

TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD
All-Hazards Mitigation Plan



Town of Bloomfield
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Table of Contents

Prerequisites.....	3
Certificate of Local Adoption.....	3
Section One - Planning Process.....	4
1.1 Introduction and Purpose.....	4
1.2 About Bloomfield.....	5
1.3 Community History and Background.....	5
Section Two - Risk Assessment.....	6
2.1 Identifying Hazards.....	6
Table 2-A Hazard Identification.....	7
2.2 Profiling Hazards.....	7
Floods.....	7
Hazardous Materials.....	8
Structure Fires.....	8
Power Failure.....	8
Dams.....	8
2.3 Vulnerability: Overview.....	8
2.4 Identifying Structures.....	9
2.5 Estimating Potential Losses.....	9
2.6 Analyzing Development Trends.....	9
Section Three - Mitigation Strategy.....	9
Table 3-A Development Tools.....	10
3.1 Regional Hazard Mitigation Goals.....	10
3.2 Community Preparedness Goals.....	11
3.3 Existing Hazard Mitigation Programs.....	11
3.3.1 Emergency Management Planning.....	11
3.3.2 Codes and Standards.....	11
3.3.3 Local Planning and Zoning, NFIP.....	11
3.3.4 Protection of Town Records.....	11
3.3.5 School Drills.....	11
3.4 Preparedness Tools.....	11
3.5 Analysis of Mitigation Actions.....	12
3.6 Implementation of Mitigation Actions.....	13
Table 3-B Mitigation Projects by Priority.....	14
Section Four - Plan Maintenance Process.....	14
4.1 Initial Approval Process.....	14
4.2 Routine Plan Maintenance.....	14
4.3 Programs, Initiatives and Project Review.....	15
4.4 Post-Disaster Review Procedures.....	15
Section Five.....	16
5.1 Maps.....	16

Prerequisites

Certificate of Local Adoption

Town of Bloomfield

A Resolution Adopting the All-Hazards Mitigation Plan

WHEREAS, the Town of Bloomfield has worked with the Northeastern Vermont Development Association to identify hazards, analyze past and potential future losses due to natural and human-caused disasters, and identify strategies for mitigating future losses; and

WHEREAS, the Bloomfield All-Hazards Mitigation Plan contains recommendations, potential actions and future projects to mitigate damage from disasters in the Town of Bloomfield; and

WHEREAS, a meeting was held by the Bloomfield Selectboard to formally approve and adopt the Bloomfield All-Hazards Mitigation Plan as an annex to the Northeastern Vermont Development Association's (NVDA) All-Hazards Mitigation Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Bloomfield Selectboard adopts The Bloomfield All- Hazards Mitigation Plan Annex as well as the associated NVDA All-Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Date

Selectboard Chair

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Attested to by Town Clerk

Section One - Planning Process

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

This Annex, when used with the appropriate sections of the basic NVDA All-Hazards Plan, is an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Town of Bloomfield. The purpose of this plan is to assist the Town of Bloomfield to identify all hazards facing the community and identify strategies to begin reducing risks from identified hazards. A Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Grant to the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) assisted the Town of Bloomfield in preparing this plan.

The impact of expected, but unpredictable natural and human-caused events can be reduced through community planning. The goal of this plan is to provide all-hazards local mitigation strategies that make the communities in northeastern Vermont more disaster resistant.

Hazard Mitigation is any sustained action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from natural and human-caused hazards and their effects. Based on the results of previous efforts, FEMA and state agencies have come to recognize that it is less expensive to prevent disasters than to get caught in a repetitive repair cycle after disaster have struck. This plan recognizes that communities have opportunities to identify mitigation strategies and measures during all of the other phases of Emergency Management – Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Hazards cannot be eliminated, but it is possible to determine what they are, where they might be most severe and identify local actions that can be taken to reduce the severity of the hazards.

