportunities in a safe and healthy atmosphere
- A well-maintained park system and recreational facilities to be used in an optimal, fair and equitable manner

STAFFING

Staff includes a Recreation Director, Program Coordinator, Park Foreman, Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC) Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant.

50 seasonal part time employees are hired throughout the year with the majority of the seasonal staff being hired in the summer. The seven-member Recreation Commission, representing the community at large, works with the Recreation Director to meet the community's recreation needs.

FACILITIES

The Department manages the following Town facilities:

Baboosic Lake Beach and Building, located at 25 Broadway Street, is the town beach and includes a small structure with bathrooms, a playground, and basketball court. The beach was upgraded in 2015 with a new dock system, rentals of kayaks and Stand Up Paddle Boards as well as upgraded concession stand.

Town Tennis Courts located adjacent to the Clark School at 5 Davis Lane. The town tennis courts were completely resurfaced in 2017.

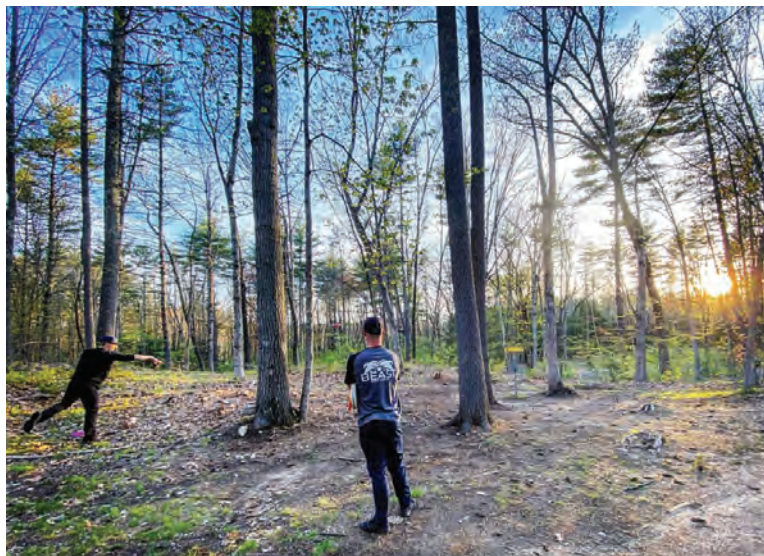
Spaulding Field, located at Christian Hill Road and Davis Lane, is owned by the School District, but managed by the Recreation Department. There are two baseball fields here. The Field is located within the Historic District and therefore any significant changes require the Commission's review. Spaulding Field is in very good condition and no improvements are needed in the near future.

Upper and Lower Wilkins Fields, located at the Wilkins School, are flat fields used for T-ball, soccer and football. These fields are in very good condition and no improvements are needed in the near future.

Tennis Courts at the Middle School and one of the fields at the Middle School



Above: Baboosic Lake



Above: Birch Park Disc Golf Course

are maintained by the Recreation Department. Tennis court replacement is planned for FY23 through the capital improvement planning process. This includes resurfacing of the AMS tennis courts and installation of basketball hoops.

Bean Field is 4.5 acres surrounding the house which houses the Recreation Department. The land is owned by the Amherst School District that leases it to the Recreation Department for \$1 per year. The Recreation Department manages the fields. It is in great condition, but is overused.

Since 2010, the following facilities have been built and are overseen by the Parks and Recreation Department. Since they are relatively new, there isn't much planned for these areas.

Amherst Makerspace, which is located at the Amherst Middle School, is a space for “makers” to use shared equipment and materials for various trades including woodworking, metal working, welding 3D printing, laser cutting, pottery, and others. The Makerspace is currently not in operation due to lack of space for the program at the Amherst Middle School

Birch Park is located at 11 Baboosic Lake Rd. The park has a Disc Golf Course and a pump track for cyclists.

The **Stearns-Davis Community Garden** was established at Joshua's Park, 31 Courthouse Road, to maintain the traditional agricultural use and history of the Amherst Village. The Amherst land Trust organized the design and installation of the infrastructure, including a permanent deer-proof fence and an automatic irrigation system. The garden is allocated by Amherst Recreation and is managed by the Stearns-Davis Community Garden Committee (SDCGC) and the Amherst Recreation Department. A \$20,000 Shade Initiative was recently completed to create for more shade at the playground (see photo on the following page).

The **ice-skating rinks** were built in 2015 through a partnership with the Amherst Parks and Recreation Department, Milford Rotary, and the Amherst Community Foundation.



Above: Amherst Parks and Recreation completed the shade project at Joshua's Park. The project includes the construction of two pergolas.



Above: Peabody Mill Environmental Center

In 2020, the Buckmeadow Golf-course, a 40-acre parcel of land located on Route 101A, was purchased by the Parks and Recreation Department and the Amherst Conservation Commission. This parcel became the **Buck Meadow Conservation and Recreation Area**. The property includes a 1900-square foot clubhouse, which will serve as meeting/program space for Recreation programming as well as a place for civic groups to meet, and 40 acres of flat land that is ideal for athletic fields and open space. The Town also plans to construct a playground and other small amenities in the park. The Amherst Conservation Commission has built a few walking trails around the property already.

Please note that additional information on the recreation facilities and programs in Amherst can be found in the Recreation Existing Conditions section.

FACILITY PLANS/NEEDS

- **Indoor Community Center:** The Recreation Department is in need of indoor recreation space for sports such as basketball, volleyball and other recreation activities. The school facilities have worked in the past, but availability of these facilities are shrinking. There is also a need for indoor senior programming and meeting space. This would dramatically improve the ability to age in place in Amherst. By building a multi-purpose community center, the department will be more able to meet the needs of all Amherst citizens. This project is currently in the 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan. The CIP Committee is recommending this be funded with a 20-year bond for \$5,000,000 beginning in FY2024.
- **Athletic Field Construction at Buck Meadow Conservation and Recreation Area:** The Parks and Recreation Department would like to add athletic fields to the Buck Meadow Conservation and Recreation Area on the property in FY 2022. Amherst has a lack of fields for the amount of field time needed for all sports in Amherst. The plan is to apply for a Land Water Conservation Grant to pay for 50% of the project.
- **Tennis Court Replacement at Amherst Middle School:** Resurfacing of the tennis courts and addition of basketball hoops.

PEABODY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

Located at the end of Brook Road on the Joe English Reservation, the Peabody Mill Environmental Center is a community environmental and nature education center owned and operated by the Town of Amherst's Parks and Recreation Department. The Amherst Conservation Commission initially sponsored the P MEC (the Commission purchased the 7.5- acre in 1997). The P MEC continues to work closely with the Conservation Commission and the Commission cares for the land surrounding the P MEC. The Center is staffed by one regular part-time staff member who coordinates all programming at the facility. There are also 15-20 seasonal staff who assist throughout the year with programming including summer camps, vacation camps and environmental programs. The P MEC serves the citizens of Amherst and offers surrounding communities programs at a fee.

There are 12-miles of well-marked hiking trails and natural features on the 600 acres of conservation land and forest surrounding the Center. There is a parking area, picnic tables, a nature center with hands-on exhibits, and the historic Peabody Mill foundation and sawyer's cottage. There is also an outdoor classroom complete with podium and benches and a small building with a nature museum and craft area used for classes and seminars offered to the general public. Uses of the Peabody Center

include:

- Educational Workshops
- Environmental Programs
- Scheduled Hikes
- Summer Day Programs
- Classroom Nature Programs
- School Vacation Programs
- Scouting Programs
- Birthday Celebrations
- Nature Museum and Library
- Use by groups for educational purposes ie., art classes
- Limited use for small meetings for supporting organizations

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- The condition of the nature center building is still good, but the structure is starting to require more preventative maintenance.

SENIOR SERVICES

PARKHURST PLACE

Parkhurst Place, located at 11 Veterans Road, provides housing, programming and services for seniors. Parkhurst was founded by the Souhegan Valley Interfaith Housing Corporation, a non-profit comprised of four area churches. The complex is managed by a property manager. Parkhurst Place is located on ten acres off of Route 101A, next to a horse farm. It has forty-two units of senior rental units, half of which are subsidized (Section 8 and tax credit); the other half is market rate. Parkhurst offers classes, workshops, health screenings, cultural programs, intergenerational events and entertainment for residents of Souhegan Valley who are 55 years and older. Programs include strength training, “gentle yoga,” hearing aid clinic, blood pressure clinic, eye health and vision screening, art, enjoyment of nature, chorus, crafts, and health education. Parkhurst Place receives \$10,000 annually from the Town (which is permanently in the budget) for senior programming.

ADDITIONAL SENIOR SERVICES

Good Morning Amherst is a service managed by the Amherst Police Department and offered to the elderly and/or physically impaired with the intention of providing them with a feeling of security knowing that someone is in contact with them daily and will provide help when needed. Individuals who have signed up for the service call every morning to verify that they are well and do not need assistance. Failure to call during



Above: Peabody Mill Environmental Center

the designated time (each morning 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.) results in the administrative personnel calling the participant to see if all is well. A negative response or no answer results in the immediate dispatch of a police officer to check on the well being of the individual.

The Friends of the Library organize cultural trips for seniors. The Recreation Director organizes senior games (e.g. dominoes) and senior exercise classes. The Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP), an interfaith organization has begun a project to identify senior needs and is focusing on affordable housing. The Interfaith Housing Justice Group is a group of leaders and members of communities of faith committed to increasing safe, affordable housing in the Nashua area.

FUTURE NEEDS/PROJECTS

- As the elderly population increases and the baby boomer population ages, there will be an increased need for services geared to the elderly including recreation, entertainment, education, health, wellness, transportation and housing.
- One way of meeting senior needs may be to regionalize services, including social services, a senior center, transportation, etc.
- Transportation is a critical need currently and would be more important in the event of the regionalization of services.
- There is no designated senior center in Amherst and indoor space for senior activities is needed.

UTILITIES

WATER SYSTEM

Amherst's public water system is owned and operated by Pennichuck Water Works. As of December, 2021, 1,512 customer accounts tied to the public water system in Amherst. The remainder of the Town's population is served by private wells. The residents served by the public water system are generally located within the center of Town. Since 2010, the original Amherst Village District wells have been legally decommissioned in accordance to NHDES regulations in 2015. The Bon Terrain Well was taken out of service in 2012-2013 due to elevated naturally occurring manganese levels



Above: Amherst Garden Club set up a booth featuring rain gardens at the Souhegan Sustainability Fair.

For a water system to be considered to have adequate water supplies, its supply capacity must be capable of meeting its maximum day demands. Water storage tanks are essential for ensuring adequate service pressures, meeting instantaneous water demands, providing required fire flows, and providing for short-term emergencies when the supply capacity may be out-of-service. The public water system is served by a 4.5 million gallon tank, through interconnections of this system with the City of Nashua. The ability of the water system to provide adequate service (flow and pressure) throughout the water system depends upon the size and condition of the respective network of water mains to any specific

location. As road construction progresses, old water system pipes are replaced as appropriate.

Based upon the existing sources, Pennichuck Water Works has noted that there are no capacity concerns at this time. However, within the 5 to 10 year planning horizon, private sector development could spur growth and possible system expansion increasing demand as well as responses to groundwater contamination. This happened on Hickory Drive and Douglass Drive in 2016.

SEWER SYSTEM

The majority of the Town's residents are served by individual on-site wastewater treatment systems (septic tank and leach field) that are owned and maintained by the individual property owner. The only area of Town presently served by a community "sewer" system is the Baboosic Lake Community Septic System. The Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Baboosic Lake Community Septic System, with costs assessed directly to the connected homes. There are no current plans to extend (or create) public sewer service to other areas.

STORMWATER

The Town's storm water collection system has evolved over time, as the Town developed and streets have been constructed. This system encompasses many roads in Town, ranging from open culverts/swales to catch basins and associated piping. As road improvements have been made over the years, the Town has evaluated and addressed drainage improvements in those project areas.

The Department of Public works and Community Development are cooperatively working together to comply with the requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit issued on January 18, 2017 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) includes the stormwater collection, conveyance, and outfall structures within a city or town. These structures include (but are not limited to) catch basins, drain manholes, culverts, stormwater basins, and swales. As with approximately sixty other municipalities in NH, the Town of Amherst MS4 is regulated under the EPA Clean Water Act (CWA) and requires a permit for discharges to the environment. The Town of Amherst has a about 4,000 culverts and 986 catch basins that it maintains to ensure effective stormwater management.

The Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) describes and details the activities and measures that will be implemented to meet the terms and conditions of the 2017 NH Small MS4 General Permit. The SWMP document should be updated and/or modified during the permit term as activities are modified, changed, or updated to meet permit conditions. The main elements of the SWMP are:

1. A public education program in order to affect public behavior causing stormwater pollution,
2. An opportunity for the public to participate and provide comments on the stormwater program,
3. A program to effectively find and eliminate illicit discharges within the MS4,
4. A program to effectively control construction site stormwater discharges to the MS4,
5. A program to ensure that stormwater from development projects entering the MS4 is adequately controlled by the construction of stormwater controls, and
6. A good housekeeping program to ensure that stormwater pollution sources on municipal properties and from municipal operations are minimized.

According to the 2020 Town Report, the Department of Public Works, the Conservation Commission, and Community Development collaborated to review Amherst's Stormwater Ordinance, and propose updated numerical standards to better address current and forecasted stormwater conditions and treatment requirements. The revised stormwater ordinance will bring Amherst more in line with State

guidelines and better protect the Town's water resources.

The Department of Public Works has also partnered with the Conservation Commission to take water samples and establish salt levels in Ponemah Bog. The results were very low, less than 1/3 the level allowed in drinking water.

The DPW has also undertaken an effort to reduce its road salt and sand use (which impacts water quality), performs annual ditch cleaning and culvert reinforcement, and during road replacement, ensures all replacement of corrugated piping with high-density polyethylene piping that are sized up to accommodate for increased precipitation and storm frequency. The DPW manages a GIS database of the stormwater system that enables them to track maintenance work efficiently.

COMMUNICATIONS

Comcast holds a non-exclusive franchise to serve the Town of Amherst for cable television services and also offers high-speed internet service.

CABLE TV

Comcast provides cable services for the Town of Amherst. Amherst's Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Adjustment meetings are broadcasted on Amherst Community Access Cable TV (Channel 20). Volunteers from the Communication Infrastructure Committee staff the Cable TV Station ACTV20. A community notice bulletin board runs on ACTV20 whenever there is no programming. The Town website also catalogs video recordings of meetings that can be filtered and viewed later by any member of the public.

INTERNET SERVICE

Business class internet service is available to all commercial and industrial areas of town. There are some areas of town where home-based businesses are located and where cable broadband is either unavailable or unsuited to specific needs and DSL is unavailable.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission is part of the New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program that seeks to better understand where broadband, or high-speed internet access, is currently available in NH, how it can be made more widely available in the future, and how to encourage increased level of broadband adoption and usage. A telephone survey that was conducted by the University of New Hampshire for NRPC revealed that there are a few areas in the NRPC region that are underserved by high-speed internet and face broadband coverage gaps. The northeast corner of Amherst was identified as one such area.

DSL

There are no Central Offices in Amherst but there are some local switches that provide limited DSL coverage. Phones served by the 672 and 673 exchanges are connected to the Milford CO. Other exchanges serving portions of Amherst are in Bedford and Merrimack.

Land Use and Zoning Profile

KEY FINDINGS

- Forty-seven percent of Amherst's land area is currently used for single-family residences with an additional 3.8% used for multi-family residences. In total, more than half (50.8%) of Amherst's area is used for residential purposes.
- Open space and recreation uses account for 1/5th (20.5%) of Amherst's area.
- Vacant lands account for 12% of Amherst's area.
- Sixty-six percent of Amherst's area is zoned as Residential/Rural with more than half of that zone (56%) being used currently for single and multi-family residential uses.
- The Northern Rural Zone accounts for 24% of Amherst and 42% of that zone is currently providing permanent open space.
- The Industrial Zone accounts for only 3% of the town's area, but 26% of the zone's parcels contain industrial uses and an additional 25% contain commercial uses. Thirty-two percent of the zone is still vacant land.
- Although the Commercial Zone accounts for only 1% of the towns' area, nearly three-quarters (73%) of it is currently occupied by commercial uses.
- There are also four overlay districts in Amherst:
 - Aquifer Conservation and Wellhead Protection District
 - Floodplain Overlay
 - Historic Overlay
 - Wetland and Watershed Conservation District

DATA SOURCES

- 2008 Master Plan Existing Conditions Report
- Ordinances, Laws, and Regulations for the Town of Amherst March 2020
- Town of Amherst GIS Data
- Town of Amherst Assessing Data

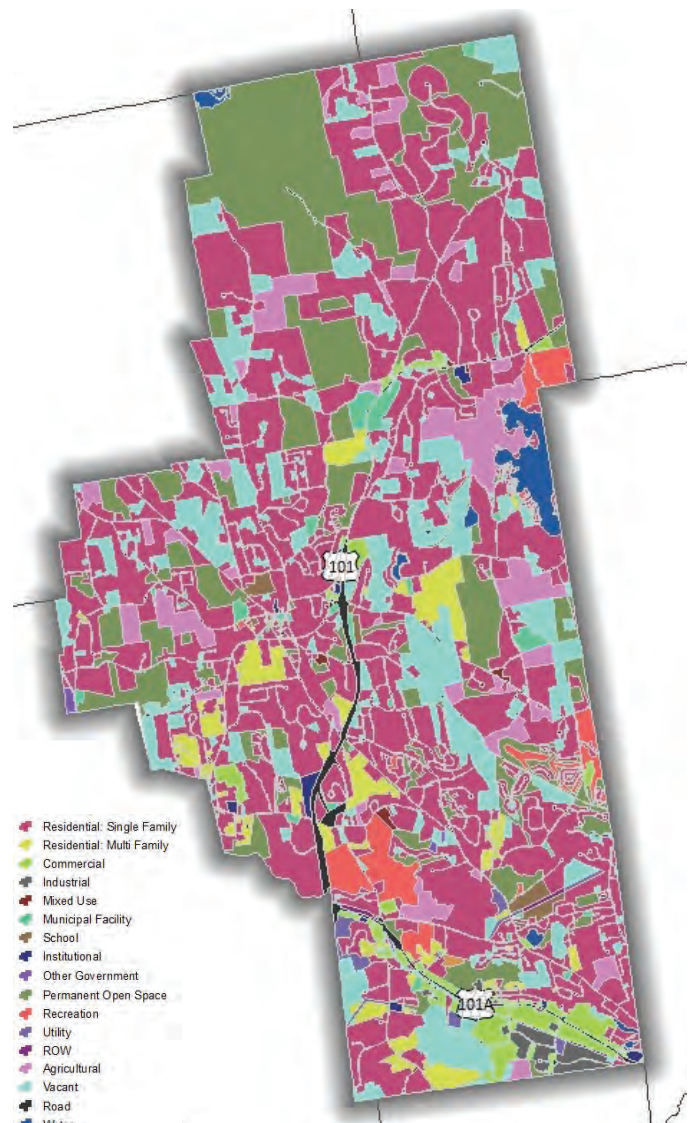
EXISTING LAND USE

Land uses in Amherst are primarily residential and open space related uses. Over 50% of the Town's land area is in a residential use, and about 25% is open space and agriculture. Only just over 3% of the Town's area is in a commercial or industrial use, and vacant parcels represent 12% of the Town's area. Table 1 below summarizes Amherst's existing land use and this pattern is illustrated in the Existing Land Use map below.

The Existing Land Use map clearly illustrates the dominance of single-family residential uses. Along with residential uses, large areas of open space and vacant lands exist throughout town. For the purpose of this analysis, the entire parcel is labeled for its primary use. Single-family residential properties account for most of Amherst's area with the average size of each lot being 2.8 acres. Multi-family residential parcels are scattered

Land Use	Area (acres)	Percent of Town's land area
Residential	11,180	50.8%
Single-Family Residential	10,353	47.1%
Multi-Family Residential	827	3.8%
Commercial and Industrial	706	3.2%
Commercial	524	2.4%
Industrial	151	0.7%
Mixed Use	31	0.1%
Public and Institutional	446	0.2%
Municipal Facility	242	1.1%
School	110	0.5%
Institutional	72	0.3%
Other Government	23	0.1%
Open Space and Recreation	4,501	20.5%
Permanant Open Space	3,988	18.1%
Recreation	513	2.3%
Utilities	140	0.6%
Utility	102	0.5%
Right-of-way	38	0.2%
Agricultural	1,158	5.3%
Vacant	2,669	12.1%
TOTAL AREA IN PARCELS	20,801	94.6%
Roads	904	4.1%
Water	284	1.3%
TOTAL	21,989	100%

EXISTING LAND USE MAP



throughout the southern two-thirds of town and are generally found within 1-1/2 miles of Routes 101 and 101A. These properties have an average lot size of 9.7 acres. Most commercial uses are found in the southern third of town and centered around Route 101A with several smaller parcels found along northern sections of Route 101 around Salzburg Square. Vacant parcels are scattered throughout the town and have an average lot size of 6.9 acres.

EXISTING ZONING

The Town of Amherst has seven primary zoning districts and 4 overlay districts. Table 2 provides details on the area covered by each zoning district. Conducting a zoning and land use analysis provided helpful insight in understanding how each zoning district is actively being used. The following subsections discuss specific zoning districts in detail and provide their subsequent land use breakdown with remaining zoning district breakdowns in tabular form. **Action - Once the Master Plan document is updated, the Town could review its land use regulations to identify any changes that are needed to better guide land use activity toward the identified vision.**

Residential/Rural Zone

Ninety percent of Amherst is zoned for low-density residential use in both Residential/Rural and Northern Rural Zones. The Residential/Rural Zone includes sections of town east and west of Route 101 and south of the intersection of Horace Greeley Road and Austin Road and north of 101A. There is also a section south of 101A in the southwestern corner of town. In total, the Residential/Rural Zone covers nearly 14,500 acres (66%) of town. Fifty-one percent of the Residential/Rural Zone is being used for single-family residential uses, with an additional 5% being multi-family residential. Fifteen percent of the zone is designated for open space and recreation, and 13% is vacant. Table 3 shows the land use breakdown of the Residential/Rural Zone.

Northern Rural Zone

The Northern Rural Zone covers nearly one-quarter (24%) of Amherst's land area west of Horace Greeley Road and primarily north of Austin Road (although there is a small area south of Austin Road). Forty-two percent of the zone is permanently open space,

Table 2: Amherst Zoning Districts

Zone	Acres	Percent of Town
Commercial	292	1%
General Office	86	0.4%
Industrial	588	3%
Limited Commercial	88	0.4%
Northern Rural	5,379	24%
Northern Transitional	1,089	5%
Residential/Rural	14,467	66%
TOTAL	21,989	100%

Table 3: Residential/Rural Zone Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Single-Family Residential	7,327	51%
Multi-Family Residential	752	5%
Permanant Open Space and Recreation	2,138	15%
Vacant	1,877	13%
Other	2,372	16%
TOTAL	14,467	100%

Table 4: Northern Rural Zone Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Single-Family Residential	2,156	40%
Multi-Family Residential	55	1%
Permanant Open Space	2,267	42%
Vacant	497	9%
Other	403	7%
TOTAL	5,379	100%

while a similar percentage contains single-family residential uses/properties (40%). The average parcel size in the zone is 13.4 acres. Table 4 shows the full land use breakdown for the Northern Rural Zone.

Northern Transitional Zone

The Northern Transitional Zone covers 5% of Amherst's land area "between Route 101 and Horace Greeley Road, excluding the Limited Commercial Zone around Salzburg Square" and "requires a 3.5-acre minimum lot size for single family uses" (2008 Master Plan Existing Conditions Report). More than three-quarters (76%) of the zone is currently single-family residential, with an additional 9% being vacant lots and 8% designated as permanent open space. Table 5 shows the full land use breakdown of the Northern Transitional Zone.

Industrial Zone

The Industrial Zone accounts for 3% of Amherst's land area along the Route 101A corridor. Industrial and commercial uses account for 51% of the zone – 26% and 25% respectively. However, the single largest land use in this zone is vacant land accounting for one-third (32%) of the District area. Table 6 shows the full land use breakdown of the Industrial Zone.

