

CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element

66.1001 (2)(h) Wis. Stat:

Land Use element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that show current land uses and future land uses that indicate natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which service of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

The purpose of this plan's land use chapter is to compile an inventory of existing land use patterns, and establish the goals, objectives and policies which will be used to guide public and private actions concerning future land use and development. These goals, objectives and policies express ideas that are consistent with the desired character of the community and the other chapters of this Comprehensive Plan.

Section 8.1 Existing Land Use

The Village of Amherst contains a mix of single family and multiple-family housing, surrounding a traditional central "downtown" with commercial and governmental uses. Over time commercial uses have been established along the Cty Rd KK (former USH 10) corridor to the west of downtown, and industrial development has occurred to the southeast. Table 8.1 and Map 8.1 illustrate the distribution of different land use categories across the Village.

Table 8.1: Village of Amherst 2004 Existing Land Use Acreage

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Single Family Residential	181.4	21.9%
Plex Residential (2-4 units)	7.4	0.9%
Multi-Family Residential (5+ units)	8.2	1.0%
Commercial/Office	36.0	4.3%
Industrial	41.7	5.0%
Governmental/Institutional	96.2	11.6%
Parks and Recreation	7.8	0.9%
Agriculture and Idle	174.5	21.1%
Transportation (Road & Rail ROW)	131.1	15.8%
Water	28.9	3.5%
Vacant	115.4	13.9%
Total	828.6	100.0%

Source: Village of Amherst and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department.

A. Residential Land Use

Existing residential development is separated into single family, plex, and multi-family categories. Single Family residential, the largest land use category, covers 181 acres, or 22% of the Village land area. “Plex” residential (buildings with two to four dwelling units), accounts for 7.4 acres (0.9%) of Village land. Multiple family residential accounts for 8.2 acres, (1.0%).

B. Commercial/Office Land Use

Commercial and office development accounts for 36 acres, or 4.3% of Village land area, and is concentrated in two main areas of Amherst: downtown, and along the Cty Rd KK corridor at Cty Rd B on the western edge of the Village.

C. Industrial Land Use

The industrial uses within Amherst have historically been located in the central portion of the Village, on Mill Street along the Mill Pond, and north of Wilson Street, along the railroad tracks. Within the last 10 years, the Village has established the Amherst Business Park at the southeast end of the Village as a focal point for new industrial development. Industrial land use currently accounts for 42 acres, or 5% of Village area.

D. Government/Institutional Land Use

Government and Institutional land uses (Village buildings, school facilities, cemetery, churches, etc.) account for 95 acres, 11.5% of Village land area.

E. Park

Park land accounts for approximately 8 acres (0.9% of land area), and is located primarily along the Tomorrow River and Mill Pond.

F. Agriculture and Idle Lands

Agricultural and idle land accounts for the second largest land use in 2004, 176 acres (21.2%) of Village land area. Much of this is cultivated land located within the boundaries of the Amherst Business Park. Two other large parcels are located in the northeast and northwest corners of the Village, and are currently restricted from development by poor access.

G. Transportation (road and rail right-of-way)

This land use category includes all of the right-of-way for the Village, and at 131 acres, occupies almost 16% of the total Village area. Railroad right-of-way accounts for 18 acres, with the remainder (113 acres) being street and highway right-of-way.

H. Water

The Tomorrow River, along with the Mill Pond impoundment, account for slightly more than 30 acres of area through the heart of the Village.

I. Vacant

In 2004, 115.37 acres of the Village were “vacant”. This designation was primarily applied to previously platted lots that contained no development and were considered developable in the future, as well as the nearly 55 acre parcel at the southern edge of the Village annexed in 2004.

Map 8.1: 2004 Existing Land Use

Section 8.2 Land Use Trend Analysis and Projected Land Use

The Village of Amherst is a growing community that, while containing some area within its current borders for growth, will likely need to expand its borders to accommodate anticipated new development throughout and beyond the planning period. Table 8.2 details the land use calculations from the 1977 Village Development Guide and 1990 Comprehensive Plan, along with the 2004 land use from this plan. The 2004 land use has been condensed to approximate the categories used in the previous plans. For the actual existing land use distribution, please see Table 8.1 and Map 8.1 above.

Table 8.2: Village of Amherst Land Use Trends

Existing Land Use	1975 Acres	1989 Acres	2004 Acres
Residential	81.1	119.1	196.9
Commercial/Office	9.8	30.7	36.0
Industrial	11.5	9.6	41.7
Public / Semi-Public	45.6	105.7	104.0
Transportation	73.3	97.5	131.1
Agriculture	184.9	232.0	174.5
Water	28.9	30.4	30.1
Vacant / Idle	203.6	124.0	115.4
Total	638.3	755.0	828.6

Source: Village of Amherst, Portage County Planning & Zoning Department

A. Residential Land Use

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, the Village of Amherst population increased by nearly 70% between 1970 and 2000. Table 8.2 illustrates the corresponding increase in acreage devoted to residential activities, which increased 143% over the same period. Subdivisions were added in both the east and west portions of the Village.

B. Commercial Land Use

The downtown was historically the center of commercial activity in Amherst. Over the 30 years reflected in Table 8.2 commercial land use acreage has increased over 250%, as businesses located to the west along Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B, and occupied larger parcels of property.

C. Industrial Land Use

Industry has migrated from the historic core downtown to the Amherst Business Park in the southeast corner of the Village. Future industrial activity is anticipated to occur in this Business Park.

D. Agriculture

There has always been a large amount of agricultural land within the Village boundaries. Over time agricultural land has been converted to urban uses. The largest portion of agricultural land lies within the Amherst Business Park. It is anticipated that nearly all of the land currently classified as agricultural will ultimately be converted to urban uses, quite possibly within the planning period.

E. Trends in Land Values

Table 8.3 below describes the increase in the equalized values for the different property types, as compiled by the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

Table 8.3: Equalized Property Values, Village of Amherst

Type of Property	1980		1990		2000	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$7,977,000	75%	\$10,041,000	67%	\$24,651,000	75%
Commercial	\$1,769,000	17%	\$3,225,000	22%	\$6,797,000	21%
Manufacturing	\$103,000	1%	\$145,000	1%	\$54,000	0%
Agricultural	\$303,000	3%	\$251,000	2%	\$54,000	0%
Swamp and Waste	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$3,000	0%
Forest	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4,000	0%
Other	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$140,000	0%
Personal Property	\$457,000	4%	\$1,253,000	8%	\$1,220,000	4%
Total Value	\$10,609,000	100%	\$14,915,000	100%	\$32,923,000	100%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statistical Report of Property Valuations, 1980, 1990, 2000

F. Redevelopment Areas

The Amherst Village Plan Commission identified the following areas as having possibilities for redevelopment at some point within or beyond the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan.

- Central Business District – should redevelop in similar CBD fashion.
- Manufacturing area between Wilson and School Streets along the railroad tracks – should remain as manufacturing.
- Older homes across the Village on non-conforming lots – should remain in residential use.
- Mill Pond dam area (Village buildings and Co-op buildings) – should redevelop with park/recreation/public uses.

G. Infill Development Areas

The Amherst Village Plan Commission identified the following areas as having possibilities for infill development at some point within or beyond the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan.

- Packer Avenue: commercial development on the Co-op tank farm property north of the road, single family or multiple family residential development on the vacant property south of the road.
- Edge Road: between Washington Street and Mill Street – single family residential
- Hawk’s Nest subdivision: plex and multiple family residential development.
- Amherst Business Park.
- Wolter property: mixed use residential and commercial south of USH 10.
- Borgen and Ostrowski farms (NE, NW corners of the Village) – single family residential.
- Justmann property within the Business Park – manufacturing.

Section 8.3 Land Use Conflicts

The Village Plan Commission identified the following existing and potential land use conflicts within Amherst.

- CBD – abrupt borders (no buffers), which can lead to conflict between residential and commercial uses
- the potato warehouse area in the NW part of the Village – industrial / residential conflicts
- the narrowness of Depot Street, and the problems that creates for accessing the vacant developable acreage at its north end
- the increase in the number and speed of trains through the Village over the years
- the rear of the business properties facing the park downtown.

Section 8.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

The Village of Amherst needs to consider the protection of land uses it currently has, project where it may need to expand, and work with the surrounding communities to make it happen.

A. Goal

1. Provide a balance of land uses to serve existing and future residents of the Village, as well as non-residents, that allows for a strong economy and maintains the high quality of life that Amherst currently enjoys.

B. Objectives

1. Minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses. Encourage development (both new and redevelopment) in buildable vacant areas of the Village that is consistent and compatible with surrounding areas.
2. Periodically compare the ratio of residential, commercial and industrial land uses with Village goals, objectives and policies.

C. Policies

1. Review Comprehensive Plan projections at a minimum every 5 years to evaluate the adequacy of future land use allocations.
2. Encourage safe and attractive development; ensure that the development site is physically suited to the proposed use; apply sound design and landscape principles in the planning, layout and construction of new development.
3. Ensure that proposed uses are compatible with surrounding uses; give consideration to the opinions of neighboring landowners and interests of the Village in general.
4. Review housing density at a minimum every 5 years to evaluate the adequacy of future land use allocations.

Section 8.5 Future Land Use Recommendations

Table 8.4 below and Map 8.2 illustrate the Future Land Use recommendations for the Village of Amherst Comprehensive Plan and identify how development should proceed in the future to meet the Village's goal of encouraging a pattern of community growth and development that will provide a quality living environment. Future development and redevelopment should be encouraged in an orderly pattern adjacent to and compatible with existing development.

The projected growth of Amherst’s population to more than 1,200 persons by the year 2020 will result in an increased demand of land for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses. The amount of agricultural/idle and vacant land available within the Village limits will probably not be sufficient to meet land needs to the year 2020. The challenge for realizing an efficient approach to land use will be to promote proper timing / location of land development.

Table 8.4: Village of Amherst Future Land Use, 2020

Land Use Category	2004 Acres	%	2020 Acres	%	Change 2004 to 2020	5-year Change Increment
Single Family Residential	181.4	21.9%	312.5	37.7%	133.4	44.5
Plex Residential (2-4 units)	7.4	0.9%	11.5	1.4%	4.1	1.4
Multi-Family Residential (5+ units)	8.2	1.0%	17.2	2.1%	6.9	2.3
Commercial/Office	36.0	4.3%	72.9	8.8%	37.0	12.3
Industrial	41.7	5.0%	115.5	13.9%	73.8	24.6
Governmental/Institutional	96.2	11.6%	102.7	12.4%	7.6	2.5
Parks and Recreation	7.8	0.9%	27.4	3.3%	19.6	6.5
Agriculture and Idle	174.5	21.1%	8.7	1.0%	-167.0	-55.6
Transportation (Road / Rail ROW)	131.1	15.8%	131.3	15.8%	0.0	0.0
Water	28.9	3.5%	28.9	3.5%	0.0	0.0
Vacant	115.4	13.9%	0.0	0.0%	-115.4	-38.5
Totals	828.6	100.0%	828.6	100.0%	0.0	0.0

Source: Village of Amherst and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department.

