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## 'Life is better on a bike' pedal-pushers promise

**Christina Toth, The Times**

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The drizzle Friday afternoon didn't deter cycling advocates from Abbotsford and Mission to preview and launch Bike to Work Week, which happens May 11 to 17.

Officials from the two communities, local MLAs and members of the Abbotsford Cycling Advocacy Group, gathered to promote the use of bikes, to see how commuters can load them on to transit buses, and to test what mode of transportation was the fastest.

Harvey Bergen, owner of Life Cycles in Abbotsford, and Kevin Koopmans, an economic development specialist with South Fraser Community Futures, raced their velos against a bus and a car across town and back.



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**From left, Kevin Koopman of Community Futures, Harvey Bergen, owner of Abbotsford's Life Cycles, and Abbotsford Coun. Dave Loewen all wore appropriate gear for the Bike to Work Week kickoff by City Hall on Friday.**

Christina Toth/Times

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"It was about seven kilometres. We got back in 13 minutes or so, the bus and car were two minutes behind," said Bergen, dressed appropriately in suit, tie, shorts and bike helmet.

"I really believe cycling has a ton of benefits for the community. Life is better on a bike," said Koopmans.

This year's theme for the growing Bike to Work Week Fraser Valley network is "Just try it, you'll love it."

It looks like opportunities for cycling will expand, as eight more bike lane projects are in the works for the Fraser Valley, along with trail networks and a bike link across the Fraser River, said Abbotsford-Mount Lehman MLA Mike de Jong.

"We are really proud of the trail network that is developing here . . . it is becoming a model for other communities. Phase 1 is complete, Phase 2 is underway, and there's funding for Phase 3. I expect a trail link between Abbotsford and Mission anytime now," said de Jong.

That was a sweet sound for dedicated local cyclist Gary Harder, a proponent of road cycling and mountain biking.

"There's a green blowing and it smells and feels good," said Harder, a veteran advocate for two-wheeled transportation.

Abbotsford Mayor George Peary encouraged residents to embrace cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Mission Mayor James Atebe added the working relationship between the two communities is crucial to the longevity of this campaign.

"This is about Abbotsford and Mission working together, [and about] staying connected.

"It's up to us, the locals, to have a futuristic vision," Atebe said.

Bike to Work Week encourages people to commute to work by bike for just one week, to get healthy and to cut traffic and vehicle emissions.

To help riders get comfortable with urban roads, Wenting's Cycle and Mountain Shop of Mission and Phoenix-Velo, a training group sponsored by Wenting's, will lead on-road commuter bike courses on riding etiquette, safety, mechanics and other issues.

Each three-hour road class is free and for adults only. A \$35 deposit is required upon reservation, but will be refunded once attendance is confirmed.

Rain or shine, classes start at 6 p.m. sharp. Call to register between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. at 604-870-3764.

For more information, see [www.biketowork.ca/fraser\\_valley/btww](http://www.biketowork.ca/fraser_valley/btww).

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