



Clark County Public Health Heat Watch Summary Report



INTRODUCTION

Extreme heat is the deadliest weather-related hazard in the United States. Washington summers are getting longer and hotter, and extreme heat waves are becoming more frequent. But the impacts of extreme heat are not evenly distributed. Location matters. Some communities and families are impacted by excessive heat more than others, and this can worsen health inequities.

People who live in historically disinvested neighborhoods, who have limited access to resources and green space, and those struggling with additional health issues are all at greater risk for impacts from extreme heat.

The Clark County Heat Watch provides a snapshot in time of how urban heat varies across neighborhoods in the county and how local landscape features affect temperature and humidity. The data in this summary report was collected on July 12, 2024, during a one-day event organized by Clark County Public Health with the support of more than 50 volunteers, local government partners and technical assistance from CAPA Strategies. This data can be used to inform community decision-making, guide plans to mitigate the impact of hotter summers, create more resilient communities and save lives.

For additional information and results from the Clark County 2024 Heat Watch, visit the [Clark County Public Health website](#).

RESULTS

Cities and more developed areas tend to be warmer than surrounding rural or less developed areas. These areas are referred to as [urban heat islands](#). Buildings, roads, and other paved surfaces with a lack of shade hold on to more heat than natural landscapes or areas with more trees. Communities of color are disproportionately located in neighborhoods with less green space, less shade, fewer parks and other amenities that are protective against the effects of high heat, making them more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.



In Clark County, areas with more buildings and development tend to be hotter during the afternoon. Industrial areas can also create pockets of higher heat near residential areas.

The hottest areas in the afternoon included most of the Vancouver area, including downtown, Orchards, Fourth Plain, and Fruit Valley. Washougal, downtown Camas, and downtown Battle Ground also had areas with higher temperatures.

