

## LAUTENS: Bah! to batty bully-boy bicycle backers

[Trevor Lautens](#) | North Shore News

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This  
**JUST IN**  
Trevor Lautens

You may have heard – or bellowed yourself – something like: “By Jing, that moron Coun. Thimblehooper! I’ll never vote for that idiot again!”

The Thimblehooper moment has come in West Vancouver.

Because only a council of Thimblehoopers could consider for one New York minute voting for a project contemptuously hostile to West Van interests as this:

**Turning over a chunk of Argyle Avenue to the cyclist lobby’s Spirit Trail.**

In all earnestness, I think better of councillors Mary-Ann Booth, Bill Soprovich, Christine Cassidy, Craig Cameron, Nora Gambioli and Michael Lewis, and Mayor Michael Smith. I personally like every one. There have been dud councillors. Not in this lot.

Because it would be an act of certifiable insanity to surrender to the bully-boy bicycle lobbyists – who arrogantly jammed motor traffic to intimidate Vancouver into bowing to their demands – and their enablers among the busy-bee bureaucrats in WV town hall. A total loser.

Just for starters: Closing Argyle to motor traffic would strip away 104 parking spaces. From a downtown screaming for parking already! Bellevue Avenue businesses, for years spotted by struggles and closures, would especially be further hurt.

As for businesses on Ambleside’s one-block-over Marine Drive, which Mayor Smith for years has thrown a ton of political might and muscle into reviving – **do you think losing those 104 parking stalls would help?** And would the sweaty Lycra-and-spandex crowd patronize Chez Michel, Daichi Sushi, Carmelo’s, Blue Eyed Marys and other good restaurants, let alone pause to drop a dime on the street’s fine furnishing stores, women’s fashions, jewellers, florists, gift shops, and so forth?

**Exercise? What a good thing. But exercise vendors Steve Nash, Trevor Linden and Ron Zalko don’t ask citizens to subsidize their businesses, especially by donating publicly funded thoroughfares to an interest group that pays zero for the surfaces they move on.**

Even worse, the proposed Spirit Trail section imposed on WV's gorgeous Seaview Walk – a paved surface, night lighting, and, most unbelievable of all, clear-cutting of Tantalus Park, tucked in near the traffic circle above Horseshoe Bay, were initially suggested – threatened an outrageous environmental wound.

Town hall ran a couple of meetings. The opponents were as defiantly rude as any I can recall. Their written responses could fill this space. One, close to my heart: "That the importance of off-leash (for dogs) is not listed under the key themes is a gross oversight." No oversight, I'd have said: Dogs, leashed or unleashed, would get in the arrogant cyclists' way.

But, to be fair, and a hopeful signal for the Argyle issue: This time town hall materially backed down. No paved surface, no lights, no clear-cutting, dogs still allowed off leash – a mixed benefit because a potential danger to man and beast, and still not a desirable sharing with cyclists.

Western Residents Association co-chair Chris Adshead, and all credit to his and similar sincere views and to WRA's determination, acknowledges that the staff's Seaview discussions "started off very poorly" but "we were later pleased by the way the district has consulted and listened," and the work so far done "has not altered the rustic feel of the trail."

Apart from the foregoing, there are more than enough questions about town hall's waterfront vision.

Some West Vancouver Community Arts Council members are grieving over the proposed destruction of their charming Silk Purse building. Smith has mused that an all-new combined arts building, situated eastward, is an idea. One that I'd predict the artists, musicians and (presumably) concert attendees would resist.

Notionally, the arts may be a fit. In fact music through the walls while painting or teaching would be, put gently, a distraction.

Spirit Trail and waterfront change critics: Crowd in to council chambers at the crucial June 13 meeting. By the way, what ever happened to Coun. Thimblehooper?

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And this just in: As Jeremy Shepherd reported Wednesday in these pages, North Van City council dumped – barely, 4-3 – the Mussatto Party's insane fantasy of a \$4.24-million bicycle tow lift (yearly maintenance, \$133,000) for the sad exercise buffs who sweat pedalling up Keith Road. Applause for councillors Rod Clark, Holly Back, Don Bell and Pam Bookham. Scorn for Mayor-for-Life Darrell Mussatto and his unbreakable political machine.

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Two North Shore theatrical home runs in a row: Theatre West Van's second version of Fawlty Towers at the Kay Meek and North Shore Light Opera's The Merry Widow at Presentation House – which drew a rave review from highly experienced opera critic and musician Hillary Clark – sold out. I tried love and money and couldn't get tickets to either. I'm aiming for Mary, Mary at Hendry Hall, on stage till June 11.

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