

Wildland-Urban Interface Code

Austin City Council
April 9, 2020



Chief Tom Vocke - Austin Fire Marshall

Journey Toward Adoption



- May 12, 2016 - Austin City Council approved Resolution No. 20160512-016, to explore a Wildland Urban Interface Code for Austin
- November 2016 - Fire Chief recommended to Council that AFD use the model code approach
- 2016-2019 - Austin Fire Department Wildfire Division initiated a process that included public outreach, communication, education
- 2019 - AFD launched a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, gathered input, balanced competing interest and developed a code that meets stakeholder needs.

2015 International Code Council IWUIC



- April 9, 2020 – City Council consider amending the 2015 ICC WUI Code, to meet the needs of our City. A code balanced to respect our environment, while providing much needed protection to our citizens
- The code with amendments, when combined with the risk maps developed by AFD will apply the code where it is most needed and at a level that is appropriate for conditions in a given location.

Three potential types of ignition sources:



Ember Attacks (aka Firebrands)

- Most home losses in a wildfire are from embers, not by direct contact with flames.



Surface Fires

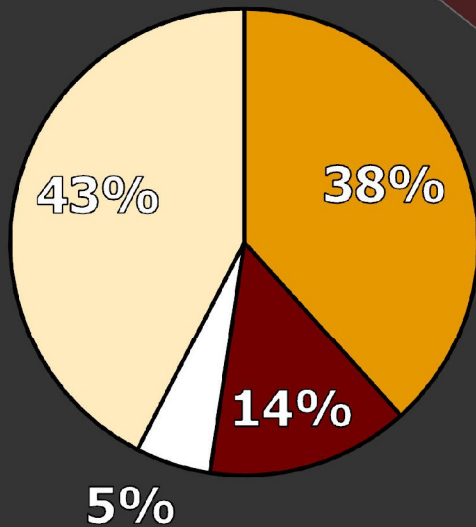
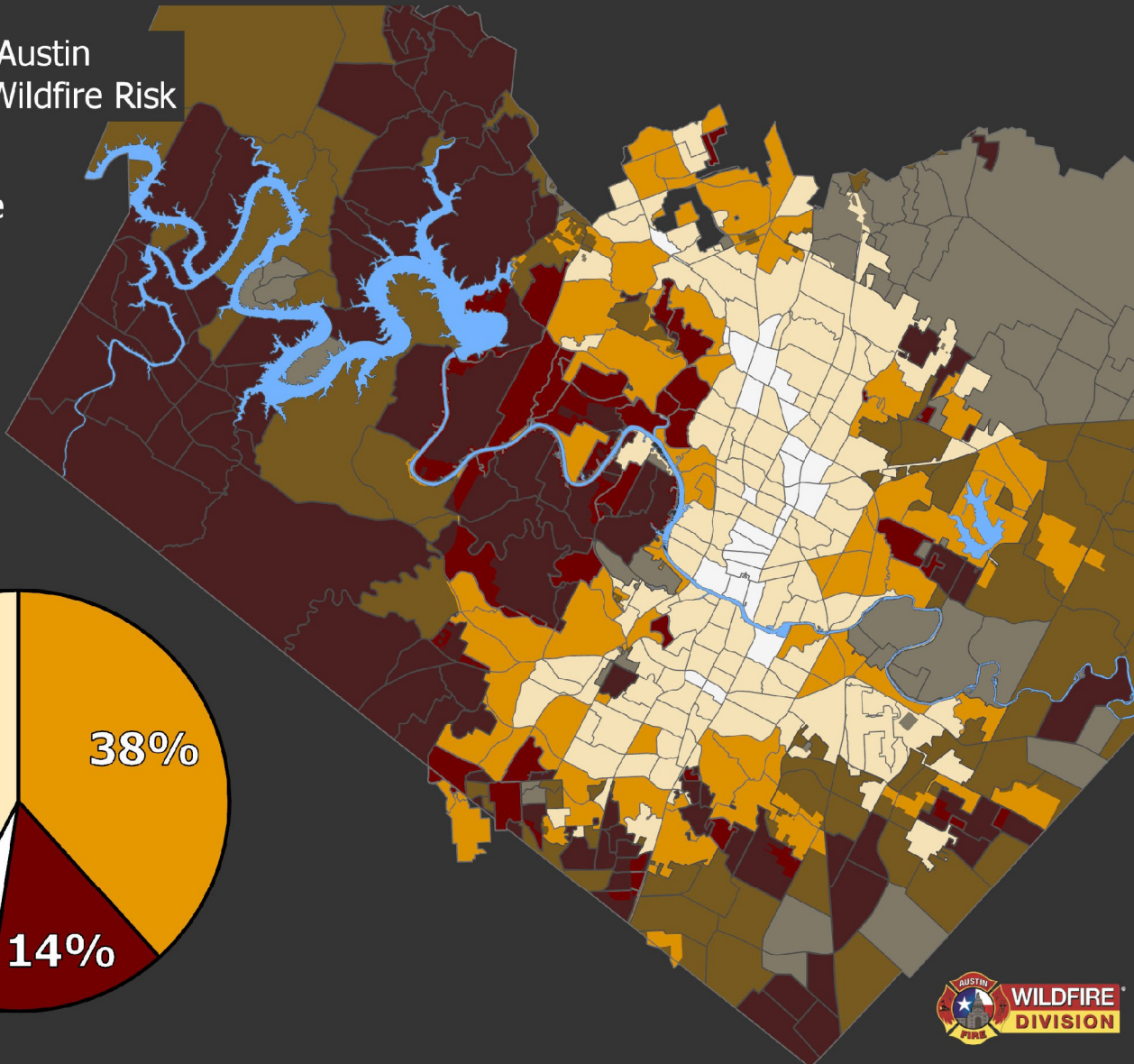
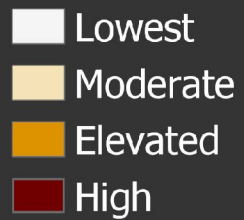
- Typically small flames burning through grass and ground litter.
- Can reach houses if there's no interruption in fuel.
- Use of Shaded Fuel Break to help reduce the risk.
- Flames touching a house can cause them to ignite.

