

# PACIFIC STATION SETS PRECEDENCE FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

**Challenges With Zoning  
had Westmark Construction  
Finding Innovative Solutions  
and an Award Winning  
Community**

**N**ANAIMO - **Pacific Station** on Metral Drive has reached Phase 4. Once completed, the entire project will include five commercial office space buildings totalling 50,000 square feet, 16 two and three bedroom townhomes and a large apartment complex.

Project developer, **Westmark Construction** and its team of design consultants, engineers and architects, have created a West Coast contemporary feel to each of the buildings with a mix of timber and stone, vaulted ceilings and inverted rooflines that are eye catching and highly visible from Metral Drive and the Island Highway.

"Owners of the strata offices have been experiencing a great deal of success conducting business in this location," said Westmark owner, **Chris Lundy**, adding that more than 40,000 vehicles drive by its location every day.

Acquired in 2012, the property, backing onto the Island Highway and fronting Metral Drive, was identified by the city, in its Official City Plan (OCP), as part of a corridor slated for increased density.

"The City of Nanaimo is looking to increase the density in strategic areas around the city," Lundy said. "When the property came on the market, Westmark first assessed its potential and then determined its viability. It took a couple of months to complete our due diligence and get an assessment of the site, but once that was achieved we could follow through with the company vision for the site."

Part of that vision was to create a mixed-use complex that focused on office space for



**Pacific Station has the right balance of residential and commercial space**

CREDIT: WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION

**"Owners of the strata offices have been experiencing a great deal of success conducting business in this location."**

**CHRIS LUNDY**

OWNER, WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION, NANAIMO



**Originally zoned as single family residential the Pacific Station property fit the city's plan to create higher density and more mixed use space**

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## PACIFIC STATION

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professionals rather than retail and included residential buildings. Originally zoned for single family homes, Lundy explained that the property needed to be rezoned for comprehensive development which would provide for a variety of land uses and development approaches.

"We needed to make sure there was the right balance of residential and commercial," Lundy said. "The City was initially looking for residential space over the commercial, but that wasn't the model we envisioned so we created a scenario that met the City's and our needs. We changed the plans, got the zoning that was required, and are now building a community that has both commercial and residential space within the same development."

It's a highly-desired town-centre design with services both residents and the professionals can take advantage of.

**Devin Jahelka**, commercial real estate advisor, **Jahelka Real Estate Group at Royal LePage Nanaimo Realty**, said that the complex is becoming a thriving and vibrant business community.

"Historically, with commercial real estate in Nanaimo, presales don't happen, people here haven't been receptive to it. Selling out Building A after 14 days on the market speaks to how excited the community is about this phase of the project. While Building B, which is currently under construction, still has space available, with its West Coast, modern style of architecture, secured underground parking, and convenient elevator access, remaining units are poised to move quickly."

What Jahelka is also seeing is interest from investors from larger markets outside of Nanaimo.

"Other communities and larger cities have seen mixed use developments, they understand how successful they are. There are great synergies and referral relationships with businesses working together and building a strong sense of community. It's setting the stage for other developments like this throughout



Part of the vision for Pacific Station was to create office space that focused on professionals rather than retail

CREDIT: WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION



Highly visible the building sees more than 40,000 cars a day driving by on the Island Highway

CREDIT: WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION

Nanaimo."

Lundy said that the larger multi-family residential development will begin construction soon and feature 60 one and two bedroom units with secure underground parking.

For Westmark, Pacific Station is an ongoing success story with Phase 2 already winning an

Honorable Mention for the **Vancouver Island Real Estate Board's (VIREB) Commercial Building Awards** in 2015, and an Award of Merit for Phase 1 in 2014 and more recently the 2017 VIREB Award of Excellence for Townhouse.

"There is quite a community unfolding within this complex," Lundy said, "with a variety of

owners in the commercial strata space such as architects, engineers, financial planners, real estate advisors, notary public, chiropractor, hair salon, mortgage broker, language school, insurance broker, and a technology company. They are saying they've experienced a great deal of success doing business within

the complex. That's how you define a professional community."

He explained that his initial vision for the property has been exceeded.

"When we sat down with the architect and engineers we wanted to create a project that was unique in form and character. We didn't want the standard and generic type architectural style, and we also wanted a look that would be consistent throughout with both the commercial and residential buildings."

But as Lundy explained, the challenge came in finding a way to mix the two together that fit the company vision and was complimentary to both the office space and residential.

"The architects did a great job. I really commend **Delinea Design Consultants** on the great job they did. The entire team working on the project, from suppliers to trades, have really set a standard for being diligent with quality control. Winning the awards added substance to that quality and the creative aspects put into the master plan and in its development."

Andrea Ironside, Lundy's wife

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**Commercial Realtors, Devin Jahelka and Carlee Jahelka, said that Building B has space to lease of up to 16,000 square feet**

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**Even though the winter was harsh Westmark workers only took a couple of days off because of the snow**

CREDIT: WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION

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and the company marketing director said that the Award of

Excellence is the Gold win and affirms all the hard work that went into the project.

"It is so gratifying to drive by the development and see the



**The design team was looking for consistency between the residential and commercial buildings, both have a West Coast style and feel**

CREDIT: WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION

project coming together. Architecturally, it is beautiful. As it was being developed I was so excited about it I showed it to friends and they ended up buying units."

Westmark was incorporated in 1988 by Lundy. Its reach extends beyond Nanaimo through Duncan, Parksville, Qualicum and up into the Comox Valley as well as Port Alberni, Tofino and Ucluelet. Its experience and expertise has seen it offering new home building, commercial construction, custom home building, design-build services and general contractor services.

With this latest project, Lundy has brought multiple levels of knowledge, adding features to the Pacific Station to further set it apart. He also brought an understanding of the complexity of building on the Island during the winter months and in dealing with the challenges of a long, cold and wet past winter.

"We created an onsite storm water management system that returns excess water back into the ground and rock gardens to help manage the run off. Although it was a harsh winter for the West Coast, we only took a couple of snow days off and otherwise we

kept on working."

Pacific Station also boasts energy efficient features including the installation of exterior cladding and provisions for car charging stations.

"With the trend towards electric cars we wanted the buildings to be ready to accommodate them," Lundy said.

For Lundy, this project will see the beginning of other buildings with a similar goal of utilizing existing space in Nanaimo to add density without sacrificing

quality or comfort.

"Pacific Station is significant for the businesses because not only are they in a great location within a collaborative community, but they are also creating assets for themselves for the future. Rather than paying lease costs, they have ownership and a say in how the strata operates and develops moving forward."

Westmark Construction is at #1-2535 McCullough Road in Nanaimo

[www.westmarkconstruction.ca](http://www.westmarkconstruction.ca)

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