

Implementation



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11.0 Implementation

11.1 OVERVIEW

Primary Functions of the Comprehensive Plan

- Policy foundation for town decision-making
- The community’s “to-do” list

Plans are turned into reality by taking action. The Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a working document that will guide community leaders in making decisions, establishing priorities, and committing to actions that will affect the future of the Town. Plan implementation will focus on the two primary functions of the Comprehensive Plan:

1. ***It provides the policy foundation for all town decisions regarding land use, transportation, and the other plan elements.*** The question “What does the Comprehensive Plan have to say about this?” should be asked and answered in ongoing activities of the Town such as reviewing rezoning requests and setting capital budgets.
2. ***It is the community’s “to do” list.*** The Plan’s influence on Amherst’s future will be a product of the motivating power of the shared vision it communicates and the effectiveness of actions taken to realize the vision. However, the vision will not be achieved simply because the community agrees with the sentiments it expresses. Rather, it will be realized by steady progress in adhering to a well-defined “game plan” that sets priorities for effective short and long-term actions.

If the Comprehensive Plan is to effectively guide Amherst in moving towards achievement of the Vision Statement, **it is vitally important that the Town Board adopt it.** The benefits of adopting the plan are many, including:

1. ***Adopting a Comprehensive Plan establishes a common vision for the future that is attained over time through coordinated action by all agencies of town government.*** Without a unifying vision and “game plan” that focuses all of the Town’s resources in a common direction, it will not be possible to attain the goals for the future that have been clearly expressed by Amherst residents. As an added benefit, there is a synergy that occurs when all agencies work together – the cumulative impact of their efforts will be greater than the sum of their individual contributions.
2. ***The Plan reflects the values of the community.*** Citizens have placed particular emphasis on quality of life and quality of development issues. By adopting the Plan the Board endorses the importance of these issues and sets the stage for

implementing regulations and other actions to secure the quality of community that citizens say they desire.

3. ***Having a plan in place provides a greater level of confidence and assurance to both town residents and the development community.*** By adopting the Comprehensive Plan the Board makes a statement that the Plan reflects the pattern of development that is desired and needed to achieve the Town's collective vision of the future. This statement provides a level of certainty as to what is in the best interest of the community in the Town's day-to-day decision-making. Throughout the planning process, residents have consistently voiced a desire for some level of assurance for the future.
4. ***When adopted as official town policy, the Plan provides a clear statement of expectations for the actions of outside agencies undertaking projects within Amherst.*** The Plan provides not only the basis for day-to-day decision-making by the Town but also a firm statement of development policy to guide the actions of federal, state, regional, and county agencies as they affect Amherst. An example is the Plan's endorsement of "context-sensitive" design principles in relation to roadway improvement projects that could have deleterious effects on Amherst neighborhoods if constructed to normal state highway engineering standards.
5. ***An adopted plan provides the community with a significant advantage when applying for federal, state, and county assistance for local projects.*** Grant applications for projects that are demonstrably consistent with an up-to-date, adopted Comprehensive Plan characteristically receive greater consideration than those that are not consistent with a plan or where an adopted plan is absent.

With the Comprehensive Plan adopted as official town policy, setting priorities is of prime importance due to the complexity of the policies contained in the Plan Elements. The Plan defines an ambitious agenda commensurate with the bold mandate of the Vision Statement. The selected policies range from revised regulations to broad policy initiatives; from specific capital programs to changes in overall processes and procedures. It is readily apparent that the Town lacks the resources that would be needed to implement all of these policies simultaneously. Thus an ongoing implementation program is needed to prioritize the Comprehensive Plan policies and develop short and long-term strategies for their realization.

The four Key Initiatives identified as part of the Plan Concept provide a framework for prioritizing the actions the Town will take to move towards achieving the Vision Statement. These initiatives are summarized as follows:

- ***Aesthetic/Community Character:*** To be renowned for the beauty, character, and environmental quality of the Town.
- ***Education:*** To become known as one of the nation’s leading “knowledge-based” communities.
- ***Revitalization:*** To become a model for effective reinvestment and revitalization of older neighborhoods.
- ***Governance:*** To exercise leadership by providing excellent services and facilities, ensuring fiscal balance, and managing development to promote predictability, fairness, and quality.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will focus on 12 ***priority action programs.***

Based upon consideration of the Vision Statement and the Key Initiatives, 12 action programs have been identified as high priorities in the short term (to be implemented or implementation to begin within the next several years). Presented in Section 11.2 in the order they appear in the plan elements, these represent proposed areas of focus for the Town in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, either through initiation of a new program or an increase in the level of commitment to an existing one.

