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From: Michael L. Sena
To: Nick Bradley
Traffic Technology International
Ref: Shopping_V2
Re: Proposed Article

SHOP LOCALLY

When shopping, we have grown accustomed to maximizing our choices and minimizing our purchasing costs. The car has given us the freedom to go where the goods we want are sold, and worldwide supply chain management delivers those goods to us at always the lowest price. As the stores moved from the centres of cities to large, open fields at the cities' edges, individual stores with all of their contents have been consolidated under one roof into the sell-everything-at-always-the-lowest-price, super-sized, "Big Box" stores, like Wal-Mart and Costco and Carrefour.

At the same time as consolidation and concentration is occurring, the smaller, more locally accessible stores are disappearing. It has gotten to the point in most parts of the U.S. that even if one wanted to shop locally, there would be nowhere to go. Even in Europe, where people live, work and shop in cities, the same forces are at work. In Stockholm, Sweden the number of everyday commodity stores per 10,000 inhabitants shrunk from 8.3 in 1975 to 4.8 by 1999. From 1975 to 1999, the number of large stores, with sales over \$18 million increased from 15 to 44, while the number of small shops with less than \$8.5 million contracted by 40%, from 1,202 to 744. The elderly and others who cannot drive suffer most from this consolidation

If you shop at one of the big box stores, you are both a victim and a part of the problem. If your aim is to minimize the inconvenience, irritation and time delays that traffic congestion has on your life, then your objective should be to avoid shopping in these facilities. What can we do to avoid being forced to get into our cars to satisfy our most minimal shopping needs? Visit the local stores that remain as often as you can.

Most corner grocery stores are gone, but there are still plenty of smaller supermarkets in operation in most medium- to large-sized communities. They often have a specialty along with the standard fare of produce, meats, boxed and canned goods and sundries. Shop in these stores rather than in the giants. Set the budget for your total purchases at the level you think you would pay for a week's worth of groceries bought at the Big Box, and throw out of the cart the extras that break the budget. Pay more, buy less, keep your neighbour working. In the bargain, you can avoid the traffic at shopping centres and do your part to cut down on the amount of truck traffic travelling into your region.

Encourage your community leaders to eliminate single-use zoning codes in favour of multi-use developments so that shops can be built closer to where people live instead in the middle of vast parking lots. Promote and support local legislation to prohibit trucks over three tons on streets where the speed limits are, or should be, 30 mph (50 kph). Remember, it's a tradeoff, and on the plus side are less driving and less traffic.