



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: July 17, 2020
Re: Town Manager Report for July 20, 2020

Town Manager Update:

- Top Line:
 - Downtown and Business Reopening: Town staff have been aggressive in assisting restaurants to reopen.
 - Restaurants open with expanded outdoor seating, most with alcohol service:
 - Public Way:
 - Bistro 63
 - Momo
 - Arigato
 - Taste Thai
 - Amherst Coffee
 - Fresh Side
 - La Veracruzana
 - Oriental Flavor
 - The Lone Wolf
 - Antonio's (for takeout)
 - Private Property:
 - The Hanger
 - Johnny's Tavern
 - IYA
 - Mission Cantina
 - The Harp
 - Jake's at the Mill
 - Restaurants who are submitting applications in the near future:
 - Other actions:
 - Placed two picnic tables on the Cushman Common that are being maintained by Cushman Café
 - Placed numerous picnic tables on Boltwood Walk to accommodate take out dining
 - Placed picnic tables on the North Common to accommodate take out dining

- Discussing use of parking spaces in front of Johnny’s Tavern for use by the Tavern
 - This continues to be a true team effort with Inspection Services assisting businesses and expediting permitting and the Public Works Department establishing safe dining areas on our streets seemingly overnight.
 - Summer Events Summary:
 - Town Pools: Town pools opened on June 27th. Hours limited slightly. New rules require that those using the pools will need to arrive in their bathing suits, as changing spaces will not be open. Bathhouses at Mill River and War Memorial are for bathroom use only. Social distancing on the pool deck is also in place. LSSE is looking into a dedicated time for seniors to swim.
 - Puffer’s Pond: Puffer’s Pond is open. To achieve social distancing on the beach, the number of parties/individuals allowed on the beach at one time is limited. Attendants are present to provide guidance and monitor usage. Much positive feedback on this new approach.
 - Playgrounds: Town playgrounds are open. The Town is not sanitizing equipment and surfaces between uses.
 - Recreation Fields and Team Sports: Recreation Fields are open to groups of 10 or fewer who may use the fields but no scrimmages or games are authorized. All summer sports programs including Adult Softball are cancelled. LSSE will be looking at offering various sports clinics during the summer that are held outside and limited to 8 children at a time. We will be releasing updated information for organized sports shortly.
 - Cherry Hill Golf Course: Cherry Hill Golf Course is Open.
 - Reopening Committee:
 - Most staff from Town Hall, Bangs Center, and LSSE are back in the office. Procedures are in place for entrance to the building and Standard Operating Protocols have been reviewed with each individual to ensure a common understanding of what we all need to do to ensure each other’s safety.
 - Town Hall:
 - We are laying out plans to make Town Hall available to the public on an appointment basis only.
 - There is no date set for Town Hall to reopen to the public.
 - More and more services are being placed online to accommodate the public.
 - Key Points:
 - There is no date for the Senior Center to reopen. I believe the Senior Center will be closed for the rest of the calendar year.
 - I do not anticipate opening buildings to publicly accessible, posted, in-person public meetings any time soon. I will reevaluate this around Labor Day.
 - Town Zoom Committee:
 - A team from I.T., Town Clerk, Town Manager, and Clerk to the Council have discussed options in response to the concerns expressed by Town Councilors and members of the public to be able to see participants in meetings. There are trade-offs between the security and being able to view all people in the audience.
- Outreach:
 - Coffee with Town Manager:

