

Engagement Strategy

CITY OF WALLA WALLA CLIMATE ELEMENT



The City of Walla Walla Climate Element is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

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OVERVIEW

Background

The City of Walla Walla is updating its Comprehensive Plan in accordance with E2SHB 1181 (HB 1181), signed into law in 2023, which requires Washington's cities and counties to use their principal planning document – the comprehensive plan – to build community resilience in regard to climate change. To meet this requirement, Walla Walla will prepare a “Climate Element,” which will eventually be adopted as a Comprehensive Plan element.

Project Team Roles and Responsibilities

Public Participation Deliverables

- ◆ CPAT facilitation and materials
- ◆ Public outreach materials (informational flyer, translations)
- ◆ Online open house
- ◆ Survey

The project team consists of staff from the City and Cascadia Consulting Group (the consultant). Table 1 summarizes the roles and responsibilities of project team members related to engagement for this project.

Table 1. Roles and Responsibilities of Project Team Related to Engagement

| Roles | Name | E-mail Address | Responsibilities |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| City Project Manager | Preston Fredrickson, Development Services Director | pfred@wallawalla.wa.gov | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Confirm key partners and audiences to be engaged in the public involvement effort (see Table 2) ◆ Confirm CPAT membership and meeting schedule ◆ Review and provide comments on key deliverables throughout the project ◆ Participate in CPAT meetings - review agendas, materials, summaries ◆ Participate in consultant/city check-in meetings |
| City Support Staff | Lisa Wasson-Seilo, Senior Planner, Development Services | lwasson-seilo@wallawalla.gov | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review and provide comments on draft communications to potential partners ◆ Review and provide comments on engagement deliverables ◆ Lead coordination with Planning Commission and City Council ◆ Participate in CPAT meetings - review agendas, materials, summaries ◆ Participate in consultant/city check-in meetings |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| City Communications Lead | Brenden Koch, Communications Manager | bkoch@wallawalla.wa.gov | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review and publish climate planning information and related work to the designated webpages ◆ Advertise upcoming public participation opportunities ◆ Review the City website and/or newsletter to introduce the Resiliency Element and describe the process; publish final to website and/or newsletter ◆ Review and provide comments on draft communications to potential partners |
| City Engagement Lead | [intern] | Hasn't been filled yet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Support engagement and public participation through preparing materials, working with the consultant team to revise and finalize. ◆ Participate in consultant/city check-in meetings ◆ Table at in-person events |
| Consultant Project Manager | Gretchen Muller | gretchen@cascaadiconsulting.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide project oversight and ensure timely deliverables |
| Consultant Engagement Lead and Deputy Project Manager | Alexandra Doty | adoty@cascaadiconsulting.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lead the consultant/city team check-in meetings ◆ Produce materials and deliverables related to the climate grant ◆ Facilitate and present materials to the CPAT ◆ Coordination/communication with the city |
| Consultant Engagement Support | Carson Brock | carson@cascaadiconsulting.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Support the consultant/city team check-in meetings ◆ Produce materials and deliverables related to the climate grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Public survey ◆ Engagement Strategy |
| Consultant Technical Leads | Abigail Lambert, Nicole Gutierrez, Lucy Harrington, Mary Ann Rozance | Multiple | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Support CPAT, Planning Commission, and City Council meetings as needed to provide technical presentations regarding the climate element. |

ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

To engage the Walla Walla community, virtual and in-person engagement will be the two key ways to reach key audiences and partners. The City will staff and lead all in-person engagement. The consultant will support these in-person events by designing materials and facilitating activities and will physically attend up to 2 in-person events. The consultant will co-lead any online engagement events for this project.

Engagement Phases

Engagement will be phased for Climate Element development. These phases will subsequently build upon the previous phase and coincide with critical developmental points.

| | Phase 1 (August – November) | Phase 2 (November – March) | Phase 3 (March – August) |
|------------|---|---|---|
| Overview | Visioning | Identify climate priorities | Refine CE |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build early awareness of plan process and legislative requirements ✓ Build or strengthen key partner relationships ✓ Understand current community context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gather and integrate community value and vision from ✓ Community-driven prioritization of potential strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Solicit feedback on draft CE ✓ Gather input for implementation |
| Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Promotion ◆ Webpage ◆ Email updates ◆ CPAT meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Webpage ◆ Email updates ◆ Public Survey ◆ Online open house ◆ CPAT meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Webpage ◆ Email updates ◆ Tabling at public events ◆ CPAT meetings ◆ Public comment |

Promotion Webpage, and Social Media

The City will use a range of tools to promote their climate element and engagement with the community, such as a project webpage, and social media postings (Facebook, X, and Next-door).

- Project webpage: The project webpage will be drafted by the consultant team and reviewed by City staff. The webpage will include a project overview, relevant updates, upcoming engagement opportunities, and project team contact information. The website will also house all project materials, host the survey, and the online comment period on the draft climate element. The City will be responsible for uploading the webpage.
- Social media: The City will use social media to promote climate element awareness and engagement.

Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT)

The Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT) will serve as an advisory body to advise the City of Walla Walla throughout the Climate Element development process. The team should include planners, public works professionals, a diverse group of community members, and individuals with existing climate change and climate hazard knowledge. The City will identify and recruit CPAT members and the consultant team will lead facilitation of the group.

The CPAT will work to identify assets of climate impacts and provide feedback on draft goals and policy for the climate element. To ensure participation, CPAT meetings should have hybrid meeting options when possible. Below is an outline of CPAT meeting frequency and meeting goals. CPAT meetings will be approximately 1.5 hours in length. Specific meeting dates and times are yet to be determined.

