



January 14, 2016

To Vickie Fulton <vfulton@mapleridge.ca>
Economic Development Department, City of Maple Ridge

Re: Draft Maple Ridge Tourism Strategy Plan

Hi Vickie,

Thank you for inviting the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Chapter of HUB Cycling to participate in the Tourism Task Force as part of the process of developing a Tourism Strategy Plan for Maple Ridge.

We at HUB are excited to be able to give our input in order to make all-ages-all-abilities cycling a part of the strategy to help make Maple Ridge a great place to visit for tourists from near and far.

To recapitulate Jackie's input thus far, as well as add further comments:

Routes and maps

We discussed the need for truly multi-use and connected bike routes, as well as the essential need for clear and reliable maps (physical maps, but also availability of maps, trips itineraries, track GPX files, etc. on-line). The most recent (2013) trails map combined the extensive equestrian trail network - the amazing result of over half a century of hard work by the Haney Horse people - and cycling network maps in one map and identified all trails as "multi-use".

There are significant differences in the needs of equestrians and people on foot and on bikes. A horse can easily wade through a knee-deep water crossing, while that may be less advisable for people on bikes. Even among cyclists there is a wide variety of needs that need to be met. Maple Ridge has some truly exceptional mountain biking trails, which should definitely be part of the strategy to attract mountain bikers to our area.

Mountain biking is a more extreme sport, whereas another, significant segment of the cycle tourism target market would be for on-road cycling as well as cycling on paved and smooth gravel trails. This type of cycle tourist/explorer often wishes to add to the experience by combining the activity of cycling with visiting local destinations, such as farms, breweries, eateries, quaint bed and breakfasts, etc.



We would suggest the following maps would be essential to local explorers and tourists alike:

- A map with walking/hiking routes covering both Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows and surrounding trails networks.
- There should be one map specific for equestrian trails, also covering both municipalities.
- A bike map should clearly indicate which routes are rideable and safe for all ages and abilities, and which routes are more challenging with respect to topography or path surface, as well as traffic volumes and speeds, and which ones are separated - or not - from car traffic. This map should clearly indicate which trails are specific to mountain biking only and not suitable for road- and touring/city bikes.

Walkable and bikeable downtown

We would like to stress the huge importance of making the downtown a more inviting place for people, whether on foot or on bikes. We strongly support any initiatives for limiting car access to certain street segments in order to create pedestrian-only areas and to encourage a more vibrant street scene where people like to linger, shop and eat. Perhaps this can easily and cheaply be done as a pilot project, starting with e.g. one weekend day of the week in the summer months, combined with outdoor activities, food, music etc., and if successful this program can be expanded.

Creating a more pedestrian friendly downtown is a prerequisite to developing the downtown as an attraction.

