



April 10th, 2025

**Mayor and Members of Council
District of Central Saanich
1903 Mount Newton Cross Road
Saanichton, BC V8M 2A9**

Re: Support for Proposed Light Industrial Zoning Bylaw Amendments for Gateway Park, Central Saanich, BC

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

As the owners of 2261 Keating Cross Road, we are writing to express our full support for the proposed Light Industrial Zoning Bylaw Amendments currently under review by the District. These changes are not only timely but critical to enabling high-value, innovative tenants to establish roots in Central Saanich.

Over the past several years, we have faced recurring challenges in attracting and retaining tenants due to the limitations of our existing zoning. While neighbouring properties—some of which benefit from broader permitted uses—have remained fully leased, our building has experienced prolonged vacancies. This mismatch has prevented prospective businesses, particularly in emerging sectors, from moving into our site, despite their clear desire to contribute to the region's growth.

We are now actively working with Vancouver Island Life Sciences (VILS) to bring one of their expanding initiatives to 2261 Keating Cross Road. VILS is a provincially and federally supported, non-profit organization focused on advancing BC's life sciences and clean tech sectors. As a business incubator and accelerator, VILS supports a growing number of start-ups and scale-ups through access to shared lab infrastructure, technical mentorship, and commercialization support.

Bringing VILS to Keating will offer substantial long-term benefits to Central Saanich, including:

Attracting new, innovation-driven companies to the district;

Creating skilled employment opportunities across biotech, agri-tech, and green innovation sectors;

Supporting sustainable, locally based economic development;

Enhancing the District's profile as a regional hub for clean and life sciences industries.

VILS already has strong partnerships with academic institutions and has been awarded funding from both the Province of BC and Government of Canada, highlighting the strategic importance of their work. Their presence at our location would activate vacant space, foster community-based innovation, and support a diverse ecosystem of entrepreneurs.

It is important that Council understands that if this amendment is not adopted, VILS will not be able to proceed at this location. This would likely result in VILS pursuing opportunities in other municipalities with more flexible and accommodating zoning policies. This would be a missed opportunity for Central Saanich, and time is of the essence as their planning window is actively moving forward.



We respectfully urge council to approve the proposed zoning bylaw amendments to ensure forward-thinking organizations like VILS can operate within Central Saanich. These changes are minor in scope but meaningful in impact, unlocking our district's potential to attract purpose-driven companies that align with council's vision for sustainable economic development.

We appreciate your leadership and thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

McGregor Wark
Vice President, Headwater Projects