



## **CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAM 2023 WORKPLAN- AUGUST 2023**

The following outlines FY 2023 implementation priorities for the Whatcom County Climate Action Program. The projects, project description, and project status are current as of August 2023. Project status is defined as follows, “In progress,” indicates the project is currently active, “not started,” means that the project is in the queue for 2023, and “on hold,” denotes that other work must be completed before starting the initiative or a funding notification is pending. Possible partnerships are noted with an asterisk. The Climate Action Manager will lead or support each initiative, depending on needs. Additional external funding sources to advance each project beyond the initial workplan period are listed on page 9.

Each project that aligns with a priority identified by CIAC members in the Implementation chapter of the Climate Action Plan (below) is denoted with the respective priority number in parenthesis next to the project name in the table that follows. A progress report outlining initial progress towards achieving the identified workplan priorities will be issued by the end of FY 23 and presented to the Executive’s Office and Whatcom County Council.

### **Climate Action Plan First Year Priorities:**

1. Advocate for a state-level legislation that encourages quick adoption and growth of renewable electricity generation with an emphasis on community solar and addresses our additional need for Transmission and Distribution.
2. Start a dialogue with bp management about how they intend to reduce their GHG emissions.
3. Adopt new financial tools and incentives that will accelerate electrification of existing buildings and the installation of distributed energy resources for climate resilience.
4. Install publicly accessible electric charging stations at all county government facilities and underserved locations. Require EV charging stations at apartment complexes and new commercial and industrial complexes.

5. Implement the Regional Trails Plan as identified in the 2011 Bicycle Pedestrian Plan and 2004 Chain of Trails plan and any subsequent revisions thereto to expand the regional trail network for commuting, recreation, and emissions reduction.
6. Incorporate climate change risk into all aspects of the County Comprehensive plan, from infrastructure to land use to natural systems.
7. Prioritize restoration, function and protection of wetlands, riparian areas, headwaters, and other climate resilience areas to improve base flows in streams and rivers, to increase carbon sequestration and storage potential, and to build resilience to climate impacts.
8. Ensure a stable land base for our agricultural economy and promote renewable energy in agricultural areas that can reduce emissions from farms and provide farmers with new income.
9. Increase funding and staff capacity for the County Conservation Easement Program and develop a carbon credit market.
10. Expand a County-hosted public database hub that includes georeferenced environmental measurements that are routinely collected by various organizations in the County.

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE- County Facility, Fleet, & Ferry Decarbonization**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Clean Buildings	Whatcom County is participating in PSE’s Clean Buildings Accelerator program to ensure County facilities in compliance with current and future Clean Buildings Law requirements.	Puget Sound Energy  Facilities	No Cost	IN PROGRESS	EB.3.1 Develop a multiyear master plan for upgrading/ consolidating county government facilities while meeting GHG targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County energy use tracked in Portfolio Manager</li> <li>• Virtual energy scans of space and water heating systems</li> <li>• Prioritized plan for energy savings</li> <li>• Templates for energy management and operations &amp; maintenance plans</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: early compliance with Clean Buildings Law</p>

