Commuters, heres some food for thought: collectively, Americans spend more than 8 billion hours each year stuck in traffic. This is just one of the horrifying statistics mentioned in Jane Holtz Kays Asphalt Nation, an eye-opening look at the relationship between Americans and their cars. Kay asserts that the automobile is destroying our communities, our environment, and our economic competitiveness, and her supporting arguments are pretty persuasive. In addition to the billions of hours wasted in gridlock, Kay notes that our daily drives are becoming longer and more frequent, and that increased mileage has nullified any advances in emission controls. Asphalt Nation is comprised of three parts: the first, Car Glut: A Nation in Lifelock, examines the impact of the automobile culture on life in the United States today. Car Tracks: The Machine That Made the Land traces the history of cars from Henry Ford to the present, while Car Free: From Dead End to Exit imagines a happier future without automobile dependency. What makes Asphalt Nation far more interesting than the typical anti-auto diatribe is Kays discussion of the cultural mores that helped create Americas current car glut--namely, our attitudes toward land use and growth management; her comparisons between American and European practices in these areas are particularly interesting. Others have written about the American love affair with the automobile, but Holtz revisits the discussion with lively writing and a dramatic narrative.

My Personal Review:
Ive noticed how much design caters to car traffic for some time now. Not only are bus systems left behind in plans, but it is also difficult to walk anywhere these days. Im not crazy about her ideas like raising gas prices, or anything that raises the misery factor for low income people struggling to keep their jalopy running (like harsh smog test requirements) but the idea of making alternative transportation easier and more attractive is
good. There could have been a little more attention to using the already in place car infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles. But that doesn't take away from the basic idea behind the book.

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Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back by Jane Holtz Kay - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!