

May 28, 2021

To: Mayor and Council  
Cc: Mark Halpin, Manager of Transportation  
David Pollock, General Manager Engineering Services  
Sarah Freigang, Urban Systems <[sfreigang@urbansystems.ca](mailto:sfreigang@urbansystems.ca)>  
Allison Clavelle, Urban Systems <[aclavelle@urbansystems.ca](mailto:aclavelle@urbansystems.ca)>

Dear Mayor and Council,

We're excited that the City is embarking on a review of the Strategic Transportation Plan (STP).

We hope that the following feedback from our HUB Cycling Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee, in the form of observations and concerns as well as opportunities and suggested guiding principles, will be considered in the City's new plans for our transportation system and will help the City to transform our transportation system into a more sustainable one that will help improve mobility and accessibility for all, as well as livability, affordability and economic prosperity.

## Current and emerging issues

- There is now a great sense of urgency worldwide to act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions collectively. We're encouraged to see that this sense of urgency also exists among Maple Ridge Council members, as much of the action has to happen at the local level.
- As transportation accounts for about 64% of greenhouse gas emissions in our community, a truly bold Plan that will lead to transformative change in how we get around is critical to work towards Council's very ambitious goal to reduce our emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030. We have given more detailed feedback in our [letter](#) of March 15 of this year.
- It's not just greenhouse gas emissions alone. Both moving and parked cars and trucks take up a lot of valuable public space in our city. That leaves less space for active transportation and transit, as well as for much-needed parks and meeting places for people in the more densely built-up neighbourhoods, at walking/cycling distance from where they live.
- Successive councils have lobbied hard for better transit for our community. We have already seen improvements in service, amongst others the Rapid Bus line and better service to some outlying areas. But **we're using our vehicles more than ever.**

- COVID has led to an even greater dependence on our private automobiles, and **transit usage has dropped dramatically**.
- Only a combined 9% of our trips were made by walking, cycling and transit in 2017. The goal region-wide is 50%<sup>1</sup>.
- Cycling for transportation has proven to be a lifeline for many front-line workers and others during the pandemic. The popularity of cycling for exercise and recreation has also surged over the past year to maintain physical and mental health.
- Our population continues to age. Many elderly are reluctant to give up the freedom that a car gives them, even when their deteriorating driving skills may start putting them and others at risk. Providing a complete, connected network of safe spaces for active transportation will allow them, and many others, to choose safe alternatives to walk, ride or roll.

*Cycling participation in Maple Ridge has dropped from 1.1% of all trips in 1996 to 0.5% in 2016<sup>2</sup>.*

*The population of Maple Ridge residents within 400m of a comfortable cycling route is only 36% and the % of people cycling are among the lowest rates in all municipalities in the region, while cycling collision rates are the highest in the region<sup>3</sup>.*

*The growth of the proportion of trips made as a driver has grown significantly, from 60% in 2008 to 72% in 2017.*

These are alarming numbers when there is a great urgency to reverse these trends.

## **What are the challenges?**

- Accessibility to services and amenities by active transportation can be challenging, as a result of decades of land use planning that favoured separation of uses and transportation by car.
- With increasing local and pass-through commuter traffic, as well as increasing truck traffic, the appeal of on-road cycling routes deteriorates naturally over time.

<sup>1</sup> TransLink's Transport2040 plan (2008)

<sup>2</sup> [Benchmarking the State of Cycling in Metro Vancouver - 2019](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Benchmarking the State of Cycling in Metro Vancouver - 2019](#)

- Funding for active transportation is inadequate, and doesn't reflect the change we want and need to see in our transportation habits and behaviour. Cycling participation has continued to drop partly as a result of this.
- Most kids today are transported to school by private automobile, leading to chaotic and often dangerous situations at school zones around the city. Schools and parents need and want help to find solutions for these problems. There is a great need for support for active school transportation, and improved infrastructure to safely accommodate kids walking and cycling to school. The infrastructure around schools tends to be designed primarily for cars and safety for kids walking and cycling to school is a big concern.
- The City has invested in systemic cycling education recently - this should be provided on an ongoing basis and participation in events such as Bike to School Week and Active School Travel initiatives should be encouraged.
- Considerable effort has been made by our City over the past decade to add physically separated route segments. However, this AAA infrastructure will remain under-utilized as long as it is disconnected from safe infrastructure at either end and/or doesn't lead to destinations. The resulting low usage rates erode public support for future cycling projects. A full cycling network plan is needed. Commitments should be made and followed through on to fulfill meaningful connections rather than completing one segment then stopping due to pushback.
- Wide roads and larger vehicles lead to more speeding and dangerous driving behaviours in neighbourhoods throughout the community, endangering the safety of people walking, cycling and rolling. Introducing protected active transportation space and traffic calming help to create safer speeds for all.
- The disconnected road network in east Maple Ridge offers no AAA east-west access to people on bikes to some of the lovely quieter roads with beautiful scenery. The planned new road connections at 124 Ave. and Grant Ave. will improve access, but will also bring more speeding cars and trucks to these areas. Improvements for cycling need to be part of the plan.

*Bike routes are sometimes unsafe, incomplete, convoluted and non-intuitive, and don't always lead to destinations.*

### **What are the opportunities?**

- The transformation of our Town Centre is starting to take shape and things are moving very fast. We'll see similar changes along the Lougheed Transit Corridor. These big changes can help many to live a less car-dependent and a more healthy, active lifestyle. Let's work to make that an appealing and natural choice for them by re-designing

streets to make them more welcoming to people. We need to create more people-first streets.

- More neighbourhood commercial nodes are being planned and implemented. We have to ensure that they are easily and safely accessible for people walking and cycling.
- Due to COVID, many more people have been working from home, reducing the need for long commutes. This may well be a continuing trend. More people are moving to our area, planning to work remotely and enjoy more quality time with the family while saving money at the same time. This is definitely a great opportunity to reduce the numbers of cars on the road by providing amenities within walking and cycling distance as well as safe facilities to get around locally.
- Popularity of cycling in general has surged since the pandemic began. Cycling is not only a great alternative to the gym, it also allows those who do not/can't afford to drive to get around town without the possibility of exposure to COVID while using transit.
- Mass transit will have to continue to be a big part of the solution post-COVID. To significantly enhance the reach of transit and further encourage improved services, safe and convenient cycling infrastructure around transit nodes and corridors as well as secure bike parking are needed to encourage multi-modal travel and provide first and last mile transportation where local transit is infrequent or unavailable. The growth of car-share and bike-share opportunities in other areas of Metro Vancouver helps multi-modal travelers to complete their trip at the other end.
- Cycling adoption is directly linked to the installation of high quality infrastructure which people feel safe to use, and a connected network. The explosive growth in cycling in Vancouver is testimony of this. We can do better too!
- Cycling infrastructure is important not just for physically able people who ride or roll, but also for those with mobility issues who use for example mobility scooters or wheelchairs. For them it means freedom and independence. It allows them to meet friends in the park, go to the store, or go out for a meal in the evening without having to rely on others to drive them.
- High quality cycling infrastructure improves not only cycling safety but also pedestrian safety.
- Improved transportation options means reduced need for parking, which will improve affordability both in terms of transportation and housing. The average underground parking space costs \$30,000, which increases housing prices.
- In the 2017 Maple Ridge Tourism Strategy, the outdoor experience was identified as one of the most obvious strengths of our City that should be capitalized on. Among the strategies listed, on-road as well as recreational cycling are mentioned numerous times throughout the plan. Infrastructure improvements will enhance Maple Ridge's appeal as a tourist destination. For example, safe cycle paths into Golden Ears Park would be a

fantastic attraction. Cycling tourists are great for business. They're more likely to stop and explore, and stay overnight. And they like to eat well.

*Most trips originating in Maple Ridge have a destination within Maple Ridge (68%), which means there is huge potential to grow cycling participation. We need to plan and build now, for tomorrow, not for yesterday.*

### **Micromobility: it's the future!**

- World-wide, e-bikes and e-scooters (micro-mobility) are getting more popular by the day. Also other upcoming trends and technologies - such as car- and bike share and self-driving vehicles - are expected to significantly disrupt the transportation landscape within the time span of 20 years as covered by the new Transportation Plan. Careful attention needs to be paid to what is required to safely accommodate these new classes of users, and to encourage the uptake.
- There is huge potential for growth of electrically assisted micromobility modes in our area. E-assist devices make riding longer distances, conquering hills, carrying kids and equipment, or concern about arriving at the destination all sweaty much less of an issue.
- Physical limitations/disabilities no longer need to be an impediment for many to use active transportation.
- More people will have alternatives to the car for many trips up to 10 km (and more).
- Segregation of people walking from people riding and rolling, including faster micromobility modes, will be needed along designated, higher traffic volume/speed bike routes where separated infrastructure is warranted as per the BC Active Transportation Design Guide. Wider lanes should be built to accommodate micromobility users passing each other, as well as to accommodate wider cargo bikes, etc.

*Electric and self-driving vehicles can help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but they are still cars and could lead to an increase in car travel.*

*We need to focus on cycling, new micromobility and shared modes to help address other urgent issues such as congestion, affordability, inequity and safety and accessibility for all.*

## Guiding principles

Main guiding principles:

- o Safety for all road users
  - o Reduce dependence on private automobiles
  - o Equity
  - o Inclusion
  - o Accessibility
  - o Affordability
  - o Efficiency for all modes
- 
- Roads need to be designed for all users, with appropriate separation and/or buffers from moving and parked vehicles on arterials and collectors.
  - Rather than using 'level of service' for cars as the main measure of the performance of our roads, we need to prioritize the main guiding principles listed above in order to improve performance for all users.
  - When it comes to active transportation, we need to build for and accommodate the growth we want, not just current mode share.
  - Directness, intuitiveness, safety, comfort, connectivity and convenience of bike routes are all important in order to make cycling a more appealing option.
  - Bike routes need to lead **to** destinations, not **around** them.
  - Not everyone can afford a car, transit often doesn't work to get from point A to B, and distances are often too far to walk. Cycling and e-mobility can provide door-to-door transportation and can work for many trips in town, and even beyond.
  - Transportation Demand Management is key to reduce trips made by private automobiles and encourage other modes.
  - Multi-modal travel needs to be facilitated, supported and encouraged. This is key to creating a more efficient transportation system.

