

## **CHAPTER 1: Issues and Opportunities for Comprehensive Planning in the Village of Amherst Junction**

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 governmental 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, necessary community facilities and services, efficient land use and transportation systems, and encouraging sufficient employment opportunities and adequate choices in quality housing options for all residents.

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 Village development-related decisions are sound, practical and consistent.

### **Section 1.1 Brief History and Description of the Planning Area**

The Village of Amherst Junction is located on the East side of Emily Lake, 12 miles southeast of Stevens Point and 16 miles northwest of Waupaca. It is the second smallest village in the county with regard to number of residents. The Wisconsin Department of Administration estimates the 2003 village population to be 319 persons.

From the May 19, 1992 Stevens Point Journal By SUSAN ALLEN of the Journal

Like many communities in Portage County, Amherst Junction was created when the railroad went through the county. And as the name implies, it was a junction between two railroads - the Wisconsin Central and the Green Bay and Lake Pepin railroads. Until 1875, the community was referred to as Groversburg, presumably after the Grover family that held considerable property in the area, wrote Malcolm Rosholt in his book “Our County Our Story.” But when a post office was established in March 1875, it was called Amherst Junction.

The Summit House, a fairly large hotel, was built in the Village around 1872 or 1873 by H. N. Livermore, according to an article in the Stevens Point Journal by Wendell Nelson. Since the hotel was a popular place to stay, eat and dance, as Nelson wrote, the Village must have been a gathering center for many of the surrounding communities.

It wasn't until 1911 that the Village was incorporated. By 1914, the Village had become an important potato buying and shipping center, Rosholt wrote. A number of warehouses were spotted along the railroad tracks that were built by the railroad companies, he wrote. In addition, many people traveling to the eastern and northeastern part of the County would detrain in Amherst Junction and hire a rig from a livery in the Village to take them to their destination, Rosholt wrote.

George Sroda, the 81 year-old Town of Amherst resident who lived in Amherst Junction for most of his life remembers when the Village was much different than it is today. When he was growing up, the village boasted 36 businesses, compared to the nine that are left there now, he said.

There were five taverns, two hotels, two grocery stores, dancehalls, depots, feed stores, four potato warehouses, a blacksmith, a livery stable, a meat market, bank, hardware store, car dealership, a post office, a school and a turkey processing plant, which Sroda owned.

“Women would come into town to go shopping, while the men would go into the tavern,” Sroda said. “In those days, you could buy a pair of work shoes for \$1.95 and a pair of socks for 9 cents. “The store keepers would set up free movies to lure people to go shopping,” he said. “The stores would be so packed, you couldn't even move.”

The Summit House remained in business until 1939, when it was dismantled and its lumber was used to build a new home for the owner, Nelson wrote. At one time, the hotel was operated by Zilphia Moyers Een, the county's first woman hotel keeper, he wrote. The hotel even survived a move from somewhere near the current Village Hall north of the railroad tracks to a place near the current barbershop and across from the bank, Nelson wrote.

Sroda attributes the decline of the Village to the accessibility and the growth of the automobile, which meant the decline of traveling by railroad and consequently of Amherst Junction.

## **Section 1.2 Past Planning in Amherst Junction**

### **A. 1980 Village Development Guide**

The Village of Amherst Junction contacted the Portage County Planning Department to assist them in preparing a Village Development Guide which would meet the statutory description of a Master Plan contained in Wisconsin State Statutes. The Village of Amherst Junction Development Guide was adopted in July 1980, and was used as the basis for updating the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance, and as a guideline for approving or disapproving actions affecting growth and development within the jurisdiction of the Village.

## **Section 1.3 The Current Comprehensive Planning Process**

As previously mentioned in the introduction of this plan, this Village of Amherst Junction Comprehensive Plan update had its beginning as a part of the County-wide planning project started in June 2001. The work during the first 18 months of the County-wide project, performed primarily by the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee, centered on public participation, visioning, and the generation of preliminary goal suggestions for the nine required Plan elements. This information was then forwarded to all local units of government in the fall of 2002. Utilizing the information provided by the Joint Steering Committee, the Village of Amherst Junction Plan Commission began the Village Comprehensive Planning process in

