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CITY OF EUGENE
WORK SESSION
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>> Mayor Knudson: Welcome to June 10, 2026 City Council work session. Thank you for joining news the hybrid meeting format. There is no opportunity for public comment, those wishing to access the meeting can do so by watching livestream available on the website, the broadcast on Comcast channel 21, or by calling in to one of the phone numbers listed for the meeting on the public webcast and meeting materials page of the city of Eugene website. Thank you for joining us. I now call the June 10, 2026 work session of Eugene City Council to order. And today we're beginning with executive session. This is Eugene City Council will now meet in executive session held pursuant to 192.6602I, review and evaluation of employee related performance. Representatives of the news media and designated staff allowed to attend the work session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the meeting. Representatives of the news media directed not to record or direct on the deliberations during the executive session. Except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No decision may be made in executive session. At the end of executive session we will return to open session and welcome the audience back in to public work session. So for Councilors who are attending virtually please log out of this public work session and log back in using the executive session Zoom invitation now. We will see you there shortly. [Executive session]

>> Mayor Knudson: We'll now return to the City Attorney's office and to staff as we introduce our second topic, work session on municipal judge evaluation.

>> I'm Becky DeWitt, assistant director. This work session is opportunity for Council to complete the annual evaluation of the municipal court judge Gill. Judge Gill was hired August 2019, ski code outlines the process for evaluating his performance and Valerie annually. Today is an opportunity to provide feedback to judge Gill and following that you will have an opportunity to discuss compensations options provided to you.

>> Mayor Knudson: I will open the floor for Councilor discussion, Councilor groves?

>> Thank you, Mayor. I want to start saying thank you, Becky, for putting this together. It is helpful. Judge -- is he there?

>> We lost him. We will pause for one moment.

>> The thunderstorm.

>> Thank you, staff.

>> Mayor Knudson: Welcome back judge.

>> Sorry about that.

>> Mayor Knudson: Certainly out of your control. As we left off Councilor groves was about to frame a question to you.

>> Groves: Thank you. If you have a metal rod don't hold it in the air back there. Judge, I very much appreciate the work you and your staff do. Especially with the restorative justice programs and the fact that you are helping to declutter some of our court space at the Circuit Court level and keep that more available for more serious issues that can only be handled there. I did want to talk to you a little bit about becoming a court of record. Maybe you could start with a short explanation for the public of why we went through those steps.

>> Judge Gill: Councilor, yes, absolutely. This all begins with house bill 2460 passed in 2025. The regular session. That bill was De signed to address appeals from courts not of record. Those are municipal courts and justice courts who have not become a court of record. At the time there were maybe 8 to 10 of those courts that were actually courts of record in the state of Oregon. In this new bill that was passed into law, there was a short section at the beginning of the municipal court portion that allowed a Defendant in a municipal court not of record to transfer their case to the Circuit Court. So they would enter not guilty plea and their case would automatically be sent to the Circuit Court as if it was filed in the Circuit Court originally. Prosecuted at the Circuit Court level in a court of record. Thin the appellate rights for court of record attach and move forward there. The concept is good. And really wouldn't have anything to do with us as a municipal court of record,

except for the fact that there is and was a very high tension that there would be a mass transfer process, meaning that defendants, a lot of defendants would want to transfer their cases. That's not wrong for the Defendant to want to do. But at the same time the resources that the county has and the city has would not be able to meet the burden that such a transfer process would present. To be more clear, the lane county district attorney's office would not be able to handle that load of folks coming in from the municipal system and prosecute the cases that they were already prosecuting on the county level. Same thing with the indigent defense firm, it would put a big strain on those folks. Really it put a huge strain on the Circuit Court and the availability of judges and courtrooms there. There are two new positions created for the lane county Circuit Court Bench the first place to address the then-existing workload that the number of cases the judges couldn't meet. They could meet but under high stress and being overworked in doing that. Adding these municipal cases transferred would add to that pile, and there wasn't room for it. Then the real bottom line is the city prosecutor's office if they continue to prosecute the cases because the district attorney's office wouldn't be able to prosecute those cases, they would, if they had to meet the burden, be dividing their office between two courts, the municipal court for those still in the municipal court and the folks transferring to lane county Circuit Court. That was untenable. There's no way the city prosecutor's office would be able to do that, they would have two different court systems, two different scheduled, trials at different paces. Just simply put we didn't have the resources to do that. Ultimately what would happen is the City would have to -- there would have to be a decision how many cases continue to be prosecuted. The idea that the city would, might be in a position to where it wouldn't be able to prosecute violations of its own code, meaning these cases wouldn't be prosecuted in Circuit Court or in municipal court. That was just -- all of a sudden didn't become an option, all of a sudden. The clear answer out of several options was to become a court of record. To obviate the need to worry about transfers, keep everybody in the municipal court so the city can maintain its fair and just process for misdemeanors filed in the city, and the city can prosecute its own -- violations of its own code. I hope that was descriptive enough, Councilor, I'm sorry if I was mincing words.

>> Groves: In the process of making the transition, were there any things you didn't anticipate or things that you learned, you and your staff learned from the process?

