

## LETTER: Society values parking more than park land

North Shore News

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Dear Editor:

Elizabeth James' column titled [Paving Park Strip Won't Get us Out of Cars, March 16 \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/columnists/james-paved-park-strip-won-t-get-us-out-of-cars-1.2198375\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/columnists/james-paved-park-strip-won-t-get-us-out-of-cars-1.2198375), misunderstands the conundrum the city faces when installing good, protected cycling infrastructure.

First, numerous studies have shown that when cities build protected bike infrastructure, riders will come. Here are two examples, but you can view more at

[peopleforbikes.org/statistics](http://peopleforbikes.org/statistics).

Note: The death and/or injury rate per km travelled is about 10 times higher by bike than by car. Encouraging more bicycle use, although good for one's health will result in more deaths and injuries. Something to seriously think about. - cjk

In the first case, 38 per cent of people biking on Sherbourne Street in Toronto switched to biking after Sherbourne got a protected bike lane. Of those, 24 per cent switched from driving. Mode Substitution Effect of Urban Cycle Tracks: Case Study of a Downtown Street in Toronto, Canada.

In the second case, New York City's Prospect Park West protected bike lane saw a 190 per cent increase in weekday ridership, with 32 per cent of those biking under age 12. New York City DOT, 2012 – Prospect Park West: Traffic Calming & Bicycle Path.

James grieves the loss of green space. I also am saddened by this loss. That is park land that we will not get back as green space.

Why does the city use park land to install separated bike lanes? Another obvious way to achieve the same end would be to convert a portion of the existing paved vehicle lanes or on-street parking into protected bike lanes.

This is a discussion on land use. If we want to add bike infrastructure, do we use park land, or existing road infrastructure? James mentions a price tag of \$500,000 for the bike lanes. This does not include the massive public investment in the land cost.

The value of the land for the bike lanes is 1.8 metres per lane times two lanes times 1,500 metres in length for a total of 5,400 square metres. At current land values in North Vancouver (approximately \$3,000 per square metre), the value of the land to be used for the bike lanes is around \$16.2-million dollars.

No matter where we build the bike lanes, the land cost is \$16.2 million. In case you argue that is too much to spend, consider the land cost of all the pavement on Grand Boulevard that facilitates car movement or storage. On both East and West Grand Boulevard, there are two travel lanes at three metres per lane with a parking lane at three metres. That totals 27,000 square metres (2 x 9 m x 1,500 m). That adds up to \$81 million.

Do we need all that land for cars? It seems reasonable to use less than 20 per cent of that already paved land to support transportation alternatives.

So why don't we build the protected bike lanes on the existing pavement? The same people who do not want pavement in the park will argue they cannot give up on-street parking or vehicle lanes – not even to save the green space.

The appalling truth is, we value parking more than we value park.

**Heather Drugge**

**North Vancouver**

The truth is, we value "safety" above all else, yet as individuals we refuse to take responsibility for it and demand that government provide it for us. -cjk

*What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by clicking [here \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter) or post a comment below.*

References: [www.ogp.org.uk/pubs/434-09.pdf](http://www.ogp.org.uk/pubs/434-09.pdf)  
[www.vtpi.org/tca/tca0503.pdf](http://www.vtpi.org/tca/tca0503.pdf)

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