
From: Web NoReply
Sent: Saturday, March 2, 2024 1:33 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Email - Communication - Kiera Mitchell - Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2 Endorsement Request - CK 6003-1

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Submitted on Saturday, March 2, 2024 - 12:58

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: Saturday, March 02, 2024

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: She/her/hers

First Name: Kiera

Last Name: Mitchell

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: Kee-Rah Mee-tch-ell

Phone Number : [306](tel:306) [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] 10th St E

Ward: Ward 6

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:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you today in favour of the Swale Watchers recommendations. I would like to emphasize that one of Saskatoon's strengths as a city and community is its proximity and valuing of natural areas, both inside and near the city limits. The Meewasin Valley is a prime example of a natural, conservation-focused area that is integral to the City of Saskatoon as an outdoor space to be used by residents and visitors. Without the Meewasin Valley as it currently exists, Saskatoon would be a community bereft of a unique, beautiful, and ecologically important gathering space. Another area which provides ecological and cultural significance to city of Saskatoon residents are the Northeast and Small Swales which contain extremely valuable, rare, and disappearing native grassland and wetland habitats. Once destroyed, these native grasslands and wetlands cannot be replaced or rehabilitated to the level of long-established ecological diversity that currently exist. I would hope that the Saskatoon City Council would recognize that residents and visitors love Saskatoon because it prioritizes the conservation of natural habitats and provides access to such spaces for recreational, educational, and community-building purposes.

I would also like to underline that I do not agree with the Saskatoon Freeway project as a focus of the Saskatoon City Council. Focusing infrastructure development on large roadway projects which, at a basic level, move higher volumes of people around and away from the city of Saskatoon does not work to benefit people living, working, and spending money in the city full time. Large freeway projects that move people around the outskirts of a city faster also do not provide essential infrastructure to tourists who want to enjoy the many amazing events, businesses, cultural locations, etc. contained within the city of Saskatoon. I would strongly urge the Saskatoon City Council to refocus its infrastructure renewal efforts on routes within the city and, especially, on functional public transit opportunities. Please recall the city's strong interest in downtown renewal projects and building a central stadium, which will require strongly financed and well-planned transit strategies focused on moving people in and out of the city's interior. Instead of building roadways to pull people away from the City of Saskatoon and demolishing a shining jewel of ecological diversity, it is imperative for the Saskatoon City Council rethinks its transportation priorities to support downtown renewal projects and Saskatoon businesses by bringing people to and from these areas with ease.

As such, I strongly support the Swale Watchers' two urgent recommendations for Saskatoon City Council:

1. Given that the Biological Assessment and the Functional Planning Study for Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway demonstrate that irreversible harm would befall the Northeast and Small Swales –two of Saskatoon's most valuable and valued natural areas—if the project proceeds as planned, we urge you NOT to endorse the Functional Planning Study for Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway.
2. Recognizing that the ultimate authority over where, when or if this project is completed lies with the province, rather than with the City of Saskatoon, we urge you to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to choose a route for the Saskatoon Freeway that does not intrude on the Swales and to guarantee that the project will be subject to a thorough, impartial Environmental Impact Assessment.

Sincerely,

Kiera Mitchell

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