

# 2015 Comprehensive Plan



**Town of Amherst**  
Portage County, Wisconsin



# **Town of Amherst**

## **2015 Comprehensive Plan**

**Adopted by the Amherst Town Plan Commission January 13, 2015**

**Adopted by the Amherst Town Board August 13, 2015**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan. This Comprehensive Plan is the centerpiece of the community planning process, stating our community's development goals and outlining public policies for guiding future growth. It establishes an identifiable destination that allows both the governing body and private interests to plan and budget for the future to ensure that anticipated growth is managed and controlled. Additionally, the Plan functions as a practical guide to coordinate day-to-day decisions.

### **The Portage County Comprehensive Planning Process and the Town of Amherst**

The Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan has been completed as a part of a larger, county-wide planning project. In November of 2000, the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department submitted an application for a State of Wisconsin planning grant to help fund the creation of County-wide Comprehensive Plans that would meet the newly enacted State Statute requirements for long range planning (see SS 66.1001 in Appendix C). The Statute stipulates that by January 1, 2010, all Towns, Villages, Cities, and Counties that make decisions regulating land use will need to base those decisions on an adopted comprehensive plan. In January 2001 grant funds totaling \$504,000 were awarded to Portage County to assist with the project. Two separate "large area" plan documents were to be developed: an Urban Area Plan which encompasses the City of Stevens Point, Villages of Park Ridge, Whiting and Plover, and a portion of the unincorporated Towns of Hull, Stockton, Plover, Linwood and Carson; and, the Portage County Comprehensive Plan, which includes each of the seventeen unincorporated Towns (Alban, Almond, Amherst, Belmont, Buena Vista, Carson, Dewey, Eau Pleine, Grant, Hull, Lanark, Linwood, New Hope, Pine Grove, Plover, Sharon, Stockton) and six incorporated rural Villages (Almond, Amherst, Amherst Junction, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt) that make up the rest of the County. In addition to the large area plans, the project includes the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for each of the County's 27 individual units of government.

In June of 2001, a committee made up of representatives from each unit of government within Portage County was appointed to draft these plan documents. The *Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee* adopted a "Public Participation Plan" on July 25, 2001. The Participation Plan detailed the different ways that residents of the County would be invited and encouraged to participate in the formulation of the Comprehensive Plans. The Town of Amherst adopted the Public Participation Plan on August 9, 2001 (Appendix A).

The first step in soliciting public involvement was a County-wide opinion survey, which was conducted in the second half of September 2001. Over 30,000 surveys were mailed, with an intended target of one for every household within the County. Over 6,600 of the households responded, a return rate of approximately 22%. The survey responses provided information on residents' feelings in the areas of: County trends and land use; housing; utilities and community facilities; agricultural, natural and cultural resources; commerce and employment; transportation; and quality of life within the County. The Town of Amherst was well represented in the survey results (see Appendix B). In order to follow up and build on the information gathered in the survey, a series of Hopes and Concerns Workshops were held in various locations around Portage County. A wide variety of County residents participated in the Workshops.

After completion of the Hopes & Concerns workshops all of the response information was forwarded to the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee, which used a series of meetings to create 44 summarizing "issue statements". This list then became the basis

for a series of six visioning sessions held across Portage County during the spring of 2002. Again, all of the public input was returned to the Joint Steering Committee for review and discussion. An Urban Area Vision Statement and a Rural Vision Statement were approved in the fall of 2002. These Vision Statements were used as a foundation for the Urban Area and Rural Area Comprehensive Plans respectively, and their ideas resonate throughout the individual local unit plans.

State Statute 66.1001 defines minimum requirements for what content should be included within a Comprehensive Plan. These requirements include nine “elements” or chapters describing: *issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agricultural, natural and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation, land use; and implementation.* The Town of Amherst has used the required elements as an outline for its plan document.

## **CHAPTER 1      Issues and Opportunities for Comprehensive Planning in the Town of Amherst**

66.1001(2)(a) Wis. Stat.:

Issues and Opportunities element. Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local intergovernmental unit.

The purpose of a comprehensive planning program is to promote orderly and beneficial development, helping to create a community that offers residents a more attractive, efficient, and “resident-friendly” environment in which to live. Such an environment can be realized in part by creating a financially sound governmental structure, providing good schools, a variety of community facilities and services, efficient land use and transportation systems, and encouraging sufficient employment opportunities and adequate, affordable housing.

The planning process involves understanding the various physical, economic, and social issues within the Town. It examines where the Town has been, where it is now, what goals or targets the community hopes to achieve, and what actions are necessary to reach these goals. A successful planning program can provide the direction needed to manage future growth by offering guidelines to governmental leaders, private enterprise, and individuals so that the Town development-related decisions are sound, practical and consistent.

### **Section 1.1      Description of Planning Area**

The Town of Amherst is located on the eastern side of Portage County, and is bordered by the Towns of New Hope and Stockton on the north, Town of Stockton on the west, Towns of Lanark and Buena Vista on the south, and Waupaca County on the east (Figure 1.1). Amherst is the 10th largest of Portage County’s 17 towns in terms of geographic size, encompassing an area of approximately 24,497 acres or 38.28 square miles. The Town (political unit) includes all of congressional Township 23N-R10E and part of T23N-R9E.

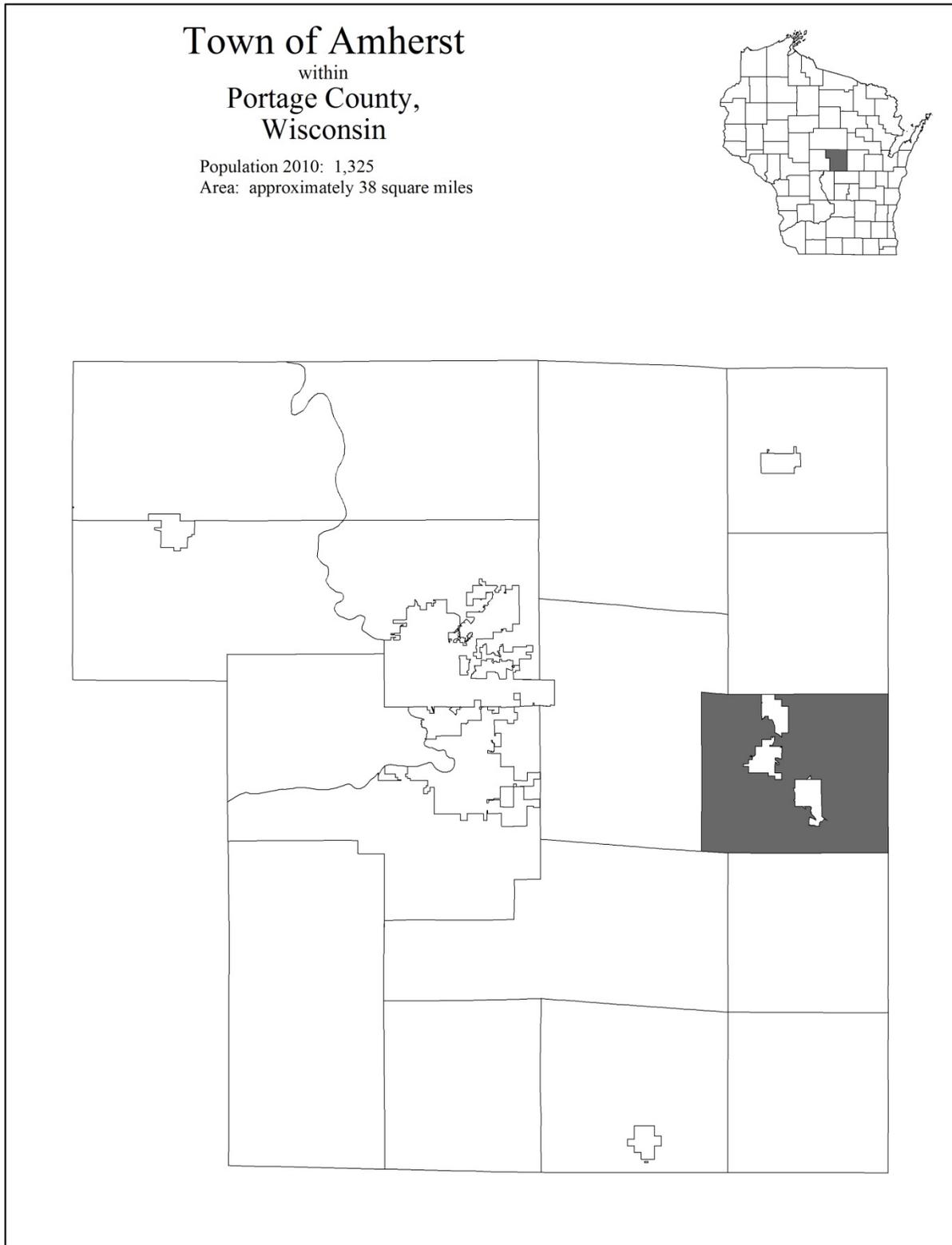
The following excerpt is taken from the Malcolm Rosholt Online Archives of the Portage County Historical Society:

*It is not exactly recorded when the Town of Amherst was established, but that was probably in 1852, making it one of the earliest towns in the county. At the time it included the present Town of Lanark which in 1856 was annexed to the Town of Belmont and soon after became independent.*

*It lies entirely in the glaciated area and is divided by the Tomorrow River, which has its source in the Town of Sharon, then passes through Amherst, the corner of Lanark, to flow into Waupaca County. The name of Tomorrow is the translation of an Indian name transcribed as Waupaca, a name that it takes after passing the village of Amherst. The town is hilly with traces of recessional moraines and some flats representing outwash plains formed when the glacier receded. There are a few lakes, the largest being Lake Emily on which is a public park. It is a favorite lake for boating, fishing and swimming, and on its shores are a number of cottages.*

*The first settlers were Yankees and English speaking Canadians one of whom suggested the name of the town after his native town of Amherst, Nova Scotia. After 1860 Norwegians arrived in large numbers expanding the colonies in Waupaca County and became the largest foreign ethnic group. As the area was largely wooded, sawmills were built along the Tomorrow River and the Village of Amherst started by 1860 near one of the mills, with shops, taverns and a hotel. It further developed when in 1871 the Wisconsin Central Railroad was built and had a depot close to the town. The following year the Green Bay and Lake Pepin line was established. It passed north of town and westwards crossed the Wisconsin Central Railway at a place which became a Village named Amherst Junction. North of it on the Tomorrow a dam was built by an Englishman named Nelson, probably at the site of a beaver dam. The waterpower was used for a sawmill; later a gristmill was also built there and the Village of Nelsonville started in the vicinity. All three places were incorporated as villages. Amherst remained the largest with its mills, stores, hotel, bank, telephone exchange, which attracted people other than Yankees and Norwegians, so that it has now five different churches: Lutheran (one American Lutheran, the other of the Missouri Synod, originally started by the Germans), one Methodist, one Episcopal and one Catholic. Nelsonville can be called the Florida of Portage County as Norwegian farmers retire there. As they wanted a peaceful town, a Lutheran church was built. Later, when the village was incorporated, one of the first ordinances banned anyone from bringing any device for gambling and up to the present the village is dry; no tavern and no liquor in the stores.*

**Figure 1.1 Town of Amherst Location**



## **Section 1.2 Past Planning in the Town of Amhersts dkk**

### **A. 1995 Land Use Plan**

In 1993, the Town of Amherst Planning Committee began working with the Portage County Planning Department to draft the first land use plan for the Town of Amherst. This planning effort was requested by the Town due mostly to the increased development pressure the community had experienced over the previous 20 years, and to update the County's Farmland Preservation Plan.

The intent of the plan was to serve as a formal statement of Town/County policies regarding land use. The document was formally adopted by the Town Board in September 1995. In addition, the Plan was to serve as a guide in updating the Town's zoning map.

## **Section 1.3 Initial Comprehensive Plan and Current Update Process**

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, this Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan had its beginning as a part of the County-wide planning project started in June 2001. The Portage County Planning and Zoning Committee, generated preliminary County-wide goal suggestions for the 9 required Plan elements. This information was then forwarded to all local units of government in the fall of 2002. Utilizing the information provided by Portage County, the Town of Amherst Plan Commission began the Town Comprehensive Planning process in earnest in January 2003. The Plan Commission met regularly, often many times a month, through April 2005 to put together the first complete preliminary draft of the plan. The plan was adopted by the Amherst Town Board on June 9, 2005. The comprehensive planning process involved several basic steps:

The first step involved research. Activities included acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting on a variety of topics, identifying problems that require solutions, and creating community goals, and establishing goals and objectives for growth and development. The second step involved the formation of planning policy. Planning policies recommend a course of action that will accommodate expected change, produce desired change, and prevent undesirable change.

The next step involved the selection of a preferred plan alternative for guiding future growth. The Land Use Element relates how the Town is expected to grow, and generally identifies how development should proceed in the future to achieve community goals. It proposes the most efficient use of land within the financial capabilities of the community by identifying where residential, and other anticipated land uses should occur.

The final step will involve implementation of the plan and programs that influence the day-to-day decisions made by government officials, private enterprise, and individuals. Plan implementation provides the means by which community goals can be achieved. Three major tools of implementation are the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements program.

This update to the Plan, begun in November 1, 2012, follows the same planning steps as the 2005 Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the primary link between the past, the present, and the future, making it perhaps the best resource for achieving continuity over a period of time. It is to be used as a guide by those making decisions with regard to the development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan must also remain flexible so that it can be modified to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. To maintain an updated Comprehensive Plan, new information must be continually gathered and

studied to determine trends and reevaluate projections, forecasts, and plans. Even policy recommendations, which are relatively permanent statements, may require periodic review to determine their appropriateness and suitability in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time. A well thought-out and updated Comprehensive Plan, with a solid base of public involvement, is one of the most fruitful investments a local government can make. As a collection of policies and plans designed to guide future growth and development, it will help ensure continuity over time as changes occur within the Town of Amherst.

#### **Section 1.4 Demographic Trends**

The demographic information in the Comprehensive Plan comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. Through the Census, the name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship and housing tenure is collected on every individual in the United States every ten years. Starting with the 2010 Census, the method of collecting data beyond this primary information has been changed. The more detailed socioeconomic information once collected during each Census is now collected annually by the American Community Survey (ACS), which began sampling in 2005.

The ACS is a branch within the U.S. Census Bureau. The Survey is sent to a small percentage of the population each year on a rotating basis throughout the decade. Information for large metropolitan areas is available every year. For urban areas like the City of Stevens Point and Portage County as a whole, estimates are based on a 3 year average. Data at the Town level is based on a 5 year average.

The tables and figures provided below use the U.S. Census or ACS data. This data is available via the American Fact Finder search site at the <http://factfinder2.census.gov/> web site. When looking at the tables and figures remember that they are in many cases estimates and not based on a complete count. The point is that the Census or ACS data is an estimate that may have some error, but it is the most accurate measure of what is happening within the Town that is available.

The tables and figures below compare the Town of Amherst, Town Average, and Portage County as a whole. The Town Average is the result of the Town of Amherst compared against the other 16 Towns in Portage County. Portage County data is for the entire County.

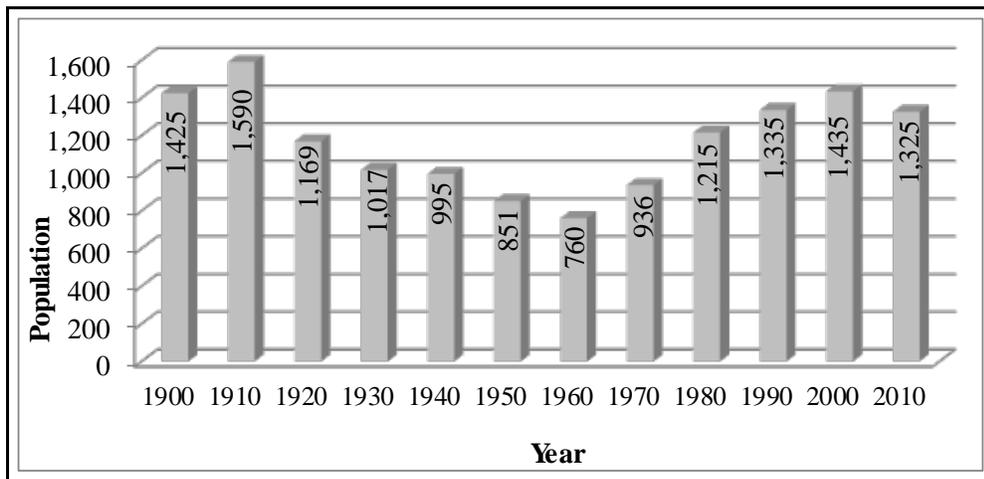
##### **A. Population Growth**

Census data reveals two major, historical population trends for the Town of Amherst (see Figure 1.2). The first major trend was a steady decline in the Town's population over a fifty-year period from 1910 to 1960. This was characteristic of a rural-to-urban population movement which occurred during that period on a county, state, and nationwide basis. The particularly large decline in population during the 1910-1920 period was due, in part, to the incorporation of the Village of Amherst Junction in 1911 and the Village of Nelsonville in 1913 (both Villages incorporated out of the Town of Amherst).

This declining trend was reversed during the 1960's, with the Town experiencing a significant upturn in population, as urban residents began moving back to rural areas. Once again, this change was characteristic of a broader urban-to-rural movement at the County, State, and national levels. In Portage County, the impact of this migration back to the rural areas was greatest in three towns adjacent to the larger population centers. Accordingly, Towns such as Hull and Plover experienced the largest growth spurts due to their proximity to the Stevens Point Urban Area. Nevertheless, population growth in outlying towns, such as Amherst, was still very

significant. Thus, the decade of the 1960's marked the end of the Town of Amherst's declining population and the beginning of a growth period.

**Figure 1.2: Town of Amherst Population Change, 1900 to 2010**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 1900 to 2010

More recently, the Town experienced a more modest growth rate of 7.5% during the 1990-2000 period and a declining rate of growth of -7.7% during the 2000-2010 period. In population, the Town of Amherst currently ranks 7th out of 17 towns in Portage County.

**Table 1.1: Amherst Comparison Population Change, 1970 to 2010**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 Change	1970-2010 Change
Town of Amherst	936	1,215	1,335	1,435	1,325	-7.7%	41.6%
Town of Buena Vista	827	1,023	1,170	1,187	1,198	0.9%	44.9%
Town of Lanark	578	1,043	1,554	1,449	1,527	5.4%	164.2%
Town of New Hope	492	625	694	736	718	-2.4%	45.9%
Town of Stockton	1,537	2,208	2,494	2,896	2,917	0.7%	89.8%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	70,019	4.2%	47.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1970 - 2010

Population growth is a combination of many factors including birth, death, in and out migration. By examining migration patterns for the residents of the Town of Amherst, we can better understand how growth in the community is occurring (Table 1.2). Altogether, this information provides insight into the nature and pace of new residents moving into the Town.

Based on 2010 American Community Survey information, ninety-six percent (96%) of the Town's residents lived in the same house the previous year. This would show that long-term residents comprise the great majority of the total population.

**Table 1.2: Place of Residence for Town Residents One Year Prior**

	Same house		Different house, Portage County		Different house, Different County		Different State	
	2010	%	2010	%	2010	%	2010	%
Town of Amherst	1,285	96%	21	2%	23	2%	11	1%
Town of Buena Vista	1,057	90%	78	7%	35	3%	8	1%
Town of Lanark	1,424	93%	35	2%	68	4%	0	0%
Town of New Hope	671	95%	35	5%	0	0%	0	0%
Town of Stockton	2,710	95%	127	4%	12	0%	0	0%
Portage County	55,399	81%	8,134	12%	4,037	6%	926	1%

Source: ACS 2006-2009

**B. Age Distribution**

Table 1.3 below details the number of Town residents that occupied specific age groups in each of the last three census years, along with similar information for an average of all Portage County Towns and the County as a whole.

**Table 1.3: Distribution of Population, by Ten-Year Age Groups**

Age	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Under 5 years	121 9.1%	74 5.2%	72 5.4%	117 7.7%	96 6.0%	81 5.3%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%	3,891 5.6%
5 to 14 years	256 19.2%	217 15.1%	161 12.2%	271 17.8%	255 16.0%	201 13.0%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%	8,095 11.6%
15 to 24 years	181 13.6%	174 12.1%	121 9.1%	200 13.2%	200 12.5%	176 11.4%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%	14,038 20.0%
25 to 34 years	195 14.6%	169 11.8%	124 9.4%	242 15.9%	183 11.5%	142 9.2%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%	8,431 12.0%
35 to 44 years	244 18.3%	212 14.8%	176 13.3%	247 16.3%	294 18.4%	205 13.3%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%	7,991 11.4%
45 to 54 years	122 9.1%	293 20.4%	198 14.9%	161 10.6%	257 16.1%	299 19.4%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%	10,180 14.5%
55 to 64 years	82 6.1%	116 8.1%	287 21.7%	150 9.9%	152 9.5%	236 15.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%	8,438 12.1%
65 to 74 years	87 6.5%	76 5.3%	119 9.0%	86 5.6%	96 6.0%	125 8.1%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%	4,723 6.7%
75 to 84 years	40 3.0%	50 3.5%	51 3.8%	39 2.6%	52 3.2%	58 3.8%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%	2,846 4.1%
85 years and over	7 0.5%	54 3.8%	16 1.2%	9 0.6%	12 0.8%	18 1.1%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%	1,386 2.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>1,597</b>	<b>1,542</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>	<b>70,019</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>35.8</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census DP05.

Insight into the nature of the Town's population change over time can be gained through examining how the different age groups change as they move through their life cycles. Age groups for the Towns and County (or "cohorts" as they are called when tracking a group of

same-aged people) have been displayed in the table in ten-year increments to more easily see how their numbers increase or decline over different census years. The diagonal series of gray and white boxes within Table 1.3 indicate the path of each age cohort through the three census periods.

The 5-to-14 year old cohort for the Town of Amherst numbered 256 in 1990. Their number declined by 132 persons (-52%) by the year 2010 (as the 5-to-14 year olds became 25-to-34 year olds). Some of this decline may be explained by children leaving home for college or jobs. For the most part, the age cohorts between under 5-to-44 years old have experienced decreases in numbers, while age groups 45 and above experienced an increase in numbers between 1990 and 2010. In comparing similar cohorts to the Town Average and County overall, a similar pattern can be seen.

The “median age” is the point where ½ of the population lies above and ½ lies below; the older this age is, the older the overall population for a place is becoming. The median age for the Town of Amherst was 45.5 years old in 2010, increasing by 14.6 years since 1990. The other Towns across Portage County have seen their median age increase at a slower pace (11.5 years). The County as a whole has seen its median age increase at an even slower rate, 6.5 years over the twenty-year period. This is an indication that the Towns overall are aging more rapidly than the County’s Villages or City of Stevens Point.

As one would expect with the rise in median age, the percentage of the population for the Towns within Portage County over the age of 65 has been trending upward since 1990 as well. The Town of Amherst 65+ population segment increased from 10% of total population in 1990 to 14% in 2010. The average Portage County Town saw this segment increase from 8.8% to 13%, and the County as a whole increased from 10.85 to 12.8%. The number of seniors aged 75 and over has increased by about fifty percent since 1990, with the number of residents aged 85+ increasing from 7 in 1990 to 16 in 2010.

### C. Education Levels

As is typical across the different municipal divisions within Portage County, the Town of Amherst raised its’ overall educational attainment over the last 20 years (Table 1.4). This achievement is a result of the combination of in-migration, continued educational involvement by the existing residents of the Town and the passing of older residents who did not have the educational opportunities enjoyed today.

**Table 1.4: Comparison of Educational Attainment for Residents 25 Years and Older**

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Less Than 9th Grade	114 14.7%	42 4.3%	43 4.2%	118 13.5%	67 6.4%	44 4.3%	4,065 11.6%	2,420 6.0%	1,577 3.8%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	83 10.7%	95 9.7%	58 5.6%	82 9.3%	84 8.0%	74 7.2%	3,029 8.7%	3,019 7.5%	2,415 5.9%
High School Graduate	300 38.6%	386 39.4%	476 46.0%	392 44.9%	444 42.3%	434 42.1%	14,082 40.2%	14,952 37.2%	14,911 36.4%
Some College (No Degree)	122 15.7%	229 23.4%	199 19.2%	113 12.9%	181 17.3%	170 16.5%	5,205 14.9%	7,572 18.9%	8,143 19.9%
Associate Degree	52 6.7%	68 6.9%	63 6.1%	42 4.8%	73 7.0%	93 9.0%	1,922 5.5%	2,802 7.0%	3,263 8.0%
Bachelor's Degree	84 10.8%	122 12.4%	165 15.9%	89 10.2%	142 13.5%	146 14.1%	4,594 13.1%	6,468 16.1%	7,151 17.5%
Grad / Profess Degree	22 2.8%	38 3.9%	31 3.0%	37 4.3%	58 5.5%	69 6.7%	2,107 6.0%	2,910 7.2%	3,502 8.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1,048</b>	<b>1,031</b>	<b>35,004</b>	<b>40,143</b>	<b>40,962</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census, and the ACS Survey data from 2005 to 2009 DP02.

#### D. Households and Income

The Town of Amherst residential community is made up of different types of households. The U.S. Census defines a household simply as “including all of the people who occupy a housing unit”. People not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. “Family Households” consist of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. “Nonfamily Households” consist of people living alone and households which do not have any members related to the householder. Table 1.5 below details the changes in the make-up of Town of Amherst households over the last 20 years, and compares them to the Portage County data and the average of the County Towns. Family households, traditionally the primary household type within Amherst, have seen their percentage of total households slightly decrease over the last 20 years, even as their numbers increase, mirroring a County-wide declining trend. Married-couple householders are by far the most numerous, but their percentage of Family numbers has dipped slightly. Single-parent headed households within Amherst have increased over the 20 year period to represent 16% of Family numbers, up from 10%. This percentage is higher than the Town Average (12%), and slightly lower than the County overall (17%).

Amherst’s non-family households have increased from approximately 16% of total households in 1990 to 24% in 2010. The percent of Amherst residents 65 years and older have stayed nearly steady, increasing by 1% over the same period.

The Persons Per Household (PPH) calculation for the Town of Amherst, along with the average of Towns and the County overall have continued a declining trend over the last 20 years. Amherst closely matches the size and rate of decline of the Town Average.

**Table 1.5: Household Type Comparison**

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
<b>Family Households</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>14,883</b>	<b>16,496</b>	<b>17,270</b>
Percent of Total Households	84%	79%	77%	82%	79%	76%	70%	66%	62%
Married-couple families	325	349	363	359	404	400	12,645	13,808	14,155
Percent of Family Households	90%	89%	90%	88%	89%	87%	85%	84%	82%
Other family, male householder	16	23	20	18	21	24	602	861	1,023
Percent of Family Households	4%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Other family, female householder	21	19	20	29	29	34	1,636	1,827	2,092
Percent of Family Households	6%	5%	5%	7%	6%	7%	11%	11%	12%
<b>Nonfamily Households</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>6,423</b>	<b>8,544</b>	<b>10,544</b>
Percent of Total Households	16%	21%	23%	18%	21%	24%	30%	34%	38%
Householder living alone	54	84	100	70	95	111	4,679	6,130	7,559
Percent of Non-Family Households	81%	82%	19%	81%	78%	78%	73%	72%	72%
Householder 65 years and over	21	34	34	29	34	41	1,933	2,196	2,632
Percent of Non-Family Households	31%	33%	6%	33%	28%	29%	30%	26%	25%
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>	<b>27,814</b>
<b>Persons Per Household</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.39</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census SF1.

Another instructive piece of information on the state of households within the Town is the level of income that each household achieves. Again the Census provides insight into the range of incomes present within Amherst. Table 1.6 below describes how household incomes have changed in the last 20 years. It is a testimony to both the inflation of wages and the increased earning power of the residents of Town of Amherst that the percentage of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from 21.4% in 1989 to nearly 56% in 2010. Median household income increased from \$32,679 to \$59,722 over the same period, a level consistent with the average of Portage County Towns, and higher than Portage County overall.

**Table 1.6: Household Income Comparison**

Household Income Per Year	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010
Less Than \$10,000	24 5.7%	41 8.2%	16 2.8%	50 10.1%	25 4.2%	22 3.5%	3,210 15.0%	1,767 7.0%	1,854 6.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	27 6.4%	17 3.4%	5 0.9%	37 7.5%	24 4.2%	25 4.0%	1,978 9.3%	1,608 6.4%	1,520 5.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	96 22.9%	38 7.6%	35 6.2%	84 16.9%	56 9.6%	52 8.5%	4,072 19.1%	3,174 12.6%	3,180 11.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	76 18.1%	54 10.8%	77 13.6%	85 17.1%	76 13.0%	56 9.3%	3,654 17.1%	3,425 13.6%	2,744 10.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	107 25.5%	95 19.1%	118 20.8%	124 25.0%	112 19.2%	83 13.7%	4,370 20.5%	4,484 17.9%	3,908 14.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	79 18.8%	160 32.1%	117 20.6%	82 16.5%	153 26.3%	155 25.4%	2,983 14.0%	5,771 23.0%	6,002 22.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6 1.4%	52 10.4%	110 19.4%	22 4.4%	82 14.1%	112 18.4%	661 3.1%	2,820 11.2%	3,709 13.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1 0.2%	34 6.8%	56 9.9%	8 1.7%	36 6.1%	76 12.5%	274 1.3%	1,346 5.4%	2,828 10.5%
\$150,000 or more	4 1.0%	7 1.4%	34 6.0%	5 0.9%	19 3.2%	29 4.7%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%	1,200 4.5%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>21,336</b>	<b>25,112</b>	<b>26,945</b>
Median H-Hold Income	\$32,679	\$50,435	\$59,722	\$31,439	\$47,887	\$59,825	\$28,686	\$43,487	\$50,978

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census and ACS data from 2005 to 2009 table DP03.

With the examination of income information, the Town of Amherst should also assess the poverty status of its residents. “Poverty” is generally defined as a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than that family’s threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. That is, they are the same throughout the United States. However, the poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, food stamps, and Medicaid). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated children under age 15 (such as foster children). Table 1.7 below outlines poverty thresholds for 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2011. Table 1.8 lists the Census information on poverty for the total number of residents, persons age 65 and above, and families within the Town of Amherst, the Town Average, and Portage County as a whole.

**Table 1.7: Poverty Thresholds - 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2011**

Size of Family Unit (Poverty Threshold)	1980	1990	2000	2011
One Person	\$4,190	\$6,652	\$8,794	\$11,702
Two Persons	\$5,363	\$8,509	\$11,239	\$15,063
Three Persons	\$6,565	\$10,419	\$13,738	\$17,595
Four Persons	\$8,414	\$13,481	\$17,603	\$23,201
Five Persons	\$9,966	\$15,792	\$20,819	\$27,979
Six Persons	\$11,269	\$17,839	\$23,528	\$32,181
Seven Persons	\$12,761	\$20,241	\$26,754	\$37,029
Eight Persons	\$14,199	\$22,582	\$29,701	\$41,414
Nine Persons or More	\$16,896	\$26,848	\$35,060	\$49,818

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980-2000 and Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division: Poverty, Revised: June 25, 2012.

According to Census figures, the Town of Amherst has experienced a decrease in the number of residents earning below the poverty level as compared to the County as a whole

**Table 1.8: Percent in Poverty Comparison**

Poverty Statistics For Selected Populations	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010
<b>Persons</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>1,597</b>	<b>1,546</b>	<b>57,805</b>	<b>67,182</b>	<b>65,720</b>
Below poverty level	111	94	77	131	82	75	7,454	6,074	7,924
% below poverty	8.3%	6.6%	5.7%	8.8%	5.1%	4.9%	12.9%	9.0%	12.1%
<b>Persons 65 Years and Over</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>7,354</b>	<b>8,356</b>
Below poverty level	10	54	6	15	12	14	740	561	690
% below poverty	76.9%	30.0%	2.6%	10.8%	7.4%	6.9%	13.9%	7.6%	8.3%
<b>Families</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>14,927</b>	<b>16,643</b>	<b>17,658</b>
Below Poverty Level	22	13	18	26	15	16	1,051	725	901
% below poverty	6.3%	3.4%	4.5%	6.6%	3.2%	3.4%	7.0%	4.4%	5.1%

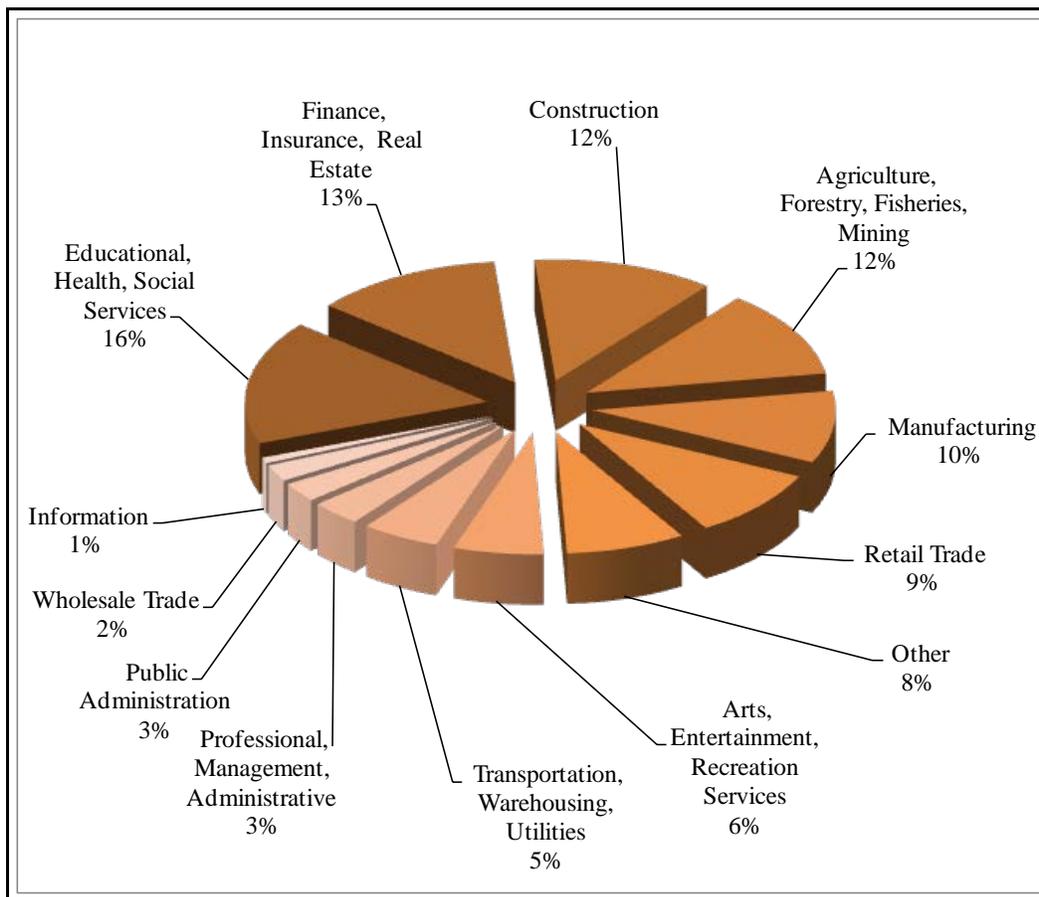
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1989 and 1999; ACS data from 2005 to 2009, Tables S1701 and S1702.

## E. Employment Characteristics

Figure 1.3 below summarizes employment by industry provided by ACS. This information represents what type of industry that the working residents of Amherst were employed by, and is not a listing of the employment currently located within the Town. The discussion of the Amherst economy will take place within the Economic Development Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

The U.S. Census Bureau has changed the method of producing the statistics for the summary of employment by industry, creating a situation where comparison between the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census is not possible. Figure 1.3 below shows the employment by industry for residents of Amherst as identified in the 2010 Census.

**Figure 1.3: Town of Amherst Summary of Employment by Industry, 2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS data from 2005 to 2009 table DP03.

The leading industry for employment is Educational, Health, and Social Services. Employment as illustrated here is fairly equally distributed. The first six industry categories account for 72% of the workforce. The Town has agriculture as the 4th leading industry by employment at 12% of the workforce. Agriculture is 53% of the land use in the Town.

## **Section 1.5 Forecasts**

### A. Population Projections

Population projections for the State's cities, villages, and towns are developed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The most recent population projections for the Town of Amherst were created in 2008. Based on those projections, The Town of Amherst will

grow to 1,642 residents by 2030. This represents an increase of 317 people or 24% over the 20 year period. It is believed that the State projections will be recalculated based on the 2010 Census, which totaled 175 people less for Amherst than the State's previous projection for that year. This compares with a projected increase of 12.9% for the entire County, for the same period. It should be noted that population projections are "best guesses" and should be used with caution.

The Town of Amherst Plan Commission has adopted the following projected population totals for the planning period:

Yr 2015: **1,182** Yr 2020: **1,579** Yr 2025: **1,614** Yr 2030: **1,642**

#### B. Household Projections

Household projections for the Town of Amherst are also based upon projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration. As with population, the projections were created in 2008. Based on these projections, Town of Amherst will grow to 623 households in 2030, an increase of 55 households.

2015: **569** households 2020: **591** households 2025: **610** households 2030: **623** households

The number of persons per household has been steadily declining in the Town of Amherst, from 3.11 persons in 1990 to 2.53 persons in 2010 (See Table 1.5 above). Based on the State population and household projections, the persons per household in 2030 would be 2.64.

#### C. Employment Projections

Future job opportunities outside of the agriculture sector are expected to be located in the Stevens Point urban area, Waupaca, and the Fox Valley area. Jobs will most likely be found in the service, health care, finance, real estate, construction, and manufacturing sectors.

Agricultural use occupies a significant portion of the Town's land base. Discussions with farm operators indicate that positive changes in the agriculture sector have occurred since the completion of the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan in 2005. The outlook for success of the agriculture sector indicates an opportunity for increased employment. Refer to Chapter 5, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element for an additional discussion of agricultural employment.

### **Section 1.6 Vision Statement**

The Town of Amherst recognizes change will occur over the next twenty years that may alter the character of the community. Due to this anticipated change, the Town offers the following statement of how it envisions a future based on community values over this time period:

The Town will continue to work to maintain the rural character of the community, preserving, protecting and enhancing natural resources and open spaces.

Growth is to be managed in a financially sound manner that does not negatively impact the Town's ability to provide services. While agriculture continues to be the predominant land use and the cornerstone of our Town's economy, thoughtfully planned residential areas and small commercial development are encouraged to maintain the tax base. Higher intensity uses are to be carefully planned to contribute to our rural lifestyle.

The Town of Amherst continues to work with area municipalities to solve common problems and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations.

To achieve this desired future, residents and community leaders recognize the necessity and importance of individual rights and community interests, encouraging citizen involvement and open communication.

### **Section 1.7 Community Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

Town residents wish to manage growth in a manner that does not impede existing agricultural operations and still promotes a more rural lifestyle. Town residents also recognize the importance that natural resources, such as the Tomorrow River, Lake Emily, Lime Lake and Bear Creek contribute toward the Town's character. Recognition of these assets should be taken into consideration as growth and development occur over time.

Goals, objectives and policies provide the framework for guiding future community development activities in the Town of Amherst. One means of deriving goals and policies is through issue identification. Many of the issue statements in the various plan elements are framed as questions. This was purposefully done so that answering the questions would help Plan Commissioners more easily form goal or policy statements.

Goals are stated as desirable conditions to strive toward in the future. They are common ideals of the community that can be achieved through the actions of government leaders, private enterprise and individuals.

Objectives are general targets to be achieved along the path of satisfying community goals.

Policies are more specific recommendations or methods of action to accomplish these stated objectives. Together these three pieces express the uniqueness of the community while providing guidance for desirable patterns of growth and development. The following statements are reflective of the overall desires of the community:

#### **A. Goals**

1. Maintain the Town's rural character.
2. Manage and protect the Town's natural resources to ensure long term quality.
3. Promote a sound, stable, and sustainable economy.
4. Manage growth in a financially sound manner that does not negatively impact the Town's ability to provide services.

#### **B. Objectives**

1. Direct non-farm housing away from productive agricultural areas.
2. Protect important natural areas throughout the Town.
3. Ensure that newly developed or redeveloped areas are compatible with existing uses of land.
4. Recognize the importance of individual property rights.

#### **C. Policies**

1. Effective implementation tools, such as the Portage County Zoning Ordinance, official maps, and Town ordinances should be used and enforced.

2. Develop a Land Use Map that is consistent with Town Zoning. This will establish development densities throughout the Town aimed at preserving productive farmland and to protect natural resources and open spaces as a means of preserving rural character.
3. Develop new ordinances and regulatory tools as the need arises.
4. Encourage residential and commercial development in locations that can support growth with minimal additions of roads or other Town services while protecting lands for agricultural use.



## **CHAPTER 2 Housing Element**

66.1001(2)(b) Wis. Stat.:

**Housing element.** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit's housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit's existing housing stock.

### **Section 2.1 Introduction**

Shelter is one of the most basic of human needs. It also represents one of the largest expenditures a resident will make. Because of the importance of housing in the community, the Town of Amherst believes it is important to allow for an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of all citizens. This Chapter will look at different characteristics of the housing stock to help make sure that the needs of present and future residents are addressed by this Plan.

The sections below include statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau through the decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS) (see Section 1.4 for further description). These tables and figures are a general indicator of housing occupancy, structure age, structural characteristics, value, and affordability. When reviewing the tables and figures remember that they are in many instances estimates and not based on a complete count. The point is that, while the Census or ACS data may be an estimate that may contain error, it is the most accurate measure of what is happening within the Town that is available.

### **Section 2.2 Housing Inventory and Analysis**

#### **A. Housing Occupancy**

Occupancy is one of the indicators that helps explain if the current amount of housing stock is sufficient to meet existing demand. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) set an overall vacancy rate of 3% to assure an adequate choice for consumers. An acceptable vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing is 1.5% while a vacancy rate of 5% is acceptable for rental units.

The Town of Amherst overall vacancy rate has remained at approximately three percent over the past twenty years, after subtracting for seasonal, recreational and occasional use housing. This is very similar to both the Town Average and County overall vacancy rates (Table 2.1). According to the 2010 Census, the Town of Amherst had a homeowner vacancy rate of 1.4%, and a rental vacancy rate of 2.4% (Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics 2010, 2010 Census Summary File 1). Based on the HUD standard, the Town's options for rental housing may be somewhat limited.

Between 1990 and 2010, the Town of Amherst has seen the percent of owner-occupied units increase by 5% to 92%, a level slightly greater than the Town Average. This may be a product of rental units being converted to owner-occupied units. The County has held at approximately 70% owner occupied housing units over the twenty year period.

**Table 2.1: Housing Occupancy Characteristics**

OCCUPANCY	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>	<b>27,814</b>
<i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>94%</i>	<i>93%</i>
Owner Occupied	372	447	484	430	517	541	14,984	17,750	19,251
<i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>69%</i>
Renter Occupied	57	47	40	63	60	59	6,322	7,290	8,563
<i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>31%</i>
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>2,240</b>
<i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	50	50	56	37	29	45	685	557	893
<i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>3%</i>
<b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>22,910</b>	<b>26,589</b>	<b>30,054</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 SF1.

### B. Age Characteristics

Age is often used as a measure of a houses condition, however, it should not be the sole criteria since many older homes are either remodeled or kept in a state of good repair to maintain their value.

In 2010, 66% percent of the houses in the Town of Amherst were built after 1970, indicating a slightly older housing stock than the Town Average (69%), and slightly younger that the County overall (62%). Nearly one-quarter of the Amherst housing stock was constructed prior to 1940, meaning that the Town is home to a larger percentage of older homes with possible maintenance issues than the Town Average or County overall (17% and 19%, respectively).

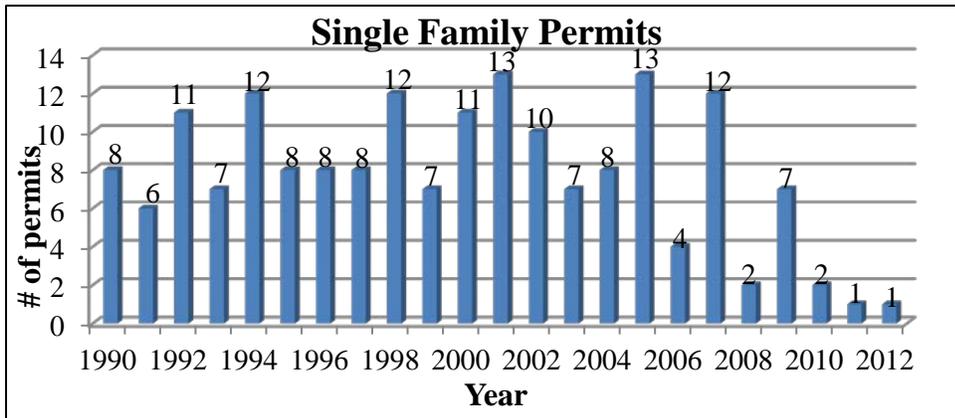
**Table 2.2: Housing Age Characteristics**

Year Structure Built	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
2000 or later	na	na	70	na	na	68	na	na	2,829
			<i>11%</i>			<i>10%</i>			<i>10%</i>
1990 to 1999	na	105	124	na	138	119	na	5,147	4,520
		<i>19%</i>	<i>20%</i>		<i>22%</i>	<i>18%</i>		<i>19%</i>	<i>16%</i>
1980 to 1989	118	71	66	115	99	114	5,012	4,186	4,192
	<i>24%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>14%</i>
1970 to 1979	182	145	149	195	162	158	6,305	5,717	6,331
	<i>37%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>22%</i>
1960 to 1969	31	39	26	78	61	57	2,978	2,846	2,786
	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>10%</i>
1950 to 1959	15	23	33	28	28	25	1,672	1,988	1,842
	<i>3%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>
1940 to 1949	7	20	11	18	22	15	1,372	1,270	1,133
	<i>1%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>4%</i>
1939 or earlier	140	154	144	116	115	113	5,571	5,435	5,513
	<i>28%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>19%</i>
<b>Total Units Listed</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>22,910</b>	<b>26,589</b>	<b>29,146</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010, and ACS Survey data from 2005 to 2009 table DP04.

A more detailed breakdown of recent single-family housing starts in the Town of Amherst is provided through an examination of building permit data for the past 23 years on file with Portage County (Figure 2.1). The Town experienced a very consistent base of 7 to 8 permits per year throughout most of the period, with occasional spikes of higher permit activity. The last five years, roughly corresponding to the national economic recession, have produced very little permit activity.

**Figure 2.1: Single-Family Permits**



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning - permit data

When comparing single-family housing starts during the recent past (2000-2012) Hull and Stockton tied for the most single family residential building activity with 202 permits each. Next with more than 100 each were the Towns of Sharon (169), Lanark (136), and Grant (105). Amherst (90) was 6<sup>th</sup> out of 17 Towns.

**Table 2.3: Portage County Single Family Residential Building Permits 2000-2012**

Municipality	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total	Ave. Per Year
T. Alban	8	7	9	4	5	4	5	4	6	0	5	1	2	60	4.6
T. Almond	4	4	4	1	4	4	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	34	2.6
T. Amherst	11	13	9	7	8	13	4	12	2	7	2	1	1	90	6.9
T. Belmont*	0	0	1	0	5	0	4	3	3	4	2	2	2	26	2.0
T. Buena Vista	9	11	12	10	3	7	8	9	7	2	3	3	2	86	6.6
T. Carson	8	9	5	9	7	15	7	8	4	1	2	2	4	81	6.2
T. Dewey	10	6	11	6	7	7	3	4	0	2	1	2	3	62	4.8
T. Eau Pleine	5	4	7	6	10	9	6	11	7	6	7	4	5	87	6.7
T. Grant	13	15	8	12	9	11	9	5	2	6	7	2	6	105	8.1
T. Hull	21	13	32	28	13	14	17	13	15	12	8	4	12	202	15.5
T. Lanark	15	15	12	19	16	18	6	9	7	5	4	5	5	136	10.5
T. Linwood	3	1	6	9	10	5	6	3	6	6	2	2	0	59	4.5
T. New Hope	6	3	4	6	6	3	9	4	4	5	0	1	1	52	4.0
T. Pine Grove*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
T. Plover	5	6	6	10	3	4	3	5	1	4	5	1	3	56	4.3
T. Sharon	23	16	15	20	22	15	11	6	9	5	12	7	8	169	13.0
T. Stockton	17	15	14	18	25	24	25	13	12	10	11	9	9	202	15.5
<b>Town Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1507</b>	<b>115.9</b>

Source: Portage County Planning and Zoning – permit data. \* T. of Belmont and Pine Grove (Homes on water only)

### C. Structural Characteristics

Structure type information (single family, duplex, multi-family, etc.) is commonly used for describing the physical characteristics of housing stock. The following “number of units in structure” information is taken from U.S. Census data based on a sample of units within a community, and not a total count of units. Although it does not account for all housing units within a community, this information provides insight into the mix of housing types in the Town. Data from 2010 forward is taken from the ACS DP04 table.

**Table 2.4: Housing Structural Characteristics**

Units in Structure	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
1 Unit Detached	423 86%	506 91%	599 96%	450 83%	541 87%	550 82%	15,828 69%	18,534 70%	19,834 68%
1-Unit Attached	8 2%	5 1%	7 1%	4 1%	4 1%	9 1%	329 1%	630 2%	1,008 3%
2 to 4 Units	8 2%	7 1%	2 0%	6 1%	7 1%	18 3%	2,420 11%	2,840 11%	3,197 11%
5 or more Units	1 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 0%	3 0%	16 2%	2,196 10%	2,765 10%	3,356 12%
Mobile Home Trailer or Other	53 11%	39 7%	15 2%	84 15%	69 11%	76 11%	2,137 9%	1,788 7%	1,751 6%
<b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>22,910</b>	<b>26,557</b>	<b>29,146</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010, and ACS data from 2005 to 2009 table DP04.

In 2010, 96% of the housing stock was categorized as single-family (1-unit detached), an increase of 10% from 1990. Since 1990, the percentage of Town of Amherst housing stock in single-family homes exceeded both the Town Average and the Portage County overall.

The second largest structure type is mobile homes, which have declined in number over the past 20 years. In 2010, 2% of the housing stock fell into this category, which is lower than the Town Average and Portage County overall. Census data shows that 1990 marked the peak number and percentage of mobile homes across the County during the last twenty years.

### D. Value Characteristics

Housing value is another important aspect in the overall assessment of current housing stock. The value of housing, along with median price, has risen significantly since 1990 all across Portage County. The Town experienced a significant increase in housing values between 1990 and 2010. Homes valued at over \$100,000 rose from less than 4.3% in 1990 to nearly 90% in 2010, with those valued above \$200,000 increasing from 0 to over 35% of total units for the same period.

Median value is an indicator that can be used to gauge housing demand. The median home value in the Town of Amherst has risen significantly since 1990, from \$64,700 to \$172,500 in 2010. The Town of Amherst median value has historically been higher than the Town Average and County overall, and this difference has increased in the last decade (see Table 2.5 below).

**Table 2.5: Housing Value Characteristics**

Housing Value (Owner Occupied)	Town of Amherst			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Less than \$50,000	39 21.1%	20 7.3%	3 0.6%	65 27.3%	14 4.6%	35 6.4%	3,562 33.6%	781 6.0%	1,140 6.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	138 74.6%	102 37.2%	47 9.4%	149 62.8%	114 37.1%	67 12.3%	6,139 58.0%	6,028 46.1%	3,413 18.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5 2.7%	107 39.1%	136 27.3%	17 7.0%	120 39.1%	151 27.8%	716 6.8%	4,253 32.5%	5,975 31.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3 1.6%	38 13.9%	138 27.7%	6 2.5%	36 11.8%	129 23.7%	150 1.4%	1,329 10.2%	4,116 21.8%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	0 0.0%	5 1.8%	135 27.1%	1 0.3%	15 5.0%	111 20.4%	19 0.2%	493 3.8%	2,978 15.8%
\$300,000 or more	0 0.0%	2 0.7%	39 7.8%	0 0.1%	8 2.5%	51 9.3%	4 0.0%	204 1.6%	1,277 6.8%
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>10,590</b>	<b>13,088</b>	<b>18,899</b>
<b>MEDIAN VALUE</b>	<b>\$64,700</b>	<b>\$106,000</b>	<b>\$172,500</b>	<b>\$53,806</b>	<b>\$103,481</b>	<b>\$154,181</b>	<b>\$58,600</b>	<b>\$98,300</b>	<b>\$140,800</b>

Source: US Census, 1990, 2000, and ACS 2005-2009 table DP04

#### E. Housing Affordability

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) not more than 30% of gross household income should be spent on monthly housing costs in order for that home to be considered affordable. The U.S. Census provides this data on housing costs as a percentage of household income for homeowners (Table 2.6) and renters (Table 2.7). The following information is taken from the U.S. Census Summary File 3 and ACS data, which is based on a sample of households within a community, and not a total count of all households.

