



Town of Brookfield, Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

Public Presentation: August 5th, 2026

What is hazard mitigation? What is a mitigation plan?

- Hazard mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of natural disasters.
- Mitigation is not disaster response; its goal is to reduce hazard impacts before a disaster occurs.
- A mitigation plan identifies natural hazards and the risks they pose to residents, infrastructure, property, and natural resources. It prioritizes projects, policies, education, and procedures for reducing these risks, now and in the future.
- Mitigation helps break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

Why should Brookfield complete and adopt this kind of plan?

- Natural hazard mitigation planning establishes a road map for achievable actions that can substantially reduce risks.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that cities and towns adopt and update a natural Hazard Mitigation Plan to be eligible for various FEMA pre-disaster and post-fire hazard mitigation grants.
- This plan is primarily funded by a grant from FEMA through MEMA (with a local in-kind match).
- FEMA and Brookfield Select Board adopted the Town's last natural hazard mitigation plan in August 2018, and this plan expired in August 2023.

What natural hazards pose the greatest risks to Brookfield?

- Largest risks: Severe snowstorms/ ice storms / Nor'easters, severe thunderstorms / wind
- Moderate risks: Flooding, hurricanes, drought, invasive species
- Lower risks: wildfire, extreme temperatures, earthquakes

Local partners

Local knowledge is essential to the mitigation planning process. Partners in Brookfield to date include:

- Steve Rich, Tantasqua Regional School District, Representative
- Clarence R. Snyder III, Agricultural Commission, Chairperson
- Marylou Knight, Council on Aging, Board Member
- Donna Lafleur, Brookfield EMS, Chief
- Lindsey Rockwood, Highway Department, Grant Coordinator (former)
- Ron Aponte, Town Administrator's Office, Town Administrator (former)
- Peter Martell, Fire Department, Fire Chief
- Michael Blanchard, Police Department, Police Chief

Planning timeline

- Information gathering via mapping, research, and local input **August 2024 to present**
- Draft plan development **January 2025 – June 2026**
 - Public comments/questions are requested within two weeks of the draft plan being posted on the town website following this presentation.
- Public presentation #1 **August 2026**



- MEMA review
- FEMA approval and local adoption
- 5-year update

Anticipated Fall 2026
Anticipated Winter 2026
2031

Recent/ongoing mitigation activities include:

- Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
- Tree trimming program
- Maintaining and replacing problem culverts when needed and as funding allows
- Compliance with the state building code
- Vegetative debris program
- Dam monitoring
- Connect CTY hazard warning system and notifications
- Education and outreach
- Plans, regulations, and studies

Recommended high priority mitigation strategies in the DRAFT plan
Structure and Infrastructure Strategies

- Replace a 36" culvert, 20' in length, on Rice Corner Cross Road that is about to collapse, in order to decrease the flood risk in tis area.
- Implement a vegetative debris management program to reduce debris and thereby mitigate risk of stormwater flooding, riverine flooding, winter storm damage, etc.
- Increase the amount of vegetative debris that is clear from fire roads to include a 10 foot area on each side in order to mitigate the risk of wildland fire.
- Sweep streets at least annually to increase stormwater management capacity; capture & dispose of appropriately.
- Annually clean all stormwater structures and basins.
- Locate and identify using GPS all catch basins, drainage infrastructure (DI), culverts, bridges, etc.
- Enhance needed tree trimming throughout town to protect utility wires; enhance coordination with utility to implement a systematic approach to tree trimming.
- Identify Owners of nearby Man-O-Name #20 Dam (MA01932) and bring them into compliance with Office of Dam Safety. Develop an emergency Action plan for this dam and identify what should be done to reduce the risk of this dam, as well as whether to repair, retrofit, or remove the dam and restore the local ecology.

Preparedness, Coordination, and Response Strategies

- Investigate shelter/emergency resources to develop a town emergency shelter. Identify an appropriate site for a town shelter.
- Investigate the benefits and requirements of the Community Rating System (CRS) and decide whether to participate in this program or not.
- Continue to implement Unified Command
- Incorporate town EMS and other first responders into radio interoperability between the Highway, Police, and Fire departments for seamless radio communication
- Promote the use of local WACF-LP Radio Station for sending out emergency communications
- Participate in National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) (or other) training offered by the State and/or FEMA that addresses flood hazard planning and management



Education and Awareness Strategies

- Promote use of federal & state resources related to disaster mitigation such as training, educational materials & National Weather Service forecasts
- Develop means of sharing information on a regional basis about successful disaster mitigation planning & programs, such as mutual aid agreements
- Continue to support mutual aid agreements between safety agencies
- Continue to support the Regional Highway Equipment Sharing Co-Op
- Achieve Firewise Community Designation.
- Provide information to residents and businesses on water conservation through reduction in use, low-impact landscaping and other low-cost measures (in part to conserve water for firefighting)

Local Plan and Regulation Strategies

- Incorporate flood protection measures when critical structures located in floodplains are rebuilt or renovated
- Incorporate hazard mitigation actions into appropriate local and regional plans - Master Plans, Open Space and Recreation Plans, land use planning, transportation planning, and capital programming
- Seek funding to review the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) on an annual basis and to update it every five years
- Continue to enforce and comply with MA Wetlands Protection Act (WPA)
- Pursue funding that builds local capacity and supports grant writing for mitigation actions identified in the local and regional HMPs
- Develop and enhance working relationships with utility companies; ensure satellite spaces within each community for temporary emergency headquarters
- Improve hazard warning systems and notifications to vulnerable populations
- Enforce seismic standards in the State's Building Code, and identify earthquake vulnerable structures in town and develop site specific strategies to address risks to those structures from earthquakes
- Develop a Climate Action Plan
- Continue to identify hazard prone buildings as new threats are identified
- Integrate hazard mitigation concerns into subdivision, site plan review, 40B reviews, and other zoning reviews. In particular, require the consideration of downstream flooding impacts caused by new projects—even if the impacts cross town lines—and urban/wildland interface concerns in high-risk areas. Work on model bylaw language for urban/wildland interface and model parking standards to reduce the amount of impervious coverage
- Participate in the development and implementation of the Regional Community Wildfire Protection Plan with East Brookfield, West Brookfield and North Brookfield
- Participate in the development and implementation of the Regional Evacuation Plan

The draft plan with the full list of mitigation strategies will be available on Brookfield's town website.

Comments and questions should be directed to Charlotte Leavitt (cleavitt@cmrpc.org) at CMRPC within two weeks of the draft plan being posted on the town website. Copies of the slideshow from tonight's presentation can also be requested by E-mailing cleavitt@cmrpc.org



This natural hazard mitigation planning activity is funded by an FY 2021 Hazard Mitigation grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.