- The last Cuppa Joe was on Friday, June 5th with Finance Director Sean Mangano and Comptroller Sonia Aldrich.
 - The next Cuppa Joe will be on Friday, July 24th at 8:00 a.m. Chamber of Commerce Director Claudia Pazmany and Business Improvement District Director Gabrielle Gould will be the guests.
- Call-in shows: We continue our Community Chats on a weekly basis. We have had the Police Chief, Director of Senior Services, and the Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief, the Assistant Town Manager/Director of Conservation and Development, Superintendent of Public Works, Director of LSSE, Council President, School Superintendent, and Finance Director. Thursday's Chat focused on the U.S. Census and featured Communications Manager and Town Clerk as the featured guests. These call-in shows are all available for viewing by going here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySXkNrb1J1g>
- Appointments:
 - I continue to seek members to serve on the Elementary School Building Committee, Agricultural Commission, Affordable Housing Trust, Cultural Council, CDBG Advisory Committee, Community Preservation Act Committee, Council on Aging, Disability Access Advisory Committee, Human Rights Commission, Leisure Services and Supplemental Education (LSSE) Commission, Public Art Commission, and Public Shade Tree Committee.
- Outreach and Community Participation Officers (CPOs):
 - Complete Count – United States Census: The Town's current response rate is 62.5%. This is significantly below where we need to be to ensure a complete count. Amherst is at high risk of undercounting our young children. Promoting completion of the census by the Town Councilors would help.
- Town-Gown:
 - Hampshire College:
 - The College will be open to its residential students beginning August 20th and the semester will run until November 20th.
 - The Spring semester will run from February 2nd until May 15th.
 - The College expects to be at ~50% occupancy which is about 550 students.
 - The College will utilize UMass contact tracing services, have daily health monitoring, and offer Isolation and Quarantine shelters on campus.
 - There will be a limitations on visitors and they have few students off campus (~25)
 - Amherst College:
 - The College will be open to its residential students beginning August 24th and the semester will run until November 20th.
 - The Spring semester will run from February 3rd until May 23rd.
 - The College expects to have 1,200 – 1, 250 students on campus (~60% capacity).
 - The College conduct daily testing, have daily health monitoring, and offer Isolation and Quarantine shelters on campus or in neighboring motels.
 - There will be a limitations on visitors and they have few students off campus (<50)
 - Students are required to sign a "Statement of Shared Responsibility" and are expected to restrict their time to being on-campus only.
 - University of Massachusetts at Amherst:
 - The University will be open to its residential students beginning August 24th and the semester will run until November 20th.
 - The Spring semester will run from January 19th until May 6th.

- 85% of classes will be purely remote.
- The University will be open to an unknown number of its residential students with significant restrictions on the campus and on the staff and students.
- The University is building the capacity to conduct daily testing, have daily health monitoring, and offer Isolation and Quarantine shelters on campus but only for those students living on-campus.
- Off-campus students: We anticipate a larger than normal number of students will be in Town this summer and that many students will be living off-campus during the Fall. Staff have been discussing the impact this may have for public safety and public health and we will be meeting with the colleges and University to discuss the issues this population of students is likely to raise. We are told from large landlords that parents are seeking to rent apartments so that their students can have “a true college experience.”

Departments:

- Town Clerk:
 - The Town Clerk is presenting an option for centralized voting to the Town Council at its meeting on July 20th.
- Public Safety:
 - The Town Council held a special meeting on Police policies, procedures, and activities on July 6th. Staff made a presentation and was available to answer questions from the Council and to listen to public comment.
- Human Resources:
 - Searches are being conducted for the Health Director and Human Resources Director positions. Review teams are meeting within the week to begin reviewing applications and conducting interviews.
 - I have been interviewing to fill some vacant firefighter positions.
- Public Works:
 - Mill River Basketball Courts: With passage of the capital funds, the DPW will be repaving the basketball courts at Mill River.
 - Mill River Pool: DPW installed a new filtration system at the pool which is working well. This replaced an antiquated system that was failing repeatedly.
 - Paving:
 - Chapter 90 funds for local road and bridge work was funded at \$200 million for FY21. Both branches had increased Chapter 90 to \$300 million in bills passed this spring, but ultimately reverted to the \$200 million level due in large part to the coronavirus pandemic’s impact on state revenues.
 - Bids have been awarded for new work utilizing existing funds including a full depth reclamation with asphalt injection of Henry Street.
 - DPW crews are on Old North Pleasant Street and Kendrick Park to make the changes necessary to connect the new park to the sidewalk system.
 - Downtown: DPW placed picnic benches in the Boltwood Garage area and we are seeking additional seating areas in Sweetser Park and on the North Common. DPW has been fast in establishing outdoor dining areas on North Pleasant Street, South Pleasant Street, Main Street, and Amity Street.
- Finance:
 - Budget: The Finance Committee completed an intensive effort to review the budget paying close attention to the areas of concern raised during the public hearing.
 - COVID-19: The finance department has secured the Town’s first reimbursement for extraordinary expenses related to COVID-19.