Accessibility for cyclists

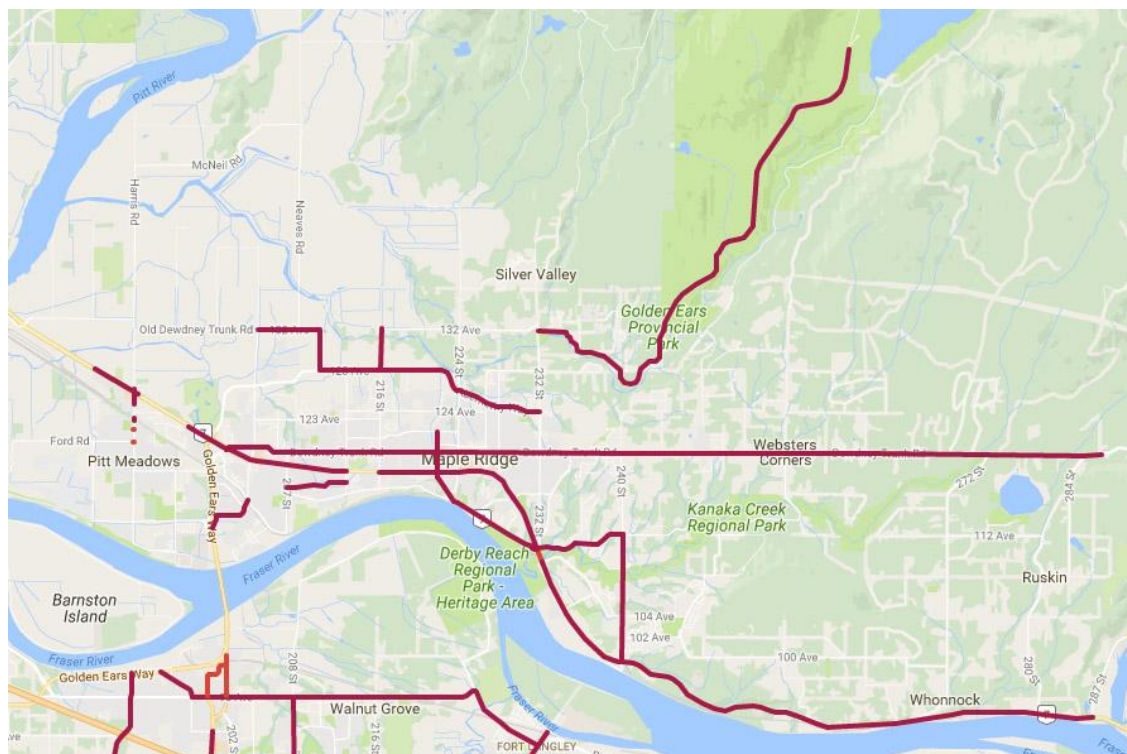
Accessibility to possible destinations for all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, should be considered in road design. Bi-directional paths such as the one recently constructed along 128th Ave. are wonderful for attracting more vulnerable users thanks to the separation from car traffic. However, problems arise if destinations on the other side of the 4-lane road cannot be accessed. This is the case with Golden Ears Cheeseworks, which our HUB committee would have liked to once again include in our popular Bike to Farms event. This is no longer possible.

As part of HUB's Metro Vancouver wide [UnGaptheMap](#) initiative, our local HUB committee has mapped the main gaps in our cycling network and will continue to add to/refine the list of missing linkages. It is important to note that certain destinations in and around our community are presently not yet easily accessible to cyclists of all ages and abilities.

In order to take advantage of the many, economic and other, benefits that can be reaped from improved cycling - an important one being the ability to tap into the cycle tourism market - we feel Maple Ridge should prioritize safe cycling infrastructure leading to possible destinations in and around our community.



The following map shows in red the main gaps in the regional cycling network in our area:



With the main focus of the Tourism Task Force clearly being on the outdoor/nature attractions, we would like to emphasize the need for accessibility to destinations for those without cars, including local residents and tourists. As existing and new outdoor attractions are further developed, we would like to see improved and safe access for cyclists to destinations such as Whonnock Lake, Alouette River/the dikes, Cliff Falls and Golden Ears Park.

In order to encourage long distance cycle tourists to come to and make a stop in Maple Ridge, improving the east-west linkages are very important. As is visible on the above map, improvements are needed along Lougheed Highway and Dewdney Trunk Road to the east. Cycle tourists should eventually be able to safely get to Maple Ridge from Mission.

With improved access, it will be possible to cycle to destinations in east Maple Ridge such as Whonnock and Ruskin, which can be highlighted and further developed as historical destinations. For our Bike to Farms events our HUB committee will be able to include additional interesting farms in east Maple Ridge. These improved linkages will also enable long distance cyclists to do circle tours using the Golden Ears and Mission bridges.

Examples of success stories in our area/region

- The dike trails and car-light Osprey Village in Pitt Meadows attract many people walking and biking. Stomping Grounds coffeeshop is a favourite stop.



- The cycling facility from Derby Reach to Fort Langley right across the river is an example of how decent infrastructure turns the entire area into a very popular destination.
- Of course the cycling facilities in Vancouver have turned the city world famous (at least one of the top ones in North America) for tourists and locals alike.

Supporting evidence

Below articles demonstrate that cycle tourism is booming in places where cyclists are being made to feel welcome, and that there are huge benefits for local economies:

[Press release BC Cycling Coalition on economic benefits of cycle tourism](#)

[Article Bike Portland: bike tourism means big bucks](#)

[Article Grist: The grand tour: How bike tourism helps local economies](#)

Note that spending by cyclists in Quebec totaled over \$166 million in 2000 and \$95.4 million of that was spent by [Route Verte](#) cyclists.

Kind regards,

Ivan Chow, Co-Chair
HUB Cycling
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Chapter

JC/IC/AC