



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
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RDBN and Cycle 16 hold ground-breaking ceremony for construction of the Smithers-Laidlaw Multi-use Pathway

Burns Lake, B.C. – The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and Cycle 16 Trail Society are pleased to announce the start of construction on the multi-use Commuter Trail from the Town of Smithers to Laidlaw Rd. in Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural). Construction on the 3.5 km trail is planned to start later in June 2022 and be completed in September 2022.

The project is made possible through notable support from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as a \$1,465,940 grant from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream for construction of the commuter trail. The successful proponent for the construction contract is Terus Construction.

The RDBN, in partnership with the Cycle 16 Society, are thrilled that this pathway will become a reality. The community-based Cycle 16 Society has undertaken years of community consultation, fundraising and advocacy to ensure the success of the trail. The RDBN is proud to participate through ownership of the multi-use path, as this will be the first trail construction undertaken through the RDBN's recently established Parks and Trails Service. The partners are working on planning the next stage of construction, with the eventual goal of connecting the Town of Smithers and the surrounding rural area to the Village of Telkwa by a 10.5 km multi-use commuter trail.

The need for a safe commuter trail connecting the rural areas around the municipalities has long been recognised as a need. This trail will not only increase safety, but also encourage active lifestyles and add to the availability of safe, accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

“This project is not just trail building, but a great example of community building. People from all different backgrounds made their support clear. The diversity of people and their passion has been amazing, including the tireless work of so many all the way from concept to reality. Creative fundraising for both construction and future upkeep will ensure the long-lasting life of this investment. The journey has been long and hard, but it has resulted in a great case study of how things can come to be, and an incredible community trail too! Good work Cycle 16, and thanks.”

- Mark Fisher, RDBN Director, Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

"Commitment to environmental sustainability and active lifestyles is strong in the Bulkley-Valley, and this project has been a passionate endeavor of the Cycle 16 community for years. It is wonderful to see years of planning and background work materializing in a tangible project that will provide such a valuable community asset. The RDBN is pleased to continue developing this project with such an energetic, action-oriented group. We are very pleased to see the incredible support from the Province of BC and the Government of Canada for safe, active-living infrastructure in our region"

- Gerry Thiessen, RDBN Board Chair

" The Cycle 16 team is thrilled that this community asset is going to happen! We celebrate with the many partners that have worked with us to achieve our vision"

- Allan Cormier, President, Cycle 16

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