

Wildfire Mitigation Plan

TPU PUB Study Session
9/25/2024



PERTEET

Better communities, by design

TACOMA POWER
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

What is a Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP)?



A document that describes how an electric utility will work to reduce the risk of its assets or operations starting or contributing to a catastrophic wildfire.

A WMP may also include:

- An assessment of an electric utilities' service territory wildfire risk.
- A plan to respond to and recover from a wildfire.
- Metrics to measure and track WMP performance.
- Public awareness and community outreach on the hazards of wildfires.



Why a Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP)?

In 2023 the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1032 which requires all Washington State investor and consumer owned utilities to file a WMP with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by October 31, 2024.

- The Washington State DNR finalized a template in April 2024 with a recommended format and list of suggested elements for each WMP.
- Each utility may decide which elements will be included and the level of detail for those elements in their WMP.
- Each utility is required to review and update their WMP a minimum of every three years.



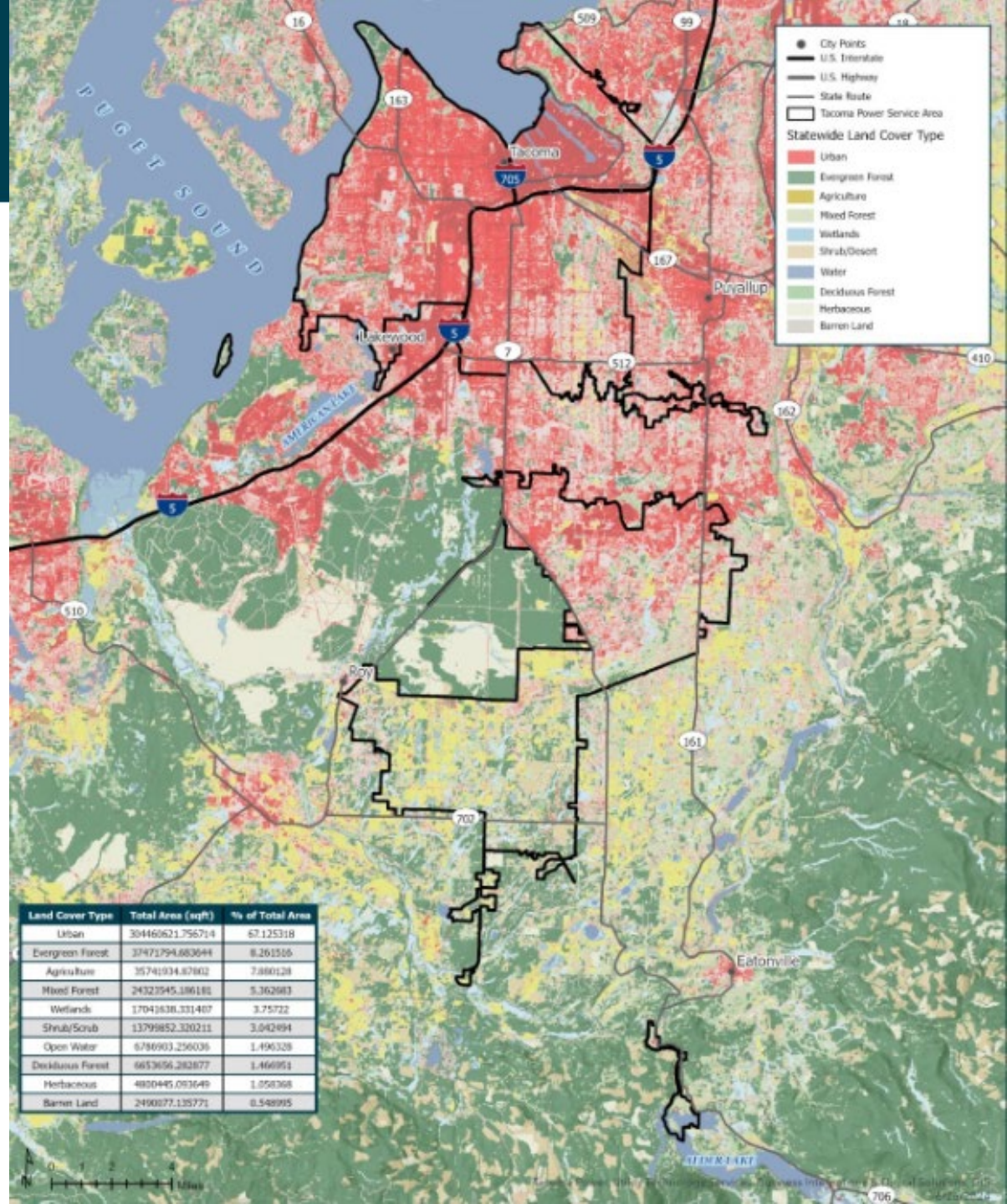
Assessment of Risks

Land Cover Type

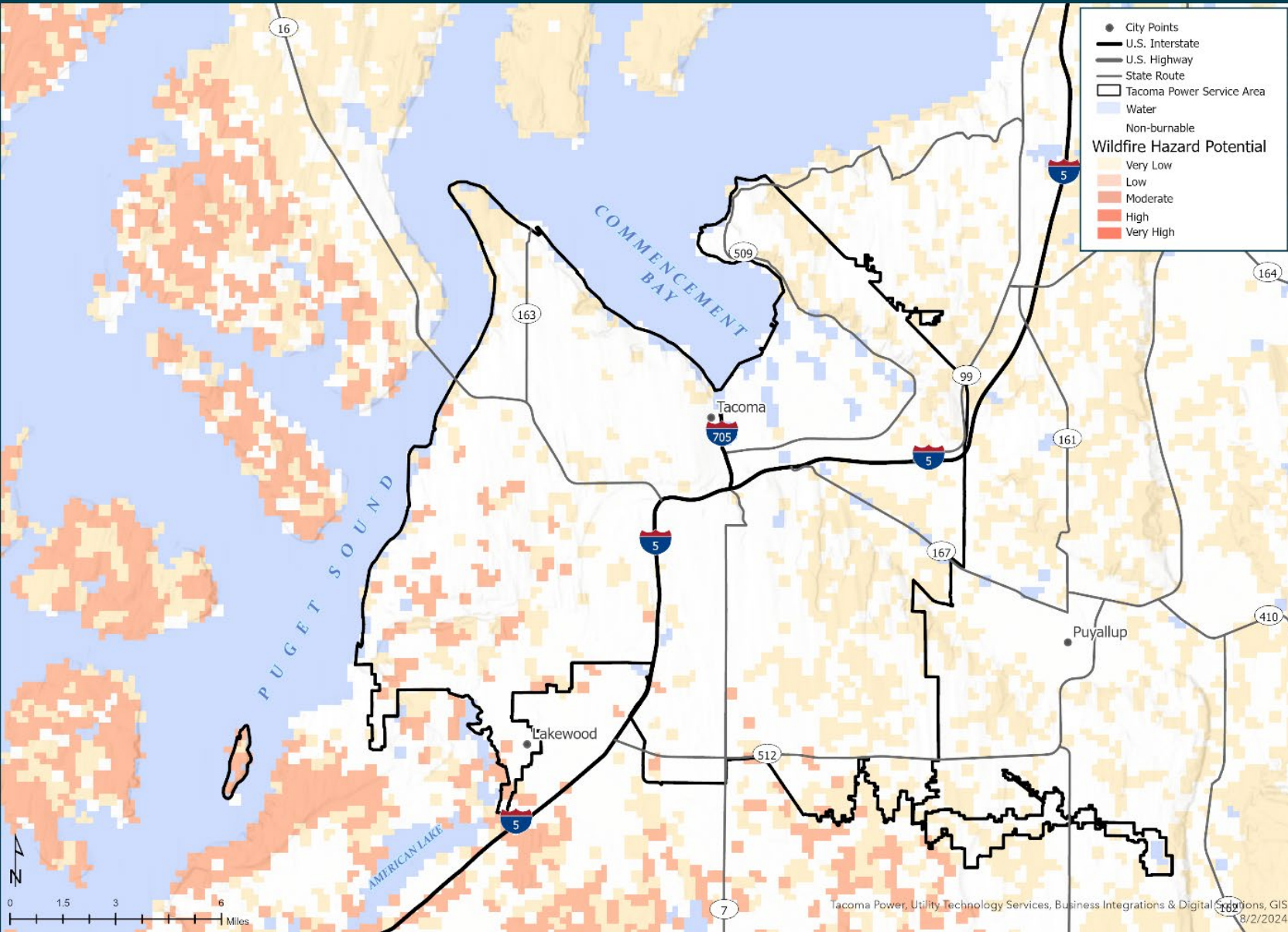
- City Points
- U.S. Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- State Route
- Tacoma Power Service Area