Crown Fire

- Large flames burning in the tops or canopies of trees.
- Radiate heat that can ignite wood walls from up to 100' away.



City of Austin Community Wildfire Risk



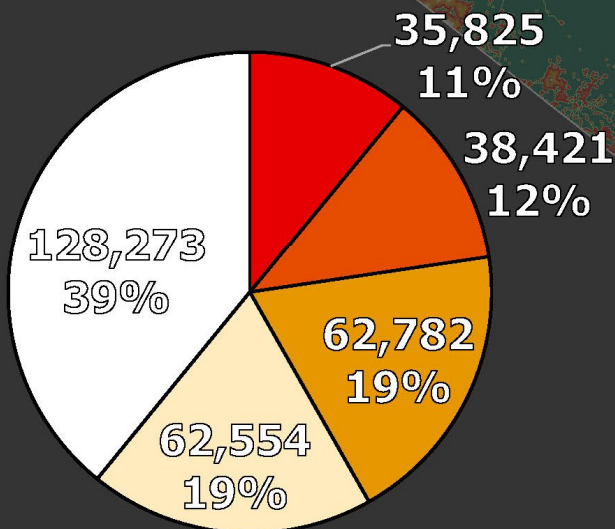
Wildfire Risk

- 52% of Austin has Elevated or High Wildfire Risk

City of Austin
Wildland Urban Interface

Structure Proximity to Wildlands

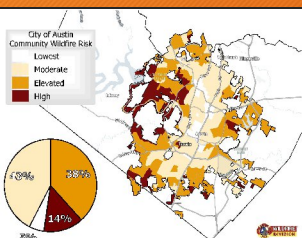
- Within 150 feet (Interface)
- Within 400 feet (Interface)
- Within 1,000 feet (Interface)
- Within 1.5 miles (Ember Zone)
- Greater than 1.5 miles
- Wildlands (27% COA Area)



Wildland Urban Interface

- Where wildlands & human development meet or intermix
- 647 miles of Interface in Austin



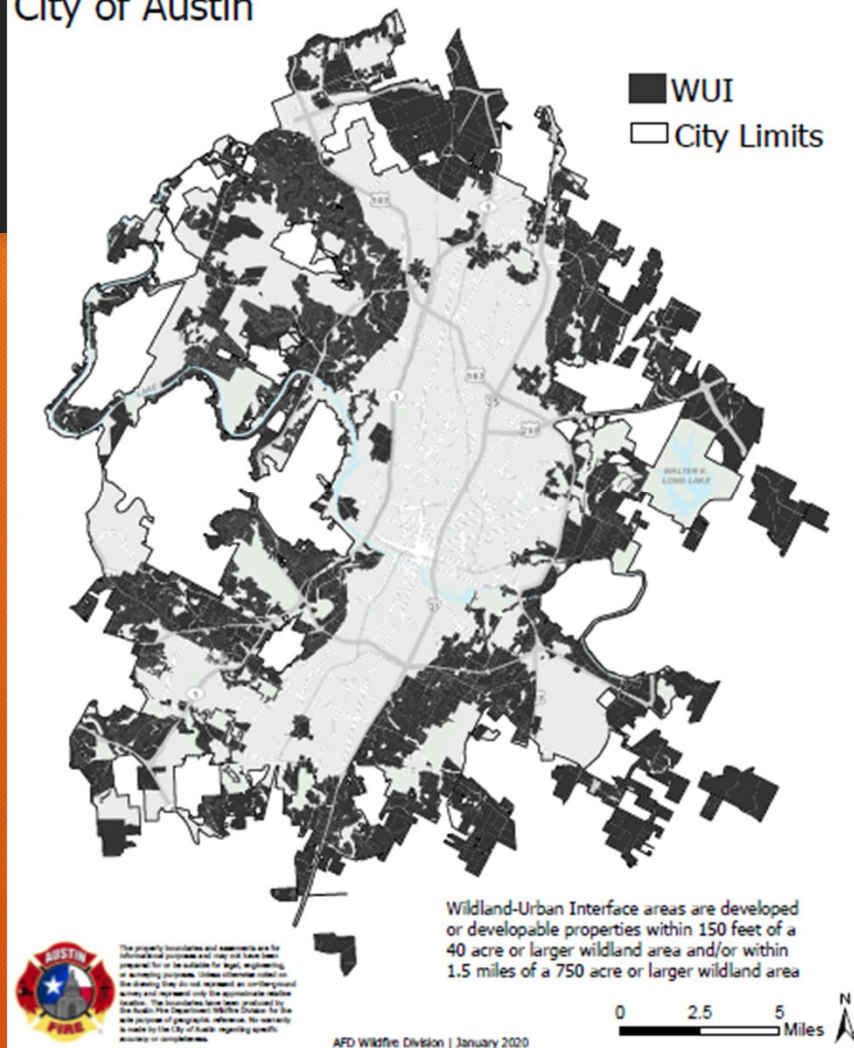


Risk Statistics



District	At-Risk Structures				Zone 5	Total	Risk Classification
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4			
CD1	5,567	5,868	7,770	8,180	9,666	37,051	Elevated
CD2	4,822	5,998	10,051	7,628	6,539	35,038	Elevated
CD3	1,710	2,107	4,178	3,689	16,314	27,998	Elevated
CD4	313	532	1,329	4,122	19,173	25,469	Moderate
CD5	3,920	5,245	8,315	11,736	9,805	39,021	Elevated
CD6	4,314	3,864	6,108	11,611	4,713	30,610	High
CD7	2,171	2,383	5,062	2,109	27,026	38,751	Moderate
CD8	7,145	7,610	11,822	5,855	998	33,430	High
CD9	211	419	1,298	317	23,635	25,880	Moderate
CD10	5,652	4,395	6,849	7,307	10,404	34,607	High
Total	35,825	38,421	62,782	62,554	128,273	327,855	

Wildland Urban Interface Code Areas City of Austin



Wildland-Urban Interface Code

- 40% of City Area
- Developable properties near wildlands
- Ignition resistance for new and remodeled structures

Ignition Resistant Construction



- New and remodeled structures in WUI areas
- Ember protection throughout
 - Class A roof, vent screens, decks and fences, underfloor enclosures
- Increased requirements closest to wildlands
 - Ignition resistant exterior walls, doors, windows
- Defensible space where most hazardous conditions exist

Key Stakeholders



- Public Safety Commission, Environmental Commission, Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals
- Greater Austin Home Builders Association and Real Estate Council of Austin
- City, County, State departments, agencies, programs
- Neighborhood organizations

Austin Fire Department



Effective Fire Fighting

- Quick initial response
- Continuous training
- Proper equipment



Firewise USA®



- More than 1,500 recognized
 - Residents reducing wildfire risks
 - Taking action and ownership
 - Preparing
 - Protecting their homes
- There are over 100 in Texas
 - 18 in Austin
- Austin Firewise Alliance
 - Communities coming together to educate and promote FAC
- Many more are engaged with AFD



Implementation



- January 1, 2021 - WUI ordinance effective
- Dedicated team for permit review and inspection
- Incremental hiring to balance work load and cost
- Estimated start up cost \$1.5 million FY 2021 budget
- Fee structure will be implemented to offset expense

Thank you

