

Special Series: Cycling solutions at core of Maple Ridge group



Members of HUB stopped for a photo during an art studio bicycle tour. The group meets once a month to discuss cycling issues in the community.

— *Image Credit: Special To The TIMES*

posted Aug 20, 2015

by Eric Zimmer

In 1996, feeling uncomfortable cycling on roads in urban areas was the expected norm.

That same year, HUB Cycling (formerly the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition) was formed with a vision that the cycling community could have significant impact working together across Metro Vancouver for better roads and connections, protected bike lanes, and better rules.

Today, there are nine Local HUB Committees, representing 16 Metro Vancouver communities, each with a primary focus of working with local communities and governments to keep cycling growing.

In Maple Ridge, Ivan Chow is the chair of the local arm, which began six years ago, and his wife Jackie is an active member.

“We have a very dedicated core group of five or six people, most of whom are still the founding members of the group,” Jackie explained.

The idea to create a local HUB group came from what the feeling that Maple Ridge was “accommodating mostly the fast and fearless type of cyclist, and not so much the people who are interested in biking, but not necessarily that type of rider,” she said. “We felt that more infrastructure and separation was required, especially on some of the east-west routes that are quite busy.”

Since the formation of the local HUB group, “we’ve seen more awareness, and more understanding that sharing the road is required, and that it’s a bit of give-and-take from both sides,” Jackie noted.

The group holds monthly meetings to discuss cycling issues in the community, which primarily have to do with development applications and how they will impact cycling infrastructure, positively, or negatively.

She added that in larger centres like downtown Vancouver, the idea of building cycling infrastructure into new developments has “certainly” caught on.

In fact, she said, it’s often the developers who will approach HUB and “ask what they can do to make it better for cyclists, because they’re aware of the advantages for them, such as the increase in property value.”

However, in a more suburban setting like Maple Ridge, Jackie doesn’t feel that attitude has caught on yet in the same way.

Traditionally, the 16 divisions of HUB have all operated as separate entities, but Jackie said that’s starting to change, as people realize there’s power in numbers.

“The HUB offices are making an effort to connect each one with one another,” she said.

Going forward, Jackie said she would like to see a bit more of a sharing mentality between drivers and cyclists.

“It can be tough out there on the roads sometimes,” she said.

“I think people need to remember that the roads are spaces that need to be shared by everyone.”

Note: correction added in on-line comments section by HUB: "Small correction - there are a total of 10 volunteer-led HUB Committees, working for better & safercycling in all 23 Metro Vancouver municipalities."