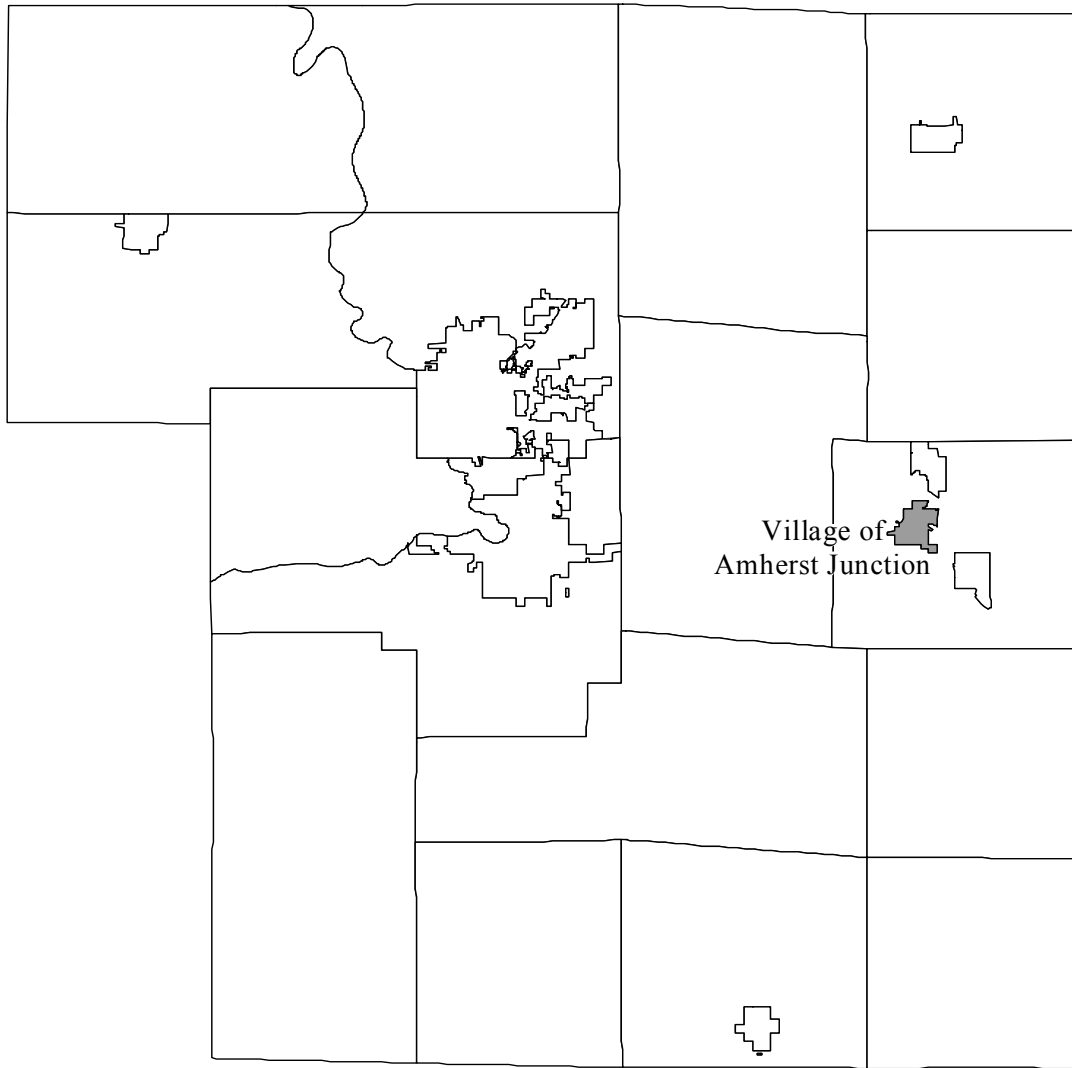
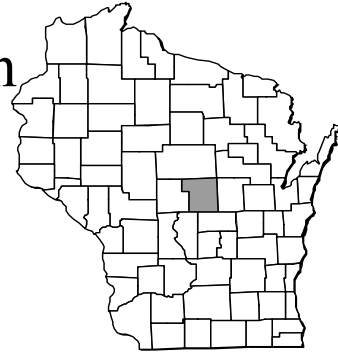
**Figure 1.1 Village of Amherst Junction**

# Village of Amherst Junction

## Portage County, Wisconsin

Figure 1.1

Population 2000: 305  
Area: 1.2 square miles



earnest in January 2003. The Plan Commission met monthly through October 2003 to put together the first complete preliminary draft of the plan. As in the previous planning projects, the comprehensive planning process involved several different phases:

The first phase involves research. Activities include acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting, identifying problems requiring solutions, analyzing critical factors that need to be changed before progress can be made toward community goals, and establishing goals and objectives for growth and development.

The second phase involves 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 phase involves the development of different plan alternatives for guiding future growth. The Land Use Element relates how the Village 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, commercial and industrial development should occur.

The final phase involves implementation of the plan and programs that will 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. Zoning regulations act to control growth and development so that it is harmonious with the proposals and recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. They promote sound, orderly development directed toward the preservation of property values and the improvement of the overall appearance of the community. Subdivision regulations assure that new land divisions are designed in an orderly and efficient manner and are in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. The capital improvements program is a long range financial plan for major public improvements. It proposes the best means for utilizing available financial resources to provide residents with necessary facilities and services.

