

## Addition of new bike lane one component of big framework

Three kilometres have been added for cyclists in the city this year

Spencer Anderson / Daily News

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Outgoing Nanaimo councillor George Anderson and members of the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition do a test run of the city's newest cycling lane on Bruce Avenue. Councillor-elect Jerry Hong is pictured behind Anderson. Photograph By Spencer Anderson/Daily News

Nanaimo officials and cyclists gathered Wednesday morning to mark the addition of a new bike lane along the Bruce Avenue corridor, one component of a much larger commitment to add 65 kilometres of new travel routes for bicycles in the city in the next few years, with a larger network of bike amenities to follow after that.

The new bike lane stretches along Bruce Avenue from Fourth Street to Seventh Street and is included in three kilometres of new bike lanes that have been added to the city this year, including along Hammond Bay Road, Linley Valley Drive and Bowen Road.

The city is also in the planning phases for a new bike lanes in the city's hospital district on Boundary Avenue, as well aligning a cycling network with the EN trail south of Nanaimo's downtown. The measures are included in the transportation master plan passed by council this year, and cyclists want to see the new plan implemented.

"Right now what a lot of cities do is they work on a piecemeal basis, and a lot of the time it's sort of dictated by where

new sewer lines need to go in or where the roads are really bad," said Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition chairman Leo Boon. But he pointed to larger cities like Vancouver and Calgary that have rapidly developed new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

Mayor John Ruttan said that until roads are made safer for cyclists, the city would have difficulty encouraging more people to commute by bike instead of by car.

Coun. George Anderson, who spearheaded development of the transportation plan, said public consultation on the wide-ranging plan was clear.

"These were the community's priorities, so I think this is a want in the community to move forward with these types of projects and these types of goals," he said. However, he added Nanaimo would take a more "incremental" approach than other cities.

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