

The background of the slide features a light beige, marbled texture. On the left side, there is a vertical branch with a large, dried, brownish leaf. A horizontal branch with a smaller, similar leaf extends from the bottom left towards the right side of the slide.

# **Becoming Fire Adapted: Ashland's Wildfire Safety Strategy**

**Wildfire Hazard Zone Expansion**

**Land Use Code Update**

**Prohibited Flammable Plant List**



# Ashland's Comprehensive Wildfire Risk Management Work to Date

- National Fire Plan Homeowner Assistance Grants (2002-2008)
- Ashland Watershed Protection Project (2000-2004)
- Existing Wildfire Hazard Zone Regulations (1994 to Present)
- AF&R Structure Protection and Wildfire Suppression Training
- Mutual Aid Agreements (USFS, ODF, JCFD#5, RVFCA)
- Ashland Forest Resiliency All-Lands Community Wildfire Buffer (2013)
- Ashland Forest Resiliency Watershed Fuels Reduction/Restoration (2010)
- Fire Prevention (Smokey Bear in Schools, Wildfire Safety Assessments)
- Summer Forest Patrol Contract with Sherriff's Office (2000)
- Illegal Camping Ban in Ashland Watershed
- Fireworks Ban
- City Forestlands Management Program (1995 to Present)
- Fire Season Public Equipment Use Restrictions
- Weed Abatement Ordinance/Enforcement
- Jackson County Title III Grants (2002 to Present)
- Established AF&R Forest Division (2013)



# Why is this Update Needed?

- Protect life, and property, firefighter safety, watershed, and quality of life
- Climate change is increasing wildfire size and intensity.
- Destructive wildfires are occurring throughout the City, outside of the currently regulated Wildfire Lands Overlay.
- Follows 2015-17 Council Goals, CEAP Adaptation Strategies, 2004 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, AF&R Strategic Plan, and FEMA Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Ensures all new construction meets wildfire safety standards.
- Flammable plantings have proliferated around existing structures throughout Ashland.



# Regulatory and Voluntary Efforts

## REGULATORY

- WHZ Expansion to include the entire city limits
- Amendments to current Wildfire Lands Overlay Ordinance
- Flammable Plant List Resolution that would not allow new plantings within 30 ft of any structure across the City.

## VOLUNTARY

- Firewise USA neighborhoods program. *Ongoing since 2010.*
- Free Firewise home assessments, City-wide. *Ongoing since 2010.*
- Grant-based landowner incentives (FEMA). *Projected by 2019.*



# Regulatory Elements of Wildfire Safety

- Expanded Wildfire Lands Overlay
- Updated Land Use Ordinance Components
- Prohibited Highly Flammable Plant List Resolution

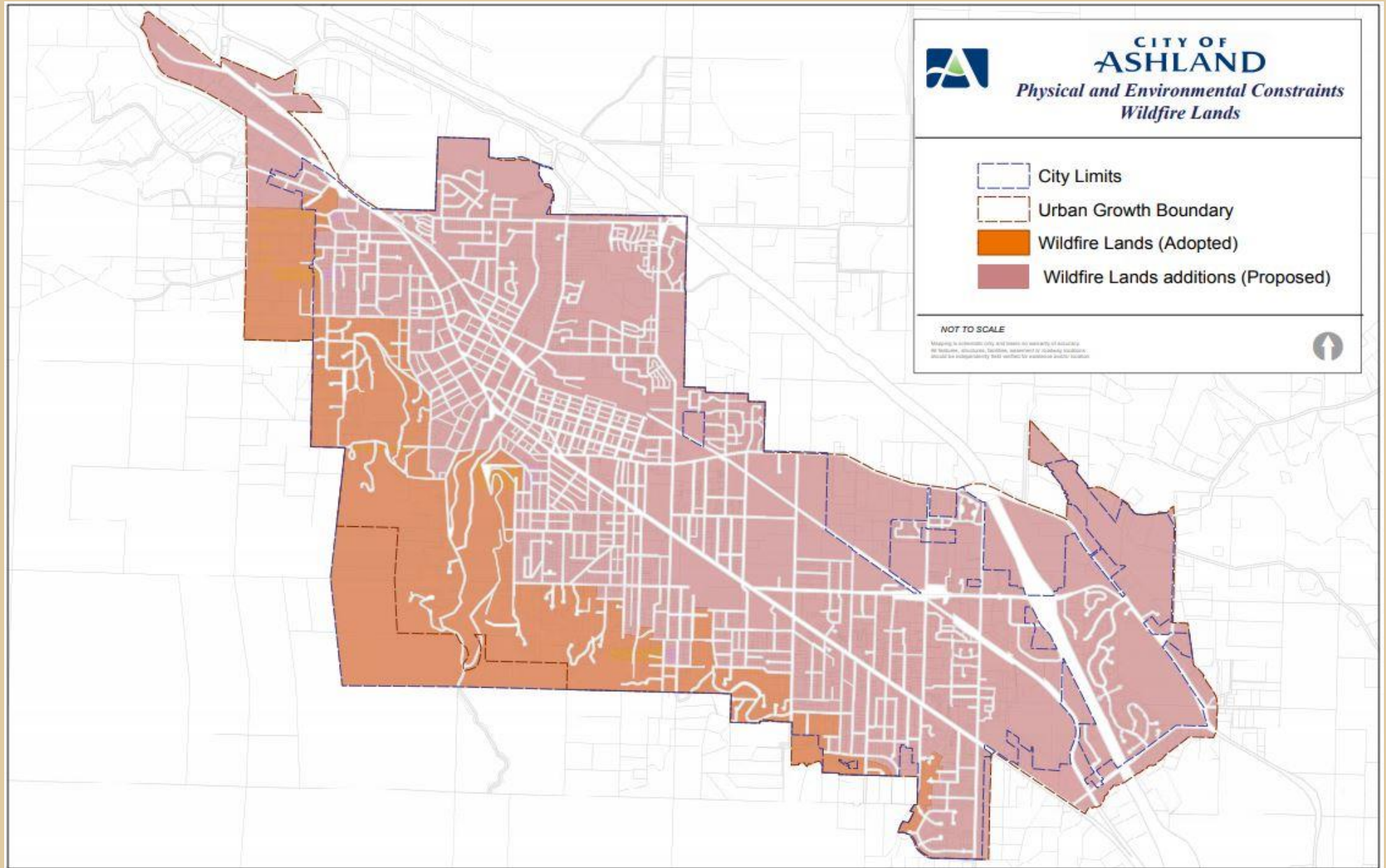


# Regulatory Elements of Wildfire Safety

- **Expand Wildfire Lands Overlay to City Limits**



# Wildfire Lands Overlay Expansion







WILDLANDS



INTERMIX



INTERFACE



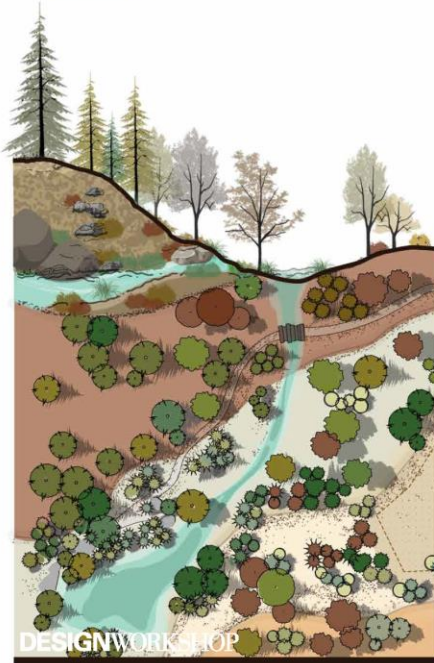
OCCLUDED



EMBER ZONE



# CONTINUUM OF WILDLAND TO URBAN DENSITIES



DESIGNWORKSHOP

WILDLANDS



RURAL



SUBURBAN



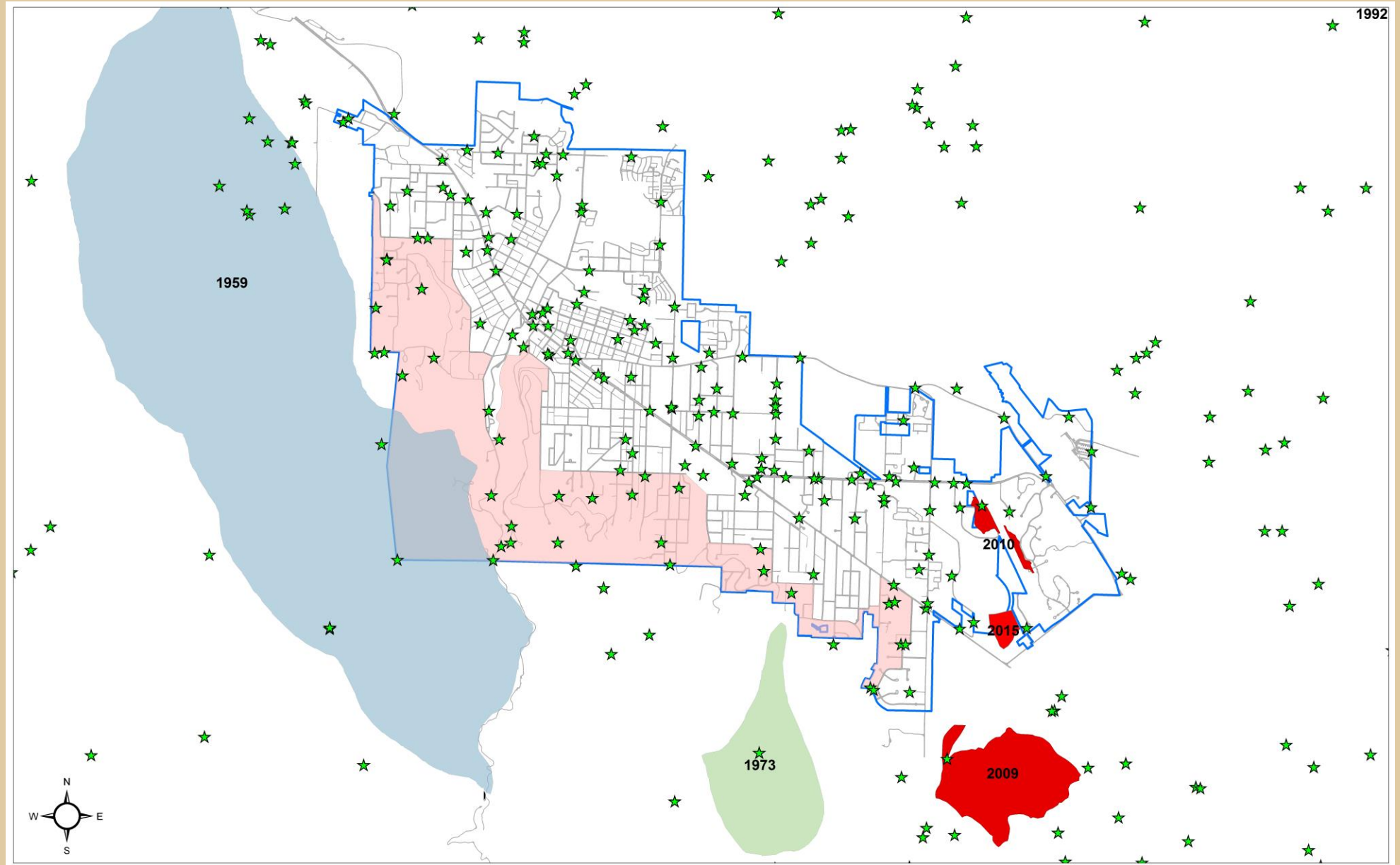
GENERAL RESIDENTIAL



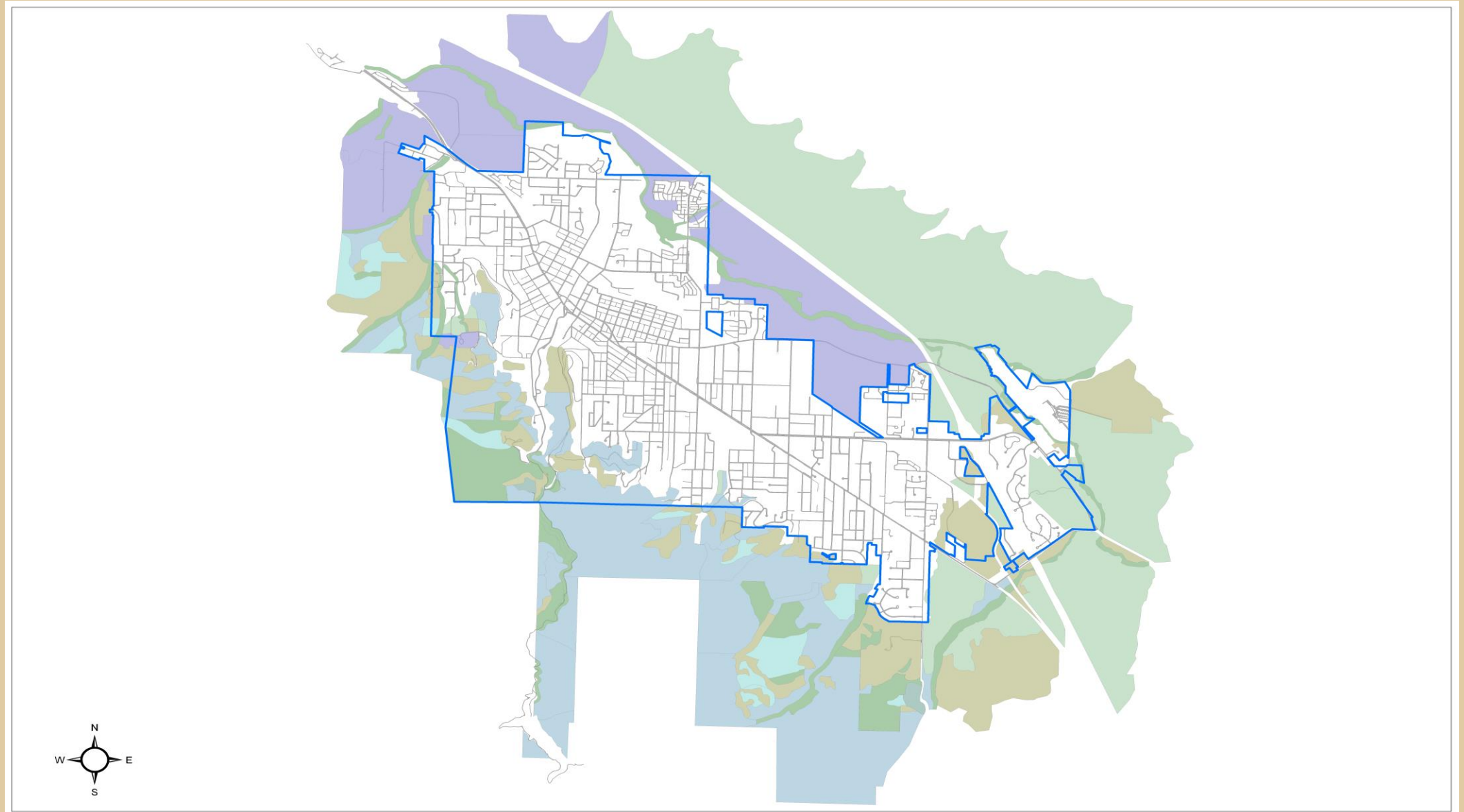
URBAN / TOWN CENTER



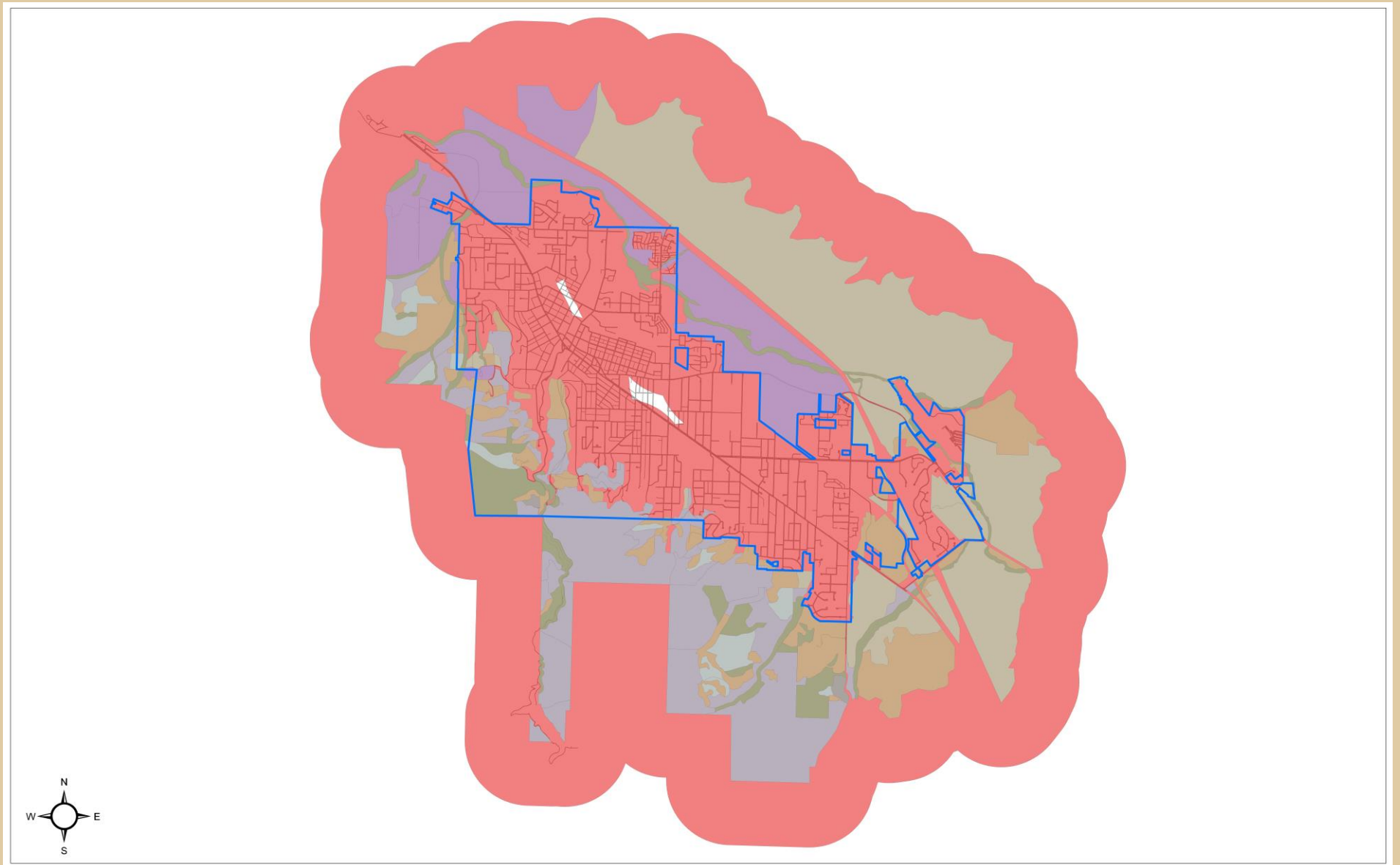
# Ashland Wildfires and Ignitions



# Wildfire Fuels Mapping



# Wildfire 1/2 Mile Spotting Distance









# Regulatory Elements of Wildfire Safety

- **Expanded Wildfire Lands Overlay**
- **Updated Land Use Ordinance Components**
  - The ordinance is keyed to the wildfire lands overlay.
  - The ordinance only applies- and has always applied- to new construction and planning actions
  - The ordinance has been proposed to apply to the whole city. Here are highlights of the ways at which the amended code makes citizens safer with respect to wildfire.





# Ordinance Highlights

- A 30-foot safety zone\* is required for building expansions, outbuildings, and decks that increase lot coverage by 200 ft<sup>2</sup> or more.
- New buildings over 200 ft<sup>2</sup> on vacant lots requiring fuels reduction\* on the entire property.
  - \*See General Fuel Modification Area
- New subdivisions, land partitions, and planning actions require a Fire Prevention & Control Plan.
- No new wood shake roofing or new attached flammable fencing will be allowed city-wide for new roofing or fences.

**BUT...**

- Flexibility built in for significant trees, ignition resistant construction, and special onsite circumstances





# Nuts and Bolts: General Fuel Modification Areas

- Remove all dead or dying vegetation
- Remove Prohibited Flammable Plants from within 5' of new structures or additions; no mulch or combustibles allowed.
- No new plants from the Prohibited Flammable Plant List within 30' of a structure.
- Thin existing vegetation to create “spacing” between Flammable Plants\*.
- New attached fences non-combustible within 5' of point of attachment.

\*Code reference: 18.3.10.100.B.2

# Fences Burning in Santa Rosa Tubbs Fire

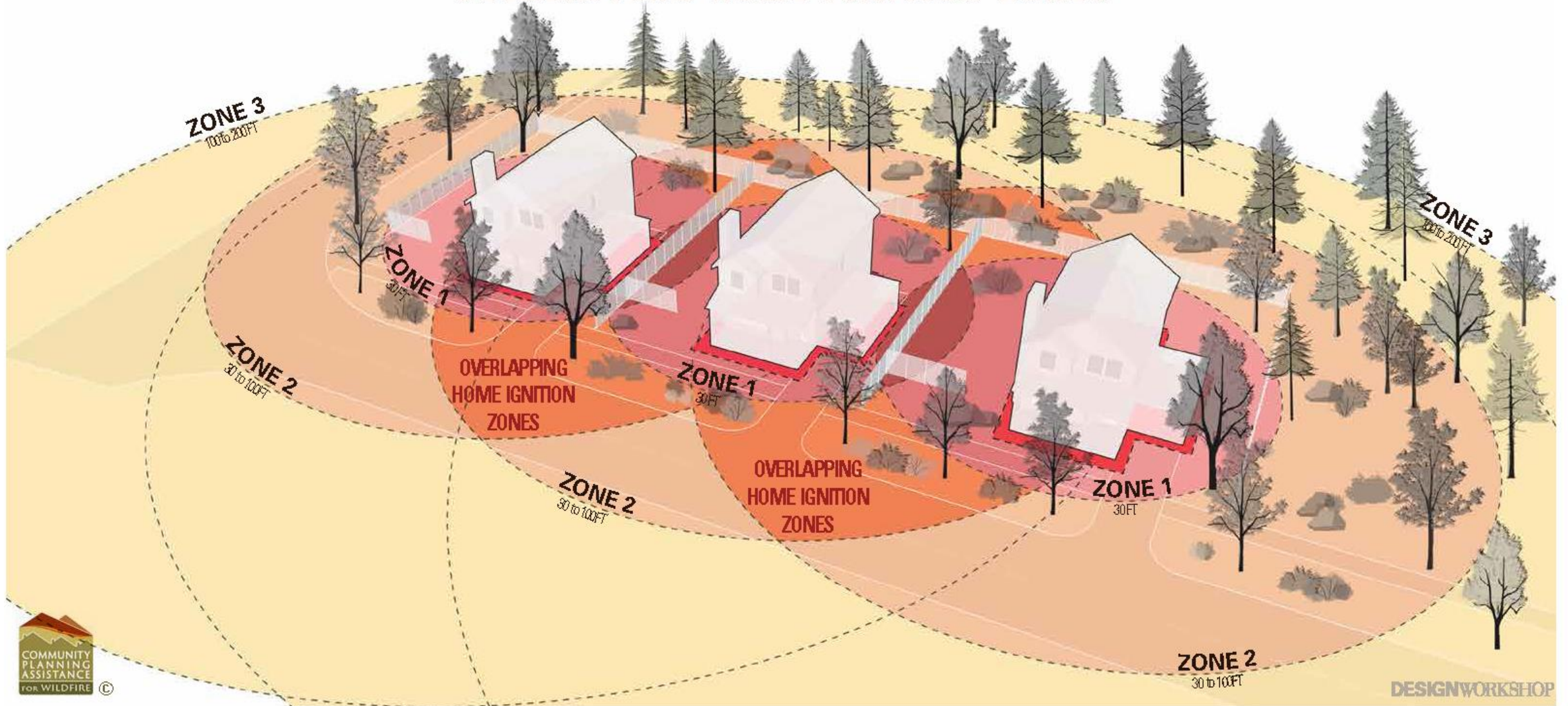






# MITIGATED STANDARD LOT RESIDENTIAL

## OVERLAPPING HOME IGNITION ZONES



**ZONE 1A** Eliminated Combustible Material

**ZONE 1** Reduced, Discontinuous, and Intensively Maintained Vegetation

**ZONE 2** Spaced, Pruned, and Limited Low-Growing Surface Vegetation

**ZONE 3** Thinned, Pruned Trees, and Reduced Surface Vegetation

☐ Maintain a 5FT non-combustible buffer around

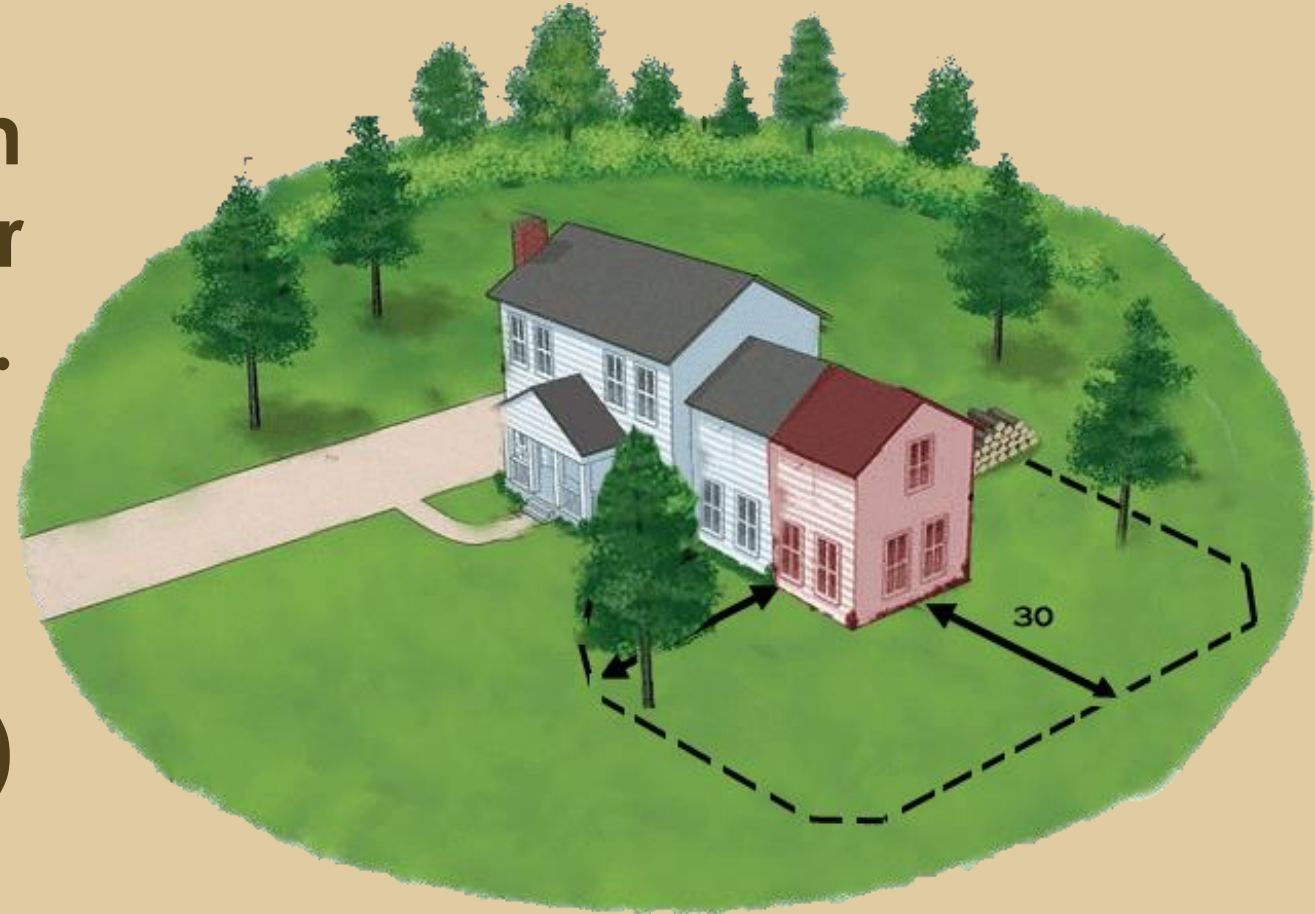
☐ Limit trees to provide adequate horizontal and vertical spacing

☐ Prune trees 6FT to max 1/3 of tree height from ground

☐ Encourage a mix of age, size, and species of appropriately spaced and

# General Fuel Modification Area: Additions

- Extends 30' from furthest extent of an addition or deck, or to the property line.
- Does not include the existing structure (change from previous draft)







# Fire Prevention and Control Plan

- **Applies to new subdivisions, land partitions, and planning actions**
  - Requires tree and vegetation management plan for projects such as commercial, multifamily, subdivisions:
    - New Landscaping
    - Tree removals
    - Areas to be thinned
    - Schedule for thinning and removal
    - Ongoing Maintenance Required





# Regulatory Elements of Wildfire Safety

- Expanded Wildfire Lands Overlay
- Updated Land Use Ordinance Components
- Prohibited Flammable Plant List Resolution



# Prohibited Flammable Plant List

- Prohibits new plantings of listed flammable plants within 30' of buildings and decks- for all properties city-wide regardless of whether the building itself is new or existing.

Rationale: reduces the risk of damage to property and persons due to the spread of fire via highly flammable plant material.

- Also applies to new construction
  - Existing flammable plants within 5' of the new building, addition, or deck must be removed, except significant trees.
  - Ten foot spacing from furthest extent of structure
  - Tree canopy separation: from buildings, existing shrubs and trees
  - Tree pruning and shrub spacing

# Nezla Street Fire 2001





# Oak Knoll Fire 2010





# Burning Italian Cypress – Redding, CA



# Institute for Business and Home Safety Video







# Prohibited Flammable Plant List

## Trees:

- Arborvitae (Thuja sp.)
- Cedar (Cedrus sp.) *exception for prostrate or dwarf variety*
- Cedar/Cypress (Chamaecyparis sp.) *exception for prostrate or dwarf variety*
- Cypress (Cupressus sp.)
- Douglas-fir (Pseudotsuga menziesi)
- Fir (Abies sp.)
- Hemlock (Tsuga sp.)
- Juniper (Juniperus sp.)
- Pine (Pinus sp.)
- Sequoia (Sequoia sp.)
- Spruce (Picea sp.)
- Yew (Taxus sp.)

## Shrubs

- Blackberry (Rubus armeniacus)
- Bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata)
- Juniper (Juniperus sp.)
- Manzanita (Arctostaphylos sp.) *exception for 'Kinnikinnick'*
- Oregon grape (Mahonia aquifolium) *exception for 'Compacta'*
- **\*Rosemary (Rosmarinus sp.) exception for 'Prostratus'**
- **Sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata sp.)**
- Scotch broom (Cytisus scoparius)
- Wild Lilac (Ceanothus sp.) *exception for prostrate varieties*


## Grasses and Ground Cover

- Pampas grass (Cortaderia seloana)



# Regulatory Elements of Wildfire Safety

- Expanded Wildfire Lands Overlay
- Updated Land Use Ordinance Components
- Prohibited Highly Flammable Plant List Resolution



# Next Step: Structural Wildfire Safety: Appendix W

- Proposed Addition to State Building Code
  - Requires ignition resistant building materials and design
- If approved, could be adopted by Ashland to apply in our Wildfire Lands Overlay
- Future policy decision for Council

(Adoption city-wide is enabled by expansion of the Wildfire Lands Overlay)





# Next Step: FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant

- Grant funding for voluntary wildfire risk reduction work
- Will apply for \$3 million with owner cost-share
- Application due in November 2018
- Work would begin in late 2019



# Question: How much opportunity has there been for public to comment on this proposal?

## **Public Meeting Dates**

Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 Open House

Sept 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Open House

Nov 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting

Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 Planning Commission Study Session

Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Planning Commission Study Session

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Council Study Session

May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 Open House

July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Planning Commission Hearing

July 17<sup>th</sup>, City Council Business Meeting

Aug 6<sup>th</sup>, City Council Study Session



# Question: How much opportunity has there been for public to comment on this proposal? (Cont.)

## **Public Outreach**

3 Daily Tidings Articles

City Source

Daily Tidings Alarm Box Column

Local TV News

Open City Hall

3 Open Houses

Tree Commission Meetings

Wildfire Mitigation Commission Meetings





**Question/Concern: Could more be done to reduce wildfire risk than what's being proposed? Is it feasible to require removal of existing flammable plants?**



**Question/Concern: Does science support the approach taken in the proposal?**



**Question: Will character of historic neighborhoods change due to requirements of this ordinance?**





**Question: Will conifer trees disappear from Ashland because of the prohibited flammable plant list?**



**Question: Will the proposed ordinance change new construction costs?**



**Question: How will we manage enforcement of the flammable plant list?**





# Questions

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