

A scenic view of a river with rapids, a concrete dam with a metal railing, and a red brick building in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white filter. The river flows from the left towards the center, with white water rapids. A concrete dam with a metal railing runs across the middle ground. In the background, there are trees and a red brick building.

*Natural and  
Cultural Resources*

# 4

## *Natural and Cultural Resources*

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## 4.0 *Natural and Cultural Resources*

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

***Priority Action Program:  
Natural and Cultural Resources***

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

Amherst’s rich environmental and cultural resources contribute greatly to the Town’s quality of life and community character. Although much of the Town is developed, many valuable sensitive lands and historic resources have been preserved. Important resources within Amherst include:

- ***Surface water resources:*** Amherst has a number of significant surface water resources, including the Tonawanda Creek (Erie Canal), Ellicott Creek, and Ransom Creek. These waterways provide recreational opportunities, irrigation, options for stormwater management, and important wildlife habitat.
- ***Floodplains:*** Floodplains have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA). The floodway and 100-year floodplain are important demarcation areas for planning due to special construction requirements within these sensitive areas. Due to level terrain, abundant water resources, and poorly drained soils, a significant part of the Town (including most of Northeast Amherst) lies within the 100-year floodplain.
- ***Wetlands:*** Several large wetland areas exist within Amherst, many of which are protected as part of the Town’s existing public open spaces. Wetlands are important due to their value as habitat and their ability to reduce the impacts of flooding and enhance water quality.
- ***Woodlands:*** While much of Amherst’s natural vegetation has been cleared for development or agriculture, significant amounts of woodland remain, particularly along stream corridors, in wetland and conservation areas, and in the northern part of Town. In addition to providing environmental benefits such as habitat for wildlife and improved air and water quality, woodlands make important contributions to Amherst’s visual character.
- ***Soils:*** Much of Amherst is underlain by poorly drained soils that were formed from silts and sands deposited at the bottom of a glacial lake. Most of the soils are deep, nearly level, and have the potential for saturation. In addition, many of the soils

have the ability to produce high yields and are designated as agriculturally significant soils at the state and federal levels.

- **Historic and cultural resources:** Due to its location along the Erie Canal and its role in the growth of Western New York, Amherst has many potentially significant historic structures. Currently, there are six local historic landmarks within the Town and ten within the Village of Williamsville. Two surveys of historic resources within Amherst have identified other potentially valuable historic resources in the Town. In addition, the cultural, visual, and performing arts offered by institutions such as the University at Buffalo and Daemen College are important community resources. Musicfare Theatre at Daemen College is identified as a “resource of county-wide significance” in Erie County’s *Guiding Principles for Countywide Land Use Planning*.

The Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement speaks to the importance of preserving natural, historic, and scenic resources throughout Amherst. The goals, objectives, and policies of this element are designed to promote the preservation and management of these critical resources for the benefit of present and future generations and the surrounding region. These resources have significance beyond Amherst, and Erie County has identified many as having countywide importance. Planning for these resources should be regional in perspective, involving the County and surrounding municipalities.

***Vision Statement Directions:  
Natural and Cultural Resources***

- Preserve open space, natural, and scenic resources
- Preserve historic resources
- Protect against noise, light, air, and water pollution
- Protect woodlands and tree canopy

## **4.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

### **GOAL**

***Sensitive environmental and cultural resources identified and preserved as part of the physical fabric of the community***

### **OBJECTIVES**

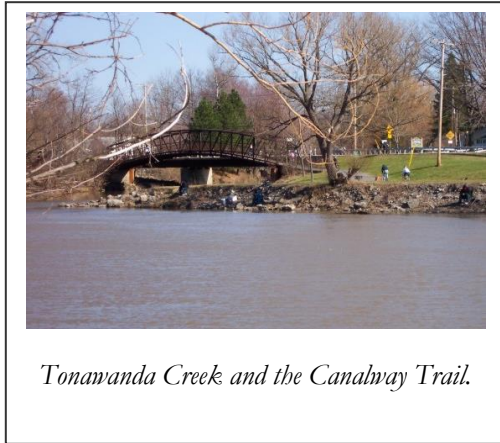
- Establish an interconnected open space network that incorporates significant natural and cultural resources
- Protect sensitive environmental resources through improved regulations, policies, and management, including:
  - Water resources and wetlands
  - Air quality
  - Trees and woodlands
  - Historic and cultural resources

### **POLICIES**

#### **A. Open Space System**

Establishment of a town-wide network of parks, open spaces, and greenways is one of the organizing principles of the Land Use and Development Element, as described in Policies 3-13 to 3-15. This

network is envisioned as a primary means of accomplishing preservation of sensitive natural and cultural resources.