11.2 PRIORITY ACTION PROGRAMS

Action Program #1

Comprehensively revise the Town’s development regulations, standards, and review/approval processes to implement the policies of the Land Use and Development Element.

This program is essential to successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. It has implications for three of the four Key Initiatives:

Aesthetic/Community Character: Improved regulations, standards, and incentives will promote higher quality development of the patterns and types envisioned by the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative (e.g., open space preserved as part of the pattern of development).

Revitalization: More flexible, context-sensitive regulations and standards will facilitate reinvestment in and revitalization of Amherst’s older neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

Governance: Consistent policies and standards will improve the predictability and fairness of development review and approval processes.

The Town has committed to revising the current development regulations as a short-term action to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Beyond the immediate task of revising the regulations, an ongoing commitment to establishing and following clear, objective standards, criteria, and processes supportive of Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives for the management of development is needed. Relevant policies include:

- 3-1 *Promote mixed-use development*
- 3-2 *Encourage compact, pedestrian-friendly development*
- 3-3 *Modify Suburban Agricultural District zoning*
- 3-4 *Reduce new commercial development (zoning) in North Amherst and along highway strips*
- 3-5 *Employ design standards for non-residential and multi-family development*
- 3-6/6-1 *Designate character roads for application of context-sensitive design standards*
- 3-7 *Designate special places/ design guidelines*
- 3-9 *Advance the revitalization of underutilized/ obsolescent properties*
- 3-10 *Establish context-sensitive commercial zoning districts*
- 3-14 *Encourage conservation development*
- 3-16 *Improve predictability/ consistency of development review processes*
- 3-17 *Set clear development standards to increase certainty*
- 3-18 *Periodically review/ revise the Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations*
- 4-4 *Establish stream buffer/ setback standards*
- 5-5 *Protect neighborhoods from commercial development impacts*
- 5-6 *Establish commercial development standards for neighborhood compatibility*
- 6-3 *Establish a town highway planning capability, including traffic impact analyses and mitigation*
- 8-5 *Establish standards for multi-family housing*

Action Program #2

Provide expanded incentives for reinvestment/revitalization.

This program is intended to help “level the playing field” by increasing the attractiveness of reinvestment, infill development, and redevelopment of Amherst’s older neighborhoods and commercial areas compared to new development on “greenfield” sites. It is a major vehicle for implementing the Revitalization Key Initiative. In addition to evaluating and revising internal regulatory and fiscal policies in order to remove barriers to and provide incentives for reinvestment, the Town will need to work closely with the Amherst IDA and its tax abatement program. Eggertsville and Snyder should be targeted as key areas for application of incentives. Relevant policies include:

- 3-8 *Provide tax incentives for reinvestment*
- 3-9 *Advance the revitalization of underutilized/ obsolescent properties*
- 3-10 *Establish context-sensitive commercial zoning districts*
- 3-12 *Initiate public investment to stimulate private investment*
- 7-3 *Give priority to infrastructure repairs rather than extensions to serve new development*
- 8-6 *Provide incentives for residential property repairs*
- 8-8 *Promote revitalization of older commercial areas*

Action Program #3

Implement a coordinated strategy to achieve a town-wide open space and greenway network, including a public acquisition program.

Beginning with the 1988 *Open Space Acquisition Plan*, the Town of Amherst has committed significant resources to acquiring public open space and parkland. This program would build upon this legacy, directing the Town's future efforts towards establishing a network of parks and open spaces well distributed throughout Amherst and linked by trails, greenways and scenic roads. This action program supports the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative. Relevant policies include:

3-13/4-1 Establish a Town-wide open space and greenway network

3-14/4-2 Encourage conservation development

3-15/4-3 Initiate a public acquisition program

Action Program #4

Initiate a community-wide tree planting and re-vegetation program (Greening Amherst).

