



Date: March 5, 2017

To: LIFAC
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From: Beth Walukas Louis, President Protect Lummi Island Community (PLIC)

Subject: Memo on 2016 Dry Dock Questionnaire Results

During January 2017, PLIC collected information from the Lummi Island community about their 2016 Dry Dock experience. A questionnaire (see Attachment 1) was circulated via Survey Monkey and in hard copy. Two hundred and twenty four (224) responses were received by the January 31st deadline.

This memo summarizes the data and conveys the results of the questionnaire. It proposes short and long term suggestions to implement immediately and over time for improving the Dry Dock process so that the majority of concerns could be addressed. Some of these suggestions are applicable to year round operations as well Dry Dock. At this time PLIC is requesting LIFAC and the Whatcom County Public Works Department to use the results of this PLIC questionnaire to aid 2017 and future Dry Dock planning efforts.

While the majority of people responding look forward to or tolerate the Dry Dock period, there are still many for which it is a hardship. The reasons for this vary from person to person and enjoying/tolerating and not enjoying/tolerating Dry Dock are not mutually exclusive concepts. People are more likely to enjoy or better tolerate Dry Dock if they have flexibility regarding finances and time and benefit from robust health. The fact that some people do not have this flexibility needs to be acknowledged and accommodated whenever possible. Parking and safety are the top issues of concern, which is no surprise, but there are ideas suggested that if proven to be cost-effective, could be implemented to minimize

the uncertainties and address these concerns. These are summarized in the last section of the memo.

Data Summary By Question

A summary of the responses by question shown in tabular and graphical format is found in Attachment 2. Some responses were check all that apply so totals may exceed the number of total questionnaires received. The following is noted:

- The majority (80% - 179 respondents) of people who responded are full time residents with 18 percent part-time and less than 2 percent representing visitors to or workers on the Island. **(Question 1)**; therefore, the results presented in this memo are more representative of full-time residents. This is most likely a result of the questionnaire being distributed in January rather than Fall following Dry Dock or any other time of the year when more part-time residents and visitors to the Island could have responded. Use of the results should be used with this in mind. Any future questionnaires will be distributed so that meaningful information can be collected from these groups.
- Over a quarter of the people responding (56) reported that (1) they do not leave the island at all during dry dock (17% - 37 respondents) or (2) they leave the Island and do not return until dry dock ends (9% - 19 respondents). **(Question 2)**
- The most reported reason for leaving the Island during dry dock is for shopping or medical reasons (60% - 134 respondents) followed by Other, not specified, (43% - 95 responding), and commuting full or part-time (27% - 61 respondents). **(Question 2)**.
- When asked if they parked a vehicle on the mainland during Dry Dock **(Question 3)**,
 - Just over a third (34% - 75 respondents) said they did not park a vehicle on the mainland because they:
 - Took other transportation (11% - 23 respondents),
 - Did not want to take a space from someone who needed it (16% - 34 respondents), or
 - Just chose not to (8% - 18 respondents)
 - The two most cited reasons for not parking on the mainland were (1) lack of security for the vehicle and (2) uncertainty of parking availability. Other reasons for not parking on the mainland included not having a second vehicle or they just didn't need to.
 - Two-thirds (66% - 144 respondents) did park on the mainland. Of those,
 - 44 percent (96 respondents) parked in a free spot

- 22 percent (48 respondents) paid for parking
 - Of those that paid, approximately 20 percent parked in the fenced lot and 80 percent in other paid areas.
 - Not all of these who paid for parking shared how much they paid, but of those that did reported a range from \$50 to \$200. The majority of those reporting how much they paid ranged between \$100 and \$150, with \$100 for the three week period being the most common.
 - There were a number of creative ways to find paid parking or to pay for parking. People bartered goods or services in exchange for a space or imposed on friends/relatives and provided gifts in lieu of payment. People parked with friends or relatives at Gooseberry as well as in town and asked their friends to come pick them up when they had to go to town. Some paid for parking at an off-site location like the airport or other lot and arranged a way to get to Gooseberry.
 - The two most cited reasons for paying for parking at Gooseberry was because (1) a vehicle was needed to get to work reliably and (2) the certainty of having a parking space. Other reasons included security.
- Overwhelmingly, people feel that there is a lack of parking on the mainland during dry dock (88% - 178 respondents). Over 90 comments were received on this issue **(Question 4)**. The most cited comments were:
 - There is not enough low-cost/free, accessible, reasonably located parking, especially after 7 p.m. (33 comments).
 - It is a burden in many instances to park so far away from the dock and this is exacerbated when seniors, handicapped and people with mobility issues are included (27 comments). It is difficult to carry supplies/children/packages the long distances the current parking configuration requires.
 - There is a perception that the County ignores or is not engaged with helping to remedy the difficulties of Dry Dock regarding parking on the mainland and that the parking situation has worsened over time. While it is recognized that parking has always been an issue on the mainland during dry dock, particularly when people park their cars and leave them in the prime spots without using them, Dry Dock could be better managed to address and resolve some of these difficulties in a way that is a win-win for the County, the Nation and Islanders (25 comments).

