

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, region and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

Section 6.1 Introduction

This section of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes the Village of Amherst existing economic activity and identifies the desired directions for future economic growth. 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.

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 Village identify potential opportunities that could be used to pursue appropriate economic development activities.

Section 6.2 Economic Base Characteristics

A. Labor Force Analysis

1. Educational Attainment

Table 1.5 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter compares educational attainment for the Village of Amherst adults with similar information for Portage County as a whole. Since 1990, the percentage of 25+ year-old residents who completed some college, or completed a higher degree program rose by 18% for the Village of Amherst, and by 19% in the County.

2. Earnings and Income

Wages are not the only form of income that 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 business, 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 sources of income received regularly such as Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony.

According to the 2010-2014 ACS, 76% of Amherst households sampled were classified as households with earnings, 31% were households with social security income, 2.2% received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), 23% received retirement income, and 2% of households received public assistance.

In order to better understand the existing wage-earning realities within the Village of Amherst, “earnings” data was considered to be more informative. “Earnings” are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the algebraic sum of wage 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. The Village of Amherst made great percentage strides in earnings and income since 2000, but still lags slightly behind its neighbors and Portage County as a whole in actual dollars.

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

	Mean Earnings Per Household			Mean Income Per Household			Per Capita Income		
	1999	2010-14	Change	1999	2010-14	Change	1999	2010-14	Change
V. Amherst	\$46,680	\$51,156	10%	\$57,083	\$49,850	-13%	\$18,514	\$19,824	7%
V. Nelsonville	\$55,066	\$59,462	8%	\$64,303	\$66,691	4%	\$19,708	\$26,529	35%
V. Amherst Junction	\$52,631	\$78,846	50%	\$60,498	\$82,907	37%	\$19,261	\$27,459	43%
T. Amherst	\$54,644	\$76,506	40%	\$63,172	\$77,719	23%	\$19,751	\$32,586	65%
Portage County	\$50,373	\$62,367	24%	\$52,102	\$62,649	20%	\$19,854	\$25,462	28%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2010-2014 American Community Survey
 Mean earnings = total earnings / # households with earnings; Mean income = total income / # households with income

Table 1.7 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter details changes in household income over the last 25 years, as reported in the U.S. Census. The 2010-2014 Village of Amherst median household income (\$39,292) is slightly lower than that of Portage County overall (\$50,837). Within the greater Amherst area, the Village of Amherst median household income is lower than the Village of Nelsonville (\$61,875), Amherst Junction (\$65,714) and Town of Amherst (\$63,088).

3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 below shows the number of residents 16 years and above living in the Village of Amherst, Portage County and Wisconsin. Age sixteen is considered to be the lower threshold for being eligible for employment. The Village of Amherst has a similar percentage of residents in the labor force (67%) as compared to Portage County and the State. According to the 2010-2014 ACS, the Village had an unemployment rate of 10%, slightly higher than Portage County overall.

Table 6.2: Employment Status of Population 16 Years and Above (2010-2014 ACS)

Employment Status (Persons 16 Years +)	Village of Amherst	Portage County	Wisconsin
Population 16 Years and Over	822	57,780	4,561,244
Not in Labor Force <i>(Percentage Not in Labor Force)</i>	271 33%	18,702 32%	1,484,933 33%
In Labor Force <i>(Percentage In Labor Force)</i>	551 67%	39,078 68%	3,076,311 67%
Armed Forces <i>(Percentage of Labor Force)</i>	0 0%	33 0.1%	2,631 0.1%
Civilian Labor Force <i>(Percentage of Labor Force)</i>	551 67%	39,045 68%	3,073,680 67%
Employed <i>(Percentage of Civilian Labor Force)</i>	494 90%	35,983 92%	2,852,018 93%
Unemployed <i>(Percentage of Civilian Labor Force)</i>	57 10%	3,062 8%	221,662 7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

4. Type of Employment for Village Residents

Table 6.3 below provides information regarding the type of occupation that Village of Amherst residents are employed in. The Management/Professional category includes the largest number of employed residents, followed by Sales and Office occupations. Figure 1.3 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the period of time spanning from 2010 to 2014. Information for both these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Village were employed in, and is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in the Village.

