



Council Study Session Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION AGENDA

Monday, July 14, 2025

Council Chambers, 1175 E Main Street

Live stream via RVTV Prime at rvtv.sou.edu or broadcast on Spectrum 180 & 181.

Public comment is welcome on agenda items.

To **speak electronically** during the meeting or to submit **written comments** in advance, please complete the online [Public Comment Form](#) by 10 a.m. the day of the meeting.

5:30 p.m. Study Session

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS
 - a. Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- III. ADJOURNMENT

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Alissa Kolodzinski at recorder@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.488.5307 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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Council Study Session

Date: July 14, 2025

Agenda Item	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Department	Fire and Safety
From	Chris Chambers, Forestry Officer

TIME ESTIMATE

One hour

CATEGORY

Informational - this is to inform the body on a particular topic. No motion or direction needed.

SUMMARY

The 2025 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a roadmap for living more safely with wildfire. This agenda item provides a high-level overview of the proposed 2025 CWPP and the chance for City Council to ask questions prior to the plan coming before the Council for adoption.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Council Goals:

- **Livability**, including a focus on Community character and community amenities, reliable utility services, progressiveness in rate structures and support for attainable housing;
 - The CWPP prioritizes supporting and protecting socially vulnerable populations, low-income housing, and economic institutions that provide employment.
- **Risk Reduction**, including Wildfire risk reduction and CEAP (Climate Energy Action Plan) execution;
 - The CWPP addresses head-on the need for a new paradigm in wildfire risk reduction across sectors and settings, anticipating the increased risk posed by our changing climate.
- **Economic Development**, including development of eco-tourism related accomplishments like trails, and ensuring City processes such as planning are supportive of attracting new business and supporting those already here;
 - The CWPP addresses the insurance crisis that is undermining real estate markets and affordability, and an overall sense of security that threatens livability and desirability of our community. The CWPP also reinforces efforts to create long-term ecological sustainability of local forests where trails are located.
- **Efficient and Effective Government**, including equity of access, customer focus, transparent and frequent communication, strong regional partnerships, use of technology, execution of maintaining City facilities and public infrastructure.
 - The CWPP emphasizes maintenance and upgrades to City facilities and infrastructure protection using cutting edge technology and analysis.

Ashland Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

- Addresses Ashland's #1 hazard using all mitigations listed in the NHMP.

Ashland Forest Plan

- Supports the Ashland Forest Plan goals including the Climate Change Addendum adopted by Council in 2023.

2021 Electric System Wildfire Mitigation Plan



Council Study Session

- The CWPP references initiatives in the Electric System Wildfire Mitigation Plan and supports implementation of the entire mitigation plan.

Emergency Operations Plan Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) Ashland Community Smoke Response Plan

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the City's first Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in 2004, the wildfire landscape has changed drastically. The City has built and implemented nationally recognized programs like the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project, Fire Adapted Ashland, Firewise USA, SmokeWise Ashland, and others. At the same time, we face an increased risk of urban wildfires, an increased incidence of smoke, and a growing insurability crisis. The proposed 2025 CWPP addresses these changes by adopting a new vision, goals, priorities, and initiatives informed by cutting-edge research, hazard assessment, prioritization, social science, and community input. At the heart of the 2025 CWPP is the goal of achieving the highest degree of wildfire readiness on at least 90% of properties in the city within 10 years.

Forestry Officer Chris Chambers will present a high-level overview of the proposed 2025 CWPP and what steps are next for the City to continue to increase its wildfire readiness, strengthen evacuation systems, and improve our smoke resilience.

Attached to this council report is the proposed 2025 Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Adoption of the 2025 CWPP does not cause any direct fiscal impacts to the City. Various initiatives within the plan, however, will when implemented.

Estimating the cost of implementing the full plan is challenging because an entire community hasn't attempted to mitigate wildfire threat at the scale this CWPP is proposing. With the best information we have and using recent program experience, we conservatively estimate \$80-\$100 million investment is needed over a decade at all levels from individuals, rental property owners, local government, state government, federal government, non-profits, foundations, businesses, and institutions. With the recent passage of wildfire prevention funding from the Oregon Legislature, an upcoming U.S. Forest Service grant opportunity, and interest from foundations and the business community, we anticipate ample opportunities to use the City's wildfire risk reduction fee dollars to leverage and match external funding. Lastly, we expect property owners to contribute towards work on their properties while using external funds to the extent available to offset costs for those with financial need and to mitigate risk to critical community assets.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS, MOTIONS, AND/OR OPTIONS

As needed, incorporate Council comments into a final CWPP to be brought back at the August 19th business meeting for final adoption.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

1. 250624_Ashland_CWPP_FINAL
2. 250624_Ashland_CWPPAppendices_FINAL

2025 Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Photo credit: Darren Campbell



Signature Page

The following signatures indicate review and approval of the 2025 Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan with Appendices (2025 Ashland CWPP).

-----	-----
Tonya Graham – Mayor, City of Ashland	Date
-----	-----
Marshall Rasor – Interim Fire Chief, City of Ashland	Date
-----	-----
Dan Quinones – Southwest Oregon District Forester, Oregon Department of Forestry	Date

Acknowledgments

Approximately 100 individuals, representing various partner organizations, were involved in the City of Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Management Advisory Committee (MAC) and/or various working groups that contributed to the overall outcome of the 2025 City of Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Many of these individuals served on multiple working groups, in addition to their other responsibilities within their respective organizations. The following list identifies these individuals by name and affiliation. City of Ashland personnel greatly value and appreciate the contributions of our cooperators in this endeavor to make the City of Ashland safer and more resilient to the threat of wildfire. If we inadvertently missed anyone, please know that we greatly appreciate your contributions to this effort.

State Representatives	Affiliation
Jeff Golden	Oregon State Senator for District 3
Pam Marsh	Oregon State Representative for District 5
Ross Ballou	Oregon Dept. of Forestry – Southwest District Fire Planner
Silvia Ceron	Oregon Dept. of Human Services (ODHS) Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM)
Taham "Kilo" Khosroabadi	Oregon Army National Guard
Teresa Vonn	Oregon State Fire Marshall – Regional Fire Risk Reduction Specialist

City Council/Mayor	Affiliation
Bob Kaplan	City Councilor

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City Council/Mayor	Affiliation
Doug Knauer	City Councilor
Dylan Bloom	City Councilor
Tonya Graham	City Mayor

City Staff	Affiliation
Brian Hendrix	Fire & Rescue – Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator
Chad Woodward	Climate and Energy Coordinator
Chris Chambers	Fire & Rescue – Forestry Officer
Dorinda Cottle	Communications Officer
Emily Matlock	Fire & Rescue – Senior Administrative Analyst
Hannah King	Fire & Rescue – Wildfire Risk Reduction Specialist, Ashland Wildfire Mitigation Project
Kelly Burns	Emergency Management Coordinator
Leslie Eldridge	Ashland Parks & Recreation – Acting Superintendent
Linda Reid	Housing Program Specialist
Mark Shay	Fire & Rescue – Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Chief – Wildfire & Community Risk Reduction
Marshall Rasor	Fire & Rescue – Interim Fire Chief
Ralph Sartain	Fire & Rescue – Fire Chief (retired)

City Staff	Affiliation
Rick Landt	Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission Chair
Rickey Fite	Senior GIS Analyst
Robby Moles	Ashland School District - Facilities Director
Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
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Scott Fluery	Public Works Director
Sydney Jenkins	Fire & Rescue - Fire & Life Safety Specialist
Tighe O'Meara	Police Chief
Tom McGowan	Fire & Rescue - Training Officer
Tom McBartlet	Electric Department

City Committee Reps	Affiliation
Charisse Sydoriak	Fire Adapted Ashland Management Advisory Committee
Frank Betlejewski	Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee
John Williams	Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee
Kent Romney	Fire Adapted Ashland Management Advisory Committee
Priscila Franco	Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee

City Committee Reps	Affiliation
Rachel Glass	Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee
Reggie Windham	Fire Adapted Ashland Management Advisory Committee

Chamber	Affiliation
Bonnie Chirrick	Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Travel Ashland
Greg White	Reinholdt Insurance, Current Chamber President
Eli Katkin	Owner, Brickroom Restaurant, Chamber Legislative Chair
Jordan Pease	Rogue Valley Metaphysical Library, Chamber Board Member
Mary Gardiner	Retired SOU, Past Chamber President
Meiwen Richards	Retired Bank Manager, Past Chamber President
Sandra Slattery	Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director

Businesses	Affiliation
Catherine Hatfield	Rogue Valley Association of Realtors – Official Rep. (Windermere)
Chris Leishman	Gambrel Gallery
Chris Myron	Rogue Valley Association of REALTORS®
Cindy Bernard	Rogue Valley Roasting Company
Doug Volk	Mt. Ashland Association

Businesses	Affiliation
Eli Katkin	Brickroom Restaurant
Eric Ahnmark	Recology Ashland
Eric Walker	Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Gary Blake	Recology Ashland
Greg Panero	Good Life Property Management Company
Greg White	Owner Reinholdt & O'Harra Insurance and Ashland Chamber Board President/Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair
Jeff & Amber Ekwall	Lithia Property Management
Mark Gibson	Timberland Helicopters
Sean Holt	Good Life Property Management Company

Jackson County	Affiliation
Delaney Huerta	Jackson County Deputy Emergency Manager
Holly Powers	Jackson County Emergency Manager

Universities	Affiliation
Ashley Bosa	Boise State University – Ph.D. candidate, Department of Geosciences

Universities	Affiliation
Brittany Brand	Boise State University – Director of the Hazard and Climate Resilience Institute
Chris Dunn	OSU – Research Associate in the College of Forestry
Erica Fischer	OSU – Associate Professor in the School of Civil and Construction Engineering
E. Jaime Trammell	SOU – Chair and Associate Professor of Environmental Science & Policy
Jessica Piekielek	SOU – Chair of Sociology & Anthropology and Professor of Anthropology
Michael Olsen	OSU – Professor in the School of Civil and Construction Engineering
Rachel Fields	OSU – Master’s Student, Department of Forest Engineering, Resources & Management
Robert Gibson	SOU Campus Public Safety

Federal	Affiliation
	*Employees of the USDA Forest Service served solely in an advisory capacity.
Bill Kuhn	U.S. Forest Service, Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest, Ecologist*
Jennifer Sanborn	District Ranger, Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District *
Kristofer (Kit) Colbenson	U.S. Forest Service, Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest*
Laura Lowrey	USFS Entomologist*
Lindsey Negherbon	U.S. Forest Service, Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest*

Federal	Affiliation *Employees of the USDA Forest Service served solely in an advisory capacity.
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Homeowners' Associations	Affiliation
Betsy Baruso	Glenn Vista Estates HOA
David Intersimone	Park Estates HOA Firewise Committee Chairman
Kathy Rishel	Firewise USA® Resident Leader, Oak Knoll Meadows
Keila Miramontez	Mountain Meadows Retirement Community

Hospitals	Affiliation
Robin Hanson	Asante Ashland Community Hospital, Emergency Manager
Scott Clemetson	Asante Rogue Regional, Emergency Manager
Stephanie Roland	Asante Community Health Foundation, Executive Director

Media Organization	Affiliation
Bert Etling	Ashland.News

Non-Government Orgs	Affiliation
Amber Ferguson	Rogue Food Unites

Non-Government Orgs	Affiliation
Cole Smith	ACCESS, Landlord Engagement Specialist
Ellie Holty	ReOregon & RV COAD Program Coordinator
Tucker Teutsch III	Director, Firebrand Resiliency Collective
Tessa Elbettar	Jackson County Long-Term Recovery Program

Local Residents	Affiliation
John Scarborough	Rotary Club, Resident
Rachel Glass	Landscape Architect, Resident
Richard Whitley	Rotary, Resident
Steve Jensen	Former City Councilor

Contractors	Affiliation
Charisse Sydoriak	CWPP Subcontractor
Dena DeRose	CWPP Subcontractor – Intently Collaborative, LLC
Dustin Tetrault	CWPP Subcontractor – Target Hazard Consulting, LLC
Elijah Polsky	Aerial LiDAR Contractor – Rogue Reconnaissance LLC
Jerry McAdams	CWPP Contractor – MC Fire, LLC
Justice Jones	CWPP Subcontractor – Wildfire Justice, LLC

Contractors	Affiliation
Kevin Preister	Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy
Nate Casebeer	CWPP Subcontractor
Trevor Pereira	American Red Cross, Cascades Region
Trish Malone	Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The 2025 City of Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) reflects a citywide commitment to address the escalating threat of wildfire with inclusive planning, science-based strategies, and community-driven solutions. Guided by the Ashland City Council’s 2022 “priorities, vision, and values” statements, this CWPP is a comprehensive wildfire risk reduction blueprint that ensures equitable access to services and resources.

Since adopting its first CWPP in 2004, Ashland has led with action — building nationally recognized programs like the Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Stewardship Project. Through strategic local investment, the city has leveraged over \$30 million in external funding to reduce wildfire risk in Ashland’s municipal watershed and surrounding forests. Programs like Fire Adapted Ashland, Firewise USA®, SmokeWise Ashland, volunteer-run wildfire risk assessments, and school-based wildfire education initiatives have deepened community engagement across all sectors.

With climate-driven catastrophic urban wildfires, a growing insurability crisis, and stretched wildfire risk mitigation resources has brought Ashland to a pivotal moment. The risk facing Ashland is urgent and deeply personal. The 2009 Siskiyou Fire underscored the importance of proactive forest management, the 2010 Oak Knoll Fire destroyed 11 homes, and the 2020 Alameda Fire, ignited within Ashland’s city limits, devastated neighboring communities and claimed three lives.

What is a CWPP?

A CWPP is a community-driven roadmap for living more safely with wildfire. Under federal guidelines, every CWPP must:

- Be developed collaboratively with local, state, and federal partners, along with other community stakeholders.
- Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction — and recommend the best methods.
- Suggest practical actions that homeowners and neighborhoods can take to make homes and structures more resistant to fire.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) defines these requirements — and gives funding priority to communities that have an up-to-date CWPP.

Figure 1: CWPP

Evacuations were required in every case. Wildfire is no longer a mere possibility; it is a growing and pressing reality.



Figure 2: Ashland Skyline, Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Pawlowski

Vision Statement: *We envision a future where Ashland’s fabric, economy, and spirit not only withstand wildfire—but grows stronger and more connected because of it. In this future, residents, students, workers, visitors, and pets remain safe during wildfires and return quickly to undamaged homes, schools, businesses, and gathering places.*

The creation of this update to Ashland’s 2004 CWPP was supported by a USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant. The updating process engaged over 4,600 Ashland community members through surveys, meetings, and working groups. This CWPP marks a community-wide commitment to protect Ashland. It calls everyone—residents, businesses, and leaders alike—to act, to lead, and to work

together toward a future where wildfire resilience is not just possible, but enduring. That future begins with a **Vision**. To realize this **Vision**—before wildfire reshapes the city—Ashland must unite behind bold, achievable goals that turn intention into action. Embracing these goals will transform Ashland from a vulnerable fuel source into a community strong enough to slow fire, resist ignition, and protect everything we value. Five thematic goals form the pillars of Ashland’s path to wildfire resilience—and the foundation for protecting our future.

Thematic Goals
Stronger Together, Safer Forever – Inspire and mobilize the Ashland community through trust, shared leadership, and open dialogue to achieve 90% risk reduction within 10 years.
Strengthen What Matters, Track What Counts – Harden Ashland’s highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs) to wildfire through data-informed strategic planning, regular risk assessments, and monitoring progress.
Smart Standards, Big Results – Revise municipal codes to align with the 90% risk reduction goal by integrating clear compliance timelines and financial assistance for eligible populations.
Strengthen Our Core, Fund the Mission – Establish a reliable local funding mechanism and build core capacity to partner, secure, manage, and match essential risk reduction resources.
Meaningful Work, Massive Impact – Secure funding to support wildfire risk assessments, implement inclusive community engagement initiatives, create and maintain resilient forests, and fund structure-hardening and defensible space work.

Figure 3: Thematic Goals

Implementation Priorities
Scaling up wildfire risk assessments and structure-hardening programs citywide.
Strengthening evacuation systems and smoke resilience initiatives.
Focusing outreach on socially vulnerable populations and renters , ensuring equitable access to wildfire risk reduction resources.
Building a full-time CWPP implementation team and a robust tracking dashboard.
Securing an average of \$8 million annually for 10 years to fund wildfire mitigation, workforce development, and public engagement.
Revamping local codes and ordinances to align with modern wildfire science.

Figure 4: Implementation Priorities

Attaining the Vision, Goals, and Implementation Priorities takes more than technical solutions—it requires ongoing community involvement at every level. This plan lays out a clear path where each step—including motivating citizen action, strengthening homes, securing funding, and expanding capacity—moves Ashland closer to becoming stronger together and safer from wildfire.

Navigating the Plan

To drive actionable outcomes, the plan uses the analogy of building a home: the five **Thematic Goals** form the foundation, each supported by **Key Results** that function like structural pillars—defining **major objectives** needed to create a strong, resilient community. Approximately 40 identified **Challenges** represent real-world barriers to public safety, infrastructure, environmental health, economic stability, and equity. These are addressed through targeted **Initiatives**, which serve as construction drawings within an implementation blueprint. Every step—from assessing community risk and assembling resources to adapting during setbacks—is guided by measurable outcomes, enabling regular public updates, annual evaluations, and continual adjustments. Together, these building blocks create a clear, flexible path forward.

Through the interactive Table of Contents (TOC) readers may easily navigate to each section.

Supporting information is provided in the listed [appendices](#).

- A. Community Profile
- B. Table of Initiatives
- C. Funding Mechanisms
- D. Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)
- E. Whole Community Report
- F. Socially Vulnerable Populations Project Report
- G. Property Management Survey Report
- H. Rental Owners Survey Report
- I. CWPP DRAFT Comments and Responses

While this plan is relatively comprehensive—because the mission demands it—implementation is designed to be clear, logical, and actionable. It moves step-by-step from ambitious goals through focused objectives, connected challenge statements, and specific initiatives that drive real results. The 2025 CWPP is Ashland’s blueprint for action. It builds on the community’s legacy of environmental leadership and resilience, charting a necessary course toward a safer, stronger future—where every resident, business, and institution plays a vital role in meeting the wildfire challenge head-on.

Section 1

Overview of the Planning Process

Section 1: Overview of the Planning Process

“A top priority is wildfire risk reduction that supports principles of equity and access.”

–Ashland City Council

Introduction

In the summer of 2022, the Ashland City Council adopted Vision and Value Statements for the city which are embraced in this Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). In March 2023, the Mayor and City Council formally adopted priorities to take the city into the 2023-25 Biennium and beyond. A top priority is wildfire risk reduction that supports “principles of equity of access” to city services (Ashland City Council, 2022).

Ashland has a distinct environment and governance framework (see [Appendices](#)), which provides a foundation for understanding the community’s wildfire challenges. There are many wildfire concerns expressed by residents which reflect strong feelings and ideas about how to reduce collective risk. It is evident that the community cares, as indicated by the level of community involvement in developing the 2025 City of Ashland CWPP.

Wildfire Potential in Ashland

Situated in a fire-dependent dry forest ecoregion, Ashland has experienced over a century of fire exclusion, leading to dense secondary growth and an overabundance of woody vegetation in forested areas (Halofsky, 2016, 2020; Metlen et al., 2017). Historically, naturally occurring and indigenous-set fires in the Rogue Valley were the norm. Human suppression of these fires, starting in the mid-to-late 1800s, has resulted in diminished ecosystem function and structural resilience (Hessburg et al., 2019; Borgias in City of Ashland Forest Plan Appendix 8.3, 2004). Additionally, extensive logging has left unnaturally dense second-growth conifer forests (Metlen et al., 2017). Over

a century of land disturbance in the lower elevations, near the main core of Ashland, has transformed former savanna oak woodlands into annual-dominated, non-native grasslands.

A stark reminder of these vulnerabilities occurred on September 8, 2020, when the Almeda Fire ignited in one of Ashland’s grassland areas adjacent to a riparian corridor. Wind-driven fire and embers rapidly spread northwest, devastating the communities of Talent and Phoenix, killing three people and destroying approximately 2,500 homes and 600 businesses (Rogue Valley Council of Governments, n.d.).

Rapid progression of the Almeda Fire highlights Ashland’s critical need for comprehensive wildfire risk reduction and preparedness strategies.

Ashland CWPP Development Process

In 2023, the City of Ashland received a USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) for nearly \$250,000 to update its twenty-year-old Community Wildfire Protection Plan (City of Ashland, 2004). These funds were contingent on using a multi-level, community-engaged process to guide issue identification and strategic planning. Ashland’s application for the grant identified (10) ten specific plan components:

- 1. Assess **community structure ignitability** and fill risk assessment gaps.
- 2. Assess **critical infrastructure** vulnerable to wildfire impacts.
- 3. Develop a risk reduction **strategy for vulnerable community members.**
- 4. Enable **citywide structural ignitability risk reduction.**
- 5. Mitigate **landscape wildfire** potential.
- 6. Strengthen wildfire **prevention** strategies.
- 7. Promote personal **health and safety.**
- 8. Develop an **economic resilience** strategy.
- 9. Identify what is needed for a **post-fire recovery plan.**
- 10. Develop a **strategy to secure sustainable funding** to create a fire adapted community.

An expectation of the planning process was that it would be facilitated by a contractor and community advisory body jointly evaluating wildfire risk at multiple scales to meet the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Wildland Fire Council, 2024), and a 45% in-kind match of city staff and volunteer time.

In addition to requiring community engagement in plan development, the city committed to integrating advances in understanding of social dynamics, public engagement strategies, wildfire risk assessment tools, identification of measurable outcomes, and a sustainable funding strategy.

In September 2023, the City of Ashland issued a call for proposals, to which five companies responded. MC Fire, LLC was selected, and an agreement was signed in January 2024.

In August 2023, the city invited more than 40 community members representing city, federal, and state government, residents, educational institutions, and businesses to a meeting to solicit interest in serving on the Ashland CWPP Management Advisory Committee (MAC).

While putting together the detailed process to incorporate a variety of community input and conduct a full update of the 2004 Ashland CWPP, it was evident that the update should include many facets that weren't originally emphasized in the 2004 document. To assist in these efforts, Ashland staff and a volunteer assembled the MAC and supported 10 working groups tasked with creating challenge statements and initiatives for their respective areas of concern. These groups and their roles are described in the following pages.

Management Advisory Committee

Creating the CWPP has been a collaborative effort between community members and local organizations. A joint approach ensures that the 2025 City of Ashland CWPP embodies the diverse values, knowledge, and commitment of Ashland's citizens to wildfire risk reduction.

On August 23, 2023, approximately 40 community members gathered to learn about the City of Ashland receiving USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) funds. This grant program allocated specific funding to assist the City of Ashland with updating an outdated plan from 2004. Meeting goals included encouraging participation in the MAC and identifying community values and

desired outcomes for the planning process. Participants expressed the following desired process conditions:

- Align the CWPP with the City of Ashland’s 2023–25 Vision and Values Statement.
- Adopt a “whole systems” approach and strive for socially acceptable actions and outcomes.
- The plan should specify education and communication needs and include economic and social values that focus on businesses, industry, and schools.
- Use metrics to monitor and refine strategies over time.
- Collaborate with Oregon State University (OSU) and Southern Oregon University (SOU).
- Provide an easy-to-use information dashboard (e.g., “StoryMap”).
- Ensure the CWPP is a living document with institutional support and funding for minor annual updates and major updates every five years.



Figure 5: Management Advisory Committee Meeting, Photo Courtesy of Chris Chambers

On February 26, 2024, community members and representatives of interested organizations attended the first CWPP MAC meeting where they received an overview of project work expectations (see Figure 5). A comprehensive project guide was provided which identified topics to be addressed in the CWPP and outlined goals and objectives in these areas. MAC members were encouraged to sign up for specific areas of interest identified in the project guide.

Working groups were developed to focus on the ten topics listed below:

- Community Wildfire Risk Assessment
- Public Health and Safety
- Economic Stability
- Insurance Crisis
- Renters Wildfire Risk
- Socially Vulnerable Populations
- Engaging the Unhoused Population
- Building Whole Community Mitigation Capacity
- Watershed and Forest Resilience
- Wildfire Recovery Planning

The MAC represented diverse perspectives, facilitated public input, and reviewed and recommended initiatives in this update to the Ashland CWPP.

Working Groups

Most topic-specific CWPP inputs are individual working groups products. Each group's composition was determined by its leads, based on collective members expressed interest and subject matter expertise. Observers could attend meetings at the lead's discretion. Group sizes ranged from two to ten members. Meeting frequency was negotiated based on workload and each working group was tasked with developing an action plan.

Working group goals were outlined in a CWPP Project Guide, reflecting expectations outlined in the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) application. Some goals were achievable within the planning process, while others were more visionary. It was the responsibility of each working group to identify relevant planning process goals and objectives, identify challenges and propose solutions,

define tasks and deliverables, and establish a timeline for deliverables. A short description of each working group's tasks and contributors follows.

Community Wildfire Risk Assessment

This working group was tasked with: (1) establishing a baseline assessment of structure ignitability across all building types within the City of Ashland, (2) providing a comprehensive understanding of current vulnerabilities, (3) deepen insights into how wildland fuels and fire behavior interact with structural ignitability to better inform mitigation strategies, (4) evaluating critical infrastructure, specifically water, power, and communication systems, (5) identifying susceptibilities to wildfire, and (6) developing a living Wildfire Hazard and Risk Base Map for the City of Ashland.

City of Ashland staff, Oregon State University (OSU) professors and researchers, and an aerial imagery contractor comprised this multidisciplinary group.

Public Health and Safety

This working group focused on public health and safety concerns, including: (1) the need for safe evacuations and public assembly areas, (2) emergency planning for Ashland's diverse school-aged community, (3) maintaining a resilient communication infrastructure, (4) creating an inclusive smoke response plan, (5) maintaining quality of life during a wildfire disaster event, (6) ensuring a secure water supply, and (7) protection of life.

The group met monthly for a year, with each member contributing to research, revising goals, and proposing further needs and wants. City of Ashland staff, community partners, and resident volunteers comprised this group.

Economic Stability

This working group was tasked with: (1) determining how to prepare Ashland businesses, customers, and their employees for a wildfire emergency, (2) determining how to best help businesses prepare and adapt their facilities for wildfire smoke, and (3) propose a Wildfire Recovery Plan for the tourism industry, institutions, and key businesses.

Between January and December 2024 this group met ten times. City of Ashland staff, business owners and community partners comprised this standing committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce that pivoted in 2024 to develop the Economic Stability content of this plan and will continue to work on its future implementation.

Insurance Crisis

In 2024, this working group met six times to discuss insurance issues, share information, and test ideas. The group was comprised of members of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, elected Oregon State representatives, and city staff. Substantial effort was made by the CWPP development team to research the issues and summarize the current situation.

Renters Wildfire Risk

This working group was formed on August 12, 2024 to: (1) identify strategies to motivate and enable renters to reduce their risk and potential impacts from wildfire to themselves and their rental structure, (2) identify strategies to motivate and enable rental property owners/managers to reduce their risk and potential adverse impacts to their properties from wildfire, and (3) facilitate the collection of survey data from property management companies and private rental property owners (see [appendices](#)).

The seven-member working group representing realty and property management companies, social service organizations, and residents met five times.

Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVPs)

This working group was tasked with understanding the challenges faced by housed vulnerable populations—such as low-income individuals, those experiencing housing insecurity, and residents of mobile/manufactured home parks, people with disabilities, seniors, single-parent, and limited-English-speaking households—in creating and maintaining wildfire-resistant places of residence. Based on data collected in 2024 (see [appendices](#)), the group was asked to identify strategies to enable them to create and maintain fire-resistant homes.

Engaging the Unhoused Population

Engaging the unhoused population was split into two parts: (1) preventing wildfires caused by the unhoused, and (2) enable the unhoused to find safety during a wildfire. Part 1 was assigned to City of Ashland Fire & Rescue staff, and Part 2 was assigned to the Public Health and Safety working group.

Building Whole Community Mitigation Capacity

This working group was tasked with enhancing wildfire resilience throughout Ashland by identifying and scoring highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs) for priority risk reduction (see [appendices](#)). It was comprised of city staff and residents and formed to develop a bold strategy for reducing community wildfire risk through direct, tangible mitigation efforts. The group set a clear goal: achieve at least 90% compliance in wildfire mitigation across all properties within city limits within 10 years. To reach this goal, they designed a triage process to prioritize actions based on an inventory of HVRAs and identified strategies to build capacity for implementation.

Watershed and Forest Resilience

This working group was tasked with: (1) collaborating with the Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest and others to identify a pathway to develop a comprehensive, Ashland Watershed Management Plan, (2) updating fuel treatment parameters by incorporating the latest scientific research to predict climate change impacts on the city's forested lands, (3) mapping steps to promote climate-adapted landscapes by restoring structural and functional processes that align with projected climate scenarios, and (4) recommending actions to maximize snowpack accumulation and retention in the watershed to ensure the Ashland Municipal Watershed can consistently provide high-quality drinking water.

Additional considerations are activities to preplan stabilization efforts for the Ashland Watershed in the event of a severe wildfire and ensuring rapid recovery and sustained ecological health. The City of Ashland's Forestry Officer and members of the Ashland Forest Lands Commission comprise this working group.

Wildfire Recovery Planning

The CWPP contractor and a subcontractor were tasked with: (1) summarizing socio-economic lessons from Oregon's 2020 wildfires, especially the Almeda Fire, (2) compiling recovery advice from communities affected by catastrophic wildfires, (3) incorporating initiatives from other working groups, and (4) determining the critical needs, budgeting, and timeline required to develop a collaborative Wildfire Recovery Plan for Ashland.

Whole Community Engagement Summary

In addition to wide-ranging community involvement in the plan development process, the challenges and solutions identified were informed by a combination of qualitative and quantitative studies as shown in the table below.

Engagement in Recent Ashland Wildfire-Related Studies

Year	# Participants	Nature of the study
2015	437	People engaging in wildfire-related conversations in a range of venues
2019	~1,136	Residents from single-family homes responding to a mail-in survey
2020	2,472	Mail-in survey to support an evacuation time study
2024	225	Socially vulnerable persons (primarily) were engaged in conversations
2024	319	Respondents to an open invitation to an online wildfire survey
2024	8	Respondents to property management company survey
2024	22	Respondents to a private rental property owner survey
Total	~4,619	

Table 1: Engagement in Recent Ashland Wildfire-Related Studies

Successful implementation of the 2025 CWPP’s recommended initiatives is dependent on significant community engagement, local collaboration, new investments, and bold strategies.

Public Concerns About Wildfire

For a survey in October and November 2024, Ashland residents and businesses were openly invited to “list any issue or concern they would like to see addressed in the Updated Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan” and their “ideas about how to resolve the issue” in an online survey. 62% of the 319 respondents provided statements on what they thought should be covered in the CWPP and ideas for addressing the issues.

The statements were sorted into themes, with specific concerns, issues, and ideas sorted, scored, and analyzed. A **public interest rating (PIR)** was assigned, with ratings ranging from 15 to 100, with 100 representing the highest interest. These concerns and ratings are listed in the tables below:

Public Health and Safety

PIR	Issues / Concerns
100	traffic bottlenecks, evacuation routes, and alternative plans
80	narrow streets, overdevelopment, and lack of fire breaks
35	improved warning systems and multiple alert mechanisms
30	evacuation plans for schools and other institutions

Table 2: Public Health and Safety

Community Engagement

PIR	Issues / Concerns
90	clearing vegetation, defensible space, and enforcing property maintenance
75	communication, outreach, and education about fire safety
70	challenges for disabled, elderly, low-income residents, and pet owners
50	rising insurance premiums and incentives for fire-safe measures
45	encouragement of neighborhood efforts and volunteer programs
40	recommendations for fire-resistant plants and banning flammable landscaping
25	suggestions for organized volunteer efforts to assist with mitigation tasks
15	plans to accommodate diverse needs, including mobility-impaired individuals

Table 3: Community Engagement

Wildfire Response and Prevention

PIR	Issues / Concerns
65	risks from illegal camping and the need for supervised spaces
60	criticism of city management's use of funds and enforcement of safety codes
40	adequate water storage and availability during wildfires
20	stricter regulations and penalties for noncompliance with safety standards

Table 4: Wildfire Response and prevention

Summary of Challenges

The range of wildfire hazards and risks facing Ashland is broad and can feel overwhelming. To create a clear and manageable action plan, the issues were grouped into 44 **“challenge statements.”** A list of more than 220 initiatives proposes solutions to these challenges.

The table below highlights key challenges Ashland must address to reduce wildfire risk across neighborhoods, businesses, natural areas, and infrastructure. These challenges were identified through community input, expert analysis, and a careful review of current conditions. Each challenge is directly linked to one or more initiatives proposed in this plan.

To facilitate navigation, challenges are organized by subject focus and assigned an identifier (identifying code for tracking purposes) that connects related initiatives throughout the CWPP.

Table of Challenges

Subject	ID	Challenges	Initiatives
Data Collection	CR-1	To respond effectively, Ashland must routinely reassess wildfire hazards and risks across space and time.	4
Electrical System	CR-2	Additional wildfire mitigation measures are needed to make Ashland’s electrical system safer.	5
Water Quality & Supply	CR-3	Action is needed to identify Ashland’s water system limits and implement solutions to safeguard the city’s clean water supply.	2
Prioritize Mitigation	CR-4	Protecting every highly valued resource and asset in Ashland is impossible given limited time and resources, so triage is necessary.	5
Emergency Notices	HS-1	Emergency notifications and advisories are not accessible to everyone, are confusing to some	5

		members of the community, and the communication system has operational weaknesses.	
Evacuation	HS-2	Many are justifiably concerned that safe evacuation during an event will be extremely difficult for many reasons including not having the means to evacuate, confusion about what to do and where to go, blocked roads, and fallen utility poles.	15
Smoke Impacts on Health	HS-3	While the city has a 4-year-old community smoke impacts response plan, it has not been adequately funded and fully implemented.	8
Safety During Fires	HS-4	Local citizens and commuters are concerned about their health and safety during a wildfire event because they fear they will be unable to receive health care or survive if they can't evacuate.	9
General Awareness	RR-1	Residents' perceptions of wildfire risk vary significantly by housing type, location, ownership, and experience, leading to inadequate preparations.	2
Physical Barriers	RR-2	Physical/functional limitations prevent many residents from conducting wildfire risk reduction work.	4
Financial Constraints	RR-3	Financial constraints pose a significant barrier to wildfire risk reduction across all demographic groups.	3
Neighbors	RR-4	Collective residential risk reduction is essential to protect everyone, yet many neighbors do not participate, or their efforts are inadequate even when	3

		they are in a NFPA designated Firewise USA Neighborhood.	
Workforce	RR-5	Licensed and unlicensed workers are either not empowered to, are unaware of, or choose not to follow fire-resistant construction and/or landscaping best practices and some residents don't want to make recommended adjustments to be wildfire safe.	6
Rental Management	RE-1	Most renters lack authority to implement risk reduction measures. Rental owners and property management companies (by proxy) are ultimately responsible for reducing wildfire risk, but most are not taking necessary action.	7
Tenant Awareness	RE-2	Renters living in multi-unit housing face greater challenges. Many renters don't understand wildfire risk or are not motivated to learn.	3
Affordable Rental Housing	RE-3	In the aftermath of wildfire, the availability of affordable rental homes in Ashland may become severely limited, potentially forcing many residents to relocate.	3
Vulnerable Households	SV-1	Many socially vulnerable households underestimate their wildfire risk and face multiple barriers to reducing that risk.	4
Engaging SVPs	SV-2	SVPs require a variety of communication modalities to develop trusting relationships critical to fostering engagement.	5
SVP Housing	SV-3	A majority of socially vulnerable residents live in housing that is highly susceptible to wildfire ignition.	3

Homeowner Insurance	IN-1	While most Ashland homeowners are insured, affordability and access to coverage are growing concerns, particularly for residents in high-risk areas like mobile home parks and homes near wildlands.	5
Uninsured Renters	IN-2	The number of uninsured renters in Ashland is significant, which means that many could lose all assets and be unable to find affordable temporary housing if their rental unit burns.	4
SVP Loss Potential	IN-3	Many socially vulnerable residents are uninsured, leaving them financially unprotected and at risk of displacement when a wildfire occurs.	4
Business Insurance	IN-4	Rising insurance costs and wildfire risks threaten business stability, housing security, and Ashland's socioeconomic viability, with rebuilding efforts expected to take years.	3
Smoke Economics	ES-1	Wildfire smoke is a recurring issue that continues to adversely impact Ashland's economy.	6
Economic Security	ES-2	A significant wildfire would devastate Ashland's economy, with long-lasting impacts that could cripple its economic stability for decades.	13
Business Structures	ES-3	Most businesses are not doing enough to protect their structures from exposure to wildfire.	4
Leadership	PS-1	Protecting the city from wildfire requires a fundamental shift in how community leaders and citizens collectively perceive and respond to the risk.	7

Equitable Support	PS-2	Existing wildfire mitigation efforts suffer from inconsistent and inadequate funding, making it extremely difficult to provide sufficient and equitable support to everyone.	21
Deliver Results	PS-3	Voluntary compliance has proven insufficient, leaving the community dangerously exposed to wildfire. Alternative strategies are needed to accelerate risk reduction efforts.	4
Land Use Planning	CO-1	Ashland Land Use Planning ordinances lack robust and current science-based requirements for new developments.	3
Municipal Code	CO-2	Ashland Municipal Code lacks robust and current science-based requirements for new and existing structures.	1
Enforcement	CO-3	City of Ashland staff are at or beyond capacity and don't have the time available to ensure compliance.	2
HOA CC&Rs	CO-4	Many HOA CC&Rs in Ashland lack wildfire risk mitigation requirements, and some directly conflict with best practices and municipal codes.	3
Tree Mortality	LR-1	Recent tree die-off in the lower Ashland Watershed is increasing fire danger to the community, watershed, and trails.	6
Mt. Ashland Recreation	LR-2	Critical infrastructure and economic assets at the Mt. Ashland Ski Area are at significant risk of wildfire.	9

Climate Impacts	LR-3	The Ashland Watershed's ecological integrity is increasingly threatened by climate change, yet no mitigation plan exists for federal lands, unlike the city's managed areas.	2
Unhoused Issues	RP-1	Unhoused community members face heightened wildfire risks and are also at risk of accidentally starting fires.	5
Non-Forest Wildlands	RP-2	Ashland's highest wildfire risk currently comes from ignitions and rapid fire spread in the non-forested lands surrounding and within the city.	7
Recovery Planning	RC-1	Wildfire recovery can be slow, painful, unfair, and expensive, but proactive planning can significantly ease the process.	1
Recovery Capacity	RC-2	Ashland lacks the capacity, personnel, and funding to effectively pre-plan for and deal with the devastation from a catastrophic wildfire.	5
Environmental Recovery	RC-3	Wildfires can cause severe, lasting damage to streams and watersheds, triggering landslides and heavy sedimentation that can impact the city's potable water supply.	1
Protect High Value Assets	IM-1	Capacity and funding don't exist to accomplish meaningful mitigation to protect all of Ashland's critical values in a short timeframe.	6
City Funding	IM-2:	Implementation requires city funding and resources as a baseline and to meet required matching dollars for external grants.	1

Operational Capacity	IM-3	To be able to attract and administer significant funding we need dedicated city leadership, staff, and willing and able project partners.	3
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Table 5: Table of Challenges



Figure 6: Drought Affects Emigrant Lake near Ashland, Photo Courtesy of Jesse

Section 2

Looking Back and Leaping Forward

Section 2: Looking Back and Leaping Forward

This section is a celebration of the progress that has been made in wildfire preparedness and risk reduction since the implementation of the 2004 CWPP, including achieving national recognition for these efforts. However, after 20 years, it is prudent to take a thoughtful and constructive approach to assess if the CWPP is meeting the challenges ahead. By evaluating wildfire risk reduction activities and leveraging the experiences and insights of the dedicated staff and volunteers, the city can assess its ability to sustain past initiatives while ensuring alignment with proven, science-based strategies that drive meaningful action. Through open and honest reflection, informed decisions can be made to maximize impact and ensure wise investment of resources for a safer, more resilient future.

Looking Back

Ashland was one of the first communities to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in response to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) (U.S. Congress). Ashland's 2004 CWPP was informed by the best available science and exceeded HFRA requirements by "1) *proposing alternative locations and methods of treatments on federal land in our watershed*, 2) *prioritizing fuels reduction across the landscape*, 3) *addressing structural ignition*, and 4) *working with Oregon Department of Forestry, US Forest Service, and local fire officials*." (City of Ashland, 2004; page 2). It laid out a vision for safeguarding the watershed and called for proactive treatments and initiatives designed to protect the forests, drinking water supply, wildlife habitat, and the safety of Ashland. This sparked a long-term commitment to achieving ecological health with community resilience.

Ashland Forest Resiliency Project

The Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) project emerged from this work. Through thinning dense forests, controlled burning, community engagement, ecological monitoring, and collaborative stewardship, the AFR project restored forest health while reducing wildfire risk. What began as a necessary response to growing wildfire dangers evolved into a nationally recognized model of community driven forest management. It united city leadership, local organizations, federal agencies, and residents, in a shared mission to protect Ashland.

At the time, the 2004 CWPP addressed the most pressing and growing fire issue: increased size and severity of wildfires, primarily in forested settings. In 2002, the Biscuit Fire, at over 500,000 acres, had cloaked Ashland in smoke and significantly raised the bar for the size and impacts of wildfire in Oregon. That same summer, Ashland residents watched the East Antelope Fire torch the top of Grizzly Peak. New fuels mitigation efforts were turning into legitimate institutional programs when the 2004 CWPP was crafted.

A “log jam” of controversy over forest management was being broken down by the city’s Restoration Phase II Project in 2004, using a helicopter to remove overly dense trees on more than 140 acres in the municipal watershed. These new efforts followed years of thinning small trees and brush to reduce fire danger and build community support for active forest stewardship.

Landowner grant assistance programs that began in 2001 because of the National Fire Plan (2000) had picked up steam and hundreds of acres of fuels reduction had been completed or were underway by 2004, leading to the city’s first staff position dedicated to wildfire safety. This program connected landowners to professional expertise and funding; two major obstacles to reducing fire danger in Ashland’s forested interface zone.

Community engagement was central to working with citizens, funders, researchers, students and public policy makers as phases of the project were implemented. Three longitudinal studies were completed by Southern Oregon University’s Dr. Mark Shibley to understand public perceptions of the project. These studies found that residents reported having a spiritual, physical, and mental connection to the watershed and citizens wanted to know and understand the science, planning, and implementation processes. Tours, events, classes, field activities, a paid youth and education program, student service learning, and research from college students have kept people engaged and have helped to create a deeper understanding of forest health, the increased need for prescribed fire, and active forest management. A relatively new program, SmokeWise Ashland, was born from AFR to help increase the use of prescribed fire (and quickly increasingly polluted summer months) by educating residents, businesses, and visitors to protect themselves from smoke in the air.

The work continues, adapting to new challenges and embracing innovative approaches. By staying true to science, collaboration, and proactive care, Ashland’s forests are enabled to adapt to rapid climate-driven changes. This helps protect the city’s water supply and the community.

Though defensible space and home hardening were topics of conversation and study, there was much less emphasis on these topics in the 2004 CWPP. Some of the related education and outreach initiatives included:

- Information on Ashland’s website, which has evolved, with the creation of a Fire Adapted Ashland website.
- Wildfire messaging in utility bills, which diminished over time as people chose to opt out of the city’s newsletter.
- Evacuation drills in neighborhoods, which happened twice over a 19-year period.
- A single residential fire safety tour held in 2006.
- Lawn signs, which were used for properties that met Firewise USA® standards.
- A self-guided fire ecology interpretive trail, constructed in 2004 and updated in 2016.

Many other wildfire preparedness and risk reductions activities have been promoted by the City of Ashland since 2004, including the Ashland Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Program, SmokeWise Ashland, and FireWorks!. The following information will provide brief descriptions of these activities, along with accomplishments and opportunities.



Figure 7: Removal of Flammable Juniper by ODF Crew, Photo Courtesy of City of Ashland 2015

Free Home Wildfire Risk Assessments (2006–2024)

Between 2006–2024 hundreds of wildfire risk assessments were completed for single-family homes, where city staff and volunteers engaged face-to-face with residents. Annually, on average, approximately thirty-three (33) homes were assessed, with no quantitative measures to determine risk reduction performed by residents. Qualitative results included positive feedback from residents, increased demand for assessments, and noticeable risk reduction actions, which provided evidence to city staff that the program had tangible benefits to improving wildfire safety on individual private parcels. Unfortunately, in some years, few assessments were completed due to insufficient staff.

It became apparent that to affect significant risk reduction citywide, the average annual assessment rate needed to increase to meet the need for the nearly 7,000 single-family homes and thousands of multi-family residential units in Ashland. In 2021, this led to the formation of the volunteer Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP). Trained and certified volunteer assessors performed over 150 assessments within the first year of the WRAP program. Some years were more challenging due to delays resulting from the COVID pandemic shutdowns, as well as staff and volunteer shortages. This

program has since been restructured within Ashland's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to secure funding and centralize fire department volunteer oversight.

Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator (2015)

While the term fire adapted communities (FAC) was not specifically identified in the 2004 CWPP, efforts have been made to incorporate these concepts. A fire adapted community is a community that collaborates to identify its wildfire risk and works collectively on actionable steps to reduce its risk of loss. This work protects property and increases the safety of firefighters and residents. Creating fire adapted communities is also one of the three goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2014).

In 2015, Ashland was among the first cities in Oregon to hire a Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator to coordinate citizen wildfire safety and mitigation activities, engage with the community, and implement FAC concepts. The position grew out of a grant-funded Firewise Communities Coordinator position that was first created in 2010.

This work also includes developing codes and ordinances, facilitating fuels reduction, and planning evacuation strategies. A City of Ashland utilities fee provides funding for this position. Four (4) separate individuals have filled this role over the past ten (10) years.

Tours and Lectures

Fire department staff schedule speaking engagements and field tours when requested, or as necessary. In the AFR project between 2010 and 2021, sixty-eight (68) tours were given in the Ashland Watershed, with an estimated 1,329 attendees. AFR partners also shared the significance of the project through hosting events like the Era of Megafires presentations by Paul Hessburg, three (3) of which were hosted between 2016 and 2018, guest lectures by fire historian Dr. Stephen J. Pyne and fire ecologist Dr. Susan Prichard. Maintaining positive perceptions of using prescribed fire and active forest management remains important.

City staff have given dozens of presentations to local service clubs, in Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) courses, SOU and Ashland School District classes, homeowners associations, local and national conferences, and via online webinars.

Outreach activities can encourage residents to participate in reducing their own fuels using defensible space science and home hardening. Staff capacity should be maintained for providing community education activities. Tours of hardened homes and fire-resistant neighborhoods can be a way to directly influence the community to act. This is also an opportunity for managing risk perceptions and sharing the urgency of wildfire risk reduction. The City of Ashland can also sponsor community education events in partnership with organizations serving people at risk. However, there are currently no metrics to show that risk reduction actions are being taken by recipients because of city Staff or volunteer presentations.

Educational Information on the City Website

Face-to-face interviews and online surveys in 2024 indicate that the city website is important to some users, while others such as socially vulnerable persons (SVPs) are less likely to use the website. Results also indicate that in-person, onsite risk assessments are the preferable methods of communication for respondents, as it enables interactive dialogue with residents.

Firewise USA® Site Program

Ashland formally began supporting the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise USA® (formerly Firewise Communities USA program) site program in 2010. This voluntary program encourages individual neighborhoods to acknowledge that they are at risk from wildfire and form a committee to encourage neighbors to protect their homes and surrounding areas from wildfire incrementally over time. In 2022, Ashland had thirty-three (33) certified Firewise USA® sites, which were the most Firewise USA® sites of any city in the country at that time. For tracking metrics, this program includes numbers of Firewise USA® sites, along with the per capita time and dollars spent per site.

Firewise USA® certificate of recognition standards do not require that any home attain a meaningful, code-based level of mitigation. Similarly, the program does not require any minimal level of mitigation across the community or neighborhood. Given Ashland's density, having a high level of homes attaining a meaningful level of mitigation is essential. The "certification" process can create a false sense of security—as residents may believe they are better protected though wildfire hazards remain high. The most effective neighborhoods have a strong leader, but the majority don't.

Expectations of city fire staff to assess, draft action plans, find funding, and routinely advise and oversee Firewise USA® communities is inadvisable and unsustainable. By focusing heavily on Firewise USA® sites, which primarily benefit financially secure homeowners in HOAs, the program limits city staff's capacity to support community residents with less resources.

The value of the program is getting neighbors to talk about shared risk and collectively reducing risk factors. If the neighborhood is "In Good Standing" it is often eligible for small fuel reduction grants. Select insurance companies offer small discounts in some states if a home is in a recognized Firewise USA® neighborhood that is in good standing.

However, using city staff to support Firewise USA® sites is not an effective use of city resources. The program has value, but these communities need to be self-directed and may need to hire certified risk assessors to maintain their Firewise USA® recognition. Fire staff or volunteers can continue to support the Firewise USA® program by speaking at neighborhood events and supporting individual home assessments. City staff time, formerly invested in Firewise USA® communities, has already been redirected towards other projects and programs, like the volunteer wildfire risk assessment program (WRAP).

Citizen Wildfire Safety Commission

Ashland established a Firewise Commission in 2011 to "enhance the community's resilience to wildfire hazards." The Commission was renamed the Wildfire Safety Commission in 2019, with the purpose to "provide advice and support to the Council and City departments and education to the community on wildfire issues and plans for mitigation action ... and to foster the efforts of the City of Ashland to adopt and achieve the goals set forth in the Fire Adapted Communities programs." (Ord. 3175 § 1, replaced, 03/05/2019). The Commission was switched to Management Advisory Committee status in September 2023 to free city staff from the time demands of public meeting rules. During its tenure, the Commission played a key role in expanding the Wildfire Hazard Zone, staffing the Farmer's Market AF&R Booth (still done by volunteers today), launching the annual Wildfire Preparedness Campaign, establishing the Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP), creating a real estate wildfire education program, and helping secure a \$3 million FEMA grant to reduce wildfire risk for 1,100 of the city's most vulnerable single-family homes.

The Fire Adapted Ashland Management Advisory Committee's role is currently limited to supporting fire staff upon request. Ideally, this committee would meet on a more frequent basis.

Farmer's Market (and other venues) Booth

An AF&R information booth has been seasonally staffed by volunteers at the Tuesday Farmer's Market since around 2016. This booth is also set up for special events upon request. Since the booth is typically run by volunteers it is relatively cost-effective, so long as there is availability to staff it, which is not always the case. A booth enables direct engagement when people have questions.

Overall effectiveness of this form of education and outreach has not been measured, although the number of interactions is now being tracked. It is a much-appreciated service, but it is unknown if these individuals act based on these interactions. When volunteers are not available, fire department personnel may end up staffing the booth.

Annual Wildfire Preparedness Campaign

This annual campaign ran from 2018–2022. The campaign consisted primarily of setting up poster boards and placing monthly themed flyers in retail stores, at fire stations, and the YMCA from April through July. No metrics were used to measure if actions were taken based on people taking flyers. Research studies indicate that messaging through posters, brochures and handouts raises awareness but rarely motivates action.

Ashland Wildfire Mitigation Project

The Ashland Wildfire Mitigation Project (AWMP) was initiated by AF&R and resulted in securing a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant in the amount of \$3 million. The project's primary goal is to establish defensible space around approximately 1,100 of the highest risk single-family homes and eliminate wood-shake roofing, thereby reducing the overall risk to residents and structures from future wildfires. Assistance is specifically dedicated to single-family homes.

AWMP is the most successful mitigation program since the inception of Firewise in 2010. It requires residents to meet code-based standards for defensible space and eliminates one of the major risk factors for wildfire ignition in wood-shake roofing. Though the program doesn't fund other necessary

elements of home hardening, it accomplishes an important objective through a voluntary, incentive-based approach with verifiable results. As a pilot project of how community-wide risk reduction could work, it is understood that long-term, sustainable funding is needed to continue this sort of incentive-based work.

As of January 1, 2025, 167 eligible residents have reduced their wildfire risk by removing flammable vegetation and debris, and twelve (12) wood roof surfaces have been replaced.

A challenge has been hiring and keeping qualified staff in the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist coordinator role; a temporary grant-funded position dedicated to the AWMP. This program was on pause for several months due to lack of qualified applicants after the first coordinator left for a higher-paying, permanent job, which is a challenge in relying on grant funds.

This incentive-based program comes with an administrative burden given that FEMA and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) are involved in oversight. While the results for properties participating in the program are excellent, the overall participation rate is low at 30% of those contacted from the list of highest risk homes. Defensible space work is only part of the equation in wildfire protection along with home hardening, so even homes who complete the AWMP still need more work to achieve a science-based and desired level of protection. However, AWMP does fill an important role as a means of learning more about how people can successfully reduce their risk through combining codes and incentives, and this needs to continue.

SmokeWise Ashland Program

SmokeWise Ashland is a collaborative initiative in southwest Oregon dedicated to safeguarding public health and enhancing community resilience amid increasing wildfire smoke and increased need for controlled burns to mitigate wildfire risks. Established in 2016, the program unites various local entities, including AF&R, Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Asante Ashland Community Hospital (AACH), Jackson County Health and Human Services (JCHHS), the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), the Fire Adapted Ashland Management Advisory Committee, various schools and childcare centers, and Southern Oregon University (SOU).

SmokeWise Ashland offers community members comprehensive resources on topics such as understanding the Air Quality Index (AQI), improving indoor air quality, proper use of respirators,

wildfire prevention strategies, and methods to reduce exposure to wildfire smoke. It also provides information on controlled burns through text messages, social media and city news. Additionally, SmokeWise Ashland provides guidance for businesses, schools, and community groups on preparedness, decision-making, and communication during smoke events. Thirty-seven (37) PurpleAir monitors have been placed at various facilities around Ashland through this program.

In 2019, the City of Ashland received a \$85,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to purchase and distribute 600 HEPA purifier units to the most smoke-vulnerable residents, demonstrating the program's proactive approach to public health. Since then, an additional 180 HEPA purifier units have been purchased. Free replacement filters for these units are also offered in the spring each year. In 2024, a total of 100 free filters were distributed in just a few days with the help of AF&R staff. In 2024, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) shipped 18,000 N95 respirators to the City of Ashland at no cost to the community. These are still being distributed, with about 9,000 respirators on hand for 2025.

In 2021, the City of Ashland purchased eight (8) high-capacity air scrubbers and installed these at Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA) transitional housing, Ashland Public Library, ScienceWorks, and Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC). Two (2) air scrubbers are in a storage facility for deployment at the City of Ashland Inclement Weather Shelter. Replacement filters for each unit are also in storage. Oregon Department of Human Service Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (ODHS-OREM) also has large capacity air scrubbers and air quality monitors for deployment during smoke events.

SmokeWise Ashland helped develop health messages in partnership with pulmonologists at AACH and the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. Community partners have been critical in dissemination of health information, development of community centered messages and in providing brochures, education videos and business products that help in smoke readiness.

For communications, SmokeWise Ashland began using text messages to inform the community of prescribed fire and other forest management activities that closed specific areas. SmokeWise and AF&R helped to establish best practices for notifying the community about smoke. SmokeWise also maintains a website that during the summer is the most visited by residents.

AF&R and SmokeWise also installed a watershed camera in 2018, which has frequent views. This provides a distant view of the watershed and helps in seeing air quality conditions and smoke movement during prescribed burns. Another role for this camera can be in early detection of wildfires.

In 2022, a survey of 280 Ashland residents during the development of the Jackson County Smoke Management Community Response Plan, found that **37% were extremely concerned** about smoke impacts on their health, **40% were very concerned**, 17% were concerned, 6% were slightly concerned, and 0% reported no concern for health impacts from smoke. The survey found that 40% of respondents wanted in-person classes, covering topics such as how to keep air clean, purchasing of HEPA purifier units, understanding the AQI, and how to select a respirator and wear one properly. In 2024, SmokeWise presented smoke and health information at nine (9) events to a total of 250 attendees.

SmokeWise also provided 100 HEPA units to families who spoke English as a second language and trained over 100 people who then built their own do-it-yourself (DIY) HEPA purifiers. Another forty (40) HEPA purifier units will be provided to community members in spring of 2025.

A critical challenge remains in funding the supplies needed for maintaining this clean air program, as well as sustainable funding for a permanent staff position to run this program; staffing for one position is currently funded by two (2) federal grants, which creates an uncertain future for the program.



Wildfire Education for Students

One way the City of Ashland has supported the needs of K-12 grade students is with the development of a local fire science curriculum called FireWorks! Southern Oregon Fire Ecology Education (FireWorks! SOFEE). Since 2019, it has engaged with numerous organizations for development of local fire science curriculum. Partner organizations include Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC), Lomakatsi Restoration Project, ScienceWorks, Southern Oregon Educational Service District (SOESD), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). These partner organizations have been working together for student education since 2019. In 2024, it provided three (3) separate educator trainings, with an additional training in February 2025, and another planned training in November 2025.

AF&R has led development of the curriculum since hosting the first train-the-trainer workshop in March 2020. Twenty-eight (28) educators participated in the first training and have adopted the curriculum in their classrooms. Three (3) full-time educators were hired for the SOFRC to lead dissemination of both FireWorks! SOFEE for K-8th grade students, as well as a career and technical education program, Fire Bright, for high school students. The City of Ashland recently completed a grant with the BLM for \$84,100 in January 2025 for the curriculum adoption and pilot of the FireWorks! SOFEE lessons at ScienceWorks and classrooms across the Rogue Valley.

Curriculum is ready to be posted to the USFS website, however, there has been a hold on posting any new content to the site. BLM funding also helped in the transfer of the curriculum and program planning to SOFRC for expanded reach.

Involving organizations in collaboratively developed projects like FireWorks! SOFEE has helped to bring in additional funding for smoke and wildfire education, broaden outreach, and provide a network of support for this train-the-trainer model, which can be expanded to other areas in Oregon. Increased collaboration among practitioners, educators and organizations serving at-risk populations helps develop social connections and relationships that will be relied upon when disaster strikes. Comprehensive and responsive fire education also helps with children's social and emotional well-being, as well as that of the educators serving them. Resources developed in this

project, including an OSU Trauma-Informed Toolkit, have been shared with survivors in Lahaina and Pacific Palisades.

The reach of the program is being tracked on a map that SOFRC intends to publish in 2025. This map will allow educators to track student participation from all counties and share student-led service-learning projects. High school students who go into wildland fire, forestry, and related natural resource careers will be able to share their successes.

The City of Ashland also participates as part of an EPA collaborative for planning and dissemination of culturally relevant and engaging hands-on fire science called Southern Oregon Wildfire Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness (SOWREP). It is an effort to assist at-risk students by providing them opportunities to learn about wildfire, forest health and prescribed (Rx) fire. In 2020, 40% of the students in Phoenix-Talent School District lost their homes. This collaborative responded by organizing an art supply drive and distributed 600 art kits to students impacted by the Almeda and South Obenchain Fires.

Student education is a great way to reach a larger portion of the socially vulnerable population (SVP), who tend to be at greater risk of harm from smoke or wildfire disasters. It allows educators to have deeper discussions, which help students understand multiple issues like smoke and health needs, Ready, Set, Go!, evacuations routes, notifications, defensible space, home hardening, and forest stewardship.

To further connect student education and outreach efforts across the region, the City of Ashland and the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC) are participating in the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative (RVFPC). Older students assist with fuels reduction projects organized by a volunteer coordinator and actively participate in the community fuels reduction days. In 2024, Armadillo Institute and TRAILS Middle School worked at North Mountain Park and ScienceWorks to reduce fuels, and plans are being made for additional fuels work with student volunteers. Students have expressed an interest in more opportunities for service learning and want to help community members who do not have the physical capacity to reduce fuels around their homes. However, there is currently a lack of capacity to build upon this volunteer program.



Figure 8: Reducing Fuels at ScienceWorks Museum, Photo Courtesy of City of Ashland

Volunteer Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP)

Starting in 2009, AF&R staff began conducting face-to-face wildfire home risk assessments, with capacity expanding in 2021 when two (2) Wildfire Safety Commission volunteers worked with the Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator (FACC) to create the volunteer-run Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP). Volunteers designed the program, created the logo, and did most of the work, including designing an effectiveness survey. Five (5) residents were certified to perform assessments in October 2021. In the first year, more than 150 assessments were completed: a 470% increase over the annual average by AF&R staff.

WRAP sent emails to 200 residents who had an assessment completed between October 2021 and August 2022. Of the fifty-eight (58) respondents, all of them found the assessment useful, 83% indicated that they had performed some home hardening work, and 95% said they had done substantial work in the 0 – 5’ zone around their home. Respondents also identified obstacles they had experienced in getting the work done. In the spring of 2023, the FACC and WRAP volunteers worked to expand the cohort of trained volunteers and refined the data collection platform. Three new WRAP volunteers were certified by fall 2023.



Figure 9: WRAP Volunteers, Photo Courtesy of City of Ashland

WRAP is best suited for volunteers who thrive in independent, field-based work rather than traditional desk roles or social group settings. WRAP work is also rewarding for those who enjoy making a tangible impact in their community, combining technical expertise with meaningful one-on-one interactions.

WRAP was paused for more than a year to transition to a new home assessment platform, Fire Aside, paid for with USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) funds. Fire Aside is a subscription-based service, with no funding secured beyond 2025, which could limit Ashland’s ability to use the

software in the future. This data collection platform enables the inclusion of photos to highlight specific issues and is designed to enable self-reporting of work accomplished. Marin County (California) reports that only about 20% of households used the self-reporting function, with the program proving most effective when tied to code enforcement.

There are alternative software platforms available that could be considered. For example, WUUII created the Madronus Wildfire Defense Network, which is utilized to assess properties for the popular IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home® program. It provides both self-service and full-service assessment options and facilitates remote or in-person consultations with wildfire risk specialists, streamlining property evaluations (Wuuii, 2024). In May 2025, the Firebrand Resiliency Collective elected to invest in the Wuuii software over the Fire Aside software in the areas they serve in the Rogue Valley. ODF, local municipalities (including Ashland), and private contractors have been creating their own versions of ArcGIS Survey 123 site-specific risk assessment data collection platforms for several years. We foresee the lack of a consistent data collection platform as a significant issue that must be addressed to create comparable regional risk metrics.

Leaping Forward

Much has been done over the past 20+ years since the 2004 CWPP was written. However, the needle needs to move significantly on this pressing issue of community wildfire safety. Ashland’s 2004 CWPP was drafted before a national effort was launched to understand how homeowners respond to wildfire risk, risk assessments, mitigation advice, codes and ordinances, wildfire events, and more. Since 2004, social science research has helped inform best practices for reducing wildfire risk in communities.

Other major changes since 2004 include an alarming rise of urban conflagrations (Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, 2023; Headwaters Economics, 2024; Syphard & Keeley, 2019; Kramer et al., 2019; Mann & Sherriff, 2019), a growing awareness of how disasters disproportionately impact socially vulnerable people (Fothergill & Peek, 2004; Thomas & Phillips, 2012; Islam & Winkel, 2017), and an increase in insights and tools for fostering more inclusive community engagement (Paveglio et al., 2018).

Science-based research on wildfire risk reduction has shown that the most effective strategy to invoke compliance is building trust-based relationships through direct, face-to-face engagement with residents (McCaffrey, 2020; USFS, 2018; Dickinson et al., 2015; McCaffrey, et al., 2011, 2013, 2015; Steelman & McCaffrey, 2012; Paveglio et al., 2009, 2018; Martin et al., 2009; Sturtevant & McCaffrey, 2006). This personal approach not only motivates individuals to take responsibility for their own property but also inspires neighbors to do the same, fostering a collective commitment to wildfire preparedness.

However, it is understood on an anecdotal level (e.g., carrot and stick) that motivating individuals to voluntary compliance only works for those individuals that will voluntarily comply. For others who don't wish to participate in wildfire preparedness and mitigation, codes and enforcement will be necessary.

Coexisting with Wildfire

While the AFR project has reduced wildfire risk in the Ashland Watershed and adjacent forests through partnerships, funding, education, and measurable outcomes, there is simply no equivalency for the highly at-risk built environment or community, which has not had the same kind of focus, funding, and resources allocated to date. This CWPP is the next phase in the Ashland community's wildfire adaptation journey.

A primary vision in this 2025 CWPP update is to build on previous successes and lessons learned through the hard work of staff, volunteers, and citizens. Ashland has tried various approaches and has noted what has and hasn't worked. Ashland is now in a place to propose a new vision to meet a future of climate change and rapid adaptation, which will require different, and possibly drastic, means and methods of creating wildfire resistance and resilience. On September 8, 2020, the Alameda Fire was a near miss event for Ashland, and the need to protect the community was made abundantly clear. The fire rapidly spread to the adjacent communities of Talent and Phoenix, consuming ~2,800 homes, businesses, and public properties in these municipalities and surrounding rural areas.



Figure 10: 2020 Almeda Fire Consuming a Manufactured Home Park in Talent or Phoenix, OR

There are 20+ years of statistically significant, science-based research in fire-sciences and social-sciences to help inform and guide an effective approach for Ashland's future. The City of Ashland will need to take a big leap forward to increase capacity, with the threat of wildfire being listed by Ashland City Council as one of the highest risk events for the city. Capacity is the all-important "infrastructure" that supports and shapes organizations into sustainable, efficient, and effective change agents and enables individuals to do the work that needs to be done.

"Capacity building enables us to have the knowledge, skills, and resources to take action" (Coalitions & Collaboratives, n.d.). Unfortunately, AF&R's staff capacity is stretched thin, and personnel have more work than they could accomplish by themselves, which eventually leads to burnout.

Despite significant past investments in time and resources, residents and businesses are largely not motivated to act on the scale needed to ensure Ashland's survival in the face of severe wildfire. This 2025 City of Ashland CWPP provides a framework for "leaping forward" as a community.

Section 3

Community Risk Assessment

Section 3: Community Risk Assessment

“We have to live with wildland fire. We don’t have to live with fire in our communities.”

(Calkin, et. al, 2023)

Introduction

Urban areas, such as Ashland, are becoming increasingly vulnerable to large-scale wildfires (Giammanco, 2023). This growing risk is evident in recent catastrophic events, including the **2017 Tubbs Fire** and **2018 Camp Fire** in California, the **2020 Alameda Fire** that originated in Ashland, the **2022 Marshall Fire** in Colorado, the **2023 Lahaina Fire** in Maui, and the **2025 Palisades and Eaton Fires** in California (Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety [IBHS], 2025). Over the past six (6) years, these urban conflagrations have resulted in the deaths of more than 220 people, countless animals, and the loss of tens of thousands of structures.

Ashland’s highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs), including infrastructure, businesses, natural environments, and social institutions, play a critical role in supporting economic stability, public health, and overall wellbeing. When disasters occur, these resources and assets can be negatively impacted, disrupting essential services, displacing community, and impeding recovery efforts. For instance, damaged transportation networks can hinder emergency response and supply chain operations, while destruction of local businesses can lead to economic instability (Tierney, 2019). Similarly, the loss of natural resources, such as water supply, can have long-term environmental and economic consequences (Cutter et al., 2003). Furthermore, social institutions, such as schools and healthcare facilities, are vital for community resilience, and their impairment can exacerbate the challenges of recovery (Aldrich, 2012).

This section examines wildfire hazards and risks to Ashland's developed area resources and assets. It begins with an overview of projected climate change impacts, then examines past wildfires and current vulnerabilities in the built environment. The section concludes with a proposed scoring system to help prioritize treatments for HVRAs that are essential to Ashland's identity, functionality, and resilience.

Climate Change Forecast

Climate change is impacting the Rogue Valley, affecting its ecosystems, economy, and communities. Since 1900, the region's average annual temperature has risen by about 2°F. Projections indicate it could increase by at least 5°F by 2074 and 7.6°F by 2100 under moderate emissions conditions (Fleishman, 2025).

As global temperatures rise, extremely hot days are becoming more common, and heat waves are increasing in frequency and intensity. In nearby Medford, the average number of days with temperatures reaching 90°F or higher rose from 53.5 days per year (1950–1960) to 67.4 days per year (2011–2020) (O'Neill et al., 2023).

Looking ahead, the number of dangerously hot days is expected to climb even more. The heat index combines air temperature and humidity to reflect how hot it feels and is a key measure because it's closely tied to human health risks. By 2040–2069, Medford could experience 30 to 40 more days per year with a heat index of 90°F or higher compared to the period from 1971–2000. By 2070–2099, that number is projected to increase to 39 to 62 additional hot days per year, depending on future emissions (O'Neill et al., 2023).

In the Klamath Mountains ecoregion, winter precipitation is expected to increase, while precipitation in other seasons is projected to decrease. Overall, annual precipitation is expected to rise by about 3%, with heavier winter storms becoming more intense (Pierce & Cayan, 2025). As these heavy storms become stronger, the risk of landslides will also increase, particularly in areas that have recently experienced wildfires.

Rising temperatures will cause a significant shift in how precipitation falls. By 2100, over 85% of the precipitation that once fell as snow in the Klamath Mountains is projected to fall as rain instead (Pierce & Cayan, 2025).

These changes, combined with warmer temperatures and shifts in precipitation patterns, are expected to make summer and autumn droughts more frequent, longer, and more severe (O'Neill et al., 2025).

Ashland’s Wildfire Risk and the Role of Climate and Wind Patterns

Ashland has a Mediterranean climate characterized by hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters; conditions that naturally increase the risk of wildfire ignition and spread (Abatzoglou & Williams, 2016). Recent changes in climate, including rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and shifting precipitation patterns have further intensified this fire risk (Westerling, 2016; Halofsky et al., 2020).

In late summer and autumn, before the onset of fall rains, strong, dry easterly winds often fuel fast-moving wildfires. These winds have historically driven some of the largest wildfires in western Oregon, including the 2020 Almeda Fire (Abatzoglou et al., 2021; Mass et al., 2021; Reilly et al., 2022).

While climate change does not appear to be increasing the frequency or speed of easterly winds, conditions during these wind events are changing. Research shows that although easterly winds have slightly decreased since the preindustrial period, they are now more likely to occur alongside high temperatures, dry air, and parched vegetation, creating ideal conditions for large, rapidly spreading fires (Hawkins et al., 2022; Mass et al., 2022; Balch et al., 2024).

Downslope wind-driven fires, such as those fueled by Oregon’s east winds, are especially dangerous. Between 1999 and 2020, these types of fires accounted for 60% of homes destroyed and 52% of wildfire-related deaths in the western U.S. (Abatzoglou et al., 2023).

Additionally, ecosystem changes, such as the spread of non-native grasses, the densification of forests, and the installation of tree plantations, have further heightened wildfire risk.

In Ashland, this wind-driven wildfire threat is particularly concerning near the city's southeast edge, where a fire igniting in the Emigrant Lake area could spread quickly toward town, leaving little time for evacuation or emergency response. To address this, a team of researchers led by Boise State University (BSU) is studying evacuation strategies, traffic patterns, and fire response planning, with results expected in summer 2025.

Local Wildland Hazards and Risk Management

Historically, most naturally occurring fires and indigenous burning that occurred in the Rogue Valley have been suppressed since the mid to late 1800s, resulting in diminished ecosystem function and structural resilience (Hessburg et al., 2019, Borgias in City of Ashland Appendix 8.3, 2004). Most of the region has been heavily logged, leaving unnaturally dense second growth conifer forests (Metlen et al., 2017). More than a century of livestock grazing in the lower elevations where Ashland lies has converted former savanna oak woodlands into annual-dominated and mostly non-native grasslands. The Alameda Fire started in one of these grasslands adjacent to a riparian corridor in Ashland.

Local initiatives such as the Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Project have been developed to mitigate fire hazards in the Ashland Watershed through controlled burns, thinning, and community preparedness efforts (City of Ashland, 2022c). Research by Metlen et al. (2021) suggests that these fuel reduction treatments, including thinning and prescribed (Rx) fire, can significantly decrease wildfire severity while enhancing ecosystem resilience in southwestern Oregon's forests. These strategies aim to restore historical fire regimes and reduce the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires impacts. The AFR Project has been actively working to reduce fuel loads, but long-term sustainability requires ongoing investment in fire adaptation strategies. For more details, see the Landscape Resiliency Section 12.

Significant Wildfires in and Adjacent to Ashland

The City of Ashland has experienced many wildfires since it was incorporated in 1874. The first reliable report of a major wildfire was the August 8, 1959, the Jackson Hot Springs Fire. The temperature was 105°F at the time when two (2) arson fires broke out in dry grass near where the car dealerships are currently located on Highway 99. Driven by steady upslope winds, the fire traveled

through the Ashland Mine Road area and five (5) miles to the crest of the Ashland Watershed by nightfall.

Fire Name	Date	Acres Burned	Structures Lost	Other
Jackson Hot Springs	Aug 8, 1959	2,800–3,800	UNK	Arson
Hillview	Sept, 1973	330	UNK	Arson
Siskiyou	Sept 21, 2009	188	1	Electric Spark
Oak Knoll	Aug 24, 2010	~15	11	Accidental
Almeda	Sept 8, 2020	~3,200	~2,800	3 died; ~6000 displaced

Table 6: Historic Wildfires in and Adjacent to Ashland

Table 6 shows the five (5) largest wildfires within and adjacent to the city from 1959–2020. Fortunately, only one (1) of these fires, the 2010 Oak Knoll Fire, caused significant home losses in Ashland. However, the most destructive fire, the Almeda Fire in 2020, which started in Ashland, caused the loss of thousands of homes and hundreds of local businesses in the neighboring communities of Talent and Phoenix.

It is not a question of if, but when, another major wildfire will affect Ashland. How and where that fire (and subsequent fires) burns could profoundly shape the city’s future. While we may be fortunate once again, there is also the risk of a worse-case scenario. Assessments show that Ashland and nearby communities face high wildfire risk, driven by natural conditions and human influences. The growing built environment, including homes, infrastructure, and cultural landmarks is increasingly vulnerable due to expansion into fire-prone areas and limited evacuation routes (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2023). Proactive planning and community-wide action are essential to reducing this risk and protecting Ashland’s future.

Ashland Developed Area Vulnerabilities

Ashland has a population of approximately 21,400 residents as of 2020. The city covers an area of 6.64 square miles (17.2 sq km), resulting in a population density of ~3,218 people per square mile (2.6 sq km); significantly higher than the national average of ninety-one (91) people per square mile (2.6 sq km) (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

In 2018, through curbside risk assessments, Ashland collected parcel level wildfire risk data for 6,625 private single-family residential properties within city limits (assessors recorded what they could observe from the street). This data set serves as a qualitative baseline for land parcels containing single-family residential properties in 2018. The results of this assessment were used to apply for a \$3,000,000 FEMA wildfire risk reduction grant to replace approximately twenty-four (24) wood roofs and to treat flammable vegetation on the top 1,100 most at risk single-family residential properties.

To update the structural ignitability baseline for the entire city, the following was proposed:

- Reassess the 6,625 residential properties to compare with 2018 baseline data.
- Establish baseline data for ~2,700 multifamily units on ~540 parcels.
- Establish baseline data for ~1,280 commercial, institutional, industrial, and governmental structures on ~680 parcels.

In addition, in the CWPP grant application, the city committed to “analyz[ing] risk by property type and develop[ing] customized risk reduction plans based on geographic patterns of wildfire risk.”

In 2018, the City of Ashland declared the entire city as being at risk from wildfire and delineated Ashland as wildland-urban interface. This means that every property owner in the City of Ashland should strive to make their properties and structures resistant to the threat of wildfire. In March 2025, a geospatial exercise took place to determine ember transmission potential during windblown fires, and again Ashland shows to be at threat from wildfire transmitting into the built environment.

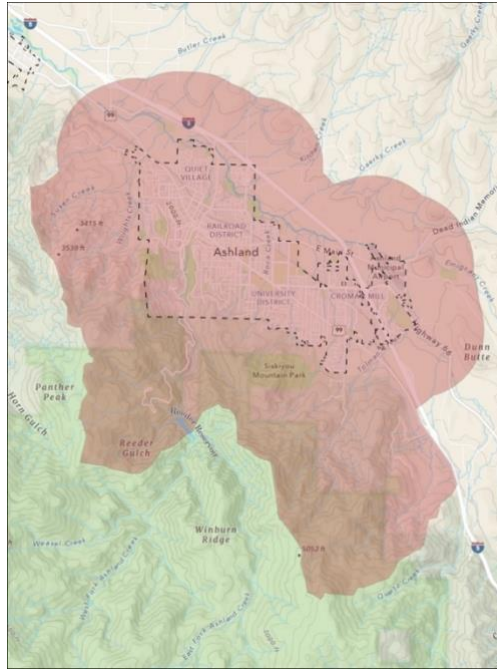


Figure 11: Wildland-urban Interface in and Around Ashland (2025)

2024 UAS LiDAR

In 2024, utilizing USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) funds, UAS (unmanned aerial system) LiDAR (light detection and ranging) & RGB (red, green, blue) data was collected by a contracted aerial imaging provider. As part of this CWPP project, high-resolution LiDAR and RGB data were collected using UAS over approximately 4,300 acres of the City of Ashland, including portions of the Ashland Watershed. Flights were conducted in 100-acre sections at 250 feet above ground level (AGL) with 50% overlap, utilizing terrain awareness to navigate complex elevations. Data collection spanned approximately 2-1/2 weeks.

Key deliverables produced from this effort include:

- Digital Elevation Model (DEM) – High-resolution elevation data.
- Canopy Height Model (CHM) – Tree canopy structure representation.
- Classified Point Cloud – Ground, low, medium, and high vegetation classifications.

- Vegetation Polygon Layer – 1-foot resolution vegetation classification with height attributes for 2D/3D visualization.
- Ladder Fuels Polygon Layer – Identified ladder fuels (0–8ft AGL) to assess wildfire risk.
- Tree Canopy & Height Analysis – Using R programming, tree canopy polygons and tree height points were generated for all vegetation over two feet in height within city limits.

Data collection was conducted using a DJI M300 drone with a HESAI XT32 LiDAR sensor, Emlid RS2+ base station, and ODOT NTRIP network for RTK precision. Processing and analysis were performed using ESRI ArcGIS Pro, GlobalMapper Pro, and R programming (Forest Tools package).

Modeling

Based in part on the UAS LiDAR data, Oregon State University (OSU) and Ashland staff worked with the UAS contractor to classify trees in Ashland into two classes: conifer and deciduous. To accomplish this, they used the tree canopy polygon created from the Tree Canopy and Height Analysis as the population of trees to classify.

Tree type analysis began with a population of 2,190 trees ‘visually’ classified as conifer or deciduous by city GIS staff. They averaged red, green, and blue visual bands from two aerial imagery datasets with a resolution < 1 m, as the basis for this classification, and used the infrared band from one of the image sources. A first aerial imagery set was **leaf off**, high-resolution aerial photography collected during the high-resolution LiDAR acquisition and included band 1 (red), band 2 (green) and band 3 (blue) that constitute color photography. A second aerial imagery set was collected through the NAIP program with **leaf on**, and consisted of band 1 (red), band 2 (green), band 3 (blue) and band 4 (near infrared). Individual bands from each dataset were averaged across the tree polygon and used in the statistical analysis.

A generalized linear model with a binomial distribution (logistic regression) was used to classify trees into conifer and deciduous classes. A stepwise model selection was used to determine which bands to include as factors contributing to distinction of conifer and deciduous trees. The team also tested for two-way interactions among variables within an aerial image dataset and ultimately settled on a model that included all bands from each dataset (leaf off and leaf on), as well as two-

way interaction among all three (3) bands in the leaf off imagery. The dataset was split into a training and assessment dataset so they could perform an accuracy assessment.

Model evaluation for logistic regression is best evaluated with the Area-Under-the-Curve value (AUC), where values above 0.7 are considered good, above 0.8 are considered great, and above 0.9 are considered **outstanding**. AUC for this model was 0.9847 (see Figure 12).

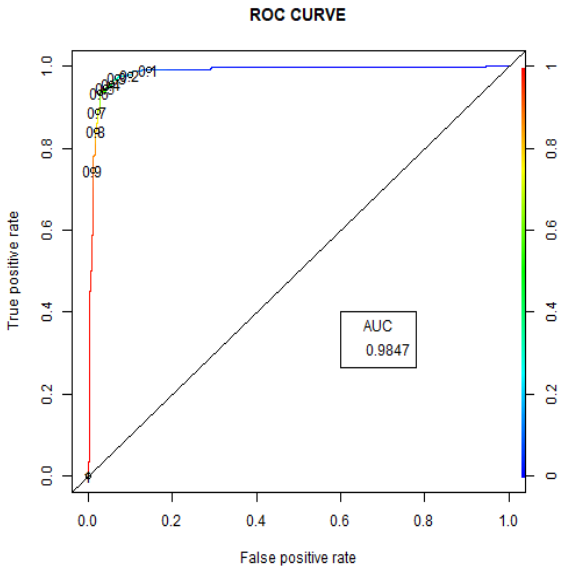


Figure 12: AUC Values Related to Tree Classification Methodology

The team conducted an accuracy assessment on the portion of data excluded from the model and found that by separating trees into conifer or deciduous models, based on a probability estimate for a conifer of 0.5, resulted in a model prediction accuracy of 95%. A confusion matrix on the accuracy assessment data was provided, where 1 = conifer. This model classifies trees very well and there does not appear to be a bias in prediction accuracy for conifers or deciduous trees.

This research is vital to quantify the incidence of conifers adjacent to structures, the data from which can be extrapolated to other vulnerabilities such as ladder fuels, interconnectedness of hazardous vegetation, etc.

Other Data

Other attributes that inform the rapid spread of wildfire in the built environment are being drawn from the UAS LiDAR data, which includes vegetation within 5’ of structures (Figure 13), as it is well understood in the fire sciences that this area should remain ember-resistant or fuel-free, to the extent that California has now instituted Zone 0 requirements “...which will require an ember-resistant zone within 5 feet of structures.” (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 2025).



Figure 13: Percentage of Vegetative Fuels Within 5’ of A Structure

Using the UAS LiDAR data, ladder fuel percentages were also quantified (Figure 14), which informs future steps to mitigate these known vulnerabilities. Ladder fuels are either live or dead vegetation that allows a surface fire to climb from ground level vertically up into the canopies of nearby trees, thus propagating the increased spread of fire.

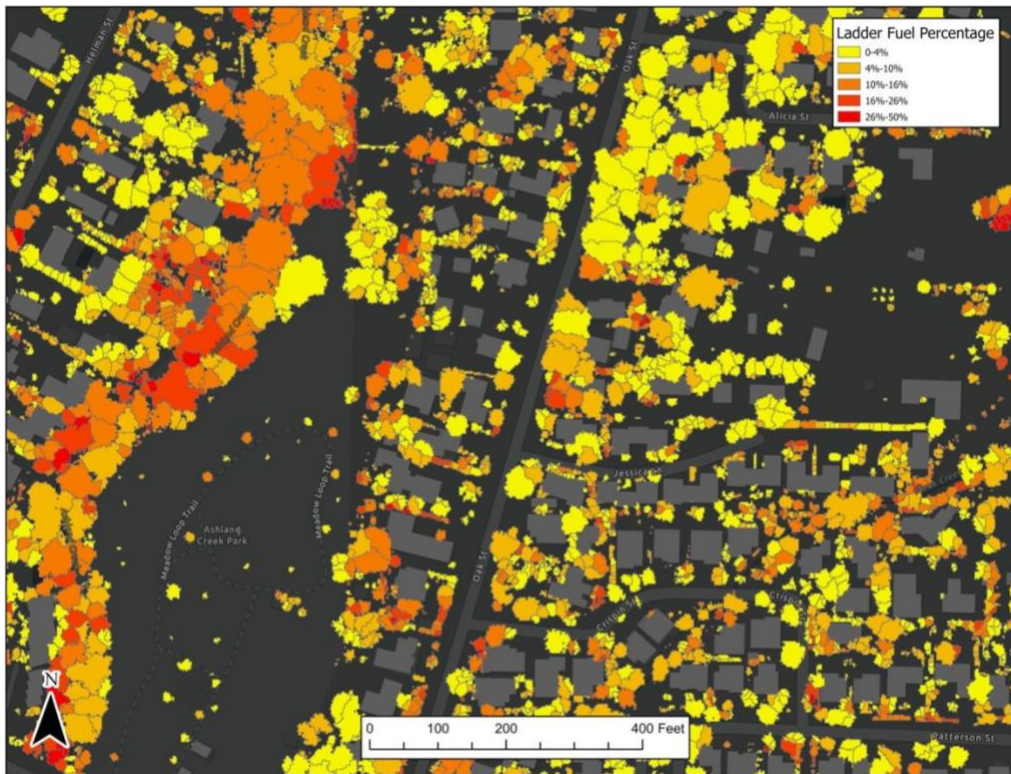


Figure 14: Percentages of Ladder Fuels Around Structures

Additionally, tree canopy cover over structures has been identified through this data (Figure 15), which will help inform parcel-based field assessments to determine the extent that limbs are within ten feet (10') of a particular structure's roofline. Ashland will also be able to identify through GIS data whether those specific trees are conifers or deciduous trees.

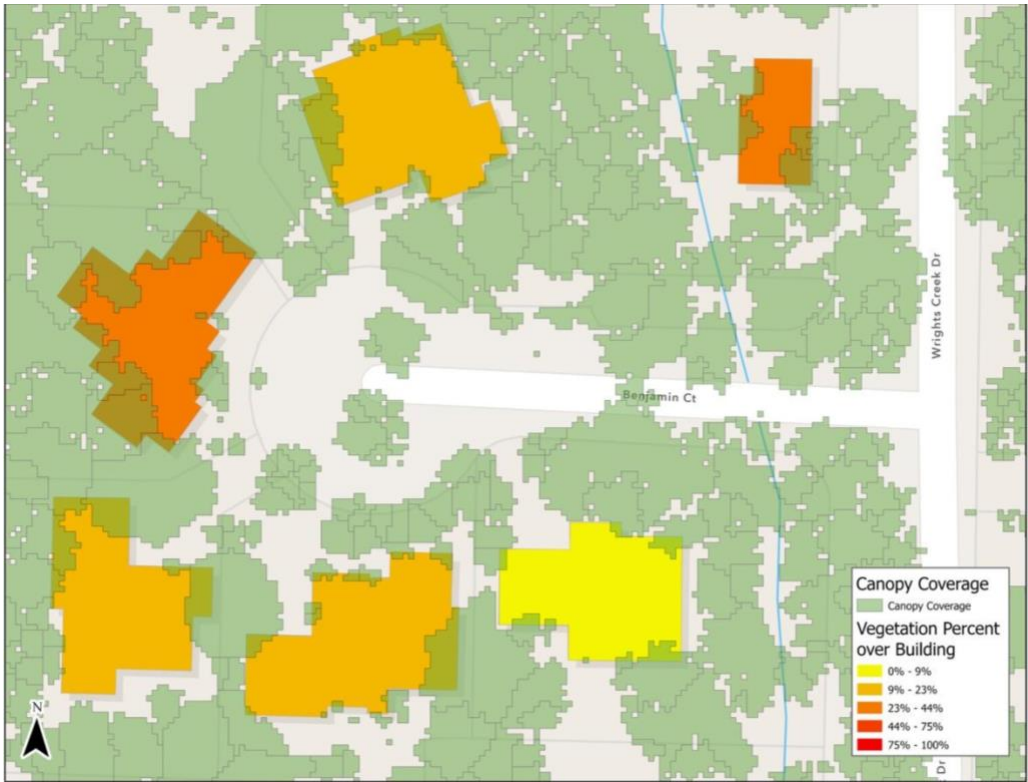


Figure 15: Percentage of Tree Canopy Coverage Over Structures

Lastly, and most importantly, the UAS LiDAR data has helped quantify structure density (e.g., setbacks from other structures) in Ashland’s built environment (Figure 16). The horrific and common incidence of national tragedies, where a wind-driven wildfire transitions into the built environment and an urban conflagration ensues, drives the need to focus efforts on high-density developments. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Hazard Mitigation Methodology (2022) specifically separates out HIGH, MODERATE, AND LOW density in the built environment, as it relates to interconnected fuels and the incidence of structure to structure spread in an urbanized setting (urban conflagration). This information should also inform future codes and zoning ordinances for new developments in Ashland.

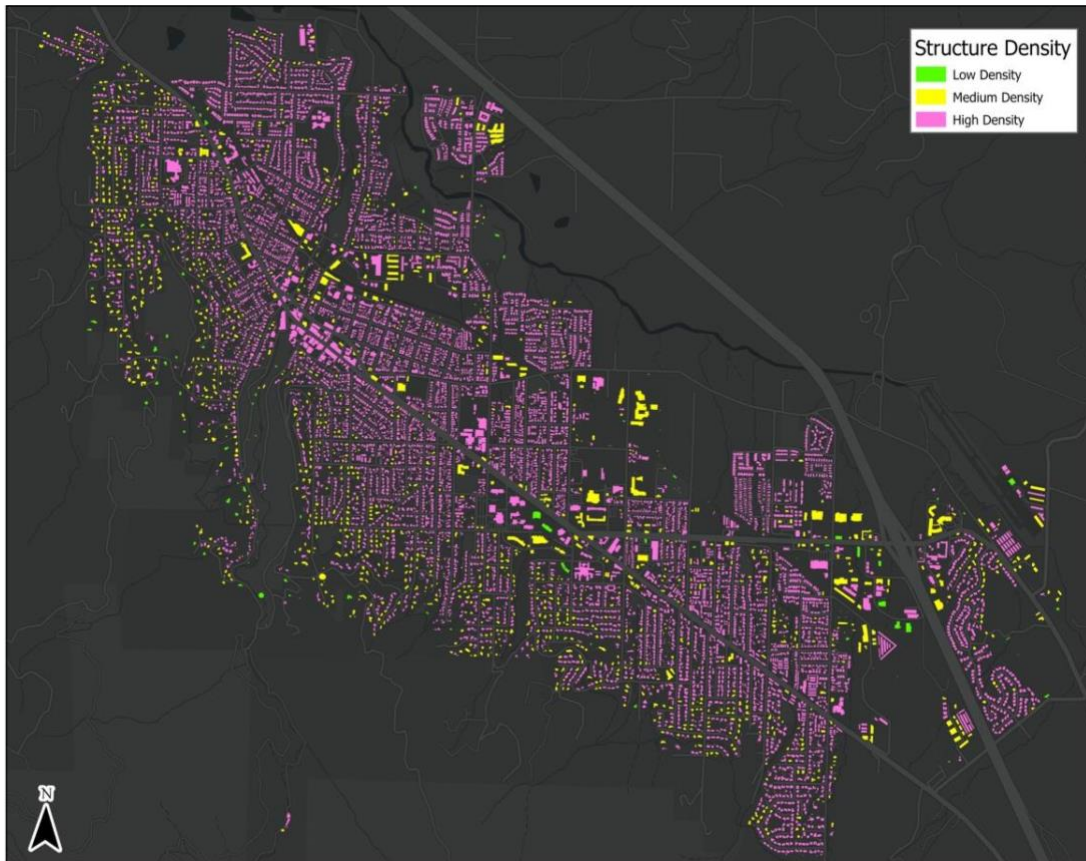


Figure 16: Showing the Incidence of High-Density Construction in the City of Ashland

Next Steps

To complete Ashland's structural ignitability baseline, several critical steps remain. The City must reassess the 6,625 residential properties surveyed in 2018, establish baseline risk data for approximately 2,700 multifamily units, as well as 1,280 commercial, institutional, industrial, and governmental structures. Additionally, the City must analyze wildfire risk by property type and develop customized risk reduction plans based on geographic risk patterns. Utilizing the recently collected LiDAR and RGB data will be essential for advancing these efforts.

Critical Infrastructure

Electrical Infrastructure

Following the 2020 Labor Day fires, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 762 (Oregon State Legislature, 2021), which required utilities across the state to submit wildfire mitigation plans. The City of Ashland operates its own electric utility, though some infrastructure within the city is managed by Pacific Power and Bonneville Power Administration. In 2022, Ashland’s electric utility submitted its wildfire mitigation plan, which was subsequently approved by the State of Oregon (City of Ashland, 2022b). The approved plan outlines local fire conditions, details Ashland’s electrical system, and provides recommendations for improving fire safety. All recommendations within the Ashland Electric Utilities Wildfire Mitigation Plan (City of Ashland, 2022b) are considered initiatives under this CWPP. Moving forward, upgrades and mitigations outlined in the plan will be prioritized and implemented as funding becomes available.

The City of Ashland has taken significant steps to improve wildfire safety since the passage of Senate Bill 762. With its 2022 Electric Utilities Wildfire Mitigation Plan, the city has implemented key measures such as improved fuse technology, fire-resistant infrastructure, and enhanced vegetation management. Additional risk reduction work is needed.

Water Supply Infrastructure

Recent urban wildfires, including the 2017 Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa, the 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise, the 2020 Alameda Fire, the 2023 Marshall Fire in Colorado, and the 2025 Palisades and Eaton Fires in Los Angeles County, revealed a troubling pattern: water system failures during firefighting efforts. These systems were not designed to handle the extreme demands that today’s increasingly common urban, large-scale fires place on them.

In Los Angeles, Janisse Quinones, Chief Executive of the Department of Water and Power, reported that their water system faced four (4) times the usual demand for fifteen (15) consecutive hours during the Palisades Fire (Hamilton, M., & Zahniser, D. (2025, January 8). Such strain can severely limit firefighting efforts. Worse still, system failures can cause water pressure to drop across entire sections of a city. As the fires grow and destroy homes, businesses, and infrastructure,

depressurization can draw contaminated smoke, ash, and toxic chemicals into the water supply, a dangerous mix that can persist for weeks or even months (Public Health Institute, 2022).

For example, following the 2017 Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa's Fountaingrove neighborhood, extensive cleanup was required. Crews replaced more than 440 water lines, three (3) water mains, and eight (8) contaminated fire hydrants. The cleanup cost an estimated \$8 million, and water restrictions remained in place for eleven (11) months. Overall damage to Santa Rosa's infrastructure was estimated at \$111 million (Pineda, 2025).

Recognizing these risks, the City of Ashland is proactively working with RH2 Engineering, the firm that developed the City of Ashland Water Master Plan Update (City of Ashland, 2020b), and Dr. Erica Fischer from Oregon State University's College of Engineering. Dr. Fischer has studied water system failures following major wildfires and conducted experiments to understand how contamination occurs.

This team is building a detailed model of Ashland's water system (Figure 17). The model will simulate the extreme water flow demands expected during a wildfire, helping the city identify system vulnerabilities and develop strategies to prevent hydrants from running dry or drawing contaminants into the system. While the study's results will not be published until after this CWPP update is released, Ashland's Public Works and AF&R plan to use the findings to improve the city's fire readiness ahead of the next wildfire season.

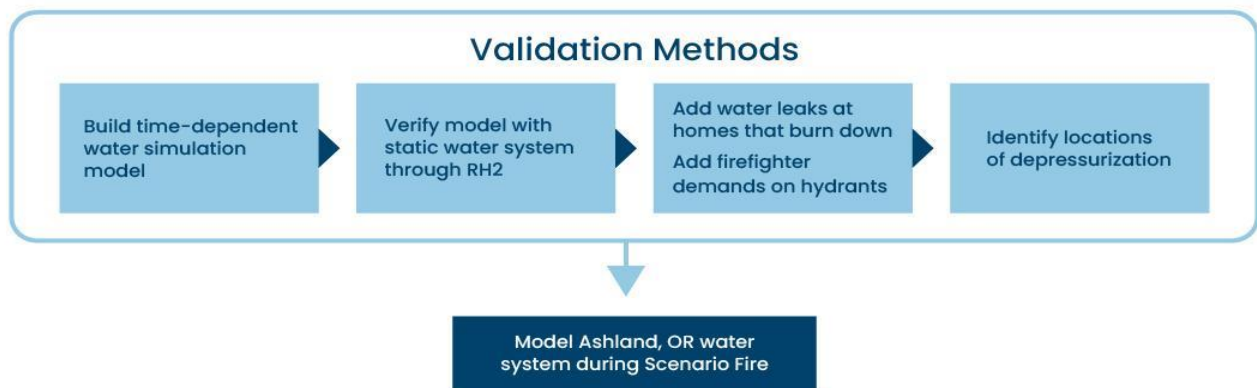


Figure 17: Modeling Approach Outlined by RH2 Engineering and Oregon State University

Ashland’s water system is likely vulnerable to failure during a major wildfire, risking both firefighting capabilities and potential contamination. This will need to be addressed.

Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)

Highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs), as they pertain to wildfire, are those natural resources and human-created assets that can be impacted in a negative or positive way by wildfire. HVRAs enable the city to function, and to support its economy and welfare.

While every community resource and asset have value, not all carry the same weight. Some are the backbone of survival, irreplaceable lifelines that, once lost, could not be replaced with the same character, history, and not without significant time and cost. Others, though vital, have counterparts, making their absence less catastrophic (e.g., grocery stores).

A triage and rating exercise took place with stakeholders in 2024/2025 for Ashland’s HVRAs. By assigning scores based on their physical vulnerabilities to wildfire and societal importance, it is possible to prioritize and collectively invest in protecting higher risk resources and values.

Wildfire will impact assets differently depending on their construction and location. It’s usually very difficult and expensive to change the location of a fixed asset (e.g., the Ashland Water Treatment Plant), but if the asset is critical to the community, it may be a necessary investment to reduce exposure to the hazard. Often, the preferred recourse is making an asset more fire resistant by altering its condition.

For example, there are several major institutional assets in the city: Southern Oregon University, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Asante Ashland Community Hospital that contribute significantly to the cultural, educational, and social landscape of the region and to the welfare and quality of life in Ashland. Other examples include the infrastructure required for communications, transportation, and utilities that serve residents and businesses in Ashland, and the eight (8) schools that support roughly 2,600 students (Ashland School District, n.d.). The 175-acre Southern Oregon University campus is used by more than 6,200 students (Southern Oregon University, n.d.).

Ashland’s small business assets include more than 100 restaurants, bars, coffee shops, galleries, music and theater venues, and specialty shops. Thousands of tourism jobs generate millions of

dollars that support approximately 350,000 visitors each year. Tourism is largely dependent on the 90-year-old Oregon Shakespeare Festival and a variety of local outdoor, visual arts, and culinary opportunities (Ashland Chamber of Commerce, 2023).

Other assets in Ashland include the many historic buildings and four (4) historic districts, which are on the National Register of Historic Places. There are also approximately 7,000 single-family residences, and hundreds of multi-family housing structures including an estimated 200 apartment buildings. Additionally mobile/manufactured home parks, within or directly adjacent to the city, contain around 400 rental spaces.

Decisions to allocate resources based on total weighted scores rest with policymakers. To calculate a total weighted score requires assessing each asset’s fire-resistant qualities and wildfire exposure potential. Unfortunately, the city does not yet have this information, but advanced technological tools and refined data and modelling should make it possible to assess physical vulnerabilities in the next three to five (3 - 5) years or sooner. In the meanwhile, subjective community-based social valuing criteria may be used to set priorities.

Scoring Process

To facilitate prioritization of limited wildfire risk reduction assets, a CWPP working group comprised of residents and city staff developed a process to score highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs) within and adjacent to the City of Ashland. The inspiration for the approach came from the 2024 Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Toolkit.

The first step in the process was to inventory assets. Ashland’s list of HVRAs was informed by various FEMA documents and customized by the working group. Of note, functionally similar assets are grouped together to limit the appearance of bias in the scoring process. There are exceptions when an asset is of clearly greater value to many community members based on the threat of wildfire and the long post-fire recovery process.

The second step required the selection of scoring criteria and assigning a range of possible scores as shown in Table 7.

HVRA Scoring Categories	Scoring	Code
Exposure to environmental factors conducive to extreme fire behavior	1-5	EXPOSURE
Relative resistance to ignition by wildfire	1-5	RESISTANCE
Enables people and animals to survival/evacuate	1-4	SURVIVAL
Post-fire recovery value during the recovery process	1-4	RECOVERY
Importance to community function and identity	1-10	IMPORTANCE
Who would be most impacted if the asset were lost?	1, 3, 5	USERS

*Table 7: Scoring Criteria and Range of Possible Scores
(The higher the number, the greater the weighted value score.)*

Of the six categories, community (aka social) value is judged in four ways:

1. Whether the asset could help people survive or evacuate during the wildfire.
2. The relative importance of the asset in facilitating recovery when the city experiences wildfire.
3. The relative importance of the asset to the identity and functionality of the entire community regardless of fire impacts.
4. Whether the asset is designed to or consistently serves more well-resourced populations, the entire community, or socially vulnerable populations (SVPs).

The scoring rubric applied follows:

Assets in the same category guided prioritization between HVRAs. For instance, communications infrastructure, evacuation routes, and large irrigated fields are crucial for enabling evacuation and

survival during a wildfire, thus each received a top score of 4 in the SURVIVAL bin; while homes are generally not a suitable refuge during a wildfire, so they get a score of 1 in the SURVIVAL bin.

Assets vital for post-fire recovery include utility infrastructure (e.g., water and power, main roads), schools, and city records needed for rebuilding; each received a top score of 4 in RECOVERY. If there were multiple types of assets of the same type or they have counterparts available in Talent, Phoenix, or Medford, such as gas stations and restaurants, they received a wildfire recovery score of one.

Scoring the “relative importance” of HVRAs is challenging because property owners understandably view their own properties as highly significant. While losing some homes and businesses would be devastating for those directly affected, the city could continue to function and recover if enough critical HVRAs remained intact. For example, Ashland has eight (8) local gas stations, numerous restaurants, shops, cafes, and thousands of residential units, which place these HVRAs low to mid-range in the “importance” bin. However, essential services such as power, water, and sewer are vital to the city’s overall functionality. Without them, the city could not operate, making critical infrastructure the highest priority, scoring a 10 on the “importance” scale.

Major economic drivers, like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival campus, rank higher than smaller theaters. Certain assets offer such essential and unique services that they are rated at the top of the scale (10), such as the hospital and Hosler Dam.

Relocating a fixed asset, such as the Ashland Water Treatment Plant, is extremely costly. However, if an asset is critical to the community, such investment of dollars may be justified to mitigate wildfire risk, and that decision was made by Ashland voters in fall 2024, in part because of wildfire risk.

It is not realistic to score all structures (over 10,000) in the built environment or to identify community assets that benefit one to a few citizens. We acknowledge that homes and businesses are important but cannot rank them against each other, so they are lumped together (see [appendices](#)).

To protect Ashland from wildfire devastation, critical assets must resist wildfire rather than act as fuel sources. By resisting ember attacks and disrupting fire spread, the built environment can slow the advancing wildfire and improve survival outcomes. Proactively reducing wildfire risk for key

community resources and assets is essential for resilience and recovery, which will require further refinement through geospatial prioritization of HVRAs.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Community Risk Challenge Statements
Challenge CR-1: To respond effectively, Ashland must routinely reassess wildfire hazards and risks.
Challenge CR-2: Additional wildfire mitigation measures are needed to make Ashland’s electrical system safer.
Challenge CR-3: Action is needed to identify Ashland’s water system limits and implement solutions to safeguard the city’s clean water supply.
Challenge CR-4: Protecting all highly valued resources and assets in Ashland is impossible given limited time and resources.

Figure 18: Community Risk Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- In 2018, 6,625 single-family residents were assessed through curbside observation. Approximately, 400 single-family residences have had full parcel wildfire risk assessment between 2019–2024.
- There is currently no baseline for accessory buildings, multi-family residential units, commercial, institutional, governmental or industry structures.

- In 2022, an Ashland Electric Utilities Wildfire Mitigation Plan (EUWMP) was adopted; along these lines Ashland has a robust vegetation management crew and budget in place to prevent vegetation contact with overhead conductors and reduce fuel within these areas.
- Ashland's Water Master Plan was updated and approved the City Council in 2020, and the water treatment plant has since been approved for relocation to make it much less vulnerable to wildfire (City of Ashland, 2024).
- Research is underway to determine Ashland's water system requirements and adequacy to meet extreme demands from a major wildfire.

Desired Conditions

- Achieve parcel-level wildfire hazard and risk data sufficient to drive timely, effective, and cost-saving risk mitigation across the community.
- Complete all initiatives in the Enhanced Urban Wildfire Mitigation Plan (EUWMP) within five (5) years to accelerate community resilience.
- Ensure clean, reliable water availability before, during, and after a worst-case wildfire scenario to protect public health and safety.
- Maintain water supply pressure and capacity at levels sufficient to meet peak wildfire suppression demands under extreme conditions.
- Treat 90% of Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs) within ten (10) years to reduce wildfire exposure potential and safeguard Ashland's critical resources.

Tracking Metrics

- Data collection metrics can quantitatively detect wildfire prepared home and yard standards set by municipal code.
- Tracking metrics for electrical utilities are identified in the EUWMP.
- Metrics for water resource tracking are awaiting the results of the Oregon State University research study.
- Metrics will be used such as number and type of HVRAs that score 12 or higher on the **social index score** that are mitigated for wildfire hazards within 300 feet of the asset.

Monitoring Plan

- Every city parcel is assessed for wildfire risk at least once every five (5) years.

- Water resource monitoring will be based on relevant research being conducted by Oregon State University.
- Track progress annually on an HVRA conditions base map (development in progress).
- Progress will be reported on a CWPP dashboard (to be created)

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Community Risk Initiatives	
Challenge CR-1: To respond effectively, Ashland must routinely reassess wildfire hazards and risks.	
CR-1.1	Reassess the 6,625 residential properties to compare with 2018 baseline data.
CR-1.2	Establish baseline data for ~2,700 multifamily units on ~540 parcels.
CR-1.3	Establish baseline data for ~1,280 commercial, institutional, industrial, and governmental structures on ~680 parcels.
CR-1.4	Analyze wildfire risk by property type so that customized risk reduction plans can be developed to address geographic patterns of wildfire risk.
Challenge CR-2: Additional wildfire mitigation measures are needed to make Ashland's electrical system safer.	
CR-2.1	Replace expulsion fuses with current-limiting fuses in high-risk areas.
CR-2.2	Replace wood cross-arms with fire-resistant fiberglass arms.
CR-2.3	Install squirrel guards on poles to prevent animal-triggered ignitions.
CR-2.4	Deploy drone inspections for pole and line monitoring.

CR-2.5	Install cameras to monitor smoke and fire conditions.
Challenge CR-3: Action is needed to identify Ashland's water system limits and implement solutions to safeguard the city's clean water supply.	
CR-3.1	Relocate the Water Treatment Plant to a safer site.
CR-3.2	Develop water quality and supply assurance initiatives based on Oregon State University (OSU) water infrastructure vulnerability study.
Challenge CR-4: Protecting every highly valued resource and asset in Ashland is impossible given limited time and resources.	
CR-4.1	Model wildfire scenarios and identify mitigation strategies.
CR-4.2	Use LiDAR and AI to assess wildfire exposure for HRAs with a Social Index Score ≥ 12 .
CR-4.3	Perform ignition risk assessments on high social index scoring HVRAs.
CR-4.4	Identify high-priority zones for early wildfire risk action investments.
CR-4.5	Secure funding and community support for high-priority zone treatments.

Table 8: Community Risk Initiatives

Section 4

Community Health and Safety

Section 4: Community Health and Safety

*"I am very concerned about hitting a traffic jam. I have 4 young kids.
We would probably jump in the ponds."*

-Ashland Resident Interviewed in 2024

Introduction

This section explores the impact of wildfire on community health and safety and assesses Ashland’s readiness to face this persistent threat. Then solutions are presented—developed through collaboration between city staff and community members—to strengthen Ashland’s ability to keep people safe and healthy during wildfire and smoke episodes.

Major wildfires like the 2017 Tubbs Fire, 2018 Camp Fire, and 2020 Oregon fires forced mass evacuations, exposed hundreds of thousands to hazardous air, and caused lasting physical and mental health impacts (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2022). While this section was being drafted, winter wildfires in the Los Angeles region exposed millions to extremely poor air quality, twenty-nine (29) lives were lost, and thousands of individuals and families face permanent displacement and long-term health impacts.

Wildfire poses immediate dangers, including loss of life, injuries, and the destruction of critical infrastructure, which can leave communities without essential services such as power, water, and healthcare. However, **the health impacts of wildfires extend well beyond the flames**. Wildfire smoke contains fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and toxic chemicals that can worsen respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and individuals with preexisting health conditions (Liu et al., 2017). Studies have linked wildfire smoke exposure to increased hospital visits, respiratory complications, and long-term health risks, such as reduced lung function and heightened cardiovascular issues (Reid et al., 2016).

In addition to physical health effects, wildfires take a significant toll on mental well-being. Evacuations, loss of homes and livelihoods, and the uncertainty of rebuilding contribute to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among affected individuals (Friedman et al., 2021). First responders and healthcare workers also face psychological challenges, often experiencing burnout and post-traumatic stress due to the prolonged and demanding nature of wildfire response efforts (Doherty & Clayton, 2011).

Beyond health concerns, wildfires disrupt local economies, place immense pressure on emergency response systems, and create significant challenges for public health infrastructure (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences [NIEHS], 2023).

These disruptions highlight the urgent need for comprehensive preparedness and resilience strategies to keep Ashland healthy and safe during local and regional wildfires.

Process

A CWPP Working Group reviewed concerns and gaps in public awareness of wildfire-caused health and safety risks. Their assessment was based on research studies and input from the August 2023 pre-CWPP Management Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting.

Early in the planning process, several critical needs emerged, including establishing safe evacuation routes and public assembly areas, developing emergency plans for Ashland’s diverse school-aged population, strengthening communication infrastructure, and augmenting Ashland’s smoke response plan. Throughout discussions, a core value remained clear: preserving the community’s quality of life during and after a wildfire disaster. Above all, the protection of life, particularly through securing a reliable water supply, was identified as the highest priority.

This chapter includes a summary of how Ashland residents perceive their evacuation preparedness and how they intend to evacuate. This information is based on surveys conducted in 2019 and 2024, along with a qualitative study in 2024 focusing on socially vulnerable residents. The findings establish a baseline to track progress as the 2025 Ashland CWPP is implemented.

Evacuating During Wildfire

“Evacuation is a huge concern. In our neighborhood there are streets that barely have room for two cars to pass each other due to cars parked on both sides of the street. This would be a huge bottleneck on trying to get through evacuation routes.”

–2024 Ashland Resident

The top wildfire concern for Ashland citizens based on a 2024 survey—earning a Public Interest Rating (PIR) of 100 on a scale of 15–100—are traffic bottlenecks, blocked evacuation routes, and lack of alternatives to evacuating. The third highest PIR (80) is a concern about narrow streets and overdevelopment impeding evacuation. Additionally, meetings with residents and multiple survey results revealed ongoing confusion about evacuation procedures and how to interpret emergency messages.

While the City of Ashland has taken important steps to prepare people to safely evacuate, a lot more needs to be done. Efforts are needed to help prepare larger institutions, such as the community hospital, assisted-living facilities, and schools.

In 2020, KLD Engineering was contracted to analyze the city’s evacuation capabilities, summarize the findings, and make recommendations to reduce evacuation time. To prepare the report, citizens were invited to respond to a survey, of which nearly 2,500 residents responded. This study highlighted potential delays due to limited exit routes and congestion, emphasizing that even in ideal conditions, full evacuation of the entire city could take four (4) hours. Suggestions included reducing the number of cars per household during evacuation, creating safe refuge zones, and implementing minor infrastructure improvements to expedite traffic flow (KLD Engineering, P.C., 2021). Also included in the report were recommendations from city staff to implement parking restrictions on certain streets on Red Flag weather days and to manage vegetation along evacuation routes.

A 2019 mail-in survey of single-family home residents living in Ashland's "high-risk" areas—those adjacent to significant wildland fuels, steep slopes, or both—revealed that most respondents (average age of 67) have taken steps to prepare for evacuation. This survey found that 59% of respondents had an evacuation plan for their household, and among those with pets, 56% had a plan in place for their animals. However, there is room for improved evacuation preparedness, especially for livestock and broader participation in emergency alert systems (USDA Forest Service 2020).

Most respondents live in areas far from main thoroughfares, with steep, narrow roads that limit access (ingress and egress). While 35% of survey participants reported having only one road for ingress and egress, City of Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) staff determined that this was true for only 22% of these properties. This discrepancy highlights an opportunity to better inform residents about their access options.

Driveway length and width were also assessed, as they play a crucial role in allowing first responders to reach properties safely and ensuring a smooth evacuation for occupants. These findings are particularly important for developing targeted educational materials for residents with long, narrow, steep, or complex driveways.

319 respondents to the 2024 online general CWPP survey answered a multiple-choice questionnaire to assess how prepared they are for a wildfire-related evacuation. As shown in Figure 19 nearly 86% of those who responded to the survey are registered for Citizen Alert, ~73% said they know the "Ready, Set, Go!" protocol, ~68% indicated that know their evacuation zone, and ~48% say they have a "Go-kit" ready. However, nearly 21% chose "I feel unprepared for an evacuation" and nearly 81% indicated that they may not have an evacuation plan, or that they may have a plan but have not practiced it.