*Tonawanda Creek and the Canahway Trail.*

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

Land Use and Development Policy 3-13 proposes establishment of a town-wide open space and greenway network to be achieved through a variety of mechanisms, including public acquisition, conservation development options, and private landowner conservation. As illustrated in the accompanying Parks, Open Space and Trail Map (Figure 4) and Conceptual Land Use Plan (Figure 6), greenway corridors along streams and associated water resources (100-year floodway and wetlands) are essential components of this network.

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

Conservation development is a technique that groups houses and roadways closer together in compact patterns, thus accommodating development while preserving valuable open space and environmental resources. As described in Policy 3-14, the Town should enact new regulations to encourage use of this option for new developments where public sewer is available or soils are conducive to on-site sewage disposal. The regulations should include standards for the dedication of significant natural resources and habitat areas as permanent open space.

**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.**

Policy 3-15 proposes that the Town initiate a public acquisition program to help develop an open space and greenway network. The presence of sensitive natural or historic resources should be one of the basic criteria used to identify properties for potential acquisition as part of the network.

**B. Water Resources and Stormwater Management**

Figure 7 depicts water resources within the Town of Amherst. Water quality and stormwater management issues have been documented for all of the Town’s three major streams. Policies 4-4 to 4-8 are designed to promote improved protection and management of the Town’s water resources. The Joint Local Waterfront Redevelopment Plan (JLWRP) also provides guidance and policies for environmental protection and preservation along the Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal corridor.

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

Riparian or streamside buffers comprised of native vegetation are one of the most effective methods of protecting water quality. Instituting setback standards for all new development along

waterways designated as Class C or above by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) will contribute to improving the water quality of Amherst's streams.

Stream banks and associated natural buffer zones are extremely important to the health of the stream. A buffer will help ensure that vegetation along the streambank remains healthy and provides shade, food, and nutrients to the system. The roots from the vegetation help to stabilize the streambank and reduce erosion and siltation, a particular problem for Amherst's waterways. The leaf litter, roots, and ground cover in riparian buffers also act to filter sediment and other pollutants that would otherwise enter the waterway. Lastly, a buffer increases visual quality and provides for increased recreational potential and wildlife habitat.

In addition to setback standards, the Town should consider instituting management guidelines for different types of buffer zones. These guidelines would establish acceptable and unacceptable uses within the buffer and could address vegetation goals for each zone within the buffer. Residents and landowners should be encouraged to maintain the natural vegetation of riparian areas, which often are mowed and maintained as lawns. Mowing destroys native vegetation and prevents new plants from taking root. Private lawns are often treated with fertilizer and pesticides that can contaminate surface water. Signage could be installed along buffer boundaries to educate the public and encourage proper usage. These preservation standards should be applied to significant stream corridors as identified by Erie County in the *Guiding Principles for Countywide Land Use Planning* (1999).<sup>3</sup>

As a long-term goal, streamside buffer areas could be incorporated into the Town's open space network.

**4-5 Support protection of designated wetlands and implement best management practices to maintain Town owned wetland areas. Work with regulatory agencies to encourage permitted wetland mitigation of an equal or higher level of function and quality to be located near impacted areas or within the Town. (Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01)**

Wetlands are unique assets that contribute to Amherst's overall economic, social, and environmental health. They provide numerous benefits such as water quality improvements, stormwater control and storage, filtering of contaminants, provision of wildlife habitats, and recreational and open space opportunities. While federal and state regulations provide the

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<sup>3</sup> This report designates stream corridors having countywide significance as identified by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning.

regulatory framework for wetland protection, local efforts to support wetland preservation by encouraging best management practices can also improve quality and prevent loss of quantitative and qualitative wetland characteristics.

