

HOW EVERYDAY LAND USE SHAPES DISASTERS

FROM ZONING TO

CONFLAGRATION

Utah APA Chapter Conference | April 9, 2026

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*Community Planning
Assistance for Wildfire*



HEADWATERS
ECONOMICS





Anchorage, AK (1964)



ADAPT

in order to moderate or avoid harm.



Anticipatory and deliberate



Long-term solutions (vs. short-term coping)



A full-systems approach that can lead to transformative change

“In order to be free, I had to make certain adjustments.”

Chicago Fire, 1871



Hurricane Betsy, 1965



“... veritable hurricane of fire”

“... thousands of burning brands aloft to deposit them far in advance of the main fire front.”

FIRE BURNS UCLA HOMES

Libby Counts Loss; Morris Home Safe

BY ART HARRIS

Scores of UCLA students and staff members were homeless yesterday as the worst fires in Los Angeles history blazed unchecked for the second straight day in the canyons of the Santa Monica Mountains, near campus.

Dr. Willard F. Libby, Nobel Prize-winning chemist, was among those who lost their homes. Like many others, he escaped the fire with little more than the clothing he was wearing.

One home saved was that of ASUCLA Publications Manager Harry E. Morris. When he heard the fire was near, Morris rushed to his home and saved it from destruction, staying up all day and night Monday, using his own watering system, until friends came to his rescue Tuesday morning.

Freshman basketball coach Jerry Norman lost his home when the fire hit Brentwood. Norman and his family were forced to leave most of their possessions to the blaze. Professors Stewart Carpen-

ter and Morris Neiburger, chairman of the Departments of Infectious Diseases and Meteorology respectively, also lost their homes.

Almost every department on campus listed one or more members whose property had been damaged when the Daily Bruin made a telephone check yesterday evening.

Professors lost homes in Brentwood, Bel Aire, Tigertail Canyon Road and many other fashionable areas.

On campus, some students even “evacuated” themselves from Sproul and Dykstra Halls, worried about the path and outcome of the fire.

Many classes and tests were cancelled for a second day, as instructors and students found themselves without homes or adequate routes for commuting to school.

Fire Department officials, on information gathered from firefighters at the scene, predicted that the fire would be brought under containment sometime this morning.



TO THE NORTH—A lone firefighter stands back and futilely watches fire burn up hillside in one of its more violent moments.

LD Reps Highlight Council Meeting

Student Legislative Council will meet at 7 tonight in the KH Memorial Room, with reports from LDMR Dick Weisbart and from LDWR Sue Woods scheduled to highlight the meeting.

Weisbart, who met with the Westwood Chamber of Commerce yesterday, will present to Council a detailed report on what progress has been gained toward the establishment of a student discount service in the Westwood stores.

Miss Woods will bring SLC up to date on the operations of the Bureau of Student Opinion, which is conducting a survey on cheating.

- SLC AGENDA
- PRESIDENT Jim Stiven
 - Publications Board
 - SENIOR PRESIDENT Walt Howald
 - Special Events/Senior Class
 - JUNIOR PRESIDENT John Carter
 - Junior Prom Budget Advance
 - LDMR Rich Millard
 - Year Book Name
 - LDMR Dick Weisbart
 - Student Discount Policy
 - LDWR Sue Woods
 - Fall Drive Report
 - Bureau of Student Opinion Report

Author Meyer to Speak On 'Challenge of Conservatism'

Distribute Trojan Ducats
SC rooters tickets are available now at the Spalding Field and KH Ticket Offices.

Bel Air Fire 1961

“...barriers were utterly incapable of interrupting the progress of the fire.”

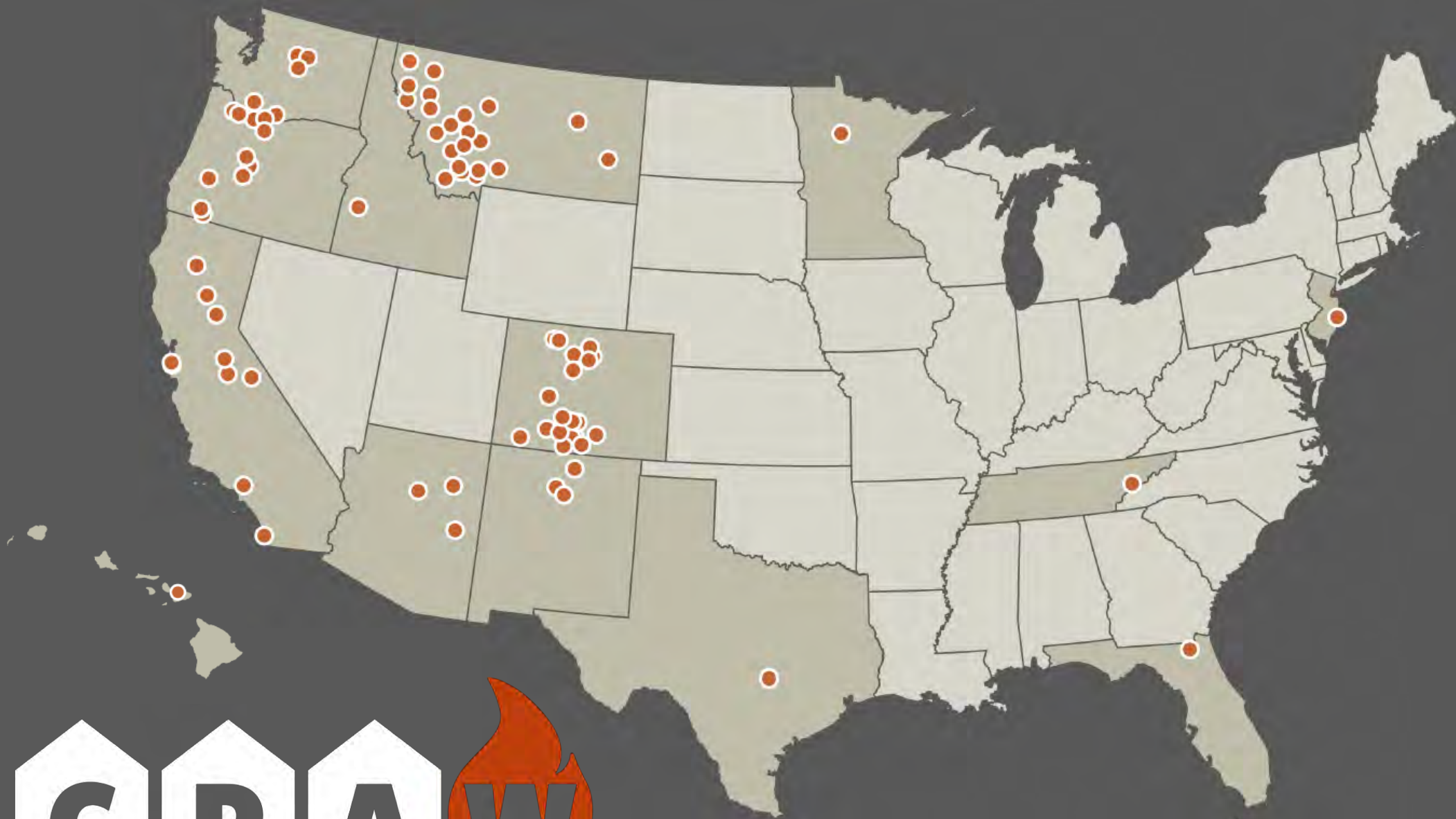
WHAT WILL MODERN WILDFIRES CHANGE?





