

## **CHAPTER 1      Issues and Opportunities for Comprehensive Planning in the Village 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 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, 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 development-related decisions are sound, practical, and consistent.

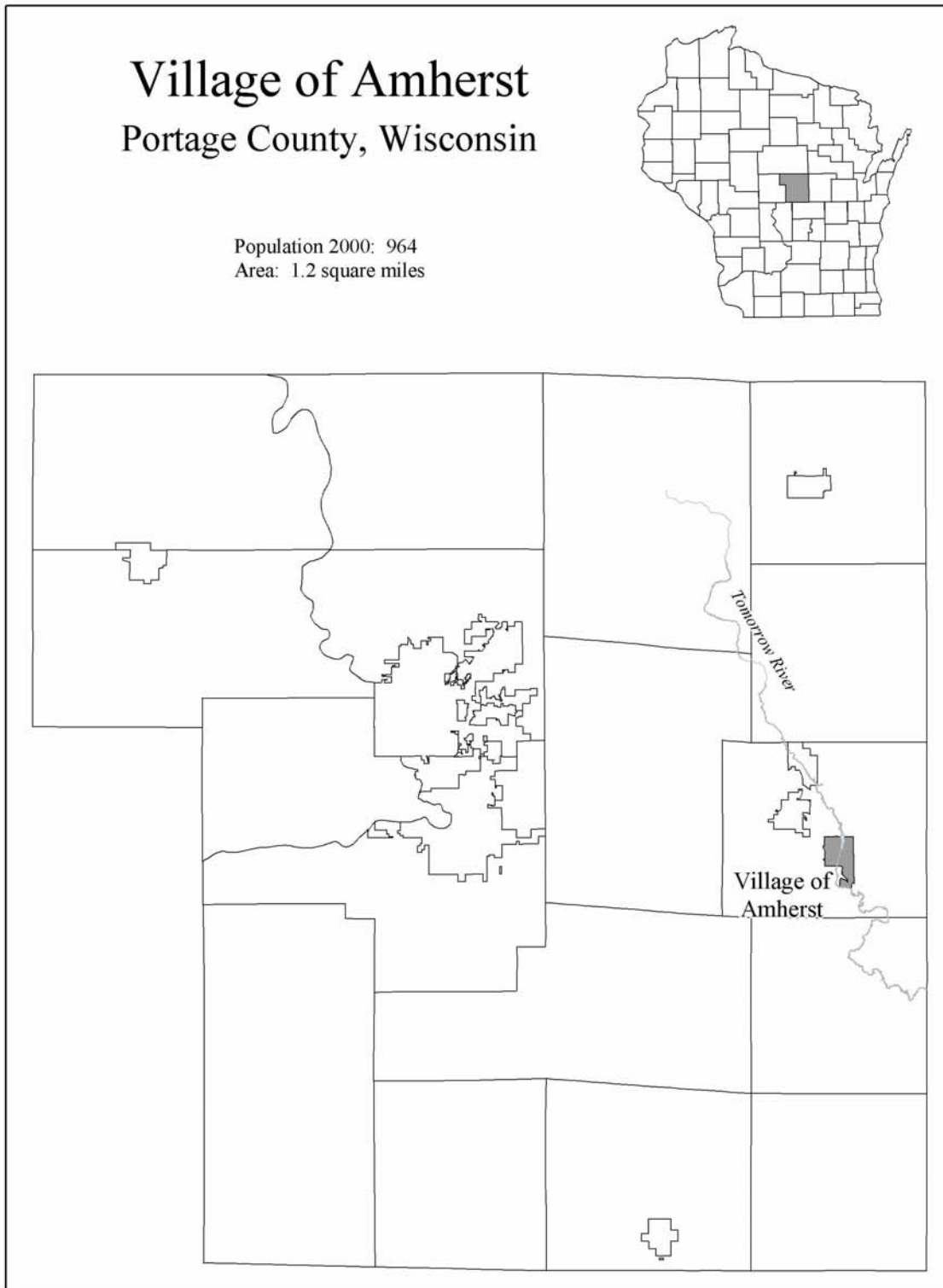
### **Section 1.1      Brief History and Description of Planning Area**

The Village of Amherst is located on the Tomorrow River, 15 miles southeast of Stevens Point and 14 miles northwest of Waupaca, lying along what was once a Native American portage that stretched from the Wolf River to the Wisconsin River (see Figure 1.1). This portage traversed an expansive hunting and fishing woodland and was called the Tomorrow River Valley by the Native Americans.

Around 1850, settlers began to buy land and move their families to the Tomorrow River Valley. Some of the first settlers included Rueben (Curley) Smith, William V. Fleming, Al Ryerson, and Jim, Robert and William Wilson. Amherst arrived at its name in 1853 when Judge Gilbert L. Park of Stevens Point suggested to Adam Uline (who was Chairman of the Town of Lanark) that the Town be called Amherst to honor General Amherst of Revolutionary War fame. Mr. Uline, a native of Amherst, Nova Scotia, naturally approved of this name. A number of dams were constructed on the Tomorrow River and settlements flourished. In order to meet the changing needs of the settlement around the Upper Amherst Mill Pond, the residents voted to incorporate on December 28, 1899. The following spring, the 640 acre Village became fully incorporated and A. J. Smith was elected the first Village President. Today, the Village of Amherst occupies nearly 830 acres and operates under a Village President/Trustee system of government.

The Village of Amherst is experiencing a sustained period of growth and change that could affect the nature of the community for years to come. By the year 2020, nearly 3,500 people may live in the Amherst area (Town of Amherst and Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction and Nelsonville), with over 1,200 people living within the Village itself.

Figure 1.1



To accommodate this type of growth, the Village's current development pattern will change and tracts of land (both in and outside the Village) that are now vacant will be developed. If not properly managed, these changes could result in unwise use of land resources and inefficient expenditures for municipal utilities and services. This Comprehensive Plan will analyze all of the lands within the incorporated boundary of the Village, as well as the 1½ mile extraterritorial area within the adjacent Town of Amherst.

## **Section 1.2 Past Planning In Amherst**

### **A. 1977 Development Guide**

During 1975 the Amherst Village Board took notice of a significant rise in the Village's population, beginning around 1970. This sudden growth was cause for concern because the Village had grown very little between 1899 and 1970 (less than 30 people were added to the Village's population, see Figure 1.2, page 8). The Village Board contacted the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department to prepare a Development Guide for the Village.

The Development Guide, completed in 1977, utilized citizen and community leaders' input in the planning process. A public survey, used to further determine community needs and problems, was incorporated into the document. The Development Guide was assembled in five steps. The first step involved inventory and analysis of existing social, economic, and environmental conditions of the Village. Goals and objectives for the Guide, based on inventory and analysis and citizen input, were created in Step 2. Step 3 utilized the inventory and analysis of past and present Village conditions to predict future trends. In Step 4, alternate plans and policies were created to represent the different development patterns and cost levels that could occur within the Village. The Village's final step was to choose a specific development pattern from the alternatives. The Development Guide that was adopted established guidelines and standards for all land use within the Village and created review procedures for development occurring within the Village's extraterritorial area.

### **B. 1990 Comprehensive Plan**

The decision to prepare an updated Comprehensive Plan for the Village was made by the Village Board in January of 1988. Citizen involvement in the planning process was encouraged to make certain that issues addressed in the Comprehensive Plan were important to local residents.

The initial step in the planning process again involved inventory and analysis of past and present social, economic, and environmental conditions of the Village. During September and October of 1988 this information was used by the Plan Commission to determine strengths and weaknesses of the Village. During October and November of 1988 the Amherst business community became involved in the planning process by identifying a set of fourteen goals they felt the Village should pursue. In addition, the business community referred the Plan Commission to the goals that were outlined in the Amherst Community Economic Analysis document regarding opportunities for creating more jobs and greater income in Amherst. To provide further public involvement in the comprehensive planning process, a sixteen page questionnaire was sent out to each Village of Amherst household, property owner, and business. The results of the survey provided the Plan Commission with insight and direction on formulating objectives and recommendations for the Plan. Active citizen participation throughout the process allowed the desires of the community to be reflected in the Plan that was adopted in November 1990.

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

As previously mentioned in the introduction to this document, this Village of Amherst 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, or chapters. 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 Plan Commission began the Village Comprehensive Planning process in earnest in January 2003. The Plan Commission met monthly through November 2004 to put together the first complete preliminary draft of the plan. As with the previous planning projects, the comprehensive planning process involves several basic phases:

The first phase involves research. Activities include acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting, identifying problems that require 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, or prevent undesirable change.