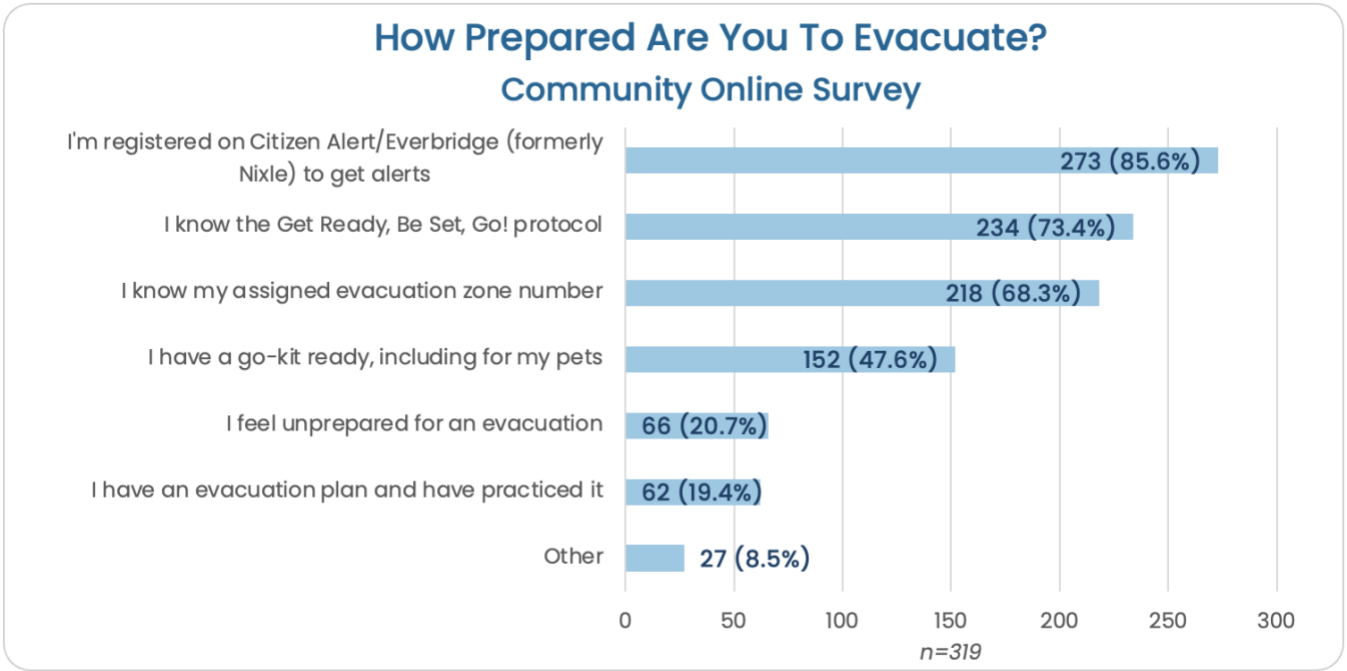


Figure 19: Community Evacuation Preparedness Survey Results (2024)

Out of all respondents to the survey, 27% expounded on their evacuation preparedness concerns by selecting the “Other” choice and adding context; the input is highlighted in the following summary.

- A significant portion of respondents express varied levels of emergency preparedness, with some having detailed plans involving sheltering in place or specific evacuation routes, while others acknowledge gaps such as unpracticed plans, lack of go-kits, or uncertainty about evacuation zones.
- Personal experiences from past fires, including the Alameda Fire, contribute to heightened anxiety and a sense of urgency, particularly among those who previously lost homes or experienced chaotic evacuations.
- Concerns about community and infrastructure are prevalent, focusing on issues such as inadequate evacuation planning by local authorities, traffic congestion, and unclear or inaccessible evacuation routes.
- Some respondents admit to a lack of readiness, citing complacency or insufficient action despite recognizing potential risks.

Overall, the responses reflect a mix of proactive measures, learned experiences, and systemic challenges.

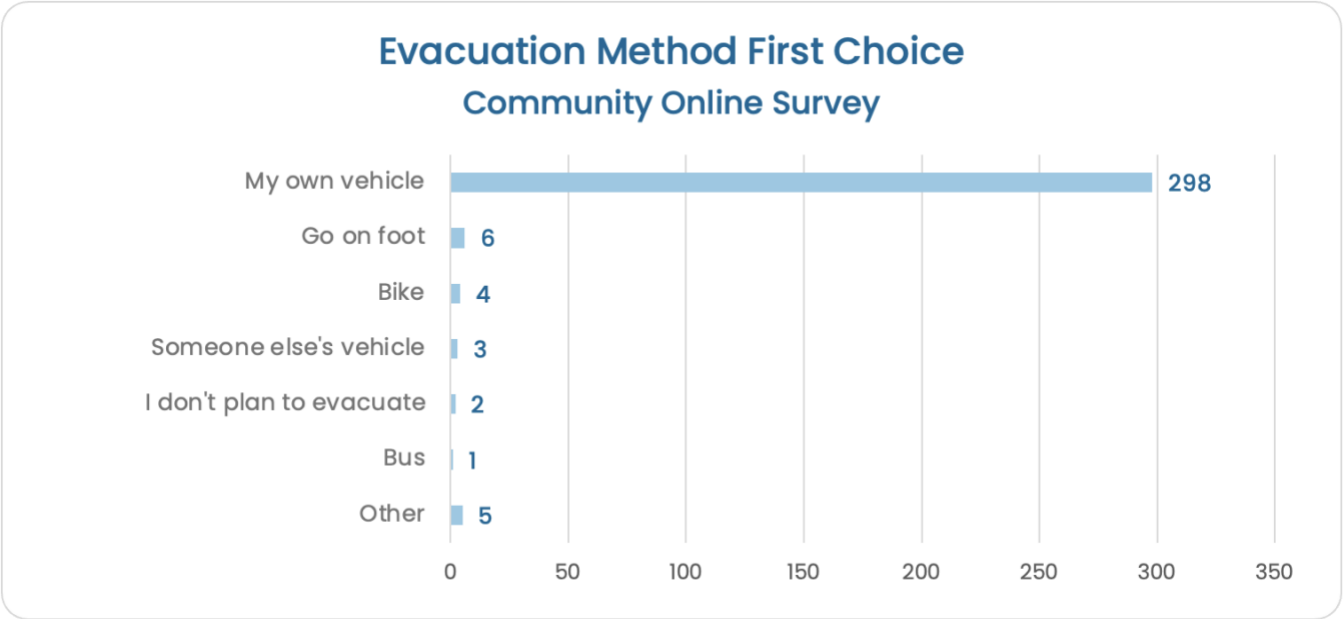


Figure 20: 2024 CWPP Online Survey, Evacuation Method First Choice

Evacuation Method (first and second choices): In the 2024 CWPP online general survey, respondents were asked about their preferred evacuation methods. Additionally, 225 individuals were asked about their planned evacuation method as part of the 2024 Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVP) Project (see appendices). The findings from both efforts are summarized below; key similarities and differences are pointed out.

Most respondents to the 2024 CWPP online survey (93%) indicated their first choice for evacuation would be using their own vehicle (see Figure 20). Similarly, participants in the 2024 SVP Project also preferred using a personal vehicle as their primary evacuation option. Many stated that they would take all available vehicles, considering them valuable assets they could not afford to lose.

Evacuating in someone else’s vehicle is the second choice (~54%) for respondents of the 2024 CWPP online general survey respondents (see Figure 21). The next most popular choices are “Go on foot” (~21%) and by bike (~8%). One respondent indicated that evacuating by bus was their first choice

and nine (~3%) chose the bus as their second choice. Fourteen (14) 2024 online survey respondents (~4%) indicated that they **“don’t plan to evacuate.”**

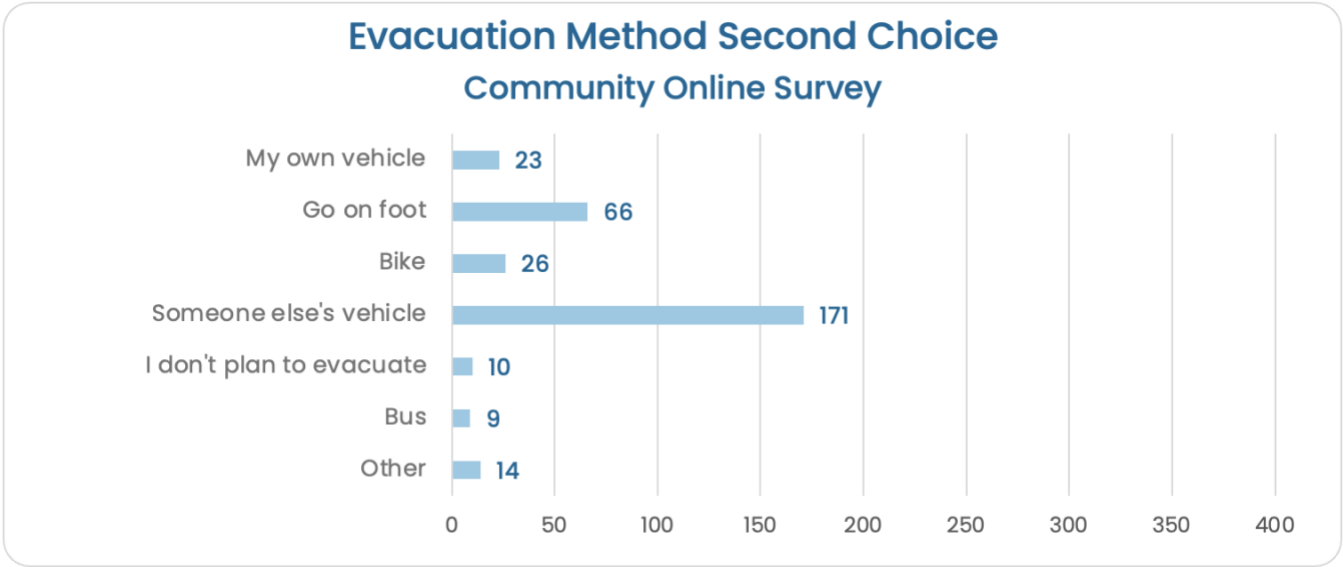


Figure 21: 2024 CWPP Survey Evacuation Method Second Choice

The 2024 SVP Project interviewees made similar choices, but indicated that they would go by bike, on foot or by bus slightly more than those who said they would go in someone else’s vehicle. Nearly 2% of the SVP interviewees said they would not evacuate.

Researchers at Boise State University plan to send out a survey in 2025 to integrate behavioral science data and transportation engineering models to create more accurate and actionable interdisciplinary evacuation models. The survey data will identify and validate the critical factors that influence household protective action decision-making and evacuation logistics, and integrate social-behavioral data into wildfire evacuation scenario simulations using agent-based models to assess evacuation efficacy.

“I can’t drive and have no car. I have not talked to anyone about going with them.”

-Ashland Resident

Emergency Notifications

A desire for improved warning systems and multiple alert mechanisms received a Public Interest Rating (PIR) of 35 on a scale of 15–100.

Three (3) studies asked respondents to identify whether they signed up for an emergency alert system. Emergency alert systems provide critical, real-time updates during wildfire events, helping people to stay informed and respond effectively. In 2019, citizens could sign up for Citizen Alert which was operated by Jackson County Emergency Services and/or Nixle which was operated by the City of Ashland. After the Alameda Fire the two systems were merged into a single “Citizen Alert” system. (Note that in March 2025, the Everbridge “Citizen Alert” system was moved to an independent Jackson County emergency notification system called “Jackson Alert”).

The percentage of respondents who indicated that they were signed up for emergency alerts is listed below:

- ~30–34% of the 2019 respondents
- ~86% of the 2024 online respondents
- ~47% of the 2024 SVP respondents

The results indicate a significant increase in the number of residents registered for emergency notifications through the combined Citizen Alert system, rising from 30–34% in 2019 to 86% in 2024. However, there is room for improvement, particularly among socially vulnerable households, where fewer than half are using the emergency notification system. However, it’s worth noting that the actual number of socially vulnerable individuals enrolled in the system may be higher than reported, as the interviewers did not consistently ask respondents specifically about their Citizen Alert registration. Conversely, participants often mentioned it when answering a broader question about how they stay informed about current wildfire conditions.

During the 2024 SVP Project, approximately 38% of respondents said that they rely on the Watch Duty app for information on wildfires nearby. Additionally, 15% stated they get wildfire updates from friends or family members. However, 9% of respondents admitted they either didn’t know where to

get information or had no access to wildfire updates, highlighting a critical concern for evacuation planning.

Smoke Impacts

Over the past fifteen (15) years, Ashland and the Rogue Valley have suffered some of the worst air quality in the country because of regional wildfires. Over the past decade, Southern Oregon has experienced an **8.7-fold increase** in wildfire smoke compared to the previous ten (10) years, according to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) (2022). Looking ahead, forecasts from the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) (2025) predict hotter, drier conditions that will further intensify fire activity. These trends put communities like Ashland at greater risk of wildfire damage and prolonged smoke exposure.

Smoke has immediate effects and long-term accumulated health impacts. Children, anyone who works outside, persons with pre-existing conditions, pregnant women and older adults are at greater risk of physical harm from smoke. Far-reaching health, economic, and social implications of not addressing smoke adequately are too great to ignore. Severe smoke causes harm to businesses, residents and people of all income levels, outdoor recreationists, student athletes, and healthy adults.

The Oregon Health Authority found that summer wildfire smoke has significantly impacted Oregon healthcare. When air quality becomes increasingly unhealthy, it triggers health alerts and increased hospital visits. Hospitals and health systems have had to close facilities, move patients, and delay procedures due to the smoke.

In the days after the Alameda Fire, a record-breaking Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 900 was recorded on an ODEQ regulatory monitor at Ashland Fire & Rescue’s Station #1. A comprehensive approach is needed to address recurring smoke events affecting Ashland.

In 2021 the City of Ashland developed the Ashland Community Response Plan for Smoke to address some of the concerns. Primary goals are to collaboratively identify and implement strategies for reducing harm from wildfire smoke disasters before they happen and to increase the use of prescribed fire for reducing community wildfire risk. Necessary elements include:

- **Identification of Smoke-Vulnerable Populations:** The plan identifies groups particularly susceptible to smoke-related health issues, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with respiratory conditions. This allows for targeted interventions to protect these populations.
- **Communication and Notification Strategies:** The plan outlines methods for informing the public about fire incidents, smoke impacts, and air quality updates. This includes utilizing various communication channels to ensure timely and accurate information dissemination.
- **Health Protection Measures for Smoke-Vulnerable Groups:** The plan proposes options to safeguard the health of smoke-vulnerable populations during periods of poor air quality, such as establishing clean air shelters and distributing high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) purifiers. For example, the city received a grant to provide 500 HEPA purifiers to smoke-vulnerable residents.
- **Coordination Among Agencies:** The plan emphasizes collaboration between entities conducting prescribed burns, local public health authorities, and the community to manage and communicate about smoke effectively.

Several initiatives from this plan have been implemented, with the assistance of federal and state grants. This has led to improved community awareness of smoke’s health impacts. Efforts have included an updated website, regular communication, health education resources, in-person classes, HEPA purifiers, N-95 respirators, and business forums.

However, gaps remain, and federal funding for existing programs is currently uncertain. There are no plans to hire city staff to implement the plan, and collaborating agencies lack dedicated full-time staff. As a result, Ashland and surrounding communities struggle to meet the demand for health education and community planning before, during, and after smoke emergencies. The Jackson County Community Response Plan for Smoke has not been adopted, so Ashland stands out as the only city in the county to have a smoke impacts mitigation plan.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Community Health and Safety Challenge Statements

- Challenge HS-1:** Emergency notifications and advisories are not accessible to everyone, are confusing to some members of the community, and the communication system has operational weaknesses.
- Challenge HS-2:** Many are concerned that safe evacuation during an event will be extremely difficult for many reasons, including not having the means to evacuate, confusion about what to do and where to go, blocked roads, and fallen utility poles.
- Challenge HS-3:** While the city has a 4-year-old community smoke impact response plan, it has not been adequately funded and fully implemented. Community awareness of smoke impacts on public health and proactive protective measures could be improved.
- Challenge HS-4:** Local citizens and commuters are concerned about their health and safety during a wildfire event. Some fear they will be unable to receive health care or survive if they can't evacuate.

Figure 22: Community Health and Safety Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Evacuation and critical alerts rely on internet connectivity.
- Everbridge was the primary platform for phone, email, and text notifications but that changed on March 3, 2025 to an independent notification platform.
- Only the Emergency Management Coordinator can issue evacuation notifications in Ashland.
- Under ideal conditions, citywide evacuation takes ~4 hours; the North Mountain ramp saves ~10 minutes.
- There are limited evacuation routes: I-5 exits (11, 14, 19), the North Mountain emergency ramp, Highway 99 & 66, and USFS roads to Mt. Ashland.
- Highways 99 & 66 access can be impaired when I-5 traffic is stopped or diverted.

- Residents are advised to follow the 2021 Evacuation Zone Map for guidance.
- Jackson County published evacuation zones for the entire county in the spring of 2024.
- Police, fire, streets, ODOT, and other city resources conduct evacuation training. An Evacuation Task Force is established to coordinate mass evacuation strategies with city and response partners.
- The National Weather Service (NWS) issues regular Red Flag warnings.
- Since 2018, Ashland has faced some of the worst air pollution in the U.S., harming health and the economy.
- The Community Response Plan for Smoke identifies vulnerable populations, protection measures, education, notifications, and interagency roles. Some public and business buildings have indoor/outdoor air quality sensors, but coverage is incomplete.
- SmokeWise web tools and a school curriculum are available, and more than 700 residents have received donated HEPA purifiers since 2020.
- A temporary, grant-funded city employee supports SmokeWise Ashland part-time, and those grant funds will run out.
- A full-time Ashland Emergency Management Coordinator was hired in 2022.
- The City of Ashland currently advises against sheltering in place during wildfire.

Desired Conditions

- Emergency notifications are sent before, during, and after wildfires.
- Alerts are accessible, clear, and understandable for all residents and commuters.
- The city ensures emergency communications function flawlessly, even while people are asleep.
- A secondary system prevents any disruption in information flow to the public and first responders.
- Roads are clear of fuels, wide enough for multiple vehicles, and protected from falling power poles and lines.
- Evacuation Zone Maps and route instructions are well-marked and proven effective.

- The city collaborates with researchers and consultants to enhance evacuation routes and practices.
- The city updates the 2021 Evacuation Time Estimate (ETE) with improvement recommendations on a set schedule.
- City departments train regularly to maintain and manage open evacuation routes.
- Resources are in place to quickly remove broken-down vehicles and restore traffic flow.
- Public advisories are coordinated with NWS Red Flag Warnings, ensuring community-wide notification.
- Ashland's Community Response Plan (2021) is revised and re-adopted by 2026.
- All residents have effective smoke protection systems and follow outdoor safety precautions.
- Businesses minimize smoke exposure for visitors, clients, and employees.
- Community members have access to temporary clean-air spaces during smoke events.
- Hospitals, healthcare centers, and public spaces are hardened against wildfire and smoke.
- Students learn how to protect themselves and their families from the negative impacts of smoke.
- A regional Joint Emergency Operating Center (JEOC) ensures accurate, timely information for emergency and public health responders.
- Evacuation zones include city-approved shelters and open spaces for those unable to evacuate.
- Hospitals and healthcare facilities remain operational during wildfires, and ambulance services are available.
- Clear shelter-in-place guidelines are accessible upon request and where appropriate.
- Multiple designated wildfire-safe shelters and outdoor refuge locations are known and understood by the public.
- Commuters and tourists have clear evacuation and sheltering guidance.

Tracking Metrics

- Number of community members and Socially Vulnerable Population (SVP) households registered for emergency notifications.

- Number of complaints received, number of failures or issues reported.
- Number of evacuation events assessed.
- Total length of wildfire-hardened evacuation routes.
- Count and distribution of city-designated evacuation areas.
- Number of citizens and visitors aware of evacuation zones, go-kits, and emergency evacuation alternatives if they can't escape.
- Number of days AQI exceeds 100.
- Total hours clean air spaces are available to the public.
- Number of public buildings with air filtration systems.
- Number of HEPA purifiers and filters distributed to socially vulnerable people.
- Number of public organizations and schools with smoke plans.
- Number of awareness raising events and after-action reviews.

Monitoring Plan

- Remeasure where Ashland is at in these areas every 1-3 years to determine how things have changed and to measure tracking metrics listed above.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created, and projects receive funding.

Community Health and Safety Initiatives	
Challenge HS-1: Emergency notifications and advisories are not accessible to everyone, are confusing to some members of the community, and the communication system has operational weaknesses.	
HS-1.1	Train two new staff for emergency communication system backup.

HS-1.2	Form an interdepartmental emergency notification team, provide training, and conduct regular system evaluations.
HS-1.3	Improve public communication strategies for wildfire emergencies.
HS-1.4	Install community alert sirens.
HS-1.5	Develop backup communications plan for network failures.
Challenge HS-2: Many are concerned that safe evacuation during an event will be extremely difficult for many reasons.	
HS-2.1	Assess wildfire exposure hazards on primary evacuation routes and possible refuge areas and mitigate.
HS-2.2	Test and refine evacuation traffic management strategies.
HS-2.3	Inspect evacuation routes and hydrants annually.
HS-2.4	Explore widening arterial routes for better evacuation flow and engage the public to resolve conflicts (e.g., bike lanes).
HS-2.5	Parking Restrictions: Consider limiting street parking on Red Flag Warning days.
HS-2.6	Install additional traffic cameras at key locations.
HS-2.7	Evaluate and improve Evacuation Zone signage across the city.
HS-2.8	Integrate Red Flag Warnings into Jackson Alerts.
HS-2.9	Improve public education on evacuation zones and routes.
HS-2.10	Partner with social service organizations to develop action plans for seniors, low-income, housing-insecure, disabled, and unhoused populations. Secure funding for planning and implementation.

HS-2.11	Coordinate evacuation information and planning with local schools.
HS-2.12	Update the 2021 Evacuation Time Estimate study by 2028.
HS-2.13	Strengthen citywide and regional evacuation readiness.
HS-2.14	Expand evacuation zones regionally.
HS-2.15	Establish a task group to improve regional emergency preparedness.
Challenge HS-3: The city has a 4-year-old community smoke impacts response plan, but it has not been adequately funded and implemented. Community awareness of smoke impacts on public health and proactive measures could be improved.	
HS-3.1	Update the Community Smoke Response Plan (CRP) annually or as warranted.
HS-3.2	Integrate the evolving CWPP recommendations into the CRP.
HS-3.3	Expand air quality monitoring at public buildings.
HS-3.4	Educate residents and integrate smoke resilience into school curricula.
HS-3.5	Enable inclusive smoke resilience engagement citywide.
HS-3.6	Support businesses in mitigating smoke impacts on employees and visitors.
HS-3.7	Optimize public indoor spaces for clean air during smoke events.
HS-3.8	Collaboratively expand capacity and infrastructure at Ashland's Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Challenge HS-4: Citizens and commuters are concerned about their health and safety during a wildfire event. Some fear they will be unable to receive care or survive if they can't evacuate.

HS-4.1	Collaboratively expand capacity and infrastructure at Ashland's Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
HS-4.2	Standardize NIMS ICS and disaster training for all employees.
HS-4.3	Develop a plan to sustain healthcare services during wildfires.
HS-4.4	Partner to establish mass care and shelter locations.
HS-4.5	Be prepared to address wildfire-related mental health impacts.
HS-4.6	Evaluate and plan for use of hospitals, schools, and assisted-living facilities as refuges.
HS-4.7	Identify outdoor refuge areas for trapped individuals and make them known.
HS-4.8	Assess risks and benefits of designated assembly points.
HS-4.9	If viable, define actions to establish and manage temporary shelter areas, and work with property owners to secure funding and ensure these sites are safe and suitable for use.

Table 9: Community Health and Safety Initiatives

Section 5

Residential Risk Reduction

Section 5: Residential Risk Reduction

Introduction

This section examines the challenges associated with enabling residents to reduce the threat of wildfire to their places of residence. Residential risk reduction strategies were informed by complementary studies that highlight the perspectives of residents in different locations and housing types. The focus is primarily on homeowners, but renter’s perspectives are included. Renter issues and concerns are addressed in detail in Section 6. Socially vulnerable household perspectives are introduced here, with a deeper exploration of their needs in Section 7.

Motivating Action

Social science research over two (2) decades focused on determining best practices for reducing wildfire risk in communities has found that the most effective strategy is the development of trust-based relationships through direct engagement with residents (Madsen, et al., 2018; Dickinson et al., 2015; McCaffrey et al., 2011, 2013; Steelman and McCaffrey, 2013; Paveglio et al., 2009; and Martin et al., 2009). Personal engagement helps people take responsibility for their property and encourages neighbors to follow suit.

Recent studies emphasize the significance of trust-based relationships and 1-on-1 engagement in encouraging homeowners to mitigate wildfire risks. For instance, Steelman and McCaffrey (2013) highlight that effective communication before and during wildfires, facilitated through established trust and interactive dialogue, leads to more flexible and accepted fire management strategies. Similarly, Paveglio et al. (2018) propose tailored approaches for wildfire adaptation, emphasizing the need to consider social diversity and local contexts to foster community engagement in risk reduction efforts.

While it is physically impossible to develop a trust-based relationship through face-to-face engagement with more than 21,000 residents in a short time, citizens were asked to make their perspectives and ideas about wildfire known through a series of qualitative and quantitative studies.

Discovery Process

In 2015, 2019, and 2024, the city supported quantitative and qualitative studies involving approximately 2,145 participants. These studies explored homeowners' and renters' perspectives on wildfire risk reduction, employing a variety of methodologies. Below is a brief overview of each project.

In 2015, the City of Ashland engaged the Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy to conduct a qualitative research project aimed at involving residents in discussions about fire and preparedness, in anticipation of updating the CWPP. Researchers reached out to 437 individuals; however, the study did not specify the number of homeowners versus renters among the respondents. The authors reported distinct differences in perspectives – homeowners' concerns were closely tied to their strong connection to their residences, while renters were primarily worried about their lack of control over living conditions, evacuation procedures, and personal safety (Preister, et al, 2015).

In 2019, a mail-in survey targeted occupants of single-family homes within Ashland's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), yielding 1,136 responses. 97% of respondents were homeowners, indicating that the findings predominantly reflect the experiences and concerns of homeowners in these high wildfire-risk areas (USDA Forest Service, 2020). Insights from this homeowner-centric sample do not fully represent the perspectives of renters or residents in other housing types. Consequently, wildfire preparedness strategies derived from this data should be carefully considered before being applied to the broader Ashland population.

In 2024, and in preparation for an updated 2025 City of Ashland CWPP, a city staff and volunteer team conducted three (3) data collection projects to gather current perspectives from various segments of Ashland's population, as shown in the table below.

General Survey (n=313)	Homeowner	Renter
Not vulnerable, not senior	91	18
Not vulnerable, senior	125	6
Vulnerable, not senior	25	14
Vulnerable, senior	25	9
Totals	266	47

Table 10: General Population Resident Type

Socially Vulnerable Pop (n=225)	Homeowner	Renter
Not vulnerable, not senior	10	42
Not vulnerable, senior	23	17
Vulnerable, not senior	12	58
Vulnerable, senior	36	27
Totals	81	144

Table 11: SVP Population Resident Type

1. **General Population CWPP Survey:** An online open survey collected responses from the general population. The respondents included 266 homeowners and forty-seven (47) renters. Nearly 23% of all respondents identified as low income, disabled, living in crowded conditions, had children living with them, or had limited English proficiency. Of these, about 16% were homeowners and 7% were renters.
2. **Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVP) Project:** This initiative focused on understanding the perceptions of wildfire risk among socially vulnerable households who are low income, housing insecure, disabled, seniors, or have limited English-speaking proficiency. This was completed through face-to-face interviews. Eighty-one (81) respondents said they were homeowners, and 144 said they were renters.
3. **Rental Property Assessment:** In 2024, a survey of rental properties was conducted to gain insights into measures taken to protect rental assets and tenants. An online survey engaged eight (8) property management companies overseeing nearly 4,100 rental units. Other outreach to private rental owners yielded limited participation, with only twenty-two (22) owners managing forty-four (44) units responding.

Respondents to the surveys and interviews in 2024, included 347 homeowners and 191 renters, providing a current sample of residents' perspectives on wildfire risk. Roughly half of the sampled population were seniors. The dataset reflects more diversity than prior wildfire-related social science surveys in Ashland. While the substantial volume and variety of data doesn't fully represent the community, it will inform future customizable approaches to better meet the needs of homeowners, tenants, rental property owners, seniors and other socially vulnerable populations living in a variety of housing types.

A more in-depth summary and description of each investigation is available in the Voices from the Whole Community Report in the [appendices](#).

In the next section, questions relevant to protecting Ashland residents who live in all housing types are answered using the data collected in the studies described above.

Wildfire Risk Awareness Findings

Experience has demonstrated that sharing the results from systematic data collection with the community provides a common platform for constructive discussion about adapting to wildfire (USDA Forest Service 2020).

Resident Engagement and Understanding

In 2019, a survey of approximately 1,140 Ashland residents revealed that while many financially stable, older single-family homeowners are aware of wildfire risks and defensible space requirements, their preparedness levels vary. Neighborhood participation in risk reduction efforts ranged from 40% to 73%. 14% of respondents incorrectly believed that local firefighters have sufficient capacity to protect all homes, indicating a misunderstanding of firefighting resource limitations. Additionally, there were misconceptions about home or structural hardening, with a disconnect between perceived and actual fire-resistant construction features. A small minority either dismissed the effectiveness of homeowner actions or believed wildfire prevention was not their responsibility. About 45% of respondents acknowledged that wildfire could severely damage or destroy their homes, highlighting both awareness and vulnerability (USDA Forest Service, 2020).

In 2024, online surveys and interviews revealed varied perceptions of wildfire risk influenced by housing type and personal experiences. Approximately 32% of respondents admitted they "don't know or don't think about" wildfire safety, and about 47% felt "some degree of safety" despite Ashland being designated as a Wildfire Hazard Zone. Single-family homeowners generally felt the safest.

Renters in apartments and studio/ADU/cottages expressed mixed feelings, frequently citing concerns about inadequate property maintenance, and reliance on rental property owners for fire mitigation efforts. Some apartment residents highlighted the importance of surrounding conditions, while condominium and townhouse dwellers noted challenges with shared walls and limited clearance around buildings. Mobile/manufactured home residents emphasized risks related to flammable materials, dense vegetation, and aging infrastructure, underscoring the importance of preparedness through ignition-resistant building materials.

Respondents from all datasets demonstrated some awareness of wildfire risks, but their concerns and level of engagement varied significantly. Mobile/manufactured home and single-family homeowners mentioned external environmental threats, while apartment dwellers highlighted urban-specific risks, such as maintenance issues and inadequate infrastructure. Many respondents, regardless of housing type, called for collective action, stricter enforcement of fire mitigation standards, and improved education. Although proactive mitigation measures, such as creating defensible spaces, are understood by many, these efforts are widely recognized by fire scientists as insufficient to fully counter the risks posed by severe wildfires.

Single-family homeowners are most engaged in wildfire preparedness. Residents of multi-unit/family and rental housing often face challenges due to structural vulnerabilities and limited control over fire prevention measures. To address these disparities, community-wide efforts should be tailored to different housing types and socioeconomic conditions.

Communication

The 2019 and 2024 surveys reveal that preferred methods for receiving wildfire risk information varies by demographic group. In the 2019 survey of presumably more secure single-family homeowners, the preferred information sources were mailed newsletters (71%), email newsletters (67%), and in-person interactions (58%). In 2024, online survey respondents ranked on-site risk assessments as

their top choice (37%), followed by the City of Ashland website (26%), while handouts, social media, and videos were moderately ranked. In the 2024 Socially Vulnerable Population (SVP) project, interviewees were not asked to rank preferences, but 16% reported learning from direct engagement with city staff or volunteers, aligning with the general survey preference for on-site risk assessments. Approximately 22% of SVP interviewees reported not receiving any wildfire safety information, revealing a major outreach gap, particularly among apartment dwellers.

Findings highlight key challenges in wildfire education and outreach. While direct engagement and site assessments are preferred, many residents, especially socially vulnerable renters, indicate they don't get information. This means that posting information on the City of Ashland website, flyers, and other messaging media does not meet the city's "equity of access". To improve outreach, a combination of in-person engagement, digital accessibility, and targeted messaging followed by assistance through trusted community channels is warranted.

Limiting Factors Findings

In the 2019 mail-in survey, the 2024 online general survey, and the 2024 SVP Project, interviews highlight a range of barriers preventing Ashland residents from reducing wildfire risk to their homes. Physical limitations and lack of knowledge were significant obstacles in the 2019 survey (49% and 38%, respectively), with financial limitations also cited (35%). The 2024 online general survey revealed that neighbor-related issues (32.3%) and cost (28.2%) were the top challenges, with fewer respondents indicating physical limitations (21%). Renters, particularly in the SVP cohort, faced unique barriers, with 33% stating that reducing wildfire risk was not their responsibility due to rental agreements.

Cost, time, and aesthetic preferences were recurring themes across all surveys. Some respondents were unwilling to alter their property's appearance; 21% in the 2019 survey and 7% in the 2024 online survey. Disengagement or apathy affected a small portion of participants.

A complete list of obstacles respondents identified to making their homes safer are provided in the survey results in the [appendices](#). The primary obstacles indicated were:

- Lack of knowledge
- Not allowed
- Not their responsibility
- Not their problem
- Physical limitations
- Cost
- Time constraints
- Can't find help
- Don't want to change

The number and diversity of barriers indicated by respondents underscores the inherent complexity of wildfire risk reduction. Challenges are complicated by housing type, socioeconomic status, and property ownership. Emotional attachment further highlights the need for both pragmatic and empowering solutions.

Workforce Findings

A common challenge highlighted by respondents across all studies, as well as by city staff and volunteer wildfire risk assessors, is the lack of a properly trained workforce to implement home-hardening retrofits and ignition-resistant landscaping. While new construction with permits requires ignition-resistant materials and landscaping, homeowners seeking to upgrade existing structures often struggle to find skilled workers. Assessors frequently hear from residents who are unable to secure help and are often asked for recommendations for contractors, handypersons, or landscape service providers.

Many companies and online resources promote “home-hardening” techniques and materials, but when taken out of context, some recommendations may be unnecessary or counterproductive. Uninformed or misinformed actions can increase risk rather than reduce it, such as:

- **Roofing Choices:** A properly installed asphalt fiberglass roof can offer better protection than a poorly assembled metal roof—at about half the cost.
- **Flammable Mulch:** Despite widespread guidance against using bark mulch near structures, new shipments continue arriving, and homeowners routinely place it too close to buildings.
- **Non-Compliant Fencing:** Even though a 2018 ordinance prohibits wooden fences and gates within five (5) feet of structures, many contractors and DIY homeowners install them without permits.
- **Overplanting by Landscapers:** Clients often prefer an immediate, lush look, leading landscapers to overplant. As these plants mature, they create dense fuel ladders and continuous fuel beds that become expensive to mitigate years later.
- **Combustible Plant Sales:** Local nurseries and big-box stores sell highly combustible plants like arborvitae, juniper, and dwarf conifers. These species are popular because they are evergreen, deer-resistant, and inexpensive, but they also trap dry, dead materials and contain oils, resins, and terpenes that ignite easily.

Another challenge is the relationship between homeowners and workers. Clients trust contractors and landscaping companies to make informed decisions, but not all of them prioritize wildfire resistance. For example:

- A large local landscaping company has told clients that ignition-resistant landscaping “won’t make a difference,” leading to missed opportunities for risk reduction.
- Many landscape maintenance workers (often called “blow and go” crews) focus only on what the client requests, which may not be appropriate.
- Some well-informed workers suggest fire-safe landscaping options, but client education and interest are inconsistent.

The City of Ashland cannot recommend specific vendors to residents but provides a contractors list on its website. To be included, contractors must review materials and sign an acknowledgment agreeing to follow municipal codes and ordinances. Additionally, there is no continuing education requirement, and due to limited resources, the city cannot verify whether listed contractors adhere to regulations. Addressing workforce gaps, misinformation, and inconsistent contractor practices is essential for improving wildfire resilience in Ashland. A well-trained workforce, better public

education, and stronger accountability measures can help homeowners make informed, effective choices for ignition-resistant upgrades, ultimately reducing communitywide risk.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements.” Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are also listed.

Residential Risk Reduction Challenge Statements
Challenge RR-1: Residents' perceptions of wildfire risk vary significantly by housing type, location, ownership, and experience, leading to inadequate preparations.
Challenge RR-2: Physical/functional limitations prevent many residents from conducting wildfire risk reduction work.
Challenge RR-3: Financial constraints pose a significant barrier to wildfire risk reduction across all demographic groups.
Challenge RR-4: Collective residential risk reduction is essential to protect everyone, yet many neighbors do not participate, or their efforts are inadequate even when they are in a NFPA designated Firewise USA® Neighborhood.
Challenge RR-5: Licensed and unlicensed workers are either not empowered to, are unaware of, or choose not to follow fire-resistant construction and/or landscaping best practices and some residents don't want to make recommended adjustments to be wildfire safe.

Figure 23: Residential Risk Reduction Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- ~32% of residents don't know or don't think about the potential for wildfire to affect their home.
- ~47% of residents feel that their home is relatively safe or very safe.
- Most apartment dwellers report not getting information.
- People get information in a variety of communication modalities but prefer personal on-site learning.
- No baseline conditions information for commuters and visitors.
- 21-49% of households indicate that physical capacity to do work is a constraint.
- 26% of self-identified disabled residents said they are incapable of doing the work.
- 76% of predominantly older (65+ years) single-family households indicate they would like physical assistance.
- One of the Rotary Clubs currently provides basic fuels reduction assistance to low income and disabled residents upon special request when they get a home-site risk assessment.
- 24-35% of households claim they can't afford to get wildfire risk reduction work done.
- Low-income residents are eligible for utility subsidies.
- 32-40% of respondents cited neighbor's inaction as a barrier to risk reduction.
- Ashland has 32 recognized Firewise USA® neighborhoods within city limits as of January 1, 2025.
- Contractors currently self-identify on the city website that they have read, understand, and will abide by municipal codes.
- Workers can volunteer for wildfire risk reduction training, but relatively few choose to participate.
- Home-hardening training is not available.
- Landscaping best-practices training is rarely offered.
- Landscaping maintenance workers have not been offered training in Ashland.

Desired Conditions

- 90% of citizens can accurately describe their wildfire risk where they live.
- Personalized wildfire risk assessments are iterative and reinforcing.
- Physical/functional challenges are not an obstacle to reducing residential wildfire risk in Ashland.
- Cost is not an obstacle to reducing residential wildfire risk in Ashland for those who really can't afford to do the work.
- Every household in Ashland is part of an active wildfire risk reduction group.
- Community networks such as Firewise USA® neighborhoods do not require direct support from the city, but they remain active.
- A list of "certified" contractors and landscaping workers is readily accessible to everyone.
- 90% of workers are properly trained and certified to meet wildfire risk reduction standards approved by the city.
- 90% of clients seek out qualified contractors and landscaping service providers.

Tracking Metrics

- Number of residents who can accurately describe the wildfire risks where they live.
- Number of residents who are clearly reducing wildfire risks to their property.
- Number of physically/functionally challenged citizens who receive assistance/year.
- Number of financially challenged households who receive financial assistance/year.
- Percent of in-kind contributions per dollars spent.
- Number of organizations providing assistance at no cost to the applicant.
- Number of residents who are working with their neighbors to reduce wildfire risk.
- Number and type of collective action organizations such as Firewise USA® neighborhoods.
- Evidence that collective action groups are meaningfully reducing makes a difference.
- Number of service providers trained and certified to meet City of Ashland standards.
- Number of clients who use qualified service providers.
- Number of satisfied clients and celebratory events.

Monitoring Plan

- Use technology and on-site visits to prioritize treatment areas every 3-5 years depending on funding and data collection capacity.
- Randomly sample service providers and clients every 3-5 years.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Residential Risk Reduction Initiatives	
Challenge RR-1: Residents' perceptions of wildfire risk vary significantly by housing type, location, ownership, and experience, leading to inadequate preparations.	
RR-1.1	Expand and promote wildfire risk reduction programs, including public education, home assessments, community outreach events, school programs, grant incentives (e.g., FEMA), and Fire Adapted Ashland initiatives across digital and public platforms.
RR-1.2	Refine messaging, education, and outreach strategies based on 2024 survey results and CWPP public input.
Challenge RR-2: Physical/functional limitations prevent many residents from conducting wildfire risk reduction work.	
RR-2.1	Facilitate groups, organizations, and volunteers doing defensible space work for physically or functionally challenged households.
RR-2.2	Create a sustainable program to assist physically challenged households to create and maintain fire-hardened residences and defensible space around their homes. Consider modeling the program based on the Nevada County Fire Safe Council Functional Needs Program (n.d.).

RR-2.3	Partner with the HASL Center for Independent Living to connect individuals with disabilities and seniors to disaster preparedness and mitigation resources.
RR-2.4	Encourage personal support networks for physically challenged residents.
Challenge RR-3: Financial constraints pose a significant barrier to wildfire risk reduction across all demographic groups.	
RR-3.1	Complete administration and implementation of the 2020-2025 FEMA funded fuels reduction grant.
RR-3.2	Secure additional fund sources to incentivize and directly assist residential home hardening and defensible space work.
RR-3.3	Explore local revenue options to support residential risk reduction work.
Challenge RR-4: Collective residential risk reduction is essential to protect everyone, yet many neighbors do not participate, or their efforts are inadequate even when they are in an NFPA designated Firewise USA® Neighborhood.	
RR-4.1	Encourage neighborhood efforts to attain code compliance and wildfire risk reduction best practices, while simultaneously minimizing neighborhood or network dependence on City of Ashland oversight and financial assistance.
RR-4.2	Provide wildfire risk reduction guidance for multi-family complexes.
RR-4.3	Develop a neighborhood risk reduction program based on the best available science and published recommendations by the IBHS.
Challenge RR-5: Licensed and unlicensed workers are either not empowered to, are unaware of, or choose not to follow fire-resistant construction and/or landscaping best practices and some residents don't want to make recommended adjustments to be wildfire safe.	
RR-5.1	Identify companies and workers who consistently meet wildfire risk reduction codes requirements and best practices standards. Promote good work.

RR-5.2	Develop, test, and monitor methods to keep workers informed of current codes, ordinances, and best practices.
RR-5.3	Update weed abatement regulations to address residents' misunderstandings and enforcement challenges.
RR-5.4	Update municipal code to comprehensively and systematically address all wildfire risk work done by all kinds of workers.
RR-5.5	Maintain and update the city's wildfire risk reduction contractor list through outreach, training, and removal of consistently poor performers.
RR-5.6	Engage landscapers, nurseries, designers, and builders to foster cooperation and promote desired wildfire risk reduction products and best practices.

Table 12: Residential Risk Reduction Initiatives

Section 6

Preparedness for Renters

Section 6: Preparedness for Renters

"I am a renter, and I don't have authority or money to do what the landlord should do as regular maintenance."

-Ashland Renter

Introduction

The 2022 U.S. Census reports that approximately 47% of residents in Ashland are renters. Around 35% of all occupied housing units in the United States are rented (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The high rate of rental properties in Ashland poses several wildfire safety challenges, including: a transient population needing constant education, absentee property owners, and rising home insurance costs leading to higher rent, while renters remain underinsured or uninsured.

This chapter identifies strategies and activities to motivate and enable tenants and rental property owners/managers to reduce the potential for wildfire to adversely affect renter households and rental properties.

Process

In 2024, 191 Ashland renters were engaged through separate qualitative and quantitative surveys. A total of forty-seven (47) renters responded to an online general CWPP survey, and another 144 renters responded to face-to-face interviews. Many renters also identified as being a part of one or more Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVP) in Ashland; see more information in Chapter 7. Separately, property management companies and private rental property owners were invited to participate in two customized surveys. The findings from these surveys are incorporated into this action plan and form the basis for the initiatives. Detailed reports of the survey's findings are located in the [appendices](#).

Findings

Renters living in apartments and studio/accessory dwelling unit (ADU)/cottages expressed mixed feelings, frequently citing concerns about inadequate property maintenance and reliance on property owners for wildfire risk reduction efforts. Some apartment residents highlighted the importance of surrounding conditions, while condominium and townhouse dwellers noted challenges with shared walls and limited clearance around buildings.

Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) from Homeowners' Associations (HOAs), and rental property owners were cited as barriers to wildfire risk reduction. SVP renters were nearly three (3) times more likely to report such limitations compared to the general population.

Eight (8) property management companies responded. They serve clients in all housing types in Ashland and collectively manage 973 rental buildings, containing 4,066 rental units. About 74% of these units are apartments and 12% are single-family residences. There were several property management companies, managing hundreds of apartment units, who did not participate in the survey.

The property management companies surveyed identified a minimum amount of risk-adverse landscaping work taking place, and almost no engagement with tenants to educate and enable their personal wildfire risk reduction. The companies' ability to address issues is largely controlled by the owners.

Approximately 50% of privately managed rentals are single-family homes and about 34% are studio/accessory dwelling unit (ADU)/or a room, or rooms, in a private residence.

Of the private rental owners who responded, many would benefit from, and appreciate having more customized information on what to include in lease agreements, along with how to properly manage their rental properties to significantly reduce wildfire risk.

Many rental property owners rely on contractors to create and maintain "fire-hardened" buildings and/or "defensible space", yet, based on qualitative field observations, most contractors don't do what's needed.

Based on survey data, between 7-50% (depending on housing type) of tenants are responsible for landscape maintenance. This creates a dilemma where the lease may only require minimal upkeep that isn't consistent with current wildfire safety recommendations.

Most tenants, regardless of housing type, have a lack of agency to reduce wildfire hazards where they live. Lack of agency refers to the idea that respondents do not believe they have control over, or responsibility for, making their homes safer. Rather, they believe that responsibility or control rests in the hands of rental property owners or managers, mobile or manufactured home park owners or managers, or the HOAs.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into "challenge statements." Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Monitoring metrics are listed and proposed monitoring requirements are identified.

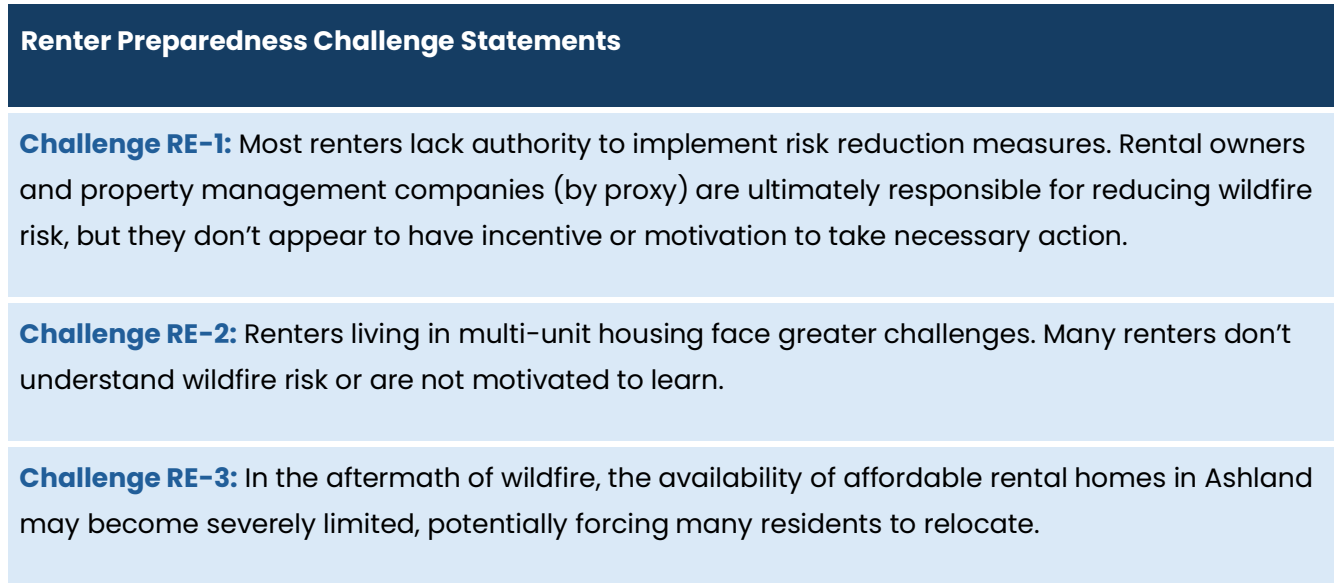


Figure 24: Renter Preparedness Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Property management companies manage at least 4,066 rental units.
- Renters' lack of agency to reduce their wildfire risk.
- Wildfire risk reduction responsibilities are poorly understood.
- Wildfire risk itself is poorly understood.
- Property owners want to maximize their income and minimize expenses.
- Renters don't want their rents to increase.
- Renters assume service property owners and HOAs are doing the right thing.
- Inadequate knowledge about what to do and who is responsible.
- Many renters are not capable, are too busy, or lack resources.
- The amount of wildfire risk reduction measures needed, particularly for older rental buildings, is significant.

Desired Conditions

- Renters are aware, engaged, insured, and feel comfortable living in Ashland because wildfire risks have been addressed, and rents are not increased solely because of enhanced wildfire risk reduction activities.
- Property owners and property management companies comply with City of Ashland wildfire safety codes and continually maintain their properties in a state of wildfire-readiness.

Tracking Metrics

- Number of rental buildings that meet IBHS "Base Standards" or equivalent (e.g., compliant with Ashland "defensible space" codes and ordinances).
- Number of rental property owners who are actively engaged in reducing their rentals wildfire risks (no current baseline).
- Number of renters engaged in appropriate wildfire home risk reduction (no current baseline).

Monitoring Plan

- Create a study to sample and resample the same renters, property owners, and property management companies at one, three, and five years to see if their perspectives have changed and to measure the tracking metrics listed above.
- Also assess the percentage of rental properties that have been verified to meet “base standards” or equivalent for the housing type every year depending on available resources.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Renter Preparedness Initiatives	
Challenge RE-1: Most renters lack authority to implement risk reduction measures. Rental owners and property management companies (by proxy) are ultimately responsible for reducing wildfire risk, but they don’t appear to have incentive or motivation to take necessary action.	
RE-1.1	Identify strategies to bring older rental units up to wildfire compliance standards for wildfire resistance and defensible space and to maintain those standards.
RE-1.2	Develop the means to cover the cost of assessing wildfire risk for all rentals in Ashland.
RE-1.3	Establish a sustainable program to assess wildfire risk on privately managed rentals, using IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home standards and random inspections.
RE-1.4	Create a sustainable system to communicate with and assess wildfire risk at property-managed rental properties every five (5) years.

RE-1.5	Secure funding, if necessary, to mitigate wildfire hazards and risks so that rental rates do not increase solely because of wildfire risk reduction activities.
RE-1.6	Encourage property management companies to require annual wildfire training and certification for contracted landscaping providers, phased in over five (5) years.
RE-1.7	Implement a city-approved wildfire-resistant homes certification program for property managers, with options for private rental owners and recertification every three (3) years.
Challenge RE-2: Renters living in multi-unit housing face greater challenges. Many renters don't understand wildfire risk or are not motivated to learn.	
RE-2.1	Secure resources to sustain face-to-face engagement with renters and property owners, assess wildfire risk needs, and enhance renter education with a focus on evacuation, communication, and personal risk reduction for multi-family housing.
RE-2.2	Develop and update a "risk reduction best practices" package customized by housing type; ask property managers and encourage rental owners to provide wildfire preparedness and renters insurance information in welcome packages and attached to leases.
RE-2.3	Define lease agreement requirements for tenants to create and maintain defensible space in accordance with wildfire safety codes and ordinances.

Challenge RE-3: In the aftermath of wildfire, the availability of affordable rental homes in Ashland may become severely limited, potentially forcing many residents to relocate.

RE-3.1	Collaborate with regional partners who participated in the drafting of the Rogue Reimagined project to articulate recommended actions and avenues for securing resources.
RE-3.2	Create a partnership to pre-plan affordable housing rebuilding strategies (e.g., establishing a land trust like Breath of Life and Spirit Village) and the steps to make it happen.
RE-3.3	In the Ashland Wildfire Recovery Plan, include a section on rebuilding affordable rental building stock. Identify the challenges and solutions based on experiences in other communities.

Table 13: Renter Preparedness Initiatives

Section 7

Preparedness for Socially Vulnerable Populations

Section 7: Preparedness for Socially Vulnerable Populations

"We lost just over 700 homes in our community, most of it affordable housing. It very succinctly ripped right through most of our naturally-occurring affordable housing."

–Darby Ayers-Flood, Mayor of Talent (Castillo, E. 2025, OPB)

Introduction

In this context, the definition of **Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVPs)** includes individuals who self-identify as living in a household where one or more of the following conditions exist: low income, housing insecurity, disability, senior status, single parenthood, and/or limited English proficiency.

This section examines wildfire home risk perception among Ashland's housed SVP, outlines the data collection process, summarizes key findings, and identifies challenges and initiatives aimed at enabling the **housed** SVP to have a home to return to when wildfires impact Ashland.

While guidance exists on aiding underserved groups in wildfire recovery, relatively little was found tailored to help SVPs have ignition-resistant homes before a wildfire. Most wildfire preparedness advice focuses on single-family homeowners, often overlooking socially vulnerable populations (SVPs), especially those living in multi-unit housing. To enable SVPs to have homes after a wildfire, it is crucial to assess their awareness of wildfire hazards in Ashland and the barriers they face to making their homes safer. With this understanding, the community can better engage these residents to help address their needs. To support this effort, the City of Ashland launched the SVP Project in 2024.

Process

A working group of ten (10) members met bi-weekly from June to October 2024 to guide the “Enabling Socially Vulnerable Populations to Have Fire-Resistant Homes” Project and develop recommendations based on its findings. After finalizing interview questions, outreach began with door-to-door visits in target areas with high utilization of energy bill assistance and areas with an abundance of multi-family housing.

For these impromptu interviews, individuals shared wildfire concerns through small gatherings (“coffee klatches”), home interviews, and public space conversations, such as at the Ashland Senior Center. Two (2) experienced interviewers conducted 83% of the interviews, while the remaining interviews were completed by four (4) trained volunteers and twenty (20) Southern Oregon University (SOU) Sociology students.

A total of 225 1-on-1 interviews took place, and over 93% of participants were Ashland residents. Findings from these interviews were analyzed, and the full report and raw data can be found in the SVP Project Report in the [appendices](#).

The primary intent of the SVP Project was to document what socially vulnerable people had to say about wildfire, specifically perceptions about the potential for their home to burn and what they thought would make their home safer. Related questions were about where they obtain information on wildfires and how to reduce wildfire hazards. Responses to questions about evacuation choices are covered in the Community Health and Safety section (Section 4).

A final open-ended interview question began with a general statement such as “this an opportunity to express yourself on any topic.” Prompts by the interviewer varied based on the interviewee’s willingness to share additional thoughts.

An organic conversation with no hint of authority was the goal of this process. No formal criteria were offered to help the respondents decide about social determinants. The interviewer did not define what it means to be a member of the targeted demographic groups; rather, they let the respondents decide. This means that the findings from the SVP Project do not represent the perspectives and experiences of the member populations as defined by the interviewers; they represent the

perspectives and experiences of the respondents as defined by the respondents. The process was pseudo-randomized and should not be considered statistically representative.

This informal approach emphasized establishing a trustworthy relationship with everyone who agreed to have a conversation with the interviewer. There was an assumption that interviewees might have experienced, or were experiencing, some sort of trauma, particularly related to wildfire. It was also assumed that some people would not be comfortable talking to an authority figure. Interviewers were advised to do specific things to avoid triggering negative reactions to the interviewer or the questions asked.

Demographic Findings

Information in this section represents selected findings from the 2024 SVP Project. Additional information can be found in the full report in the [appendices](#).

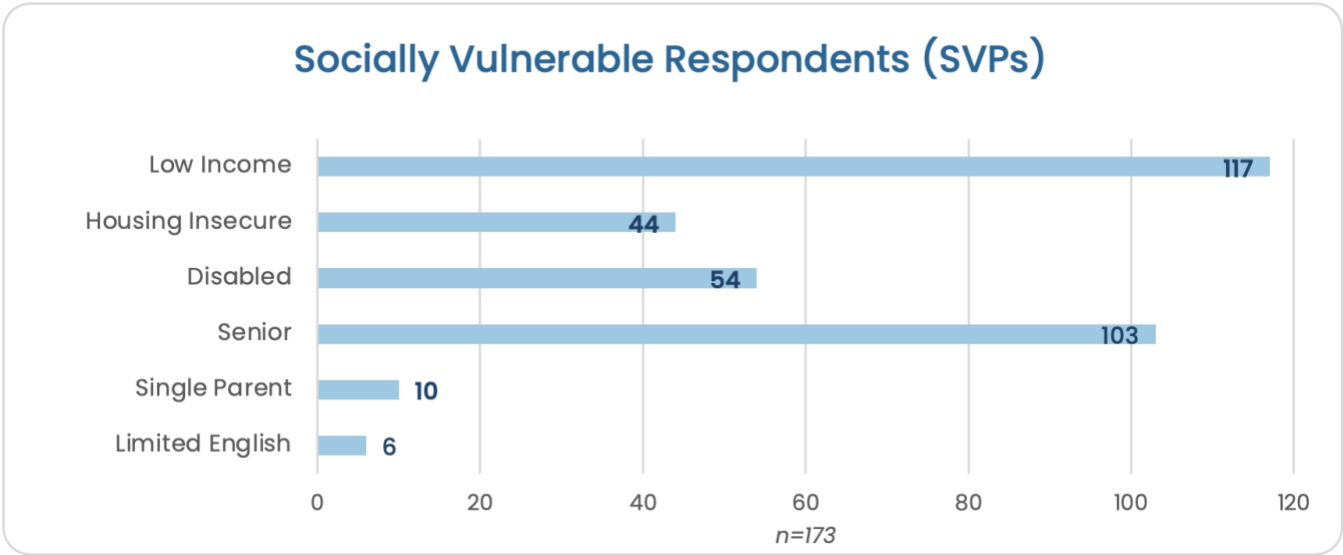


Figure 25: Target Populations Represented

Out of the 173 respondents who self-identified as being a part of one or more SVP groups, 117 identified as low-income, forty-four (44) identified as housing-insecure, fifty-four (54) identified as having a person with disabilities in their household, 103 identified as having a senior in their

household, six (6) identified as having individuals with limited English proficiency in their household, and ten (10) respondents identified as being a single parent (Figure 25).

Respondent Housing

Most socially vulnerable populations live in older, low-income housing or manufactured homes, which typically have higher ignition potential due to combustible construction materials and lack of ignition-resistant design features (Reining et al., 2025). Lower-income residents lack financial and informational resources to make retrofits (Winker et al., 2024). Manufactured housing communities face severe wildfire risk due to poor insulation, lack of defensible space, and high housing density (Otto & Clifford, 2025).

Of all survey respondents, 25% lived in an older single-family home, 31% lived in an apartment building, 22% lived in a mobile or manufactured home park, and 19% lived in a condo, townhouse, duplex, or accessory dwelling unit (ADU). One person lived in a room in a house, and one lived in their car (Figure 26).

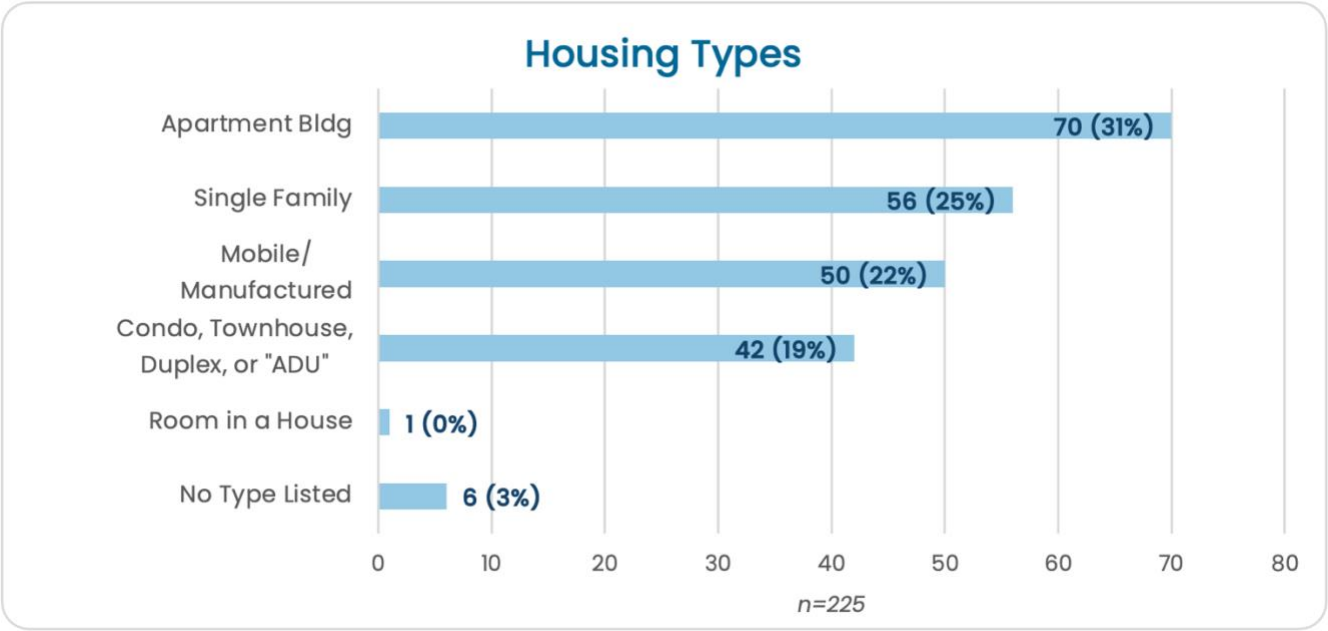


Figure 26: Where the Sampled Population Lives

Older apartments buildings were the most common type of housing, particularly for low-income individuals, housing-insecure respondents, and persons with disabilities. Most seniors live in mobile/manufactured homes or single-family homes. Single parents show an even split between apartments and single-family homes.

High-density, multi-family housing communities in Ashland, including apartments, mobile home parks, and multiplexes, where many socially vulnerable populations reside, face elevated wildfire risk due to aging structures that are more vulnerable to ignition and crowded developments.

Respondent Evacuation Plans

Results are summarized in the Public Safety section and compared with a general population survey in. Additional information and raw data are available in the SVP Project Report in the [appendices](#).

Perceptions of Safety

Everyone interviewed was asked *"How safe from wildfires do you believe your home is?"*. About 32% of the respondents said they "don't know or don't think about it much" and about 1% said they "don't care." The mid-range response "Kind of safe", was ~30%, which was the most popular answer after "I don't know." Just over 47% of the sampled population in the SVP Project feels some degree of "safe". Nearly 20% feel some degree of "unsafe." This data reveals a divide in perceptions, with some individuals expressing greater uncertainty and concern about their home's safety compared to others in the same demographic.

Interviewees were asked to explain their answers. Among those who felt "very safe," none provided strong evidence to support their belief. Their justifications revealed a limited understanding of what is required to make homes resistant to wildfire, often citing a sense of security because they live in the middle of town.

Respondents who described their homes as "safe" sometimes cited factors beyond their control, such as nearby fields, or expressed optimism because their homes hadn't burned yet. Some relied on the belief that Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) would prevent wildfire from reaching their home. Overall, most respondents demonstrated significant gaps in knowledge about wildfire safety. Less

than half mentioned relevant factors, and many responses reflected misconceptions about what makes a home safe from wildfire.

Findings reveal widespread uncertainty and misconceptions about wildfire safety, with many respondents feeling "safe" based on factors beyond their control rather than proactive mitigation measures, highlighting significant gaps in knowledge and preparedness.

Communication Modalities

A significant portion of SVP interviewees (35%) reported not receiving wildfire-related information or not knowing where to find it, with apartment dwellers being the most affected. The City of Ashland website, which was a top source for wealthier homeowners, was rarely mentioned (3.5%) by SVP respondents, indicating the possibility that traditional online communication strategies may not effectively reach socially vulnerable populations. Instead, nearly twice as many SVP respondents rely on social media or traditional media channels over official city or non-governmental sources. Additionally, 9.4% of SVP respondents turn to friends, family, or neighbors for information, and 5.4% rely on their landscaper or rental property owner for relevant information.

Direct engagement appears to be the most effective way to inform SVP residents, with ~16% of interviewees citing city staff or volunteers as key sources of information. Approximately 32% of respondents signed up for a future on-site risk assessment during the interview process.

Findings suggest that tailored, hands-on outreach efforts may be the most effective way to bridge wildfire preparedness gaps among socially vulnerable communities. However, it is evident that more research on a broader scale must be done in this area.

Risk Reduction Barriers

Several risk reduction barriers were identified by respondents during this study. Figure 27 and the following paragraphs outline the most common barriers to residents making their homes safer from the threat of wildfire.



Figure 27: Top 4 Risk Reduction Barriers

Lack of agency refers to the idea that respondents do not believe they have control over, or responsibility for, making their homes safer. Rather, they believe that responsibility or control rests in the hands of rental property owners or managers, mobile or manufactured home park owners or managers, or a Homeowners’ Association (HOA). Households that most frequently identified lack of agency as a factor preventing them from having ignition-resistant residences were renters, single parents, and the housing-insecure.

84% of renters felt like they had no control over their home’s safety from wildfire.

Financial constraints affect many SVP households. Approximately 29% of the 173 respondents indicated that finances limit their ability to make their home resistant to exposures from wildfire. About 13% indicate that they lack agency to reduce the risk themselves because they are renters or are constrained or dependent upon an HOA taking care of the property.

Financial constraints were a limiting factor for ~50% of households with a disabled resident, and ~40% of single-parent households. For low-income, housing insecure, and households with seniors and limited English-speaking individuals, approximately 33% of these households indicated that finances were a limiting factor as well.

Inadequate knowledge also plays a role for many socially vulnerable groups, as they are either underinformed, misinformed, disengaged, traumatized, or do not recognize wildfire as a threat to their home. Of households with a person with disabilities, low-income, housing insecure, and single-parent households, approximately 20% indicated that they **didn't know what to do to make their home safe from wildfire**. Similarly, approximately 33% of the limited English-speaking households and just over 10% of seniors said they also didn't really know what needs to be done.

Almost 1 in 5 residents are living below the federal poverty line and nearly 40% of Ashland households are deemed "cost burdened."

(ACCESS, 2023)

Physical limitations create another barrier to effective wildfire preparedness. A small number, approximately 9%, of SVP respondents said they lack the physical capacity to do the work, even though most of these same individuals have agency to make these changes because they are homeowners.

Other barriers were also identified, which included the following sentiments:

- I don't care.
- It's hopeless.
- I can't find help.
- It's not a priority.
- I don't have time.
- I don't think anything needs to be done.
- The problem is on neighboring properties.

All socially vulnerable groups face a variety of risk reduction barriers to making their residences safer from the threat of wildfire. These include limited agency to make changes, clear understanding about what needs to be done, insufficient financial resources, and physical limitations.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

SVP Preparedness Challenge Statements
Challenge SV-1: Many socially vulnerable households underestimate their wildfire risk and face multiple barriers to reducing that risk.
Challenge SV-2: SVPs require a variety of communication modalities to develop trusting relationships critical to fostering engagement.
Challenge SV-3: A majority of socially vulnerable residents live in housing that is highly vulnerable to wildfire ignition.

Figure 28: SVP Preparedness Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Percentage of SVPs by housing type, perceptions of relative safety, and perceived barriers to reducing risk as noted in the 2024 SVP Project results (see [appendices](#)).

Desired Conditions

- SVPs are actively engaged in reducing their wildfire risk.
- Everyone has a residence to return to when wildfire occurs in Ashland.
- Within five (5) years, 50% or more of SVP housing units meet or exceed wildfire prepared property standards.

Tracking Metrics

- Number of multi-family housing units that are compliant with Ashland “home-hardening” and “defensible space” codes & ordinances.
- Number of SVP households actively engaged in wildfire related issues.

Monitoring Plan

- Randomly re-sample individuals from the SVP at least once every three to five (3-5) years to determine how perspectives have changed and to measure tracking metrics listed above.
- Where feasible, use onsite wildfire risk assessment data with follow up surveys, aerial imagery, or other tools to document mitigation actions taken that directly benefit socially vulnerable households.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

SVP Preparedness Initiatives	
Challenge SV-1: Many socially vulnerable households underestimate their wildfire risk and face multiple barriers to reducing that risk.	
SV-1.1	Investigate which local organizations have a similar vision/mission relative to the needs of the SVPs and find opportunities to formally collaborate and develop MOUs as appropriate.
SV-1.2	Find a champion to oversee implementation of SVP-specific initiatives.
SV-1.3	Create a work plan to enable SVPs to address risk-reduction barriers.
SV-1.4	Conduct face-to-face, engaging interviews with 200+ SVPs every 3-5 years.

Challenge SV-2: SVPs require a variety of communication modalities to develop trusting relationships critical to fostering engagement.

SV-2.1	Create a partnership capitalizing on existing networks and social service organizations to brainstorm and test multiple communication modalities to engage SVPs where they live and in other spaces as appropriate. Establish MOUs if necessary.
SV-2.2	Invest in relationship building methods that work for specific target populations/individuals by collaboratively developing and implementing a 5-year work plan to test communication modalities.
SV-2.3	Establish an “SVP Communications Fund” to explore and test communication modalities.
SV-2.4	Deliver customized information that is readily accessible to those who have limited resources, are house-bound, or isolated.
SV-2.5	If needed, figure out how to compensate partners who participate in the partnership development process.

Challenge SV-3: A majority of socially vulnerable residents live in housing that is highly vulnerable to wildfire ignition.

SV-3.1	Map where socially vulnerable residents live and systematically evaluate wildfire risk in those areas.
SV-3.2	Pursue grant funding to provide socially vulnerable households with equipment and materials for healthy indoor air during wildfire events.
SV-3.3	Establish a city-based revenue stream to continuously support wildfire risk reduction projects for socially vulnerable households.

Table 14: SVP Preparedness Initiatives

Section 8

Insurance Crisis

Section 8: Insurance Crisis

“When we finally came back and saw all the devastation [we went into shock]. We had no power for weeks and no cell service. We lost all of the food in the refrigerator because of the power outage. I don't think my parents had any insurance to deal with the losses. Since insurance is for the home, they probably had no way to get reimbursement for the time in the hotel. This is something that needs to be addressed....”

-Ashland Apartment Resident

Introduction

A Crisis is Forming

Insurance is critical for households recovering from wildfires and essential for securing a loan to acquire real property.

“Home, rental, and property-related insurance products are ubiquitous and foundational to the health of the US housing market. Insurance functions like a glue that helps the housing finance system stick together” (Koller, 2025).

Unfortunately, the United States is experiencing an insurance crisis affecting homeowners, businesses, and renters. This is primarily driven by escalating insurance premiums and reduced availability of coverage, largely due to the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters (U.S. Senate Budget Committee, 2024; U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2025; Time, 2025).

Natural disasters are increasing insurance premiums and rebuilding costs due to their increasing frequency and severity. As climate change intensifies storms, wildfires, and floods, insurers face higher payouts, leading to rising premiums for homeowners and businesses (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA], 2023).

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Key factors include inflation-driven rebuilding costs (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2023) and higher reinsurance expenses (S&P Global, 2023). These pressures create financial strain on policyholders, especially in disaster-prone areas.

On February 2, 2025, the First Street Foundation issued a report predicting a significant decline in U.S. real estate values due to rising climate change impacts, including wildfire. The average decline predicted in property values in “climate abandonment areas” is 6.2%; in “risky growth” areas the decline is projected to be 1.7% over the next 30 years.

Homeowners across the U.S. are facing rising insurance premiums, making homeownership increasingly costly. From 2020 to 2023, homeowners’ insurance prices increased by approximately 20%, contributing to the growing financial burden on property owners (Prevention Web, 2024). In some high-risk areas, insurers have ceased offering coverage altogether, leaving homeowners with limited options (Insurance Information Institute, 2023). This situation has led to homeowners feeling “trapped” in properties they can barely afford, with some considering selling their homes due to the financial strain (The Guardian, 2025).

“We are marching steadily towards an uninsurable future in this country.”

–Dave Jones,
former California
insurance
commissioner

Despite state laws mandating fire coverage in homeowners’ insurance policies, insurers can refuse renewals for high-risk properties (Baumhardt, 2024). Recent legislative efforts to encourage wildfire resilience through premium discounts have had minimal impact so far (Baumhardt, 2024; Senate Budget Committee, 2024).

FAIR Plans

FAIR (Fair Access to Insurance Requirements) Plans are state-mandated insurance programs designed to provide basic property insurance to homeowners and businesses that cannot obtain coverage in the private market due to high wildfire risks or other hazards. Oregon has a FAIR Plan program (Oregon FAIR Plan Association, n.d.). These plans are typically considered a last resort, offering limited coverage at higher premiums compared to traditional policies.

As wildfire becomes more frequent and severe, more homeowners and businesses are being forced into FAIR Plans, leading to concerns about affordability, coverage adequacy, and long-term sustainability (Mixides, 2025). While FAIR Plans help maintain a level of market stability, they do not incentivize risk reduction or provide comprehensive coverage options comparable to private insurers.

Nationwide, the number of FAIR Plan insurance policies nearly doubled between 2018 and 2023, rising to 2.7 million, according to data from AM Best, a company that rates the financial strength of insurers. The California FAIR Plan alone saw its exposure grow nine-fold over the past six (6) years (Time, 2025).

FAIR Plans serve as a temporary safety net, but their rising enrollment highlights a growing insurance crisis in wildfire-prone regions. Without systemic reforms, such as stronger risk reduction incentives and improved insurance models, reliance on FAIR Plans will continue to grow, making property coverage increasingly expensive and inaccessible (Mixides, 2025).

As wildfire risks intensify, homeowners and businesses in high-risk areas are increasingly forced into FAIR Plans, which offer limited, high-cost coverage without incentivizing risk reduction, highlighting the urgent need for insurance reform and stronger mitigation strategies.

IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Program

The IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Program, developed by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS), provides science-based standards to help homeowners reduce wildfire risk and improve insurability. By implementing key mitigation measures—such as fire-resistant roofing, ember-resistant vents, defensible space, and ignition-resistant decks—homeowners can earn a Wildfire Prepared Home designation, demonstrating their commitment to risk reduction. This designation enhances home resilience and signals to insurers that a property meets rigorous wildfire safety standards, potentially improving access to coverage and reducing premium costs. By bridging scientific research, homeowner action, and insurance industry interests, the program supports the development of fire-adapted communities and a more sustainable insurance market in wildfire-prone areas. The IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Program became available to single-family

homeowners in Oregon in October 2024, and Ashland is looking at ways to incorporate this program into its wildfire resiliency efforts.

Local Findings

Homeowners’ Insurance

In 2015, 2019, and 2024, the City of Ashland supported quantitative and qualitative studies involving approximately 2,145 participants. The 2019 and 2024 studies asked homeowners and renters about their wildfire insurance coverage.

A 2024 Consumer Federation of America study reported that 7.4% of U.S. homeowners now lack insurance, up from 5% in 2019, largely due to affordability issues (Realtor.com, n.d.). Premiums have risen nationally ~20% between 2020–2023 alone (Steve Koller, 2024). Premiums increased by 23% in the past year, with major insurers like Allstate and State Farm halting new policies in California, citing wildfire risks and rising costs (Realtor.com, n.d.; Senate Budget Committee, 2024). For example, in July 2024, State Farm dropped nearly 70% of policyholders in Pacific Palisades, California, just six (6) months before whole neighborhoods were consumed by wildfire in January 2025 (Time, 2025).

Since 2018, Oregon homeowners’ insurance premiums have risen 44.8%, with a sharp 16.5% increase in 2023 alone (Realty Today, 2025). In wildfire-prone areas like Ashland, Bend, and Medford, rates have doubled or quadrupled, with some Ashland residents facing hikes of up to 600% over four (4) years (Baumhardt, 2024).

Most Ashland homeowners that responded to the 2019 survey and the 2024 CWPP survey appear to have homeowner’s insurance. For the 2019 survey, 12% percent of single-family homeowners living in high-risk areas of the city indicated that their insurance companies provided wildfire-related information, and only 2% received discounts for reducing wildfire risks.

Among homeowners in the 2024 Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVP) Project—many of whom live in mobile or manufactured home parks—11% reported being uninsured, which is higher than the national average of 7.4% and more than double the uninsured rate reported in the 2024 CWPP online general survey (5%). For these homeowners, high premiums and difficulty obtaining insurance were cited as the primary barriers to coverage.

Many Ashland homeowners are facing rising insurance premiums. While 56% of the respondents to the 2024 CWPP online general survey reported only minor or normal increases, nearly 29% said their premiums had risen sharply due to wildfire risks. An Ashland City Council member reported a staggering 700% increase in their insurance premium last year.

Even though most Ashland homeowners are currently insured, affordability and access to coverage are growing concerns, particularly for residents in high-risk areas like mobile/manufactured home parks and homes near wildlands. The ongoing insurance crisis could lead to increasing non-renewals and declining home values.

Insurance for Renters and Socially Vulnerable

While renters are not directly responsible for property insurance, the increased costs borne by property owners will likely trickle down. When rental property owners facing higher insurance premiums pass these costs on to tenants through increased rent, it will make housing less affordable for renters.

Renters insurance premiums remained relatively stable from 2018-2022 due to lower risk exposure, costing an average of \$254 annually in Oregon (Insurance Information Institute, 2023).

Estimates suggest that 28-67% of Ashland renters lack renters’ insurance, with the higher percentage based on interviews with socially vulnerable populations (SVP) and the lower figure derived from an online survey of forty-two (42) renters in the general population.

Senior renters interviewed during the 2024 SVP Project were nearly three (3) times more likely to be uninsured than those in the 2024 CWPP survey population, likely due to income disparities and the SVP study’s focus on low-income households. These discrepancies suggest that insurance coverage among Ashland renters varies widely, likely influenced by age, socioeconomic status, and housing type.

Ashland renters in the 2024 CWPP online general survey appear to have a higher rate of renters insurance coverage than the national average, however findings from the SVP project highlight significant gaps in coverage for seniors and limited income, housing-insecure, disabled, single parent, and limited English proficiency renters.

Rental type affects renters' insurance coverage. Based on the 2024 CWPP online general survey, renters living in apartments or studios, ADUs, or cottages are the least likely to carry renters' insurance. This trend is also reflected in the 2024 SVP interview data. Overall, renters in apartments are least likely to have insurance.

Estimates found that half of the city's renters (~25% of the city's population) occupy either multi-family housing units or mobile/manufactured homes, which are highly vulnerable to wildfire. Many of these rentals are managed by property management companies that do not require renters' insurance. Oregon law permits property owners to require their tenant to get renters insurance, but there are some restrictions based on median household income (Oregon Revised Statutes § 90.222, n.d.).

Renters in low-income, multi-unit housing typically face barriers such as financial constraints, social exclusion, and limited knowledge or access to insurance options (Klampe, 2023; Fothergill & Peek, 2004).

There is a disparity in renters insurance coverage within the population in Ashland. Socially vulnerable households, who are more likely to be renters of multi-unit/family housing, are least prepared to recover from wildfire losses. In 2020, the Alameda Fire disproportionately affected socially vulnerable populations, including low-income residents and the elderly, worsening existing social and economic disparities (OWER Council, 2021; Leickly et al., 2023). It destroyed over 2,600 homes, displacing many families, driving up housing costs, and leaving many in temporary or overcrowded conditions (Hoyer, 2024). Approximately 8,500 people were displaced (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, 2023).

Many socially vulnerable households in Ashland lack wildfire insurance, leaving them without financial resources for post-disaster recovery.

Business Insurance

In 2021, the Ashland Chamber of Commerce found that there were approximately 2,241 businesses registered in Ashland. This figure is based on active business licenses in the city and reflects the multitude of small enterprises operating locally (Ashland Chamber of Commerce, 2021).



Figure 29: Photo Courtesy of Ashland Fire & Rescue

In recent years, businesses in Southern Oregon have experienced significant increases in insurance premiums due to heightened wildfire risks (Oregon Public Broadcasting, July 14, 2024). Escalating costs are attributed to a combination of factors, including the fact that insurance companies, facing substantial payouts from natural disasters, have adjusted their pricing models to manage the elevated risks associated with climate change (Oregon Public Broadcasting, July 18, 2024).

Despite regulatory efforts, the overall trend indicates that businesses in Southern Oregon are facing higher insurance costs as insurers reassess their exposure to wildfire-prone areas.

Businesses in Southern Oregon, including those in Ashland, face rising insurance premiums as insurers adjust pricing models in response to wildfire risks and climate change impacts. This situation underscores the importance of proactive risk mitigation by business owners and staying informed about policy changes to manage financial impacts on businesses.

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is a pressing issue in Ashland. According to the City's Housing Capacity Analysis, 41% of households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing expenses. The median home price in Ashland is approximately \$540,000; significantly higher than the national median of \$416,100 as of 2023 (City of Ashland, 2021). This financial strain exacerbates housing insecurity, particularly for renters, who make up between 42–47% of Ashland's population.

Businesses involved in affordable housing development are significantly affected by the rising cost of insurance. In Texas, for example, insurance premiums for multifamily properties have surged by up to 300% since 2020. This sharp increase has resulted in a more than 20% decline in the production of affordable rental housing built with federal tax credits between 2021 and 2023. Developers are now forced to sell properties or reduce the number of new projects due to these prohibitive insurance costs (Houston Chronicle, 2025).

Reduced investment in affordable housing developments exacerbates the shortage of affordable rental units. Due to limited affordable housing, a significant loss of rental units to wildfire would severely impact Ashland's socioeconomic viability, businesses, essential services, and cultural institutions. Rebuilding will take years. This is on clear display in Talent and Phoenix, nearly five (5) years since the Alameda Fire destroyed many hundreds of affordable housing units.

Due to limited affordable housing stock, the loss of more than a few units to wildfire would severely impact the city's socioeconomic viability, businesses, essential services, and cultural institutions.

“The risks of loss are rising through climate change, and insurers can’t just wave a magic wand and make them go away.”

–Dave Jones, the Former Insurance Commissioner of California

Rebuilding will be expensive, and many workers will be forced to leave the area due to lack of affordable housing.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier (**in bold**) for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Insurance Crisis Challenge Statements
Challenge IN-1: While most Ashland homeowners are insured, affordability and access to coverage are growing concerns, particularly for residents in high-risk areas like mobile home parks and homes near wildlands.
Challenge IN-2: The number of uninsured renters in Ashland is significant, which means that many could lose all assets and be unable to find affordable temporary housing if their rental unit burns.
Challenge IN-3: Many socially vulnerable residents are uninsured, leaving them financially unprotected and at risk of displacement when wildfire occurs.
Challenge IN-4: Rising insurance costs and wildfire risks threaten business stability, housing security, and Ashland’s socioeconomic viability, with rebuilding efforts expected to take years.

Figure 30: Insurance Crisis Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- From 2018 to 2023, Oregon experienced a 44.8% increase in homeowners insurance rates.
- 98% of Ashland single-family homeowners were insured when sampled in 2019.
- 89% of mobile/manufactured homeowners were insured when sampled in 2024.
- 28-67% of renters are uninsured based on 2024 data; socially vulnerable households are at the high end.

- There is no baseline information to quantify the adequacy of business insurance coverage in Ashland.

Desired Conditions

- 100% of residential units, renters and businesses have affordable wildfire loss insurance to cover evacuation expenses, temporary housing, and the loss of personal and real assets.

Tracking Metrics

- Number of homeowners, renters, and businesses with comprehensive and basic wildfire insurance coverage.
- The average premium rate change by housing/business type and demographic group.

Monitoring Plan

- Randomly sample homeowners, renters, and business owners every 3-5 year

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Insurance Crisis Initiatives	
Challenge IN-1: While most Ashland homeowners are insured, affordability and access to coverage are growing concerns, particularly for residents in high-risk areas like mobile home parks and homes near wildlands.	
IN-1.1	Promote the IBHS Wildfire Prepared Homes Program to single-family homeowners.
IN-1.2	Create a taskforce to develop sustainable, accessible insurance options for all housing types.

IN-1.3	Collaborate with insurers to educate the public on wildfire coverage challenges and solutions.
IN-1.4	Work with elected officials to align insurance premiums with location-based mitigation efforts.
IN-1.5	Develop a handout to guide residents on wildfire insurance coverage, including covering evacuation costs.
Challenge IN-2: The number of uninsured renters in Ashland is significant, which means that many could lose all assets and be unable to find affordable temporary housing if their rental unit burns.	
IN-2.1	Create a taskforce to develop sustainable, accessible insurance options for renters.
IN-2.2	Educate renters on wildfire insurance coverage and policy language to protect assets and survival needs.
IN-2.3	Create standardized lease language encouraging or requiring tenants to get renters insurance.
IN-2.4	Distribute information to renters about temporary housing insurance costs and options during evacuations or disasters.
Challenge IN-3: Many socially vulnerable residents are uninsured, leaving them financially unprotected and at risk of displacement when wildfire occurs.	
IN-3.1	Create a taskforce to collaborate with the insurance industry and develop educational materials tailored to the needs of socially vulnerable populations (SVPs).
IN-3.2	Establish pathways to help those who cannot afford insurance obtain coverage for temporary housing, lost wages, and asset protection.

IN-3.3	Distribute educational materials and engage with SVPs using accessible methods, regardless of homeownership or insurance status.
IN-3.4	Develop additional activities based on lessons learned from the Alameda Fire.
Challenge IN-4: Rising insurance costs and wildfire risks threaten business stability, housing security, and Ashland’s socioeconomic viability, with rebuilding efforts expected to take years.	
IN-4.1	The Chamber of Commerce will comprehensively assess and broadly strengthen business insurance coverage.
IN-4.2	Collaborate with the insurance industry to develop strategies for sustained and affordable business coverage.
IN-4.3	Explore creating business insurance pools for wildfire resilience & recovery.

Table 15: Insurance Crisis Initiatives



Figure 31: Wood Shake Roof, Photo Courtesy of Charisse Sydoriak



Figure 32: Wildfire Insurance Crisis Infographic

Section 9

Economic Stability

Section 9: Economic Stability

Introduction

This chapter outlines strategies to help Ashland business owners, employees, and customers stay safe, while enabling businesses to serve the community and maintain economic stability during smoke events and before, during, and after wildfires.

Ashland's economy thrives on tourism, independent businesses, renowned institutions, and its unique sense of place. Home to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Southern Oregon University, it attracts year-round visitors for its rich culture and outdoor activities, from hiking and rafting to winter sports at Mt. Ashland.

“Wildfires and smoke are becoming a more serious threat each year, and it’s clear that Ashland and our region need to take action now. By working together on prevention, smoke mitigation, and emergency preparedness, we can continue to protect our community and build a stronger, more resilient future.”

–Greg White, Owner Reinholdt & O’Harra Insurance and Ashland Chamber of Commerce Board President/Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair

Ashland’s charming, walkable downtown is the heart of the city’s economy, drawing the highest concentration of visitors and employees within a five-block area filled with boutique shops, a vibrant culinary and wine scene, and wellness offerings. Lithia Park—designed in 1908 by John McLaren—enhances the town’s appeal with nearly 100 acres of gardens, ponds, trails, a bandshell, the historic Butler-Perozzi Fountain, a Japanese Garden, and pickleball courts.

Ashland’s rich history shines through its many historic homes and businesses, with several listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its vibrant public art scene and performing arts venues attract visitors from the West Coast and beyond. Recently, *Architectural Digest* named Ashland one

of the "13 Most Beautiful Underrated Cities in the World," *TheTravel.com* dubbed it "America's Coziest College Town," and *USA Today* ranked the Winchester Inn as the #1 Bed & Breakfast in the nation.

Process

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce was charged with answering two questions: (1) are Ashland businesses and their employees prepared for a wildfire emergency, and (2) what needs to be done, and by whom, to motivate action?

The Chamber of Commerce's Emergency Preparedness Committee has been collaborating with Ashland Fire & Rescue for a decade to develop wildfire preparedness education programs and messaging for the business community. In 2024, this committee pivoted to develop goals and objectives to answer these questions through a more comprehensive planning process. The challenges and initiatives the plan needs to address are described next.

Effect of Wildfire on Businesses

Wildfire smoke negatively impacts Ashland's economy, particularly the tourism sector. A 2013 study estimated that local tourism businesses lost about \$171,350 in a single month due to smoke-related disruptions (Sumic, et al., 2013). In 2017, these impacts were substantial, with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) experiencing considerable financial losses and operational challenges. That season, OSF canceled nine (9) performances due to poor air quality, resulting in a \$370,000 loss, with ripple effects on the local economy, as 85% of OSF's patrons are tourists (Oregon Forest Resources Institute, n.d.). The situation worsened in 2018, when OSF canceled more performances and relocated shows indoors, leading to an estimated \$2 million in losses. In response, OSF considered major modifications to its outdoor theater, including a retractable roof and redesigned seating, to reduce future cancellations and improve the audience experience (Yuen, 2019).

Beyond OSF, persistent smoke has deterred people from visiting the area, reducing revenue for hotels, restaurants, and retailers. The Ashland Chamber of Commerce reported that prolonged smoke events led to widespread trip cancellations, further straining the local economy (Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 2023). Additionally, residents and businesses faced increased costs to mitigate smoke exposure, such as purchasing air purifiers and upgrading HVAC systems, adding financial pressure to the community (University of Oregon, n.d.).

A recurring threat of wildfire smoke has created ongoing economic challenges for Ashland, impacting key industries like tourism and affecting the financial well-being of businesses and residents.

In 2020, the Alameda Fire, which began in Ashland, devastated the economies of nearby Talent and Phoenix, burning over 3,000 acres and damaging approximately 2,500 homes and hundreds of businesses (Rogue Valley Council of Governments, n.d.). This destruction caused immediate economic challenges, including job loss, reduced income, and increased housing insecurity. The loss of key businesses, including restaurants, shops, and grocery stores, left many unemployed and disrupted essential services, making recovery difficult for neighboring communities.

The fire also severely impacted the tax base for Talent and Phoenix. Loss of properties reduced taxable assets, decreasing property tax revenues and straining local government budgets. In response, the state introduced measures to balance property owner relief with the financial needs of municipalities, underscoring the disaster's broader economic effects.

Severe wildfires in urban areas destroy infrastructure, homes, and businesses, weakening the local economy and tax base. Recovery requires sustained efforts to rebuild physical structures and restore economic stability. In the aftermath, businesses face damages, supply chain disruptions, and lost customers, while municipalities struggle with reduced revenue from a decreased tax base and recovery efforts. A key factor in economic stability is ensuring businesses are prepared for major disasters and have the resources needed to recover and survive. The process for accessing these resources will vary depending on the stage of response or recovery.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Economic Stability Challenge Statements

Challenge ES-1: Wildfire smoke is a recurring issue that continues to adversely impact the Ashland economy.

Challenge ES-2: A significant wildfire would devastate Ashland's economy, with long-lasting impacts that could cripple its economic stability for decades.

Challenge ES-3: Most businesses are not doing enough to protect their structures from exposure to wildfire.

Figure 33: Economic Stability Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- There is no baseline data on how many businesses are prepared for the impact of wildfire on their operations, employees, or customers.
- Ashland businesses can access an online "Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Toolkit," created collaboratively between the City of Ashland and the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. This toolkit offers practical guidance and resources on key preparedness steps, including evacuation planning, asset inventory, safeguarding important documents, and ensuring adequate insurance coverage.

Desired Conditions

- There is no loss of life.
- Residents and visitors can access what they need from local businesses.
- Local businesses are not displaced.
- No businesses are damaged or lost and economic impacts are minimal when smoke and/or wildfire impacts all or a portion of the city.
- All businesses, including home-based ones, have a plan for emergency preparedness, operations during a crisis, and post-disaster recovery, tailored to their specific needs.

Tracking Metrics

- Economic impacts of smoke on Ashland businesses by business type.
- Economic impacts of wildfires on businesses when wildfires occur in or near Ashland.
- Number (and type) of businesses who have experienced insurance issues since 2020.
- Number (and type) of businesses that have had a wildfire risk assessment of their real property.
- Number (and type) of business that have measurably reduced identified wildfire risks on their real and personal property.
- Number (and type) of businesses that have a wildfire evacuation plan that they have practiced, an emergency operations plan or a business resumption plan for a disaster, as appropriate.
- Number of partners/partnerships working collectively to reduce wildfire risk community wide.

Monitoring Plan

- Survey Ashland Businesses every other year to collect the equivalent data.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Economic Stability Initiatives	
Challenge ES-1: Wildfire smoke is a recurring issue that continues to adversely impact the Ashland economy.	
ES-1.1	Measure and quantify smoke impacts on businesses and visitors.
ES-1.2	Survey businesses about their smoke resilience efforts.

ES-1.3	Enable employees and visitors to be informed and remain healthy when air quality is poor.
ES-1.4	Update the SmokeWise Ashland website.
ES-1.5	Update the Business Preparedness Workbook with smoke strategies.
ES-1.6	Promote smoke-adapted facility upgrades for businesses.
Challenge ES-2: A significant wildfire would devastate Ashland's economy, with long-lasting impacts that could cripple its economic stability for decades.	
ES-2.1	Map critical business assets and major employment centers to identify areas with the highest concentrations of people.
ES-2.2	Assess the readiness of business facilities, staff, and customers for wildfire emergencies.
ES-2.3	Evaluate awareness and implementation of evacuation protocols, especially in visitor related businesses (lodging, dining, attractions).
ES-2.4	Create industry-specific wildfire protocols and evacuation plans, including zone awareness for staff and customers.
ES-2.5	Enhance business communication strategies for wildfire emergencies.
ES-2.6	Update and expand the Chamber of Commerce preparedness toolkits and videos.
ES-2.7	Host bi-annual wildfire preparedness workshops for businesses.
ES-2.8	Integrate wildfire resources into new Chamber of Commerce member packets.
ES-2.9	Provide outreach for employers, employees, and patrons with access needs.

ES-2.10	Collaborate with community partners to enhance existing programs and develop new initiatives.
ES-2.11	Create a visitor-focused wildfire emergency plan for downtown.
ES-2.12	Support resilience hubs to inform visitors and citizens.
ES-2.13	Partner with recreation organizations to inform visitors during wildfires.
Challenge ES-3: Most businesses are not doing enough to protect their structures from exposure to wildfire.	
ES-3.1	Work with the Ashland Chamber to help businesses understand structural vulnerabilities.
ES-3.2	Collect baseline structural vulnerability data for Ashland businesses.
ES-3.3	Support business structure hardening and defensible space initiatives.
ES-3.4	Track progress on structural risk reduction and publicly highlight accomplishments.

Table 16: Economic Stability Initiatives



Figure 34: Main St. in Ashland, Photo Courtesy of RG

Section 10

A Necessary Paradigm Shift

Section 10: A Necessary Paradigm Shift

“Mitigation measures on the structure (hardening) combined with removal of surrounding fuels in the area immediately adjacent to the structure (zone 0) has the potential to dramatically reduce losses in future fires. While applying these measures to any structure within a dense urban area makes little difference on the survivability of a single home, significant reductions in losses are achievable when community-wide actions can be applied.”

(Zamanialaei et al, 2023)

Introduction

The initiatives in this chapter, if embraced fully, have the potential to save Ashland from a catastrophic wildfire disaster. Community destruction has become so commonplace that researchers have been able to learn key insights from catastrophic fires that others can reliably use to help avoid future losses.

Achieving meaningful, city-wide wildfire risk reduction will require a fundamental shift in how the community perceives this threat and a commitment to addressing the greatest risk the community has ever faced.

To become a fire-adapted community, Ashland would need to reduce wildfire exposure and harden about 90% of its structures and maintain this standard moving forward. If this standard is met, wildfires may occur in and around Ashland without necessarily triggering an urban conflagration – the widespread destruction of the built environment initiated by a wildfire. Relying on education, through flyers, lectures, and online resources, and relying on voluntary compliance among single-family homes is important, but not enough. Climate-driven extremes in fire behavior and weather are only intensifying, and experience from thousands of burned structures in dozens of communities points to the need for aggressive and timely risk reduction.

Most structures in Ashland weren’t designed to withstand ember storms or the intense heat of city blocks burning under 40–60 mph winds. Additionally, traditional landscaping practices have left Ashland more vulnerable, with continuous, highly combustible vegetation, as well as wood and bark mulch dominating yards and public spaces.

World-renowned fire researcher Jack Cohen and others have said “We have the tools and knowledge to reduce community wildfire risks. But we must address the profound and deeply rooted misalignment of political and social expectations regarding what it means to live with wildfire. Now is the time to invest in long-term, economically efficient solutions, rather than short-term, risk-averse tactics. We have to live with wildland fire. We don’t have to live with fire in our communities.” (Calkin, et. al, 2023).

Voluntary Verses Mandatory Risk Reduction Findings

Over the past 20 years, Ashland has invested significant effort in community wildfire risk reduction. Successful initiatives include the Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Project, which has effectively reduced (but not eliminated) wildfire risk in the surrounding forests; a highly popular Firewise USA® program; various grant-funded homeowner incentive programs; and hiring of a Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator, who has led residential education and mitigation efforts. A volunteer-driven Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP) was particularly effective for two (2) years, increasing face-to-face engagement and motivating many residents, particularly homeowners, to act. Additionally, the Ashland Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer program has trained over 1,500 volunteers for disaster response and preparedness.

Most public outreach efforts prescribed in the 2004 CWPP, such as creating and distributing education materials and posting information on the city website, raised awareness in some demographic groups, but ultimately resulted in limited action. The Firewise USA® site certification program initially gained traction but has been deemed inadequate due to low performance requirements, lack of enforcement, and the program required an unsustainable amount of city fire department oversight. City of Ashland staff turnover in the Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator position has been high, due largely to workload demand exceeding available funding and resources. Thanks to two (2) decades of overcoming challenges, testing approaches, and building community

awareness, Ashland now has the informed experience needed to propose the necessary compulsory actions outlined in this section of the CWPP.

While voluntary measures have reduced risk, their effectiveness is constrained by the limited value of simple messaging, limited volunteer participation, physical and financial barriers, and heavy reliance on limited city staff for ongoing outreach and education.

Voluntary compliance with wildfire home hardening and defensible space standards has shown mixed effectiveness, as evidenced by various studies and reports (Pavaglio et al., 2021; Edgeley, et al., 2020; Crow, et al., 2015; McCaffrey et al. (2011); Vogt and McCaffrey, 2011).

In a study examining community policies and defensible space compliance, McCaffrey et al. (2011) found that while there are concerns about regulations infringing on personal liberties, mandatory approaches may be justified in high-risk areas or when individual noncompliance poses risks to neighbors. Participants acknowledged that, under certain conditions, regulations could be appropriate to enhance community safety.

Other research indicates that effective wildfire hazard mitigation programs can incorporate voluntary and mandatory elements. Homeowners are more likely to accept mandatory programs if they perceive a significant risk and believe that such regulations serve the common good (McCaffrey, S.M., 2004; Winter, G, et.al, 2009).

A program evaluation of the Town of Woodside, and of the Plumas County Fire Safe Council, found that defensible space requirements are often unrealistic without proper financial assistance, suggesting that homeowners may struggle to implement these measures without support (San Jose State University, 2021).

In their 2021 study, Baylis and Boomhower analyzed the effectiveness of California's mandatory wildfire building codes compared to voluntary adaptation measures. Utilizing administrative data on housing damage and assessments, they found that homes constructed under these codes are approximately 40% less likely to be destroyed in wildfires. Additionally, these building codes provide protective benefits to neighboring structures. The authors concluded that mandatory building standards yield significant net social benefits in wildfire-prone areas.

On September 8, 2020, the Alameda Fire started in Ashland, moving rapidly into adjacent communities with devastating consequences. A slight change in the ignition point or wind direction could have destroyed much of Ashland. The January 2025 Eaton Fire was a surprise to many that lived in Altadena, CA, which is a densely populated, mixed residential area not that different from Ashland. Researchers have investigated whether such events change risk perceptions and promote behavior or policy change. They found in one study that “direct experience with wildfire does not directly influence the risk perception–risk mitigation process” (Martin, et al., 2009). Another study into whether recent wildfire experience “opens a ‘window of opportunity’ leading to local government policy changes” found that “land use planning and regulations remained largely unchanged.” They found that “[l]ocations with long histories of destructive wildfire, extensive previous investment in formal wildfire regulation and mitigation, or little government and community capacity to manage wildfire saw fewer changes” (Mockrin, et al., 2017). They also reported that across diverse settings, communities consistently shy away from “incorporating formal approaches.” They implied that the solution lay in a combination of receiving external funding, having sufficient capacity, and the presence of “issue champions.”

Voluntary wildfire risk reduction measures have mixed success, influenced by perceived risk, financial support, and community engagement. Voluntary compliance relies on the hope that homeowners will do their part. This hope has not led to large-scale results in Ashland over the past fifteen (15) years, and results are desperately needed to protect the city, and its residents, businesses, and visitors from the threat that catastrophic wildfires pose. **Hope is not a strategy.** Research suggests that combining voluntary and mandatory strategies is the most effective approach. While building codes and defensible space regulations offer clear benefits, their adoption remains limited in most places due to concerns about personal freedoms and local capacity. Regulatory measures have been shown to have significant benefits for the homeowner, their neighbors, and the entire community.

Risk Reduction Incentives Experience

In April 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded a \$3 million Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant to the City of Ashland aimed at enhancing wildfire resilience. The project targeted the creation of defensible space around 1,100 homes and the replacement of twenty-three (23)

wood shake roofs with ignition-resistant roofing materials. While the roof replacement program worked well, the defensible space improvement incentive program has proven challenging to administer. In addition, the voluntary participation rate leading to completion of defensible space has been low at 30% (169/562 contacts as of January 2025).

At the current pace, if every property owner voluntarily cooperated, though improbable, it would take 45 years and an estimated \$14 million more to complete defensible space work as outlined under the FEMA Grant for the remaining structures in Ashland. Landscaping changes are only half of the wildfire mitigation equation. Home hardening will cost more to achieve, but it is equally important.

At one point, Ashland had thirty-five (35) active and sanctioned Firewise USA® neighborhoods, which has now dwindled to seventeen (17) due to staffing challenges and to lack of citizen participation and leadership. The lack of enforcement, no verification of standards at each property, and lack of “critical mass” participating at each neighborhood led the city to conclude that Firewise USA® was insufficient to protect Ashland from future wildfires. Complaints to Fire Department staff were common from homeowners who met the voluntary standards and still felt vulnerable because of their neighbor’s lack of action. This is supported by the CWPP public survey results that showed 32.3% of respondents said their neighbor was the biggest obstacle to achieving wildfire-readiness.

In other communities, incentive-based programs have been implemented to encourage individuals and communities to adopt wildfire risk mitigation measures. These incentives include insurance discounts, cost-sharing initiatives, and tax adjustments. Research indicates that such incentives can effectively motivate property owners to engage in risk-reducing behaviors, especially when combined with educational outreach. However, the success of these programs often depends on factors like the adequacy of the incentives, the level of public awareness, and the accessibility of resources needed for implementation.

Meldrum, et al, conducted a study in California's wildland-urban interface areas utilizing a choice experiment to assess homeowners' willingness to invest in public and private fuel reduction programs. The findings indicated that homeowners residing in perceived high-risk areas are inclined to financially support new wildfire risk mitigation initiatives. The study revealed that homeowners with lower income and education levels are less responsive to risk factors and generally prefer maintaining the status quo over incurring costs for new mitigation programs. This suggests that such homeowners may require accessible information and substantial financial incentives to engage in risk reduction efforts.

“When aligned with regulatory tools such as ordinances and building codes, incentive-based programs reaffirm a community’s commitment to becoming fire-adapted.”

(Barrett, K. 2019)

A 2023 analysis by Headwaters Economics and the Columbia Climate School evaluated various policies aimed at reducing community wildfire risk. The study concluded that managing the built environment through strategies like mandatory building codes and home hardening are among the most effective approaches. However, these strategies often receive limited funding and support. The analysis emphasizes the need for increased investment in home-hardening programs and the implementation of mandatory building codes in wildfire-prone areas to enhance community resilience.

Incentives can promote wildfire risk reduction but often face low participation and are administratively burdensome. Financial support and education are crucial for broader engagement, especially among lower-income homeowners. Research suggests mandatory building codes and home hardening are most effective at reducing risk, but underfunded. Aligning incentives with regulations can enhance community resistance to wildfire damage.

Critical Mass

As of 2020, Ashland is home to approximately 21,400 residents within 6.64 square miles, creating a population density of 3,218 people per square mile, which is over 350% higher than the national average of ninety-one (91) people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

In such a close-knit community, wildfire resilience depends on everyone doing their part. Many homeowners who have worked hard to reduce their wildfire risk express frustration that their neighbors aren't taking the same precautions (USDA Forest Service, 2020). They wonder why they should invest time and effort if those around them don't. It's a fair concern because wildfire risk isn't just personal, it's shared.

True protection comes when an entire community acts together. In the context of wildfire risk reduction in urban areas, the concept of "herd immunity" can be analogously applied through community-wide mitigation efforts. When a critical mass of properties within a community adopts fire-resistant measures, the collective resistance increases, thereby reducing the overall risk of wildfire spread and impact. Key strategies to achieve this communal protection include all the following:

- **Community-Wide Home Hardening:** Requiring all homeowners to implement a minimum level of ignition-resistant building materials and designs can significantly reduce structural ignitability. During new construction, **up-to-date**, well-enforced building codes ensure that new construction incorporates more extensive safety features, contributing to the community's overall defenses against wildfire (Insurance Institute of Business & Home Safety, n.d.).
- **Defensible Space Creation:** Collective efforts to maintain defensible space around properties can impede wildfire progression. This involves the removal of flammable vegetation and the strategic management of landscaping to create buffer zones, thereby enhancing the community's ability to withstand wildfire events.
- **Integrated Land Use Planning:** Incorporating wildfire risk considerations into urban planning helps prevent or slow expansion into more vulnerable areas. Policies that discourage low-density urban sprawl and limit growth into wildlands should be considered, along with requirements for developers to hire a qualified "special expert," or experienced Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (CWMS), to write a detailed Wildfire Safety Plan for all new developments. By designing communities with wildfire resilience in mind, the overall susceptibility to wildfires is reduced (C40 Knowledge Hub. (n.d.).
- **Community Engagement and Education:** Empowering residents with knowledge and resources fosters a culture of preparedness. Community engagement initiatives encourage

proactive measures, such as participation in local fire prevention and preparedness programs and adherence to safety practices, thereby enhancing communal resistance.

- **Collaborative Mitigation:** By collaborating across multiple scales, through cooperatives, collectives, partnerships, businesses, multi-family housing, neighborhoods, networks, clubs, committees, schools, faith groups, volunteer organizations, and more, communities can strengthen their collective capacity to withstand wildfire challenges together.

By adopting community-wide measures and using wildfire mitigation best practices and tools (Coalitions and Collaboratives, n.d.), urban areas can emulate the protective benefits of herd immunity, creating an environment where the spread and impact of wildfires are significantly minimized.

The goal is to achieve meaningful wildfire risk reduction in 10 years. This requires strategically mitigating risk on ~90% of structures in the city.

Resident Support for Urgent Action

Most Ashland residents believe immediate action is necessary to address wildfire risks. According to the 2024 CWPP online general survey, 77% of respondents indicated that action is needed “as quickly as possible,” showing strong consensus on the urgency of wildfire risk reduction efforts. Only 8% felt that there is sufficient time to act, and 5% believed that current efforts are adequate and nothing more needs to change. Just one respondent opposed any action.

The thirty-two (32) “other” responses to the “urgency question” reinforced the need for proactive and sustained efforts to address wildfire risks. Key themes from these responses emphasize reducing overgrowth, consistent vegetation management, and providing centralized access to resources and information. Residents also noted the importance of balancing cost with effectiveness, improving evacuation routes, and tailoring solutions to specific areas, particularly near the forested interface.

Ashland residents overwhelmingly recognize the urgency of wildfire risk reduction and advocate for immediate, proactive action, with a balanced approach.

Summary

Based on the findings articulated in this section, Ashland must break away from business as usual and **embrace a paradigm shift** in its approach to wildfire risk reduction, moving from reactive response and individual voluntary efforts, to proactive, accountable, and collective actions that prioritize long-term resilience and shared responsibility.

The challenge statements that follow are obstacles to overcome to significantly **“move the needle”** on Ashland’s wildfire risk reduction efforts. Over the next decade, the City of Ashland proposes implementing a scalable wildfire risk reduction strategy that combines mandatory home hardening, defensible space regulations, physical assistance, and financial incentives, ensuring 90% compliance across all parcels. Success depends on collaboration and commitment.

A paradigm shift cannot be accomplished solely with existing city staff and resources; rather this is a community problem that requires the whole community to rectify. City government, all major institutions, the business community, property managers and real estate professionals, as well as many other partners, must work together in a new business model.

Ashland needs a strategic approach designed with the best fire science and research, and support from a multitude of community leaders and partners. This new strategy must attain verifiable results that first responders can rely on during a wildfire emergency.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Paradigm Shift Challenge Statements

Challenge PS-1: Protecting the city from wildfire requires a fundamental shift in how community leaders and citizens collectively perceive and respond to the risk.

Challenge PS-2: Existing wildfire mitigation efforts suffer from inconsistent and inadequate funding, making it difficult to support everyone.

Challenge PS-3: Voluntary compliance has proven insufficient, leaving the community dangerously exposed to wildfire. Alternative strategies are needed to accelerate risk reduction efforts.

Figure 35: Paradigm Shift Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Data was collected on a parcel-by-parcel basis for mostly single-family homes in 2018; it was not collected for the purpose of an absolute sense of wildfire preparedness. Rather, the 2018 risk baseline and the baseline in this document can only be classified as relative rankings for establishing priorities and strategies. Ultimately, a combination of relative risk assessment data along with on-site, explicit inspection and reinspection results will be able to establish whether a particular property meets scientifically acceptable standards of wildfire safety, and the degree of risk reduction accomplished.

Desired Conditions

- When Ashland experiences wildfire under severe weather conditions, there is less than 10% loss of exposed structures, minimal disruption to the economy, and no loss of life.

Tracking Metrics

- Percent by structure and type of structures meeting the equivalent standards of either the Wildfire Prepared Home base level, NIST Hazard Mitigation Methodology (HMM), or International Code Council’s (ICC) International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC).
- Community risk can be tracked by cataloging changes in overall ladder fuel levels, aggregated neighborhood and community exposure to wildland fires, the extent of hazardous vegetation, and areas of dense construction.
- Additional metrics include the cumulative number of structures with adequate defensible space and home hardening improvements.

Monitoring Plan

- Community-level and parcel-level wildfire risk monitoring should be systematically implemented.
- At the parcel level, risk data should be verified through site visits, with changes documented in assessment software based on completed mitigation activities.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Paradigm Shift Initiatives	
Challenge PS-1: Protecting the city from wildfire requires a fundamental shift in how community leaders and citizens collectively perceive and respond to the risk.	
PS-1.1	Maintain wildfire risk reduction as the city’s top priority for the next 5-10 years.
PS-1.2	Implement policy and budget adjustments to support wildfire risk reduction for all property types in Ashland.

PS-1.3	Host a potential partners forum in 2025 to investigate which local organizations have a similar vision/mission and determine whether it is in all parties' best interest to formally collaborate.
PS-1.4	Create an organizational structure to fulfill initiatives based on existing and needed capacity.
PS-1.5	If a suitable entity does not exist, establish one or more formal organizations (either a fiscally sponsored NGO, or through an MOU) or a "Fire Safe Council" (multisector group with multiple partners-see 2020 California Fire Safe Council Handbook).
PS-1.6	Establish an advisory board(s) to ensure that community input is regularly considered in prioritizing and implementation.
PS-1.7	Create and annually review and update focused CWPP work plans.
Challenge PS-2: Existing wildfire mitigation efforts suffer from inconsistent and inadequate funding, making it difficult to support everyone.	
PS-2.1	Develop customized community outreach plans by housing type.
PS-2.2	Hire NGOs to educate residents by housing type and demographic.
PS-2.3	Measure education and outreach program effectiveness and adjust strategies.
PS-2.4	Support experimental and interactive decision-making tools on the web including the Plant List Generator (link) and the certified "Service Provider's Directory" which enables the clients to review services received.
PS-2.5	Discourage sales of flammable landscaping plants and mulches in regional nurseries and landscaping centers.

PS-2.6	Collaboratively prioritize investments based on community wildfire risk assessments.
PS-2.7	Monitor and adjust CWPP progress annually.
PS-2.8	Systematically and aggressively engage collective action networks (e.g., Ashland Climate Collaboratives) to accelerate wildfire risk reduction.
PS-2.9	Champion networks such as Ashland Climate Collaboratives to collectively reduce wildfire risk within a defined space. These networks may be informal groups, formal associations, public service organizations, partnerships, trusts, civic clubs, business coalitions, Firewise USA® neighborhoods, or similar.
PS-2.10	Facilitate measuring and reporting of progress by all groups.
PS-2.11	Develop wildfire-resistant home-hardening training for retrofitting older buildings.
PS-2.12	Require home-hardening contractors to be certified in fire-resistant construction techniques.
PS-2.13	Institute a fire-resistant landscaping best practices training and worker certification program that results in CEU's, a certificate, and listing on the city's website.
PS-2.14	Maintain an interactive, publicly accessible trained contractors' database that enables clients to compare and rate the contractors.
PS-2.15	Hire, train, and deploy crews for home hardening and defensible space work.
PS-2.16	Promote standardized fire-resistant landscaping in maintenance contracts.
PS-2.17	Identify incentives to encourage property owners and tenants to hire qualified contractors and maintain properties to wildfire risk standards.

PS-2.18	Track, advertise, and celebrate businesses and property owners who have demonstrated achievement of wildfire safety goals.
PS-2.19	Implement tailored education and outreach solutions by housing type and occupancy status.
PS-2.20	Build and implement a sustainable funding model that drives wildfire mitigation, prioritizes vulnerable populations and high-risk areas, and taps into public-private partnerships, insurance incentives, and federal/state grants.
PS-2.21	Start or utilize an existing foundation to get streamline access to tools and equipment and/or pay skilled workers to do wildfire risk reduction work for those who can afford to pay and those who can't.
Challenge PS-3: Voluntary compliance has proven insufficient, leaving the community dangerously exposed to wildfire. Alternative strategies are needed to accelerate risk reduction efforts.	
PS-3.1	Expand the Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP) to be able to continuously perform around 1,000 strategically targeted personalized site assessments per year tailored to the housing type and demographic differences in the population. Assess wildfire risk based on capacity and funding using standardized protocols for ~300 apartment buildings and ~300 mobile homes in year one of funding. Assess multiplexes of all types in year two of funding. Assess single-family rental homes in year three.
PS-3.2	Develop business, major institution, and critical infrastructure, risk assessment/reduction programs. Use professional assessors if warranted for liability reasons.
PS-3.3	Draft wildfire risk reduction regulations for pre-existing structures, making it mandatory to take certain measures within three years of notice from the

	city. Extensions may be granted in certain cases. Implementation will be phased by priorities established by the oversight committee working with Ashland Fire & Rescue.
PS-3.4	Develop a strategy and secure resources to enable functionally and financially challenged property owners to meet regulations within an established timeline.

Table 17: Paradigm Shift Initiatives

Section 11

Codes and Ordinances

Section 11: Codes and Ordinances

Introduction

Codes and community planning in the City of Ashland should be aligned with the actual threat that is present. Ashland was proactive and visionary (the first and only community in Oregon to do this) in delineating the entire city as a wildland-urban interface (WUI) area in 2018, realizing their unique threat from wildfire. This change led to adoption of defensible space, flammable plant prohibition, and wildfire building codes for new construction. Codes are ubiquitous in all construction and building upkeep, unknown to many people who visit public and private buildings with these protections in place (fire sprinklers, kitchen hoods, fire walls, exiting, etc.). Codes are developed and enforced in response to tragedies. In the past 20 years, tragic wildfire events have taken place in areas around the country thought to be relatively safe from the threat of wildfire:

- Coffey Park in Santa Rosa, California during the Tubbs Fire in 2017.
- **Talent and Phoenix, Oregon during the Almeda Fire in 2020.**
- Louisville and Superior, Colorado during the Marshall Fire in 2021.
- Lahaina, Hawaii during the Maui Fires in 2023.
- Camarillo, California during the Mountain Fire in 2024.
- Altadena, California during the Eaton Fire in 2025.