Commercial Zone

The Commercial Zone accounts for 1% of Amherst's land area along Route 101A and "allows uses intended to serve the major commercial and business needs of the general public." (2008 Master Plan Existing Conditions Report) Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the Commercial Zone exists as commercial uses, with an additional 5% being institutional uses. Table 7 shows the full land use breakdown of the Commercial Zone.

General Office & Limited Commercial Zones

Combined, the General Office and Limited Commercial Zones account for less than 1% of Amherst's land area. The respective land use breakdowns are found in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 5: Northern Transitional Zone Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Single-Family Residential	826	76%
Vacant	95	9%
Permanant Open Space	84	8%
Other	83	7%
TOTAL	1,088	100%

Table 6: Industrial Zone Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Industrial	151	26%
Commercial	144	25%
Vacant	187	32%
Other	106	18%
TOTAL	588	100%

Table 7: Commercial Zone Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Commercial	214	73%
Road	46	16%
Institutional	13	5%
Single-Family Residential	10	4%
Other	8	3%
TOTAL	292	100%

Table 8: General Office Zone Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Commercial	51	59%
Road	15	17%
Vacant	8	9%
Other	12	14%
TOTAL	86	100%

OVERLAY DISTRICTS

The Town of Amherst has 4 overlay districts. An overview of each is described here with additional information found in the “Ordinances, Laws, and Regulations for the Town of Amherst March 2020”.

Aquifer Conservation and Wellhead Protection District

PURPOSE. *The Aquifer Conservation and Wellhead Protection District Ordinance (ACWPD) is established for the purpose of protecting quality and quantity of groundwater resources available to be used as current and/or future drinking water supplies. This ordinance is intended to:*

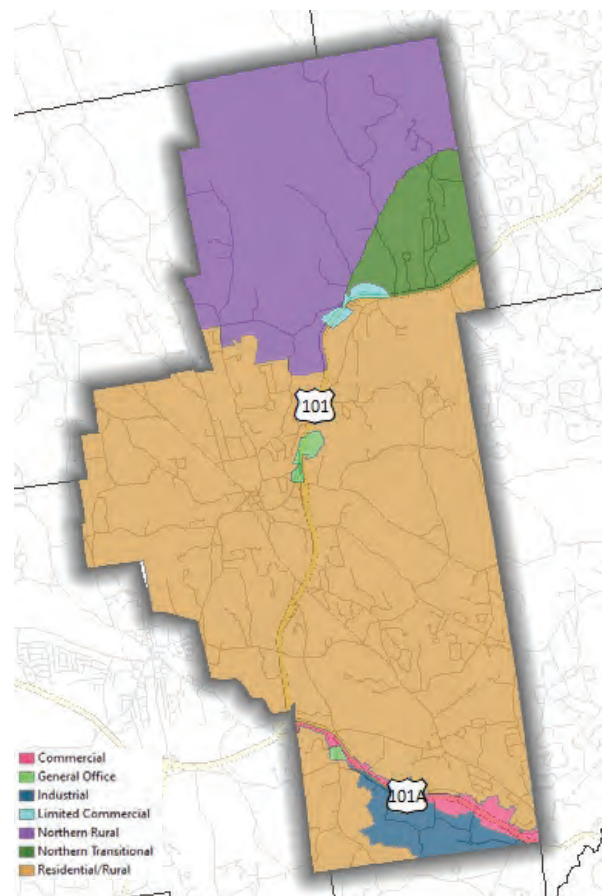
1. *Maintain public health and welfare by protecting existing and potential sources of groundwater and associated recharge areas.*
2. *Prevent land use practices and development that could reduce the volume of recharge available to aquifers identified as current or potential sources of drinking water*
3. *Prevent land use practices and development that could contaminate or adversely impair the quality of groundwater within aquifers identified as current or potential sources of drinking water.*
4. *Provide for future growth, in accordance with the Town’s Master Plan, by protecting the longterm availability of clean, safe, potable water.*
5. *Identify land uses that can safely be sited in aquifer recharge areas and in the proximity of water supply wells.*

Flood Plain Conservation District

GENERAL. *In the interest of public health, convenience, safety, and welfare, the regulations of this district are intended to guide the use of areas of flood plain subject to flood water and to encourage the retention of open land so as to constitute a harmonious and appropriate physical development of the Town, as developed from the Master Plan. The specific intent of this district is:*

Table 9: Limited Commercial Zone Land Use Breakdown		
Land Use	Acres	Percent of Zone
Commercial	28	32%
Single-Family Residential	23	26%
Municipal Facility	18	21%
Agricultural	5	6%
Other	13	15%
TOTAL	86	100%

ZONING MAP



1. *To prevent the development of buildings and uses in areas that are unsatisfactory and hazardous due to the threat of flooding.*
2. *Protection of natural flow and drainage*

Historic District

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PURPOSE. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and preservation of the Historic District. It is hereby declared that it is a public purpose that the heritage of Amherst will be safeguarded by:

1. *Preserving districts in Amherst which reflect elements of the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history;*
2. *Conserving property values in such districts;*
3. *Fostering civic beauty;*
4. *Strengthening the local economy;*
5. *Promoting the use of an historic district for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the citizens of Amherst.*

Wetland and Watershed Conservation District

PURPOSE. The purpose of the Wetland and Watershed Conservation District is to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public by promoting both the most appropriate use of land and by protecting wetland and surface water ecosystems and water quality in accordance with the goals and objectives of Amherst's adopted Master Plan. Wetlands, surface waters, and associated buffers situated in the Town of Amherst are recognized as a valuable natural resource requiring careful management in order to preserve their benefits to public health, safety, and welfare. Correspondingly, the Town of Amherst hereby acknowledges wetlands, surface water, and associated buffers:

1. *Prevent the destruction of or significant changes to wetland and surface waters and adjoining land which provides flood protection;*
2. *Protect persons and property against the hazards of flood inundation by ensuring the continuation of the natural flow patterns of streams and other watercourses;*
3. *Provide for nutrient attenuation and augmentation of stream flow during dry periods;*
4. *Preserve and protect important wildlife habitat, flora, and fauna areas, including those critical to threatened and endangered species, and to maintain ecological balance;*
5. *Prevent the expenditure of municipal funds for the purposes of providing and/or maintaining essential services and utilities which might be required as a result of abuse or inharmonious use of land situated within the District;*
6. *Protect wetlands, surface waters, and groundwater supply and recharge areas within the Town of Amherst from degradation;*
7. *Mitigate the effects of structures and associated land uses which have the potential to compromise surface and groundwater supplies through the introduction of sewage, nutrients, hazardous substances, and siltation; and*
8. *Preserve and enhance those aesthetic values associated with the Wetland and Watershed Conservation District.*

Public Outreach Summary Report

Town of Amherst 2022 Master Plan Update

July 2022

Introduction

The Town of Amherst is updating its 2010 Master Plan, which serves as a long-term planning document and guides future growth, development activity, infrastructure investments, and land use change in the community. The Master Plan includes a vision for the future of the community and ways for the town to guide land use changes to meet that vision. It also provides guidance to local officials making decisions on budgets, ordinances, capital improvements, land use regulations, and identifies non-regulatory initiatives that achieve the Town's future vision.

As part of this comprehensive master planning process, the Town of Amherst completed public outreach activities to identify community issues that matter to residents and community members, and glean opportunities, challenges, and potential solutions from the public on important local issues. The summary of results obtained through these outreach efforts thus far are included on the following pages.

The outreach mechanisms undertaken soliciting public participation in the master planning process included an in-person Community Forum and an alternative online survey tool. Steps were taken to publicize these feedback options including:

- Envision Amherst website – <https://resilience.mysocialpinpoint.com/amherst-master-plan>
- Master Plan Steering Committee and Staff communication all municipal boards and committees
- Flyers and postcards
- Amherst Social Media posts
- Print Media Articles in the Union Leader, Amherst Citizen, and Milford Cabinet

In-person Community Forum & Alternative Online Survey

On November 15, 2021, the Town of Amherst held an in-person community forum for the 2022 Master Plan update. The purpose of the forum was to share current information and data on Amherst with the public, and to learn more about community member's perspectives, thoughts, and feedback on the future growth of Amherst over the next ten to twenty years.

After a brief presentation on the background of the project, participants visited stations by topic to provide feedback that will inform the creation of the 2022 Master Plan. These topics included:

- Housing & Population

- Land Use & Zoning
- Natural Resources
- Water Resources
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Population & Housing
- Economic Development
- Heritage & Cultural
- Public Facilities & Services

Additionally, an alternative online survey tool was also made available to the entire community to increase participation and provide an option to those that were unable to attend the Community Forum for any reason. Approximately 51 responses were submitted through the online tool and another 30 people were recorded as submitting in-person responses.

The information and data presented for both the in-person forum and online survey were identical. The questions posed were also the same. Because of this, the summary of results for both methods have been combined. Summary results are broken out by topic and include highlights and main takeaways for each of the questions the public was asked to consider.

Initial Communication Questions

How are you currently receiving news related to the Town of Amherst?

- There are many outlets' residents receive news from with several key communication methods being repeated by respondents. The most common outlets are:
 - Town of Amherst:
 - Website
 - School newsletters
 - Library newsletter
 - Conservation Commission newsletter
 - Facebook
 - Amherst Citizen
 - Word of mouth

Do you have suggestions on how the Town of Amherst could better communicate news to residents?

- Some suggestions reiterate many of the current methods residents are receiving news, but several themes presented themselves.
 - More active engagement with certain outlets including the Town website, Facebook page, and library postings.
 - More concise communication would help make the material more digestible.
 - Expand email & text alerts like the schools to those that would participate.
- Additionally, other ideas were presented:
 - Periodic direct mailings
 - Include communications in tax invoices

Housing & Population

What notable changes in population and housing have you observed in the last 10 years, and why are they important to the master plan? (57% answered)

- An influx of young families moving into Amherst creates a need for housing options from large, single-family houses to more affordable options.
- Amherst is an aging community and needs to provide housing options including large, single-family houses and more affordable options.
- Population is growing in Amherst and multi-family housing options need to be available, but not at the expense of the rural landscape.

What type of housing unit do you live in now, and is it the same type of housing unit you, your family, or others in the community will need in ten years? (67% answered)

- Single-family homes are the dominant housing type, and many respondents think that type of unit is what is needed.
- However, some respondents see the need for more affordable single-family senior homes as the population ages.
- Additionally, while single-family homes are appropriate for the next ~10 years, beyond that the tax burden may be too high to maintain that type of unit and necessitate alternative housing options.

How feasible do you think it will be for first time home buyers to find an affordable home to purchase in Amherst? (67% answered)

- It is unlikely for first time home buyers to find an affordable home unless they are high-income earners.
- While it may not be feasible right away, it is attainable through diligent savings or other forms of equity.
- Surrounding towns/cities have more affordable options and Amherst may not need to provide them directly. Additionally, the lack of availability in town makes Amherst more desirable.
- It is very feasible for first time home buyers to find an affordable homes.

As you age, how feasible will it be to live in your home and still have access to the facilities and services you need in your daily life in Amherst? (59% answered)

- Many think it's feasible to stay in their current homes home while maintaining access to facilities and services.
- Many that don't think it's feasible identify the high tax burden from property and school taxes as reasons they would be unable to stay in their current homes while they age.
 - o Some respondents are alright with aging out of Amherst after they are done with the school system as they wouldn't need those services.

- More senior services are needed in Amherst to ensure residents have access to facilities and services such as transportation around town and connections to surrounding towns.

Which areas in Town are most appropriate for new housing? And what types of housing should be encouraged? (59% answered)

- Appropriate locations:
 - o The 101A corridor is an appropriate place to accommodate new housing, especially mixed-use options.
 - o All areas of town should be considered for new housing to accommodate the population growth in town.
 - o Anywhere outside the historic district should be considered for new housing.
- Types of housing:
 - o Single-family homes
 - o Clustered housing such as townhouses, condos, and low-rise apartments
 - o Senior housing or 55+ developments
- Regardless of the housing type, any new housing construction should fit and maintain the rural look with the character of Amherst.

Are there other issues and opportunities that you are aware of related to demographics and housing in Amherst? (48% answered)

- The relationship between Amherst's economy and the housing options in town. However, the surrounding towns may be able to support the housing needs.
- The relationship between Amherst's schools and the housing options in town. While the quality of education is high, many families are unable to move to Amherst because of high housing costs and there is a need for more affordable options.
- Along with larger population and higher density housing come issues like traffic and additional burdens placed on the school system.

Transportation

Are there specific locations in Amherst that need transportation infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks, bicycle facilities, traffic safety controls, and others? (51% answered)

- Areas around the high school and middle school need sidewalks and bike lanes to improve safety.
- Route 101 needs attention with the flow of traffic and dangerous intersections – installation of traffic lights could help.
- Sidewalks along Route 122 could connect to the historic village.
- Sidewalks and bike lanes along areas of Boston Post Road would improve safety for recreators.

Are there specific groups of residents that are currently underserved and need better access to transportation options? Who are these groups? (36% answered)

- Seniors have very limited transportation options if they don't drive or have someone who can drive them.
- Older kids, teens and children that are not able to drive do not have options to connect with other neighborhoods.
- Disabled residents in Amherst have very limited transportation options.

Are there specific locations in Amherst where the roadway or infrastructure is prone to flooding or other natural hazards? (38% answered)

- Boston Post Road near the middle and high schools.
- Boston Post Road and Route 122 crossing the Souhegan River
- Hemlock Hill Road and Storybrook Lane
- Narraganset Road and Beaver Brook
- Spring Road near Lynch Farm
- Roberge Drive, particularly on the circle, need repair
- Parts of Upper Mack Hill Road need repair

What other issues and opportunities related to transportation are you aware of? (27% answered)

- Heavy volume of traffic and speeding in different parts of town:
 - o Along Routes 101 & 101A
 - o In and around the village
 - o Around the schools
- Many roadways need repair.

Natural Resources

What land and water resources need further protection in Amherst? Are there specific land areas or resources that you have in mind? (36% answered)

- Wells, well-head areas, and public water supplies need further protection from contaminants from development and industry.
- Aquifer protection through increased land, forest, and water conservation efforts.
- The Souhegan River corridor requires greater conservation efforts specific to wildlife, water resources, and public access for recreation.

Should more land be protected/conserved in Amherst? If so, do you have ideas of where or how that should be accomplished? (46% answered)

- Overwhelmingly, yes.
 - o The conservation, expansion, and connection of unfragmented blocks.
 - o Reduce the allowance of large developments.
 - o A focus in North Amherst to combine the focus of conserving unfragmented blocks and ensuring no additional large developments.

What new recreation opportunities or infrastructure should be created within or adjacent to Amherst's natural resource areas? (38% answered)

- Expand the trail network for walking, hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing that connects existing conserved lands and trails.
- Provide opportunities for senior recreation in the form of a senior center and more recreation options suitable for the older population, which could also tie into opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Increase active recreational infrastructure including fields for soccer, baseball, and other recreational fields.
- Provide more access to water activities.

How could Amherst better steward or manage its natural resources? (28% answered)

- Assess impact on water resources and enact stronger protections while enforcing the ordinances and policies that are already in place.
- Impose more and stricter ordinances on development in the form of higher building standards and fewer permitted housing developments.

What other issues and opportunities related to natural resources, open space, and conservation are you aware of? (21% answered)

- The need for strong and innovative policies including an active Conservation Commission, progressive housing ordinances encouraging open space, increased wetland protection, and reducing impacts on water resources from development.

Historic & Cultural

How could Amherst better steward or manage the remaining historic and cultural resources in the community? (23% answered)

- Address the traffic and development pressures on the village center.
- Better coordination of volunteer groups (Heritage Commission, Historic District Commission) and improve communication and interaction with the public.
- Address funding limitations for:
 - o individuals looking to participate in programs through tax credits or grants, and
 - o the Town by creating a public fund if one does not already exist.

What aspects of Amherst's history and culture are important to you? (31% answered)

- Physical structures including the buildings, historic district, and stone walls.
- The village, village green and the culture and traditions that exist in the center of town.
- The agricultural traditions and landscape outside the village center.

Are there specific places that are important to Amherst's historic and cultural identity that need further protection? (25% answered)

- The village green and all associated structures therein including buildings, cemetery, and stone walls.
- Farms and agricultural lands that may someday be sold and developed.

Are there investments in signage, interpretation, or access infrastructure that would help people access and enjoy historic and cultural sites in Amherst? (22% answered)

- Better promotion and publication of resources that already exist with the Historical Society, Heritage Commission, and Conservation Commission news.
- Increased attractive and engaging signage and potential for integrated walking trail, while balancing over-signage.

What other issues and opportunities related to historic and cultural resources are you aware of? (10% answered)

- Increase visibility and communication of historic programs and offerings in town.

Economic Development

What aspects of Amherst's character need to be retained as business development continues? (35% answered)

- Protect and maintain the village by promoting and permitting small businesses, while prohibiting larger, big box development.
- Keep large-scale business development to the Route 101A corridor.
- Maintain the historic, rural, agricultural character of town through proper planning and architectural requirements.

What kinds of infrastructure or amenities are currently missing from areas of the community with business activity? (23% answered)

- More opportunities for smaller-scale restaurants and bars/pubs that would allow Amherst residents to stay in town rather than driving to neighboring areas.
- More walkable downtown with smaller retail options that supports alternative forms of transportation.
- All amenities are within a short drive to neighboring towns and enjoy not having those developments in Amherst.

Should housing units be integrated with the business activity along Route 101 and 101A? If so, what types of housing units should they be? (43% answered)

- Yes:
 - o Modest apartment, condo, multi-family units should be incorporated into 101 and 101A, while restricting the height and ensuring the structures fit with the existing architectural standards in Amherst.
 - o Smaller, single-family residences should be incorporated if they fit with the existing architectural standards in Amherst.
- No:
 - o There are already issues with crowded schools and traffic to begin increasing the population in Amherst.

Where should Amherst focus its future economic development efforts? What types of business and job opportunities would be most appropriate in these locations? (23% answered)

- Efforts should be focused along the 101A corridor:
 - o Small retail and restaurants
 - o All business options including those supporting small- to mid-sized technology-based jobs

What other issues and opportunities related to economic development are you aware of? (17% answered)

- The importance of balancing economic development with the impact it has on Amherst's resources, in particular water resources.
- Limited availability of infrastructure to encourage economic development including reliable power and internet, sewage/water and fuel, and parking.

Recreation

Do the existing recreation facilities meet the needs of all residents and recreational activities? (33% answered)

- More recreational facilities for seniors and people with disabilities including a Recreation Center and trails that are compatible with ADA requirements.
- More gathering places for teens and young children with alternative transportation links between them and the schools.
- The current recreation facilities meet the community needs.

Do the existing recreation programs meet the needs of all resident age groups in the community? (33% answered)

- Overwhelming need for more senior recreation programs as well as outdoor trails that are designed for an older population.
- The current recreation programming meets the community needs.

Are there recreation programs or infrastructure that are missing and should be invested in? (35% answered)

- A Recreation Center that could house indoor basketball courts and other gathering places for the community including seniors.
- A gathering place designed for seniors that could offer additional senior programming.
- Outdoor recreational tennis and pickleball courts with associated programming.
- Alternative transportation infrastructure to link existing recreational opportunities and facilities for all ages.

What other issues and opportunities related to recreation resources are you aware of? (17% answered)

- The need for more senior recreational facilities and programs.
- Amherst has great recreational opportunities and programming – there is an opportunity to promote those more and consider a volunteer database for those willing to assist.

Land Use

How do you define rural character? (33% answered)

- Lots of open space including trees, fields, views.
- Agricultural landscape with associated barns, fields, orchards.
- Low density housing on large lots.
- Controlled development with limited commercial/industrial areas.
 - o Development that maintains an historic architectural design.

What do you like most about the current land use pattern in Amherst? (33% answered)

- The open land and low-density housing.
- Focused commercial/industrial areas that limits developmental sprawl.

How does this pattern of open space and development contribute to Amherst's character and quality of life? (30% answered)

- Balancing open space and focused areas of development creates the small-town feel that benefits residents' quality of life and what residents seek. The balance enhances the character of Amherst and creates more community.

What issues or opportunities related to Amherst's existing land use pattern are you aware of? (21% answered)

- Concern over the proposed County Road development:
 - o The density of houses is not fitting, and
 - o It will negatively impact the existing open space.
- Overall issues with high density housing and the number of new homes in town recently.
- The importance of prioritizing and maintaining open space and conservation and the issue of fragmentation from development.
- There needs to be more opportunities for local employment to support the tax base, while minimizing development impacts on open space.

As new development takes place in Amherst, how should it be integrated to retain or improve the community's character and desirability? (40% answered)

- Strong zoning ordinances and building codes to maintain the current character of Amherst:
 - o Minimum lot sizes
 - o Setbacks for new developments
 - o Architectural requirements

- Development needs to maintain balance with open space and natural resources.
- Need to understand the impact development has on existing services – schools, police, fire, roads, utilities – and how that affects the tax burden.

2021 Master Plan Survey Results

The following charts illustrate some of the key findings from the 2021 Master Plan Survey.

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

Amherst should...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	Total	Weighted Average						
Increase affordable housing	9.19%	145	20.55%	324	28.79%	454	20.42%	322	20.04%	316	1.01%	16	1577	-0.22
Preserve agricultural lands	34.64%	547	46.74%	738	15.58%	246	1.39%	22	0.95%	15	0.70%	11	1579	1.14
Improve roads and infrastructure	28.16%	448	50.85%	809	18.29%	291	2.01%	32	0.38%	6	0.31%	5	1591	1.05
Preserve educational quality in schools	55.72%	891	28.27%	452	12.07%	193	1.56%	25	1.31%	21	1.06%	17	1599	1.37
Increase emergency services	7.60%	121	28.56%	455	50.03%	797	9.04%	144	2.13%	34	2.64%	42	1593	0.31
Reduce municipality energy use	10.51%	167	34.55%	549	43.30%	688	4.09%	65	2.33%	37	5.22%	83	1589	0.49
Improve food sustainability (CSA, community gardens, etc.)	14.97%	239	33.56%	536	37.19%	594	7.39%	118	4.07%	65	2.82%	45	1597	0.49
Protect historic resources	31.68%	504	48.84%	777	15.71%	250	1.51%	24	1.45%	23	0.82%	13	1591	1.09
Limit number of new residential developments	40.59%	647	30.68%	489	17.38%	277	7.21%	115	3.20%	51	0.94%	15	1594	0.99
Limit number of new business developments	18.34%	293	23.84%	381	31.73%	507	19.02%	304	6.45%	103	0.63%	10	1598	0.29
Attract new businesses	12.42%	197	39.53%	627	34.80%	552	8.32%	132	4.10%	65	0.82%	13	1586	0.48
Protect open space/natural resources	55.29%	883	36.19%	578	6.83%	109	1.13%	18	0.44%	7	0.13%	2	1597	1.45
Increase recreational opportunities	24.42%	389	37.48%	597	29.25%	466	5.52%	88	2.13%	34	1.19%	19	1593	0.77
Reduce schools' tax rate	31.86%	506	22.17%	352	29.28%	465	10.14%	161	4.28%	68	2.27%	36	1588	0.69
Improve telecommunications/Internet accessibility	33.65%	537	35.40%	565	24.75%	395	3.70%	59	1.00%	16	1.50%	24	1596	0.98
Reduce municipal tax rate	25.99%	412	28.20%	447	35.14%	557	7.00%	111	1.64%	26	2.02%	32	1585	0.71
Improve safe routes (connectivity) for pedestrian and bicyclists	32.92%	526	32.67%	522	21.59%	345	6.38%	102	4.94%	79	1.50%	24	1598	0.83
Increase the variety and types of housing options	8.27%	131	19.32%	306	29.92%	474	19.63%	311	20.45%	324	2.40%	38	1584	-0.25
Other #1 (specify below)	71.93%	82	7.02%	8	3.51%	4	1.75%	2	1.75%	2	14.04%	16	114	1.69
Other #2 (specify below)	50.00%	27	1.85%	1	9.26%	5	1.85%	1	3.70%	2	33.33%	16	54	1.39
Other (please specify)													0	
													1604	
													211	

Answered
Skipped

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

Please rank your priorities

	Highest Priority	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority	Not a Priority	Total	Weighted Average					
It is important to maintain the rural character and feeling of Amherst	42.20%	695	40.01%	659	13.36%	220	2.91%	48	1.52%	25	1647	4.18
It is important to limit residential density within Amherst	35.94%	589	34.78%	570	20.01%	328	6.59%	108	2.68%	44	1639	3.95
It is important to limit commercial density within Amherst	22.15%	363	29.59%	485	32.46%	532	12.08%	198	3.72%	61	1639	3.54
It is important to encourage housing for all ages and income levels	11.53%	189	23.98%	393	30.14%	494	18.43%	302	15.92%	261	1639	2.97
It is important to secure and preserve water resources within Amhers	48.44%	794	36.79%	603	11.47%	188	2.50%	41	0.79%	13	1639	4.3
It is important that Amherst encourage housing outside the single-far	5.14%	84	12.23%	200	25.14%	411	29.42%	481	28.07%	459	1635	2.37
It is important to avoid increasing traffic in Amherst	31.03%	507	35.37%	578	24.72%	404	6.73%	110	2.14%	35	1634	3.86
It is important to provide safe and comfortable routes for bikers and v	30.68%	504	30.68%	504	22.76%	374	9.80%	161	6.09%	100	1643	3.7
It is important to maintain town recreational infrastructure (parks, ten	32.46%	533	40.80%	670	20.16%	331	4.51%	74	2.07%	34	1642	3.97
It is important to preserve the historical character of Amherst	39.94%	657	36.53%	601	16.96%	279	4.56%	75	2.01%	33	1645	4.08
It is important to lower our carbon footprint within Amherst (commerc	23.92%	392	27.64%	453	25.83%	420	11.29%	185	11.53%	189	1639	3.41
It is important for Amherst to be affordable	13.35%	218	27.13%	443	34.05%	556	14.39%	235	11.08%	181	1633	3.17
Other 'A' (specify below)	75.53%	284	16.48%	62	2.13%	8	0.53%	2	5.32%	20	376	4.56
Other 'B' (specify below)	67.24%	117	16.09%	28	3.45%	6	0.57%	1	12.64%	22	174	4.25
										Answered	1655	
										Skipped	160	

Answered
Skipped

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

Amherst needs...

