



AMERY'S
TOMORROW TODAY



City of Amery, Wisconsin **2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Adopted XXX, 2025

DRAFT

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WHY PLAN?

Planning is important because it helps communities grow with intention rather than by chance. Thoughtful planning balances development with preservation, anticipates future needs, and ensures that infrastructure, housing, and public services evolve in harmony with community values.

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Comprehensive Plan is a resource for managing the growth of the City of Amery. It is designed to be a working document that City staff and officials can use to direct community development decisions, assist with capital and operational budgeting, and stimulate private housing, business, and industrial investment.

Functioning as an umbrella document, the Comprehensive Plan covers nearly every aspect of municipal governance. It is not meant to replace other plans, ordinances, or regulations, but rather to complement and coordinate with them. Zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, infrastructure plans, and neighborhood studies should all be interpreted and applied in harmony with this Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY DATA

Unless otherwise noted, most data used in this Comprehensive Plan comes from the U.S. Census Bureau:

- The [U.S. Census](#) collects basic demographic data every 10 years, with the most recent taking place in 2020.
- The [American Community Survey \(ACS\)](#) is also used to collect more detailed insights over a shorter time span, using a relatively small sample size to estimate local conditions and trends over a five-year sampling period. The most recent ACS data provides estimates for 2019-2023.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide decisions and actions affecting City budgets, ordinances, and growth. This plan looks up to 20 years into the future but focuses on action steps to guide the City's near-term efforts to help realize the long-term goal. As a broad based plan, it relies on other more detailed plans, budgets, and other processes that bring more clarity and specifics to everyday decisions.

This plan's recommendations are intended to:

- Create a collective vision for the future of the City of Amery;
- Establish priorities for public investment, including the City's Operating Budget, Capital Budget, and 5-year Capital Improvement Program;
- Inform policies that guide City decision-making;
- Align the work of City agencies around the issues that matter most to residents and stakeholders;
- Create a framework for topic-specific plans and initiatives that will expand on the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations;
- Guide private development through the Future Land Use Map and related policies;
- Foster partnerships with other entities to address shared goals.

Comprehensive Plan vs Zoning

Comprehensive planning and zoning are closely related tools to guide community growth and development, but they serve distinct purposes. A Comprehensive Plan is a long-range, visionary document that outlines the community's goals and aspirations for a broad range of elements such as land use, housing, and transportation. The Future Land Use Map is a crucial component of the plan, illustrating desired patterns of development that will support the City's overall vision into the future.

Zoning, by contrast, is a regulatory tool used to *implement* the Comprehensive Plan's vision. It establishes specific rules for how land can be used today, such as permitted uses, building heights, setbacks, lot sizes, and density. While the Comprehensive Plan is advisory in nature, zoning ordinances are legally binding and enforceable. For example, the zoning map is used to determine what can be built on a property now, but any changes to the map must be compared to the desired future uses detailed in the Future Land Use Map.

In essence, a Comprehensive Plan answers the question "What should go where in the future?" while zoning answers "What can go where right now?" Together, they ensure that proposed development is both strategic and consistent with the community's long-term goals.

Plan Adoption and the Consistency Requirement

Under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning statute (66.1001), a Comprehensive Plan must receive a public hearing and be approved by resolution by the Plan Commission, and adopted by ordinance by the City Council.

This statute requires that if a local government unit enacts or amends any of the following ordinances, the ordinance must be *consistent* with the Comprehensive Plan:

- Official maps, including the zoning map
- Local zoning and subdivision regulations
- Shoreland/wetland zoning ordinances

Though adopted by ordinance, the Comprehensive Plan itself is not an enforceable ordinance. Rather, it is intended to guide decision making in the years to come toward a unified vision developed by the community, for the community. Over the course of time, many factors will arise that will significantly influence the day-to-day decision making that occurs at the local government level and in the community in general. This plan should continue to be consulted to ensure that such decisions contribute to the City's established vision. As this is a living document, it may need to be amended from time to time to adapt to unexpected changes. See the Implementation chapter for more information.

Chapter Components

There are ten total chapters in this Comprehensive Plan, seven of which are related to specific community elements:

- Introduction
- Public Engagement & Feedback
- **Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources**
- **Utilities & Community Facilities**
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation**
- **Economic Development**
- **Housing**
- **Transportation**
- **Land Use**
- Implementation

These seven element-specific chapters contain the following information to establish a foundational understanding of existing conditions in the City of Amery, as well as goals and strategies to guide decisions moving forward:

- Community Snapshot – A brief overview of current conditions, data, and maps relevant to the applicable community element, providing a contextual foundation for the other components in the chapter.
- Issues & Opportunities – Identification of key challenges and potential areas for growth or improvement that the plan should address. These insights were primarily identified through public engagement and conversations with City staff, Plan Commission, and City Council.
- Goals – Aspirational, long-term outcomes that Amery aims to achieve, aligned with the plan's vision statement on page 3.
- Strategies – Specific approaches or themes designed to help achieve the stated goals. Some of the strategies in the plan could also be stated as actions, but have not yet been assigned to anyone to pursue action. All strategies are repeated in Chapter 10 (Implementation) with approximate deadlines and priority levels assigned.

INTRODUCTION

2045 Vision

The City of Amery's vision statement is intended to set the general framework for the rest of the plan:

“Amery will continue to be a thriving, welcoming community that preserves its small-town charm while embracing thoughtful growth.

We envision a city where families and businesses flourish, supported by affordable housing options, purposeful economic development, vibrant parks and gathering spaces, and quality infrastructure. By providing a high quality of life and a strong sense of belonging, Amery shall always be a desirable place to live, work, and visit.”



Regional Context

The City of Amery is located in Polk County, in western Wisconsin. It is bordered to the north by the Town of Lincoln and to the south by the Town of Black Brook. It is located 60 miles northeast of St. Paul, Minnesota, and 70 miles northwest of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

As detailed in the following chapters, Amery's regional significance is shaped by its abundant natural resources – namely the Apple River, numerous lakes, and two state trails – that support a range of outdoor recreation activities, as well as a strong local business community and wealth of cultural events and resources for residents. Highway 46 and nearby Highway 8 provides vital connectivity to the Twin Cities and surrounding communities.

Community History

Amery was named after William Amery, a carpenter and civic leader who helped shape the town in the 1870s. Early on, the town developed around the sawmill on the Apple River, which processed timber floating downstream from northern camps and shipped lumber by rail throughout the region.

In 1888, the construction of the Amery Dam on the Apple River created the Apple River Flowage, a 640-acre body of water that powered sawmills and later a gristmill. The dam was central to the town's industrial activity and was even used briefly to generate electricity for the Amery Electric Light Company. Over time, the flowage became a recreational asset, supporting fishing, boating, and shoreline development.

Amery's downtown began to take shape in the late 19th century, reflecting Amery's transition from a resource-based settlement to a more diversified and community-oriented town that is enjoyed to this day.

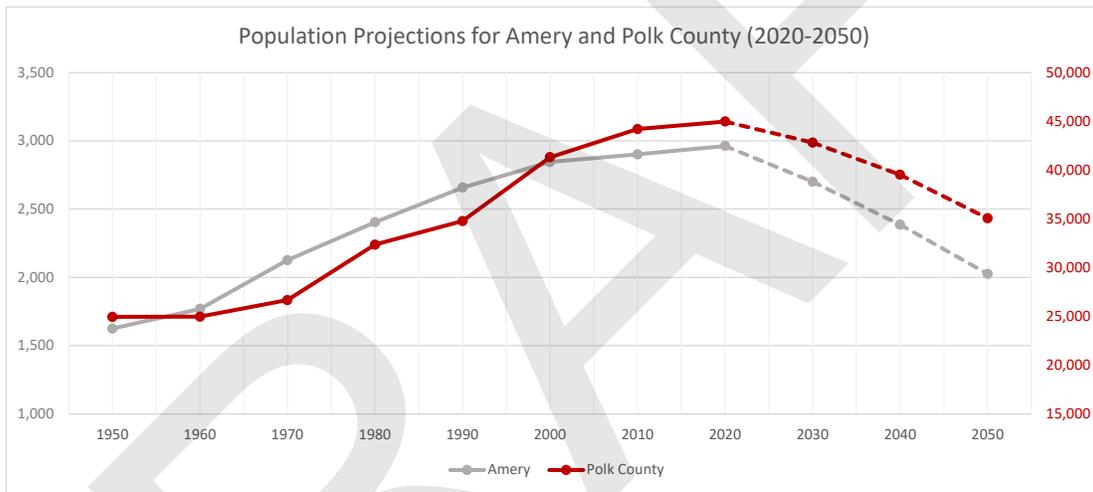
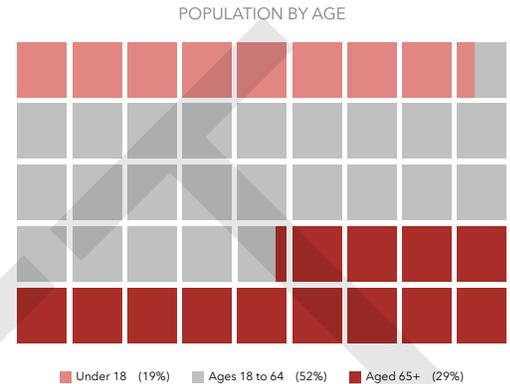
Source: Wikipedia and Apple River Protection and Rehabilitation District

Demographics

Demographic data is vital for comprehensive planning because it helps communities anticipate future needs and ensure services, infrastructure, and policies are aligned with population trends, age distribution, and cultural diversity.

Population

According to the U.S. Census, the City of Amery's total population was 2,962 in 2020. From 2010 to 2020, the City of Amery's population increased 2.1%, reflecting Wisconsin's total percentage growth of 3.6% in the same time frame. However, the City is expected to lose 937 residents between 2020 and 2050, representing a 31.6% decrease over a thirty-year period (Wisconsin Department of Administration). Decreases are also expected for Polk County (22%) and Wisconsin (3.1%).



Age Composition

About 13% of the City's population is considered youth (less than 18 years old), 61% is between the age of 18 and 64, and 26% are over the age of 65. The number of retirement-aged individuals is expected to grow as the Baby Boomer population continues to age, matching trends seen across the nation. The City of Amery's median age is 45.9, higher than that of 2010 (44.8) and the current State median (40.1).

Race and Ethnicity

The majority of Amery's population is white (98.1%), followed by "two or more races" (0.7%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.5%), and Asian (0.4%). It is estimated that no residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, though the data's margin of error is 1.3%. Compared to 2013 ACS Estimates, Amery has gotten less diverse; demographics with the largest losses have been Black or African American (-1.4% of total population), "two or more races" (-1.4%), and Hispanic or Latino (-1.3%).

Households

There are approximately 1,325 households in Amery, 22.6% of which include at least one child under the age of eighteen. The total number of households has declined slightly over the last decade (1,336 in 2013 to 1,325 in 2023), as well as the number of households with children (337 in 2013 to 300 in 2023). This aligns with population decline resulting from the ongoing economic and social impacts of the 2008 nationwide recession and COVID pandemic. The average household size in 2023 was 2.11 individuals, which is higher than 2013 estimates (2.06). This may be explained by an increasing prevalence of multi-generational households, as the aging population moves in with younger family.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

PLAN ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

This plan was drafted through collaboration between City staff, the Plan Commission and City Council, the MSA project team, and residents of the City of Amery and surrounding communities.

1 PROJECT KICKOFF & EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

- Compile Community Snapshot data and review existing planning documents.
- Create a set of maps and a written summary of existing conditions.
- Create a vision statement for the City of Amery's future growth.

2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Solicit input from community members (through online survey, in-person events, etc.) to further develop a vision and goals & strategies.
- Review input with City staff and community decision-makers.

3 FINALIZE PLAN

- Draft the City of Amery's Comprehensive Plan based on the information gathered throughout the process.
- Receive frequent feedback from the Plan Commission, City Council, and community members.

Community engagement is an crucial part of the planning process, both to identify guiding priorities and to gather support for later implementation. Engagement for this Comprehensive Plan was conducted in tandem with the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) and consisted of the following activities:

- An online input survey, promoted online and through print media;
- One-on-one interviews with key stakeholders;
- Discussions with the Plan Commission and City Council;
- Two community workshops, held at City Hall; and
- A pop-up event at Music on the River.

Stakeholder Interviews

The project team met one-on-one with key stakeholders from various sectors, including the Apple River & Lakes Protection and Rehabilitation Districts, Amery Area Public Library, Amery Hospital & Clinic, Amery Area Historical Society, Amery Community Club, Amery Woman's Club Board, Black Brook Town Board, and Amery School Board.

Primary findings included:

- Expanding access to affordable housing, childcare, and transportation;
- Enhancing parks and natural amenities with features like splash pads, accessible equipment, and public art;
- Adding inclusive spaces and programming for youth, seniors, and families;
- Exploring strategies to enhance residents' mental health, social connection, and community wellness;
- Additional collaboration between the City and local organizations to strengthen economic development initiatives, preserve Amery's small-town character, and promote civic engagement.



Amery's Tomorrow Today

Help us develop Amery's Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP)

City of Amery, WI and MSA Professional Services
February 12, 2025

[Get Involved!](#) [Planning 101](#) [Project Schedule](#) [Meetings](#) [Resources](#) [Contact](#)

The City of Amery is updating its Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP), which will guide the continual advancement of the community for years to come. This process has been nicknamed **Amery's Tomorrow Today**. Please check this website regularly for project updates and upcoming community engagement opportunities.

Get Involved!

Community Survey

The Community Input Survey is now closed. Thank you for your valuable feedback;

Comprehensive Plan and CORP's project website, which contained engagement opportunities and updates, meeting materials, and other pertinent information.

Community Survey

Early in the planning process, an online input survey was promoted to gather the public's priorities and concerns about future growth in the City of Amery. In total, the online survey received 346 responses (between March–May 2025) from a wide cross section of the community, including residents of Amery/surrounding towns and households comprised of all age groups, household sizes, and length of tenure within the community. The most prevalent respondents were those in a two-member household, those that have lived in or near Amery for 20+ years, and those that live in a single-family home.

The key findings are listed below; the full survey results are located in Appendix A.

General Insights

- Residents were primarily drawn to Amery because of its proximity to family and employment, as well as safety and low crime rate.
- Amery's strengths include its rural character, location (including proximity to the Twin Cities), healthcare access, and welcoming culture.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with Amery's quality of life.

Housing & Economic Development

- One of the most common concerns was the lack of affordable and diverse housing options for owners and renters, especially middle-income earners, families, young professionals, and seniors. Many cited this shortage as a primary reason for stagnating growth in the community.
- Commonly cited barriers to new development included high property taxes and limited land for development within Amery's city boundary.
- There was strong support for economic development within the community, especially for small local businesses and larger employers that bring employment opportunities. However, the lack of housing and childcare may have repelled many prospective workers.

Mobility & Transportation

- There is general dissatisfaction with the condition of Amery's roads and infrastructure – nearly 60% of respondents rated their condition as "fair" or "poor".
- The highest-rated priorities for mobility infrastructure improvements were road repairs/upgrades and sidewalk improvements.
- Bike lanes were somewhat contentious, with many showing support for additional cycling infrastructure and others calling for the removal of the bike lanes along Keller Ave.