The next phase involves the development of a preferred plan alternative for guiding future growth. The Land Use Element contains the different discussion points on how the Village is expected to grow, and identifies in general terms 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,

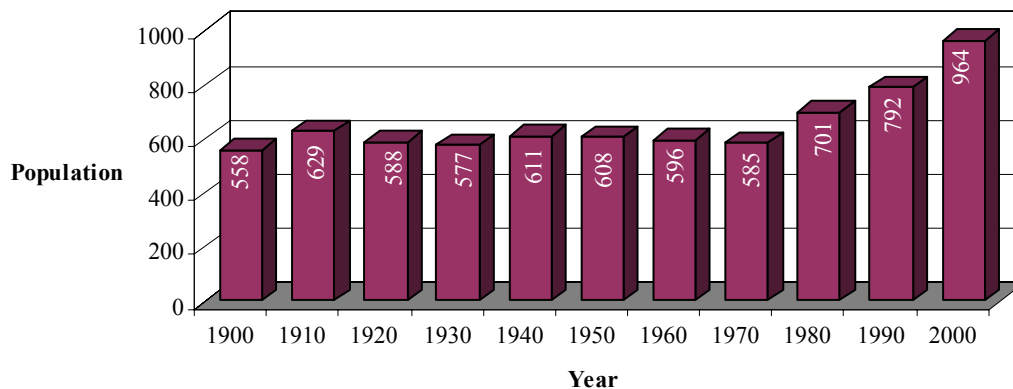
which are relatively permanent statements, may require periodic review to determine their appropriateness and suitability in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time. A well thought-out and updated Comprehensive Plan, with a solid base of public involvement, is one of the most fruitful investments a 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.

## **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 the information used to understand how communities change over time. The Village of Amherst has seen a considerable acceleration in its growth rate over the last 30 years. According to the latest Census information, the population increased by 379 people between 1970 and 2000. This is a distinct departure from the previous period (1900 to 1970), which saw a relatively flat population trend (see Figure 1.2 below).

**Figure 1.2: Village of Amherst Population Change, 1900 to 2000**



Source: US Bureau of Census

According to Census data, the Village of Amherst population growth rate of nearly 65% from 1970 to 2000 was greater than that of Portage County (+41%) and well above the State (+21%) over the same time period (see Table 1.1 below).

**Table 1.1: Amherst Area Population Change, 1970 to 2000**

	U.S. Census Data				State DOA Estimate	1970 to 2000	2000 to 2004
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004	Change	Change
Village of Amherst	585	701	792	964	1,027	64.8%	6.5%
Village of Almond	440	477	455	459	451	4.3%	-1.7%
Village of Amherst Jct.	141	225	269	305	328	116.3%	7.5%
Village of Junction City	396	523	502	440	432	11.1%	-1.8%
Village of Nelsonville	152	199	171	191	186	25.7%	-2.6%
Village of Rosholt	466	520	512	518	512	11.2%	-1.2%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	68,922	41.3%	2.6%
State of Wisconsin	4,417,731	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,532,000	21.4%	3.1%

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

The 2004 State of Wisconsin Department of Administration population estimate for the Village of Amherst was 1,027, a 6.5% increase since the 2000 Census. This percent change over the 4-year period was the second largest in Portage County, behind the Village of Amherst Junction (+7.5%). The next largest percentage increases were the Town of Lanark (5.4%) and Village of Plover (5.3%). See Appendix D for all municipalities in Portage County.

Table 1.2 below helps to illustrate the migration patterns of Village residents by examining where residents were living five years prior to the 1980 and 2000 Census. The “Same House” column identifies the Amherst residents that lived in the same dwelling in both 1995 and 2000 (or 1975 and 1980); a high percentage can be an indicator of long-term residency. The “Different House, Portage County” column identifies the Amherst residents that lived in a home outside the Village, but within Portage County, in 1995. The “Different House, Different County” column identifies the Amherst residents that lived in a home outside of both the Village and Portage County, but within the State of Wisconsin, in 1995. The “Different State” column identifies the Amherst residents that lived in a home outside the State of Wisconsin in 1995. Altogether, this information can be an indicator of resident turnover and where new residents are coming from. Based on 2000 Census information, the percentage of Amherst residents living in the same house as they did in 1995 decreased by 7% from the 1980 Census, despite the fact that the number of residents reported for this category actually increased. This is an indication that more people are moving into the community, or there is movement within the existing housing stock. Based on 2000 Census information, Amherst residents who had moved into the Village after living in other parts of Portage County in 1995 increased by 153 people from 1980 (up to 29% of residents), meaning a larger percentage of new residents came from within Portage County than had before.

