

Chief Administrative Officer's Report to
Special Meeting of Council
2026 January 07

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
C2026-0045

Bearspaw South Feedermain Independent Review Panel – Final Report

PURPOSE

This cover report is provided to facilitate receipt for the Corporate Record of the Bearspaw South Feedermain Independent Review Panel: Final Report (Attachment 2).

The Independent Review Panel's Report ("Panel Report") offers a high-level management perspective. It complements the technical review and other reports by examining broader organizational practices, decision-making processes, and system resilience for The City's water utility.

This report places the Panel Report before Council for consideration and recommended direction. It does not interpret or restate the Panel's findings.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Council has received reports, briefings, and verbal updates regarding the Bearspaw South Feedermain since a rupture and service disruption occurred on 2024 June 5.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. Receive the Bearspaw South Feedermain Independent Panel's final report in Attachment 2 ("Panel Report") for the corporate record;
2. Direct Administration to return to Executive Committee on 2026 February 3 with an implementation plan and resource requirements; and
3. Commend and thank the Bearspaw South Feedermain Independent Panel's Chair and Panel members for contributing their considerable knowledge, experience and time toward significantly improving and advancing critical water, sanitary and wastewater services for Calgarians, businesses and regional customers.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

The Chief Administrative Officer approves this cover report to facilitate Council receipt of the Panel Report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Independent Review Panel ("The Panel") was established following the 2024 rupture of the Bearspaw South Feedermain.
- The Panel, comprised of external experts, operated independently of Council and Administration and created the attached report.
- The Panel provided a systems level assessment of management and governance practices that complement other technical reviews and reports.

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DISCUSSION

The City of Calgary owns, operates, and maintains a complex water utility system that is essential to public health, safety, economic activity, and community well-being. The system includes long-lived, high-consequence feeder mains and other critical assets whose performance depends not only on physical condition, but also on effective governance, risk awareness, and disciplined decision-making over time.

On 2024 June 5, a significant incident occurred involving the Bearspaw South Feedermain, resulting in service disruptions and emergency response measures. In response, The City initiated a forensic engineering report prepared by consulting engineers, addressing technical failure mechanisms and contributing physical factors associated with the feeder main rupture.

On 2025 December 30, a second feeder main rupture occurred on the Bearspaw South Feedermain at a different location.

Establishment of the Independent Panel

Chief Administrative Officer Duckworth initiated the establishment of an Independent Review Panel to conduct a management review recognizing that other technical reviews would not fully address questions related to organizational governance, management oversight, risk management, and system resilience.

Within an agreed upon high-level purpose, The Panel established its own mandate, enabling it to define its lines of inquiry and approach while remaining focused on governance, oversight, decision-making, and risk management related to The City's water utility.

The Panel examined:

- Governance and oversight structures for critical water infrastructure
- Management decision-making processes related to asset risk and resilience
- How risks were identified, communicated, and accepted at an organizational level
- Alignment between asset management practices, redundancy planning, and service expectations; and
- Consultant and technical reports that were commissioned by The City.

Independence and Review Design

To preserve independence and credibility, The Panel was structured to operate at arm's length from Administration, consistent with recognized best practices for reviews of complex, high-consequence systems. Independence was supported through structural separation, mandate clarity, and control by the Panel over its own inquiry.

The Panel consisted of six independent professionals, none of whom are or were City employees, with experience spanning executive leadership, infrastructure oversight, governance, risk management, and complex system operations. While Panel members bring technical and operational expertise, their collective role was limited to a systems-level

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assessment of management and governance practices, rather than technical or regulatory investigation.

Liaison Function

To support The Panel's independence while enabling effective access to information, the CAO delegated the work to the COO, who established the liaison role was established within the COO's office to be the conduit between Administration and The Panel.

The liaison's role was limited to facilitation and coordination, including:

- Managing document and information requests
- Coordinating interviews and briefings
- Supporting accurate and consistent transmission of factual information.

This structured interface was intended to promote transparency, avoid informal influence, and ensure The Panel's work was informed by complete and reliable information. The Panel Report should be read in the context of its defined mandate and in conjunction with the other completed reviews.

Administration Considerations

Administration will review the Panel Report and provide an Administrative report to Council with an implementation plan and resource requirements. Efforts to efficiently implement immediate next steps will occur. Administration acknowledges and commends The Panel, supporting team members, and consultants for their leadership and contributions to this comprehensive review and undertaking.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The report supports public transparency and oversight of essential water services.

Environmental

This management review aligns with an environmental lens by reinforcing governance of water, stormwater, and wastewater systems.

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Economic

The report supports economic resilience through improved oversight of budgeting and business planning for utility services.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

No anticipated financial impact from the Panel report itself. Resource requirements for implementation will be brought back to Council through Executive Committee.

RISK

The risks identified by The Panel are outlined in the attached report. Risk information associated with technical causes and engineering standards is addressed in the forensic investigation. This management review describes governance, operations, budgeting, and risk assurance frameworks used to support ongoing improvements.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Timeline
2. Bearspaw South Feedermain Independent Review Panel: Final Report
3. Administration Presentation
4. Independent Review Panel Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
CAO	CAO	Approve
COO	COO	Approve

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