Future development should be encouraged in a compact pattern adjacent to and compatible with existing development rather than creating scattered areas of development too small and too costly to provide public utilities and services. This objective will best be achieved by promoting development of existing centers and neighborhoods to optimum size before creating new growth areas. In addition, the Village must strive to protect its environmental resources as pressures to develop wooded and other unique natural areas for urban use increase. Development should be prohibited in floodplains and wetlands, should not disrupt natural drainage courses, and should be compatible with soil conditions.

Land Use recommendations include both immediate and long range planning recommendations to be implemented. The long range Land Use Plan recommendations are not considered to be inconsistent or in conflict with the Village’s existing zoning map because they will be implemented over the course of the planning period as development proposals and land use changes are presented to the Village for consideration.

Section 8.6 Future Land Use Categories

A. Residential

Future residential land use is broken up into three categories; Single family, Plex (2-4 units), and Multiple Family (5+ units). The single family category is intended for single unit residential development on Village sewer and water with a minimum lot size of 58,000 square feet (approximately ¾ acre). The Plex (2-4 units) and Multi-Family (5+ units) categories are intended to provide areas of higher density and opportunities for mixed use residential within the Village.

Map 8.2: Future Land Use

1. Single Family – one-unit structures, one habitable building per parcel.
2. Plex - includes structures that contain from 2 to 4 units, one habitable building per parcel.
3. Multi-Family – includes structures that contain 5 or more units, one habitable building per parcel.

B. Commercial/Office Land Use

Commercial land use includes small-scale neighborhood and larger-scale retail and service establishments (i.e. stand alone buildings and strip centers, etc.). Office land use includes doctors, lawyers, financial services, government agencies, etc.

The Village of Amherst has two main classifications for commercial/office land use: the Central Business District (CBD) and the General Business Zone. The CBD was established to provide a single contiguous district encompassing the Central Business District or downtown area which will encourage retail uses and a variety of supporting uses. This district is intended to help implement the Village’s specialized development goals and planning principles for the CBD, particularly the development and maintenance of the downtown area as a specialized-pedestrian-oriented shopping and community center. The General Business Zone is intended to provide areas for retail, commercial, office, and service uses.

C. Mixed Use Residential / Commercial

Either residential or commercial development is acceptable in these areas, with proper attention paid to minimizing conflicts between commercial development and existing or future residential development.

D. Industry

Industrial land use includes processing and manufacturing operations, trucking operations, as well as wholesale sales and establishments with large amounts of outside storage of materials.

The Amherst Business Park was created to provide areas within the Village for commercial, manufacturing or other industrial uses that are determined not to have a detrimental effect on the environment, neighboring uses, or other desirable features of the Village.

E. Institutional / Government

Institutional and Governmental land uses include the Village Hall and other buildings, library, wastewater treatment plant, water tower, well fields, schools, churches and synagogues, cemeteries, etc.

The Village of Amherst has only identified one area for governmental/institutional expansion south of Prairie View Street. This area is designated for Public Works storage expansion.

F. Parks and Recreation

This category includes publicly owned land used for passive or active recreation. The Village of Amherst recently had a University of Madison student complete his thesis on the Village of Amherst community design for parks and recreation. The Village should consider using this study as a starting point for future improvements to the Village’s parks and recreation areas.

G. Agriculture

This category is used to describe lands in which the primary use is planned for normal agricultural practices or in which no other development is planned over the next 10 to 20 years. The only area designated as future Agriculture and Idle in the Village is located between the Tomorrow River and the Canadian National rail line just west of the wastewater treatment facility. Access to this parcel will most likely be from Cty Rd KK to the south as the Tomorrow River and the railroad create significant barriers on all other sides.

H. Road and Rail Right-of-Way: This category includes both rail and street right-of-way within the village.

I. Water: This category includes open water bodies such as ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, etc.

Section 8.7 Extraterritorial Area

State Statutes allow communities to identify extraterritorial boundaries in order to implement zoning [s.62.23 (7a)], control offensive industry (s.66.052), regulate smoke emissions (s. 146.10) and review plats (s.236.10). The Village of Amherst utilizes powers granted by State Statutes (ss.66.32, 236.10) to identify extraterritorial boundaries for the purpose of plat review. The statutes specify that the extraterritorial planning area extends 1½ miles beyond municipal limits and may not cross the corporate limits of another city or village. When extraterritorial areas overlap, the overlapping area must be divided on a line equidistant from the boundaries of each municipality concerned, so that only one municipality can exercise extraterritorial powers over one area. It was necessary to modify Amherst's extraterritorial area in order to avoid overlapping the extraterritorial areas of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville. The Village of Amherst's extraterritorial area is shown in Map 8.3.