Tree canopy and woodlands are important to Amherst's visual and environmental quality, supporting the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative. This program will involve the Town leading a community-wide effort to plant trees and other vegetation on public and private properties. Other visual improvements (e.g., gateway treatments, public art, signage) could be combined with the tree planting program as part of a town beautification program. Relevant policies include:

4-11 Undertake a "Greening Amherst" planting initiative

3-11 Target capital investments to improve aesthetic character

4-10 Support the Amherst Tree Law

Action Program #5

Establish a collaborative planning structure with the University at Buffalo (UB).

The presence of UB is central to Amherst's identity and a cornerstone of the Education Key Initiative. UB's North Campus is physically isolated from Amherst and a formal coordination structure between Town and University has been lacking in the past. However, establishing such a structure, to address issues such as business and employment growth, planning for the "town/gown" edge, and social and cultural ties, will work to the benefit of both parties and will facilitate implementation of Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, and policies. Relevant policies include:

5-9 Establish a collaborative planning structure with UB

5-7/8-4 Establish mixed-use activity centers on the periphery of the campuses

5-8 Increase educational, social, and cultural ties between the Town and UB

Action Program #6

Pursue collaborations with educational institutions, private businesses, and other partners to promote economic development.

This program is related to and builds upon Action Program #5. It involves increased efforts by the Town and Amherst IDA to promote formal and informal collaborations between public sector, institutional, and private sector partners to implement Comprehensive Plan policies. The potential involvement of educational institutions, including UB, the colleges, and public school districts, as well as Kaleida Health Care, is of particular significance for the “Education” Key Initiative. Relevant policies include:

5-3 Encourage collaborations between government, educational institutions, health care organizations, and private industries

5-4 Promote life-long learning/worker training programs

Action Program #7

Develop a strategy to implement targeted improvements to roadways with identified level of service deficiencies.

While not directly related to any of the four Key Initiatives, vehicular mobility and traffic congestion constitute an important Comprehensive Plan issue with quality of life implications for Amherst residents. The direction set by the Transportation Element accepts certain levels of congestion as inevitable while endorsing increased investment in alternative transportation modes rather than widespread roadway improvements (widening or new roads). Nevertheless, a number of town roadways are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service within the time horizon of the plan and are not currently programmed for improvement under the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council’s (GBNRTC) Long Range Transportation Plan. This program involves developing a long-term strategy with GBNRTC to alleviate the most serious congestion problems through targeted capital and operational improvements such as signal-timing, turn lanes, and access management. This program must be consistent with the policies regarding “context-sensitive” design of roadway improvements. Relevant policies include:

6-1/6-2 Apply context-sensitive design standards to roadway improvements

6-3 Establish a town highway planning capability

6-4 Undertake operational improvements to improve system capacities

6-5 Target capital improvements to maintain the efficiency of the roadway system

Action Program #8

Develop a strategy to implement a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network.

The Town of Amherst has made significant strides in developing a system of off-street recreational trails for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Town has been relatively less successful in developing an on-

street network of designated bikeways and sidewalks. This action program builds on the Town's current efforts through a long-term strategy to implement a comprehensive network of off-street and on-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities as designated on the Open Space and Greenways Plan (Figure 4). It is related to and complements Action Program #2 (town-wide open space and greenways network), similarly supporting the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative. Relevant policies include:

6-7 *Develop a comprehensive bicycle network*

6-8 *Develop a comprehensive pedestrian network*

Action Program #9

Implement a comprehensive stormwater management strategy to address flooding and water quality protection.

The Town of Amherst is developing a stormwater management program to comply with federal and state regulations. This program should incorporate innovative measures to protect the quality of Amherst's water resources, including maintenance of natural vegetation and drainage patterns. These measures will contribute to the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative by enhancing environmental quality. Relevant policies include:

7-1 *Implement a stormwater management program*

3-13/4-1 *Establish a town-wide open space and greenway network*

3-14/4-2 *Encourage conservation development*

4-4 *Establish stream buffer/setback standards*

4-5 *Support protection of designated wetlands and implement best management practices. Work with regulatory agencies to encourage permitted wetland mitigation within the Town.*

4-6 *Initiate watershed management plans*

4-7 *Apply best management practices to promote water quality*

4-8/7-2 *Adopt low-impact development standards and techniques*

Action Program #10

Limit future sewer service extensions to support the Conceptual Land Use Plan. Establish a septic system maintenance district for areas not designated for public sewer.

