

Ottawa could be in for “as much as 50% on infrastructure” : Esslinger

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The Trudeau government is wanting to leak some good news ahead of next week's budget. The Prime Minister himself first confirming changes to old age pension Thursday to Bloomberg News and now there are some rumblings about increased infrastructure cash for cities.

The [Toronto Star is reporting](#) about an emphasis on rehabilitating older infrastructure instead of building new, and that the federal share could increase.

“The thing that interested me was the willingness to go beyond the typical one-third, one-third, one-third structure,” said Coun. Bev Esslinger who sits on the board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities which is the national body that represents cities to Ottawa. “That's something that FCM has been lobbying for, that it's not always practical.”

“To see that there's movement that perhaps the federal government will fund more than a third of a project was good news to my ears.”

And it could mean a larger percentage of cash could come compared to the old funding formula.

“I'm not sure what that means but I've heard up to fifty per cent of projects and that would certainly be helpful.”

Edmonton has had it's priority list on file with Ottawa for some time.

“Public transportation is important to us,” Esslinger said. “We looked at our

priorities under the new Building Canada Fund, it was the Yellowhead (making it a free flow highway) as well as some of the rail crossings (at 50th and 75th streets) and we've already identified and are very clear about that. We're looking at the investment in renewable energy and Blatchford's top of mind."

As the Star reported, a spokesman from Minister Amarjeet Sohi's office declined comment ahead of the budget announcement.

But having the former Edmonton city councillor in charge "sure helps" Esslinger winked.