As of 2012 there are over 2,800<sup>4</sup> acres of wetlands regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) located in the Town. Other wetland areas are under federal jurisdiction and regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Federal wetland delineations are conducted on a case-by-case basis; their locations and extent are not compiled on a single map by the USACE. Wetlands are likely to continue to grow and change over time, creating the potential for future designated or jurisdictional wetland areas. Guidance about wetland information, permits, and regulations should be sought from the appropriate regulatory agency. Figure 7 illustrates the location of Town-owned and NYSDEC designated wetlands in Amherst. It also identifies the corresponding NYSDEC wetland classifications: Class 1 (most valuable) to Class 4 (least valuable).

While designated wetlands are protected by federal and state regulations, development demands may arise that affect them. Regulatory agencies issue permits to manage wetland impacts, and determine compensatory mitigation measures to offset impacts or loss of the wetland. When wetland impacts are considered, the following sequence of permitting criteria from the USACE or a similar sequence by the NYSDEC is used to manage potential loss:

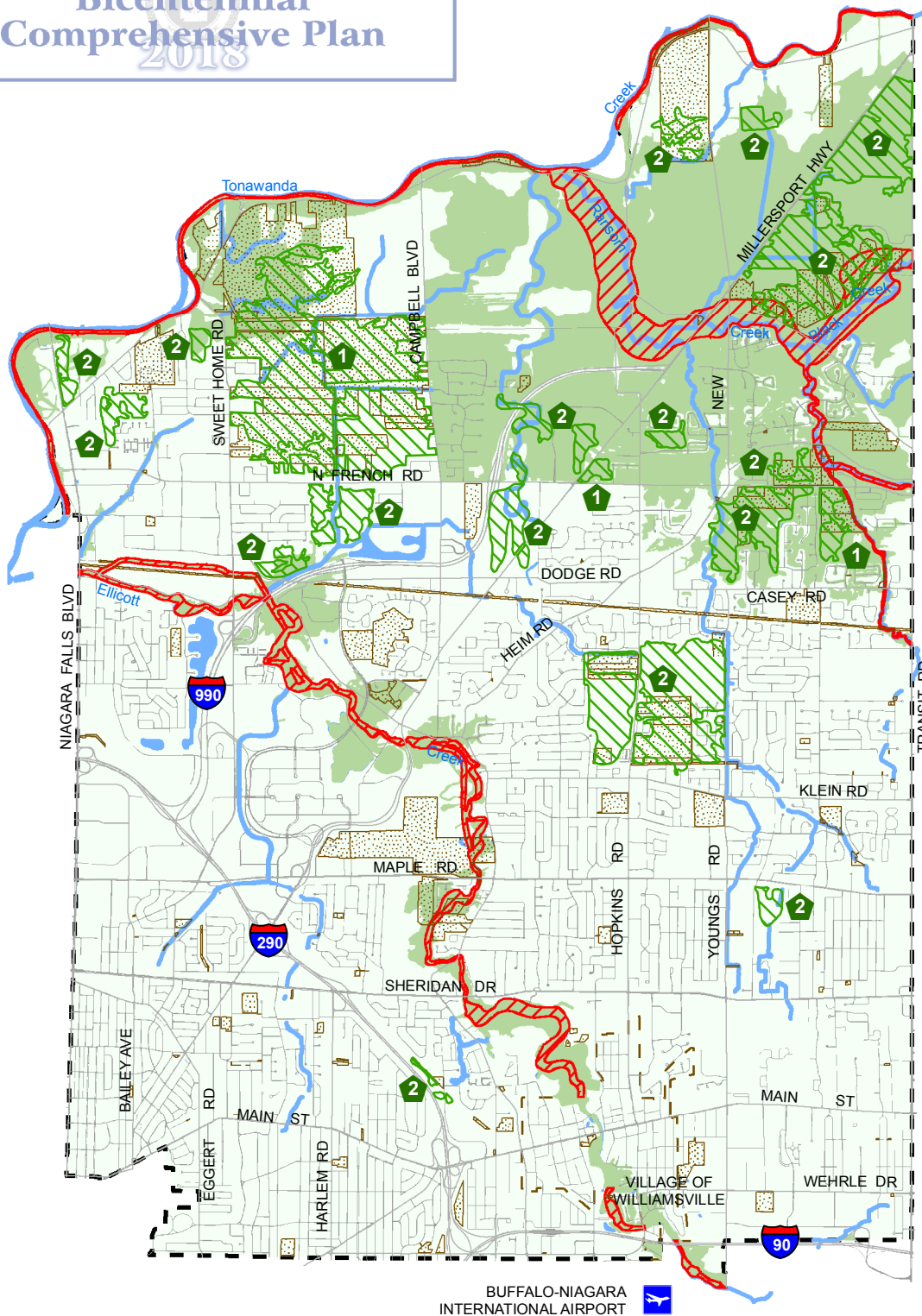
1. *Avoid* - Adverse impacts to designated wetlands are to be avoided and no discharge shall be permitted if there is a practical alternative with less adverse impacts.
2. *Minimize* - If impacts cannot be avoided, appropriate and practical steps to minimize adverse impacts must be taken (such as project reconfiguration or minimization).
3. *Compensate* - Appropriate and practical compensatory mitigation is required for unavoidable adverse impacts to wetlands which remain (such as wetland degradation or loss). The amount and quality of compensatory mitigation may not substitute for avoiding and minimizing impacts.

