

## Missing link filled in Maple Ridge cycling network



Alex Pope, with the bicycle advisory committee, hopes the new path will encourage more people to start cycling.

— *Image Credit: THE NEWS/Files*

by [Phil Melnychuk - Maple Ridge News](#)

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The risky two-wheeled commute on Lougheed Highway soon will be easier now that B.C. money has been pooled with that of Maple Ridge to fill a gap in the district's cycling network.

On Thursday, MLA Marc Dalton announced the province, through the BikeBC Program, was chipping in \$488,956 for a four-metre wide, multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path on the north side of Lougheed Highway, from 216th to Laity streets.

The 655-metre stretch will connect bike paths from the downtown that run north of the Lougheed Highway to the 117th Avenue Bikeway that runs west of Laity and hooks up with 203rd Street.

Cyclists now should have fairly safe paths from Maple Ridge's western border to the downtown.

"It bridges a connection that's, right now, not very safe, and hopefully encourages a few people to get out on their bikes," said Alex Pope, chair of the bicycle advisory committee.

The District of Maple Ridge will pay the same amount as the provincial government, while TransLink will give \$269,875 towards the project.

The provincial money was announced in a B.C. Government Caucus news release.

“It’s one more connection,” said Mayor Ernie Daykin.

“I guess you’ve got to do a bit at a time.”

The design for the path is already complete, so the cash should allow the project to get started soon.

Dalton announced the money at Local Ride bike shop in downtown Maple Ridge.

“Cyclists have talked to me about their personal safety concerns along Lougheed Highway and elsewhere. I know these improvements will make local biking safer and easier,” he said in the release.

Pitt Meadows also received \$100,000, about half of the cost to build another separated cycle path, the Kennedy Road multi-use pathway, from Lougheed Highway to Ferry Slip Road, near the Pitt River Bridge.

That path will also cyclists to get to the Pitt River dike system without having to use Kennedy Road, where truck traffic is high and road shoulders are narrow, the release says.

That makes a “safe and family-friendly connection that closes the loop to our extensive dike and bike path system and also provides safe passage to Port Coquitlam,” added Pitt Meadows Mayor Deb Walters.

Since 2001, the B.C. government has spent more than \$148 million on cycling paths in more than 75 communities.

Last year, it spent \$7.25 million in BikeBC funding.

Pope said the next major long-term cycling project is a multi-use path along 128th Avenue from Golden Ears Way to 224th Street, that will coincide with later widening of that road.