State statutes provide the Village with an opportunity to monitor and guide development in the extraterritorial area. It is important that the Village take advantage of this ability, since any development in the extraterritorial area has the potential to impact the Village and because much of the land adjacent to the Village is conducive to development. The Plan Commissions for the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction, and Nelsonville met with the Town of Amherst Plan Commission to discuss future development possibilities within the extraterritorial areas of the Villages. The purpose of this section is to identify conditions that, based on those discussions, have the potential to affect development and potentially impact the Village, and to guide development in the extraterritorial area according to the goals, objectives and policies identified in the Village and Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plans.

A. Zoning

The Town of Amherst is also completing its new Comprehensive Plan, and will be revising its zoning to conform with that plan. The Village should work with the Town to evaluate and develop a zoning strategy for the extraterritorial area that will be compatible to the goals and objectives that the Town develops and sensitive to the Village's zoning policies and practices. Specific issues that should be addressed include the following:

- Utilizing zoning to protect lakes, streams, shorelands and wetlands
- Utilizing zoning to protect the Village's existing and proposed well recharge areas
- Utilizing farmland preservation measures to avoid the premature conversion of good agricultural lands within the Town to non-agricultural uses

Map 8.3: Extraterritorial Area and Highly Productive Agricultural Soils

B. Natural Area

Natural areas within the extraterritorial area include the Tomorrow River and Bear Creek stream corridors and Turtle Lake. Important or fragile environmental areas, including selected shorelands, wetlands and floodplains, should be protected because of their flood control, wildlife habitat, protection of water quality and recreational opportunity values.

C. Highly Productive Agricultural Soils

Highly productive agricultural soils in the Town of Amherst have been identified, with the assistance of the County Conservationist, based on highest productivity and lowest degree of limitations for farming (Map 8.3). Slopes greater than 6% were excluded from the “highly productive” designation (due to severe hazard for water or wind erosion), along with stony, rough, and eroded sites. Highly productive soils in the Town of Amherst include:

Billett sandy loam, 0-2% slopes	Rosholt loam, 2-6% slope
Richford loamy sand, 0-2% slope	Wyocena sandy loam, 2-6% slope
Richford loamy sand, 2-6% slope	Oesterle sandy loam

Area farming should continue to be supported to maintain and promote agri-business and industry, and to provide local jobs. In addition, premature conversion of agriculturally significant lands within the extraterritorial area should be avoided.

D. Residential Development

Areas of residential development that have been identified in the extraterritorial area are:

- Land along the Yellow Brick Road, located north of the Village
- The Tomorrow River Subdivision, located east of Keener Road
- The Meadows Subdivision, located west of the Village and north of Cty Rd B
- The James Phillips Subdivision located west of the Village along Lillian Drive, Packer Avenue
- The Enchanted Forest Subdivision, located west of the Village, adjacent to the fairgrounds
- The Booher Subdivision on Fountain Grove Road, located southwest of the Village

Beyond the urban development boundary, non-farm uses should be guided and regulated around the needs of agricultural uses. Low density (two acre minimum) residential land use should be implemented where sanitary sewer is unavailable and impracticable. To address water quality problems, the Village should explore the feasibility of extending sewer and water to serve existing residential areas located west of the Village.

E. Commercial Development

The extraterritorial land use guide identifies the following areas as having potential for future economic development:

- The area between the northwestern Village limits and Cty Rd KK
- The general area between Cty Rd B and Packer Avenue, located west of the Village
- The area between the Tomorrow River and the proposed industrial park north of USH 10
- The area between the Tomorrow River and Cty Rd A south of USH 10

1. Area northwest of the Village limits

The Village has identified that future residential or commercial development should be directed towards the area northwest of the current Village limits, bounded by the railroad on

the east, and Cty Rd KK and the extraterritorial boundary to the north and west. To provide for future residential/commercial development, the Village will need the cooperation of the Town of Amherst and Portage County to develop an access plan for this area. The plan should include access provisions to the northwest quadrant of the Village.

In addition, the Village should encourage annexation so that sanitary sewer, water and roadway facilities can be provided. In February of 2003, both the Town of Amherst and the Village of Amherst passed resolutions to discuss a joint venture to extend utilities into the Town without requiring annexation into the Village. But the Town of Amherst's April 2003 referendum and subsequent Town action halted any further development of joint services. The current position of the Village of Amherst is that annexation is the only alternative available to facilitate utility extensions.

2. The general area between Cty Rd KK and Packer Avenue, located west of the Village

Existing development in this area includes B Bar 10, H.O. Wolding and the Frontier Restaurant. Future development, including in particular the new interchange at the USH 10 crossing of Cty Rd B, will need to be planned cooperatively with the Town of Amherst.

3. Area between the bait shop and the Amherst Business Park, north of Cty Rd KK

Rhodes Live Bait Shop is the only existing business in this area. The Village should determine the type of development appropriate for this area. Possibilities include highway commercial, professional office or expansion of the Business Park. The Village should also determine how access should be provided.

4. Area between the Tomorrow River and Cty Rd A that is south of Cty Rd KK

This area represents part of a live bait operation. More intensive uses are not recommended in area.

F. Urban Development Expansion

The Village of Amherst understands the importance of working with the Town of Amherst, as well as the neighboring Villages of Nelsonville and Amherst Junction, to reach understanding and consensus on land uses within the Amherst extraterritorial area that are acceptable to all parties. The Village of Amherst must keep in mind the best interests of the current and future residents of the Village. Discussions with adjacent municipalities should include identifying areas where the Village borders can reasonably be expected to expand within and beyond the current planning period. Map 8.4 details future land use recommendations within the Village of Amherst extraterritorial area. The Village has mapped anticipated land uses within a 40 acre (1,320 foot) "halo" to the north and east of the Village limits, which extends to include all land within the "beltway" created by USH 10 on the west. These are the areas within which the Village sees the potential for expansion during the planning period. It is not assumed, however, that all of this will be annexed and/or developed during the current planning period. Beyond this "halo", future land use is based on the Town of Amherst adopted Future Land Use Map.

