

March 4, 2024

Standing Policy Committee on Transportation
222 3rd Ave. N.
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Standing Policy Committee on Transportation,

Re: NSBA Letter of Support for Endorsing Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway Project

On behalf of the NSBA – Saskatoon’s Business Association, I am writing to express the strong support for the endorsement of Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway Project.

The NSBA has been in support of the Saskatoon Freeway Project from its inception, recognizing the numerous benefits it brings to our city. As Saskatoon continues to experience rapid growth, addressing traffic congestion, particularly on Circle Drive, is important. The proposed freeway, as a replacement bypass route for Circle Drive, is a necessary step to accommodate the increasing population, expected commuting demands and most importantly, accommodate heavy truck traffic that wants to circumvent Saskatoon entirely.

We urge the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation to endorse Option 2 recommended in the administrative report, which would provide clear direction to the Ministry of Highways. This endorsement not only streamlines the process but also ensures that the numerous benefits associated with the project are put into consideration.

Advantages of endorsing Phase 2 of the Saskatoon Freeway Project include:

1. **Easing Traffic Congestion:** The freeway will alleviate congestion on Circle Drive, benefitting both regular and commercial/industrial traffic.
2. **Transportation Cost Savings:** Time spent idling at stop lights equals money being spent. Continuous traffic flows will save businesses on transportation costs, especially those contributing to economic growth.
3. **Emissions Reduction:** Less time spent idling means less time on the road which also leads to fewer greenhouse gas emissions; since traffic congestion will be eased.
4. **Safety:** A dedicated freeway reduces mixed traffic and minimizes collision risks, addressing safety concerns raised by the transportation industry.

We understand the concerns being raised about the Northeast Swale and Small Swale and acknowledge these concerns. That is why it is important to note that the swales have already been accommodated to minimize the impact that Saskatoon Freeway will have upon them. These route changes have been accommodated through the stakeholder consultations that have been going on for years as part of the

Saskatoon Freeway Functional Planning Study Steering Committee that the NSBA, along with more than a dozen other stakeholder groups have been a part of.

The location of the freeway is optimized to achieve maximum benefits for all road users at the lowest cost. Therefore, moving the freeway further north may hinder cross-city travel and rural usage, adding unnecessary kilometers and potentially jeopardizing the project's success. And it has already been considered as part of the stakeholder engagement mentioned above.

In addition, there have also been concerns about the cost of the project, the NSBA firmly believes that investing in good-quality capital projects is always money well spent. This project will not only address current Circle Drive challenges but will significantly impact the city's future development.

The NSBA encourages the Committee to consider the overall benefits of the Saskatoon Freeway Project in the broader context of our city's growth and development. As we navigate these considerations, let us look to other jurisdictions and adopt best practices to ensure we are capitalizing on their lessons learned.

In closing, we would like to stress that "time is money." Delaying the endorsement of Phase 2 could incur additional costs and hinder the timely implementation of this crucial infrastructure. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to witnessing the positive impact the Saskatoon Freeway will bring to our city in the future.

Sincerely,



Keith Moen
Executive Director
NSBA – Saskatoon's Business Association