

Webinar

Wildfire Resilience: Best Practices in Real Estate and Land Use

Date: October 30, 2020

00:00:04 --> 00:00:08: Good morning and good afternoon everyone and welcome to today's

00:00:08 --> 00:00:13: Eulalie Wildfire resilience and real Estate Webinar will give folks

00:00:13 --> 00:00:16: a few minutes as we know that many people are

00:00:16 --> 00:00:16: coming

00:00:16 --> 00:00:20: from zoom meetings, but we're really excited about today's panel

00:00:20 --> 00:00:21: discussion.

00:00:31 --> 00:00:34: Alright, we'll go ahead and get started with some of

00:00:34 --> 00:00:35: the introductions.

00:00:35 --> 00:00:37: My name is Jose Bodipo member.

00:00:37 --> 00:00:39: I am the chair for you lies Sacramento,

00:00:39 --> 00:00:42: this District Council and the Director of Sustainable Communities for

00:00:42 --> 00:00:45: the Sacramento Municipal Utility District and happy to be the

00:00:45 --> 00:00:47: moderator for today's discussion.

00:00:47 --> 00:00:51: Really important discussion about wildfire resilience in real estate.

00:00:51 --> 00:00:52: We go to the next slide,

00:00:52 --> 00:00:52: please.

00:00:55 --> 00:00:57: Again, the format will be 60 minute.

00:00:57 --> 00:01:00: Conversation is presented by the Urban Land Institute and for

00:01:00 --> 00:01:02: those of you who are new to you,

00:01:02 --> 00:01:05: a lie in the Urban Institute programming again,

00:01:05 --> 00:01:07: our goal and mission is really to provide leadership in

00:01:07 --> 00:01:10: the responsible use of land and creating a sustained,

00:01:10 --> 00:01:14: thriving communities worldwide. And as we discussed this issue right

00:01:14 --> 00:01:14: now,

00:01:14 --> 00:01:16: this very pertinent as release wildfires again,
00:01:16 --> 00:01:19: you allies taking a lead role in that process.
00:01:19 --> 00:01:21: Next slide, please.
00:01:23 --> 00:01:27: Again, this is brought to you by utilizing resilience program.
00:01:27 --> 00:01:31: Again, the Urban Resilience Program has been a leader in
00:01:31 --> 00:01:34: brain great minds together in strategizing for buildings,
00:01:34 --> 00:01:37: communities, cities. They sure, resiliency.
00:01:37 --> 00:01:40: If you haven't had the opportunity to participate in some
00:01:40 --> 00:01:43: of the formal recently programs and conferences,
00:01:43 --> 00:01:47: please reach out at the resilience at uli.org.
00:01:47 --> 00:01:48: Next slide, please.
00:01:51 --> 00:01:54: And today a new report specifically related to the issue.
00:01:54 --> 00:01:59: We're discussing firebreak wildfire resilience strategies for
real estate is
00:01:59 --> 00:02:01: being published again.
00:02:01 --> 00:02:05: This details implications of wildfires for real estate industry
and
00:02:05 --> 00:02:09: explores best practices in building design and land use policy
00:02:09 --> 00:02:12: that can reduce damage caused by wildfires and help set
00:02:12 --> 00:02:15: communities to thrive in the long run.
00:02:15 --> 00:02:19: This report feels includes information from real estate
developers,
00:02:19 --> 00:02:22: planners, public leaders. And really,
00:02:22 --> 00:02:25: folks who are aware of all the drivers that are
00:02:25 --> 00:02:29: causing these increased wildfires and talk about the
consequences of
00:02:29 --> 00:02:33: poor planning and some of the benefits of positive planning
00:02:33 --> 00:02:35: as part of this effort.
00:02:35 --> 00:02:39: So please take a look at this document at uli.org/wildfires.
00:02:39 --> 00:02:44: Again, really excited that releases today as the need is
00:02:44 --> 00:02:45: present.
00:02:45 --> 00:02:46: Next slide, please.
00:02:48 --> 00:02:50: And so now to the formal presentation.
00:02:50 --> 00:02:53: We have a very esteemed group of experts to talk
00:02:53 --> 00:02:53: about.
00:02:53 --> 00:02:56: Wildfire resilience is really surreal.
00:02:56 --> 00:02:58: State. Our first speaker will be Molly,
00:02:58 --> 00:03:02: Mallory, executive director of the Community Wildfire
Planning Center.
00:03:02 --> 00:03:06: Molly has served in that role is a nonprofit organization
00:03:06 --> 00:03:09: dedicated to helping communities prepare for an app to
recover
00:03:09 --> 00:03:11: from wildfire events.

00:03:11 --> 00:03:13: Molly is headquartered in Colorado,
00:03:13 --> 00:03:16: but is doing work all throughout the United States,
00:03:16 --> 00:03:20: so we're really lucky to have Molly today.
00:03:20 --> 00:03:22: Our second panelists will be Justice Jones.
00:03:22 --> 00:03:26: Justice is the wildfire mitigation officer for the Austin Fire
00:03:26 --> 00:03:26: Department,
00:03:26 --> 00:03:30: so Justice has two bachelors degrees from University of
Texas
00:03:30 --> 00:03:34: and Environmental Resource Management and Cultural
Anthropology and Justice.
00:03:34 --> 00:03:38: Again is at the front lines of this conversation serving
00:03:38 --> 00:03:42: as a wildfire mitigation officer and leading efforts to enhance
00:03:42 --> 00:03:45: the city of Austin's resiliency to impacts of wildfire.
00:03:45 --> 00:03:48: In our last presenter today will be Larry Florence,
00:03:48 --> 00:03:51: the CEO, Burbank Housing. Larry brings over 30 years of
00:03:51 --> 00:03:55: expertise and experience in real estate and community
economic development.
00:03:55 --> 00:03:58: Larry is headquartered in California and has served as the
00:03:58 --> 00:04:01: Director of Housing Intergovernmental Affairs for Napa
County and is
00:04:02 --> 00:04:04: a developer who's really in the throes of of the
00:04:04 --> 00:04:07: current wildfire issues facing the state of California,
00:04:07 --> 00:04:10: particularly North Bay or really lucky to have Larry and
00:04:10 --> 00:04:12: his expertise as a part of today's panel.
00:04:14 --> 00:04:17: So we go to the next slide please,
00:04:17 --> 00:04:21: just to kind of set the tone for our conversation
00:04:21 --> 00:04:21: today.
00:04:21 --> 00:04:24: You know, as most of you know we are in
00:04:25 --> 00:04:28: the throes of a recent wildfire epidemic here,
00:04:28 --> 00:04:32: and some of the stats on the screen can show,
00:04:32 --> 00:04:36: you know, from 2010 till present.
00:04:36 --> 00:04:39: Increase in acreage is impacted by awhile.
00:04:39 --> 00:04:43: Wildfires is been significant as a native of Sacramento and
00:04:43 --> 00:04:43: in North Bay,
00:04:43 --> 00:04:45: growing up in that area.
00:04:45 --> 00:04:48: I've been personally impacted in directly,
00:04:48 --> 00:04:51: indirectly and directly affected by these wildfires.
00:04:51 --> 00:04:55: The air quality effects as well as property effects his
00:04:55 --> 00:04:57: hit my family members directly.
00:04:57 --> 00:05:00: So as was more crisis is we were able to
00:05:00 --> 00:05:03: actually thrive through these through smart planning,
00:05:03 --> 00:05:07: preventative work, and we have some experts here.
00:05:07 --> 00:05:10: Who can help better lay the framework for this conversation?

00:05:10 --> 00:05:12: And so without further ado,
00:05:12 --> 00:05:14: I'd like to start off with our first panelist,
00:05:14 --> 00:05:18: Miss Molly Mallory, Executive director for the Meanwhile,
00:05:18 --> 00:05:21: for playing center and and she will provide some context
00:05:21 --> 00:05:25: about wildfire resilience in the best practices that she's
00:05:25 --> 00:05:25: experienced
00:05:25 --> 00:05:25: in there.
00:05:25 --> 00:05:28: In her role there. Thank you,
00:05:28 --> 00:05:30: Molly. Thanks so much Jose,
00:05:30 --> 00:05:32: can you hear me can hear you great great well
00:05:32 --> 00:05:36: good afternoon everyone it is such a pleasure to be
00:05:36 --> 00:05:36: here.
00:05:36 --> 00:05:40: I really appreciate the opportunity that you all I created
00:05:40 --> 00:05:43: with this webinar to highlight what is obviously such a
00:05:43 --> 00:05:47: timely and important topic and also excellent job on the
00:05:47 --> 00:05:50: Resilience report which I had a sneak peak of earlier
00:05:50 --> 00:05:54: this week and highly recommend all of you to check
00:05:54 --> 00:05:54: out.
00:05:54 --> 00:05:58: So with so many overwhelming headlines on wildfires
00:05:58 --> 00:06:00: devastation,
00:05:58 --> 00:06:00: I think it can be easy to.
00:06:00 --> 00:06:03: Lose sight of some of the progress that is actually
00:06:03 --> 00:06:04: being made,
00:06:04 --> 00:06:07: especially when it comes to land use planning and other
00:06:07 --> 00:06:08: related activities.
00:06:08 --> 00:06:12: And when I'm referring to land use planning in this
00:06:12 --> 00:06:12: context,
00:06:12 --> 00:06:16: I'm referring more to the strategic and intentional application
00:06:16 --> 00:06:20: of
00:06:16 --> 00:06:20: strategies that make development more resilient to wildfire,
00:06:20 --> 00:06:22: and this can take many forms,
00:06:22 --> 00:06:26: regulations, policies, voluntary programs. So I wanted to give
00:06:26 --> 00:06:29: you
00:06:26 --> 00:06:29: just a snapshot of what some of these efforts look
00:06:29 --> 00:06:30: like around the country,
00:06:30 --> 00:06:33: and I know the other speakers will.
00:06:33 --> 00:06:36: Also share some examples during their presentations.
00:06:36 --> 00:06:39: So next slide please.
00:06:39 --> 00:06:42: So one of the most effective strategies that we see
00:06:42 --> 00:06:46: in terms of effective land use planning is really when
00:06:46 --> 00:06:51: the state takes a leadership role in developing frameworks
00:06:46 --> 00:06:51: for
00:06:51 --> 00:06:55: their statewide codes. Excuse me in other planning

requirements.

00:06:55 --> 00:06:58: So for example, we do a lot of work in
00:06:58 --> 00:07:02: California and all the cities and counties in California are
00:07:02 --> 00:07:06: required by state law to adopt A general plan which
00:07:06 --> 00:07:10: has a requirement to address hazards including wildfire.
00:07:10 --> 00:07:14: And this isn't simply adding policies that you acknowledge
Fire
00:07:14 --> 00:07:15: is a challenge,
00:07:15 --> 00:07:19: but these are really robust requirements to assess the hazard
00:07:19 --> 00:07:22: and its potential impacts on Community safety.
00:07:22 --> 00:07:27: Avoiding or minimizing wildfire hazards associated with new
uses of
00:07:27 --> 00:07:27: land,
00:07:27 --> 00:07:32: locating essential public facilities outside of high fire risk
areas,
00:07:32 --> 00:07:37: and other policies that really ensure that communities are
strategically
00:07:37 --> 00:07:38: thinking about this.
00:07:38 --> 00:07:41: The state also has a minimum set of land use
00:07:41 --> 00:07:43: planning regulations,
00:07:43 --> 00:07:46: which are called the Fire Safe Regulations and those have
00:07:46 --> 00:07:48: been in effect since 1991.
00:07:48 --> 00:07:53: These apply to residential, commercial and industrial building
construction in
00:07:53 --> 00:07:55: designated areas across the state.
00:07:55 --> 00:07:57: They address Rd widths, grades,
00:07:57 --> 00:08:01: water supply, vegetation management and to support all of
this,
00:08:01 --> 00:08:05: the state has instituted a land use planning program within
00:08:05 --> 00:08:09: the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to
provide
00:08:09 --> 00:08:13: that additional capacity and support across the state.
00:08:13 --> 00:08:15: Other states, Oregon and Montana,
00:08:15 --> 00:08:19: for example, offer model. We are building codes where we
00:08:20 --> 00:08:24: meeting Wildland urban interface or building codes that can
be
00:08:24 --> 00:08:26: adopted at the local level.
00:08:26 --> 00:08:29: Those are not currently required to the degree they are
00:08:29 --> 00:08:31: in like in California,
00:08:31 --> 00:08:32: so it's a little bit different.
00:08:32 --> 00:08:35: We also see other states such as Washington or Florida
00:08:35 --> 00:08:39: have requirements to address hazards in their
comprehensive plans.
00:08:39 --> 00:08:41: And yes, Florida does have wildfires,

00:08:41 --> 00:08:43: so this is not just a Western issue.
00:08:43 --> 00:08:45: I know that.
00:08:45 --> 00:08:48: Justice will speak to that during his presentation,
00:08:48 --> 00:08:51: so there's a lot more complexities that I can't get
00:08:51 --> 00:08:52: into today,
00:08:52 --> 00:08:53: just in terms of the time.
00:08:53 --> 00:08:56: But I think the key point here is that state
00:08:56 --> 00:09:00: requirements or guidance really sets up that consistent
baseline for
00:09:00 --> 00:09:02: local jurisdictions to follow.
00:09:02 --> 00:09:03: Next slide, please.
00:09:07 --> 00:09:09: So Speaking of the local level,
00:09:09 --> 00:09:14: we also see successful outcomes when communities either
take state
00:09:14 --> 00:09:17: or model codes and then beef them up at the
00:09:17 --> 00:09:17: local level,
00:09:17 --> 00:09:20: or adopt new measures on their own.
00:09:20 --> 00:09:23: So one example of how a community might go above
00:09:23 --> 00:09:26: and beyond is with fencing an often this is an
00:09:26 --> 00:09:30: unregulated part of the code for wildfire purposes,
00:09:30 --> 00:09:34: but it is a significant vulnerability to a home during
00:09:34 --> 00:09:35: a wildfire event,
00:09:35 --> 00:09:39: particularly with wooden fences that are attached to a home
00:09:39 --> 00:09:40: which can act as a.
00:09:40 --> 00:09:43: Wick carrying fire from a yard to the house.
00:09:43 --> 00:09:46: Although it's not just wooden fences that can burn like
00:09:46 --> 00:09:48: the example on the left,
00:09:48 --> 00:09:51: here's an example on the right from a different property
00:09:51 --> 00:09:54: with vinyl fence that melted in the Woolsey Fire in
00:09:54 --> 00:09:56: Southern California.
00:09:56 --> 00:09:59: So communities can adopt A host of these measures,
00:09:59 --> 00:10:02: such as other measures, in addition to just fencing.
00:10:02 --> 00:10:07: But implementing noncombustible zones around a structure
having extra requirements
00:10:07 --> 00:10:11: for decks or creating allowable plant species or prohibited
plant
00:10:11 --> 00:10:11: species,
00:10:11 --> 00:10:15: and many of these strategies are meant to address areas,
00:10:15 --> 00:10:17: particularly where embers can land,
00:10:17 --> 00:10:21: so these measures often are adopted in a development code
00:10:21 --> 00:10:23: or a zoning code or subdivision regulations.
00:10:23 --> 00:10:26: Sometimes we even see these in a nuisance.
00:10:26 --> 00:10:30: Portion of the code, depending on what the provisions are,

00:10:30 --> 00:10:33: a few great examples of you know codes local codes
00:10:33 --> 00:10:36: that have gone above and beyond the Ashland OR and
00:10:36 --> 00:10:37: Summit County,
00:10:37 --> 00:10:40: Colorado, and I know I think justice will highlight in
00:10:40 --> 00:10:42: his example what Austin is doing.
00:10:42 --> 00:10:45: Next. Slide please.
00:10:45 --> 00:10:48: So we also know that there are definitely aspects of
00:10:49 --> 00:10:53: the built environment that are more difficult to address
through
00:10:53 --> 00:10:57: regulation in terms of what has already been developed.
00:10:57 --> 00:11:00: Or maybe it's not appropriate to regulate that.
00:11:00 --> 00:11:04: So to address existing development that may have been built
00:11:04 --> 00:11:05: prior to a code,
00:11:05 --> 00:11:09: many local, state or local or state governments or other
00:11:09 --> 00:11:15: national organizations have begun developing programs that
incentivize voluntary actions
00:11:15 --> 00:11:16: ideally too.
00:11:16 --> 00:11:20: Retrofit a property and and strengthen its resilience to
wildfire.
00:11:20 --> 00:11:24: So I just wanted to highlight a voluntary property assessment
00:11:24 --> 00:11:26: program called Real Fire,
00:11:26 --> 00:11:29: which began in Colorado several years ago,
00:11:29 --> 00:11:31: is a collaboration between Eagle County,
00:11:31 --> 00:11:33: the Veil Board of Realtors,
00:11:33 --> 00:11:37: and our organization that Community welfare planning center
and real
00:11:37 --> 00:11:41: fire is a voluntary program that provides parcel level property
00:11:41 --> 00:11:46: assessments to homeowners so the counties mitigation
specialists in this
00:11:46 --> 00:11:48: case it's. Eric Lovegreen feature here.
00:11:48 --> 00:11:51: In these photos, Eric will go out and conduct these
00:11:52 --> 00:11:56: assessments with the homeowner on site and then that
assessment
00:11:56 --> 00:11:59: gets emailed back to a homeowner in the form of
00:11:59 --> 00:12:03: a customized mitigation report. And this information is
tracked to
00:12:03 --> 00:12:07: see what kind of mitigation activities a homeowner performs
and
00:12:07 --> 00:12:11: ultimately a home can receive a certificate if they
successfully
00:12:11 --> 00:12:13: achieve all of their mitigation.
00:12:13 --> 00:12:17: So this program started because the Realtors available
Realtors wanted
00:12:17 --> 00:12:19: to become more engaged.

00:12:19 --> 00:12:23: In outreach efforts, and we're particularly interested in the voluntary
00:12:23 --> 00:12:25: aspect of this program,
00:12:25 --> 00:12:28: and you know, we've started to see successes both in
00:12:28 --> 00:12:31: Eagle County and in a similar program in Boulder County
00:12:31 --> 00:12:32: called Wildfire Partners,
00:12:32 --> 00:12:35: where homeowners have achieved their mitigation,
00:12:35 --> 00:12:40: they've earned their certificates, and they've voluntarily
shared these certificates
00:12:40 --> 00:12:44: with insurers to either receive discounts in their premiums or
00:12:44 --> 00:12:45: continued coverage.
00:12:45 --> 00:12:49: So there really leveraging the hard work that they're doing
00:12:49 --> 00:12:49: and.
00:12:49 --> 00:12:53: So I just add, it's a very comprehensive approach to
00:12:53 --> 00:12:54: mitigation.
00:12:54 --> 00:12:58: It's not you know. It also goes above and beyond
00:12:58 --> 00:13:00: the next slide please.
00:13:00 --> 00:13:04: So the big picture question that I always get especially
00:13:04 --> 00:13:07: from reporters is well is it enough are we are,
00:13:07 --> 00:13:11: we doing enough and what else could be done and
00:13:11 --> 00:13:13: I think for the question isn't enough.
00:13:13 --> 00:13:15: The answer is always well.
00:13:15 --> 00:13:18: Yes, and no this is Molly is very crude and
00:13:19 --> 00:13:23: unscientific chart of trends that I wanted to just quickly
00:13:23 --> 00:13:23: share.
00:13:23 --> 00:13:27: I think it helps express my my thoughts on this
00:13:27 --> 00:13:30: so development has been occurring for centuries.
00:13:30 --> 00:13:34: And we've been expanding into fire prone areas relatively
unchecked
00:13:35 --> 00:13:36: for many many decades.
00:13:36 --> 00:13:39: And fire suppression has been trying to keep pace with
00:13:40 --> 00:13:40: development,
00:13:40 --> 00:13:43: especially as the need increases.
00:13:43 --> 00:13:47: But fire suppression activities have also been reshaping our
landscapes.
00:13:47 --> 00:13:50: I think it was the fire historian Stephen Pyne who
00:13:51 --> 00:13:54: said something to the effect of fire put out today
00:13:54 --> 00:13:57: is essentially just a fire postponed tomorrow.
00:13:57 --> 00:13:59: So we're trying our best.
00:13:59 --> 00:14:01: But we still have these.
00:14:01 --> 00:14:04: You know parallel tracks that are going up and then
00:14:04 --> 00:14:07: we also know now that the climate is changing it
00:14:07 --> 00:14:10: even faster than what scientists had predicted.

00:14:10 --> 00:14:11: And this is, I suppose,
00:14:11 --> 00:14:13: what alarms me the most is when I hear a
00:14:13 --> 00:14:16: scientist being interviewed and they say yeah,
00:14:16 --> 00:14:20: our our trends are what's happening now is actually
surpassing
00:14:20 --> 00:14:22: what their predictions were for 2020.
00:14:22 --> 00:14:24: This picture, by the way,
00:14:24 --> 00:14:27: is from the East troublesome fire that I took outside
00:14:27 --> 00:14:28: my office window.
00:14:28 --> 00:14:31: It was burning here in Colorado last week after an
00:14:31 --> 00:14:35: extreme drought and unseasonably warm temperatures
extending into late October.
00:14:35 --> 00:14:37: And it. Now to me,
00:14:37 --> 00:14:41: just really encapsulates the these trends.
00:14:41 --> 00:14:44: So along the way, you know very scattered there's a
00:14:44 --> 00:14:47: little tiny star around the 1920s when there was a
00:14:48 --> 00:14:50: significant fire in the LA area,
00:14:50 --> 00:14:53: and there were some, but there's some small outcomes that
00:14:53 --> 00:14:57: came from that in terms of reshaping our relationship to
00:14:57 --> 00:14:58: the built environment,
00:14:58 --> 00:15:01: at least very local. Again in the 1950s and 60s.
00:15:01 --> 00:15:05: Really interesting research that came out from the National
Fire
00:15:05 --> 00:15:08: Protection Association again in LA County.
00:15:08 --> 00:15:11: Looking at, you know what some of the ways were
00:15:11 --> 00:15:12: to better design.
00:15:12 --> 00:15:16: Communities, but I would, I would argue or I would
00:15:16 --> 00:15:20: suggest that you know we really haven't gotten serious about
00:15:20 --> 00:15:21: land use,
00:15:21 --> 00:15:26: planning tools and related activities until the past few
decades.
00:15:26 --> 00:15:30: And Meanwhile we've had decades and decades of
development occurring.
00:15:30 --> 00:15:33: And now we're trying to catch up.
00:15:33 --> 00:15:36: And that's ultimately the conundrum is this,
00:15:36 --> 00:15:38: you know, planning takes time.
00:15:38 --> 00:15:43: A comprehensive approach is required to get ourselves out
of
00:15:43 --> 00:15:43: this.
00:15:43 --> 00:15:45: But the question is, you know,
00:15:45 --> 00:15:47: do we have the luxury of time,
00:15:47 --> 00:15:50: which opens up a different set of questions on how
00:15:51 --> 00:15:55: we simultaneously mitigate the existing threat plan for the
future

00:15:55 --> 00:15:57: and adapt to both of these situations.