CPAT Meeting Schedule

Table 3. CPAT Meeting Schedule

| | Meeting 1 | Meeting 2 | Meeting 3 | Meeting 4 | Meeting 5 | Meeting 6 |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| <i>Month and Year</i> | October 15, 2024 | November 2024 | January 2025 | March 2025 | May 2025 | July 2025 |
| <i>Goal</i> | Review engagement strategy with CPAT and gather feedback to incorporate; Identify community assets; Identify CPAT resilience goals and priorities for Climate Element; | Review climate impacts and provide feedback on priority climate hazards for the city | Review VA and identify gaps and opportunities for Climate Element | Provide feedback on draft Climate Element goals and policies | Provide feedback on revised draft Climate Element goals and policies | Review final goals and policies for integration into the Comp Plan |
| <i>Relevant Deliverables</i> | Deliverable #1: Engagement Strategy | Deliverable #2 & #3 Climate impacts - current state memo; Policy Audit | Deliverable #4: Memo summarizing completion of the vulnerability and risk assessment | Deliverable #5: Memo summarizing the pathways the City will pursue and Relevant spreadsheets of the Climate Element workbook | Deliverable #5: Relevant spreadsheets of the Climate Element workbook | Deliverable #6: Climate Element/ Resilience Sub-Element |
| <i>Logistics</i> | Hybrid (Library & Teams) | Hybrid (Library & Teams) | Hybrid (Library & Teams) | Hybrid (TBD & Teams) | Hybrid (TBD & Teams) | Hybrid (TBD & Teams) |

CPAT Member List

| Position # | Title | Name |
|------------|---|---|
| 1 | Sustainability Committee Chair | Ann Johnson amj@wallax2.com |
| 2 | Planning Commission Chair | Emily Brown emilyrbrown@gmail.com |
| 3 | City Council member | Monte Willis Mwillis@wallawallawa.gov |
| 4 | Public Works Stormwater Coordinator | Dara Osbourne dcosborne@wallawallawa.gov |
| 5 | Deputy Fire Chief | Erik Wood ewood@wallawallawa.gov |
| 6 | Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) - Climate Adaptation Planner | Colleen Sanders ColleenSanders@ctuir.org |
| 7 | CTUIR - Water Policy Analyst | Chris Marks ChrisMarks@ctuir.org |
| 8 | YMCA Youth and Government President | Ingrid Iverson ingridiverson2@gmail.com |
| 9 | Department of Ecology - Nuclear waste program | Sarah Williams williams@whitman.edu |
| 10 | Community Development Block Grant Coordinator | Lydia Caudill lcaudill@wallawallawa.gov |
| 11 | Sustainable Living Center Director | Erendira Cruz director@slcww.org |

Key products will include:

- Meeting materials such as agendas, discussion guides, and presentations.
- 6 hybrid CPAT meetings (consultant team to attend virtually and City staff and CPAT members to attend in person).
- Brief meeting summaries, with a focus on key input to the Climate Element.

Online Open House

The consultant team will organize and facilitate one online open house to serve as an opportunity to educate the public on the planning process and gather feedback on priorities, concerns, action ideas, and implementation considerations at key steps in the planning process.

In-Person Tabling and Information Sharing

The City will identify and book tabling opportunities at existing community events to inform community members of the Climate Element development process and engagement opportunities and solicit feedback on resiliency policy. The consultant team will develop materials for tabling events (to be reviewed by the City) and the City will attend in-person events.

- Book tabling space for up to 2 in-person events.
- When possible, tabling events may be aligned with CPAT meetings. Potential events include:
 - Walla Walla Farmers Market - Saturdays May through December.
 - Other events to be determined.
- Develop a Climate Element informational flyer and other relevant outreach materials, as needed, in English and Spanish. Distribute informational flyers at the library, YMCA, schools, City Hall, etc. The consultant team will develop communication collateral to support events. The City will translate materials into Spanish.
- Ensure information is accessible and available both online and through non-digital formats.

Public Survey

Public surveys provide convenient and accessible opportunities for the public to share feedback. The consultant team will lead one public survey using a survey platform and the survey will be shared on the City's website. The City will promote the survey through their existing communication channels and provide input.

Public Comment

The City will hold a public comment period for feedback on the draft Climate Element. The consultant team can support the public comment process through an online platform such as Konveio or Consider.it if the City prefers to have external support for the public comment process. Alternatively, the City may utilize a dedicated email address to collect comments during meetings. The City may also use modules on their website to collect feedback.

The public comment period should remain open for at least 4 weeks and be promoted through the City's communication channels.

Planning Commission

The Walla Walla Planning Commission has a lead role in supporting staff through the climate element and comprehensive plan update, then considering different elements of the proposal and making a formal recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission will work on the update over most of its meetings in 2024 and 2025. Public comments are taken at every Planning Commission meeting and several formal public hearings will be held before a recommendation is made to the council. The commission will also be provided summary reports of public comments at key points in the process. The City staff will lead engagement with Planning Commission and City Council, the Consultant team will join in-person for one meeting, and virtually at up to 2 meetings.

