

Sent to members of the Parks and Leisure Services Commission and members of the (Maple Ridge) Bicycle Advisory Committee on Jan. 2, 2014

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Recommendations by HUB Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows regarding future map and possible improvements of the recreational cycling network:

Main recommendations:

- Use detailed information gathered by HUB volunteers during assessment rides in Summer 2011 to update map (available from Russ Carmichael, Staff Liaison Bicycle Advisory Committee).
- If the goal is one map for different uses - walking, hiking (probably different levels of difficulty?), recreational cycling (both suitable for ages 8 – 80 as well as more challenging trails/routes), horses, mountain biking - the suitability of trails for each use should clearly be indicated both on the map, as well as on signage, which needs to be clearly visible, also to those not familiar with the area.
- A separate map for each use (with possibly some uses combined) may provide more clarity for users.

Further suggestions:

- Possibly do a separate assessment of off-road trails not assessed in 2011 that may be accessible for recreational cycling, if any (not mountain biking, which should be done by mountain biking groups).
- Decide, together with different user groups (horse groups, HUB, mountain biking groups, hiking groups, ...), which trails can safely be recommended as “multi-purpose” (e.g. horses and (mountain) bikes may sometimes not be a very good mix, especially on the more challenging trails).
- In recognition of the fact that the horse community has been instrumental in developing much of the present off-road trail system, their input is essential.
- River/stream crossings where there is no bridge should be clearly indicated on the map, and the trails leading there should probably not be marked as cycling trails.
- Addition of bridges on trails that are suitable for recreational cycling will improve the recreational cycling network.
- Improvement of trails (e.g. surface, width, steepness etc.) that are presently not suitable for all-ages-all-abilities recreational cycling will improve the recreational cycling network.
- On-road routes should indicate steepness and otherwise challenging issues (e.g. no shoulder, high traffic volumes/speed). Where appropriate, these routes should be marked with “caution” or something similar.

- Pitt Meadows is rather well served with recreational trails for all ages and all abilities. In Maple Ridge there are few off-road, all-ages-all-abilities recreational cycling trails that are accessible (i.e. without having to load the bike on the car to get there).
- Nature is available in abundance in Maple Ridge, and it would be of great benefit not only to local residents as well as to tourism opportunities to invest in off-road trails as well as improved on-road trails that are suitable for recreational cycling for all ages and abilities. There is considerable pent-up demand for safe and pleasant recreational cycling infrastructure. Long term planning for a well-connected trail system throughout our communities needs to occur before new subdivisions appear, since many presently have cul-de-sacs and dead ends without proper connections for pedestrians and cyclists.
- When it comes to on-road trails, continued sprawling development, over-dependence on cars and speeding make roads increasingly unsafe for cycling for all ages and abilities. A Complete Streets policy - which requires the consideration of the needs of all road users, not just cars, when constructing new or upgrading existing roads - would help to improve safety and comfort for those wanting to get around and enjoy our cities, our parks and the surrounding countryside on their own power.

Since HUB volunteers have already completed the assessment of the existing bicycle network in 2011, we will limit ourselves to some specific comments on the off-road trails (not all) that one of our members has explored (on foot, not by bike!) since the 2013 Recreational Trails map was published earlier this year, which according to the map are now “multi-purpose”. These are her findings:

- Looking for the trail off of 232nd Ave. at 136 Ave., going east, I walked back and forth several times, but could not find it.
- I walked the trail starting at Larch Ave. and 236th St. (trail has disappeared, is now sidewalk in a new development!), going north and then west, until I arrived at a stream that I could not cross - which must have been fairly close to 232nd (this would have been the trail above that I couldn't find starting from 232nd Ave.
- The trail at 227th St. at 128th Ave. going west was totally overgrown when I first tried to find it. I tried again a few weeks later, and the trail had been cleared. I could only walk it a very short distance up to the Alouette River, which I could not cross on foot.
- I also tried the short trail between 127 St. and 224th St., but again there was a stream to cross, which was difficult as I had to climb over a fallen tree.
- I also tried the short trail west of 224th Street connecting to 128 Ave.. Again there was the Alouette River to cross.
- I tried the short trail connecting 128th Ave. with 240th, west of 240th. Again, there was a stream to cross.
- I tried the short trail at 240th just north of 124th (?), but I could not cross the Alouette, since there was no bridge.
- I tried 241st St., same thing.

- I tried the trail at 128th Ave., just west of 248th. At the entrance there was a horse gate, and there was a big log as well, so this trail is clearly just for horses. I continued on the trail and arrived, again, at a body of water.
- I tried the trails at Alco Park. The trails there are pretty short, so I was hoping to follow the trail going further north, but there was the river again, and no bridge.
- I tried some of the trails at the Woodlot, starting at the parking lot off Dewdney. There is no signage on any of the trails, so it's hard to know where you are exactly. The trails were very poorly maintained. Twice I had to return because the trail was totally overgrown.
- I tried the trail at 248th Street, crossing Kanaka Creek. There was the Creek, and no bridge! At the south end of the trail there are logs at the entrance to the trail, so clearly this is just a horse trail.
- The trail at 110th Ave. just west of 248th St. is marked on the map as a horse trail, but there was a sign saying "no horses allowed", and there was a concrete barrier.
- The trail at 104th Ave. and Jackson Road, going east, was closed (temporarily, due to development). I tried this trail a few years ago, but it was an extremely steep hill to climb on foot, so also definitely not a suitable bike trail at all.
- I tried the trail at the north end of 264 Street. Nice trail, but again, a stream to cross. Doable for some, but not for everyone. Some of the trails further north have now turned into logging roads.
- The surface of the trails through Albion Park is not great for cycling (wood chips), and the trails are pretty short for biking through anyway.
- Bikes are not allowed on the loop at the Kanaka Creek Waterfront Park, and the connection to the Haney Bypass is closed off, which is not indicated on the map. Only the dead-end section along the Fraser is accessible for bikes, which takes only about 5 to 10 minutes going to the end and back.
- The trails at Cliff Falls are not suitable for recreational biking. Mountain biking is probably tough too, because there are sections with steps.

Summary:

None of the trails above are suitable for recreational cycling.