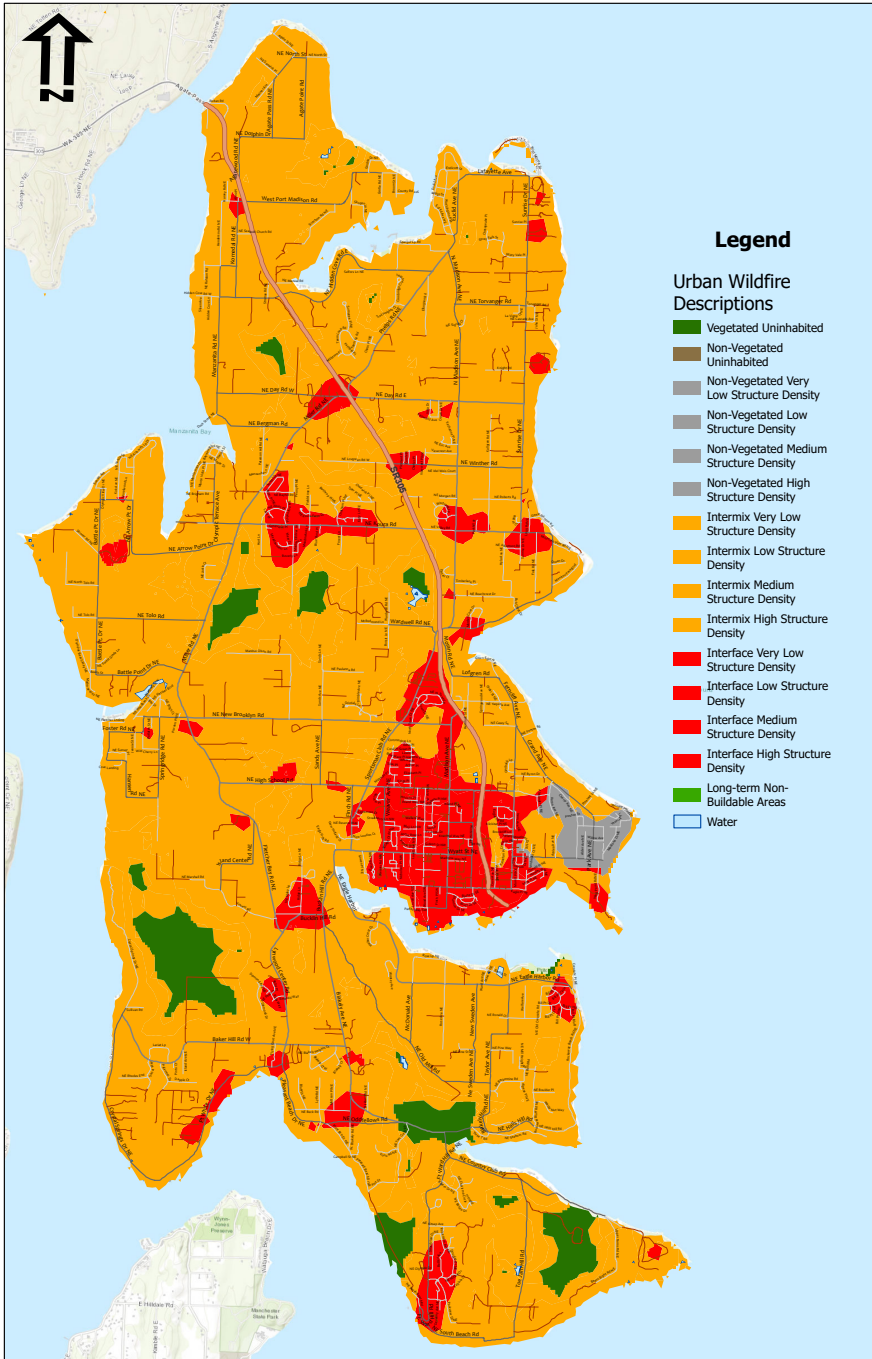




Understanding Fire Hazard Severity in the WUI

Moderate, High, and Extreme

Bainbridge Island Fire Department Urban Wildfire Map - WUI 2023



The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is the geographical area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.

A number of factors are considered when designating these areas including structure density, vegetation coverage, and proximity to wildlands. Development within these identified intermix and interface zones is subject to fire mitigation requirements outlined in the state adopted WUI code. The aim of the state adoption of WUI is to limit the impact of wildfires on people and property.

Mapping the WUI

Bainbridge Island has been mapped as intermix or interface on the official DNR-WUI map as shown below. With the map update occurring this year it is expected that the grey area (non-vegetated uninhabited) will be changed to WUI due to Finding of Fact. This means any development project on the island is subjected to these regulations.

The amount of vegetation management and/or ignition resistant building construction required during development is largely based on the fire severity level (moderate, high, or extreme) on the parcel. When multiple levels are mapped on a parcel, the higher of the two is considered.

Determining Fire Hazard Severity (FHS)

Fire hazard severity is calculated using Table 502.1 in the WUIC by looking at slope percentage, fuel model, and critical fire weather frequency. The entire island of Bainbridge falls under “critical weather frequency 2-7 days” per the Bainbridge Island Fire Department’s determination, so the following chart applies:

Fuel Model	≤ 40 % Slope	41-60% Slope	≥ 61% Slope
Light Fuel	M	M	M
Medium Fuel	H	H	H
Heavy Fuel	H	E	E

E= Extreme hazard H = High hazard M = Moderate hazard

Modifying Fire Hazard Severity (FHS)

In some cases, the map may not accurately reflect site conditions due to site specific uses or existing ignition resistant conditions. If a more nuance determination is desired by the applicant there is an option to complete the fire hazard severity form (WUIC Table 801.1). To verify the completeness of this form a site visit with Fire Department and additional review fees may be required.

The existing fire hazard severity identified on the City of Bainbridge Island GIS map may also be modified by completing a vegetation management plan (VMP). This plan requires the applicant to describe Firewise activities that will be done on site (removing fuel ladders, removing dead trees and brush, etc.) to reduce overall hazard severity. On some areas of the island these activities may conflict with vegetation ordinances. A site visit with Fire Department and additional review fees may be required to verify management plans.

