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City may draw funds from art program

By [SHAWN LOGAN](#)

Siphoning funds from the city's pricey public art program could be a tool to pay for a controversial pedestrian bridge, says a Calgary alderman.

Ald. Jim Stevenson said with the city struggling to pay for infrastructure, it needs to take a much closer look at its public art policy requiring 1% of every project over \$1 million to be used to finance esthetics, a program now being reviewed in light of the stagnant economy.



Stevenson said with the city planning to spend at least \$16 million on public art during the next three years, reductions make sense.

He said it could be used to help cover the costs of a \$25-million iconic pedestrian bridge over the Bow River. "My indications have been that they're supposed to spend all of that money on that project one way or another and I don't like that because what it means (is) they have an obligation to figure out the most expensive project rather than the best project," Stevenson said.

"If that money can be pooled, then they can take excess money from some of these projects and maybe use it for something like the bridge over the Bow River."

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart called for a review of the policy during November's budget talks and said council needs to put the entire process under the microscope.

"This is really out of control," she said.

"People are having a hard enough time putting food in their mouths and we're blowing this money on art."