

**Mayor's column for
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During past elections when I have gone into neighborhoods knocking on people's doors asking for their vote, it was always interesting to hear what folks had to say. First of all, there was the surprise effect because they didn't know I was coming, so their reaction was always refreshing. Some would genuinely tell me what they felt about Edmonds and what their concerns were; others would use the opportunity to vent a little. My reaction was always to listen and answer their concern if I could. I had to take the good with the bad since I was the one who knocked on their door!

Last year I started what I call "neighborhood tours" where I come to area neighborhoods and listen to your concerns at a local school or church. It was a successful start last year, and I have offered to do the same this year. I've now completed the first two visits, and I thought I'd share what I've heard so far.

Many folks are interested in what is happening with vacant stores like Albertsons (nothing) or with the Antique Mall/old Safeway property (some progress). Neighborhood concerns are at the forefront of their thinking: sidewalks, speeding traffic (please slow down!) and the inevitable war between those who want trees cut down for views and those who never want another tree cut down...ever!

There has been some discussion about Old Milltown. Compliments about the City's quarterly newsletter. Questions about how parking stalls get marked, the trimming of vegetation on City property, the City's website, and mostly interesting conversation.

What I have found is that the topics are almost unilaterally about what is happening in your own backyards. There are occasional questions about other parts of town, but mostly it's about where you spend most of your time when not at work, and that's in your homes and neighborhoods. I've heard interesting questions that you really didn't know where else to go to get the answer.

I thoroughly enjoy coming out, listening, and helping where I can. Sometimes I have to say that I can't help, or your frustration may be over something that we just can't change. But I appreciate you taking the time to come out, and I look forward to the balance of the neighborhood meetings this year.