When regulatory agencies determine that compensatory wetland mitigation is required, the Town should encourage that mitigation be located within Amherst whenever feasible. The following mitigation hierarchy should guide decisions on the

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<sup>4</sup> Based on updated NYSDEC designated wetland information

# Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan












BUFFALO-NIAGARA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

## WATER RESOURCES

FIGURE 7

### LEGEND

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  NYSDEC Regulated Wetland*<br><small>*Wetland boundaries are approximate. Wetlands are surrounded by a 100 foot wide regulated adjacent area.</small> |  FEMA Floodway              |  Significant Stream Corridor       |
|  NYSDEC Wetland Class   |  FEMA 100 - Year Floodplain |  Municipal Boundary                |
|  |  Surface Water Body         |  Village of Williamsville Boundary |
|  |  Town Owned Property        |   |

SOURCE NOTES:  
Original Source Data Provided by the Town of Amherst

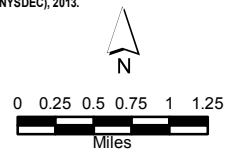
NYSDEC Regulated Wetlands:  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), 2013.

Map does not illustrate Federal Jurisdictional Wetlands.

Floodplains and Floodways:  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 1992  
Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Erie County, New York.

Map Compiled by the Town of Amherst Planning Department

Date: September 2015





location of mitigation sites. Wetland mitigation sites should be located as follows:

1. On the project site, within the same watershed, and within the Town's boundaries (Best Case Scenario).  
If not, then;
2. On land adjacent to or near the project site, within the same watershed, and within the Town's boundaries. If not, then;
3. Wherever possible within the same watershed and within the Town's boundaries. If not, then;
4. In a municipality that shares the same watershed from which the wetlands are being impacted.

Acquiring regulated wetlands can help to protect the quality and function of wetland resources. Many of Amherst's larger wetland areas are protected as part of existing public open spaces. Whenever feasible, the Town should continue its acquisition of regulated wetland property. Funding for open space, natural resource, and agricultural land acquisitions may be available through state initiatives and programs. Acquisition of these wetlands should be guided by Comprehensive Plan land use recommendations and the application of qualitative and functional criteria related to the wetland characteristics.

The Town should also consider mechanisms to manage Town-owned wetlands. First, the Town could encourage the acquisition of conservation easements to prevent future alteration or decreased quality of wetlands. Second, the Town should consider the need for management, removal, and prevention of invasive species—vegetation not native to Amherst that can diminish wetland quality and function. Third, the Town should consider reviewing its ditch maintenance practices. If not properly maintained, ditches can cause excessive and inordinate growth and contamination of wetlands.

The Amherst Conservation Advisory Council should collaborate with the Town Highway Department and other departments to formulate wetland protection and management strategies.