- Health Insurance: The MIIA Health Benefits Trust voted to offer a relief package to its members in the form of a premium holiday which will be shared proportionately between the employers and the employees.
- Sustainability:
 - Community Choice Aggregation: The Town is working on the development of an aggregation plan that will be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities and the creation of a legal Joint Powers Agreement that would be entered into by the Towns of Amherst and Pelham and the City of Northampton. The purpose of the Aggregation is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and the development of local renewable distributed energy resources.
 - The Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant: The Energy and Climate Action Committee is holding a series of subcommittee meetings with Community Leaders and stakeholders. There are four Task Groups holding a series of three meetings each through September.
 - Climate Action Plan: A flyer for the Town’s adaptation and resiliency plan is attached to this report.
 - ValleyBike: ValleyBike has reopened the bike share locations in Amherst.
- Community Services:
 - Leisure Services: Staff have been reallocated to work at Cherry Hill, Puffers Pond, and Groff Park.
 - Senior Center:
 - The Director of Senior Services has redirected, with the grantor’s permission, a grant to provide food tokens to the Amherst Farmers Market to seniors in need.
 - The Senior Center received a bequest from a loyal participant as part of her will.
 - Health Department:
 - The Health Director has received a very nice letter from the Board of Trustees of Cooley Dickinson Health Care expressing gratitude to the Health team in Amherst during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The State Department of Public Health announced that a statewide outbreak of hepatitis A is over. Weekly case counts have decreased to a pre-outbreak baseline, and that trend has been sustained for several months. However, the populations that were impacted most by this outbreak, people experiencing homelessness or substance use disorder, continue to be very vulnerable populations who are at risk from hepatitis A. The Town will continue to maintain vigilance for clusters of hepatitis A cases and will continue promoting vaccination of all vulnerable populations in accordance with recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.
 - The Health Director continues to guide all of our work with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. She has been working closely with the School Superintendent and providing guidance to Amherst College when requested.
- Conservation and Development:
 - Housing Choice Community:
 - The Town was designated a “Housing Choice Community in 2020” by the State which recognizes the Town’s efforts to support housing production over the last five years.
 - The designation qualifies the Town to apply for an exclusive capital grant of up to \$250,000.

- The designation provides an advantage to the Town in nine other state grant programs including MassWorks, Complete Streets, and Green Communities funding.
 - There are 74 designated communities in the State. The Town and these other communities account for 70% of the new housing in the Commonwealth in the last five years.
- Solomon Grant: The Planning Department secured a \$10,000 grant from the Solomon Foundation to support the changes to the public way downtown. This grant is in conjunction with the Business Improvement District which is using the funds to purchase umbrellas and shade structures for the outdoor dining areas.
- DOT Grant: The Town applied for funds from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for temporary changes.
- CDBG-CARES Act Funding: The Town was awarded \$321,577 in CDBG-CARES Act funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development. This is less than was requested and we are reviewing the award to determine next steps.
- Supportive Housing at 132 Northampton Road: A public hearing began on June 25th on Valley CDC's Comprehensive Permit application to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the supportive studio apartment project, including 28 units for low income individuals, proposed to be constructed at 132 Northampton Road. The ZBA will take numerous meetings listening to public comment and reviewing this proposal which has received significant Town financial support.
- Emergency Rental Assistance program: The Town is moving quickly to set up this program.
- ADA Transition Plan: Consultants were in Town surveying all Town buildings to identify the barriers to full accessibility to those who are disabled.
- Information Technology (I.T.):
 - I-Net: I.T. is moving forward on a contract to construct a replacement I-Net loop to replace the current Comcast loop which the Town must abandoned in compliance with the contract we have with Comcast. This project will extend the Town's I-Net to more municipal facilities, upgrade the fiber to state-of-the-art capacity fiber, and retain ownership for the future.