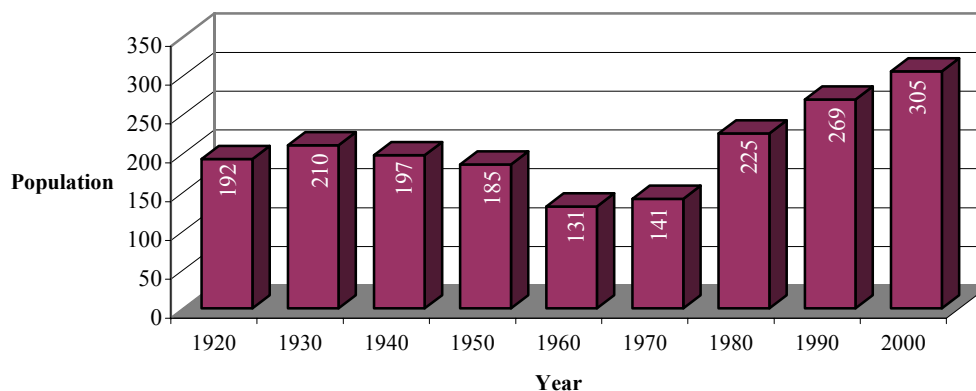
The Comprehensive Plan is the primary link between the past, the present, and the future, making it perhaps the best resource for achieving continuity over a period of time. It is to be used as a guide by those making decisions with regard to the development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan must 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 community 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 Junction.

## Section 1.4 Demographic Trends

### A. Population Growth

Every 10 years the Federal government performs the National Census, and these Census results are the main source of information used to understand how communities change over time. The Village of Amherst Junction has seen a jump in population in the last 30 years. According to the last census information, the population increased by 164 people, or over 116%, between 1970 and 2000. This is a distinct departure from the previous period which saw relatively flat population growth and decline between the years of 1920 and 1950, followed by a dip in population between the years of 1950 and 1970 (see Figure 1.2 below).

**Figure 1.2: Village of Amherst Junction Population Change, 1920 to 2000**



Source: US Bureau of Census

This population growth rate for Amherst Junction of 116% between 1970 and 2000 is much higher than that of Portage County (41% increase) and well above the State (21% increase) over the same period (Table 1.1). The 2002 State of Wisconsin Department of Administration population estimate for the Village of Amherst Junction was 315, an approximately 3% increase since 2000 Census. This percentage increase over the 2-year period since the 2000 Census was the second largest in Portage County behind the Village of Amherst (+ 38 people, 3.9%). Growth in the surrounding Town of Amherst since the Census has more closely mirrored the County over all (1.46% and 1.56%, respectively, see Table 1.1 below, and Appendix D).

**Table 1.1: Amherst Junction Area Population Change, 1970 to 2002**

	U.S. Census				State	1970 to	2000 to
	1970	1980	1990	2000	DOA	2000	2003
					Estimate	Change	Change
Village of Amherst Jct.	141	225	269	305	319	116.3%	4.6%
Village of Amherst	585	701	792	964	1,024	64.8%	6.2%
Village of Nelsonville	152	199	171	191	189	25.7%	-1.0%
Town of Amherst	936	1,215	1,335	1,435	1,455	53.3%	1.4%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	68,664	41.3%	2.2%
State of Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,490,718	21.4%	2.4%

Source: US Census Bureau; State of Wisconsin Dept. of Administration; Portage County Planning and Zoning Dept.

Table 1.2 below helps to illustrate the migration patterns of Village residents by examining where residents were living five years prior to the 1990 and 2000 Census. The “Same House” column identifies the Amherst Junction residents that lived in the same dwelling in both 1995 and 2000 (or 1985 and 1990); a high percentage can be an indicator of long-term residency. The “Different House, Portage County” column identifies the Amherst Junction residents that lived in a home outside the Village, but within Portage County, in 1995. The “Different House, Different County” column identifies the Amherst Junction residents that lived in a home outside of the Village and Portage County, but within the State of Wisconsin, in 1995. The “Different State” column identifies the Amherst Junction residents that lived in a home outside the State of Wisconsin in 1995. Altogether, this information provides insight into the nature and pace of new residents moving into the Village. Based on 2000 Census information, fifty-four percent (54%) of the Village's residents lived in the same house as they did in 1995, up one percent (1%) from the 1990 Census.

**Table 1.2: Comparison of Place of Residence, Five Years Prior to 1980 & 2000 Census**

	Same House				Different House, Portage County				Different House, Different County				Different State			
	1985		1995		1985		1995		1985		1995		1985		1995	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
V. Amherst Jct.	137	53%	141	54%	51	20%	84	32%	49	19%	37	14%	21	8%	0	0%
V. Amherst	353	50%	528	56%	226	32%	277	29%	73	10%	100	11%	55	8%	36	4%
V. Nelsonville	90	55%	125	70%	59	36%	25	14%	4	3%	29	16%	10	6%	0	0%
Portage County	51%		56%		21%		22%		21%		16%		7%		5%	

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

Thirty-two percent (32%) of Village residents in the year 2000 had moved into the Village after living in other parts of Portage County in 1995 (up from 20% in 1990); fourteen percent (14%) lived in a different Wisconsin County in 1995 before moving to Amherst Junction (down from 19%). No residents from the 2000 Census reported living in a “Different State” five years prior to residing in Amherst Junction (down from 8% in 1990). These numbers indicate that the growth being directed at the Village of Amherst Junction comes most recently from other parts of Portage County. During the 1980’s, a good portion of new Amherst Junction residents came from other counties within Wisconsin, and states other than Wisconsin.