*One of the main guiding principles needs to be to reduce our dependence on the private automobile. We're not heading in the right direction.*

<b><i>Proportion of trips as a driver:</i></b>	<b><i>2008</i></b>	<b><i>2011</i></b>	<b><i>2017</i></b>
<i>Metro Vancouver</i>		<i>59%</i>	<i>55%</i>
<i>Maple Ridge</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>73%</i>

## Some suggested solutions

- Maple Ridge needs to set a clear goal when it comes to cycling mode share. For the Transport2050 plan, HUB Cycling proposes a cycling mode share target of 20% of trips up to 8 km by 2050 for all of Metro Vancouver. We propose a modest and quite achievable local cycling mode share target of 2% of trips up to 8 km by 2030, up from 0.5% in 2016. Developing a strategy and monitoring progress need to be part of the plan.
- Adopt a Vision Zero<sup>4</sup> policy and apply the Safe Systems approach when designing infrastructure for active transportation. The BC Active Transportation Design Guide provides good guidance.
- Apply Transportation Demand Management solutions in the Town Centre and other higher density neighbourhoods with destinations to discourage car use and to encourage active transportation.
- Prioritize active transportation around schools, as well as in the Town Centre and along the Lougheed Transit Corridor. Make improvements to infrastructure around schools to improve safety for kids walking and cycling.
- Eliminate 2-way stops prioritizing north-south car movement along designated east-west bike routes where possible, and either change to roundabout/traffic circle with appropriate active transportation infrastructure, or 4-way stop where appropriate.
- Explore opportunities to install bike-permeable diverters on neighbourhood bikeways to reduce car traffic.
- Designate all neighbourhood streets (or at least all designated bike routes) at maximum 30km/h to significantly improve safety for people using active transportation. It can be the difference between life and death if a collision occurs. These speed limits have been introduced in Vancouver, New Westminister and many municipalities in the Victoria area.



<sup>4</sup> [Moving to Vision Zero: Road Safety Strategy Update and Showcase of Innovation in British Columbia](#)

- Design slower streets to better protect vulnerable road users.
  - Explore opportunities to reduce the size and improve manoeuvrability of emergency vehicles over time, to help reduce the need for wide roads and wide curve radii.<sup>5</sup>
- Review bike parking requirements, presently only mandatory for Town Centre development. Consider lowering the minimum requirements for car parking and increasing the number of required long-term and short-term bike parking spaces and end of trip facilities for residential and commercial developments.<sup>6</sup>
- Set aside a certain percentage of Development Cost Charges as well as Amenity Contributions to help pay for needed improvements for active transportation along existing roads as a result of increased traffic from new development.
- The choice of capital projects labeled specifically as cycling projects should be guided by the greatest need for cycling improvements, not the greatest need for pedestrian sidewalks.

## Our priorities

We will be updating our UnGapTheMap list of the most important gaps in the cycling network in our City in the coming months, and we will be submitting this list later on as part of our official input for the new Strategic Transportation Plan.

Our most recent list, dated February 2021, including priority scores, has been attached to this letter.

Thank you for considering our feedback. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or for further discussion.

With kind regards,

Barry Bellamy  
 HUB Cycling  
 Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee  
 mapleridge-pittmeadows@bikehub.ca

JC/IC/SG/DR/JW/BB/EoM

## About HUB Cycling

---

<sup>5</sup> See [Fire Department's New 'Vision Zero' Truck](#) and [Fire Trucks & Vision Zero](#)

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to [Not Just Bike Racks](#), Informing Design for End of Trip Cycling Amenities in Vancouver Real Estate



HUB Cycling is a charitable not for profit organization that has spent over 22 years removing barriers to cycling in Metro Vancouver, while cultivating the health, environmental, and economic benefits that active transportation can bring. HUB has educated thousands of people, motivated thousands more, and championed improvements that [#UnGapTheMap](#) to create a connected cycling network. HUB Cycling's mission is to get more people cycling more often. HUB Cycling has close to 3,000 members and more than 45,000 direct supporters. HUB Cycling has 10 volunteer committees across Metro Vancouver that encourage cycling for all ages and abilities (AAA) in municipalities across Metro Vancouver. For more information, visit [bikehub.ca](http://bikehub.ca).