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Opinion		Total	Weighted Average
A community center with meeting space	9.73%	153	24.30%	382	35.56%	559	20.04%	315	8.08%	127	2.29%	36	1572	0.08
More grocery stores	2.36%	37	13.03%	204	25.54%	400	44.44%	696	13.73%	215	0.89%	14	1566	-0.55
Additional health services	2.69%	42	13.77%	215	44.39%	693	28.57%	446	7.82%	122	2.75%	43	1561	-0.26
Additional light industrial (manufacturing, assembly, etc.)	3.06%	48	15.91%	250	34.63%	544	29.03%	456	13.94%	219	3.44%	54	1571	-0.36
More emergency services in Amherst	3.63%	57	13.58%	213	53.15%	834	19.38%	304	6.05%	95	4.21%	66	1569	-0.11
Non-emergency medical transport	2.19%	34	15.75%	245	54.24%	844	15.36%	239	5.98%	93	6.49%	101	1556	-0.08
Performing and visual art facilities	4.33%	68	20.20%	317	36.78%	577	22.82%	358	13.89%	218	1.98%	31	1569	-0.22
Additional professional services (legal, financial)	1.08%	17	8.33%	131	53.24%	837	23.66%	372	9.10%	143	4.58%	72	1572	-0.33
Additional restaurants	10.33%	162	32.97%	517	31.95%	501	16.14%	253	7.08%	111	1.53%	24	1568	0.24
Additional retail stores	3.76%	59	15.24%	239	40.63%	637	26.40%	414	12.50%	196	1.47%	23	1568	-0.29
Additional senior services	8.04%	126	29.87%	468	42.05%	659	8.55%	134	5.49%	86	6.00%	94	1567	0.28
Additional Transportation options (taxis, shared rides, carpools, bus)	5.46%	86	21.08%	332	38.41%	605	21.59%	340	10.54%	166	2.92%	46	1575	-0.11
Municipal trash pick-up service	13.96%	219	23.33%	366	25.56%	401	18.10%	284	16.38%	257	2.68%	42	1569	0
Year-round farmer's market/locally grown products	24.70%	388	40.61%	638	25.91%	407	4.65%	73	2.93%	46	1.21%	19	1571	0.8
Other #1 (specify below)	63.33%	57	10.00%	9	3.33%	3	0.00%	0	2.22%	2	21.11%	19	90	1.68
Other #2 (specify below)	44.19%	19	4.65%	2	4.65%	2	0.00%	0	2.33%	1	44.19%	19	43	1.58
													Answered	1581
													Skipped	234

Answered
Skipped

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

Amherst needs to...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	Total	Weighted Average
Conserve natural areas to protect open space and natural aesthetics	56.80%	881	34.43%	534	6.58%	102	1,355	1.45
Focus conservation on scientifically prioritized wildlife habitats (base	33.12%	513	40.93%	634	20.14%	312	2,914	1.03
Protect aquifers for drinking water	61.18%	947	32.30%	500	5.17%	80	1,548	1.53
Increase buffers around lakes, streams, and rivers to further protect	41.26%	637	35.88%	554	16.84%	260	2,784	1.14
Conserve agricultural land	35.53%	550	43.54%	674	16.80%	280	2,458	1.11
Non-emergency medical transport	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0
Perform targeted forest management (including logging) to improve	26.31%	406	44.26%	683	23.14%	357	3,768	0.93
Improve trail network access & connectivity on public lands	32.28%	499	40.69%	629	20.31%	314	3,824	0.98
Other #1 (specify below)	61.82%	34	5.45%	3	3.64%	2	1,822	1.73
Other #2 (specify below)	32.14%	9	3.57%	1	7.14%	2	1,537	1.31
							1553	
							262	

Answered
Skipped

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update
Amherst needs to...

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Increase residential rental development	3.19%															48															12.71%															191															27.21%															409															24.42%															367															29.27%															440															3.19%															48															1503															-0.66																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
Increase the size of housing lots in the zone I live in	9.58%															144															13.71%															206															42.25%															635															20.83%															313															8.98%															135															4.66%															70															1503															-0.06																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
Limit the number of new residential units allowed annually	30.79%															465															31.79%															480															22.25%															336															8.28%															125															4.37%															66															2.52%															38															1510															0.78																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
Support high density housing development in the zone I live in	2.12%															32															4.11%															62															15.25%															230															23.01%															347															51.46%															776															4.05%															61															1508															-1.23																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
Other #1 (specify below)	57.63%															34															1.69%															1															10.17%															6															0.00%															0															3.39%															2															27.12%															16															59															1.51																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
Other #2 (specify below)	32.14%															9															0.00%															0															10.71%															3															0.00%															0															0.00%															0															57.14%															16															28															1.5																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update
Amherst needs to...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	Total	Weighted Average						
Promote community design standards which reflect Amherst's nature	33.51%	494	41.52%	612	16.42%	242	5.22%	77	2.04%	30	1.29%	19	1474	1.01
Establish additional Historic Districts or Neighborhood Heritage Area	11.62%	171	21.06%	310	39.47%	581	17.80%	262	8.22%	121	1.83%	27	1472	0.1
Preserve and enhance the rural character of Amherst	39.73%	586	43.93%	648	12.27%	181	2.24%	33	1.56%	23	0.27%	4	1475	1.18
Preserve existing Scenic Roads and establish additional Scenic Roads	27.53%	405	38.21%	562	24.47%	360	6.05%	89	2.38%	35	1.36%	20	1471	0.84
Preserve the historic resources and cultural resources of Amherst -s	39.69%	585	43.69%	644	12.48%	184	2.10%	31	1.49%	22	0.54%	8	1474	1.19
Preserve the rural character of major access roads leading into the town	35.13%	516	41.93%	616	16.68%	245	3.40%	50	2.04%	30	0.82%	12	1469	1.06
Other #1 (specify below)	62.22%	28	4.44%	2	2.22%	1	0.00%	0	4.44%	2	26.67%	12	45	1.64
Other #2 (specify below)	33.33%	8	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	5.56%	1	0.00%	0	61.11%	11	18	1.57
													Answered	1484
													Skipped	331

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update
Your reason(s) for residing in Amherst

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	Total	Weighted Average						
Availability of housing stock	2.63%	38	18.80%	272	39.32%	569	20.46%	296	10.37%	150	8.43%	122	1447	-0.19
Historic district (Village Green)	21.13%	310	41.38%	607	20.93%	307	9.48%	139	4.64%	68	2.45%	36	1467	0.67
Historic preservation (stone walls, foundations, cellar holes, etc.)	18.59%	272	38.35%	561	26.73%	391	9.23%	135	4.51%	66	2.60%	38	1463	0.59
Local outdoor activities (hiking, skiing, water sports)	20.33%	298	40.93%	600	25.99%	381	7.71%	113	2.66%	39	2.39%	35	1466	0.7
Property tax rate	1.10%	16	3.97%	58	27.93%	408	32.85%	480	31.76%	464	2.40%	35	1461	-0.92
Proximity to cities/urban area	10.75%	156	58.44%	848	19.37%	281	7.99%	116	2.21%	32	1.24%	18	1451	0.68
Reasonable commute to work	13.83%	202	48.53%	709	19.44%	284	6.02%	88	2.87%	42	9.31%	136	1461	0.71
Reputation of the Amherst Schools	41.70%	613	26.87%	395	14.63%	215	5.58%	82	6.73%	99	4.49%	66	1470	0.96
Rural/agricultural character	31.92%	467	47.10%	689	14.63%	214	3.21%	47	1.57%	23	1.57%	23	1463	1.06
Safe environment (low crime rate)	56.12%	825	38.50%	566	3.20%	47	1.02%	15	0.61%	9	0.54%	8	1470	1.49
Ties to family and/or friends who live in Amherst	15.08%	221	16.44%	241	25.99%	381	17.26%	253	13.64%	200	11.60%	170	1466	0.02
Open space, conserved lands, and natural aesthetic	32.81%	480	44.98%	658	16.95%	248	2.12%	31	1.44%	21	1.71%	25	1463	1.07
Other #1 (specify below)	63.49%	40	4.76%	3	4.76%	3	0.00%	0	7.94%	5	19.05%	12	63	1.43
Other #2 (specify below)	35.00%	7	0.00%	0	5.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	60.00%	12	20	1.75
													Answered	1479
													Skipped	336

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update
What are your future plans? (Check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Reducing operations and/or staff	8.51%	4
Selling	6.38%	3
Moving	6.38%	3
Closing	6.38%	3
Continuing at normal level of operation	46.81%	22
Increasing operations and/or staff	34.04%	16
Acquiring or merging with another business in Amherst	4.26%	2
Opening another location or business in Amherst	0.00%	0
None of the above	6.38%	3
Please share any key factors in your decision		10
Answered		47
Skipped		1768

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

Would your business benefit from better town mobility?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Pedestrian or cyclist access to your business	68.00%	17
Parking near your business	12.00%	3
Other mobility options (please specify)	24.00%	6
Answered		25
Skipped		1790

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

Would your business benefit from better town administration?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Business-friendly regulations, permitting, inspections	62.07%	18
Understandable business requirements	51.72%	15
Assistance with compliance	41.38%	12
Other (please specify)	31.03%	9
Answered		29
Skipped		1786

Envision Amherst: Amherst Master Plan 2021 Update

In what areas can the town collaborate better?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Marketing	54.17%	13
Finance	16.67%	4
Finding business locations	50.00%	12
Other (please specify)	25.00%	6
Answered		24
Skipped		1791









Master Plan Maps

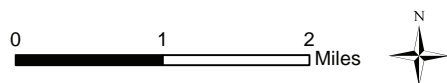
The following pages consist of maps created for Amherst's Master Plan.



Town of Amherst, NH

Multi-Modal Transportation

-  Town boundary
-  Existing project
-  Existing unimproved project
-  Project underway
-  Funded project
-  Potential project
-  Proposed project
-  Other

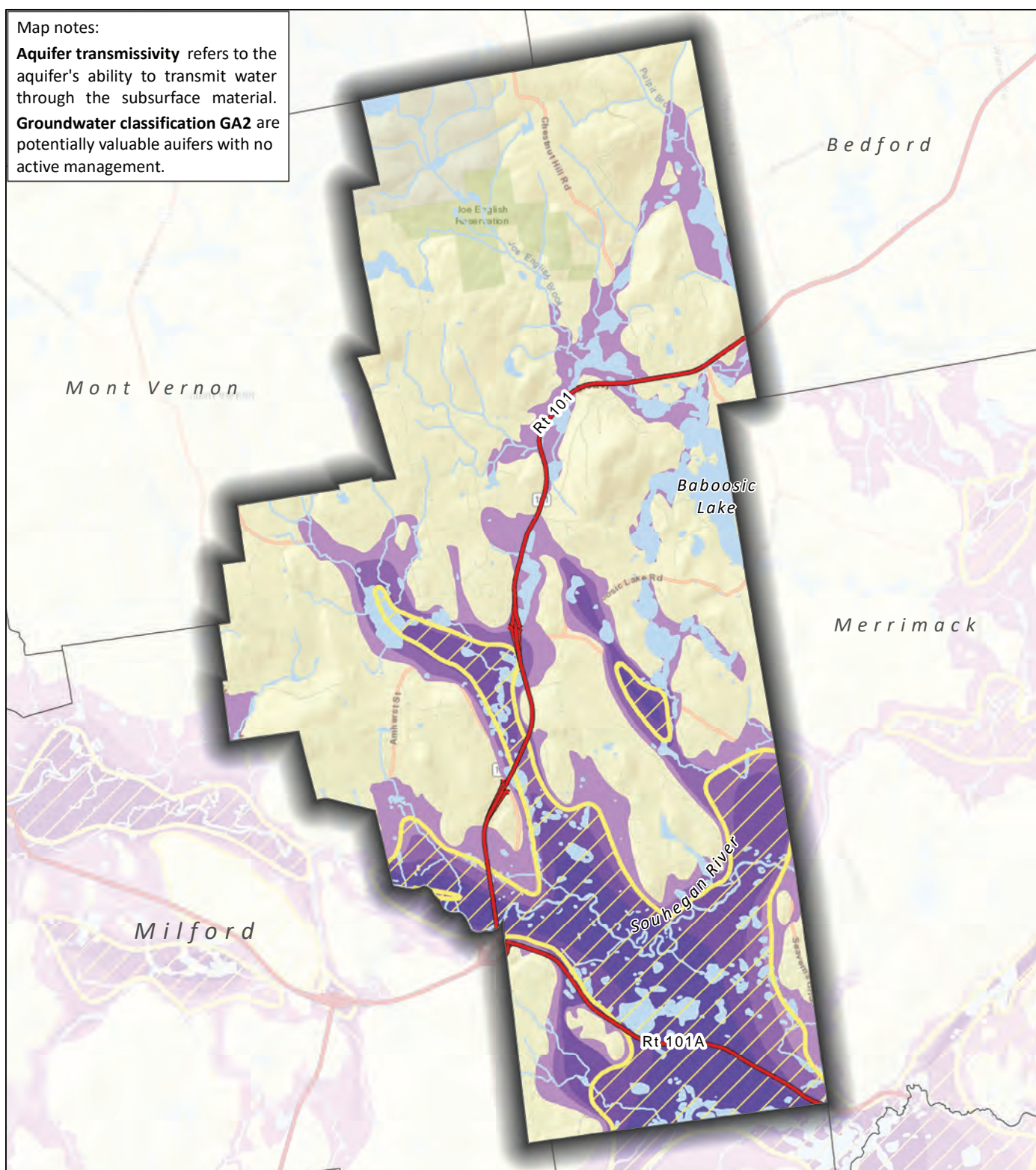


Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

Map notes:





Aquifer transmissivity refers to the aquifer's ability to transmit water through the subsurface material.






Groundwater classification GA2 are potentially valuable aquifers with no active management.



Town of Amherst, NH

Water Resources

-  Town boundary
-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  Primary road

-  Aquifer productivity: Low
-  Aquifer productivity: Medium
-  Aquifer productivity: High
-  Aquifer productivity: Excellent
-  Groundwater classification: GA2

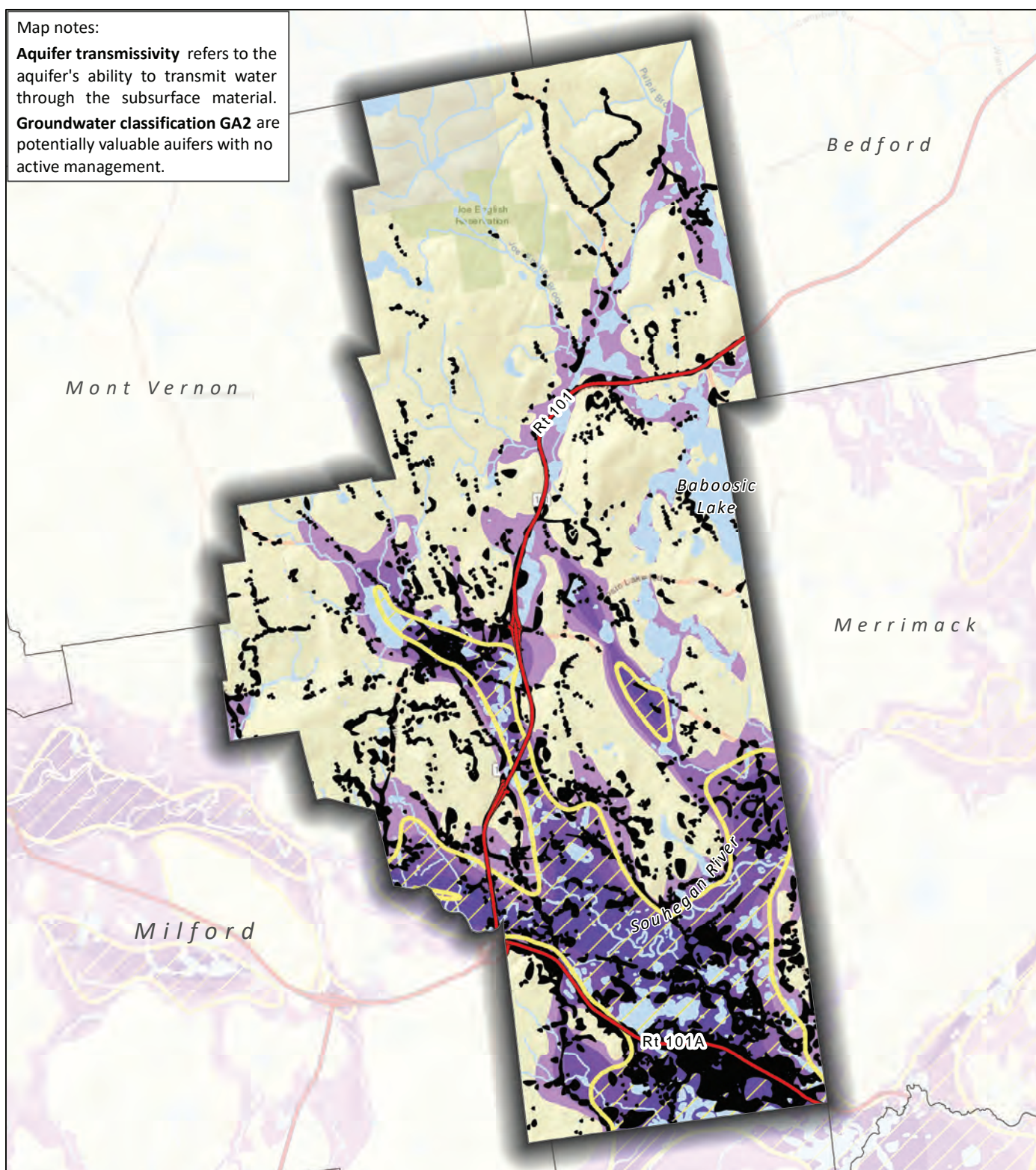


Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

Map notes:

Aquifer transmissivity refers to the aquifer's ability to transmit water through the subsurface material.

Groundwater classification GA2 are potentially valuable aquifers with no active management.



Town of Amherst, NH

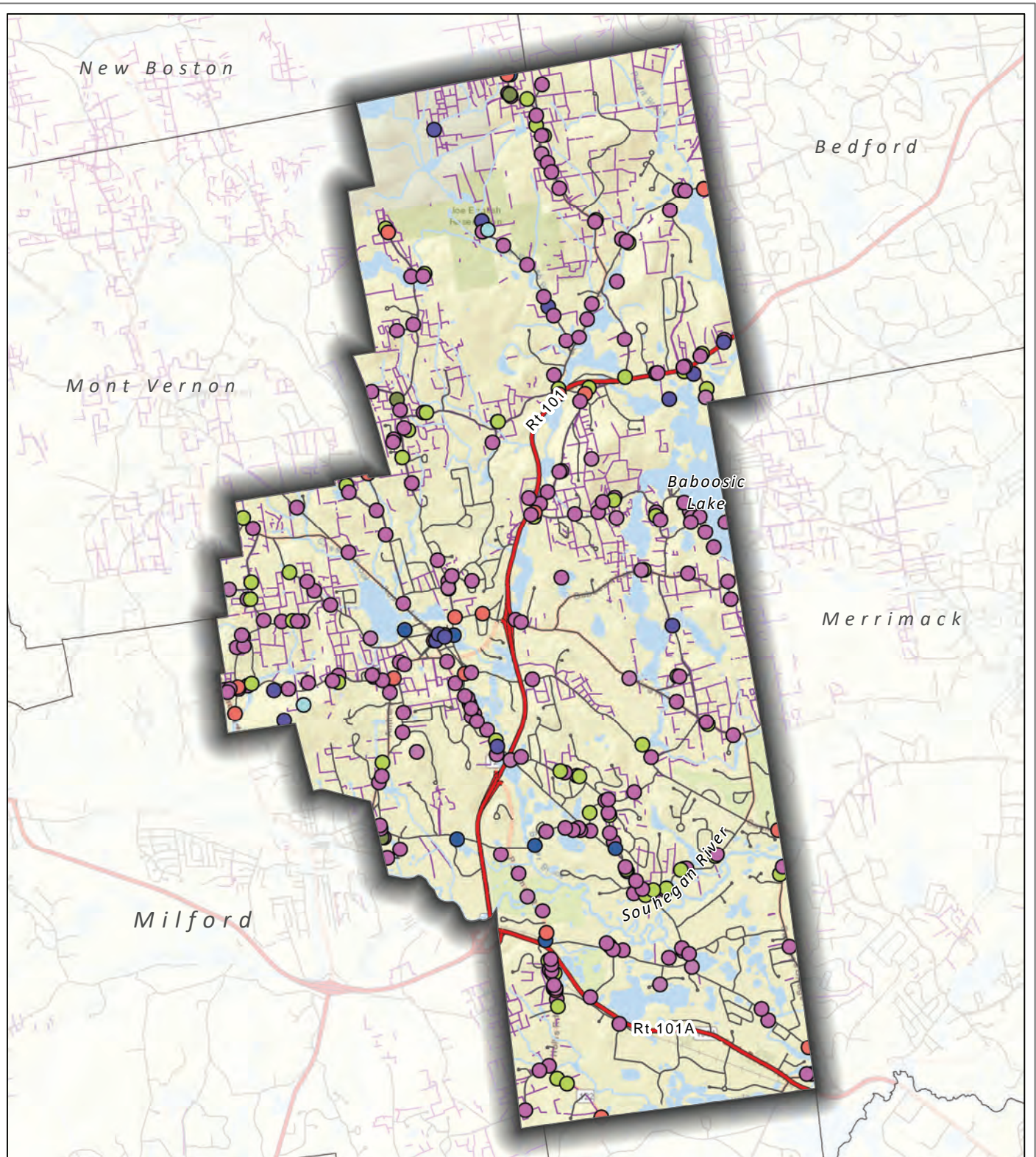
Water Resources & Development

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Town boundary |  | Aquifer productivity: Low |
|  | Stream |  | Aquifer productivity: Medium |
|  | Waterbody |  | Aquifer productivity: High |
|  | Developed area |  | Aquifer productivity: Excellent |
|  | Primary road |  | Groundwater classification: GA2 |







