

TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW REPORT

Referred to the Amherst Town Board by the Amherst Planning Board
September 17, 2015

Prepared by the Amherst Planning Department

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CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

Comprehensive planning is a continuous process that guides the development, redevelopment and preservation of a community to promote the goals and aspirations of its residents. Land use, infrastructure, housing, and other factors are important components of a community that influence the quality of life experienced by its residents and stakeholders. Communities need to practically manage and direct these resources to assure an economic future that is consistent with its goals and sustains desired qualities. Planning assists this effort by facilitating a coordinated approach to policy development and implementation.

By adopting the Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan in January 2007, the Amherst Town Board acknowledged its role as the guide to managing future development; however an adopted Plan should not be viewed as a static document. Economic, social, regulatory and physical conditions and trends are continuously changing, and a comprehensive plan must periodically be reviewed to maintain its relevance and currency. The Bicentennial Plan calls for regular monitoring of internal and external actions, decisions, and trends that might suggest consideration of amendments or other adjustments.

Plan monitoring and review are critical to sustaining the vision and policies expected to guide future growth and development. Plan monitoring involves the collection and analysis of pre-determined data and information that identifies trends and progress toward community goals and objectives; these are implemented through policies. A Plan Monitoring Report assessing the Town's progress toward achieving its goals and implementing its policies is now prepared biennially. The findings of the 2014 Review that are discussed in this report are based on the policies articulated in the Plan and an analysis of actions and activities undertaken by the Town and other agencies during the period from January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2014.

This Report is organized by sections that generally correspond to Chapters in the Plan and addresses: Demographic Information and Trends; Land Use and Development; Natural and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Transportation; Infrastructure; Housing and Neighborhoods; and Community Facilities and Services. Each policy in the Plan was evaluated by Town staff and representatives of outside agencies. Contributors to this Report were requested to identify actions or activities taken during the study period to implement one or more of the policies. In addition to these actions or activities, contributors were also asked to identify current or emerging economic, social, physical and development trends that might influence the implementation or relevance of Plan policies. The evaluation in this Report includes consideration of data and information from a variety of sources; where appropriate those data are included or summarized.

Regular reporting on policy implementation provides a useful indication of progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the Plan. Demographic data portrays trends that play a key role in community planning, but they seldom reflect significant change on an annual basis. Population and demographic trends for 2000 and 2007-2011 were derived from data collected in the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS); these were discussed in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Review Report. Chapter 2 of this Report includes consideration of new demographic estimates for a variety of characteristics that were collected in five successive annual samples reported in the 2009-2013 ACS. The ACS data replace sample data previously collected in the Decennial Census; those samples were ended in 2000 and are

now collected annually. The demographic trends reported in this Report indicate some interesting changes to the Town's social composition and characteristics.

Background

The Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan was formulated from a Vision Statement expressed by stakeholders as a verbal expression of their shared image for the future of the community. The Vision Statement is as follows:

In the Vision of Amherst in the Year 2018, the Town is renowned for an exceptional quality of life that derives from three fundamental attributes:

- **Livability:** Our healthy neighborhoods, outstanding public facilities and services, and active community life make Amherst an exceptional place to live and raise a family.
- **Community Character:** We wisely manage growth to preserve natural and historic resources, maintain green space throughout the community, and revitalize older neighborhoods and commercial corridors while accommodating quality new development.
- **Shared Direction:** As partners in the renewed prosperity of the Buffalo-Niagara region, we work together with neighboring communities and institutions and balance our multiple roles as a premier residential community and a complementary regional center of economic, cultural, and educational activity.

The Plan also identified four Key Initiatives representing areas of emphasis for specific policies that provide a focus for the Town's efforts to achieve the Vision. The Plan's policies address several areas that correspond with the Chapters of the Plan. Summarized below are significant recommendations and findings from this review and analysis of the Plan and its policies.

Summary of Recommendations

The demographic and development data, and the participatory events that were part of the planning process leading to formulation of the Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan took place from 2000-2002. Those data and background materials are included in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* and are now over 15 years old. As the Plan ages, the trends and recommendations described in this Report and previous Plan Reviews help to maintain its relevance. The following is a summary of recommendations from this 2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report.

1. The closing of two grant projects has positioned Amherst to be successful in applying for grants that would enable the Town to increase investments in "quality of life" facilities. Taking advantage of this opportunity requires an aggressive grants application campaign. Grants identification, tracking, application and management should be a priority for the wide range of departments that deal with "quality of life" facilities. This approach may benefit from a greater level of organization, outreach, grant research and application development in order to increase the level of success measured in terms grant funding received.

2. The concepts of sustainability and community resilience are growing trends in development and land management. Federal and State guidelines/laws increasingly refer to “sustainability.” The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is leading a successful effort to formulate a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) through an initiative called One Region Forward. The Town participated in this effort and is in the initial stages of identifying strategies and policies that could be incorporated into the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. Although the concept of “sustainability” will be an underlying principle for upcoming Plan and code revisions, the Town will face additional policy and code amendments in the very near future. Those amendments will be driven by many of the recommended actions in One Region Forward and will involve many more facets of Town government than its land use regulations. The Town might consider developing a plan for how it addresses sustainability issues in the future.
3. Although the existing Comprehensive Plan alludes to the long-standing policy of preserving residential character along minor arterials such as Maple Road and Sheridan Drive, the Town’s Comprehensive Plan should clarify that policy. The guidance in the Plan regarding the location of small office buildings along these corridors should be revisited to determine whether it in any way supports the erosion of that policy. Any deviation from this policy should be subjected to a corridor planning study similar to the study of Maple Road in close proximity to Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital.
4. The Planning Department completed a technical report on location criteria to guide senior housing location and development decisions. In 2015 and 2016, that report should undergo a thorough review by the appropriate Town agencies prior to its review by county and regional agencies with responsibilities for senior services. Those reviews should result in the formulation of discrete policy statements suitable for Planning Board review and Town Board consideration for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. The data collection and analysis tasks related to this issue has been completed. The policy formulation and adoption process should have a high priority for the coming year.
5. A recently completed NYSDOT improvement to Transit Road makes it feasible to consider the extension of Glen Oaks Drive to Transit Road; the extension is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan as illustrated in Figure 9. The Engineering Department recommended construction of the road connection as a component of the storm drainage improvement project. In recent conversations with the NYSDEC, it was concluded that road extensions previously recommended to be removed from the Comprehensive Plan because of their alignment through extensive wetlands should remain in the Plan. Wetland regulations may not be the only deciding factor, as there may be a greater public good for such roads. Road extensions in Figure 9 should be reviewed to determine their feasibility regarding regulated wetlands and their future use for the public good.
6. The Town needs to review Plan policies (Policies 3-13, 6-7, 6-8) regarding new sidewalk development (Policy 6-8). Emerging trends that encourage walking and bicycling are inconsistent with the reluctance of property owners to assume responsibility for installing and maintaining sidewalks. The Town should review recent decisions and positions on sidewalk installation to clarify implementation of associated Plan policies. The aging of

the Town's population may also dictate a review of sidewalk maintenance responsibilities, particularly snow removal. A citizens' commission should be appointed and tasked with working with the community through public outreach to develop a new sidewalk policy.

7. The Comprehensive Plan should include a Town policy in regard to "complete streets." Those policies should be informed by current context-sensitive highway design and access management policies, along with other regional efforts. Of particular importance is the recognition of streets as multi-modal facilities and the need to integrate various modes in consideration of corridor improvements.
8. Building a stronger physical connection between the Village and the University could be accomplished through a bicycle and pedestrian link with consideration of new approaches to personal transportation such as car and bicycle sharing. The Village Walking Trails Committee has asked the Town to propose a link to UB and the Ellicott Creek Trail network in the form of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Department should review proposed on-street bicycle facilities and off-street multi-use trail facilities in the Plan to determine if they are still relevant or if additional facilities are desired, warranted or feasible to pursue this concept. The Town should also work to connect trails to activity centers and incorporate them into the regional trail system.
9. Funds to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be identified and a scope of work should be developed that includes cost estimates for needed improvements. Grant funds have traditionally been available to partially defray the cost of a plan update. Those funding sources have not been available for several years and prospects are they will remain unavailable. The recommendations and cost estimates in the plan will have a two-fold benefit for the Town. First, the plan will provide descriptions of needed facilities and facility upgrades along with conceptual level costs necessary for inclusion in the capital improvement programming process. Second, the recreation master plan can be used as an opportunity to sample resident attitudes toward expanding the Town's multi-use trail system and community support for bicycle lanes along major roadways. The use of bonding the funds for a plan update should seriously be explored.
10. The Comprehensive Plan is based on information collected in the 1990s. Although changes in population have been tracked using the American Community Survey, that data is limited in scope. The Town should explore alternatives for funding an update of each of the data sets used to form the Plan. From an economic development perspective, the data should be analyzed to determine how, if at all, the economic character of the community has or is changing. This analysis would provide objective information upon which a decision to update Chapter 5 (Economic Development) can be made. An updated to Chapter 8 (Housing and Neighborhoods) to include information from newly completed plans, initiatives and tools should also be made.

Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of findings from this 2014 Review Report including actions or activities taken during the study period and current or emerging economic, social, physical and

development trends that might influence the relevance or implementation of Plan policies. It is organized into sections that correspond to Chapters in the Plan.

Chapter 2 – Demographic Trends

1. The 2010 Census indicated that the Town's total population (122,366) continued to grow. This growth was projected in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* prepared for the Comprehensive Plan. Under one scenario based on extension of past housing inventory trends, the 2010 population would reach 128,561. A second projection based on application of baseline growth rates derived from various projections by outside agents projected growth to 121,347. The Town's estimated population in 2013 (122,814) falls between these projections. This is favorable as a sharp growth or decline may affect demand for resources and services.
2. The Town's population is more diverse. The Town has experienced a significant increase in the number of residents from a variety of backgrounds since 2000. In accordance with an increase of foreign born residents (+44.1%), residents from Africa, Asia and Latin America represent the prominent rise of non-caucasian residents. Townwide, the greatest increases occurred in Sub-Saharan African (+208.4%) and Arab (+114%) ancestries, while the greatest decreases occurred in many of the European ancestries. Only in Northwest Amherst did the majority of foreign born residents emigrate from Europe.
3. The number and composition of households in Amherst is changing. The number of households (+7.9%) and families (+0.5%) both increased. However, the number of married-couple families, and both average household size and average family size all decreased. Non-traditional households are growing as the number of non-family and female headed households with no husband present both increased by over 20%. There are also an increasing number of householders living alone (19.7%) and householders 65 years and over (23.6%), as the Town's aging population is evident in these trends.
4. Housing units continue to increase, with a 19.5% increase in renter-occupied units. The value of housing is also changing. Large increases occurred in houses valued at less than \$50,000 and in houses valued at \$200,000 or greater, with the greatest increase occurring in houses valued at one million or more (+541.2%). This trend is also evident in monthly mortgages and monthly housing rents.
5. The Town has also experienced an increase in demand for rental student housing to accommodate growth of the UB student population. This trend is closely tied to the UB 2020 plan for growth and expansion in the future.
6. The number of residents age 35–44 years decreased by 23%. Losses in this age cohort may be a reflection of changing economic and employment conditions. This trend and the declining number of younger residents (ages 1–14) could impact future natural population change through fewer births.
7. With more diversity and growth in older age cohorts, there is likely to be continued demand for apartments, smaller homes, condominiums, patio homes, and assisted living facilities. There has been significant growth in the number of residents at pre-retirement age: 55-59 years (+26.2%) and 60-64 years (+64.7%). If these people continue to live in

Amherst after retirement, this large cohort of aging residents combined with the growing number of older residents (85+) will impact the range and type of services the Town and other agencies may be asked to provide. The larger senior citizen cohort may indicate a future demand for medical facilities and senior transportation services.

8. While Town services may need to be adjusted to reflect increasing demand by older residents, the Town must also strive to remain an attractive option as a place to live and work for families and young adults. The high quality of schools and businesses located within the Town continue to attract younger families to live here. The Town must ensure it maintains fiscally sound and high quality recreation and youth services, as well as other opportunities that are proven assets and reasons for many to live in Amherst.
9. Both families and households with incomes from \$10,000 to \$74,999 decreased, while the largest increases occurred in the two highest income cohorts—\$150,000 to \$199,999 and \$200,000 or more. For households, those making \$200,000 or more increased by 117.9%, and for families it was an increase of 120.4%. Residents are also receiving more Social Security, Supplemental Security, Cash Public Assistance, and Retirement income; all of these increased more than 20%.
10. Employment in the Town is increasing faster than projected in the Comprehensive Plan *Inventory and Analysis Report*. From 2000-2013, people employed in the labor force grew from 55,433 to 59,995, an 8.2% increase. As the economy improves employment in the Town should remain stable or continue to grow.

Chapter 3 – Land Use and Development

1. In 2014 the Town created a new Recreation Conservation (RC) zoning district to separate and protect the public, private and civic uses related to recreation and conservation. During the report period the Town initiated the rezoning of 51 parcels to the RC district.
2. Two amendments to the Zoning Ordinance were approved in 2014 to address aesthetics and the impacts of development: (1) The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process was added for lots measuring 30 acres or larger. Its purpose is to address the aesthetics of large sites, especially those community facilities parcels that may be prone to redevelopment, such as the former Buffalo Gun Club and Westwood Country Club. The PUD regulations include requirements regarding landscaping, aesthetics, screening, circulation and signage. (2) In response to a Town Board directive to protect residential uses in the Town, an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance was prepared and approved in 2014 that requires increased side or rear setbacks for properties adjacent to residential districts.
3. Of the 19 site plans processed during the review period, all but one pertained to redevelopment or infill sites. This is indicative of the attractiveness of existing properties in terms of location and access. It is a welcome trend that reduces development pressures on greenfield sites while bringing about the revitalization of many of the older sections of the Town.

4. The length of the development approval process may be more difficult to predict in coming years as the most usable land is taken up by development and the remaining parcels are more likely to be encumbered by environmental or dimensional constraints that require lengthier review before approval can be granted. Also, parcels proposed for infill development are more likely to require area variances which necessitate a hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals that can lengthen the review process.
5. The land use pattern recommended on the conceptual Land Use Plan (Figure 6 in the Comprehensive Plan) is intended to be implemented through an associated pattern of zoning districts portrayed on the Town Zoning Map. The Planning Department reviewed the Land Use Plan and Zoning Map to ensure that they accurately reflect recent Town Board decisions as well as desired future development patterns for the Town. The map is awaiting adoption by the Town Board.
6. Mixed-use zoning provisions are continuing to be utilized in the Town. A change to the Zoning Ordinance in 2008 allowing upper-story residential units in the General Business zoning district was applied to two large-scale mixed-use projects in 2012 at Main Street & South Forest Road, and in the Sweet Home/Rensch area.
7. Planning staff has identified specific areas and corridors where current Comprehensive Plan guidance and existing zoning may need to be reviewed. These locations have experienced significant new development or are likely to experience increased development pressure in the near term that may require policy guidance to be reconsidered or enhanced.
 - Sweet Home Road Corridor from the I-290 to the I-990, with specific emphasis on the area near the intersection of Rensch and Sweet Home Roads: There continues to be development interest in the area surrounding the UB North Campus for student housing; the densest cluster of site plan activity was located in the area generally west of the Millersport Highway. This area has seen several rezoning and site plan requests as this entire area has been essentially transformed over the past decade from a residential neighborhood to a mixed-use/high density residential destination of student housing that maximizes its proximity to the university. The larger scale mixed-use project located on the west side of Sweet Home Road south of Rensch Road changes the existing context of this area and provides opportunities for development of a complementary scale and type. Existing plan guidance and zoning does not consider the changing nature of this area.
 - Main Street Corridor from the I-290 to the Village and from the Village to Youngs Road: Approved mixed-use projects on Main Street near the Village of Williamsville are consistent with the general guidance provided by the Plan for this corridor, but those projects were developed despite Zoning provisions that worked against the desired form, scale, and mixed-use nature of Main Street. The “Mosey” project at the southeast corner of Main Street and North Forest Road indicated that significant demand for higher-density, mixed-use development exists in this corridor. This was affirmed by the completed “Main Street Corridor Market Study” that found significant near-term demand

for higher density residential uses in this area. A more detailed review of the Plan recommendations of this corridor may be needed to properly integrate higher density development into this area.

- Sheridan Drive from Hopkins Road to Patrice Terrace and from the I-290 to Mill Street: This predominantly lower-density residential corridor features mostly single-family homes with some interspersed commercial uses, large country clubs, and attached housing. There will likely be increasing pressure to combine residential parcels or utilized the recently closed Westwood property for commercial or higher-density residential uses. A detailed review of development policy for the corridor may be warranted to insure that any new development is done in a coordinated manner and does not fundamentally alter its character.
- New Community District (NCD): There are a number of issues facing the NCD that may need to be addressed in both the near and mid-term future. As development of the new community has evolved, it has become increasingly apparent that the design guidelines of the NCD have become inconsistent with contemporary market demands. The NCD also has not evolved to adequately deal with changes in technology and contemporary legal issues. A phased approach that first deals with the most pressing issues in the NCD, followed in the future by more comprehensive plan and code revisions may be appropriate. The latter review needs to consider the basic design objectives of the NCD and also bring the 1960 Zoned parcels into the current code.

Chapter 4 – Natural and Cultural Resources

1. Significant progress has been made in enhancing the Town's interconnected open space network with the acquisition of key parcels of land that feature significant natural resources and are identified in the Conceptual Land Use Plan as "Recreation, Open Space and Greenway." The adoption of Planned Unit Development zoning provisions mandated for parcels of 30 acres or more will provide additional options for acquiring open space and linear recreation space while accomplishing economically viable mixed-use projects.
2. New State storm water pollution prevention regulations being implemented by the Town continue to promote the use of best management practices for handling storm water runoff to improve surface water quality.
3. It is anticipated that the Town's regulated wetland inventory may grow in the future. Policy 4-5 which states "no net loss of designated jurisdictional wetlands" has been clarified and expanded, as the future expansion of wetland areas may create an impression of a significant "net gain" of regulated wetland area. The policy now includes information on wetland benefits, quantitative and qualitative aspects, regulations, and mitigation. Wetland adjustments may require review of the Conceptual Land Use Plan. In addition, it may be appropriate for the Town to review its ditch maintenance methods to ensure that current practices do not contribute to the growth of wetlands that may be subject to federal and state regulation.

4. Threats to the Town's urban forest (Emerald Ash Borer) are emerging and Amherst has been pro-active in planning to manage the physical and fiscal impacts. Many communities locally and nationally are taking similar steps to protect their street and park tree resources. The Asian Long-horned Beetle represents a future threat to all tree species in Amherst.

Chapter 5 – Economic Development

1. A concern has been raised by the AIDA that some of the basic assumptions and initiatives originally identified in Chapter 5 of the plan are no longer true or applicable. This includes:
 - Diminished importance of office development as the primary driver of economic development in the Town. This concern is due to technology changes that permit more telecommuting and shared work space. There is a resulting national trend toward shrinking square-feet-per worker demand and corresponding weakening of the office market.
 - It is an appropriate time to re-evaluate the basic demographic data and assumptions that produced the recommendations in Chapter 5 and elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan, data that is now over 15 years old.
 - Based on this re-evaluation, a discussion of revising the basic assumption of office use driving economic development may be needed. This could include how to repurpose and rehab buildings in established office and industrial parks to meet future needs and market demand.
2. The Town applied for and received a \$161,250 grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which will be added to \$117,000 of local match. The Town will use these funds to develop new commercial and mixed-use zoning provisions that should enhance flexibility to meet current market demands. The project will include development of form-based provisions in appropriate locations. Clearer, more contemporary code provisions will lead to higher quality context-sensitive development, improved acceptance of different forms of development in the community, and more predictable outcomes.
3. There has been an overall reduction in the amount of land zoned Research and Development (RD), a district that is typically used for light industrial, distributive and office uses. The demand for pure research and development land has changed, and the lands are increasingly being used for office and business park development. The Town and AIDA should work together to review the inventory of land for office and RD use and consider courses of action to address the need for additional lands to accommodate future demand. Such development breeds opportunities for collaboration on economic development initiatives.
4. A new State initiative called Start Up New York abates most property and income taxes for qualified new employers for a certain time period of time. The program is limited to certain locations on or adjacent to SUNY campuses. There has been limited interest and use of this program in the Town. The Planning Department should research this program and talk with local colleges to see how this program could be better utilized to bring additional economic development and business to the Town.

5. The University at Buffalo and other colleges in the Town can have significant influences on demographic and physical growth in the Town. These institutions can play a significant role in the efforts to revitalize and improve conditions in surrounding areas. While future plans for UB are well publicized, the Town Planning Department should meet with representatives of Daemen College and Erie Community College to discuss their plans for growth and development. Such meetings should be routinely scheduled in order to maintain open communication that will benefit Amherst and the higher-education community.

Chapter 6 – Transportation

1. In October 2012 new Federal transportation legislation called Moving Ahead for Progress into the 21st Century (MAP-21) went into effect. MAP-21 is a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program that replaced federal transportation acts that supported reconstruction of many arterials in the Town. The Act is narrowing the focus of funding to maintaining only significant roadways, leaving others to seek alternative funding. In accordance with the Act, the NYSDOT adopted a “preservation first” and “asset management” approach to project selection. As a result, funding for costly congestion relief projects (widening) is limited. This is a trend that is expected to continue.
2. The Town’s policy of holding individual property owners responsible for installation and maintenance of sidewalks has made it increasingly difficult to install new sidewalks. Many owners do not want to accept responsibility for sidewalk maintenance and snow clearing in the winter. Alternatives to this policy and related policies in the Plan need to be formulated.
3. Automotive travel remains the most common form of transportation in Amherst. However data suggest that alternative modes of travel are becoming more common. Nationally the average young person (16-34 year old) is driving less and increasingly using alternative modes of transportation such as transit (+100%), biking (+122%) and walking (+37%).¹ From 2000 – 2013 the overall number of people using different modes of travel in Amherst also increased as follows: transit (+81.5%), cycling and other means (+176%), and walking (+47.8%).
4. Advances in technologies and materials are changing the nature of vehicles and the infrastructure that guide their navigation and highway operations. Connections with other vehicles and with infrastructure reduces congestion and vehicle fatalities. The future of vehicular travel and the transportation infrastructure (e.g. highways) will be changing; however, it is not clear how these changes may alter the highway system in Amherst.
5. Some of the Town’s mixed-use activity centers may be good bases for car share and bike share services. The Town and Village of Williamsville should consider where and how these emerging modes of transportation delivery can be accommodated.

¹ <http://uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Millennials%20in%20Motion%20USPIRG.pdf>, accessed January 2015

6. Increasing use of alternative modes of travel is consistent with the concept of “complete streets” where numerous modes of transportation are designed into a transportation corridor. New York State has adopted a complete streets policy, and the Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (GBNRTC) advocates consideration of the complete street concept. The Town has not adopted a complete streets policy. Based on the 2012 Plan Review, the Planning Department prepared a report on Complete Streets. Formulation of a complete streets policy for the Town and implementation of such principles requires broad support and participation by Town and regional transportation agencies. The Planning Department must initiate discussions with each of the transportation providers in the Town in order to formulate a Complete Streets policy and implementation strategy that is embraced by each jurisdiction and provider.
7. The UB Stampede bus service was initiated as a point to point service between the North and Main Street Campuses. Although no detailed service evaluation has been undertaken, it is apparent that the service has morphed into one offering stops at locations along Millersport Highway in Eggertsville thereby making housing in that area more accessible for students. Intuitively, this change has lead to conversion of single family homes to student housing. The Town should monitor conditions in the area to ensure that neighborhood conditions and stability are maintained. In addition, and should it be determined that Stampede Bus stops have lead to the conversion of single family homes to student housing, the University should be educated as to their role in the changing character of the Eggertsville neighborhood.
8. Building a stronger physical connection between the Village and the University could be accomplished through a bicycle and pedestrian link with consideration of new approaches to personal transportation such as car and bicycle sharing. The Village Walking Trails Committee has asked the Town to propose a link to UB and the Ellicott Creek Trail network in the form of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Department should review proposed on-street bicycle facilities and off-street multi-use trail facilities in the Plan to determine if they are still relevant or if additional facilities are desired, warranted or feasible to pursue this concept.
9. As new housing opportunities surrounding the college campuses grow, improved pedestrian accessibility to the surrounding community is needed. With the construction of new apartments occupied by UB students along Sweet Home Road and at Flint and Frankhauser Roads, sidewalks are needed to enable safer access to the UB campus. Improvements to pedestrian accessibility and amenities for all areas surrounding college campuses in the Town need to be considered.
10. A recently completed NYSDOT improvement to Transit Road makes it feasible to consider the extension of Glen Oaks Drive to Transit Road; the extension is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan as illustrated in Figure 9. The Engineering Department recommended construction of the road connection as a component of the storm drainage improvement project. In recent conversations with the NYSDEC, it was concluded that road extensions previously recommended to be removed from the Comprehensive Plan because of their alignment through extensive wetlands should remain in the Plan. Wetland regulations may not be the only deciding factor, as there may be a greater public good for such roads.

Chapter 7 – Infrastructure

1. The Town completed the North French Road Sanitary Sewer Upgrades in September 2014. This completed the planned capacity upgrades to Millersport Highway. Any planned future improvements by the Town must be weighed against a Peanut Line upgrade from Paradise Road to Transit Road by private sources or other agencies.
2. The Town continues to make stormwater management among its highest priorities for infrastructure development. The development and confirmation of modeling capability for Ditch 26B and Ellicott Creek allowed the Town to develop several drainage projects that were implemented within the watershed.
3. At the recommendation of the Engineering Department, the Planning Board recommended that Policy 7-5 regarding a septic system maintenance districts be amended or deleted. The Planning Department has formulated an amendment that will be considered by the Town Board in 2015.

Chapter 8 – Housing and Neighborhoods

1. The need for a variety of affordable housing options is evident in the diverse demographics of the Town, including a growing older population. The increase in market rate and senior housing projects over the past few years is notable, and reflects the trends of an aging population and reduction in household size. The Erie County Industrial Development Agency recently drafted criteria for use in determining which proposals for senior residential complexes would receive tax incentives. Those criteria have been modified by the Amherst Industrial Development Agency to strengthen the criteria related to location, consistency with comprehensive plan policies and affordability. The use of those criteria now provide a vehicle for providing incentives for senior residence. Maintaining accessible and affordable single family and rental housing units should be a priority. The aging population, diverse household composition, and the needs of those who are physically challenged cannot be met with the current inventory. To meet the demand the Town could encourage use of “Universal Design” components that allow for inclusion of adaptability or accessibility features into plans for new units.
2. In an effort to promote sustainable home ownership and aging in place, there is increasing focus on housing rehabilitation for existing homeowners, and neighborhood revitalization. Tools for the redevelopment of both residential and non-residential properties should continue to be explored. The Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (Land Bank) may present the Town with an opportunity to acquire both residential and non-residential properties. Additionally, tools within the HUD programs (especially Community Development Block Grant) may allow for addressing non-residential issues through activities such as façade improvement and neighborhood revitalization. Both residential and non-residential programs can have an impact on neighborhood stability and viability.
3. The Town is in the final stages of preparing its Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) as a requirement for the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The AI process was recently expanded and renamed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). The goal of AFFH will be to address fair housing issues including

patterns of segregation, disparity in access to opportunity, and disproportionate housing needs. The Town will increasingly be required to report to HUD how it is not only combating discrimination, but also being proactive in planning inclusive communities. A corresponding objective of the Town's Comprehensive Plan is: to "ensure the availability of housing that is affordable to all socioeconomic groups in Amherst." As the Plan is updated this objective should be expanded and emphasized to reflect HUD's increased examination of these issues.

4. New student housing developments have increased around UB's North campus; however they tend to offer little involvement with the surrounding community and non-student residents. As well, single family homes seem to be converting to rental units for students. The Town should research ways to measure needs, use and zoning practices for housing around the University, and should determine the extent of conversions to student rentals, the actual impact on the surrounding neighborhoods and the influence of University and public transit options on housing around the campus. Inclusionary zoning is also becoming more important; as the community reviews its zoning code and uses, new tools can assure that needs for different demographics are being met. This includes appropriate rentals for all types of households.

Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services

1. During the period 2010 to 2015 the Town's capital expenditures continue to be dominated by investments in the Wastewater Treatment Plant and sewer infrastructure. Of the \$15.5 million in programmed capital investments for 2015, approximately 57% have been allocated to treatment plant and sewer line projects. Under a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Consent Order, Amherst completed a Comprehensive Evaluation Study to identify needed plant upgrades. As a result, it is reasonable to anticipate that capital spending will continue to be dominated by plant and sewer infrastructure projects. Initial indications are that capital investments for the plant alone will continue at a level approximating \$8.0 million for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. This pattern of capital spending raises concerns regarding the availability of capital funds to support and upgrade "quality of life" facilities such as park, recreation and open space facilities.
2. Although not explicitly addressed in this report, the Town should also be concerned about pressures to reduce overall capital expenditures created by recent New York State Legislation limiting the growth of municipal tax levies. The combination of "capped" tax levies and rising operating costs work to reduce available funds for capital projects and capital bond amortization. This situation exacerbates problems associated with balancing dwindling funds with "quality of life" expenditures that contribute to a community's desirability.
3. Demographic data and information received from the Senior Services Department indicate that increasing numbers of senior residents have already impacted physical facilities and service delivery needs. Demographic trends will continue to place greater demand on existing facilities without adequate policy guidance. The prioritization of efforts to provide policy guidance to deal with issues related to services provided to seniors is critical. In addition, Amherst should creatively address land use regulations that

encourage affordable housing for middle income seniors as well as policies related to financial mechanisms that support the provision of housing for this resident group.

Comprehensive Plan Observations and Comments

During the review period from 2013 to 2014, the Planning Board completed its review of the 2012 Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan report (November 2013) and approved a resolution with several recommendations to address issues from the Review. In November 2014 the Planning Board recommended adoption of a number of amendments to the text and maps that updated information and reflected decisions by the Planning and Town Board over the period 2011 to 2012. The amendments include adjustments to maps and text to reflect recent changes by the Village of Williamsville and regional transportation and environmental agencies, significant changes to policies 4-5 and 7-5, and an adjustment to the Plan review process in Chapter 11. These proposed amendments were adopted by the Town Board in September 2015.

Other observations and comments from Town officials and the other stakeholders are summarized below.

1. The Comprehensive Plan should go further to increase public awareness of the Town's changing role in the regional economy. This is supported by the continued rise in employment from 2000-2010. This growth may indicate a need to examine the designation of industrial-office land uses on the Conceptual Land Use Plan, especially since the loss of industrially-designated land to student housing west of the UB campus along Sweet Home Road. Also, the importance of office development as the primary driver of economic development in the Town has been diminishing. This is due to technology changes that permit more telecommuting and shared work space. There is a resulting national trend toward shrinking square-feet-per worker demand and corresponding weakening of the office market.
2. Sustainability and community resilience are important contemporary planning concepts that are not directly addressed in the Plan. The 2012 Plan Review recommended research into ways of incorporating principles of sustainability into the Town's Plan. Two local efforts to incorporate sustainability into community planning were completed during this review period. The New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) completed the Western New York Regional Sustainability Plan in 2013. The Vision for this Plan's states:

"The WNY region seeks to create a future where social and environmental issues are addressed within a framework of a sustainable regional economy. The pursuit of sustainability includes the creation and maintenance of conditions under which our communities utilize the resources we have in the most effective ways to permit social and economic growth while preserving natural resources."

The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council together with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute completed a regional plan for sustainability entitled "A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara." The Plan is:

“designed to be a decision-making tool. It offers measurable factors and insights on the future impacts of various approaches to regional development and provides guidance on how our region can work together to create a sustainable and livable Buffalo Niagara for the 21st Century.”

Completion of these Plans provides valuable guidance toward the pursuit of sustainable communities, and can be used by the Town to assess its Plan and formulate Plan amendments that support sustainability.

As an example, in 2014 the Planning Department proposed a project to review and revise the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to introduce context sensitive design and form-based zoning techniques to achieve improved building design and neighborhood development. The project is partially funded through a grant from the NYSERDA, and will reflect the New York State Smart Growth Principles (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/45970.html>) which are intended to help develop more sustainable communities.

Other initiatives to incorporate principles of sustainability are likely to emerge from the zoning project and regional planning efforts.

3. The Comprehensive Plan should promote energy efficiency and conservation in housing design and site development. This could be done by including policy(s) encouraging the use of green roofs and solar access in new buildings and incentives for LEED construction. The discussion could also encourage greater connectivity among developments to foster walking and contribute to public health and well-being.

The Comprehensive Plan is now almost fifteen years old and is fast approaching its bicentennial horizon in 2018. As the Plan ages, information and fundamental guiding principles such as Key Initiatives or the Vision Statement may become dated. As noted in this report, emerging trends, technologies, policies, regulations, improvements, and ideas have arisen that may impact the assumptions and principles incorporated into the Plan’s vision, initiatives and policies. Conducting a Plan Vision Statement Review (see Chapter 11) in the near future may be needed so the Plan reflects the many changes occurring on national, regional, and local levels. A Vision Statement Review would likely include extensive revisions to Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 on land use, natural and cultural resources, economic development, transportation, and housing.

September 2015

CHAPTER 2 – Demographic Information and Trends

Demographic conditions, projections, and trends influence many planning policies and recommendations, such as those regarding land use, housing, neighborhoods, and community facilities and services. The 2014 demographic review presented in this Chapter focuses on data from the newest American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates (2009-2013) and compares it to the 2000 Decennial Census data. Five year estimates are most reliable for small areas such as census tracts which make up the Planning Analysis Areas (PAA) that were used as the geographic area of analysis reported in the Comprehensive Plan and Inventory and Analysis Report.

The ACS estimates are derived from samples, and the estimates are reported with corresponding margins of error (MOE). The Margin of Error measures the variation in the random samples due to chance. Because all units or people are not sampled in the ACS as is done for the Decennial Census, one must expect that the sample results will be “off” by a certain amount just by chance. The MOE acknowledges that the results could change with additional sampling and that the estimates are only accurate to within the range expressed as the MOE. The reported MOE for each characteristic is not cited directly in this Chapter, but is reported in Appendix A. Data presented for PAAs include a MOE derived by combining the MOE for each geographic area through an algorithm recommended by the University of Oklahoma.

Consistency in the collection of data by the Census Bureau allows for comparisons over time and space. However, dramatic changes in demographic characteristics rarely occur on an annual or biannual basis. For this reason, demographic changes comparing the 2010 Census with the 2009-2013 ACS are not reported in this review. While the ACS provides an annual release of data, in some cases the data cannot be directly compared to 2000 Decennial Census data because the questions asked or timeframe for collection do not match. As more estimates are made by the Census Bureau, comparisons can begin to be made between five year ACS estimates. The following is a summary and comparison of demographic data from the 2000 Census and the 2009-2013 ACS.

National and Regional Demographic Trends

The 2012 Review Report discussed data from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Cornell Program on Applied Demographics, and the Urban Land Institute.² These reports provided some insight into trends occurring nationally and regionally and their likely influences on this region and the Town. The trends included general population increase, aging populations and aging in place, and an increased demand for housing and government services. Many of these trends are also occurring in the Town. One new observation regarding household and family income is that populations with the lowest incomes are decreasing while those with the highest incomes are greatly increasing, as reported in Table 26. This could be due to increased wages, increased job creation, lower inflation, and a more thriving economy compared to the previous seven years.³

² See page 39 for citations.

³ See page 39 for citation (Naroff).

Amherst Population Characteristics

The following summary compares the 2009-2013 five-year estimates from the ACS with 2000 Census data for select demographic characteristics. This comparison updates the data and tables reported in both the 2011 and 2012 Review Reports, and provides new insights as well. Selected demographic data and tables created for the 2012 Review Report are included in Appendix B.

According to the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, the Town's population experienced a 5% growth from 116,510 to 122,366 persons. The most recent population estimate (2009-2013) for the Town shows a slight increase to 122,814 persons. These data indicate that the Town's population has grown since 2000 and the overall population trend is consistent with projections made in the Comprehensive Plan. While overall population increased, the growth was not evenly distributed across the Town. The Comprehensive Plan disaggregated demographic factors into six planning analysis areas (PAAs); the distribution of these areas is shown in Figure 1. Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate total population changes for the Town in comparison with other local municipalities, and for the Town PAAs.

Table 1
Population Comparison with Local Municipalities

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	2013 Estimate	% Change 2000-2013
Erie County	950,265	919,040	919,230	-3.3%
Amherst	116,510	122,366	122,814	5.4%
Aurora	13,996	13,782	13,782	-1.5%
Buffalo (City)	292,648	261,310	260,568	-11.0%
Cheektowaga	94,019	88,226	87,998	-6.4%
Clarence	26,123	30,673	30,721	17.6%
Colden	3,323	3,265	3,267	-1.7%
Elma	11,304	11,317	11,413	1.0%
Grand Island	18,621	20,374	20,469	9.9%
Hamburg	56,259	56,936	57,155	1.6%
Lancaster	39,019	41,604	41,927	7.5%
Orchard Park	27,637	29,054	29,205	5.7%
Tonawanda (Town)	78,155	73,567	73,548	-5.9%
West Seneca	45,920	44,711	44,773	-2.5%

Table 2
Total Population by Planning Analysis Area (PAA)

Population	PAA1 Northwest	PAA2 Northeast	PAA3 West Central	PAA4 East Central	PAA5 Southwest	PAA6 Southeast
2013	14,093	13,746	20,867	23,407	34,216	21,965
2010	8,276	14,045	20,341	23,644	34,154	21,906
2000	8,080	11,853	17,892	22,736	34,085	21,864
% Change 2000-2013	74.4%	16.0%	16.6%	3.0%	0.4%	0.5%

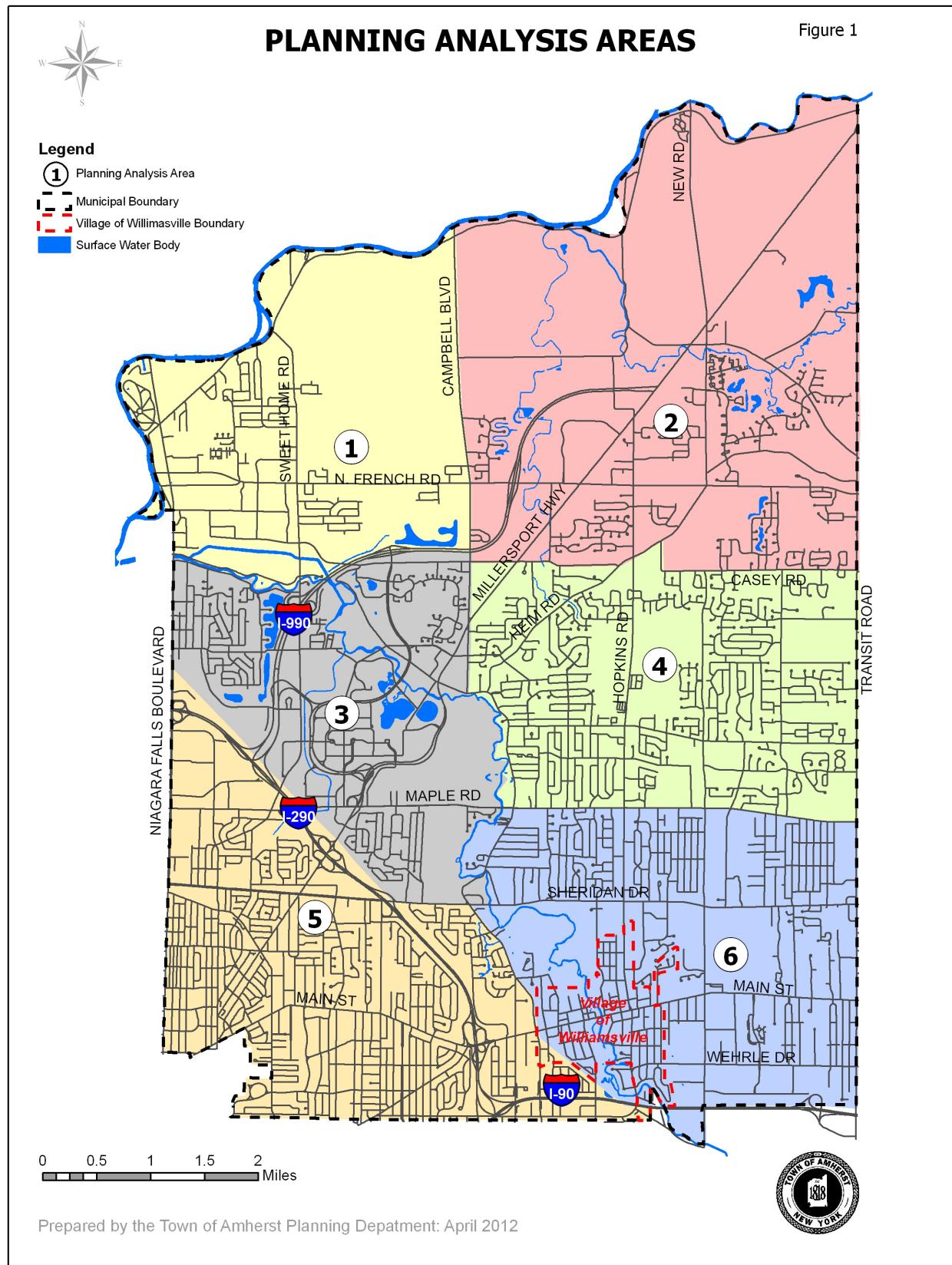


Figure 1: The location and division of the Town into six Planning Analysis Areas.

As shown in Table 2 above, population in all PAAs increased from 2000-2013, with the largest percentage increase (74.4%) occurring in Northwest Amherst (PAA 1) from 8,080 to 14,093. The second largest population increase occurred in West Central (PAA 3) which went from 17,892 to 20,867 persons, a 16.6% increase. This trend is consistent with the Inventory and Analysis Report, where it was noted that a substantial amount of the Town's population growth was expected to be composed of students from the University at Buffalo. This increase in population has been accompanied by an increase in demand for services and off-campus student housing. Population in both Southwest and Southeast Amherst (PAAs 5 and 6) have remained fairly steady from 2000-2013. Amherst's changing demographics go beyond growth in the overall population, and the following discussion and tables provide insight into those other social, housing, and economic changes.

The Town of Amherst is more racially and ethnically diverse. As displayed in Table 3, since 2000, all but the White population (-1.5%) and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population (-100%) have increased. The most significant increase from 2000-2013 occurred in the Hispanic or Latino population from 1,579 to 4,096, a 159.4% increase. The African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Asian populations all experienced over a 50% increase as well. Those associated with some other race and two or more races also increased, demonstrating how much more racially diverse the Town is becoming.

Table 3
Change in Racial Composition from 2000-2013

Race	2000 Population	% in 2000	2013 Estimate	% in 2013	% Change 2000-2013
One race	115,243	98.9%	120,094	97.8%	4.2%
White	104,018	89.3%	102,444	83.4%	-1.5%
Black or African American	4,544	3.9%	6,815	5.5%	50.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	146	0.1%	293	0.2%	100.7%
Asian	6,079	5.2%	9,174	7.5%	50.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	29	0.0%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
Hispanic or Latino	1,579	1.4%	4,096	3.3%	159.4%
Some other race	427	0.4%	1,368	1.1%	220.4%
Two or more races	1,267	1.1%	2,720	2.2%	114.7%

The region of birth for foreign born residents provides insight into the places of origin of people who have immigrated to the United States and were living in Amherst at the time of the Decennial Census or ACS survey.⁴ As shown in Table 4 below, the number of foreign born residents increased (44.1%) from 2000-2013. The largest number of foreign born residents currently in Amherst immigrated from Asia (55.5%), and their overall numbers nearly doubled from 4,220 in 2000 to 8,408 in 2013. African born residents currently make up 4.1% of the total foreign born population in the Town, but their numbers increased by 108.1%. The most drastic decrease is the population born in the Oceania region (-88.9%).

As the number of foreign born residents grows in the Town, the number of those whose primary language spoken at home is not English also increases. Table 5 illustrates this trend. While the Town population of 5 years and over increased, the percentage of those speaking

⁴ Table B-17 lists the countries located within the respective regions shown in Tables 4, 24 and 25.

English decreased from 89.1% to 85%. Of those who speak a different language at home, those speaking Asian (+76.9%) and Spanish (+50.9%) increased the most from 2000-2013.⁵

Table 4
Region of Birth of Foreign Born Residents

Region of Birth	2000 Census	% of Persons	2013 Estimate	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
Foreign-born population (excluding born at sea)	10,511	(X)	15,147	(X)	44.1%
Europe	3,822	36.4%	3,632	24.0%	-5.0%
Asia	4,220	40.1%	8,408	55.5%	99.2%
Africa	296	2.8%	616	4.1%	108.1%
Oceania	36	0.3%	4	0.0%	-88.9%
Latin America	670	6.4%	1,150	7.6%	71.6%
Northern America	1,467	14.0%	1,337	8.8%	-8.9%

Table 5
Language Spoken at Home

Language Spoken at Home	2000 Census	% of Persons	2013 Estimate	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
Population 5 years and over	110,279	(X)	116,678	(X)	5.8%
English only	98,223	89.1%	99,233	85.0%	1.0%
Language other than English	12,056	10.9%	17,445	15.0%	44.7%
Spanish	1,717	1.6%	2,591	2.2%	50.9%
Other Indo-European languages	6,657	6.0%	7,962	6.8%	19.6%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	3,015	2.7%	5,333	4.6%	76.9%

Data on reported ancestry on a Town-wide basis can be seen in Table 24 and Table A-24 in Appendix A. Those of Sub-Saharan African ancestry increased the greatest, from 275 persons in 2000 to 848 in 2013, a 208.4% increase. Other ancestries that greatly increased within the Town were Arab (114.8%), French Canadian (64%), and Portuguese (100%). Those with American ancestry only increased 17.3%, from 2,585 to 3,032 persons. Those with Scotch-Irish ancestry decreased the most (-65.5%), along with Czech, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Slovak, and Swiss ancestries also decreasing. Ancestry data on a PAA level can be seen in Appendix A, Table A-25 and are discussed in the Planning Analysis Areas section below.

As stated in the 2012 Plan Review Report and seen in Table 6, the population is aging, both regionally and in the Town. This trend is attributed to a large, aging Baby Boom generation, longer life expectancies from healthier environments and new technologies, and a desire to “age in place” which suggests that many older Americans and Town residents want to stay in their current homes, even with some assistance. The Town’s pre-retirement population of 55 to 59 years grew 26.2%, the population 60 to 64 years grew 64.7%, and the population 85 years and over grew 37.8%. Older people may also be moving to Amherst as the amount of senior housing grows. This trend is similar in both Erie County and the City of Buffalo, although Buffalo lost population 85 years and over.

⁵ See page 39 at the end of this chapter for definitions of languages spoken at home.

Table 6
Age Comparisons with Buffalo and Erie County

Age	Amherst			Buffalo			Erie County		
	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change	2000	2013	% Change
5 to 9 years	7,264	6,347	-12.6%	22,773	15,881	-30.3%	65,940	51,902	-21.3%
20 to 24 years	7,924	11,123	40.4%	24,031	25,006	4.1%	57,441	69,134	20.4%
35 to 44 years	17,006	13,090	-23.0%	43,741	30,610	-30.0%	150,498	109,308	-27.4%
60 to 64 years	4,746	7,817	64.7%	10,371	12,948	24.8%	38,651	53,988	39.7%
85 years and over	3,303	4,550	37.8%	5,008	4,102	-18.1%	18,525	22,920	23.7%
Median age (years)	39.6	40.3	1.8%	33.6	33.5	-0.3%	38.0	40.4	6.3%

As seen in Table 7, the Town is also experiencing growth in college-aged and young adult cohorts: 15-19 years (12.3%), 20-24 years (40.4%), and 25-34 years (10.6%). These changes can be attributed to UB's growth and influence in the region, and an abundance of newly constructed student housing. Alternatively, residents aged 35-44 saw the largest decline of -23%, suggesting a change in economic and employment conditions. Corresponding to this decline, younger age cohorts (ages 0-14) are also declining, which can impact future population through decreased births. Examination of these changes within individual age cohorts suggests trends that will affect future service type and delivery, and the type of housing demanded in the Town.

Table 7
Change in Age Composition from 2000-2013

Age	2000 Population	% in 2000	2013 Estimate	% in 2013	% Change 2000-2013
Under 5 years	6,270	5.4%	6,136	5.0%	-2.1%
5 to 9 years	7,264	6.2%	6,347	5.2%	-12.6%
10 to 14 years	7,807	6.7%	6,868	5.6%	-12.0%
15 to 19 years	9,188	7.9%	10,318	8.4%	12.3%
20 to 24 years	7,924	6.8%	11,123	9.1%	40.4%
25 to 34 years	12,488	10.7%	13,806	11.2%	10.6%
35 to 44 years	17,006	14.6%	13,090	10.7%	-23.0%
45 to 54 years	17,104	14.7%	17,100	13.9%	0.0%
55 to 59 years	6,124	5.3%	7,726	6.3%	26.2%
60 to 64 years	4,746	4.1%	7,817	6.4%	64.7%
65 to 74 years	9,619	8.3%	10,445	8.5%	8.6%
75 to 84 years	7,667	6.6%	7,488	6.1%	-2.3%
85 years and over	3,303	2.8%	4,550	3.7%	37.8%
Median age (years)	39.6	(X)	40.3	(X)	1.8%

Marital Status as reported by the Census Bureau falls into four major categories: never married, married except separated, widowed, and divorced.⁶ According to a Pew Research Institute report dated December 2011, the institution of marriage and marital status for many persons in America has changed in the past half century. Just over half of American adults are married (51%), which is a record low according to the report. Additionally, the overall number of married couples has declined by more than 20 percent since 1960. The report also shows that Americans are not only getting married less frequently, they're doing so later in life.

⁶ See page 39 at the end of this chapter for definitions of marital status categories.

As shown in Table 8, the marital status of Amherst residents has changed. The number of persons who have never been married increased by 53.5%, while the number of married residents declined by -13% from 2000-2013. The number of separated persons in the Town decreased only slightly, while the number of divorced persons significantly increased by 46.6%. The number of widowed persons increased by 9.3%, with 6,334 out of 8,005 of those being female. Marital status on a PAA level can be seen in Table 25. The institution of marriage in New York State changed in 2011 with the legalization of same-sex marriage. The Census Bureau also counts these marriages in its reported estimates of marital status.

Table 8
Marital Status

Marital Status	2000 Census	% of Persons	2013 Estimate	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
Population 15 years and over	95,336	(X)	103,463	(X)	8.5%
Never married	22,531	23.6%	34,574	33.4%	53.5%
Married, except separated	57,865	60.7%	50,325	48.6%	-13.0%
Separated	1,291	1.4%	1,287	1.2%	-0.3%
Widowed	7,326	7.7%	8,005	7.7%	9.3%
Females widowed	6,013	6.3%	6,334	11.6%	5.3%
Divorced	6,323	6.6%	9,272	9.0%	46.6%
Females divorced	3,983	4.2%	6,027	11.0%	51.3%

Educational attainment is strongly related to financial success and is an important consideration in any economic development location decisions. Amherst strives to be a knowledge-based community and this goal is supported by the increasing level of educational attainment among its residents. As shown in Table 9 below, estimates indicate that there are increasing numbers of residents who have attended college and are earning various degrees. The number of residents who earned a graduate or professional degree increased by over 25% from 2000-2013. The number of residents with lower educational attainment such as less than a 9th grade education or those who attended high school but did not earn a diploma decreased significantly (-40.4% and -34.4% respectively).

Table 9
Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	2000 Census	% of Persons	2013 Estimate	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
Population 25 years and over	78,389	(X)	82,022	(X)	4.6%
Less than 9th grade	2,218	2.8%	1,321	1.6%	-40.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4,109	5.2%	2,696	3.3%	-34.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	14,640	18.7%	14,594	17.8%	-0.3%
Some college, no degree	13,594	17.3%	12,394	15.1%	-8.8%
Associate degree	6,681	8.5%	7,882	9.6%	18.0%
Bachelor's degree	19,422	24.8%	20,871	25.4%	7.5%
Graduate or professional degree	17,725	22.6%	22,264	27.1%	25.6%
Percent high school graduate or higher	(X)	91.9%	(X)	95.1%	3.5%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	(X)	47.4%	(X)	52.6%	11.0%

Amherst Housing Characteristics

According to the 2000 Census, Amherst remained a community of predominately owner occupied (64.4%) homes. However, multi-family and rental units continue to represent a growing share of the Town's total housing stock, increasing slightly from 25.1% of all housing units in 2000 to 25.9% in 2010. Group quarters housing (including dormitories) represents a growing segment of housing in the Town as well. As displayed in Table 10, the total number of households in Amherst grew (7.9%) and became more diversified from 2000-2013. Families with a female householder with no husband present increased by 21.2%, but married couple families decreased by -4.5%. This reflects the trend that there are less marriages and/or more divorces and separations occurring. Other types of households are growing as well: non-family households with a householder living alone or 65 years and over both increased (19.7% and 23.6% respectively). The Town's average household size and family size continue to decline.

The number of housing units in the Town increased 9.9% from 46,803 to 51,416. Much of this growth was in renter-occupied units (19.5%) with only a slight increase in owner-occupied units (3.8%). The number of vacant housing units increased drastically (60.9%) from 1,727 to 2,779 from 2000-2013. The homeowner vacancy rate decreased by -10% but the rental vacancy rate increased by 4.2%, which supports the trend that there is more vacancy with rented units. Although the overall number of occupied housing units increased in all Town PAAs, owner-occupied housing units decreased in PAA3 and PAA 5. These two PAAs have a much larger proportion of renter-occupied housing units (3,313 and 4,196 units respectively) than the other PAAs, as much of the student population attending UB and living off-campus are located there. Also, many new student housing units were constructed in PAA3 in recent years.

Table 10
Change in Housing Characteristics from 2000-2013

Housing Characteristics	2000 Census	% in 2000	2013 Estimate	% in 2013	% Change 2000-2013
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE					
Total households	45,076	100.0%	48,637	100.0%	7.9%
Family households (families)	29,899	66.3%	30,040	61.8%	0.5%
Married-couple family	25,055	55.6%	23,915	49.2%	-4.5%
Female householder, no husband present	3,760	8.3%	4,556	9.4%	21.2%
Nonfamily households	15,177	33.7%	18,597	38.2%	22.5%
Householder living alone	12,748	28.3%	15,258	31.4%	19.7%
Householder 65 years and over	6,024	13.4%	7,447	15.3%	23.6%
Average household size	2.42	(X)	2.35	(X)	-2.9%
Average family size	3.01	(X)	2.98	(X)	-1.0%
HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENURE					
Total housing units	46,803	100.0%	51,416	100.0%	9.9%
Occupied housing units	45,076	96.3%	48,637	94.6%	7.9%
Owner-occupied	33,349	74.0%	34,622	71.2%	3.8%
Renter-occupied	11,727	26.0%	14,015	28.8%	19.5%
Vacant housing units	1,727	3.7%	2,779	5.4%	60.9%
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	(X)	1.0%	(X)	0.9%	-10.0%
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	(X)	4.8%	(X)	5.0%	4.2%

As shown in Table 11 below, the value of housing in Amherst increased significantly from 2000-2013. The median value of a housing unit increased by over \$50,000 and the number of higher priced homes—\$500,000 to \$999,999 and \$1 million or more—increased by over 650 units (553.5% and 541.2% increases respectively). The number of houses valued between \$150,000 and \$300,000 in the Town also increased by over 10,500 units. On the other hand, the number of housing units in the lowest value category (less than \$50,000) also increased by 177.5% from 298 to 827 units. Table 11 also indicates that the amount of housing valued in the range that is considered affordable to persons or families with a moderate annual income of \$50,000, i.e. housing valued from \$50,000 – \$150,000 declined by over 9,000 units or -44.5%.

Table 11
Value of Housing

Value of Housing (\$)	2000 Census	% of Units	2013 Estimate	% of Units	% Change 2000-2013
Less than \$50,000	298	1.0%	827	2.4%	177.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	9,257	31.3%	3,789	10.9%	-59.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	12,093	40.8%	8,485	24.5%	-29.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4,961	16.8%	9,019	26.0%	81.8%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	2,236	7.6%	8,711	25.2%	289.6%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	651	2.2%	3,022	8.7%	364.2%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	101	0.3%	660	1.9%	553.5%
\$1,000,000 or more	17	0.1%	109	0.3%	541.2%
Median value (dollars)	120,000	(X)	170,700	(X)	42.3%

As the value of housing increases so does the value of mortgages. The monthly mortgage status for housing in Amherst is shown in Table 12 below. The median value of a monthly mortgage payment in the Town rose by almost 24% from \$1,266 in 2000 to \$1,569 in 2013. The largest increase occurred in housing units with mortgages \$2,000 or more (124.3%). This may indicate that some older residents have fewer or lower mortgages, or there is more refinancing occurring among Town residents. The most affordable mortgages (\$500-\$700) have decreased by nearly 38%. The number of units without a mortgage rose by 35% as well.

Table 12
Monthly Mortgage Status

Mortgage Status	2000 Census	% of Units	2013 Estimate	% of Units	% Change 2000-2013
Housing Units with a mortgage	20,877	70.5%	22,802	65.9%	9.2%
Less than \$300	24	0.1%	41	0.2%	70.8%
\$300 to \$499	197	0.7%	149	0.7%	-24.4%
\$500 to \$699	1,137	3.8%	554	2.4%	-51.3%
\$700 to \$999	4,273	14.4%	2,969	13.0%	-30.5%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	8,283	28.0%	6,745	29.6%	-18.6%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	4,309	14.6%	6,391	28.0%	48.3%
\$2,000 or more	2,654	9.0%	5,953	26.1%	124.3%
Median payment (dollars)	1,266	(X)	1,569	(X)	23.9%
Housing units not mortgaged	8,737	29.50%	11,820	34.1%	35.3%

As discussed above, although the Town has a majority of owner-occupied housing units, the number of renter-occupied housing units continues to rise. As shown in Table 13, the median monthly rental payment in the Town rose by 35.4% and the number of units demanding higher rents—\$1,000 to \$1,499 and \$1,500 or more—increased by 390% and 164.6% respectively. This reflects a trend of increased construction of more up-scale apartments with greater amenities and higher-end finishes, requiring higher rents. Higher rents may continue to drive the market rate for rented units. For units with rents less than \$200, there was a decrease from 409 to only 249 units in 2013 (-39.1%). The most affordable rents (\$200-\$500) decreased by approximately 26%.

Table 13
Monthly Housing Rent

Housing Rent	2000 Census	% of Units	2013 Estimate	% of Units	% Change 2000-2013
Renter-occupied units	11,727	26.0%	14,015	28.8%	19.5%
Less than \$200	409	3.5%	249	1.8%	-39.1%
\$200 to \$299	544	4.7%	416	3.1%	-23.5%
\$300 to \$499	1,078	9.2%	762	5.6%	-29.3%
\$500 to \$749	5,076	43.5%	1,980	14.7%	-61.0%
\$750 to \$999	2,752	23.6%	4,565	33.8%	65.9%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	787	6.7%	3,856	28.6%	390.0%
\$1,500 or more	628	5.4%	1,662	12.3%	164.6%
Median rent (dollars)	681	(X)	922	(X)	35.4%
Units paying no cash rent	388	3.3%	525	3.7%	35.3%

Amherst Income Characteristics

Median household (HH) income and per-capita income are among the most commonly used measures reflecting economic conditions among communities and smaller geographic areas. Table 14 compares income data from the 2009-2013 ACS for Amherst with other first ring suburbs and municipalities in Erie County. Amherst continues to rank highly among the largest communities, ranking 7th in median household income and 5th in per-capita income.

Table 14
Comparison and Rank of Incomes Among Local Municipalities

Municipality	2013 Median HH Income (\$)	2011 Rank	2013 Rank	2013 Per Capita Income (\$)	2011 Rank	2013 Rank
Amherst	67,615	6	7	35,938	5	5
Aurora	70,899	7	6	36,208	3	4
Buffalo	30,942	12	13	20,392	12	13
Cheektowaga	47,842	11	12	24,976	11	12
Clarence	87,327	1	1	42,343	1	1
Colden	77,477	5	4	37,929	7	3
Elma	74,610	3	5	35,040	4	7
Grand Island	80,243	2	2	35,192	6	6
Hamburg	61,440	9	9	30,925	8	9
Lancaster	65,518	(X)	8	31,930	(X)	8
Orchard Park	77,517	4	3	41,526	2	2
Tonawanda (Town)	53,001	8	11	28,005	10	11
West Seneca	56,762	10	10	28,008	9	10

Table 15
Comparison of Income (1999 and 2013)⁷

Income	2000 (1999) (\$)	2013 Estimate (\$)	Change 2000- 2013 (\$)	% Change 2000-2013
Median HH income	55,427	67,615	12,188	22.0%
Adjusted Median HH Income	74,816	(X)	-7,201	-9.6%
Per capita income	27,647	35,938	8,291	30.0%
Adjusted Per-Capita Income	37,318	(X)	-1,380	-3.7%
With Cash Public Assistance (HH)	672	555	-117	-17.4%

Table 16
Selected Income Characteristics

Income	2000 Population	% of Persons	2013 Population	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
HOUSEHOLDS					
Less than \$10,000	2,657	5.9%	3,026	6.2%	13.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2,432	5.4%	1,956	4.0%	-19.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,281	9.5%	3,828	7.9%	-10.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4,493	10.0%	3,609	7.4%	-19.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	6,431	14.3%	5,330	11.0%	-17.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	9,482	21.0%	8,602	17.7%	-9.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,204	13.8%	7,076	14.5%	14.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,623	12.5%	8,142	16.7%	44.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,779	3.9%	3,429	7.1%	92.7%
\$200,000 or more	1,670	3.7%	3,639	7.5%	117.9%
Median household income (dollars)	55,427	(X)	67,615	(X)	22.0%
FAMILIES	29,969	(X)	30,040	(X)	0.2%
Less than \$10,000	845	2.8%	710	2.4%	-16.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	635	2.1%	318	1.1%	-49.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,676	5.6%	1,230	4.1%	-26.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,395	8.0%	1,473	4.9%	-38.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4,247	14.2%	2,608	8.7%	-38.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	6,873	22.9%	5,247	17.5%	-23.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	5,239	17.5%	4,985	16.6%	-4.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,033	16.8%	7,085	23.6%	40.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,523	5.1%	3,072	10.2%	101.7%
\$200,000 or more	1,503	5.0%	3,312	11.0%	120.4%
Median family income (dollars)	68,951	(X)	92,106	(X)	33.6%

Comparison of income data must be made with caution and awareness of the differences between the responses to the Decennial Census and ACS estimates (see page 40). Table 15 compares income data for Amherst from the 2000 Census with the 2009-2013 five-year ACS estimates. The table includes an adjusted dollar amount, as recommended by the Census Bureau,

⁷ Caution must be exercised with any comparison of data about income from 2000 (collected in 1999) with 2009- 2013 income estimates, see page 40 for an explanation of this consideration and adjustment factors.

for household income and per-capita income data in 2000. These adjusted amounts show declines in income from 2000-2013 by -9.6% and -3.7% respectively. While income for residents increased, the overall value of the dollar declined. This may reflect the changing demographic make-up of the Town, such as the growing number of students with low incomes, and the growing proportion of older residents with fixed incomes.

Table 16 displays data of selected income characteristics for the Town. From 2000-2013, median household income increased by 22% from \$55,427 to \$67,615. Median family income increased even more so, from \$68,951 to \$92,106 (33.6%). For both families and households, those with incomes from \$10,000 to \$74,999 decreased. Alternatively, the number of households with incomes less than \$10,000 increased 13.9%, while the number of families making less than \$10,000 declined by -16%. Also, for both household and families, the largest increases occurred in the two highest income cohorts—\$150,000 to \$199,999 and \$200,000 or more. For households, those making \$200,000 or more increased by 117.9%, and for families it was an increase of 120.4% from 2000-2013. Residents are also receiving more Social Security, Supplemental Security, Cash Public Assistance, and Retirement income; all of these increased more than 20% from 2000-2013, as displayed in Table 26, which also displays Town income characteristics in comparison with other municipalities.

Table 17 below compares the number of residents with Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits amongst different municipalities. The City of Buffalo has experienced the largest increase of 32.4%, while Amherst currently has the lowest percent of people (6.1%) with these benefits. Despite this, the number of people receiving Food Stamps/SNAP benefits in the Town of Amherst has been increasing: there were 1,903 persons (4.0% of the population) in 2007 compared to 2,975 persons (6.1%) in 2013. Even though Town residents' incomes have generally increased, the value of the dollar has declined and prices for goods and services have increased. Therefore, more people are relying on these benefits, both in the Town and the region.

Table 17
Food Stamps and SNAP Benefits

Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits	2007 Estimate	2013 Estimate	% of Population 2013	% Change 2007-2013
Amherst	1,903	2,975	6.1%	56.3%
Buffalo	25,763	36,324	32.4%	41.0%
Erie County	37,831	57,751	15.2%	52.7%
New York	670,564	1,050,669	14.5%	56.7%

Amherst Employment Characteristics

When examining income data, it is also important to examine employment characteristics to understand the labor force, industries, and occupations of Town residents. Amherst continues to grow as a leader in job creation and a center of employment. Employment projections prepared in 2001 for the Comprehensive Plan *Inventory and Analysis Report* (Table 6-7) projected there would be 103,844 jobs in the Town by 2020. Employment data reported by the Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics for 2011 indicates that the Town's total employment was 105,570, surpassing the 2020 projection. The Town's share of Erie County's overall employment was 10.3%, second only to the City of Buffalo.

As shown in Table 18, the number of civilian employed residents increased by 8.2% from 55,433 to 59,995 persons. Persons employed in service occupations increased 40.8% while those employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations decreased 13.7%. There are many different industries present in Amherst but those seeing the most increase were “educational, health and social services” along with “arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services” (24.6% and 39% respectively). Agriculture and related industries saw a significant increase of 407.7%, but this sector only makes up 0.2% of the employment base in the Town. The “Class of Worker” is also changing within the Town. More residents are becoming employed in private and government sectors. The number of private wage and salary workers increased 9.9%, and government workers increased 12.5% from 2000-2013. Less people are self-employed (-21.2%) or are unpaid family workers (-72.2%)—those people performing incidental work within the home for less than 15 hours per week.

Table 18
Selected Employment Characteristics

Employment Characteristics	2000 Population	% of Persons	2013 Population	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
OCCUPATION					
Civilian employed population	55,433	(X)	59,995	(X)	8.2%
Service occupations	5,937	10.7%	8,359	13.9%	40.8%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	2,155	3.9%	1,860	3.1%	-13.7%
INDUSTRY					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	26	0.0%	132	0.2%	407.7%
Information	1,613	2.9%	1,062	1.8%	-34.2%
Educational, health and social services	16,583	29.9%	20,661	34.4%	24.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	3,698	6.7%	5,142	8.6%	39.0%
CLASS OF WORKER					
Private wage and salary workers	40,909	73.8%	44,976	75.0%	9.9%
Government workers	10,802	19.5%	12,151	20.3%	12.5%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	3,589	6.5%	2,831	4.7%	-21.1%
Unpaid family workers	133	0.20%	37	0.1%	-72.2%

Displayed in Table 19 are local area unemployment statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This table compares the unemployment rate in Amherst with Erie County and New York State, and Figure 2 displays the associated data from 2000-2014. Amherst had the lowest unemployment rate in 2014, at 5.2%. Both Erie County and New York State had a greater percentage decrease in their unemployment rates from 2010 to 2014 though. As illustrated in the figure, although Amherst has had lower unemployment rates from 2000-2014, the Town trend does correspond with the County and New York State trends: greatly increasing from 2008-2010 as the economy declined, and a large decline from 2013-2014 as the economy improved.

Table 19
Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Year	Amherst Unemployment (Percent)	Erie County Unemployment (Percent)	New York State Unemployment (Percent)
2000	4.1	5.1	5.3
2005	4.5	6	5.7
2010	6.8	9.3	9.6
2011	6.6	8.8	8.9
2012	6.7	8.9	9.1
2013	6.8	8.9	9.1
2014	5.2	7.1	7.3

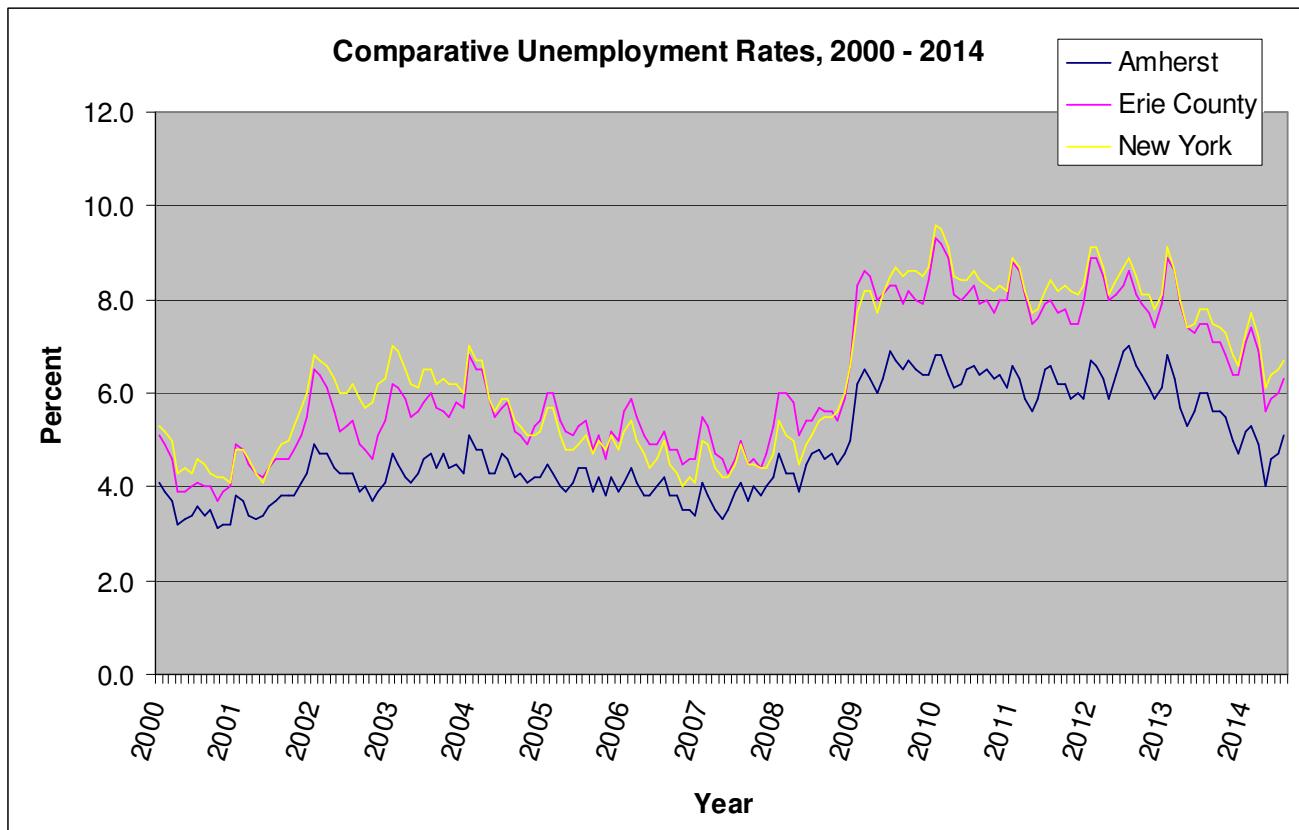


Figure 2: Employment Rates in Amherst, Erie County, and New York State

With unemployment comes decreased income and high levels of poverty. Table 20 displays data on poverty status. There has been a 35.9% increase in Town residents living below the poverty level, from 6.4% in 2000 to 8.7% in 2013. There was a 24.1% increase in the number of residents aged 65 years and over living under the poverty level, and a decline for families with a female householder with no husband present, from 17.2% to 13.4%. It is also useful to examine health insurance coverage in the Town, which is influenced by unemployment and influences poverty. Table 21 summarizes health insurance coverage in multiple municipalities. Of those compared, Amherst has the highest level of people with health insurance coverage (95.8%), and the most with private insurance (85.7%). Of those people who are unemployed, 80.5% still have some form of coverage.

Table 20
Poverty Status

Poverty Status	% of Persons Below in 2000	% of Persons Below in 2013	% Change 2000-2013
All people	6.4%	8.7%	35.9%
18 years and over	6.3%	9.2%	46.0%
65 years and over	5.4%	6.7%	24.1%
All families	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%
With related children under 18 years	6.3%	6.3%	0.0%
With related children under 5 years only	8.5%	10.1%	18.8%
Families with female householder, no husband present	17.2%	13.4%	-22.1%
With related children under 18 years	24.7%	21.9%	-11.3%
With related children under 5 years	46.0%	33.8%	-26.5%

Table 21
Health Insurance Coverage

Health Insurance Coverage	Amherst 2013	% Population 2013	Buffalo 2013	% Population 2013	Erie County 2013	% Population 2013
Civilian noninstitutionalized population	121,290	(X)	257,983	(X)	907,174	(X)
With health insurance coverage	116,196	95.8%	231,274	89.6%	845,295	93.2%
No health insurance coverage	5,094	4.2%	26,709	10.4%	61,879	6.8%
Civilian population 18 to 64 years	75,858	(X)	168,789	(X)	571,365	(X)
Employed:	55,032	94.6%	102,026	86.5%	406,978	91.7%
With private health insurance	50,714	92.2%	71,690	70.3%	344,387	84.6%
With public coverage	2,952	5.4%	18,200	17.8%	37,141	9.1%
Unemployed:	3,146	5.4%	15,858	13.5%	36,696	8.3%
With private health insurance	1,832	58.2%	3,685	23.2%	14,243	38.8%
With public coverage	702	22.3%	7,944	50.1%	13,280	36.2%
Not in labor force:	17,680	23.3%	50,905	30.2%	127,691	22.3%
With private health insurance	14,360	81.2%	18,411	36.2%	72,980	57.2%
With public coverage	3,070	17.4%	32,521	63.9%	57,710	45.2%

Amherst Commuting Characteristics

The above discussion reinforces the Town's role as a center of regional employment, and a destination for commuters. The 2012 Review Report compared commuting patterns and presented insights into the numbers of persons who work in the Town, where they come from, and their commuting patterns. Table 22 below displays means of transportation to work for 2013 and illustrates how the commute to work for Amherst residents has changed since 2000: more residents are using alternatives to the single occupancy automobile to commute to work. The largest increase (176%) occurred in using "other means" to get to work, including means of transportation such as bicycles and motorcycles. Walking to work increased from 1,202 to 1,777 (47.8%) and those using public transportation to work also increased from 677 to 1,229 (81.5%). Despite the increasing employment and associated traffic, the mean travel time to work did not change, staying at 19.5 minutes.

