



C I T Y O F
RENO
Memorandum

DATE: September 19, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

FROM: Suzanne Groneman, Environmental Services Manager
Cynthia Esparza, Director

DEPT: Community Engagement & Services

SUBJECT: Defensible Space Pilot Program - Revised

This revised memo clarifies that the donation is from the NV Energy Foundation.

In response to an increase in calls to Reno Direct regarding homeowner insurance non-renewals due to open space proximity, resident and business-owner concerns, and the increasing threat of wildfire in Reno, the Community Engagement & Services Department created a pilot program with GreenVibe World, a non-profit organization, to help address defensible space in a community in Northwest Reno.

As highlighted in the 2025 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, there is a growing wildfire threat, particularly in neighborhoods adjacent to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) due to high winds, low humidity, and drought. These risks underscore the urgency for a creative, innovative pilot program in Reno.

GreenVibe World

GreenVibe World supports environmental initiatives and recently established a program with the Nevada Youth Parole Bureau to provide community service opportunities for at-risk youth. This program supports youth rehabilitation and pro-social development through mentorship, meaningful community service, and hands-on environmental work. GreenVibe's current debris removal and vegetation management projects directly align with the City's defensible space goals by reducing hazardous fuels and supporting wildfire resilience in Reno, while also providing a direct impact to the community.

Project Location

The project neighborhood is in Ward 2, west of the Truckee River, south of I-80, and backs to open space owned by the City of Reno. A priority area, this site was selected due to its proximity to the WUI and limited ingress and egress. The approximate area marked for clearing, in accordance with guidelines for creating defensible space, is marked in red.



Defensible Space Pilot Program

Launched on September 6, 2025, and continuing through March 1, 2026, GreenVibe will use its current partnership with the Nevada Youth Parole Bureau to clear up to 30' of defensible space behind homes on City-owned open space. Should adjacent homeowners also require assistance, GreenVibe is available to assist those homeowners. The project cost is \$17,500 for each two-month term, for a total not to exceed \$52,500 for six months. This pilot program is funded through Green Energy Funds, designated to address community environmental impacts, and a pending donation from NV Energy Foundation to GreenVibe.

GreenVibe's management staff and the Community Engagement & Services, Parks & Recreation, and Fire Departments staff met at the project site to view the project area, discuss debris and vegetation disposal, and review the City's guidelines. Reno Fire Department staff also notified several homeowners on September 5, 2025 of the program.

Support Efforts

Alongside the GreenVibe partnership, staff is also leveraging both internal and external collaborations for added support, including:

- Providing consistent and mission-focused support for Community Court participants, who will assist in bagging and disposing of the vegetation to fulfill community service hours.
- Requesting Waste Management container and allowance support for debris disposal.

The defensible space pilot project reflects the City's commitment to proactive wildfire risk reduction, responsible vegetation management, and building community partnerships. By aligning GreenVibe's efforts with City resources and leveraging partnerships with community organizations, the City of Reno is creating a replicable model for cost-effective, community-driven resilience.

Staff will monitor outcomes to inform a broader cityside defensible space program that safeguards residents, property, and public lands.