0 1 2 Miles











Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D



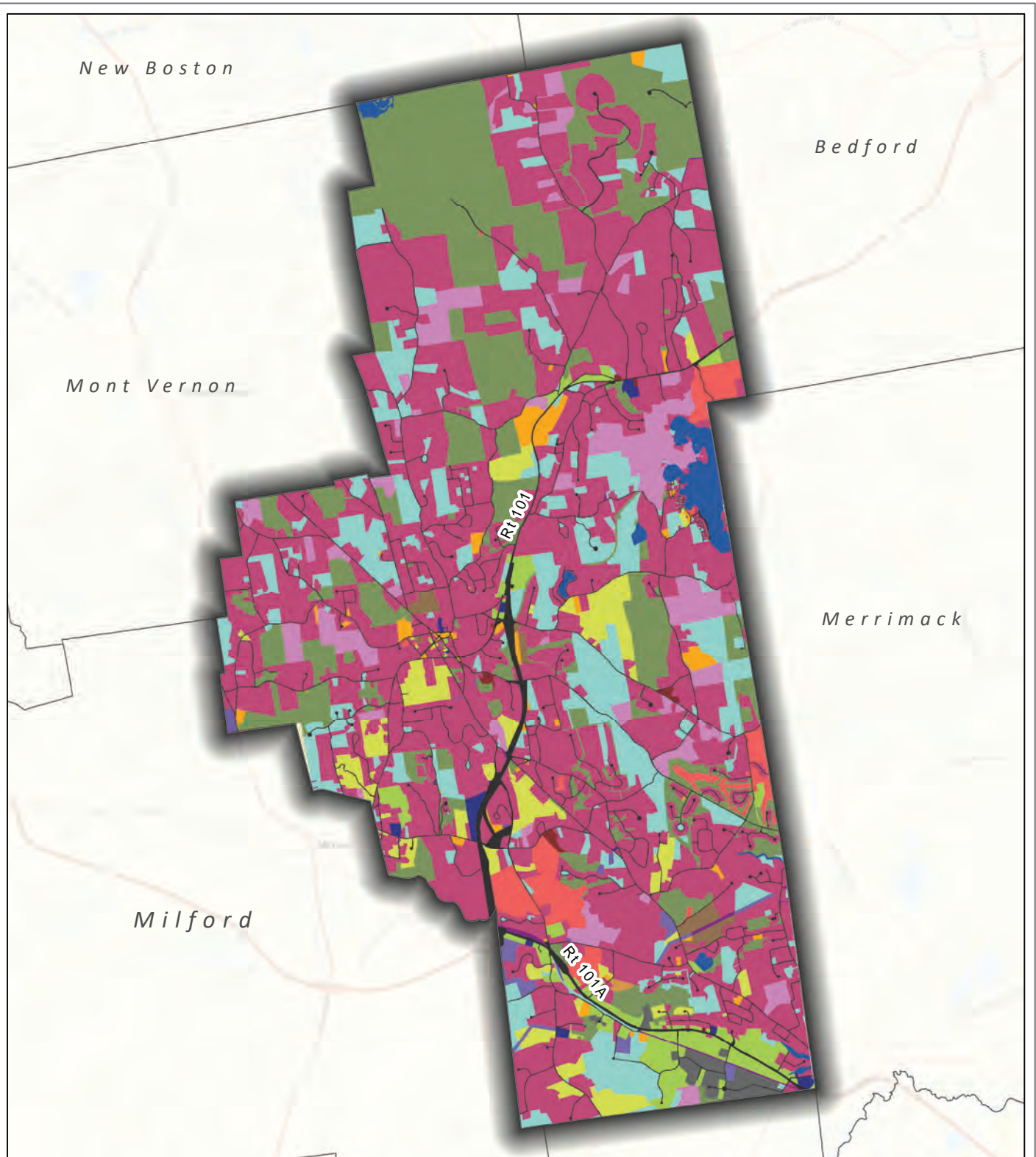
Town of Amherst, NH Heritage & Cultural Resources

-  Town boundary
-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  Primary road
-  Primary road
-  Stone wall

-  Cemetery (7)
-  Distinctive Outbuilding (52)
-  Guidepost & Marker (20)
-  Historic Residence (193)
-  Quarry or Mill Site (3)
-  Schoolhouse (3)
-  Sight or Place of Interest (18)
-  Stone Structure (14)



Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
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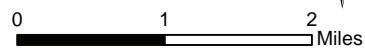


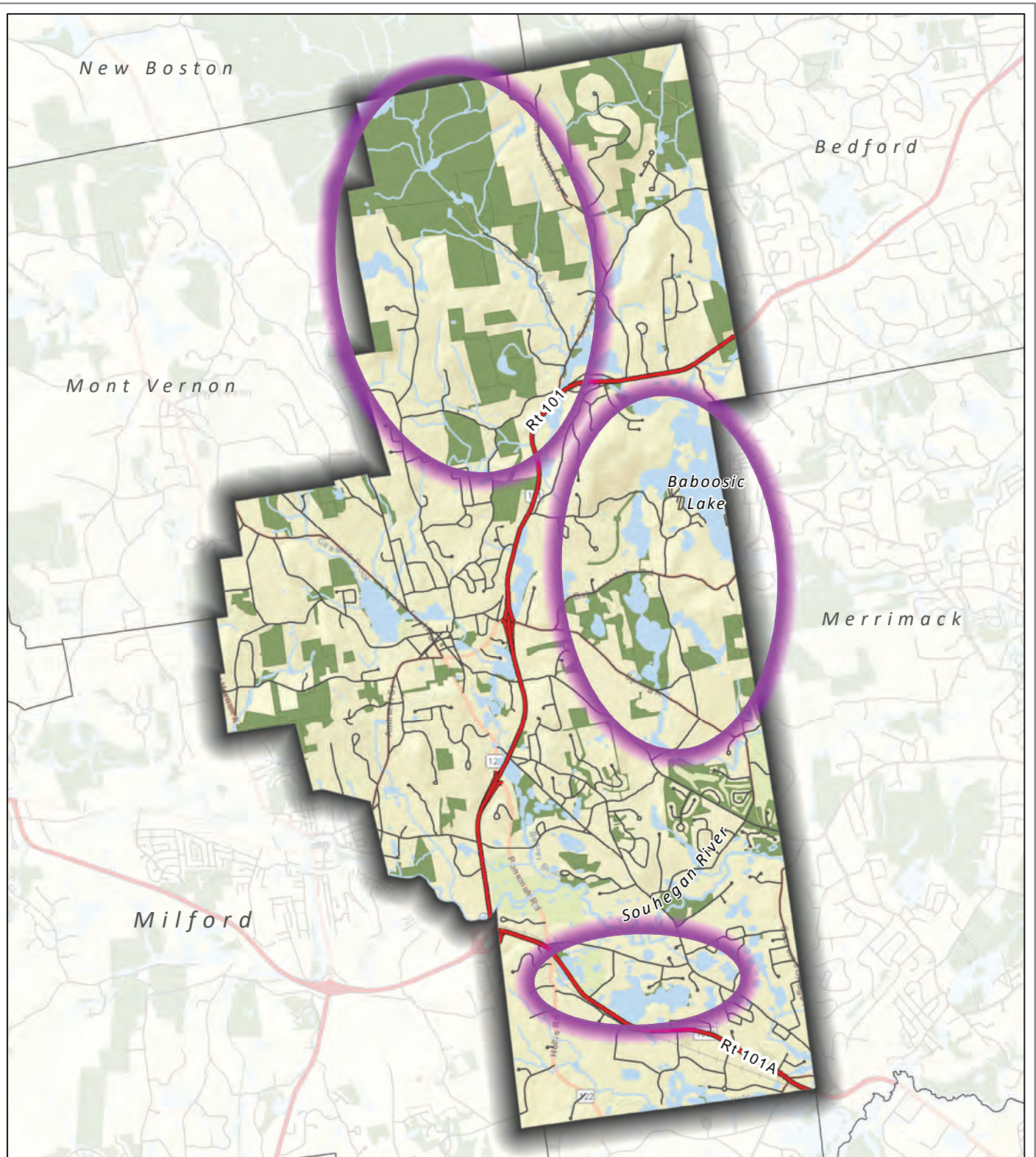
Town of Amherst, NH

Existing Land Use






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Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
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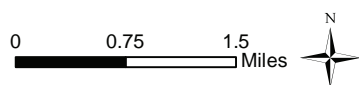


Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Priority Areas

-  Town boundary
-  Conservation priority
-  Conserved land

-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  Primary road
-  Primary road







Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D



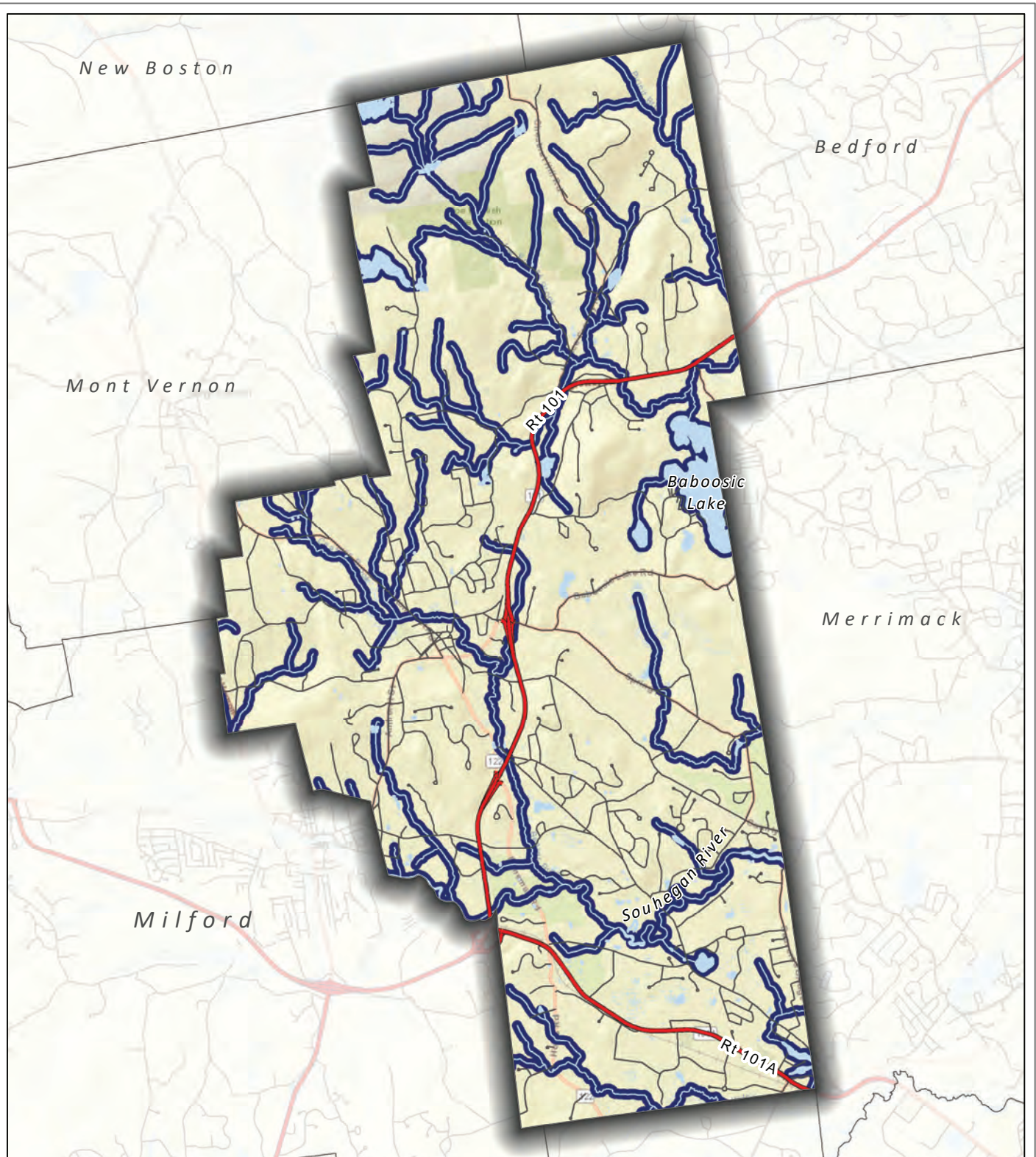
Town of Amherst, NH

Upstream and Downstream Waters

-  Watershed (HUC10)
-  Amherst boundary
-  Water flowing into Amherst (upstream)
-  Water flowing out of Amherst (downstream)









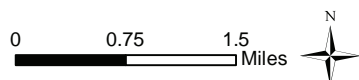
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September 2022
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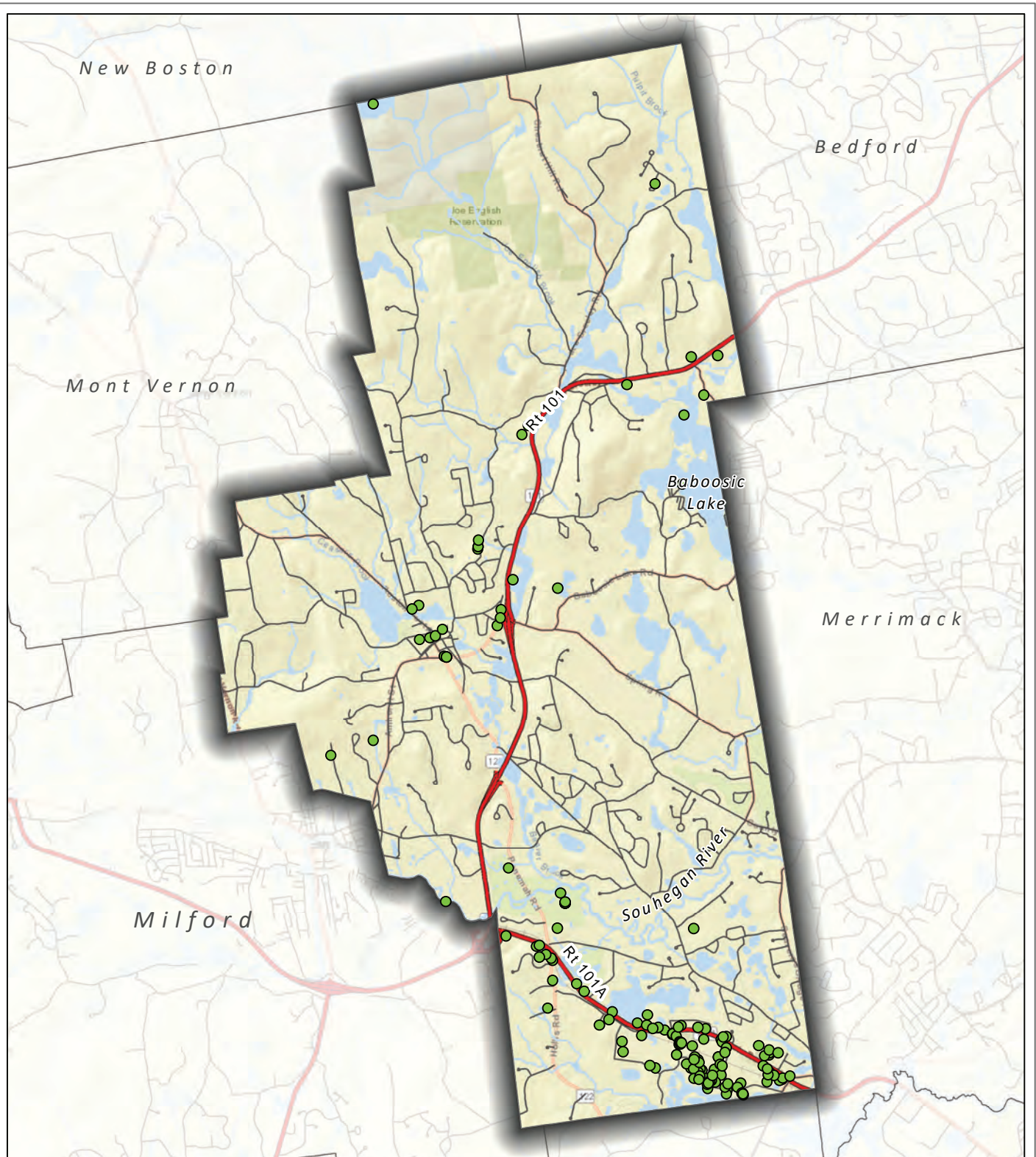
Town of Amherst, NH

Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act Buffer







-  Town boundary
-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  250-ft SWQPA buffer
-  Primary road
-  Primary road

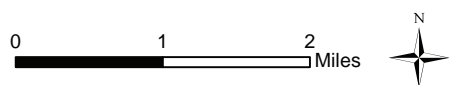


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Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

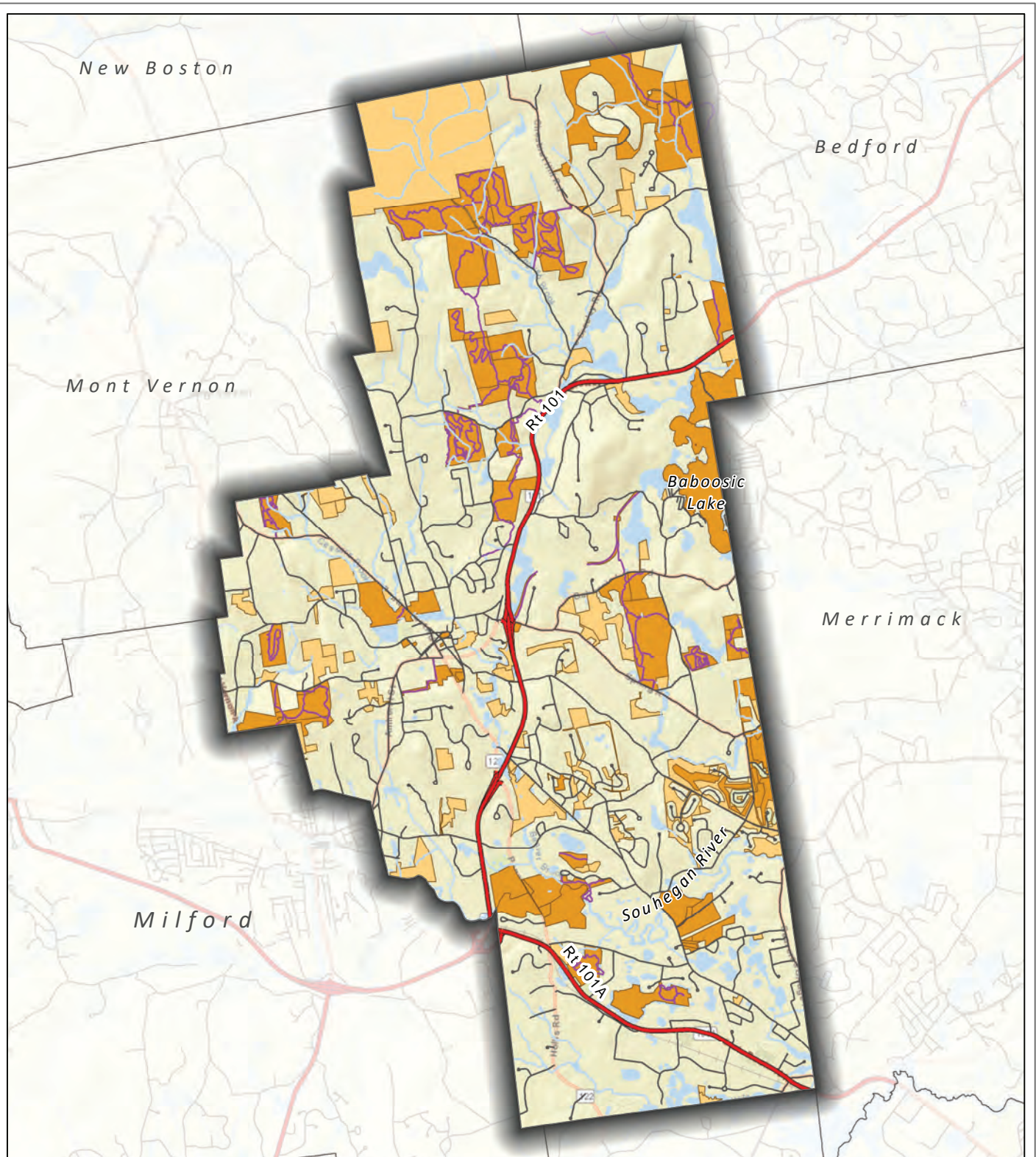


Town of Amherst, NH Contamination Sites

-  Town boundary
-  Potential contamination site
-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  Primary road
-  Other road







Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D



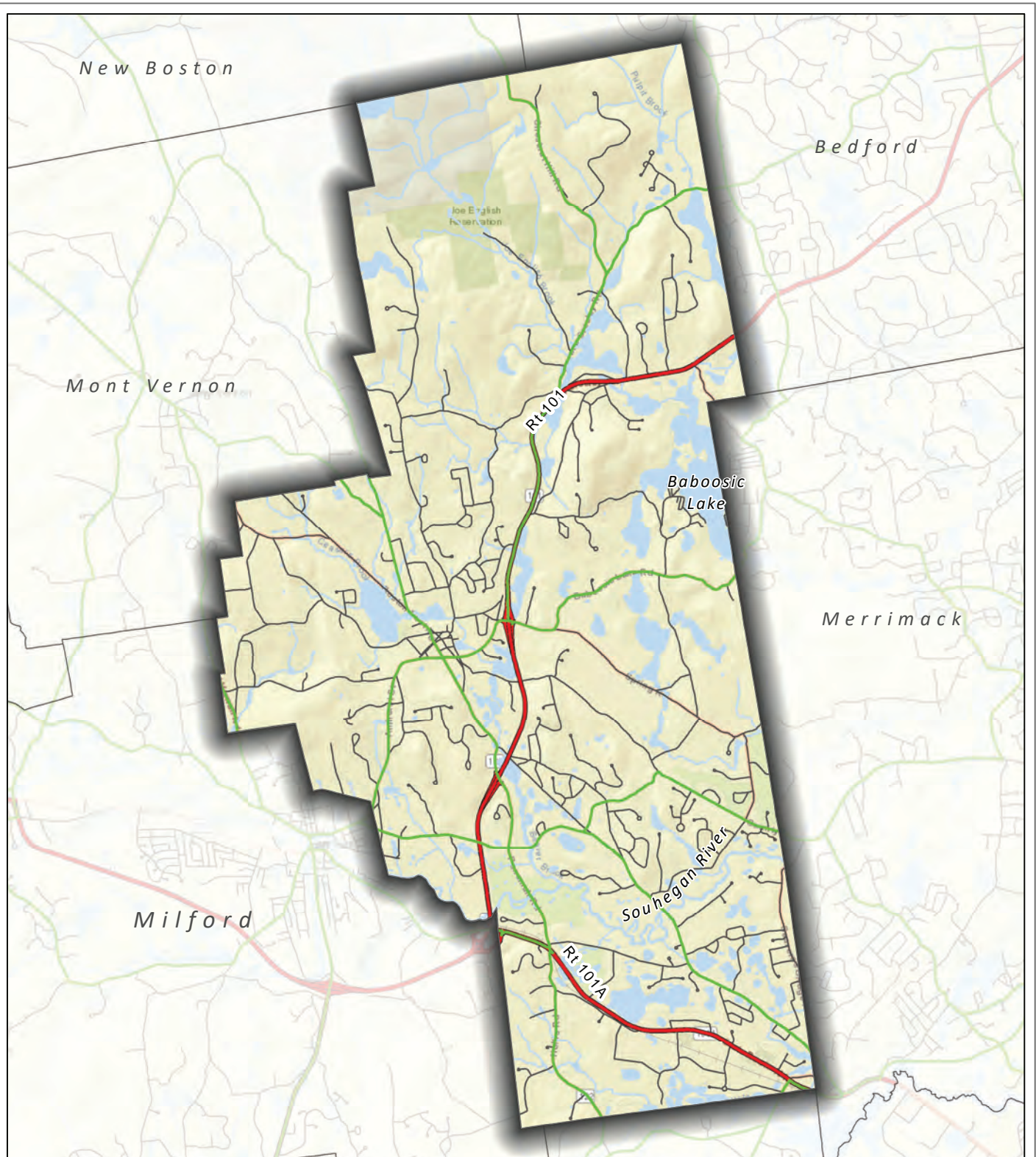
Town of Amherst, NH

Recreational Trails

-  Town boundary
-  Trail
-  Lands supporting recreation
-  Other open lands
-  Stream
-  Waterbody
-  Primary road
-  Other road