The Village recognizes that annexation is primarily a landowner driven process. As such, annexations within the extraterritorial area will depend on the availability of sanitary sewer. Since providing sanitary sewer would also lessen the potential for groundwater contamination of the Village's well recharge area, the cost and feasibility of extending sanitary sewer and water west of Cty Rd KK should be explored.

Map 8.4: Village of Amherst Extraterritorial Future Land Use

G. Well Recharge Areas

Since any development has the potential to affect groundwater quality, the recommendations listed under the Groundwater Protection section of this Comprehensive Plan should be implemented as they pertain to the extraterritorial area. Specifically, further hydrogeologic evaluation, identification of a wellhead protection area, identification of existing and potential pollution sources, and management activities should be explored. In addition, the Village should explore the feasibility of extending sanitary sewer west of Cty Rd KK to mitigate the potential for groundwater pollution.

H. Well Restriction Zone

The well restriction zone is a 1,200 foot area that surrounds the abandoned landfill that is located in the Village of Amherst Junction. The installation of wells is prohibited within this zone by State codes. Modifications, however, may be allowed.

I. Development Information Zone

The potential exists for development to occur in the Town of Amherst that would affect the Village of Amherst, but is beyond their extraterritorial jurisdiction because of the close proximity of Amherst to Amherst Junction. The Development Information Zone, shown in the Village's extraterritorial land use guide, is the area within the Village of Amherst Junction's extraterritorial area south of the village. It is not the intent of the Village to make land use recommendations for this area. Rather, the Village would request to be informed of proposed development in this zone in order to assess potential impacts, in particular to groundwater quality, to the Village. This Development Information Zone cannot be implemented without the agreement and cooperation of the Town of Amherst. The Village should request approval from the Town to obtain notice of proposed development within the Development Information Zone. A signed Town Board resolution agreeing to this proposal would then be sent to the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department by the Village of Amherst, along with a request for notification of development proposals within the Development Information Zone.

Section 8.8 Standards for Development within the Village of Amherst

A. Residential Development Design Standards

This section contains design standards for new residential development in the Village of Amherst and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The purpose of these design standards is to guide residential development according to the goals, objectives and policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan and according to the intent and purposes established in the Village's Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances.

1. Recreational Facilities

Whenever a tract of land is subdivided for residential development, the developer should provide land or money to the Village for parks, playgrounds, public access and open space, as follows:

- a. One acre of land for each fifteen proposed dwelling units; or
- b. Payment to the Village park fund of \$250 for each dwelling unit; or
- c. Any combination of (a) and (b) as agreed to by the Village Board.

2. Streets

Streets should be designed and located in relation to existing and planned streets identified by the Village's Official Map. In addition, as many landscape features as possible should be preserved, the proposed street pattern should relate to the natural contours of the site and should promote public safety and convenience. Specific street design standards, including cross-section design criteria, are available from the Village Clerk's office and should be referred to when new streets are proposed.

3. Blocks

Width: The widths, lengths and shapes of blocks should be suited to the following:

- Planned use of the land
 - Zoning requirements
 - The need for convenient access, control and safety of street traffic
 - Limitations and opportunities created by topography
- a. Length: Blocks in residential areas should not be less than 400 feet or more than 1,500 feet in length, unless otherwise dictated by exceptional topography or other limiting factors of good design.
 - b. Pedestrian Ways: Pedestrian ways not less than 10 feet in width may be required near the center and entirely across any block of more than 900 feet in length. This is to provide adequate pedestrian circulation and access to schools, parks, shopping centers, or churches.
 - c. Width: Blocks should be wide enough to provide for two tiers of lots of appropriate depth, except where required to separate residential development from through traffic. The widths of lots or parcels reserved or designated for commercial or industrial use shall be adequate to provide for the off-street service and parking areas required by the use contemplated and to meet the zoning requirements for such use.
 - d. Utilities: Telephone, cable and electric power lines should, where practical, be placed on mid-block easements of not less than 20 feet in width, centered on the property line. Where possible, easements should be placed along rear lot lines for underground construction.

4. Lots

The size, shape and orientation of lots shall be appropriate for the location of the subdivision and for the type of development and use contemplated. The lots should be designed to provide an aesthetically pleasing building site and should be appropriate for the topography of the subdivision.

- a. Lot Lines: Side lot lines should be at right angles to straight street lines or radial to curved street lines on which the lots face. Lot lines should follow municipal boundary lines rather than cross them.
- b. Double Frontage: Double frontage or "through" lots should be prohibited, except where necessary to provide separation of residential development from arterial traffic or to overcome specific disadvantages of topography and orientation.