Independent Nonpartisan Research





Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire

Maui County, HI



Lewis & Clark County, MT



Coconino County, AZ



La Pine, OR



Roadmap



Wildfire Risk in Utah



Homes are fuel



Where Current Trajectories Lead



Wildfire Resilience at the Home

Roadmap



Wildfire Risk in Utah



Homes are fuel

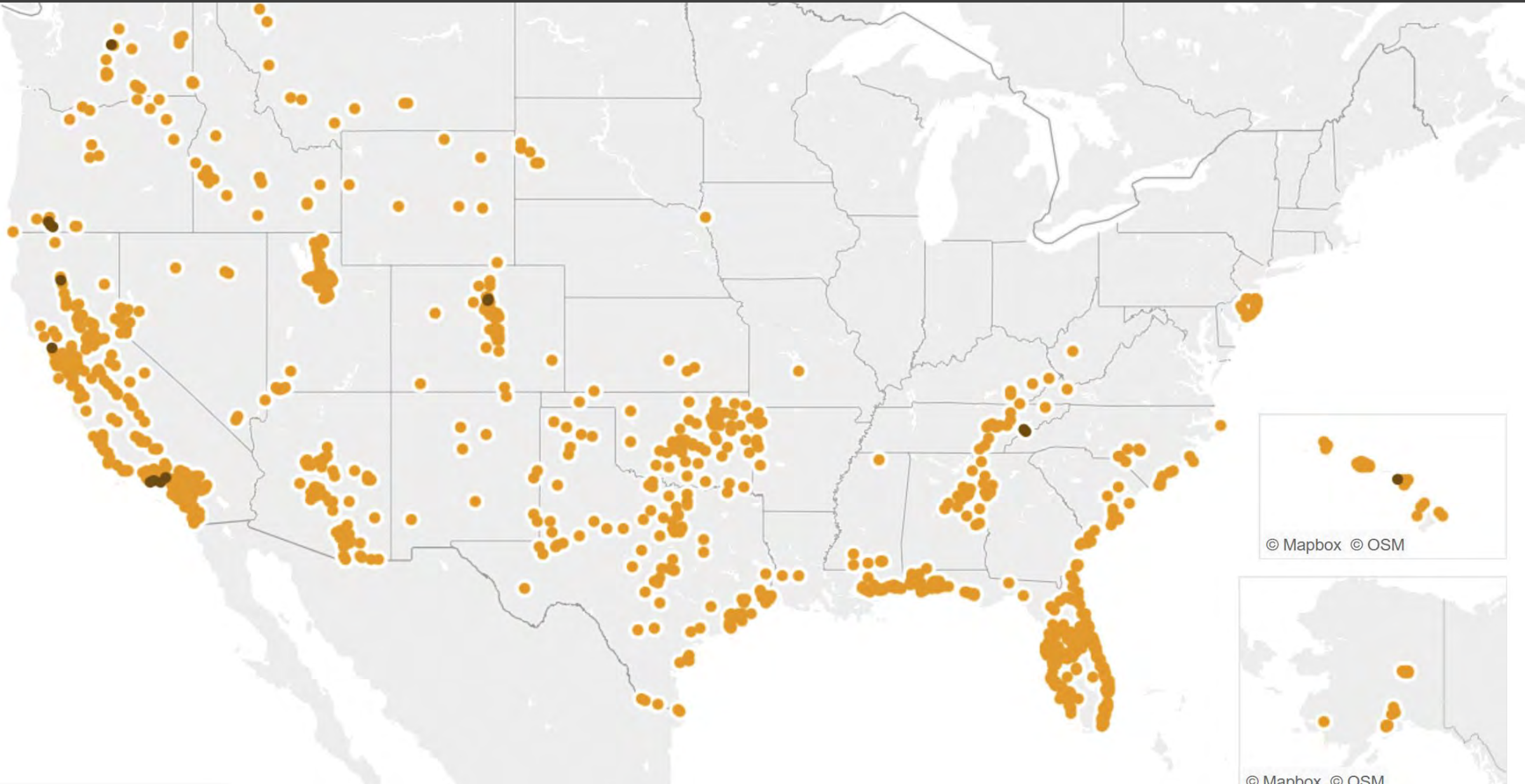


Where Current Trajectories Lead

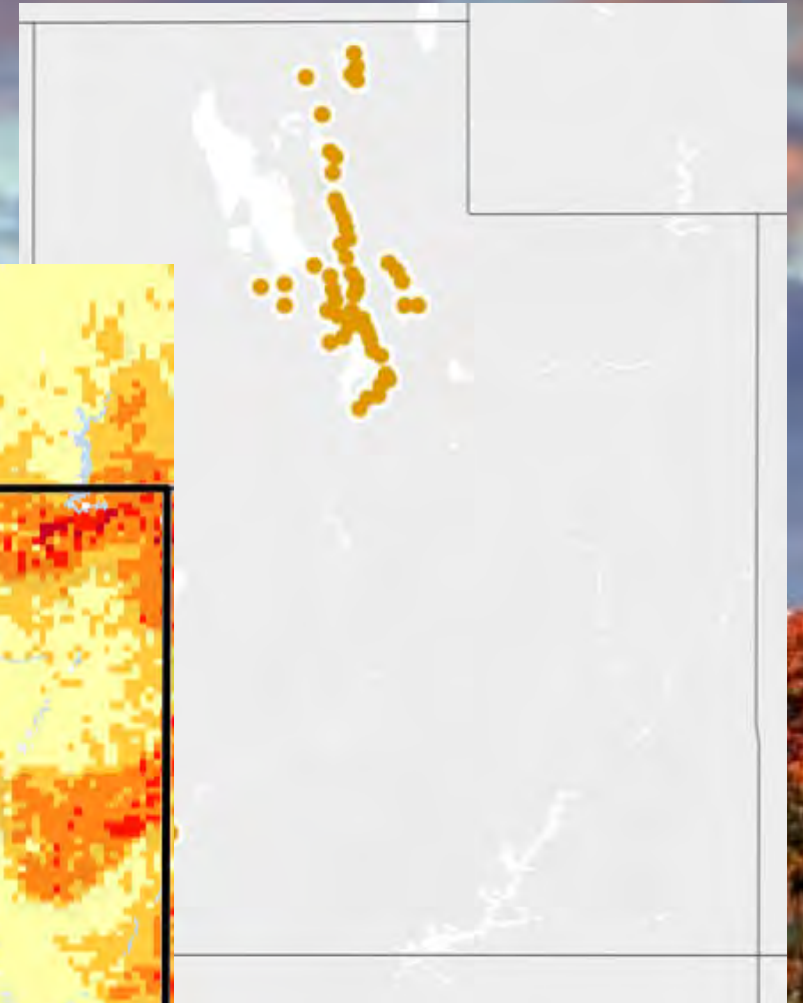
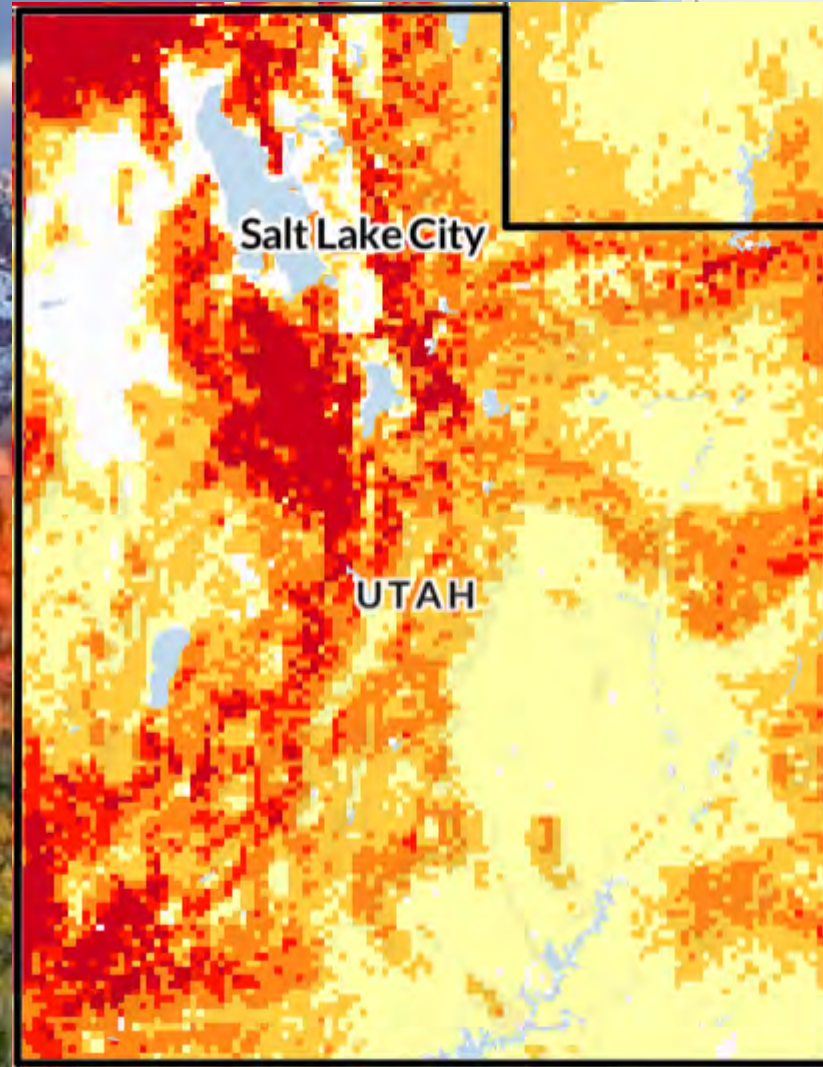


Wildfire Resilience at the Home

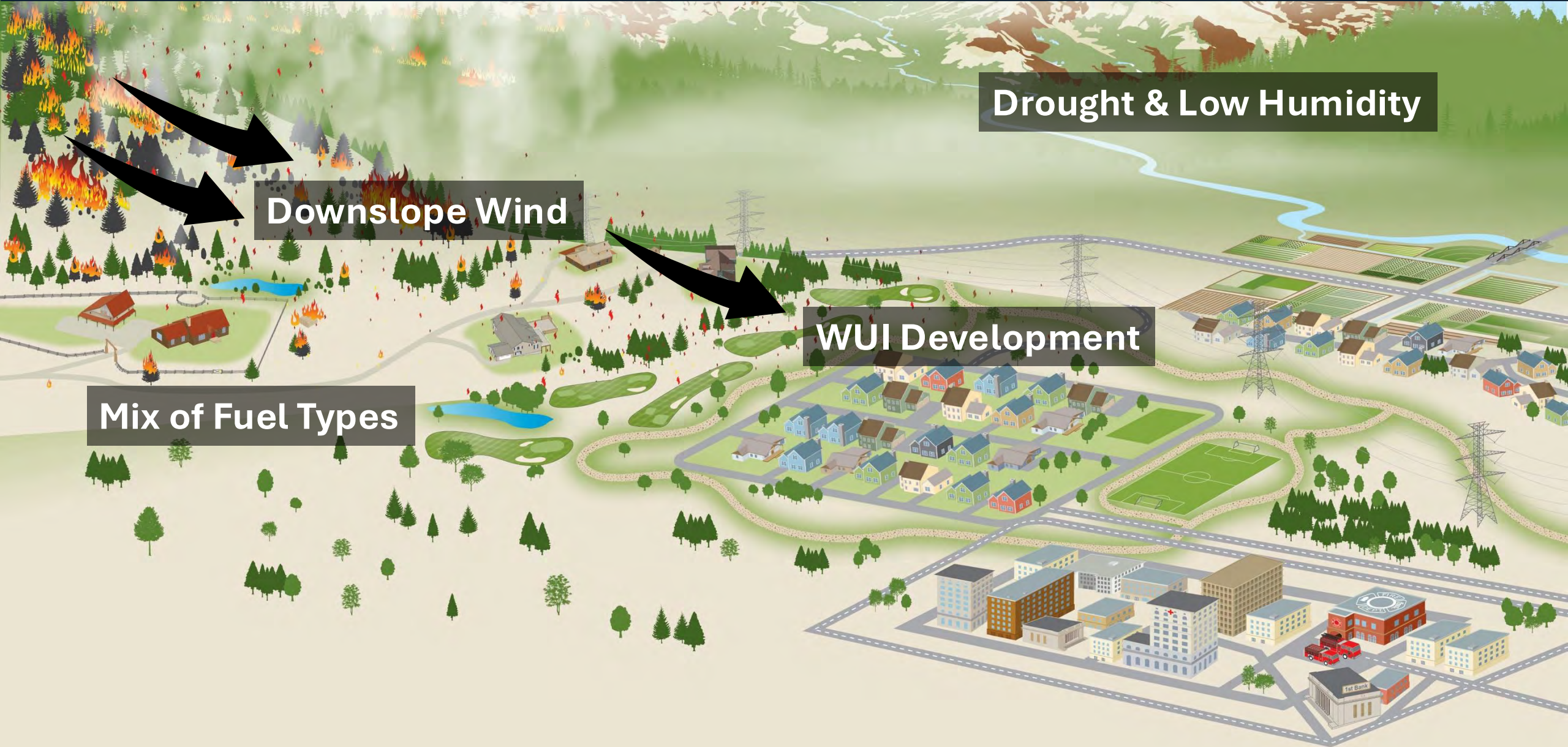
1,000+ cities face wildfire risks similar to L.A.