**Table 2.6: Affordability Comparison for Owner-Occupied Housing Units**

Monthly Owner Costs as % of Household Income	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010
less than 20.0%	113 61.1%	154 56.2%	106 33.2%	159 66.8%	196 63.8%	128 37.5%	6,707 63.3%	8,277 63.2%	4,674 40.1%
20.0 to 24.9%	20 10.8%	39 14.2%	63 19.7%	33 13.9%	42 13.6%	64 18.8%	1,628 15.4%	1,897 14.5%	2,211 19.0%
25.0 to 29.9%	27 14.6%	25 9.1%	57 17.9%	20 8.6%	26 8.4%	46 13.6%	910 8.6%	1,063 8.1%	1,604 13.8%
30.0 to 34.9%	6 3.2%	10 3.6%	30 9.4%	8 3.2%	14 4.4%	32 9.3%	470 4.4%	576 4.4%	951 8.2%
35% or more	19 10.3%	46 16.8%	61 19.1%	17 7.0%	28 9.1%	70 20.5%	852 8.0%	1,187 9.1%	2,163 18.6%
not computed	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 0.6%	1 0.5%	2 0.6%	1 0.3%	23 0.2%	88 0.7%	45 0.4%
<b>Total Units Listed</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>10,590</b>	<b>13,088</b>	<b>11,648</b>

Source: US Census Bureau 1990, 2000 and 2006-2010 ACS. Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss is included in the "not computed" category (U.S. Census Bureau).

In 2010, nearly 29% of Town of Amherst owner-occupied households paid more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs, an increase of over 15% since 1989. There was also a significant increase in the percentage of Amherst owner-occupied households transitioning up to the less “affordable” categories. This pattern is also reflected in the Town Average data. The implications for the Town include the reality that nearly one-third of homeowners are finding it increasingly difficult to cover the cost of monthly housing costs.

With respect to Amherst’s renter-occupied households, 8.6% were paying a monthly rent above 30% of household income on housing costs in 2010 (Table 2.7). This percentage reflects a steady decrease since 1989, the opposite of the trend described for owner-occupied housing units. The percentage of households paying more than 30% of monthly income in 2010, as reported, is nearly one-third of the 1989 total (8.6% vs 22.5%), and is considerable lower than both the Town average (28%+) and Portage County overall (45%).

**Table 2.7: Affordability Comparison for Renter-Occupied Housing Units**

Gross rent as % of Household Income	Town of Amherst			Town Average			Portage County		
	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010
less than 20.0%	17 42.5%	15 48.4%	37 52.9%	18 38.2%	20 41.3%	22 33.7%	1,776 29.5%	2,675 37.9%	2,248 27.9%
20.0 to 24.9%	2 5.0%	2 6.5%	0 0.0%	6 11.8%	4 8.1%	6 8.6%	981 16.3%	886 12.5%	1,018 12.7%
25.0 to 29.9%	2 5.0%	0 0.0%	9 12.9%	3 5.4%	5 9.3%	8 11.4%	695 11.5%	863 12.2%	729 9.1%
30.0 to 34.9%	4 10.0%	2 6.5%	3 4.3%	3 5.6%	4 7.4%	6 9.5%	447 7.4%	485 6.9%	713 8.9%
35% or more	5 12.5%	4 12.9%	3 4.3%	13 26.6%	8 15.8%	12 18.3%	1,860 30.9%	1,791 25.4%	2,896 36.0%
not computed	10 25.0%	8 25.8%	18 25.7%	6 12.4%	9 18.1%	12 18.4%	260 4.3%	361 5.1%	442 5.5%
<b>Total Units Listed</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>6,019</b>	<b>7,061</b>	<b>8,046</b>

Source: US Census, 1989, 1999, 2010, and ACS data for 2010 from DP04. Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss is included in the “not computed” category (U.S. Census Bureau).

### **Section 2.3 Housing Programs**

Several means are available to the Town of Amherst to maintain and improve housing conditions and satisfy the needs of all residents. To meet the needs of low and moderate income elderly and handicapped residents needing housing assistance, the Town should help residents participate in Federal, State, and County housing programs that make available loans and grants to build, repair or obtain adequate housing. Some of these programs are listed below.

- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) - provides a listing of numerous housing programs including low interest loans for first time homebuyers, home improvement loans, and tax credit programs for elderly and low-income family housing.
- Housing Authority of Portage County (HAPC) - offers a housing assistance program through the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Federal funds are available to help low income persons pay rent on privately owned dwelling units. Most housing types can

qualify including single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, manufactured homes and town homes. All units must meet HUD's standards.

- **CAP Services** - a non-profit corporation that has several programs available to low and moderate income residents of Portage County including Home Buyer's Assistance, Housing Rehabilitation and Weatherization programs. Financial assistance under these programs is provided through a deferred loan which is due upon sale of the home or transfer of title. Brief explanations of some of the programs offered through CAP Services are listed below.
  - **The Home Buyer's Assistance Program** - encourages home ownership by providing matching funds to eligible first-time, low and moderate income homebuyers for down payment and closing costs.
  - **CAP's Housing Rehabilitation Program** - assists low and moderate income homeowners by providing funds for necessary repairs including but not limited to: roof, door, window, and siding replacement; foundation repair; well and septic systems; and electrical, heating system, and water heater replacement.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** - a federally funded program administrated by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations, to assist local governments with housing programs that primarily benefit low and moderate income residents. CDBG funds can be used for a wide variety of activities including owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing rehabilitation, homebuyer assistance, handicap accessibility modifications, public facility/infrastructure improvements and special housing projects like acquisition, demolition, and relocation projects. While only municipalities can apply for the grant, CAP Services can assist with the application and administer the grant for a 10% administration fee which is paid for with grant money. This allows municipalities like the Town of Amherst, who may not have the experience or resources to administer a grant, to improve the housing conditions in their community.

## **Section 2.4 Housing Issues**

The following housing issues were derived from input throughout the planning process:

- How can the Town encourage the allowance of accessory living quarters for relatives (i.e. granny flats) and farm labor?
- Homes without foundations don't get taxed the same as other homes. How will the Town address the need to apply consistent taxation standards for new homes, manufactured homes, and mobile homes?
- How can we meet the housing needs of current and future residents who choose to live in a rural area?

## **Section 2.5 Housing Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1: Allow for housing choices that meet the needs of current and future residents.**

**Objective 1.1:** Provide guidance to enable developers, builders, property owners and real estate agents to create or choose suitable housing.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage high quality construction and enforcement of Uniform Dwelling Code and maintenance standards for new and existing housing.
2. Recommend the amendment of County Ordinances to allow mobile homes on a farm property for the housing of temporary laborers or family members.
3. Recommend the amendment of County Ordinances to allow for single family housing with separate quarters for developmentally or physically challenged family members or for elderly family members.
4. Review alternative housing types as future needs dictate.

**Goal 2:** Support housing development that takes into consideration the protection of natural resources and open spaces and protects rural character.

Objective 2.1: Encourage neighborhood design and location that protects residential areas from infringement of incompatible uses.

Policy: Encourage the location and siting of residential development in a manner that enhances the agricultural and rural character and promotes harmony between neighbors.

**Goal 3:** Keep existing housing as conforming uses whenever possible.

Policy: Support the requests to rehabilitate existing homes when such requests do not harm the public interest.

## **CHAPTER 3      Transportation Element**

66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Stat.:

**Transportation element.** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

### **Section 3.1      Introduction**

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens of Amherst. Decisions made regarding transportation can have a direct impact on the community's growth and quality of life. These decisions should be made to include choices that will most effectively serve the community as a whole, maximize investment in transportation infrastructure, as well as minimize conflicts between modes of transportation as well as jurisdictions.

This Chapter will assess the current inventory of transportation options, list goals, objectives, and policies that guide future development of various modes of transportation in the Town of Amherst, and compare local goals to existing county, regional, and state transportation plans.

### **Section 3.2      Transportation Facility Inventory**

#### **A.      Roads and Highways**

Classifying and protecting roads according to their function is a primary element of transportation planning. The term "functional classification" is used to refer to the process by which highways are grouped into classes, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. The level of service a roadway provides can range from a high degree of traffic mobility to a more basic land access function, or a combination of both (Map 3.1). All roads and highways have been classified by periodic updates from the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation and adopted by the County Highway Committee. Criteria used in determining functional classification included traffic volumes (Average Daily Traffic volume or ADT), land use, population concentrations, and geographical limitations such as river crossings or restrictive topography.

As of January 1, 2013, the municipal road system within the Town of Amherst consisted of a total of 104.8 miles of roadway. Municipal roadway accounts for 58.2 miles. County Roads (County Roads) A, B, SS, K, and Q totaled 27.7 miles. State Highways comprised 5.4 miles. Federal Highways accounted for 13.7 miles of the network (divided highway counted twice). See Map 3.1 below for the Average Daily Traffic volume (ADT) information for individual roadways.

1. **Rural Principal Arterials** - These roads primarily stress traffic mobility/movement and are representative of interstate or intrastate travel. U.S. Highway 10 is the only principal arterial in the Town of Amherst. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation

(WisDOT) regulates public and private road and driveway access onto this facility. The ADT count for U.S. Highway 10 west of the Village of Amherst Junction was 10,700. The 2011 ADT count for U.S. Highway 10, east of the Village of Amherst was 12,500 vehicles. The ADT count for U.S. Highway 10 west of the Village of Amherst was 12,500.

2. Rural Minor Arterials - These roads provide for intraregional and inter-area traffic movements. There are no Rural Minor arterials in the Town of Amherst.
3. Rural Major Collectors - These roads provide for inter-area traffic movements. Major collectors in the Town of Amherst include County Road's A, B, Q, and KK (From the Village of Amherst to Nelsonville). The location and separation of access points along these highways is regulated by Portage County. The required minimum separation between access points is 300 feet.

The 2011 ADT count for County Road A south of U.S. Highway 10 was 1,200 vehicles. The 2011 ADT count for County Road A North of U.S. Highway 10 was 720 vehicles.

County Road B had a 2011 ADT count of 2,800 vehicles west of U.S. Highway 10, and 1,300 east of the Village of Amherst.

County Road Q had a 2011 ADT count of 520 vehicles south of U.S. Highway 10. The ingress and egress ramps of U.S. Highway 10 note a 2011 ADT of 2,300 vehicles closest to the intersection of County Road B and County Road Q. There is no recent ADT given for County Road Q north of this intersection.

County Road KK has a 2011 ADT of 1,900 vehicles entering the Village of Amherst north of the intersection of County Road A and County Road KK. County Road KK has a 2011 ADT of 1,700 ADT vehicles as it reaches the intersection of County Road KK and County Road Q.

State Highway 161 has a 2011 ADT count for 2 sections of its length: 2,400 vehicles east of the County Road Q and State Highway 161 intersection, 1,800 vehicles west of the County Road T and State Highway 161 intersection.

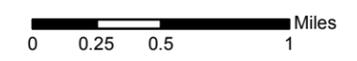
4. Rural Minor Collectors - These roads link the rural areas, i.e. local roads, with higher order roads/highways. Portage County regulates the location and separation of new access points along these roadways and requires a minimum separation of 300 feet between access points. There is only one minor collector in the Town of Amherst, Town Line Road. This section of County Road is on the borderline of the Town of Stockton and the Town of Amherst. This section of road between Lutz Lane and U.S. Highway 10 has a 2011 ADT of 390 vehicles.
5. Rural Local Roads - These roads primarily stress land access and provide inter-ownership and intra-ownership traffic movements over short distances. All roads not designated as arterials or collectors are considered local roads. The Town regulates the location of new access points on local roads and Portage County requires that access points be located a minimum of 50 feet from a County Road intersection.

# Map 3.1 Transportation Network and Functional Class

## Functional Class

- Rural Principal Arterial
- Rural Minor Arterial
- Rural Major Collector
- Rural Minor Collector
- Rural Local
- Railroad
- - - Ice Age Trail Bike Route
- - - Tomorrow River State Trail
- Highway 10 Realignment

2008 - Average Daily Traffic Volume  
2011 - Average Daily Traffic Volume



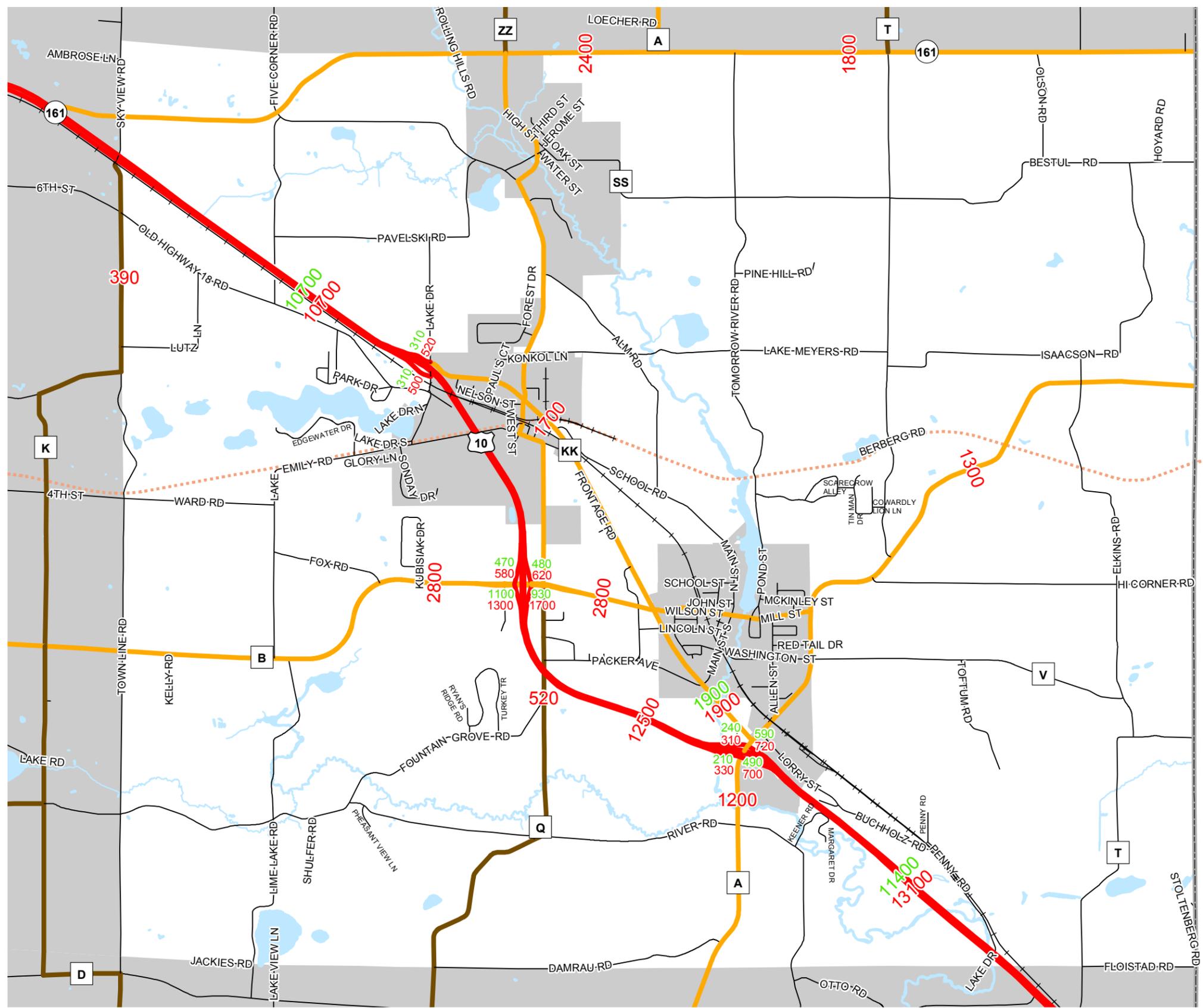
Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2013)  
Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation (2011)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan



Portage County  
Planning & Zoning  
1462 Strongs Ave.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481





## B. Transit and Transportation Facilities for the Disabled and Elderly

The Portage County Aging, Disability, and Resource Center provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities to the Amherst area through a busing and volunteer escort service. Bus rides are provided to meal sites, grocery shopping, senior center services, essential personal business, and adult day care. Buses will bring residents into Stevens Point or to the Jensen Center on specific days during the week. Volunteer drivers may also be requested for those persons going to medical appointments or those otherwise not able to use the busing service. Persons requiring such services must call to make a reservation and are picked up and dropped off at their home. There is no set fee for this service; however, passengers are asked to make a donation. Additional transit services are provided by the Disabled American Veterans, as well as the Stevens Point School District bus services for children.

Community Industries Corporation of Stevens Point employs handicapped individuals to perform various activities important to the local community. This organization does offer rides to work for its employees who have no other means of transportation.

## C. Bicycle/Walking Routes and Trails

Pedestrian and Bike linkages are commonplace and an important part of the transportation network. Pedestrian use of roads in Amherst is an important part of healthy living for many people as they use them for exercise and enjoyment of the natural environment of the Town. Bikes are used for both exercise, recreation and commuting.

In June, 2009 the State of Wisconsin passed ACT 28 (State Statute 85.023) to provide assistance in the development of bicycle facilities. It dictates that going forward, bike-pedestrian facilities will be required or will be established on all new highway construction and reconstruction funded in whole or in part from State or Federal funding. Rules intending to clarify issues in the State statute were reaffirmed in March, 2011.

Only State Highway 161 currently meets the guidance provided for State Statute 85.023 in the Town of Amherst. This statute describes what a bike and pedestrian way is and how they should be planned for as well as what exceptions exist. A simplified explanation of the Statute can be found by doing an internet search for “Wisconsin Complete Streets Presentation”.

The League of American Bicyclists recently rated Wisconsin as the 8<sup>th</sup> friendliest state for biking in the United States. A Wisconsin Department of Transportation workshop in 2010 indicates that the total contribution of bicycles to the state is \$556 million dollars a year and includes 3,418 jobs.

Making roads bicycle-pedestrian friendly provides many benefits to motorists, public safety, and non-motorists alike. Below are examples of how providing bicycle-pedestrian facilities provides public benefits to all (Workshop Presentation for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Law - Fall, 2010 - WisDOT).

- Makes room for vehicles to perform evasive maneuvers
- Added width allows for accommodation of driver error
- Adds a recovery area to regain control of vehicle
- Makes space for disabled vehicles, mail vehicles, and bus stops
- Increases the sight distance for through vehicles
- Creates clearance for poles, guard rails, signs, and other roadside obstacles
- Reduces passing conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycle-pedestrians
- Increases visibility of pedestrians trying to cross the road

- Storm water removal from the road is facilitated and reduces hydroplaning
- Provides more intersection and safe stopping distances
- Allows for easier exiting from travel lanes and to side streets and roads
- Provides additional space for maintenance operations and snow storage

The Town of Amherst has one major bicycle/walking trails running through it. The Tomorrow River State Trail follows an abandoned rail line from the Village of Plover in Portage County to the Village of Scandinavia in Waupaca County. The trail is open to bicyclists, joggers, and hikers in the spring, summer, and fall, and to skiers, snowmobilers, and dog sledgers in the winter. A separate trail for horseback riders is located adjacent to the limestone bike path from the Village of Plover to the Village of Amherst Junction. Parking and access to the trail is available in the Village of Amherst Junction and at Cate Park, approximately one half mile north of the Village of Amherst. A paved shoulder has been installed along Pond Street, from Mill Street north to the Cate Park trail head, to provide safer pedestrian and bike access to the Tomorrow River State Trail.

#### D. Railroads

Eight miles of mainline track lay across the Town of Amherst. There are three (3) public at-grade crossings and three bridges/trestles. WisDOT did close the at-grade crossing located at Five Corners as part of the ramp construction at Lake Road.

Canadian National Railroad runs approximately 22-24 trains per day through the Town of Amherst. There is an expected 10-15% increase over the next 10 years, including a 60 mph corridor and possible increases in track sidings.

The lengths of trains on these routes are to gradually increase. Canadian National Railroad intends to have trains up to 3 miles in length (15,840 feet). This could significantly increase the wait times at rail intersections. It could also be a potential issue for emergency vehicles, especially if a that vehicle should have to stop or reverse course while needing to reach a medical emergency or arrive at a hospital.

#### E. Air Transportation

A number of airports serve the Town of Amherst: the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Stevens Point Municipal Airport, and the Waupaca Municipal Airport. Two private airstrips are also located within the Town of Amherst.

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA), located approximately 35 miles north of Amherst along Interstate Highway 39 in Mosinee, is a full service, all-weather airport offering around-the-clock service. Several airlines offer regular commuter and passenger service and air cargo service is also available with overnight delivery.

This facility is owned and operated via joint agreements between Marathon and Portage Counties. Several airlines (Delta, United, and American Airlines) offer regular daily commuter and passenger service to Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago providing connections anywhere in the world. Air cargo service as well as passenger charters are also available.

This airport has two large concrete runways (complete with taxi ways) capable of handling most planes. Main runway is 7,648 feet long by 150 feet wide. Secondary runway is 6,501 feet long and 150 feet wide. There are 25 private/corporate aircraft based out of this facility, 2 of which are jet and 2 are multi-engine. There are a limited number of hangers present which are leased. Additional services include flight training education, Airframe and engine maintenance, fuel service and several car rental companies.

Beginning in the spring of 2011 CWA embarked on a 3 year \$25 million expansion project for terminal renovation and expansion aimed at increasing operational space, expanding the security check-point, relocating car rentals to their own facility and expanding current parking facilities. CWA was recently awarded a \$250,000 Small Community Air Service Development Program grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation that it will use to pursue new air service with a fourth carrier and improve and/or expand current air service with existing carriers. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 designates the Central Wisconsin Airport as an Air Carrier / Air Cargo Airfield.

Additional services include flight training education, Airframe and engine maintenance, fuel service and several car rental companies.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located at the intersection of I-39 and State Highway 66 in Stevens Point (15 miles east of the Town) and has two runways. The primary runway is 6,028 feet long and 120 feet wide. The secondary runway is 3,642 feet long and 75 feet wide. There are 37 private hangers at the airport, fuel and repair services are available. No passenger service is available. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the airport as a Transport/Corporate airfield.

The airport is owned and operated by the City of Stevens Point and averaged 101 aircraft operations per day in 2011. It is home to 42 home-based aircraft including four jets, 40 single-engine and one multi-engine propeller airplane. Travel Guard, Med Topics Unlimited, Sentry Insurance, Pegasus Aviation, Freight Runners, and the Rettler Corporation operate business aircraft from this location. Also, UPS operates daily flights providing essential cargo services to the local and regional community.

The Waupaca Municipal Airport, otherwise known as Brunner Field is located 13 miles east of Amherst adjacent to U.S. Highway 10. It has two asphalt paved runways. The longest is 5,200 feet long by 100 feet wide. The second is 3,899 feet long and 75 feet wide. The airport is operated by Plane Guys Aviation LLC. The airport is open to the public; however, there is no passenger service available. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the Waupaca Municipal Airfield (Brunner Field) is as a Transport/Corporate airfield.

#### F. Trucking

There are no designated truck routes within Town of Amherst. Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on U.S. Highway 10 and County Rd. B; local traffic on County Road KK and AB; and normal delivery services for area businesses. The Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on County Roads in spring to mitigate potential damage from the thawing frost layer in the soil. However, County Road B from the Village of Plover to the Village of Amherst is one route that is not posted in spring.

Several trucking firms providing local, regional, and national service are based in the Town and are located primarily along major collector roads.

#### G. Water Transportation

Although the Tomorrow River runs through the Town, its primary use is recreation and is not considered a transportation corridor.

The Town of Amherst has 3 improved boat launches that can be used by recreational boaters to access Lake Emily, Lime Lake, and Lake Meyers. Residents also are likely to use the access in the Village of Amherst to access the Amherst Mill Pond. These sites include accommodation for parking.

The Town has at least 11 public access sites that have primitive boat launch facilities. A primitive boat launch is a wide spot on the shoreline on public land used to launch a canoe or kayak. The access may be no more than a worn walking path. Parking may not be available or available on Town or County Roads.

### **Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs**

#### **A. WisDOT Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan (2013-2017)**

The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation has no plans for major repairs or construction scheduled for Portage County at this time. This schedule includes existing or proposed highways, and existing or proposed bridges.

#### **B. Portage County Highway Department Six-Year Improvement Plan (2013-2017)**

In 2013, the Portage County Highway Department will mill and resurface parts of County Highway B west of the Village of Amherst Junction.

Crack fill and chip sealing of County Road A from the Town line north to County Road KK. County Road KK will have crack fill and chip sealing from County Road A to northwest into the Village of Amherst Junction. A section of County Road T that head north from County Road V to where County Road T turns due west toward the Village of Amherst.

County Road B from U.S. Highway 10 through the Village of Amherst and into the Town on the northwest side will also receive crack filling in 2013.

County Road T between County Road V and County Road T will get a crack fill and chip sealing.

The Town is not scheduled to have any State or County road maintenance in 2014.

In 2015, the Portage County Highway Department will mill and resurface parts of County Road SS from the Village of Nelsonville west to State Highway 161.

In 2016, the Portage County Highway Department will mill and resurface parts of County Road T east of the Village of Amherst from County Road B west to where County Road T turns south.

The Town is not scheduled to have any State or County road maintenance in 2017.

#### **1. Jurisdictional Transfers**

With the reconstruction of USH 10 around the Village of Amherst to a 4-lane divided highway and its subsequent relocation (Map 3.1), numerous jurisdictional transfers occurred, resulting in changes to the functional classification of certain segments and traffic flow through the Town of Amherst.

A majority of the USH 10 Amherst by-pass, which opened in the fall of 2004, is located almost entirely in the Town of Amherst. There is an interchange at County Road B west of the Village of Amherst that will provide access to the 4-lane highway for area residents. County Road B will be rerouted around the Village of Amherst along the new USH 10 alignment to another new interchange at County Road A, where a new County Road will be constructed northeast towards Edge Road. The existing County Road A route was terminated in a cul-de-sac on the north side of the new interchange, and will be rerouted along with County Road B towards Edge Road, and then along County Road T towards Highway 161. New USH 10 realigns with the existing USH 10 just east of County Road A.

A number of jurisdictional transfers will directly affect the Town of Amherst. The former US Highway 10 from Lake Drive south to County Road A has been transferred from the State to Portage County and renamed County Road KK. County Road A from Highway 161 south to the Village of Amherst boundary line, and County Road B from the new USH 10 interchange east to the Village of Amherst boundary line will be transferred from the County to Town of Amherst.

State Highway 161 from County Road KK (formerly USH 10) to the Village of Nelsonville's northern limits will be transferred from the State to the County and will be renamed County Road Q.

State Highway 161 now follows the northern Village border along Loberg Road and County Road SS eventually intersecting with the new USH 10.

A new intersection has been constructed at the junction of County Road ZZ, Highway 161, and the new County Road Q to allow for a safer crossing of the new State Highway 161. Traffic counts will have to be done once the realignment project is complete to determine the new functional classifications.

### C. Wisconsin State Airport System 2030

The State Airport Plan determines the number, location and type of aviation facilities required to adequately serve the state's aviation needs through 2030. The plan also forecasts the level of public investment required to: upgrade substandard features such as widening of existing runways, replace existing systems to meet Federal and State standards, and enhance the airport system through runway extension and new construction. The classifications for Central Wisconsin Airport (Air Carrier/Air Cargo) and Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Transport/Corporate) are not projected to change through 2030.

### D. Connections 2030 - Wisconsin State Railroad Plans (SRP)

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has decided to include the State Rail Plan as a component of the State's Connections 2030 Plan, a long range, all-mode transportation plan. At this time, there is a draft Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 that has not been adopted by the State. At the time the Amherst Comprehensive Plan was written, the state had only completed the Issues and Opportunities Report of the rail plan.

The primary issues in the report were broken into four major areas: rail network issues, intercity passenger rail issues, safety issues, and legislative issues. Emerging issues identified in the report included commuter rail, locomotive horns at rail/road crossings, and proposals to reduce mercury emissions. However, Town officials should maintain awareness of the status of that Plan as there is a rail corridor that parallels U.S. Highway 10 through most of the Town.

### E. State, Regional and Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

#### 1. Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Portage County takes pride in being a great place to live, work, and play. Providing opportunities for citizens to integrate bicycling and walking into their everyday lives is essential to maintaining the vibrancy of the community and enhancing quality of life. Better public health, increased economic activity, and cleaner air are a few of the benefits that can be realized by improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Whether for recreation or transportation, the demand for safe, comfortable, and convenient places to walk and bike is increasing. The Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian plan provides recommendations to

improve conditions for bicycling and walking in Portage County and to coordinate efforts of the County, City of Stevens Point, and the numerous Villages and Towns.

While bike lanes may be warranted in villages, town bicycle accommodations typically take the form of paved shoulders, shared roads, and shared-use paths. From a pedestrian perspective, providing sidewalks along rural roads in unincorporated areas is rarely cost-effective. In these areas, pedestrians will often use paved shoulders or shared-use paths. Below are definitions for more commonly utilized bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in towns.

- **Paved Shoulders:** Paved shoulders ranging in width from three feet to five feet, or wider, provide space for bicyclists on rural roads. The width of the paved shoulder should be based on traffic volumes, site lines, and anticipated bicycle use.
- **Bike Routes/Shared Roadways:** Lower volume roadways where potential motor vehicle conflicts are at a minimum, especially where motorists are passing in opposing directions with a bicyclist in the same section of the roadway. Generally, where motor vehicle counts are less than 750, conflicts are significantly reduced, although there are other factors that need to be considered.
- **Paths (or trails):** Separated from streets and roads. They are often built in rural areas where railroads are abandoned or rail-banked, along rivers, in parks, and occasionally along roadways.

For additional information including recommended bikeways within the Town of Amherst please refer to the Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The official Plan is available at the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Office, located at 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, as well as the Department's website.

## 2. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2030

Overall plan goals are: to increase the level of bicycling in Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicycle and motor vehicles.

## 3. Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

Current plans exist for a bridge across County Road KK to allow for the unencumbered continuation of the Tomorrow River State Trail.

### **Section 3.4 Transportation Related Programs**

The Town of Amherst uses the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) road condition rating system to assess the physical condition of local roads. The PASER software can help prioritize road maintenance, calculate project costs, evaluate consequences of alternative budgets and project selection strategies.

The Town tries to make effective use of the State's Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP), a reimbursement program that pays up to 50% of eligible costs for upgrading seriously deteriorating town roads.

### **Section 3.5 Transportation Issues**

The following transportation issues were identified during this planning process:

- The proposed U.S. Highway 10 relocation will:

- Adversely impact agricultural areas of the Town.
- Increase pressure to develop land for commercial and residential uses in the Town near the villages. This growth pressure must be managed carefully.
- The proposed U.S. Highway 10 relocation may:
  - Require additional setbacks from the new right-of-way to ensure there is room for additional lanes in the future if needed.
  - Change local road traffic patterns, thus requiring upgrades to roads that were not previously planned for upgrade.
  - Change the demographics of the area.
  - Create parcels of unpredictable nature that may require special exceptions or variances to utilize to good effect.
- How will re-assigning of road systems impact traffic patterns?
- How can communities band together to secure highway funds for specific projects?
- How will the Town create a safe environment for different modes of transportation?
- How can the Town address potential safety issues arising from railroad spills or derailments?
- How will road infrastructure be addressed due to increased growth?
- How will the Town address the increased use of compression brakes by trucks?
- How will the Town address the potential impacts from hazardous material spills along rail and road corridors?
- How can surface waters and Lake Emily be protected from transportation projects?

### **Section 3.6 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Maintain a safe and efficient transportation network throughout the Town.

**Objective 1.1:** Identify potential growth areas that may generate need for road construction or improvements.

**Policies:**

1. Recommend that future road right-of-way in new developments be identified on final plats.
2. Update the Town of Amherst road ordinance.
3. Work with local organizations to minimize conflicts and enhance safety along snowmobile, biking, and pedestrian trails.
4. Where necessary, request the County to post weight limits on County roads.
5. Identify roads where speed limits should be decreased and create ordinances to set and enforce limits.

6. Consider road impact fees for new developments for needed upgrading of roads adjacent to those developments.
7. Consider developing an official road map.
8. Consider the creation of an ‘engine braking’ ordinance.
9. Roads must be designed to accommodate school bus and snow removal equipment.
10. Work with County Emergency Management Department to develop a plan for dealing with hazardous materials spills.

Objective 1.2: Monitor changing traffic patterns due to jurisdictional road transfers.

Policies:

1. Work with County Highway Department and DOT to identify safety concerns, weight limits and road usage on re-assigned roads.
2. Work with the Sheriff’s Department to identify dangerous sections of road for automotive, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic through crash information in the Town of Amherst.

Objective 1.3: Materials, road construction practices, and road runoff should have a minimal impact on the environment.

Policy: Contact the DOT and/or County Highway Department to ensure that road construction materials are environmentally safe and proper stormwater management provisions are adhered to.

Objective 1.4: Identify potential railroad problem areas.

Policy: Work with railroad commission to enhance railroad safety in the Town.

**Goal 2:** Enhance the aesthetic development of the road right of ways.

Objective 2.1: Encourage local organizations to support highway beautification efforts.

Policy: Work with the County and other municipalities to apply for highway enhancement funds.

Objective 2.2: Limit off premise signage along major transportation corridors. (i.e. USH 10, STH 161, County Roads A, B, D, T, Q, K, KK )

**Goal 3:** Minimize the negative impacts of the Highway 10 re-alignment project.

Objective 3.1: The rerouting of U.S Highway 10 east of Amherst Junction will present unforeseen consequences. The Town will strive for flexibility in administration of land use objectives and policies when addressing issues directly affected by the expressway rerouting.

**Goal 4:** Take part in the County Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan and develop guidelines for addressing bicycle-pedestrian routes within the Town.

Objective: Identify important routes to designate for future bicycle-pedestrian upgrades.

Policy: Future bicycle-pedestrian upgrades will be mapped and plans will begin for their inclusion into the Town budgetary process.

## **CHAPTER 4      Utilities and Community Facilities Element**

66.1001(2)(d) Wis. Stat.:

**Utilities and Community Facilities element.** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit, shall include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the local governmental unit to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the local governmental unit that are related to such utilities and facilities.

### **Section 4.1    Introduction**

Adequate infrastructure, utilities, community facilities, and services are important in meeting existing and future community needs. They are the framework of a community's life and without them, present day standards of living could not exist. The decisions made for the Town of Amherst regarding the utilities and community facilities will have an impact on all present and future residents.

This Chapter will describe the existing utilities and community facilities serving the community, and outline future desires and needs for Town residents.

### **Section 4.2    Public Utilities Inventory and Analysis**

#### **A. Sanitary Sewer Service**

There is no sanitary sewer service in the Town of Amherst. Residents in the Town utilize private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS), otherwise known as private septic systems, as regulated by the Portage County Private Sewage System Ordinance and Department of Commerce Administrative Code (COMM 83). The Portage County Planning and Zoning Department administers the permitting and management of POWTS County-wide.

The Village of Amherst has a wastewater treatment facility and sewage collection system, but there are currently no plans for extension of services into the Town.

#### **B. Water Supply**

Town residents rely entirely on private wells and groundwater for their water supply. Water is generally plentiful throughout the Town, with potential pumping yield rates of 500-1000+ gallons per minute. Please see the groundwater section of the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter of this plan for further information.

Since potable water is obtained primarily from groundwater, consideration should be given to possible sources of contamination. One possible source is landfills. Landfills (also formerly known as dumps) have been around as long as people have lived in Portage County; however, the locations of many of the smaller, private dumps are unknown. The amount of materials deposited in these was small, and the toxicities of the materials were likely fairly low as

compared to current solid waste. All known landfills, including the County Landfill located on County Road QQ, have been closed. According to Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) Administrative Code, there must be 1,200 foot separation between a private well or reservoir and the nearest edge of an existing, proposed, or abandoned landfill. Landfills in the Town are shown on Map 4.2.

### C. Storm Water Management

The Town does not have a formal storm water management plan. However, responsibility for storm water management within the Town of Amherst is split between Portage County and the Town. Storm water facilities consist mainly of ditches along the road network. Portage County maintains the ditches along the portions of County Roads within the Town of Amherst, while the Town maintains any ditches along Town roads. Ditches along Town roads vary in size, ranging up to 4 feet in width.

### D. Solid Waste & Recycling Facilities

The Town of Amherst contracts with Harter Disposal for solid waste and recycling pickup. The Town is charged a fixed dollar amount per residence that is then assessed on the tax bill. Waste is trucked to a landfill in Marathon County. Recyclables are taken to the Portage County Material Recovery Facility in the Village of Plover. Solid waste is picked up weekly and recyclables are collected weekly. The Town is satisfied with the current level of service, but will review alternatives as conditions change.

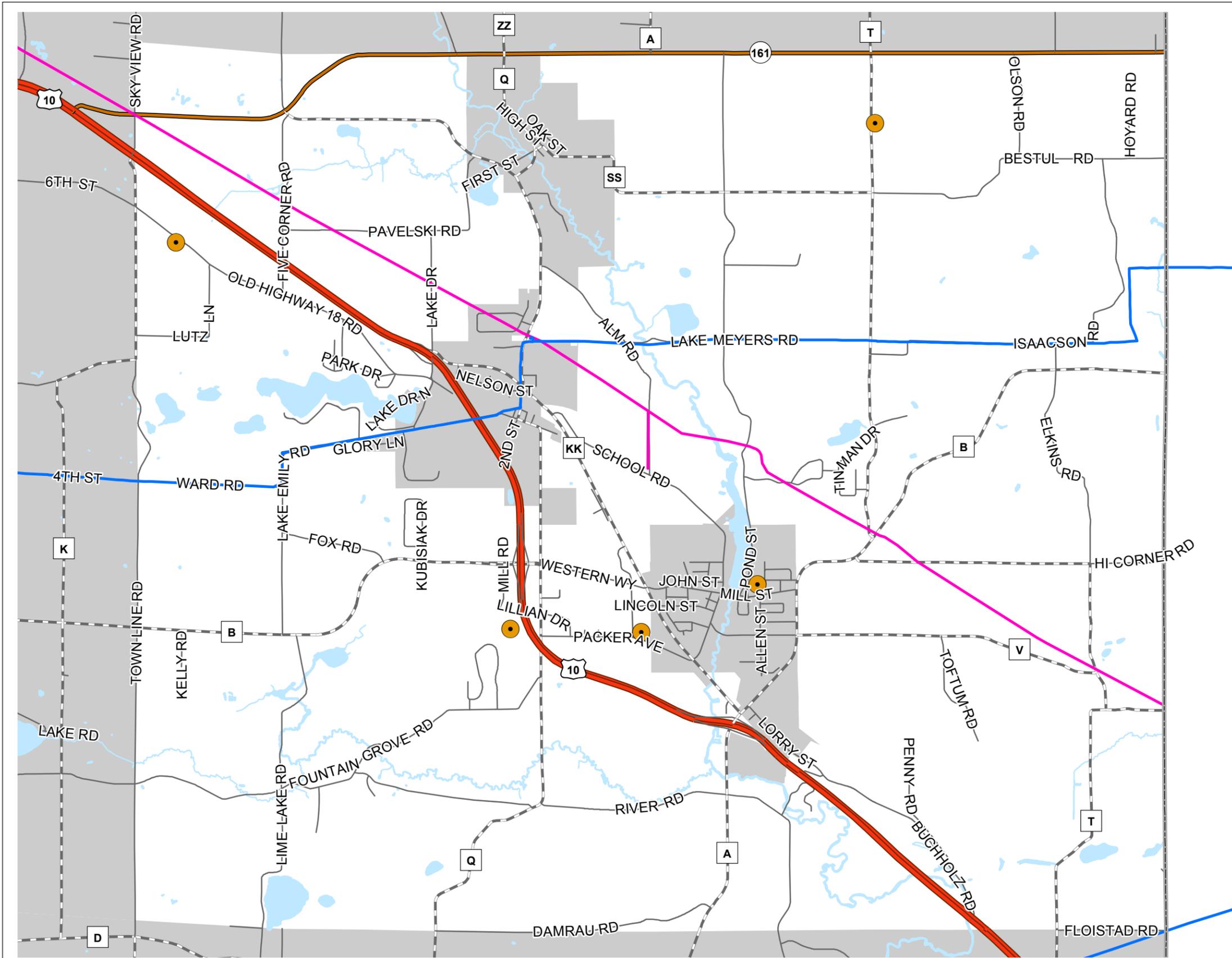
An old landfill exists in the Town southeast of the Town Hall. It lies west of County Road Q on private property (Map 4.2). Nelsonville, Amherst Junction, and the Town of Amherst deposited waste there until 1991 (File Re: SW Lic#181). There is no clay liner or monitoring wells associated with the site. WisDNR plans to do nothing about this landfill unless wells in the area begin to show contamination.

Another landfill exists in the Town on County Road T near the intersection of County Roads T and B. This facility, owned by the Village of Amherst, is still active for yard waste and inert construction material.

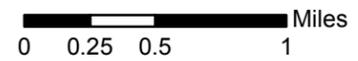
### E. Corporate Utilities

1. Telecommunication Facilities - The Town does not own or manage telecommunication facilities. However, three telecommunication towers are located in the Town, one at the end of Mill Road, another south of Old Hwy 18 west of Amherst Junction, and the third at the northeast corner of the intersection of Packer Avenue and Fairgrounds Road. These facilities were placed to maximize exposure to the U.S. Highway 10 facility. There is a fourth communications tower on County Road T south of State Highway 161 on the east side of the road midway between County Road SS and State Highway 161. Ordinances governing the placement and construction of these facilities are administered by the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department (See map 4.1).
2. Power Generating Plants and Transmission Lines – The Town of Amherst does not have any electric generation plants. However, it does have a substation located near Konkol Lane northeast of Amherst Junction. One 69kV electrical transmission line runs east-west through the Town.

# Map 4.1 Utilities



-  Telecommunication Tower
-  Powerlines
-  Pipeline



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2013)  
Adopted: August 13, 2015

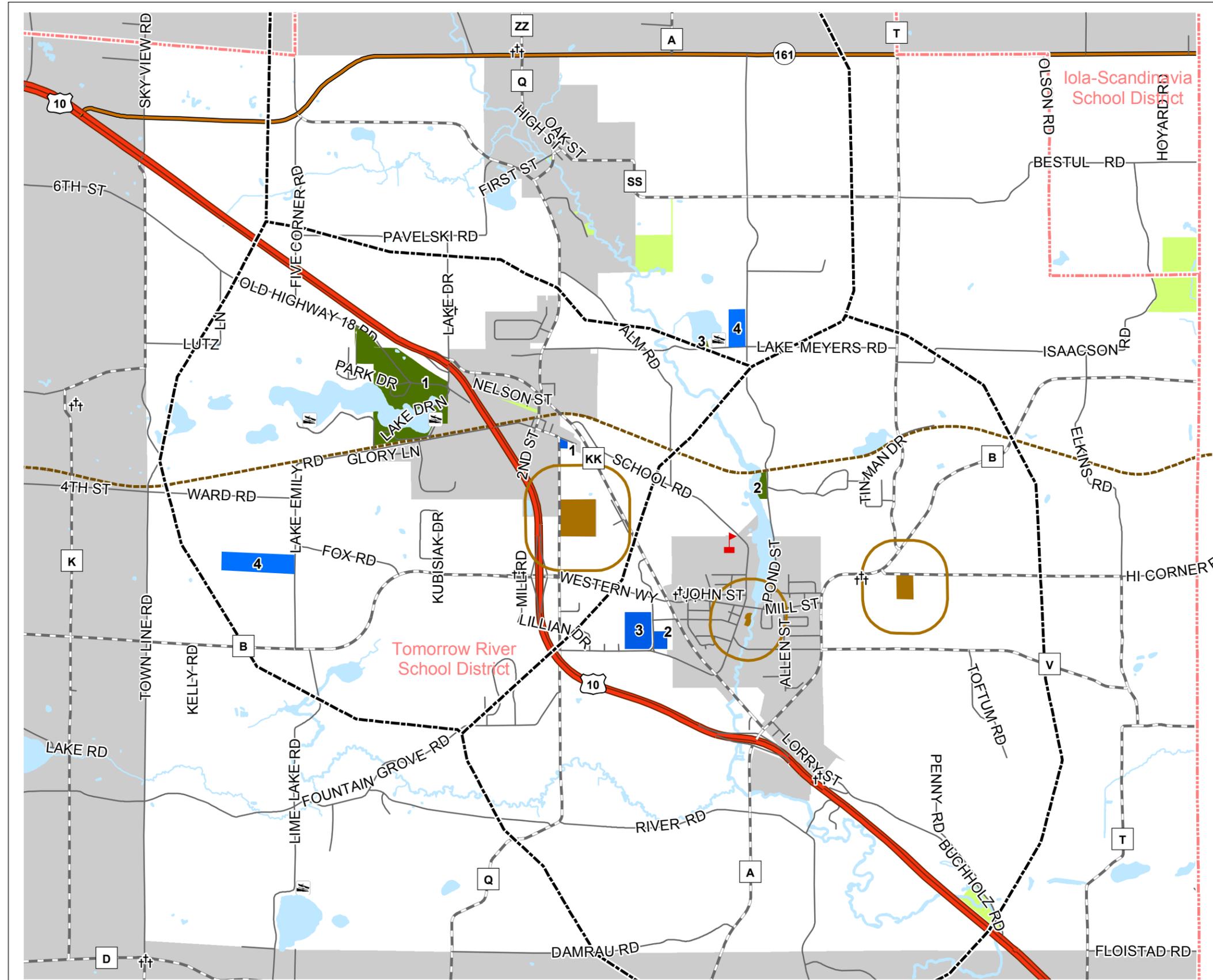
## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan



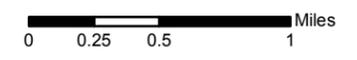
Portage County  
Planning & Zoning  
1462 Strongs Ave.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481



# Map 4.2 Community Facilities



- Cemetery
- Boat Launch
- Amherst Schools
- School District Boundary
- Tomorrow River State Trail
- Department of Natural Resources Land
- County Park
  - 1. Lake Emily Park
  - 2. Cate Park
  - 3. Meyers Lake
- Governmental/Institutional Facilities
  - 1. Amherst Town Hall
  - 2. Amherst Fire Department
  - 3. Fairgrounds
  - 4. School Forests
- Extraterritorial Boundaries
- Landfills with 1,200 foot buffer



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2013)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan



Portage County  
Planning & Zoning  
1462 Strongs Ave.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481



3. Pipelines – A 36” gas pipeline, owned by ANR Pipe Line Company, a subsidiary of El Paso Corp., was laid prior to 1969. It enters the Town State Highway 161 and parallels USH 10. Then it crosses north of the Village of Amherst and continues to parallel USH 10 until it exits just south of County Road T and County Road V.
4. Telephone and Internet Services – Phone service is currently offered through Amherst Telephone Company out of Amherst, Wisconsin. Cell phone and internet services are available through a number of private providers.
5. Other facilities – Gordondale Farms, near the Village of Nelsonville, generates enough energy to serve a number of homes through the production of methane from their dairy operation. The surplus electricity is sold back to Alliant Energy and the left-over solids from the manure digestion process are re-used as livestock bedding. This digestion process waste is also resold for use as fertilizer and soil material for garden applications.
6. Wind Turbines (WEGTs) – Private wind electrical generation towers (WEGTs) are allowed in all agricultural zoning districts, in the Commercial and Highway Commercial Zoning districts, and in the Rural Ltd. District, according to the regulations in the Portage County Zoning ordinance. The Plan Commission and the Town Board shall be given the opportunity to review the site analysis prior to the issuance of a zoning permit. Site analysis shall provide, but not be limited to setbacks, location to residences, location to public and private airport-landing strips, other WEGTs, and Town recommendation. Commercial WEGTs must be approved by the Portage County Board of Adjustment as a special exception. Commercial wind farms are controlled by the State of Wis.

### **Section 4.3 Community Facilities Inventory and Analysis**

#### **A. Municipal Buildings**

Municipal buildings in the Town of Amherst include the Town Hall and Town Garage, located at 4023 County Road Q. The Town Hall contains a meeting room, office, small storage room, and bathroom. The 3-bay Town garage provides storage for the Town’s road maintenance equipment. Public parking at these facilities is adequate. The town also owns the block building next (south) to the Town Hall and uses it for seasonal storage of equipment. The Town also recently added .8 acres to the existing land used for the Town facilities in 2013.

#### **B. Police, Fire, Rescue, Emergency Response**

##### **1. Sheriff Patrols and Policing**

The Portage County Sheriff’s Department provides protective services for the Town of Amherst through random patrols and on a “call-out” basis. Portage County is divided into 3 districts for patrol purposes. The district in which Amherst is located is bounded by State Highway 66 to the north, and the Portage County line to the east. During the day shift, 1 officer is assigned to each district, plus an additional officer “floats” throughout the County. During the night shift, 2 officers are assigned to each district, plus 2 additional officers float throughout the County. Officers may drive through the Town any number of times during each shift to check on businesses and residences.

##### **2. Fire Department Services**

An agreement to create the Amherst Fire District was signed January 1, 1993 by representatives of the villages of Amherst, Nelsonville, and Amherst Junction, and the Town of Amherst. In addition to serving these areas, the District also contracts with parts of

Lanark and Stockton for fire services. Volunteer firefighters, recruited from the area served, are dispatched via pagers by Portage County 911.

The Amherst Fire Department (AFD) is comprised of 3 distinct branches of service, Fire/Rescue, First Responders and Ambulance. All branches of the AFD are staffed by local members working as Paid on Call and Paid on Site employees. The Amherst Fire District strives to keep pace with the anticipated needs of the local emergency responders and is continually working towards the future through advanced training, planned capital improvements and member retention and recruitment.

### 3. Ambulance

A contract has been signed by the Amherst Fire District that will result in a higher level of service and an expanded role of the Amherst-based ambulance. This is a 3-way agreement between Portage County, the city of Stevens Point and the Amherst Fire District. On July 1, 2011 the Amherst based ambulance began operating at an "intermediate" level, running with one paramedic and one advanced EMT on board during each 12-hour shift. This allows the crews to administer pain medication and cardiac drugs. The Amherst ambulance has a 21 member roster, with 10 of them being at the paramedic level. The station is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with crews working 12 hour shifts.

### 4. Fire Rescue

Amherst Fire District fire and rescue personnel respond to any call for assistance within the district, including structure, grass, brush, and forest fires, all types of rescue situations, calls for emergency medical assistance, carbon monoxide alarms, missing citizens, down power lines, traffic control at accident scenes, and even the occasional stuck cat.

The Amherst Fire District operates three fire engines. One engine (Engine 10) is equipped with a 65 foot aerial boom. To support the engines on rural fires, where there are no fire hydrants, we also operate two water supply tenders. These tenders provide the initial water supply and are the ongoing water source for rural fires (they will carry water from the designated water source to the scene for the duration of the incident).

For rescue responses, the Amherst Fire District operates two rescue squads. Rescue 1 is equipped for general rescue (vehicle, farm, ice and cold water, etc.). Rescue 2 is equipped for specialized rescue such as confined space, high angle, collapse and more.

Normally, the rescue company is supported by at least one engine company during rescue responses. A "company" in fire terminology means a specific apparatus (such as an engine or a rescue squad) with a three or four person crew. The specific response order of equipment will depend on the nature of the incident.

### 5. EMR First Responders

The Amherst Fire District First Responders are emergency medical responders that respond directly from home to all types of emergency scenes. On emergency medical calls the First Responders typically will arrive in advance of the ambulance and begin scene stabilization and patient care. Once the ambulance arrives patient care will be transitioned to the ambulance crew, with the First Responders assisting. All of the First Responders are trained to at least the EMT-Basic level of training.

Normally, the First Responders will remain in the area and available while the ambulance transports the patient to one of our receiving hospitals (normally St. Michael's Hospital in

Stevens Point, WI or Riverside Medical Center in Waupaca, WI). While our ambulance is involved in the transport, the First Responders are available to respond. If another ambulance call is received while our ambulance is involved in the transport of a patient, our First Responders will respond and work with an ambulance from a neighboring community.

