

THE WHEELS OF CHANGE

Buzz Word of the Week

Sustainable Transportation mainly refers to human behavior, not to technology. In that sense, a behavioral approach considers not only a set of non-polluting and human scaled green transport choices, regardless of the means and technology used, but also a set of reinforcers both individual and social to promote these choices.

by Tricia Kapelari

Without question most northern BC communities are automobile dependent. For the most part, owning and operating a vehicle just seems more convenient, safer and well, affordable – or is it?

According to the Canadian Automobile Association the average cost of owning and operating a vehicle in 2007 was \$20 - \$25 per day plus \$0.12 per km. The cost is comparable to financing an \$80,000 mortgage. Even more remarkable is the fact that most families own and operate two or more vehicles.

In addition to the heavy financial burden, we are also increasing traffic congestion, smog, watercourse pollution, and carbon dioxide emissions not to mention adding to the rate of obesity, none of which seem safe.

One has to wonder in these uncertain economic times, what would our economy, the health of our communities even, look like if we gave up our automobile dependency and adopted principles of sustainable transportation?

The unfortunate reality is that our northern communities were built to accommodate automobile use. Our main streets cater to cars not pedestrians and our shopping malls are all located on the fringes of town.

To make life convenient without automobiles, all levels of government must adopt principles and plan to invest in development or re-development which support and encourage alternative modes of transportation. These include walking, cycling, public transit and high occupancy vehicles. It will require compact, efficient

land use planning with mixed-use neighborhoods to increase residential and employment density so that citizens are working closer to home or at the very least have more transportation options.

In the face of climate change and global recession the only certainty is that life is changing, the question is are we prepared to invest in green technology and re-design our communities to adapt?

When the Official Community Plan committee calls for input later this year, it's up to you to walk on down to town hall and become part of the solution.

Smithers Transit

Smithers Transit operates several runs between Telkwa and Smithers daily, Monday through Saturday. The cost of a monthly transit pass is \$45 and you can ride as often as you wish during the month. \$45 times 12 months is only \$540 per year, and what's more, its even tax deductible.

visit their website at www.scsa.ca



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