A goal for transportation in the Comprehensive Plan is to have an efficient multi-modal transportation system that accommodates the automobile and emphasizes alternative means of transit. As shown in Table 22, the use of alternative modes for travel to work has increased in Amherst. Table 23 compares the use of alternative modes of travel in Amherst with similar communities known for encouraging alternative modes of transportation with denser mixed-use development that may diminish reliance on automobiles. While there are many differences amongst these communities, data comparison can help assess progress toward realizing the Town's goal.

Table 22
Means of Transportation to Work

Means of Transportation to Work	2000 Population	% of Persons	2013 Population	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
Workers 16 years and over	54,501	(X)	58,813	(X)	7.9%
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	46,707	85.7%	49,011	83.3%	4.9%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	3,772	6.9%	4,226	7.2%	12.0%
Public transportation (including taxicab)	677	1.2%	1,229	2.1%	81.5%
Walked	1,202	2.2%	1,777	3.0%	47.8%
Other means	233	0.4%	643	1.1%	176.0%
Worked at home	1,910	3.5%	1,927	3.3%	0.9%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	19.5	(X)	19.5	(X)	0.0%

Table 23
Means of Transportation to Work in 2013 - Comparison of Communities

Mode of Transportation	Amherst, NY	Buffalo, NY	Colonie, NY	Greece, NY	Ann Arbor, MI	Portland, OR
Workers 16 years and over	58,813	103,849	42,493	46,455	56,036	302,410
Car, truck, or van, drove alone	83.3%	67.3%	85.2%	88.9%	58.0%	59.0%
Car, truck, or van, carpooled	7.2%	9.9%	7.0%	6.4%	6.3%	9.1%
Public transportation (inc taxi)	2.1%	12.0%	1.9%	0.6%	10.2%	11.6%
Walked	3.0%	6.3%	1.7%	0.6%	15.0%	5.8%
Other means	1.1%	2.4%	1.3%	0.8%	4.8%	7.2%
Worked at home	3.3%	2.1%	2.9%	2.7%	5.7%	7.3%

Planning Analysis Areas

As noted above, the demographic analysis for the Inventory and Analysis Report and the Comprehensive Plan included separation of the Town into six planning analysis areas (PAAs). The distribution of these areas is shown in Figure 1. Many of the demographic characteristics discussed in the preceding sections were also considered for individual PAAs. Data from the 2000 Census and the 2009-2013 ACS for certain selected characteristics on a PAA level are summarized in Table 25 below. The following summary identifies significant changes in these demographics within each PAA. Margins of error for each variable by PAA are given in Appendix A, Table A-25.

PAA 1

- This PAA had the highest percentage increase of those with a graduate or professional degree (132.1%).
- This PAA had the largest percentage increase in households receiving cash public assistance (26.3%).
- This PAA had the largest percentage increase in those commuting to work using public transportation (647.1%) and the largest percentage increase in foreign born residents (207.8%). This is likely due to a large student population.

PAA 2

- People claiming Subsaharan African and West Indian ancestries increased significantly—513.3% and 369.2% respectively—while those claiming Swiss and Welsh ancestries decreased by -100% to zero persons.
- Households receiving cash public assistance income decreased -64.8%, from 88 in 2000 to 31 in 2013.
- This PAA has the largest percentage increase in those using other means to commute to work (506.3%).

PAA 3

- This PAA has the largest population of those that speak a language other than English with 4,879 persons, a 183.5% increase from 2000.
- People claiming Subsaharan African and West Indian ancestries also increased significantly—440.5% and 787.5% respectively.
- This PAA had the largest percentage increase of persons who walked to work (797.3%), increasing from 110 to 987 people.

PAA 4

- This PAA has the highest home value (\$216,675) and highest average household income (\$115,396).
- This PAA also has the highest monthly mortgage payment (\$1,880) and highest monthly rent payment (\$1,509).

PAA 5

- This PAA had the highest percentage decrease (-46%) of those with less than a 9th grade education and now has the largest population with a graduate or professional degree with 6,407 persons.
- This PAA has the largest populations of those claiming German (8,528), Irish (7,966), and Italian (6,539) ancestries.
- This PAA has the most households on cash public assistance with 208 persons.

PAA 6

- The average value of homes increased 51.8%, from \$117,850 in 2000 to \$178,900 in 2013.
- People claiming Arab ancestry increased by 281.9%, from 127 in 2000 to 485 in 2013.
- This is the only PAA to have a decline in its foreign born population (-11.9%).

Table 24

Ancestry

Ancestry	2000 Census	% of Persons	2013 Estimate	% of Persons	% Change 2000-2013
Total population	116,510	(X)	122,814	(X)	5.4%
Arab	959	0.8%	2,060	1.7%	114.8%
Czech	546	0.5%	326	0.3%	-40.3%
Danish	343	0.3%	333	0.3%	-2.9%
Dutch	1,366	1.2%	1,391	1.1%	1.8%
English	11,843	10.2%	11,300	9.2%	-4.6%
French (except Basque)	3,824	3.3%	3,559	2.9%	-6.9%
French Canadian	662	0.6%	1,086	0.9%	64.0%
German	29,827	25.6%	30,165	24.6%	1.1%
Greek	904	0.8%	776	0.6%	-14.2%
Hungarian	1,316	1.1%	1,191	1.0%	-9.5%
Irish	19,215	16.5%	21,952	17.9%	14.2%
Italian	20,696	17.8%	24,569	20.0%	18.7%
Lithuanian	373	0.3%	156	0.1%	-58.2%
Norwegian	509	0.4%	299	0.2%	-41.3%
Polish	15,136	13.0%	16,370	13.3%	8.2%
Portuguese	0	0.0%	205	0.2%	100.0%
Russian	2,937	2.5%	2,989	2.4%	1.8%
Scotch-Irish	1,500	1.3%	517	0.4%	-65.5%
Scottish	2,546	2.2%	2,023	1.6%	-20.5%
Slovak	270	0.2%	160	0.1%	-40.7%
Sub-Saharan African	275	0.2%	848	0.7%	208.4%
Swedish	1,399	1.2%	1,058	0.9%	-24.4%
Swiss	459	0.4%	277	0.2%	-39.7%
Ukrainian	1,158	1.0%	1,528	1.2%	32.0%
United States or American	2,585	2.2%	3,032	2.5%	17.3%
Welsh	899	0.8%	707	0.6%	-21.4%
West Indian (excluding Hispanic groups)	398	0.3%	475	0.4%	19.3%

Table 25

Summary of Select 2009-2013 American Community Survey Data for Town Planning Analysis Areas (PAA)

Subject	% Change 2000-2013 Townwide	PAA 1				PAA 2				PAA 3				PAA 4				PAA 5				PAA 6				
		2000 Census	2009- 2013 Estimate	Change 2000- 2013	% Change																					
MARITAL STATUS																										
Population 15 years and over	8.5%	6,264	11,548	5,284	84.4%	8,936	11,076	2,140	23.9%	11,435	19,307	7,872	68.8%	18,120	19,103	983	5.4%	28,072	28,383	311	1.1%	18,120	18,851	731	4.0%	
Never married	53.5%	2,049	4,459	2,410	117.6%	1,900	2,635	735	38.7%	3,293	11,644	8,351	253.6%	3,482	3,986	504	14.5%	7,352	9,003	1,651	22.5%	4,325	4,859	534	12.3%	
Now married, except separated	-13.0%	3,213	5,364	2,151	66.9%	6,004	6,561	557	9.3%	6,293	5,128	-1,165	-18.5%	12,059	11,912	-147	-1.2%	15,645	13,367	-2,278	-14.6%	10,704	10,187	-517	-4.8%	
Separated	-0.3%	134	199	65	48.5%	94	113	19	20.2%	130	123	-7	-5.4%	123	227	104	84.6%	417	471	54	12.9%	152	232	80	52.6%	
Widowed	9.3%	282	630	348	123.4%	375	615	240	64.0%	981	1,347	366	37.3%	1,584	1,598	14	0.9%	2,450	2,348	-102	-4.2%	1,654	1,701	47	2.8%	
Divorced	46.6%	586	896	310	52.9%	563	1,152	589	104.6%	738	1,065	327	44.3%	872	1,380	508	58.3%	2,208	3,194	986	44.7%	1,285	1,872	587	45.7%	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT																										
Population 25 years and over	4.6%	5,034	8,875	3,841	76.3%	7,729	9,510	1,781	23.0%	9,655	10,055	400	4.1%	15,828	16,761	933	5.9%	24,141	24,043	-98	-0.4%	15,904	16,236	332	2.1%	
Less than 9th grade	-40.4%	104	151	47	45.2%	128	96	-32	-25.0%	430	238	-192	-44.7%	487	296	-191	-39.2%	766	414	-352	-46.0%	303	192	-111	-36.6%	
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	-34.4%	319	403	84	26.3%	207	239	32	15.5%	638	520	-118	-18.5%	638	382	-256	-40.1%	1,366	751	-615	-45.0%	906	603	-303	-33.4%	
High school graduate (includes equiv)	-0.3%	1,220	2,177	957	78.4%	1,358	1,517	159	11.7%	1,981	2,236	255	12.9%	2,322	2,196	-126	-5.4%	4,901	4,456	-445	-9.1%	2,795	2,684	-111	-4.0%	
Some college, no degree	-8.8%	1,075	1,492	417	38.8%	1,230	1,467	237	19.3%	1,660	1,457	-203	-12.2%	2,371	2,249	-122	-5.1%	4,496	3,770	-726	-16.1%	2,762	2,382	-380	-13.8%	
Associate degree	18.0%	570	1,115	545	95.6%	768	724	-44	-5.7%	892	976	84	9.4%	1,125	1,734	609	54.1%	1,976	2,277	301	15.2%	1,350	1,567	217	16.1%	
Bachelor's degree	7.5%	1,016	1,843	827	81.4%	2,147	2,588	441	20.5%	2,175	2,548	373	17.1%	4,369	4,672	303	6.9%	5,514	5,968	454	8.2%	4,201	4,184	-17	-0.4%	
Graduate or professional degree	25.6%	730	1,694	964	132.1%	1,891	2,879	988	52.2%	1,879	2,080	201	10.7%	4,516	5,232	716	15.9%	5,122	6,407	1,285	25.1%	3,587	4,624	1,037	28.9%	
REGION OF BIRTH - FOREIGN BORN																										
Total (excluding born at sea)	44.1%	628	1,933	1,305	207.8%	1,148	1,459	311	27.1%	1,483	3,975	2,492	168.0%	2,385	3,066	681	28.6%	2,744	3,636	892	32.5%	2,123	1,871	-252	-11.9%	
Europe	-5.0%	97	553	456	470.1%	552	463	-89	-16.1%	407	813	406	99.8%	704	739	35	5.0%	1,096	668	-428	-39.1%	966	550	-416	-43.1%	
Asia	99.2%	406	833	427	105.2%	305	732	427	140.0%	730	2,500	1,770	242.5%	976	1,669	693	71.0%	1,093	2,155	1,062	97.2%	710	900	190	26.8%	
Africa	108.1%	41	201	160	390.2%	32	35	3	9.4%	25	197	172	688.0%	136	68	-68	-50.0%	42	203	161	383.3%	20	27	7	35.0%	
Oceania	-88.9%	0	0	0	0.0%	22	0	-22	-100.0%	7	0	-7	-100.0%	0	0	0	0.0%	7	4	-3	-42.9%	0	0	0	0.0%	
Latin America	71.6%	59	164	105	178.0%	42	104	62	147.6%	102	227	125	122.5%	176	312	136	77.3%	182	275	93	51.1%	109	107	-2	-1.8%	
Northern America	-8.9%	25	182	157	628.0%	195	125	-70	-35.9%	212	238	26	12.3%	393	278	-115	-29.3%	324	331	7	2.2%	318	287	-31	-9.7%	
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME																										
Population 5 years and over	5.8%	7,522	13,319	5,797	77.1%	11,063	12,987	1,924	17.4%	12,868	20,291	7,423	57.7%	21,532	22,340	808	3.8%	32,121	32,106	-15	0.0%	20,784	20,900	116	0.6%	
English only	1.0%	6,732	11,073	4,341	64.5%	9																				

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Table 26
2000-2013 Income Comparison

Income	Amherst				Buffalo				Erie County				New York State				Nationwide			
	2000	2013	% of Persons 2013	% Change	2000	2013	% of Persons 2013	% Change	2000	2013	% of Persons 2013	% Change	2000	2013	% of Persons 2013	% Change	2000	2013	% of Persons 2013	% Change
HOUSEHOLDS	45,052	48,637	(X)	8.0%	122,672	112,037	(X)	-8.7%	380,890	380,152	(X)	-0.2%	7,060,595	7,234,743	(X)	2.5%	105,539,122	115,610,216	(X)	9.5%
Less than \$10,000	2,657	3,026	6.2%	13.9%	26,041	19,337	17.3%	-25.7%	41,325	32,420	8.5%	-21.5%	809,507	562,307	7.8%	-30.5%	10,067,027	8,380,364	7.2%	-16.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2,432	1,956	4.0%	-19.6%	13,848	10,510	9.4%	-24.1%	29,626	21,941	5.8%	-25.9%	453,320	378,465	5.2%	-16.5%	6,657,228	6,214,548	5.4%	-6.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,281	3,828	7.9%	-10.6%	22,274	17,827	15.9%	-20.0%	53,865	43,959	11.6%	-18.4%	822,611	724,289	10.0%	-12.0%	13,536,965	12,468,604	10.8%	-7.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4,493	3,609	7.4%	-19.7%	17,005	13,711	12.2%	-19.4%	49,316	39,201	10.3%	-20.5%	807,043	657,882	9.1%	-18.5%	13,519,242	11,929,761	10.3%	-11.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	6,431	5,330	11.0%	-17.1%	17,022	14,311	12.8%	-15.9%	61,760	50,324	13.2%	-18.5%	1,047,001	859,574	11.9%	-17.9%	17,446,272	15,723,148	13.6%	-9.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	9,482	8,602	17.7%	-9.3%	15,090	17,043	15.2%	12.9%	71,848	70,062	18.4%	-2.5%	1,297,712	1,201,783	16.6%	-7.4%	20,540,604	20,744,045	17.9%	1.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,204	7,076	14.5%	14.1%	6,319	8,619	7.7%	36.4%	37,429	47,655	12.5%	27.3%	746,384	870,855	12.0%	16.7%	10,799,245	14,107,031	12.2%	30.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,623	8,142	16.7%	44.8%	3,314	7,043	6.3%	112.5%	24,537	46,815	12.3%	90.8%	639,525	1,023,910	14.2%	60.1%	8,147,826	14,858,239	12.9%	82.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,779	3,429	7.1%	92.7%	729	1,945	1.7%	166.8%	5,900	15,756	4.1%	167.1%	202,640	447,506	6.2%	120.8%	2,322,038	5,651,848	4.9%	143.4%
\$200,000 or more	1,670	3,639	7.5%	117.9%	1,030	1,691	1.5%	64.2%	5,284	12,019	3.2%	127.5%	234,852	508,172	7.0%	116.4%	2,502,675	5,532,628	4.8%	121.1%
Median household income (dollars)	55,427	67,615	(X)	22.0%	24,536	30,942	(X)	26.1%	38,567	50,653	(X)	31.3%	43,393	58,003	(X)	33.7%	41,994	53,046	(X)	26.3%
FAMILIES	29,969	30,040	(X)	0.2%	67,408	58,577	(X)	-13.1%	244,376	231,215	(X)	-5.4%	4,673,485	4,637,549	(X)	-0.8%	72,261,780	76,744,358	(X)	6.2%
Less than \$10,000	845	710	2.4%	-16.0%	10,717	8,307	14.2%	-22.5%	15,447	12,649	5.5%	-18.1%	359,778	231,065	5.0%	-35.8%	4,155,386	3,626,303	4.7%	-12.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	635	318	1.1%	-49.9%	6,085	3,886	6.6%	-36.1%	10,156	6,723	2.9%	-33.8%	215,349	157,855	3.4%	-26.7%	3,115,586	2,446,045	3.2%	-21.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,676	1,230	4.1%	-26.6%	11,235	8,265	14.1%	-26.4%	25,313	16,818	7.3%	-33.6%	462,739	359,043	7.7%	-22.4%	7,757,397	6,233,829	8.1%	-19.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,395	1,473	4.9%	-38.5%	9,524	7,385	12.6%	-22.5%	29,632	19,217	8.3%	-35.1%	505,162	373,435	8.1%	-26.1%	8,684,429	6,944,923	9.0%	-20.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4,247	2,608	8.7%	-38.6%	10,528	7,883	13.5%	-25.1%	42,950	28,892	12.5%	-32.7%	705,855	529,052	11.4%	-25.0%	12,377,108	10,023,111	13.1%	-19.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	6,873	5,247	17.5%	-23.7%	10,394	9,649	16.5%	-7.2%	56,941	46,297	20.0%	-18.7%	957,683	792,106	17.1%	-17.3%	16,130,100	14,611,574	19.0%	-9.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	5,239	4,985	16.6%	-4.8%	5,031	5,432	9.3%	8.0%	32,397	36,510	15.8%	12.7%	594,059	623,926	13.5%	5.0%	9,009,327	10,949,862	14.3%	21.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,033	7,085	23.6%	40.8%	2,560	4,934	8.4%	92.7%	21,884	39,343	17.0%	79.8%	522,203	796,287	17.2%	52.5%	6,936,210	12,294,074	16.0%	77.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,523	3,072	10.2%	101.7%	586	1,509	2.6%	157.5%	5,214	14,020	6.1%	168.9%	164,443	363,771	7.8%	121.2%	1,983,673	4,836,963	6.3%	143.8%
\$200,000 or more	1,503	3,312	11.0%	120.4%	748	1,327	2.3%	77.4%	4,442	10,746	4.6%	141.9%	186,214	411,009	8.9%	120.7%	2,112,564	4,777,674	6.2%	126.2%
Median family income (dollars)	68,951	92,106	(X)	33.6%	30,614	37,412	(X)	22.2%	49,490	65,897	(X)	33.2%	51,691	70,670	(X)	36.7%	50,046	64,719	(X)	29.3%
Average earnings (dollars)	70,557	92,673	(X)	31.3%	36,982	49,935	(X)	35.0%	51,587	69,825	(X)	35.4%	64,102	88,516	(X)	38.1%	56,604	75,017	(X)	32.5%
Average Social Security income (dollars)	13,166	19,202	(X)	45.8%	10,294	14,294	(X)	38.9%	11,817	17,537	(X)	48.4%	11,667	17,510	(X)	50.1%	11,320	17,189	(X)	51.8%
Average Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	7,022	10,244	(X)	45.9%	6,249	8,747	(X)	40.0%	6,643	9,417	(X)	41.8%	6,568	9,159	(X)	39.4%	6,320	9,152	(X)	44.8%
Average Cash Public Assistance income (dollars)	2,999	3,625	(X)	20.9%	3,417	3,790	(X)	10.9%	3,379	3,728	(X)	10.3%	3,699	4,138	(X)	11.9%	3,032	3,808	(X)	25.6%
Average Retirement income (dollars)	20,078	26,460	(X)	31.8%	12,602	16,852	(X)	33.7%	14,977	21,224	(X)	41.7%	17,660	25,196	(X)	42.7%	17,376	23,589	(X)	35.8%
Per capita income (dollars)	27,647	35,938	(X)	30.0%	14,991	20,392	(X)	36.0%	20,357	27,978	(X)	37.4%	23,389	32,382	(X)	38.4%	21,587	28,155	(X)	30.4%

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Endnotes

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Census Definitions and Data Notes

Marital Status

Never Married – Includes all people who have never been married, including people whose only marriage(s) was annulled.

Now Married, Except Separated – Includes people whose current marriage has not ended through widowhood, divorce, or separation (regardless of previous marital history). The category may also include couples who live together or people in common-law marriages if they consider this category the most appropriate. In certain tabulations, currently married people are further classified as "spouse present" or "spouse absent." In tabulations, unless otherwise specified, "now married" does not include same-sex married people even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples.

Separated – Includes people legally separated or otherwise absent from their spouse because of marital discord. Those without a final divorce decree are classified as "separated." This category also includes people who have been deserted or who have parted because they no longer want to live together but who have not obtained a divorce.

Widowed – Includes widows and widowers who have not remarried.

Divorced –Includes people who are legally divorced and who have not remarried. Those without a final divorce decree are classified as "separated." In selected tabulations, data for married and separated people are reorganized and combined with information on the presence of the spouse in the same household.

Languages Spoken At Home

Spanish – includes Spanish, Spanish Creole, and Ladino.

Other Indo-European – includes most languages of Europe and the Indic languages of India. These include the Germanic languages, such as German, Yiddish, and Dutch; the Scandinavian languages, such as Swedish and Norwegian; the Romance languages, such as French, Italian, and Portuguese; the Slavic languages, such as Russian, Polish, and Serbo-Croatian; the Indic languages, such as Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Urdu; Celtic languages; Greek; Baltic languages; and Iranian languages.

Asian and Pacific Island – include Chinese; Korean; Japanese; Vietnamese; Hmong; Khmer; Lao; Thai; Tagalog or Pilipino; the Dravidian languages of India, such as Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam; and other languages of Asia and the Pacific, including the Philippine, Polynesian, and Micronesian languages.

World Regions of Foreign Born

Table B-17 lists the countries located within the respective regions shown in Tables 4 and 25.

Income

The Census Bureau recommends using caution when comparing income data reported from a decennial census and data reported from the ACS. The ACS collects data throughout the year on an on-going, monthly basis and asks for a respondent's income over the "past 12 months." Census 2000, however, collected the income data for a fixed period of time -- "during 1999" (the last calendar year). For example, the 2007-2011 ACS 5-year data reflect incomes over 2006-2011. In a comparison study between Census 2000 income data and the 2000 ACS, income collected in Census 2000 was found to be about 4 percent higher than that in the 2000 ACS. For more information on the differences of income in the ACS and Census 2000, see [Income in the American Community Survey: Comparison to Census 2000](#). The Census Bureau recommends using CPI-U-RS adjustment factors published annually by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to adjust 1999 median, mean, and per capita income dollar amounts shown in Summary File 3 to 2011 dollars by multiplying the 1999 dollar amounts by the CPI-U-RS factor of 1.34981610. For CPI-U-RS inflation adjustment factors for other years see: [BLS Consumer Price Index](#). Furthermore, direct comparisons of income and earnings distributions between Census 2000 and the 2011 ACS are not possible due to inflation. Users interested in making distribution comparisons need to inflation adjust individual income records using the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) files from Census 2000.

CHAPTER 3 – Land Use

During 2013 and 2014, the Town Board and Planning Board continued to view the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan when making decisions. With rezoning petitions, the Boards relied on both the Conceptual Land Use Plan (Figure 6 in the Plan) and text as bases for their actions. During the report period there were 83 petitions for rezoning, 74 of which (89%) were approved. Four requests were withdrawn, one was denied (later approved), and the remaining four are still pending before the Town Board. All but one of the approvals were determined to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; the petition requesting an accompanying Plan amendment is pending.

The 83 rezoning requests have been mapped by location and illustrated in Figure 3. The following trends are observed based on this information:

- Over half of the petitions (51) were initiated by the Town to bring recreation, open space and conservation parcels into the newly-created Recreation Conservation (RC) district.
- Fifteen (15) of the requests involved rezoning to permit denser residential development such as market-rate or senior apartment developments.
- Interest in the area near the UB North Campus for higher density residential use and mixed-use developments continues, albeit at a somewhat slower pace. There were three requests for apartment developments and one mixed-use project in close proximity to the university.
- Rezoning for office use—which in previous years made up a major part of the rezoning requests—accounted for just four of the petitions.

It should also be noted that four requests (two per year) were received during the report period to modify or relieve zoning conditions. Two of these were approved, one was withdrawn, and one is pending. While not large in number, approval of these requests is a concern since it could erode the public's confidence in the development process and contribute to their impression that conditions placed on rezonings are short-term only.

Table 27 below summarizes development activity (site plans and subdivisions) in the Town in 2013 and 2014 by amount and type. The following trends are noted:

- Nearly half of the approved residential units were for market rate apartments, although a relatively large number of senior apartment developments (9) were also proposed.
- There were just two subdivisions proposed – Village Park North (44 lots) and The Hamlet at Sable Woods (9 lots) – which is not surprising given the scarcity of available land (The Village Park North Subdivision has not yet received final approval).
- All but one of the approved commercial projects were redevelopment/infill projects. This trend will likely continue as undeveloped land in Amherst becomes scarcer.
- The greatest concentration of development was located west of Millersport Highway near the UB North campus. Other evident trends are the grouping of commercial projects south of the I-290 and the residential projects near the UB North campus.

Table 27
Land Use and Development Activity (2013 - 2014)

Development Type	Residential Projects	Commercial Projects	Office Projects	Mixed-Use	Industrial	Institutional
Residential	23					
Senior housing	9					
Student housing	2					
Market rate apts.	10					
Subdivisions (lots)	2 (53)					
Commercial		19				
New		1				
Redevelopment / infill		18				
Office			8			
New			5			
Redevelopment / infill			3			
Mixed-Use				4		
New				1		
Redevelopment / infill				3		
Industrial					2	
New					2	
Redevelopment / infill					0	
Institutional						9
Educational facilities						7
Fire Company						2

Figure 4 illustrates the location of site plan and subdivision activity during the review period. The following is a discussion of the land use and development policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

3-1 Expand provisions and incentives for mixed-use development in designated centers.

A) Activity or Actions

No new provisions were developed in 2013 or 2014 to specifically address mixed-use development.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The 2008 Zoning Ordinance amendment to permit upper-story residential uses in the commercial zoning districts to foster mixed-use development continued to be utilized in the Town. This type of proposal has become increasingly desirable for developers to undertake, indicated by the following applications submitted during the review period:

- 1) A site plan for a mixed-use development on Main Street in Eggertsville was approved in August 2013 and includes construction of two additional floors for apartments in an existing retail building.
- 2) A site plan for a 2-story building on Transit Road between Casey and North French Roads to include first floor commercial and second floor apartments was approved in May 2014.

September 2015

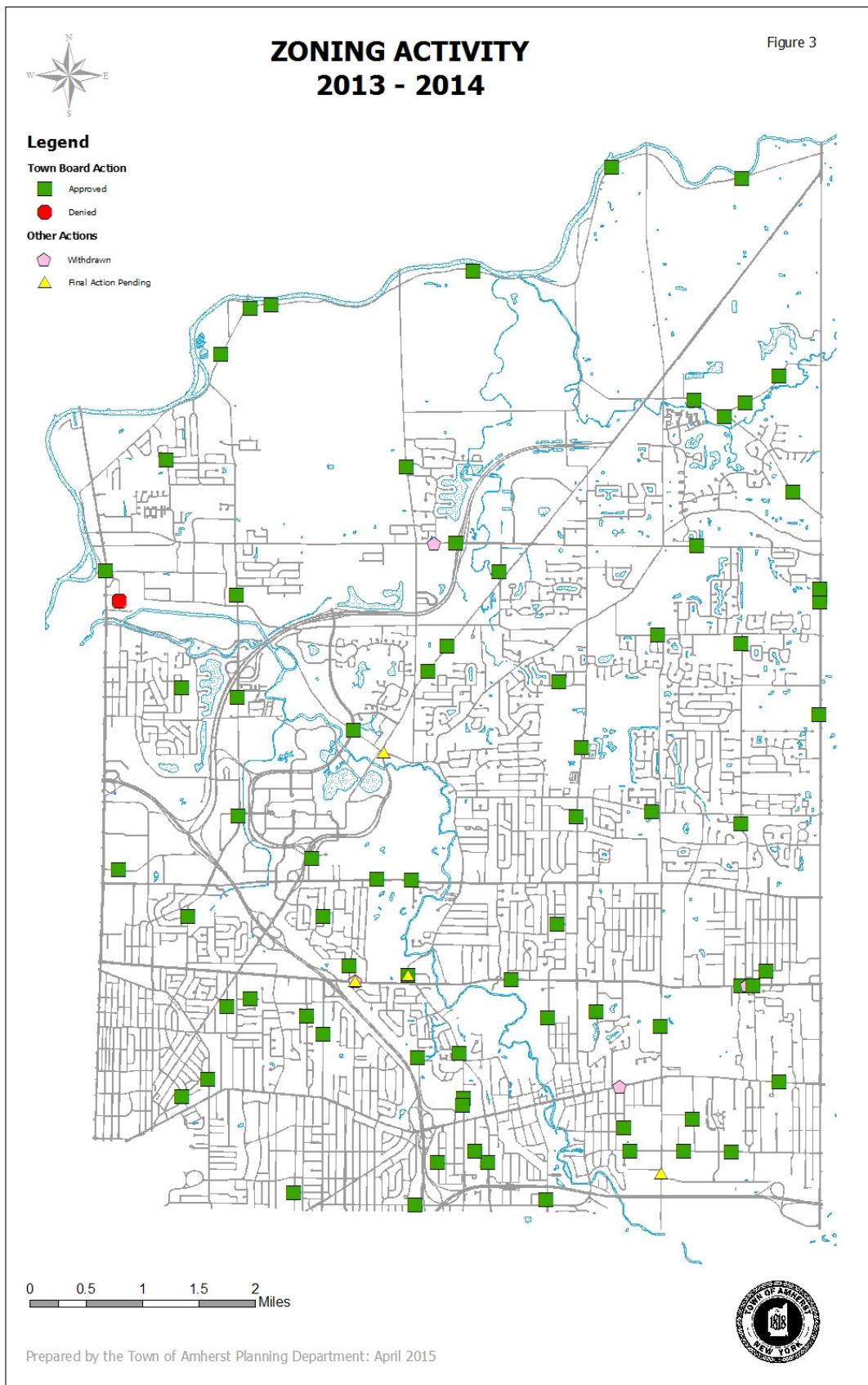


Figure 3: Zoning Activity from 2013 – 2014

September 2015

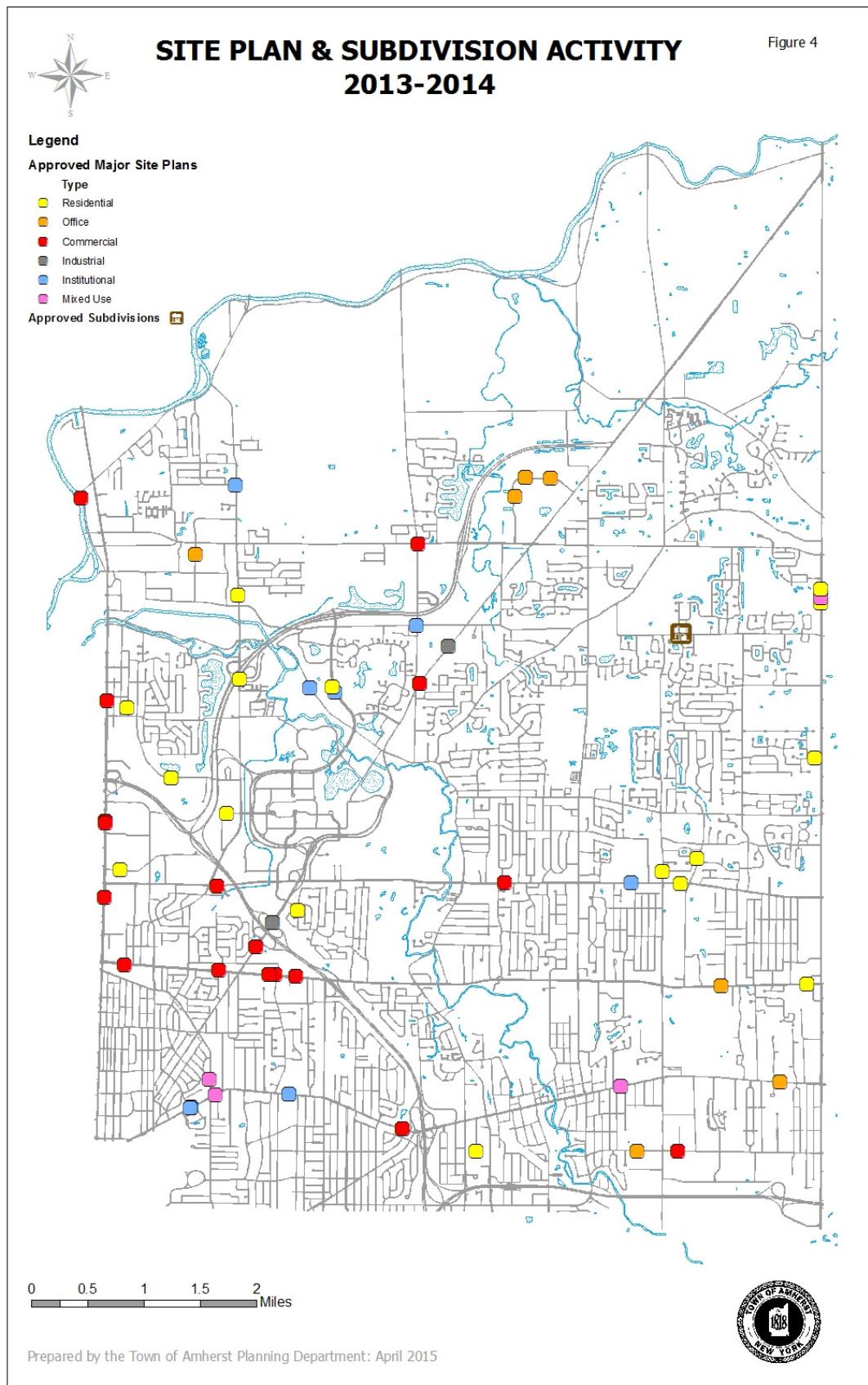


Figure 4: Site Plan and Subdivision Activity from 2013 – 2014

- 3) A site plan for a 2-story building on Transit Road between Casey and North French Roads to include first floor commercial and second floor apartments was approved in May 2014.
- 4) A mixed-use proposal for redevelopment of the former Cantalician Center building on Eggert Road was approved in June 2014. This project is planned as mostly apartment units, with first-floor office space.
- 5) A mixed-use development was proposed to replace an older commercial building on Main Street and Hirschfield Road that straddles the Village-Town line. The project will include a 3-story building with first floor commercial/office uses and upper story apartments. The project was approved in July 2014.

The following activity was proposed for land within the Traditional Neighborhood overlays (TNB, TND) during 2013-2014:

- A town-initiated request to rezone the Maynard Alley right-of-way in Eggertsville from CF-TNB-1 and OB-TNB-1 to R-3 in response to a neighborhood request was approved in October 2013.
- A request to rezone land at Main Street and Richfield Road from GB to TNB-1 was withdrawn and eventually re-submitted to the ZBA to allow a mixed-use development (see B4, above).
- A request to rezone the former Westwood Country Club from RC to TND for a mixed-use project is pending before the Town Board.

3-2 Encourage compact, pedestrian-friendly development through Planned Residential options, including but not limited to neo-traditional design.

A) Activity or Actions

No changes or upgrades have been made to the Planned Residential District (PRD) during 2013-2014.

Section 6-9 of the Zoning Ordinance, “Planned Unit Development Process,” was added to the code in May 2013 to permit coordinated developments that allow flexibility for responding to market demands and the needs of tenants. This process is required for development or redevelopment for areas measuring 30 acres or more in size. A further amendment to the Zoning Ordinance applied this requirement to the new Recreation Conservation (RC) zoning district, an important inclusion since many of the properties planned for RC zoning meet or exceed 30 acres.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

No projects have been submitted to date under the PRD provisions of the ordinance; however, recent projects have been proposed that incorporate multi-use buildings (see Policy 3-1B, above). In addition, in July 2014 the Town received an application for rezoning of the former Westwood Country Club to create a PUD on 145± acres. That application is currently undergoing review. To the greatest extent possible, all approved site plans are required to include an accessible sidewalk system to serve employees, customers and/or the general public.

3-3 Modify provisions of the Suburban Agricultural district to reduce conversions of rural to suburban development patterns.

A) Activity or Actions

The Suburban Agriculture (SA) zoning district has not been modified during the report period.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Not including the Town-initiated rezonings to the Recreation Conservation district, the rezoning of SA land has slowed somewhat from the previous report period. Four applications to rezone SA land were received in 2013-2014 (not including 7 Town-sponsored rezoning requests to Recreation Conservation district), three of which were approved and one is pending. Two of the approvals rezoned some of the last remaining SA land on Transit Road between Casey and North French Roads for the Fox Creek senior development. The other approval was to allow expansion of an industrial use on Millersport Highway. The pending application pertains to land on Casey Road at the north terminus of Youngs Road; this request would permit development of a 30-lot residential subdivision.

It is expected that SA properties in Amherst, especially those located along collector or arterial roads where that zone is no longer considered appropriate, will continue to come under pressure for rezoning. This trend needs to be monitored and appropriate amendments reflected in the Conceptual Land Use Plan.

3-4 Reduce future new commercial development in North Amherst and along highway strips.