00:15:57 --> 00:16:01: So I'll leave that discussion for our next speakers and

00:16:01 --> 00:16:05: I'm happy to share some additional resources in the chat

00:16:06 --> 00:16:07: and answer any questions.

00:16:07 --> 00:16:11: Thank you so much, Molly again to all the attendees.

00:16:11 --> 00:16:14: If if you have questions for Molly,

00:16:14 --> 00:16:16: please put them in the chat.

00:16:16 --> 00:16:19: Again, we'll do our best to feel this many audience

00:16:19 --> 00:16:21: questions as possible.

00:16:21 --> 00:16:23: I do have one follow up just to get us

00:16:23 --> 00:16:27: started by before we go to our next presenter.

00:16:27 --> 00:16:29: Again. Given the context of Kobe 19,

00:16:29 --> 00:16:33: the Kobe 19 pandemic, how has that impacted some of

00:16:33 --> 00:16:36: the planning trends and impacts on land used as it

00:16:36 --> 00:16:38: relates to wildfire?

00:16:38 --> 00:16:40: And as approaches change at all,

00:16:40 --> 00:16:42: yeah, that's an intriguing question,

00:16:42 --> 00:16:46: Jose. We've actually been starting to do a little research

00:16:46 --> 00:16:46: on that,

00:16:46 --> 00:16:49: or trying to do some research on it for an

00:16:49 --> 00:16:52: upcoming report that will be publishing,

00:16:52 --> 00:16:55: but so far we're finding conflicting research,

00:16:55 --> 00:16:57: you know, and I don't even know if we call

00:16:57 --> 00:16:59: it research yet,

00:16:59 --> 00:17:02: but it's more some educated opinion pieces and various,

00:17:02 --> 00:17:07: you know, newspaper journals or other other

00:17:07 --> 00:17:08: communications where we've

00:17:08 --> 00:17:11: been able to see some.

00:17:11 --> 00:17:14: Maybe very localized short term trends.

00:17:14 --> 00:17:17: I think there's been some anecdotal information about.

00:17:17 --> 00:17:20: You know people fleeing the very urban areas and moving

00:17:20 --> 00:17:23: to the hillsides of Montana for example.

00:17:23 --> 00:17:25: But we haven't even been through winter yet,

00:17:25 --> 00:17:29: so you know, we've seen here in Colorado,

00:17:29 --> 00:17:30: you know, there's always a desire to move somewhere when

00:17:30 --> 00:17:33: it's sunny and warm,

00:17:33 --> 00:17:34: and but during the hard winters people might also get

00:17:34 --> 00:17:37: a reality check.

00:17:37 --> 00:17:38: So I think once we we have to go through

00:17:38 --> 00:17:40: a full cycle of.

00:17:40 --> 00:17:42: Where we really, you know,

00:17:42 --> 00:17:44: a full year I should say to really see if

00:17:42 --> 00:17:45: some of these trends are sticking and then what the
00:17:45 --> 00:17:46: longer term implications are.
00:17:46 --> 00:17:49: You know I'm personally intrigued as a as a land
00:17:49 --> 00:17:50: use planner.
00:17:50 --> 00:17:52: I'm intrigued with, for example,
00:17:52 --> 00:17:54: and we just.
00:17:54 --> 00:17:57: Have we just facilitated a faster approach to where we
00:17:57 --> 00:18:00: would have gotten in the next 10 years with changing
00:18:00 --> 00:18:01: commuter habits?
00:18:01 --> 00:18:04: For example. So definitely the jury still out,
00:18:04 --> 00:18:07: but it's a great question that I think will want
00:18:07 --> 00:18:09: to track in terms of its implication for can,
00:18:09 --> 00:18:15: potential sprawl and potential wildland urban interface
expansion.
00:18:15 --> 00:18:19: Really, again anxiously awaiting some of the additional
research,
00:18:19 --> 00:18:22: but I appreciate that feedback I see in the comments
00:18:22 --> 00:18:25: or some feedback about what's happening in Texas.
00:18:25 --> 00:18:28: And actually it's a great segue to our next presenter,
00:18:28 --> 00:18:32: Justice Jones, who is coming to us live from Austin,
00:18:32 --> 00:18:36: Texas. So justice love to hear about the strategy you're
00:18:36 --> 00:18:38: employing in Austin.
00:18:38 --> 00:18:41: Yeah, thank you. I'm very excited to be here and
00:18:41 --> 00:18:44: Molly is a tough act to follow that is really
00:18:44 --> 00:18:45: great information.
00:18:45 --> 00:18:48: So thank you for sharing that.
00:18:48 --> 00:18:52: Just echo mollies, encourage everybody to read the
wonderful report
00:18:52 --> 00:18:56: that UL I generated a lot of great comprehensive information
00:18:56 --> 00:18:59: to share with your peers and read about yourself.
00:18:59 --> 00:19:02: So thank you for all the great work you're doing,
00:19:02 --> 00:19:05: including us in this effort.
00:19:05 --> 00:19:08: Thought I'd start with a little bit of history and
00:19:09 --> 00:19:12: background on the Austin area an our efforts.
00:19:12 --> 00:19:15: In the event you may not be familiar with our
00:19:15 --> 00:19:16: community,
00:19:16 --> 00:19:20: the City of Boston proper has a population hovering right
00:19:20 --> 00:19:23: around 1,000,000 and in Travis County were situated.
00:19:23 --> 00:19:28: We're looking at about overall population of 2 million
residents
00:19:28 --> 00:19:29: within the city.
00:19:29 --> 00:19:32: We have about 400,000 single family residence.
00:19:32 --> 00:19:36: I'm in about 120 folks moving to Austin Area Day,

00:19:36 --> 00:19:40: so we're experiencing some. You high velocity change and growth

00:19:41 --> 00:19:42: in our community.

00:19:42 --> 00:19:46: During 2011, Texas experienced its worst historic wildfire in the

00:19:46 --> 00:19:50: states history and the worst of those fires occur just

00:19:50 --> 00:19:52: a stones throw away from Austin.

00:19:52 --> 00:19:56: The Bastrop Complex fire, which you can see in the

00:19:56 --> 00:19:58: background of this photo.

00:19:58 --> 00:20:02: Where I'm destroyed over 1600 homes in a very short

00:20:02 --> 00:20:06: period of time really was the wake up call for

00:20:06 --> 00:20:09: the City of Austin and Texas as a whole to

00:20:09 --> 00:20:12: the reality of emerging threat of wildfire.

00:20:12 --> 00:20:16: Following that fire, the city took heed and worked with

00:20:16 --> 00:20:22: fire Department leadership to establish a wildfire division dedicated to

00:20:22 --> 00:20:27: enhancing the resiliency of Austin to the impacts of wildfire.

00:20:27 --> 00:20:30: And one of our first steps in that effort was

00:20:30 --> 00:20:34: to bring our peers and stakeholders together and develop a

00:20:34 --> 00:20:38: plan that was modeled after the national cohesive Wildfire strategy,

00:20:38 --> 00:20:42: which we'll talk about a little bit more in depth.

00:20:42 --> 00:20:48: Later on, that plan is called Community Wildfire Protection Plan,

00:20:48 --> 00:20:51: and it was the springboard for all of our future

00:20:51 --> 00:20:56: mitigation actions moving forward in the City of Austin that

00:20:56 --> 00:21:01: include efforts like adopting that CWP at the city County

00:21:01 --> 00:21:03: level and 2014.

00:21:03 --> 00:21:07: Passing a council resolution in 2016 that call for all

00:21:08 --> 00:21:12: city departments to be engaged in reducing the threat of

00:21:12 --> 00:21:13: wildfire.

00:21:13 --> 00:21:16: And also at that point we reached out to some

00:21:16 --> 00:21:19: of our partners in the wildfire community.

00:21:19 --> 00:21:23: Wildfire planning an headwaters economics that helped us to develop

00:21:23 --> 00:21:27: a community planning assistance for wildfire reports that laid out

00:21:28 --> 00:21:31: of their road map or addressing wildfire from a land

00:21:31 --> 00:21:35: use regulatory standpoint and will talk about each of those

00:21:35 --> 00:21:35: 2018.

00:21:35 --> 00:21:39: We developed the first city County wildfire evacuation plan in

00:21:39 --> 00:21:42: the state and the reason we put such a priority

00:21:43 --> 00:21:43: on that is.

00:21:43 --> 00:21:45: You know, based on research,

00:21:45 --> 00:21:49: that it's during that evacuation phase that most of wildland
00:21:49 --> 00:21:50: fire fatalities occur,
00:21:50 --> 00:21:53: so it's also for planning for wildfire evacuations when you
00:21:53 --> 00:21:57: have the greatest opportunity to save lives in Walker event
00:21:57 --> 00:21:58: and as a fire Department.
00:21:58 --> 00:22:00: That's always our first priority,
00:22:00 --> 00:22:03: so we wanted to put that at the forefront and
00:22:03 --> 00:22:04: add urgency.
00:22:04 --> 00:22:07: Our efforts with that wildfire evacuation plan and then most
00:22:08 --> 00:22:09: recently in 2019.
00:22:09 --> 00:22:13: City Council unanimously adopted or changes to the Land
Development
00:22:13 --> 00:22:14: Code and most importantly.
00:22:14 --> 00:22:16: The International Code Council is,
00:22:16 --> 00:22:18: while an urban interface code.
00:22:18 --> 00:22:24: With amendments and I'll speak to those in detail shortly.
00:22:24 --> 00:22:26: But if you switch the next slide,
00:22:26 --> 00:22:29: I'd like to talk about what is driving and austins
00:22:29 --> 00:22:33: risk and why is it so important that we take
00:22:33 --> 00:22:35: wildfire seriously and we do it now?
00:22:35 --> 00:22:38: Austin, in in its existing form,
00:22:38 --> 00:22:42: has over 61% of its population located in the Wildland
00:22:42 --> 00:22:44: Urban Interface in those homes.
00:22:44 --> 00:22:48: So we have over 250,000 homes across Austin at risk
00:22:49 --> 00:22:50: from wildfire.
00:22:50 --> 00:22:55: Recent report released Foam Core Logic indicated Texas
was the
00:22:55 --> 00:23:01: fifth highest probability for major structural losses and
associated economic
00:23:01 --> 00:23:02: impacts.
00:23:02 --> 00:23:04: To the tune of over 22 billion dollars.
00:23:04 --> 00:23:07: So we have a lot to lose in Austin and
00:23:07 --> 00:23:10: we want to make sure that we're proactive and get
00:23:10 --> 00:23:13: ahead of the curve when it comes to the way
00:23:13 --> 00:23:16: we design build our communities and climate change is
certainly
00:23:16 --> 00:23:17: a factor.
00:23:17 --> 00:23:20: One of the first things we did is the wild
00:23:20 --> 00:23:24: Card division was engaged with our Office of Sustainability
who
00:23:24 --> 00:23:27: manages our climate protection programs.
00:23:27 --> 00:23:28: And look into the future.
00:23:28 --> 00:23:32: What are climate prediction could be what we got back

00:23:32 --> 00:23:33: was alarming.

