

**People, Innovation and Collaboration Services Briefing to
Regular Meeting of Council
2024 September 17**

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Update on Supports for Businesses Impacted by Bearspaw South Feeder Main Repairs

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this briefing is to provide Council with information on how Administration is supporting businesses that have been impacted by the Bearspaw South Feeder Main (“Feeder Main”) repairs.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Since the break in the Bearspaw South Feeder Main on June 5, 2024, Administration has been working with businesses to try to mitigate the impacts on business operations and customer access of the measures taken to repair the Feeder Main. Impacted businesses can be grouped into four main categories:

1. Businesses in Bowness and Montgomery who have experienced loss of business due to perceptions around access.
2. Businesses in Montgomery whose access has been impacted by the construction required to repair the Feeder Main.
3. Businesses whose operations were impacted by the declaration of Stage 4 restrictions on outdoor water use under the Water Utility Bylaw.
4. Businesses who adjusted their operations to comply with Administration’s request to reduce indoor water use by 25%.

While Administration is in regular contact with major water customers with respect to the request to reduce indoor water use, the main focus of our efforts has been on the first three categories.

Open For Business Campaign

In mid-June, The City launched an Open for Business campaign focused on Bowness and Montgomery to remind Calgarians that these businesses were still operating and needed support. This consisted of a targeted social media campaign, bold signs, and collateral for businesses and was implemented with the support of both the Bowness and Montgomery Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

Shortly after the announcement of the most recent repairs required to the Feeder Main, the campaign pivoted to “Stop Buy” Bowness and Montgomery. We created new visuals and bought additional social media and new bold signs throughout the neighbourhoods. This campaign is currently active. We will be working with the BIAs to measure the success of these campaigns later in Q3/Q4. Administration is also compiling a business directory and map that will be distributed at recreation facilities in the area throughout the busy fall season. This should be ready the week of September 16.

Mitigating Construction Impacts on Businesses

The Infrastructure Services’ Community & Business Relations team has been leading support for businesses whose access has been impacted by construction. The focus on the team’s work is to 1) connect with affected businesses through direct outreach to help them prepare for construction, and 2) to develop and implement a variety of tactics to help mitigate construction impacts on businesses operations and customer access

These tactics have included:

- Proactive alley grading to support customer access to parking via the alley
- Installation of temporary parking and loading zones installed for affected businesses
- Comprehensive business wayfinding strategy
- Custom business signs
- Digital “know before you go” materials for businesses to share with their customers
- Direct outreach (email and in-person)
- Direct outreach to affected businesses to develop plans for access and business continuity (e.g. temporary loading, temporary parking, temporary access)

The team is exploring post-construction activities that will help the local businesses recover.

Water Utility Bylaw Declaration Impacts

From June 5 – July 5, Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions were declared under the Water Utility Bylaw. Under Stage 4, no outdoor potable water use is allowed. The impacts to industries such as irrigation, landscaping and nurseries have been significant, with some businesses self-reporting as much as \$250,000 in losses as a result of cancelled contracts. There were also impacts to industries such as construction.

Administration has addressed some business impacts by providing stations where they can collect non-potable water from the Bow River to use in their operations. While the water itself and access to the filling stations are available for free, some businesses have had to invest in equipment to haul the water, and getting the water to their business operations is an additional time cost. While many businesses were able to innovate and generate some revenue following the June interruption, it has proven to be challenging to find work compliant with Stage 4 Outdoor Water Restrictions twice in one season.

Administration is currently collecting feedback from industry associations to determine how we can best support them now and into the future. There is also work underway to update Calgary’s Water Efficiency Plan, and early engagement with industry is focusing on opportunities to support and enable their long term resilience and sustainability with respect to water use. Administration will focus on helping businesses by supporting investments in landscapes and water-saving irrigation systems as we approach next year’s growing season.

Reducing Indoor Water Use

From the very beginning, business owners and associations have been open to collaborating with The City on innovative solutions and approaches to responding to the request to reduce their indoor water consumption. Thank you to all of those businesses who are doing their part as community members through this challenging time. Hotels, breweries, restaurants, salons, and car washes have all had to make adjustments to their operations, and we are very appreciative of their efforts.

Next Steps

Administration will continue to engage with the business community to identify how we can provide support through both the response and recovery phases of this major repair, with a focus on ensuring the long term resilience and sustainability of our business community. An updated Water Efficiency Plan and amendments to the Water Utility Bylaw that take into account learnings from the feeder main break are scheduled to come to Committee in Q1 2025.

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General Manager Doug Morgan and Chris Arthurs concur with the information in this Briefing.