A) Activity or Actions

The rural nature and sparse population in North Amherst have naturally limited the pace of commercial development in this area. In 2014 the Town created a new Recreation Conservation (RC) zoning district to separate and protect the public, private and civic uses related to recreation and conservation, many of which are located in North Amherst. Since the existing Community Facilities (CF) district (which many of these properties were zoned) permits residential development, this new district was considered a more appropriate zone because it prohibits residential uses. The Town initiated the rezoning to RC of 27 properties throughout the Town, several of which are located north of North French Road, to further protect these sites.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Of the total 83 rezoning requests received in 2013-2014, sixteen (19%) pertained to land north of North French Road, the area denoted as North Amherst in the Comprehensive Plan. All but one of these requests involved Town-initiated rezoning to the new RC district. Based on this record, it is safe to assume that commercial growth is not altering the overall rural character of North Amherst. Although the majority of new commercial projects in the Town were proposed along collectors and arterials, they are considered redevelopment or infill projects that are not contributing to strip development.

3-5 Apply design standards to enhance community appearance and sense of place.

A) Activity or Actions

1. The Zoning Ordinance does not include design guidelines; however, inclusion of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process into the Ordinance in 2014 for lots measuring 30 acres or larger was aimed at addressing the aesthetics of large sites. The PUD regulations include requirements regarding landscaping, aesthetics, screening, circulation and signage. For properties less than 30 acres, design guidelines will continue to be negotiated as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. This Ad Hoc approach lacks the impact that would be accomplished if more comprehensive and consistent design guidelines were available.

In its review of site plans, the Planning Department routinely cites zoning ordinance provisions for landscaping, screening, lighting, signs, access and connectivity, with the goal of improving the function and appearance of new developments. These comments are then incorporated into the project and/or made conditions of approval.

2. In response to a Town Board directive to protect residential uses in the Town, an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance was prepared and approved in 2014 that requires increased side or rear setbacks for properties adjacent to residential districts. The new requirement is for these setbacks to be at least 30 feet for buildings less than 35 feet in height; for buildings taller than 35 feet, the minimum side and rear setbacks must be three feet for each foot of building height. In addition, front yard setbacks were adjusted to provide a graduated height whereby the first 35 feet of building height is 20 feet and any higher portion of the building must be set back 35 feet.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

A dialogue with developers about the architectural features of their projects that are expected to carry over to future developments, particularly on high-visibility sites has been ongoing. Increased use of design standards to guide commercial growth would provide the Town greater input on the aesthetics of projects and thereby enhance overall community appearance. In 2014 the Town initiated a project to draft major amendments to the Zoning Code. As currently envisioned, the project will include a general diagnosis of the code's consistency with contemporary zoning standards, provide updated commercial districts that respond to the function of each type, and add form-based provisions. This initiative will provide a level of building design guidance absent from the current code. Partial funding for the project is being provided by a grant from the New York State Energy and Research Development Agency.

3-6 Apply Context Sensitive design standards to designated character roads.

A) Activity or Actions

See response to Transportation Policy 6-1. In 2014, a Complete Streets report was completed which provides the foundation for establishing Complete Street policies. This report states that Complete Streets are for the use of multi-modal transportation options, which also includes sidewalks and pedestrian activities such as biking and walking. Implementing such policies requires the close cooperation of transportation providers with the City of Buffalo, NYSDOT,

the NFTA, and other agencies. The transportation planning agencies responsible for various levels of responsibility for transportation facilities will be engaging with the Town in the process of drafting a Complete Street policy capable of being implemented.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

In recent years transportation planners have accepted the concept of “complete streets” where numerous forms and modes of transportation are designed into a transportation corridor that are also visually pleasing and harmonious with land uses adjacent to the corridor.

3-7 Protect and retain the identity of special places through design guidelines.

A) Activity or Actions

See response to Policy 3-5.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

See response to Policy 3-5.

3-8 Consider tax incentives for reinvestment, revitalization and redevelopment of commercial properties and housing in older areas with less emphasis on new “Greenfield” development.

A) Activity or Actions

No activity to report in 2013 or 2014

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

3-9 Rezone and/or provide incentives for reuse of underutilized/obsolete properties for economically viable ones.

A) Activity or Actions

There were no new actions undertaken during the report period.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

This policy seeks to address lands in the Town that may no longer be viable for the uses or forms of development that were/are allowed under existing zoning. The two amendments to the Zoning Ordinance adopted in 2012 to facilitate reuse of these properties –the “Live-Work” zoning district and the “Traditional Neighborhood Business Overlay District (-TNB-3)”– have not yet been utilized. Also see response to Policy 3-1B.

3-10 Tailor commercial zoning districts to the unique physical characteristics of older commercial areas in need of revitalization.

A) Activities or Actions

See Policy 3-5

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The 2008 Zoning Ordinance amendment to permit upper-story residential uses in the commercial zoning districts to foster mixed-use development continued to be utilized in the Town, as described in Policy 3-1B.

The use of the alternative parking plan appears to be increasing in recent years, on both small and large sites. This provision has permitted the use of several older properties with size or shape constraints in cases where the building occupancy or type of operation does not require strict adherence to the ordinance requirements.

3-11 Target capital investments to improve the aesthetic character of key locations within the Town.

A) Activities or Actions

In 2015 and 2016, a significant update to the Zoning Code will be in motion. This update was approved in 2014 and will receive financial backing in the form of a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA). Form-based zoning attempts to direct design guidelines and aesthetics of future development projects in the Town.

During 2013-2014 the Town continued its efforts to rehabilitate the historic entranceways along Main Street in Eggertsville and Snyder by earmarking funds to provide/restore lighting to the Smallwood and Darwin entranceways. Additional funding to undertake the rehabilitation of many of the remaining entranceways along this corridor should be forthcoming as a result of state reimbursements for past capital projects.

The Town has been successful in working with regional transportation agencies to introduce medians and other landscape features into highway design plans. Capital programming will be considered as a means of implementing recommendations of the Town Highway Context Sensitive Design Project (see Transportation Policy 6-1).

Funds to implement a streetscape project in the Main/Eggert commercial district were included in the 2012-2017 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for construction in 2016 and 2017. The project is envisioned to include new street furniture, architectural street lights, paver-style crosswalks, and improved separation of parking and sidewalks with the objective of both improving the overall aesthetics and the pedestrian environment. Implementation will coincide with a planned NYSDOT drainage project for Main Street between Bailey Avenue and the I-290.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The projected continued reduction of resources at all levels of government will likely make it increasingly difficult to fund capital projects to improve community aesthetics. In addition, available bonding capacity for local projects has been focused on critical upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and not on projects to improve community aesthetics. This trend

will continue through 2017. Creative use of available funds and public-private partnerships must be explored to implement this objective.

3-12 Initiate public capital investment projects to encourage/support private investment.

The intent of this policy is to use public investment to encourage private investment in elements such as streetscape improvements that will improve the visual character and encourage private investment in older commercial areas, highway and utility improvements, parks and recreation facilities and other amenities that encourage neighborhood preservation and enhancement.

A) Activities or Actions

The 2015-2020 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes \$2.2 million in improvement projects for seven public parks: Amherst State Park, Nature View, Bassett, Dann Lake, Veteran's and the North Amherst Recreation Center. A significant portion of that (\$800,000) is allocated to general improvements to the remaining facilities. Those improvements include the replacement of ball field backstops and resurfacing basketball and tennis courts. The significant public investments in these facilities have encouraged the preservation of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Although the transportation investments in Harlem Road in Amherst and Cheektowaga were made by New York State, these investments have been followed by significant private sector investment in new and rehabilitated commercial structures and an attendant strengthening of neighboring residential areas.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Other than the investments in parks, Amherst's capital investments have been focused on infrastructure, specifically the wastewater treatment plant, sewer and water lines and drainage improvements. Due to the age of these systems and modest investments in the past, these facilities will continue to have a high priority of capital funding.

3-13 Designate a town-wide open space and greenway network to be achieved through a variety of mechanisms.

As suggested by the Plan, implementation of this policy may include approaches such as: acquisition by regulatory agencies, public acquisition and private owner conservation of greenways, recreational trails and farmland protection

A) Activities or Actions

Regulatory Approaches

As a regulatory measure to help preserve designated recreation, open space and greenways, the Town drafted a new Recreation Conservation District (RC) zoning classification. The new RC district enables the Town and private land owners to designate valued lands for conservation and recreation purposes. This new district has been applied to all of the Towns conservation and

recreation areas as well as numerous privately-owned recreation uses, many of which are golf courses.

The Nature View Park Conservation Easement was executed in 2006. Similar to agricultural easements, development rights have effectively been extinguished assuring that the entire 1,267± acres will be retained forever in its predominantly un-built and natural open space condition. In May of 2008, the Town Board adopted the Management Plan required under the easement agreement and appointed a Nature View Advisory Committee. The Plan outlines specific uses and activities for the property. It provides governing standards, specific procedures and directives, and other management guidance consistent with the purpose of the Conservation Easement. In early 2012, the Nature View Advisory Committee was reorganized as a sub-committee of the Amherst Conservation Advisory Council (ACAC). As part of that reorganization, the Council was also given responsibility for managing other open space resources.

Land Acquisition

Pursuant to a Town Board Resolution, the Amherst Conservation Advisory Council was directed to update the *Amherst Open Space Index* and *Town of Amherst Open Space Acquisition Plan* (1988) with the assistance of the Planning Department. A work program was developed to evaluate lands for their value as open space. The program includes the identification of areas that have a high priority for open space preservation and a palate of tools that can be employed to preserve these lands. The project was suspended in early 2009 and continues to be dormant during this reporting period.

The Town acquired three parcels on Dann Lake Road that have been added to Dann Lake Park. Approximately 34 acres were added to this natural area in 2014. Where necessary, these areas have been added as an amendment to the Parks, Open Space and Trail Map, and the Conceptual Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2006, the Town Board authorized a successful grant application to acquire the 62.4 acre Gramercy Park property. In 2010, due to a breakdown in negotiations for purchase of the parcel, the Town received authorization from New York State to purchase six alternative parcels with a total acreage of 135.51 acres. Those parcels are wholly or partially within the area on the Conceptual Land Use Plan (Figure 6) designated as *Recreation, Open Space and Greenways*. These acquisitions include key parcels that have been added to Amherst State Park and Nature View Park and, in some cases, create linkages to existing open space areas. Amherst received title to all of the parcels at the end of 2013.

Trail Development

The Town of Amherst received approval of a grant in the amount of \$849,000 for the design and construction of a multi-use trail on the former Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way that parallels the Youngmann Expressway. Funding for that project was withdrawn due to communication errors between the Town and the NYSDOT. Although reapproved locally, final reauthorization was denied at the State level. With the encouragement of NYSDOT and the support of SUNY Buffalo, in early 2014, Amherst applied for a federal Transportation Enhancement Project grant for capital funds to construct a portion of the project linking the

commercial corridor along Niagara Falls Boulevard with UB's North Campus. That application was again rejected by NYSDOT's Central Office in Albany.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The term Greenway is increasingly used to describe natural corridors or networks of open space whose primary function is conservation but may also provide passive recreational opportunities. The integration of greenways into community plans is increasing as the environmental, recreational/health/fitness and economic benefits to the community are recognized. In addition to public funding, regulatory approaches and private land donations, many communities have successfully integrated private fundraising approaches into their greenway/recreational trail programs to help fund the development of greenways and recreational trails. This approach is beginning to gain momentum in Amherst.

Off-street multi-use recreational trails are increasingly popular for passive recreation and health/fitness purposes both in the US and Canada. Most of these facilities serve in a limited capacity as transportation facilities in addition to their recreational component. Federal and state funded highway projects (such as the Sweet Home Road project) are required to consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists and provide sidewalks, bike lanes and off-street multi-use trails where appropriate. The Town of Amherst Recreation and Parks Master Plan (June 2004) determined through the use of a statistically valid household survey that walking for leisure and bicycling were the number one and number two (respectively) most popular recreational activities with 73% and 44% (respectively) of Amherst households participating (57% and 42% of people surveyed participating). The Comprehensive Plan should continue to emphasize the importance of its off-street recreational trail network along greenways where appropriate.

The Town of Amherst could consider a partnership with an existing not-for-profit organization to raise private funds for Town-owned and maintained greenways and recreational trails as an additional mechanism for achieving the Comprehensive Plan's stated goals regarding a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network.

3-14 Encourage conservation development with incentives for the dedication of open space in private developments.

A) Activities or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Several factors have limited the implementation of Policy 3-14, not the least of which is the national downturn in residential development which has impacted the Town. In addition to this lack of demand for new housing units, Amherst's inventory of parcels suitable for residential subdivision is diminishing. The number of parcels that might be attractive for residential development has also been severely reduced by the aggressive enforcement of state and federal wetlands regulations. This factor is exacerbated by the occurrence of poorly drained soils north of Main Street and inadequate private storm water management. These factors have contributed to the growth of areas subject to regulation.

3-15 Initiate a public open space acquisition program consistent with the open space, recreation and greenway network.

A) Activities or Actions

A major component of the Town's plan-compliant open space acquisition initiative has been the purchase and extinguishment of development rights within its Farmland Protection Program, an area of 1,265 acres. This initiative also involves the acquisition of conservation easements on these parcels. As of the end of January 2015, 785 acres of agricultural land in North Amherst have been protected. These acquisitions were achieved using a 75/25% matching program through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant Program. Amherst's matching cost has been significantly reduced in several cases by landowner "Bargain Sale" of the development rights.

In late December 2011, the Town completed the purchase of six open space parcels totaling 135.51 acres, all wholly within the area designated in the Comprehensive Plan as "Recreation, Open Space and Greenways." Two of these parcels filled significant gaps in the configuration of Amherst State Park and Nature View Park. These purchases were assisted by an Environmental Bond Fund Grant from New York State. A long, extremely narrow, 5.6-acre parcel surrounded by Nature View Park was subsequently acquired in 2013.

Finally, the size of Dann Lake Park is currently 171.38 acres. Three parcels totaling 45.5 acres were added to that passive recreational facility in 2014. These acquisitions were the result of a development agreement with Dockside Village, a residential community immediately north of the park.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

As observed in 2007, the construction of state-of-the-art golfing facilities that are open to the public with reasonable greens fees has put one or more country clubs in the Town at risk of being sold. Recently, Westwood Country Club was sold to a partnership that included two of the region's major development firms. This situation will ultimately result in the course being developed for other land uses with a resultant loss of open space particularly in the more intensively developed southern portions of the Town.

The ACAC has concluded that "invasive vegetative species" will be a problem for maintaining some of the conservation values of significant open space resources. These species favor hydric soils and may increase the acreage that falls under state wetlands regulation. This has significant implications for land use planning as it may reduce the land area available to accommodate new development or redevelopment and increase the amount of space under State regulation, thereby increasing the inventory of open space in Amherst.

Under the Town's Farmland Protection Program, much of the remaining agricultural lands eligible for inclusion in the program are non-farmer owned and may or may not be rented or worked by active farmers. Although the sentiment for preservation of agricultural lands in North Amherst from non-farmers has been positive, non-farmers who own parcels within the preservation area have not always been as interested in selling development rights as those families actively farming. Although the Comprehensive Plan identifies those parcels to remain

as agriculture, anticipation by non-farmers that their land may still hold a higher market value for larger scale development still exists.

Amherst's farmland acquisitions have traditionally been funded through the State Farmland Protection Implementation Grant program, which, in some cases, requires that the Town contribute a minimum 12.5% and, in the majority of cases, up to 25% local match. Although the Town has the ability to supplement its local match with other sources of funding, the Town typically pays the match from bond funds, open space fees and in-kind services. This policy is undergoing significant changes including the requirement that all future purchases of development rights must be "Bargain Sale", a transaction that requires that the landowner agree to donate the local match. In addition, the Town has initiated an update to its Farmland Protection Plan that will explore the option of transferring farmland program administration to a not-for-profit conservation organization. This model is consistent with the trend among other upstate New York communities.

3-16 Improve the predictability and consistency of the rezoning and other development approval processes through the application of clear town-wide land use policies.

A) Activities or Actions

All but one of the total 83 rezoning petitions for which a decision was rendered during 2013-2014 were approved, indicating general consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The only request for a Plan amendment was submitted by a developer seeking to construct a 30-lot residential subdivision on Casey Road at the north terminus of Youngs Road. That request, to eliminate all references to the "Youngs Road extension" from the text and mapping in the Plan, was approved the Town Board in early 2015.

During 2013-2014, the consistency between Planning Board recommendations on rezonings and Town Board actions decreased slightly to 96% (from 100% in 2012) due to three petitions (Westwood Country Club, Maynard Alley, Linwood/South Forest). This can still be considered a high level of consistency in light of previous studies done during the years 1995–2000 (78%), 1976–1985 (82%), 2007 (94%) and 2008-2011 (95%). The slight decrease from 2012 can be attributed to the high level of public input and the controversial nature surrounding the three petitions.

As noted in the introduction to this section, four requests (two per year) were received during the report period to modify or relieve zoning conditions. While not large in number, approval of these requests is a concern since it erodes the predictability of the development process.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

There are two types of requests periodically submitted for Town approval that can actually erode the predictability of the rezoning process:

1. Requests for relief of conditions imposed at rezoning or site plan approval. During the report period, there were three such requests. Two were approved (additional parking for Ingram Micro on Wehrle Drive; use of rear SA-zoned portion of land for Fox

Creek senior development on Transit Road). The third request (relief of restriction to office use for two properties on North Forest Road) was approved by the Town Board in early 2015.

2. Requests for restricted parking in residential zones. During 2013-2014 there were five such requests, all of which were recommended for approval by the Planning Board and approved by the ZBA.

Although these requests are not numerous, they have the potential to not only fuel the public's uncertainty and weaken their assurance in the approval process, but to also ultimately undermine their faith in the reliability of Town government.

Unavoidable factors contribute to the increasing difficulty in predicting the length of the development approval process in coming years:

- As the most usable land is taken up by development over time, the remaining parcels are more likely to be encumbered by environmental or dimensional constraints that require lengthier study before approval can be granted.
- Parcels proposed for infill development are more likely to require area variances which necessitate a hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

3-17 Set clear standards for development quality to increase the level of certainty in the development process.

A) Activities or Actions

A resolution passed by the Town Board in 2011 requires that context-sensitive building design criteria be prepared and incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. These regulations will increase the predictability for developers by setting clear standards they need to follow, reducing the potential for protracted review processes that could involve costly plan revisions. This will also increase the level of certainty for neighbors of proposed projects. These criteria have not yet been adopted.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The practice of reviewing design elements has been initiated in recent years with developers of large-scale projects. Incorporating design elements into site plan review has started a precedent in the Town that will become more prevalent in coming years, more so if formal design guidelines become part of the Zoning Ordinance. The use of design standards to guide commercial growth will provide the Town greater input on the aesthetics of projects and thereby enhance overall community appearance.

3-18 Provide for periodic review and revision of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

A) Activities or Actions

The Planning Board approved a recommendation to change the review process of the Comprehensive Plan from an annual to a biennial review. The Planning Department has developed a scope and schedule for a biennial review and revision of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Department has conducted an analysis of the Town Zoning Map and identified zoning districts whose land use designation is not consistent with land uses proposed on the Conceptual Land Use Plan. Additional analysis is necessary to determine actions that might be undertaken to address inconsistencies.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Town Planning Department has proposed several amendments to both text and mapping in the Comprehensive Plan to reflect changing conditions within the Town. This is currently awaiting approval by the Town Board.

The Town has embarked on an aggressive project to expand policy guidance for each form of commercial development. That project will also provide the regulatory language designed to implement that guidance. In addition and for the first time, form-based coding will be introduced to the code. The form of regulation will be designed to enable the redevelopment of key locations while protecting the residential values that exist in those locations. This coding will also require policy guidance that will be incorporated onto the Plan.

For a number of years, community decision makers have discussed the use of architectural design guidelines as a means of accommodating context-sensitive redevelopment projects in its mature neighborhoods. This tool will be evaluated in 2016 as an element of the Plan and code review process.

CHAPTER 4 – Natural and Cultural Resources

Chapter 4 of the Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan discusses the importance of preserving Amherst's sensitive natural (environmental) and cultural (historic) resources and outlines a series of policies intended to achieve the stated objectives. The Plan's objectives include the establishment of an interconnected open space network incorporating significant natural and cultural resources; protecting sensitive environmental resources including surface water/wetlands, air quality, trees/woodlands and historic/cultural resources through improved regulations, policies and management. The following is an analysis of those policies.

4-1 Establish greenway corridors along streams as part of a town-wide open space system.

- A) Activity or Actions
See discussion of Policy 3-13
- B) Observed or Emerging Trends
See discussion of Policy 3-13

4-2 Provide conservation development options to encourage dedication of significant habitat as permanent open space.

- A) Activity or Actions
See discussion of Policy 3-14
- B) Observed or Emerging Trends
See discussion of Policy 3-14

4-3 Acquire land or development rights on land with environmental resources of local significance, consistent with an open space plan or determined to be in the public interest.

- A) Activity or Actions
See discussion of Policy 3-15
- B) Observed or Emerging Trends
See discussion of Policy 3-15

4-4 Establish buffer/setback standards for new development to help protect streams of significance.

- A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report. See discussion of Policy 7-2

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Local communities are using regulatory tools such as Conservation Overlay Zoning regulations and Riparian Area Protection Overlay Zones to protect water quality in stream corridors. The Town should research new techniques or options that might be available to support this policy. In the most recent past, the Town has evaluated each open space acquisition in terms of its role in preserving stream corridors and providing for flood storage. Over 135 acres of land that potentially provide these functions have been preserved and an additional 60 are in the initial stages of acquisition.

4-5 Adopt a town policy of no net loss of designated jurisdictional wetland within the town.

A) Activity or Actions

A clarification of the “no net loss of designated jurisdictional wetlands” policy (Policy 4-5) was needed as the expansion of wetland areas created an impression of a significant “net gain” of regulated wetland area. With direction from the Planning Board, the Planning Department developed up-to-date information on wetland values, changes to our wetland resources and the wetland management policies of communities of similar size leading to draft revisions of Policy 4-5 to be reviewed by the Planning Board. It is anticipated that that the Town Board will adopt a form of that policy amendment sometime in late 2015.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Since 2008 the NYSDEC has remapped its wetlands as a result of an increase in size and location of wetlands. Wetland TE-38 was expanded and Wetland TE-45 was added (2011), both located in northwest Amherst. Wetlands CC-35 and CC-45, located in northeast Amherst were expanded in 2011 by more than 600 acres (see Figure 5). It is anticipated that other areas of the Town, particularly in the northern portions, will see significant expansions of regulated wetland areas in the coming years. A clarification of this policy may be needed as the rapid expansion of these types of wetlands has created a significant gain in designated jurisdictional wetlands. The original policy was intended to direct mitigation for wetland impacts to areas within the Town; mitigating wetland impacts within the Town is not necessary if wetland losses are more than offset by existing undesigned wetlands in the Town now being designated as state wetlands under the jurisdiction of and regulated by NYSDEC and/or the USACE.

4-6 Initiate watershed management plans in cooperation with the County and other municipalities in the watershed.

A) Activity or Actions

There have been no significant actions or activities that address this policy.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

There has been a Tonawanda Creek Management Committee that has been working on a plan for the watershed.

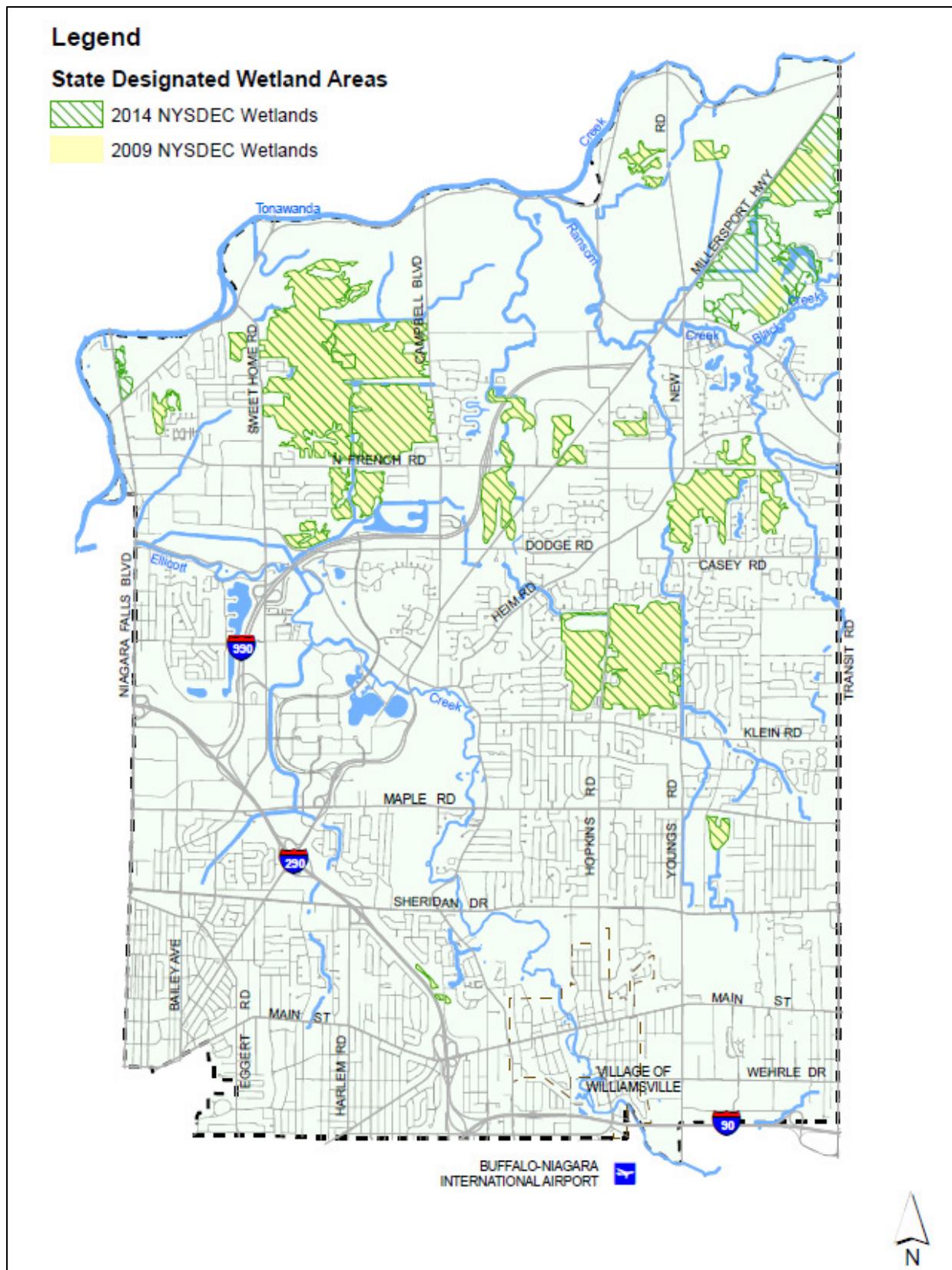


Figure 5: NYSDEC Changes to Designated Wetlands 2009-2014

4-7 Apply “best management practices” (BMPs) to reduce water quality impacts of development.

A) Activity or Actions

See discussion of Policy 4-4 and 4-11

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

See discussion of Policy 4-4

4-8 Implement “low impact development” standards and techniques designed to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff from development.

A) Activity or Actions

See discussion of Policy 7-2

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

See discussion of Policy 7-2

4-9 Reduce air quality emissions by pursuing Comprehensive Plan strategies such as compact, mixed-use development patterns; tree planting, transit and other alternatives to automobile use, etc.

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Plan discusses air quality noting that automobile use is a primary contributor to local air quality and recommends a series of strategies to reduce the number of automobiles on the road and vehicle miles traveled. These strategies include promoting compact, mixed-use development, tree planting, transit and other alternatives to automobile use. Vehicle miles of travel (VMT), is a measure of highway vehicle travel over a geographic area. According to data provided by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), total travel along highways in Amherst has increased; the estimated Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) increased by 0.6% between 2007 and 2011.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) maintains air quality monitoring stations throughout the region. The NYSDEC reports that the region currently attains all standards for air quality. While these standards are met, the DEC is increasingly concerned about aerosols. These are characterized as “ultra-fine transport particulates of sulfur and ozone” that move with the jet stream. Aerosols affecting this region can originate here and also migrate from areas in the mid-west. Aerosols are known to cause upper respiratory ailments, and nationally they travel from west to east causing significant ozone and smog problems along

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the east coast. The DEC reports that new standards for sulfurs that contribute to aerosols are likely to be promulgated in the near future.

The American Lung Association monitors data about air quality for communities across the nation. Its latest data for Erie County is rated as “B” for Ozone and “B” for particulate pollution over a 24 hour period, both measures are positive. The County’s air quality has been steadily improving since 2001 (<http://www.stateoftheair.org/2013/states/new-york/erie-36029.html>).

In 2012 the GBNRTC announced that the region is “in attainment” for air quality and no longer qualifies for congestion management funding that is used to assist in making highway improvements.

4-10 Support the Amherst Tree Law

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Amherst Tree Law exempts farming activity from the permitting process, a legal loophole that has allowed the clearing of trees from two large parcels owned by development interests with the stated intent of farming the properties. The Tree Law should be reviewed to determine whether additional protection is required and to include monitoring to ensure farming is being undertaken.

In addition, violations of the Tree Law are considered misdemeanors and are the prosecutorial jurisdiction of Erie County. Consequently, most Tree Law violators are not prosecuted as the County has not shown an interest in pursuing charges against Tree Law violators. Revisions to the Tree Law that would make the charge a violation which could be handled by the Town Court would be more likely to be prosecuted and potentially reduce the number of violations.

4-11 Implement a “Greening Amherst” planting initiative consistent with a program of managing the “Town Landscape.”

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

More local municipalities are preparing detailed inventories of their public trees (street and park trees) and preparing and implementing urban forest management plans utilizing GIS/GPS technology to manage and improve the quantity and quality of the tree canopy within their communities. This is especially critical moving forward as the Emerald Ash Borer will likely have a significant negative impact on the Towns street trees, park trees and public/private forested areas. The Town has been pro-active in planning to manage the physical and fiscal

impacts posed by this invasive insect. Other municipalities both locally and nationally are taking similar steps to protect their street and park tree resource.

The concept of sustainability as it pertains to the built environment is at the forefront of national discussion of development and land management. Techniques such as the application of Leadership in Energy and Environmental design (LEED) standards for new buildings and emerging guidelines for built landscapes and managing natural areas are becoming increasingly more important as the connection between energy use and climate change is established. Federal and State guidelines/laws regarding stormwater management and quality are an important step towards that end. Energy conservation as part of landscape management as well as the preservation and restoration of native ecosystems is an emerging trend that could be encouraged as part of private development and included as policies for the development and management of Town facilities and properties.

Reducing lawn areas by re-establishing self-sustaining native plant communities can reduce maintenance costs and carbon emissions for private and public developments while providing biodiversity and valuable habitat for native fauna. Rain gardens and bioswales help manage stormwater runoff while improving water quality, aquatic and terrestrial habitat. These are increasingly included with site plan submittals as part of stormwater pollution prevention plans. The Engineering Department recently used grant funds to implement a rain garden as part of redeveloping the site's stormwater management system. Similar projects could be undertaken at the Municipal Complex on Audubon Parkway as well as various parks. The planting of native species for private development projects can be advanced through changes to the Landscaping Regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. Management and/or eradication of harmful invasive plant species should become policy for all of the Town's publicly owned properties, particularly those considered to be significant natural areas.

Green or living roofs are an emerging trend and the Town should encourage and facilitate their application to both private and public building projects as part of the "Greening Amherst" initiative. Green or living roofs provide benefits related to energy conservation, extension of roof membrane life, reduction of the urban heat island effect (lower rooftop temperatures), and improved stormwater runoff quality and stormwater quantity management. This type of roof should be considered the next time roof replacement is contemplated for the many flat-roofed municipal buildings. The above image summarizes some of the principles of sustainability that could be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan and related Town policies.

4-12 Encourage designation of historically significant resources for protection and provide incentives available through the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

A) Activity or Actions

Historic preservation activity during 2013-2014 is summarized below.

- The HPC processed three (3) properties for local landmark status that were designated by the Town Board:
 - Rosary Hall (on Daemen College campus)
 - Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart (main building only), 3560 Main Street

- 58 Youngs Road

- The HPC sponsored a presentation/discussion with SHPO representatives from Albany that was held in conjunction with the Williamsville HPC.
- HPC provided input to the Town for the re-electrification of the Main & Smallwood and the Main & Roycroft historic entranceways.
- HPC requested an update to the “Demolition Delay” regulations, which was granted by the Town Board. This update allows the *Updated Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Places* to be referenced as the source of determining which properties should be referred to the HPC for demolition approval.
- The HPC continued its historic marker program that resulted in placement of a plaque on Rosary Hall, the second building [in addition to the Coplon Mansion (Curtis Hall)] on the Daemen College campus to receive a plaque. A ceremony was held to commemorate the occasion. In addition, a marker has been received for the former Mennonite Meeting House which was converted to an Evans Bank branch by Iskalo Development.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

In recent years the HPC has increased its efforts to spur designation of historic properties through encouragement and personal follow-up with owners of worthy properties. The Commission also seeks to identify potential areas for historic district designation in Amherst.

The HPC desires to increase public awareness of historic resources and educate property owners as to the value these resources contribute to the overall quality-of-life in Amherst. The Commission is currently working on both a newsletter and informational packets for the public to increase awareness of historic preservation and its benefits. HPC brochures will continue to be available at various Town offices and at other locations throughout the Town.

4-13 Support the cultural, visual and performing arts as part of the education Key Initiative.

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report

4-14 Develop management plans for public natural and historic resources of local significance.

A) Activity or Actions

As discussed in Policy 3-12, the Town has developed and adopted draft management plans for Nature View, East Amherst Conservation Area and Dann Lake Parks. The Town also completed master plans for active facilities at Creek Wood and Fetto Parks and is in the process of developing a similar plan for Dellwood Park. Implementation projects have been funded or are in preparation for several of these parks. Funding initiatives include the development of grant applications for specific plan-related projects. Future improvements to park facilities should be guided by an update to the adopted 2004 Park and Recreation Master Plan currently being explored.

Although there are no management plans for historic resources, one designated local historic landmark—the Town-owned historic entranceways—appeared in the CIP for restoration beginning in 2013. Although no funding was included in the 2014-2019 capital program, the current plan calls for a total investment of \$189,000 for the period 2015/16 for the restoration of these entranceways in Eggertsville and Snyder.

Under its “Demolition Delay” regulations, the Historic Preservation Commission has the authority to review requests for the demolition of historic structures or parts thereof. This provision has been utilized several times in 2013-2014 and has given the HPC an additional opportunity to review and regulate the disposition of historic resources in the Town.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Amherst Conservation Advisory Council was tasked with the oversight of the Town’s passive parks/natural areas such as the Great Baehre Conservation Area, Nature View Park, Dann Lake Park, Amherst State Park and six new open space acquisitions. With the assistance of the ACAC, the Planning Department, Engineering Department, Parks Department, Youth and Recreation Department and others collaborated to prepare management plans for new acquisitions and review and revise (as necessary) existing management plans. The preparation of management plans for newly acquired open space should be a priority for the ACAC.

Comprehensive Plan policies directed at the management of Amherst’s historic resources have received a higher level of consideration since 2011 as evidenced by the addition of the new legislation enabling the review of demolition permits by the Historic Preservation Commission. In addition, there is a renewed interest in the rehabilitation of the historic gateways along Main Street. The Town has made significant strides in replacing damaged sections of these gateways and anticipates initiating a program to systematically rehabilitating those gateways in accordance with the need identified in the 2004 *Town of Amherst Architectural Conditions Survey of Historic Entranceways*.

The Town completed the acquisition of 81.65 acres of land in Northeast Amherst in 2012. This acreage, combined with an additional 74.73 acres of land in the vicinity previously acquired constitutes the recently named “East Amherst Conservation Area.” The ACAC has drafted a management plan for this 156.38 acre group of properties that was adopted in 2014.