Table 6.3: Amherst Village Resident Employment by Occupation

Occupation	2000	2010-2014
Management, Professional, and Related Occupations	30%	30%
Service Occupations	13%	20%
Sales and Office Occupations	23%	22%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations ⁽¹⁾	2%	NA
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations ⁽²⁾	7%	12%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	25%	17%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

(1) Category was changed to an "Industry" during the 2010 Census period.

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

5. Commuting

The majority of people from the Village of Amherst work outside of the Village. According to 2010-2014 ACS data, 82.6% of employed Village residents work outside of Amherst, while the remaining 17.4% live and work in Amherst. The fact that the majority of the Amherst labor force works further from home is also supported by the mean travel time to work, which is 22.6 minutes for Village residents.

B. Economic Base Analysis

Appendix B lists all the businesses located within the Village of Amherst. As of 2016, there were over 50 businesses in the Village, from large industrial plants to small-scale retail and service establishments. The major employers within the Village are listed in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4: Village of Amherst Major Employers

Employer	Number of Employees		
	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Tomorrow River Schools	129	18	147
Blenker Companies	65	2	67
Amherst Family Foods	11	24	35
Central Waters Brewing Co.	14	10	24
Amherst Telephone Company	14	3	17
International Bank of Amherst	13	0	13
American Governor	10	0	10

Source: Village of Amherst, 2016

The value of commercial properties within the Village of Amherst has greatly increased over time. In 2000, Amherst's commercial properties were valued at \$6,797,500; by 2015 the value had risen to \$11,878,500. Table 6.5 below illustrates the change in percentage of total value over the 15-year period. Commercial value accounted for 21% of total value in 2000, and 19% in 2015.

Table 6.5: Equalized Property Values for Village of Amherst

Property Classification	2000		2010		2015	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$24,650,600	75%	\$40,480,800	73%	\$46,920,500	74%
Commercial	\$6,797,500	21%	\$9,583,200	17%	\$11,878,500	19%
Manufacturing	\$54,200	<1%	\$3,421,100	6%	\$3,076,400	5%
Agricultural	\$53,600	<1%	\$12,900	<1%	\$14,400	<1%
Undeveloped ⁽¹⁾	\$2,800	<1%	\$15,600	<1%	\$7,700	<1%
Ag Forest ⁽²⁾	NA	NA	\$7,000	<1%	\$6,000	<1%
Forest	\$3,900	<1%	\$28,000	<1%	\$24,000	<1%
Other	\$139,700	<1%	\$134,800	<1%	\$116,300	<1%
Personal Property	\$1,219,600	4%	\$1,482,800	3%	\$1,782,100	3%
Total Value	\$32,921,900		\$55,166,200		\$63,825,900	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Historical Statement of Changes in Equalized Value 1999-2014 (Report 2) and Statement of Changes in Equalized Values 2015 (Expanded Version)

(1)The Swamp and Waste property classification was renamed Undeveloped in 2004.

(2)The Ag Forest property classification was created in 2006.

In 2000, Amherst's manufacturing properties were valued at \$54,200; by 2010 the value had risen to \$3,421,100, but fell to \$3,076,400 by 2015. Manufacturing value accounted for less than 1% of total value in 2000, but grew to 5% in 2015.

1. Commercial Development

Commercial development is generally concentrated in three areas in Amherst: a) the Central Business District (CBD), b) the intersection of Cty Rd KK/ Wilson Street, and c) the southern edge of the Village at the Cty Rd A/USH 10 interchange.

a. The Central Business District

Amherst's CBD (generally, from the funeral home to John Street along Main Street and from the International Bank of Amherst parking lot to the Tomorrow River along Wilson Street) has historically served the primary retail, service and governmental functions of the community. The vitality and economic strength of the CBD has been challenged over time by population trends, competition and lack of expansion area. The Village should encourage distinct commercial areas that compliment each other and not directly compete.

