

# Missing bike path pieces filling in

## Path could connect downtown to bridge

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One day soon, it will be possible to pedal from one side of Maple Ridge to the other without getting smacked in the head with a mirror or nudged on the knee by a lumbering SUV (driven by a someone from suburbia chatting on a cell-phone).

Those days could come sooner rather than later, if it's possible to fit in the missing pieces of bike paths.

"We came up with this concept for downtown

Maple Ridge. We should be able to ride a bike to Mission, ride a bike to Langley, ride a bike to PoCo," said Russ Carmichael, district staff representative on the bike advisory committee.

But a study is underway to find a way to bridge two gaps in the cycling paths, one on the east-west network, the other on the north-south route.

The east-west gap stretches from 222nd Street and Lougheed Highway to 216th Street.

When westbound cyclists get as far as 216th Street, a network of side street bike lanes on the south side of Lougheed would move them to the Golden Ears Bridge.

"It's tough to get through that section on a bike," Carmichael said.

The obvious way to bridge that is with a bike lane on Lougheed Highway. But that requires Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure approval and would have to allow for future rapid transit routes.

And that's why the consultant, Urban Systems, will discuss that with the ministry and Ridge Meadows Hospital, where a proposed route will run beside the hospital grounds.

The district is getting half the \$35,000 cost of the study from the Climate Action Program.

That study is also trying to find a way to bridge the gap in bike lanes from between 124th Avenue and 216th Street to 137th Avenue and Neaves Road.

That gap involves the treacherous corner at 128th Avenue and 210th Street, where there is nowhere for cyclists to pedal. Once cyclists are west of Neaves Rd. and into Pitt Meadows, the wider shoulders makes pedalling much easier.

However, the initial proposal involves putting a bike lane on the Alouette dike, running north of Lacity Street and heading west through Jerry Sulina Park and back on to 132nd Avenue.

"They're looking at a couple different possibilities there," Carmichael said.

Once the proposals have been identified, the bike committee will review it, then have the consultant complete the study. When costs are known, the bike group can make requests in Maple Ridge's 2010 budget.

"The idea of this study is to get it to shovel ready," he said.

Cyclists from the eastern suburbs will already find their ride a bit easier by the end of March, when a kilometre-long bike path is completed just west of 237th Street. With paths, ways, roads and parks that run parallel to Dewdney Trunk Road, cyclists will be able to ride from 256th Street to 203rd Street without riding directly on Old Dewdney Trunk Road.