Hazard mitigation strategies and measures alter the hazard by eliminating or reducing the frequency of occurrence, avert the hazard by redirecting the impact by means of a structure or land treatment, adapt the hazard by modifying structures or standards or avoid the hazard by stopping or limiting development and could include projects such as:

- Flood proofing structures
- Tying down propane/fuel tanks in flood prone areas
- Elevating structures
- Identifying high accident locations
- Monitor and protect drinking water supplies
- Enlarge or upgrade culverts and road standards
- Proactive local planning
- Ensuring that critical facilities are safely located
- Providing public information

1.2 About Bloomfield

Population: 263
Median Housing Value: \$54,606
Essex County
Chartered: June 29, 1762 ([New Hampshire Grant](#))
Area: 25,771 Acres / 40.27 Square Miles
Coordinates (Geographic Center): 71°38'W 44°45'N
Altitude ASL: 912 feet
Population Density (persons per square mile): 6.5
Tax Rate: \$2.057 ('03)
Equalized Value: \$19,111,895 ('03)

1.3 Community History and Background

Located in the rural Northeast Kingdom of Essex County, Vermont, the Town of Bloomfield is across the Connecticut River from North Stratford, New Hampshire and approximately 15 miles from the Canadian border. The terrain is considered hilly/mountainous with the Nulhegan River valley in lower elevations. The two main roads are Vermont Highways 102 and 105. Large trucks, especially logging trucks between the US and Canada, travel on these roads regularly as connectors to larger interstate highways. The St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad parallels Route 105, as does the Nulhegan River that empties into the Connecticut River.

Bloomfield does not have a town plan but has adopted flood hazard regulations and they are in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There is a community public water system that serves several structures in the village area. This system is checked regularly and is locked. Residents and businesses have onsite septic systems for their waste

The local emergency shelter is located the Town Clerk's Office, one of several local historic buildings in the village area. a secondary shelter is located across the river in No. Stratford. The Town Clerk's building is located in the flood plain and has received some damage in the past. There is a small general store nearby store with gas pumps.

Fire and rescue services come from Colebrook, New Hampshire, which is the closest town with these services. Colebrook is located about seven miles from the village area of Bloomfield. Their response time is about 30 minutes. There are two bridge access points to New Hampshire over the Connecticut River. The Murphy Dam up river has an inundation plan on file with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Conservation. Colebrook also has a hospital. Groveton, N.H. also provides service for ambulance requests. When 911 is dialed, the dispatch is in Colebrook.

There is no school in Bloomfield, so the 49 students in grades K-12 can attend school in Canaan, VT, Colebrook or Groveton, N.H. There are approximately 50 seasonal camps in Bloomfield off the East Branch and Nulhegan river systems. These are on dirt roads and not maintained year round.

There are no nursing homes or day care centers that are considered special needs populations. There are no known persons using Lifeline in Bloomfield.

Electrical power is provided by Vermont Electric Coop and can go out as frequently as once a week for several hours at a time. There is at least one farm that has a generator for back up power. Communications for cell phones and radio signals are poor in Bloomfield. There are no public radio signals that reach the area because of mountain peaks interrupting the radio waves. The first responders from New Hampshire have constant problems with communications when serving the area.

Section Two - Risk Assessment

2.1 Identifying Hazards

Meeting Date: 8/16/04

Meeting Attendees: Gerald Routhier, Lance Walling, Sherry Belknap, Paulette Routhier

Bloomfield local officials identified several hazards that are addressed in this annex. These were identified through interviewing the Selectboard members and the town clerk. These individuals have a thorough working knowledge of the community through many years of living in the town and being familiar with local issues.

Table 2-A Hazard Identification

Possible Hazard	Likelihood	Impact	Community Vulnerability	Most Vulnerable
Tornado	Low	Low	Low	Depends – 1977 Black Brook
Flood	High	High	High	Village Area
Flash Flood	Medium	Medium	Medium	See above
Hazardous Materials (RR)	High	High	High	Roads - mostly 105, not so much 102
Radiological Incident	Low	Low	Low	Residents
Structure Fire	Low	Low	Low	Residences. Average 1/year
Power Failure	High	Medium	Medium	Residences, businesses (see ice storm)
Winter Storm/Ice	Low/Med	Low	Low	Residences, businesses
High Wind	Low	Low	Low	Trees down, loss of power
Air crash	Low	Low	Low	Site specific
Water Supply Contamination	Low	Low	Low	Public water supply, rivers.
Hurricane/High Winds	Low	Low	Low	Power lines, residences
Earthquake	Low	Low	Low	Site specific
Dam Failures (Murphy Dam)	Low (High)	Low (High)	Low (High)	Residences, businesses, infrastructure.
Drought	Low	Low	Low	Water supply
Chemical or Biological Incident	Low	Low	Low	Site specific * Railroad could be damaging
Highway Incidents	Low	Low	Low	Site specific
Wildfire/Forest Fire	Low	Low	Low	Farms, sugar bushes, residences
Landslide	Low/Med	Low	Low	Site specific – 102 North
School Safety Issues	n/a			Students, teachers, hostage issues
Terrorism	Low	Low	Low	Residents, businesses, local officials

