

March 15, 2021

To: Maple Ridge Mayor and Council;
sustainability@mapleridge.ca

Re: Maple Ridge proposed updated Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction targets

Dear Mayor and Council,

Our Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows local committee of HUB Cycling would like to provide the following feedback with regard to the efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in our community. As a cycling advocacy group, we will obviously focus our submission on the issue of transportation.

It appears very likely that our municipality will align its GHG emissions targets with those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Metro Vancouver, i.e. a 45% reduction from 2010 levels by 2030, and 100% by 2050. There is no doubt that this is a very ambitious target. It will require bold action with regard to further policy changes and implementation.

The previous targets, embedded in the OCP, of a 33% emissions reduction from 2007 by 2020, and 80% by 2050, were adopted over a decade ago. We understand that our emissions have increased since then.

Our emissions from transportation make up the biggest slice of the pie for our community. For comparison:

- Globally, emissions from transportation are 14% of total emissions.
- Regionally (Metro Vancouver wide), that percentage is about 36%.
- Locally (Maple Ridge) emissions from transportation make up about 64% of our emissions (this percentage was 57% only about ten years ago!).

Despite the absence of accurate, clear and comparable year-over-year data, it's clear that we need to do better.

We agree at this point with Mayor and Council's desire to move forward quickly with two "*big moves*" to reduce our community emissions. One of those *big moves* is to strengthen electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements in new development.

As we have to acknowledge the reality that, over the past decades, our society, by design, has grown increasingly dependent on motor vehicles for personal transportation, we agree with the need to continue the transition to electric vehicles in order to reduce both our dependence on fossil fuels for transportation as well as our emissions as a result of it.

In view of the inadequate results with regard to community emissions so far, we feel that a much more comprehensive plan is needed. With regard to transportation, the wide spread adoption of private automobiles has already had and continues to have a dramatic and destructive impact on our urban/suburban environment, on the way we live and consequently on our energy consumption.

Changing the way we power our vehicles may help us reduce our GHG emissions, but it does not solve and may even exacerbate a host of other problems we also urgently need to face, such as:

- our ever increasing energy consumption;
- our continued over-reliance on, and prioritization of, energy inefficient cars for personal transportation (we consume a lot of energy to move multi-ton vehicles, often just to transport our bodies from point A to point B);
- our dependence on various metals needed for the production of electric vehicle batteries. (The mining of these minerals leads to serious environmental, social, human rights and geopolitical problems, mostly in other parts of the world);
- worsening congestion;
- the danger that cars continue to pose to vulnerable road users;
- the high proportion of valuable land dedicated in our community to moving and parked cars;
- our sedentary lifestyle, which leads to many health issues;
- worsening transportation inequality, exacerbated by the various ways electric vehicles (i.e. the more affluent among us) are being subsidized;
- while cycling is a super energy efficient, affordable, zero-emission, and space efficient mode of transportation, a safe and connective cycling network for all ages and abilities continues to be treated as optional (a complete network for cars is a given, whereas often much-needed infrastructure improvements for people cycling only **may** happen when land is re-developed, or if cycling grants are made available, resulting in a disconnected network);
- the unpreparedness and unawareness when it comes to planning for highly promising emerging micro-mobility options;
- the as yet untapped potential for multi-modal travel, i.e. combining active transportation with transit.
- the high number of children being driven to school in private automobiles. Active transportation is a lifestyle. Research has shown that when children are exposed to and encouraged to actively transport themselves at an early age, they can have a great influence on how future generations, as well as current friends and family choose to move about their community.

Solutions:

- a more efficient, sustainable urban environment
- less long distance commuting
- fewer cars and fewer trips made by car
- more mass transit
- prioritizing walking, cycling and micromobility for trips up to 10 km
- safe infrastructure around all schools (at least 0.5 km in every direction) that allows for children to cycle, walk and otherwise actively transport themselves to and from school

How are we doing with regard to sustainable transportation?

The regional goal has been 50% sustainable mode share (note that electric vehicles are not considered sustainable), throughout Metro Vancouver, since the 1990s. So how are we doing?

Regionally, we've gone from 24% sustainable mode share in 2011 to 27% in 2017 (all trips).¹

What about Maple Ridge? The data that we've been able to find is not complete:

- According to the 2014 Transportation Plan, 4% of **all** trips were made by transit.
- The 2016 Census provides only data on **commute** trips, not all trips: a total of 11.9% of commute trips in Maple Ridge were made by sustainable modes (7.7% by transit, 3.7% walk, 0.5% bike).

