

Connected bike path a pleasant ride

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Some people have named the new multi-use path along Lougheed Highway the “[Bike Path to Nowhere](#),” since they seem to think that it abruptly stops and there’s nowhere else for cyclists to go.

You may be surprised to know the path is actually the link that finally completed the 117th Avenue bike route and it does lead to several destinations.

There’s already some signage and bike symbols on the road between Laity and 203rd streets, but between 216th Street and downtown there’s nothing to guide you along.

The district has not yet published a map of this route on its website.

While we’re hoping for a more professional looking map from the district, you can find two versions of a 117th Ave. route map on our HUB committee’s blog (<http://www.rmcyclist.info/>), at the bottom of the page.

One version shows you how to go from downtown Maple Ridge to Meadowtown Mall, and the other from downtown Maple Ridge to the Golden Ears Bridge.

I’m also happy to send e-copies to anyone who’s either interested or has any doubts about the usefulness of the multi-use path. Just send me an e-mail at jchow23708@yahoo.ca.

Last weekend, fellow cyclist Bunty, who wasn’t sure how to ride from downtown Maple Ridge to go to the Pitt Meadows Day celebrations, followed me along the 117th Ave. route through Maple Ridge.

Bunty had a knee replacement a number of years ago, and her new knee still gives her some problems from time to time. She was a little worried if it was going to be too much for her knee.

We pedaled along at a leisurely pace, and she was doing just fine. She was surprised at how quiet and pleasant the route was. We encountered little car traffic, apart from the short stretch along the Lougheed multi-use path.

It’s amazing how much difference even just a curb can make to separate you from the car traffic on Lougheed Hwy.

It definitely feels much safer and more comfortable, and you don’t feel you have to race to try and keep up – even if just somewhat – with the speed of traffic.

Bunty e-mailed to thank me after the ride: “Nothing like riding on a scenic, safe and flat route in the sunshine! The 117th route had it all on that day!”

Anyone who would like to have a guide when trying the 117th Ave. route can just e-mail me and one of our committee members will be happy to accompany you the first time.

I would like to extend a special invitation for a ride along this route to News columnist Sandy Macdougall and others who are not supportive of this much needed improvement for cyclists.

I think they should experience for themselves how pleasantly relaxing it is to ride your bike along this route, so that they can help convince others to start biking, even if it's out of self-interest.

Getting others out of their cars and onto the bike routes will make more space on the road and in parking lots, and reduces congestion.

Granted, the overall cost of the project seemed rather outrageous, but just keep in mind that cyclists would have been quite happy with a less luxurious path, without those rather extravagant sewage pipes underneath the multi-use path. But we weren't given the option.

I hope all can see the importance of providing alternatives to the car for many reasons.

We've gotten ourselves into quite a pickle with our oil-dependence.

For many uses, it's hard to find a replacement for oil, but that's not necessarily the case when it comes to transportation.

What's wrong with using a little muscle to propel yourself along on a bike?

Try it. You might even like it.

Jackie Chow is a member of the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows [chapter of HUB](#).