

BRIEFING

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Item # 11.2

Operational Services Briefing to
Infrastructure and Planning Committee
2022 September 09

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Storm Pond Safety

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

This briefing provides Committee with an update on the progress to date and activities planned to enhance public safety at storm ponds.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

On 2021 March 16 Council provided two short and one long-term direction to enhance public safety at storm ponds. See Attachment #1

On 2021 December 21, Administration provided an update on the two short-term directions. See Attachment #2.

Work continues on a longer term program. The overall goal of the program is to ensure stormponds in Calgary are both functional for their intended purposes, inherently safe for all and a purposeful space which adds vibrancy for citizens to enjoy. The program includes five key projects that are ongoing and will be included as part of the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budget. Internal resourcing and consulting dollars to complete the following items of work are also included in the 2023-2026 Stormwater Management Service Plan.

1. Conduct safety assessment/audits of high-risk storm ponds located in Calgary.

As noted in Attachment 2, the methodology and findings of the initial public safety investigation resulted in thirty (30) Priority-One locations that will be the focus of a program of consulting work to achieve:

- detailed design reviews understanding the identified risks, unique features and design intent of each location,
- a full, physical site assessment to identify potential capital upgrades that could improve public safety,
- stakeholder engagement to better understand the opportunities and challenges in the community context, and
- a report for each site identifying the scope of public safety improvement options and associated budget requirements, including options to bundle the work to increase procurement and delivery efficiency.

2. Lead internal and external engagement on storm pond safety issues.

The activities under this program of work will align with the City of Calgary's Social Wellbeing Policy to ensure internal business units are speaking with One Voice on public safety at storm ponds and community needs can be incorporated into service delivery, educational programming and event response. This will be achieved through the following actions:

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- Administration will seek the advice, support, knowledge and experience of the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee in Fall of 2022
- Through partnering with the Innovation Lab, we will:
 - Conduct a series of engagements with key stakeholders and the public to understand the issues driving risky behaviours and issues surrounding storm ponds.
 - Prototype scalable solutions to increase safe behaviours and decrease inappropriate use at storm ponds.
 - Gain a better understanding of what educational tools and communication approaches would work for a broader public use.

3. Coordinate cross-corporation storm pond safety.

Creating One Voice for public safety at storm ponds starts with a meaningful dialogue with key stakeholder business units (Water Services, Calgary Fire Department, Parks and Open Spaces, Calgary Community Standards, Calgary Neighborhoods, Community Planning, City and Regional Planning, Customer Service and Communications) to:

- Share and fully understand the public safety issues surrounding storm ponds
- Explore how to improve processes between Business Units
- Outline roles in educational approaches and communications
- Take a public education first approach to bylaw compliance
- Improve coordination on issues/locations of concern
- Discuss areas of overlap or service gaps

4. Continue to refine and develop educational and communication tools.

Based on the outcomes of the engagement work, we will improve existing educational approaches and communications to develop a suite of tools to reach diverse and vulnerable populations. This work will consider social equity, cultural norms, age, gender and marginalized groups to ensure inclusive and citizen-focused approaches are adopted. It will also foster and build better community connections on sharing messaging of the risks associated with storm ponds. In addition, traditional and English-only print, media and digital media channels need to be expanded to reach audiences who do not speak English.

5. Address the planning and design of storm ponds.

As part of The City of Calgary's 2022 Stormwater Management and Design Manual update, a review is being conducted that compares storm pond design standards across eight (8) jurisdictions in Canada and the United States to identify specific public safety parameters that could be used to address health and safety concerns in the Calgary context.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Previous Council Direction
2. Attachment 2 – Administrative Memo 2021 December 21, Initial Findings on Public Safety Investigation into Storm Pond Safety