

Demand Management in 2026

Near-term actions to deliver reliable water service, aligned with the Water Efficiency Plan

The City of Calgary uses demand management to balance available water supply and infrastructure capacity with community needs. Demand management includes seasonal monitoring and readiness, operational actions, public programming and communications that help reduce peak use and manage service risk during drought, infrastructure constraints and seasonal demand.

Demand-side management is also a key component of the Water Transformation Program, Administration's response to the Bearspaw South Feedermain Independent Review Panel's findings and recommendations. Demand-side management in 2026 is accelerating to ensure that programming, communications, education and incentives are deployed to drive commercial, residential, and regional water efficiency.

How demand management differs from water efficiency: Demand management addresses near-term service reliability risks – balancing supply, system capacity and demand when conditions change. Water efficiency is a longer-term approach that shifts how Calgary uses water over time so we can serve a growing city while protecting shared rivers and maintaining reliable service. Together, they support public and river health and city-building.

MANDATE AND OUTCOMES

Effectively deploy existing and new demand management tactics to support continuity of safe, reliable water services throughout upcoming construction projects and seasonal conditions.

What success looks like:

1. Strategies and tactics are developed and deployed in a timely and coordinated manner, maintaining continuity of safe and reliable water services during major constraints and capital projects.
2. Programs and tactics remain current and aligned with the updated Water Efficiency Plan (WEP).
3. The program team and resources can transition to support planned and emergency activations, when warranted.

MONITORING AND READINESS

- Monitoring and regional coordination: We monitor conditions across the regional watershed and water management system and coordinate internally and with major water users to support timely, consistent response.
- Readiness to act: We are prepared to recommend and implement actions internally and externally when indicators show increased risk to water service delivery.
- What we monitor:
 - Supply: snowpack, rain, reservoir levels, river flows, drought stage
 - System: water treatment plant capacity; distribution system capacity

- Demand: daily water demand; heat forecast, population growth

CITY OPERATIONS

- The City leads by example. When conditions require restrictions and increased conservation, City operations reduce non-essential water use, for example by reducing outdoor watering, reusing stormwater where feasible and adjusting mowing height. City facilities may pause non-essential activities like window washing, turn off outdoor decorative fountains, and limit fleet/vehicle washing to health and safety needs only.

COMMUNITY TOOLS AND PROGRAMS

- Public information campaigns support indoor and outdoor water-wise habits year-round (e.g., Fix-a-Leak, YardSmart, indoor water-wise habits).
- Incentives and supports help Calgarians reduce outdoor water use (e.g., rain barrel rebates).
- Outdoor water restrictions (Stages 1-4), if warranted: communications and bylaw enforcement readiness are maintained for quick activation. Additional water efficiency supports to Calgarians (e.g., leak-fix supports; fixture upgrades, indoor water use prompts).

BUSINESS TOOLS AND PROGRAMS

- Business-facing resources on calgary.ca and sector-specific guidance support water-wise operations.
- New for 2026 (in development / pending approvals): business water audit supports and targeted incentives.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications and public education run year-round and are elevated when conditions require increased action or change in habits, with a focus on shared responsibility for a shared resource.
- During major system events, outreach is scaled up through education, partnerships and community presence.
- Primary channels include calgary.ca, media and social, utility bills, community events, partner channels and direct community communications as needed.
- Key water-use metrics are tracked via the [C&E Public Dashboard](#) and the [WS Potable Water Demand Dashboard](#).

HOW 2026 DEMAND MANAGEMENT CONNECTS TO THE UPDATED WATER EFFICIENCY PLAN

- The Water Efficiency Plan has been under development since 2024, guided by the 2023 Drought Resilience Plan, to modernize Calgary's approach to protecting shared rivers and securing long term water reliability.
- The Plan establishes a long-term vision to 2050, a goal to 2040, and a 2026–2030 action plan that guides near term programs, policies, and tools.

- In 2026, select Water Efficiency Plan actions are being accelerated through the Water Transformation Program to reduce system pressure during construction and transition periods and lower the likelihood and severity of service disruptions.
- Where appropriate, actions from the 2026 Demand Management program will be sustained at a pace and scale to meet the objectives of the Water Efficiency Plan.



2026 Demand Management Accelerates the New WEP