Delegated Authority (June 2020):

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons: None
- Short-Term Parking Requests: None
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures:
 - Approved the following lane closures to accommodate outdoor dining by adjacent restaurants:
 - North Pleasant Street
 - South Pleasant Street
 - Amity Street
 - Main Street

Major Capital Projects:

- DPW/Fire: No developments

- Schools: I am interviewing applicants for the resident members of the Committee and will forward the appointees to the TSO Committee within the next week or so.
- Library:
 - Since 2010, the Library Trustees and staff have been identifying the needs and planning for improvements to the Jones Library.
 - The Trustees presented analysis and costs for fixing the building's major problems to the Town Council and the public.
 - A leak in the Jones Library occurred last week causing damage in the Special Collections Department:
 - 710 books and 12 manuscript boxes had to be removed from the shelves.
 - Of those, 157 books are water damaged. It is too soon to tell whether or not we'll be able to save them all.
 - For the manuscripts, parts of the Kinsey Garden scrapbooks and records of the First National Bank of Amherst are badly water damaged.
 - Other manuscripts affected were the Henry Jackson photograph albums (one of our only collections documenting the Black community of Amherst in the 19th century), Ira Chafee Goodell correspondence, early 18th century documents relating to Amherst long before its incorporation, and Garden Club records.
 - Books receiving the most damage were the Amherst Authors and Imprints, including Noah Webster, Helen Hunt Jackson, Julius Lester, Edward Hitchcock, and very rare imprints from the early 19th century.
 - A ceiling tile also fell on one of our Fine Arts frames causing some minor damage.
 - Tarps are covering the books remaining on the shelves because water is still dripping from the ceiling.

Project Update:

- Groff Park:
 - We held a Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting on July 8th Thanks to those of you who were able to attend. The new park is getting rave reviews from the toughest critics...the kids!
 - The electrical work for the spray park is expected to be completed by the first of August.
 - Project funding:
 - \$300,000 – State Land Water Conservation Fund Grant
 - \$550,000 – Town CPA funds (cash, FY17)
 - \$500,000 – Town CPA funds (borrowing, FY18)
 - \$100,000 - Town CPA funds (cash, FY20)
 - Timeline:
 - 2017 – concept design and grant application
 - 2018 – grant awarded, design team selected, design
 - 2018-2019 – permitting through Conservation Commission and Planning Board
 - 2019-2020 – construction by JL Construction with oversight by DPW, Planning and Conservation
 - 2020 – park opens on July 8th
 - Boards/Committees who played a role:
 - LSSE Commission
 - Conservation Commission
 - Planning Board

- Staff who played a role:
 - Planning and Conservation
 - LSSE
 - Public Works
 - Accounting
- Destination: Amherst!
 - Kendrick Park Playground: The project is expected to be bid this summer and construction is expected to start in late summer or early fall.
 - Performing Arts Shell on the Town Common: No developments.
 - Parking Structure on Town Land at North Pleasant Street Parking Lot: No developments.
 - North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: No developments.
- Hickory Ridge: Staff continue to actively work toward a conclusion on this project conducting the required due diligence on behalf of the Town.
- East Street School: No developments
- North Amherst Library: We are working with procurement and the anonymous donor to move to the next phase for this project.
- Solar on the Landfill: Slow, steady progress continues to be made as we work through the permitting and interconnection approvals. We are projecting construction to begin in November of 2021 and operation to begin in April of 2022.
- Dog Park:
 - The Amherst Dog Park Committee has created a superb website that you can find here: www.amherstdogpark.wordpress.com
 - There will be a Ground Breaking ceremony on July 22nd with a rain date of July 23rd at 10:00 a.m. I hope you are available to attend.
 - The project has been bid and construction will begin soon. It will take 2-3 months to complete construction and then there will be a season of rest to allow for the grass to grow.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- July 20th - Town Council meeting
- July 21st – Town Council meeting
- July 28th – Town Council and School Committee joint meeting
- August 3rd – Town Council meeting
- August 17th – Town Council meeting
- August 31st – Town Council meeting

Other events:

- July 22nd – 10:00 a.m. – Dog Park Ground Breaking
- July 23rd – 12:00 noon – Community Chat
- July 24th – 8:00 a.m. – Virtual Cuppa Joe with Paul
- July 30th – 12:00 noon – Community Chat
- August 6th – 12:00 noon – Community Chat
- August 13th – 12:00 noon – Community Chat
- August 14th – 8:00 a.m. – Virtual Cuppa Joe with Paul
- August 27th – 12:00 noon – Community Chat