Statewide Land Cover Type

- Urban
- Evergreen Forest
- Agriculture
- Mixed Forest
- Wetlands
- Shrub/Desert
- Water
- Deciduous Forest
- Herbaceous
- Barren Land

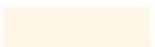






Wildfire Hazard Potential



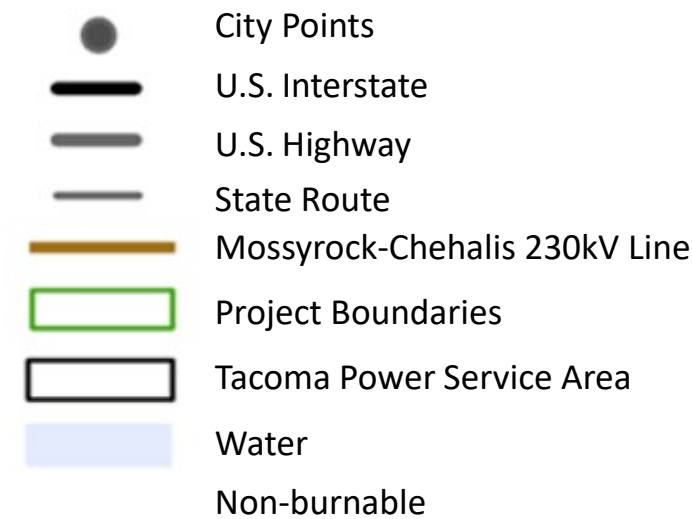
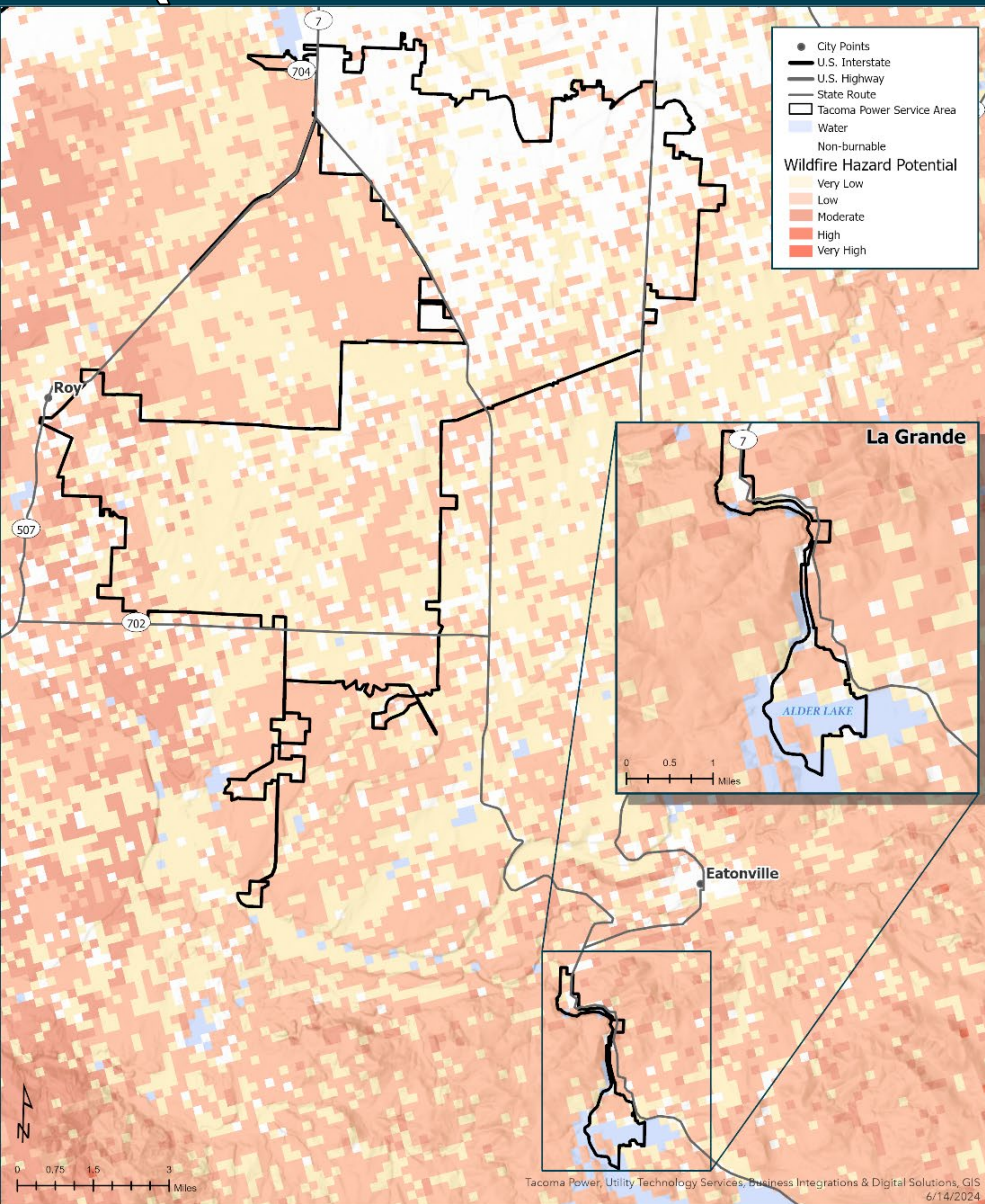
-  City Points
-  U.S. Interstate
-  U.S. Highway
-  State Route
-  Mossyrock-Chehalis 230kV Line
-  Project Boundaries
-  Tacoma Power Service Area
-  Water
-  Non-burnable

