

## Dreaming of a Zenn-powered world



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**I want a Zenn car.** My uncle pointed out this was a ridiculous desire, as he watched me pack a week's worth of camping gear and two growing children into my Honda CRV with great difficulty.

"What you need is a truck," he boldly declared.

"No way," I said. "What I need is to change the way I live so that Zenn fits my life."

He let out a roaring laugh, as only a respected older uncle can.

"Not me," he roared. "I'm too old to change."

Certainly, with only two seats and traveling at a maximum speed of 40 km/hr, driving the 100-per-cent electric-powered Zenn would have been impossible for my 12-hour journey to visit family at the lake last week. Not to mention it's illegal in most of Canada.

Trend-setting British Columbia approved use of the vehicle off-highways two years ago. Quebec's Ministry of Transportation announced a three-year pilot in June that would allow low-speed vehicles (LSVs) like the Zenn on roads with posted speed limits of up to 50 km/hr.

Elsewhere in Canada, Zenn's two-seater LSV, which is manufactured in Saint-Jerome, Quebec, north of Montreal and retails for US \$15,995, is not considered road-worthy.

But the Toronto-based motor company is working to change that.

With little support for its innovation this side of the border, Zenn has partnered with a cutting-edge American company that is developing an energy storage unit (ESU) that would revolutionize the (already revolutionary) electric car.

Texas-based EESstor Inc. is hoping its ESU will be commercially available by the end of the year. The high-power-density ceramic ultra capacitor would replace electrochemical batteries and is projected to store up to 10 times the energy of lead-acid batteries at the same cost.

The new technology would push the electric car's maximum speed to 120 km/hr, which would transform it to a viable alternative to petroleum-powered cars on the highway. Zenn, which holds a 3.8 per cent equity position in Texas-based EESstor, seems to be pegging its future on the technology. And So am I.

We strategically chose our first home a few years ago within walking distance to stores, museums, playgrounds and schools. A short bus ride gets us downtown in less than 15 minutes.

My husband's new job was purposefully chosen because it is less than two kilometers from our bike rack. I work at home, so my commuter impact is minimized; a bit of luck and a pre-school is set to open next month within spitting distance from our backyard, and when it comes to choosing recreational activities – be it swimming, shopping or camping – we find ourselves staying home more often.

"We're looking for ways to help people live and work in their communities," was the official message at a recent public meeting at city hall last month, where my neighbours came out in droves to protest the proposed construction of the Kettle Island Corridor.

Propaganda is what it is.

To avoid the "not in my backyard" argument, I say: Go ahead and divert 3,000 vehicles twice daily traveling from inexpensive homes in Quebec more than 20 kilometres to lucrative jobs this side of the river, call Gatineau to Orléans a single community, let the cars jam up on Montreal Road from the Aviation Parkway to Blair to get onto the 174 every Monday-to-Friday morning.

But – all ye visionless policy-makers—why not let them be Zenn?