

Abernethy/232 Street improvements

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Date: Monday, April 4, 2022, 09:16 a.m. PDT

Hi Forrest,

We have the following comments and questions about the design for this project.

We appreciate the intention to accommodate kids learning to ride and people going for a slow pedal on the weekend on shared pathways. For decades, the approach was that nothing much needed to be done to just “accommodate” the strong and fearless cyclists, ignoring the needs of everyone else on a bike. Now, it appears the goal is just to try to accommodate the people on the very other end of the spectrum.

The result is that people of all ages and abilities, riding all types of bikes at speeds of anywhere between 5 and 32 km/h, **in both directions**, are being lumped together with pedestrians, on one side of the street/road, anywhere where cycling “improvements” are planned, **regardless of context**.

We have serious concerns about pedestrian safety as a result of this relatively new approach. In places where cycling is successful, careful thought is being put into where facilities can be shared, and where separated facilities are more appropriate. The same diligence is being used when deciding whether a bi-directional facility can be installed. In this way, both pedestrian and cyclist safety is always prioritized, as it should.

It's obvious that for a variety of critically important reasons, the City of Maple Ridge needs to provide everyone with truly viable alternatives, including cycling. By not adequately accommodating cycling for transportation **for all ages and abilities**, i.e. the entire spectrum of people cycling, including those riding for transportation on a daily basis, and those riding e-bikes and wider, larger cargo bikes, we fail to create the conditions that are necessary for cycling to reach its full potential. As both 232 Street and Abernethy are presently part of the **existing** cycling network, and are **proposed** to be part of the **future** primary cycling network, the chosen design needs to be of high quality, which is presently not the case.

We don't believe we're asking for the moon when what we're proposing is to prioritize safety, comfort and convenience for all vulnerable road users, including pedestrians. Ideally, we'd prefer segregated, separated facilities on both sides, but we believe that what we're asking for is a reasonable compromise. What we would like to see here is a similar concept that was built along 232 St. north of 132 Ave.: a shared pathway on the uphill (west) side, and a buffered or separated bike lane on the (downhill) east side.

We've spent some time observing traffic along the ~800 m stretch of 232 St. between Dewdney and Abernethy, and we noticed that both curb (parking/travel) lanes are hardly used:

- East side (downhill) curb lane: we did not see any parked cars, and pretty much all northbound cars exclusively used the passing lane for travel.
- West side curb lane:

On a weekday between 5:30 and 6:00 pm we counted only 6 parked cars.

On another weekday between 2:30 and 3:00 pm we counted only 3 parked cars.

Only closer to Dewdney Trunk Road, about the last 100 m of the curb lane was used by cars going straight or turning right/west.

The large majority of cars were turning left/east. Most of the curb lane was not used for travel. Even less of that curb lane will need to be used once there are two left-turning lanes.

All homes except four have generous driveways behind the homes, and it appears parking is not really needed. The four homes that front onto 232 St. also have generous driveways.

Question/comment: It would seem to make a lot of sense to reallocate at least the east side curb lane for a separated or buffered northbound bike lane. Once Abernethy is extended to 240 St. and traffic volumes along this stretch of 232nd are reduced, a bike lane could potentially be constructed on the west side as well.

As mentioned above, we supported the design of 232 St. between 132 Ave. and Silver Valley Road. [This](#) was our feedback about the proposed design back in 2016. This design was a multi-use facility uphill (with less speed differential between users), and a sidewalk and downhill bike lane. This road lay-out was recommended by cycling infrastructure expert Richard Drdul, the consultant for this project. We propose the same concept for this project.

Further questions/comments:

- We once again strongly recommend raised crossings at the residential side streets. Especially on busy arterials, there is significant risk that drivers, when turning across the multi-use facility, will not see people cycling, especially in the direction opposite to car traffic.
 - With regard to the driveway access points, we ask that the raised surface of the pathway be continued through the driveway. Most importantly, this clearly indicates to drivers that pedestrians and people cycling and rolling have the right of way. The grooved and sloped driveway surfaces that are typically used are also dangerous as they can destabilize bikes with thinner tires.
 - We were told at the information meeting that there will be no obstructions such as signage within the multi-use path on 232 St. It appears that existing street lighting is mostly located about 2.2 m from the existing curb. We measured the traffic light pole at the Abernethy intersection at 1.35 m from the curb. There is also a large electrical box immediately adjacent to the sidewalk at that intersection, which will likely be within the pathway, in the line of travel, and will also obstruct the sightlines. Will these all remain located within the multi-use path? The existing fence on the south-west corner will also obstruct sightlines. If the street lights and other obstacles remain within the future multi-use pathway, this presents safety hazards for people riding bikes.
 - We have concerns that, for some of the length of the multi-use path on 232 St., the width of the path is as narrow as 2.5 m. Note that according to the BC Active Transportation Design Guide, the desirable width of multi-use facilities **along arterial roads** is 4 meters. The constrained limit width is 3 meters. The desirable buffer is 2 meters or greater. The constrained width of a buffer is 0.6 m. See BC Active Transportation Design Guide, [E - Multi-use Facilities](#), page E14. The proposed buffer along this section of 232 St. is only 0.3 m.
 - North-south pedestrian/bicycle traffic signals will need to be installed at the Dewdney and Abernethy intersections. These will need to be easily accessible, while not in the line of travel.
 - No bollards should be installed within the multi-use path at the bus stops as was done along the multi-use path on 116 Ave. by Thomas Haney. Why is this kind of heavy-duty protection used, presumably to protect people waiting alongside the path at the bus stop from people cycling, when pedestrians who are directly in the line of travel of people cycling are much more likely to be hit by a person on a bike? These bollards create a hazard for people on bikes.
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- Adequate space and easy access should be provided for all bikes, including cargo bikes and bike trailers, at the entrance to the off-road path east of 232 St. at 122 Ave.
 - Will the pedestrian crossing in the median along Abernethy at 231 Street comfortably accommodate all bikes, including cargo bikes, bikes with trailers and recumbent bikes/trikes? (they tend to need more space to manoeuvre).
 - All side streets on the west side of 232 St. between Dewdney and Abernethy should be right-in/right-out only. No left turns onto side streets should be allowed for northbound traffic. Allowing left turns will put too much mental load on drivers on a high volume, high speed 4-lane arterial like 232 St., when they also need to cross a bi-directional multi-use path.

We sincerely hope you will consider our feedback.

With kind regards,

HUB Cycling
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Committee