

To the editor,

Yet again we hear that another person cycling in Metro Vancouver has been killed as a result of a crash with a motor vehicle, this time in Richmond. At HUB: Your Cycling Connection, we believe that many serious crashes can be eliminated with improved infrastructure and better education of all road users.

The speed of motor vehicles involved in a crash with those walking or riding a bike is a major factor in determining whether the outcome is injury or death. The speed of motor vehicles travelling on the roads of Richmond is out of hand and needs to be confronted. Better enforcement of speed limits will help, but lower speed limits on municipal roads will make the roads safer for everyone. Municipalities like Vancouver have asked the province to allow them to introduce 40km/hr legislation, and countries like Sweden are implementing 30km/hr urban speed limits as a way of achieving their target of zero traffic fatalities.

Although the City of Richmond has made some effort at improving cycling infrastructure, it clearly is not enough. It is great that we can bike along recreational paths like the dike system and now we have a new greenway running alongside Railway Ave. We also have some neighbourhood bikeways and some roads with painted bike lanes, but there are many sections of Richmond where cycling infrastructure is non-existent. We desperately need a connected city-wide network of safe and convenient cycling routes so that those who choose to cycle for their next trip can be assured of a safe trip the whole way. The city has recently adopted an Official Community Plan which has a good cycling component, but the completion date of 2041 should be moved up by several decades so that the people of Richmond can have a safe and convenient cycling network much sooner.

Education of all road users should not be ignored. ICBC has a role to play in upgrading their driver's training to have more information on interacting with people on bikes. Additionally, cycling education should be widely available to children and adults so they know how to be responsible and safe while using bikes for transportation. HUB offers training to all ages in Metro Vancouver but only has limited resources. Investment in better education will reduce dangerous situations like we have seen too many times recently.

Leaders of progressive cities around the world know that better cycling facilities encourage more people to ride bikes, which in turn provides many benefits to society including improved mobility, improved health, less noise and pollution, reduced motor vehicle congestion and a more vibrant and liveable city.

With its flat landscape, Richmond could be the greatest cycling city in North America. Also, most trips in Richmond are between 5 and 10 km – an easy cycling distance. We encourage Richmond to join the growing list of cities around the world that are taking serious steps to make cycling a safe and practical choice that appeals to everyone.