SPEAKING NOTES

Rise in Bus Fare, Winnipeg City Council, November 14, 2007

Your Worship Sam Katz, Councillors, Fellow Winnipegers,

Good Morning. Tansi.. My name is Raven ThunderSky and I am here to give my voice to those Winnipegers standing in opposition to the proposed twelve and one half percent increase to transit fares in the new year,

I consider my family a typical inner city family. We do not live to excess and, as the rest of the world comes to grips with the effects of global warming and over consumption we find more and more that our lifestyle is in fact the type of lifestyle that the experts are recommending that all people follow. Use less. Leave a smaller ecological footprint behind. Leave something for tomorrow.

We do not drive. My husband cannot get a driver's license due to his eyesight. I do not drive. So we walk and we take the bus. We have three small children so we cannot take a taxi as they have a limit of four passengers.

We pride ourselves that we are contributing less carbon emissions than even those drivers who have bought a smart car. You see, smart cars still give off greenhouse gas emissions. By riding the bus we give off significantly less emissions than even the smart car driver.

But here is the dilemma. The Province of Manitoba gives $2,000 cash to anyone buying a smart car, and the Government of Canada gives them another $2,000. And they are still over producing greenhouse gases when they travel.

My family produces far less emissions by riding the bus, but instead of being rewarded for our correct behavior the City of Winnipeg wants us to pay more. Sure we can buy bus passes and not pay the increase and at the same time we can claim the ridiculously low deduction that the federal government will give us if we do. But our children do not use the bus enough to warrant buying a bus pass.

You are punishing the very people you should be rewarding. We produce less greenhouse gas emissions and you want to charge us more. It is time that the City of Winnipeg woke up to the fact that this is 2007 and that the biggest global issue today is global warming. Why are you penalizing those who choose to ride the bus?

It will cost my family $8.95 to ride the bus one way. $17.90 return.

If I may suggest, why don't you try something radical on a trial basis? Instead of raising the bus fares, lower them to $1,50. See if the increased ridership would in fact provide more gross revenue than your proposed 25 cent increase? And at the same time reduce overall greenhouse gases.

Just a thought, but Winnipeg could lead by example instead of always being the foot mat in Canada.

Thank you.