Wildfire Hazard Potential

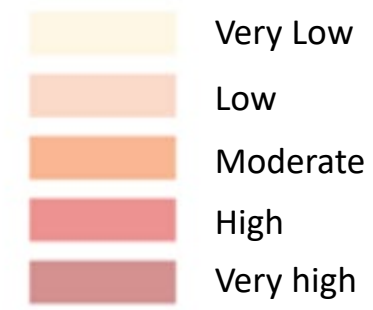
-  Very Low
-  Low
-  Moderate
-  High
-  Very high



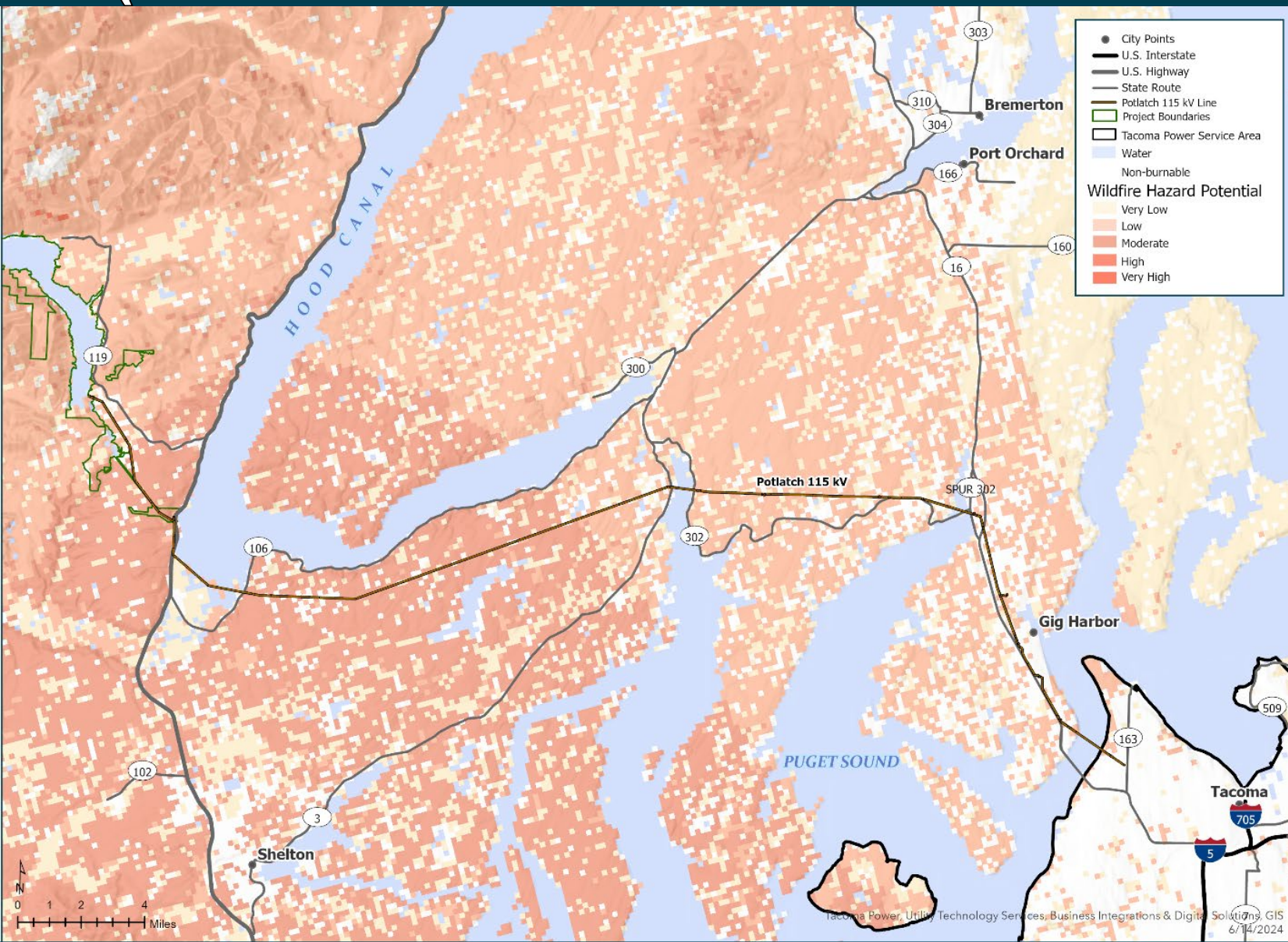
Wildfire Hazard Potential (Loveland and Nisqually Project)



Wildfire Hazard Potential



Wildfire Hazard Potential (Potlatch Lines and Cushman Project)



●	City Points
—	U.S. Interstate
—	U.S. Highway
—	State Route
—	Potlatch 115 kV Line
□	Project Boundaries
□	Tacoma Power Service Area
□	Water
□	Non-burnable
Wildfire Hazard Potential	
□	Very Low
□	Low
□	Moderate
□	High
□	Very High

