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# Transport costs weigh heavily

## GUEST COLUMNIST

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THE Committee for Perth this week released the findings from a study called *The Rising Cost of Living in Perth*. This report looks at the operating costs for households in Perth.

Affordability has been a hot topic in Perth since the millennium, fuelled in large part by the WA resources boom. Perth is now the 11th most expensive city in the world in which to live.

Petrol in Perth is among the most expensive in the world.

Often household affordability is thought about through the narrow lens of the cost of a house.

However, this study looks at an important aspect of the operating costs of households: transport.

One might think that everyone in Perth is equally affected, but that's not the case. Those on a lower income are doubly affected because they earn less, live further out and so need to use more petrol to get around.

You might think also that these people would instead use public transport, but their suburbs typically have the least

access to good-quality transport.

Therefore, these households need to own more cars than those who live closer to the city. Consequently, their household operating expenses are disproportionately higher.

The study finds that Perth's roads are servicing more than 1.55 million vehicles, of which more than 1.14 million are passenger vehicles.

Fifty-three per cent of the survey respondents who use a car said they did so because of a lack of public transport alternatives.

Joondalup has the third highest number of vehicles per household in Perth, after Mundaring and Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

Peppermint Grove, Cambridge and Cottesloe are the top three local government areas to have the highest proportion of households with one or no cars.

The average household transport costs are now in excess of \$200 per week.

If we are serious about affordability, land use and public transport, plans need to respond to these findings.

In particular, household spending on transport needs to be dealt with to ensure affordability for those who need it the most.