

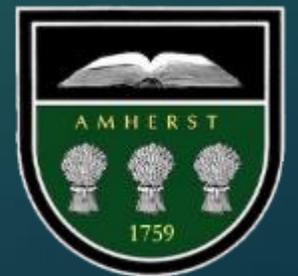
# Conservation and Development



# Conservation and Development

## MISSION STATEMENT

This functional area supports conservation programs that protect the environment and natural resources for current and future generations of Amherst residents, creates and implements appropriate planning initiatives and regulatory mechanisms for the preservation and responsible development of the Town, and ensures the public health, safety, and welfare of citizens by administering Massachusetts General Laws and Regulations and Town Bylaws as they relate to land use and to the construction and occupancy of building and structures.



# Conservation & Development

## Conservation & Sustainability

- ▶ 5 Staff
- ▶ Shared Permit Administrator
- ▶ Seasonal Staff
- ▶ 9 Boards/ Committees

## Planning & Zoning

- ▶ 5 Staff
- ▶ Shared Permit Administrator
- ▶ 15 Boards/ Committees

## Inspection Services & Licensing

- ▶ 11 Staff
- ▶ Shared Permit Administrator
- ▶ 6 Boards/ Committees

# Conservation Department



# MISSION and WHO WE ARE

- ▶ *Environmental and resource area protection*
- ▶ *Staff support to the Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, other Boards and Committees*
- ▶ *Conservation and land management of the natural environment to enhance quality of life*

## CONSERVATION STAFF:

- ▶ **Director of Conservation and Development**
- ▶ **Sustainability Coordinator**
- ▶ **Land Manager**
- ▶ **Assistant Land Manager (part time)**
- ▶ **Wetlands Administrator (part time)**
- ▶ **Program Assistant**



Mount Pollux Conservation Area

# GUIDING FRAMEWORK

## Conservation Commission:

- ▶ charged with ensuring the protection of the Town's natural resources and conservation areas
- ▶ administering and enforcing the MA Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Amherst Wetlands Protection Bylaw
- ▶ works closely with the Conservation Department on land management, drafting environmental policy and updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan



**Town of Amherst  
Wetlands Protection Bylaw  
and Regulations**



**Town of Amherst  
Open Space and  
Recreation Plan**

2017 Update

# OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

## Required Map 7 Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest



### Legend

#### Trails

- Major Trails (105)
- Local and Literary Trails

#### Permanently Preserved

- Conservation Areas
- MA DCR
- APR Land
- Conservation Restrictions
- Private Land Trusts
- Subdivision Open Space

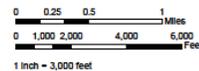
#### Partially Protected

- Schools
- Chapter 61 (Forest)
- Chapter 61A (Agriculture)
- Chapter 61B (Recreation)

#### Institutional Lands

- Amherst College
- Hampshire College
- UMass

Land Inventory based upon  
Amherst Tax Assessment information  
as of July, 2016.



Amherst Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2017 Update

- provides framework to guide community policies and future actions
- examines the Town's need for new or improved conservation areas, land management, new and improved recreational facilities, and preserved land

# LAND CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT



Bridge construction

- Manage 1,965 acres of conserved land
- Maintain 50 open field habitats
- Oversee 80 miles of trails
- Responsible for over 1,842 acres of preserved farmland on 32 properties through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program
- Maintain 157 acres covered by Conservation Restrictions
- Manage 2,500 acres of Town watershed land in Shutesbury, Pelham, Belchertown, and Amherst



Bog Bridge



Trail head improvements



Trail Maintenance



Mowing to maintain habitat

# WETLANDS & NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chap. 131 Sec. 40) and Regulations (310 CMR 10.00)
- Town of Amherst Wetlands Protection Bylaw and Regulations
- Stormwater Management
- Collaboration with multiple Town Departments
- Coordination with state agencies





# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & COLLABORATIONS

Fearing Brook



Solarize Mass - Amherst



Orchard Arboretum Accessible Pathway Extension



UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture and Grow Food Amherst Volunteers on a cold, rainy day in November planting at the Fort River Farm

# SPECIAL PROJECTS

- ▶ Fort River Farm Conservation Area
- ▶ Support for Amherst Farmers
- ▶ Large Bridge Replacements
- ▶ Epstein Conservation Area
- ▶ Storm Drain Markers



# Future Conservation/Sustainability Efforts

- ▶ Work to support the Energy and Climate Resiliency Committee
- ▶ Implement Puffers Pond 2020 Plan
- ▶ Maintain and develop community connection to conservation land(s)

