

\$75 WON'T SOLVE TRAFFIC WOES

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Increasingly, young families living in our newer communities, Langley, Delta, and Surrey, in particular, are stretched to the breaking point. Young families, often forced from the towns they grew up in because they can't afford a home there, buy a little home with a yard in the burbs. Nine time out of 10, both parents have to work full-time to meet their mortgage. In such circumstances, having two cars is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Absolutely nothing that they need is available nearby, not their children's school, a loaf of bread, a video, a grocery store, least of all their jobs. Meeting daily needs keeps them and thousands of families like them clogging the suburban arterials, which carry an astonishing four times as many cars per thousand residents in the suburbs as in the city. Congestion, air pollution, and road rage are increasingly a suburban problem. Naturally citizens and their elected representatives, already under stress, are outraged when they are asked to take it on the chin yet again.

But it doesn't have to be this way. The problem isn't the transportation system itself, it is the pattern of blocks and parcels that feed that system, and the widely separated land uses that require car use even for the most basic of needs.

Simple changes to the way new neighbourhoods are built can reduce the stress on arterials by 75 per cent, provide convenience services within a five minute walk of all residents, be serviceable by transit, reduce the price of housing for our young families, and virtually eliminate the need for the second family car.

Surrey has proposed just such a new more sustainable pattern for the East Clayton area. This plan, when executed, will end the absolute enslavement to the car for all those who live there. If we can arrange all of our new communities in a similar way, our young families could survive with one car rather than two. This will save them \$8000 a year. That makes \$75 seem very small in comparison.

If we cannot change the way we design parcels, streets and districts, then we may well be doomed to more and more combat between suburban dwellers, who have no option to the car, and regional authorities who want them on the bus, but can't find the way to their door.

