

Impact of Commuting on Community

In Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, and the Katzie communities approximately 65% of residents commute to jobs outside our community. “The reality is that we are a bedroom community for Greater Vancouver and many of our commuters feel a sense of disconnect from their neighbourhood” notes Angie McLeod, Building Community Solutions Coordinator.

“For some the disconnect leads to feeling as if they don’t belong, raises questions of safety and security since they don’t know others who live nearby, and results in a more regional versus community loyalty.”

In a series of community conversation hosted by Building Community Solutions in 2003, community participants identified a desire for neighbourhoods:

- ▶ Where people work together to improve their neighbourhood;
- ▶ Where people feel safe;
- ▶ Where people care about and respect each other and the neighbourhood.

This need to improve neighbourhood relationships – in terms of trust, sense of safety and security, level of respect and caring, and overall physical appearances – is partially an outcome of our commuting culture as few commuters have the time or energy to get to know those who live around them.

However, all is not lost for those who are commuters and for those who currently do not feel “connected” to their community. Many opportunities exist to develop relations with others who live around you, without investing copious amounts of time. An hour or two a week or even a month can have great impact.

Consider:

- ▶ Joining your local neighbourhood association (see http://www.mapleridge.org/community/community_directory.html);
- ▶ Connecting with a local sports, service, or professional development group;
- ▶ Volunteering with one of the worthwhile non-profit agencies in your community (see <http://www.mapleridge.org/parks/volunteers/index.html>);
- ▶ Attending neighbourhood and community events on a regular basis (http://www.mapleridge.org/parks/special_events/special_events.html).

You’d be amazed at how easily you can meet new people and establish new relationships by just getting out there.