The Conceptual Land Use Plan calls for a large area in North Amherst to remain in open space and rural uses. This action program supports this policy directive by redefining the boundaries of Amherst Sewer District No. 16 to support designated development areas and preclude extension into areas to remain in rural uses. In conjunction with this change, a program to repair and maintain failing on-site septic systems in areas not earmarked for public sewer service is needed. This program supports the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative by maintaining rural character and addressing septic system impacts on water quality. It will also contribute to the Revitalization Key Initiative by limiting future extension of sewer service to support "greenfield" development. Relevant policies include:

7-2 Give priority to infrastructure repairs rather than extensions to serve greenfield development

7-3 Redefine the boundaries of Sanitary Sewer District No. 16

7-4 Redefine the boundaries of the Consolidated Sanitary Sewer District. Promote the importance of proper maintenance of septic systems to limit sewer extensions into protected areas.

Action Program #11

Initiate a Neighborhood Conservation Program, including a collaborative process to develop Neighborhood Improvement Plans.

Maintaining and enhancing the quality of Amherst's older neighborhoods is a major focus of the Revitalization Key Initiative. This program involves a more proactive approach to neighborhood conservation and revitalization by the Town, through a collaborative process with residents to plan for and implement strategies to address neighborhood needs. Southeast Amherst is the highest priority for development of such a plan. Relevant policies include:

8-7 Initiate a neighborhood conservation program

8-8 Promote revitalization of older commercial areas as a focus for neighborhood activity

8-9 Encourage public participation in neighborhood action/improvement plans

Action Program #12

Establish an objective system of planning for community facility and service needs. Link this system to a long-range capital programming process to reconcile needs with the Town's fiscal capacity.

Whereas the focuses of previous action programs range from regulatory changes to collaborative partnerships to public investments, Action Program #12 involves changes to the Town's internal procedures for planning and programming of capital projects. It calls for facility and service providers to assess needs based on objective level of service standards or performance criteria for each type of facility. This assessment will provide input to a capital improvement programming process that reconciles identified needs with fiscal capacity and stages projects over the long term (as opposed to current short-term decision-making). This action program is central to the Governance Key Initiative. Relevant policies include:

9-1 Identify and prioritize community facility and service needs

9-8 Revise the capital programming process

11.3 SEQUENCING OF ACTION PROGRAMS

While all of the action programs identified above are considered important Comprehensive Plan priorities, they will not be accomplished simultaneously but instead will be staged over a period of years. The action programs can be divided into three general categories:

- Programs which involve changes to town policies and regulations (#1, #2, #9, #10, and #12)
- Programs which involve partnerships with other agencies and organizations (#5 and #6)
- Programs with significant capital implications (#3, #4, #7, #8, and #11)

In general, the action programs involving policy changes and partnerships will be initiated first because they do not require significant capital expenditures. Five of these programs have been identified as being especially high priorities to set the stage for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan through both day-to-day decision-making and long-term action:

- #1 Revise the Town's development regulations, standards, and processes*
- #3 Provide expanded incentives for reinvestment/ revitalization*
- #5 Establish a collaborative planning structure with UB*
- #10 Revise the sewer service extension policy*
- #12 Establish a community-facility planning/ capital programming system*

Implementation of programs with significant capital implications will be a longer-term proposition because of the need to phase them over a number of years consistent with the Town's fiscal capability. The initial stages of planning for implementation of these programs should focus on defining the scope of capital investments to be made and the sources of funding. Based upon the values expressed by residents during the planning process and the relatively small amount of available undeveloped land remaining in the Town, the highest priority should be placed on acquisition of land to establish a town-wide open space and greenways network (#3) in conjunction with establishing a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network (#8).

11.4 FISCAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLAN

A number of the action programs described in this Section 11.2 will require increased funding to be successfully implemented. Action programs with significant capital implications include:

- #3 Implement a coordinated strategy to achieve a town-wide open space and greenway network, including a public acquisition program*

- #4 *Initiate a community-wide tree planting and re-vegetation program (Greening Amherst)*
- #7 *Develop a strategy to implement targeted improvements to roadways with identified level of service deficiencies*
- #8 *Develop a strategy to implement a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network*
- #11 *Initiate a Neighborhood Conservation Program, including a collaborative process to develop Neighborhood Improvement Plans*

While the combination of these programs may seem daunting given present fiscal constraints, it is important to put them in perspective by considering several points. First, the Town has already made substantial investments in excellent facilities and services for the benefit of residents, investments that have contributed to its reputation as a premier community in western New York. Second, there is a need for continued investment if Amherst is to retain its competitive advantage and the high quality of life its residents enjoy into the future. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan has a long-term (20-year) time horizon, meaning that it is intended to be accomplished not all at once, but through incremental action over a period of years to achieve the Vision Statement.