- c. Access: Every lot should front or abut a public street.
- d. Lot Size: Residential lots to be served by private sewage disposal facilities shall comply with the rules of the State Board of Health and be a minimum of 2 acres in size. New single and two family residential lots to be served by municipal sewer shall be a minimum of 15,000 square feet. Multiple family residential lots shall conform to the requirements of the Village of Amherst Zoning Ordinance.
- e. Lot Depth: Excessive depth of lots in relation to width should be avoided, and a two-to-one proportion should be considered a maximum depth-to-width ratio. Lot depth should be increased by approximately 10 feet when abutting an arterial highway where no direct access is permitted to the highway, in order to allow for a landscaped buffer strip between the arterial highway and the residential land use. Where no landscaped buffer is provided, that distance should be increased to 30 feet.
- f. Lot Width: Lots within the interior of a block should have the minimum average width required in the residential districts of the Village's Zoning Ordinance.
- g. Corner Lots: Corner lots should have a width sufficient to provide a building setback of at least 25 feet from each street.

5. Sidewalks

The Village feels it can provide for the safety and orderly movement of pedestrian traffic within the Village without requiring installation of sidewalks on one side of all streets within new subdivisions. The Village proposes to review the need for sidewalks in each subdivision and make recommendations accordingly. The Village's Subdivision Ordinance reflects this philosophy. Wheelchair and bicycle curb ramps should be installed at street intersection crosswalks pursuant to Section 66.616 of Wisconsin State Statutes. The Village has the ability to require additional or wider than standard sidewalks in the vicinity of schools, commercial areas or other places of public assemblage.

6. Landscaping

Every effort should be made to protect and retain all existing trees, shrubbery, vines and grasses not actually lying in public roadways, drainageways, paths and trails. Trees should be protected and preserved in accordance with sound conservation practices.

- a. Tree Planting: The Village, through its Tree Board, should explore replacing the tree planting requirements of the Village's Subdivision Ordinance with a Village tree planting program. The Subdivision Ordinance currently calls for the subdivider to plant at least one tree of an acceptable species for each fifty feet of frontage along dedicated streets. Trees are to be a minimum of six feet in height and should be planted between the sidewalk and curb, where possible. The placement of trees within any parkway (a parkway is the non-paved area within the right-of-way of a road) must be approved by the Village Forester and a permit granted by the Village Board. Advantages to a Village street tree planting program include: (1) Provides for the proper care and attention necessary to promote healthy tree growth; (2) Allows for site evaluations to determine the approximate location, number and species of trees; (3) Allows for a street tree master plan and/or block themes; (4) Allows for the development of a diverse street tree population, thereby minimizing the potential for a catastrophe like dutch elm disease; (5) Promotes civil and government interaction and cooperation; (6) Source of community pride.

- b. Paths: Easements for paths and trails in wooded and wetland areas should not exceed ten feet in width. Paths and trails should be constructed so as to result in the least removal and disruption of trees and shrubs and the minimum impairment of natural beauty.

7. Easements

Utility easements may be required by the Village of Amherst or utility companies where necessary or advisable. All utilities in residential areas should be underground unless restricted by exceptional topography or other physical barriers.

Where a subdivision is traversed by a watercourse, an adequate drainageway or easement should be provided, and may be required by the Public Works Director or Village Board.

8. Stormwater Drainage And Erosion/Sedimentation Control

Storm water drainage facilities should be adequate to serve the subdivision. The Village may require curb and gutter, catch basins, inlets, storm sewer, road ditches, culverts, water retention structures or settling basins where necessary. The facilities should be of adequate size and grade to hydraulically accommodate design flows through and from the subdivision, designed to prevent and control soil erosion and sedimentation, and should not present hazards to life and property.

Earth moving activities should be conducted so as to prevent erosion and sedimentation and protect natural fauna, flora, watercourse, water regimen and topography. In addition, construction activities should be planned so that soil is disturbed a minimal amount of time.

The subdivider should plant grasses and trees (suggested tree species are available from Village Clerk's office) necessary to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation. The Village may require the subdivider to provide or install certain protection and rehabilitation measures such as fencing, slopes, seeding and/or shrubs.

B. Commercial Development Design Standards

This section contains design standards for commercial development in the Village of Amherst and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The purpose of these design standards is to guide commercial development according to the goals, objectives and policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan and according to the intent and purposes established in the Village's Zoning Ordinance. Design standards should be incorporated into site plans, where applicable.

1. Vehicular Circulation

Proposed commercial developments should orient access and parking facilities so they are compatible with the Village's street system and promote smooth traffic ingress and egress. Vehicular and pedestrian conflicts should be avoided where possible. Conflicts should be minimized where they cannot be avoided.

2. Vehicular Access And Street Intersection Separation Distances

To eliminate safety hazards, control vehicles entering and leaving commercial development that interfere with traffic flow, and to plan for the eventual upgrade of USH 10 to a multilane expressway or freeway, no new direct private access should be permitted to USH 10 in the Village or its extraterritorial area. Access to USH 10 should be provided by way of public streets or frontage roads.

To provide adequate and unrestricted turning movements by driveway traffic and insure a minimum of overlapping maneuvers, new driveway locations should be located as follows:

- Corner clearance. The minimum clearance between a street intersection and the nearest driveway location should be 100 feet if the street intersects with an arterial (USH 10) and 50 feet if the street intersects with a collector or local road.
- Driveway separation. The minimum distance between adjacent driveways, on streets with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour, should be 85 feet.