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

Due to Amherst's location near the Niagara River and on the Tonawanda Creek, most streams enter the Town after flowing through several other municipalities and a large part of Erie County. Therefore, many of the water quality and stormwater management problems in Amherst's waterways are initiated upstream. Ransom Creek and Tonawanda Creek both have documented water quality issues before entering Amherst and many of the actions taken upstream affect water quality and flooding in Amherst. Amherst partners with several local

municipalities and government agencies through participation in the Western New York Stormwater Coalition, Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee and Erie County Water Quality Committee in watershed-based management planning to protect and improve water quality and stormwater management. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Erie County has designated both the Ellicott Creek and Ransom Creek watersheds as environmental features of countywide significance.<sup>5</sup> Watershed management planning for these creeks in cooperation with other municipalities and possibly Erie County would be an effective way to address watershed-wide water quality and stormwater management issues. Several watershed studies have been completed or are currently underway in Amherst. These efforts could be the starting point to engage other communities and would provide an important information base. The Ransom Creek Improvement Study has been recently completed and focuses on flooding and stormwater management in northeastern Amherst. Other studies include a reconnaissance study of the Ellicott Creek watershed by the Army Corps of Engineers and a Flood Mitigation Plan. Amherst will also likely begin stormwater management planning in order to comply with federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NYSDEC regulations.

The watershed management planning process should begin with an identification of the major issues within the watershed and the goals of the planning process. This will help to focus planning efforts and ensure that the major benefits of the resource are identified and addressed. After the initial scoping, the planning process should include an inventory of the watershed and collection of all relevant available data. All inventory information should be analyzed by engineers, hydrologists, ecologists, and economists.

After the initial assessment, resource standards and management strategies can be developed based on the initial goals of the plan. Management strategies should address issues on a watershed-wide basis, including opportunities for intergovernmental coordination. Resource standards should reflect the integrated nature of the watershed. Specific actions should be developed to address the strategies and ensure that resource standards are met over time. An implementation schedule should be devised to ensure that the actions of the plan are carried out and have adequate funding. The watershed management planning process should be revisited every five to ten years to measure progress towards goals and to incorporate changes in priorities.

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<sup>5</sup> *Guiding Principles for Countywide Land Use Planning*, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, 1999

Several guides and references exist on how to develop a watershed management plan. The Center for Watershed Protection in Maryland, the EPA Office of Water, the United States Geological Service (USGS), and the New York DEC all have published guides on watershed management planning. Watershed Plans could also be coordinated with the New York DEC, USGS, or the regional EPA office for guidance and potential funding.

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

Development typically results in an increase in impervious cover and removal of natural vegetation. An increase in impervious cover creates more overland flow, causing water to be unable to infiltrate into the ground and be filtered of sediment and contaminants. An overall increase in impervious surfaces throughout the Town exacerbates stormwater quality problems. At a specific construction site, stormwater can remove a considerable amount of sediment. Several best management practices can be recommended to improve stormwater quality from new development.

*Best management practices* are measures designed to minimize the impacts of stormwater runoff from land development on water quality. Examples include erosion control during construction, preservation of buffers of natural vegetation, and on-site detention of stormwater to filter out pollutants.

- ***Preserve natural vegetation and institute clearing limits for new construction:*** Vegetation can be one of the most effective and cost effective methods of improving stormwater quality. Where possible, natural vegetation should be retained in new developments. On sites where existing vegetation has been removed and replanted rather than maintained, it will likely take a number of years for the replanted areas to remove contaminants and sediment at the same rate as the original vegetation. Developers should be encouraged to establish maximum areas to be cleared at a time. Large cleared areas can result in much higher erosion and sedimentation rates and corresponding impacts on water quality.

The benefits of preserving natural vegetation are many. Vegetation decreases water temperature by shading stormwater ditches, waterways, and pavement. Vegetation captures and absorbs water and helps to keep soils permeable. It provides stability to soils that would otherwise erode at a faster rate. It traps and filters potential contaminants and provides habitat.