00:23:33 --> 00:23:37: 2012 and 2011. Our best case scenario moving into the

00:23:37 --> 00:23:41: future and most probably will exceed those years and their

00:23:41 --> 00:23:42: severity 2011 alone.

00:23:42 --> 00:23:47: We had over 90 days of temperatures exceeding 100

00:23:47 --> 00:23:51: degrees.

00:23:47 --> 00:23:51: So that's going to mean longer extended periods of drought

00:23:51 --> 00:23:53: for us more sporadic rainfall,

00:23:53 --> 00:23:57: actual longer growing seasons, 'cause we're going to have

00:23:57 --> 00:23:58: less

00:23:57 --> 00:23:58: freezes.

00:23:58 --> 00:24:02: And so effectively will have bursts of vegetation growth

00:24:03 --> 00:24:04: followed

00:24:03 --> 00:24:04: by severe drought,

00:24:04 --> 00:24:08: which is really a recipe for wildfire when you couple

00:24:08 --> 00:24:12: that with the exponential population growth we're seeing in

00:24:12 --> 00:24:14: Austin

00:24:12 --> 00:24:14: and Central Texas,

00:24:14 --> 00:24:18: and it really starts to culminate in in the recipe

00:24:18 --> 00:24:19: for wildfire disaster.

00:24:19 --> 00:24:22: And what we have control over is the way we

00:24:22 --> 00:24:26: build and design our built environment and how we utilized

00:24:26 --> 00:24:28: that land because the topography,

00:24:28 --> 00:24:30: the fuels and the weather.

00:24:30 --> 00:24:33: We won't be able to eliminate wildfire risk in Austin.

00:24:33 --> 00:24:37: What we can do is eliminate the probability that structures

00:24:37 --> 00:24:40: will be vulnerable during those events.

00:24:40 --> 00:24:43: So we can go to next slide please.

00:24:43 --> 00:24:44: So how do we approach this?

00:24:44 --> 00:24:48: We wanted to align with the national crisis strategy.

00:24:48 --> 00:24:50: Is Molly mentioned at the federal,

00:24:50 --> 00:24:52: the state and the local level?

00:24:52 --> 00:24:55: So our plan is reflective of national strategies and it's

00:24:55 --> 00:24:56: three tiered.

00:24:56 --> 00:24:59: We want to ensure that our communities or adapted to

00:24:59 --> 00:25:00: fire,

00:25:00 --> 00:25:03: meaning they can experience a fire in the area without

00:25:03 --> 00:25:06: significant losses of life or property.

00:25:06 --> 00:25:10: And their landscapes and retired after ecosystems are

00:25:10 --> 00:25:12: resilient to

00:25:10 --> 00:25:12: the catastrophic impacts of wildfire.

00:25:12 --> 00:25:16: Austins very fortunate. And like the rest of the state,

00:25:16 --> 00:25:18: which is 97% private land.

00:25:18 --> 00:25:21: About 30% of the County is held in conservation easements,
00:25:21 --> 00:25:24: so we have a permanent wildland urban interface.
00:25:24 --> 00:25:28: We're also fortunate we have some of the nicest greenbelts
00:25:28 --> 00:25:29: and parks in Austin,
00:25:29 --> 00:25:32: so we want to protect those as well.
00:25:32 --> 00:25:35: And we all know the majority of fires are started
00:25:35 --> 00:25:36: by individuals,
00:25:36 --> 00:25:38: so our landscapes are very much.
00:25:38 --> 00:25:42: Rap and the economic impacts and values associated with
those
00:25:42 --> 00:25:44: and as the fire Department.
00:25:44 --> 00:25:46: Our first priority is life safety.
00:25:46 --> 00:25:50: As I mentioned, so we worked really diligently to ensure
00:25:50 --> 00:25:53: that the Department has appropriate training.
00:25:53 --> 00:25:56: PPE Pre incident response plans.
00:25:56 --> 00:26:00: Situational awareness to be able to effectively respond to
those
00:26:00 --> 00:26:01: qualifiers.
00:26:01 --> 00:26:05: But we know those response are contingent on the public's
00:26:05 --> 00:26:07: reaction during a wildfire situation,
00:26:07 --> 00:26:10: so our plans are only as effective as.
00:26:10 --> 00:26:14: We communicate those plans and get clients with the public.
00:26:14 --> 00:26:18: So that effective responses is really a much broader effort
00:26:18 --> 00:26:22: than when we just traditionally think about suppression.
00:26:22 --> 00:26:26: Associated approaches to wildfire preparedness.
00:26:26 --> 00:26:28: Please.
00:26:28 --> 00:26:32: So as I mentioned, our Community Wildfire protection plan is
00:26:32 --> 00:26:34: based on that national cohesive strategy.
00:26:34 --> 00:26:38: We wanted to create that continuity and that Matt right
00:26:38 --> 00:26:40: out of the gate we had to engage a very
00:26:40 --> 00:26:42: broad group of stakeholders.
00:26:42 --> 00:26:45: Austin is a very complex and planning environment.
00:26:45 --> 00:26:48: We have over 28 threatened or endangered species to work
00:26:48 --> 00:26:52: with highly sensitive environmental features across the
landscape.
00:26:52 --> 00:26:55: Most of our reserves are preserved for a reason.
00:26:55 --> 00:26:58: Because of the sensitivity of the environmental.
00:26:58 --> 00:27:01: The quality is on that landscape and we had to
00:27:01 --> 00:27:04: balance all the values that people hold dear or not
00:27:04 --> 00:27:07: Austin to make sure that we reflected how wildfire risk
00:27:07 --> 00:27:10: and impact them. And so if you live in a
00:27:10 --> 00:27:13: high rise in downtown Austin but you like going to
00:27:13 --> 00:27:15: the Greenbelt for your morning runs,

00:27:15 --> 00:27:18: then you have a stake in the fight against wall.
00:27:18 --> 00:27:22: Or whether you're actually at risk in this.
00:27:22 --> 00:27:25: So we want to make sure that wildfire was everyone's
00:27:25 --> 00:27:28: life and work to enhance our local capacity.
00:27:28 --> 00:27:32: To address this risk, not just within the fire Department,
00:27:32 --> 00:27:36: but within other departments and agencies across the city
and
00:27:36 --> 00:27:37: County.
00:27:37 --> 00:27:40: We've seen an exponential expansion in the number of
people
00:27:41 --> 00:27:45: who are dedicated to wildland urban interface's primary duty
and
00:27:45 --> 00:27:49: so working to expand that capacity to include our partners
00:27:49 --> 00:27:53: and Co. Operators because we want everyone to understand
what
00:27:53 --> 00:27:54: their role while fire is.
00:27:54 --> 00:27:59: Know how to effectively engage and to implement what's
appropriate
00:27:59 --> 00:28:01: in their Mail.
00:28:01 --> 00:28:04: You one of the ways that we have done that
00:28:04 --> 00:28:08: is by putting wildfire risk in the geography of our
00:28:08 --> 00:28:09: audience.
00:28:09 --> 00:28:12: So one example of that is our City Council is
00:28:12 --> 00:28:14: very proactive when it comes to wildfire.
00:28:14 --> 00:28:17: They wanted to know what the risk was to their
00:28:17 --> 00:28:18: constituents specifically,
00:28:18 --> 00:28:22: so we broke our wildfire risk assessments out into Council
00:28:22 --> 00:28:25: districts where each Council member can see the number of
00:28:25 --> 00:28:27: constituents were at risk from wildfire,
00:28:27 --> 00:28:30: the number of structures in their district,
00:28:30 --> 00:28:33: the degree of that risk so they could have good
00:28:33 --> 00:28:37: situational awareness to make sound policy decisions
moving forward.
00:28:37 --> 00:28:39: So communicating the story of wildfire.
00:28:39 --> 00:28:42: And getting by and based on people's values is going
00:28:42 --> 00:28:44: really ascential strategy for us.
00:28:44 --> 00:28:47: One of the other things that we worked really hard
00:28:47 --> 00:28:50: to do as we move through defining what are best
00:28:50 --> 00:28:53: practices were and how to mitigate wildfire to codify those
00:28:53 --> 00:28:56: best practices. And I mentioned we've done that in a
00:28:56 --> 00:28:57: couple of ways.
00:28:57 --> 00:29:01: Most recently is the adoption of the Wildland Urban Interface
00:29:01 --> 00:29:01: code.

00:29:01 --> 00:29:06: According to International Code Council Austin's largest municipality outside of

00:29:06 --> 00:29:08: California to have adopted echoed.

00:29:08 --> 00:29:11: But we just didn't stop with the model code.

00:29:11 --> 00:29:13: We expanded that to compass.

00:29:13 --> 00:29:16: What we know is one of our greatest threats from

00:29:16 --> 00:29:19: wildfire which is embers intruding well into the community.

00:29:19 --> 00:29:21: Based on our fire history,

00:29:21 --> 00:29:25: in our modeling, we can receive viable members up to

00:29:25 --> 00:29:28: a mile and a half within structures within proximity to

00:29:29 --> 00:29:30: large wildland areas.

00:29:30 --> 00:29:33: So we extended the Amber protection in the code well

00:29:33 --> 00:29:34: into communities.

00:29:34 --> 00:29:36: Anything within a mile and a half of a Louis

00:29:36 --> 00:29:40: area is required to have invert resistant ignition components built

00:29:40 --> 00:29:41: into the structure.

00:29:41 --> 00:29:44: So it's not just the homes that are adjacent to

00:29:44 --> 00:29:44: Wildlands,

00:29:44 --> 00:29:47: then we want to provide protection for is the homes

00:29:47 --> 00:29:50: in the Wildland urban interface as a whole.

00:29:50 --> 00:29:54: Because we know these fires quickly transitioned from wildland fires

00:29:54 --> 00:29:55: to urban conflagrations.

00:29:55 --> 00:29:59: And that's our biggest concern in Austin that we're working

00:29:59 --> 00:30:00: to address.

00:30:00 --> 00:30:03: As I mentioned, it's key to have a balanced approach

00:30:03 --> 00:30:05: to wildfire mitigation,

00:30:05 --> 00:30:08: and so one of the things that we use a

00:30:08 --> 00:30:10: tool in Austin to.

00:30:10 --> 00:30:12: Awareness of our fire adapted ecosystems,

00:30:12 --> 00:30:16: but also to mitigate that threat is to use prescribed

00:30:16 --> 00:30:17: fire judiciously.

00:30:17 --> 00:30:19: But as broadly as we possibly can,

00:30:19 --> 00:30:21: and when people see smoke in the hair,

00:30:21 --> 00:30:24: so reminder that we live in an ecosystem that will

00:30:24 --> 00:30:24: burn.

00:30:24 --> 00:30:27: It's a matter of if and when we want to

00:30:27 --> 00:30:28: make sure it does burn.

00:30:28 --> 00:30:31: It's in our terms and we have some measure of

00:30:31 --> 00:30:35: control out how fire effects our communities or ecosystems.

00:30:35 --> 00:30:38: So finding that balance of communicating wildfire risk and the

00:30:38 --> 00:30:40: benefits of reintegrating fiery.

