

Urban Thrive Developments  
10-864 Central Spur Road, Victoria, BC  
V9A 0C1  
October 17, 2024

**Re: Letter of Support for Eliminating Parking Minimums in Nanaimo.**

I'm the owner of Urban Thrive, a social enterprise housing developer in Victoria that specializes in building car-free housing.

The legacy of parking requirements has inflicted immense harm on the fabric of our communities, drastically reducing the livability of homes and neighborhoods. This has manifested in forced car dependency, urban sprawl, increased traffic and congestion, pollution, vast stretches of paved surfaces, and the loss of valuable green spaces. Without the wasteful burden of parking, Urban Thrive can deliver higher-quality housing that is more community-centered, sustainable, and attainable for middle-income families. We've demonstrated the value of car-free housing in Victoria, and I believe it's possible to achieve the same in Nanaimo.

It's essential to understand that people's mobility choices are dynamic, not fixed. There is no such thing as "parking demand" that can be reduced to a simple calculation. People make transportation decisions based on the options available to them. When driving is the only practical option, people will drive. When you force them to pay for expensive parking, you are essentially forcing them to invest in driving, thereby encouraging more car use. However, when you make sustainable transportation options safe, convenient, and enjoyable (something Nanaimo is already working toward), more people will choose those alternatives. By allowing residents to decide whether they want to invest in parking, many will opt out and instead invest in sustainable alternatives. As a Council, your choices shape the transportation habits of your community. Your leadership—or lack thereof—will determine whether more people drive or take sustainable alternatives.

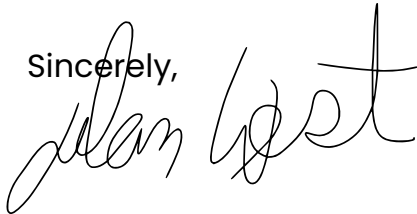
People are ready for this shift. In Victoria, 25% of households are now car-free (up from 20% just five years ago) due to the City's strategic investments in

cycling infrastructure, transit, and car-sharing. More than 160 families are currently waitlisted to purchase one of our homes. As we introduce new car-free housing projects in Victoria, the reaction from neighbours is increasingly positive and supportive, and we see ever greater understanding and appreciation. This makes sense. Our projects provide desperately needed homes without adding traffic and congestion, while increasing the number of trees and greenspace. Car-free families make great neighbours! This is the kind of development that improves and strengths a community as it grows.

You will no doubt hear from naysayers, as does any meaningful change. For many, it's hard to imagine a future where we aren't reliant on cars. But I urge you not to listen to the detractors. This is your opportunity to lead and help Nanaimo become the city you aspire for it to be. If your goal is to create a more livable, sustainable community that's equipped for the future, this decision should be an easy one.

I strongly encourage you to endorse Strong Town Nanaimo's recommendations and put people before cars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julian West". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julian" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "West".

Julian West  
Owner, Urban Thrive Developments