- ***Protect or restrict development on steep slopes:*** Although not likely a major problem in the level terrain of Amherst, the protection of unstable or steep slopes will decrease sedimentation in stormwater runoff. Methods of slope protection include mulching, matting, seeding, and installation of retaining walls combined with native plantings. Other methods include piping concentrated

runoff from the top of a steep slope to the bottom and creating parallel grooves or terracing the slope to make it more stable.

- **Detention/retention:** One Best Management Practice currently utilized by the Town is to retain stormwater on-site, thus reducing downstream flooding and allowing pollutants to filter out over time. Several methods can be used to detain or retain stormwater. Wet detention ponds have outlets higher than the bottom of the pond, allowing sediment to filter out before the stormwater is released. Establishment of a wetland area in conjunction with a detention pond allows nutrients to be removed by the vegetation and will supplement the sediment controls.

Wetland creation can help retain stormwater and decrease water quality impacts. Vegetation helps to absorb excess nutrients and sediment. Created wetlands can also provide habitat and recreational opportunities.

- **Sediment collection:** A number of techniques are used by the Town to prevent sediment from leaving construction sites or recently cleared areas. These include silt fences, buffer strips, temporary drainage swales, temporary berms, and temporary storm drain diversions.
- **Limit impervious cover:** As previously stated, impervious cover (pavement and roofs) increases the rate and water quality impacts of stormwater runoff. Limiting the amount of impervious cover can reduce the amount of runoff coming from a site. To the greatest extent possible, vegetation should be kept intact and buffer strips and wetlands maintained or established to offset the impacts of impervious surfaces on stormwater runoff. One technique to reduce impervious cover is “low impact development” (Policy 4-8).

**Low impact development** is an approach to managing stormwater runoff that minimizes disturbance of natural areas, reduces the amount of impervious surfaces (buildings and pavement), and, to the extent possible, infiltrates stormwater on the site.

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

Low impact development is an alternative to conventional stormwater management. The intent of this approach is to control stormwater runoff in a cost-effective and ecologically sound manner. It minimizes the disturbance to natural systems, reduces the coverage of impervious surfaces, and infiltrates stormwater on site with the goal of retaining pre-development hydrologic conditions. Low impact development techniques include permeable pavement, bioretention areas (wetlands), and grass swales. Redirecting runoff from rooftops away from storm sewers and into grass swales or irrigation ditches is also

an effective method of mitigating the effects of stormwater runoff.

Several street design strategies also can reduce the impact of development on stormwater flows. Streets can be designed at the minimum width necessary to accommodate traffic. Center islands can be incorporated into cul-de-sacs to absorb stormwater runoff. Parking areas and driveways can be shared. Setback standards for homes can be reduced. These strategies are consistent with the pedestrian-oriented, compact development patterns described in the Land Use and Development Element.

Conservation development is another low impact development strategy (see Policies 3-15 and 4-2). By maintaining substantial open space areas in natural cover, this approach maintains natural drainage patterns and reduces development impacts on stormwater runoff and water quality.

The Town should consider revising its existing stormwater management standards to incorporate low impact development techniques. Further research should be conducted on which areas have the most suitable conditions for application of low impact development techniques, as certain site characteristics are more appropriate. In addition, some low impact development techniques require continual maintenance. Individual homeowners might not have the ability or will to maintain these areas. Therefore, these techniques might be more successful if they are implemented by the Town or other public agencies (e.g., on school properties) or through private development/management organizations, such as homeowner associations.

### C. Air Quality

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara region is classified as a “Marginal Non-Attainment Area” for air quality because it slightly exceeds the EPA standard for ozone. The region is in attainment with the other EPA air pollutant standards. The Town of Amherst has no specific air quality designation within the region. Air quality is related to several causes; the primary contributor to local air quality is automobile use. Automobile use is directly tied to local land use and transportation patterns. Social dependency on the automobile will continue to impact air quality for the foreseeable future. However, a number of strategies are available that can help reduce the number of automobiles on the road and vehicle miles traveled.

Implementation of a number of Comprehensive Plan policies will contribute to *improving air quality*.