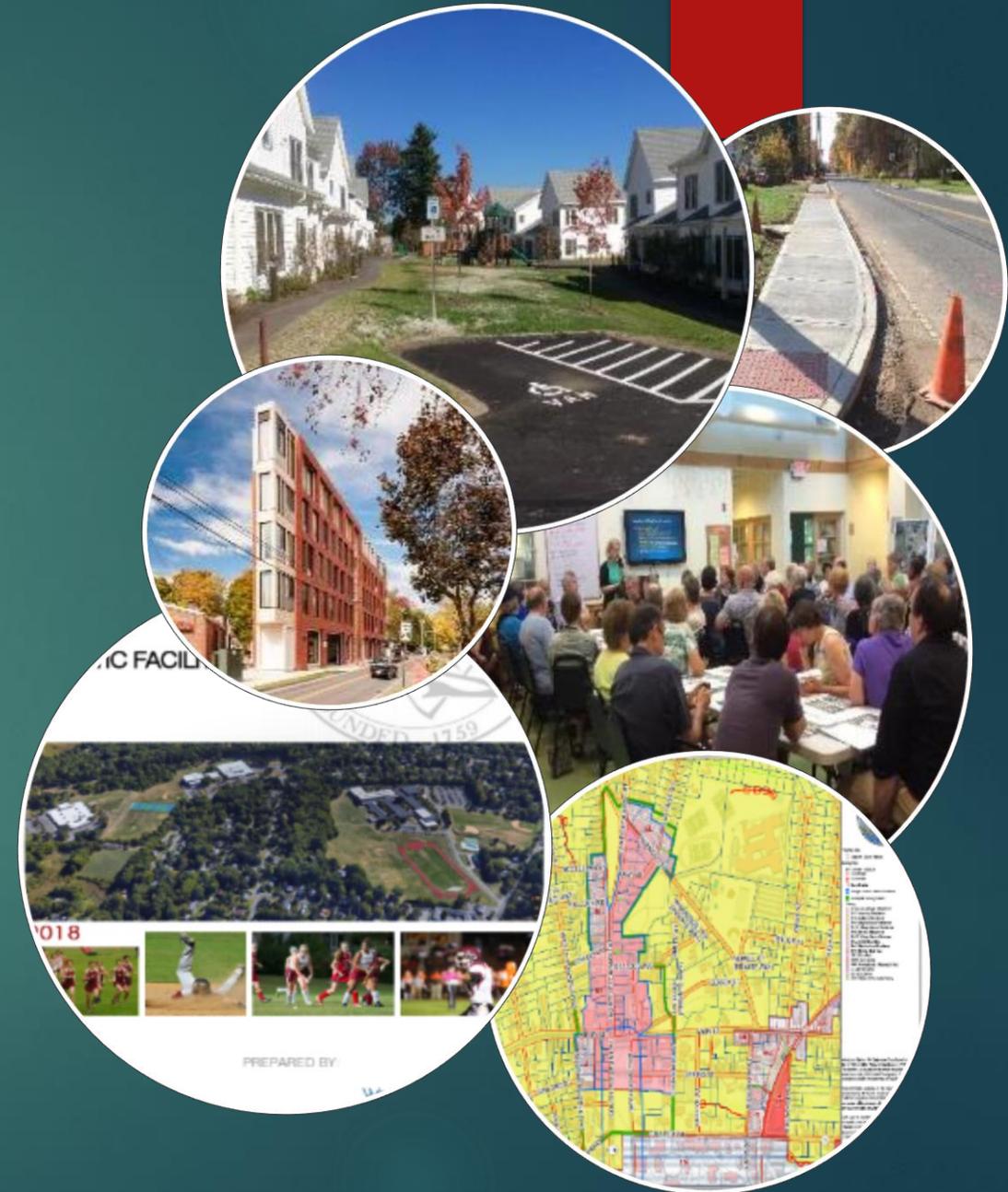


# Enhancing the Quality of Life....



# Planning Department

- ▶ Protect and enhance quality of life
- ▶ Create & implement plans and regulations
- ▶ Preserve community resources
- ▶ Promote rational & sustainable development



# Who we are

- ▶ **Planning Director**
  - ▶ **Manages department, Planning Board, Regulations, long-range planning**
- ▶ **Senior Planner**
  - ▶ **Historical projects, ZBA, assists with planning**
- ▶ **Senior Planner**
  - ▶ **Grants, Housing, Board/Committees, Projects, assists with planning**
- ▶ **Associate Planner**
  - ▶ **ZBA, Design Review, DAAC, assists with projects**
- ▶ **Administrative Assistant**
  - ▶ **Application intake, staff support, MUNIS entry, public interface**

# Regulations

- ▶ Massachusetts General Laws and State Regulations



- ▶ Town Land Use Regulations

  - ▶ Zoning Bylaw

  - ▶ Subdivision Regulations

- ▶ General Town Bylaws

  - ▶ Local Historic District

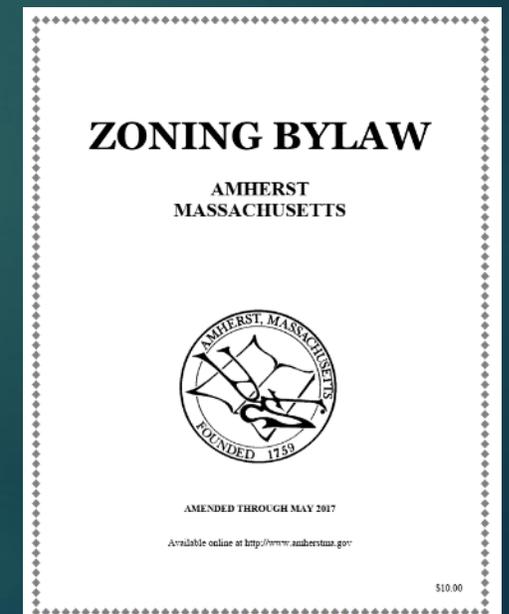
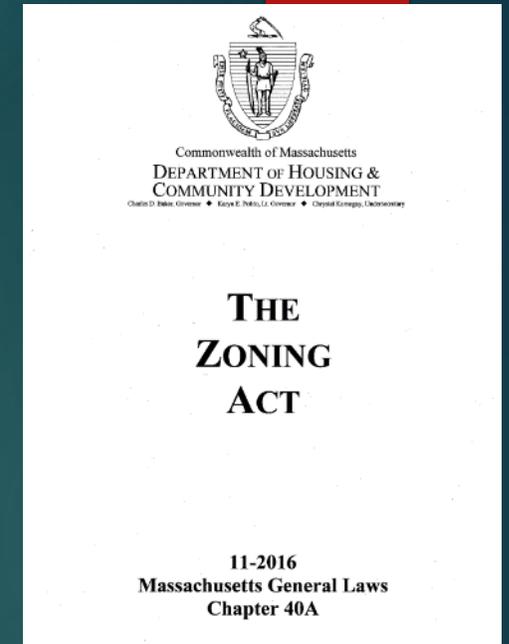
  - ▶ Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

