

Calgary inching towards \$500,000 tow truck proposal

BY JASON MARKUSOFF, CALGARY HERALD NOVEMBER 2, 2009

CALGARY - Calgary council took tentative steps towards having tow trucks on standby on key city highways, a proposal which could add a half-million dollars to the cash-strapped city's budget.

"Which to me, is just a drop in the bucket when it comes to keeping people moving on these major thoroughfares," said Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, who led council's push Monday to have city staff investigate the long-discussed standby program.

By December, aldermen will consider an administration report that suggests the top four or five pressure points the private tow trucks would wait, and exactly how such a program would work and be paid for.

Colley-Urquhart said such a program is long overdue, following a 2005 pilot project during the traffic snarls caused by construction of the Glenmore Trail-Elbow Drive interchange.

However, many aldermen have concerns about the costs of paying trucks to be at the city's ready.

Ald. Ric McIver expressed hope that much of the tab — which a city manager said would run \$400,000 to \$500,000 annually — could be recouped by tow fees.

Some members also had questions about why the city should pay for trucks handling accidents on Deerfoot Trail and the ring road, when both are provincial roads, not city-owned ones.

Colley-Urquhart, however, argued that these are Calgary drivers, no matter who manages the highways.

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