

# Cycling: Just try shopping on your bike

By [Jackie Chow - Maple Ridge News](#)

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Our HUB members are quite excited about the wonderful news that we're finally going to have a safe cycling connection along Lougheed Highway between 216th and Laity streets, now that funding has been made available by the province, the district and TransLink.

The separated path is expected to be complete by the summer.

Another improvement for cyclists is Pitt Meadows' safe multi-use path connecting Lougheed Hwy. via Ferry Slip Road to the dike system, which is ready to be used. It's no longer necessary to bike alongside big trucks on Kennedy Road.

We're often being told to shop local, to support local businesses –meaning small, locally owned businesses, many of which are having a hard time competing with big chain stores.

Our reliance on the car for everything we do changed the way we shop.

We want one-stop shopping instead of going to the bakery for bread and the butcher for meat. We instead just drive to one of the big supermarket chains in town and visit perhaps one or two more stores in the same mall.

There are considerable benefits to all of us supporting our local businesses.

Much more of the money that we spend in a locally owned store tends to stay in the community compared to the money we spend when we shop in non-locally owned big-box stores.

Another benefit of shopping locally is that the owners of local businesses have a personal stake in our communities since many live here. They pay local taxes, they support local charities, their customers are their neighbours, and they're likely to provide better service.

Locally owned, one-of-a-kind stores are also what makes a community unique and interesting. No tourists will visit a town for its big-box stores.

What does 'shop local' have to do with cycling?

A lot. Cyclists tend to stay closer to home and shop local.

In cycling-friendly communities, people tend to shop more by bike, and studies have shown that, even though they spend less per trip, cyclists make more trips and often end up spending more altogether than those who drive.

Not owning a car or just driving less can save you a lot of money – money that can be spent on other things.

Cyclists, by the way, tend to be pretty hungry people.

When you drive to shop, your trip is pretty well planned out beforehand.

When you bike to shop, you're more likely to notice an interesting storefront, or smell delicious smells from a bakery or restaurant, and it's much easier to then stop, park your bike and go into the store or eatery.

It's certainly much easier to carry your groceries on a bike than walking. You can carry more and you can go farther.

What's needed is door-to-door access – which means safe downtown bike routes along the streets where the shops are – in particular Loughheed Hwy. and Dewdney Trunk Road – and more and convenient bicycle parking.

Slower traffic and quiet cyclists make for a much more pleasant shopping environment than noisy speeding cars that are obviously just passing through.

If you feel unsafe on the road, Maple Ridge does allow cycling on the sidewalk. Just be courteous and considerate when you encounter pedestrians on your path.

Try it – get on your bike and explore what our downtown has to offer.