

APC Report to Islands Trust on Parking in False Bay

The APC held several meetings and a public consultation on Parking in False Bay area. The primary goal of this exercise was to consult with the Lasqueti community and gain a sense of what problems were most pressing and what solutions might be acceptable. This report documents our findings and recommendations for the Islands Trust and PRRD board. It contains a set of related problems and potential solutions, along with some recommendations for further action.

Areas of General Agreement

A number of ideas appear to have broad support in the community, in most cases unanimous support among the APC and those who attended the public consultation.

Abandoned Vehicles: vehicles abandoned in False Bay - in serious disrepair and/or left for many months without moving – were the dominant problem for many years. In recent years, thanks to the efforts of community members and Merrick, most of the abandoned vehicles have been removed, and there is some monitoring around vehicles abandoned in False Bay, and a process for having them removed.

The fish plant in Scottie Bay has been accepting towed cars, storing them in their yard, and helping to eventually ship them off-island. A coming challenge for Lasqueti is that the shipyard will stop providing this service next year. Lasqueti needs to identify a suitable location for storing and disposing of abandoned vehicles.

Unlicensed Vehicles: vehicles not displaying a valid license with proof of insurance (sticker) comprise about 50% of the vehicles parked in False Bay. There are many reasons for encouraging our neighbors to properly license and insure their vehicles, and there was general agreement that more enforcement around vehicle licensing would be a good idea. However, it was also agreed that this may have little impact on parking, as these cars would likely be still require parking after they are properly insured.

Safety Issues: there are 3 key places in False Bay that currently present safety issues:

1. **Base of Hill:** congestion and confusion at the bottom of the hill is caused by vehicles lined up for gas, others waiting to get onto the dock, vehicles coming off the dock, and people, kids, and dogs moving up, down, and across the road. Coupled with limited visibility around the corner and the steep slope in this area, this is an accident waiting to happen at times.
2. **Corner of Weldon Rd.:** this is a narrow point on Main Rd., with vehicles turning on and off Weldon Rd., pedestrians and cyclists using the roadway, and often with limited visibility due to cars parked too close to the intersection.
3. **Arts Centre:** particularly when there is an event at the Arts Centre or during Market days, vehicles are often stopped here to load / unload freight or passengers. With cars parked along both sides of Main R., it can be quite congested and visibility is reduced.

Broad-based solutions needed: the needs Lasquetians have for parking in False Bay vary widely. A range of solutions is required that accommodate all of these needs. It's not adequate to simply shut-out a particular group of users (i.e., not "that's *their* problem").

False Bay Master Plan needed: jurisdiction for roadside parking resides with the Ministry of Highways. They are reluctant to take any action until Lasqueti completes a Master Plan for the False Bay area. This plan would reflect the long-term visions Lasqueti has for this area, and help to identify suitable parking regulations.

Issues on which Opinions Diverge

There appear to be some fundamental philosophical differences in people's expectations around parking. Although expressed here, for illustrative purposes, as a dichotomy, each of these actually represents a spectrum of opinion. Since these underlying philosophical perspectives inform the utility of any potential solutions, clarity about one's interests in these issues is key to continued productive discussions about parking.

Convenience:

Perspectives: *"parking near the ferry should be convenient and available for all users" vs. "we should try to discourage / minimize the number of cars parked in False Bay".*

The former perspective leads to solutions such as increased parking, and towing abandoned or unlicensed vehicles. The latter leads to solutions such as expanding the 3-day limit zone, restricting roadside parking to 30 days elsewhere (thereby reducing available long-term parking or pushing it further away from "downtown" False Bay), valet service options, and improved pedestrian/bike paths.

Key Question: *Should adequate parking near the ferry be supplied for all potential parkers or should parking be strictly limited and regulated to reduce the number of parked vehicles?*

Public-Private:

Perspectives: *"it's a community problem so we need community solutions with costs shared by all" vs. "parking problems are caused by a sub-set of the community so solutions should tailored and costs primarily borne by those who cause the problems"*

The former perspective leads to collective solutions (e.g. buying public land, creating public parking lots and/or increased road-side parking paid through tax levies, referendum for borrowing, etc.). The latter leads to user-pay solutions (e.g. user-pay parking lots, private enterprise opportunities, people willing to do valet service, etc.).

This aspect raises concerns about the socio-economic impacts of using public land for parking, tax increases, fairness to people who bike/walk, etc. Both positions will tend to see their perspective as the means to equitable cost sharing (either distributed across the tax base or focused on "parkers").

Key Questions: *Does the community have an obligation to provide public parking or should people pay for parking? Should the cost of parking be shared among all community members or should it be borne primarily by those who park?*

Stick vs. carrot

Perspectives: *"some people will only follow the rules if there is a penalty" vs. "effective enforcement on Lasqueti is hard to impossible, and social pressure and incentives are a better mechanism for encouraging compliance in the long run anyways".*

The former perspective leads to ticketing, impounding, wheel locks. The latter leads to solutions such as notes/marks on windshields, "worse offending cars" photos on the website, public education campaigns, etc.

Potential Solutions

There is no “silver bullet” solution to the parking problems in False Bay – so a range of small solutions is the appropriate way to proceed. There was general agreement that solutions relying primarily upon enforcement are unlikely to work well, so we need solutions that can generate broad community buy-in. While there was some agreement about the following ideas in general, there was no consensus on any specific implementations in many cases.

Public Education Campaign

- the parking problem and any potential solutions will require public education around what the issues are and how people can change their parking habits to improve things.
- Conduct and publish research about the relative cost of maintaining a private vehicle on Lasqueti vs. using a local taxi service.

Increase Short-term Parking

- create a 24-hour parking zone on the lower hill by businesses;
AND/OR
- extend 3-day parking zone further up the hill;
AND/OR
- create a 7- or 14-day maximum zone above the 3-day zone.

Designate Long-term Parking areas

- Longer-term parking should be on Weldon Road or on Main Road above the Arts Centre.
- Designate some areas along Main Rd. where there is a wide shoulder for long-term parking. For example, along the roadside across from the Teapot house. People who need long-term parking could drop their gear at the ferry, go back and park their car, and hitch a ride back to the ferry. Since this is for long-term parking, it should be minor inconvenience, as it will be done infrequently.

Promote Ride Share / Taxi / “Valet” services

- People who will be off island for an extended period (more than a couple weeks) should be encouraged to get a ride to the ferry, use the taxi, or have a neighbour or someone else shuttle their car home, or otherwise arrange for their vehicle to not be parked on the roadside for an extended period.
- There may be an opportunity to operate a small business shuttling cars from False Bay to their home and back again when their owners are about to arrive. The community website could be used as a hub for connecting people who need a car shuttle service with those willing to shuttle cars.

Encourage additional private parking

- Landowners in the area should be encouraged to consider providing pay parking on their properties.

Widen Main Rd. at Arts Centre

- There should be a pull-out in front of the Arts Centre to allow people to load / unload in this area without restricting the roadway.

Designated bike / pedestrian path

- The entire South shoulder of False Bay Hill from the public dock to the Arts Center should be for pedestrians and cyclists, and should be strictly no parking.
- This would greatly improve visibility for vehicles turning on or off of Weldon Rd.

“Small Cars Only” Zone at Weldon Rd. intersection

- Parking along the North shoulder of Main Rd. from Weldon Rd. up to the next driveway (current Parallel Parking area) should be perpendicular parking limited to small (short) vehicles only.
- Vehicles should not crowd the paved surface, and certainly not overhang it. A painted yellow line on the edge of the pavement could help identify the limit.
- In conjunction with “No Parking” on along the South shoulder of Main Rd., this should provide adequate road width for 2 lanes of traffic plus a “sidewalk”.

Improve traffic management around gas pump

- Although the gas pump is a private enterprise operated on private property, congestion from vehicles waiting to access the pump causes some serious hazards on the public road.
- Possible resolutions include:
 - freeing up some of the hotel parking specifically for gas-pump only when the pump is open;
 - moving the pump location (say up to Weldon Rd.)

Recommendations

Based on our discussions, community input, and the range of practical options available on Lasqueti, the APC recommends the following follow-up actions:

- **Islands Trust and PRRD should work with BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to locate and create a proper impound area so unlicensed or abandoned cars can be towed.**
- **Islands Trust & PRRD should work with Lasqueti Community to develop a *Master Plan for False Bay*.**

This is a long-term project, likely requiring several years of work, and would need to be initiated by the Islands Trust.

The master plan should examine the following issues:

- Facilitate rezoning or whatever is required to move the gas pump to a more suitable area, perhaps off Weldon Rd.
- Identify community parking needs – how many 3-day / weekly / monthly / longer-term parking spots are needed?
- Identify suitable area for pay-parking for longer-term parking.
- Facilitate / allow / encourage residents to provide small-scale pay-parking on their properties.

- Revise parking regulations and signage in False Bay to create more *short-term* parking (under 30 days).
- Hold public meetings to develop acceptable parking regulations. For example
 - extend sidewalk - create no parking zone - from the Hotel right up to the Arts Centre on the South side of Main Rd.
 - remove parallel parking zone - convert this zone to "small cars only" with signage and yellow line on edge of pavement
 - extend 3-day zone to church parking lot
 - create a 24 hr. parking zone on the lower part of False Bay Hill
 - limit all other parking in False Bay to 30 days max.
- **Islands Trust & PRRD should work with the APC to develop a public education campaign:**
 - post parking discussion, documents, and solutions on website
 - create area on website to facilitate private parking and "valet" services for shuttling cars
 - send letter to all property owners on Lasqueti with summary of parking issues
 - post notices on cars parked for extended periods or against posted signage informing them of the negative impact this behaviour has on others.