July 10, 2020

Kumble R. Subbaswamy
Office of the Chancellor
UMass Amherst
374 Whitmore Building
Amherst, Massachusetts 01003

Dear Chancellor Subbaswamy:

I have profound concerns about two major decisions made recently by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The first major decision was to open your dormitories to thousands of additional students who otherwise may not be traveling to Amherst to live for the Fall semester. The second was to treat University students living on-campus and off-campus differently in your campus pandemic management plans. I believe these two decisions will endanger the health and, perhaps, lives of those who live in and around the Town of Amherst.

These decisions have consequences and it is up to the University to take responsibility and manage their impact. Time is short. Students have been invited to return to the Town and surrounding areas in five short weeks.

This letter summarizes the Town's concerns and requests.

The Town's Concerns

Amherst is currently one of the safest communities in Massachusetts in terms of the percentage of COVID-19 cases. We need definitive action on your part to ensure that it remains so.

Your decision to open up thousands of dormitory rooms will bring students from around the country and the world to Amherst. It signals that the University encourages student to come to Amherst even if they have no in-person courses. We all know that the large number of students residing in dorms will inevitably interact freely with the thousands of students living off-campus. Without normal University programming, students will have to produce their own college experiences, creating conditions that will likely result in a spike in COVID-19 cases in the Town. This is not to disparage students but simply to acknowledge a well-established fact that is already evident by our shared history and at other universities.

I fear that the decision to bring additional students to Town will fuel the conditions for a massive spread of COVID-19 that could overwhelm our local public health infrastructure, create a crisis for our local hospital, strain the capacity of our EMS first responders, and force our public safety officers into difficult, untenable, and possibly dangerous situations.

Four Requests

First, I want to emphasize that this is not a "town vs. gown" question. I very much value the University and I appreciate the partnership the Town and University have built over the past few years. It's a good partnership. I also love the vitality and cultural richness the University and its staff and students bring to the area. I appreciate the diversity, enthusiasm, and unbridled energy that students refresh the Town with every new school year. The Town would not be what it is without the University. But what the University does, and the decisions you make, have deep and direct impact on our community. What the University does matters and, in this case, it matters a lot!

I fear there will be unchecked spread of the COVID-19 virus in our community. This concern is shared by our entire municipal senior leadership team including our Public Health Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director. I write to suggest steps you can take that may help mitigate this danger. But we have to be realistic: your decisions mean that we all face a tremendous uphill battle.

You stated that "a great many details still need to be worked out." We hope that these requests will be incorporated into the University's policies and messages. In all cases we believe they will improve public health and safety in both the campus and local communities.

1. **Treat all students – whether on-campus or off-campus – the same.**

As you noted in your message to the University community, "Given the prevalence of the virus in the general populations, it is expected that a number of students will test positive for COVID-19 while remaining asymptomatic." You also acknowledged the "risk of a populous campus in the middle of a pandemic." These statements reflect the hard facts of our situation. The virus will not respect the invisible border between campus and community. In public health terms the entire student population is a community, and must be approached as such.

The single most important step the University can take to promote the health of its students, faculty and staff — as well as the health of its surrounding communities — is to take responsibility for the health and actions of its students both on and off-campus. You have clear guidelines for those students on-campus. It must be made clear that expectations are no less exacting for students living off-campus. Failure to do so results in inconsistent action and confused messaging that inevitably magnifies the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can do this by:

- Requiring all students residing in the Amherst area to sign the "UMass Agreement."
- Requiring students to register their place of domicile while enrolled for the fall semester.

2. **Enforce the UMass Agreement for all students.**

The University already is clear that the Code of Student Conduct extends to student behavior wherever it occurs, on-campus or off-campus. Indeed, I note that the Code states explicitly that the University "may impose sanctions up to, and including suspension and expulsion in order to preserve a safe and healthy environment for the University Community." The direct link between safety and sanctions is the critical message. Therefore, the University should follow this same logic by enforcing the UMass Agreement.