>> Judge Gill: There's a lot of things the staff learned and the judges too. I'll give you a cheat answer, the surprise was how fast the court was able to pivot. Court administration making sure we become a court of record quickly, getting the equipment necessary, getting the software necessary, then the trainings in to make sure that staff were ready and prepared to be a court of record. Working with the judges to transition to becoming -- saying more words on the dock to make sure everything gets into the record that is going to be required to make sure you have a transparent process. Everybody did it smoothly. A couple of speed bumps along the way getting used to it. But they did a fantastic job in moving and they did it so

quickly. I admire their discipline and rolling up their sleeves. That's my cheat answer on what surprised me.

>> Groves: Thank you judge Gill. Thank you Mayor.

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor Yeh.

>> Yeh: I want to thank you for your truly exceptional work you've been doing, thoughtful leadership centered around the needs of individuals and broader community. Really continues to strengthen the foundations of our municipal court. Clear communication has been valuable and evident throughout this transition to court of record helping to ensure the process was very understandable, and that Councilors were kept up to date. I'm also deeply appreciative of your commitment to our community court program and your coordination with lane county deflection program. It was encouraging to read in you're valuation how that program has been successful. Even getting national recognition. But most importantly, the program -- how the program is reaching our goals of I will have practicing long term public safety and connecting people with the services that we know that they need. Reading you're valuation was really a good reminder of all of the things the court has been through recently. As both a City Councilor and resident of Eugene I appreciate the values that I see you bringing to your job, values of fairness, accountability, clarity, transparency, collaboration, and compassion. Along with this commitment to continually improve our municipal court and your willingness to adapt to what our community needs. We are fortunate to have you as a municipal judge. I wish there were more opportunities to highlight the extent work you are doing and your staff is doing. I just want to, that you for being here today to have an opportunity to daylight that good work happening in our city that is just working fine. It goes under the radar. Thank you.

>> Judge Gill: Thank you, Councilor, a quick statistic that I learned today, the lane county deflection program in working with partners at CPD, LCSO and municipal law enforcement and the Oregon state police, statistic is now up to 64% of law enforcement officers are now offering deflection as a potential option instead of arrest and incarceration. For these low level quality of life type crimes that involve substance abuse, and other behavioral health issues. That's a huge boon to our community. In conjunction with all of the other programs and efforts that the city and the county are doing. I want to throw that statistic out there. It really sat me down for a second. Thank you.

>> Mayor Knudson: Thank you. Any other comments from Council? Councilor Keating.

>> Keating: Judge, great to see you. You are so communicative, committed to fairness, and transparency, and justice. I echo my colleagues' observations when it comes to applauding your service and your passion for restorative justice and your commitment to our community. I have kind of a complicated question, judge, I think

you know where I'm going. Before I do, when you are on a plane or you are meeting someone who learns that you are the municipal court justice, you're our judge, here in Eugene, what's the one thing you share to someone who is meeting you for the first time, perhaps, that you are the most proud of our municipal court here in Eugene?

>> judge Gill: To restate the question, say it back to you, if I'm on a plane and someone finds out what I do, and it is my chance to talk about our court, what is it that I say, what is it that I'm most proud of. Is that what you are asking?

>> Keating: Yeah, yeah. And I have a follow-up that's a little more complicated but yeah.

>> Judge Gill: I had this chance last night, my wife and I met some people when we were out on a walk. They're from New Jersey, familiar with New York. So we just, through small talk, started to talk about some of the things that we see. That includes the fact that Eugene has a lot of big city problems even though it's not itself a big city by national standards. We found real commonality in a lot of stuff that we, the unhoused, addicted, the folks who are suffering trauma current and in past. The confluence of all of those plus other additional items. What I'm the most proud of is the fact that we approach these issues that aren't going away in the way that we do, as a court. That's from staff, front counter staff, front line staff, staff in the courtroom, staff who are out of court folks that take care of everything that needs to take care of to make sure that everybody is treated fairly, everybody is treated with equity and everybody has as best experience as you can when you're involved with the criminal justice system. How we do that. At that point their eyes haven't glazed over, these folks that we talked to their eyes hadn't glazed over, yet. I'll go into the things that we do. I'll start with the fact that we have trials, criminal trials, and I think we do it the right way. Experienced bench. All the way to the programs that the administrator and staff put together. What they do. The hard things they have to handle every day. But showing up every day, continuing to do it. It's a big deal. So if I had someone who had the window seat on an airplane and they couldn't get out, that's what I would be answering with them. As you all probably know I can go on and on about a lot of the things that we do. But that would be probably the most -- biggest fact I would want to enunciate to somebody.

>> Keating: Your passion and perspective are greatly appreciated, judge. You referenced in yourself-evaluation the challenges that come with defendants who might not have the capacity to proceed or stand trial. You said that local resources are simply inadequate to effectively work with criminal defendants who are unable to stand trial because they suffer from an incapacitating qualifying mental disorder. What can be done, especially since we have three members of the IGR here, Councilor Evans, groves, Yeh from the IGR team. What can be done to better to ensuring justice for criminal defendants who might not be able to stand trial because of mental -- qualifying mental disorder.

