

Re: 1015 Re: 2019-138-RZ; 22238, 22242, 22246, and 22286 Selkirk Avenue, 22245, 22251, and 22289 Loughheed Highway

From: Jackie Chow (jchow23708@yahoo.ca)  
To: wayne@bisskyarchitecture.ca  
Cc: rtardif@mapleridge.ca; cgoddard@mapleridge.ca  
Date: Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 10:34 a.m. PDT

Hi Wayne,

Thank you very much for your detailed and insightful response, which is, to be honest, not surprising to me.

As you know, the current demand for both car- and bicycle parking is a result of past and current planning practices, which continue to prioritize the use of private motor vehicles. Bicycle infrastructure still doesn't get built where it's most needed, so we don't yet have the infrastructure that makes it possible for people to safely and conveniently travel by bike to get to their destinations.

It's true that you're required to abide by current by-laws, and I totally understand that there's no incentive for developers to do more. If residents don't ask for more bike parking, why would you provide it at a cost?

The region as a whole is really at a crossroads at this point in time. Change has to, and will, start happening a lot faster in the near future. We simply have no choice. Metro Vancouver's population is expected to grow by another million residents by 2050 and Maple Ridge is going to see its share of the growth. In addition, there's all the car and truck traffic that just travels through Maple Ridge without even stopping here. There are very few opportunities in Maple Ridge to expand east-west road capacity and that's really where the bottleneck is and always will be. The only real solutions is to give people viable alternatives for the many shorter trips that are made in town: we need more and better transit (Bus Rapid Transit will be coming to Maple Ridge!) and much improved walking and cycling infrastructure. With the use of new micromobilities growing fast and the range of e-bikes improving significantly, it also becomes more feasible to travel farther. Build it and they will come.

The fact that the transportation landscape is changing very fast is another reason why we need all hands on deck to help our community adapt: many people are discovering e-bikes and e-scooters. Longer distances and hills are no longer an issue. We're also being told that car-sharing is the way of the future, which means that not every household will need to own their own car. Those are really good things.

We can no longer say that "people just need their cars in Maple Ridge and that's how it always will be" when there's a huge effort going on right now to densify the Town Centre and along the Loughheed Transit Corridor. One of the main reasons for this is that, yes, we need people to get out of their cars! Thousands of apartments like yours are being added, while we're seeing more and more congestion as a result of the increase in car traffic. That's why a well connected, safe and convenient cycling network is critical, to make door-to-door travel without a car possible for many more people. I totally understand that it doesn't seem make sense for developers to provide bike parking when the road infrastructure doesn't support it.

I think nobody should be surprised that you gave up your month-long effort to commute to your office by bike eight years ago. You may have tried biking on Loughheed Highway? I tried that myself, but gave it up quite a few years ago. Who wants to get killed, right? The alternative is a circuitous route along neighbourhood streets. Takes some effort and time to figure that out. At the time the route probably wasn't even signed yet. It is now. And now there are plans for a continuous greenway between Loughheed and Dewdney. There are also plans for multi-use facilities along Loughheed Highway from downtown Maple Ridge to 203 St. That will open up huge possibilities for car-free travel along this transportation corridor.

We WILL start seeing the infrastructure improve to make cycling a more viable and safe option for most people. It's happening across the region and it WILL happen in Maple Ridge. But if people don't have anywhere to store their bikes, while they do have ample space for their cars, then it's obvious what the choice of many of them is going to continue to be. How many people will want to store their bikes in their living room, especially if the household includes kids? Forget that, right?! Makes more sense to do what everybody else does since they already have a car parking spot (or two). Easy-peasy, right?

As I said, we need all hands on deck, and I'm hoping that you, as a prominent developer in our city, and as someone who lives, works and plays here, and who has the ability to make a difference, will be willing to add your voice to the call for the need for change. And I hope you will show that you believe change is possible, and that you want to be in the forefront of it all.

By the way, have you considered unbundling the parking? If people do not need to pay for a parking spot if they don't need one, that'll make it a more appealing option to more people to go car-free, or to go from two to only one car in the household. It'll help to make housing more affordable, which is such a huge issue right now.

You can make a difference!

With kind regards,

Jackie Chow  
HUB Cycling  
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 08:43:59 a.m. PDT, Wayne Bissky <wayne@bisskyarchitecture.ca> wrote:

Thank-you for your email.

Currently , development applicants are required to address laws and bylaws that have already been adopted by elected officials , not future ones. It is impossible to know what future councils may or may not adopt. They may indeed require more parking or bike storage if they wish.

Meanwhile, this project complies fully with, and exceeds in many areas, the current bylaws and requirements. Their decision to provide more parking is based on their review of the market demands. Over the last 33 years we have been working in Maple Ridge, the most common complaint we hear post-occupancy is inadequate vehicle parking. Most residents wish more stalls had been provided. I have yet to hear a complaint regarding the amount of bike storage. There is also currently a major shift to electric vehicles. Our clients believe this demand will only increase.

Retired seniors, singles , and young couples without children used to be the main demographics of apartment dwellers. They typically had more time and inclination to use other forms of transportation besides cars. While they are still a large part of the apartment market, over the last 5 years or so our housing crisis has exploded, resulting in many young families whose first choice would have been townhomes or single family homes can now only afford apartments. Almost all have at least one (and often two) vehicles which they see as necessary to quickly transport their young children to and from school or extracurricular activities. Being able to get to and from work and then back to their children in a timely manner is a very important part of their values.

On a personal note, in our former office location we developed on Loughheed Highway in the downtown area, we provided all of the required bike storage . Yet over the almost 10 years we were there, none of the short term bike stalls at the front entrance were ever used once and the long term area in the parkade was only used by myself about 8 years ago during a month long healthy-living spurt. That space has remained empty ever since.

We applaud people for choosing car-free lifestyles, but it simply is not possible for many members of our community.

W. Bissky, Architect AIBC

On Sep 19, 2022, at 10:39 PM, Jackie Chow <jchow23708@yahoo.ca> wrote:

Hi Wayne,

I saw the development proposal for the above property is on the agenda for Committee of the Whole tomorrow.

I was wondering about the extra parking you're proposing. From what I've heard from several developers, it appears that often the amount of parking provided in apartment buildings in the area exceeds demand. Is your decision to provide more than is required based on a parking study?

Are you aware that the City is reviewing the Off-street Parking and Loading Bylaw and that significantly more bike parking will be required in the near future? The apartment building you're proposing is right along a designated bike route, which will be part of the future West Ridge Greenway, which will run all the way from downtown Maple Ridge to 203 Street. It's really important to make sure that residents of all new apartment buildings have adequate bike/micromobility facilities so that we can encourage more people to make more trips by bicycle/e-bike/e-scooter etc.

Many future residents in your building may be able to live car-free lives. We already have the Rapid Bus on Loughheed Highway, and TransLink is planning future Bus Rapid Transit, with designated transit lanes. With so many destinations at walking and biking distance, and transit almost on our doorstep in this case, we have a great opportunity here to plan for a less car-dependent future.

Would love to hear your thoughts!

With kind regards,

Jackie Chow  
HUB Cycling  
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee