

# Amherst Business Improvement District Improvement Plan

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*Exhibit C to Petition, Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40a  
Filed: September 15, 2011, Amherst, Massachusetts*

Over the past 30 years, Business Improvement Districts have been a proven tool in over 1,200 large and small communities across the United States. Through self-imposed fees for services, property owners have aided in the renewal of their areas by cooperatively pooling resources to provide a wide range of services and programs not provided in the communities' basic public services. Historically, these service elements have included:

- Physical improvements
- Supplementing public services
- Improving the downtown marketplace
- Marketing and public relations
- Illumination of the streets
- Addressing social needs
- Improving access and mobility
- Guiding economic development

The Amherst Business Improvement District ("BID") will provide a comprehensive supplemental package of programs and services that will create an attractive, safe, well programmed and aggressively promoted location in which to live, conduct business, shop and visit. The BID will establish a private sector-directed entity to provide programs and services that supplement the basic services provided by the Town of Amherst and other organizations. The BID will be a partnership with the Town, other public property owners, private property owners, academic institutions and non-profit organizations, with the goal of generating greater attractiveness and profitability through cooperation than any individual property owner could accomplish alone.

The following is a brief description of the BID program components within the approved area (the "District").

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Curt Shumway

Alex Krogh-Grabbe,  
Executive Director

## I. MARKETING PROGRAM

The BID marketing program will put a strong emphasis on marketing the District to both potential businesses and consumers including the valuable customer base represented by the academic community and its visitors. The BID will promote the unique “Amherst Brand” to a broad audience of businesses, residents and visitors.

Through special events, common advertising and public relations, tours and an expanded One Card program, the BID will promote businesses, dining and cultural/entertainment attractions in downtown Amherst.

### Program Elements

#### 1) Marketing Program

- a) Support Amherst Brand program
- b) Market Research
- c) Marketing/Advertising for Consumers and Businesses
- d) Information Kiosks and Signage
- e) Website and Social Media

#### 2) Special Events

- a) Art/Culture/Speaker series/festivals
- b) Restaurant Weeks or other events

#### 3) College/University Marketing Initiative

- a) Promote BID in marketing materials
  - (1) College/University Concierge – BID tours by college/university for visitors and students
- b) Expansion of One Card Program
- c) College/University Events

### Objectives

1. Increase the number of visitors and expenditures in the BID from within the Pioneer Valley as evidenced in top line results for downtown businesses and attractions.
2. Enhance employee, office worker and resident experience.
3. Enhance visitor experience, including shoppers and professional office clients.
4. Increase occupancy for retail, office and residential opportunities.
5. Promote award winning attributes of downtown Amherst.
6. Enhance and add special events and entertainment programs.
7. Create business promotions geared to increase customers and tenants.
8. Increase cross-promotional opportunities with attractions, restaurants, shopping, transportation, institutional attractions, and cultural and entertainment venues.
9. Develop ongoing public relations opportunities to promote the BID.
10. Maximize and leverage public and private resources available for marketing.



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## II. MAINTENANCE/BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

The BID will create enhanced levels of seasonal and targeted maintenance to maintain a high level of cleanliness in the BID. It will also add landscaping and decorative lighting or other enhancements to help tie the District together as a destination. The downtown will be an even more attractive place to enjoy and in which to work, shop, gather, connect and socialize. The maintenance programs will supplement the general maintenance efforts of the Amherst Departments of Public Works.

### Maintenance/Beautification Program Components

- 1) Enhanced maintenance: Bi-weekly Sidewalk/Troubleshooting for Hotspots in the BID.
- 2) Targeted Snow Removal
- 3) Graffiti Removal
- 4) District-wide Landscaping and Plantings
- 5) Decorative Lighting

## III. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The BID will focus on recruitment and retention of businesses in downtown Amherst. The BID will partner with the Town of Amherst to create a streamlined permitting process, encourage multi-use sidewalks and music venues. It will undertake market analysis to identify customer needs, new markets and business opportunities, and help develop incentives for businesses to locate in downtown Amherst.

