

Cycling still on sidewalks

Staff report: Banning bicycles from sidewalks won't make a difference

Nov. 16, 2016 5:00 p.m. / NEWS



The City of Maple Ridge is providing ongoing money to improve cycling infrastructure.

Maple Ridge could pass a bylaw and ban bicycles from city sidewalks, but doing so may not make any difference, according to a staff report.

“Given the volume of vehicular traffic ... one can expect cyclists to continue to utilize sidewalks until appropriate cycling facilities are in place, regardless of whether it is permitted in a bylaw or not.”

And as for reducing the speed limit in Maple Ridge’s downtown to 30 kilometres an hour – good luck with that.

TransLink doesn’t like the idea because it makes it difficult for buses to stay on schedule, while findings from nearby Victoria are not encouraging.

Engineer Dave Pollock said that in that city, where lower speed limits are in place, “there has been marginal reductions in speed – approximately two per cent.”

Neither has there been any effect on collision rates, while pedestrians and cyclists seem to have increased the number of accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians.

The report was presented at council’s Nov. 7 meeting and addressed both topics, as well as the idea of forcing big trucks on to the Haney Bypass instead of having them lumber through downtown.

The way to reduce traffic speed is by changing the street scape, says the report.

Maple Ridge changed its Highway and Traffic Bylaw in 2010 to allow cyclists on sidewalks as a safer option to riding on busy streets where there were no cycling lanes.

At the time, the Vancouver Area of Cycling Coalition urged the city to allow cyclists on sidewalks and Dewdney Trunk Road and Lougheed Highway.

However, the city is now providing ongoing money to improve cycling infrastructure.

The review also looked at forcing trucks on to Haney Bypass, but said that would require public consultation and approval by TransLink.

A request in 2014 by New Westminister for a truck route was rejected by TransLink.