>> Judge Gill: The big answer, Councilor Keating to that question, is the community safety payroll tax has been integral and the nucleus of our ability to work in context where resources are scarce to address these problems. It allows our court staff to work with a lot of these folks and with our system partners. We work with our system partners every single day. Lane county behavioral health in 370 folks and their fit team, and the doctor that's part of the fit team now, Dr. Berry. They're doing very good things, very good work with us. The city is doing very good work in its different programs and approaches. The county is doing wonderful things in its different programs. But the CSBT, community safety payroll tax, has been the number one piece that allows the court to do what it has to do in order to work in this area of limited resources and be able to work with its system partners. If I could say what the one thing would be, if there was just one, it would make sure that that stays, if we can do it. Because if it goes away our whole ability to approach what we see in the city of Eugene especially with folks who don't have the capacity to proceed, and may be able to be restored, it would be to its huge detriment.

>> Keating: If I can follow up, are there any local or state reforms that you recommend in regard to the rules, timelines, regarding defendants being restored in communities when they're charged or outside of Oregon state hospital?

>> Judge Gill: There's a lot there, Councilor Keating and I appreciate that, I smile because there is a lot of history there. There isn't anything that I'm advocating to use the word "advocating" for really right now the court is trying to make sure that we adhere as best as possible to the new timelines that have been introduced by legislation. Work with the limitations that are put on the Oregon state hospital by the Federal bench. And then be able to pay attention to and work with the defendants that are coming through the court. I'd say 3 or 4 years ago as five or six years as the state was working through SB-24, and HB-295 and before 4002, I would have a lot of opinions and a lot of folk heard what my opinions were in terms of timeline, limitations, etcetera. Right now we are where we are. I don't think there is a chance to advocate for one thing for a little while. Making sure we keep things moving straightforward. I appreciate the question very much.

>> Keating: Judge, we appreciate -- I appreciate, I won't speak for my colleagues, we appreciate you very much pretty clearly. Thank you.

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor Zelenka.

>> Zelenka: Hard to follow Councilor Yeh's comments, so comprehensive about the great things you are doing, so well-said, thank you for saying that stuff, Jennifer. Ditto everything that Jennifer said, they were spot on. Suffice to say I think you are doing a great job as judge. The court runs really well, I hope you stay here a long time. Our loss would be someone else's gain for sure. So thank you, judge.

>> Judge Gill: Thank you, Councilor, I'm here.

>> Zelenka: Sorry for being late, got caught up at work. Your answer is the reason I never tell anybody what I do when I get on a plane. [Laughing]

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor Kashinsky?

>> Kashinsky: Thank you, and thank you judge Gill. I will be brief because many colleagues have said the things I would have said as well. Just wanted to express my presentation for your work and your willingness to connect and make sure that we as Council understand what is going on with the court. And with what the needs are. All of your good work and the work of your team, thank you.

>> Judge Gill: Thank you, Councilor.

>> Mayor Knudson: Thank you, judge Gill. I'll turn to the Council President for a motion in about 30 seconds or maybe 15. I want to add my appreciation to you as a colleague. Your communication around the transition to the court of record was excellent, a major event for our community and it is great to hear what the staff and the municipal court handled that so well. Thank you for sharing that work and describing its importance. Thank you for the work that you have done to ensure that our municipal court is a reflection of the community just as our municipal laws are a reflection of our community, ensure the fairness of that process. It is very appreciated. And I appreciate that this session has allowed us to spend time sharing that with the public as well today. I'll turn to the Council tonight put a motion forward.

>> Leech: Thank you and before I do that, just I want to echo also my appreciation for the steady leadership, your compassion, commitment to equity, and fairness, those are all qualities that are essential and you are superb at demonstrating through our court system. We and all of our staff at the court are just so lucky to have you. With that, I move to recognize judge Gill's positive contribution to the city of Eugene.

>> Kashinsky: Second.

>> Mayor Knudson: Any further discussion? Seeing none I'll take a vote for the motion all in favor. Raise your hand. Vote from Council, 8-0. Thank you all, thank you judge Gill for this checkpoint. And that concludes our second agenda item today. Thank you to thunderstorms for cooperating just a little bit longer.

>> Judge Gill: Thank you for having me.

>> Mayor Knudson: Thank you, judge. I'll turn to our City Attorney to introduce our third topic, work session on community wildfire protection plan and update.

>> City manager Jenny is on her way, should be here any moment. If you give one or two minutes she will be here.

>> Jenny Haruyama: Thank you, sorry for the delay. This is a work session to provide overview of the Eugene-Springfield wildfire protection draft plan. The first wildfire protection draft plan in the met row area. This is for informational purposes only, there's no action required today. We welcome Council's comments and feedback. I'll turn it over to staff, thank you.

>> Good afternoon, Travis Worthington, deputy for Eugene-Springfield. I have brought Hannah shaver to present the wildfire protection plan annex to the lane county plan. I will have our technology good, we'll turn it over to Hannah and she can get started with the presentation. Thank you.