**Table 1.2: Comparison of Place of Residence, Five Years Prior to 1990 & 2000 Census**

	Same House		Different House, Portage County				Different House Different County				Different State					
	1975		1995		1975		1995		1975		1995		1975		1995	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Village of Amherst	395	63%	528	56%	124	20%	277	29%	59	10%	100	11%	55	8%	36	4%
Village of Amherst Jct.	163	71%	141	54%	62	27%	84	32%	6	2%	37	14%	21	8%	0	0%
Village of Nelsonville	82	47%	125	70%	41	23%	25	14%	23	13%	29	16%	30	17%	~	~
Town of Amherst	575	55%	1,014	77%	337	32%	189	14%	123	12%	83	6%	14	1%	27	2%
Portage County	51%		56%		21%		22%		21%		16%		7%		5%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 and 2000 Census.

The percentage of Amherst residents who lived in a different part of Wisconsin in 1995 before moving to Amherst increased by 41 people (11%) however the number of residents moving into the Village from another state decreased by 19 people (4%). These numbers provide further evidence of the increasing growth being directed at the Village of Amherst: reduced percentage of residents living long term in the same dwelling; more people relocating into the Village from Portage County and beyond.

## B. Age Distribution and Race

The 2000 Census describes the Villages population as almost 100% white, with 8 residents of a different race (see Appendix E).

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 Village Average and the County as a whole (see Appendix F for the rest of Portage County).

If you were to examine the Village of Amherst 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 “15-to-24”, “45-to-54” and “55-64” age cohorts saw the largest increase, 126 people, or thirty-seven percent (37%) of the total. The only cohort that decreased was the “65-to74”, which decreased by 24 persons. Altogether, the Village gained 172 residents form 1990 to 2000.

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

Age	Village of Amherst			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Under 5 years	64 9.1%	<b>66</b> 8.3%	72 7.5%	35 9.0%	30 7.8%	29 7.6%	4,343 7.6%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%
5 to 14 years	<b>99</b> 14.1%	129 16.3%	<b>151</b> 15.7%	58 14.9%	67 17.4%	65 16.9%	8,671 15.1%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%
15 to 24 years	103 14.7%	<b>99</b> 12.5%	138 14.3%	62 16.0%	49 12.8%	55 14.3%	15,270 26.6%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%
25 to 34 years	<b>111</b> 15.8%	114 14.4%	<b>128</b> 13.3%	59 15.2%	58 15.1%	56 14.6%	9,180 16.0%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%
35 to 44 years	81 11.6%	<b>127</b> 16.0%	147 15.2%	35 9.0%	53 13.8%	59 15.4%	5,593 9.7%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%
45 to 54 years	<b>23</b> 3.3%	74 9.3%	<b>124</b> 12.9%	26 6.7%	35 9.1%	44 11.5%	4,447 7.7%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%
55 to 64 years	87 12.4%	<b>48</b> 6.1%	85 8.8%	41 10.6%	25 6.5%	27 7.0%	4,185 7.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%
65 to 74 years	<b>82</b> 11.7%	68 8.6%	<b>44</b> 4.6%	38 9.8%	34 8.9%	20 5.2%	3,391 5.9%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%
75 to 84 years	42 6.0%	<b>55</b> 6.9%	57 5.9%	27 7.0%	24 6.3%	19 4.9%	1,806 3.1%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%
85 years and over	<b>9</b> 1.3%	12 1.5%	<b>18</b> 1.9%	7 1.8%	9 2.3%	10 2.6%	534 0.9%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>57,420</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	32.5	33.9	34.5	32.0	32.9	32.8	25.4	29.3	33.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census. Rural Villages = Almond, Amherst Jct., 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 numbered 99 people in 1980. This number remained at 99 in 1990 (as the 5-to-14 year olds became 15-to-24 year olds), but increased to 128 in 2000 (+29%) as 25-to-34 year olds. This increase through the 1990's represents more people of that age moving into the Village. The present-day 35-to-44 year olds saw even greater growth over the last 20 years, increasing in number from 103 (as 15-to-24 year olds in 1980) to 147 in the year 2000 (+43%).