3. On-Site Parking Areas

In instances where a site plan is required for proposed on-site parking areas, the following elements should be included:

- Existing and proposed improvements, including building outlines, light standards, walls, fences, parking spaces, driveways, walks, storage areas, sign locations and public ROW.
 - Survey layout. Property lines, easements and building and setback lines should be shown.
 - Planting Plan. The planting plan should show the types, location, spacing, size and common names of planting material.
 - Proposed finished ground surfaces (including paving, turf, gravel, etc.).
 - Drainage provisions.
 - Dimensions. Dimensions to be shown include stall and aisle width, stall depth, setbacks, property lines, parking area and driveway width.
 - Scale data.
 - North arrow.
- a. Parking lot entrances. Commercial parking lot entrances should be clearly visible from the street and visually distinguished from public rights-of-way.
 - b. Parking lot surfacing. All off street parking areas with more than two parking spaces should be graded and hard surfaced so as to be dust free and properly drained. The aisles and parking spaces should be clearly marked in order to distinguish between parking stalls and vehicular circulation areas. When enforcement of the hard surfacing requirement would entail practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship, an extension may be granted by the Village.
 - c. Parking lot dimensions. Minimum dimensions for parking lots are available from the Village Clerk's office. Each 90°, full size parking space should not be less than 10 feet in width and 18 feet in length. Each 90° compact parking space should not be less than 7.5 feet in width and 15 feet in length.
 - d. Number of parking spaces. Parking spaces should be provided in sufficient numbers to meet the requirements of the Village's Zoning Ordinance. Parking spaces should also be provided to serve the handicapped.
 - e. Parking lot curbs and barriers. Curbs or barriers should be installed to protect sidewalks, adjoining private property and landscaping from vehicular encroachment.
 - f. Parking lot lighting. Parking lot lighting should serve four purposes. First, the lighting should provide for the safe movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Second,

lighting should aid in the provision of an environment which promotes security and crime prevention. Third, lighting should aid in creating an aesthetically pleasing environment at night, as well as during the day. Fourth, lighting should promote the use of commercial facilities during the evening. Any lighting used to illuminate an off-street parking area should be arranged to prevent glare, reflection, nuisance, inconvenience or hazardous interference of any kind on adjoining streets or residential properties.

- g. Parking lot location. Parking lots should be located on the site so as to minimize customer walking distances to the facility which the parking lot serves.
- h. Service and loading areas. All service and loading areas should be located on the same lot as the use it serves and should provide for safe and convenient service vehicle access. Service and loading areas should be designed so that vehicles do not encroach upon or obstruct any part of a public ROW. Also, service and loading areas, which are generally not aesthetically pleasing, should be orientated and designed to obscure visual contact from customers and residents of the area.

4. Landscaping

- a. Shade trees. At least one shade tree, of at least six feet in height, should be planted for each 50 feet of frontage. Columnar varieties of shade trees may require shorter distances between plantings.
- b. Urban landscape plant selection. Landscape plantings are an important part of an attractive commercial area. Landscape plantings have functional, as well as aesthetic, characteristics which improve commercial areas. Plantings of trees and shrubs provide shade and shelter, act as limited noise buffers and visual screens, assist in the channeling of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, act as windbreaks, and decrease heat that radiates from asphalt and concrete surfaces. As discussed earlier, a general landscape guide for tree planting in the Village (available from Village Clerk's office) should be used as a guide to select well suited landscape plant materials.
- c. Parking lot landscaping. The Village's Zoning Ordinance requires that off street parking areas containing 60 or more spaces be provided with landscaping. In addition, the Village Board has the authority to require landscaping for parking areas containing two or more spaces. Location of landscape areas, plant materials and protection afforded the plantings should be considered when developing parking area proposals. Those parking areas that adjoin a residential use should be screened by a solid wall, fence, dense evergreen planting or other effective means and maintained at a minimum height of six feet. Landscaping elements should be placed where they will not interfere with the act of parking, parking lot maintenance, vehicular egress and ingress, or snow removal.
- d. Areas of existing vegetation. Every effort should be made to protect and retain existing trees, shrubbery, vines and grasses not actually growing in public roadways, drainageways, paths, or trails. Trees should be protected and preserved during construction in accordance with sound conservation practices.

5. Easements

Utility easements may be required by the Village or utility companies where necessary or advisable. Easements may be necessary for electric power and communication wires and conduits, gas and other utility lines. All utilities should be considered for underground location, since these wires detract from the overall appearance of commercial areas and typically add to visual clutter. Where a land division is traversed by a watercourse, drainageway, or street, an easement should be provided for drainage purposes.

6. Stormwater Drainage And Erosion/Sedimentation Control

Storm water drainage and erosion/sedimentation control should be in conformance with the design criteria established in Section 8.8(A)(8) above for residential development.

7. Commercial Lot Standards

There are no minimum performance standards for lot size, street, side and rear yard setbacks, and parking in the CBD. Building height, however, is limited to 50 feet. Performance standards for commercial development within the Amherst Business Park are listed in the Business Park Covenants. Proposed commercial developments located outside of the CBD and Amherst Business Park must meet the following minimum performance standards:

- Lot Area: 7,000 square feet
- Lot Width: 80 feet
- Height of Structure: 35 feet
- Street Setback: 50 feet from arterials and 25 feet from collectors and local roads
- Rear Yard Setback: 20 feet, plus 3 feet for each story or fraction thereof above 2 stories
- Side Yard Setback: 5 feet when adjacent to residential zoning districts or 0 feet adjacent to all other zoning districts

8. Signage

All signs must conform to the rules and regulations of the Village's Sign Ordinance. In addition, signs should be designed so that they are in keeping with the overall character of the commercial area and its buildings. Lettering on signs should be functional, as well as visually pleasing. Truly functional lettering is of a type-face which is properly spaced, easy to read, and makes its message clear from the distance it is intended to be read. Generally, the fewer the words on the sign face, the more likely people will be able to read the sign with ease.

