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**From:** Web NoReply  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024 8:15 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Email - Communication - Karen Kobussen - Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2 Endorsement Request - CK 6003-1  
**Attachments:** Letter to SPCoT - Freeway Project 03.2024.pdf  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** FILED

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

Submitted on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 - 20:15

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:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024

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

**First Name:** Karen

**Last Name:** Kobussen

**Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name:** KO-bus-sen

**Phone Number :** 306 [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] Avenue P N

**Ward:** Ward 4

**Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):** Strong Towns YXE

**What do you wish to do ?:** Submit Comments

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** SPCoT

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** 7.2.1 Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2  
Endorsement Request [TS2024-0205]

**Comments:**

Please see attached letter in opposition to the Freeway Project

**Attachments:**

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



February 19, 2024

TO: City of Saskatoon - Standing Policy Committee on Transportation

RE: Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2 Endorsement Request

Dear Councillors:

It probably goes without saying, but here it is: When we build a highway, we know we must maintain it. The same applies to a bridge, an interchange, an off ramp. Every highway or bridge that has ever been built comes with a predictable schedule for maintenance. It isn't difficult to understand, nor is it difficult to calculate the costs involved. But has anyone done the future maintenance math?

The Freeway Project is shaping up to be the single most disastrous and devastating major project in the history of disastrous and devastating projects of all time. From significant environmental considerations and impact, to massive expenditures of public funds, to the simple fact that throughout history, dozens and dozens of North American cities have seen rapid and intense decline within their municipal city limits due to freeway expansions and "ring road" mania, Saskatoon basically has two opposing views to consider – do we need a freeway that will virtually guarantee travelers will not bother to come to Saskatoon, choosing to bypass it instead? Or, do we want to have a vibrant downtown, with the DEED and the City Centre as a major tourist attraction? Are we wishing to draw people in, or make sure they stay out?

Last month, the Montreal Gazette reported that Canada's Environment Minister, Steven Guilbeault, said the federal government has made the decision to stop investing in new road infrastructure. "There will be no more envelopes from the federal government to enlarge the road network," said Guilbeault. This comes as the Government of Canada plans significant investments to a mix of active and public transportation, all a result of municipal planning and densification efforts. "We can very well achieve our goals of economic, social and human development without more enlargement of the road network," he said. In other words, we have more than enough already. We just need to be better stewards of our current infrastructure so as not to go bankrupt.

Why do we continue to set ourselves up for failure and disappointment? Why do we continue to suffer with enormous backlogs of basic and much needed infrastructure maintenance within the city limits? Why do we have round after round of tax increases and debt expansions to pay for perpetually underfunded transportation systems and road and sidewalk maintenance? Does nobody see this coming? The future looks expensive from here, and we need to take note.

Even more unfathomable is why we are even considering building more. New highways. New bridges. New interchanges. New roads. More and more lane miles will be added to a system that we are already failing to properly maintain. We all should take a few hours to drive around Circle Drive in its entirety, and then decide if we are properly maintaining our current system and can afford to keep building new roads.

The goal of Strong Towns' End Highway Expansion campaign is to curtail the primary mechanism of local wealth destruction and municipal insolvency—that being the continued expansion of freeways and auto-related transportation systems and the endless and expensive maintenance that is now, and will be required in the future.

Every new lane mile we build adds to our backlog of future transportation costs. Every bridge or interchange we construct deepens our city's fiscal insolvency (and make no mistake, despite provincial funding, the city will most certainly have a financial responsibility over the long term, as we grow to 500,000 people). The Freeway Project will leave us all worse off in the long run and will have significant negative impact on the Northeast Swale, the DEED, and Saskatoon's overall prosperity.

We need to restore citizens' faith in our financial capacity and show that the City and the provincial government are competent enough to maintain the essential infrastructure systems we currently rely on. The first step—the only logical thing we can do right now—is to stop building more. Until we have a credible plan for maintaining our existing transportation infrastructure, we must stop building more roads and bridges, because our children and grandchildren will not be able to afford the upkeep. Much like we cannot do so now.

Strong Towns YXE urges the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation to NOT endorse the Functional Planning Study for Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway, and additionally, we urge you to call on the provincial Minister of the Environment to declare the Freeway a “development” and to convene a thorough, impartial Environmental Impact Assessment immediately.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Kobussen

Strong Towns YXE