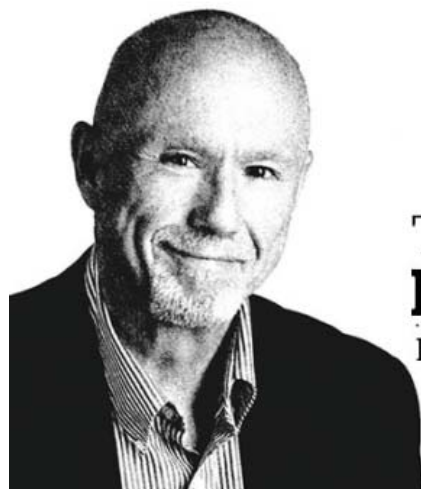


SULLIVAN: Edgemont's refresh really no surprise

Paul Sullivan / contributing writer

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The
NORTH SIDE
Paul Sullivan

Edgemont Village is the Centre of the Universe.

Precise location: A bench on the corner of Edgemont and Highland by the clock. I've often wondered how to get my name engraved on the clock, but not that hard as I'm sure I could secure my legacy for a fee.

I remember when I first encountered the Village, tucked away in the upper reaches of Capilano Highlands.

It was 1989, but felt more like 1959, in a good way.

Quiet, leafy, ringed with mountains, featuring bunches of funky little shops that appeared randomly assembled. If you were in the market for a saddle, wind chimes or a laundromat, you could get it all done in a single visit.

Change came slowly to the village, but it came. Some of the places that were there in '89 are still there, but many have gone and new ones have taken their place.

I still miss the English stuff store, but how many wine gums and week-old newspapers do you need?

Then there's the Bakehouse. Mike McMaster, come back, wherever you are. I'm suffering from apple raisin muffin deficit.

One thing that's stayed pretty much the same is the pace.

Oddly, it doesn't matter how crowded it gets, everyone still moseys. I think that's the correct term.

They mosey to the bank; they mosey to the grocery store; they mosey to Delany's. Edgemont Village may be the last place in the world where you can mosey across the street and the cars will stop for you.

Most of them anyway.

Some people are worried this is all about to change, and not at the usual stately rate.

There are four developments underway at various stages of approval: Baybridge Senior Living, Grosvenor Edgemont, a residential development near Edgemont Villa and a new residence at Ridgewood Drive and Edgemont Boulevard.

Add the water main installation on Capilano Road and all the rerouting through the village, and you're looking at a four-year bulldozer rodeo.

"It's as if," says Grig Campbell, the stalwart Scot of the Edgemont Upper Capilano Community Association, "somebody pulled the cork out of the bottle."

Grig Cameron

Grig explains that development in the village was on hold during the revision of the District of North Vancouver official community plan, followed by the Edgemont Local Area Plan "refresh" process and that together took four years and wasn't complete until last April.

Once the refresh was approved, the developers got the certainty they needed on height, density, parking, etc. and flooded the District with their marvellous/nefarious plans.

"No one should be surprised by any of this," says Grig. "We've had umpteen public meetings."

Refresh workshops, developer public information meetings, District public hearings, council meetings: yikes!

A week does not go by without a public meeting, most of them at Highlands United, the world's most publically engaging church.

Once the construction dust settles, what comes out the other end? Well, the number of mosey-ers will increase.

Grosvenor and the two other residential projects will add about 130 new homes, and we can't forget another 100+ seniors, who have no equal when it comes to moseying.

To some, all this means more noise, traffic and nonsense.

Cute little businesses such as Peter Rabbit, which has been a village fixture since Beatrix Potter was still breathing, could be lost.

Yet Grig believes the character of the Village will prevail. And he's backed by all the weight and authority of Dan Milburn, the deputy general manager of planning & permits at the District.

Thanks to intense public input, no building will rise above three and a half storeys. Architecture will remain "eclectic," which everyone assures me is not a fancy word for random.

There will be more even more benches from which to scan the universe.

But it's all about the pace. If you can still mosey across the street without getting turned into a speed bump, the operation will be a success.

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