

Memorandum:



To: Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan Working Group (HMPWG)

From: Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

August 8, 2023

Subject: Guidance for reviewing and updating the 2015/2016 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of the 2023-2024 HMP Update

Re: 2023-2024 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Overview:

The following information pertains to the Ayer section of the 2015/2016 Montachusett Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). It is intended to be used as a guidance document for reviewing the 2015/2016 Plan and informing the 2023-2024 MHP update. The Ayer HMP Working group, or Core Team, will use it throughout the planning process of the 2023 update of the Ayer HMP.

Input from the Core Team is especially critical in the beginning of the process but is an important part of updating the plan throughout the entire planning process. Detailed local information provided to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission will be directly incorporated into the Plan and will result in a more meaningful and effective Plan.

Please review the information presented in the 24-pages (p. 126-149) of the attached section of the 2015/2016 Regional HMP ("Ayer HMP 2016 – Excerpt from Regional Plan – fulltext & guidance.pdf"). The following Guidance includes the comments, questions, and notations provided in the right-hand margin of that document. Please review this Guidance along with the corresponding document (Ayer HMP 2016 – Excerpt from Regional Plan) and provide any information or input you may have.

It is recommended that members of the Core Team meet as a group or in sub-groups to review and discuss this information throughout the process between regular Core Team meetings, and particularly in advance of each Core Team meeting held with MRPC. Meetings with MRPC and Public Forums or outreach meetings will be most productive, and the final plan will be more comprehensive and complete if the Core Team members are actively involved in the process and working to provide the necessary information that is needed to inform the many components of the Plan.

Feel free to share this document (or specific questions) with others, either within the Town government or those considered as interested community or regional stakeholders, who may be able to provide important information, answers to questions, or other relevant input.

Please send any comments, suggested revisions, answers to questions, and any other input or information you may have to Fire Chief/EMD, Tim Johnston at the following email address: tjohnston@ayer.ma.us, and copy jlegros@mrpc.org

Enclosure:

Guidance for reviewing and updating the 2016 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan:
2023-2024 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (See below)

Guidance for reviewing and updating the 2015/2016 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan: 2023-2024 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

The following pages provide the Hazard Mitigation Plan Working Group (HMPWG), or Core Team members, with a guide (the Guide) to reviewing the 2015/2016 *Ayer Excerpt* of the (Multi-jurisdictional) *Montachusett Region Hazard Mitigation Plan*. The Guide asks the questions and identifies the information that is needed to inform the planning process and update the Plan as part of the current 2023-2024 HMP Update. Answers to the questions asked within this guide, and input related to the information needed to update the Plan, are critical to the overall success of the Plan update process.

In addition to facilitating the collection of important information, this document can be used to familiarize yourself with the HMP update planning process. We encourage you to use the guide for both purposes. This Guide should be referenced throughout the planning process and especially in advance of each regular HMPWG meeting to prepare for and provide information related to each step in the planning process. (Additional information or guidance, specific to a particular stage of the planning process, may also be provided within the detailed Agenda provided prior to each HMPWG meeting.)

To focus your review now, or at any specific stage of the process, you may refer to individual meeting Agenda or any specific information requested by the MRPC planning team, Ayer Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director, or another member of the HMPWG. Each HMPWG meeting will focus on one or more of the sections of the Ayer portion of the previous HMP (2015/2016 Montachusett Region HMP) and related topics and questions provided below as part of this Guide.

Please use the information below as guidance for reviewing the previous plan and to provide the information needed for each Phase or Task of the current HMP update:

Town of Ayer Excerpt from the 2015/2016 Regional HMP (pgs. 126-149):

Ayer Natural Hazards Risk Assessment

The information below pertains to critical facilities, flooding, risk assessment, existing protections and mitigation strategy in the community. More detailed information and descriptions of each natural hazard's impact on the region and its communities and a summary of the vulnerability associated with each hazard can be found in the regional section (main body of the plan), within "*Section 4. Identification of Natural Hazards, Identifying and Profiling Hazards*".

Community Profile:

- Please not any edits, additions, or other revisions needed within the Community Profile Section
- Are there any important aspects of the Town's natural, cultural, or historical resources or heritage that helped shape or define the community and are not mentioned here?
- Have there been any major changes in the community or has the overall vision, focus, or "feel" of the downtown area or any other areas changed since that time?
- How has the evolution of Devens's as a Regional Enterprise Zone benefited, impacted, or otherwise affected the Town of Ayer in the past 7 to 10 years?
- How might the future of Devens influence the Town over the next 5 to 10 years and into the future? Think Devens 2033...
- Is there no Historical Society for the Town of Ayer? What are the possible reasons behind this and are there potential cultural implications associated with those reasons? Are there future

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possibilities for the town to recapture its (lost) cultural and historical identity?
<https://www.ayer.ma.us/historical-commission/pages/historical-society>

Critical Facilities:

- Please review pg. 127 and Table 30 (pgs. 127-129), List of Critical Facilities and provide comments and revisions related to updates that are needed, items that should be removed, or items that should be added since the 2016 Plan.
- See also, Ayer CEMP 2022 and Town Infrastructure Report:
<https://www.ayer.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhliif2756/f/uploads/infrastructure.pdf>

