

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.

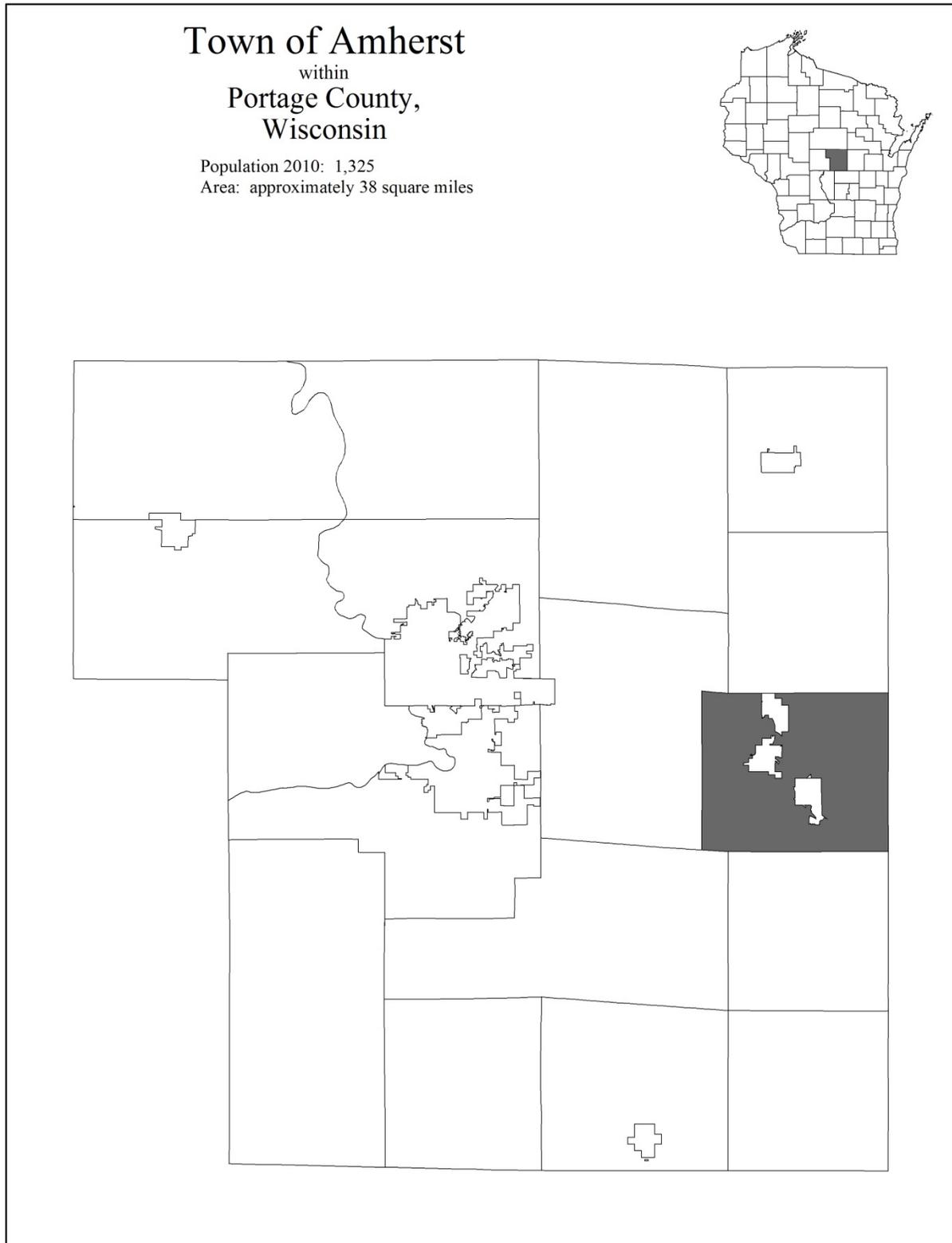
The following excerpt is taken from the Malcolm Rosholt Online Archives of the Portage County Historical Society:

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 Amherst

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.

