

Trail maintenance dependent on volunteer labour

Dear Editor:

Re: Pay Parking Debated for Busiest Parks, April 22 news story.

Firstly, I'm an "older guy," with limited income and admit that I don't lend myself easily to change at this point in life. Frankly, though, I've become totally exasperated with the goings on in the city and district of North Vancouver council chambers over the last few years along with the accompanying rate and kind of development, especially in the city, not to mention the toxic blue cloud of mixed greens that insists on blowing our way. I really digress now! That said, I'm at my limit when the key opportunity to escape from the stresses of such things is now being threatened, that is free and easy access to our North Shore trails and parks, which are my only real escape from all the daily stuff that accumulates. So, I register my vote, as profoundly as I can, against pay parking at the access points

to our parks and trail systems.

Mental, physical health and well-being is what I'm talking about here and the cost to maintain it.

Secondly, I take exception to several points in this news article, but most pointedly with what the DNV, and the CNV too, I'm sure, are claiming about "higher maintenance costs for trails, which are taking a beating." Yes, they are taking a beating but I seriously question the management, planning and the amount that has been provided by our civic authorities in the past for trail maintenance and say that I believe that it's been inadequate for years. At least that's the evidence at trail level and now they want to play "catch up" with parking meters.

I've frequented North Shore trail systems every week, often two or three times per week, for as long as I've lived on the North Shore and have yet to see good maintenance and certainly no preventive maintenance. To

clarify, I refer specifically to trails, trailheads and access points in the upper reaches of our community, systems on, off and adjoining Baden Powell trail. Trails in some locations where CNV, DNV and Metro Vancouver share responsibility for maintenance, i.e., Baden Powell between Mosquito Creek and the base of Grouse Grind. Nothing, repeat nothing, has been done on this section for as long as I've been here. It's now a safety hazard, again in my opinion, because of disagreement or a lack of co-operation between these authorities. Walk it sometime.

A local trail bike association, namely the NSMBA – and I have absolutely no connection or bias here – has shown more initiative on their bike trails than our civic authorities have on what you might call our civic trail systems. Local volunteers have contributed the majority of labour and time and therefore costs, that I can see at least. Yes, some new boardwalks and stair

systems have been built over the last two or three years in the Seymour and headwaters areas but for the most part by volunteers. Some decommissioning of old trails and new routes constructed around sensitive areas but all that our civic authorities have kicked in is a project supervisor and the cost of materials. All the rest is volunteer labour. So, manage better, set out

reasonable budgets and stick to them while building on them each year to cover the cost additional pressures of a growing community and tourism bring with them.

Enough of the band-aid approach.

Personally, I'd be more sympathetic with the need for this cost debate if better fiscal management had been more evident over the years.

Volunteer labour has been carrying a large part of the cost being debated and it will continue to do so. I call for the district and city to be more responsible with and accountable for what they already have been given. I suggest (they) build on a volunteer program as B.C. Parks has in provincial parks.

David Webb
North Vancouver

Pay parking in parks misguided

Dear Editor:

The provincial government introduced paid parking for provincial parks and it was a disaster.

This decision was later reversed because locals felt they were priced out of their own parks. Living in Upper Lynn Valley, I find that on-street parking is becoming scarcer as the level of development escalates. Homeowners are renting out basement suites and rooms

(some legal, others not) to make ends meet. Renters have cars too and it is not uncommon for one house to have six cars or more parking on the streets. Prior to constructing the Fromme Mountain parking lot, the mountain bikers had to park on the district streets. This resulted in areas close to the top of Mountain Highway deemed residents parking only. This resulted in the bikers parking farther away

on the streets that are not so designated. So what is going to happen if paid parking is introduced? Drivers are going to try to find free parking in front of taxpayers' houses and with that comes conflict.

I find that to have paid parking for our local parks is a misguided and inappropriate suggestion. Let people enjoy the natural beauty of what the North Shore has to offer.

Dennis Attfield
North Vancouver