>> Thank you. I will be presenting an update on the community wildfire protection plan. Go through the development process and CWPP stakeholder and engagement process. I will be going through what came out of the wildfire risk assessment. Reviewing the action plan and action items. I want to talk about the CWPP. Began with the healthy forest restoration act in 2003. These reduce wildfire risk and protect lives and strengthen overall community resilience. Communities that develop a CWPP and adopt one are eligible for Federal funds and state funds. Each plan must identify wildfire hazards in the local context areas of concern. And outline strategies to reduce fire risk in coordination with other agencies. The exact contents and boundaries of the plan are highly localized. This plan does not mandate anything, doesn't create new laws, ordinances or land use areas, it is a planning tool to use. We can only take the risk assess minute and use it to guide other decisions. To adopt CWPP, the healthy forest restoration act requires three decisionmakers mutually agree to the final contents of the plan. So local government officials, fire departments, and the Oregon Department of forestry. This plan was developed by a grant from the Oregon state fire marshal, community risk reduction grant, awarded \$150,000 to hire a consultant to develop the contents of the plan. Done throughout the last 19 months. This was developed with Federal and state wildlife planning framework. Using the guidance of Department of forestry frame works, compliments and supports existing emergency management plans. So the natural hazard mitigation plan with the county Springfield and Eugene's plans and other wildfire mitigation plans in the region. This will act as annex to lane county's CWPP, they are currently in the process of updating their plan and they hope to have that finalized and adopted by the end of August of this year. This plan established six goals, goal one is to protect lives, property, critical infrastructure. Goal two, to enhance wildfire resilience through community engagements and education. Goal three, reduce hazardous fuels and maintain resilient landscapes. Goal four to improve emergency response and recovery capabilities. Goal five is to strengthen collaboration across jurisdictions. Goal six is to support policy alignment and regulatory integration. We used those six goals to help develop the contents of the plan. I want to talk about stakeholder in our community engagement process. To develop the plan we received active participation from cities of Springfield and Eugene, specifically the emergency management departments and the parks and rec departments. We partnered with WILLAMAIAANE, Oregon Department of forestry, lane county

emergency management, Oregon state fire marshal, EWEB, lane regional air protection agency, and BLM. Then getting into community engagement we started out with the public survey that ran from December throughout January of this year. We didn't get as many responses as we had initially hoped, we ended up with I think around 85 total responses there. That was shared out to our neighborhood associations through a newsletter. This was shared through other newsletters as well. Shared internally to Eugene and Springfield departments. And shared on Eugene Springfield fire social media accounts, has over 30,000 followers. The survey was also shared to anyone who had a defensible space assessment done and included in any reporting. Those survey results did find that more than 60% of respondents feel unprepared for wildfire event in the area. I'm going to focus on the Eugene side of things just for time's sake and not get into Springfield. Respondents in Eugene area identified that the south hills, southwest hills, Laurel hill Vale areas face the greatest wildfire risk. Their priority concerns are evacuation safety and damage to their properties. Though showed strong interest in getting assistance with vegetation management around their homes. And any financial and technical support. Then continuing on with community engagement, we've been active in community events since this past April, we have been able to table at the lane county farmers market since they first opened. Lane county home and garden show. We have attended south Eugene neighbor event. And we are able to attend the new Springfield farmer's market last Sunday. Here we are trying to spread general wildfire preparedness and also talk about the CWPP, let them know it's open for public comment. We have had some meetings with south Eugene neighbors, leaders, Hendricks park in Laurel hill Vale neighborhoods to discuss the plan and how to stay involved. As part of wildfire awareness month in May we partnered with northwest youth corps and offered two free wood debris drop sites, would than in Eugene and one in Springfield. Able to send 400 mailers out to some of the higher risk areas identified in this plan. I was able to interact with a lot of residents there to discuss wildfire preparedness in the CWPP. We recently concluded a public comment period which was also shared out to our plan stakeholders, mentioned earlier in this presentation, to Eugene Springfield fire social media accounts. The majority of those comments we received were concerns about a new development proposal in the Laurel hill Vale. Citing how the CWPP risk map should be used to guide the permitting of the development. We have some upcoming events throughout June and July, and the rest of the summer. We hoped to meet with neighborhood association groups and leaders to attend any of their meetings and be included in any of their newsletters going out to present information from this plan and hear any feedback that they have. Some of these are where scheduled throughout June and July. We will be attending various fire-wise events in the area. We will be attending lane county fair throughout that entire week. And we will continue with defensible space assessment interactions and talking about the plan for people to be aware. Then getting into the risk assessment, the purpose of the risk assessment is to establish a data informed foundation and planning tool for understanding what hazards exist in our area. We used a layered approach of multiple datasets to create one comprehensive map to show where mitigation will be the most effective. So I'm just -- I just listed a couple of datasets that we used. Not