If needed, one of the First Responders will “join” the two-person ambulance crew at the scene and remain with the ambulance through the entire treatment and transport process. This allows for two personnel to care for the patient during the transport to the hospital while a third drives the ambulance.

On other emergency scenes, the First Responders will provide patient care as needed, support operations, or provide care and support for fire/rescue personnel. First Responders are on call for 12 hours shifts, using either a department vehicle or their personal vehicle. During the 12 hour shift, the on-call First Responders must stay within the response area and be available to respond.

#### 6. Amherst Fire Department Fire Station and Equipment

The Fire Station has a NFPA compliant breathing air compressor and fill station. In 2004 a washer extractor was added and up-dating of the interior by painting and constructing workstations in the offices took place. A new marquee to identify our fire station was also added.

In 2005 a Plymovent Vehicle Exhaust system was added to the truck room for better air quality. A new training room and storage room to accommodate our growing numbers of members was added. The AFD purchased an additional acre of land adjacent to station and now includes all of the land on the north east corner of Fair Ground Road and Packer Avenue. This purchase gives the Fire District access to two streets and allows us better access to our entire property. The AFD is constantly working to meet the changing needs of the fire district.

The following is a list of equipment operated by the Amherst Fire Department. Each vehicle listed provides its primary assignment and the special equipment used with it. All of the equipment is stored at the Amherst Fire Station at 4585 Fairgrounds Road.

All engines are equipped with: 2-1 3/4" attack lines (both preconnected), 2-2 1/2" attack lines (1 preconnected), 5" LDH supply hose, various hose fittings, positive and negative pressure ventilation fans, chain saw or "K12" saw, utility ropes, salvage covers and equipment, self contained breathing apparatus, hand held radios for all crew members, "Streamlite" flashlights, Class B foam, eductors, and nozzles, electrical generators and lights, chimney fire equipment, fire extinguishers, and hand tools.

- Engine 10 – Is a 2003 Pierce 1250 GPM pumper with 61' "Skyboom" aerial. It is not due for replacement until about 2028.
  - Primary assignment: 1st out engine
  - Special equipment: Aerial master stream, On board Class A foam system, Thermal Imaging camera, Gas detector, Cribbing, High angle rescue ropes and harnesses
- Tanker 15 - 2000 Freightliner/Monroe 2000 gallon tanker It is not due for replacement until about 2025
  - Primary assignment: 1st out tanker
  - Special equipment: 3000 gallon "portable drop tank", 2-290 GPM portable pumps

- Tanker 17 - 1993 Ford/Monroe 3000 gallon tanker It is not due for replacement until about 2018
  - Primary assignment: 2nd out tanker
  - Special equipment: 3000 gallon "portable drop tank", 2000 gallon "portable drop tank", 500 GPM portable pump, 6" "Jet Siphon"
- Rescue 1 - 1995 GMC 4x4/Stahl It is not due for replacement until about 2020
  - Primary assignment: 1st out on rescue calls
  - Special Equipment: Hurst spreader, cutter, ram, and "Maverick tool", Ice/Cold water rescue equipment, Rescue rope and Stokes basket, Cribbing and stabilizing equipment, Portable generator, Rescue hand tools, High-pressure air bag set, EMS crash pack and defibrillator, "B" spill suits, Spill containment equipment-booms, pads and patching
- Brush 1 - 1985 Ford F350. It will be replaced as needed
  - Primary assignment: 1st out brush, grass, and forest
  - Special equipment: 250-gallon water tank and pump, Pre connected 1" and 1 ½" attack lines, "Back pack water cans", Wildfire hand tools
- Rescue 2 - Ford F-350 and trailer It is not due for replacement until about 2025
  - Primary assignment: Technical and special rescue
  - Secondary assignment: Department utility vehicle Special equipment: Technical and special rescue equipment Ropes, harnesses, and rigging equipment Hand tools Power tools Air tools Support struts Lumber (for blocking, bracing, and shoring)
- Utility Off Road Vehicle - 2012 Kubota It will be replaced as needed
  - Primary assignment: Off road rescue, EMS, fire attack, personnel and equipment movement.
  - Special Equipment: Stokers Basket, EMS Trauma Kit and AED, 50 gallon water tank. Custom body and Legend Air Suspension <http://legendsuspensions.com/>
- 58 A1 - 2003 International/MedTech Ambulance. It will be replaced as needed.
  - Primary assignment: All EMS calls
  - Special equipment: Fully equipped Advanced Life Support ambulance EMS trauma, medical, and pediatric crash packs Long boards, scoop stretcher, and stair chair Full splinting sets 12 lead cardiac monitor Onboard and portable oxygen Onboard and portable suction Onboard blanket and IV warmer On-dash and portable GPS
- EMS Squad 1 - Chevrolet Blazer It is not due for replacement until about 2015
  - Primary assignment: 1st out on all Emergency Medical calls
  - Special Equipment: EMS crash pack and defibrillator Oxygen and airway aids (including "combitubes") Powered airway suction EMT Med pack Pediatric care pack Long board & "C" collars Full splint set GPS

Water for the vehicles is usually pumped from the water hydrants located in the Village of Amherst. Additional water is available from four irrigation wells: 2 in the Town of Lanark and 2 in the Town of Amherst. In addition, there are a number of dry hydrants across the area. The District also has mutual aid agreements with other fire districts in Portage County to utilize their water resources, equipment and manpower if needed.

## C. Schools

The Town of Amherst is served by two School Districts (Map 4.2).

### 1. Tomorrow River School District

The Tomorrow River School District is approximately 100 square miles in size, and includes the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction and Nelsonville, along with part of the Towns of Amherst, Buena Vista, Lanark, Stockton, and New Hope. The entire student population, Pre-kindergarten through 12, is educated on one site, within a 193,627 sq. ft. interconnected structure in the Village of Amherst. The Tomorrow River School District employs approximately 38 teachers, 10 support staff and 4 administrators servicing 900 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12 according to the school district website staff directory. The school is governed by a 5 member school board elected to three year terms.

The original high school building constructed in 1922 was 11,000 square feet in size. Additions to the school have included:

- A 7,500 square foot shop building added during the 1940's;
- A new 14,300 square foot band building in 1953;
- A 12,075 square foot elementary school addition in 1978;
- A 16,000 square foot elementary school addition in 1988. The area between the high school and elementary buildings has gradually been utilized for expansion, so that both buildings are now under one roof.
- In 2012, an \$8.5 million school expansion referendum passed for the construction of a new cafeteria and food service area. It will add five classrooms and address middle school gym locker issues of space and accessibility. A new bus loop and fire lane will be built on the west side of the building along with roadway improvements up to George Street. Funds will also be set aside to help acquire adjacent property to the south for future expansions. The gymnasium will get a new HVAC system and other fixtures and equipment will be updated.

The classroom additions will add 12,316 square feet to the school and the cafeteria expansion will add 19,311 square feet. The school structure will be approximately 193,627 square feet in size after the recent expansion is complete.

### 2. Iola-Scandinavia School District

The Iola-Scandinavia School District serves approximately 820 K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in two facilities located in the Village of Iola, in Waupaca County.

The elementary school, which houses the district administrator, administers K-6<sup>th</sup> grade and special needs students. The middle and high school serves 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders. The staff of the school district is made up of 75 teachers 8 teachers aids, 23 support staff, and 6 administrators.

### 3. University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point (UWSP)

UWSP is home to four colleges (fine arts and communication, letters and science, natural resources and professional studies) and enrolls approximately 9,500 students. Its academic programs offer 128 majors and minors plus 13 graduate programs.

The 400 acre main campus includes seven 15 academic and administrative buildings including Old Main, UWSP's administrative building, the University Centers and 13

residence halls housing over 3,500 students. North campus includes Schmeeckle Reserve, a 280-acre nature area with a 24-acre lake, nature center and trails that are part of the Portage County 26-mile Green Circle Trail. The Stevens Point campus is part of the University of Wisconsin System that includes 13 four-year campuses, 13 two-year centers and the University of Wisconsin-Extension. The University of Wisconsin system represents one of the finest educational institutions in the world. Access to information and research on virtually any topic is available on the internet.

#### 4. Mid-State Technical College

Mid-State Technical College (MSTC) is one of 16 publicly supported colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System. The Wisconsin Bluebook states that there were Approximately 11,055 full and part-time students enrolled during 2009 and 2010. MSTC offers technical training in nearly 44 programs by granting one- and two-year technical diplomas and two-year associate degrees in four areas: Business and Information Technology, Service and Health, General Education, and Technical and Industrial certificates. The Mid-State Technical College District includes full-service campuses in Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids; a center in Adams; and several outreach sites.

In addition to these facilities in Stevens Point are: Fox Valley Technical College, located in Waupaca, and UW- Marathon County (2 year college) and North Central Technical College, located in Wausau.

##### Fox Valley Technical College (Waupaca Regional Center)

The Waupaca Regional Center provides credit courses that can be applied to associate degree, technical diploma programs or certificates. Numerous non-credit courses are offered for continuing education as well as for self-enrichment.

The Waupaca Regional Center provides focused training for Business Technology and Emergency Medical Service.

Detailed information on the achievement scores by school for each district can be found at ([http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov/rc\\_districts](http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov/rc_districts)).

#### D. Parks and Recreation

There are no Town parks in the Town of Amherst. However, there are 2 parks that are owned and maintained by Portage County. Lake Emily Park is a 143-acre park located on the northern and eastern portions of Lake Emily. It features swimming, picnicking, fishing, camping and motor boating, with utilities, enclosed shelters, two playgrounds, a fishing pier and swimming raft including 51 camping sites and the new south campground has 15 campsites. The park is also available for passive day use activities.

The other County Park is Cate Park, a 9-acre undeveloped park located on the eastern shore of the Amherst Mill Pond. The main activities at this facility include fishing and picnicking with access provided to the 48 acre water body (Map 4.2). The park also provides access to the State bicycle and pedestrian trail system at Kale park. There is a place to park vehicles and easy access to the trails.

A number of boat launches within the Town are available to provide access to various water bodies. Portage County owns an unimproved boat launch on the south side of Lake Meyers on west Lake Meyers Road, an unimproved boat launch at Cate Park, north of the Village of

Amherst, and an improved boat launch on the east side of Lake Emily. There is also access to Ebert Lake through an unimproved boat launch at Edgewater Drive and Lime Lake Road. Ebert Lake is the only lake in the County that does not have any Eurasian Water Milfoil. Entrance to the lake is through crick that feeds the lake.

In addition to the named locations of lake access, the Town sports several more unimproved primitive access boat launches throughout the Town. These may span the range from gravel launch site for small fishing boats, to a primitive track through grass and woods to the water's edge. Parking at these locations is limited.

The County Fairgrounds, owned and managed by the non-profit Portage County Fair Association, is a 32-acre facility located between U.S. Highway 10 and Western way on Packer Avenue, west of the Village of Amherst in the Town of Amherst. It is currently a car racing track utilizing the dirt surface and is about .28 miles in circumference. It contains viewing stands, stables, and exhibition buildings. In addition to hosting the yearly fair, the fairgrounds are the site for the Little Britches Rodeo, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July activities and fireworks, flea markets, and assorted other activities. The buildings can be rented for other purposes including boat storage during the winter. In May of 2013 the Amherst Fairgrounds were approved through the Board of Adjustment to allow weekly auto racing.

More information regarding hiking and bicycling facilities in the Town can be found in the Transportation element of this plan.

#### E. Cemeteries

There are four cemeteries in the Town of Amherst that will adequately serve the residents through the time frame of this plan. They are located as follows:

- LOWER AMHERST CEMETERY, Section 27, near the intersection of Buchholz Road and U.S. Highway 10. This 3.5 acre cemetery is not affiliated with a church; it is operated and funded by a corporation with ties to the Fleming family. The corporation would like to procure the property on which the old Fleming School sat at some point in the future.
- BICKEL CEMETERY, Section 20, Amherst Township, Portage County, WI on County Road B, 1 mile west of Highway 10. This small but still active cemetery is owned and operated by St. Paul's Lutheran Church in the Village of Amherst.
- OAK GROVE CEMETERY, Section 22, Amherst Township, Portage County, WI on County B, ½ mile east of Amherst. This active cemetery is owned and maintained by Peace Lutheran Church, Village of Amherst.
- PORTAGE COUNTY POOR FARM CEMETERY, Section 08, Amherst Township, Portage County, WI on Lake Drive, just north of Hwy 10. This is an inactive cemetery that was once part of the Portage County Poor farm. Residents indicate that more bodies were buried in this area but the graves are unmarked. The Town would welcome a historian to further research this information in the future.

#### F. Health Care Facilities

There are no health care facilities located in the Town of Amherst. The closest facility is the Amherst Family Medical Center located near the center of the Town in the Village of Amherst. This clinic, associated with Ministry Medical Group Health Care, provides primary care services

for patients in the surrounding area. Normal business hours for this facility are 8:00a – 5:00p Monday through Friday.

The Village of Amherst also has the Roberts and Associates physical therapy facility. This facility treats for manual physical therapy, worker’s compensation, aquatic therapy, trigger point dry needling, and lower back pain.

The next closest facilities are in the cities of Stevens Point, Iola and Waupaca, each approximately 12 miles on either side of Amherst.

Marshfield Hospital has a clinic at the northeast intersection of U.S. Interstate 39 and State Highway 66. An Aspirus Health Clinic is operating at the northeast corner of U.S. Interstate 39 and County Highway HH.

Major hospitals utilized by residents include Riverside Hospital in Waupaca, Ministry-St. Michaels Hospital in Stevens Point, St. Joseph’s Hospital in Marshfield, and Riverview Hospital in Wisconsin Rapids. Other regional hospitals are found in Wausau and the Fox Valley.

#### G. Child Care Facilities

There are no licensed day care facilities in the Town of Amherst. However, there are several licensed facilities located in the Village of Amherst, and one licensed facility in the Village of Amherst Junction.

There are 2 different categories of state licensed child care, determined by the number of children in care:

- Licensed **Family** Child Care Centers provide care for up to 8 children. This care is usually in the provider’s home, but it is not required to be located in a residence.

There are no licensed Family Child Care Centers in the Town of Amherst, Village of Nelsonville, or Amherst Junction.

- Licensed **Group** Child Care Centers provide care for 9 or more children. These centers are usually located somewhere other than a residence and may be small or large in size.

The village of Amherst has two Licensed Group Child Care Centers:

1. Amhersts Own Child Care Inc at 235 Lincoln St, Amherst, Wi 54406. They have a State of Wisconsin Youngstar rating of 3 stars.
2. Sarahs Family Day Care, 202 High St, Amherst, Wi 54406. They have a State of Wisconsin Youngstar rating of 3 stars.

The Licensed Group Child Care Center is located south of the Town of Amherst in the Town of Lanark. It is included because it is located near the Town of Amherst:

1. Little Angels Daycare, 9387 County Road D, Amherst, Wi 54406, They have a State of Wisconsin Youngstar rating of 3 stars.

Licensed child care facilities can be found by searching the following WI, government website. You can search by location, child care name, type of child care, or by the youngstar quality. This site will also provide a rating by 5 stars of the quality of the daycare facilities and the types of violations found at the facility:

<http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx>

For a complete list of providers, contact the Regional Division of Children and Referral of Central Wisconsin at: 210 E. Jackson Street, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494, Phone: (715) 423-4114.

#### H. Libraries

Although there is no library in the Town of Amherst, residents still have access to several library resources close by. The Lettie W. Jensen Public Library located at 278 North Main Street, in the Village of Amherst and is a member of the South Central Library System. The Library offers internet access, various computers programs, interlibrary loan, large-print books, audio books, videos, magazines, a local history room, a copy machine, story time kits, a book discussion group, and a weekly preschool story hour.

The Portage County Library System has branches throughout the County. The Charles M. White library, affiliated with the Portage County Library system, is located on Main Street in downtown Stevens Point, approximately 15 miles from the Town of Amherst. There is also another branch in the Village of Plover, located at 2151 Roosevelt Drive, approximately 10 miles from the center of Amherst. Hours for the Plover branch can be obtained by calling 715-341-4007. More detailed information about the Portage County Public Library can be obtained via the internet at: <http://library.uwsp.edu/pcl/> or by calling the library system at: 1-800-264-0766.

#### I. Aging and Disability Resource Center

The Aging and Disability Resource Center, located in the Lincoln Center at 1519 Water Street in Stevens Point, provides a delivered meal program to Portage County Residents who have difficulty preparing meals, skip meals, have difficulty leaving home, or are at risk due to living alone or need a regular check for safety purposes.

The meals provide 1/3 of an adult's daily nutritional requirement, improve health, provide connections to other supportive services, and offer friendship. Most special dietary requirements can be met through the program. Deliveries are made between 10:30 and 12:30 Monday through Friday with frozen meals being delivered for non-delivery days. Residents who will not be home for deliveries are asked to call ahead and tell the Center they will not be present. A small donation to cover meals is requested but not required.

### **Section 4.4 Utilities and Community Facilities Issues**

The following issues regarding utilities or community facilities were identified during the comprehensive planning process:

- As growth occurs, how will the Town provide adequate emergency services?
- How can the Town protect groundwater quality?
- How can surface waters be protected from run-off?
- What can the Town do to address safety concerns on and around Lake Emily?
- How can the Town enforce ordinances pertaining to recreational usage, especially on Lake Emily?
- How can the Town limit the proliferation of communication towers?
- What technologies or systems are available to replace failing septic systems?
- How can the Town monitor groundwater quality around existing or closed landfills?

## **Section 4.5 Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Ensure a range of services to meet present and future needs.

Objective 1.1: Residents are provided an adequate level of emergency services.

Policies:

1. Ask the Portage County Sheriff's Department for crash and injury data on a regular basis. Use this information to address issues of road safety.
2. Continue to address and strengthen intergovernmental agreements with the Portage County emergency dispatch and adjoining municipalities to maintain efficient emergency medical response, police and fire protection services.

Objective 1.2: The Town will continue to review proposals for new communication towers.

Policy: Continue the current method of reviewing the proposed communications tower. Provide a recommendation to Portage County Board of Adjustment for approval or disapproval.

**Goal 2:** Protect groundwater quality.

Objective 2.1: Encourage the use of Best Management Practices by agricultural operations to ensure a supply of potable water.

Policy: Report obvious overflows of agricultural manure to the Portage County Land Conservation Section for follow up to the event and to begin to find a method to prevent future overflow events.

Objective 2.2: Encourage the use of newer technologies to replace failing septic systems.

Policy: Maintain housing densities at a 2 acre minimum for lots not connected to sewer or water.

**Goal 3:** Protect and preserve Lake Emily Park, other parks, the trail and the fairgrounds.

Objective 3.1: Properly maintain recreation facilities throughout the Town.

Policies:

1. Work with the County Parks Department to mitigate negative impacts to Lake Emily Park.
2. Work with the County Parks Department and other organizations to monitor the usage of recreational facilities.
3. Work with the County to enforce ordinances designed to protect and preserve recreation facilities.
4. Continue to participate in the Portage County Outdoor Recreation Plan in order to take advantage of grants aimed at park updates or improvements that become available.

## **CHAPTER 5     Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element**

66.1001(2)(e) Wis. Stat.:

**Agricultural, natural and cultural resources element.** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s. 295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

### **Section 5.1     Introduction**

The agricultural, natural and cultural resources of the Town of Amherst often serve as the foundation for why people choose to live here. Substantial natural woodlands, varied and abundant wildlife, and productive farms and farmland all come together to create a unique Wisconsin landscape.

The residents of the Town of Amherst recognize the value of their unique landscape and understand that it supports and sustains a way of life of which they are proud. For those who choose to farm the land here, the community supports their efforts and works to minimize barriers that impede this industry. The residents also understand that the identification and protection of the historical and cultural resources of the community will help sustain a rich quality of life that is enjoyed by all who settle here.

### **Section 5.2     Agricultural Resources**

#### **A. Agricultural Potential Based on Land Evaluation Site Assessment Rating (LE-SA)**

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) is a tool that can be helpful in assisting Town leaders to identify land that has the highest value for agricultural use within the community. The LESA system is a point-based approach that can be used for rating the relative value of agricultural land resources. It does so by defining and measuring two separate sets of factors. The first set, **Land Evaluation**, includes factors that measure the inherent soil-based qualities of land as they relate to agricultural suitability. The second set, **Site Assessment**, includes factors that are intended to measure social, economic, and geographic attributes that also contribute to the overall value of agricultural land.

A Land Evaluation (LE) rating was developed for use across all of Portage County. Three soil property indexes, all published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), were combined to produce the LE rating: prime farmland classification, land capability class – natural condition, and productivity index. LE ratings reflect the productivity potential, as well as the economic and environmental costs of producing a crop. Possible LE ratings range from 0 to 100, with **higher numbers meaning greater value for agriculture**. Many physical and chemical soil properties are considered in the LE rating, either directly or indirectly, including soil texture and rock fragments, slope, wetness and flooding, soil erodibility, climate, available water capacity, pH (alkalinity versus acidity), and permeability.

A Site Assessment (SA) rating was also developed for the Town of Amherst. The site assessment factors are further evaluated in the Land Use element of this plan. As with the LE rating, SA ratings range from 0 to 100, with higher numbers meaning greater value for agriculture. The LE

and SA scores are combined to yield a score for each two-acre block of land within the Town ranging between 0 and 200 points, with a score of 200 representing lands that are of the highest value for agriculture (excluding specialty crops such as cranberries). Communities will then determine an appropriate threshold for ranking lands recommended for protection (i.e. areas with a score higher than 150 and greater than 40 contiguous acres in size). Weighting factors can be changed by each community to reflect its own priorities. See Appendix D for a complete explanation of this system.

The Town of Amherst has decided to use a modified LESA model as an advisory tool to help identify areas in the community that should remain in agricultural use.

#### B. Highly Productive Agricultural Soils

Highly productive agricultural soils in the Town of Amherst have been identified, with the assistance of the County Conservationist, based on highest productivity and lowest degree of limitations for farming (Map 5.1 Highly Productive Agricultural Soils). Slopes greater than 6% were excluded from the “highly productive” designation (due to severe hazard for water or wind erosion), along with stony, rough, and eroded sites. Highly productive soils in Amherst include:

- Billett sandy loam, 0-2% slopes
- Richford loamy sand, 0-2% slope
- Richford loamy sand, 2-6% slope
- Rosholt loam, 2-6% slope
- Wyocena sandy loam, 2-6% slope
- Oesterle sandy loam

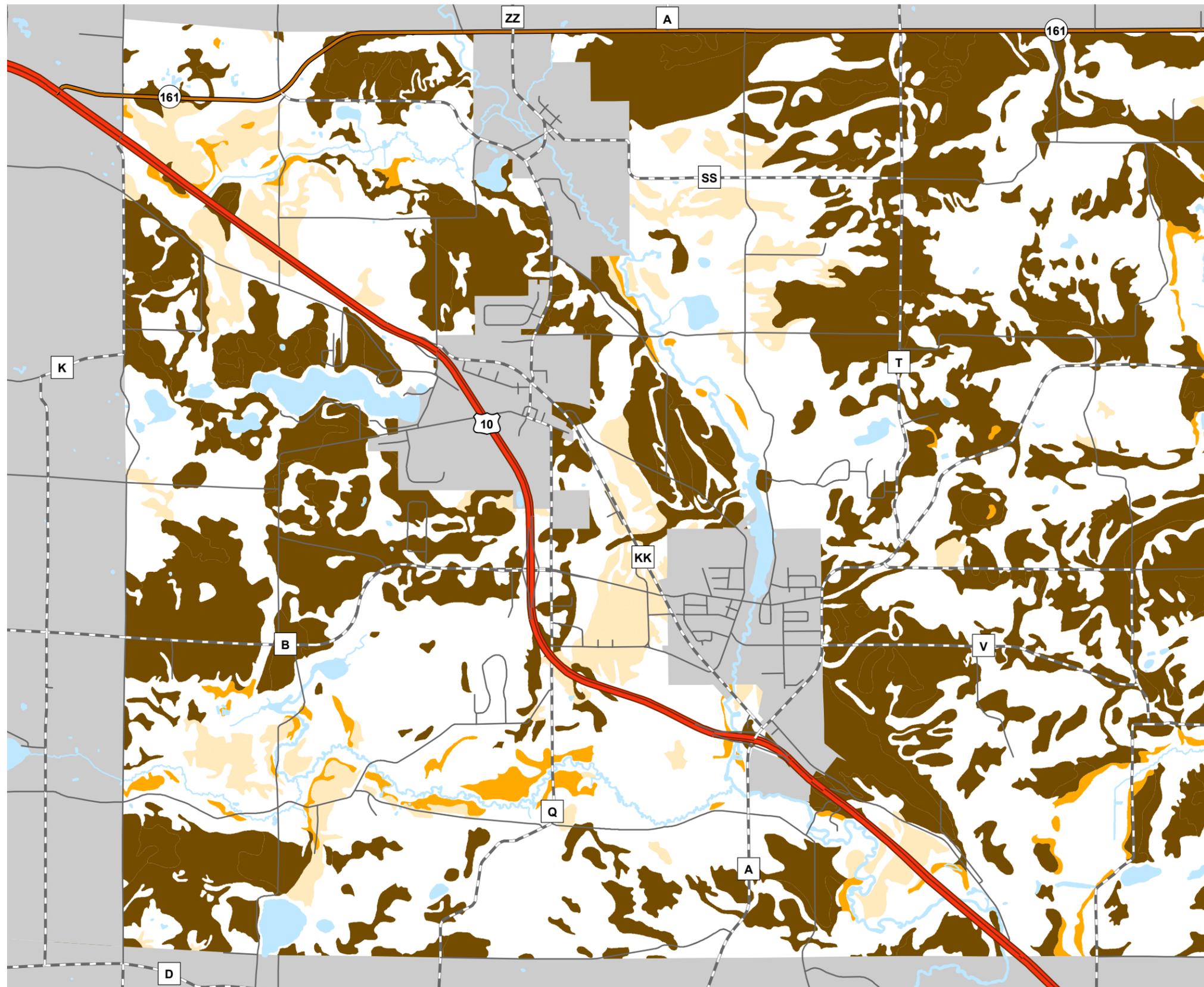
#### C. Farming Systems, Demographics, and Land Tenure

The agricultural landscape of the Town of Amherst can best be described as a “coming together” of farming systems. The Town is located within the two major farm regions in Wisconsin. First, and most prominent, is the dairy region. In Wisconsin, dairying is most concentrated in a belt that begins near Hudson (St. Croix County), heads east to Wausau and Green Bay (Brown County), then turns southwest through Fond du Lac, Madison and ends near Dubuque (Iowa County). Wisconsin Department of Agriculture 2012 permit information listed fifteen (15) active farms operating in the Town of Amherst. To the north in New Hope, there were eight (8) such farms; to the south in Lanark, there were six (6); and to the west in Stockton, there were eighteen (18).

The second farming region that includes Amherst is that of fresh vegetable production. The irrigated soils of the “Golden Sands” region of Wisconsin lay between Amherst and the Stevens Point area. Amherst is on the eastern edge of this large irrigated plain and there are a number of producers who have scattered vegetable operations within the Town. The presence of pivot irrigation rigs is one key indicator of vegetable production. There were approximately 7 irrigation pivots in Amherst based on 2000 aerial photo interpretation.

The amount of land dedicated to agricultural production can and often does change from one year to the next. In 2000, the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department analyzed aerial photography of Amherst to identify active farmland within the Town. The land in farms was broken down by: presence of irrigation, 1,033 acres; use for row crops or hay, 9,632 acres; and permanent pasture, 491 acres. Total agricultural acres identified for 2000 were 11,847, which represents approximately 48% of the Towns land area. An aerial photography analysis of this kind has not been completed by the Planning and Zoning Department since 2000.

# Map 5.1 Productive Agricultural Soils



### Soil Class

**Prime**

- Billett Sandy Loam, 0-2% Slopes
- Mecan Loamy Sand, 2-6% Slopes
- Mecan Sandy Loam, 2-6% Slopes
- Rosholt Loam, 2-6% Slopes
- Rosholt Loam, Loamy Substratum, 0-2% Slopes
- Wycocena Sandy Loam, 2-6% Slopes

**Prime Where Drained**

- Oesterle Sandy Loam
- Oesterle Loam, Silty Subsoil Variant

**Prime Where Irrigated**

- Richford Loamy Sand, 0-2% Slopes
- Richford Loamy Sand, 2-6% Slopes



Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service (1998)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan



Portage County  
Planning & Zoning  
1462 Strongs Ave.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481



There were 90 persons employed in an agriculturally-related field in the Town of Amherst in 2010. This represented 12 % of employment for the Town (Figure 1.3, Issues and Opportunities element), and a 3.2 % increase from 2000. Although this is down substantially from the 1980 figure of 138 persons (27.3%), Amherst still has a higher percentage of agriculture-related employment in 2010 when compared to the Portage County Town average (6.0%). Decreasing farm employment is not a unique trend by any means. The number of farms is decreasing, while acreage and animal units per farm are up. Farm consolidation is a common practice in this industry.

#### D. Farm Economy and Infrastructure

Because of the lack of farm economy information available at the town level, a detailed discussion of the farm economy at the town level is not practical. Please see the complete discussion of the Portage County farm economy in the Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resource element of the Portage County Comprehensive Plan.

#### E. Other Local Influences on Agriculture

Over the past few years, the Amherst area has seen an increase in non-farm related development. With the expansion of USH 10 to a four lane highway between Appleton and Stevens Point, there will be even greater development pressure in the coming years. Increased interest in Amherst can bring more homes and other urban-type developments onto the agricultural landscape, leading to increased conflict between residential and agricultural lifestyles. Increased demand for residential uses can also increase the sale price per acre of land beyond the point of being economically viable for purchase as farmland. The expansion of the USH 10 facility (bypass around the Village of Amherst), in addition to being constructed through highly productive soils, has been identified by the Plan Commission as the single most influential threat against the preservation of agricultural lands.

#### F. Legislative Influences on Agriculture

##### 1. Wisconsin Right-to-Farm Law (State Statute 823.08)

Dating back to the early 1980's, the State of Wisconsin saw the need to protect farmers from lawsuits pertaining to everyday operations and created State Statute 823.08, commonly referred to as the "Right-to-Farm" law. The Right-to-Farm law was substantially revised in 1995 in an effort to thwart lawsuits against farmers dealing with standard farming operations and consequences such as odor, noise, dust, flies and slow-moving vehicles. As part of the law, the Legislature notes that local units of government are in the best position to handle possible farm and non-farm conflicts through zoning and other land use controls.

##### 2. Wisconsin Act 377 – Implements of Husbandry (2014)

As the size of modern agricultural equipment continues to grow, so has the misconception within the agricultural community that implements of husbandry are exempt from State size and weight regulations. In short, Act 377 clarifies the definition of implements of husbandry, defines the new term "agricultural commercial vehicles," increases weight limitations (essentially 15%) for implements of husbandry and agricultural commercial motor vehicles (Ag-CMV), and details a new 'no-fee permit' that can be issued by Department of Transportation and local units of government.

Through Act 377, implements of husbandry are defined as – A self-propelled or towed vehicle that is manufactured, designed, or reconstructed to be used and that is exclusively used in the conduct of agricultural operations. These include, but are not limited to, farm tractors; self-propelled combines, forage harvesters, and pesticide or fertilizer equipment. Developing a definition Ag-CMV allows these vehicles to comply with federal regulations while still receiving the same benefits of exclusive agricultural use. An Ag-CMV refers to a commercial vehicle to which all of the following apply: 1) the vehicle is substantially designed for agricultural use, 2) the vehicle is designed for highway use and is manufactured for Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard Certification, 3) the vehicle is used exclusively for agricultural operations, and 4) the vehicle directly engages in harvesting farm products, applying fertilizer, spray or seeds to a farm field or distributes feed to livestock.

## G. Agricultural Programs

A number of programs are available to agricultural landowners to help achieve desired outcomes ranging from enhancing wildlife habitat to minimizing soil erosion. The following is a partial list obtained from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). For more information about these and other programs contact the local NRCS office at 715-346-1325 or the Farm Service Agency at 715-346-1313.

### 1. Wis. Working Lands Initiative Program

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative can be found primarily in Chapter 91 of the Wis. State Statutes. The main components include: Expand and modernize the state's existing farmland preservation program; establish agricultural enterprise areas (AEAs); develop a purchase of agricultural conservation easement matching grant program (PACE). Although the PACE program remains on the books, it has remained unfunded since 2010.

### 2. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program, administered through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, one can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland. Participants enroll in CRP for 10 to 15 years.

### 3. Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. EQIP may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of eligible conservation practices. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a farmer to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management.

### 4. Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore wetlands that have been drained for agriculture. Landowners who choose to

participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and NRCS develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10- year duration.

#### 5. Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is a voluntary program for people who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost sharing to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. Landowners agree to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to implement the wildlife habitat restoration practices.

### **Section 5.3 Agricultural Issues**

- For the 1995 Land Use Plan, much of the land that logically could be put into A1 zoning was, if landowners agreed. How can land be classified by its suitability for agriculture, instead of merely enrolling land in farm programs to receive tax credits?
- Changes in the economics of agriculture have put great pressures on the need to produce income from the sale of land for non-agricultural purposes. To what extent will the Town place a value on protection of productive agricultural lands?
- The Amherst area development potential is pressuring the agricultural potential. How will the increased demands for residential use be weighed against the loss of productive farmlands?
- To what extent should the Town encourage the exploration and development of niche agricultural markets?
- How will the Town address the consequences and possible impacts on the environment from large agricultural operations (concentrated animals, etc)?
- How can the Town increase awareness of existing farm practices to individuals choosing to move into a rural or agricultural area?
- Irrigation is a necessary practice for many farmers, but implementation can be a challenge with increased public pressure to limit groundwater usage.
- Younger generations are faced with an increasingly difficult start-up climate as today's agricultural practices carry with them enormous upfront costs.
- How does the Town deal with increasingly large agriculture equipment as it pertains to maintaining and improving Town roads?
- The expansion and/or relocation of US HWY 10 is a major threat to the preservation of highly productive agricultural lands.

### **Section 5.4 Agricultural Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Provide a reasonable degree of farmland protection for those wishing to farm.

Objective 1.1: Discourage land divisions on highly productive farmland.

Policies:

1. In some cases A1 zoning should be used to help protect productive agricultural areas.

2. In some instances, Agricultural Enterprise Areas (Working Lands Initiative) could be used to help protect productive agricultural areas.

**Goal 2:** Minimize conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.

Objective 2.1: Encourage residential and commercial development in areas least suited for agricultural purposes.

Policy: Use the LESA system to help identify productive agricultural regions.

Objective 2.2: Protect farming operations from incompatible adjacent land uses.

Policies:

1. Provide information regarding agricultural operations to individuals moving into rural areas.
2. For new subdivisions, encourage the use of recorded covenants that identify the presence of adjacent agricultural operations and the impacts they may have.
3. Encourage the use of density-based development adjacent to areas identified as productive agricultural areas and lands zoned A1, Exclusive Agriculture.
4. Recommend that new residences be set back 300 feet from areas zoned A-1 or lands identified as productive agricultural areas.
5. Vegetative or spatial buffers between intensive agricultural activities and sensitive environmental areas should be established.

## **Section 5.5 Natural Resources**

Natural resources in the Town serve as the foundation for residents' physical and economic well-being – from groundwater quality to land suitability for agricultural, residential, recreational, or commercial development. According to the results of the 2001 Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Survey, a majority of Town residents favored *managing the natural resources that support, sustain, and entertain them*.

This section will describe the existing natural resources inventory and state the issues, goals, objectives, and policies that were identified and adopted by the Town of Amherst Plan Commission and Town Board.

### A. Geomorphology

The present Portage County landscape primarily reflects the last or Wisconsin stage of the pleistocene or glacial epoch (Holt, 1965). The glacial ice transported large amounts of rock debris known as drift. The drift is called till if deposited directly by the ice, and outwash if placed by glacial meltwater.

The Town of Amherst is located in the geologic drift province. The drift province covers the eastern 1/3 of the County and is made up of a series of end moraines that represent the accumulation of ice-transported debris that piled up at the forward edge of the ice sheet. The hills and ridges are composed of a combination of silts, sands, gravels, and outwash till.

As the ice melted and the end moraines were formed, large amounts of ice-transported materials were removed by the meltwaters. This glaciofluvial (outwash) material was deposited between and in a large area to the west of the moraines. The deep deposits of the drift province, which

includes the entire Town, were formed in this way. The silt, sand, gravel, and till is well sorted and contains small amounts of silt and clay. Deeper gravel deposits are found adjacent to the end moraines. The sands are generally finer further from the moraine. The thickness of outwash deposits ranges from less than 30 feet northeast of Stevens Point to over 200 feet near the outer moraine, and averages about 100 feet.

The topography of the Town is slightly rolling and includes two moraine ridges and scattered lowland wet areas. The elevation ranges from 1,230 feet above sea level in the north and northwest part of the Town to 970 feet above sea level in the east and southeast corner (Map 5.2). Depth to bedrock throughout the Town is between 50-100 feet.

## B. Soils

Soils in the Town can be grouped into two soil associations (Map 5.3), as follows:

- Wyocena-Rosholt association: Well-drained, gently sloping to very steep soils that formed in loamy deposits and sandy glacial till or outwash sand and gravel. These soils are found in the northeastern corner of the Town and are used for crops, pasture or woodland. Wyocena soils have a moderately rapid permeability and a medium water capacity. Rosholt soils have a moderately rapid permeability and a low water capacity.
- Richford-Rosholt-Billett association: Well-drained, nearly level to gently sloping soils that formed in sandy and loamy deposits and outwash sand and gravel. These soils are found in the western and central part of the Town and are used for crops, woodland or pasture. These soils have a moderately rapid permeability and a low to medium available water capacity.

Soil testing by a certified soil tester is strongly recommended for more detailed, site specific information.

## C. Surface Water, Wetlands, and Flood Plains

The major surface water bodies that are present in the Town of Amherst are: Lake Emily, Myers Lake, Lime Lake, Mud Lake, Ell Lake, Thorn Lake, Lake Elaine, and Turtle Lake, which are scattered throughout the Town. Other surface water features running throughout the Town include the Tomorrow River and Bear Creek.

The Town of Amherst is situated in the Upper Little Wolf River and the Tomorrow-Waupaca River watersheds. A watershed can be defined as interconnected areas of land draining from surrounding ridge tops to a common point such as a lake or stream junction with a neighboring land area.

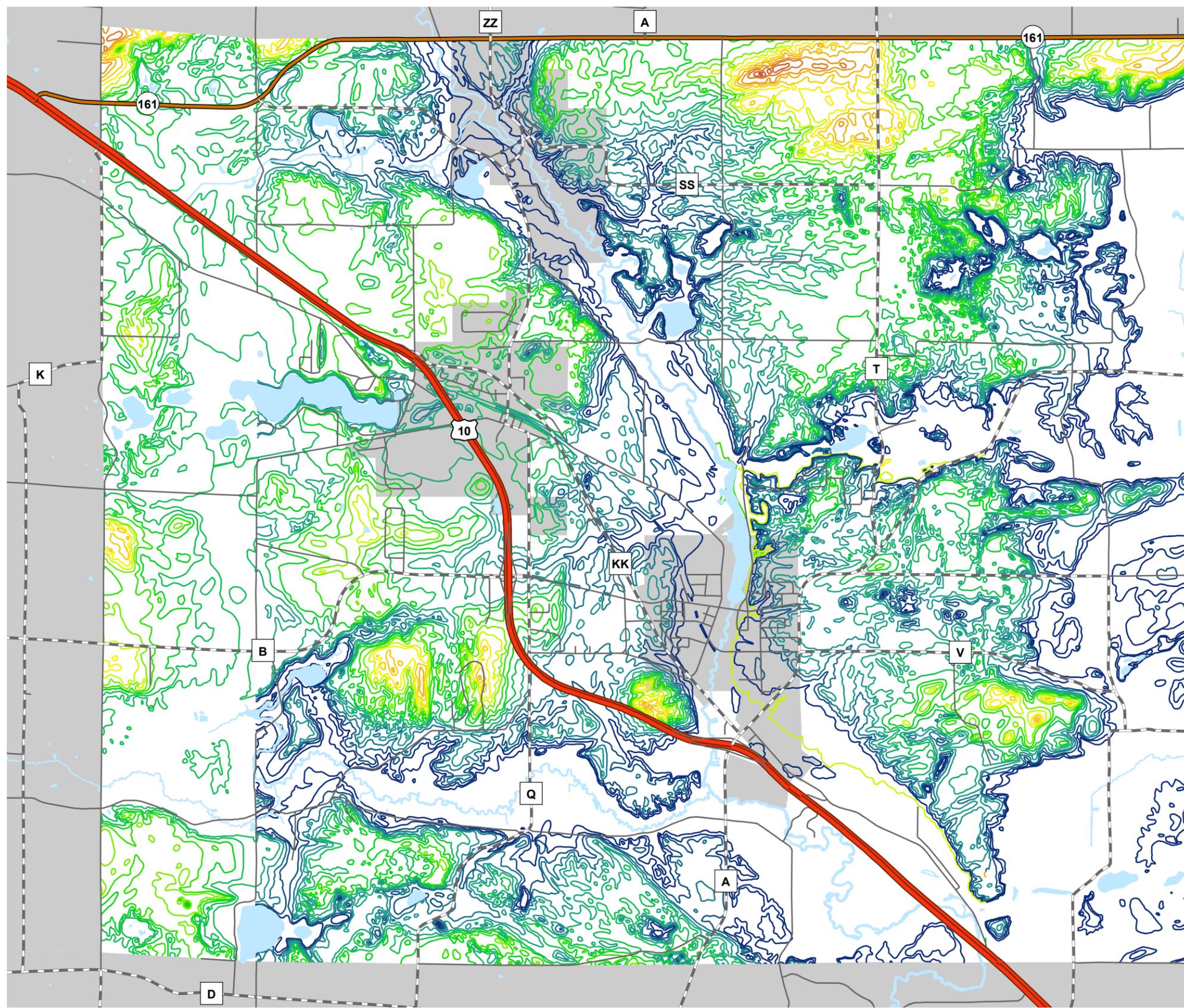
Wetlands are an important part of the watershed, as they act as a filter system for pollutants, nutrients, and sediments, along with serving as buffers for shorelands and providing essential wildlife habitat, flood control and groundwater recharge. Wetlands within the Town of Amherst are very limited (Map 5.4), but include three general types: forested, scrub or shrub, and emergent/wet meadow.

- **Forested** wetlands are the predominant type, including bogs and forested floodplain complexes that are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as, tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash, and silver maple. These wetlands are located primarily along the edges of the Tomorrow River, Bear Creek, and along the eastern edge of the Township.

- **Emergent/wet meadow**, the second most numerous type of wetland within the Town, consists of areas that may have saturated soils more often than have standing water. Vegetation includes sedges, grasses and reeds as dominant plants, but may also include blue flag iris, milkweed, sneezeweed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster. These types of wetlands are primarily found along the edges of the Tomorrow River, Bear Creek, Mud Lake, Lime Lake, and along the eastern edge of the town.
- **Scrub/shrub** wetlands are the third most abundant type. These wetlands, which include bogs and alder thickets, are characterized by wood shrubs and small trees such as tag aster, bog birch, willow and dogwood. These are also found primarily along the water bodies in the southern part of the Town, including Bear Creek and Thorn Lake.

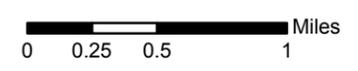
A flood plain is defined as that land which has been or may be covered by floodwater during a regional flood. The flood plain includes the floodway and flood-fringe areas. A 100-year flood is defined as a flood event having a 1% chance of reaching the 100-year flood elevation in any given year. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a flood occurring once every 100 years. A 100-year flood plain is the area adjoining a river, stream, or watercourse covered by water in the event of a 100-year flood. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps, the area along the entire length of the Tomorrow River is designated as a 100-year flood plain (Map 5.5).

# Map 5.2 Topography



### Elevation (Feet)

- 1060 - 1070
- 1071 - 1080
- 1081 - 1090
- 1091 - 1100
- 1101 - 1110
- 1111 - 1120
- 1121 - 1130
- 1131 - 1140
- 1141 - 1150
- 1151 - 1160
- 1161 - 1170
- 1171 - 1180
- 1181 - 1190
- 1191 - 1200
- 1201 - 1210
- 1211 - 1220
- 1221 - 1230



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)  
U.S. Geological Survey (1967-1971)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

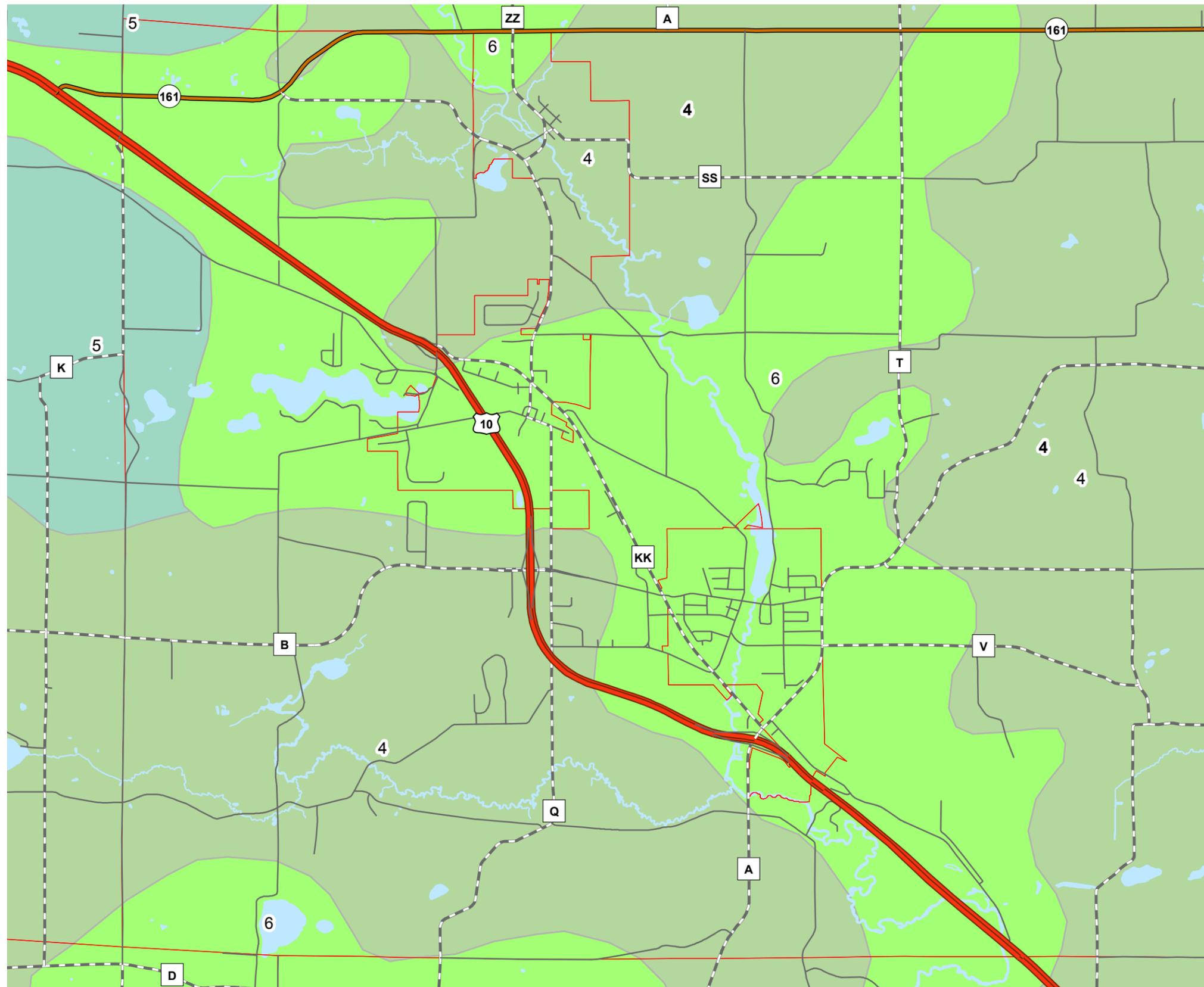
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# Map 5.3 General Soil Association



## Soil Associations

- Soils formed in sandy glacial drift**
- 4 Wyocena-Rosholt Association
  - 5 Kranski-Coloma-Mecan Association
- Soils formed mainly in outwash sand and gravel or sand**
- 6 Richford-Rosholt-Billett Association



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)  
U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service (1977)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

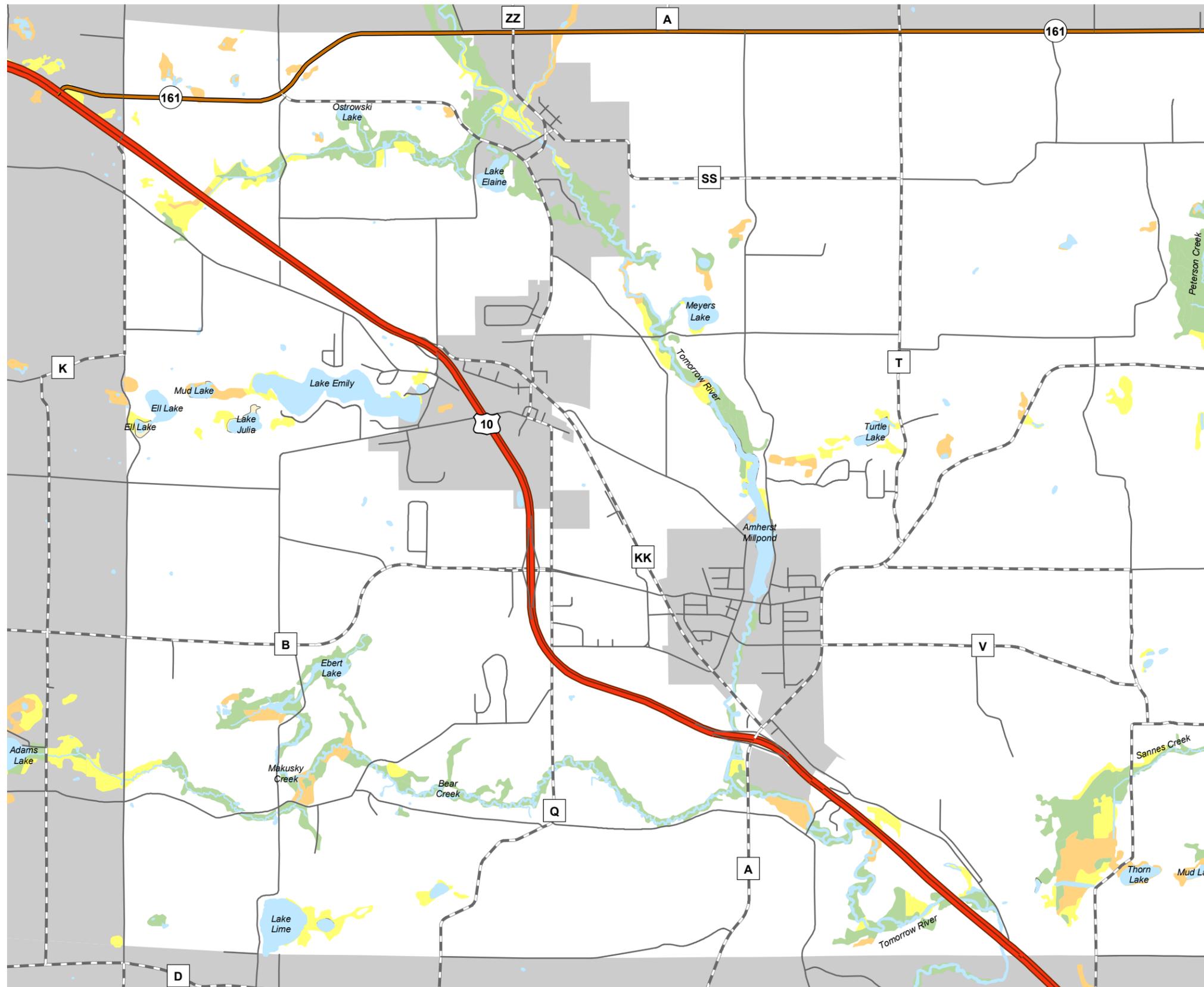
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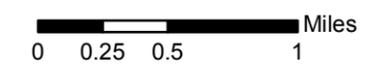
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# Map 5.4 Wetlands



- Wetland Class**
- Emergent/ Wet Meadow
  - Scrub/Shrub
  - Forested



This map is intended for general planning purposes. Site specific wetland determination should be made by the Army Corps of Engineers, the WI Dept. of Natural Resources, or those qualified to delineate wetlands.

Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)  
DNR - Wisconsin Wetland Inventory (1986)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

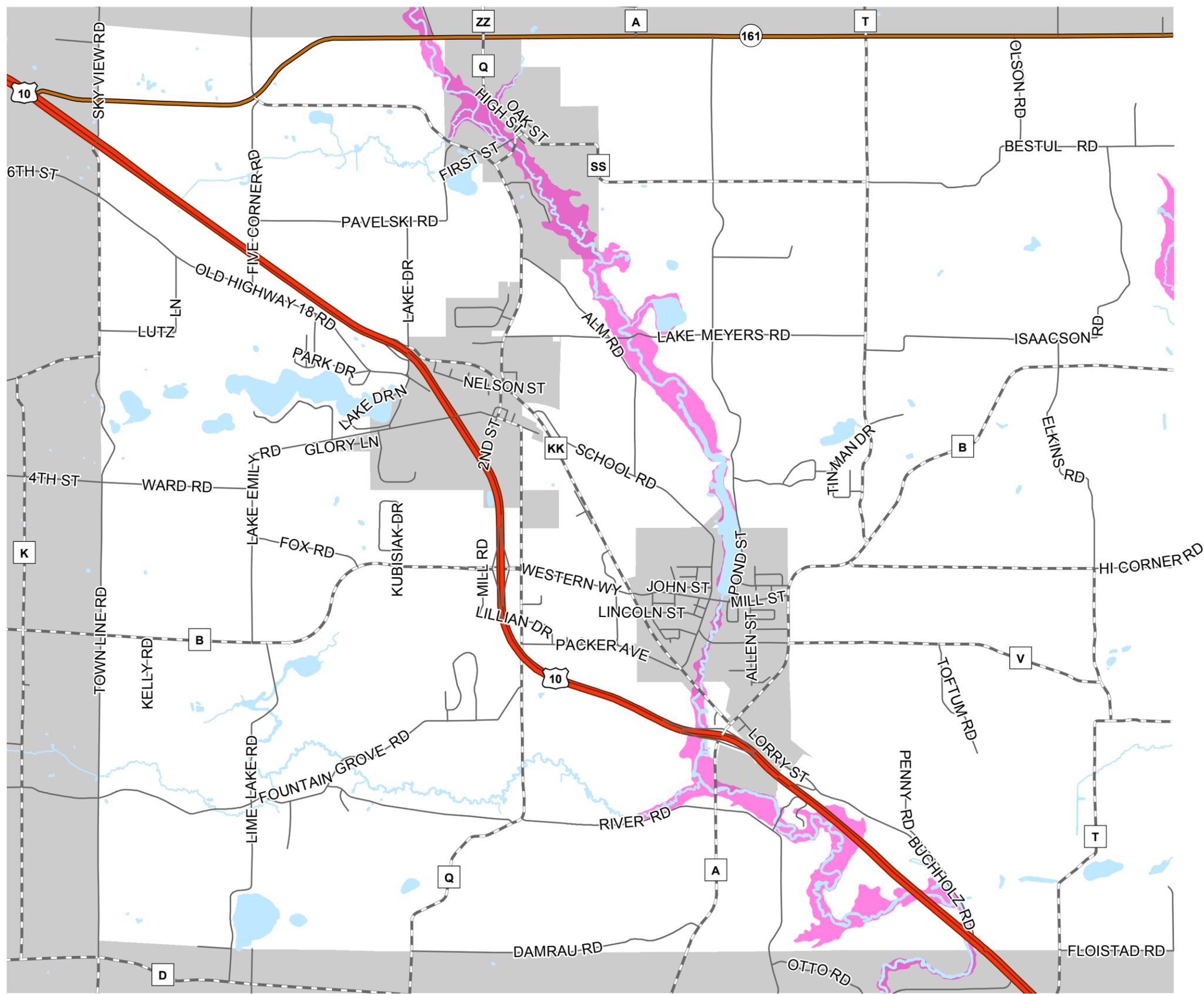
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# Map 5.5 Floodplain



100 Year Floodplain



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (2009)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

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## D. Groundwater

All Town residential water use comes from groundwater sources; therefore, protection of this resource is important. Generally, a thick unsaturated zone exists; however, given the sandy soil type, there is little second-line defense against pollutants regardless of the nature of the subsurface materials. Although some of the soils ranked moderate to good in pollution attenuation, this area of the County should be considered vulnerable overall given the sandy soil type. Depth to groundwater varies greatly throughout the Town, ranging between 20 to 100 feet.

Potential pumping yield rates for groundwater generally range from 500-1,000 gallons per minute or greater, except for the very far northeast corner of the Town, where potential pumping rates are 10-500 gallons per minute. This rate is high when compared to areas west of the Wisconsin River where rates rarely exceed 50 gallons per minute.

The Town is situated east of the County's groundwater divide and, as such, is part of a larger watershed that drains into Lake Michigan and eventually the Atlantic Ocean. Groundwater flows generally in an easterly direction throughout the Town (Map 5.6). Data collection for groundwater monitoring remains an on-going process. Knowing groundwater flow can be a helpful piece of information when determining proper siting of well and on-site waste systems. More specific information and recommendations regarding groundwater can be found in the ***Portage County Groundwater Management Plan***, adopted by the County Board, March, 2004. The Town has a representative on the County's Groundwater Citizen Advisory Committee.

### 1. Atrazine Prohibition Areas

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is researching the health effects of atrazine in water. Drinking water that contains atrazine will not cause immediate sickness or health problems (acute toxicity). However, consuming low levels of atrazine over time may cause health problems (chronic toxicity). The EPA is also concerned that atrazine may be an endocrine disruptor which can cause unintentional hormone-like activity in the body.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is responsible for protecting Wisconsin's groundwater from contamination by pesticides and fertilizers. Their authority to restrict the use of a pesticide that is contaminating groundwater at levels above health-based standards is found in the Wisconsin Groundwater Law, [Chapter 160 of the Wisconsin Statutes](#), and by department rule in [ATCP 31, Groundwater Protection Program](#).

The rules for restricting the use of atrazine and other pesticides in Wisconsin are part of [ATCP 30 - Pesticide Product Restrictions](#) and the county maps showing the location of the prohibition areas can also be found in the rule in [ATCP 30](#). Atrazine has been detected above the enforcement standard in some wells within the Town of Amherst and because of this, prohibition areas have been defined within the community (Map 5.7, Atrazine Prohibition Areas). Approximately 3,520 acres of land, found in the north central portion of the Town, are designated as a prohibition area.

## E. Wildlife Habitat and Forested Areas

When people think about wildlife, birds, fish, and mammals most likely come to mind. It is important, however, to consider all organisms that make up an ecosystem in order for that system to continue providing the maximum benefit to humans and the environment. Town residents recognize the fact that human beings play a role in protecting or restoring, as well as, degrading or destroying wildlife and its habitat. They also recognize that while it will be very difficult to

preserve all ecosystems in the Town from human encroachment or interaction, it is the desire of residents to protect wildlife habitat where practicable.

The biggest threats to wildlife are loss of habitat quality and quantity. These threats can be attributed primarily to fragmentation, invasive species, and pollution. **Fragmentation** refers to the loss of large, contiguous sections of land through subdivision into smaller parts, which can lead to an alteration and possible degradation of the native plant and animal communities on these properties. **Invasive species** (both plant and animal) tend to out-compete or prey on native species, altering the native ecosystem. **Pollution** can lead to habitat degradation, and cause birth defects and increased mortality rates in animal species. Habitat areas are important for providing food and cover for nesting, brooding, and sheltering. Farmland is one type of habitat that also provides food, as well as travel corridors between wetlands and woodlands.

Woodlands or forested lands account for 34% of the land area in Amherst (Map 5.8), while wetlands make up 6%. According to 2001 County survey data, 82% of respondents felt that an effort should be made to identify and protect woodlands, and 76% felt the same about wetlands and flood plains. Woodlands are present in the Town primarily due to an inability to sustain successful agricultural practices in those areas. Loss of these habitat types can threaten the viability of certain species.

One option open to all private landowners owning ten or more acres of woodlands is the Managed Forest Law Program (MFL). The MFL program is intended to foster timber production on private forests while promoting other benefits that forested lands provide. Participants in this program have the option to choose a 25 or 50 year contract period and pay property taxes at a reduced rate on enrolled lands. A portion of the difference in property taxes is recouped by the State at the time of a timber harvest when a yield tax is imposed based on the volume of timber removed. For more information regarding specific requirements and how to enroll in this program, contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR).

#### F. Air Quality

The following information comes from the WisDNR and the Environmental Protection Agency: A few common air pollutants are found all over the United States. These pollutants can injure health, harm the environment and cause property damage. The Environmental Protection Agency calls these pollutants **criteria air pollutants** because the agency has regulated them by first developing health-based **criteria** (science-based guidelines) as the basis for setting permissible levels. These pollutants include: ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and lead. One set of limits (**primary standard**) is designed to protect public health, including the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly; another set of limits (**secondary standard**) is intended to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility and damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings. A geographic area that meets or does better than the primary standard is called an **attainment area**; areas that don't meet the primary standard are called **nonattainment areas**.

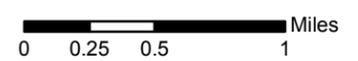
All of Portage County, including Town of Amherst, is listed as an attainment area by the DNR.

# Map 5.6 Goundwater Flow

## Groundwater Elevation (Ft)

- 980
- 990
- 1000
- 1010
- 1020
- 1030
- 1040
- 1050
- 1060
- 1070
- 1080
- 1090
- 1100
- 1110

→ Flow Direction

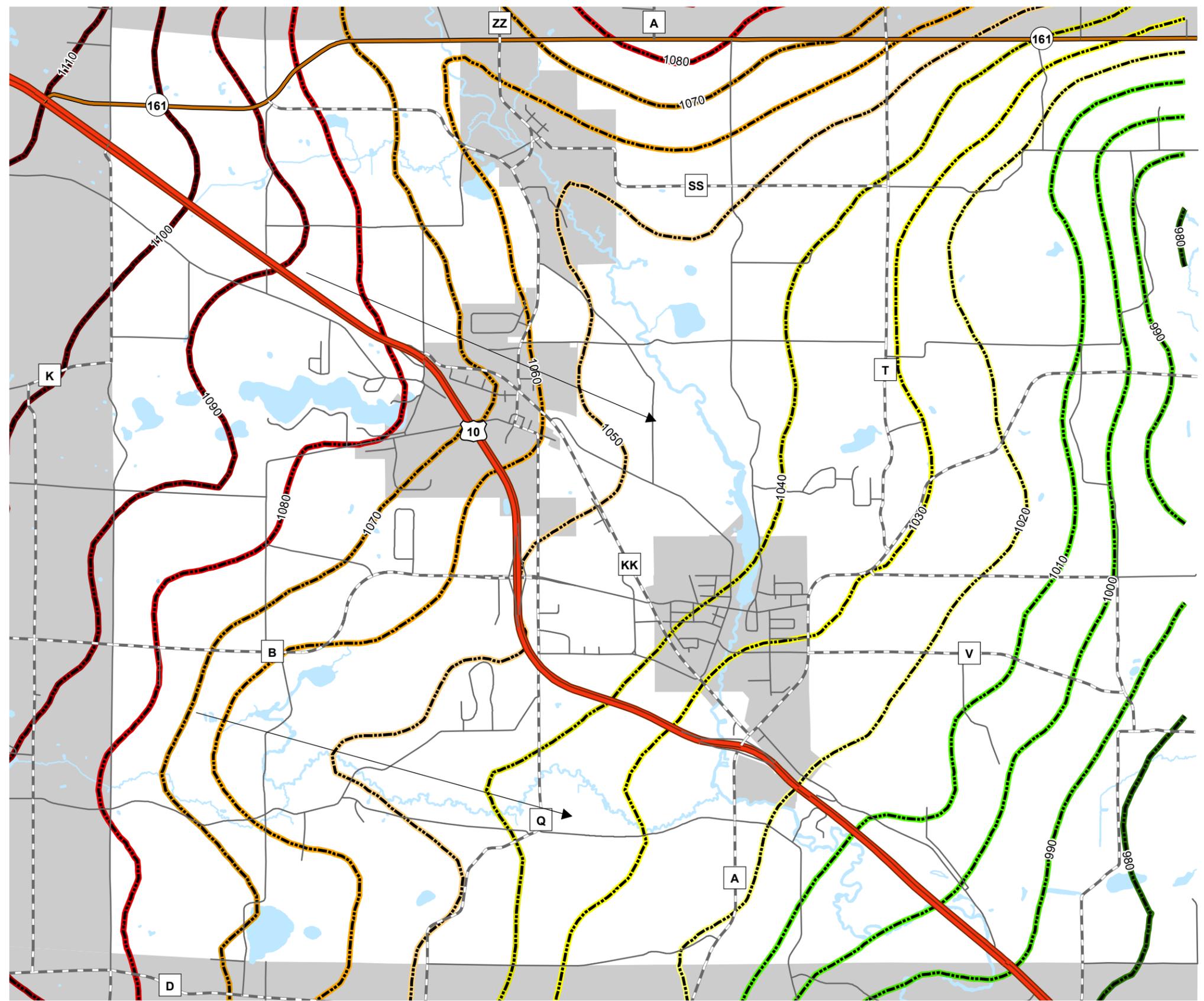


Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2004)  
Adopted: August 13, 2015

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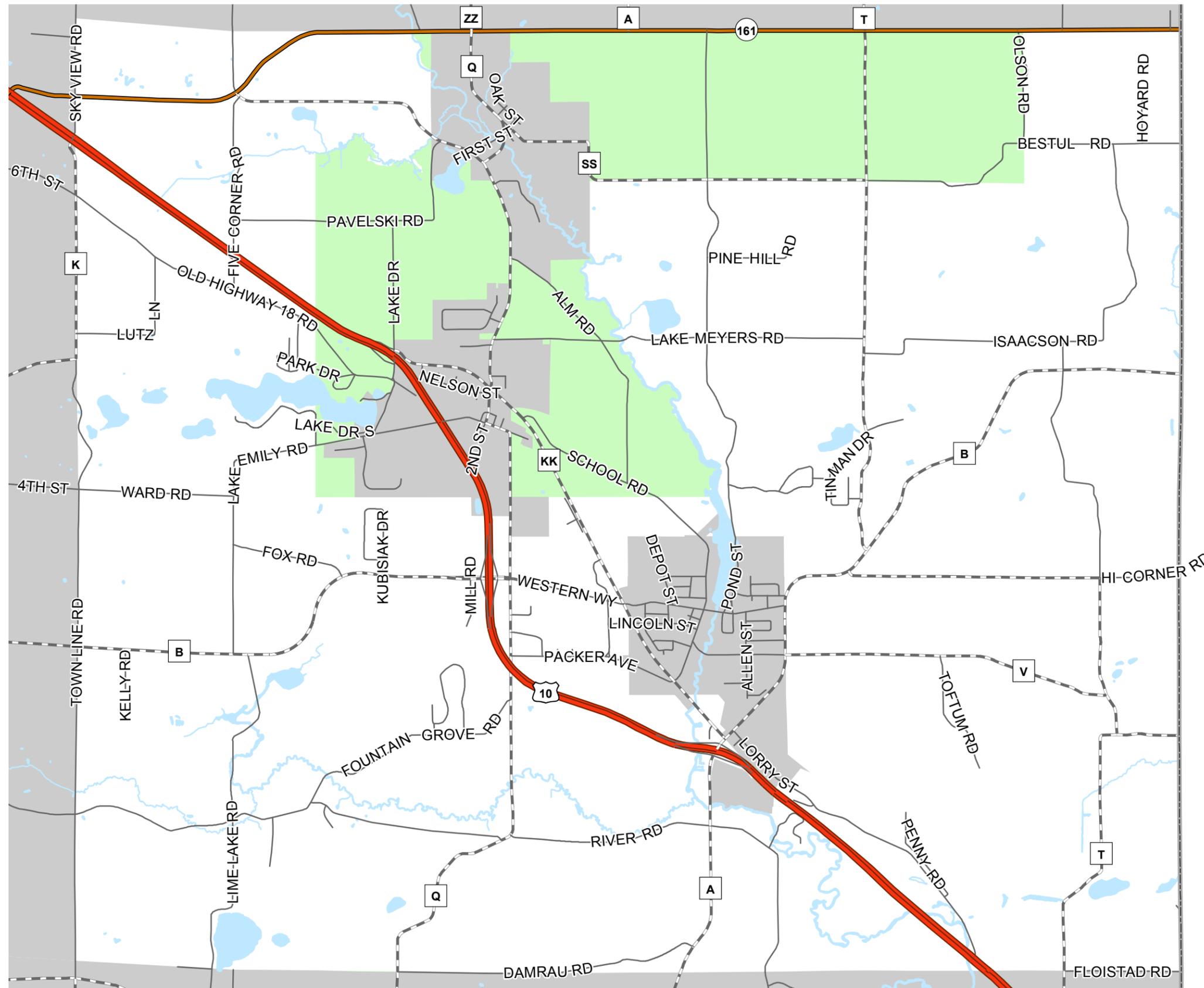


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# Map 5.7 Atrazine Prohibition Areas



 Atrazine Prohibition Areas



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)

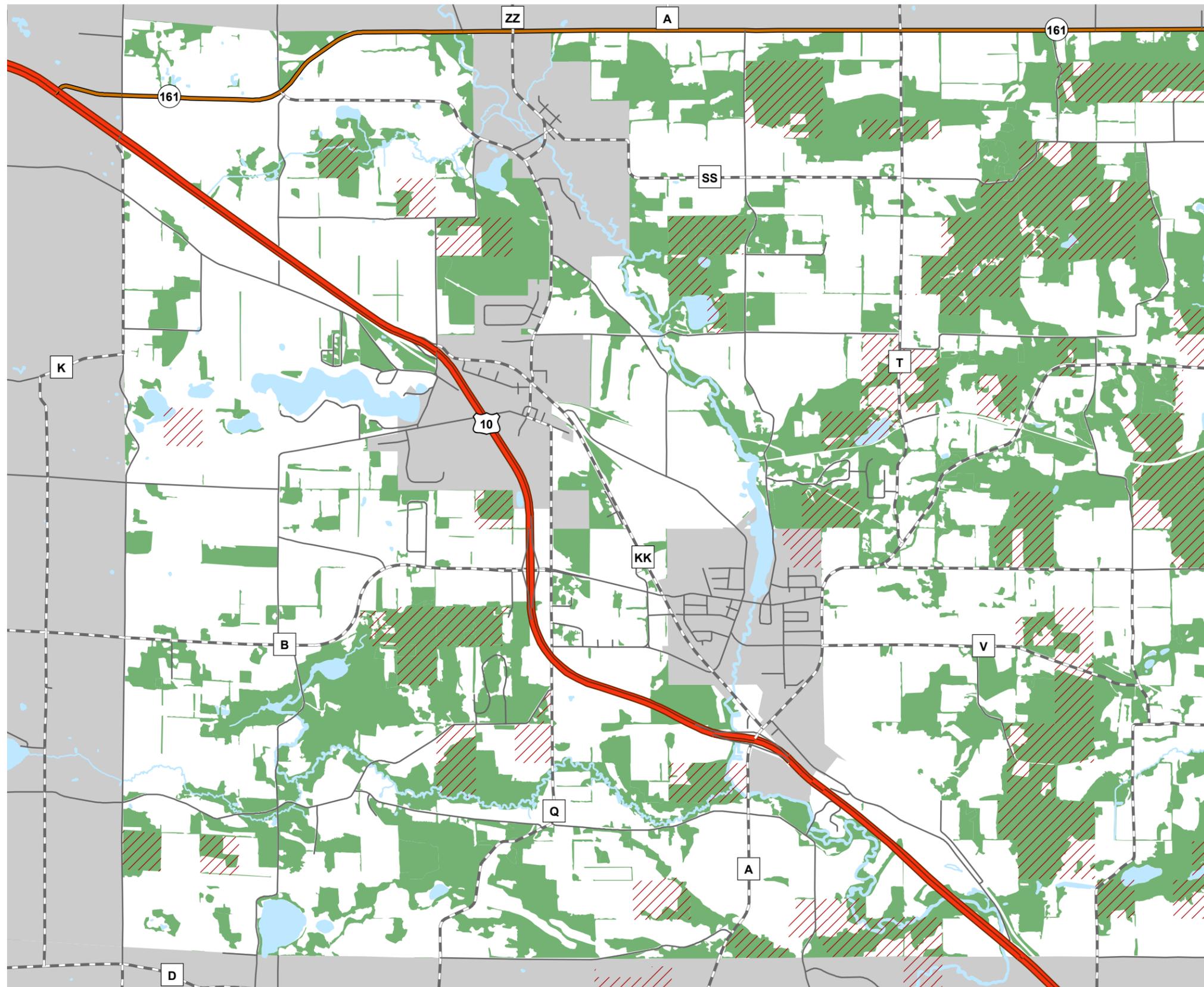
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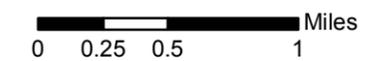




## Map 5.8 Forested Land

-  Managed Forest Land\*
-  Forested Land

\*The entire parcel is shown, however, only the wooded portion of each parcel is included in the MFL program



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)  
Adopted: August 13, 2015

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## G. Non metallic mining

The glacial and geologic history of Portage County has made conditions suitable for certain types of non-metallic mining. Along the moraines in the eastern third of the County, glacial deposits have resulted in some lands that are desirable for gravel and aggregate extraction. This is in contrast with lands west of the Wisconsin River where soils are heavier and have a higher clay content. With the significance of sand and gravel deposits in the Town of Amherst, there are some active sand and gravel pits.

### **Section 5.6 Natural Resources Issues**

- How can we protect our rivers, lakes and streams?
- How can we protect our groundwater quality?
- How can we protect open spaces, wetlands and forests?

### **Section 5.7 Natural Resources Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Manage and enhance the Town's natural resources.

Objective 1.1: Residential and Agricultural Best Management Practices should be used to maintain or improve groundwater quality.

#### Policies:

1. Work with the Wis. DNR and County Land Conservation Department to identify practices that potentially harm groundwater quality.
2. Communicate to citizens the importance of using Best Management Practices and individual well testing to protect drinking water.
3. Work with the County and other research organizations to maintain the most current information possible regarding groundwater quality and quantity.
4. Cooperate with the County and the Village of Amherst in protecting that portion of the Village's wellhead recharge area which lies within the Town.

Objective 1.2: Promote the preservation of sensitive environmental areas.

#### Policies:

1. Conserve the Town's major environmental resources/corridors through implementation of the Conservancy Zoning District. Such resources include shorelands, wetlands, and publicly owned lands used for recreation and wildlife management.
2. Encourage the location and siting of residential development at densities that promote the protection of open space and enhance rural character.

Objective 1.3: Maintain and protect the quality of surface waters throughout the Amherst area.

#### Policies:

1. Work with neighboring villages to promote uniform development standards for protecting rivers, lakes and streams, especially Lake Emily and the Tomorrow River.

2. Work with the Friends of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River organization to promote the maintenance of natural vegetation along shorelines.
3. Work with research organizations to identify environmentally sensitive lakes and streams and strive to protect their ecosystems.

## **Section 5.8 Cultural Resources**

Cultural and historic resources often help link the past with the present and can give a community a sense of place or identity. These resources can include historic buildings and structures along with ancient and archeological sites.

Burial sites are one example of a resource that can add to a community's sense of history as well as provide a great deal of genealogical information. Formally catalogued burial sites are protected from disturbance in Wisconsin and are given tax treatment equal to that of operating cemeteries.

Information regarding cultural and historic resources in the Town is constrained by limited financial and human resources. This section will provide goals and policies that promote the effective management of historic and cultural resources.

### **A. Cultural and Historic Resources Inventory**

A wide range of historic properties have been documented that help create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. Descriptions of existing locations are identified on the list of historic places by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Keep in mind many of the properties included in this inventory are privately owned and not necessarily open to the public. At this time, there are 18 listings in the Portage County, which include several houses and a railroad bridge. One of the sites listed is:

- **Green Bay and Western Railroad Bridge**: a concrete railroad bridge built in 1915, located just west of County Highway A, 1/3 of a mile north of the Village of Amherst.

There are four cemeteries located in the Town, as identified in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, Native American burial sites within the Town have been identified by the Wisconsin Historical Society (Map 5.9). State statutes require that burial sites, together with sufficient contiguous land necessary to protect the burial site from disturbance, be identified and catalogued; and that no person may intentionally disturb a catalogued burial site without a permit from the Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

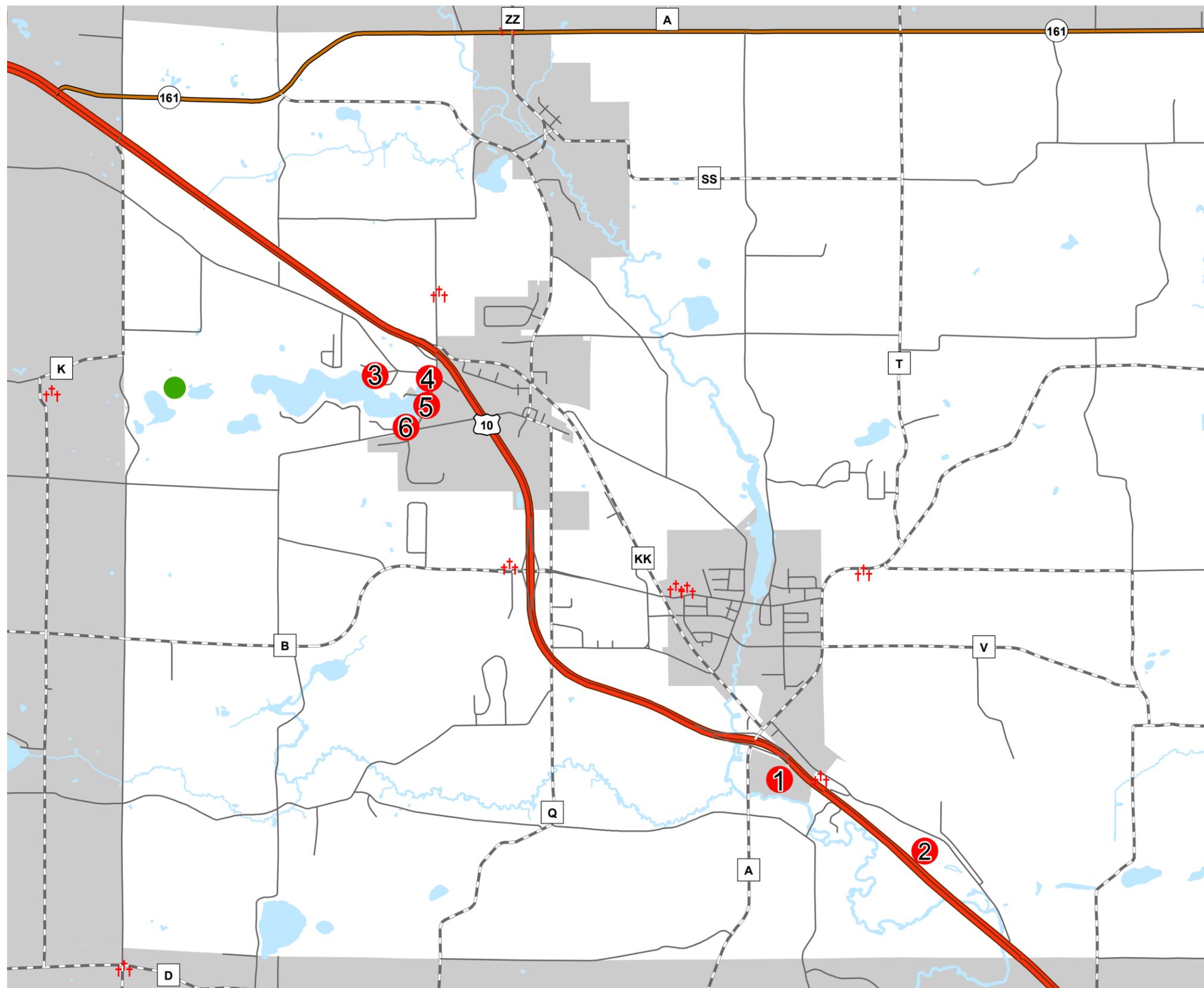
### **B. Cultural Resource Programs**

At the state level, the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board (WHRAB) works in association with the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Board's activity falls primarily into three areas: 1) it provides guidance and assistance to archives and records management programs in Wisconsin, 2) promotes the value of historical records as keys to our cultural heritage and works through partnerships with statewide organizations whose purpose and goals support that end, and 3) to bring federal grant funds to Wisconsin for improving access and preservation of historical records.

## **Section 5.9 Cultural Resource Issues**

The Town of Amherst Plan Commission did not identify any issues pertaining to cultural or historic resources.

# Map 5.9 Cultural Sites



†† Cemeteries

● Burial Sites

1. Burley Brew Sites 1, 2, 3
2. Dambroski Site
3. Green Space Mound Group
4. Amherst Junction Mounds
5. Lake Emily Group
6. Seymour Mounds

● Ceremonial Ground



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)  
Wisconsin Historical Society (2005)

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## **Section 5.10 Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Residents become more aware of cultural resources.

Objective 1.1: Work with the Portage County Historical Society and Central Wisconsin Archaeology Center to help identify cultural and historic resources in the Town.

Policy: Protect identified burial sites from development.



## **CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element**

66.1001(2)(f) Wis. Stat.:

**Economic development element:** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

### **Section 6.1 Introduction**

This element will present information about the economy within the Town of Amherst. Economic development, which can be defined as the type and level of business activity within an area, is often based on a combination of market forces, regulation, and the extent of local government encouragement. The Town of Amherst has historically been a rural community of primarily agricultural activity with a scattering of small-scale commercial uses. In the recent past, an increase in residential development, recreation and tourism has occurred due to the desirable lakes, rivers and transportation improvements in the Town. As such, the majority of business development will most likely occur in the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction and Nelsonville, which are within the Town.

Different types of development in surrounding areas, such as Stevens Point, Waupaca, and the Fox Valley area, can have an impact on Town growth, quality of life, and even its ability to pay for Town services. For this reason the Town of Amherst wishes to pursue economic development opportunities that will enhance the rural character of the area and assure the community the means to provide for the services and infrastructure needs of present and future residents.

This element concludes with goals, objectives, and policies to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base. County and state economic development information is included to help the Town identify potential opportunities that could be used to pursue appropriate economic development activities.

### **Section 6.2 Labor Force and Economic Base**

#### **A. Labor Force Analysis**

##### **1. Educational Attainment**

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, and illustrated by Table 1.4 of that chapter, the Town of Amherst has seen an increase in the percentage of its residents who have achieved a college degree (Associates, Bachelor, or Graduate/Professional degree). According to Census 2010 data, 25% of Town residents have an associate's degree or higher.

## 2. Earnings and Income

Wages are not the only form of income those residents receive. “Total income” is defined by the U.S. Census as the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income from non-farm or farm businesses, including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other source of income received regularly such as Veterans; (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. According to the 2010 ACS, 427 (78.9%) of the 541 Town of Amherst households were classified as household with earnings; 202 (37.3%) were households with social security income; 119 (22%) were households that received retirement income.

In order to better understand the existing wage-earning realities within the Town of Amherst, “earnings” data was considered to be more informative. “Earnings” are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the algebraic sum of wages or salary income and net income from self-employment, representing the amount of income received regularly before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, Medicare deductions etc.

Table 6.1 compares mean (average) earnings, and mean household and per capita income, for households and individuals in communities within the Amherst area and Portage County overall. Compared to the surrounding Towns and Portage County overall, the Town of Amherst experienced the highest percentage increase since 1989 in mean earnings. The Town performed higher than most Portage County Towns for mean household earnings increase.

**Table 6.1: Mean Earnings, Mean Income, and Per Capita Income Comparison**

	Mean Earnings Per Household				Mean Income Per Household				Per Capita Income			
	1989	1999	2010	Change	1989	1999	2010	Change	1989	1999	2010	Change
Town of Amherst	\$34,883	\$54,644	\$72,609	108%	\$36,120	\$63,172	\$71,547	98%	\$11,387	\$19,751	\$28,278	148%
Town of Buena Vista	\$35,365	\$48,055	\$7,538	-79%	\$36,182	\$51,832	\$75,580	109%	\$11,246	\$18,775	\$25,446	126%
Town of New Hope	\$34,645	\$51,461	\$67,397	95%	\$33,113	\$57,024	\$81,352	146%	\$11,289	\$21,334	\$32,115	184%
Town of Stockton	\$39,107	\$55,412	\$67,729	73%	\$38,599	\$58,001	\$71,309	85%	\$12,471	\$19,886	\$26,497	112%
Town of Lanark	\$32,396	\$50,273	\$59,143	83%	\$32,682	\$51,376	\$56,268	72%	\$10,511	\$19,246	\$22,181	111%
Portage County	\$33,230	\$50,373	\$61,125	84%	\$33,184	\$52,102	\$62,396	88%	\$11,730	\$19,854	\$24,873	112%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 and 2006-2010 ACS  
Change = % Change from 1989-2010

Mean earnings = total earnings/ # h/holds with earnings;  
Mean income = total income/ # h/holds with income

According to 2010 ACS data, the median household income for Town of Amherst residents was \$71,547, which was higher than Portage County (\$63,396) and State of Wisconsin (\$49,001). See Table 1.6 of the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

## 3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 examines labor force participation and employment percentages for the Town of Amherst, as described in the 1990 and 2000 Census and the 2006-2010 ACS. Age sixteen is considered to be the lower threshold for being eligible for employment. The Town had a 2010 labor force of 525 people or 69.9%, which was slightly above the Portage County

average of 68.7%. Amherst has experienced an increase in the unemployment rate in each sampling year from 3.4% in 1990 to 5.4% in 2000 to 6.3% in 2010.

**Table 6.2: Employment Status of Town of Amherst Population 16 Years and Above**

Employment Status	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
In labor force	692	73.9%	812	73.0%	525	69.9%
Civilian labor force	692	73.9%	812	73.0%	525	69.9%
Employed	660	70.5%	752	67.6%	478	63.7%
Unemployed	32	3.4%	60	5.4%	47	6.3%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	244	26.1%	301	27.0%	226	30.1%

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census and 2006-2010 American Community Survey

#### 4. Employment by Occupation

Table 6.3 below provides information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Amherst residents were employed from 1990-2010. The management/ professional category is now the largest, followed by sales and office occupations. Table 1.10 of the Issues and Opportunities chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the last three census years. Information for both these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Town were employed in, and is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in Amherst.

**Table 6.3: Town of Amherst Employment by Occupation**

Occupation	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Management, professional, and related occupations	132	20.0%	260	34.6%	147	30.8%
Service occupations	58	8.8%	86	11.4%	59	12.3%
Sales and Office occupations	163	24.7%	150	19.9%	118	24.7%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations <sup>(2)</sup>	99	15.0%	18	2.4%	14	2.9%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations <sup>(1)</sup>	19	2.9%	89	11.8%	53	11.1%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations	189	28.6%	149	19.8%	101	21.1%
<b>Total Employed</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>103%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2006-2010 American Community Survey

(1) = Category was changed during the previous Census period and may reflect the addition or subtraction of other occupations

(2) = Category was changed to an "Industry" during the 2010 Census period

#### 5. Commuting

According to Census 2010 data, mean travel time to work was 20.1 minutes and 23.1 % of the employed residents worked outside of Portage County.

#### B. Local Economic Base Analysis

The land base in the Town of Amherst consists mainly of agricultural uses and has a broad range of businesses relating to the agriculture industry, including two large dairy operations. The Town of Amherst is ranked 11th out of all the Towns in Portage County for having the most irrigated cropland with 1,033 acres. See the Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources chapter

for further information. Existing businesses in the Town of Amherst include:

- Agriculture
- Services
- Storage
- Recreation
- Trucking
- Retail
- Taverns/Restaurants
- Auto repair
- Gas Station

### **Section 6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses for Attracting/Retaining Business**

#### **A. Strengths**

- Transportation infrastructure
- Available land
- Quality natural resources, including air and water.
- Presence of rail line.
- Well situated between urban centers (i.e. Stevens Point, Fox Valley)
- Workforce with good work ethic
- Large population of artisans and craftsmen.
- High quality of rural life.

#### **B. Weaknesses**

- Local road networks may limit development.
- Lack of municipal services (i.e. sewer and water)
- Limited workforce.

### **Section 6.4 Desired Businesses**

The Town of Amherst will evaluate new proposals for industrial and commercial activities on a case-by-case basis. Many businesses can develop in the community with little or no impact on existing services and uses. Desired businesses in the Town include:

- Agriculturally related businesses.
- Small scale and home-based businesses.

### **Section 6.5 Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

Contaminated sites, also known as brownfields, serve as potential land base for economic development. Brownfields are defined as abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. The Wisconsin Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources have jointly prepared a guide to help finance brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. It can be found online at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/archives/pubs/RR539.pdf>

Currently, one site in the Town of Amherst is listed with the WI DNR as brownfield sites with open status. Open status refers to a contaminated site in need of clean up or where cleanup is still underway. A complete list of all brownfield sites can be obtained by contacting the DNR or through their website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/clean.html>

### **Section 6.6 Economic Development Resources**

#### **• Revolving Loan Fund Programs (Portage County)**

*Purpose:* Funds administered by local communities, which provide local government the ability to assist in economic development projects that will create jobs for low-to-moderate income persons. Typically, the revolving loan fund program provides "gap" financing to local projects that make the project economically feasible.

*Use of Funds:* Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

*Amount Available:* Programs are different in each community.

*Advantage:* Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on and provide businesses the ability to finance job creation efforts locally. This program provides a quicker approval process than the Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant - Economic Development Program.

- **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development (WI Dept. of Administration)**

*Purpose:* To provide resources to local governments to assist economic development projects that provides jobs to low-to-moderate income persons and expands the local tax base.

*Use of Funds:* Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

*Amount Available:* 1,000,000 maximum award. Provides fixed-rate long term financing.

*Advantage:* Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on public funds, and provide business with rate of return comparable to industry norms. In addition, these funds remain locally for the creation or expansion of an existing Revolving Loan Fund.

- **Community Development Block Grant - Workforce Training (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* Support businesses making a firm commitment to locate a new facility in Wisconsin or expanding an existing facility within the State which is developing a product, process, or service that requires training in new technology and industrial skills.

*Use of Funds:* Job training that focuses on new technology, industrial skills, or manufacturing processes. The training must not be currently available through other resources (Wisconsin Technical College System), such as Microsoft Office training, OSHA courses, Welding, etc.

*Amount Available:* A grant of 50% of eligible training costs, up to \$5,000 per employee trained. The maximum award is \$200,000.

*Eligibility:* Eligible training costs include training wages (of production employees through first line supervisors), training materials and trainer costs. Routine training is ineligible. Eligible training costs do not include travel expenses, food and lodging.

- **Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation**

A voluntary, non-governmental organization controlled by member families to represent them on legislative issues and to provide farm marketing, business and planning consultation and services. Contact information:

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation  
PO Box 5550  
Madison, WI 53705-0550  
1-800-261-FARM or 608-836-5575

- **USDA – Rural Development Administration (Wisconsin)**

The Rural Development Administration is an organization affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture that provides funding for home purchase and rehabilitation, technical assistance and funding to new cooperative ventures, and financing for new business development. A full list of their programs can be found on the internet at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/programs/index.htm>

Contact information:

USDA Rural Development - WI  
5417 Clem's Way.  
Stevens Point, WI 54482  
Phone: (715)345-7600 FAX: (715)345-7669

**Technical Assistance:**

- **Small Business Development Center**

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, is one of ten university-based SBDC's in Wisconsin. Their mission is to provide learning opportunities and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The Stevens Point SBDC works with small business in eight central Wisconsin counties, and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individualized counseling. (715) 346-3838

- **Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP)**

In an effort to improve quality and productivity of small to medium sized Wisconsin Manufacturers, a partnership between government, industry, labor, and education was formed. The WMEP assessment process is designed to be broad based rather than in-depth. The purpose is to "raise flags" where more effort should be placed. After the assessment, this can lead to a technical assistance project, in which your company is paired with a facilitator to help design and implement solutions.

- **Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)**

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's SHWEC program was created to provide pollution prevention services to waste generators in Wisconsin. SHWEC' pollution prevention specialists will assess hazardous waste systems, provide no-cost non-regulatory technical assistance, and identify potential waste reduction options.

**Section 6.7 Economic Development Issues**

The following issues were identified during the comprehensive planning process:

- To what extent does the Town want to promote larger scale or non-agriculture related economic development?
- How will the Town provide business opportunities within the Town?
- How can the Town promote business development and increase its tax base taking into consideration its service limitations?

## **Section 6.8 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Encourage businesses that can operate within the limitations of the Town.

Objective 1.1: Limit large-scale commercial development within the Town.

Objective 1.2: Encourage businesses that enhance the rural quality of life and are compatible with surrounding uses.

### Policies:

1. Review large scale commercial development on a case-by-case basis as it relates to surrounding uses, environmental impacts, and available services.
2. Encourage agriculturally-related businesses.
3. Encourage the development of home-based businesses.



## **CHAPTER 7 Intergovernmental Cooperation Element**

66.1001(2)(g) Wis. Stat.:

Intergovernmental cooperation element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall consider, to the greatest extent possible, the maps and plans of any military base or installation, with at least 200 assigned military personnel or that contains at least 2,000 acres, with which the local governmental unit shares common territory. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

The intergovernmental cooperation chapter identifies opportunities for establishing or maintaining cooperation between units of government. Cooperation improves lines of communication between different units of government, aids in the recognition and possible resolution of conflicts between jurisdictions, and allows for the identification of mutual service needs and improvements. The intent of this chapter is to identify, inventory, and analyze existing and potential cooperative relationships.

### **Section 7.1 Inventory and Analysis Intergovernmental Relationships**

Inventory and examination of existing municipal relations allows for the understanding of how municipalities currently work together and how these relationships can be enhanced. As the Town of Amherst develops over the next 20 years it is important for them to continue to work with surrounding municipalities, school districts, and other governmental units.

#### **A. Adjacent Units of Government**

The Town of Amherst shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Buena Vista, Lanark, New Hope, Stockton and the Waupaca County Town of Scandinavia. The Town is unique in that the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction and Nelsonville are located within the Town.

##### **1. Adjacent Communities**

The Town has been working with the three villages to develop consistent and uniform ordinances that deal with signs and adult entertainment businesses to prevent a patchwork of differing regulations across municipal boundaries. The Town amended a sign ordinance in 2013 and along with the Village of Amherst Junction adopted the 'Joint Boating Ordinance for Town of Amherst and Village of Amherst Junction to Regulate Boating Upon the Waters of Lake Emily' in 2011. As issues develop, Town officials desire to continue this working relationship to maintain and enhance the quality of life for residents in the area, regardless of the governmental unit in which they reside.

The Town of Amherst has agreements with surrounding communities for aid in snow removal and road maintenance on local roads that are located along the Town boundaries.

The Town and Village of Amherst have an informal agreement regarding the lighting at the Cty Rd KK (formerly known as USH 10) and Cty Rd B intersection. The costs for electricity and repairs to the light structures are shared evenly between the two municipalities.

The Amherst Area Fire District and EMT's — The Town of Amherst is part of the Amherst Area Fire District, along with the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction and Nelsonville, and portions of the Towns of Lanark and Stockton. An agreement to create the Amherst Area Fire District was signed January 1, 1993 by representatives of the Villages of Amherst, Nelsonville, Amherst Junction, and the Town of Amherst. In addition to serving those areas, the Fire District contracts to supply fire protection to several other adjacent municipalities or parts thereof.

All equipment is owned and maintained by the Fire District. Title to all property is vested in the Fire District and is housed at the fire station located in the Town of Amherst at the corner of Packer Ave. and Fairgrounds Rd. The affairs of the Fire District are handled by a committee consisting of a voting representative appointed by each of the founding municipalities, plus a fire chief, who serves as a non-voting member. The Fire District is supported by its member communities based on a formula that is part of the initial 1993 agreement.

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. EMT's are dispatched by the Portage County 911 system and attempt to stabilize patients before ambulances arrive. Supplies and equipment used by local EMT's are kept at the Amherst Fire Station. The EMT program is supported financially by the municipalities involved in the Amherst Fire District.

The Town has Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding Portage County communities, as well as the Iola and Rural Fire Volunteer Fire Department located in Waupaca County.

## 2. Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Recognizing that land uses in town territory may affect neighboring cities and villages that may need to grow beyond their borders, state laws have long provided these municipalities with certain "extraterritorial" authority over adjacent town lands and have provided methods for them to expand their borders through annexation. This city and village extraterritorial authority may, subject to the applicable laws, apply to planning, land division approvals, zoning and coverage of a city or village official map. The extraterritorial jurisdiction for a city with a population of 10,000 or more is three miles from its corporate boundary, while the extraterritorial jurisdiction for a city whose population is under 10,000 and for villages is one and one half miles from their corporate boundaries.

The extraterritorial boundaries of the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction, and Nelsonville extend into portions of the Town (Map 8.2 Future Land Use). The Town recognizes the mutual benefit of working collaboratively and responsibly with the villages regarding extraterritorial land use.

## B. School Districts

The Town of Amherst is served by two school districts: the Tomorrow River School District, serving most of the Town; and the Iola-Scandinavia School District, serving residents in the northeast corner of the Town. The primary form of interaction with these entities is through the

payment of property taxes which, in part, help to fund the districts. The Town has little participation with either district in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities.

### C. County

#### 1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Town contracts with Harter's Fox Valley Disposal for handling solid waste and recycling materials. Waste and recyclables can be taken to the County's Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Plover.

#### 2. Portage County Highway Department

The Highway Department of Portage County maintains and plows State and County Roads in the Town. This Department also administers the application process for local road projects as part of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Local Roads Improvement Program.

#### 3. Portage County Police and Ambulance

The Town relies on the Portage County Sheriff's Department to provide protective services through periodic patrols and an "on-call" basis. The Stevens Point Fire Department operates the Ambulance Service for Portage County. [See Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter for detailed information.]

#### 4. Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

There are currently seven different sections operating under the Planning and Zoning Department: Planning, Zoning and Code Administration, Land Conservation, On-Site Waste, Groundwater Management, Justice, and Economic and Business Park Development.

The Planning and Groundwater Management Section includes staff and resources to assist local communities in the preparation or amending of various plan documents including a comprehensive plan. Staff can also assist in water quality testing associated with siting new developments.

The Code Administration Section staff is responsible for administering the County's Zoning, Wellhead Protection, Tower, Subdivision, Floodplain Zoning, Shoreland Zoning, Non-metallic Mining Reclamation, and Private Sewage System Ordinances. [The Towns of Pine Grove and Grant currently do not participate in the Portage County Zoning program.]

The Land Conservation Section staff works with individuals to design and implement conservation practices. Assistance may be given to Towns upon request.

#### 5. Portage County Parks Department

The Portage County parks, including Cate and Lake Emily in the Town of Amherst, are open all year; however, they are only maintained by the Department from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>. In addition, Portage County owns an unimproved boat landing on the south side of Lake Meyers on Lake Meyers Road to provide access to that water body. In addition, two public boat landings are maintained at Lake Emily. The Town interacts with the Parks Department on an as-needed basis as issues arise.

### D. State of Wisconsin

The two primary State agencies that the Town of Amherst interacts with are the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation

(WisDOT). The DNR is responsible for natural resource protection, compliance monitoring, and law enforcement.

WisDOT is responsible for the planning and development of road networks and associated infrastructure and is the lead agency for the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP). Town road improvement projects must be submitted as part of a two year improvement plan.

A third agency, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, enforces the livestock siting regulations and animal control issues.

### **Section 7.2 Identification of Existing or Potential Issues and Conflicts with Other Governmental Units**

The Town Plan Commission identified some issues with other governmental units that need further attention:

- How can the Town encourage the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department to update its ordinances, policies and procedures in a timely manner?
- How can the Town protect its tax base against aggressive annexation which forces people to become part of a village against their wishes?
- How can the Town have better communication with the County Highway Department regarding highway plans, jurisdictional transfers, and maintenance schedules, including projects that are subcontracted along county and town roads, *i.e.* brush and tree clearing?
- How can the Town work with other agencies and organizations to better educate the public regarding the role of Town government?

The Town of Amherst has identified a potential conflict with Village of Amherst regarding cooperative working relationships, land uses, unfriendly annexations, etc. due to language in the Land Use element of the Village of Amherst's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Language in the Village Plan encourages annexation between certain areas of the new USH 10 facility and the Villages corporate boundaries.

### **Section 7.3 Issues/Conclusions Regarding Intergovernmental Relations and Possible Methods of Conflict Resolution**

Possible methods of conflict resolution with the Village of Amherst include:

- An acknowledgement of the issue
- Discuss conditions of service provision without annexation
- Investigate the creation of a sanitary district
- Set up a joint extraterritorial committee between the Town and Village of Amherst.

In addition, the Town would like to continue its intergovernmental agreements with surrounding communities and meet with their representatives on a periodic basis to review how relationships and services can be improved.

## **Section 7.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Work to maintain or improve intergovernmental relationships.

### Objectives:

1. Work with other communities to maintain appropriate public access to natural resources and recreational opportunities.
2. Communicate with surrounding municipalities for discussion of Land Use and other related issues.
3. Share services with other units of government whenever possible.

### Policies:

1. Continue to meet with other government units as needed.
2. Continue participation with the Portage County Towns Association.
3. Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental agreements.
4. Continue shared agreements with adjacent units of government (roads, Fire Dept., lighting).



## **CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element**

66.1001(2)(h) Wis. Stat.:

Land-use element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d) and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

The purpose of this plan's land use chapter is to compile an inventory of existing land use patterns, and establish the goals, objectives and policies which will be used to guide public and private actions concerning future land use and development. These goals, objectives and policies express ideas that are consistent with the desired character of the Town and the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Section 8.1 Existing Land Use**

The Town of Amherst has been and still is predominantly an agricultural community; however increased residential development in the recent past may be a signal of changes to come. The upgrade of US Hwy 10 to a four-lane facility through the Town is likely to make this a desirable area, as it is conveniently situated between Waupaca and the Fox Valley to the east, and the Stevens Point/Plover area to the west. Consequently, there is an increased potential for more residential and/or commercial development in the Town. Table 8.1 and Map 8.1 illustrate the distribution of different land use categories across the Town.

**Table 8.1 Town of Amherst Existing Land Use, 2004**

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage
Residential	1,196.8	4.9%
Commercial	116.3	0.5%
Agricultural	13,014.9	53.1%
Governmental/Institutional	49.0	0.2%
Right-of-Way	1,098.9	4.5%
Parks and Recreation	361.8	1.5%
Non-Metallic Mineral Extraction	5.0	0.0%
Undeveloped/Vacant	8,668.5	35.4%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>24,511.2</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Amherst and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

#### A. Residential Land Use

This category includes several types of residential dwellings, including single family and seasonal residences, mobile homes, duplexes, and farm residences or farmsteads. Residences are scattered throughout the Town and are generally located along the established road network and water bodies. For the purposes of land use calculation, rural residences and farmsteads were estimated to occupy approximately 2 acres of area if located within a larger parcel, while calculations for residential uses concentrated in subdivisions or clusters were based on actual parcel size. Within the last few years, the Town has experienced an increase in proposals for platted subdivisions. As of December 2004, 1,197 acres, or 4.9% of the Town's land area, were devoted to residential land use.

#### B. Commercial/Office Land Use

Commercial development accounts for a small (0.5%) amount of land use in the Town. These lands are located primarily near the Village of Amherst and include uses such as trucking services, retail and sales establishments, restaurants, taverns, offices, and other professional services.

#### C. Agricultural Land Use

Lands in this category represent the predominant land use in the Town. Greater than 50% of the total acreage for Town of Amherst has a use that is primarily agricultural. This includes irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, dairy farms and livestock operations, lands that have structures used to store agricultural equipment or products, and small, isolated stands of trees that are surrounded by agricultural use.

#### D. Government/Institutional Land Use

This category includes, but isn't limited to, existing municipal and government owned structures, public schools, fairgrounds, churches, cemeteries and fire stations. These lands make up only 0.2% of the total Town acreage. The greatest portion of these lands is attributed to the presence of Portage County Fairgrounds, located just west of the Village of Amherst.

#### E. Road and Railroad (Right-of-Way)

This land use category, which occupies 2.5% of the Town, includes all of the railroad and road right-of-way in the Town. Table 8.1 shows the combined acreage for these two modes of transportation: roads account for 1,027 acres and the railroad 71 acres.

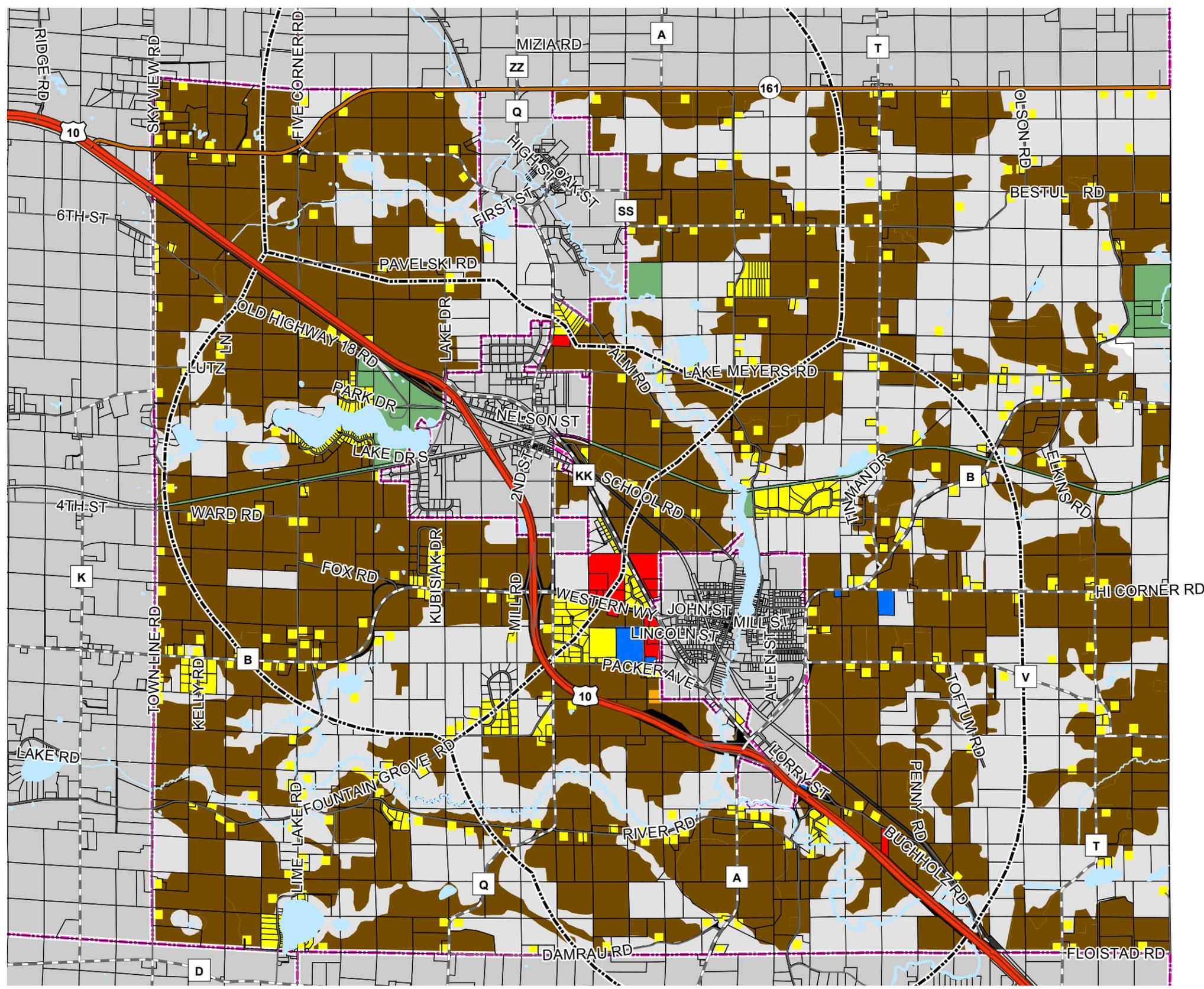
#### F. Parks and Recreation

Lands in this category can be either publicly or privately owned. Public lands may include State, County, or Town Parks, nature preserves, bike trails, boat landings, or athletic fields. Private lands may include golf courses, campgrounds, etc. The majority of these lands are associated with Lake Emily Park, a County park located in the northwest portion of the Town. [More information regarding recreational facilities can be found in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.]

#### G. Non Metallic Mineral Extraction

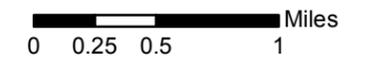
These include lands that are currently being used to extract sub-surface materials such as sand, gravel, clay, or other aggregates. Only one active gravel extraction site exists in the Town. It is approximately 5 acres in size and is located south of Packer Avenue at the western boundary of the Village of Amherst.

# Map 8.1 Existing Land Use



- Existing Land Use**
- Residential
  - Commercial
  - Government/Institutional
  - Agriculture
  - Non-Metallic Mining
  - Parks & Recreation
  - Road & Railroad Right-of-Way
  - Vacant/Undeveloped

- Municipal Boundaries
- Extraterritorial Boundaries



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2004)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan



Portage County  
Planning & Zoning  
1462 Strongs Ave.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481



## H. Undeveloped

Lands in this category include privately owned wooded and non-wooded areas, fallow fields, wetlands and water bodies. As of December, 2004, over 35% of the land in the Town was considered undeveloped. Lands in this category are scattered throughout the Town and those that are not wetlands or surface waters can be attributed in large part to steeper slopes and stonier soils.

## **Section 8.2 Land Use Trend Analysis and Projected Land Use**

The Town of Amherst is a community that consists of increasing residential growth and a range of agricultural activities, including irrigated vegetable production, dairy farms, and other livestock operations. In order to maintain the Town's economic base and rural character, future development should include a mix of low-density, farm and non-farm residential use.

### A. Residential Land Use

The Town's population has risen slowly over the last twenty (20) years, with increased residential land use impacting farm operations. The Town of Amherst Plan Commission anticipates this trend to continue and desires to direct future non-farm residential uses away from higher intensity agricultural operations. The Town Plan Commission also recognizes that the recent upgrade of US Highway 10 to a four-lane facility will most likely increase demand for commercial uses in close proximity to that facility, as well as residential uses throughout the Town. As a combination of agricultural and undeveloped lands would most likely be converted for any new residential uses, the Town recommends housing densities that have minimal impact on groundwater quality and other natural resources, as well as remaining agricultural operations. If residential land use projections were based on past permit activity (average of 9.1 single family permits per year over the past 14 years) and assume a lot size of two (2) acres per housing unit, 364 acres would be needed to accommodate new growth over a 20-year period. If population and household size projections were used (98 housing units; see the Housing chapter of this Comprehensive Plan for details), along with the same lot size assumption (2 acres), 196 acres would be needed for residential use. Due to recent experience and events, and variables that are at best difficult to anticipate, the Town projects that growth in residential acreage will be closer to the first scenario at about 364 acres, with most growth occurring in the southern and western portions of the Town.

### B. Agricultural Land Use

Amherst residents consider agricultural land a valuable natural resource to the Town, and since it is the community's economic base, there is a desire to protect those who wish to farm. To encourage retention of the community's agricultural base, the Town Plan Commission recommends limiting residential densities near active agricultural operations.

Acreage in the Town of Amherst devoted to agricultural land uses is projected to decrease during this planning horizon due to a number of factors related to the impact of the relocation and construction of the 4-lane US Hwy 10 facility. In addition to cutting through some of the Town's more productive soils, this facility will most likely increase demand for residential and commercial uses due to the Town's location in relation to Stevens Point/Plover, Waupaca, and the Fox Valley.

### C. Commercial Land Use

The majority of commercial activity in the Town compliments the dominant agricultural uses and serves limited residential needs. The Town anticipates that trend will continue. Developable

acreage for commercial activities is abundant, provided that new businesses have a minimal impact on the agricultural community and are complementary to surrounding uses. There is a desire by Town residents to preserve and protect the existing open space and maintain the community's rural character, resulting in a future desire for very limited commercial activity in the Town.

#### D. Trends in Land Values

Table 8.2 below describes the increase in the equalized values for the different property types, as compiled by the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue. The implementation of agricultural use value assessment in the mid 1990's redistributed valuations from the Agricultural category to the Residential, Forest, and Other categories. The Other category (created between 1990 and 2000) includes, "buildings and improvements; including any residence for the farm operator's spouse, children, parents, or grandparents; and the land necessary for the location and convenience of those building and improvements (WI Statutes 70.32)." The critical factor defining "Other" property is its actual use supporting a farm enterprise. If an assessor obtains verifiable evidence that buildings on a farm are used for agricultural purposes, they qualify as "Other" (WI DOR *Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners 12/03*). Notice that combining the Equalized Assessed Property Value of the "Agricultural" category with the "Other" category from Table 8.2 below for 2010 and the value of land supporting agricultural uses has only fallen by 9% over 30 years.

**Table 8.2 Equalized Assessed Property Values, Town of Amherst**

Type of Property	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$9,602,000	30.3%	\$16,520,000	46.6%	\$48,389,000	67.3%	\$89,814,000	72.3%
Commercial	\$1,252,000	3.9%	\$1,834,000	5.2%	\$3,256,000	4.5%	\$4,019,700	3.2%
Manufacturing	\$0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Agricultural	\$15,818,000	49.9%	\$13,276,000	37.4%	\$5,148,000	7.2%	\$2,173,700	1.7%
Swamp and Waste	\$22,000	0.1%	\$85,000	0.2%	\$199,000	0.3%	1,085,300	0.9%
Forest	\$3,314,000	10.5%	\$3,202,000	9.0%	\$7,488,000	10.4%	\$14,479,800	11.6%
Other	na	na	na	na	\$6,824,000	na	\$12,225,800	na
Personal Property	\$1,700,000	5.4%	\$536,000	1.5%	\$580,000	0.8%	\$497,600	0.4%
Total Value	\$31,708,000	100.0%	\$35,453,000	100.0%	\$71,884,000	100.0%	\$124,295,900	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statistical Report of Property Valuations, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010

#### F. Redevelopment Areas

Since the Town of Amherst is a rural community with no clearly defined patterns of development, other than residential use along Lake Emily, no sites or areas have been identified during this planning horizon for redevelopment.

### **Section 8.3 Land Use Conflicts**

The primary land use conflict identified by the Town of Amherst Plan Commission was a potential for dispute between non-farm residences and existing farm operations. Due to the important role agriculture plays in the community's economy and character, the primary recommendations for conflict resolution are: to limit residential densities and direct non-farm residential building away from intensive agricultural operations, encourage the use of spatial

and/or vegetative buffers, and provide information to citizens regarding expectations for rural living.

## **Section 8.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies**

**Goal 1:** Provide for orderly, planned growth which: promotes compatibility between land uses; makes efficient use of public services and tax dollars; protects the rural atmosphere; and preserves important natural resources including highly productive farmlands, high quality groundwater and environmentally sensitive areas.

**Objective 1:** Identify productive agricultural areas in the Town

Policy 1.1: Use Exclusive Agriculture (A-1) Zoning to fulfill existing Farmland Preservation contracts and to protect productive farmland at the owners' requests.

Policy 1.2: Inconveniences, such as aerial spraying, dust, noise, odors, etc. that come from agricultural operations and aren't a major threat to public health or safety, shall not be considered a nuisance.

**Objective 2:** Encourage the location of new development in areas other than those identified as productive agriculture or environmentally sensitive.

Policy 2.1: Use Lot Averaging next to natural areas and areas that are intensely farmed.

Policy 2.2: Require that new, unsewered lots are at least two (2) acres in size or developed at a 2-acre density.

Policy 2.3: Conserve the town's major environmental resources/corridors through implementation of the conservancy zoning and Rural Limited zoning district.

Policy 2.4: The town will support the granting of a variance in the R2 zoning district should a residence be damaged more than 50% of its value.

Policy 2.5: Support the amendment of the R2 zoning district in the county zoning ordinance to allow for the reconstruction of a residence or incidental structure, if damaged more than 50% of its value, on the same footprint.

**Objective 3:** Carefully evaluate commercial and industrial development in the town.

Policy 3.1: Avoid strip-type commercial development along roads designated as principal arterials, minor arterials, and major collectors, in order to ensure traffic safety and mobility.

Policy 3.2: Commercial uses which generate substantial volumes of traffic, particularly truck traffic, could be located near county or state trunk highways. This is intended to avoid increased maintenance of town roads, as well as minimizing traffic safety hazards to residents along those roads.

Policy 3.3: Address proposals for new industrial development on a case-by-case basis, due to the highly variable nature and potential impacts of industry.

Policy 3.4: Retain agricultural zoning and consider rezoning on a case by case basis.

**Objective 4:** Use techniques such as Lot Averaging, offset development, extended setbacks, and conservation buffers to limit conflict between different uses.

Policy 4.1: Encourage the county to update its ordinances to allow for density-based and offset development.

**Section 8.5 Future Land Use Recommendations**

Table 8.3 and Map 8.2 illustrate the Future Land Use recommendations for the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan, and identify how development should proceed in the future to meet the Town’s goal of encouraging a pattern of community growth and development that will provide a quality living environment, protect rural character, and maintain the agricultural economy. Map 8.3 illustrates the future land use recommendations of the three Villages located within the Town of Amherst, within their 1.5 mile extraterritorial area. Future development and redevelopment should be encouraged in an orderly pattern compatible with existing development.

Land Use recommendations include both immediate and long-range planning goals to be implemented. The long-range Land Use recommendations will be implemented over the course of the 20 year planning period as development proposals and land use changes are presented to the Town for consideration. The Town will have to consider periodically updating its zoning map to reflect changing land uses and citizen requests.

**Table 8.3: Future Land Use in the Town of Amherst, 2025**

Future Land Use	2004 Acres	% of total	2010 Acres	2015 Acres	2020 Acres	2025 Acres	% of total	Change 2004 to 2025
Residential	1,196.8	4.9%	1,287.8	1,378.8	1,469.8	1,560.8	6.4%	30.4%
Commercial	116.3	0.5%	121.3	126.3	131.3	136.3	0.6%	17.2%
Agricultural	13,014.9	53.1%	12,923.6	12,832.3	12,741.0	12,649.7	51.6%	-2.8%
Industrial	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
Governmental/Institutional	49.0	0.2%	49.0	49.0	49.0	49.0	0.2%	0.0%
Road/Railroad Right-of-Way	1,098.9	4.5%	1,124.7	1,150.4	1,176.2	1,201.9	4.9%	9.3%
Parks and Recreation	361.8	1.5%	361.8	361.8	361.8	361.8	1.5%	0.0%
Non-Metallic Extraction	5.0	0.0%	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.0%	0.0%
Undeveloped/Vacant	8,668.5	35.4%	8,638.1	8,607.7	8,577.3	8,546.9	34.9%	-1.4%
Total Acreage	24,511.2	100%	24,511.2	24,511.2	24,511.2	24,511.2	100.0%	

Source: Town of Amherst and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

**Section 8.6 Future Land Use Categories**

**MAPPING CRITERIA**

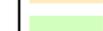
Categorizing the more than 24,000 acres of land in the Town into different land use classes was a time-consuming task. In order to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the mapping process, specific mapping criteria were utilized.

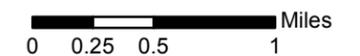
**Residential Mapping Criteria**

The term "residential" is intended to identify subdivisions or clusters of lots where it was the original intent of the developer/residents to maintain a residential neighborhood character where nonresidential uses would be incompatible. Proposals for new residential development shall be considered on a case by case basis at the request of the landowner. Approval for such use may require a change to the land use map. The following areas were mapped:

# Map 8.2 Future Land Use

## Future Land Use

-  Extraterritorial Boundaries
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Institutional
-  L-2 General Agriculture
-  L-3 Limited Agriculture / Mixed Use
-  Non-Metallic Mining
-  Natural Areas Limited
-  Natural Areas Protected



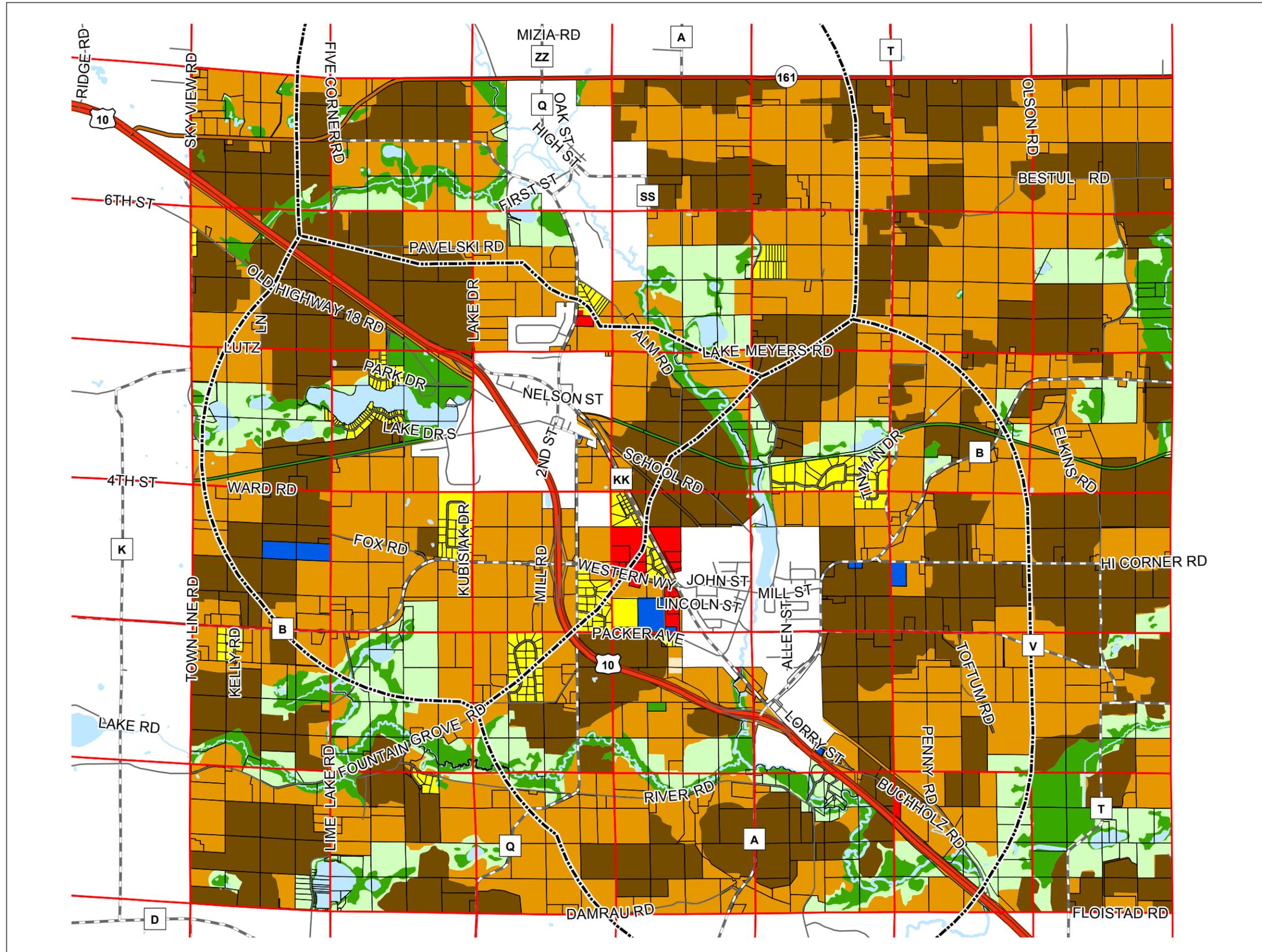
Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning (2012)  
DNR - Wisconsin Wetland Inventory (1986)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan

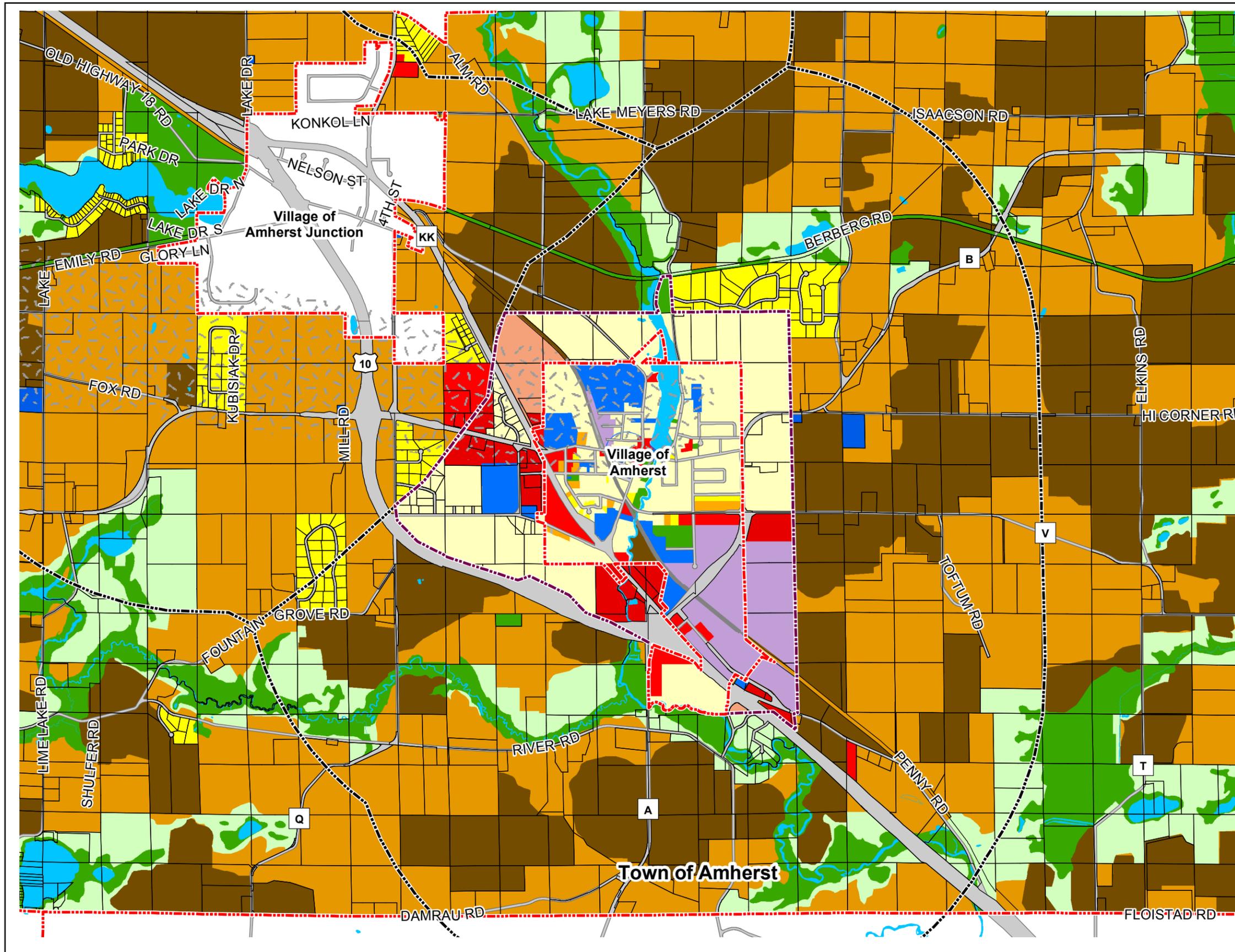


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# Map 8.3 Extraterritorial Future Land Use



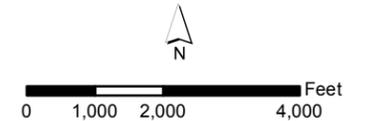
### Village of Amherst Future Land Use

- Single Family Residential
- Plex (2-4 units)
- Multi-Family (5+ Units)
- Commercial
- Mixed Use, Residential & Commercial
- Industrial
- Community Facilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Agriculture and Idle
- Railroad
- Road Right-of-Way
- Water Bodies

### Town of Amherst Future Land Use (Adopted 4/12/12)

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- L-2 General Agriculture
- L-3 Limited Agriculture / Mixed Use
- Non-Metallic Mining
- Natural Areas Limited
- Natural Areas Protected

- Well Recharge Area
- Extraterritorial Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Village Extraterritorial Land Use Recommendation Boundary



Source: Village of Amherst (2004)  
Portage County Planning & Zoning (2015)

Adopted: August 13, 2015

## Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan



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1. Developed residential and developed recreational zoning (i.e. shoreland).
2. Subdivision or clusters of lots, strongly residential in character, that have developed under agricultural zoning. [It is suggested that such areas be identified and considered for rezoning to an appropriate residential district where there is evidence of land use conflicts or where there is a consensus among the residents as to the need for residential-oriented restrictions]
3. Existing platted concentrations of small lots of record not yet developed.
4. Other suitable areas in the Town which were determined to be desirable for future residential development. Consideration will be based on location, soils, road access, surrounding/adjacent land use, etc.

Land Use Categories:

**Low Density/Rural Residential:** equal to or greater than 2 acres per residence. Existing concentrations of lots of record smaller than 2 acres are also to be included in this category.

**Commercial and Industrial Mapping Criteria**

For many rural communities, it is difficult to determine where commercial activity might occur. Most of the businesses that develop are home or farm-based and do not have the option of relocating. Therefore, in the Town of Amherst, proposals for new industrial and commercial development shall be considered on a case-by-case basis at the request of the landowner. All such requests must be considered by the Town Planning Commission, the Town Board, and the County based on the goals, objectives, and policies of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. Approval for such use may require a change to the land use map. The following areas were mapped:

1. Existing developed commercial zoning.
2. Existing developed industrial zoning, if any.

Land Use Categories

**Commercial:** Includes uses as allowed in commercial zoning districts

**Industrial:** Uses that relate to the manufacturing of a product or other uses that are allowed in the Industrial Zoning District.

**Agricultural Mapping Criteria**

Lands recommended predominantly for the continuation of agricultural pursuits, the protection of productive agricultural lands, and the retention of the rural nature of the community. In preparation for the 1996 Land Use Plan, the Amherst township was reviewed carefully, forty by forty, with regard to land use, including agriculture to determine land use and subsequent zoning. Most of this earlier review is still relevant and will serve as the baseline from which to make revisions appropriate to the changing agricultural economy, increasing residential development pressures, and the recognition that:

1. For the most part, the necessity for Farmland Preservation for tax purposes has passed; however, the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative (found primarily in Chapter 91 of the Wis. State Statutes,) passed as a part of the state’s existing farmland preservation program, establishes agricultural enterprise areas (AEAs), and develops a purchase of agricultural conservation easement matching grant program (PACE). Its goal is to achieve preservation of areas significant for current and future agricultural uses through successful implementation of these components.

2. Some of the more marginal soils that were previously farmed might better serve other uses.

The following Land Use Categories of agriculture were used based on the intensity of the agricultural operations in a particular area:

**L-2 General Agriculture** This category is intended to preserve and enhance land for a wide range of agricultural uses. The category's regulations are designed to encourage agricultural uses in areas where soil and other conditions are best suited to those agricultural pursuits and control residential development to avoid potential conflict with agricultural use.

New residential development adjacent to more intensive agricultural uses, *i.e. large dairies, large confined livestock feeding operations, concentrations of irrigated vegetable crop production*, will have to consider several development techniques: off-set development, open space development, density-based development, greater set-backs for siting housing, or buffer areas. These requirements will be shared with developers by the Town Planning Commission.

Recommended minimum lot size for lands in this category is five (5) acres.

**L-3 Limited Agriculture/Mixed Use** This category is intended to provide for the continuation of low-intensity agricultural uses, recommends against the siting of new and expanding livestock operations and large dairies, provides for the careful siting of single family residences, and supports other uses that maintain the rural characteristics of the area. It may serve as a buffer between higher-density residential or other uses, more intensive agricultural uses, and may prevent premature conversion of rural lands to urban and other non-agricultural uses in adjacent categories. The category's use and development regulations are designed to implement the Town of Amherst's Comprehensive Plan goals by discouraging urban and suburban development in areas that are best suited to agricultural uses.

Also included in this category are small fields of cropland and lands expected to remain in green space for use in forestry, recreation, and low-intensity residential use.

New residential development adjacent to more intensive agricultural uses, *i.e. large dairies, large confined livestock feeding operations, concentrations of irrigated vegetable crop production*, will have to consider several development techniques: off-set development, open space development, density-based development, greater set-backs for siting housing, or buffer areas. These requirements will be imposed upon developers by the Town Planning Commission. In addition, new residential development proposals involving five (5) or more lots should be submitted to the Town Plan Commission and Board (in addition to the County) for review and, if approved, may be rezoned to the R-1, Rural and Urban Fringe Residence District.

Recommended minimum lot size for lands in this category is two (2) acres.

### **Natural Areas Mapping Criteria**

Lands recommended remaining in their natural state or for non-intensive uses such as recreation, wildlife habitat, or forest management. This category will be applied to lands which are environmentally important or sensitive, including shorelands, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, substantial wildlife habitat and public resource areas. Limited residential development could occur in a manner that does not negatively impact the ecological or aesthetic value of areas designated for preservation in their natural state. Criteria for identification may include the following:

1. Lands within 100 feet of navigable waters or to the landward side of adjoining wetlands, if greater than 100 feet. This includes wetlands within 300 feet of navigable waters, and excluding preexisting structures or cropland that would be nonconforming uses under Conservancy Zoning.
2. Other wetlands (not adjoining navigable waters.)
3. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplains as adopted by Portage County in 2009. Pre-existing cropland that would be nonconforming under Conservancy Zoning is to be excluded.
4. Hydric soils as mapped by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
5. Publicly owned lands used for recreation or wildlife/resource management.
6. Other natural features of the landscape deemed important by the local community.
7. Homes and dwellings designed for human habitation that would be nonconforming under Conservancy Zoning are to be excluded from the Natural Areas – Protected land use designation and placed into Natural Areas – Limited land use.

### Land Use Categories

**NA-Protected** Lands recommended remaining in their natural state or for non-intensive, non-developed uses such as passive recreation, wildlife habitat, ground and/or surface water protection, and forest management. Development of these lands is not recommended due to the potential for destroying or degrading important or unique natural resources, or due to the excessive measures necessary to overcome development barriers presented by the environmental conditions.

Note: Designation of navigable waters and wetlands are based on DNR determination. Boundary lines may be adjusted based on on-site investigation by County or other appropriate agencies.

**NA-Limited** Lands recommended remaining in their natural state, which buffer unique ecological, geological, scenic areas and other natural features, lands that provide for public or private recreational opportunities, forest management, wildlife corridors, protection of threatened and endangered species, and which protect and improve water quality, lands which provide for non-intensive development uses such as low-density residential use. Development of these lands is intended to be low impact due to the potential for destroying or degrading important or unique natural resources, or due to the excessive measures necessary to overcome development barriers presented by the environmental conditions. Limited residential development could occur on these lands without negatively impacting the ecological and aesthetic value of the area. Minimum lot size for the Natural Area – Limited category is recommended to be 5 acres.

### **Institutional Mapping Criteria**

Lands where public facilities exist or are to be located. Facilities include, but are not limited to government services and institutions, educational, religious, cemeteries, medical and health care, military, power plants, solid waste disposal sites, and transmission towers and pipelines.

### Land Use Category

#### **Institutional**

### **Resource Extraction Mapping Criteria**

These areas are considered economically viable resources, and are identified within specific boundaries to minimize or avoid conflict with other adjacent land uses. Resource extraction uses include clay, sand, gravel, and other aggregate extraction.

### Land Use Category

#### **Non-metallic Mineral Extraction**



## **CHAPTER 9 Implementation Element**

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used as the guide for future development decisions. Its real value, however, will be measured by the results it produces. To accomplish the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan, specific implementation measures must be taken to ensure the Town of Amherst's actions meet the desires of its Comprehensive Plan.

### **Section 9.1 Comprehensive Plan Adoption Procedures**

The Wisconsin State Statutes establish the manner in which a Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by a community:

**66.1001(4) Procedures for adopting Comprehensive Plans.** *A local governmental unit shall comply with all of the following before its Comprehensive Plan may take effect:*

*(a) The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for wide distribution of proposed, alternative or amended elements of a Comprehensive Plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the Plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.*

*(b) The Plan Commission or other body of a local governmental unit that is authorized to prepare or amend a Comprehensive Plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of a Comprehensive Plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the Plan Commission or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. One copy of an adopted Comprehensive Plan, or of an amendment to such a Plan, shall be sent to all of the following:*

- 1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the local governmental unit.*
- 2. The Clerk of every local governmental unit that is adjacent to the local governmental unit that is the subject of the plan that is adopted or amended as described in [par. \(b\) \(intro.\)](#).*
- 3. The Wisconsin Land Council.*
- 4. After September 1, 2003, the Department of Administration.*
- 5. The Regional Planning Commission in which the local governmental unit is located.*
- 6. The public library that serves the area in which the local governmental unit is located.*

*(c) No Comprehensive Plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment under [par.\(b\)](#) may take effect until the political subdivision enacts an ordinance or the Regional Planning Commission adopts a resolution that adopts the plan or amendment. The political subdivision may not enact an ordinance or the Regional Planning Commission may not adopt a resolution under this paragraph unless the Comprehensive Plan contains all of the elements specified in [sub. \(2\)](#). An ordinance may be enacted or a resolution may be adopted under this paragraph only by a majority vote of the members-elect, as defined in [s. 59.001 \(2m\)](#), of the governing body. An ordinance that is enacted or a resolution that is adopted under this paragraph, and the plan to which it relates, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under [par. \(b\)](#).*

*(d) No political subdivision may enact an ordinance or no Regional Planning Commission may adopt a resolution under [par. \(c\)](#) unless the political subdivision or Regional Planning*

*Commission holds at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance is discussed. That hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice under [ch. 985](#) that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The political subdivision or Regional Planning Commission may also provide notice of the hearing by any other means it considers appropriate. The class 1 notice shall contain at least the following information:*

- 1. The date, time and place of the hearing.*
- 2. A summary, which may include a map, of the proposed Comprehensive Plan or amendment to such a Plan.*
- 3. The name of an individual employed by the local governmental unit who may provide additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.*
- 4. Information relating to where and when the proposed Comprehensive Plan or amendment to such a plan may be inspected before the hearing, and how a copy of the Plan or amendment may be obtained.*

As previously stated in this plan, the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Planning process took place as part of a larger County-wide planning effort (see the Introduction section of this document). These concurrent and complementary regional and local planning efforts began in June 2001. On July 25, 2001, the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee adopted the Portage County Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Plan. This extensive document detailed the many ways and opportunities that citizen input would be encouraged and facilitated throughout the formulation of the Comprehensive Plans across Portage County. On August 9, 2001, the Amherst Town Board adopted the Portage County Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Plan as a model for their process.

Beginning in January 2003, and lasting through April of 2005, the Amherst Plan Commission met regularly to discuss the different issues and elements that make up their Comprehensive Plan.

Each of these meetings was open to the public and officially noticed, being posted in five public places or listed in Stevens Point Journal newspaper. The Plan Commission recommended the Plan to the Town Board for consideration on May 5, 2005, with copies of this recommended draft made available for inspection at the Town Hall and Portage County Planning and Zoning offices, as well as being posted for viewing on the Portage County Comprehensive Planning website. A public hearing was held before the Town Board and Plan Commission on June 9, 2005, and the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan was officially adopted by unanimous vote at the June 9, 2005 Town Board meeting.

## **Section 9.2 Comprehensive Plan Implementation**

Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(3) establishes the actions that must be based on the adopted comprehensive plan (2003 Wisconsin Act 233 revised the original list of items to meet the consistency requirement) to include:

*(3) **Actions, procedures that must be consistent with Comprehensive Plans.** Beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's Comprehensive Plan:*

- (a) Official mapping established or amended under [s. 62.23 \(6\)](#).*
- (b) Local subdivision regulation under [s. 236.45](#) or [236.46](#).*
- (c) County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under [s. 59.59](#).*
- (d) City or Village zoning ordinances enacted or amended under [s. 62.23 \(7\)](#).*

(e) Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62.

(f) Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under [s. 59.692](#), [61.351](#) or [62.231](#).

The Town of Amherst came under Portage County Zoning jurisdiction in 1968 and Portage County still administers the Zoning Ordinance for the Town. The Town is also subject to the County's Shoreland and Floodplain Zoning, Subdivision, Private Sewage, Tower and Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinances.

The Town shall undertake a review of these regulatory tools for compatibility and consistency with the various goals, objectives and policies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan, and identify any sections of the documents that may need updating. The review period shall commence within 12 months of the initial adoption of the plan. The Town recommends revision and final approval for the updated regulatory tools to be completed within 24 months of the County Board adopting the Portage County Comprehensive Plan.

To ensure that this Plan will accomplish its intended goals, more steps will need to be taken beyond simply adopting this document. In general, the plan's effectiveness depends upon the commitment of Town and County officials, as well as local residents, to follow through with the policies, recommendations and action plan contained herein.

#### Action Plan:

Specific actions needed to preserve the Town's rural atmosphere, guide growth and otherwise successfully implement this Plan include:

1. Review the Town's Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis. Prepare a summary of plan Goals, Objectives, Policies, and possible additional action items for presentation at the annual Town meeting.
2. Create a Comprehensive Plan text and map amendment application form within six (6) months of plan adoption.
3. Work with County staff to amend the Zoning and/or Subdivision Ordinances to allow for housing quarters for farm laborers or additional family members. Initiate this process within 12 months of plan adoption.
4. Create a mobile home ordinance within 24 months of plan adoption.
5. Review and update the Town's Road Ordinance within 12 months of plan adoption.
6. Review the need for an official map and other ordinances (such as engine braking). This step will be on-going.
7. Review speed limits on Town roads and identify where changes are needed. This step will be on-going.
8. Maintain contact with railroad commissioner to enhance railroad safety within the Town. This process should be initiated within 12 months of plan adoption, but will be on-going.
9. Work with the County Parks Department to monitor the usage of recreation facilities and mitigate negative impacts to Lake Emily. This process should be initiated within 12 months of plan adoption but will be on-going.
10. Work with Emergency Management to continue monitoring the need for more protective and emergency services. This step will be on-going.

11. Designate an area at the Town hall where information can be obtained regarding Wisconsin's Right to Farm Law, Best Management Practices, and agricultural practices within the Town. This step should be initiated within three months of plan adoption; however, the provision of literature pertaining to the aforementioned will be on-going.
12. Meet with adjoining municipalities to promote uniform development standards along valued natural resources such as, the Tomorrow River and Bear Creek. This process should be initiated within 12 months of plan adoption but will be on-going.
13. Work with various organizations to help identify and protect cultural and historic resources within the Town. Initiate this process within 24 months of plan adoption.
14. Develop a process of meeting regularly with surrounding units of government to address issues of growth, land use, and service provision. This process should be initiated with 12 months of plan adoption.
15. Create and adopt a Town of Amherst Land Division Ordinance. This process should be initiated within six months of plan adoption.
16. Work with appropriate organizations to investigate the burial sites within the perimeters of the Portage County Poor Farm before development takes place in this area.
17. Prioritize the above action items within one (1) month of plan adoption.

### **Section 9.3 Relationship to Zoning**

While this Plan is intended to serve as a guide in updating the Town zoning map, it is advisory in that it does not have the same authority of zoning ordinance. However, the State's Comprehensive Planning law requires that *beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's Comprehensive Plan.* One of those actions is zoning; therefore, the Town's zoning map will have to be consistent with the recommendations found in this Comprehensive Plan.

Since the Town of Amherst is under County zoning jurisdiction, the Portage County Board has the final decision-making authority regarding amendments to the Town zoning map. It is the County Board's established practice to seek the input of the Town Plan Commission, Town Board, interested residents/ landowners, and the Planning and Zoning Department when formulating decisions. However, under State law, the Amherst Town Board is granted the power to veto any zoning change made within the Town by the County Board.

The Town of Amherst will rely on the Portage County Zoning Ordinance as the primary tool for implementing their Comprehensive Plan. Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance use districts to separate incompatible uses and specify appropriate development densities. Each land use district identified by this Plan describes the community's expectations of what future development should consist of within specific areas. To implement those expectations, the Town must assign zoning districts that match the intent of their land use districts. Table 9.1 is provided to show appropriate zoning / land use district relationships.

**Table 9.1: Town Of Amherst Zoning / Land Use Plan Compatibility Table**

Comprehensive Plan Map Categories  Portage County Zoning Districts	Natural Area - Protected	Natural Area - Limited	General Agriculture (L-2)	Limited Agriculture/ Mixed Use (L-3)	Rural Residential	Institutional	Commercial	Industrial	Non-metallic Mineral Extraction <sup>1</sup>
CON - Conservancy	X								
RL - Rural Limited	X	X <sup>5</sup>							
A1 - Exclusive Agriculture			X <sup>4</sup>						
A20 - Primary Agriculture									
A2 - Agricultural Transition			X <sup>4,5</sup>			X <sup>4,5</sup>			X <sup>4,5</sup>
A3 - Low Density Agriculture			X <sup>4,5</sup>			X <sup>4,5</sup>			X <sup>4,5</sup>
A4 - General Agriculture				X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>			X <sup>4</sup>
R-1 - Rural and Urban Fringe Residence					X				
R2 - Single Family					X				
C1 - Neighborhood Commercial							X <sup>4</sup>		
C3 - Commercial							X <sup>4</sup>		
C4 - Highway Commercial							X <sup>4</sup>		
IND - Industrial								X	X

<sup>1</sup> All non-metallic extractions greater than 30,000 sq. feet are regulated by special exception.

<sup>2</sup> All industrial uses are regulated by special exception.

<sup>3</sup> Most institutional uses are regulated by special exception. Requests for these uses should be directed to the County Zoning Administrator.

<sup>4</sup> Commercial windfarms are regulated by the State of Wisconsin.

<sup>5</sup> The Town of Amherst authorizes the use of Lot Averaging in these districts.

**Section 9.4 Integration, Amendment, and Update of Comprehensive Plan Elements**

A. Integration

The goals, objectives, and policies contained within the preceding eight elements (chapters) of this Comprehensive Plan, along with the accompanying inventory and analysis, have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by the Amherst Plan Commission and Town Board. Throughout the drafting and review process, great care was taken to include all issues and concerns from Board and Commission members, as well as from the community at large. Special attention was then given to making sure that the policies required to address the individual issues or concerns did not conflict, either with each other within the chapter, or between the different chapters. The future revision of any Comprehensive Plan goal, objective, or policy shall receive the same level of deliberation and analysis as the original Plan; special attention shall be given so that the new adopted language does not create conflicts within or between chapters.

## B. Plan Amendment and Update

As cited at the beginning of this chapter, State Statute section 66.1001(2)(i), states that the Comprehensive Plan shall be updated no less than once every 10 years. To comply with this requirement, the Town of Amherst will need to undertake a complete update of this nine-chapter document and appendices by the year 2015. The Town may commence the update at any time prior to 2015 as Town conditions or needs change.

Smaller-scale amendments to portions of the Comprehensive Plan may also be considered by the Town Board at any time. The public shall be notified of any proposed changes and allowed the opportunity to review and comment. The Town should consider residents' opinion in evaluating a proposed change. The procedure for amendment and update will be the same as original Plan adoption outlined in Section 9.1 above.

### 1. Amendment Initiation

The following may submit an application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment:

- Amherst Town Board
- Amherst Plan Commission
- Any Town resident \*\*
- Any person having title to land within the Town
- Any person having a contractual interest in land to be affected by a proposed amendment
- Any agent for the above

The applicant that proposes an amendment to the Future Land Use Map shall have the burden of proof to show that the proposed amendment is in the public interest and internally consistent with the remainder of the Plan.

\*\*Any Amherst resident may request for the Town Plan Commission to review future land use for a parcel of land (not owned by the resident making the request); and determine if it is in the Town's best interest to move forward with the request or deny it.

### 2. Application and Review Procedure

The amendment process described in Section 9.1 shall also include the following steps:

- a. **Submittal of Application.** The applicant shall submit a complete application to the Town Clerk, along with any applicable application fees. A copy of the application shall be forwarded by the Clerk to each member of the Plan Commission.
- b. **Application Review.** The Plan Commission shall review the application at one of its regular or special meetings for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Upon conclusion of its review, the Plan Commission shall make a written recommendation to the Town Board for either approval or denial. This recommendation shall include finding of fact to justify the recommendation.
- c. **The Town Board shall hold a public hearing on the request, per State Statute requirements.** After reviewing the application, Plan Commission recommendation, and comments from the public hearing, the Town Board shall make a decision to deny the proposed amendment; approve the proposed amendment; or approve the amendment with revision(s) that it deems appropriate. Such revisions to the proposed amendment shall be limited in scope to those matters considered in the public hearing.

- d. Update History of Adoption and Amendment. The Plan Commission shall establish a table entitled “History of Adoption and Amendment” for the purpose of keeping records on Plan amendments.

### 3. Application Requirements

- a. An application submitted by a resident/landowner/agent to amend the Future Land Use Map shall include the following:
  - A scaled drawing of the subject property.
  - A legal description of each of the parcels in the subject property.
  - A map of existing land uses occurring on and around the subject property
  - A written description of the proposed change
  - A written statement outlining the reason(s) for the amendment
  - Other supporting information the Town or applicant deems appropriate.
- b. Other Amendments. For all other types of amendments, the application shall include the following:
  - A written description of the proposed change
  - A written statement outlining the reason(s) for the amendment
  - Other supporting information the Town or applicant deems appropriate.

### 4. Special Considerations for Plan Amendments

- a. Internal Consistency. Amendments shall be made so as to preserve the internal consistency of the entire Comprehensive Plan.
- b. Granting special privileges or placing limitations is not permitted. No amendment to change the Future Land Use Map shall contain special privileges or rights or any conditions, limitations, or requirements not applicable to all other lands in the district.
- c. The amendment shall not create an adverse impact on adjacent land/land uses.
- d. The amendment shall not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services.

## **Section 9.5 Monitoring/Formal Review of the Plan**

To assure that this Comprehensive Plan will continue to provide useful guidance regarding development within the Town, the Amherst Plan Commission must periodically review and amend the Plan to ensure that it remains relevant and reflects current Town values and priorities.

In order to achieve this, the Town Plan Commission Chair shall request, at least once every year, to place the performance of the Comprehensive Plan on the agenda of a regular or special Plan Commission meeting for discussion and recommendation to the Town Board. Discussion should include a review of the number and type of amendments approved throughout the previous year, as well as those that were denied. This information serves to gauge the adequacy of existing policies; multiple changes indicate policy areas in need of re-assessment. Other topics would include changes to either the development market or residents’ attitudes and values toward different aspects of Town life. As a result of this discussion, the Plan Commission would recommend either no change to the Plan, or one or more specific changes that should be addressed. At this point the process detailed in Sections 9.1 and 9.4 above would commence.



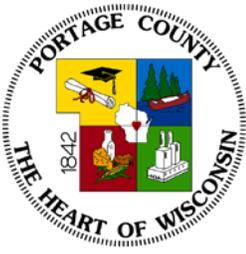
Appendix A

Portage County Comprehensive Plan:  
Public Participation Plan

and

Town Board Resolution to  
Adopt Public Participation Plan

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015



## **PORTAGE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

1462 STRONGS AVENUE,  
STEVENS POINT, WI

PHONE: 715  
54481

-346 -1334 FAX: 715 -346 -1677

# **Portage County Comprehensive Plan: Public Participation Plan**

*Adopted by:*

*Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee*

**July 25, 2001**

*Town of Amherst Board*

**August 9, 2001**

## ***Portage County Comprehensive Plan: Public Participation Plan***

### ***Introduction***

The concept of citizens participating in government decision-making is fundamental to our system of governance. While it is true that our government officials are elected to represent citizens, it is also true that elected officials need to inform, be informed by, and interact with the public on an ongoing basis if their representation is to be meaningful. Regular and continuing involvement in government decision-making is the very basis for the idea of citizenship. Citizen participation is likely to produce better decisions by utilizing the knowledge of the populace and by allocating part of the responsibility for formulating and implementing decisions to the citizens. Without citizen participation, governments become less “governments for the people and by the people,” and more “service providers” for “taxpayers.”

The Portage County Comprehensive Planning process is committed to providing broad-based and continuous opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process. The process is designed to be responsive to citizen participants, is committed to utilizing the knowledge and understanding of citizens to address important issues, and offers multiple opportunities for engagement – at varying levels of involvement. The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to define how the public will be involved throughout the entire comprehensive planning effort.

Wisconsin’s new Smart Growth and Comprehensive Planning law requires public participation throughout the comprehensive planning process.

Wisconsin Statutes, Section 66.1001(4)(a)...

*“The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for a wide distribution of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.”*

In order to be responsive to the new law, Portage County’s public participation process will: require planning committees to adopt the written public participation guidelines contained within this document to provide for meaningful input into the process; utilize a variety of public forums to garner input on a broad range of planning issues; provide for wide distribution of plan-related proposals and reports (through mail, world wide web, community exhibits and displays, etc.) to foster public dialogue and interaction; and develop formal mechanisms for the public to ask questions of the planning committees and for the planning committees to respond to those questions.

In addition, the public participation process will utilize a variety of methods to involve citizens at differing levels – from passive to active.

- **Public awareness** will be increased through the use of direct mail, news releases and mass media; displays and exhibits will be used as well to build awareness of the comprehensive planning process and opportunities to participate.
- **Public education** will provide citizens with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding issues and alternatives for addressing them. Public meetings will be held as one approach to providing education.
- **Public input** is an important part of participatory efforts. Public feedback through surveys, focus groups, open houses, and public meetings will be critical in assessing needs and providing input on alternatives developed to address them.
- **Public interaction** provides a higher level of participation. Through community visioning processes, public concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed to address them, and feedback is given on how the input affected decision-making.
- **Public Partnership** is the highest level of participation. Decision making authority is placed in the hands of the urban and rural planning committees, with the promise to work to implement their decisions.

### ***Public Participation in the Comprehensive Planning Approach***

Portage County proposes to use an eight-step approach to the comprehensive planning process. What follows is a discussion of public participation at each step in the comprehensive planning approach (a graphic illustration of the comprehensive planning and citizen participation approaches is attached to this document).

#### *Step 1: Committee Formation and Initial Meetings*

In this step, urban and rural planning committees are formed. This represents the beginning of **Public Partnership** as described above. **Public education** also begins in Step 1. Educational efforts will focus attention on the comprehensive planning process, with the objective of improving public awareness surrounding the project. Newsletters, news media, a comprehensive planning website, and public meetings will be used to make the public more aware of the planning effort.

#### *Step 2: Plan for Planning*

Building **Public awareness** and **public education** will be the major objectives of participatory efforts in this step. Awareness will continue to be built through the use of media outlets, such as local newspapers, radio stations, and television. Presentations will be made to community and local government groups. Information will be made available through the comprehensive planning website and through written fact sheets and newsletters that will be made available to the public at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public education** efforts will focus attention on the planning process and opportunities for public involvement. Awareness efforts described above will also provide some education.

**Public input** will be solicited through an interactive question and answer function on the website, as well as through more traditional means of communicating (phone, mail, etc.). Planning committees and staff will develop a system to respond to the questions submitted by the public.

**Public partnership** efforts continue with the convening of the urban and rural planning committees. This group of individuals will meet together to develop and adopt a public participation plan.

### *Step 3: Background Information and Inventory: Trends Assessment*

Step 3 provides for the collection and analysis of data related to growth and change in the community, and looks at projections into the future.

**Public awareness** related to the inventory and assessment is critical to the understanding of community issues. In that regard, the public will be kept informed through a variety of media, as well as printed materials developed by the planning team. Presentations will be made at community and local government meetings. Materials developed will be made available to the public at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public education** will take the form of public meetings related to the discussion of information developed throughout this step. Fact sheets will be developed for distribution to the public at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public input** will be accepted in a number of ways. Opportunities for interactive questions and answers will be made available through the comprehensive planning website, as well as through traditional means of communication (phone, mail, etc.). Public comment will be solicited regarding the inventory, assessment, and trends information, which will be compiled in a Background Analysis Report. The Background Analysis Report will be made available for public review and comment at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public partnership** is advanced as the urban and rural committees continue to meet and adopt the Background Analysis Report.

*Step 4: Issue Identification and Visioning*

Step 4 is the most public participation intensive in the comprehensive planning approach. It is at this point in the process that citizens identify key community issues and develop a vision of what their community should look like in 20 years.

As in the first three steps, **public awareness** efforts will focus on the utilization of the media, community meetings, printed materials, and the comprehensive planning website to inform people of opportunities to participate in this step. Materials developed will be made available to the public at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public education** will continue through the use of public meetings and fact sheets developed for this step in the process.

**Public input** will be gathered in a number of ways. Opportunities for interactive questions and answers will be made available through the comprehensive planning website, as well as through traditional means of communication (phone, mail, etc.). Opinion surveys will be conducted to identify community issues. These surveys will include a mail survey to all residents, as well as property owners, in the county, and a photographic survey to assess visual preferences for different types of land uses and development (likely to be completed by urban and rural committee members). Invited experts will address the planning committees regarding a number of critical community issues. Focus groups will be convened to further detail issues identified through the opinion surveys and by invited experts. Citizens will also be asked to provide input on draft vision statements that are developed following interactive events described below. A summary Issue Identification Report will be made available for public review and comment at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public interaction** will take place through community visioning sessions that take place throughout the county. Participants will be asked to describe their hopes and concerns about the future of their community, and more broadly, Portage County. Community mapping exercises will be used to develop graphic visions to be used along with narrative comments collected. The Draft and Final Vision Statement documents will be made available for public review and comment at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public Partnership** efforts continue as the urban and rural committees meet jointly through this step. The large group will adopt an Issues Identification Report and will draft and adopt a vision statement for the county as a whole. The two committees will then continue their work separately, and will adopt vision statements and establish development goals and policies for the urban and rural areas, using the county vision as a guide.

### *Step 5: Strategy Formulation and Draft Comprehensive Plans*

In this step, alternative strategies are developed to address the issues identified in Step 4 and to move toward the vision established in that step as well.

**Public awareness** efforts will continue using media, printed materials, community presentations, and the comprehensive planning website. Materials developed will be made available to the public at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

A series of **public educational** sessions will be held to provide information and education surrounding strategy formulation.

In an effort to gather **public input**, countywide public sessions will be held to respond to alternative strategies that are developed. Opportunities for interactive questions and answers will be made available through the comprehensive planning website, as well as through traditional means of communication (phone, mail, etc.). Open houses will be utilized to gather information related to graphic and narrative strategies developed. This input will be utilized by the planning committees to assess preferred strategies to pursue in the development of the comprehensive planning documents.

**Public partnership** efforts are advanced as the planning committees work to develop alternative strategies with the assistance of planning staff. The planning committees will review public input regarding potential strategies and will select and adopt preferred strategies. The committees will draft comprehensive plans with staff assistance. The Draft Comprehensive Plans will be available for public review and comment at county and local government offices, local libraries, and the comprehensive planning website.

### *Step 6: Plan Review and Adoption*

In this step, the planning committees, local units of government and citizens review the comprehensive plans.

**Public awareness** surrounding the review and adoption step will utilize a variety of media, printed materials, community presentations, and the comprehensive planning website.

**Public education** sessions will be held to improve understanding of the plan review and adoption step, as well as specifics of the plans.

**Public input** will be solicited regarding the comprehensive plans through open houses and other public events. Opportunities for interactive questions and answers will be made available through the comprehensive planning website as well as through traditional means of communication (phone, mail, etc.). Materials will be available for review and comment at county and local government offices, and at local libraries.

**Public partnership** efforts will be focused on the planning committees taking final action to approve the comprehensive plans and presenting the final comprehensive plan documents to local units of government and the County Board of Supervisors for their approval.

*Step 7: Plan Implementation*

The first stage of the comprehensive planning process is complete following the adoption of comprehensive plans in step 6. Grant funding for this project is provided through adoption of the comprehensive plan. Step 7 initiates implementation of the plan. This step focuses attention on updating all land related ordinances in the county to be consistent with the new comprehensive plans. As in preceding steps, public involvement in this process is critical, but will be more formally designed as comprehensive plans are adopted.

*Step 8: Plan Monitoring, Reassessment and Amendment Procedures*

As the plan is implemented, it is imperative to monitor and reassess the effectiveness of strategies that have been put into place. Effective strategies need to be maintained, while ineffective strategies need to be modified or terminated. An amendment process will be developed to address issues that develop with the plan, or changes that take place in the community that necessitate change in the documents. Public involvement in this process will be needed. A more formal process will be designed as comprehensive plans are adopted.

# Portage County Comprehensive Plan

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION APPROACH

### *INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT*

<i>Public Awareness</i>	<i>Public Education</i>	<i>Public Input</i>	<i>Public Interaction</i>	<i>Public Partnership</i>
<b>Objective:</b> To make the public aware of the comprehensive planning process.	<b>Objective:</b> To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, and/or solution.	<b>Objective:</b> To obtain public feedback on issues, alternatives and/or decisions.	<b>Objective:</b> To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered	<b>Objective:</b> To place decision-making responsibilities in the hands of the public
<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will keep you informed.	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will try to help you understand.	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will work to implement what you decide.
<b>Example Methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mail</li> <li>• News releases and mass media</li> <li>• Displays and exhibits</li> </ul>	<b>Example Methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public education meetings</li> <li>• Websites</li> </ul>	<b>Example Methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open houses</li> <li>• Public hearings</li> <li>• Visual preference surveys</li> <li>• Opinion surveys</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> </ul>	<b>Example Methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visioning</li> </ul>	<b>Example Methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen planning committees</li> </ul>

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation

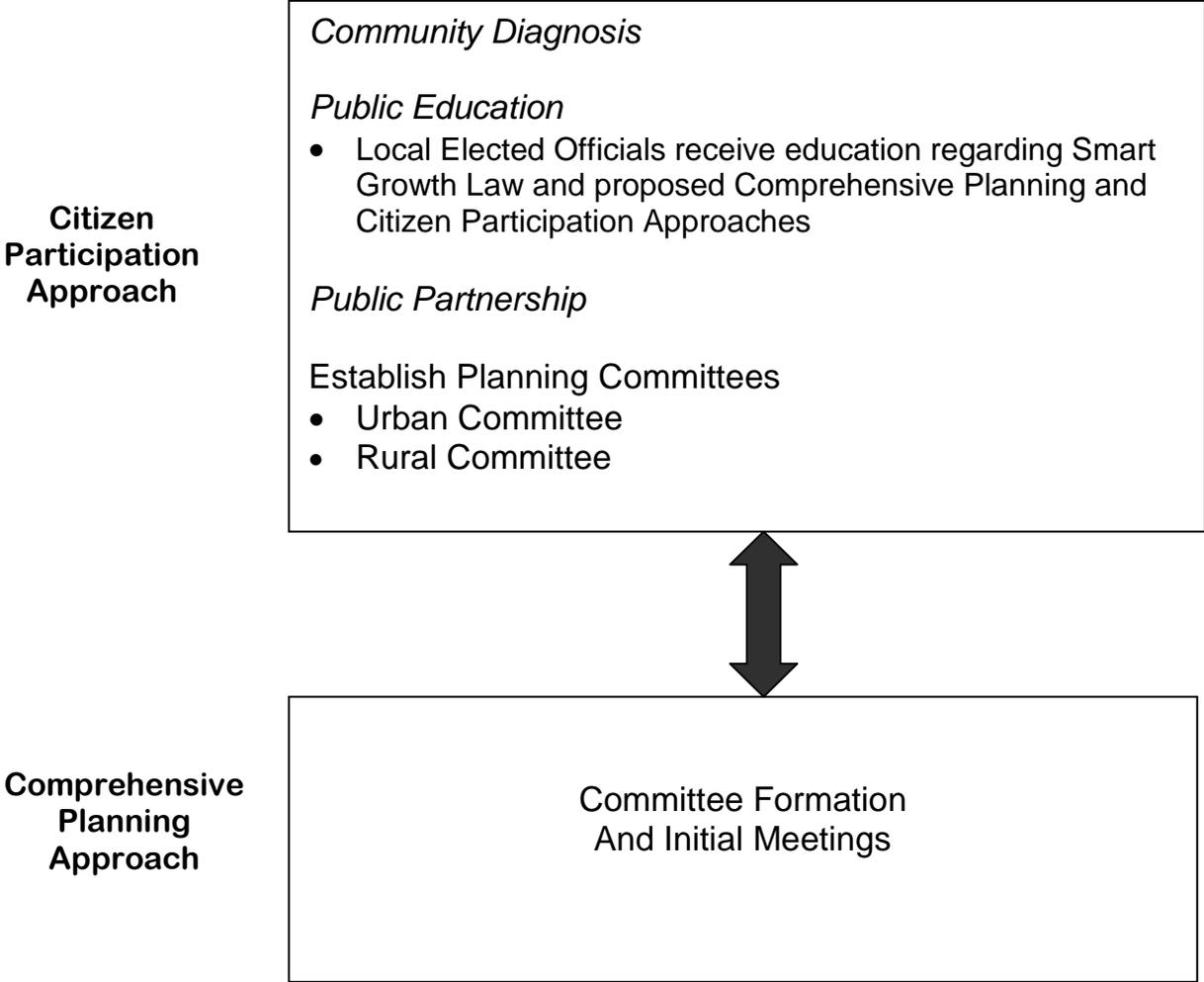


*Developed by: Citizen Participation Team, Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development Program Area.*

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# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 1: Committee Formation and Initial Meetings



# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 2: Plan for Planning

### Citizen Participation Approach

#### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases announcing Comprehensive Planning Effort
- Radio Talk Shows announcing Comprehensive Planning Effort
- Cable Access TV announcing Comprehensive Planning Effort
- Introductory Comprehensive Planning Newsletter
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups
- Website development to house comprehensive planning resources

#### *Public Education*

- Public Educational Sessions related to the Comprehensive Planning Approach and Opportunities for Citizen Participation
- Utilization of Awareness Methods to provide public education as well

#### *Public Input*

- Debut interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees
- Evaluation of awareness and education activities

#### *Public Partnership*

- Convene Planning Committees
- Develop and Adopt Citizen Participation Plan/Guidelines



### Comprehensive Planning Approach

Plan for Planning

# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 3: Background Information & Inventory: Trends Assessment

### Citizen Participation Approach

#### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases related to Inventory and Assessment
- Radio Talk Shows related to Inventory and Assessment
- Cable Access TV related to Inventory and Assessment
- Comprehensive Planning Newsletter related to Inventory and Assessment
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups related to Inventory and Assessment
- Comprehensive Planning Project Website

#### *Public Education*

- Public Educational Sessions related to Inventory and Assessment
- Fact Sheets related to Inventory and Assessment
- Utilization of Awareness Methods to provide public education as well

#### *Public Input*

- Interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees
- Public Review and Comment related to Background Analysis Report
- Evaluation of awareness and Inventory and Assessment

#### *Public Partnership*

- Planning Committees Meet
  - Adopt Background Analysis Report



### Comprehensive Planning Approach

Background Information and Inventory:  
Trends Assessment

# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 4: Issue Identification and Visioning

### Citizen Participation Approach

#### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases related to Issue Identification and Visioning
- Radio Talk Shows related to Issue Identification and Visioning
- Cable Access TV related to Issue Identification and Visioning
- Comprehensive Planning Newsletter related to Issue Identification and Visioning
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups related to Issue Identification and Visioning
- Comprehensive Planning Project Website

#### *Public Education*

- Public Education Sessions related to Issue Identification and Visioning
- Utilization of Awareness Methods to provide public education as well

#### *Public Input*

- Hopes and Concerns Workshops throughout the county
- Community Surveys (mail/photographic)
- Focus Groups (tied to planning elements and human services dimension)
- Invited "Experts" provide input to planning committees
- Public Input Sessions to review draft mission statements
- Interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees
- Evaluation of issue identification and visioning process

#### *Public Interaction*

- Hopes and Concerns Workshops throughout the county
- Community Visioning Sessions
- Community Mapping Exercises

#### *Public Partnership*

- Planning Committees Meet
  - Adopt Issue Identification Summary Report
  - Draft Vision Statement (County; Rural & Urban)
  - Adopt Visions Statements with Local Units of Government



### Comprehensive Planning Approach

Issue Identification and Visioning

# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 5: Strategy Formulation and Draft Comprehensive Plans

### Citizen Participation Approach

#### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases related to Strategy Formulation
- Radio Talk Shows related to Strategy Formulation
- Cable Access TV related to Strategy Formulation
- Comprehensive Planning Newsletter related to Strategy Formulation
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups related to Strategy Formulation
- Comprehensive Planning Project Website

#### *Public Education*

- Public Education Sessions related to Strategy Formulation
- Utilization of Awareness Methods to provide public education as well

#### *Public Input*

- Area-wide public input sessions related to alternative strategies
- Open Houses at various locations throughout the county
- Public review and comment of alternative strategies (narrative and graphic formats)
- Interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees
- Evaluation of Planning Approach and Citizen Participation effort

#### *Public Partnership*

- Planning Committees Meet
  - Develop Alternative Strategies
  - Review Public Input related to alternative Strategies
  - Select/Adopt Preferred Strategies
  - Draft Comprehensive Plans with Staff



### Comprehensive Planning Approach

Strategy Formulation and Draft Comprehensive Plans

# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 6: Plan Review and Adoption

**Citizen  
Participation  
Approach**

### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases related to Plan Review and Adoption
- Radio Talk Shows related to Plan Review and Adoption
- Cable Access TV related to Plan Review and Adoption
- Comprehensive Planning Newsletter related to Plan Review and Adoption
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups related to Plan Review and Adoption
- Comprehensive Planning Project Website

### *Public Education*

- Public Education Sessions related to Plan Review and Adoption

### *Public Input*

- Public review and comment on Comprehensive Plans
- Open Houses at various locations throughout the county
- Interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees
- Formal Public Hearings prior to adoption by each local unit of government
- Evaluation of Comprehensive Planning Approach and Citizen Participation Effort

### *Public Partnership*

- Planning Committees Meet
  - Present Final Comprehensive Plan documents to public
  - Action by Planning Committees, Local Units of Government, and County Board to Adopt Comprehensive Plan



**Comprehensive  
Planning  
Approach**

Plan Review and Adoption

# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 7: Plan Implementation

### Citizen Participation Approach

#### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases related to Plan Implementation
- Radio Talk Shows related to Plan Implementation
- Cable Access TV related to Plan Implementation
- Comprehensive Planning Newsletter related to Plan Implementation
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups related to Plan Implementation
- Comprehensive Planning Project Website

#### *Public Education*

- Public Education Sessions related to Plan Implementation and opportunities for participation

#### *Public Input*

- Interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees

#### *Public Partnership*

- Planning Committees Meet
  - Assess membership
  - Begin revision/updating of all land related ordinances to make consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
  - Develop linkages between Comprehensive Plan and Implementation
  - Develop action steps, timelines, roles, and responsibilities for implementation



### Comprehensive Planning Approach

Plan Implementation

# Portage County Citizen Participation and Comprehensive Planning Approaches

## Step 8: Plan Monitoring, Reassessment and Amendment Procedures

### Citizen Participation Approach

#### *Public Awareness*

- News Releases related to Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures
- Radio Talk Shows related to Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures
- Cable Access TV related to Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures
- Comprehensive Planning Newsletter related to Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures
- Presentations at community meetings and to local Government Groups related to Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures
- Comprehensive Planning Project Website

#### *Public Education*

- Public Education Sessions related to Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures

#### *Public Input*

- Interactive Question and Answer and Input function on comprehensive planning website
- Accept questions from the public and provide answers and referrals by the Joint and Individual Planning Committees

#### *Public Partnership*

- Planning Committees Meet
  - Develop plan evaluation process
  - Develop plan review and amendment process
  - Definition of plan update target (i.e. 5 years, 10 years, etc.)



### Comprehensive Planning Approach

Plan Monitoring, Assessment and Amendment Procedures

*Prepared By: Mark Hilliker, Community Resource Development Agent  
Portage County UW-Extension  
July 2001*

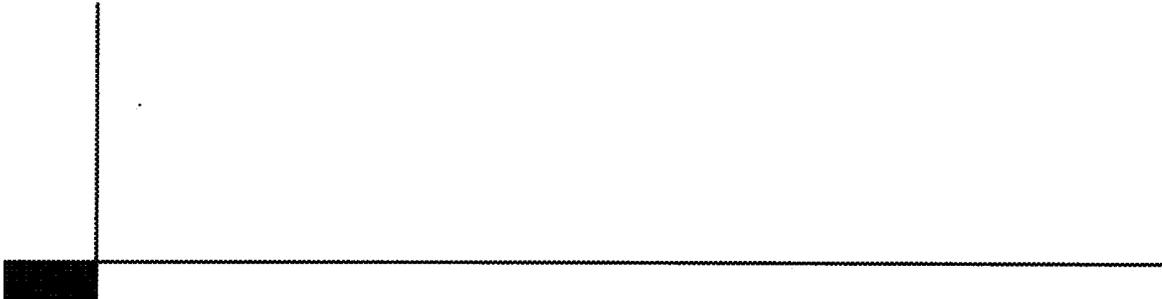


## Appendix B

### Portage County Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Survey Final Report

December, 2001

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015



Portage County  
Comprehensive  
Planning & Zoning  
Survey

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**Final Report**

**December, 2001**

*Town of Amherst*

**Prepared By:**

**Itzkowitz & Associates, LLC.  
4409 Sequoia Dr.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481  
715-344-2725**

## Town of Amherst Planning Survey

### County Trends and Land Use

**1. From the year 2000 to 2020, Portage County's population is projected to increase 21 percent from 67,182 to 81,242. At what rate would you like to see growth occur?**

	Responses	Percent
Faster than projected	7	5%
Present projected rate of growth	45	34%
Slower than projected	63	47%
No growth	14	11%
Don't Know	4	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>

**2. The following types of growth should be encouraged within Portage County**

**Single family residential**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	9	7%
3-Neutral	29	21%
4-Agree	50	37%
5-Strongly Agree	45	33%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100%</b>

Valid cases	136
Average	3.9

**Multi-family residential**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	16	12%
2-Disagree	26	19%
3-Neutral	52	39%
4-Agree	29	22%
5-Strongly Agree	9	7%
DK-Don't Know	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>

Valid cases	132
Average	2.9

**Rural residential**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	20	15%
2-Disagree	31	23%
3-Neutral	30	23%
4-Agree	32	24%
5-Strongly Agree	16	12%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%
Total	132	100%

Valid cases	129
Average	2.9

**Family farms**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	1	1%
3-Neutral	20	15%
4-Agree	46	34%
5-Strongly Agree	66	49%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	136	100%

Valid cases	136
Average	4.3

**Small businesses**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	2	1%
3-Neutral	18	13%
4-Agree	63	47%
5-Strongly Agree	49	36%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	135	100%

Valid cases	135
Average	4.1

**Hobby farms**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	9	7%
2-Disagree	15	11%
3-Neutral	42	32%
4-Agree	47	36%
5-Strongly Agree	18	14%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	132	100%

Valid cases	131
Average	3.4

**Large corporate farms**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	53	40%
2-Disagree	33	25%
3-Neutral	29	22%
4-Agree	12	9%
5-Strongly Agree	5	4%
DK-Don't Know	2	1%
Total	134	100%

Valid cases	132
Average	2.1

**Large retail outlets/centers**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	26	20%
2-Disagree	34	26%
3-Neutral	29	22%
4-Agree	24	18%
5-Strongly Agree	18	14%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	132	100%

Valid cases	131
Average	2.8

<u>Light industry</u>			<u>Heavy industry</u>		
	Responses	Percent		Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	8	6%	1- Strongly Disagree	23	17%
2-Disagree	7	5%	2-Disagree	24	18%
3-Neutral	15	11%	3-Neutral	31	23%
4-Agree	67	50%	4-Agree	27	20%
5-Strongly Agree	37	27%	5-Strongly Agree	25	19%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%	DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	135	100%	Total	134	100%
Valid cases	134		Valid cases	130	
Average	3.9		Average	3.1	

**3. Local units of government have the responsibility to protect property owners and the community by regulating land use.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	6	4%
2-Disagree	8	6%
3-Neutral	26	19%
4-Agree	68	49%
5-Strongly Agree	32	23%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	140	100%
Valid cases	140	
Average	3.8	

**4. The use of zoning regulations is beneficial.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	4	3%
2-Disagree	2	1%
3-Neutral	22	16%
4-Agree	70	50%
5-Strongly Agree	36	26%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	134	
Average	4.0	

**5. People should be allowed to develop their property any way they see fit.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	35	25%
2-Disagree	45	32%
3-Neutral	23	16%
4-Agree	20	14%
5-Strongly Agree	16	11%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	140	100%
Valid cases	139	
Average	2.5	

**Housing**

**6. Ideal urban neighborhoods would include homes as well as:**

<u>Apartments</u>			<u>Shopping</u>		
	Responses	Percent		Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	7	5%	1- Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2-Disagree	16	12%	2-Disagree	6	5%
3-Neutral	27	21%	3-Neutral	19	14%
4-Agree	58	44%	4-Agree	80	60%
5-Strongly Agree	20	15%	5-Strongly Agree	26	20%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%	DK-Don't Know	2	2%
Total	131	100%	Total	133	100%
Valid cases	128		Valid cases	131	
Average	3.5		Average	4.0	

T. Amherst

**Employment**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2-Disagree	8	6%
3-Neutral	28	21%
4-Agree	65	48%
5-Strongly Agree	34	25%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	135	
Average	3.9	

**Parks**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2-Disagree	2	1%
3-Neutral	12	9%
4-Agree	72	53%
5-Strongly Agree	47	35%
DK-Don't Know	2	1%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	134	
Average	4.2	

**Sidewalks**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	4	3%
2-Disagree	13	10%
3-Neutral	25	19%
4-Agree	62	46%
5-Strongly Agree	26	19%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	130	
Average	3.7	

**Schools**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2-Disagree	1	1%
3-Neutral	14	10%
4-Agree	72	54%
5-Strongly Agree	45	34%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	133	
Average	4.2	

**Alleys**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	13	10%
2-Disagree	32	25%
3-Neutral	46	35%
4-Agree	25	19%
5-Strongly Agree	11	8%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%
Total	130	100%
Valid cases	127	
Average	2.9	

**7. Other than farm residences, what types of housing would be appropriate in rural areas**

**Single family (2+ acre)**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	9	7%
2-Disagree	10	7%
3-Neutral	17	12%
4-Agree	57	42%
5-Strongly Agree	42	31%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	135	
Average	3.8	

**Duplexes**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	36	27%
2-Disagree	45	34%
3-Neutral	26	20%
4-Agree	17	13%
5-Strongly Agree	4	3%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	133	100%
Valid cases	128	
Average	2.3	

**Mobile home parks**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	71	53%
2-Disagree	38	28%
3-Neutral	14	10%
4-Agree	6	4%
5-Strongly Agree	1	1%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	130	
Average	1.7	

**Single family (<2 acre)**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	35	26%
2-Disagree	34	25%
3-Neutral	24	18%
4-Agree	24	18%
5-Strongly Agree	13	10%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	130	
Average	2.6	

**Multi-family apartments**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	53	40%
2-Disagree	48	36%
3-Neutral	18	14%
4-Agree	8	6%
5-Strongly Agree	2	2%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%
Total	132	100%
Valid cases	129	
Average	1.9	

**No new non-farm housing**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	24	18%
2-Disagree	32	24%
3-Neutral	38	29%
4-Agree	18	14%
5-Strongly Agree	14	11%
DK-Don't Know	6	5%
Total	132	100%
Valid cases	126	
Average	2.7	

**8. My city/village/township has a need for more:**

**Moderately priced homes**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	8	6%
2-Disagree	15	11%
3-Neutral	40	29%
4-Agree	50	36%
5-Strongly Agree	19	14%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	132	
Average	3.4	

**Higher priced homes**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	22	16%
2-Disagree	45	33%
3-Neutral	50	37%
4-Agree	10	7%
5-Strongly Agree	4	3%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	2.5	

**Manufactured(mobile) homes**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	52	38%
2-Disagree	46	34%
3-Neutral	30	22%
4-Agree	3	2%
5-Strongly Agree	2	1%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	133	
Average	1.9	

**Public/subsidized housing**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	32	24%
2-Disagree	39	29%
3-Neutral	37	27%
4-Agree	14	10%
5-Strongly Agree	5	4%
DK-Don't Know	8	6%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	127	
Average	2.4	

**Multi-unit rental housing**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	33	24%
2-Disagree	47	35%
3-Neutral	30	22%
4-Agree	20	15%
5-Strongly Agree	1	1%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	2.3	

**Housing for seniors**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	9	6%
2-Disagree	6	4%
3-Neutral	42	30%
4-Agree	59	42%
5-Strongly Agree	16	12%
DK-Don't Know	7	5%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	132	
Average	3.5	

**9. The overall quality of housing in my city/village/township is good.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	4	3%
3-Neutral	17	12%
4-Agree	105	76%
5-Strongly Agree	9	6%
DK-Don't Know	2	1%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	137	
Average	3.8	

**10. Government should provide financial assistance for lower income residents to maintain and improve their homes.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	16	12%
2-Disagree	18	13%
3-Neutral	43	31%
4-Agree	52	37%
5-Strongly Agree	9	6%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	138	
Average	3.1	

**Utilities & Community Facilities**

**11. New homes and businesses should be encouraged :**

**11a. Primarily in communities where sewer and water are available...**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	8	6%
3-Neutral	15	11%
4-Agree	78	58%
5-Strongly Agree	32	24%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	135	100%

Valid cases            135  
 Average                4.0

**11b. Next to communities where sewer and water could be extended...**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	11	8%
2-Disagree	20	15%
3-Neutral	35	26%
4-Agree	53	40%
5-Strongly Agree	14	10%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	134	100%

Valid cases            133  
 Average                3.3

**11c. Anywhere in the County, with or without sewer and water services...**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	34	25%
2-Disagree	35	26%
3-Neutral	33	24%
4-Agree	23	17%
5-Strongly Agree	8	6%
DK-Don't Know	2	1%
Total	135	100%

Valid cases            133  
 Average                2.5

**12. Future boundaries should be established for municipal water and sanitary sewer systems.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	10	7%
3-Neutral	33	24%
4-Agree	67	48%
5-Strongly Agree	23	16%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	140	100%

Valid cases	136
Average	3.7

**13. The boundaries described in Question 12 should be**

	Responses	Percent
Very inflexible, essentially stopping development outside of the boundary.	33	25%
Somewhat flexible, allowing for some development outside the boundary	92	70%
Very flexible, allowing anyone who asks for sewer and water to get it wherever they are.	7	5%
Total	132	100%

**14. How would you rate each of the following local services.**

**Sanitary sewer**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	2	1%
3-Average	15	11%
4-Good	31	23%
5-Excellent	7	5%
DU-Don't Use	78	58%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	57	
Average	3.7	

**Municipal water**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	3	2%
2-Poor	2	2%
3-Average	20	15%
4-Good	28	21%
5-Excellent	3	2%
DU-Don't Use	77	58%
Total	133	100%
Valid cases	56	
Average	3.5	

**Police protection**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	6	4%
3-Average	48	36%
4-Good	62	46%
5-Excellent	13	10%
DU-Don't Use	4	3%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	3.6	

**Fire protection**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	1	1%
3-Average	36	27%
4-Good	58	43%
5-Excellent	33	25%
DU-Don't Use	4	3%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	130	
Average	3.9	

**Ambulance service**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	1	1%
2-Poor	7	5%
3-Average	34	25%
4-Good	63	47%
5-Excellent	20	15%
DU-Don't Use	9	7%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	125	
Average	3.8	

**Social service**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	2%
2-Poor	6	5%
3-Average	42	32%
4-Good	38	29%
5-Excellent	8	6%
DU-Don't Use	35	27%
Total	131	100%
Valid cases	96	
Average	3.5	

**Garbage collection**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	1	1%
3-Average	28	21%
4-Good	72	53%
5-Excellent	14	10%
DU-Don't Use	18	13%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	117	
Average	3.8	

**Library**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	3	2%
3-Average	22	16%
4-Good	74	55%
5-Excellent	26	19%
DU-Don't Use	7	5%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	127	
Average	3.9	

**Parks**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	3	2%
3-Average	26	19%
4-Good	79	58%
5-Excellent	22	16%
DU-Don't Use	5	4%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	132	
Average	3.9	

**Recycling program**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	0	0%
2-Poor	7	5%
3-Average	28	21%
4-Good	79	59%
5-Excellent	15	11%
DU-Don't Use	5	4%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	129	
Average	3.8	

**Education**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	3	2%
3-Average	23	17%
4-Good	76	56%
5-Excellent	27	20%
DU-Don't Use	5	4%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	3.9	

**Recreation programs**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	3	2%
2-Poor	7	5%
3-Average	35	26%
4-Good	55	40%
5-Excellent	13	10%
DU-Don't Use	23	17%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	113	
Average	3.6	

## Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### 16. Portage County should work with farmers to identify and protect productive agricultural regions.

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2-Disagree	3	2%
3-Neutral	13	9%
4-Agree	50	35%
5-Strongly Agree	74	52%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	141	100%
Valid cases	140	
Average	4.4	

### 17. Local units of government in Portage County should address the issue of development in productive agricultural regions by:

#### 17a. Preserving farmland at all costs

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	5	4%
2-Disagree	24	18%
3-Neutral	36	27%
4-Agree	39	29%
5-Strongly Agree	29	22%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	134	100%
Valid cases	133	
Average	3.5	

**17b. Protecting productive farmland, but allowing growth in areas not suitable for agricultural use.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	7	5%
2-Disagree	14	10%
3-Neutral	17	12%
4-Agree	76	55%
5-Strongly Agree	23	17%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	137	
Average	3.7	

**17c. Not protecting farmland, let owners develop as they see fit**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	68	50%
2-Disagree	28	21%
3-Neutral	24	18%
4-Agree	8	6%
5-Strongly Agree	3	2%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	1.9	

**18. The rural economy of Portage County should be protected by having growth directed into and around existing developed areas.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	6	4%
3-Neutral	24	18%
4-Agree	75	55%
5-Strongly Agree	28	21%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	135	
Average	3.9	

**19. My city/village/township should make an effort to identify and protect the following:**

**19a. Woodlands**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	7	5%
3-Neutral	15	11%
4-Agree	58	42%
5-Strongly Agree	56	40%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	139	
Average	4.1	

**19b. Wetlands and floodplains**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	4	3%
3-Neutral	26	19%
4-Agree	45	32%
5-Strongly Agree	62	44%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	140	100%
Valid cases	139	
Average	4.2	

**19c. Open spaces**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	10	7%
3-Neutral	36	26%
4-Agree	48	35%
5-Strongly Agree	40	29%
DK-Don't Know	1	1%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	137	
Average	3.8	

**19d. Lakes, rivers and streams**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2-Disagree	2	1%
3-Neutral	13	9%
4-Agree	52	37%
5-Strongly Agree	72	51%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	140	100%
Valid cases	140	
Average	4.4	

**19e. Endangered species habitat**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	5	4%
2-Disagree	9	7%
3-Neutral	25	18%
4-Agree	40	29%
5-Strongly Agree	58	42%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	137	
Average	4.0	

**19f. Parkland, existing and future**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	4	3%
3-Neutral	23	17%
4-Agree	62	45%
5-Strongly Agree	47	34%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	138	
Average	4.1	

**19g. Historic and cultural sites**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	7	5%
3-Neutral	24	17%
4-Agree	61	44%
5-Strongly Agree	46	33%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
Total	140	100%
Valid cases	140	
Average	4.0	

**20. The following represent a threat to the quality of Portage County's groundwater:**

**20a. Residential runoff**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	18	13%
3-Neutral	18	13%
4-Agree	68	50%
5-Strongly Agree	26	19%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	132	
Average	3.7	

**20b. Agricultural pesticides and fertilizers**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2-Disagree	10	7%
3-Neutral	15	11%
4-Agree	54	39%
5-Strongly Agree	51	37%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	132	
Average	4.1	

**20c. Manure and liquid waste application**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	15	11%
3-Neutral	26	19%
4-Agree	51	37%
5-Strongly Agree	33	24%
DK-Don't Know	9	7%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	128	
Average	3.8	

**20e. Sewage holding tank and septic tank spreading**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	25	18%
3-Neutral	50	36%
4-Agree	33	24%
5-Strongly Agree	16	12%
DK-Don't Know	10	7%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	127	
Average	3.3	

**20g. Industrial waste land spreading**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2-Disagree	7	5%
3-Neutral	25	19%
4-Agree	54	40%
5-Strongly Agree	32	24%
DK-Don't Know	16	12%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	119	
Average	3.9	

**20d. Commercial/Industrial storm water runoff and infiltration**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2-Disagree	5	4%
3-Neutral	29	21%
4-Agree	62	46%
5-Strongly Agree	24	18%
DK-Don't Know	14	10%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	121	
Average	3.9	

**20f. Improperly abandoned wells**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2-Disagree	10	7%
3-Neutral	53	39%
4-Agree	38	28%
5-Strongly Agree	16	12%
DK-Don't Know	17	13%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	118	
Average	3.5	

**20h. municipal waste and sludge land spreading**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	5	4%
2-Disagree	10	7%
3-Neutral	34	25%
4-Agree	43	32%
5-Strongly Agree	29	21%
DK-Don't Know	15	11%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	121	
Average	3.7	

**21. The following represent a threat to the quantity of Portage County's groundwater:**

**21a. Municipal wells**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	9	7%
2-Disagree	28	21%
3-Neutral	55	40%
4-Agree	24	18%
5-Strongly Agree	5	4%
DK-Don't Know	15	11%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	121	
Average	2.9	

**21b. Agricultural irrigation wells**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	4	3%
2-Disagree	25	18%
3-Neutral	41	30%
4-Agree	35	26%
5-Strongly Agree	21	15%
DK-Don't Know	11	8%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	126	
Average	3.3	

**21c. Drinking water bottling plants**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	8	6%
2-Disagree	13	9%
3-Neutral	30	22%
4-Agree	36	26%
5-Strongly Agree	38	28%
DK-Don't Know	12	9%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	125	
Average	3.7	

**21d. Industrial water users**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	3	2%
2-Disagree	12	9%
3-Neutral	44	33%
4-Agree	46	34%
5-Strongly Agree	18	13%
DK-Don't Know	12	9%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	123	
Average	3.5	

**21e. Private wells**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	26	19%
2-Disagree	57	42%
3-Neutral	32	24%
4-Agree	8	6%
5-Strongly Agree	5	4%
DK-Don't Know	8	6%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	128	
Average	2.3	

**Commerce and Employment**

**22. What types of new development do you believe would be good for Portage County to attract?**

**22a. Retail development**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	8	6%
2-Disagree	23	17%
3-Neutral	41	30%
4-Agree	42	30%
5-Strongly Agree	20	14%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	134	
Average	3.3	

**22b. Service Development**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	6	4%
2-Disagree	26	19%
3-Neutral	60	43%
4-Agree	31	22%
5-Strongly Agree	12	9%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	135	
Average	3.1	

**22c. Office Development**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	9	7%
2-Disagree	26	19%
3-Neutral	47	35%
4-Agree	36	27%
5-Strongly Agree	13	10%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	3.1	

**22d. Industrial Development**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	9	7%
2-Disagree	17	13%
3-Neutral	23	17%
4-Agree	50	37%
5-Strongly Agree	31	23%
DK-Don't Know	5	4%
Total	135	100%
Valid cases	130	
Average	3.6	

**23. New retail or commercial businesses should only be located in cities or villages**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	5	4%
2-Disagree	26	19%
3-Neutral	20	15%
4-Agree	51	37%
5-Strongly Agree	32	23%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	134	
Average	3.6	

**24. There are enough job opportunities to make a living in Portage County.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	11	8%
2-Disagree	35	26%
3-Neutral	27	20%
4-Agree	44	32%
5-Strongly Agree	14	10%
DK-Don't Know	6	4%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	131	
Average	3.1	

**25. Tax dollars should be used to develop new jobs in the County.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	16	12%
2-Disagree	29	21%
3-Neutral	43	31%
4-Agree	35	25%
5-Strongly Agree	12	9%
DK-Don't Know	3	2%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	135	
Average	3.0	

**Transportation**

**26. Local roads in my city/village/township are in good condition**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	7	5%
2-Disagree	26	19%
3-Neutral	16	12%
4-Agree	82	59%
5-Strongly Agree	8	6%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100%</b>
Valid cases	139	
Average	3.4	

**27. Portage County Highways are in good condition.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	4	3%
2-Disagree	8	6%
3-Neutral	15	11%
4-Agree	100	71%
5-Strongly Agree	13	9%
DK-Don't Know	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>
Valid cases	140	
Average	3.8	

**28. Local units of government in Portage County need to provide:**

**28a. more bicycle routes**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	16	12%
2-Disagree	19	14%
3-Neutral	45	32%
4-Agree	39	28%
5-Strongly Agree	14	10%
DK-Don't Know	6	4%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	133	
Average	3.1	

**28b. more pedestrian routes**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	15	11%
2-Disagree	20	14%
3-Neutral	51	37%
4-Agree	33	24%
5-Strongly Agree	14	10%
DK-Don't Know	6	4%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	133	
Average	3.1	

**29. Local units of government should provide connections to regional trail systems.**

	Responses	Percent
1- Strongly Disagree	18	13%
2-Disagree	17	12%
3-Neutral	35	25%
4-Agree	42	30%
5-Strongly Agree	22	16%
DK-Don't Know	4	3%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	134	
Average	3.2	

**30. How would you rate the following transportation-related services in Portage County:**

**Road maintenance**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	7	5%
2-Poor	4	3%
3-Average	29	21%
4-Good	83	60%
5-Excellent	15	11%
DU-Don't Use	1	1%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	138	
Average	3.7	

**Public parking**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	1	1%
2-Poor	11	8%
3-Average	55	40%
4-Good	57	41%
5-Excellent	6	4%
DU-Don't Use	8	6%
Total	138	100%
Valid cases	130	
Average	3.4	

**Bicycle/pedestrian facilities**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	4	3%
2-Poor	14	10%
3-Average	47	35%
4-Good	37	27%
5-Excellent	4	3%
DU-Don't Use	30	22%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	106	
Average	3.2	

**Snow plowing**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	0	0%
2-Poor	9	6%
3-Average	26	19%
4-Good	85	61%
5-Excellent	16	12%
DU-Don't Use	3	2%
Total	139	100%
Valid cases	136	
Average	3.8	

**Bus / Taxi / etc.**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	1	1%
2-Poor	22	16%
3-Average	37	27%
4-Good	21	15%
5-Excellent	4	3%
DU-Don't Use	51	38%
Total	136	100%
Valid cases	85	
Average	3.1	

**Transportation for seniors**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	2	1%
2-Poor	10	7%
3-Average	29	21%
4-Good	33	24%
5-Excellent	5	4%
DU-Don't Use	58	42%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	79	
Average	3.4	

**Transportation for disabled**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	4	3%
2-Poor	9	7%
3-Average	24	18%
4-Good	32	23%
5-Excellent	5	4%
DU-Don't Use	63	46%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	74	
Average	3.3	

**Airport facilities**

	Responses	Percent
1-Very Poor	7	5%
2-Poor	17	12%
3-Average	40	29%
4-Good	24	18%
5-Excellent	5	4%
DU-Don't Use	44	32%
Total	137	100%
Valid cases	93	
Average	3.0	

**Issues and Opportunities**

**31. My preference for development in rural Portage County in the year 2020 is:**

	Responses	Percent
Preservation of the existing rural landscape with limited amounts of new development.	79	56%
Preservation of the existing landscape with moderate amounts of new development.	55	39%
Unrestricted development in rural areas.	6	4%
Total	140	100%

**32. my preference for development in urban Portage County in the year 2020 is:**

	Responses	Percent
Infill and redevelopment with no outward expansion of existing urban areas.	32	23%
Some outward expansion of existing urban areas with a focus on infill and redevelopment.	98	70%
Unrestricted growth of the urban areas with a focus on outward expansion.	11	8%
Total	141	100%

**33. As Portage County and local government units plan for future development, should they discourage, encourage, or remain neutral regarding each of the following:**

**33a. Environmental preservation**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	117	84%
Remain neutral	22	16%
Discourage	0	0%
Don't Know	0	0%
Total	139	100%

**33b. Farmland preservation**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	114	81%
Remain neutral	24	17%
Discourage	1	1%
Don't Know	1	1%
Total	140	100%

**33c. Industrial development**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	71	52%
Remain neutral	46	34%
Discourage	15	11%
Don't Know	4	3%
Total	136	100%

**33d. Residential development**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	47	34%
Remain neutral	70	51%
Discourage	18	13%
Don't Know	3	2%
Total	138	100%

**33e. Retail development**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	53	38%
Remain neutral	62	45%
Discourage	21	15%
Don't Know	2	1%
Total	138	100%

**33f. Tourism facilities**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	61	44%
Remain neutral	52	37%
Discourage	20	14%
Don't Know	6	4%
Total	139	100%

**33g. Vacation homes**

	Responses	Percent
Encourage	15	11%
Remain neutral	68	49%
Discourage	50	36%
Don't Know	6	4%
Total	139	100%

## Demographics

### 36. How long have you been a resident in Portage County?

	Responses	Percent
Less than 1 year	1	1%
1 - 5 years	5	4%
6 - 10 years	11	8%
11 - 20 years	16	12%
over 20 years	99	71%
Not a resident but own land	7	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 38. I currently

	Responses	Percent
Own	134	96%
Rent	5	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 39. Please indicate your gender:

	Responses	Percent
Male	83	61%
Female	54	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 40. What is your age:

	Responses	Percent
under 18	0	0%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	17	12%
35-44	28	20%
45-54	43	31%
55-64	22	16%
65-74	19	14%
over 75	11	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 42. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	Responses	Percent
some high school	5	4%
high school graduate	59	44%
technical college	21	16%
junior college	2	1%
college	32	24%
post graduate	15	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 43. What is your employment status:

	Responses	Percent
employed	78	57%
unemployed	2	1%
self-employed	26	19%
student	1	1%
retired	30	22%
do not work	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 44. What is your field of employment?

	Responses	Percent
Agriculture	11	10%
Wholesale trade	2	2%
Manufacturing	17	16%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	7	7%
Government	12	11%
Retail trade	9	9%
Transportation/Public Utilities	7	7%
Services	32	30%
Construction/Mining	8	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

**41. How many people live in your household, including yourself?**

	Responses	Percent
0	1	1%
1	14	10%
2	57	42%
3	29	21%
4	24	18%
5	8	6%
6	2	1%
7	1	1%
8	0	0%
9	0	0%
10	0	0%
Over 10	0	0%
Total	136	100%

**41a. number under 18 years old.**

	Responses	Percent
0	65	55%
1	22	19%
2	20	17%
3	8	7%
4	2	2%
5	1	1%
6	0	0%
7	0	0%
8	0	0%
9	0	0%
10	0	0%
Over 10	0	0%
Total	118	100%

**45. Where do you work?**

	Responses	Percent
Portage County	47	46%
Stevens	26	25%
Point/Plover/Whiting/ParkRidge		
Marshfield Area	1	1%
Wisconsin Rapids	4	4%
Mosinee/Wausau Area	0	0%
Waupaca Area	17	17%
Outside Central Wisconsin	7	7%
Total	102	100%

**46. What is your approximate gross (before tax) yearly family income?**

	Responses	Percent
under \$15,000	6	5%
\$15,001 to \$29,999	28	22%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	33	26%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	48	38%
\$100,000 or more	10	8%
Total	125	100%

15. One recreational program or facility that my family or I would like to see provided somewhere in Portage County is:

T. Amherst

1. ATV TRAIL
2. connection of current trail systems
3. Rural Bike Trail
4. Afterschool Rec. Center age 10-18
5. shooting range
6. access to public swimming pool in winter
7. Youth Hockey Rink
8. MORE GOLF COURSES
9. Nature trails
10. Lighted night skiing ant Standing Rocks
11. County Landfill
12. N/A
13. Not qualified to choose
14. Swimming/Amherst
15. park(s) w/o facilities
16. Park Trailer for 1 or 2 weeks a year in Tree Farm property areas
17. soccer
18. snow shoeing trails
19. Community Swimming Pool
20. Senior citizens
21. more campgrounds
22. -
23. near Amherst
24. wellness- fitness center
25. for kids 16 to 21
26. none
27. movie theatre for teenagers
28. No Snowmobile trails
29. more count parks & better management
30. Improved fairgrounds
31. Boys & Girls Club of Portage Co.
32. Teen recreation spot in smaller villages
33. Wildlife Rehabilitaion and Education Center
34. Fitness center other than YMCA
35. Preserve the land from future development (complete bike trail from Plover to Rapids - Hwy 54)
36. no more
37. swimming pool
38. Soccer
39. ATV trail
40. Public Pool
41. A casino
42. boys girls club
43. archery targets in park

34. Please tell us the SINGLE greatest problem or concern you have regarding your city/village/township.

T. Amherst

1. gangs & drugs
2. planning- county doesn't plan very well
3. rapid growth
4. Highway 10 expansion
5. Too Many People
6. too much development
7. to much pressure to join village incorporation
8. unrestricted rural residential growth & peoples lack of knowledge of Agricultural practices
9. The social services needs to be expanded & more available to all
10. maintaining and developing arterial roads
11. the lack of local retail shopping for conveniences and variety
12. Big subdivisions taking over rural forest or crop land and letting them have small lots which means many more homes.
13. ?
14. The encroachment of the village of Amherst on our area.
15. Excessive use of power boats too large & too fast for size of lake
16. That re-routing Highway 10 will create another lackluster retail area as happened with the downtown.
17. none
18. Town of Amherst Roads suck!
19. Not enough Police Officers on the street.
20. NO MAJOR CONCERNS
21. Concern about ground water quality.
22. Urban sprawl
23. Rerouting Hwy 10
24. Road maintenance/snow removal Large feedlot farms/milking parlors.
25. increased traffic on narrow roads
26. Developing Farmland should be stopped
27. Dividing up of mid-size farms (40-200 acres) into smaller lots.
28. Must have 3 acres of land to build in country when 2 acres are sufficient stupid to waste land. Why build 7 homes on forty acres when one could build 15 to 18 homes on same area.
29. Need more job's
30. Lack of attn. to preserving farm land and compensating retiring farmers to keep it in farming.
31. Not qualified to comment
32. Safety on small lake/over use by boaters and pwc
33. Expanding into rural areas (including water/sewer)
34. Water price
35. Growth (spreading out to far)
36. expanding development.
37. We have had people drive by our land & dump garbage out of their cars/trucks
38. To much traffic
39. Fire Protection
40. Should not wait so long to cut high grass along rural roads especially by four corners.
41. Development of subdivisions
42. not enough money for schools
43. The small roads aren't kept up & snow plowing is atrocious
44. Too many people from the city are moving to the rural area.
45. Trucking Co. in agriculture zone
46. Too much growth

47. School system is deteriorating
48. Town board does not encourage public participation or input.
49. Kids on drugs & drinking and drive too fast
50. loss of productive farmland due to residential development
51. Too much rural development
52. unplanned development - sprawl
53. schools
54. Too much traffic in the countryside, rural part of the county
55. -
56. High taxation (among other ag policies) that force families off of farms & encourage selling off land into residential lots.
57. Downtown Stevens Point needs to be revived! It is dead!
58. All is fairly well maintained.
59. County Highway R/W maintenance
60. better road maintenance & snow plowing
61. More law enforcement for outlying county- more county reps on committees. This is not Stevens Point County.
62. high taxes
63. City water is way too expensive!!
64. Diverting farmland away from ag use
65. Favoritism in Local Government
66. High taxes
67. Our groundwater
68. There are not enough good paying jobs to keep up with living cost.
69. narrow township roads
70. narrow township roads
71. The roads by Amherst are terrible Cty Q is nasty
72. ground water
73. no police protection village Amherst
74. taxes - roads
75. Large corporate farms & the inability to control smells
76. Money wasted on foreigners and refugees
77. Industrial Ag.
78. That farms will no longer be
79. Village of Amherst Junction, The wealthy people have influenced the board (zoning) to promote their development
80. We need more police surveylance around schools.
81. only roads to be improved lead to supervisor's homes.
82. Road Maintenance in Town of Amherst
83. Provincial attitudes regarding relationship with Stevens Point (city)
84. Snow removal
85. The teenagers seem to have no place to "hang out". Potential trouble spot with the local "hoods" and drug use.
86. Unrestricted rural development for home building
87. Not enough GOOD jobs with good pay/benefits
88. village trying to force sewer & water on town residents
89. Expansion in housing "subdivision" w/in township
90. Farm land becoming 2 acre or less home sites. Stop developing OR allowing homes on less than 100 acres
91. Sprawl
92. sprawl
93. Law Enforcement not in local village.

94. Family farms folding up and turning into subdivisions
95. The number of criminals who aren't locked up (Bracelet, probation etc)
96. Its fine
97. trees along roads are not trimmed enough
98. need more industries in village limits
99. rising property taxes
100. Lack of respect for agriculture
101. Over Growth
102. They don't plow the roads soon enough in the winter
103. schools
104. I work nights go in at 11pm roads don't get plowed until am traffic

35. Please share with us the best part of living in your city/village/township.  
T. Amherst

1. open spaces
2. pretty area
3. quiet
4. Rural living w/ easy access to urban areas
5. Tight Knot Community
6. the open spaces and beauty of the country
7. quite a nice neighborhood-room
8. Being able to find anything I need in Stevens Point/services, shopping, hospital, good school
9. It is still quiet and safe
10. wildlife, beautiful rolling landscape
11. the sense of safety and low crime rate
12. country living but within good distance to shopping, etc.
13. Quiet- safe- able to take advantage of services in nearby cities.
14. natural, unspoiled beauty of rural countryside!!
15. excellent schools
16. peace & quite beautiful landscape
17. Good clean neighborhood.
18. SMALL TOWN FEEL
19. Quiet, beautiful, safe.
20. Nature and solitude
21. Low taxes & friendly people
22. Peaceful/quiet rural setting
23. close to cultural/shopping in St. Point, but room to breathe
24. Nice People
25. like country living
26. Large open spaces, occasionally dotted with small farms, residences.
27. Close to village but not in village close to run to store
28. scenery and privacy
29. ok
30. The friendly people
31. Living in the country on a farm-environment
32. It's homyness
33. Enjoyment of nature in rural setting
34. Quiet-clean-safe
35. Small town
36. It was better ten years ago

37. Simple life - few regulations - Family friendly
38. Quiet - open space
39. We have good access to help in case of emergency.
40. Rural atmosphere
41. where we live
42. The quiet in the evening.
43. The natives are friendly.
44. People are ready to help.
45. close enough to larger city but yet out in country
46. Quality of life is excellent
47. Rural character of area.
48. Good snow plowing
49. wide open country living
50. Beauty of the landscape, rivers, trees, no ugly apartments so far.
51. rural atmosphere
52. great community spirit & quiet rural living
53. Friendly & caring people. Small town atmosphere.
54. -
55. Rural area- I'd like to keep it that way.
56. The clean air and not to close to waste smell.
57. rural living
58. Hunting & fishing & other recreational things we can do.
59. Small, friendly, good schools.
60. Friendly People, Above Average Snow Removal
61. Knowing most of our neighbors
62. The people
63. Knowing that my kids will know what country life is.
64. fresh air
65. fresh air
66. small community with lots of open space
67. rural living
68. small town atmosphere; no congestion
69. peace and quiet country atmosphere
70. small population - uncongested - Peaceful
71. open space
72. The access to necessary service needs.
73. Quiet.
74. Rural setting is great compared to the cities
75. wide open country. No congestions.
76. Don't interfere w/my business
77. Good School District Quite Community
78. Quiet country location; close to nature, yet convenient to Village/City.
79. Quiet surroundings, well kept up
80. Amherst has retained that small-town atmosphere and pride in our community over the years.
81. Quiet small town lifestyle
82. Close to my job
83. People mind their own business, I have some privacy
84. open space/ great neighbors/ volunteer fire fighters
85. The woods that we are trying to keep for wildlife and the future.
86. people, school
87. not a city!!!
88. The Rural Areas Are not Overcrowded yet - Keep it that way!

89. unpopulated country, woods, lakes & streams
90. Being left alone. Having my right to private property respected.
91. Rural and simple government
92. the peaceful setting of country living
93. small town
94. Some what private yet close to larger towns
95. Location and schooling
96. meets all our needs
97. other residents



## Appendix C

### Wisconsin State Statutes:

16.965

Planning grants to local government units

66.1001

Comprehensive Planning

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015

(3) (a) Establish a demographic services center for the purpose of developing and administering systems needed to carry out the functions of the department under subs. (1) and (2), maintaining a current repository of appropriate published and computer retrievable federal census information and cooperating with state agencies and regional planning agencies so that the department's population estimates, projections and published reports are useful for planning and other purposes for which they are required. The center shall coordinate population information development and use. The center shall provide assistance to and encourage and coordinate efforts by state and local agencies, regional planning agencies and private businesses and associations to inform the public regarding the federal census process and the importance of obtaining a complete, accurate federal decennial census. The department may enter into agreements with state and local agencies or regional planning agencies for their assistance in the preparation of population estimates, projections and forecasts.

