

Public Hearing December 9, 2014 - Submission by Jackie Chow

re 2013-019-RZ, 22576 and 22588 Brown Avenue, highrise development proposal

This is the 3rd tower presently proposed for Brown Ave., with another planned for the corner of Dewdney Trunk Road and Edge St. It is expected that 5 more will be proposed another 5 years or so down the road for Brown west of 224th Street.

This is a real game changer for downtown Maple Ridge, and it is critically important that we get it right.

This type of density means that many more people will be able to bike for short trips in and around the town core. We need to capitalize on the opportunities here, so that we can

- reduce our car (& oil!) dependency where possible
- reduce the need for parking (which will leave more space for tax generating buildings as well as people gathering places which are so important and greatly add to the appeal, cohesion and vibrancy of any community)
- work towards our goal of 33% reduction of community greenhouse gas emissions from 2007 levels by 2020
- achieve our Smart Growth objective of improving transportation options, especially for those who live in and around the town core
- provide a low cost and efficient transportation alternative (which is particularly important for low income residents, many of whom reside in the downtown)
- make cycling and walking safer (and reduce costly and life altering traffic injuries and deaths)
- reduce cycling on the sidewalks (and make them safer for pedestrians!)
- encourage local shopping (cyclists are more likely to shop local, and can spend more since they save money on transportation . This leads to a boost for the local economy)
- encourage active transportation (which leads to significant health benefits, happier people and reduced health care costs)

- improve vibrancy by reducing car traffic while increasing people traffic

It's wonderful that this proposal includes secure bike storage for residents. The road infrastructure is as important if not more.

Brown Ave. is presently the best one of only two east-west bike routes to and through the town core. Not only should we do everything we can not to lose it, we should improve it.

The present road standard, with no special facilities for cyclists, was quite adequate for cyclists in this existing single family residential neighbourhood. The proposals for these highrises change everything, and it's obvious the same road standards will no longer be appropriate for a street that will get a lot of car traffic. The attached photo, taken behind Extra Foods on Brown Ave., gives a good impression of what the road is going to look like, with more traffic of course.

The present design will lead to drivers getting stuck behind cyclists, dangerous manoeuvres and potential road rage directed against cyclists. It will also lead to less people cycling as traffic increases.

Cyclists need to feel safe when cycling on the road, so that they won't need to seek refuge on the sidewalks, thereby endangering pedestrians.

Potential solutions would be:

- Bike lanes (preferred solution). A buffer between parked cars and bike lanes is very important to prevent cyclists from getting "doored". (This option will provide most flexibility for possibly needed changes in the future, such as adding buffers between bike lanes and moving cars as traffic increases)
- Making Brown a one-way street, with a "counter-flow" bike lane (so cars can only go one way, and cyclists can go both ways). Both bike lanes will need buffers, at least between the parked cars and the bike lanes. (This option may cause unintended problems, and if two-way traffic needs to be

re-instated, cyclists will lose a safe bike route and will be back on the sidewalks).

Lowering the speed limit to 30 km/h will not work. Maximum speed is rarely enforced, and especially since this block is quite long, drivers are more likely to speed up inbetween stop signs.

Speed humps would not be appropriate on a busy street, even though this street is presently classified as a "local road". Even now, with the new 4-storey apartment building between Edge and 224th, the traffic is already noticeably busier.

I kindly request Mayor and Council to very carefully consider the needs and safety of cyclists of all ages and abilities when looking at the options for road design for Brown Ave. We have to make sure that we plan not just for today, but for future generations.

Thank you,

Jackie Chow
23708 110B Ave.
jchow23708@yahoo.ca