



Annex J: City of Alturas Hazard Mitigation Plan

City of Alturas Overview

The City of Alturas, located in northeastern California, serves as the county seat and the only incorporated city within Modoc County. Known for its rural charm and scenic landscapes, Alturas is surrounded by vast open spaces, forests, and agricultural lands. With a population of approximately 2,700 residents, the city offers a close-knit community atmosphere and is characterized by its historical roots, resilient economy centered on agriculture and government services, and commitment to proactive hazard mitigation and public safety planning.

Planning Process

The City of Alturas participated in the Modoc County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) update through representation by city officials, department heads, and staff with responsibilities in emergency management, public works, planning, and administration. These representatives contributed to meetings, provided jurisdiction-specific data, reviewed hazard analyses, identified mitigation actions, and coordinated public outreach efforts within the city.

Stakeholder Engagement and Participation

The City of Alturas participated in the Modoc County LHMP Update utilizing a common planning process built on the “whole community” approach. Rather than convening a separate Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC), Alturas looped in with the broader Modoc County HMPC to ensure that all FEMA-required stakeholder categories were represented.

This approach was chosen because Alturas shares nearly identical hazard risks with Modoc County and, as the smallest incorporated jurisdiction in the County, has limited staffing and resources to conduct a standalone planning process. By integrating into the County-led HMPC, the City ensured its stakeholders were included without duplicating meetings or imposing additional burdens on staff and residents.

Participation in the County HMPC also provided Alturas with consistent alignment to countywide priorities, improved coordination across jurisdictions, and access to regional expertise. This collaborative method streamlined the process into the five primary HMPC meetings, where City representatives were present and contributed to the development of the Plan.

Legal Authority and Basis for Integration

Alturas’ integration with Modoc County’s planning efforts is supported by Modoc County Code §2.40 et seq., which designates the Sheriff and the Modoc Office of Emergency Services (OES) as the responsible agency for emergency situations. The City of Alturas and Modoc OES memorialized an agreement that during a declared City emergency, Modoc OES will manage operations, planning, logistics, and fiscal tracking through the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).



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Because Alturas may not have sufficient personnel, facilities, or equipment to manage a declared emergency independently, the City chose to formalize reliance on Modoc OES. This agreement ensures that emergency response and hazard mitigation planning are conducted under a consistent countywide structure, providing the City with the operational capacity and fiscal accountability required under FEMA and Cal OES standards.

Alturas representatives attended all relevant County-wide planning meetings described in Section 3.0 Planning Process of the Modoc County LHMP, contributing to the hazard identification, risk assessment, and mitigation strategy development phases. During these sessions, City officials provided local data, shared recent hazard experiences, and collaborated with regional partners on identifying multi-jurisdictional projects.

Participation in the Planning Process

Name	Title	Agency/Department	Role in Planning Process
Paul Minchella	City Mayor	City of Alturas	Internal review; ensured City Council engagement and leadership oversight.
Dominic Budmark	Assistant Director of Public Works / Chief Building Inspector	City of Alturas	Served as primary City point of contact; coordinated internal review; ensured City Council engagement.
Dorothy Long	City Treasurer / Finance Department	City of Alturas	Provided fiscal data, budget context, and financial considerations for mitigation actions.
Warren Farnam	Public Works Director	City of Alturas Public Works	Provided infrastructure data, identified vulnerabilities, and proposed mitigation projects.
Eric Hunter	Fire Marshal	Alturas Fire Department	Supplied wildfire risk information, WUI mapping insights, and fire mitigation project ideas.
John Sweet	(Representative)	Alturas Rural Fire	Supplied wildfire risk information, WUI mapping insights, and fire mitigation project ideas.
Jasen Vela	Emergency Services	City/County Coordination	Participated in risk identification and response planning.
Rick Ehlert	Emergency Services	City/County Coordination	Assisted with coordination of emergency response and hazard data review.
Robert Goyeneche	Emergency Services	Cal OES	Provided state-level hazard mitigation and response coordination.



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Name	Title	Agency/Department	Role in Planning Process
Mike Beckstrand	Communications Specialist	Cal OES: Communications	Supported communications planning and emergency alert/warning considerations.
Chris Murray	Environmental Health Specialist	Environmental Health	Contributed public health and environmental risk considerations.
Donald Bailey	Environmental Health	Environmental Health	Assisted with environmental health data and hazard analysis.
Megan Wright	EMS Coordinator	MMC EMS	Provided emergency medical services perspectives and operational input.
Scott Ward	Building Official	Modoc County	Provided structural vulnerability information and building code enforcement perspective.
Bill Engel	Education Official	Modoc County Office of Education	Represented schools and educational facility vulnerabilities.
Benjamin Sylvia	Water Master	Modoc County	Provided water infrastructure and watershed management data.
Michelle Radke	Resource Conservation Specialist	Modoc Resource Conservation District	Provided conservation and natural resource data relevant to mitigation actions.
Holy Powers	Utility Representative	Pacific Corp	Provided utility system vulnerability information and coordination on energy resilience.
Jill Drinkwater	Utility Representative	Pacific Corp	Assisted with utility system data and outage mitigation planning.
Chris Swasey	Public Health	Modoc County Public Health	Contributed public health and vulnerable population considerations.
Stacy Sphar	Public Health	Modoc County Public Health	Assisted with community health risks and vulnerable population data.
Tanya Schultz	Public Health	Modoc County Public Health	Provided input on disease outbreaks and public health mitigation strategies.
Michelle Lockinood	Volunteer Coordinator	Red Cross	Provided sheltering, mass care, and volunteer coordination perspectives.
Frances Hannah	Hospital Administrator	Surprise Valley Hospital	Provided hospital preparedness, medical surge capacity, and health system vulnerabilities.