## B. Age Distribution and Race

The 2000 U.S. Census describes the Village’s population as 100% white.

Table 1.3 below details the number of Village residents that occupied specific age groups in each of the last three Census years, along with similar information for the other five rural Portage County Villages (Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt – in the form of the average for all five) and the County as a whole (see Appendix E) for the rest of Portage County.

If you were to examine the Village of Amherst Junction age group data straight across the Census years, you can get a feeling for how the increase in Village population in the last 10 years has been distributed.

The “5-to-24”, “35-to-64” and “85+” age groups added a total of 60 people since 1990, in particular the “15-to-24” and “45-to-54” (+23 and +13, respectively). Altogether, the Village gained 36 residents from 1990 to 2000.

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

Age	Village of Amherst Junction			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Under 5 years	11 5.1%	27 10.0%	24 7.9%	46 9.3%	33 7.6%	38 7.8%	4,343 7.6%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%
5 to 14 years	22 10.2%	55 20.5%	58 19.0%	73 15.5%	72 17.3%	83 16.5%	8,671 15.1%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%
15 to 24 years	46 21.4%	24 8.9%	47 15.4%	74 14.9%	56 13.3%	73 13.3%	15,270 26.6%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%
25 to 34 years	24 11.2%	66 24.5%	57 18.7%	76 16.1%	57 13.4%	70 14.4%	9,180 16.0%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%
35 to 44 years	81 8.4%	38 14.1%	49 16.1%	48 9.9%	63 16.0%	79 15.2%	5,593 9.7%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%
45 to 54 years	13 6.0%	18 6.7%	31 10.2%	28 5.8%	41 10.0%	62 12.0%	4,447 7.7%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%
55 to 64 years	18 13.0%	11 4.1%	18 5.9%	53 10.7%	27 8.0%	40 7.7%	4,185 7.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%
65 to 74 years	28 13.0%	22 8.2%	10 3.3%	49 9.8%	35 8.4%	26 13.8%	3,391 5.9%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%
75 to 84 years	21 9.8%	8 3.0%	8 2.6%	31 6.7%	27 6.1%	29 5.3%	1,806 3.1%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%
85 years and over	4 1.9%	0 0.0%	3 1.0%	8 1.5%	7 1.8%	13 2.6%	534 0.9%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>57,420</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	34.8	28.3	30.2	31.5	34.0	33.7	25.4	29.3	33.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt.

Further insight into the nature of the Village population’s change over time can be gained through examining how these age groups change as they move through their life cycles. The age groups (or “cohorts” as they are called when tracking a group of same-aged people) have been displayed within 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 or white boxes within Table 1.3 indicate the path of each age cohort through the three Census periods.

For example, the 5-to-14 year old cohort for Amherst Junction numbered 22 people in 1980. This number increased to 24 in 1990 (as the 5-to-14 year olds became 15-to-24 year olds), and increased to 57 in 2000 as 25-to-34 year olds. 35 residents joined this cohort in the Village over the twenty-year period, a 160% increase. The 1980 15-to-24 year old cohort numbered 46. Between 1980 and 1990 (as they became 25-to-34 year olds), this group grew by twenty residents (+44%). Between 1990 and 2000 the cohort lost seventeen residents, leaving a total of forty-nine 35-to-44 year olds and a modest 6.5% gain for the twenty-year period. The Village of Amherst Junction has a larger percentage of its 2000 overall population aged 44 and under (77%) than the Rural Village Average and County as a whole (both at or near 68%).

The 65+ age group within the Village of Amherst Junction has experienced a decrease in overall population percentage over the last twenty years, falling from 25% in 1980 to under 7% in 2000. This downward trend has also appeared within the Rural Villages, although to a much lesser

degree (from 18% down to 13%). Portage County overall has seen a slight increase in 65+ population (see Table 1.4 below). The decrease in this age group in Amherst Junction could be due to the fact that there is not enough elderly housing and support services provided locally for these residents, and they are moving out of the area to where there are such accommodations.

With these shifts in the population structure, Amherst Junction has seen a decrease in its median age 34.8 years in 1980 to 28.3 years in 1990, and then back up to 30.2 years in 2000. The “median age” is the point where ½ of the population lies above and ½ below; the older this age is, the older the overall population for a place is becoming. The ’80-to-’90 trend may be attributable in part to the loss by 1990 of over three-quarters of the 45-to-54 age cohort, combined with the 44% increase in the 25-to-34 year old age cohort. The ’90-to-’00 increase could be attributable to the 26% decrease in 35-to-44 year olds and 137% increase in 25-to-34 year olds. To summarize, as the Village population has expanded over the last twenty years, it has become a younger population overall.