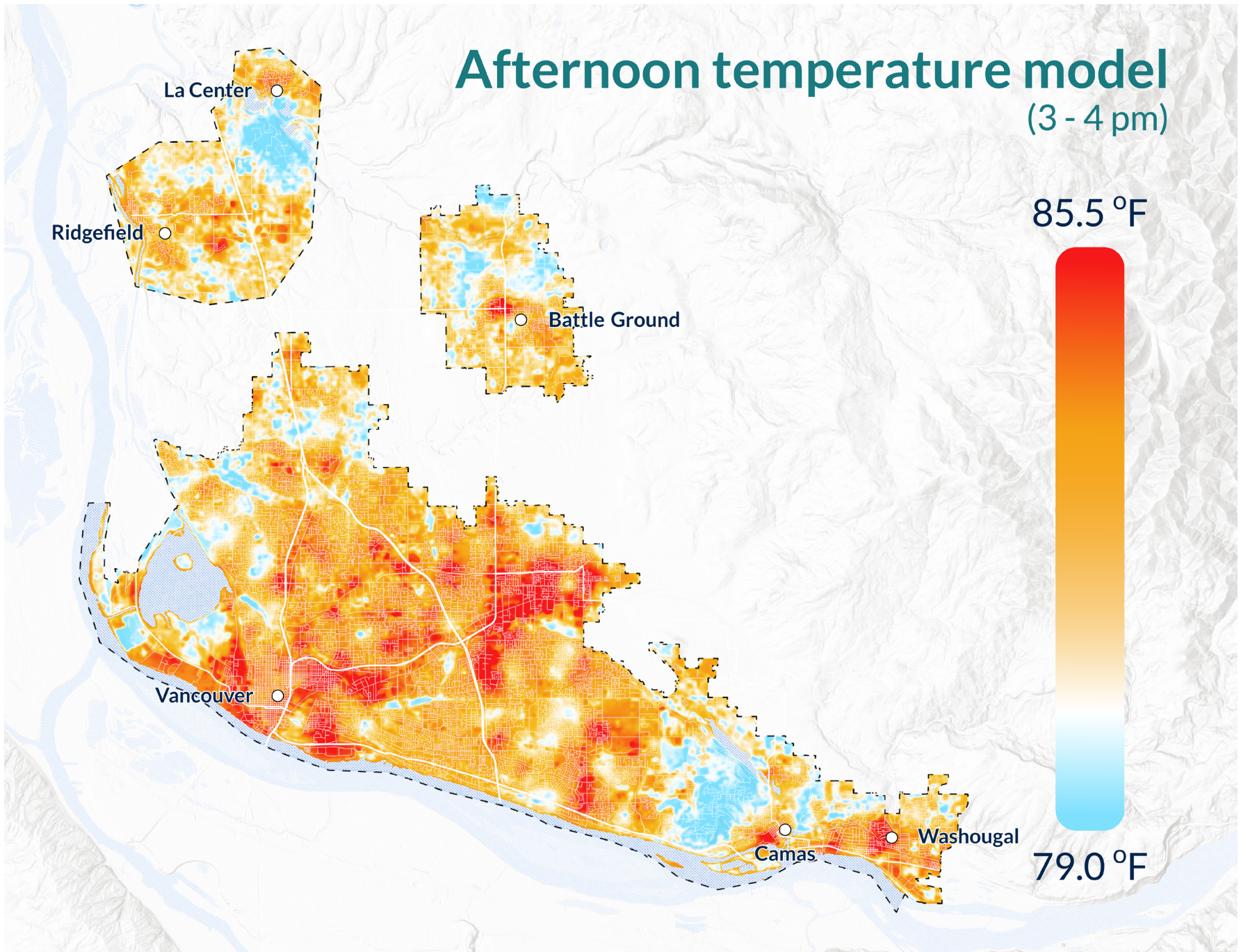
Afternoon temperature model

(3 - 4 pm)