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Name	Title	Agency/Department	Role in Planning Process
Edward Willy	Agricultural Specialist	USDA	Provided agricultural sector data and risk assessment input.
Chris Christofferson	Forest Representative	USFS	Provided federal forest management perspectives and wildfire mitigation data.
Joe Johnston	Forest Representative	USFS	Assisted with federal forest hazard mitigation coordination.
Mark Main	Forest Representative	USFS	Contributed wildfire and forest hazard data.
Michael Crites	Forest Representative	USFS	Provided USFS planning and coordination on wildfire hazard management.

Participation Activities:

- Attended the LHMP kickoff meeting to review FEMA requirements and update process.
- Participated in hazard identification and risk assessment discussions specific to the City of Alturas.
- Provided local hazard history, critical facilities inventory, and infrastructure data.
- Reviewed draft hazard profiles and mitigation actions for jurisdiction-specific accuracy.
- Assisted with public and stakeholder outreach, including sharing surveys and meeting announcements.
- Reviewed and approved the final draft for submission to the City Council for adoption.

Public Outreach and Engagement

The City of Alturas participated in the Modoc County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) outreach and engagement process through integration with countywide public involvement strategies. Because Alturas is a small jurisdiction with limited staff capacity and shares nearly identical hazard risks with the County, the City chose to loop into the Modoc County process rather than develop a separate, duplicative effort. This ensured that Alturas residents and stakeholders were represented while maximizing efficiency and access to countywide resources.

A comprehensive outreach strategy guided how feedback was gathered and how stakeholders, including Alturas, were engaged throughout the planning process. This strategy ensured that communication efforts reached all relevant groups across the County while also capturing Alturas-specific perspectives.

Key outreach methods included:



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- **Questionnaire:** The structured hazard mitigation questionnaire distributed by Modoc County was also made available to Alturas residents and stakeholders. This provided an opportunity for the City's population to express their perceptions of hazards, vulnerabilities, and preparedness needs.
- **Survey Results:** Responses collected from Alturas residents were incorporated into the countywide survey results, ensuring the City's hazard concerns were reflected. These results informed priorities in both the Modoc County base plan and the Alturas Annex.
- **Websites:** Hazard Mitigation Plan documents, surveys, and updates were posted on the Modoc County and Modoc Sheriff websites. Alturas directed its residents to these county-hosted platforms for access to materials and opportunities to provide input.
- **Social Media:** County-managed social media posts promoting the HMP process reached Alturas residents as part of the broader regional audience, with messaging designed to encourage community input and awareness.
- **Stakeholder Meetings:** Alturas representatives participated in countywide stakeholder meetings, ensuring the City's perspective was included. Stakeholders included government agencies, local businesses, NGOs, public safety officials, and emergency services.
- **Press Releases:** Press releases issued to local media outlets highlighted the importance of public participation, and Alturas residents were encouraged to respond to the hazard survey and review draft plan materials online.
- **Vulnerable Populations:** The Modoc County Department of Public Health (PH) and Health Care Coalition ensured that outreach efforts also included vulnerable populations within Alturas. Using the SAFE volunteer registration program and Genasys Protect alert system, outreach extended to elderly residents, individuals with disabilities, medically dependent individuals, and non-English-speaking residents in Alturas. Health clinics, senior centers, and food assistance programs within the City were leveraged to share information and gather input.

Results of Outreach for Alturas

The planning team reviewed survey responses and public input from Alturas residents alongside countywide data. Alturas participants most frequently emphasized concerns about wildfire, drought, and emergency communications. These findings directly influenced both countywide priorities and City-specific mitigation actions, including projects related to wildfire defensible space, water system reliability, and upgrades to public alert and warning systems.

By participating in the County-led outreach process, the City of Alturas ensured that its residents' voices were incorporated into the regional hazard mitigation strategy while avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. This integration reflects the City's size, resource capacity, and alignment of hazard risks with the County, resulting in a more efficient and coordinated planning process.



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Background

The City of Alturas is the only incorporated city in Modoc County and serves as the county seat. Located in northeastern California within the upper reaches of the Pit River Valley, Alturas lies at an elevation of approximately 4,370 feet and is surrounded by rangelands, forests, and agricultural areas. The city's geography is defined by the Pit River and nearby tributaries, which historically influenced settlement patterns and continue to shape the community's flood risk profile.

It has long served as the center of commerce, transportation, and government services for the rural county. Its location along U.S. Highway 395 and State Route 299 makes it a regional hub for goods movement, education, and public services. Despite its small population, Alturas plays an important role in supporting surrounding communities across Modoc County and the broader high desert region of northeastern California.

History

Originally named Dorrisville, the city was renamed Alturas, meaning "The Heights" in Spanish, in 1876. Officially incorporated on September 16, 1901, Alturas has historically served as a central hub in Modoc County due to its strategic location and role in local governance and commerce.

Geography

Alturas is situated in a region characterized by diverse geographical features, including vast plateaus, rugged mountain ranges, and volcanic formations. The city's proximity to the Pit River contributes significantly to local flood risks, particularly during rapid snowmelt seasons.

Climate

The City of Alturas experiences a continental Mediterranean climate, marked by hot, dry summers and cold, snowy winters. Seasonal temperature variations are considerable, and precipitation levels vary significantly throughout the year, contributing to distinct seasonal weather patterns that impact city planning and mitigation strategies.

Population, Demographics & Employment

As of the 2020 census, Alturas is home to 2,715 residents. The racial makeup is predominantly White (approximately 70–78%), with Hispanic or Latino residents making up around 15% of the population; other groups include Native American, Asian, and multiracial individuals. Households average about 2.25–2.33 people, with around 55–67% owner-occupied and the remainder renters. The median household income is approximately \$54,600, with per capita income near \$31,700, though roughly 23–23.3% of residents live below the poverty.

Economically, Alturas has a mixed employment base: key local industries include health care & social assistance, public administration, and professional, scientific & technical services, which together employ a significant share of the workforce. Employment structure leans heavily toward white-collar occupations (over 93%), with minimal blue-collar representation. Most adults commute locally within Modoc County averaging a



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quick 14-minute drive to work while private businesses and government entities account for the majority of jobs.

Land Use

Land use within the City of Alturas is predominantly characterized by residential, commercial, institutional, and open-space zoning. Residential areas include single-family homes and limit multi-family dwellings, concentrated mainly near the city center and expanding outward into suburban neighborhoods. Commercial zones, hosting retail, dining, and service-oriented businesses, are primarily located along central thoroughfares such as Main Street (U.S. Route 395). Institutional land use comprises government buildings, schools, healthcare facilities, and other public service properties. A substantial portion of the city's surrounding area is designated as open space, reflecting the rural and agricultural heritage of Modoc County, which supports farming, ranching, and outdoor recreational activities. Land use planning in Alturas emphasizes balanced growth, environmental sustainability, and resilience to natural hazards, aligning with comprehensive hazard mitigation and emergency management strategies.

Table 1. Distribution of Value by Property Use: Alturas

Property Use	Structures	2024 Value (\$)	% of Current Role
Residential	1,154+	\$130,058,289	.12
Commercial	191+	\$64,811,848	.059
Industrial	1	\$148,254	.0003
Agricultural	0	\$18,248	.0001
Public/Institutional	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-

Infrastructure

Alturas' Public Works Department oversees a broad range of services including water, sewer, streets, airport operations, building inspections, and planning throughout the city. The city manages a municipal wastewater system featuring lift stations and treatment facilities with generational capacity, though ongoing maintenance is critical due to the age of the infrastructure.

Transportation infrastructure includes well-maintained segments of U.S. Route 395 and State Route 299, which serve as major corridors for regional connectivity. Alturas Municipal Airport, a public-use general aviation facility, features two asphalt runways (4,228 ft and 2,506 ft), supports nearly 20,000 aircraft operations annually, and plays a vital role in emergency response and local access.

Water services are municipally supplied, with regular monitoring ensuring compliance with federal health standards, although naturally occurring arsenic and nitrate are present at levels below legal limits. The city also supports healthcare transportation services through Altura Centers for Health, offering non-emergency transit for medical and dental appointments.



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Altogether, Alturas maintains a robust infrastructure framework that supports its essential public services, regional connectivity, and overall community resilience.

Future Trends

Looking ahead, the City of Alturas is expected to experience modest growth shaped by regional development trends and infrastructure enhancements. According to the City's 2020–2024 Housing Element, despite population stagnation in Modoc County, Alturas anticipates up to a 15% increase in employment adding roughly 161 new jobs by 2024 across sectors including public administration, construction, education, healthcare, leisure, and hospitality. The modest job growth underscores a need for diversified housing types, yet the city's job-housing balance remains below 1.0, indicating more available housing than local employment. Long-term zoning capacity suggests future residential development could reach approximately 10 units/acre in designated areas, though realistic density may be closer to 80% of that maximum about 8 units/acre to preserve town character. Infrastructure-focused projects, such as Caltrans-led road improvements and municipal expansion of water and sewer services, further support anticipated development, keeping in mind community priorities for sustainability, resilience, and local economic reinforcement .

Risk Assessment

Identified Jurisdictional Hazards

The City of Alturas is subject to the same natural and human-caused hazards identified and analyzed in the Modoc County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) Base Plan. These hazards include flood, drought, severe weather, wildfire, earthquake, and hazardous materials incidents. The detailed hazard profiles, definitions, and methodologies for risk assessment are provided in the Base Plan and serve as the foundation for this Annex.

As a small jurisdiction with limited staff and technical capacity, the City of Alturas adopts the hazard definitions, descriptions, and analysis methods contained in the Base Plan as the official record of hazard conditions for its planning purposes. By adopting the County's hazard definitions, Alturas ensures consistency across jurisdictions and alignment with the region's broader mitigation strategy.

Where City-specific vulnerabilities or unique exposures exist (e.g., critical facilities, parcels in the floodplain, or essential infrastructure), those details are documented within this Annex. However, the overall hazard identification and characterization used by the City mirrors that of Modoc County, as described in the Base Plan. This approach avoids duplication, promotes regional coordination, and meets FEMA's requirement that all participating jurisdictions adopt a consistent hazard identification and risk assessment framework.

Specific Vulnerabilities

While the City does not face any hazards that are unique from the County, certain hazards pose greater risks to Alturas due to its geography, built environment, and role as the county seat. These include flooding, wildfire, drought and water shortage, severe winter



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weather, and hazardous materials transport. Secondary vulnerabilities include severe thunderstorms/high winds, dam or levee failure, and earthquake risk.

Flood: Flooding remains one of the City's most significant hazards. During FEMA's 2015 DFIRM remapping, 89 properties (approximately 59 residential and 30 commercial) were added to the 1% annual chance floodplain. In addition, 18 critical facilities are located within FEMA flood zones (15 in the 1% zone and 3 in the 0.2% zone). These exposures continue to create economic and social impacts for the community, including abandoned homes, reduced tax revenues, and difficulty selling properties due to mandatory flood insurance. Future development sites, such as the wastewater treatment plant and portions of the mill/airport area, are also partially located in flood hazard zones.

Wildfire: Wildfire is rated as a high significance hazard for Alturas, with highly likely occurrence and catastrophic potential impacts. The City is surrounded by forested and rangeland areas, creating a wildland–urban interface (WUI) environment. Vulnerabilities include residential neighborhoods, businesses, and critical facilities that could be threatened by fast-moving wildfires.

Drought and Water Shortage: Drought is also rated as a high significance hazard. As part of California's high desert, Alturas is prone to extended drought conditions that strain water resources, affect agriculture, and increase wildfire risk. Impacts include reduced agricultural productivity, stress on municipal water supplies, and economic challenges for residents and businesses.

Severe Winter Weather: Alturas is highly vulnerable to extreme cold, snow, ice, and winter storms, which were rated as high significance hazards in the Base Plan. Severe winter events can result in road closures, power outages, and risks to vulnerable populations such as elderly residents or those with limited heating resources.

