

Nanaimo Daily News.

Why Nanaimo: Being close to family, better climate drew psychology major to Nanaimo

[Aaron Hinks](#) / Daily News

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Rhys Lewis has now lived in Nanaimo for five years.

Rhys Lewis moved to Nanaimo five years ago after obtaining his PhD in industrial and organizational psychology from Western University in London, Ont. Born and raised in Victoria, he came back to the Island to be closer to family. He started a company in Nanaimo called Honest Renter. The website, www.honestrenter.com, publishes a personality test that landlords can use to screen tenants.

What drew you to Nanaimo?

Family. All my family is on the Island. Nanaimo in particular has a better quality and affordability of life than in bigger cities, such as Vancouver or Victoria.

Having the best climate in Canada is also a nice bonus.

What challenges have you faced since moving to town?

It's harder than it should be to get to and from Vancouver. Long travel times (drive to ferry terminal, then two hour crossing, then one hour bus ride) and the lack of late return sailings add unnecessary barriers to doing business in Vancouver while living in Nanaimo. The ability to go quickly and cheaply from downtown Nanaimo to downtown Vancouver should be a cornerstone of the Nanaimo economy, bringing business into this area, treated similarly to the public road network.

The underutilization of Nanaimo's proximity to Vancouver is one of the greatest absurdities and tragedies of this city. I feel the cost of it in my own personal business dealings, and I'm sure I'm not alone.

What do you feel is the most under-rated aspect of Nanaimo?

South Nanaimo/Cedar. I'm right on the beach in Cedar. It's just beautiful out here; it's fantastic being out in the country and near the ocean. At the same time I know from experience that Cedar is the dumping ground for projects that the rest of Nanaimo doesn't want. Area A tends to get out voted on everything, so we have the dump out here, we have the Harmac facility here, we just seem to get the short end of the stick.

If you could change one thing about Nanaimo, what would it be?

Better transportation options to Vancouver, Victoria, and Mount Washington. The central location of Nanaimo is one of its greatest strengths. That strength can be better leveraged. Specifically to Vancouver I know the passenger ferry is in the works. My understanding is that the prices are a little bit out of sync with what people were hoping to pay for a passenger ferry to and from downtown Vancouver, but it's a step in the right direction.

To and from Victoria I know that that the EN railway corridor is not being used at all and it seems that that is a precious resource that shouldn't go to waste.

A stronger bus network would be beneficial. The last time I looked into it the transportation options to Mount Washington were rather limited. You had to leave right at the end of the ski day and not have time to relax a little bit. I would love to take the bus up to Mount Washington, relax there, spend a little bit of the time in the evening there and then come back in the evening.

AHinks@nanaimodailynews.com 250-729-4242

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