You can do this by:

- Making a clear and definitive statement that all University students in the local community - whether living in residence halls or private housing off-campus - have the same expectations and are subject to the same enforcement and penalties under the Student Code of Conduct.
- Being explicit that not meeting COVID-19 expectations - on-campus or off-campus - jeopardizes continued enrollment at the University and that the University *will* exercise its right to take action regardless of location.
- Clarifying that violations by on-campus students do not simply result in the loss of on-campus housing, leaving them free to move into the surrounding community while continuing their studies.
- Fielding all complaints from local residents, establishing reporting and follow-up procedures, and collaborating with the Town in developing appropriate responses, including protocols related to large gatherings.

3. **Provide testing, intervention, follow-up, and support to all students.**

As written, the Plan currently describes a confusing double standard with certain students being subject to testing while others are not. Contact tracing conducted by the University Public Health Team needs to be for all students who have tested positive. Isolation and quarantine shelter must be offered to students living on-campus and students living off-campus alike. A uniform testing and follow-up protocol is essential for a coherent public health response to the needs of the University and surrounding communities.

You can do this by:

- Requiring and providing testing of all students, regardless of place of residence, both upon arrival in Amherst and as indicated by the best public health advice thereafter.
- Requiring daily screenings of all students, not just those who will be physically on campus.
- Conducting contact tracing for all students living in the Town of Amherst, and collaborating with the Town of Amherst Health Director at all stages of testing, diagnosing, reporting, and managing.
- Providing isolation and quarantine housing and support services to all students who require it, whether their local address is on-campus or off-campus.
- Reporting on all testing and follow-up on a daily basis to the Town of Amherst Health Director.

4. **Work cooperatively to inform the community and manage the crisis.**
COVID-19 presents an extraordinary challenge to all of us. We have no realistic chance of keeping either the campus or the larger community safe if we are not cooperating closely at all times and at all levels. Like you, we are struggling with difficult trade-offs. We deeply regret that we were not invited to participate in the development of your plan before it was issued. The best way to understand each other and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes is to be in dialogue: early, often, and candidly.

You can do this by:

- Joining with me to convene a regular working group to plan for and monitor activities affecting the local community for the duration of the pandemic.

As the nation's fragmented response to COVID-19 has demonstrated so clearly, confusion and ambiguity are the virus's best friends. We hope we can all avoid that here in Amherst, and convey a simple, clear and consistent message as thousands of students prepare to return to the area.

I recognize that some of these requests will require new ways of doing business and may push all of us outside the comfort zone of our ordinary roles and relationships. But that is the challenge of extraordinary times, and there is no doubt that our efforts will be repaid. A few months from now, I am sure none of us want to look back and say, "I wish I had done more."

The Town is ready, willing, and able to do its part. I ask that the University do the same.

Sincerely,



Paul Bockelman
Town Manager

Cc: Amherst Town Council
Nancy Buffone, UMass Community Relations
Tony Maroulis, UMass Community Relations
Senator Comerford
Representative Domb



AMHERST CLIMATE ACTION, ADAPTATION, AND RESILIENCY PLAN

Why Make a Plan?

Climate change is already affecting us all. Things like air pollution, food shortages, longer heat waves, warmer winters, and more intense storms are becoming more dangerous and frequent. The Town of Amherst is working to develop plans and procedures to deal with these effects, and needs your help. Only by working together can we plan for climate change in ways that best support the health and well-being of all Amherst residents and the natural environment that surrounds us.

Climate Pollution in Amherst

When **fossil fuels** are burned to create energy, one kind of pollution that results is called **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**. This climate pollution is one of the main causes of climate change. Amherst has studied greenhouse gas emissions in the town in 1997, 2005, and most recently in 2017. This information can help us to know where our town can make changes to reduce climate pollution, and keep track of how we're doing over time.



Key Terms and Definitions

Fossil fuels

Coal, oil, gasoline and natural gas which are burned to generate electricity, heat, and power for transportation.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

The pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels, which traps heat in our atmosphere and drives global warming. Carbon dioxide is the most common and abundant GHG.

Climate mitigation

Strategies to slow the worsening of climate change, such as reducing the production of greenhouse gases, using renewables (like solar and wind power), or planting more trees.

