

Parking in False Bay: Issues and Solutions

On Friday, Feb. 22, 2013, the PRRD and RCMP attended a public “Town Hall” LTC meeting on parking in False Bay (notably absent was the MoT). The APC presented an early draft plan and several recommendations for developing a parking management strategy for False Bay. This follows on a series of public consultations and work completed by the previous APC, and reported to the LTC in June 2011 (see <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/ltc/la/pdf/larptapcparkinginfasebayjun132011.pdf>)

It is clear from this meeting and the on-going work of the APC over the past 2 years that there are, in fact, several some-what independent underlying issues contributing the “parking problem”, and that no single strategy will effectively deal with all these issues. Thus, to make progress, we should clearly identify these issues and work to address each with it’s own set of suitable solutions.

Issues

There are at least 6 quite distinct issues related to parking in False Bay:

1. **Derelict / Abandoned Vehicles:** take up on-street parking spaces.
Issues:
 - Definition: when can a vehicle be declared derelict or abandoned? Who has authority to do so?
 - Disposal: how, where, and who pays?
2. **Unlicensed / Uninsured Vehicles:** vehicles not displaying a valid license with proof of insurance (sticker) comprise about 50% of the vehicles parked in False Bay.
Issues:
 - Can an unlicensed vehicle be considered “abandoned”?
 - Could unlicensed vehicles be towed to a yard, on- or off-island? Who pays?
3. **Excessive-term Parking:** vehicles parked for over 30 days take up much of the available on-street parking.
Issues:
 - vehicles should not be left parked on roadside for > 30 days.
 - Who / how to inform / educate / enforce?
4. **Access to Short-term Parking:** for residents visiting False Bay or taking the ferry
Issues:
 - suitable parking regulations required to accommodate:
 - a. patrons of local businesses
 - b. ferry loading / off-loading
 - c. 1-3 day trips “away”
 - d. 1 – 4 week trips “away”
 - Who has jurisdiction to create parking plan?
 - How to enforce and administer these regulations?

5. **Traffic Safety Issues:** there are 3 key places in False Bay that currently present safety issues:
 - a) **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.
 - b) **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.
 - c) **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.
6. **Environmental Issues:** petroleum run-off from vehicles runs onto and pollutes the beach at False Bay where our children play and swim.

Solutions

A wide range of potential solutions to these issues are well documented and detailed in the APC Report on Parking in False Bay -

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/lrc/la/pdf/larptapcparkinginfalsebayjun132011.pdf> :

- Public Education Campaigns
- Increase Short-term Parking
- Designate Long-term Parking areas
- Promote Ride Share / Taxi / “Valet” services
- Encourage additional private parking
- Widen Main Rd. at Arts Centre
- Designated bike / pedestrian path
- “Small Cars Only” Zone at Weldon Rd. intersection
- Improve traffic management around gas pump

Several enforcement mechanisms for posted parking regulations were suggested & discussed:

- name and shame / “community enforcement”
- ticket, fine, tow, and/or tire-lock
- tow to secure yard
- tow, barge, and scrap

Enforcement

Any solution that creates a “violation”¹ also requires some level of enforcement – even on Lasqueti not everyone always plays nice. There are two distinct phases to parking enforcement, each with its own challenges:

1. Identify vehicles in violation / non-compliance
2. Consequence & Resolution

Identifying Vehicle in “violation”¹

The severity of the “resolution” determines, in some ways, the degree of care and documentation required in identifying and “marking” violations.

- Process needs to be public, legitimate, transparent, sanctioned, and trusted.
- Entrusted person(s) required to perform identification (likely requires remuneration)
- Clear, consistent system for marking and/or ticketing cars (account for rain!)
- Liaison with RCMP

Resolving the “violation”¹

Once a vehicle has been clearly identified as non-compliant, a variety of strategies could be employed to create incentives for the owner to comply in future.

- **Shame** – “wall of shame” (could be on website), “car decorating”,
Needs: community support; volunteers
- **“Community Enforcement”** – mischievous vandalism-light to make violating very inconvenient (e.g., flat tires, drained battery, paint / butcher paper on windscreen)
- **Tow Home** – vehicle towed, at owner’s expense, back to their residence
Needs: collection method to pay towing charges
Who: Keith will tow clearly identified vehicles for \$75
- **Fine** - raises money to pay for further enforcement / improvements
Needs: regulation/by-law + collection method
Who: MoT / PRRD?
- **Tow to Secure Yard** – vehicle towed and stored until payment
Needs: secure store yard + abandonment mechanism
+ person willing to oversee, manage, impound/release cars
Who: ?
- **Barge and Scrap** – abandoned / derelict vehicles are sent to scrap yard
Tow: Keith will tow for \$75
Barge: Keith will barge for scrap value (\$150)
Scrap: Scrap dealer will pick-up derelicts in French Creek & pay \$150 per

¹ By “violation” here I mean any kind of non-compliance with the communities accepted parking policies, whether or not they are literally in violation of a regulation or by-law.

Collection Methods – need effective way to collect fines, towing fees, etc.

- escalating fines / charges
- fines collected on property tax (PRRD)
- fines resolved before re-insuring (ICBC)
- Storage Yard – vehicle is locked in a secure yard until towing / storage charges are paid or it is designated abandoned.
Needs: secure store yard + abandonment mechanism
+ person willing to impoundk/release cars
- Tire Lock – vehicle is locked until fine paid or designated abandoned
Needs: tire locks + abandonment mechanism
+ person willing to lock/release cars

Jurisdiction / Regulation

A major obstacle for many of the potential solution strategies discussed above is the issue of which regulatory body has jurisdiction over parking and can enact by-laws and enforcement mechanisms that would permit some of these strategies to be effective. The LTC and PRRD have committed to continue their attempts to discuss this with the MoT. Their cooperation and a willingness of all government agencies that share jurisdiction on Lasqueti is likely required to enable these solutions.

A number of ideas discussed at the Feb. 22 LTC meeting appear to have broad support in the community, in many cases unanimous support among the APC and those who attended the public meetings. Some political will and a little money are key ingredients to any solution.