C. Industrial Development Recommendations And Standards

This section contains recommendations and design standards for industrial development in the Village of Amherst and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The purpose of these recommendations and design standards is to guide industrial development according to the goals, objectives and policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan and according to the intent and purposes established in the Village's Zoning Ordinance. Design standards should be incorporated into site plans, where applicable.

1. Industrial Development Commission

The Village is currently working to accommodate development requests with the Portage County Business Council. At this time the Village Plan Commission maintains the responsibility of reviewing these requests and making recommendations to the Village

Board. In the future the Village may consider exploring the feasibility of forming an Industrial Development Commission. The Industrial Development Commission should be comprised of municipal and civic officials. The objective of the Commission should be to attract and maintain industrial firms that are compatible with the Village of Amherst's goals and objectives.

2. Vehicular Circulation

Proposed industrial developments should orient access and parking facilities so they are compatible with the Village's street system and promote smooth traffic ingress and egress.

3. Vehicular Access, Street Intersection Separation Distances

To eliminate safety hazards, control vehicles that interfere with traffic flow, and plan for the upgrade of USH 10 to a multilane facility, no private industrial access points should be permitted to USH 10 in the Village or its extraterritorial area. Access to USH 10 should be provided by way of public streets or frontage roads.

To provide adequate and unrestricted turning movements by driveway traffic and insure a minimum of overlapping maneuvers, new driveway locations should be located as follows:

- Corner clearance. The minimum clearance between a street intersection and the nearest driveway location should be 100 feet if the street intersects with an arterial (USH 10) and 50 feet if the street intersects with a collector or local road.
- Driveway separation. The minimum distance between adjacent driveways should be 85 feet.

4. On-Site Parking Areas

Parking should be provided for as shown in Section 8.8(B)(3) above (On-site parking design standards).

5. Landscaping

- a. Shade trees. At least one shade tree, of at least six feet in height, should be planted for each 50 feet of frontage.
- b. Urban landscape plant selection. Landscape plantings are an important part of an attractive industrial area. Landscape plantings have functional, as well as aesthetic, characteristics which improve industrial areas. As discussed earlier, a general landscape guide for tree planting in the Village (available from Village Clerk's office) should be used as a guide to select well studied landscape plant materials.
- c. Parking lot landscaping. The Village's Zoning Ordinance requires that off street parking areas containing 60 or more spaces be provided with landscaping. In addition, the Village has the authority to require landscaping for parking areas containing two or more spaces. Location of landscape areas, plant materials and protection afforded the plantings should be considered when developing parking area proposals. Those parking areas that adjoin a residential use should be screened by a solid wall, fence, dense evergreen planting or other effective means and maintained at a minimum height of six feet. Landscaping elements should be placed where they will not interfere with the act of parking, parking lot maintenance, vehicular egress and ingress, or snow removal.

- d. Areas of existing vegetation. Every effort should be made to protect and retain existing trees, shrubbery, vines and grasses not actually growing in public roadways, drainageways, paths or trails. Trees should be protected and preserved during construction in accordance with sound conservation practices.

6. Easements

Utility easements may be required by the Village or utility companies where necessary or advisable. Easements may be necessary for electric power and communication wires and conduits, gas and other utility lines. All utilities should be considered for underground location, since these wires detract from the overall appearance of industrial areas and typically add to visual clutter. Where a land division is traversed by a watercourse, drainageway, or street, an easement should be provided for drainage purposes.

7. Stormwater Drainage And Erosion/Sedimentation Control

Storm water drainage and erosion/sedimentation control should be in conformance with the design criteria established in Section 8.8(A)(8) above for residential development.

8. Access: Every lot should front or abut a public street.

9. Blocks

Blocks should be wide enough to provide for two tiers of industrial lots of appropriate depth. Whenever proposed industrial blocks abut an arterial street or highway, through and local traffic should be separated by way of reversed frontage lots. The width of lots or parcels reserved or designated for industrial use shall be adequate to provide for on-site service and parking needs of proposed uses.

10. Industrial Lot Standards

- a. The Amherst Business Park covenants have standards for lot size requirements.
- b. Minimum performance standards (outside the Amherst Business Park). Other proposed industrial developments must meet the following performance standards:
 - Lot Area: 8,000 square feet.
 - Lot Width: 100 feet.
 - Height of Structure: 50 feet.
 - Street Setback: 50 feet from arterials and 30 feet from collectors and local roads.
 - Rear Yard Setback: 20 feet, plus 5 feet for each story or fraction thereof above three stories.
 - Side Yard Setback: 10 feet for each side yard or 20 feet if the side yard adjoins a residential zoning district.
- b. Corner lots. Corner lots should have additional width to permit adequate building and facility setbacks from side streets.
- c. Lot depth. The depth of lots or parcels designated for industrial use should be adequate to provide for the on-site service and parking required by the use contemplated. Industrial lots adjoining lands of a lesser intensity of land use should have an adequate depth to permit landscape plantings or other design elements to serve as a buffer area between the two land uses.

11. Signage

All signs must conform to the rules and regulations of the Village's Sign Ordinance. In addition, signs should be designed so that they are in keeping with the overall character of the industrial area and its buildings. Lettering on signs should be functional as well as visually pleasing.