### Business Development Program Components

- Business Ombudsman
- Market Analysis
- Retail Incentive Strategy
- Music Venues
- Multi-Use Sidewalks

## IV. TRANSPORTATION/PARKING

The BID will work in collaboration with the Town of Amherst to implement a comprehensive approach to manage parking and provide transportation in downtown Amherst that is convenient, affordable and fun.

### Parking/Transportation Program Elements

- 1) 5 College Shuttle
- 2) Bike Storage
- 3) Valet Program
- 4) Parking Management participation



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## V. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS/ADVOCACY

The BID, in partnership with the Town of Amherst, will undertake programs to enhance the physical and economic development of the District and the convenience and comfort of those who use it. The BID will be an active participant with other key stakeholders to represent the needs of the BID as major downtown infrastructure projects are developed. The BID will communicate with its members regarding projects that will impact the District. The BID will work with the Town of Amherst to identify and advocate for funding to address infrastructure needs of the BID.

### Public Infrastructure Program Elements

- 1) Public Bathrooms
- 2) Gateway Project
- 3) Kendrick Park

## VI. ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT

The BID will be managed by the Board of Directors of the Amherst Business Improvement District, Inc. (the "Corporation"), a non-profit corporation whose directors will be participating members of the BID. The Corporation will contract for appropriate office space, equipment and general staff support for its administrative operations. The offices of the Corporation will be located within the District.

### General Provisions

- 1) As determined by the Board of Directors, the Corporation may provide such additional programs and services as are permitted by law.
- 2) The District shall exclude residential condominiums and residences with less than four (4) units.
- 3) The Corporation may incur indebtedness in the course of providing the programs and services permitted by law.
- 4) The Board of Directors will set policy and the budget for the BID. Daily operations will be conducted by BID staff.
- 5) The Corporation shall have all of the powers permitted by G.L. c. 40 O and other provisions of law, and as set forth in its Articles of Organization and its By-Laws.



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## VII. SERVICES OF THE TOWN OF AMHERST

The Town of Amherst has agreed to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to provide municipal services within the District.

### Baseline Services

The Memorandum of Understanding includes detailed lists of programs and levels of services currently provided by the Town through its respective municipal departments (the Baseline Services”), which the Town shall continue to provide within the District.

### Baseline Plus: Town Participation in BID

- 1) Fund BID at the rate of \$0 in year 1, \$15,000 in year 2, and \$20,000 in year 3 and \$30,000 annually beginning in year 4.
- 2) Purchase equipment to execute the maintenance and landscaping program undertaken by the BID. Initial acquisition will include a sidewalk sweeper. The Town will provide storage, maintenance, and fuel for the equipment. Acquisition of additional equipment will be considered and negotiated based on need, funding availability, and mutually agreed upon schedule of acquisition.
- 3) Provide quarterly BID billing and collection at no cost to the BID and maintain the official database of BID members.
- 4) The Town will provide police, DPW and other Town services for a series of up to four marketing events developed by the BID, Amherst College and/or UMass with dedicated hours and thresholds of service such as College Welcome Events, Restaurant Week, Sidewalk Sales, and one other event to be mutually identified at no additional cost to the BID.
- 5) The Town and the BID will undertake a comprehensive landscape and streetscape design plan for the District and will work to secure funding for long term streetscape improvements in the District.
- 6) The Town will match tree replacements within the BID on a one-for-one basis and seek available grants for tree planting.
- 7) The Town will develop a plan to design and build public bathroom facilities in the BID and work jointly to secure funding for implementation.
- 8) The Town will invest up to \$110,000 in new parking system infrastructure in year 1 as part of the installation of a new parking management system in the BID. The Town will include the BID on the parking advisory committee to develop policy relating to pricing, administration, management and parking enforcement within the BID.
- 9) The Town will assign a staff person to serve as ombudsman to facilitate business development and permitting process in downtown Amherst.
- 10) The Town will work with the BID, UMass and Amherst College to develop and promote a Bus Loop for linking academic institutions and the BID.