There is a lack of expansion area for the CBD, because the area surrounding the CBD is developed and mostly residential in character. It is important that residential development be limited within the CBD to allow for additional retail sales and service uses, which will help to strengthen commercial viability in the downtown. According to the Village's Zoning Ordinance, the intent of the Central Business District is to encompass the downtown business area and encourage primarily retail uses with a variety of supporting uses. In addition, the downtown was intended to be developed and maintained as a specialized pedestrian oriented shopping and community center. The CBD originally served the agriculture sector and supporting retail trade and services. Recently, an infusion of small scale, professional office development has occurred in the CBD.

The vitality and economic strength of the CBD is also related to its appearance. Although the CBD is well defined by natural boundaries such as the railroad tracks, Mill Pond and Nelson Park, there is a need for stronger cohesiveness and identity. Specifically, there is a need to improve the overall appearance and unity (along with improving the structural integrity of a few buildings), which will enhance the Village's ability to retain and attract business to the CBD.

b. Cty Rd KK/-Wilson Street Intersection

For a long period of time, commercial development in the Cty Rd KK/Wilson Street intersection consisted of a printing company, grocery store, gas station and restaurant, which were separated by the cemetery and a large tract of undeveloped land. As traffic counts on Cty Rd KK (formerly USH 10) grew, the desire to locate commercial business along the highway to attract that traffic also grew. As of early 2016, the Cty Rd KK/ Wilson Street intersection includes a significant concentration of commercial development in the Village of Amherst. Some of those businesses are highway oriented, while others are not. With the relocation of USH 10 to a by-pass west of Cty Rd KK, the Village foresees this commercial area remaining intact, although some businesses that are most reliant on highway traffic may seek other locations. With the anticipated emergence of additional commercial development related to the by-pass (see Section c below), this area is seen as an "intermediate" place for commercial activity, servicing different needs (auto-oriented shopping where on-site parking is more important, and highway dependent or related business) than the CBD or commercial area at the southern edge of the Village.

c. Southern Edge of the Village (Cty Rd A at the USH 10 Interchange)

