

2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Executive Summary

Overview

What is a Hazard Mitigation Plan and why does Medford need one?

The Medford Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is a five-year roadmap for reducing the impacts of hazards like floods, storms, and extreme weather.

It highlights projects and actions the City can take ahead of time to reduce risks, protect people and property, and limit future damage.

Core Considerations:

- Ensuring all residents have access to communications about preparing and responding to all hazards, regardless of English literacy.
- Protecting and strengthening our infrastructures and natural spaces so that our community is better prepared for natural and manmade hazards.
- Complying with all FEMA requirements

1

Federal Requirement

Required by the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

2

Community Protection

Helps minimize loss and damage from natural disasters

3

FEMA Funding

Required to remain eligible for FEMA grants and recovery funding

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Community Voices

Community engagement as part of HMP update

105 Surveys

5 Conversation Groups

Integrating Community voices in the HMP update

Residents emphasized the need for:

1

Financial support including home improvements to prepare for hazards

2

Reliable emergency communication, especially for people with limited English literacy

3

Stronger neighborhood support systems for seniors, caregivers, and people with chronic health conditions

4

Better coordination between the city and trusted community-based organizations

Community voices directly influenced the HMP update:

- Lived experiences from residents informed our understanding of hazard risks.
- Helped set the goals and actions Medford will take to reduce these hazard risks.

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Hazard Identification

Flooding Events

Highest Risk

Flooding happens when water covers normally dry land. It can be caused by heavy rain, rising water levels, or dam failure.



Photo by City of Medford

Flooding is among the most frequent hazard in Medford. Each year, residents are likely to experience mild to moderate impacts like power and roadway disruptions.

Since 2004, Medford has had **13 floods**, causing nearly \$14 million in damage.

Flooding risk will likely increase as climate change causes heavier rainfall and rising water levels.

Storm Events

Moderate to High Risk

A **storm** is severe weather – such as wind, rain, snow, or ice – that can harm people, damage buildings, and disrupt services like power or transportation.

The most common storms are **winter storms**, which can make travel hazardous on icy roads, down trees, and disrupt power.

When storms **disrupt power**, heatwaves and cold fronts become even more dangerous.

Medford faces multiple types of less common yet devastating **storms**:

- Nor'easters
- Hurricanes and tropical storms
- Tornadoes

Extreme Temperature

Lower Risk

Extreme temperature refers to an area experiencing temperatures much hotter or colder than normal.

Medford experiences summer **heatwaves** and winter **cold fronts**, both of which can threaten health and safety.

Extreme heat and **cold** can threaten health, especially for older adults, young children, unhoused people, and those without proper heating or cooling.

Extreme temperatures are expected to become more frequent as climate change continues.

Geological Hazards

Lower Risk

Geological hazards include **brush fires**, **droughts**, **earthquakes**, and **landslides**.

Although uncommon in Medford, they can still cut power, disrupt transportation, and harm the environment and wildlife.

Medford's most common geological hazard is **drought**, which can strain water supplies, harm the environment, and raise the risk of brush fires.



Photo by Troy Sankey

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Mitigation Goals and Actions



Increase Public Service Capacity

Increase **public service capacity** and support the growth of equitable, hazard-resilient neighborhoods.

Example Activities

- Replace at least 50% of known lead service lines by 2029, prioritizing vulnerable populations for early replacement.
- Pilot an opt-in registration system for facilities serving residents with access or functional needs.
- Hold an internal meeting between city staff and Medford's primary transit provider to identify low-cost options for improving transportation access during emergencies.



Improve Communication Systems

Reduce hazard damage by **improving communication systems**, including support for people with different English literacy levels.

Example Activities

- Create and distribute a multilingual "Emergency Preparedness 101" information sheet with key contacts.
- Translate all public alert system messages into at least 5 languages.
- Promote SeeClickFix platform, with attention to seniors, people with disabilities, young families, and immigrant communities through a multilingual campaign.
- Host at least two virtual emergency preparedness or hazard mitigation workshops annually through 2029

Strengthen and Protect Infrastructure

Protect public structures and infrastructure while boosting the **climate resilience** of city buildings and grounds.

Example Activities

- Apply for funding for shovel-ready drainage improvements at Main Street and Mystic Avenue.
- Complete Meetinghouse Brook drainage improvements.
- Coordinate with utility providers for tree trimming to reduce power outage risks.
- Collaborate with MA DOT to conduct a traffic safety audit of high-incident areas and propose redesigns for at least 3 priority zones.

