

Maple Ridge development

Another nod for Brown tower

City to look at bike safety after highrise proposal passes third reading.

by Christopher Sun

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A proposed 18-storey highrise with 126 apartments and six townhouses on Brown Avenue near Edge Street was given another green light.

Maple Ridge City council gave third reading to the proposal at Tuesday's council meeting, passing it unanimously. The next step is for a fourth and final reading before construction can start. The project will have 15 affordable housing units, 15 accessible housing units, 146 parking spots and an illuminated feature on top of the tower.

However, concerns over lack of street parking and bicycle safety was raised during a public hearing held two hours prior. The current plan is to have

cars and bicyclists share the road, with no physical barriers between the two.

Ivan Chow of HUB, a bicycling advocacy group, said work will need to be done on Brown Avenue as the increased density on the narrow street will make cycling more dangerous.

Another proposal with three residential towers is also planned in the area.

"Cyclist are forced to take the middle lane to avoid parked cars," Chow said, explaining the street is one of only two bike routes in the downtown area.

"We would like to ask for a buffered bike lane along Brown Avenue."

That concern was shared by many councillors.

"There needs to be a separate parking and bike lane or we need to drop parking on one side of the street," said Coun. Craig

Speirs, after the meeting.

"You can't have shared bike lanes in the centre of town."

Speirs said there will be a lot of traffic because "300 apartments are going to be built in the area," so the City needs to work on a plan to keep the street safe for bicyclists, as well

as pedestrians and those using wheelchairs and mobility scooters. He also said this shows the need for an active transportation committee, which is being formed.

Others shared Speirs' concerns.

"I think it's a great project and it will help the community and downtown, but I do

have concerns with the biking," said Coun. Bob Masse

"You may call it a shared road, but I know first hand that's not what typically happens," said Coun. Kiersten Duncan, explaining she's a cyclist.



Craig Speirs
Councillor

West Maple Ridge

Homes deferred

A proposal to extend 207A Street to 123 Avenue and build 21 homes, has been deferred by City council.

More than a dozen people spoke against the project during a public hearing held Tuesday evening, causing the 7 p.m. City council meeting to start an hour later. Nearby residents raised concerns regarding homes encroaching too close to a stream that has fish, loss of wildlife habitat, and road safety. There is a dip on 207A Street and the road is very narrow.

City staff will report back to council on concerns raised by nearby residents. In the meantime, the application, which was expected to receive third reading on Tuesday, is on hold and council is unable to publicly comment on it.

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