Beautification & Public Amenities

- Many respondents acknowledged Amery's outdoor amenities as strong assets, including the Stower Seven Lakes/Cattail State Trails and access to numerous lakes.
- One of the most common concerns was the lack of free/low-cost activities for children, teens, and seniors, especially in winter. A large gap identified through the survey was a lack of water amenities, such as beaches, swimming pools, and splash pads.
- While respondents generally appreciated downtown Amery and the recent reconstruction of Keller Ave, many suggested pedestrian scale improvements (such as landscaping, street furniture, and public art) to make it feel less sterile.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

In-Person Community Events



Visioning Workshop

Kick-Off + Visioning Workshop

A project kick-off was held at City Hall on the evening of April 22, 2025 to collect preliminary priorities and concerns from community members through a series of interactive stations. Activities included visual preference voting, SWOT (Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats) prompts for a variety of categories, and an annotatable map of Amery. The results of this SWOT analysis, coupled with similar discussions with the Plan Commission and City Council, are detailed in the following section.



Pop-Up Engagement at Music on the River

Pop-Up Booth at Music on the River

On July 18, 2025, a pop-up engagement booth was hosted at Music on the River to gather community input on drafted elements in an informal, conversational setting. Activities included a future land use mapping exercise, in which participants placed sticky notes with preferred land use categories on a map of Amery, and park recommendation prioritization exercises using a visual preference board and thematic voting.

Draft Plan Open House

On September 23, 2025, draft versions of the Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) were presented to the public for comment before Plan Commission consideration in late October.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) discussions were conducted with the Plan Commission, City Council, and community members early in the planning process to identify preliminary needs and concerns. Input was sorted into three main themes: Beautification, Mobility, and Development.

BEAUTIFICATION

Strengths:

- Park amenities and access to lakes/Apple River
- Very aesthetic community
- Great community beautification efforts (e.g. public art, flower planting program)
- Recent Keller Ave reconstruction project

Weaknesses:

- Parks need a facelift, especially to address accessibility concerns
- Lack of signage to direct visitors to parks
- Few opportunities to “stop and smell the roses” in downtown Amery and some parks
- Vacant downtown buildings in need of remodeling
- Inconsistent property maintenance
- Lack of green spaces in southeast corner of Amery

Opportunities:

- Expand and promote Façade Loan program
- Additional placemaking opportunities in downtown (e.g. street furniture, public art, seasonal decorations)
- Better leverage water resources for tourism and recreation
- More community events to attract residents and visitors to parks/destinations
- Leverage grants and funding opportunities

Threats:

- Limited resources to fund maintenance and improvements
- Aging buildings, property, landscaping and foliage that can become a safety concern
- Swimmer’s itch in the lakes

MOBILITY

Strengths:

- Well-maintained streets and infrastructure
- Recent Keller Ave reconstruction project
- Easy to get around town and find parking close to destinations
- Amery Municipal Airport
- Good sidewalks downtown
- Good multi-modal routes for motor vehicles, bikes, ATVs, and other recreational vehicles
- Access to Stower and Cattail Trails

Weaknesses:

- Lack of sidewalk connectivity, maintenance, and accessibility
- Lack of public transport, especially for seniors and those with medical needs
- Challenging to reach some businesses with semi or box truck deliveries
- Poor wayfinding signage
- Some neighborhood streets are narrow and/or lacking regular maintenance
- Lack of safe pedestrian crossings on busy roadways

Opportunities:

- Expand safe routes to school
- Connect bike/pedestrian trails to the rest of Amery and enhance supportive infrastructure (e.g. more bike racks at key destinations)
- Expand public transport opportunities
- Clearly mark and promote existing City parking lots
- Bolster efforts and resources of existing organizations across all sectors

Threats:

- Limited resources for infrastructure maintenance and replacement, including money and personnel
- Wisconsin winters wreak havoc on paved infrastructure
- Undefined minimum standards for legacy infrastructure
- Contention surrounding bikes and ATVs on/near public roadways

DEVELOPMENT

Strengths:

- Current momentum for housing development
- Appropriate housing for high-income and subsidized low-income residents
- Existing housing initiatives that make it easier to develop in the City
- Utilities are in good condition
- Industrial park
- Quaint downtown character and community events draw people/developers to Amery

Weaknesses:

- Lack of alternative funding besides TIF
- Lack of affordable childcare options
- Shortage of middle-income housing and rental housing options
- Outdated and/or needlessly restrictive ordinances
- Limited historic preservation regulations/oversight
- Vacant buildings are allowed to depreciate

Opportunities:

- Explore extraterritorial zoning and annexation to increase housing stock in and around Amery
- Explore non-traditional housing options (e.g. tiny homes)
- Create incentives to reduce costs when establishing a business in Amery
- Expanding industrial areas, especially along major corridors
- Coordinate zoning requirements with Black Brook and Lincoln townships
- Establish vision for "ideal" development

Threats:

- Shortage of developable land within City limits
- Housing shortage limits economic growth and community development opportunities
- Resistance to growth/extraterritorial zoning
- Old buildings that are costly or infeasible to maintain
- Sketchy contractors/developers

Community Snapshot

Farmland

- **Active Farmland:** Though there is little active farmland in the City of Amery, there is substantial acreage within the City's 1.5-mile extraterritorial boundary. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, the top agricultural products in Polk County were dairy, grains, and poultry and eggs.
- **Farmland Preservation Plan:** Polk County's Farmland Preservation Plan, adopted in October 2024, has identified land within Amery's extraterritorial zone – in both the Towns of Black Brook and Lincoln – as farmland preservation areas. These areas protect agricultural land from development and offer tax incentives to farmers who follow conservation practices.
- **Agri-tourism:** Amery and the surrounding area has a wealth of agriculture-oriented destinations offering farm stay opportunities, you-pick orchards and on-site sales, farm-to-table restaurants, and more. The City of Amery also hosts a Farmers Market twice a week (June – October) at the Soo Line Pavilion.

Physical Characteristics

- **Geology and Topography:** The majority of Polk County, including the City of Amery, is located within the WIDNR's Forest Transition landscape classification. This ecological landscape is entirely glaciated, identifiable through deposits of glacial outwash, lakes, wetlands, and uneven topography. Throughout most of the Forest Transition, the uppermost layer of bedrock is Precambrian volcanic and metamorphic rock; the underlying layer is likely majority dolomite or sandstone.
- **Fault Lines:** The City of Amery is not located near any major active fault lines.
- **Soils:** Polk County soils were formed from glacial and alluvial deposits under northern hardwood and conifer forest cover. Irregular topography and many depressions account for much of the local variability in soils. Although each soil type contains variations, soils within Amery are generally two types: Rosholt-Cromwell-Menhaga Association and Amery-Santiago-Magnor Association.

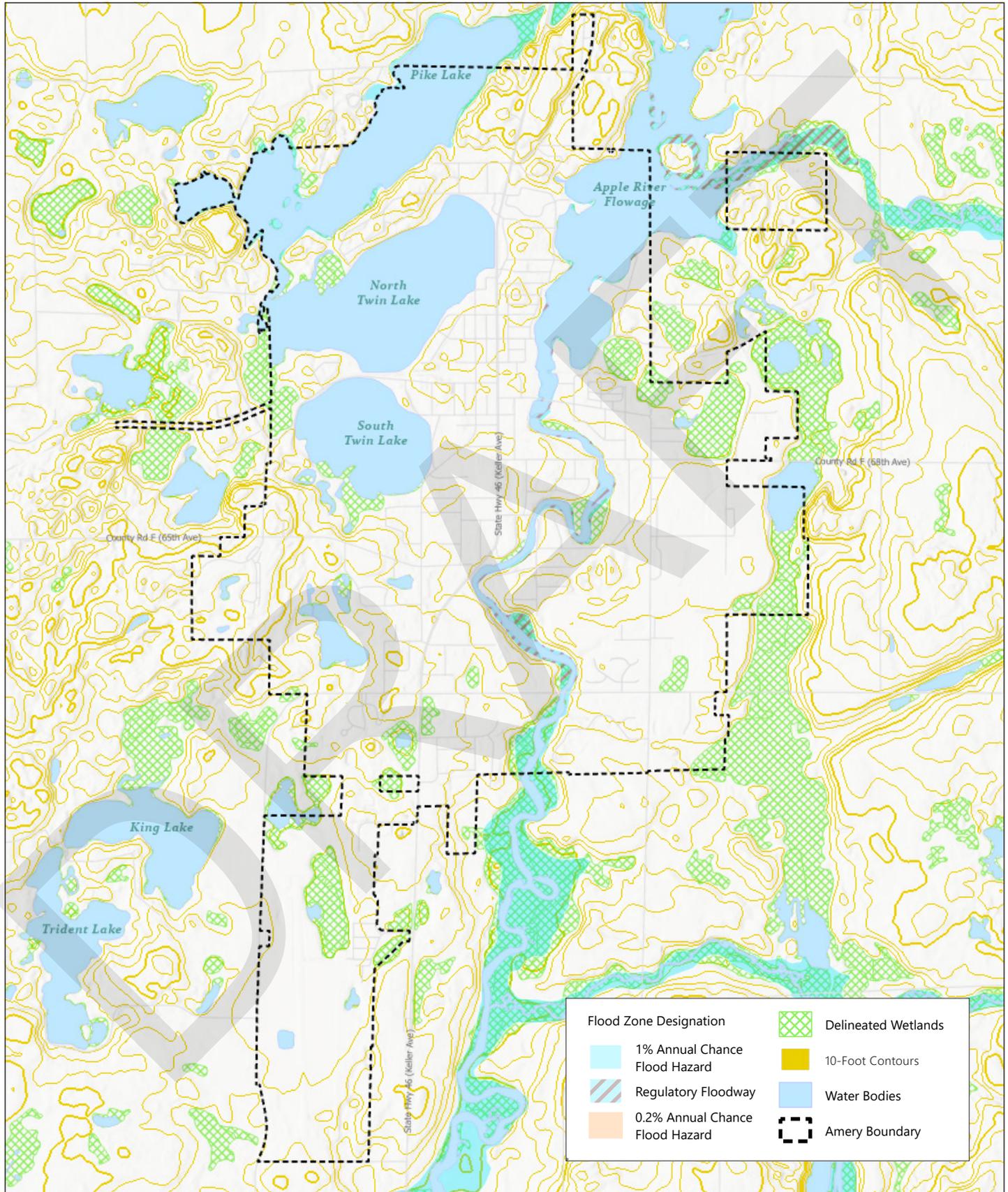
Water Resources

- **Rivers and Lakes:** Appropriately referred to as the "City of Lakes", the City of Amery is largely shaped by the presence of numerous water bodies, including the Apple River and its flowage, North Twin Lake, Pike Lake, South Twin Lake, and numerous other lakes just outside of City limits. These lakes serve as popular destinations for boating, fishing, and other recreational activities. As classified by the Wisconsin DNR (WIDNR), there are no Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs), Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs), or impaired waters within Amery.
- **Groundwater:** Groundwater is the only source of drinking water in Amery and plays a pivotal role in recharging the area's rivers, streams, and other surface water bodies. Development, uncontrolled stormwater runoff, and man-made contaminants continually threaten groundwater quality and should be closely monitored.
- **Watersheds:** The City of Amery is located within the Upper Apple River Watershed, which encompasses about 125,000 acres in east-central Polk County and feeds into the St. Croix River Basin.
- **Wetlands and Floodplains:** The Apple River and Pike Lake both have floodplains that lie within City limits, which are marked by a floodplain overlay on the City's existing zoning map. The Amery Dam, located on the Apple River just east of the main commercial corridor, is primary used to maintain flowage levels for recreational purposes but can also be used to control floodplain levels during heavy precipitation. Many areas of surface water within the City also have associated wetlands.

Cultural Resources

- **Historical Society:** The Amery Area Historical Society preserves and shares Amery's history through museum exhibits, educational programs, walking tours, genealogy resources, and community events.
- **Civic Traditions:** Annually recurring community events include the Amery Fall Festival, Music on the River, and Farmers Market.

Development Limitations Map



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION



Agriculture is a dominant land use in Polk County, and agri-tourism is a notable industry in Amery and the surrounding area. As the nature of the industry changes, with many workers transitioning to other industries and commodity prices rising, the City of Amery must accommodate these shifts and preserve its existing arable land.

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS



As the “City of Lakes,” Amery has a deep reverence for its natural amenities, including numerous lakes, the Apple River flowage, and terrestrial green spaces. Ongoing efforts will be necessary to preserve water quality, remove invasive species, mitigate the threats of climate change, and effectively balance natural conservation with recreation and development.

Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Goals

Goal #1: Preserve productive agricultural lands in balance with future City development.

Strategies

- Promote infill and redevelopment initiatives on under-utilized sites within the City of Amery as the preferred development type, reducing development pressure on agricultural lands in the extraterritorial boundary.
- If development does occur on agricultural parcels, discourage placement in the middle of parcels on agricultural cropland, or on prime agricultural land.
- Adhere to the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan to ensure that future development in the extraterritorial boundary does not infringe upon valuable agricultural areas.

Goal #2: Balance the conservation of Amery’s aquatic and terrestrial resources with enhancing their accessibility for public enjoyment and use.

Strategies

- Support healthy ecosystems by minimizing polluted runoff, utilizing natural stormwater management techniques, removing invasive species, and engaging in broader biodiversity conservation efforts.
- Continue to collaborate with conservation entities, such as the Apple River/Amery Lakes Protection & Rehabilitation Districts and Wisconsin DNR, to address pertinent environmental threats in and around Amery.
- Raise public awareness of local conservation initiatives and recreational procedures such as the DNR’s “Clean Boats, Clean Waters” inspection program. Enhance infrastructure (e.g. boat or shoe cleaning stations) as needed to support these conservation activities.
- Ensure that recreational amenities – especially those in close proximity to water bodies, wetlands, and undeveloped forests – preserve sensitive features and natural character to the greatest extent possible.

Goal #3: Preserve and promote the City's architectural heritage and civic traditions.

Strategies

- Strengthen and promote the City's Downtown Façade Loan Program and provide supporting technical/financial resource guidance when needed.
- Develop historic preservation ordinances and/or overlays to protect notable areas within Amery, ensuring that requirements are reasonable and financially feasible. Integrate grants, tax credits, or recognition programs whenever possible.
- Continue encouraging civic engagement for all ages through small- and large-scale community gatherings such as the Amery Fall Festival.
- Continue to establish strong partnerships with local organizations and businesses in order to create a shared network of knowledge and financial, spatial, and personnel resources for current/future community initiatives.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

HISTORICAL ASSETS



Originally established as a lumbering town and a stop along the Soo Line Railroad, Amery has numerous historical structures and fixtures that remain to this day. Continuing efforts to preserve and promote this history will help foster a sense of community pride and belonging for years to come.



Cattail Trail bridge over the Apple River in central Amery

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

PARKS & RECREATIONAL AMENITIES



Amery contains 11 parks of varying sizes, offering a variety of recreational amenities, water access, and community gathering areas. While these amenities are plentiful and well-distributed throughout the community, many survey respondents expressed a need for park fixture improvements that are safe, accessible, and engaging for users of all ages.

In particular, Amery currently lacks recreational opportunities for young children, teens, and seniors.

INTERNET QUALITY



16% of households in Polk County do not have internet, and some residents have reported poor connectivity in Amery. As telehealth and remote work options become increasingly common post-COVID, reliable internet will be critical to enable access to essential services and attract workers from a variety of industries.

Community Snapshot

Schools and Education

- **Public Schools:** The School District of Amery serves approximately 1,400 students across 162 square miles. The District includes four school buildings on one campus in eastern Amery: Lien Elementary School (which houses Early Childhood, Traditional and Montessori classrooms through grade 2, and the Clubhouse Childcare program), Amery Intermediate School (grades 3-5), Amery Middle School (grades 6-8), and Amery High School.
- **Private Schools:** Rivers Academy, an independent K-12 micro-school, is anticipated to open in Fall 2025 and will hold classes at YMCA's Camp Iaghowan, west of Amery.
- **Community Education:** Enrichment education is offered through the School District of Amery; class offerings often include arts and crafts, dance, cooking, recreation and sports leagues, and field trips to local destinations.