40+ other communities in Utah have the same wildfire risk profile as Los Angeles



Utah's Wildfire Risk Realities



Drought & Low Humidity

Downslope Wind

WUI Development

Mix of Fuel Types

Roadmap



Wildfire Risk in Utah



Homes are fuel



Where Current Trajectories Lead

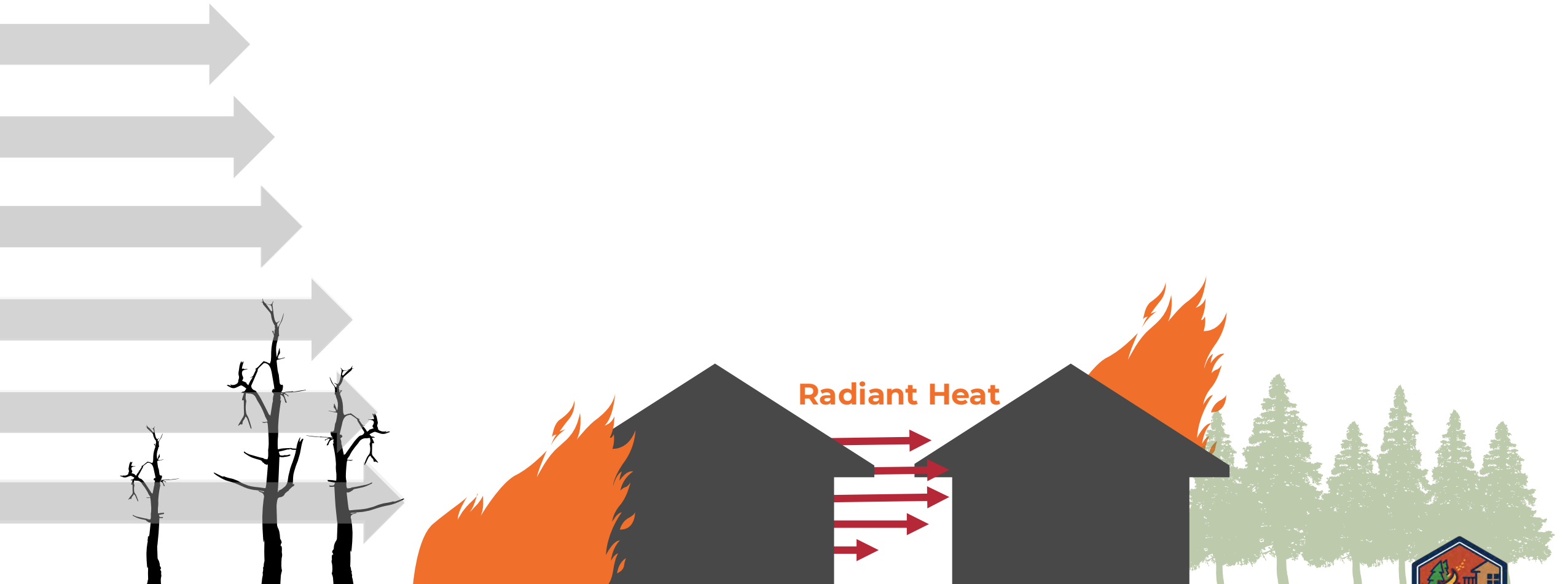