### Rules and Regulations

The Town will agree not to impose additional rules and regulations upon the BID or the Board of Directors of the Corporation.



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## VIII. FEE STRUCTURE

### BID Fees

All private and public properties are included in the District except residential condominiums and residences having less than four (4) units. The BID annual fee schedule is:

- Commercial properties will have a fee equal to the assessed value multiplied by .005.
- Commercial components of mixed-use properties will have a fee equal to the assessed value multiplied by .005, and residential components will have a fee equal to the assessed value multiplied by .001.
- Public/academic and non-profit properties will have negotiated fee agreements with contributions of cash and/or in-kind services.
- Hotels/Inns/B&Bs will have a fee of \$200/room per year, which may be increased annually by a percentage not greater than the percentage by which the real estate tax rate in Amherst for commercial properties has increased over the prior fiscal year.

### Waiver of Fee

The BID may waive or reduce the annual District fee for any member for whom the imposition of such a fee would create a significant financial hardship based on policies established by the Board of Directors.

Applications for waivers will be available annually at the offices of the Corporation. The Corporation may request additional or sufficient information from the member to evaluate the claimed hardship. Applications will be reviewed by the Board of Directors, or a committee designated by the Board of Directors. A member not satisfied with the initial decision on a requested waiver may request a meeting with the Board of Directors to review the decision. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

## IX. BUDGET STRUCTURE

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be as determined by the Board of Directors. Its budget shall include income and expenses that are both "cash/or cash equivalents" and "in-kind." The proposed budget for fiscal year 2012 is attached to this Plan as Exhibit 1.

## X. AMENDMENTS AND UPDATES

This Improvement Plan may be amended as permitted or as required by Mass. G.L. c. 40 O, as amended from time to time. This Improvement Plan shall, within the limitations described in G.L. c. 40 O, § 9, be updated by the Board of Directors at least once every three (3) years, and each update shall be effective upon approval of a majority of the electors. An amendment of the Improvement Plan in accordance with G.L. c. 40 O shall be deemed an update of the Improvement Plan.



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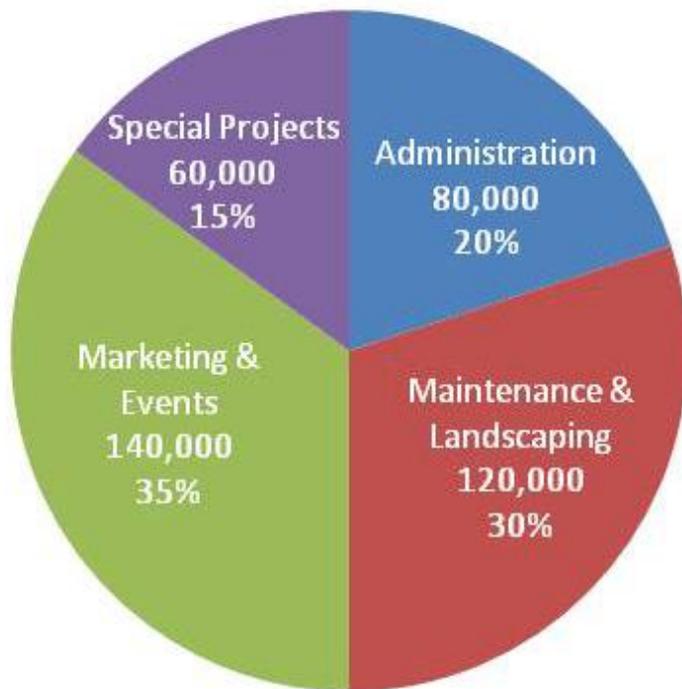
# Exhibit 1



*To the Amherst Business Improvement District Improvement Plan*

## Estimated Budget for First Fiscal Year

The Amherst Business Improvement District anticipates an aggregate annual budget of approximately \$400,000 of receipts and expenditures, including BID fees, donations, sponsorships, and in kind services. The revenues generated by the BID will be allocated in the following manner:



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