**Table 1.4: Comparison of Population Aged 65+**

Age	Village of Amherst Junction			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
65 years and over	53 25.0%	30 11.2%	21 6.8%	88 18.2%	69 16.5%	68 13.2%	5,731 10.0%	6,603 10.8%	7,354 10.9%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>57,420</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	34.8	28.3	30.2	31.5	34.0	33.7	25.4	29.3	33.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Portage County Planning and Zoning Dept. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt.

### C. Educational Levels

Table 1.5 below compares the attainment information for the Village of Amherst Junction with the average results from the five other rural villages and Portage County as a whole.

Amherst Junction raised its overall educational attainment during the 1990’s. The number and percentage of Village of Amherst Junction residents aged 25-and-over who have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education dramatically decreased from 11.5% to 0% between 1990 and 2000. The percentage and number of residents between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade that did not receive a diploma also decreased considerably, from 15.9% to 5.4%. The Rural Village Average and Portage County also decreased in these categories, but still maintained higher percentage in 2000. The percentage of 25+ year olds residents who completed some college, or completed a college degree program rose from 29% to 45% over the same period. This 17% ten-year increase was larger than that of the Rural Villages Average (16%) and Portage County (10%).

**Table 1.5: Comparison of Education Attainment**

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Village of Amherst Jct.		Rural Village Average		Portage County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than 9th Grade	21 <i>11.5%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	47 <i>15.7%</i>	19 <i>5.9%</i>	4,065 <i>11.6%</i>	2,420 <i>6.0%</i>
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	29 <i>15.9%</i>	9 <i>5.4%</i>	31 <i>10.5%</i>	29 <i>9.0%</i>	3,029 <i>8.7%</i>	3,019 <i>7.5%</i>
High School Graduate	80 <i>44.0%</i>	83 <i>49.4%</i>	137 <i>46.0%</i>	135 <i>41.5%</i>	14,082 <i>40.2%</i>	14,952 <i>37.2%</i>
Some College (No Degree)	17 <i>9.3%</i>	34 <i>20.2%</i>	43 <i>14.3%</i>	62 <i>19.1%</i>	5,205 <i>14.9%</i>	7,572 <i>18.9%</i>
Associate Degree	21 <i>11.5%</i>	17 <i>10.1%</i>	8 <i>2.6%</i>	25 <i>7.6%</i>	1,922 <i>5.5%</i>	2,802 <i>7.0%</i>
Bachelor's Degree	12 <i>6.6%</i>	19 <i>11.3%</i>	26 <i>8.7%</i>	41 <i>12.8%</i>	4,594 <i>13.1%</i>	6,468 <i>16.1%</i>
Graduate or Professional Degree	2 <i>1.1%</i>	6 <i>3.4%</i>	7 <i>2.2%</i>	13 <i>4.1%</i>	2,107 <i>6.0%</i>	2,910 <i>7.2%</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>35,004</b>	<b>40,143</b>

Source: U.S. census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt

#### D. Households and Income

The Village of Amherst Junction residential community is made up of different types of households. Table 1.6 below details the changes in the make-up of Village households over the last 20 years, and compares them with data for Average of Rural Villages and Portage County.

**Table 1.6: Household Type Comparison for Amherst Jct, Rural Villages & Portage County**

Household Type	Village of Amherst Jct.			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Family Households</b> <i>(Percent of Total Households)</i>	<b>64</b> <i>68.8%</i>	<b>65</b> <i>64.4%</i>	<b>76</b> <i>69.7%</i>	<b>131</b> <i>71.1%</i>	<b>130</b> <i>69.7%</i>	<b>134</b> <i>65.9%</i>	<b>13,257</b> <i>72.4%</i>	<b>14,883</b> <i>69.9%</i>	<b>16,496</b> <i>65.9%</i>
Married-Couple Families <i>(Percent of Family Households)</i>	53 <i>82.8%</i>	55 <i>84.6%</i>	61 <i>80.3%</i>	113 <i>86.4%</i>	109 <i>83.4%</i>	103 <i>76.3%</i>	11,592 <i>87.4%</i>	12,645 <i>85.0%</i>	13,808 <i>83.7%</i>
Other Family, Male Householder <i>(Percent of Family Households)</i>	1 <i>1.6%</i>	3 <i>4.6%</i>	7 <i>9.2%</i>	4 <i>3.2%</i>	5 <i>4.1%</i>	10 <i>7.1%</i>	437 <i>3.3%</i>	602 <i>4.0%</i>	861 <i>5.2%</i>
Other Family, Female Householder <i>(Percent of Family Households)</i>	10 <i>15.6%</i>	7 <i>10.8%</i>	8 <i>10.5%</i>	14 <i>10.4%</i>	16 <i>12.4%</i>	22 <i>16.5%</i>	1,228 <i>9.3%</i>	1,636 <i>11.0%</i>	1,827 <i>11.1%</i>
<b>Non-Family Households</b> <i>(Percent of Total Households)</i>	<b>29</b> <i>31.2%</i>	<b>36</b> <i>35.6%</i>	<b>33</b> <i>30.3%</i>	<b>53</b> <i>28.9%</i>	<b>57</b> <i>30.3%</i>	<b>70</b> <i>34.4%</i>	<b>5,056</b> <i>27.6%</i>	<b>6,423</b> <i>30.1%</i>	<b>8,544</b> <i>34.1%</i>
Householder Living Alone <i>(Percent of Non-Family Households)</i>	23 <i>79.3%</i>	29 <i>80.6%</i>	21 <i>63.6%</i>	48 <i>90.6%</i>	51 <i>89.8%</i>	62 <i>87.7%</i>	3,730 <i>73.8%</i>	4,679 <i>72.8%</i>	6,130 <i>71.7%</i>
Householder 65 Years and Over <i>(Percent of Non-Family Households)</i>	~	10 <i>27.8%</i>	8 <i>24.2%</i>	~	30 <i>53.5%</i>	32 <i>45.0%</i>	~	1,933 <i>30.1%</i>	2,196 <i>25.7%</i>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>18,313</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>
<b>Persons Per Household</b>	2.31	2.66	2.80	2.62	2.64	2.62	2.93	2.71	2.54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Portage County Planning and Zoning Dept. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt.

