

VACC Comments re design 240th Street bridge replacement

E-mail March 24, 2009

Mr Fryer,

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC) would like to make the following recommendations on the design of the replacement bridge over Kanaka Creek at 240th Street. This recommendation is an integral part of our vision on the future design of 240th Street north and south of the bridge.

Guiding principles

- VACC believes that cycling is a key transportation alternative, the use of which fits very well into the green house gas reduction initiatives at the global, federal and provincial levels, as well as our **Sustainable Community Policies within Maple Ridge**.
- A cycling infrastructure should be designed with different types of cyclists in mind. For long distance commuters, the need to maintain speed and momentum and the directness of route are important. For utility, short distance riders, however, subjective safety is important. For example, in order to provide a bike route for children to bike to school, safety from vehicular collisions is a non-negotiable element.
- We believe that the city should, wherever possible, design bike infrastructure which would accommodate the needs of such different types of cyclists.

Key requirements

It is important that the design of the bicycle infrastructure meet the following key requirements arising from the different source of anticipated use of the infrastructure.

1. Commuter cyclists who need to maintain momentum and try to avoid intermixing with pedestrians. The VACC would recommend a wide curb lane to be provided for these cyclists.
2. A safe route for young children from nearby neighborhood to ride to their school (Albion Elementary School). The need for safety in this case is paramount, and, therefore, separation from vehicular traffic is mandatory.
3. Short distance utility or recreational cyclists who cycle to nearby shopping malls for light shopping or cycle with their children to a nearby restaurant or coffee shop. The need for safety in this case is also critical.

Key recommendations

Taking the aforementioned requirements into account, we have come up with the following key recommendations.

1. A bike lane should be dedicated for slower traffic and cyclists of all ages. This lane, along with the pedestrian walkway, is physically segregated from the car traffic by means of either a raised curb or a cement barrier. The pedestrian walkway can be raised to further separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

2. A wide curb lane should be provided to allow commuters to ride unobstructed by slower bike and pedestrian traffic.

Technical recommendations

1. For safety reasons, it is important that motor vehicle drivers be aware of the existence of the bike lane at intersections, especially if the bike lane is behind a barrier. Therefore, it is recommended that at intersections the raised curb/barrier between car and bike lanes be omitted a short distance from each intersection upon approach. The bike lane could be painted a different colour at the intersections to alert turning motorists to the bike lane.
2. We also recommend that openings in the raised curb/barrier be provided along the uphill section, so that cyclists on the fast commuter lane could merge into the bike lane with the slower bike traffic as they head uphill and quickly lose momentum.

As we were previously told that the car lanes are extra wide under the current design, we believe the extra width required to implement the above recommendations can easily be accommodated by reducing the middle car lanes back to normal width and potentially adjusting the equestrian path.

Thank you for taking our recommendations into consideration. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call or email me. We look forward to getting feedback from your department.

regards,
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