Community Facilities

- **Airport:** Amery Municipal Airport, located at the south end of the City, contains one runway, numerous hangar lots for aircraft storage, and a pilot lounge. In 2023, the airport had 13,900 airport operations and averaged 38 per day: 98% general aviation, 1% air taxi, and 1% military.
- **Senior Facilities:** Amery has multiple residential facilities that offer assisted living, memory care, and rehabilitation services.
- **Community Center:** The Amery Area Community Center offers weekly programming for seniors, rental spaces for private events, a fitness center, and gift shop/library for members.
- **Library:** The Amery Area Public Library offers print and digital resources, educational programs, and community events for all ages.

Public Safety, Health & Welfare

- **Police Department:** The City of Amery is served by its own police force and fire department. The Police Department, housed in City Hall, consists of the Police Chief, 6 full-time officers, and 1.5 administrative employees. It responds to law enforcement needs within City limits and the Polk County Sheriff's Department serves the surrounding area.
- **Fire Department and EMS:** The volunteer-run Amery Fire and Rescue serves Amery and parts of the Towns of Lincoln, Alden, and Black Brook. Northwestern Municipal EMS provides ambulance services.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** Amery Hospital & Clinic, part of the HealthPartners network, offers a range of services (including emergency care, family medicine, and specialty clinics) across three campuses in Amery.

Utilities

- **Sewer and Water:** The City of Amery operates the Amery Municipal Joint Water and Sewer Utility, which serves 1,169 households in the community. Amery has approximately 52 miles of sewer main and 9 lift stations; the City’s Wastewater Treatment Plant is expected to receive a significant update and expansion in the coming years. The water supply system relies on groundwater and consists of 2 operating wells and 53 miles of water main.
- **Refuse and Recycling Collection:** The City contracts with Waterman Sanitation for weekly garbage hauling and large-item waste disposal. Residents pay for these services through a quarterly utility bill.
- **Power:** Electricity is supplied by Xcel Energy; natural gas is provided by WE Energies.

Public Natural Areas and Outdoor Recreation Spaces

- **City-Owned Parks:** The City of Amery contains 11 public parks with a wide range of amenities: Triangle/Schumacher, Flagpole, North Twin, South Twin, Michael, North, Riverfront/Bobber, Soo Line, York, North Twin Boat Landing, and Amery Dog Park.
- **Trails:** Soo Line Park serves as a trailhead for two popular multi-modal trails: Cattail State Trail (runs 18 miles east to Almena) and Stower Seven Lakes State Trail (runs 14 miles west to Lotus Lake, near Dresser). Amery’s park system and the Amery School Forest also contain walking trails.
- **County Parks:** While not located within Amery’s boundaries, popular nearby parks include DD Kennedy County Park, Black Brook County Park, and Apple River Park.
- **Quasi-Public or Private Facilities:** Additional recreational facilities include Amery Golf Club, Amery Ice Arena, Little League baseball fields, and school owned/operated facilities.
- **Snowmobiling and ATV Routes:** In addition to the Cattail Trail, which is open to snowmobiles and ATVs, Amery Snowmobile Club maintains a portion of 370 miles of trails in southern Polk County. All City streets are also open to ATVs if the speed limit is under 25 mph.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS



In 2021, reconstruction along Keller Avenue added a central turn lane, curb extensions, and bike lanes through downtown Amery. While the project was generally well-favored by survey respondents, many indicated that this stretch now feels “sterile” (i.e. lacking in landscaping and color) and uninspiring as a shopping destination.

As the City continues to encourage economic growth, ongoing efforts to add greenery, public art, and other placemaking elements will further establish downtown Amery as a community gathering place.



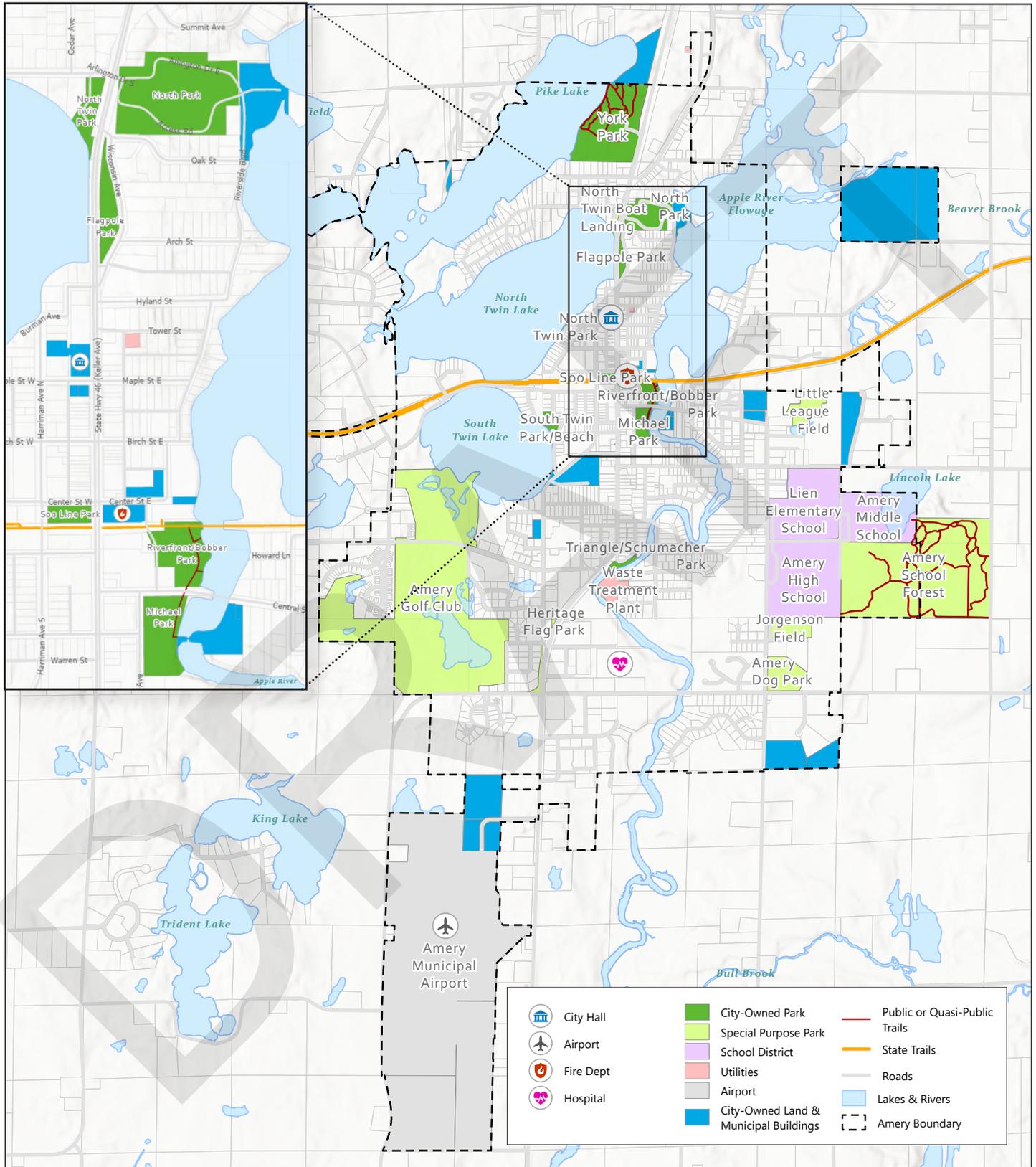
Amery Fire Station



Playground in North Park

UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities Map



Utilities & Community Facilities Goals

Goal #1: Maintain reliable and quality public services, utilities, and facilities to encourage growth and reinvestment.

Strategies

- Use annual capital improvement planning and budget processes to secure funding for regular facility/ infrastructure maintenance, replacement, and expansion.
- Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of existing utility systems (including water, sewer, and stormwater management) to ensure their integrity and reliability.
- Regularly engage with residents and businesses to ensure that services and facilities meet the needs of the community.

Goal #2: Continue to develop and enhance a comprehensive and engaging park system that meets the needs of all users.

Strategies

- Utilize the 10-minute walk principle to identify and address coverage gaps in the park system as future development occurs, ensuring that parkland acquisition and improvement is continuously fiscally reasonable.
- Evaluate and implement recommendations from recent recreation planning initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Walkability Study, and Water Recreation Study.
- Continually plan for trail linkages to important community facilities, recreational assets, and neighborhoods throughout the community.
- Continue to leverage partnerships with local organizations and businesses for ongoing park maintenance and improvements.
- Perform regular safety compliance inspections to ensure the safety of users of the park facilities and equipment.
- Work with Polk County and WisDOT to integrate safe and logical ATV routes into the City's transportation network.

Goal #3: Continue to support and strengthen downtown Amery as a vibrant community hub.

Strategies

- Enhance streetscape elements (such as wayfinding signage, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and public art) to make downtown more navigable and welcoming for all visitors.
- Develop signage to promote existing parking facilities in downtown Amery and in close proximity to key community destinations.
- Encourage resident and visitor engagement with downtown Amery through events, business promotions, and other interactive activities.
- For all new development within downtown Amery, encourage and prioritize mixed-use projects that accommodate a variety of commercial and residential uses.
- Continue to collaborate with the Amery Historical Society, the Community Club, and other local partners on historic preservation efforts to maintain a strong sense of character within downtown Amery.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Community Snapshot

Local Connections

- **Amery School District:** Most students living in the City of Amery attend the School District of Amery. Residential growth in the City will likely have a large impact on the school district's enrollment and necessary resources.
- **Surrounding Communities:** The City of Amery is flanked to the north by the Town of Lincoln and to the south by the Town of Black Brook. Amery has an agreement for shared fire protection services in Black Brook, Alden, and Lincoln, and shares dam maintenance responsibilities with Lincoln.

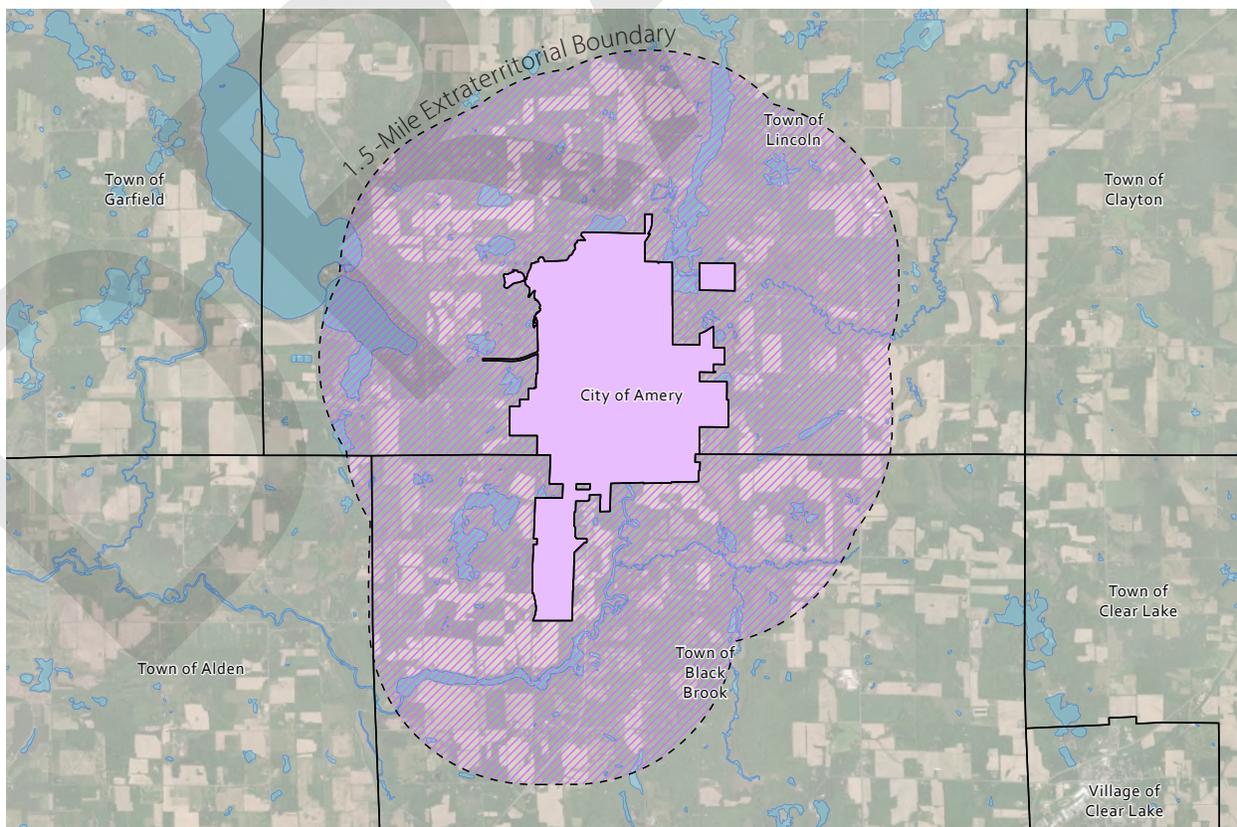
County and Regional Connections

- **Polk County:** While the City of Amery provides a full range of municipal services, it relies on Polk County for broader support including judicial services, maintenance of land records, trail management, and emergency management. The City of Amery has been included in numerous County plans, including the 2009-2029 Comprehensive Plan, and continues to collaborate with the County to implement those strategies.
- **Regional Planning Entities:** The City of Amery is located within the West Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission's jurisdiction, which maintains databases on community demographic, land use, and transportation data. The WCWRP completed a Housing Study and Needs Assessment for the City of Amery in 2020.

Extraterritorial Zone

- As a fourth class city (defined by the state as fewer than 10,000 residents), Amery has a 1.5-mile extraterritorial boundary around its corporate limits, which allows the City to regulate nearby land use and ensure that new development patterns are harmonious with those occurring within the City. The extraterritorial boundary extends into the Towns of Lincoln, Alden, and Black Brook.

Extraterritorial Zone Map



Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals

Goal #1: Enhance coordination and collaboration with local, regional, and statewide governmental organizations to promote City interests.

Strategies

- Enforce, abide by and maintain existing intergovernmental/cooperative agreements with neighboring townships to provide predictability for property owners, avoid municipal boundary disputes, and plan for efficient provision of public facilities and services.
- Regularly convene with neighboring officials to discuss intersecting community development goals, intergovernmental boundaries, and future cooperation on planning efforts.
- Work closely with the School District of Amery to foster open communication and mutual support for planning and growth activities.
- Coordinate with adjoining jurisdictions, Polk County, and the State of Wisconsin during outdoor recreation planning efforts to seek complementary recreation investments where service areas overlap. Work to avoid duplication of unique amenities.
- Collaborate with WisDOT, Polk County, the State of Wisconsin, and local organizations and developers to review proposed changes to land uses, transportation systems, and utilities that will have an impact on Amery.
- Ensure information access to existing/prospective residents and businesses regarding community events, engagement opportunities, and pertinent projects in Amery and the surrounding area.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



Amery has a wide variety of engaged, knowledgeable local organizations/institutions that support the continued wellness and enrichment of community residents. For all initiatives listed in this Comprehensive Plan and beyond, the City of Amery has the opportunity to partner with these organizations to explore create solutions and support beneficial efforts already occurring within the community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Snapshot

Local Economic Development Entities

- **Amery Economic Development Corporation (AEDC):** AEDC is a non-profit corporation with a board of directors that focuses on promoting long-term business growth, job creation and training, coordination with developers and investors, and commercial/industrial development in and around Amery.
- **Amery Community Club (ACC):** The ACC serves as Amery’s “chamber of commerce,” supporting small businesses, tourism, and community events to enhance local engagement and visibility.
- **Polk County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC):** PCEDC works to attract capital investment, create jobs, and support sustainable growth throughout Polk County, including Amery.

