

E-mail to Helen Cook,

Date: Oct. 13, 2010

Re: Maple Ridge Major Road Network

Hi Helen,

Nice to "meet" you! (Thanks, Keith, for the introduction!)

My apologies that it took a while for me to send you this e-mail. I actually still had it in my draft folder, thinking that I had sent it to you already.

As a member of the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Chapter of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, I would like to ask you the following.

Maple Ridge, as you know, has two main east-west arteries, namely Dewdney Trunk Road and Lougheed Highway, both cutting right through the downtown core. The sections of both roads going through the town core are lined with shops, and as such would be main destinations for local cyclists. Neither have special provisions, such as bike lanes, even though there are high volumes of car traffic. There is an alternate route for cars, namely the Haney Bypass. There are two alternate east-west routes for cyclists. However, there are no possible destinations (shops etc.) along these routes, and they can merely be used as a way to bypass the downtown area. Also, when using these routes, cyclists need to stop for 2-way stop signs at every single intersection, which does not make for an easy, pleasant and convenient ride.

As a cycling advocacy group, we feel that shopping streets should be safe and accessible not only for cars, but especially for people, including cyclists of all ages and abilities ("from 8 to 88"). Dewdney Trunk Road has little potential for improvement because of narrow lanes and insufficient right of way. We have approached the municipality and asked if it would be possible to improve safety for cyclists on Lougheed Highway between 222nd Street and Kanaka Way, e.g. by installing bike lanes and/or lowering speed limits. The answer we received was that Lougheed Highway, including this section, is part of the Major Road Network, and as such Translink will not permit taking away any space for cars nor lowering the speed limit. It was added, however, that possibly this position might change in the future, when the Haney Bypass is going to be widened to 4 lanes all the way.

Our town is and will remain very car dependent as long as transit is not feasible for many people because of low frequency and lack of sufficient routes. We can, however, provide people with a viable alternative for shorter-distance trips by making getting around by bike or on foot safer and more pleasant. We feel that the stretch of Lougheed that runs through the town core should be part of the cycling network. As a cycling advocacy group, we would like Translink to consider allowing the District to lower the speed limits on this part of Lougheed, and also to look at the feasibility of providing back-angle parking, as well as a bike lane in each direction. I understand that for this to happen there would have to be consultation with the local businesses as well,

which would be the next step.

The population in our town core will double in the next few decades. Maple Ridge is expanding rapidly eastward as well. This means that thousands more cars will need to be able to traverse our town, the majority in east-west direction. Since we only have the two major corridors right now, there is just not going to be enough space for thousands more cars in our downtown. If Translink and the municipality do not work together to find ways to provide transportation alternatives for people, the traffic situation in Maple Ridge is going to worsen dramatically over the coming years. We feel that cycling can be part of the solution, if only we can ensure that people feel safe on their bikes by providing the right kind of infrastructure.

I would appreciate to hear your position on the above.

Kind regards,

Jackie Chow
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Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Chapter
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