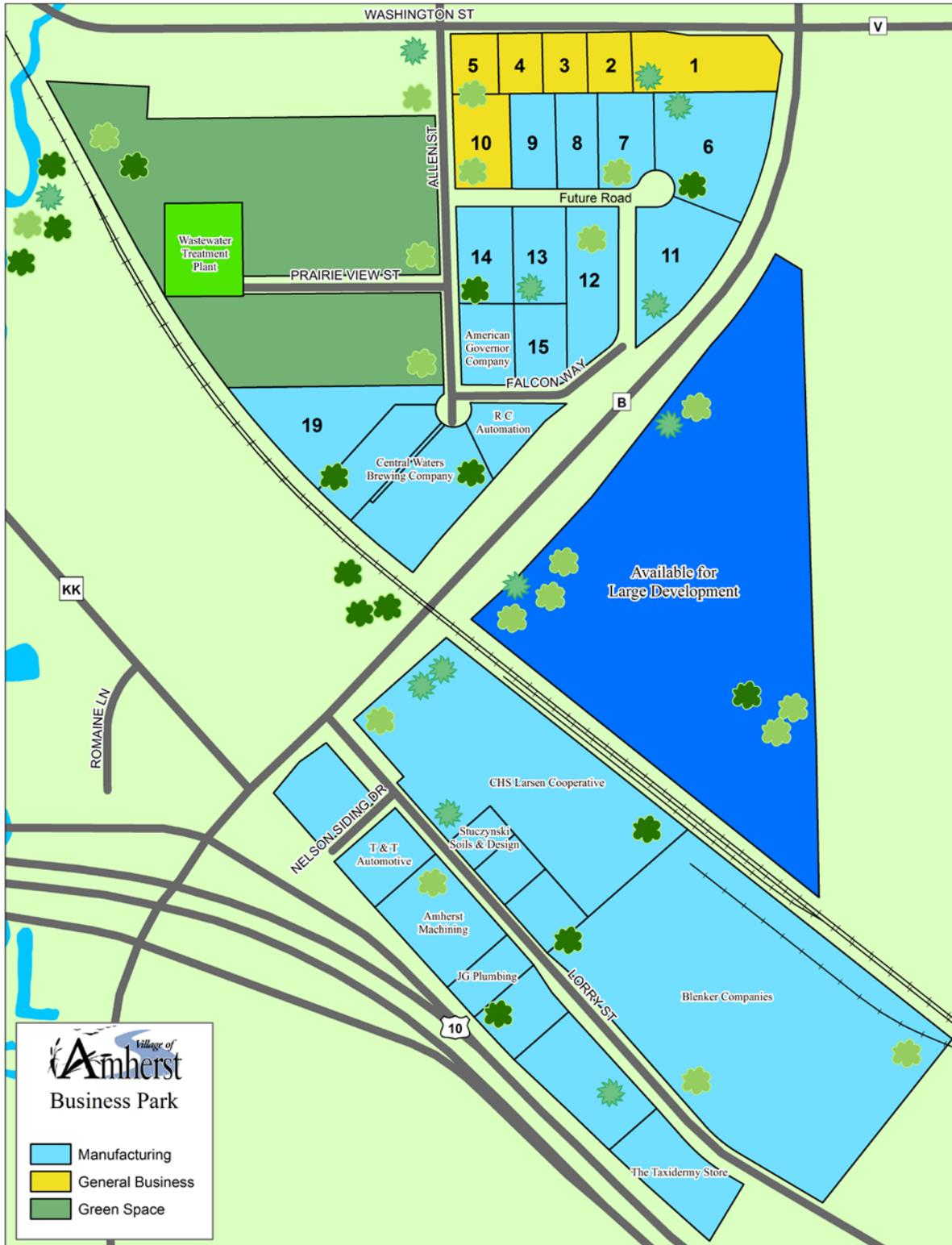
In 2004, the Village of Amherst annexed land located in the southeast quadrant at the new Cty Rd A/USH 10 By-pass interchange. This area, along with property adjacent to Washington and Lorry Streets, is anticipated to support both highway-dependent and local resident-oriented commercial development. Currently, the land in the southeast quadrant (south of USH 10) is zoned agricultural with future intentions of establishing a mix of residential and commercial zoning on the property. The properties along Washington and Lorry Streets have been rezoned to residential and commercial, with some additional manufacturing along Lorry Street. Development along Lorry Street has occurred more rapidly, while Washington Street has yet to be developed.

2. Industrial Development

Industrial development in Amherst has historically been located adjacent to the railroad tracks north of Wilson Street and oriented toward agriculture. There is a small amount of vacant land available for industrial development in this area. Other industrial development includes three sites located on the Mill Pond and one located on Wilson Street in the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area.

During 1984, Amherst annexed 112 acres of land in what is now the southeast quadrant of the Village. The Village purchased 26 acres of land just north of the annexed area and built a new wastewater treatment facility on the site. The Village's Development Guide was updated in 1984 relative to this area and called for the development of an industrial park. In July of 1984, the Village Zoning Ordinance was amended and the land south of the railroad tracks and adjacent to USH 10 was zoned Industrial. For a period of years, no development occurred on this land. In 1996, the Village went through the process of creating Tax Increment Finance district (TID) Number 1 to encourage development within the Amherst Business Park (see Map 6.1). TID #1 started with 111 acres and a base value of \$274,500; 40 acres of land were added to TID #1 in 2003, for a total of 151 acres and a 2003 value of \$836,600. In 2003, the Village also created TID #2, adjacent northeast of TID #1. The base value of this approximately 82 acre TID was \$17,200. As of 2016, 3.5 out of 19 lots in the Business Park have been sold and developed. This Business Park will be the primary focus of industrial development throughout the planning period.

