

# Building Resilience Against Smoke and Heat (BRASH)

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Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee



WHATCOM COUNTY  
**HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Whatcom County, Pennsylvania, completely obscured by a thick, greyish-brown haze of wildfire smoke. The buildings and streets are barely visible through the dense layer of smoke that fills the sky and the lower atmosphere.

# **BRASH: Building Resilience Against Smoke & Heat**

Identifying public health impacts of extreme heat and wildfire smoke on residents of Whatcom County

# Project Development

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- FPHS Funding Allocated to WCHCS July 2022
- Queried partners on climate vulnerability assessment focus areas
- Developed separate contracts for quantitative and qualitative assessment
- Council approval of contracts Spring 2023

# BRASH Goals

- Engage frontline communities
- Build lasting relationships and partnerships
- Operationalize equity in County's climate planning work



# Project Approach

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- Use of the CDC's BRACE Framework
- Identify
  - geographic areas
  - frontline communities
  - known risk factors
- Assess overall capacity of various systems

# Project Planning

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## Steering Committee



# Project Planning

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## Qualitative Assessment

### Identification of stakeholders

- Frontline communities
- Local government organizations
- Community partners

### Community Engagement

- Focus groups and stakeholder interviews

# Project Planning

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## Quantitative Assessment

Evaluate 3 components of vulnerability

- Exposure
- Sensitivity
- Adaptive capacity

## Development of Story Map

- Engaging narrative and accessible display to communicate results to the public





# BRASH TIMELINE

At-a-glance

## DATA & EVALUATION

Identify specific areas at higher risk for smoke and heat. Conduct asset inventory.

**2023**

Sept to December



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Hold several community events and collect input

**23-24**

October to Feb.



## ESRI STORYMAP

Compile and present existing spatial data, including maps, photos, stories

**23-24**

Nov.- March



## FEEDBACK

Connect with stakeholders and steering committee on final report draft

**23-24**

Dec. to April



## CLOSURE AND PHASE II

Present final report including recommendations to Council, plan for implementation phase

**2024**

April and Beyond





# Phase II: Infrastructure, Program and Policy Development

# Request to Council

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- Council Representation and feedback
  - One member to attend 2 steering committee check-ins
  - Review draft final report for feedback
  
- Estimate: 5 -7 hours



**Thank you**

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