<p>Electric Vehicles &amp; Charging Infrastructure (4)</p>	<p>Selected to participate in Clean Energy to Communities Program for 6-month technical assistance on electric vehicle infrastructure deployment strategy for public charging.</p> <p>Working with Fleet to determine needed EV infrastructure needs for County fleet electrification.</p>	<p>NREL, WA Clean Cities</p> <p>Public Works</p>	<p>No Cost; General Fund (\$50,000)</p>	<p>IN PROGRESS</p>	<p>T.2.4 Install electric charging stations in strategic locations, prioritizing underserved populations.</p> <p>T.3.1 The County should undertake an evaluation of its on-road vehicle fleet to achieve maximum GHG reductions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of EV ownership and contracting models</li> <li>• Engagement with community partners</li> <li>• Preparation for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant and other funding opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: Early draft electric vehicle infrastructure study; fleet study</p>
<p>Ferry Electrification</p>	<p>PSE completed contract to study the electrical capacity and improvements required for the Lummi Island Ferry terminals to support electric ferry propulsion.</p>	<p>Puget Sound Energy</p> <p>Public Works &amp; Ferry Committee</p>	<p>PW Ferry (\$25,000)</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p>	<p>T.3.2 Invest in a hybrid or electric technology to replace the Whatcom Chief ferry to Lummi Island.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating technological feasibility of hybrid and electric vessel options including various charging options (to be completed in June)</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: Ferry electrification report</p>
<p>On-Site Renewables (3)</p>	<p>Applied for technical assistance to evaluate solar capacity on County owned community facilities through WA Solar plus Storage for Resilient Communities Program.</p>	<p>WA Commerce</p> <p>DOE*</p> <p>Facilities &amp; Parks and Recreation</p>	<p>No Cost</p>	<p>ON HOLD</p>	<p>EB.2.1 Work with communities in the County to identify public buildings, such as schools, fire departments, etc. for potential community solar/ battery projects and resilience hubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop cost estimates, specifications, or other early design work for solar on County owned buildings funded through Solar plus Storage grant program</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: solar site assessment for prioritized County facility</p>

**EVALUATE POLICY BARRIERS- Integrate Climate Planning & Policy**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Comprehensive Plan (6)	Draft new climate element for Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, compliant with HB 1181 and 2022- 036 Council resolution.	WA Commerce  PDS	Commerce	IN PROGRESS	LU.1.1 Use climate resilience as a criterium for updating the Comprehensive Plan, land use codes and building codes in rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New climate element of Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• Revisions to existing chapters of comprehensive plan</li> <li>• Updated regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: climate element, revised comprehensive plan, greenhouse gas inventory</p>
Code Revisions	Determine needed code revisions throughout Comprehensive Plan climate element planning.	PDS	TBD	IN PROGRESS	LU.1.1 ... Also revise codes to encourage the siting of community-scale renewable energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft revised code based on needs as determined through Comprehensive Plan review and update</li> <li>• Council adopted wind code amendments</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: revised solar code</p>

Adaptation & Watershed Planning (6)	Based on recommendations of Compound Flood Vulnerability Assessment, follow-up with further adaptation planning.	Ecology*	Ecology* (\$250,000)	ON HOLD	WRF.6.1 Incorporate probabilistic scenarios for riverine/ coastal flooding to inform planning and management and restrict development in the floodplain zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of Compound Flood Vulnerability Assessment to other areas in riverine floodplain and shoreline jurisdiction</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: adaptation plan</p>
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**BUILD PROGRAM CAPACITY- Climate Funding, Partnership, & Strategic Planning**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Climate Funding Strategy	Determine long-term climate funding sources through the biennial budgeting process and by leveraging external funding opportunities.	Executive's Office	Various	IN PROGRESS	"the Office of Climate Action... can coordinate proposals for grants requests"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine project and funding needs for FY 24 initiatives</li> <li>Coordinate with other departments to determine joint projects for FY 24</li> <li>Track and communicate total County climate investments</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: annual climate budget</p>
Strategic Planning	Develop annual work plans for Climate Action Program and related projects.	Executive's Office	N/A	IN PROGRESS	"help the County take full advantage of increasing opportunities for funding of climate-related projects"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate and execute strategies and actions throughout the Whatcom County Climate Action Plan</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: annual work plans</p>

Departmental Collaboration	Work with County departments to advance and expedite implementation of climate action goals.	PDS, PW, Health, Executive's Office,	N/A	ONGOING	"ensure that County departments are aware of each other's activities and work in concert to achieve climate action goals"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance existing and future climate adjacent work through partnerships, funding, and support for County Departments</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: completion of climate projects</p>
Partnership Building	Work to expand and develop collaborative climate partnerships with Whatcom County organizations.	Various	N/A	ONGOING	"actively coordinate and cooperate with those organizations and communities in Whatcom County and beyond"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase collaborative relationships and partnerships on climate projects with external organizations</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: increased partnerships for County climate initiatives</p>