City Council

The Walla Walla City Council is the final authority on the contents of the comprehensive plan and will adopt the plan in early-2026. The council will receive briefings at key points in the update process in 2024 and 2025. Public comments are taken at every City Council meeting, and one or more formal public hearings will be held before the council makes its decision. The Council will also be provided with summary report of public comments at key points in the process. In RCW 36.70A.035(2) the GMA limits the City Council with regards to changing a proposal after it has been transmitted to them by the Planning Commission. If the Council chooses to consider a change to an amendment after the Planning Commission has concluded their public hearing and formulated a recommendation, the Council must provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the proposed change. This public review must occur at a duly advertised, public hearing held by the City Council before voting on the proposed change.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES & TIMELINE

The table below outlines how the community will be engaged during the Climate Element process. Roles have been categorized as follows:

Lead meeting/task (including prep and follow-up)

Co-lead meeting/task and material development.

Review materials and provide feedback.

Logistic Support/Promotion

Table 4. Public Engagement Opportunities and Proposed Timeline for Climate Element

| Public Engagement Opportunity | Touchpoint | Date | City Role | Cascadia Role | Goal |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--|
| City webpage and/or newsletter | Share key updates and opportunities for public involvement | September 2024 - July 2025 | Lead & Review | Review | Provide the public with information about the Climate Element process and how to get involved. |
| CPAT Meetings | Gather input at various points of the planning process | October 2024 - July 2025 | Attend & logistic support | Co-lead (as needed) | Facilitate CPAT meetings and gather input on the climate element and climate element process. |
| Online open house | Provide overview of the climate element and gather community input | February - April 2025 | Attend & logistic support | Lead | Organize and facilitate an online open house to educate the public on the planning process and gather feedback on priorities, concerns, action ideas, and implementation considerations at key steps in the planning process. |
| Attend tabling event | Tabling #1: | TBD | Attend & Logistic support | Co-lead (materials) | Goals will vary depending on timing. Potential goals could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Raise public awareness of the Climate Element process and engagement opportunities. ◆ Gather feedback from public on vision of what a resilient Walla Walla looks like. ◆ Gather feedback on draft goals and policies. |
| | Tabling #2: | TBD | Attend & Logistic support | Co-lead (materials) | |
| | Tabling #3: | TBD | Attend & Logistic support | Co-lead (materials) | |
| Participate in public survey | Public survey | January - April 2025 | Review & Promotion | Review | Public survey to gather initial feedback on climate impacts and Climate Element priorities. |
| Provide public Comment | Public comment platform | May 2025 | Lead | Review | Public comment to gather feedback on draft climate element goals and polices. |

KEY MESSAGES

Why should I participate in this process?

- This is an ongoing opportunity to tell us your vision and priorities when it comes to building a resilient Walla Walla and how the city will pursue climate policy and action.
- By participating, you have an opportunity to guide the development of Walla Walla's climate action for the coming years.

What is a Climate Element? What does the climate resiliency sub-element mean?

- The Climate Element will serve as an element or chapter of the city-wide Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document, approximately a 20-year horizon, the city uses to guide growth and development.
- Climate resilience is the ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to climate change and minimizing negative impacts on our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities.
- A Climate Element resilience sub-element is a strategy to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Walla Walla can build this plan by implementing preparedness, response, and recovery policies, including mitigating natural hazards, adapting to unavoidable impacts, and restoring degraded natural areas. This approach includes setting goals, policies, and objectives to improve resilience against climate change equitably, informed by science and considering the needs of affected communities.

Why is it important?

- A Climate Element lays out the goals and policies to address climate change and resiliency for the city's Comprehensive Plan. By taking action to build resilience for climate risks, such as extreme heat, wildfire, smoke, and air quality, drought, and extreme precipitation and flooding, the City will position itself to be ahead of the curve in preparing for impacts and to protect the health and well-being of its residents and economy.

How will my feedback be used?

- Public input is an essential part of Walla Walla's climate planning processes. We will consider all public input, along with input from City staff, community leaders, and partners throughout the planning process. Input received through the engagement opportunities outlined within this engagement strategy will inform the goals prioritized in the Climate Element and influence resilience policies for the Walla Walla community.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan update?

The Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) was amended in 2023 under Washington House Bill 1181, requiring cities and counties to integrate climate mitigation and/or resilience policies into their periodic comprehensive plan updates.

The City of Walla Walla is working on the update to the city's Comprehensive Plan which is scheduled to be completed by June of 2026. The Climate Element with the required Resilience Sub-Element is required to be completed and incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan and will include policies that:

- Requirement 1: Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns;
- Requirement 2: Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster climate resilience, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe species migration; and
- Requirement 3: Identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate impacts, including social, economic, and built-environment factors, which support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.

APPENDIX A. CITY OF WALLA WALLA COMMUNITY PROFILE

The following sections outline a brief community snapshot of the City of Walla Walla to inform community engagement and social vulnerability analysis.

Demographics

Based on the April 1, 2024 Population of Cities, Towns and Counties Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues, State of Washington Office of Financial Management, the total population of the City of Walla Walla is 34,580 people. The tables below provide age, gender, race, language, education, and income levels for those who reside in the City of Walla Walla sourced from the [US Census: 2022 American Community Survey](#)

| Age | % |
|---------------|------|
| Under 5 years | 3.9 |
| 5-19 years | 19.0 |
| 65 and over | 18.3 |

| Language Spoken at Home | % |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Speak language other than English | 23.4 |
| Speak English "very well" | 14.1 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 9.3 |

| Housing tenure | % |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Owner-occupied housing units | 60.4 |
| Renter-occupied housing units | 39.6 |

| Means of Transportation to Work | % |
|---|------|
| Car, truck, or van – drove alone | 66.8 |
| Car, truck, or van - carpooled | 9.0 |
| Public transportation, walk, or bicycle (excluding taxicab) | 10.8 |
| Work from home | 12.2 |

| Sex | % |
|------------------|--------|
| Total population | 33,842 |
| Male | 43.6 |
| Female | 56.4 |

| Race | % |
|--|------|
| White alone | 83.0 |
| Black or African American | 3.7 |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 4.4 |
| Asian | 3.8 |
| Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander | 1.2 |
| Some Other Race | 13.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 23.6 |

| Education Level | % |
|---|------|
| High school graduate, including equivalency | 22.2 |
| Associate's degree | 11.4 |
| Bachelor's degree | 16.2 |
| Graduate or professional degree | 13.1 |

| Earnings | % |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Less than \$10,000 | 14.4 |
| \$10,000 to \$24,999 | 19.3 |
| \$25,000 to \$49,999 | 32 |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 14.5 |
| \$75,000 or more | 19.7 |
| Median earnings (dollars) | 38,144 |

