

# BRIEFING

Page 1 of 2

Item #5.2.3

**Utilities & Environmental Protection Briefing to**

**SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services**  
**2020 April 15**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED**  
**UCS2020-0424**

## **2019 Integrated Watershed Management Update**

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### **PURPOSE OF BRIEFING**

The City is committed to ensuring a resilient watershed to continue to make life better for Calgarians. The purpose of this briefing and attachments is to provide a summary of The City of Calgary's (The City's) integrated watershed management (IWM) initiatives and performance in 2019 and highlight planned actions for 2020. Through One Calgary, Calgarians reinforced how much they value healthy river areas, reliable, safe drinking water, and the management of their wastewater.

IWM is being achieved across four key goal areas: #1 protect our water supply; #2 use water wisely; #3 keep our rivers healthy; and #4 build resiliency to flooding. Council's decisions and significant investments over the past 30 years have helped ensure Calgary's water security despite population growth and a changing climate. The Water Utility continues to balance the impacts of city-building on water management through three lines of service: water treatment and supply, wastewater collection and treatment, and stormwater management.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The Water Utility takes a customer-focused approach to watershed resilience by working collaboratively across the Corporation, with Calgarians, other orders of government, regional municipalities, landowners, the development industry, and businesses through engagement, research, partnerships and education. More detailed information is provided in the attachments to this briefing note.

To protect Calgary's water supply, the Water Utility completed the One Calgary One Water Security Framework in 2019 with six key actions to ensure future water security. In 2020, the Water Utility will make progress on these key actions, including refining river modelling, participating in the Bow River Working Group's feasibility study of upstream reservoir options, and delivering the Source Water Protection Policy to Council. This policy will be presented in Q3 instead of Q2 due to shifting priorities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. To better prepare Calgary for future droughts, a Drought Risk and Vulnerability Assessment was completed. This will inform Phase 2 of the Drought Management Plan to be completed in 2020. The City also actively contributed to Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) conversations to ensure IWM priorities inform the development of the regional growth and servicing plans in 2020.

To encourage wise water use, the Water Utility is exploring new water conservation solutions for residential outdoor water use and for the business sector to keep Calgary on track to achieve water conservation targets. A business friendly program including water audits and a rebate initiative will be developed in 2020 to support large and small businesses to reduce operational costs and achieve water savings. To meet new Federal guidelines and ensure high drinking water quality for all customers, The City is accelerating the removal of a small remaining number of lead service lines by 2023.

# BRIEFING

To keep our rivers healthy, The City renewed its Approval to Operate for its wastewater treatment plants, optimizing operational efficiency while ensuring our commitment to a healthy river. Major upgrades to the Bonnybrook Wastewater Treatment Plant are on time and on budget. Upgrades will continue in 2020 and will accommodate future growth and protect the environment. Sediment loadings into the Bow River from stormwater remain below The City's benchmark, demonstrating the effectiveness of stormwater quality investments and pollution prevention programs. Stakeholder engagement was undertaken in 2019 to inform a new Stormwater Management Strategy being drafted in 2020 which will address stormwater and city-building challenges. Riparian health is also being improved, with 30 new natural infrastructure projects complete or underway to restore riparian health in areas used by fish and wildlife and make river banks more resilient to flooding. Progress on The City's riparian health target will be measured in 2020.

Working closely with communities to progress on key flood mitigation projects, advocating for upstream mitigation, and planning policy direction continue to be key focus areas in 2019 and 2020 to improve Calgary's resilience to river flooding (see UCS2020-0372).

The Water Utility's IWM work aligns with The City's Climate Resilience Strategy (Water Management and Natural Infrastructure themes) and is represented in the Climate Resilience Strategy Update 2019 (UCS2020-0308). IWM activities also tie into Resilient Calgary (Pillar #3 Natural Infrastructure and Pillar #4 Future-Ready Infrastructure). Advancing work across the four watershed management goals aligns with the One Calgary Council Directive stating that IWM is essential to protect public health and the environment, while strengthening resiliency to a changing climate, recognizing the importance of integrating watershed management into land use policies, plans and decisions while working collaboratively with stakeholders.

During the COVID-19 situation, the health and safety of citizens and employees remains a top priority. The Water Utility is prioritizing the delivery of essential services, and continues to move IWM initiatives forward, recognizing that there may be delays if resources need to pivot to ensure continuity of essential services. Some project stakeholder engagement and communication is being conducted through new avenues, including online meetings, town halls and other web-based feedback opportunities.

The City continues to treat, test and deliver high-quality water to customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, while working closely with partners and will continue to monitor the current situation to adjust work as needed. At this time, there is an increase in residential water use due to hand washing and more people being at home due to COVID-19. Conversely, there is a decrease in water use by businesses and industrial customers. Overall, water use in the city remains about the same.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – 2019 Integrated Watershed Management Snapshot – Demonstrating Value to Calgarians
2. Attachment 2 – 2019 Integrated Watershed Management Update