(b) Maintain and keep current throughout the decade the maps of congressional and legislative district boundaries received from the legislative reference bureau under s. 13.92 (1) (a) 6. and provide copies thereof to the government accountability board.

(c) Serve as the state's liaison to the U.S. bureau of the census to facilitate accurate federal decennial census counts in this state.

**History:** 1971 c. 215; 1973 c. 37, 333; 1975 c. 189; 1977 c. 29 ss. 93 to 95, 1648 (1), (3); 1979 c. 34; 1981 c. 20; 1983 a. 29; 1987 a. 142; 1989 a. 31; 1991 a. 39, 269; 1999 a. 63; 2005 a. 22; 2007 a. 1.

**Cross-reference:** See also s. Adm 3.01, Wis. adm. code.

#### 16.9645 Interoperability council. (1) In this section:

(a) "Council" means the interoperability council created under s. 15.107 (18).

(b) "Dispatch center" has the meaning given for "public safety answering point" in s. 256.35 (1) (gm).

(c) "Interoperability" means the ability of public safety agencies to communicate with each other and with agencies and entities identified under sub. (2) (a) by means of radio or associated communications systems, including the exchange of voice, data, or video communications on demand and in real time, as needed and authorized.

(d) "Public safety agency" has the meaning given in s. 256.35 (1) (g).

(2) The council shall do all of the following:

(a) Identify types of agencies and entities, including public works and transportation agencies, hospitals, and volunteer emergency services agencies to be included, in addition to public safety agencies, in a statewide public safety interoperable communication system.

(b) Recommend short-term and long-term goals to achieve a statewide public safety interoperable communication system.

(c) Recommend and periodically review a strategy and timeline for achieving the goals under par. (b), including objectives for local units of government.

(d) Assist the department of justice in identifying and obtaining funding to implement a statewide public safety interoperable communication system.

(e) Advise the department of justice and the department of military affairs on allocating funds, including those available for homeland security, for the purpose of achieving the goals under par. (b).

(f) Make recommendations to the department of justice on all of the following:

1. Technical and operational standards for public safety interoperable communication systems.

2. Guidelines and procedures for using public safety interoperable communication systems.

3. Minimum standards for public safety interoperable communication systems, facilities, and equipment used by dispatch centers.

4. Certification criteria for persons who operate public safety interoperable communication systems for dispatch centers.

**History:** 2007 a. 79; 2009 a. 180; 2013 a. 20.

#### 16.965 Planning grants to local governmental units.

(1) In this section:

(a) "Local governmental unit" means a county, city, village, town or regional planning commission.

(b) "Smart growth area" means an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities that have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.

(2) From the appropriations under s. 20.505 (1) (cm) and (ud), the department may provide grants to local governmental units to be used to finance the cost of planning activities, including contracting for planning consultant services, public planning sessions and other planning outreach and educational activities, or for the purchase of computerized planning data, planning software or the hardware required to utilize that data or software. The department shall require any local governmental unit that receives a grant under this section to finance a percentage of the cost of the product or service to be funded by the grant from the resources of the local governmental unit. The department shall determine the percentage of the cost to be funded by a local governmental unit based on the number of applications for grants and the availability of funding to finance grants for the fiscal year in which grants are to be provided. A local governmental unit that desires to receive a grant under this subsection shall file an application with the department. The application shall contain a complete statement of the expenditures proposed to be made for the purposes of the grant. No local governmental unit is eligible to receive a grant under this subsection unless the local governmental unit agrees to utilize the grant to finance planning for all of the purposes specified in s. 66.1001 (2).

(4) In determining whether to approve a proposed grant, preference shall be accorded to applications of local governmental units that contain all of the following elements:

(a) Planning efforts that address the interests of overlapping or neighboring jurisdictions.

(b) Planning efforts that contain a specific description of the means by which all of the following local, comprehensive planning goals will be achieved:

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.

2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.

3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.

4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.

5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.

6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.

7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.

8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.

9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.

10. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and

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future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.

11. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.

12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.

13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

14. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

(c) Planning efforts that identify smart growth areas.

(d) Planning efforts, including subsequent updates and amendments, that include development of implementing ordinances, including ordinances pertaining to zoning, subdivisions and land division.

(e) Planning efforts for which completion is contemplated within 30 months of the date on which a grant would be awarded.

(f) Planning efforts that provide opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process.

(5) The department may, upon application, grant a local governmental unit that has received a grant under sub. (2) and that has not adopted a comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 an extension of time to adopt a comprehensive plan. During the period of the extension, the local governmental unit shall be exempt from the requirements under s. 66.1001 (3).

**History:** 1999 a. 9, 148, 185; 2001 a. 16, 30, 105; 2003 a. 33 s. 2813; 2009 a. 372; 2013 a. 20.

**Cross-reference:** See also ch. Adm 48, Wis. adm. code.

Challenges to "Smart Growth": State Legislative Approaches to Comprehensive Growth Planning and the Local Government Issue. Yajnik. 2004 WLR 229.

**16.9651 Transportation planning grants to local governmental units.** (1) In this section, "local governmental unit" means a county, city, village, town or regional planning commission.

(2) From the appropriation under s. 20.505 (1) (z), the department may provide grants to local governmental units to be used to finance the cost of planning activities related to the transportation element, as described in s. 66.1001 (2) (c), of a comprehensive plan, as defined in s. 66.1001 (1) (a), including contracting for planning consultant services, public planning sessions, and other planning outreach and educational activities, or for the purchase of computerized planning data, planning software, or the hardware required to utilize that data or software. The department may require any local governmental unit that receives a grant under this section to finance not more than 25% of the cost of the product or service to be funded by the grant from the resources of the local governmental unit. Prior to awarding a grant under this section, the department shall forward a detailed statement of the proposed expenditures to be made under the grant to the secretary of transportation and obtain his or her written approval of the proposed expenditures.

**History:** 1999 a. 9; 2001 a. 30.

**Cross-reference:** See also ch. Adm 48, Wis. adm. code.

**16.966 Geographic information systems.** The department may develop and maintain geographic information systems relating to land in this state for the use of governmental and non-governmental units.

**History:** 1997 a. 27 ss. 133am to 133d, 9456 (3m); 2003 a. 33 s. 2811; 2003 a. 48 ss. 10, 11; 2003 a. 206 s. 23; 2005 a. 25 ss. 91, 2493.

**16.967 Land information program.** (1) **DEFINITIONS.** In this section:

(a) "Agency" has the meaning given in s. 16.70 (1e).

(b) "Land information" means any physical, legal, economic, or environmental information or characteristics concerning land, water, groundwater, subsurface resources, or air in this state.

"Land information" includes information relating to topography, soil, soil erosion, geology, minerals, vegetation, land cover, wildlife, associated natural resources, land ownership, land use, land use controls and restrictions, jurisdictional boundaries, tax assessment, land value, land survey records and references, geodetic control networks, aerial photographs, maps, planimetric data, remote sensing data, historic and prehistoric sites, and economic projections.

(c) "Land information system" means an orderly method of organizing and managing land information and land records.

(d) "Land records" means maps, documents, computer files, and any other information storage medium in which land information is recorded.

(e) "Systems integration" means land information that is housed in one jurisdiction or jurisdictional subunit and is available to other jurisdictions, jurisdictional subunits, public utilities, and other private sector interests.

(3) **DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT.** The department shall direct and supervise the land information program and serve as the state clearinghouse for access to land information. In addition, the department shall:

(a) Provide technical assistance and advice to state agencies and local governmental units with land information responsibilities.

(b) Maintain and distribute an inventory of land information available for this state, land records available for this state, and land information systems.

(c) Prepare guidelines to coordinate the modernization of land records and land information systems.

(cm) Provide standards for the preparation of countywide plans for land records modernization under s. 59.72 (3) (b), including a list of minimum elements to be addressed in the plan.

(d) Review project applications received under sub. (7) and determine which projects are approved.

(e) Review for approval a countywide plan for land records modernization prepared under s. 59.72 (3) (b).

(f) Review reports received under s. 59.72 (2) (b) and determine whether county expenditures of funds received under sub. (7) and s. 59.72 (5) (b) have been made for authorized purposes.

(g) Post reports received under s. 59.72 (2) (b) on the Internet.

(h) Establish an implementation plan for a statewide digital parcel map.

(4) **FUNDING REPORT.** The department shall identify and study possible program revenue sources or other revenue sources for the purpose of funding the operations of the land information program, including grants to counties under sub. (7).

(6) **REPORTS.** (a) By March 31 of each year, the department of administration, the department of agriculture, trade and consumer protection, the department of safety and professional services, the department of health services, the department of natural resources, the department of tourism, the department of revenue, the department of transportation, the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System, the public service commission, and the board of curators of the historical society shall each submit to the department a plan to integrate land information to enable such information to be readily translatable, retrievable, and geographically referenced for use by any state, local governmental unit, or public utility. Upon receipt of this information, the department shall integrate the information to enable the information to be used to meet land information data needs. The integrated information shall be readily translatable, retrievable, and geographically referenced to enable members of the public to use the information.

(b) No later than January 1, 2017, the department shall submit to the members of the joint committee on finance a report on the progress in developing a statewide digital parcel map.

(7) **AID TO COUNTIES.** (a) A county board that has established a county land information office under s. 59.72 (3) may apply to the department on behalf of any local governmental unit, as

suror, who need not be a member of the board, to perform services specified by the board.

(b) Members, and any assistant treasurer, shall qualify by taking the official oath, and the treasurer and any assistant treasurer shall furnish a bond in a sum specified by the board and in the form and conditioned as provided in s. 19.01 (2) and (3). The oaths and bonds shall be filed with the county clerk. The cost of the bond shall be paid by the board.

(8) POWERS OF BOARD. The board may, subject to provisions of the ordinance:

(a) Contract for the construction or other acquisition, equipment or furnishing of a hospital.

(b) Contract for the construction or other acquisition of additions or improvements to, or alterations in, a hospital and the equipment or furnishing of an addition.

(c) Employ a manager of a hospital and other necessary personnel and fix their compensation.

(d) Enact, amend and repeal rules and regulations for the admission to, and government of patients at, a hospital, for the regulation of the board's meetings and deliberations, and for the government, operation and maintenance of the hospital and the hospital employees.

(e) Contract for and purchase all fuel, food, equipment, furnishings and supplies reasonably necessary for the proper operation and maintenance of a hospital.

(f) Audit all accounts and claims against a hospital or against the board, and, if approved, pay the accounts and claims from the fund specified in sub. (10). All expenditures made pursuant to this section shall be within the limits of the ordinance.

(g) Sue and be sued, and to collect or compromise any obligations due to the hospital. All money received shall be paid into the joint hospital fund.

(h) Make studies and recommendations to the county board and city council or city councils relating to the operation of a hospital as the board considers advisable or the governing bodies request.

(i) Employ counsel on either a temporary or permanent basis.

(9) BUDGET. The board shall annually, before the time of the preparation of either the county or city budget under s. 65.90, prepare a budget of its anticipated receipts and expenditures for the ensuing fiscal year and determine the proportionate cost to the county and the participating city or cities under the terms of the ordinance. A certified copy of the budget, which shall include a statement of the net amount required from the county and city or cities, shall be delivered to the clerks of the respective municipalities. The county board and the common council of the city or cities shall consider the budget, and determine the amount to be raised by the respective municipalities in the proportions determined by the ordinance. After this determination, the county and city or cities respectively shall levy a tax sufficient to produce the amount to be raised by the county and city or cities.

(10) HOSPITAL FUND. A joint county–city hospital fund shall be created and established in a public depository to be specified in the ordinance. The treasurer of the respective county and city or cities shall pay into the fund the amounts specified by the ordinance and resolutions of the respective municipalities when the amounts have been collected. All of the moneys which come into the fund are appropriated to the board for the execution of its functions as provided by the ordinance and the resolutions of the respective municipalities. The moneys in the fund shall be paid out by the treasurer of the hospital board only upon the approval or direction of the board.

(11) CORRELATION OF LAWS. (a) In any case where a bid is a prerequisite to contract in connection with a county or city hospital under s. 66.0901, it is also a prerequisite to a valid contract by the board. For this purpose, the board is a municipality and the contract a public contract under s. 66.0901.

(b) All statutory requirements, not inconsistent with the provision of this section, applicable to general county or city hospitals apply to hospitals referred to in this section.

(12) REPORTS. The board shall report its activities to the county board and the city council or councils annually, or oftener as either of the municipalities requires.

(14) POWERS OF VILLAGES. Villages have all of the powers granted to cities under subs. (1) to (12) and whenever any village exercises these powers the word “city” wherever it appears in subs. (1) to (12) means “village” unless the context otherwise requires. Any village participating in the construction or other acquisition of a hospital or in its operation, pursuant to this section, may enter into lease agreements leasing the hospital and its equipment and furnishings to a nonprofit corporation.

(15) POWERS OF TOWNS. Towns have all of the powers granted to cities under subs. (1) to (12) and whenever any town exercises these powers the word “city” wherever it appears in subs. (1) to (12) means “town” unless the context otherwise requires. Any town participating in the construction or other acquisition of a hospital or in its operation, under this section, may enter into lease agreements leasing the hospital and its equipment and furnishings to a nonprofit corporation.

**History:** 1977 c. 29; 1983 a. 189; 1983 a. 192 s. 303 (1); 1993 a. 246; 1999 a. 150 ss. 262, 480 to 483; Stats. 1999 s. 66.0927.

## SUBCHAPTER X

### PLANNING, HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

**66.1001 Comprehensive planning. (1) DEFINITIONS.** In this section:

(a) “Comprehensive plan” means a guide to the physical, social, and economic development of a local governmental unit that is one of the following:

1. For a county, a development plan that is prepared or amended under s. 59.69 (2) or (3).

2. For a city, village, or town, a master plan that is adopted or amended under s. 62.23 (2) or (3).

3. For a regional planning commission, a master plan that is adopted or amended under s. 66.0309 (8), (9) or (10).

(am) “Consistent with” means furthers or does not contradict the objectives, goals, and policies contained in the comprehensive plan.

(b) “Local governmental unit” means a city, village, town, county or regional planning commission that may adopt, prepare or amend a comprehensive plan.

(c) “Political subdivision” means a city, village, town, or county that may adopt, prepare, or amend a comprehensive plan.

(2) CONTENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. A comprehensive plan shall contain all of the following elements:

(a) *Issues and opportunities element.* Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20–year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit.

(b) *Housing element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit's housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local

governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit's existing housing stock.

(c) *Transportation element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

(d) *Utilities and community facilities element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit, shall include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the local governmental unit to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the local governmental unit that are related to such utilities and facilities.

(e) *Agricultural, natural and cultural resources element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s. 295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

(f) *Economic development element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

(g) *Intergovernmental cooperation element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public ser-

vices. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall consider, to the greatest extent possible, the maps and plans of any military base or installation, with at least 200 assigned military personnel or that contains at least 2,000 acres, with which the local governmental unit shares common territory. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

(h) *Land-use element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

(i) *Implementation element.* A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in pars. (a) to (h). The element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

(2m) EFFECT OF ENACTMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. The enactment of a comprehensive plan by ordinance does not make the comprehensive plan by itself a regulation.

(3) ORDINANCES THAT MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLANS. Except as provided in sub. (3m), beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit enacts or amends any of the following ordinances, the ordinance shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan:

(g) Official mapping ordinances enacted or amended under s. 62.23 (6).

(h) Local subdivision ordinances enacted or amended under s. 236.45 or 236.46.

(j) County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.69.

(k) City or village zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 62.23 (7).

(L) Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62.

(q) Shorelands or wetlands in shorelands zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.692, 61.351, 61.353, 62.231, or 62.233.

**(3m) DELAY OF CONSISTENCY REQUIREMENT.** (a) If a local governmental unit has not adopted a comprehensive plan before January 1, 2010, the local governmental unit is exempt from the requirement under sub. (3) if any of the following applies:

1. The local governmental unit has applied for but has not received a comprehensive planning grant under s. 16.965 (2), and the local governmental unit adopts a resolution stating that the local governmental unit will adopt a comprehensive plan that will take effect no later than January 1, 2012.

2. The local governmental unit has received a comprehensive planning grant under s. 16.965 (2) and has been granted an extension of time under s. 16.965 (5) to complete comprehensive planning.

(b) The exemption under par. (a) shall continue until the following dates:

1. For a local governmental unit exempt under par. (a) 1., January 1, 2012.

2. For a local governmental unit exempt under par. (a) 2., the date on which the extension of time granted under s. 16.965 (5) expires.

**(4) PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING COMPREHENSIVE PLANS.** A local governmental unit shall comply with all of the following before its comprehensive plan may take effect:

(a) The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for wide distribution of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments. The written procedures shall describe the methods the governing body of a local governmental unit will use to distribute proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan to owners of property, or to persons who have a leasehold interest in property pursuant to which the persons may extract nonmetallic mineral resources in or on property, in which the allowable use or intensity of use of the property is changed by the comprehensive plan.

(b) The plan commission or other body of a local governmental unit that is authorized to prepare or amend a comprehensive plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the plan commission or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. One copy of an adopted comprehensive plan, or of an amendment to such a plan, shall be sent to all of the following:

1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the local governmental unit.

2. The clerk of every local governmental unit that is adjacent to the local governmental unit that is the subject of the plan that is adopted or amended as described in par. (b) (intro.).

4. After September 1, 2005, the department of administration.

5. The regional planning commission in which the local governmental unit is located.

6. The public library that serves the area in which the local governmental unit is located.

(c) No comprehensive plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment under par. (b) may take effect until the political subdivision enacts an ordinance or the regional planning commission adopts a resolution that adopts the plan or amendment. The political subdivision may not enact an ordinance or the regional planning commission may not adopt a resolution under this paragraph

unless the comprehensive plan contains all of the elements specified in sub. (2). An ordinance may be enacted or a resolution may be adopted under this paragraph only by a majority vote of the members-elect, as defined in s. 59.001 (2m), of the governing body. One copy of a comprehensive plan enacted or adopted under this paragraph shall be sent to all of the entities specified under par. (b).

(d) No political subdivision may enact an ordinance or no regional planning commission may adopt a resolution under par. (c) unless the political subdivision or regional planning commission holds at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance or resolution is discussed. That hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice under ch. 985 that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The political subdivision or regional planning commission may also provide notice of the hearing by any other means it considers appropriate. The class 1 notice shall contain at least the following information:

1. The date, time and place of the hearing.

2. A summary, which may include a map, of the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan.

3. The name of an individual employed by the local governmental unit who may provide additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.

4. Information relating to where and when the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan may be inspected before the hearing, and how a copy of the plan or amendment may be obtained.

(e) At least 30 days before the hearing described in par. (d) is held, a local governmental unit shall provide written notice to all of the following:

1. An operator who has obtained, or made application for, a permit that is described under s. 295.12 (3) (d).

2. A person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit under s. 295.20.

3. Any other property owner or leaseholder who has an interest in property pursuant to which the person may extract nonmetallic mineral resources, if the property owner or leaseholder requests in writing that the local governmental unit provide the property owner or leaseholder notice of the hearing described in par. (d).

(f) A political subdivision shall maintain a list of persons who submit a written request to receive notice of any proposed ordinance, described under par. (c), that affects the allowable use of the property owned by the person. At least 30 days before the hearing described in par. (d) is held a political subdivision shall provide written notice, including a copy of the proposed ordinance, to all such persons. The notice shall be by mail or in any reasonable form that is agreed to by the person and the political subdivision. The political subdivision may charge each person on the list who receives a notice a fee that does not exceed the approximate cost of providing the notice to the person.

**(5) APPLICABILITY OF A REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION'S PLAN.** A regional planning commission's comprehensive plan is only advisory in its applicability to a political subdivision and a political subdivision's comprehensive plan.

**(6) COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAY TAKE EFFECT.** Notwithstanding sub. (4), a comprehensive plan, or an amendment of a comprehensive plan, may take effect even if a local governmental unit fails to provide the notice that is required under sub. (4) (e) or (f), unless the local governmental unit intentionally fails to provide the notice.

**History:** 1999 a. 9, 148; 1999 a. 150 s. 74; Stats. 1999 s. 66.1001; 1999 a. 185 s. 57; 1999 a. 186 s. 42; 2001 a. 30, 90; 2003 a. 33, 93, 233, 307, 327; 2005 a. 26, 208; 2007 a. 121; 2009 a. 372; 2011 a. 257; 2013 a. 80.

A municipality has the authority under s. 236.45 (2) to impose a temporary town-wide prohibition on land division while developing a comprehensive plan under this section. *Wisconsin Realtors Association v. Town of West Point*, 2008 WI App 40, 309 Wis. 2d 199, 747 N.W.2d 681, 06-2761.

The use of the word "coordination" in various statutes dealing with municipal planning does not by itself authorize towns to invoke a power of "coordination" that would impose affirmative duties upon certain municipalities that are in addition to

# Appendix D

## Portage County's Land Evaluation Site Assessment System

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015

# ***PORTAGE COUNTY'S LAND EVALUATION SITE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM***

***A tool to help local communities  
understand the agricultural landscape.***

## ***NOTE:***

***This tool is not designed to produce a “land use map.” It is intended to provide information for the local plan commission about conditions on the landscape that may affect agriculture.***

# PORTAGE COUNTY'S LAND EVALUATION SITE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

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# PORTAGE COUNTY'S LAND EVALUATION SITE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### A. Defining the LESA System

The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system is a point-based approach that is generally used for rating the relative value of agricultural land resources. In basic terms, a given LESA model is created by defining and measuring two separate sets of factors. The first set, **Land Evaluation**, includes factors that measure the inherent soil-based qualities of land as they relate to agricultural suitability. The second set, **Site Assessment**, includes factors that are intended to measure social, economic, and geographic attributes that also contribute to the overall value of agricultural land. While this dual rating approach is common to all LESA models, the individual land evaluation and site assessment factors that are ultimately utilized and measured can vary considerably, and can be selected to meet the local or regional needs and conditions a LESA model is designed to address. The LESA methodology lends itself well to adaptation and customization in individual states and localities.

### B. Background on LESA Nationwide

In 1981, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Soil Conservation Service, now known as Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) released a new system that was designed to provide objective ratings of the agricultural suitability of land compared to demand for nonagricultural uses of lands. The system became known as Land Evaluation and Site Assessment or LESA. Soon after it was designed, LESA was adopted as a procedural tool at the federal level for identifying and addressing the potential adverse effects of federal programs. (e.g., funding of highway construction) on farmland protection. The Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (5) spells out requirements to ensure that federal programs, to the extent practical, are compatible with state, local, and private programs and policies to protect farmland, and calls for the use of LESA to aid in this analysis. Typically, NRCS staff is involved in performing LESA scoring analyses of individual projects that involve other agencies of the federal government.

Since the inception, the LESA approach has received substantial attention from state and local governments as well. Nationwide, over two hundred jurisdictions have developed local LESA methodologies. One of the attractive features of the LESA approach is that it is well suited to being modified to reflect local conditions. Typical local applications of LESA include assisting in decision-making concerning the siting of projects, changes in zoning, and spheres of influence determinations. LESA is also increasingly being utilized for farmland protection programs, such as the identification of priority areas to concentrate conservation easement acquisition efforts or purchase of development rights.

## **2. PORTAGE COUNTY APPROACH**

### **A. Decision-Making Tool**

Portage County is making an effort to preserve productive farmland and manage non-farm rural residential development. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system is an analytical tool used to assist decision makers in comparing agricultural sites based on their agricultural value. The LESA system provides an objective and consistent tool to aid decision-makers in evaluating the relative importance of specific sites for continued agricultural use. In this sense, it is a tool for determining the best use of a site. While in some cases the best use may be some type of development, there are many other situations where the best use is to remain in agriculture. Also, there may be instances where the land is not suitable for agriculture, but neither is it a suitable location for development. In such situations the LESA system is a valuable tool for determining the use with the least detrimental impact to the environment, economy and aesthetics.

### **B. System Components**

As noted earlier, there are two components to the LESA system; the **Land Evaluation (LE)** portion of the system, which is based on soils and their characteristics, and the **Site Assessment (SA)** portion of the system, which rates other attributes affecting a site's relative importance for agricultural use. The Land Evaluation portion is stable and unchanging because the soils do not change and the data relative to those soils takes a long time to accumulate. The Site Assessment is dynamic and changes on a continual basis because there are regular changes in development, property ownership, roadway improvements, sewer expansions, etc. happening throughout Portage County.

## **3. LAND EVALUATION FOR PORTAGE COUNTY**

A Land Evaluation (LE) system was developed by the USDA in 1981 and is now widely used throughout the U.S. LE provides a systematic and objective way to evaluate and numerically rank soils for their relative value for a specific use.

A LE rating was developed for Portage County by the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department. **Higher numbers mean greater value for agriculture.** LE ratings reflect this productivity potential, as well as the economic and environmental costs of producing a crop. Possible LE ratings range from 0 to 100.

Many physical and chemical soil properties are considered in the LE rating, either directly or indirectly, including soil texture and rock fragments, slope, wetness and flooding, soil erodibility, climate, available water capacity, pH (alkalinity versus acidity), and permeability.

Three soil property indexes are combined to produce the LE rating. This produces a rating that reflects the most important soil considerations for agricultural use in Portage County. Each of these data elements is assigned a point score from 0 to 100:

### **A. Prime Farmland Class Index**

This index rates the major physical and chemical soil properties affecting agricultural use. Please see Appendix A for the prime farmland criteria in Wisconsin.

<u>Index</u>	<u>Score</u>
0 - Not prime farmland	0
1 – Prime if drained	70
2 – Prime if irrigated	90
3 - Prime farmland	100

### **B. Land Capability Class - Natural Condition Index**

This index rates all soils in their natural, unaltered condition for the risk of environmental damage (eg: soil erosion, off-site damage from sediment, nutrient, and pesticide runoff or leaching) and the degree of management concerns and limitations for agricultural use. Please see Appendix A for further information on Land Capability Classes.

<u>Land Capability Class</u>	<u>Score</u>
1	100
2	90
3	70
4	50
5	30
6	20
7	10
8	5

### **C. Productivity Index**

This index rates the potential productivity of the soil for corn and alfalfa. A productivity index (PI) was calculated for all soil map units in Portage County. The productivity index rates the potential productivity of each map unit relative to all other soils in Portage County. The index is calculated from corn and alfalfa yield data, which can be found in Section II of the USDA Technical Guide for Portage County.

If no corn or alfalfa yields are commonly grown on a soil due to wetness, steepness of slope, stoniness, etc., the map unit receives a score of 0 for the missing yield and will be reflected in a lower overall PI score.

The Productivity Index is set at 100 for the most productive soil map unit in Portage County. All other map units were then proportionately adjusted by dividing them by the most productive soil map unit's yield total, which is 99.2. Please see the sample calculation below. The lower PI scores represent proportionately lower productivity for corn and alfalfa.

➤ **PI calculation details**

1) The total maximum (long-term average) yield for corn and alfalfa in Portage County is determined:

Corn 95 bu/acre -- highest long-term average corn yield in Portage County

Alfalfa 4.2 tons/acre --highest long-term average alfalfa yield in Portage Co.

$$99.2 = 100 \text{ PI}$$

2) The map unit is assigned a PI using the formula:

$$(\text{Corn Yield} + \text{Alfalfa Yield}) / 99.2 \times 100 = \text{PI}$$

**Example:** corn yield = 90 bu/ac

alfalfa yield = 3.5 tons/ac

$$90 + 3.5 = 93.5 / 99.2 = .94 \times 100 = 94 \text{ PI}$$

**D. Weighting Factor**

A weighting factor is then applied to each of the three data element scores to reflect their relative importance. The weighting factors were chosen for the following reasons.

- **Prime Farmland. (60%)** This is a broad soil index component, which has national soil classification significance. It does not reflect crop yields. Some non-prime soils have much higher yields than some prime soils, usually due to slope and/or irrigation.
- **Capability Class. (30%)** This index considers many soil properties and conditions. This index indirectly considers the economic and environmental costs of producing a crop. Equally important was that the capability class is a system that is familiar to many local units of government.
- **Productivity Index. (10%)** Both corn and alfalfa yields were considered as part of this index. This factor was given little weight in Portage County because a number of our sand soils that can be irrigated have great productivity for vegetable production.

### E. Sample LE Calculation:

The Portage County LE rating is calculated using the formula:

$$\text{LE} = (\text{prime score} \times 0.60) + (\text{capability score} \times 0.30) + (\text{productivity index} \times 0.10)$$

<u>Soil Data Element</u>	<u>Score</u>	x	<u>Weight</u>	=	<u>LE Rating</u>
Prime Farmland	100	x	0.60	=	60.0
Land Cap. Class	90	x	0.30	=	27.0
Prod. Index	82	x	0.10	=	<u>+8.2</u>

**TOTAL LE** rating for the map unit **95.2 = 95**

### F. LE Assumptions and Decisions

The following assumptions or decisions will be made when finalizing calculations.

- It is assumed that most wet soils in Portage County are not cropped under natural conditions, they require drainage of some type.
- LE factors will be adjusted to consider conditions where wet soils are being cropped. Aerial photography will be used to identify the mapping unit as being cropped. For areas of wet soils that are cropped, yield data, capability class and prime farmland criteria shall be used from the USDA Technical Guide Section II. (Prime if drained). Site visits may be required to make drainage determinations.
- Fractions of numbers will be rounded to the nearest whole number with a fractional number of .5 being rounded up to the next highest whole number.

## 4. SITE ASSESSMENT FACTORS

Site assessment rates non-soil factors affecting a site's relative importance for agricultural use. Potential development sites in which a land use change is contemplated are evaluated against factors in three general categories, SA-1 through SA-3. Each rating factor is assigned a range of possible values according to relative attributes of a specific two (2) acre area. This process helps to provide a rational, sound basis for making land-use decisions. Specific site assessment factors were developed based on existing Land Use Plans, Ordinances, and other adopted policies.

### SA-1 FACTORS

These factors measure non-soil site characteristics effect on the potential for agricultural productivity or farming practices. Site factors evaluated include:

#### A. Land Area in an Agricultural Use Within ¼ Mile of Site

This factor measures the agricultural viability of an area. The factor is scaled to increase the rating as the percentage of land in agricultural uses within the area increases. The following scale will be used to determine the value of this factor.

% of Area in Ag Use	Score
90-100	100
80-90	85
70-80	70
60-70	55
50-60	40
40-50	25
30-40	10
< 30	0

#### Intent:

In order to limit potential nuisance complaints and other forms of conflict, pre-existing adjacent land uses should be evaluated in all cases. This factor is also a major indicator of the agricultural character of an area.

#### Definitions

**Agriculture:** Beekeeping; commercial feedlots; dairying; egg production; floriculture; fish or fur farming; forest and game management; grazing; livestock raising; orchards; plant greenhouses and nurseries; poultry raising; raising of grain, grass, mint and seed crops; raising of fruits, nuts and berries; sod farming; placing land in federal programs in return for payments in kind; owning land, at least 35 acres of which is enrolled in the conservation reserve program under 16 USC 3831 to 3836; participating in the milk production termination program under 7 USC 1446 (d); and vegetable raising. (Source: Wis. Stats. Chapter 91.)

**Ownership:** Any individual, association, company, corporation, firm, organization or partnership, singular, plural, of any kind.

### **SA-2 FACTORS**

These factors measure development or conversion pressures on a site. Site factors evaluated include:

#### **A. Land Area Adjacent to the Site Proposed for Agricultural Use in the Community's Land Use Plan**

This factor includes the community's perception or desire for future growth as designated on their Land Use Map. The following scale will be used to determine the value of this factor.

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Score</b>
Agr. - L-1	100
Agr. - L-2	80
Agr. - L-3	60
Natural Area-Limited	40
Resource Extract.	40
Industrial	20
Res. - Low Dens.	20
Res. - Med. Dens.	20
Commercial	20
Institutional	20
Natural Area - Protected	0

#### **Intent:**

This factor is important because the Land Use Plan adopted by the community and the County constitutes the County's policy regarding the preservation of prime farmlands for agricultural use and the identification of other areas for residential, commercial, industrial and other non-agricultural uses.

### **SA-3 FACTORS**

#### **A. Environmental and Public Values of the Site**

This factor measures the public values of a site, such as environmental values. If any of the environmental factors are present on more than 50% of the sample area, that entire area will be scored as 0.

<b>Env. Factor present</b>	<b>Score</b>
water	0
wetland	0
floodplain	25
slopes > 6%	
highly perm. Soils - Rapid	25
woodlands > 10 acres	0
depth to gr. water < 5ft.	25
stream corridor	0

### Sample SA Calculation:

The Portage County SA rating is calculated using the formula:

$$SA = (SA-1 \times 0.30) + (SA-2 \times 0.50) + (SA-3 \times 0.20)$$

<u>Site Assessment Factor</u>	<u>Score</u>	x	<u>Weight</u>	=	<u>LE Rating</u>
Ag Use w/in ¼ mile	85	x	0.30	=	25.5
Land Use Map	80	x	0.50	=	40.0
Environmental Factor	50	x	0.20	=	<u>+10.0</u>

**TOTAL SA** rating for the map unit 75.5 = **76**

### SA Assumptions and Decisions

The following assumptions or decisions will be made when finalizing calculations.

- It is assumed that a community's desired development and growth, as shown by its land use map, would rank as the highest non-soil factor.
- Fractions of numbers will be rounded to the nearest whole number with a fractional number of .5 being rounded up to the next highest whole number.

## **5. THRESHOLD VALUES FOR LESA SCORES**

THE COMBINED LAND EVALUATION FACTORS ARE WORTH 100 POINTS AS ARE THE COMBINED SITE ASSESSMENT FACTORS. THE **LE** AND **SA** SCORES ARE ADDED TO YIELD A POTENTIAL FINAL SCORE FOR EACH TWO ACRE BLOCK RANGING BETWEEN 0 AND 200 POINTS, WITH A SCORE OF 200 REPRESENTING LANDS THAT ARE OF THE HIGHEST VALUE FOR AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING SPECIALTY CROPS SUCH AS CRANBERRIES). COMMUNITIES WILL THEN DETERMINE AN APPROPRIATE THRESHOLD FOR RANKING LANDS RECOMMENDED FOR PROTECTION (I.E. AREAS WITH A SCORE HIGHER THAN 150 AND GREATER THAN 40 CONTIGUOUS ACRES). WEIGHTING FACTORS CAN BE CHANGED BY EACH COMMUNITY TO REFLECT ITS OWN PRIORITIES.

## 6. APPENDIX A

### A. Prime Farmland Background Information

Soils, which meet ALL of the following criteria, are prime farmland in Wisconsin.

- 1) Not too dry (at least 4 inches of Available Water Capacity in the upper 40 inches)
- 2) Not too acid or alkaline (pH between 4.5 and 8.4 in the upper 40 inches)
- 3) Not too wet (not frequently flooded and water table generally deeper than one foot during the growing season)
- 4) No serious erosion problems ( $K \text{ factor} \times \text{slope} < 2$ )
- 5) Permeability not restricted (at least 0.06 in/hr in the upper 20 inches)
- 6) Not too rocky (less than 10% rock fragments larger than 3 inches in the surface layer)
- 7) Not too cold or too salty (generally don't apply in Wisconsin)

#### Notes:

- Crop yields are not a criterion. Some non-prime soils have much higher yields than some prime soils, usually due to slope.
- Present land use is not a criterion, except soils in urban use or water storage is not prime.
- Location is not a criterion. Only physical and chemical soil properties are considered.

### B. Land Capability Class Background Information

Land capability classification is a system of grouping soils primarily on the basis of their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. Capability class is the broadest category in the land capability classification system. Codes 1 - 8 (sometimes written as I - VIII) are used to represent both irrigated and non-irrigated land capability classes. Crop yield, present land use and location are not considered in assigning land capability classes.

Land capability classes place soils into groups with similar suitabilities and limitations for agricultural use. The risks of soil damage or limitations in use become progressively greater from class 1 to class 8 (sometimes written as I to VIII).

*Class 1* soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.

*Class 2* soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.

*Class 3* soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require special conservation practices.

*Class 4* soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require very careful management, or both.

*Class 5* soils have little or no hazard of erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food cover.

*Class 6* soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.

*Class 7* soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife.

*Class 8* soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plant production and limit their use to recreation, wildlife, or water supply or for esthetic purposes.

Appendix E

Portage County Lakes Study:

Lake Emily

Lime Lake

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015

# Lake Emily

## Preliminary Results

### Portage County Lake Study

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
Portage County Staff and Citizens

*March 31, 2005*

#### **What can you learn from this study?**

*You can learn a wealth of valuable information about:*

- *Critical habitat that fish, wildlife, and plants depend on*
- *Water quality and quantity of your lake*
- *The current diagnosis of your lake – good news and bad news*

#### **What can you DO in your community?**

*You can share this information with the other people who care about your lake and then plan together for the future.*

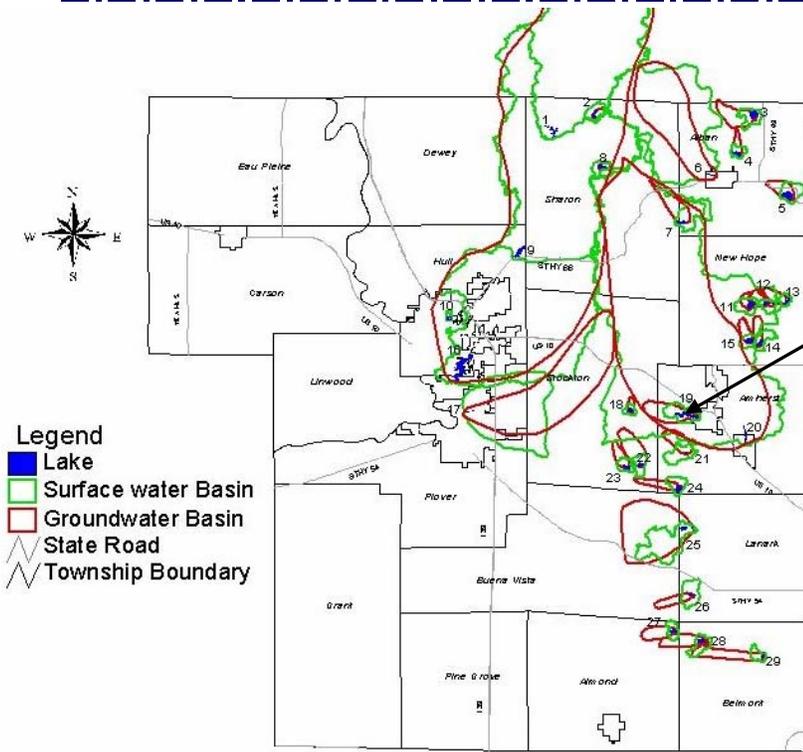
- ✓ *Develop consensus about the local goals and objectives for your lake.*
- ✓ *Identify available resources (people, expertise, time, funding).*
- ✓ *Explore and choose implementation tools to achieve your goals.*
- ✓ *Develop an action plan to achieve your lake goals.*
- ✓ *Implement your plan.*
- ✓ *Evaluate the results and then revise your goals and plans.*

**To protect**

**the lake** we must protect  
the “watershed,” the land  
that drains or  
sheds its water  
into the  
lake.



# Lake Emily ~ Location



**Lake Emily**  
 South of Highway 10, just west of  
 Amherst Junction; Town of Amherst

**Surface Area:** 95.5 acres  
**Maximum Depth:** 35 feet  
**Lake Volume:** 1691 acre-feet

## Lake Emily

### Water Flow

- Lake Emily is a seepage lake
- Water enters Lake Emily from groundwater, one intermittent inlet from Mud Lake at the west end, runoff, and precipitation
- Water exits the lake through groundwater



# Lake Emily ~ Land Use in the Surface Watershed

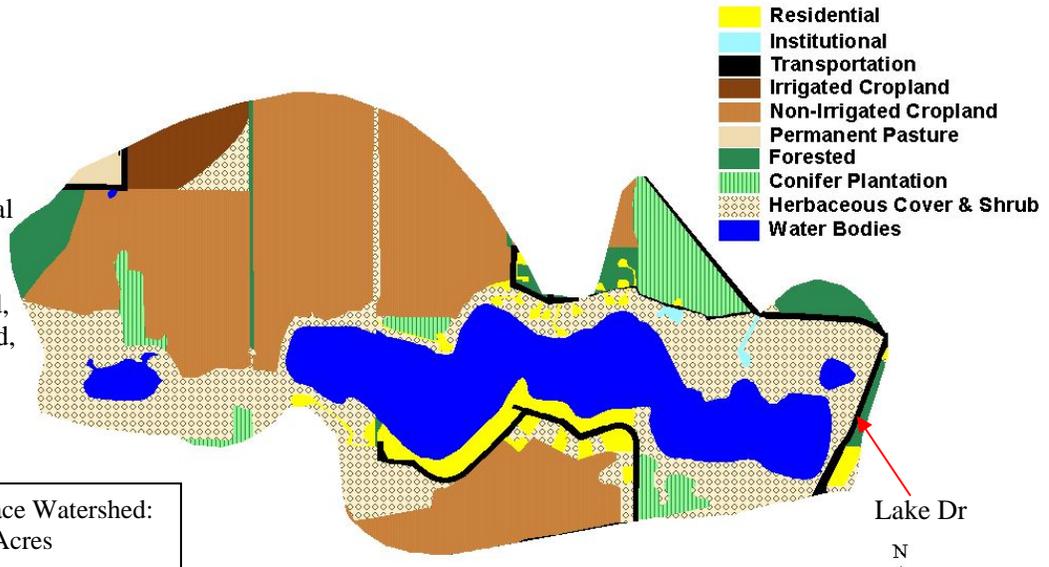


**Surface Watershed:** The land area where water runs off the surface of the land and drains toward the lake.

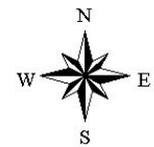
## Lake Emily Land Use

### Current Predominant Land Use

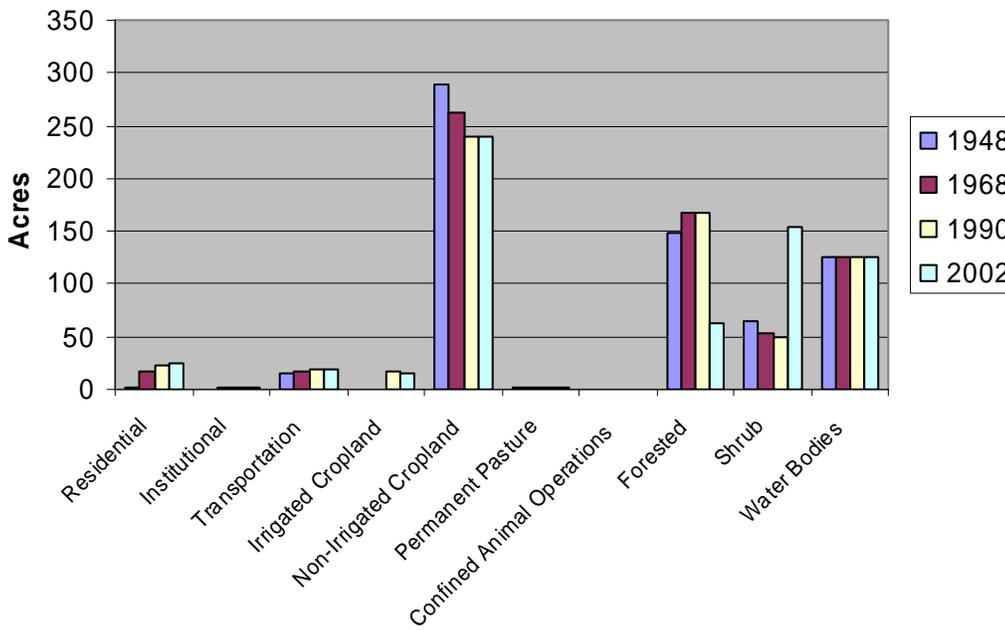
- Around the lake: shrub cover, residential uses
- In the watershed: non-irrigated cropland, shrub cover, forestland, and irrigated cropland



Surface Watershed:  
646 Acres



### Surface Watershed Land Use



### Surface Watershed Land Use

- Non-irrigated agriculture dominates land use in the watershed despite a modest decline since 1948
- Forestland has made a dramatic decrease since 1990 as shrub cover increased
- Residential use increased greatly between 1948 and 1968, and continues to increase

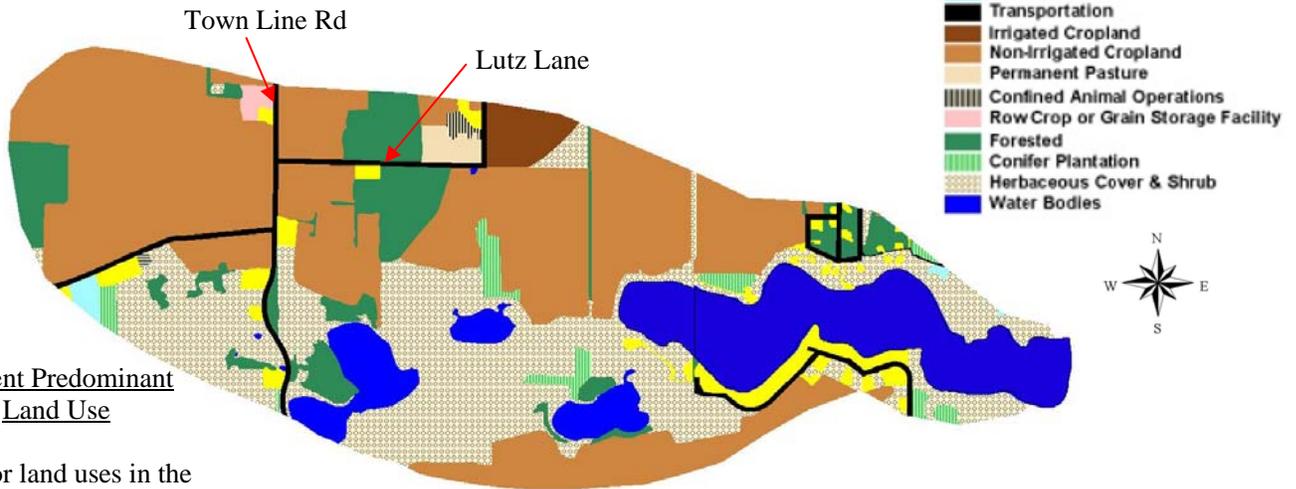


# Lake Emily ~ Land Use in the Groundwater Shed



**Groundwater Shed:** The land area where water soaks into the ground and travels underground to the lake.

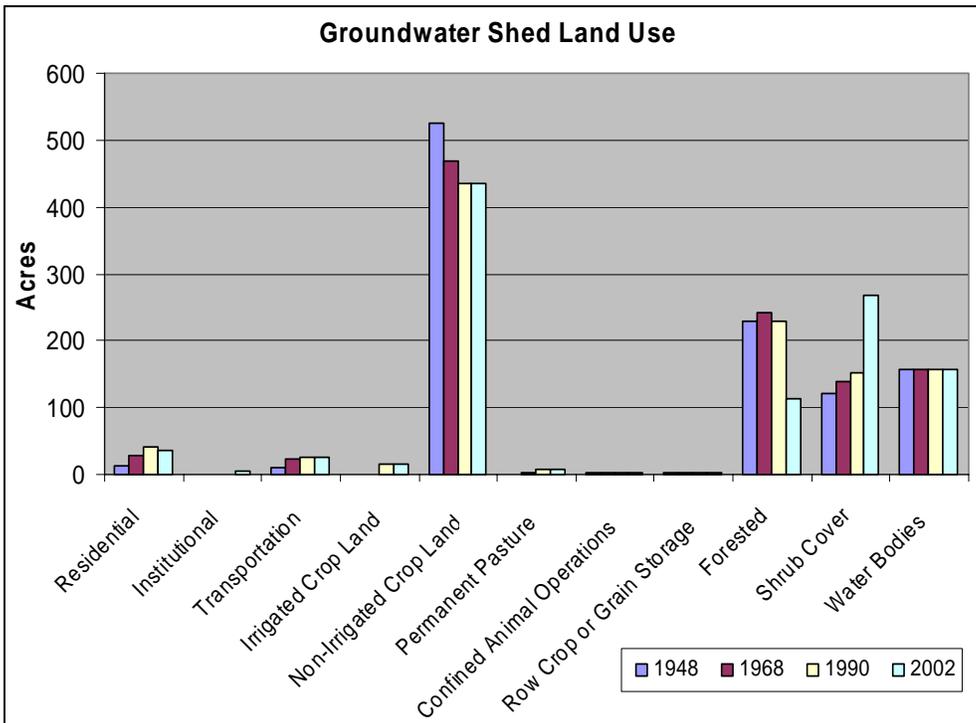
## Lake Emily Groundwater Land Use



### Current Predominant Land Use

- Major land uses in the groundwater shed are non-irrigated agriculture, shrub cover, and forestland

**Groundwater Shed Land Use**

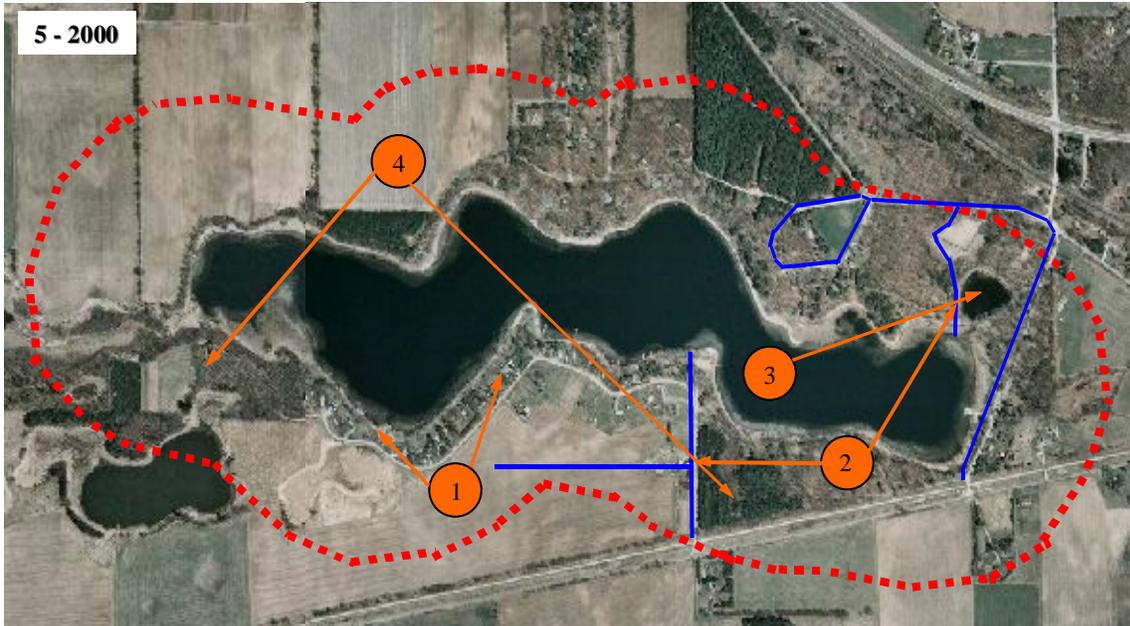


### Groundwater Shed Land Use

- Non-irrigated cropland has dominated the groundwater shed since 1948
- Residential, institutional, transportation, irrigated cropland, and shrub cover uses have all increased since 1948
- Non-irrigated cropland and forestland have decreased in land use area since 1948



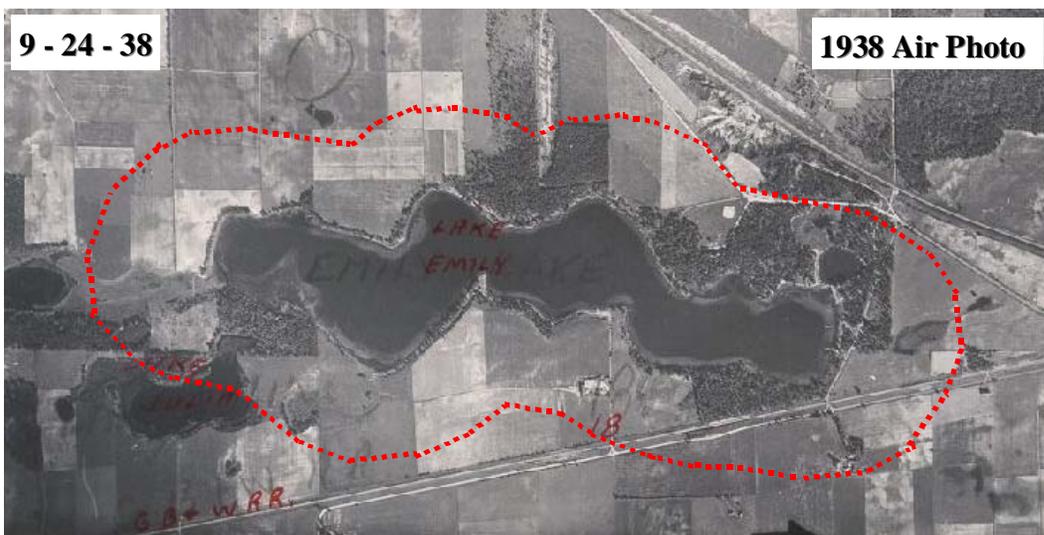
# Lake Emily ~ Taking a closer look (Within a 1,000 feet of lake)



## Points of Interest

1. The development of the south side of the lake started in the early 1950's and 1960's.
2. The blue line outlines the original roads that surrounded the lake in 1938. As you can see, many of the roads that were originally there have disappeared.
3. The water level is much lower in 1960 and 1968 than in 1938 and the present.
4. Two small areas that have reverted back from cropland to forested.