**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.**

Several of the transportation policies outlined in Chapter 6.0 will contribute to ameliorating the impacts of private automobiles on air quality. These policies include:

- Enhance system capacities and undertake a capital program to maintain or improve the efficiency of the existing road system (6-4, 6-5)
- Develop a comprehensive bicycle network, using a rating system to identify and prioritize improvements (6-7)
- Develop a comprehensive pedestrian network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and trails (6-8)
- Work with NFTA to improve transit service and provide connections to activity centers (6-9)

The compact, mixed-use development patterns proposed by the Land Use and Development Element (Policies 3-1 and 3-2) will also contribute to reduced automobile dependency by providing opportunities to walk, bike, or take public transit (or shorter automobile trips) to retail and service areas and possibly to work. Other strategies to improve air quality in Amherst include tree preservation and planting (Policies 4-10 and 4-11), encouraging energy efficiency in new and existing buildings, and discouraging the burning of brush and leaves.

#### D. Tree Preservation

Trees and wooded areas improve aesthetics and contribute to community character. They provide numerous benefits including reducing flooding impacts and soil erosion, improving air quality, reducing water and noise pollution, and providing shade and habitat. The Vision Statement notes the importance of woodlands and tree canopy to the visual character of the Town. Consistent with the Vision Statement, tree canopy and woodlands should be preserved where possible and tree plantings encouraged on public and private lands.

#### 4-10 Support the Town of Amherst Tree Law.

The Town of Amherst Tree Law was adopted in May 1992 as Chapter 179 of the Town Code. The main focus of the Tree Law is to maintain and improve the aesthetics and ecological systems of the Town. The Tree Law generally requires a permit to remove trees greater than 4 inches in caliper and prohibits trees from being removed from public land. Several exceptions to this law address trees that are a danger to public welfare or might inhibit operations of public utilities, farms, and other businesses. The Tree Law also enforces the management of trees on private property that may be affecting public areas such as road intersections and rights-of-way. The Tree Law permits the Town to plant trees in parks and along streets. Limited guidelines for planting trees are included.

Amherst should support the Tree Law and the Town Forester who is charged with permitting and enforcing tree removal. Support of the Tree Law will ensure that private landowners do not remove



*Street trees enhance visual character, provide shade and habitat, and reduce noise and air pollution.*

trees that are of great benefit ecologically and aesthetically. In addition, it protects the natural integrity of public places. The following changes should be implemented to strengthen the effectiveness of the Tree Law:

- Appoint a Certified Arborist to act as Town Forester and to lead the Town’s Division of Forestry
- Provide the Town Forester with increased enforcement powers to address illegal tree removal
- Provide continuous training and education for Forestry Division/Parks Department staff to foster better maintenance and management of town tree and landscape resources

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

“Greening Amherst” is envisioned as a community-wide tree planting and re-vegetation program encompassing both public and private action. Article V of Chapter 179 of the Town Code authorizes the Town to plant trees to enhance the beauty of public places and ensure public safety. Criteria should be developed to guide planting of trees and shrubs on streets and in parks consistent with Article V. This article sets standards as to how close trees can be planted to the curb and sidewalk. It also mandates that an official tree species list be developed and that only trees on the list be planted. The criteria should also designate priority areas for planting. Possible priority areas include roads as they enter the Town, parking lots, drainage areas, cemeteries, and major thoroughfares. The “Greening Amherst” initiative can be coordinated with other Plan initiatives. For example, consistent with Policy 3-13, which calls for on-street sidewalk/bike lane connections along public roadways, these facilities should be treed and landscaped to provide users with a pleasant recreational experience.

The “Greening Amherst” initiative should be coordinated with secondary schools, UB, and neighborhood and environmental groups. This would create a community sense of pride as well as ensure greater coverage and lower costs. Potentially using grant funding sources, a “tree endowment fund” could be established with tree planting “vouchers” available to neighborhood residents. American Forests, a national organization that is sponsoring a “Global ReLeaf” initiative, is a potential resource and source of information. If volunteer groups are used, the Town should actively manage their efforts to ensure that correct species and locations are chosen.

The “Greening Amherst” initiative should be expanded over time to address the proper management of existing vegetation in Amherst’s parks and public places and to provide information on the management and planting of vegetation on private property.

*Greening Amherst* is designed to involve the entire community in a tree planting and re-vegetation program in support of the Aesthetic/Community Character Key Initiative.