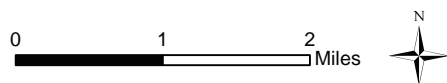
Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D



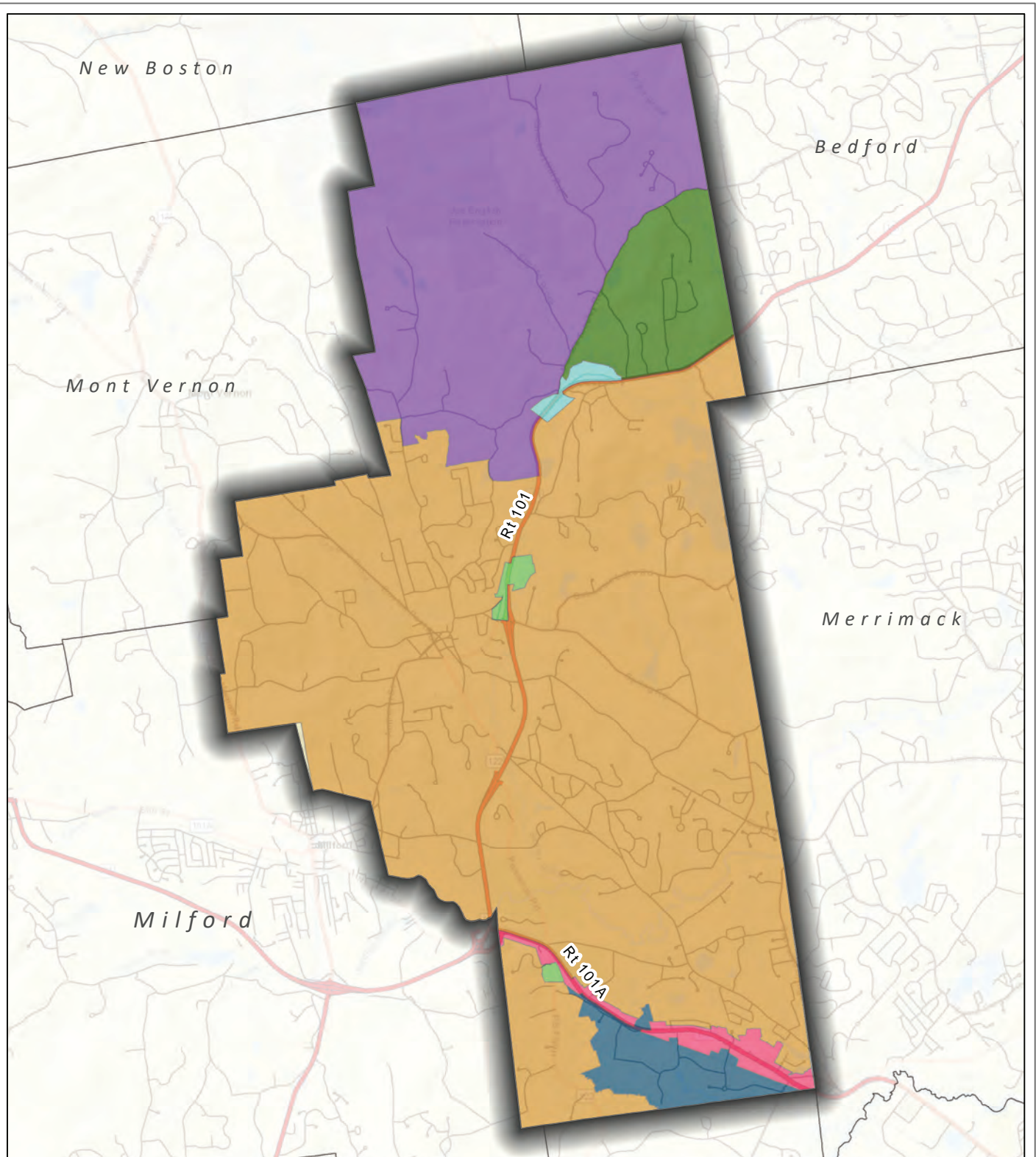
Town of Amherst, NH

Recommended Bicycle Routes

-  Town boundary
-  Recommended bicycle route
-  Primary road
-  Other road
-  Stream
-  Waterbody













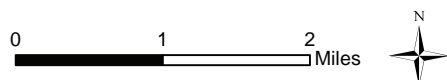
Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D, NHDOT



Town of Amherst, NH

Zoning Districts

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Town boundary |  | Industrial District |
|  | Primary road |  | Limited Commercial District |
|  | Other road |  | Northern Rural District |
|  | Commercial District |  | Northern Transitional District |
|  | General Office District |  | Residential/Rural District |



Prepared by Zak Brohinsky
Resilience Planning & Design
September 2022
Data sources: Town of Amherst,
GRANIT, NRPC, RP&D

Amherst Buildout Analysis Report

JUNE 2022

Prepared by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission
for the Town of Amherst



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Introduction

Like much of southern New Hampshire, the Town of Amherst continues to face the pressures of development due to its proximity to the Boston Metropolitan Area and the rapid growth of other communities in the region. After decades of population and housing increases, transportation improvements, and an evolving economy, Amherst officials and board members are constantly confronting the impacts of development and will need to employ effective land use planning with the goal of long-term sustainability in mind.

To that end, Amherst asked the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to conduct a buildout analysis to help visualize the current state of development in town and examine possible future outcomes based on various scenarios of growth and policy changes.

What is a buildout?

A buildout is a data-driven tool that allows planners and other decision-makers to estimate future development based on different scenarios. “Buildout” is a theoretical condition that exists when all available and suitable land has been developed for residential and non-residential purposes. By heeding natural constraints and land use and zoning regulations, the buildout can therefore produce an estimate of the type and amount of future growth.

The results of a buildout in this case are presented in terms of new single-family residential buildings, multi-family residential buildings, and square footage of new commercial and industrial buildings. Those numbers can then be translated into various indicators based on per-building rates to help answer questions such as “How many more school children will be added?” or “What percent of the population will live within 1 mile of a park?”.

This buildout includes two scenarios: a base and an alternative. Each of these scenarios comes with two timeframes – 20 years and full buildout. Comparing the results of these scenarios allows planners to test the effects and consequences of employing certain regulations in town.

What a buildout is NOT

It is vital to note that a buildout is simply a tool. It is NOT a prediction of what will occur nor a representation of official policy goals or part of a master plan for the community. Also, despite the detailed nature of the data, the buildout is NOT a perfect simulation of the development potential on each individual parcel.

Methodology

This buildout was performed using CommunityViz, a software developed by City Explained, Inc. The software is an add-in extension to ArcGIS for Desktop, the industry standard in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the product which the Nashua Regional Planning Commission uses in its daily GIS work program.

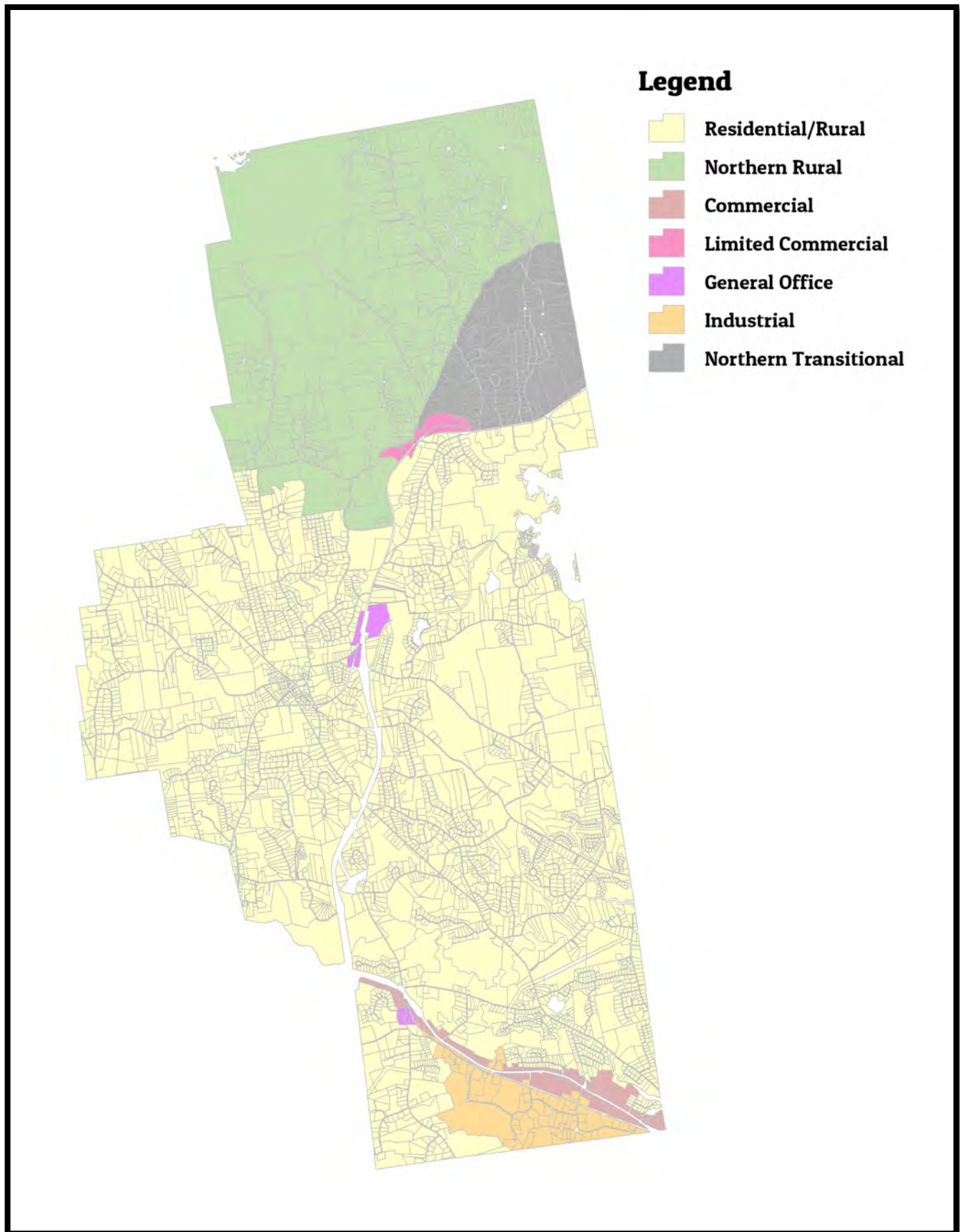
Buildout results are generated both as GIS data to allow for mapping and analysis and as tabular data compatible with Microsoft Excel and other spreadsheet and database packages.

Inputs

The base unit of analysis in this buildout is the parcel. This offers several advantages over analyzing by neighborhood or zone. First, it estimates the numbers of new lots at buildout for each developable parcel in Town. This allows for a very explicit and numerically accurate identification of where and how much growth will occur. Second, it accounts for the ownership, configuration, and size of each lot so that parcels that may be prohibited from development either now or in future scenarios can be removed from the process with affected any other area. This might include parks, conservation lands, schools, and utility rights-of-way.

Each parcel in Amherst is analyzed for its development potential based on current activity, constrained land, and what is allowable under local development regulations. NRPC maintains a robust GIS database of all parcels in its 13-community region, meaning the parcels were up-to-date as of the time of analysis.

The parcels are then coded with the zone that they fall in, according to Amherst's Zoning Ordinance. This tells the software what and how much can be built on each parcel. **Map 1** shows the current zoning district boundaries in Amherst.



Map 1 - Zoning Districts

CommunityViz then asks for the relevant zoning and land use regulations that would affect the amount on type of allowable buildings on each lot. **Table 1** below shows a summary of dimensional requirements by use, as taken from Amherst's current Zoning Ordinance.

Zone	Min. Lot Size	Front Setback	Side Setback	Rear Setback	Max FAR*
Residential/Rural	2 ac	50'	25'	25'	15
Northern Transitional	3.5 ac	50'	40'	40'	15
Northern Rural	5 ac	4	30'	30'	15
General Office	2 ac Res/1 other	50-100'	30'	30'	20
Commercial	1 ac	50-100'	30'	30'	25
Limited Commercial	1 ac	50-100'	30'	30'	20
Industrial	1 ac	50-100'	30'	30'	40

Table 1 - Required Inputs by Building Use

**Floor Area Ratio*

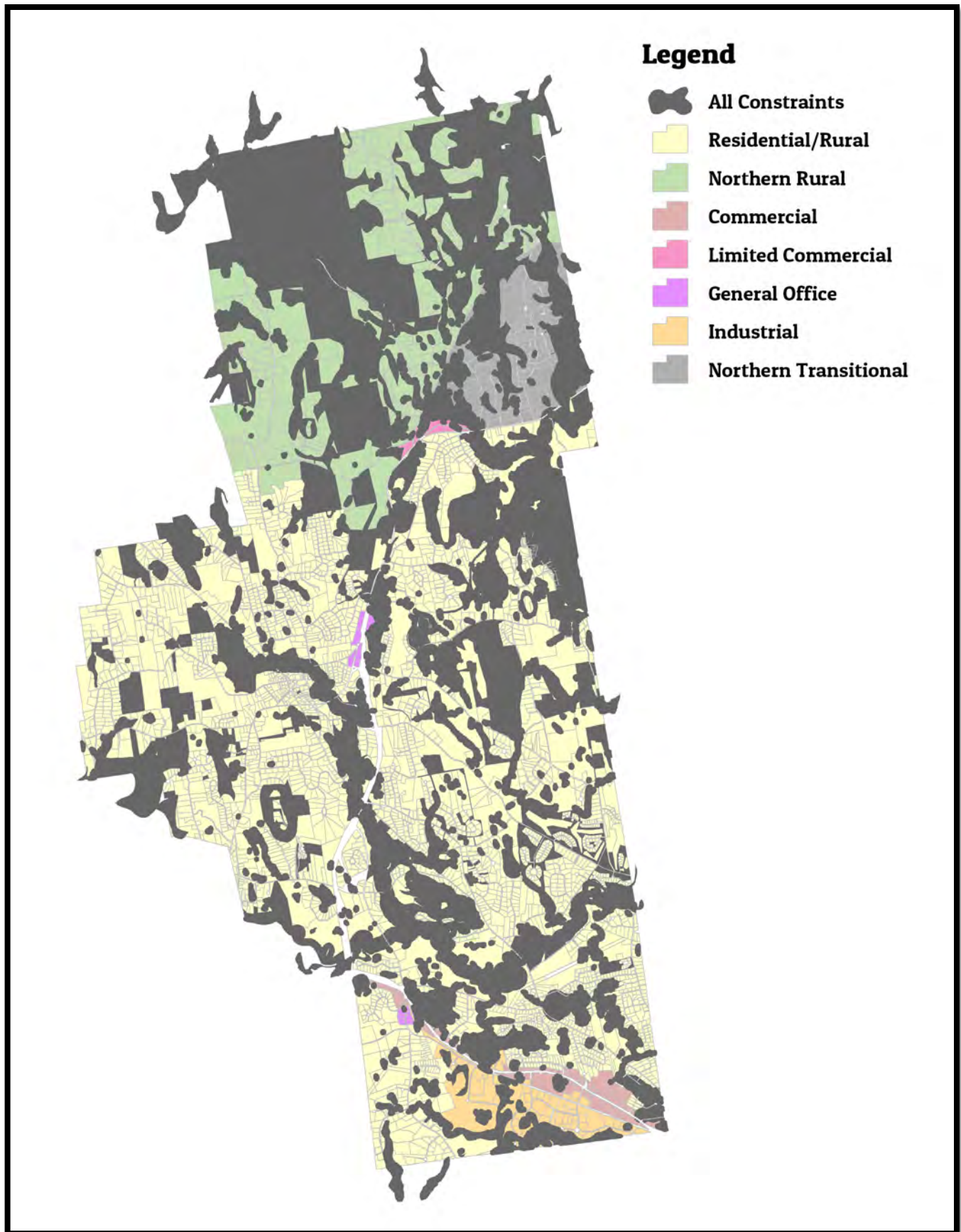
Other factors such as efficiency (how much of a parcel to set aside for roads, open space, utilities, and other features) were also used as inputs where available.

The last set of inputs involves development constraints. These are GIS layers of areas that represent undevelopable land, either due to natural features or regulatory exclusion. When calculating the amount and location of new buildings, the buildout software will avoid these areas entirely. For Amherst's base scenario buildout, these layers included:

- Surface water and shoreland buffers
- Wetlands and associated buffers
- Large powerline easements
- Soils classified as having poor to very poor drainage
- Slopes equaling or in excess of 20%
- Conserved lands

Other constraints were introduced in the alternative scenario and are discussed later in the report.

Map 2 shows the extent of these constraints when combined into one area



Map 2 - Constrained Land Simplified

Assumptions

When calculating where to place new buildings on available land, CommunityViz software not only takes into account the regulations of what can be built on each parcel, but also the amount of space that any current buildings are taking up. Thus, an average size (in square feet) for single-family, commercial, and industrial buildings was derived for current Amherst assessing data and applied to each point in the GIS data representing an existing unit. NRPC maintains a GIS layer of buildings footprints, which were converted into points and given attributes representing these floor areas.

These numbers are carried over to any new buildings as well so that, for example, a 1-acre lot that currently has a house on it will not see any further development because the existing structure takes up space and the 1-acre minimum for a new house is no longer met.

As previously mentioned, some buildouts are time-constrained, using annual development rates to estimate growth after a certain number of years. Others look at a full buildout, meaning all available land is developed no matter how long that would take. Initially, Amherst chose to run a 20-year buildout assuming 30 new residential units per year. NRPC then also performed the full buildout to give a more drastic picture of what each scenario would mean for development. In either case, no assumptions can be made from the results of this analysis as to the location or timeframe of any theoretical new building or group of buildings.

Other assumptions used during the buildout process include

- Any potential mixed-use buildings are assigned 25% residential and 75% commercial uses
- Each parcel is given a 70% efficiency rate, meaning 30% of otherwise developable space is dedicated to new roads and open space normally associated with subdividing lots
- Patterns of development are random with no prediction for the shape of new roads or the layout of new lots

Base Scenario

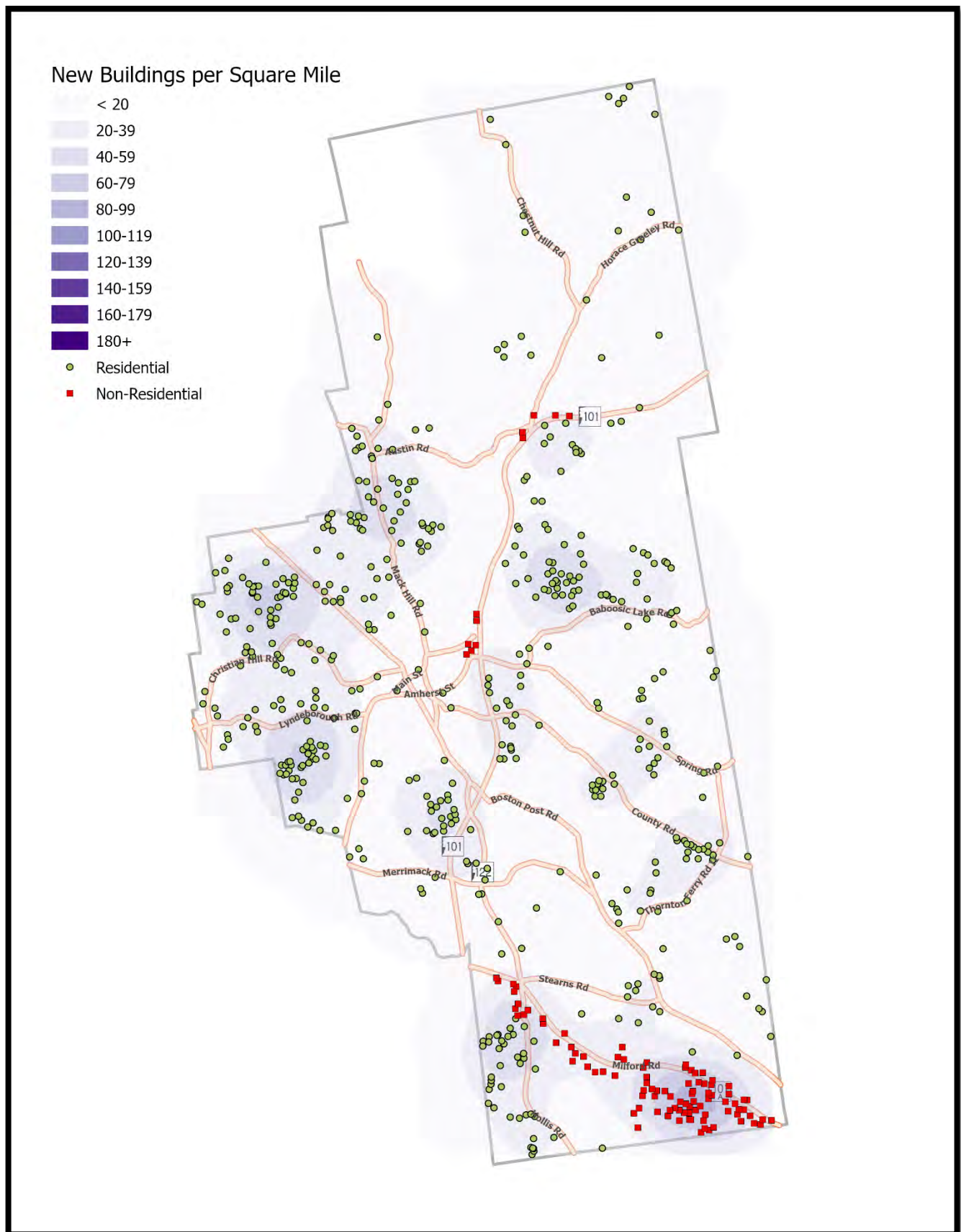
The base scenario buildout analysis represents what development patterns would look like under current land use regulations under both the 20-year timeframe and the full buildout when all available land is used up. This scenario is an important tool not only on its own, but also in setting a baseline to which alternate scenarios can be compared.