going to get too technical. Some of those are the community wildfire risk reduction zones. This incorporates burn probability, home and structure. Another is the inner agent support system. This is a publicly available data layer and this uses to model fire potential behavior and spread under a different range of weather and fuel conditions. So we get to see multiple scenarios under various conditions. Finally, land fire uses vegetation and fuel characteristics. Then this is the community wildfire risk reduction zone map. So we can see here in the legend that the urban core is generally low risk. Then when you get to the outskirts of those Eugene and Springfield into these areas you see some of the greater vulnerabilities and rated moderate to high wildfire risk in those areas, the WUI areas. We also wanted to include a risk rating for the entire metro area so this kind of zooms out to the greater Lane county area. Does a vulnerability assessment. These areas were informed by fire personnel, planning staff, land managers, and emergency management with the cities. Then getting into some specific Eugene areas, I wanted to highlight the southwest Eugene hills which was rated moderate to high. Here we see dense vegetation and complex terrain. There's a mix of conifer and hardwood fuels in the area. That combined with the population density and some access limitations, and how homes are built on the steep and wooded hillsides, creates a more higher fire risk. A lot of homes have limited defensible space around them. Given the right conditions, if there's east driven winds it can really accelerate the fire spread uphill. There's also a lot of ecologically significant natural areas and parks and trail systems that we want to protect. Mitigation priorities for that area would be shaded fuel breaks along the key ridge lines, access roads, and in the perimeter of residential neighborhoods we would partner up and try to do multi jurisdictional fuel reduction. Because Eugene-Springfield jurisdictional areas enter mix with other agencies. Then promoting defensible space and structure hardening around the homes in the area. We also want to educate on evacuation and start evaluating some street connectivity with any new development. Then we have the Hendricks park and Laurel hill Vale. This is similar to the southeast Eugene hills. Dense tree can on my, steep slopes, proximity of residential structures next to heavy fuels. Hendricks park is the oldest park in Eugene, it contains a lot of mature forest vegetation. That presents hazards when it is, you know, September, October, and the fuels have been dried out for so long. So the hillside with limited defensible space, ore structures with narrow access routes creates that heightened risk. Mitigation priorities would look similar as before, doing some selective thinning, forest thinning, reducing those ladder fuels, brush removal, creating more fuel breaks along the parks perimeter and residential zones. Doing some hazard tree assessments. And again promoting defensible space, evacuation education, and doing some more street assessments. Then the southeast Eugene hills, also steep terrain, dense vegetation, big concentration of homes and the wild land urban interface zone. There's residential zones with mature trees and thick understories. Amenable defensible space in the area. Similar mitigation priorities would be increased fuel breaks along public land boundaries, ridge lines, access routes, partnering up with agencies to tackle fuels reduction projects, promoting defensible space, and evacuation education to residents in the area. I wanted to go over the action plan and action items that we have. So with each of the goals that I

mentioned earlier, we tried to have a list of action items to go along with each goal. Those are rated from high to low. I'm just going to touch on some of the higher action items that we have identified in the plan. Goal one, protect lives, property, consider it natural infrastructure. We're looking to do more assessments specifically on critical infrastructure corridors. The plan offers general overview, but we'd like to get more detailed assessments to figure out what mitigation actions we can take. Goal two, some of these action items involve public outreach campaigns. One specific one we're working on is offering more materials in Spanish and creating more localized materials. We currently use a lot of our outreach with state and Federal resources so trying to create our own localized data materials would be an action item. And then goal three, fuels reduction work, implementing fuels reduction projects, and then creating those fuel breaks that I mentioned earlier along park roads. Goal four, improving emergency response and recovery capabilities. Looking to create updated evacuation route maps and more signage for those wild land urban interface areas. Then predesignate and equip temporary evacuation centers with defensible space and backup power. There's been a lot of discussion around resiliency centers with the city and county as people are evacuating to the area. From the upper McKenzie. This would be a good opportunity to incorporate that. Goal five, strengthen collaboration, this would just be working on action items that we have identified with other agencies and try to partner up to apply for grants together. And goal six, support policy alignment and regulatory integration. This is a goal that would take a little longer to achieve. The Oregon state fire marshal has a model code available for defensible space and home hardening for local jurisdictions to adopt. So we hope to engage local stakeholders and do a review process to see what recommendations we would make for adopting some of that code for Eugene and Springfield. Specifically for new development and then looking at some of the wild land urban interface areas and seeing if there's any defensible space codes we can implement to make those areas safer. And then something earlier than that that we want to start implementing by the ends of 2027 is to implement a standardized process to distribute defensible space and home hardening guidance to applicable residential permit applicants. Anyone that's applying for any residential construction or development would receive materials. There's no enforcement, it's all educational for them. And then finally, just reviewing our plan going forward, so this CWPP will be a five-year plan. It will be active for five years, then we'll update it in the next five. Eugene-Springfield fire serves as lead agency for maintaining the plan. We will continue with our ongoing outreach and education efforts. When the plan is adopted we'll create an advisory committee, made up of the same stakeholders I mentioned earlier, that group will be responsible for evaluating progress on the action items. Providing a venue for collaboration on grants and projects. Partnering up with community outreach, rules treatment projects, identifying newer treated risk and making sure the plan stays current. Then identifying any mapping updates. So that is all I have for the overview. I know it is a lot of information at once, we welcome any comments, questions, feedback.

>> Mayor Knudson: Thank you very much. We really appreciate comprehensive update. This is important information and I think all of us are feeling a sense that this will become even more important and feel even more current as we move into the hotter months of this summer. Councilor Kashinsky, Councilor Evans, Councilor Keating, Councilor Groves in the queue.

>> Kashinsky: Thank you for the presentation and your work on this very, very important topic. I feel like one of my questions you kinds of hinted at the answer when you were talking about some of the goals for the future. How much work on defensible space and hardening is an encouragement level of work versus how many of those are things that are required that people are required to do?

>> Eugene does not have a code that requires anybody to maintain a certain level of defensible space around their home and property. We do have a vegetation complaint process with code compliance and the fire marshal's office. If someone makes a complaint we can require some action be taken for, under certain conditions. Other than that there's no code that exists. It is all educational. When I do an assessment I don't even force any of that. It is all educational for their awareness.

>> Kashinsky: The level of vegetation that requires code enforcement is probably greater than what we see where there's a high fire risk, it is designs for a different situation, is that right?

>> Yes, we have criteria, it is over half an acre lot, it's within a certain feet of structure, and it is within wildfire safety months. We're looking at that during the wildfire season when we have more code enforcement opportunities when we can't just educate.

>> Kashinsky: It sounds like a lot of the mitigation strategies are voluntary at this point. So that's something that we should probably look at some. What are some of the funding sources for this work? I know there's been a mix of grants and I know there's been some of the particularly resiliency hubs where there's some funding pieces. So I wonder what does the funding picture look like.

>> My position is funded by the community safety patrol tax. And then from there on for any projects that we do we have one right now with Oregon state fire marshal, the same grant that made this plan possible. We have another word from them, the community wildfire risk reduction grant. So that is available for homeowners to -- for us to hire contractors to do fuels reduction work on their properties or any other projects in the higher risk areas. Yeah, there's community wildfire defense grants at the Federal level that we don't have currently. But usually it's coming from the state fire marshal. The most reoccurring grants that are available.

>> Kashinsky: Some community safety payroll tax, some state and Federal but not right now?

>> Yes.

>> Kashinsky: Thank you for the presentation and the work.

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor Evans.

>> Evans: Thank you, Mayor. My question is more towards did you guys do any specific analysis on some of the flatlands, we talk about west Eugene, northwest Eugene. I'll note that last year we had a brush fire in west Eugene that could have turned into something pretty ugly if we hadn't gotten to it as quickly as we did. And maybe, I see chief in the audience, maybe he can speak to this as well. There was a potential that our neighborhood over in Bethel can have gone up in flames pretty fast. And I'm concerned about us having a more comprehensive plan, strategy, that covers the most exposed areas like the southwest hills and the south hills. But also looking at potentials in the flatlands where wildfire can spread pretty quickly.

>> Yes, so the fire you refer to last year started in another jurisdiction. We do send resources into those areas intentionally to protect our territory. When it was encroaching on one of our protected rural fire districts that contracts with the city, we deployed an entire task force immediately. Pretty much stopped the situation where it stood. But much of our planning I'll let Hannah speak to the plan is not isolated just to the hills. The goal of any of these projects is to keep wildfire out of the built community. Your defensible space, vegetation to structure, is relatively small structure to structure you are closer. That's the goal to keep it out of the structures, keep it out of town. We operate automatic aid agreements in our area. Not just to support our neighbors, but to keep fire out of our community.

>> I did only focus on the higher risk areas of the plan just for time's sake of the presentation. But it does cover the entire area of Eugene Springfield. It was rated I think mostly low in those areas, due to some of the vegetation and proximity to homes and the terrain and slopes that it was rated the low risk. But it covers all of that. I will say there's no -- it's always low, it's never zero. There's not a 0% chance something would occur in that area.

>> Another point, wildfire size in our flat areas, are more densely populated west Eugene, it's not uncommon to have a structure fire become more than one structure fire on the wrong day or even a rainy day. So we're constantly focused on keeping resources from a rogue house fire from becoming more.

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor Keating.

>> Keating: Thank you, Mayor. I was just at a league of cities conference in which we heard from the city of sisters and they referenced the city of Ashland, being really creative in expanding the home hardening and defensible space knowledge throughout their communities. I pointed out that my in-laws who live just a stone's throw from Spencer's Butte are outside of the city limits, in county territory. And they were thrilled to take advantage of the fire-wise grants offered them to appropriately ball that defensible space and home hardening around their property. I'm concerned about the municipal residents who might not have access to the same funding source who are just as at risk. They just happen to live on the other side of imaginary line. Is there any opportunity or any potential for noncounty residents for these municipal residents living in just -- living whether it's the south hills, southwest hills, living in spaces where there's a danger but there's not access to the capital, to the grant dollars because it's a county -- it's dollars as I understand it, are open and available to county residents. Is there a pathway for expanding those fire-wise grants at the state level so the municipal residents who might live within half mile or whatever distance determines they're at risk. So our municipal residents can have access to the same level of funding as our county residents do, to better prepare and harden their home appropriately.

>> We are looking to start implementing a similar program. The issue is it's limited to grant funding. I mention we have the community wildfire risk reduction grant funds available now. So we're doing assessments and working to see where we can use those funds to do work on properties. Yeah, we have to think of a sustainable funding source for that. Fire-wise USA is a national organization, so sometimes if you are a fire-wise community they will have some funds available for that. So that's something that we are continually working on. We recently did purchase a chipper with community safety patrol tax funds. So the idea with that is to provide neighborhoods a chance to partner up and have a chipper come out. So if they do any work on their property and they have a lot of vegetation to dispose of that can be quite costly. So we would provide that completely for free. We're starting to slowly get there. I will say this is a newer program. I hope by like a year from now we will have more programs available for residents and get the word out there.

>> Keating: Do you see any tension between renters and property owners, if a renter is pretty clearly pointing out there's some issues on their property how -- if you have recognized or if you have come across this tension -- how empowered are renters to points out dangers in their community, access said chipper for example?

>> I will say when I'm tabling at events I come across a lot of people who say well I rent so I can't do anything about that. I'm always there to say if you let your landlord or property management company know that you are interested in having an assessment one and that funds may be available for the homeowner we just need the homeowner property owner's permission to do an assessment on the property. Once we have the information and contact information if they're okay with it, they are eligible for us to go out and do whatever feels reduction -- fuels reduction

work is possible. We encourage renters to work with landlords and property management companies. Whoever they talk to to make sure everything is in place.

>> We have the scenario where we see it becoming where the insurance companies are starting to ask if you are in a wildfire area have you had an assessments done, did you comply with the recommendations. We are eye seeing that starting to be the trend going forward. We want to provide defensible space assessments and make solid recommendations that are achievable, realistic goals, so they can benefit from any insurance decreases they can achieve.

>> Keating: This Council has banned fireworks east of AGATE, south to 18th, sale and use of fireworks. Yet we're still in education phase around educating the public, shouldn't use fireworks. Should we consider shifting to an enforcement phase, are there any gaps in what the city has done in regards to banning fireworks and the safety of our community?

>> Good question. The enforcement phase I don't think we're there yet. We need more education with that. Also capacity is a concern having the staff to be able to chase those down. EPD would have to do that, that's not charged to the fire don't to enforce. Their capacity to do that is probably going to be challenging at this juncture.

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor groves?

>> Groves: Thank you, Mayor, thank you for the presentation. I want to pick up on the insurance companies where you left off, that was on my list. Is O-chiefs or I-chiefs doing anything to work with the insurance companies to help enforce this? They're the ones with the teeth, especially with the multi billion dollar losses they're suffering in western states from wildfire.

>> I-chiefs are pushing this in education currently, regarding that. And pushing the wildfire. They have a new conference just based on wildfire that's coming up directly, in Las Vegas, I think. But they are front and center with the lead on this, legislation and support to get what we need. Landscape more resilient and cities more resilient as well.

>> Groves: That's always on my mind, seems there's too little effort to push the environment companies having to pay for the losses. Is youth corps still involved with vegetation mitigation?

>> Yeah, we were able to partner up with youth corps four times this spring to do five weeks worth of projects. So they've been very, very helpful throughout the process. The crews have been great. Good learning experiences for them to help build up the workforce in this area.

>> Groves: Under the goal one, I notice we have protect lives, property, critical infrastructure which I think is good. But what happened to the environment? It's still in the mission statement on slide 1 but that's an important piece as well. I know in past fires this is example wasn't wild land but Dean irrigation fire. They stopped putting water on the fire we had a lot of good heat and thermal column taking the products of incomplete combustion into the atmosphere and out of the area. But they stopped putting water on the fire, it was overrunning containment capabilities and getting into the sensitive wetlands. I think environment should be in there, if it's not too late to add that piece.

>> Thank you for your feedback, we will make sure to add that in, that's an important part, especially given all of Eugene's natural areas and spaces.

>> Evans: And important to the community as well. We had a watershed bill that came up. I know the department has done a lot of things, soy-based foam for class A combustibles, things like that, I assume we're still using that? Very good. Then the last point I hatted is more of a point specific location, parks and open spaces division of public works has been really involved with the wild Irish ridge area. Police are aware of it, parks is aware of it, there's been youth behavioral problems up there. Youth getting together to drink beer. But they're building small fires in the middle of summer out into the tall grass. I know that's one of the areas that's always been a concern to fire, south hills conflagration can take off. Is fire doing anything specific for that area?

>> Not for that area, at least I'm aware of. I know skinner Butte lot we had closed off the parking lot to the summit lot to reduce similar activity that's occurring. I don't know if that's something that we can look into doing.

>> We can discuss options.

>> Groves: Craig Carnegie has been helpful in that work including getting guardian camera trailer up there right around the fourth of July. There's people show up there to light of fireworks as well. It's not an easy area to get into. With prevailing winds out of the south and west, that being the leading edge of Eugene it is just ripe with that southern exposure upslope aspect to really get something going in there. I certainly would appreciate it, as would the neighbors of that area, with some fire attention. I know there's been periodic units driving up into. There I'm out of time, thank you.

>> Mayor Knudson: Councilor Zelenka.

>> Zelenka: Thanks. I agree with Randy adding environment to that criteria is a good idea. I had a question about insurance as well, maps and insurance. There was a statewide map that created quite a Kerfuffle at the legislature, increasing insurance costs which I found ridiculous since thinking that the insurance companies hadn't known all of this information. To me it was ludicrous. Maps don't

create that, the insurance companies know this stuff. Are we seeing interactions with insurance companies or impacts on homeowners on their insurance costs that are in these higher risk areas?

>> Yes, and we're back to the map, I'll go back to reference that. The wildfire hazard map that the state was trying to initiate encountered a lot of lawsuits, public outcry that this isn't fair. I served on the rules committee, and we went back to try and do it a second time and couldn't get there. Senate, 85 was passed, that gives the localities the ability to define their own hazard map and their own wildfire hazard areas. That's been beneficial to us locally. We're not seeing that insurance input yet locally but we see it in other parts of the state particularly the eastern side.

>> Zelenka: Since you were on that rat, do the insurance companies, they had these maps, they figured this out, right? I'm assuming that.

>> They knew. And I would just add as a residents of the south hills buying a house at the same time that map was being deployed, I got a letter immediately threatening to cancel my insurance if I didn't cut the trees and rhododendrons back. I saw how fast they were on it. I appreciate that. They are paying attention, my new insurance carrier, same thing, high risk zone. They send a letter about redeploying their own fire crews in the events of fire, can you opt in or opt out. Engaging in the space for sure.

>> Zelenka: I wanted to point that out. We're not adding new information that the insurance companies already don't know. We're not causing any of this stuff, it is widely known and they are taking action. But your personal example, chief, is a good one, the perception versus reality. Last year in the Laurel hill Vale on moon mountain had a wildfire that took off and it came down the hill right, like, 100 feet or 200 feet from a group of homes. It was quite scary. I remember standing on my property in the Vale and Riverview and looking at the flames, holy cow, if this got any worse we would be evacuating. The psychological impact of that was pretty tremendous on folks. I still remember it vividly, the people are right there really remember it. And the neighborhood association in the Vale does. I'm wondering about how, what we're doing to address some of the reality and the perception about risk areas. Because everybody is starting to freak out about wildfires and potential fires, especially in the south hills all the way from Franklin boulevard around the valley.

>> We are starting to see a lot more awareness around it which is great. That can create a big sense of fear among residents that live in the area. So the biggest thing is just spreading more education and awareness. Again, like doing the most we can by attending events trying to interact with neighborhoods. Any time I'm doing an assessment I ask them to please share this out with neighbors. We hope to do more, like mailers and create some signage and yards that say I had defensible space assessment done, so people are driving by and can see I didn't know that was an option. It is really the 1-on-1 interaction that I can have with people that

creates more awareness around their wildfire risk. But I'm really just asking neighborhoods and communities to be involved with each other. I think that's the best way. If someone in your neighborhood knows a lot about fire and fire risk, pledge preparedness, please spread the word. I think that is the best course of action as we continue to build up this program.

>> Zelenka: I wasn't at the meeting but fire folks met with the Laurel hill folks, when they described it as low to moderate, they were surprised. Councilor-Elect Jennifer Smith was there, recounted that to me. Getting the information out and helping people, calm down a little bit, would be valuable. The last question I had is about the Hendricks park fire risk you put up that slide, a valuable crown jewel of our parks. But it is large trees and old growth forest. Chief we have talked about this, interested in the gates that were put up in terms of -- the closure of the gates. That's one of very, very few egress access routes for that area should something happen in Laurel Valley. You can describe how that process of closing those gates. When we did that with Skinner Butte park that makes more sense. This is different. Can you describe how that might work.

>> We work with parks and talked with the neighborhood there regarding those gates. There was an issue with the unhoused parking and creating fire potential to go up the hill on that road to connect those gates. It is open. They maintain it open. They use it to close it down when there is a threat or when they need to divert traffic or feel like they need to do some work on those roads. They're not closed all the time. The Fire Department and other emergency responders have keys to the gates so we can open those effectively. We have that notated in our maps as well for evacuation maps. We know what we need to do in the instance that we need to have them open. We have been working with emergency management to update the evacuation maps through Genesis, a state program the county uses. We have made smaller zones. Smaller zones help us to do evacuation that we can control and give capacity on the roadways for residents to leave when they need to leave.

>> Zelenka: My understanding they've never been closed. I hope they never are unless there's a really bad fire circumstance. I certainly don't think they should be closed in reaction, overreaction of the neighbors to unhoused people in the parking lots. That was an inappropriate response I think. I hope we never discriminate against homeless people closing the park to everybody thank you.

>> Mayor Knudson: Thank you staff for this presentation today. I have two quick questions. One is lane alerts where community members should be signing up to receive information about wildfire risk and potential need to evacuate?

>> For evacuation and alerts lanealerts.com is where they can sign up. And for other information. If you go to our website, on the fire marshal's office page, there's a wildfire page. So Eugene-OR/wildfire.org, that has information. Good resources on the Oregon state fire marshal's website.

>> Mayor Knudson: Appreciate it as we discuss circumstances where people might need to know something immediately and follow good advice immediately, that's always important to share. My second very quick question is about your wildfire fuels drop sites. As part of that community engagement plan. When does that happen and where?

>> Given limited, like, unverified -- not verified, unregular I guess grant opportunities, it just depends on what we have available. So this year that was provided by the northwest youth corps. So they had a trailer come out, and then they helped people dispose of their debris and then brought it, and they used their chipper and able to distribute those chips to various community gardens around Eugene. Then we have some funds in the community wildfire risk reduction grant that we received that we have done some dumpster days in the past where people can drop their woody debris in the dumpsters, it's just parked there for a week or so. And the whole neighborhood can use it. So I hope to do something similar every May which is wildfire awareness month. Hopefully it'll become a more sustainable event in the future. For now it's just whenever there's free availability for northwest youth corps and grant funding.

>> Mayor Knudson: Thank you for adding that clarification. We have such incredible history in terms of managing waste and connecting those dots and reusing materials that might otherwise end up not having a next life. As we continue to move into the future looking to model some of our fuels reduction work after some of the work that we have done with our leaf collection process for example is a good reference point, something that resonates in our community. Thank you again for this discussion for sharing an update on this plan. We know that we will unfortunately continue to be talking a lot about wildfire but hope this is a good resource for people. With that this concludes our agenda for today. I now close the June 10, 2026 City Council work session. We are adjourned.