Stage Right Residences
A White Paper on Housing & Mobility Partnership--
Demonstrating a Transitional Model for Climate-Aligned, Economically Pragmatic Urban Infill

Prepared for: Culver City Economic Development Staff and Elected Officials
Project: Rethink Culver – Downtown Mixed-Use Housing (34 Units) with Café Vida, Fat Sal's, and Kirk Douglas Theatre Shop & Yard Space
Architect: Brooks + Scarpa
Location: Adjacent to Kirk Douglas Theatre, above Café Vida

I. Executive Summary

Rethink Culver's downtown mixed-use project, now named Stage Right Residences, was intentionally designed as a no-parking, walkable infill housing development in the heart of downtown Culver City. This design aligns with the City's pedestrian-oriented vision for the district and reflects the structural realities of the site, where constructing on-site parking would have required displacing active businesses or fundamentally altering the block's urban character.

Downtown Culver City represents one of the strongest environments in Los Angeles to demonstrate a car-light housing model due to its concentration of employment, restaurants, cultural venues, and proximity to transit.

However, while shared mobility and autonomous vehicle (AV) technology are advancing rapidly, the housing finance market remains in a transitional phase. Both the City and our development team believe projects without parking represent the future of urban housing in locations like this. Nevertheless, feedback from lenders and investment partners indicates that some level of parking access remains necessary in the near term.

For approximately the next 5–10 years, parking access will likely remain an important bridge as mobility technology adoption accelerates and financial markets adjust to new patterns of urban living.

To responsibly manage this transition, we propose a structured, time-bound municipal parking partnership utilizing excess capacity in the City Hall garage located approximately 150 feet across a signalized crosswalk, or potentially the Watseka parking structure. The allocation would begin at up to one space per unit with a conservative phase-down over time.

Rather than constructing new parking infrastructure that may become unnecessary within a decade, this approach leverages existing municipal parking assets to responsibly bridge the gap between current market expectations and the mobility patterns that are rapidly emerging.

This approach allows Culver City to deliver housing today while preparing responsibly for the mobility systems of tomorrow.

II. Unique Site Constraints

This is not a typical development site. The project preserves and builds above active restaurant uses including Café Vida and Fat Sal's, while maintaining operations of the adjacent Kirk Douglas Theatre — a cultural anchor in downtown Culver City.

Café Vida, a 30-year Westside institution, now operates its only remaining location following the loss of its Palisades restaurant in the recent fire. Protecting this business and its employees was a priority throughout the design process.

Only approximately 4,000 square feet of the site was potentially available for excavation. Constructing subterranean parking would have required significant disruption to operating restaurants and introduced structural risks adjacent to an active theater venue and may not have been feasible at all.

In addition, no other businesses on this block provide on-site parking. Introducing new curb cuts or driveways would undermine the pedestrian character that defines this portion of downtown.

III. Economic Development & Downtown Vitality Benefits

The project protects legacy small businesses and cultural anchors while strengthening downtown housing density.

Preserving Café Vida, Fat Sal's, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre supports local jobs, sales tax revenue, and the continued vibrancy of downtown Culver City.

The addition of 34 housing units targeted to walk-to-work creative professionals will increase evening and weekend activity, supporting restaurants and retail while strengthening downtown economic resilience.

Looking ahead to the 2028 Olympic Games, Culver City is expected to host a number of international 'Hospitality Houses' where participating countries establish temporary cultural and event hubs during the Games.

Stage Right Residences is uniquely positioned to support this opportunity given its location in the heart of downtown, adjacent to restaurants, cultural venues, and civic spaces. The project could potentially serve as a location where a participating country hosts events, accommodates visiting staff, and activates downtown during the Olympic period.

A forward-looking mobility partnership between the City and this project would demonstrate Culver City's commitment to innovative urban planning and could serve as a

compelling example of sustainable, walkable urban development while the region is on the global stage during the Olympics.

IV. Climate Responsibility & Avoided Embodied Carbon

Concrete production accounts for roughly 8% of global carbon emissions. Structured or subterranean parking construction requires large volumes of concrete and steel, resulting in significant embodied carbon.

Constructing underground parking for this project would have required extensive excavation, soil export, reinforced concrete structures, ventilation systems, and long-term energy use. Given evolving mobility patterns, such infrastructure risks becoming partially obsolete within the next decade.

Leveraging existing municipal parking infrastructure avoids redundant construction while preserving embodied carbon and maintaining long-term flexibility.

V. Mobility Trends & Autonomous Vehicle Adoption

Los Angeles is one of the primary deployment markets for autonomous vehicle services in the United States. Driverless ride-hailing services are already operating commercially in portions of Los Angeles.

Industry analysts project that autonomous ride-hailing fleets will expand significantly through the late 2020s and early 2030s, particularly in dense, walkable urban districts where trip distances are short and demand is concentrated.

Downtown Culver City — with its employment density, walkability, and mixed-use environment — is particularly well positioned to experience early adoption of these mobility shifts.

VI. Capital Markets & Underwriting Transition

While mobility behavior is evolving rapidly, capital markets adapt more slowly. Multifamily lenders and equity partners continue to underwrite projects based on traditional parking ratios developed over decades.

A structured municipal parking partnership provides transitional certainty, reduces perceived leasing risk, and enables housing production without requiring long-term investment in potentially obsolete infrastructure.

VII. Precedents for Municipal Shared Parking Partnerships

Shared parking partnerships between municipalities and nearby residential or mixed-use developments are widely used in urban districts to optimize existing parking infrastructure.

Municipal garages across the country operate permit-based systems that allow residents to access underutilized parking during off-peak periods while preserving daytime capacity for civic uses.

In fact, shared parking strategies are widely recommended in urban planning practice because they reduce the need for redundant parking construction while making more efficient use of existing public infrastructure.

VIII. Proposed Municipal Parking Transition Framework

- Years 1–3: Up to 34 spaces (1 per unit)
- Years 4–6: Approximately 30–32 spaces
- Years 7–10: Approximately 26–28 spaces
- Post-Year 10: Reassessment based on demonstrated demand and mobility trends

All spaces would be market-rate leased, key-card secured, and subject to annual utilization review.

IX. Municipal Revenue & Asset Optimization

If leased at approximately $175–$200 per space per month, 34 spaces could generate approximately $71,000–$81,000 annually in recurring municipal revenue while activating underutilized public infrastructure.

X. Recognition & Replicable Model

This project combines vertical infill over active businesses, cultural preservation, avoided embodied carbon, shared municipal infrastructure, micromobility integration, and structured mobility transition planning.

With Brooks + Scarpa as architect, the project has strong potential for regional and national recognition as a model for innovative yet pragmatic urban development.

Highlighting this forward-looking public-private partnership during the 2028 Olympics would allow Culver City to showcase its leadership in housing, mobility innovation, and sustainable urban planning to a global audience.

XI. Conclusion: A Pragmatic Bridge to the Future

Stage Right Residences demonstrates how housing production, small business preservation, climate responsibility, and evolving mobility patterns can align within a single project.

A time-bound parking partnership allows the City to support housing delivery today while preparing for a less car-dependent future.