Given the above, a comprehensive and creative funding strategy is needed to implement the priority action programs. Several factors to be considered in developing this strategy include:

- ***Make maximum use of alternative revenue sources.*** The Town is already making good use of programs such as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) to finance recreational trail projects. Federal and state funding sources to defray the costs of action programs should be pursued to the greatest extent possible. The private sector, including foundations, businesses, institutions, and individuals, is another potential source of funding for particular programs or projects.
- ***Set priorities among capital programs and projects.*** With many worthwhile projects competing for limited dollars, prioritization according to relative importance in achieving Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives is essential. Action Program #12 is intended to provide a rational basis for prioritizing capital programs and projects, including a long-term strategy to incrementally implement capital improvements over a period of 10 to 20 years.
- ***Consider operating and maintenance as well as capital costs.*** Planning for capital improvements needs to take into consideration future operating and maintenance costs to the Town. Revenue sources such as user fees and corporate sponsorships can defray some of these costs.

- ***Ensure that the Town maintains a strong tax base to help support the cost of Comprehensive Plan programs.*** Community Facilities and Services Policy 9-5 speaks to the need for continued growth of the nonresidential tax base, consistent with the Comprehensive (Land Use) Plan, to help subsidize the cost of providing community facilities and services to town residents. A strong nonresidential (commercial retail, office, and industrial) tax base is essential if Amherst is to be in a fiscal position to implement Comprehensive Plan programs. This statement is not, however, an endorsement of indiscriminate nonresidential development, which would be counter productive by eroding the quality of life on which Amherst's economic prosperity depends. Rather, it supports quality development consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, which are designed to create and maintain "value" throughout the Town.

The final bullet raises an important issue for plan implementation: the economic impacts of the Comprehensive Plan. These impacts can be considered from two perspectives:

1. Is the plan ***economically viable?*** Does it provide adequate capacity for the residential and non-residential growth projected in Amherst over the 20-year time horizon?
2. Is the plan ***fiscally beneficial?*** Will the plan policies result in economic development that supports the community's goals as expressed in the Vision Statement?

The answer to both of these questions is yes. Projections of residential and non-residential (commercial retail and industrial) development over the next 20 years were conducted for the *Inventory and Analysis Report* as part of the comprehensive planning process. The Conceptual Land Use Plan designates sufficient land in the various land use categories to accommodate projected development over the next 20 years and beyond. Moreover, the plan sets the policy direction that much of the future non-residential (and higher-density residential) growth be accommodated in designated mixed-use centers. Additional policies promote infill development, redevelopment, and reuse of older commercial areas to accommodate a portion of the projected growth.

The Comprehensive Plan policies will also positively affect the Town's fiscal situation. The Plan's economic policies are designed to promote the types of ***quality development*** that will contribute to a healthy tax base to support community facilities, services, and other town investments. Equally important, the Plan's emphasis on ***quality of life*** will serve to strengthen Amherst's reputation as a premier community, enhancing residential property values while attracting the desirable types of business that are drawn to places with a high quality of life. While implementation of the Plan will

require increased spending for certain programs, in essence what is proposed is an investment in the future of the community, one that enhances Amherst's intrinsic value as a place to live as well as its economic well being. As a well-defined guide to building the community that residents desire for the future, the Comprehensive Plan sets the framework for fiscally responsible decision-making that will ultimately conserve fiscal resources through prudent management of town assets and of growth and development within Amherst.

11.5 PLAN MONITORING

The Comprehensive Plan should not be viewed as a static document, but rather as one that will evolve in response to changing circumstances. New York State Planning and Zoning law requires regular review of adopted Comprehensive Plans. Ongoing monitoring and assessment should be conducted to support regular plan review. A Plan monitoring report assessing the Town's progress toward achieving its goals and implementing its policies should be prepared biennially. The Report may include recommendations for a formal plan review. A review of the Plan's goals, objectives, policies, and/or implementation programs should be undertaken when the monitoring report identifies changes in internal and external forces that have significantly altered conditions within the Town. A diagram depicting the monitoring program and plan review schedule is provided in Appendix B. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Plan Monitoring

Plan monitoring involves the following activities:

- Measuring progress in meeting the Plan's goals and objectives
- Identifying trends that may influence planning objectives and policies

Data related to Plan policies and objectives should be collected and analyzed on an ongoing basis along with indicators of demographic, economic, development and planning trends. The Town Planning Department will develop an routine monitoring protocol so that Town departments capture and report relevant data. Data collection activities must be consistent with available resources and staffing levels in the Town departments. The indicators and their associated data will be reviewed annually by the Planning Director and may be adjusted year-to-year as deemed necessary. The resulting information will form the basis of a biennial "Comprehensive Plan Review Report." The Planning Department will prepare the report and the Planning Board will consider its findings and make any recommendations for further study to the Town Board at the end of the first year. The Town

Board may initiate a review of individual polices or direct preparation of a Plan Review that could result in proposed amendments to the Plan. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Comprehensive Plan Reviews

Reviews may take one of the two following forms:

- ***Policy Reviews*** that consider trends and shifts affecting specific policies and actions
- ***Vision Statement Reviews*** that reconsider the fundamental guiding principles of the Plan such as the Key Initiatives or the Vision Statement (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Policy Review: Each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes specific goals, objectives and policies that guide implementation of the Plan. Based on the ongoing Plan monitoring program, the Planning Department will assess whether changes and trends have occurred that warrant review of any of these specific Plan policies. The Planning Board may recommend the review of a Plan Policy based on its analysis of the biennial “Comprehensive Plan Review Report.” They may also solicit public input to assist with this recommendation. The Planning Board then will provide its recommendations to the Town Board, which will determine if selected Plan amendments will be initiated. The Town Board may also solicit public input before making its final decision. The scope of a Policy Review and any associated budget must be approved by the Town Board. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Vision Statement Review: This is the most comprehensive type of review and may include activities that emulate the Comprehensive Plan development process, albeit at a reduced level of effort and cost. As a result of its review of the biennial Comprehensive Plan Review Report, the Planning Board may recommend, and the Town Board may authorize initiation of a Vision Statement Review based on any of the following criteria:

1. Approximately eight years after adoption of the Plan or adoption of Vision Statement amendments.
2. When three or more Plan policies or Action Programs have been substantially amended within a two year period and the Planning Board finds a need to recommend a higher level review.
3. When, in the judgment of the Planning Director with endorsement by the Planning Board, a review and amendment of the Vision Statement is warranted as a result of:
 - a. Emerging trends or new ideas regarding development, community services, or governance that were not considered or adequately captured in the Vision Statement;

- b. Any significant national, regional, or local change that impacts the physical and/or economic development of the Town in such a manner that the Vision Statement, or portions thereof are no longer applicable or relevant;
- c. The adoption of a Comprehensive Plan or amendments by an adjacent community that could result in significant changes to the growth and land use policies of Amherst;
- d. A significant number of requests for use variances or zoning changes that are inconsistent with the adopted Plan, as amended; and
- e. Significant changes to policies or regulations by outside agencies such as the NYSDEC, NYSDOT or the University at Buffalo that have significant implications on land use or major infrastructure systems in the Town. Examples include: alterations to wetland regulations; sewer service extended beyond the area recommended in the adopted Plan; or significant transportation improvements (for example, toll barrier relocation or transit extension). *(Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01)*

If a Vision Statement Review is warranted or recommended, resource needs should be considered with the proposed Planning Department budget for the upcoming fiscal year. *(Amended 2-28-11; BCPA-10-2)*

11.6 PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Conduct of the monitoring and review processes will result in possible amendments to respond to the ever changing social, physical, regulatory and environmental conditions in Amherst. Flexible amendment procedures are necessary to respond to these changes.

Recommended amendments resulting from a Policy Review or Vision Statement Review will be completed through a formal review and hearing process by the Town Board pursuant to New York State Town Law Section 272-a. The Planning Board is designated as the agency to oversee the review process and prepare proposed amendments to the Plan. At the completion of their review, the Planning Board may, by formal resolution, recommend Plan amendments to the Town Board for their consideration. The Town Board will conduct its required public hearing and act on the proposed amendments. The Planning Department will be responsible for incorporating any amendments into the text and mapping of the Comprehensive Plan. *(Amended 2-28-11; BCPA-10-2)*