

# MAPLE RIDGE-PITT MEADOWS NEWS

## Take bikes away from helmetless riders: Maple Ridge councillor

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People are ignoring the bicycle helmet law so perhaps they should have their bikes taken away, says a Maple Ridge councillor. If people can't afford a bicycle helmet, how can they afford to have a bicycle, asked Coun. Hogarth Monday. Bicycles, in particular Maple Ridge's new bylaw that allows them to be ridden on sidewalk was back on council's agenda Monday. Staff are proposing the new Highway and Traffic Bylaw be reviewed after it was passed a year ago, including a provision allowing all cyclists to ride on district sidewalks. The intent was to encourage families and kids to use two-wheeled transportation safely and as a means of avoiding dangerous roads such as Dewdney Trunk Road, providing they always yield to pedestrians. "I have real problem with bikes on sidewalks. I see many incidents of what I call mental midgets," said Hogarth, adding he was recently almost bowled over by a cyclist on a sidewalk. After being in place for the past year staff report there have been three incidents involving cyclists on sidewalks. In response, staff are suggesting that cycling on sidewalks be banned in certain areas, after consultation with the RCMP. Staff are also suggesting that bylaw officers be allowed to ticket helmetless riders. Maple Ridge is the only municipality 1

allows cyclists to ride on sidewalks. It's a part of the bylaw that Coun. Cheryl Ashlie said she missed when was passed. "I think there are major challenges putting bikes on sidewalks." And what about allowing skateboards, she asked. However, municipal engineer Andrew Wood said those aren't allowed on sidewalks. Maple Ridge sidewalks are safe, said Coun. Linda King. She often walks on downtown sidewalks and has "never even come close to being hit by a cyclist." On the whole, our sidewalks are not dangerous." She also rides her bike on the sidewalks, "because riding on Dewdney Trunk Road is impossibly dangerous." More people, especially seniors, will be riding bikes because they're much cheaper than cars, she added. Coun. Craig Speirs says the bylaw is needed because there's a lack of bike lanes in Maple Ridge, particularly for Lougheed Highway and Dewdney Trunk Road. But discussing the helmet law has nothing to do with riding on sidewalks, said cyclist Jackie Chow. Any areas where there are problems with pedestrians are likely congested areas where cyclists need to ride on the sidewalks, she added. Cyclists shouldn't have to ride on sidewalks and suggested the speed limit in the downtown be 30 kilometres an hour, to improve safety for cyclists on the road, she added.

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