

Cycling as a lifestyle

by [Maria Rantanen - Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Times](#)

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Alex Pope and his family sometimes get called the "poster family for cycling." This might be because they can be seen cycling around Maple Ridge and to various events around town throughout the year.

Pope puts 6,000 kilometres per year on his car but he put between 10,000 and 14,000 kilometres on his bike per year.

When Pope was attending UBC and living in North Vancouver, he rode his bike regularly to university - simply because it was faster.

"I discovered I could get there faster by bike than by car or even by express bus," he said.

"Every single job I've had since then I've commuted at least partly by bike."

His cycling kilometres include commuting twice a week to downtown Vancouver although Pope said sometimes he "cheats" and drives his car to east Vancouver where he can park for free and cycles into work - or cycles to the West Coast Express station.

Pope cycles largely because he enjoys it, but it also saves money, keeps him fit, and it's good for the environment.

But Pope is also a strong advocate for cycling and wishes the municipality would invest more into cycling infrastructure to make the roads safer for both expert cyclists like himself and also for people who aren't as adept as him but just want to hop on their bikes to go to the store.

While Pope can maintain speeds of up to 40 kilometres an hour - thereby often staying with the flow of traffic - he said current bike lanes in Maple Ridge don't encourage less skilled cyclists to ride their bikes around town.

Painted bike lanes make it easier for cars to navi-gate around bikes, but he doesn't think they promote cycling.

Some bike routes like the 121 and 123 bikeways through Maple Ridge help cyclists already comfortable in traffic. But they don't encourage people who aren't already cycling.