These areas were not specifically designated as a high threat from wildfire, or delineated as WUI areas, but they still burned due to nearby wildfire spreading embers into these areas and catching structures on fire during extreme weather events. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent with changes in climate. Wildfire seasons are also becoming longer. As a society, it is imperative to look at all solutions in a comprehensive approach to wildfire preparedness, prevention, and mitigation. Residents and businesses in Ashland want to survive extreme wind-blown wildfire with minimal impacts on continuity of life and business.

Anecdotally, voluntary compliance works incrementally over time, with a fraction of the population, while most individuals and organizations do nothing to mitigate wildfire vulnerabilities.

Codes and ordinances are enacted to provide requirements and direction to well-meaning uninformed individuals, and to those individuals who would prefer not to voluntarily comply regardless of how unsafe it may be. Using public outreach with recommendations and best-practices relies on voluntary compliance, which works for individuals and organizations with a higher sense of social responsibility, whereas requirements (code) work to protect everyone, including less socially responsible individuals.

“Partial community compliance, in the form of incomplete structure and parcel hardening, has very significant impacts across the entire community in high-density communities. Full community participation will be critical to hardening existing high-density communities.”

(Maranghides et al., 2022)

The City of Ashland intends to establish new codes and standards that require compliance with best practices in wildfire preparedness for all homes and buildings (new and existing). Ideally, existing structures would be allowed time to mitigate wildfire hazards on their properties by structural hardening and vegetation management through a sunset provision that allows property owners time to comply, with the goal of 90% of structures in Ashland being compliant with IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home standards, or an equivalent city code, within ten (10) years. The intent is to provide financial assistance to lower-income households who will not be able to afford the necessary safety measures. There will be pushbacks at first, but recognizing the high-density nature of Ashland, and the inherent hazards present in the built environment, this is essential to the survival of Ashland’s community and economy.

Oregon WUI Code

Senate Bill 762 (Oregon State Legislature, 2021) was created with the intent to improve wildfire preparedness in the State of Oregon. Under Senate Bill 762, the responsibilities of the various state agencies were as follows:

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- **Oregon State University (OSU):** Develop and update the wildfire “risk” map using the latest data.
- **Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM):** Creates defensible space codes for high-hazard properties in the WUI.
- **Department of Consumer and Building Services (DCBS)**
 - **Building Codes Division (BCD):** Adopts fire-hardening building codes for new developments and significant updates in high-hazard WUI areas.
 - **Division of Financial Regulation (DFR):** Assists with wildfire insurance coverage.

At the time of this writing, the Oregon Legislature is intending to withdraw the state-wide hazard map and associated regulatory compliance. The outcome of this session will have an impact on Ashland’s currently adopted code applications.

City of Ashland Land Use Ordinance

Ashland’s Land Use Ordinance is already proactive when it comes to wildfire. There are a handful of recommendations that are highlighted in this section which could help Ashland become more fire resistant and fire resilient.

The City of Ashland Land Use Ordinance classifies “wildfire lands” as lands with potential for wildfire, which are called out on a “Wildfire Lands Overlay” map. Fortunately, for ease of use and interpretation, Ashland’s “wildfire lands” encompass the entire City of Ashland, as well as some outlying urban growth areas. (Ashland, 2024).



Figure 36: Aerial View of Ashland, Photo Courtesy of Ahturner

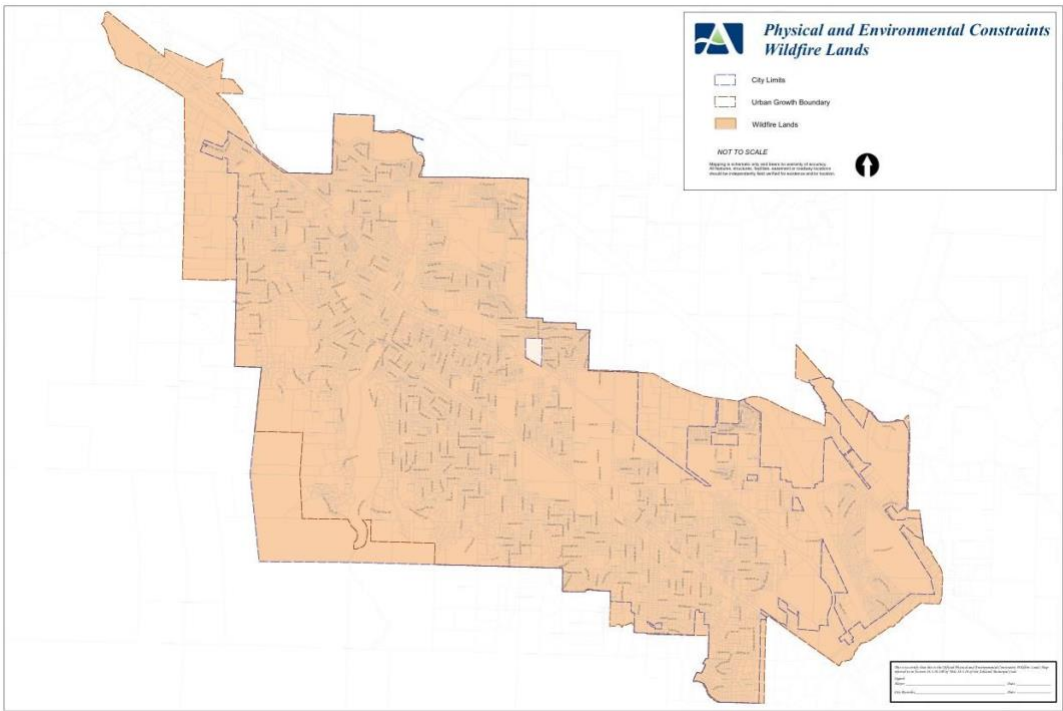


Figure 37: Ashland “Wildfire Lands” Map (2024)

Subsection 18.3.10.100.A – Requirements for Subdivisions, Performance Standards Developments, Site Design Review or Partitions

The Fire Prevention and Control Plan in the current ordinance only provides for certain attributes to be called out and maintained over time, with many of these being part of the work a civil engineer would normally be required to do. Unfortunately, most engineers (and architects) do not understand wildfire enough to plan accordingly. There is a great opportunity here to bolster the requirements for new developments by requiring a comprehensive **“Wildfire Safety Plan”** instead, which serves as a catalyst for long-term maintenance and protection of the community from wildfire. It is much more comprehensive and is written by a “special expert,” which is defined in the 2018 International Fire Code (2018 IFC) as “an individual who has demonstrated qualifications in a specific area, outside of the practice of architecture or engineering, through education, training and experience.” An excerpt from City of Boise Municipal Code is below. The City of Boise WUI Code was put together and placed

as a group of amendments in an empty chapter of the International Fire Code during the code amendment update process.

- 4103.2 Wildfire Safety and Mitigation Plan. Prior to or with a submittal of a preliminary plan or annexation, a Wildfire Safety and Mitigation Plan, with site plan, shall be prepared and submitted to the code official for review and approved as a part of the plans required for a permit.
- 4103.2.2 Content. The plan shall be based upon a *site-specific, wildfire risk assessment* that includes considerations of location, topography, aspect, flammable vegetation, climatic conditions and fire history. The plan shall also address water supply, fire department access, structure ignition and fire-resistance factors, fire protection systems and equipment, defensible space and vegetation management, and other information as required by the fire code official.
- 4103.2.3 Maintenance. The Wildfire Safety and Mitigation Plan shall be incorporated into the CC&R's for subdivisions to ensure long-term maintenance and adherence to these requirements.
- 4103.2.4 Cost. The cost of plan preparation and review shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 4103.2.5 Plan Retention. The plan shall be retained by the code official.
- 4103.2.6 Qualifications. The plan shall be prepared by a special expert (e.g. wildfire mitigation specialist) or other person demonstrating competence and relevant experience or training. The preparer shall be acceptable and approved by the fire code official.

There is a distinct benefit that a Wildfire Safety Plan is written by someone who understands the nuances of wildfire, which most architects and engineers do not. Secondly, having the plan incorporated into the CC&Rs requires that the HOA Design Review Committee or Architectural Review Committee maintain the provisions of the plan over time, instead of relying on capacity-limited code enforcement personnel for continued enforcement.

Subsection 18.3.10.100.B.2.d.i – (exception to 0 – 5' fuel-free area)

"Combustible materials may be permitted within five feet of a structure when the Staff Advisor, in consultation with the Fire Code Official, has determined the portion of the

structure adjoining the combustible material is constructed with ignition-resistant building materials sufficient to reduce the spread of fire from the combustible materials.”

This exception is problematic. Ignition-resistant is not considered noncombustible and even noncombustible-sided structures (e.g., cementous siding, stucco, etc.) have openings under the sill where flames could get to the wood sheathing underneath. It is highly recommended to amend the ordinance to remove this exception.

Subsection 18.3.10.100.B.2.n – (waiver of fuel modification area)

“The General Fuel Modification Area standards outlined in subsection [18.3.10.100.B.2](#) may be reduced or waived when approved by the Staff Advisor in consultation with the Fire Code Official, provided it is demonstrated that the fire risk has been reasonably reduced such as in cases where ignition-resistant materials and construction methods, or vegetation type and separation, function to enhance the structure’s protection from exterior wildfire exposure.”

The same principles apply for this subsection. It makes sense to create a sense of certainty in these situations by not allowing these subjective exceptions. Otherwise, officials may end up relying on untrained personnel to make the determination for this exception, which is unwise. It is highly recommended to amend the ordinance to remove this exception.

Subsection 18.3.10.100.B.3 – Roofing

“Where 50 percent or more of a structure’s roof area is replaced within a five-year period, the roof covering shall be constructed or reroofed with a Class B or better roof covering.” If possible, it is recommended to change this to “...a Class A roof covering or Class A roof assembly.”

Subsection 18.3.10.100.B.4 – Fencing

Recent research by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has shown that fire spreads from combustible (e.g., wood and vinyl) fencing to structures. Based on the location and configuration of the fencing they have prescribed recommendations in the NIST Hazard Mitigation Methodology (HMM). Table A recommends that any combustible fencing attached directly to a structure should have a minimum eight-foot (8') separation between the fence and the structure.

However, most fences also turn and run parallel to the side of the structure. Table B prescribes a ten foot (10') minimum fuel separation distance (MFSD) from any combustible fence section that runs parallel to the structure, for single fences. For double fences, they prescribe a MFSD of twenty feet (20') because of the increased fuel and heat release rates from double parallel fences (Maranghides et al., 2022).

To simplify matters, the ordinance could be amended to preclude the use of any single combustible fencing within ten feet (10') of any structure and preclude the use of any double combustible fencing within twenty feet (20') of a structure. This would apply to new construction and fence replacements only. However, additional language with a sunset clause could be added for existing fences (e.g., existing combustible fence sections within ten feet (10') of a habitable structure shall be replaced with noncombustible fence sections by 2030.)

The same requirements could also be adopted for other occupancy types, to include businesses, schools, etc.

Subsection 18.3.10.100.D.1.e – (reduction of fuel modification area)

"A reduction of the requisite fuel modification area in recognition of the use of fire-resistant materials and construction methods that function to provide the structure with reduced exterior wildfire exposure."

Using this exception is a slippery slope and could expose the City of Ashland to increased liability. As previously mentioned, even noncombustible-sided structures have vulnerabilities that many people are unaware of. Additionally, plate glass windows still fracture around 180°F and tempered glass windows fracture around 630°F, which are relatively low temperatures (NFPA ASIP, 2023 Update). A fractured window allows embers and/or direct flames to get inside the structure.

It is recommended to remove this exception or use it only when the shape or configuration of a particular lot doesn't allow for building without using this exception, in which case there should be unequal and imperfect tradeoffs to make the structure safer (e.g., retaining walls, under eave sprinklers, interior sprinklers, etc.).

Subsection 18.4.4.060.B.8, Wildfire Lands Overlay

To allow exceptions to minimum fuel separation distances by using the exception in subsection 18.4.4.060.B.8.d, it would be necessary to employ all the structure hardening requirements in Table D of the NIST HMM (Figure 38). It would be much easier to install noncombustible fencing as prescribed, or to replace combustible fencing sections, than to employ all of the necessary structural hardening required to protect the structure. See “fencing” section above for NIST recommended MFSDs for combustible fencing.

Table D. Structure hazard mitigation – hardening structure and attached combustibles against ignition from fire (radiation, convection).

Item #	Structure Component – Exposure Distance (ED) or Structure Separation Distance (SSD)	Hardening Action	Performance Goal	Applicable Condition(s)
1	Roof covering and roof design (assembly) including dormer and bump out roofs	Replace non-Class A roofs by assembly or by covering alone	Prevent ignition of roof from flames	Non-Class A roof
2	Dormer side	Replace all combustible siding with noncombustible options	Prevent ignition of dormer from flames	Combustible dormer siding
3	Dormer under eave	Replace all under eave construction with noncombustible options or cover with noncombustible material	Prevent ignition of dormer from flames	Combustible dormer eave
4	Dormer window	Replace with dual pane window with both being tempered	Prevent complete window failure ^a	Single pane or dual pane non-tempered
5	Exterior wall(s) including bump out(s)	Add on top (of existing cladding) or replace with noncombustible cladding. Trim must be noncombustible	Prevent siding ignition	Combustible cladding facing exposures in Table B and/or Table C
6	Bump out bottom (underside)	If exposed framing, enclose with noncombustible material. If enclosed with combustible material, replace or cover with noncombustible material. Trim must be noncombustible and extend (vertically) to account for added material	prevent ignition under bump out(s)	Combustible bump out(s) underside material or exposed framing
7	Glazing in doors and glass sliding doors	Double pane windows (both panes tempered)	Prevent complete window failure ^a	Single pane non-tempered, non-tempered double pane, or double pane with one tempered facing exposures in Table B and/or Table C
8	Under eave(s) - overhanging eave and overhanging rake (gable end)	Create a soffited eave (horizontal) or enclose eave (angled) using noncombustible material	Prevent ignition in under eave area and entry of fire in residence	Under eave(s) combustible construction facing exposures in Table B and/or Table C
9	Screens	Screen over entire window(s) (even if window does not open) and other glazed surfaces. Framing for screens must be of noncombustible material	Reduce radiative exposures to glass and possibly to parts of frame	All glazed surfaces facing exposures in Table B and/or Table C
10	Windows	Replace with dual pane window with both being tempered	Prevent complete window failure ^a	Single pane non-tempered, non-tempered double pane, or double pane with one tempered facing exposures in Table B and/or Table C

Figure 38: Maranghides et al., HMM Table D (2022), Courtesy of NIST

Ashland Municipal Code

It is highly recommended not to wait for new consensus codes to come out before creating interim amendments that meet current knowledge in fire science for wildfire. New findings in fire science are evolving much quicker than the consensus codes, which do not reflect current best practices related to wildfire-prone areas. Some thoughts, considerations, and recommendations for the Ashland Municipal Code are as follows:

AMC 16.12.080.F, Independent Consultants Retained by Fire Chief

Regarding this section of code, this is a proactive idea, which is not commonly seen in code amendments. It is highly recommended that Ashland take advantage and utilize this provision when necessary to assist with AF&Rs limited capacity.

General Code Recommendations

City of Ashland wildland-urban interface and building ordinances should be updated to reflect more modern and science-based requirements, similar to comments provided in the previous section. There are numerous provisions which should be either included in both the body of the ordinance and this specific section or added as an amendment to this section. In addition, standard separation distance (SSD) should also be considered, along with enhanced defensible space requirements.

Zone 0

Additionally, a zero-to-five-foot (0–5') fuel-free, noncombustible zone should be added to these requirements.

Setbacks

Setbacks to natural open space areas should be increased from thirty feet (30') to a minimum of fifty feet (50') to meet best practices and HMM recommendations.

Multifamily Housing

Consider creating an ordinance requiring owners of multi-family housing complexes, as well as owners and/or property managers of single-family residential rentals to structurally harden and

employ vegetation management as necessary, with a sunset provision to allow them time to comply.

Manufactured Homes

Consider noncombustible or Class A ignition-resistant decking and skirting requirements.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Consider adding language to require a structure separation distance (SSD), calculated from HMM tables, from the primary dwelling to any accessory dwelling, and a requirement for structural hardening. Accessory dwelling units should be constructed to the same standard as the primary dwelling (e.g., IR1 from IWUIC) and should be required to follow the same defensible space standards as the primary dwelling.

Revise the Prohibited Flammable Plants List

Update the list using the best available science to address plant placement, spacing, maintenance, and species selection. Broaden the municipal code to cover highly flammable evergreen shrubs, vines, and ornamental grasses. To improve compliance with Oregon noxious weed prohibitions and align with expert recommendations, adopt a clearer, more enforceable language to code and ordinance restrictions.

Plant and Tree Spacing

Plants should be set up in a zone concept, with either no plants or short-stature and highly fire-resistant plants (e.g., succulents) within the 0–5' zone, a little taller fire-resistant species spaced appropriately in the 5–30' zone, and taller fire-resistant and some non-fire-resistant species within the 30–100' zone (Figure 39; see NFPA Firewise USA® website for additional information).

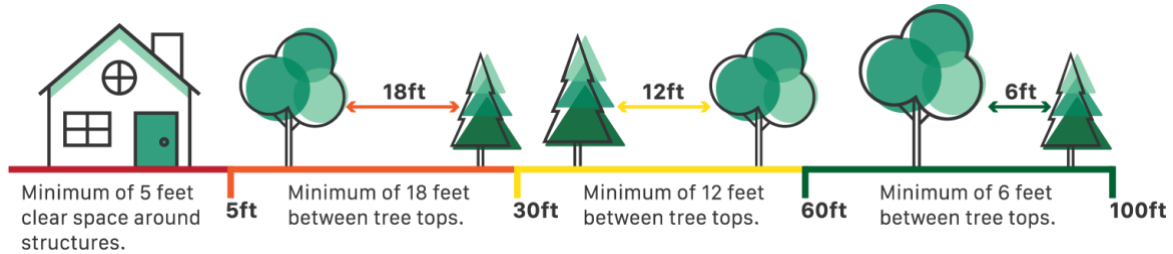


Figure 39: Example of Tree Spacing, by Pacific Tree Preservation

Ignition Source Control

Ignition source control measures from the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) should be considered for adoption as code amendments to help prevent human-caused fires from occurring.

HOA CC&Rs

A majority of CC&Rs lack robust mitigation measures, and language related to emergency egress (evacuation). Adding language to CC&Rs to provide for increased safety from wildfire is necessary. This is much easier to do at the front end of a development, rather than years later vying for a majority or supermajority vote. Enforcement of CC&Rs and community rules, related to wildfire, should be emphasized year-round. Mitigation and continual maintenance are the key to a much safer community.

Minimalistic CC&Rs are sometimes desirable but lack the necessary requirements for real community safety from wildfire. Added language could include science-based considerations such as setback distance from other structures, setbacks from slopes, ignition-resistant design, separation of combustible fences from structures, restrictions for solid-fuel-fired appliances (e.g., portable outdoor fireplaces), etc.

CC&Rs should be reviewed by the current board and members, to address the need for more robust structural hardening and mitigation measures on and around properties in these communities. A certified city wildfire risk reduction specialist should review and approve relevant CC&Rs.

ICC International Wildland–Urban Interface Code

The International Code Council (ICC) provides consensus-based codes on a normal code cycle of three (3) years. The most recent version of the International Wildland–Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) is the 2024 IWUIC, which has pertinent updates and clarification on roof structures and ventilation openings. However, when trying to determine the actual relative hazard for a particular area it seems to be lacking. The IWUIC Fire Hazard Severity classification is based on the predominant fuel model in open space areas, critical fire weather frequency, and percentage of slope (ICC IWUIC, 2024). It does not include structures as fuel and does not include community attributes such as age and density of development (existing or new). Because of the nature of creating consensus codes, it does not match current research in fire-science and does not require a minimum separation distance for fences from structures. It is recommended that local fire code officials be in tune with current research findings in the field of wildfire heat transmission as it relates to structures and create relevant code amendments to that end.

NIST Hazard Mitigation Methodology (HMM)

Further highlighting the need for purposefully thought out code amendments is the NIST Hazard Mitigation Methodology (HMM), which was created by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in collaboration with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) after thorough investigations of wildland fire disasters that resulted in significant structural losses (Maranghides et al., 2022). These fires included:

- The Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado (2012), which resulted in two (2) fatalities and the destruction of 346 structures.
- The Black Forest Fire in Colorado (2013), which resulted in two (2) fatalities and the destruction of 511 structures.
- The Camp Fire in California (2018), which resulted in eighty-five (85) fatalities and the destruction of 18,804 structures.
- The Marshall Fire in Colorado (2021), which resulted in two (2) fatalities and the destruction of 1,084 structures.

While not a code document itself, the NIST HMM provides guidance to inform the code development process. It views structures as fuel that can contribute to further destruction within the built environment, separate from the wildfire's direct effects. It quantifies the impact of wildfire on structures and combustible materials to determine minimum separation distances needed to prevent additional ignitions. The HMM considers the entire community, not just individual parcels, to reduce ignition risks regardless of location or ownership.

The primary objectives of the HMM are to (1) protect homes and property to minimize losses, and (2) prioritize cost-effective protection measures.

These goals are achieved by balancing mitigation efforts to reduce potential fire and ember exposures, and by hardening structures to resist ignition. **Effective mitigation involves a balance between exposure reduction and structural hardening** (Figure 40). If exposures are eliminated (as prescribed in the HMM), no hardening is needed. Conversely, a structure hardened to extreme levels, like a windowless concrete bunker, could survive severe exposure.

The HMM also examines the impact of fuel packages and continuity (e.g., combustible fences, auxiliary structures, decks, vehicles, and combustible storage) and how they can transfer fire to each other and to primary structures within a community.



Figure 40: HMM Dials Graphic, Maranghides et al. 2022

The HMM then determines the minimum separation distance from both built and vegetative fuel packages (plant material that can act as fuels) and provides recommendations for structure

hardening to reduce structure ignition from radiant heat, embers, and direct-flame impingement. Structure loss from wildfire has been prevalent across the western United States over the past twenty to thirty (20–30) years. The HMM provides a science-based method to address structure ignition and the potential subsequent loss, as well as to inform future code amendments and adoptions. Figure 41 displays a graphic of the evolution of HMM following beginning stages of early experiments and building codes.

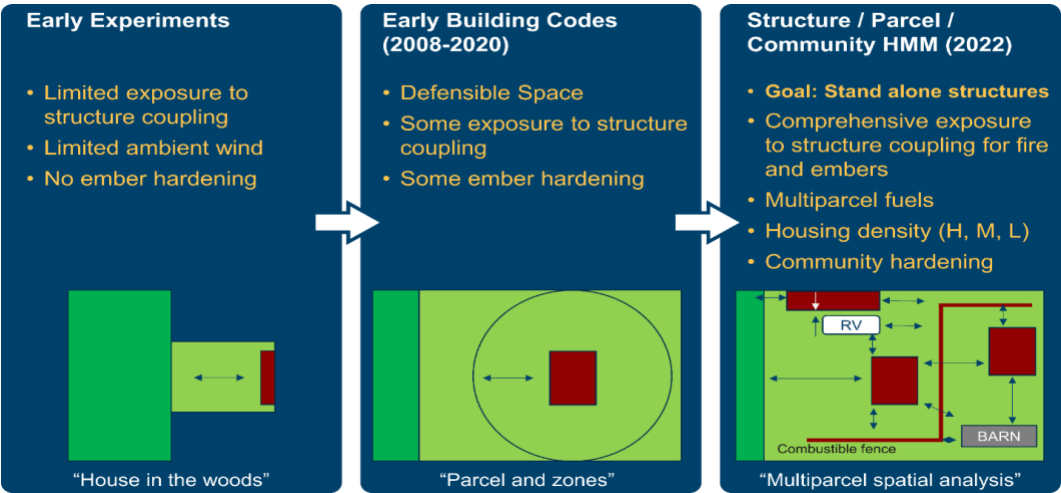


Figure 41: HMM Evolution Graphic, Maranghides et al. 2022

"Historically, codes have been parcel-centric and address exposures in the context of protecting a residence from the exposures on the same parcel."

-NIST HMM, 2022

Summary

HMM provides a clear science-based understanding of the protection of structures from ember and flame exposures. Concepts and specific components of the HMM should be included in code amendments at the state, county and municipal level, with consideration for enforcement at the HOA level.

Codes and standards, CC&Rs, and rules and regulations, can be modified to account for the inherent wildfire risk to the City of Ashland. It is highly recommended to start with stakeholder meetings as an approach to build buy-in from all stakeholders. Providing solid, science-based education and outreach to owners and other stakeholders who may not have an in-depth understanding of wildfire is an effective method for providing background information on the inherent risk of wildfire to the Ashland community.

Fortunately, the City of Ashland and community are already interested in furthering their protection from the real threat of wildfire, and these activities are not impossible to complete. It takes all the community working together from leaders to citizens.

This document is not exhaustive and does not provide every recommendation and best practice available to communities in wildfire-prone areas, but it provides a platform to promote wildfire awareness and both individual and collective mitigation actions in the City of Ashland. The work that homeowners do around their properties helps firefighting resources by allowing them to do their job more efficiently and effectively, spending less time protecting homes and more time putting the fire out. Homeowners are a first line of defense and can make all the difference on how a fire plays out on the landscape. That is precisely why the HMM construct is so important to employ in wildfire-prone communities.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Code and Ordinance Challenge Statements

Challenge CO-1: Ashland Land Use Planning ordinances need updates to the best available science-based requirements for new developments.

Challenge CO-2: Ashland Municipal Code lacks robust and current science-based requirements for new and existing structures.

Challenge CO-3: City of Ashland staff are at or beyond capacity and don't have the time available to ensure compliance.

Challenge CO-4: Many HOA CC&Rs in Ashland lack wildfire risk mitigation requirements, and some directly conflict with best practices and municipal codes.

Figure 42: Code and Ordinance Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- State of Oregon wildfire hazard mapping and associated requirements are in a state of flux and not entirely reliable currently.
- Associated OSFM defensible space requirements are not as comprehensive as they could or should be.
- Ashland currently has Land Use Planning Ordinances and the Ashland Municipal Code in place with varying levels of requirements in “wildfire lands.”
- There is a requirement for a non-comprehensive “Fire Prevention and Control Plan” with no expectation of having a professional in the field of wildfire write the plan.
- There are many additional components of the Land Use Planning Ordinance which could be bolstered.
- Ashland Municipal Code is missing some key requirements to help protect and enhance the safety of the citizens of Ashland from the real threat of wildfire.

- HOAs in Ashland have minimal requirements in CC&Rs regarding the protection of their specific communities from wildfire.
- Current codes, ordinances, and CC&Rs aren't strong enough, and do not meet best practices related to current science-based research on wildfires and the built environment.

Desired Conditions

- It is desired that codes, ordinances, and land use planning work together for the protection of the City of Ashland from the threat of wildfire.
- Tracking Metrics
- Tracking metrics could include the number and year of code amendments, and the number of CC&Rs updated. Other metrics may be determined as workplans are created.

Monitoring Plan

- The monitoring plan for this is simply noting whether anything has changed.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Code and Ordinance Initiatives	
Challenge CO-1: Ashland Land Use Planning ordinances need updates to the best available science-based requirements for new developments.	
CO-1.1	Create an internal interdisciplinary Wildfire Mitigation Team (WMT) to facilitate seamless and efficient implementation of the CWPP across city departments.
CO-1.2	Bolster wildfire resilience requirements for city development through consistent planning and zoning.

CO-1.3	Revise wildfire resilience codes for existing properties to maximize wildfire resilience.
Challenge CO-2: Ashland Municipal Code lacks robust and current science-based requirements for new and existing structures.	
CO-2.1	Adopt improved science-based wildfire code amendments (may warrant hiring a consultant).
Challenge CO-3: City of Ashland staff are at or beyond capacity and don't have the time available to ensure compliance.	
CO-3.1	Research best practices from other self-sustaining city wildfire code and ordinance programs.
CO-3.2	Hire a full-time wildfire risk inspector to ensure consistent and timely code compliance.
Challenge CO-4: Many HOA CC&Rs in Ashland lack wildfire risk mitigation requirements, and some directly conflict with best practices and municipal codes.	
CO-4.1	Promote meetings and trainings for HOA Board Members, Architectural Review Committees, and Design Review Committees to promote wildfire prevention best practices and update CC&Rs accordingly.
CO-4.2	Encourage wildfire risk reduction champions and other knowledgeable community members to share expertise and inspire action.
CO-4.3	Help HOAs make appropriate wildfire prepared structure and landscaping choices for inclusion in CC&Rs.

Table 18: Code and Ordinance Initiatives

Section 12

Landscape Resiliency

Section 12: Landscape Resiliency

Introduction

The Shasta, Takelma, and Athabaskan peoples with their ongoing presence and legacy of intimate relationships between nature and people has not been forgotten, and the infusion of past and present knowledge is welcomed to help chart a new course.

Native American communities were the original stewards of these lands, skillfully managing forests, woodlands, and grasslands with fire and traditional ecological knowledge to sustain its health and resilience. Building on that enduring legacy, present-day land managers have, over the past few decades, earned a national reputation for innovative, landscape-scale forest stewardship. This section calls for the evolution and expansion of Ashland’s proven management framework—the City of Ashland Forest Plan with thirty (30) years of project work, and fifteen (15) years of the Ashland Forest All-Lands Resiliency (AFAR) project—to meet the challenges of rapidly changing forest health and wildfire conditions.

Originally piloted by the City of Ashland on municipal lands starting in 1995, the “restoration forestry” approach recognizes the significant changes that have taken place in our forests due to fire suppression and the end of indigenous burning and works to reduce overly dense forests and return the beneficial role of mild fire. Although climate change adaptation was not the original goal, these treatments have become critical defenses against the uncharacteristic wildfires and insect outbreaks now reshaping forests across the western United States. With a legacy of active stewardship and innovation, Ashland is uniquely positioned once again to lead—adapting its beloved forests to thrive in an era of unprecedented change.

Local Wildfire Environment

The current fire environment surrounding Ashland is shaped by a combination of climatic, ecological, and human factors. Ashland is located within the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion, known for its rugged terrain, mixed conifer forests, and frequent wildfire activity (USDA Forest Service, 2021). This fire-dependent ecoregion has experienced more than a century of fire exclusion, resulting in dense

secondary growth and atypically dense woody vegetation in forested areas (Halofsky, 2016 and 2020, Metlen et al., 2017).

The region experiences a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters, creating conditions conducive to wildfire ignition and spread (Abatzoglou & Williams, 2016). Historically, wildfire played a crucial role in maintaining the health of local ecosystems, with Indigenous communities using controlled burns to manage vegetation and promote biodiversity (Lake & Long, 2014). However, fire suppression and exclusion policies implemented in the early 20th century have led to increased fuel loads, exacerbating the severity of wildfires in recent decades (Hessburg et al., 2019; Halofsky et al., 2020). Additionally, changing climate conditions—characterized by rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and altered precipitation patterns—have further intensified fire risk in the region (Westerling, 2016; Halofsky et al., 2020).

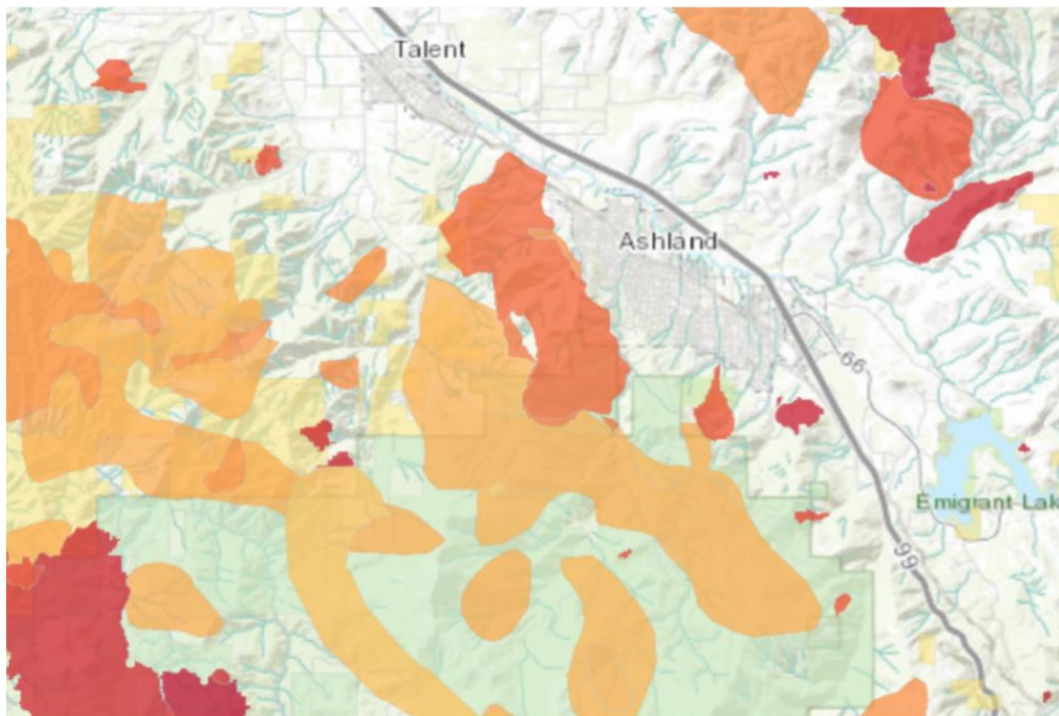


Figure 43: Large Fires from 1893-2019.

Ashland and the surrounding Rogue Valley have witnessed a significant increase in wildfire activity, particularly in the 21st century. Notably, the 2020 Alameda Fire devastated the nearby communities of Talent and Phoenix, highlighting the growing threat in the region (Oregon Department of Forestry [ODF], 2021).

Ecosystem Services at Risk

The Ashland Creek Municipal Watershed, and surrounding forests in adjacent watersheds, contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by Ashland residents, along with the inherent ecosystem value apart from its utility to humans. Much of what is now Ashland has been derived from, or currently relies on, forest-dependent ecosystem services such as clean drinking water, outdoor recreation, aesthetic settings, wood products, fresh air, and spiritual refuge. Forests are part and parcel of the community and present a double-edged sword between amenities and wildfire risk to the built environment and economy. With over 80% of the city's drinking water derived from the Ashland Watershed, forests are a literal lifeblood of this community.

Habitat is also a critical value in the Ashland Watershed, all the federal land in the watershed falls under the designation of Late-Successional Reserve:

“Late-Successional Reserves are identified with an objective to protect and enhance conditions of late successional and old-growth forest ecosystems, which serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest related species including the northern spotted owl.”

(USDA Forest Service, 1994)

Wildfires near or in forested neighborhoods and wildlands are a significant and growing threat to dry forest ecosystems and the many values they provide. Compounding the wildfire issue, climate change is also shifting ecological niches, forcing adaptation and/or migration which many species are unable to do in such short order. Among tree species, this has been documented in Northern

California by Stanford University researchers and deemed the “zombie forest” phenomena (Stanford Report, 2023).

Changes and Challenges Facing Ashland’s Forests

Tree Mortality

As documented by Bennett et al (2023), Douglas-fir die-off seen across the Rogue Valley was due in part to “hot drought”, or high temperatures combined with long periods of significantly low rainfall, conditions likely created by climate change. Aerial Detection Surveys (ADS) done by the Pacific USDA Forest Service – Southwest Oregon Service Center (based in Medford, OR), documented over 250,000 acres of Douglas-fir mortality, focused near valley margins and surrounding communities in southwest Oregon from 2022 to 2024 (U.S. Forest Service, 2024).

In 2023, the Ashland City Council approved an addendum to the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan that updated and expanded the original chapter on climate change. The addendum was utilized as a basis for Phase One of the Ashland Forestlands Climate Change Adaptation Project; a rapid response to unprecedented tree die-off in the lower Ashland Watershed after years of drought and record heat. In April and May of 2024, the city was able to remove dead and dying trees on approximately 400 acres of municipal forestlands adjacent to the community. The city, via Timberline Helicopters, removed over 600,000 board feet of dead and dying wood and sold it to a local mill, creating revenue to offset 40% of the project cost. Pile burning of dead and down limbs and treetops completed Phase One in spring 2025. A subsequent phase is being planned to plant appropriate species for aspects, elevation, and anticipated heat and drought.

The city was able to react quickly to this novel situation that posed a threat to the community and municipal watershed. Unabated, the accumulation of dead trees on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest adjacent to homes, and at the base of the Ashland Municipal Watershed, will erode the accomplishments, purpose and need of the Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Project, and minimize the benefits of work now complete on adjacent city-managed forestlands (see map below).

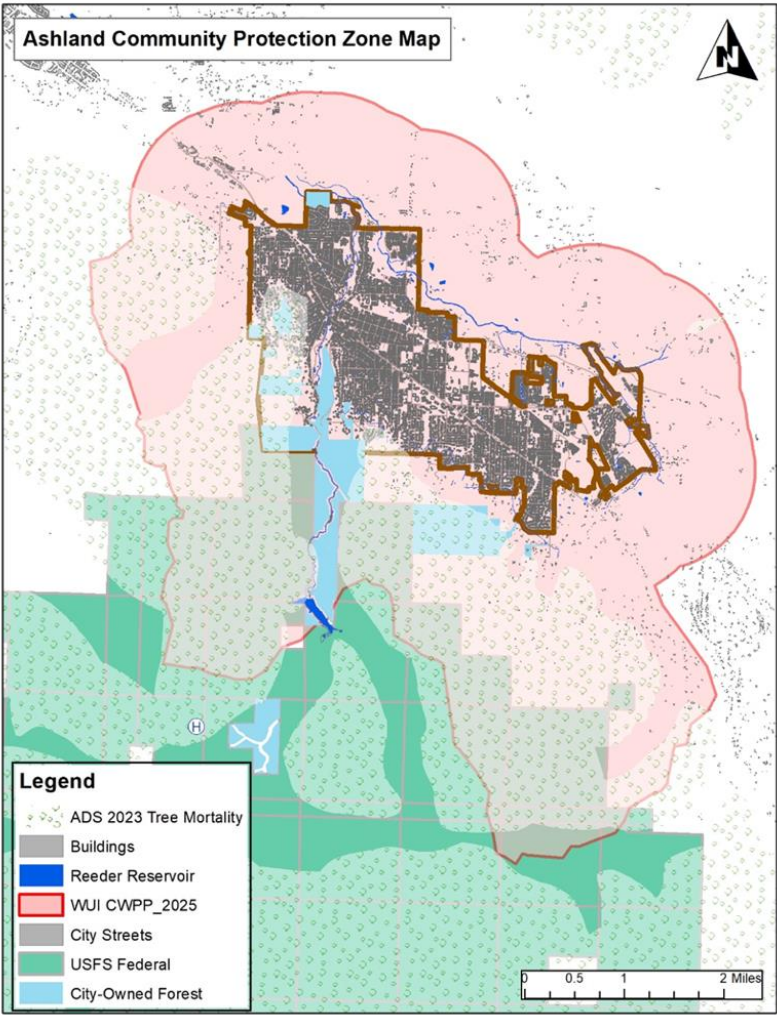


Figure 44: Bark Beetle–Caused Tree Mortality in the Lower Ashland Watershed and CWPP WUI Zone Across City, USFS, and Private Lands

Figure 44 shows Tree mortality data from USDA Forest Service Aerial Detection Surveys, with the extent of bark beetle mortality across the Ashland WUI area and into the municipal watershed. USFS property is shaded green, with significant bark beetle mortality captured by annual Aerial Detection Surveys (ADS) done by the local USFS Insect and Disease Service Center (City of Ashland GIS map). Work has been completed on city-owned and many private parcels as of April 2025.

The city envisions working with the USFS on a focused and rapid response to determine the extent that past, present, and future tree mortality is increasing wildfire danger adjacent to the community, and at the base of the municipal watershed. Federal land managers have options that allow for relatively small projects to be undertaken without extensive investments in staff time and without years of studies and reviews. The city’s climate change adaptation project was supported by community members and City Council. A well-crafted, targeted project on adjacent USFS federal land stands to garner similar support and is a high priority for community and watershed protection.

Mt. Ashland Ski Area: Physical and Economic Infrastructure at Risk

Mt. Ashland Ski Area was established in 1964 and welcomes over 100,000 skier visits in a normal year, contributing \$7.3 million to the local economy (Mt. Ashland Association, 2024). Mt. Ashland lies at the peak of the Ashland Watershed, amid dense forests of true fir, mountain hemlock, and scattered western white pine. Infrastructure on the mountain includes five (5) chairlifts, a surface lift, two (2) lodges, outbuildings, and associated power, water, and sewer infrastructure. Also located on the mountain, though not owned by the Mt. Ashland Association, are communications and broadcasting infrastructure as well as the National Weather Service’s Doppler Radar installation.

There have been no specific, organized efforts by the Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest or the Mt. Ashland Association to reduce wildfire exposure to the built or natural environment on the mountain. Though higher elevation forests at the ski area have a shorter fire season their characteristic fire regime is that of mixed to high intensity, stand-replacing fire on infrequent intervals as compared to low elevation (cool white fir plant association = 65–75 years and moist mountain hemlock = 100–120 years), forests that historically experienced low intensity fire at frequent intervals (dry Douglas–fir = 5–15 years) (USDA Forest Service, 2003). Though a high–intensity wildfire may be characteristic of the mountain’s high elevation, mesic forest, it would be detrimental to Mt. Ashland’s infrastructure and its economic and recreational benefits to the community.

A critical need for the survival of the Mt. Ashland Ski Area is to create a plan that addresses wildfire vulnerabilities, increases structural hardening and defensible space around key assets, and manages fuel loads on the mountain and around the ski area infrastructure. Small projects to address wildfire risk are possible under federal land use planning guidelines (Ruckriegle, 2021). Initial discussions between the Mount Ashland Association (MAA) and Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest

staff regarding wildfire issues at the ski area have been productive. According to the Mt Ashland Association, efforts are underway to earmark budgets to begin the process of mitigating risk. Making this a CWPP priority will help efforts to secure further funding.

Adapting to a Hotter, Drier, and More Fire-Prone Future

The 2004 Ashland CWPP was written in response to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest’s solicitation of the City of Ashland to engage more broadly in an expanded vision for restoring dry forest in the Ashland Watershed. These forests had departed from their historic composition, structure, and function. This required the city to submit an alternative project proposal embedded in a CWPP, meeting the letter of the 2003 Healthy Forests Restoration Act. The city’s “alternative” was substantively adopted by the Forest Service.

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest’s purpose for the newly coined Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Project was “to protect values at risk, reduce crown fire potential and obtain conditions that are more resilient to wildland fires”, while the need was “for urgent reduction of large-scale, high intensity wildland fire in the Upper Bear Analysis Area”. There was no mention of climate change in AFR Project foundational documents.

Since the AFR Record of Decision (USDA, Forest Service, 2009), and now after fifteen (15) years of implementing the AFR project on 14,000 acres of forestlands, conditions in the forests have changed, notably at lower elevations.

Increasingly extreme heat and drought has led to insect outbreaks that have reached epidemic levels, with Douglas-fir (DF) tree mortality measured via drone-based aerial data at 20% (range on the city’s forestlands in the lower watershed (City of Ashland, 2023). That percentage has only increased in the past year, especially where dead and dying DF trees have not been removed, as they had been on the majority of impacted acres owned by the city.

“Resulting interactions between historical increases in forested area and density and recent rapid warming, increasing insect mortality, and wildfire burned areas, are now leading to substantial abrupt landscape alterations. These outcomes are forcing forest planners and managers to identify strategies that can modify future outcomes that are ecologically and/or socially undesirable.”

(Hessburg et al, 2021)

Some locations have seen up to 75% die-off and smaller pockets up to near complete DF mortality; a phenomena dubbed by Bennett et al the “Douglas-fir decline spiral” in a 2023 research paper by Oregon State University (OSU) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), who utilized data for their research from the forests surrounding Ashland and the Rogue Valley (Bennett et al, 2023).

When looking at what’s happening in western United States forests, there are alarming trends:

- Insect outbreaks in the mixed-conifer Sierra Nevada forests of California (State of California, 2022) and forests in the Rocky Mountains (University of Colorado, 2012) have impacted thousands of square miles of forests.
- Fuel accumulations and hotter and drier weather have led to mega-fires that have impacted communities and disrupted critical ecosystem services (Stephens et al, 2022).
- Forest loss, called type conversion, is being documented in the west (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS], 2022), with shifting climate zones (Stanford University, 2023), insect outbreaks, severe fires, and over a century of departure from historic frequent fire regimes (Hagman et al, 2021) coinciding over vast areas like the Southern Sierras of California (Steel et al, 2023).
- Recent research on forest regeneration after fires underscores the need for quick management action to maximize the chance for desirable tree species to establish and persist. Avoiding high severity fire that can quickly alter ecosystem function (the conditions for forests to persist) is critical in frequent dry forests like those in the majority of the Ashland Watershed (Davis, 2023).
- The “Douglas-fir Decline Spiral” documented in SW Oregon, affecting the city’s own forestlands and adjacent private and federal land (Bennett et al, 2023).

There is more scientific certainty in the root causes of our current forest conditions, as well as certainty in the efficacy of treatments that have been part of Ashland’s stewardship “toolbox” for decades. Publications like “Wildfire and climate change adaptation of western North American forests: a case for intentional management.” by Hessburg et al (2021) summarize dozens of previous studies and answer key questions commonly asked about forest management.

“While there are many important lessons to learn from the past, we believe that we cannot rely on past forest conditions to provide us with blueprints for current and future management.”

(Millar et al, 2007)

With a sense of urgency in recognizing the predicted and already increasing climate change impacts to local forests, escalating community wildfire risk, and the threat to municipal drinking water, the Ashland City Council adopted the Ashland Forest Plan Climate Change Addendum in April of 2023. The Addendum, within the context of the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan, provides a solid foundation for the first phase of climate adaptation projects not only on city-managed forests, but also across adjacent USFS and private forests.

The city’s policy represents a shift in philosophy from decades of extensive and excellent work done between 1995 and the current day under the objective of forest restoration. Restorative work completed to date has turned out to be the building blocks of climate change adaptation. Promoting forest health and vigor through tree thinning, fuels reduction to minimize fire severity, and planting of pine species better adapted to a warmer and drier climate have been ongoing for decades and create a firmer footing than many unmanaged landscapes.

Ashland’s history of active stewardship across city, federal, and private lands positions the city to respond to changing conditions with a variety of options that would not have existed otherwise. The change from restoration (using past reference conditions) to adaptation is spelled out well in the following excerpt from Stephens et al in 2010: *“While there are many important lessons to learn from the past, we believe that we cannot rely on past forest conditions to provide us with blueprints for future management. To respond to this uncertainty, managers will be challenged to integrate adaptation strategies into plans in response to changing climates.”*

More narrowly, objectives from the 2023 Ashland Forestlands Climate Change Addendum can be useful as guides to apply to the entire Ashland Watershed and adjacent drainages:

- Shift from the restoration paradigm that guided previous forest planning and management to an enhanced adaptive management strategy that incorporates new science and technology to effectively address climate change-induced forest land conditions that are likely without historic reference.
- Maintain and promote refugia conditions and stand characteristics to buffer against climate change impacts to allow diverse habitats to persist. Develop a finer scale approach to refugia delineation, where appropriate.
- Enhance and maintain a variable mosaic of forest structure conditions and fuel loads. For example, creating openings in the forest canopy to reduce potential crown or ground fire intensity from continuous tree canopies or surface fuels. Growing shade intolerant and fire tolerant species would be balanced with higher tree densities and fuel loading in other areas such as riparian areas.
- Manage to promote and maintain healthy, functional, and productive soil conditions.
- Plan for increasing frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events that could negatively (or positively, in some cases) impact soils and aquatic resources, resulting in the loss of ecosystem services and damage to Ashland’s built environment including road systems, trails, infrastructure, and other downstream assets and values.
- Anticipate and proactively treat tree mortality events to reduce excessive fuel accumulations. Additionally, implementing a rapid response for the strategic and timely removal of dead and dying trees will reduce overall costs of treatment, enhance public safety, and contribute to the local timber supply (only as a by-product of ecosystem management).
- Mitigate the increasing impact of habitat loss on wildlife populations from wildfire, weather pattern changes, insects and disease outbreaks, and pressures from recreational use on National Forest lands because of climate change while considering adjacent land ownerships.
- Monitor, evaluate, and regulate recreation resource users to protect ecosystems from the additive stressors of climate change and to protect the recreation resource itself.

An important source to consult is the U.S. Forest Service General Technical Report (GTR) PNW-GTR-995, titled “Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation in Southwest Oregon” (Halofsky et al., 2022). This GTR outlines a regional approach created by a group of technical experts for all federal lands in southwest Oregon, including the Ashland Watershed. Key takeaways include adaptation strategies and vulnerability assessments for critical resources and species of concern.

Further Protecting and Enhancing the Municipal Water Supply

The upper portion of the Ashland Watershed was not a priority treatment area in the AFR Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Though the Community Alternative in the 2004 Ashland CWPP did advocate for a broader footprint into the upper Ashland Creek Watershed, it was ultimately reduced (City of Ashland, 2004).

An analysis of areas treated as of 2025 in the AFR footprint as a proportion of the drinking water drainage area, here called the “Reeder Watershed” after Reeder Reservoir, the city’s collection point for domestic water, shows that 33.8% of the Reeder Watershed was treated to reduce fire intensity during the AFR project. Though significantly reducing the intensity of a wildfire coming from the lower Ashland Watershed or adjacent watersheds, AFR treatments do not affect a large proportion of an area critical to maintaining municipal water quality, or to protecting a key community recreational resource in the Mt. Ashland Ski Area. A high intensity wildfire within the Reeder Watershed could still result in sedimentation into the reservoir itself as well as the loss of critical late successional habitat, two (2) key goals of the AFR project (U.S. Forest Service, 2009).

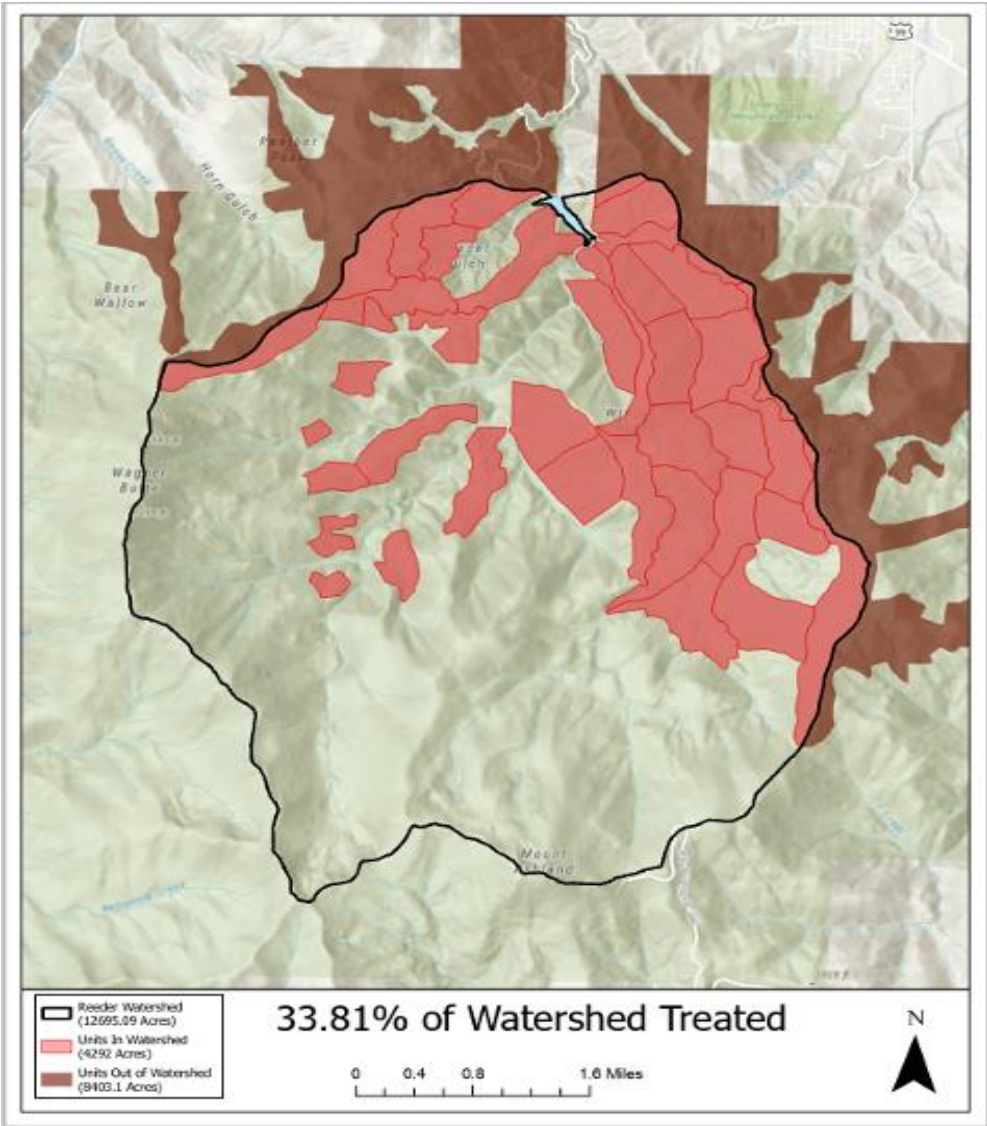


Figure 45: The AFR project footprint, showing areas within the drainage to Reeder Reservoir (Reeder Watershed) where forest thinning was completed through 2023 (light red shading). Unshaded areas in the same black outline received no treatment.

Since the Reeder Watershed drainage supplies approximately 80% of Ashland’s drinking water (Ashland.news, 2024), snowpack in the Reeder Watershed is a critical issue for the community. Snowpack has been a limiting factor recently, with “supply deficiencies” due to low snowpack in 2014, 2015, 2018, and 2020 (City of Ashland, 2023). An overlooked component of snowpack is forest cover. When snow falls onto trees and doesn’t reach the ground, it is lost to the atmosphere through evaporation or sublimation. In Arizona, researchers analyzed changes in forest cover due to forest restoration treatments that removed overly dense trees. They found in areas where canopy was reduced, more snowpack was retained, and later into the spring season, with the assumption that would equal higher rates of groundwater recharge (Sankey et al, 2015). Similar results were found by Sun et al (2022), among many other authors and research papers referenced by Sun. Key points from Sun et al include:

- Canopy density effect on peak snow accumulation and snowpack duration varies with winter climates.
- Canopy thinning is most effective in wet/warm winter climates for improving snowpack duration; this applies to the Ashland Watershed.
- Greatest decrease in snowpack duration under warming is anticipated for snowpack under dense canopy in presently warm winter climates.

The Ashland Watershed’s climate fits that of wet/warm, which points to opportunities to further evaluate ecologically appropriate strategies to increase snowpack by strategically thinning and/or burning forests where multiple objectives, such as fire management and increased water yield could be realized. Worth further investigation is restoring fire to the landscape as a critical means of maintaining or enhancing/expanding open meadow and glade habitats for multiple benefits to wildlife, plant diversity, snowpack, and fire management. For example, the “Wagner Glades” are a significant non-forested ecological feature in the upper Ashland Watershed.

Planning Frameworks: Potential Operational Delineations (PODs)

In 2019, the AFR partnership engaged with Chris Dunn, PhD of Oregon State University (OSU) and the USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station as a component of effectiveness monitoring, funded by an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grant. Dunn and his team engaged with the AFR

Partnership and later the whole community leveraged the significant progress made on the ground by AFR in creating opportunities to manage wildfire across the forest surrounding Ashland. Dunn and colleagues brought to bear a nationally recognized planning process called Potential Operational Delineations, or PODS:

The Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) process is a framework for cross-boundary, collaborative, and integrative fire planning that can support place-based implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. PODs are based on best available science about fire operations and risks to communities, ecosystems, and responders. The PODs process is holistic. It brings together local managers and stakeholders to plan for future fires using a sophisticated science framework (Thompson et al., 2022).

The resulting report for the AFR Project, incorporating community input through workshops, outlines the opportunities created through fuels reduction and forest restoration, potential fire control locations, and combines values such as water source protection and community fire protection into a framework for future landscape fire management, including using prescribed fire in the most advantageous locations. The PODs framework could be further leveraged to build on climate resiliency indicators as well.

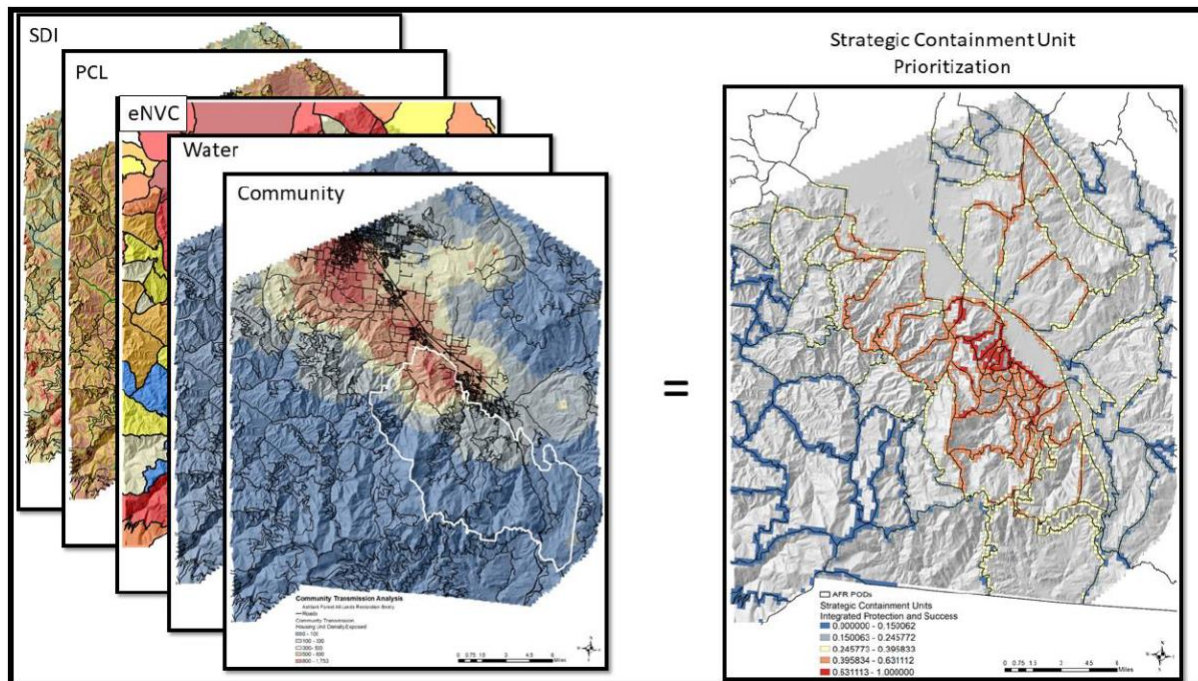


Figure 46: Combination of Data Layers and Containment Units to Create a Strategic Landscape Prioritization (Dunn and Bailey, 2020)

Planning Frameworks: Climate-Smart Conservation

A long-term plan to help the landscape adapt to changing future conditions is a critical need. By convening a multi-disciplinary technical team representing key interests and stakeholders, it is possible to set the stage for another successful partnership project that stands to garner the support, funding, and acclaim the AFR Project has achieved in 15 years of work. There are various frameworks for planning ahead for watershed resiliency and adaptation. One useful framework that could serve as a model is called Climate-Smart Conservation (Stein et al, 2014).



Figure 47: Climate-Smart Conservation Cycle

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Landscape Resiliency Challenge Statements

Challenge LR-1: Recent tree die-off in the lower Ashland Watershed is increasing fire danger to the community, watershed and trails.

Challenge LR-2: Critical infrastructure and economic assets at the Mt. Ashland Ski Area are at significant risk of wildfire.

Challenge LR-3: *The changing climate threatens the ecological integrity of the Ashland Watershed and there is currently no plan to address this risk on federal lands as there is on city lands.*

Figure 48: Landscape Resiliency Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Tree mortality (primarily Douglas-fir) at lower elevations in the Ashland Watershed has been mapped at Moderate (11-29%) by USFS Aerial Detection Surveys. City mapping has identified areas of much higher mortality rates.
- No structural hardening, defensible space, or fuels management projects have been completed to date at the Mt. Ashland Ski Area, leaving the area at high risk of wildfire.
- The vast majority (~85%-90%) of the Ashland Watershed is federal land managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The City of Ashland manages only ~1,100 acres of the ~16,000 acres (25 square miles) of the watershed.
- Previous goals of restoring historic forest conditions are now insufficient to sustain rapidly changing ecological conditions in the watershed. No comprehensive plan for climate change adaptation exists for federal lands in the Ashland Watershed.

Desired Conditions

- Develop and implement a rapid, collaborative response with the U.S. Forest Service to address increased wildfire risk caused by widespread lower elevation tree mortality adjacent to Ashland and the municipal watershed, ensuring long-term protection of community, forest, and water resources.

- Wildfire hazards and risks to high-value resources and assets at the Mt. Ashland Ski Area have been fully mitigated by 2036.
- A “climate-smart” comprehensive plan for the entire Ashland Watershed is in place and being implemented to respond to uncertain future conditions.

Tracking Metrics

- Can include number of acres of Douglas-fir mortality addressed on USFS land and tracked by tons of fuel removed.
- Number of structures at Mt. Ashland Ski Area with adequate defensible space and hardening measures implemented, and number of acres of fuels reduction completed within the Mt. Ashland Ski Area footprint.
- Work with USFS partners on other tracking metrics specific to planning and adaptation actions.

Monitoring Plan

- Track progress annually on identified metrics.
- Utilize existing monitoring data on city and other forestlands to inform planning and treatments as much as possible.
- Work with USFS partners to identify future monitoring needs.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Landscape Resiliency Initiatives

Challenge LR-1: Recent tree die-off in the lower Ashland Watershed is increasing fire danger to the community, watershed and trails.

LR-1.1	Work with the U.S. Forest Service to map and validate the extent and severity of tree mortality near Ashland's WUI and municipal watershed using Aerial Detection Survey data and ground verification.
LR-1.2	Identify and prioritize the most urgent areas for intervention where tree mortality is significantly increasing wildfire risk.
LR-1.3	Collaboratively develop a project plan that focuses on removing dead and dying trees, using expedited federal authorities and small-project environmental reviews to enable faster action.
LR-1.4	Leverage strong community and City Council support for proactive climate adaptation to build momentum for treatment of adjacent USFS lands.
LR-1.5	Seek funding opportunities and partnerships to implement treatments, including cost-sharing models similar to Phase One of the Ashland Forestlands Climate Change Adaptation Project.
LR-1.6	Establish a monitoring program to track tree mortality trends and wildfire risk reduction progress, and adjust treatment plans as necessary.

Challenge LR-2: Critical infrastructure and economic assets at the Mt. Ashland Ski Area are at significant risk of wildfire.

LR-2.1	Assess Vulnerabilities: Conduct a wildfire risk assessment for all Mt. Ashland Ski Area infrastructure, including lodges, lifts, communications installations, and utilities.
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LR-2.2	Prioritize Assets: Identify and prioritize critical assets for structural hardening and defensible space improvements based on site risk. .
LR-2.3	Develop Protection Plan: Create a wildfire mitigation plan focused on structural hardening, defensible space, and fuel management around ski area and communications infrastructure in conjunction with USFS and MAA partners.
LR-2.4	Engage the USFS: Collaborate with the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Mt Ashland Association to expedite small-scale fuel reduction and protection projects under applicable federal guidelines.
LR-2.5	Secure Funding: Identify and pursue federal, state, and private grant opportunities to fund wildfire resilience improvements at Mt. Ashland.
LR-2.6	Implement Fuel Reduction: Initiate fuel reduction treatments, including thinning, pruning, and surface fuel removal, around key infrastructure and along primary access routes as appropriate.
LR-2.7	Harden Structures: Retrofit key buildings and infrastructure with fire-resistant materials and features to minimize ignition risk. Ensure any new construction meets best practices for wildfire protection.
LR-2.8	Establish Maintenance Protocols: Develop ongoing maintenance schedules for defensible space, structural inspections, and fuel reduction to ensure long-term resilience.
LR-2.9	Community Engagement: Collaborate with local recreation, conservation, and economic groups to build public support and advocacy for wildfire protection efforts at Mt. Ashland.

Challenge LR-3: The changing climate threatens the ecological integrity of the Ashland Watershed and there is currently no plan to address this risk on federal lands as there is on city lands.

LR-3.1	Facilitate creation of a “climate-smart” plan for the entire Ashland Watershed.
LR-3.2	Partner with the USFS to implement projects within Ashland’s scope of authority.

Table 19: Landscape Resiliency Initiatives

Section 13

Response and Prevention

Section 13: Response and Prevention

Introduction

While Native Americans historically used fire to manage the local landscape, fire suppression has been a standard practice in Ashland since the mid-1800s. Today, proactive wildfire response and prevention efforts are vital because Ashland is a densely developed city with a population of over 3,200 people per square mile.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the interagency wildfire response system. The focus then shifts to wildfire prevention in the built environment, recognizing that most modern wildfires are both unwanted and human caused.

Wildfire Response and Mutual Aid

Oregon's wildfire response relies on coordinated mutual aid agreements at both county and state levels to ensure resources are available when emergencies exceed local capacity.

County and Municipal Coordination

There is a mutual/automatic aid agreement between fire departments in Jackson and Josephine counties (Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association, 2010), whereas fire departments contribute apparatus, equipment, and personnel during major emergencies such as wildfires or structure fires. This ensures rapid resource mobilization across county lines. Local mutual aid agreements are also in place whereas AF&R and nearby fire departments provide additional resources to one another when needed.

State-Level Support

The Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System (OFMAS) is a statewide program, which enhances local firefighting capacity by providing apparatus (i.e., engines), personnel, and resources through initiatives like Response Ready Oregon. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) coordinates state resources to support counties and municipalities during major wildfire incidents.

Wildfire Response in Ashland

Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies through the Rogue Valley Fire Chief's Association. These agencies follow "pre-programmed" wildfire response plans, coordinated by fire chiefs in Jackson and Josephine counties. The Oregon Department of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service also coordinate closely with local fire departments.

When local resources are overwhelmed, the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office can request additional support from other counties or states. Ashland's proximity to the California border allows access to CAL FIRE resources if available.

Ashland Fire & Rescue has added personnel dedicated to medical response, freeing up firefighter/paramedics for wildfire response. AF&R also has personnel that are attached to Incident Management Teams (IMTs), which manage long-duration fires, rotating every two (2) weeks to ensure sustained coverage.

Additionally, the Medford Air Tanker Base services air tankers and helicopters, while the Ashland Airport serves as a helicopter base for incidents in the southern Rogue Valley.

Limitations of Fire Suppression

While fire suppression is critical and effective in controlling most fires, extreme fire weather—like the conditions during the 2020 Alameda Fire—can overwhelm even the strongest firefighting efforts. Wind-driven fires, such as the recent Eaton and Palisades Fires in Los Angeles, demonstrate that no number of resources can fully contain fires under extreme conditions. Aircraft are often grounded in strong winds and rarely operate at night, further limiting suppression efforts.

While improving firefighting capacity is essential, communities like Ashland must also prioritize prevention and preparedness to reduce wildfire risk during extreme conditions.

Local Wildfire Prevention

Ashland Fire & Rescue has been actively involved in wildfire prevention for many years, both within the community and in collaboration with regional agencies. Fire prevention focuses on reducing the sources of fires, regardless of their cause.

While many people view the city’s weed abatement ordinance (City of Ashland, n.d.), which requires property owners to cut tall grass during the summer, as fire prevention, it’s actually “mitigation”. Cutting grass doesn’t prevent fires from starting; instead, it reduces the intensity of a fire if one ignites. Both “prevention” and “mitigation” are equally important—and both are components of “risk reduction”.

In Ashland, common causes of fires include cigarettes, cooking fires, campfires, machinery, and intentional acts. To reduce these risks, AF&R has implemented several fire prevention programs, including:

- Infrared drone monitoring of forested areas to detect illegal camping and potential fire starts.
- Regulations on fire and spark-emitting machinery use during fire season.
- Bans on backyard fire pits and appliances during High and Extreme fire danger periods.
- A fireworks ban to reduce ignition risks.
- Smokey Bear education campaigns in local schools.
- Fire danger rating signage throughout the city to inform residents and visitors of the current fire danger level.

These combined efforts aim to minimize the chances of wildfires starting and spreading in the Ashland area.

The Unhoused Population

In the 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) count study, approximately 10% of unsheltered residents were found to be living in wooded or open spaces, which are areas highly prone to wildfire ignitions (City of Ashland, 2025). These individuals face increased risk due to limited access to emergency alerts, remote living locations, and potential barriers to evacuation. Hearing and vision impairments, developmental disabilities, and mental health issues among the unhoused population further hinder their ability to receive emergency warnings.

Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, ranking third after New York and Vermont (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2023). The state also leads the

country in unsheltered homeless youth and families, with forty-eight (48) individuals experiencing homelessness for every 10,000 Oregon residents (HUD, 2023).

Fire starts are not uncommon among the unhoused community, which end up threatening other members of the unhoused community, along with nearby structures and properties.

Unhoused individuals in Ashland face significant risks related to wildfire. Some of their activities pose a risk for ignitions, and transient unhoused individuals may be unaware of local fire dangers, camping restrictions, and wildfire safety, and are therefore more likely to unintentionally contribute to fire starts.

They are also affected by wildfire as a vulnerable population during these events. Tragically, the first presumed fatality in the 2020 Alameda Fire was an unidentified individual caught without warning in dense vegetation near the fire's origin, highlighting the extreme vulnerability of unhoused persons during wildfire events.

"I am worried about the unhoused sleeping in the watershed and starting fires."

–Ashland Resident

Education and Prevention Opportunity

Clackamas and Deschutes counties have instituted a successful education and wildfire prevention program for the unhoused. These programs involve fire prevention personnel, medics, and law enforcement, who visit unhoused encampments to provide safety resources. Distributed items include:

- Portable fire extinguishers
- First aid kits
- Emergency ponchos/warming blankets
- Solar phone chargers and lanterns
- Sunscreen and ChapStick
- Buckets that can be filled with water to douse fires

Ashland's unhoused and transient residents cause wildfires (unintended or not) and are particularly vulnerable to the impacts from wildfire. Proactive measures are needed to improve education, fire prevention, and emergency preparedness.

Hazards in Non-Forested, High-Risk Areas

Historically, the probability of a catastrophic wildfire in Ashland is not from within the forested areas alone, but from ignition and rapid fire spread originating in the grass-dominated lands adjacent to the city. These areas, including the Bear Creek Greenway and highway corridors stretching to Emigrant Lake, including lands that are nearly all privately owned, are highly vulnerable to human-caused ignitions leading to a fast-moving fire under dry and windy conditions like those on the day of the Almeda Fire.

The threat is most acute under extreme fire weather conditions driven by **Foehn winds** (dry, downslope wind events that come from the east), typically occurring in late summer and early fall. Historical examples, including the **2009 Siskiyou Fire** and the devastating **2020 Almeda Fire**, demonstrate the city's critical vulnerability to fires that start under these conditions and rapidly escalate into urban firestorms. The National Weather Service created a new category of weather warning, beyond a "Red Flag Warning" that historically indicated the highest level of fire conditions. The new warning is called a "Particularly Dangerous Situation".

The main risk from these types of fires is the speed at which they spread. Driven by higher-than-normal winds and low humidity that drive moisture from vegetation, the landscape becomes particularly susceptible to ignition and fire spread. In light and fast burning fuels like tall grass, fire can quickly outpace fire suppression, igniting structures that further stress firefighting resources, leading quickly to a situation where the priority is safety of life, which means focusing efforts on evacuation versus fire suppression. All of this played out during the Almeda Fire.

Knowing these conditions will surface in the future, a strategy needs to be developed to both increase the likelihood of successful fire suppression and to mitigate structures so fires don't take hold in the urban environment, leading to a conflagration. Strategies can include creating fuel breaks through mowing, grazing, and prescribed burning. It's important to note that the Almeda Fire

ignited in a mowed field, yet it spread so rapidly that fire crews were unable to contain it. Of those three (3) methods of fuels reduction, only prescribed burning removes the fuel to the point that it won't burn, and then for only a limited period until vegetation regrows and fuels accumulate. Pilot projects are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of various fuels reduction methods in grassland settings adjacent to Ashland. A strategy to create ignition resistant structures is outlined extensively in the CWPP chapters on Paradigm Shift and Implementation.

Preventing the next catastrophic wildfire in Ashland requires a deliberate focus on the non-forested, high-risk ignition zones to the east of Ashland. By proactively managing fuels, preventing ignitions, hardening structures, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing emergency response, Ashland can meaningfully reduce the risk of devastation from "particularly dangerous" conditions that led to the Siskiyou and Alameda fires, and protect the future of the community.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into "challenge statements" and assigned an identifier (**in bold**) for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Response and Prevention Challenge Statements
Challenge RP-1: Unhoused community members face heightened wildfire risks and are also at risk of accidentally starting fires.
Challenge RP-2: Ashland's highest wildfire risk currently comes from ignitions and rapid fire spread in the non-forested lands surrounding the city.

Figure 49: Response and Prevention Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Unhoused individuals have not been consistently provided with fire prevention information or tools that could help them avoid accidental fire starts. No baseline data is available on how prepared unhoused people are to evacuate and on how best to enable them to be prepared and protect themselves.
- Causes of wildfires are tracked by AF&R and Jackson County. Most ignitions in Ashland are human-caused. While arson fires are uncommon, accidental fires particularly those started by unhoused persons are relatively common.

Desired Conditions

- No wildfires are caused by the unhoused, 100% of the unhoused are signed up for emergency alerts when in Jackson County, 100% of the unhoused are using best-practices and appropriate tools to prevent accidental ignitions, and 100% of the unhoused protect themselves in some way from wildfire smoke inhalation.
- Prevent ignitions and reduce the potential for fast-moving, structure-threatening wildfires originating in non-forested, high-risk lands within and adjacent to Ashland.

Tracking Metrics

- Number of wildfires caused by the unhoused or transient populations.
- Number of unhoused able to receive emergency alerts in Ashland each year.
- Number of unhoused using appropriate tools (e.g., buckets) to meet essential needs.
- Track treated and untreated acres of ignition-prone areas that are adjacent to the City of Ashland and wildfire risk reduction partnerships and collaborative activities taken on these properties.

Monitoring Plan

- Track progress and report annually through partner agencies and organizations.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Response and Prevention Initiatives

Challenge RP-1: Unhoused community members face heightened wildfire risks and are also at risk of accidentally starting fires.

RP-1.1	Collaboratively create a plan to develop the means to engage the unhoused to be better prepared for the impacts of wildfire on their health and safety.
RP-1.2	Provide training and resources for everyone who has contact with the unhoused to help them sign up for emergency alerts.
RP-1.3	Collaborate with local partners and organizations that engage with the unhoused to design a wildfire prevention initiative based on the Clackamas and Deschutes County model that provides items to reduce ignition risk. Find funding to purchase materials and assemble items.
RP-1.4	Implement a coordinated outreach campaign to improve the safety and well-being of the unhoused and deliver wildfire prevention messages and resources to the unhoused.
RP-1.5	Collect data to document and validate efforts to engage the unhoused. Modify initiatives based on lessons learned. Consider leveraging the annual Point-in-Time Count program for data collection.

Challenge RP-2: Ashland's highest wildfire risk currently comes from ignitions and rapid fire spread in the non-forested lands surrounding the city.

RP-2.1	Conduct a fine-scale wildfire risk assessment for the Bear Creek Greenway, highways, and adjacent lands; map priority ignition zones near neighborhoods, schools, critical infrastructure, and high-fuel areas.
RP-2.2	Implement strategic fuel breaks, defensible buffers, and low-flammability native plantings along highways, the Greenway, and private lands; partner with ODOT,

	Jackson County, and private landowners to coordinate vegetation management and debris removal.
RP-2.3	Phase in defensible space enforcement in fringe zones with education, incentives, and support for critical private parcels through cost-share or grant-funded programs.
RP-2.4	Collaborate with transportation agencies to reduce roadside ignition risks; install fire-resistant barriers along high-risk corridors; enhance patrols, signage, and public alerts during Red Flag warnings and Foehn wind events.
RP-2.5	Launch a citywide outreach campaign for adjacent private landowners; establish wildfire resilience partnerships among the city, nonprofits, businesses, and land managers to coordinate efforts across property lines.
RP-2.6	Conduct scenario-based drills simulating rapid wildfire spread; pre-position suppression resources in ignition-prone zones during extreme fire weather periods.
RP-2.7	Regularly monitor ignition-prone areas, vegetation conditions, and barrier effectiveness; adapt strategies based on evolving risk patterns and event after-action reviews.

Table 20: Response and Prevention Initiatives

Section 14

Before Wildfire Strikes: Community Recovery Planning

Section 14: Before Wildfire Strikes: Community Recovery Planning

“...wildfires have massive economic and social consequences that can reverberate throughout impacted communities for years, disrupting housing, employment, and other aspects of social and economic infrastructure that support community health and wellbeing.”

(Moloney et al, 2023)

This section outlines a vision and key components for an Ashland-specific Wildfire Recovery Plan. It draws from the real-world impacts of large wildfires and the hard lessons learned by rural and urban communities that have faced catastrophic fire events. By applying these lessons, Ashland can take a proactive, inclusive, and well-informed approach to wildfire recovery planning before facing such a disaster. The information gathered for this chapter came from a multitude of sources.

Introduction

The Almeda Fire, which ignited on September 8, 2020, in Ashland, devastated the neighboring communities of Talent and Phoenix, destroying over 2,500 homes and 600 businesses (Rogue Valley Council of Governments, n.d.). The loss of housing worsened Southern Oregon’s housing crisis, causing the displacement of 8,500 people (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, 2023). Among the hardest hit were 1,500 manufactured homes across eighteen (18) communities, disproportionately affecting socially vulnerable populations (CASA of Oregon, 2022). The Superintendent of the Phoenix-Talent School District reported that about 700 children (~30% of the student population) lost their homes (Barry, 2020).

Infrastructure damage significantly slowed recovery efforts due to compromised roads, sewer, and water systems. The Bear Creek Greenway, a key multi-use path and urban park, also suffered

extensive damage, affecting recreational interests and the local ecosystem (Jefferson Public Radio, 2021).

Over four (4) years later, the local economy still struggles to recover, with widespread business losses, job instability, and disrupted services, leaving many residents grappling with long-term physical and mental health challenges.

In the aftermath of the 2020 wildfires, community-driven organizations quickly mobilized to aid recovery. A key lesson learned was that communities with pre-established networks of organizations were better equipped for disaster response. These networks enabled a faster, more coordinated, and equitable recovery, enabling longer-term support for those affected.

Wildfire recovery is a long, complex process beyond rebuilding homes. Anticipating emotional recovery needs and implementing coordinated efforts can prevent delays, revenue loss, and prolonged disillusionment, strengthening long-term resilience. Effective recovery requires strong community engagements before, during, and after a wildfire disaster. To be fair and equitable, the effort requires ongoing investments in interorganizational collaboration and strategic planning to restore essential systems and support for affected populations and businesses. Proactive measures can significantly influence a business' ability to withstand and recover from catastrophic events.

Research Findings

Since the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire in California, extensive research and case studies have underscored the importance of proactive wildfire recovery planning. Lessons from past wildfires highlight the significance of community engagement and collaboration in recovery efforts. Fostering strong interorganizational relationships before the fire are critical components of effective wildfire recovery. Proactive measures not only aid in immediate recovery but also contribute to long-term resilience against future wildfire events (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998).

Emotional Phases of the Recovery Process

It's critical to understand the deep and lasting impact of a disaster on mental health, which not only affects people's wellbeing, but can also be a factor in survivors' decisions to leave the community. Five (5) years after the Camp Fire in Paradise, CA, over 68% of people had not returned (First Street,

2025). To help understand the depth of this issue, authors Zunin and Myers (2000) describe the emotional phases of disaster recovery progressing from pre-disaster anxiety to heroic community action, followed by a honeymoon phase of optimism, then disillusionment as challenges arise, and finally long-term reconstruction as individuals and communities rebuild and adapt (DeWolfe, 2000) (Figure 50).

Understanding these phases can aid in anticipating community needs and implementing appropriate support mechanisms throughout the disaster recovery process.

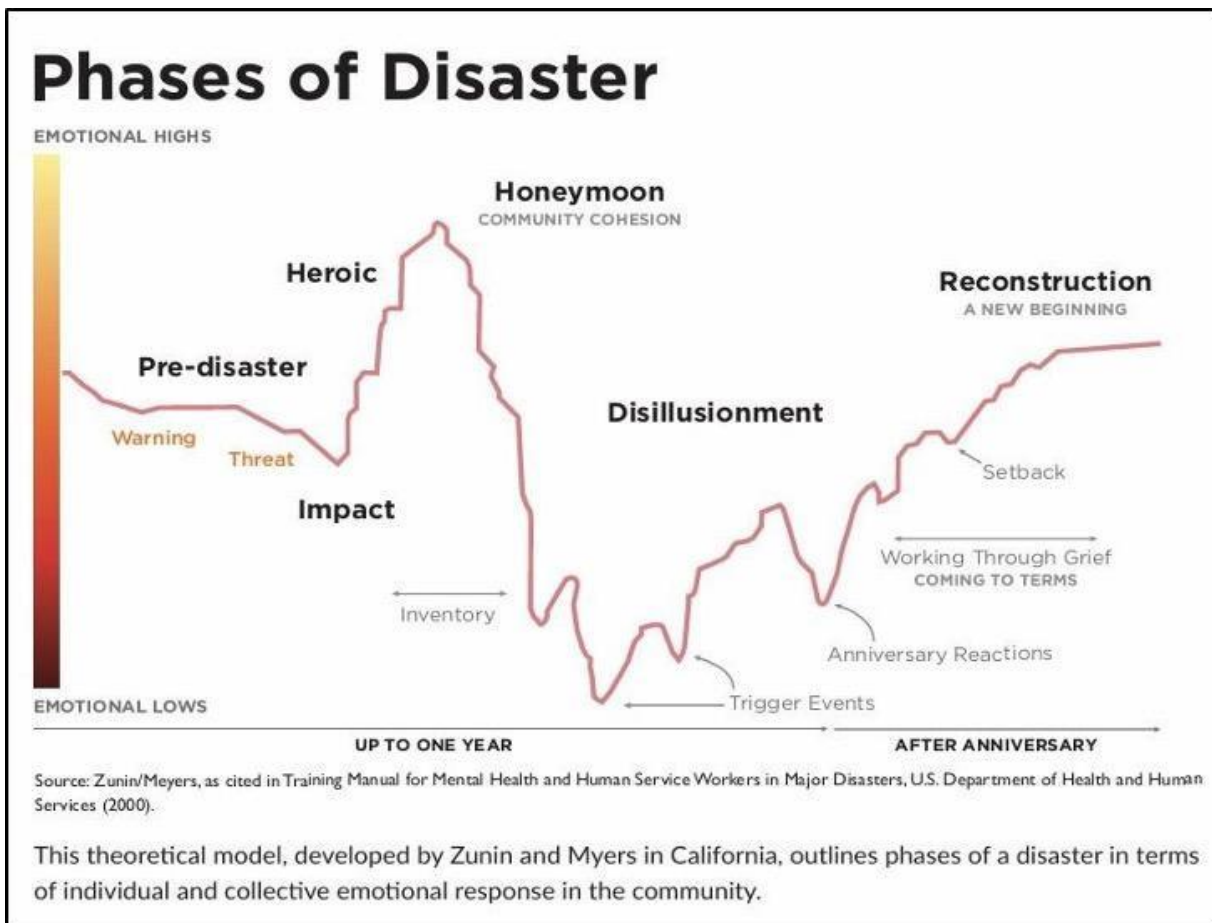


Figure 50: Phases of a Disaster Graphic, Zunin and Myers in DeWolfe (2000)

“I’m lucky, blessed, whatever you want to call it. But I know from looking at Craigslist that in the past when I was desperate for housing that it’s really, really hard to find affordable housing here.”

–Participant Jackson County Community Needs Assessment Participant, 2022

Fairness and Equity in the Recovery Process

Research shows that without deliberate attention to fairness and equity, community recovery efforts can unintentionally leave behind vulnerable groups. Key dimensions include the following aspects:

- Economic (e.g., housing and finance)
- Social (e.g., health, education, community cohesion)
- Environmental (e.g., land and infrastructure restoration)
- Policy (e.g., governance and resource distribution)

A summary of issues and some recommendations to promote equitable recovery follow:

1. Disparities Across Economic, Social, Environmental, and Policy Dimensions

- **Economic Inequities:** Lower-income households, renters, and uninsured homeowners face greater challenges in rebuilding, often experiencing slower or incomplete recovery (Hamideh et al., 2022; Urban Institute (aka Rumbach et al., 2023a).
- **Social Vulnerabilities:** Access to healthcare, education, and mental health services significantly affects recovery outcomes, particularly for elderly residents, children, and marginalized groups (Hamideh et al., 2022; Hess et al., 2023).
- **Environmental Justice:** Post-fire cleanup and mitigation efforts can disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities, particularly regarding toxic debris management (Environmental Health News [EHN], 2023).
- **Policy and Bureaucracy:** Delays in government aid and complex application processes tend to benefit wealthier, better-resourced communities while leaving smaller, rural, and marginalized populations behind (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2024; Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [C2ES], 2021).

2. Policy Recommendations to Improve Equity

- **Pre-Disaster Planning:** Integrating equity into emergency response frameworks can mitigate post-disaster disparities (Moloney et al., 2023).
- **Targeted Assistance:** Prioritizing aid distribution to the most vulnerable groups ensures more balanced recovery outcomes (FEMA, 2022; GAO, 2024).
- **Better Data Collection:** Using geographic, demographic, and socio-economic tracking of recovery progress can help policymakers adjust support where needed (Thomas et al., 2022).

3. Best Practices for More Equitable Recovery

- **Language Accessibility:** Implementing comprehensive language access services—including translation of materials and provision of interpreters—ensures that individuals with limited English proficiency can fully participate in recovery efforts and access essential services. (FEMA, 2020 and 2023).
- **Housing and Financial Assistance:** Policies such as grants for rebuilding, affordable housing programs, and flexible aid reduce disparities in who can return and rebuild (FEMA, 2022; GAO, 2024).
- **Community-Centered Planning:** Actively engaging marginalized residents in recovery meetings ensures their needs are addressed (Urban Institute – aka Rumbach et al., 2023a).
- **Streamlined Government Aid:** Reducing administrative burdens, providing upfront funding, and simplifying grant applications to help underserved communities access support (GAO, 2024).
- **Environmental Considerations:** Fair debris removal policies and transparent communication prevent additional harm to vulnerable neighborhoods (EHN, 2023).
- **Health and Education as Anchors:** Prioritizing the restoration of schools and healthcare facilities supports long-term recovery by stabilizing communities (Hamideh et al., 2022; Hess et al., 2023).

4. Measurable Indicators Can Help Track Recovery and Equity

- **Housing Reconstruction Progress:** Percentage of homes rebuilt or repaired post-disaster, with a focus on income and tenure disparities (Urban Institute, 2023b).

- **Displacement and Return Rates:** Who can return and when, particularly comparing renters vs. homeowners and lower-income vs. higher-income groups (Urban Institute 2023a (aka Rumbach et al., 2023a)).
- **Housing Affordability Post-Fire:** Tracking rent increases and home prices to determine which survivors are priced out (Urban Institute, 2023a); or percentage of a community's population paying in excess of 30% and 50% of their income on housing.
- **Insurance Coverage Adequacy:** Identifying underinsurance gaps, as lower-income households often struggle with rebuilding costs (Urban Institute, 2023b).
- **Restoration of Critical Services:** Measuring the speed of reopening schools, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure to assess community-wide recovery (Hamideh et al., 2022; Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2022).
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Tracking PTSD prevalence and access to psychological support services (Hess et al., 2023; Moloney et al., 2023).
- **Public Engagement in Recovery Planning:** Ensuring participation is representative of all affected populations (Urban Institute, 2023a, -- aka Rumbach et al., 2023a).
- **Distribution of Recovery Funds:** Monitoring how government and charitable funds are allocated to ensure equitable support (Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [C2ES], 2021; GAO, 2024).

Other Considerations

Economic Recovery

Disasters significantly impact small businesses, with nearly half (43%) failing to reopen and an additional 29% closing within two (2) years. Preparedness plays a crucial role in recovery; businesses with resumption plans resume operations more swiftly than those without disaster preparedness plans. The development of resumption plans and awareness of available financial assistance after a disaster, is vital for small business resilience (Federal Emergency Management [FEMA], 2018).

Environmental Recovery

Best practices for watershed recovery can be gleaned from work done by the Rogue River Watershed Council, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, and Jackson County in the aftermath of the Almeda Fire along the tributaries and main stem of Bear Creek.

For the Ashland Creek Watershed, should a fire impact U.S. Forest Service lands, a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team and response protocol would be initiated by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. The City of Ashland would follow the BAER recommendations on adjacent municipal lands in the lower Ashland Watershed.

National Guidance and Resources

Many resources are readily available to assist with wildfire recovery and wildfire recovery preplanning. Some of these resources are listed here.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, 2024) offers a comprehensive resource titled "Long-Term Community Recovery Planning Process: A Self-Help Guide," designed to assist local stakeholders in post-disaster recovery planning. This guide provides direction for developing strategic plans to restore and revitalize community health, social, economic, natural, and environmental systems following a disaster. It emphasizes the importance of a flexible and unified structure, promoting collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as private sector partners, to address the diverse needs of affected populations. The guide also highlights the significance of integrating resilience and sustainable recovery planning to strengthen communities against future disasters.

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net)

FAC Net offers guidance on wildfire recovery planning, emphasizing the importance of proactive, community-based strategies. Key recommendations include:

- **Pre-Fire Planning:** FAC Net underscores the necessity of developing recovery plans before wildfires occur. This involves engaging diverse community members to create inclusive

strategies that address potential post-fire challenges, thereby enhancing ecological resilience and expediting recovery efforts.

- **Collaborative Frameworks:** The network advocates for the establishment of collaborative groups, which unite local agencies, organizations, and residents. These partnerships facilitate coordinated recovery actions and ensure that all community sectors are represented in decision-making processes.
- **Utilization of Visual Tools:** FAC Net has developed a visual tool and guide to facilitate post-fire recovery planning.

Local Advice and Resources

Ashland is in the Rogue Valley, which has many dedicated organizations committed to making it easier for communities to recover from disasters. A brief description is presented here.

Jackson County Community Long-Term Recovery Group (JCC LTRG)

Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) are a nationally recognized best practice recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for post-disaster recovery. LTRGs exist across Oregon and the country, supporting local communities in rebuilding efforts after federally declared disasters. When a disaster strikes, an LTRG convenes community-based organizations, government entities, faith-based groups, developers, business owners, and others working with disaster survivors to coordinate recovery and rebuilding. Long-term recovery—the process of restoring a community—can last three to ten years depending on the disaster’s scope.

The mission of the Jackson County Community Long-Term Recovery Group (JCC LTRG) is to assist disaster survivors in Jackson County in recovering and rebuilding their lives. Established after the 2020 Almeda and South Obenchain fires, JCC LTRG aims to unite recovery resources with community needs, ensuring that even the most vulnerable survivors can achieve a new sense of normalcy. The organization used the FEMA *Long-Term Community Recovery Planning Process: A Self-Help Guide* (updated in March 2025) to analyze needs and determine short- and long-term goals for community recovery, rebuilding, and resilience. In 2023, they collaboratively facilitated “Rogue Reimagined,” a community-led planning process to create a resilient Rogue Valley and carry momentum of past recovery efforts forward into the future.

The "Rogue Reimagined: Regional Long-Term Recovery Plan," serves as a comprehensive roadmap for post-wildfire recovery in Jackson County. This plan emphasizes community collaboration, integrating input from residents, state and local partners. A central feature of the plan is the identification of twenty-one (21) recovery projects, each managed collaboratively by community organizations and local governments, with designated project leads to ensure effective implementation. These projects are designed to address various aspects of recovery, including housing, infrastructure, economic revitalization, and environmental restoration, aiming to rebuild a more resilient and connected community.

The plan also highlights the importance of learning from other disaster-affected communities, recognizing that such initiatives can significantly improve recovery outcomes for both survivors and the broader community. By outlining clear guidelines and actionable steps, "Rogue Reimagined" provides a structured approach to rebuilding and reimagining the community, ensuring that recovery efforts are both effective and equitable.

Rogue Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster (RV COAD)

The **RV COAD** is a program of the Jackson County Community Long Term Recovery Group (JCC LTRG), which coordinates with local government agencies to support an organized, collaborative response to and recovery from disasters. JCC LTRG works in partnership with nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations, as well as individual volunteers, to coordinate local recovery efforts aligned with FEMA's long-term recovery framework. The COAD focuses on addressing unmet needs and advancing equitable support for fire-impacted communities across Jackson County.

Firebrand Resiliency Collective (FRC)

The FRC, a local not-for-profit, is dedicated to fostering community-driven solutions for long-term recovery, resilience, and preparedness in the face of natural disasters. Their mission emphasizes the importance of empowering local communities to collaboratively address and mitigate the impacts of such events (Firebrand Resiliency Collective, n.d.). The FRC has a wealth of experience building a wildfire recovery process from the ground up and has developed a helpful collection of documents to advise and assist community members during the recovery process.

This grassroots organization figured out what to do to help Alameda Fire victims through engaging affected community members and experimentation and have shared what they learned with the Ashland CWPP Project Team.

Rogue Food Unites

Based in Ashland, Rogue Food Unites was literally born from the ashes of the Alameda Fire. Their mission: Rogue Food Unites (RFU) uses food to heal individuals and communities during times of crisis. RFU coordinates with locally invested food businesses to provide fresh, nutritious, and shelf-stable ingredients, assembled and delivered to our communities. While meeting the fundamental human right for food, RFU strengthens local economies, fostering collaboration, preserving jobs for residents, building resilience, and ensuring food security and sovereignty in Oregon.

RFU is looking forward to their growing role in the local emergency response and management community. They have a physical space in Ashland near Southern Oregon University with kitchen, refrigeration, office, and storage space that would be open to the community in a time of need.

RFU is working to improve resiliency at their facility. They've acquired grants from the American Red Cross and State of Oregon to improve their communications and energy independence, allowing them to continue operations independent of the normal, everyday power and communications grids. RFU is seeking funding to create backup power for their refrigeration units, ideally in partnership with the neighboring Market of Choice grocery store.

RFU has a Memorandum of Understanding with the local American Red Cross to provide food for disaster survivors. Part of a developing strategy is to increase production of freeze-dried foods from Oregon producers that will be shelf-stable for up to twenty (20) years.

RFU is looking to supply state resources across Oregon and build regional storage centers where freeze-dried food can be staged for distribution. A developing partner in Ashland is a newer business called Heather's Choice, who specializes in dehydrated foods. In addition to food stockpiles for disaster response, RFU supplies meat and produce to 600 people a day for three (3) days each week through their farmers markets and are currently the largest purchaser of produce in the Rogue Valley.

Aside from food, RFU is providing bilingual support for ongoing resource navigation and support for post-2020 wildfire recovery families in Josephine, Jackson, and Klamath Counties. RFU is a willing and eager partner in the Ashland community with the shared goal of making communities, including Ashland, better prepared for disasters. They have a trained staff and actively solicit grant funding and donations for their programs.

American Red Cross (ARC)

The ARC has been actively enhancing wildfire resilience in the Rogue Valley, particularly following the Almeda Fire. In August 2023, the American Red Cross launched the Community Adaptation Program (CAP) in Jackson County, aiming to bolster community resilience by partnering with local nonprofits. CAP focuses on providing training, equipment, materials, volunteer support, and funding to grassroots organizations addressing basic needs in disaster-prone areas. For instance, a grant was awarded to Rogue Food Unites to establish an independent power system, ensuring continued food distribution during power outages. Similarly, collaboration with Talent Maker City facilitated the construction of over 100 beds for residents displaced by wildfires and the installation of a solar charging station for community use. These initiatives exemplify the Red Cross's commitment to fostering local partnerships that enhance disaster preparedness and recovery efforts in the Rogue Valley.

By leveraging national guidance and resources, community-based strategies, and local service organizations, Ashland is well positioned to collaboratively create an equitable and effective wildfire recovery plan.

Preplanning Considerations

There are a multitude of preplanning considerations which will be introduced here.

Creating a Pre-Disaster Wildfire Recovery Plan

Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and actions by taking the following steps:

- Agree on plan goals, objectives, desired outcomes, and content.
- Assign a facilitator to bring partners, resources, and city staff together.

- Review information identified in the findings section of this chapter and other sources.
- Hire a writer to sort through available information, interview local organizations and knowledgeable individuals, and draft the plan.
- Submit the plan to the public and authorities for review and approval.
- Update the plan when needed (at least every five years).

Before a Wildfire (Preparedness & Capacity Building)

- **Build Interagency and Community Partnerships** – Strengthen coordination between local government, emergency services, nonprofits, and residents.
- **Secure Funding and Resources in Advance** – Identify and apply for grants, create emergency funds, and pre-establish aid programs.
- **Conduct Community Education and Training** – Inform residents and businesses about preparedness, insurance, and evacuation procedures.
- **Enhance Infrastructure Resilience** – Improve fire-resistant building codes, defensible spaces, and critical infrastructure protections.
- **Preplan for Re-entry** – Develop clear protocols for safe return after evacuation, including damage assessments, public communication, and support services.

During a Wildfire (Immediate Response & Resource Deployment)

- Activate Emergency Coordination Centers – Covered in Section 4.
- Assess Immediate Damage and Needs – Deploy rapid damage assessment teams to inform response and aid distribution.
- Support Evacuees and At-Risk Populations – Establish temporary shelters, medical support, and financial aid for displaced residents.
- Maintain a Contractor Contact List – Including mental health professionals, who will be critical resources during the recovery process.
- Begin Data Collection for Recovery Efforts – Document impacts for insurance claims, federal aid applications, and future planning.
- Communicate Clearly with the Public – Provide timely updates on fire progression, safety measures, and available assistance.

After a Wildfire (Long-Term Recovery & Resilience)

- **Implement Housing and Infrastructure Recovery Programs** – Fast-track rebuilding permits, offer financial assistance, and prioritize affordable housing.
- **Provide Economic Support for Affected Businesses** – Offer grants, low-interest loans, and technical support for reopening businesses.
- **Address Mental Health and Social Service’s Needs** – Ensure long-term access to trauma recovery, counseling, and community support programs.
- **Enhance Future Disaster Preparedness** – Update wildfire response and recovery plans based on lessons learned.
- **Monitor and Restore the Environment** – Rehabilitate burned landscapes, improve watershed protection, and invest in sustainable land management.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Recovery Planning Challenge Statements
Challenge RC-1: Wildfire recovery can be slow, painful, unfair, and expensive, but proactive planning can significantly ease the process.
Challenge RC-2: Ashland lacks the capacity, personnel, and funding to effectively preplan and deal with the devastation from a catastrophic wildfire.
Challenge RC -3: Wildfires can cause severe, lasting damage to streams and watersheds, triggering landslides and heavy sedimentation that can impact the city’s potable water supply.

Figure 51: Recovery Planning Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- Ashland has a plan and funding strategy to relocate the city’s Water Treatment Plant to mitigate risks from wildfires, floods, landslides, and earthquakes.
- Ashland’s Electric Department has a plan focusing on maintaining a safe and reliable electric system during emergencies.
- Jackson County updated its Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) in 2024, which will be effective until February 2029. The plan identifies critical infrastructure countywide.
- Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) launched the ReOregon program after the 2020 wildfires. This initiative provides financial assistance for rebuilding housing, repairing infrastructure, and revitalizing local economies in affected areas.
- The RV COAD acts as the Jackson and Josephine Counties’ coordinating organization with local government agencies toward an organized, collaborative response to and recovery from disaster by NGO, faith-based, community organizations and individuals. The Ashland Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates residents about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic response skills, including fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and medical operations.

Desired Conditions

- Creation of an Ashland Wildfire Recovery Preplan which clearly addresses community needs before, during and after a wildfire; identifies what needs to be done immediately after the fire (0-30 days)—including an evacuation re-entry plan short-term (1-6 months), and long-term (6+ months); engages partners and citizens; prescribes activities that are fair and equitable, providing guidance to the “whole community”, including residents, businesses, and major institutions; draws heavily on local experience, research studies, and best practices; and identifies available funds to implement the plan and track identified metrics.

Tracking Metrics

- A current wildfire recovery plan is available.
- Number of highly valued “wildfire recovery” resources and assets (see [appendices](#)) at low risk because of proactive risk reduction actions taken.
- Restoration of services – measure the time taken to restore power, water, schools, parks, and healthcare.

- School closed days, reopening provisions, and re-enrollment rates.
- Public engagement in recovery planning.
- Housing losses and reconstruction in progress.
- Displacement and return rates.
- Housing affordability post-fire.
- Insurance coverage adequacy.
- Distribution of recovery funds.

Monitoring Plan

- The plan should identify how the above metrics will be monitored and include demographic indicators to identify recovery gaps and inform policies to ensure no demographic group is left behind.
- Progress should be reported on the CWPP dashboard.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Recovery Planning Initiatives	
Challenge RC-1: Wildfire recovery can be slow, painful, unfair, and expensive, but proactive planning can significantly ease the process.	
RC-1.1	Collaboratively draft an inclusive Pre-Disaster Wildfire Recovery Plan by leveraging partners, mining information from this CWPP and local surveys, and integrating lessons learned from other communities.

Challenge RC-2: Ashland lacks the capacity, personnel, and funding to effectively preplan and deal with the devastation from a catastrophic wildfire.

RC-2.1	Survey all institutions and businesses that operate in Ashland to develop an inventory of who has adequate emergency operations and or business resumption plans.
RC-2.2	In anticipation of a major reduction in affordable housing, convene a working group to look at the existing baseline and develop and implement a proactive plan to address the potential for loss of even more affordable housing.
RC-2.3	Draft an Ashland Business Recovery Plan based on best practices adopted by other communities.
RC-2.4	Prepare businesses to support wildfire recovery focusing on displaced household needs.
RC-2.5	Discuss and develop joint plans and funding strategies with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for disaster response.

Challenge RC-3: Wildfires can cause severe, lasting damage to streams and watersheds, triggering landslides and heavy sedimentation that can impact the city's potable water supply.

RC-3.1	Preplan Burned Area Emergency Response with partners to enable rapid landslide and erosion mitigation after wildfire
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Table 21: Recovery Planning Initiatives

Section 15

Implementation Blueprint

Section 15: Implementation Blueprint

Introduction

To protect Ashland from wildfire devastation, the community must become a **fuel break—not a fuel source**. By resisting ember attacks and slowing the spread of fire, our homes, businesses, and surrounding landscapes can help interrupt wildfire advancement and improve survival outcomes.

“We must recognize that our communities were developed in a climate and environment that no longer exist. We have the tools and knowledge to reduce community wildfire risks. But we must address the profound and deeply rooted misalignment of political and social expectations regarding what it means to live with wildfire. Now is the time to invest in long-term, economically efficient solutions, rather than short-term, risk-averse tactics. We have to live with wildland fire. We don’t have to live with fire in our communities.”

(Calkin, et al., 2023)

Achieving this transformation requires a clear blueprint for action, which is outlined in this final section. Our shared vision for Ashland’s future in the Executive Summary and five (5) overarching goals reiterated in this section are entirely attainable. Yes, it will take individual and collective effort, require investment, and will result in significant changes. With so much at stake, it’s not a question of whether we can succeed, but how quickly and effectively we can act.

To guide the way, this plan identifies many challenges, describes current and desired conditions, and proposes a comprehensive suite of activities (called initiatives) designed to overcome obstacles and drive real change.

This blueprint offers a path forward. It offers opportunities to share the workload and coordinate action. The blueprint can be regularly reviewed and adapted as needed to stay focused, flexible, and accountable.

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Success will require more than just a good plan. The City of Ashland alone does not have the capacity to implement this CWPP. Meaningful progress depends on four critical ingredients:

- Strong community buy-in
- A coordinating body to facilitate collaborative implementation
- A trained workforce
- Substantial, sustained funding

This is more than a plan, it's a call to action, a roadmap to resilience, and a promise to future generations that we chose to protect and preserve Ashland.



Figure 52: Photo Courtesy of Charrisse Sydoriak

Ashland has the experience, vision, and proven ability to meet tough challenges. A powerful example is the city's long-standing commitment to wildfire risk reduction and forest stewardship. In 2013, Ashland added a small fee to all water bills to create a dedicated local funding source. Over the next decade, this modest investment—about \$1.2 million—unlocked more than \$33 million in federal, state, and private funding. It enabled the city and AFR Project partners to meet critical cost-share requirements and build strong partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, dramatically advancing forest resiliency and fuels reduction work. A similar local investment strategy today would empower Ashland to implement the bold initiatives outlined in this CWPP—and protect our community for generations to come. We co-created a new model of forest stewardship, now we need to change how communities prepare for wildfire.

Blueprint for Action

Achieving Ashland's wildfire resilience goals will take more than technical solutions—it will require broad, sustained community involvement. Each household, business, organization, and institution has an important role to play in strengthening the city's wildfire preparedness. Because this task is complex, creating a clear action plan is not simple. To help explain it, we use a familiar analogy: building a home.

The **Five Goals** listed below are the foundation of this "home." Each goal acts like a pillar, helping hold up the entire structure. Attached to each pillar are **Key Results**—high-level objectives that show what needs to happen to make the structure strong and complete. Think of them as the major features of the home that allow the whole community to exist safely under one roof.

Challenges are like the obstacles and limitations we have to work around when designing a complex house. In this CWPP, about 40 challenges have been identified, meaning our "home" must be large, adaptable, and thoughtfully designed. Each challenge has been assigned a code to facilitate tracking. The table below should facilitate moving quickly between plan sections to find challenge categories and initiatives of interest.

Navigation Guide

Section	Challenge ID	Section	Challenge ID
Community Risk	CR	Paradigm Shift	PS
Health and Safety	HS	Codes & Ordinances	CO
Residential Risk	RR	Landscape Resilience	LR
Renter’s Preparedness	RE	Response & Prevention	RP
Socially Vulnerable People	SV	Wildfire Recovery Planning	RC
Insurance Crisis	IN	Implementation	IM
Economic Stability	ES		

Table 22: Blueprint Navigation Guide

Initiatives (or action steps) are similar to detailed construction drawings; the blueprint we use to turn our vision into reality. Before building, we must assess the site, gather resources, and assemble a skilled work crew. As construction moves forward, we can expect to encounter setbacks and make discoveries that necessitate adjustments.

Every initiative is nested under a challenge statement and has an assigned number. For a complete list of initiatives, refer to the [appendices](#).

Our Goals
Inspire and mobilize the Ashland community through trust, shared leadership, and open dialogue to achieve 90% risk reduction in 10 years.
Harden Ashland’s valued resources and assets (HVRAs) to wildfire through data-informed strategic planning and risk assessments. Monitor and report progress.
Revise municipal codes to align with the 90% risk reduction goal by integrating clear compliance timelines and financial assistance for eligible populations.
Establish a reliable city funding mechanism and build core capacity to partner, secure, manage, and match essential risk reduction resources.
Secure an average of \$8 million annually for 10 years to enable sustainable plan implementation.

Figure 53: Goals

Key Results Desired for Each Goal (Framework)

The key results and action steps that follow are a call for collective action. By working together, we can protect lives, homes, the local economy, and the natural and cultural resources that define Ashland.

All actions identified should be accomplished in a manner that is equitable and clear to most members of the community. Whether it’s a renter learning evacuation protocols, a business owner

retrofitting their storefront, or a neighborhood organizing a cleanup day, each step contributes to a safer Ashland. These efforts will be tracked, evaluated, and celebrated—ensuring we maintain momentum and adjust strategies as needed to stay on course.

Goal 1: Stronger Together, Safer Forever

Inspire and mobilize the Ashland community through trust, shared leadership, and open dialogue to achieve 90% risk reduction in ten (10) years.

Key Results (Measurable Objectives)	Challenges	When	Cost
<u>Leadership</u> : City Council approves the CWPP and establishes base level funding to sustainably implement.	PS-1, 2 & 3	FY26–FY36	\$
<u>Public Engagement</u> : Based on survey data, 90% of residents and business in Ashland understand the need for action; at least 50% are taking action by 2030; and 75% by 2036.	PS-1, 2 & 3; RR-1, RE-2; SV-1 & 2	FY26–FY36	\$
<u>Communications</u> : Develop a CWPP progress tracking platform to inspire and motivate the community.	CR-1; RR-1; SV-1	FY26	\$
<u>Partners</u> : Leverage diverse partnerships to enable effective outreach and risk reduction.	RR-4; PS-1, 2 & 3	FY26 & ongoing	\$

Table 23: Key Results Goal 1

Goal 2: Strengthen What Matters, Track What Counts

Harden Ashland’s valued resources and assets (HVRAs) against wildfire through data-informed strategic planning and risk assessments. Monitor progress.

Key Results (Measurable Objectives)	Challenges	When	Cost
<u>Assess Risks</u> : Periodically reassess wildfire hazards and risks across space and time.	CR-1	FY26	\$
<u>Scoring HVRAs</u> : Evaluate wildfire potential for all HVRAs, populate the HVRA table, and document scoring methods.	CR-4; PS-1, 2 & 3; IM-1	FY26	\$
<u>Strategize</u> : Develop a risk reduction strategy based on HVRA scores, taking into account fire behavior.	CR-1 & 4, IM-1	FY26	\$
<u>Prioritize</u> : Assess the extent of high-risk non-forest wildlands that need to be treated.	CR-1 & 4; IM-1	FY26–FY27	\$
<u>Report Changes</u> : Build a system to monitor, analyze, and publicly share wildfire risk reduction progress.	All	Ongoing	\$\$

Table 24: Key Results Goal 2

Goal 3: Smart Standards, Big Results

Revise municipal codes to align with best practices to achieve the 90% risk reduction goal.

Key Results (Measurable Objectives)	Challenges	When	Cost
<u>Prevent Ignitions</u> : Use education and tools to minimize unhoused person-caused ignitions.	PR-1	Ongoing	\$
<u>County-Wildland Hazards</u> : Engage Jackson County to promote coordinated non-forested wildlands risk reduction within 10 miles of the city.	PR-2	FY26–FY36	\$\$

<u>Pass Improved Wildfire Mitigation Codes:</u> Adopt necessary and enforceable vegetation management and structural hardening codes.	PS-1; RR-5, CO-3,4	FY27	\$
<u>Inspection Capacity:</u> Build inspection capacity to enable timely and consistent application of regulations.	PS-1; RR-5; CO-3	FY26	\$\$
<u>Phasing:</u> Phase in regulations, allowing ~3 years for owners to comply, prioritizing compliance for strategically important areas.	RR-5; CO-1, 2, 3, & 4	FY26–FY29	\$\$
<u>Early Adoption:</u> Promote voluntary compliance with IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home standards and connect to insurance crisis.	CO-3 & IN-1	Ongoing	\$
<u>Revise HOA CC&Rs:</u> to align with wildfire safety best practices by 2030.	CO-4	FY26–FY30	\$
<u>Implement:</u> Establish clear administrative compliance timelines.	CR-1; IM-1	FY27–FY30	\$\$\$
<u>Support Options:</u> Develop financial assistance opportunities for eligible populations.	PS-2; RR-2 & 3; R-1; SV-1, 2, & 3	Ongoing	\$\$\$
<u>Monitor Effectiveness:</u> Adapt regulations based on feedback, compliance tracking, and evolving risk.	PS-1, 2, & 3; RR-5; CO-1, 2, 3, & 4	Ongoing	\$

Table 25: Key Results Goal 3

Goal 4: Strengthen Our Core, Fund the Mission

Establish a reliable city funding mechanism and build core capacity to partner, secure, manage, and match resources essential for advancing wildfire risk reduction.

Key Results (Measurable Objectives)	Challenges	When	Cost
<u>Appropriate Funding</u> : Adopt an appropriate wildfire risk reduction fee that would provide for existing staffing, ongoing forest stewardship, and base funding for CWPP implementation.	IM-2; LR-1, 2, & 3	FY26	\$\$\$
<u>City Inspector</u> : Fund a wildfire mitigation inspector to enforce risk reduction regulations.	CO-3	FY26	\$\$
<u>Workload Management</u> : Establish a fiscally sponsored collaborative or independent NGO to share operational responsibility with the city to exponentially improve capacity.	PS-1, 2 & 3; IM-1, 2 & 3	FY26- FY36	\$\$\$
<u>Matching \$</u> : Maximize matching dollars to meet funding cost-share requirements.	CR-4; PS-2	FY26- FY36	\$
<u>Donations</u> : Create or align with existing charitable foundations to accept donations for wildfire risk reduction projects.	PS-2	FY26- FY36	\$
<u>External Grants</u> : Continuously apply for and manage federal and state hazard mitigation grants.	IM-1, 2, & 3	FY26- FY36	\$\$

Table 26: Key Results Goal 4

Goal 5: Meaningful Work, Massive Impact

Secure an average of \$8 million annually for 10 years to enable sustainable plan implementation.

Key Results (Measurable Objectives)	Challenges	When	Cost
<u>Electrical System</u> : Implement high-priority safety upgrades for wildfire resilience by FY30.	CR-2	FY26-30	\$\$\$
<u>Water Quality/Supply</u> : Identify and address Ashland's water system vulnerabilities.	CR-3	FY26-28	\$\$
<u>Workforce Training</u> : Develop a workforce training program and implement through a collaborative partnership.	RR-5, PS-2 & 3	FY26 & Ongoing	\$
<u>Work Crews</u> : Hire, train, and deploy wildfire risk reduction work crews for hardening and vegetation fuels management.	PS-2 & 3, IM-1	FY26 & Ongoing	\$\$
<u>Evacuation</u> : Implement tailored evacuation preparedness strategies for all residents, workers, and visitors.	HS-1, 2; RE-1; SV-2	FY26 & Ongoing	\$
<u>Public Health</u> : Implement smoke mitigation strategies for residents, workers, businesses, and visitors.	HS-3, SV-1 & 2, ES-1	Ongoing	\$
<u>Residential</u> : Fund and implement residential engagement, residential structure hardening, and defensible space initiatives.	RR-1, 2, 3, 4, 5; R-1, 2, 3; SV-1, 2, 3, PS-1, 2 & 3; IM-1, 2, & 3	FY26–FY36	\$\$\$\$
<u>Renter Preparedness</u> : Implement targeted wildfire risk reduction programs for rental properties.	R-1; 2, & 3; IN-2; PS-2 & 3	FY26–FY36	\$\$
<u>SVP Home Risk Reduction</u> : Deliver wildfire risk reduction support for socially vulnerable populations.	SV-1, 2, 3; IN 1, 2, & 3; PS-2 & 3	FY26–FY36	\$\$

<u>Landscape Resilience</u> : Implement ongoing maintenance through prescribed burning while addressing tree mortality issues on federal lands in the city's WUI Zone.	LR 1, 2, & 3	FY26–FY36	\$\$
<u>Flexibility</u> : Maintain some flexible funding to address emerging wildfire risk reduction needs.	PS-2 & 3; IM-1	FY26–FY36	\$

Table 27: Key Results Goal 5

The structured approach outlined in this section provides a blueprint for sustainable implementation of the 2025 update to Ashland’s CWPP.

Challenges

Findings have been distilled into “challenge statements” and assigned an identifier **(in bold)** for tracking purposes. Baseline and desired conditions are identified to establish a foundation for action. Tracking metrics and proposed monitoring methods are listed as well.

Implementation Challenge Statements

Challenge IM-1: Capacity and funding don’t exist to accomplish meaningful mitigation to protect all of Ashland’s critical values in a short timeframe.

Challenge IM-2: Implementation requires city funding and resources as a baseline and to meet required matching dollars for external grants.

Challenge IM-3: To be able to attract and administer significant funding we need dedicated city leadership, staff, and willing and able project partners.

Figure 54: Implementation Plan Challenge Statements

Baseline Conditions

- The local, state, and federal fund sources listed in the [appendices](#) provide several opportunities to fund wildfire mitigation initiatives. However, the availability of external funding is shrinking due to changing priorities at all levels of government and most sources require at least some degree of matching support. The ability to secure and administer funding requires a dedicated commitment of administrative time and resources.
- Two (2) City of Ashland wildfire mitigation staff are funded by a water meter fee. Since that fee was set ten (10) years ago and program costs have substantially increased, generated revenue is barely sufficient to pay the salaries of the Forestry Officer and Fire-Adapted Community Coordinator positions. These positions are critical to shepherd work outlined in the CWPP and to meet match requirements for federal grants.
- Financial assistance usually requires at least a 25% contribution (money or labor) by the beneficiary (including city government, but not always), though exceptions may be made based on fund source and income status.
- The City of Ashland has experience serving as the statutory partner to manage large grants from external funding sources and distribute funds to partners.
- Implementation of this CWPP cannot be accomplished with only city staff. A new approach is needed that leans heavily on community and partner capacity to engage and commit time and resources such as ACCESS, Workforce Oregon, the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, American Red Cross, Firebrand Resiliency Collective, Ashland Climate Collective, Jackson County COAD, local contractors, and many, many more.

Desired Conditions

- Prevent catastrophic wildfire losses by reducing risk on 90% of vulnerable structures by 2036—protecting lives, homes, and what we value most.
- Harden Ashland’s high value resources and assets (HVRAs) to wildfire through data-informed strategic planning and risk assessments. Monitor progress.
- Revise municipal codes to align with the 90% risk reduction goal by integrating clear compliance timelines and financial assistance for eligible populations.
- Establish a reliable city funding mechanism and build core capacity to partner, secure, manage, and match risk reduction funding.

- Secure an average of \$8 million annually for ten (10) years to support wildfire risk assessments, implement inclusive community engagement initiatives, and fund building and infrastructure hardening and defensible space work.

Tracking Metrics

- Progress toward 90% risk reduction—annual assessment of defensible space, structure hardening accomplished.
- Revenue generated by local funding mechanisms (e.g., water meter fee adjustment, new revenue sources).
- Number of workers trained and deployed through grants or partnerships.
- Workforce training effectiveness.
- % of new code updates adopted and compliance timelines initiated.
- Evaluate enforcement and compliance with updated codes.
- Development and public launch of a CWPP Implementation Dashboard.

Monitoring Plan

- Will be developed for the tracking metrics.
- Frequency of data collection and reporting is dependent on which initiatives get funded.

Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in a comprehensive Initiatives Table in the [appendices](#). Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Implementation Initiatives

Challenge IM-1: Capacity and funding don't exist to accomplish meaningful mitigation to protect all of Ashland's critical values in a short timeframe.

IM-1.1	Complete wildfire risk assessments on high-value resources and assets.
IM-1.2	Develop a strategy for wildfire risk reduction for socially vulnerable populations.
IM-1.3	Identify revenue sources within the community that can be used to attract external funding to implement the CWPP.
IM-1.4	Reserve funding to accomplish "resolve as we go" issues/needs.
IM-1.5	Create or co-opt an existing charitable, non-profit foundation to receive donated funds and resources for wildfire risk reduction projects.
IM-1.6	Solicit and manage external funding to hire, train, certify, and contract with risk reduction work crews to do prescribed structural hardening and code compliant fuels clearing.

Challenge IM-2: Implementation requires city funding and resources as a baseline and to meet required matching dollars for external grants.

IM-2.1	Adopt a city fee structure that sustainably funds ongoing forest resiliency and newly outlined CWPP wildfire risk reduction priorities.
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Challenge IM-3: To be able to attract and administer significant funding we need dedicated city leadership, staff, and willing and able project partners.

IM-3.1	Create a stable revenue source for CWPP implementation management.
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IM-3.2	Apply for Federal and State Assistance grants that offer financial support for hazard mitigation. Continuously collaborate with private, local, state, and federal entities to solicit and administer funding.
IM-3.3	Monitor and report on plan implementation progress annually. Maintain real-time assessed property data to support transparency, citizen engagement, municipal code enforcement, and risk reduction progress on the CWPP dashboard.

Table 28: Implementation Initiatives

Closing Thoughts

Closing Thoughts

Commitment. This one word sums up the 2025 City of Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) process. The CWPP is a synthesis of countless hours of work, both volunteer and paid, paired with detailed research, expertise, data crunching, and public outreach to meet the requirements of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) for a comprehensive community-based CWPP.

Writers of the CWPP update applaud the City of Ashland CWPP Management Advisory Committee for their insight and deference to creating a CWPP that strives to account for everyone in the community. Great lengths were taken to include observational comments from the community, and both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from members comprising socially vulnerable populations, rental property owners and managers, homeowners and business owners, as well as other members of the community. To go to this length is unusual in CWPP processes, although it should be the norm, and the City of Ashland will now be seen as a pioneer in this area.

Best-practices in wildfire preparedness and mitigation were brought into this process, along with incorporating the latest technology in high-resolution LiDAR imagery and fire modeling.

The City of Ashland has a very high risk of wildfire – higher than 97% of communities in the United States (USDA Forest Service, 2024). The commitment that Ashland staff, community members, and volunteers brought to developing this CWPP must now carry into long-term policy and funding decisions. Ensuring a fire-resilient and fire-resistant Ashland requires stable, ongoing investment—built into city systems—to continue the work we've started together.

This is the time to prioritize practical, lasting solutions. As columnist Burton Hillis wisely said: “There’s a mighty big difference between good, sound reasons and reasons that sound good.”

It is our hope that current and future policy makers will see the sound reasons behind the actions and initiatives in the updated 2025 City of Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan, because real and lasting change requires a strong commitment. In 2020, the Alameda Fire provided a tragic example of what can happen when we simply sit on our hands and do nothing; now is ***the time to act and commit to making a real difference.***



Figure 55: Lithia Park, Photo Courtesy of Victoria Ditkovsky

Disclaimer

DISCLAIMER

While no community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) is perfect, and the absolute prevention of wildfires or losses resulting therefrom cannot be avoided or prevented with 100% certainty, the 2025 City of Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) aims to reduce wildfire risks to life, property, and Highly Valued Resources & Assets (HVRAs) by minimizing the risk of fire spreading between wildland areas and structures, and by minimizing ignition vulnerabilities that may arise from embers and low-intensity surface fires. This plan serves solely as a resource for future pre-fire planning and is intended to enhance community safety from surface fires and windblown embers based on current best practices for mitigating ignition risks in wildfire-prone areas. However, it must be acknowledged that even if the CWPP is strictly adhered to in all respects, wildfires and losses resulting therefrom are still possible. MC Fire, LLC and its subcontractors have relied upon a wide variety of information provided through local working groups, third-parties, and peer-reviewed wildfire prevention practices to prepare this plan and cannot verify the accuracy or reliability of all third-party sources. MC Fire, LLC expressly disclaims any and all liability for any damage, loss, or injury arising from its reliance upon inaccurate or incorrect information provided by a third-party.

MC Fire, LLC considers the City of Ashland to be at high risk for wildfires and advises that the City of Ashland strictly adhere to the CWPP's actions, initiatives, and recommendations. The City of Ashland expressly acknowledges that excluding any action, initiative, or other recommendations from the CWPP carries significant risk. If any actions, initiatives, or recommendations are taken by the City of Ashland that are contrary to those provided in the CWPP, the City of Ashland expressly assumes the risk of doing so and further expressly agrees to hold MC Fire, LLC harmless for any and all liability or losses suffered as a result. The City of Ashland expressly agrees to indemnify MC Fire, LLC from any related legal claims or liabilities that may arise from actions contrary to those recommended in the CWPP or from wildfires in general that could not be prevented even by strict adherence to the CWPP.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

Terms

Access – fire department "access" refers to the ability of fire personnel and apparatus to reach a building, facility, or area during an emergency. This includes designated routes such as fire apparatus access roads, which ensure that fire engines, ladder trucks, and other emergency vehicles can effectively deploy equipment, access fire hydrants, and perform rescue or suppression operations.

Assets – human-made features, which can either be influenced positively or negatively by fire.

Combustible – materials that require higher temperatures to ignite compared to flammable materials. They have a flash point above 100°F and are considered less volatile. Examples include treated lumber or damp vegetation.

Defensible Space – a strategically maintained buffer zone around a structure or property. This space is designed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire by reducing flammable vegetation and other fuels. It also provides firefighters with a safer area to defend the property.

Dendroecologically – refers to the study of ecological processes and relationships using tree-ring data. It combines dendrochronology (the study of tree rings) with ecology to understand how environmental factors like climate, soil, and disturbances (e.g., fires, insect outbreaks) influence tree growth and forest dynamics.

Egress – refers to the safe and efficient means of exiting an area or structure during an emergency.

Flammable – materials ignite and burn easily at relatively low temperatures. They have a flash point below 100°F, which means they can catch fire quickly, making them more hazardous. Examples include dry grasses or untreated wood.

High-Density Development – refers to areas where structures are closely spaced, often with minimal separation distances. This density increases the risk of fire spread between structures due to proximity and shared exposure to embers or radiant heat.

Home Ignition Zone – the areas around a structure which define its ignition potential, broken down into zones from 0' – 5' (Immediate Zone), 5' – 30' (Intermediate Zone), and 30' – 100' or greater (Extended Zone).

Ingress – refers to the ability or means by which emergency personnel, vehicles, or equipment can enter an area or access a location.

Lack of Agency – refers to a state where an individual, group, or organization does not possess the power, resources, or authority to take necessary actions or make decisions to address a specific need or problem.

Ladder Fuels – live or dead vegetation that allows a surface fire to climb from the ground level. vertically up into the canopies of nearby trees, thus propagating the increased spread of fire.

Leaf Off – refers to aerial imagery and tree classification during seasons when deciduous trees have lost their leaves.

Leaf On – refers to aerial imagery and tree classification during seasons when deciduous trees have their leaves.

Multi-Family Housing Units – four (4) or more housing units in the same building.

Refugia – Locations that experience less severe or less frequent disturbances than the surrounding landscape.

Resilient – refers to the ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from wildfire events.

Resistant – focuses on the specific measures taken to prevent homes and structures from igniting during a wildfire.

Resources – naturally occurring features which can be influenced positively or negatively by fire.

Structure Assessment – the assessment of a structure's ignition vulnerabilities from exposures to embers, exposures to direct flame, and exposures to radiant heat, looking at structural materials as well as vegetation management and combustible storage around structures.

Socially Vulnerable Population (SVP) – defining a group of individuals or population that is at higher socioeconomic risk from the threat of natural disasters and/or economic upset.

Urban Conflagration – refers to a large, destructive fire that spreads within an urban area, often fueled by the dense concentration of buildings, infrastructure, and sometimes vegetation. These fires can occur when a wildfire encroaches on the boundaries of an urban area or when a fire starts within a city and spreads rapidly due to strong winds, dry conditions, and flammable materials. The term emphasizes the intersection of wildfire dynamics with urban settings, which often leads to devastating impacts on human life, property, and infrastructure.

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) – the interface and intermix between wildlands and the built environment.

Acronyms

AACH	Asante Ashland Community Hospital
AARP	American Association of Retired Persons
ADS	Aerial Detection Surveys
AF&R	Ashland Fire & Rescue
AFAR	Ashland Forest All-Lands Resiliency Project
AFRP	Ashland Forest Resiliency Project
AGL	Above Ground Level
AQI	Air Quality Index
AMC	Ashland Municipal Code
ARC	American Red Cross
AUC	Area Under the Curve Analysis
AWMP	Ashland Wildfire Mitigation Project
BAER	Burned Area Emergency Response

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CAP	Community Adaptation Program
CC&R	Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
COA	City of Ashland
COAD	Community Organizations Active in Disasters
CRP	Community Response Plan
CWDG	Community Wildfire Defense Grant
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
DCBS	Department of Consumer and Business Services (State of Oregon)
DIY	Do-It-Yourself
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAC	Fire Adapted Community
FACC	Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator
FAIR	Fair Access to Insurance Requirements
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRC	Firebrand Resiliency Collective
GIS	Geographic Information System

HEPA	High-Efficiency Particulate Air
HFRA	Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2003)
HMM	Hazard Mitigation Methodology
HOA	Homeowners’ Association
HVRAs	Highly Valued Resource and Assets
IBHS	Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
JCHHS	Jackson County Health and Human Services
JEOC	Joint Emergency Operations Center
KS WILD	Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LTRG	Long-Term Recovery Group
MAA	Mount Ashland Association
MSFD	Minimum Fuel Separation Distance
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NHMP	Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
NIFC	National Interagency Fire Center
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWS	National Weather Service

OCDC	Oregon Child Development Coalition
ODEQ	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
ODHS-OREM	Oregon Dept. of Human Services – Office of Resilience & Emergency Mgmt.
ODEM	Oregon Department of Emergency Management
ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
OFMAS	Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System
OFRC	Oregon Forest Resources Council
OHA	Oregon Health Authority
OHCS	Oregon Housing and Community Services
OHRA	Options for Helping Residents of Ashland
OLLI	Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
OSF	Oregon Shakespeare Festival
OSFM	Oregon State Fire Marshal
OSU	Oregon State University
OWEB	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
PIT	Point-In-Time
RGB	Red, Green, Blue (cameras)
RVCOAD	Rogue Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster
RVFPC	Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative
Rx	Prescribed

SIZ	Structure Ignition Zone
SOESD	Southern Oregon Educational Services District
SOFEE	Southern Oregon Fire Ecology Education
SOFRC	Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative
SOU	Southern Oregon University
SOWREP	Southern Oregon Wildfire Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness
SSD	Structure Separation Distance
SVP	Socially Vulnerable Population
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
Tx	Treatment
UAS	Uncrewed (or Unmanned) Aerial System
USFS	United States Forest Service
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface
WRAP	Wildfire Risk Assessment Program

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2025 Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Appendices

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Appendix A

Community Profile

Appendix A: Community Profile

Ashland has a distinctive environment, governance framework, and relatively diverse population.

Location

Ashland is located at around 2,000 feet in elevation in the Rogue Valley in southwestern Oregon, about 15 miles north of the California border, and roughly midway between the San Francisco Bay Area and Portland on Interstate 5.

Nestled in the foothills of the Siskiyou and Cascade Mountain Ranges, Ashland boasts diverse ecosystems, including mixed conifer forests, oak woodlands, and riparian habitats. This rich biodiversity enhances the city’s natural beauty but also presents significant wildfire risks, especially where these wildlands meet the built environment.

Physical Environment

Ashland’s topography is marked by rolling hills and valleys, with elevations ranging from approximately 1,949 feet in the city center to over 7,500 feet at nearby Mount Ashland. It sits on a geologically complex interplay of sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous rocks, reflecting its position near the convergence of the Siskiyou and Cascade Ranges. This geological diversity supports a rich array of soil types and ecosystems.

Varied terrain influences local microclimates and contributes to ecological diversity. The region’s flora includes mixed coniferous and broadleaf forests. Dominant tree species include Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and Oregon white oak. The understory features shrubs such as manzanita and ceanothus, along with a variety of herbaceous plants. The diverse plant life supports a range of fauna, including black-tailed deer, black bears, Pacific fish, and numerous bird species. The City contains an array of parks and managed “natural” areas which support diverse wildlife.

Weather and Climate

Ashland has a warm summer Mediterranean climate, characterized by distinct wet and dry seasons. The climate supports diverse ecosystems and largely drives the timing, frequency, and severity of wildfires.

Winters in Ashland are cool and wet, with average daily high temperatures ranging from 40°F to 50°F. Occasional snowfalls occur, averaging less than 10 inches annually. Summers are warm, dry, and sunny, with average high temperatures reaching 85°F to 95°F in July and August. Nighttime lows average 55°F to 60°F.

The frequency of days with temperatures exceeding 100°F in Southern Oregon has been increasing. According to Extreme Weather Watch, 2024 holds the record for the most days with temperatures reaching or exceeding 100°F in Ashland's history, totaling 11 days. Projections suggest that this pattern will continue. For Ashland, climate change models predict an increase of 3–19 days over 100°F by the 2050s, and 5–40 days over 100°F by the 2080s, depending on emission scenarios (Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, 2016).

Ashland receives approximately 20 inches of precipitation annually, with the majority falling between October and April. Minimal precipitation from May through September makes Ashland susceptible to drought and wildfires during the dry season.

Winds in Ashland are generally mild, averaging around 5–10 mph; however, stronger winds can occur (NOAA, 2022). The strongest winds are typically foehn winds, which descend from mountains to the east and southeast. During the 2020 Alameda Fire, sustained foehn winds of 20 to 25 mph, with gusts up to 40 mph, persisted throughout the day, driving the fire from Ashland through Talent and Phoenix, covering approximately nine miles in a few hours. These conditions led to the destruction of over 2,800 structures and resulted in three fatalities (Nauman, 2020).

The People

Ashland is a community deeply committed to resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity. The City's vision emphasizes maintaining its distinctive quality of place, fostering environmental conservation, and encouraging artistic expression. Ashland strives to be an open, welcoming community for all, with a focus on long-term planning and a positive economic future.

Additionally, recreational interests draw many visitors to Ashland throughout the year. Lithia Park, local trails, and Mount Ashland provide year-round opportunities for outdoor recreation, from skiing in the winter, to hiking and biking in summer (Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, 2023).

Community Demographics

Understanding demographic elements is essential for tailoring public policies and community programs that address the needs of a diverse community.

Population and Density

In 2020, Ashland had a total population of 21,360, living in 10,264 households, according to the U.S. Census. *Of these, nearly half were occupied by renters.* The average household size, based on 2019–2023 data, is ~2 people per household. Approximately 10,200 people are employed in Ashland, primarily in health care and social assistance, educational services, and accommodation and food services (Data USA, 2022).

Ashland covers an area of 6.64 square miles, resulting in a population density of 3,218.8 people per square mile, based on 2020 U.S. Census data, significantly higher than the national average of 91 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

Age and Household Composition

The median age of residents is 48.2 years, reflecting an older demographic compared to the national median age of 38.8 years. Approximately 47% of individuals aged 15 and older are married, and 33% of households include children under the age of 18. Single-person households constitute nearly 34% of all households, a figure indicative of a strong presence of retirees and young professionals in the City (City of Ashland, 2021).

Ethnicity

Ashland’s population is predominantly White, with 85.7% of residents identifying as such. Other ethnic groups include individuals identifying as two or more ethnicities (9.4%), Asian (1.9%), Black or African American (0.5%), and American Indian and Alaska Native (0.7%). Hispanic or Latino residents account for approximately 8.9% of the population. Of all households, 8.3% of persons aged 5 years and over reported a language other than English at home, and 7.8% of residents were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

Social Determinants

Understanding social determinants and addressing disparities are crucial for developing targeted policies and interventions that can enhance the quality of life for the whole community.

Health

Socioeconomic status significantly impacts health outcomes in Ashland. Approximately 10% of residents in Jackson County, which includes Ashland, report not having health insurance. Individuals with higher incomes and educational attainment generally have better access to healthcare services and healthier lifestyles. Conversely, households earning below the median income often face barriers to accessing adequate healthcare, contributing to increased stress and poorer health outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.).

Housing

Housing affordability is a pressing issue in Ashland. According to the City’s Housing Capacity Analysis, 41% of households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing expenses. The median home price in Ashland is approximately \$540,000, significantly higher than the 2023 national median of \$416,100. This financial strain exacerbates housing insecurity, particularly for renters, who make up approximately 42–47% of Ashland’s population (City of Ashland, 2021).

Education

Ashland’s residents are considered highly educated, with 65% of individuals aged 25 and older holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to the national average of 38%. The presence of Southern Oregon University enhances the educational attainment of the community and provides opportunities for cultural and academic enrichment. The high school graduation rate in the Ashland School District is approximately 91%, surpassing both state and national averages (Oregon Secretary of State, 2023).

Employment

The local economy in Ashland is diverse, with significant employment in education, tourism, and healthcare. The unemployment rate in Jackson County, as of 2023, stands at 4.5%, slightly below the state average of 4.9%. Seasonal tourism, driven by events like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, also influences employment patterns, creating temporary jobs during peak seasons. However, economic downturns can disproportionately impact low-wage earners in the hospitality and retail sectors (Oregon Employment Department, 2022).

Income

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019–2023 data, the median household income in Ashland is \$71,782, slightly below the state median of \$80,426. Additionally, 14.2% of Ashland's population lives below the national federal poverty level (FPL), which does not account for regional cost-of-living variations. In 2022, the cost of living in every county in Oregon exceeded the FPL, with a single adult requiring an annual income of \$42,733 to meet basic needs (United for ALICE, 2025). According to the City of Ashland, 24.8% of households earn less than \$25,000 annually (City-Data.com, 2023).

High housing costs and a reliance on seasonal tourism exacerbate these disparities, limiting economic mobility for lower-income residents (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The local economy relies heavily on education, tourism, and retail sectors, with seasonal employment fluctuations influenced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and other cultural events (Oregon Employment Department, 2022).

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity remains a significant concern in the region. Statewide, 13% of Oregon residents experience food insecurity, and the rate in Jackson County is slightly higher at 14%. Food banks, such as the Ashland Emergency Food Bank, report serving over 1,200 individuals monthly, reflecting the persistent need for support. Demographics such as single-parent households and renters are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity (Oregon Food Bank, 2022).

City Governance

Ashland operates under a Council-Manager form of government, a structure established through a charter amendment passed by voters in May 2020. This governance model ensures a separation of policy development and administrative management, fostering accountability and efficiency (City of Ashland, 2020).

The City Council serves as the primary legislative and policymaking body, comprised of a mayor and six council members. The mayor is elected at large for a four-year term and presides over council meetings. Council members are also elected at large and serve staggered four-year terms, providing continuity in governance. The council is responsible for approving budgets, enacting ordinances, and setting policy priorities (City of Ashland, 2023).

The City Manager acts as the chief executive officer, overseeing daily operations and implementing the policies set forth by the City Council. Appointed by the council, the City Manager coordinates with department heads to ensure effective delivery of municipal services, such as public works, community development, and public safety (City Manager’s Office, 2023).

The municipal government manages a broad spectrum of responsibilities, including public safety, infrastructure maintenance, land use planning, and community services. Ashland Parks and Recreation oversees the City’s extensive park system, including Lithia Park. Public safety is provided by the Ashland Police Department and the Ashland Fire & Rescue Department (City of Ashland, 2023).

Ashland’s governance structure reflects the city government’s commitment to responsive and participatory municipal management, emphasizing collaboration between elected officials, professional staff, and the community.

In the summer of 2022, the Ashland City Council adopted Vision and Value Statements for the City, which are reflected in this CWPP Update. In March 2023, the mayor and City Council formally adopted Priorities to take the City into the 2023–25 Biennium and beyond. The top two priorities are **wildfire risk reduction** and execution of the climate energy action plan (CEAP; City of Ashland, 2017) in a manner that supports “principles of equity of access”

Appendix B

Table of Initiatives

Appendix B: Table of Initiatives

Initiatives have been proposed for each identified challenge and are listed below, as well as in each related section in the main body of the 2025 City of Ashland CWPP. Implementation responsibilities, potential partners, and estimated project costs will be addressed as detailed work plans are created and projects receive funding.

Community Risk Initiatives	
Challenge CR-1: To respond effectively, Ashland must routinely reassess wildfire hazards and risks.	
CR-1.1	Reassess the 6,625 residential properties to compare with 2018 baseline data.
CR-1.2	Establish baseline data for ~2,700 multifamily units on ~540 parcels.
CR-1.3	Establish baseline data for ~1,280 commercial, institutional, industrial, and governmental structures on ~680 parcels.
CR-1.4	Analyze wildfire risk by property type so that customized risk reduction plans can be developed to address geographic patterns of wildfire risk.
Challenge CR-2: Additional wildfire mitigation measures are needed to make Ashland's electrical system safer.	
CR-2.1	Replace expulsion fuses with current-limiting fuses in high-risk areas.
CR-2.2	Replace wood cross-arms with fire-resistant fiberglass arms.
CR-2.3	Install squirrel guards on poles to prevent animal-triggered ignitions.
CR-2.4	Deploy drone inspections for pole and line monitoring.
CR-2.5	Install cameras to monitor smoke and fire conditions.
Challenge CR-3: Action is needed to identify Ashland's water system limits and implement solutions to safeguard the City's clean water supply.	
CR-3.1	Relocate the Water Treatment Plant to a safer site.
CR-3.2	Develop water quality and supply assurance initiatives based on Oregon State University (OSU) water infrastructure vulnerability study.
Challenge CR-4: Protecting every highly valued resource and asset in Ashland is impossible given limited time and resources.	
CR-4.1	Model wildfire scenarios and identify mitigation strategies.
CR-4.2	Use LiDAR and AI to assess wildfire exposure for HRAs with a Social Index Score ≥ 12 .

CR-4.3	Perform ignition risk assessments on high social index scoring HVRAs.
CR-4.4	Identify high-priority zones for early wildfire risk action investments.
CR-4.5	Secure funding and community support for high-priority zone treatments.

Community Health and Safety Initiatives

Challenge HS-1: Emergency notifications and advisories are not accessible to everyone, are confusing to some members of the community, and the communication system has operational weaknesses.

HS-1.1	Train two new staff for emergency communication system backup.
HS-1.2	Form an interdepartmental emergency notification team, provide training, and conduct regular system evaluations.
HS-1.3	Improve public communication strategies for wildfire emergencies.
HS-1.4	Install community alert sirens.
HS-1.5	Develop backup communications plan for network failures.

Challenge HS-2: Many are concerned that safe evacuation during an event will be extremely difficult for many reasons, including not having the means to evacuate, confusion about what to do and where to go, blocked roads, and fallen utility poles.

HS-2.1	Assess wildfire exposure hazards on primary evacuation routes and possible refuges areas and mitigate.
HS-2.2	Test and refine evacuation traffic management strategies.
HS-2.3	Inspect evacuation routes and hydrants annually.
HS-2.4	Explore widening arterial routes for better evacuation flow and engage the public to resolve conflicts (e.g., bike lanes).
HS-2.5	Parking Restrictions: Consider limiting street parking on Red Flag Warning days.
HS-2.6	Install additional traffic cameras at key locations.
HS-2.7	Evaluate and improve Evacuation Zone signage across the City.
HS-2.8	Integrate Red Flag Warnings into Jackson Alerts.
HS-2.9	Improve public education on evacuation zones and routes.
HS-2.10	Partner with social service organizations to develop action plans for seniors, low-income, housing-insecure, disabled, and unhoused populations. Secure funding for planning and implementation.
HS-2.11	Coordinate evacuation information and planning with local schools.

HS-2.12	Update the 2021 Evacuation Time Estimate study by 2028.
HS-2.13	Strengthen citywide and regional evacuation readiness.
HS-2.14	Expand evacuation zones regionally.
HS-2.15	Establish a task group to improve regional emergency preparedness.
Challenge HS-3: While the City has a 4-year-old community smoke impacts response plan, it has not been adequately funded and fully implemented. Community awareness of smoke impacts on public health and proactive protective measures could be improved.	
HS-3.1	Update the Community Smoke Response Plan (CRP) annually or as warranted.
HS-3.2	Integrate the evolving CWPP recommendations into the CRP.
HS-3.3	Expand air quality monitoring at public buildings.
HS-3.4	Educate residents and integrate smoke resilience into school curricula.
HS-3.5	Enable inclusive smoke resilience engagement citywide.
HS-3.6	Support businesses in mitigating smoke impacts on employees and visitors.
HS-3.7	Optimize public indoor spaces for clean air during smoke events.
HS-3.8	Collaboratively expand capacity and infrastructure at Ashland's Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
Challenge HS-4: Local citizens and commuters are concerned about their health and safety during a wildfire event. Some fear they will be unable to receive health care or survive if they can't evacuate.	
HS-4.1	Collaboratively expand capacity and infrastructure at Ashland's Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
HS-4.2	Standardize NIMS ICS and disaster training for all employees.
HS-4.3	Develop a plan to sustain healthcare services during wildfires.
HS-4.4	Partner to establish mass care and shelter locations.
HS-4.5	Be prepared to address wildfire-related mental health impacts.
HS-4.6	Evaluate and plan for use of hospitals, schools, and assisted-living facilities as refuges.
HS-4.7	Identify outdoor refuge areas for trapped individuals and make them known.
HS-4.8	Assess risks and benefits of designated assembly points.
HS-4.9	If viable, define actions needed to establish and manage temporary shelter areas, and work with property owners to secure funding and ensure these sites are safe and suitable for use.

Residential Risk Reduction Initiatives**Challenge RR-1: Residents' perceptions of wildfire risk vary significantly by housing type, location, ownership, and experience, leading to inadequate preparations.**

RR-1.1	Expand and promote wildfire risk reduction programs, including public education, home assessments, community outreach events, school programs, grant incentives (e.g., FEMA), and Fire Adapted Ashland initiatives across digital and public platforms.
RR-1.2	Refine messaging, education, and outreach strategies based on 2024 survey results and CWPP public input.

Challenge RR-2: Physical/functional limitations prevent many residents from conducting wildfire risk reduction work.

RR-2.1	Facilitate groups, organizations, and volunteers doing defensible space work for physically or functionally challenged households.
RR-2.2	Create a sustainable program to assist physically challenged households to create and maintain fire-hardened residences and defensible space around their homes. Consider modeling the program based on the Nevada County Fire Safe Council Functional Needs Program (n.d.).
RR-2.3	Partner with the HASL Center for Independent Living to connect individuals with disabilities and seniors to disaster preparedness and mitigation resources.
RR-2.4	Encourage personal support networks for physically challenged residents.

Challenge RR-3: Financial constraints pose a significant barrier to wildfire risk reduction across all demographic groups.

RR-3.1	Complete administration and implementation of the 2020-2025 FEMA funded fuels reduction grant.
RR-3.2	Secure additional fund sources to incentivize and directly assist residential home hardening and defensible space work.
RR-3.3	Explore local revenue options to support residential risk reduction work.

Challenge RR-4: Collective residential risk reduction is essential to protect everyone, yet many neighbors do not participate, or their efforts are inadequate even when they are in a NFPA designated Firewise USA® Neighborhood.

RR-4.1	Encourage neighborhood efforts to attain code compliance and wildfire risk reduction best practices, while simultaneously minimizing neighborhood or network dependence on City of Ashland oversight and financial assistance.
RR-4.2	Provide wildfire risk reduction guidance for multi-family complexes.
RR-4.3	Develop a neighborhood risk reduction program based on the best available science and published recommendations by the IBHS.

Challenge RR-5: Licensed and unlicensed workers are either not empowered to, are unaware of, or choose not to follow fire-resistant construction and/or landscaping best practices and some residents don't want to make recommended adjustments to be wildfire safe.

RR-5.1	Identify companies and workers, who consistently meet wildfire risk reduction codes requirements and best practices standards. Promote good work.
RR-5.2	Develop, test, and monitor methods to keep workers informed of current codes, ordinances, and best practices.
RR-5.3	Update weed abatement regulations to address residents' misunderstandings and enforcement challenges.
RR-5.4	Update municipal code to comprehensively and systematically address all wildfire risk work done by all kinds of workers.
RR-5.5	Maintain and update the City's wildfire risk reduction contractor list through outreach, training, and removal of consistently poor performers.
RR-5.6	Engage landscapers, nurseries, designers, and builders to foster cooperation and promote desired wildfire risk reduction products and best practices.

Renter Preparedness Initiatives

Challenge RE-1: Most renters lack authority to implement risk reduction measures. Rental owners and property management companies (by proxy) are ultimately responsible for reducing wildfire risk, but they don't appear to have incentive or motivation to take necessary action.

RE-1.1	Identify strategies to bring older rental units up to wildfire compliance standards for wildfire resistance and defensible space and to maintain those standards.
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RE-1.2	Develop the means to cover the cost of assessing wildfire risk for all rentals in Ashland.
RE-1.3	Establish a sustainable program to assess wildfire risk on privately managed rentals, using IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home standards and random inspections.
RE-1.4	Create a sustainable system to communicate with and assess wildfire risk at property-managed rental properties every five years.
RE-1.5	Secure funding, if necessary, to mitigate wildfire hazards and risks so that rental rates do not increase solely because of wildfire risk reduction activities.
RE-1.6	Encourage property management companies to require annual wildfire training and certification for contracted landscaping providers, phased in over five years.
RE-1.7	Implement a city-approved wildfire-resistant homes certification program for property managers, with options for private rental owners and recertification every three years.

Challenge RE-2: Renters living in multi-unit housing face greater challenges. Many renters don't understand wildfire risk or are not motivated to learn.

RE-2.1	Secure resources to sustain face-to-face engagement with renters and property owners, assess wildfire risk needs, and enhance renter education with a focus on evacuation, communication, and personal risk reduction for multi-family housing.
RE-2.2	Develop and update a "risk reduction best practices" package customized by housing type; ask property managers and encourage rental owners to provide wildfire preparedness and renters insurance information in welcome packages and attached to leases.
RE-2.3	Define lease agreement requirements for tenants to create and maintain defensible space in accordance with wildfire safety codes and ordinances.

Challenge RE-3: In the aftermath of wildfire, the availability of affordable rental homes in Ashland may become severely limited, potentially forcing many residents to relocate.

RE-3.1	Collaborate with regional partners who participated in the drafting of the Rogue Reimagined project to articulate recommended actions and avenues for securing resources.
RE-3.2	Create a partnership to pre-plan affordable housing rebuilding strategies (e.g., establishing a land trust like Breath of Life and Spirit Village) and the steps to make it happen.

RE-3.3	In the Ashland Wildfire Recovery Plan, include a section on rebuilding affordable rental building stock. Identify the challenges and solutions based on experiences in other communities.
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SVP Preparedness Initiatives

Challenge SV-1: Many socially vulnerable households underestimate their wildfire risk and face multiple barriers to reducing that risk.

SV-1.1	Investigate which local organizations have a similar vision/mission relative to the needs of the SVPs and find opportunities to formally collaborate and develop MOUs as appropriate.
SV-1.2	Find a champion to oversee implementation of SVP-specific initiatives.
SV-1.3	Create a work plan to enable SVPs to address risk-reduction barriers.
SV-1.4	Conduct face-to-face, engaging interviews with 200+ SVPs every 3-5 years.

Challenge SV-2: SVPs require a variety of communication modalities to develop trusting relationships critical to fostering engagement.

SV-2.1	Create a partnership capitalizing on existing networks and social service organizations to brainstorm and test multiple communication modalities to engage SVPs where they live and in other spaces as appropriate. Establish MOUs if necessary.
SV-2.2	Invest in relationship building methods that work for specific target populations/individuals by collaboratively developing and implementing a 5-year work plan to test communication modalities.
SV-2.3	Establish an "SVP Communications Fund" to explore and test communication modalities.
SV-2.4	Deliver customized information that is readily accessible to those who have limited resources, are house-bound, or isolated.
SV-2.5	If needed, figure out how to compensate partners who participate in the partnership development process.

Challenge SV-3: A majority of socially vulnerable residents live in housing that is highly vulnerable to wildfire ignition.

SV-3.1	Map where socially vulnerable residents live and systematically evaluate wildfire risk in those areas.
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SV-3.2	Pursue grant funding to provide socially vulnerable households with equipment and materials for healthy indoor air during wildfire events.
SV-3.3	Establish a city-based revenue stream to continuously support wildfire risk reduction projects for socially vulnerable households.

Insurance Crisis Initiatives

Challenge IN-1: While most Ashland homeowners are insured, affordability and access to coverage are growing concerns, particularly for residents in high-risk areas like mobile home parks and homes near wildlands.

IN-1.1	Promote the IBHS Wildfire Prepared Homes Program to single-family homeowners.
IN-1.2	Create a taskforce to develop sustainable, accessible insurance options for all housing types.
IN-1.3	Collaborate with insurers to educate the public on wildfire coverage challenges and solutions.
IN-1.4	Work with elected officials to align insurance premiums with location-based mitigation efforts.
IN-1.5	Develop a handout to guide residents on wildfire insurance coverage, including covering evacuation costs.

Challenge IN-2: The number of uninsured renters in Ashland is significant which means that many could lose all assets and be unable to find affordable temporary housing if their rental unit burns.

IN-2.1	Create a taskforce to develop sustainable, accessible insurance options for renters.
IN-2.2	Educate renters on wildfire insurance coverage and policy language to protect assets and survival needs.
IN-2.3	Create standardized lease language encouraging or requiring tenants to get renters insurance.
IN-2.4	Distribute information to renters about temporary housing insurance costs and options during evacuations or disasters.

Challenge IN-3: Many socially vulnerable residents are uninsured, leaving them financially unprotected and at risk of displacement when wildfire occurs.

IN-3.1	Create a taskforce to collaborate with the insurance industry and develop educational materials tailored to the needs of socially vulnerable populations (SVPs).
IN-3.2	Establish pathways to help those who cannot afford insurance obtain coverage for temporary housing, lost wages, and asset protection.
IN-3.3	Distribute educational materials and engage with SVPs using accessible methods, regardless of homeownership or insurance status.
IN-3.4	Develop additional activities based on lessons learned from the Alameda Fire.

Challenge IN-4: Rising insurance costs and wildfire risks threaten business stability, housing security, and Ashland's socioeconomic viability, with rebuilding efforts expected to take years.

IN-4.1	The Chamber of Commerce will comprehensively assess and broadly strengthen business insurance coverage.
IN-4.2	Collaborate with the insurance industry to develop strategies for sustained and affordable business coverage.
IN-4.3	Explore creating business insurance pools for wildfire resilience & recovery.

Economic Stability Initiatives

Challenge ES-1: Wildfire smoke is a recurring issue that continues to adversely impact the Ashland economy.

ES-1.1	Measure and quantify smoke impacts on businesses and visitors.
ES-1.2	Survey businesses about their smoke resilience efforts.
ES-1.3	Enable employees and visitors to be informed and remain healthy when air quality is poor.
ES-1.4	Update the SmokeWise Ashland website.
ES-1.5	Update the Business Preparedness Workbook with smoke strategies.
ES-1.6	Promote smoke-adapted facility upgrades for businesses.

Challenge ES-2: A significant wildfire would devastate Ashland's economy, with long-lasting impacts that could cripple its economic stability for decades.

ES-2.1	Map critical business assets and major employment centers to identify areas with the highest concentrations of people.
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ES-2.2	Assess the readiness of business facilities, staff, and customers for wildfire emergencies.
ES-2.3	Evaluate awareness and implementation of evacuation protocols, especially in visitor related businesses (lodging, dining, attractions)
ES-2.4	Create industry-specific wildfire protocols and evacuation plans, including zone awareness for staff and customers.
ES-2.5	Enhance business communication strategies for wildfire emergencies.
ES-2.6	Update and expand the Chamber of Commerce preparedness toolkits and videos.
ES-2.7	Host bi-annual wildfire preparedness workshops for businesses.
ES-2.8	Integrate wildfire resources into new Chamber of Commerce member packets.
ES-2.9	Provide outreach for employers, employees, and patrons with access needs.
ES-2.10	Collaborate with community partners to enhance existing programs and develop new initiatives.
ES-2.11	Create a visitor-focused wildfire emergency plan for downtown.
ES-2.12	Support resilience hubs to inform visitors and citizens.
ES-2.13	Partner with recreation organizations to inform visitors during wildfires.
Challenge ES-3: Most businesses are not doing enough to protect their structures from exposure to wildfire.	
ES-3.1	Work with the Ashland Chamber to help businesses understand structural vulnerabilities.
ES-3.2	Collect baseline structural vulnerability data for Ashland businesses.
ES-3.3	Support business structure hardening and defensible space initiatives.
ES-3.4	Track progress on structural risk reduction and publicly highlight accomplishments.

Paradigm Shift Initiatives	
Challenge PS-1: Protecting the City from wildfire requires a fundamental shift in how community leaders and citizens collectively perceive and respond to the risk.	
PS-1.1	Maintain wildfire risk reduction as the City's top priority for the next 5-10 years.
PS-1.2	Implement policy and budget adjustments to support wildfire risk reduction for all property types in Ashland.
PS-1.3	Host a potential partners forum in 2025 to investigate which local organizations have a similar vision/mission and determine whether it is in all parties' best interest to formally collaborate.
PS-1.4	Create an organizational structure to fulfill initiatives based on existing and needed capacity.
PS-1.5	If a suitable entity does not exist, establish one or more formal organizations (either a fiscally sponsored NGO, or through an MOU) or a "Fire Safe Council" (multisector group with multiple partners-see 2020 California Fire Safe Council Handbook).
PS-1.6	Establish an advisory board(s) to ensure that community input is regularly considered in prioritizing and implementation.
PS-1.7	Create and annually review and update focused CWPP work plans.
Challenge PS-2: Existing wildfire mitigation efforts suffer from inconsistent and inadequate funding, making it difficult to support everyone.	
PS-2.1	Develop customized community outreach plans by housing type.
PS-2.2	Hire NGOs to educate residents by housing type and demographic.
PS-2.3	Measure education and outreach program effectiveness and adjust strategies.
PS-2.4	Support experimental and interactive decision-making tools on the web including the Plant List Generator (link) and the certified "Service Provider's Directory" which enables the clients to review services received.
PS-2.5	Discourage sales of flammable landscaping plants and mulches in regional nurseries and landscaping centers.
PS-2.6	Collaboratively prioritize investments based on community wildfire risk assessments.
PS-2.7	Monitor and adjust CWPP progress annually.
PS-2.8	Systematically and aggressively engage collective action networks (e.g., Ashland Climate Collaboratives) to accelerate wildfire risk reduction.

PS-2.9	Champion networks such as Ashland Climate Collaboratives to collectively reduce wildfire risk within a defined space. These networks may be informal groups, formal associations, public service organizations, partnerships, trusts, civic clubs, business coalitions, Firewise USA® neighborhoods, or similar.
PS-2.10	Facilitate measuring and reporting of progress by all groups.
PS-2.11	Develop wildfire-resistant home-hardening training for retrofitting older buildings.
PS-2.12	Require home-hardening contractors to be certified in fire-resistant construction techniques.
PS-2.13	Institute a fire-resistant landscaping best practices training and worker certification program that results in a CEU's, a certificate, and listing on the City's website.
PS-2.14	Maintain an interactive, publicly accessible trained contractors' database that enables clients to compare and rate the contractors.
PS-2.15	Hire, train, and deploy crews for home hardening and defensible space work.
PS-2.16	Promote standardized fire-resistant landscaping in maintenance contracts.
PS-2.17	Identify incentives to encourage property owners and tenants to hire qualified contractors and maintain properties to wildfire risk standards.
PS-2.18	Track, advertise, and celebrate businesses and property owners who have demonstrated achievement of wildfire safety goals.
PS-2.19	Implement tailored education and outreach solutions by housing type and occupancy status.
PS-2.20	Build and implement a sustainable funding model that drives wildfire mitigation, prioritizes vulnerable populations and high-risk areas, and taps into public-private partnerships, insurance incentives, and federal/state grants.
PS-2.21	Start or utilize an existing foundation to get streamline access to tools and equipment and/or pay skilled workers to do wildfire risk reduction work for those who can afford to pay and those who can't.
Challenge PS-3: Voluntary compliance has proven insufficient, leaving the community dangerously exposed to wildfire. Alternative strategies are needed to accelerate risk reduction efforts.	
PS-3.1	Expand the Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP) to be able to continuously perform around 1000 strategically targeted personalized site assessments per

	year tailored to the housing type and demographic differences in the population. Assess wildfire risk based on capacity and funding using standardized protocols for ~300 apartment buildings and ~300 mobile homes in year one of funding. Assess multiplexes of all types in year two of funding. Assess single-family rental homes in year three.
PS-3.2	Develop business, major institution, and critical infrastructure, risk assessment/reduction programs. Use professional assessors if warranted for liability reasons.
PS-3.3	Draft wildfire risk reduction regulations for pre-existing structures, making it mandatory to take certain measures within three years of notice from the City. Extensions may be granted in certain cases. Implementation will be phased by priorities established by the oversight committee working with Ashland Fire & Rescue.
PS-3.4	Develop a strategy and secure resources to enable functionally and financially challenged property owners to meet regulations within an established timeline.

Code and Ordinance Initiatives

Challenge CO-1: Ashland Land Use Planning ordinances need updates to the best available science-based requirements for new developments.

CO-1.1	Create an internal interdisciplinary Wildfire Mitigation Team (WMT) to facilitate seamless and efficient implementation of the CWPP across city departments.
CO-1.2	Bolster wildfire resilience requirements for city development through consistent planning and zoning.
CO-1.3	Revise wildfire resilience codes for existing properties to maximize wildfire resilience.

Challenge CO-2: Ashland Municipal Code lacks robust and current science-based requirements for new and existing structures.

CO-2.1	Adopt improved science-based wildfire code amendments. (May warrant hiring a consultant).
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Challenge CO-3: City of Ashland staff are at or beyond capacity and don't have the time available to ensure compliance.

CO-3.1	Research best practices from other self-sustaining city wildfire code and ordinance programs.
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CO-3.2	Hire a full-time wildfire risk inspector to ensure consistent and timely code compliance.
Challenge CO-4: Many HOA CC&Rs in Ashland lack wildfire risk mitigation requirements, and some directly conflict with best practices and municipal codes.	
CO-4.1	Promote meetings and trainings for HOA Board Members, Architectural Review Committees, and Design Review Committees to promote wildfire prevention best practices and update CC&Rs accordingly.
CO-4.2	Encourage wildfire risk reduction champions and other knowledgeable community members to share expertise and inspire action.
CO-4.3	Help HOAs make appropriate wildfire prepared structure and landscaping choices for inclusion in CC&Rs.

Landscape Resiliency Initiatives

Challenge LR-1: Recent tree die-off in the lower Ashland Watershed is increasing fire danger to the community, watershed and trails.

LR-1.1	Work with the U.S. Forest Service to map and validate the extent and severity of tree mortality near Ashland's WUI and municipal watershed using Aerial Detection Survey data and ground verification.
LR-1.2	Identify and prioritize the most urgent areas for intervention where tree mortality is significantly increasing wildfire risk.
LR-1.3	Collaboratively develop a project plan that focuses on removing dead and dying trees, using expedited federal authorities and small-project environmental reviews to enable faster action.
LR-1.4	Leverage strong community and City Council support for proactive climate adaptation to build momentum for treatment of adjacent USFS lands. Utilize successful treatment prescriptions as appropriate.
LR-1.5	Seek funding opportunities and partnerships to implement treatments, including cost-sharing models similar to Phase One of the Ashland Forestlands Climate Change Adaptation Project.
LR-1.6	Establish a monitoring program to track tree mortality trends and wildfire risk reduction progress, and adjust treatment plans as necessary.

Challenge LR-2: Critical infrastructure and economic assets at the Mt. Ashland Ski Area are at significant risk of wildfire.

LR-2.1	Assess Vulnerabilities: Conduct a wildfire risk assessment for all Mt. Ashland Ski Area infrastructure, including lodges, lifts, communications installations, and utilities.
LR-2.2	Prioritize Assets: Identify and prioritize critical assets for structural hardening and defensible space improvements based on site risk. .
LR-2.3	Develop Protection Plan: Create a wildfire mitigation plan focused on structural hardening, defensible space, and fuel management around ski area and communications infrastructure in conjunction with USFS and MAA partners.
LR-2.4	Engage the USFS: Collaborate with the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Mt Ashland Association to expedite small-scale fuel reduction and protection projects under applicable federal guidelines.
LR-2.5	Secure Funding: Identify and pursue federal, state, and private grant opportunities to fund wildfire resilience improvements at Mt. Ashland.
LR-2.6	Implement Fuel Reduction: Initiate fuel reduction treatments, including thinning, pruning, and surface fuel removal, around key infrastructure and along primary access routes as appropriate.
LR-2.7	Harden Structures: Retrofit key buildings and infrastructure with wildfire-resistant materials and features to minimize ignition risk. Ensure any new construction meets best practices for wildfire protection.
LR-2.8	Establish Maintenance Protocols: Develop ongoing maintenance schedules for defensible space, structural inspections, and fuel reduction to ensure long-term resilience.
LR-2.9	Community Engagement: Collaborate with local recreation, conservation, and economic groups to build public support and advocacy for wildfire protection efforts at Mt. Ashland.

Challenge LR-3: The changing climate threatens the ecological integrity of the Ashland Watershed and there is currently no plan to address this risk on federal lands as there is on city lands.

LR-3.1	Facilitate creation of a “climate-smart” plan for the entire Ashland Watershed.
LR-3.2	Partner with the USFS to implement projects within Ashland’s scope of authority.

Response and Prevention Initiatives**Challenge RP-1: Unhoused community members face heightened wildfire risks and are also at risk of accidentally starting fires.**

RP-1.1	Collaboratively create a plan to develop the means to engage the unhoused to be better prepared for the impacts of wildfire on their health and safety.
RP-1.2	Provide training and resources for everyone who has contact with the unhoused to help them sign up for emergency alerts.
RP-1.3	Collaborate with local partners and organizations that engage with the unhoused to design a wildfire prevention initiative based on the Clackamas and Deschutes County model that provides items to reduce ignition risk. Find funding to purchase materials and assemble items.
RP-1.4	Implement a coordinated outreach campaign to improve the safety and well-being of the unhoused and deliver wildfire prevention messages and resources to the unhoused.
RP-1.5	Collect data to document and validate efforts to engage the unhoused. Modify initiatives based on lessons learned. Consider leveraging the annual Point-in-Time Count program for data collection.

Challenge RP-2: Ashland's highest wildfire risk currently comes from ignitions and rapid fire spread in the non-forested lands surrounding the City.

RP-2.1	Conduct a fine-scale wildfire risk assessment for the Bear Creek Greenway, highways, and adjacent lands; map priority ignition zones near neighborhoods, schools, critical infrastructure, and high-fuel areas.
RP-2.2	Implement strategic fuel breaks, defensible buffers, and low-flammability native plantings along highways, the Greenway, and private lands; partner with ODOT, Jackson County, and private landowners to coordinate vegetation management and debris removal.
RP-2.3	Phase in defensible space enforcement in fringe zones with education, incentives, and support for critical private parcels through cost-share or grant-funded programs.
RP-2.4	Collaborate with transportation agencies to reduce roadside ignition risks; install fire-resistant barriers along high-risk corridors; enhance patrols, signage, and public alerts during Red Flag warnings and Foehn wind events.

RP-2.5	Launch a citywide outreach campaign for adjacent private landowners; establish wildfire resilience partnerships among the City, nonprofits, businesses, and land managers to coordinate efforts across property lines.
RP-2.6	Conduct scenario-based drills simulating rapid wildfire spread; pre-position suppression resources in ignition-prone zones during extreme fire weather periods.
RP-2.7	Regularly monitor ignition-prone areas, vegetation conditions, and barrier effectiveness; adapt strategies based on evolving risk patterns and event after-action reviews.

Recovery Planning Initiatives

Challenge RC-1: Wildfire recovery can be slow, painful, unfair, and expensive, but proactive planning can significantly ease the process.

RC-1.1	Collaboratively draft an inclusive Pre-Disaster Wildfire Recovery Plan by leveraging partners, mining information from this CWPP and local surveys, and integrating lessons learned from other communities.
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Challenge RC-2: Ashland lacks the capacity, personnel, and funding to effectively preplan and deal with the devastation from a catastrophic wildfire.

RC-2.1	Survey all institutions and businesses that operate in Ashland to develop an inventory of who has adequate emergency operations and or business resumption plans.
RC-2.2	In anticipation of a major reduction in affordable housing convene a working group to look at the existing baseline and develop and implement a proactive plan to address the potential for loss of even more affordable housing.
RC-2.3	Draft an Ashland Business Recovery Plan based on best practices adopted by other communities.
RC-2.4	Prepare businesses to support wildfire recovery focusing on displaced household needs.
RC-2.5	Discuss and develop joint plans and funding strategies with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for disaster response.

Challenge RC-3: Wildfires can cause severe, lasting damage to streams and watersheds, triggering landslides and heavy sedimentation that can impact the city's potable water supply.

RC-3.1	Preplan Burned Area Emergency Response with partners to enable rapid landslide and erosion mitigation after wildfire
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Implementation Initiatives

Challenge IM-1: Capacity and funding don't exist to accomplish meaningful mitigation to protect all of Ashland's critical values in a short timeframe.

IM-1.1	Complete wildfire risk assessments on high-value resources and assets.
IM-1.2	Develop a strategy for wildfire risk reduction for socially vulnerable populations.
IM-1.3	Identify revenue sources within the community that can be used to attract external funding to implement the CWPP.
IM-1.4	Reserve funding to accomplish "resolve as we go" issues/needs.
IM-1.5	Create or co-opt an existing charitable, non-profit Foundation to receive donated funds and resources for wildfire risk reduction projects.
IM-1.6	Solicit and manage external funding to hire, train, certify, and contract with risk reduction work crews to do prescribed structural hardening and code compliant fuels clearing.

Challenge IM-2: Implementation requires city funding and resources as a baseline and to meet required matching dollars for external grants.

IM-2.1	Adopt a city fee structure that sustainably funds ongoing forest resiliency and newly outlined CWPP wildfire risk reduction priorities.
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Challenge IM-3: To be able to attract and administer significant funding we need dedicated city leadership, staff, and willing and able project partners.

IM-3.1	Create a stable revenue source for CWPP implementation management.
IM-3.2	Apply for Federal and State Assistance grants that offer financial support for hazard mitigation. Continuously collaborate with private, local, State, and Federal entities to solicit and administer funding.
IM-3.3	Monitor and report on plan implementation progress annually. Maintain real-time assessed property data to support transparency, citizen engagement, municipal code enforcement, and risk reduction progress on the CWPP dashboard.

Appendix C

Funding Mechanisms

Appendix C: Funding Mechanisms

Wildfire risk is growing across many regions in the United States and globally. In response, numerous municipalities, counties, and fire districts have developed innovative local funding mechanisms to support wildfire risk reduction at the community level. These approaches are essential for financing home-hardening, fuel reduction projects, public education, and other mitigation measures that can prevent catastrophic wildfires and save lives and livelihoods. This Appendix outlines strategies some communities have implemented, describes how these mechanisms work, and highlights successful examples.

Community	Parcel Tax Amount	Annual Revenue	Purpose
Oakland, CA (Measure MM)	~\$99 per parcel annually	~\$2.67 million	Vegetation management, home hardening, evacuation route maintenance
Truckee, CA (Measure T)	\$179 per parcel annually	~\$3.7 million	Fuel reduction, defensible space inspections, public education, evacuation planning
Northstar, CA (Measure U)	Up to \$219 per parcel annually	~\$2 million	Vegetation management, fire break maintenance, evacuation planning
Marin County, CA (Measure C)	\$0.10 per sq ft (capped at \$75 per unit)	~\$19.3 million	Vegetation management, home hardening, public education, defensible space evaluations
Community	Sales Tax Rate	Annual Revenue	Purpose
Orinda, CA (Measure R)	1% increase (from 0.5% to 1%)	~\$2.4 million	Wildfire prevention, infrastructure maintenance, emergency preparedness
Boulder County, CO (Issue 1A)	0.1% sales tax (one penny per \$10)	~\$10–11 million	Strategic fuel reduction, defensible space, forest health, public outreach
Community	RETT Rate	Annual Revenue	Purpose
Vail, CO	1% of property sale price	~\$7.5 million	Fuel reduction, defensible space, evacuation route clearance
Community	Funding Type	Annual Impact	Purpose
Flagstaff, AZ (Forest Health Bond)	\$10 million bond	One-time funding	Forest thinning, watershed protection, community firebreaks
Colorado Springs, CO (Issue 2D)	\$20 million permanent fund	~\$1 million (5% drawdown)	Fuel reduction, evacuation planning, public education
Community	Funding Type	Annual Revenue	Purpose

Ventura County, CA (FHRP)	Cost recovery via property liens	Varies based on enforcement	Vegetation management, brush clearance enforcement
San Diego County, CA	Cost recovery via property liens	Varies based on enforcement	Hazard abatement enforcement on private property
Community	Utility	Annual Revenue	Purpose
Ashland, OR	Water \$3/mo/ meter	\$120,000	Protect Ashland water supply from extreme wildfire and promote forest resiliency
Portland, OR	Electric ~\$1.66/mo/ 780 kWhr	Unable to determine	Recover costs associated with the development and implementation of PGE's Wildfire Mitigation Plan
California (PG&E customers)	Electric mo/fee	Unable to determine	The state established a \$21 billion Wildfire Fund in 2019 to expedite compensation for victims of utility-caused wildfires

Table 1: Funding Mechanisms

Summary Table – Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding (Oregon FY 2025–26)				
Program (Funding Source)	Administered by	Eligible Applicants	Match Requirement	FY 2025–26 Funding Availability*
ODF Landscape Resiliency Grants (state)	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	Collaborative projects (public/private partners) in high-risk landscapes	Suggested match leverage (not required)	\$20M provided 2021–23; future funding pending (expected new round if appropriated)
ODF Small Forestland Grants (state)	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	Small forest landowners (≤160 acres westside) – groups or individuals	No mandatory match (25% in-kind encouraged)	\$2.5M for 2023–25 biennium; similar level anticipated for 2025–27 (grants \$10k–\$300k each)
OSFM Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grants (state)	Oregon State Fire Marshal	Local governments, fire districts, tribes, non-profits	No required match (state covers up to 100%)	\$18M awarded in 2023 plus \$3M in 2024 for defensible space projects. Continued annual funding expected (~\$10M/yr recommend)
OSFM Defensible Space Incentive (state)	Oregon State Fire Marshal	Homeowners in designated high-risk communities	No match (direct \$250 payment per home)	Ongoing in FY25 – limited pool (funding “while supplies last”); thousands of grants

Summary Table – Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding (Oregon FY 2025–26)				
Program (Funding Source)	Administered by	Eligible Applicants	Match Requirement	FY 2025–26 Funding Availability*
				available as more areas added in 2024
Oregon Fire Hardening Grant (state)	OR Building Codes Division (DCBS)	Home/business owners rebuilding after 2020–2021 wildfires	No match (grant amounts per retrofit element)	Extended through Dec 2025; ~\$10M total fund, >\$3.3M given to 800 survivors so far. Grants up to ~\$6k–\$7k per structure
ODOE Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding (state)	OR Department of Energy	Homeowners & businesses who lost structures in 2020 fires	No match (incentive payments)	\$10.8M allocated; rebates \$3k–\$15k each. ~\$4M remains (as of 2025), program ends when funds spent
* State programs are subject to state budget appropriations each biennium.				

Table 2: Summary– Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding (Oregon FY 2025–26)

Summary Table – Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding (Federal Sources)				
Program (Funding Source)	Administered by	Eligible Applicants	Match Requirement	FY 2025–26 Funding Availability
FEMA BRIC (federal)	FEMA (via Oregon OEM)	States/tribes (sponsor local governments, special districts)	25% non-federal match (10% for small communities)	~\$1B/year nationally, Highly competitive.
FEMA HMGP (Post-Disaster & Post-Fire) (federal)	FEMA (via Oregon OEM)	States/tribes (sponsor local governments, tribes, some non-profits)	25% non-federal match (standard)	Varies by disaster.
USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grants (federal)	U.S. Forest Service	Local governments, tribes, non-profits, state forestry agencies	10% match (planning) / 25% (projects), waivable for underserved communities	\$1B over 5 years (≈\$200M/yr). FY22: \$197M awarded; similar funding through 2026.

BLM Community Fire Assistance (federal)	Bureau of Land Management	State agencies, counties, tribes, fire districts, NGOs (in OR/WA)	No fixed match required (federal IRA/BIL funds)	\$8M available in OR/WA for FY25 projects; grants \$30k–\$900k. Funded by 2025 budget (IRA/BIL); future funding likely with federal fire budgets.
USDA NRCS EQIP – Wildfire (federal)	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)	Private landowners (forest/range owners), Tribes (for tribal land)	Landowner cost-share ~25–50% of practice cost (NRCS pays 50–75%)	Ongoing funding – millions yearly in OR for forest thinning, fuel breaks, post-fire rehab. E.g. 2024 E. OR fires signup in Feb 2025.
FEMA Fire Prevention & Safety (federal)	FEMA (USFA)	Fire departments or fire safety nonprofits	5% match (most applicants)	~\$36M nationally for FP&S (FY2024); a small grants for education, outreach, etc.

Table 3: Summary– Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding Sources (Oregon FY 2025–26)

Appendix D

Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)

Appendix D: Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)

Resources and Assets

	EXPOSURE	RESISTANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY	IMPORTANCE	USERS	SCORE
	Exp Potential (1-5)	Fire Resistant (1-5)	Evac & Survival (1-4)	Postfire Recovery (1-4)	Relative Value (1-10)	1=Well-Off 3=All 5=SVP	Total Score (max=23)
Emergency Services and Health Care							
Emergency Services/Response Infrastructure							
Ashland City EOC – Lithia Motors Pavilion (SOU)			4	2	8	1	15
Ashland Fire & Rescue Station 1			1	2	8	3	14
Ashland Fire & Rescue Station 2			1	2	8	3	14
Asante Ashland Community Hospital			1	4	10	3	18
Ashland Police Department HQ			1	2	7	3	13
Ashland Police Department (secondary locations)			1	1	2	3	7
Public Health Services							
Pharmacies			1	3	7	3	14
Rogue Community Health – Ashland Health Center			1	3	5	5	14
Valley Immediate Care			1	3	5	5	14
Behavioral and Mental Health Services			1	3	7	3	14
Doctor's Offices			1	2	3	3	9
Surgery Centers			1	1	2	3	7
Physical Therapy Facilities			1	1	2	3	7
Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA)			1	4	5	5	15
2200 Ashland Street Facility			1	4	4	5	14

Resources and Assets

	EXPOSURE	RESISTANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY	IMPORTANCE	USERS	SCORE
	Exp Potential (1-5)	Fire Resistant (1-5)	Evac & Survival (1-4)	Postfire Recovery (1-4)	Relative Value (1-10)	1=Well- Off 3=all 5=SVPS	Total Score (max=23)
Infrastructure and Utilities							
Transportation Infrastructure							
Ashland Municipal Airport			2	1	1	1	5
Ashland School District Bus Depot			4	1	7	5	17
Railway			2	3	2	1	8
Ashland Street (State Route 66)			4	4	8	3	19
North Main			4	4	8	3	19
East Main			4	4	8	3	19
Siskiyou Boulevard (OR99)			4	4	8	3	19
Collector Streets			4	3	8	3	18
Local Streets from Neighborhoods			4	2	5	3	14
Critical Intersections			4	4	8	3	19
Interstate 5 Southbound Onramp from OR99			4	4	8	3	19
Interstate 5 and OR66 Interchange			4	4	8	3	19
Interstate 5 and South Valley View Rd Interchange			4	4	8	3	19
South Mountain Road Emergency Ramp to I-5			4	4	8	3	19
Lithia Way and Helman			4	2	5	3	14
Valley View Bridge			4	4	8	3	19
Railroad Overpass (west side of Ashland)			4	1	7	3	15
OR66 Overpass (east side of Ashland)			4	4	8	3	19
Gas Stations			2	2	4	3	11
Utilities Infrastructure							
Ashland Fiber Network			4	3	8	3	18
Phone Landlines			4	1	6	3	14
TV/Internet Lines – Fiber and Coax			4	3	8	3	18
Telecommunication – Cellular			4	4	9	5	22
Ashland Electric Department Grid			4	4	10	3	21

Pacific Power			4	4	10	3	21
Ashland Wastewater Treatment Plant			1	4	10	3	18
Ashland Water Tx Plant near Reeder Reservoir			4	4	10	3	21
Natural Gas Facilities and Pipelines (Avista)			1	3	7	3	14

Resources and Assets

EXPOSURE	RESISTANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY	IMPORTANCE	USERS	SCORE
Exp Potential (1- 5)	Fire Resistant (1-5)	Evac & Survival (1-4)	Postfire Recovery (1-4)	Relative Value (1-10)	1=Well- off 3=all 5=SVPs	Total Score (max=23)

Communication and Information Hubs							
Radio Stations			4	2	4	3	13
TV Stations			4	2	4	3	13
TV Transmitters			4	1	2	3	10
Government and Public Administration							
Ashland Chamber of Commerce			1	4	5	3	13
City Hall and Local Government Offices							
Ashland City Hall			2	2	5	3	12
Ashland Finance & Utilities Billing Building			1	2	5	3	11
Ashland Public Works Facility at 90 North Mountain			3	4	9	3	19
Community Development Building			1	4	8	3	16
Courthouses and Public Record Buildings							
Ashland Municipal Court/Council Chambers			1	2	7	3	13
City Records and Archive Facilities			1	4	10	3	18
Parks and Recreation Department Facilities							
The Grove			2	2	5	3	12
Headquarters Building in Lithia Park			1	1	5	3	10
Oak Knoll Golf Clubhouse and Shops			3	1	3	3	10
North Mountain Park			4	1	6	3	14
State Government – National Guard Armory							
National Guard Armory			3	1	2	3	9

Federal Government Facilities							
USFWS Forensics Lab			1	1	10	0	12
Post Office			1	3	4	3	11

Resources and Assets

EXPOSURE	RESISTANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY	IMPORTANCE	USERS	SCORE
Exp Potential (1-5)	Fire Resistant (1-5)	Evac & Survival (1-4)	Postfire Recovery (1-4)	Relative Value (1-10)	1=Well- off 3=all 5=SVPs	Total Score (max=23)

Education and Social Services

Public Schools and Universities

Ashland School District Offices Buildings			1	3	6	3	13
Ashland High School			3	4	9	5	21
Ashland Middle School			3	4	9	5	21
Bellview Elementary School			3	4	8	3	18
Helman Elementary School			3	4	8	3	18
Southern Oregon University (SOU)			3	4	9	3	19
TRAILS Outdoor School			3	4	8	3	18
Walker Elementary School			3	4	8	5	20
Willow Wind Community Learning Center			1	4	8	3	16

Libraries

Ashland Public Library			2	2	5	5	14
Rogue Valley Metaphysical Library			1	1	2	3	7

Private Schools and Daycare Centers

Privately Operated Daycare			1	3	7	5	16
Ashland Head Start			1	3	7	5	16
Oregon Child Dev. Coalition - Briscoe Center			1	3	7	5	16
The Siskiyou School			1	3	5	3	12

Social Services Orgs & NGO Facilities

Ashland Elks Lodge #944			1	2	2	1	6
Masonic Lodge			1	2	2	1	6
NGO Offices			1	2	1	3	7

Resources and Assets

	EXPOSURE	RESISTANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY	IMPORTANCE	USERS	SCORE
	Exp Potential (1-5)	Fire Resistant (1- 5)	Evac & Survival (1-4)	Postfire Recovery (1-4)	Relative Value (1-10)	1=Well- off 3=all 5=SVPs	Total Score (max= 23)
Faith-Based and Community Centers							
Faith-Based Facilities							
Ashland First United Methodist Church			1	3	4	5	13
First Presbyterian Church of Ashland			1	3	4	5	13
Other Sectarian Christian Facilities			1	3	4	3	11
Community Spiritual Centers			1	3	4	3	11
Synagogues and Temples			1	3	4	3	11
Nonsectarian Community Gathering Places							
Bellview Grange			1	4	5	5	15
Pioneer Hall and Community Center			1	4	5	5	15
Peace House (Quakers)			1	3	4	3	11
YMCA			2	3	5	5	15
Residences, Stores, Restaurants, and Businesses							
Residences							
Multi-Tenant Housing: Apts, Multiplexes, MH Parks			2	4	4	5	15
Assisted Living & Memory Care Facilities			4	1	4	5	14
Other Permanent Homes (all types)			1	1	4	3	9
Vacation/Secondary Homes			1	1	2	1	5
Food Supply Facilities							
Albertsons/Rite Aid			3	3	7	3	16
Ashland Food Co-op			1	3	7	3	14
Safeway			2	3	7	3	15
Shop n Kart/Bi-Mart			3	3	7	3	16
Market of Choice			1	3	7	3	14
Locally Owned Restaurants, Cafes, and Shops			1	2	3	3	9
Corporately Owned Restaurants			1	1	1	3	6

Large Fire-Resistant Dining Halls (e.g., SOU Hawk)			2	4	3	3	12
Food Banks			1	4	7	5	17
Building Supply Stores			1	3	2	3	9
Financial Institutions			1	2	1	3	7
Thrift Stores			1	4	3	5	13

Resources and Assets

EXPOSURE	RESISTANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY	IMPORTANCE	USERS	SCORE
Exp Potential (1-5)	Fire Resistant (1-5)	Evac & Survival (1-4)	Postfire Recovery (1-4)	Relative Value (1-10)	1=Well-off 3=all 5=SVPS	Total Score (max=23)

Environmental, Historic, Cultural, and Recreational							
Critical Environmental Resources and Assets							
Ashland Watershed			1	4	10	3	18
Hosler Dam (Asset)			1	4	10	3	18
Indoor Performance Venues							
OSF Campus			1	3	7	3	14
Varsity Theatre			1	1	5	3	10
Oregon Cabaret Theatre			1	1	5	3	10
Historic and Cultural Assets							
Nationally Listed Historic Buildings and Districts			1	1	5	3	10
Schneider Museum of Art			2	1	2	1	6
Butler Memorial Bandshell - Lithia Park			1	1	5	3	10
Science Works			2	2	4	3	11
Art Galleries			1	1	2	3	7
Cemeteries			1	2	2	3	8
Recreational and Tourism Facilities							
Travel Ashland Oregon Turnout			2	1	2	1	6
Oak Knoll Golf Course Grounds			4	2	1	1	8
Hotels, Motels, Short Stay Rentals (< 30 days)			1	4	4	3	12
Hotels, Motels, Short Stay Rentals (that house SVPS)			1	4	4	5	14

Bed and Breakfast (B&B) Lodging			1	4	4	3	12
Ashland Creek Park (mix of community facilities)			1	2	2	3	8
Lithia Park			1	2	7	3	13
Railroad Park			2	2	3	5	12
Dog Parks			3	3	3	3	12
Garfield and Other Parks with Playgrounds			2	2	3	5	12
Neighborhood Grassy Parks/Spaces (few Trees)			2	2	2	3	9
Seasonal Recreation Facilities (e.g., ice rink)			1	1	1	3	6
Trail System			2	2	2	3	9
Ashland Mountain Ski Hill Facilities			1	1	5	1	8

Table 4: Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)

Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRA) Scoring Guide

Step 1: Identify Core Values-at-Risk

The City of Ashland's High-Value Resources and Assets (HVRAs) are identified. Like assets are grouped together to avoid assigning any like-function structures more value than another and because it is not realistic to score more than 12,000 structures and all natural and recreational resources within city boundaries. *(Note that HVRAs will eventually be mapped on the community risk base map to facilitate strategic wildfire risk reduction planning at the neighborhood scale).*

Step 2: Assess Wildfire Exposure Potential (EXPOSURE)

Asset exposure scores will be determined using wildfire probability models and professional input. Conditions considered are proximity to wildland areas, topographic variables, and density of fuels (veg & buildings). Scores range from 1 (low) to 5 (extreme). To score, chose the highest number if one or more of the hazard rating criteria apply. *(Note that the criteria below are preliminary, incomplete, and intended for demonstration purposes only).*

1 = asset is less likely to be exposed directly to the heat of a wildfire or an ember blizzard because the asset is located on flat terrain, at least 2,700 ft from a high-density development, wildland fuels, riparian corridors

2 = the asset is located on or above a shallow slope (2–9%), 1500 ft from a high-density development, wildland fuels, riparian corridors

3 = the asset is located on or above a continuous 10–20% slope, at least 100 ft from a high-density development, wildland fuels, riparian corridors

4 = the asset is located on or above a continuous 21–40% slope, at least 100 ft from a high-density development, wildland fuels, riparian corridors

5 = Located on or above a 40+% slope or in alignment with a canyon, ridgeline, chute, or gully

Step 3: Assess Relative Wildfire Resistance (RESISTANCE)

Asset resistance to wildfire impact may be determined by assessing its relative flammability using recognized science-based metrics. Scores range from 1 to 5 with 5 being the least resistant. Note that the following definitions are subject to change.

1 = asset is made of unburnable material, or it has been “hardened” to IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Plus standards; structure density is low (SSD=50+)

2 = asset is combustible, but it has been “hardened” to IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Base standards; structure density is low (SSD=50+); and no highly flammable plants are growing within 30 ft of the asset

3 = asset is combustible, and it has been “hardened” to IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Base standards (or surrounding conditions treated to limit ignition potential if the asset is a natural area); structure density is low (SSD=25+); no ladder fuels, horizontally continuous vegetation > 2 ft tall, and no highly flammable plants growing within 30 ft of the asset

4 = asset is combustible but has some “fire-resistant” features; there are some flammable materials (including other structures) within 25 feet of the asset; ladder fuels, horizontally continuous vegetation and highly flammable vegetation is at least 15 ft away

5 = asset is combustible but is not “fire-resistant” in some significant way; there are significant flammable materials (including other structures) within 10 feet of the asset; ladder fuels, horizontally continuous vegetation or all highly flammable vegetation are present within 5 ft of the asset

Step 4: Assess Value During a Citywide Life-Threatening Emergency (SURVIVAL)

This subjective variable is used to indicate whether the asset is necessary to enable emergency evacuation in the opinion of emergency managers/police, or if the asset is an accessible refuge area for when evacuation is impossible. The score ranges from 1 to 4 with 4 representing an asset critical for survival during a fast-spreading wildfire.

1 = asset is not needed to enable humans and their animals to safely evacuate or survive a rapidly spreading wildfire

2 = asset is needed to enable a segment of able-bodied humans and their animals to safely evacuate or “survive” if they can’t evacuate

3 = asset is critical for a significant proportion of the population to safely evacuate or survive

4 = asset is critical for physically challenged humans to safely evacuate or survive a wildfire

Step 5: Assess HVRA’s Importance to Post-fire, Citywide Recovery (Recovery)

This variable is a semi-subjective variable because recovery needs are dependent upon where and how much of the City burns. The assets needed to get basic needs met during the recovery process (including rebuilding) are dependent on available infrastructure, housing, and support services. The Alameda Fire recovery experience informed the scoring which ranges from 1 to 4, with 4 indicating great potential to support physical and socioeconomic recovery.

1 = asset is not essential during the wildfire recovery phase because the function of the asset can be accomplished elsewhere (e.g., the airport, parks & rec buildings, assisted living facilities)

2 = asset function is duplicated elsewhere in the City (e.g., there are two fire stations and many gas stations and local businesses/restaurants, doctor’s offices)

3 = asset essential to the economy (e.g., OSF) and meeting basic needs during rebuilding (e.g., pharmacies, building supply stores, urgent health care, sectarian and nonsectarian gathering places, dog park)

4 = asset is critical to the wildfire recovery process (e.g., the hospital, schools, primary roads, public works, power and water supply, access corridors, hotels/motels, and grocery stores)

Step 6: Relative Importance to Ashland's Functionality & Identity (IMPORTANCE)

The asset importance score reflects the relative value of the asset to community functionality, economy, and identity. The range of possible scores is 1 -10, with 10 being the highest because the asset is irreplaceable, or replacement costs are prohibitive. To avoid ranking every asset too highly, the following definitions should be carefully considered. A general rule is that anything over a 5 is essential to the community's safety, economy and functionality. If the asset is unique and important to the community's sense of identity it can be rated as a 5 but rarely more. Replicated assets like houses and businesses should rate 4 or below.

1 = Service or function can be accomplished elsewhere within the 30 miles even though it may be inconvenient (e.g., fast-food restaurants, banks, Ashland airport)

2 = Function can be temporarily delayed or accomplished elsewhere during a fire and reestablished relatively easily if affected (e.g., surgery center, retail stores, Lodges, offices, trail system, secondary/vacation homes)

3 = Important, but substitute service or function is available within 10 miles (e.g., post office, non-urgent clinics/doctor's offices)

4 = asset is a place of residence for a household or a business with good income and adequate insurance or a Shelter (e.g., Science Works, radio/TV stations, post office, spiritual service organizations, etc.)

5 = asset is a unique resource that drives the quality of life, identify, and welfare of "Ashland" (e.g., Ashland Plaza, YMCA, City Hall, Parks Dept and parks, nonsectarian gathering places like the Belview Grange and Pioneer Hall, theaters)

6 = asset is clearly an economic engine important to the tax base or supports the employment of many and socially vulnerable populations (e.g., affordable housing, Ashland Sch Dis Build)

7 = asset provides essential services that enable the community to get basic needs met (e.g., pharmacies and some health care services, childcare, groceries, and energy resources; Police Station/Council chambers/Courthouse, OSF campus)

8 = asset is important to emergency services (e.g., Emergency Operations Center, arterial roads, internet connectivity, fire and rescue facilities, elementary schools)

9 = asset is very important to retain in the community, no substitutions available within a reasonable distance (e.g., high & middle schools, SOU, cellular communication towers, and the City of Ashland's planning function)

10 = If the asset were lost, recovery would be possible only with extreme effort and cost, or is irreplaceable (e.g., undigitized archival records, critical infrastructure to support utility services and rebuilding, Forensics Lab (only one of its kind in the United States, the Ashland Watershed (water supply)

Step 7: Assess HVRA's Importance to Primary Users (USERS)

This variable refers to the demographic profile of the asset's primary users. Scores are 1, 3, or 5 to reflect the degree to which the assets beneficiaries are socially vulnerable by virtue of income, physical or mental health, limited mobility, discrimination or marginalization, or age (very young or elderly).

1 = Asset is primarily used by middle- and upper-income populations

3 = Asset is used by all or most demographic groups

5 = Socially vulnerable populations are highly dependent on this asset/resource

Appendix E

Whole Community Report

Appendix E: Whole Community Report

“Everything is old and dry. I’m scared because of the Alameda Fire. It’s nothing like when I was young. I am more aware than I was as a child. In the last decade it’s gotten so much worse. My daughter and I are triggered all the time.”

-Ashland single-parent apartment resident

Introduction

This report analyzes qualitative and quantitative studies from 2015, 2019, and 2024 to understand how sampled populations, primarily Ashland residents, perceive wildfire risk and preparedness. It also identifies key issues for the 2025 update of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Additionally, this report serves as the summary of the 2024 CWPP open online survey. The findings from a comparative analysis of population similarities and differences provide a foundation for the 2025 CWPP risk reduction planning, including initiatives focused on whole community engagement, socially vulnerable populations, and rental properties.

The report introduces the various studies considered and then compares relevant results based on the following topics:

- Evacuation preparedness
- Perceptions of wildfire risk: why people feel their home is/is not safe
- Preferred wildfire safety information sources
- Barriers to improving home wildfire safety
- Insurance coverage among Ashland residents
- Perceived urgency to reduce wildfire risk in Ashland
- Key priorities for the CWPP update based on survey findings
- Stories and insights summary

Data Sources

In **2015**, the City of Ashland contracted the Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy (CSEPP) to “engage a qualitative research project to enlist Ashland residents in conversations about fire and fire readiness in preparation for the development of an updated CWPP.” Over a four-month period, CSEPP researchers contacted 437 residents to “sample the range of social and geographic diversity in the city, as well as businesses and organizations with interest and responsibility relevant to the Fire Plan” (Preister et al., 2015).

In **2018**, the City of Ashland conducted a rapid “curbside” risk assessment of approximately 6,625 single-family homes to establish a parcel-level wildfire risk baseline. The results indicated that 62% of these homes face high to extreme wildfire risk. In collaboration with the Wildfire Research (WiRē) Center, the City supplemented this assessment with a mail-in survey sent to about one-third of the evaluated households to compare residents’ awareness of wildfire threats with the risk levels identified by trained assessors. (USDA Forest Service, 2020).

In **2024**, the CWPP Update Team conducted three data collection projects to better understand socially vulnerable populations and renters while also providing an opportunity for community-wide input.

1. **Socially Vulnerable Population (SVP) Project** (Aug–Sep 2024) – A qualitative study examining how prepared socially vulnerable residents are for wildfire threats to their safety and homes. The findings are the basis for the CWPP Socially Vulnerable Populations Chapter.
2. **Property Management & Rental Property Owners Project** (Oct–Nov 2024) – Two independent surveys were conducted with property management companies and private rental owners to evaluate current and potential wildfire risk reduction efforts for renters. The findings informed the CWPP Rental Properties Chapter.
3. **Community “Voices” CWPP Survey** (Oct–Nov 17, 2024) – An online survey open to all residents, gathering perspectives, ideas, and concerns on wildfire-related topics to help shape the updated CWPP. The findings from this survey are summarized in this document.

¹ FEMA (October 2020) defines ‘Whole Community’ as individuals and families, including those with access and functional needs; businesses; faith-based and community organizations; nonprofit groups; schools and academia; media outlets; and all levels of government, including state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal partners.

When combined the **2024** data sets represents:

Total Owners	Senior Owners	Vulnerable Owners	Total Renters	Senior Renters	Vulnerable Renters
347 (81+266)	209 (59+150)	121 (71+50)	191 (144+47)	59 (44+15)	108 (85+23)

Total Seniors	Total SVPs
271 (103+168)	250 (173 + 77)

Property Management Companies		Private Rental Owners	
8 companies	4,066 rental units	22 rental owners	44 rental units

Table 5: Respondent Breakdown

Total Sample Size & Study Type

Number of Participants Engaged through Recent Ashland Wildfire Risk Related Studies

Year	Number	Nature of the study
2015	437	people were engaged in conversations in a range of venues
2019	~1,136	single-family home residents responded to a mail-in survey
2020	2,472	evacuation time study
2024	225	primarily socially vulnerable persons were engaged in conversations
2024	319	respondents to an open invitation to an on-line wildfire survey
2024	8	respondents to property management company survey
2024	22	respondents to a private rental property owner survey
Total	~4,619	

Table 6: Sample Size and Study Type

2015 CSEPP Qualitative Study

CSEPP researchers contacted 437 residents over a four-month period to “sample the range of social and geographic diversity in the City, as well as businesses and organizations with interest and responsibility relevant to the Fire Plan.”

Selected Trends Reported in 2015

- School enrollment is steadily declining, and Ashland’s population is aging
- Turnover in the Ashland population is high...[this] means that “Education is Forever.”
- Renters “pretty much dismissed attention to fire risks.”
- “Residents resoundingly favored education over regulation, but they may support regulation when it is related to safety.”

Selected Wildfire Concerns in 2015

- Private lands adjacent to City land are a big concern because of untreated fuels.
- The awareness of residents regarding the risks of fire was highly variable. Some people showed very low awareness.
- Avoid authoritarian approaches...[they] will put an immediate brake on collaborative activity.
- People’s value of privacy is a deterrent to creating “defensible space”.
- The “Jackson County Fire Plan determined that rental properties frequently had significant fire risks in landscaping and building conditions, and that landlords, particularly absentee rental property owners, were not timely or responsive often in addressing problems.”
- Researchers did not specify how many were homeowners or renters. However, they discovered that homeowners and renters have differing concerns as shown below.

Homeowners’ Primary Concerns

- Managing and maintaining **defensible space**.
- **Costs** associated with implementing fire-resistant landscaping and home retrofits.
- More accessible **information on best practices and available resources** to assist with mitigation.

Renters' Primary Concerns

- **Limited ability** to implement wildfire mitigation measures due to property ownership constraints.
- **Personal safety** during wildfires.
- **Unclear communication** from property owners and local authorities about wildfire risks.

Conclusions: Homeowner concerns strongly reflected their close relationship with their place of residence. Renters are concerned about their lack of control over their living conditions and about evacuating and personal safety.

Selected Recommendations

- People trust day-to-day and face-to-face communications
- Renters may require special attention
- Adopt a “resolve as you go” to address issues and sustain interest/momentum
- “Baby Steps” are important to learning new behaviors.
- Repeat visits are extremely valuable because they give people time to think and act.
- Find ways to “turn over” responsibility to citizens.
- Use community-wide meetings not to develop the plan but to showcase the elements developed at smaller scales and to integrate the whole. It is a time for confirmation, public recognition of citizen contributions, and celebration.

Most of the results and recommendations from the 2015 qualitative “conversations” with 437 citizens have been reinforced and augmented by the 2024 research results. Of note are recommendations to focus on face-to-face communications, repeat visits, give special attention to renters, and enable and empower citizens to be personally responsible.

USDA Wildfire Quantitative Study (AKA 2019 Survey)

In March 2018, Ashland Fire and Rescue (AFR) partnered with the USDA Rocky Mountain Research Station Wildfire Research (WiRē) Team to collect social data to better understand Ashland, Oregon

single-family home residents' knowledge, experiences, and perceptions about wildfire risk. A mail-in survey packet was completed to 1,128 respondents (55.5% response rate) who self-evaluated their wildfire risk. The research team generated a paired dataset. (USDA Forest Service, 2020).

The neighborhoods represented in the study were restricted to areas directly adjacent to significant wildland fuels or on a steep slope, or both. Within the subset of 2,045 residences invited to participate in this study, 75% of the properties were rated by risk assessors as "facing high, very high, or extreme risk of wildfire."

The survey results reflect a narrow group of Ashland residents—predominately relatively affluent single-family homeowners. Nearly 80% of the respondents reported an annual income (in 2018) of over \$50,000, 42% over \$100,000, and 92% of the respondents were homeowners.

While the survey data is 6 years old, and there was no system established for reporting risk reduction activities performed by residents, it provides an informative perspective on how closely older more affluent residents living in higher risk areas of the City perceive their wildfire risk relative to access, evacuation, structure ignitability, and defensible space compared to observed conditions made by city wildfire risk assessors. Of note, relatively affluent single-family homeowners appear to understand the relative risk of wildfire and defensible space requirements similarly to the city risk assessors. Some major differences were discovered in perceptions of how fire-hardened their homes are and actual construction of the homes.

The report contains many insights relating to preferred communication pathways, evacuation preparedness, expectations of home loss if a fire occurs, acceptable mitigation strategies, risk reduction activities regularly performed, and barriers to mitigation activities and the importance of incentives. The findings relating to experience with insurance companies are significantly different from the survey finding in the 2024 CWPP on-line survey.

The findings from this 6-year-old investigation are the best information available for moderate- and high-income single-family homeowners. Other demographic groups are better represented by data collected in 2024.

Demographic Data Collected

- Average year the single-family homes were built was 1971 but ranged from 1856–2018
- Average age of the respondent was 67 years and 60% were retired
- 84% were full-time occupants, 92% were homeowners, and ~3% were renters
- 77% indicated an annual household income of >\$50,000; 42% reported an income of >\$100,000
- 47% indicated that they have an advanced degree (M.D., M.A., M.S., PH.D., etc.)

Selected Attitudes and Perceptions

- Most residents are aware of, and concerned about, the wildfire threat and somewhat accurately self-assessed their overall wildfire risk rating
- In some neighborhoods 73% reported that their neighbors were taking steps to reduce wildfire risk; and in other neighborhoods 40% reported that their neighbors are doing nothing.
- 5% or fewer think homeowner actions to reduce risk are ineffective, or (1) the occupant won't do anything because they want "to live in the trees," (2) they think risk reduction isn't their responsibility or (3) "firefighters should put their lives at risk to protect my home"
- Most residents understand that firefighting resources cannot be relied on, however, 14% believe that "local firefighters will have sufficient resources to protect threatened homes"
- 45% thought there was a 50% or greater chance that if there is a wildfire on their property, their residence would be destroyed or severely damaged.

Selected Wildfire Risk Reduction Results

- ~1/3 have limited evacuation access (one road in/out)
- ~77% have some equivalent of "defensible space" within the 0–30-foot zone based on assessor observations*
- ~74% had no combustible material other than vegetation within 30 ft of their home based on assessor observations*
- More than 88% reported regularly mowing, raking and reducing vegetation on their property and keeping debris off their roof and out of the gutters.

**Note that assessor observations were limited because they did not go onto the property to assess conditions around the entire property. Defensible space was evaluated based on only three factors: surface vegetation within 30 feet, ladder fuels within 30 feet, and tree canopy.*

Selected results are compared in this document with the data collected from the socially vulnerable populations project (2024 SVP) and the “voices from the community” survey (2024 on-line survey).

Socially Vulnerable Populations Qualitative Study (2024 SVP Project)

From June–October 2024 a variety of opportunities were provided to 225 people to safely express their thoughts and feelings about wildfire in Ashland. The purpose of this qualitative research project was to gain perspective on what motivates (or not) and enables low-income renters and socially vulnerable persons (SVPs) who have not been engaged so far for whatever reason to reduce the risk of wildfire where they live.

Demographic Data

- 93.3% of the interviewees live in Ashland
- 77% self-identified as “lower income, housing insecure, senior, disabled, a single parent, and/or have limited English-speaking skills
- Approximately 46% self-identified as “seniors”, 52% as low income, 20% as housing insecure, 24% as disabled, 4% as single parents, and 3% as having no or limited English speaking skills
- Of the 225 responses recorded, approximately 64% of the respondents said they are renters and 36% said they are homeowners.

Living Situation Observed or Reported by the Respondents

- 31% (70) live in an apartment building
- 25% (56) live in a single-family household.
- 22% (50) live in a mobile/manufactured home or RV
- 19% (42) live in a condominium, townhouse, duplex, or triplex
- ~1% (1) live in a studio, ADU, or cottage

This document includes selected results to compare findings from the 2019 single-family home survey and the 2024 online community survey.

Community “Voices” Wildfire Quantitative Study (AKA 2024 CWPP Survey)

Three hundred nineteen (319) responses were received during the survey period from an open-to-all on-line survey. Advertising for the survey was facilitated by the City of Ashland’s Communications Specialist. The volunteer CWPP Community Engagement Liaison processed the results.

Demographic Data

- Approximately 97% (298) of the respondents said they live in Ashland and 24% (77) self-identified as “lower income, a single parent, limited English-speaking, unemployed, disabled or living in crowded conditions.”
- More than half of the respondents (53%) said they were 65 years old or older.
- Approximately 18% of the respondents said there is someone 17 years old or younger living in the household.
- Eighty-three (83) percent (266 people) of the respondents are homeowners, 15% (47 people) said they are renters; and 2% (6 persons) indicated that they were neither.

Living Situation Reported by the Respondents

- 77.1% (246) live in a single-family household.
- 5.0% (16) live in a townhouse
- 4.7% (16) live in a studio or Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)
- 4.1% (13) live in a condominium
- 3.8% (11) live in an apartment building
- 1.6% (5) live in a mobile/manufactured home or RV
- 1.3% (4) live in a duplex
- 0.9% (3) a room or room(s) in a home
- 1 respondent each live in a triplex, or identified as “unhoused”

- Three respondents selected “Other” which 2 of the respondents further described as “mixed use” (“apartment” above commercial units) and 1 respondent identified as “PUD” (definition not known).

Evacuation Preparedness Findings

The **2019** mail-in survey (2019 survey) was the only study that specifically looked at accessibility (ingress/egress) around people’s homes. This makes sense since the population sampled primarily lives on steep slopes above the downtown area.

Thirty-five (35) percent of the survey respondents reported that they have only one road in or out, but city fire staff observed that 22% of these properties had such a limitation. This indicates an opportunity to make some residents more aware of their ingress/egress options. Driveway length and width were also evaluated because they affect first responders’ ability to safely access the property and safe evacuation by the occupants. The findings are particularly worth considering when tailoring education materials for residents of properties with long, narrow, steep, and/or complex driveways.

The **2019 survey** also asked respondents about how prepared they were to evacuate—specifically whether they had a plan to evacuate people, pets, and livestock. Over half (59%) reported having an evacuation plan for the people in their household; and for whom it applies, over half (56%) have a plan for the pets in their home/on their property (Figure 1).

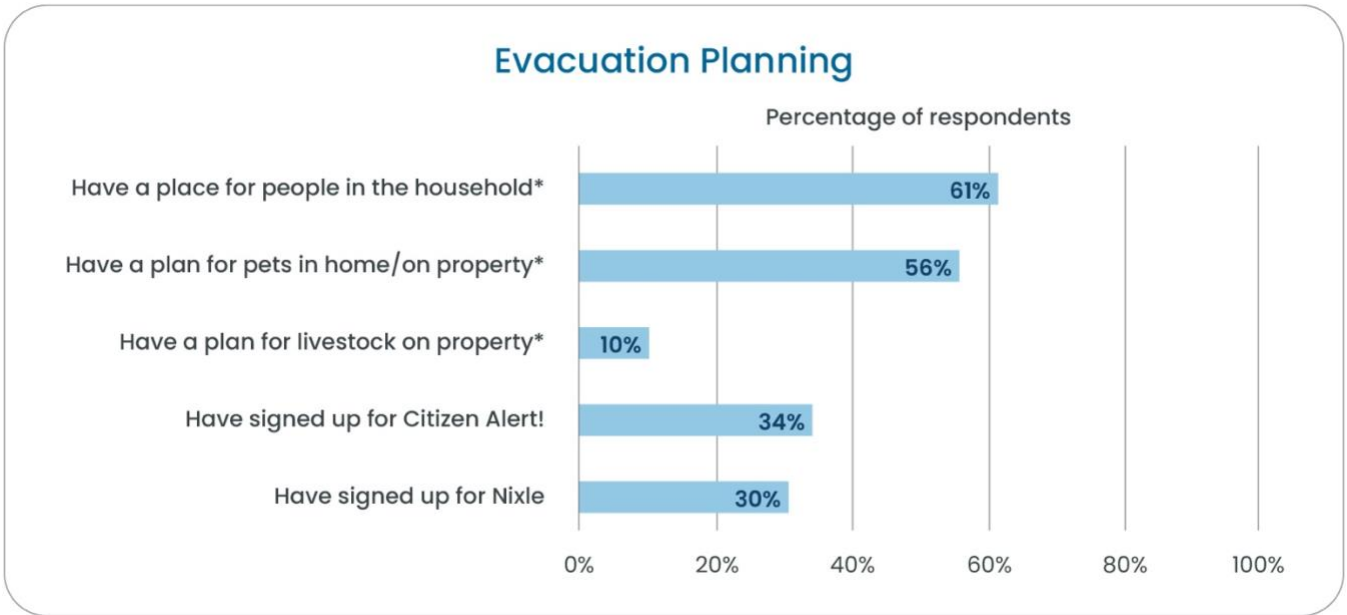


Figure 1: 2019 Evacuation Preparedness Results (*means not relevant to all respondents)

Three hundred nineteen (319) respondents to the **2024 CWPP survey** answered a multiple-choice question to assess how prepared they are for a wildfire-caused evacuation. As shown in Figure 2, nearly 86% of those who responded to the 2024 on-line survey are registered for Citizen Alert, ~73% said they know the Ready/Set/Go system; ~68% indicated that know their evacuation zone; and ~48% say they have a “Go-kit” ready. Nearly 21% chose “I feel unprepared for an evacuation.” Nearly 81% may not have an evacuation plan, or they have a plan but have not practiced it.

The increase in the percentage of the population that has signed up for emergency notifications in 6 years is very significant – more than doubling – which is excellent. The challenge with comparing the other results is that the survey questions focused on different aspects of evacuation. The 2019 survey focused on whether respondents had a specific evacuation plan for people, pets, and livestock, while the 2024 survey looked at broader indicators including whether the respondent had known the Ready/Set/Go system and their evacuation zone number—metrics not included in the 2021 survey. The evacuation plan questions were phrased differently between the two studies which makes comparison impractical. It appears however, that there could be a significant decline in the number of households who have prepared an evacuation plan of any kind. This finding should be of concern for the 2025 CWPP evacuation preparedness program. No matter how the results are interpreted,

many residents may still be unprepared for a wildfire evacuation despite increased awareness raising efforts by the City.

Subject	2019 responses	2024 responses	Comments
Registered for Nixle and or Citizen Alerts	30-34%	86%	Great; can improve
Know the Ready, Set Go Protocol	N/A	73%	Good; can improve
Have a go kit, including for pets	N/A	48%	Okay; can improve
Have an evacuation plan for people	61%	21%	Not good
Have an evacuation plan for livestock	10%	N/A	No comment
Have practiced my evacuation plan	N/A	19%	Not good
I feel unprepared for evacuation	N/A	21%	Not good
I know my evacuation zone number	N/A	68%	Good; can improve

Table 7: Evacuation Plan Results

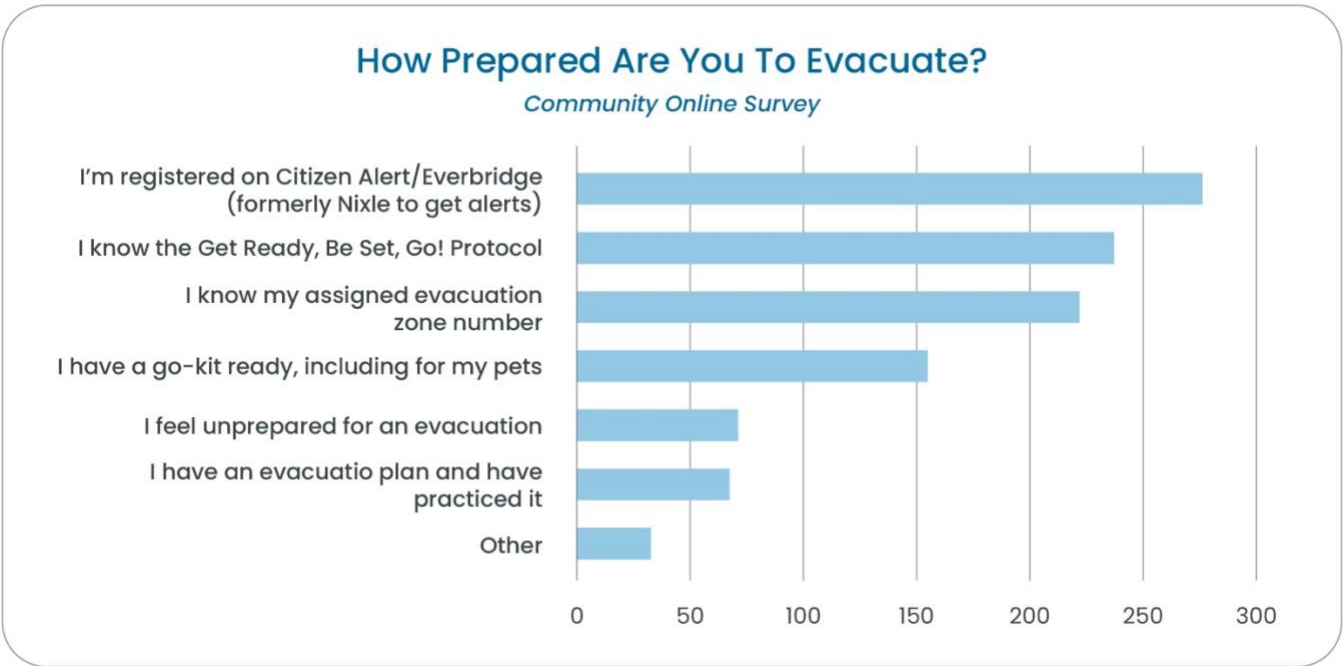


Figure 2: 2024 Evacuation Preparedness Results

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents to the 2024 on-line CWPP survey expanded on evacuation preparedness concerns by selecting the “Other” choice. An AI (ChatGPT) synthesis of the input highlighted a wide range of concerns and experiences related to wildfire preparedness and evacuation:

- A significant portion of respondents express varied levels of emergency preparedness, with some having detailed plans involving sheltering in place or specific evacuation routes, while others acknowledge gaps such as unpracticed plans, lack of go-kits, or uncertainty about evacuation zones.
- Experiences from past fires, including the Alameda and Paradise fires, contribute to heightened anxiety and a sense of urgency, particularly among those who previously lost homes or experienced chaotic evacuations.
- Concerns about community and infrastructure are prevalent, focusing on issues such as inadequate evacuation planning by local authorities, traffic congestion, and unclear or inaccessible evacuation routes.
- Some respondents admit to a lack of readiness, citing complacency or insufficient action despite recognizing potential risks.

Perceptions Of Wildfire Risk: Why People Feel Their Home Is or Is Not Safe

2019 Survey Perception Findings

The 2019 mail-in survey respondents were asked to self-assess their overall wildfire risk rating, but they were not asked to explain their reasoning. Therefore, we cannot compare the 2019 results to data collected in 2024. We can posit, however, that a year later when the Alameda Fire occurred in 2020, the sense of risk would have increased. In 2019, 62% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “my property is at risk of wildfire.” It would be interesting to test this hypothesis and to resurvey the sampled population (predominantly financially secure single-family households that live adjacent to wildland areas) to find out if they were motivated to change their beliefs or activities relating to wildfire risk after the Alameda Fire.

The “expectations about wildfire” data in 2019 is worth considering as is the “expected outcomes in event of wildfire” and “expected directions of fire spread” relative to public lands. Respondents reported that, if there was a wildfire on their property, it was likely that their home/property would:

- be destroyed (28%), or
- experience some physical damage (58%), or
- have smoke damage (63%), or
- the trees and landscaping would burn (54%), or
- be saved by the fire department (39%).

2024 CWPP Survey Perceptions Findings

The 2024 CWPP survey respondents were asked to rate how safe they think their home is on a scale from 1 to 5 with one being “very unsafe” and 5 being “very safe.” Out of more than 300 responses, the average score was 3.03 which means on average, people feel their home is “safe.” Respondents were asked to explain their answer. Their written replies were subsequently sorted by score and housing type to better understand why people feel safe or unsafe from wildfire.

The responses highlight significant differences in wildfire risk perceptions based on housing type. While factors such as location, construction materials, and personal preparedness efforts influence these perceptions, the ability to mitigate risks is often constrained by housing type and ownership status. Below are key takeaways based on respondent feedback:

1. Apartment Residents: Limited Control and Property Maintenance Concerns

- Apartment dwellers generally feel moderately safe to unsafe, with some expressing confidence due to urban locations and proximity to emergency services.
- However, many highlight poor property maintenance by owners, with concerns about untrimmed vegetation and dead trees increasing fire risk.
- Those living in mixed-use buildings feel slightly safer when structures have fire-resistant materials, such as stucco exteriors.

2. Condominium Residents: Dependence on HOAs and External Risks

- Condo residents express divergent views on safety, depending on HOA management and individual mitigation efforts.

- While some feel protected by fire-resistant construction and alarms, others cite poor HOA enforcement of vegetation management and proximity to high-risk areas.
- Living near major roads like Interstate 5, North Mountain, and East Nevada introduces additional risks from vehicle-caused fires.

3. Duplex/Triplex Residents: Firewise Participation but Persistent Risks

- Some perceive a benefit from HOA-led Firewise initiatives that focus on education and vegetation management.
- Despite these efforts, concerns remain due to proximity to forests, transient activity, and highway fires.

4. Mobile/Manufactured Home Residents: Fire-Hardening Efforts vs. Vegetation Risks

- Some residents have taken proactive measures, such as metal roofs, cement board siding, and defensible space, but nearby vegetation and unprotected neighboring units increase risk.
- Those living in parks near tall trees (40-150 ft) feel particularly vulnerable.

5. Residents in Shared Housing (Rooms or Room Rentals): High Vulnerability and Limited Control

- Renters in shared housing express frustration over their lack of control in implementing fire safety measures.
- Those who have experienced past wildfire evacuations, like the Alameda Fire, report long-term trauma and anxiety about future events.
- Flammable construction materials (e.g., wood siding and shingle roofs) heighten concerns.

6. Single-Family Homeowners: Greater Preparedness but Persistent External Risks

- Single-family homeowners report the widest range of perspectives, with many actively fire-hardening their properties through defensible space, vegetation removal, and fire-resistant materials.
- Despite personal efforts, respondents highlight significant risks from neighboring properties, city-maintained forests, and locked gates impeding evacuation.
- Climate change, increasing wildfire intensity, and inadequate community-wide mitigation fuel concerns.

7. Studio/ADU/Cottage Residents: Fire-Resistant Materials vs. Environmental Risks

- Some feel safer due to fire-resistant construction (e.g., stucco siding and tile roofs).
- However, those near riparian zones, mature trees, and transient activity areas worry about increased ignition sources and limited firebreaks.

8. Townhouse Residents: Structural Vulnerabilities and Mixed Safety Perceptions

- Townhouse residents express concerns about shared walls, increasing fire spread potential.
- Some feel safer in urban locations, but others highlight fire risks from ornamental trees, proximity to highways, and transient activity.

2024 SVP Project Perception Findings

The SVP Project responses were rated by expression: “very unsafe, unsafe, safe, kind of safe, and very safe.” These expressions are translatable to the 1–5 number scale used in the 2024 CWPP survey. The SVP respondents also had the option of replying with the equivalent of “don’t know”, “I don’t think much about it” or “I don’t care”.

About 32% of the respondents said they “don’t know or don’t think about it much” and about 1% said they “don’t care.” The mid-range response “kind of safe”, (equivalent to a 3) was 30.2%, which was the most popular answer after “I don’t know.” Just over 47% of the sampled population in the SVP project feels some degree of “safe”. Nearly 20% feel some degree of “unsafe.”

Respondents Safety Perceptions Summary

- 47% (106 respondents) felt some degree of safety (“very safe” or “kind of safe”)
- 20% (44 respondents) felt “unsafe” or “very unsafe”
- “Kind of safe” was the most common response

The following groups most often reported feeling only “kind of safe”:

- Renters
- Low-income individuals
- Housing-insecure individuals
- Seniors

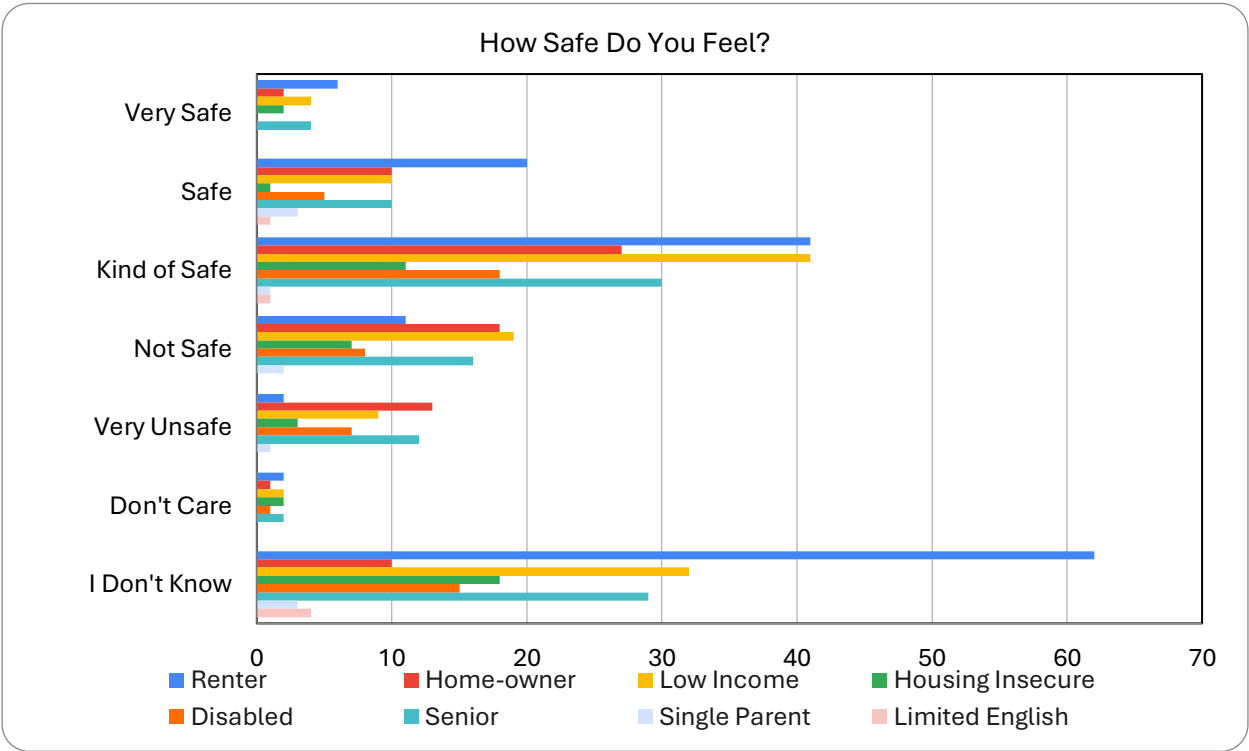


Figure 3: Feelings of Safety Results

Higher levels of feeling "unsafe" or "very unsafe" were reported among:

- Housing-insecure individuals
- Low-income individuals
- Disabled respondents

The perceptions of wildfire safety among sampled renters and homeowners differ. Among renters, a significant portion (44%) either "don't care" or "don't know" about their safety related to wildfires. Nearly half (47%) of renters feel "safe," while a smaller percentage (9%) consider themselves unsafe.

In contrast, homeowners demonstrate a greater awareness or concern about wildfire safety, with only 14% reporting that they "don't care" or "don't know." A similar proportion to renters, 48%, feel "safe," but a notably larger percentage (38%) of homeowners feel unsafe.

Renters (n=144)	44% don't care or don't know; 47% feel "safe"; and 9% feel unsafe
Homeowners (n=81)	14% don't care or don't know; 48% feel "safe"; and 38% feel unsafe

Table 8: Homeowners and Renter Response

These findings suggest that renters, compared to homeowners, are less engaged or informed about wildfire risks, as reflected in their higher rates of indifference or uncertainty. Homeowners, on the other hand, exhibit a greater level of concern, with a significantly higher proportion perceiving themselves as unsafe.

The table below and Figure 3 above illustrate how different socially vulnerable groups perceive their relative safety. Low-income individuals show mixed awareness levels: 47% feel safe, while 29% either don't care or don't know about wildfire safety, and 24% feel unsafe.

Low income (n=117)	29% don't care or don't know; 47% feel "safe"; and 24% feel unsafe	Seniors (n=103)	30% don't care or don't know; 43% feel "safe"; and 27% feel unsafe
Housing insecure (n=44)	45% don't care or don't know; 32% feel "safe"; and 23% feel unsafe	Single parents (n=10)	30% don't know; 40% feel "safe"; and 30% feel unsafe
Disabled persons (n=54)	30% don't care or don't know; 43% feel "safe"; and 28% feel unsafe	Limited English households (n=6)	67% don't know; 33% feel "safe"; and 0% feel unsafe

Table 9: SVP Safety Perception

Housing-insecure individuals demonstrate particularly high uncertainty, with 45% saying they don't care or don't know about their safety. Only 32% feel safe, and 23% feel unsafe. Similar patterns emerge among seniors and disabled individuals, with both groups showing identical rates: 43% feel safe, 30% are uncertain, and roughly a quarter feel unsafe (27% of seniors and 28% of disabled individuals).

Single parents are evenly divided in their perceptions: 40% feel safe, 30% are uncertain, and 30% feel unsafe. Limited English households stand out with the highest uncertainty level – 67% don't know about their safety status, while the remaining 33% feel safe, and notably, none report feeling unsafe.

Reasons People Think Their Home Is or Is Not Safe

The SVP Project respondents were also invited to explain their “home safety” choice. The answers have been subjected to synthesis through ChatGPT though condominium/townhouses/duplexes and Studios/ADUs are lumped together in that analysis.

Most residents who claimed to feel **“very safe”** showed limited understanding of what makes a home wildfire resistant, as evidenced by their explanations. Those who rated their homes as **“safe”** often mentioned factors beyond their control, such as:

- Proximity to open fields
- Past luck in avoiding fires
- Trust in the Ashland Fire Department's capability to provide protection

Residents who selected **“kind of safe”** generally showed better awareness of actual fire hazards, though some responses still revealed significant knowledge gaps. Those who felt **“unsafe”** often drew from personal experiences that had eroded their sense of security. They accurately identified many risk factors, though their risk rankings sometimes appeared inconsistent with their stated concerns. The **“very unsafe”** group expressed well-articulated concerns about fire risks.

Some interviewees revised their safety ratings after attempting to justify their initial responses. Notably, the lead interviewer observed no homes that could be considered “very safe” or even “safe” from wildfire risk, despite residents' perceptions. While some properties had better safety features than others, most respondents showed limited understanding of wildfire hazards.

Findings Across Studies

Housing Type Makes a Difference

We compared the results between the 300 responses to the 2024 CWPP survey and the 223 SVP Project interview response using a combination of ChatGPT analysis and human examination of the data for apartment, mobile/manufactured home park, and single-family home residents. (Data available to compare other housing types was deemed inadequate.) The comparative findings follow:

- The 2024 CWPP Survey population that lives in apartments was more focused on objective features--describing external and structural conditions influencing the safety of apartment buildings. Whereas SVP residents incorporated personal perceptions and broader contextual factors, such as city infrastructure and community diligence. Both perceive an advantage in urban settings.
- The 2024 CWPP survey population that lives in single-family homes provided a more generalized view of fire safety concerns, better described specific factors contributing to wildfire risks, and emphasized broader environmental and structural issues. The SVP responses reflected more on individual challenges, and localized vulnerabilities and experiences.
- The 2024 CWPP survey population that lives in mobile/manufactured home parks talked about structural vulnerability of these types of homes and nearby dense vegetation and trees. The SVP responses were similar but focused more on individual and communal action. Many mentioned housing densities as a risk factor.

While all groups are concerned about wildfire risk, mobile home and single-family residents focus more on external environmental threats, whereas apartment dwellers most often mentioned building maintenance issues and urban-specific risks. Housing type, therefore, appears to affect perceptions of personal safety and relative risk to homes.

Ownership Status Makes a Difference

Homeowners tend to feel safer due to their ability to implement fire mitigation measures. However, their safety is contingent on neighboring properties and broader community efforts.

Renters feel significantly less in control, often relying on rental property owners or HOAs to enforce fire safety measures. Many express concerns about inadequate vegetation management and poorly maintained infrastructure. Renters commonly cited their downtown location, away from hills and the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), as justification for feeling safe. While many recognized the importance of fuel reduction (managing grass, brush, and trees), few performed these tasks themselves. The difference between homeowner and renter perspective is pronounced.

Conclusion

On average, respondents in both sampled populations feel that their homes are safe from wildfire. This is an important finding since the entire City of Ashland is classified as a Wildfire Hazard Zone based on extensive scientific analysis and geospatial modeling (see the Community Base Map in Chapter 4). This means that no neighborhood can be considered “wildfire safe” and relatively few homes in the City are constructed out of fire-resistant materials or have fire-reluctant landscaping. Therefore, it would be worth investigating in depth, why people tend to score the situation more positively and why some of their explanations contradicted their scoring choice.

These findings reveal differences in fire safety awareness across socioeconomic and ownership status, underscoring the need for targeted education and motivational incentives. Community-wide efforts are crucial, as individual mitigation depends on surrounding properties, infrastructure, and emergency preparedness. The 2024 studies emphasize the need for stronger fire safety enforcement, greater rental property owner accountability, improved HOA compliance, and expanded community awareness initiatives to ensure consistent wildfire mitigation regardless of income and homeownership.

Preferred Wildfire Safety Information Sources

In 2019, single-family homeowners living near wildland fuels (in the hills and between Oak St. and East of North Mountain Ave.)—were surveyed about their wildfire risk information sources and their usefulness. The most **used** information sources indicated by the respondents were the Media (73%) and Ashland Fire & Rescue (71%), though the method of fire department communication was unclear.

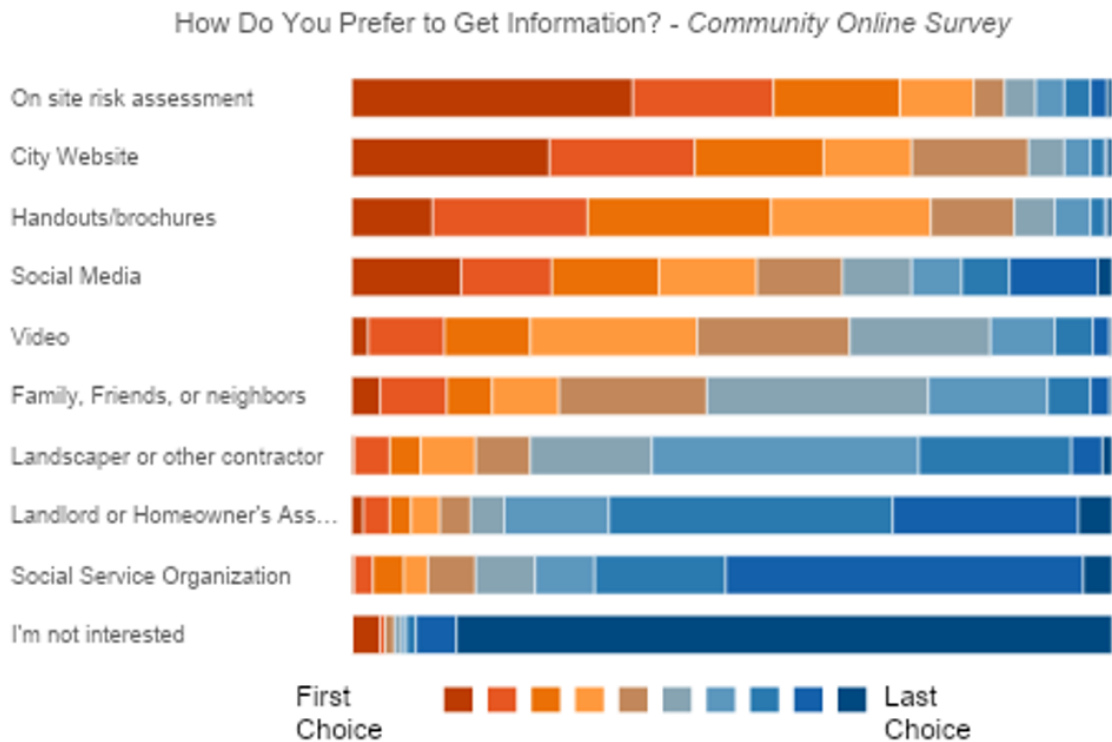


Figure 4: Preferred Methods for Obtaining Wildfire Information

The respondents were also asked to identify how they preferred to get information. The results are as follows:

- Mailed newsletter (71%) and email/e-newsletter (67%) are most preferred
- 58% would like to get info through in-person interactions and 56% prefer the newspaper
- 54% indicated a preference for the Internet, and 20% would like to get information through social media (the least popular choice) though only 13% had received information from social media
- About half of the respondents like to receive info through TV news, radio, and community meetings

The 2024 CWPP Survey respondents were invited to rank the options for obtaining information on how to make their home safer. The results are shown in Figure 4. An interpretation of the results follows:

- Receiving an on-site risk assessment was the top choice (37%). It also ranked relatively high as a second (18.5%) and third (16.6%) choice.
- The city website received the first choice for 26% of the respondents, second choice for 19.1%, and 16.9% made it their third choice. The city website is clearly useful but the fact that it did not get the highest score may reflect that the type of people who responded have computers and are used to getting information remotely. On-site assessments are customized and engaging while going to the city website is more like going to a library. Both are important for different reasons.
- Handouts and brochures were the first choice for 10.7% of respondents. 20.4% ranked them as their second choice. The third choice (24.1%) and fourth choice (21%) rankings received the highest score in this category which indicates that handouts and brochures, while useful, should not be the first choice for educating the public.
- Social media was the first choice for 14.4% of the respondents. Social media was ranked moderately low across the board from 1st to 9th choice between ~6-14% which may indicate that it has not become mainstream but is broadly acceptable for dispersing information.
- Videos were the first choice for 2.2% and last choice for 0.3%. Video was the fourth choice for 21.9%, fifth choice for 20.1%, and sixth choice for 18.5% of respondents which indicates a lot of interest in this option that could be coupled with other educational tools.
- Family and friends were ranked high in the mid-range of options 19.4% (5th), 29.2% (6th), and 15.7% (7th). While not a first or last choice for many, it is clearly a preferred option for some. More work is needed to figure out how to capitalize on family and friend connections.
- Landscapers and contractors ranked relatively low as the first choice (4.7%), but they ranked well (35.1%) for the 7th choice. Service providers are a conduit for information for some residents.
- Only 1.6% ranked landlord or a homeowner association as the first choice. More than 37% ranked them as 8th choice and 24.5% ranked as a 9th choice. Rental property owners and

homeowner organizations appear to be on par with contractors and landscapers as a choice for information on how to make residences more wildfire resistant.

- Social service organizations did not rank highly as a first or last choice, but 47% ranked them as 9th choice—not a popular option. More research is needed to figure out how these organizations can help get information to residents that rely on their services.
- Nearly 4% selected “I’m not interested” as their first choice. This means that more than 95% place “not interested” at the bottom of their ranked list, which indicates a significant positive interest in getting information on how to make homes safer by most respondents.

The ranked choice results differ from the 2019 Survey results and the 2024 data collection projects. A striking difference is a preference for mailed (71%) or email newsletters (67 %) for single-family households in 2019, with “in-person interactions” ranking in third place. In the 2024 on-line survey of the general population (which happened to represent a similar percentage of persons over 65 years), the top scoring option is on-site risk assessments with the “City Website” in second place. The difference could be explained by the differences in the sampling platform (choose all that apply vs ranked choice) and wording of the options (“in-person interactions” vs. “on-site assessments”).

People interviewed during the 2024 SVP project were directly asked how they get information about how to make their homes safe from wildfire but were not asked to say what they prefer as a mode of communication. They were not prompted with a pick list or asked to rank their choices. While the approach is different, the results are worth comparing to the 2019 “chose all that apply” approach and the 2024 survey ranked list of preferred learning methods generated by the on-line survey responses.

Two-hundred twenty-three (223) SVP responses were recorded and sorted into categories as shown in the table below in descending order of occurrence:

Seventy-eight of the responses recorded are in the “don’t get information” (49) and “don’t know” categories (29). This means that ~35% of the respondents are uninformed. Most apartment dwellers reported not getting information. In the 2019 survey of single-family households, 38% reported that they “lack specific info on how to reduce risk on my property.” While this population appears to be much more informed, they indicated that what they know is inadequate. The results from two very different demographic groups indicates a significant need and opportunity for more effective

outreach and education in all housing types. The SVP Project data is particularly important because it reveals a huge gap in understanding by apartment dwellers.

Category	# responses	% of total
Haven't gotten any information	49	22.0
General knowledge/observation/experience informed	40	17.9
Directly from city fire staff or volunteers	35	15.7
Don't know how to make my home safer	29	13.0
Search on the Internet	24	10.8
I learned from family, friends, or neighbors	21	9.4
I got information through social and regular media	15	6.7
Training of some kind	14	6.3
My landscaper or landlord knows	12	5.4
From the City website	8	3.6
From a non-governmental organization or HOA	7	3.1
I don't care	6	2.7

Table 10: Where Respondents Obtain Information

Other observations of note are: (1) the City website was only mentioned by ~3.5% of the SVP interviewees, while it ranked as second choice for the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents, and ranked second choice for predominantly well-to-do single family households living in relatively high wildfire risk areas in 2019; and (2) nearly twice as many SVP interviewees said they get information from social or regular media than from the City Website or from a non-governmental organization or HOA. This means that posting information on the City website or pushing information through churches, HOAs, and social service organizations is likely not very effective for many socially vulnerable people and renters.

While nearly 18% of the SVP Project interviewees said they know what to do because of observation or experience, the highest percentage of interviewees (~15.7%) said they learned through direct engagement with city staff or volunteers. In addition, 32% of the SVP interviewees signed up for on-site risk assessments. These findings reinforce the 2024 CWPP survey top choice preference for "on-site assessments" which involves personal engagement with a knowledgeable and trustworthy person.

About 9.4% of SVP Project interviewees turn to friends, family, or neighbors for information. Approximately 5.4% get information from their landscaper or the rental property owner. This relative ranking mirrors the preference ranking in the 2024 CWPP Survey.

Key Takeaways for Future Outreach Efforts

- **Expand On-Site Assessments** – Given their high ranking across multiple studies, in-person evaluations should be prioritized to provide tailored recommendations and build trust.
- **Improve Outreach to Renters and Vulnerable Populations** – Apartment dwellers and lower-income groups lack sufficient wildfire safety information; outreach efforts must target these communities.
- **Leverage Direct Engagement** – City staff, fire department volunteers, and community leaders should take a proactive role in education and risk assessment efforts.
- **Diversify Information Channels** – While official websites and newsletters are useful for some, social media, community networks, and trusted service providers (e.g., landscapers, rental property owners) should also be utilized to broaden the reach.

By tailoring communication strategies to different housing types and demographics, Ashland can ensure more effective wildfire safety education and risk reduction efforts across the community.

Barriers To Improving Home Wildfire Safety

In 2019, 1,147 mail-in survey respondents, 319 online survey respondents in 2024, and 221 SVP project interviewees were asked to identify barriers to having a wildfire-safe home. The 2019 and 2024 survey respondents selected obstacles from a pick list. Responses from the SVP interviewees were open-ended, with minimal prompting, leading to more varied and sometimes off-topic answers. Results are presented in the following order: 2019 survey, SVP interviews, and 2024 online survey, with a comparison at the end of this section.

2019 Single-family Household Responses

Survey respondents were asked, “Do any of the following prevent you from taking action to reduce the wildfire risk on your Ashland property?”

The top barrier reported was **physical difficulty** in performing mitigation work, cited by nearly half (49%) of respondents. Other key obstacles included **lack of specific information** on wildfire risk reduction (38%), **financial cost** (35%), and **limited options for slash removal** (34%).

Additional barriers included:

- **31%** cited **lack of time** as a reason for not conducting risk reduction.
- **21%** did not want to alter their property's appearance.
- **18%** believed risk reduction actions were ineffective.
- **7%** faced **Homeowner Association restrictions** on tree removal.
- **4%** were **not property owners**, limiting their ability to take action.

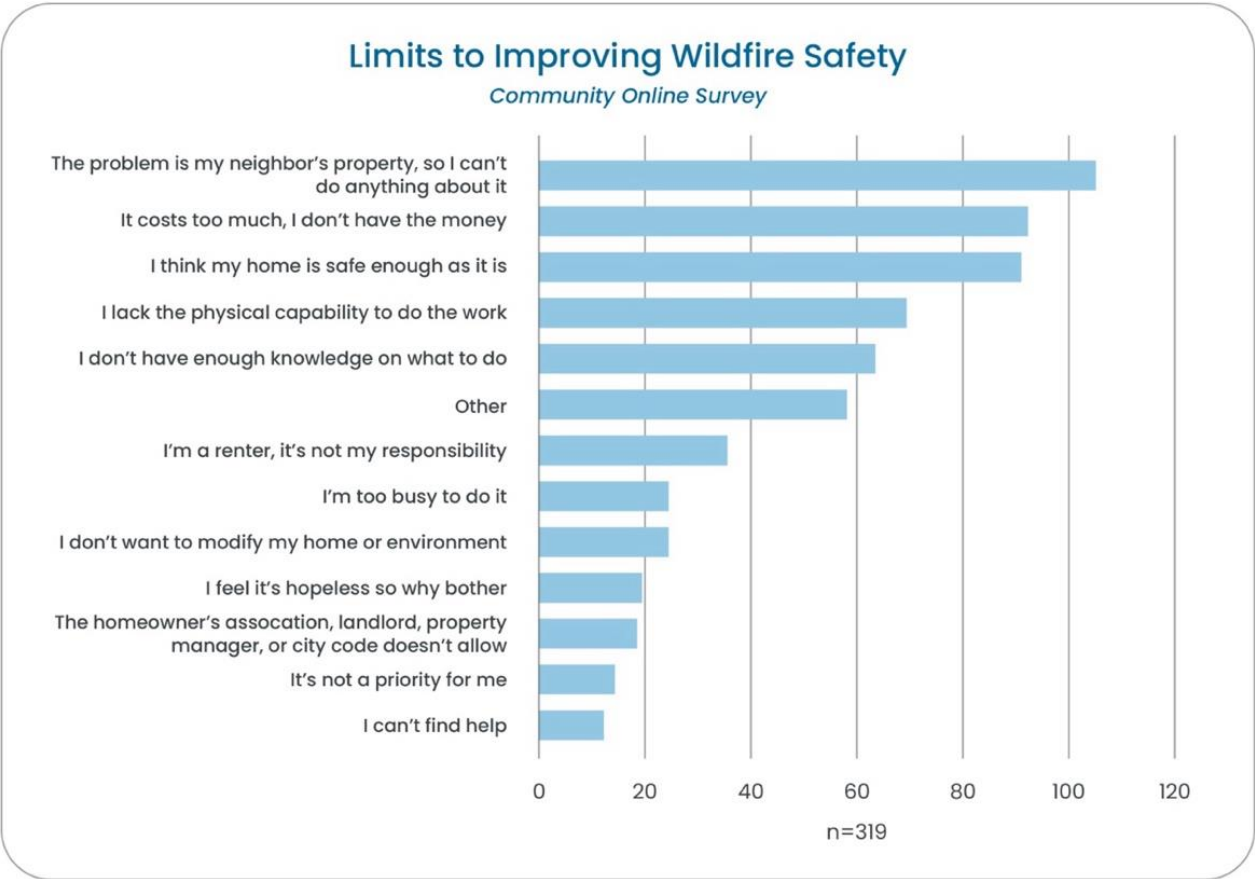


Figure 5: Barriers to Mitigation

SVP Project Interview Responses

When asked what prevented them from improving wildfire safety at home, out of 221 respondents:

- 43% stated they had no control or responsibility, as decisions rested with rental property owners, mobile park managers, or HOAs.
- 24% cited financial constraints as a major barrier.
- 18.7% felt they lacked the necessary knowledge to make improvements.

Nearly three-quarters of renters reported that they either do not consider it their responsibility to make their homes wildfire-safe or feel unable to do so due to restrictions imposed by their homeowners' association (HOA), rental property owner, or property management company. Some renters expressed hope that their rental property owner or management company were taking wildfire safety measures, while several others complained that they were not.

Among the 173 socially vulnerable individuals interviewed, the top four barriers to making their homes wildfire-safe were:

1. Lack of agency (control over property decisions)
2. Financial constraints
3. Insufficient knowledge of wildfire safety measures
4. Limited physical ability to act

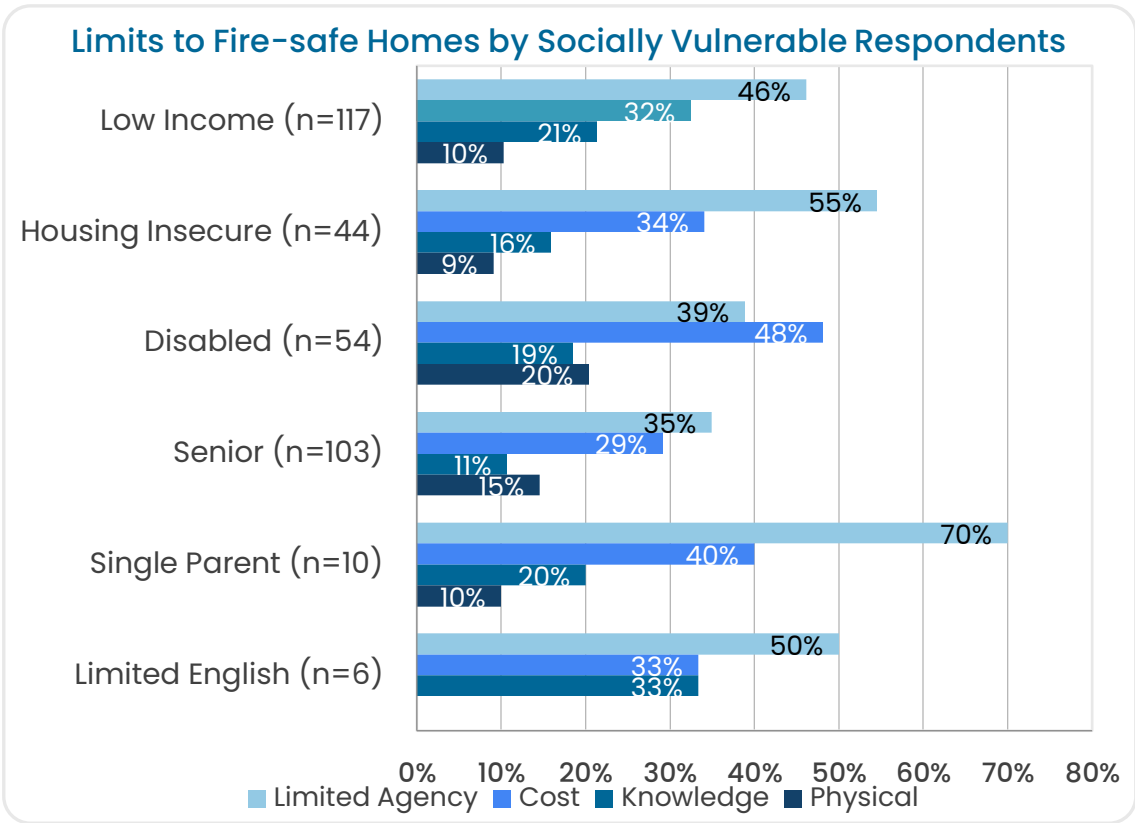


Figure 6: Percentage of Socially Vulnerable individuals (SVPs) Who Reported Facing These Challenges

Findings Across Studies

Lack of Knowledge

According to the 2019 single-family households survey, 38% of single-family households in the WUI are twice as likely to feel that they lack adequate knowledge about how to reduce the wildfire risk on their property than the general population in the 2024 CWPP Survey (19%) and SVP respondents (also 19%). This is interesting and not readily explainable.

It’s not “my” Responsibility

Of the 144 renters that responded during the 2024 SVP Project interviews, nearly 33.3% said it is not their responsibility to make their home wildfire safe, while 10.3% of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents

who are renters selected “it’s not my responsibility”. That is a more than threefold difference between the two rental populations sampled. The percentage of the 2019 respondents that said it was not their responsibility matches the percentage of respondents that indicated that they are renters. There is a clear correlation with renters assuming they have no responsibility to reduce wildfire risk where they live.

Lack of Agency and Property Restrictions

Lack of agency refers to the idea that respondents do not believe they have control over, or responsibility for, making their homes safer. Rather, they believe that responsibility or control lies with rental property owners or managers, mobile or manufactured home park owners or managers, or a Homeowners’ Association (HOA). Households interviewed in the 2024 SVP Project that most frequently identified lack of agency as a factor preventing them from having fire-resistant residences were renters (84%), single parents (70%) and housing-insecure (55%).

- 7% of the 2019 respondents indicated that they are restricted by their HOA from cutting trees
- 5% of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents indicated that they are limited by their HOA, landlord, property management company, or city code/ordinance
- 14% of the 2024 SVP project renters and homeowners interviewed said that they are limited by their HOA/landlord/or a property management company.
- Some renters mentioned “hoping” that their rental property owner or property management company were keeping their rental units’ wildfire resistant, but some complained that they aren’t.

Residents in the SVP project cohort are nearly three times more likely to be unable to reduce wildfire risk where they live than single-family households that own their properties. The nuances of these restrictions deserve greater attention to effectively target educational efforts and find workable solutions. HOA restrictions can be changed by a majority agreement among the property owners of the HOA. The greater challenge is addressing barriers to wildfire risk reduction imposed by restrictions placed on occupants by thousands of privately managed and company managed rentals in Ashland.

Lack of Physical Capability

- 49% of the 2019 respondents indicated a reason for not doing work is that it is “physically difficult”
- 21% of the 2024 respondents indicated that the lack the “physical capability” to do the work
- 7.1% of the 2024 SVP respondents expressed a lack of physical capacity

Further investigation is indicated to understand why so many on-line respondents chose physical limitations as a reason for not making their home wildfire resistant. It could be because 53% of the respondents are over 65 years old. However, 46% of the SVP socially vulnerable respondents self-identified as seniors so there does not appear to be a simple answer.

Threefold fewer of the respondents from the 2024 SVP Project indicated that physical capacity was a limiting factor than the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents. The difference is even more significant between the 2019 Survey response -- sevenfold more 2019 respondents said they lacked physical capability to do mitigation work than the SVP respondents.

This widely divergent finding begs for an explanation. The 2024 SVP project intentionally targeted physically challenged populations (e.g., disabled) while the 2019 survey and 2024 CWPP survey were not selective. One explanation could be the number of seniors represented in the three sampled groups. But it is not enough. The average age of the 2019 survey respondent was 67 years. More than half of the 2024 on-line survey respondents (53%) indicated that they were 65 years old or older. Forty-five (45) percent of the SVP population self-identified as “seniors” giving no specific age. Yes, the average age was likely higher in the 2019 single-family household survey but was it proportionately significant enough to support a sevenfold larger percentage over the 2024 SVP sample?

Twenty-four (24) percent of the 2024 CWPP survey respondents self-identified as “lower income, a single parent, limited English-speaking, unemployed, disabled or living in crowded conditions.” Since the status for each of these vulnerability indices was not asked for, we do not know how many considered themselves “disabled” which could be an obstacle to physically reducing their wildfire risk at their residence.

The 2019 Survey of single-family households asked respondents to identify incentives that would encourage them to reduce their risk. Of the four incentives identified, 76% indicated that they need “help doing the work” which presumably means they are physically limited.

Persons responding to the SVP interviews were asked to identify whether they were low-income, housing insecure, disabled, a single parent, and/or if anyone in the household had limited English-speaking skills. Nearly 26% that self-identified as “disabled” said they were limited by physical capacity to reduce wildfire risk. Not surprisingly for the disabled, limited physical capacity was mentioned nearly twice as often as that of all other socially vulnerability indicators. interviewed. Between 12.8% and 15.5% of low income, housing insecure, and seniors (all of which were well represented in the dataset) mentioned physical ability as a limiting factor (Figure 7).

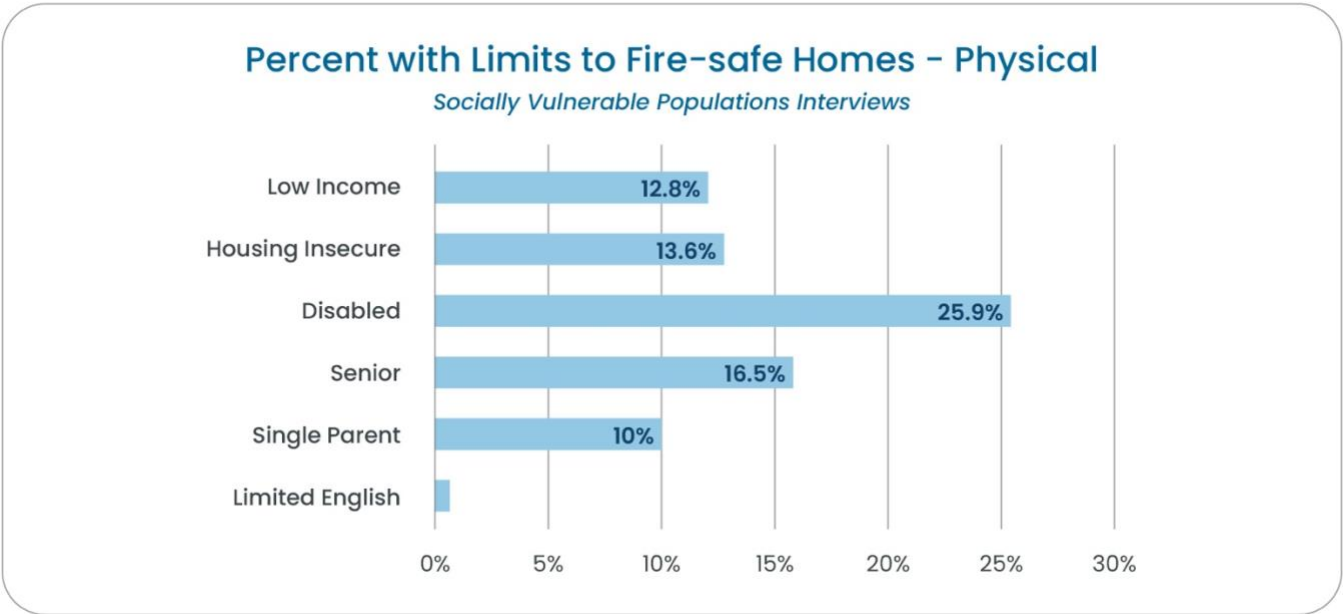


Figure 7: Percentage of SVP Who Are Physically Limited

Finances (Cost)

- 35% of the 2019 survey respondents indicated that finances were a reason
- 28.2% of the 2024 on-line survey respondents indicated that cost of doing the work was a reason

- 24% of the 2024 SVP interviews mentioned that cost was a limiting factor. All SVP target populations mentioned finances as a limitation. The percentage of seniors (28.2; n=101) that mentioned finances as a limiting factor was the lowest of the SVP target populations, but it is close to 1/3 of that demographic.

The 2019 study gathered two types of demographic data—1) age of the respondent, and average annual income of the household.

The three surveys' results are in a similar ballpark relative to expressed need for financial assistance. However, the 2019 population which can be considered more affluent (92% are homeowners; 77% indicated that their annual income is more than \$50,000 per year; and 43% have an annual income over \$100,000) claims that financial obstacles are a reason not to reduce their properties wildfire hazards more than the other two surveyed populations. Only 3 percent of the sampled population rents, 5% own and rent out their home for long periods, and 92% own and occupy their single-family properties.

The results are curious because the percentage of economically challenged respondents is presumably proportionally higher in the SVP population. It would be interesting to explore this further. Perhaps it's because the SVP populations are less aware of what needs to get done so can't imagine the costs; and the more well-to-do inherently view any change in their normal activities as a financial burden. Another possible explanation is that the SVP Survey gathered information from a higher percentage of renters who have limited responsibility for investing in making their residential property safer. And a third explanation is the way the question was framed. The only population asked to identify incentives that would encourage mitigation was the 2019 single-family households in the higher risk areas of Ashland. Sixty-five (65) percent of the respondents chose "financial assistance" as a motivator.

Lack of Time or it Takes too Much Time

- 31% of the 2019 survey respondents indicated that the amount of time it takes is a deterrent
- 7% of the 2024 CWPP survey respondents indicated that time is an issue
- 7% of the 2024 SVP interviewees said that they don't have time to reduce their wildfire risk

The findings are similar enough to be confirming for the two 2024 surveys but why is there a nearly a 4.5 times difference between the 2019 and 2024 respondents since 60% of the 2019 respondents indicated that they are retired? The significant difference may reflect the 2019 respondents' higher proportion of retirees, who may perceive time differently despite their retired status, highlighting a need to better understand how time is perceived as a barrier.

It's not a Priority or It's not Worth Doing

- 18% of the 2019 respondents feel that risk reduction activities are not effective
- 5.3 % of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents selected "It's hopeless, so why bother"
- 3.8% of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents selected "It's not a priority for me"
- 8.4% of the SVP interviewees expressed apathy or said they don't think it's a priority for them
- ~2% of the SVP interviewees expressed feelings of hopelessness so "why bother?"

The range of responses and how they are expressed could be indicative of differing attitudes between demographic groups, but it is quite likely the way in which the responses were solicited. The 2019 respondents were only given the option to one answer related to topic and it was limited to whether they thought that the risk reduction activities were ineffective. The answer was couched more like an opinion than a feeling. The 2024 surveys did a better job of capturing emotions relating to taking action.

Regardless of how comparable the results are, it appears that roughly 2-9% of the residential population is disengaged or discouraged. The reason for this cannot be determinable based on the data collected but could be because SVP respondents tend to be more challenged by their living conditions or occupied with meeting basic survival needs.

Nothing Needs to be Done

- 28% of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents don't think they need to do anything
- 4.4% of the 2024 SVP interviewees expressed the opinion that nothing needs to be done

“No matter what I do, if my neighbors are not held to the same standard, what difference will it make?”

– Ashland Resident

The 2024 CWPP Survey respondents who don’t think they need to do anything are remarkably different from the SVP respondents. Why so many CWPP Survey respondents think they don’t need to take action is undeterminable based on the collected data. However, based on community wildfire risk assessment data and modeling, the chance that 28% of residential structures don’t need to have any wildfire risk reduction work done is extremely small.

Neighbors are the Problem

- 40% of the 2019 survey respondents indicated that their neighbors “are not taking action” to addresses sources of wildfire risk on their properties and 90% of these properties have conditions that “increase the likelihood of wildfire spreading” to the respondent’s property. According to the 2019 report, “[d]espite the very active Firewise USA® program in the area, relatively few respondents report having participated in broader community activities related to wildfire....”
- 32.3% of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents selected “the problem is my neighbor’s property” as the primary reason limiting their ability to reduce their wildfire risk
- 1.3% of the SVP interviewees said their neighbors were the reason for not reducing wildfire risk

The difference between the 2019 and 2024 surveyed populations and the 2024 SVP interviewees is remarkable. One explanation could be because the much higher proportion of renters in the SVP study lacks agency to reduce their wildfire risk, so they pay little attention to potential issues on neighboring properties. Homeowners seem much more aware of wildfire risk reduction requirements, so they pay more attention than renters due to conditions on their neighbors’ properties. The 2019 and 2024 CWPP surveyed populations are primarily representative of homeowners (92 and 83% respectively).

Can't Find Help

- The 2019 survey did not ask respondents to list reasons for not conducting mitigation work. However, respondents were asked to identify incentives to getting work done. One of the four incentives they could choose was “a list of recommended contractors.” Sixty-three (63) percent of the respondents identified this need to “encourage residents to mitigate” wildfire risks on their properties.
- 3.1% of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents indicated that they can't find help to do the work.
- 1.8% of the 2024 SVP interviewees said they couldn't find help.

The results indicate that finding wildfire risk reduction contractors is challenging at least for single-family homeowners. Difficulty finding qualified help is also brought up as a concern by residents when the City's wildfire risk assessors evaluate properties. An expanded list of qualified contractors could be a valuable resource to give residents.

I Don't want to Change

- 21% of the 2019 survey respondents indicated that they don't want to change their property's appearance
- 7% of the 2024 on-line survey respondents indicated that they don't want to modify their property
- 7% of the 2024 SVP interviewees did not want to modify their homes. The reason given most often during the interviews for not modifying the residence is a desire to maintain privacy.

Other Reasons for not Reducing Wildfire Risk

Of the 2024 CWPP Survey respondents, 56 (17.6%) selected “other” and provided written responses. While many reiterated previously listed barriers, some raised concerns about unmanaged City lands. Among SVP interviewees, 20 (8.9%) mentioned topics unrelated to the question, categorized as “other.” Their responses reflect diverse perspectives on wildfire safety, shaped by personal circumstances and available resources. Some cited structural vulnerabilities, including limited property access, closely spaced trailers, and flammable landscaping. Others pointed to systemic issues such as infrequent debris removal, county-maintained vegetation, and the high cost of fire preparedness, which disproportionately affects low-income families.

Personal challenges also play a role—disability, grief, and survivalist mindsets influence attitudes toward fire assessments and mitigation. While some prefer self-education, others remain hesitant or unwilling to make changes. Aesthetic and emotional attachments to natural features often hinder mitigation efforts, while practical barriers, such as limited access to hoses and mobility issues, add further challenges.

Conclusion

These perspectives illustrate the complex interplay of practical, emotional, and financial obstacles in wildfire preparedness. Overall, the suite of barriers reflects the need for collective action, strategic planning, and customized risk reduction approaches.

Insurance Coverage Among Ashland Residents

Insurance plays a critical role in a household's capacity to recover from wildfire and insurability is a requisite to purchase a home for many homebuyers. The least likely to be able to recover fully from wildfire losses are members of the socially vulnerable demographic groups who strongly tend to be renters of higher density housing.

Few of the nearly 1,140 respondents to the [2019 Survey](#), 97% of whom were homeowners, indicated that they had had any specific interaction with their insurance provider regarding wildfire risk. However, 12% said their company had provided them with some information. Approximately 2% reported that their insurance company provided a risk reduction discount for reducing wildfire risk and 2% reported that their insurance was cancelled or was found non-renewable (see graphic below). In hindsight it is unfortunate that the respondents were not asked whether they chose to go without insurance.

The home insurance landscape has changed since 2019. Oregon is one of 10 states where home insurance rates rose the most from 2018–2023. The insurance rate change from 2018–2023 was 44.8% with a 16.5% increase in 2023 alone (Realty Today, 2025).

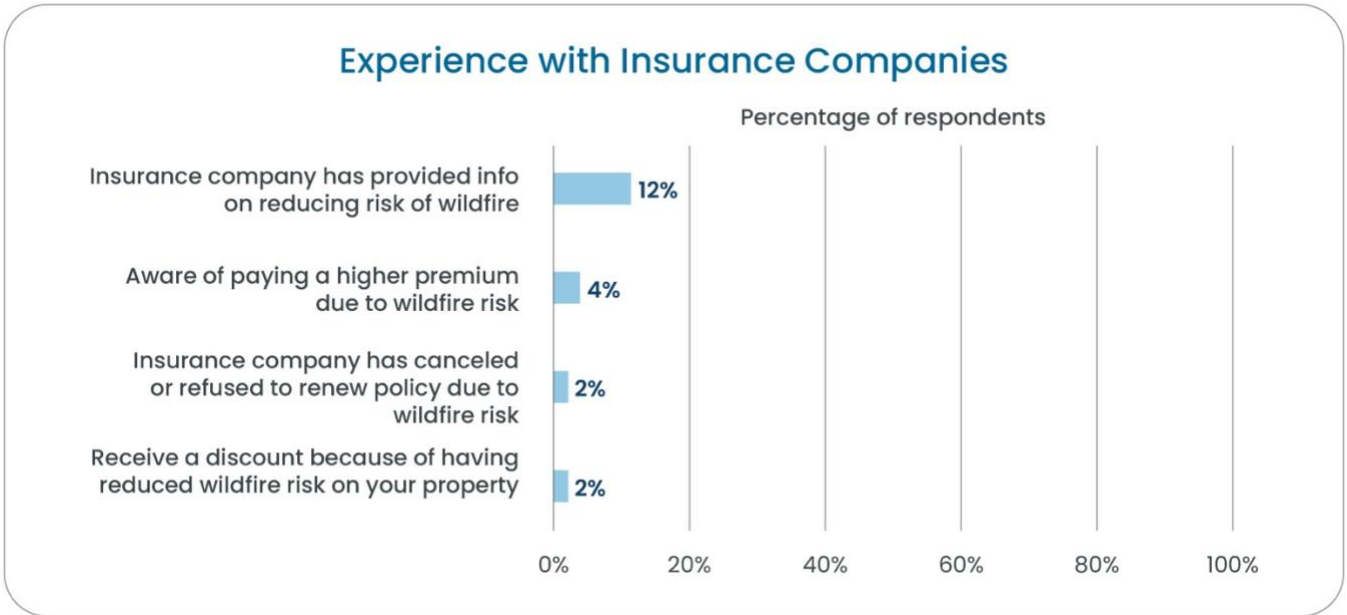


Figure 8: 2019 Respondent Experiences with Insurance

The purpose of the following discussion is to explore whether residents are concerned about the altered insurance landscape which is largely driven by increased wildfires in the western states. Homeowner and renter insurance coverage are discussed separately because perceptions of the need for and ability to get adequate insurance differs between renters and homeowners.

Homeowners’ Insurance

A 2024 Consumer Federation of America study found that around 6 million homeowners—or 7.4% of the homeowner population in the U.S.—have no homeowners insurance, up from 5% in 2019. *Do Ashland homeowners perceive a link between insurance coverage and reducing wildfire risk? Do perceptions differ by housing type?*

Homeowners who responded to the [2024 CWPP Survey](#) were not asked directly if they had homeowners’ insurance, but they were asked to answer a question pertaining to their experience with insurance premium changes. Approximately half (56%) of the respondents indicated that their insurance premium had not been affected by anything more than normal (including a modest increase), and nearly 29% indicated that their rate had risen substantially because of recent

wildfires. Five percent (5%) did not know if their rate had changed and two percent (2%) didn't know if their premium had increased because of recent wildfires.

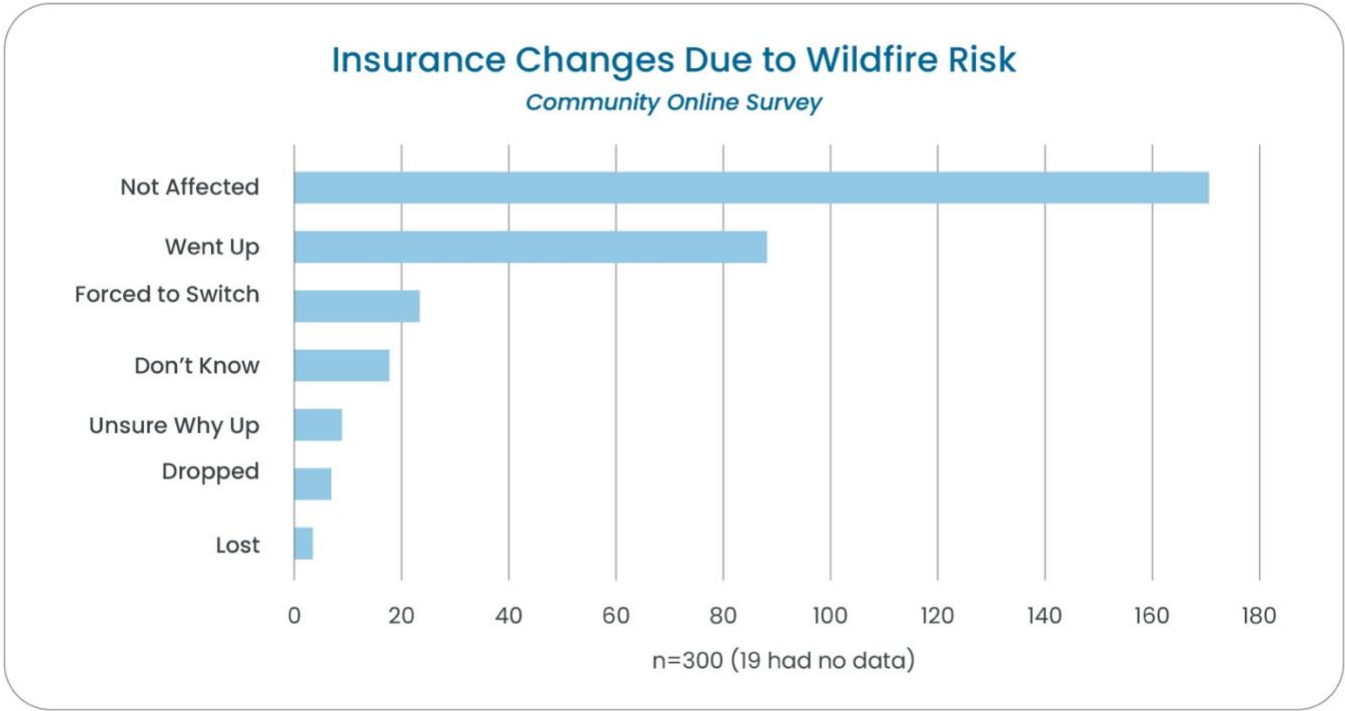


Figure 9: Respondents Insurance Coverage

Through deduction, we found that more than 98% of homeowners who responded to the 2024 CWPP survey have insurance coverage.

Does housing type owned affect the answer to insurance premium questions?

The answer to this question is “probably”, but the sample size is only large enough from the 2024 CWPP Survey for single-family homeowners. About 56% of single-family homeowners reported that their “insurance has not been affected or only a minimal, normal increase rate has taken place.” All but two of eight condominium owners (75%) said there was no notable increase.

Approximately 31% of homeowners of all types said their “premium went up significantly in the past few years due to wildfire risk. Five homeowners (~2%) said their insurance premium had increased but the reason was unknown. Ten respondents were unsure how to answer the question.

Seventeen (7.4%) of single-family homeowners selected “My company dropped my coverage, and I had to find another company.” One single family household chose: “My coverage was dropped, and I chose to go without insurance.” Two mobile/manufactured homeowners chose to go without insurance.

One of the first questions asked of the **2024 SVP** interviewees was whether they have homeowner’s insurance coverage. Of the 81 homeowners, 11.1% said they had no homeowner’s insurance. Many of them live in a mobile/manufactured home park and several cited premium cost and difficulty getting insurance as reasons for not having coverage. The number of uninsured SVP homeowners is 33% higher than the national average which is 7.4%. The number of uninsured homeowners from the **2024 CWPP Survey** (5%) is less than half the number of uninsured homeowners (11.1%) in the **2024 SVP** project population. The lack of insurance coverage in the SVP homeowner population means that these folks are far less likely to be able to recover from wildfire-caused losses.

“Reason [for non-renewal of insurance] – unsatisfactory risk...your home is either located inside of or in close proximity of an area that is identified as having a high risk of wildfire.”

–Text from an insurance company to a client notifying them that their insurance coverage is being dropped

Renter’s Insurance Coverage

Of the 47 renters surveyed in the 2024 CWPP Survey, 13 (27.7%) reported having no renter’s insurance, while two were unsure, and one did not respond. This means 66.0% reported having insurance, a rate significantly higher than the national average, where 45% of renters lack coverage ([Simply Insurance, 2024](#)).

However, these findings may not represent all renters in Ashland. In contrast, 66.0% of the 144 renters interviewed in the SVP Project reported having no insurance, the opposite of the online survey results, where only one-third lacked coverage. This discrepancy suggests differences in renter demographics between the two surveys and highlights the need for further investigation into insurance accessibility and awareness among renters in Ashland.

These findings may not accurately represent Ashland’s renter population, as 66.0% of the 144 SVP Project renters reported having no renter’s insurance—the opposite of the 2024 CWPP Survey, where only one-third of renters lacked coverage. This discrepancy suggests differences in demographics or sampling methods between the two surveys and highlights the need for further analysis.

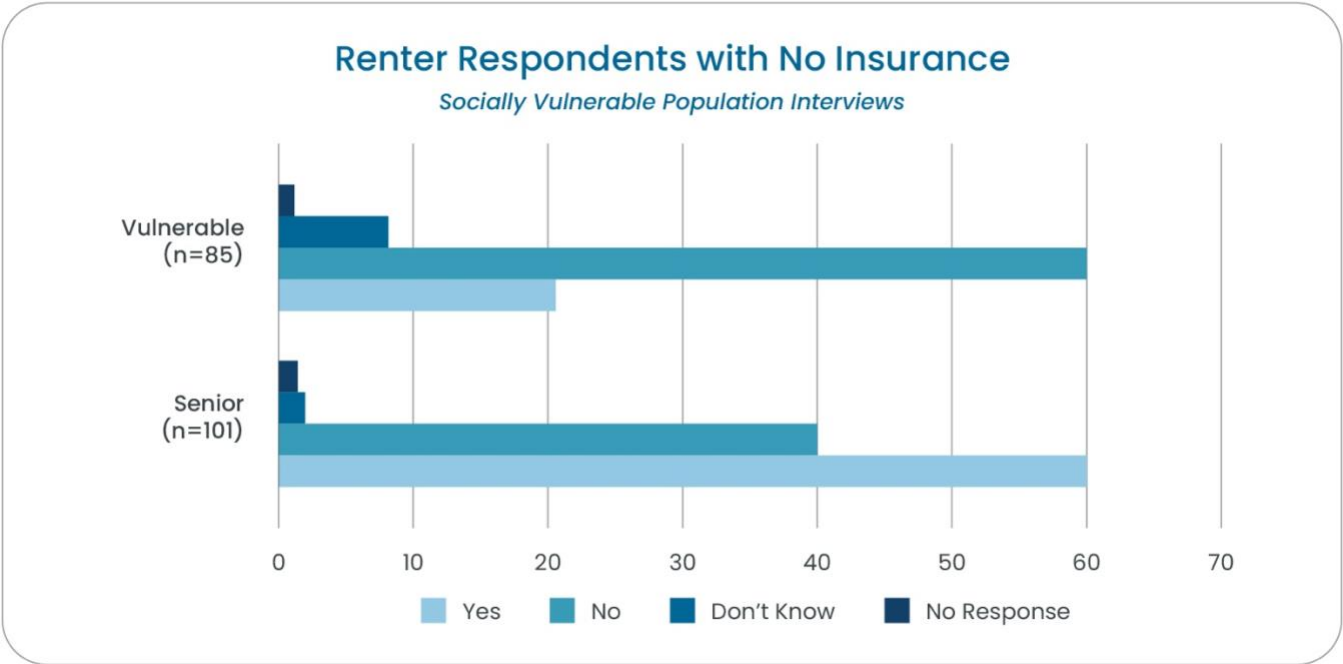


Figure 10: Renters With No Insurance

“Why do more renters in the 2024 CWPP Survey have insurance, while those interviewed in the SVP Project do not?”

Further research is needed, but it’s likely that SVP renters face greater economic challenges, making insurance less accessible. Socially vulnerable households are disproportionately affected by wildfire due to factors such as inadequate housing, social exclusion, lack of property ownership, and limited ability to evacuate effectively (Klampe, 2023; Fothergill & Peek, 2004).

Are “vulnerable” renters similarly defined in the two studies?

Of the 23 renters who self-identified to the 2024 CWPP Survey as “vulnerable”², seven (30.4%) indicated that they don’t have renter’s insurance. Of the 85 SVP project renters who self-identified as

“vulnerable”³, 69.4% said they have no renter’s insurance coverage or don’t know if they have insurance.

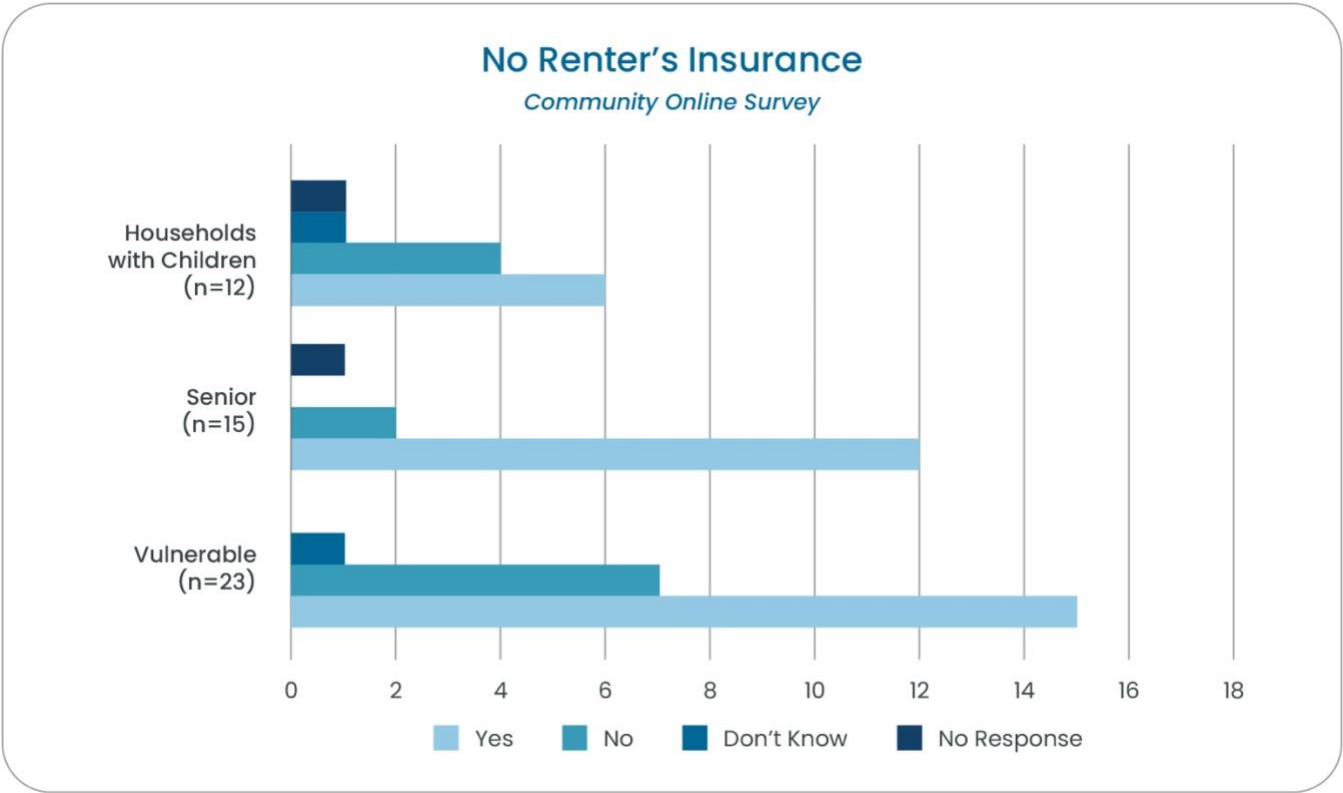


Figure 11: Additional Results On The Uninsured

- 2. The 2024 CWPP Survey definition of “vulnerable” is one or more of the following conditions: lower income, a single parent, limited English-speaking, unemployed, disabled, or living in crowded conditions.
- 3. The 2024 SVP Project definition of “vulnerable” is the interviewee self-identifies said “yes” to one or more of the following: low income, housing insecure, disabled, a senior, or has limited English-speaking skills.

While the definition of “vulnerable” is not identical in the sampled populations, both populations of renters who are “vulnerable” may be considered demographically comparable when the “seniors” are pulled out and analyzed separately (which was done for the SVP population – as shown in the graph on the previous page).

“Senior” Renters

Approximately 13.3% of households with senior (65 years or older) renters said they have no renters’ insurance when they responded to the on-line survey. Of the 101 self-identified “seniors” (age not claimed) who were interviewed in the SVP project, 38.6% said they do not have renters’ insurance coverage or didn’t know. There appears to be nearly **three times** more uninsured seniors in the SVP project population. This may be explained at least in part because we targeted low income, high density rental housing types during the interview process. The income levels and living conditions for the on-line respondents is likely different but we did not ask for income level in the SVP project.

Rental households with children

The data from 10 single-parent households interviewed in the SVP Project and 12 households with children under 18 in the 2024 CWPP Survey cannot be directly compared since the SVP survey did not ask all households whether they had children.

However, the 12 renter respondents in the 2024 CWPP Survey may include households with children, though the sample size is small. Among them, half (n=6) reported having renter’s insurance.

Does rental housing type affect renter’s insurance coverage?

Based on an analysis of the 2024 CWPP Survey data of housing types that renters occupy (see table below), those living in an apartment building or studio/ADU/cottage are the least likely to carry renters’ insurance. The findings are similar for the 2024 SVP respondents.

The online survey asked respondents about changes in their insurance costs due to wildfire risk.

Among renters with insurance:

- 67.6% reported no substantial change in their premiums.
- 6% said their premiums increased significantly in recent years due to wildfire risk.
- 14.7% were unsure if their premiums had changed, equal to the percentage who reported a substantial increase (14.7%).
- One renter noted an increase but did not know the reason.

Conclusion

Renters in apartment buildings are far less likely to carry renter's insurance, and renters who are socially vulnerable are not likely to be represented adequately by impersonal survey data. Renter's insurance premiums do not appear to have increased significantly due to increasing wildfire risk.

	Renters – Insured				Renters – Insured Percent			
	Yes	No	I Don't Know	No Answer	Yes	No	I Don't Know	No Answer
Apartment building with four or more units	2	6	1	0	4.3%	12.8%	2.1%	0.0%
Condominium	5	0	0	0	10.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Duplex	1	1	0	0	2.1%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Mixed use	1	0	0	0	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mobile/Manufactured Home or RV	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Room or rooms in a shared house	0	1	0	1	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	2.1%
Single family residence	14	1	0	0	29.8%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Studio/ADU/Cottage	4	3	0	0	8.5%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Townhouse	4	1	1	1	8.5%	2.1%	2.1%	0.0%
Triplex	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	31	13	2	1	66.0%	27.7%	4.3%	2.1%

Table 11: Insurance Breakdown By Dwelling Type

	Yes, my premium went up significantly in the past few years due to wildfire risk	My company dropped my coverage and I had to find another company	My coverage was dropped and I chose to go without insurance	I lost commercial insurance and elected for coverage under the Oregon Fair Plan	Premium increase reason unknown	My insurance has not been affected, or only a minimal, normal increase in rate has taken place	Do Not Know
Apartment building with four or more units	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%
Condominium	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.8%	0.0%
Duplex	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
Mixed use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
Mobile/Manufactured Home or RV	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Room or rooms in a shared house	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
Single family residence	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	32.4%	2.9%
Studio/ADU/Cottage	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%
Townhouse	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.8%	2.9%
Triplex	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	14.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	67.6%	14.7%

Table 12: Insurance changes by Dwelling Type

Perceived Urgency to Reduce Wildfire Risk in Ashland

The 2024 CWPP Survey shows a strong sense of urgency regarding wildfire risk:

- **77% believe action is needed “as quickly as possible.”**
- 8% think there’s time, but action is still necessary.
- 5% feel the current efforts are sufficient and no changes are needed.
- One respondent stated nothing should be done.

Key Takeaways from Open-Ended Responses

Among the 32 “other” responses, most reinforced existing answer choices. After filtering out irrelevant responses, an AI thematic analysis found key themes:

- **Immediate and ongoing action is essential**, focusing on vegetation management, overgrowth reduction, and wildfire risk mitigation in forest-adjacent areas.
- **Better access to resources and clear, centralized information** is needed to improve community preparedness.
- While progress has been noted, respondents stress the importance of **proactive risk reduction, balancing cost-effectiveness without causing panic.**
- **Community-wide efforts** such as education, improved evacuation routes, and sustained risk reduction measures are critical.
- Some concerns were raised about high-density housing and the need for localized strategies tailored to areas near forest interfaces.

Conclusion

The results highlight broad agreement that wildfire risk requires urgent, ongoing efforts and a well-coordinated community response.

Key Priorities Identified for the CWPP Update

The 2024 CWPP Survey invited respondents to “list any issue or concern that [they] would like to see addressed in the Ashland Community Protection Plan” and “...ideas about how to resolve the issue....” One hundred ninety-nine (62.4%) respondents provided statements on what they thought should be covered in the CWPP and ideas for addressing issues. The statements were sorted into five themes:

- Promoting Public Health and Safety
- Whole Community Engagement
- Wildfire Prevention and Response
- Mitigating Landscape Wildfire Potential
- Wildfire Recovery Planning

Specific concerns, issues, and ideas that were brought up were sorted and scored through AI (ChatGPT) analysis and a “public interest score” (PIS) scale assigned. The PIS ranged from 15 to 100 with 100 representing the greatest interest.

Public interest for **Promoting Public Health and Safety** Themes are:

PIS = 100; concerns about traffic bottlenecks, evacuation routes, and alternative plans.

PIS = 80; issues with narrow streets, overdevelopment, and lack of firebreaks.

PIS = 35; need for improved warning systems and multiple alert mechanisms.

PIS = 30; concerns about evacuation plans for schools and other institutions.

Public interest for **Whole Community Engagement** Themes are:

PIS = 90; clearing vegetation, enforcing property maintenance, and creating defensible spaces.

PIS = 75; need for better communication, outreach, and education about fire safety.

PIS = 70; challenges for disabled, elderly, low-income residents, and pet owners.

PIS = 50; concerns about rising insurance premiums and need for incentives for fire-safe measures.

PIS = 45; encouragement of neighborhood efforts and volunteer programs for safety.

PIS = 40; recommendations about fire-resistant plants and banning flammable landscaping.

PIS = 25; suggestions for organized volunteer efforts to assist with mitigation tasks.

PIS = 15; calls for plans that accommodate diverse needs, including mobility-impaired individuals.

Public interest for **Wildfire Response and Prevention** themes are:

PIS = 65; risks from illegal camping and the need for supervised spaces.

PIS = 60; criticism of city management’s use of funds and enforcement of safety codes.

PIS = 40; concerns about adequate water storage and availability during wildfires.

PIS = 20; stricter regulations and penalties for non-compliance with safety standards.

Stories and Insights

People who were interviewed during the SVP project were invited to share anything they wanted about wildfire. Many told stories or shared additional information that provide additional insights into residents’ concerns related to wildfire. The stories were analyzed by anthropology students at SOU and categorized into five groups:

1. Stories of wildfires which directly impacted them or family or close friends, including homes lost, displacement, and difficult evacuation experiences (57 respondents).
2. Stories and comments about wildfires which occurred in the vicinity, sometimes increasing respondents’ awareness of and/or preparation for wildfires (27 respondents).
3. Expressions of fear for themselves, family, and/or neighbors in the event of a wildfire (22 respondents).
4. Stories and comments that exemplified respondents’ sense of empowerment or preparedness (20 respondents); and
5. Stories and comments that expanded on limits to capacity or responsibility to prepare their home related to rental/mobile home park property management or HOA (7 respondents).

Appendix F

Socially Vulnerable Populations Project Report

Appendix F: Socially Vulnerable Populations

Project Report

Enabling Socially Vulnerable Persons to Have Fire Resistant Homes

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, significant progress has been made in reducing wildfire hazards in the built environment. However, many residents remain unaware of these risks or are unable—or unwilling—to act. A critical gap exists in understanding how socially vulnerable groups—such as low-income and housing-insecure individuals, mobile home residents, seniors, disabled individuals, single parents, and limited-English speakers—perceive wildfire risks in Ashland. Addressing their needs begins with assessing their awareness and identifying the barriers they face in reducing wildfire risks. This insight will help develop more effective community engagement strategies tailored to their specific challenges.

2024 Project Report

The purpose of this project was to provide supporting information to identify strategies to motivate and enable socially vulnerable persons (SVPs) who have not been engaged so far for whatever reason to reduce the risk of wildfire at their place of residence. This project report contains supporting documentation for the Socially Vulnerable Populations (SVP) Chapter of the Ashland 2025 CWPP.

Measurable Deliverables

- Formulate a project implementation work plan.
- Significantly improve understanding of the perspectives of low income, housing insecure, mobile/manufactured home park, disabled, senior, single parent and limited English-speaking households that affect their ability to create and maintain a wildfire resistant home.
- Survey the renter population through one one-on-one interviews and an on-line survey.
- Create a draft action plan using strategies that are humanizing, empowering, effective, and meaningful for target populations to progressively work towards having wildfire resistant homes and outdoor spaces.

- Incorporate the findings into the 2025 CWPP to support proposed initiatives.

Assumptions

- Everybody is “vulnerable” to the impacts of extreme wildfire.
- To engage SVPs, we will strive to interact with them in their places.
- SVP residential units are co-located and scattered throughout the City; some may be a room or larger portion of a shared residence.
- Our task at the “discovery” stage is to listen and not educate.
- Addressing the housing needs of the unhoused is not part of this project.
- Evacuation and smoke preparedness concerns and issues (including evacuation for vehicle less and limited mobility populations) will be the responsibility of the Public Health and Safety Work Group (PHS).
- Project work will be done primarily by volunteers. Volunteer contributions will be tracked.

Methodology

The effort was led by Charisse Sydoriak, volunteer CWPP Community Engagement Liaison and supported by Chris Chambers, COA Ashland Fire & Rescue CWPP Team Lead.

Collaborators:

- Kelly Burns -- COA Emergency Manager
- Kevin Preister -- Director, Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy
- Linda Reid -- COA Housing Specialist

The working group had its first meeting on June 3, 2024, and its last meeting on January 8, 2025. Working group membership evolved over the 16 times we met. The primary role of the working group from June–September was to agree on the approach to collecting information from socially vulnerable demographic groups and support data collection. The role of the working group from October–December was to distill the findings into a set of challenge statements and recommend an action plan to address issues.

Volunteers were recruited to perform the interviews. Charisse Sydoriak performed about half of the interviews, Trish Malone performed about one-third, and the remainder (~1/6th) were performed independently by four trained volunteers and 20 Southern Oregon University Sociology students in Jessica Piekielek's fall 2024 Anthropology course.

Our goal was to create a natural, non-authoritative conversation. We did not impose formal criteria for defining social status—such as low-income, housing-insecure, disabled, or senior—allowing respondents to self-identify. As a result, the findings reflect individual perspectives rather than official classifications, and while the selection process was pseudo-randomized, it is not statistically representative.

The project prioritized building trust with participants, recognizing that many had experienced or were experiencing trauma, particularly related to wildfire. We also acknowledged that some might be uncomfortable speaking with an authority figure. To foster a safe and open dialogue, interviewers were advised to:

- Avoid wearing uniforms, even if affiliated with the City.
- Establish credibility with a name tag and legitimacy through a CERT program shirt or an official business card from Ashland Fire & Rescue or CERT.
- Be mindful of language, ensuring interactions remain respectful and considerate.
- Prioritize listening over speaking, approaching each conversation with curiosity.
- Refrain from judging responses, even if they seem off-topic.
- Follow the respondent's lead in the conversation while still aiming to cover key questions.
- Inform respondents that notes are being taken to accurately capture their words.

The approach fostered an environment where participants could feel comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives.

“Local Conversations” (Data Collection) Process

From June–October, a variety of opportunities for people to safely express their thoughts and feelings about wildfire were provided. In July, we agreed on two “discovery” approaches: 1) “coffee

klatches” consisting of people who know the host; and 2) interviewing people at their place of residence or opportunistically around town. We discussed stationing volunteers at places where targeted persons were likely to go but only had enough resources to place a person in the Ashland Senior Center on 3 occasions.

The one-on-one process began with door-to-door outreach in areas where members of the target populations were likely to reside. While U.S. Census data was initially considered for identifying these areas, its resolution proved too coarse. Instead, we relied on a range of local indicators including focusing on areas where utilities are subsidized. Data collectors were assigned to specific parts of the City with a high concentration of mobile/manufactured homes, designated affordable housing units, condominiums, townhouses, and apartment buildings.

To start the conversations, the following text was provided to the data collectors:

“I am/we are volunteers helping to inform the Ashland Wildfire Protection Plan which is being updated right now. We want this plan to reflect concerns and meaningful solutions for everyone—especially those who have not been heard from in the past. The goal is to keep our community safe and whole when wildfire affects Ashland. We are hoping you can help our community by sharing your thoughts for about 10 minutes.”

We started out listening to folks without taking notes but discovered that note taking was essential to capture “the voices” of the target populations in their words and to get consistent data. We hand recorded responses on a hard-copy form which were then transferred into Google Forms for analysis. All responses were accepted whether they provided a topic conforming answer or not. The intent of this organic approach was to make the “interview” more conversational, promote trust, and foster a relationship.

The project goal was to gather 200 responses to a set of demographic and topical questions which were discussed and approved by the working group in July. By October 20, we exceeded the target response goal by 25. More than three-quarters (77%) of the respondents represent the targeted demographic groups.

Field Interview Questions

We included the following questions in the SVP Project question set so the responses could be considered by the Public Health and Safety Working Group. Ashland Emergency Manager Kelly Burns participated in selecting which questions to ask. More than 220 evacuation-relevant responses were recorded.

1. Where would you go to evacuate and why would you go there?
2. How would you evacuate?
3. Do you know what a “Red Flag Warning” is? If they said, “Yes” they were asked to tell the interviewer. If they did not know, they were given a flyer and a brief verbal description.

The primary intent of the face-to-face conversations was to listen to and record what people have to say about wildfire—most specifically perceptions about the potential for their home to burn and what they thought would make their home safer. Related questions were about how they get information on how to reduce wildfire hazards and where they get information about current wildfire conditions. The questions asked are as follows:

1. How safe do you think your home is and why do you think it is safe or unsafe?
2. What do you think would make your home safer?
3. How do you get information about making a home resistant to wildfire ignition?
4. What limits you from having a wildfire resistant home?
5. Have you ever had a wildfire risk assessment? Who did the assessment?
6. Would you like to have an opportunity to learn about making your home safe, evacuation options, or anything else relevant to wildfire risk reduction?
7. How do you find out about current wildfire conditions and what to do about them?

Question 7 aimed to determine whether respondents sought information from someone they trusted. However, few identified a specific “trusted person” as their primary source of information. In today’s digital age, communication appears to be largely dependent on the internet and phone apps. When respondents did rely on a trusted individual, it was more often a family member or friend rather than a broader social network or news source.

The last interview question was open-ended with a general statement like “this an opportunity to express yourself on any topic.” Prompts by the interviewer varied based on the interviewee’s willingness to express themselves, but they were generally variations on:

1. Would you like to share any stories or experiences you or anyone you know has had with wildfire (such as the Alameda Fire)?
2. What do you think should be addressed in a community wildfire protection plan?
3. As an apartment dweller, what do think should be addressed in the plan?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Summary of Findings

Disclaimer: while ~77% of the respondents self-identified as being in one or more of the socially vulnerable demographic groups, the qualitative findings in this report do not de facto represent the perspectives and experiences of the demographic groups.

Demographics

Proportion Of Respondents Who Lived in Ashland

Ninety three percent (93.3%) of the respondents live in Ashland; 8 (3.6%) live in Talent, Phoenix, or a rural area within 15 miles of Ashland; 2 (~0.9%) live in Medford; and 5 (2.2%) live in unincorporated Ashland.

The City was divided into ~30 “districts” and 4 unincorporated “districts” (Ashland Mine, East Main, Emigrant Lake, and Mt Ashland Road). The most sampled districts were North Clay, Garfield, Faith, Orange, Railroad, Hospital, and Laurel. This distribution was intentional to focus on high concentrations of low-income housing—particularly districts with a greater concentration of mobile home parks and apartments.

North Clay had the largest representation, with 21% (46 residents) of interviewees, due to its two mobile home parks and numerous apartment complexes. Garfield and Faith districts each accounted for 9–11% of the sample, as we specifically targeted apartment dwellers in these areas. Additionally, 15 residents were interviewed in the Railroad district, which has a high density of

apartments, particularly on its east end. Notably, the 2022 U.S. Census report identified the Railroad district as having the highest population of socially vulnerable individuals in the City.

The respondents included 12 residents in the Hospital district and two residents in the Laurel district who represent townhouse and condo renters. The Rice Park population (7 residents) and the Faith district (7 residents) represent “affordable” long-term housing for low-income homeowners.

All but four apartment dwellers were sampled in the following districts: Avery (4), Clay North (2), Clay South (6), Faith (7), Garfield (15), Hersey (1), Laurel (10), Morton (5), Railroad (14), and in SOU family housing (not dorms) (1).

Some residents interviewed live in rooms in single family homes scattered throughout the City. One resident lived in their car but rents a parking space from a homeowner.

Proportion of Respondents Who Self-Identified as a member of a SVP Group

Approximately 77% (173 out of 225) of interviewees identified as belonging to a household that is low-income, housing-insecure, disabled, senior, single-parent, or includes someone with limited English proficiency.

- 68% of respondents identified as low-income.
- 25% reported being housing insecure.
- Nearly one-third identified as having a disability.
- 60% identified as seniors.
- The number of single-parent (10) and limited-English (6) households interviewed is likely too small to be representative of these populations.

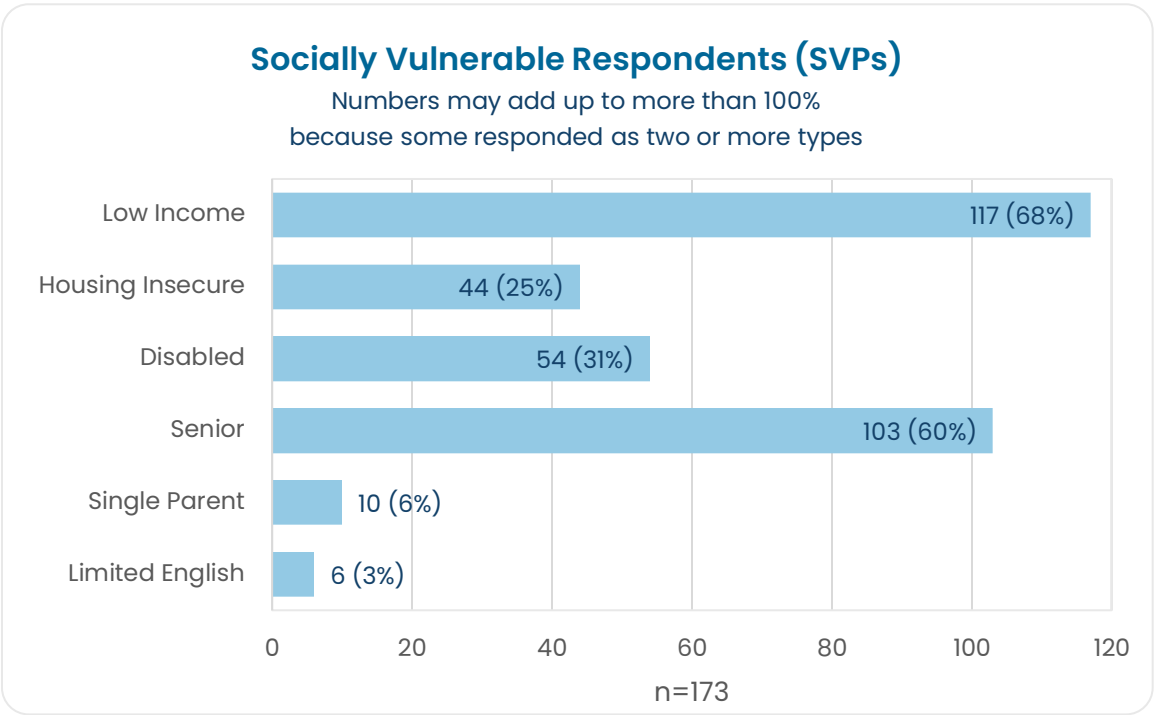


Figure 12: SVP Respondent Breakdown

Homeowners and Renters Sampled

Of the 225 respondents, 64% identified as renters, while 36% were homeowners.

Among self-identified socially vulnerable respondents, nearly 60% were renters and 41% were homeowners (13). Most SVP homeowners reside in mobile/manufactured homes or designated affordable housing developments.

Four out of five of the 52 interviewees who did not identify as socially vulnerable were renters. Renters as a group are often considered vulnerable due to their limited control over the defensible space surrounding their home and the fact that rental properties are often not built with fire-resistant materials.

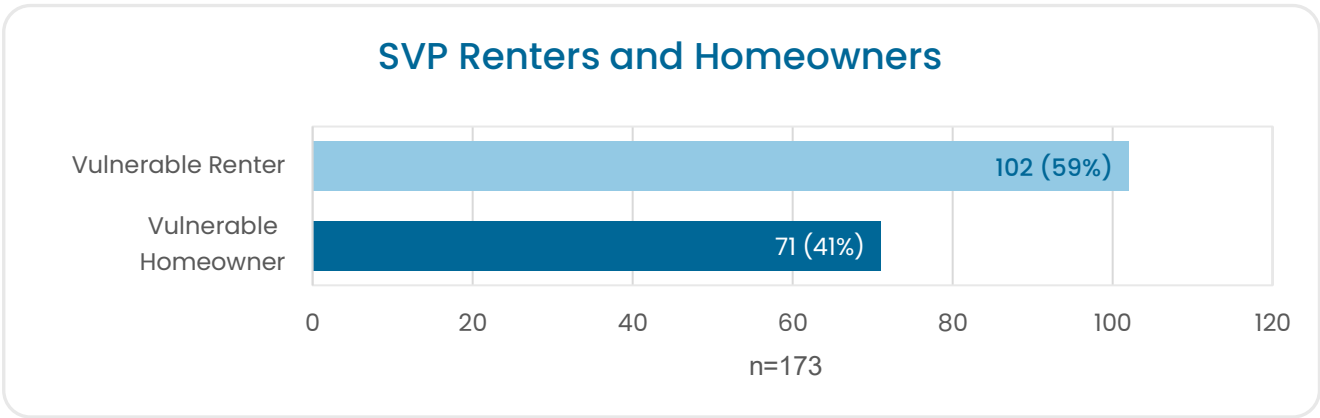


Figure 13: Number of Renters vs Homeowners in SVP Survey

Housing Types Occupied

The housing types occupied by the 225 respondents are shown in 14. One-quarter of the 2024 sampled population lives in a single-family home and nearly one-third live in an apartment building. Just under a quarter live in a mobile/ manufactured home park and one fifth live in a condo, townhouse, duplex, or ADU. One person lives in a room in a house, and one lives in their car.

We focused our sampling on mobile/manufactured home parks (MHPs) and apartment buildings, as we assumed that these housing types were more likely to be occupied by socially vulnerable households.

Most MHP residents interviewed were homeowners, as the parks they lived in required ownership. A significant number identified as seniors but did not consider themselves low-income. In contrast, apartment buildings appeared to have the highest percentage of younger respondents, although no formal data on age was collected.

The distribution of housing types occupied by those who self-identified as belonging in one or more of the socially vulnerable groups is shown in 15. Across all groups, apartment buildings are the most common housing type, particularly for low-income individuals, with about 50% of this group residing in apartments. Similarly, 45% of housing-insecure respondents and 40% of disabled individuals also live in apartment buildings.

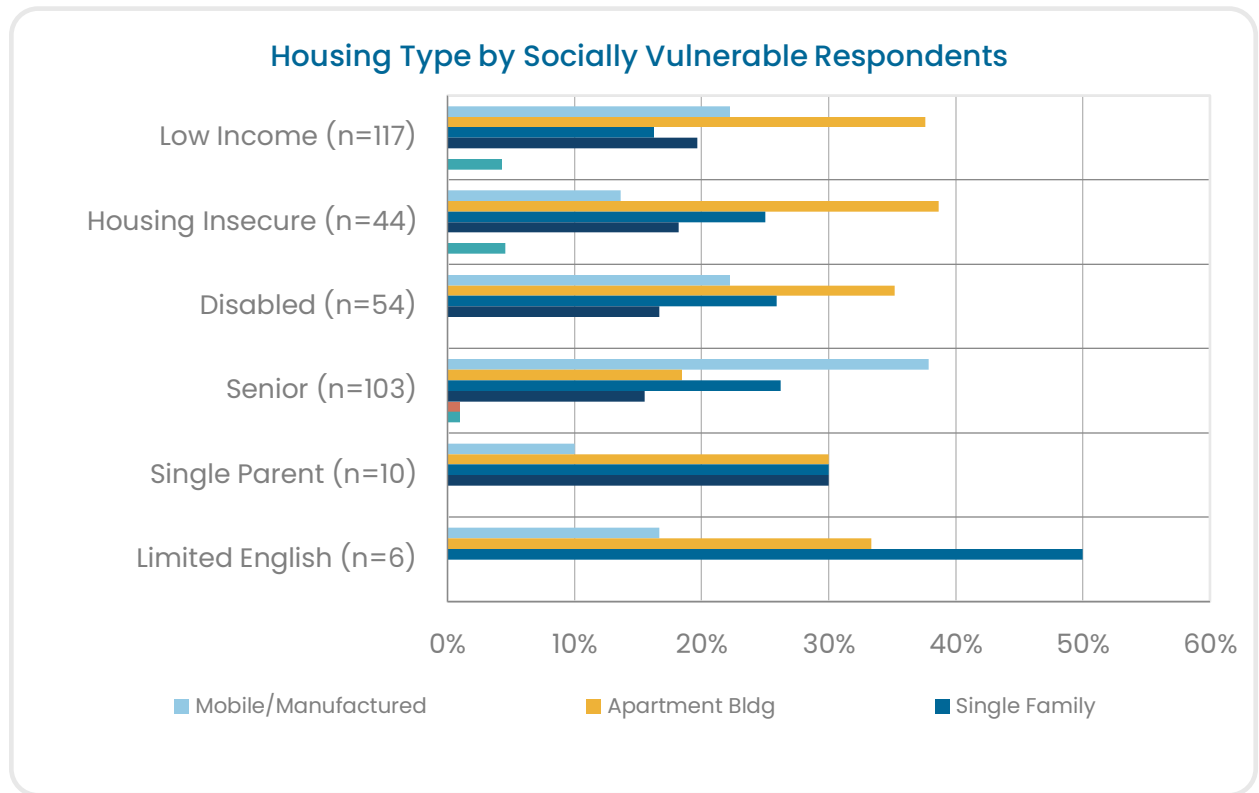


Figure 14: SVP Housing Types

Seniors show a more balanced distribution, with a significant portion (around 35%) living in single-family homes, reflecting a possible preference for long-term stability or ownership.

Distinct housing trends emerge among specific groups:

- Housing-insecure individuals are more likely to live in shared housing, such as renting a room in a house, compared to other groups.
- Single parents (n=10) show an even split between apartments and single-family homes, reflecting diverse housing needs within this group.
- Limited English speakers (n=6) predominantly live in apartments (55%), but about 25% reside in single-family homes—notably, all Ukrainian refugees in the study lived in single-family homes.

Mobile and manufactured housing is the most common type of housing among seniors. Across all groups, a small fraction (less than 5%) did not specify their housing type.

The data shows that apartment buildings are the primary housing option for most socially vulnerable populations, likely due to affordability. However, seniors and low-income individuals have a stronger presence in single-family homes, suggesting different housing priorities or opportunities. In contrast, housing-insecure individuals tend to rely more on transitional or shared housing arrangements.

Evacuation Findings

Traditionally, emergency response organizations focus on system-driven evacuation preparedness, such as receiving automated alerts, knowing evacuation zones, and having a go-bag ready. However, we took a different approach by asking two open-ended questions: **"Where would you go if you needed to evacuate, and why?"** and **"How would you evacuate?"** These questions were developed in collaboration with Kelly Burns, Ashland's Emergency Manager, to gain deeper insight into individual evacuation planning and decision-making processes.

Destination Choices

Responses from 223 participants who answered the question "Where would you go if you needed to evacuate, and why?" were sorted thematically.

"My biggest concern is my wife and I not being home and the kids being home alone. During the Alameda Fire that was what happened. The streets were clogged with semitrucks. It was frightening to have no plan."

-Resident of Manufactured Home Park in Ashland

Evacuation method

If the SVP Project respondent had a vehicle, most chose it as their first option. If they had no vehicle, they hoped to go in someone else's vehicle (16). Some households said they would take every vehicle they had because they were critical assets.

A significant majority across all demographic groups rely on their own vehicles (car, truck, van, or motorcycle) as their primary evacuation method, with renters (116), low-income individuals (93), and seniors (81) showing the highest reliance. In contrast, the use of personal vehicles is lowest among single parents (9) and limited English speakers (6), indicating potential transportation challenges within these groups.

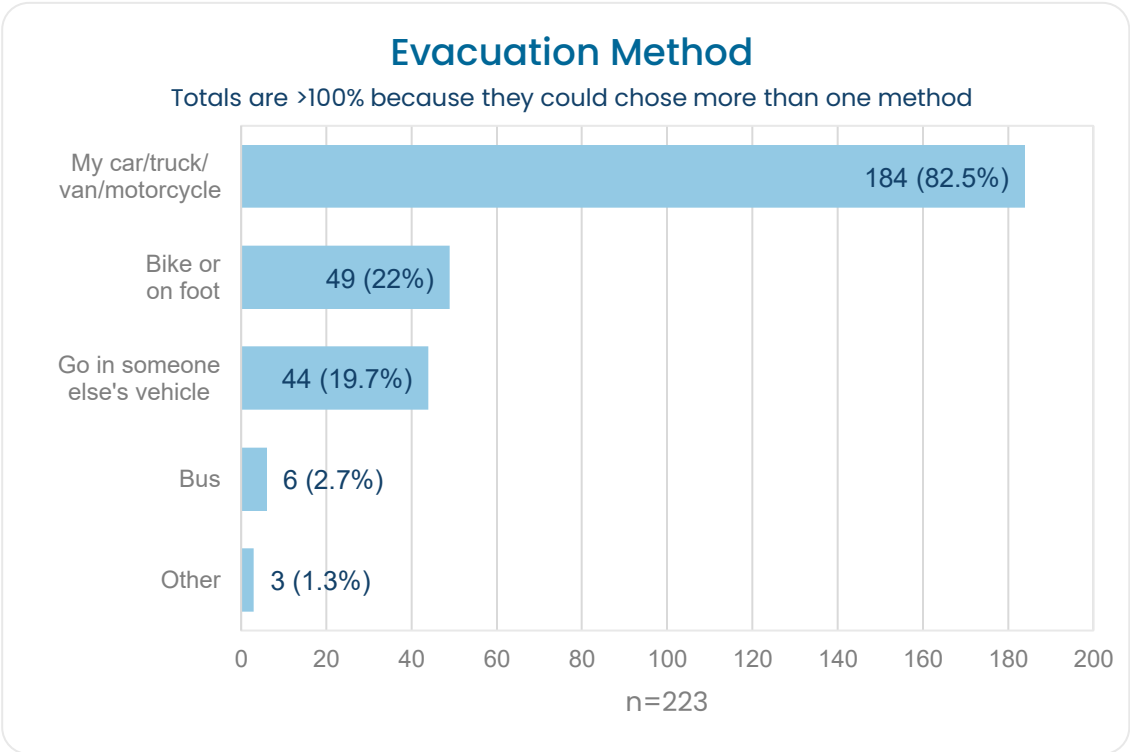


Figure 15: Overall Self-Reported Evacuation Methods for SVP

A considerable number of respondents indicated they would rely on someone else’s vehicle, with housing-insecure individuals (10) and disabled individuals (16) reporting a higher dependence on others compared to other groups. Single parents (1) and limited English speakers (3) are the least likely to rely on someone else’s vehicle.

Evacuating by bike or on foot was mentioned by all demographic groups but was more commonly suggested by seniors (33) and low-income individuals (27). Notably, no limited English speakers reported considering this method to evacuate. Some people were committed to evacuating on foot or by bike even if they had a vehicle because they expect traffic jams.

A significant portion of housing-insecure, disabled, and limited English proficiency respondents indicated that they need to rely on others for transportation during an evacuation. Several elderly and disabled residents expressed hope that someone would take them to safety but were unsure as to whom would take them.

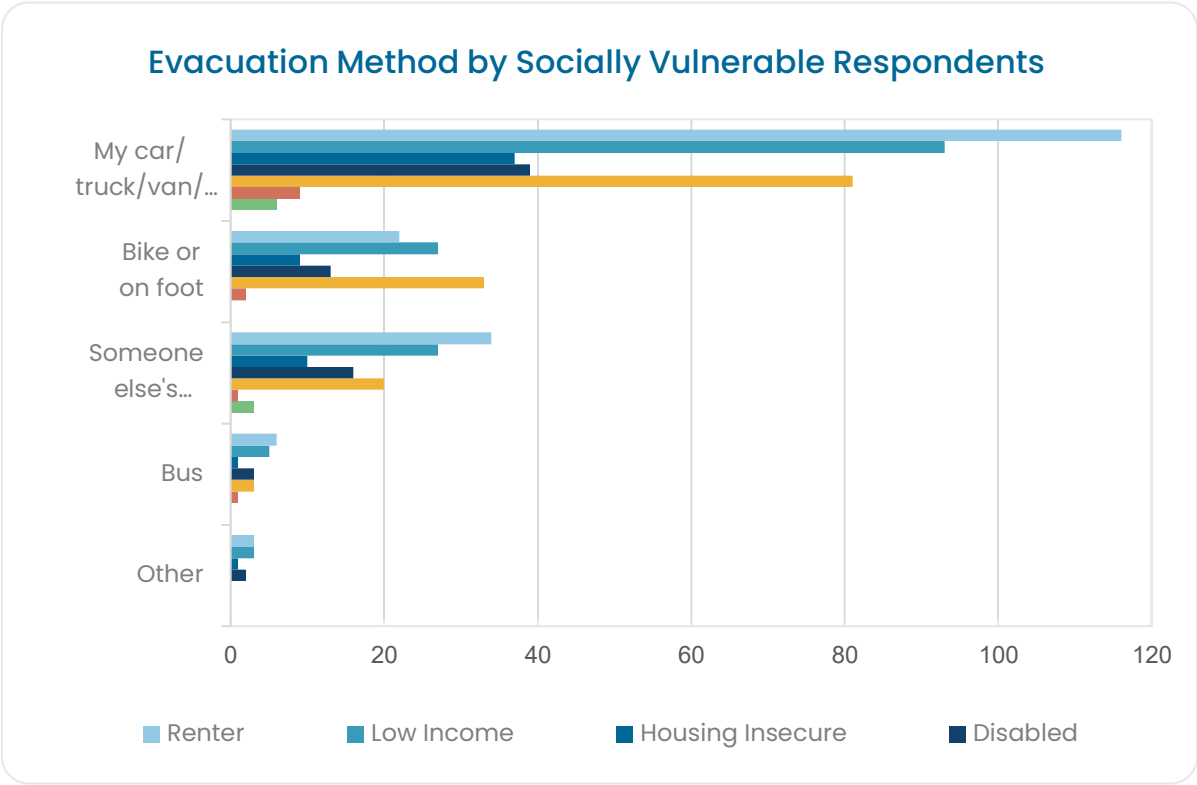


Figure 16: Self-Reported Evacuation Methods Between SVPs

Using the bus, is the least preferred option across all groups, with the highest reported usage among renters (6) and disabled individuals (3). No limited English speakers indicated bus usage as an evacuation method.

Overall, the data highlights that personal vehicles are the most common evacuation method, while certain groups, such as single parents and limited English speakers, may face greater transportation challenges and a higher reliance on others to evacuate. These differences suggest the need for targeted evacuation planning to support those with limited transportation options.

Knowledge About “Red Flag Conditions”

After asking evacuation-related questions, we asked respondents if they knew what a **Red Flag Warning** is. This helped assess their awareness of high fire danger conditions and their readiness to evacuate even without an active fire. It also provided insight into their level of concern and attentiveness to wildfire risks.

This question was also the only direct educational moment in the interview. Respondents unfamiliar with Red Flag Warnings were given an **informational flyer** to help them better understand its significance.

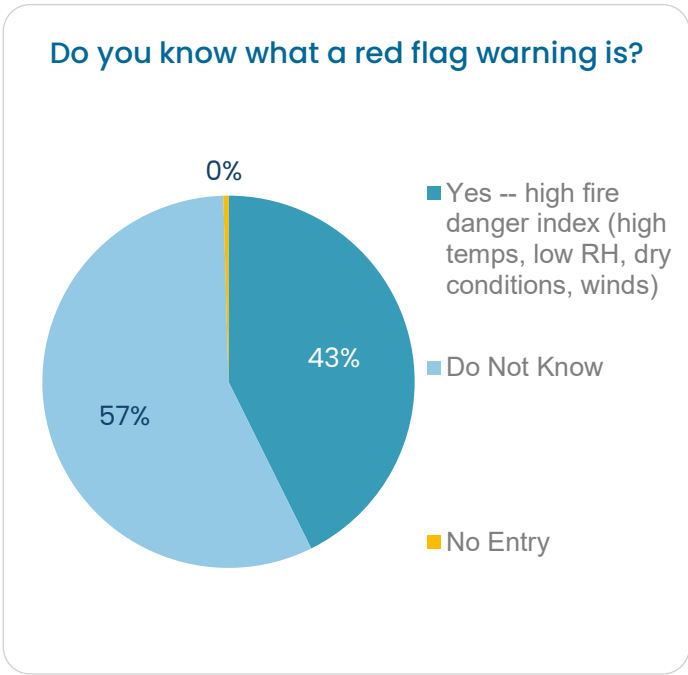


Figure 17: Red flag Warning Familiarity

Figure 17 shows respondents' understanding of red flag warnings. To verify their knowledge, we asked them to describe the conditions that trigger a National Weather Service Red Flag Warning.

43% correctly understood red flag warnings
57% did not know what red flag warnings indicate

This significant knowledge gap - with more than half of respondents unaware of these critical fire danger alerts - highlights a need for enhanced public education about wildfire risks and warning systems.

How Safe from Wildfires Do You Believe Your Home Is?

Everyone interviewed was asked “How safe from wildfires do you believe your home is?” Being an open-ended question meant that they had to respond from experience or gut instinct. We sensed a bit of shock or disengagement from those who had never thought about it or preferred not to. About one third of the respondents said they didn’t know or didn’t think about it. About 1% said they didn’t care.

Overall Safety Perceptions

- 47% (106 respondents) felt some degree of safety ("very safe" or "kind of safe")
- 20% (44 respondents) felt "unsafe" or "very unsafe"
- "Kind of safe" was the most common response

SVP’s Safety Perceptions

The following groups most often reported feeling only "kind of safe":

- Renters
- Low-income individuals
- Housing-insecure individuals
- Seniors

Higher levels of feeling "unsafe" or "very unsafe" were reported among:

- Housing-insecure individuals
- Low-income individuals
- Disabled respondents

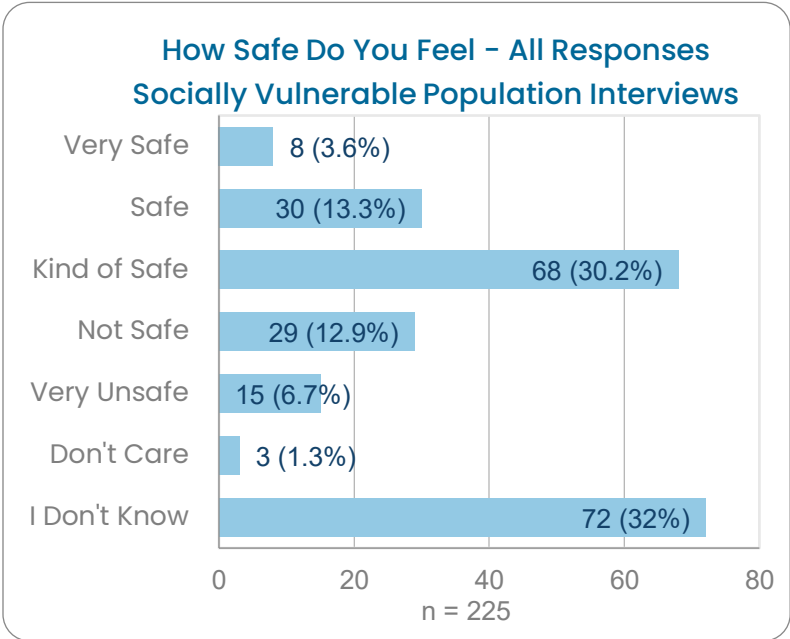


Figure 18: All Respondents Sense of Safety

Key Finding: When respondents explained their safety ratings, the lead interviewer noted that none of the homes would actually be considered "very safe" or even "safe" from wildfire risk, despite residents' perceptions. While some properties had better safety features than others, most respondents showed limited understanding of wildfire hazards.

Methodology Note: After giving their initial safety rating, respondents were asked to explain their choice. These discussions sometimes led respondents to revise their initial safety assessment. The explanations were later analyzed using ChatGPT.

The table to the right presents the perceptions of wildfire safety among sampled renters and homeowners. Among renters, a significant portion (44%) either "don't care" or "don't know" about their safety related to wildfires. Nearly half (47%) of renters feel "safe," while a smaller percentage (9%) consider themselves unsafe.

Renters (n=144)	44% don't care or don't know; 47% feel "safe"; and 9% feel unsafe
Homeowners (n=81)	14% don't care or don't know; 48% feel "safe"; and 38% feel unsafe

Table 13: Sense of Safety

In contrast, homeowners demonstrate a greater awareness or concern about wildfire safety, with only 14% reporting that they "don't care" or "don't know." A similar proportion to renters, 48%, feel "safe," but a notably larger percentage (38%) of homeowners feel unsafe.

These findings suggest that renters, compared to homeowners, are less engaged or informed about wildfire risks, as reflected in their higher rates of indifference or uncertainty. Homeowners, on the other hand, exhibit a greater level of concern, with a significantly higher proportion perceiving themselves as unsafe. This disparity may indicate differences in preparedness, investment in property protection, or access to information and resources between the two groups.

The table below illustrates how different socially vulnerable groups perceive their relative safety. Low-income individuals show mixed awareness levels: 47% feel safe, while 29% either don't care or don't know about wildfire safety, and 24% feel unsafe.

Low income (n=117)	29% don't care or don't know; 47% feel "safe"; and 24% feel unsafe	Seniors (n=103)	30% don't care or don't know; 43% feel "safe"; and 27% feel unsafe
Housing insecure (n=44)	45% don't care or don't know; 32% feel "safe"; and 23% feel unsafe	Single parents (n=10)	30% don't know; 40% feel "safe"; and 30% feel unsafe
Disabled persons (n=54)	30% don't care or don't know; 43% feel "safe"; and 28% feel unsafe	Limited English households (n=6)	67% don't know; 33% feel "safe"; and 0% feel unsafe

Table 14: Sense of Safety by SVP

Housing-insecure individuals demonstrate particularly high uncertainty, with 45% saying they don't

care or don't know about their safety. Only 32% feel safe, and 23% feel unsafe. Similar patterns emerge among seniors and disabled individuals, with both groups showing identical rates: 43% feel safe, 30% are uncertain, and roughly a quarter feel unsafe (27% of seniors and 28% of disabled individuals).

Single parents are evenly divided in their perceptions: 40% feel safe, 30% are uncertain, and 30% feel unsafe. Limited English households stand out with the highest uncertainty level – 67% don't know about their safety status, while the remaining 33% feel safe, and notably, none report feeling unsafe.

Key Patterns in Safety Perceptions

Most residents who claimed to feel "very safe" showed limited understanding of what makes a home wildfire resistant, as evidenced by their explanations. Those who rated their homes as "safe" often relied on factors beyond their control, such as:

- Proximity to open fields
- Past luck in avoiding fires
- Trust in the Ashland Fire Department's capability to provide protection

Renters commonly cited their downtown location, away from hills and the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), as justification for feeling safe. While many recognized the importance of fuel reduction (managing grasses, brush, and trees), few performed these tasks themselves. In mobile home parks, residents frequently mentioned housing density as a risk factor.

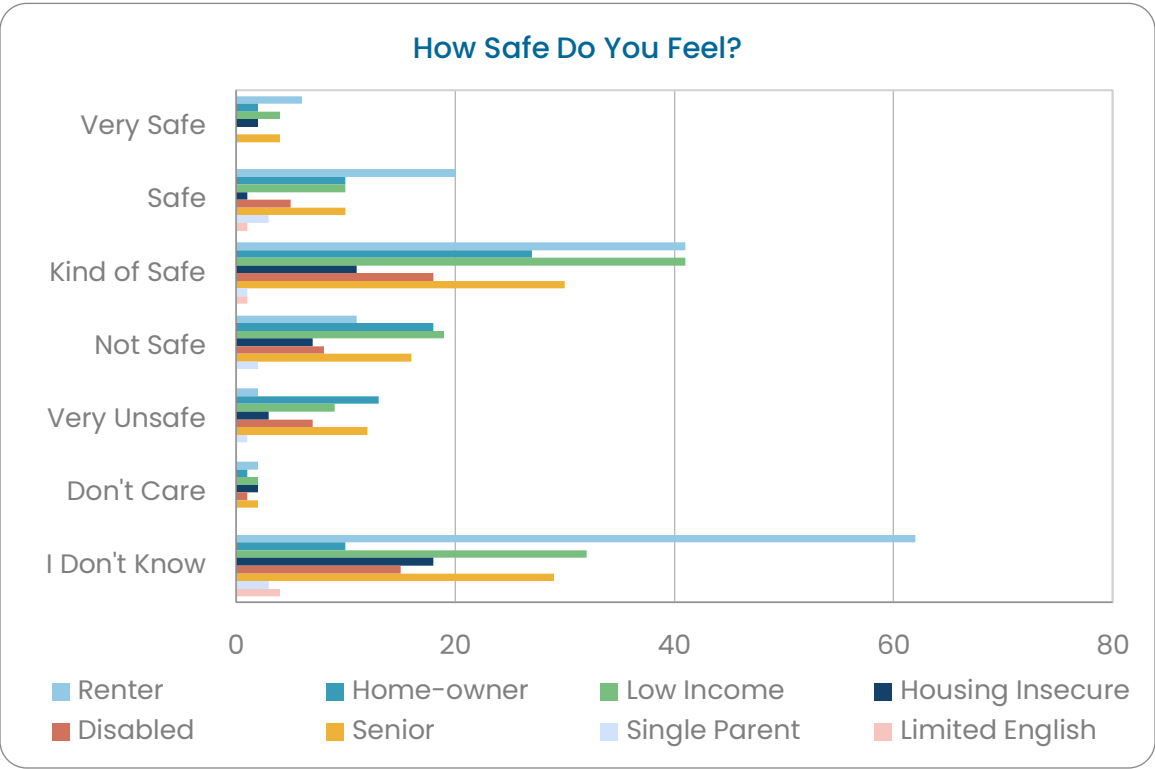


Figure 19: How Fire-Safe Do SVP Respondents Feel?

Residents who selected "kind of safe" generally showed better awareness of actual fire hazards, though some responses still revealed significant knowledge gaps. Those who felt "unsafe" often drew from personal experiences that had eroded their sense of security. They accurately identified many risk factors, though their risk rankings sometimes appeared inconsistent with their stated concerns.

The "very unsafe" group expressed well-articulated concerns about fire risks. Notably, some respondents revised their safety ratings after discussing and attempting to justify their initial responses.

These findings highlight varying levels of fire safety awareness across different housing situations and emphasize the need for targeted education about practical wildfire preparedness measures

How Could Your Home Be Safer from Fire?

When asked how to make their homes safer from wildfire, the 223 respondents identified several approaches:

Fuels Reduction (45% of respondents)

A plurality believed reducing flammable materials would improve safety. They identified hazards such as vegetation, yard debris, and bark mulch that could be removed or managed around their homes and in surrounding areas.

Other Safety Measures

Some respondents suggested multiple improvements, including:

- Structural modifications like replacing wood fences with metal
- Upgrading older roofs
- Watering vegetation to reduce flammability

Knowledge Gaps and Control Issues

- 23% didn't know what could be done to protect their homes
- 10% felt no changes were necessary
- 19% believed safety improvements were outside their control

Notably, though we didn't specifically ask about responsibility for improvements, many renters and residents pointed to others as responsible for reducing wildfire risks, including:

- Property owners and managers
- Immediate neighbors
- Public and private land managers

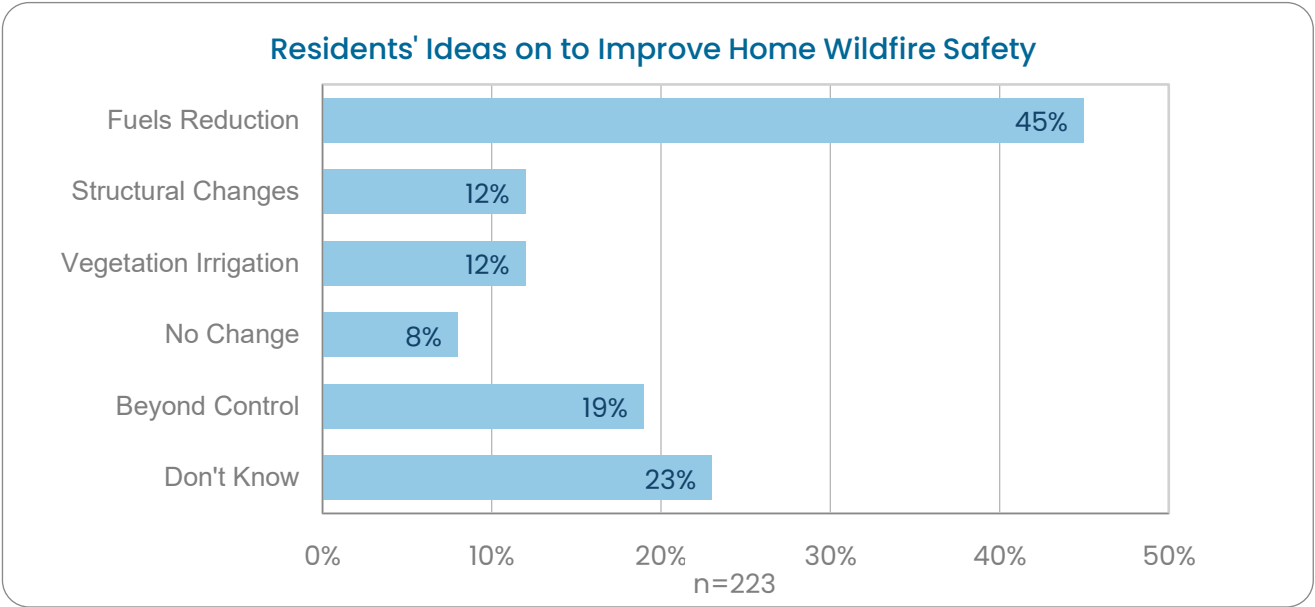


Figure 20: What Could Be Done to Make Your Home safer?

According to Ashland's most experienced certified wildfire risk assessor, none of the 100+ homes she observed could be considered "safe" from wildfire. While education efforts have helped some residents understand key safety measures, many still showed limited knowledge of effective wildfire protection strategies.

Note that these findings were not segregated to separate out the responses between the total sample population and the SVP population which comprised 77% of the respondents.

Preferred Sources for Wildfire Home Safety Info

Responses were categorized and are presented in the table below. Seventy-eight (35%) of the responses recorded are in the "don't get information" and "don't know" categories. Additionally, less than 3% indicated they "don't care" about receiving such information, citing various reasons. A significant number of apartment dwellers reported not receiving any information on wildfire preparedness.

Category	# response	% of total
Haven't gotten any information	49	22.0
General knowledge/observation/experience	40	17.9
Directly from city fire staff or volunteers	35	15.7
Don't know how to make my home safer	29	13.0
Search on the Internet	24	10.8
I learned from family, friends, or neighbors	21	9.4
I got information through social and regular media	15	6.7
Training of some kind	14	6.3
My landscaper or landlord knows	12	5.4
From the City website	8	3.6
From a non-governmental organization or HOA	7	3.1
I don't care	6	2.7

Table 15: Preferred Sources of Wildfire Safety Information

The data reveals that nearly one-quarter of the respondents have not received any information, and 1 in 5 rely on "general knowledge" or personal observation or experience. Nearly 1 in 6 respondents reported obtaining information directly from city fire staff or volunteers, which is slightly less than those who rely on personal observation and "general knowledge." Internet searches are used by 1 in 10 of the respondents. Social media is slightly less popular. Nearly 1 in 10 respondents reported learning from friends, family, or neighbors, while 1 in 20 rely on their landscaper or rental property owner. The least mentioned sources for information were the City's website, and a non-governmental organization or homeowners' association (HOA). About 1 in 15 respondents had

participated in some form of training, though the type of training varied, including programs such as CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), firefighting courses, or environmental studies at Southern Oregon University (SOU).

Some respondents misunderstood the question and cited sources like Nixle, which provides emergency alerts but not specific wildfire preparedness information. The responses highlight that while some residents proactively seek information, a significant portion remains uninformed or uncertain about how to protect their homes, emphasizing the need for more accessible and targeted educational efforts.

Do You Want to Learn More?

Of the 225 responses recorded, only 4% had gotten a home site risk assessment. Nearly 60% of the respondents said they weren't interested in getting an assessment. Nearly 7% did not know if they wanted one. Approximately one-third of respondents were interested (Figure 21).

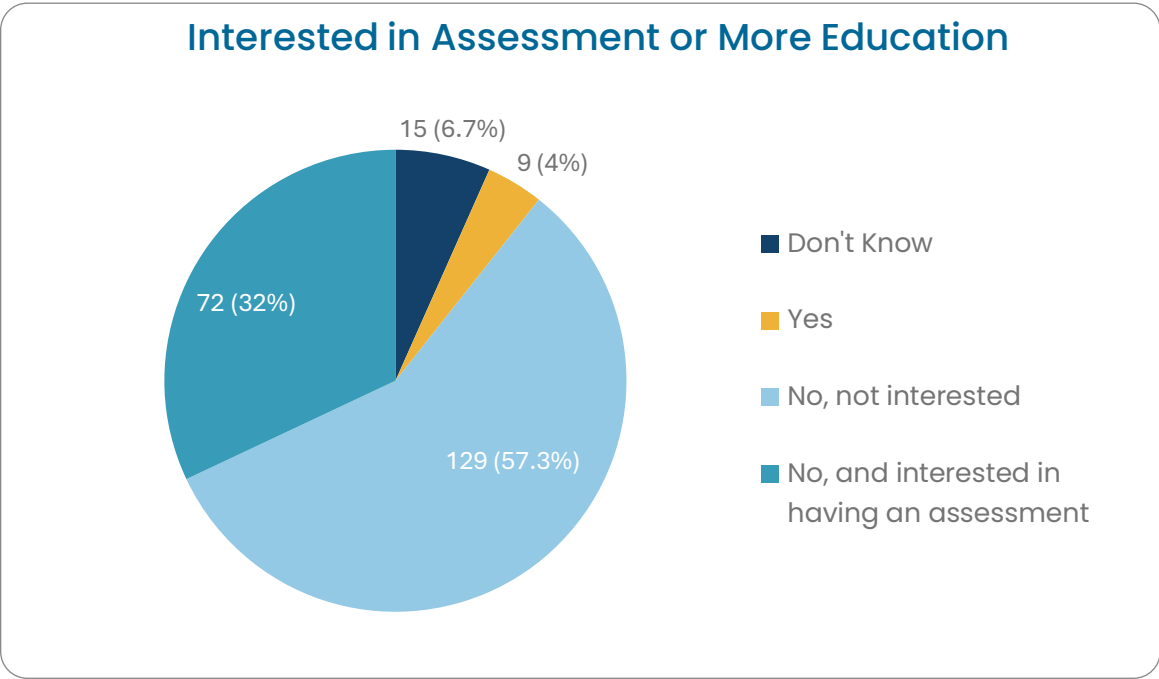


Figure 21: Respondents Interested in Further Educational Opportunities

Out of 72 respondents interested in an assessment, about 7% were given a wildfire risk assessor's business card to sign up later. About 65 residents (29%) provide contact details. In total, over one-third of respondents provided contact information—mostly to schedule an assessment—with a few sharing their phone numbers solely to enter a raffle introduced late in sampling.

The project lead's interviews emphasized that the wildfire risk assessment was free, confidential, and a valuable learning opportunity, resulting in higher participation. In contrast, when less experienced volunteers conducted the interviews, fewer respondents signed up. This suggests that either the volunteers did not present the offer as effectively or that the way the offer was framed influenced responses.

Of the nine respondents who had previously undergone a risk assessment, five had assessments conducted by City of Ashland Fire Staff within the past decade, three by Ashland Volunteer Wildfire Assessment Program (WRAP) volunteers since 2021, and one by an unspecified individual.

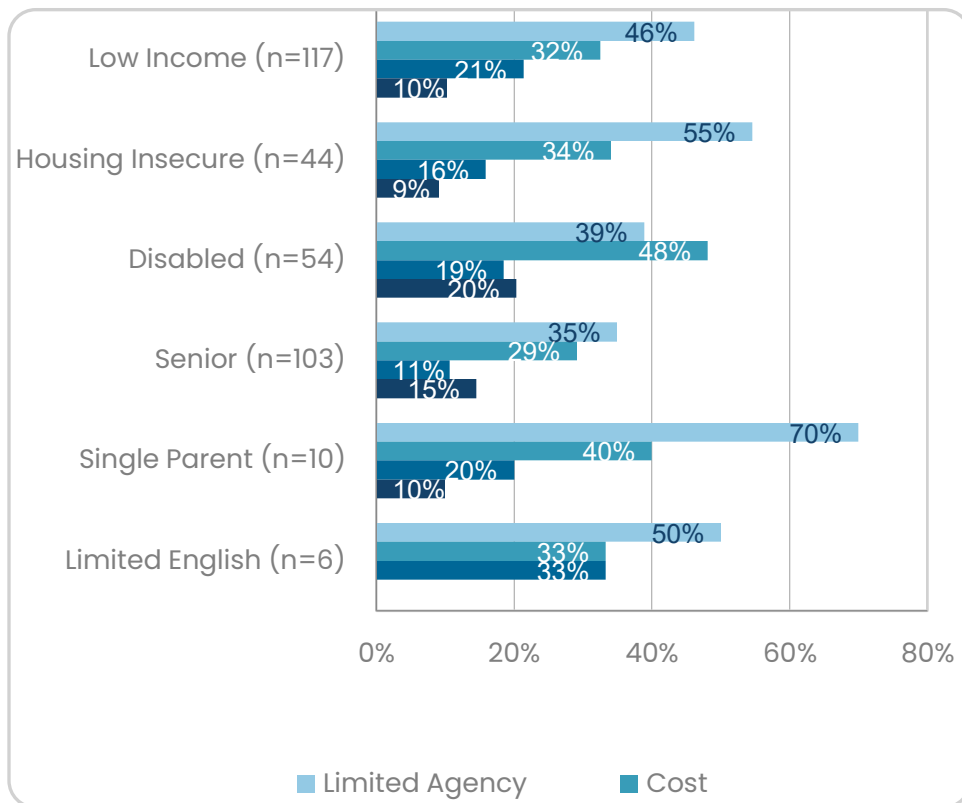


Figure 22: Barriers to Fire-Safe Homes for SVPs

"I said I don't want an assessment because I don't want to know what I need to do"

-SVP Project Interviewee

Barriers To Having a Wildfire Safe Home

The top three barriers identified by the 221 individuals interviewed in the sampled population to making their homes wildfire safe are: 1) lack of agency (48%), 2) cost/finances (24%), and 3) inadequate knowledge about what to do (18.7%). About 9% of the responses went into the "other" category because it was difficult to categorize their responses as obstacles or limitations. The next most common limiting factor reported was "it's not a priority" or I don't care" (8.4%) followed by "I don't have the time" and I don't have the physical capacity (both were 7.1%).

Nearly three-quarters of renters reported that they either do not consider it their responsibility to make their homes wildfire-safe or feel unable to do so due to restrictions imposed by their homeowners' association (HOA), rental property owner, or property management company. Some renters expressed hope that their rental property owners or management companies were taking wildfire safety measures, while several others complained that they were not.

Among the 173 socially vulnerable individuals interviewed, the top four barriers to making their homes wildfire-safe were:

1. Lack of agency (control over property decisions)
2. Financial constraints
3. Insufficient knowledge on wildfire safety measures
4. Limited physical ability to act

Figure 22 shows the percentage of socially vulnerable individuals (SVPs) who reported facing these challenges. The following discussion provides a closer look at each of the four obstacles.

Lack of agency refers to the idea that respondents do not believe they have control over, or responsibility for, making their homes safer. Rather, they believe that responsibility or control rests in the hands of rental property owners or managers, mobile or manufactured home park owners or

managers, or a Homeowners’ Association (HOA). Households that most frequently identified lack of agency as a factor preventing them from having fire-resistant residences were renters (84%), single parents (70%) and the housing-insecure (55%).

Cost: Finances were identified as a major barrier by all socially vulnerable demographic groups. Nearly half (48%) of disabled respondents identified financial constraints as an obstacle to improving wildfire resilience. Among seniors, 29% reported finances as a limiting factor—the lowest percentage among SVP groups—yet it still accounts for nearly one-third of that demographic. Financial concerns were also reported by 40% of single-parent households; however, the small sample size (n=10) should be considered when interpreting this data. Between 33% and 40% of housing-insecure, low-income, and limited English-speaking households similarly identified cost as a major challenge. Several respondents mentioned that if they owned a home, they would feel more willing and able to invest in wildfire safety improvements.

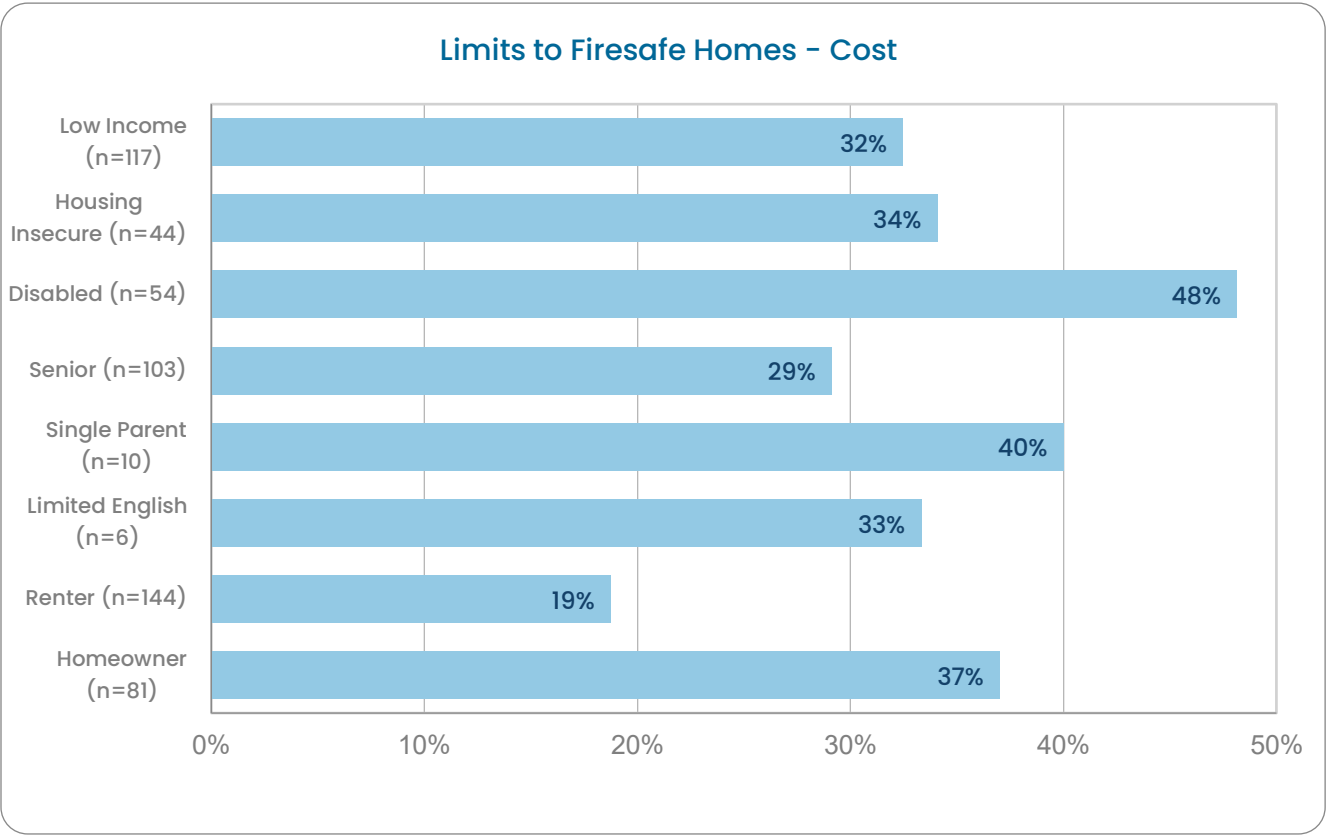


Figure 23: Percent of SVPs Who Indicated Cost is a Limiting Factor

Inadequate knowledge plays a role for many socially vulnerable groups. One fifth of the 225 Project respondents did not think they had the knowledge to make improvements. By listening and observation, we discovered that a significant number are either underinformed, misinformed, disengaged, traumatized, or do not recognize wildfire as a threat to their home.

Approximately 1 in 5 low-income, housing insecure, disabled and single parent households indicated that they didn't know what to do to make their home wildfire resistant. One-third of the limited English-speaking households and 2 out of 10 single parent households said they didn't know what to do. Seniors were the least likely to say that they lacked knowledge--1 in 10 seniors said they didn't really know what needs to be done (Figure 24).

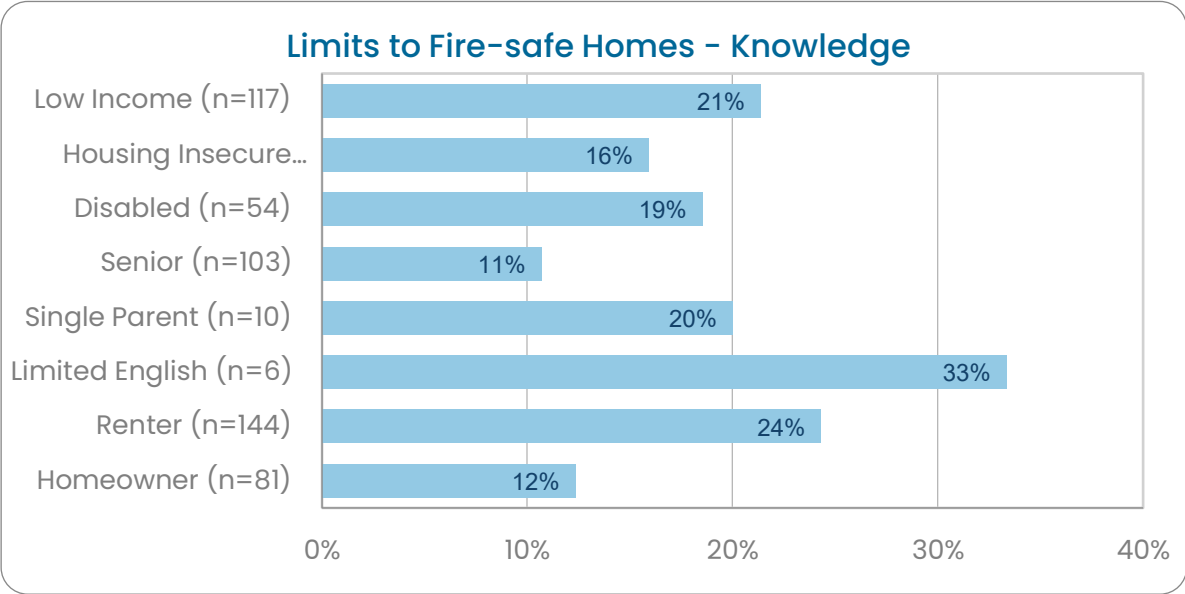


Figure 24: Percent of SVPs Who Indicated They Lack Knowledge On What To Do

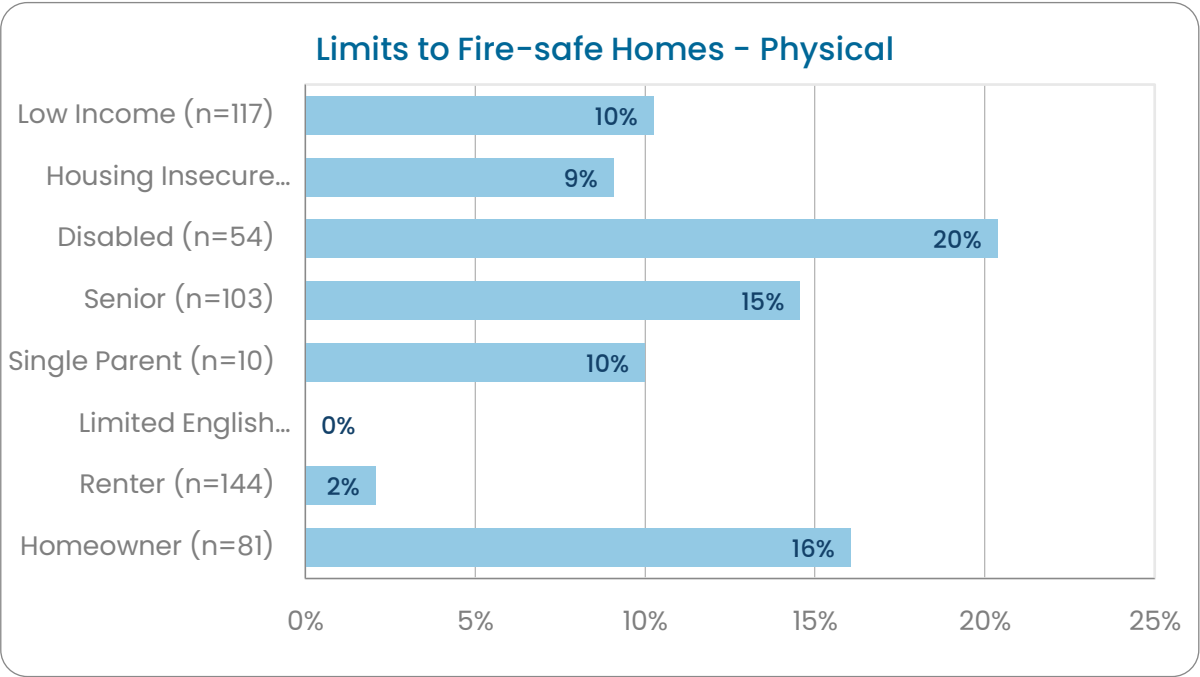


Figure 25: Percent of SVPs Who Indicated They Lack Physical Capacity

Limited physical capacity creates another barrier. Just over 7% (n=16) of the 173 socially vulnerable respondent indicated they lack the physical capacity to reduce their wildfire risk. The majority (81%) of these appear to have agency to make changes because they are homeowners. Surprisingly, only three socially vulnerable renters out of 144 interviewed mentioned they face physical limitations.

One in 10 low-income and housing insecure households indicated that physical capacity was a limiting factor. The largest percentage of individuals that said they lacked the physical capacity to do work was in disabled (20%) and or senior (15%) households (Figure 25).

Other barriers identified with the sampled population:

- I don't have the time
- I don't think anything needs to be done
- Its not a priority for me or I don't care
- I can't find help
- It's hopelessness
- The problem is on neighboring properties

Lack of time was cited as a barrier for about 7% of the Project respondents. Students mentioned a lack of time as a limiting factor more often than did any other demographic group, but students were not specifically targeted for data collection, so the result is anecdotal.

About 2% of the Project respondents said they can't find help to do mitigation work around their home. Around 5% don't think anything needs to be done (but it does) and less than 3% said there are no obstacles to getting the work done. Nearly 9% say it's not a priority. Four residents feel that it is futile or hopeless or that their best choice is to move away. Three respondents indicated that it was their neighbor who is the limiting factor.

Information On Current Wildfire Conditions

Category	# responses	% of total	Category	# responses	% of total
Citizen Alert/Nixle/Everbridge	104	46.8	My neighbor(s)	9	4.1
Watch Duty App	84	37.8	Local radio station	7	3.2
Friends or family member(s)	34	15.3	SOU alerts or from an instructor	6	2.7
Other	27	12.2	Reading local or national news	6	2.7
Search the Internet	24	10.8	Sherriff's Scanner	6	2.7
Don't Know or No access	20	9.0	Other Social media sites	6	2.7
Television news	16	7.2	Personal network (e.g., church, HOA, club, and similar)	5	2.3
App on my Phone	16	7.2	Oregon State Website	3	1.4
Facebook	11	5.0	Jackson County Wildfire Map	3	1.4
City of Ashland website	10	4.5	InciWeb (Incident Info System)	1	0.5

Table 16: Where Respondents Get Information on Current Wildfire Conditions

Respondents could list multiple information sources. Nearly half reported receiving alerts on their phones, which we attempted to verify as Nixle or Citizen Alert. Since some mentioned text alerts without specifying the source, the actual percentage of registered users (46.8%) could be higher. Overall, a significant portion of the target population is registered for emergency alerts, though there is room for improvement.

Watch Duty, a new non-profit wildfire tracking app available for free on smartphones, has gained popularity, with nearly 38% of respondents indicating they use it. Interestingly, several of these respondents did not mention using local or county services such as Citizen Alert or Nixle. The next most common sources of information are friends and family (15.3%), followed by the “other” category (12.2%) and online searches (10.8%). The responses in the “other” category provide useful insights. For instance, some individuals mentioned turning to a volunteer or fire department personnel rather than using the City’s official website. In a sense, seeking information from a City employee or volunteer functions similarly to relying on a personal network or a friend.

Notably, 9% of respondents indicated they either did not know where to find wildfire information or had no access to current updates. This gap in awareness and accessibility should be a concern for the evacuation planning team.

A small percentage of respondents (3.2%) rely on local or national television and radio news for wildfire information. An equal number of people (six each) cited sources such as the Sheriff’s scanner, SOU alerts or instructors, local or national news websites, and unspecified social media platforms as their preferred sources. Facebook, the City of Ashland website, and neighbors were mentioned by a similar number of respondents, ranging between 4-5%. Additionally, five respondents reported relying on a personal or organizational network for updates.

Only three respondents mentioned using the Oregon State website or the Jackson County wildfire map. However, it is possible that some of the 24 respondents who indicated they use the Internet for information may also be accessing these sites. Notably, only one person reported using the federally operated InciWeb.

Insurance Coverage for Wildfire Related Losses

Approximately 11% of homeowners and 67% of renters interviewed in the SVP Project reported that they did not have insurance for wildfire-related losses. Of the 85 SVP project renters who self-

identified as meeting one or more of the SVP criteria, 69.4% said they have no renter’s insurance coverage or don’t know if they have insurance.

Between half to more than two-thirds of all socially vulnerable groups represented in the sample had no insurance except for the senior cohort which had the lowest proportion of uninsured households (38.6%).

The housing-insecure, single-parent households, and individuals with limited English proficiency were the least likely to be insured. Additionally, only half of respondents with disabilities reported having insurance coverage. In contrast, most seniors indicated they were insured for wildfire-related losses.

The percentage of uninsured homeowners in the sampled population (11.3%) is higher than the national average. Although we did not specifically ask respondents why they lacked insurance, it is reasonable to attribute this, at least in part, to rising insurance costs and limited availability. These factors align with findings from recent studies. According to the Consumer Federation of America (2024), 7.4% of U.S. homeowners lack insurance, an increase from 5% in 2019. Additionally, the average annual cost of homeowners insurance for a policy with \$300,000 in coverage has risen to \$2,230, compared to \$1,096 in 2013, reflecting a 23% increase in just the past year (Realtor.com, 2024).

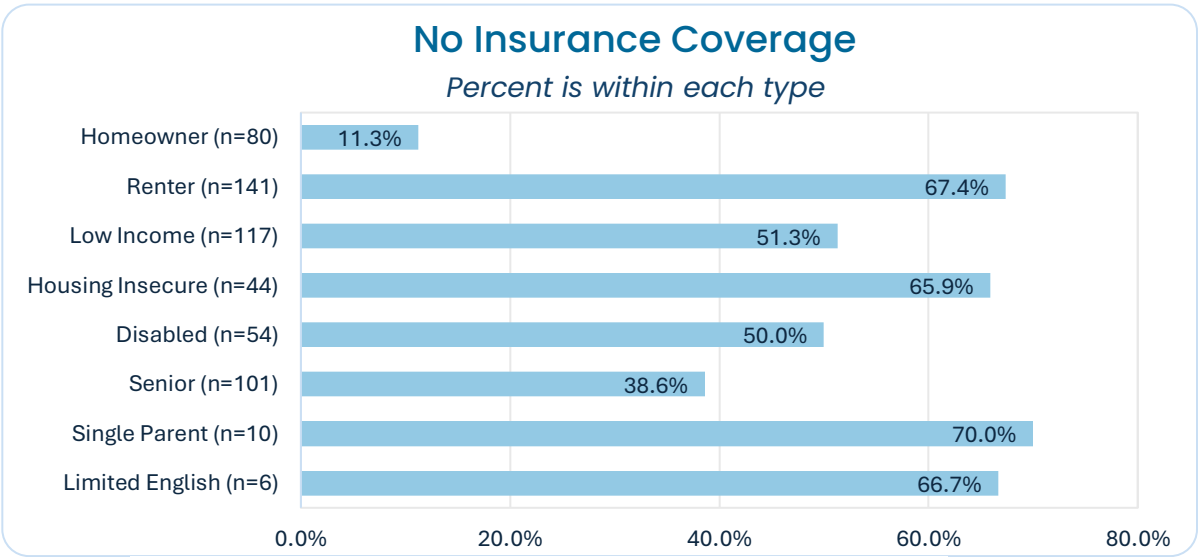


Figure 26: Households Who Have No Insurance Coverage

Interestingly, of the homeowners who said they have no insurance, many own mobile homes or live in designated affordable housing units that require homeowner's insurance. A total of 47 residents living in three privately owned mobile/manufactured home parks were interviewed: Wingspread (31), Tolman Creek (9), and The Pines (7). No renters are allowed to occupy homes in Wingspread or Tolman Creek and according to occupants interviewed the homeowner is required to carry homeowner's insurance. Despite this requirement, eight (17.0%) said they currently have no insurance. This is substantially more than in other home types. One manufactured home resident said: "It took me awhile [recently] to get my insurance because of my credit score."

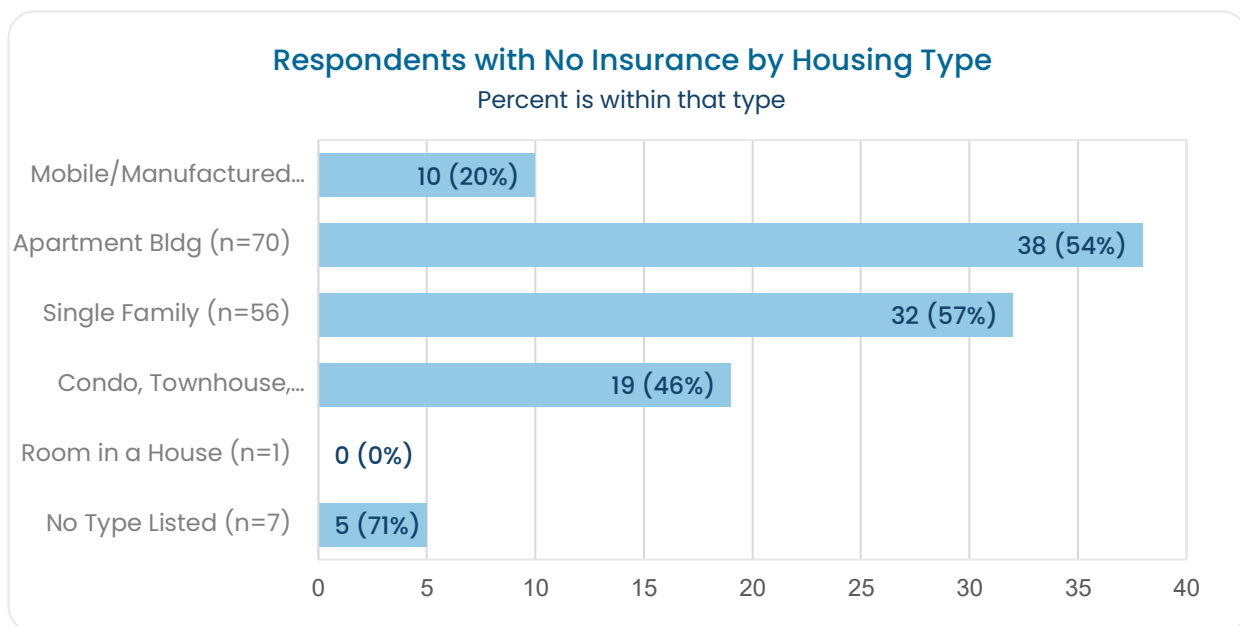


Figure 27: SVP Households Without Insurance by Housing Type

The Pines mobile/manufactured home park is owned and operated by the largest property management company in Ashland. Two residents of the seven interviewed said they have no insurance. We encountered three limited English-speaking households in the Pines but only had time to interview one family. A young Hispanic woman who spoke English, but whose mother did not, could not tell me whether the household had any kind of insurance. One of the Pines resident's claims to be disabled and housing insecure and has been homeless. He expects to be evicted in the next few months. This park is at high risk of complete loss if a fire occurs based on the density, age and poor quality of the units, and the abundance of debris, clutter, open storage areas, trees, and connected wood fences surrounding homes.

Figure 27 shows that 54% of 221 occupants interviewed who live in an apartment building have no type of insurance; 57% of households living in single family homes; and 45% of those living in multiplexes said they have no insurance. These high percentages are likely because many are renters. More than 67% of renters said they don't have insurance for wildfire losses, and nearly 66% of housing insecure residents have no type of property insurance. The lack of insurance coverage is a serious problem for many reasons. It is even more serious for socially vulnerable households who have limited capacity and assets.

The 2022 U.S. Census reports that 47% to 49% of Ashland residents are renters, compared to the national average of approximately 35% of all occupied housing units being rented. This indicates that Ashland has a higher proportion of renters than the national average. Additionally, over two-thirds of Ashland renters do not have insurance coverage, which is significantly higher than the national average, where 45% of renters lack insurance, according to Simply Insurance. Oregon law allows landlords to require tenants to obtain renters insurance, but there are restrictions based on median household income.

Our hypothesis that Ashland's large rental population differs from homeowners in terms of insurance coverage has proven true. While approximately 11% of homeowners in the sampled population lack home insurance, an alarming 66% of renters are uninsured. Since most renters interviewed belong to one or more socially vulnerable demographic groups, their lack of insurance puts them at significantly greater risk compared to homeowners. Wildfires can disproportionately impact socially vulnerable households due to factors such as inadequate or substandard housing, social exclusion, lack of property ownership, and limited ability to evacuate effectively (Klampe, 2023; Fothergill & Peek, 2004).

The City of Ashland and rental property owners should be deeply concerned about the high number of uninsured residents. If a significant portion of the city's housing stock is lost to wildfire and residents are uninsured, the workforce would be severely affected. Many low-income, housing-insecure, disabled individuals, seniors, and limited English-speaking households would struggle to recover. This scenario became a reality in the neighboring communities of Talent and Phoenix after the Almeda Fire, where uninsured residents faced enormous challenges in rebuilding their lives. Even when rental properties were adequately insured by owners, the rebuilding process is taking years, and the availability of affordable housing decreased dramatically, forcing many former residents to

leave the area permanently.

The lack of insurance among renters and socially vulnerable individuals is a critical issue, as they have limited capacity to cover evacuation costs and recover lost assets. Addressing this challenge should be a top priority in the CWPP. Gaining insight into the culture, knowledge, and perspectives of uninsured residents is crucial for effective wildfire risk reduction and recovery across the City. Below are some quotes from interviewees who shared their thoughts and experience with getting insurance:

- "I had no problem with insurance for years. I submitted a claim three times [after the Alameda Fire] but they don't want to pay. California Casualty provided my insurance which is hard to get for mobile homes."
- "Due to my need for multiple surgeries, I stored all my belongings in a storage shed in Talent. During the Alameda Fire the facility burned and I lost everything. My insurance won't pay anything because the contents were not inventoried."
- "Our insurance was very good. They paid out the entire amount for rebuilding and for the contents. We ended up in a rental for two years which the insurance paid for."
- She thinks she will lose her home because the insurance has gone up from \$1700/year to \$2460/year.
- They evacuated family, kids, horses during Alameda fire.workshop burnt down in Talent, he is a metal sculpture, had no insurance, but no lives were lost so they count their blessings.
- "I don't have insurance partly because of the expense."
- "When we finally came back and saw all the devastation [we went into shock]. We had no power for weeks and no cell service. We lost all of the food in the refrigerator because of the power outage. I don't think my parents had any insurance to deal with the losses. Since insurance is for the home, they probably had no way to get reimbursement for the time in the hotel. This is something that needs to be addressed in the postfire recovery planning process."
- Because she is so worried about responders passing her by (she is very slow moving), so she made the following suggestion: a way to notify responders with a sticker on the door but don't let robbers know. [I also "can't afford home insurance"].

- “We weren’t insured because we felt safe [in their mobile home in Phoenix which burned]. Not enough to do much but help look for somewhere else. We moved into RV, parked out at daughter’s.”

Stories and Additional Information Shared

Interviewers documented additional comments and personal stories shared by interviewees beyond their answers to specific questions. While some respondents chose not to share extra information, those who did provided valuable insights into their state of mind and wildfire-related concerns. The additional information generally fell into five key themes:

1. Personal experiences of wildfires that directly impacted them, their families, or close friends—such as home loss, displacement, and challenging evacuations (57 respondents).
2. Stories and observations about nearby wildfires that heightened their awareness and/or preparation efforts (27 respondents).
3. Expressions of fear for themselves, their families, and neighbors regarding potential wildfires (22 respondents).
4. Examples of personal empowerment or preparedness efforts, such as assembling go-bags and educating neighbors (20 respondents).
5. Challenges related to limited capacity or responsibility for home preparation due to rental or mobile home park property management or homeowners’ associations (7 respondents).

Approximately one-quarter of respondents shared personal experiences of wildfire impacts, including losing homes, displacement, and evacuation stress—most frequently citing the Alameda fire. Several respondents reported losing their homes in the Alameda fire, while others described the confusion or absence of evacuation notices and the stress of leaving under uncertain conditions. Many also shared stories of friends or family who lost their homes, with lingering fear, loss, and anxiety continuing to affect them.

Additionally, 12% of respondents mentioned wildfires occurring nearby that, while not directly affecting them, increased their awareness of wildfire risks. Around 10% of respondents expressed general fears about potential wildfires, particularly concerns about losing their homes or not being able to evacuate in time. And 8% of respondents shared actions they had taken to feel more prepared, such as creating emergency kits, educating their communities, and reducing fire hazards around their properties.

Field Lessons Learned

While data is useful, there are many things to be learned that are experiential. For example:

- Most (if not all) of the people we interacted with are unlikely to attend a public meeting or read written materials placed in a public place. Going to their place of residence or casually meeting them in a park or gathering place made a huge difference in connecting with people who are not otherwise heard.
- Many people interviewed were surprised and grateful to be asked questions on the topics and were impressed that someone would volunteer to seek them out.
- Inviting people to share their perspectives without trying to educate them at the same time was important to relationship building. Occasionally they asked questions and were given info.
- Offering incentives to have the conversation did not appear to have much value; in fact, it tended to make the conversation transitional rather than personal.
- To encourage people to want to be better educated, they often needed reassurance that the experience would be one-on-one, free, unconditional, and done at a time of their convenience.
- Some seniors indicated that they were glad to participate because they are lonely.
- Several households with children had a hard time paying attention because they were distracted.
- It was extremely helpful to have one of the volunteers who was Ukrainian, reach out to Ukrainian refugees.
- Volunteers with limited experience tended to have difficulty listening and writing down what people said. We all learned what worked best through experience.
- It was difficult getting volunteers to commit to doing the interviews more than a few times even if they were initially very interested and enthusiastic. It takes a special person to go to the home of someone you don't know and engage them in conversation.

Raw Data Sections

- “Local Conversations” Data Collection Form
- Responses to Where would you go if you needed to evacuate and why?
- Responses to Why do you think your home is safe or unsafe from wildfire?
- Responses to What do you think would make your home safer?
- Responses to Where do you get information on how to make your home safe?
- Responses to What limits you from having a wildfire safe home?
- Responses to Where do you go to get information on current wildfire conditions?
- Responses to Open forum—additional stories and information shared

“Local Conversations” Data Collection Form

Local Wildfire Conversations

I am a volunteer working on Ashland’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Our goal is to keep you safe and our community whole when wildfire affects Ashland. To create a plan that reflects concerns and meaningful solutions for everyone, we would like to hear your perspective. Do you have a few minutes for a brief conversation?

Name(s) of volunteer(s) filling out this form **(Required)**: _____

Circle or mark all that apply. See the master map to locate areas by name. If map is not available, write down the two closest cross-streets: _____

Which City? (required)	SVP Areas in Ashland	Other Areas	MH Parks
Ashland	Allison	Almeda	Wingspread
Unincorp. Ashland	Avery	Ashland Mine	Tolman Ck
Talent, Phoenix +	Faith	Church	The Pines
Medford, Central Point, White City	Garfield (SOU units – not dorms)	Fordyce	Siskiyou Village
Other Rogue Valley	Hersey	East Main	Nauvoo
Not a “local” resident	Holmes	Granite	Bear Creek
	Hospital	Green Meadows	

	Laurel	Guthrie	
	Morton	Nevada	
	Oak	North Mountain	
	Orange	South Mountain	
	North Clay	Oak Knoll	
	South Clay	Takelma	
	Railroad	Terrace	
	Rice Park		

DEMOGRAPHICS – First ask if they are a renter or homeowner (if living in a MHP where they own the trailer they are a homeowner). Ask the interviewee to self-identify their income, age group, etc. status. Assume if they live in City, State or Federal “affordable housing” they are low income.

CIRCLE or MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

Renter or Homeowner (At a minimum, answer this question)
Condo, Townhouse, multiplex; Apartment Bldg (4 or more units); Mobile/Manufactured Home
RV; Single Family Residence; Studio/Adu/cottage; Room(s) in a house; Other _____

Low Income Housing Insecure Disabled Senior Single Parent child under 18 in home
Limited English in home Other (explain): _____

INSURANCE: Homeowners insurance—Y / N; Renters insurance ---Y / N; Don’t know _____

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Where would you go if you needed to evacuate? Why? (They may describe what they would do, how prepared they are with a go bag, etc., rather than where they would end up. Any answer is fine but try to find out where they plan to “land.” If they have no answer, enter that they “don’t know.”)

How would you evacuate? (check all that apply)

my car/truck/van/motorcycle: _____ go in someone else's vehicle: _____ bus _____
bike or on foot: _____ other: _____

Do you know what a "red flag" warning is and why it is important?

No _____ Give them a flyer if they don't know. Yes _____ high temps, low RH, dry conditions, winds

WILDFIRE RESISTANT HOMES KNOWLEDGE: These questions assess their understanding of wildfire risk and how they get information to make risk reduction decisions. Use their words as much as possible.

How safe do you think your home is from wildfire? (Required):

Very Safe _____ Safe _____ Kind of Safe _____ Not Safe _____ Very Unsafe _____ Don't know _____
Don't Care _____

Why do you think your home is safe or unsafe? (Required): (record their words)

What do you think would make your home safer from wildfire? (record their words)

Where did you get information on how to make your home safer from wildfire? (Required):

Have you had a wildfire risk assessment done for your home or property? Encourage them to ask for an assessment to learn more. If they are interested get their contact info (next page).

Yes _____ No, not interested _____ No, and interested _____ Don't know _____
Who did the assessment? City Fire Staff _____ WRAP volunteer _____ Don't know _____

CAPACITY TO HAVE A WILDFIRE RESISTANT HOME: If they don't say anything specific—write down "Don't know" & encourage them to get an assessment.

What limits you from having a wildfire safe home? E.g.: finances, time, resources, knowledge, etc.

COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS: Goal is to discover preferred wildfire communications pathways
Where do you go or who do you turn to for information and advice about wildfire conditions and what to do about them? Common responses: Citizen's alert, Nixle, Watch Duty, **(Required):**

FOLLOW UP: *Can we contact you again to clarify your responses or provide educational materials?*

Yes _____ No _____ Maybe _____ (give them Charisse's card if they are unsure)

Contact Information: If they are comfortable get their name, address, phone #, and email so we can provide them with educational materials, a wildfire risk assessment, or come back to talk to them or others about wildfire risk reduction options. Personal information will be shredded after responding.

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address (only if they want a free assessment) _____

Preferred contact media to make an appointment: text; email; phone call (circle one)

NOTES: First paragraph (below) is for anything that does not fit elsewhere and for stories, experiences, and ideas. **Record stories and anecdotes here.** *Stories are usually the richest source of information, so take your time to paint a full picture and quote often.*

Interviewer's Notes (this is your space) It is helpful to remind yourself who this person is if we need to go back to correct or add information. This is especially helpful if you have many conversations



close together and get mixed up about who said what. Consider putting information shared that is not directly related to wildfire here, such as complaints about City Council, electrical costs, etc.

Thank You For Contributing To Making Ashland A Fire Adapted Community

Responses to “Where would you go if you needed to evacuate and why?”

223 Responses recorded and sorted thematically:

- Destinations (120; 53.8%)
- Travel direction/route (includes generic “away from the fire”) (97; 43.5%)
- “Don’t know” (used these or similar words) (35; 15.7%)
- Accessibility issues (29; 13%)
- Other concerns (15; 6.7%)
- Unsolicited evacuation “preparedness” options mentioned (13; 5.8%)
- Plan not to evacuate (4; 1.8%)
- Evacuation related comments recorded in the Open Forum Notes (n=37)

Destinations

1. To the SOU parking lot. I don't think we can get out of town because the roads will be blocked
2. Corvallis because my daughter lives there.
3. Depends on where the fire is. North or south. Petaluma or Eugene. Have friends all over town.
4. I have a lot of family in the area so I will go to one of them.
5. We have lots of family and friends in the area and would go to stay with them.
6. I would probably get in my car and sleep in it.
7. I would go to Medford or south to stay with friends depending on where the fire is.
8. Los Angeles, or Portland.

9. Have out of area travel trailer
10. We have places to go outside of the area
11. Any one of several places already identified out of the area
12. We would probably go to family in Mt Shasta or to Eugene depending on the fire.
13. My daughter lives in Medford. I would go there.
14. I would go to my daughter's house unless the fire required us to evacuate which happened during the Almeda fire.
15. Many places. Probably to Seattle.
16. I would take a wool blanket and go the pond. I would use my old fire shelter for me and my dog.
17. We would leave at Level 2 and go to Grants Pass, Klamath Falls, or Yreka, depending on the fire. If we couldn't drive away we would probably go down to Bear Creek on foot across a large dry grassy field.
18. Good question. Depending on the immediacy of the situation I would have 2 choices: going to the field to the north or to the Shop N Cart parking lot to the south. I expect all routes to be impacted. I purchased an ebike with this in mind. I'm really concerned about only one point of egress. We are trapped here. I plan to escape on foot or bike and won't take anything with me.
19. Depends on where it starts and the way the wind is blowing. I have the evacuation map. Not sure where I would go if I couldn't get to Medford. I probably would go into the mountains.
20. Go out to Foss Rd or someplace open. Away from wooded areas in Ashland.
21. To the cemetery on foot. If I had time to go in a vehicle I would go down to East Main and out to Emigrant Lake depending on the fire.
22. To Medford because I have family there--if I could go north that is.
23. I would leave here in whatever matter works. I have no plan to land. Where I go depends on the fire direction. Possibly a motel depending on what's available. We would try to take our two cars, but I could a certain distance if I had to.
24. I have friends in town that are a little higher in the mountains. That's where I would go.
25. Good question. Not sure. Away to where family are. Probably to central Oregon to be with family.

26. Depends on the fire direction. We have meeting points planned in Ashland, Hilt, Yreka, Rogue River, and Grants Pass. We have people to stay with. We have two vehicles and would take both. We talked about a foot route to the cemetery. If we can drive we would go to Clay and East Main.
27. Probably would seek advice. May stay with my ex-wife in Talent or I would go to live with my sister in Massachusetts. It depends on the disaster.
28. I don't have a place to go to.
29. If I needed to evacuate Ashland, I would probably try to stay at a friends house in Medford, however, they'd likely have a lot of other people trying to do the same thing, so that might not really be an option. If I had to leave Southern Oregon, well, I guess I'd drive down to LA where I have friends and family? But then again, they might not have space. So I would probably stay close and find the cheapest place for me and my pets to stay.
30. Anywhere. I have already evacuated from 2-3 fires.
31. I would go to my parents house in Burney California.
32. It depends on where the fire is coming from. If from the south, I would go to Merlin to be with family. If it came from the north, I would go to Chico.
33. To Medford. It depends on where the fire is.
34. To my church building. There are people that know me there and can help me. I'm 84 and no family so I need help.
35. That's a really good question. I suppose I would go to a lot near here that I think the City owns; or I would go to the Seventh Day Adventist lawn.
36. Yeech... I know people who had to evacuate during the Alameda fire. I guess I would go to friends who are in a safe place.
37. Depends on where the fire is. I would go north to Eugene. South would be "SOL" (shit-out-of luck). I would have no place to stay if I went south.
38. I would probably go to Medford to stay with friends or in a hotel."
39. my fathers house in Jacksonville if that was safe or I could get there
40. a friends house, Medford Grants Pass
41. I'd go to family or friends depending on evacuation length
42. I have friends in Ashland and Medford I could stay with

43. anywhere the fire was not, maybe my X-husband's house in Medford or my kids in Portland
44. family in Portland or maybe family in Seattle
45. My sisters in cave junction, if I could get there. I slept in my car first night of almeda fire with my dog and cat cause I couldn't get anywhere when we had to evacuate in Talent
46. friend's house-where it was safe
47. my son's home in grants pass
48. depends on where I can get to. I could go to friends in Redding-but only if I can get there.
49. Depending on the fire we would go to the coast or south to California.
50. I could go to my daughter in Phoenix or I would go to Medford.
51. I would probably check into a hotel. I have no friends or relatives living in the area.
52. once I got out of evac zone, maybe id go to friends in CA if I could get across the pass, my closest friends live in Ashland and talent.
53. Medford if I could get there, stay with friends
54. Medford
55. My family Portland or a local motel
56. Friends in Medford for immediate stays and father in Seattle if there was lengthy time away
57. My daughters home in Portland if evac was extended. But stay w a friend or get a motel immediately
58. To sons home in Portland, when I could get there. Immediately guess I'd go to motel.
59. My friends live around the valley and I can stay with any of them if I can get there. In Almeda fire I was evacuated and went to several homes during first few days of the event.
60. We would suss out the situation and then go to family in Talent. I have another close family nearby who we would pick up on the way out. We would take two vehicles.
61. It depends on what the evacuation is for. Our plan is to go the ball field because everyone in the family knows where it is and it would be a safe space.
62. Hmmm. I would head to the coast if possible because I assume the air there would be fresher.
63. My daughter lives in the hills in Ashland so I would try to go there.
64. Drive to our friends in Portland.

65. I would drive to my mom's house on Clay Street in Ashland if I could. Or I would just stay with an American family I live with and follow their advice and go with them whenever they went.
66. Hmmm. Not sure where I would go outside of Ashland. Would probably go to my girlfriends in Ashland.
67. Probably up north to family.
68. I would go to family in San Francisco if I could, or to friends in Portland.
69. My family lives in Ashland. If we had to leave Ashland, I may stay with family in Portland or a friend in Eugene.
70. I would go to a friend's house in Grants Pass.
71. I would probably go to Gold Hill.
72. To family in northern California
73. That depends on where I need to evacuate to. If I have to go north, I'll go to Portland. If I have to go south, I'll go to Nevada.
74. I would probably try to pick up my mom in memory care in Medford. My next door neighbor has no car, so I would probably ask her to come with me.
75. To my sisters who live in Klamath Falls.
76. North because I am more familiar with there.
77. I would go to California
78. Somewhere in Medford.
79. I would go to my parents' place in Medford. During the fire in Talent my parents came to my place.
80. Good question. Probably drive to friends in Silver City (near Salem)
81. Probably out towards Medford where I have relatives. I know Ashland well so I think I have options on how to leave.
82. Out to the Applegate to ex-husband or friend. Otherwise, I don't know.
83. My parents house in Portland if I could get their or stay w friends who do not evacuate
84. My friends in Medford if I could get there
85. I go get my mom and brother and stay w them if it was safe. If they evacuated too we'd all to Medford I guess for a short time we could stay in motel till we could come home.

86. Well my brother lives over Tolman creek road we could go their, but if he evacuated we'd go to Medford or San Francisco where we're from if the worse thing happened.
87. Might have to go to CA to stay w family if I was evac for long time
88. Medford
89. Medford friends live there
90. My friends live in central point I'd go there
91. To Medford my friends
92. Yreka where my sister lives.
93. Medford since I work there.
94. We evacuated during Alameda fire and all family agreed to meet at Mall
95. Medford if I could get there.
96. The nearest park or where he was directed to by PD
97. Try to get back to Cave Junction where he has previously resided
98. Most likely south of Ashland but would depend on fire location
99. Away from fire -probably to Medford or Jacksonville.
100. Friends in Medford my church in Medford
101. Anywhere away from fire, if I can get to Friends in Medford I'd stay there
102. Friend in Medford
103. Depends on how long I had to evacuate probably to friends in grants pass
104. My family brother lives in Central Point. I'd go there
105. to my cousins in Jacksonville I guess
106. My parents live in Medford. I'd go there
107. If she was going south, she would go to Hornbrook to her dad's house. And if she was going north, she would go to Medford. She knows those roads.
108. If the fire is South of Ashland I would take I-5 North to Eugene or Portland. If the fire is North of Ashland, I would take I-5 South to my family in Sacramento.
109. Most likely drive to Grants Pass to stay with friends while Ashland was being evacuated.
110. ...likely upwards towards Bend or Portland where I have family.

- 111. I would probably try a friends house if it was safe or Medford to find a place to go.
- 112. I think I would also maybe drive until I feel safe and far away from the fire.
- 113. Myrtle creek
- 114. go to neighbors, she is very prepared with classes proactive or follow route 7. She has cinder blocks and is proactively reducing risk. Confused on exact route. rely on phone tree for info
- 115. Drive up north to Oregon City where his parents live to figure out next steps
- 116. would go back to Sacramento California because that is where her family is
- 117. Depending on direction of wildfire, either Portland to stay with best friend, or Redding to stay with parents.
- 118. If possible, she would evacuate to Portland where her family is and if Portland was not possible she would go to the coast.
- 119. If south I-5 is open they would go Yreka because they have family there.
- 120. Where would I go if I needed to evacuatechico if the road wasn't blocked south. I have close family there who would put me up. If I could only go north I would go to Eugene. I have a brother there.

Travel direction

- 1. There are only two ways out--I5 and highway 99. If I5 is blocked, I would use highway 99 or 66.
- 2. Go to I5
- 3. Wherever the fire wasn't going
- 4. Opposite direction of the fire.
- 5. We would go the opposite direction from the fire.
- 6. Depends on where the fire is.
- 7. The fire would go down Bear Creek--wind direction depending. So I would go uphill and if the fire got closer, I would continue to go uphill." I told him that this would be a poor choice and explained why. He doesn't have a car and can barely walk. He seemed to think that the fire would mostly stay confined to the creek.
- 8. Wherever the fire wasn't going

9. I would look at the fire department guide. I would probably go towards the freeway.
10. I would drive to Eagle Mill Rd depending on the wind and fire.
11. Anywhere away from the fire
12. Anywhere away from the fire
13. Straight out the gate towards the railroad tracks depending upon where the fire is. (Note that the "gate" is for access to a newly constructed chain link fence around wingspread. The gate is locked though some folks have a key. The railroad tracks are lined with blackberries so getting to them will require going through blackberries.)
14. I am very concerned about hitting a traffic jam. I have 4 young kids. We would probably jump in the ponds.
15. Where the fire is not--maybe up Dead Indian Memorial Road because that is where my sweetie lives.
16. Away from the fire -- south or east. Maybe to the fairgrounds or to family in Yreka.
17. Depends on where it starts and the way the wind is blowing.
18. To the cemetery on foot. If I had time to go in a vehicle I would go down to East Main and out to Emigrant Lake depending on the fire.
19. I would go to I5 if I could. I have familiarity with other options. I would look for smoke direction and what others are doing.
20. Where I go depends on the fire direction.
21. Depends on the fire direction. We have two vehicles and would take both. We talked about a foot route to the cemetery. If we can drive we would go to Clay and East Main.
22. I would follow the evacuation route to East Main. I keep my vehicles topped up. We have 3 vehicles and three drivers so we would take all of them. We have cats that we would take with us.
23. It depends on where the fire is. I would go to open space. If driving is not possible, I would walk. I won't wait until told to go.
24. Call Amy who is in a safer place. It depends on where the fire is at.
25. It depends on where the fire is coming from. If from the south, I would go to Merlin to be with family. If it came from the north, I would go to Chico.

26. To Medford. It depends on where the fire is.
27. It depends on where the fire is...if we go north or south. I grew up here so I think we could get out. I have a dog so I need to evacuate in a car.
28. Depends on where the fire is. I would go north to Eugene. South would be "SOL" (shit-out-of-luck). I would have no place to stay if I went south.
29. Good question. There was a fire the road [a few days ago]. We loaded our cars because we were on level 2. We would go to Tolman Creek Rd down to E. Main. It depends on where the fire is. We would consider going by bike or on foot if we had to.
30. My daughter lives in Ashland. I would go to her depending on where the fire is. I have to take a car because I am not strong enough to carry much and I would have to take my cat.
31. I guess it depends on where the fire is coming from.
32. We have a plan. If we are in two places, we will meet in the Bi Mart parking lot. If we can go to Benson Rd we will get our RV and drive away. We have radios on because we are ham radio operators. We would listen to the Sheriff's radio. We would develop situational awareness and then reassess. We might pick up someone who lives on Siskiyou Blvd who only has a bicycle.
33. Do you think I would go to the freeway! No! My friend and I have been talking about how to evacuate. My friend says we should go to the nearby irrigated soccer field. What do you think? {Charisse told her it was a good option and she should discuss with the YMCA getting the gate unlocked so residents can go into the field in an emergency. I told her the City could not make the request}. If the fire is from the south, I'd go north.
34. wherever I could away from fire
35. Away from fire, from there I'd go to family or friends depending on evacuation length.
36. Friend's house wherever fire was not. We evacuated Alameda fire and our house burnt down
37. Away from fire, wherever police allow me to go. I have friends in Ashland and Medford I could stay with
38. wherever fire was not. I got here in 2021 after Alameda fire but if I had to evacuate I'd go wherever the police allowed me to go.
39. Depends on the situation and what is blocked off. I have friends all around. I would exit on North Mtn [we mentioned that it only goes south]. I would grab essentials and go wherever I could go. We have two cars and would take both of them.

40. It depends. I try to have options...but it depends on the fire and winds.
41. Depends on where the fire is.
42. It depends on the path of the fire.
43. In my mind the fire would be coming from grasslands. I would look at the wind direction. I have no idea what to do. I guess I would go away from the fire.
44. wherever police roadblocks allow me to go.
45. anywhere the fire was not and police would let me
46. Friends in Medford if that area was safe
47. Wherever the fire was not.
48. Away from fire
49. Away from fire
50. Wherever I can to get away from fire
51. Away from fire wherever I could go based on road blocks
52. Wherever I can away from fire.
53. I would head down the hill to the SOU campus. It depends on whether the fire is coming up the hill.
54. Depends on which direction the fire is.
55. I would go on I5 north or south to get away from the fire and out of the smoke.
56. It depends on what roads are open.
57. at least drive in the opposite direction to the fire.
58. It depends on which direction is open.
59. Opposite to the fire.
60. Depends which way the fire is.
61. Well gee.... I'd go away from the fire. I have no car and would have to go by bus or on foot.
62. Depending on fire location I may not be able to get out of here. I can go out to Callahans I5 and N or S. or out to Greensprings Hwy and head up to Greensprings or into Ashland. All depending on where w the fire is.
63. Wherever I could

64. Where the fire wasn't
65. Depending on where the fire is, I'd go in opposite direction
66. I'd go away from the fire.
67. Well depends on the fire and where it was.
68. It depends on where the fires are.
69. Depending on where the fire is, we would probably go to the north.
70. Wherever the police told him to go.
71. Away from fire. Wherever fire was not
72. Somewhere safe away from fire
73. Anywhere safe
74. Depends on where fire is.
75. Away from fire
76. Anywhere away from fire
77. Anywhere safe
78. Wherever the fire was not
79. Wherever the fire was not
80. Did not elaborate location. Said he would go away from fire direction but did not have a predetermined place to meet up with family or friends.
81. Most likely south of Ashland but would depend on fire location
82. A direction away from the fire, most likely to the South East.
83. Away from fire.
84. Away from fire. Wherever I could get to.
85. We'd go where ever the fire is not
86. Anywhere away from fire, if I can get to Friends in Medford I'd stay there
87. Depends on where the wildfire is located. North or south is the direction I would go.
88. If the fire is South of Ashland I would take I-5 North to Eugene or Portland. If the fire is North of Ashland, I would take I-5 South to my family in Sacramento.

89. Nearest exit with roommate who has a car. If not, find exit on bike. (Doesn't know where those exists are).
90. I would have to rely on people around me, I don't have a car. Whatever their plan is my plan too. Vacate the area as soon as possible, but you can't really predict where to go.
91. Generally speaking the opposite direction of the fire,....
92. I would evacuate wherever the fire wasn't and I would go wherever the government tells me to go ... I have no reason to go anywhere other than where they direct me (Doesn't seem to have any plan in place).
93. Depending on the direction of the fire, I would evacuate towards the opposite direction to avoid meeting with the fire.
94. go to neighbors, she is very prepared with classes proactive or follow route 7. Confused on exact route. rely on phone tree for info
95. They would go in "whatever direction the fire is not" and "self explanatory"
96. Interviewee said that they would go towards the nearest freeway exit as they understand the evacuation guidelines to indicate. But that it might depend on who else is in town that may be able to assist them. She said that someone in town would most likely be able to pick them up to evacuate but if not, she has a promise from the owners of the house that they would come get her.
97. It depends on the fire. She would communicate with her best friends family and coordinate with them.

Don't know/unknown

1. don't know
2. Don't know.
3. Unknown.
4. I don't know where I'd go. Somewhere where the fire was not
5. I don't know
6. I don't know since we don't know anybody else.
7. Depends on where the fire is...opposite of the fire.

8. Don't know.
9. No. Have to think about it.
10. I don't know.
11. I don't know.
12. I don't have a plan.
13. Don't know.
14. I don't know --somewhere away from fire, then to CA to family
15. I don't know, I don't have friends here or family. so I'd probably go wherever the fire was not.
16. I don't know, friends in Talent, wherever I could get to that was safe
17. I have no idea what to do
18. I don't know, if I had a car that would determine to some degree where I go, cause I can get away. If I'm walking well I'll walk away from the fire.
19. Wherever I could go
20. I don't know, wherever the fire is not. All my friends that I could stay with live in Ashland
21. Motel, I don't know hadn't thought about it really
22. Don't know
23. I don't know. There is a police station down the road so I might go there.
24. Not sure. It depends on where the fire is.
25. I don't know. I recently moved here from Key West Florida.
26. Don't know. [Sophomore at SOU]
27. I don't know. I don't have a car. I would probably go to the fire station if I could.
28. I just moved in. I don't know where to go. It depends if I can go to family in the area. I don't have a car.
29. Don't know.
30. I don't know I've got too many animals. I would need a big truck or car.
31. Don't know. Maybe near the river/lake.
32. Haven't thought about that, I guess away from fire somewhere safe

33. I'd probably evacuate w my daughter and grandkids since we're usually home. Where we go depends on the fire. I don't know where we're go.
34. I don't know where I'd go
35. No idea. Was living in Phoenix and lost her home and was not allowed to evacuate to her designated spot. Currently lives with daughter, who would probably know where to evacuate.

Accessibility issues

1. The new exit near me only goes south on the freeway and is locked. I have figured out how to drive across a field nearby to get to another exit.
2. Would like a community place to go to.
3. My sister has a car but it is small and she travels a lot so I mostly walk.
4. He doesn't have a car and can barely walk.
5. Straight out the gate towards the railroad tracks depending upon where the fire is. (Note that the "gate" is for access to a newly constructed chain link fence around wingspread. The gate is locked though some folks have a key. The railroad tracks are lined with blackberries so getting to them will require going through blackberries.)
6. I can't drive and have no car. I have not talked to anyone about going with them.
7. Look at Clay St--three major neighbor hoods would have to get out on Clay St. It would get backed up in minutes. I have been looking at an alternative area to walk to on foot to cross the train tracks and go to the storage area on the other side. (Note that I looked at the area and expressed concern with the blackberries and flammable arborvitae that would impede evacuation. I agreed to come back to talk more about what should be considered when I do her WRA.)
8. There is only one way out [of Wingspread].
9. I'm really concerned about only one point of egress. We are trapped here [in Wingspread].
10. Its so abstract--I can't even think about it. I have no car.
11. Expressed puzzlement by the question. "Wingspread and Tolman Creek only have one exit. I wonder about that--what would I do?
12. Do you think I would go to the freeway! No! My friend and I have been talking about how to evacuate [from the Tolman Creek MHP]. My friend says we should go to the nearby irrigated

soccer field. What do you think? (Charisse told her it was a good option and she should discuss with the YMCA getting the gate unlocked so residents can go into the field in an emergency. I told her the City could not make the request).

13. I need assistance to evacuate if I can't go in a car. I am 85 years old.
14. I can't drive so I would have to go with someone else.
15. I don't have a car.
16. Depends on how far away the fire is. We don't have a vehicle so we would have to use public transportation or call friends to pick us up. [Apt has 3 roommates]
17. I have no vehicle so I would get a ride friend in an emergency.
18. I don't have a car.
19. We were prepared to evacuate during the Alameda Fire, but got cut off on all four sides.
20. The reality seems hopeless--there are not enough ways out. It will be chaotic.
21. Church with Arlene [her sister]. Arlene has no driver's license and is 89. I'm worried I could not get out in time because my backdoor is blocked by my bed.
22. My next door neighbor has no car,
23. Well gee.... I'd go away from the fire. I have no car and would have to go by bus or on foot.
24. I don't know. I don't have a car. I would probably go to the fire station if I could.
25. I just moved in. I don't know where to go. It depends if I can go to family in the area. I don't have a car.
26. bottle neck [by the Bard's Inn] trying to get into N Main heading to Medford.
27. Nearest exit with roommate who has a car. If not, find exit on bike.
28. I would have to rely on people around me, I don't have a car.
29. depend on who else is in town that may be able to assist them. She said that someone in town would most likely be able to pick them up to evacuate but if not, she has a promise from the owners of the house that they would come get her.

Other concerns

1. Wondered why there are evacuation route signs in the hills but not on the low lands. Would like to see them installed.

2. Expressed concern that he could not afford temporary housing anywhere if his family had to evacuate.
3. I would leave as soon as I saw a whiff of smoke. I wouldn't wait to be notified to evacuate.
4. Since I am a member of CERT, I hope to be called out but I am a caretaker for my 99 year old mother. We live with my sister on the steep part of Morton and don't interact with neighbors.
5. We evacuated during the Alameda Fire. They sent a cop up the street with a bullhorn. A lot of older folks didn't hear. Some folks chose to stay put in Talent and Medford. Some saved their home.
6. People need to be prepared to evacuate but they don't. I'm on the Helping Hands Committee in this park. I'm the most active and am currently helping a 93 year old woman who would need to be evacuated. When the situation goes south, I don't want to be the one who has to help others evacuated.
7. I think the [authorities] should avoid overstatements. It is hard for people to really be ready when they do what they did on the fire last week about sending out evacuation information [and then nothing happens.]
8. A friend and I tried to help people evacuate during the Alameda Fire. Our original plan to evacuate was to go up Dead Indian Memorial, but highway 66 was blocked. During the Alameda Fire everything was blocked.
9. Didn't want to talk about it
10. We've been close [to having to evacuate] at times. **I have dementia** but I am bright enough right now to have some responsibility.
11. I would try to get in touch with other friends and family from Ukraine that I know of around this area to see if we can help each other.
12. The Alert would tell me to go--probably to the Jackson County Expo.
13. I have studied the **evacuation routes and I don't think they make sense** because we don't know where the fire will be coming from.
14. ...she is **unfamiliar with the area** being a student and has no place else to go or knowledge of Ashland's plans in that event
15. I would also **look for any shelters** that are available if I can't stay with families and friends.

Unsolicited evacuation “preparedness” options mentioned

1. We have no evacuation kit in the car. I feel discouraged because I can't do anything.
2. I don't know my evacuation zones.
3. I keep my car filled with gas and I have Citizen's alert. I also have my go bag ready.
4. I have the evacuation map.
5. I get alerts. I have a go bag by the door and my car is gassed.
6. I would use my car because I have 2 dogs. I have a big to-go bag and a little to-go bag. I keep the little one in my car.
7. We have a plan. If we are in two places, we will meet in the Bi Mart parking lot. If we can go to Benson Rd we will get our RV and drive away. We have radios on because we are ham radio operators. We would listen to the Sheriff's radio. We would develop situational awareness and then reassess. We might pick up someone who lives on Siskiyou Blvd who only has a bicycle.
8. Almeda made me aware that I need more than 1/4 tank of gas to get to where we need to go.
9. I don't have anything planned and I won't be going with anyone.
10. Where I go depends on the fire--I would try to follow the [City's] evacuation plan but I have doubts about it working.
11. I have a go bag packed and put everything into a fireproof bag.
12. He always has 1/2 tank of fuel in his car so is able to remove from the danger area.
13. I have a go-bag, but that's pretty much it.

Plans not to evacuate

1. To be completely honest, because we have so many animals I would turn on the sprinkler and get the hose and stand on the roof and hose as much of the property as possible. I would try and stay. I don't think we have the means to take all of our animals. Maybe I care too much, cause the responsible things to do would be to leave them, but I couldn't do that. That method worked for my friends in Talent during the fire. I went to his house one day before they rebuilt the area and his house was the only one standing on the block. I would try to stand my ground and say 'no to fire'.

2. I don't plan to evacuate. This is the best place I have ever lived. If it burns down, I have nothing.
3. Probably stay here and defend my home and animals and property.
4. But really I'd probably stay here. I have horses and irrigation so I could defend my property and horses.

Evacuation related comments recorded in the Open Forum Notes (unsorted)

1. Roger always keeps his gas tank 1/2 full for evacuation and 2 Go Bags by the front door. He plans to turn off gas and water valves before evacuation.
2. When I moved into my Parkside Condo I was told that I was responsible for organizing everyone in the community relative to wildfire evacuation. Nobody asked me if I wanted to do the job. That's why I quit. I also got tired of people being uninterested. One person said that he is "not afraid" of fire so he isn't going to do anything.
3. CERT has never told us to think critically about what to do. We are only trained to do what we are told when it comes to evacuation.
4. 2nd floor loft. Pretty safe. I have my go bag and personal information ready.
5. Says 'My van is packed and the go bag is right here by the door'
6. She has two cats and is afraid they won't be catchable. She has a system set up with her neighbors on each side. They will leave together.
7. I am really concerned about egress from this park. I have looked at adjacent properties for a way out. They just put up a gate and fence blocking the only possible alternative way to drive out of the park. If there is any way to open up more escape routes, we need other ways out.
8. After the Alameda Fire, I made a commitment to leave with the first level of evacuation. I wonder about all the older disabled folks in the Mountain Meadows Manor.
9. I am concerned that there is only one way out and getting elders out. I don't want that responsibility.
10. My biggest concern is my wife and I not being home and the kids being home alone. During the Alameda Fire that was what happened. The streets were clogged with semitrucks. It was frightening to have no plan.

11. Its the uprooted nature that is the bigger factor for people losing there homes. There are very limited services during an evacuation. I had to stay in a hotel for 11 days when I was evacuated. I don't have that kind of money.
12. Only source of support is through her church. During Alameda fire, no one told her about it and whomever knocked at door moved on too fast before she could answer it.
13. She talked a lot about how there are so many old women in the park that need help. She is a retired nurse and a retired army nurse. She has lived here 17 years and is on the helping hands committee but doesn't want to be responsible when it comes time to evacuate. She is currently helping a 93 year old women out and is not getting much support. I suggested that she set up a phone tree like they have done in the Tolman Creek MHP. She liked the idea and plans to pursue.
14. The recent fire really threw me. How could I have gotten out of here? Access to the YMCA soccer field is blocked by a locked gate.
15. We had family evacuated from the Alameda Fire. I was at home at home that day with my dog. My parents were out of town and could not get back to Ashland. It was difficult because I was 14 years old and separated from my parents. We need to have more information on the fires and where to go during an event. My parents had nothing with them because they were not at home when the fire happened.
16. When the Alameda fire broke out I learned about it on Facebook and left work to drive home to get my husband who didn't have a car and wouldn't have been able to leave unless he walked of course. the roads were all blocked but I kept going and made it back. then we loaded the car and went to our friend's house in Medford.
17. I got real motivated after the recent fire. I cleaned away the debris from the base of my wood fences. I have a friend who lives on Corp Ranch Rd who left soon as she learned about the recent fire we had to the south. I have other friends who said they would stay at their home and fight the fire. I saw the wisdom of leaving early because of my fired. Fewer people in the area because some leave early means those that remain have fewer problems.
18. In hindsight I wish we had known sooner what was going on. I was responsible for getting everyone out but my dad is controlling and made us wait. I still resent him for that.
19. The biggest risk I see because of wildfire is the need to evacuate immediately. That means taking routes where the traffic would be unmanageable. That is what I most wonder about.

20. I was lucky enough not to be here during the Alameda Fire. A lot of people had pets that got lost during the fire. In the planning process, I recommend that pets get microchipped so they can be returned to the owners. I worry a lot about how to handle evacuating our pets because we don't have a car. I really need information on this subject.
21. In the plan, you need to have more education about the County evacuation zones.
22. I am super concerned about the "road diet". When the freeway got shut down I worried I could not get out for my day job.
23. The plan should address the need for us to have a space to be safe [during a fire.] We need to know what the options are.
24. We just moved here from Medford. During the Alameda Fire we were in Medford living in a motel on the greenway. We got a level 2 evacuation alert. The motel said we couldn't reserve our room unless it was a level 3 alert so we stayed. All of us watched the fire coming towards us and we were scared. At the last minute it turned.
25. Because she is so worried about responders passing her by (she is very slow moving), so she made the following suggestion: a way to notify responders with a sticker on the door but don't let robbers know.
26. I'm concerned about getting animals out. I work at a vet center.
27. One thing I am concerned about is the "little road diet". It will cause problems with people evacuating to the freeway. I have no idea how to get out of town. The converging at the Bard's Inn is horrible.
28. The Alameda Fire--that day my partner was working in Talent. She saw smoke in Ashland and called me at work. We shut down the business and I brought the cash box home. Then the threat shifted from being afraid in Ashland to Talent. My partner couldn't get home. She evacuated north to Stage Road and then had to evacuate again. I became the HQ for telling her what was going on.
29. We just had a fire [near Exit 11]. I called a friend who was out of town but she lives near the fire. They didn't know what to do when they found out that the key to their office where their valuables were stored wasn't available. They are making plans to get keys and use a phone to unlock the office.
30. I wouldn't know where the shelters are...[as an apartment dweller.]

31. This interviewee was senior, disabled, not independently able to get around, did not have a car, and is not able to easily relocate nor has any financial means to support himself.
32. He was recently homeless in the Cave Junction area and has moved to Ashland to get cleaned up and improve his life. He likes Ashland but having only been here one month, was not familiar with it. He is disabled, senior, has had past medical issues, and it not in a good situation. He does not have transportation and is totally dependent on local friends and agencies to assist him in living here.
33. Biggest problem is that people panic when exposed to dangerous situations.
34. He has evacuated before. He emphasized to not go through town or landlocked areas but to get to periphery as soon as possible.
35. He evacuated during the Alameda fire and went North on Highway 99 but was stuck at Suncrest for 4 hours and then eventually came back South through Talent. It was very stressful and not organized well in any way.
36. [Family of 3]. We left when fire came to Alameda St. By time we tried to get out the traffic was awful, really not moving up Glenn abs onto N Main St. So we did a u turn and cut thru town ended up going to mt Shasta cause we could see the fire going north. We were lucky cause we were both home that day, my son didn't live here then.
37. Interviewee doesn't think it's safe just because of the "driveway" (private alley into small HOA community) might prevent safe evacuation. She then clarified she isn't scared she couldn't get out, but it makes things more difficult in an emergency evacuation situation.

Responses to "Why do you think your home is safe or unsafe from wildfire?"

Seventy-two (32.3%) of the respondents said they "don't know or don't think about it much" and about 1.3% said they "don't care." Just over 47% of the sampled population feel some degree of "safe". Nearly 20% feel "unsafe" or "very unsafe." The responses are sorted by type after the next section which is a partially edited AI generated summary of the 223 responses by housing type.

Apartment Buildings

Why I feel Very Safe (5)

Two apartment dwellers talked about the aging wooden infrastructure of their apartment buildings, but both selected “very safe”. One expressed concern about external risks such as dry grasses near freeways but said that her personal efforts to maintain fire safety through watering and landscaping provide some reassurance, and they are confident because there is a firefighter in the family.

Why I feel Safe (4)

Thirteen residents a general sense of safety due to urban location: proximity to the city center, fire stations, and well-maintained properties with limited foliage. However, concerns remain about nearby dry grass, bushes, and the risk of fires starting closer to the freeway or in less densely populated areas. Overall, residents feel relatively secure because of the infrastructure and resources available within Ashland, though they acknowledge the inherent risks of wildfire.

Why I feel Moderately Safe (3)

Twenty-one responses reflects a mix of perceived safety and vulnerabilities regarding fire risks. Urban locations, proximity to fire departments, watered lawns, and stucco siding are seen as mitigating factors, while concerns persist about nearby vegetation, old structures, and poorly maintained buildings. The unpredictability of human-caused fires and the proximity to hazards like open fields or flammable materials heightens unease.

Why I feel Unsafe (2)

Eight apartment dwellers expressed widespread concerns about fire safety rooted in past experiences and specific environmental and structural vulnerabilities. Key themes include the perceived inevitability of fire damage due to dense vegetation, proximity to wildfire-prone areas like hills and parks, and poor maintenance of properties, such as debris-filled vents and overgrown bushes. Concerns about inadequate evacuation routes, especially for individuals with disabilities, highlight the risks of limited exits and unsafe designs. The fear of fires being started by unhoused individuals in nearby the Ashland watershed adds another layer of anxiety. Overall, the sentiments point to a lack of confidence in fire preparedness and safety in densely vegetated and poorly maintained areas.

Why I feel Very Unsafe (1)

One resident emphasized a collective sense of vulnerability to fire hazards due to environmental and geographical factors including climate change, beetle infestations, and dry grasses.

Condominium/Townhouse/Duplex/ADU

Why I feel Very Safe (5)

One response reflects on witnessing the rapid spread of the Alameda Fire and concerns about debris from trees, pointing to rental property owner inaction as a risk factor. Another response highlights perceived safety due to proximity to school property, which is expected to be well-maintained and protected.

Why I feel Safe (4)

Two respondents suggest a sense of safety due to surrounding buffers like streets, buildings, and the lack of dense vegetation. However, concerns about risks from neighboring houses remain.

Why I feel Moderately Safe (3)

Fourteen residents expressed mixed assessments of fire safety, with many residents citing mitigating factors such as non-flammable building materials (metal roofs, cement walls), minimal vegetation, and urban locations away from dense forests. Proactive measures like clearing vegetation, replacing flammable materials, and maintaining green spaces are highlighted. However, concerns persist about old infrastructure, evacuation challenges, HOA restrictions, and the unpredictability of wildfires, underscoring the belief that no home is entirely safe.

Why I feel Unsafe (2)

Six respondents expressed frustrations with living under restrictive HOAs limiting property modifications, concerns about structural vulnerabilities (e.g., connected wood fences), limited time for fire preparedness due to personal circumstances, feelings of general unease, and an overarching sense of inevitability regarding wildfire risks.

Mobile/Manufactured Homes

Why I feel Unsafe (5)

Two respondents talked about their efforts to mitigate fire risks through preparedness and structural improvements, such as removing flammable vegetation, installing metal fencing, and maintaining clean gutters. While one resident feels confident due to access to water and food and proactive changes, there is an acknowledgment of the inherent vulnerability of mobile home parks to rapid fire spread, revealing a contradiction between perceived and actual safety.

Why I feel Safe (4)

Four residents of the parks conveyed a sense of cautious optimism about fire safety. Personal experience and structural features contribute to their overall sense of safety. One said he was safe because no fire had come to “this location yet.” They feel relatively secure due to factors like their location (near a pond), limited foliage, and one of them said they live in a “well-built” home.

Why I feel Moderately Safe (3)

Twelve residents expressed mixed perceptions of fire safety. Some residents feel relatively secure due to proactive measures like fire breaks, metal siding, clear spaces, and fire extinguishers, while others acknowledge vulnerabilities due to flammable materials, risky neighboring properties, or reliance on spiritual peace over physical safeguards. Features like ponds, gravel, and clear landscaping offer some reassurance, but there remains concern about the unpredictability of fire spread and the safety of the overall neighborhood.

Why I feel Unsafe (2)

Eleven responses highlighted deep concern about fire risks in the context of manufactured homes, parks, and surrounding vegetation. While some homes feature fire-resistant materials, the surrounding areas, including parks, lack adequate defensible space, with insufficient clearance and flammable vegetation. Personal stories emphasize vulnerability, such as losing a trailer in the Alameda Fire and concerns about clutter hindering evacuation. Social dynamics, such as nearby residents' lack of awareness and issues with transient populations, exacerbate the feeling of insecurity. Overall, the theme underscores the difficulty of ensuring fire safety in densely built, flammable, and poorly managed

Mobile/manufactured home parks.

Why I feel Very Unsafe (1)

Twelve respondents identified profound concerns about fire safety in densely packed living environments. These include the vulnerability of homes to wildfires, especially older or flammable structures like aluminum trailers and 1980s-built homes. Residents highlight risks from nearby flammable vegetation, such as tall dry grass and trees, and hazards posed by shared community resources, such as propane tanks. There is unease about the lack of preventive measures, like uncut grass, clutter, and insufficient fire preparedness (e.g., personal fire extinguishers). The overall sentiment conveys a sense of helplessness and heightened awareness of wildfire dangers due to previous experiences, like the Alameda Fire, underscoring the unpredictability and destructive nature of fires in close-knit communities surrounded by natural fuel sources.

Single-Family Residences

Why I feel Very Safe (5)

Two responses indicate that they believe they are "fire-wise" and plan to remove bark as a fire safety measure.

Why I feel Safe (4)

Ten residents describe proactive measures like replacing wood fences with metal, fire-resistant landscaping, and maintaining vegetation-free zones around their homes. Others emphasize the role of location—such as being in urban areas or farmland—as contributing to perceived safety, though vulnerabilities in open fields and rural settings are noted.

Why I feel Moderately Safe (3)

Eighteen responses reflect mixed perceptions of fire safety, with a strong emphasis on the inevitability of wildfire and the varying effectiveness of precautionary measures. Residents highlight efforts like removing flammable vegetation, maintaining watered yards, pruning trees, and stucco finishes, while acknowledging barriers such as shared responsibility in neighborhoods, city regulations, and financial constraints on irrigation. Past experiences like the Alameda Fire underscore the unpredictability of wildfires and the vulnerability of even prepared properties. Overall, the sentiment is one of doing the best within individual control but recognizing that no property is completely safe.

Why I feel Not Safe (2)

Three residents highlighted concerns about fire risks stemming from overgrown vegetation, the collective vulnerability in densely packed neighborhoods, and the inherent flammability of building materials. While some individuals take preventative measures like installing gutter screens and blocking deck undersides, there is an overarching concern about the lack of fire safety at both personal and community levels.

Why I feel Very Unsafe (1)

The lone response expressed deep sadness at the high risk of total loss due to steep terrain, dense tree coverage, and structural vulnerabilities like wood fencing directly attached to the house.

I don't care

1. I'm self-taught and I won't cut down any trees or bushes.
2. If it goes it goes. It's not mine. Nothing worth saving.

I don't think much about it

1. I don't know or think about safety. I live in the moment and if a fire comes through I'll deal with it then. I'm not going live in fear and create a problem where there is not one
2. Not thought about it
3. I don't know. I rent a room in Alis house. What happens outside is not my concern.
4. I don't think about it much, I live pretty close to fire station and think they'd protect the neighborhood.
5. I don't know if its safe or unsafe. I leave it to my lawn landscaping company who does my yard work. But I don't know if he knows what plants are safe.
6. I don't think much about fire affecting my home, of course I know it can but I cannot do anything about a wild fire coming through, I rent.
7. I don't know. I haven't thought about how a wildfire may affect my home
8. This is not our home, we are tenants so we really can't do anything about this home.
9. I don't know. I haven't thought about that question before.
10. I don't think about it
11. Hasn't thought about much of any of this. Rents for quite awhile but will just find somewhere else if the 'place' burns

I don't know

1. I rely on my landscaper.
2. Anything is possible, fire could spread in Ashland
3. Where I grew up in Mexico, they don't have wildfires like here. It was a surprise for me when I moved here as an exchange student. The school mentioned wildfire very briefly during orientation, but no information was given out.
4. The Alameda Fire tells me nothing is safe.
5. No idea how safe. I just spent \$1300 to remove all the debris around the house. It looks really good now.
6. There is a lot of inertia. The seniors are the problem. They hear things but don't do anything.
7. Our trailer is old.
8. wildfire is possible anywhere and with climate changes we all have more fire risks
9. Anything is possible but a wildfire in town affecting my apartment doesn't seem likely. The fire dept would be on top of a wildfire in a hurry.
10. I only have a front door. I came home once and it was very smoky. I didn't know where the fire was because of the smoke.
11. I had some plants taken out because they got dry and brittle. I was spraying my house a lot during the hot period.
12. I don't know. I don't know if green vegetation is a problem. Is it?
13. I live in an apt complex, I have nothing to do with the outside of my building. I don't know if its safe vegetation or shrubbery or not.
14. I'm surrounded by both open space and forested lands, I don't know where a fire might come from. The mountains are right there.
15. [There is a] large field behind my apt complex...that field could catch fire and ...
16. I don't know.
17. I live in the middle of town and a fire broke out the fire dept would be on top of that.
18. I don't know.
19. I don't really know. Maybe the large grass field behind me makes my condo less safe from a wildfire or any fire.
20. I don't know if it's safe or not but I'd lean towards unsafe because of field behind me and huge tree limbs from next door property hanging over onto my yard and dripping all its leaves, which I don't pick up.
21. Well I don't know, I guess wildfires could come from any direction and through the condos we

are so close to each other. But a wildfire I don't think would come here, the fire dept wouldn't let that happen.

22. Bushes and trees are over grown
23. Well my home could be gone in a flash. I back up to a field can't change how my neighbors manage their yards.
24. Fires have a mind of their own, nothing I can do to make it safer.
25. Because the housing is denser here than in the country I think we are less safe. The wood on the building is old, dry, and rotting--in fact the bathroom floor is rotten and the plumber is in the house right now.
26. All houses in this area are built from wood and drywall. They will burn very fast.
27. It was built in the 1980s. I don't know what the standards [for fire resistance] were at the time.
28. The building is all made of wood.
29. The building was built in the early 60s...cheaply built. The walls are so thin you can hear people talking in the next apartment. I came from the mid-west where fires aren't an issue.
30. Its safe because I have no reason to feel otherwise. We aren't surrounded by dry grass.
31. Would probably go up like a match in a haystack. But I do have a new roof. It will kill my roses which are heirloom [the rose bushes are very large and up against the entire length of the trailer].
32. I rent a room and don't really know. I suppose it's kinda safe. He waters his yard.
33. The yard is dirt and dried grass.
34. Wild fire can effect all of us, my friends still talk about the Alameda fire when they evac but their house was saved. I don't know if my apt is safe.
35. The outside of apt bld is pretty clean grounds are kept up
36. It's an apt complex, there's no grass weeds trees or junk layin around, so pretty safe
37. This apartment building is pretty safe I guess
38. I don't know. I just see the landscaper taking care of place. Keeping ground's clean
39. The building is old. I don't know how flammable it is. I see dry brush around.
40. We live in the middle of town. Its too dry here. People are smoking and throwing their butts out. I've lived here for 20 years and in the last 10 its gotten so bad. I don't think I can answer the question. So many people are still coming in here.
41. I have a fire extinguisher
42. I do not know what makes it safe or not. I have smoke detectors.
43. I really don't know

44. I don't know.
45. Not much vegetation around my house gravel and cement.
46. I don't really know if my home is safe or unsafe
47. I don't really know.
48. I come from CA fire happen everywhere you gotta be prepared
49. I don't know
50. I don't know
51. I don't know
52. I don't know that any home is really safe or unsafe. I don't know
53. I don't know if it safe or not
54. I Don't Know; Landlord keeps the yard maintained so I guess my home is safe
55. I don't know; We recently moved here and live in a new home that's landscaped I don't know what could make home safer I think we're pretty safe
56. I don't know; Landlord just had tree company Out to trim trees off roof. Cause the leaves would pile up on the roof.
57. I don't really know, I rent a room in basement and my landlord lives in house. They take care of all outside garden.
58. I rent this house and I don't know that.
59. I would say unsafe, I am surrounded by a lot of foliage directly outside my home.
60. safe because there are multiple possible evacuation routes
61. Renter has only lived there for about 1 month. Renter has never lived in Ashland during a major threat of fire, so it's difficult to determine risk.

Why I feel Very Safe

1. I do my best I think I am fire wise I'm gonna remove bark.
2. I do my best. I think I am fire wise. I'm gonna remove bark
3. If we have water and 30 minutes or more I could cover everything. If we don't, we are screwed. We got an assessment several years ago from the fire dept and made many changes. We put up metal fencing between properties and we are next to a very wet drainage area. Our gutters are clean and we took out all the bark.
4. I'm safe because I have made preparations. I've got lots of water and food. I know that a mobile home park would [burn] up like...[really fast]! I think my home is safe because I removed a lot of juniper and Leyland cypress trees. I was so stupid when I planted those

plants 15 years ago. (note the contradiction in her saying she is very safe but lives in a mobile home park that will burn fast).

5. I watched the Alameda fire moving rapidly from my kitchen window. I waited for evacuation notice, but finally just left. Why is my safe or not that's hard to say. Huge tree drops leaves and needles and debris in my backyard and on my roof. That cannot be safe leaving it there, but my landlord hasn't done anything to remove debris.
6. wood, it's old as well. They are worried about the aging infrastructure of their old apartment.
7. due to being close to school property that would be protected

Why I feel Safe

1. I have replaced most of the wood fences with metal, screened under my low deck, and landscaped with fire resistant plants. I live on a corner, so my house is not close to other buildings.
2. The dry grasses in nearby fields and by the freeway and Bear Creek would burn. Said her home is safe because she keeps the area around the house watered and there are lawns between apartment buildings.
3. I feel safe based on my experience. There have been many fires around here but not quite in this location yet.
4. It would be difficult for the fire because we don't have the foliage. In Bear Creek there are vines and trees. I think it is unlikely for the fire to come here.
5. When we rebuilt after Alameda we knew some landscaping things. a wildfire has a mind of its own and it doesn't really matter what I do to be proactive about my outside , if a fire comes through it could burn. I didn't put any bark down and planted more grass which I keep watered
6. I'm as safe as I can be because of where I live. open grass lands all around me and forest lands make my home vulnerable. I keep water storage from rain run off for just this emergency and I keep all vegetation away from my home and keep tree limbs cut back away from roof line as well as water a good amount of my yard.
7. We are close to the middle of Ashland. It would take awhile to reach here. (Note from Charisse--the Parkview apts are across the street from Garfield park, not in the "middle of Ashland)
8. I am an optimist. There is a pond in the back [of the house] but there are big trees that could catch fire.

9. I have lived here for 14 years. In the last three years is the only time anything close happened. The home is will built.
10. open field across the street makes my home vulnerable
11. Our home is safer than homes in the interface. We are not on a steep slope in the WUI.
12. Here is safer than the Applegate. In the City I think they would not allow the fire to develop near many homes. I feel relatively safe here.
13. Being in the middle of town [makes it safe]. However, I know there is always risk.
14. Because it is within the town. Not 100% safe because we are closer to the Freeway where it is drier.
15. There's less foliage here [in the Railroad District] from the rest of town.
16. My location [in Medford] is safer because its downtown and there's a lot more concrete.
17. I feel safe because we are in the City Center and there is a big street [Siskiyou Blvd] close by.
18. There is a lot of dry grass out back but otherwise it's clear.
19. Not a lot of trees. Its not like a forest with trees or [vegetation] growth. The houses are well spaced.
20. Country living means there is some inherent wildfire dangers that I live with. I irrigate, I keep trees appropriately trimmed up and limbed. Weeds get pulled and structures kept clean of debris.
21. The fire station is down the road in terms of getting out.
22. Clear of trash but too many trees and bushes. Building is maintained well and the neighbors are pretty diligent about safety.
23. It is in an ok location, not adjacent to heavy fire load. Did not elaborate.
24. He says he lives a long way from fire fuel area and that Ashland has a good Fire Dept.
25. His rented house is pretty safe from fire due to distance to flammable fuels and because it is a house and not attached to other residences.
26. There is a lot of buffer around us, so unless it was started within another house it may be safer.
27. Other side of freeway, in farmland, not a lot of trees around. Would be easier to put out grass fire.
28. It's in the middle of town; there are no real fuels nearby
29. Safe but not very safe because there is no foliage around but there are other
30. Because it is in a relatively populated area so there are more streets and building rather than trees and plants etc.

Why I feel “Kind of Safe” (some called it “medium” safe)

1. I’m safe because this unit is sandwiched between the parking lot and Siskiyou Blvd and there are not too many houses nearby. The grassy field across the road is not a problem because of the road. I think about cutting the grass, keeping vegetation low, and not living near wildlands.
2. [Fire] could come through any time. Done some things after the Alameda. Cleared out plants next to the house. Removed bark. Asked to take plants out and placed rocks.
3. Nervous during fire season. I am as safe as anyone in fire season.
4. I think my home is relatively safe because I replaced the sawdust and glue wood trim boards with hardibacker boards before repainting. No other person in our block of townhouses did this.
5. I don’t think it would affect my home because of the parking lots around me, metal roof, BMX park nearby is barren, the sewage treatment plant and green way and dog park would protect my home.
6. It probably wouldn’t burn because there is a lot of cement around these homes and a greenway nearby; there is a lot of green space; the house has a metal roof and cement walls.
7. We are kind of safe because we are away from the main forest. We live in the middle [of Ashland]. We have metal roofs.
8. I don’t know. I’m in a city, I don’t have a lot of debris, there’s a house next to me so if they were burning it would probably burn. Its a new house, so I think its safer since its a new build.
9. If a fire came through these homes, we are gone. The house is not especially safe but being next to two ponds helps.
10. I have fire alarms [in my house] and new floors so I am safe. My house would be gone because it is made of wood.
11. I think my home and the park would burn. I feel “safe in my soul” because of my spiritual practice so losing everything isn’t a big concern.
12. It would burn up quickly, but I think my house is pretty safe. The park is okay, too.
13. I have already removed juniper from the front and have gravel in the back as a fire break.
14. After Brian’s presentation at Mountain Meadows we went home and removed 10 shrubs that were growing within 3 feet of the house: camillia, rhododendron, Phyllasarus lewisia; 3 Peris Japonica, a viburnum, and a daphne like shrub. We still have maples and a crabapple that are more than 10 feet away and on the street.
15. I feel kinda safe because I have done what needs to be done within my control. I can’t control

neighbors. My neighbors are a wildfire hazard.

16. I live on the east side of Medford where it is relatively safe because it is urban. There is some oak savanna around, though. Unless we are in a worst case conditions, I think we are safe because the houses aren't too dense.
17. My siding is metal and there are no trees overhead.
18. This trailer is brand new and I have the ability to move it if I need to.
19. Where we are is very concrete and there is clear space from my perspective.
20. We put closable vents on our home after the Alameda Fire.
21. Good question. We are located in town so I feel fairly safe. The fire would have to get through a lot of other homes before it could get here.
22. My home is very safe except for the conifer tree near my house. There are no branches on the house and I have water in the front and back yards. I have a fire extinguisher in the house.
23. Wildfire could come from anywhere, like it did with Alameda Fire. I don't know what could make my home safer from a fire, I rent.
24. There is an empty field next to my place full of weeds and never gets watered. That makes me vulnerable
25. I have an aluminum roof, that's good-but there is a huge field all around my house that is not mowed or watered. That could catch on fire and my place would be gone.
26. wild fire can and does affect us all, no matter where we live or what we do as precaution and prevention. we live out in country and wild fire is possible. Didn't matter what was outside when Alameda fire came thru. It burnt everything in sight.
27. I moved in with my sister in Talent after my home burnt down in Alameda fire, my home is safe or unsafe due to my neighbors yard. Their debris affect my homes safety. They won't do anything to fix up their yard, water it or cut bushes.
28. Huge open field next to me is dangerous.
29. fire could sweep up hill, but probably not, unless fire comes from Mt side.
30. well there is old leaves from last year on my roof, that's not safe. these trees are over grown and landlord put in new bark everywhere.
31. We are in a dense area of homes and not surrounded by super dry fuels like in the woods.
32. Based on my Alameda Fire experience I feel kind of safe. I never used to think about it--it never crossed my mind. I feel safe because of the amount and type of vegetation we have here. The landscaping is lush. The proximity of the pond and the location of my home which is shaded from the trajectory of the sun.

33. I keep my yard watered and tree limbs pruned up 8-10 ft. I don't know that it's really safe, but as safe as I can make it. I'd like to cut the big pine down out front but it's on city property and they said no to cutting. It drips sap all year long and in summer it's worse.
34. I cannot control what others do around me. My neighbors don't mow water their yard pull weeds or rim trees.
35. The house we rent has a stucco finish.
36. This is more of an urban area. I don't know about how safe the roof is.
37. Stucco siding. He also pointed to the E. Main as evidence of how safe his home is.
38. Haven't had a fire in Ashland. I think its moderately safe here. Less safe at this time of year because its fire season.
39. Anybody can start a fire. We could get burned out if it is started in the community. I saw a homeless guy burning candles [in the triangle in front of the fire station] and the winds were strong. I told people in the fire station and 2 fire guys got rid of the candles.
40. Not close to a hill. The cemetery trees aren't safe because they keep falling over in windstorms.
41. There was a fire a couple weeks ago that got pretty close. Plus our [exterior] walls look like old dry wood.
42. I feel safe because of the location. If a fire got to the central part of the Railroad District, then the whole town would burn. Its better than living in the woods.
43. Living in the country wildfire can come from anywhere. My home is somewhat safe because of irrigation in field immediate around our home. But that's doesn't really make my home safe, just a little more safe
44. I live up Ashland Mine Rd and water is expensive, so I do not irrigate my yard and it's got dry dirt and weeds. None of that's good.
45. No debris outside bushes trimmed no trees. Management Co does not do much in the way of upkeep on bldg. This old bldg is a tinder box waiting for a fire. I used to work wildfires and this place is not kept up. Look at the open hole where ash and sparks can get into, that wall is not painted.
46. Its safe "because of our firefighters."
47. We have smoke detectors and extinguishers. Plus we all know each other and look out for one another so...
48. Nothing is really safe from fire. If Alameda fire can do what it did another fire can come from anywhere

49. Fire could come from anywhere; you cannot be safe really from a wildfire.
50. HOA make all rules about outside
51. It is an older house and has an old electric heater that needs to be replaced. It has recently malfunctioned.
52. Wildfire can start anywhere and spread. I live here when Alameda fire broke out. Nothing is 100% safe.
53. I do the best I can to keep landscape up. We water our yard. Which cost way to much money, so we're considering removing shrubs and little patch of grass, we can't afford to keep this place green
54. I suppose my house is safe. Most houses on this blk water their yard and keep it up.
55. We keep our landscaping up
56. Why, is my home safe, I don't know that it is. Fires happen and no one is immune from a fire
57. I live w my daughter and her husband and grandkids what they do with outside of their home is up to them
58. There are roads in front of their apartment, but there is also some vegetation. There is a tiny creek behind the apartment but that is not going to provide much of a buffer. "I feel safe in the first place because we are in town."
59. Living on campus, you get feedback and notifications pretty quickly. Living with other people helps me feel more safe as well. The lawns are also watered a lot which helps.
60. I'm in the center of the city so there are a lot of fire stations around me, and my apartment does not have too many trees around. Inside the apartment I have a lot of candles and blankets which are not fire friendly.
61. In some ways its safe b/c close to fire department, almost on main road so if need to evacuate, don't need to navigate side streets. Close to campus which is resiliency hub, in good location b/c not high in hills. But, vulnerable given history of fires in the area. Alameda fire could easily happen here. I'm not high up in the hills, but close and I'm going to be affected first before those lower in the valley.
62. There are trees surrounding it and they're very old structures. I think they'd go up fast and catch the others on fire quickly
63. I feel somehow safe in my home because there aren't any serious wildfires happening in Ashland but if there is a fire, I would have to leave as soon as possible because there are so many trees around our apartments including the shrubs and plants in our backyard.
64. Interviewee doesn't think it's safe just because of the "driveway" (private alley into small HOA

community) might prevent safe evacuation. She then clarified she isn't scared she couldn't get out, but it makes things more difficult in an emergency evacuation situation.

65. Live in area where lot of construction happens which is a risk, but not much brush around and near a small water source.
66. I am not in a highly wooded area, but I think with what we've seen happen in the valley before, you're never really safe."

Why I feel Not Safe

1. I don't know
2. Paradise waiting to happen right here in Ashland
3. [It could] come right over the Hwy and up here
4. I can't make my home safer because I live in an HOA. The HOA controls everything.
5. I don't know and have no time to think about it. (He is a single parent working 14 hr days).
6. Did not specify anything but she says she feels unsafe.
7. Newly built with cement board siding and enclosed soffits. The home is firesafe. Not the yard or park.
8. Everything will burn.
9. It would burn.
10. If it goes, it goes. Its a horrible feeling but I'm not going to hang around and wait. We live in a park [which will burn]. Many [residents] don't care.
11. Stuff growing around is pretty green. The south side is more likely to ignite.
12. She just moved here from New York and has no experience with wildfire.
13. I think I feel unsafe because I don't know what to do, what to look out for, or anything really. I guess since I'm a renter, I'd imagine the "preparing my apartment" would fall under the landlords responsibility, but I've never really thought of it. If wildfire took out my apartment, I mean, at worst it could be me, at best, it would be all my belongings which a lot of can't be replaced, or I don't have the money to replace. I guess living in the center of town I feel safer, I think (whether this is correct or not, I don't know), wildfire couldn't get to us here.
14. We aren't safe because the homeless come through here. The guy next door lets the homeless folks sleep under his trailer.
15. It's old and probably a tinderbox. Plus I save a lot of things I find so it's hard to get in and out of sometimes.
16. We lost our trailer in the Alameda Fire. Its not possible to create defensible space in the park. 20

feet of clearance is not possible.

17. "Manufactured homes burn like a timberbox. Everything around us could burn because of trees and our location."
18. Well iv let my yard to pot since iv been this sick. The bamboo is taking over outback and my neighbor would love if I got rid of it. It's fuel for a fire. This is a dense Neighborhood so one house not taken care of affects everyone else's
19. I have gutter screens and have blocked the underside of one of my decks.
20. Based on my experience with the Alameda Fire and the Santa Rosa fire 7 years ago, I don't think any home is safe. My daughter's home in the hills is surrounded by fuels and is very unsafe.
21. None of the homes in this area are safe from wildfires just because of the materials they are made out of.
22. I kinda have the feeling that inner cities are more resistant to wildfire. Its not something I worry about. The roof is asphalt.
23. Because we are on fire every year but it hasn't burned here yet.
24. Based on what we saw in the Alameda Fire, if a fire comes sweeping through Ashland I don't think we are very safe. We are safer here because we are not next to the hills.
25. Its not safe because of what we experienced with the Alameda Fire and the recent fire near Tolman Creek [actually the fire was near Exit 11 but the edge of Tolman Creek was at evacuation level 2].
26. The number and nature of wildfires. I am worried about the unhoused sleeping in the watershed and starting fires.
27. Wood fences are connected to other homes creating a higher risk.
28. Ron Deluce, Pacific property Management does not take any care of this complex. Vents are filled w debris bushes up against the bldg.
29. There is only one exit door at the front of the apartment. If there was a fire or danger near the middle to far end of the apartment, he would be trapped and unable to exit. He is disabled, walks with difficulty and feels he would be at risk of injury. He said he would have to jump out the window which would either be very difficult or would result in injury to himself.
30. Not the most fire repellent. Very close to fields and an enclosed apt complex.
31. I live in a woody area in the hills. so not very safe from a fire. Not safe. Reason is that I live above Lithia Park. Much combustibles.

Why I feel Very Unsafe

1. Didn't say why
2. We would lose everything because our house is on the steep part of Morton and we are surrounded by trees. There is a wood fence connected to the house.
3. "I know these homes burn easily. I saw how they burned the mobile home parks in the Alameda Fire. My home would burn down."
4. My home is very unsafe. The organic garden in the back is kept watered to help build the soil year-round. I am aware of flammable plants and continuous ground fuels such as bark.
5. There are two matchstick trees in the neighbor's yard. I put rock around the house, its an aluminum trailer, has green grass nearby. The park as a whole and where we sit is unsafe. We have the ponds. I don't feel like living in Ashland is very safe.
6. We are packed in like sardines if the fire were going the wrong way.
7. We live in a park with close homes. There are dead tall grasses in the back field. They used to get cut but they haven't been this year.
8. My biggest concern is the dry tall grass in the back. It is beyond my control.
9. Next to nestled hill [referring to the Ashland Water shed]. There are a lot of propane tanks here in this park.
10. I feel very unsafe "because I had to 1) provide my own fire extinguisher; 2) the properties are very cluttered; 3) we are close together (dense); and 4) fire would spread very quickly here."
11. The amount of fuel in the backyard. [Based on the Alameda Fire]...just seeing how fires work and embers fly, we are still at risk. I have a new roof.
12. My manufactured home is SOL--a tinderbox built in the 1980s. We are too closed in--our neighbors are too close and if a neighbor doesn't care we are SOL (shit out of luck).
13. All the places in the park are surrounded by trees and plants.
14. Fire is like a terrorist--unpredictable, vicious, and very sincere--it wants to burn to get its food.
15. All of us are unsafe in this area because we are surrounded by mountains and dry conditions. Climate change is causing drying and beetle infestations. There is also a lot of dry grasses.

Responses to “What would make your home safer from wildfire?”

Categories of Responses: n=222

- Mentioned doing something about the landscaping (72; 32.4%)
- Don’t know how to make my home safer or haven’t thought about it (51; 23%)
- Unsure but suggested something (28; 12.6%)
- Mentioned doing something about buildings (including fences) (26; 11.7%)
- rental property owner or Property Management Company issues (19; 8.6%)
- Mentioned neighbors as an issue (16; 7.2%)
- Other (13; 5.9%)
- Mobile/manufactured home park issues (9; 4.1%)
- Mentioned location as an issue or asset (9; 4.1%)
- Mentioned broader land management issue (7; 3.2%)
- Better evacuation options (6; 2.7%)
- Having a fire extinguisher or fire alarm (5; 2.3%)
- Don’t need to do anything to have a safer home (3; 1.4%)
- People not starting fires (3; 1.4%)
- Removing clutter other than landscaping debris (~3)

Mentioned doing something about the Landscaping (n=72)

1. Weeding and watering yard
2. Moving bark away, removing plants from under the eaves and getting rid of rosemary. "I rely on my landscaper."
3. To be safe he thinks about cutting the grass, keeping vegetation low
4. Pick up All the leaves built up over years of falling. All along that fence line is about 5 feet deep of leaf debris. My roof is still laden w last years leaves.
5. Done some things after the Alameda. Cleared out plants next to the house. Removed bark. Asked to take plants out and placed rocks. Have a wood fence. Wind tunnel. Alot of decomposing granite.
6. Keeping up the watering of planter beds next to the house
7. I already took out the bark and a lavender bush.
8. Remove bark mulch from areas around my home

9. Clearing brush, trees get trimmed.
10. Keeping the brush cut back.
11. I used to have trees all around but I removed them. I put rock next to the house. (Note that the gravel has only been put 1 ft wide around the house.)
12. I try to keep my yard watered in some areas.
13. I put down bark mulch because that is all I could afford after losing everything because of the Alameda Fire. I can't afford more fireproof materials.
14. Cut bushes, trim trees, rake leaves.
15. Keeping weeds down.
16. I have already removed juniper from the front and have gravel in the back as a fire break. I make my home safer by limbing up the trees and I plan to put up a wire fence.
17. I put in rock and removed weeds. I put in the rock because I was tired of mowing the lawn not for fire safety. I have lived in this park for 47 years.
18. Guessing the removal of dry, fire type trees. Eliminating the decaying hawthorns in my back yard. Putting in more rocks.
19. Maybe less trees--no one wants that. Paving everything. Clean the gutters.
20. Try to keep plants green and wet. We have a couple of trees over the house.
21. I have a tree that is gradually dying. I water a lot...
22. Cleaning of the green debris around the apartment, and consistent watering.
23. "Matter of logistics; not keeping piles of crap; calculated risk factor
24. Less trees and more storage space.
25. Fuel clearance but I can't do it.
26. Trees are too close. More watering --but that's a double edged sword because we get more weeds when we water.
27. I used to have a lot of trees and really liked them
28. The people who lived here before me put rock around the house.
29. "I think about the trees; if its hot enough the trees can burn. Oaks are not as likely to burn as the pine trees." Cutting down foliage...
30. We removed the cedar bushes off the property...one gone and 5 to go. (Note from Charisse-- the bushes are a dense row of arborvitae with a lot of dead material--these trees should be removed asap).
31. Limb up the trees, clear the roof and gutters, and get rid of the weeds.
32. Remove the conifer tree.

33. Learn about fire safety shrubbery and fencing. landscaping was here when we moved in.
34. Water larger yard area
35. Increase the area around my house that I keep watered
36. removing old leaves from last years trees from my roof. no leaf pick up and there's about 6' of debris along my fence line.
37. Taking out dead and dying trees.
38. I won't take down any bushes or trees
39. Taking all the trees away but then I would have no shade.
40. I keep my hose hooked up and spray my house and trees once a week. "Dry vegetation is not good." We don't pay for water in the park.
41. Cleaning the leaves off the roof and cutting back tree branches
42. Remove bark around the house
43. remove leaves that fell last fall in my back patio. Bag em up and take them away
44. Pull weeds in my yard, water lawn bring back grass
45. if bushes were trimmed back away from house and maybe tree limbs were trimmed up.
46. ? Remove old leaves, trim tree limbs?
47. That big pine is a fire magnet. Cut it down. Remove old debris from my roof and pine needles/debris from yard, trim branches off my roof line.
48. Remove all bamboo in back yard, that means dig it up. I have a landscaper that comes to trim bushes and keep tree limbs off the roof
49. Water yard. We don't do that cause if water cost and cut limb back off of roof line
50. I have no idea where the hose spickets area and I should. I have only lived here for 3 months. To be safer I know that there should not be a lot of dead plants and that the grass should be kept green.
51. To have no trees, grass or any other vegetation around our house
52. Less foliage around.
53. A way to get out the back and cutting back the rose bushes.
54. There is a dry parch of very tall grass behind us.
55. Landscaping next to the home, getting rid of grasses.
56. Clearing dead plants.
57. Water yard, pull weeds,
58. If she'd water the dirt make a nice lawn remove debris (??)
59. I suppose watering the yard. Tree limbs hang over onto roof over my bedroom

60. Clear the trees close to the buildings but I do not want them to add they provide shade and keep my bedroom cool.
61. Maintenance. Trim bushes back
62. I don't know maybe cut back these bushes. Can't even see the front door of some apt
63. We have some bark out back around house and shrubs, maybe pull that bark up? Put down rock? Other than that we keep trees pruned weeded pulled
64. The big tree out front really needs trimming but we can't afford it so limbs hang over roof line, leaves fall on roof
65. Trim old tree in front yard
66. I hadn't thought about that. I live over on Laurel St most folks keep their homes kept up nice, w nice yards.
67. "Better care of removing dead foliage"
68. Taking all decor and plants out of my yard
69. Chop down all this Ivy and make sure these trees are a little bit further from the house
70. more proactive trimming of trees and grass around house
71. not being surrounded by dry brush
72. To make the home safer- a defensible perimeter should be kept up. That means clearing vegetation around the building.

Don't know how to make my home safer (n=51)

1. don't know
2. Don't know
3. Don't know
4. No idea
5. Don't know
6. Don't know
7. Don't know
8. I have no idea. I haven't thought about it much.
9. Not thought about it
10. Have no idea.
11. Not really sure.
12. I rent a room I don't think about that
13. I bought house with this landscaping and haven't paid any attention to it as to whether its

safe

14. I don't know
15. Not sure. Maybe what's around us?
16. Not really
17. I don't know
18. I don't know
19. I don't know what would make my home safer from a wildfire
20. I don't know
21. Don't know.
22. Don't know.
23. Not sure.
24. Don't really know.
25. Do not know.
26. I don't know
27. Don't know.
28. I don't know
29. I don't know
30. Well I don't know what could make it safer.
31. I don't know I think it's pretty safe as much as possible
32. I don't know
33. I don't know
34. Can't think of anything.
35. Don't know.
36. Not able to say.
37. Don't know
38. I don't know that is the owners problem.
39. I don't know
40. Don't really know
41. I don't know what would make my house safer from a wildfire
42. I don't know
43. I don't know
44. He was not sure
45. I don't know

46. I don't really know
47. I can't think of anything
48. I think we're pretty safe (said by a grandmother who would not engage)
49. I don't know, my home is pretty safe
50. honestly have no clue what I would do. I grew up in an area where wildfires weren't really a thing, it was so wet back home. I kinda really don't know what I'm doing here and am thankful I have people teaching me.
51. I don't know.

Unsure but suggested something (n=28)

1. I'm not sure what to do to make it safer. I wonder if people get fire resistant stuff sprayed on there house, or water more often. we have so much plant matter around our house, it seems so dry, but we try to do pruning... outside of some of the obvious stuff I don't know what to do.
2. I don't know. I'm in a city, I don't have a lot of debris, there's a house next to me so if they were burning I would probably burn. Its a new house, so I think its safer since its a new building
3. Two or more exits for people. Nothing will save our trailers
4. I don't know. I know that they will tell me to cut down my lovely spruce trees and I won't do that.
5. I think my house is actually safe.
6. I think my house is safe, in my opinion. [Charisse noted a lot of flammable debris stored on the porch].
7. Look around...maybe the trees could burn in high winds. Honestly, I don't know.
8. Not really sure. I could be more proactive about the clutter.
9. I don't know. All the trees along Tolman drop needles. Whose job is it to clean up the needles?
10. Maybe cutting some bushes back and putting more water on ground so its not so dry
11. Maybe green grassy area around my house could make for a buffer between me and the field.
12. Maybe trim the tree limbs back? I really don't know
13. I don't know, if field were mowed more and grass removed after mowing
14. I don't know, watering yard, trimming tree branches off the roof
15. No idea--maybe clearing of underbrush and don't let things dry out.
16. I really don't know and I haven't thought about there being a fire. I moved here from San

Diego where as a child I experienced 2 fires.

17. I don't know because we have not had a fire in town. I suppose not leaving candles unattended and protecting electric outlets.
18. Not sure. Perhaps putting stickers on the window by the front door saying who lives here.
19. Haven't thought about it. We don't have a ton of trees and leaves here.
20. That question is overwhelming. Everything is over grown w weeds blackberries bushes, trees. It's an old farm and how safe are all these sheds barns fences? We will cut back bushes blackberries trees, we just moved in a month ago and there's a lot to do for fire safety
21. I don't know. Maybe if he cut back all those blackberry bushes.
22. I don't know. Maybe sprinklers?
23. Well I guess look around we have cement and gravel everywhere no trees around no bushes
24. I don't know. I rent a room from my mom she takes care of landscaping
25. I don't really know but there is a big bush outside my window that seems like it outta be trimmed way down.
26. I hadn't thought about that. I live over on Laurel St most folks keep their homes kept up nice, w nice yards.
27. Not sure... all I think of are housefires. We have a smoke alarm so it would be nice to
28. have more. Kinda nice if there was some kind of sign outside of our apartment saying what evacuation zone. Or in front of major buildings or residences to make it easily accessible. Also having some sort of insurance b/c in apartment not sure how to navigate that process.
29. Not sure if there is anything. There is one small tree, but not much vegetation.

Mentioned doing something about buildings (including fences) (n=26)

1. Being somewhere else...in a real home.
2. Purchase a brick home with metal roofing.
3. Not attaching fences to the house
4. Replacing the wood fence that surrounds the back yards of the units. The wood is old. (Rice?)
5. The wooden fences around the houses are a problem.
6. We could be safer with "metal eaves." If I was building new, I would use fire resistant materials.
7. We just got a new wood fence but a metal fence would be best. (Note the wood fence does not connect to any structures.)
8. A mote. I am a designer and have researched architecture. I would design a different home

with wider driveways.

9. Venting screens--not sure if they are right. I have a membrane roof. I don't know if that is safe; the sides of the trailer are aluminum and there is wood skirting around the base.
10. It's a mobile home so those just burn easy. It would need new walls and roof. Maybe new doors.
11. Having a sprinkler system. We have a pond available in the park.
12. These prefab homes may not be safe.
13. My siding needs to be fixed and there is some other exterior work needed.
14. I still need to take care of my wood fences and screen under my front porch. I also need to clean between deck boards if I can
15. Best home we could have asked for would be built from bricks with a metal roof and have large cemented areas near the house with minimal trees or shrubs.
16. Have a house built from bricks, no trees around it and have a hose with water available to use if needed.
17. My personal opinion is this: wildfire resistant home starts from the materials used to build it. After this comes the house surroundings. Many homes in my country, Ukraine, have large cemented areas around the homes with minimal landscape such as pine trees which burn very fast.
18. Not sure about the construction of the house.
19. Metal fencing, cleaning the gutters
20. People are talking about non wood fences. I have wooden fences around my property I guess I might look into that.
21. New roof
22. Maintenance...clean out vents
23. New roof metal fence
24. A more stable structure
25. Better construction and materials
26. Sprinklers for roof. Due to small yard and property. Sprinklers will be able to reach all yard areas.

Rental property owner or Property Management Company issues (n=19)

1. My landlord could prune bushes and trim tree limbs and water ground so there is grass.
2. That's my landlord Kelly's job. I rent and I'm never home and don't do any yard work.

3. They've done a good job making the outside of my home and property fire safe, no bushes close to house, no bar, water yard.
4. I don't know my landlord takes care of landscaping.
5. If landlord kept property up, trim tree limbs, trim bushes back away from house.
6. Removal of last years debris from yard and roof. But my landlord won't do anything and I don't want to rock the boat as I pay a lower rent. If I ask for too much he may up my rent
7. There is brush outside. The rental company does the landscaping.
8. If they would let us grow vegetation instead of putting down bark [next to the building]. But the deer eat the plants. There is no water source here and the gate for the back apartments is locked. There is no access for fire equipment. When the fire marshall came around, he just told us to contact the owner.
9. Since the Alameda Fire the [property management] company has taken out a lot of the bushes.
10. I'm a renter. This is my first time living on my own after living with my mom and brother and then college. I don't think about a safer home. I live in apartment building and I think the management co does a good job. So yeah I'm safe.
11. New roof haha sprinklers for bushes fix up the property. But that would cost too much they won't do anything (??)
12. I'm just waiting for [a fire] to happen. The mentally ill are all over the place and its getting worse and worse. I was walking my son home from school since the Alameda fire and I saw smoke coming up from the ground. Someone must have tossed out a cigarette or something. Nobody cares. The property management company doesn't care.
13. I think the homeowner makes all those decisions.
14. To continue to maintain the property (apartment complex) in a good manner. He stated that there was an old dead tree in the front yard which was a clear fire hazard and that the porch decking was old and rotten and needed to be replaced before it collapsed.
15. Continued landscape cleaning and mowing, pruning the trees and vegetation, and most importantly, have all that done on a citywide basis.
16. Move away, worried that the entire complex is too old to fix.
17. communicate with the maintenance workers at the complex to take down plants in the neighborhood.
18. Kinda nice if there was some kind of sign outside of our apartment saying what evacuation zone. Or in front of major buildings or residences to make it easily accessible. Also having

some sort of insurance b/c in apartment not sure how to navigate that process.

19. I think asking our property management about plant control can help slow wildfires near our area.

Mentioned neighbors as an issue (n=16)

1. Getting neighbors to reduce their risk
2. Neighbors trees must be trimmed back. They hang over fence and onto my roof
3. the neighbors to take care of their trees.
4. If one building caught fire it would create enough heat [to spread fire to other buildings]"
5. I am worried about flammable vegetation on my neighbors property.
6. My neighbor had a torch like shrub growing next to his house. Since our houses are 10 feet apart we talked to the neighbor (who is 93) and he was very positive about removing it. He got his tools and we all removed the shrub.
7. The neighbor next door has so much trash. If it ignites we are goners. I don't know what would save it.
8. My neighbors have a lot of trees.
9. I have neighbors that drink and smoke until they fall down. They have not complied with the weed abatement program. My neighbors never do weed work. I reported to the City, but the City didn't do anything other than tell them to remove the weeds. The work wasn't done. I don't think it would help to report [the violation] again. (Note from Charisse--the neighbors to the north are out of compliance with the City weed abatement ordinance).
10. my neighbors watering their yard would help
11. Neighbors tree limbs hang over into my yard.
12. Maybe if my neighbors tree branches were trimmed back and the leave didn't fall onto my property that would be good
13. This home isn't safe but to make it safer it depends on what the neighbors do.
14. Removal of the dead trees in the neighbor's yard. The trees have been dead since we moved in 2 years ago.
15. There are bushes outside the windows but there are no trees nearby. My fence is wood and my neighbors have a giant bush that is hanging over a large area.
16. My neighbors irrigate too so while the risk is real, with the majority of us watching out for each other, irrigating and keeping our property fairly free of debris. What else can I do? I'm doing a good job, I'm very conscientious of yearly spring readiness for wildfire season.

Other (n=13)

1. Getting rid of EMP and CMEs.
2. I read that if you have shade on the fire, they could catch the fire.
3. Underground the utilities.
4. Have cemented area within half a mile all around our home. Plus pour water on top of our house.
5. My answer is complicated so I won't share it. A simple answer is that we need more firefighters available and to address the homeless problem. Also, there should be nothing on the roof or gutters.
6. I'm a renter this is my first time living on my own after living with my mom and brother and then college. I don't think about a safer home. I live in apartment building and I think management co does a good job. So yeah I'm safe.
7. Did not really comment but it is a situation of "when and not if". He is a professional firefighter with USFS and CalFire experience. He has all the necessary experience and has tools to assist with any wildfire activity.
8. People, destruction. Take the people out of the world. Get rid of people.
9. The university could probably implement some things like removal of dead leaves and other maintenance of the area. Clearing of bike trails, etc.
10. Irrigation system updates, all around (systematic). Talent irrigation district, city water.
11. I also think that educational initiatives are important to educate all Ashland residents about evacuation plans and how to prepare for a fire.
12. Less construction, which isn't something they can control.
13. I think that if large corporations would stop pumping the world with dangerous chemicals and causing climate change and we worked to heal the earth rather than destroy it, I would feel a bit safer.

Mobile/manufactured home park issues (n=9)

1. We have heavily landscaped and wooded park. The park owner and management company wouldn't do more anyway.
2. Not gravel or cutting trees. We're too close for defensible space
3. There are some giant cottonwood trees in the back surrounded by blackberries. They weigh tons and could fall and injure someone. The streamway belongs to the state I think. It is filled with blackberries. (Wingspread)

4. Taking care of the back field would be a start. Last year they did it. Berta, Barbara, and I are considering watering the dry area [behind our homes].
5. The park could do more maintenance on trees and clearing off the roof. I don't think they have cleared the roof for 6 months to a year. Pacific Rental Properties is supposed to do this kind of maintenance on rentals.
6. There are a lot of propane tanks--they should be removed.
7. here are many trailers with firewood close to the house and many propane tanks [in the park].
8. We need an alternative route out of the park. One way in and out is a problem.
9. I am wondering whether the pond or creek would be a good place to go to. Problem is woods along the creek. Get rid of the dangerous spruce tree in my front yard. The leaves and bark are gummy and the tree is oversized for the front yard. Park management said they wouldn't cut it down.

Mentioned location as an issue or asset (n=9)

1. He thinks he is safe because his unit is sandwiched between the parking lot and Siskiyou Blvd and "there are not too many houses nearby." He thinks the grassy field across the road is not a problem because of the road.
2. To be safe he thinks about cutting the grass, keeping vegetation low, and not living near wildlands.
3. I am working on fixing my home now because I am moving back from Eugene. Its much less safe in Ashland.
4. Move out of Oregon
5. Move somewhere else (laughed).
6. The field across the Street is a big risk.
7. Moving outta wild fire zones
8. Not living in the Pacific Northwest.
9. Move away, worried that the entire complex is too old to fix

Mentioned broader land management issue (n=7)

1. Treat the dry fuels along the freeway and Bear Creek.
2. Getting the City of Ashland to take care of the trees on City lands near my house.
3. The Bear Creek Greenway needs to be managed. I don't see anyone clearing out the

blackberries to break up fuel continuity. The blackberries are continuous along the railroad tracks. Trains cause fires to start and if they do spark a fire next to this park we are goners.

4. We have blackberries on two sides that run along the creek. There is a large grassy field on the other side of the drainage.
5. The County property next to us is a concern. The City ordinances don't apply.
6. I supposed it goes back to forest management.
7. Continued landscape cleaning and mowing, pruning the trees and vegetation, and most importantly, have all that done on a citywide basis.

Better evacuation options (n=6)

1. Both exits from the house on the front side. If the fire came to the front it would be hard to be able to evacuate.
2. Did not answer the question. Instead she said "A better evacuation route out of town. They haven't even opened the [North Mountain] off ramp yet.
3. He needs better access and exit capabilities. He is disabled, requires a cane to move about, and it fearful of having to make quick decisions regarding personal safety.
4. Kinda nice if there was some kind of sign outside of our apartment saying what evacuation zone. Or in front of major buildings or residences to make it easily accessible.
5. Indicated that they think it would be safer if the private alley looped through instead of having only one way in and one way out as it does now. Otherwise not much else she thinks she could do. If it were within her power and ability, it would already be done already.
6. Making the parking lot more evacuation-friendly would help.

Having a fire extinguisher or fire alarm (n=5)

1. Thinking about it I just realized that I don't have a fire extinguisher. I should at least get one. It probably needs those smoke alarms too. I couldn't lift a fire canister so don't give me one.
2. Fire alarms and automated sprinkler system.
3. Sprinklers or an extinguisher.
4. A fire extinguisher in each home.
5. all I think of are housefires. We have a smoke alarm so it would be nice to have more.

Don't need to do anything to have a safer home (n=3)

1. We are pretty good there is always something to do to make my home safer - better prepared. But we do our best.
2. We're pretty good (they probably aren't based on other answers where he says he has no time, and his wife is where he gets his information from)
3. I'm a renter. This is my first time living on my own after living with my mom and brother and then college. I don't think about a safer home. I live in apartment building, and I think management co does a good job. So yeah I'm safe.

People not starting fires (n=3)

1. People should pay attention so they don't start fires.
2. I'm just waiting for [a fire] to happen. The mentally ill are all over the place and its getting worse and worse. I was walking my some home from school since the Alameda fire and I saw smoke coming up from the ground. Someone must have tossed out a cigarette or something. Nobody cares. The property management company doesn't care.
3. People not starting fires. I know a lot of the fires were set. There shouldn't be grass, garbage, piles of brush near here.

Removing clutter other than landscaping debris

1. Taking all decor and plants out of my yard....
2. Only two interviewees mentioned clutter but only in passing. I lead them on to say something because it was clearly an issue.

Responses to: "Where do you get information on how to make your home safer from wildfire?"

Categories of Responses: n=223

- Haven't gotten any information (49; 22.0%)
- Don't really know how to make my home safer (29; 13%)
- General knowledge/observation/experience informed (40; 17.9%)

- Directly from city fire staff or volunteers (35; 15.7%)
- Search on the Internet (24; 10.8%)
- I learned from family, friends, or neighbors (21; 9.4%)
- I got information through social and regular media (e.g., TV, news, etc.) (15; 6.7%)
- Training of some kind (14; 6.3%)
- My landscaper or landlord knows (12; 5.4%)
- From the City website (8; 3.6%)
- From a non-governmental organization (7; 3.1%)
- Don't care (6; 2.7%)

Haven't Gotten Any Information (n=49)

1. No where currently
2. I am not getting information.
3. We get no information about what is being done to manage fuels in the City or along the greenway and around this park.
4. I don't get this information.
5. Never gotten information.
6. I haven't gotten any information.
7. We haven't gotten any information.
8. I haven't gotten any information.
9. City of Ashland I would hope, but have never seen any information.
10. Haven't gotten any information.
11. I don't get information.
12. I don't get info
13. I don't have information
14. I don't
15. We haven't gotten any information. But we think about what could happen during fire season. Frankly we aren't too worried.
16. I don't have info
17. I don't, I leave it to property owner who lives upstairs.
18. I live in apt w no front space and a tiny back deck, I don't know where I would get info about making my home safer from a wildfire
19. I don't have updated information
20. I don't I assume landlord takes care of yard gardener does all outside work,

21. I don't have that info
22. I don't
23. We do not know how to get this information. Even if we knew, we would not be able to read it because we do not speak good English, hardly no English. (Ukraine refugee)
24. I do not have such information. All houses in this area are built from wood and drywall. They will burn very fast.
25. I don't get information
26. I haven't gotten any information from Ashland. I have general knowledge about wildfire growing up in San Diego.
27. Not getting any information.
28. I haven't gotten any.
29. Not getting information.
30. I haven't gotten any.
31. I don't
32. I don't
33. I don't have any
34. I don't have info
35. I don't have that info
36. I don't get information
37. Not gotten any information
38. I haven't gotten any information.
39. I haven't gotten information
40. I don't have info
41. I don't have info
42. I rent I don't have info
43. I don't have that info
44. I don't have info
45. I don't have that information
46. I don't have any
47. I don't have any
48. Hasn't gotten information
49. Nowhere

Don't Really Know how to Make my Home Safer (n=29)

1. Don't know
2. Since she doesn't know how to make her home safer, we presumed that she was not getting any information on the subject
3. I don't know. I don't know what tools are at my disposal.
4. Very abstract for me to think about.
5. I don't know
6. friends internet but mostly I don't know where i would get reliable info
7. I don't know much about how to make my apt safer from wildfire.
8. Not sure
9. I don't
10. I don't know
11. I don't have information
12. I don't
13. I don't know. I just assume that rotten wood is not good.
14. Don't know
15. Don't know
16. I don't know
17. I don't know
18. I don't know haven't thought about that before
19. I rent I don't know
20. I don't know
21. I don't know
22. I don't know I'm in college
23. I don't
24. Did not have any answers
25. I don't know but if I were looking I'd go online
26. Don't know.
27. I don't know
28. Don't know
29. I don't know much information about protecting homes from wildfires.

General Knowledge/Observation/Experience informed (n=40)

1. A little of everything
2. I was a wildland firefighter for several years and a city firefighter for awhile. Our house doesn't need much.
3. I ask around--can't remember where I heard about the metal eaves. I think it might have been a at fire prepared seminar at the library. I know a lot of builders.
4. Brian's lecture topped off what we already knew after paying attention to multiple sources after the Alameda Fire.
5. I attended some events, participate in OLLI, and a talk at the park.
6. Watching the Alameda Fire tear through all the mobile home parks. We live along Bear Creek.
7. I get my information all over the place, on the Internet and community based services.
8. I look at the plant.
9. Got a pamphlet last year for evacuation. Nothing about home hardening or landscaping. I think its just about common sense.
10. I heard about it in California which has laws about it.
11. I read that these trees go up real quick.
12. I have experience from the Alameda Fire. That day could happen again.
13. I am a Survivor. I have been looking at this for years. I have food stored.
14. I was a wildland fire fighter. I have always been interested in fire. Always know things because I am old and pay attention.
15. I watch the news and I know some wildland firefighters. One of them dissected how the Alameda Fire burned and told me about it.
16. If I was looking for info I would ask friends, look online, or go to library or fire station for literature
17. I am a self taught agronomist and soil scientist
18. city web site, library, friends
19. Hummm I just been homeowner a long time and know
20. From getting an assessment and reading.
21. I have a background in natural resources so I know about fire behavior..
22. From experience
23. General information is available.
24. Personal experience. I have the zone map on my fridge.
25. Not sure where. Perhaps by watching people who have property do things [to reduce their

- risk]. I watch what they do in rural areas.
26. I haven't gotten any information from Ashland. I have general knowledge about wildfire growing up in San Diego.
 27. I grew up in Southern California so we were constantly getting information.
 28. Here and there.
 29. Common sense
 30. I grew up on the West Coast and I grew up in the woods of northern California. I have a lot of woodsy knowledge.
 31. I look out the window
 32. I used to work on wildfire crew learned a lot
 33. Just reading about things here and there.
 34. Maybe police or fire fighters
 35. ...various email and text sources from various organizations.
 36. Smokey the bear! He was a common character in the learning as a child.
 37. Didn't get it for wildfires for a long time. Grew up in area more susceptible to grass fires so learned how to manage and prevent those. But because didn't grow up in Ashland, don't have much info on how to prevent wildfires. Went to fire camp when little so know basic skills. Don't toss out cigarettes, put campfire all the way out before going to bed.
 38. Hometown was very devastated by wildfires, experience based.
 39. Community knowledge and lived experience.
 40. I have general knowledge as I have lived in high risk areas for decades.

Directly from city fire staff or volunteers (n=35)

1. At the fire station
2. I got it when a woman from the fire department came to assess our complex a long time ago.
3. By mail from the City
4. City of Ashland and FireDuty
5. Wildfire assessment, fire dept
6. City notifications
7. Pamphlets from the City
8. By mail from the City.
9. I had a WRAP assessment about a year ago, and did most of what I was told to do.
10. Brian's lecture topped off what we already knew after paying attention to multiple sources

after the Alameda Fire.

11. Fire department and [Charisse's] Olli Class.
12. The fire dept did an assessment. I am a retired landscaper and helped to develop the fire plant lists with the City of Ashland. I worked on that committee.
13. From you [Charisse] and the fire department.
14. Got a pamphlet last year for evacuation. Nothing about home hardening or landscaping. I think its just about common sense.
15. But I'd probably look to a mailer from the city. The one they send out with the utility bill, I glance at that.
16. We learned when we became a Firewise community a long time ago. And information from the City.
17. We used to be with CERT and had an assessment 5 years ago.
18. Fire staff walked through the park 5 years ago and told me.
19. fire dept, internet, grange coop
20. fire dept brochures
21. Maybe through mailers or flyers
22. Fire station old brochures on planting vegetation
23. Brochures fire dept and I had a wild fire assessment done a few years ago
24. From getting an assessment and reading.
25. At my work in the library, we some training.
26. From you....haha.
27. I saw information on how to have fire safe homes at the Fire Station
28. From my neighbor who had a wildfire risk assessment. This is my first time trying to figure it out.
29. I suppose I could get info from Ashland fire department or go online and research
30. I've been to Tuesday farmers market and there's a booth w info
31. fire Dept
32. While back went to a fair and picked up materials at booth of landscaping home hardening fire safety
33. Tuesday market has a fire dept table I stopped there once and picked up literature

Search on the Internet (n=24)

1. Private Study

2. On line
3. Emergency apps
4. Emergency notifications
5. Apps and online
6. Apps and friends
7. Internet, my sister, and neighbors.
8. I personally research everything when I design homes.
9. Watch duty
10. We watched mobile home videos and how they burned. They burn from the inside out because the flames are sucked in through the attic vents.
11. fire dept, internet, grange coop,
12. Best source at this point is internet because we can switch language to Russian or Ukrainian and read about it.
13. Internet mostly
14. Internet
15. I don't know a lot of info but I try to keep tabs on aps. (Unsure which aps)
16. I suppose I could get info from Ashland fire department or go online and research
17. Internet
18. Internet
19. Internet
20. Internet
21. Google
22. Internet
23. I don't know but if I were looking I'd go online
24. If I were looking for info I'd go online

I learned from Family, Friends, or Neighbors (n=21)

1. My husband is a firefighter and is on a fire right now. We use the Frontline defense and Watch Duty apps all the time.
2. Media and friends
3. Apps and friends
4. Internet, my sister, and neighbors.
5. My partner.
6. My brother was a wildland fire fighter for many years.

7. I watch the news and I know some wildland firefighters. One of them dissected how the Alameda Fire burned and told me about it.
8. my friends, I don't know, I rent a room from my sister.
9. I saw my neighbor next door spraying his house. He told me to do the same. He's lived here for 20 plus years.
10. city web site, library, friends
11. Friends
12. Talking to friends and family. One of my friends told me about a successive sprinkler system on another apartment complex. Its not a huge topic of conversations but it comes up.
13. My brothers were wildland firefighters. When I was young I lived on Stewart and South Stage on a farm. My brother was the fire chief at Needle Point. He is retired now.
14. My dad was a firefighter. When I moved in he facetimed me and we went through the apartment.
15. From my neighbor who had a wildfire risk assessment. This is my first time trying to figure it out.
16. TV neighbors
17. My wife
18. Other renters in the apartment complex complaining about the buildings structural integrity.
19. What started the Alameda fire and talked to friends who survived and what contributed to it burning.
20. His dad is a fire investigator who worked closely with Clackamas county police
21. Father is a firefighter for Cal-Fire. Firewise app.

I got Information from Social and Regular Media (n=15)

1. Facebook,
2. Media and friends
3. TV
4. I read some in the Seniors newsletter and listen to the local news.
5. I hear some things on the news after the fire.
6. I don't know a lot of info but I try to keep tabs on aps. (Unsure which aps)
7. TV neighbors
8. Facebook mostly. I follow the Ashland and Jackson pages. Last year they had a list on what you should keep in your car or emergency bag.

9. The radio – he did not specify which kind of broadcasts he regularly listens to or where he might receive emergency information.
10. Various Television and news programs.
11. Watchduty and various email and text sources from various organizations.
12. I have Nixle on my phone
13. Communication and news articles.
14. Interviewee indicated that she “reads everything”. She used to get the local papers before they went out of print but still gets arts magazines that she says are “pretty on top of things” to be proactive. Goes to the library for books frequently and listens to the radio.
15. social media

Training of Some Kind (n=14)

1. Cert, attending meetings
2. My ex husband was a fire fighter. I also did some firefighting.
3. As a member of CERT I get all my information through the program. However, many of the things that you told me to consider are not covered by CERT training.
4. In Northern California we had disaster training. The training focused mostly on earthquakes but they covered a little bit about wildfire.
5. Went to a fire camp around the park several years ago.
6. We used to be with CERT and had an assessment 5 years ago.
7. I brought in Firewise several year's ago. We got \$1000s to remove fuels. I did a lot of work with CERT: such as Map your Neighborhood.
8. I had training in high school to be able to work with Lomakatsi. I'm pretty fire savvy.
9. His personal experiences as a firefighter.
10. School. I went to school. I have app. [Watch Duty app]
11. I'm an environmental science student
12. At work we have fire trainings, and they teach us about evacuation protocols as well fire safety.
13. I am an environmental science student we talk about it a lot in class. There's probably more that could be done but the place is mostly surrounded by concrete.
14. Some SOU environmental science classes.

My Landscaper/Landlord Knows (n=12)

1. my yard man
2. I leave it up to my landlord
3. Grange Coop
4. I rent I don't do anything outside my house
5. The park used to send out monthly newsletter. Now we get quarterly newsletters. In the fall we are reminded to clean after the leaves fall and to keep the yard looking good.
6. The kid who is supposed to do the tree work told me that the tree branches need to be cut down. He has a good heart but hasn't been able to do the work.
7. I don't, I leave it to property owner who lives upstairs.
8. my landlord
9. I don't assume landlord takes care of yard gardener does all outside work,
10. I used to work for a landscaper and she was always talking to clients about fire retardant planting
11. Rental company
12. I rely on landlord to keep outside of house in good condition.

From the City Website (n=8)

1. the City webpage.
2. Fire dept web site
3. Website
4. fire dept info web site books
5. fire dept brochures
6. city web site, library, friends
7. Fire Adapted Ashland
8. I guess if I had to look for information now I'd go on to the city website to see if they had any recommendations. The fire department usually has tips.

From a Non-governmental Organization (n=7)

1. Rely on the HOA.
2. Read senior center newsletter.
3. The CPM came through and periodically checks properties. They send out notices...people say "whatever" and never do anything.

- 4. From my church. They come help me clean my yard but I don't want them to come inside
- 5. The [apartment] building is owned by ACCESS so I would hear from them
- 6. ...various email and text sources from various organizations.
- 7. Ace Hardware.

Don't Care (n=6)

- 1. I don't trust anyone
- 2. I just don't worry about it...I'm from the Midwest...
- 3. We haven't gotten any information. But we think about what could happen during fire season.
Frankly we aren't too worried.
- 4. I don't care
- 5. I don't. I work 2 jobs and don't have time for this stuff.
- 6. Its not their home so its not their problem

Responses to: "What limits you from having a wildfire safe home?"

Two-hundred twenty-one (221) responses were sorted into the following categories which are listed in descending order of occurrence except for the renters – its not my responsibility and HOA/Landlord/Property Management Company limits which are listed together because there is significant overlap between those categories.

Category	# responses	% of total	Category	# responses	% of total
I am a renter...it's not my responsibility	75	33.9	I don't have the time	16	7.2
HOA/Landlord/Property Management Company Limits	31	14.0	Don't need to do anything	10	4.5

Cost--don't have the financial resources	54	24.4	There are no obstacles	5	2.3
Limited knowledge	42	19.0	Can't find help to do work	4	1.8
Other	20	9.0	It's "hopeless" so why bother	4	1.8
Not a priority or apathy	19	8.6	The problem is on neighboring properties	3	1.4
Lack physical capacity	16	7.2			

Table 17: What Limits Respondents from Having A Wildfire Safe Home

I am a renter...it's not my responsibility (n=75)

1. I don't like my landlord and do not want to engage with him. Anything I say or ask for could be held against me in rent increase or lease renewal
2. I'm a renter my landlord should pick up all these leaves along fence line and blow them off the roof. All around my house perimeter is new bark mulch.
3. I share a space with a friend who rents the apartment through a property management company.
4. I am a renter. Not an issue. The owner keeps the place nice.
5. I rent a room from homeowner
6. I'm a renter my landlord does everything outside
7. I rent this home, I don't have those responsibilities to make
8. I rent so I don't have that responsibility
9. I am a renter and don't have responsibility to do anything outside
10. I rent not my responsibility
11. I rent my landlord is taking care of all exterior maintenance and fire safety
12. I rent a room from my sister who owns the home and we water our yard have grass and take care of the mowing of lawn
13. I rent
14. I am a renter and I don't have authority to or money to do what landlord should do as regular maintenance
15. I'm not responsible for the outside of my apt
16. time interest money its not my house, the owner upstairs takes care of everything outside

17. I live in apartment, landlord and gardeners takes care of all exterior. I have no responsibility
18. my landlord does everything
19. not my responsibility I'm a renter, the owner should do all things outside to keep my home safe from wildfires. sure my little yard is safe from wildfire(??)
20. property management should do that not me.
21. I'm a renter and have no control over outside plants or trees. I have a little deck to take care of
22. I rent it's not my job
23. I am a renter my landlord should take care of outside property
24. I live in an upstairs rental, owners and hoa take care of property there's nothing I can do
25. We don't control the outside of the Apartment building. Pacific Rental Properties owns the building.
26. I am not responsible for the outside area
27. This is not our home, we are tenants so we really can't do anything about this home.
28. This is not our home. We rent it.
29. I rent my house. I am not a homeowner.
30. I'm not the homeowner. [A visitor living in an American family's home]. If I owned my own home I would say yes [to getting a wildfire risk assessment].
31. I have not been proactive enough because I am a renter and we can't get our house updated. We could get in trouble if we tried and I can't afford it.
32. I am a renter. There's not much we can do
33. The condition of the apartment building [limits me].
34. I'm a renter.
35. Being a renter.
36. I'm not responsible for the landscaping, except in my backyard. The landlord is fairly "hands on". The building manager lives across from me.
37. I am a renter. I don't have much knowledge and I move so frequently.
38. Being a renter, I can't do anything.
39. I'm a renter. I know I can take care of little things [like sweeping the porch.]
40. Being a renter...its the only way to afford living in Ashland.
41. I rent so I will do what we can within our budget
42. I don't think about that, my landlord takes care of all outdoor maintenance
43. I rent a room

44. I rent a room and have no responsibility for outside of the home safety
45. I rent property maintenance is not my responsibility
46. I rent
47. I rent from pacific managment Co it's their responsibility
48. I rent
49. I rent not my job to make this place safe from wild fires. The property management co job
50. I think My apt bldg is as safe as any other place. I rent and safety isn't my job
51. I know there is a lot you can do to make homes safer, but not having control of the property means I can't. If I owned my own home, I wouldn't have dry plants
52. I don't own this so not my problem.
53. I don't own it so I can't make any changes
54. I rent an apt
55. I rent not my job to think about this
56. I rent
57. I rent a room in this house, none of this is my responsibility.
58. I rent
59. Since he is a renter, he does not feel responsible for ensuring the property is safe, it is the owners responsibility. His owner is ok, not good but not deficient.
60. Not my responsibility (his mother does the landscaping)
61. I rent a room—that's not my concern I mean it's important to know about weather conditions and evacuation but I got no info on what ur talking about
62. I don't own this house, I can't make decisions about landscaping or trees.
63. I rent but still think the landlord takes care of House pretty well
64. I rent the outside is not my responsibility
65. Well I rent and don't have extra money, my property management co outta take care of home safety from wildfires
66. I am a renter so I do not have much control over my property at all.
67. Uh. I don't own my home so I don't get to make many decisions about it or have to go through bureaucratic barriers to do so.
68. Renter and not permitted to change anything.
69. Finances, knowledge, what to do as a renter, etc.
70. not being home owner, finances, would invest if they were home owner
71. Lack of home ownership, lack of control over construction

72. She does not own the home and feels that living in a fire-prone area means that you can never really be safe.
73. Renting and having no control or right to change the property.
74. Lack of ownership. Since he rents he has to go over everything with landlord first
75. What limits me is I am a renter. I have limited control over the property I live in.

HOA/Landlord/Property Management Company Limits (n=31)

1. I can't make my home safer because I live in an HOA. The HOA controls everything.
2. Personality differences—differences with the landscaper
3. I think the park should be doing more things in the common areas.
4. Need to reach out to the park manager about unsafe vegetation.
5. CMP limits me. The property management company won't allow us to do even the smallest of changes. I am looking forward to getting a risk assessment to justify cutting down some trees and changing my fence.
6. The property management codes for [Wingspread] are grossly out of date. For example, we are required to build wood fences. I would feel safer if the property management company would at least adopt and enforce City of Ashland ordinances but I think that we are outside city limits so they don't. I am concerned about fuel continuity between spaces. I would like the City and landowners to be in compliance with clearing blackberries out of the creeks and to do maintenance because they come back. I am worried about the unmown grassy fields around us.
7. I don't know what the Oregon laws require of the property owner since they own the land [in the MHP]. I don't know who is responsible for the space that I don't own
8. The owners of these kinds of parks are frequently very wealthy and don't care
9. The surrounding area in and out of the park needs work.
10. There is also the issue of who is responsible for what here; we don't own the land. I'm on the board [of wingspread]. We worry about ways to deal with how to get out of here. The roads fill up pretty quick. We have to get permission to install anything now [from the CMP].
11. The park has to approve any landscaping we do.
12. Park management said a month ago that the trees don't matter because if a fire comes it won't matter anyway. It's probably true. They have 40 trees that said would not get cut down. I don't want to pay for tree removal and the property management company won't cut the [big gummy spruce tree] down.

13. I live in a condo and do not have anything to do about maintaining the outside
14. We live in a condo so we don't have to do yard maintenance, don't have that responsibility.
15. I gave fire assessment to my landlord and he did nothing to remedy and be proactive
16. I don't have any control in this building. The landscaping is the property management company's responsibility. I only have one window in the apartment.
17. Knowledge and we are renters. I wouldn't even know what to do. I hope the property management company knows.
18. I think the landlords have been working on making it safer, but I'm worried about the tree branches. One tree recently fell over. I've lived here for more than 40 years. We had private landlords until recently when DeLuca bought it. The prior landlords did a pretty good job in [putting in fire resistant] landscaping.
19. Being in a rental I don't worry about it. It should be up to the [rental] company to make the apartment building safe.
20. I am a renter. The company is pretty controlling. There is a maintenance worker who blows away leaves.
21. I'm a renter. You should be talking to Pacific Rental Properties. They have thousands of rentals in the area. Duluca owns the company. They don't take care of their rentals
22. Management won't do anything to maintain this apartment complex. I rent and don't have a choice. They do what they want. I live here because it's one of the few places that will accept dogs and we can afford
23. HOA makes all those rules and decisions about outside of my house
24. HOA
25. He is just a renter and feels he has no say in any housing condition. He felt the owner had total responsibility for assessing and ensuring the property was safe.
26. His apartment has baseboard heaters which had not been cleaned prior to his occupancy (he has been there about one month) and the baseboard heaters had black scorch marks on them and on the wall. The windows are original single pane windows which are not weatherproof and are drafty. The gutters are dirty and clogged and need to be cleaned.
27. Uh. I don't own my home so I don't get to make many decisions about it or have to go through bureaucratic barriers to do so.
28. Renter and not permitted to change anything.
29. Lack of ownership. Since he rents he has to go over everything with landlord first
30. Renting and having no control or right to change the property.

31. Fire safety is generally the landlord's responsibility. I also have limited control of landscaping (except in my immediate little backyard).

Cost--don't have the financial resources (n=54)

1. Lack of resources and time
2. Money and on welfare.
3. We need financial assistance for the tree work because we can't reach that high.
4. Finances. I don't have money to replace the wood fencing.
5. Money
6. Costs
7. Cost
8. Cost. I just got a new roof and can't afford anything more right now.
9. Money.
10. We aren't poor but money is always a limiting factor. It will depend on what we are told to do. We are saving money right now to paint our house.
11. Cost and personal preference -- vegetation in part
12. Nothing, unless super expensive.
13. I don't have money to hire an arborist
14. Finances
15. Knowledge, time, money. I have a lot of things to deal with right now. I'm disabled at this time and my trailer probably won't pass inspection so I will become homeless.
16. Money
17. Finances, time and the fact that the summer is the height of the Shakespear festival.
18. Finances and having too much stuff.
19. Finances.
20. I don't have the money.
21. Financial barrier.
22. I'm physically not able to do the work. Probably cost as well
23. Financial. There is no way I can afford to remove the tree.
24. money
25. Finances and knowing what needs to get done.
26. Knowledge about what to do and cost.
27. Finances and knowing what to do. I am grateful that we have no water bill.
28. Can't afford to do any landscaping.

29. Money and recent auto accident And I am not well
30. I am so disabled now can't do anything much around the house any money goes toward medical expenses.
31. Money
32. We don't have any money to invest in landscaping.
33. I can't afford it.
34. I'm in a wheelchair and don't have money for a car payment, let alone a mower. I just don't really care.
35. Finances and knowledge
36. Ability to rent vs buy.
37. I rent so I will do what we can within our budget
38. Money
39. Money! It's always the money! Like, they say what to put in the go-bag but I can't put that much clothes and shoes or supplies. I have to wear them.
40. My dad died, my mom died, my dog died I'm just trying to stay healthy. I can't do one more this to this place. I've spent so much money on getting rid of mold in my house.
41. Time and money
42. Mostly not enough money to do upkeep
43. Knowledge, time, and financial resources as I am a full time student.
44. They are a college student with a busy schedule and low budget
45. Finances are also a limitation but I do now know where I would start as I do not own my home.
46. And finances.
47. Finances, knowledge, what to do as a renter, etc.
48. Money
49. Finance and resources will probably be the biggest issue for me. Most fire preparations cost a lot and there are not enough resources to provide adequate support for low-income families in case of a fire emergency. Knowledge may be one because I am not aware of any resources that may help.
50. not being home owner, finances, would invest if they were home owner
51. Not owning the home, if they did own the home then finances would be the biggest inhibitor but they aren't sure because they don't own the home
52. Not much limiting her from having a wildfire safe home, finances and physical limitations from age and injuries prevent her from any major upgrades to the property but tries to keep

up with regular maintenance

53. Lack of home ownership, lack of control over construction

54. Another issue could be my finances.

Limited knowledge (n=42)

1. Considers herself relatively safe so does not see anything to be done.
2. I think we are "all okay."
3. lack of know-how.
4. Not relevant because she doesn't know what to do.
5. Lack of info.
6. Didn't know
7. I heard you can get fireproof paint. Does it work? (I told her No). We have only one exit out-- kind of scary and a lot of old people live here.
8. Knowledge and information
9. Knowledge and information.
10. Knowledge.
11. Knowledge.
12. Knowledge, time, money. I have a lot of things to deal with right now.
13. Knowledge
14. "I said I don't want an assessment because I don't want to know what I need to do."
15. I don't know what you need to do
16. I could have put in aluminum steel fence instead of wood?
17. Finances and knowing what needs to get done.
18. Knowledge about what to do and cost.
19. Not knowing things
20. Finances and knowing what to do.
21. Knowledge
22. Knowledge
23. Having access to information.
24. I don't know what to do
25. Unsure
26. Lack of knowledge and being a renter.
27. Knowledge and we are renters. I wouldn't even know what to do. I hope the property

management company knows.

28. Don't know.
29. Time and I have no idea what to do (knowledge).
30. Finances and knowledge
31. Knowledge.
32. I don't know.
33. Knowledge
34. Knowledge
35. I don't know
36. I don't know We do best we can
37. I rent a room--that's not my concern I mean it's important to know about weather conditions and evacuation but I got no info on what ur talking about.
38. Knowledge, time, and financial resources as I am a full time student.
39. Sources, knowledge and time
40. Probably just knowledge. I do think we are practicing fire-safety within the home, but I think we lack knowledge.
41. Finances, knowledge, what to do as a renter, etc.
42. Knowledge and time mostly

Other (n=20)

1. It depends on the situation--such as where the fire is coming from
2. The frequency of green debris bin pickup is too long--it should be weekly instead of every 2 weeks during fire season.
3. All of the trees and landscaping and trailers so close together
4. These things are tinder boxes even when they're new
5. She said she is willing to learn how to make her home safer if Charisse does the assessment, otherwise she wouldn't want to.
6. Entrance to my back area and home is limited; My porches are covered, but the gates limit access. There is only one way in and out of the park.
7. I don't want anyone coming inside because they'll get hurt and I'll get sued.
8. I said I don't want an assessment because I don't want to know what I need to do.
9. I don't want someone walking around my property. I won't even let my family inside. I am a survivalist

10. We decided to buy a manufactured home after selling out condo because it was too small. Real estate in Ashland is very expensive. We could buy this place for \$130,000.
11. We worry about the grasses and blackberries behind us. Its County property which is mowed only once a year. The prevailing winds are from that direction.
12. Small things like the vegetation around the house; and bigger things like above ground utilities and where we live.
13. I am a renter...we only have one hose on the building and its on the other side
14. I'm a gangster. I was homeless for 23 years. This is the best place I have ever lived.
15. I would rather just read something than have someone tell me
16. My dad died, my mom died, my dog died I'm just trying to stay healthy. I can't do one more this to this place. I've spent so much money on getting rid of mold in my house.
17. Did not have any answers. Again, a male high school student (15-17 yo) who lives with his father and was not aware of most of the scope of our questions.
18. He needs better access and exit capabilities. He is disabled, requires a cane to move about, and it fearful of having to make quick decisions regarding personal safety.
19. He is moving from this house in one month and therefore not interested in any changes or improvements to this location. Did not really comment but it is a situation of "when and not if". He is a professional firefighter with USFS and CalFire experience. He has all the necessary experience and has tools to assist with any wildfire activity.
20. Finance and resources will probably be the biggest issue for me. Most fire preparations cost a lot and there are not enough resources to provide adequate support for low-income families in case of a fire emergency. Knowledge may be one because I am not aware of any resources that may help.

Not a priority or Apathy (n=19)

1. Being preoccupied with other things. I know it should be a priority.
2. Nothing...not a financial hold up or time. Its just about doing it.
3. Also anxiety of having information makes me say "No" [to learning more]. I know we should not have a wood fence connected to the house. I may fix that.
4. I don't have any thought about it
5. [not a] priority
6. I am less worried about fire than other things.
7. time interest money its not my house

8. Lack of concern
9. I'm in a wheelchair and don't have money for a car payment, let alone a mower. I just don't really care.
10. Busy with kids.
11. Me, I am alone...time...getting distracted by other home issues. I can't do all the work by myself. I have found someone who can help me through a friend.
12. I haven't thought about it.
13. Not at top of my priority list ... not interested, life's busy and wildfire isn't on her radar
14. Interest
15. Renters ... was very personable but not really willing to get more involved in any processes in this area.
16. Time not high priority right now with other family things going on.
17. All of the above. Since I don't own the home, I don't feel like I have the ability to do a fire safety test on the home. And I feel like if I did a fire safety test on the home, I would want to move.
18. I've never taken the time to go "I need to do this" because it's just not on my radar as something to do.
19. Time, resources, daughter handles things

Lack physical capacity (n=16)

1. Wife's disability
2. My 99 year old mother and I remove pine needles by ourselves regularly. We need financial assistance for the tree work because we can't reach that high.
3. I have a significant disability and limited balance. Half of the residents of this park are elderly and have lived here for 40+ years. Many are disabled.
4. I'm old and my heart is going to stop soon anyway. I don't have family and it's hard to get around. I don't want anyone coming inside because they'll get hurt and I'll get sued.
5. I'm not able to do gardening any more. The fire dept came around when we applied to be Firewise. Someone came to reduce fuels. I was not at home when they asked for permission to clean up the backyard and my partner at the time said "No." I really regrets not getting the work done because I am physically unable to do the work due to neuropathy and lymphodema. It's hard for me to use tools, and I am aging so my body can't balance.
6. I'm physically not able to do the work. Probably cost as well
7. I don't have the money this year because I haven't been able to work since March when I

broke my arm and I got sick. I couldn't do anything.

8. disability health
9. I don't have the energy to spray all the bushes because I am disabled.
10. I have dementia and can't remember things.
11. Money and recent auto accident And I am not well
12. I am so disabled now can't do anything much around the house any money goes toward medical expenses.
13. I'm disabled and can't walk or bend so can't do any yard work. My wife has dementia so she's not of much help.
14. Moving to a nursing home on October 1, 2024.
15. I'm in a wheelchair and don't have money for a car payment, let alone a mower. I just don't really care.
16. Not much limiting her from having a wildfire safe home, finances and physical limitations from age and injuries prevent her from any major upgrades to the property but tries to keep up with regular maintenance.

I don't have the time (n=16)

1. lack of resources and time
2. Knowledge, time, money. I have a lot of things to deal with right now. I'm disabled at this time and my trailer probably won't pass inspection so I will become homeless.
3. Finances, time and the fact that the summer is the height of the Shakespear festival. I work for the festival and we are busy.
4. We work full time and really don't wanna do outdoor work.
5. I work as much as I can, I'm a nurse at Asante. I'm not home much and I don't wanna take care of outside yard.
6. I don't have any time.
7. Time and I have no idea what to do (knowledge).
8. Energy and time--I work.
9. Time money
10. Time not high priority right now with other family things going on
11. I got no time for projects
12. "Knowledge, time, and financial resources as I am a full time student.
13. Sources, knowledge and time

14. They are a college student with a busy schedule and low budget
15. Time, resources, daughter handles things
16. Knowledge and time mostly

Don't need to do anything (n=10)

1. I was a wildland firefighter for several years and a city firefighter for awhile. Our house doesn't need much. (not true)
2. Nothing really. I think we are pretty safe.
3. I'm pretty good with keeping my home as safe as I can given where I live and weather conditions
4. I feel I am prepared. I even have a fire ladder in my bedroom and 2 fire extinguishers.
5. I think I am pretty safe considering where I live
6. I don't know that my apt bldg is not safe. Grounds are kept clean no debris on ground bushes trimmed and trees trimmed they do a good job
7. I think My apt bldg is as safe as any other place. I rent and safety isn't my job
8. Knowledge and interest--he lacks both. Very disengaged.
9. I think my home is as safe as possible
10. I think we have a pretty fire safe home. As much as anyone can be safe from fires

I don't want to change the (n=8)

1. I'm not gonna remove my rugs outside. I need somethings to look pretty and nice for my sanity
2. She doesn't want to be told to cut down her spruce trees.
3. Personal preference -- vegetation in part
4. I need somethings to look pretty and nice for my sanity
5. I don't want to be told to cut down bushes.
6. I look at the trade-offs. I am a gardener and don't want to take down the trees. I don't think I could do that.
7. The trees...I wouldn't want them eliminated.
8. Aesthetics--I like wood fences.

There are no obstacles (n=5)

1. He doesn't think there are any obstacles
2. I do my best. I think I am fire wise. I'm gonna remove bark
3. Nothing--I am motivated.
4. Nothing would limit me.
5. Nothing, unless super expensive.

Can't Find Help (n=4)

1. My roof is covered with needles and I can't find a hand-i-man.
2. Its hard to find a hand-i-man.
3. I've been waiting three months for [Herve] to get the leaves off the roof and to cut back the tree branches. He says its too hot to do right now. My roof hasn't been cleaned in 4 years.
4. Me, I am alone...time...getting distracted by other home issues. I can't do all the work by myself. I have found someone who can help me through a friend.

It's "hopeless" so why bother (n=4)

1. I have a sense of futility when it comes to catastrophic fire when winds pick up and arsonists are all over the place like when the Alameda fire started with crazy winds and arsonists were lighting fire. If the fire on highway 66 hadn't been stopped, we probably would have been goners.
2. We are next to Tolman Creek so there are trees and pine needles everywhere. Its out of control. The homeless camp under the trees at the end of Tolman. We are close to I-5.
3. Park management said a month ago that the trees don't matter because if a fire comes it won't matter anyway. It's probably true. They have 40 trees that said would not get cut down. I don't want to pay for tree removal and the property management company won't cut the [big gummy spruce tree] down.
4. She does not own the home and feels that living in a fire-prone area means that you can never really be safe.

The problem is on neighboring properties (n=3)

1. Neighbors
2. The empty field next to me that is not mowed or watered is a bit scary. that field could catch fire in a heart beat

3. So long as the neighbors "aren't cooking nothing" it doesn't bother me.

Responses to: "How do you get information about current wildfire conditions and what to do about them?"

Categories of Responses: (n=222) Responses were sorted into the following categories which are listed in the table below by frequency of occurrence:

Category	# responses	% of total	Category	# responses	% of total
Citizen Alert/Nixle/Everbridge	104	46.8	My neighbor(s)	9	4.1
Watch Duty App	84	37.8	Local radio station	7	3.2
Friends or family member(s)	34	15.3	SOU alerts or from an instructor	6	2.7
Other	27	12.2	Reading local or national news	6	2.7
Search the Internet	24	10.8	Sherriff's Scanner	6	2.7
Don't Know or No access	20	9.0	Other Social media sites	6	2.7
Television news	16	7.2	Personal network (e.g., church, HOA, club, and similar)	5	2.3
App on my Phone	16	7.2	Oregon State Website	3	1.4
Facebook	11	5.0	Jackson County Wildfire Map (website)	3	1.4
City of Ashland website	10	4.5	InciWeb (Incident Information System)	1	0.5

Table 18: How Respondents Get Information About Current Wildfire Conditions

The respondents could identify as many sources as they wanted to. Nearly 50% said they get alerts on their phone (which we attempted to verify as Nixle/Citizen's Alert). The number may be a little higher because some folks said they get text messages without being specific. While there is room

for improvement, this percentage is likely a good indicator that a lot of folks in the target populations have registered for alerts. Watch Duty, a new non-profit supported wildfire tracking application available for free download on smartphones, is very popular with nearly 38% of the respondents indicating they used the app—several of whom did not mention the local or county Citizen's Alert/Nixle.

Citizen Alert/Nixle/Everbridge (n=104)

1. Citizen Alert
2. Likes the Citizen Alert -- "This is good" and thinks it works well.
3. Citizen's Alert from the City
4. Emergency notifications
5. My friends and alerts
6. We have signed up for Nixle.
7. She is on Citizen's Alert.
8. the Citizen's alert.
9. Citizen's alert
10. Citizen's alert
11. Citizen's Alert
12. I'm signed up for Citizen's Alert.
13. Use alerts, Nixle
14. Nixle and Citizens Alert
15. I have Citizen's alert
16. Citizen's alert
17. County alerts
18. Citizen's alert
19. County emergency alert system for extreme weather condition for the unhoused.
20. Citizen's Alert
21. Nixle
22. Citizen's Alert and Pulse Point
23. Citizen Alert
24. Citizen's Alert
25. Citizen's Alert
26. Citizen's Alert

27. Citizen's Alert
28. Citizens Alert.
29. Citizens Alert
30. Nixle
31. Nixle and Pulse Point
32. Nixle and Pulse Point
33. Nixle
34. Nixle and Pulse Point
35. Nixle
36. Pulse Point
37. Nixle
38. Nixle
39. Nixle
40. Nixle
41. Citizen's Alert
42. Citizen's alert.
43. Citizens alert.
44. Citizen's alert -- may not have properly loaded
45. Pulse Point, Nixle
46. Nixle
47. Nixle and pulse point
48. Nixle
49. Nixle and pulse point
50. Nixle
51. Nixle and pulse point
52. Nixle and pulse point
53. Nixle, I watch my phone
54. Nixle and pulse point
55. Nixle and pulse point
56. Citizen's Alert
57. Nixle
58. Citizen's Alert
59. Citizen's alert--texts to my phone. We got a notification for the recent fire.

60. Citizen's Alert
61. Pulse Point
62. Citizens Alert in the City and in the County. Sometimes the County alert has more information.
63. Citizen's alert--texts to my phone.
64. Citizen's Alert
65. Citizen's Alert
66. Citizen's Alert
67. Citizen's alert
68. Citizen's Alert, and Pulse Point
69. Citizen's Alert
70. Nixle and Pulse Point
71. Citizen's Alert and Pulse Point--working for OSF we get hammered with this information
72. Citizen's Alert
73. Citizen's Alert
74. Citizen's Alert
75. Citizen's Alert
76. Citizen's Alert
77. I use [citizen's alert] but I am not sure its reliable. I have heard people complain about it.
78. Nixle and Pulse Point
79. Citizen's Alert
80. Nixle
81. Citizen's Alert (Nixle)
82. Citizen's Alert (Nixle)
83. Citizen's Alert (Nixle)
84. Nixle
85. I get text alerts
86. Nixle watch duty
87. Nixle watch duty
88. Nixle
89. Watch duty Nixle
90. Nixle
91. Nixle

92. Nixle
93. He wanted NIXLE alerts but could not get them registered from his phone.
94. Nixle
95. Nixle
96. Nixle and Pulse Point
97. Nixle
98. Alerts on the phone
99. I usually check my phone for any alerts and see if there are any messages on how and where to evacuate.
100. Sometimes he gets an alert on his phone. Check AQU on phone. Says he doesn't look for that information very actively.
101. uses alerts like RVEM Ashland alerts
102. She says that she relies on the radio, the Ashland phone alert system, and word of mouth to get information on developing conditions. During the small fire over the summer near town this year, she was listening to the radio and was reassured by a friend that checked it out with their own vehicle from a vantage point. Not someone who uses apps or texts.
103. Ashland City Alerts--the text messages you can sign up for
104. Ashland Alert system

Watch Duty App (n=84)

1. FireDuty app
2. Watch Duty.
3. Watch Duty
4. Watch Duty
5. Watch Duty
6. Watch Duty
7. Watch Duty
8. Watch Duty
9. Watch Duty
10. Watch Duty
11. Watch Duty
12. Watch Duty
13. Watch Duty

- 14. Watch Duty
- 15. Watch Duty
- 16. Watch Duty
- 17. Watch Duty
- 18. Watch Duty
- 19. Watch Duty
- 20. Watch Duty
- 21. Watch Duty
- 22. Watch Duty
- 23. Watch Duty
- 24. Watch Duty
- 25. Watch Duty
- 26. Watch Duty
- 27. Watch Duty
- 28. Watch Duty
- 29. Watch Duty
- 30. Watch Duty
- 31. Watch Duty
- 32. Watch Duty
- 33. Watch Duty
- 34. Watch Duty
- 35. Watch Duty
- 36. Watch Duty
- 37. Watch Duty
- 38. Watch Duty
- 39. Watch Duty
- 40. Watch Duty
- 41. Watch Duty
- 42. Watch Duty
- 43. Watch Duty
- 44. Watch Duty
- 45. Watch Duty

-
46. Watch Duty which is nice for road trips to see where fires are. I was a cashier at the Dollar store--customers told me about Watch Duty
 47. Watch Duty
 48. Watch Duty
 49. Watch Duty
 50. Watch Duty
 51. Watch Duty
 52. Watch Duty
 53. Watch Duty
 54. Watch Duty
 55. Watch Duty
 56. Watch Duty
 57. Watch Duty
 58. Watch Duty
 59. Watch Duty
 60. Watch Duty
 61. Watch Duty
 62. Watch Duty
 63. Nixle watch duty
 64. Nixle watch duty
 65. Watch duty Nixle
 66. Watch duty
 67. Watch duty
 68. Watch duty
 69. Watch duty
 70. Watchduty and other text applications
 71. Watch duty
 72. Watch duty
 73. Watch duty
 74. Watch duty
 75. Watch duty
 76. Watch duty
 77. Watch Duty

78. Watch Duty
79. WatchDuty
80. I use the app Watch Duty- nice for keeping track of local fires or fires in specific locations.
81. Watch duty
82. He uses apps like Watch Duty
83. Watch Duty notifications turned on for all of Oregon

Friends or family member(s) (n=34)

1. Friends
2. She would turn to family and the city for information
3. My husband and family
4. My friends
5. Friends
6. My friends and alerts
7. My son's big brother would tell me about it. My daughter has told me.
8. My partner.
9. We listen to our kids. Our son-in-law Ben is a native of Ashland and rebuilt many homes in Talent after the fire.
10. First person is my brother. We don't have smart phones. I have a flip cell phone but rarely use it
11. My sons who have been firefighters
12. Friends
13. Friends
14. Friends
15. Friends
16. Talking with each other and my brothers. Note that this is a Spanish speaking household.
17. Friends and neighbors text me. I'm not on Nixle.
18. friends my mom
19. Friends
20. Friends
21. I call a friend.
22. my daughter
23. My daughter-in-law called me about the recent fire.

24. Close friends who work on fires.
25. My friends
26. Friends
27. Word of mouth
28. Friends
29. Friends
30. Friends
31. He learns and discusses with friends. He did not have other response.
32. Friend, father,
33. Also comes up in conversation- "oh is smokey today.. there's a fire in Eugene..."
34. word of mouth to get information on developing conditions. During the small fire over the summer near town this year, she was listening to the radio and was reassured by a friend that checked it out with their own vehicle from a vantage point. *Not someone who uses apps or texts.*
35. I get alerts from friends and the local neighborhood watch. My daughters are also alerted by others- so between the three of us we are usually up to date.

Search the Internet (n=27)

1. Used the Internet during the Alameda Fire
2. Used the Internet during the Alameda Fire
3. probably go to youtube.com and type in "fire proofing house"
4. Look on line
5. Possibly the Internet.
6. I pay attention to Ryan weather
7. I go on line to try to figure things out--no specific place.
8. On line
9. Websites. I don't use any apps
10. On line--the Internet
11. looking at satellite maps every 10 minutes when there are fires burning.
12. On line (Spanish speaking household)
13. On line resources like the Oregon State Website
14. Various sources on line.

15. If you want to find any information including about wildfires, the first source for me is the internet. I don't speak good English and with the internet research, I can switch language to Russian or Ukrainian pretty easily.
16. Internet is the #1 source for me
17. No particular place. I follow fires on the Internet.
18. Internet
19. the Internet
20. Googling on the Internet
21. My computer doesn't work so I don't use the Internet.
22. Internet mostly.
23. The internet
24. I look up online can I have a fire right now and it tells me fire severity
25. I don't anywhere else to look for information other than searching online or scrolling through social media.
26. and google
27. social media, google

Other (n=24)

1. I don't trust anybody
2. Myself
3. Cert and fire department, friend police officers.
4. CERT
5. I don't turn to the news because the news focuses on being negative. Communications are always an issue.
6. sheriff's office?
7. Now that we have talked, I would probably go to you (Charisse). I look for people who are familiar with this biome to advise me.
8. US Weather Service
9. I am a retired forester and a former firefighter. I spent my career on the Klamath and Shasta Trinity Forests. I know about wildfire.
10. I go to Charisse
11. the weather.gov site
12. I would probably call Justin Foss who is an Ashland firefighter. He used to live here.

13. Not able to ask because the interviewee was hostile
14. Government websites with maps. Shows all wildfires in the Pacific Northwest and California.
15. I look outside.
16. We would find someone who speaks our language (Ukrainian or Russian) and ask this person where we should to for any information or help!
17. It would be good to have a place where wildfire information is available in different languages for people like us who are just learning English.
18. the vibe on how it's feeling outside
19. fire danger signs
20. The Library. I hate all the computer world we are living in and avoid it at all costs. I don't engage in that world.
21. I pay attention to the weather
22. Maybe police will tell us if we have to evacuate.
23. He is in the business and knows what is occurring and expected. He is a professional Wildfire Mitigation Specialist who is self employed
24. I look at the sky

Don't Know or No access (n=20)

1. I don't know
2. Since I moved to Ashland a month ago I don't get any information
3. Don't know
4. I have no information source
5. No idea
6. Nothing
7. I don't have any idea where to get info
8. don't get information (we tried to load her phone with Citizen's alert but it appears to have a block turned on. Advised her to get her daughter to help).
9. "I'm totally irresponsible about that." [Charisse gave him the Citizen's alert flyer]
10. No one
11. has no access to info and conditions
12. Don't know
13. I'm not on any app.
14. I don't have any phone apps. I watch how the weather looks outside

15. I don't have any way to get info. On TV I suppose
16. Doesn't go anywhere. I gave him a flyer to get on to Citizen's Alert
17. I think there's sirens and phone messages
18. I think there are sirens (gave her handout for citizens alert)
19. I guess firemen
20. go to local fire dept, perhaps? Not signed up for Ashland city alerts

Television news (n=16)

1. Hmm, local news sites?
2. Media notifications
3. Media - phone and tv
4. I watch the TV and get some news.
5. News
6. I watch 2 television stations
7. TV news
8. You always listen to the news
9. News alerts.
10. TV
11. TV--local news warnings
12. If I hear it on the TV
13. TV
14. TV
15. I watch the news every day
16. TV news and information.

App on my Phone (general reference and not all users) (n=16)

1. app on my phone
2. the special apps
3. Media - phone
4. Air Visual
5. A couple of apps I don't really use.
6. I don't have a fancy phone that beeps at me
7. I would use the Sherriff app

8. my phone apps
9. My phone
10. I watch my weather apps
11. I look on some apps. Can't remember which ones
12. I monitor the direction of the wind and other things on weather apps
13. My phone
14. Watchduty and other text applications
15. Phone app that has the weather on it and usually has some sort of reminder or notification.
16. Firewise app.

Facebook (n=11)

1. Facebook
2. When the fire happened, I couldn't get any information because I had deleted Facebook.
3. Facebook
4. Facebook
5. Facebook
6. Facebook
7. Facebook
8. Facebook
9. Facebook
10. Facebook
11. Social media--Facebook Ashland Fire Watch group. The group uses Watch Duty

City of Ashland website (n=10)

1. City of Ashland
2. City of Ashland
3. Pamphlets from the City
4. city website, I'd hope they'd push out information and I wouldn't have to go searching for it.
5. Very good question. I would check with the City, but they aren't much help.
6. city website
7. Ashland website
8. Ashland fire department website for smoke conditions
9. I look online at Ashland fire page.

10. local fire department (ask questions)

My neighbor(s) (n=9)

1. my neighbors tell me
2. I think my neighbors would say something.
3. Friends and neighbors text me. I'm not on Nixle.
4. Neighbor's mainly
5. Penny my neighbor tells me.
6. neighbors. Have no smartphone or computer internet.
7. I suppose if the neighbors knock, but they don't like me very much
8. neighbors
9. phone tree, neighbors

Local Radio Stations (n=7)

1. Media notifications
2. Emergency radio we bought.
3. I listen to local news and ABC news for national news. PBS for local news
4. Local radio during the Alameda Fire – KSKQ
5. News alerts
6. Again, the radio stations are his only source of information or emergency notifications
7. She says that she relies on the radio

SOU (n=6)

1. The internet and/or Dr. Werner. [Dr. Werner is an Environmental Science & Policy professor at SOU who teaches and researches fire ecology]
2. In the past I have relied mostly on SOU Alerts and Social Media such as Twitter(X)
3. SOU-issued alerts.
4. Southern Oregon University's citizen alerts have been my main point of information since moving to Ashland, and I believe those alerts are taking directly from the city.
5. SOU alert system active on phone and messages through text
6. SOU alerts.

Reading Local and National News (n=6)

1. reading local and national news
2. News
3. I listen to local news and ABC news for national news. PBS for local news
4. I see the news
5. local news
6. Ashland News

Sheriff's Scanner (n=6)

1. My daughter listens to the scanner on her phone.
2. Jackson County sheriff's scanner
3. Jackson County police and fire scanner
4. My daughter has a police scanner.
5. Jackson County Scanner
6. I listened to the scanner throughout the Alameda Fire

Other Social media sites (n=6)

1. Social media
2. Social media--most likely Facebook and word of mouth.
3. Next Gripe (Door)
4. In the past I have relied mostly on SOU Alerts and Social Media such as Twitter(X)
5. I don't know anywhere else to look for information other than searching online or scrolling through social media.
6. social media and Google

Personal network (e.g., church, HOA, club, and similar) (n=5)

1. Ham Radio
2. Rogue Food Unites educates us some.
3. Senior Center
4. I get a lot through the University. We got messaged by the University about the recent fire.
5. KS Wild

Oregon State Website (n=3)

1. On line resources like the Oregon State Website
2. Oregon Dept of Forestry website
3. Oregon live fire maps

Jackson County Wildfire Map (website) (n=3)

1. Jackson County Fire Watch has been particularly helpful
2. Jackson County website
3. Alerts on the phone. Jackson County website.

InciWeb (Incident Information System) (n=1)

1. InciWeb

Open Forum -- Additional Stories and Information Shared

Summary of 166 responses from interviewees. The information has been sorted into the following categories:

- Where some folks are at mentally
- Communications
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Where some folks are at mentally

1. Hasn't thought about much of any of this.
2. They have been in other areas of serious fire in CA. They are very aware.
3. I don't have any stories, but I know people who lost everything. Its sad.
4. I've lived here since I was 7. I'm now seventy. People aren't paying attention anymore. We used to go camping when I was a kid. We would put our fires out. It feels so crazy now. I don't know where to start. So many careless people--you pray to make it through the summer.
5. I feel the City is working hard to get things working as good as possible. I know a lot of people who got burned out. Its a traumatic thing for sure.
6. I have lots of friends who lost everything in the Alameda Fire. Many lost pets and are still struggling.
7. I'm on medical leave. I don't expect to pass the [property mgmt company] inspection so I will be rendered homeless. Its really hard to get out of once unhoused.
8. Its a common sense thing--the climate is drier. The USFS said 30 years ago that the climate in the Rogue Valley is going to be like it is in Redding. And it is.
9. It really surprised me how fast fire moves....
10. We had a bunch of friends lose everything in the Alameda Fire. It was rough for a lot of people. I don't think anything could have been done.
11. I've lived here in Ashland for 65 years. In summer it used to not get above 85 degrees and we used to get deep snow. Climate change is real. My grandparents bought this trailer in 1977. I lived with them. Now that they are gone, I live in the trailer alone.
12. I haven't been paying as much attention as I should. I've been distracted by other things.
13. In hindsight I wish we had known sooner what was going on. I was responsible for getting everyone out but my dad is controlling and made us wait. I still resent him for that.
14. I don't really know what to do. It seems impossible. I had a friend evacuate from the Alameda Fire but she didn't evacuate far enough so she had to keep going.
15. If there was a wildfire we could lose everything we have and it would be very difficult to start over. It would feel like when we had to run away from the war in Ukraine. If fire happened to take everything from us all our family health would suffer. We would be so worried to be in a country where we do not speak language well and would not know where to go for help.
16. This family escaped war in their town in Ukraine and if the wildfire happened in their area they would be devastated. We would have to start from scratch with our life and it is very scary to

me since I have 2 children to take care of.

17. I haven't lived here very long and do not even think about fire.
18. I came from the Illinois farmlands. We didn't get fires.
19. I am from the mid-west so the idea of fire is too foreign to me.
20. Renters seem to have lower stakes. It must be harder for people with homes to leave. I haven't considered that.
21. He loves Ashland says he doesn't have to watch his back, hasn't been shot at or home broken into. Moved here last sept 23 from SF CA
22. I just moved back to Ashland. I wasn't here during the Alameda fire.
23. Everything is old and dry. I'm scared because of the Alameda Fire. Its nothing like when I was young. I am more aware than I was as a child. In the last decade its gotten so much worse. My daughter and I are triggered all the time. We are now thinking of moving away--to Sandy Oregon near Portland where it rains a lot. Summers are so awful. I don't crave summer any more. We can't survive because it is so dry and dusty...just waiting for a fire to burn our home.
24. People's brains just shut down during a fire and most don't know what to do.
25. Says he was having a bad trip and did not want to talk anymore.
26. It could completely ruin my life. Worst case scenario where you run out of your house at the last minute and take nothing with you, you have to start your whole life over in terms of everything.
27. Biggest problem is that people panic when exposed to dangerous situations. He feels that people don't understand the WUI predicament. Everyone needs to be aware of and work on improving communication, planning, evacuation plans, and home hardening.
28. Renters name is ... and he was very personable but not really willing to get more involved in any processes in this area.
29. He's about 30ish and works and rents a room from his mom. He does not think about his responsibility to prevent wildfire where he lives.
30. This young man was very polite and thoughtful of my questions but the questions did not match his lifestyle and reality
31. "Most of my fire experience is from living in California with my parents. I never really had to do any of the inspections or things like that."

Communications

1. I didn't know that I could get an assessment. Why didn't we get this information?

Communications are always an issue. He recommended three things: a) Facebook groups; b) Rogue Valley family networking. That's where we get the best information. and c) NextDoor." To get communication ideas ask the question on NextDoor: "What are your ideas for networking." Make communications free through social media groups. Need to consider demographics. As a 40 year old, I use Facebook. Younger folks use Instagram and twitter.

2. In our neighborhood there are a lot of older single women so we created a phone tree. We keep an eye on each other. The older 80s generation is not adept on the Internet.
3. There's too much BS on the news.
4. The City's ongoing reminders are helpful. There are new neighbors so we need to get them to sign up. I like the electric bill reminders. The once a year flyers and reminders are great because it gets us going again.
5. "The system is down message during the fire was silly." I have had 2 strokes and have limited ability. I prefer to be taking care of people and not have people taking me.
6. Citizen's Alert should not use abbreviations...if its N, say north. Take the time to print everything out in complete sentences. I have been to college, but others have not.
7. I've been in the area for 7 years. When we had the recent fire they gave out location information that I don't relate to. The recent fire took me a long time to understand. The power was out and I couldn't use the internet to find out any information.
8. During the Alameda Fire someone said the fire was on Tolman when they meant to say Colman. It caused a lot of confusion.
9. When asked what we should do for apartment dwellers in the CWPP, she said that they need to have access to knowledge about what to do and what is being planned.
10. Another thing that bugs me is the naming of the fire and its actually location. The "Alameda" fire meant nothing to me. I suggest that the system visit its naming choices to make it more clear where the fire is.
11. He suggests putting more resources on the Facebook neighborhood pages about where to get things for a bug-out bag or how to test smoke alarms.
12. She really misses having the local papers, seems like they were a major source of information to her before they stopped printing.
13. I always think about how to most effectively communicate danger to people because a lot of people who've lived in Oregon their whole lives have the mentality of there's always fires in the area and they haven't reached me and they're not going to... When the 2020 fires happened, my grandma lived on the McKenzie river which burned on the same day as the

Almeda fire and she got a be ready fire notification before she went to bed and she laughed it off and went to bed because she has gotten this notification every year and it never amounted to anything, but because she didn't take it seriously, her neighbors had to wake her up at 2am to evacuate.

Neighborhood Related

1. I am not interested in organizing a neighborhood risk assessment. I will give your card to Anni (on the same block) who lives at the end of this row. She likes to organize but is not home right now.
2. I can't help but think about Talent, Phoenix, and Maui. I have lived here for 18 years. The last 8 years have been smoky and the fires have become serious. The dry western states are fire prone. I am from California and have been through fire before. I am anxious about the TID going dry.
3. I wish my neighbors were interested in wildfire.
4. There are new neighbors so we need to get them to sign up.
5. I would be willing to participate in Firewise again if the people have changed. I got burned out because I was abused by a man who lived in the park.
6. I have lived in Ashland for 33 years--since 1991. I worked with Lomakatsi before the [Ashland Forest Resiliency Project]. I was on my roof when the Almeda Fire started. I drove around a lot during the Almeda Fire. I try to cooperate with my neighbors. There are many seniors here. I want options including having water in the pond to protect us.
7. The trailer across the street burned down a few years ago. The woman was being evicted so she burned it down. Next to the trailer was a row of arborvitae trees that are now gone. My neighbor said they burned really hot.
8. Wonderful group of people living here. My daughter lives here too. My grandson is moving back in this week to their home on the other street.
9. Since there was no support during the Almeda Fire, many people I knew left the State--we lost community.
10. In our neighborhood there are a lot of older single women so we created a phone tree. We keep an eye on each other.

Evacuation Related

1. Roger always keeps his gas tank 1/2 full for evacuation and 2 Go Bags by the front door.

He plans to turn off gas and water valves before evacuation.

2. When I moved into my Parkside Condo I was told that I was responsible for organizing everyone in the community relative to wildfire evacuation. Nobody asked me if I wanted to do the job. That's why I quit. I also got tired of people being uninterested. One person said that he is "not afraid" of fire so he isn't going to do anything.
3. CERT has never told us to think critically about what to do. We are only trained to do what we are told when it comes to evacuation.
4. 2nd floor loft. Pretty safe. I have my go bag and personal information ready.
5. Says 'My van is packed and the go bag is right here by the door'
6. She has two cats and is afraid they won't be catchable. She has a system set up with her neighbors on each side. They will leave together.
7. I am really concerned about egress from this park. I have looked at adjacent properties for a way out. They just put up a gate and fence blocking the only possible alternative way to drive out of the park. If there is any way to open up more escape routes, we need other ways out.
8. After the Alameda Fire, I made a commitment to leave with the first level of evacuation. I wonder about all the older disabled folks in the Mountain Meadows Manor.
9. I am concerned that there is only one way out and getting elders out. I don't want that responsibility.
10. My biggest concern is my wife and I not being home and the kids being home alone. During the Alameda Fire that was what happened. The streets were clogged with semitrucks. It was frightening to have no plan.
11. Its the uprooted nature that is the bigger factor for people losing there homes. There are very limited services during an evacuation. I had to stay in a hotel for 11 days when I was evacuated. I don't have that kind of money.
12. Only source of support is through her church. During Alameda fire, no one told her about it and whomever knocked at door moved on too fast before she could answer it.
13. She talked a lot about how there are so many old women in the park that need help. She is a retired nurse and a retired army nurse. She has lived here 17 years and is on the helping hands committee but doesn't want to be responsible when it comes time to evacuate. She is currently helping a 93 year old women out and is not getting much support. I suggested that she set up a phone tree like they have done in the Tolman Creek MHP. She liked the idea and plans to pursue.
14. The recent fire really threw me. How could I have gotten out of here? Access to the YMCA

soccer field is blocked by a locked gate.

15. We had family evacuated from the Alameda Fire. I was at home at home that day with my dog. My parents were out of town and could not get back to Ashland. It was difficult because I was 14 years old and separated from my parents. We need to have more information on the fires and where to go during an event. My parents had nothing with them because they were not at home when the fire happened.
16. When the Alameda fire broke out I learned about it on Facebook and left work to drive home to get my husband who didn't have a car and wouldn't have been able to leave unless he walked of course. The roads were all blocked but I kept going and made it back. Then we loaded the car and went to our friend's house in Medford.
17. I got real motivated after the recent fire. I cleaned away the debris from the base of my wood fences. I have a friend who lives on Corp Ranch Rd who left soon as she learned about the recent fire we had to the south. I have other friends who said they would stay at their home and fight the fire. I saw the wisdom of leaving early because of my friend. Fewer people in the area because some leave early means those that remain have fewer problems.
18. In hindsight I wish we had known sooner what was going on. I was responsible for getting everyone out but my dad is controlling and made us wait. I still resent him for that.
19. The biggest risk I see because of wildfire is the need to evacuate immediately. That means taking routes where the traffic would be unmanageable. That is what I most wonder about.
20. I was lucky enough not to be here during the Alameda Fire. A lot of people had pets that got lost during the fire. In the planning process, I recommend that pets get microchipped so they can be returned to the owners. I worry a lot about how to handle evacuating our pets because we don't have a car. I really need information on this subject.
21. In the plan, you need to have more education about the County evacuation zones.
22. I am super concerned about the "road diet". When the freeway got shut down I worried I could not get out for my day job.
23. The plan should address the need for us to have a space to be safe [during a fire.] We need to know what the options are.
24. We just moved here from Medford. During the Alameda Fire we were in Medford living in a motel on the greenway. We got a level 2 evacuation alert. The motel said we couldn't reserve our room unless it was a level 3 alert, so we stayed. All of us watched the fire coming towards us and we were scared. At the last minute it turned.
25. Because she is so worried about responders passing her by (she is very slow moving), so she

made the following suggestion: a way to notify responders with a sticker on the door but don't let robbers know.

26. I'm concerned about getting animals out. I work at a vet center.
27. One thing I am concerned about is the "little road diet". It will cause problems with people evacuating to the freeway. I have no idea how to get out of town. The converging at the Bard's Inn is horrible.
28. The Alameda Fire--that day my partner was working in Talent. She saw smoke in Ashland and called me at work. We shut down the business and I brought the cash box home. Then the threat shifted from being afraid in Ashland to Talent. My partner couldn't get home. She evacuated north to Stage Road and then had to evacuate again. I became the HQ for telling her what was going on.
29. We just had a fire [near Exit 11]. I called a friend who was out of town but she lives near the fire. They didn't know what to do when they found out that the key to their office where their valuables were stored wasn't available. They are making plans to get keys and use a phone to unlock the office.
30. I wouldn't know where the shelters are [as an apartment dweller.]
31. This interviewee was senior, disabled, not independently able to get around, did not have a car, and is not able to easily relocate nor has any financial means to support himself.
32. He was recently homeless in the Cave Junction area and has moved to Ashland to get cleaned up and improve his life. He likes Ashland but having only been here one month, was not familiar with it. He is disabled, senior, has had past medical issues, and it not in a good situation. He does not have transportation and is totally dependent on local friends and agencies to assist him in living here.
33. Biggest problem is that people panic when exposed to dangerous situations.
34. He has evacuated before. He emphasized to not go through town or landlocked areas but to get to periphery as soon as possible.
35. He evacuated during the Alameda fire and went North on Highway 99 but was stuck at Suncrest for 4 hours and then eventually came back South through Talent. It was very stressful and not organized well in any way.
36. [Family of 3]. We left when fire came to Alameda St. By time we tried to get out the traffic was awful, really not moving up Glenn Ave onto N Main St. So we did a u turn and cut thru town ended up going to Mt Shasta cause we could see the fire going north. We were lucky cause we were both home that day, my son didn't live here then.

37. Disgusted with Phoenix when the fire happened. Was living in the mobile home park, with no notice. The mayor and sheriff had meetings afterwards, and decided not to warn people because it could cause a panic. It was on the scanner page only that the mobile home needed to be evacuated, but that there weren't any resources. By the time she got notice, she was no longer allowed to go south to evacuate to daughter's house, and was forced to take 99 north, because I5 was closed. She didn't have a place to stay in Medford at the time. Her family notified her first before anyone came through the park. They had only 10 minutes to get out. Could have given a lot more notice. Were given FEMA funds and United Way.
38. They are from California and they have dealt with having to evacuate from wildfire before so they are familiar with at least some of the procedures.
39. Was helped with installing new fire alarms by the senior center a few years ago and they also talked about safe routes out of the house in case of a fire.
40. When the 2020 fires happened, my grandma lived on the McKenzie river which burned on the same day as the Alameda fire and she got a be ready fire notification before she went to bed and she laughed it off and went to bed because she has gotten this notification every year and it never amounted to anything, but because she didn't take it seriously, her neighbors had to wake her up at 2am to evacuate.
41. No experience in Ashland specifically but they had to evacuate from the family home in Yreka about 3 years ago.
42. I did evacuate once while living in California. I loaded the dogs and fire go bag and headed into San Francisco. I had arranged for a friend to put me up. It was under control in hours. I was reminded that a go bag and fire proof case for things like car pink slips etc. is really essential. Plus an agreement with friends and family.

Alameda Fire Stories

1. Ginny lived on Alameda St in 2000 when fire broke out on Alameda St. She continues to have PTSD from that fire and appears to be in high stress when fire is talked about and reluctant to make changes around her current home for more fire security.
2. Was on the Alameda fire. Fire person told her that the fire is not going toward you. She turned others away who were gawking. Had car packed up with animals. No one came to talk to them. The wind could have turned and burned us out. I went to the entire neighborhood.
3. I was here during the Alameda Fire and saw that the fire wasn't moving in our direction. However, I thought for awhile it moved back away so I was ready to leave if it came to a

certain point. We had our go bags packed.

4. She and her neighbors stayed when they were told to evacuate because they saw the fire was moving away from them. When she saw the helicopter over the fire from her bedroom window, she felt herself getting scared. She talked to herself and stopped to breath. She told herself, "You can do this."
5. I was asleep on the sofa when the Alameda Fire started. People knocked on the door. I then saw a plume of smoke. It was really windy and had been all morning.
6. During the [Alameda] fire, I realized it was a huge probability [that we could experience a wildfire here] and then we also were having smoke in the summer. This changed my perspective. We created go bags and got ramen noodles and other food ready to go. Before the fire it wasn't a big deal.
7. I was living in Medford during the Alameda fire. I have concerns because of the mobile homes burned like matchboxes during the Alameda Fire.
8. I remember climbing on the roof during the Alameda fire. I saw the genesis of the fire from the [Ashland] Coop and told my co-worker who lives in Talent to go home because I saw the fire going that way. I took a picture.
9. Due to my need for multiple surgeries, I stored all my belongings in a storage shed in Talent. During the Alameda Fire the facility burned and I lost everything. My insurance won't pay anything because the contents were not inventoried. I had a house on Alta Ave in Ashland which I sold to buy this trailer 3 years ago. I deal with the trauma by loving nature. I live here because of the natural landscape.
10. My friend had her house burn down during the Alameda Fire.
11. A girlfriend who is an artist had just finished building her home in Talent when the fire occurred. They lost everything including her artwork. Her husband died soon after (he wasn't well when the fire occurred). Having the Alameda fire and seeing what it was like the next day, shook us to our core. My daughter and many friends are still very nervous when the winds blow.
12. Both my kids, my brother, and nephew lost their homes during the Alameda Fire. My brother has since passed away. So sad,. My husband was alive at the time. We heard the power went out by Quiet Village--that was the first we knew about the fire. My daughter called and couldn't get back to Ashland.
13. I knew the first victim of the Alameda Fire. He was my ex-husband. He sired both of my children. My kids get really freaked out when the winds are blowing. I have heard that he

could not pay his meth dealer. I think they threw him in his tent and set it on fire. I would probably leave if my mother wasn't here.

14. Nope I have nothing I can think about sharing. Friends lost their home up the freeway. One woman in the fire didn't make it. She was in a wheelchair.
15. I was married at the time of the Alameda Fire. It burned down our house and garden. My wife was an avid gardener. She lost everything. We spent time at my in-laws after the fire. Our insurance was very good. They paid out the entire amount for rebuilding and for the contents. We ended up in a rental for two years which the insurance paid for. Supply line issues and a bad contractor made rebuilding difficult. It was very hard on my wife. Right at the end of the rebuilding we decided to call it a day. I moved to a rental in Ashland. I was lucky. I only had enough money to buy this mobile home.
16. I was in Vegas when the Alameda Fire occurred. I felt survivors guilt so I tried to help out in many ways, like giving money to someone to fix their truck and helping with evacuated people. I also felt that it was good that I was not "a body on the ground" getting in the way of the evacuation.
17. One uncle and 2 aunts lost their homes during the Alameda fire. Our pastor lost his home. Some of the homes had a lot of smoke damage. It was pretty bad. I asked her what they would do because of the Alameda experience and her response was that they would leave as soon as they hear anything about a fire. They waited to leave "until it was too late." Everything was blocked. People were stuck in their car in Talent and didn't know where to go. Some got moved into campers and some got help from habitat for humanity.
18. I was working in Medford when the Alameda Fire occurred. I couldn't drive home so I spent the night in my son's truck in the Albertson's parking lot. My daughter was home with her niece.
19. I had relatives who survived the Alameda Fire but they have since passed away. The Alameda Fire...so many people went through that disaster: my barber, a neighbor here. I had friends drive through the flames. It's making my cry just thinking about it. I can see some encouraging things happening now...the rebuilding and new life. It points to a positive future.
20. We lived in the Town Mobile Estates Park in Talent. My sister and her family also lost her home. We went to the Medford Walmart parking lot then we drove down to Ashland to be here (my father's home). We drove through flames on I5. We didn't expect to get that fire.
21. I knew 15 people who lost their homes because of the Alameda Fire. They moved away. These people lost their homes in different locations.
22. The Alameda Fire wind that day was weird--like a dehydrator.

23. they evacuated family, kids, horses during Alameda fire. Kevins workshop burnt down in Talent, he is a metal sculpture, had no insurance, but no lives were lost so they count their blessings.
24. I lived in Talent when Alameda fire came through, my home burnt down along with all my neighbors.
25. One cousin lost her home in Talent and my sister 3 blocks away did not. It was totally unexpected. My cousin moved in with me. Her mother passed just before the fire. Still gets really worried when we get really strong winds. It also triggers me. Family losses have made me more aware of fire. When the fires in Brookings happened I paid extra attention because I have family there. When there are fires in California I pay attention because I have cousins there. Severe thunderstorm alerts with dry lightning make me so nervous.
26. It really bothers me that the Alameda survivors just got parked--not given homes--just a place to live in. I was down south when the fire happened. I had a friend who was living with her mother, so I had a place to stay until I could come home. [She started tearing up as she said the following]: "When I got back I kept driving around to see that my friends were okay. I was really affected by the disaster I saw. Many of my friends still aren't okay. I felt guilty that I wasn't doing my part to help. But I knew that I would be in the way."
27. We lived in Medford when Alameda fire came. Our apt complex was evacuated and we had no where to go, no money for a motel and a dog. We came to Ashland to friend's house which probably wasn't that smart cause he lived a block from Alameda street.
28. I was at Safeway when the Alameda Fire started. I could see the smoke. When I had to pay some bills, I saw the devastation in Talent and Phoenix. I have lived here for 2.5 years...its hard to believe.
29. I was here for the Alameda Fire. I was in Ashland and my family lived in Talent. My family wanted me with them so I drove to Talent. It was my first time ever driving on my own. I had just gotten my license. There was tons of traffic on I5. The experience was very scary for me and my siblings. We aren't doing anything different because of the fire. Its not something I think about.
30. When the Alameda fire happened, I lived on Mountain. We were not getting any information from emergency services and were very nervous and confused. We got on the road and it was bumper to bumper and we were all waiting for the evacuation order. It was pretty scary.
31. Watching a lot of animals die during the Alameda Fire was really hard.
32. The winds during the Alameda Fire were strong. I just concentrate on keeping my family safe. I feel blessed that we were safe in our apartment during the Alameda Fire and we were not

affected. We have children under 18 years of age. English is not my first language. My first language is Polish.

33. My parents were in Medford at the time of the fire in Talent. It took them 3 hours to get through to their to their pets. Were told by police to head into the thick smoke until they hit the highway.
34. He has evacuated before. He emphasized to not go through town or landlocked areas but to get to periphery as soon as possible. He evacuated during the Alameda fire and went North on Highway 99 but was stuck at Suncrest for 4 hours and then eventually came back South through Talent. It was very stressful and not organized well in any way.
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Fire Experiences (other than the Alameda Fire)

1. Here's a story, in the 1980s in southern California we lived in a community 3 miles up a dirt road in a group of geodesic domes. The canvas covered domes were built on wood decks. One of the domes had a hole in the top that allowed a 1 gallon jug of water sitting on the deck to start the wood deck on fire. Retardant planes came over to drop retardant. Fortunately the wind was blowing away from t. other domes so only his dome burned. He lost his home. No he wasn't smoking.
2. I experienced a wildfire in the Applegate on Humbug Road. We noticed flames coming from

the barn across a field in the middle of the night through uncut grass on the neighbors land. One time when it was really smoky and we had a dry lightening storm we got really concerned because we couldn't see anything if a fire started.

3. When I was a child in San Diego I was afraid of fire because in the early 1960s we lived on an acre of land. We saw a fire approaching so my father got on the roof and wet it down under strong winds.
4. My partner went through Greenview in Northern California. He had to drive from here to there to try to save his parents home.
5. My brother stayed to fight a fire at our home in Sonoma County. They were using water until it ran out. It was a slow creeping fire that moved to firewood piled up against the house and wood fencing. My brother and others went back after being evacuated and everyone else was gone. He and friends put out spot fires and knocked down fences until they felt they had to leave. It was black with smoke. Many people did not evacuate which made me nervous. Its terrible there because there is only a single road and everyone has to use it. The smoke was so black you couldn't see anything.
6. I'm just living here for now but I did live down south a bit when a fire came near Hornbrook. Nobody knew what to do with all the cattle so me and my buddy went out and started herding them on foot. They were good girls and listened. People aren't so smart.
7. We just moved here from CA outside of Paradise CA. We been through several wildfires it's too much. My in-law lived in Paradise and their home burnt down so when they moved I was telling them you gotta pay attention to landscaping and irrigation you have to make sure your home is as ready as you can be. They didn't listen and the next fire came through and their house burnt down and they moved back to Montana
8. He has seen wildfire and the damage it can inflict. He witnessed the Hillview Fire (unknown location) and knows how quickly it spread and how devastating it was.
9. When the 2020 fires happened, my grandma lived on the McKenzie river which burned on the same day as the Alameda fire and she got a be ready fire notification before she went to bed and she laughed it off and went to bed because she has gotten this notification every year and it never amounted to anything, but because she didn't take it seriously, her neighbors had to wake her up at 2am to evacuate.

Stories of Transformation

1. My life was changed by a wildfire that burned many homes in my town. I have PTSD from the

experience. Ashland is very vulnerable and most of its citizen's are not taking action to reduce their risk.

2. My first interview with Dorothy was the first week in July. She didn't know much about how to protect her home, as a renter her landlord should keep his property up, and didn't have any fire app or signed up for Nixle. While she was not fire smart and was disconnected from her part in home safety, she was interested and willing to learn. By middle of July Dorothy signed up for fire assessment, and over the following weeks talked to her neighbors about community fire risks-condo complex of 11 units and with 1-way in and out, talked to the Gardner about possibly blowing leaves off her roof and that of her neighbors roof, and got neighbors together to talk fire and signed up for Fire Safety talk at Ashland Senior Center.
3. I am really prepared. I already lost everything when my house in Phoenix by Rays burned. I saw how nearby trees burn like candlesticks. I am really aware. I have everything of value in a lock box and emergency supplies in the car.
4. I bought this trailer a few months ago when I got a job with the I was gone most of the summer. I am really glad you came by. I look forward to learning more.
5. I was married at the time of the Alameda Fire. It burned down our house and garden. My wife was an avid gardener. She lost everything. We spent time at my in-laws after the fire. Our insurance was very good. They paid out the entire amount for rebuilding and for the contents. We ended up in a rental for two years which the insurance paid for. Supply line issues and a bad contractor made rebuilding difficult. It was very hard on my wife. Right at the end of the rebuilding we decided to call it a day. I moved to a rental in Ashland. I was lucky. I only had enough money to buy this mobile home.
6. The Alameda Fire helped us know what to do. My husband and I know where everything is in our house...we are totally prepared. I have a family member who was evacuated during the Alameda Fire. Many have no idea about how wildfires burned. I became a wildland firefighter when I was 44. I only had one kid who was still at home and I dreamed of being a wildfire firefighter when I was in college. A firefighter friend said if I don't do it now, I never will so I trained hard and backpacked in the hills. I was on a fire in 2001 in the Lake Tahoe, Eldorado NF. I was the oldest person on the crew.
7. She was very disinterested when we first spoke, saying her landlord should do outdoor debris pick up. Within 2 weeks of our initial conversation she had talked to her landlord and had talked to her landscaper and gotten leaves removed from roof. She personally removed old leaf debris from her fence line and began pulling the bark mulch away from wooden fence.

She has talked to her neighbors about wildfire safety and has spurred the clean-up of 3 roofs from leaf debris in her complex.

8. I will ask my boyfriend to help me remove old leaves and debris from my back deck.
9. Back in 2016, my sister's house in Virginia caught fire from an electrical fire. She lost everything including her two sons (6 & 10 years old). As a result, our entire family is very prepared for [a house] fire. After the fire, my sister became a volunteer with the fire department. She had a "miracle baby" since then.
10. We were in the 2020 Eagle Creek Fire up north. We lived in town and were on Level 2. As a family we have always had fire safety in mind. We made it a priority not to live on the edge of town.
11. My family just moved from Tiller to Ashland and lived through the Tiller fire, which was no more than 1 mile from our home and farm. We irrigated from Creek 24/7 during that fire and stayed put with cattle, horses and livestock we couldn't leave. That was life changing, country living is a challenge and we plan to make our Ashland home and property as wild fire safe as possible.

Landlord/Renter Relations

1. At first she was interested in having home wildfire assessment. But then decided it would be a waste of her time because her landlord would not do any recommendations so she said no to getting an assessment.
2. I'm on medical leave. I don't expect to pass the [property mgmt company] inspection so I will be rendered homeless. It's really hard to get out of once unhoused.
3. She wanted me to note that rent is getting so expensive (currently \$790/month) and will certainly go up. In addition to high rent, we have to pay for the storage shed, garbage, and laundry. If we get any kind of raise it's gone with higher expenses. The increasing electricity costs are going to us to have to move.
4. Park Management showed very little interest. They never expressed interest or appreciation for what we had done. Allen North is the Property Management Company for this park.
5. Dot used to own her home alone Nevada area. and says she was prepared as she could be outside then. she kept trees cut back bushes away from home and ground watered, with no bark. Now it's not her job to take care of outside and she's happy for less responsibility.
6. The property management company is very resistant. At first they didn't like the fire-resistant fence that was installed, now they do. The landowners won't allow removal of junipers.

because they want as much green as possible. In the park is both personal and common space. They took all the mulch away in the common areas which hurts the trees. Here the riparian areas should be handled differently than mow and blow. Clay Creek is a wetland that attracts wildlife. The landowner is not very open. They have been mismanaging the riparian areas for a long time. You should interview Herve Perrault, the onsite property manager. He has only been here since last July. I've lived in the park for 21 years.

7. all my friends rent rooms in homes where homeowner lives. the homeowner takes care of all outside planting and care. my landlord lives upstairs and i have no responsibility for any outdoor property.
8. My yard is full of weeds I hate my landlord so I don't talk to him and don't want to talk to him. I don't want to rock the boat he might up my rent if I ask for things so I will not ask.
9. My landlord is a biologist she tells me about fire resistant plants and that I should trim bushes back. but her trees need trimming they drop leaves on my roof and she does nothing. i have very low rent and don't want to ask her to do any thing extra. cause she may raise my rent. my landlord doesn't want to fix anything around my house. So I'm not going to do the work for her about pruning or landscaping. Let her do that.
10. My landlord should take care of outside. If plants shouldn't be there I don't know about that. The neighbors' trees hang over my backyard and deck. I like condo life because I don't have any exterior responsibility. Someone else does all that thinking.
11. I'm a renter and have no control about what happens outside of my house, my landlord is in charge.
12. ...said she didn't want to rock the boat w landlord as she has low rent (is HUD subsidized) her landlord is very amenable to fixing things that break inside the house but doesn't want to ask him to do anything more than he's doing. The gardener comes weekly and the complex is very neat and pretty. Landlord just spent a lot of money putting bark around entire complex, along fencing and up against condos and around trees. I can't ask him to take bark up.
13. The apartment is owned by an individual who is not responsive. This is a Section 8 apartment so they gave me one of the worst units. The fridge didn't work for a year. They had to change the hot water heater.
14. I sure hope the owners [of this property] know what they should do about wildfire. The company is Pacific Rental Properties.
15. I was here when there was an earthquake in the early 90s. Everything cracked in the corners and along the walls. Plates fell off shelves. We had to move out for the remodeling. My

apartment was not remodeled much because I've lived here 43 years. They want me to leave so they can increase the rent. My rent is really low because they can't raise it much. Williams [former landlord] put in new double pane windows and mini heat pumps.

16. As an apartment dweller, we don't have central air and the windows are not efficient. I need an air purifier.
17. The only thing I can think of that might help improve the safety of apartment dwellers is enabling people to turn on the [external] water ourselves.
18. There are no fire extinguishers in this place. It really bothers me. They are required elsewhere. It should be considered an ordinance. It's like a tinderbox here. It would behoove them because of their investment in these buildings. They should consider putting fire extinguishers in every apartment and outside in a central location that is highly visible. (Note that I did see fire extinguishers outside some of the buildings.)
19. The apartment building contains so many connected families. We can't control the smoking and property management company doesn't maintain [the landscaping]. I do the watering to keep it green. I wish there was more information on where the fire extinguishers are.
20. We live here because they allow dogs, and it's a good school for my son. Ron Deluca is a slum lord.

Builders and Landscapers

1. We are concerned that builders and landscapers may not be doing the right thing. KDA is building right now. The landscaping in the new units doesn't look fire resistant. They have their fingers in every hole so we should check it out.
2. "...from the interviews I conducted, most Ukrainian's opinions is that houses built from bricks have higher chances of surviving the fire which is not the case in our state."

Wildfire Risk Response/Prevention

1. He has brand new roof and is conscious to not have large BBQ gas container and keeps a small container.
2. We lived in the Applegate. There were a lot of rules to keep safe: clean up fuels. MHP need to mow regularly and clean up duff.
3. I grew up in Southern California so I am very aware of wildfire. We lived in the Oakland Hills in 1983 when we there was a wildfire. It was a wake up call that nobody listened to. I wasn't living there during the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire.
4. People don't know that there are ordinances. We need to post things to avoid on hot days. I

didn't lose my home but I was on backup duty to evacuate seniors from this park.

5. I'm impressed by all the people who don't know all the ways you can start a fire; such as by smoking and throwing down the cigarette; trucks dragging chains down the road. I think we need to tell people what to do if they accidentally start a fire. People in Humboldt where I lived had to be trained because there was no fire department. It made me feel very powerful.
6. My manufactured home was in Mt View Estates and the entire subdivision burnt down in Alameda fire. Those homeowners were conscious of what they planted around their homes and they still burnt. There is no real preparation for wild fire.
7. An issue to cover in the plan I guess, is it would be a good idea to have info on how fires travel through urban areas. Alameda showed us that it can happen. I observed that the fire seem to be stopped at the pear orchards. It was very different burning in Bear Creek.
8. He might be 30ish, probably does not consider himself as "socially vulnerable" but by our definition is indeed SV. He was antagonistic towards the subject of wildfire prevention for his home or place of residence.
9. As for my dad's house, I would say that we are in very high risk. Thankfully though, there's not many big trees right next to my house, so that makes it less scary. [talking about her dad's house and not her current residence] I have a question for you. How do you reduce wildfire? Uncontrolled wildfire in a town without taking away all the greenery?
10. ... to pass on to advocate for fire department and resources/ funding cut for permanent positions/ lack of funds for year round firefighting positions due to city council decisions

Wildland Fuels Management

1. The City is doing an amazing job in the watershed. I see them in town working hard to clear brush. They jumped quick on the small fires around here recently. I really appreciate what they have been doing.
2. I kept thinking that fire would get better. My dad was an environmental activist who opposed logging. Now I think logging should have been permitted because the loggers would clear the forest floor. We need better forest management. We also need to address social health issues to stop arsonists.
3. We live right next to a big gigantic dry field next to Bear Creek. There is an alley on one side but its not big enough to stop a fire.
4. It would be nice to get information on what is being done to reduce wildfire hazards on the greenway.

5. My biggest concern is a grassy pasture that hasn't been mown in years. It belongs to Mahar, a developer. A family owns it. Concerned about the blackberries in the creek that runs along the park boundary. I don't know who owns that strip of land.
6. My husband lost his home in Paradise. Three of us who live here lost our homes in Paradise. Ashland seems more fire safe because of more access routes. I think the State of Oregon does an awesome job of clearing underbrush compared to California.
7. I feel if there should be state resources to maintain the Greenway and Highway 99. The homeless population is sad...but they cause a lot of disruption and start fires.
8. I had a stucco house with very little vegetation. It was slightly up a hill but it burnt to the ground. I grew up in the Willamette Valley on a farm. Berries burned like crazy -- they are highly flammable. Why isn't anything being done about [removing the blackberries]?
9. Wanting to explore more about controlled burning. Think that the controlled burning that Native Americans did is healthier for our area. Remembering 2021-22 in Hillsboro, Oregon having to get ready for evacuation and the sky being orange.

Postfire Recovery

1. At the time of the Alameda Fire, I was living with my parents in Talent. We evacuated to Grants Pass for 2 weeks. It was a horrible financial burden because my parents are really, really poor. We relied on people who were going around the town to post information to tell us if our house was still there. When we finally came back and saw all the devastation we were [we went into shock]. We had no power for weeks and no cell service. We lost all of the food in the refrigerator because of the power outage. I don't think my parents had any insurance to deal with the losses. [Since insurance is for the home, they probably had no way to get reimbursement for the time in the hotel. This is something that needs to be addressed in the postfire recovery planning process.]
2. My father's and aunt's home got burned up north of here. My dad has since died. My aunt rebuilt in place. I don't think we decided to do anything differently because of the fire.
3. It's hard to control a space that isn't yours. Coming from the Gulf Coast and having the fire and meeting people who lost things in the fire. I saw good things come out, I saw the response of it change lives. Some of the responses changed lives and it was so much better.

Insurance and cost of living

1. I had no problem with insurance for years. I submitted a claim three times but they don't

want to pay. California Casualty provided my insurance which is hard to get for mobile homes. The lot rental rate has gone up \$100/year now. That's really hard. It was very reasonable for years.

2. Due to my need for multiple surgeries, I stored all my belongings in a storage shed in Talent. During the Alameda Fire the facility burned and I lost everything. My insurance won't pay anything because the contents were not inventoried. I had a house on Alta Ave in Ashland which I sold to buy this trailer 3 years ago. I deal with the trauma by loving nature. I live here because of the natural landscape.
3. I don't have insurance partly because of the expense.
4. It took me awhile to get my insurance because of my credit score.
5. I can't afford home insurance.
6. We weren't insured because they felt safe [in their Phoenix mobile home park]. Not enough to do much but help look for somewhere else. They moved into RV, parked out at daughter's. She spent 7-8 months to restore a home in Rogue River. Oct 2020-May 2021 in mobile home. Housing was very slim.

Capacity Limitations

1. I am ill and very scared.
2. His wife is bedridden and he has to work 14-16 hours a day at a job and caring for her and their young child.
3. My neighbor is very limited physically. We need assistance to help people when we become 70 years old and can't do it anymore. We need to address money and funding in the [CWPP].
4. I know I need a go bag and I know I can't carry it. What do I do? I hope someone can take care of me.
5. I had knee replacement surgery for both knees several years ago. After the surgery, the fire dept did a fall risk assessment of my home. They discovered that the toilet was going to fall through the floor, so my entire bathroom floor got rebuilt and I got a new toilet and baseboards. They did an amazing job looking for falling hazards.
6. My car is not working so its at a place in Medford. I have had no phone service for 3 days because they messed up on the billing.
7. This interviewee was senior, disabled, not independently able to get around, did not have a car, and is not able to easily relocate nor has any financial means to support himself.
8. He was recently homeless in the Cave Junction area and has moved to Ashland to get

cleaned up and improve his life. He likes Ashland but having only been here one month, was not familiar with it. He is disabled, senior, has had past medical issues, and it not in a good situation. He does not have transportation and is totally dependent on local friends and agencies to assist him in living here.

Miscellaneous

1. I knew the mentally ill man who started the Oak Knoll Fire. My daughter's house was 5 houses away from the 11 that burned.
2. There are too many homeless in this place. That's why we have fires. I noticed the same mentally ill guy who started the Oak Knoll Fire and he is back out lighting cooking fires.
3. I am a computer ludite and self-educated agronomist. I moved to the park in 2018 and grow organically. I like everything to do with nature. I can see you are a good person--I like your aura.
4. One of my neighbors was barbequing this summer so I called the fire dept on them. I watched the Alameda Fire burning on TV. I moved here about 1.5 years ago. I used to be homeless. I have a packed suitcase by my door. I learned about doing this from a letter from park management.
5. Definitely not interested in fire. Only here because the state made me move away from a park [in Klamath Falls?]. Has 90 days left on a housing voucher.
6. He did not have any stories or experiences to relate. He had not experienced a wildfire in his
7. area nor evacuation requirements so was not really able to expound. Again, this was a high school age male student who lives with his father in an apartment and was not really aware of our scope of inquiry. He was pleasant and cooperative, just not a big source of opinion or experiences.
8. Interviewee shared an experience where he creates fire lines at his bladesmith instructors forge while there was a wildfire. This shows that he is experienced in wildfire safety.

Appendix G

Property Manager Survey Report

Appendix G: Property Manager Survey Report

October 30 – November 17, 2024 (Survey Period)

A total of eight companies completed the survey out of 13 who were sent the survey. We estimate that the respondents represent about 80% of the Ashland property management companies' rental inventory because the companies that did not respond are relatively smaller businesses. One company manages about 71% of the residential inventory reported and 55% of the commercial unit inventory. The smallest inventory of buildings and units reported was for 2 apartment buildings, but the company did not specify the number of units in these buildings.

Property Management Company Inventories (data provided by the companies)

	Housing Type						
	Sum of Properties	Percent of Total Properties	Percent of Residential Properties	Sum of Units	Percent of Total Units	Percent of Residential Units	Missing Units Data
Apartment	184	19%	19%	3031	74%	75%	0
Commercial	27	3%		51	1%		0
CondosTownhouses	20	2%	2%	23	1%	1%	0
DuplexTriplex	139	14%	15%	276	7%	7%	1
MobileManufacturedRVHomes_InPark	6	1%	1%	6	0%	0%	0
MobileManufacturedRVSpaces_InPark	102	10%	11%	235	6%	6%	0
Other	6	1%	1%	6	0%	0%	
SingleFamily	485	50%	51%	485	12%	12%	
StudioADURooms	4	0%	0%	4	0%	0%	0
Total Properties	973	100%	103%	4117	100%	101%	1
Total Residential Properties	946	97%	100%	4066	99%	100%	1

Table 19: Property Management Company Inventories

Collectively, eight companies reported managing 973 rental buildings containing a total of 4,117 rental units. Of the total, 3% (27) are commercial buildings containing 51 commercial units. Ninety-seven percent (946) are residential buildings containing 4,066 units (see table above). The vast majority (74%) of residential units are within apartment buildings (which are defined as containing 4

or more units). Two companies manage just under 3,000 apartment units with one company managing 92% of the total reported. Several apartments only management companies are not included in these results. The second most common residential unit managed are single family homes making up about 50% of the rental buildings and 12% of rental units. Duplexes/triplexes make up 7% of the reported residential unit inventory. One percent of the residential units were identified as a condo or townhouse.

Manufactured/mobile home spaces rented out to homeowners make up 10% of the total reported managed properties inventory. One property management company owns six (<1%) of the rented mobile/manufactured homes in a park. One company chose "Other" to tell us that they manage "vacation rentals" but they did not specify the type of living unit. There is one duplex/triplex "unit" that cannot be accounted for.

Three companies reported managing a total of 27 commercial properties for a total of 51 units. Regarding the commercial buildings, one company manages 74% of them, while another company reported managing 14.8% of the commercial building inventory; however, within 4 buildings they reported managing 28 units.

Renter's Insurance Requirements

Based on all responses, renters' insurance is not required for renters of apartments, condos, townhouses, duplexes, or triplexes. One company says "it depends" for commercial properties, but they provided no details.

Single Family Residences (SFR)

- Renter's insurance is required for some renters living in single-family homes that charge \$2,000 or more per month.
- It was reported by two companies that it is not required for renters of SFRs costing less than \$2,000/month, and two other companies say it is required. One company stated that they "just started this [requirement] for new occupants"
- A company that rents single-family homes said it depends on whether the property owner requires it. They also manage 1 or 2 Studio/ADUs and said the same thing—it's up to the owner.

Mobile/Manufactured Park Spaces (MHS)

- Two mobile/manufactured home parks who manage the rental of spaces, require the homeowner to have insurance according to the occupants.

Risk Reduction Requirements in the lease

No risk reduction requirements are specified in any of the property type leases however one property management company is “instituting new requirements” but did not provide additional information. Below is what the survey respondents provided to describe who is responsible for landscaping and the activities prescribed by housing type.

Landscaping Responsibilities: a) “it depends...” & b) prescribed activities

SFRs	Dup/Triplex	Condo/ Twnh	Apartment	MH Park	Studio/ ADU
a) Each owner makes their own decision; b) Tree trimming, grass cutting, weeds etc.	Hired contractor; general landscaping	Hired contractor; HOA	Hired contractor; general landscaping		Hired contractor; general landscaping
a) Each property is different. b) Its property specific but we keep trees off roofs, dead limbs and trees removed.					
b) Cut grass, trim shrubs, manicure trees, remove debris.	a) Hired contractor; b) Cut grass, trim shrubs, manicure trees,		Hired contractor	Hired contractor; Cut grass, trim shrubs, manicure trees,	

	remove debris.			remove debris.	
a) We recommend to all property owners that they pay for yard care services and to perform seasonal maintenance. Some owners, however, opt out of these services choosing to make landscaping a tenant responsibility. This decision is almost always a financial consideration rather than one based on safety foundation see. b) Gutter cleaning; seasonal leaf cleaning; tree removal	Same as SFR	Hired contractor; Same as SFR	Hired contractor; Same as SFR	Same as SFR	
	a) hired contractor;		a) hired contractor; b)		

	b) mowing, edging, blowing.		mowing, edging, blowing.		
a) Most of my owners do not want more expenses so they leave it up to the tenants. b) Trimming of trees, hedges, mowing.					
			Hired contractor; b) no landscaping near the buildings we took out all junipers and bushes up next to the building we all new plants were using the afr guide to non flammable landscaping plants. we keep a line of gravel along the back side		

			of our buildings		
a)Most are handled by a landscaper, but some of the single family dwellings, the tenants are responsible for the landscaping. b) Trimming of trees, hedges, mowing		Hired contractor; Usually the association maintains.	Hired contractor; b) Common area landscaping, pruning, tree work	Hired contractor for common areas. Tenants responsible for their space	

It depends on owner requirements but a contractor usually does the maintenance which covers standard clean up next to buildings and [in] gutters		It depends on owner requirements but a contractor usually does the maintenance	It depends on owner requirements		No, but it depends on owner requirements
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Table 20: Risk Reduction Responsibility

Risk Reduction Challenges

All but one (87.5%) of the property management companies (co) identified cost as a limiting factor to reducing wildfire risk.

Cost	Lack of knowledge or resources	Tenant cooperation	Landscaping contractor limitations
7 co.	4 co.	5 co.	3 co.

Table 21: Risk Reduction Challenges

Challenges with tenant cooperation were identified by 62.5% of the companies, lack of knowledge about what to do and the resources to do it was identified by 50% of the companies. Several of the property management companies identified all listed challenges and two companies provided additional information on the challenges they have experienced:

- It's hard to get some of these owners to respond or want to spend money on the rental especially when tenants have more rights than the owners.
- Regulatory or Legal Constraints: its difficult “navigating local ordinances, codes, or restrictions related to fire-safe improvements or changes.”

The lowest ranked challenge (37.5%) identified was “landscaping contractor limitations.” There is an opportunity here to make a big difference. We know from experience that: a) most landscaping “maintenance workers” are not adequately trained to do fire-reluctant landscaping, b) many professional landscaping service providers are “set-in-their-ways” with few exceptions, and c) most importantly—property owners (the clients) are more interested in saving many than investing in wildfire-reluctant landscaping. A wildfire-reluctant landscaping training and certification program could dramatically improve standard landscaping practices on rental properties—potentially making it possible for ~47% of the city’s residents who are renters to have fire reluctant landscaping around their homes.

Preferred Risk Reduction Options

Routinely providing wildfire risk reduction information recommended by the city of Ashland in tenant welcome packages.	Adding best practices for landscaping maintenance to reduce wildfire risk in lease agreements.	Using standardized language for fire-resistant landscaping in landscaping maintenance contracts.	Requiring landscaping design, installation, and maintenance contractors you work with to receive city-sponsored wildfire risk reduction training.	Requesting a free, no-obligation wildfire risk assessment for the exterior of your properties every five years.
6 companies	5 companies	6 companies	5 companies	5 companies

Table 22: Risk Reduction Options

All risk reduction options proposed received 5 or more thumbs up. Two companies said they would seriously consider all options presented. These results indicate that all risk reduction options listed are worth seriously considering.

Do you do anything differently based on recent experience with wildfires?

Three property management companies responded to this question. One of the companies let us know that they had lost homes in the Alameda Fire, but no homes were lost during this fire in Ashland.

The company did not go on to say that they have made any changes to their business practices because of losses.

One company stated that they are doing “new landscaping” applying rock, etc. and are applying “metal siding” but did not specify any details about which buildings they are treating differently.

Another company said that they are changing “how we handle notifications to tenants” and “insurance requirements.”

These changes are limited to two (25%) companies.

Summary of Findings for Property Management Company Rentals:

Housing Type:

- ~97% are residential buildings and 3% are commercial buildings containing 51 rental units
- ~50% of the residential rental buildings are single-family residences that presumably provide housing to 12% of rental households
- ~19% of the residential rental buildings are apartments that presumably house ~75% of renter households
- ~15% of the residential rental buildings are duplexes or triplexes that house 7% of the renter households
- ~2% of the residential rental buildings are condos/townhouses that presumably house 1% of renter households
- ~1% (6 units) of rented mobile/manufactured homes are owned by a property management company
- 235 mobile/manufactured homes park spaces are leased out through two companies representing about 6% of the residential housing stock.

Renters’ Insurance Required in the Lease:

- Does not appear to be required for apartment, condo/townhouse, or duplexes/triplexes tenants
- Renter’s insurance appears to be required in the lease for some higher rate single-family rentals

Landscaping Responsibilities:

- No risk reduction requirements are specified in the property leases, however one property management company is “instituting new requirements” but did not provide text.
- Landscaping responsibilities vary but based on qualitative data, it appears that most rentals hired contractors. For single-family homes the requirement is largely determined by the property owner. One company insists that a hired contractor be specified in the lease agreement for single-family homes.

Risk Reduction Challenges Chosen by the Property Management Companies Who Responded:

- 87.5% (7/8) selected “Cost” as a limiting factor
- 62.5 % (5/8) identified lack of tenant cooperation
- 50% (4/8) identified lack of knowledge or resources
- 37.5% (3/8) Landscaping contractor limitations was identified by ~18%
- One company said, “It’s hard to get some of these owners to respond or want to spend money on the rental especially when tenants have more rights than the owners.”
- One company cited regulatory or legal constraints: saying its difficult “navigating local ordinances, codes, or restrictions related to fire-safe improvements or changes.”

Risk Reduction Options the Respondents would Consider:

- 75% (6/8) selected: (1) “Routinely providing wildfire risk reduction information recommended by the city of Ashland in tenant welcome packages;” and (2) “Using standardized language for fire-resistant landscaping in landscaping maintenance contracts.”
- 62.5 (5/8) selected: (1) “Adding best practices for landscaping maintenance to reduce wildfire risk in lease agreements.” (2) “Requiring landscaping design, installation, and maintenance contractors you work with to receive city-sponsored wildfire risk reduction training.” And (3) “Requesting a free, no-obligation wildfire risk assessment for the exterior of your properties every five years.”

DRAFT Recommendations based on these findings:

- Develop a method for communicating with and sampling property management companies and the owners of the properties they manage by 2027.
- Secure the resources to assess wildfire risk around all
- Secure the resources to establish a program that enables the City of Ashland to support a

wildfire risk assessment for the exterior of all rental properties every five years.

- Collaboratively develop, customize (by housing type), and publish a “risk reduction best practices” brochure to be given to all tenants occupying units managed by the property management companies. Plan to review and update the information every five years or more often if warranted.
- Require property management companies to provide new tenants wildfire preparedness (including renters insurance advice) and home risk reduction information in a “welcome” package that is physically attached or linked to the lease.
- Require property management companies to sponsor annual training of the landscaping service providers they use and to employee only certified providers.
- Develop a searchable database and directory for City-sponsored trained landscaping service providers.

Appendix H

Rental Owners Survey Report

Appendix H: Rental Owners Survey Report

Ashland's Private Rental Property Owners Survey Results

October 23 – November 15, 2024 (Survey Period)

More than 2000 postcards were mailed to potential landlords (rental property owners); 22 of the respondents self-verified that they manage their rental properties. The response rate was very low at ~1%; however, the response rate is hard to validate because we don't know for certain how many of the addressees who were sent the postcards inviting them to participate are renting out their properties. All we know, based on Jackson County public tax records, is that the property address is not the same as the property owner's address—an indication (we surmised) that the owner likely does not occupy the property. One conclusion we can make is that to monitor change over time we need to figure out how to create a better method for collecting data from independently managed rental property owners.

	Housing Type				Missing Units Data
	Sum of Properties	Percent of Total Properties	Sum of Units	Percent of Total Units	
Apartment	1	2%	1	2%	0
CondosTownhouses	2	5%	2	5%	0
DuplexTriplex	3	7%	4	9%	0
MobileManufacturedRVHomes					0
MobileManufacturedRVHomes_InPark	0	0%	0	0%	0
MobileManufacturedRVHomes_NotInPark	0	0%	0	0%	0
MobileManufacturedRVSpaces					1
MobileManufacturedRVSpaces_InPark	0	0%	0	0%	0
MobileManufacturedRVSpaces_NotInPark	1	2%	0	0%	0
Other	0	0%	0	0%	
SingleFamily	22	50%	22	50%	0
StudioADURooms	15	34%	15	34%	1
Total	44	100%	44	100%	2

Table 23: Rental Property Owner Inventory

While the results do not adequately represent the inventory of private rental properties or their owners, they provide some insights for planning purposes. For example, half (50%) are single family homes and one-third (34%) are studio/ADUs/or one or more rooms in a single-family residence. Duplexes and triplexes make up 7% of the reported inventory and Condos/townhouses 5%. One respondent said they have one unit in an apartment building, and another rents a mobile home space not in a mobile/manufactured home park. (See table above).

Lease Requires Renter's Insurance

Renters insurance is required for ~43% of the privately management rental units, with the highest number being associated with single family homes (41%) and studios/ADUs/rooms (62%) requiring renter's insurance.

One duplex/triplex owner said they advise "the tenant to buy renter's insurance, but she may not be able to afford it." Another owner who rents out two single-family homes, two Studio/ADU/room units/ and one duplex or triplex said, "it depends on whether the rental is single-family home, condo, or ADU."

Lease Requires Risk Reduction by the Tenant

It was reported by 3 (13.6%) single-family homeowners that they include risk reduction text in their leases. The language provided by the respondents follows:

- "Gardens must be cut back seasonally, no outdoor storage. Firewood storage in approved location. Fireplace use only during November-April."
- "Promptly reporting to the landlord any new or merging hazards or risks, such as wildfire hazards."
- "Yard debris and keeping up the landscape"

Risk Reduction/Landscaping Responsibilities

The type of rental unit affects the "risk reduction and maintenance" responsibilities. Risk reduction (primarily landscaping) is the responsibility of the tenant for 18% of the rental properties reported. Single-family home tenants are most often given that responsibility though in some cases the

responsibility is shared with the property owner. Twenty-five (25) percent of the property owners assume responsibility and contractors are hired for 39% of the properties, including 41% of single-family homes. The property owners claim landscaping responsibility for 33% of studio/ADU/room rental properties.

	Risk Reduction Maintenance							
	Landlord	Landlord Percent of Property	Tenant	Tenant Percent of Properties	Hired Contractor	Contractor Percent of Properties	It depends....	It Depends... Percent of Properties
Apartment	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
CondosTownhouses	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%
DuplexTriplex	1	33%	0	0%	2	67%	0	0%
MobileManufacturedRVSpaces	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
SingleFamily	5	23%	6	27%	9	41%	2	9%
StudioADURooms	5	33%	1	7%	4	27%	5	33%
Total	11	25%	8	18%	17	39%	8	18%

Table 24: Risk Reduction Maintenance by Dwelling Type

Who is responsible for specific landscaping activities for single-family homes:

Tenant:

- Keeping leaves and debris picked up and trimming tree branches up off the ground
- Gardens must be cut back seasonally, grass cut bi-monthly, electric mower and trimmer provided. Automatic irrigation around building perimeter
- Most of the everyday maintenance is done by the tenant. Activities: Sweeping the roof of pine needles, cleaning gutters, trimming back the neighbors' bushes/trees that pose a hazard to my property.
- Cutting low branches and maintaining weeds and shrubbery growth
- Watering, mowing, leaf and brush removal
- Mowing & weeding. Keeping plant life off house and fences
- Watering, raking, cleaning gutters, pruning. (tenant and landlord)
- Trimming trees, bushes and picking up leaves/debris

Property Owner:

- I do general landscape maintenance a minimum of 2x a year. I also hire a local arborist to

trim the trees when needed. Sending an annual letter to the HOA of the property that backs up to my property, asking them to maintain the very large bushes/trees that pose a risk to my property

- Yard maintenance
- Tree trimming
- brush and excess bush and tree growth removal
- Watering, raking, cleaning gutters, pruning. (tenant and landlord)

Hired Contractor:

- Prompt removal of dead vegetation, maintenance of irrigation to keep plants healthy, trimming of low branches, trimming or removal of vegetation close to structures.
- trees trimmed, leaves removed, trees removed as necessary, etc.
- continual weed and yard debris cutting and removal, keeping plants sparse and in clusters, irrigation provided
- Weed and grasses control, all trees trimmed to 8', vegetation limited or removed 10' from homes/buildings. Pine needles and fall foliage raked, blown and removed.
- The HOA manages these decisions. We are a fireside community

Who is responsible for specific landscaping activities for Studio/ADU/Rooms:

Tenant:

- Removing leaves and debris from property and trimming branches high off the ground
- One of our studios we do the landscaping maintenance, and one our tenant is responsible for.

Property Owner:

- No organic matter within 5 feet of house, no trees within 25 feet
- Yard maintenance
- One of our studios we do the landscaping maintenance, and one our tenant is responsible for.
- Bushes branches off roofs, no piles

Hired Contractor:

- Mowing lawn, trimming up trees

- keeping the area clear of landscape debris, minimal planting, amble (sic.) watering
- HOA manages these decisions

Who is responsible for specific landscaping activities for condos, townhouses, duplexes, and triplexes:

Tenant:

- Grass must be mowed and landscaping watered

Property Owner:

- Grass and brush and tree growth removal

Hired Contractor:

- lawn mowing, tree and shrub trimming, changing out higher risk plants (juniper) for low fire risk ones
- keeping the area clear of landscape debris, minimal planting, amble (sic.) watering
- Removal of bushes next to rental

Wildfire Risk Reduction Challenges

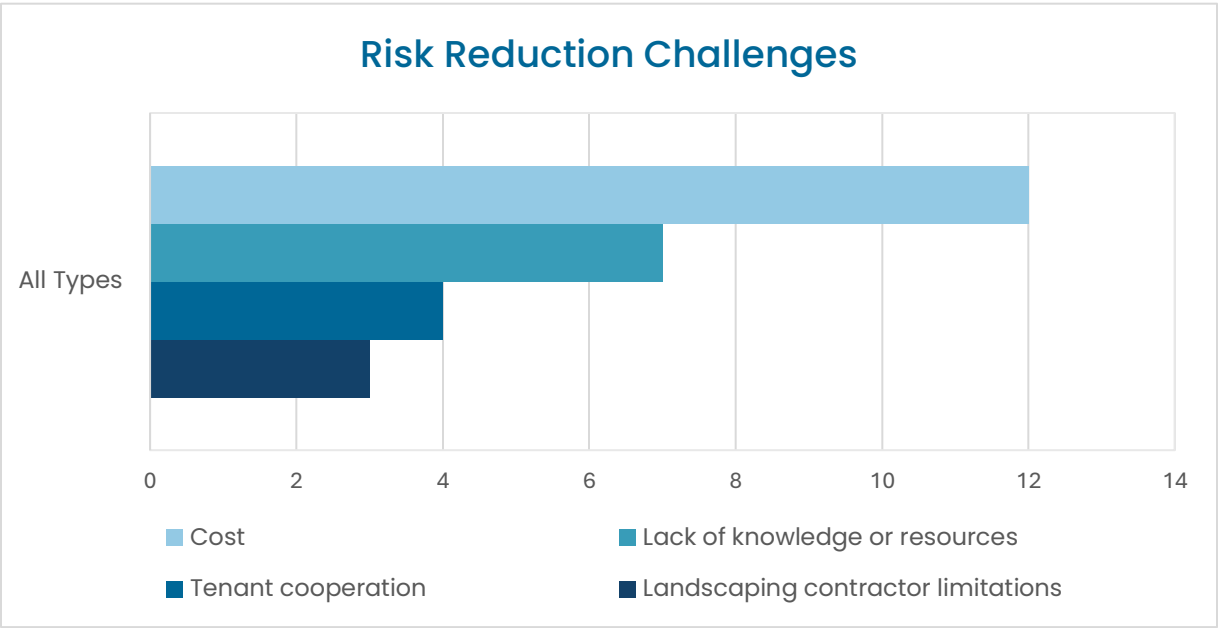


Figure 28: Risk Reduction Challenges

A pick list of four possible “challenges” to reducing the wildfire risk on rental properties was presented to the survey respondents who could pick any or all of them. A total of five people did not respond. This could mean that they do not have those challenges, or they preferred not to answer. Only one of those five identified something else—“It’s a constant battle but necessary and it’s the law to maintain a safe property.”

“Cost” was selected by 60% of 17 respondents. Lack of knowledge was identified by seven (35%) and inadequate tenant cooperation received four marks (20% of the responses). Landscaping contractor limitations was identified by three (17.6%) of the respondents.

The challenges by housing type are shown in the figure to the right. “Cost” to reduce wildfire risk was identified for all housing types. Lack of knowledge about what to do was identified by all housing types except for the one person who said they manage an apartment rental which is taken care of by a hired contractor. Tenant cooperation and landscaping contractors’ limitations were identified as challenges for single-family homes and duplexes/triplexes.

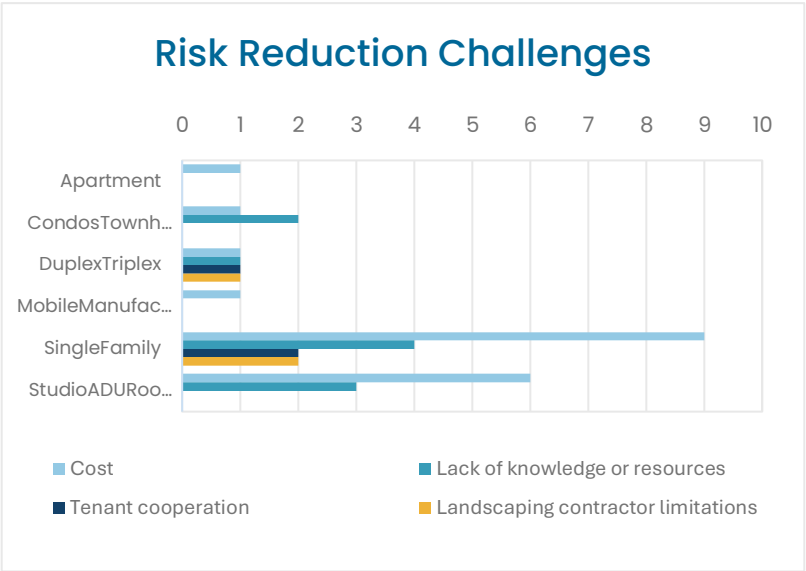


Figure 29: Risk Reduction Challenges

Wildfire Risk Reduction Options

Out of 22 respondents, 20 completed the pick list question proposing four risk reduction options for consideration.

Based on the results, all five of the listed options are worth considering. The least popular option is “requiring landscaping design, installation, and maintenance contractors to receive city-sponsored wildfire risk reduction training” which 8 out of 20 (40%) respondents checked.

The most popular (80%) was the ability to “request a free, no-obligation wildfire risk assessment for the exterior of your properties every five years.” Seventy-five percent (75%) liked the idea of adding language about “best practices” in lease agreements; and 70% would consider providing information in tenant welcome packages.

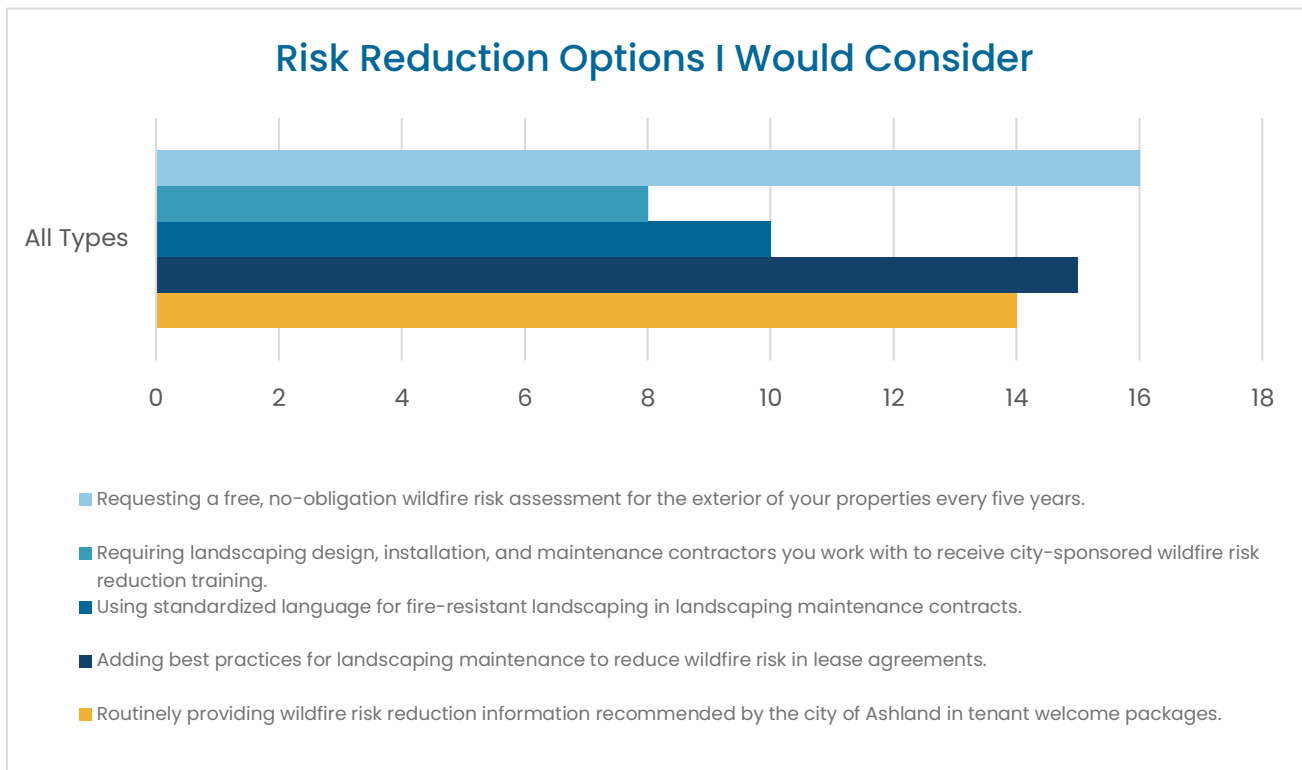


Figure 30: Risk Reduction Options I would Consider

Risk Reduction Activities Recommended by the Respondents:

- “Developing neighborhood-wide coordination and collaboration to reduce wildfire risks for the neighborhood as a whole”
- “Getting government support for wildfire risk reduction by individuals and neighborhoods”
- “Getting government action to reduce wildfire risks on government owned lands in and near the city”
- “I had a risk reduction done on my own property which Ashland would have included financial assistance to implement, but you wanted control of my landscaping for 10 years. Property owners will never agree to attached conditions like that. So don’t attach conditions.”

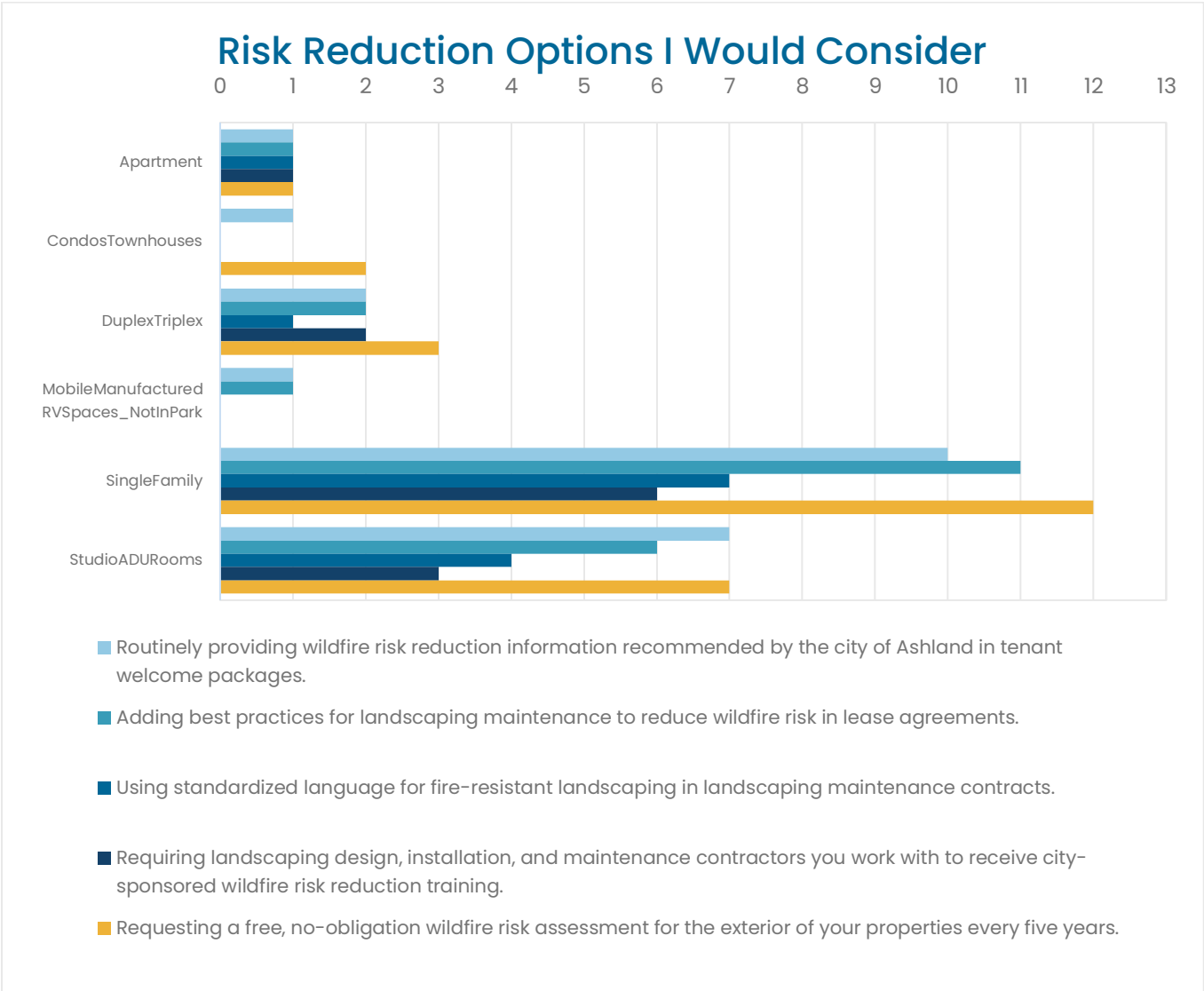


Figure 31: Risk Reduction Options I would Consider by Residence Type

Comments/Complaints about Risk Reduction Experiences:

- “It’s a constant battle but necessary and it’s the law to maintain a safe property”
- “Neighbor cooperation! HOA does not maintain the large bushes growing in the wetland area behind my house. Other neighbors planted [L]eland cypress trees along our shared fence line even though they were advised not to by a firefighter. I had to spend my \$ trimming their trees!”

- “I applied for a grant through the city for wildfire mitigation and never received a response. I reached out multiple times to no avail. Being more proactive with this offering from the city would be incredibly helpful.”

“Closing Thoughts—What did we miss?”

One respondent provided a closing comment which was: “I really think its unfair that I have to maintain my neighbor’s landscaping.”

Summary of Findings for Privately Management Rentals:

Note that the data set is too small to be highly representative.

Housing Type:

- Slightly more than over half are single-family residences
- A third are studio/ADU/rooms in a house
- ~10% are duplexes/triplexes
- ~5% are condominiums

Renters’ Insurance Required in the Lease:

- 41% of tenants in single family homes
- 62% studios/ADUs/rooms
- Recommended but not required by some owners

Landscaping Responsibilities:

- Landscaping does not appear to be a component of most leases
- Dependent on housing type
- Type of work prescribed is general maintenance: moving, debris removal, and pruning (though there are exceptions)
- Property owners maintain ~31% of the rental units
- Hired contractors maintain ~46% of the rental units
- Tenants have responsibility for ~23% of the rental units

Risk Reduction Challenges:

- Depends somewhat on housing type
- “Cost” was selected by 60%
- Lack of knowledge was identified by 35%
- Inadequate tenant cooperation was marked by 20%
- Landscaping contractor limitations was identified by ~18%

Risk Reduction Options the Respondents would Consider:

- Varies somewhat by housing type
- 80% (16/20) supported “request a free, no-obligation wildfire risk assessment for the exterior of your properties every five years.”
- 75% (15/20) liked the idea of adding language about “risk reduction best practices” in lease agreements
- 70% (14/20) supported providing information in tenant welcome packages
- 40% (8/20) would consider requiring contractors to have city-sponsored training.
- One respondent suggested focusing on neighborhood-wide collaboration.
- Two respondents suggested government involvement: a) direct support, and b) addressing risks “on government owned lands in and near the city”
- One respondent strongly opposed “attaching conditions” to incentives.

DRAFT Recommendations based on these findings:

- Develop a sustainable means for identifying and sampling private rental property owners who have rentals in Ashland and implement by 2028.
- Secure the resources to establish a program that enables the City of Ashland to support a free, no-obligation wildfire risk assessment for the exterior of all rental properties every five years.
- Collaboratively develop, customize (by housing type), and publish a “risk reduction best practices” brochure to be given to all tenants by the rental property’s owner. Plan to review and update the information every five years or more often if warranted.

- Encourage private rental property owners to give all new tenants wildfire preparedness and home risk reduction information in a “welcome” package that is physically attached or linked to the lease.
- Secure the resources to establish landscaping service provider training at least twice a year. One of the courses should be designed for landscape designers, arborists, and other professionally certified service providers and the second course should be directed to landscaping maintenance workers. A bilingual option is also recommended.
- Develop a searchable database and directory for City-sponsored trained landscaping service providers.

Appendix I

CWPP Public Comments and Responses to DRAFT

Appendix I: CWPP Public Comments and Responses to DRAFT

Table of Contents, Content Accessibility, Document Layout, and Survey Format	
Very clear, easy to follow	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
It is not clear how to print information entered when filling out this form, or to save it to a personal file for later access after it has been submitted.	Thank you for your comment. We are sorry for the inconvenience. It sounds like you were hoping to download a copy of your submitted comments. While our system wasn't set up to automatically send responses back to participants, please know that all public input has been recorded and included in this full document. If you'd like to review your comments or confirm they were received, we'd be happy to assist.
Fine	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
My disclaimer is that I did NOT read the CWPP and I answered the questions anyway. I wanted to weigh in and I was not willing to figure out how to access the CWPP. If each question was connected (one click away) to the specific question being asked, it would help.	Thank you for commenting despite technical challenges.
It would be MUCH easier to answer these questions, if the access to the specific content were included. I'm not willing to figure out how to do	Thank you for commenting despite technical challenges.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

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this. Some of us ARE not nimble in this area and this must've been an oversight.	
Table of Contents is very clear and helpful.	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
Very well organized -- numbering each section and sub-section would help, like 1.1.2.3, 9.3.13, etc.	Thank you for commenting. We considered numbering subsections but decided not to.

Executive Summary (Plan, Vision, Goals, & Priorities)	
laid out well; understandable	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
Time and resources for implementing all the desirable changes are limited, so triage must be used and priorities set. What has to be done first to make the biggest differences in reducing risk at the earliest time?	Great question! There is a lot to be accomplished in all facets of wildfire risk reduction. We assume based on how you phrased the question, that your interest is directed at the built environment. The starting point for making the “biggest differences” for all of Ashland is to reduce structural ignitability of all Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs) identified in Appendix D. A triage process was used to prioritize HVRA treatments. We used four social value indices to score HVRAs. For additional details refer to Section 3 of the CWPP.
I wonder whether the vision includes a change to city regulations to ALLOW goats and/or sheep to be utilized to eat unwanted grasses,	The City has explored the use of goats and sheep for fuels management. There are numerous drawbacks and

Executive Summary (Plan, Vision, Goals, & Priorities)	
weeds and brush. This is a viable option and in some ways more "sustainable" than using gas powered and even electric powered machinery to reduce blackberries and other "weeds". It also supports new job opportunities for people with these animals.	challenges including cost, predator control, impact to native species, and effectiveness. Nonetheless, it's still worth considering further for a possible pilot project. We are not aware of a local business offering this service specifically for fuels reduction who has a successful track record.
helpful	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
Very easy to read. Thank you.	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
I think the plan vision is good but the executive summary does not seem to share enough urgency and falls a little flat. For example, all of page 18 explains how to navigate the plan...and the analogy of building a home and blueprint didn't motivate me. Is there a way to share an analogy that is more motivating 'the plan is blueprint for saving your own home and reducing the wildfire risk to your neighbor's home and the community.' Also, I am concerned there is not enough simplicity built-in if the plan needs a whole page to explain how to navigate the plan, can it be simplified more? In the plan and vision, this would be a great time to add the voices of people who answered the surveys for the plan development either past or present. I liked how the goals were boiled down to five main objectives; can there be a few	Thank you for your thoughtful and constructive feedback. We appreciate your recognition of the plan's vision and the clarity of the five main objectives. Your suggestions around increasing urgency, simplifying navigation, and refining analogies are well taken and will help shape future engagement materials. While significant structural changes are beyond the scope of this final draft, we will look for opportunities to clarify key elements—especially where simplification could enhance communication and support implementation. Your idea to elevate community voices and distill complex content is especially valuable

Executive Summary (Plan, Vision, Goals, & Priorities)

more simplified sharing of the plan details for the initiatives and goals? It was confusing when there was 40 goals, 44 challenge statements and 222 initiatives. Can any of these be distilled more? If some of these were simplified, it could help in tracking the results overtime, prioritizing limited funding and sharing the urgency with potential investors (both the citizens, state partners and other funding sources).

as we develop summary tools, progress tracking, and outreach efforts beyond the plan's publication.

Overview of the Planning Process

The Ashland CWPP process appears to be particularly focused on the geographic boundaries of the City of Ashland. I was hoping to see more discussion about interaction with Jackson County, as the risks and needed mitigation measures span across these boundaries. Also, how are federally-owned lands in the nearby area being brought into the planning processes?

In general, what I think is needed is regional emergency preparedness and response planning. Fires are going to affect the entire region.

Thank you for the comment. Past efforts to work with Jackson County have been challenging (such as enforcing weed abatement outside the City), though working individually with property owners outside the City has proven successful and continues through City funding and grants as available. Part of the CWPP strategy is mitigating grassland fuels east of Ashland to prevent an east-wind fire from entering the City. This will necessitate working with owners outside the City limits. Federal lands are addressed in the chapter on the Ashland Watershed, with the assumption that the AFR

	project will continue to be maintained through prescribed burning, which has had ongoing support from the City via funding and public information.
The plan needs to take into account all the population groups present in Ashland, not just permanently housed residents. These include * Students who are in Ashland part time (e.g., at Southern Oregon University) * Visitors/tourists * People working in Ashland who live elsewhere in the Rogue Valley * Homeless people	In the economic stability chapter visitors and tourist needs are mentioned as an initiative; commuting workers are covered in the current draft as a subtopic in evacuation and employee health. SOU students are addressed in the City's evacuation planning by a joint emergency management agreement. The CWPP addresses new initiatives, and since this is ongoing it isn't fully described in the plan...but it is being addressed. Homeless, or unhoused, people are addressed in the CWPP, and due to multiple comments on that topic we plan to add more to address that concern, including increased smoke exposure prevention recommendations and more resources to allow emergency alerts to be delivered to the unhoused when a fire breaks out.
The plan needs to take into account changing interactions between institutions, such as different branches of government (city, county, state, federal). Note that the current national administration is working to shift responsibilities away from the federal level. This has major	Though we recognize that federal support for wildfire programs is becoming more challenging, the CWPP is not meant to be a political document. It's the responsibility of the Mayor and Council to direct

implications for the future availability of grants and other sources of funding.	communications to our federal Congressional delegation regarding funding and policy issues.
Funding is going to be dependent on general economic conditions. Right now the indications are that the U.S. will be entering a recession due to trade policies and other factors. Government programs relevant to community resilience, such as FEMA and NOAA, are being cut back greatly or even potentially eliminated.	This may or may not transpire in a manner that limits funding for wildfire programs, but in either case the CWPP is not the venue to address these concerns. The Mayor and Council can contact Congress on behalf of the City. It is important to note that the City passed a local funding option for Wildfire Risk Reduction that will begin in July of 2025, creating a reliable and local funding source for CWPP implementation, regardless of federal policies and economic challenges.
helpful	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
Incredibly comprehensive process with a very difficult and complex topic!	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
I felt like [the overview section] could be abbreviated and added to an appendix.	Thank you for your constructive feedback.

Looking Back – two decades of programs

The city, the council, staff and various committees/ commissions/ landscape businesses do not speak in ONE voice about WHAT plant/tree/mulch choices are best for fire mitigation. This is SOOOO	Thank you for highlighting this important concern. We agree that consistent messaging is critical, especially when it comes to fire-safe landscaping. While multiple
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confusing to the public. A possible approach could be 3 best choices and include BAD choices AND what to do if one is renting and landlords/neighbors are uncooperative.	perspectives exist, we recognize the need to present clear, unified guidance that includes top recommended choices, what to avoid, and practical options for renters or those facing limited control over their surroundings. Your suggestions will inform our efforts to create more accessible and actionable materials for all residents moving forward.
The fire took out a lot of people's homes and businesses, so obviously more needs to be done	Tragically yes, we agree that more needs to be done and hope that by implementing this plan we will prevent Ashland from experiencing the impacts of catastrophic wildfire.
Fine	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
Good overview	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
useful history.	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
It seemed like there was still an opportunity to abbreviate parts of this section. Also, there is a disconnect between what was explained to be happening now and the path forward. For example, if there has been an average of 33 home assessments done every year since 2006; which is around 9% of the 7000 structures in Ashland, what is the estimated need going forward? If the vision is to transform Ashland for	Thank you for your thoughtful observations. We appreciate your call for greater clarity and connection between past accomplishments and the scale of work ahead. You're absolutely right that clearly stating the estimated need—such as the number of home assessments required annually to meet long-term goals—would strengthen the narrative and sense of

90% reduction, how many assessments need to be done every year? ***My numbers could be off here :	direction. While some sections have been condensed, we will take another look at how we can better align current progress with the path forward in future versions or supporting materials.
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Leaping Forward –need to do much more

In addition to fire safety, Ashland has a number of major challenges facing its governance over the next decade or two, particularly involving budgets and revenue. Disaster preparedness is a high priority, but by no means the only pressing issue. How can the City manage its limited staff resources in a balanced manner to address these multiple needs? How can leadership attention be best allocated?	It will be a challenge that the entire community will have to face. An important piece of the CWPP is that it involves the entire community, not just the City government. Success involves everyone playing a part, including many organizations in the community, businesses, non-profits, etc...and most all institutions are facing budget challenges. We will all have to navigate these issues together, the City included.
First of all, every city needs to have no barrier housing so there isn't so many risks of homelessness out in the woods. It is a human right for everyone to use the resources to be housed. People don't get to be	We recognize that homelessness is a complex and multi-faceted issue that won't be solved through addressing any one of the symptoms that we see as a result of

unhoused alone and won't get off alone. Many are unrentable and unemployable. The only solution is housing first. Every organization that can afford it, can buy a house and make it a part of a no barrier housing program. The city can start helping pay for it by using some of the hospitality tax. That makes sense doesn't it, to use it for the unhoused. You can contact me at 831 346 2316. I am developing this program. Also, since human pollution is causing these problems, the city needs to be more aggressive with the solutions which is more water access points, a plastic container ban while also instituting a replacement program (sustainability consulting and management) so hire a sustainability consulting and management person, provide those services to the whole city to help transition off of fossil fuels (again I can help with this. Call me), create no car downtown city events to increase people learning to do without cars. (it literally will put Ashland more on the map and increase tourism to do so), create a goal to make Ashland a no pollution zone for anyone tourists as well. So you will need to hire or get a volunteer (easy to find one) to help assist tourists into having no pollution transportation avenues. This means that the city finds a grant to purchase city van's, golf carts, electric bikes, and etc. to make no pollution travel at no cost to the tourists. Letting our lands, air, and water be polluted means we are letting the value decrease. This is not okay or good city planning to	homelessness (fire risk, pollution, crime, etc...) or the various city departments, commissions, and organizations that work on the issues. The CWPP is not the correct venue to address the root causes and solutions to homelessness, which are being addressed by the City's Housing and Human Service Commission and through ongoing work by OHRA and the City's emergency shelter upgrades that are underway at 2200 Ashland St. We plan to work with partners to make the unhoused safer from fires and to lessen the chances of fires starting because of homelessness. Water availability is a challenge, and water is available at every structure already. We are studying how to best use water for firefighting and prevent water system failure. Encouraging volunteers to fight a major urban conflagration rather than evacuate safely is a huge liability to citizens and the City that could lead to loss of life.
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keep allowing this. Also start managing the costs of rents etc. in some way. It can't be that businesses fail here because they keep raising the prices. There has to be some type of management for the cost of living. Allowing property owners to create an epidemic of homelessness and family instability is not ok. Create sprinkler systems that are smart and can go around things and are accessible at certain points in the city so it will never go down. do this throughout the woods etc. where possible. Make sure to be watering the woods to keep it from being a fire hazard. So instead of saying, oh there is a fire hazard, we always prevent the fire hazard by figuring out how to water the woods. Catching water is a good way to create reserves. There needs to be more water reserves throughout the area. There needs to be more volunteer training and sign agreements not to sue if they get hurt. Training people and getting more water hose dispersal areas is what needs to be done where the neighbors can actually run them and have hoses on hand. For example, there is a hose station point every 20 houses or so with a water connection that can be used when and if they have to. They are all trained to do this.	
The City should stop issuing permits to build more houses above the TID. Numerous scientific studies have established that most fires occur in the urban-wild lands interface because people are careless. This	The City follows State of Oregon land use laws and policy that allows construction by zoning type. Ashland designated the entire City as a Wildfire Hazard Zone in 2018. All new construction must meet stringent standards for defensible

area is fire habitat: manzanita seeds require fire/smoke to germinate. Why does the city continue to approve construction in this danger zone? telling those of us with homes in the flats to change our gardens to gravel will not stop a fire destroying our beloved city. Forbidding more homes in the fire habitat will. HTTPS://www.usfa.fema.gov/wui/what-is-the-wui/	space and fire-resistant construction. This is the maximum level of precaution being taken by any city in Oregon. Implementing fire codes on existing construction is a goal in the CWPP and will be done strategically considering fire risk as a prioritizing factor. The Alameda Fire did not burn in hills or forests, but impacted thousands of homes and businesses "in the flats."
laid out future situations to deal with well	Thank you for the positive feedback.
Yes!	Thank you for the positive feedback.
Please improve the connection between the programs shared and the vision going forward. I liked seeing the social science of one-one conversations but, the nuts and bolts of how to sustain these conversations and the programs going forward seemed to not be explained well.	Thank you for the thoughtful comment. A strategic plan is intentionally high-level, focusing on vision and guiding principles, while leaving room for programmatic or prescriptive plans to define specific actions, timelines, and implementation details.

Climate Change Forecast & Wind Patterns

It might be useful to consider likely/possible fire spread corridors in Ashland, considering the likely higher velocity wind directions during high fire danger conditions, such as foehn winds, and locations of likely ignition sources. Some corridors are likely to be at higher risk of extensive damage than others. Ember resistance of properties at the	Thanks for the astute input. We are working with a team of researchers based at Oregon State University to create the tools necessary to analyze different wildfire scenarios, look at vulnerabilities and threats. There are some obvious fire scenarios such as east wind events
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front edge portions of such corridors is likely to be of particular importance, as that will be where the first exposure of structures to fire from wildland sources will come. Once fully-developed structure fires are occurring downwind, building-to-building fire transfer will dominate. Note that it is common to observe that vegetation is only singed in suburban conflagration conditions. The fires spread directly between structures and can bypass the vegetation.	(like Alameda) that we included in the CWPP in considering how to develop a defensible perimeter around the City. Some detail and flexibility is left up to implementation, guided by larger strategies in the CWPP, and subject to funding. Looking at ember intrusion is important on the edges of the city, though has to be considered with priorities such as protecting schools, hospital, communications, etc... There will be many challenging choices to be made. We also need further research and understanding of urban conflagrations and home to home spread, specifically if there are mitigation measures, firefighting tactics, or other means of limiting fire spread in dense neighborhoods. What if all fences were steel instead of wood? Just one example of the complexity and challenges ahead. Thank you for the comment.
All aspects of projected climate change should be taken into account over the longer term: warming, drying, season shifting, vegetation changes including invasive species and change in what crops are grown, reduced precipitation and a shift from snow to rain, human	Thank you for emphasizing the importance of accounting for the full range of projected climate change impacts. We agree that long-term planning must consider not just fire behavior but also broader shifts in vegetation, water availability, land use, and

population migrations, etc. What is uncertain is how severe the effects will be and the rate at which they will appear.	population dynamics. While uncertainty remains around the timing and severity of these changes, your input reinforces the need for adaptive strategies and regular plan updates as new data and trends emerge.
Use cutting edge research on foehn wind driven fire events. An example: "Downslope Wind-Driven Fires in the Western United States" by J.T. Abatzoglou, et. al. 2023 https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1029/2022EF003471 .	We have read that publication and it did influence the CWPP initiative to address fuels reduction in the non-forested areas east and north of Ashland. We are also engaged with researchers at OSU who are looking at how to better predict fire flow pathways into the community. Some initial research will be available this summer.
I think the figures of future temperatures were if anything low balled	Thank you for sharing your perspective.
We've known all this for decades... it'll be challenging to maintain forecasting if the federal cuts persist.	Thank you for sharing your concern about maintenance of forecasting capabilities..

Local Wildfire Hazards and Risks

The plan needs to consider human-set fire sources, both deliberate (arson) and inadvertent. Note that an individual was caught setting one or more fires during the Alameda fire. My concern is particularly for fires escaping from unauthorized homeless encampments. The trend is for these encampments to be growing and be populated with less	Thank you for raising this important concern. The risk of human-caused ignitions—whether accidental or intentional—is a critical part of our wildfire risk landscape. We recognize the need to address ignition sources from unauthorized encampments, especially in vegetated areas. This feedback will help inform future coordination
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careful and responsible people. Encampments are often in areas with a lot of vegetation to fuel a fire.	with public safety, social services, and land management partners to reduce ignition risks while also supporting compassionate, community-wide solutions.
I don't see mention in the plan of fire risks associated with earthquakes, where breaks in gas lines can create multiple widely distributed ignition sources.	Thank you for your concern about the relationship between earthquakes and wildfire. You're absolutely right that earthquake risks—especially related to older, unreinforced buildings and gas infrastructure—pose serious safety concerns, including potential fire ignition. While this CWPP focuses specifically on wildfire risk, earthquake preparedness is addressed through separate emergency response and hazard mitigation plans. Your comment highlights important connections between disaster types, and we agree that coordinated planning across all hazards—including the promotion of gas shut-off valves and seismic retrofits—is essential for true community resilience.
I don't think the details were shared with enough urgency here and there could be more graphics. Unfortunately, sharing an image of the Alameda Fire scar that was a wind driven event could help motivate change and 'show' more than tell the need to act and invest without delay.	Thank you for this helpful feedback. We agree that urgency and visual storytelling are powerful tools for motivating action. Including impactful imagery—such as the Alameda Fire scar—can make the risks more tangible and immediate. We'll look for opportunities to strengthen

	the visual and emotional resonance of the plan's messaging in final materials and future outreach.
Good information stated well	Thank you for your positive comment.
Daunting but laid out well	Thank you for your comment.
much-needed analysis	Thank you for your comment.

Developed Area Vulnerabilities	
It is pretty clear that when conflagration conditions occur in a densely developed suburban area, the fires spread from structure to structure, with vegetation fires being of less consequence. Few suburban buildings are able to withstand a fully developed fire occurring in an adjacent structure. Even best practices such as fire-resistant roofs, fire-resistant siding, fence modifications, double pane windows, proper screening of all vents and decks, elimination of fire-prone curtains and drapes behind windows, control of vegetation surrounding the building, etc. are unlikely to reliably save a structure under such conditions.	Thank you for your insightful comment. You are right that under extreme conflagration conditions, structure-to-structure fire spread can outpace vegetation-driven fire. While best practices in home hardening and defensible space reduce risk, they may not guarantee survival in the most severe scenarios. Your input underscores the need for collective, neighborhood-scale mitigation strategies and continued investment in broader community resilience. This CWPP proposes actions to address all of the above.
I don't see in the plan provisions for managing water supply systems during a conflagration, for example to be able to automatically shut off water leakage from damaged irrigation and other water	There is a current study in progress to answer these questions about managing water supply during a conflagration. A research team from Oregon State

systems. This can prevent firefighters from having sufficient water pressure and volume to fight fires downwind of the main flame front.	University, working with the City's Public Works and Fire Dept, are using data and modeling to first recreate the water system failure seen during the Alameda Fire with the intent to apply that approach to various fire scenarios in Ashland. The work won't be done until later this summer or fall, so wasn't included in the CWPP.
It appears that downed telephone and power poles were a significant problem in the Alameda Fire. How can circuits for damaged poles be automatically de-energized so affected lines can be safely driven over or otherwise crossed? I understand there is an initiative to replace wood utility poles with fire-resistant poles, but this is likely to be an expensive and longer-term program. What agency will be responsible for paying for this?	Ashland Public Works (our electric utility) is working to replace power poles as quickly as possible. With the CWPP calling out this issue and being previously included in the State-required utility wildfire mitigation plan, Ashland stands a good chance to acquire more funding to accelerate pole replacement. The Electric Dept is also replacing fuses across the whole city with fire-safe fuses that don't emit sparks when tripped. That project is more than half complete already. With the CWPP data now available, a project is underway to determine the most strategic locations for pole replacement considering evacuation safety and electric system function. All electric water pump stations across the city have automatic generator backup to maintain water pressure during electric system failure.

A lot of Ashland homes are located on narrow, steep, and/or winding streets that hinder emergency vehicle access and resident evacuation. What can be done to lessen these problems, as they are intrinsic to the City's basic layout? Such areas may need to be given priority during an ordered evacuation.	The issue of narrow streets is not easily remedied except during new street construction, and that occurs only rarely. An initiative in the Public Safety and Health section of the CWPP examines the practice of “red flag parking days” that’s being used by communities in California. In a nutshell, during the highest fire danger days, or red flag days, parking on critical evacuation routes would be banned and enforced. This would open critical street width for evacuation while first responders can drive in the opposite direction.
The city's electrical dept. “trimmed” as in butchered our parkwayponderosa trees—trees known for their ability to withstand fire. How does this help?	These are separate issues. Ponderosa pine is known for its ability to withstand a fire burning along the ground in a natural forest setting. ANY tree that potentially touches power lines is a public safety hazard that could lead to a fire start, especially during windy conditions where trees sway and fires start and spread readily. The type of tree has nothing to do with the issue of it touching power lines. Sorry to hear your tree got cut back, but it is a necessary public safety measure.
Enlist the support of landscaping contractors so we don't have truckloads of bark mulch being blown out onto yards.	Thank you for your constructive comment. Initiatives in Section 10 are proposed to train and certify landscaping

	contractors working in Ashland and the Rogue Valley. Implementation is dependent on creating capacity to develop, train, and enforce.
Very interesting	Thank you for taking the time to study the information.
yep. Well described.	Thank you for your positive feedback.

Critical Infrastructure	
Preserving the functioning of as much of the electric grid and cell grid as possible during a wildfire event is going to be important, for many reasons such as emergency communications and traffic management. Fueling stations and electric vehicle charging stations might be important to preserve as well to keep essential vehicles running.	Ashland Public Works (our electric utility) is working to replace wooden power poles as quickly as possible with a fire-resistant model. With the CWPP calling out this issue and being previously included in the State-required utility wildfire mitigation plan, Ashland stands a good chance to acquire more funding to accelerate pole replacement. This will help keep the system up for longer during a fire. If areas are directly impacted by a fire, the electricity has to be turned off for firefighter safety. Other zones should be able to retain power at the same time if not impacted by fire.
Good info	Thank you for the affirmation.
So much comes down to funding!	Yes it does. We hope to generate the necessary funding.

Highly Valued Resources and Assets	
I think that medical treatment facilities, such as the Asante Ashland Community Hospital, have to be near the top of the list of Ashland resources to protect in a wildfire event response. Other high value resources to protect during the event are command control communications and intelligence (C3I) centers	We absolutely agree with your comment. The hospital and emergency communications infrastructure are in the top tier of priorities. See Appendix D for their scores. We propose making these facilities wildfire resistant in Year 1 (FY26).
Disallowing ALL burning year round makes complete sense. This include better communications and enforcement of violations (including firecrackers around July 4th especially) Consider negotiating with the sale of firecrackers just outside city limits.	We agree that consistent communication, enforcement, and addressing sources of ignition—like fireworks—are essential to reducing fire risk. Your suggestion about coordinating with vendors outside city limits is appreciated and highlights the importance of regional collaboration to effectively manage these challenges.
Uncooperative members and those who cannot afford to make changes. Encouraging wood chipping rather than hauling material away. Possibly renting or supporting reduce costs to rent/borrow equipment. FREE debris drop days at transfer station are great. Maybe boy scouts would like to do more than just xmas trees sometimes for a FEEEE.	Thank you for the comment. We're always looking for ways to help people get rid of flammable debris. With recent funding dedicated by the Council for wildfire mitigation, we will look into ways to help lower income populations and those with limited capacity to dispose of flammable materials. The CWPP already addresses the issue of increasing capacity to assist vulnerable populations.

Our home is wood ; built in 1897 by an early settler. We're under no illusions about what will happen to it if a large fire sweeps down from the watershed and engulfs our town.	Thank you for recognizing the harsh reality we face. If we do everything recommended in the CWPP, we should be able to minimize the loss of all structures—including old wood homes. Every homeowner can be part of the solution.
Persuading the city to stop issuing building permits for more homes above the TID.	Thank you for sharing your idea.
Seems a good plan.	Thank you for the affirmation.
"agree" [with the designations]	Thank you for the affirmation.
How is "targeted risk reduction" different for "iconic attractions like Lithia Park, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and downtown historic districts"?	Thank you for your question. "Targeted risk reduction" for iconic attractions refers to site-specific strategies that address the unique cultural, economic, and structural value of places like Lithia Park, OSF, and the historic downtown. These areas may require customized approaches that go beyond general guidelines—balancing wildfire risk reduction with preservation, public access, and community identity.

HVRA Challenges and Initiatives	
Persuading the city to stop issuing building permits for more homes above the TID.	Thank you for sharing your idea.
The railroad is mentioned as a local infrastructure resource. It is also a potential source of fire starts. Consider bringing in the operator to create and formalize a mitigation plan.	The railroad is already restricted during fire season by the Oregon Department of Forestry to operate during nighttime hours when fire risk is lower. Other measures may be required depending on fire danger. The City enforces the weed abatement ordinance on railroad properties within the City limits each year. Though railroads have historically been a source of fire starts, there hasn't been a fire caused from the railroad at this end of the valley in many years.
This would be better served in a linear graphic with each of these stacked next to each other so people can see the connections between the baseline and desired conditions...the tracking metrics and monitoring plan are so linked, can this section be combined? This section is an example of where technical language was over used and a graphic could help in connecting information. Sometimes the bullet points were repetitive: Ensure clean, reliable water availability before, during, and after a worst-case wildfire scenario to protect public health and safety.	Thanks for the comments about organization. Unfortunately, a change that reaching isn't achievable in the document given time and available funding. The two sentences about water supply are in fact separate topics addressing water supply, but in different aspects. One is water supply in Reeder Reservoir before the treatment plant and the other is maintaining the supply of water in the City's pipes and treated water holding tanks. The electric system is referred to in the

• Maintain water supply pressure and capacity at levels sufficient to meet peak wildfire suppression demands under extreme conditions. (these seem the same) ***What about electric system control and responsiveness.	CWPP primarily through the referenced "Electric Wildfire Mitigation Plan" that is in the process of being implemented over the past two years and will continue.
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Evacuation Preparedness	
In our community (Mountain Meadows) we have strongly urged residents to have one or more buddy relationships where they can get a ride with a buddy in an evacuation or provide a ride to a buddy if the buddy is not able to evacuate in their own vehicle. We emphasize keeping this relationship current and have a backup in the event that a primary buddy ride provider is not available at the time of an evacuation. We have established protocols for ensuring that the exit from the parking garages in an evacuation goes smoothly and efficiently. We emphasize evacuation preparedness for one's animals, such as a well-prepared go kit for the animals, in addition to the go-kit for the humans. In Mountain Meadows, we recognize that available exit routes for vehicles can become clogged for various reasons. We tell residents	Keep up the good work!

that a last-ditch alternative to evacuating by car is to walk to the ball fields in North Mountain Park and shelter in place there. The fields are watered and flammable vegetation is some distance away, so the survivability should be relatively good. We suggest people wear cotton or similar fabric clothing (no synthetics such as nylon) and bring water to deal with embers. This option, of course, is available to those able to get there on foot, so people with mobility limitations may not be able to use it.

....We strongly urge residents to keep their gas tanks at least half full at all times (or well-charged, for electric vehicles) so as to not run out in an evacuation.

....Our community is particularly focused on evacuation using the emergency gravel on-ramp to I-5 South that is near us. We need to be certain whether or not the ramp has been opened for use when an evacuation order for our zone (Zone 9) is issued. Of course, this will be contingent on management of southbound traffic on I-5 to prevent collisions.

We go to considerable lengths to make sure all residents are informed about emergency procedures, particularly evacuation readiness.

Note that emergency responders, city officials, caregivers, etc. have evacuation responsibilities for their own homes and families and cannot be solely dedicated to helping evacuate others.	Thank you for that comment.
I find that people I talk with don't have a good notion of just how few Ashland first responders are on duty and available for emergency evacuation response at a given time. They tend to think more people are available than in reality.	While only 15 to 20 first responders are available at any one time, we do have a robust mutual aid system throughout the Rogue Valley that when called on during the Alameda Fire responded in force and saved many dozens of lives.
Communicating about emergency preparedness and emergency response can be difficult for populations with language issues. As a minimum, there needs to be effective communication in Spanish. Note that people who are undocumented immigrants are very wary of interacting with officials of any kind nowadays, fearing arrest and deportation.	Thank you for this reminder. The City's website is now available in Spanish translation as are emergency messages. We are always looking to improve our outreach to Spanish speaking residents and workers in Ashland and we'll continue as the CWPP is being implemented.
A key factor in evacuation is preparedness for traffic management, especially what to do for vehicle breakdowns, accidents, running out of gas, etc.	True. This is an issue that is a big concern that is being addressed by city staff and through a new evacuation study in collaboration with Oregon State University and Boise State University.

We have our bags ready to go, but evacuating the entire town is likely to be a disaster unless we have days to do so.	The previously commissioned study in 2020 called the Evacuation Time Estimate Study concluded that it would take more than 4 hours to evacuate all zones in the City. While that can be a long time during a fire, it is not days. We are always working on new ideas to decrease that time. The CWPP addresses strategies to reduce crowding on key evacuation routes and a new evacuation study lead by Boise State University will help us better understand traffic patterns under various wildfire scenarios and including data from social surveys sent to Ashland households and available online.
Develop an early public warning system like that used in Southern California ("The Santa Ana Wildfire Threat Index") for foehn wind events. Incorporate this into the evacuation levels. Initiate evacuation planning by the public when our southeast foehn winds are predicted, not just when a wildfire is actually happening.	The City did post and send warnings ahead of the wind event that preceded Alameda Fire and will continue to do so in the future. The National Weather Service has a new category of weather warning called "Particularly Dangerous Situation" that is above and beyond the normal "Red Flag Warning". The PDS would be sent out as an alert as far ahead of time as possible. The City encourages all residents to be at a Level 1, or READY, at all times during the fire season.
I agree with analysis	Thank you for the affirmation..

I would like to see precautionary alerts when the fire danger is assessed to be particularly high, as was the case in the couple of days before the Alameda Fire--strong gusty winds, high temperatures, very low humidity, dried vegetation, etc. This would help more vulnerable populations to leave in advance, before an official evacuation alert. It could also incentivize people to fill their gas tanks.	The City did post and send warnings ahead of the wind event the preceded Alameda Fire and will continue to do so in the future. The National Weather Service has a new category of weather warning called "Particularly Dangerous Situation" that is above and beyond the normal "Red Flag Warning". The PDS would be sent out as an alert as far ahead of time as possible. The City encourages all residents to be at a Level 1, or READY, at all times during the fire season.
In a true evacuation emergency everyone getting in their cars and sitting in traffic to exit is a death trap. My plan is to put on good walking shoes, grab my dog and hoof it out of harms way.	We are keenly aware that traffic is an issue for evacuations. Leaving on foot can be a viable option, depending on location and the speed and intensity of a fire. Our Emergency Manager is researching the use of refuge areas in other communities as a strategy to allow for temporary sheltering within the community to reduce exposure and traffic issues.
Really difficult to do this without serious commitment from the public	We understand the implications and need for a significant outreach and education effort. This is part of the CWPP's initiatives and will be included in any mitigation funding/projects.

Evacuation – identify and pre-plan safe refuge zones and evacuation destinations.	All options are being considered and studied to make evacuations safer and more efficient.
What is being done to "expand and maintain evacuation routes"? In the 5 years since the Alameda Fire, and 4 years since publication of the KLD evacuation study, the only positive thing done to slightly help evacuations is the dirt/gravel onramp to I-5 southbound, whereas a number of negative things have been done to Hwy 99 that will impede evacuations. Why is that?	The CWPP recommends "red flag parking" days as a way to decongest particularly important evacuation routes during critical fire weather. There are certain aspects of our street layout that simply aren't going to change due to past development over many decades.
How quickly will the City "update evacuation time studies based on new transportation modeling and social behavior research"? How will the City use those study results? What priority does the City give such studies?	We anticipate the results of a new evacuation modeling study to be complete by the end of fire season 2025. The City gives high priority to these studies and now having an Emergency Manager on staff, the City has more capacity to address these issues.
Will the "timely communications to evacuate safely and stay informed during rapidly unfolding wildfire events" include specific guidance regarding which streets to take, and which to avoid, during an evacuation? Will the City be directing traffic during such an evacuation? Which people will be doing this?	The City will issue specific directions during an event once we understand which routes are safe and viable. Our Public Works team is prepared to respond for traffic control and can ask for help from other cities and the County.
"Evacuation planning will improve evacuation efficiency given the inherent challenges of population density, behaviors, and street capacity." What is the City doing to reduce "population density" rather	The City has limited capacity to reduce population density or restrict new construction due to State of Oregon planning and development laws. The CWPP

than increase it [as the City always seems to be doing]? What is the City doing to increase "street capacity" rather than reduce it [as the City always seems to be doing]?	address street capacity through the proposal to adopt a "Red Flag Parking" program, which has been in use in some California communities for many years.
I think this would be a good place to share what has improved after the Alameda Fire; it did not specifically share that there was a full-time emergency management coordinator hired and the benefits of having someone organizing efforts for improving this for the community. There are not photos of the new zone signs and no graphics or links from the evacuation study. Please provide a few links to resources for community members who are not familiar with evacuation maps. ***I noticed there was a lot of focus on people knowing their routes, practicing evacuation but, there are several steps that lead up to physically evacuating - the readiness of the household to evacuate and their understanding of Be Ready, Be Set and Go Now! The more the community understands what each of these levels mean, the better each household will understand this process. The levels of readiness were not mentioned in the plan and, there should be a push for the community to understand and follow the evacuation levels.	While there are many programs and funding sources that could be illustrated in the CWPP, there was simply not room to account for all the current programs in the CWPP. Out of necessity, the CWPP includes primarily new initiatives. Much of this comment pertains to existing programs.

Recommended Evacuation Preparedness Initiatives	
Need to have a plan to evacuate the unhoused	This is addressed in the CWPP as a need, in addition to current work provide evacuation options for all residents who do not have cars. Staff are already working with the Rogue Valley Transportation District on bussing options for those who cannot or do not drive. Through efforts outlined in the CWPP we will work to increase communications options for the unhoused to get emergency messages via cellphone as available to them.
I would suggest that Ashland develop a capability to deploy one or more camera drones to be able to directly observe the locations and movement of fire fronts, the response of fire crews, and how evacuation is going in different areas. This might even involve City systems accepting video feeds from resident-owned drones. Of course, drones need to be grounded for safety if aerial firefighting resources are being used in the area.	In any serious fire where a drone view would be useful, there will be aerial firefighting resources. This has been the case on all WUI fires we have experienced. The Fire Department does already have a drone for small fires and house fires.
Another possible use of drones is to provide loudspeaker notifications and spotlights to supplement police vehicles performing this service in an evacuation scenario.	As answered above, drones cannot be used during serious fires due to conflicts with aerial firefighting resources.

Create an evacuation re-entry plan in coordination with city and county law enforcement.. VERY IMPORTANT	Great recommendation. A “Pre-plan for Re-entry” action item has been added to the “Before a Wildfire – Preparedness and Capacity Building” list in Section 14.
What are “renter-focused education campaigns on evacuation”?	The information doesn’t differ by housing type, but how it is delivered can change. Rental populations are more transient by nature and often harder to reach. Having property rental companies help distribute information is one way to focus on the rental population, among other ideas still to be developed.
“Participate in community preparedness events and evacuation drills.” When will there be “evacuation drills”? Who will lead them?	The City is hosting a drill in October, 2025.

Emergency Alerts

I would like to see precautionary alerts when the fire danger is assessed to be particularly high, as was the case in the couple of days before the Alameda Fire--strong gusty winds, high temperatures, very low humidity, dried vegetation, etc. This would help more vulnerable populations to leave in advance, before an official evacuation alert. It could also incentivize people to fill their gas tanks.	This was done previous to Alameda and is already happening this year in advance of fire season and should the conditions arise similar to Alameda, alerts will be sent again.
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In Mountain Meadows, we work hard to make sure that every resident is signed up to receive Jackson Alerts, now that this has taken over for the Nixle and Citizen Alert systems. We want people to be able to receive alerts at any time of the day or night, keeping their cell phones on and able to be heard. We make sure that residents know about the various sources of information about fire situations in the general area, such as Watch Duty and various websites covering fires and smoke.	Thank you so much for your diligence.
What we have observed regarding emergency alerts is that they need to provide specific actionable information. For example, where the fire is now, what areas are currently threatened, what areas have been told to evacuate, what evacuation routes are now open and what are now closed, and where people are being directed for evacuation assembly.	The alerting protocol has continually been updated over the past couple years and we believe it now addresses these concerns.
We recognize that the alert messages have limited numbers of text characters. What is needed is links to other messages with more complete information. Ideally, the links should provide access to things like map data and possibly traffic cam data and drone images, if available.	Links are always a standard part of text alerts. Traffic cams can be saved as bookmarks on your computer and phone. Drones cannot be used during firefighting operations due to conflicts with aerial firefighting resources.

One worry is how to provide effective alerting and guidance information when things like cell towers and internet services are down as a result of fire effects.	Cell towers and similar communications infrastructure are listed as a high priority in the CWPP High Value Assets and Values table. We realize their significance and plan to do what we can to secure and harden these sites.
A challenge is to provide timely emergency alerts to populations who don't have mobile phones, or don't have them available and turned on at the time, as this has become the primary channel for distributing emergency alerts. I think in particular of homeless encampments. What are possible mechanisms for getting alerts to these people. Could aerial drones equipped with loudspeakers play a useful role for this?	Drones cannot be used during firefighting operations due to conflicts with aerial fire resources. The primary line of communication is still door knocking done by law enforcement officers, in addition to alerts sent through the Jackson Alerts system. In a serious fire, a system called IPAWS can be activated to provide further levels of alerts on radio stations, TV stations, and via all cell phones in a defined radius whether signed up or not.
Emergency alerts need to be able to provide sufficient actionable information to recipients. This may require that text messages provide links to online sites with more detail, ideally including maps and graphics. How can this information be generated in a timely manner?	Messages are pre-loaded templates and activated as quickly as possible. Links are always provided in messages already. It will always take up to 10-15 minutes for the cycle of messaging to be completed once a fire starts. Staff are always practicing protocols in order to be more efficient.
There needs to be multiple people with the capability to generate alert information, so it is not solely on the shoulders of a single person	This is already the case.

I am not in favor of the use of sirens for emergency alerts. A siren doesn't provide enough information to know what to do in a wildfire type emergency.	This is an option that is favored by many, but needs further research.
I agree with analysis	Thank you for the affirmation.
without advance planning, alerts can cause panic -- fingers crossed that we can respond calmly when the time comes.	Tests are done each year and information is continually being distributed to citizens about levels and how to prepare. There will be another evacuation exercise this fall.

Emergency Notification Initiatives	
Notifications - In addition to current methods being used by the city, include warning sirens, local city operated AM/FM emergency radio messaging, commercial radio and TV, and the Emergency Broadcast Systems.	These methods (except sirens) are already part of the emergency messaging system.
Adopt and formalize the OSFM evacuation notification system which instructs citizens on what mitigation steps can be taken before the final evacuation level is given.	The evacuation levels are coordinated through Oregon Emergency Management. The City follows these levels and recommendations as do almost all cities and counties in Oregon.

This seemed adequate but, there was not an outline of actions for how to increase enrollment for the system or a plan for how the community understands the evacuation levels, how to prepare or access resources. For example, Silvia Ceron with ODHS OEM frequently has classes that teach access to resources and how to use electronics. Would there be any staff or departments that are tasked with making this information and these classes available for the public? There currently is not an updated communications plan or anyone tasked with the responsibility of communicating with the public other than the PIO and Kelly Burns, there should be a plan that outlines duties and responsibilities to enhance and improve City communication between departments and with the public.	The City is hosting two public information sessions this spring on this exact topic. There are also recordings of similar presentations on the City's emergency preparedness website. The CWPP addresses the need for increased outreach to vulnerable populations.
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Smoke Impacts on Health	
Wildfire smoke in Ashland, of course, can originate from sources far distant from the City. Residents want to know where smoke is going to come from, how heavy it is likely to be, and its projected movement into our area, based on wind forecasts. Unfortunately, the topography of our location, being a valley blocked at its south end by high terrain, makes smoke more problematic for Ashland than many other places.	To the extent this information is available, the City, through Smokewise Ashland, links to the Oregon Smoke Blog, a seasonal resource that links to smoke forecasts from various fires around the state and Northern California as well. When the Oregon DEQ sends out air quality warnings, those are passed on as well.

Provisions may need to be made to move population groups, such as asthmatics that are particularly affected by smoke, to locations with reduced exposure.	This is not a function of City government. The Oregon Health Authority addresses population health.
Note that even if residents do not have their homes damaged through being burned, they may have to leave due to their places and supporting infrastructure systems being made unusable by smoke effects. It is unclear about the degree to which homeowners insurance will cover secondary smoke damage.	This would be addressed in the Wildfire Recovery Plan, an urgent need listed in the CWPP for future funding in a follow-up to the CWPP.
People should store face masks.	Great suggestion. This messaging is included via the Smokewise Ashland website and outreach.
Don't know. Educating public???	Yes. Public education has been on-going and will continue based on available staff capacity.
very serious for health and economy. Thank you for documenting.	Thank you for the affirmation.
This was adequate. I noticed that in the metrics for tracking, there was not a statement on providing resources to the community for smoke readiness. Offering N-95 respirators, filters and air cleaners is still a need for lower income residents.	We realize that there is still a need for air purifiers in the community and will keep pursuing available funds to secure more of them.
For evacuation preparedness: There was not be enough emphasis on table top exercises for responding agencies. These exercises could be	The CWPP, being a strategic document, would not necessarily prescribe this level of action in telling agencies to conduct table top exercises. Training is

helpful in going over the details of existing plans and coordination of efforts for practice and planning. For emergency alerts and communication: There currently is not an updated communications plan or anyone tasked with the responsibility of communicating with the public other than the PIO and Kelly Burns, there should be a plan that outlines duties and responsibilities to enhance and improve City communication between departments and with the public.	conducted at various levels each spring to prepare responders for fire season. A live fire training is planned for the Ashland area this June...better than a table top! We will pass on this comment to the Emergency Coordinator, thank you.
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Residents Perceptions of Wildfire Risk

I think it is becoming increasingly apparent to people in communities located in wildland-urban interface (WUI) conditions that they have become highly vulnerable to fire, including urban conflagration conditions. The list of catastrophic events is growing steadily, with the horrific fires in the greater Los Angeles area being the most recent examples. These are becoming less exceptional and more the norm. This should calibrate peoples' perception of what their risks really are. It is becoming clear that a large number of communities in the West (and other areas) are at high risk. Communities should work	So true. We hope this point was made clear in the CWPP and it is why creating a new paradigm around mitigation is so critical to our survival.
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with each other to share strategies, tactics, lessons learned, etc. as they organize to respond to their risk.	
very interesting	Thank you for taking the time to absorb the information.
Many folks don't even think about it.	Unfortunate but true.
residents perceptions are still pretty much deer in the headlights. We don't have the money to do what is needed!	Thank you for sharing your perspective. When the CWPP is fully implemented, we hope that everyone will become fully informed and will have the resources to make their home fire-safe. We will make all efforts to capture external funding, similar to the many millions of dollars that were brought to bear in the Ashland Watershed over the past 15 years.

Barriers to Taking Action

Unfortunately, diligent efforts by individual homeowners to reduce the fire risk of their own properties may have little benefit if nearby neighbors don't take sufficient fire risk mitigation actions as well. The strength of any chain is dependent on its weakest link. The challenge is how to motivate ALL the people in a neighborhood to take effective action, particularly if they don't own the property and can't make changes themselves but are dependent on a remote institutional landlord.	True. That is why stronger codes and ordinances are recommended in the CWPP. The CWPP calls for a suite of initiatives to engage tenants, property management companies, and rental property owners to unite and develop solutions (see Section 6).
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As the CWPP notes, a large portion of Ashland's building stock is relatively old, built to codes that predate modern fire risk mitigation standards. How feasible is it going to be to modify these units to desirable modern standards (e.g., fire-resistant siding, Class A roofs, fire-resistant double-paned glass windows, etc.)? Landscaping improvements are more feasible for these older properties, but may not be sufficient to reduce the risk enough.	Thank you for highlighting this critical issue. You're right that much of Ashland's older housing stock was built before modern fire safety standards, and upgrading these structures poses financial and logistical challenges. While landscaping improvements are often a more accessible first step, we recognize that structural retrofits are essential for meaningful risk reduction. The CWPP emphasizes the need for incentives, technical assistance, and targeted funding to support property owners in making these upgrades over time. Your input reinforces the importance of prioritizing these efforts and exploring innovative solutions to make them more feasible community-wide.
Many individual property owners do not have the personal physical capabilities to make needed changes on their properties and will have to have the work contracted. There is a limited supply of qualified contractor personnel to do the work, especially when similar work is being done throughout the Rogue Valley. Contractor personnel need to be educated in how to perform the work to the needed standards. The work needs to be monitored to confirm that it is done satisfactorily.	Thank you for bringing attention to these very real and interconnected challenges. You're absolutely right—many property owners face physical, financial, or logistical barriers to completing wildfire risk reduction work, and the limited availability of qualified contractors is a growing concern across the region. The CWPP includes initiatives focused on expanding the local workforce, offering contractor education, and supporting

	quality assurance. Your comments reinforce the importance of scaling up these efforts to ensure the work is both accessible and effective.
The aesthetics of the Ashland environment are very important to residents. Fire safety improvements need to take aesthetic considerations into account. Excessive vegetation removal without some remediation is likely to be resisted by residents.	Yes, this has to be balanced with possibility of having a major fire that completely destroys our aesthetic, historic buildings, and tourist infrastructure. We see many good examples of attractive landscaping and construction that is both fire safe and aesthetic.
Difficult to imagine everyone chopping down their trees in this “tree city”; or replacing beloved gardens with gravel.	This is a common misconception about fire safe landscaping practices. Trees, for the most part, provide a positive value in protecting our town, buildings, and moderating heat and wind. There is a need to reduce the use of flammable bark mulch in the community. There are a few alternatives that are not gravel, such as composts, that can be used. Gravel is not a single, gray and lifeless concept. Rock mulch can be colorful, various sizes, and combined with hardscaping to create attractive and fire resistant landscapes. Wood mulch can still be used conservatively.
I agree	Thank you for the affirmation..
definite barriers! Money and public awareness.	We will pursue both with zeal!

What are "ember-resistant retrofits"? What are "best practices for wildfire resistance"? What are "home hardening upgrades"?	Ember-resistant retrofits are upgrades that prevent wind-blown embers from entering or igniting a home—like vent screens or sealing roof gaps. Best practices for wildfire resistance include actions like maintaining defensible space, using non-flammable construction materials, and following expert guidelines based on science.. Home hardening upgrades are structural changes—such as fire-rated roofs, siding, windows, and vents—that make homes more resistant to ignition.
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Residential Risk Reduction Challenges and Initiatives

Seeking voluntary compliance is desirable but unlikely to accomplish the needed changes in a timely manner. What enforcement actions for fire risk mitigation, will be accepted by the citizens of Ashland? If it is too heavy handed, it is likely to cause pushback.	This is a core challenge that this community will have to undertake. It is clear that the current approach to landscaping invites disaster, so alternatives are needed. Ashland has always responded to challenges and has the capacity to do this with creativity. We remain hopeful that people will step up and respond to the misalignment of our current practices and our current and future climate. The CWPP sets the stage for this to happen if the community engages.
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Funding for fire risk reduction is a huge issue. Many property owners in Ashland will have very limited financial ability to make the mandated changes using their own funds without assistance of some form.	Thank you for your comment. This major issue is discussed in Sections, 5, 6, 7, and 9. Proposed actions include seeking external funds for those households that are eligible for assistance.
Need landscape design ideas for small yards to accomplish the 5' defensible space & still look nice.	Agreed. Thank you for your comment. We will add your idea to the list of activities to follow up on.
Need to know what to do about common/shared areas that appear risky, but I can't touch.	This isn't a comment on the CWPP per se. Please contact the Fire Department directly.

Tenant and Rental Property Owners/Managers Perceptions	
In increasing numbers of cases, rental properties are owned by private equity institutions, such as hedge funds, that are less engaged in local community issues than are traditional private landlords located in the immediate area. Communicating effectively with the decision makers in such institutions will be essential to get buy-in for expensive improvements in the rental properties they own. They need to have meaningful financial incentives to do the necessary work.	Thank you for raising this important point. We recognize that reaching absentee and institutional property owners presents unique challenges. The CWPP emphasizes the need for targeted outreach, policy tools, and financial incentives to engage these decision-makers and encourage investments in wildfire risk reduction for rental properties.
It would be great if landlords had easy access to this info to forward to their tenant. In fact, landlords should include it with every rental agreement and provide updated info from city annually	This activity is proposed in the CWPP in a suite of initiatives: R-1; 2, & 3; IN-2; PS-2 & 3.

big challenges but landlords need to step up	Agreed.
Is this ["Provide incentives for renters to create defensible space and to participate in neighborhood mitigation programs"] in anticipation of the City's failure to enforce this ["Require landlords and property management companies to meet new wildfire-safe landscaping and building standards"]?	We were unable to find this quote or decipher the comment. Apologies.

Socially Vulnerable Household Perceptions	
I have been working diligently over the past decade to communicate with the senior population of Mountain Meadows to inform them about risks, emergency preparedness actions, and responses such as well-organized evacuations. As socially vulnerable households go, this is a pretty astute population, but it requires constantly refreshing the messages.	Thanks for your hard work and for recognizing that persistent refreshing is necessary to keep your neighborhood community engaged.
Better access to information. Maybe providing incentives for tenants and landlords	Access to key information is definitely important. The plan calls for customized outreach and education formats and incentives to effectively meet the needs of diverse populations
Very interesting and well laid out.	Thank you for the affirmation.

so difficult to provide support for vulnerable people!	True. But we have to figure out how to reach and motivate socially vulnerable populations.
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The Insurance Crisis	
General insurability of Ashland properties is a critical factor when its community fire risk is considered to be so high. We are already seeing whole cities in California (example: Orinda and Moraga in the East Bay) becoming uninsurable for this reason. As pointed out in the plan, uninsurable properties can't get mortgages, so the only buyers are institutional ones, such as private equity firms, that don't need mortgages.	Thanks for confirming what we have discovered in our research.
If suitable property insurance becomes unavailable in Ashland, it will drastically affect the viability of the community. Few new people will be able to buy property and existing owners will not be able to sell to access their equity. This could cause the City of Ashland to die .	This situation has been captured in the CWPP and we're hopeful that by addressing fire risk as a community and to a high standard, we will be able to convince companies that Ashland is worth insuring. The IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home program is a good example of this kind of work, and it's available to owners right now.
Fire insurance is becoming a national crisis, perhaps even a worldwide one. Currently, insurance is predicated on individual structure losses, not conflagrations with the simultaneous destruction of many thousands of structures. Total losses in the recent fires in the Los	Thank you for the well-researched comment. While the U.S. faces significant insurance challenges due to climate change, other countries are also grappling with similar issues. However, proactive measures like

Angeles area are projected to be as much as \$250 billion. Insurance reserves are hard to accumulate to be adequate to cover such a level of claims. Even reinsurance capacity on a worldwide basis is an issue. The likelihood of default is high in such circumstances.	government-backed insurance programs and stringent building regulations have helped mitigate the impact elsewhere. One resource is located at: <i>Natural Disasters Have Caused A Global Home Insurance Crisis—How Other Countries Cope</i>. Retrieved from https://www.investopedia.com/how-other-natural-disaster-prone-countries-deal-with-home-insurance-8780085)
Work toward insurance cost breaks for people who perform wildfire hazard risk reduction on their property, like in California.	Thank you for your comment. Insurance cost breaks are one of the options. The primary challenge is making sure that insurance coverage is affordable with so many companies dropping coverage and raising fees.
As expected and a good analysis.	Thanks for the affirmation.
This is a very, very serious crisis. The numbers just don't work! Even FAIR coverage is astronomical, so this is a serious challenge.	Thank you for your comment. We agree—rising insurance costs are a serious and growing challenge. The CWPP recognizes this and calls for coordinated efforts to improve local risk conditions, advocate for policy solutions, and explore insurance affordability alternatives.

Ashland's Economy and Wildfire Impacts	
It is challenging to project the evolution of the Ashland economy over the next several decades in the context of larger social forces. A key question is how will these forces interact. Some factors that need to be taken into account include the following: * Plummeting birth rates, so greatly declining numbers of children and young people. * General aging of the population, with increased fractions of the society needing care services (e.g., memory care). * Increasing use of automation and AI, including the replacement of jobs that primarily employ cognitive capabilities (programmers, accountants, lawyers, financial workers, teachers, marketers, etc.). * Questions about how unsustainable ballooning debt (personal, family, corporate, government) can be discharged without causing an economic collapse. * Expanding political and cultural polarization that is difficult to bridge.	While these trends are concerning on many levels, they are not something to be addressed by the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. You are welcome to submit them to the City Council.
The question is how Ashland needs to position itself to remain an attractive place to visit, work, and live in the context of the changing larger socio-economic environmental conditions. Certainly	We believe the CWPP is the vision to make Ashland a safe haven and with financial support already expressed by the City Council, we are on the correct path. A similar

demonstrating that Ashland is addressing its risks effectively will be a key part of this. Ashland needs to be seen as a safe(r) haven in a turbulent world.	change in paradigm has already been achieved in forest management surrounding the city and in the watershed (as a result of the previous CWPP). We are hopeful a similar change can be achieved in the next decade as a result of this new CWPP.
great to include this information; it rounds out the picture	Thank you for the affirmation.
We need to start generating more money to pay for all the mitigation.	Thank you for your comment. Generating funds to implement the plan is critically important.
Very sober and accurate assessment -- without proper planning the local economy will crash.	Thank you for the affirmation.

Economic Stability Initiatives

Economic Impacts - provide resources to local businesses for the creation of business continuity planning.	Thank you for your comment. The Ashland Chamber of Commerce has been providing resources to local business for years and will continue to do so with renewed focus and vigor.
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A Necessary Paradigm Shift

Comprehensive collective action is essential to seriously reduce Ashland's risk of severe negative impacts of fire and smoke. This	Thank you for your thoughtful comment. We agree that meaningful risk reduction requires broad, collective
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requires vision and leadership, particularly to go beyond just the voluntary actions of the most committed, responsible, and affluent members of the community. Some mandates, with equitable enforcement, are likely to be necessary. Those who are least responsive shift risk onto those who are more responsive.	action—not just voluntary efforts. The CWPP acknowledges the need for strong leadership, equitable mandates, and policies that ensure all community members contribute to reducing shared wildfire risks and safeguarding personal health and safety.
It takes time/easy to access information to inform and eventually evolve a community. This is a relatively new reality and many of us are hanging on for dear life for our outdated paradigms of existence. Overwhelm is understandable so solid information with tiered actions might be more palatable.	Thank you for this thoughtful perspective. We agree—navigating change takes time, and clear, accessible information is essential. The CWPP aims to present tiered actions that make it easier for all community members to engage at a pace that feels achievable, especially in the face of uncertainty and seemingly overwhelming challenges.
I doubt if we ever get to collective action. I think that is a pipe dream. There has to be some sort of oversight and meaningful enforcement. Money has to be paid to people to get them to do actions or else the service provided for free. Volunteers will never be able to do enough.	Thank you for your candid feedback. We understand your concerns, and you're not alone in feeling skeptical about getting to collective action. The CWPP recognizes that sustained progress will require a combination of strong oversight, meaningful incentives, and accessible services—alongside community engagement. Your comment reinforces the need for practical, funded solutions that go beyond what volunteers alone can accomplish.

This section was very effective in laying out the "big issue" of community change needed	Thank you for the affirmative comment.
Great analysis especially liked PS 2.4, 2.5, 2.13, and 3.3. Yes collective action is key.	Thank you for pointing out the initiatives that resonate with you.
This is the heart of the plan! Individual actions are useless, unless collective neighborhoods and the whole region join together to create aggregations of reduced risk.	Thank you for affirming the need for collective action.
funding, funding, funding -- but the paradigm shift is really what is needed -- we have to find ways to get people to sit up and listen, then ACT to reduce ladders, ground covers vulnerable to embers, roofs, storage areas -- maybe mandate inspections and certifications?	Thank you for affirming the need for a paradigm shift.
What "key economic assets" have been identified? What is envisioned as prioritizing "mitigation efforts around these locations"? "Ashland's businesses will stay open, visitors will return, and the city's economic heart will survive and thrive through future fire seasons" even if the rest of the City burns down? Even if Ashland residents who work in these businesses, and/or make them viable year-around, are either killed by wildfire or are forced to relocate out of the area when their homes are destroyed? How the hell can a tourist-oriented business have priority over Ashland residents?	Thank you for your passionate feedback. We hear your concern and want to clarify that protecting key economic assets is not about placing businesses above residents—it's about recognizing that our community's well-being, livelihoods, and recovery are all interconnected. The CWPP prioritizes the protection of people first, while also identifying areas—like downtown, healthcare facilities, and critical infrastructure—that are essential for community functioning and long-term

	recovery. Your comment underscores the need to clearly communicate that economic resilience depends on the safety and stability of Ashland's residents.
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Regulatory Information and Initiatives

This is where the rubber meets the road for leadership and commitment. We need updates to city codes now.	Thank you for affirming the importance of leadership, commitment, and updated codes and ordinances.
Oregon law does not provide a good deterrent for those who maliciously ignite fires that threaten our community. Right now, arsonists are released on their own reconnaissance until their court dates if law enforcement determines there was no threat to property. Law enforcement needs to keep ALL arsonists in jail until their court dates. This happened in Ashland several years ago when an arsonist was apprehended after setting a fire within Ashland city limits. A witness saw the person do it, yet the person was released on their own reconnaissance even though the fire was in the middle of the city and DID pose a threat to property. Local law enforcement mistakenly deemed it to be a lower level offense that didn't threaten property, so the person was released.	Thanks for the comment. There were recent changes to Ashland's municipal code that allow Ashland Police to charge certain fire-related crimes as misdemeanors rather than just violations. Arson is a specific criminal act with three levels of severity, 1 being the highest. There are dollar figures associated with property loss and while a "threat" to property is a contributing factor, it's not the only factor law enforcement uses to charge a suspect with arson. Lower-level fire crimes may be charged as reckless burning which is a misdemeanor as opposed to arson being a felony. Releasing suspects is likely a result of an overcrowded and underfunded jail. APD is not involved with the decision to release a suspect. Local police may charge someone with a crime but it's up to

	the DA's office to either carry those charges forward, increase the charges, or drop them altogether.
didn't review this section -- too complicated :(	Thank you for your candid comment. We will strive to simplify the regulatory information going forward.
Why would you have "sunset dates" on wildfire prevention codes? "Ample time to meet a high level of wildfire safety"??	We recognize that the kind of changes needed to help Ashland survive the next major fire will not be easy to apply. We included sunset dates as a concept in order to allow citizens the time to absorb what needs to be done, time to save up funds as needed, time to apply for grants to help lower income residents, and time to train a workforce to do the work needed.
Municipal and county codes and ordinances need to fully address good practice fire safe measures for both new and existing developments. Much of Ashland's code appears to be old and in need of updating. Code enforcement needs to be vigorous, prompt, and equitably applied.	Ashland's wildfire code for new construction was update in 2018 and again in 2021. Minor updates are needed. There is no code except for weed abatement and prohibited flammable plants that applies to existing construction of all types. The CWPP prescribes a pathway to adoption of codes to address wildfire hazards on pre-2018 construction. An extensive education effort will be needed to get the code passed and enforced...also part of the CWPP vision.

Incentivizing the desired behavior changes that are communicated with consistency (unified voice) from the different departments could be helpful. This communication would be offered regularly through different mediums : 1. email, text, written, publications (city source, parks guide, sneak preview, facebook, instagram, IN PERSON, in mail. Let citizens pick their preferred choices.	Thank you for this input, we will pass it along to our City Communications Officer.
Owners associations (HOAs and condo associations) need to have requirements in their governing documents' Rules and Regulations aligned with fire safe good practices. Mountain Meadows is currently actively working on this and planning to take the identified actions.	Thank you for sharing information on your local owner's association interest in promoting wildfire risk reduction best practices. This topic is an initiative in Section 11 of the CWPP.
Why does the Plan not include a prohibition against future building in the fire habitat zone above the TID? This is the most likely area where a fire will start: the urban/wildlands interface zone. The towns people may build all the rock gardens they want, but that will not stop a fire occurring in the watershed—especially as more and unnecessarily larger homes are built there.	The kind of prohibition on building is not allowed at the local level by the State of Oregon.
Any codes and ordinances to be effective, require adequate enforcement provisions or they will be ineffective.	Thank you for acknowledging an important truth about codes and ordinance effectiveness. .

Ashland Forest Resiliency Program	
Forest resiliency policies need to be applied not just in the Ashland watershed, but on a broad regional basis. Fire and smoke risk to Ashland is not defined by geographic or land ownership boundaries.	The CWPP can only address localized issues in the greater Ashland Watershed area. The larger Rogue River Basin does have a plan called the Rogue Basin Cohesive Strategy and a considerable amount of work is taking place outside of the Ashland Watershed on federal and private lands.
so important; curious how federal funding cuts will affect this	We will have to see how this plays out over time.
Dealing proactively with surrounding remains a without-which-not priority -- everything else is useless, if we don't reduce fuels to prevent firestorms!	We are committed to doing more and maintaining the progress we've made. Thanks for the support.
What is envisioned by "a rapid response project to remove dead and dying trees in high-risk areas of the Ashland Watershed"? Will there be "a rapid response project to remove dead and dying trees" within the City, especially on City-owned properties? If not, why not?	Within the City, private landowners are responsible for removing dead trees and City code can be enforced if that does not happen. The City did implement a helicopter logging project that removed thousands of dead and dying trees in the spring of 2024. The missing piece is federal land, which the CWPP addresses and is referred to in the comment.
I liked the focus on protecting drinking water. The AFR project moved into an all lands project and I did not see a lot of attention on 1) maintenance of the project and 2) landowner investments and	Much of that work is ongoing in existing programs and as such was not included in the CWPP because it's not a

encouraging large landowners to save for maintenance and projects. The map was blurry on page 173. There was a clear partnership need for working with large landowners and, they continue to be the holders of many of the properties closest to the towns center and a description of these properties and the work of All-lands initiative was not included.	new initiative. We are working on making the map more readable, thanks for that comment!
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Adapting to Climate Change in the Watershed to Protect Forest Health and Recreation

Unfortunately, the Ashland watershed cannot be restored to the ecological conditions prevalent before white settlement of the Rogue Valley. Many new species have been introduced, existing species have had some different characteristics selected for, and basic factors of the climate have changed. The planning has to look forward to define what will constitute best forest health in the conditions expected to develop over the future. Since the prior ecological systems evolved in the presence of periodic lower-intensity fires, the likely healthy future ecological systems will also involve periodic lower-intensity fires. The challenge will be to keep these out of the adjacent urban landscape in Ashland. People will need to learn to live with the unavoidable smoke associated with this.	Thank you for the comment. You captured the intent of the watershed planning initiative well. Our current prescribed fire program is constantly putting more “good fire” back into the ecosystem and we expect to increase that footprint with more available funds from the City.
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I appreciate trying things that are in the forefront of addressing the problems.	Thank you for your support of proactive forested areas wildfire risk reduction initiatives.
So necessary! Thank you for laying it out so clearly. once again, funding, funding, funding, emerging from the paradigm shift in Section 10	You're welcome and thank you for acknowledging the need for a paradigm shift and adequate funding to make it happen.
I felt there was a lack of understanding land ownership and the need for pushing maintenance, which is expensive for everyone. Recreation is increasingly the reason people come to visit Ashland. I like focus on Mt. Ashland but the trails for hiking and mountain biking could be emphasized more. I have long felt there could be more public involvement from everyone in the project planning. I saw there was a desire to rapidly develop a plan with USFS and, I think this is needed but we also need to develop more relationships with the Southern Oregon Prescribed Burn Association, recreators and other groups to help push along both the funding and coordination of projects. One of the desired conditions should be increased participation of conservation and monitoring groups like KS Wild or the Klamath Bird Observatory, prescribe burn association and landowners as well as recreationists. There should be both rapid movements on a set of actions and also a diverse set of voices that help set the course for the approach rooted in the climate science and monitoring results of	In general, the ongoing maintenance of past projects under the banner of the AFR project were not focused on because the initiatives are not new, but part of our "business as usual" programs. Thank you for the suggestions on partnerships as we continue to grow the programs to help forest landowners maintain their properties with prescribed fire or otherwise. The City's Forest Plan and Climate Change Addendum outline the need for more diverse set of partners and science to address climate change impacts. The City partnered with the BLM recently to plant more climate adapted species where Douglas-fir have died off and been removed...as one example of work already underway.

completed projects on both public and private lands. I like the focus on innovation, this is excellent, lets also put in efficiency. Other organizations to consider working with are SOCAN, Rogue Climate Action, The Pollinator Project and Understory Initiative as well as Rogue Forest Partners and SOFRC. An immediate plan should be made for potential projects that need maintenance right now (1-2 years) using funding that might already be available through the CFLRP. I might have missed seeing this mentioned.	
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Watershed Protection Challenges and Initiatives	
Stop building in the watershed!	The City's watershed is primarily publicly owned and building is not allowed.
There are existing initiatives/policies that don't get adequate communication to citizens. One example is Drains to Creek. Any NEW communications need much more consistent education and reinforcement.	Thank you for the comment.
Who pays for protecting "the Mt. Ashland Ski Area and recreational assets through strategic defensible space and fuels management"? Isn't the Mt. Ashland Ski Area privately owned?	The Mt Ashland Ski Area is a non-profit entity that took over the operation from the City (as permit holder) after the community paid to rescue the ski area many years ago. Since it is an essential community economic and recreational asset, the City has a stake in the safety of

	the ski area along with the Mt Ashland Association and the USDA Forest Service in partnership. The Association has funds earmarked for fire mitigation and have met with Forest Service staff. External funding should be explored by all entities and having a project named in the CWPP can help with that process.
I would add 'maintain the Ashland Forest Resiliency previous work using prescribed fire and engage landowners in maintenance' or highlight these two needs more throughout. The only partner identified seemed to be USFS. Could a list of previous partners be added and a list of new partners/desired partners be listed?	This is a good comment and has been incorporated. Thank you.

Mutual Aid Firefighting Challenges and Initiatives

Are there firefighting strategies and tactics being developed in the United States and other countries to deal with urban/suburban conflagration fires? For example, innovative use of drone aerial firefighting resources. These might be able to be used when larger manned aerial firefighting resources are grounded due to excessive risk in high wind and low visibility conditions.	If tanker planes can't fly due to wind, drones aren't likely to fly either. Our assessment is that no matter how many firefighting resources are employed, the flammability of structures cannot be overcome during extreme weather. The only way to save a community is to reduce risk through hazard mitigation. We keep thinking that new technology is going to somehow win this battle, and it continues to fail despite billions of dollars of investment.
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	If that money instead goes to retrofitting communities, we could solve this problem in a decade, which is exactly what the CWPP proposes to do.
Firefighters, particularly those brought in from mutual aid areas, need to have commonly-agreed priorities of what assets to protect when resources are insufficient to protect everything.	We have created a table of High Value Assets and Resources in the CWPP that can be used for that purpose.
Interoperability of all firefighting resources is essential when mutual aid teams are assembled. This includes common protocol training.	This training is addressed through the Rogue Valley Fire Chief's Association.
Helping our neighbors is what being a good neighbor is all about.	Well said.
We need to follow the lead of community organizations that have enlisted their community to be attentive and report suspicious behavior. In southern California, community groups banded together to patrol their neighborhoods and they reduced the number of arson caused fires. If someone sees something, they should be empowered to say something to law enforcement.	Thank you for that input. We don't have a serial problem with arson, though on highly dangerous days it's worth considering increased patrols. Our CERT program is a consideration for that job. Thank you.
Local wildfire managers need to be pro active when a foehn wind is predicted. Resources should be staged locally, from other parts of the country if necessary. Lack of local or state availability of wildfire suppression resources should not stop the use of resources from around the country when a PDS is predicted. This practice is common among fire managers in the US and Oregon resources should take	This is already a function of the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office, Oregon Department of Forestry, and Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

advantage of this fact. Although direct suppression may not be possible due to fire behavior, the roles of fire personnel are many, and could assist local resources and perhaps provide a buffer for more efficient fire suppression activities.	
Everything everyone can do won't be enough, as we saw in Palisades, Altadena, and Alameda -- once everyone is out on the line, there is no backup!	Thank you for recognizing fire suppression limitations.
Before the devastating fires in LA, there was significant funding cuts made to the fire department. To prevent further cuts to Ashland Fire & Rescue, there should be an emphasis on maintaining the current conditions and capacity for mutual aid and fire suppression. I am unsure if it should be in this section or another section. A summary of the maintaining the current level of response, equipment, training and personnel at AF&R should be emphasized in 2-5 pages in the plan. I checked and AF&R was mentioned 21 times in the plan but, the highly skilled and trained staff that works on fire suppression and response was not emphasized enough!	Thank you for the comment. Our intent in the CWPP was to emphasize that fire suppression is globally recognized to be insufficient as a solution to the wildfire problem. Not that local resources aren't important to keep small fires small, which we already do quite well. But those aren't the fires that burn down communities and as such, we are choosing to emphasize mitigation as the solution. The City Council recently approved an increase to the Public Safety Fee, which directly supports positions at Ashland Fire & Rescue. Keeping positions at the fire department is very important for structure fires, medical, and rescue responses along with smaller wildfires. However, whether or not there's 10 or 12 firefighters working will not have a significant impact on wildfire

A summary of AF&R training, fire suppression successes and the need to maintain this suppression and response capability should be highlighted! 'Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies through the Rogue Valley Fire Chief's Association. These agencies follow "pre-programmed" wildfire response plans, coordinated by fire chiefs in Jackson and Josephine counties. The Oregon Department of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service also coordinate closely with local fire departments.' (page 191) Go on to say... AF&R currently has highly staff of XXX firefighter paramedics...and has successfully suppressed these XXX grass fires. There should be a set of challenges and initiatives here too for table top exercises, training, maintaining capacity and meeting the growing need for fire suppression and response. While we should share the limitations of fire suppression under the worng conditions (Almeda, perfect example) we should also share the	suppression during extreme weather conditions. Since there isn't a trend in losing positions locally, we chose not to emphasize that aspect of the wildfire solution. It is not meant in any way to devalue the incredibly important role our firefighters play.
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success of having a well-trained fire suppression team at AF&R and importance of preserving this capability.	
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Preventing Wildfires Caused by the Unhoused Challenges and Initiatives

This is a particularly difficult challenge, as many unhoused people suffer from mental illness and alcohol and drug use and so are not able to exercise good care for fire. Homeless encampments typically have large accumulations of highly flammable material. Unhoused people don't have means to fight a fire (extinguishers, etc.) and may not be able to call for firefighting help in a quick manner.	We do have an initiative in the CWPP to help the unhoused with communications and provide them with simple tools like small fire extinguishers. This is a challenging topic that crosses into capacity that is outside of the CWPP's scope but is being addressed by the City and community in other ways. Camping in town is still illegal and keeping people from starting fires accidentally is critical to everyone's safety.
This may be an area where machine-aided detection of fires is important (e.g., infrared cameras placed on high vantage locations scanning the area and automatically notifying authorities of a suspected detection of a fire to initiate investigation.	This already a part of the Oregon Department of Forestry's detection system that covers Ashland from various vantage points.
In the longer term, there are space-based fire detection systems being deployed in low earth orbit that may become relevant to this problem. See https://news.engin.umich.edu/2025/04/first-launch-of-new-fire-monitoring-satellite-aiming-to-transform-wildfire-detection-and-response/	This is exciting and hopefully something that can be funded nationally or at least regionally.

Tricky. If we could easily address this tremendously complex part of our community, we would strike gold. The "answers" are complex. There are no quick fixes. IF we'd accept this reality and problem solve based on actual realities....we might better understand the challenges and maybe the "unhoused" could be invited to problem solve a variety of solutions.	Thank you for the input! We will be working with partners such as OHRA and others to figure out innovative ways to address fire starts among the unhoused.
Please don't permit a campground in town/the watershed for the unhomed.	Thank you for the input. There are currently no plans to do so.
Law enforcement should take complaints of the unhoused starting fires seriously. I know of to instance where unhoused people started fires and they were out on the street after they were apprehended.	An increased penalty system for fire starts was recently proposed by Ashland Police and passed by the City Council.
BAN SMOKING IN PUBLIC!! You mention cigarettes first as a cause, but never address reducing addiction to smoking tobacco and cannabis. Hards not to blame the victims, but we need serious and ongoing outreach to transit unhoused populations to get them away from flammable foliage. See Grants Pass history... major funding needed to divert transient unhoused people to proper housing, mental health, and addiction treatment. It's a national problem, which has to be addressed via housing first, and exponentially increased low income housing.	Smoking in areas of dry vegetation is already a law on ODF protected forestlands (a portion of the City and all forests) and within the City of Ashland. Housing issues are out of the scope of this plan but being addressed elsewhere in the broader community.

Unhoused Residents The latest Point in Time (PIT) count data shows Oregon is leading the nation in the rate of unsheltered, unaccompanied homeless youth and unsheltered homeless families. It is now second only to California in terms of the rate of unsheltered overall homelessness. Oregon has the third highest rate of homelessness in the nation, trailing only New York and Vermont, according to a new federal count of homeless individuals in 2023. An estimated 48 people are unhoused or experience housing insecurity for every 10,000 Oregon residents. Ashland residents living without shelter are among the most at risk from both wildfire and wildfire smoke. A Point In Time census is conducted roughly every two years, and the 2025 count found XXX unsheltered residents in Ashland –an increase/decrease from 2023. Unsheltered residents have less access to cleaner air spaces and less ability to protect themselves from unhealthy air where they live. Emergency heat sheltering is provided through Jackson County, and Ashland has provided shelter space when there is inclement weather. Cleaner air spaces are identified in the Ashland Community Response Plan for Smoke and Jackson County has also developed a community response plan for smoke that has currently not been adopted which also identifies the need for cleaner air spaces. Due to the significant	The ongoing remodel taking place at 2200 Ashland Street (the City’s emergency shelter) will provide a place for a smoke refuge. How many hours of the day/night it would be open during smoke events is a discussion and budget challenge. The resource, once finished, will exist to help people get out of the smoke. The library is also a clean air space, and at times, SOU opens facilities to the public.
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risk to unhoused populations in Ashland and throughout Jackson County, it is highly recommended that the City of Ashland and area partners serving populations without adequate housing offer emergency inclement weather shelters for cleaner air spaces for 24-hours of operation during unhealthy and hazardous AQI conditions. Results from the 2025 survey of residents in Jackson County indicate that XXX% of unsheltered residents have one or more disabilities, a much higher rate than the housed population – including about XXX% with a physical disability and about XXX% with a chronic health condition. Unsheltered residents are also disproportionately likely to be already suffer from major chronic illnesses, including asthma, COPD or substance use disorder.

The 2025 count found that about 10% of unsheltered residents were living in woods or open space. Unsheltered residents living in woods or open space are at high risk from wildfire, living in areas bounded by fire fuels, having barriers to receiving alerts and warnings, and living in locations that may be hidden from view of emergency responders. Other disabilities disproportionately held in the unsheltered community, such as hearing or vision limitations and developmental disabilities, may also create barriers to emergency alerting and evacuation.

Wow, don't take offense to this but, I am deeply concerned that the only problem or challenge we see for the unhoused is fire prevention. It seems like we may have not engaged this population at all during the process of developing this plan. Did anyone interview the unhoused or find out their needs during a wildfire emergency? Having a whole section on placing prevention on the unhoused is quite scary to me because, I don't think that is an adequate strategy! We need EVERY PERSON to focus on fire prevention in Ashland. Including landowners who have escaped burn piles like what just happened a few weeks ago. I would not make this be a highlighted area for the unhoused, wildfire prevention is the responsibility of EVERYONE and you are giving the citizens of Ashland and excuse to punch down on the most vulnerable people. This part of the plan is the one I find the most dissatisfying and unfair. Please do not give everyone a free pass to not do fire prevention on their homes, on all the multifamily housing units that one or two people own by demonizing the unhoused. In doing this, you reinforce the idea that renters and SVP or anyone with barriers should dismiss the things they do have control over. This plan needs to be about empowering individuals and encouraging the participation of the whole community, and requiring those that can to make changes. I would move the unhoused section to the SVP and reframe the whole approach to working with this community.	Reaching out to the unhoused was a topic of discussion and we ultimately did not have the resources to do so after an extensive effort to reach out to vulnerable residents who are currently housed.
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I found this might be the basis for this whole section: 'Fire starts are not uncommon among the unhoused community, which end up threatening other members of the unhoused community, along with nearby structures and properties.'

The above statement should have specific statistics. I found online that an estimated 54% of unintentional starts in LA were from the unhoused but, I am unsure if this stat is true for Ashland.

The unhoused are also disproportionately impacted by smoke:
<https://today.ucsd.edu/story/unhoused-people-are-highly-vulnerable-to-wildfire-smoke>

I also would like to see initiatives for the unhoused that will help them survive a wildfire for evacuation and communication. There could be a need to develop this further from what I am seeing in the current plan.

Pre-planning for Equitable Wildfire Recovery

Thank you for your work on this, it's very impressive and as a resident and member of this community I'm really proud of the work you all have done to help protect us residents. ☐

1: Naming language access as a best practice

On what I believe is page 4/5, under the section 3. Best Practices for More Equitable Recovery, language access should be named as its own bullet point, particularly in recovery communications, applications for assistance, bi-lingual case management, etc. there is a whole chapter on this in the rogue reimagined plan, and I know FEMA (HAD) an equitable recovery guide that mentions it.

2: Housing Affordability shouldn't be a metric for success... it's impossible to ensure survivors won't be priced out

On page 5, section 4. Measurable Indicators Can Help Track Recovery and Equity, the point "Housing Affordability Post-Fire: Tracking rent increases and home prices to ensure survivors aren't priced out." I would recommend rephrasing this. While this data could be helpful to advocate for more government housing recovery and rebuild funding, housing is a private market, so it's impossible to ensure that survivors won't be priced out, and my understanding is housing prices nearly

Extremely helpful feedback. Corrections made as recommended.

always go up after a disaster. I think this is covered under distribution of recovery funds, so I would just recommend removing it, although the data would be helpful to track. What is more trackable is the percentage of a community's population paying in excess of 30% and 50% of their income on housing. This is data that is already being captured by housing partners. Data from sites like redfin and realtor can provide historical information about rent prices and home prices. Additionally, data on individuals is going to be incredibly difficult to determine due to privacy concerns. So again, high-level aggregate, sure. But telling a story about housing and rental price increases and population level changes is about as close as it might get.

3: LTRG is a national function

Under the section where we are mentioned, I think it would be helpful to mention that LTRGs are a national best practice recommend by FEMA for post disaster recovery, and that they exist across oregon and the nation. You could use this language if you like:

"Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) are a nationally recognized best practice recommended by FEMA for post-disaster recovery. LTRGs exist across Oregon and the country, supporting local communities in rebuilding efforts after federally declared disasters. When a disaster strikes, an LTRG convenes community-based organizations, government entities, faith-based groups, developers, business owners,

and others working with disaster survivors to coordinate recovery and rebuilding. Long-term recovery—the process of restoring a community—can last three to ten years depending on the disaster’s scope.” 4. Defining the COAD correctly “The RV COAD is a program of the Jackson County Community Long Term Recovery Group (JCC LTRG) serving both Jackson and Josephine Counties. It coordinates with local government agencies to support an organized, collaborative response to and recovery from disasters. JCC LTRG works in partnership with nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations, as well as individual volunteers, to coordinate local recovery efforts aligned with FEMA’s long-term recovery framework. Our focus is on addressing unmet needs and advancing equitable support for fire-impacted communities across Jackson County.”	
5. Emergency Planning RC-2.5 — I would not name RFU explicitly since organizations change and missions change, and they are focused on feeding. I would suggest changing this statement to 'develop joint plans with non-governmental organizations working in disaster response.	Thank you for sharing your perspective based on experience.
Planning for community recovery after a mega fire event is daunting. Many, even most, residents and businesses will leave, likely	Thank you for your insightful and candid comments. We could not find any examples of a community that had

not to return. What examples are available for U.S. communities that have recovered their identity after a mega fire event, say within five years? Ashland would be severely harmed by the loss of its tourism and education draws as a result of a major fire. It is unclear how these could be restored in a timely manner after the destruction of the venues and the departure of vital staff.	fully recovered after five years of experiencing a catastrophic wildfire. However, many communities--in spite of huge challenges--have made significant progress from which we can learn.
It just takes ONE bad behavior in an entire city of "compliance" to have a catastrophic event, especially if we're exceptionally DRY and the wind is blowing. Maybe start with planning for the WORST case scenario???? Most citizens have no idea that the wooden trellis in front of their home and/or wooden table or open doggy door or window could draw fire into our homes in an instant.	Thank you for your powerful reminder. You're absolutely right--just one vulnerability can have devastating consequences, especially under extreme conditions. The CWPP emphasizes planning for worst-case scenarios and increasing public awareness about often-overlooked home features that can invite fire. Your comment reinforces the urgency of widespread education and proactive mitigation.
Funding, funding, funding. But also, finding ways for volunteers to participate incrementally without the need for the amount of hours required just to read this plan -- it's an incredibly diverse and complex situation, that will have to be prioritized in advance -- look at Paradise, Pacific Palisades, Altadena, Talent, Phoenix to see what happens without the planning. But even the planning will be insufficient if we don't accomplish the kind of paradigm shift discussed in Section 10.	Thank you for this thoughtful and urgent comment. We fully agree--planning for worst-case scenarios is essential, especially given how quickly fire can spread from a single point of failure. Your insights about overlooked home features, the critical need for funding, and the value of accessible volunteer opportunities highlight exactly why this plan must be both strategic

	and actionable. The CWPP acknowledges that real progress requires not just planning, but a broader cultural shift—one that makes fire resilience a shared, ongoing priority across the entire community.
funding, funding, funding, but also paradigm shift -- get people to realize that we are already at risk of disaster and act accordingly to reduce risk in advance, through collective coordination. I don't want to replace my simple wooden fence with chain link -- but I can't afford tasteful wrought iron. How we join together as neighborhoods to help each other on an accelerated time schedule.	Thank you for your thoughtful comment. You're absolutely right—real progress requires both sustained funding and a collective shift in mindset. Many residents face tough trade-offs between safety, cost, and aesthetics, and the CWPP recognizes the need for affordable, fire-safe options. Your call for neighborhood-level coordination and mutual support is exactly the kind of community-driven approach that can accelerate risk reduction and make solutions more accessible to all.
"Ashland's CWPP establishes a vision that community recovery will be organized, inclusive, and effective ready to restore housing, businesses, and vital services after a disaster." How will this avoid "inequalities" when "iconic attractions" and preferred businesses [as surveyed?] are given priority over all else, including residents?	Thank you for your important question. The CWPP scoring rubric prioritizes infrastructure, schools, and key economic drivers not because they are more important than homes, but because they are essential to the function and recovery of the entire city. These community resources and assets are often unique, extremely costly to rebuild, and serve broader public needs—including residents.

	The CWPP goals and implementation blueprint is grounded in equity and emphasizes inclusive recovery. The goal is not to prioritize one group over another, but to ensure that housing, services, and livelihoods can all be restored as part of a coordinated recovery. Your comment highlights the need for transparency in how these priorities are communicated and balanced moving forward. Thank you.
"Develop a full Wildfire Recovery Plan as soon as possible" -- "as soon as possible"? Why is this given priority over wildfire prevention and evacuation planning? A "full Recovery Plan"? Where is the "full" mitigation plan? Where is the "full" evacuation plan? ASAP for the Recovery Plan, but 10 years for mitigation [and the evacuation plan]? Misplaced priorities? Cart before the horse?	Thank you for your comment and for raising important concerns about priorities. We agree that evacuation and prevention are essential—and want to clarify that these efforts have been ongoing in Ashland for nearly two decades, including significant investments in evacuation planning, community education, and risk reduction. The recommendation to develop a full Wildfire Recovery Plan “as soon as possible” is not meant to deprioritize prevention or evacuation—it reflects the understanding that recovery planning has historically been underdeveloped, despite its critical role in long-term

	community resilience. It's not an either/or choice, but a both/and approach. We must prevent and prepare for fire, while also being ready to recover effectively if disaster strikes. Your comment highlights the importance of making the reasoning for the priorities clear.
"Track and prioritize the needs of displaced residents" -- isn't their #1 "need" to be displaced safely [aka, evacuated]?	You're absolutely right—safe evacuation is the first and most urgent need during a wildfire event. The recommendation to “track and prioritize the needs of displaced residents” refers to the longer-term needs that follow evacuation, such as shelter, healthcare, financial assistance, and pathways to return. Both immediate safety and long-term recovery are essential, and your comment underscores the importance of addressing the full arc of resident needs—from evacuation through recovery.
"In the aftermath of wildfire, Ashland will recover faster, rebuild stronger, and protect the most vulnerable" -- "in the aftermath"? Shouldn't the top priority be "protecting the most vulnerable" during a fire, as when evacuating them?	Protecting the most vulnerable during a wildfire, especially through effective evacuation, is a top priority. The objective that emphasizes long-term support and rebuilding does not replace the urgent need for life safety during an event.

Implementation Blueprint and Progress Tracking Framework	
We need leadership that thinks about the future on and can rally the people of Ashland to think and act for the future too.	We agree—strong, progressive leadership is essential to meet the challenges of wildfire risk and climate change. The CWPP aims to inspire both leadership and community-wide action, recognizing that long-term resilience depends on shared vision, commitment, and collaboration across all of Ashland.
The City and its departments must lead by example by adopting fire safe principles such as not using flammable mulch and planting materials.	We fully agree—city departments must lead by example in applying fire-safe practices, including the use of non-flammable mulch and low-flammability plants. Demonstrating these principles in public spaces builds trust, sets a visible standard, and helps encourage community-wide adoption.
"90% Wildfire Ready by 2036 ...Achieve 90% wildfire-resistant properties within 10 years." "Within 10 years would be by summer 2035. Why 10 years? Why not 5 years? Or 3 years? Or 1 year? What can be accomplished in 1, 3, and 5 years, and how will that be measured?"	The 10-year timeline is intended to set an ambitious yet realistic goal, recognizing the scale of change needed and the capacity of the community to implement it. That said, you're absolutely right—setting clear milestones at 1, 3, and 5 years is essential for measuring progress and maintaining momentum. The CWPP will be reviewed annually, with a more comprehensive review every few years to assess outcomes, adjust strategies, and

	accelerate actions where possible. Your feedback reinforces the need for clear benchmarks and accountability throughout the implementation process.
"Wildfire resilience isn't built overnight. It requires sustained investment, leadership, and community partnership over many years." Yes, it must be "sustained over many years" [iif not forever], BUT it should not be allowed to take "many years" to accomplish." Ten [10] years to achieve a "90% wildfire-ready goal" is not very impressive. In fact, it is rather pathetic.	Thank you for your candid feedback. We understand your concern, and we share the urgency. The 10-year goal reflects the scale of transformation needed across thousands of properties, varying ownerships, and resource constraints—but it's not a reason to delay action. In fact, much can and must be accomplished in the first 1–3 years. Your comment underscores the importance of setting clear near-term benchmarks and ensuring that momentum starts immediately, not sometime in the distant future.
So sorry I didn't have time to delve into this deeply -- along with paradigm shift, this is where the next round of attention should be focused. well-stated; feeds well into the implementation section.	Thank you for acknowledging the need for a paradigm shift.
Recommend annual formal review of the CWPP and adopt any changes and updates via amendments to the plan.	Great recommendation which we intend to adopt.
Complete an updated UAS LIDAR survey every five years to track changes to fuels and mitigation efforts.	This will be considered as part of ongoing management on City (and other) forestlands. Lidar technology is still

	emerging and tracking surface fuels via Lidar is not yet a reliable technique.
"Establish a full-time CWPP Implementation Coordinator to drive initiatives, manage grants, and report progress." A new City employee? How are Ashland residents to believe this 'full-time Coordinator' will accomplish these objectives when the City [AF&R?] totally blew the \$3 million FEMA mitigation grant, and then had the nerve to blame City residents for that failure?	Thank you for your comment. We understand the frustration and concern stemming from past experiences, and accountability is important. The proposed CWPP Implementation Coordinator is intended to improve transparency, coordination, and follow-through—precisely to avoid the kinds of setbacks you’ve described. This role would be focused on facilitating partnerships, ensuring measurable progress, managing funding effectively, and keeping the public informed. Your comment reinforces why this position must come with clear expectations, oversight, and community trust.
"Leverage local wildfire funding to further fund and build a full-service wildfire mitigation initiative to equitably implement the CWPP." What does "leverage local wildfire funding" mean? What is envisioned as "a full-service wildfire mitigation initiative"? Who determines what is an "equitable implementation" of the CWPP?	Thank you for your thoughtful questions. "Leverage local wildfire funding" means using existing city funds as a foundation to attract additional resources—such as state, federal, or private grants—to expand our wildfire mitigation capacity. A "full-service wildfire mitigation initiative" envisions a coordinated effort that offers education, technical assistance, home assessments, fuels reduction, and structural hardening support.

	Equitable implementation means ensuring that resources and assistance reach all parts of the community, especially those most at risk or with the least capacity to act.
"Review and update the CWPP initiatives and strategies every five years"? That's only 1 review/update between now and the "by 2036" 90% goal. Shouldn't such reviews and updates be more frequent, such as every 2 to 3 years?	Thank you for your comment. You make an excellent point. While a full CWPP update is planned every five years, the plan also calls for annual reviews to track progress, adjust timelines, and update priorities as needed. Your suggestion to consider more frequent in-depth reviews—every 2 to 3 years—is well taken and reinforces the importance of staying responsive and adaptable on the path to achieving the 90% goal by 2036.
Maintain the CWPP as a living document that continues to be relevant and guide the overall vision to survive and thrive in the face of escalating wildfire risk." A living document needs constant maintenance [ala review/update].	Thank you for your comment. You're absolutely right—a "living document" requires ongoing attention to remain useful and relevant. In addition to scheduled five-year updates, the CWPP includes annual reviews to assess progress, make timely adjustments, and ensure it continues to reflect current conditions, risks, and community priorities. Your comment highlights the importance of treating the plan as an active tool—not a

	static report. To accomplish this, the city needs a dedicated full-time CWPP Implementation Coordinator.
"Advocate for sustainable funding to keep Ashland protected for future generations." "Advocate" how?	In this context, "advocate" means actively working to secure long-term funding through multiple avenues—such as engaging with state and federal agencies, building partnerships with regional and nonprofit organizations, pursuing grants, and communicating the community's needs to elected officials. Your comment underscores the importance of clearly defining how advocacy efforts will be carried out and by whom.

Potential Funding Options

Note that grant money generally requires matching funds from the community. A major challenge will be to identify community partners in Ashland with deep pockets and the willingness to make such contributions. Ashland definitely has numbers of wealthy residents, who don't necessarily stand out in public visibility. How can these people best be tapped without causing pushback?	Thank you for this thoughtful and practical comment. You're right—matching fund requirements are a major consideration in pursuing grants, and engaging potential local contributors must be done carefully. Building trust, demonstrating clear impact, and offering meaningful recognition are key strategies. Your comment highlights the need for a respectful, well-planned approach to
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	engaging Ashland's philanthropic capacity in support of community-wide wildfire resilience.
I would vote in support of any measure needed to fund this	Thank you for your commitment to making Ashland a wildfire resistant and resilient community. See answer below.
Tax every resident in town and make them pay for their own wildfire mitigation.	Thank you for sharing your perspective. City Council approved a new wildfire risk reduction fee on water meters starting on July 1, 2025. This fee will help pay for city staff to facilitate certain activities.
Take advantage of media like YouTube, where many landscapers do yard cleanup/hazard reduction for free in exchange for the publicity on YouTube. (example: Blessing Boys, SB Mowing). They have hundreds of thousands views and use the publicity and money generated to augment regular paid work. Watching this landscape work is curiously addictive--a reason why it is successful as a free service. There are many stories on their channels about people who have been sick, are elderly and can no longer take care of their property.	Good suggestions. We will add this to the list of ideas, and we recognize the need to assist lower income and physically challenged citizens.
I don't think we have enough money in the rural areas to do what is needed -- has to come through broad-scale, statewide and national contributions to pool financial and technological resources.	You've raised a critical point--many rural areas lack the local funding needed to address wildfire risk at scale. While Ashland is semi-urban and urban, portions of the community are rural. The CWPP recognizes this and

	emphasizes the importance of securing broader state and federal support, as well as building partnerships that can bring in both financial and technical resources. Your comment reinforces the need for coordinated, multi-level investment to ensure no community is left behind.
We just have to do it! Maximum assessments to share costs equitably.	Thank you for sharing your perspective.
It was good to see examples of what other communities have done for funding. I think over relying on outside resources may not be the only path forward. I noticed that so far, there is not discussion of tax incentives like what there is for energy conservation. There could be the potential to also list innovations in funding and new approaches as an option.	Thank you for the comment. We will explore all funding options. Note that the City Council adopted an updated utility fee that will be dedicated to wildfire risk reduction.
Listing the development of innovative sources should included. There was not discussion of creating a wildfire fund that can be donated to...I could see people may want to donate into a fund for Ashland in their wills or might make a regular donation monthly.	All options will be considered to fund implementation of the CWPP. Thanks for adding another one!

Initiative Suggestion for CWPP Appendix B: *Requiring Wildfire Safety Inspections and Inspection Report Followed by Compliance During Ashland Home Sale Process*

This is a significant overlooked opportunity in the otherwise comprehensive CWPP draft that could be implemented with little if any cost to the City of Ashland, as has been demonstrated successfully in *multiple California towns. It offers the potential to bring every home sold in Ashland up to CWPP standards at the time of sale, contributing significantly to Ashland's adaptation to wildfire threats with minimal effort once codified.

*(California has had a statewide law requiring compliance with defensible space requirements since 2021 at point of home sale. A number of California towns and fire protection districts have even stricter mandates in place.)

The average US homeowner puts their home up for sale an average of once every 11.6 years, according to Redfin's 2024-2025 reports (down from once every 7 years before Covid). It is easy to see how quickly this turnover could transform our town. In fact, while undoubtedly many Ashland homeowners don't move that frequently, this statistic almost falls within the CWPP's 10 year Target!

Thank you for this well-researched and detailed suggestion. A point-of-sale wildfire inspection requirement is a strategy with potential to accelerate risk reduction at minimal long-term cost. However, given the need to create and manage a program has staff costs on all sides of the equation, we have to weigh the return on investment that a real estate program would have. Another drawback is the geographic context where homes sell in random locations that don't create a cohesive strategy for wildfire protection. As the CWPP explains, attaining significant level of mitigation across entire neighborhoods, and eventually the whole town, is what the science shows is most effective. One home in compliance is no help if surrounding homes are out of compliance. The data derived from the CWPP planning effort, alongside the growing body of science on wildfire mitigation, should inform where to invest scarce

Cost to Ashland: in several California municipalities, the fee that is charged for the required Wildfire safety inspection comes close to or completely pays the salary of the full-time inspector hired by the government to handle inspections and compliance follow ups. That suggests this addition has the potential to be the most cost-effective recommendation in this appendix that offers significant potential for widespread wildfire adaptation.

In 2024, according to <https://www.alicelema.com/blog/ashland-homes-sold-in-2024/>, there were 258 residential real estate transactions in Ashland. If Ashland charged a \$400 inspection fee during the home sale process, 2024's transactions would have generate about \$103,000 towards the salary and benefits for an employee dedicated to home sale inspections and compliance enforcement. Annually, there are 241 work days in a typical work week, including time off for weekends, vacations, and public holidays, which suggests a single Ashland-only inspector might have a workload of about one inspection and one follow-up per workday. A year's trial would reveal whether this workload could be met by a half-time position.

resources. Careful consideration will be given to the idea of real estate transactions alongside other strategies. It is also worth considering that the insurance crisis may drive future real estate transactions to include wildfire risk reduction standards. The CWPP addresses the insurance issues and connects to a developing industry standard called Wildfire Prepared Home, from the Institute for Business and Home Safety.

Your input reinforces the value of learning from successful programs elsewhere and exploring how a similar approach could be adapted to fit Ashland's unique context.

Acceptance: between January’s horrific Los Angeles fires and our Alameda fire, and judging from frequent concerns expressed by a significant number of residents in recent council meetings, it is reasonable to believe there is now serious widespread citizen concern about wildfire in Ashland. This should make a home sale inspection and subsequent compliance requirement a much easier pill to swallow in our town.

Initial Rogue Valley Trial: When John Stromberg was Mayor of Ashland, he, plus Chris Chambers and Ashland’s fire Chief, with Ashland’s then current city administrator, the Chair of the WSC (Ashland Wildfire Safety Commission), and Rogue Valley Realty Association (RVAR) leadership met a number of times to discuss wildfire safety inspections during home sales. RVAR leadership agreed that this could be an important and viable system to promote change, but wanted to start with voluntary program of education, followed by an evaluation after two years to see how successful it was. RVAR gave AF&% a grant which funded the production of an informational brochure that RVAR realtors were then supposed to pass out to homebuyers and/or sellers, and an informational fact sheet that was supposed to accompany every escrow closure. Fire Department-based trainings were offered to valley realtors to familiarize them with the issues. RVAR’s follow-up poll, held several years later, revealed that

the voluntary program had been largely ineffective, albeit with the best of intentions, with few realtors actively promoting this program.

California Program Perspective:

Prior to the initial meetings with RVAR, Ashland’s WSC Chair interviewed several principal Marin County realtors involved in co-creating the Marin County Inspection Program described below, working with Marin’s local government and fire department leadership. They described how they were initially resistant to adding what felt like fairly onerous new regulations that could inhibit the sales process, but eventually agreed to a voluntary program that soon morphed into a compliance-based program. Years later, at the time of WSC Chair’s interview, they said that while they still sometimes found the requirements challenging from a realty professional perspective, as homeowners themselves in the area, they were very glad the requirements had been implemented. There was no question in their mind that the program had made Marin neighborhoods far safer. They said it was now commonplace for homeowners in their area to consider wildfire hardening of structures and landscaping a normal part of the home staging process when getting ready for sale, often starting that work even before contacting a realtor.

California Program Details:

1. Statewide Requirement: Assembly Bill 38 (AB 38)

Since July 1, 2021, California Civil Code Section 1102.19 mandates that sellers of residential properties located in designated High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) provide buyers with documentation confirming compliance with defensible space requirements. If such documentation isn't available by the close of escrow, the seller and buyer must enter into a written agreement wherein the buyer agrees to obtain the necessary documentation within one year post-sale.

2. Local Ordinances in Marin County

Beyond the state requirements, several municipalities within Marin County have enacted stricter local ordinances:

- City of Larkspur & Town of Corte Madera: These jurisdictions require a Fire Department Residential Resale Inspection for all single-family dwellings listed for sale within their WUI. The inspection focuses on ensuring compliance with both state law and local ordinances related to wildfire hazards. Violations identified must be corrected within 30 days, and the report must be included in the seller's disclosures.
- Towns of Ross, Fairfax, and San Anselmo: The Ross Valley Fire Department mandates Residential Property Resale Inspections **for any single-family dwelling listed for sale within these towns**. The inspection ensures compliance with state law and local ordinances, primarily focusing on wildfire hazards. Buyers are required to maintain

properties in compliance with vegetation management and wildfire hazard codes and standards. • Kentfield Fire Protection District: While not having a dedicated Home Resale Inspection Program for properties outside High or Very High Fire Severity Zones, the district provides state-mandated reviews and evaluations for properties within these zones. Compliance issues identified must be corrected within 30 days, and failure to do so may result in penalties, abatement, and liens. • Stinson Beach & Bolinas: [All] properties in these areas are subject to AB 38 requirements. Sellers must provide buyers with documentation confirming compliance with defensible space requirements. If such documentation isn't available by the close of escrow, a written agreement must be made for the buyer to obtain it within a year. 3. Woodside Fire Protection District (San Mateo County): Communities including Portola Valley, Emerald Hills, and Ladera require sellers to provide proof of compliance with new fuel mitigation ordinances at the time of sale. Key California Inspection Criteria During these inspections, fire officials assess various aspects to ensure compliance with wildfire safety standards:	
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• Defensible Space: Maintenance of defensible space ranging from 30 to 150 feet from all structures, depending on topography and vegetation. • Vegetation Management: Removal of all dead vegetation and fire-hazardous plants (e.g., juniper, bamboo, Italian cypress) within specified distances from structures. • Tree Maintenance: Pruning tree limbs extending within 10 feet of chimney outlets or 6 feet from roofs, and ensuring trees adjacent to buildings are free of dead wood. • Address Visibility: Ensuring address numbers are at least 4 inches tall, of a contrasting color, and plainly visible from the road. • Roadway Clearance: Clearing combustible vegetation within 10 feet horizontally and 15 feet overhead of roadways and driveways. • Chimney Safety: Installation of spark arrestors with specific mesh sizes on all chimneys. • Structural Hardening: Assessment of vents, gutters, roofing, siding, and attachments for fire resistance.	
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Closing Thoughts

Where does hardening of the community against earthquake risks fit into the plan? Note that many of the older buildings in Ashland are not	Thank you for your concern about the relationship between earthquakes and wildfire. You're absolutely right
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earthquake-safe—for example, they are not bolted to their foundations. Earthquakes frequently break gas lines, creating ignition sources for urban conflagrations. Earthquake shut-off valves for gas lines could help alleviate this problem.	that earthquake risks—especially related to older, unreinforced buildings and gas infrastructure—pose serious safety concerns, including potential fire ignition. While this CWPP focuses specifically on wildfire risk, earthquake preparedness is addressed through separate emergency response and hazard mitigation plans. Your comment highlights important connections between disaster types, and we agree that coordinated planning across all hazards—including the promotion of gas shut-off valves and seismic retrofits—is essential for true community resilience.
This is a great proposal, comprehensive and easy to read. So valuable	Thank you for the affirmation.
This is a gargantuan undertaking, carried out with minimal awareness from the general public. Here's hoping the paradigm shift can occur ahead of the disaster!	Thank you for the affirmation. We certainly share your hope for a paradigm shift before it is too late.
I feel this is your opportunity to say that wildfire science has proved that if individual home owners and communities act swiftly, they can prevent loss. This does not seem emphasized enough.	Thank you for your comment. You're absolutely right—decades of wildfire science clearly show that proactive actions by individual homeowners and communities can significantly reduce the risk of home loss. The CWPP is grounded in that science, and your feedback highlights the need to emphasize this message more strongly.

	Swift, collective action truly can change outcomes, and that is a central goal of the plan.
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Disclaimer

I'm happy to hold you folks harmless, knowing all your efforts are sincere, well-intentioned, and aimed at achieving the kinds of paradigm shift needed to change public perceptions and actions.	Thank you for your comment.
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Community Profile Information (Appendix A)

Seems comprehensive and well-stated.	Thank you for the affirmation.
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Anything Else?

I give great credit to people putting this together. I think it is very well done and is a great example of Ashland's motto Better Together. I appreciate the enormous amount of work this represents and am eager to see the next steps being pursued. I am happy to offer to contribute to the initiative in any way that would be useful.	Much appreciated expression of support.
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How about using solutions from other communities that have dealt with this? Ashland is not unique. No one like to look to California for solutions, but that is where they may be.	Thank you for your comment. In fact, the strategies included in this plan draw heavily from wildfire risk reduction best practices developed in California and other fire-prone regions, both nationally and globally. We carefully reviewed approaches tested in diverse communities and incorporated lessons from successful programs—especially those with demonstrated outcomes. While wildfire risk is complex and evolving, this plan reflects both current science and the lived experience of other communities working to reduce losses and build resilience.
This review was the least successful part of reading the CWPP. I know you need responses/data that can be easily quantified but it was not satisfying to complete.	Thank you for the feedback about your comment experience. We will try to improve the experience in future surveys.
The report itself is amazing both in content and ambition – Ashland is VERY fortunate to have this. Thank you to all who made it possible	Much appreciated expression of support. Thank you for reviewing the draft CWPP.
Deep gratitude to ALL who contributed to this!	Much appreciated expression of support. Thank you for reviewing the draft CWPP.