Map 6.1: Amherst Business Park



Section 6.3 Community Assessment: Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

A. Categories or types of new businesses and/or industries that are desired by the community

The Village of Amherst is willing to work with any potential business and/or industry wishing to locate within the community, to determine whether it is a good fit for all parties. The Village is “open to business” which helps further its economic development goals.

B. Community strengths

- location (close to many places)
- transportation (rail, highway access)
- utilities
- land available, with services
- fiber optic available
- complete community (nice old/new homes, good school district, multiple places of worship, places to shop, eat, recreate, etc.)

C. Community weakness for attracting/retaining businesses and industry

- proximity to other communities (competition with neighboring communities to attract businesses)
- lack of development incentives

Section 6.4 Economic Development Issues/Trends

Commercial and industrial establishments provide a base for balanced economic growth by supplying necessary goods and services, offering employment opportunities and contributing to the tax base of the community. Historically, Amherst has served as a rural agricultural center with a majority of the commercial activity taking place within the Central Business District (CBD). Industry in Amherst has been oriented to the railroad that bisects the Village, and concentrated northwest of the CBD. Today, Amherst’s economy is no longer dominated by agricultural services (although they still play an important role) and the CBD is no longer the only area of concentrated commercial activity.

The first major change was the relocation in 1968 of USH 10 from downtown Amherst to the western portion of the Village. In 1984, the Village annexed a parcel of land at the southeast edge of the Village for the development of an industrial park. Business activity shifted to the USH 10/Cty Rd B intersection at its former location on the west side of the Village, and during the 1990’s the Amherst Business Park was created to serve as the focal point for new industry in Amherst. In 2004, USH 10 was reconstructed to a 4-lane divided highway and relocated west of Cty Rd KK almost entirely outside of the Village of Amherst. At that time the Village annexed property adjacent to the Business Park on the south side of USH 10 for the location of residential and commercial development. With completion of the second relocation of USH 10, these areas will see increased development pressure.

A. Commercial Development

To encourage local commercial growth it will be necessary to maintain and improve the appearance and quality of existing business districts, and effectively limit further development to areas that are compatible with and accessible to existing land uses. Three general areas of commercial development are recommended for the Village: the Central Business District, the Cty Rd KK/Wilson Street intersection, and the Cty Rd A/USH 10 interchange.

1. Central Business District

Amherst's CBD is accessible to more people than any other point in the Village. Therefore, the CBD should remain a vital commercial and business center of the community. This is essential if Amherst is to improve its competitive economic position with surrounding municipalities and counties. Amherst should explore the feasibility of a program to revitalize the CBD in order to maintain its place as the commercial and business center of the community. A rehabilitation program should be designed to improve the general appearance of the area. The visual appearance of the downtown area should be an important factor in the overall strengthening of the CBD. Efforts to improve exteriors and interiors of retail establishments will be necessary to provide a more attractive shopping environment. The need for long term improvements such as accessibility, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and parking could also be addressed. If renovation plans are incorporated, they should include shopping center planning principles in order to establish an identifiable district with distinct boundaries and compact, concentrated development of compatible activities suitable for pedestrian access.

A street landscaping program promoting the addition of shade trees, sidewalk planters, street furniture and improvements to the roadways could also improve the atmosphere and add comfort and appeal to the CBD. The CBD should offer increased availability of merchandise and services. Prospective customers must be offered the type, variety and quality of goods and services consistent with their needs.

On-street parking is provided free of charge for downtown business patrons, and is very important to downtown business owners. Public parking facilities are also available on the perimeter of the CBD which help function to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Fringe area parking also facilitates better pedestrian access and interaction in the downtown district. Current public parking facilities are projected to be adequate through the planning period. See the Transportation Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan for a more complete discussion of current and future parking issues.

