



Driver Profile

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Charging ahead: Saskatoon driver's EV journey continues to evolve

By Jeannie Armstrong

Carol always looks before she leaps, so when she made the decision to purchase an electric vehicle (EV) 10 years ago, she was cautious in her approach.

The Saskatoon resident found a gently used, priced-right 2013 Toyota Prius. She was encouraged to make the switch to a hybrid by the environmental concerns expressed by her daughter, as well as the car maker's reputation for quality.

A conventional hybrid which charges its battery solely through braking and the engine, the Prius proved a reliable mode of transportation. And when it came time to shop for her next vehicle, Carol decided to stick with the Toyota Prius brand.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Her EV journey continued to evolve in January 2025 when she purchased a new Prius Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV). *"It was a logical progression for me,"* says Carol. *"I didn't want to go full electric, because I feel we just don't have the charging infrastructure yet in Saskatchewan to support it."*

The PHEV, with its automatic transition between electric and gas modes, offered the perfect middle ground. *"I put it on automatic most of the time, so the Prius switches back and forth on its own,"* says Carol.

"There are some limitations with that. I found out after I bought it that at -10 C degrees or lower, the car automatically switches to gas. So in winter, on colder days, the Prius PHEV primarily uses gas. The rest of the year, it's primarily electric, because I do mostly city driving."

To support her new PHEV, Carol had a Level 2 charger installed at her home. Because of the age of her house, the electrical panel had to be replaced and relocated to meet modern code requirements, a cost much higher than Carol anticipated. However, she doesn't regret her decision. *"It improved the infrastructure in my house. And by the time I get my next car, I'll probably go fully electric and then I'll be ready to go,"* says Carol.



CALCULATING THE SAVINGS

With the charger installed, Carol can easily calculate the economy of her EV. The City of Saskatoon's smart metering system shows her electricity use in real time.

"Each full charge costs me about two dollars," she says. ***"In a month, that's about \$12. Compare that to a tank of gas, which is around \$30 to \$50, depending on the current price per litre. The savings absolutely add up."***



Maintenance costs for the Prius PHEV have been minimal, says Carol.

“I had one scheduled maintenance check six months after I bought it. Because there’s a gas engine, I still have to do oil changes, replace filters, that kind of routine maintenance.”

Her new Prius PHEV also came with a wave of smart features that she has come to rely on, including blind-spot warnings, lane assist, traffic alerts and even driver-attention reminders. *“It will even notice when I’ve looked sideways at something for a second or two too long and then it flashes a ‘driver inattention’ warning,”* laughs Carol. *“It’s obviously watching your face.”*

A GREENER LIFESTYLE

Carol’ hybrid journey has sparked her interest in other sustainable upgrades for her home, including heat pumps and solar panels. She’s watching the technology closely. *“My experience with the hybrid has encouraged me to look at other options,”* she says. *“You’ve got to be smart, do your research and make changes if it makes financial sense.”*

One year into owning her plug-in Prius, Carol says she would never go back to a fully gas-powered vehicle. She’s embraced the quiet ride, the safety-first technology features and the satisfaction of lowering her environmental footprint.

Carol is quick to recommend EV ownership to others.

“I tell them I pay \$12 a month in electricity to charge my EV, versus \$30 to \$50 in gas. That convinces a lot of people. Then I invite them for a ride. They’re quite impressed by how quiet it is, how smooth the ride is and all the technology features. My dad even got a hybrid recently and he’s quite happy with it.”

For more information about electric vehicles, please visit [Saskatoon.ca/EV](https://saskatoon.ca/EV).

