

# Maple Ridge building for growth with

## transportation plan

By Phil Melnychuk

**M**aple Ridge motorists already see the difference on their way to work and back home.

Widening of 128th Avenue to four-lanes from 210th to 224th streets is almost complete, and likely to be finished by year-end, with the final coat of asphalt applied in the spring.

With that project, costing at least \$15 million, Maple Ridge will have another east-west avenue to serve its growing eastern areas.

But that only leads to the next task in building Maple Ridge's transportation network.

"That's probably one of the most significant pieces of infrastructure that we've completed, transportation-wise," said municipal engineer Dave Pollock.

"Over the next five years, we'll be commencing the four-lane design [of 128th Avenue, or Abernethy Way] from 224th to 232nd street."

Construction could start within that time period if council approves the financial plan.

"What we're looking to do is draw in the traffic that's coming from Silver Valley. North Albion will be starting to build. The

intent is to make that a significant roadway."

Pollock noted that Maple Ridge's long-term transportation plan calls for extending 128th Avenue farther east, to 240th, 248th and even 256th streets, as a means of creating a third east-west option to Dewdney Trunk Road and Lougheed Highway.

The new section that's about to open, from 210th to 224th streets, is intended for all road users because there's a multi-use pathway on the north side of it, separate from the roadway.

That multi-use pathway will continue on when the road widening is extended to 232nd Street.

What's likely to be lost, though, are the road shoulders that are part of the existing widening and which give cyclists another option. Because the road east of 224th St. will be cutting through the suburbs, there won't be room enough for shoulders, meaning that cyclists will have to use the multi-use path.

The road widening hasn't been without controversy, with complaints about the pathway being located on the north side.



**Raj Coimbatore along with Ramya and Tanish, 8, and Tara, 2, try out the new cycling lane on 203rd Street.**

But Pollock pointed out that the city started its consultation with the public early.

"There was significant public consultation for all the property owners," even from when the city started acquiring the right of ways, he said.

Deep ditches on the south side, fewer driveways and road crossings and access to the Alouette River dike and trails on the north side made it easier to put the multi-use pathway on the north side.

That's not the only major road project for this year.

The rebuilding of 203rd Street, between Dewdney Trunk Road and Powell Avenue, including a three-metre-wide separated bike path on the east side, is 75 per cent complete.

Again, space limits there made it easier to put a single, bi-directional cycling path on one side of the road. Public consultation was part of that process, as well.

With the above projects well on their way, city engineers are still trying to figure out how to design a major access point to the Silver Valley suburb – 232nd Street.



## **Transportation from 16**

“There are some significant challenges there. It’s a fairly steep road,” said Pollock.

Engineers have to figure out how to create enough space for cars, trucks, buses, cyclists and pedestrians in what’s basically a two-lane road.

They’ll be seeking out public input on that project.

Two other projects are also on the to-do list: improving 123rd Avenue, from 203rd to 216th streets; and completing the rest of the downtown enhancement by rebuilding Lougheed Highway from 224th to 226th streets.

One other larger project is also looming – setting out the route and the required infrastructure for the rapid-bus route from Haney Place Mall to Coquitlam, connecting with the Evergreen SkyTrain line.

That service has been promised under the Mayor’s Plan for Metro Vancouver and is expected to start within four years, providing TransLink follows through.

The three cities along the route, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, along with TransLink, have already agreed to share costs of a study that will identify such a route. A proposal to request bids should be ready by the end of the year.

- Over a five-year period, the City of Maple Ridge is spending \$2 million to help link and improve sidewalks and another \$1 million on improving cycling paths.