

CONSTABLE ALMOST RUN DOWN



Mikael Kjellström, Calgary Herald

Calgary police Const. Steve Walker escaped serious injury on Thursday night when a car swerved toward him, ran over his foot and knocked him to the ground. Walker was attempting a traffic stop on 9th Avenue S.E. in full reflective gear when the car veered toward him. The two male occupants of the vehicle have not been caught.

City ponders levy for inner-city projects

COLETTE DERWORIZ
CALGARY HERALD

The city wants to bring in a redevelopment levy for utility improvements — such as water and sewer lines — that could add thousands of dollars to every project built in or around the downtown core.

Aldermen on the land use, planning and transportation committee will decide Wednesday whether to go ahead with the levy in centre city, which includes downtown Calgary and the Beltline.

The redevelopment levy — similar to one brought in last year that added about \$2,500 to every home built in new subdivisions — would be used to upgrade water and sewer mains.

Fees in the inner city would be based on how many metres of the property are along the street.

There would also be separate levies to pay for nearly \$100 million in capital projects — such

as transit buses, fire stations and libraries.

Ald. Madeleine King said she has concerns over the levy.

"If you are just building a new house in the inner city, we shouldn't be doing redevelopment levies because there's no new amenities required," she said, noting everyone who builds a new home in the area would have to pay under the proposed bylaw.

King said the lot levies in the suburbs came about because the city discovered established communities were subsidizing the cost of new subdivisions.

"I can't see the logic in making inner-city property development more expensive," she said. "We need as many people to live in the established communities as possible in order to be environmentally sustainable and financially prudent."

But the director of development and building approvals said the levy is necessary given

the amount of redevelopment in the inner city.

"As a city, the phenomenon of redevelopment has really gained tremendous momentum over the past five years," said Gary Klassen. "It has become apparent that with that redevelopment, there needs to be a very important look at what the implications of the cost of that redevelopment are."

Right now, he said the infrastructure needed for redevelopment is determined on a case-by-case basis. The levies, he said, will make the system more equitable for developers because there would be a set cost for the entire area.

Ald. Druh Farrell, who represents much of the downtown core, said she supports the concept. "But we need to look at the benefits of building closer to the core and factor that into the formula."

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Seven suspects charged over swarming theft

Store clerk's tip led to arrests

SHERRI ZICKEFOOSE
CALGARY HERALD

Police have charged seven members of a suspected band of travelling thieves who may be linked to swarming thefts across the country.

Immigration officials are assisting Calgary police, who charged five Romanian-speaking women and two men with theft over \$5,000 after arresting the group near

McKnight Boulevard Thursday afternoon.

Police in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal are searching for a group using a similar swarming technique to fleece shops since November.

On Tuesday, a group of nine people was caught on videotape in a Calgary liquor store, with some distracting the owner while others walked out with a safe.

Surveillance footage from the incident shows the group entering the liquor store on Centre Street N. While some asked the owner for help selecting a wine, others slipped

into the back room and carried out the safe, which contained the family's passports, jewelry and \$10,000 cash.

On Thursday, a convenience store clerk became suspicious of some people and called police, said Acting Staff Sgt. Rod McRae.

Police pulled a minivan over in the area shortly afterwards.

One man fled the scene, and five women and two men were taken in for questioning.

The suspects, whose names were not released, are being kept in custody.

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