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 Village of Amherst has risen two full years since 1980, with a slower rate of increase since 1990 (34.9 to 32.5 years of age, see Table 1.4 below). The other rural villages across the County have seen their median age increase less than one year since 1980. This is in contrast to the surrounding Town of Amherst and Portage County overall, who have seen their median age increase nearly thirteen and eight years, respectively, during the same time (see Appendix F for comparison of all municipalities).

The overall percentage of Rural Village population over the age of 65 has been declining since 1980. The Village of Amherst 65+ population segment decreased from 19% in 1980 to 12.4% in 2000 (Table 1.4). The average Rural Village saw this segment decline from 18.6% to 12.7%. Again in contrast, the percentage of population 65 years and older in the surrounding Town of Amherst and Portage County overall has been increasing over the last 20 years (see Appendix G for the Town of Amherst and the rest of Portage County). Town of Amherst 65+ has gone from 8.6% of the Town population in 1980 to 12.5% in 2000, while the County segment has increased from 9.9% to 10.9% over the same period.

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

Age	Village of Amherst			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
65 years and over	133	135	119	72	65	49	5,731	6,603	7,354
	19.0%	17.0%	12.4%	18.4%	17.0%	12.6%	10.0%	10.8%	10.9%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>57,420</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>
Median Age	32.5	33.9	34.5	31.96	32.92	32.82	25.4	29.3	33

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

To summarize, the Village of Amherst has seen the number of residents aged 25-to-44 increase in the last ten years by nearly one-third. In addition, the number of Village of Amherst residents aged 5-to-24 has also increased by nearly one-half since 1990 (mainly ages 10 to 19, see Appendix F). This is a much larger increase than the average for these age groups in the five other rural Villages (7.4% and 12%, respectively). And while the median age is creeping upward, the number and percentage of the oldest residents within the Village has been declining. There has been a considerable amount of discussion about the impending aging of the general population across the County and the Nation. Based on the 2000 Census information on the number and nature of aging for the existing residents, the Village of Amherst should not be subject to a sudden rush of senior-related issues throughout the planning period. These issues could, however, become more immediate through an influx of older residents from surrounding areas. The Comprehensive Plan should take this possibility into consideration.

### C. Education Levels

Table 1.5 below compares the educational attainment information contained in the 1990 and 2000 Census data, for the Village of Amherst, Rural Village Average, and Portage County as a whole. This information is taken from the US Census Summary File 3, which is based on a sample of units within a community, and not a total count of units. Although it does not account for all of the population within the community, this information provides insight into the educational attainment.

Amherst raised its overall educational attainment during the 1990's. This was most likely a result of the combination of in-migration, continued educational involvement by the existing residents of the Village, and the passing of older residents who did not have the educational opportunities enjoyed today. The number and percentage of Village of Amherst residents aged 25 and over who had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education decreased dramatically between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of 25+ year-old residents who completed some college, or completed a college degree program rose from thirty-six percent (36%) to fifty percent (50%) over the same period. This ten-year increase in college attainment was greater than that of the Rural Village Average (25% to 41%) and the County as a whole (40% to 49%).

One area where the Village of Amherst did not perform as well as the average of the Rural Villages or the County was the number and percentage of residents who completed 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade but did not receive a diploma. The Village numbers increased by 10, with the accompanying percentage rising from 6.9 to 7.0, while the Rural Villages and Portage County both experienced a decline in this category's numbers and percentage. Even with the slight increase in this category, Amherst still has a lower percentage of persons over age 25 with no high school diploma than the County overall and the average of the five Rural Villages.

**Table 1.5: Comparison of Educational Attainment**

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Village of Amherst		Rural Village Average		Portage County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than 9th Grade	70 14.1%	30 4.8%	37 15.7%	13 5.6%	4,065 11.6%	2,420 6.0%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	34 6.9%	44 7.0%	30 12.7%	22 9.5%	3,029 8.7%	3,019 7.5%
High School Graduate	212 42.8%	241 38.3%	111 47.0%	103 44.4%	14,082 40.2%	14,952 37.2%
Some College (No Degree)	90 18.2%	140 22.3%	28 11.9%	41 17.7%	5,205 14.9%	7,572 18.9%
Associate Degree	15 3.0%	48 7.6%	9 3.8%	18 7.8%	1,922 5.5%	2,802 7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	57 11.5%	101 16.1%	17 7.2%	25 10.8%	4,594 13.1%	6,468 16.1%
Graduate / Professional Degree	17 3.4%	25 4.0%	4 1.7%	10 4.3%	2,107 6.0%	2,910 7.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>35,004</b>	<b>40,143</b>

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

### D. Households and Income

The Village of Amherst residential community is made up of different types of households. The US Census defines a household as “including all of the people who occupy a housing unit”.