Wildfire Resilience at the Home

FLAME CONTACT



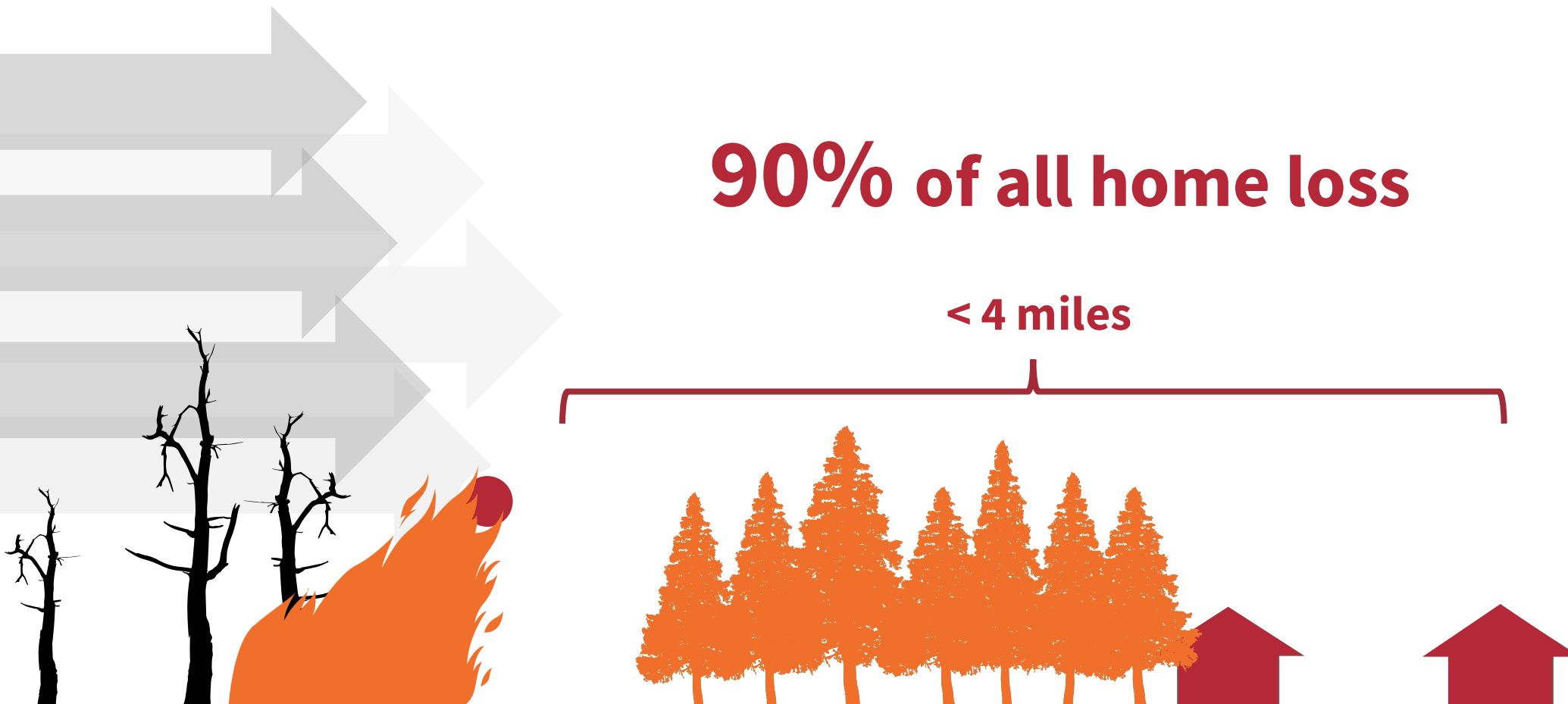
FLAME RADIATION



EMBERS

90% of all home loss

< 4 miles







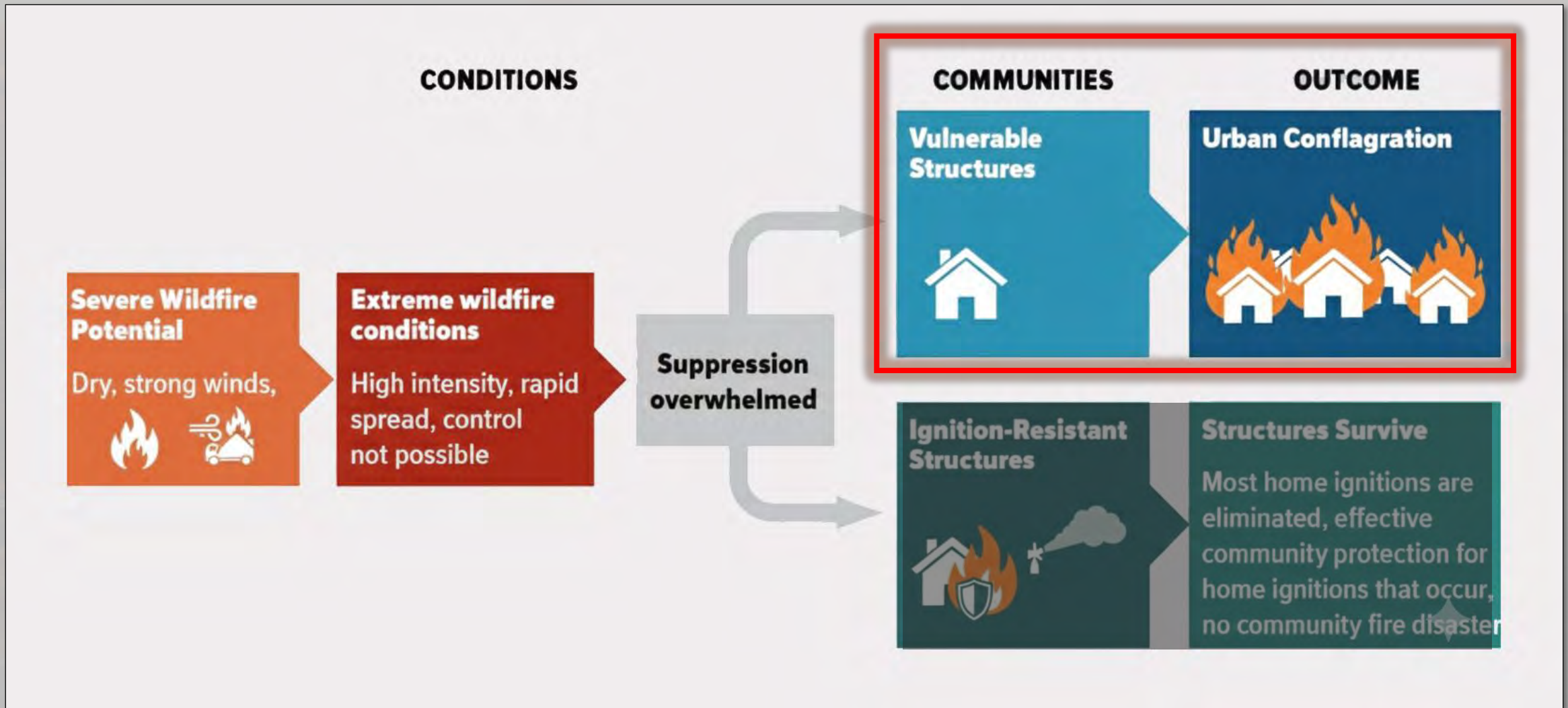


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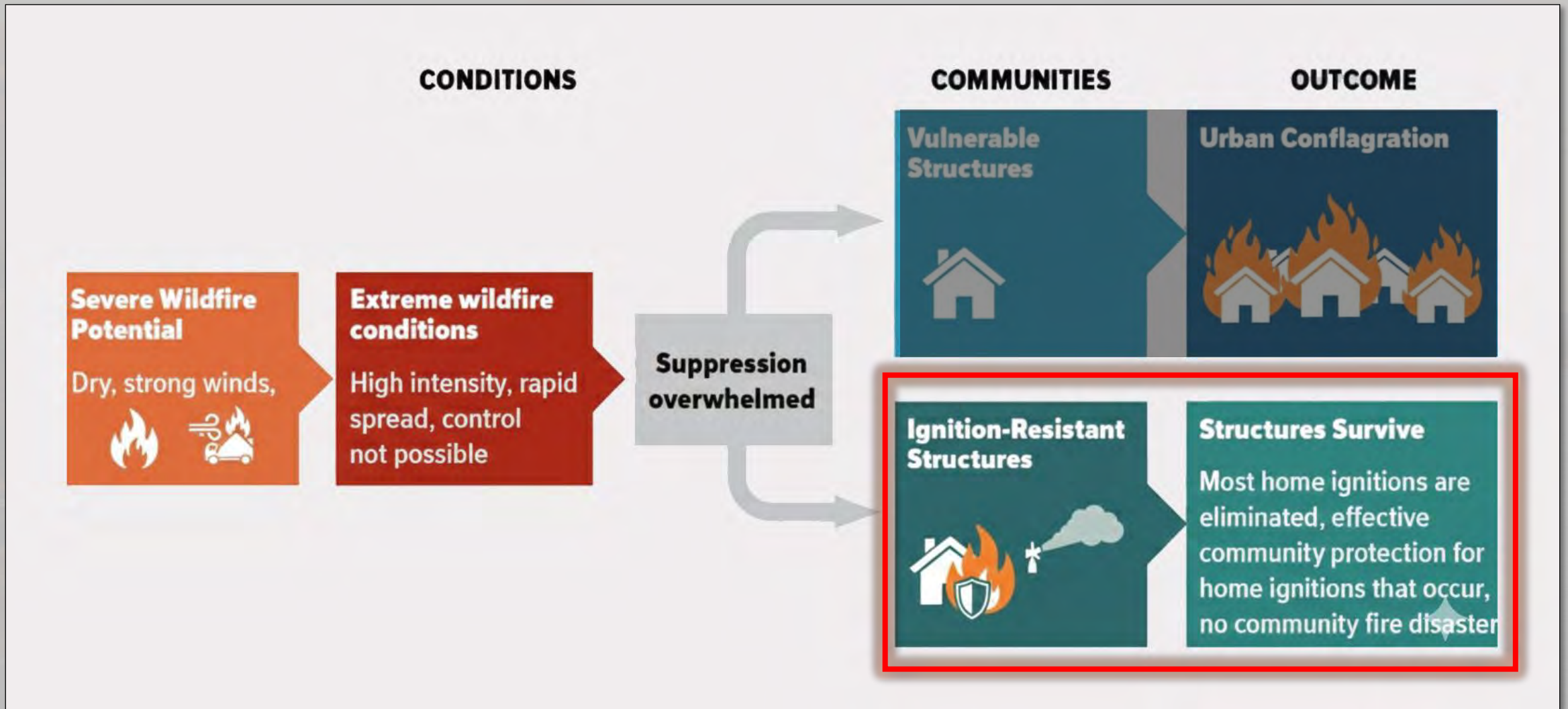


Embers
(firebrands)

Disaster Sequence



Disaster Sequence





Green vegetation
does not mean
low risk



Structures, not
vegetation, drives
fire spread



Sleepy Hollow Fire (2015), Wenatchee WA

Roadmap



Wildfire Risk in Utah



Homes are fuel



Where Current Trajectories Lead



Wildfire Resilience at the Home

The Wildfire Insurance Crisis



Wildfires contribute to more costly insurance.

As a result, home insurers are **raising rates, issuing non-renewals, and exiting** risky locations.



Insurance becomes unaffordable and inaccessible.

Homeowners become underinsured or uninsured, destabilizing the insurance market.



An unstable insurance market has cascading impacts.

Affecting the housing market, security of mortgages, property values, municipal bond financing, and funding critical community services.



The underinsured struggle to recover from disasters.

Displacement and dispersion increases.



Inaction raises costs for everyone.

Local government budgets are strained and requires billions of dollars in federal relief and investment.

The Wildfire Insurance Crisis

HOMEOWNERS WANT:



Reliability



Affordability



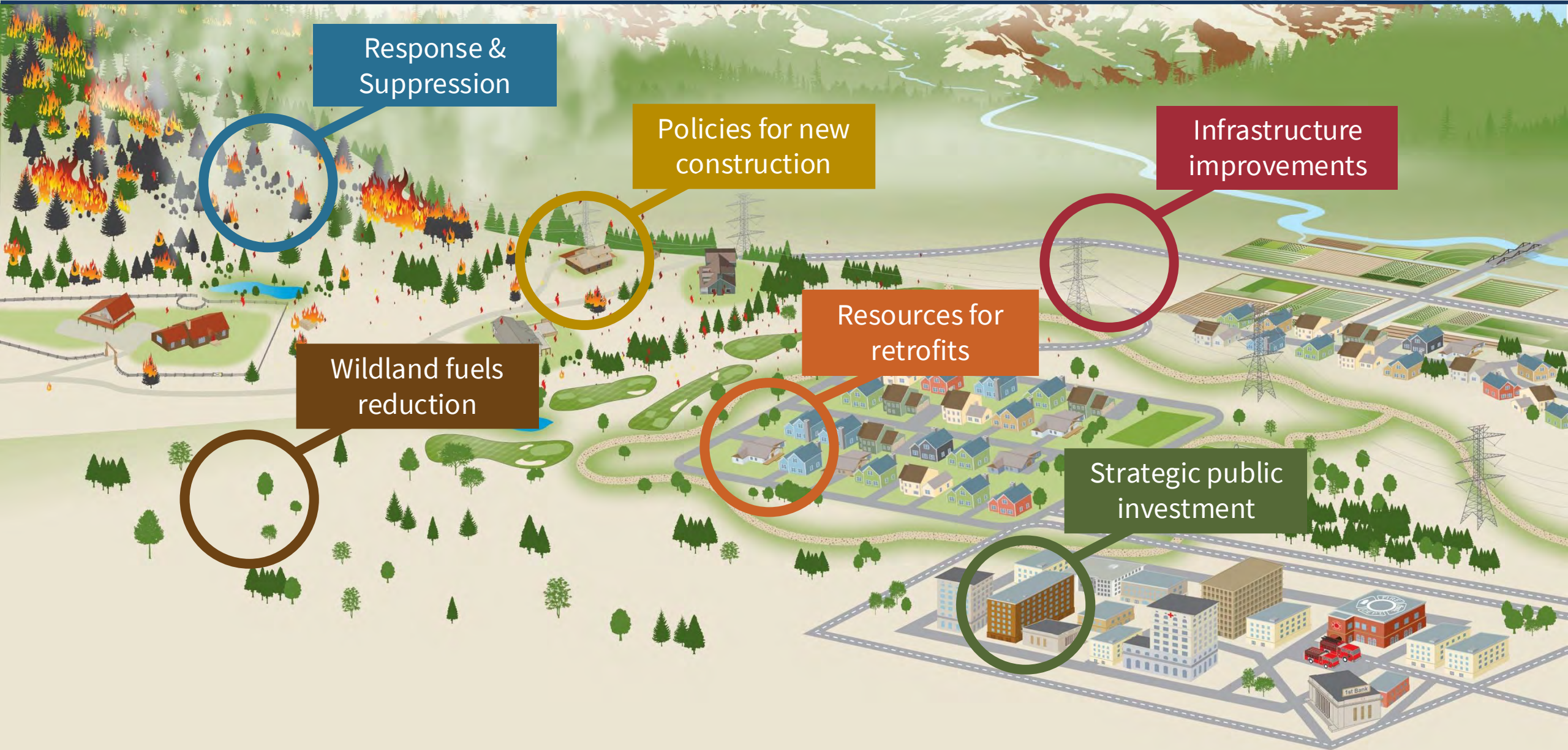
Availability

INSURERS WANT:



**Risk reduction to
homes and
neighborhoods.**

Risk Reduction Measures



Response & Suppression

Policies for new construction

Infrastructure improvements

Wildland fuels reduction

Resources for retrofits

Strategic public investment

Roadmap



Wildfire Risk in Maui County



Homes are fuel



Where Current Trajectories Lead



Wildfire Resilience at the Home

IGNITION POINT OR INTERRUPTION POINT?

Transforming homes from fuel loads to fire stops

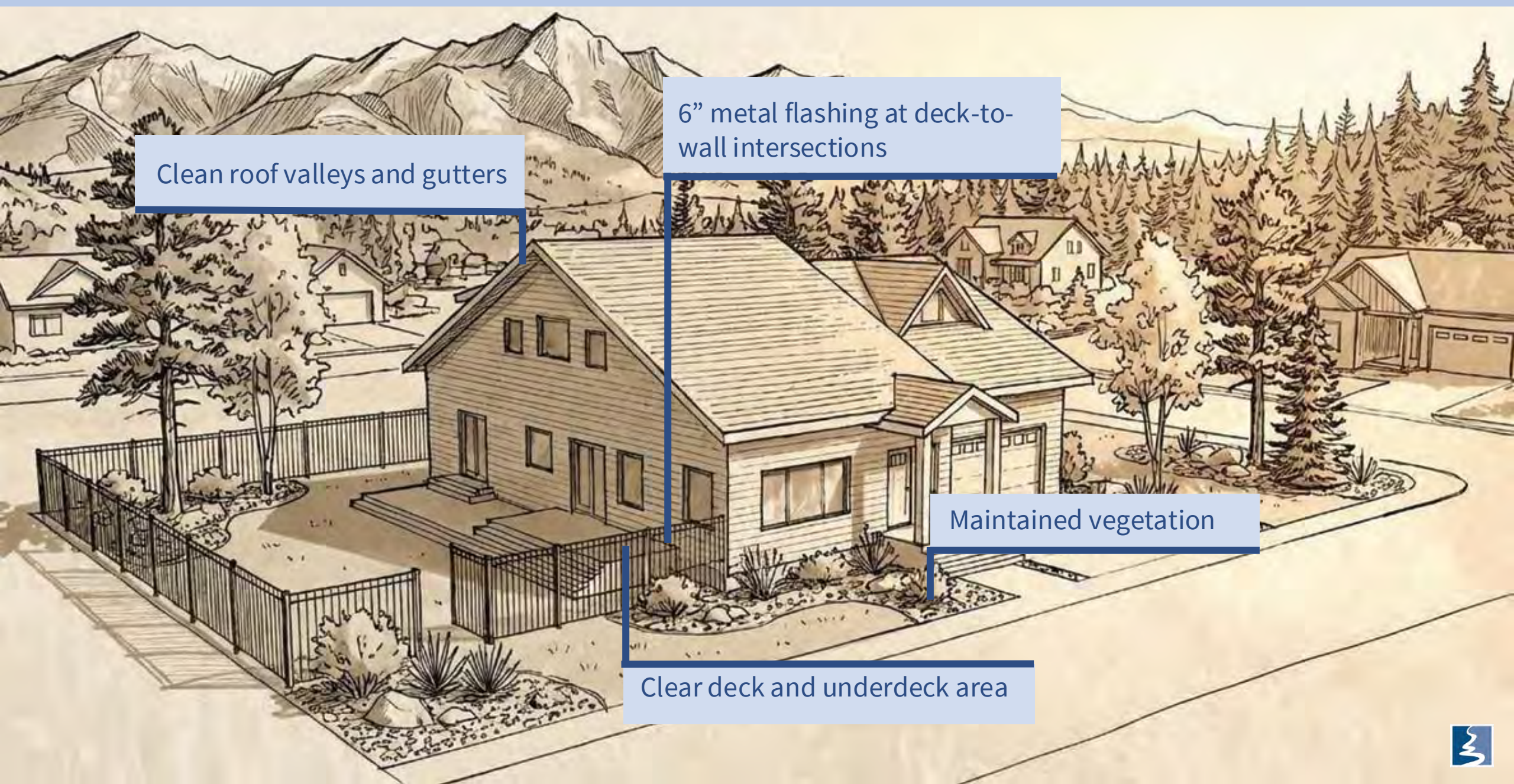


Individual Homeowner

- **Becomes an "Interruption Point"**
- **Provide safe zone for firefighters**
- **Protect your own property**
- **Improve community resistance**

“Good” Wildfire Resistance Measures

\$5K



Clean roof valleys and gutters

6" metal flashing at deck-to-wall intersections

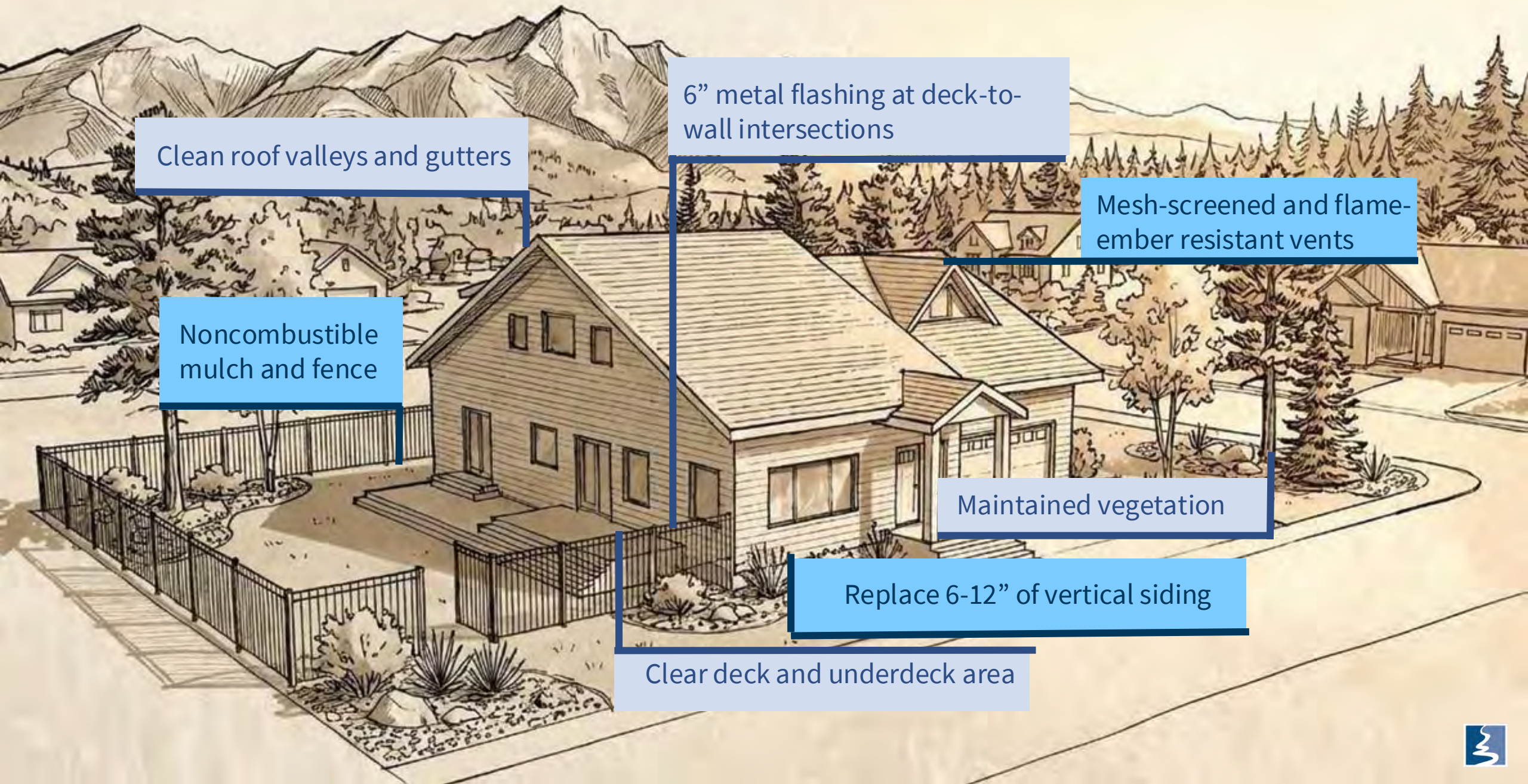
Maintained vegetation

Clear deck and underdeck area



“Better” Wildfire Resistance Measures

\$15K



Clean roof valleys and gutters

6" metal flashing at deck-to-wall intersections

Mesh-screened and flame-ember resistant vents

Noncombustible mulch and fence

Maintained vegetation

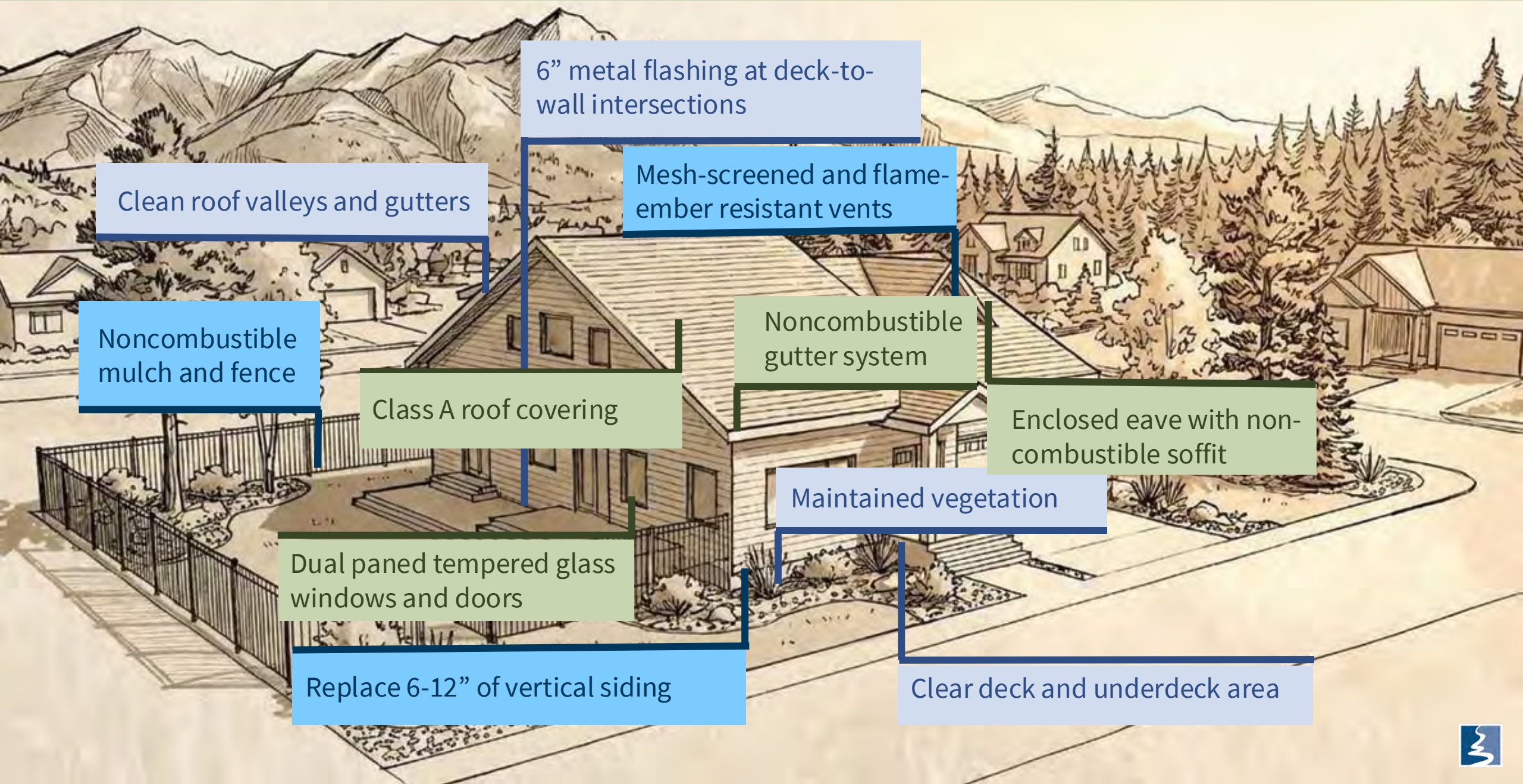
Replace 6-12" of vertical siding

Clear deck and underdeck area



“Best” Wildfire Resistance Measures

\$25K+



6” metal flashing at deck-to-wall intersections

Clean roof valleys and gutters

Mesh-screened and flame-ember resistant vents

Noncombustible mulch and fence

Noncombustible gutter system

Class A roof covering

Enclosed eave with non-combustible soffit

Dual paned tempered glass windows and doors

Maintained vegetation

Replace 6-12” of vertical siding

Clear deck and underdeck area



Some of the most effective risk reduction strategies are also the most affordable.

- ✓ Address **vulnerable intersections** and flammable surface areas
- ✓ Remove **accumulated debris from the roof valleys and gutters**
- ✓ Remove **flammable debris from on top of and under deck area**
- ✓ Maintain a **noncombustible zone**
- ✓ **Breakup fuel continuity** on the property

**We know how
to do things
better,
smarter, and
safer.**



Thank you!

Newsletter



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