State of Cycling

So are we making any gains so far in Maple Ridge when it comes to cycling?

The [State of Cycling report](#) (2019), a joint effort by HUB and TransLink, offers an up-to-date picture of cycling rates, safety and quality of bike routes.

According to the report, we can only improve what we are able to measure. Below are some of its findings:

	Metro Vancouver		Maple Ridge	
	1996	2016	1996	2016
Cycling rates:	1.7%	2.3%	1.1%	0.5%
	Metro Vancouver		North-east subregion (including Maple Ridge)	
	2008	2017		
Collisions per million bike trips:	21	23	52	
	Metro Vancouver		Maple Ridge	
	2019		2019	
Cycling network comfortable for most people:	46%		36%	
% Population within 400 metres of a bike route comfortable for most	65%		36%	

Cycling during COVID

How has COVID affected cycling in our community? Statistics are not yet available, but we do know that bike shops in our area are not able to keep up with the huge growth in demand for bikes. One bike shop in our area reported selling more than twice as many e-bikes in **January** this year alone than in all of 2019, and labour sales to repair and tune up bikes had increased in 2020 from 2019 by close to 80%. Some bike shops are now taking orders for delivery in 2022. It's a great opportunity for our City to seize on this growth in cycling in our community!

Action:

We can't just set ambitious targets without committing to truly ambitious action.

- It all starts with land use.

¹ Benchmarking the State of Cycling in Metro Vancouver 2019

Mayor and Council and staff are well aware that land use is of the utmost importance. Densification, especially in the Town Centre and along the Lougheed Transit Corridor, is already happening. Mixed use development is being encouraged. More commercial nodes are being planned and developed throughout the community, creating destinations closer to where people live. Maple Ridge is *growing up*.

- No more sprawl!
We absolutely need to stop *growing out*, and say **no!** to even more car dependent sprawling subdivisions! There are many more opportunities for densification and in-fill.
- Transit will be back!
We may be seeing a big dip right now in the use of transit due to COVID, but there is no doubt that transit will continue to have to be relied upon by a significant and growing part of the population for their daily transportation needs.
- Embrace and further encourage working from home as the new normal for more people.
- Transportation Demand Management
Explore a variety of ways to make "alternative", sustainable modes the preferred ways to travel more often and to discourage travel by private automobile.
- **Active transportation and micromobility need to be a big piece of the puzzle.**
Supportive policies and practices:
 - a strong, connective bicycle network plan that prioritizes sustainable modes over speedy travel by and free public storage of private automobiles;
 - a cycling strategy detailing goals and performance objectives, monitoring and performance evaluation, as well as education, promotion and enforcement;
 - a Complete Streets policy to support safe and convenient access, regardless of mode of transportation;
 - a Vision Zero strategy to achieve zero traffic related injuries or fatalities for vulnerable road users;
 - traffic calming measures and reduced maximum speed limits along designated bike routes where cars and bikes share the road;
 - careful consideration of the use of multi-use facilities, as studies have shown they more often lead to conflict and collisions (which will increase as we start seeing higher numbers of faster e-bikes);
 - very careful consideration of the use of bi-directional facilities (in situations where they are not recommended by the various design manuals), which have been shown to be significantly more dangerous at intersections and driveways when cycling in the direction opposite to expectation.

Thank you for considering our feedback on this very important issue.

Kind regards,

Jackie Chow
HUB Cycling
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee

JC/DR/IC/JW/MN/BB/JL/NC

About HUB Cycling

HUB Cycling is a charitable not for profit organization that has spent over 22 years removing barriers to cycling in Metro Vancouver, while cultivating the health, environmental, and economic benefits that active transportation can bring. HUB has educated thousands of people, motivated thousands more, and championed improvements that [#UnGapTheMap](#) to create a connected cycling network. HUB Cycling's mission is to get more people cycling more often. HUB Cycling has close to 3,000 members and more than 45,000 direct supporters. HUB Cycling has 10 volunteer committees across Metro Vancouver that encourage cycling for all ages and abilities (AAA) in municipalities across Metro Vancouver. For more information, visit bikehub.ca.