People not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. Table 1.6 below details the changes in the make-up of Village households over the last 20 years, and compares them to the Rural Village Average and Portage County data. Family households, traditionally the largest group within the Village of Amherst, have seen their percentage of total households decrease over the last 20 years, even as their number has continued to increase. Non-family households, or households made up of non-related residents, have increased from approximately 27% of total households in 1980 to over 36% in the year 2000.

Married-couple households, traditionally the largest group within the Family households, have seen their percentage decrease nearly 10% over the last 20 years, even as their number has continued to increase. Single-father or single-mother headed family households have increased from nearly 16% in 1980 to over 21% in 2000, with a majority of the rise attributable to the increase in single-father headed households.

While the Non-Family numbers for Portage County are very similar to Amherst (27% to 34%), the County's rate of increase for single-father or mother headed households was less than that of the Village. On average, the other rural villages in the County maintained numbers similar to Amherst, although the percentage of single-mother households was growing more quickly than Amherst.

**Table 1.6: Household Type Comparison, Village of Amherst**

Household Type	Village of Amherst			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>200</b> 72.8%	<b>209</b> 66.1%	<b>251</b> 63.5%	<b>103</b> 70.1%	<b>102</b> 70.1%	<b>99</b> 67.3%	<b>13,257</b> 72.4%	<b>14,883</b> 69.9%	<b>16,496</b> 65.9%
Married-Couple Families <i>(percent of Family Households)</i>	169 84.5%	174 83.3%	198 78.9%	90 86.7%	85 83.7%	75 75.7%	11,592 87.4%	12,645 85.0%	13,808 83.7%
Other Family, Male Householder <i>(percent of Family Households)</i>	8 4.0%	8 3.8%	18 7.2%	3 2.7%	4 4.3%	7 7.4%	437 3.3%	602 4.0%	861 5.2%
Other Family, Female Householder <i>(percent of Family Households)</i>	23 11.5%	27 12.9%	35 13.9%	11 10.6%	12 12.0%	17 16.9%	1,228 9.3%	1,636 11.0%	1,827 11.1%
<b>Non-Family Households</b> <i>(percent of Total Households)</i>	<b>75</b> 27.3%	<b>107</b> 33.9%	<b>144</b> 36.5%	<b>44</b> 29.9%	<b>43</b> 29.9%	<b>48</b> 32.7%	<b>5,056</b> 27.6%	<b>6,423</b> 30.1%	<b>8,544</b> 34.1%
Householder Living Alone <i>(percent of Non-Family Households)</i>	69 92.0%	97 90.7%	128 88.9%	39 88.6%	37 87.8%	40 83.8%	3,730 73.8%	4,679 72.8%	6,130 71.7%
Householder 65 Years and Over <i>(percent of Non-Family Households)</i>	~	47 43.9%	69 47.9%	~	23 54.0%	19 40.4%	~	1,933 30.1%	2,196 25.7%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>18,313</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>
<b>Persons Per Household</b>	2.55	2.51	2.44	2.62	2.66	2.62	2.93	2.71	2.54

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

The Persons Per Household calculation for both Amherst and Portage County has continued a shrinking trend; however the Village rate of reduction has been a relatively stable 0.11 over the last 20 years while the overall County rate has been a more accelerated decrease of 0.39 persons. On average the other rural villages have maintained their person per household level.

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 Amherst.

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 the residents of the Village of Amherst that the percentage of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from two percent (2%) in 1979 to forty-three percent (43%) in 1999. Median household income has increased from \$12,734 to \$40,125 over the same period, with the majority of the increase occurring from 1989 to 1999. The percentage increase in households earning greater than \$50,000 for Portage County as a whole is roughly the same over the 20-year period (3% to 42%). The median household income for the County has consistently been greater than the Village, with advances more evenly distributed between the two decades.

