

Columnist: Change in priorities needed

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[JACKIE CHOW](#) / Sep. 24, 2015 1:00 p.m. / [COMMUNITY](#)

The third annual Bike to Farms ride took place on Sept. 6, with two groups of 30 each.

We again visited Matt and Deanna Laity at the historic Brookfield Farm, Lorea McCready and her amazing vegetable garden, and learned what goes on at Red Barn Plants and Produce from owners Ken and Elke Knechtel.

Visiting these local farms made me think about how important it is to treasure our local heritage. The passionate people who own and work so hard on our small local farms often have a long and deep connection to the land where they sow and harvest their produce, and to the animals that produce the milk, the eggs and the meat that we consume.

Decades ago, local agriculture used to feed many more people in our community. These small businesses keep our heritage alive.

Most of all, we need to treasure and support our small local farmers because they are very much needed to make our community more resilient, so that if, or rather, when California can no longer send us the many fruits and vegetables that they've fed us with for decades, and when it no longer makes sense to transport much of our food thousands of miles, our own local farmers can help feed us and hopefully we won't go hungry.

We had some kids on the ride, but next year I'd like to see more.

Of course, there's more to heritage than just farming.

Heritage was the theme of last weekend's GETI Fest. There was lots to see and learn while enjoying the wonderful long-awaited downpour.

Unfortunately, I guess thanks to the rain, the kids stayed at home instead of having fun at HUB's bike rodeo, where we were hoping to teach them some road safety and biking skills. Not too many people tried out the wonderful e-bikes we had at GETI Fest, either. Next year it's going to be sunny.

If you've never heard about GETI: it stands for Golden Ears Transition Initiative. Under the leadership of founder Gerry Pinel, GETI works to create awareness of the need to transition to a less fossil-fuel dependent future and greater resilience of our community. Many action groups each do their little bit to help create awareness and encourage change.

Our HUB committee is one of those groups. We focus on the transportation-side of things.

As cities work to better accommodate cyclists with improved and safer infrastructure, cycling is rapidly becoming the mode of choice for an ever increasing number of people.

Communities simply have to move away from always putting the fast movement of private automobiles before the needs and safety of people. Priority needs to be given to people on transit, walking and biking, and we urgently need to get serious about increased investment in all those modes.

Cities can't do it alone.

They need help from senior levels of government. Which brings us, of course, to the upcoming election.

Don't forget to ask your candidates whether they will actively support a national transit strategy.

Also ask if they'll support the development of a national cycling strategy as proposed by Canada Bikes, including federal funding of a modest \$10 per capita annually.

– *Jackie Chow is a member of the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows*

chapter of HUB Cycling.