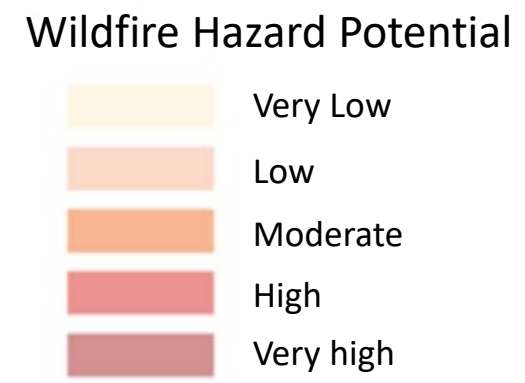
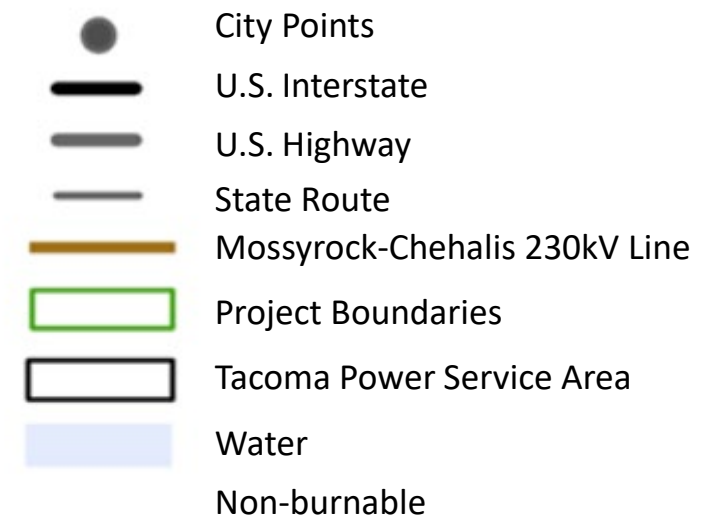
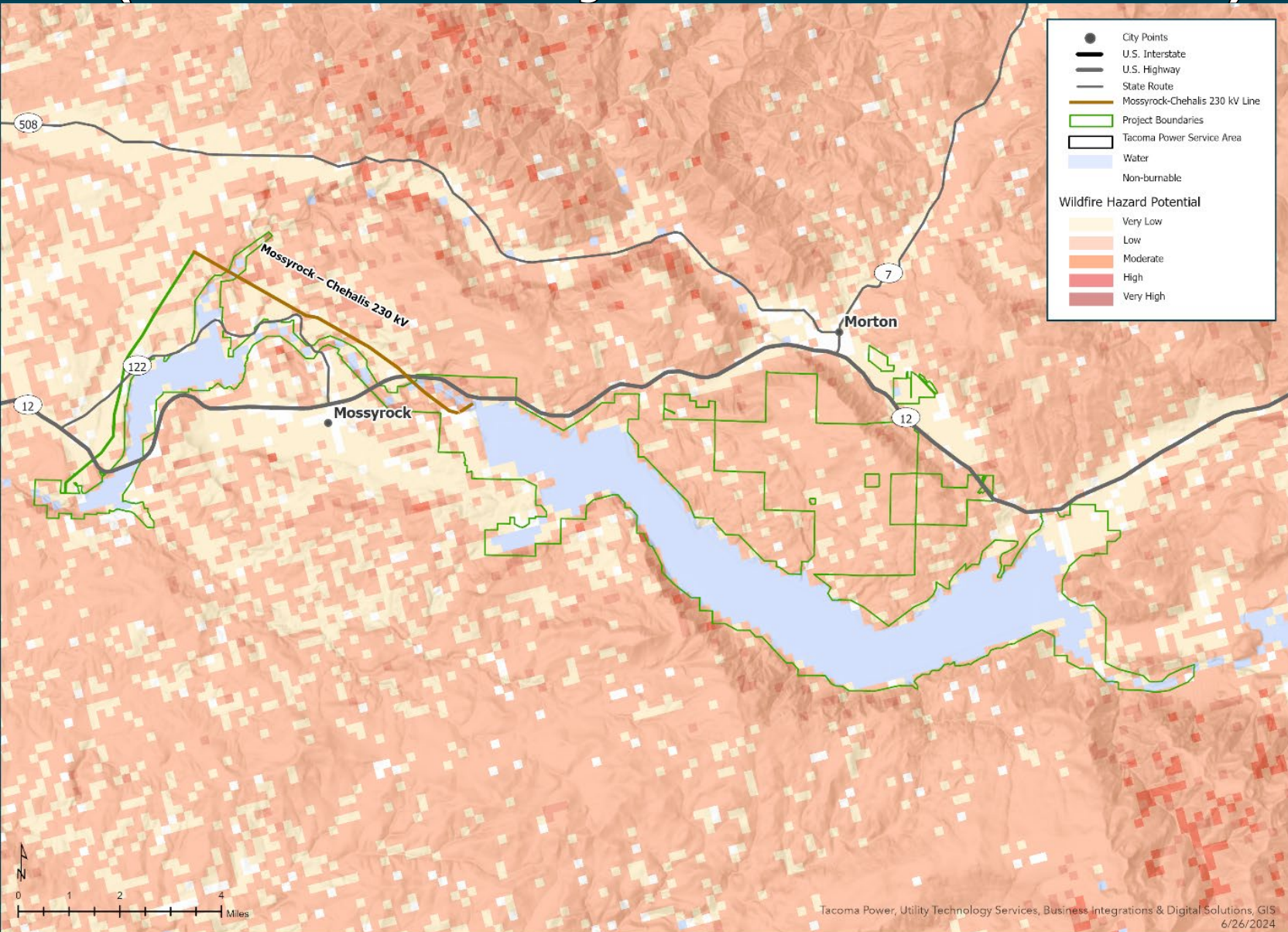
●	City Points
—	U.S. Interstate
—	U.S. Highway
—	State Route
—	Mossyrock-Chehalis 230kV Line
□	Project Boundaries
□	Tacoma Power Service Area
□	Water
□	Non-burnable

