

LETTER: Merchants key to Edgemont charm

North Shore News

December 2, 2015 12:00 AM

Dear Editor:

Re: Paul Sullivan's recent column about Edgemont ([Edgemont's Refresh Really No Surprise, Nov. 27](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/columnists/sullivan-edgemont-s-refresh-really-no-surprise-1.2121137) (<http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/columnists/sullivan-edgemont-s-refresh-really-no-surprise-1.2121137>))

As a long-time merchant I feel I can speak with a very clear perspective about our funky, beloved village, and maybe even bring some surprising clarity unknown to many "mosey-ers."

Everything about our village that you have enjoyed and loved over the years – the summer music concerts, the Christmas lights and candy cane poles, our highly successful Halloween trick-or-treat event, the Easter bunny hunt, to name but a few – are spearheaded, organized and paid for by the merchants of the village.

And while we are at it, we also sweep our sidewalks, decorate our windows, learn your names, recognize your children and provide you with personal service like nowhere else.

We also employ your teenagers, your wives, maybe even some of your husbands.

But all of this is changing. You, Mr. Sullivan were correct about that. **Our village is under siege.** And while none of us are against progress, we do feel that as our buildings are purchased, and new buildings are built, **there is little respect given to "what has gone before."**

Also, that **developers and property owners** do not have a real idea about what kind of actual "dollar traffic" moves through this village daily, and so to **expect tenants to pay downtown rents and taxes when we don't have downtown traffic is out of sync.**

Our neighbourhood is changing certainly. And the very thing that we all love so dearly is to be lost to us, as we have become victims of our own success. We made you love us. You came, you bought and you threw us away.

Mr. Sullivan, you mention you still miss the muffins from **The Bakehouse.** Imagine for a moment, how Mike McMaster felt, when the rug was pulled out from under him, and he **lost his livelihood.** That **was all about rent and taxes.**

Once Christmas is over, **we will see both Peter Rabbit and Trims go.** And why, you wonder? **Because the new building owner wants different tenants – and significantly more rent.** Now, if that isn't a double blow for the village, I don't know what is. Not to mention more livelihoods gone, just like that.

Marlene Tate has kept that corner alive and vibrant for 25 years. She has enlivened our village in myriad ways with her extraordinary window displays, her beautiful product, her incredible sensibility and her village involvement. **Losing her from our community will be like turning out the lights.**

Peter Rabbit has been a village staple for decades, and a village without a neighbourhood candy store doesn't make any kind of sense.

As merchants, **we need the ongoing regular support of our area residents in order that we survive.** **We need our property owners to be realistic, and to acknowledge the value of heritage.**

Otherwise, the unique and charming "mom and pop" shops will all disappear, and the mosey-ers will mosey

amongst only banks, insurance companies, corporate offices and branches. And where's the village charm in that?

Sharyn Webber
North Vancouver

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