Industries By Growth in the City of Amery, 2013-2023

Industry	# of Jobs in 2013	# of Jobs in 2023	% Change
Management, business, science, and arts			
Management, business, and financial	148	299	102.0%
Computer, engineering, and science	80	99	23.8%
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media	137	34	-75.2%
Healthcare practitioners and technical	74	97	31.1%
Service			
Healthcare support	7	36	414.3%
Protective service	10	0	-100.0%
Food preparation and serving related	44	32	-27.3%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	68	14	-79.4%
Personal care and service	12	16	33.3%
Sales and office			
Sales and related	154	127	-17.5%
Office and administrative support	159	172	8.2%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance			
Farming, fishing, and forestry	38	0	-100.0%
Construction and extraction	16	81	406.3%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	10	67	570.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving			
Production	230	216	-6.1%
Transportation	33	102	209.1%
Material moving	45	79	75.6%

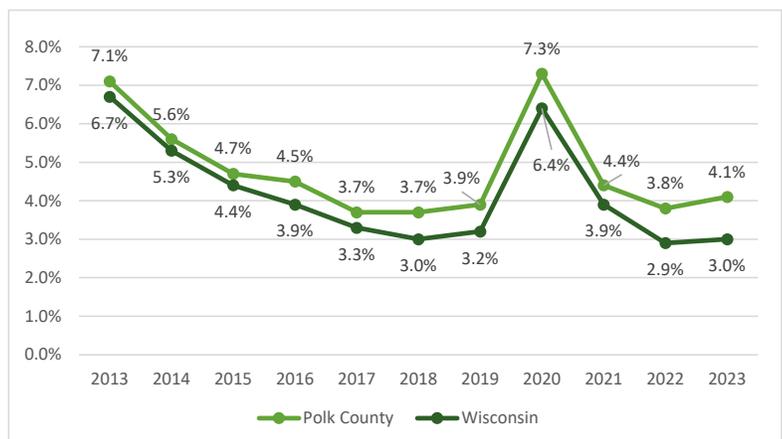
Average Annual Wage per Industry in Polk County, 2023

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Industry	Average Annual Wage
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$40,160
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	\$139,331
Utilities	\$85,020
Construction	\$60,299
Manufacturing	\$58,934
Transportation and Warehousing	\$72,225
Information	\$50,677
Finance and Insurance	\$75,817
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$54,194
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$54,733
Educational Services	\$42,526
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$24,155
Accommodation and Food Services	\$16,680

Unemployment Rate in Polk County, 2013-2023

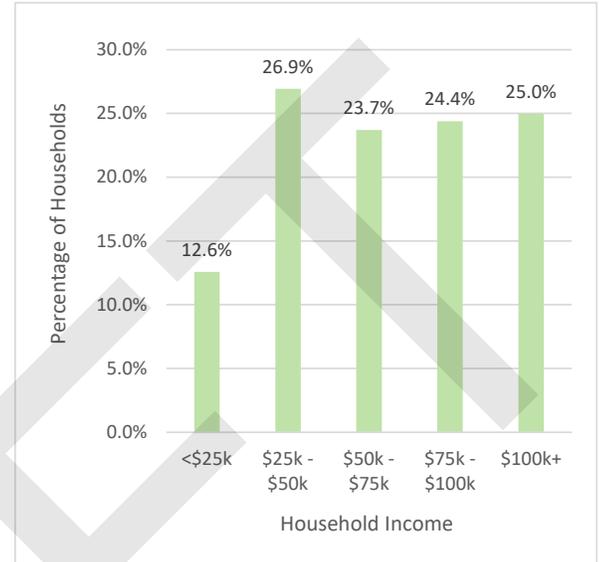
Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development



Household Income, 2013-2023

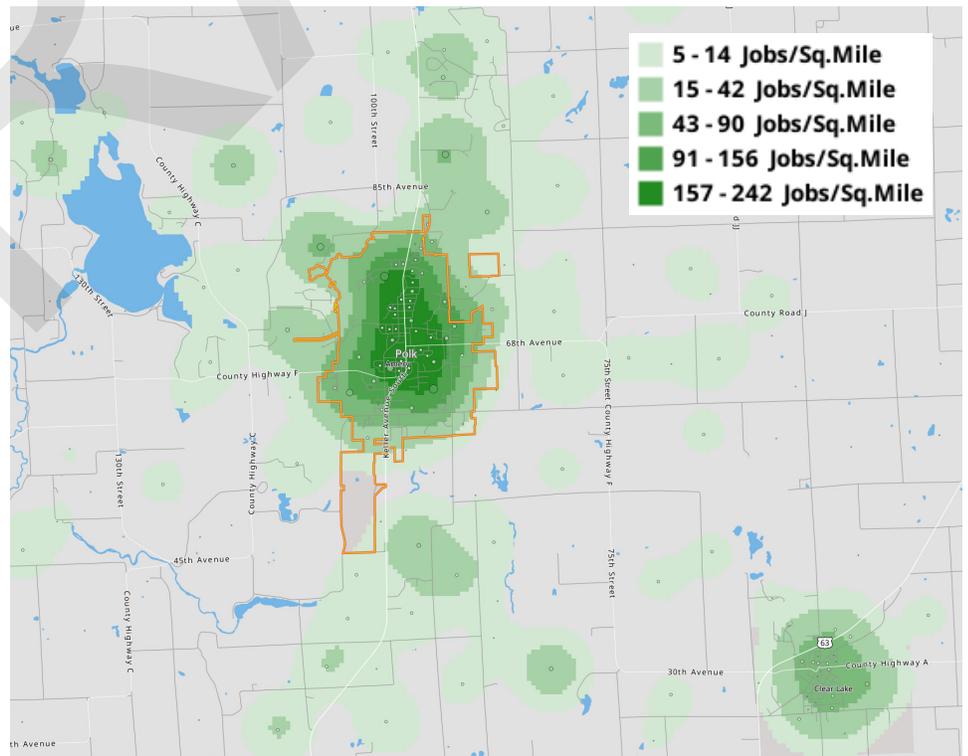
	2013	2023	% Change
Less than \$5,000	0.4%	7.1%	1675%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	2.2%	1.1%	-50%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.1%	0.0%	-100%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	6.4%	0.0%	-100%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	6.6%	3.0%	-55%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	22.1%	8.8%	-60%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	19.5%	15.1%	-23%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15.6%	21.1%	35%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	8.9%	21.7%	144%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7.0%	11.8%	69%
\$150,000 or more	4.9%	10.4%	112%
Median Income	\$38,464	\$71,290	\$32,826

Household Income, 2023



Employment Location, 2022

The map and venn diagram below illustrate where residents of the City of Amery work. The venn diagram shows that the largest group of people are employed in Amery but live elsewhere, the second largest group lives in Amery but commutes elsewhere, and the smallest group lives *and* works in Amery. Most local employment opportunities are concentrated within the City of Amery, likely serving major employers like the hospital and school district. While workers may live elsewhere for many reasons, this discrepancy may indicate a shortage of appropriate housing, childcare, and other factors in Amery that would allow households to live in the community in which they work.



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents indicated that it is “very important” for the City of Amery to attract new businesses and jobs, with many expressing excitement for growth in a variety of retail and industrial sectors.

The City of Amery has the opportunity to reinforce this widespread support through business assistance initiatives, commercial and industrial infrastructure enhancements, and partnerships with local business organizations.

TOURISM



Amery’s wealth of natural and man-made amenities – including multiple lakes, the Apple River flowage, and trailheads to the Stowor Seven Lakes/Cattail State Trails – make the City a prime candidate for tourism. Through effective marketing and infrastructure improvements, the City of Amery can position itself as a regional outdoor recreation destination and encourage additional engagement with the local economy.

Economic Development Goals

Goal #1: Develop and support a comprehensive approach to community development within the City of Amery that will expand and diversify the local economy.

Strategies

- Prioritize the enhancement of “quality of life” infrastructure that makes Amery more attractive for prospective workers. Efforts may include but are not limited to:
 - Partnering with local providers and regional agencies to increase the availability and affordability of childcare services, especially for working families. Revise City ordinances as needed to remove barriers to establishing and operating these services.
 - Developing and promoting entertainment, arts, and social spaces that appeal to all age groups, including youth centers, senior activities, and community events.
 - Supporting zoning updates, public-private partnerships, and funding mechanisms to encourage the construction of diverse housing options for all income levels (see “Housing” chapter for more strategies).
- Enhance collaboration with the Amery Community Club (ACC), Amery Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), and County/regional/state economic development entities to identify and address local business needs.
 - Regularly conduct “business retention visits” with existing business owners to evaluate current and future resource needs.
 - Work with the ACC and AEDC to better establish each entity’s roles and expectations regarding communication, collaboration, and financial support.
 - Ensure that businesses have adequate methods to voice concerns, receive assistance, and promote their services within the community.
- Develop and/or promote resources and funding opportunities for small businesses, including local/state/federal grants, loans, and tax incentives.
- Seek funding and support for community-wide infrastructure, workforce development and networking opportunities, and community enhancement projects that support economic diversification.
- Facilitate proactive communication between educational institutions (including the School District of Amery, local UW-Extension, and technical/community colleges) and area employers to accurately identify and meet local skill requirements. Promote diverse skill training programs and post-secondary career preparation opportunities.
- Develop standardized procedures to guide the City’s role in development partnerships, ensuring a more consistent, proactive, and transparent approach when working with developers.

Goal #2: Continue to develop Amery’s identity as a tourist destination and support a high-quality, welcoming environment for visitors to encourage participation in the local economy.

Strategies

- Work with the ACC and AEDC to develop a cohesive marketing campaign that highlights Amery’s natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and cultural events.
- Prioritize investment in streetscaping, public art, and façade improvements to make downtown Amery a memorable, pedestrian-friendly destination (see “Utilities and Community Facilities” chapter for more strategies).
- Develop a comprehensive system of tourism infrastructure including wayfinding signage, adequate parking, connective paths to prominent destinations, lodging and dining accommodations, public spaces, and multi-modal transportation options.

Goal #3: Continue to attract and retain industrial operations within the City of Amery.

Strategies

- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of industrial properties and promote them through regional and state economic development channels.
- Evaluate the usage of Amery Municipal Airport for additional commercial and industrial purposes.
- Ensure that Amery’s industrial parks have modern utilities, transportation access, and internet to meet the needs of a diverse range of industrial operations. Regularly consult with industrial park tenants to identify current and future needs.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

QUALITY OF LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE



Most survey respondents and key stakeholders indicated a significant need for affordable childcare, housing, and other lifestyle necessities/services to encourage households to live and work in Amery.

Enhancing the affordability and availability of this ancillary infrastructure will bolster economic development efforts because workers are more likely to settle long-term in Amery, support the local economy, and invest in community amenities.

ECONOMIC STAGNATION



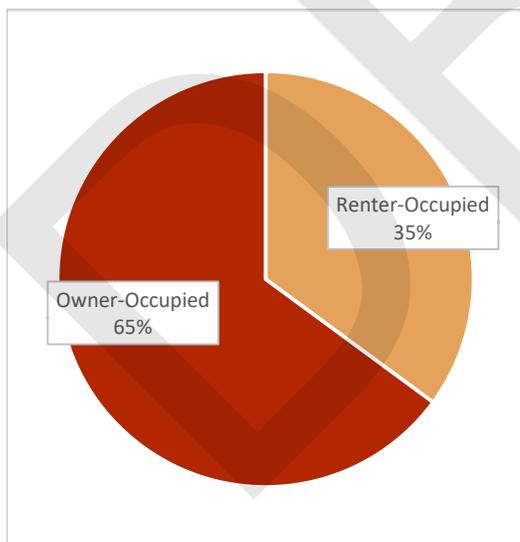
Local and state-wide wage stagnation has made it increasingly difficult for residents to keep up with the rising cost of living. Proactive investment in job creation, workforce development, and business support (at all levels of government) will be crucial to break this affordability crisis.

Community Snapshot

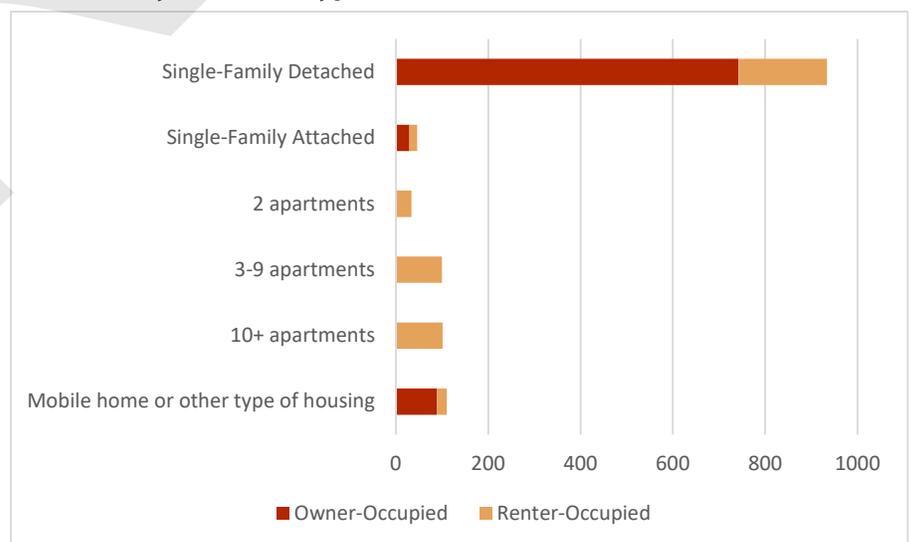
The following numbers illustrate those conditions in the City of Amery most relevant to the formation of housing goals and policies for the next 10-20 years. All data was obtained from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

- 1,544** – The number of housing units in the City of Amery in 2023. 1,325 housing units were occupied in 2023 – 860 owner-occupied units and 465 renter-occupied units.
- 70.5%** – The percentage of occupied units that are single-family detached housing. As costs continue to rise for new construction, this option may become unaffordable and cause households to look for new options in the housing market, both within the City of Amery and elsewhere.
- 64.9%** – The percentage of all occupied units that are owner-occupied. This has increased slightly in the last decade (from 63.1% in 2013), indicating that more owner-occupied units have been added to the City’s housing stock in recent years.
- 32.9%** – The percentage increase in the median owner-occupied home value since 2013, representing a strong sellers’ real estate market for homes within the City of Amery.
- 0.0%** – The estimated homeowner vacancy rate in 2023 (margin of error = ± 2.6), which is consistent with the vacancy rate recorded in 2013. While the renter vacancy rate is much higher – up to 20.3% – the margin of error is ± 20.6 and therefore not reliable. As the City of Amery’s population continues to grow in the coming decades, the housing market will experience further strain and competition if additional owner-occupied and rental units are not added.
- 26.6%** – The percentage of households that are considered “cost-burdened,” meaning they pay more than 30% of their income towards monthly housing costs. 30% is the generally-recognized “affordability limit” before households must sacrifice other essentials like food, healthcare, childcare, etc. Households making less than the area median income (\$71,290 in 2023) are much more likely to be cost-burdened than households above AMI.

