



Thursday » January  
29 » 2009

## Council has plenty of projects to pitch

**Kim Guttormson**

Calgary Herald

*Thursday, January 29, 2009*

Aldermen are already lining up with projects they'd like to see built with new federal infrastructure money, but it's likely to be a month before the city is in a position to talk details.

Mayor Dave Bronconnier said calls are in to various federal ministries to clarify the guidelines surrounding the \$12 billion that will be available to communities across Canada.

That will be followed by discussions with the province, the mayor said, because all three levels of government will have to contribute money.

"There is high interest from members of council and others on how to spend it," Bronconnier said of the estimated \$350 million that could flow to Calgary over the next two years. "There will be no grass growing under our feet.

"I'd like to be in a position to spend it tomorrow, but in reality it's probably a month away."

Ald. Gord Lowe, chairman of the finance committee, said much will depend on how the federal government defines a new project.

If it excludes projects the city has already set money aside for--such as the west leg of the LRT--there would be a gap before the city would be ready to move ahead on others on the books, Lowe said.

"The easiest possible way would be to let us reprofile the money," he added.

Any new infrastructure, he pointed out, requires months of pre-design work before physical construction can begin.

Conservative MP Brian Jean, the parliamentary secretary for infrastructure, said the government wants to see construction on the funded projects begin as quickly as possible.

The working definition, he said, of what will be eligible, "is a new project that doesn't have a shovel in the ground."

Transit projects would be viewed favourably by the government, he added.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart said she's confident the federal government will make sure the funding flows quickly to municipalities.

"Traditionally the government is slow with red tape relating to money," said Colley-Urquhart, who has a few ideas about where the money should be spent. "I think with the pressure we're facing with the economic downturn, there's a real desire to fast

track that like never before."

The city will also have to come up with a portion of the funding, and council will need to decide where it finds the cash.

But many believe they must take advantage of the program.

"If there's money to be had, we can't afford not to do it,"Ald. Ray Jones said, joking that is especially true if desperately needed projects in his ward make the cut. "We'll find ways to get the money."

kguttormson@theherald.canwest.com

© The Calgary Herald 2009

CLOSE WINDOW

---

Copyright © 2009 CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#). All rights reserved.  
CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#). All rights reserved.