



June 14, 2018

To Mayor and Council:

**RE: Victoria Multicultural Society dba Victoria Event Centre: Request of Change in Hours of Service - Liquor License**

We write the following to advise Council of the context and intent behind our request for a change in hours of service with respect to liquor primary license #303765. For ease of reference, the particulars of this request are outlined in the application for a permanent change to liquor licence as previously submitted to Council and the BC Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB).

**Context and Intent:**

Over the past 14 years of operations, the Victoria Event Centre (VEC) has been a cornerstone of Victoria's arts community with a special focus on providing affordable space for new and emerging artists, celebration, and community building. The last two years have seen many positive changes for our small non-profit society and it is in the spirit of change that we have submitted this application.

With new energy, the VEC Board and staff have worked hard to overcome substantial financial challenges and infrastructure issues. We are working hard to become an organization of financial stability, and in doing so, have reinvested in long overdue upgrades to our lighting and sound system along with accessibility upgrades to our stage and washrooms. While we are currently able to meet our bottomline financial obligations, we are unable to make important costly investments to strengthen the capacity of our space to serve community by offering flexible booking times, complete accessibility upgrades and to provide a "living wage" for our staff.

The three current strategic priorities for the VEC are:

1. Provide a fully accessible and culturally appropriate art space that serves all citizens of Victoria with specific focus on underrepresented or otherwise marginalised groups and individuals.
2. Ensure long term financial sustainability.
3. Provide a living wage to all VEC Employees.

We see this application for a change in our hours of service as foundational to achieving these strategic priorities.

The benefit of increased flexibility in our liquor licence will allow the VEC to accommodate a wider array of performances and special occasion uses. An anticipated increase in revenue from rental fees and food and beverage sales, flowing from this greater flexibility, will allow the VEC to reinvest this revenue in providing a living wage to our staff while strengthening financial capacity for much needed accessibility upgrades. The largest current infrastructure challenge we face is elevator modernization, estimated to cost \$200,000, which we require in order to be fully accessible to guests with mobility challenges. Any increase in revenue resulting from a change in our liquor primary licence will serve our strategic priorities through reinvestment in operations and infrastructure.

We urge Council to consider our application in the operating context of the VEC as separate and distinct from an application for a change in liquor licence that may be brought by a more traditional liquor servicing entity. Our non-profit motive and the nature of our operations means that the impacts of our events on the surrounding neighbourhood are far less intrusive than most traditional liquor serving establishments.

### **Impact on the Neighbourhood:**

As noted in our attached letter to the LCLB, The Victoria Multicultural Society has a tradition of respecting our community, our neighbours, and our guests. While our current licence permits liquor service until 1:00AM, for many events, the VEC restricts hours of service voluntarily. We do this to ensure responsible service, reduce potential neighbourhood nuisance and to provide a safe experience for all of our guests. Extended serving hours will allow for greater flexibility to accommodate user groups on an as needed basis but would not be established as default daily serving hours.

The VEC has taken a unique approach, exceeding provincial requirements, to ensure safe and effective management of events that aim to build on our commitment to the neighborhood and to our community. The VEC was the subject of recent national media interest with the hiring of Canada's first ever ["Consent Captain"](#). This unique position is aimed at preventing sexual harassment and assault by supporting people who feel threatened and to talk to others about their behaviour to ensure that the VEC remains a safe space for all. Through this position and other similar staff led initiatives the VEC proactively mitigates the potential for bad behaviour and promotes a culture of respect and safety for guests, both inside and outside our space.

The work of the VEC, to promote respect and safety inside our venue, builds on our efforts to be responsible and respectful neighbours to all who live and do business in the downtown core. Our guest policies and procedures for door management are focused on moving guests into the venue swiftly at the start of events and dispersing guests respectfully at the time of event close limiting the effects of late night noise and loitering. We are committed to working with all of our neighbours to address concerns, should any occur, so that we can continue to have a positive impact on the vibrancy of the downtown core and the arts community across the region.

**In Conclusion:**

The Executive Board of the VEC strongly encourage Council to approve our request to the LCLB. We make this appeal for support not only for the sustainability of accessible art programming and events at the VEC but for the growth and promotion of the arts for those who may not otherwise have a place to celebrate and create in.

Sincerely,

Luke Galimberti  
Board Chair, VEC  
1415 Broad Street  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 2B2  
Cell: 250-587-0772  
Email: [lugalimberti@gmail.com](mailto:lugalimberti@gmail.com)

Stephen Portman  
Treasurer, VEC  
1415 Broad Street  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 2B2  
Cell: (250) 361-6083  
Email: [Stephenportman@gmail.com](mailto:Stephenportman@gmail.com)

**Cc.**

**Victoria Downtown Residents Association**

c/o 1715 Government Street  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8W 1Z4  
Email: [info@victoriadra.ca](mailto:info@victoriadra.ca)

**Encl.**

1. Application for a Permanent Change to Liquor License