Hazardous Materials Transport: The City's location along U.S. Highway 395 and State Route 299 exposes it to the risk of hazardous material releases from transportation accidents. Such incidents could cause catastrophic impacts to public safety, the environment, and local infrastructure.

Secondary Hazards

- **Severe Weather (Thunderstorms, High Winds, Lightning, Hail):** Highly likely and potentially damaging to structures, utilities, and transportation networks.
- **Dam or Levee Failure:** Less likely but potentially severe, given the presence of upstream water infrastructure and older levee systems.
- **Earthquake:** Considered unlikely but remains a risk from regional faults. While rated lower significance, earthquakes could impact critical facilities and utilities.

Table 2. Vulnerability Assessment City of Alturas

Hazard	Geographic Extent	Likelihood / Frequency	Severity / Impact	Overall Significance
Flood (Riverine / Stormwater)	Significant to Extensive	Occasional to Highly Likely	Critical	High
Wildfire	Extensive	Highly Likely	Catastrophic	High



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Hazard	Geographic Extent	Likelihood / Frequency	Severity / Impact	Overall Significance
Drought & Water Shortage	Extensive	Highly Likely	Catastrophic	High
Severe Winter Weather (Cold/Snow/Ice)	Extensive	Highly Likely	Catastrophic	High
Hazardous Materials Transport	Extensive	Occasional	Catastrophic	High
Severe Weather (Thunderstorms, Hail, Lightning, High Winds)	Extensive	Highly Likely	Critical to Limited	Medium
Dam Failure / Levee Failure	Significant	Occasional to Unlikely	Critical to Limited	Medium
Earthquake	Extensive	Unlikely	Limited	Low

The City of Alturas continues to face significant vulnerabilities related to flooding. During the FEMA DFIRM remapping finalized in 2015, 89 properties were added to the 1% annual chance (100-year) floodplain, including approximately 59 residential and 30 commercial structures. This remapping has had lasting effects on the City, with abandoned homes, reductions in the property tax base, and unsold properties linked to the high costs of mandatory flood insurance.

Alturas also has 18 critical facilities exposed to FEMA flood zones, including 15 in the 1% annual chance zone and 3 in the 0.2% annual chance zone. These facilities include government offices, fire departments, medical/health facilities, and schools, representing critical lifelines for the community that remain vulnerable to flood hazards.

The planning committee considered environmental impact assessments, historical records, geographic characteristics, and the socioeconomic profile of the county. Volcanic activity, tsunamis, and significant coastal erosion, were excluded as they are either geographically irrelevant or considered extremely improbable in this inland, high-desert region. Additionally, thorough environmental evaluations and input from local agencies, emergency management personnel, and community stakeholders confirmed that the hazards identified in Table 2 comprehensively represent the county's realistic threats, thereby guiding efficient resource allocation and focused mitigation efforts.

Specific Impacts

The social and economic impacts first identified in the 2016 plan remain current and unchanged in 2025. The community continues to experience property devaluation, financial strain on residents, and limited development opportunities within mapped flood hazard areas.

Future development sites also remain partially located within flood hazard zones, including the wastewater treatment plant, portions of the mill/airport site, and the hospital site. These exposures will require continued mitigation consideration during design, permitting, and construction phases to avoid additional vulnerability.

Table 3. Hazard Impact Table City of Alturas



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Hazard	Primary Impacts	Community Systems Affected	Vulnerable Populations
Flooding (Riverine & Stormwater)	Property damage, abandoned homes, reduced property tax base, economic hardship from mandatory flood insurance, exposure of 18 critical facilities	Housing, critical facilities, economy, infrastructure, government services	Residents in FEMA 100-year floodplain, low-income households, renters, elderly on fixed incomes
Wildfire	Threat to WUI neighborhoods, critical facilities, and businesses; risk of injury/death; smoke impacts on public health and air quality	Housing, public safety, health, natural resources, utilities	WUI residents, elderly, children, medically vulnerable (respiratory issues), rural populations
Drought & Water Shortage	Reduced municipal water supply; agricultural and ranching losses; economic hardship; increased wildfire risk	Water systems, agriculture, economy, environment	Farmers, ranchers, low-income households, small businesses dependent on agriculture
Severe Winter Weather (Cold/Snow/Ice)	Road closures, power outages, heating demand surges; risks to elderly and medically dependent populations; isolation of residents	Transportation, utilities, public health, vulnerable populations	Elderly, people with mobility limitations, medically dependent residents, rural households
Hazardous Materials Transport	Release of toxic substances from accidents on U.S. 395 or SR 299; evacuation needs; contamination of soil and water	Public safety, transportation, environment, economy	Populations near transport corridors, school children, first responders, residents with limited mobility
Severe Weather (Thunderstorms, High Winds, Lightning, Hail)	Damage to utilities and structures; localized crop losses; power outages; wildfire ignition from lightning	Utilities, agriculture, housing, transportation	Outdoor workers, farmers, mobile/manufactured home residents
Dam Failure / Levee Failure	Inundation of properties; transportation disruption; potential loss of life and economic damages	Housing, infrastructure, public safety	Downstream residents, low-income households, elderly/limited mobility populations
Earthquake	Structural damage to older/unreinforced buildings; disruption of utilities and lifelines	Housing, critical facilities, utilities	Residents in older/unreinforced masonry structures, schools, healthcare facilities



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NFIP and Repetitive Loss Information

The City of Alturas has been a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since September 24, 1984. The City does not currently participate in the Community Rating System (CRS). NFIP data as of the last verified reporting (2014) showed 64 flood insurance policies in force with \$13.4 million in coverage, with 0 repetitive loss and 0 severe repetitive loss properties. The following summarizes how Alturas continues to meet NFIP regulatory requirements for the 2025 Plan Update:

- **Adoption of NFIP Minimum Floodplain Management Criteria:** The City has adopted NFIP minimum standards for floodplain management through its municipal code and continues to enforce development regulations consistent with FEMA requirements. These ordinances ensure that construction and land use decisions in flood hazard areas meet or exceed federal minimum criteria.
- **Adoption of the Latest Effective FIRM:** The City of Alturas has adopted the latest effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as issued by FEMA. The most recent DFIRM update process, finalized in 2015, added 89 parcels into the 1% annual chance floodplain (59 residential and 30 commercial properties). This updated mapping remains the regulatory basis for floodplain management in the City.
- **Implementation and Enforcement of Floodplain Management Regulations:** The City enforces its floodplain development regulations through its Planning and Public Works Departments. Any new development or substantial improvement within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) requires a permit. This regulatory process includes reviewing applications for compliance with elevation, construction, and floodproofing requirements.
- **NFIP Designee or Agency:** The City of Alturas has designated its Assistant Director of Public Works/Chief Building Inspector as the NFIP Administrator. This official is responsible for administering and enforcing NFIP-related provisions, maintaining floodplain maps and records, and coordinating with FEMA and the California Department of Water Resources on floodplain issues.
- **Substantial Improvement / Substantial Damage Provisions:** Following a flood or other damaging event, the City conducts post-disaster inspections to determine whether affected structures meet the NFIP definition of substantial improvement (50% or more of the structure's market value improved) or substantial damage (damage of 50% or more of market value). Properties meeting these thresholds are required to come into compliance with NFIP standards during repair or reconstruction.

Past Occurrences of Each Hazard

Alturas has experienced multiple incidents of severe winter storms causing power outages and transportation disruptions. Flooding events, particularly from snowmelt and intense precipitation, have occurred in areas adjacent to the Pit River. Wildfire threats have been elevated during prolonged dry periods, including threats from surrounding rural interface areas. The city has also experienced health-related emergencies, such as COVID-19, and minor tremors associated with regional fault lines.



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Identified Jurisdictional Risk Differences from Broader County Risks

Compared to other areas of Modoc County, Alturas has a higher concentration of population, critical infrastructure, and public services, which increases the potential impact of localized hazards. The city's location near the Pit River increases its relative flood risk, while dense residential and commercial areas necessitate more concentrated emergency response and mitigation planning.

Changes in Development in Hazard-Prone Areas

Since the approval of the 2016 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the City of Alturas has experienced limited new development due to its small population base, rural character, and constrained economic growth. No significant subdivisions, commercial centers, or industrial facilities have been constructed in identified hazard-prone areas such as the FEMA 100-year floodplain, mapped wildfire hazard severity zones, or downstream dam inundation areas.

As a result, there have been no changes in development that have measurably increased the City's overall vulnerability to hazards since the previous plan. Likewise, no large-scale hazard mitigation redevelopment or buyouts have occurred that would substantially decrease vulnerability.

Future growth pressures are anticipated to remain minimal over the 2025 plan cycle. However, the City will continue to review all building permit and development applications against FEMA floodplain maps, Cal Fire wildfire hazard maps, and other hazard data to ensure that new development does not create avoidable risks.

Vulnerabilities

The City of Alturas is vulnerable to a range of natural and human-caused hazards identified in the Modoc County LHMP, including wildland fire, severe winter storms, drought, localized flooding, and seismic events. The City's exposure is influenced by its location in the Modoc Plateau, proximity to wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, reliance on a small number of transportation corridors, and dependence on overhead utilities for critical services.

Population and Demographic Vulnerabilities

- At-risk populations: Seniors, persons with disabilities, individuals with chronic health conditions, and residents without personal vehicles face increased difficulty evacuating or accessing services during hazard events.
- Economic vulnerability: Approximately [X%] of households are low- to moderate-income, limiting their ability to retrofit structures, maintain defensible space, or absorb disaster-related losses.
- Housing stock: Many homes are older and may lack fire-resistant construction, adequate insulation for extreme cold, or seismic retrofits.

Critical Facilities and Lifelines at Risk

Key assets within Alturas that are exposed to hazard impacts include:



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- Government and emergency services: City Hall, Public Works Yard, Police Department, Fire Department, and designated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) sites.
- Utilities: Water supply wells, treatment and storage facilities, wastewater systems, and electric distribution infrastructure.
- Transportation lifelines: U.S. Highway 395 and State Route 299, which serve as evacuation and supply routes but are vulnerable to closure from snow, ice, wildfire, or flood-related debris.

Potential impacts to these facilities include:

- Loss of power due to wildfire, winter storms, or wind events.
- Limited or delayed access if transportation corridors are closed.
- Flooding of low-lying facilities or road approaches during heavy precipitation or snowmelt.

Hazard-Specific Vulnerabilities

- Wildland Fire: WUI areas along the city's perimeter have a high exposure to grass, brush, and timber fuels. Structure ignition potential is elevated where defensible space is lacking, or older roofing/siding materials are present. Smoke impacts can cause respiratory health issues and disrupt outdoor economic activities.
- Severe Winter Storms: Heavy snow accumulation can lead to roof loading, hazardous travel, and downed power lines. Extended outages can disrupt heating for vulnerable populations.
- Drought: Reduced water availability can strain municipal supply, increase wildfire risk, and impact economic sectors such as agriculture and recreation.
- Flooding: Localized flooding from inadequate drainage or post-wildfire debris flows can damage property, disrupt transportation, and impair access to critical facilities.
- Seismic Hazards: Although the area is classified as low to moderate seismic risk, older unreinforced masonry buildings and non-retrofitted residential structures remain susceptible to shaking damage.

Functional Needs and Social Vulnerabilities

- Limited access to healthcare and specialized services in the immediate city area increases the potential severity of hazard impacts.
- Residents with limited English proficiency or without consistent access to communication channels may have reduced awareness of warnings and response instructions.

Summary of Key Vulnerability Factors

- Concentration of critical facilities in areas potentially affected by wildfire smoke, winter weather, or localized flooding.
- Dependence on a small number of evacuation and supply routes that are hazard prone.
- Aging housing stock and infrastructure lacking hazard-resistant features.



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- Disproportionate impacts to seniors, medically fragile individuals, and low-income households.
- Reliance on regional mutual aid for large-scale hazard events, which may be delayed when surrounding jurisdictions are also impacted.

Mitigation

The City of Alturas has identified the following mitigation actions to reduce vulnerability to hazards addressed in the risk assessment. Each action lists the responsible office/department, potential funding sources, and an expected timeframe for completion.

- **Timeframe Definitions:**
- **Short-term:** 1–3 years
- **Medium-term:** 3–5 years
- **Long-term:** 5–10 years
- **Ongoing:** Continuous or phased projects with no fixed end date

Flooding & Severe Weather (Power Outage Hazards)

Action 1: Install 25 KW Multi-Phase Generator with Portable Grinding Pump

- **Description:** Provide portable power and wastewater pumping capacity to maintain wastewater flow during flood or power outage events. Reduce long-term flood and power-outage vulnerability of the municipal wastewater system by installing a 25-kW multi-phase generator and portable grinding pump to protect continuous wastewater conveyance during utility disruptions. This action mitigates the risk of sanitary sewer overflows, environmental contamination, infrastructure damage, and regulatory violations by ensuring system operability during flood conditions and extended power outages. The project strengthens critical utility resilience and reduces cascading public health and environmental impacts associated with system failure.
- **Responsible Department:** City of Alturas Public Works Department (Utilities Division)
- **Funding Sources:** FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), USDA Rural Development Utilities Programs, City Capital Improvement Funds
- **Timeframe:** Short-term (1–3 years)

Action 2: Acquire 500 Gallon Mobile Fuel Trailer

- **Description:** Provide mobile fueling capability to support back-up generators and emergency pumps during power outages or flood events. Mitigate long-term risk to critical utility and infrastructure operations during flooding and severe weather by acquiring a 500-gallon mobile fuel trailer to support continuous operation of backup generators and pumping equipment. This action reduces dependence on disrupted commercial fuel supply chains and prevents extended outages of essential services, including wastewater treatment and lift station operations. By ensuring sustained fuel availability, the project limits service interruptions, environmental releases, and infrastructure damage during prolonged emergencies.
- **Responsible Department:** City of Alturas Public Works Department / Fleet Management



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- Funding Sources: FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), BRIC, California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Hazard Mitigation Funding, City Emergency Management Funds
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–3 years)

Wildfire Hazards

Action 3: Install 10,000 Gallon Jet A Fuel Tank

- Description: Install a dedicated fuel tank at Alturas Municipal Airport to provide firefighting aircraft with reliable refueling capacity during wildfire events.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Airport Department, in coordination with Cal Fire and Modoc County OES
- Funding Sources: FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), BRIC, Cal Fire Prevention Grants, U.S. Forest Service Aviation Support Funds
- Timeframe: Medium-term (3–5 years)

Action 4: Acquire 3,000 Gallon Water Tender

- Description: Provide a firefighting water truck for standby water supply and emergency response to wildfire events.
- Responsible Department: Alturas Fire Department
- Funding Sources: FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Cal Fire Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Program, USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program, City Fire Department Funds
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–3 years)

Action 5: Construct Building for Generator & Fill Station

- Description: Improve Well 6 with a building to house a generator and water fill station for tenders, supporting firefighting operations.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Public Works Department / Water Division
- Funding Sources: FEMA BRIC, HMGP, Cal Fire Fire Prevention Grant Program, California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Infrastructure Grants
- Timeframe: Medium-term (3–5 years)

All-Hazards / Power Outage Hazards

Action 6: Install 200 KW Generator at Well 7

- Description: Provide backup power for a primary City water well to maintain potable water during hazard events and extended outages.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Public Works Department / Water Division
- Funding Sources: FEMA HMGP, BRIC, USDA Rural Development Utilities Programs, City Capital Improvement Funds
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–3 years)

Action 7: Install 150 KW Generator at Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)

- Description: Provide emergency backup power for the WWTP to ensure continuous wastewater treatment during outages.



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- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Public Works Department / Wastewater Division
- Funding Sources: FEMA BRIC, HMGP, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), City Capital Improvement Funds
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–3 years)

Drought

Action 8: Develop and Implement a Citywide Water Conservation and Emergency Supply Program

- Description: Install smart water meters and promote conservation practices to reduce water demand during drought. Develop an emergency water supply plan that includes mutual aid agreements and the identification of alternate water sources.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Public Works Department / Water Division
- Funding Sources: FEMA BRIC, California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Urban Drought Relief Program, USDA Rural Development Utilities Program
- Timeframe: Medium-term (3–5 years)

Winter Weather

Action 9: Acquire Emergency Snow Removal and Power Resilience Equipment

- Description: Purchase an additional snowplow and portable generators to maintain transportation access and heating for critical facilities during severe winter storms. Reduce long-term vulnerability to severe winter weather by investing in permanent snow removal and power resilience infrastructure that protects critical access routes and essential services. This project includes the acquisition and integration of snow removal equipment and permanently deployable backup power units to ensure continued functionality of priority transportation corridors, public facilities, and lifeline services during and after extreme winter events. By improving the County's ability to maintain access and prevent prolonged service disruptions, this action mitigates the risk of isolation, economic disruption, and secondary emergencies associated with severe winter storms.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Public Works Department (Streets Division) and Emergency Management Office
- Funding Sources: FEMA HMGP, BRIC, Cal OES Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, USDA Community Facilities Program
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–3 years)

Hazardous Materials

Action 10: Hazardous Materials Transportation Incident Preparedness and Response Program

- Description: Provide specialized training for first responders and acquisition of spill containment equipment.
- Responsible Department: Alturas Fire Department in coordination with Modoc County OES



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- Funding Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant, FEMA HMGP, Cal OES Hazardous Materials Grant Program
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–3 years)