Results

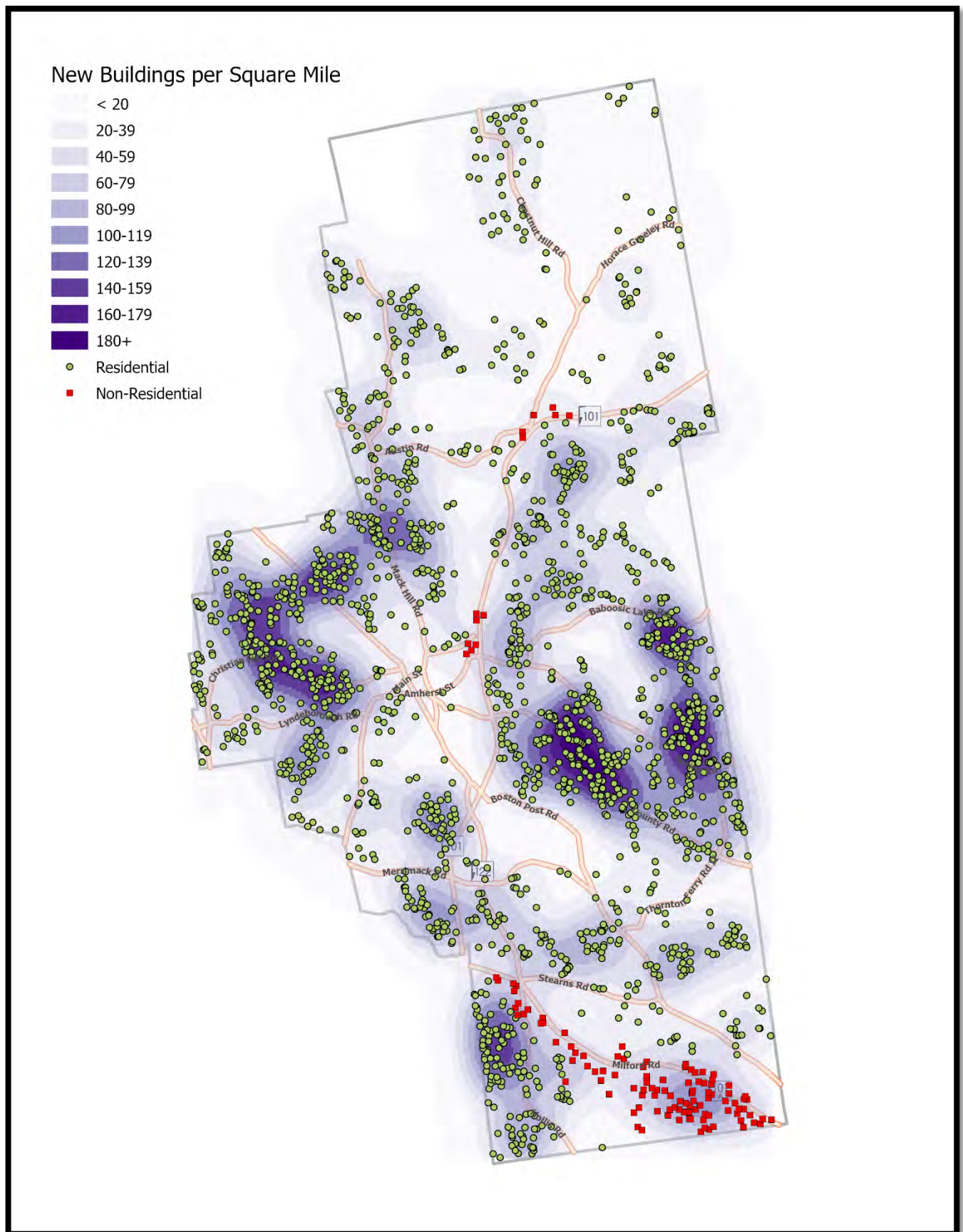
At full buildout using all current regulations, constraints, and assumptions, CommunityViz produced the following estimates:

- 1,900 new buildings
 - 1,784 residential
 - 116 commercial and industrial
- 437,000 square feet of new commercial space
- 1.64 million square feet of new industrial space

Map 3 and **Map 4** show the results of the base scenario after 20 years and at full buildout, with modeled locations of new buildings shown as a density heat map. Building locations in the 20-year timeframe are placed using various assumptions in the CommunityViz model related to lot size and proximity to existing buildings.



Map 3 - Base Scenario Results after 20 years of growth



Alternative Scenario

Under the terms of this project, NRPC agreed to produce at least one alternative scenario for Amherst in order to compare results to the base scenario. In determining what any alternative scenarios should look like, discussion amongst staff, local boards, and Envision Amherst centered around the concept of increased constraints related to natural resources, particularly water and conservation lands.

Thus, the new scenario differs from the base in its additional layers of development constraints, further limiting where future buildings could be placed and leading to less growth at the end of the unlimited timeline buildout. These layers include:

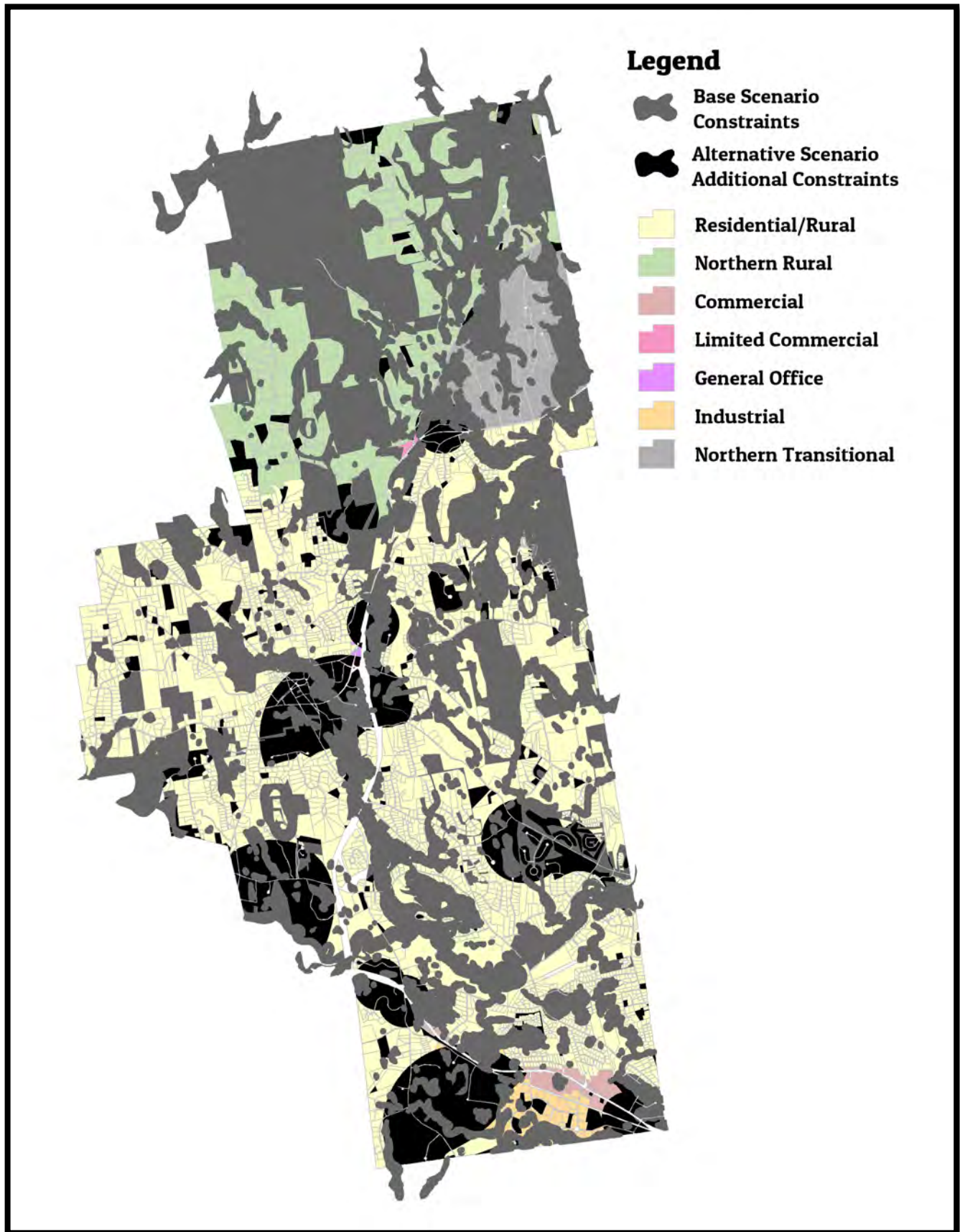
- 100- and 500-year floodplain
- Wellhead protection areas
- Any currently vacant parcels located in a ranked habitat per New Hampshire's Wildlife Action Plan

Table 2 summarizes the constraint layers from the base and alternative scenarios.

Together, these layers added an additional 2,900 acres of land to the undevelopable land category. **Map 5** shows these new constraints in relation those of the base scenario. Note that total acreage is not the sum of each individual constraint layer due to overlap.

Comparison of Buildout Scenarios					
Development Constraint Category	Data Source(s)	Scenario 1 (Base): Business-As-Usual		Scenario 2: Increased Local Environmental Protection	
		Constraint Definition	Total Area (AC)	Constraint Definition	Total Area (AC)
Conservation Land	NH Granit Conserved Lands, NRPC Conserved Lands	All existing conserved land	4,454	All existing conserved land plus vacant lands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater than 10 acres, or Adjacent to another conservation tract, or Has priority habitat (Tiers 1-3) 	5,137 (+683 over Base)
Open Water	New Hampshire Hydrography Dataset, NHDES Designated Rivers GIS Dataset	Rivers, Lakes, Streams, and Wetlands with 100-ft buffer	4,722	Plus Shoreland Water Quality Protection Jurisdictional Area Buffers	5,284 (+562 over Base)
Floodplain	FEMA Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM)	None	0	100 and 500-year floodplains	+2,712 over base
Wellheads	NRPC GIS database	None	0	Wellhead Protection Areas	+3,143 over Base

Table 2 – Comparison of Buildout Scenarios



Map 5 – Constraints of Alternative Scenario

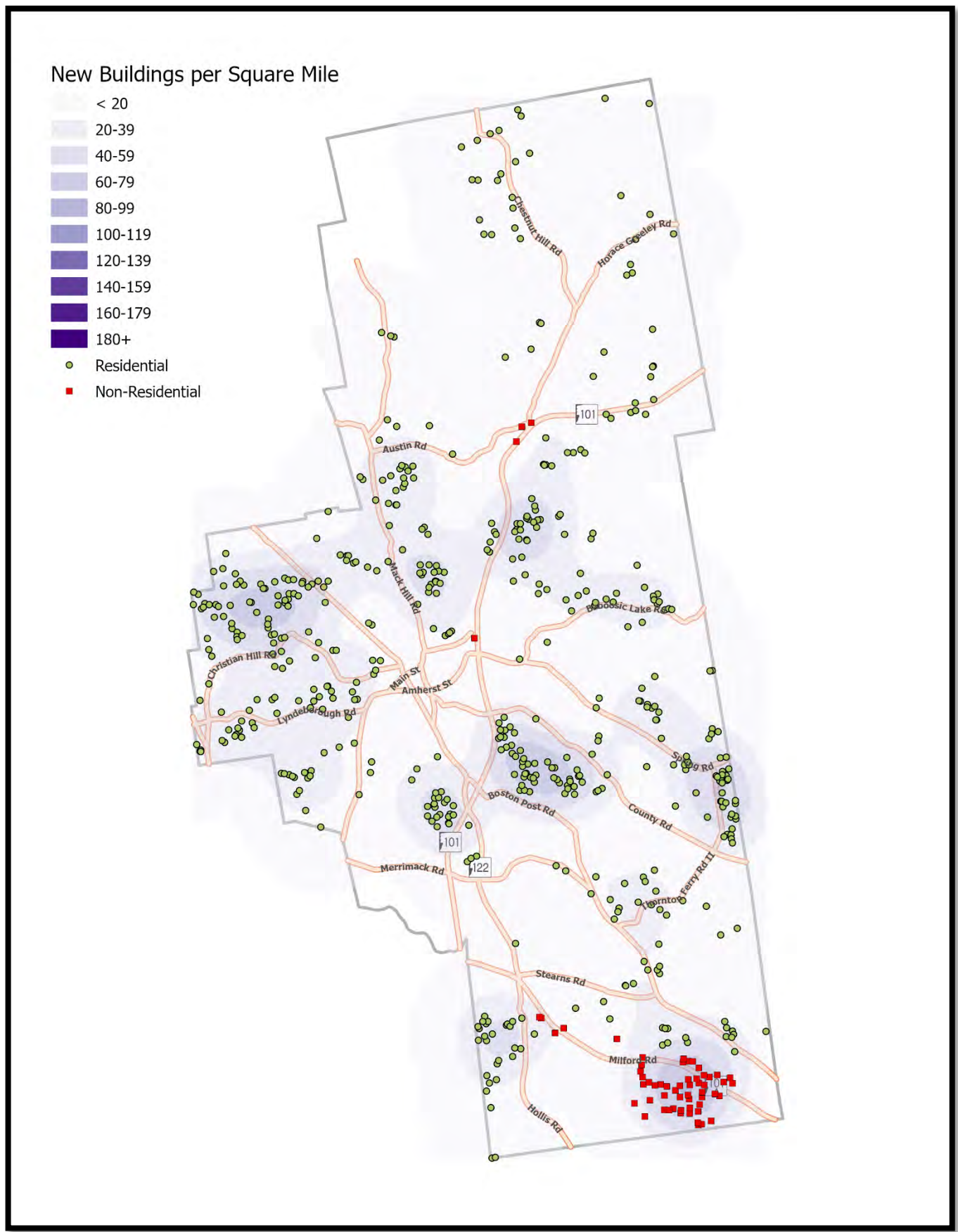
Results

Alternative Scenario – Increased Environmental Protections

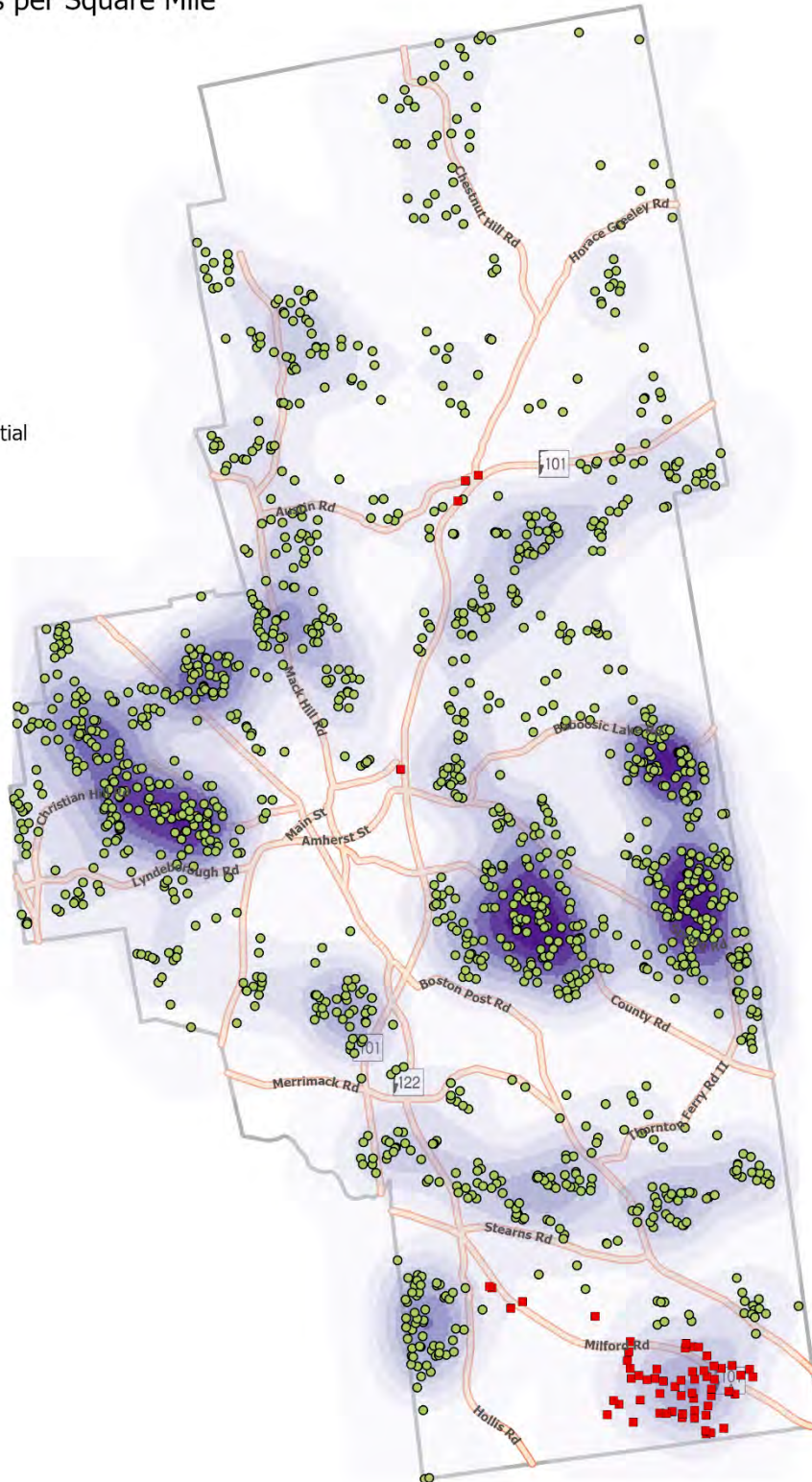
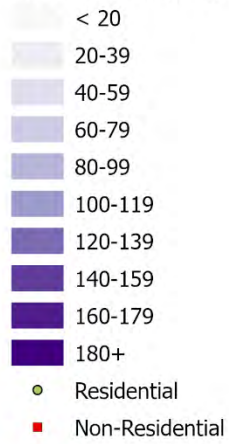
CommunityViz produced the following estimates for a full buildout under the alternative scenario:

- 1,450 new buildings
 - 1,387 residential
 - 63 commercial and industrial
- 268,872 square feet of new commercial space
- 955,000 square feet of new industrial space

Map 6 and **Map 7** show the results of the base scenario after 20 years and at full buildout, with modeled locations of new buildings shown as a density heat map. Building locations in the 20-year timeframe are placed using various assumptions in the CommunityViz model related to lot size and proximity to existing buildings.



New Buildings per Square Mile



Map 7 – Alternative Scenario Results at full buildout

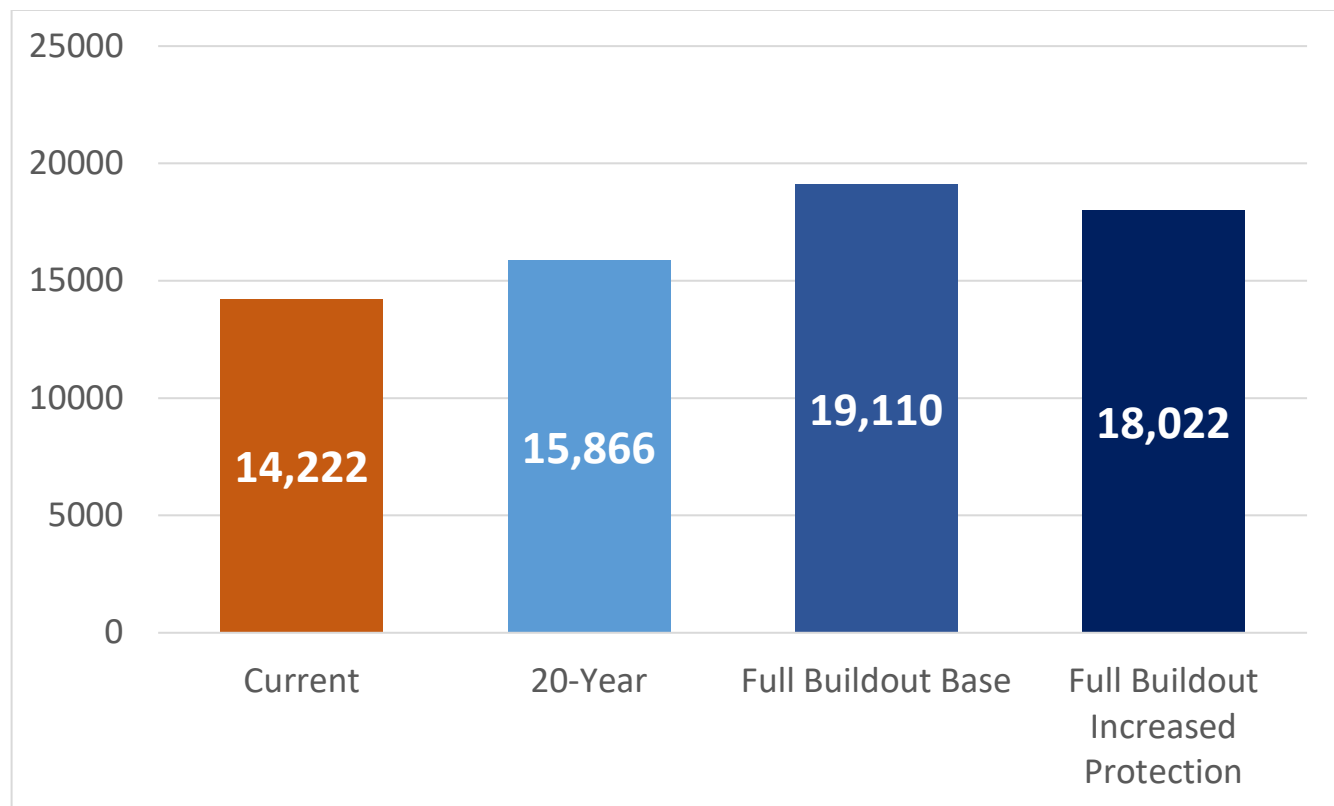
Indicators

The comparative effects the potential results of local development under various scenarios can be better understood through quantitative measures referred to in this project as impact indicators. Impact indicators are a series of data points based on real-world rates and can project future changes to the town's people and infrastructure.

The following charts compare these impacts between the base and alternative scenarios. Indicators were chosen in consultation with the Town of Amherst. Where available, local or regional rates were used to extrapolate these future impacts based on added buildings of each type. Otherwise, national averages from the United States Census Bureau apply. The source and value of all assumptions are indicated below each chart.

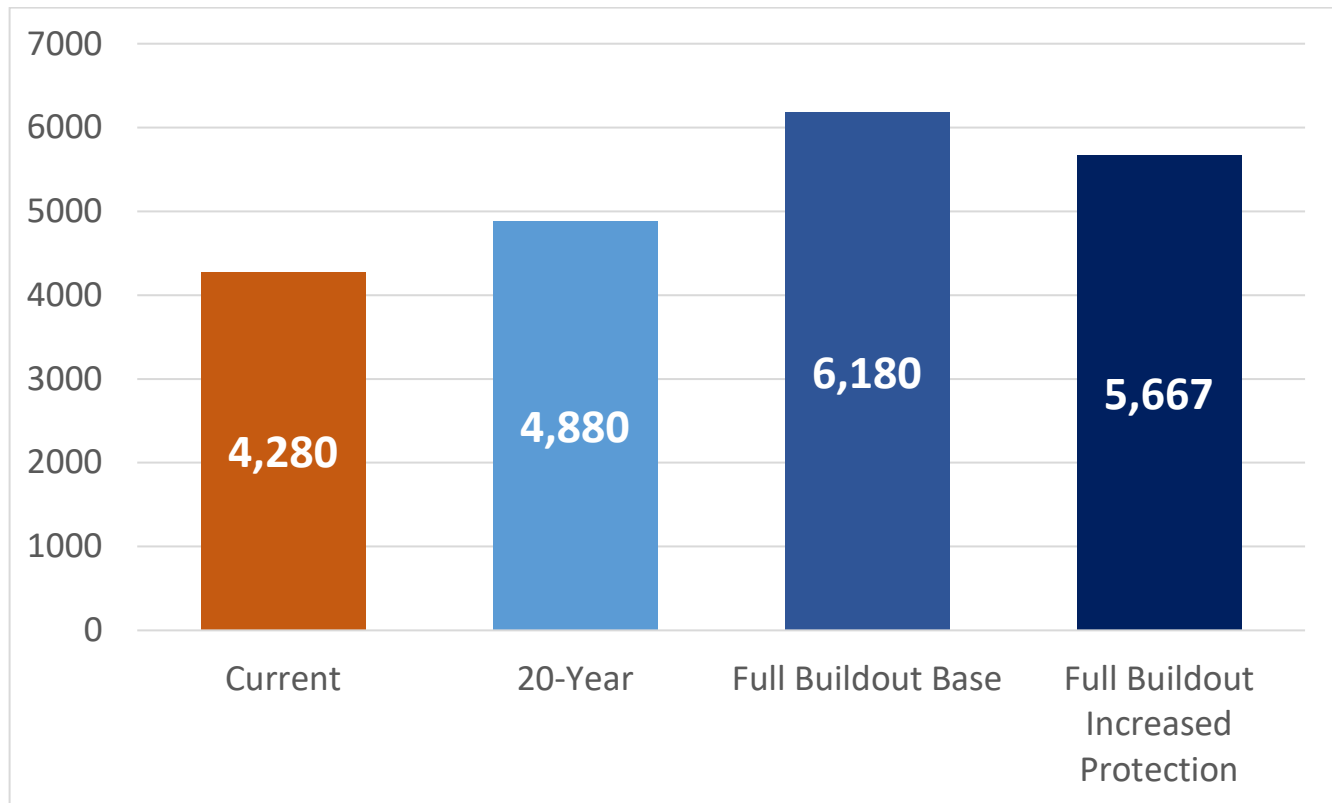
Note that because 600 buildings are modeled as the result of 20 years of growth under either scenario, indicators for the limited horizon timeframe are the same. These numbers are shown as one item on the graph alongside the current data and each of the two full buildout results.