2. Cty Rd KK/Wilson Street Intersection

The Cty Rd KK/Wilson Street intersection provides a significant concentration of commercial development. This area should be utilized for additional commercial and office development. Commercial development along Cty Rd KK may serve major automotive establishments such as motels, service stations and restaurants, as well as other activities. The objective is to promote economic growth and improve the Village's retail trade position within the surrounding trade area.

Approximately 2.5 acres of vacant land remains available for development in this area. This acreage is insufficient to support the Village's short and long range needs for commercial land. The most suitable location for new commercial and office development is adjacent to the Cty Rd KK/Wilson Street intersection, along the northeast side of Cty Rd KK. This area, although located outside Village limits, has been identified for future commercial and residential development by the Village. In order to provide for future commercial development and address existing limitations at the Cty Rd KK/ Wilson Street intersection, Amherst should undertake to:

- Develop an access plan for the northwest quadrant of the Village, including land outside the Village proposed for commercial development. The Village should work in conjunction with the Town of Amherst, Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

and DOT. In order to facilitate commercial development, the access plan should include a frontage road along the northeast side of Cty Rd KK.

- Encourage annexation of the area proposed for commercial development so that sewer, water, and roadway facilities could be provided upon annexation.

3. Other Commercial Areas

a. Business Park Area

There are locations that may be appropriate for commercial and professional office development in the Amherst Business Park. The Village should remain open to a development plan for the northern half of the Business Park, but work to finalize a street layout for completion under TID funding.

b. Cty Rd KK/Packer Avenue Area

The Cty Rd KK/Packer Avenue area includes lands within the Village that are located north of Packer Avenue and west of Cty Rd KK. Land use currently consists of a veterinary clinic, single-family and multi-family residences, agricultural services, and commercial property. Currently, the County highway serves as a barrier to development in this area, with access controlled by the County. New development west of Cty Rd KK currently would have to obtain access from Packer Avenue, Fairgrounds Road, or a new street.

B. Industrial Development

Future industrial growth in Amherst will focus on development in the Amherst Business Park. Industrial development is encouraged for the following reasons:

- To provide jobs within the Village in order to stem out-migration.
- To provide additional balance to Amherst's economy.
- To increase the Village's tax base.
- To increase income for Village residents by providing higher paying jobs.

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 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has prepared a guide to help finance brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. It can be found online at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/rr/rr539.pdf>

There are 4 sites listed by the DNR within the Village of Amherst as a contaminated site with open status. Please see attachments (Appendix C) for listings. Open status refers to a contaminated site in need of clean up or where cleanup is still underway. A complete listing 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 Programs

The Village of Amherst does not currently offer any incentive or assistance programs for economic development. The following is a list of potential resources and programs that could provide technical support and financial assistance to the Village's businesses.

A. Tomorrow River Business Association

The Tomorrow River Business Association (TRBA), located in Amherst, is a leadership group that strives to represent the interests of area businesses, while addressing the needs of the entire community. TRBA benefits both businesses and the community by organizing many different activities and events throughout the Village. An emphasis is placed upon attracting residents and tourists to the downtown area, in order to maintain the CBD as a vital commercial and business center of the community.

B. Portage County Business Council

The Portage County Business Council (PCBC) serves as the chamber of commerce and economic development organization for the Portage County community. PCBC works with local municipalities and state agencies to promote business development in the area and smooth the way for businesses expanding or relocating to Portage County. The Business Council promotes the Portage County community by featuring available properties, resources and news of interest to potential and growing businesses.

C. Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund

The Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund (CWED) is a regional loan program established from the consolidation of state-funded Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan Funds within Central Wisconsin. Participating counties include Adams, Forest, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, Vilas and Wood. CWED works with entrepreneurs and their lenders to structure financing packages for start-up and expanding businesses to encourage economic growth in the area. Use of funds may be put toward acquisition of land, buildings, and fixed equipment; site preparation, construction, or remodeling; equipment financing; working capital; and investment in technology to keep the business competitive. CWED loans usually have low interest rates, reduced collateral requirements, and flexible terms.

D. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is the state's lead economic development agency. WEDC helps businesses, communities and individuals take advantage of new opportunities for growth and job creation through innovative market-driven programs. WEDC's economic development programs are designed to retain and attract businesses, create jobs and encourage economic growth.

1. Workforce Training Grants

Purpose: To 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.

E. Wisconsin Department of Administration

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has a broad range of financial assistance programs to help communities with economic development. The federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program can be used for housing, economic development and public facilities improvements.

1. Community Development Block Grant – Economic Development Loan

Purpose: To support economic development projects that spur job creation for low to moderate income residents located in Wisconsin communities of under 50,000 residents. The State will grant funds to a municipality. The municipality, in turn, makes a loan to a business for the purpose of job creation.

Use of Funds: To purchase equipment or provide working capital. Project must create/retain jobs and be documented for a period not to exceed 24 months.

Amount Available: Up to \$1,000,000, based on an allowance of up to \$35,000 per job created.

F. United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development Administration

The Rural Development Administration is an organization affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 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.rd.usda.gov/programs-services> or by contacting the Wisconsin office at:

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

G. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) provides technical grant writing and administrative assistance to communities that are seeking funds from the U.S. Department of Administration, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and USDA-Rural Development.

In addition, the NCWRPC provides communities with assistance in a variety of other economic development related studies, including: developing economic development strategies that examine the local economy, assess local trends and identify strategies to spur development, and preparing various grant applications.

H. Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point is one of 12 university-based SBDC's in Wisconsin. The center offers confidential, no-cost business counseling to current or prospective small-business owners on issues ranging from

financial management to sources of capital. Assistance is available to businesses located throughout nine counties including Adams, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, Waupaca, and Wood.

I. Centergy (Central Wisconsin Alliance for Economic Development)

Centergy is an economic development corporation representing the central Wisconsin counties of Adams, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, and Wood. The corporation works with area chambers, including economic development organizations to encourage business cluster development, support local businesses, attract new businesses, achieve growth for higher education facilities, and improve life in general for all central Wisconsin residents.

J. 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 has expertise in addressing the needs of Wisconsin manufacturers, whether the primary concern is cost and efficiencies, growth, establishing a winning culture or gaining a specific certification.

Section 6.7 Economic Development Conclusions

- A. The Village Plan Commission and Board take an active interest in promoting appropriate economic development, both within the Village limits and in surrounding areas.
- B. Village officials work to recognize and understand the unique challenges and advantages associated with each area of business development.
- C. Realize the importance of planning for new business growth as well as nurturing existing business enterprises.

Section 6.8 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

Amherst's advantageous central location, combined with the effective use of the Village's human and natural resources, will improve Village of Amherst's ability to capture existing income, provide greater employment opportunities for residents, including young people, and provide adequate and convenient goods and services.

A. Goal

To encourage and promote commercial and industrial development, in order to achieve balanced economic growth in Amherst.

B. Objectives

- 1. Encourage community support and leadership in coordinating and promoting commercial and industrial development.
- 2. Encourage commercial and industrial development that will reflect the effective use of the Village's human and natural resources.
- 3. Encourage commercial development in areas that are compatible with and accessible to existing urban activities.

4. Maintain and improve the appearance and quality of existing commercial businesses in the community.
5. Minimize the negative impacts of industrial activities on neighboring land uses.
6. Encourage industrial development where access to needed transportation is available and appropriate.

C. Policies

1. Encourage commercial and industrial development that will provide career opportunities for community residents.
2. The location of new industry should be directed towards the Amherst Business Park.
3. In order to maintain strong, compact shopping districts, new commercial development should be directed toward the CBD or the Cty Rd KK/ Wilson Street intersection.
4. Main and Mill Streets should be maintained as attractive shopping corridors.
5. Encourage municipal and civic cooperation and work cooperatively with the Portage County Business Council to attract and maintain industrial firms that are compatible with a residential community.