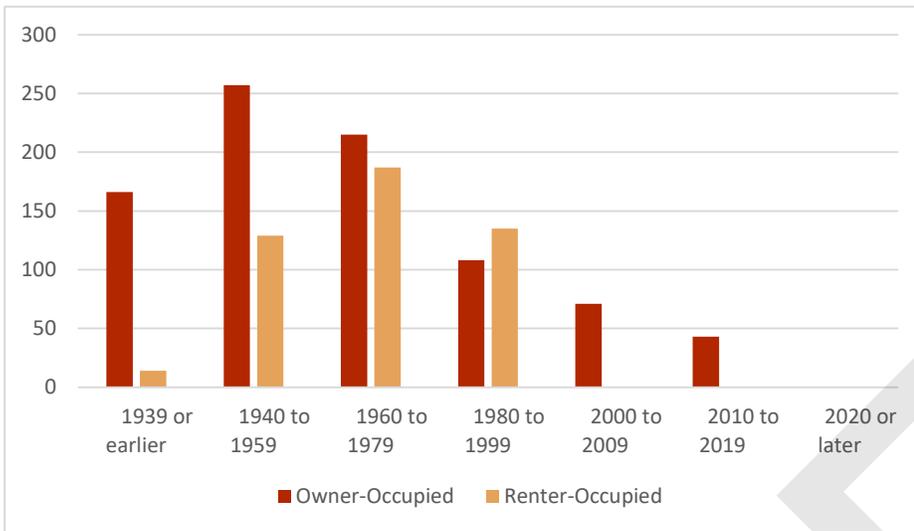
Tenure, 2023



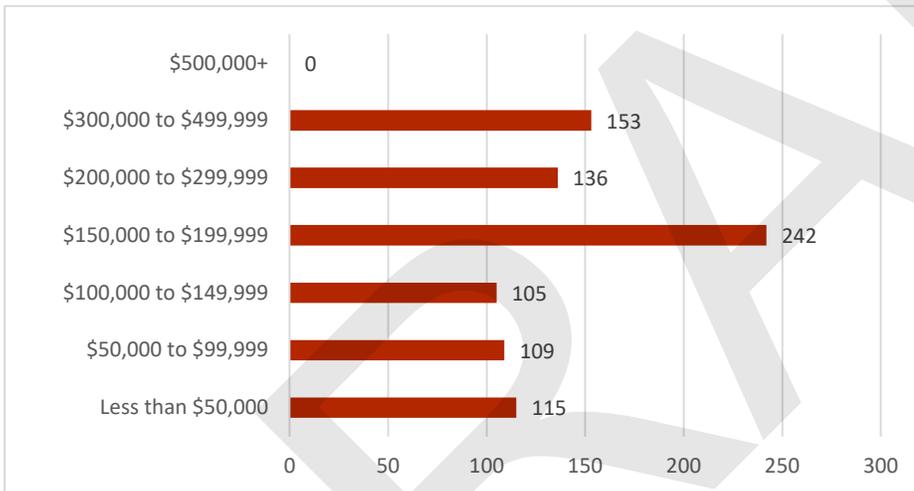
of Units by Structure Type, 2023



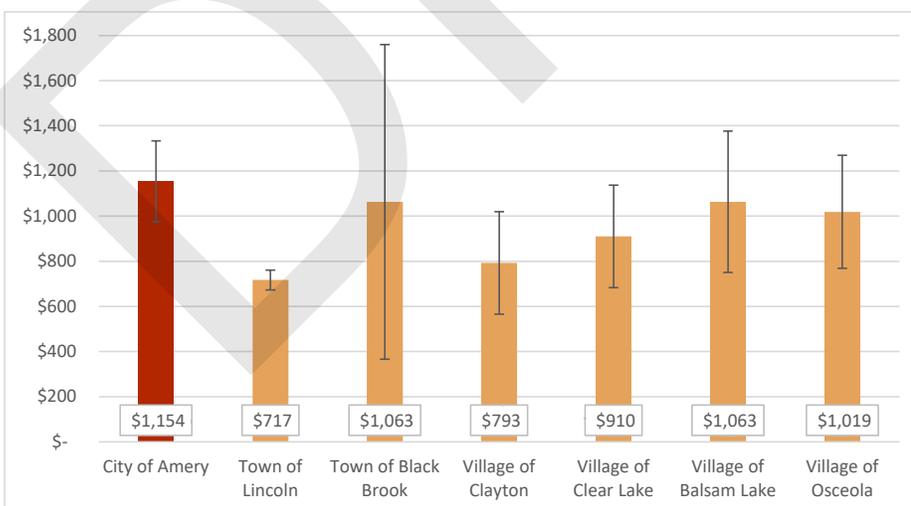
of Units by Structure Age, 2023



Housing Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2023



Median Monthly Rent by Community, 2023



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

AFFORDABLE & DIVERSE HOUSING



Over 50% of survey respondents ranked “expanding housing options and affordability” as a top priority for the next five years, with many expressing a significant need for affordable starter homes, senior housing, apartments, middle-income housing, and other diverse housing types to support Amery’s existing and future population.

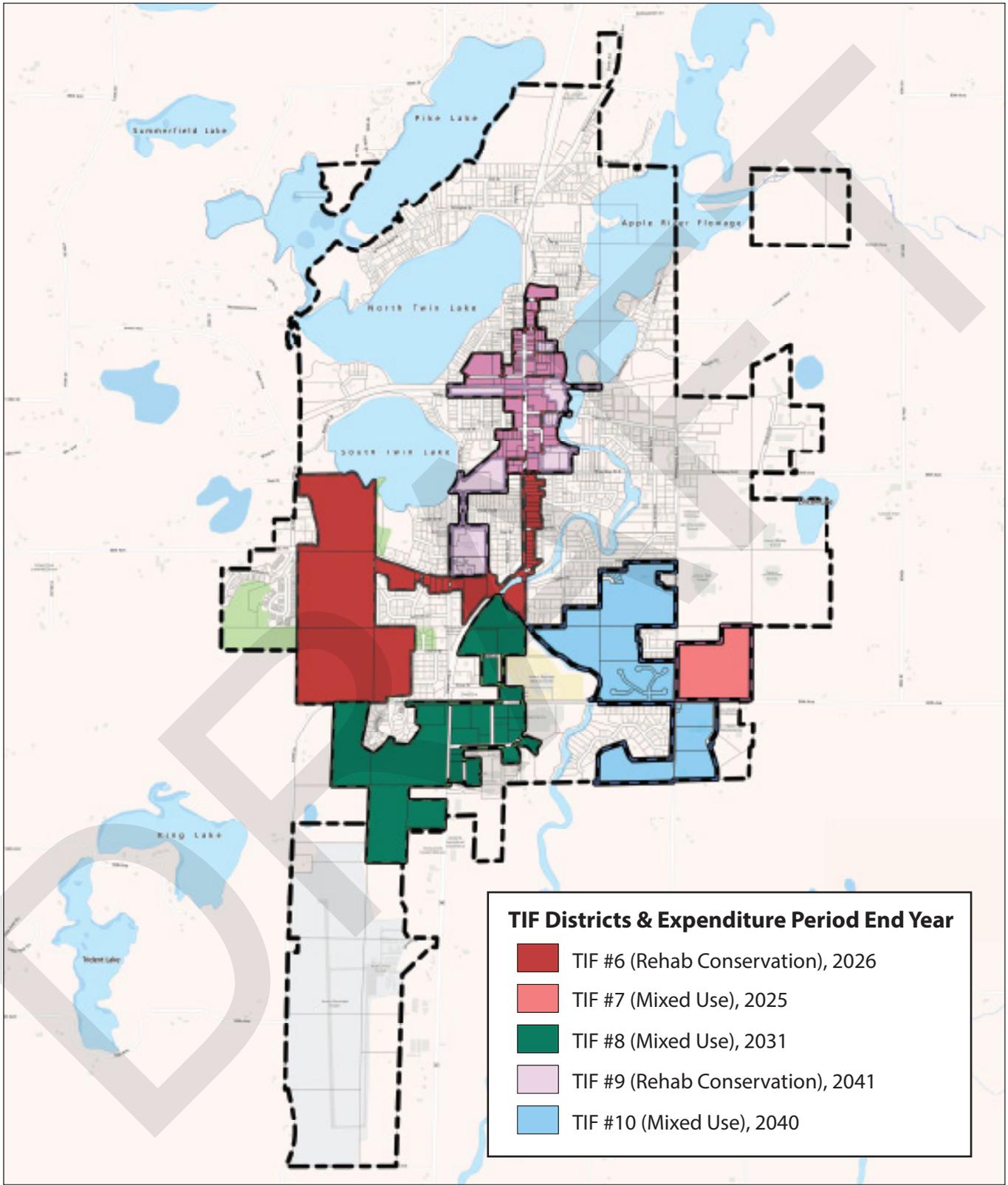
This presents an opportunity to explore creative solutions to housing development in Amery, such as mixed-use housing and development incentives.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE



Survey responses and conversations with City committees revealed the importance of maintaining Amery’s charm and visual appeal, including improving run-down or nuisance properties.

TIF Districts Map



Note: Amery's Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) districts support housing growth and mixed-use development by funding infrastructure and incentivizing reinvestment. Recent efforts, such as those in TIF District 10, have enabled construction of over 40 new homes and encouraged rehabilitation of aging properties, helping expand and diversify the City's housing options.

Housing Goals

Goal #1: Retain and attract residents by providing a range of affordable, accessible, and desirable housing options for owners and renters.

Strategies

- Review housing development proposals based on consistency with the Land Use chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use map and associated policies.
- Prioritize housing development on vacant or underutilized lots within City limits to reduce sprawl and leverage existing infrastructure.
- Assess development regulations of neighboring and peer communities to identify opportunities to enhance Amery's appeal to prospective housing developers.
- Refer to the recommendations outlined in the 2020 WCWRPC Housing Needs Assessment, including strategies to address the following goals:
 - *"Take action to "narrow the gap" by working both ends of the housing cost equation (i.e. reducing development costs and assisting households with housing costs)."*
 - *"Support diverse housing choices for special population groups, such as seniors and low- and moderate-income (LMI) households ."*
 - *"Evaluate and amend regulations as necessary to address barriers to affordable housing."*
 - *"Enhance housing-related education and collaboration efforts."*

Goal #2: Maintain a high standard of property maintenance and architectural cohesion for new development.

Strategies

- Implement regulatory tools as needed (such as development agreements, revisions to Amery's zoning ordinance, historic preservation regulations, and overlay districts) to establish and/or maintain reasonable community aesthetic standards .
- Promote State/Federal funding mechanisms and assistance resources to help property owners preserve and rehabilitate existing housing stock.

Goal #3: Complement Amery's housing policies with economic development goals, growing businesses and population in tandem.

Strategies

- Prioritize housing and mixed-use development near major employers to reduce commute times and attract workers.
- Improve "quality of living" infrastructure (such as childcare, housing, entertainment, and other lifestyle necessities) to encourage households to settle and work in Amery long-term.
- Collaborate with developers, employers, and non-profit organizations to fund and implement housing and economic initiatives.

Community Snapshot

Roads and Highways

- Federal & State Roads: State Highway 46 (a.k.a. Keller Avenue) runs north-south through the City of Amery and is under state jurisdiction.
- County Roads: The only County road within Amery's limits is County Road F (Deronda & Broadway St), which connects to STH 46 south of downtown. Other nearby County roads include C, H, and J.

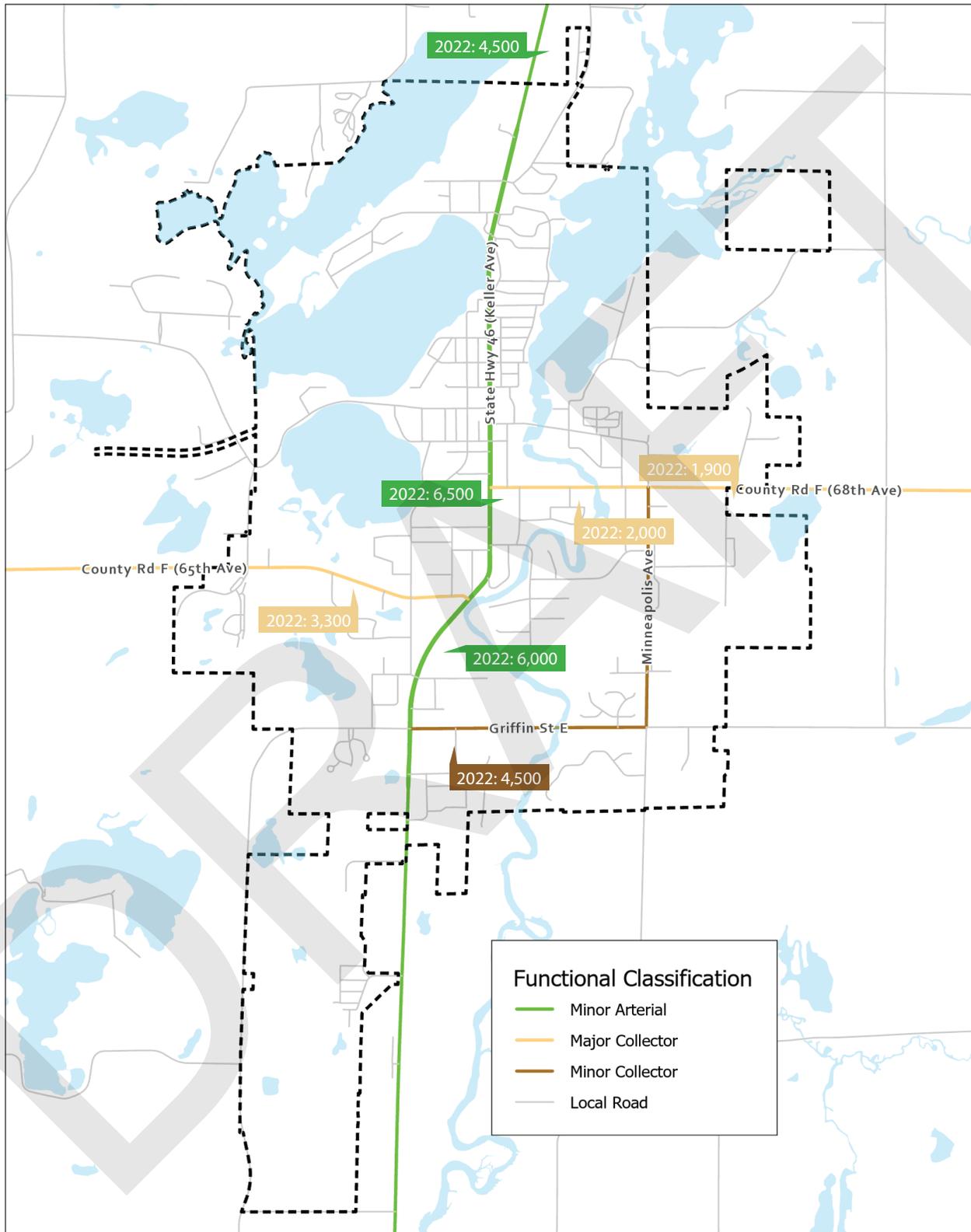
Other Transportation Options

- Air Facilities: The City of Amery contains the Amery Municipal Airport, a General Utility (GU) airport that has one runway and numerous hangar lots. Amery is also approximately 65 miles from the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport.
- Trucking and Cargo: There are no freight terminals or distribution centers near Amery, though freight is trucked through the City using STH 46 and CTH F.
- Rail Transportation: Freight rail enters Polk County through Osceola on the Canadian National Railway and continues to Dresser, but does not enter the City of Amery. Amtrack operates three passenger rail routes in Wisconsin – Hiawatha Service, Empire Builder, and Borealis – though the closest stations to Amery are in the Twin Cities.
- Public Transportation: While there is no bus system in Amery, there are multiple programs in Polk County that provide transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.

Relevant Transportation Planning Documents

- WisDOT Connect 2050: Adopted in 2022, this plan addresses all forms of transportation through the year 2050. Its goals and policies aim to guide the development of an integrated, efficient, and safe state-wide multimodal transportation system.
- WisDOT Active Transportation Plan: This in-progress plan aims to supplement the Connect 2050 plan with goals specific to human-powered modes of transportation such as walking and biking. Goals include improving safety and enhancing infrastructure to encourage active transportation.
- 2009-2029 Polk County Comprehensive Plan: Transportation goals from this plan include developing additional medical transportation options, enhancing active transportation opportunities, and addressing commuter needs.