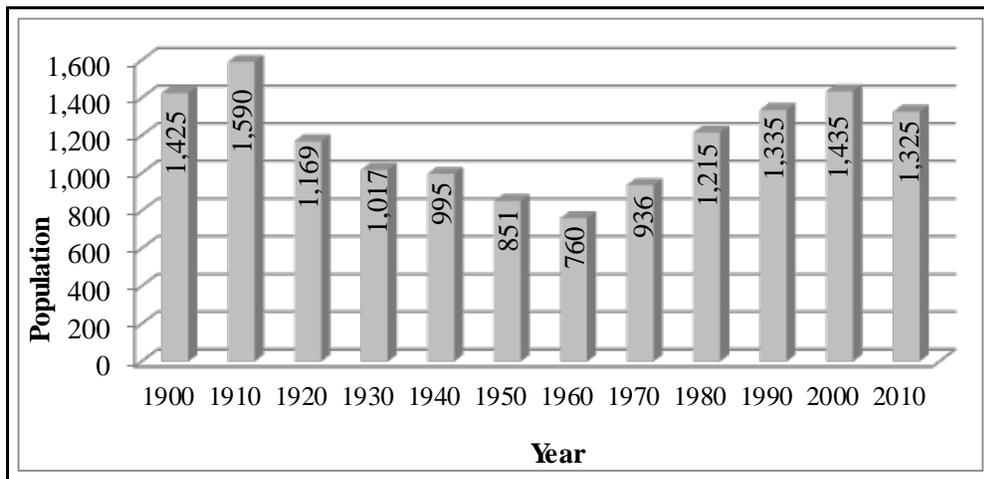
A. Population Growth

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%
TOTAL	1,335	1,435	1,325	1,522	1,597	1,542	61,405	67,182	70,019
Median Age	30.9	39.3	45.5	32.3	37.7	43.8	29.3	33.0	35.8

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%
TOTAL	777	980	1,035	873	1,048	1,031	35,004	40,143	40,962

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
Family Households	362	391	403	406	454	458	14,883	16,496	17,270
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%
Nonfamily Households	67	103	121	87	122	142	6,423	8,544	10,544
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%
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	429	494	524	493	576	600	21,306	25,040	27,814
Persons Per Household	3.11	2.80	2.53	3.00	2.71	2.55	2.71	2.54	2.39

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%
Total Households	420	498	568	496	583	609	21,336	25,112	26,945
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
Persons	1,333	1,435	1,356	1,487	1,597	1,546	57,805	67,182	65,720
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%
Persons 65 Years and Over	13	180	231	134	160	199	5,327	7,354	8,356
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%
Families	352	388	401	399	455	474	14,927	16,643	17,658
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%

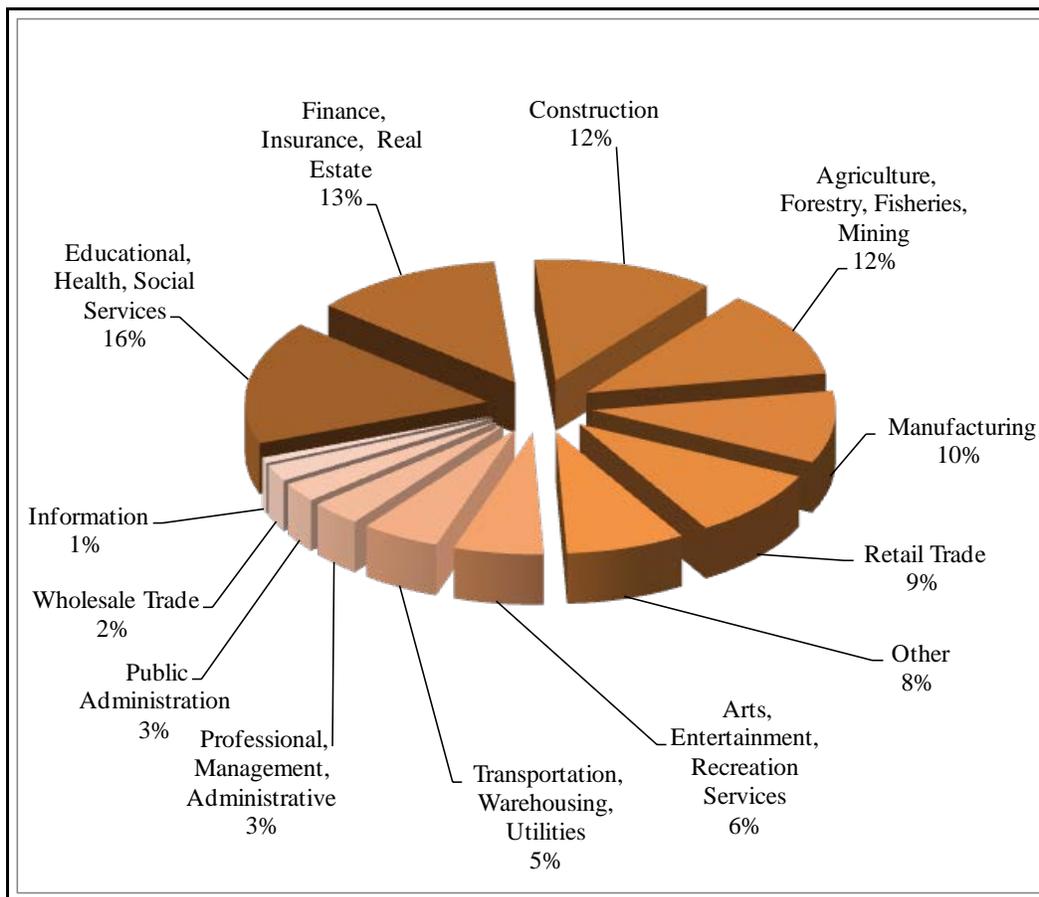
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1989 and 1999; ACS data from 2005 to 2009, Tables S1701 and S1702.

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.