Policy Audit Summary

Purpose. This policy audit reviews the City of Royal City's existing planning documents, with emphasis on the Comprehensive Plan, to identify opportunities, gaps, and barriers related to the new climate resiliency requirements under Washington's Growth Management Act and HB 1181.

Primary climate hazards. The audit focuses on four hazards identified as most relevant to the City and its assets: drought, extreme heat, extreme precipitation, and wildfire smoke/air quality. These hazards affect water supply, agriculture, emergency services, public events, parks and open spaces, transportation corridors, housing, schools, ecosystems, public facilities, the regional economy, and industrial and trucking activity.

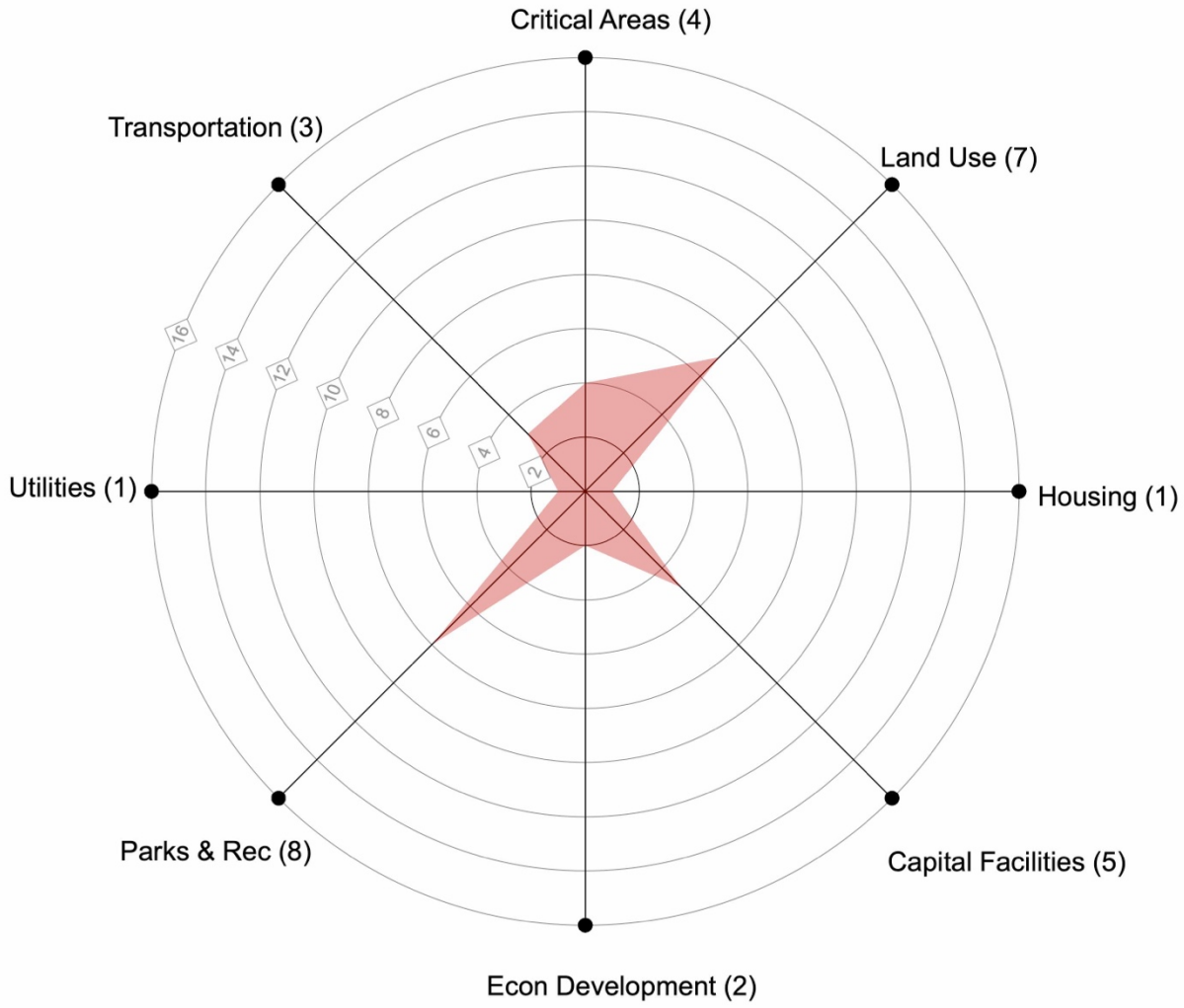
Existing policy strengths. The Comprehensive Plan already provides a foundation for resiliency. Drought-related policies address aquifer protection, water rights, water conservation, wellhead protection, water storage, and future water system improvements. Extreme precipitation policies address stormwater management, drainage level-of-service standards, flooding, erosion control, preservation of natural drainage areas, and requirements for road projects to meet stormwater standards. Extreme heat is addressed indirectly through green building practices, open space preservation, and tree preservation. Wildfire smoke and air quality are addressed indirectly through air quality maintenance, energy conservation, reduced vehicle emissions by encouraging sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, and transit access.

Key gaps and barriers. The strongest gaps are in hazard-specific implementation measures, especially for extreme heat and wildfire smoke. The plan does not yet establish explicit wildfire smoke response actions, clean-air shelter strategies, indoor air filtration standards, public health protocols for smoke events, or measures to ensure walking, biking, transit, parks, and public events remain safe and usable during extreme heat.

Broader implementation barriers include limited local funding, limited staff capacity, and the need for community buy-in.

Recommended next steps. Before drafting new resiliency policies, the City will complete a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment to evaluate current preparedness, identify the assets and populations most at risk, and prioritize measures that provide the greatest benefit with available resources. After that assessment, the City can draft and workshop new or revised policies for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan as a climate resiliency-focused element, ensuring the policies remain consistent with the community's vision while addressing the hazards with the greatest local impact.

See the following graph, identifying current strengths by policy count in the Comp Plan.



Each Comprehensive Plan element above is numbered by how many policies were found to address the 4 main climate hazards identified through the climate impact report. The graphic represents which element has the strongest resiliency built in already, and which could use additional supporting policy, if found to be a priority area of concern through the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment.