



August 30, 2017

To: Mayor and Council Maple Ridge
cc: David Pollock, P.Eng. <dpollock@mapleridge.ca>
Michael Eng <meng@mapleridge.ca>
Maria Guerra <mguerra@mapleridge.ca>

Re: **Open House August 1, 2017**
123 Ave. separated bike lanes

Mayor and Council,

Thank you!

First of all, our HUB Cycling Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee would like to again express our gratitude to you as well as to City staff for being supportive of expanding cycling infrastructure for all ages and abilities (AAA) in our community, as well as for your commitment to providing cycling education to all elementary schools.

The changing transportation landscape

The urgent need to change the way we get around cannot be overstated. We're being told that big changes such as car-share and self-driving cars will soon be on our doorstep. It's unclear exactly what the ramifications - good and bad - will be for our cities. We have a responsibility and an opportunity to avoid, and fix, the biggest mistake we've made over the past decades. Our eggs were put into one basket for too long, and the automobile reigned, to the detriment of livability, safety and mobility for all. We hope that you will recognize and seize upon this opportunity.

Communities around Metro Vancouver and elsewhere are increasingly shifting their focus towards alternative transportation to solve some of their traffic woes. It's clear we can't forever keep building more roads and parking lots without providing viable alternatives, as all it does is induce more car traffic.

There is a critical need to facilitate "alternative" transportation such as transit, cycling and walking. This will reduce the pressures on our road network, limit the need to provide additional space for car parking and ensure that we can better accommodate the additional 40,000 to 50,000 people who will be settling in Maple Ridge between now and 2040.

Improved alternative transportation options also lead to a more equitable transportation system that better accommodates all ages and abilities as well as people of all income levels, while improving safety for all road users as well as physical and mental health outcomes, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, lowering air and noise pollution and improving livability.





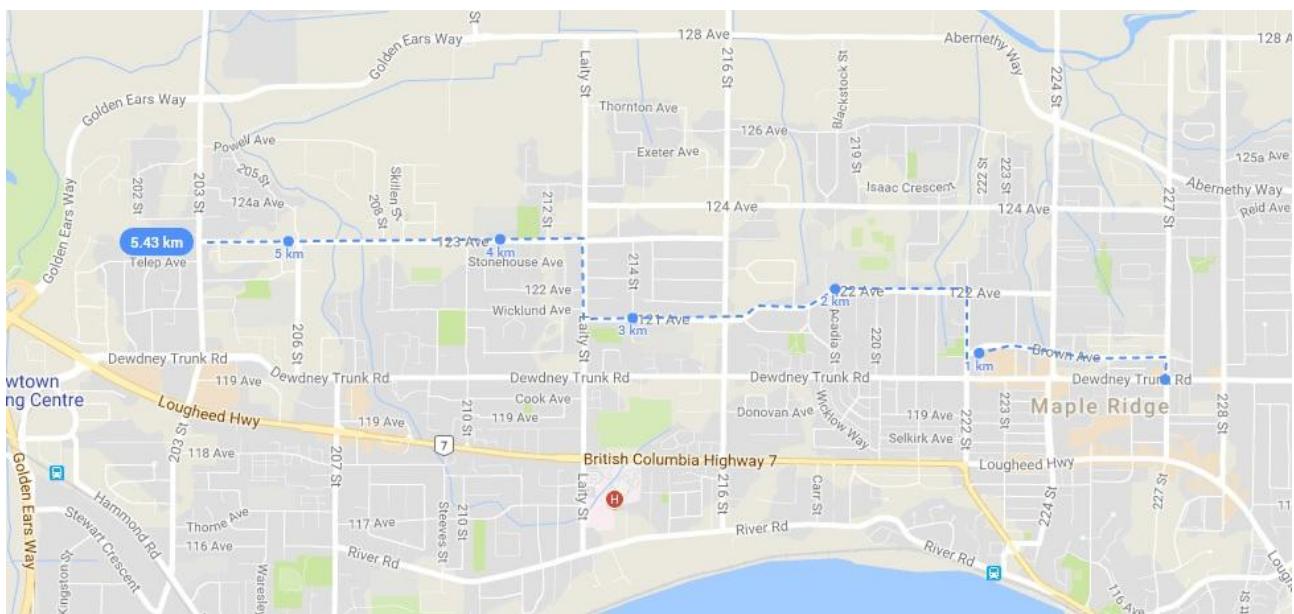
The case for protected bike lanes on 123 Ave.

123 Ave. is an important link in the east-west 123 Bikeway, which connects the new 203rd Street cycle track all the way to 240th Street off the main roads.

Speeding is presently a significant problem on 123 Ave. both for local residents and for people on bikes. The solution to the speeding problem presented at the Open House held in March 2016 - traffic circles and curb bulges - would make cycling more dangerous on this designated bike route, as cyclists would be forced to "take the lane" (ride in the middle of it, impeding car traffic) at each traffic bulge and traffic circle, basically functioning as human traffic calming devices.

Significant interest was expressed at the 2016 Open House for the option of separated bike lanes, which has been explored at the Information Session on August 1, and which our HUB Cycling Committee fully supports.

TransLink's regional cycling strategy "[Cycling for Everyone](#)" states that the target range for trips that can be easily switched to cycling are trips under 8 km. All of 123 Ave. between 203rd Street and Laity Street easily falls within the 8 km range from downtown Maple Ridge as shown on the map below (biking distance from the 227th Street/Dewdney Trunk Road intersection to the 123 Ave./203rd Street intersection is only 4.5 km).



From the 203rd Street/123 Ave. intersection, the following locations within Maple Ridge fall within the 8 km range, which illustrates the significant potential of cycling, provided safe infrastructure is available:

- 232nd Street/132 Ave. intersection
- Dewdney Trunk Road/234 Street intersection
- Kanaka Way/Lougheed Highway/Haney Bypass intersection

According to **Cycling for Everyone**, *cycling cost-effectively extends the catchment area for transit services and provides fast and flexible mobility to customers at the beginning and end of their transit trips*. Much more can be done to make it easier to combine cycling with transit. Improving cycling infrastructure such as is proposed for 123 Ave. is critical. Residents of 123 Ave. and beyond will be able to easily bike to the West Coast Express station at Meadowtown



Mall, and either leave their bike in a bike locker for the day, bring it along on bus or train, or use bike-share in order to complete their trip at the other end.

The [2014 Maple Ridge Transportation Plan](#) explains that congestion in west Maple Ridge is expected to increase by 100% over the next twenty years. Our east-west road network in west Maple Ridge is presently built out to maximum capacity, now that 128th Ave. has been four-laned. The addition of thousands more cars on our roads will most likely lead to increased rat-running and thus higher traffic volumes on the few alternative east-west routes we have, including 123 Ave.

There are several schools in the 123 Ave. area where students and parents will be able to benefit from improved AAA cycling infrastructure on 123 Ave., notably Laityview Elementary School on 123 Ave., and Westview Secondary School on Wicklund Ave.

Safer infrastructure will also allow more churchgoers at Burnett Fellowship Church to safely pedal to worship.

Arguments against separated bike lanes

We understand that a significant number of local residents have expressed concerns about the option of separated bike lanes as shown at the latest Information Session. The main concern is loss of parking.

This is what we heard:

- There aren't enough cyclists who use 123 Ave. to justify spending lots of money on bike lanes.

The improvements don't just benefit those who are already biking on 123 Ave. The "target audience" is actually the "interested but concerned" segment (41%) of the population, as identified by TransLink in *Cycling for Everyone*. Obviously, better infrastructure will also influence choice of mode of the "regular cyclists" (25%) more often. The latter segment will likely bike less in present conditions in Maple Ridge than they would in, for example, Vancouver. This will change as infrastructure improves. Much depends on the connectedness, convenience and safety of the overall cycling network, and we have to continue to chip away at fixing the [gaps](#). It's about getting more people on their bikes, more often.

- Residents do not wish to lose public parking in front of their properties, because they want any visitors to be able to park in front of their homes, and they also want to be able to accommodate parking for larger parties for special occasions, like Christmas or birthday parties.

Streets are primarily for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, and in principle safety and mobility of all road users, including and especially vulnerable ones, should take precedence over private vehicle storage in the form of free public parking spaces. An attempt to satisfy peak (convenient) public parking demand during short periods of time at certain times of the day on school days, and perhaps during public holidays, should not lead to compromising mobility and safety for all, throughout the day, every single day of the year. After all, ample parking is available on neighbouring streets.



123 Ave. is classified as a major collector road. Over time, traffic has increased, and the street no longer feels safe for many people on bikes due to traffic volumes and speeds, especially during rush hour. Local residents have also expressed serious concerns about speeding issues. Bike lanes will address both residents' and cyclists' concerns of speeding and safety.

All residential properties appear to have adequate parking accommodation. All homes on 123 Ave. have at least 3 parking spots, including the garage/carport. About 75% of homes have 4 or more parking spots. As pointed out, ample additional parking is available on neighbouring streets. Extra parking will be created at Volker Park as well, which will be available for both residential and school parking.

More kids can bike to school when separated bike lanes are available, which can reduce school parking demand. Families could consider car-pooling as well.

- Residents feel it's "their" street and they should be able to decide what happens there, not cyclists who don't even live on their street.

The road network is public space, and as such belongs to all residents of Maple Ridge. No resident can lay claim to "his" street, or "his" parking spot in front of his property. The reality is that Maple Ridge is growing. Somehow we all have to adapt and figure out how we can offer people of all ages and abilities safe and cost-effective mobility, while making more efficient use of the available space for the growing number of people - whether in cars, on bikes or on foot - that need to use it.

- Residents feel it's not fair to use other neighbourhood streets for overflow parking for the school.

There are numerous side streets and neighbouring streets that were built wide enough to allow parking on both sides, with sufficient space even to allow moving cars in both directions. Why build it and not allow people to use it? It's all about making better use of available space.

- There may not be enough parking at the church to accommodate all churchgoers.

The Burnett Fellowship Church has approx. 170 parking spots. Providing safe cycling infrastructure along this east-west designated bike route would enable more people to bike to church instead of taking the car. It's not clear if lack of parking is a real or perceived problem, but those who don't want to or can't bike, could carpool with neighbours, family or friends if they're worried about not being able to find a parking spot at the church or on neighbouring streets.

- Residents want to be able to manoeuvre larger vehicles, such as RVs, boats and machinery.

We trust that this issue can be resolved by residents working with the Engineering Department to ensure sufficient gaps remain at driveways in the curb separating the car lanes and bike lanes.

- Some residents expressed concern that elderly people or those with physical disabilities might have to park a distance away from their homes.



All homes along 123 Ave. have at least 3 parking spaces, while most have more. We trust that this is quite a reasonable amount of parking per household, and we expect that with a bit of planning it should be possible to accommodate convenient parking for any elderly persons and people with physical disabilities in each household.

- Some homes have suites and others have grown children still living with their parents, which leads to additional cars.

Homeowners are responsible for accommodating additional vehicles for tenants on their property. Not all homes presently have curb parking. It appears that those that don't, manage to park all vehicles on their own property. Hopefully the separated bike lanes will help convince a number of car owners to switch to cycling for some of their trips, and others may be encouraged to use their available space more efficiently. Much of Laity Street, as well as River Road, which are comparable streets, does not have curb parking, with comparable driveways adequately accommodating residents' parking needs.

- Laityview Elementary School is one of only two elementary schools in Maple Ridge that offer French Immersion, and students from all over Maple Ridge attend the school, often making it necessary for parents to drive their kids to school. School parking is chaotic and is expected to worsen due to loss of parking on the north side of 123 Ave.

Building separated bike lanes along 123 Ave. should enable more kids to get themselves to school on their own two wheels. For those who do need to be chauffeured to school, perhaps the school can encourage parents to "Drive to Five", and ask them to park at 5 minutes walking distance away from the school. Parking is available on 210th Street, Stonehouse Ave. and 211 Street south of 123 Ave., and on 212th Street, Douglas Ave. and Meadowbrook Place north and east of Volker Park, from where students can walk to the school through Volker Park.

- Residents are upset about having to sacrifice part of Volker park in order to create more parking.

Not providing safe cycling infrastructure increases parking requirements. Fixing gaps in the cycling network, such as 123 Ave., and thus enabling more students to bike to school, and getting more people to bike for some of their trips, will reduce parking requirements.

- Some residents feel they shouldn't have to use their garages for their cars if they prefer to use them for storage, as it's "their business" what they use their garage for.

Residents will have to make that choice. It's entirely up to each individual home owner to decide whether storing "stuff" is more important for them than storing their cars.

Kind regards,

Barry Bellamy, Co-Chair
HUB Cycling
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Chapter

JC/IC/BB/LJ/JL