The highest risks to Bloomfield are: flood, hazardous materials, power failure, Murphy Dam failure.

2.2 Profiling Hazards

Floods

There has been no flood damage in the past that has qualified for FEMA assistance. There are no properties that have been identified as repetitively damaged using FEMA funds, although some properties have received repetitive on a lesser scale. The village area of Bloomfield gets backed up regularly with flooding. There have been several town roads that have received some flood damage due to washouts, but not of a major scale.

Hazardous Materials

The highest potential threat to Bloomfield is the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Rail Line. There are hazardous materials on board and the tracks are perceived as not well maintained. There have been derailments north of Bloomfield in Norton. The tracks are adjacent to Route 105 where much of the population lives. The general store is located between the railroad tracks and Route 105, near the intersection of Route 105 and 102. There are propane tanks, and liquid nitrogen tanks as well as other caustic materials on the train. There are underground gas tanks at the store. A hazardous incident near the Nulhegan or Connecticut Rivers could severely impair the water quality.

Structure Fires

While structure fires were not mentioned as a high threat to Bloomfield, it should be noted that there are one or two structure fires per year and service is from Colebrook, with at least a 30 minute response time. Bloomfield is working on installing a dry hydrant to have a year round water source for the pumper trucks.

Power Failure

Power failures occur frequently and can be out for several hours at a time. This is typically due to high winds and heavy snow or ice causing power lines to collapse. Due to the remoteness of Bloomfield, it can take some time to get crew to the area to repair the lines. Most residences have back up heat and store water in preparation for these outages.

Dams

The Murphy Dam is upstream on the Connecticut River bordering Canada and New Hampshire. The dam is a large earthen dam holding back Lake Francis, built approximately 70 years ago, that impounds a large expanse of the river. This dam is monitored 24 hours per day and is perhaps the highest potential risk to the community of Bloomfield. An inundation plan is on file with the State of New Hampshire, State of Vermont, and all towns below the dam for 81 miles until the Centennial Mill Dam is reached in Gilman, Vt. Should this dam breach, it is estimated that the peak flow could be 10-18 feet above the 100-year flood limit peaking at approximately 12 hours after the Murphy Dam breach. An early warning system of reverse 911, combined with sirens, is needed to address this potential disaster. Presently the warning would be dispatched through Derby and there may be a significant (20 minute) lag time depending on accurate warnings from above the Murphy dam. A segment of a copy of the inundation map is attached.

2.3 Vulnerability: Overview

In terms of vulnerability, Bloomfield rated these potential hazards below as High or Medium-High threat: **Floods, Hazardous Materials, Power Failures and Dams**. Fire, drought, highway incidents, school safety issues and terrorism were considered medium threats to Bloomfield. Mitigation strategies are identified for the highest priority projects in Section Three. Only those hazards that were identified as a high risk to the town were profiled. While other types of hazards may cause smaller problems for the community, they pose a lower risk.

2.4 Identifying Structures

It is difficult to estimate the total number of structures in the 100-year limit of the FIRM identified floodplain as those maps do not accurately match up to the E911 maps that are based on the structures' geographical location (latitude and longitude). However, it can be estimated that there are approximately 50 structures in or near the flood areas depicted on the NFIP maps and the Murphy Dam Inundation Map.

2.5 Estimating Potential Losses

Future losses should be lessened through mitigation of the repetitively flooded properties, most of which are roads, bridges and culverts. The FIRM maps are not compatible with the GIS maps containing contour, rivers, roads and structures and it is not possible to estimate the amount of potential loss at this time. It is recommended that the NFIP maps be redone using the Vermont Geographic Information System standards based on orthophoto mapping.

