

# Public Meeting #1

## City of Medford | Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

January 27, 2025

### ATTENDEES

Brenda Pike, Laurel Siegel, Bob Paine, Mark Babetski, Erin Dalbec, Elizabeth Dowey, Marie Cassidy, Samira Hayek, Charble Hayek, Lizette Carteiro

### PROJECT TEAM

MaryAnn O'Connor (Medford Health Director & Emergency Manger), Andreeanne Breton-Carbonneau (Principal & Project Director, ACBC Consulting), Kiara Tanta-Quidgeon (Project Coordinator, ACBC Consulting)

**ACBC:** ACBC Consulting (Consultant Vendor)

**DCR:** Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation

**FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**HMP:** Hazard Mitigation Plan

**MHD:** Medford Health Department

**MVP:** Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

**PDS:** Medford Office of Planning, Development, & Sustainability

### **Bold: Public Response**

Highlight: Medford point of interest

### MINUTES FROM PUBLIC COMMENT

#### Local Hazards

- Previously lived in **West Medford** close to the river: concerns of flooding. Now, moved up to the **Fells** and is worried about potential fires
  - The issue in Medford (and Massachusetts) - there are a lot of different agencies you have to get approval from. Who is responsible for this land?
    - **MHD: DCR**

- Are there any clean-up efforts in the Fells that would limit potential fire spread?
- Power lines are above ground and pose a fire risk. Is the city considering burying power lines like other communities do? Why doesn't Medford do this?
- Flooding is a key issue
  - Asheville, North Carolina had no idea that could happen to them
  - What do we have a plan for? Do we have maps and models?
    - **MHD: Previous plans included modeling to identify flood-prone areas and assess which locations would be most impacted**
    - **MHD: The Planning Committee includes the Engineering Department and Building Department who are helping us, as well**
- How much are we planning to apply for from the federal government?
  - **MHD: Depends on the mitigation project - the Hazard Mitigation Plan provides the city with access to substantial FEMA grants designed to support resilience and risk reduction efforts.**
- Regarding flood maps - the maps presented show the likelihood of risk but do not show the severity of risk - are we using the best data?
  - **ACBC: There is a ranking of severity (as a risk analysis looking at the impact on life and property)**
  - **ACBC: Will look into existing maps on flood depth and previous flooding areas**
- Comment that **Berry Park** does not drain when it rains
- Dam failure concerns
  - **Amelia Earhart Dam**
  - Horn Pond Dam in Woburn
  - **ACBC: Will include a table of all the Middlesex County dams with risk of failure in the HMP.**
  - Sewage overflow from flooding of the **Mystic River** - collateral risk of flooding = contamination
  - Another collateral risk = power loss
  - **ACBC: Direct and indirect risks/impacts will be included in the plan**
- Is the HMP integrating the upcoming zoning changes?

- **ACBC: The HMP Planning Committee includes members of the Office of Planning, Development & Sustainability (PDS) currently reviewing local zoning**
- **PDS: New zoning changes will be implementing a green score for new development and new major renovations**
- **West Medford** area - amount of area being tared over, trees being cut = for housing
  - Loss of permeable surfaces
  - **PDS: Planting program going on - the city received an MVP grant for tree canopy implementation**
  - More trees are cut than planted every year - the big trees are cut and small ones are planted. Not enough to cover what has been removed.

### Community Assets & Other Areas of Priority

**ACBC: We want to understand areas and spaces that the community feels are critical**

- Climate Equity Council is concerned about the area on **Main Street + Salem Street** - storm water drain system gets overwhelmed when there is heavy rain
  - Are there any measures being taken to improve the system?
  - Is there anything we can do as a community?
- Water pipes - lead (notice sent out to some residents)
- Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is concerned about water contamination and may be a great HMP resource
  - **ACBC: Medford is connected to MyRWA through the Resilient Mystic Collaborative (RMC) and will be reaching out to them as a resource**
- Concerned about places along the edge of the lower **Mystic Lake** - knotweed (destroys the integrity of the soil and the local plants that keep the soil in place)
  - Invasive species. Important to catch it before it goes crazy (can see it along the **bike paths** in Medford and in other places in Arlington)
  - **ACBC: Ecosystems is a key consideration we are integrating into the HMP**
- In a town west of Medford, there was an ice storm that knocked the power out.

- Is Medford prepared for a severe ice storm that could knock out the power lines for an extended period?

### Public Participation

- Lean on the Medford Connects Community Engagement team for support
- Survey Suggestions
  - Post idea boxes on hazards, areas of concern, etc. throughout the city at schools, community centers
    - **ACBC: Great for the HMP process. More challenging year-long or between-update cycles**
    - **ACBC: To put together a system for retrieving or picking up cards**
  - Surveys can reach more people if we include them in the Medford newsletter or Medford Public School emails
  - Surveys could be conducted in two rounds: 50 during colder months to focus on cold-related impacts and 50 as temperatures warm to capture seasonal differences.
    - **ACBC: Good idea. We will need to ensure the approach does not interfere with the timeline**
  - Could add the survey to the water bill (every homeowner gets one)
    - **MHD: We will have to look into the costs of this type of mailer**