Social Vulnerability in the City of Walla Walla

The Resilience Sub-element must address disadvantaged communities in the City of Walla Walla. This Element will address economic, environmental, and social conditions as they intersect with climate resilience, and minimize the potential for environmental health disparities to get worse.

WA HEALTH DISPARITIES DATA

The [Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) is an interactive mapping tool comparing communities across the state for environmental health disparities. The map provides decision makers with key insights into where public investments can be prioritized to best target their jurisdiction's highest environmental health concerns.

The tool ranks key data categories from 1-10, with 1 being the lowest occurrence of environmental health disparities and 10 being the highest. There are 19 indicators, divided into four themes: Environmental Exposures, Environmental Effects, Socioeconomic Factors, and Sensitive Populations. The key findings for environmental health disparities in Walla Walla are presented as maps below. Walla Walla has relatively high disparity ratings for Environmental Health Disparities, Socioeconomic Factors, and Sensitive Populations, with the north-west central area of the city ranking highest.

Figure 1. Environmental Health Disparities V 2.0. Provides an overview of environmental health concerns in the selected area. The City of Walla Walla's score is **medium-high**.

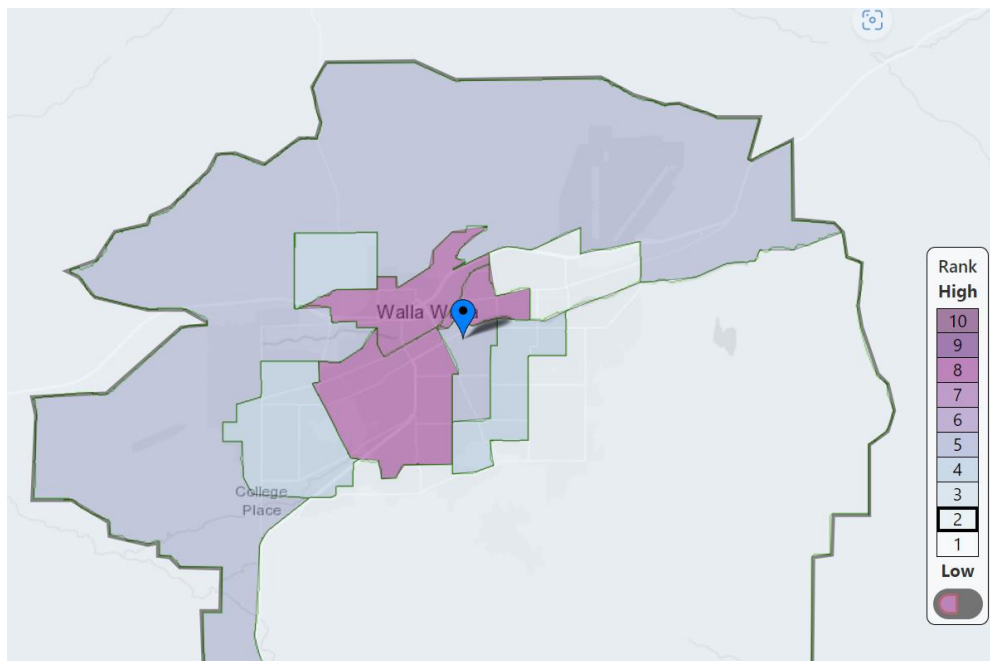


Figure 2. Environmental Exposures. Demonstrates exposure to various pollutants, such as PM2.5. The City of Walla Walla's score is **low**.