**Table 1.7: Household Income Comparison**

Household Income Per Year	Village of Amherst			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
Less Than \$10,000	97 36.6%	66 21.1%	35 8.6%	57 38.4%	27 18.6%	11 7.7%	5,300 28.9%	3,210 15.0%	1,767 7.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	50 18.9%	48 15.3%	35 8.6%	27 18.0%	14 9.7%	12 8.3%	2,919 15.9%	1,978 9.3%	1,608 6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	71 26.8%	62 19.8%	41 10.0%	39 26.2%	30 20.5%	21 14.6%	5,423 29.6%	4,072 19.1%	3,174 12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	24 9.1%	51 16.3%	60 14.7%	16 10.7%	28 19.3%	16 10.8%	2,907 15.8%	3,654 17.1%	3,425 13.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	19 7.2%	47 15.0%	60 14.7%	6 4.0%	31 21.6%	32 21.8%	1,223 6.7%	4,370 20.5%	4,484 17.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2 0.8%	27 8.6%	115 28.1%	2 1.2%	11 7.9%	34 23.1%	380 2.1%	2,983 14.0%	5,771 23.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2 0.8%	6 1.9%	50 12.2%	2 1.5%	2 1.1%	13 9.0%	193 1.1%	661 3.1%	2,820 11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0 0.0%	6 1.9%	4 1.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.6%	5 3.4%	0 0.0%	274 1.3%	1,346 5.4%
\$150,000 or more	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	9 2.2%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	2 1.2%	0 0.0%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>18,345</b>	<b>21,336</b>	<b>25,112</b>
<b>Median H-Hold Income</b>	<b>\$12,734</b>	<b>\$22,109</b>	<b>\$40,125</b>	<b>\$13,610</b>	<b>\$25,782</b>	<b>\$40,146</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 Jct., 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 (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 1.8 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, 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, Village of Amherst, Rural Villages, Portage County**

	Village of Amherst		Rural Village Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
<b>Persons</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>57,805</b>	<b>67,182</b>
Below Poverty Level	108 14.0%	109 11.3%	43 11.5%	30 7.8%	7,454 12.9%	6,074 9.0%
<b>Persons 65 Years and Over</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>7,354</b>
Below Poverty Level	20 15.0%	16 13.4%	10 15.5%	5 9.5%	740 13.9%	561 7.6%
<b>Families</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>14,927</b>	<b>16,643</b>
Below Poverty Level	20 9.3%	21 7.7%	7 7.4%	7 6.5%	1,051 7.0%	725 4.4%

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

According to Census information from 1990 and 2000, the Village of Amherst has a higher percentage of total persons, persons aged 65 and over, and families living below the poverty level than that of the Rural Village Average and Portage 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. 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 1.10 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			Rural Village Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	11 3.7%	18 4.9%	10 1.9%	9 6.2%	18 10.8%	12 6.5%	1,816 7.3%	1,755 5.8%	1,241 3.5%
Construction	12 4.1%	20 5.4%	27 5.1%	9 6.7%	11 6.7%	13 6.9%	1,004 4.0%	1,297 4.3%	1,707 4.8%
Manufacturing	55 18.7%	62 16.8%	102 19.3%	31 22.1%	39 23.8%	34 18.6%	4,637 18.6%	5,373 17.8%	6,314 17.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	36 12.2%	20 5.4%	52 9.8%	14 10.2%	8 5.0%	16 8.6%	1,214 4.9%	1,511 5.0%	1,948 5.5%
Information	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	26 4.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 3.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	835 2.3%
Communications/ Other Public Facilities	13 4.4%	12 3.3%	0 0.0%	2 1.1%	4 2.3%	0 0.0%	325 1.3%	367 1.2%	0 0.0%
Wholesale Trade	15 5.1%	7 1.9%	13 2.5%	7 5.0%	4 2.7%	7 3.8%	885 3.5%	1,026 3.4%	1,235 3.5%
Retail Trade	58 19.7%	74 20.1%	61 11.6%	22 15.8%	31 18.7%	19 10.2%	4,317 17.3%	5,667 18.8%	4,813 13.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	23 7.8%	38 10.3%	37 7.0%	10 7.2%	12 7.4%	14 7.6%	2,971 11.9%	3,359 11.1%	3,682 10.3%
Professional, Management, Administrative	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	12 2.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8 4.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1,627 4.6%
Business and Repair Services	0 0.0%	18 4.9%	0 0.0%	2 1.3%	5 3.0%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	0 0.0%
Personal Services	0 0.0%	5 1.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 2.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	777 2.6%	0 0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	8 2.7%	11 3.0%	33 6.3%	2 1.7%	1 0.6%	14 7.6%	734 2.9%	388 1.3%	3,005 8.4%
Educational, Health, Social Services	42 14.3%	57 15.5%	138 26.1%	25 18.1%	20 12.1%	30 16.3%	5,331 21.4%	5,617 18.6%	7,192 20.2%
Other	19 6.5%	15 4.1%	7 1.3%	3 1.9%	6 3.6%	8 4.4%	624 2.5%	1,362 4.5%	1,236 3.5%
Public Administration	2 0.7%	11 3.0%	10 1.9%	4 2.9%	2 1.1%	3 1.9%	571 2.3%	710 2.4%	842 2.4%
<b>Total Employed Persons</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>24,947</b>	<b>30,150</b>	<b>35,677</b>
<b>Unemployed Persons</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>2,255</b>
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>26,960</b>	<b>31,740</b>	<b>37,944</b>
<b>Percent Unemployed</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>Persons 16 Years +</b>	~	<b>566</b>	<b>752</b>	~	<b>277</b>	<b>274</b>	~	<b>47,202</b>	<b>53,135</b>

