



ReCAP reduces the risks

What does effective, equitable, and climate-informed municipal planning look like? The City of Calgary's new ReCAP report gives city planners the knowledge base to implement proven, evidence-based adaptations.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The City of Calgary is no stranger to extreme weather. The 2013 flood, the 2020 ice storms, and recent wildfire smoke exposure loom large for many Calgarians and are part of the new reality of more frequent and intense extreme weather events due to climate change. In 2021, the City of Calgary declared a climate emergency to galvanise the work needed to limit the degree of climate change and prepare for climate impacts.

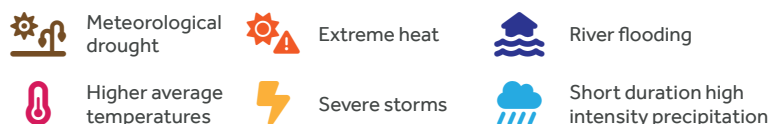
As the City prepared to act on their climate emergency declaration, they realized that not all residents experience climate risks equally: downtown Calgary faces very different risks compared to a riverside residential community or a low-lying industrial corridor. This means adaptation actions appropriate to one community may not work in another.

In considering how to use limited time and resources to efficiently support the unique needs of its diverse communities, the City commissioned a new report, *Recommendations for Climate Adaptation Planning* (ReCAP).

WHERE WE ARE NOW

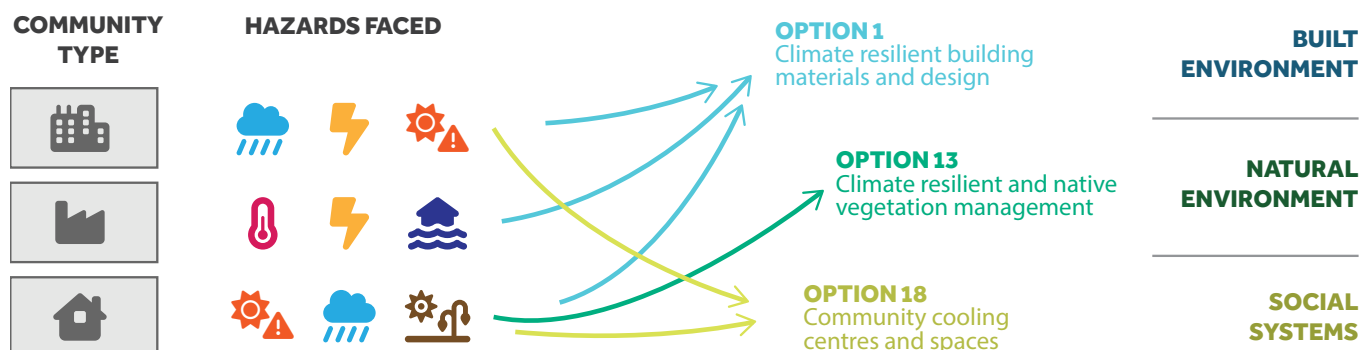
The ReCAP report is a well-researched summary of best practices for municipal climate adaptations. The report highlights the role of municipal planners in advancing community-level adaptation, informing planners on the effectiveness, barriers, costs, and implementation considerations of specific adaptation actions—what the report calls *Options*.

The report identifies six climate hazards impacting the City of Calgary.



Each Option—encompassing best practices for adaptation in the built environment, natural environment, and social systems—addresses one or more climate hazards.

FIGURE 1: An illustration of the ReCAP approach



CITY OF CALGARY

The City of Calgary sits on fertile land where two rivers meet, with the traditional names of Moh-kins-tsis, Wichispa Oyade, Otos-kwunee and Guts-ists'i - the land that has given so much to so many.

With a population of 1.3 million, Calgary is Canada's third largest municipality. It lies in the transitional area between the Rocky Mountain foothills and the prairies. With hundreds of head offices, Calgary is an economic hub for energy, telecommunications, financial services, film and television, transportation, aerospace, tourism, and more.

A leader in municipal climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives, the City of Calgary is guided by their *Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050* and the *2023-2026 Climate Implementation Plan*.





STRENGTHS OF THIS APPROACH

Focusing on co-benefits

The ReCAP report demonstrates how climate adaptation actions would promote other City objectives, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting equity-deserving groups. Highlighting the co-benefits of climate adaptation emphasizes that climate adaptation is not made at the expense of other priorities; climate adaptation both supports and gains from progress made on the City's other goals. This should encourage municipal decision-makers across multiple portfolios to support climate adaptation actions.

Examples of adoption

Risk averse decision-makers may hesitate to mobilize public investment for cutting-edge climate adaptation, out of fear of the blow back should a measure fail. To help reassure decision-makers, for each action, the ReCAP report includes examples of successful municipal implementation. Planners can easily learn from these examples, including which policy levers to engage, how incentives can be structured, and how programs can be monitored successfully.

NEXT STEPS

The City of Calgary recognizes that climate impacts are not felt equally across communities and that factors like location, community characteristics, and demographics can intersect and compound vulnerability to climate risks. In other words, some of the City's communities are likely to experience climate impacts worse than others.

For this reason, the ReCAP report takes an equity approach to climate adaptation planning. The report details which climate hazard each action addresses and how each action supports equitable engagement and outcomes.

With the ReCAP report in hand, the City is ready to prioritize the most impactful actions and to develop informed climate adaptation policies and incentives at multiple stages of city building, from land use planning, to development application review, to informing adaptation designs, to designing features for specific buildings, developments, and areas.

Equipped with this new resource, the City of Calgary is taking real steps to build a more climate resilient community.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

The Climate Resilience Capacity Building Program provides funding for Alberta municipalities and Indigenous communities to assess adaptation measures and to create climate resilience plans. The program is helping reduce negative impacts and leverage opportunities so Albertans can feel secure in their community's future.

This \$4.5 million program is funded by the Government of Alberta and designed and delivered by the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre, a partnership of:

