

City to replace Dodge Caravan fleet with energy efficient vehicles

BY ISAAC OLSON

Côte St. Luc's District 4 councillor Steven Erdelyi told the *Free Press* that the city will be purchasing environmentally friendly vehicles to replace its fleet of vans and mid-size cars.

A specialized Subaru Forester will replace the Dodge Caravans as they wear out with usage by, for the most part, Public Security. In addition to the Subarus, Erdelyi said the city is studying how best to replace its already fuel-efficient Toyota Yaris fleet with either electric

or compressed natural gas vehicles.

The most recent plan to purchase more vans has been cancelled after some paperwork issues, he explained, and councillors intend on taking advantage of the clerical error by implementing a strategy that has long been under study. Public workers, said Erdelyi, have been examining different options such as hybrid vehicles, and they met with neighbouring cities to discuss the cost benefits or drawbacks of various vehicles already in use.

"We realized, for each vehicle, there were pros and cons," said Erdelyi. "For

instance, hybrid vehicles are energy efficient in terms of using gasoline but, what we found out in talking with other cities is, because the vehicles are ridden hard with quick starts and stops, they don't get the expected energy efficiency."

So, said Erdelyi, the city decided on Partial Zero Emissions Vehicles (PZEV), which have zero evaporative

emissions from its fuel system and they meet Super Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (SULEV) standards. SULEV is an American classification for vehicles which, typically, produce 90 percent less emissions than equivalent gasoline vehicles.

Not only do PZEV Subaru Foresters have great reviews, said Erdelyi, but they also come equipped with all-wheel drive, which makes for a safer car come winter or when driving off-road in, for example, parks. There is virtually zero waste going to landfills during the fabrication of these Foresters, he added.

"Based on studying different models in different cities, this seems to be the best one," said Erdelyi. "We're also looking to



These Dodge Caravans will slowly be replaced with energy efficient Subarus.

Photo: Isaac Olson

replace some of our mid-size Public Works vehicles. The nice thing about the Subaru Forester is it tends to be more affordable than some of the hybrid vehicles."

Looking ahead, the city will continue to explore other alternative vehicles that use less gas and produce less emissions, he said, but, when it comes to heavy machinery or box trucks, there really aren't any options out there at this point.

"As we replace our vehicles, we are going to try to come up with more energy efficient models," concluded Erdelyi, noting Public Works is tracking fuel consumption of each individual vehicle in the fleet so as to replace those that are costing more to run.