Traffic Counts Map



Note: The traffic data above comes from WisDOT's 2022 short-duration count sites. A recent WisDOT report outlines how seasonal fluctuations significantly affect traffic volumes, especially in rural and recreational areas like Amery. It notes that short-term traffic counts (e.g., 48-hour samples) can deviate by up to 40% in recreational zones due to seasonal factors such as tourism, weather, and local events.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Amery currently lacks public transportation to local and regional destinations, making it difficult for those without personal vehicles – especially seniors and individuals with disabilities – to access amenities in a timely or financially reasonable manner. While these services are crucial to enabling access to healthcare and other community essentials, Amery’s rural location and wide geographic spread make sustainable implementation infeasible.

PROXIMITY TO STATE TRAILS



Amery contains the trailheads for two popular state trails – Stower Seven Lakes and Cattail – presenting a myriad of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. This proximity presents an opportunity to boost tourism and engagement with Amery’s economy by connecting trail users to local amenities, businesses, and bodies of water.

Transportation Goals

Goal #1: Develop a comprehensive, safe, and accessible system of pedestrian spaces that support users of all ages and abilities

Strategies

- Incorporate findings and recommendations from the 2015 Walkability Study and other recent planning initiatives when planning for future sidewalk and roadway improvements.
- Incentivize sidewalk construction and maintenance to ensure a well-connected pedestrian network throughout the community, prioritizing separated or off-street paths where able. Ensure that maintenance standards and obligations of responsible parties are reasonable and clearly communicated.
- Identify gaps in ADA-compliant access by engaging the community and analyzing current conditions using strategies such as accessibility audits. Identify funding opportunities and partnerships to fix instances of ADA non-compliance throughout the community.
- Continue to work with Polk County and the State of Wisconsin to improve pedestrian infrastructure within and alongside busy roadways.
- Develop a consistent system of pedestrian-scale wayfinding and lighting to help users navigate the City easily and safely.
- Collaborate with the School District of Amery on safe transportation for students, including walking, biking, and busing, both in neighborhoods and near school sites.

Goal #2: Develop a local and regional transportation network that provides multi-modal options for traveling to, from, and within the City of Amery.

Strategies

- Enhance bicycling infrastructure throughout the community to improve cyclists’ enjoyment and safety, such as adding additional bike lanes, repair stations, and racks at notable destinations. Ensure that City ordinances support cycling and cycling-related infrastructure.
- Continue to promote existing transportation services for seniors and those with disabilities, including social/medical transportation and volunteer driver programs.
- Work with Polk County, regional planning commissions, and neighboring municipalities to align transportation goals and identify/address ongoing transportation needs.
- Adopt and implement a “Complete Streets” policy to ensure all new and reconstructed streets accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities.

Goal #3: Continue to maintain and enhance Amery's roads and transportation infrastructure.

Strategies

- Continue to plan for transportation infrastructure improvements through short-term and long-term budgeting processes such as the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Establish a consistent schedule for pothole repair, crack sealing, street sweeping, and signage upkeep.
- Leverage local, state (e.g. Wisconsin DOT LRIP), and federal funding sources to support infrastructure projects.
- Coordinate roadway improvements with land use plans, economic development zones, housing initiatives, and utility updates to minimize disruption and reduce costs.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS



Many survey respondents acknowledged sidewalks as a primary mobility concern in Amery, citing poor maintenance, low visibility, unsafe crossings, connectivity gaps, and accessibility issues. By directly addressing these problems and improving streets with the pedestrian experience in mind, the City of Amery can create a safe and inviting environment for recreation throughout the community.



Source: Project for Public Spaces

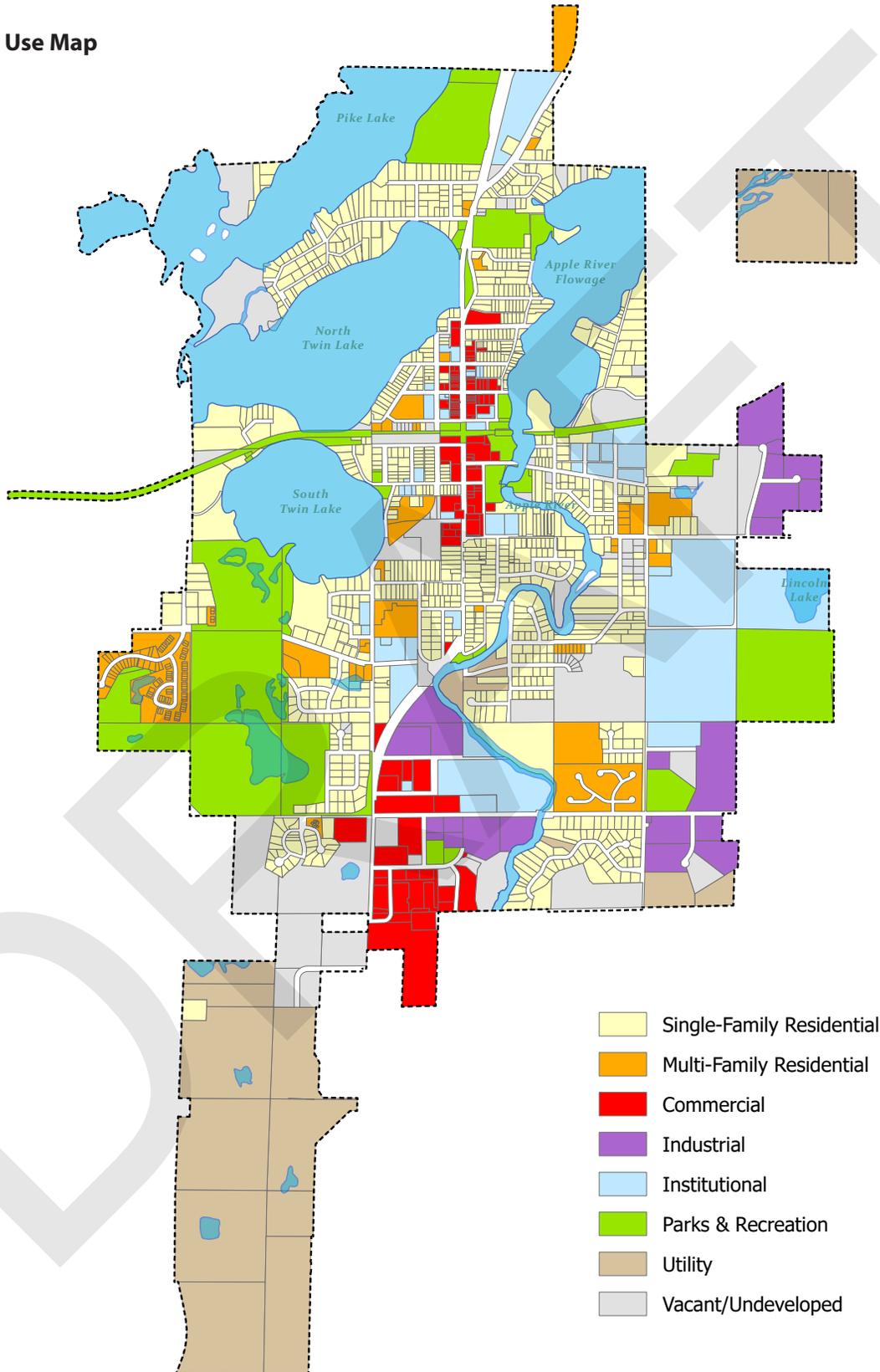
WHAT ARE COMPLETE STREETS?

"Complete Streets" is a transportation design approach that prioritizes safe, accessible, and efficient mobility for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel. It emphasizes the creation of roadways that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and public transit riders alike.

Key features often include sidewalks, bike lanes, accessible transit stops, pedestrian crossings, and traffic calming measures. By focusing on inclusive design, Complete Streets fosters safer travel, encourages active transportation, reduces environmental impact, and enhances the overall quality of life in communities.

Community Snapshot

Existing Land Use Map



Existing Acreage Calculations

ELU Land Use Category	# of Acres	% of Total Acres	# of Parcels
Single-Family Residential	463.49	18.8%	994
Multi-Family Residential	100.35	4.1%	147
Commercial	91.25	3.7%	123
Industrial	101.84	4.1%	23
Institutional	182.38	7.4%	40
Parks & Recreation	293.06	11.9%	48
Utility	328.54	13.4%	22
Vacant/Undeveloped	233.00	9.5%	80
Right-of-Way/Miscellaneous	666.73	27.1%	–
TOTAL	2460.85	100.0%	1477

Key Findings

- Besides Right-of-Way, Residential is by far the largest land use category by acreage percentage. Utility is the third largest category because of the Amery Municipal Airport and former landfill east of town. Parks & Recreation makes up the fourth largest category with 11.9% of the City’s total acreage.
- There does not appear to be significant conflict between land uses due to the separation of Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Uses throughout the City of Amery. Industrial uses are largely isolated from other uses by undeveloped land or less intense Commercial uses.
- Much of the City’s current stock of undeveloped land is due to wetlands and other environmental barriers to development. See the “Development Limitations” map in the Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources chapter for more information.
- Projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration indicate that Amery’s population may decline over the next two decades. This decline could be a consequence of the development limitations within Amery’s existing City limits. To address this trend and support future growth, the City should consider strategies such as voluntary annexation and the use of extraterritorial zoning to expand its tax base and create new opportunities for development.

HOW DOES ANNEXATION WORK?

Annexation typically occurs through a voluntary, incremental process initiated by property owners. Wisconsin statutes authorize a number of different annexation methods, but unanimous approval and one-half approval of all affected property owners are the most common of these methods. This allows Amery to expand its boundaries gradually, often to provide municipal services like water and sewer to adjacent properties. The process ensures that annexed areas are contiguous to existing City limits and supports orderly growth aligned with local development goals.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

SHORTAGE OF BUILDABLE LAND



Nearly all of the suitable land within Amery’s current boundary has been developed, significantly restricting future growth and development in the community. Many survey respondents and key stakeholders acknowledged the strained housing market and increasing tax burden on existing residents, indicating a need for Amery to grow in various capacities to support current/future populations.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE ETZ



Amery’s development standards, such as minimum lot size and density requirements, differ from those of the Towns of Black Brook and Lincoln. This has resulted in incohesive development within the extraterritorial boundary and may cause future incompatibility if this land is annexed into the City of Amery.

Land Use Goals

Goal #1: Establish a cohesive land use pattern that ensures compatibility and functional relationships among activities, including cohesive development and thoughtful growth in the extraterritorial zone.

Strategies

- Support sufficient lot area and setback requirements for new development along major streets and highways to establish attractive street corridors, buffer yards and screening of adjacent land uses, natural noise barriers, and safe roadway intersections.
- Develop and/or revise design standards that encourage efficient development patterns, interconnected streets, and limited use of cul-de-sacs.
- Encourage industrial site designs that integrate the facility with natural features of the land and provide an aesthetically attractive appearance.
- Leverage extraterritorial zoning to ensure that new developments are compatible with Amery's character and can be efficiently served by City utilities and services in the future. Frequently collaborate with abutting townships to establish these standards and maintain consensus moving forward.
- If applicable, work with property owners in the ETZ who are interested in initiating annexation into the City of Amery, prioritizing growth on the west and south side when able. Continuously evaluate regulatory and/or procedural barriers to annexation into Amery.

Goal #2: Ensure that new development reinforces Amery's beloved small-town character and protects important natural/cultural resources.

Strategies

- Preserve environmental corridor features including waterways, floodplains, wetlands, ground water recharge areas, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and mature woodlands through the enforcement of the City's Subdivision Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map.
- Ensure that new development within the City's jurisdiction efficiently uses public services and infrastructure. "Leapfrog" development that requires costly infrastructure extensions through undeveloped lands should be discouraged when avoidable.

Goal #3: Reduce the tax burden on residents by encouraging balanced growth in residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development.

Strategies

- Foster collaboration between property owners and developers to encourage successful property development and investment. Provide support and resources, when necessary, to ensure sustainable and beneficial outcomes for both the community and developers.
- Regularly evaluate and update the development review process based on developer/resident feedback, ensuring that application procedures are as approachable and efficient as possible.
- Provide up-to-date guidance materials (online and at City Hall) outlining the City's development and application processes.
- Gradually close out existing Tax Increment Districts (TIDs) to restore the existing tax base and lessen restrictions on funds. If needed in the future, TIDs may be reinstated to spur development and revitalization of specific areas within Amery.
- Leverage impact fees or developer agreements to offset the cost of new development on City services.

Using the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map on pages 37-38 outlines land use categories that reflect the City of Amery’s vision for the next twenty years. This map, along with its associated policies, serves as a foundational guide for land development decisions and should be referenced whenever new development is proposed, particularly in cases involving zoning changes or land divisions. However, not all areas shown for future (re)development will be rezoned or developed immediately after the plan’s adoption. In some cases, (re)development may be delayed for years or even decades due to market conditions, property owner intentions, or limitations in the City’s capacity to support new growth.

Statement of Intent and Typical Use

The future land use categories identify areas by their primary intended uses, character, and ideal density. These classifications are *not* zoning districts; they do not establish binding performance criteria for land uses (i.e. setbacks, height restrictions, etc.) nor are they intended to list every possible use that may be permitted within the future land use class classification.

While parcels are designated by their intended use, some areas on the map remain unplatted or unsubdivided. Detailed site planning for these larger parent parcels is beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan. The City may choose to create neighborhood plans for these areas or require developers to prepare such plans, including park layouts, before submitting requests for rezonings or preliminary plats.

Potentially Acceptable Zoning Districts

Each future land use category includes a list of existing City of Amery zoning districts that align with that category, found in the “Potentially Acceptable Zoning Districts” table below. This is intended to help the City evaluate whether rezoning requests are generally in line with the Comprehensive Plan and the category’s intended usage. The categories are as follows:

- **Compatible** – The uses can coexist without significant issues, often because they share similar characteristics or are complementary. May be listed as an allowed or conditional use in the zoning ordinance.
- **Partially Compatible** – Potential conflicts exist, but they can be resolved through design, mitigation, or specific conditions to minimize impacts. Typically listed as a conditional use or uses that are close together in Amery but not similar in characteristics.
- **Incompatible** – The uses are inherently in conflict due to negative impacts like noise, odor, or traffic, requiring separation or significant measures to be supported.

Potentially Acceptable Zoning Districts

Land Use Categories C - Compatible PC - Partially Compatible [blank cell] - Incompatible	Zoning Districts									
	AT (Agricultural Transition)	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)	R-2 (Two-Family Residential)	R-3 (Two-Family Condo. Residential)	R-4 (Multi-Family Residential)	CD-1 (Conservancy)	C-1 (Neighborhood Shopping Commercial)	C-2 (Central Business)	I-1 (Light Industrial)	I-2 (Standard Industrial)
Agricultural-Residential	C	PC				PC				PC
Single-Family Residential	PC	C	C	C	PC	PC	PC			
Medium-Density Residential		PC	C	C	C	PC	PC	PC		
Downtown Mixed Use		PC	PC	PC	C	PC	C	C	PC	
Commercial		PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	C	C	C	PC
Industrial	PC							PC	C	C
Institutional		PC	PC	PC	C	PC	C	C		C
Recreation	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C		
Conservation	C	C	C	C	C	C	PC	PC	PC	PC
Utility	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	C	C

Future Land Use Categories

The future land use categories identify areas of similar use, character and density. These classifications are not zoning districts, as they do not legally set performance criteria for land uses (i.e. setbacks, height restrictions, density, etc.).

