

August 2, 2017

Michael Hill
Community Development Coordinator-Downtown
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square,
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Re. Parking restrictions on Balmoral Road

Dear Sir,

First Metropolitan United Church and the organizations listed below wish to protest the recent reduction in parking from two hours to one hour on Balmoral Road between Quadra and Vancouver Streets, and to request the former two-hour parking restriction be reinstated.

The decision to reduce parking time on this block was taken without consultation with our organizations and without warning, and has caused serious difficulties for congregants, staff, clients, volunteers, and members of the public who use our facilities on a regular basis. We understand this decision was made after a petition was circulated to some, but not all, of the addresses on the block. However, by failing to consult or even inform all groups affected, we feel this process was unfair and the decision was made hastily and without consideration of its effects.

The church serves not only its members but also the greater community who take part in our many daily and weekly Health and Wellness Programs, and who attend many community events hosted by First Metropolitan United Church. Parking problems are also experienced during funerals which are often attended by many members of the public. None of these activities are less than one hour, and the new parking restrictions are not just an inconvenience but discourage people from coming to our facility.

It should also be noted that the church gave up a valuable parking lot to provide 74 units of subsidized housing in the neighbourhood at Balmoral Garden Court.

The Inter-Cultural Association, which among other services provides language classes lasting more than one hour to hundreds of immigrants, has dedicated volunteers receiving parking tickets to the detriment of the organization's operation. These volunteers, plus staff and students themselves, already give their time and should not have the additional burden of parking tickets.

As with First Metropolitan Church, many POV patrons are elderly and the loss of suitable parking within a block of their location is a major issue. Constituents, board members, and volunteers have all received parking tickets.

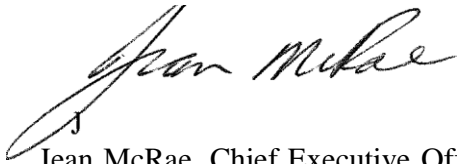
The North Park Neighbourhood Association has raised this issue in the past and remains concerned about the detrimental effects this new parking restriction has on the local community. The Church of St. John the Divine Anglican, which is further down the block, has also been affected by the restrictions and lends its support to this letter of request.

Given the difficulties imposed on our organizations by this new parking restriction, we respectfully request a return to the previous two-hour parking limit on the affected portion of Balmoral Road.

Please feel free to contact any of the groups named for further information.



Rev. Ivy Thomas, Interim Minister
First Metropolitan United Church



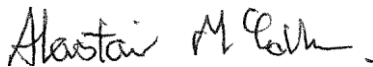
Jean McRae, Chief Executive Officer
Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria



Jeremy Roszmann, Venue Manager
Pacific Opera Victoria



Penny Bond, Secretary/First Met Liaison
North Park Neighbourhood Association



Rev. Alastair McCollum, Rector
Church of St. John the Divine Anglican

Cc: Lisa Helps, Mayor
Councillor Jeremy Loveday, City of Victoria