85.5 °F



79.0 °F



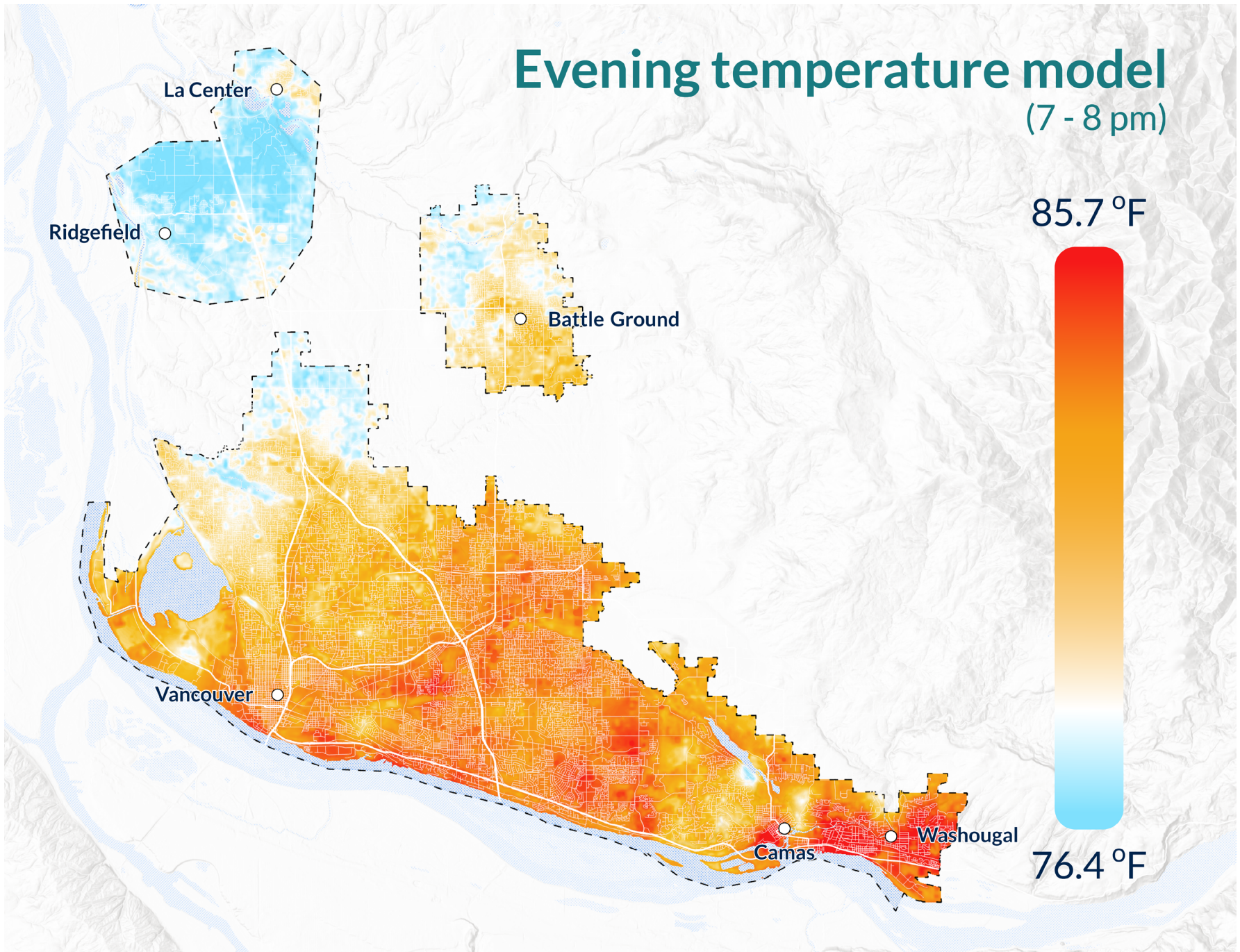
Evening temperature model

(7 - 8 pm)

85.7 °F



76.4 °F



Cooler places during the afternoon included west and central Camas, and places with more green and natural spaces, like [Burnt Bridge Creek Trail](#) area in Vancouver. Areas with parks and street trees can provide relief from heat in denser urban areas.

During the evening, there is nearly a 10-degree difference in temperature, depending on location. Hotter areas in the evening included Washougal, central and east Vancouver (especially Ogden, Bennington, and Fisher’s Landing East neighborhoods).

Ridgefield, La Center, northwestern Vancouver (Mount Vista, Felida, and Lake Shore neighborhoods), and northwest Battle Ground (Cherry Grove) appeared cooler in the evening.

Yacolt and Woodland heat data are not included in the modeling maps in this report because of their smaller area size. You can find heat data collected during the event for Yacolt and Woodland on [Clark County Public Health’s Heat Watch webpage](#).



There are some limitations of this project to keep in mind. Heat data was collected on one day in July 2024. We recommend data users focus more on the pattern of temperatures (hotter or cooler places) within each time period, rather than the actual temperatures measured at one point in time.

HOW HEAT IMPACTS HEALTH

- Heat-related illness, like heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke
- Impacts to mental health
- Pregnancy complications
- Heart and breathing problems





WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prepare for hot weather

- [Register for public alerts](#)
- Monitor local weather and [Heat Risk forecasts](#) during warm weather months
- [Plan for heat emergencies](#)

Take action

- Practice [hot weather safety](#)
- Know the symptoms of [heat-related illness](#) and get help
- Check on neighbors, especially [those most at risk of heat-related health illness](#), during hot weather
- Act to [reduce the severity of climate change](#)

Groups most impacted by heat

- Older adults
- Pregnant people
- People with existing health conditions or who take certain medications
- People living unsheltered or unhoused
- Infants and children
- People who exercise outdoors
- People living in urban heat islands or without access to air conditioning
- Outdoor workers

HOW THIS DATA WILL BE USED

Clark County Public Health plans to compare Heat Watch data with other maps that include information about the built environment, social factors, and [health inequities](#) to further identify opportunities to support local communities with heat adaptation and resiliency efforts.

How communities, organizations, and decision-makers can use this data

Heat maps can be used to inform the development and implementation of a range of cooling activities through land use, built environment, transportation, and community infrastructure policies and plans. The data can also be used to support grant applications, the development of extreme heat preparedness and response plans, and long-term climate action strategies.



Use this data when:

- Determining where to plant trees and increase vegetation/green spaces.
- Planning and designing infrastructure to include green roofs, [green stormwater](#), and [smart surface updates](#).
- Prioritizing where to add temporary or permanent shelters (e.g., cooling centers and covered bus stops).
- Advocating to preserve existing natural areas that provide respite from heat.
- Prioritizing equitable planning, [collaboration](#) and community engagement.
- Applying for energy-efficient upgrades and retrofits incentives (e.g., replacing oil and gas-based systems with heat pumps).

For more examples of community actions to reduce heat islands, visit the [Environmental Protection Agency Heat Island Community Actions database](#) and the Washington Department of Health's [Healthy Community Design and Climate Change](#).

Questions? Need help using this data? Email CCPHClimateAction@clark.wa.gov for questions, feedback, or to schedule a tutorial on how to use the maps.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Clark County Public Health extends its gratitude to the more than 50 volunteers from partnering community organizations and local government who made this project possible.

Partners and volunteers:

- Clark County Community Planning
- Clark County Council
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency (CRESA)
- Clark County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue (CCSO SAR)
- Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue
- City of Vancouver
- Fourth Plain Forward
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- PeaceHealth

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For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office:
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