The ten categories designated on the Future Land Use Map are as follows:



Agricultural-Residential

Intended to preserve the rural areas outside of the current City boundaries that are unlikely or infeasible for urban development prior to 2045. Preferred uses in these areas include open space, farming, farmsteads, agricultural businesses, forestry, and low-density residential on well and septic.



Single-Family Residential

Encompasses most residential lots in Amery, as most are intended for single-family detached housing units. As the City continues to grow, underutilized lots within current City boundaries should be prioritized for infill development, followed by areas within the anticipated growth area (depicted in the Future Land Use Map) that are adjacent to major roadways and/or deemed practical for utility extension.



Medium-Density Residential

Intended for townhomes, apartments, condominiums, senior living facilities and other multi-family dwelling options. These areas should be strategically located near employment centers and community destinations, as well as to create buffers between more intense uses (e.g. downtown mixed-use or commercial) and lower-density residential areas.



Downtown Mixed Use

Encapsulates Amery's "downtown core" along Keller Avenue, predominantly comprising of buildings with ground-floor retail uses and upper-floor residential uses. This category is intended to preserve the area's existing infrastructure and allow for its variety of uses to continue to work cohesively together.



Commercial

Includes a variety of commercial activities including retail, dining, offices, and services located outside downtown Amery. Development in this category is typically auto-oriented and may include larger building footprints and parking facilities.



Industrial

Intended for office, office-industrial, transportation, warehousing, storage, and other uses exhibiting industrial characteristics. This use type is reserved for development that wouldn't work well next to residential and pedestrian-business areas.



Institutional

Includes public or semi-public facilities including but not limited to governmental offices, police and fire facilities, hospitals and clinics, educational institutions, and places of worship.



Recreation

Includes active or passive parks such as playing fields, playgrounds, golf courses, campsites, and trails.



Conservation

Designates environmentally sensitive areas that are not intended for future development or recreation, such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and wildlife habitats.

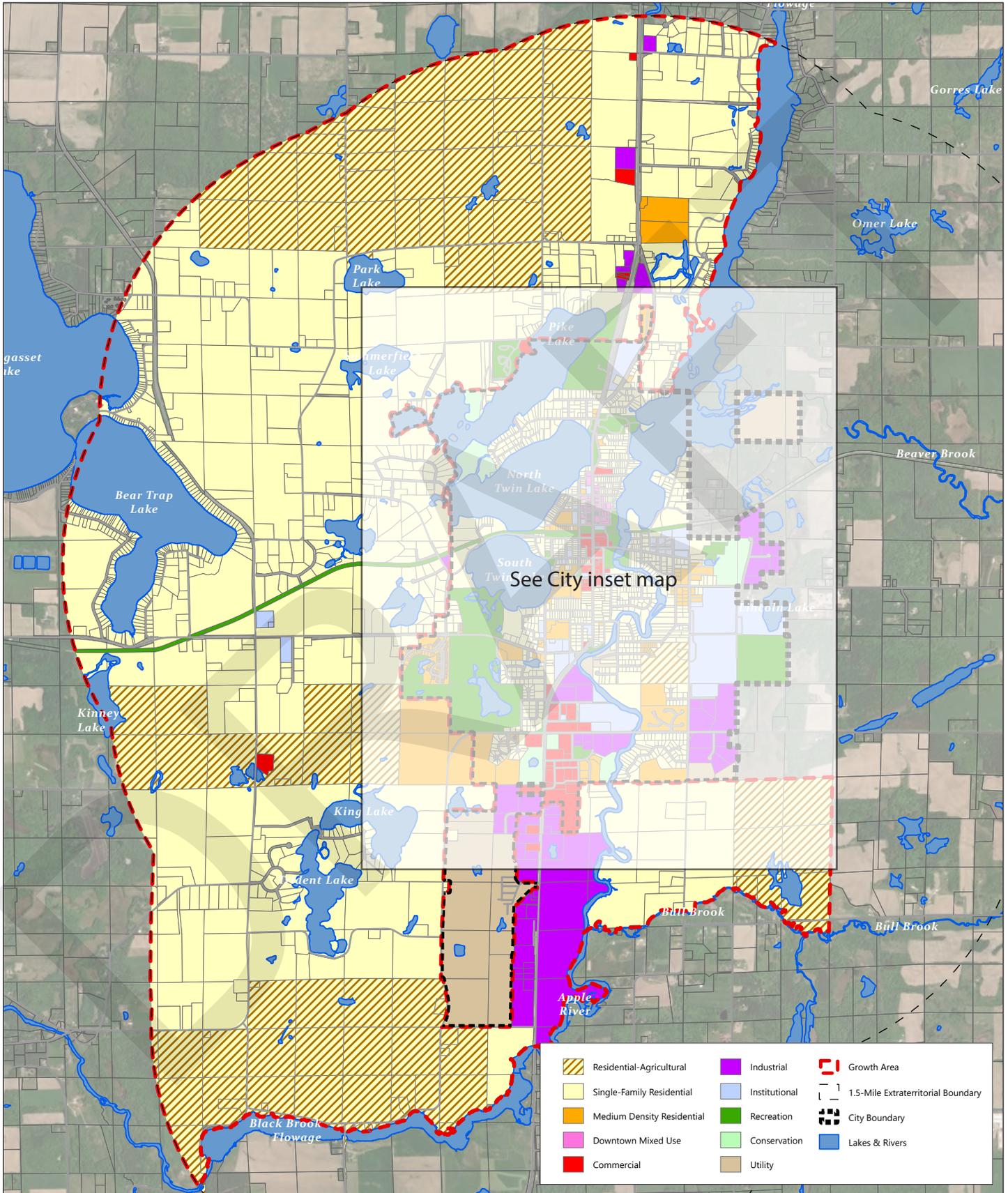


Utility

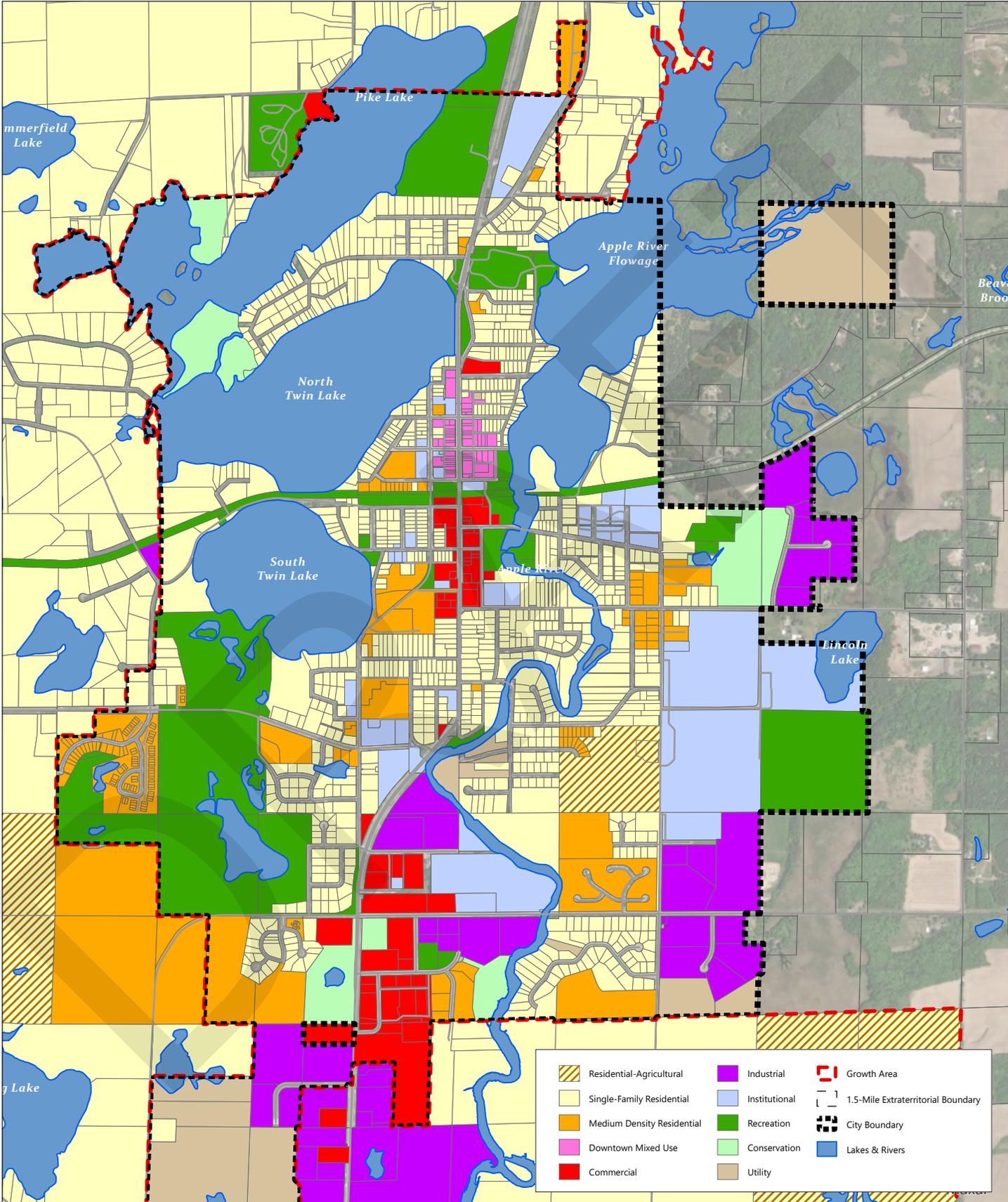
Includes land used for essential public infrastructure such as water treatment facilities, electrical substations, airports, and active/former landfills.

LAND USE

Future Land Use Map (ETZ)



Future Land Use Map (City Inset)



IMPLEMENTATION

Guiding Daily & Annual Decisions

Responsibility for implementing this plan lies primarily with the City Council, Plan Commission, and City staff.

City Roles and Responsibilities

City Council

The City Council sets priorities, controls budgets and tax rates, and typically has the final say on key aspects of public and private development projects. Each Council member should know where to find this plan and should be familiar with its major goals and priorities. Council members should anticipate that staff recommendations and actions will reference and remain consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Commission

Land use and development recommendations are a core component of this plan, and the Plan Commission has a major role in guiding those decisions. Commission members must be familiar with its contents, especially the Land Use chapter, in order to ensure that decisions and recommendations are consistent with this plan. If a proposed action conflicts with the plan but is believed to benefit the City, the Plan Commission should gather public input before recommending any amendments, in accordance with the procedures outlined on the following page.

City Staff

City staff have a significant influence on capital projects, operational initiatives, and regulatory decisions. It is imperative that individuals in key roles understand, support, and actively work to implement the various strategies in this plan, referencing this document as appropriate in communications with residents and City officials. The purpose of this extra effort is to strengthen staff recommendations and reinforce the plan as a relevant tool integral to City functions.

Link to Annual Budget Process

The most important opportunity for this plan to influence the growth and improvement of the City is through the annual budgeting and capital planning processes. These existing annual efforts determine what projects will and will not be pursued by the City, and so it is very important to integrate this plan into those processes every year.

The Action Plan at the end of this chapter is a resource to support decisions about how and where to invest the City's limited resources. The Annual Update should draw from these actions. Plan Commission should make formal recommendations for City Council consideration, identifying those choices and commitments most likely to further the goals and objectives identified in this plan.

Amending the Plan

Although this plan is intended to guide decisions and actions by the City of Amery over the next 10-20 years, it is impossible to accurately predict future conditions in the community. Amendments may be appropriate from time to time, particularly if emerging issues or trends render aspects of the plan irrelevant or inappropriate. The City may face an opportunity, such as a development proposal, that does not fit the plan but is widely viewed to be appropriate for the City. Should the City wish to approve such an opportunity, it must first amend the plan so that the decision is consistent with the plan. Such amendments should be carefully considered and should not become the standard response to proposals that do not fit the plan. Frequent amendments to meet individual development proposals threaten the integrity of the plan and the planning process and should be avoided.

All changes to plan text or maps require a formal amendment process, as outlined in the following subsections, which may be initiated by the City Council, Plan Commission, or by application from a landowner or developer.

Amendment Process

In the years between major plan updates, it may be necessary or desirable to amend this plan document. A straightforward amendment, such as a strategy or future land use map revision for which there is broad support, can be completed through the following process:

1. Amendments can be initiated by referral by the Plan Commission or City Council, or may be requested by application from a member of the public through a formal application process.
2. A Class 1 public hearing notice must be issued 30 days prior to the public hearing date. The notice must include the time, place, and purpose of the hearing and a summary of the proposed amendment.
3. Following the public hearing, the Plan Commission adopts a resolution recommending approval, modification, or denial of the amendment. The City Council then reviews the recommendation and votes on the amendment (adoption requires a majority vote of all elected officials).
4. Copies of the adopted amendment shall be sent to the following entities:
 - Wisconsin Department of Administration
 - Adjacent local governments
 - West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 - Amery Area Public Library
 - Any other relevant governmental units

Amendment Considerations

Before proposing changes to the Comprehensive Plan and/or Future Land Use Map, the following criteria should be carefully considered:

- Agricultural Land Reduction – As Amery’s population grows, agricultural land may need to be rezoned in the extraterritorial zone to accommodate new development. This anticipated growth must be balanced against the goals of preserving agricultural land for the purposes of resource protection and maintaining agricultural contributions to the region.
- Compatibility – Proposed amendments or developments should not significantly disrupt adjacent properties or alter the character of the surrounding area, especially in existing residential neighborhoods. A petitioner may indicate approaches that will minimize incompatibilities between uses.
- Natural Resources – Development should avoid negatively impacting natural features such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, scenic vistas, or mature woodlands. Proposed site modifications should comply with Shoreland, Wetland, and Floodplain regulations to the greatest extent possible.
- Transportation – The site must be suitable for constructing roads and driveways that allow safe access, including for emergency vehicles. Development should not degrade nearby transportation infrastructure or create safety hazards for drivers, cyclists, or pedestrians.
- Ability to Provide Services – New development should not impose an unreasonable financial burden on the City. Applicants should demonstrate that existing public services – such as schools, emergency services (police, fire, EMS), parks, libraries, and water/sewer infrastructure – are sufficient to support the proposed use, or propose alternative solutions to address any shortfalls.
- Public Need – The proposed change should meet a clear public need or respond to unforeseen circumstances, and offer positive social and fiscal benefits to the City.
- Adherence to Other Portions of this Plan – The proposed amendment or development must align with the City’s overall vision and be consistent with the broader goals, policies, and actions outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

Action Plan

The following pages feature a compilation of actions identified in Chapters 3 – 9 to help the City of Amery achieve its various goals and objectives.

Priority

The Priority column identifies the relative importance or urgency of each strategy based on its potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with community goals. High-priority actions are those that address pressing needs, unlock future opportunities, or lay the groundwork for other initiatives. Medium- and low-priority actions are still valuable but are less time-sensitive or dependent on other steps being completed first.

Target Completion

The “Target Completion” column identifies the anticipated timeline for the City to initiate and/or address each strategy. These deadlines are not firm; rather, they are indications of when the City of Amery may choose to pursue an action based on its importance or difficulty. The categories are as follows:

- Short-Term (1–3 years): Actions that are ready for immediate implementation or respond to urgent needs.
- Medium-Term (4–7 years): Initiatives that require moderate preparation, coordination, or funding before execution.
- Long-Term (8+ years): Goals that depend on significant planning, infrastructure investment, or evolving conditions.
- Ongoing: Efforts that require continuous attention, monitoring, or maintenance throughout the life of the plan.