Wildfire Hazard Potential

□	Very Low
□	Low
□	Moderate
□	High
□	Very high



Wildfire Hazard Potential (Cowlitz Project 230kV Lines)



Plan to Respond



Preparation for Red Flag Events and Wildfires

The plan documents and builds on efforts Tacoma Power has already started to mitigate wildfire risk, including:

- Proactively engaging with our neighboring utilities and emergency service providers,
- Enhancing our distribution system protection,
- Developing crew work practices that minimize the risk of initiating a wildfire, and
- Continue tracking outage metrics, especially season and cause.

Electric Utility Mitigation Efforts



- **Asset Management Assessments and Inspections**

- Wood pole condition assessment
- Infrared equipment inspection
- Drone inspections of hardware or site conditions

Existing

- **Grid Design and System Hardening**

- Protection and reclosing improvements
- Distribution wire replacement (number 6 copper)
- Pole replacement
- Covered conductor

Existing

- **Vegetation Management**

- Annually receive best practice recognition awards
- Higher frequency inspections for higher risk circuits

Existing

Electric Utility Mitigation Efforts



- **Incident Command System**

- Key Roles and Backups maintained and trained
- Incident Command System templates developed
- Experience with a variety of incidents

Existing

- **System Operations Practices**

- Existing practice for event driven power shut offs
- Have emergency plans in place that can flex for different situations
- Meet and exceed all existing compliance requirements
- Monitors fire weather risk and empowered to order sensitive/lower reliability settings

Expanding

- **Electrical System Protection**

- Use alternative protection schemes on targeted feeders
- Application of covered conductors on feeders
- Expanded deployment of reclosers

Expanding

Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)



- During high-risk wildfire weather conditions or in cooperation with local fire authorities, Tacoma Power may temporarily shut off power lines in specific areas. This is called a PSPS, and it's a measure of last resort to keep the community safe or for a specific emergency response.
- Risk of Public Safety Power Shutoff
 - Water pumps
 - Medical support equipment
 - Traffic signals
 - Internet and mobile phones
 - Economic impacts
 - Air conditioning
 - Difficult notifying all customers
 - Restoration delays
- Currently, risks of PSPS usually outweigh risk of igniting wildfire in Tacoma Power service territory
- Public Outreach

Summary



- **Seek approval of Tacoma Power's first Wildfire Mitigation Plan**
- **Continue to meet with regional electric utilities and emergency service providers**
- **Deepen assessment of risks**
- **Build out communication plans**

Questions?

Drivers for Wildfire Mitigation Strategy



- **Fort Steilacoom Park Fire – Aug 2023**
- **Bolt Creek Fire off Highway 2 – Sept/Oct 2022**
- **Sumner Grade Fire in Bonney Lake – Sept 2020**
- **Graham El Dorado Estate Fire – [Sept 2020](#)**
 - Ongoing Puget Sound Energy litigation
- **Labor Day Fires – 2020**
 - Lane Electric Cooperative and Eugene Water & Electric Board
 - A lawsuit filed on behalf of 70 landowners in the McKenzie River Valley seeks \$103 million from two public utilities.
 - The plaintiffs contend that the two utilities failed to de-energize their power lines despite Red Flag warnings and widespread forecasts for extreme fire weather, including an historic east wind event, single digit humidity levels and an ongoing drought.
- **Oregon PUC Rule Making on Wildfire Mitigation Plan Requirements**
- **Washington Advisory Bill [5158](#)**
- **Seattle Times OpEd on [Utilities should prepare shut-off plans for wildfire emergencies](#)**