Total Population



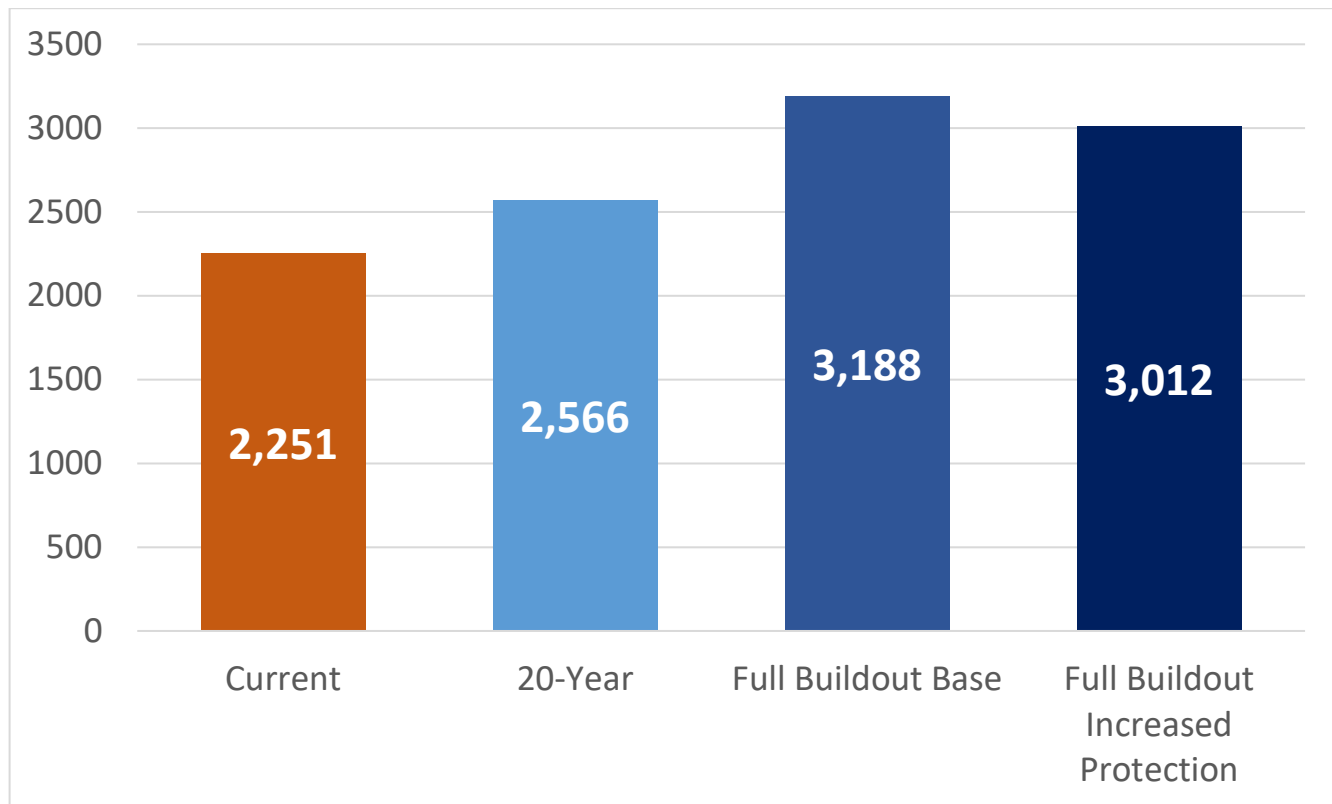
Based on an average household size in Amherst of 2.74 from data.census.gov

Households



Based on added buildings from results of buildout

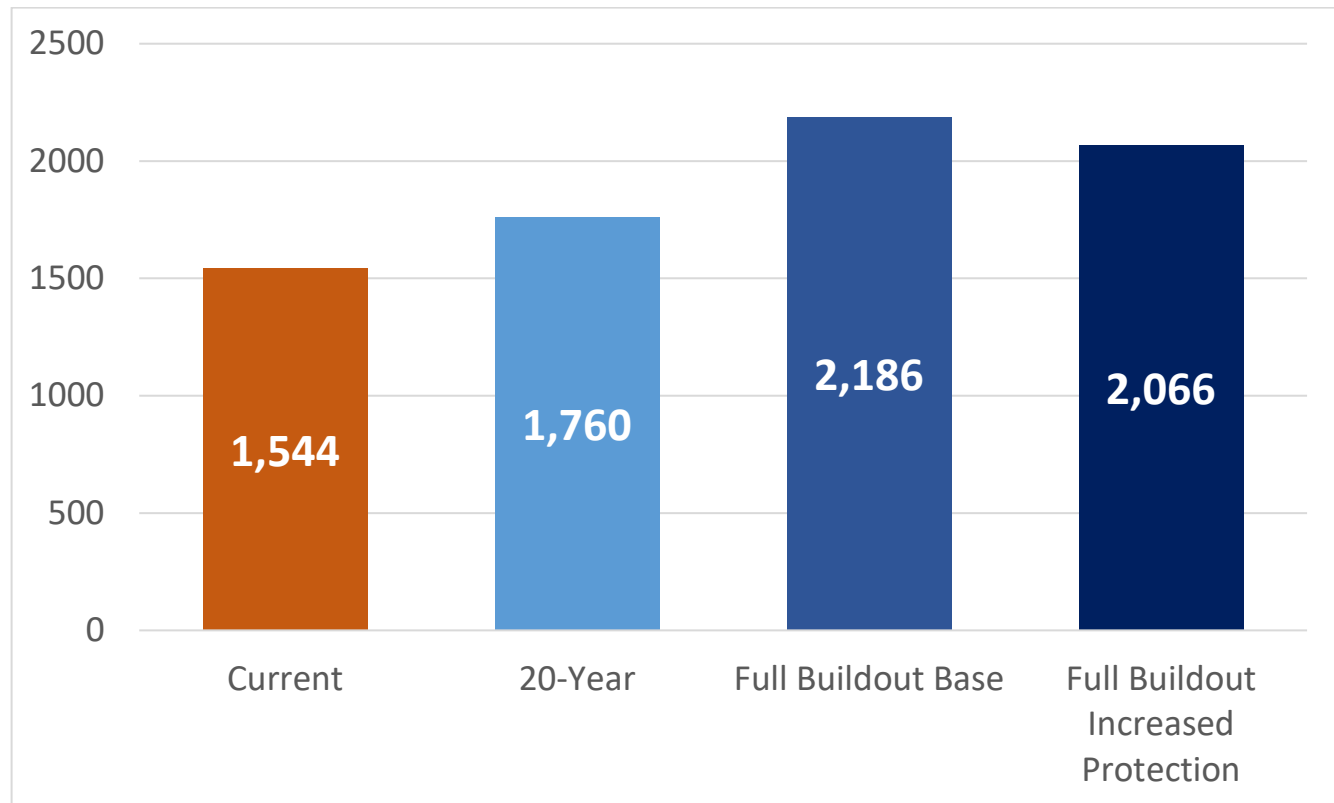
School Enrollment (Total including Mont Vernon*)



Based on current enrollment provided by Town of Amherst and a school-age child per household rate of .525 calculated by NRPC

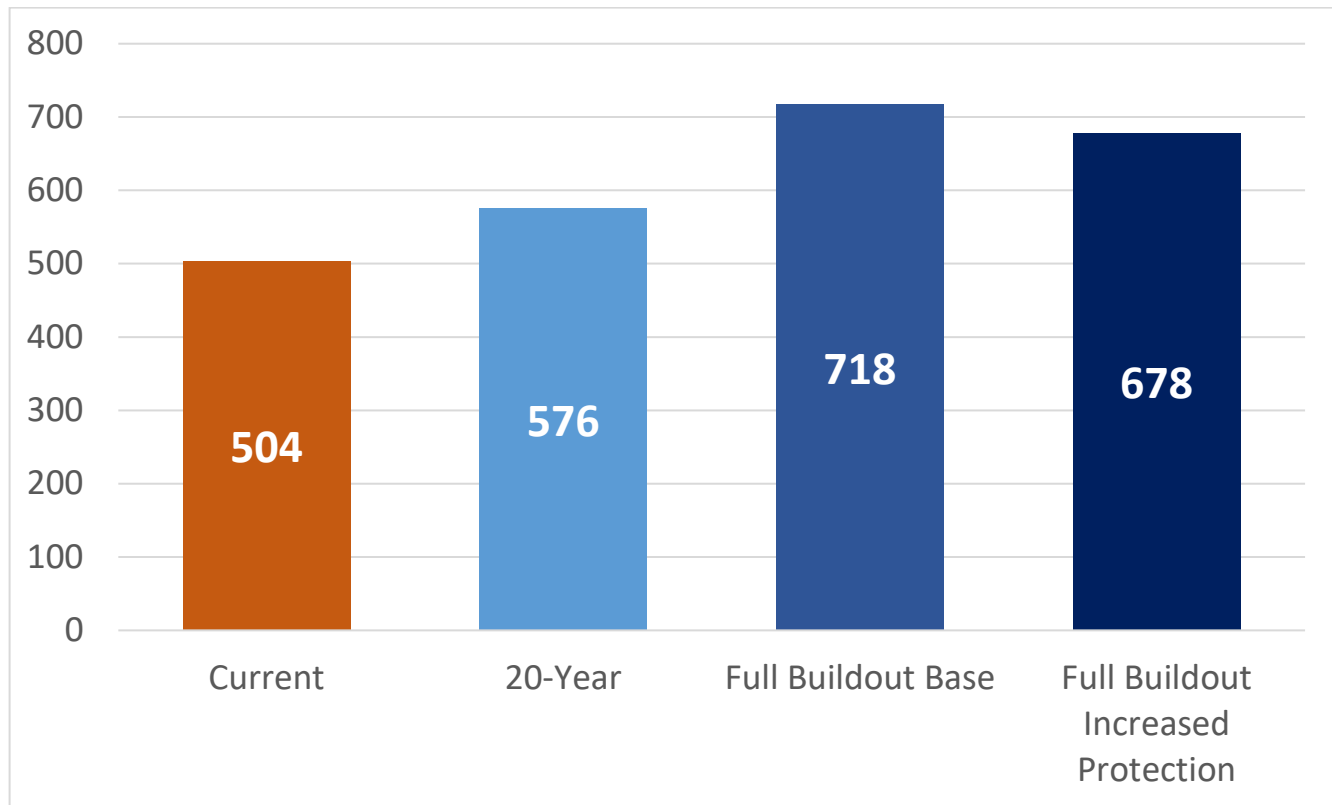
* Mont Vernon would likely experience future growth as well but any estimates are not included in the analysis

School Enrollment (Pre-K through 8th grade)



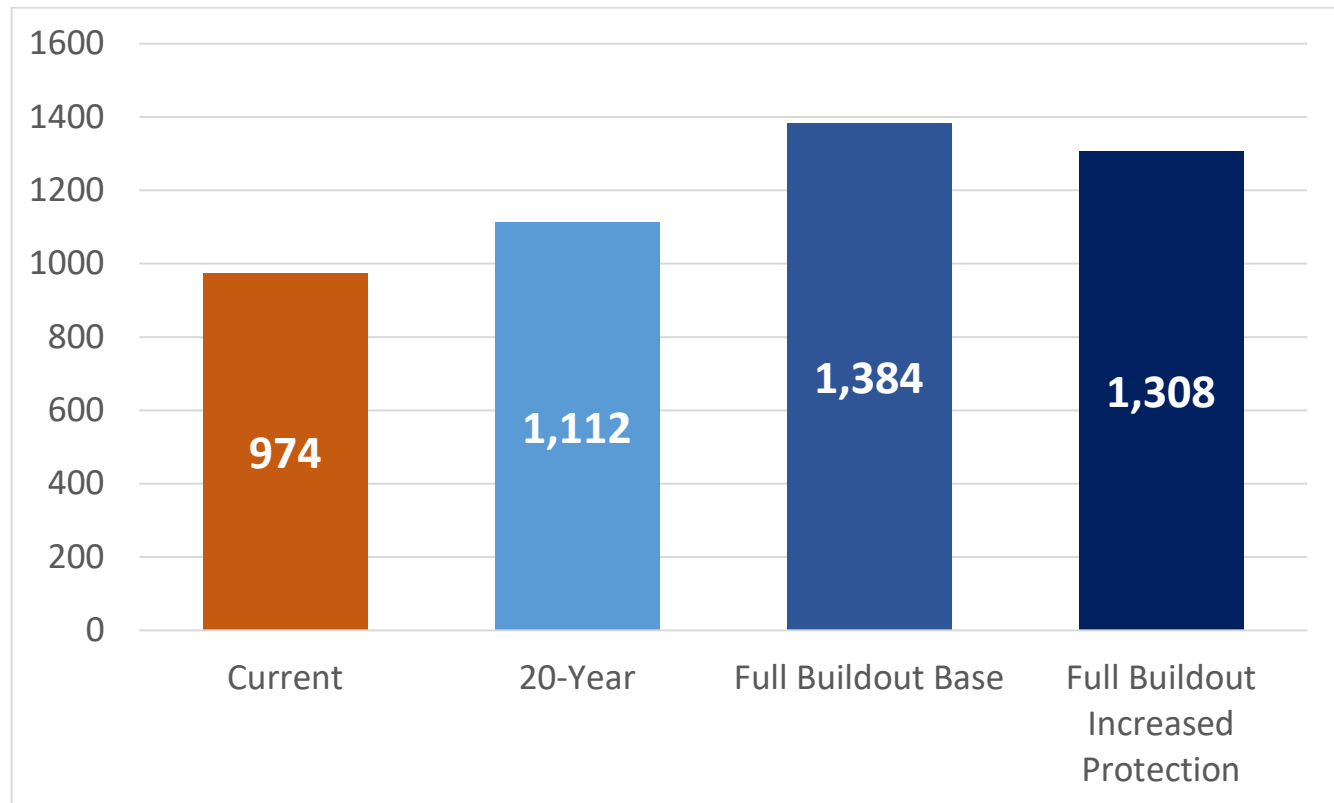
Based on current enrollment provided by Town of Amherst and a school-age child per household rate of .36 calculated by NRPC

Yearly Incident Responses - Fire



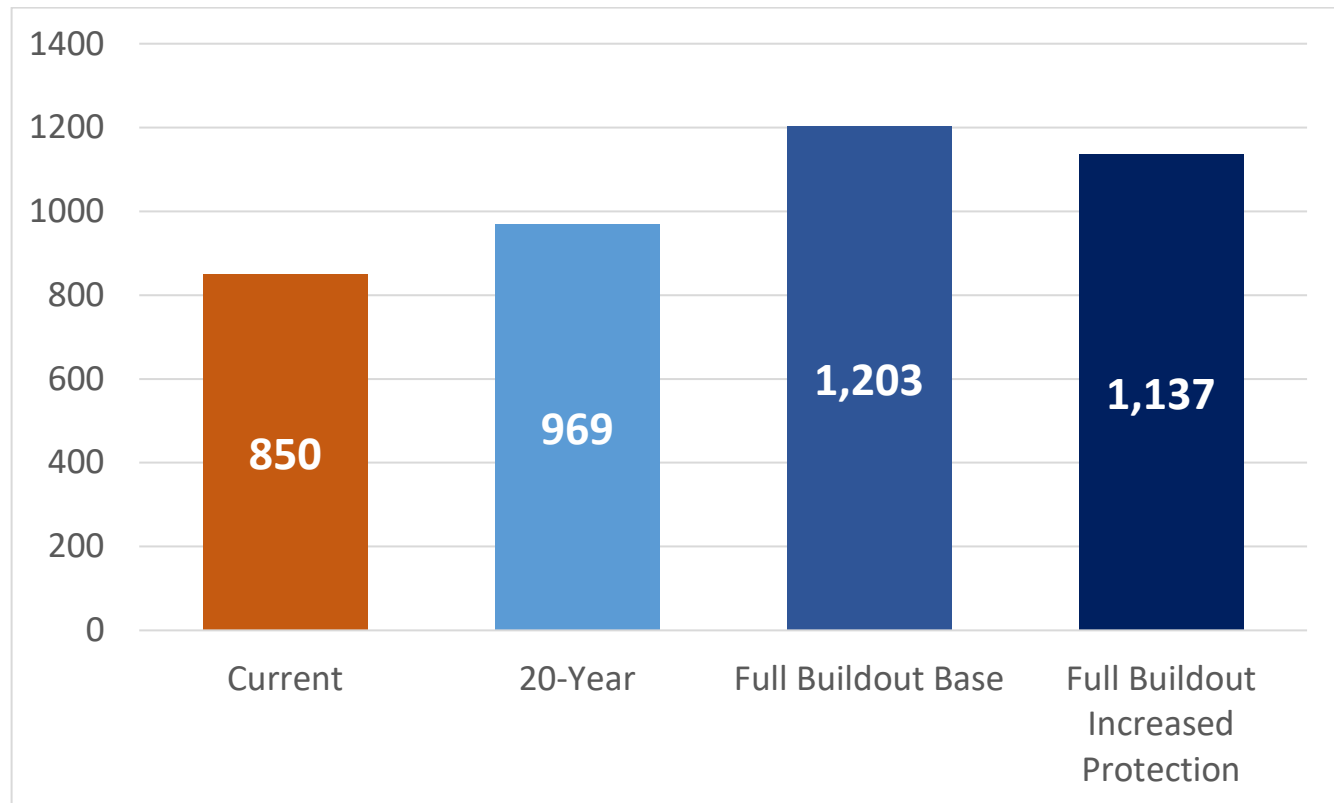
Current number and per-household rate of 0.12 provided by Town of Amherst.

Yearly Incident Responses - EMS



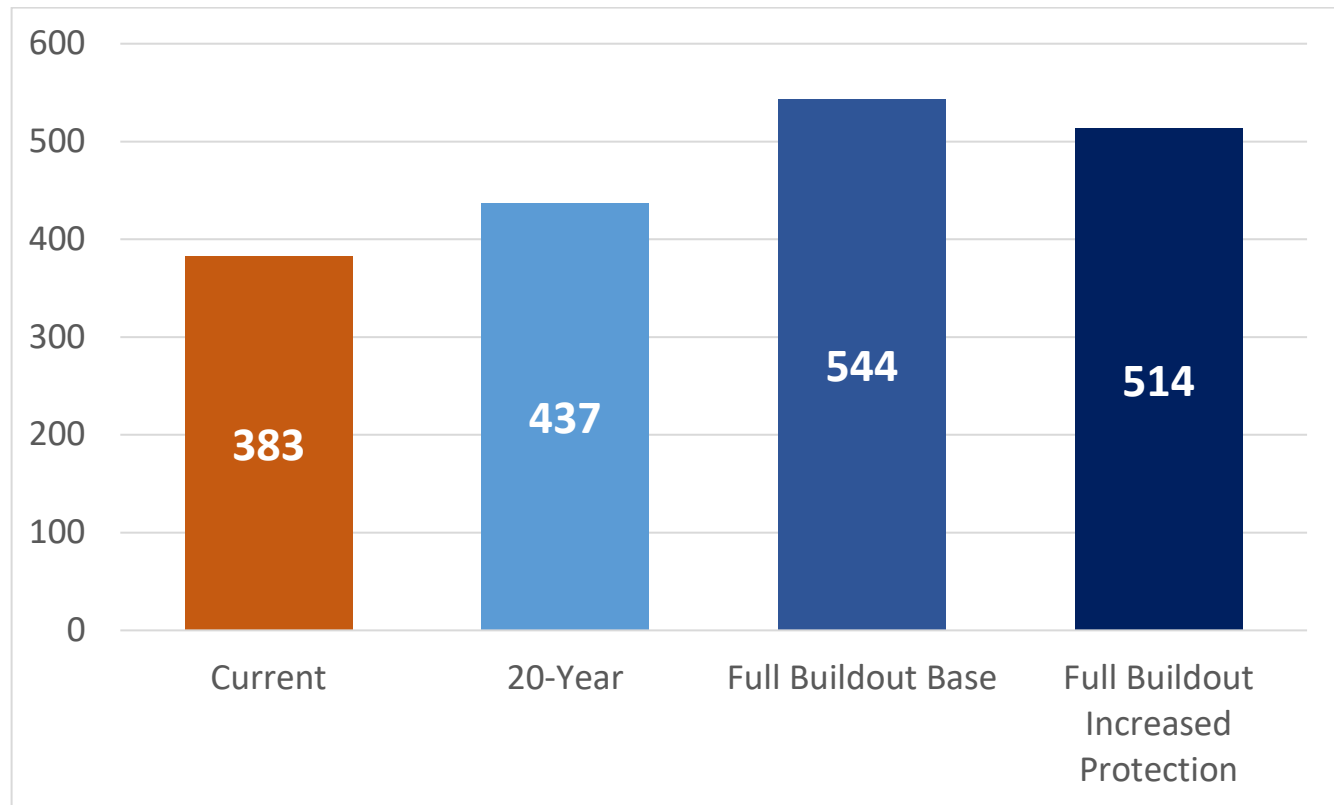
Current number and per-household rate of 0.23 provided by Town of Amherst.

Yearly Incident Responses - Crimes



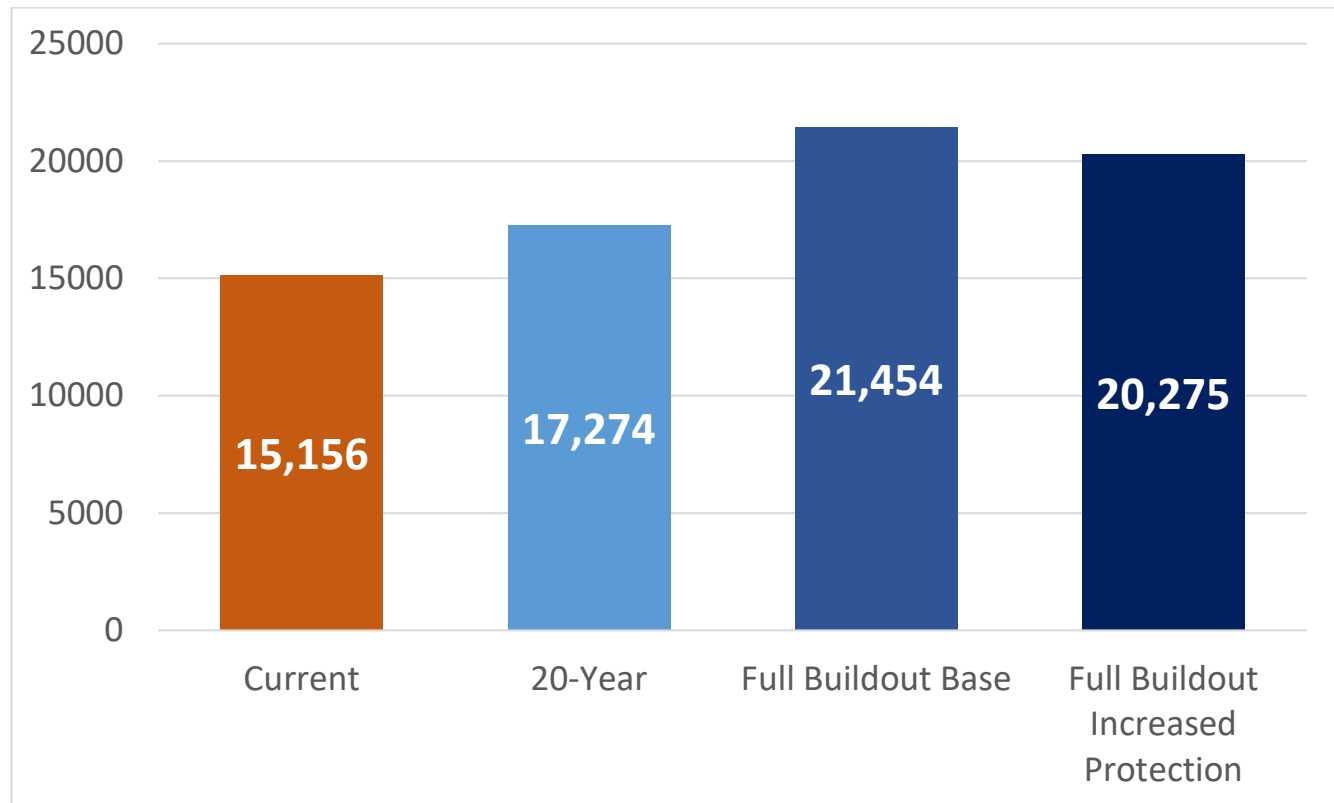
Current number and per-household rate of 0.198 provided by Town of Amherst.