New standards should be developed for plantings in subdivisions and new developments. Lastly, the initiative should be coordinated with neighboring towns to ensure that community entranceways are improved.

**E. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Amherst has a rich historical legacy stemming from its location on the Erie Canal and role in the growth of Western New York. Amherst’s historic resources should be preserved because they promote pride in historical achievements and enhance the Town’s character and quality of life.

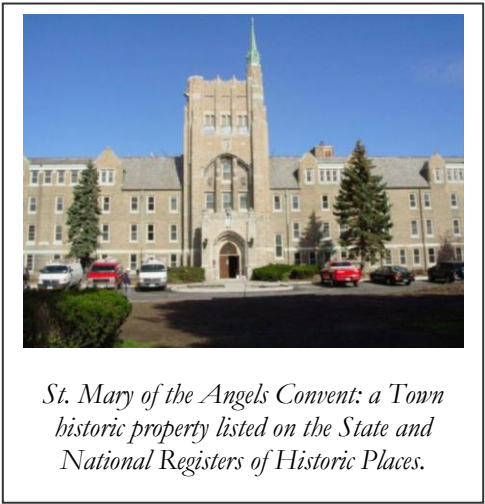
**4-12 Encourage designation of historically significant resources for protection and provide incentives available through the Historic Preservation Ordinance.**

Amherst should encourage the nomination of the highest ranked historically significant resources to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The Town’s pursuit of grant monies to further investigate high priority sites for inclusion on the National Register will aid in determining eligibility. The recently completed *Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Resources* and *Intensive Level Survey of Historic Resources* identifies those resources that may be of greatest importance and provides much of the background information that is necessary when completing the application process. Resources that do not meet the criteria for the State or National Registers, but do have local historical significance, should be considered for designation as local landmarks. These sites should be brought to the attention of the Historic Preservation Commission and eventually submitted to the Town Board for designation.

The Historic Preservation Commission should also consider identifying areas of the Town where a local historic district might help in protecting historic character. The Historic Preservation Commission has this authority under Chapter 121 of the Town Code. The Town should work with and inform property owners when developing proposals for historic districts.

Amherst should also encourage the use of incentives for historic property rehabilitation. Designated historic properties are eligible for a variety of federal and state preservation benefits such as rehabilitation financing and tax credits. The Town should also encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and their incorporation into redevelopment plans per Policy 3-9. (*Amended 2-28-11; BCPA-10-1*)

Amherst should further maximize the benefits of being part of the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program under the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Under the CLG program, Amherst is



*St. Mary of the Angels Convent: a Town historic property listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.*



eligible for technical assistance in writing applications for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and for grants that can be used to fund a variety of preservation activities. Amherst is also eligible for grants from the federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), the New York State Council on the Arts, and other agencies.

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

Art, music, drama, literature, and other cultural arts are important to the quality of life, community heritage, and identity of the community. As part of the effort to position Amherst as a “knowledge-based” community, the Town should work with institutions such as UB and Daemen College to promote opportunities for residents to experience the cultural arts.

**F. Resource Management**

Sound management is critical to ensure that Amherst’s natural and cultural resources are maintained for future generations. Policies 4-6 and 4-7 describe management strategies designed to enhance the Town’s water resources and to reduce the water quality impacts of development. The Town should also consider developing management plans to address specific resources, such as historically significant resources or parks with a concentration of sensitive natural resources.

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

Nature View Park, which contains extensive wetland areas, is an example of a town-owned resource that would benefit from a management plan to define both compatible uses and strategies to preserve and protect sensitive natural areas. The Town’s Capital Improvement Program includes development of a master plan for this park as an approved project. Management plans for similar natural areas and public parks should be considered.

Significant historic resources within Amherst would also benefit from management plans that define strategies to maintain their historic character in the future. Amherst’s significant historic resources are identified and rated in the *Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Resources* and the *Intensive Level Survey of Historic Resources*. The Town could consider developing a comprehensive management plan for all identified resources of local historical significance or, more likely, a subset of the most important resources as documented in the *Intensive Level Survey of Historic Resources*. The success of such plans would be enhanced if developed in cooperation with property owners. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