Family households, traditionally the largest group within the Village, have seen their number and percentage of total households increase over the last 20 years. This trend is the opposite of that reflected in the Rural Village Average and Portage County data, where the percentage of family

households had decreased. Non-family households in Amherst Junction, or households made up of non-related residents, have decreased slightly from 31.2% of total households in 1980 to 30.3% in the year 2000. Married-couple households, traditionally the largest group within the Amherst Junction family households, have seen their number increase while their percentage of family households has decreased over the last 20 years. Single-father or mother headed family households have increased from 17% in 1980 to nearly 20% in 2000, with a majority of the rise attributable to the increase in single-father headed households. In Non-Family households, Amherst Junction has a much lower percentage of residents living alone than either the Rural Village Average or County overall.

The Persons Per Household (PPH) calculation for the Village of Amherst Junction has actually risen since 1980, from 2.31 to 2.80. Portage County has decreased 0.39 persons over the same period, while the Rural Village Average has remained the same.

Another instructive piece of information on the state of households within the Village is the level of income that each household achieves. Again the Census provides insight into the range of incomes present within the Village of Amherst Junction. Table 1.7 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 Village of Amherst Junction residents that the percentages of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from zero percent (0%) in 1979 to forty-three percent (43%) in 1999. Median household income has increased from \$13,611 to \$44,500 over the same period, with the majority of the increase occurring from 1989 to 1999. The Portage County percentage increase in households earning greater than \$50,000 is roughly the same as Amherst Junction over the 20-year period (3% to 42%). The median household income for the Village of Amherst Junction, which was slightly higher than the Rural Village Average and lower than Portage County in 1980, is now higher than both.

**Table 1.7: Household Income Comparison: Amherst Jct, Rural Villages & Portage County**

Household Income Per Year	Village of Amherst Junction			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
Less Than \$10,000	31 32.3%	12 11.1%	2 2.0%	70 38.5%	38 20.3%	18 8.6%	5,300 28.9%	3,210 15.0%	1,767 7.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	22 22.9%	5 4.6%	3 3.0%	33 17.8%	23 12.2%	19 8.9%	2,919 15.9%	1,978 9.3%	1,608 6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	26 27.1%	37 34.3%	6 6.0%	48 26.3%	35 18.7%	28 13.7%	5,423 29.6%	4,072 19.1%	3,174 12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	14 14.6%	18 16.7%	13 13.0%	18 9.8%	34 18.6%	25 12.1%	2,907 15.8%	3,654 17.1%	3,425 13.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3 3.1%	15 13.9%	33 33.0%	9 5.0%	38 20.3%	37 17.9%	1,223 6.7%	4,370 20.5%	4,484 17.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	0 0.0%	16 14.8%	25 25.0%	2 1.2%	14 7.3%	52 24.9%	380 2.1%	2,983 14.0%	5,771 23.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	0 0.0%	3 2.8%	13 13.0%	3 1.4%	2 1.2%	21 9.9%	193 1.1%	661 3.1%	2,820 11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 3.0%	0 0.0%	2 1.1%	5 2.5%	0 0.0%	274 1.3%	1,346 5.4%
\$150,000 or more	0 0.0%	2 1.9%	2 2.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	3 1.5%	0 0.0%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>18,345</b>	<b>21,336</b>	<b>25,112</b>
<b>Median H-Hold Income</b>	<b>\$13,611</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$44,500</b>	<b>\$13,435</b>	<b>\$25,204</b>	<b>\$39,271</b>	<b>\$16,659</b>	<b>\$28,686</b>	<b>\$43,487</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt.