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

## **Section 1.5 Assumptions for Future Growth**

- 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 area 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 for new non-farm residents.

## **Section 1.6 Forecasts**

### **A. Population Projections**

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 H of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Village of Amherst Plan Commission has adopted the following projected population total for the planning period: Yr 2005: **1,035**; Yr 2010: **1,095**; Yr 2015: **1,149**; Yr 2020: **1,215**.

### **B. Housing Unit Projections**

Based on the anticipated increase in population and the projected level of occupancy (2.39 persons per household), the Village may need to add approximately 128 new housing units over the next twenty years.

### **C. Employment Projections**

As of mid-2004 there were approximately 300 jobs located within the Village of Amherst. Based on a 2004 Village population estimated by the State of Wisconsin to be 1,027, Amherst currently contains just under 30 jobs per 100 residents. Several new industrial projects have recently been approved, and the Village of Amherst will be actively marketing its Business Park acreage throughout the planning period. This variable makes it difficult to settle on a specific future employment projection; the Village, however, anticipates an increase in employment.

## **Section 1.7 Conclusions from the Issues and Opportunities Analysis**

- A. The Village has seen a considerable acceleration in its growth rate over the last 30 years. Between 1970 and 2000, Amherst grew from 585 to 964 residents, an increase of 65%. The 2020 population of the Village is projected to be 1,215, representing a 26% increase since the 2000 Census.
- B. The Village has seen the number of residents aged 25-to-44 increase by nearly one-third between 1990 and 2000. In addition, the number of Village of Amherst residents aged 5-to-24 has also increased by nearly one-half since 1990 (mainly ages 10 to 19).
- C. The Village of Amherst continues to pull a large portion of new residents from other parts of Portage County.

## **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. Goals are 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 may increase from 964 in 2000 to 1,215 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. While a portion of this growth will occur within existing development, the majority will occur on adjacent, undeveloped land. The Village should strive to limit growth within a compact area suitable for development.

### **A. Vision Statement**

To provide for orderly growth, encourage industrial and commercial development, make use of residential opportunities, recreational opportunities, and transportation opportunities to retain the character of the Village.

### **B. Goal**

Encourage a pattern of community growth and development that will provide a quality living environment.

### **C. Objectives**

1. Encourage development in areas with urban services or in areas where services can be most efficiently and economically provided.
2. Promote future development in planned growth areas.
3. Ensure that newly developed areas are compatible with existing uses of land.

### **D. Policies**

1. The Village of Amherst should implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure the Village remains a desirable place to live and work, to encourage the development of balanced residential, commercial, industrial and recreational land use patterns and to provide areas adequate for future growth.
2. Effective implementation tools, such as the zoning ordinance, official street map, subdivision regulations, shoreland and wetland ordinances and a capital improvement program should be used and enforced.
3. Community development should occur contiguous to and extend outward from areas of existing development.

4. The Village of Amherst should establish cooperative land use control procedures in conjunction with Portage County and surrounding town and village governments to ensure harmonious development beyond the corporate limits of the communities.
5. The Village should encourage development which protects and enhances the Village's tax base.
6. The Amherst Plan Commission should maintain an active role in assessing Village needs, evaluating development, and utilizing the planning process as a means of accomplishing recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan.