



■ Wildland Fire Challenges and Solutions in Boulder, CO

■ Wildfire risk in Boulder

Top 3%

riskiest communities in the U.S.

U.S. Forest Service assessment from
“Wildfire Risk to Communities”

“

CSFS fire modeling expert states
Boulder is the “**highest risk
community in the state**” and “**top
three in the world.**”

■ Why is wildfire risk so high in Boulder?

Our WUI features a particular set of conditions:

- 1 Adjacent open space with highly flammable vegetation
- 2 Steep slopes, canyons and mesas
- 3 Frequent human-caused ignitions
- 4 Closely-spaced, highly flammable structures
- 5 HIGH WINDS!!! → Fast-moving fires are the most destructive and costliest

■ What does this really mean?

Boulder is at great risk of a *catastrophic urban conflagration event* with large-scale negative *outcomes and costs*:

01

Life safety

02

Property

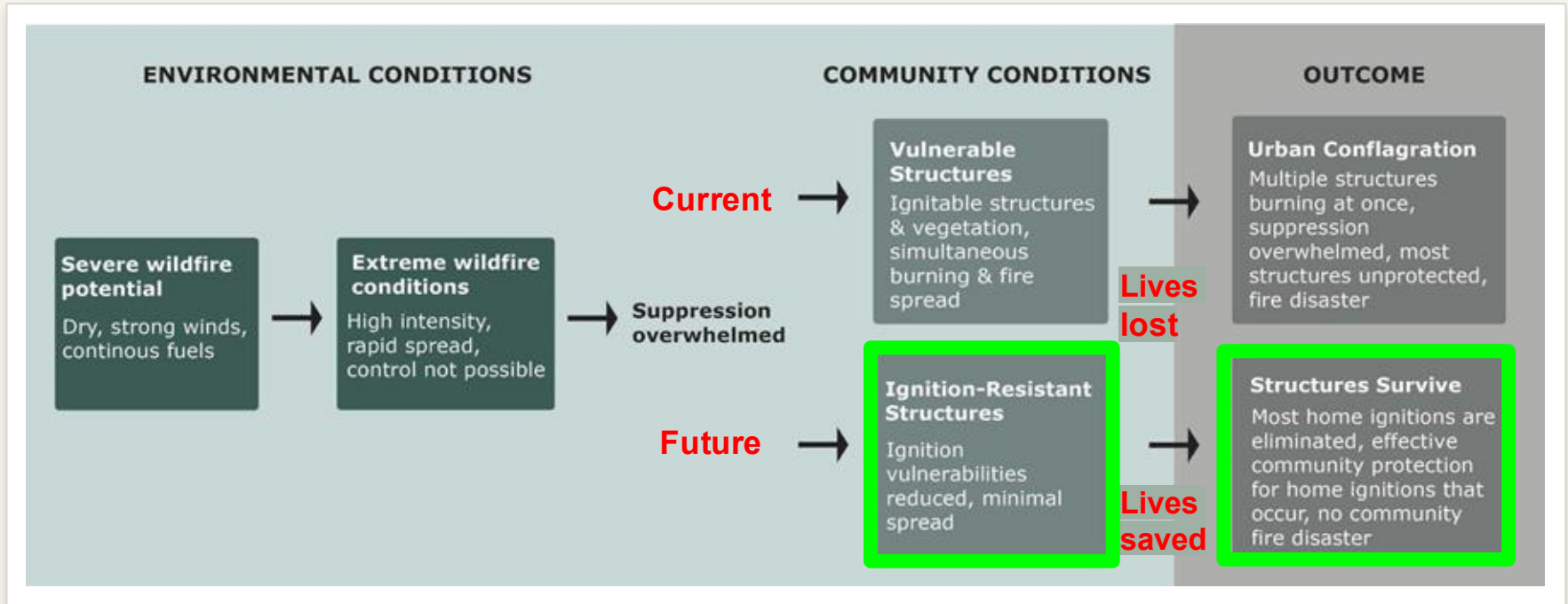
03

**Natural
resources**

04

**And so much
more**

■ Urban conflagration sequence



“This is NOT a wildfire suppression problem, but a home ignition problem.” Dr. Jack Cohen

The Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)

The home and its immediate surroundings can and MUST be mitigated to reduce / prevent ignitions.

“If your home doesn’t ignite, it can’t burn.” Jack

■ Our recommendations

1

Revise Ordinance 8695 WUI Code to include mandatory retrofitting of existing structures.

2

Expand OSMP vegetation management to align with best practices and CWPP recommendations.

3

Prioritize existing funding and explore new funding opportunities.

1 Ordinance 8695 WUI Code revision

GOAL Reduce the ignition potential of structures

All properties in Class 1 and 2 WUI must be hardened to the IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home standard within 3 years.

- This is a science-based set of best practices proven to reduce / prevent ignitions.

- Insurance carriers are starting to require WPH to maintain coverage.

- We need to retrofit the existing housing stock.

1

IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home Base/Essential standard



✓ 5' noncombustible zone

✓ Decks under 48" enclosed / screened

✓ 5–30' vegetation spacing and maintenance

✓ Noncombustible gutters

✓ 6" noncombustible base of walls

✓ Hot tubs > 10' from house

✓ All vents screened $\frac{1}{8}$ "

✓ Class A roof

✓ 5' fence noncombustible

2

OSMP Vegetation Management Plan

GOAL Reduce fire speed / intensity and limit ember production as it approaches the city

- Dramatically expand OSMP projects, including re-introducing prescribed fire
- Ensure standards are consistent with best practices and aligned with the 2024 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- Identify priority areas, detailed metrics, action plan, and implement the plan.

Buffer distances

300'

Grasslands (minimum)

1,500'

Shrub / timber (minimum)

3 Funding opportunities

GOAL Identify and prioritize existing funding; explore and seek other funding.

\$6.5M/yr

City Climate Tax Fund (CTF) re-allocations; consider bonding for that tax

\$9M/yr

Request re-allocation of Boulder County Wildfire Mitigation Sales Tax

\$10M

Federal, state and county grants — e.g. \$10M to Larimer and JeffCo via CWDG.

■ Summary

- Wildfire is a **public safety** issue
- Boulder's wildfire risk is **extreme**
- The solutions are science-based and accessible
- We **can** reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire
- The time for action is NOW



Questions and Discussion?

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