
From: Web NoReply
Sent: Saturday, March 2, 2024 7:24 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Email - Communication - Jory Vermette - Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2 Endorsement Request - CK 6003-1
Attachments: CJS Swale Support Letter.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Categories: FILED

--- Replies to this email will go to climatejusticeyxe@gmail.com ---

Submitted on Saturday, March 2, 2024 - 19:23

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

First Name: Jory

Last Name: Vermette

Email: climatejusticeyxe@gmail.com

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Churchill Dr

Ward: Ward 5

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): Climate Justice Saskatoon

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: PUBLIC AGENDA STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION Tuesday, March 05, 2024 at 2:00 P.m.

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 7.2.1 Saskatoon Freeway Planning Study – Phase 2
Endorsement Request

Comments:

Please see attached letter - we also offer our support and backing to the Swale Watchers comments

Attachments:

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



March 3, 2024

Saskatoon City Council
222 3rd Ave North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Mayor Clark and Councillors,

Please accept the enclosed comments on behalf of Climate Justice Saskatoon concerning the Saskatoon Freeway and the associated proposal for the Functional Planning Study for Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway.

First, we acknowledge the important work of the Swale Watchers and their in depth research and analysis of the Saskatoon Freeway project and the detrimental ecological effects associated with building the proposed freeway over the Northeast Swale. We agree with their assessment of the situation and believe they have persuasively and effectively demonstrated the serious ecological impacts of this proposed highway.

The purpose of our letter is to bring Council's attention to the severe climatic impact of a project of this scale. Expanding the Saskatoon Freeway as proposed by this project represents a "business as usual" approach that serves to expand urban sprawl, continue to promote car centric culture, and is ultimately short sighted given the need for transformative change to address the climate emergency.

The city has advocated to mitigate climate change with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 as outlined in the Saskatoon Low-Emissions Community Plan (LECP).

By supporting the Saskatoon Freeway project the city is directly working against the goal of net-zero by 2050, is also hindering our ability to mitigate and adapt to meet the LECP goals. Building the Saskatoon Freeway expansion project will further endanger our communities both in the present and future by exacerbating climate change and undermining our ambition to achieve net-zero.

The emissions involved in this project are expected to be significant. The construction process, cement and asphalt production, use of heavy equipment and machinery, and the expanded use of gas and diesel vehicles associated with this project will create emissions in the present and well into the future.^{1,2,3} Given that every ton of CO₂e emissions matters we should be using our extremely limited carbon resources wisely toward projects that reduce the city's emissions. We

need to focus capital expenditures on projects that contribute to the goal of net-zero by 2050 rather than spending precious resources on projects that increase our emissions and ecological impacts (as demonstrated by the Swale Watchers)..

We must also recognize that the Swale itself is green infrastructure that sequesters carbon (which helps address our emissions). Each acre of Grasslands stores about 20 tonnes of carbon per acre. Our grasslands, as one of the most endangered habitats/ecosystems, are actually one of the top storing ecosystems of carbon. Destroying this natural carbon sink would result in the release of tonnes of CO₂e emissions that will be added onto the aforementioned emissions from the Saskatoon Freeway project. We would effectively be reversing our climate efforts twofold.^{4 5 6 7 8}

In conclusion, Climate Justice Saskatoon recommends that the City of Saskatoon not approve, support, or endorse the Saskatoon Freeway project without undertaking a comprehensive redesign that addresses the concerns raised by the Swale Watchers and seeks to reconcile any proposed Saskatoon Freeway expansion with the objectives of the LECP. Approving and supporting the project as proposed today would be an act of policy incoherence that is inconsistent with the objectives of the LECP and the City's (and our Country's) goals to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050.

We must act now to ensure our city and its infrastructure are supporting the transition to net-zero by 2050. 2050 is less than 26 years away. We need Council to make courageous decisions that demonstrate commitment to transformative change rather than promoting business as usual. Council must make decisions that adequately consider the triple bottom line of the economy, the environment, and social objectives. Climate Justice Saskatoon hereby requests that Council oppose the Saskatoon Freeway as currently proposed. Any future consideration of a revised Saskatoon Freeway must address the valid concerns raised by the Swale Watchers, reduce the impacts on the environment, and demonstrate that such freeway expansions do not jeopardize the goal of a net-zero Saskatoon by 2050 and the objectives of the LECP.

Thank you,

Climate Justice Saskatoon

1. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/what-on-earth-highways-environment-1.6279735>
2. <https://www.jtc.sala.ubc.ca/reports/analysis-ghg-roads.pdf>
3. <https://www.ice.org.uk/news-and-insight/the-infrastructure-blog/april-2021/how-roadbuilding-projects-create-co2-emissions>
4. Wang, L., Pedersen, P. B. M., & Svenning, J.-C. (2023, February 8). Rewilding abandoned farmland has greater sustainability benefits than afforestation. *npj Biodiversity*, 2*(5). [Link to paper](#)
5. Yongfei Bai, M. Francesca Cotrufo, (2022). Grassland soil carbon sequestration: Current understanding, challenges, and solutions. *Science*377,603-608, 10.1126. [Link to paper](#)

6. Amézquita, M. C., Murgueitio, E., Ibrahim, M., & Ramírez, B. (2010). Carbon sequestration in pasture and silvopastoral systems compared with native forests in ecosystems of tropical America. *Grassland carbon sequestration: management, policy and economics*, 11, 153. [Link to paper](#)
7. Roch, L., & Jaeger, J. A. (2014). Monitoring an ecosystem at risk: What is the degree of grassland fragmentation in the Canadian Prairies?. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 186, 2505-2534. [Link to paper](#)
8. Sawatzky, K. D. (2019). the state oF natIve PRaiRie in saskatCheWan. *Blue Jay*, 77 (1), 24-28. [Link to paper](#)