Flood Prone Areas/Flooding Vulnerability Assessment:

- Table 31 (p. 131) will be updated based on any updates to Table 30 (List of Critical Facilities, see above), however, if there are any changes that should be made to this table please provide MRPC with comments and suggested revisions.
- Is the information on pgs. 131-132 still accurate?
- Have any revisions or amendments been made to the Town's Wetlands Protection Bylaw since 2016?
- Have any revisions or amendments been made to the Town Flood Plain District Bylaw since it was implemented or last updated (December 10, 1999)?
- Have the Stormwater (catch basins, drains, and culverts) and Waterbody maintenance programs continued and have any changes or additional procedures been implemented since 2016?
- Is the Cluster Development Bylaw still enforced as a tool to mitigate flooding?
- Have there been any new stormwater or subdivision Bylaws (e.g., Low Impact Development, Open Space or Natural Resource Protection Subdivision, stormwater infiltration or pre-treatment requirements, etc.) enacted since 2016?

Structurally Deficient Bridges Over Waterways and Hazard Potential Dams:

- Are there currently any structurally deficient bridges over waterways or other (non-classified) bridges with structural concerns or maintenance needs?
- MRPC will update Table 32 (p. 134-135), Dams list, with the newest DCR Office of Dam Safety data, but if you are aware of any changes (e.g., dam removal or repairs, or changes in status or ownership) since 2016, or other (smaller) non-regulated dams that pose a hazard or are in disrepair, feel free to provide any notes, comments, or suggested revisions.

Risk Assessment (Hazards):

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Based on the hazards identified in this plan and the assessment of risks by the Town of Ayer, the town considers itself to be at a high risk for Beavers, Heavy Severe Thunderstorms, and Ice Storms; low risk for Snow Melt, Ice Jams, Hurricanes, Blizzard, Major Urban Fires, Drought, Extreme Temperatures, Earthquakes and Landslides; and tsunamis as not applicable. This information was documented in the Ayer Natural Hazard Matrix (see pg. 136) which was obtained from participants at the Ayer Local Hazard Mitigation Team Meeting held on December 10, 2012 as part of the 2015/2016 HMP update. Please review the Ayer Natural Hazard Matrix and the Risk Assessment Section and consider the following questions and comments:

- Would you still agree with the risk assessments (i.e., "High Risk", "Low Risk") for each of the Hazards listed under the "Risk Assessment" section on p. 135?
- Do you think the classification of any Hazards are higher or lower now than they were in 2016?
- Please review the Matrix of Natural Hazards (p. 136) and consider the column (Likelihood, Location, Impacts) ratings and overall Hazard Index Score for each Hazard listed in the first column.
- Do the Hazards and their ratings and overall level of impact still seem consistent with present-day conditions and concerns? (These Hazards and their scores will be re-evaluated as part of the process of this Plan update.)
- Review the Hazards and associated Vulnerabilities/Risks represented within the Ayer "Local Hazards" map (p. 138).
- Are all of the mapped Hazards/Risks still relevant?
- Note any Hazards/Risks that are no longer a concern or have been fully addressed, substantially reduced, or otherwise mitigated since 2016.
- Identify any new or increased Hazards since 2016.
- Describe any Hazards identified within the MVP Plan that are not addressed within the HMP (and note any actions taken or mitigation or resilience work done to address those Hazards in response to that plan).
- Provide any other comments or suggest additional or new risks that may not be represented.
- For example, some hazards may have increased, some may have decreased, or some may have been successfully addressed or mitigated since the last Plan, while other Hazards or Risks may have arisen or become apparent since 2016.

Existing Protections (Capabilities Assessment):

- Please review the Existing Protections Table (Capabilities Assessment) and comment on any needed revisions, additions, or deletions.

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Mitigation Goals, Objectives, and Strategies:

- We will discuss the Mitigation Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (p. 142-144) at a later stage of the project, but feel free to make any comments you may have at this time.
- Please review the Implementation Strategy/Action Plan (p. 145-149) below and note any mitigation actions that have been accomplished since the last Plan (2016).
- Feel free to comment on changes in priority or ongoing actions and any changes or additions that may be needed.
- The Mitigation Goals, Objectives, and Strategies will be addressed and discussed in greater detail later in the project.
- The Actions achieved/implemented from the 2008 Ayer Hazard Mitigation Plan are listed on p. 149.
- What Actions have been achieved from the 2016 Plan (see Implementation Strategy/Action Plan Table above (p. 145-149)?

Mitigation Action Plans and Prioritization of Actions:

- Describe any actions accomplished or other steps taken to mitigate or increase resilience related to any of the Hazards or Actions/Goals identified within the Ayer MVP Plan (2020).
- Identify any mitigation actions or resiliency measures completed since the last plan, specifically those that are listed as priority actions within the '*AYER IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR PRIORITY MITIGATION ACTIONS*' table (pgs. 145 – 149).
- Identify any other general mitigation actions or measures completed since 2016 (consider those listed within the 2020 MVP Plan).