The Median Housing Value (MHV) for Bloomfield in 2003 was \$54,606. The Equalized Value for all properties in Bloomfield in 2003 was \$19,111,895. If one percent (1%) of all properties in Bloomfield were damaged, the value would be assessed at \$19,112. There have been no past FEMA damages over the last 16 years, so the damage is not expected to be large unless the Murphy Dam were to breach. Under this scenario, the entire Connecticut River Valley would be devastated with total loss of property and life.

2.6 Analyzing Development Trends

Bloomfield is not a rapidly growing community. The town has flood zoning regulations in place to guard against future development in flood prone areas. All buildings being improved in or near frequently flooded areas are required to elevate or provide additional mitigation measures.

Population Increase 2000 to 2003

Town	Estimated Pop 2003	Census Pop 2000	Increase
Bloomfield	263	261	2 persons

Section Three - Mitigation Strategy

Hazard Mitigation Strategies and Measures **avoid** the hazard by stopping or limiting new exposures in known hazard areas, **alter** the hazard by eliminating or reducing the frequency of occurrence, **avert** the hazard by redirecting the impact by means of a structure or land treatment, **adapt** to the hazard by modifying structures or standards and could include tools or projects such as:

- **Town Plan** - Bloomfield does not have a town plan. This document would contain goals and objectives for community growth, health, safety and welfare for public and private interests.

- **Zoning Status** – This is a snapshot of the current zoning tools in effect. Note the progress listed above for some communities.
- **NFIP** – National Flood Hazard Insurance Program.
- **C & S = Highway Codes and Standards** – Most all Vermont communities have adopted the Vermont Transportation Agencies recommended Highway Codes and Standards. This is perhaps the one most beneficial mitigation program in Vermont and the NVDA region. By adopting these codes, all maintenance and new construction on roads, highways, bridges and culverts must be enhanced to meet the new standards to withstand large flood events.
- **VTRC** – Bloomfield does not have a Vermont Red Cross Shelter Pre-Agreement. When a Pre-Agreement is in effect, local representatives are trained to open a shelter if needed. This will allow for a more efficient use of the VT Red Cross if and when needed.
- **Emergency Operation Plan (EOP)** – Bloomfield is in the process of having its EOP updated to include all-hazards through a Homeland Security Grant to the NVDA. This plan will be substantially completed by July 2005 and will include this Plan as its risk assessment to all-hazards.
- **Rapid Response Plan (RRP)** – Bloomfield has updated its RRP as of August 20, 2004.
- **Emergency Training** - Fire and rescue personnel from Colebrook continue to participate in training offered for its volunteers, particularly with the equipment upgrades through the Dept. of Homeland Security.

Table 3-A Development Tools

Town	Town Plan	Zoning	NFIP	Flood Regs	Sub-division	Codes & Standards	Culvert Inv.	Vermont Red Cross Pre-Agreement	Maps FIRM
Bloomfield	N	N	YES	YES	N	N	N	N	YES

3.1 Regional Hazard Mitigation Goals

- Reduce the loss of life and injury resulting from all hazards.
- Mitigate financial losses incurred by municipal, residential, industrial, agricultural and commercial establishments due to disasters.
- Reduce the damage to public infrastructure resulting from all hazards.
- Recognize the connections between land use, storm-water road design and maintenance and the effects from disasters.
- Ensure that mitigation measures are compatible with the natural features of community rivers, streams and other surface waters; historic resources; character of neighborhoods; and the capacity of the community to implement them.
- Encourage all-hazard mitigation planning as a part of the municipal planning process.

3.2 Community Preparedness Goals

Overall, Bloomfield is working to decrease its risk to flooding, water supply contamination and hazardous material incidents through proactive planning, policies and mitigation actions. Other lesser risks are being addresses through the same procedures and policies.

- Review this plan with essential town government.
- Review and study the need for additional capacity and capability in the Fire Department to minimize the impact of a HAZMAT incident.
- Ensure that all emergency response and management personnel receive HAZMAT Awareness training as a minimum.