00:30:40 --> 00:30:43: The system is also been a key strategy to our
00:30:43 --> 00:30:44: overall success,
00:30:44 --> 00:30:48: and then I mentioned integrated planning and one of our
00:30:48 --> 00:30:51: goals was to make our plan others plans and vice
00:30:51 --> 00:30:51: versa.
00:30:51 --> 00:30:54: So if you look at the planning efforts in Austin,
00:30:54 --> 00:30:58: you'll see Wildfire embedded in our Urban forestry plan or
00:30:58 --> 00:31:00: watershed protection efforts,
00:31:00 --> 00:31:05: or water quality protection lands or Homeland Security
Emergency Management
00:31:05 --> 00:31:06: are planning and development.
00:31:06 --> 00:31:08: So across the city of Austin,
00:31:08 --> 00:31:11: we've worked in bed Wildfire in community.
00:31:11 --> 00:31:15: Planning efforts all the way up to the city's comprehensive
00:31:15 --> 00:31:16: planning level.
00:31:16 --> 00:31:19: So I was really excited that opportunity to share our
00:31:19 --> 00:31:20: story with you.
00:31:20 --> 00:31:24: There's a lot of other great stories out there encouraging
00:31:24 --> 00:31:27: and motivating how people are taking this threat.
00:31:27 --> 00:31:30: Head on. So excited to be apart of ability to
00:31:30 --> 00:31:34: share that story with you today and welcome any questions
00:31:34 --> 00:31:37: that we can field as we move forward in the
00:31:37 --> 00:31:40: presentations. Thank you.
00:31:40 --> 00:31:43: Thank you Justice and definitely have questions coming in
for
00:31:43 --> 00:31:44: you.
00:31:44 --> 00:31:47: Just want to follow up with one quick question.
00:31:47 --> 00:31:50: It's really impressive to see the local emphasis and focus
00:31:50 --> 00:31:52: at Austin is done at the Council level.
00:31:52 --> 00:31:56: I'm wondering in particular we started talking about issues of
00:31:56 --> 00:31:59: equity and income equity and what have you have.
00:31:59 --> 00:32:03: Those factors been making account in terms of the wildfire
00:32:03 --> 00:32:04: risk assessments?
00:32:04 --> 00:32:06: Or are there thoughts about that?
00:32:06 --> 00:32:09: Yeah, thank you so much for mentioning that one important
00:32:09 --> 00:32:11: step in our wildfire risk analysis.
00:32:11 --> 00:32:16: Is to evaluate the vulnerability of our populations in relation
00:32:16 --> 00:32:19: to their ability to effectively recover from the impacts of
00:32:20 --> 00:32:20: wildfire.
00:32:20 --> 00:32:24: So we worked with Headwaters Economics to develop one of
00:32:24 --> 00:32:28: the first Wildfire vulnerability viewers in the nation that
allowed
00:32:28 --> 00:32:31: us to look at while far from a social justice

00:32:31 --> 00:32:35: lens who has the least ability to take meaningful action
00:32:35 --> 00:32:38: based on the challenges that they face.
00:32:38 --> 00:32:42: How do we ensure that our distribution mitigation efforts or?
00:32:42 --> 00:32:44: Equitable and we're reaching all audiences.
00:32:44 --> 00:32:46: I'm in an effective manner,
00:32:46 --> 00:32:48: so that was one of the efforts that was at
00:32:49 --> 00:32:51: the center of defining our values in wildfire.
00:32:51 --> 00:32:54: Mitigation is to ensure that we do it away,
00:32:54 --> 00:32:56: then bodies, social justice and equity.
00:32:56 --> 00:33:01: Thanks for the question. Thank you justice and we're gonna
00:33:01 --> 00:33:02: go next speaker,
00:33:02 --> 00:33:06: but there's definitely some more questions from the audience
coming
00:33:06 --> 00:33:08: your way in Molly's way.
00:33:08 --> 00:33:11: And with that, I want to introduce Larry Floor.
00:33:11 --> 00:33:14: And again, Larry is going to be able to provide
00:33:14 --> 00:33:16: a very on the ground perspective.
00:33:16 --> 00:33:19: As someone who is building homes with Burbank housing as
00:33:19 --> 00:33:23: their CEO Larry I looking forward to hearing your experiences
00:33:23 --> 00:33:27: again with the recent fire issues that you've been facing
00:33:27 --> 00:33:31: in California. Thanks, I say it's hard to differentiate in
00:33:31 --> 00:33:35: which the most recent fires there happening so frequently.
00:33:35 --> 00:33:39: Now that we just actually become part of life,
00:33:39 --> 00:33:42: I want to 1st acknowledge the report that's out today.
00:33:42 --> 00:33:47: Lisbeth and her team put together firebreak and congratulate
you
00:33:47 --> 00:33:48: had a chance.
00:33:48 --> 00:33:51: As Molly did last night to skim it,
00:33:51 --> 00:33:54: and it's got a lot of information,
00:33:54 --> 00:33:57: um, I'm also I. I'm not by any means and
00:33:57 --> 00:34:00: I don't want to misrepresent myself,
00:34:00 --> 00:34:02: an expert and in the areas.
00:34:02 --> 00:34:05: Speaking of Molly, a justice absolutely are,
00:34:05 --> 00:34:08: but I can add to the conversation,
00:34:08 --> 00:34:11: though is sort of a real world case study and
00:34:11 --> 00:34:15: the impacts of of of what happens when a wildfire
00:34:15 --> 00:34:17: hits your community.
00:34:17 --> 00:34:19: So with that I'm going to.
00:34:19 --> 00:34:22: Move through my presentation. As Jose mentioned,
00:34:22 --> 00:34:25: I'm the CEO and President of Burbank Housing.
00:34:25 --> 00:34:30: We are a nonprofit, affordable housing development
company based in

00:34:30 --> 00:34:30: Santa Rosa,
00:34:30 --> 00:34:34: CA. And we were formed by this Noma County government
00:34:34 --> 00:34:35: in 1980,
00:34:35 --> 00:34:38: but have been independent of the County since 1995.
00:34:38 --> 00:34:41: Just to give you a context of our organization we
00:34:41 --> 00:34:42: built,
00:34:42 --> 00:34:45: we built over 5000 homes all in and or a
00:34:45 --> 00:34:48: apps most relevantly for this conversation.
00:34:48 --> 00:34:52: We have 80 different properties that are located throughout
Sonoma
00:34:52 --> 00:34:53: County.
00:34:53 --> 00:34:58: Any well within the fire zones to next slide please.
00:34:58 --> 00:35:04: Actually, I was told recently where the largest landlord in
00:35:04 --> 00:35:05: Sonoma County.
00:35:05 --> 00:35:07: Text, so here we go.
00:35:07 --> 00:35:10: So this is just be a context of Sonoma,
00:35:10 --> 00:35:13: which is where we want to have conversation.
00:35:13 --> 00:35:15: We have over 500,000 people,
00:35:15 --> 00:35:20: nine incorporated cities, so it's a pretty pretty well established
00:35:21 --> 00:35:25: urban environment in check house and 17 away back
probably
00:35:25 --> 00:35:26: 200 fires ago.
00:35:26 --> 00:35:29: At this point, count 'em all up.
00:35:29 --> 00:35:31: There was the Tubbs fire,
00:35:31 --> 00:35:35: or we eventually the complex became the North Bay fires.
00:35:35 --> 00:35:38: Here we're calling the Sonoma County fires.
00:35:38 --> 00:35:40: It was the most at the time.
00:35:40 --> 00:35:44: In 2017 it was most destructive fire in US history.
00:35:44 --> 00:35:47: 6000 homes in Sonoma County a total of over 9000
00:35:47 --> 00:35:49: homes were destroyed,
00:35:49 --> 00:35:51: 44 deaths as a result of the fires.
00:35:51 --> 00:35:53: Since then, as you all know,
00:35:53 --> 00:35:57: it's going to clips by the campfires and the fires
00:35:57 --> 00:35:57: this year,
00:35:57 --> 00:36:00: but at the time it was a big wake up
00:36:00 --> 00:36:00: call.
00:36:00 --> 00:36:03: I think for a lot of folks.
00:36:03 --> 00:36:07: Well was really unique. I think about the Tubbs Fire
00:36:07 --> 00:36:11: in particular was how it directly impacted the urban
environment.
00:36:11 --> 00:36:15: Santa Rosa, which was the really the focal point of
00:36:15 --> 00:36:16: the fire,
00:36:16 --> 00:36:18: is a city of over 150,000 people.

00:36:18 --> 00:36:21: And so when it hit the city it was.
00:36:21 --> 00:36:25: As you can imagine, the destruction that came in its
00:36:25 --> 00:36:26: wake.
00:36:26 --> 00:36:28: Next slide, please.
00:36:28 --> 00:36:31: So one of the sites that was destroyed was a
00:36:31 --> 00:36:33: 60 year old mobile Home Park.
00:36:33 --> 00:36:37: Otherwise it was called at the time journeys an mobile
00:36:37 --> 00:36:40: Home Park badly named for a senior mobile Home Park,
00:36:40 --> 00:36:43: wooden. We're planning to change the name,
00:36:43 --> 00:36:46: but anyway, that's one of the the impact of the
00:36:46 --> 00:36:46: fire,
00:36:46 --> 00:36:49: so maybe we can play the video at this point.
00:36:49 --> 00:36:52: This is a Bloomberg report at the time of the
00:36:52 --> 00:36:54: journeys in mobile home parks.
00:36:59 --> 00:37:03: We had some devastating virus throughout California over
the years,
00:37:03 --> 00:37:06: but I never expected a fire to Co through Santa
00:37:06 --> 00:37:06: Rosa.
00:37:06 --> 00:37:09: With the tenacious destruction that it did,
00:37:09 --> 00:37:10: that was surprising to me.
00:37:10 --> 00:37:13: I've been to fires all over the state and I've
00:37:13 --> 00:37:14: seen destruction.
00:37:14 --> 00:37:17: I mean, have I seen this level now because this
00:37:17 --> 00:37:20: was the most destructive wildfire in the state,
00:37:20 --> 00:37:22: right? But you don't you never think is going to
00:37:22 --> 00:37:23: happen to you.
00:37:23 --> 00:37:25: Here we are generalists later,
00:37:25 --> 00:37:28: and you're not closer to having a resolution to their
00:37:28 --> 00:37:31: homes when they were day after the fire.
00:37:31 --> 00:37:33: Underground wasn't grandpas, and that's not right.
00:37:38 --> 00:37:43: In October 2017, devastating wildfires broke out in California
and
00:37:43 --> 00:37:44: burned across the state.
00:37:44 --> 00:37:48: The Tubbs fire grew to become the most destructive wildfire
00:37:48 --> 00:37:50: in California's history,
00:37:50 --> 00:37:53: ripping through the northern city of Santa Rosa.
00:37:53 --> 00:37:56: Yeah, so we're actually standing on top of the parking
00:37:56 --> 00:37:58: garage of Kaiser Permanente,
00:37:58 --> 00:38:00: and if you look back behind me,
00:38:00 --> 00:38:03: you can see what's left of the journeys in mobile
00:38:03 --> 00:38:04: Home Park.
00:38:04 --> 00:38:07: Journeys End was a low income community for seniors and

