

Utilities & Environmental Protection Report to  
SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services  
2019 June 19

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
UCS2019-0805

## Summary of Integrated Watershed Management Interactive Exercise Discussions

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to summarize the discussion themes that took place during the closed session of the 2019 May 13 Strategic Meeting of Council. Water Resources hosted this session to foster a more collaborative dialogue between Council and Administration on integrated watershed management (IWM) issues facing Calgary. The session was designed to meet Council's goal that Strategic Meetings allow for more interactive, frank conversations about medium to long term challenges for The City (C2019-0124).

On 2019 May 13, Council had an in-depth discussion with external and internal subject matter experts on 1) water supply and security, and 2) stormwater and city-building. Councillors also participated in two interactive exercises intended to build foundational knowledge of these two topics. The exercises were designed to allow for conceptual conversations. The results of the discussions are not meant to inform decision-making or to provide specific direction. Rather, the intent was to have Councillors think about the integrated nature of these issues when considering water management in city-building through this learning experience. As a result, Administration had the opportunity to hear what is important to Council on these integrated watershed management topics.

The conceptual exercises took place in closed session so that Council could have an open dialogue about sensitive matters involving regional growth and servicing, inter-governmental relations, and financial implications. The Attachment to this report summarizes the discussion themes held during these closed-session, conceptual exercises for validation by Council and recommends public release of Attachment 1.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

- 1.) That the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services recommend that Council validate the content in Attachment 1 of this report and direct that Attachment 1 remain confidential pursuant to sections 21, 24 and 25 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* until Council rises and reports.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2018 May 13, a Strategic Meeting of Council (C2019-0648) was facilitated on Integrated Watershed Management with three recommendations relating to this report:

- (1) That Council, using today's discussion as input, direct Administration to provide an update to Council with short and long-term recommendations, through the SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services, on The City of Calgary's Water Security Strategy no later than Q4 2019.
- (1) Direct that the closed meeting discussion related to the two interactive exercises be consolidated and return through the SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services, to Council, for validation by 2019 Q2.
- (4) Direct that the discussion in the closed meeting remain confidential pursuant to sections 21 (disclosure harmful to intergovernmental relations), 24 (advice from officials) and 25 (disclosure harmful to economic and interests of a public body) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## **Summary of Integrated Watershed Management Interactive Exercise Discussions**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Bow River watershed is a natural system interacting with our built environment. Activities within Calgary and upstream of our city influence river flows, river health, water quality downstream, and the many users that depend on the watershed. This interconnectedness must be considered when working together on city-building and watershed management, and is a key driver for IWM. The 2019 May 13 meeting was an opportunity for an in-depth discussion on IWM as it relates to Council's One Calgary Directive to achieve future water security and a sustainable water supply, as well as integrating watershed management into land use decisions. The session intended to explore IWM key issues through an open-ended dialogue and interactive experience as directed by Council for Strategic Meetings.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

Two interactive exercises aimed to build Council's awareness of these two pressing watershed management issues for Calgary. The intent was to have Councillors think about the integrated nature of these issues as city-builders. The discussion themes provided insights without presupposing solutions for Calgary's most pressing watershed management issues. Below are the key recurring themes heard during the exercise discussions.

#### **Water supply and security**

During this exercise, Councillors worked through water security concepts to address water supply and demand for customers and expressed what is important to them for ensuring water security. The top five themes consolidated during the conversation included:

1. Invest significantly in infrastructure, with a priority on upstream storage to secure future supply.
2. Pursue additional water conservation and education options for citizens.
3. Recognize the importance of urban planning principles in water conservation.
4. Be proactive in policy and practices The City and citizens have control over.
5. Collaborate with stakeholders towards policy solutions around water supply and licencing.

#### **Stormwater and city-building**

In this exercise, Councillors experienced the complexities of managing an established community and building a new community with stormwater as a primary consideration. The five recurring themes consolidated during this conversation included:

1. Create space for stormwater solutions as natural community amenities.
2. Develop a strong foundation of urban planning policy that integrates stormwater management.
3. Take the opportunity to build differently to meet density goals and reach stormwater management goals.
4. Couple stormwater quality improvements with infrastructure investments.
5. Support private sector solutions for infrastructure upgrades and maintenance.

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### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

The Water Utility engaged with Intergovernmental & Corporate Strategy, Environmental & Safety Management, and Resilience & Infrastructure Calgary to build content for the IWM Strategic Meeting of Council. We included external speakers to hear from and engage with outside expertise, and shared content with the development industry through BILD in advance of the meeting. Through interactive dialogue, the intent of the session was to build awareness around water management, as it relates to climate change, city-building, regional relations, and customer impacts.

### **Strategic Alignment**

On 2019 January 28, Council asked that Strategic Meetings allow for more interactive, thoughtful, open-ended conversations about medium to long term challenges unconstrained by Administrative recommendations or the need to make final decisions (C2019-0124). In response to this direction, the 2019 May 13 Strategic Meeting including interactive exercises to encourage collaborative dialogue between Council and Administration on key watershed management issues facing Calgary. Providing Council with a forum for strategic conversation and promoting enhanced direction to Administration contributes to the identified Council Priority of A Well-Run City.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Sustainable management of water is critical to city-building and healthy watersheds. An IWM approach to Calgary's water resources helps minimize risks to Calgary's water supply, ensure public health and safety, reduce risk to property from flooding, and contribute to economic and community resiliency.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

Program initiatives to achieve IWM planning goals are incorporated in the 2019-2022 Utilities budget.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

Program initiatives to achieve IWM planning goals are incorporated in the 2019-2022 Utilities budget.

### **Risk Assessment**

Strategic Meetings of Council help to build knowledge and awareness to shape strategic decisions. The IWM Strategic Meeting provided an opportunity to share with Administration what is important to Councillors on key watershed management topics. Without this collaborative conversation, there is a risk of not building the foundational knowledge and common understanding on the integrated nature of these issues when making important decisions in water management and city-building.

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**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):** This report and Attachment 1 are provided for Council's validation and public release as an output and follow up to the 2019 May 13 Strategic Meeting on IWM.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – Summary of Council discussions during the interactive exercises at the 13 May 2019 Strategic Meeting of Council on Integrated Watershed Management -  
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