3.3 Existing Hazard Mitigation Programs

Bloomfield has been proactive in planning its future as well as protecting its citizens from potential disasters. Bloomfield is located in such an area that is rural and not overly susceptible to severe hazards that could impact the community.

3.3.1 Emergency Management Planning

Bloomfield has recently updated their Rapid Response Plan.

3.3.2 Codes and Standards

Bloomfield has adopted the recommended Highway Codes and Standards that require regular upgrades on bridges, highways, ditching and culverts to avoid flood damage.

3.3.3 Local Planning and Zoning, NFIP

Bloomfield has adopted Flood Hazard Zoning. They are a member of the National Flood Insurance Program. All development in or near the identified flood areas must conform to zoning standards.

3.3.4 Protection of Town Records

The Town office has a vault to protect public records from fire, damage or theft/vandalism.

3.3.5 School Drills

The surrounding schools that take the K-12 Bloomfield students practice regular evacuation drills.

3.4 Preparedness Tools

Public Awareness, Training, Education

- Conduct Emergency Drills involving all elements of the community to practice procedures associated with a simulated varies incidents.
- Use this plan for Hazard Identification and Mapping.

Public Protection

- Designate shelters.
- Emergency communications and information systems (NOAA weather receivers, Emergency Alert System (EAS)) are at the Command Center.
- Update Hazard Vulnerability Assessments as needed.
- Review and modify evacuation and sheltering plans based on the results of drills and exercises or procedures implemented in an actual incident.
- American Red Cross chapter may be contacted to assist with community education programs.
- Maintain current Rapid Response Plans and the Emergency Management Operations Plans.
- Regularly scheduled maintenance programs are ongoing (culvert survey & replacement, ditching along roadways, cutting vegetation to allow visibility at intersections).
- The town is proactive in preparing for potential disasters.

Financial and Tax Incentives.

- Use State and Federal funding for mitigation projects and activities.

Hazard Control and Protective Works.

- Utilize regular maintenance programs (culvert survey & replacement, ditching along roadways, cutting vegetation to allow visibility at intersections).

Insurance Programs.

- Participate in NFIP.

Land Use Planning/Management: Flood.

- Bloomfield has flood zoning. They have established Flood Hazard Areas through the NFIP.

Protection/Retrofit of Infrastructure and Critical Facilities.

- A map of Critical Facilities is attached.

3.5 Analysis of Mitigation Actions

Priority Actions:

Local officials in Bloomfield have identified several mitigation actions to be included in the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Table 3-B, Implementation Strategy contains these actions, along with the responsible agency, the funding source, and implementation timeframe.

The Bloomfield local officials have prioritized the actions using the STAPLE+E criteria, a planning tool used to evaluate alternative actions. The following table explains the STAPLE+E criteria.

S – Social	Mitigation actions are acceptable to the community if they do not adversely affect a particular segment of the population, do not cause relocation of lower income people, and if they are compatible with the community’s social and cultural views.
T – Technical	Mitigation actions are technically most effective if they provide long-term reduction of losses and have minimal secondary adverse impacts.
A – Administrative	Mitigation actions are easier to implement if the jurisdiction has the necessary staffing and funding.
P – Political	Mitigation actions can truly be successful if all stakeholders have been offered an opportunity to participate in the planning process and if there is public support for the action.
L – Legal	It is critical that the jurisdiction or implementing agency have the legal authority to implement and enforce a mitigation action.
E – Economic	Budget constraints can significantly deter the implementation of mitigation actions. Hence, it is important to evaluate whether an action is cost-effective, as determined by a cost benefit review, and possible to fund.
E – Environmental	Sustainable mitigation actions that do not have an adverse effect on the environment, that comply with Federal, State, and local environmental regulations, and that are consistent with the community’s environmental goals, have mitigation benefits while being environmentally sound.

3.6 Implementation of Mitigation Actions

Flooding and the potential for hazardous material incidents are the two main threats to Bloomfield. Local officials are proactive in preparing for the hazards for which they are most vulnerable. Their highest priority concern is the health safety and welfare of the local citizens and businesses. There are concerns that center around a flood event with the Connecticut River and the potential for a hazardous incident on Routes 102, 105 or the railroad that might impact their community.

The mitigation action determined to have the highest priority was the most cost effective alternative to the community. Readiness and timeliness of project was also important.

