

Thompson, Holly

From: Web NoReply
Sent: Sunday, May 4, 2025 9:50 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Comments - Sherry Olson - Saskatoon Transit Full-Fleet Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan – CUTRIC Report
Attachments: Bus.docx

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Submitted on Sunday, May 4, 2025 - 21:49

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: Sunday, May 04, 2025

To: Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: She/her/hers

First Name: SHERRY

Last Name: OLSON

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

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Pinehouse Dr

Ward: Ward 5

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

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

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 6.2.1 Saskatoon Transit Full-Fleet Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan – CUTRIC Report [TS2025-0504]

Comments:

Please see the attached.

Attachments:

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

Dear Standing Policy Committee,

I am writing as a concerned citizen and advocate for sustainable transportation in Saskatoon. We have reviewed the recent CUTRIC report on the Saskatoon Transit Full-Fleet Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan, as well as the accompanying appendix, and appreciate the detailed analysis provided. While I understand the financial and technological challenges highlighted in the report, I strongly believe that the City must consider the broader environmental, health, and social benefits of transitioning to zero-emission buses (ZEBs) as part of its decision-making process.

The successful 12-month battery electric bus (BEB) pilot in 2020 demonstrated that BEBs can operate effectively in Saskatoon's winter conditions, and the two BEBs added to the fleet have been operating successfully since March 2025. The report indicates there was one issue with a bus while it was waiting for maintenance; however, it should not distract from the statement, "Since March 2025, these issues have been resolved and the BEBs have been in service for comparable distances to the diesel buses." While it is only a short period for the second bus to be in operation, success underscores the feasibility of integrating ZEBs into our transit system.

The report primarily focuses on the financial costs of transitioning to ZEBs. However, we urge the City to also consider the following:

- **Environmental Benefits:** While the report notes that the current carbon intensity of Saskatchewan's power grid offsets some of the environmental benefits of ZEBs, it is important to recognize that ZEBs still produce zero tailpipe emissions. This reduces local air pollution, which has significant health benefits for residents, particularly those living near transit routes or with respiratory conditions. Additionally, as the provincial grid evolves and becomes greener over time, the environmental benefits of ZEBs will increase.
- **Health Impacts:** Diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen and contributes to respiratory diseases. Transitioning to ZEBs would improve air quality in Saskatoon, leading to better health outcomes for residents. The City should consider the long-term healthcare cost savings and improved quality of life that could result from reducing diesel emissions.
- **Noise Reduction:** ZEBs, including battery electric buses (BEBs) and hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs), produce significantly less noise compared to diesel buses. Electric motors are quieter, and ZEBs do not idle, reducing noise levels at stops and in traffic. This noise reduction contributes to a more pleasant environment for residents, improves the quality of life, and enhances the passenger experience.
- **Indirect Cost Savings:** The reduction of GHGs will reduce impacts from anthropogenic climate change. (For those who may not be aware, isotopes allow scientists to discern how much temperature change is due to anthropogenic activities.) Insurance costs

continue to rise due to disasters that can be attributed to anthropogenic changes. Additionally, food costs have risen due to additional challenges of growing crops. There are many such indirect costs.

- **Social Impact:** The appendix highlights that introducing ZEBs could benefit socio-economically disadvantaged areas, including communities exposed to high levels of air pollution, low-income populations, and areas with a high elderly population. Prioritizing the electrification of routes serving these communities could have a significant positive impact on public health and quality of life.
- **Long-Term Cost Savings:** While the upfront costs of ZEBs are higher, the report does not fully account for potential long-term cost savings. For example, ZEBs are expected to have their maintenance costs decrease as technology advances.
- **Climate Leadership:** Saskatoon's Climate Action Plan identifies the transition to ZEBs as a key initiative for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By taking proactive steps toward this goal, the City can demonstrate climate leadership and inspire other municipalities to follow suit.

In light of these considerations, it is important to not only expand the Pilot Program to provide data on operational performance, maintenance costs, and technological improvements but to create a phased transition plan that commits to purchasing a significant percentage of ZEBs (e.g., 50%) during each fleet renewal cycle. This approach balances fiscal realities with environmental stewardship. It will be important to continue to engage with federal and provincial governments to request increased funding specifically for ZEB infrastructure and technology. It may also be beneficial to establish a working group or task force to regularly review advancements in battery technology, hydrogen production, and charging infrastructure. This will ensure that Saskatoon is well-positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

In conclusion, I recognize the challenges associated with transitioning to a zero-emission bus fleet. However, I believe that the environmental, health, and social benefits of ZEBs make this transition a worthwhile investment and speak to the urgency of climate action, which cause many indirect costs. I urge City Council to reaffirm its commitment to sustainable transportation as a key component of the City's Climate Action Plan.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to building a more sustainable future for Saskatoon.

Sherry Olson

Ward 5