Yearly Incident Responses - Arrests



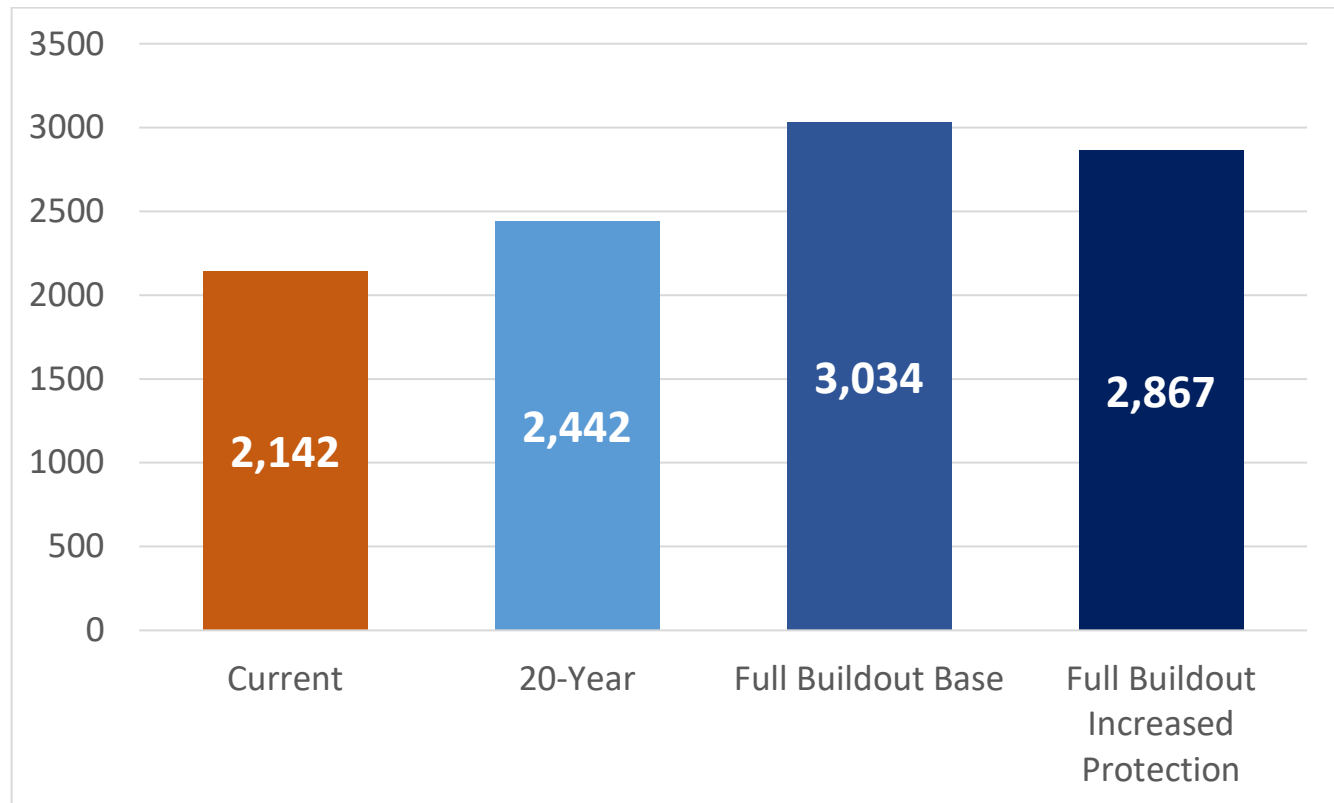
Current number and per-household rate of 0.09 provided by Town of Amherst.

Vehicle Registrations



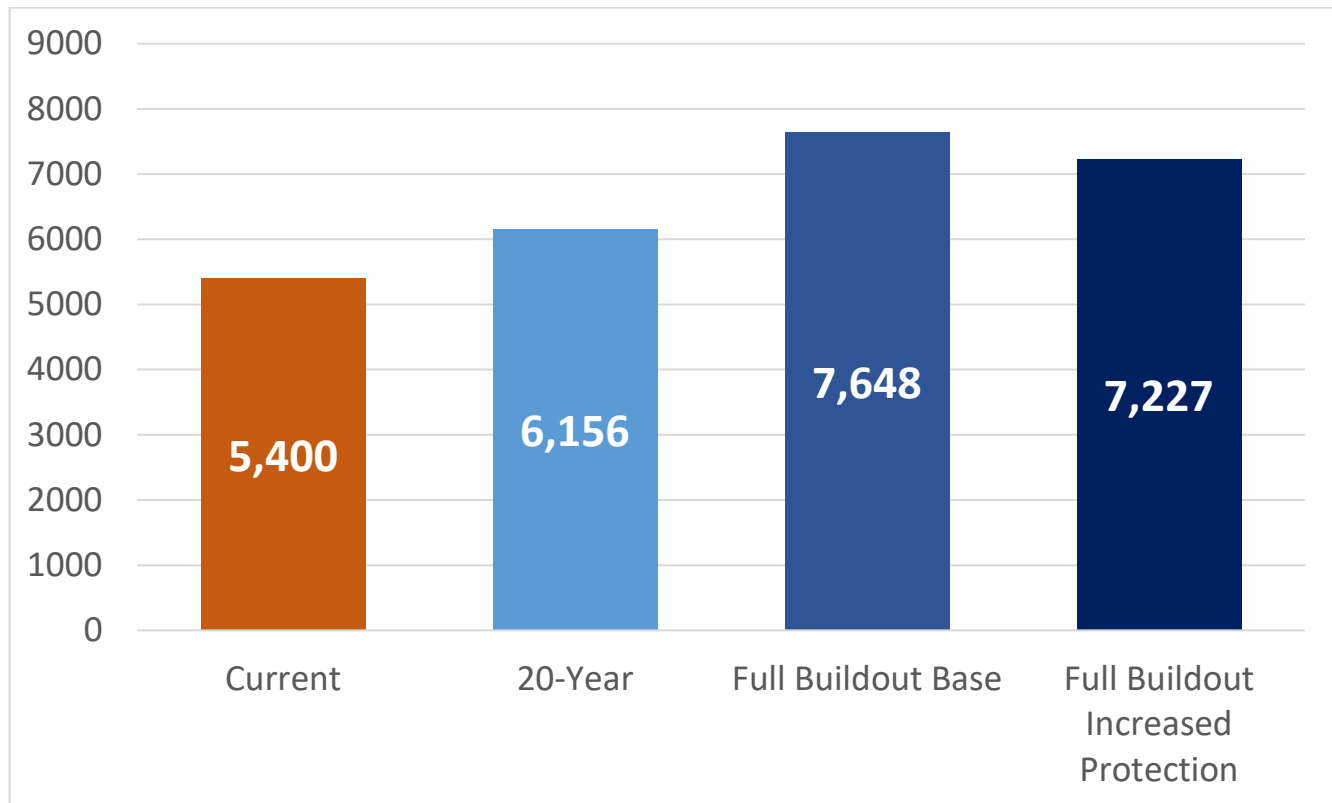
Current number provided by Town of Amherst. Household rate of 3.53 calculated by NRPC.

Dog Licenses



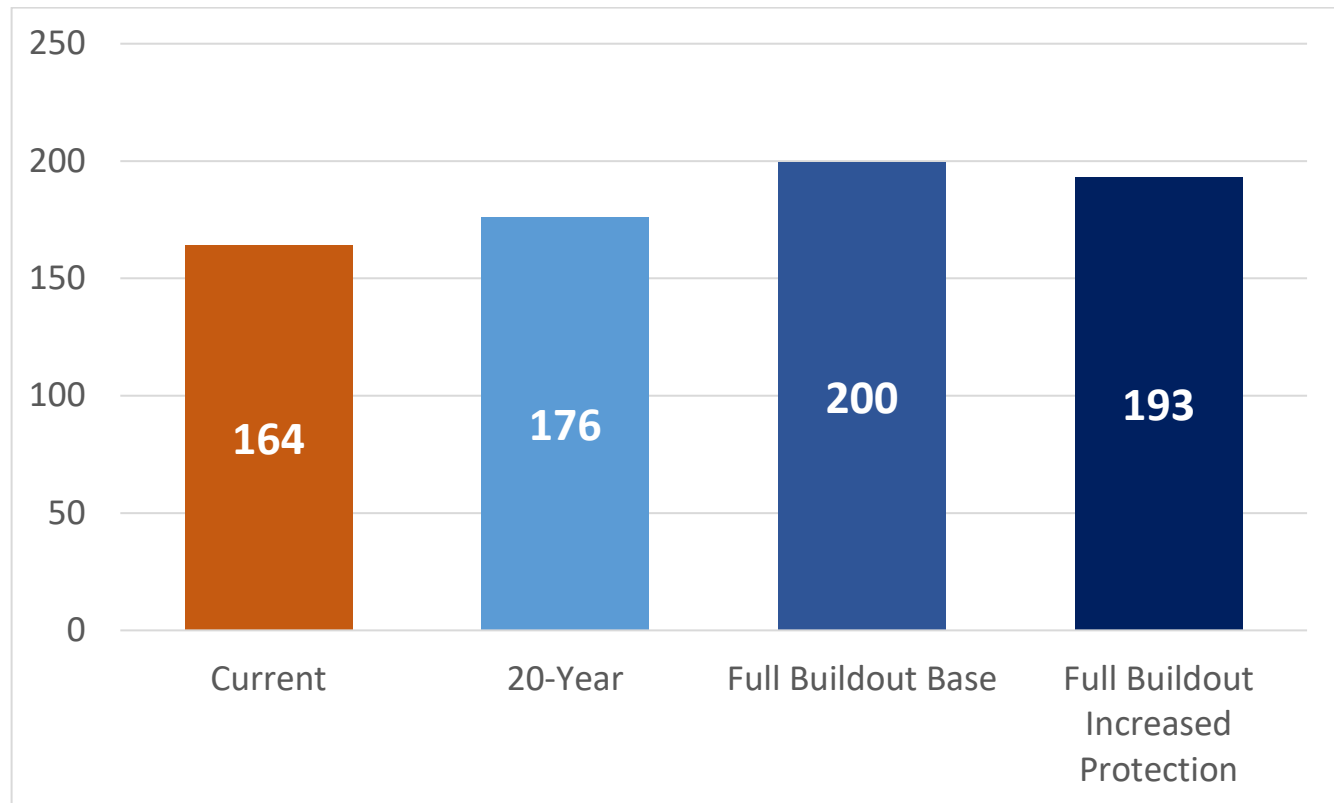
Current number provided by Town of Amherst. Household rate of 0.5 calculated by NRPC.

Tax Bills Sent



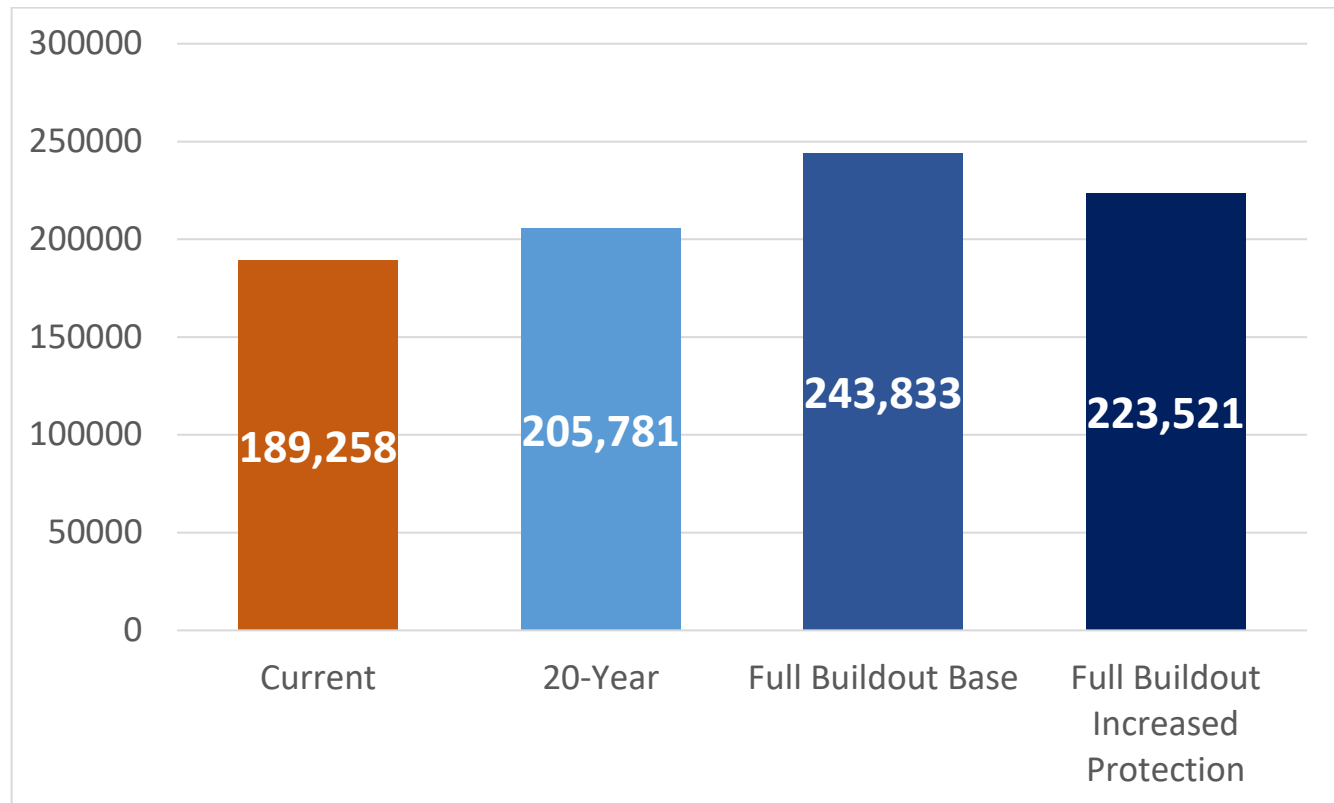
Current number provided by Town of Amherst. Per building rate of 1.26 calculated by NRPC

Road Miles



Current number and future rates calculated by NRPC GIS

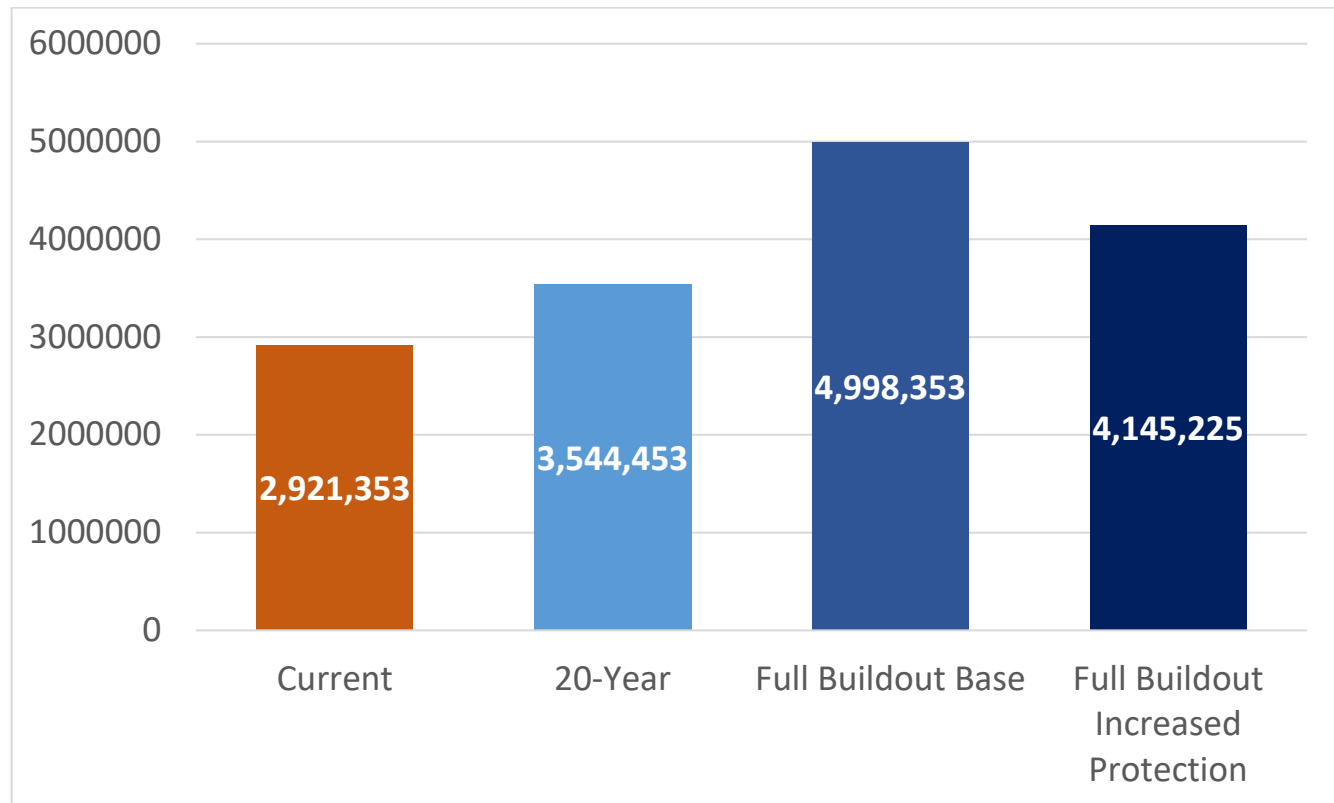
Vehicle Trips Generated*



Current number and future rates calculated by NRPC GIS using general ITE trip generation rates for commercial, industrial, and residential uses

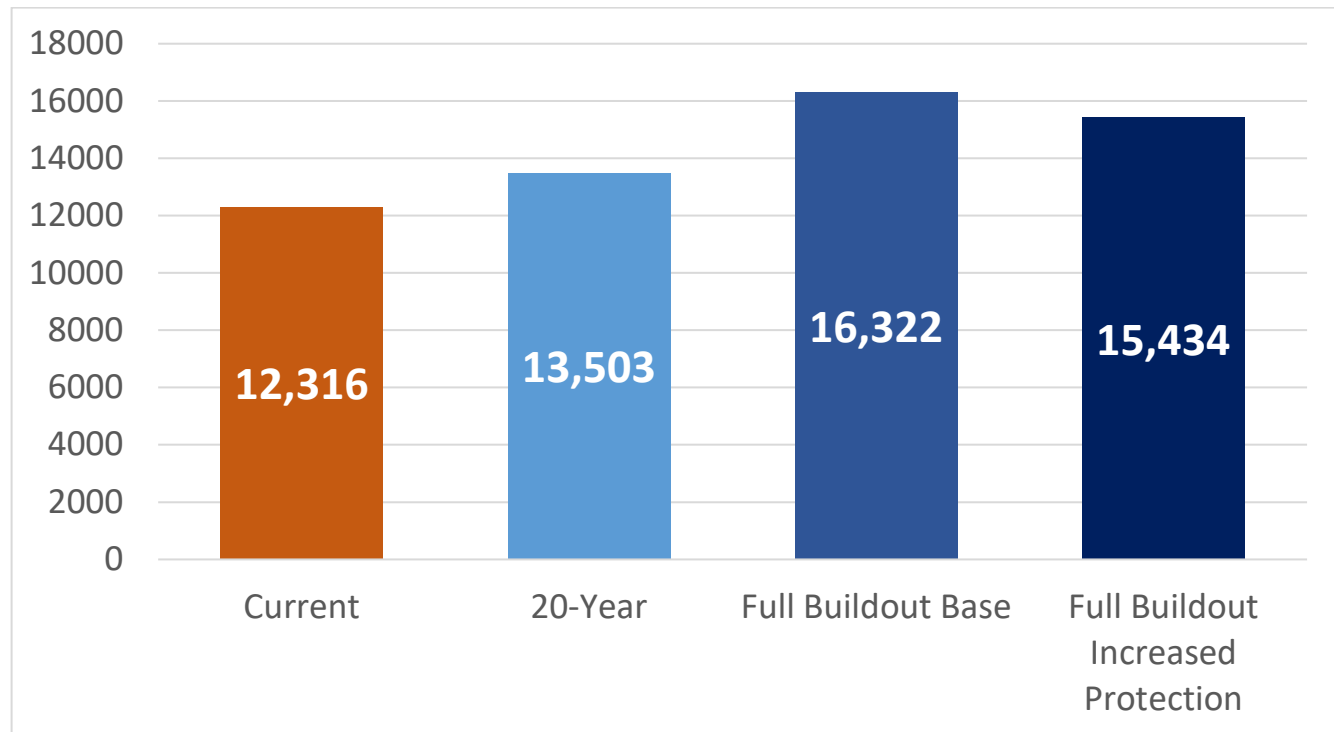
*24-hour 1-way weekday trips

Commercial/Industrial Square Footage



Current number and future rates calculated by NRPC GIS based on estimates from building footprint and land use data

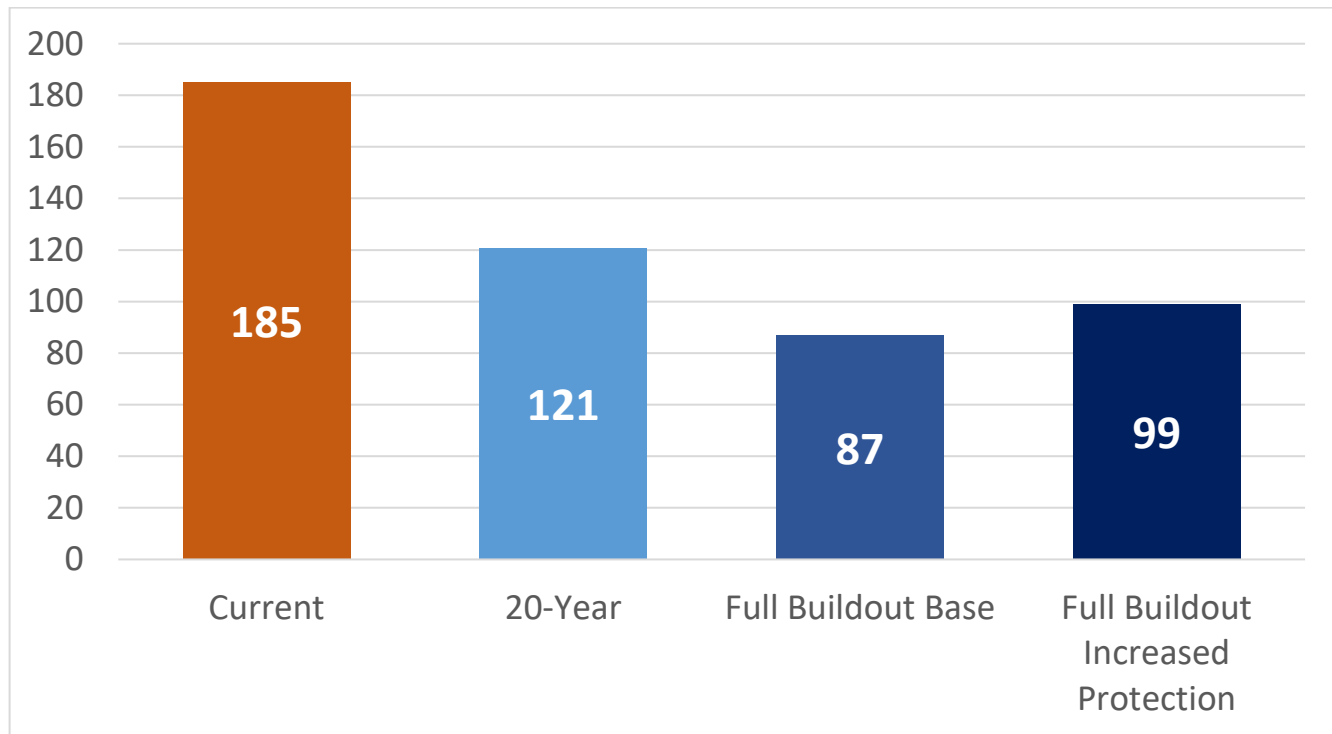
Developed Acres*



Calculated by NRPC GIS

*Measure of total acres of all parcels with a building on them under current and buildout conditions

Undeveloped 10-acre parcels



Calculated by NRPC GIS