00:38:07 --> 00:38:09: of its 160 mobile homes.
00:38:09 --> 00:38:11: All but 44 burned down.
00:38:16 --> 00:38:20: So I lived there approximately 3 years and almost coming
00:38:20 --> 00:38:22: on four and I still own it.
00:38:22 --> 00:38:26: It still is mine, but I can't live there so
00:38:26 --> 00:38:27: it's hard.
00:38:27 --> 00:38:29: When you get older, you kind of tend to.
00:38:29 --> 00:38:32: Be drawn towards your own and that's why there was
00:38:32 --> 00:38:34: a real strong senior park.
00:38:34 --> 00:38:37: A neighbor proud of that many residents are struggling to
00:38:37 --> 00:38:41: collect insurance that only worsens the financial situation.
00:38:41 --> 00:38:45: For those also facing homelessness and serious health
issues Thursday
00:38:45 --> 00:38:46: of that week.
00:38:46 --> 00:38:48: That Monday I had a biopsy.
00:38:48 --> 00:38:52: The next week I was told there was cancer.
00:38:52 --> 00:38:54: So yeah, I was dealing with cancer even then,
00:38:54 --> 00:38:55: even though I didn't know.
00:38:55 --> 00:38:57: And so then it all became clear.
00:38:57 --> 00:39:01: My supposed to live. How am I supposed to do
00:39:01 --> 00:39:01: this?
00:39:01 --> 00:39:06: The Tubbs fire started just after 9:45 PM on October
00:39:06 --> 00:39:07: 8th,
00:39:07 --> 00:39:11: 2017. The burn rate of this fire was a football
00:39:11 --> 00:39:12: field am in it.
00:39:12 --> 00:39:16: It moved at a rapid speed and burned thirty 6807
00:39:16 --> 00:39:17: acres,
00:39:17 --> 00:39:21: destroyed 5636 structures and killed 22 people.
00:39:21 --> 00:39:24: Life isn't the same.
00:39:24 --> 00:39:28: And then it's extremely scary and it is extremely deadly.
00:39:28 --> 00:39:33: Two of our residents. Inside every street but mine.
00:39:37 --> 00:39:40: Who's gone?
00:39:40 --> 00:39:42: It wasn't just a spark everywhere you look,
00:39:42 --> 00:39:44: there were flames, and so we're still trying to figure
00:39:44 --> 00:39:46: out a way to help these people.
00:39:46 --> 00:39:48: Man, it's like there's nobody wants to get involved,
00:39:48 --> 00:39:50: only wants to do anything so you see all these
00:39:50 --> 00:39:51: homes always money.
00:39:51 --> 00:39:53: Their possessions are still in there,
00:39:53 --> 00:39:54: the furniture still in there.
00:39:54 --> 00:39:56: They've been bounced from hotel room,
00:39:56 --> 00:39:57: hotel room to hotel room.

00:39:57 --> 00:39:59: Now they have places to stay but don't know what
00:39:59 --> 00:40:02: to do for the guy that's help save their homes.
00:40:02 --> 00:40:04: Again, I've never notified in my life to ever regret
00:40:04 --> 00:40:05: saving somebody's house,
00:40:05 --> 00:40:07: but right about now, like.
00:40:07 --> 00:40:08: I did something wrong.
00:40:12 --> 00:40:15: I was immediately tasked to respond over to Kaiser Hospital
00:40:15 --> 00:40:19: an report back and find out what was needed there
00:40:19 --> 00:40:20: and enrouté.
00:40:20 --> 00:40:23: I was told to also give an update on Journeys
00:40:23 --> 00:40:24: End Mobile Home Park.
00:40:24 --> 00:40:26: As I came over the overpass,
00:40:26 --> 00:40:29: I notice that the park was was in dire shape.
00:40:29 --> 00:40:32: I reported the Fire Chief to consider journeys,
00:40:32 --> 00:40:34: End mobile Home Park a total loss.
00:40:34 --> 00:40:37: I ran into a gentleman named Priest.
00:40:37 --> 00:40:39: He told me that he was in the park working
00:40:39 --> 00:40:42: on making sure that everyone was.
00:40:42 --> 00:40:45: Out net last row and that he was a previous
00:40:45 --> 00:40:48: firefighter and so he was very helpful with helping that
00:40:48 --> 00:40:51: first krulee hoses and and set up a plan.
00:40:51 --> 00:40:54: I went down to met the firemen were almost fell
00:40:54 --> 00:40:57: in the water together and I ran back up here
00:40:57 --> 00:41:00: and I kick these out so I could take the
00:41:00 --> 00:41:02: fire hose over the radio.
00:41:02 --> 00:41:07: Evacuate Kaiser Kaiser and they look at me and they
00:41:07 --> 00:41:08: go like no.
00:41:08 --> 00:41:11: So there's about another 3 or 4 minutes of that.
00:41:11 --> 00:41:13: I think we're going to put the link in there,
00:41:13 --> 00:41:15: but I think you get the I think you get
00:41:15 --> 00:41:16: the gist of the situation.
00:41:16 --> 00:41:20: It's definitely. Wanted to share that just to show you
00:41:20 --> 00:41:23: some real world on the ground or what a wildfire
00:41:23 --> 00:41:23: can do.
00:41:23 --> 00:41:26: A community. So I'm going back to the my slides.
00:41:26 --> 00:41:29: I just had a couple of pictures in there which
00:41:29 --> 00:41:30: I think may put some context,
00:41:30 --> 00:41:35: but to some of the conversation will keep going down.
00:41:35 --> 00:41:38: So the.
00:41:38 --> 00:41:40: Choose me next. Next, slide the coffee park.
00:41:40 --> 00:41:43: This is a picture. Believe of Coffee Park which was
00:41:43 --> 00:41:47: a subdivision which had over 1000 homes destroyed in just

00:41:47 --> 00:41:48: a matter of minutes.

00:41:48 --> 00:41:51: The extent of the speed at which it went with

00:41:51 --> 00:41:51: unbelievable.

00:41:51 --> 00:41:54: This is the aerial of journeys and the mobile Home

00:41:54 --> 00:41:58: Park that we would just that we were just describing.

00:41:58 --> 00:42:01: Just gives you a sense of the destructions.

00:42:01 --> 00:42:03: So we're not sort of a glass half empty,

00:42:03 --> 00:42:07: more of a glass, half full kind of organization.

00:42:07 --> 00:42:10: And since we are a community development organization,

00:42:10 --> 00:42:14: we definitely jumped in. I the Tuesday after the fires,

00:42:14 --> 00:42:18: they really were subsiding. On Monday went on a tour

00:42:18 --> 00:42:22: with one of the County supervisor who represents this area

00:42:22 --> 00:42:23: and it was just shocking.

00:42:23 --> 00:42:27: We were all speechless when we saw the scope in

00:42:27 --> 00:42:29: the scale of the description.

00:42:29 --> 00:42:32: The heat had just melted everything into solid metal.

00:42:32 --> 00:42:35: To see it witnessed it up front,

00:42:35 --> 00:42:38: first hand right as the ground was still smoking,

00:42:38 --> 00:42:41: was was quite so great and we said,

00:42:41 --> 00:42:44: really frankly, what can we do to be helpful as

00:42:44 --> 00:42:47: the local community development organization?

00:42:47 --> 00:42:51: And so we've been working now for almost three years

00:42:51 --> 00:42:55: since the fires on redeveloping the site and we're making

00:42:55 --> 00:42:56: huge progress,

00:42:56 --> 00:43:00: but we really wanted to show the world will recovery

00:43:00 --> 00:43:00: Anne.

00:43:00 --> 00:43:04: Frankly, resiliency looks like. In the form of a real

00:43:04 --> 00:43:07: project that could come up in early rise from the

00:43:07 --> 00:43:09: Ashes here so can we go to the next slide.

00:43:12 --> 00:43:16: Burbank, working with related of California is re envisioning

00:43:16 --> 00:43:18: this

00:43:16 --> 00:43:18: site and re envisioning it,

00:43:18 --> 00:43:21: one that will meet the needs of the community.

00:43:21 --> 00:43:23: The 162 folks who lost their homes.

00:43:23 --> 00:43:25: They were seniors on fixed income,

00:43:25 --> 00:43:29: although it wasn't deed restricted affordable housing,

00:43:29 --> 00:43:31: it was naturally acquired, curling,

00:43:31 --> 00:43:35: affordable housing and so we feel a real obligation and

00:43:35 --> 00:43:39: are committed to providing replacement senior affordable

00:43:35 --> 00:43:39: housing for the

00:43:39 --> 00:43:42: properties for the units that were lost.

00:43:42 --> 00:43:44: In the front closest share.

00:43:44 --> 00:43:47: So the bottom of the screen is 162 units of
00:43:47 --> 00:43:49: senior affordable housing,
00:43:49 --> 00:43:53: sort of wrapped around. It will be 300 units of
00:43:53 --> 00:43:55: market rate housing and.
00:43:55 --> 00:43:58: That we hope to be able to break ground actually
00:43:58 --> 00:44:01: plan where we actually go to the Santa Rosa Planning
00:44:02 --> 00:44:05: Commission in three weeks for our approvals from them and
00:44:05 --> 00:44:07: then the Santa Rosa City Council.
00:44:07 --> 00:44:09: And then our plan is to be in the ground
00:44:09 --> 00:44:12: with the first phase of the affordable project.
00:44:12 --> 00:44:14: 94 units in by the end of 2021.
00:44:14 --> 00:44:17: So you might ask, why are we building on a
00:44:17 --> 00:44:19: site that was destroyed in the fire?
00:44:19 --> 00:44:22: First of all, this is in the middle of Santa
00:44:22 --> 00:44:22: Rosa,
00:44:22 --> 00:44:25: so it's it really is an urban infill site of
00:44:25 --> 00:44:26: classically open infill site.
00:44:26 --> 00:44:29: But we've also been designing this with some of the
00:44:30 --> 00:44:33: best practices in mind that we've been able to call
00:44:33 --> 00:44:34: from the literature of.
00:44:34 --> 00:44:37: For starters, This site is actually adjacent to a major
00:44:38 --> 00:44:39: freeway Hwy 101,
00:44:39 --> 00:44:41: which is just on the top of the screen,
00:44:41 --> 00:44:44: so the evacuation is a lot cleaner coming out of
00:44:44 --> 00:44:47: this site than many of the other sites that were
00:44:47 --> 00:44:50: destroyed in the fires we have speaking evacuation,
00:44:50 --> 00:44:53: we have been required and we are pretty.
00:44:53 --> 00:44:56: We did put together an emergency evacuation plan for the
00:44:56 --> 00:44:57: property so.
00:44:57 --> 00:45:01: And we're also using all forms of Brazilian types of
00:45:01 --> 00:45:04: the types of materials that will withstand fires,
00:45:04 --> 00:45:07: so we're also replacing the mobile home parks with three
00:45:07 --> 00:45:11: and four story units that would better stand up wildfire.
00:45:11 --> 00:45:15: And of course, landscaping that will not promote that will
00:45:15 --> 00:45:16: provide a firebreak.
00:45:16 --> 00:45:19: Finally, for this property. So anyway,
00:45:19 --> 00:45:22: when I can stop there and just answer any questions,
00:45:22 --> 00:45:26: or the people may have thank you.
00:45:26 --> 00:45:29: Thank you. Larry Anne at like to actually bring this
00:45:29 --> 00:45:33: question for all of our panelists of get Molly injustice
00:45:33 --> 00:45:34: to also participate.
00:45:34 --> 00:45:39: Again definitely there's some lessons learned there being

demonstrated in

00:45:39 --> 00:45:43: how we're approaching the wildfire issues at easier levels.

00:45:43 --> 00:45:46: But it's it's really clear that the the risk appears

00:45:47 --> 00:45:50: to be increasing so I'd love to hear from from

00:45:50 --> 00:45:50: all of you?

00:45:50 --> 00:45:54: How much of this increased risk is is attributed to

00:45:54 --> 00:45:56: development trends climate change.

00:45:56 --> 00:46:00: Force management what what is triggering this increase bike

00:46:00 --> 00:46:04: and

00:46:00 --> 00:46:04: what can we do to intelligently reduce that risk?

00:46:04 --> 00:46:08: Maybe starting with Larry and minimally injustice?