- ▶ Local Guidelines

  - ▶ Design Review Guidelines

  - ▶ Streetscape Standards

  - ▶ Landscape Standards



# Permitting

- ▶ **Planning Board**
  - ▶ Subdivisions, Site Plan Review, Special Permits
- ▶ **Zoning Board of Appeals**
  - ▶ Special Permits, 40B affordable housing projects
- ▶ **Local Historic District**
  - ▶ Changes to outside appearance
- ▶ **Historical Commission**
  - ▶ Demolition delay, advisory review
- ▶ **Design Review Board**
  - ▶ Architecture, signs, Town-projects



236 North Pleasant Street



79 South Pleasant Street

# Recent Projects



**North Square at the Mill District-affordable, mixed use**



**University Drive-mixed use development**



**32 North Prospect-historic preservation and new units**



**Spring Street-downtown infill with small apartments**

# Affordable Housing

- ▶ Exceed State's 10% standard
- ▶ Ongoing efforts and partnerships
- ▶ Preserve and create affordable units
- ▶ State & local grants and initiatives
- ▶ Municipal Affordable Housing Trust



Main Street Housing



East Street School

  
**Looking to Buy Your First Home in Amherst?**  
We Can Help!  
Financial Assistance  
Is Now Available

To be eligible for the First Time Homebuyer's Mortgage Subsidy Assistance, household income cannot be above the following guidelines:

Household Size/Income Limit		
1 Person.....\$47,240	2 Person.....\$61,290	3 Person.....\$68,390
4 Person.....\$68,390	5 Person.....\$75,850	6 Person.....\$79,312
7 Person.....\$74,500	8 Person.....\$80,024	

Assistance up to \$40,000 per income-eligible household  
**Call Now for Information and Application**  
Valley Community Development Corporation  
Donna Cabana, [dcc@valleycdc.com](mailto:dcc@valleycdc.com)  
(413) 586-5855, ext. 180



For more information please visit our website: [www.valleycdc.com](http://www.valleycdc.com)  
If you contact us by phone or email to schedule a confidential appointment,  
Applications will be accepted until March 31, 2017

# Community Plans

- ▶ Master Plan (2010)
- ▶ Housing Production Plan (2013)
- ▶ Comprehensive Housing Market Study (2015)
- ▶ Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)
- ▶ Transportation Plan (2015)
- ▶ Strategic Plans—Recreation Facilities, Parking
- ▶ Village Center Plans



# Board and Committee Support

- ▶ Over 15 Boards, Committees and Task Forces/Working Groups
  - ▶ Planning Board
  - ▶ Zoning Board of Appeals
  - ▶ Other Boards and Committees
    - ▶ Design Review Board
    - ▶ Historical Commission
    - ▶ Local Historic District Commission
    - ▶ Downtown Parking Working Group
    - ▶ Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
    - ▶ Disability Access Advisory Committee
    - ▶ Transportation Advisory Committee

**FY18**

**200**  
Meetings

**120**  
Applications

# Town Projects

- ▶ Varying Scale—small to town-wide
- ▶ Facilitate team members and consultants
- ▶ Data gathering and analysis
- ▶ Short and long term
- ▶ Federal, State and local funding and grants



# Grants

- ▶ Over \$6Million awarded in 5 years
- ▶ Community Development Block Grant
- ▶ MassWorks Infrastructure Program
- ▶ PARC & LAND Grants
- ▶ Land Water Conservation Fund
- ▶ Affordable Housing Grants
- ▶ CPA Funds
- ▶ PVPC Technical Assistance Grants

## CDBG Grants: \$825,000

- Capital Projects: multi-use path on East Hadley Road, Shumway Street paving, modernization of units at Amherst Housing Authority
- Social Services: Adult education and job training, food security, youth development and mentoring, housing stabilization

## Housing Choice Initiative: \$190,00

- Install new sidewalk along East Pleasant Street
- More competitive in other grant applications

## Land Water Conservation Fund: \$300,000

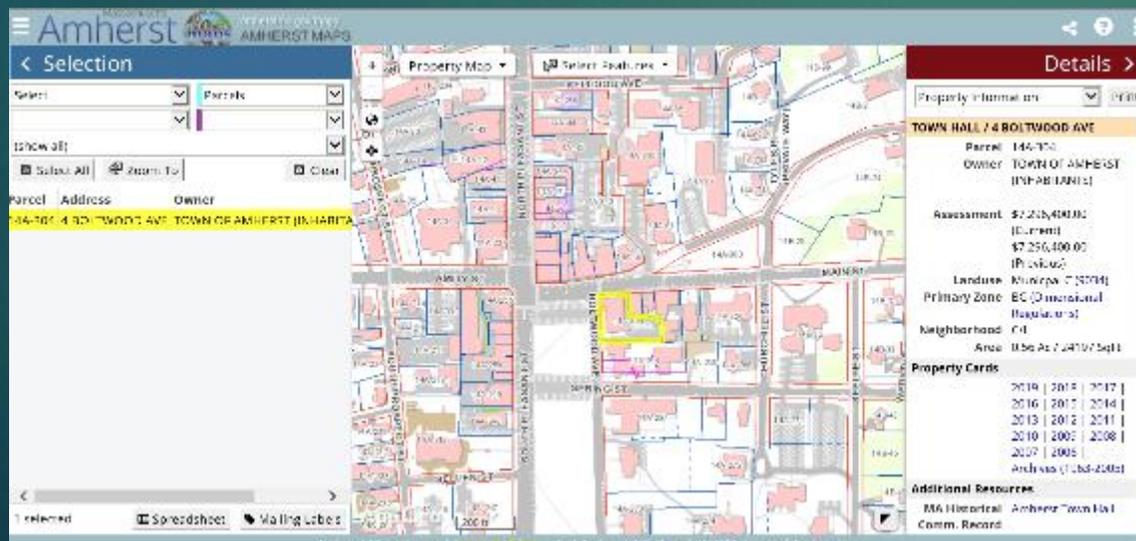
- Modernize Groff Park with spray pad, new playground, pavilion, and amenities

## Massworks: \$1,500,000

- Relocate utilities downtown to encourage new development and streetscape improvements

# Public Education and Outreach

- ▶ Planning Projects
- ▶ Community Forums
- ▶ Online Resources
- ▶ Research and Archiving



Home » In the News

[amherstma.gov](http://amherstma.gov) - News & Announcements

Posted on: January 11, 2019

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan Available for Public Comment

The TAC has worked with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to develop the Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan. This is intended to guide the town as it implements a complete streets network, specifically to improve the transportation network for cyclists and pedestrians. It also addresses the bicycling and pedestrian needs presented in the 2010 Amherst Master Plan and the 2015 Amherst Transportation Plan, and makes recommendations consistent with the strategies presented therein. Currently in Draft form, the TAC will be taking comments about this until February 13th.



