

BRIEFING

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Utilities & Environmental Protection Briefing to

SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services
2020 September 16

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
UCS2020-1005

Nose Creek Watershed Water Management Plan Implementation Update

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update to the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services (SPC on UCS) on the Nose Creek Watershed Water Management Plan (Plan). Council approved the Plan as a guidance document and planning tool on July 22, 2019 and directed Administration to report back no later than 2020 Q3 on implementation progress.

Nose Creek is an important natural feature on the landscape running from north of Crossfield and discharging within the City of Calgary boundary near Deerfoot trail. Nose Creek and adjacent lands provide recreational amenities to area residents including extensive adjacent pathways within Calgary. The main objectives of the Nose Creek Watershed Partnership (Partnership) are to protect riparian areas and manage stormwater with the goal of improving water quality in the watershed. Progress in 2019 / 2020 has been made in the following areas: science based predictive model development, ongoing development industry dialogue on stormwater management, Partnership governance and membership. More information is provided in the *supporting information* section. Project work is anticipated to continue through the end of 2020 and into 2021.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Partnership is an inter-municipal watershed stewardship group that formed in 1998, authorized by the Government of Alberta; providing the group legal standing. Members include: City of Calgary, City of Airdrie, Rocky View County, Calgary Airport Authority, Town of Crossfield and the Bow River Basin Council, which provides technical support.

The Partnership functions on an operating budget provided through annual member contributions and supplemented by project grants from external sources. Plan implementation remains focused on advancing a foundation for science-based decision making and formalizing a governance structure.

Plan Implementation Actions and Partnership Successes

- **Plan Implementation:** Develop a watershed-scale predictive model to understand the consequences of alternative management actions on hydrological / hydraulic, ecological, economic and social systems – to be completed through a multi-year and phased approach. Total project budget, for all phases of work, as estimated in the Phase 1 project report is \$1.6 million for the model development and \$1.3 million for establishing a monitoring program (over 3 years).
 - Phase 1 project work which included a model scoping study, data gap analysis and recommended data collection program was completed in July 2020.
 - The Partnership was successful in securing two grants through the Government of Alberta (unsigned at the date of this report), which will help cover the costs of Phase 2 work.

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- Phase 2 project work will include building the predictive model supported by the initiation of a data collection program. Work is anticipated to begin in Q4 2020.
- **Engagement:** The City continues dialogue with the development industry including the Building Industry Land Development (BILD) Calgary Region and the Commercial Real-Estate Development Association (NAOIP) to discuss ongoing challenges around runoff volume control targets. Meeting runoff volume control targets continues to be a challenge for the urban members of the Partnership due to the complexity of stormwater management in the watershed.
 - The City initiated a project in April 2020 to explore low energy control options for alternative operation of stormwater ponds. BILD's engagement on this work to date has been through terms of reference review. The City remains committed to working with partner municipalities and stakeholders on the common goal of improving watershed health. The City continues to work with the development industry on a case-by-case basis to minimize development approval delays in the Nose Creek Watershed due to runoff volume control target requirements.
- **Governance Review:** The City identified a governance gap with The Partnership and has taken steps to initiate a governance review which will be completed by the Partnership in 2021. The review will explore options to formalize the organizational structure and supporting legal framework, membership and sustainable funding options to ensure the operation and collaborative nature of The Partnership continues as the complexity of work increases
- **Membership:** In 2019 the Partnership welcomed The Town of Crossfield as a new member. Crossfield is located near the headwaters of Nose Creek and is an important member as decisions made by Crossfield could influence downstream municipalities.

The Plan identifies eight implementation goals, three of which are listed as short term: 1) *Watershed Condition Reporting*, 2) *Develop a hydraulic / hydrologic and water quality model*, and 3) *Develop and implement a standardized water monitoring program*. The Partnership is proud to report that two of the short-term goals are under development with the intention of initiating reporting once the monitoring program has been implemented and is generating data. The City will continue to participate in the activities of the Partnership and will provide further updates to SPC on UCS through the annual Integrated Watershed Management Update.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. None