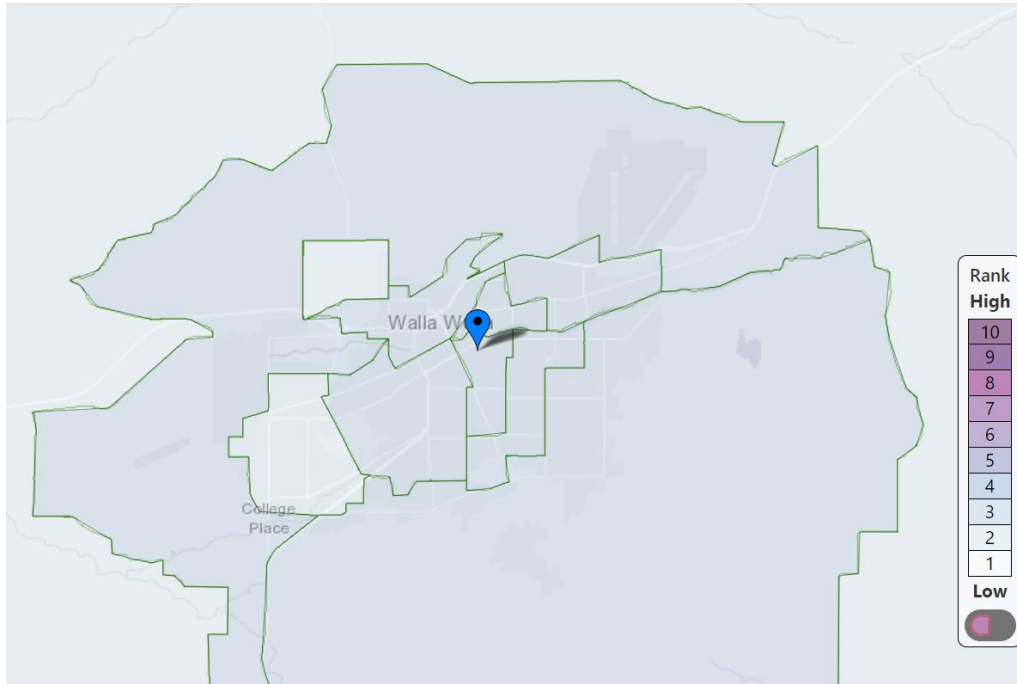


Figure 3. Environmental Effects. Demonstrates proximity to hazardous sites. The City of Walla Walla's score is **medium**, however some areas (north-west area of the city) are slightly higher.

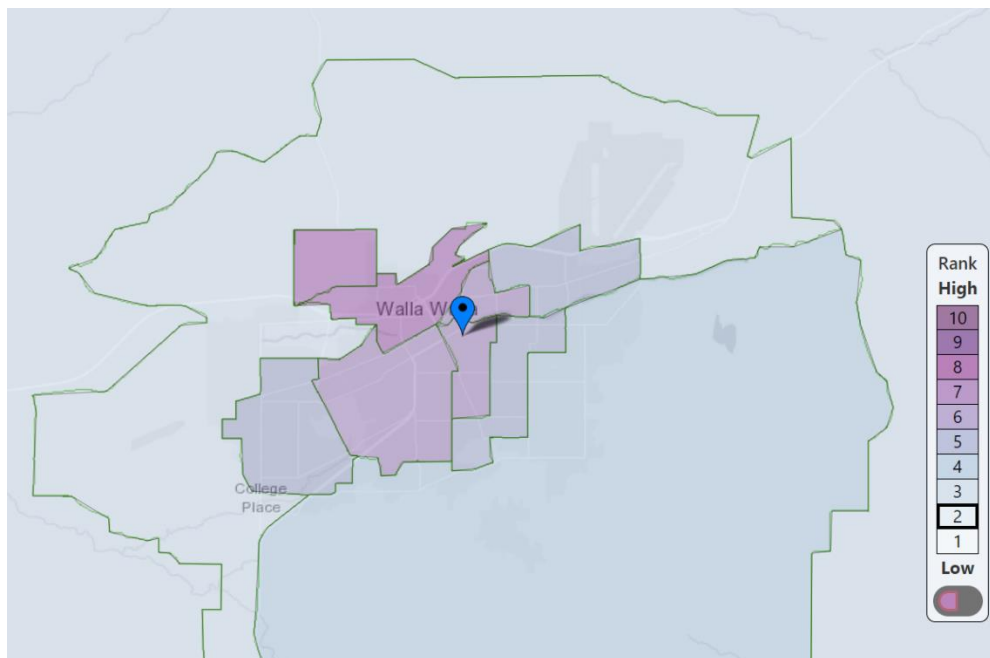


Figure 4. Socioeconomic Factors. Demonstrates the concentration of vulnerable populations in the area, such as those living below the poverty line, those without high school diplomas, and historically disadvantaged communities. Walla Walla's score is **high**, especially in the north-west area of the city.

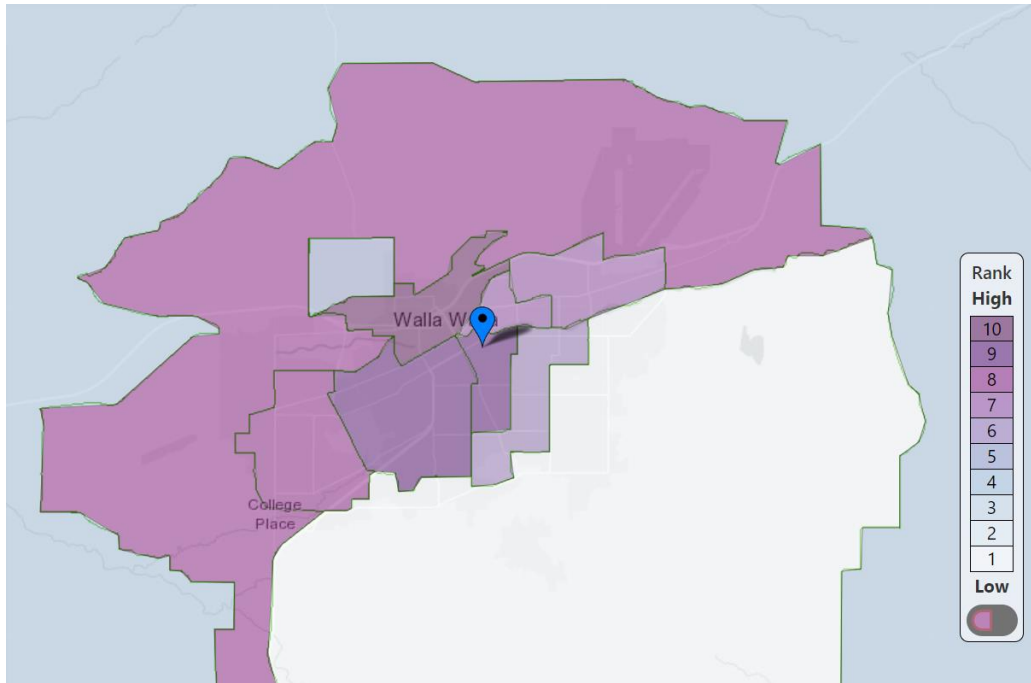
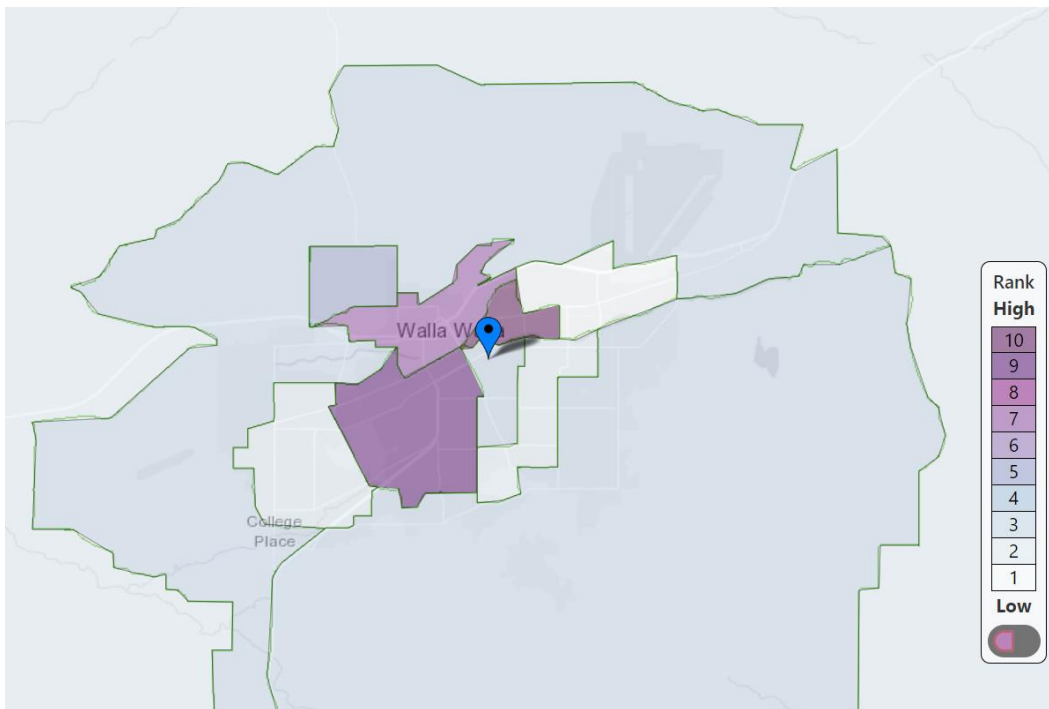


Figure 5. Sensitive Populations. Demonstrates populations at risk to cardiovascular disease and populations with low birthrates. The City of Walla Walla's score is **high** in the central area of the city and **medium-low** in areas outside the city center.



CDC SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

Identification and integration of social vulnerability into the climate element and vulnerability assessment process includes identifying characteristics that can make individuals more vulnerable to climate hazards. Social vulnerability is defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as characteristics of a person or group that affect their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a discrete and identifiable disaster in nature or society. Per the CDC, several socioeconomic factors and additional characteristics influence social vulnerability such as socioeconomic status and income, minority status and language, age, and health status.

In the City of Walla Walla, census tracts in the west and north areas of the city are reported by the CDC as having a high level of social vulnerability (Figure 1). These areas have higher percentages of socioeconomic determinants of vulnerability such as socioeconomic status (Figure 2), household characteristics (Figure 3), racial and ethnic minority status (Figure 4), and housing type and transportation (Figure 5).

Figure 1. CDC Social Vulnerability Index Overall Vulnerability

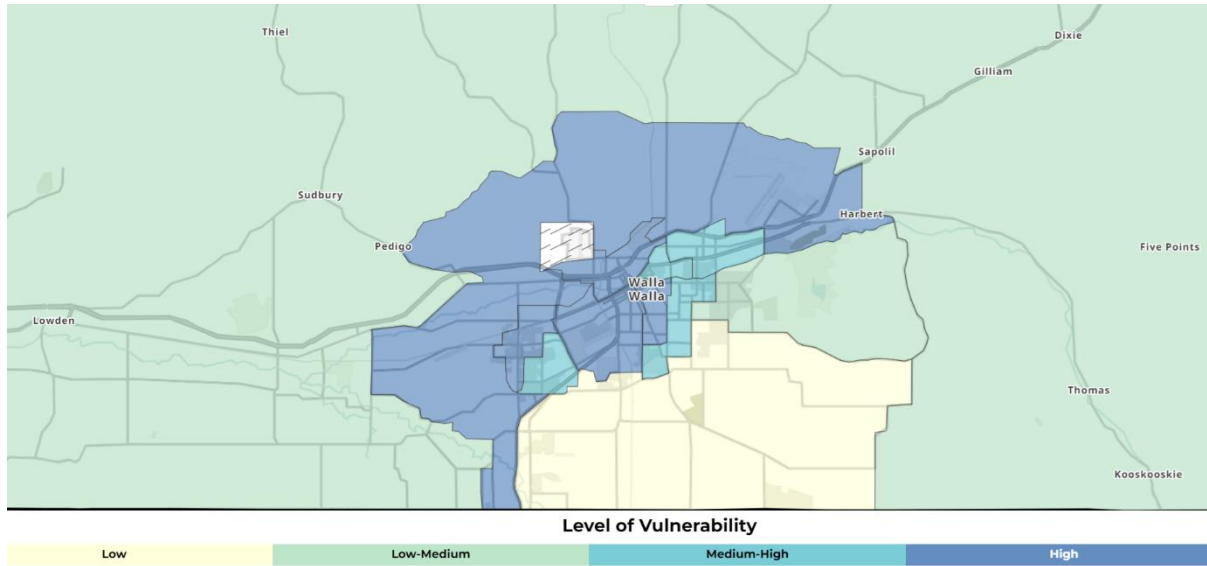


Figure 2. Socioeconomic Status includes indicators such as residents living below 150% poverty rate, unemployment, housing cost burden, education, and lack of health insurance.

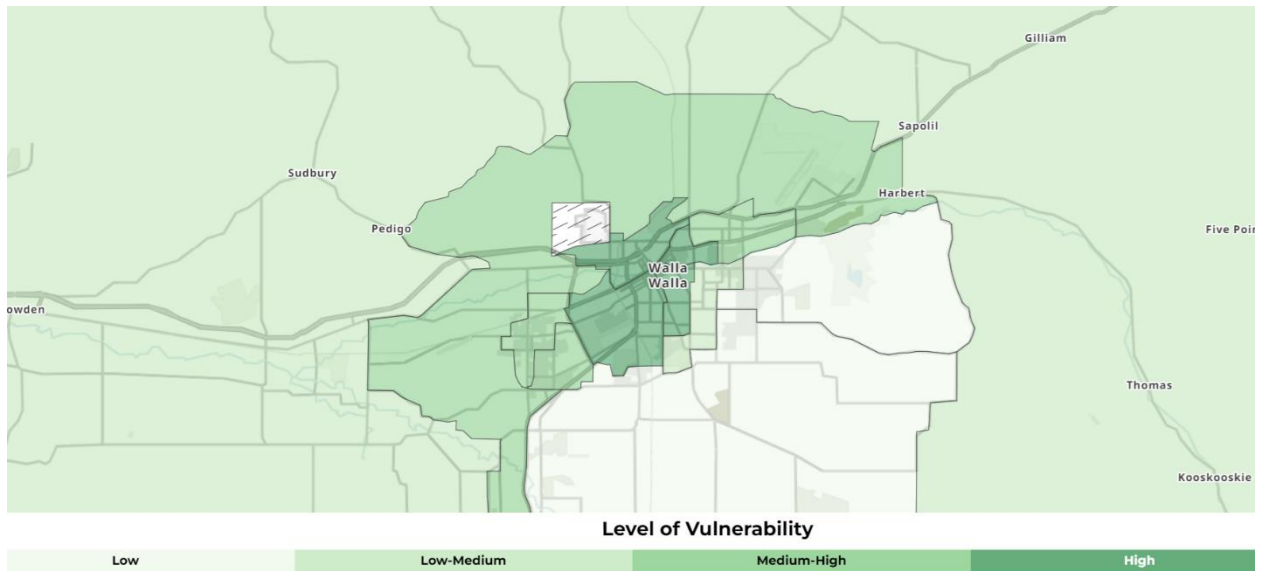


Figure 3. Household Characteristics includes indicators such as elderly, children, residents with a disability, single-parent households, and English language proficiency.

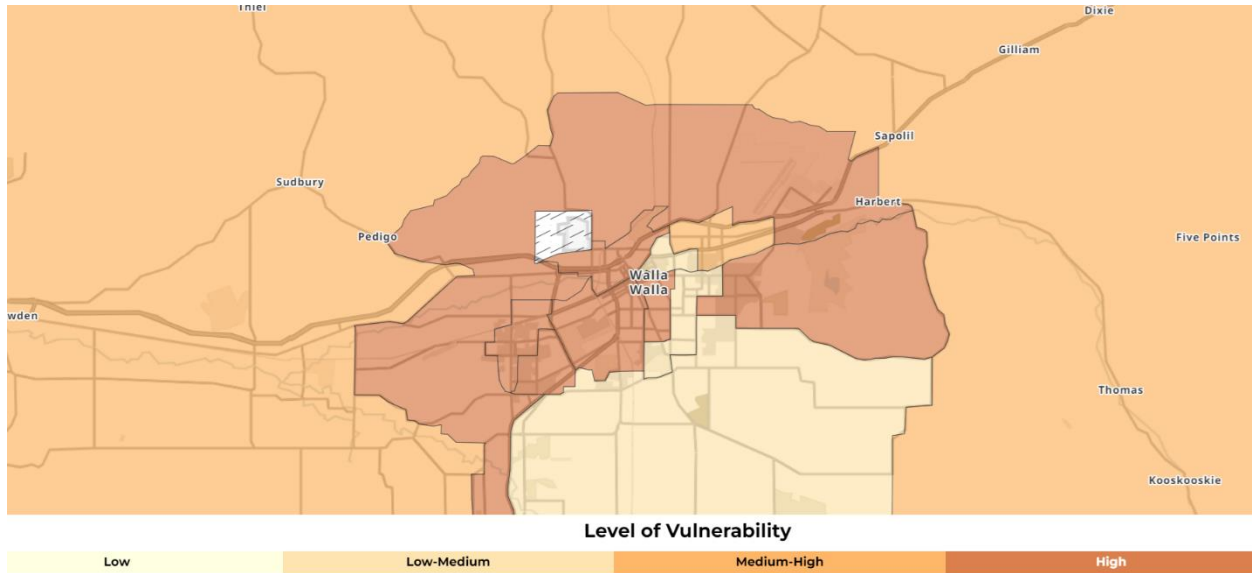


Figure 4. Racial & Ethnic Minority Status includes residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino (of any race); Black and African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Other Races.