Find the document [HERE](#).

Please email any comments to [TAC@amherstma.gov](mailto:TAC@amherstma.gov) or mail to the Amherst DPW.

# Planning Department Next Steps



**Update Master Plan**

**Re-Write Zoning Bylaw**

**Engage Community**

**Plan Village Centers**

**Implement Projects**

**Apply for Grants & Funding**

**Collaborate with other Departments**

# Planning for the future together...



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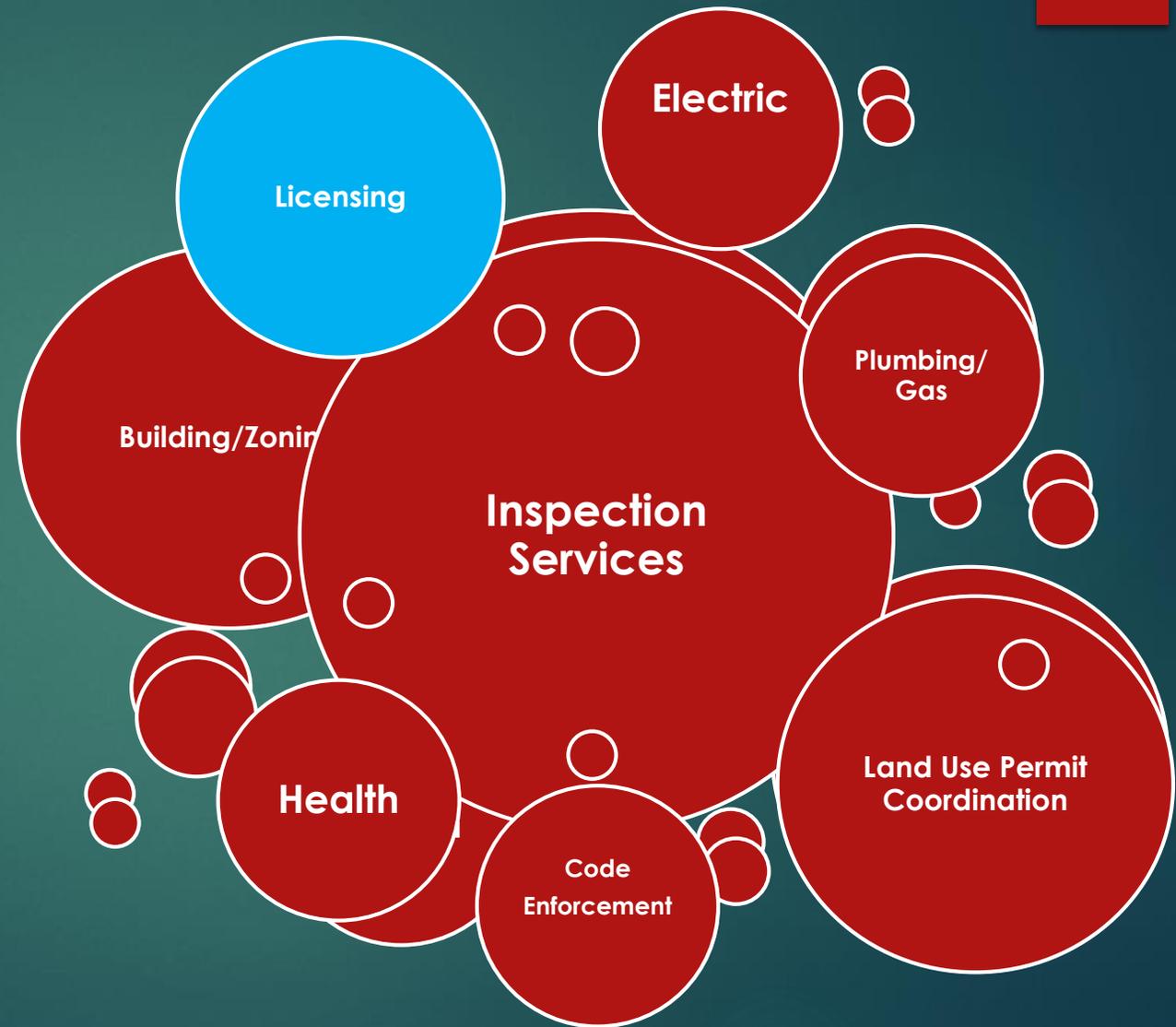
# Inspection Services

Town of Amherst



# Our Mission

- ▶ Accessible
- ▶ Efficient
- ▶ Accountable
- ▶ Effective
- ▶ Accurate



# Who we are

- ▶ **Building Commissioner - oversees Inspection Services**
- ▶ **2 Building Inspectors - dedicated to building permits, inspections**
- ▶ **1 Code Enforcement Officer (Health Inspector & Building Inspector) - dedicated to zoning, health and building related matters**
- ▶ **1 Permit Administrator, (vacant position), helps navigate applications through a variety of complicated permitting processes from project start to finish**
- ▶ **1.25 Electric Inspectors - covers all electrical work done in the Town, including projects at UMass**
- ▶ **1 PT Plumbing/Gas Inspector -covers all plumbing and gas work in the Town, except for UMass**
- ▶ **2 Health Inspectors - covering all aspects of health inspections, permitting and licensing and assist with code enforcement**
- ▶ **1 Sealer of Weights and Measures shared contract with Northampton for roughly 30 inspections per year**

