

**Mayor's column for
The Enterprise
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Stand with me, if you will, at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Main Street in downtown Edmonds. Look south down Fifth Avenue. First we see the brick roundabout without our artwork/gazebo/ pergola, which was damaged in a traffic accident last fall. It is going to be replaced and will be back in place by the end of May. It was nice to have a Christmas tree in the intersection as a temporary replacement during the holidays.

A block south at Dayton Street I can see the old AM/PM gas station encircled by chain-link fencing and boarded up with plywood. Sadly, the folks who have operated the station for the last few years weren't able to make a living at it. Hopefully they'll be able to recoup some of their investment once the property sells. The sale will mark the end of an era; there will be no more gas stations in downtown Edmonds. Before any sale can take place, the property will have to be cleaned up of any petroleum products that may have found their way into the ground. Don't look for anything to happen quickly there due to the many cleanup regulations that will need to be complied with.

Another possible hang-up for future development at that location is that it is located in the downtown BC zone, a zone in which the City Council has created a moratorium on buildings over 25 feet in height. The moratorium has been in place for over a year and no applications have been received by the city during that time to build anything at the allowable 25 feet. The debate over downtown building heights has gone on way too long! It's time for the Council to act. At a minimum, the 30-foot building height that has been in place for many years should be restored.

Our last stop as we look down Fifth Avenue comes at Walnut Street where the recent fire took place. As I write today, what I see is just a burned out shell and an eyesore. Although our investigation, headed by the ATF, has been completed at the site, the insurance company for the owner just recently finished theirs. They will have begun demolition and removal of debris by the time you read this. It may take several weeks to complete. Then, according to the owner, construction will begin again. The original permits are still good. No additional permits or public hearings are required.

The disruption created over the past year by the construction activity on Fifth Avenue has not been lost on us at City Hall. Residents and merchants have been affected by this large project. The constant flagging of traffic to one lane on Fifth and the loss of parking because of construction workers are the two main sources of our frustration. Make no mistake, the construction company paid to use our right-of-way and paid the flaggers, who did an excellent job, but it was disruptive nonetheless. We are looking at ways to lessen the disruption when construction begins again.

As we end our stroll down Fifth Avenue, I'll leave you with one last thought. Invite your friends and family to come and shop in Edmonds. There's bound to be some great bargains at the crash/going out of business/fire sale currently going on in Edmonds!