With the examination of income information, the Village 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 (CIP-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated children under the age of 15 (such as foster children). Table 1.8 below outlines poverty thresholds for 1980, 1990, and 2000. Table 1.9 lists the census information on poverty for the total number of residents, persons age 65 and above, and families within the Village of Amherst Junction, the other Rural Villages and Portage County as a whole.

**Table 1.8: Poverty Thresholds – 1980, 1990, and 2000**

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 1.9: Poverty Comparison for Amherst Junction, Rural Villages, and Portage County**

	Amherst Junction		Rural Village Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
<b>Persons</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>57,805</b>	<b>67,182</b>
Below Poverty Level	28	5	59	51	7,454	6,074
	9.8%	1.6%	12.6%	9.9%	12.9%	9.0%
<b>Persons 65 Years and Over</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>7,354</b>
Below Poverty Level	5	2	13	7	740	561
	13.2%	9.5%	15.6%	10.9%	13.9%	7.6%
<b>Families</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>14,927</b>	<b>16,643</b>
Below Poverty Level	4	0	11	11	1,051	725
	5.6%	0.0%	8.2%	7.7%	7.0%	4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt

According to Census figures, the Village of Amherst Junction has historically had a lower percentage of residents earning below the poverty level than the average Rural Village or the County as a whole.

## E. Employment Characteristics

Table 1.10 below summarizes employment by industry data provided for the last three Census years. This information represents what type of industry that the working residents of the Village were employed by, and is not a listing of the employment currently located within the Village of Amherst Junction. The discussion of the Village economy will take place within the Economic Development Element of this Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that the method used for classifying industries was changed between the 1990 and 2000 Census, and therefore the information included in the industry categories of Table 10 is not entirely consistent for comparison between those years. The table attempts to place the three Census years in a useable context.

**Table 1.10: Summary of Employment by Industry**

Industry	Village of Amherst Junction			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	3 1.8%	6 3.2%	6 3.0%	10 5.6%	20 9.5%	13 4.9%	1,816 7.3%	1,755 5.8%	1,241 3.5%
Construction	6 3.7%	13 6.9%	13 6.4%	11 5.8%	12 5.9%	15 5.9%	1,004 4.0%	1,297 4.3%	1,707 4.8%
Manufacturing	7 4.3%	47 24.9%	30 14.8%	40 22.2%	42 20.0%	49 18.7%	4,637 18.6%	5,373 17.8%	6,314 17.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	12 7.3%	10 5.3%	12 5.9%	19 10.4%	10 4.8%	24 9.2%	1,214 4.9%	1,511 5.0%	1,948 5.5%
Information	~	~	9 4.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 3.7%	~	~	835 2.3%
Communications/ Other Public Facilities	0 0.0%	5 2.6%	~	4 2.3%	5 2.5%	0 0.0%	325 1.3%	367 1.2%	~
Wholesale Trade	0 0.0%	2 1.1%	5 2.5%	10 5.5%	5 2.5%	9 3.3%	885 3.5%	1,026 3.4%	1,235 3.5%
Retail Trade	6 3.7%	20 10.6%	16 7.9%	32 17.8%	42 19.7%	28 10.7%	4,317 17.3%	5,667 18.8%	4,813 13.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	20 12.2%	9 4.8%	13 6.4%	11 5.8%	18 8.5%	19 7.2%	2,971 11.9%	3,359 11.1%	3,682 10.3%
Professional, Management, Administrative	~	~	7 3.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8 2.9%	~	~	1,627 4.6%
Business and Repair Services	5 3.0%	8 4.2%	~	1 0.4%	7 3.3%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	~
Personal Services	~	7 3.7%	~	0 0.0%	4 1.8%	0 0.0%	~	777 2.6%	~
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	4 2.4%	3 1.6%	3 1.5%	3 1.8%	3 1.2%	20 7.7%	734 2.9%	388 1.3%	3,005 8.4%
Educational, Health, Social Services	19 11.6%	6 3.2%	25 12.3%	30 16.4%	30 14.3%	53 20.2%	5,331 21.4%	5,617 18.6%	7,192 20.2%
Other	0 0.0%	2 1.1%	2 1.0%	6 3.5%	9 4.1%	9 3.5%	624 2.5%	1,362 4.5%	1,236 3.5%
Public Administration	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 2.4%	4 1.9%	5 2.1%	571 2.3%	710 2.4%	842 2.4%
<b>Total Employed Persons</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>24,947</b>	<b>30,150</b>	<b>35,677</b>
<b>Unemployed Persons</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>2,255</b>
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>26,960</b>	<b>31,740</b>	<b>37,944</b>
<b>Percent Unemployed</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>Persons 16 Years +</b>	~	<b>205</b>	<b>198</b>	~	<b>349</b>	<b>385</b>	~	<b>47,202</b>	<b>53,135</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt.  
~ = not applicable/available