Action Plan

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Preserve productive agricultural lands in balance with future City development.			
1.1	Promote infill and redevelopment initiatives on under-utilized sites within the City of Amery as the preferred development type, reducing development pressure on agricultural lands in the extraterritorial boundary.	Medium	Ongoing
1.2	If development <i>does</i> occur on agricultural parcels, discourage placement in the middle of parcels on agricultural cropland, or on prime agricultural land.	Low	Ongoing
1.3	Adhere to the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan to ensure that future development in the extraterritorial boundary does not infringe upon valuable agricultural areas.	Medium	Ongoing
Goal #2: Balance the conservation of Amery's aquatic and terrestrial resources with enhancing their accessibility for public enjoyment and use.			
2.1	Support healthy ecosystems by minimizing polluted runoff, utilizing natural stormwater management techniques, removing invasive species, and engaging in broader biodiversity conservation efforts.	High	Ongoing
2.2	Continue to collaborate with conservation entities, such as the Apple River/ Amery Lakes Protection & Rehabilitation Districts and Wisconsin DNR, to address pertinent environmental threats in and around Amery.	High	Ongoing
2.3	Raise public awareness of local conservation initiatives and recreational procedures such as the DNR's "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" inspection program. Enhance infrastructure (e.g. boat or shoe cleaning stations) as needed to support these conservation activities.	High	Medium-Term
2.4	Ensure that recreational amenities – especially those in close proximity to water bodies, wetlands, and undeveloped forests – preserve sensitive features and natural character to the greatest extent possible.	Medium	Ongoing
Goal #3: Preserve and promote the City's architectural heritage and civic traditions.			
3.1	Strengthen and promote the City's Downtown Façade Loan Program and provide supporting technical/financial resource guidance when needed.	Medium	Medium/ Long-Term
3.2	Develop historic preservation ordinances and/or overlays to protect notable areas within Amery, ensuring that requirements are reasonable and financially feasible. Integrate grants, tax credits, or recognition programs whenever possible.	Medium	Medium-Term
3.3	Continue encouraging civic engagement for all ages through small- and large-scale community gatherings such as the Amery Fall Festival.	Medium	Ongoing
3.4	Continue to establish strong partnerships with local organizations and businesses in order to create a shared network of knowledge and financial, spatial, and personnel resources for current/future community initiatives.	Medium	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Maintain reliable and quality public services, utilities, and facilities to encourage growth and reinvestment.			
1.1	Use annual capital improvement planning and budget processes to secure funding for regular facility/infrastructure maintenance, replacement, and expansion.	High	Ongoing
1.2	Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of existing utility systems (including water, sewer, and stormwater management) to ensure their integrity and reliability.	Medium	Ongoing
1.3	Regularly engage with residents and businesses to ensure that services and facilities meet the needs of the community.	Low	Ongoing
Goal #2: Continue to develop and enhance a comprehensive and engaging park system that meets the needs of all users.			
2.1	Utilize the 10-minute walk principle to identify and address coverage gaps in the park system as future development occurs, ensuring that parkland acquisition and improvement is continuously fiscally reasonable.	High	Long-Term
2.2	Evaluate and implement recommendations from recent recreation planning initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Walkability Study, and Water Recreation Study.	High	Long-Term
2.3	Continually plan for trail linkages to important community facilities, recreational assets, and neighborhoods throughout the community.	Medium	Ongoing
2.4	Continue to leverage partnerships with local organizations and businesses for ongoing park maintenance and improvements.	Medium	Ongoing
2.5	Perform regular safety compliance inspections to ensure the safety of users of the park facilities and equipment.	Medium	Ongoing
2.6	Work with Polk County and WisDOT to integrate safe and logical ATV routes into the City's transportation network.	Low	Long-Term
Goal #3: Continue to support and strengthen downtown Amery as a vibrant community hub.			
3.1	Enhance streetscape elements (such as wayfinding signage, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and public art) to make downtown more navigable and welcoming for all visitors.	Medium	Medium-Term
3.2	Develop signage to promote existing parking facilities in downtown Amery and in close proximity to key community destinations.	High	Short-Term
3.3	Encourage resident and visitor engagement with downtown Amery through events, business promotions, and other interactive activities.	Medium	Ongoing
3.4	For all new development within downtown Amery, encourage and prioritize mixed-use projects that accommodate a variety of commercial and residential uses.	Low	Ongoing
3.5	Continue to collaborate with the Amery Historical Society, the Community Club, and other local partners on historic preservation efforts to maintain a strong sense of character within downtown Amery.	Medium	Ongoing

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Enhance coordination and collaboration with local, regional, and statewide governmental organizations to promote City interests.			
1.1	Enforce, abide by and maintain existing intergovernmental/cooperative agreements with neighboring townships to provide predictability for property owners, avoid municipal boundary disputes, and plan for efficient provision of public facilities and services.	Medium	Ongoing
1.2	Regularly convene with neighboring officials to discuss intersecting community development goals, intergovernmental boundaries, and future cooperation on planning efforts.	Medium	Ongoing
1.3	Work closely with the School District of Amery to foster open communication and mutual support for planning and growth activities.	Medium	Ongoing
1.4	Coordinate with adjoining jurisdictions, Polk County, and the State of Wisconsin during outdoor recreation planning efforts to seek complementary recreation investments where service areas overlap. Work to avoid duplication of unique amenities.	High	Ongoing
1.5	Collaborate with WisDOT, Polk County, the State of Wisconsin, and local organizations and developers to review proposed changes to land uses, transportation systems, and utilities that will have an impact on Amery.	Medium	Ongoing
1.6	Ensure information access to existing/prospective residents and businesses regarding community events, engagement opportunities, and pertinent projects in Amery and the surrounding area.	High	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Develop and support a comprehensive approach to community development within the City of Amery that will expand and diversify the local economy.			
1.1	<p>Prioritize the enhancement of “quality of life” infrastructure that makes Amery more attractive for prospective workers. Efforts may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with local providers and regional agencies to increase the availability and affordability of childcare services, especially for working families. Revise City ordinances as needed to remove barriers to establishing and operating these services. • Developing and promoting entertainment, arts, and social spaces that appeal to all age groups, including youth centers, senior activities, and community events. • Supporting zoning updates, public-private partnerships, and funding mechanisms to encourage the construction of diverse housing options for all income levels (see “Housing” chapter for more strategies). 	High	Ongoing
1.2	<p>Enhance collaboration with the Amery Community Club (ACC), Amery Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), and County/regional/state economic development entities to identify and address local business needs. Activities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly conduct “business retention visits” with existing business owners to evaluate current and future resource needs. • Work with the ACC and AEDC to better establish each entity’s roles and expectations regarding communication, collaboration, and financial support. • Ensure that businesses have adequate methods to voice concerns, receive assistance, and promote their services within the community. 	High	Ongoing
1.3	Develop and/or promote resources and funding opportunities for small businesses, including local/state/federal grants, loans, and tax incentives.	High	Ongoing
1.4	Seek funding and support for community-wide infrastructure, workforce development and networking opportunities, and community enhancement projects that support economic diversification.	High	Ongoing
1.5	Facilitate proactive communication between educational institutions (including the School District of Amery, local UW-Extension, and technical/community colleges) and area employers to accurately identify and meet local skill requirements. Promote diverse skill training programs and post-secondary career preparation opportunities.	High/Medium	Ongoing (Short-Term: strengthening relationships)
1.6	Develop standardized procedures to guide the City’s role in development partnerships, ensuring a more consistent, proactive, and transparent approach when working with developers.	High	Short-Term

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (cont.)		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #2: Continue to develop Amery's identity as a tourist destination and support a high-quality, welcoming environment for visitors to encourage participation in the local economy.			
2.1	Work with the ACC and AEDC to develop a cohesive marketing campaign that highlights Amery's natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and cultural events.	High	Medium-Term
2.2	Prioritize investment in streetscaping, public art, and façade improvements to make downtown Amery a memorable, pedestrian-friendly destination (see "Utilities and Community Facilities" chapter for more strategies).	High	Medium-Term
2.3	Develop a comprehensive system of tourism infrastructure including wayfinding signage, adequate parking, connective paths to prominent destinations, lodging and dining accommodations, public spaces, and multi-modal transportation options.	High	Long-Term
Goal #3: Continue to attract and retain industrial operations within the City of Amery.			
3.1	Maintain an up-to-date inventory of industrial properties and promote them through regional and state economic development channels.	High	Ongoing
3.2	Evaluate the usage of Amery Municipal Airport for additional commercial and industrial purposes.	High	Medium-Term
3.3	Ensure that Amery's industrial parks have modern utilities, transportation access, and internet to meet the needs of a diverse range of industrial operations. Regularly consult with industrial park tenants to identify current and future needs.	High	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

HOUSING		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Retain and attract residents by providing a range of affordable, accessible, and desirable housing options for owners and renters.			
1.1	Review housing development proposals based on consistency with the Land Use chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use map and associated policies.	High	Ongoing
1.2	Prioritize housing development on vacant or underutilized lots within City limits to reduce sprawl and leverage existing infrastructure.	High	Ongoing
1.3	Assess development regulations of neighboring and peer communities to identify opportunities to enhance Amery's appeal to prospective housing developers.	Medium	Short-Term
1.4	Refer to the recommendations outlined in the 2020 WCWRPC Housing Needs Assessment, including strategies to address the following goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Take action to "narrow the gap" by working both ends of the housing cost equation (i.e. reducing development costs and assisting households with housing costs)." • "Support diverse housing choices for special population groups, such as seniors and low- and moderate-income (LMI) households ." • "Evaluate and amend regulations as necessary to address barriers to affordable housing." • "Enhance housing-related education and collaboration efforts." 	High	Ongoing
Goal #2: Maintain a high standard of property maintenance and architectural cohesion for new development.			
2.1	Implement regulatory tools as needed (such as development agreements, revisions to Amery's zoning ordinance, historic preservation regulations, and overlay districts) to establish and/or maintain reasonable community aesthetic standards .	Medium	Medium-Term
2.2	Promote State/Federal funding mechanisms and assistance resources to help property owners preserve and rehabilitate existing housing stock.	Low	Ongoing
Goal #3: Complement Amery's housing policies with economic development goals, growing businesses and population in tandem.			
3.1	Prioritize housing and mixed-use development near major employers to reduce commute times and attract workers.	High	Ongoing
3.2	Improve "quality of living" infrastructure (such as childcare, housing, entertainment, and other lifestyle necessities) to encourage households to settle and work in Amery long-term.	High	Ongoing
3.3	Collaborate with developers, employers, and non-profit organizations to fund and implement housing and economic initiatives.	High	Ongoing

TRANSPORTATION		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Develop a comprehensive, safe, and accessible system of pedestrian spaces that support users of all ages and abilities.			
1.1	Incorporate findings and recommendations from the 2015 Walkability Study and other recent planning initiatives when planning for future sidewalk and roadway improvements.	Medium	Long-Term
1.2	Incentivize sidewalk construction and maintenance to ensure a well-connected pedestrian network throughout the community, prioritizing separated or off-street paths where able. Ensure that maintenance standards and obligations of responsible parties are reasonable and clearly communicated.	High	Long-Term
1.3	Identify gaps in ADA-compliant access by engaging the community and analyzing current conditions using strategies such as accessibility audits. Identify funding opportunities and partnerships to fix instances of ADA non-compliant throughout the community.	High	Medium-Term
1.4	<i>Continue to work with Polk County and the State of Wisconsin to improve pedestrian infrastructure within and alongside busy roadways.</i>	High	Ongoing
1.5	Develop a consistent system of pedestrian-scale wayfinding and lighting to help users navigate the City easily and safely.	High	Short-Term
1.6	Collaborate with the School District of Amery on safe transportation for students, including walking, biking, and busing, both in neighborhoods and near school sites.	Low	Ongoing
Goal #2: Develop a local and regional transportation network that provides multi-modal options for traveling to, from, and within the City of Amery.			
2.1	Enhance bicycling infrastructure throughout the community to improve cyclists' enjoyment and safety, such as adding additional bike lanes, repair stations, and racks at notable destinations. Ensure that City ordinances support cycling and cycling-related infrastructure.	Medium	Long-Term
2.2	Continue to promote existing transportation services for seniors and those with disabilities, including social/medical transportation and volunteer driver programs.	Medium	Ongoing
2.3	Work with Polk County, regional planning commissions, and neighboring municipalities to align transportation goals and identify/address ongoing transportation needs.	Low	Ongoing
2.4	Adopt and implement a "Complete Streets" policy to ensure all new and reconstructed streets accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities.	Medium	Long-Term
Goal #3: Continue to maintain and enhance Amery's roads and transportation infrastructure.			
3.1	Continue to plan for transportation infrastructure improvements through short-term and long-term budgeting processes such as the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	High	Ongoing
3.2	Establish a consistent schedule for pothole repair, crack sealing, street sweeping, and signage upkeep.	High	Short-Term
3.3	Leverage local, state (e.g. Wisconsin DOT LRIP), and federal funding sources to support infrastructure projects.	High	Ongoing
3.4	Coordinate roadway improvements with land use plans, economic development zones, housing initiatives, and utility updates to minimize disruption and reduce costs.	High	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

LAND USE		Priority	Target Completion
Goal #1: Establish a cohesive land use pattern that ensures compatibility and functional relationships among activities, including cohesive development and thoughtful growth in the extraterritorial zone.			
1.1	Support sufficient lot area and setback requirements for new development along major streets and highways to establish attractive street corridors, buffer yards and screening of adjacent land uses, natural noise barriers, and safe roadway intersections.	High	Ongoing
1.2	Develop and/or revise design standards that encourage efficient development patterns, interconnected streets, and limited use of cul-de-sacs.	High	Medium-Term
1.3	Encourage industrial site designs that integrate the facility with natural features of the land and provide an aesthetically attractive appearance.	Medium	Ongoing
1.4	Leverage extraterritorial zoning to ensure that new developments are compatible with Amery's character and can be efficiently served by City utilities and services in the future. Frequently collaborate with abutting townships to establish these standards and maintain consensus moving forward.	High	Ongoing
1.5	If applicable, work with property owners in the ETZ who are interested in initiating annexation into the City of Amery, prioritizing growth on the west and south side when able. Continuously evaluate regulatory and/or procedural barriers to annexation into Amery.	High	Ongoing
Goal #2: Ensure that new development reinforces Amery's beloved small-town character and protects important natural/cultural resources.			
2.1	Preserve environmental corridor features including waterways, floodplains, wetlands, ground water recharge areas, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and mature woodlands through the enforcement of the City's Subdivision Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map.	High	Ongoing
2.2	Ensure that new development within the City's jurisdiction efficiently uses public services and infrastructure. "Leapfrog" development that requires costly infrastructure extensions through undeveloped lands should be discouraged when avoidable.	High	Ongoing
Goal #3: Reduce the tax burden on residents by encouraging balanced growth in residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development.			
3.1	Foster collaboration between property owners and developers to encourage successful property development and investment. Provide support and resources, when necessary, to ensure sustainable and beneficial outcomes for both the community and developers.	High	Ongoing
3.2	Regularly evaluate and update the development review process based on developer/resident feedback, ensuring that application procedures are as approachable and efficient as possible.	High	Ongoing
3.3	Provide up-to-date guidance materials (online and at City Hall) outlining the City's development and application processes.	High	Ongoing (Short-Term: developing initial materials)
3.4	Gradually close out existing Tax Increment Districts (TIDs) to restore the existing tax base and lessen restrictions on funds. If needed in the future, TIDs may be reinstated to spur development and revitalization of specific areas within Amery.	Medium	Long-Term (Ongoing: evaluating need to reinstate TIDs)
3.5	Leverage impact fees or developer agreements to offset the cost of new development on City services.	High	Ongoing

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