00:46:08 --> 00:46:11: Well, I think the reality in California,

00:46:11 --> 00:46:13: especially, I will speak to the other states,

00:46:13 --> 00:46:16: is that we have to build where there's land and

00:46:16 --> 00:46:21: unfortunately the Layon sometimes interfaces with what has

00:46:21 --> 00:46:22: historically been

00:46:21 --> 00:46:22: without a zones.

00:46:22 --> 00:46:25: So we as we call them we don't really have

00:46:25 --> 00:46:25: a choice.

00:46:25 --> 00:46:29: We've got such huge population in our housing is such

00:46:29 --> 00:46:30: a critical need.

00:46:30 --> 00:46:32: We just have to be more creative about how we

00:46:32 --> 00:46:36: build it and also cognizant of where we're building in

00:46:36 --> 00:46:37: regards to it.

00:46:37 --> 00:46:39: But I don't know that we have a choice really

00:46:39 --> 00:46:40: in California.

00:46:40 --> 00:46:44: But to start to develop new ways of building housing

00:46:44 --> 00:46:46: that speaks to the concerns.

00:46:46 --> 00:46:50: But it also speaks to the need for housing in

00:46:50 --> 00:46:51: our communities.

00:46:51 --> 00:46:53: Thank you Larry Marley is it?

00:46:53 --> 00:46:54: Is it the development trends?

00:46:54 --> 00:46:55: Is it more climate change?

00:46:55 --> 00:46:59: What? What's triggering this? This is increased from your

00:46:59 --> 00:47:01: perspective.

00:46:59 --> 00:47:01: Well, it's all of the above and I think that

00:47:01 --> 00:47:04: was the goal of trying to provide my really crude

00:47:04 --> 00:47:07: assessment of trends as that you know,

00:47:07 --> 00:47:09: these trends have been in place for decades,

00:47:09 --> 00:47:13: but now you're pouring, or you're adding climate change to

00:47:13 --> 00:47:13: the mix.

00:47:13 --> 00:47:16: It's accelerating the situation that we're in,

00:47:16 --> 00:47:19: and so we have to look at it comprehensively.

00:47:19 --> 00:47:21: You know, just a spoke about this.

00:47:21 --> 00:47:24: It's not just you, know someone like me with a

00:47:24 --> 00:47:25: background in land use,

00:47:25 --> 00:47:29: planning or someone with a background in fire suppression
or

00:47:29 --> 00:47:29: forestry,

00:47:29 --> 00:47:31: you know when. When we do work,

00:47:31 --> 00:47:36: we're sitting around tables virtually or physically working with,

00:47:36 --> 00:47:41: you know, a multidisciplinary team representing all of these
different

00:47:41 --> 00:47:42: interests.

00:47:42 --> 00:47:45: And that's really the only way we can move the

00:47:45 --> 00:47:50: conversation forward is to bring these different areas of
expertise

00:47:50 --> 00:47:52: to the table to problem solve.

00:47:52 --> 00:47:55: Because it's not just you know,

00:47:55 --> 00:47:59: one skill set or one type of interest that can

00:47:59 --> 00:48:01: solve this challenge.

00:48:01 --> 00:48:04: Great feedback adjust is I'm going to definitely answer that

00:48:04 --> 00:48:05: question.

00:48:05 --> 00:48:08: I want also A tag on a specific question.

00:48:08 --> 00:48:10: I was asked to you from the audience.

00:48:10 --> 00:48:14: They stated in California were encountering resistance from
public agencies

00:48:14 --> 00:48:18: that manage conservation areas to spend money in regards
to

00:48:18 --> 00:48:21: fire they strongly resist removing eucalyptus,

00:48:21 --> 00:48:26: creating fuel breaks removing highly flammable brush
managing managing fires

00:48:26 --> 00:48:29: is a part of the charter obligations do you have

00:48:29 --> 00:48:31: any tips in this area and I think?

00:48:31 --> 00:48:34: Relates to the question as to is in the conditions

00:48:34 --> 00:48:36: that are exacerbating.

00:48:36 --> 00:48:38: Would love your thoughts on that.

00:48:38 --> 00:48:42: That's great if I could start with the first question,

00:48:42 --> 00:48:44: I'll work into the follow up.

00:48:44 --> 00:48:47: So I think that my anthropology background.

00:48:47 --> 00:48:51: I think wildfire issues or largely result of cultural challenges.

00:48:51 --> 00:48:55: Both humans are a cultural species and so our physical

00:48:55 --> 00:49:00: environment is a reflection of our imaginations and creativity
in

00:49:00 --> 00:49:02: the way that we want to.

00:49:02 --> 00:49:05: Make the world a representation of those ideas and so

00:49:05 --> 00:49:08: we have to be able to change people's hearts and

00:49:08 --> 00:49:11: minds to understand the environment that we're living in.
00:49:11 --> 00:49:14: We wouldn't just buy somebody a car and give it
00:49:14 --> 00:49:14: to them,
00:49:14 --> 00:49:16: not teach him how to drive it.
00:49:16 --> 00:49:19: And so we have most of our population moving into
00:49:19 --> 00:49:22: environments that they don't know how to interact and live
00:49:22 --> 00:49:23: compatible with.
00:49:23 --> 00:49:25: And so I think our first step is to help
00:49:25 --> 00:49:29: people understand this issue and change hearts and minds.
00:49:29 --> 00:49:32: And then we'll see downstream impacts of people taking
their.
00:49:32 --> 00:49:36: Procreate measures and steps you know related to their role
00:49:36 --> 00:49:37: in wildfire.
00:49:37 --> 00:49:41: It certainly was speaking to the second question is certainly
00:49:41 --> 00:49:44: was one of our first challenges in the City of
00:49:44 --> 00:49:47: Austin because the fire Department aren't land managers,
00:49:47 --> 00:49:51: but we got tasked with the responsibility of reducing wildfire
00:49:51 --> 00:49:54: risk and that man through mean since we didn't have
00:49:54 --> 00:49:57: rules that met through collaboration,
00:49:57 --> 00:50:02: coercion communication. When we proposed our first fuels
mitigation project
00:50:02 --> 00:50:03: in the city.
00:50:03 --> 00:50:06: We invited all the regulatory entities that would be required
00:50:06 --> 00:50:09: to sign off on that project occurring in each of
00:50:09 --> 00:50:12: them had a specific concern in a vacuum about that
00:50:12 --> 00:50:15: project that would prohibit it moving forward.
00:50:15 --> 00:50:18: And so we had to come to the realization that
00:50:18 --> 00:50:21: were dead in the water and less we can figure
00:50:21 --> 00:50:24: out how to move forward together and so we backed
00:50:24 --> 00:50:27: up, and develop strategies that we could all agree on
00:50:27 --> 00:50:31: roles and responsibilities and equally as important we helped
advocate
00:50:31 --> 00:50:35: for resources that those other departments needed to be able
00:50:35 --> 00:50:36: to. How much those goals?
00:50:36 --> 00:50:39: So one recent addition to our parks and Rec was
00:50:39 --> 00:50:42: a Land Management in fire management position.
00:50:42 --> 00:50:44: 'cause we asked why aren't you doing this?
00:50:44 --> 00:50:46: It needs to be done and they said we don't
00:50:46 --> 00:50:49: have the past year of wooden so I'm helping others
00:50:49 --> 00:50:53: build the capacity and understanding how well far relates to
00:50:53 --> 00:50:56: their values has been our most effective approach.
00:50:56 --> 00:50:59: Now we're able to implement kills projects across the city

00:50:59 --> 00:51:02: with environmental compliance and buy in from our partners that

00:51:03 --> 00:51:05: we didn't have early on and so building that trust

00:51:05 --> 00:51:07: is. Really been key for us,

00:51:07 --> 00:51:12: really great feedback. Another question from the audience and this

00:51:12 --> 00:51:15: may be more specific is what can be done about

00:51:15 --> 00:51:19: Beale infants infestation that has been caused best.

00:51:19 --> 00:51:24: Cosme treason. Diane created more of a wildfire hazard.

00:51:24 --> 00:51:26: Any thoughts for my Palace?

00:51:30 --> 00:51:31: Over this question comes up a lot.

00:51:31 --> 00:51:32: I would just say though,

00:51:32 --> 00:51:34: you know it's I'm not trying to deflect it,

00:51:34 --> 00:51:36: but.

00:51:36 --> 00:51:39: We I work very closely with another director who may

00:51:39 --> 00:51:41: be on the web and are,

00:51:41 --> 00:51:44: but he's a Fort registered professional Forester,

00:51:44 --> 00:51:47: and again I guess it speaks to how important it

00:51:47 --> 00:51:49: is to have a team focused on these questions.

00:51:49 --> 00:51:51: It's outside my my scope,

00:51:51 --> 00:51:54: but we, you know, we look at the landscape,

00:51:54 --> 00:51:56: but we're also interested in what we know.

00:51:56 --> 00:52:00: How's the built environment in relation to the landscape?

00:52:00 --> 00:52:03: So that's where we lean on the expertise of a

00:52:03 --> 00:52:07: professional Forester with direct experience in fire behavior.

00:52:07 --> 00:52:11: Thanks Molly, we have a question specifically for Larry Larry.

00:52:11 --> 00:52:16: There's a question about the viability of rebuilding paradise.

00:52:16 --> 00:52:20: Paradise, CA that was devastated by fires recently giving this

00:52:20 --> 00:52:22: location in the continued wildfire.

00:52:22 --> 00:52:25: Threats it from your perspective as a builder.

00:52:25 --> 00:52:28: Is it viable to rebuild and what steps would need

00:52:28 --> 00:52:29: to be taken?

00:52:29 --> 00:52:31: I don't really see it as Mike.

00:52:31 --> 00:52:34: Also, frankly, we've been able to lend a lot of

00:52:34 --> 00:52:37: extra help having been a year earlier than the campfires

00:52:37 --> 00:52:40: in Paradise and you County to sort of a preview

00:52:40 --> 00:52:43: of what happens a year out and did get a

00:52:43 --> 00:52:45: chance to go up there for a day long planning

00:52:45 --> 00:52:48: exercise with the officials into County in paradise.

00:52:48 --> 00:52:51: They've already made a decision to rebuild,

00:52:51 --> 00:52:54: so that's the local jurisdictions determination,

00:52:54 --> 00:52:55: and we respect that it's,

00:52:55 --> 00:52:58: you know, it's as builders of anybody does.

00:52:58 --> 00:52:59: But how do you do it?

00:52:59 --> 00:53:01: I think is the key.

00:53:01 --> 00:53:04: And I know they've been trying to tap into some

00:53:04 --> 00:53:08: of the best practices and planning to ensure the fact

00:53:08 --> 00:53:08: that.

00:53:08 --> 00:53:11: Really, it's an access issue to make sure that they

00:53:11 --> 00:53:12: can get off the Ridge.

00:53:12 --> 00:53:16: Really frankly, in paradise, if there is another fast fire,

00:53:16 --> 00:53:17: let there was this year again,

00:53:17 --> 00:53:21: they are rebuilding. They're trying to incorporate the best practices,

00:53:21 --> 00:53:24: but I'm going back to the earlier comment.

00:53:24 --> 00:53:26: You know, it's sort of flipping,

00:53:26 --> 00:53:27: but it's not. I mean,

00:53:27 --> 00:53:29: where are these people going live?

00:53:29 --> 00:53:31: It's not like we've got all this extra land in

00:53:31 --> 00:53:33: California that you can develop,

00:53:33 --> 00:53:36: so we've got to be smart about how we develop.