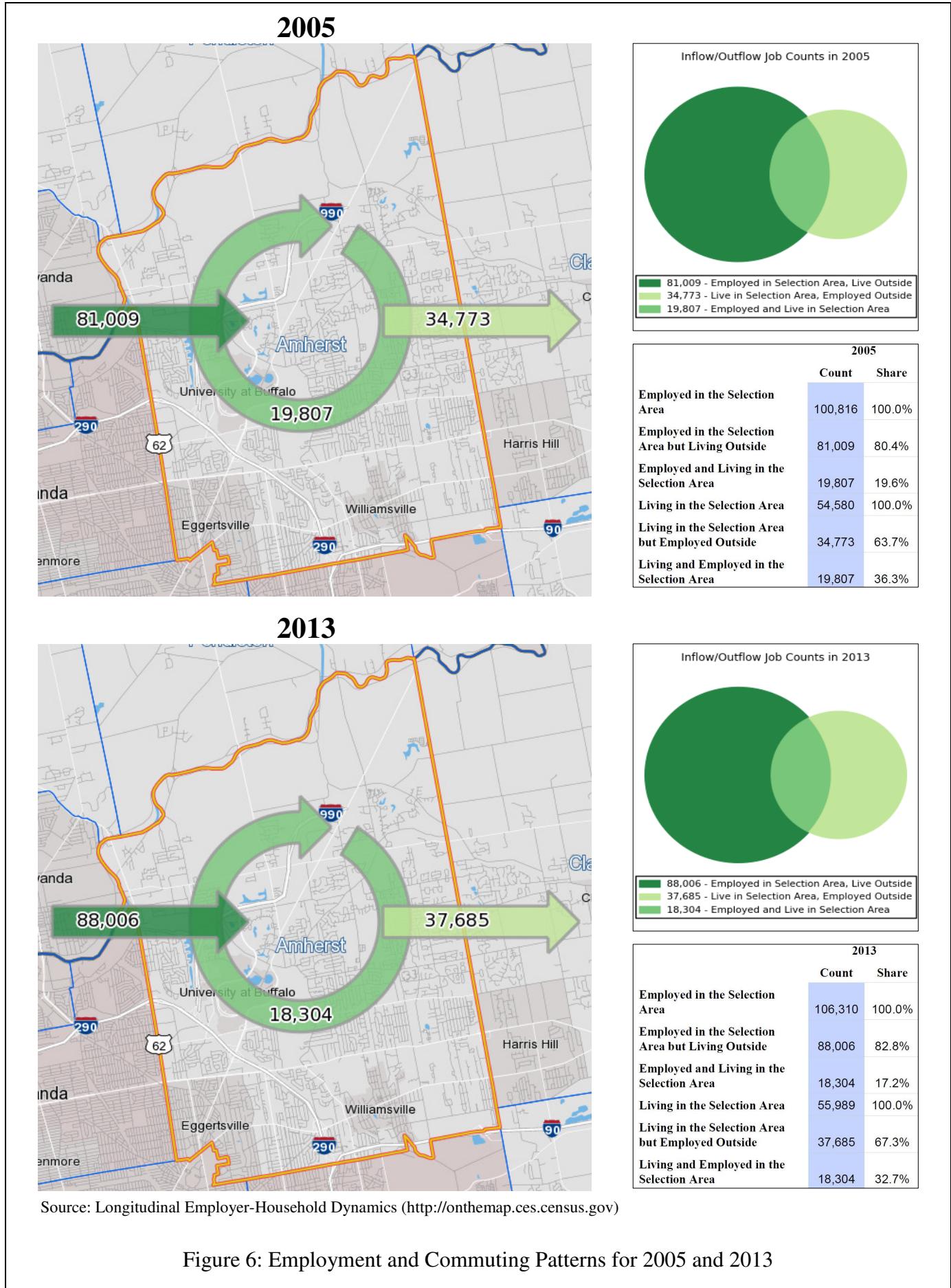
CHAPTER 5 – Economic Development

Economic development is the force that has transformed Amherst into a regional center of commerce and employment. As reported in the 2011 Plan Review, employment trends in Amherst continue to be favorable as employment growth exceeds expectations despite recent economic challenges. The most significant information presented there indicates that estimates of jobs and employment growth in the decade of the nineties were underestimated in the *Inventory and Analysis Report*, the document that formed the basis for the Comprehensive Plan. Information presented in that report indicated that Amherst added approximately 5,300 jobs from 1990 to 2000. Significant employment growth continued from 2000-2010 (93,938 to 99,541). According to the 2009-2013 ACS data, employment again grew to 101,951, a 2.4% increase from 2010. Data released from the Census Bureau's 2013 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LED) Survey indicates that overall employment grew to 106,310. This level of employment exceeds that projected for 2020 (103,844).

While the overall number of new jobs is important, the trend of continued positive growth in existing businesses is also crucial. Sustained growth within companies and businesses that located within the Town during the 1980s and 1990s has been a key to the Town's economic success. Much of the employment growth that occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s took place within the Town's industrial and business parks; most was supported through long range land use planning and the application of tax incentives through the Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA). Employment growth in Amherst was greatest in NAICS sectors (North American Industry Classification System) such as finance and insurance (+3,555 jobs), professional and technical services (+1,710), management of companies (+1,408), and health care (+2,556). Continued growth of "home grown", or "legacy companies" is a goal of the Plan and the AIDA. While office growth is still occurring, this trend is beginning to slow and may change significantly in the future.

Business and associated job growth in Amherst has benefited the Town and its residents. However the growing number of job opportunities in Amherst also benefited many surrounding communities and the region. As illustrated in the commuting patterns displayed in Figure 6, the number of persons commuting to jobs located in Amherst increased by 6,997 (+8.64%) from 2005-2013. Sustained job growth and stability in Amherst have been supported by the Town and other agencies through continued public investment in roads and other infrastructure, maintenance of high quality schools, and the use of various incentives and development/redevelopment support services provided by the AIDA. The State adopted recent changes to enabling legislation that limits the ability of IDA's to incentivize redevelopment by broadly defining retail uses. This is particularly troublesome for assisting mixed-use projects that breathe new life into underperforming properties. There have also been efforts by some Erie County officials to limit or discontinue the use of tax incentives to support development/redevelopment by agencies like the AIDA. Pursuit of such policies would undermine efforts to encourage development and redevelopment and could curtail job growth or even result in job losses. These efforts must be monitored and assessed for their affect on the Town's economic development posture.

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A concern has been raised by the AIDA that some of the basic assumptions and initiatives originally identified in Chapter 5 of the plan are in transition. This includes:

- Diminished importance of office development as the primary driver of economic development in the Town. This concern is due to technology changes that permit more telecommuting and shared work space. There is a resulting national trend toward shrinking square-feet-per worker demand and corresponding weakening of the office market.
- It is an appropriate time to re-evaluate the basic data and assumptions that produced the recommendations in Chapter 5, data that is now about 25 years old.
- Based on this re-evaluation, a discussion of revising the basic assumption of office use driving economic development may be needed. This could include how to repurpose buildings in established office and industrial parks to meet future needs and market demand.

5-1 Target economic development policies, programs, capital expenditures, and incentives to attract and retain higher paying employment and promote desired forms and locations of development and redevelopment.

A) Activity or Actions

The AIDA continues to implement its programs to attract employment and encourage redevelopment at appropriate locations.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

There is a continuing need to work with the State legislative delegation to modify State law regarding providing incentives to redevelopment project with particular focus on mixed-use locations that will grow the tax base,

5-2 Build flexibility into non-residential zoning so that options are available for various stages of business development.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town applied for and received a ±\$161,000 grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which will be added to ±\$117,000 of local match. The Town will use these funds to develop new commercial and mixed-use zoning provisions that should enhance flexibility to meet current market demands. The project will likely include development of form-based provisions in appropriate locations. It is hoped that clearer, more contemporary code provisions will lead to higher quality context-sensitive development, improved acceptance of different forms of development in the community, and more predictable outcomes.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

It appears that the community readily supports such concepts as mixed use projects, walkability and form-based development regulations provided the resulting projects fit seamlessly into the existing fabric of surrounding residential neighborhoods.

5-3 Promote economic development through collaborations between government, educational institutions, health care organizations and private industries.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town and Daemen College have signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding how each entity collaborates on various types of projects of mutual interest.

A new State initiative called Start Up New York abates most property and income taxes for qualified new employers for a certain time period of time. The program is limited to certain locations on or adjacent to SUNY campuses. There has been limited interest and use of this program in the Town with the Town to date.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Zoning changes and development along Sweet Home Road near the University have resulted in an overall reduction in the amount of land zoned Research and Development (RD), a district that is typically used for light industrial, distributive and office uses. The demand for pure research and development land has changed, and the lands are increasingly being used for office and business park development. The Town and AIDA should work together to review the inventory of land for office and RD use and consider courses of action to address the need for additional lands to accommodate future demand. Such development breeds opportunities for collaboration on economic development initiatives.

The proposed STEM (Science-Technology- Engineering-Manufacturing) Building at ECC North creates an opportunity to enhance workforce training and readiness in the Town and the region. The Town should engage UB, Daemen, and particularly ECC, to improve opportunities for collaboration.

5-4 Work with educational institutions on lifelong learning and other programs to train, attract and retain a skilled workforce.

A) Activity or Actions

The AIDA reported that this function is now the responsibility of NYS Department of Labor and the Erie County Workforce Investment Board.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The AIDA indicated that workforce training appears to be aligning with employer needs within the Town, although there remains some regional deficiencies in certain “middle” skill and manufacturing training.

5-5 Promote commercial development patterns that reduce neighborhood impacts.

A) Activity or Actions

See response to 5.2 above.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

5-6 Adopt commercial development standards for neighborhood compatibility with context sensitive design guidelines.

A) Activity or Actions

See response to 5.2 above.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

5-7 Work with UB to create mixed-use activity centers on the periphery of the campuses.

A) Activity or Actions

A new mixed-use development that includes upper story residential, first floor retail, and new hotel has opened on Sweet Home Road near the Rensch entrance to the UB North campus.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

A proposal to reclassify the proposed Class A office area in the Muir Woods development for student and senior housing is pending before the Planning and Town Boards. This is the area of Muir Woods with the greatest potential for economic development, as it is directly adjacent interstate access via the I-990. Loss of this land for more productive economic uses would diminish the opportunity for the mixed-use development originally envisioned for Muir Woods.

The Rensch/Sweet Home Roads area presents an emerging opportunity to implement this objective.

5-8 Work with UB to promote more educational, social, and cultural ties to the town and to reinforce the role of both campuses as activity centers.

A) Activity or Actions

University officials continue to express enthusiasm for broadening the topics of cooperation to include discussions of how the Town and University might create portals for educational, social and cultural exchanges between the institution and community. No substantive progress has been made in regard to the creation of portals to make the resources of the university more readily accessible to Town residents.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report

5-9 Establish an ongoing, collaborative planning structure with UB.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town and UB have collaborated to execute a Concurrent Use Permit to resolve a Town grant close-out issue related to a trail extension grant located partially on UB property. The Town and UB have been communicating regarding other projects, including the NFTA Alternatives Analysis, proposed road projects, and potential improvements in and around the Northtown Center.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Improved communication and cooperation with UB; consideration should.

5-10 Work with area municipalities and economic development agencies to promote regional economic growth.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town has worked with the Village of Williamsville on a number of projects, including serving on committees for both the development of zoning text changes for the Main Street Corridor and a Main Street streetscape project. It is anticipated that the Town will be working with Village as it develops zoning changes for the portions of the Main Street corridor located adjacent to the Village.

The AIDA is part of the local IDA Leadership Council, which has as its member's representatives from all six IDA's in Erie County, the City of Buffalo, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, and the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise. The purpose of the group is to advance regional economic development initiatives and align IDA incentives to achieve strategic objectives as discussed in Policies 3-8.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Town will continue cooperation with the AIDA and Village on various zoning, development, and streetscape projects of mutual interest.

5-11 Position Amherst as a regional technology center.

A) Activity or Actions

Critical to advancing Amherst as a regional technology center is the continued availability of R&D zoned land. It is imperative that Amherst continue to make land available for technology growth associated with UB and its life sciences and other high-tech initiatives. The proposed Audubon Plan Amendment described in.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

CHAPTER 6 – Transportation

Surface transportation and traffic management in Amherst requires close coordination and collaboration among several government jurisdictions and agencies. Highways traversing the Town of Amherst can fall under the jurisdiction of the Town, Erie County, New York State (NYSDOT), or the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA). Public transit service within the Town is provided by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), while the University at Buffalo provides bus and van services to students, and other agencies provide services to disadvantaged persons and other special populations throughout the Town. The following is an assessment of trends and activities from the review period related to the transportation policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Significant factors affecting transportation across the region and within Amherst during the review period include: continued uncertainty over the national Highway Trust Fund and federal/state funding for transportation planning and improvements; changing driving patterns among Americans, particularly “millennials”; and study of alternatives to improve transit service between the City of Buffalo and the Town of Amherst.

Transportation Funding and Highway Planning

The United States Department of Transportation reports that “both the Highway Account and the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund are nearing insolvency.” They note: “based on spending and revenue trends... the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund will encounter a shortfall before the end of fiscal year (FY) 2014.” The Mass Transit Account faces a similar situation, “based on spending and revenue trends, the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund will have a balance of approximately \$1.1 billion at the end of FY 2014, down from \$2.5 billion at the beginning of the Federal Fiscal Year.”¹

National driving trends in 2012, 2013 and early 2014 indicate lower vehicle miles travelled (VMT), and thus declining Trust Fund revenues. Locally, VMT experienced a slight increase over the last few years (Table 28). Revenues for the Highway Trust Fund are influenced by driving and other trends that are linked to fuel consumption and taxes. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) notes: “The U.S. regular gasoline retail price, which averaged \$3.36/gal in 2014, is projected to average \$2.33/gal in 2015. Diesel fuel retail pump prices, which averaged \$3.83/gal in 2014, are projected to fall to an average of \$2.85/gal in 2015 but rise to \$3.25/gal in 2016.”^{2 & 3} While the decline in fuel prices during late 2014 and early 2015 (see Figure 7 below) may encourage more driving and higher VMT in the short term, government projections of VMT over the next couple decades suggest it will experience limited growth or decline.

While fuel prices fluctuate, the federal motor fuel tax that supports investments in transportation infrastructure has not changed in more than two decades. As Americans drive less and save money at the fuel pump, transportation analysts note that revenues for the Highway Trust Fund are increasingly inadequate. The recent drop in fuel prices has led many to recommend increasing the federal motor fuel tax to build up the Highway Trust Fund⁴ in order to finance improvements to aging and deteriorating transportation infrastructure.

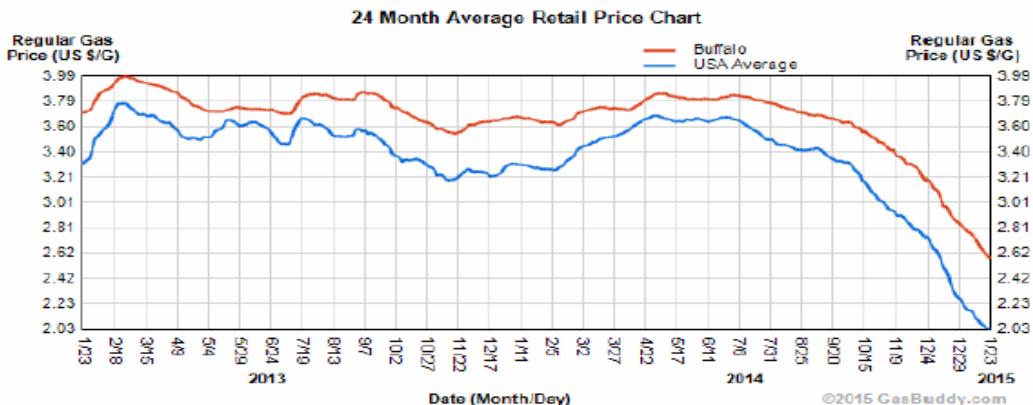


Figure 7: Average Retail Price Chart

The debate over the fuel tax and Highway Trust revenues has implications for regional transportation planning. The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and is responsible for supporting the planning and programming of regional transportation funding resources derived from federal and state taxes. The MPO works with the NYSDOT and Erie County to develop regional transportation plans and to address other issues related to land use, air quality, energy, economic development, commerce and quality of life. The GBNRTC is responsible for developing the region's metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and transportation improvement program (TIP). The MTP is updated every four years. In May 2014, the GBNRTC published the 2040 MTP, an update of their 2035 Plan. The 2040 MTP also reflects the most recent demographic trends and traffic conditions. The following are some notable provisions from the 2040 MTP.⁵

1. Integration of goals and objectives from the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, called One Region Forward, which guide the development and implementation of the 2040 and 2050 MTP.
2. Update of financial resources available to the region to implement the Metropolitan Transportation Plan projects based on recent federal transportation legislation such as “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” (MAP-21), and funding forecasted by the NYSDOT.
3. Updated status of significant planning studies and projects that could impact future transportation investments in the region.

In recent years, federal and state transportation agencies have focused funding for highway improvement projects on maintaining the roadway system and seeking alternative sources of funding. The NYSDOT has adopted tenets of MAP-21 that directs all investment decisions be guided by the following “Forward Four” principles.⁶

1. Preservation First – Expected resources will not support a “build new” or “worst first” approach and we must take a “preserve what we have” approach.
2. System Not Projects – When looking at an individual project, we must look at it in the context of the larger transportation system.
3. Maximize Return on Investment – Establish a strategy to invest constrained resources in a way that produces the greatest possible return on investment. Assess returns against metrics that measure benefits.
4. Make It Sustainable – Focus on ways to preserve our existing transportation system, incorporate sustainability considerations into decisions and actions; and support opportunities for innovation, economic growth and development.

Sustainability and accountability are two important concepts that will guide transportation planning in the future.

Transportation Trends

The changing level of funding available for highway improvements is occurring simultaneously with changes to transportation behavior. One national report notes that the trend toward lower VMT is led by young people.⁷ The report notes that: “From 2001 to 2009, the average annual number of vehicle miles travelled by younger people (16-34 year olds) decreased from 10,300 miles to 7,900 miles per capita, a drop of 23 %.”⁸ The report cites several reasons for this trend, including higher gas prices, new licensing laws, and improvements in communications technology that reduce trips and support alternative forms of transportation such as public transit. Additionally the report cites data that indicate these trends are prevalent among young people who are employed and /or are doing well financially. While young persons (16-34 year old) are driving less, they are increasingly using alternative modes of transportation such as transit (+100%), biking (+122%) and walking (+37%).⁹ (See chapter 2 for data on these trends in Amherst from 2000 – 2011).

Broadening use of public forms of transportation as noted above also applies to Amherst’s growing senior population. A report titled “Keeping Baby Boomers Mobile: Preserving Mobility and Safety for Older Americans” cites the importance of increasing and improving travel options for older citizens. The Report recommends the following strategies.¹⁰

1. Safety enhancements to highways such as installing clearer, brighter and simpler signage with larger lettering; brighter street markings, particularly at intersections; widening or adding left-turn lanes, and extending the length of merge or exit lanes; and adding rumble strips.
2. Fostering partnerships with organizations to promote education and training programs for older drivers and evaluating and monitoring “at risk” older motorists.
3. Promote increasing and improving travel options for older citizens such as adding public transit routes, vehicle facilities and stops that are easily accessible and accommodating to older or disabled passengers.

Changing preferences are behind new approaches to providing transportation and have spawned new services in the Western New York area. To meet changing transportation preferences of millennials and seniors, private interests have partnered with communities and institutions like UB and others to provide car share and bike sharing services. Car sharing in the City is provided by Buffalo CarShare¹¹ and is described as: “a service that offers the peace-of-mind of the automobile without the up-front costs, hassles, or environmental impacts of private vehicle ownership. Members rent vehicles on an hourly basis for errands or an irregular trip, while relying on other modes of transportation (such as walking, bicycling, taking transit or carpooling) for their daily commute.” Members visit a website to view the locations of available cars and reserve one for the amount of time they need. Members can also make a reservation over the phone. When the reservation comes up, the member goes to the car and drives it as if they owned it. The car tracks the time out, time returned, and miles traveled. The car is returned to the same spot it was taken from and is then available to the next member. Currently cars are available at locations near the downtown area. Car sharing is popular with college students and it is reasonable to assume that car share services could soon be available to students located in Amherst.

Bicycle sharing has also emerged as a popular alternative to meet transportation needs. Buffalo BikeShare¹² is a service offered by Shared Mobility Inc. Bicycles are available at hubs located in Downtown Buffalo, at Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and at various locations throughout the University of Buffalo’s North and South campuses. BikeShare members pay an annual fee that entitles them to use bicycles for free for up to one hour/day. An hourly fee is applied for use beyond the first hour. Bike sharing features the strategic placement of bike racks or hubs to make bikes available at convenient locations. The service website does not make mention of expansion outside of the North Campus. However, if its popularity grows, perhaps racks could be located to access the Town’s bike trails and at popular destinations that are bicycle accessible such as shopping centers, the hamlets of Eggerstville and Snyder, the Village of Williamsville, Daeman College and Erie Community College.

Technology is also transforming transportation. Forbes magazine identifies the following six trends that will influence how we move about in the future.¹³ Some of these trends and concepts already have influenced transportation products and driver preferences and behavior. Others are likely to be implemented as they become affordable and supporting infrastructure is available. These trends and their associated products are likely to be reflected in new transportation plans and projects that will shape mobility, land uses and other aspects of the community. Forbes reports the following:

1. **Autonomous Vehicles** – Hands-free and feet-free driving, with catchy names such as Tesla’s “Autopilot” and GM’s Cadillac “Super Cruise,” will soon be widely available. Experts believe that fully autonomous vehicles are not far behind, and momentum keeps picking up. Having ridden in several fully autonomous concept vehicles, we are convinced that they will change the world. The elderly will regain mobility, traffic congestion will decline, safety and fuel efficiency will improve, on-demand services and deliveries will become commonplace, and cities can reclaim public spaces that they currently must devote to parking.
2. **Connected Vehicles** – In the third quarter of 2014, AT&T added more car data subscribers (500K) than smartphone subscribers (466K) or tablet subscribers

(342K). These data plans deliver software updates to the vehicle, traffic data to the navigation system, and Internet connectivity to the passenger. Connections with other vehicles and with infrastructure reduce congestion and vehicle fatalities.

3. **Collaborative Consumption** – Millennials own fewer cars than previous generations. Globally, the auto market is a \$20 trillion asset class with just 4% to 5% utilization. We need to ask ourselves the big question: As two billion more drivers move into the middle class over the next decade, should we be adding another \$20 trillion in assets, or should we strive to reach 10% utilization instead? Services like Uber and ZipCar enable someone to have what they want (on-demand mobility) without having to purchase what they don't need (a \$30,000 piece of mostly unused metal).
4. **Electric Drivetrain** – An electric drivetrain is more powerful, compact, and efficient than the fossil-fueled alternative and produces zero local air emissions. Electric drive enables a unique combination of performance and efficiency, delivering well-to-wheels efficiency unmatched by internal combustion engines while producing maximum torque at any speed and capturing energy through regenerative braking.
5. **Efficient Multimodal Network** – Cars will integrate into an efficient intermodal network. The BMW iSeries is the first attempt by an OEM at incorporating public transit into the driving experience. Multiple companies, such as INRIX and Waze have sprung up to improve our drive's efficiency. Now, startups are working to improve transparency in public transportation and reduce friction through crowdsourcing transit data, moving ticketing to the smartphone, and calculating prices for multiple trip options.
6. **New Materials** – In the near term, lightweighting will intensify over the next decade. Fuel efficiency standards mean that manufacturers are motivated to reduce weight: weight is now frequently a more important decision factor than cost in purchasing. Electrification drives lightweighting to the extent it increases range and reduces the battery size required. The demands for lightweighting come at a time when the cost of carbon fiber parts is coming down dramatically.

Transit Options – NFTA Amherst to Buffalo

For Amherst residents, transit remains the primary alternative mode of transportation to the automobile. The NFTA and its partners have embarked on a study of public transportation options that could include an extension of the Metro Rail, improvements to current bus service or something else such as bus rapid transit for the corridor connecting Buffalo and Amherst. In fall 2013 the NFTA initiated an “alternatives analysis study” that is funded through a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The objective of the Study is to explore transit solutions that enhance travel between downtown Buffalo and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) along the Main Street corridor and into Amherst. The study will result in a “locally preferred alternative” that could be proposed to improve transit service and enable progression from the alternatives analysis directly to a design phase. Public involvement and consideration of alternatives began in the fall of 2013 and is expected to conclude before the end of 2015.

Highway and Traffic Trends

Although the trends above suggest growing popularity of alternative modes of transportation, automobiles remain the most common way of getting around in Amherst. Traffic along Amherst highways continues to change since the Plan was completed. According to data provided by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), total travel along highways in Amherst has continued to increase. The estimated Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) increased by 1.3% between 2012 and 2014. In 2014 the VMT in Amherst was 2,742,091 compared to 2,705,386 in 2012. Table 28 below summarizes the change in VMT since 2007.

Table 28

Percentage Change in Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) in the Town of Amherst 2007-2014

2006 - 2007	2007- 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2014
+1.0%	+0.6%	+3.5%	+1.3%

Source: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council.

Table 29

Roadway Segments with Projected Deficient Levels-of-Service
(Adapted from the Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan)

Highway	Segment	LOS E Threshold	Previous Count	Latest Count	Count Year
<i>E Robinson Rd (N French)</i>	<i>Niagara Falls Blvd to Sweet Home Rd</i>	32,500	19,000	16,960	2012
<i>Hopkins Rd</i>	<i>Maple Rd to Klein Rd</i>	16,250	16,500	13,920	2013
<i>Hopkins Rd</i>	<i>Dodge Rd to North French Rd</i>	16,250	8,700	8,100	2012
<i>Klein Rd</i>	<i>Hopkins Rd to Youngs Rd</i>	16,250	12,400	11,460	2014
<i>Main St</i>	<i>I-290 to Union Rd</i>	36,900	47,300/ 36,400	44,960/ 35,600	2010
Main St	Union Rd to Transit Rd	36,900	24,070	28,580	2010
Millersport Hwy	Maple Rd to Audubon Pkwy	32,500	17,700	22,260	2010
<i>North Bailey Ave</i>	<i>Sheridan Dr to Maple Rd</i>	16,250	13,850	12,050	2012
North Bailey Ave	Maple Rd to Niagara Falls Blvd	16,250	12,900	14,215	2010
North French Rd	Campbell Blvd to I-990	16,250	13,200	14,590	2012
North French Rd	Millersport Hwy to Hopkins Rd	16,250	15,500	17,800	2011
North French Rd	Dodge Rd to Transit Rd	16,250	13,600	15,550	2011
Niagara Falls Blvd	Ellicott Creek to E Robinson Rd	36,900	35,950	42,730	2013
Transit Rd	Main Street to Maple Rd	36,900/53,500	34,755	35,570	2011
<i>Transit Rd</i>	<i>Maple Rd to Casey Rd</i>	36,900	31,000	29,680	2014
Transit Rd	North French Rd to Millersport Hwy	16,250	14,950	16,300	2011
Wehrle Dr	<i>Union Rd to S Cayuga Rd</i>	16,250	14,800	14,465	2014
Wehrle Dr	Aero Dr to Garrison Rd	16,250	18,600	16,663	2014
Youngs Rd	<i>Main St to Maple Rd</i>	16,250	16,650	16,035	2014
Youngs Rd	<i>Maple Rd to Klein Rd</i>	16,250	13,500	12,720	2013

Traffic volumes along *italicized* segments decreased

Current traffic counts along shaded segments exceed the design capacity (LOS E) threshold

Source: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, 2015

Table 4 in the Comprehensive Plan identified roadway segments where the level-of-service was projected to be deficient and capacity enhancements might be necessary in the future. Table 29 above updates those data and includes the traffic volume threshold for level-of-service E, the level of traffic when the segment is operating at or near capacity and driver comfort is very low due to long delays. The Table lists traffic volumes on these segments from the mid-decade (2005-2008 – as reported in the Plan) and more recent counts taken between 2010 and 2014.

Comparison of recent counts with the LOS threshold identifies 5 segments where traffic conditions are operating at or near capacity; these segments are shaded in Table 29. Traffic volumes along North French Road from Millersport to Hopkins have grown and have exceeded the LOS E threshold; there are no current plans to increase capacity along this segment. Traffic on Main Street from the I-290 to Union Road declined slightly through 2010 but still exceeds the capacity of the segment; more recent counts are needed to assess if any improvements are necessary. It is possible that improvements to this segment and the I-290 may emerge from the Buffalo Corridor Study (see below). Traffic volumes along Wehrle Drive near the Village have declined, but remain above the level-of-service threshold. Traffic on all of these segments will continue to be monitored to determine if capacity improvements should be considered.

Several other highway segments in the Town have experienced significant traffic volume changes ($\pm 10\%$); Table 30 below identifies these segments. Although traffic volumes along some of these segments are low, some of the roads are narrow and others are in poor condition and may need consideration for improvement.

Table 30
Roadway Segments Experiencing Significant Change in Traffic Volume

Roadway	Segment	LOS E Threshold	Previous Count	Latest Count	Count Year	Change (%)
Audubon Pkwy	Millersport Hwy to Flint Rd		2,525	3,557	2014	12
Chestnut Ridge Rd	Willowridge Rd to Sweethome Rd		3,815	6,001	2012	16
Glen Oak Dr	Dodge Rd to Smith Rd		1,590	1,008	2013	(-14)
Hopkins Rd	Millersport Hwy to Schoelles Rd		600	972	2012	17
Main St	Union Rd to Evans St	36,900	25,400	34,250	2009	16
Millersport Hwy	I-290 to Maple Rd	32,500	33,344	50,162	2009	15
North Forest Rd	Weinberg Campus to Dodge Rd		1,553	2,181	2012	12
Ridge Lea Rd	N Bailey Ext to Niagara Falls Blvd	16,250	14,200	8,688	2011	(-15)
Sylvan Pkwy	Audubon Pkwy to Millersport Hwy		3,411	5,293	2012	16
Tonawanda Creek Rd	Old Falls Blvd to Niagara Falls Blvd		910	1,488	2012	13
Wehrle Dr	Garrison Rd to Hirschfield Dr	16,250	11,432	13,267	2012	16

Source: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, 2015

Current traffic counts along shaded segments exceed the design capacity (LOS E) threshold

The Comprehensive Plan identified several projects intended to increase capacity on major corridors that were included in the Region's Long Range Transportation Plan. Completion of these projects represented the end of an era of major highway reconstruction in Amherst. The reconstruction of the I-90/I-290 interchange remains to be completed. This project and several long range projects (see Table 3 in the Plan) remain under study.

The ongoing Buffalo Corridor Study is analyzing the future of the I-90/I-290 interchange and its possible reconfiguration, as well as the future of the Williamsville toll barrier and I-90 lane capacities near the Galleria Mall. Schedules for any project implementation have yet to be established. A component of the study that was completed during the review period focused on interim improvements around Exit 50 along the I-90 between the I-290/Main Street interchange and the Kensington Expressway. Short term improvements identified include a reconfiguration of the entire Main Street interchange with the I-290. These improvements would significantly alter traffic patterns at the interchange. These have been recommended to the NYSDOT for inclusion in the TIP. Other improvements to this corridor will be constructed in 2015 as part of a project to replace the Cleveland Drive bridge over the I-90.

The data discussed above and presented in Chapter 2 indicate that traffic along many major corridors is increasing as the population of the Town is also growing. Physical development and associated growth in travel often drive these changes. Recently, new mixed-use forms of development and implementation of emerging practices such as: travel demand management (TDM); encouraging transition of highways to “complete streets”; the introduction and broadening use of car-share and bike-share programs; and transit enhancements have influenced travel demand in communities across the United States. These trends and uncertainty over future funding for transportation improvements are factors that must be considered in planning for highways and other modes of transportation. Much more needs to be addressed on this issue.

Staggered work hours, ridesharing, vanpooling, adapting roadways for safe bicycle use, sidewalks and other measures can all be components of a comprehensive program of TDM. The GBNRTC and NFTA are actively working to promote these measures by engaging employers and others who can affect their implementation. Measures include rebranding the “GoodGoing WNY” rideshare program to “GoBuffaloNiagara”, emphasizing all modes of travel and advisory services to employers and developers to improve understanding of TDM options.

The Comprehensive Plan includes several policies intended to move the Town toward improved planning and management of highway capacity and traffic operations while emphasizing enhancement of alternative modes of travel. Following are the transportation policies from the Plan and a review of actions, activities and trends that are influencing their implementation.

6-1 Designate roadway corridors for application of context-sensitive design standards to maintain their character.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town developed context-sensitive highway design principles and designated their application to various streets in 2009. Although the construction of new streets related to subdivision development has slowed and reconstruction of many major highways in the Town is completed, implementation of context-sensitive design (CSD) principles may still be accomplished through minor highway improvements and even maintenance and overlay projects.

In 2012 the Village of Williamsville introduced the Picture Main Street initiative. In 2013 the Village published the Picture Main Street Plan.¹⁴ The goal of the Plan is to transform Main Street to a corridor that: “provides greater balance between function and form to create a renewed center of civic activity with a more vibrant business district.” The project features a redesign of the street to create a walkable boulevard that reinforces Main Street as the social and economic center of the community. The Village also has plans for improvements to the Spring Street area at the Mill plaza. These include street lighting, an overlook into Glen Park and “green” stormwater infrastructure features such as rain gardens. The Village has secured grants totaling \$2.5 million for Picture Main Street and \$2.9 million for the Spring Street improvements. The combination of the local match and value of the grants totals approximately \$6.8 million.

The Town Planning Department continues to work with the village to coordinate planning and potentially incorporate features of the Picture Main Street Plan at the Village/Town boundary.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

On April 15, 2011 the Governor signed Complete Streets legislation into law. Complete streets may include any or all of the following features: pedestrian access, safety and mobility measures, access management; traffic calming techniques; corridor beautification; and green infrastructure. The law states that consideration of complete street design features such as facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians be provided for all projects undertaken by public authorities and municipalities that receive state or federal funding subject to Department of Transportation oversight.¹⁵ Local governments and agencies such as the Town of Tonawanda, Erie County, the City of Buffalo and the NYSDOT are beginning to implement these principles. These features can be applied to large scale capital intensive projects, however they may also be achieved with small scale initiatives such as road diets and restriping roads for larger shoulders for bike lanes, establishment of dedicated parking spaces and crosswalks, installation of wayfinding and other forms of signage, movable barriers and even planters to calm traffic.¹⁶ The Town's CSD principles incorporate many of the same features recommended as complete streets concepts. The Town Planning Department has completed a study on complete streets and will seek to work with Town and regional transportation agencies to determine how these principles can be implemented in Amherst.

6-2 Modify the Town's engineering design standards for roadways to reduce neighborhood impacts.

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report

6-3 Establish a town highway planning capability to manage the local road network.

A) Activity or Actions

Town Engineering and Planning personnel have developed a scope of work for the development of a traffic management system (TMS) to assist with monitoring traffic conditions and the identification of traffic challenges along local highways. Additionally the scope includes the development of a capability to model traffic conditions in the Town and better plan a response to challenges. There has been no further progress on this initiative.

The Planning Department and Traffic Safety Board liaison continue to work closely with the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC). Recently the GBNRTC upgraded its traffic monitoring and modeling capabilities; these services can be available to local communities upon request. The GBNRTC assisted the Town to evaluate the traffic impacts of completing an extension of Youngs Road from Casey to New Road in 2014.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends
Nothing significant to report

6-4 Enhance transportation system capacities through operational improvements, including access management and a comprehensive signal timing plan.

A) Activity or Actions

There were few capacity and operational highway improvements constructed or completed during the review period. One such improvement is a new signal at North French / John Glenn / Northpointe Parkway completed as part of the East Robinson Road Reconstruction Project.

The following are other actions and operational improvements implemented during the review period. These projects were initiated by the State, County, GBNRTC, and the Town.

- The Amherst Traffic Safety Board began to initiate requests to review traffic signal timing at town/county intersections, e.g. Youngs and Maple Roads.
- The GBNRTC and NYSDOT have completed studies to optimize signal timing during peak hours and Saturdays along Niagara Falls Boulevard, and Sheridan Drive. To date these signal timing adjustments have not been completed. The GBNRTC intends to continue this program as a means of achieving greater operational efficiencies along major corridors.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The GBNRTC has made significant progress building computer models of the local transportation network in recent years. These models can be used to perform traffic simulation at various scales (intersection to corridors), and the GBNRTC considers requests to use these tools to assist local communities with transportation and traffic studies. As previously indicated, this tool was effectively used by the Town in evaluating the traffic impact of the completion of the proposed Youngs Road Extension.

6-5 Undertake a capital program to maintain or improve the efficiency of the existing road system.

A) Activity or Actions

Recent Town Capital Improvement Programs to improve transportation systems have included the following proposals from the Plan.

- Northwest Connector Road – This highway has been partially constructed and could extend to Tonawanda Creek Road as originally proposed. The project was dropped from the CIP but continues to be included on Figure 9 (Future Thoroughfare System) in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Traffic Signal Controls – Each year the Town budget includes funds to purchase and install new traffic signals or improve existing traffic signals. During this review period,

funds allocated in the CIP for signal improvements were used to make minor adjustments and upgrades to timing equipment.

- A project to improve the intersection of North Bailey and Amsterdam Avenues and Emerson Drive was approved in the 2014-2019 CIP and will be completed in summer 2015. The project features reconfiguration of the Amsterdam approach to improve safety and traffic operations.
- The Traffic Safety Board is working with Erie County to explore the potential for a “road diet” along Kensington Avenue. The “road diet” would reduce the number of lanes from four to two and provide an opportunity to introduce a complete street concept along this corridor.
- The 2014-2019 Capital Improvement Program included a project to improve a culvert crossing of Hickory Creek at Smith Road and Glen Oaks Drive in order to improve flood control in the surrounding area. In addition to this storm water improvement, a recently completed NYSDOT improvement to Transit Road also made it feasible to consider the extension of Glen Oaks Drive to Transit Road; the extension is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan as illustrated on Figure 9. The Engineering Department recommended construction of the road connection as a component of the storm drainage improvement project. Some residents in the Fairways Heights, Rolling Meadows, and Hickory Creek subdivisions opposed the connection and proposed to remove it from the Plan. Their proposal was referred to the Planning Department for study and consideration.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The NYSDOT and GBNRTC continue to strive for greater efficiencies in infrastructure management. Both agencies are working to integrate principles of asset management into programs supporting project development and decision making. This approach could alter the State’s allocation of funding for transportation improvements. It is a trend that will influence the scope and scale of many projects in the foreseeable future.

6-6 Accept a certain level of congestion as a “given” and expand investments in alternative transportation modes and compact, mixed use development patterns.

A) Activity or Actions

As noted above, some small scale projects and improvements have been implemented to improve operational conditions. Their impact on congestion has not been formally monitored. As federal and state budgets reflect the principles of asset management and preservation of existing infrastructure, transportation improvements to increase capacity continue to diminish. As a result it will be increasingly important to manage highway capacity as a limited resource and accept higher levels of congestion.

