

Maple Ridge News

Cyclists may have easier ride in Maple Ridge

Separate bike lanes proposed for 123rd Avenue

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Hub: Cycling Connection photo shows 123rd Avenue, planned for two cycling lanes.

The City of Maple Ridge is now mulling over the feedback it received from the neighbours about creating separate bike lanes on both sides of 123rd Avenue and removing the parking lanes.

The city held public information meetings both last year and this Aug. 1 on the concept. The [bike lanes](#) would be separated from the roads by a curb and run from Laity Street to 203rd Street – which has just had a bi-directional bike lane completed on the east of the road.

While on-street parking would be eliminated, the driving lanes on 123rd Avenue would also be narrowed. A positive outcome of that however for the city is that traffic speeds would be reduced, one of the goals of redoing the road.

Having a protected cycling lane would also make all types of cyclists feel more comfortable on the road.

According to a TransLink survey, 41 per cent of those surveyed are interested in cycling but have safety concerns, while 25 per cent are already cycling. But 34 per cent are not interested in two-wheeled, non-motorized transportation.

Jackie Chow, with Hub: Your Cycling Connection prefers the above concept instead of another option that would include curb bulges and traffic circles. She says that would make cycling more dangerous, as cyclists would be forced to move into the vehicle lane when approaching the curb bulges and traffic circles.

“It’s a critical link in the east-west 123 Bikeway as well as the overall cycling network,” Chow said. “Apart from the speeding, it’s actually the best section of east-west bike route in town that we have. It’s long and straight, without any stop signs. We can’t afford to lose it.”

But she knows many residents along the street don’t like the idea because they’ll lose parking spots outside their house.

“If we get our own space on the road, we’re not bothering anyone and both pedestrians and cyclists will be safer.”

The city could also create extra parking at Volker Park to make up for lost parking for school drop-off and pick-up, Chow said. Or maybe more parking could be found at Laity View elementary.

“About 40,000 to 50,000 more people will be living in Maple Ridge in another 20 years. Do we want all of them to drive everywhere?” Chow asked.

Most residents though don’t want to lose their parking spots.

The city is also looking at putting bike lanes on the inside of the sidewalk, if there’s enough room. More public consultation on that would follow.

But the city could also just forget about bike lanes altogether and just have street corners bulge out into the road to slow down traffic.