



Your **Cycling** Connection

bikehub.ca



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Re: Widening Project Highway 7 - 266th to 287th Street

About HUB Cycling

HUB Cycling is a charitable not for profit organization that has spent over 20 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 40,000 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.

We are writing on behalf of the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows HUB Cycling Local Committee to request that MoTI reconsider the design and conduct further consultation on its project for widening Lougheed Highway (Hwy 7) at 266-287 Streets.

On September 22, MoTI hosted an information session about this project where a few key stakeholders were invited to provide input on a proposed design, which was reportedly 50% complete. Several of our Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows HUB Committee members as well as HUB Board and Regional Advisory Committee members, namely Jeff Leigh (VP of HUB Cycling) and Geneviève Bowers, attended. We appreciated this opportunity to hear about the project and to provide input. We expressed several serious concerns, which we will reiterate here.

First and foremost, we were disappointed to find that the design for the widening of Hwy 7 in this area has seemingly been done strictly through the lens of motor vehicle use. During the presentation, the word "safety" was mentioned several times by Kristen Falconer and Erv Newcombe; however, it was always in relation to the safety of vehicles and drivers. Cyclist or pedestrian safety was not mentioned once! Consideration for active transportation was not apparent even in the context of improving safety, which is a key project objective.

We voiced more specific concerns with the proposed 2.0 meter wide pedestrian and bicycle accessible shoulder located within the roadway. This roadway is classified as a Rural Arterial Divided with Median. On average, 24,000 motor vehicles currently travel on it per day with trucks making up a fairly high percentage (7%) of all the traffic. However, a 45% projected growth in traffic volumes is anticipated over the next 25 years (i.e. up to 35,000 vehicles/day). The posted speed limit is 80 Km/hr but actual speeds are 90+ Km/hr. Were a collision to occur between a person walking and a light truck, government guidelines state it may “*have an additional severity equivalent to being hit by a passenger car travelling approximately 10% faster. Larger motor vehicles such as buses and full-sized trucks present even greater risks for active transportation users*” (see BC Active Transportation Design Guide, page B43¹). Our position is that this infrastructure will not be in any way safe or comfortable for people cycling or walking who choose to use this route, which is the most direct and intuitive way to move east-west to major destinations.

Despite the provincial Active Transportation Strategy (Move. Commute. Connect²) that talks extensively about building safe infrastructure for cyclists and other users, this road classification and the design speed clearly have not been primary considerations in the design of the cycling component of this project. Guidelines in the BC Active Transportation Design Guide (Section F.1)³ have not been incorporated or followed:

- The BC Active Transportation Design Guide does NOT recommend bicycle and pedestrian accessible shoulders on roadways with provincial right-of-way. It DOES recommend physically separated bicycle and pedestrian- or multi-use pathways for walking and cycling (footnote table F-26, page F10).
- Bicycle and pedestrian accessible shoulders are NOT recommended for design speeds > 70 km/h (footnotes tables F-27 on page F11 and F-29 on page F17, and under Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessible Shoulders on page F16). Note: as indicated by MoTI, 85% of vehicles travel at ≥90 km/h.

MoTI's stated objective to match the active transportation infrastructure at each end in order to achieve continuity forces the design to the lowest common denominator, essentially making this a race to the bottom. If this approach was used for motor vehicle infrastructure, no route would ever be upgraded due to the mismatch to existing infrastructure.

¹ [BC Active Transportation Design Guide, Section B](#), Setting the Context

² [Move.Commute.Connect](#)

³ [BC Active Transportation Design Guide, Section F.1 Current Practices for Highway Rights-of-Way](#):

Where Highway 7 has been widened already, it is extremely unsafe for people cycling. As a result of this, 24-year old Daphne Toumbanakis lost her life this past July while cycling⁴. A pick-up truck going eastbound on Highway 7 at Spilsbury Street hit the concrete barrier and then slammed into her. Had she been on a separated bike path with the barrier between the pick-up truck and herself, she would have been alive today.

Why does Highway 7 need to be built to a high standard for active transportation?

- **A commitment by the BC Government to provide safe cycling facilities on provincial highways:** *"...to integrate bicycling on the province's highways by providing safe, accessible and convenient bicycle facilities and by supporting and encouraging cycling - 1. Provisions for cyclists are made on all new and upgraded provincial highways.⁵"* as per the provincial MoTI Cycling Policy.

We are not aware of any evaluation that has been done, which would be required to make an exception to this rule.

- **The Province's commitment to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions,** as per the Climate Change Accountability Act (CCAA): *"Under the Act, BC's GHG emissions are to be reduced at least 40 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030, 60 per cent by 2040, and 80 per cent by 2050.⁶"*
- **The Province's ambitious goals with respect to road safety/Vision Zero.** A road system designed according to the Safe System Approach is essential to achieve these goals.⁷ See also Move. Commute. Connect (Getting to Vision Zero, page 9).
- **Highway 7 is a critical regional cycling route.** It is the **only** direct east-west regional cycling route through this area of the Lower Mainland for commuting, connecting communities or transit hubs, and for local or tourism activities. It is by default the entry and exit point for east-west travel into and out of Metro Vancouver. That is why it is part of both the **Translink Major Bike Network⁸** and the **Metro Vancouver Regional Greenway 2050 Plan⁹**.