**CUE UP PROJECTS & INITIATIVES- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Residential Electrification Webpage (3)	Develop resources in coordination with partners to advance utilization of residential Inflation Reduction Act tax credits and rebates.	City*, Rewiring America*, Nonprofits*	EECBG	ON HOLD	EB.5.4 Increase support of non-profit organizations that provide energy efficiency upgrades to residential and commercial buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program funding to help residents with electrification planning</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: household outreach</p>

Low Income Electrification Pilot (3)	Support City pilot with Opportunity Council to weatherize and electrify low income homes.	City*, OppCo*	EECBG	IN PROGRESS	EB.5.2 Require/ subsidize the installation of high efficiency electric heat pump water heater or furnace in existing buildings when replacement is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Execute electrification pilot program in coordination with City of Bellingham to reach low-income County homeowners</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: home audits &amp; retrofits</p>
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**STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE- Improve Response to Climate Impacts**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Compound Flood Vulnerability Assessment	Evaluation of vulnerability to sea level rise and compound flooding in Birch Bay and Sandy Point.	Port, Ecology, Lummi Nation	Ecology	COMPLETE	WRF.3.1 Include climate change and sea level rise in the codes and regulations associated with the Shoreline Management Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine climate impact zones and probable flooding scenarios for Birch Bay and Sandy Point</li> <li>Recommend next steps for implementation</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: Compound Flood Vulnerability Assessment Report</p>
Wildfire Smoke & Heat Vulnerability Assessment	Assessment of impacts of wildfire and smoke to vulnerable populations in Whatcom County.	City, NW Clean Air, Health, PW	WA DOH	IN PROGRESS	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of effects of wildfire smoke and heat prevalence and identification of population vulnerability</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: Wildfire Smoke &amp; Heat Vulnerability Assessment</p>

Urban Forestry	Identification of grant opportunities to support the Whatcom Million Trees goal.	Whatcom Million Trees	TBD	ON HOLD	F.2.2 Plant one million trees in Whatcom County by 2030 outside of designated Rural and Commercial Forest zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application for grant funding for joint project as identified by Whatcom Million Trees</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: Replanting project-pending identification of funding</p>
Community Forestry	Continued County participation in the Stewart Mountain Community Forestry Project and Nooksack carbon credit technical training.	Whatcom Land Trust, Nooksack Tribe	TBD	IN PROGRESS	F.1.3 Identify and preserve the most important forest resource lands based on carbon storage and sequestration potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next steps as identified by the Stewart Mountain Community Forest Strategic Vision Framework</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: TBD</p>
Carbon Market Development	Evaluate opportunities for listing eligible parcels to receive credits through a carbon credit market service or funding through Climate Commitment Act.	TBD	TBD	ON HOLD	F.1.5 Assess the potential for increasing carbon sequestration on County-owned forest lands and measure the results of these programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine carbon sequestration opportunities for existing and planned parcel acquisitions.</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: TBD</p>



**GROW REGIONAL CLIMATE NETWORK- Strengthen Multi-Jurisdictional Partnerships**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Countywide Electric Vehicle Charging Plan (4)	Create countywide electric vehicle charging plan to identify locations for EV charging infrastructure, building off recommendations from Clean Energy to Communities Program	WCOG	Public Works (\$50,000), WCOG (\$5,000)	IN PROGRESS	T.2.4 Install electric charging stations in strategic locations, prioritizing underserved populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on traffic modelling and electrical capacity, determine best locations for additional EV infrastructure across Whatcom County</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Study</p>
Community Outreach	Increase public support for the Climate Action Plan through direct outreach and development of web resources	CIAC	TBD	ONGOING	“take a broad range of actions to inform, influence, and secure support for climate action”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create informational resources to increase awareness of citizen’s roles in advancing Climate Action Plan goals</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: community workshops, webpages</p>
County Climate Collaboration	Deepen collaboration through Whatcom County Climate Collaboration and advance joint initiatives	Port, WTA, City, Ferndale, County, Lummi, WWU, School District	N/A	ONGOING	“the Climate Action Manager should actively coordinate and facilitate an external Joint Climate Action Team”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete grant identification project with City of Bellingham to determine joint projects to be funded through state or federal sources</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: multi-jurisdictional grant tracker, ongoing calls</p>

Multimodal Transportation Network (5)	Bicycle pedestrian committee in process of identifying multimodal projects to prioritize for County funding	Planning, Parks, PW	TBD	IN PROGRESS	"T.1.1 expand the regional trail network for commuting and recreation."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks Commission and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee will identify the demonstration project and list of priority project</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: identification of priority multimodal projects</p>
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**EXECUTE, COMMUNICATE, AND TRACK ACTION- Dashboard, Progress Report, & Project Management**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT STATUS	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT	APPROACH & OUTCOMES
Climate Action Dashboard	Create a public facing webpage to communicate climate indicators across the County.	IT	PW	IN PROGRESS	"a transparent, public-facing dashboard of county climate related data and information will be essential"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ArcGIS dashboard site updated annually with Whatcom County climate indicators</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: GIS dashboard site</p>
Climate Action Plan Progress Reporting	Annual reporting for the public to create accountability and transparency about progress towards CAP implementation.	N/A	N/A	NOT STARTED	"[the office] should regularly inform the public about climate goals and progress toward achieving them"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual reports and presentations to both County Executive's Office and County Council</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: annual report, presentation</p>

Grant & Project Management	Ongoing grant and project management administration.	Various	Various (see below)	ONGOING	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key indicators and fiscal reporting for grants and projects</li> </ul> <p>Outcome: fiscal reporting</p>
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### KEY COUNTY UPCOMING CLIMATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT	FUNDER(S)	PROGRAM	AWARD SIZE	TIMELINE & NOTES
Clean Buildings	WA Department of Commerce, Puget Sound Energy	Early Adopter Incentive, PSE Rebates & Incentives	\$.85 per sq. ft; rebate dependent on technology	1 year after compliance date with Clean Buildings Act, reimbursement for equipment
Electric Vehicles & Charging Infrastructure	US Department of Transportation, WA Department of Commerce	CFI Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant, Zero Emissions Vehicle Partnership Program, Ecology Electric Vehicle Charging Program, Charge Where You Are	\$500,000 minimum (CFI); various	Preparing for next cycle in FY 24 by receiving additional technical assistance,
Ferry Electrification	US Department of Transportation, WSDOT	Electric or Low Emitting Ferry Pilot Program	Various	PSE Study results scoped out funding needs, next funding round in FY 24, additional state funding possible
On-Site Renewables	US Department of Energy, WA Department of Commerce	Solar Tax Credit, Solar + Storage Grant Program	30% on project cost; various	Applied for technical assistance in advance of next grant cycle
Comprehensive Plan	WA Department of Commerce	Climate Program	\$800,000	Notification from Commerce of funding for Comprehensive Plan climate element upcoming
Adaptation Plan	WA Department of Ecology	Shoreline Planning Competitive Grants	Award limit \$250,000	Application submitted for Shoreline Planning Grant
Residential Electrification Campaign	US Department of Energy	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Funding	Part of \$80,000	Determination of EECBG budget with technical assistance from National Renewable Energy Lab

Urban & Community Forest	US Forest Service	Urban & Community Forest Grant	TBD	Working with Whatcom Million Trees to identify subgranted funds as part of Inflation Reduction Act grant programs
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The FY 2023 Whatcom County Climate Action Program Workplan outlines initial priorities for implementation based on the Climate Impact Advisory Committee’s initial priorities, existing County initiatives with a climate nexus, and identified opportunities for state and federal technical assistance and funding opportunities. Other areas of the Climate Action Plan that are not included in this initial workplan will be advanced in subsequent implementation phases or reevaluated based on availability of funding resources and public engagement. The full 2021 Whatcom County Climate Action Plan can be found at the Climate Impact Advisory Committee’s page [or at the following link](#).