# Who we are...

- ▶ **Management Assistant - main point of entry for building, plumbing/gas and electric permits, administers COI program**
- ▶ **Licensing Coordinator - responsible for coordinating and processing for all licensing and provides support to the Board of License Commissioners**

# Permit Administrator Role

- ▶ First point of contact for all Building and Land Use functions
- ▶ Helps navigate customer through myriad of complex permitting processes
- ▶ Initial plan review of applications
- ▶ Liaison for all town departments including Fire and DPW
- ▶ Under the supervision of the Building Commissioner & Planning Director
- ▶ Attends and schedules meetings for key players in all projects

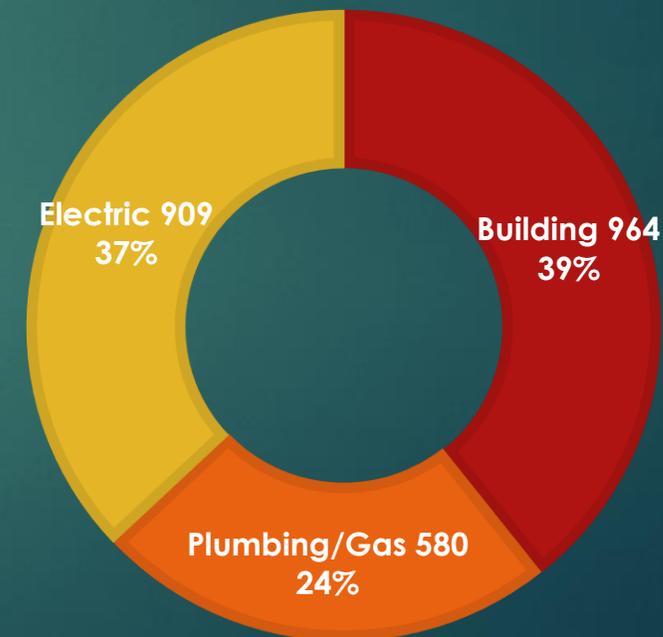


# Permitting

- Residential vs. Commercial
- New homes, additions, renovations
- Daily plan review
- 7-10 business day permit turnaround
- Regular daily office hours
- Standing daily inspection appointment times

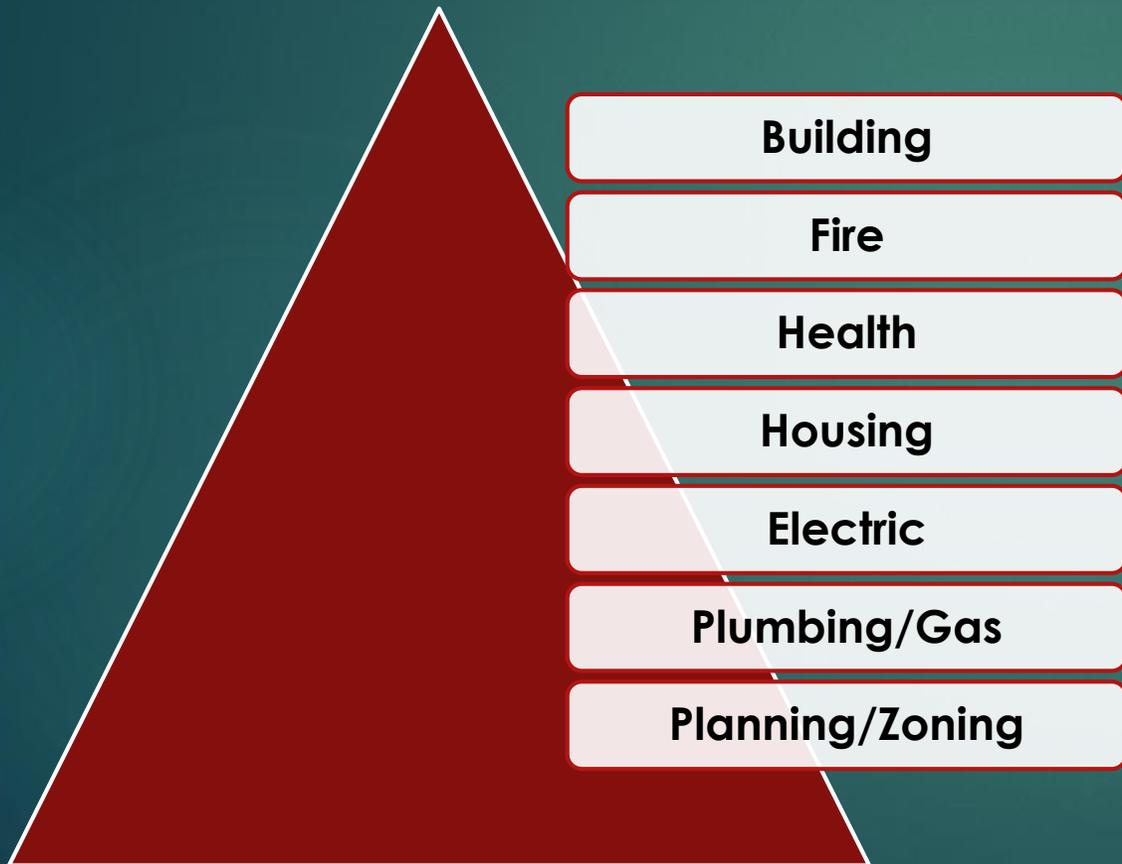
## PERMITS ISSUED FY2018

■ Building 964   ■ Plumbing/Gas 580   ■ Electric 909



# Joint Inspections Efforts

- ▶ To foster better communication, service and convenience to the public, joint efforts are taken whenever possible.