Carbon neutrality

Carbon neutral means that a city or town is removing as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as it is putting in. The net amount of carbon or greenhouse gas emissions is zero.

Climate adaptation

Strategies to deal with the effects of climate change, such as designated heating and cooling stations, increasing access to local food sources, or installing better drainage systems to deal with increased rainfall and flooding.

Climate resilience

Strategies to help strengthen people's lives so that the effects of climate change are less threatening, like increasing affordable housing, and providing more access to healthcare, good jobs, and education.

Amherst's Climate Mitigation Goals

50% reduction in town-wide GHG emissions below 2017 levels by 2030

Interim goal of 25% reductions by 2025

Carbon neutrality no later than 2050

Prepare for carbon neutrality by 2030



Energy and Climate Action Committee

The Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC) was created in February 2019 and charged with recommending "long-term climate action goals that focus on reducing **greenhouse gas emissions** and building **resilience**" in Amherst. The emissions reduction goals above were adopted by the Town Council in November 2019.



The ECAC and Town staff are now launching a planning process that will chart a course for climate action in areas including (but not limited to): *buildings, energy, land use, transportation, waste, public health, agriculture, forestry, and open space.* Collaborating with residents, business owners, institutions, and other stakeholders like you is key to making this process effective and equitable, and to making a plan that truly reflects community values.



Amherst's Top Climate Hazards

More hot days

Extended heat waves, fewer days below freezing, and more days with extreme heat.

More rain (and less snow)

Increased annual precipitation averages, concentrated as heavy rainfall in winter and spring.

Drought

Longer periods of drought which may affect water supplies and farming in the area.

Storms

More frequent and severe weather events, including heavy rainfall, hurricanes, and snow-storms.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)

Last spring, the Town of Amherst held workshops supported by the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program. Community members, Town staff, and others came together to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the town in the face of climate change. Workshop attendees developed actions and priorities to increase our **climate resilience**. The top priorities that emerged are summarized on the next page.

Amherst's MVP Climate Resilience and Adaptation Priorities

Resilient Infrastructure

- Water infrastructure and water security
- Environmentally-friendly transportation
- Resilient electric grid
- Flood resilience and green infrastructure
- Sustainable and resilient buildings and development

Stronger Society

- Empowering all residents to tackle systemic issues
- New models for public participation
- Thorough distribution of information + resources
- Stronger community connections
- Master planning / zoning that reflect community values

Healthy Environment

- Resilient food production and distribution approaches
- Food justice and access
- Sustainable development policies and practices
- Water resources protection and conservation



You Can Help Make the Plan

Last fall, ECAC members reached out to the community to gather feedback around what climate actions would be most important to Amherst residents. Now, the Town and the ECAC are asking for your help to create a Climate Action, Adaptation, and Resiliency Plan for Amherst, with a focus on actions that can be taken in the next 3-5 years. The real work of making this plan begins **now, with you**. Starting with concerns and community priorities identified through the MVP process and ECAC outreach, using the best available science and innovation, and with the participation of community leaders like you, the Town is set to develop strategies that will move Amherst closer to its climate and community goals. Your participation will help to create a better plan, together.





COOLEY DICKINSON
HEALTH CARE
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL, AMHERST

30 Locust St.
Northampton, Ma 01060

Tel: 413-582-2000
cooleydickinson.org

July 16, 2020

Julie Federman
Health Director
Town of Amherst, MA

Dear Ms. Federman,

As we reflect on the coronavirus pandemic of 2020, the Board of Trustees of Cooley Dickinson Health Care would like to recognize you and your staff for your outstanding efforts and leadership during this public health crisis. We know you worked long, stressful days writing plans and regulations, handling calls from residents and businesses, contact tracing, and trying to keep up with the constantly evolving information from state and federal sources. Our staff worked closely with you to stand up testing protocols, distribute masks, and a myriad of other actions. We know you have their full respect and appreciation.

Health care providers and public health officials don't intersect as often as they probably should, but our fields certainly have in the past few months. We are grateful for each of you and your partnership with us. Our communities are safer and healthier because of your work.

Sincerely,

Ken Bordewieck
Chair, Board of Trustees

Joanne Marqusee
President and CEO

cc: Paul Bockelman, Town Manager
Town of Amherst, MA