The GBNRTC organizes and facilitates a program for large employers to encourage their workers to car pool with other employees and nearby workers. The GoBuffaloNiagara program

helps promote carpooling as an alternative to the single occupancy vehicle. Daemen College is among Amherst's most active participants in the program.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

There has been limited mixed-use development in the Town, although a couple projects were constructed during the reporting period (see pg. 39). Mixed-use forms of development can help to reduce traffic on surrounding streets. The Conceptual Land Use Plan (Figure 6 in the Comprehensive Plan) proposes several mixed-use activity centers, particularly on lands along major highways. Support and encouragement for mixed-use forms of development could contribute to diminishing traffic volumes and reduced congestion. The Town will initiate a project in 2015 to revise zoning for its commercial and mixed-use activity centers. The new zoning may lead to reductions in trip generation and more efficient parking requirements.

6-7 Develop a comprehensive bicycle network, using a rating system to identify and prioritize improvements.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town continues to seek opportunities to enhance the bicycle and trail network through the Town.

In the past several years the Town of Amherst worked with the NYSDOT to have Transportation Enhancement Funds awarded for a trail project between Niagara Falls Boulevard and Millersport Highway. In May 2013, The Town Board authorized the Supervisor to submit an application to the NYSDOT for Federal Transportation Enhancement Project Funds for construction for the University West Trail project, a scaled down iteration of the former Lehigh Valley Trail coordinated with the University at Buffalo North Campus bikeway plans. Notwithstanding the support of regional NYSDOT and the University, that application failed to be funded.

Progress toward the vision outlined in the Picture Main Street initiative advances the notion that the Village of Williamsville can attract more visitors from the University at Buffalo who are seeking “an antidote to the largely suburban, low-density surroundings of the North Campus.” The Village Community Plan notes, “Establishing reliable, user-friendly transportation links is one way in which the Village can make itself more accessible to the university population.” The Village may also provide an ideal setting for certain university facilities or venues that are located “off campus.”¹⁷ Building a stronger physical connection between the Village and the University could be accomplished through a bicycle and pedestrian link. The Village Walking Trails Committee has asked the Town to propose a link to UB and the Ellicott Creek Trail network in the form of an amendment to Figure 4 in the Comprehensive Plan.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

On-street bicycle routes have been designated along Sweet Home Road and Youngs Road. Accommodations for bicyclists have been provided when highways are reconstructed by the NYSDOT or Erie County. The provision of bike lanes along a highway does not imply its designation as a bicycle route. In some cases there is reluctance to designate new bicycle routes as the State, County, or the Town must assume responsibility for maintenance of signs and route

markings. The implications of this trend on the designation and maintenance of a bicycle network in the Town are not clear at this time and need to be consistent if this policy is to be successfully implemented.

6-8 Develop a comprehensive pedestrian network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and trails.

A) Activity or Actions

During the reporting period the following minor projects to improve pedestrian safety through the construction and improvement to sidewalks were constructed. Some were constructed by property owners while other projects were funded through Safe Routes to Schools grants.

- Stahl Road frontage of 2295, 2305 & 2365 Millersport Highway
- Youngs Road (52 & 58 Youngs Road and 1 & 9 Turnberry Drive)
- Country Parkway (Safe Routes to School)
- Heim Road – North Forest to Deer Ridge – (Safe Routes to School)
- Sweet Home Road - between Glenhaven Dr. & Westwind La. (Safe Routes to School)

The Town also included projects in the 2013 and 2014 CIPs to improve trails and sidewalks in the following locations.

- Repaving portions of bike trails along paths at Walton Woods, Ellicott Creek and Tonawanda Creek.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

State and Federally funded transportation projects are required to consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists (see discussion of Complete Street in Policy 6-1 above), often leading to improvements such as sidewalks and crosswalks as part of the project.

In certain situations the Town Board and the Planning Board have been reluctant to require the installation of sidewalks by property owners in existing residential neighborhoods. The Town's policy of holding individual property owners responsible for installation and maintenance of sidewalks has made it increasingly difficult to get new sidewalks installed within developed areas as owners do not want to accept responsibility for sidewalk maintenance and snow clearing in the winter. This issue could prevent implementation of Policy 6-8 and needs to be addressed to provide clearer guidance for sidewalk installation.

Wintertime sidewalk maintenance continues to be a challenge in locations where there are several highway lanes to be plowed and limited snow storage area along the road. The Town has formed sidewalk snow relief districts to assist property owners in keeping walks clear. There continues to be demand for new districts and expansion of the service. As the Town, State, and County construct new sidewalks, the affected property owners are likely to request this service. The Town must study and formulate policies to guide expansion of the service.

Pedestrian accessibility around college and university campuses in the Town should be reviewed. The 2015-2020 CIP includes a project to install a culvert along Flint Road so

sidewalks can be constructed from Millersport Highway to Maple Road. With the construction of new apartments occupied by UB students at Flint and Frankhauser Roads, sidewalks are needed to enable safer pedestrian access to the UB campus. As housing opportunities surrounding the campus grow, improvements to pedestrian accessibility for all areas surrounding the North Campus need to be considered.

Similarly, pedestrian accessibility around the Daemen College campus should also be studied. Requests have been made to install a mid-block crossing on Campus Drive to the campus. Also the College's acquisition and redevelopment of the former YMCA on Main Street and use of parking lot space at the Amherst Central High School has changed pedestrian movement in the area.

6-9 Work with the NFTA to improve transit service and provide connections to activity centers (e.g. UB and Eggertsville).

A) Activity or Actions

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) provides the primary transit service within the Town of Amherst. During the review period April 2012–April 2014 the NFTA reports that overall ridership on the Metro system declined by approximately 14%. This reduction is attributed to a 2012 fare increase, service reductions, and construction impacts on Metro Rail service. Ridership on bus routes serving the Town of Amherst during the review period changed as follows.

- Route 34: Niagara Falls Boulevard (+10%)
- Route 35: Sheridan Drive (+16%)
- Route 44: Lockport (+6%)
- Route 47: Youngs Road (-15%)
- Route 48: Williamsville (+9%)
- Route 49: Sheridan/Transit/Maple (Millard Suburban) (+54%)
- Route 64: Lockport Express (-50%)
- Route 66: Williamsville/Main Express (-5%)

Major destinations within the Town include retail shopping areas along Niagara Falls Boulevard, Maple Road, Sheridan Drive and Transit Road, ECC North Campus, UB, and the Crosspointe, Audubon, and Wehrle Business Parks.

The NFTA reports that overall ridership on the Paratransit Access Line (PAL) declined by approximately 4% since 2012. The number of registered clients in Amherst and the trips/destinations in the Town remain stable. There are approximately 2,700 PAL trips per month to destinations in Amherst.

In late 2011 the NFTA received a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to study alternative transit options that serve the corridor from downtown Buffalo and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus to Amherst. The study scope and contract were finalized during 2012. The Buffalo-Amherst "Alternatives Analysis" began in Spring 2013. The study has engaged many stakeholders with an interest in what is projected to be a higher density corridor along

Main Street, Millersport Highway and Niagara Falls Boulevard. The objectives of the study are to assess the transportation impacts of redevelopment and growth along these corridors, and to evaluate all reasonable transit and multi-modal alternatives and alignment options available to address transportation needs and opportunities. The Study is expected to continue through 2015.

In November 2014 the NFTA submitted a grant proposal to the FTA for funding to assist with formulation of transit oriented development (TOD) development regulations and guidelines. As a joint proposal between UB, the Town, and the City of Buffalo, this grant will be important to guiding and managing potential impacts of transit enhancements resulting from the Alternatives Analysis.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Policy 9-2 discusses the need for transportation outreach programs and services for the disadvantaged and senior populations. As noted, Amherst Senior Transportation Services (ASTS) provides transit services to the elderly population in the Town, the demand for this service appears to be changing as the number of seniors and senior housing projects in the Town increase. During the review period requests for trips to and from the Senior Center and Adult Day Care remained stable. However, during the same period the number of seniors transported for medical services increased by nearly 30%, from 7,128 trips to 8,836 trips. This trend is expected to continue in the future.

The University provides bus service to its students for travel between campuses and other destinations such as shopping centers and downtown venues. The “Stampede” bus service operates 24 hours a day while classes are in session. Although the University at Buffalo’s UB “Stampede” service was established as point-to-point service between the North and South campuses, during the review period the service established a regular stop along Millersport Highway at Maynard Drive. Provision of bus service to this residential area of Eggertsville will make housing in this area more accessible for students, and may lead to conversion of single family home to student housing to the detriment of the single family residential character of adjacent neighborhoods. The Town should initiate a discussion with the University regarding the impact of such decisions.

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CHAPTER 7 – Infrastructure

The Town's infrastructure systems play an important role in influencing the form, size, and pattern of development. These systems are comprised of natural features and man-made facilities that form and constrain the locations for development. These systems also ensure the health and safety of community stakeholders and help to preserve the Town's natural resources and environment. The Town's infrastructure systems include sanitary and stormwater management systems, water service, and various private utilities. Their presence is evident both above and below ground.

The Comprehensive Plan called for provision of cost effective sustainable infrastructure systems that would promote economic development while preserving the natural environment. The Plan also calls for maintaining or upgrading existing systems to support current and projected needs while limiting future service extensions to areas in order to help shape development patterns that are consistent with the Conceptual Land Use Plan. The following is an assessment of actions and trends that have affected or influenced the maintenance, enhancement and development of infrastructure systems in the Town. The Town's community facilities and services are also discussed in Chapter 9.

7-1 Develop a program to address flooding and other stormwater management issues in coordination with other responsible agencies.

A) Activity or Actions

In 2006 the Town Supervisor initiated a Townwide Stormwater Drainage Study to consider existing drainage services and also develop the capability to model stormwater systems. From 2008 – 2011, the Town Board approved significant funding for storm drainage improvement projects. During this period, projects such as the Rambling Road Culvert Replacement, Bassett Park Storm Drainage Relief Pond, Royalwoods Subdivision Pond Outlet Pipe Replacement and the Royalwoods Subdivision Outlet Weir projects were constructed in an effort to alleviate frequent flooding conditions throughout the Ditch 26 watershed and within the Royalwoods Subdivision. The Town Engineering Department reports that these improvements have considerably improved drainage in the Ditch 26 watershed and reduced the inundation during minor storm events.

To date the Town has not been successful in obtaining legal access and control of a portion of private land known as the Amberleigh Senior Care Facility drainage pond. The location of this pond adjacent to Town Ditch 26 provides an opportunity to attenuate stormwater flows from Ditch 26 during heavy rains, reducing the drainage burden over the entire Ditch 26 watershed.

Within the 2012-2017 and 2013-2018 Capital Improvement Programs (CIP), the Town Board approved funding for additional storm drainage improvement projects. Ongoing storm system improvements occurring in the vicinity of Oakwood, Amherston and Bellingham Drives have been funded and designed. During 2011, 2012, and 2013 phases I and II, and III were completed. The improvements upgraded the drainage system to handle up to a 10 year storm event. In 2014 the Highway Department replaced the Glen Oak Golf Course Culvert along Hickory Creek with

a 25-year capacity culvert. The Engineering Department is working to replace the Glen Oak Drive culvert which will provide a 25-year storm protection.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Town continues to make stormwater management among its highest priorities for infrastructure development. The development and confirmation of modeling capability for Ditch 26B and Ellicott Creek allow the Town to develop drainage projects for the watershed.

7-2 Implement “low impact development” standards and techniques designed to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff from development.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town has collaborated with the Western New York Stormwater Coalition to evaluate and implement new federal stormwater management regulations. The Engineering Department reports that the implementation of these new regulations has improved their ability to locate sources of illicit discharges and strengthened their authority to require best management practices to be incorporated with development projects.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The federal government is monitoring the implementation of the new regulations and there are indications that revisions and new provisions may be promulgated over the next few years.

Local communities are using regulatory tools such as Conservation Overlay Zoning regulations and Riparian Area Protection Overlay Zones to protect water quality in stream corridors. The Town could consider the use of zoning regulations to require the preservation of protective buffers/setback standards adjacent to specified stream corridors (major and minor/ditches), water bodies or regulated wetlands (this may be optional as wetlands are regulated by the state and federal governments) and/or the vegetation of disturbed streambanks or newly constructed stormwater retention facility edges to assist in protecting surface water quality.

7-3 Give priority to repairs to existing infrastructure systems rather than extensions to serve new Greenfield development.

A) Activity or Actions

Recent capital improvement projects for sanitary sewer, storm drainage, waterlines and highway improvements have emphasized repair and enhancement to existing infrastructure systems. The Town has also made substantial investments to maintain and enhance operations and water quality discharges at the Water Pollution Control Facility.

The Town completed the North French Road Sanitary Upgrades – Phase 1 Stage 2D in September 2014. This completed the planned capacity upgrades to Millersport Highway. Preliminary flow meter information to this point indicates no surcharging in the upstream reaches of this trunk sewer to Transit Road. Any planned future improvements by the Town must

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be weighed against a Peanut Line upgrade from Paradise Road to Transit Road by private sources or other agencies.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

7-4 Redefine the boundaries of Sanitary Sewer District No. 16 in the northern part of the Town to exclude rural areas designated for protection and include areas designated for more intensive development.

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

A request was submitted by residents along Tonawanda Creek Road to be included in and expand the sanitary sewer district in May 2015.

7-5 Create a septic system maintenance district to ensure proper maintenance/operation of systems in areas where there are threats to the public health.

A) Activity or Actions

At the recommendation of the Engineering Department, the Planning Board recommended that this policy be amended or deleted. Town Board action on a proposed amendment is expected in 2015.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

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CHAPTER 8 – Housing and Neighborhoods

The Comprehensive Plan establishes as goals: “decent and affordable housing choices be available to all residents”; and “healthy and diverse neighborhoods be conserved and revitalized in older parts of Amherst”. As the Town’s neighborhoods and housing stock mature, it is important to continue existing activities which help to sustain these assets, and develop new approaches that will ensure their continued viability for contemporary lifestyles. While the recent nationwide recession affected many housing markets in the Northeast, housing values in Amherst continue to remain relatively stable. The median value of an owner occupied home in 2000 was listed at \$116,400. More recently that value has risen to approximately \$170,700. (2009-2013 5-Year Estimate from the American Community Survey)

As the Town’s population ages and the character of households change, it is important to provide a range of housing types that address the changing needs of residents. A 2012 demographic analysis of the Town, based upon the 2010 Census data, shows the largest population increase from year 2000-2010 in the 60-64 year age group, an increase of 57.5%. This change in demographics demonstrates a greater opportunity for the type of housing that allows all residents, especially older residents who prefer to “age in place,” choices to accommodate their needs. The development of patio homes has grown, due in part to the attraction of lower condominium tax assessments and the convenience of a homeowners association that provides maintenance services. As construction of new affordable housing slows, the stabilization of existing stock in older neighborhoods should become a primary focus, as available housing for smaller households (such as young families and empty-nesters) is limited. There is also a greater need for adaptable and accessible housing to accommodate people with mobility issues or disabilities, including those needing the assistance of walkers or wheelchairs.

Currently, aging homeowners with active lifestyles in Eggertsville and Snyder have very limited choice in housing if they want to move or downsize but remain in their community. There are a limited number of senior apartments and condominiums in that part of Town, and a limited number of new apartments have been built in the area over recent years. While new builds do provide a welcome addition to the market, they have typically been townhouse or suburban garden style apartments. The Town needs to adopt a more proactive stance to guide housing choices if the policies below are to be implemented in Eggertsville, Snyder or other areas where aging populations desire to remain.

Many of the Plan policies discussed below are related to others discussed in other chapters throughout the Plan, however they are all relevant to the issue of revitalization and redevelopment of sites occupied by obsolete uses. Sizable parcels that are in need of revitalization represent a prime opportunity for new housing investment in more mature portions of Amherst. Policy 3-9 in the Plan provides guidance on approaches to revitalization such as reinvestment, adaptive reuse, and full redevelopment. These approaches apply to all forms of development, and will be a key to sustaining older areas of the Town as places to live and age in place. An analysis of the Plan Policies on housing and neighborhoods follows.

8-1 Continue existing housing policies that promote home ownership and affordability.

A) Activity or Actions

During this review period, the Amherst, Cheektowaga and Tonawanda HOME Consortium prepared its Five Year Consolidated Plan for 2015-2019, using the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) data and demographics, to provide direction for the future expenditure of federal funds allocated to the Consortium. The Consolidated Plan is a document required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for communities that receive federal funding, to provide an overview of a five-year period; annual plans are then derived from the five year plan. Highlights of the most recent Consolidated Plan include continuation of historically successful housing and development programs administered through the Planning Department.

The Town's Community Development Program continues to utilize funds provided through the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Grant Program to provide assistance to first-time homebuyers. The Town's HOME Acquisition Rehabilitation Program has been very successful in conserving and re-introducing affordable homes for resale to eligible buyers in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods. Some older homes in viable neighborhoods have fallen into foreclosure and deterioration, or have simply been vacated due to homeowners' changed living situations. Through the assistance of local real estate agents and the Town's code enforcement officers, Community Development staff has identified various properties that are eligible for acquisition and resale. Investment of HOME funds for reasonable purchase and help from a not-for-profit Community Housing Development Organization have been used to rehabilitate and return these properties to the tax rolls. In return, investment in neighborhoods has encouraged surrounding property owners to invest in their own homes and revitalize their portion of the community. In the 18 years since the establishment of the program, the Town has completed 21 such projects, representing a total HOME investment of approximately \$2,631,625. These activities are financed with the yearly Federal allocation of funds and the proceeds of home sales from the previous year's activities; see Table 31 below.

Table 31
Summary of HOME Projects (1996-2014)

	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2012	2013-2014
Housing Units Assisted	5	4	9	2	1
Total Investment (\$)	478,215	478,000	1,259,410	286,000	135,000

Homes constructed using "adaptability standards" (with the guidance of the Independent Living Center and the Universal Design model from the University at Buffalo) can accommodate a resident with mobility issues, or who needs the use of walker or wheelchair.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

In an effort to promote sustainable and affordable home ownership and aging in place, there is expanded focus on housing rehabilitation for existing homeowners, and returning deteriorated vacant properties to the tax rolls. The Town's Community Development section continues to

pursue grant opportunities to supplement diminishing federal funding for housing programs. As the economy continues to improve, homeownership also becomes more attractive. The Town continues to administer a First Time Homebuyer Programs to serve residents looking for an affordable first home.

The growth of employment centers within the Town has brought into focus an increased need for additional affordable units, specifically in multi-family housing. Moderate wage earners wanting to locate near their jobs and bring their families into a better school system should be able to find housing that does not exceed 30% of their monthly income. For a wage earner whose hourly pay is \$20, which equates to an annual salary of \$41,600; 30% of his monthly income would be \$1040. However, an average market rate three-bedroom apartment in the Town tends to rent for \$1500 or more. New apartment complexes proposed in the Town are generally only two bedrooms, with the larger units being developed around the University at Buffalo and possibly oriented to students. Additional affordable rental or condo options for families are needed, even if it is only some units within a larger development.

There is also a great need for adaptable and accessible homes and rental units in the Town. An aging population, extended family households, and people with disabilities may not be met with the current inventory. Current building codes do not require adaptability or accessibility in new single family homes. However, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the Fair Housing Act, does require *accessibility* for newly constructed multi-family housing with four or more units. Site plans already must conform to standards regarding sidewalks and accessibility to buildings.

According to the WNY Independent Living Center it is more expensive for people to live in health care facilities and institutions than to return to a home that has been modified to accommodate a changing physical condition. However, there do not seem to be enough accessible homes or affordable accessible rental units to meet current or future demand. This deficit will likely only expand as the Town's population ages. The Center notes that the Town could introduce universal design standards to new or rehabilitated multifamily housing to increase the number of dwelling units (including rentals) available for older adults and people with disabilities.

8-2 Promote the development of a variety of housing types.

A) Activity or Actions

The residential projects submitted for site plan approval during 2013 and 2014 represent a wide variety of housing types for Amherst residents, although the trend is slowly shifting from owner-occupied units to rental units.

Just two subdivisions were approved during this time, for a total of 53 lots. These figures indicate an overall slowing trend in traditional single-family detached homes in Amherst, an inevitable occurrence as virgin land becomes scarcer. As the 195-lot Evergreen Subdivision in the northwest corner of the Town demonstrates, an available source of land could be former private recreation or community facilities parcels that are proposed for redevelopment. These lands are generally large and well-located to present attractive options for residential

development. The recently closed Westwood Country Club at Sheridan Drive and North Forest Road is currently undergoing review for a proposed mixed-use development that could bring several hundred new residential units, including single-family detached, condominium, townhouse, and apartments.

In addition to the subdivisions, there were 21 apartment projects approved during the report period – 10 market rate, 9 senior and 2 student housing projects. The increase in market rate and senior housing projects is notable, and reflects the trends of an aging population and reduction in household size. New senior apartment projects are generally located in the eastern and western ends of the Town or near the Weinberg Campus. The absence of available developable land in the southwest portion of the Town, where older less accessible housing is more prevalent, limits this alternative for residents who wish to stay in their community.

Recent changes to the Zoning Ordinance to permit upper-story residential uses in commercial districts continues to be utilized at various locations in the Town. (See discussion of Policy 3-1).

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

As mentioned above, recent Census data shows a growing population of older adults, especially in the first-ring suburbs. Often, older adults are attracted to locations like Amherst as a safe place to reside. Without public or non-profit assistance, new housing will not be constructed to provide affordable alternatives. As the population within the Town ages, it will become increasingly important to provide suitable affordable housing in locations that are accessible to amenities and services. It is becoming apparent that there is also a lack of adaptable and accessible market rate rental housing units for persons with disabilities that are not income -eligible for the affordable units available.

Demographic trends indicate a need for new housing opportunities for an aging population, those with mobility difficulty, and smaller household size, and the Town should use the Plan to identify the most favorable locations for such development. The proposed mixed-use activity centers and other areas close to shopping, public transit routes and medical offices are among some of the criteria that can be used to identify the best locations for such housing. The Planning Department should consult with other town agencies to develop location criteria for the Comprehensive Plan that can be used to guide senior housing location and development decisions.

See Policy 3-5 for discussion about design standards and location criteria.

8-3 Encourage higher density residential uses in mixed-use development and other appropriate locations.

A) Activity or Actions

See comments regarding mixed-use developments in Policy 3-1.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

See comments regarding upper-story residential and mixed-use developments in Policies 3-1 and 3-2.

8-4 Work with UB to establish mixed-use centers around the periphery of both campuses.

A) Activity or Actions

See comments regarding mixed-use developments in Polices 3-1 and 5-7.

The period between 2000 and 2010 has seen an abundance of independent student housing developed around the North Campus of the University. These private complexes are self-contained sites that provide many amenities like common area pools and lounges, and multi-media conveniences for students that traditionally have not been provided by University-sponsored housing. To date the new housing has focused around the North Campus and has not significantly affected residential rental housing available in the neighborhoods around the South Campus. Planning staff continues to refer proposed student housing projects to the University as an integral element of the plan review process.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The trend to develop new student housing around the North Campus has largely been due to the availability of land; the number of related businesses surrounding the complexes and supported by the students continues to grow. A large mixed-use project completed during the report period takes advantage of the prime Sweet Home/Rensch Road location, and includes a hotel and two mixed-use buildings with 42 upper-floor apartments and a variety of retail/restaurant uses on the first floor. In addition, the generally rapid turnover of Maple Road locations near the university testifies to the high demand for restaurants and services from the nearby student population.

Although new student housing developments have increased around UB's north campus, they tend to offer little involvement with the surrounding community and residents. The UB Stampede's impact on the conversion of single-family homes to student housing is also evident. The Town should determine the extent of these conversions near the University campuses, the actual impact on the surrounding neighborhoods, and what action might be appropriate in regard to the practices of the Stampede. Currently there is no accurate assessment of the actual need for student housing, and therefore there is no metric by which the Town can measure the need for zoning that enables the larger student housing developments. The Town should research ways to measure need and examine zoning practices regarding student housing.

Inclusionary zoning is also becoming more important. As the community reviews its zoning, new and emerging tools can be used to assure that housing needs for different demographics are being met. This includes appropriate rentals for all types of households, and discouraging conversion of single-family homes into student housing.

The Town has not established a strong working relationship with the University that might yield a coordinated strategy for accommodating development and redevelopment in the surrounding community. It is important to work with UB in developing land use and housing strategies, University/community development and cohesive planning as the area around UB continues to be developed.

8-5 Establish standards for multi-family housing to promote high quality design and neighborhood compatibility.

A) Activity or Actions

See discussion in Policy 3-5. Although modest revisions have been made to the Town's Zoning Ordinance to enhance the quality of multi-family housing, these changes have not been sufficient to encourage the development of new housing types suitable for the more mature areas of the community.

The Fair Housing Act has been in place for over 50 years to prohibit discrimination and impose a duty to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH). As noted in the Consolidated Plan and throughout this report, there is an increasing need for affordable housing units in the Town. Therefore, new single and multi-family developments should include a certain percentage of affordable units per project. Administratively, the Town is in the final stages of preparing an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in conjunction with Erie County, the Towns of Hamburg, Tonawanda and Cheektowaga. A community's AI describes action to comply with the Fair Housing Act and take meaningful action to overcome segregation and promote fair housing choice and inclusive communities. The AI will outline impediments to fair housing and recommendations to both bolster fair housing and overcome noted impediments. One recommendation that has been derived from the AI currently under review is to amend local zoning ordinances to require developers to include a portion of the housing units to be affordable to low-and moderate-income households. In the future HUD may require more proactive attention to fair housing, including documenting steps to proactively overcome discriminatory practices and encourage inclusive communities, or showing in what ways the Town is removing barriers to housing choice for all of its residents.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

There is a need to consider implementation of "form-based" zoning to assure a better "fit" of higher density housing within existing neighborhoods. See discussion in Policy 3-5. There is an increasing need for adaptable and accessible homes, both owner-occupied and rental units, in the Town. Certain demographic changes such as an aging population, smaller households, multi-generational family living, and the needs of those physically challenged cannot be met with the current inventory. Current building codes do not require adaptability or accessibility in new single-family units unless federal assistance or Housing Tax Credits are in the financial mix. To meet this demand the Town could encourage use of "Universal Design" components that allow for inclusion of adaptability or accessibility features into plans for new single family units. As recommendations for the AI are formalized, attention will be needed on fair housing for all household types, inclusive communities, ability for households to choose where they want to live, and more options for accessible affordable housing.

8-6 Provide incentives for residential property repairs and improvements on a town-wide basis.

A) Activity or Actions

Currently the Town's Community Development Program uses funding from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Grant (HOME) and the

New York State Affordable Housing Corporation (NYSAHC) to provide loans to qualifying homeowners for home repairs. While CDBG and HOME funds are provided on a town-wide basis, NYSAHC funds are only available to homeowners in designated community development target areas.

The Town has allocated a portion of its CDBG funding to offer Military Veterans a \$5,000 grant towards housing rehabilitation of their owner-occupied single family home. The remaining costs of the rehab will be a lien on the property at 0% interest for the life of the ownership or permanent residency.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Funding for the federal CDBG and HOME programs is awarded on a year-to-year basis. There is little likelihood that funding levels for these programs will be increased in the near future. As shown in Table 32 below, current funding has decreased in the past four years due to budget cuts at the federal level. The Town has again applied for and received New York State Division of Housing and Renewal (DHR) Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC) housing assistance grant of \$300,000. This grant, administered over the next several years will supplement the CDBG and HOME housing rehabilitation programs. This is likely to be the only way in the future that these programs can provide higher levels of funding and expand housing rehabilitation activities in the Town. Additionally, it appears that only programs funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (CDBG and HOME) will provide funding to cover program delivery costs. Any expansion of these programs on the Town level would require commitment of funds by the Town for administration.

Table 32
Summary of Community Development Funding

Fiscal Year	CDBG (\$)	HOME(\$)
2010	631,829	1,189,524
2011	524,968	1,049,874
2012	489,770	699,384
2013	509,174	669,023
2014	494,500	720,089
2015	472,599	606,061

(The slight increase in 2013 CDBG funding is due in part to HUD's strengthened oversight, and the return of funds from ineligible or cancelled activities)

8-7 Initiate a Neighborhood Conservation program to promote revitalization of designated neighborhoods through measures such as code enforcement, capital improvements, and design standards.

A) Activity or Actions

The Community Development Program's Annual Action Plan currently provides for funds to cover a portion of the cost of a code enforcement officer for target areas in the Town. CDBG funding for capital improvements had been driven by project submittals from the Engineering

and Highway Departments and from community organizations. Due to federal budget cuts, the Town has decided to focus its limited federal funds to housing rehabilitation and community servicers, and request bonding for infrastructure needs. The CIP process has helped to ensure ongoing updates to the Town's infrastructure in older neighborhoods, especially to older sanitary sewers.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Increased code enforcement has been provided in response to resident complaints and not related to any structured neighborhood conservation efforts. Community Development staff continues to work with the Building Department to share information on problem properties that may be candidates for acquisition or rehabilitation. The Town has established a "Distressed Properties Task Force" made up of representatives from various involved Town departments, with the Supervisor's office as lead. The Task Force , including staff of the Building Department, Planning/Community Development, Assessors, Highway and the Attorneys office, meets regularly to discuss action to be taken on the properties reported by Code Enforcers, Fire or Police personnel to be in deteriorated physical condition and/or tax arrears or mortgage default. Approximately two dozen properties are currently on its agenda. Key among issues reported are deteriorated structural maintenance and poor or non-existent landscape maintenance, although several properties are or will also be scheduled for demolition due to severe structural issues.

New York State law now requires mortgage lenders holding properties in foreclosure proceedings to be responsible for the maintenance and security of these properties. Task Force members then follow up on negligent lenders and homeowners to force action if possible.

Planning staff has been involved in the formation of the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC), a land bank formed under state legislation adopted in 2012. The land bank provides a mechanism for Amherst to acquire vacant or occupied tax delinquent properties for municipal purposes, such as providing homes for rehabilitation under its housing programs. Community Development staff is conducting a review designed to identify parcels targeted for tax sale by Erie County that have potential for these purposes. In addition, the Town reviewed BENLIC's initial proposals for acquiring and reselling one of its first residential property acquisition projects. In the future, Amherst will have an opportunity to review the County's list of tax sale properties and, by resolution, authorize the land bank to acquire and resell them to the Town for development.

Tools for the redevelopment of both residential and non-residential properties should continue to be explored. For example, the Town can pursue alternate financing in its housing rehabilitation programs as mentioned above. BENLIC may present the Town with opportunities to acquire residential properties that are suitable for rehabilitation and sale to first-time homebuyers. Acquisition of non-residential properties is also a possibility through the land bank. Additionally, tools within the HUD programs (especially Community Development Block Grant) may allow for addressing non-residential issues through activities such as façade improvement and neighborhood revitalization. Though Block Grant funding is limited, such residential and non-residential programs can have an impact on neighborhoods.

8-8 Promote the revitalization of older commercial areas as a focus of neighborhood activity and include support for building and property maintenance code enforcement.

A) Activity or Actions

The Industrial Commercial Incentive Board (ICIB) was formed by the Town Board and staffed by the Town and AIDA to review and make recommendations regarding changes to the 485(b) development incentive, including locations of designated Enhancement Areas. The ICIB met through 2011 and its recommendations were adopted by the Town Board in October 2011. These recommendations resulted in removing and adding properties primarily focused on sites south of Sheridan Drive and the I-290. The ICIB also concluded that 485(b) is only applicable in the designated areas and not town-wide for certain uses. The three school districts in the Town participated throughout the process in an effort to gain their support in opting into the program. The Village of Williamsville was also involved, and has included the entire Village as an eligible area.

The response to Policy 3-9 discusses the new “Live-Work” zoning district and the “Traditional Neighborhood Business Overlay District” which were adopted by the Town Board in 2012 to facilitate reuse of properties that may no longer be viable for the uses or forms of development allowed under existing zoning.

The Building Department is charged with the responsibility of inspecting commercial properties on a regular basis. As in most communities, routine inspections are not performed on a regular schedule.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Town will continue implementation of mixed use Pedestrian-friendly zoning changes in Williamsville, Eggertsville and Snyder.

The revised Enhancement Areas identified by the ICIB were targeted to locations where the specific benefits of the 485(b) program were best suited. A need was identified by the Town Board to more broadly define areas where redevelopment should be targeted. The Planning Department and AIDA have been developing a map for the Town Board’s consideration that will provide more general policy guidance for targeting various redevelopment incentives and zoning code text changes.

8-9 Encourage participation from residents when the Town is developing action / improvement plans for specific neighborhoods.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town’s Community Development section uses a Citizen Participation Plan that outlines the Department’s obligation to inform residents of community development activities. Residents must be consulted when a plan is amended or new plans are developed.

The Town Supervisor and Council members continue to work closely with the Eggertsville Community Organization (ECO) in southwest Amherst regarding changes and opportunities in the neighborhood. The Eggertsville Task Force, a group composed of Town Officials,

representatives of Town departments and neighborhood stakeholders such as ECO was formed to address concerns focused on housing issues, the need for park improvements, neighborhood youth, and problem landlords. Task Force activities have resulted in enhanced services for neighborhood residents such as community policing, various offerings through the Recreation Department, and the development of a plan for improvements to neighborhood parks. Both Eggertsville Park on Sweet Home Rd. and Dellwood Park at Garnet Drive have paved pathways throughout the parks to allow accessibility and Dellwood will have lighting to provide safety and mobility for residents. The pathways were completed in 2012 with the assistance of CDBG and Capital Improvements funding.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

In 2012 the Town and the Sweet Home School District completed a land sale of approximately 46 acres on the east side of Sweet Home Road. The parcel is now an integral part of Nature View Park, albeit without the limitations presented in the conservation easement that encumbers active recreational used in the remainder of the Park. Task force groups active both within Town government and throughout the Town, as well as special meetings or forums to gather input on action and improvement plans for certain neighborhoods, will continue to be important as housing issues are addressed. Collaboration and cooperation with UB on student housing, impact on surrounding neighborhoods, and development around the University's campuses will also be essential.

CHAPTER 9 – Community Facilities

Maintaining the excellence of Amherst's community facilities is a major theme of the Comprehensive Plan because these facilities contribute to the Town's high quality of life. The Plan's policies and recommendations acknowledge that high quality community facilities and services provide the Town with a competitive advantage for economic development opportunities. These same qualities are also attractive for high-quality residential development. The Plan's policies seek to maintain a high level of excellence in a fiscally responsible manner.

An emerging consideration regarding facilities and services is the changing character of Amherst's residents. Although the pace of population growth has remained steady, the town's population is aging, a trend projected to continue over time. A larger number of older residents is likely to increase demand and costs for services provided by the community. In general, seniors have less ability to absorb increasing service costs while simultaneously placing increasing demand for services such as public and private transportation and health care facilities. The construction of senior residences near Town facilities, mixed use developments, and near public transportation routes can reduce these impacts and costs for certain services. Such a reduction has not yet been quantified and leaves the question... In what ways will an increasing number of older residents shape demand for town-provided services or the demand for new services not yet provided? Prospective responses to this question are shrouded in the reality that our infrastructure is aging and, in some situations, requiring major replacement or upgrades.

The following is a review of Comprehensive Plan policies regarding community facilities and services and progress toward their implementation.

9-1 Establish an ongoing system to identify and prioritize community facility and service needs.

A) Activity or Actions

The Capital Improvement Program process continues to be used as a mechanism to prioritize capital infrastructure needs and funding across all Town departments. However, to date the Town has not developed a proactive system of identifying service needs, costs and financing mechanisms. The Town Board's strategy regarding community facilities continues to be one of reducing ongoing operation and maintenance costs for certain community facilities and focusing capital investments on upgrading and replacing aging infrastructure. The following is a summary of activities related to various types of facilities in the Comprehensive Plan.

Water Pollution Control and Sanitary Sewers, Storm Sewers, and Water Distribution System – Maintenance and repair of the Town's basic infrastructure systems and Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) are a significant focus of funding for Town facilities. Sources of funding for these systems typically include the Town and various grants and aid from outside sources. In 2012 the Town was mandated by the NYSDEC under an order of consent to evaluate and perform upgrades and repairs to the WPCF. As a result, the Town Board approved formulation of a Comprehensive Evaluation of all processes and infrastructure associated with the facility. The study was completed in 2013. Recommendations from the study have

subsequently guided major investments and capital improvements for 2014 and 2015. From 2010-2015 approximately \$59.2 million have been allocated for heavy maintenance, repair, or upgrades to these systems in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This funding is summarized in Table 33 below.

As shown in Table 33 below, the Town approved significant increases for the WPCF and waterline replacement funding beginning in 2013. Investment in storm sewer and sanitary sewer maintenance decreased significantly the following year and continued on through 2015. Although expenditures for capital facilities have declined after 2013, higher levels of funding for the WPCF is likely to continue over the next several years as recommendations from the Evaluation Study are implemented. Those expenditures most certainly will place pressure on expenditures for quality of life investments. In addition, the Capital Improvement Program now includes allocations for the purchase of vehicles and capital equipment, a practice that also places reduced pressure on these investments.

Table 33
Funds Programmed for Infrastructure Maintenance, Repair, or Upgrades (\$)

System	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
WPCF	2,803,000	4,627,000	4,274,000	6,855,000	6,940,000	6,315,000	31,814,000
Sanitary Sewers	2,016,000	1,520,000	3,945,500	1,625,850	2,295,000	818,000	12,220,350
Storm Sewers	75,000	959,500	858,381	841,225	0	515,200	3,249,306
Waterlines	1,963,000	1,100,000	1,410,000	3,750,000	1,895,000	1,585,000	11,703,000
Total:	6,857,000	8,206,500	10,487,881	13,072,075	11,130,000	9,233,200	58,986,656

Source: Town of Amherst Capital Improvement Programs 2010 through 2015

Parks & Recreation – Many of the decisions regarding the development of recreation facilities are guided by the adopted 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Youth and Recreation Department has expressed interest in updating that plan. The Planning Department is currently attempting to identify a source of funding for that initiative.

At a cost of \$189,000, the Clearfield Pool liner was replaced in 2014 while improvements to the outdoor fields at the North Amherst Recreation Center were deferred to 2015. Funding for the replacement of playground equipment at specific parks and for improvements to tennis/basketball court facilities was deferred to 2015. Approximately \$100,000 in park improvements each year was included in the 2015-2020 Capital Improvement Program adopted by the Town Board during the reporting period.

Police & Courts – To enhance security, a 2,058 square foot expansion of the Town's Court Building was approved for 2014 in the 2013-2018 CIP. That facility is currently in the design stage.

Libraries - A proposed 10,000 square foot expansion of the Main Library at Audubon was included in the CIP in 2003. The project has continually been moved to the “out-years” of the program. Currently, it is programmed in the 2015-2020 CIP with funding over a period between 2016 and 2019 at a total cost of \$1.8 million. Funds for a preliminary design and cost estimates have been programmed for the first year.

Senior Services – As the Center for Senior Services Building is now reaching its 15th year, updates to interior space to accommodate enhanced services continue to be made. Updating of operating systems of the Center continue to need more intensive servicing and upgrades.

As the needs of older adults continue to evolve, existing space is being re-purposed for new types of activities. In 2012 a Wi-Fi Accessible Computer Lab was established to meet the needs of program participants and class instructors. Greater focus on health, wellness and fitness by younger seniors and those with chronic illness has resulted in a growing request for age-appropriate fitness equipment. Accommodations for those activities is programmed for completion in 2015.

Efforts are underway to assist in the creation of a service delivery center for senior citizens on the Weinberg Campus. The “Town Center”, as the facility is now called, will provide a central location for a wide range of services for senior residents of the Town. The scheduled opening is in the fall of 2015.

Youth Services – No capital improvements were made during the reporting period.

Other Municipal Facilities – The 2014-2019 CIP includes an ongoing Town parking lot repair and maintenance program with a projected 6-year cost of \$1.2 million, a decrease of \$800,000 of the funding allocated in the previous CIP. This program is coordinated through the Building Department and prioritizes repair and maintenance of parking lots at all Town buildings and facilities. It has had a significant impact on the quality of parking facilities at most of the Town’s facilities. The decrease in funding is reflective of previous efforts to renovate and fund heavy maintenance of these facilities.

Information Technology - Phase One of the Town of Amherst Wide Area Network Upgrade Project was completed in 2013. Phase One included installing fiber optic cabling between ten (10) Town facilities that will foster significant Information Technology infrastructure improvements. These improvements include disaster recovery and business continuity plans designed to protect the Town's investment in technology resources. Other improvements include a reduction in ongoing telecommunication costs, consolidation of network resources to a redundant dual data center approach, and expanded use of virtual server technologies.

Fire Protection – Over time, the Senior Fire Inspector and liaison to the Fire Chiefs' Council reporting that the water pressure and flow in the general area along Main Street from the Youngs east to Transit Road continued to be an issue. Development has continued in this corridor and has exacerbated this problem. As a result of the Engineering Department's modeling effort of this situation, a project was completed to provide a connection between water lines in the vicinity of Sheridan Drive and Transit Road. As predicted in the model, these improvements have increased fire hydrant flows. Pressures at the lower end of established standards still remain in this section of Town.

As Dockside Village has developed, the Swormville Fire Chief voiced concern regarding the ongoing development of the project with a “dead-end” waterline. If a fire hydrant on that waterline were to be used for firefighting, the pressure and flow to the rest of the hydrants would be greatly diminished. The original plan was for the roadway and waterline to be connected to

Millersport Highway. According to the Engineering Department, this firefighting issue has partially been addressed by the addition of a second connection to the Transit Road water main. In addition, long range plans for the development of Dockside Village are for the continuation of the existing water main to Millersport Highway. That connection could more fully address the fire company's concerns.

Additionally, the North Amherst Fire Chief communicated his concern regarding the Tonawanda Creek Road waterline. To date no information has been received that indicates the waterline has been repaired or replaced completely.

The provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the Town has evolved and many of the EMS calls are screened by the Town's fire dispatchers using set criteria. As a result, many private ambulance companies are being dispatched to calls directly. While this has relieved volunteer fire departments of a growing burden of EMS alarms due to the Town's expanding older population, the development of numerous new senior citizen housing facilities will place increasing demands on this service.

Health Care Facilities – The availability of outpatient and emergency medical care facilities continues to expand in the Town through the development of stand-alone medical offices offering an array of specialized practices. Much of this activity has taken place along major highway corridors such as Sheridan Drive, Maple Road, and Transit Road.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Town continues to use the Capital Improvement Program as a means of managing the development and maintenance of Town facilities. Until recently, the capital investment funding plan formulated by the Town's auditors had been used to help prioritize and schedule bonding for capital projects. Due to recent fiscal constraints, investments have been limited and focused on infrastructure updates and replacements that can be funded without increases to the tax rate and within the limits prescribed by the State-mandated 2% cap on the tax levy. During the period between 2010 and 2013, expenditures for infrastructure increased by 91.0 percent. During subsequent years (2013 to 2015), those expenditures declined by 29.0 percent. It is yet to be seen whether this decline heralds the beginning of a general decline in that spending. Much depends on the cost of required improvements to the Water Pollution Control Facility identified in the Comprehensive Evaluation Report. Initial indications are that capital investments for the plant will continue at a level approximating \$8.0 million for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. In order to protect those investments and funds already committed, funding levels for years 2018 through 2020 could remain in the \$3 million to \$4 million range. Should these levels be realized, the Town's capacity to fund quality of life investments could increase.

The development of medical offices to house ancillary treatment and consultation facilities around the Millard Fillmore Suburban hospital has been funded by private interests. The Town monitors this trend to ensure that supporting infrastructure and publicly provided support systems are in place to serve this area. In addition, the Town should reinforce its long-standing policy of protecting residential uses in these corridors from speculative activity that reduces residential property values. The recent rezoning of residential parcels for office use threatens the erosion of that policy in these corridors.

Water Pollution Control and Sanitary Sewers, Storm Sewers, and Water Distribution System - As discussed above (and illustrated in Table 33), increased funding for maintenance and improvement projects at the Water Pollution Control Facility may continue in the near future. The magnitude of these investments will be guided by the NYSDEC consent order and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Evaluation report.

Information Technology - The final phase of the Wide Area Network Upgrade Project should be completed in 2015. Planned improvements include continued centralization of critical network resources, consolidation of enterprise application database stores, expansion of a town-wide electronic document management program and virtual desktop technologies. Additionally, a backup communications infrastructure plan is a major component of this phase of work. Centralization of resources requires a backup communications plan in the event of a fiber optic cable outage (hardware failure, cut cable, etc.).

Senior Services - As the population of the Town continues to age, the need for supportive programs and services continues to escalate. This may drive the need to adaptively reconfigure internal space at the Center for Senior Services to meet changing requirements. The Center offers a variety of resources to help guide older adults and their caregivers through “the maze” of the long term care system and the vast array of health and wellness programming services available to them. It is increasingly essential to have a “Continuum of Care” for older adults who live independently. Many elements of the Center are planning to improve service delivery to the aging population. In addition, the “Town Center” on the Weinberg Campus should provide one-stop accessibility to needed support service. What remains as an imponderable is the extent and cost of services needed by elderly residents who option to age in-place.

9-2 Encourage transportation and outreach programs for persons who find it difficult to get to particular facilities.

A) Activity or Actions

The continued growth of service oriented employment in the Town requires greater access to these jobs by residents of surrounding communities. This policy may have to be adjusted or combined with one in the transportation section (Chapter 6) that speaks to increasing transportation capacity for disadvantaged persons or those who depend on the reverse commute or to travel to work. Accommodating the reverse commute to work is critical to employers and employees. A robust public transportation system and other public-private partnerships that support reverse commuting to Amherst should be a policy of the Plan. The Alternatives Analysis discussed in Policy 6-9 should help to address this issue.

In 2011 the Department of Senior Services instituted a program called EZ Rider which provides a transportation option for residents of senior housing complexes that opt-out of the Amherst Senior Transportation Services (ASTS) services. Medical transport requests increased 25% from 2011. Increased demand for accessible and affordable transportation has ASTS looking at new effective vehicles to replace an aging fleet. A grant application will be made for Federal New Freedom Funds for wheelchair accessible vehicles. Administrative funding for a part-time outreach aide to coordinate service and measure performance outcomes is included in the proposal.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Publicly funded transportation and programs supporting public/private partnerships providing transportation services are experiencing new funding constraints and challenges. Funding is increasingly scarce for federally funded programs like the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs that subsidize transportation to employment centers and community facilities such as hospitals and schools.

Community based and public service organizations will find it increasingly necessary to enter into partnerships with private businesses and transportation services to maintain access to their facilities. As an example, despite the availability of the Amherst Senior Transportation Services (ASTS) Program, there is still not enough transportation available to meet all requests. With the growth of the older adult population and continued out-migration of younger adults, more and more seniors are finding themselves without a support system to take them to medical appointments and shopping. The result is a greater reluctance to restrict or give up driving that can pose a threat to themselves and others.

9-3 Identify opportunities to strategically locate certain facilities to strengthen neighborhoods and serve local needs.

A) Activity or Actions

The former Eggert Road School is in the process of conversion into a adaptively reused mixed use development accommodating market-rate rental housing, limited office space and new town-owned recreation facilities. The latter, currently awaiting transfer of title, will add a state-of-the-art accessible playground to Eggertsville Community Organization Park (formerly Crosby Circle). Inevitably, this project will strengthen the surrounding neighborhood and support the viability of neighborhood scale retail and services focused on the intersection of Eggert and Main.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

9-4 Integrate community facilities within mixed-use activity centers.

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

9-5 Allow continued growth of the non-residential tax base consistent with the Comprehensive (Land Use) Plan.

A) Activity or Actions

As discussed in Policy 3-16, new development and redevelopment activity in the Town has continued, although at varying levels than in previous years. This development was generally consistent with the pattern of land use proposed in the Conceptual Land Use Plan. As shown in Table 34, since 2010 the Town has continued to experience positive growth in assessed valuation.

Table 35 shows changes in assessed value across several generalized land uses for 2010-2014. For the reporting period 2013 and 2014, non-residential development continued to account for a significant portion of additional value (58%), however, investment in residential development including senior residences has also been strong, accounting for 42% of the increase. Manufacturing alone accounted for only two percent (2%) of recorded increases in assessed value. The value of office space, however, increased by over \$98 million, accounting for 38% of the increase during that period. A popular idea is that office development is waning in the region. Although statistics for 2011 and 2012 appear to support that position, the value of office development in 2014 was the highest since 2010. Although this cannot be interpreted as the beginning of a trend, the notion that demand for research/development and light industrial land diminished during this period is called into question. As shown in Tables 34 and 35, it is noteworthy that the Town experienced substantial growth and an increasing tax base during the latter years of a period of national and regional economic difficulty. Growth since 2009 has been strong particularly in the commercial uses. Consideration of any development trend must account for the prevailing economic situation. Trends observed during this period may not provide a reliable indication of future growth or activity.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Since 2008, the total assessed value of non-residential properties in the Town has increased due to increasing market values of vacant commercial land. Additionally, non-residential properties represent an increasing portion (+3%) of the Town's overall assessed valuation. This trend results from rapidly increasing values of non-residential land, and little growth in the value of residential properties.

Table 34
Changes to Assessed Valuation from Physical Improvements (2010-2014) (\$)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Increase	75,679,650	48,689,612	74,812,545	113,572,916	151,847,600
Total Decrease	4,380,600	5,697,200	3,044,000	9,511,900	9,328,932
Net Change	71,299,050	42,992,412	71,768,545	104,061,016	142,518,668

Data provided by the Town of Amherst Assessor's Office

Table 35
Increase in Assessed Valuation from Physical Improvements (2010-2014)

Property Type	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Value Added from Phys Inc (\$)	% of Total Physical Inc	Value Added from Phys Inc (\$)	% of Total Physical Inc	Value Added from Phys Inc (\$)	% of Total Physical Inc	Value Added from Phys Inc (\$)	% of Total Physical Inc	Value Added from Phys Inc (\$)	% of Total Physical Inc
Total Increase	75,679,650	--	48,689,612	--	74,812,545	--	113,572,916	--	151,847,600	--
Residential	26,781,450	35	29,935,300	61	37,573,445	50	52,231,500	46	54,837,700	36
Commercial	6,554,300	9	2,267,300	5	31,868,900	42	31,016,316	27	13,642,900	9
Office	27,532,900	36	5,198,400	10	5,310,400	7	20,828,300	18	77,570,800	51
Multi-Use	1,203,000	2	376,600	1	0	0	3,107,700	3	5,796,200	4
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,550,000	1	0	0
Home for Aged	11,049,700	15	7,149,400	15	0	0	1,004,000	1	0	0
Hospital/Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Religious	2,135,200	3	2,366,300	5	250,000	1	3,835,100	3	0	0
Utilities	0	0	1,352,712	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Data provided by the Town of Amherst Assessor's Office

Due to changes in New York State Law, municipalities, school districts and special districts are generally limited from increasing their tax levy (the amount raised by property taxes) in excess of 2 percent. Traditionally, increases in the assessed value of the taxing jurisdiction and a corresponding increase in the tax levy have been used to fund increases in operating costs and capital expenditures without a need to increase the tax rate. This funding mechanism is no longer operative. Instead, increases in operating and capital costs in excess of the 2 percent cap must either be funded with other revenues or result in decreases in operating or capital costs. Particularly in communities with aging infrastructure, this scenario often leads to deferred, reduced or eliminated maintenance. Ultimately, the quality of life in the taxing jurisdiction is negatively affected. A benefit, however, may be less emphasis on fiscal zoning and more on planned development that minimizes operating and maintenance costs.

9-6 Pursue cost efficiencies in the provision of public facilities and services through the sharing of resources and the elimination of service duplications.

A) Activity or Actions

As a result of the consolidation of the Youth and Recreation Departments, in 2011 the former Youth Board space at the Harlem Road Community Center was marketed to a consortium of service organizations. Current tenants include: The Resource Training Center, ElderCare Solutions LLC, and Laura Thompson, a therapist who pays rent to the Town of Amherst but also provides needed counseling and case management services to Amherst residents.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Some Town departments have noted potential benefits from shared and collaborative use of facilities amongst different services, including the potential to rent space to private interests. For example, joint use of a facility between seniors and youth could foster beneficial

intergenerational interaction. While there are not specific initiatives to cite, this may be a model to consider in pursuit of cost efficiencies in the future.

Trends in the Town's population characteristics indicate that the median age is increasing and the senior citizen cohort is increasing fairly rapidly. Additionally, funding for senior citizen residential developments is declining. This reality dictates that the Town's senior residents will be required to age-in-place. These changes will have a significant effect on the Town's current delivery system for senior services and may create a demand for services not presently provided. The Town should continue to analyze changes in population characteristics and initiate a dialog with senior service providers in order to determine the nature of existing and future needs and to develop integrated service delivery systems.

9-7 Expand partnerships with other service providers, private organizations, and businesses to provide community facilities and services.

A) Activity or Actions

The Town has taken several steps in recent years to pursue cost efficiencies. Among these were: the new Williamsville Youth & Family Center; the Eggertsville Youth and Community Center operating as a joint venture with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Buffalo; privatization of the Museum; a new refuse collection and recycling contract with the Modern Corporation; and a joint project with the New York State Department of Transportation, the University at Buffalo, and Sweet Home School district to install a new fiber-optic wide-area-network (WAN) and data switches.

The Town has begun to explore cooperative agreements between the Senior Service Department and service providers such as Weinberg Campus. This model is also being explored by the Youth and Recreation Department in an effort to expand the Northtown Center into a national hockey venue. That effort is focused on cooperative agreements with one or more hotel chains.

The Department of Senior Services is currently working with other community organizations on a public/private initiative known as "the Town Square." This facility would offer a continuum of services for older adults, enabling them to age in-community. This will be a one-stop facility that connects people to all services they need through collaboration without burdening taxpayers or duplicating effort. The uniqueness of such a facility is that all partners share resources and do not add any additional burden to taxpayers. Start-up costs are being raised by various partners and a consortium of local and national foundations. Construction for this facility began in spring 2013; programming began 2014.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

The Town is actively pursuing and evaluating opportunities to provide services to the community while reducing redundancies amongst providers. Partnerships will be a key to sustaining existing programs while responding to increasing demands by special populations. All Town departments and service providers are likely to find it necessary to collaborate and engage partners in order to maintain historic levels of services.

The Town and Village of Williamsville have discussed a joint study to consolidate Village and Town sewer systems. See Policy 9-6.

9-8 Reconcile needs for community facilities and services with the fiscal capacity of the Town through the capital programming process.

A) Activity or Actions

The period from 2007-2012 was one of financial uncertainty for public and private interests. The effect of this uncertainty on local tax bases and government budgets has been significant in some places. Fortunately, Amherst has not experienced significant changes to its financial standing. The Town experienced a modest increase in assessed value from 2012 – 2013.

The Town continues to effectively employ its capital improvement programming process. For 2013, \$16.6 million in long-term bonding is the largest single source of funding capital projects. No projects have been funded through current tax revenues while funding from other sources such as state and federal aid only accounts for one and a half percent (1.5%) of the capital spending plan. The Engineering Department will oversee the expenditure of most of the capital funds—\$13.1 million. This is due primarily to the need to invest in the aging WPCF.

As shown in Table 36 below, Town funds programmed for capital projects remained relatively stable, averaging \$9.94 million/year through 2012. During preparation of the 2013-2018 CIP, the Town increased funding for repairs and upgrades to sanitary sewer and waterline repairs and upgrades that increased the overall funding by over \$5.7 million. Over one-half of the increase is related to improvements at the WPCF. Funding from other sources such as assistance from higher levels of government or grants decreased significantly in 2013, however funds from these sources are likely to increase in the future as the Town seeks grants and assistance for infrastructure repairs.

Table 36
Summary of Capital Improvement Program Funding (\$)

Source	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Town	8,791,800	10,525,750	9,642,240	10,683,150	10,080,381	16,628,475
Other	4,867,200	2,927,330	625,000	922,470	1,009,000	257,500
Total	13,659,000	13,453,080	10,267,240	11,605,620	11,089,381	16,885,975

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Notwithstanding the adoption of a formula to estimate the needed investment in infrastructure, during the past six years the combined bonding target for capital projects was lowered to an amount driven by the availability of bond amortization funds that could be included in the operating budget without impacting tax rates. This practice is likely to continue into the future.

Passage of the New York State Property Tax Cap in 2011 is impacting local government and school district financing. The tax cap law establishes a limit on the annual growth of property taxes levied by local governments and school districts to two percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. For 2012 the Town's tax rate decreased and the tax cap was not a factor. The cap has had a more significant impact on local school district budgets and operations. Affects of the cap on budgets and operations bear monitoring and analysis. For 2013, there was slight decrease in the Town tax levy. As discussed in Policy 8-7, new initiatives to share resources and costs may emerge.

9-9 Re-evaluate funding of special purpose or “high level of service” programs or facilities.

A) Activity or Actions

Nothing significant to report.

B) Observed or Emerging Trends

Nothing significant to report.

September 2015

Appendix A - Demographic Data with Margin of Errors

The following tables correspond to the tables found in Chapter 2 on Demographics in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report. These tables document the margin of error (MOE) for data reported by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the 2009-2013 American Community Survey. The table numbers below correspond to the table numbers used in the 2014 Chapter 2 Review.

Table A-1
Population Comparison with Local Municipalities

Municipality	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)
Erie County	919,230	(X)
Amherst	122,814	51
Aurora	13,782	20
Buffalo (City)	260,568	64
Cheektowaga	87,998	59
Clarence	30,721	51
Colden	3,267	22
Elma	11,413	37
Grand Island	20,469	25
Hamburg	57,155	55
Lancaster	41,927	42
Orchard Park	29,205	44
Tonawanda (Town)	73,548	32
West Seneca	44,773	49

Table A-2
Total Population by Planning Analysis Area (PAA)

Population	PAA1 Northwest	PAA2 Northeast	PAA3 West Central	PAA4 East Central	PAA5 Southwest	PAA6 Southeast
2013	14,093	13,746	20,867	23,407	34,216	21,965
2010	8,276	14,045	20,341	23,644	34,154	21,906
2000	8,080	11,853	13,449	22,736	34,085	21,864
% Change 2000-2013	74.4%	16.0%	55.2%	3.0%	0.4%	0.5%

Table A-3
Change in Racial Composition from 2000-2013

Race	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (\pm)
One race	120,094	654	97.8%	0.5
White	102,444	1,476	83.4%	1.2
Black or African American	6,815	766	5.5%	0.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	293	127	0.2%	0.1
Asian	9,174	908	7.5%	0.7
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	421	0.0%	0.1
Hispanic or Latino	4,096	582	3.3%	0.5
Some other race	1,368	443	1.1%	0.4
Two or more races	2,720	650	2.2%	0.5

Table A-4
Region of Birth of Foreign Born Residents

Region of Birth	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Foreign-born population (excluding born at sea)	15,147	985	(X)	(X)
Europe	3,632	447	24.0%	2.6
Asia	8,408	737	55.5%	3.2
Africa	616	235	4.1%	1.5
Oceania	4	9	0.0%	0.1
Latin America	1,150	331	7.6%	2.1
Northern America	1,337	270	8.8%	1.8

Table A-5
Language Spoken at Home

Language Spoken at Home	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Population 5 years and over	116,678	509	(X)	(X)
English only	99,233	1,071	85.0%	0.9
Language other than English	17,445	1,081	15.0%	0.9
Spanish	2,591	542	2.2%	0.5
Other Indo-European languages	7,962	764	6.8%	0.6
Asian and Pacific Island languages	5,333	652	4.6%	0.6

Table A-6
Age Comparisons with Buffalo and Erie County

Age	Amherst			Buffalo			Erie County		
	2013	MOE (±)	MOE % (±)	2013	MOE (±)	MOE % (±)	2013	MOE (±)	MOE % (±)
5 to 9 years	6,347	571	0.5	15,881	814	0.3	51,902	1,121	0.1
20 to 24 years	11,123	1,212	1	25,006	927	0.4	69,134	21	0.1
35 to 44 years	13,090	673	0.5	30,610	926	0.4	109,308	96	0.1
60 to 64 years	7,817	546	0.4	12,948	761	0.3	53,988	1,158	0.1
85 years and over	4,550	419	0.3	4,102	363	0.1	22,920	683	0.1

Table A-7
Change in Age Composition from 2000-2013

Age	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (\pm)
Under 5 years	6,136	513	5.0%	0.4
5 to 9 years	6,347	571	5.2%	0.5
10 to 14 years	6,868	487	5.6%	0.4
15 to 19 years	10,318	614	8.4%	0.5
20 to 24 years	11,123	1,212	9.1%	1
25 to 34 years	13,806	776	11.2%	0.6
35 to 44 years	13,090	673	10.7%	0.5
45 to 54 years	17,100	736	13.9%	0.6
55 to 59 years	7,726	639	6.3%	0.5
60 to 64 years	7,817	546	6.4%	0.4
65 to 74 years	10,445	549	8.5%	0.4
75 to 84 years	7,488	506	6.1%	0.4
85 years and over	4,550	419	3.7%	0.3
Median age (years)	40.3	0.7	(X)	(X)

Table A-8
Marital Status

Marital Status	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (\pm)
Population 15 years and over	103,463	1,581	(X)	(X)
Never married	34,574	1,681	33.4%	2.7
Married, except separated	50,325	1,171	48.6%	2.5
Separated	1,287	388	1.2%	0.8
Widowed	8,005	741	7.7%	1.4
Females widowed	6,334	513	11.6%	0.9
Divorced	9,272	909	9.0%	1.7
Females divorced	6,027	520	11.0%	0.9

Table A-9
Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (\pm)
Population 25 years and over	82,022	1,019	(X)	(X)
Less than 9th grade	1,321	248	1.6%	0.3
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2,696	316	3.3%	0.4
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	14,594	836	17.8%	1
Some college, no degree	12,394	722	15.1%	0.9
Associate degree	7,882	588	9.6%	0.7
Bachelor's degree	20,871	911	25.4%	1
Graduate or professional degree	22,264	916	27.1%	1
Percent high school graduate or higher	(X)	(X)	95.1%	0.4
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	(X)	(X)	52.6%	1.3

Table A-10
Change in Housing Characteristics from 2000-2013

Housing Characteristics	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% in 2013	MOE % (\pm)
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE				
Total households	48,637	806	100.0%	(X)
Family households (families)	30,040	552	61.8%	1.2
Married-couple family	23,915	514	49.2%	1.3
Female householder, no husband present	4,556	438	9.4%	0.9
Nonfamily households	18,597	769	38.2%	1.2
Householder living alone	15,258	729	31.4%	1.2
Householder 65 years and over	7,447	575	15.3%	1.1
Average household size	2.35	0.03	(X)	(X)
Average family size	2.98	0.04	(X)	(X)
HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENURE				
Total housing units	51,416	891	100.0%	(X)
Occupied housing units	48,637	806	94.6%	0.8
Owner-occupied	34,622	822	71.2%	1.1
Renter-occupied	14,015	586	28.8%	1.1
Vacant housing units	2,779	418	5.4%	0.8
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	(X)	(X)	0.9%	0.5
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	(X)	(X)	5.0%	1.4

Table A-11
Value of Housing

Value of Housing (\$)	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% of Units	MOE % (\pm)
Less than \$50,000	827	152	2.4%	0.4
\$50,000 to \$99,999	3,789	346	10.9%	0.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8,485	578	24.5%	1.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9,019	433	26.0%	1.1
\$200,000 to \$299,999	8,711	504	25.2%	1.4
\$300,000 to \$499,999	3,022	268	8.7%	0.8
\$500,000 to \$999,999	660	161	1.9%	0.5
\$1,000,000 or more	109	61	0.3%	0.2
Median value (dollars)	170,700	2,337	(X)	(X)

Table A-12
Monthly Mortgage Status

Mortgage Status	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Units	MOE % (±)
Housing Units with a mortgage	22,802	749	65.9%	(X)
Less than \$300	41	36	0.2%	0.2
\$300 to \$499	149	69	0.7%	0.3
\$500 to \$699	554	156	2.4%	0.7
\$700 to \$999	2,969	345	13.0%	1.5
\$1,000 to \$1,499	6,745	503	29.6%	1.8
\$1,500 to \$1,999	6,391	451	28.0%	1.7
\$2,000 or more	5,953	364	26.1%	1.6
Median payment (dollars)	1,569	26	(X)	(X)
Housing units not mortgaged	11,820	594	34.1%	(X)

Table A-13
Monthly Housing Rent

Housing Rent	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Units	MOE % (±)
Renter-occupied units	14,015	586	28.8%	1.1
Less than \$200	249	146	1.8%	1.1
\$200 to \$299	416	119	3.1%	0.9
\$300 to \$499	762	185	5.6%	1.4
\$500 to \$749	1,980	312	14.7%	2.2
\$750 to \$999	4,565	435	33.8%	2.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	3,856	407	28.6%	2.8
\$1,500 or more	1,662	273	12.3%	1.9
Median rent (dollars)	922	22	(X)	(X)
Units paying no cash rent	525	133	(X)	(X)

Table A-14
Comparison and Rank of Incomes Among Local Municipalities

Municipality	2013 Median HH Income (\$)	MOE (±)	2013 Rank	2013 Per Capita Income (\$)	MOE (±)	2013 Rank
Amherst	67,615	1,946	7	35,938	992	5
Aurora	70,899	5,314	6	36,208	2,237	4
Buffalo	30,942	727	13	20,392	436	13
Cheektowaga	47,842	1,493	12	24,976	552	12
Clarence	87,327	4,075	1	42,343	2,807	1
Colden	77,477	19,484	4	37,929	5,121	3
Elma	74,610	6,641	5	35,040	2,774	7
Grand Island	80,243	6,924	2	35,192	2,290	6
Hamburg	61,440	1,926	9	30,925	897	9
Lancaster	65,518	2,941	8	31,930	974	8
Orchard Park	77,517	5,528	3	41,526	2,148	2
Tonawanda (Town)	53,001	1,389	11	28,005	889	11
West Seneca	56,762	1,991	10	28,008	641	10

Table A-15
Comparison of Income (1999 and 2013)

Income	2013 Estimate (\$)	MOE (±)
Median household income	67,615	1,946
Per capita income	35,938	922
With Cash Public Assistance (households)	555	147

Table A-16
Selected Income Characteristics

Income	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % (±)
HOUSEHOLDS	48,637	806	(X)	(X)
Less than \$10,000	3,026	389	6.2%	0.8
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,956	273	4.0%	0.6
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3,828	419	7.9%	0.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3,609	397	7.4%	0.8
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,330	495	11.0%	1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8,602	525	17.7%	1
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7,076	497	14.5%	1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8,142	564	16.7%	1.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,429	344	7.1%	0.7
\$200,000 or more	3,639	371	7.5%	0.8
Median household income (dollars)	67,615	1,946	(X)	(X)
FAMILIES	30,040	552	(X)	(X)
Less than \$10,000	710	211	2.4%	0.7
\$10,000 to \$14,999	318	102	1.1%	0.3
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,230	256	4.1%	0.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,473	245	4.9%	0.8
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2,608	358	8.7%	1.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,247	422	17.5%	1.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	4,985	400	16.6%	1.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7,085	477	23.6%	1.6
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,072	331	10.2%	1.1
\$200,000 or more	3,312	322	11.0%	1.1
Median family income (dollars)	92,106	2,871	(X)	(X)

Table A-17
Food Stamps and SNAP Benefits

Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits	2007 Estimate	MOE (±)	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)
Amherst	1,903	453	2,975	297
Buffalo	25,763	1,585	36,324	1,131
Erie County	37,831	1,730	57,751	1,448
New York	670,564	7,366	1,050,669	5,820

Table A-18
Selected Employment Characteristics

Employment Characteristics	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % (±)
OCCUPATION				
Civilian employed population	59,995	1,120	(X)	
Service occupations	8,359	554	13.9%	0.9
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	1,860	261	3.1%	0.4
INDUSTRY				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	132	73	0.2%	0.1
Information	1,062	243	1.8%	0.4
Educational, health and social services	20,661	940	34.4%	1.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	5,142	552	8.6%	0.9
CLASS OF WORKER				
Private wage and salary workers	44,976	1,217	75.0%	1.3
Government workers	12,151	814	20.3%	1.3
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	2,831	322	4.7%	0.5
Unpaid family workers	37	42	0.1%	0.1

Table A-19
Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Year	Amherst Unemployment (Percent)	Erie County Unemployment (Percent)	New York State Unemployment (Percent)
2000	4.1	5.1	5.3
2005	4.5	6	5.7
2010	6.8	9.3	9.6
2011	6.6	8.8	8.9
2012	6.7	8.9	9.1
2013	6.8	8.9	9.1
2014	5.2	7.1	7.3

Table A-20
Poverty Status

Poverty Status	% of Persons 2013	MOE % (±)
All people	8.7%	0.8
18 years and over	9.2%	0.9
65 years and over	6.7%	1.2
All families	4.2%	0.9
With related children under 18 years	6.3%	1.7
With related children under 5 years only	10.1%	4.9
Families with female householder, no husband present	13.4%	4.5
With related children under 18 years	21.9%	7.5
With related children under 5 years	33.8%	18.9

Table A-21
Health Insurance Coverage

Health Insurance Coverage	Amherst 2013	MOE (±)	Buffalo 2013	MOE (±)	Erie County 2013	MOE (±)
Civilian noninstitutionalized population	121,290	(X)	257,983	(X)	907,174	(X)
With health insurance coverage	116,196	639	231,274	1,421	845,295	2,141
No health insurance coverage	5,094	613	26,709	1,379	61,879	2,057
Civilian population 18 to 64 years	75,858	(X)	168,789	(X)	571,365	(X)
Employed:	55,032	1,097	102,026	1,739	406,978	2,342
With private health insurance	50,714	997	71,690	1,633	344,387	2,741
With public coverage	2,952	374	18,200	895	37,141	1,234
Unemployed:	3,146	383	15,858	1,019	36,696	1,477
With private health insurance	1,832	290	3,685	473	14,243	960
With public coverage	702	180	7,944	679	13,280	859
Not in labor force:	17,680	1,031	50,905	1,569	127,691	2,305
With private health insurance	14,360	904	18,411	1,079	72,980	1,821
With public coverage	3,070	453	32,521	1,421	57,710	1,752

Table A-22
Means of Transportation to Work

Means of Transportation to Work	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % (±)
Workers 16 years and over	58,813	1,077	(X)	(X)
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	49,011	1,071	83.3%	1.4
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	4,226	536	7.2%	0.9
Public transportation (including taxicab)	1,229	328	2.1%	0.5
Walked	1,777	361	3.0%	0.6
Other means	643	196	1.1%	0.3
Worked at home	1,927	266	3.3%	0.4
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	19.5	0.5	(X)	(X)

Table A-23
Means of Transportation to Work in 2013 - Comparison of Communities

Mode of Transportation	Amherst, NY	Buffalo, NY	Colonie, NY	Greece, NY	Ann Arbor, MI	Portland, OR
Workers 16 years and over	58,813	103,849	42,493	46,455	56,036	302,410
Car, truck, or van, drove alone	83.3%	67.3%	85.2%	88.9%	58.0%	59.0%
Car, truck, or van, carpooled	7.2%	9.9%	7.0%	6.4%	6.3%	9.1%
Public transportation (inc taxi)	2.1%	12.0%	1.9%	0.6%	10.2%	11.6%
Walked	3.0%	6.3%	1.7%	0.6%	15.0%	5.8%
Other means	1.1%	2.4%	1.3%	0.8%	4.8%	7.2%
Worked at home	3.3%	2.1%	2.9%	2.7%	5.7%	7.3%

Table A-24
Ancestry

Ancestry	2013 Estimate	MOE (\pm)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (\pm)
Total population	122,814	51	(X)	(X)
Arab	2,060	483	1.7%	0.5
Czech	326	565	0.3%	0.1
Danish	333	127	0.3%	0.1
Dutch	1,391	134	1.1%	0.3
English	11,300	310	9.2%	0.9
French (except Basque)	3,559	1,048	2.9%	0.5
French Canadian	1,086	589	0.9%	0.2
German	30,165	242	24.6%	1.3
Greek	776	1,580	0.6%	0.3
Hungarian	1,191	314	1.0%	0.3
Irish	21,952	318	17.9%	1.1
Italian	24,569	1,294	20.0%	1
Lithuanian	156	1,226	0.1%	0.1
Norwegian	299	76	0.2%	0.1
Polish	16,370	109	13.3%	0.9
Portuguese	205	1,071	0.2%	0.1
Russian	2,989	149	2.4%	0.4
Scotch-Irish	517	514	0.4%	0.1
Scottish	2,023	147	1.6%	0.3
Slovak	160	334	0.1%	0.1
Subsaharan African	848	81	0.7%	0.3
Swedish	1,058	360	0.9%	0.2
Swiss	277	232	0.2%	0.1
Ukrainian	1,528	132	1.2%	0.3
United States or American	3,032	375	2.5%	0.4
Welsh	707	240	0.6%	0.2
West Indian (excluding Hispanic groups)	475	177	0.4%	0.1

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Table A-25
Summary of Select 2009-2013 American Community Survey Data for Town Planning Analysis Areas (PAA)

Subject	PAA1		PAA2		PAA3		PAA4		PAA5		PAA6	
	2009-2013 Estimate	MOE (±)										
MARITAL STATUS												
Population 15 years and over	11,548	779	11,076	534	19,307	1,183	19,103	754	28,383	1,219	18,851	822
Never married	4,459	663	2,635	443	11,644	1,158	3,986	608	9,003	1,068	4,859	658
Now married, except separated	5,364	468	6,561	412	5,128	244	11,912	549	13,367	721	10,187	533
Separated	199	152	113	93	123	53	227	149	471	241	232	152
Widowed	630	223	615	205	1,347	255	1,598	317	2,348	389	1,701	356
Divorced	896	273	1,152	292	1,065	175	1,380	349	3,194	527	1,872	401
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT												
Population 25 years and over	8,875	428	9,510	284	10,055	291	16,761	460	24,043	673	16,236	456
Less than 9th grade	151	78	96	55	238	76	296	138	414	125	192	108
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	403	163	239	103	520	114	382	127	751	191	603	179
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2,177	319	1,517	241	2,236	190	2,196	304	4,456	443	2,684	363
Some college, no degree	1,492	227	1,467	275	1,457	134	2,249	285	3,770	404	2,382	315
Associate degree	1,115	195	724	158	976	102	1,734	275	2,277	336	1,567	275
Bachelor's degree	1,843	245	2,588	276	2,548	174	4,672	430	5,968	489	4,184	384
Graduate or professional degree	1,694	294	2,879	304	2,080	203	5,232	393	6,407	522	4,624	394
Percent high school graduate or higher	93.8	(X)	96.5	(X)	92.5	(X)	96.0	(X)	95.2	(X)	95.1	(X)
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	39.9	(X)	57.5	(X)	46.0	(X)	59.1	(X)	51.5	(X)	54.3	(X)
REGION OF BIRTH OF FOREIGN BORN												
Total (excluding born at sea)	1,933	394	1,459	281	3,975	339	3,066	438	3,636	541	1,871	356
Europe	553	184	463	173	813	150	739	239	668	199	550	192
Asia	833	299	732	191	2,500	301	1,669	285	2,155	471	900	251
Africa	201	167	35	61	197	35	68	53	203	124	27	38
Oceania	0	27	0	24	0	25	0	29	4	33	0	29
Latin America	164	110	104	89	227	51	312	195	275	150	107	73
Northern America	182	91	125	64	238	53	278	128	331	134	287	157
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME												
Population 5 years and over	13,319	699	12,987	482	20,291	1,065	22,340	607	32,106	906	20,900	585
English only	11,073	695	11,321	509	15,412	812	18,873	711	28,305	902	18,671	646
Language other than English	2,246	549	1,666	323	4,879	471	3,467	593	3,801	561	2,229	430
Spanish	455	402	208	124	589	202	620	362	440	229	378	221
Other Indo-European languages	918	271	1,211	302	1,660	241	1,546	388	1,825	423	1,107	321
Asian and Pacific Island languages	549	217	152	98	2,245	291	947	273	1,139	389	618	258
ANCESTRY (single or multiple)												
Arab	220	193	93	208	470	108	389	161	459	252	485	167
Czech	53	205	39	70	33	170	50	262	56	208	95	254
Danish	19	66	42	39	57	33	59	44	107	51	68	83
Dutch	112	33	77	38	166	31	295	69	396	67	375	70
English	1,069	80	1,101	73	1,375	87	2,223	137	3,846	160	2,164	148
French (except Basque)	206	263	390	274	414	186	743	445	1,047	654	908	324
French Canadian	199	133	105	175	271	75	219	358	326	275	88	334
German	3,459	110	4,081	86	4,344	89	5,204	133	8,528	156	5,826	69
Greek	220	537	162	499	235	365	139	563	149	834	60	597
Hungarian	364	242	74	115	262	53	187	94	251	85	129	50
Irish	2,398	245	2,165	57	3,416	86	3,613	117	7,966	113	3,485	63
Italian	2,809	511	2,719	405	3,976	319	5,310	521	6,539	841	4,375	473
Lithuanian	0	522	23	394	26	363	12	604	35	683	60	586
Norwegian	22	27	21	41	64	35	5	31	63	45	127	51
Polish	1,837	24	1,754	35	2,343	39	3,117	26	4,187	67	3,804	74
Portuguese	9	369	78	383	47	364	71	581	0	550	0	519
Russian	183	26	247	98	619	52	781	105	546	36	662	29
Scotch-Irish	17	127	25	118	71	165	79	240	211	193	114	238
Scottish	198	25	278	32	253	34	301	54	621	98	443	57
Slovak	45	100	13	148	38	65	66	99	0	198	22	204
Subsaharan African	281	41	92	30	227	22	32	59	314	36	27	33
Swedish	106	226	208	108	122	40	152	55	247	193	264	38
Swiss	7	62	0	115	30	65	105	103	112	117	23	126
Ukrainian	177	26	240	24	265	31	550	113	191	73	146	37
United States or American	329	111	503	122	547	79	448	312	840	87	538	71
Welsh	89	63	0	24	79	36	188	139	247	134	118	91
West Indian (excluding Hispanic groups)	54	57	61	83	71	39	62	68	144	105	83	95
HOUSING & RENT VALUES												
Average Median Value of Homes (\$)	160,067	19,161	196,633	38,862	147,100	20,945	216,675	26,268	135,286	30,647	178,900	19,290
Average Median Monthly Mortgage Payment (\$)	1,531	255	1,704	248	1,359	383	1,880	209	1,322	304	1,596	294
Average Median Monthly Rent Payment (\$)	932	124	1,208	776	849	196	1,509	422	844	254	1,015	149
FINANCIAL INFORMATION												
Average Household Income (\$)	74,892	14,549	102,764	20,977	60,013	17,193	115,396	24,024	79,980	24,089	88,836	20,224
Per Capita Income (\$)	28,626	6,026	41,272	8,087	22,289	7,593	45,115	9,204	34,681	10,459	39,600	9,347
With Cash Public Assistance Income (HH)	96	62	31	31	104	79	51	45	208	8		

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Table A-26
2000-2013 Income Comparison

Income	Amherst				Buffalo				Erie County				New York State				Nationwide			
	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons 2013	MOE % (±)	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons 2013	MOE % (±)	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons 2013	MOE % (±)	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons 2013	MOE % (±)	2013 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons 2013	MOE % (±)
HOUSEHOLDS	48,637	806	(X)	(X)	112,037	1,146	(X)	(X)	380,152	1,412	(X)	(X)	7,234,743	12,096	(X)	(X)	115,610,216	238,223	(X)	(X)
Less than \$10,000	3,026	389	6.2%	0.8	19,337	886	17.3%	0.8	32,420	930	8.5%	0.2	562,307	4,944	7.8%	0.1	8,380,364	19,177	7.2%	0.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,956	273	4.0%	0.6	10,510	672	9.4%	0.6	21,941	914	5.8%	0.2	378,465	3,974	5.2%	0.1	6,214,548	16,925	5.4%	0.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3,828	419	7.9%	0.8	17,827	784	15.9%	0.7	43,959	1,284	11.6%	0.3	724,289	5,592	10.0%	0.1	12,468,604	25,764	10.8%	0.1
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3,609	397	7.4%	0.8	13,711	822	12.2%	0.7	39,201	1,186	10.3%	0.3	657,882	5,498	9.1%	0.1	11,929,761	18,742	10.3%	0.1
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,330	495	11.0%	1	14,311	709	12.8%	0.6	50,324	1,454	13.2%	0.4	859,574	6,662	11.9%	0.1	15,723,148	25,273	13.6%	0.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8,602	525	17.7%	1	17,043	844	15.2%	0.7	70,062	1,507	18.4%	0.4	1,201,783	6,007	16.6%	0.1	20,744,045	40,738	17.9%	0.1
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7,076	497	14.5%	1	8,619	550	7.7%	0.5	47,655	1,400	12.5%	0.4	870,855	5,684	12.0%	0.1	14,107,031	52,951	12.2%	0.1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8,142	564	16.7%	1.1	7,043	469	6.3%	0.4	46,815	1,192	12.3%	0.3	1,023,910	7,152	14.2%	0.1	14,858,239	72,198	12.9%	0.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,429	344	7.1%	0.7	1,945	276	1.7%	2	15,756	804	4.1%	0.2	447,506	4,482	6.2%	0.1	5,651,848	31,873	4.9%	0.1
\$200,000 or more	3,639	371	7.5%	0.8	1,691	242	1.5%	2	12,019	670	3.2%	0.2	508,172	5,368	7.0%	0.1	5,532,628	32,847	4.8%	0.1
Median household income (dollars)	67,615	1,946	(X)	(X)	30,942	727	(X)	(X)	50,653	508	(X)	(X)	58,003	204	(X)	(X)	53,046	89	(X)	(X)
FAMILIES	30,040	552	(X)	(X)	58,577	991	(X)	(X)	231,215	1,951	(X)	(X)	4,637,549	11,384	(X)	(X)	76,744,358	214,842	(X)	(X)
Less than \$10,000	710	211	2.4%	0.7	8,307	719	14.2%	1.1	12,649	846	5.5%	0.3	231,065	3,291	5.0%	0.1	3,626,303	12,422	4.7%	0.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	318	102	1.1%	0.3	3,886	519	6.6%	0.9	6,723	614	2.9%	0.3	157,855	2,688	3.4%	0.1	2,446,045	11,075	3.2%	0.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,230	256	4.1%	0.8	8,265	572	14.1%	1	16,818	794	7.3%	0.3	359,043	3,394	7.7%	0.1	6,233,829	21,418	8.1%	0.1
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,473	245	4.9%	0.8	7,385	665	12.6%	1.1	19,217	1,005	8.3%	0.4	373,435	4,040	8.1%	0.1	6,944,923	16,656	9.0%	0.1
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2,608	358	8.7%	1.1	7,883	570	13.5%	1	28,892	1,009	12.5%	0.4	529,052	4,679	11.4%	0.1	10,023,111	18,802	13.1%	0.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,247	422	17.5%	1.3	9,649	668	16.5%	1.1	46,297	1,170	20.0%	0.5	792,106	5,710	17.1%	0.1	14,611,574	44,002	19.0%	0.1
\$75,000 to \$99,999	4,985	400	16.6%	1.4	5,432	526	9.3%	0.9	36,510	1,297	15.8%	0.5	623,926	5,335	13.5%	0.1	10,949,862	57,623	14.3%	0.1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7,085	477	23.6%	1.6	4,934	425	8.4%	0.7	39,343	1,124	17.0%	0.5	796,287	6,700	17.2%	0.1	12,294,074	79,758	16.0%	0.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,072	331	10.2%	1.1	1,509	242	2.6%	0.4	14,020	761	6.1%	0.3	363,771	4,763	7.8%	0.1	4,836,963	33,926	6.3%	0.1
\$200,000 or more	3,312	322	11.0%	1.1	1,327	216	2.3%	0.4	10,746	602	4.6%	0.3	411,009	4,791	8.9%	0.1	4,777,674	34,759	6.2%	0.1
Median family income (dollars)	92,106	2,871	(X)	(X)	37,412	1,435	(X)	(X)	65,897	895	(X)	(X)	70,670	313	(X)	(X)	64,719	182	(X)	(X)
Average earnings (dollars)	92,673	2,659	(X)	(X)	49,935	1,165	(X)	(X)	69,825	775	(X)	(X)	88,516	349	(X)	(X)	75,017	141	(X)	(X)
Average Social Security income (dollars)	19,202	519	(X)	(X)	14,294	312	(X)	(X)	17,537	151	(X)	(X)	17,510	38	(X)	(X)	17,189	15	(X)	(X)
Average Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	10,244	1,087	(X)	(X)	8,747	295	(X)	(X)	9,417	224	(X)	(X)	9,159	52	(X)	(X)	9,152	17	(X)	(X)
Average Cash Public Assistance income (dollars)	3,625	1,745	(X)	(X)	3,790	285	(X)	(X)	3,728	235	(X)	(X)	4,138	57	(X)	(X)	3,808	15	(X)	(X)
Average Retirement income (dollars)	26,460	1,582	(X)	(X)	16,852	801	(X)	(X)	21,224	370	(X)	(X)	25,196	181	(X)	(X)	23,589	45	(X)	(X)
Per capita income (dollars)	35,938	922	(X)	(X)	20,392	436	(X)	(X)	27,978	262	(X)	(X)	32,382	137	(X)	(X)	28,155	76	(X)	(X)

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Appendix B: Demographic Data from the 2012 Review Report

The following tables reflect data collected from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey. These data were reported in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Review Report.

Table B-2
Total Population by Planning Analysis Area

Total Population	PAA 1	PAA 2	PAA 3	PAA 4	PAA 5	PAA 6	TOTAL
2011	7,705	13,875	19,900	23,252	34,926	21,808	121,466
2010	8,276	14,045	20,341	23,644	34,154	21,906	122,366
2000	8,080	11,853	17,892	22,736	34,085	21,864	116,510
% Change (2000-10)	2.4	18.5	13.7	4.0	0.2	0.2	5.0

Table B-3
Marital Status

Marital Status	2007-2011 Estimate (Persons)	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Population 15 years and over	101,727	1,062	(X)	(X)
Never Married	33,466	1,194	32.9	2.1
Now married, except separated	50,564	815	49.7	1.8
Separated	1,002	204	1.0	0.4
Widowed	8,317	569	8.2	1.0
Divorced	8,378	552	8.2	1.1

Table B-4
Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	2007-2011 Estimate (Persons)	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Population 25 years and over	80,791	918	(X)	(X)
Less than 9th grade	1,530	266	1.9	0.3
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2,710	389	3.4	0.5
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	14,936	874	18.5	1.0
Some college, no degree	12,322	885	15.3	1.1
Associate degree	7,560	628	9.4	0.8
Bachelor's degree	20,198	719	25.0	0.9
Graduate or professional degree	21,535	818	26.7	0.9

Table B-5
Region of Birth for Foreign Born Persons

Region of Birth of Foreign Born	2007-2011 Estimate (Persons)	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Foreign-born population	15,192	916	(X)	(X)
Europe	3,883	542	25.6	3.3
Asia	8,363	707	55.0	3.5
Africa	737	296	4.9	1.9
Oceania	27	40	0.2	0.3
Latin America	1,086	278	7.1	1.7
Northern America	1,096	234	7.2	1.5

Table B-6
Language Spoken at Home

Language Spoken at Home	2007-2011 Estimate (Persons)	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Population over 5 years	115,544	394	(X)	(X)
English only	98,690	1,054	85.4	0.9
Language other than English	16,854	997	14.6	0.9
Spanish	2,149	413	1.9	0.4
Other Indo-European languages	7,948	723	6.9	0.6
Asian and Pacific Island languages	5,301	742	4.6	0.6

Table B-7
Value of Housing

Value of Housing	2007-2011 Estimate (units)	MOE (±)	% of Units	MOE % of Units (±)
Less than \$50,000	544	130	1.6	0.4
\$50,000 to \$99,999	4,145	353	11.9	0.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9,285	515	26.6	1.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9,694	465	27.8	1.3
\$200,000 to \$299,999	7,782	474	22.3	1.3
\$300,000 to \$499,999	2,782	298	8.0	0.9
\$500,000 to \$999,999	604	152	1.7	0.4
\$1,000,000 or more	70	53	0.2	0.2
Median Value	\$166,100	\$2,164	(X)	(X)

Table B-8
Monthly Mortgage Status

Mortgage Status	2007-2011 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Units	MOE % of Units (±)
Housing Units with a mortgage (Owner Occupied)	23,122	698	66.2	1.5
Less than \$300	12	19	0.1	0.1
\$300 to \$499	188	82	0.8	0.3
\$500 to \$699	576	146	2.5	0.6
\$700 to \$999	2,669	310	11.5	1.3
\$1,000 to \$1,499	6,845	497	29.6	1.8
\$1,500 to \$1,999	6,450	454	27.9	1.9
\$2,000 or more	6,382	368	27.6	1.5
Median (\$)	1,591	30	(X)	(X)
Units not mortgaged	11,784	541	(X)	(X)

Table B-9
Monthly Housing Rent

Monthly Housing Rent	2007-2011 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Units	MOE % of Units (±)
Renter-occupied units	12,777	530	(X)	(X)
Less than \$200	382	125	3.0	1.0
\$200 to \$299	443	142	3.5	1.1
\$300 to \$499	766	175	6.0	1.3
\$500 to \$749	2,087	305	16.3	2.3
\$750 to \$999	4,236	405	33.2	2.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	3,529	406	27.6	3.2
\$1,500 or more	1,334	256	10.4	1.9
Median (\$)	894	23	(X)	(X)
Units paying no cash rent	456	153	(X)	(X)

Table B-10
Selected Income Characteristics (2007-2011 ACS)

Municipality	Median HH Income (\$)	MOE (\$) (±)	Per-Capita Income (\$)	MOE (\$) (±)
Amherst	66,628	1,989	35,410	1,005
Aurora	66,624	4,499	37,924	2,524
Buffalo	30,230	752	20,072	404
Clarence	84,657	4,832	40,586	3,052
Cheektowaga	47,520	1,249	24,614	547
Colden	73,433	6,940	34,124	4,740
Elma	78,193	7,544	37,726	2,507
Grand Island	80,302	4,325	34,157	1,925
Hamburg	59,891	2,065	30,403	1,037
Orchard Park	75,039	3,910	38,733	2,246
Tonawanda (Town)	61,395	1,823	27,218	835
West Seneca	54,655	2,211	27,671	864

Table B-11
Estimate of Income (2007-2011 ACS)

Income	2007-2011 Estimate (\$)	MOE (\$) (±)
Median household income	66,628	1,989
Per capita income	35,410	1,005

Table B-12
Modes of Transportation for Commuting to Work (Town of Amherst)

Commuting to Work	2007-2011 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)
Workers 16 years and over	57,422	1,117	(X)	(X)
Car, truck, or van, drove alone	48,315	1,129	84.1	1.2
Car, truck, or van, carpooled	3,981	424	6.9	0.8
Public transportation (inc taxi)	1,333	347	2.3	0.6
Walked	1,451	277	2.5	0.5
Other means	582	172	1.0	0.3
Worked at home	1,760	251	3.1	0.4
Mean travel time to work (min)	19.5	0.5	(X)	(X)

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Table B-13
Modes of Commuting to Work – Comparison of Communities

Mode of Transportation	Amherst	Buffalo	Colonie, NY	Greece, NY	Ann Arbor, MI	Portland, OR
Workers 16 years and over	57,422	104,965	42,210	45,190	54,843	295,347
Car, truck, or van, drove alone	84.1%	67.0%	84.2%	87.6%	58.7%	60.1%
Car, truck, or van, carpooled	6.9%	9.5%	8.0%	7.5%	6.7%	9.3%
Public transportation (inc taxi)	2.3%	12.7%	1.7%	0.7%	9.5%	12.1%
Walked	2.5%	6.2%	1.6%	0.8%	15.6%	5.1%
Other means	1.0%	2.0%	1.1%	0.9%	4.0%	6.7%
Worked at home	3.1%	2.5%	3.4%	2.5%	5.4%	6.8%

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Table B-14
Summary of Select 2007-2011 American Community Survey Data for Planning Analysis Areas (PAA)

SUBJECT	PAA 1		PAA 2		PAA 3		PAA 4		PAA 5		PAA 6	
	2007-2011 Estimate	MOE (±)										
MARITAL STATUS												
Population 15 years and over (persons)	6,162	326	11,031	279	18,351	782	18,950	340	28,640	622	18,593	418
Never married	2,356	296	2,579	234	11,224	759	3,821	266	8,596	590	4,890	359
Now married, except separated	2,848	172	6,461	205	4,601	220	12,006	265	14,368	365	10,280	269
Separated	103	91	124	51	152	138	181	99	353	125	89	130
Widowed	282	48	686	76	1,390	145	1,641	96	2,497	159	1,821	79
Divorced	573	93	1,181	133	984	133	1,301	138	2,826	207	1,513	134
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT												
Population 25 years and over (persons)	4,948	333	9,532	302	9,569	503	16,468	426	24,139	583	16,135	463
Less than 9th grade	149	77	114	61	277	157	221	134	588	167	181	101
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	191	75	341	137	397	166	449	157	788	186	544	164
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,223	218	1,665	247	2,188	310	2,528	313	4,584	461	2,748	374
Some college, no degree	1,074	222	1,385	267	1,415	252	2,161	304	3,763	455	2,524	330
Associate's degree	426	110	820	186	843	204	1,686	252	2,211	292	1,574	267
Bachelor's degree	930	173	2,418	303	2,406	337	4,182	375	6,187	512	4,075	386
Graduate or professional degree	955	221	2,789	318	2,043	320	5,241	424	6,018	480	4,489	400
WORLD REGION OF FOREIGN BORN												
Foreign-born population (persons)	1,042	293	1,620	347	3,422	548	3,148	446	4,093	595	1,867	363
Europe	486	238	436	183	747	223	831	227	806	216	577	262
Asia	367	148	786	221	2,099	445	1,743	330	2,460	536	908	204
Africa	95	192	123	161	171	176	56	100	231	199	61	101
Oceania	-	126	22	132	-	199	-	178	5	218	-	178
Latin America	75	59	115	85	212	194	182	125	319	149	183	111
Northern America	19	24	138	83	193	92	336	153	272	152	138	72
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME												
Population 5 years and over (persons)	7,225	492	13,007	493	19,424	1,146	21,975	621	32,961	876	20,952	599
English only	5,874	564	11,361	502	15,278	1,005	18,768	686	28,569	870	18,840	666
Language other than English	1,351	306	1,646	348	4,146	603	3,207	502	4,392	670	2,112	392
Spanish	293	138	271	178	461	205	306	156	475	178	343	191
Other Indo-European languages	725	262	1,097	294	1,703	400	1,477	299	1,884	461	1,062	333
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	224	135	238	124	1,696	443	1,046	330	1,516	495	581	246
HOUSING & RENT VALUES												
Average of Median Value of Homes (\$)	148,350	17,540	195,367	22,054	145,150	16,431	203,250	29,847	130,771	22,209	172,350	18,319
Average of Median Monthly Mortgage Payment (\$)	1,481	202	1,802	281	1,349	361	1,880	223	1,331	259	1,608	209
Average of Median Monthly Rent Payment (\$)	953	186	1,220	504	790	221	1,490	502	827	353	953	213
FINANCIAL INFORMATION												
Average of Median Household Income (\$)	56,524	9,685	82,735	24,676	35,209	3,475	90,337	32,819	60,351	10,867	74,256	16,577
Per Capita Income (\$)	25,384	4,685	40,191	8,217	20,905	7,887	44,782	9,558	33,145	9,652	39,388	11,193
With Cash Public Assistance Income (households)	37	93	27	94	75	163	64	47	266	141	64	101
COMMUTING TO WORK												
Workers 16 years and over (persons)	3,715	357	7,248	405	8,077	612	11,058	476	16,602	626	10,722	519
Car, truck, or van, drove alone	3,116	328	6,319	396	6,047	512	9,860	466	13,906	650	9,067	511
Car, truck, or van, carpooled	397	135	544	169	483	154	649	223	1,155	251	753	194
Public transportation (including taxi)	124	86	70	61	267	188	127	79	570	261	175	78
Walked	42	111	46	97	849	258	18	128	319	177	177	95
Other means (including taxi)	34	31	65	52	119	145	10	155	263	148	91	152
Worked at home	2	89	204	77	312	109	394	125	389	122	459	141

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Table B-15
Ancestry (Town of Amherst)

ANCESTRY	2000 Census	% of Persons	2007-2011 Estimate	MOE (±)	% of Persons	MOE % of Persons (±)	Percent Change 2000-2011 (%)
Total population	116,510	100.0	121,466	48	100.0	(X)	(X)
American	2,585	2.2	2,957	687	2.4	0.6	14.3
Arab	959	0.8	1,570	430	1.3	0.4	63.7
Czech	546	0.5	257	105	0.2	0.1	-52.9
Danish	343	0.3	205	90	0.2	0.1	-40.2
Dutch	1,366	1.2	1,580	330	1.3	0.3	15.7
English	11,843	10.2	11,785	837	9.7	0.7	-0.5
French (except Basque)	3,824	3.3	3,275	569	2.7	0.5	-14.4
French Canadian	662	0.6	1,021	234	0.8	0.2	54.2
German	29,827	25.6	29,694	1,336	24.4	1.1	-0.4
Greek	904	0.8	695	230	0.6	0.2	-23.1
Hungarian	1,316	1.1	1,104	303	0.9	0.2	-16.1
Irish	19,215	16.5	22,568	1,412	18.6	1.2	17.4
Italian	20,696	17.8	24,321	1,204	20.0	1.0	17.5
Lithuanian	373	0.3	132	71	0.1	0.1	-64.6
Norwegian	509	0.4	460	131	0.4	0.1	-9.6
Polish	15,136	13.0	17,306	1,009	14.2	0.8	14.3
Portuguese	0	0.0	246	145	0.2	0.1	100.0
Russian	2,937	2.5	2,957	399	2.4	0.3	0.7
Scotch-Irish	1,500	1.3	1,464	283	1.2	0.2	-2.4
Scottish	2,546	2.2	1,908	340	1.6	0.3	-25.1
Slovak	270	0.2	126	67	0.1	0.1	-53.3
Subsaharan African	275	0.2	1,014	361	0.8	0.3	268.7
Swedish	1,399	1.2	1,012	282	0.8	0.2	-27.7
Swiss	459	0.4	204	86	0.2	0.1	-55.6
Ukrainian	1,158	1.0	1,264	302	1.0	0.2	9.2
Welsh	899	0.8	862	243	0.7	0.2	-4.1
West Indian (excluding Hispanic origin groups)	398	0.3	375	183	0.3	0.2	-5.8

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Table B-16
Ancestry (Planning Analysis Areas)

ANCESTRY	PAA 1		PAA 2		PAA 3		PAA 4		PAA 5		PAA 6	
	2007-2011 Estimate	MOE (±)										
Total population	7,705	558	13,875	515	19,900	1,152	23,252	672	34,926	893	21,808	631
American	83	72	413	167	418	196	569	240	770	253	704	420
Arab	78	120	18	91	269	176	313	197	446	232	446	264
Czech[1]	13	92	13	127	59	136	27	130	46	182	99	124
Danish	-	126	52	42	40	131	45	137	41	202	27	129
Dutch	49	41	184	150	195	105	410	195	436	220	306	117
English	393	133	1,196	251	1,735	344	2,243	407	3,913	539	2,305	369
French (except Basque)[1]	119	81	368	201	518	164	688	318	888	229	694	201
French Canadian[1]	86	60	89	65	284	124	205	151	256	149	101	112
German	1,686	262	4,095	524	4,772	596	5,130	537	8,532	774	5,479	551
Greek	26	98	159	111	130	180	120	124	146	122	114	91
Hungarian	230	223	81	115	188	83	139	90	279	123	187	104
Irish[1]	1,251	401	2,004	417	3,805	543	4,075	515	7,570	757	3,863	472
Italian	1,571	326	3,264	549	3,544	491	5,186	609	6,553	722	4,203	532
Lithuanian	-	126	-	154	5	178	35	131	63	164	29	157
Norwegian	29	30	34	132	82	137	38	95	197	175	80	50
Polish	936	278	1,832	367	2,228	362	3,486	469	4,913	548	3,911	516
Portuguese	6	90	77	151	86	103	77	170	-	235	-	178
Russian	183	120	338	179	554	178	722	223	648	236	512	188
Scotch-Irish	75	46	129	73	232	107	153	132	632	206	243	99
Scottish	93	76	266	109	207	103	441	163	501	185	400	141
Slovak[1]	20	93	28	95	24	128	38	131	16	220	-	178
Subsaharan African	109	188	184	186	206	165	-	178	428	283	87	109
Swedish	49	37	146	101	138	128	175	126	222	169	282	159
Swiss	21	92	-	154	9	179	32	158	110	168	32	130
Ukrainian	120	94	208	120	257	116	299	165	168	88	212	159
Welsh	-	126	18	129	140	77	277	116	302	152	125	128
West Indian (excluding Hispanic origin groups)	16	92	55	112	80	165	30	93	194	175	-	178

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Table B-17
Countries within World Regions of Foreign Born

Foreign-Born Regions Determined by U.S. Census (2010)					
Europe	Asia	Africa	Oceania	Latin America	Northern America
Andorra	Afghanistan	Algeria	Australia	Antigua & Barbuda	Bermuda
Albania	Armenia	Angola	Christmas Island	Anguilla	Canada
Austria	Azerbaijan	Benin	Cook Islands	Aruba	Greenland
Belarus	Bahrain	Botswana	Coral Sea Islands	Bahamas	St. Pierre & Miquelon
Belgium	Bangladesh	British Indian Ocean Territory	Fiji	Barbados	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bhutan	Burkina Faso	French Polynesia	British Virgin Islands	
Bulgaria	Brunei	Burundi	Heard & McDonald Islands	Cayman Islands	
Croatia	Cambodia	Cameroon	Kiribati	Cuba	
Czech Republic	China	Cape Verde	Marshall Islands	Dominica	
Czechoslovakia	Cyprus	Central African Republic	Micronesia	Dominican Republic	
Denmark	East Timor	Chad	Nauru	Grenada	
Estonia	Georgia	Comoros	New Caledonia	Guadeloupe	
Faroe Islands	Hong Kong	Congo	New Zealand	Haiti	
Finland	India	Democratic Republic of Congo	Niue	Jamaica	
France	Indonesia	Djibouti	Norfolk Island	Martinique	
Germany	Iran	Egypt	Palau	Montserrat	
Gibraltar	Iraq	Equatorial Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Netherlands Antilles	
Greece	Israel	Eritrea	Pitcairn Islands	St. Barthelemy	
Hungary	Japan	Ethiopia	Samoa	St. Kitts-Nevis	
Iceland	Jordan	Europa Island	Solomon Islands	St. Lucia	
Ireland	Kazakhstan	Gabon	Tokelau	St. Vincent & the Grenadines	
Italy	Kuwait	Gambia	Tonga	Trinidad & Tobago	
Kosovo	Kyrgyzstan	Ghana	Tuvalu	Turks & Caicos Islands	
Latvia	Laos	Glorioso Islands	Vanuatu	West Indies	
Liechtenstein	Lebanon	Guinea	Wallis & Futuna Islands	Mexico	
Lithuania	Macau	Guinea-Bissau		Belize	
Luxembourg	Malaysia	Ivory Coast		Costa Rica	
Macedonia	Maldives	Juan de Nova Island		El Salvador	
Malta	Mongolia	Kenya		Guatemala	
Moldova	Myanmar (Burma)	Lesotho		Honduras	
Monaco	Nepal	Liberia		Nicaragua	
Montenegro	North Korea	Libya		Panama	
Netherlands	Oman	Madagascar		Argentina	
Norway	Pakistan	Malawi		Bolivia	
Poland	Philippines	Mali		Brazil	
Portugal	Qatar	Mauritania		Chile	
Romania	Saudi Arabia	Mauritius		Colombia	
Russia	Singapore	Mayotte		Ecuador	
San Marino	South Korea	Morocco		Falkland Islands	
Serbia	Sri Lanka	Mozambique		French Guiana	
Slovakia	Syria	Namibia		Guyana	
Slovenia	Taiwan	Niger		Paraguay	
Spain	Tajikistan	Nigeria		Peru	
Sweden	Thailand	Reunion		Suriname	
Switzerland	Turkey	Rwanda		Uruguay	
Ukraine	Turkmenistan	Sao Tome & Principe		Venezuela	
United Kingdom	United Arab Emirates	Senegal			
USSR	Uzbekistan	Seychelles			
Vatican City	Vietnam	Sierra Leone			
Yugoslavia	Yemen	Somalia			
		South Africa			
		St. Helena			
		Sudan			
		Swaziland			
		Tanzania			
		Togo			
		Tromelin Island			
		Tunisia			
		Uganda			
		Western Sahara			
		Zambia			
		Zimbabwe			

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Census Definitions and Data Notes

Marital Status

Never Married – Includes all people who have never been married, including people whose only marriage(s) was annulled.

Now Married, Except Separated – Includes people whose current marriage has not ended through widowhood, divorce, or separation (regardless of previous marital history). The category may also include couples who live together or people in common-law marriages if they consider this category the most appropriate. In certain tabulations, currently married people are further classified as "spouse present" or "spouse absent." In tabulations, unless otherwise specified, "now married" does not include same-sex married people even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples.

Separated – Includes people legally separated or otherwise absent from their spouse because of marital discord. Those without a final divorce decree are classified as "separated." This category also includes people who have been deserted or who have parted because they no longer want to live together but who have not obtained a divorce.

Widowed – Includes widows and widowers who have not remarried.

Divorced – Includes people who are legally divorced and who have not remarried. Those without a final divorce decree are classified as "separated." In selected tabulations, data for married and separated people are reorganized and combined with information on the presence of the spouse in the same household.

World Regions of Foreign Born

Table B-17 summarizes the countries located within the respective regions shown Tables B-5 and B-14.

Languages Spoken At Home

Spanish – includes Spanish, Spanish Creole, and Ladino.

Other Indo-European – includes most languages of Europe and the Indic languages of India. These include the Germanic languages, such as German, Yiddish, and Dutch; the Scandinavian languages, such as Swedish and Norwegian; the Romance languages, such as French, Italian, and Portuguese; the Slavic languages, such as Russian, Polish, and Serbo-Croatian; the Indic languages, such as Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Urdu; Celtic languages; Greek; Baltic languages; and Iranian languages.

Asian and Pacific Island – include Chinese; Korean; Japanese; Vietnamese; Hmong; Khmer; Lao; Thai; Tagalog or Pilipino; the Dravidian languages of India, such as Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam; and other languages of Asia and the Pacific, including the Philippine, Polynesian, and Micronesian languages.

Income

The Census Bureau recommends using caution when comparing income data reported from a decennial census and data reported from the ACS. The ACS collects data throughout the year on an on-going, monthly basis and asks for a respondent's income over the "past 12 months." Census 2000, however, collected the income data for a fixed period of time -- "during 1999" (the last calendar year). In a comparison study between Census 2000 income data and the 2000 ACS, income collected in Census 2000 was found to be about 4 percent higher than that in the 2000 ACS. For more information on the differences of income in the ACS and Census 2000, see [Income in the American Community Survey: Comparison to Census 2000](#). The Census Bureau recommends using CPI-U-RS adjustment factors published annually by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to adjust 1999 median, mean, and per capita income dollar amounts shown in Summary File 3 to 2011 dollars by multiplying the 1999 dollar amounts by the CPI-U-RS factor of 1.34981610. For CPI-U-RS inflation adjustment factors for other years see: [BLS Consumer Price Index](#). Furthermore, direct comparisons of income and earnings distributions between Census 2000 and the 2011 ACS are not possible due to inflation. Users interested in making distribution comparisons need to inflation adjust individual income records using the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) files from Census 2000).

September 2015

September 2015

Appendix C: 2014 Report Planning Board Resolution –September 2015

The Planning Board completed its review of the 2014 Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan report in September 2015, approving a resolution with several recommendations for adjustments and studies to address issues from the Review.

TOWN OF AMHERST
PLANNING BOARD
2014 BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW REPORT

PETITIONER

SEP24'15 PM12:38

Town of Amherst
5583 Main Street
Williamsville, New York 14221

WHEREAS the Town of Amherst Planning Board on Thursday, August 20, 2015 and September 17, 2015 reviewed the *DRAFT 2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report*; and

WHEREAS in accordance with New York State Town Law Section 272-a and Section 11.5 of the adopted Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan, as amended, the Amherst Town Board, by resolution, authorized the Planning Board to prepare a review of the Comprehensive Plan for their consideration; and

WHEREAS the Planning Board has reviewed materials regarding recent Comprehensive Plan actions and trends; and

WHEREAS the Planning Board has made recommendations for study and action for consideration by the Town Board; and

WHEREAS the recommended actions may lead to the formation of future policies and Comprehensive Plan amendments; and

WHEREAS the Planning Board finds that:

1. The *DRAFT 2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report* discusses current conditions and future trends in the Town regarding demographics, land use, natural and cultural resources, economic development, transportation, housing and community facilities.
2. The *DRAFT 2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report* includes several recommendations for study and action in order to maintain the Plan's currency and relevance in the future.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Board recommends that the *DRAFT 2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report* be forwarded to the Town Board for their information and consideration; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Board, in accordance with New York State Town Law Section 272-a(4) directs the Planning Department to coordinate or perform the following activities, studies and analyses, as described in said report, to identify potential amendments or actions to update the Plan, and report any findings to the Planning Board for referral to the Town Board:

TOWN OF AMHERST
PLANNING BOARD
2014 BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW REPORT

SEP24'15 PM12:38

1. Make the *2014 Comprehensive Plan Review Report* available for public review and comment on the Town Website and update with current information as appropriate.
2. Update the Conceptual Land Use Plan to reflect changes made during the Plan review period either by local Town Board policy and zoning decisions or by external regulations such as jurisdictional wetland and flood map changes.
3. Complete and update outdated data used to form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. Analyze the new data collected to determine how the economic character is changing and to provide information to update Chapter 5.
4. Review and update Chapter 8 on Housing and Neighborhoods to include information from newly completed plans, initiatives and tools.
5. Formulate a policy to address the "complete streets" concept that is informed by the Town's context-sensitive highway design and access management policies for Planning and Town Board consideration and inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.
6. Formulate policy statements regarding senior housing locations for Planning and Town Board consideration and inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Review the future transportation plan (Figure 9) and proposed road extensions to determine their feasibility regarding regulated wetlands and their future use for the public good.
8. Analyze the One Region Forward and the WNY Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan in order to determine how to implement the broad sustainability goals outlined in these plans. Compare these plans to the Town's Comprehensive Plan policies.
9. Strengthen the Town's Comprehensive Plan language and guidance with regard to preserving the residential character along arterials such as Maple Road and Sheridan Drive, and require that deviations be subjected to a corridor planning study.
10. Review of Plan policies (3-13, 6-7, 6-8) regarding new sidewalk development. Form a commission to work with the community through public outreach to develop recommendations for sidewalk policies.
11. Review the Town's proposed trail map/system for opportunities to enhance the Town's trail network. Work to incorporate them into the regional trail system.

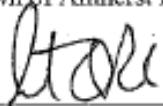
TOWN OF AMHERST
PLANNING BOARD
2014 BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW REPORT

SEP24'15 PM12:38

12. Develop a scope of work and identify sources of funding to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that includes cost estimates for needed improvements.
13. Coordinate with other departments to initiate an aggressive campaign to include grants identification, application, and management for departments that manage "quality of life" facilities.

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the

Town of Amherst Planning Board, September 17, 2015


Jonathan O'Rourke, Chair

9/24/15
Date

September 2015