⁴ <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/cyclist-killed-in-maple-ridge-was-beginning-cross-country-ride-friends-say-1.5033016>

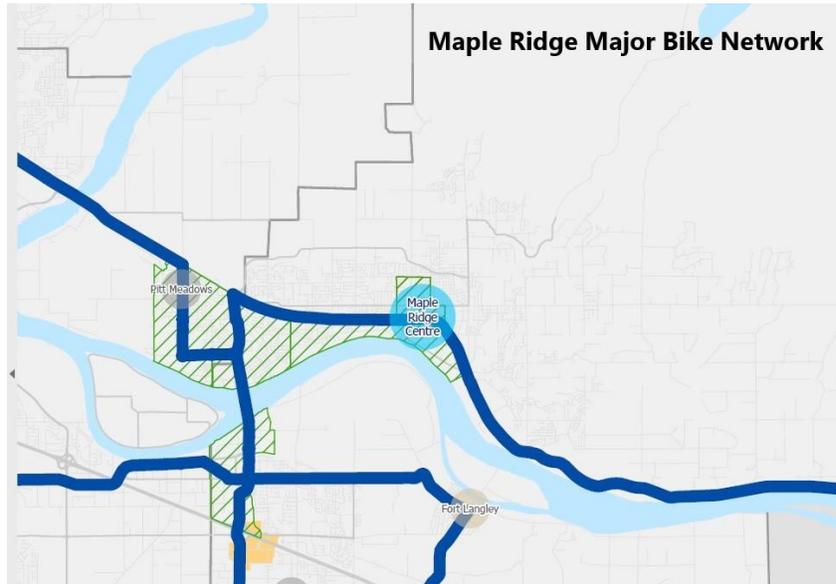
⁵ [Cycling Policy](#)

⁶ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate-change/planning-and-action/legislation#:~:text=Under%20the%20Act%2C%20B.C.'s,path%20to%20our%202030%20goal.>

⁷ [Moving to Vision Zero: Road Safety Strategy](#)

⁸ <https://bikehub.ca/about-us/news/translink-approves-major-bike-network-mbn-map>

⁹ [Regional Greenways 2050 Draft Plan](#)



- Overall fragmented cycling network with intimidating cycling conditions in Maple Ridge.** The State of Cycling report¹⁰ - a joint report between HUB Cycling and TransLink on the quality and extent of cycling networks in Metro Vancouver - states that: *“The Bikeway network in the Northeast (of Metro Vancouver) remains fragmented at present. Current cycling conditions are likely to be intimidating to most people, due to an overall lack of separation from the vehicle traffic on major streets and arterials throughout this subarea.”* Maple Ridge has the lowest rate of cycling participation in the Northeast area, with the

¹⁰ [State of Cycling report](#)

lowest percentage of the network comfortable for most people. Maple Ridge is one of only five out of twenty-three municipalities in Metro Vancouver where cycling rates have decreased over the last decade.

If the government is serious about having people get out of their cars and onto e-bikes, bicycles, scooters, or other forms of active transportation, then we need to support and actually build safe infrastructure so this will happen.

- **We need to design for the future we want, not just the present.** Cycling is the fastest growing mode share where safe facilities are provided. However, the percentage of commute trips taken by bicycle decreased from 1.1% in 1996 to 0.5% in 2016 in Maple Ridge, according to the State of Cycling report. Throughout Metro Vancouver this percentage went up during this period from 1.7% to 2.3%. With the adoption of CleanBC (2018) and Move, Commute, Connect (2019), the Province has set a target to double the share of all trips by walking and cycling by 2030. Maple Ridge has some catching up to do!
- **Cost-efficiency.** It will be much more cost efficient to include the upgrade of walking and cycling facilities now than to do it later.

We are interested in whether any calculations have been made with regard to the incremental cost if the necessary upgrades to the active transportation infrastructure are done in future years instead of now.

Here is what we are asking for:

- That MOTI stops, backs up and restarts the initial design of this project and this time creates a design using an active transportation lens in equal consideration as a vehicle lens. This will allow for safe active transportation infrastructure to be considered as a critical element of the design. The constraints that were mentioned during the presentation are then equally applied to all user modes and a design that works for all can result. We note that the question should not be whether or not safe cycling should be accommodated, but rather: how can the extra two car lanes be accommodated once the minimum requirements for separated infrastructure as per the BC Active Transportation Design Guide have been met.
- That MoTI works collaboratively with TransLink in order to ensure that high quality cycling infrastructure is incorporated into the design.
- That MoTI works with CP Rail and/or First Nations in order to resolve any constraints that may be perceived as an obstacle to providing separated walking and cycling infrastructure.

- That MoTI provides our HUB Local Committee with crash rates for all modes per million kms traveled along the different sections of Highway 7, both before widening and after widening. We would also appreciate to know any measured increases in speeds along the widened sections of Highway 7 after the upgrades.
- We request further consultation with MoTI once more active transportation consideration has been given to an initial design. We do not feel that the current design can incorporate “Physically Separated Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways.” This is the only appropriate and safe active transportation infrastructure that we are willing to accept for this proposed widening of Highway 7. As an example of what can be done, we refer to the separated bikeway along Highway 7 from the Pitt River Bridge to west of Harris Road as well as from east of Harris Road to Meadowtown Mall, close to the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows border.
- Please note that intersections will require protection for vulnerable road users, particularly considering the high approach speeds and potential for slip lanes.

Please contact us at mapleridge-pittmeadows@bikehub.ca.

Sincerely,

Ivan Chow, Co-chair, Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows HUB Committee
Jeff Leigh, Chair, Regional Advisory Committee, HUB Cycling

cc: Evan Hammer, Infrastructure and Policy Manager, HUB Cycling

JW/JC/JL/GB/EoM/EH/JD/IC