

## Janzen, Heather

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**From:** City Council  
**Subject:** FW: Email - Request to Speak - Robert Clipperton - Bus Riders of Saskatoon - Saskatoon Transit - CK 1700-1  
**Attachments:** 23 11 28 Budget Input to Council.pdf

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**From:** Web NoReply <web-noreply@saskatoon.ca>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 24, 2023 10:29 AM  
**To:** City Council <City.Council@saskatoon.ca>  
**Subject:** Email - Request to Speak - Robert Clipperton - Bus Riders of Saskatoon - Saskatoon Transit - CK 1700-1

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Friday, November 24, 2023 - 10:28

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Friday, November 24, 2023

**To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**First Name:** Robert

**Last Name:** Clipperton

**Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name:** 3066510475

**Phone Number :** [306-651-0475](tel:306-651-0475)

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Address:** [REDACTED] 9th Street East

**Neighbourhood:** [Nutana](#)

**City:** Saskatoon

**Province:** Saskatchewan

**Postal Code:** [REDACTED]

**Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):** Bus Riders of Saskatoon

**What do you wish to do ?:** Request to Speak

**If speaking will you be attending in person or remotely:** In person

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** City Council November 28th - Budget

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** Saskatoon Transit

**Comments:**

I wish to address four topics previously discussed in the City pre-budget discussions: Child fares, transit support officers, new bus purchases and base fare maintenance.

**Attachments:**

- [23 11 28 Budget Input to Council.pdf](#)122.42 KB

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?:** No

## **Bus Riders of Saskatoon – Budget Concerns/Priorities November 2023**

For this year's Budget discussions Bus Riders has interest in four areas: Child fares, transit support officers, new bus purchases and base fare maintenance.

**Child Fares:** Earlier discussions at the Governance & Priorities table have shown a lot of support for this measure. Indications from the City of Regina are that elimination of Child Fares could result in an increase in Transit revenue as more adults choose to take the bus with their children. We remind you that Saskatoon is one of the few cities in Canada that charges elementary school aged children to ride the bus. Council does seem to be on the right track on this one though and we applaud your pragmatic approach to working through some of the many issues regarding implementation in September 2024.

**Transit Support Officers:** This measure too has had strong support in the budget discussions to date. Similar measures have been adopted in other cities. We appreciate the implementation of a service that will have a focus on increasing the public's confidence that they will be safe not only when riding our buses but also at terminals and major transfer points. We agree too that the concept of connecting people with the community supports that they need is key to the success of this program. We urge that implementation be as soon as possible and not be deferred to a later time. Intervention is needed now so that a culture of civil behaviour on our buses is maintained. Once a culture of negative behaviour becomes ingrained in an environment, it is much harder to change.

**New Buses:** We had thought that this had already become a routine matter of doing business when the Fleet Renewal Strategy was adopted in 2015. At that time we calculated that at the rate buses were being replaced, each new bus would have had to remain in service for 87 years. That strategy planned for the purchase of ten new buses each year for the foreseeable future. We do recognize the circumstances that led to the discard of this policy such that no new buses have been purchased since 2019. We have all seen the negative results of this: service interruptions with a warning from your administration that more could come in the near future; full buses and few if any short term options to fix the problem. Transit at times has been unable to provide scheduled service. Councillors need to be sure that the mistakes of the past are firmly engraved in

the City's corporate memory so that this never happens again. The recent announcement of federal funding for 55 new buses is welcome, but a more permanent strategy is required for the long-term.

**Adult Base Fare:** Although raising the \$3.00 adult base fare (and adjustments accordingly to other fare categories) did not receive support from the majority of Councillors at a previous meeting we feel obliged to make a comment. This is not a good time to raise any fares, which actually form a closely integrated and complex structure. The report from your administration also cautioned correctly that fare increases reduce ridership which is then reflected in lower revenue. Saskatoon Transit's ridership has just barely recovered from the catastrophic plunge experienced during the pandemic. It is already fighting headwinds from the potential service disruptions due to the state of the bus fleet and the inability of Saskatoon Transit to respond effectively to overcrowding and full buses. Many households in the City are already struggling to maintain their standard of living due to the effects of inflation. We feel the fare comparisons showing the base adult fares in other cities only show a partial picture. In 2022 for example, Calgary's "Fair Entry" program's lowest monthly pass cost eligible riders only \$5.60 per month. Without examining the whole picture beyond the base adult fare, it is not possible to compare bus fares in Saskatoon with those in other cities. We recommend that any adjustment to the base adult fare only be considered after the results of the upcoming Fare Review.