



CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

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15 March 2021

Attn: Professor David Brown
University of Louisville Arts and Sciences

Re: Outstanding Research and Creativity Award

I am providing this letter of support for Dr. John Gilderbloom, a colleague and mentor of mine for the past 10 years. My hope is that I can reinforce the both the intellectual merit and scholarship in consideration for the University of Louisville Arts and Sciences Outstanding Research and Creativity Award.

I began working with John around 2008 and it has been the most productive relationship in my career. We have over 6 highly lauded peer reviewed articles together our work on sustainable neighborhoods and walkability set a standard for high level research, being published in 2015 and widely lauded with over 200 citation and features in The Atlantic, The Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal.

Since that time, we have extended that work to look at different street types and also to challenge thinking about the development of cities. Our work shows it is important to think about economic and social advancement in parallel—that you can have growth without displacement. I am extremely proud of this work and view John as one of my key collaborators. It is not every day that you find this kind of mentorship and outside of your own institution. And in my case, I was able to benefit from a relationship that was not only prolific but was very supportive.

This aspect of support and mentorship is important. John is not only an esteemed academic he is a human being with a heart-of-gold. Very rarely do you encounter people who not only care for the downtrodden and disenfranchised, but who are willing to stand up and fight for them. John is one of these individuals. He is both compassionate and bold. He has been willing to take difficult stances about some of the social and environmental issues that continue to divide our communities. This advocacy-oriented approach has been recognized by people throughout government. To name a few, these include: former Presidents Clinton and Obama; leadership in the City of Louisville and West Louisville; organizations like the Ford Foundation, the Congress for New Urbanism and Urban Land Institute. He embodies the idea of “service above self” and this is an area where I have learned from him.

In sum, Dr. Gilderbloom is scholar without many parallels, and a huge asset to the University of Louisville, and I’m delighted to refer him for this award.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support.
Sincerely,

William Riggs, PhD, AICP, LEED AP
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