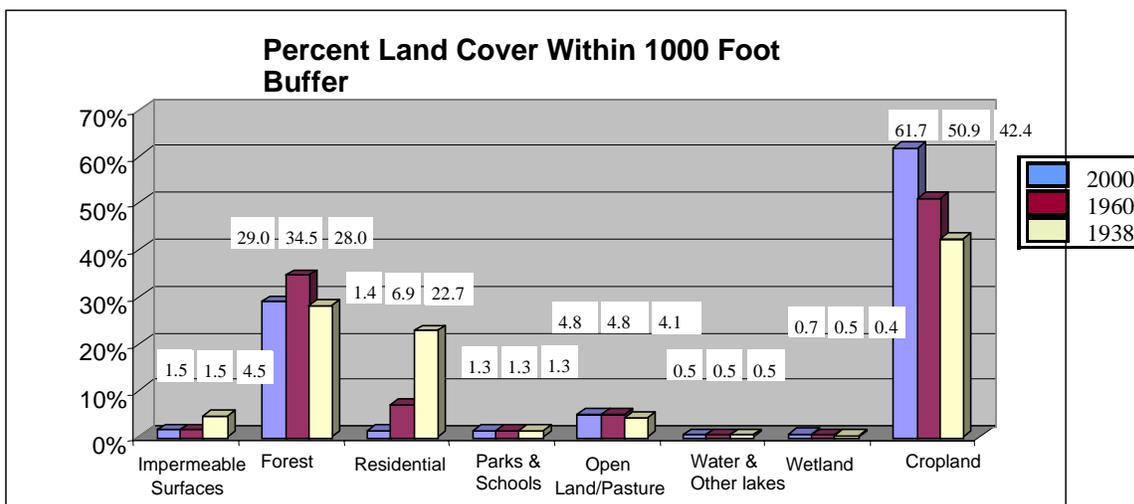
Some cottages were removed from the parkland since 1938.



# Lake Emily ~ Taking a closer look (Within a 1,000 feet of lake)

## Changes from 1938 to 2000

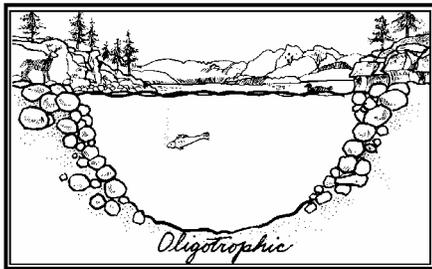
	1938	1960	2000
# of Docks	0	0	4
Impervious Surface (acres)	6.04	6.00	17.87
Residential (acres)	5.50	27.25	89.14
Open Land/ Pasture (acres)	18.66	18.66	16.27
Forest/ Park-Campground (acres)	113.65	135.33	109.96
Cropland (acres)	242.36	200.01	166.31
Water & Wetlands (acres)	4.86	3.77	3.35



# Lake Emily ~ Water Quality

## Total Phosphorus

In more than 80% of Wisconsin's lakes phosphorus is the key nutrient affecting aquatic plant and algae growth. Once in a lake system phosphorus levels are difficult to reduce, so limiting phosphorus input is key. Phosphorus at levels above 30 parts per billion (ppb) can lead to nuisance aquatic plant growth and accelerate a lake's change from oligotrophic to eutrophic. Sources of phosphorus include septic systems, detergents, animal waste, farmland and storm sewer runoff, soil erosion, and fertilizers for lawns, gardens, and agriculture.



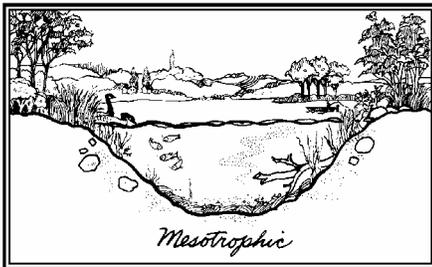
### Oligotrophic Lakes

*Common uses:*

- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Skiing
- ✓ Boating

*Vegetation of oligotrophic lakes:*

- ✓ Very little vegetation



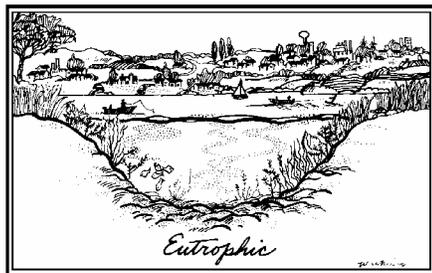
### Mesotrophic Lakes

*Common uses:*

- ✓ Boating
- ✓ Fishing

*Vegetation of mesotrophic lakes:*

- ✓ Increased vegetation
- ✓ Occasional algal blooms



### Eutrophic Lakes

*Common uses:*

- ✓ Fishing
- ✓ Wildlife watching

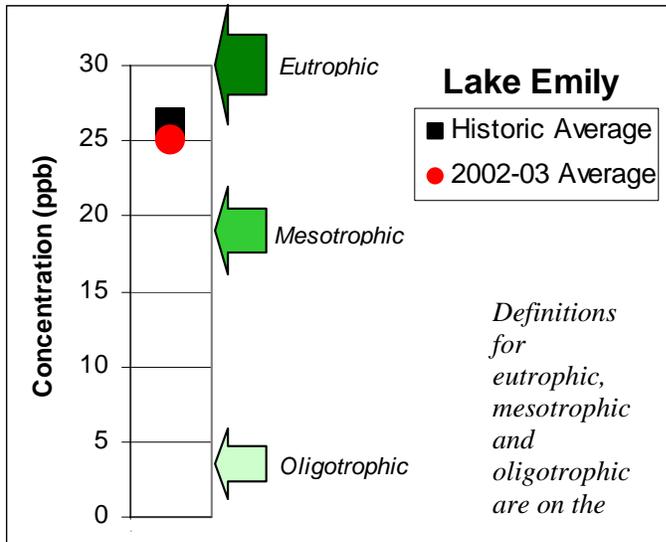
*Vegetation of eutrophic lakes:*

- ✓ Lots of aquatic plants
- ✓ Frequent algal blooms



# Lake Emily ~ Water Quality

## Average Total Phosphorus Levels



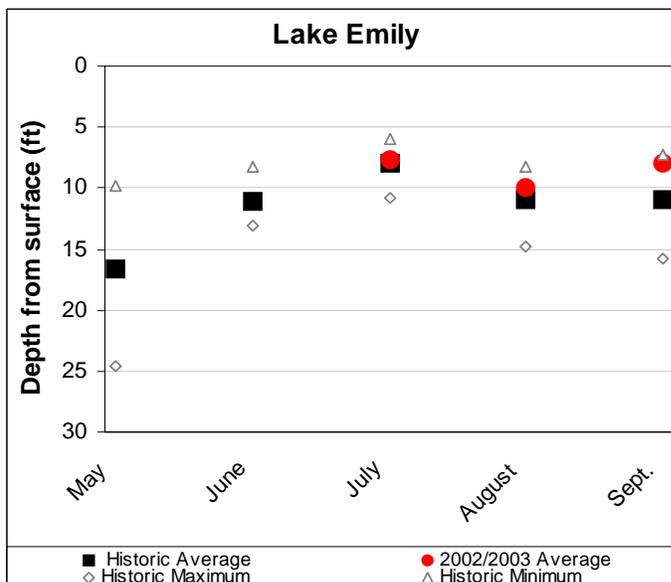
The graph to the left shows total phosphorus levels measured when the lake is well mixed (overturn). Phosphorus levels in Lake Emily in 2002-03 were similar to historic levels. Current phosphorus levels in Lake Emily are higher than average concentrations for seepage lakes in this region.



**Overturn:** uniform temperature from top to bottom in the lake.

## Water Clarity

Water clarity (Secchi disc depth) is an indicator of water quality. The two main components affecting water clarity are materials dissolved in the water and materials suspended in the water. Water clarity can indicate overall water quality, especially the amount of algae and suspended sediment present.



The water clarity in Lake Emily is considered fair. The average Secchi depth reading for similar lakes in the region is around 9-10 feet. Lake Emily is very close to being in this range, but has just slightly worse clarity. The water clarity of Lake Emily during 2002 growing season was slightly worse than the historic growing season average as well. The recent data demonstrates that the month of August shows the best water clarity and the months of July and September the poorest. These fluctuations throughout the summer are normal as algae populations and sedimentation increase and decrease.



# 2002 Amphibian Distribution at Portage County Lakes

This summary provides preliminary information on the amphibian species present and their distribution at the twenty-nine Portage County lakes. Surveys were conducted from April 2002 - August 2002, the typical breeding period of the frogs and salamanders found in the county.

Twelve frog species have been documented in Wisconsin, nine of which currently inhabit Portage County: American toad, chorus frog, spring peeper, eastern gray treefrog, Cope's gray treefrog, green frog, pickerel frog, northern leopard frog, and wood frog. Historically, Blanchard's cricket frog inhabited Portage County but is believed to now exist only in southeastern Wisconsin. Of all species believed to inhabit Portage County, only the pickerel frog was not found during the spring and summer of 2002. The pickerel frog has been listed as a species of special concern in Wisconsin. No new species to Portage County were recorded in 2002.

Seven salamander species have been documented in Wisconsin, all of which currently inhabit Portage County: blue-spotted salamander, spotted salamander, tiger salamander, central newt, mudpuppy, northern redback salamander and four-toed salamander. The four-toed salamander is listed as a species of special concern in Wisconsin.

Large sections of continuous natural shoreline on lakes are ideal habitats for frog and salamander populations. Natural areas with large amounts of submergent, emergent and floating-leaf vegetation provide protection for amphibians. Many species also use the vegetation for attachment of eggs during the breeding season. Green frogs, bullfrogs, pickerel frogs and leopard frogs depend on the shoreline area throughout the year. In contrast, American toads, spring peepers, tree frogs, wood frogs and chorus frogs depend on the shoreline area in the spring for breeding and then move to other areas for the rest of the year.

Undisturbed areas of shoreline that are also connected to large natural upland areas provide ideal habitat for many amphibian species because they lessen frogs' exposure to predators. Many frog and salamander species migrate to the lakes in the spring to breed and spend the summer months foraging in the uplands. Many amphibian species will also over winter in the uplands.



# Lake Emily ~ Frogs and Reptiles



## Lake Emily

**Number of frog species:** 6

**Frog species observed:** spring peeper, chorus frog, northern leopard frog, American toad, gray treefrog, green frog

**Location of primary habitat:** east and west sides of lake

**Key features of habitat:** protected areas of marsh with large amounts of submergent, emergent, and floating leaf vegetation

**Number of reptile species:** 2

**Reptile species observed:** painted turtle, snapping turtle

## Map Key

**Red outlined areas** = primary frog habitat

### **Good News**

Several frog species present, several large sections of natural shoreline exist

### **Bad News**

High level of altered shoreline due to development



# Lake Emily ~ Aquatic Plants

---

Aquatic plant surveys were conducted in each lake more detailed information is available in the final report.

## **Aquatic Plant Survey**

There are 66 species of aquatic macrophytes (65 species of vascular plants plus one species of macrophytic algae) that have been found in Lake Emily, on the shore, or in the small pond connected to the lake. This is above average for Portage County lakes.

Lake Emily supports a moderately diverse aquatic and wetland flora, although most of the species are common and widespread plants. Until recently the dominant submersed plants were common milfoil, Illinois pondweed, variable pondweed, bush-pondweed, wild celery, stonewort, and Canadian waterweed. However, Eurasian milfoil was present by 1995 and it is becoming more abundant.

Water levels have dropped in recent years, converting areas, especially on the eastern and northern shores, previously under shallow water into an expanded beach. The upper portions of the former shore and beach was a dry upland with weedy annuals common in 2003, although with a higher water level in 2004 the wet shore is expanding toward the the upper shore. However, Canada thistle is spreading aggressively on the beach and its spread will probably continue unless water levels rise enough to inundate it.

## **Invasive Exotic Aquatic Plants**

Invasive species displace native species, disrupt ecosystems, and affect citizen's livelihoods and quality of life. They hamper boating, swimming, fishing, and other water recreation, and take an economic toll on commercial, agricultural and aquatic resources.

(Wisconsin DNR)

Aquatic plants surveys revealed that some of the lakes in the study have invasive aquatic plants present.

**Eurasian milfoil** (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) was present in Bear Lake, Lake Emily, Lake Joanis, Jordan Pond, McDill Pond, Springville Pond and Thomas Lake.

**Curly leaf pondweed** (*Potamogetan crispis*) was identified in Spring Lake and Amherst Millpond.

Contact the Portage County Land Conservation Department for additional information.



# Lake Emily ~ What can you do to help?

## We Can All Help Take Care Of Our Lake

*A lake is a magnificent water resource. The quality of its water is a reflection of what happens on the land that surrounds it.*



### Lake Users:

- ✓ Run boat engines efficiently.
- ✓ Observe no/low wake zones.
- ✓ Refuel away from water.
- ✓ Dispose of trash properly
- ✓ Remove all aquatic plants from boats and trailers.



### Land Owners:

- ✓ Control soil erosion.
- ✓ Keep livestock out of lakes and streams.
- ✓ Control manure runoff.
- ✓ Carefully manage nutrients and pesticides.
- ✓ Learn to identify and look for invasive species.



### Home Owners:

- ✓ Leave natural vegetation buffers in place or replace them if they have been removed.
- ✓ Eliminate the use of fertilizer or use low/no phosphorus fertilizer.
- ✓ Eliminate or minimize use of pesticides.
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### Project support provided by:

- Wisconsin DNR Lake Protection grants
- UW-Stevens Point
- Portage County
- Portage County Citizens

### Study Contacts:

Portage County: Steven Bradley at 346-1334

UW- Stevens Point: Nancy Turyk at 346-4155



# Lake Emily~ Primary Researchers

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## **Algae**

Dr. Bob Bell

## **Aquatic Plants**

Dr. Robert Freckmann

## **Birds**

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Brad Bulin (Graduate Student)

## **Fish**

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Becky Cook

Dr. Paul McGinley

Dr. Byron Shaw

Dick Stephens

Nancy Turyk

## **Near Shore Summary**

Dr. Glenn Bowles

Special thanks to UWSP undergraduate and graduate students and local citizens for their assistance!



# Lime Lake

## Preliminary Results

### Portage County Lake Study

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Portage County Staff and Citizens

March 31, 2005



#### **What can you learn from this study?**

*You can learn a wealth of valuable information about:*

- *Critical habitat that fish, wildlife, and plants depend on*
- *Water quality and quantity of your lake*
- *The current diagnosis of your lake – good news and bad news*

#### **What can you DO in your community?**

*You can share this information with the other people who care about your lake and then plan together for the future.*

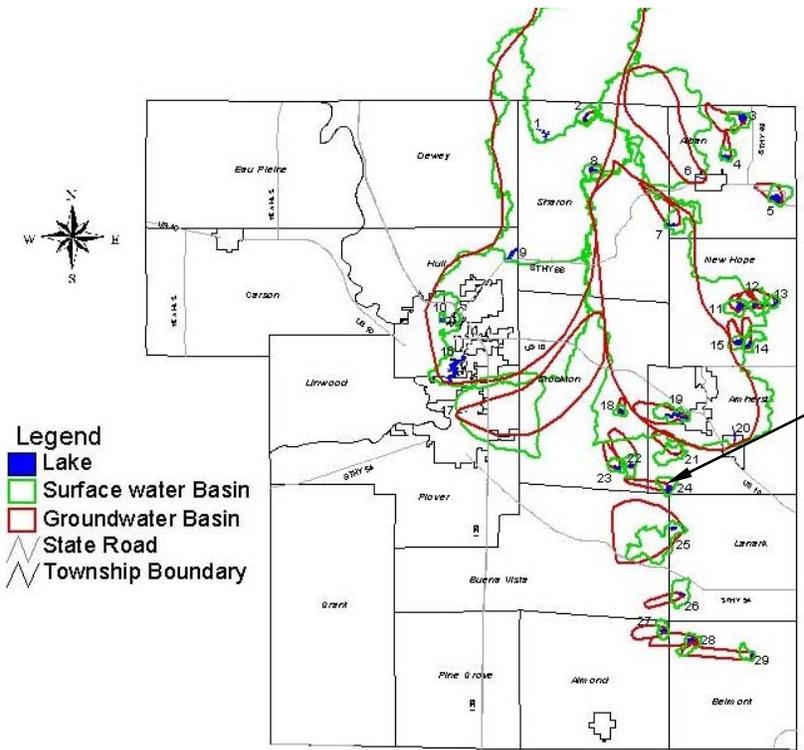
- ✓ *Develop consensus about the local goals and objectives for your lake.*
- ✓ *Identify available resources (people, expertise, time, funding).*
- ✓ *Explore and choose implementation tools to achieve your goals.*
- ✓ *Develop an action plan to achieve your lake goals.*
- ✓ *Implement your plan.*
- ✓ *Evaluate the results and then revise your goals and plans.*

## To protect

**the lake** we must protect the “watershed,” the land that drains or sheds its water into the lake.



# Lime Lake ~ Location



**Lime Lake**  
 North of County Trunk D,  
 southwest of Amherst, Town of  
 Amherst

**Surface Area:** 48 acres  
**Maximum Depth:** 29 feet  
**Lake Volume:** 804 acre-feet

## Lime Lake



### Water Flow

- Lime Lake is a groundwater seepage lake
- Water enters Lime Lake mostly from groundwater, with some runoff and precipitation
- Water exits the lake to groundwater

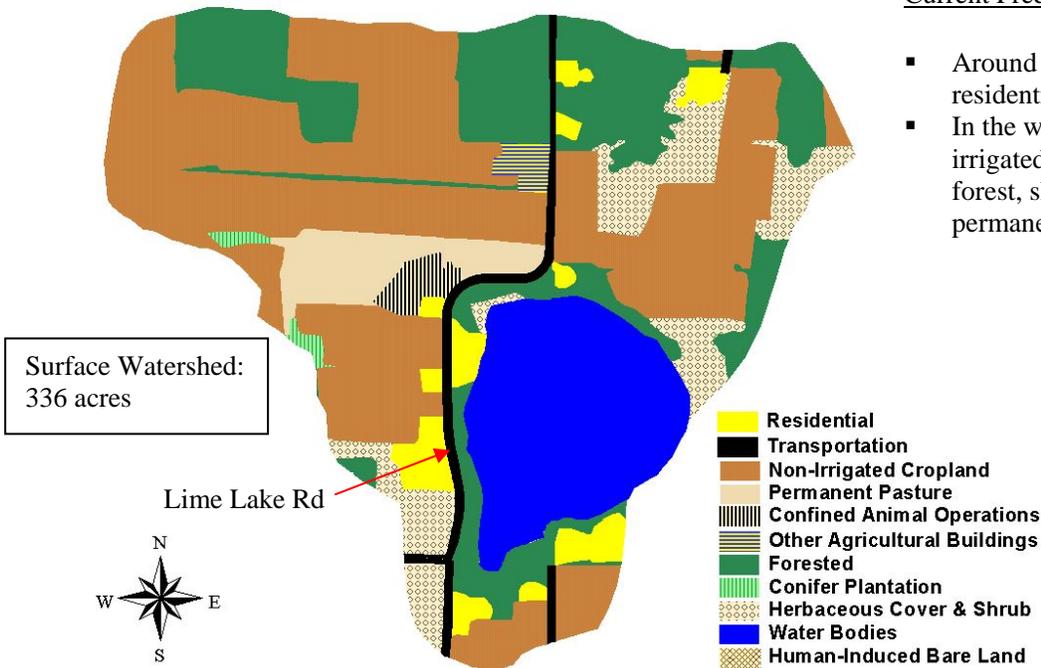


# Lime Lake ~ Land Use in the Surface Watershed



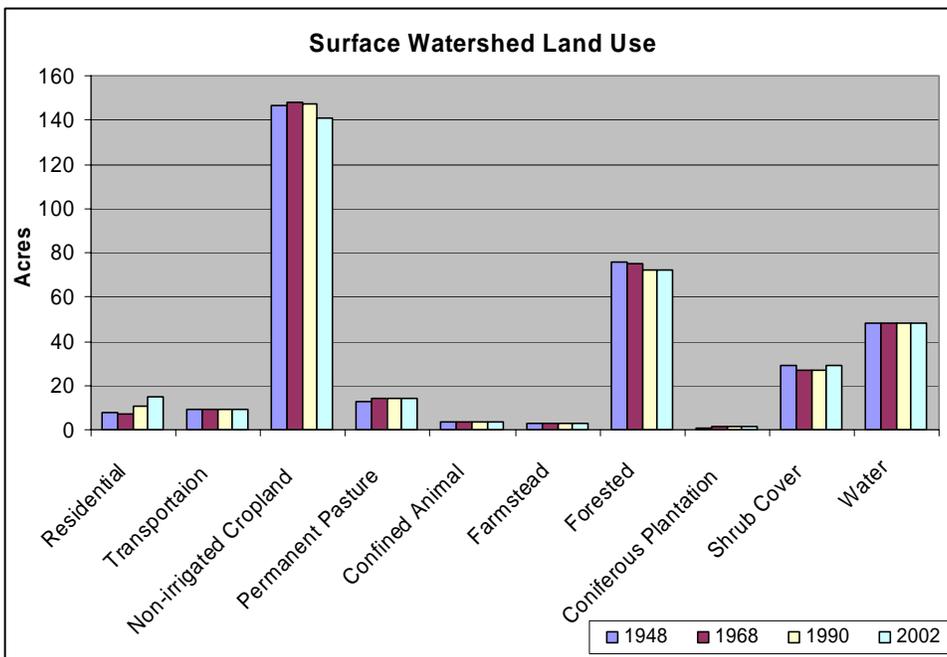
**Surface Watershed:** The land area where water runs off the surface of the land and drains toward the lake.

## Lime Lake Land Use



### Current Predominant Land Use

- Around the lake: forest, residential, and shrub cover
- In the watershed: non-irrigated cropland, residential, forest, shrub cover and permanent pasture



### Surface Watershed Land Use

- The dominant land uses in the surface watershed are non-irrigated cropland and forestland, both of which have declined slightly in recent years
- Residential use is increasing while all other uses have remained relatively constant



# Lime Lake ~ Land Use in the Groundwater Shed

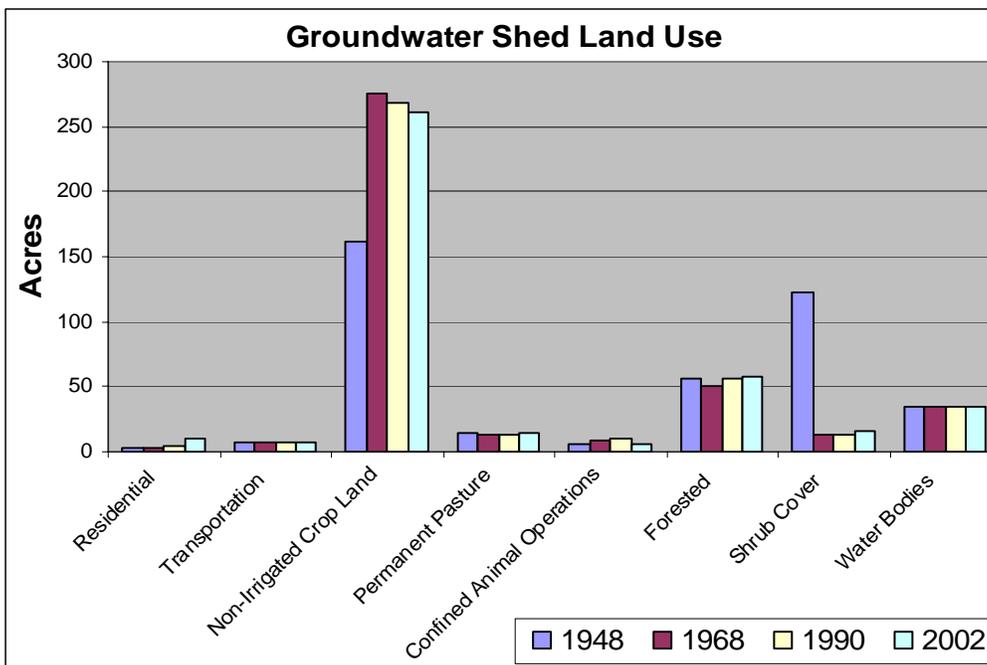


**Groundwater Shed:** The land area where water soaks into the ground and travels underground to the lake.



#### Current Predominant Land Use

- Major land uses in the groundwater shed are non-irrigated cropland, residential, permanent pasture and forest

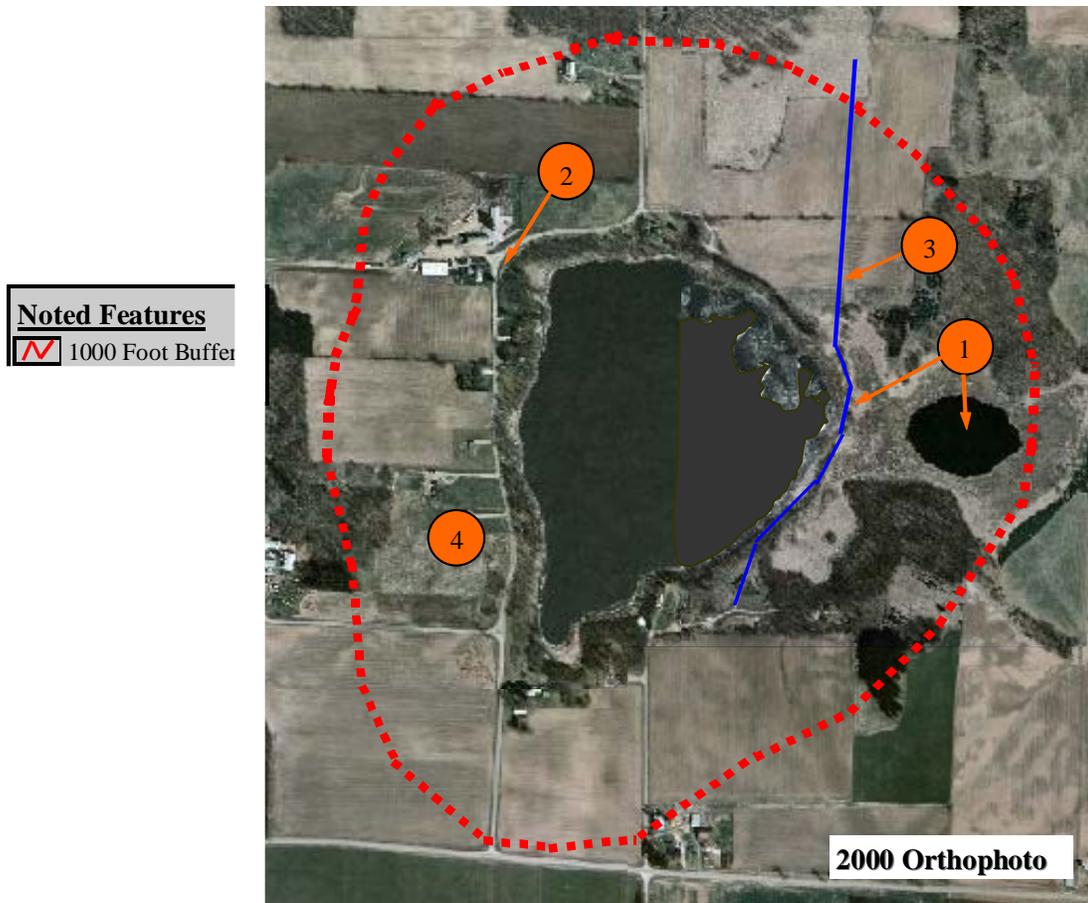


#### Groundwater Shed Land Use

- Non-irrigated cropland has dominated the land use since 1948
- Shrub Cover decreased substantially between 1948 and 1968
- All other land uses have remained relatively constant noting the increase in residential land use

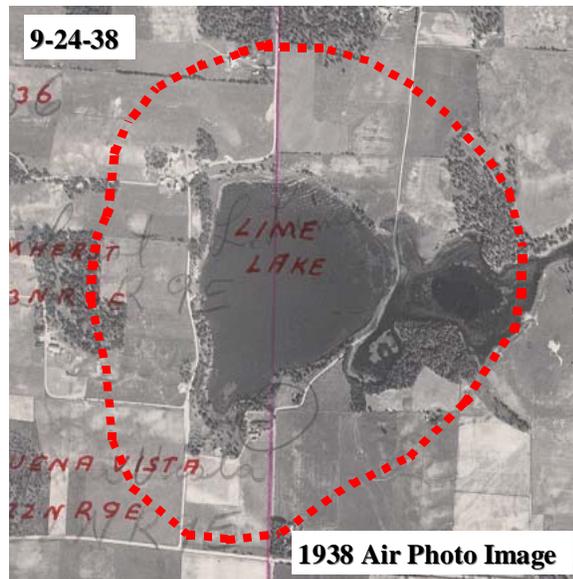


# Lime Lake ~ Taking a closer look (Within 1,000 feet of the lake)



## Points of Interest

1. It appears as though the wetlands on the east side of the lake were mostly covered in 1938
2. The only farm that has been on the lake since 1938.
3. A road was here until the early 1960s', today there is little presence of it ever being there
4. This area was cropland in 1938, now it has become residential.

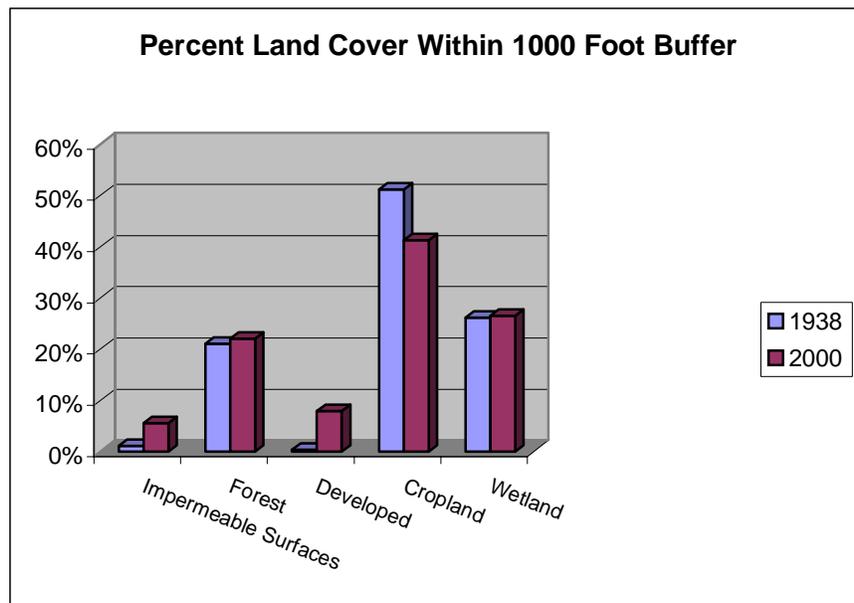


# Lime Lake ~ Taking a closer look (Within 1,000 feet of the lake)

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## Changes from 1938 to 2000

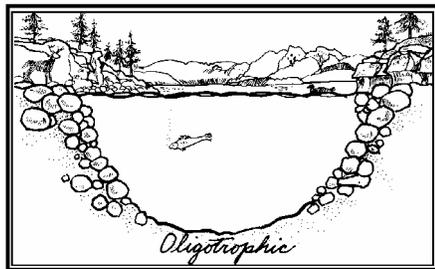
	1938	2000
# of Docks	1	0
Impervious Surface (acres)	1	6
Residential (acres)	0.4	8
Cropland (acres)	55	43
Forest (acres)	25	23
Wetland (acres)	27	28



# Lime Lake ~ Water Quality

## Total Phosphorus

In more than 80% of Wisconsin's lakes phosphorus is the key nutrient affecting aquatic plant and algae growth. Once in a lake system phosphorus levels are difficult to reduce, so limiting phosphorus input is key. Phosphorus at levels above 30 parts per billion (ppb) can lead to nuisance aquatic plant growth and accelerate a lake's change from oligotrophic to eutrophic. Sources of phosphorus include septic systems, detergents, animal waste, farmland and storm sewer runoff, soil erosion, and fertilizers for lawns, gardens, and agriculture.



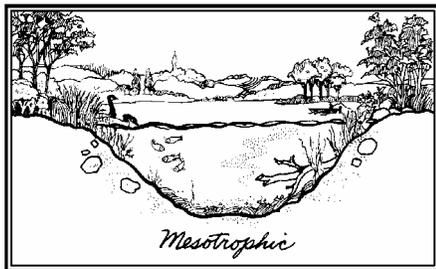
### Oligotrophic Lakes

Common uses:

- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Skiing
- ✓ Boating

Vegetation of oligotrophic lakes:

- ✓ Very little vegetation



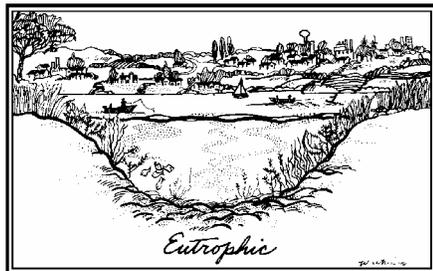
### Mesotrophic Lakes

Common uses:

- ✓ Boating
- ✓ Fishing

Vegetation of mesotrophic lakes:

- ✓ Increased vegetation
- ✓ Occasional algal blooms



### Eutrophic Lakes

Common uses:

- ✓ Fishing
- ✓ Wildlife watching

Vegetation of eutrophic lakes:

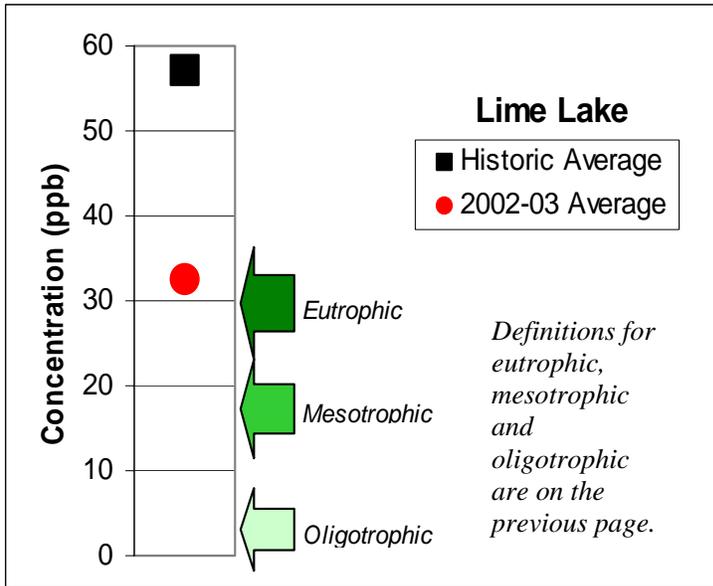
- ✓ Lots of aquatic plants
- ✓ Frequent algal blooms

Winter fish kills can occur



# Lime Lake ~ Water Quality

## Average Total Phosphorus Levels



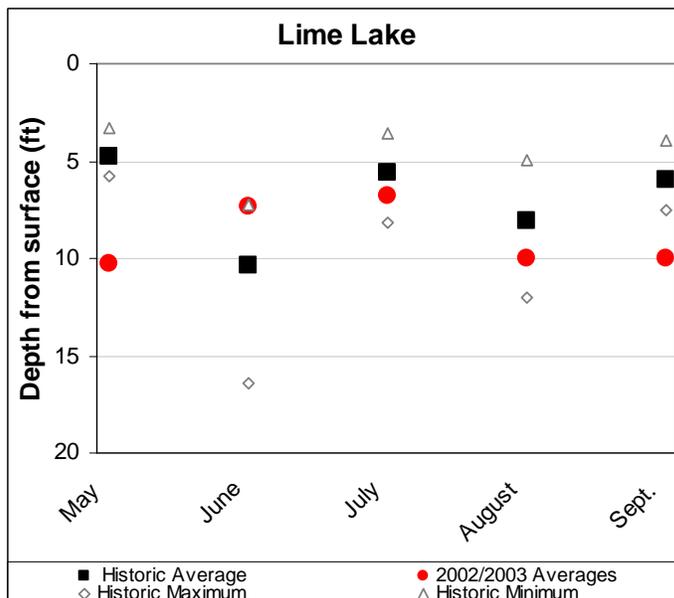
The graph to the left shows total phosphorus levels measured when the lake was well mixed (overturn). Phosphorus levels in Lime Lake in 2002-03 are lower than average historic levels, however, they are still high. Levels of phosphorus above 30 ppb are high enough to categorize a lake as eutrophic, making it subject to nuisance algae blooms and aquatic plant growth. Compared to similar lakes in the region, Lime Lake has a relatively high concentration of phosphorus that is high for a marl lake.



**Overturn:** uniform temperature from top to bottom in the lake.

## Water Clarity

Water clarity (Secchi disc depth) is an indicator of water quality. The two main components affecting water clarity are materials dissolved in the water and materials suspended in the water. Water clarity can indicate overall water quality, especially the amount of algae and suspended sediment present.



The water clarity in Lime Lake is considered fair. The average Secchi depth reading for similar lakes in the region is 8-10 feet; Lime Lake appears to have slightly reduced clarity during some months. The water clarity of Lime Lake during the 2002-03 growing season improved during most months compared with the historical growing season average. The months of May, August, and September showed the best water clarity and the month of July the poorest. These fluctuations throughout the summer are normal as algae populations and sedimentation increase and decrease.



# 2002 Amphibian Distribution at Portage County Lakes

This summary provides preliminary information on the amphibian species present and their distribution at the twenty-nine Portage County lakes. Surveys were conducted from April 2002 - August 2002, the typical breeding period of the frogs and salamanders found in the county.

Twelve frog species have been documented in Wisconsin, nine of which currently inhabit Portage County: American toad, chorus frog, spring peeper, eastern gray treefrog, Cope's gray treefrog, green frog, pickerel frog, northern leopard frog, and wood frog. Historically, Blanchard's cricket frog inhabited Portage County but is believed to now exist only in southeastern Wisconsin. Of all species believed to inhabit Portage County, only the pickerel frog was not found during the spring and summer of 2002. The pickerel frog has been listed as a species of special concern in Wisconsin. No new species to Portage County were recorded in 2002.

Seven salamander species have been documented in Wisconsin, all of which currently inhabit Portage County: blue-spotted salamander, spotted salamander, tiger salamander, central newt, mudpuppy, northern redback salamander and four-toed salamander. The four-toed salamander is listed as a species of special concern in Wisconsin.

Large sections of continuous natural shoreline on lakes are ideal habitats for frog and salamander populations. Natural areas with large amounts of submergent, emergent and floating-leaf vegetation provide protection for amphibians. Many species also use the vegetation for attachment of eggs during the breeding season. Green frogs, bullfrogs, pickerel frogs and leopard frogs depend on the shoreline area throughout the year. In contrast, American toads, spring peepers, tree frogs, wood frogs and chorus frogs depend on the shoreline area in the spring for breeding and then move to other areas for the rest of the year.

Undisturbed areas of shoreline that are also connected to large natural upland areas provide ideal habitat for many amphibian species because they lessen frogs' exposure to predators. Many frog and salamander species migrate to the lakes in the spring to breed and spend the summer months foraging in the uplands. Many amphibian species will also over winter in the uplands.



# Lime Lake ~ Frogs and Reptiles



## Lime Lake Frogs and Reptiles

**Number of frog species:** 4

**Frog species observed:** spring peeper, gray treefrog, Cope's gray treefrog, green frog

**Location of primary habitat:** east side of lake

**Key features of habitat:** protected areas of marsh with large amounts of submergent, emergent and floating-leaf vegetation

**Number of reptile species:** 2

**Reptile species observed:** painted turtle, snapping turtle

## Map Key

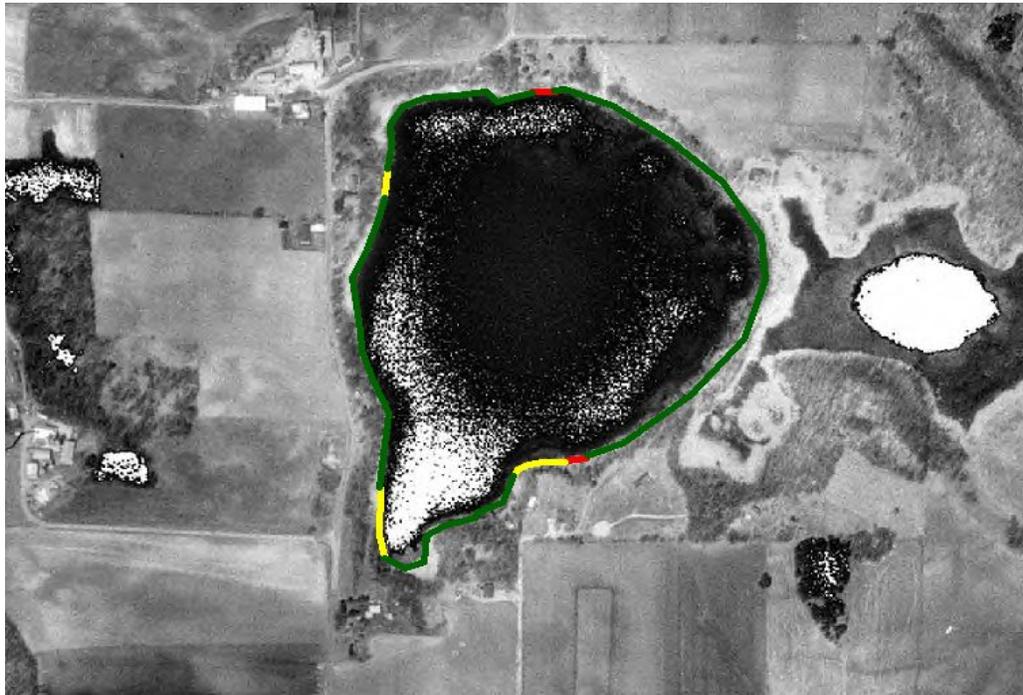
**Red outlined areas** = primary frog habitat

## **Good News**

Large sections of natural shoreline



# Lime Lake ~ Shoreline Vegetation



- Cover 1 - Tamarack/Black Spruce
- Cover 2 - Alder Shoreline
- Cover 3 - Narrow Wetland Shoreline
- Cover 4 - Vegetated Shoreline
- Cover 5 - Grasses/Shrubs
- Cover 6 - Low Disturbance
- Cover 7 - Moderate Disturbance
- Cover 8 - High Disturbance

Frogs and toads depend on shoreline and aquatic vegetation for:

- attachment of eggs during the breeding season,
- shelter for adults throughout the spring and summer,
- food for larvae,
- habitat for prey, and
- slowing evaporation and moderating temperature fluctuations.

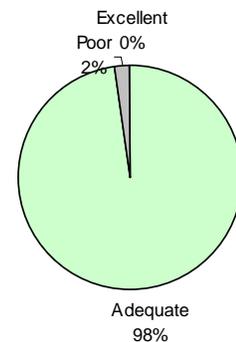
Frogs are commonly found in areas with large amounts of tree cover, aquatic plants, leaves, and downed branches, characteristics typical of natural areas. Frogs are not frequently found in sandy areas or open water, characteristics typical of altered areas. Though amphibians use drier prairies and woodlands near lakes and wetlands, this study focused on areas reaching from 16 feet into the lake to 33 feet inland.

Green frogs are used as an indicator for the health of aquatic life in Wisconsin lakes because they are abundant, live in many cover types, and remain along the edge of the lake throughout the spring and summer. While other amphibians may require more specific cover types, the green frog habitat is a useful indicator. Some cover types (as shown on map above) are better than others for green frogs. Specifically:

- Excellent green frog habitat = cover types 1 and 2
- Adequate green frog habitat = cover types 3, 4 and 6
- Poor green frog habitat = cover types 5, 7 and 8

Lakes with larger amounts of good green frog habitat will likely support more amphibians and more species of amphibians. Likewise, amphibians are more likely to be harmed or eliminated with increasing shoreland development.

Lime Lake Green Frog Habitat



**Best Green Frog Habitat: Ebert Lake**  
33% excellent habitat + 67% adequate

**Worst Green Frog Habitat: Helen Lake**  
2% excellent habitat + 6% adequate + 92% poor



# Lime Lake ~ Fish

## Lime Lake Fish

Number of observed species: 12

**Species observed to date:** This chart represents all species detected, by decade, in Lime Lake since censusing began. Data before 2002 was collected by the Wisconsin DNR and 2002/2003 data was collected by UW-Stevens Point. X represents a decade when the species was detected and S represents a decade when the species was stocked.

	1970's	1980's	2000's
<b>Bluegill</b>	X	X	X
<b>Bluegill/Pumpkinseed hybrid</b>			X
<b>Pumpkinseed</b>	X	X	X
<b>Green Sunfish</b>	X		X
<b>Largemouth Bass</b>	X	X	X
<b>Black Crappie</b>	X	X	X
<b>Walleye</b>	X,S	X	
<b>Yellow Perch</b>	X	X	X
<b>Iowa Darter</b>		X	
<b>Northern Pike</b>	X	X	X
<b>Yellow Bullhead</b>		X	X
<b>White Sucker</b>	X		X
<b>Golden Shiner</b>	X		X
<b>Central Mudminnow</b>	X		X





**Substrate:** Bottom substrate is mostly marl mixed with small amounts of sand. Deeper areas near the north and south shore appear to have been dredged, a sign of marl removal. In the absence of sand and gravel, largemouth bass and sunfish build nests on marl especially if they can excavate a depression to a coarser substrate such as woody debris.



**Vegetation:** Extensive emergent beds of cattail ring the lake with an expanse of rush and sedge in slightly deeper water along the eastern shore. Water lilies provide excellent edge habitat in deeper water along the south and west shores. Extensive beds of pondweed and common milfoil provide deep water cover. There is little woody cover along the shoreline to provide permanent cover.



Lime Lake supports a warm water fishery. The fish population is dominated by bluegill, largemouth bass and yellow bullheads. The lake has had a long history of stocking largemouth bass, bluegill and yellow perch dating back to 1930. In 1976, walleye were stocked, but there has been no evidence of reproduction and the population has apparently disappeared. The lake was considered to have potential as a trout fishery in 1958, but the lake also has been subject to winterkill and would be a poor choice for trout stocking because of periodic low dissolved oxygen.

Twelve species of fish were collected in Lime Lake in 2002-2003 compared to 13 from historical records. The only new species found not previously reported from this lake include the bluegill/pumpkinseed hybrid. Pure pumpkinseed parentals are still found in the lake unlike several other lakes where they have been lost through introgression with bluegill. Species lost or not documented include the walleye, which would only be sustained through stocking, and the Iowa darter, a small bottom dwelling fish that is best caught by seine, which could not be used because of the soft bottom. Decline in the population of black crappie has occurred since the last WDNR sampling in 1986 when it was the second most abundant sport fish after bluegill. None were collected during daytime electrofishing in 2003 and only one was collected in 2002. There were also a lot fewer northern pike collected in 2002-2003 compared to 1986, but that difference may be due to our less effective daytime electrofishing. A substantial number of largemouth bass less than 13 inches are present in the lake. Yellow perch were more common than in the other lakes sampled in the 2002-2003 study. There is also a large population of sizeable yellow bullheads. The abundance of bullheads along with the high number of mudminnows suggests the lake may have been subject to low dissolved oxygen and possibly periodic winterkill.



# Lime Lake ~ Aquatic Plants

---

Aquatic plant surveys were conducted in each lake. More detailed information is available in the final report.

## **Aquatic Plant Survey**

Lime Lake has at least 51 species of aquatic and wetland macrophytes, including 50 species of vascular plants. This is slightly above average for Portage County Lakes.

Lime Lake and adjacent wet shore areas support a fairly large number of species, but almost no species which are rare or indicative of relatively undisturbed conditions. Among the most notable features of Lime Lake are the thick accumulation of marl in places such as at the boat landing on the north shore, and the abundance of two species of water-meal (the smallest flowering plants in the world). The two aggressive alien cattails are fairly well-established in places on the shore. Eurasian milfoil and curlyleaf pondweed have not been found in the lake to date, but both could become very abundant if established.

## **Invasive Exotic Aquatic Plants**

Invasive species displace native species, disrupt ecosystems, and affect citizen's livelihoods and quality of life. They hamper boating, swimming, fishing, and other water recreation, and take an economic toll on commercial, agricultural and aquatic resources.

(Wisconsin DNR)

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- Thomas Lake

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Contact the Portage County Land Conservation Department for additional information.



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- Portage County
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### Study Contacts:

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Dr. Bob Bell

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## **Near Shore Summary**

Dr. Glenn Bowles

Special thanks to UWSP undergraduate and graduate students and local citizens for their assistance!





Appendix F

Amherst Town Plan Commission  
Resolution to Adopt Plan

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015

Resolution to adopt the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan

The Town Plan Commission of the Town of Amherst Resolves as Follows:

WHEREAS, Section 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes set out the requirements for long-range Comprehensive planning for towns, villages, and cities across the State; and

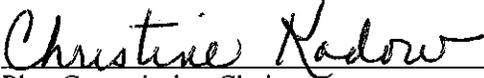
WHEREAS, Section 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes authorizes the Plan Commission to prepare, amend and recommend a Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Amherst; and

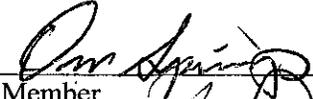
WHEREAS, the Town of Amherst Plan Commission began working cooperatively with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department in updating the formerly titled "2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst" in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Amherst completed a comprehensive update to the 2005 Plan including data from the 2010 Decennial Census and American Community Survey, updated information related to transportation, utilities and community facilities, agricultural and natural resources, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, land use, and implementation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Plan Commission of the Town of Amherst, Portage County, Wisconsin, by a majority vote, on this day the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, 2015 hereby adopts the document entitled "Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan" and to forward the updated Plan to the Town of Amherst Board for final approval after holding at least one public hearing.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2015.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Plan Commission Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

Appendix G

Amherst Town Board  
Ordinance to Adopt Plan

Town of Amherst  
Comprehensive Plan  
2015

An Ordinance to adopt the amended 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst

The Town Board of the Town of Amherst Ordains as Follows:

Section 1

Pursuant to Section 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes the Town of Amherst is authorized to prepare and amend a Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Amherst as defined in Section 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes and has been working cooperatively with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department in amending the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst.

Section 2

The Town Plan Commission of the Town of Amherst, by a majority vote of the entire Commission has adopted a resolution recommending to the Town Board, adoption of an amended 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst.

Section 3

The Town Board held a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst on August 13, 2015, in compliance with the requirements of Section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 4

The Town Board of the Town of Amherst, Portage County, Wisconsin, does by enactment of this Ordinance, formally adopt the amendments to the document titled "2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst" pursuant to Section 66.1001(4)(c) of Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 5

This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the Town Board and publication as required by law, and the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst shall be amended as deemed appropriate by the Town Board.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2015

Attest Christine Kadow, Deputy Clerk  
Town Clerk

[Signature]  
Town Chair

[Signature]  
Supervisor

[Signature]  
Supervisor