00:53:36 --> 00:53:39: Absolutely, and we've got to use best practices.

00:53:39 --> 00:53:43: But I understand the rationale for why they're rebuilding there.

00:53:45 --> 00:53:48: Thank you, Larry. A question for the group.

00:53:48 --> 00:53:53: Have you seen some successful efforts on a national scale

00:53:53 --> 00:53:57: and to implement land use planning programs for wildfire here

00:53:57 --> 00:54:01: or outside the US that we could potentially apply beyond

00:54:01 --> 00:54:03: what you're doing right now?

00:54:06 --> 00:54:08: Yeah, actually I am excited.

00:54:08 --> 00:54:11: Will have to wait a few years but I'm excited

00:54:11 --> 00:54:15: about what Canada has been doing at a national scale.

00:54:15 --> 00:54:19: They are in the process of updating their national building

00:54:19 --> 00:54:24: code which is published by Natural Research Council Canada and

00:54:24 --> 00:54:28: this is a modern modernization of the code to address

00:54:28 --> 00:54:30: climate change stressors on structures.

00:54:30 --> 00:54:35: So it will include provision specifically to address wildfire.

00:54:35 --> 00:54:37: The code also will incorporate it.

00:54:37 --> 00:54:41: Guidance chapter on land use strategies and evacuation and other

00:54:41 --> 00:54:45: considerations so that you know communities can use this.

00:54:45 --> 00:54:47: It's not. It's a model code,

00:54:47 --> 00:54:50: so it doesn't have legal status until it's adopted by

00:54:50 --> 00:54:53: a province or local jurisdiction,
00:54:53 --> 00:54:56: and this update will occur in their 2025 adoption cycle.
00:54:56 --> 00:55:00: But you know, from the engagement that I've had with
00:55:00 --> 00:55:00: it,
00:55:00 --> 00:55:04: it's really exciting and impressive and I think it's.
00:55:04 --> 00:55:06: It's where we need to go I would love
00:55:06 --> 00:55:10: to see something like that here as guidance you know
00:55:10 --> 00:55:14: that far reaching and really that comprehensive in terms of
00:55:14 --> 00:55:17: the future incorporation of climate change stressors.
00:55:17 --> 00:55:20: So yeah.
00:55:20 --> 00:55:24: Great feedback and definitely I'm sure we can share some
00:55:24 --> 00:55:26: of that information in the chat as well.
00:55:26 --> 00:55:29: There is another question.
00:55:29 --> 00:55:34: Is the California specific question by thinking it would apply
00:55:34 --> 00:55:37: across the board the question asked in California P.
00:55:37 --> 00:55:42: Jeannie has been in real neighborhoods cutting down trees
near
00:55:42 --> 00:55:44: power lines to reduce fire risk,
00:55:44 --> 00:55:48: and they feel that this is leaving neighborhoods more
exposed
00:55:48 --> 00:55:51: to heat and drying out vegetation.
00:55:51 --> 00:55:55: Is this the most intelligent way for communities to reduce
00:55:55 --> 00:55:56: fire wildfire risk?
00:55:56 --> 00:56:02: Are there other recommendations from your experience that
you might
00:56:02 --> 00:56:03: suggest?
00:56:03 --> 00:56:07: Yeah, that's an interesting, and it's also a complicated
question
00:56:07 --> 00:56:11: because the way you mitigate wildfire risk in relation to
00:56:11 --> 00:56:14: vegetation differs based on the geography and environment.
00:56:14 --> 00:56:18: What we do in Austin probably isn't appropriate for other
00:56:18 --> 00:56:21: places in the country where we strive to keep our
00:56:21 --> 00:56:22: canopy closed.
00:56:22 --> 00:56:25: Are there understory free from grass that can spread very
00:56:25 --> 00:56:29: quickly and easily during a wildfire and remove that
understory
00:56:29 --> 00:56:29: vegetation.
00:56:29 --> 00:56:32: So one of the things we did is work with
00:56:32 --> 00:56:33: our cities utility.
00:56:33 --> 00:56:38: The energy to prioritize their vegetation treatment areas to
incorporate
00:56:38 --> 00:56:41: those best fuel practices of what we call a shaded
00:56:41 --> 00:56:42: fuel break.

00:56:42 --> 00:56:45: Where we keep the canopy as intact as possible to
00:56:45 --> 00:56:49: reduce the grass growth program to plant the right trees
00:56:49 --> 00:56:50: in the right place.
00:56:50 --> 00:56:54: Under these power lines and even use some hormonal
stimulates
00:56:54 --> 00:56:57: to regulate the growth of those trees and so they
00:56:57 --> 00:56:59: don't become a future problem.
00:56:59 --> 00:57:02: So getting ahead of that curve is going to be
00:57:02 --> 00:57:04: much more effective than.
00:57:04 --> 00:57:08: Retroactively trying to fix those those issues with vegetation
management,
00:57:08 --> 00:57:11: and we've also worked with them very closely to leverage
00:57:11 --> 00:57:12: their outreach net,
00:57:12 --> 00:57:16: which is much more vast in the fire Department to
00:57:16 --> 00:57:21: engage residents adjacent to those utility lines and critical
infrastructure.
00:57:21 --> 00:57:24: In addition to doing some analysis on the vulnerability of
00:57:24 --> 00:57:25: our infrastructure,
00:57:25 --> 00:57:29: our utility recently got a budget amendment of over doubling
00:57:29 --> 00:57:33: their vegetation management funds as a result of that risk
00:57:33 --> 00:57:34: analysis.
00:57:34 --> 00:57:37: So having those conversations with the utility company can
be
00:57:37 --> 00:57:40: some of the best ways to guide the conversation,
00:57:40 --> 00:57:44: 'cause they still are humans and dialogue goes along way.
00:57:44 --> 00:57:47: So I suggest having that conversation if you haven't,
00:57:47 --> 00:57:51: see if you can come to a way to meet
00:57:51 --> 00:57:52: multiple values.
00:57:52 --> 00:57:56: Thank you justice and we're getting close to the end.
00:57:56 --> 00:57:59: There's lots of questions here and again,
00:57:59 --> 00:58:02: it just emphasizes why this is such an important topic
00:58:02 --> 00:58:03: right now.
00:58:03 --> 00:58:06: But as we are at the confluence of a number
00:58:06 --> 00:58:08: of issues in wildfire season with Koben,
00:58:08 --> 00:58:11: 19 with with a lot of civil unrest,
00:58:11 --> 00:58:13: all of these things are coming together,
00:58:13 --> 00:58:17: creating a feeling of nervousness and also changing the way
00:58:17 --> 00:58:20: in which we react to these situations.
00:58:20 --> 00:58:21: I would like to ask again,
00:58:21 --> 00:58:25: what have we learned? From the past in our final
00:58:25 --> 00:58:25: question,
00:58:25 --> 00:58:28: and how is that changing how we plan for the
00:58:28 --> 00:58:30: future from your perspective,

00:58:30 --> 00:58:32: particularly given the COVID-19 layer,
00:58:32 --> 00:58:36: social distancing and different levels of sensitivity.
00:58:36 --> 00:58:38: If we could just start with Molly,
00:58:38 --> 00:58:40: go to Larry and Fish with justice,
00:58:40 --> 00:58:42: that would be great. Sure,
00:58:42 --> 00:58:45: I know this sounds like a simple answer,
00:58:45 --> 00:58:48: but not to wait. We we've been waiting so long
00:58:48 --> 00:58:49: to try and you know,
00:58:49 --> 00:58:52: I think we just have to make tough decisions and
00:58:52 --> 00:58:53: start moving forward.
00:58:53 --> 00:58:57: Um? Collaboration is great. We love collaboration,
00:58:57 --> 00:59:00: but there's always going to be tradeoffs,
00:59:00 --> 00:59:02: and I think we have to look at the real
00:59:02 --> 00:59:06: hard issues around public safety and and not preparing for
00:59:06 --> 00:59:06: the future.
00:59:06 --> 00:59:09: What costs there are going to be that we'd have
00:59:09 --> 00:59:10: to contend with,
00:59:10 --> 00:59:12: so you know, I, I'll leave it at that.
00:59:12 --> 00:59:16: Being pro as proactive as possible and and strong in
00:59:16 --> 00:59:17: our choices.
00:59:17 --> 00:59:22: Thank you, Molly Larry. I think but.
00:59:22 --> 00:59:26: We learning and we're learning from other communities
where anything
00:59:26 --> 00:59:28: from other developments.
00:59:28 --> 00:59:31: So for now our projects for the first time have
00:59:31 --> 00:59:33: emergency evacuation plans,
00:59:33 --> 00:59:35: sort of speak to the reality that this is not
00:59:35 --> 00:59:37: something that's going away,
00:59:37 --> 00:59:41: and so we just have to build understanding that there
00:59:41 --> 00:59:42: has been an I *****.
00:59:42 --> 00:59:45: What happens not when not if but when there's a
00:59:45 --> 00:59:48: wildfire and we also need to build with materials that
00:59:48 --> 00:59:51: are hopefully give us a better shot at being able
00:59:51 --> 00:59:54: to survive wildfire.
00:59:54 --> 00:59:57: Really valuable information Larry and justice.
00:59:57 --> 00:59:58: You get the last word,
00:59:58 --> 01:00:00: yeah, but I'd like to add to.
01:00:00 --> 01:00:03: That is during the wildfire evacuations or the most risking
01:00:03 --> 01:00:06: component of that and what we're effectively doing is forcing
01:00:06 --> 01:00:08: more people to be in their homes.
01:00:08 --> 01:00:11: During those times, those wildfires were likely to occur,
01:00:11 --> 01:00:15: so will have potentially greater residential populations in

harm's way.

01:00:15 --> 01:00:18: So we owe it to our communities to make sure
01:00:18 --> 01:00:20: we're not putting them in a tender box that,
01:00:20 --> 01:00:23: if they're going to be sheltered in numerous ways in
01:00:23 --> 01:00:24: their home,
01:00:24 --> 01:00:26: in our. Now then we do it in a way
01:00:26 --> 01:00:28: that protects them,
01:00:28 --> 01:00:31: and especially from the threat of something like wildfire and
01:00:31 --> 01:00:34: so more and more people are going to be in
01:00:34 --> 01:00:37: harm's way based on that because of Publix or certainly
01:00:37 --> 01:00:40: going to have to put it the way we do.
01:00:40 --> 01:00:41: Everything I think in in general,
01:00:41 --> 01:00:46: but specifically in the way we protect peoples last during
01:00:46 --> 01:00:48: this event from wildfire.
01:00:48 --> 01:00:50: Thank you Justice and thank you.
01:00:50 --> 01:00:54: Panel is for your great information for sharing best practices.
01:00:54 --> 01:00:57: Again, I encourage everyone on the call today to take
01:00:57 --> 01:00:59: a look at the firebreak document.
01:00:59 --> 01:01:03: It is extremely valuable. Lots of best practice information
there
01:01:03 --> 01:01:06: and again you seem the chat information shared by our
01:01:06 --> 01:01:10: great panelists on what they're doing to advance their
communities
01:01:10 --> 01:01:12: that they serve. Again, thank you a lot for the
01:01:13 --> 01:01:15: opportunity to start this conversation.
01:01:15 --> 01:01:18: My name is Jose with member on behalf of Eli
01:01:18 --> 01:01:18: Sacramento.
01:01:18 --> 01:01:22: Annually national. We like to thank you for participating
today's
01:01:22 --> 01:01:22: event.
01:01:22 --> 01:01:23: Take care.

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