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## Speed fine revenue could end up in city coffers: alderman

By **BILL KAUFMANN, CALGARY SUN**

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The city will review the policy of speed camera fine revenue going into police coffers, an alderman said Tuesday.

Last Thursday, the Calgary Police Commission voted unanimously to re-examine the practise, including potentially having all funds collected by enforcement cameras going straight into the city's general revenues, said Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart.

Driving that decision was the impression police employ the technology as a cash cow for the force, said the alderman, who sits on the commission.

"There's always the question of 'what's your motivation?'" she said.

"It should be at arm's length."

At the same meeting, the commission agreed to divert \$2 million of a \$3.2 million surplus in year-end ticket revenue to city coffers to offset increases to property taxes.

The remainder goes into the police force's so-called pay-as-you-go fund used for capital procurement.

Colley-Urquhart said in the past five years, money collected from traffic enforcement cameras has increased from \$16 million a year to \$32 million.

Money yielded from technology like the speed-on-green cameras goes to the province, which then funnels back the lion's share to the city police force.

Colley-Urquhart questioned whether the cameras have a significant impact on driving habits.

Early numbers tracking the speed on green cameras suggest they're not slowing down Calgarians.

"As long as people are going to drive, they're going to speed," she said, adding she has no qualms about employing even more road cameras.

She's not bothered by possible accusations the fines would then simply be viewed as a cash cow for the city rather directly for police.

"That perception of police self-interest is more important to me," she said.

"I want the police budget to be solely millrate-supported."

Fellow commission member Ald. John Mar agreed, citing optics that hurt police.

"It would take some of the pressure off the service members," he said, adding he doubts the change would reduce the number of tickets issued.

"It's based on driver behaviour ... once it's changed drivers aren't going to notice."

Police have consistently argued the high-tech enforcement is for safety purposes.

Colley-Urquhart said she hopes the review is completed before the end of the year, in time for crafting the next three-year budget plan.

"There needs to be a risk analysis — it could come down against change," she said.

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