

Thompson, Holly

From: Web NoReply
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2024 2:29 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Email - Communication - James Dynes - Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2 Endorsement - CK 6003-1
Attachments: Dynes_Provincial-Highway-Council-Swale_Letter-240304.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged
Categories: FILED

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

Submitted on Monday, March 4, 2024 - 14:24

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: Monday, March 04, 2024

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: James

Last Name: Dynes

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Brown Cres

Ward: Ward 7

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Standing Policy Committee on Transportation

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: Agenda item 7.2.1

Comments:

I have uploaded my comments/letter as a word document.

Attachments:

- [Dynes_Provincial-Highway-Council-Swale_Letter-240304.docx](#) 18.55 KB

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

His Worship the Mayor
and City Council Members
City of Saskatoon
Saskatoon, SK, Canada

March 4, 2024

Dear Madam/Sir:

RE: Saskatoon Freeway Phase 2 Design Report Adoption by Transportation Committee

The Saskatoon City Standing Policy Committee on Transportation will vote on the Provincial Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure Phase 2 Functional Design report for the Saskatoon Freeway, which will eventually connect Highway 11 in Saskatoon's south end, crossing Highway 16 East, Highway 5 and Highway 41, to Highway 14 on the west side of the city. It is proposed to cross the South Saskatchewan River to the area south of Wanuskewin Heritage Park. From the Phase 2 report, design work will consider:

- (1) Access to and from a number of streets (i.e., McOrmond Road, Central Ave., Blakeley Road and 8th Street) on the east side of Saskatoon,
- (2) How the freeway crosses the Swales on the northeast side of Saskatoon in the most ecologically sensitive way. A variety of measures will be considered to avoid, reduce or minimize the freeway's impact on the Swales.

Let me be clear from the outset, I believe that the Saskatoon Freeway project will be very good economical and for traffic movement around the City of Saskatoon.

However, environmentally the Saskatoon Freeway project as proposed will be a tragedy, destroying one of the last remaining natural ecosystems (i.e., the Swales) remaining in the vicinity of the City of Saskatoon. The Phase 2 design report proposes constructing a gargantuan interchange in the middle of the Swales, connecting Central Avenue with the Saskatoon Freeway and putting 4 to 10 lanes of traffic through the Swales. This would be akin to an asteroid hitting the earth, forever changing the Swales characteristics such that the Swales would no longer be a viable functioning ecosystem, eventually dooming the Swales to a slow and painful death.

From the SNC-Lavalin Appendix A Phase 2 Biological Assessment, Saskatoon Freeway Functional Planning Study (SNC-AppA-Biol), dated 5 October 2022 "wildlife crossings are incorporated in the freeway design and placed along the freeway to provide wildlife with a path to safely cross the road, connect habitats, and mitigate wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC). These will be placed in locations where wildlife are mostly likely to utilize these crossings, within the Northeast and small swales, and along the South Saskatchewan River's banks."

We know that "Habitat loss and fragmentation through anthropogenic activities increases the isolation of patches, which can disrupt demographic processes such as emigration and immigration, and consequently, lead to the isolation of animal populations. These disturbances are sometimes accompanied by the creation of new structures which may further threaten the viability of animal populations" (Mazerolle, 2004). Hence, it is likely that these proposed wildlife crossings will have limited success.

The main purpose of the Saskatoon Freeway, as I understand it, is to move traffic around the city, particularly traffic that wants to bypass Saskatoon. From the Phase 2 report, “a variety of measures will be considered to avoid, reduce or minimize the freeway’s impact on the Swales” Avoidance is by far the best measure to preserve the ecological value of the Swales. So in my opinion it would be far better to extend the freeway further north, beyond the northern reaches of the Swales, before turning west, thereby avoiding the Swales all together. I wonder why this was not proposed as an option. If the only reason was increased cost, to me this is not a sound reason. We must start valuing our environment far more than we do in the development of projects. From a 650 CKOM articles Speakers express concerns over Saskatoon Freeway Project, dated 29 October 2019 “...two Grade 7 students from Dr. John G. Egnatoff School.’We need to take action on (the Freeway Project)’ said student Abhinav Menon after addressing council.’ The generation that’s in school today, we are learning a lot more about this (climate) crisis than adults have learned. I hope that we can make a change’ What Menon was referring to was the project’s proposed route through the Northeast Swale nature and wildlife preserve, an ecologically diverse ecosystem.” I really believe we should be taking the advice of our youth when we evaluate a project, as their perspective is not bogged down with all the life challenges/happenings faced by adults. Our youth can see the “true” value of the environment. Remember when your (grand)son or (grand)daughter would show their love for you by bringing you a bouquet of dandelions because they thought they were beautiful, whereas us adults viewed them as a weed, needing to be eradicated at all costs; the City of Saskatoon use to routinely spray their parks with herbicide to kill dandelions. Thankfully, the City of Saskatoon saw the folly of eradicating dandelions, realizing that the environmental and health costs were just too high, and that there is beauty to seeing a dandelion in a park. Let’s move the project out of the Swales.

On February 8 the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommended that the City Administration adopt Meewasin’s proposed Option 3 for establishing the boundaries for the Northeast Swale and Small Swale. After consideration by Saskatoon City Council at a March 2023 council meeting, they proposed to go even further than Option 3, establishing wider boundaries for the Swales than proposed in Option 3, realizing their unique environmental value and the benefit the Citizens of Saskatoon would reap for a millennium. The Saskatoon Freeway project going though the Swales will be a gigantic step backwards, negating the accomplishments and foresight of the March 2023 City Council decision.

Finally, from the SNC-AppA-Biol report “Future wildlife and vegetation studies conducted in support of a Technical Proposal (TP) and/or Environmental Impact Statement/Assessment (EIS/EIA) should include grassland bird and prairie raptor surveys, and vascular plant surveys. It may also be necessary (depending on timeline of the project) to repeat surveys that were previously completed in this assessment. Future biological studies performed within the Phase 2 area may wish to consider the following recommendations based on the results of the 2020 SFFPS Environmental and Regulatory Review and the Phase 2 Biological Assessment. The areas studied in this report represent areas with likely the greatest environmental significance in the area, but other smaller areas that were not assessed as part of Phase II still may have regulatory and environmental significance.” Hence, I believe the report is suggesting that an EIS/EIA should be conducted to assess the biological importance of the Swales and surrounding

areas, as the previous studies (i.e. surveys) may not have captured the full uniqueness/value of the Swales.

Sincerely,

James J. Dynes, Ph.D., P.Ag.

■ Brown Crescent
Saskatoon, SK,
Canada, ■
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Reference

Mazerolle, M.J. 2004. Drainage ditches facilitate frog movements in a hostile landscape. *Landscape Ecology*, 20: 579-590.