- Bi-weekly meetings
- Joint inspections

# Recent Major Projects



Kendrick Place Apartments



Hitchcock Center



Kern Center-Hampshire College



Greenway Dorms- Amherst College



Olympia Place Apartments



**Science Center-Amherst College: Build \$200M/250K SF**



**Science Center-Amherst College: Under Construction**



**One East Pleasant Project \$14.5M**

# Electrical

- ▶ Responsible for reviewing permit applications, scheduling/recording inspections, responding to questions/concerns of residents, contractors, engineers. May involve consulting State officials, manufacturers, testing laboratories
- ▶ Residential and commercial properties including UMass, Amherst and Hampshire Colleges
- ▶ Coordinate/collaborate with Building, Plumbing, Fire and Health
- ▶ Respond to emergency calls from AFD- fire, flood



UMass Design Building \$52M 87K SF



UMass Physical Sciences \$85M 83K SF

# LARGE SCALE SOLAR



UMass Fine Arts Center Solar Panels 123 kW



Pulpit Hill Solar



Solar Parking Canopies – Visitor's Center 192 kW



UMass Lot 44 solar: 1.84 MW



Hampshire College 2.3 MW

# Rental Registration Program

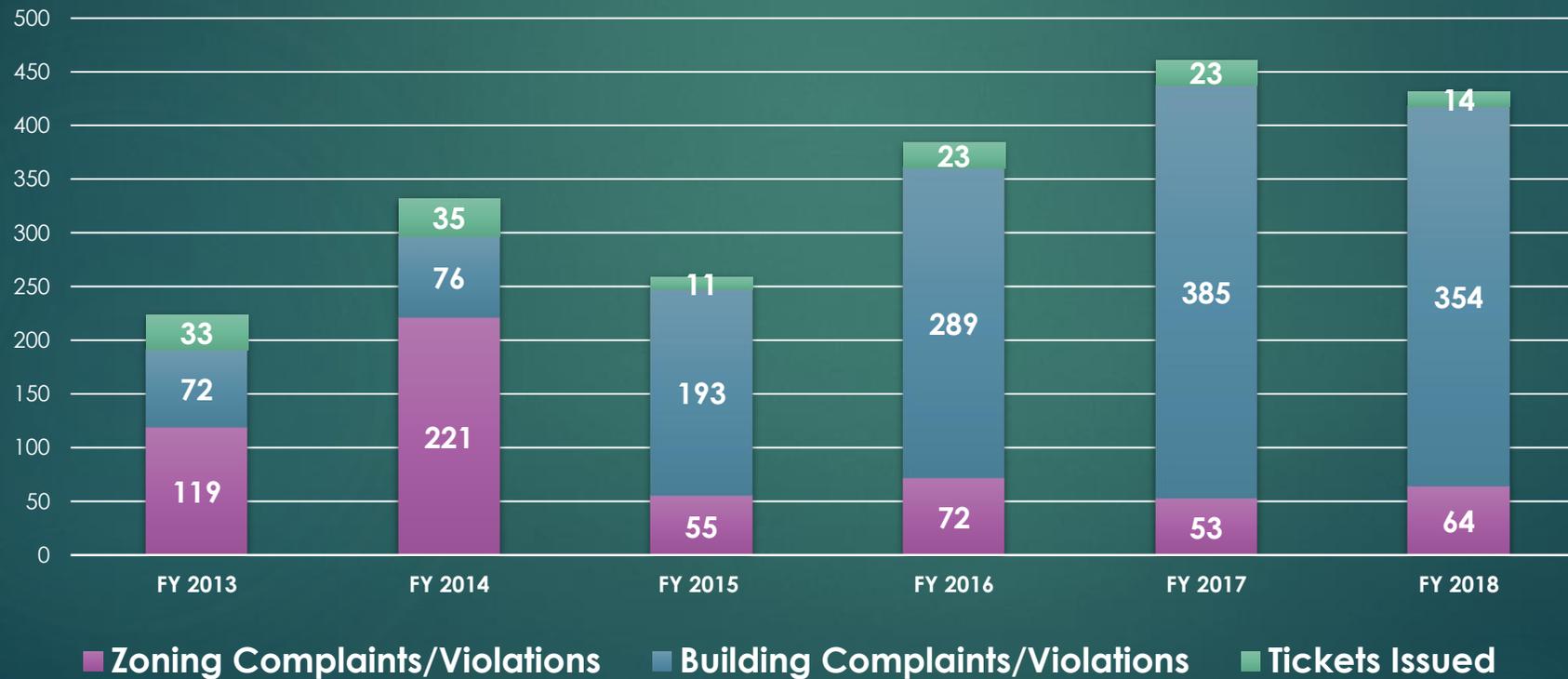
- ▶ Effective January 2014
- ▶ 4 successful renewal periods

**1174**  
Currently  
permitted

# Code Enforcement

- ▶ Enforcing agency for Zoning, Building, Health and Housing

## Inspection Services Complaint/Violation Activity



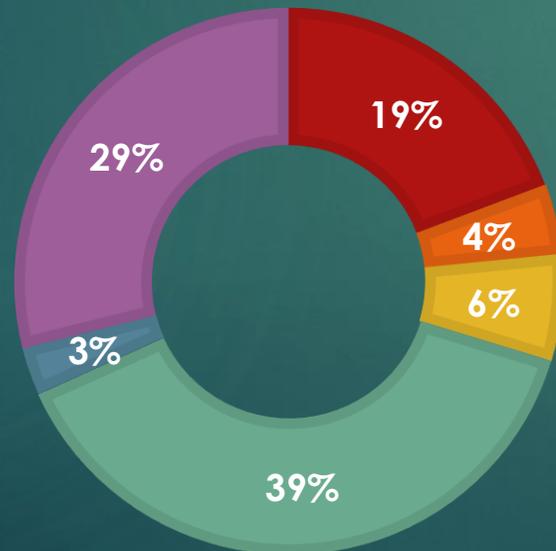
# Common Violation Types



# COI Program

- ▶ Periodic inspections of public buildings and multi-family residential structures