The evaluating of the STAPLEE criteria is takes into consideration the best available information, any engineering evaluations, and best judgment. The action listed in Table 3-B is important to community, cost effective and feasibility to the community.

Table 3-B Mitigation Projects by Priority

Project/Priority	Mitigation Action	Who is Responsible	Time Frame and Potential Funding	Initial Implementation Steps
Reverse 911 or Siren HIGH	Will provide an early warning system for flooding.	Selectboard	ASAP pending funding. FEMA – FMA, HMGP	Seek cost of implementation, public education.
GIS mapping of NFIP areas - MEDIUM	Identify flood areas with vulnerable structures consistent with Vermont GIS mapping effort.	Northeastern Vermont Development Association	2006/7 – FEMA FMA funds, HMGP or EMPG funds	Coordinated statewide NFIP mapping effort for all towns.
Improve Communications	Provide better responder communication and get better reception for public broadcasting programs.	Selectboard	ASAP – HMGP, Vermont Public Service Board, Homeland Security	Choose a lead on this project and evaluate grant sources and existing programs to enhance communications.

Section Four - Plan Maintenance Process

4.1 Initial Approval Process

In addition to public involvement in the initial development of the plan, opportunities for public comment will include a warned adoption to review the plan prior to final adoption. The fire chief has been instrumental in participating in the review of the document with the local officials.

After local review and comment, the draft local annex is presented to the State Hazard Mitigation Committee through the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) for review and comment. The SHMO will issue a recommendation for forwarding the plan to the FEMA Region I. After receipt of comments from FEMA Region I staff, final changes will be made and the resulting document adopted by the Bloomfield Selectboard. The final plan will be returned to FEMA Region I for formal approval.

4.2 Routine Plan Maintenance

The Hazard Mitigation Plan is dynamic and changing. To ensure that the plan remains current it is important that it be updated periodically. The plan shall be updated every five years, pending ongoing financial resources, in accordance with the following procedure:

- 4.2.1 The Bloomfield Selectboard will either act as the review committee or appoint a review committee.
- 4.2.2 The committee will discuss the process to determine if the evaluation criteria is still appropriate or modifications or additions are needed to the mitigation strategies based on changing conditions since the last update

- occurred. Data needs will be reviewed, data sources identified and responsibility for collecting information will be assigned to members.
- 4.2.3 A draft report will be prepared based on the evaluation criteria and in conformance with the FEMA Region I Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Crosswalk document.
 - 4.2.4 The Selectboard will have the opportunity to review the draft report. Consensus will be reached on changes to the draft.
 - 4.2.5 Changes will be incorporated into the document.
 - 4.2.6 The plan will be reviewed by Vermont Emergency Management (SHMO) staff and then FEMA Region I staff.
 - 4.2.7 VEM and FEMA comments will be incorporated into the plan.
 - 4.2.8 The Selectboard will warn the plan for approval at its regular meeting.
 - 4.2.9 The Selectboard will incorporate any community comments into the plan.
 - 4.2.10 The Selectboard will finalize and adopt the plan and distribute to interested persons.

4.3 Programs, Initiatives and Project Review

Although the plan will be reviewed, pending ongoing financial resources, in its entirety every five years the town may review and update its programs, initiatives and projects more often based on the above procedure as changing needs and priorities arise.

4.4 Post-Disaster Review Procedures

Should a declared disaster occur, a special review will occur in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Within six (6) months of a declared emergency event, the town will initiate a post-disaster review and assessment.
2. This post-disaster review and assessment will document the facts of the event and assess whether existing Hazard Modification Plans effectively addressed the hazard.
3. A draft report After Action Report of the assessment will be distributed to the Review/ Update Committee.
4. A meeting of the committee will be convened by the Selectboard to make a determination whether the plan needs to be amended. If the committee determines that NO modification of the plan is needed. Then the report is distributed to interested parties.
5. If the committee determines that modification of the plan IS needed, then the committee drafts an amended plan based on the recommendations and forwards it to the Selectboard for public input.
6. The Selectboard adopts the amended plan.

Section Five

5.1 Maps

Map A - Local Areas of Concern Map and Essential Facilities Map

