
Municipal Inspection of the City of Calgary

Into the Governance and Management of the Bearspaw South Feeder Main

How we got here

The City of Calgary experienced two catastrophic failures of the Bearspaw South Feeder Main (BPSFM) in less than two years. The first failure occurred on June 5, 2024, and resulted in extended periods of water restrictions for Calgary residents. On December 30, 2025, the City of Calgary experienced a second major break to the Bearspaw South Feeder Main (BPSFM), activating the city's emergency operations centre and municipal emergency plan. The city implemented Stage 4 water restrictions while repairs were undertaken in January 2026 and has announced further repairs and water restrictions again began on March 9, 2026, which will last approximately four weeks.

The Government of Alberta recognizes the serious nature of the impacts of this situation for the City of Calgary and surrounding communities, especially considering the necessity of water for public health and safety. The province acknowledges that city council is working to improve the situation but remains concerned with the governance and administrative issues that may have contributed to these failures. This is why the Honourable Dan Williams, Minister of Municipal Affairs, has decided to order this inspection, as an additional oversight measure to ensure the good governance and management of Calgary's water system.

What is a municipal inspection?

Municipalities have broad authority and autonomy under the *Municipal Government Act*. Councils have the powers necessary to develop and maintain safe and viable communities, balanced by their accountability to the citizens who elect them.

In rare instances where significant concerns arise, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has authority to intervene in the overall administration and/or governance of a municipality through a municipal inspection.

A municipal inspection is an investigation ordered by the Minister of Municipal Affairs that may look at any issues or concerns within the municipality to ensure council and administration are acting appropriately.

Who is the inspector?

David Goldie is an independent consultant and corporate director with over 40 years of experience in the energy industry. He served as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Alberta Energy Regulator from 2020 to 2024 and currently serves on the Board of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Since 2016, Mr. Goldie has led Orelia Consulting Ltd., providing strategic advisory services to energy companies. Previously, he held Vice-President roles at Encana and Cenovus Energy (2002–2016) across exploration, strategy, operations, and international business development, and prior roles at PanCanadian Petroleum and Imperial Oil/Exxon. He holds a B.Sc. in Geophysics from the University of Waterloo, an MBA from the University of Calgary, and the ICD.D. designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors.

What is the scope of the inspection?

The inspector has been given a mandate to examine the following matters:

- records provided by the City of Calgary to the Minister including the findings from previous reports published by independent review panels on the Bearspaw South Feeder Main (BPSFM), to:
 - evaluate the implementation of recommendations that addressed underlying causes of BPSFM failures;
 - assess whether findings and recommendations of any previous reports were acted upon;

- review current and historical information flow between operational staff, senior administration, external contractors, municipal council, and any other relevant parties;
- review decision making timelines, including when issues were identified, escalated, acted upon, or deferred;
- review risk assessment and reporting processes, including how risks were communicated and monitored;
- review internal controls, policies and oversight mechanisms, and whether they were adequate to identify or prevent the failure;
- review accountability structures, including clarity of authority, delegation, and supervisory responsibility; and
- roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in governance, management, and oversight of BPSFM;
 - the division of roles, duties and responsibilities of city staff and council since the 2004 McKnight Boulevard feeder main break and subsequent risk analysis;
 - review decisions by City of Calgary council, council committees, and administration,
 - review coordination and communication between city administration and engineering contractors;
- identify systemic or isolated obstacles to corrective actions of the management of the BPSFM, if any;
- develop recommendations for future governance and/or administrative improvements for the City of Calgary, including information-handling practices, escalation protocols, and oversight frameworks.

As part of the inspection, the inspector has the authority to inspect any other matters or issues that he determines to be necessary to prepare the inspection report.

What are the next steps?

Mr. Goldie will begin his work right away. An inspection can take between 6 and 18 months, however this review is expected to be completed by December 2026. The inspector may review the municipality's council meetings, bylaws, finances, and other documents. In addition, the inspector may interview anyone they feel is necessary.

Once the inspection process is finished, a report is presented to council and residents in an open meeting to help the public understand the inspection results. The Government of Alberta will notify the public when this step is nearing.

If because of the inspection, the Minister considers that the municipality is managed in an irregular, improper, or improvident manner, the Minister may order the council and administration to take any actions necessary to fix problems found during the inspection. Completed municipal inspection reports can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-inspection-reports>.