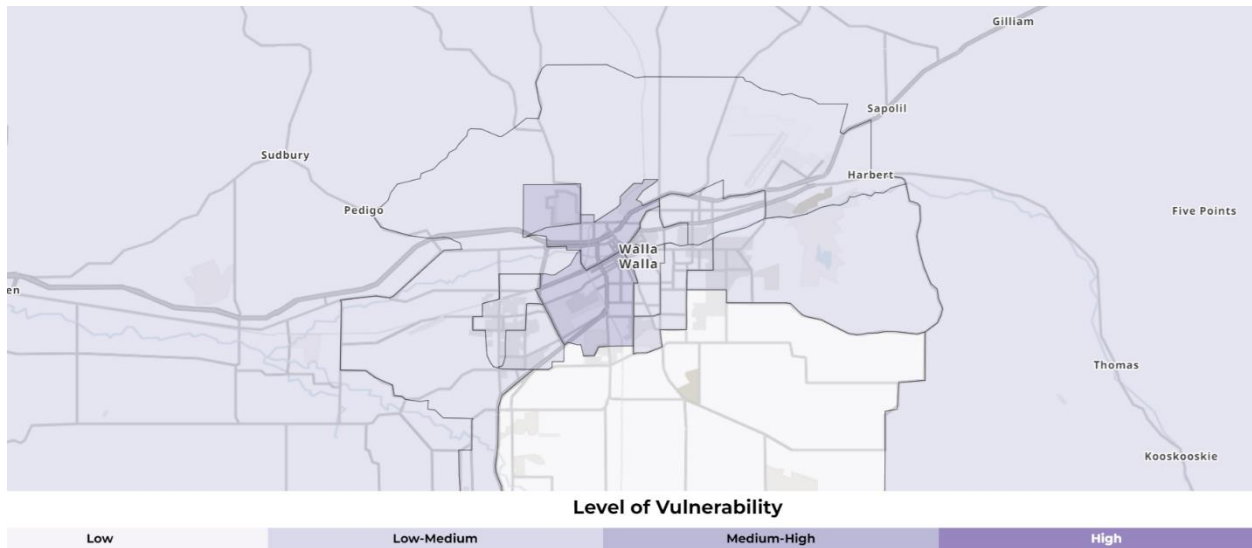
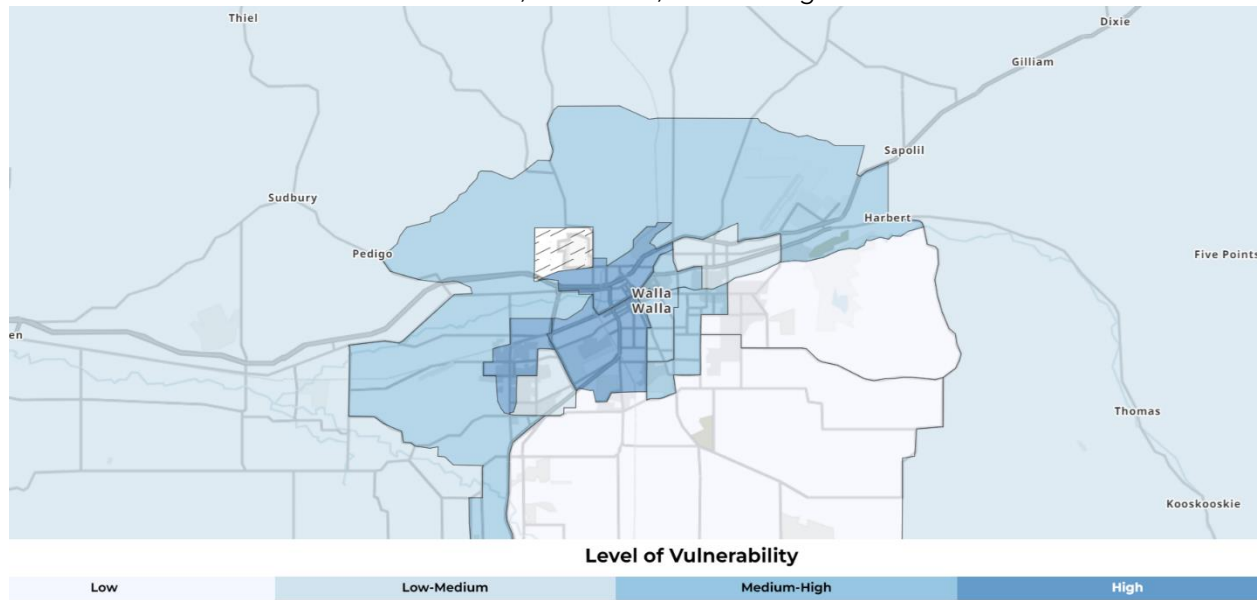


Figure 5. Housing Type & Transportation includes indicators such as multi-unit structures, mobile homes, no vehicle, or crowding.



Throughout the Climate Element development process, the consultant team will examine how socioeconomic stressors—such as poverty and inadequate housing—affect overburdened communities. These factors can exacerbate vulnerability when coupled with climate stressors, deepening societal inequities. By addressing this interplay, the consultant team aims to ensure that climate equity is a central focus of the Resilience Sub-Element. Additional analysis on social vulnerability in the City will be completed through the Climate Vulnerability Assessment, policy audit, and local engagement.