Dam Failure

Action: Dam Failure Emergency Warning and Evacuation Route Improvements

- Description: Install automated warning sirens and signage for downstream residents at risk of inundation and improve/maintain identified evacuation routes to ensure rapid and safe movement of residents during a dam failure event.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas in coordination with Modoc County OES
- Funding Sources: FEMA BRIC, FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Risk Management Program, Cal OES Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- Timeframe: Medium-term (3–5 years)

Earthquake

- Action: Retrofit Critical Facilities and Lifeline Infrastructure for Seismic Safety
- Description: Conduct seismic retrofits of older City-owned buildings (public safety, fire station, city hall) and water/wastewater facilities to reduce risk of collapse or service interruption during an earthquake.
- Responsible Department: City of Alturas Public Works Department
- Funding Sources: FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), FEMA Earthquake State Assistance Program (EERP), California Seismic Safety Commission Retrofit Grants, USDA Community Facilities Program
- Timeframe: Long-term (5–10 years)

Table 4. City of Alturas – Mitigation Action Status Table

Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
Install 10,000 Gallon Jet A Fuel Tank	Wildfire	Install a fuel tank to provide Jet A fuel for firefighting aircraft.	City of Alturas Planning Director	Alturas Municipal Airport	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	FEMA AFG, BRIC, Cal Fire, USFS Aviation	\$500,000	Goal 6 Obj.1–2; Goal 4 Obj.4	New
3,000 Gallon Water Tender	Wildfire	Acquire a water truck to provide standby and backup water	Alturas Fire Dept.	Alturas	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	FEMA AFG, Cal Fire VFC, USDA	\$500,000	Goal 6 Obj.1; Goal	New



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		for firefighting.				Community Facilities		4 Obj.6	
Building for Generator & Fill Station	Wildfire	Construct a building at Well 6 to house generator and fill station for tenders.	Public Works	Well 6	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	FEMA BRIC, HMGP, Cal Fire, CA DWR	\$275,000	Goal 2 Obj.1 ; Goal 6 Obj.4	New
200 KW Generator	All Hazards	Install backup generator at Well 7 for water continuity.	Public Works	Well 7	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	FEMA HMGP, BRIC, USDA Utilities	\$125,000	Goal 2 Obj.2 ; Goal 1 Obj.1	New
150 KW Generator	Power Outage	Install generator at WWTP to ensure wastewater operations.	Public Works	WWTP	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	FEMA BRIC, EPA CWSRF , City Funds	\$100,000	Goal 2 Obj.2 ; Goal 1 Obj.1	New
25 KW Multi-Phase Generator w/ Grinding Pump	Flood / Severe Weather - Power Outage	Portable generator/pump to maintain wastewater flow. Reduce long-term flood and power-outage vulnerability of the municipal wastewater system by installing a 25-kW multi-phase	Public Works	Citywide	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	FEMA HMGP, USDA Rural Utilities	\$50,000	Goal 2 Obj.1 ; Goal 1 Obj.3	New



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		generator and portable grinding pump to protect continuous wastewater conveyance during utility disruptions. This action mitigates the risk of sanitary sewer overflows, environmental contamination, infrastructure damage, and regulatory violations by ensuring system operability during flood conditions and extended power outages. The project strengthens critical utility resilience and reduces cascading public health and environmental impacts associated with system failure.							



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
500 Gallon Mobile Fuel Trailer	Flood / Severe Weather - Power Outage	Mobile fuel supply for backup generators/pumps. Mitigate long-term risk to critical utility and infrastructure operations during flooding and severe weather by acquiring a 500-gallon mobile fuel trailer to support continuous operation of backup generators and pumping equipment. This action reduces dependence on disrupted commercial fuel supply chains and prevents extended outages of essential services, including wastewater treatment and lift station operations. By ensuring	Public Works	Citywide	Short-term (1-3 yrs)	FEMA BRIC, Cal OES, City Emergency Funds	\$10,000	Goal 4 Obj.4 ; Goal 2 Obj.3	New



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		sustained fuel availability, the project limits service interruptions, environmental releases, and infrastructure damage during prolonged emergencies.							
Water Conservation & Emergency Supply Program	Drought	Smart meters, conservation program, emergency water supply plan.	Public Works	Citywide	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	FEMA BRIC, CA DWR, USDA Utilities	TBD	Goal 5 Obj.4 ; Goal 1 Obj.2	New
Emergency Snow Removal & Power Resilience Equipment	Severe Winter Weather; Extreme Cold; Snow and Ice; Power Outages	Acquire plow and portable generators for storm resilience. Reduce long-term vulnerability to severe winter weather by investing in permanent snow removal and power resilience infrastructure that protects critical access routes and essential services. This	Public Works	Citywide with emphasis on critical routes and facilities	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	FEMA HMGP, USDA Community Facilities, Cal OES	TBD	Goal 1 Obj.1 ; Goal 2 Obj.3	New



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		project includes the acquisition and integration of snow removal equipment and permanently deployable backup power units to ensure continued functionality of priority transportation corridors, public facilities, and lifeline services during and after extreme winter events. By improving the County's ability to maintain access and prevent prolonged service disruptions, this action mitigates the risk of isolation, economic disruption, and secondary emergencies							



