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Tuesday's letters: Bike lanes are hardly radical

EDMONTON JOURNAL FEBRUARY 18, 2013

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Re: "Calm urged in bike-lane debate; Controversy fraying tempers on both sides of cycling issue," the Journal, Feb. 15.

I am saddened by the tone of the rhetoric against bike lanes in Edmonton. It is primarily rooted in an inappropriate culture of entitlement nurtured in many car owners.

The main argument against bike lanes seems to be that the rights of a majority to parking outweigh the rights of the minority to safety.

Cyclists face disproportionate risk when they are in conflict with cars. Bike lanes and designated routes go a long way toward buffering cyclists from hazards and reminding drivers that they share the road with people more vulnerable than themselves.

People seem to believe that cyclists, bike lanes and the supporters of bike lanes are somehow radical. This is far from the truth.

Most of the world's great cities accommodate bicycles and recognize they provide pollution-free transportation that requires minimal space and minimal infrastructure. This is not radical, it is common sense.

With some leadership, white paint and no-parking signs, the City of Edmonton can protect the vulnerable, promote healthier lifestyles, reduce CO2 emissions, set an example for other municipalities and join other great, enlightened cities of the world.

Or, it can take the easy route by giving in to those willing to risk the lives of others so they can park out front. Meanwhile, cyclists will continue to risk life and limb.

Joseph Litke, Edmonton

Cyclists safer if they're seen

Much of the fuss over bicycle lanes is fuelled by the desire of too many cyclists to be invisible to motorists.

As a cyclist, when I ride on roads such as Whyte Avenue, Saskatchewan

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Drive or 76th Avenue where the speeds are moderate, I feel safest when using the entire traffic lane.

Yes, the occasional motorist becomes unhappy about having to slow down or switch to a different lane. But this just shows me that I am being seen.

As a motorist, even I sometimes find myself dreamily drifting past a cyclist trying to be unobtrusive by hugging the right-hand side of the lane — a situation that too often becomes disastrous.

Of the three groups competing for space on roads — motorists, parkers and cyclists — I see only two that can sensibly share the same space, and none who will give it up entirely.

Doug Wiens, Edmonton

Don't give up on power plant

Re: "Power plant just a bit player in Rossdale's rich history," by Rod Macleod, Letters, Feb. 16.

We have torn down far too many old buildings in Edmonton — with only pictures or displays left to honour them. Other cities such as Spokane, Winnipeg, even Calgary have tried to preserve their older buildings and incorporate them into the fabric of their city.

Having my young son walk up to an iconic old building like the Rossdale power plant, be able to "touch it" and to look at its architecture and design is a far more meaningful experience than looking at a photo display from a sidewalk.

The restoration costs appear to be high now, but work at it in stages. Invest now to stabilize it. Seek government grants, investors or public donations to keep this old building alive.

Look at possible ways the area can help fund itself. For example, have outdoor summer concerts at the ballpark with some of the proceeds to help cover the cost of restoring the Rossdale plant.

The potential for this building is huge.

Think of an indoor marketplace along with a mix of commercial shops, boutiques and eateries.

Think of Rossdale's rich aboriginal history and incorporate it into the plan — perhaps a museum of Alberta's First Nations people or a native art gallery showcasing aboriginal artists and their crafts.

Think of a living prairie garden, with plants, grasses, shrubs and trees native to Alberta alongside a walkway with displays, plaques and memorials to First Nations people.

All of this could connect to a river walkway path that leads to Louise McKinney Park, with a funicular, Chinatown gardens and Rafter's Landing, and could be linked to the Walterdale footbridge to cross the river to the south side.

If developed properly, the Rossdale area could be trendy, hip and urban while paying tribute to our past.

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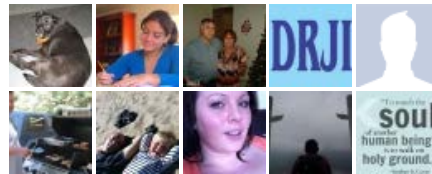
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Edmonton police use one-year anniversary of homicide to appeal for more leads

Homicide detectives and the family of a young man shot to death one year ago are making a plea Tuesday

for information to help solve the case. Welid Sahle Meskel, 22, was found in an alley near 134th Avenue and 101st Street shortly before 5 a.m. on Feb. 19, 2012.

32 MINUTES AGO



Think-tank slams Alberta government for squandering \$22 billion

Alberta has wasted \$22 billion since 2005 by not holding government spending to the rate of inflation plus

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