

2016 Comprehensive Plan

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Introduction

Welcome to the Village of Amherst Comprehensive Plan. This Comprehensive Plan is the center-piece of the community development 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 with an idea as to the direction the Village may move in the future, and helps to ensure that future growth is not only anticipated, but planned for. The Plan functions as a practical guide to coordinate day-to-day decisions so they make sense in the future.

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 Village. It examines where the Village 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 government leaders, private enterprise, and individuals so that the Village's development-related decisions are sound, practical, and consistent.

State Statute 66.1001 (Appendix A) defines minimum requirements for what contents should be included within a comprehensive plan. These requirements include nine "elements" or chapters describing: *issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agriculture, natural and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; land use; and implementation.* The Village of Amherst has used the required elements as an outline for its plan document.

This 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 Village 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 Village of Amherst.