## **Section 1.5 Conclusions from the Issues and Opportunities Analysis**

- A. The 2003 population of the Village is estimated to be 319, representing a 4.6% increase since the 2000 Census. Between 1970 and 2000, Amherst Junction grew from 141 to 305 residents, and increase of 116%. Overall, the population density in the Village is very low, with population concentrated in the built-up Village center, along Lake Road at Lake Emily, South Lake subdivision in the southwest corner of the Village, and the Timber Ridge Estates on the northern boundary of the Village off Hwy 161.
- B. This growth rate since 2000 is second fastest in Portage County. The re-location and expansion of US Highway 10 will impact the future growth of the Village. The new “bypass” route for USH 10 has been constructed diagonally from southeast to northwest of the existing Village center. The expansion to a four-lane divided freeway facility will only enhance the highway’s use as the principal east-west highway route through Portage County, and thereby convey significant economic development potential and commuter housing potential to lands along this route. It is too early to predict if this impact will ultimately be positive or negative for Amherst Junction.
- C. Amherst Junction had a higher 2000 median income than the Rural Village Average or Portage County overall.

## **Section 1.6 Area-wide Development Factors**

- A. The general “Amherst area” will continue to develop as a secondary growth center in Portage County. With its generally favorable natural conditions for land development, good access and desirable living environment, this area will increasingly function as the next most important alternative to the Stevens Point area for growth. It is believed that energy and petroleum availability throughout the planning period will remain adequate enough to maintain commuting patterns to the Stevens Point Urban Area.
- B. Caution will be necessary in allowing new population concentrations in the intensively farmed areas of the Village because of direct land usage conflicts and secondary problems such as increased land values and taxes for farmers, and possible health and nuisance problems from farm operations upon new non-farm residents.
- C. The elderly do not currently represent a significant segment within the Village population. Should the 65+ percentage of the population dramatically increase, the special transportation, health and leisure time needs associated with these residents will likely have to be dealt with by the County and/or the Village of Amherst because of Amherst Junction’s very limited resources.
- D. There is an obvious desire by existing residents that Amherst Junction remain a small Village. The desire of existing residents may do little to prevent the continued influx of new residents beyond locally desired limits, however.
- E. An active community planning program which identifies development goals, a community development guide, and an action plan updated every 5 years with a few basic development ordinances.
- F. A “cautious” approach to development, but not one which is prohibited or overly restrictive to development. Guidance and regulation of development would be reasonable and prudent, rather than being either prohibitive or pursuing an “anything-goes” philosophy.

- G. The Village Board would have some interest in the beneficial development of its extraterritorial area, particularly to the west and south of the village.
- H. Economic development - (job development) - would be pursued in some measure by the village.
- I. The Village Board would pursue grant-in-aid programs to help provide those facilities necessary for the type of community development.

**Section 1.7: Forecasts**

A. Population Projections

There are no conventional or generally reliable techniques for projecting the population of small Villages with any strong degree of accuracy. This is born-out by the development of a single plat which could contain a population equal to or greater than the total existing village population.

Portage County Planning and Zoning Department prepares population projections for each of the municipalities within the County. The methodology for this projection is included in Appendix F of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Village of Amherst Junction Plan Commission feels that the following projected population totals provided by Portage County are a little low for the planning period and that these numbers will likely be slightly higher than projected, but can be used as reasonable reference point for Village planning purposes:

Yr 2005: 334                      Yr 2010: 358                      Yr 2015: 383                      Yr 2020: 409

B. Housing Unit Projections

Based on the anticipated increase in population and the projected level of occupancy (3.08 persons per household), the Village may need to add approximately 32 new housing units over the next twenty years.

C. Employment Projections

The Village of Amherst Junction will more than likely see increase in amount of land developed for commercial and/or industrial use (see Table 8.2 and Map 8.2 in Land Use), due to the reconstruction of Highway 10.

**Section 1.8 Community Goals, Objectives and Policies**

Goals, objectives, and policies provide the framework for guiding future community development activities in the Village of Amherst Junction. Goals are stated as desirable conditions to strive for 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 methods of action to accomplish these stated objectives. Together these three pieces express the uniqueness of the community while stating changes that will produce desirable patterns for growth and development.

It is anticipated the population of Amherst Junction will increase from 305 in 2000 to 409 by the year 2020. The projected growth in population will be reflected in an increased demand for land to be used for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational facilities. With the relocation of USH 10 cutting diagonally through the heart of the Village's incorporated boundary, Amherst Junction should strive to encourage low-density growth.

A. Goals

Encourage a pattern on community growth and development that will maintain the rural, small Village atmosphere.

B. Objectives

1. Guidance and control of the urban and rural development in the Amherst Junction area by the Village Board and Planning Commission in the overall public interest.
2. Maintenance of an aesthetic and healthy environment.
3. Develop patterns and policies that promote the economic and social well being of Village and area residents.
4. Pursue cooperation with County, Town and other Village officials on development matters of mutual concern, particularly planning.
5. Encourage active citizen participation in Village development matters.
6. Plan and implement public improvements according to cost-effective methods.

C. Policies

1. Proper use of the land, including the avoidance of land use conflicts.
2. The Village of Amherst Junction should implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure the Village remains a desirable place to live.