

THE "OTHER" EDMONDS by Dave Earling

We so often think of Edmonds as the tranquil, scenic community with a gorgeous seaside-like setting. A small, quaint town with a rich history and great pride, all tucked away in "The Bowl".

Not True! First of all, we are not a "small" town. We are a city of nearly 40,000 people. We are the third largest city in Snohomish County. We are becoming a city with growing diversity; many races, many religions, and many beliefs. As I door belled in my political campaign for mayor, I was stunned to find how dramatic the changes have become from the time I was on the City Council, oh so many years ago.

One of the most noticeable and dramatic changes has taken place on our two mile stretch of Highway 99 and its surrounding neighborhoods. The International District on the Highway demonstrates the growing ethnic diversity, and the diversity of businesses from the County line to 212th SW clearly shows us there is room and need for well, thought-out improvements and growth.

We all know about the planned growth of Swedish-Edmonds. The campus itself is growing with a new parking garage and the addition of 72,000 square feet of medical facility. These changes have and will bring more supportive health facilities, jobs and quality health services to the community.

The International District itself has attracted a sprawling market, fine restaurants and a diverse group of businesses to the area. We have first rate automobile dealerships on Highway 99, dealerships such as Volkswagen, Honda, Nissan, Toyota and Mazda providing great service and adding to our economy.

Not lost in all of this are our quality neighborhoods surrounding this business community. Just as in the Edmonds Bowl, where we have neighborhoods surrounding the business community, the same is true on Highway 99. As Council member Adrienne Fraley-Monillas reminds us, Highway 99 is not just a business community, it is a separate neighborhood made up of a rich mix of businesses and single family homes, as well as apartments and condominiums. It is also a neighborhood of rich economic and ethnic diversity. A neighborhood we need to pay very close attention to.

To that end, in the coming months the Planning Board and City Council will have a thorough look at how we may be supportive of smart growth decisions to encourage mixed use developments to include retail, offices and housing units. All of you know how the city of Shoreline has made improvements over several years to their stretch of Highway 99. We don't need to have the same look, but we need to compliment the quality improvements in that community.

Similar quality improvements will take vision, years, patience, and dollars to accomplish. As an example, with the assistance of our state legislative delegation, we had \$10M in both the Senate and House Transportation Budgets to begin the improvement process, but as you may know, the Legislature did not approve any Transportation Budget this year. We will pursue that money again next year. For our city's long-term betterment we need to work with great determination to enrich neighborhoods throughout our city, including The "Other" Edmonds.