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		associated with severe winter storms.							
HazMat Transportation Preparedness Program	Hazardous Materials	Hazmat spill response plan, responder training, spill equipment.	Alturas Fire Dept. / Modoc OES	Hwy 395 & SR 299 corridors	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	USDO T HMEP, FEMA HMGP, Cal OES HazMat	TBD	Goal 4 Obj.1 ; Goal 1 Obj.1	New
Dam Failure Emergency Warning & Evacuation Improvements	Dam Failure	Install sirens, signage, and improve evacuation routes.	Modoc OES	Downstream areas	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	FEMA BRIC, FEMA FMA, USACE, Cal OES	TBD	Goal 1 Obj.1 ; Goal 3 Obj.4–5	New
Seismic Retrofit of Critical Facilities & Infrastructure	Earthquake	Retrofit older City-owned buildings/utilities for seismic safety.	Planning Director	Citywide	Long-term (5–10 yrs)	FEMA HMGP, CA Seismic Retrofit, USDA Facilities	TBD	Goal 2 Obj.2 ; Goal 1 Obj.1	New
Floodproof/Elevate/Relocate Fire Station	Flooding	Evaluate options to elevate, floodproof, or relocate the Fire Station located in the 100-year floodplain.	Planning Director	Fire Station site	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	FEMA FMA, HMGP, NFIP ICC Funds	TBD	Goal 2 Obj.1 ; Goal 1 Obj.3	<u>Carried Over</u> Ongoing
Pit River Levee Dredging & Bypass Improvements	Flooding	Dredge levee, remove silt, and construct bypass channel to	Planning Director /Modo	Pit River Floodplain	Long-term (5–	FEMA BRIC, USACE, CA DWR	TBD	Goal 2 Obj.1 ; Goal	<u>Carried Over</u> Annual



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		improve drainage capacity.	City of Alturas Planning		10 yrs)	Flood Mgmt		5 Obj.2	Requirement
Floodplain Ordinance Revisions / Buyouts	Flooding	Update ordinances, consider acquisitions/ buyouts of flood-prone properties.	Planning Director	Citywide	Long-term (5–10 yrs)	FEMA FMA, NFIP, Cal OES HMP	TBD	Goal 1 Obj.3 ; Goal 7 Obj.3	<u>Carried Over</u>
Wildfire Fuel Reduction / Defensible Space Projects	Wildfire	Conduct fuel reduction, chipper programs, defensible space work, and Firewise certification.	City of Alturas Planning Director / Fire Safe Council	Citywide / WUI	Ongoing	Cal Fire Fire Prevention, FEMA BRIC, USFS	TBD	Goal 6 Obj.1–4	<u>Carried Over</u>
HazMat Transport Corridor Evaluation	Hazardous Materials	Evaluate risks along County Road 1, extend to U.S. 395/SR 299.	City of Alturas Planning Director / Modoc OES	Transportation corridors	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	USDOT HMEP, Cal OES HazMat	TBD	Goal 4 Obj.1 ; Goal 1 Obj.1	<u>Carried Over</u>
Seismic Retrofit Inventory & Assessment	Earthquake	Inventory, assess, and prioritize older buildings for retrofit.	City of Alturas Planning Director	Citywide	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	FEMA EERP, CA Seismic Safety Commission	TBD	Goal 2 Obj.2 ; Goal 1 Obj.1	<u>Carried Over</u> - Not Started
Public Education & Outreach Campaigns	Multi-Hazard	Expand disaster education and preparedness programs (flood, wildfire,	City of Alturas Planning Director / Modoc OES	Citywide	Ongoing	FEMA PDM, Cal OES, Red Cross	TBD	Goal 3 Obj.1–6	<u>Carried Over</u> - Ongoing



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Project Title	Hazard Addressed	Project Description	Responsible Agency	Project Location	Time line	Funding Source	Project Cost	Goal Alignment	Status
		winter weather).							
Annual EOC Exercises	Multi-Hazard	Conduct three exercises annually to test and improve EOC capabilities.	City of Alturas Planning Director / Modoc OES	City EOC	Ongoing	FEMA EMPG, Cal OES HMP	TBD	Goal 4 Obj.1-3, Obj.8	<u>Carried Over</u> - Ongoing
LHMP Integration into General Plan	Multi-Hazard	Incorporate HMP findings into the City's General Plan and zoning.	Planning Director	Citywide	Ongoing	FEMA BRIC, City Planning Funds	TBD	Goal 7 Obj.1-2; Goal 1 Obj.3	<u>Completed</u>

Mitigation Capabilities Identified

The City of Alturas maintains administrative, technical, and fiscal capabilities outlined in the Modoc County Capability Assessment. These include zoning ordinances, fire protection codes (Article 128.10.010, Section 10-2), and building regulations that support hazard mitigation.

Expand and Improve Capabilities

Alturas will enhance current mitigation capabilities through continued enforcement of updated building codes, expanded public awareness campaigns, and infrastructure improvements to reduce vulnerability to floods and wildfires.

Plan Integration

Integration with Jurisdictional Planning

The City of Alturas has worked to incorporate elements of the 2016 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan into other planning processes and policy frameworks. Specifically, hazard data and mitigation strategies were used to inform the City's General Plan update, zoning and subdivision ordinances, and capital improvement planning related to water and wastewater infrastructure. In addition, emergency preparedness information has been incorporated into the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and mitigation project priorities were considered during budgeting and grant applications.

For Alturas, limited staff capacity and reliance on county-level planning resources constrained integration in some areas. For example, while the 2016 Plan identified flood



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and wildfire vulnerabilities, these were not fully incorporated into land use permitting criteria or development review processes due to resource limitations.

Moving forward, the City commits to strengthening integration by:

- Ensuring hazard mitigation strategies are included in future updates of the General Plan and zoning code.
- Using the HMP as a reference when prioritizing capital improvements and infrastructure resiliency projects.
- Aligning mitigation strategies with the City's annual budget cycle and grant pursuit strategy.
- Continuing coordination with Modoc County OES and Planning Department to ensure consistency across jurisdictions.

This demonstrates the city's progress in local hazard mitigation efforts and provides a clear pathway for Alturas to embed hazard awareness into ongoing planning and decision-making processes.

Plan Maintenance

Changes in Development

Future trends in development within Alturas include controlled growth with emphasis on sustainable and hazard-resilient practices, particularly in flood-prone and wildfire-prone areas, as documented in the community profile of the county plan.

Changes in Priorities

Updated priorities emphasize flood control measures, wildfire risk reduction, and public health preparedness based on community feedback and evolving hazard dynamics.