## CERTIFICATES



**451**  
certificates

# Multi-family COI program

- ▶ Identified through Rental Registration data
- ▶ Total of 173 Properties, 136 new to program
- ▶ All have been inspected and certified at least once
- ▶ 67 fire escapes inventoried, certified safe or in process of repairs

**173**  
properties

FY 2018

# Before and After MF COI Program



# Online Resources & Community Engagement

[www.amherstma.gov/rp](http://www.amherstma.gov/rp)  
[www.amherstma.gov](http://www.amherstma.gov)

From  
our  
website

- ▶ Submit complaints online
- ▶ Attach photos
- ▶ Immediate response and assessment
- ▶ Results available
- ▶ Correction actions taken if warranted

Property Info & Permit /  
Complaint History



Code Violations &  
Complaints Map

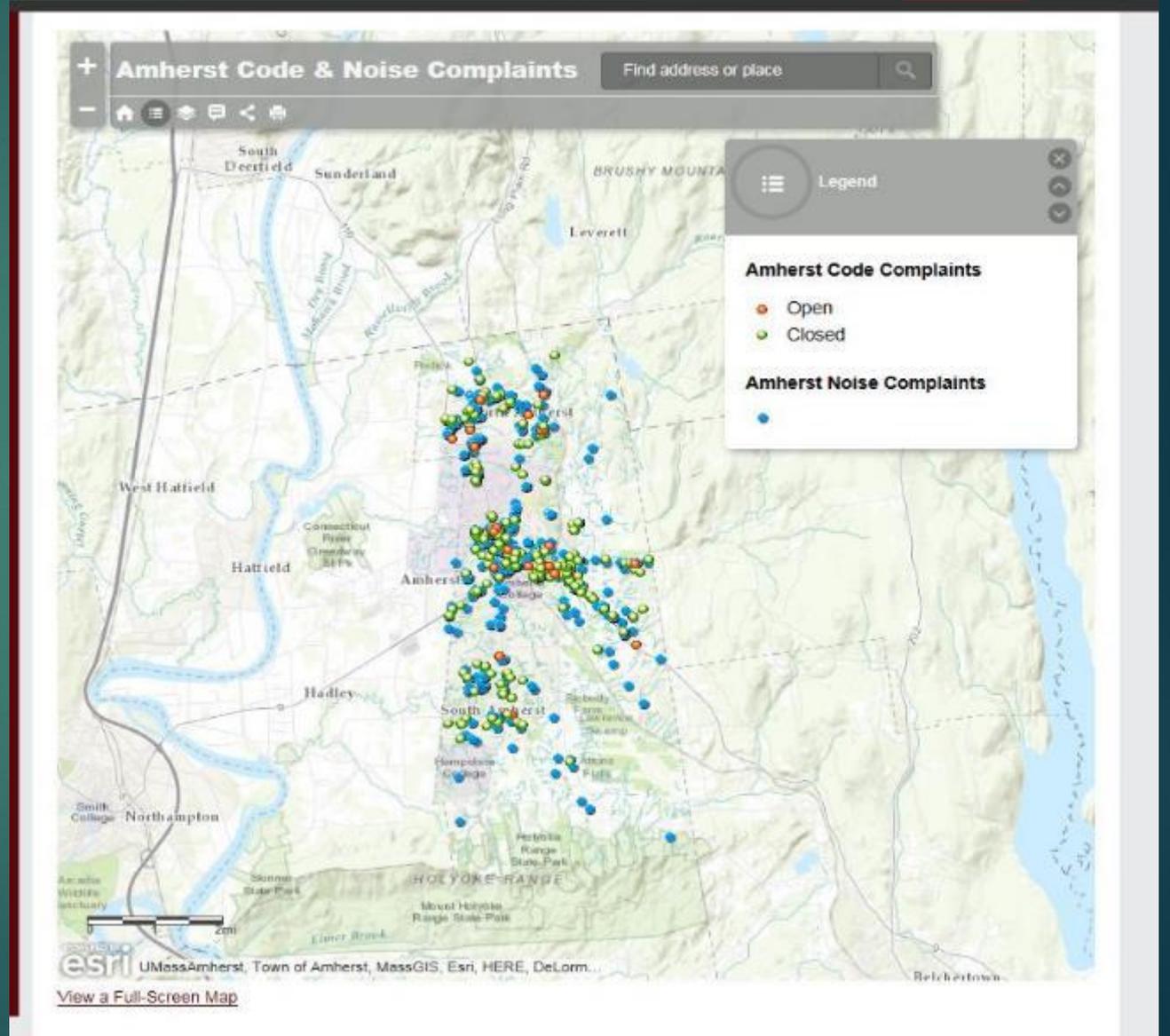


Submit a Noise or  
Nuisance Complaint



# Interactive Complaints Map

- Live data map
- Shows recent code violations and status
- Shows APD noise complaints
- Direct and coordinate enforcement efforts
- Identify problem areas
- <http://www.amherstma.gov/1876/Complaints-Map> --> to view up to date live map



# Health Licenses & Permits

- ▶ Food service; Restaurants, Catering, Retail, Bakery, Res. Kitchen, Mobile, Grocery
- ▶ Coordinating interdepartmental review of new food service applicants
- ▶ Temporary event permitting
- ▶ Annual licenses: Camps, Pools, B&B's, Tobacco, Waste/Septic haulers, Body Art, etc.
- ▶ Septic/Wells: State Title V and local septic regulations, plan review, licensing installers and haulers, innovative design
- ▶ Housing Matters: sensitive cases, code enforcement

