

Sapperton Residents' Association



The purpose of the association is to preserve and enhance the livability and quality of the Sapperton neighborhood.

March 25, 2020

Mayor Jonathan Cote and New Westminister
City Council,
New Westminister, B.C.

Dear Mayor Cote and New Westminister City Councilors,

Re: Proposed Parking Plan for RCH Employees in Sapperton Neighborhoods'

It has recently been brought to our attention that a resident of Fader Street has proposed a plan to allow RCH employees to park for free throughout the Lower Sapperton neighbourhood as well as on some streets above E. Columbia Street, including Keary and Simpson Streets, for the duration of the Covid-19 crisis. We understand that this plan involves encouraging all residents to "empty the streets" of their own vehicles and park at the RCH lot by the Braid Skytrain Station to provide space for RCH employees to park on Sapperton Streets.

While we fully appreciate the motivation and kind intentions behind this initiative - to provide thoughtful support of RCH workers during this time of crisis and stress for them as they are on the frontlines of the Covid-19 pandemic - we have concerns about the perhaps unintended impacts this plan will have on many members of our community who are also experiencing significant stress and anxiety at this challenging time.

Specifically, these concerns are:

- 1) Not everyone in the neighbourhood has a driveway or back-lane spot and rely on street front parking. Many neighbours have more than one vehicle and need the street parking.
- 2) Many residents are elderly, have small children, or have mobility issues, so parking down at Braid and walking up the hill to their homes would be challenging and inconvenient. Even though people are mostly staying home, there are those who need access to their vehicles to go to doctors' appointments, shop for groceries, check on elderly parents, and so on.
- 3) The safety and security of vehicles parked at Braid Station for extended periods of time. Residents would likely feel compelled to walk down to regularly check on their vehicles, and the worry over their vehicles' security, especially at night, is an added stress not needed at this time.
- 4) Many residents are still working in essential service jobs – health care workers at other facilities, grocery store workers, delivery people, police officers, fire fighters, and so on. After long shifts, they should be able to park in front of their own homes with the parking passes they have paid for and not feel compelled to give up their parking to someone else.
- 5) Many residents have lost their jobs due to this crisis, and the loss of their street front parking is yet another stress they do not need at this time.
- 6) Placing signs in front of the homes of people who "opt in" to this plan makes evident those residents who have not opted in, causing them to be "shamed" for not participating, even though they may have perfectly legitimate reasons for not doing so.

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- 7) Full consultation of all residents has not taken place; thus, this proposal is being made on behalf of residents who have no idea it is happening and will be shocked if it is brought into effect.

Therefore, while we appreciate the intention behind the suggested parking plan, we cannot support it as proposed. Instead, we have alternate suggestions that we feel honour the spirit of the proposal but do not cause inconvenience or stress for Sapperton residents. These suggestions are:

- 1) The City could allow RCH workers to park for free in all locations currently designated City pay-parking only spots in the Lower Sapperton area. Specifically, we have identified the following areas: Sherbrooke Street from Brunette up to Buchanan Streets on both sides of the street; E. Columbia from Simpson St. to Braid St., both sides; the stalls behind Knox Church. By our count, this would provide space for approximately 100 vehicles. Since most businesses on E. Columbia are not currently open, parking by RCH employees will not impact their operations.
- 2) To ensure these spots are used by RCH employees only, they should be identified with a sticker or tag. Without proper identification, these spots will likely be taken by construction workers who are already violating parking regulations in our area.
- 3) In the spirit of equity between RCH employees who currently pay to park in RCH designated spots and those who would get free parking in City spots, RCH should allow its employees to park for free in all its lots for the duration of the crisis.
- 4) Residents who wish to offer their Visitor passes to health care employees to use for free may do so. Likewise, those who have driveways or laneway parking spots may offer employees to park there.

Residents of Sapperton value and support our health care workers and recognize the tremendous sacrifices they make on a daily basis, especially during this pandemic. Many are already engaging in a variety of activities to show support for health care workers. We believe the alternate ideas suggested above offer a way to show support to RCH health care workers by the City, RCH and residents, and do so without causing inconvenience, stress, and anxiety for residents, many of whom are already experiencing these emotions at this challenging time.

If you would like clarification of the ideas in this letter or would like additional ideas on how to implement the above suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact members of our Executive.

Regards,

Dee Beattie and Monica Hardjowasito,
Co-Chairs, Sapperton Residents' Association

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