**399**  
licenses  
&  
permits  
FY 2018



# Permitting online...and more

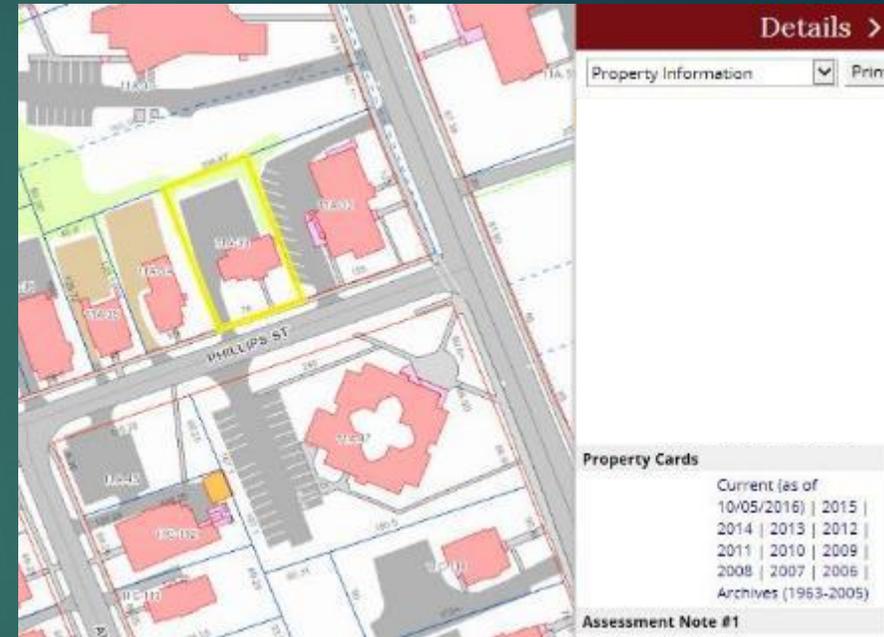
- ▶ Ability to submit rental permit applications and payments online
- ▶ Sign up for e-notifications
- ▶ Meet the Team
- ▶ Access training videos
- ▶ Submit help requests
- ▶ Access open data and maps
- ▶ Helpful resources
- ▶ Self-service station with printer in lobby

The screenshot shows the Amherst Rental Permitting website. On the left is a dark red sidebar with navigation links: Meet Our Team, Permitting Information, Video Resources, Service Requests, ePayments & Bills, Maps & Property Info, Permits & Licenses, Open Gov to the Max!, and Jobs & Apply. The main content area is white and titled 'Residential Rental Property Permitting'. It features an 'Overview' section with a house icon and a 'Meet Our Team' section with a group of people icon. Below these are three large buttons: 'RENTAL PERMIT RENEWAL', 'RENTAL PERMIT FIRST TIME APPLICANT', and 'RENTAL PERMIT RENEWAL'. There is also a 'Notices & Announcements' section with several bullet points and a 'Sign up for notifications' button with an envelope icon.



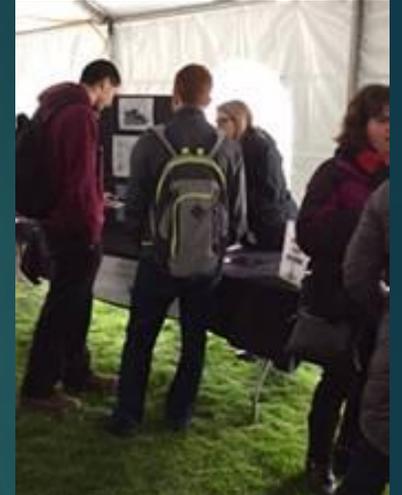
# Open Government

- ▶ View property history including:
  - ▶ Permits, Complaints, Archival Records, Utilities, Special Conditions and more details
- ▶ Incorporates APD noise/disturbance data with code violations to get a snapshot of area
- ▶ Ongoing scanning project to digitize records for immediate online access by staff and public
- ▶ Generate reports
- ▶ <http://gis.amherstma.gov/apps/staff/propertysearch.aspx>
- ▶ <http://gis.amherstma.gov/gis/Viewer.aspx?state=507852479804>



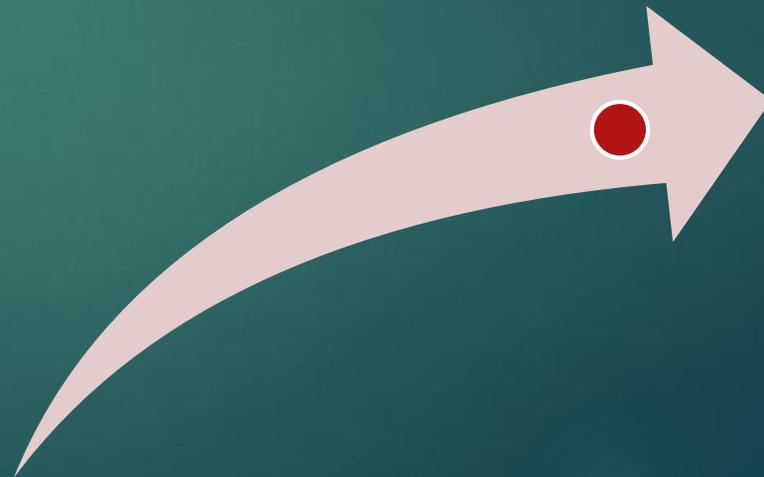
# Outreach Efforts

- ▶ Neighborhood resource fairs
- ▶ APD roll call trainings to officers
- ▶ Task force members, team comprised of code enforcement, fire, APD, UMPD, ACPD, UMass Student Affairs, UMass External Relations and UMass Greek Affairs, working together to resolve neighborhood issues and complaints.
- ▶ Participation in Housing Fairs, Safety Events
- ▶ Attendance at weekly on call meetings with Amherst Fire Dept., Amherst Police Dept., UMass Police, and UMass Dean of Students
- ▶ Attendance at Community Events, Block Party
- ▶ Creating a positive presence in Amherst



# In our future

- ▶ Expand online permitting
- ▶ Increase efficiency through automating processes
- ▶ Improvements to Inspections website
- ▶ Increased communications with customers and residents through technology



# THANK YOU!

► We welcome your comments and questions