- Personal and vehicle security issues are also a concern (16 comments). A number of people shared incidences that their vehicles were damaged or thefts occurred to vehicles and that they felt uncomfortable, especially late at night or when dogs were loose, walking to the dock from parking spaces far away.
 - Other comments included lack of coordinated public transit, lack of parking for service people and for medical and other emergencies, and the need for better bathrooms.
- The highest modes of Other Transportation (**Question 5**) were shared a vehicle with someone else (35% - 35 respondents) and took the bus (34% - 34 respondents). Other responses included: 21 percent shared a ride, 9 percent used a paid service and 2 percent had a mainland friend pick them up.
 - This question had several issues which should be accounted for when considering the results. The question asked for people to check all that apply, but the function didn't work on the electronic version of the survey. The responses cited here were adjusted to account for those who clearly identified an "other" mode of transportation in the comment section (11 additional responses). It also was ambiguous as to whether it referred to the mainland only or included the Island. This ambiguity is reflected in the comments received as stated below.
 - More and better coordinated bus service should be provided during Dry Dock. This includes promoting Lummi Nation transit.
 - Question 5 did not include a response for biking and walking, a mode some people used.
 - Question 5 did not include a response for the on-Island shuttle, which people used and had comments about: sometimes it was a long walk to the shuttle stop, especially for those with health issues or if they had a lot to carry, it didn't start early enough or go long enough.
- The sources from which people received information about Dry Dock (**Question 6**) are ranked below:
 - Next Door Lummi Island - 80% (178 respondents)
 - The Tome - 73% (163 respondents)
 - LICA/Brown Betty - 71% (158 respondents)
 - County Public Works - 40 percent (89 respondents)
 - LIFAC - 25% (55 respondents)
 - Other - 14% (30 respondents)
 - The primary "Other" sources are word of mouth (9), Islander (5), on ferry or dock (4)

- Other sources include Civic Club, Facebook, Ferry Division email, Lummi-Island.com, long time resident
 - PLIC – 11% (24 respondents)
 - Ferry Forum – 9% (21 respondents)
 - News/Media – 8% (19 respondents)
 - None – 1% (3 respondents)
- When questioned about how often people used their vehicle during Dry Dock **(Question 7)**,
 - The majority (45% - 81 respondents) used their vehicle once or twice a week,
 - Followed by 22 percent (40 respondents) using it 3 to 4 times a week, and
 - 22 percent (39 respondents) using it five or more times a week.
 - Eleven percent (19 respondents) used it less than once or not at all.
 - This question also had some ambiguity and the responses should be used with caution. It appears most people (correctly) interpreted the question to apply to use of vehicle on the mainland, however, there were some who thought it applied or should also apply to Island use. This is understandable, particularly since Question 2 identified 17 percent of those responding who said they did not leave the island at all during Dry Dock.
 - In the comments, a number of people indicated that they used their vehicle to make on-Island trips or used the shuttle when the schedule permitted.
- **Question 8** asked people to express their level of satisfaction with various aspects of Dry Dock as shown in the chart below and in Attachment 2.
 - The highest level of satisfaction is with Dry Dock information and announcements (82% - (180 respondents).
 - The lowest levels of dissatisfaction are with
 - parking availability with 83 percent (176 respondents) being unsatisfied to very unsatisfied followed by
 - security surveillance with 78 percent (155 respondents),
 - restroom facilities with 77 percent (157 respondents),
 - vehicle safety from theft or vandalism with 76% (155 respondents)
 - waiting facilities and shelter with 69% (142 respondents)
 - The other categories, including personal safety, lighting, garbage and recycling, are more evenly split between the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, but lean towards being dissatisfied.

| Item (Question 8) | % very unsatisfied or unsatisfied | % satisfied or very satisfied |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Information and announcements | 17 | 82 |
| Parking availability | 83 | 15 |
| Personal safety on and walking to the dock | 47 | 57 |
| Vehicle safety from theft or vandalism | 76 | 24 |
| Security surveillance | 78 | 16 |
| Waiting facilities and shelter | 69 | 32 |
| Restroom facilities | 77 | 21 |
| Lighting | 51 | 49 |
| Garbage pick-up | 50 | 47 |
| Recycling pick-up | 55 | 40 |

- When characterizing the Dry Dock experience (**Question 9**),
 - 52 percent (116 respondents) checked that they make the best of it,
 - Followed by 43 percent (94 respondents) checking that it was an adventure and something they look forward to.
 - However, this was a “check all that apply” question and 22 percent (48 respondents) checked that it was a hardship and
 - 7 percent (15 respondents) left the Island for the entire length of Dry Dock.
 - Another 30 percent (66 checked other) and provided the following comments:
 - Many indicated that while they liked, even loved, the Dry Dock experience for the quiet time, the ability to visit with neighbors, reduced traffic etc...it was also very stressful to deal with the uncertainties of parking, inclusive of whether a spot could be found, vehicle security and personal safety. This means that enjoying and dreading Dry Dock are not mutually exclusive. A common comment was feeling vulnerable or unsafe walking far from the dock and experiencing damage to vehicles or visitor’s vehicles while parked and unattended. Some modify their work schedules to find a parking spot.
 - The quality of the Dry Dock experience seems to depend on how flexible one can be. Workers are not as flexible as retirees; healthy people are more flexible as those dealing with age, mobility or medical issues; those with less discretionary income are less flexible than those who have more. For some it is stressful to have to front load supplies for three weeks from a budget perspective and to have to carry large and heavy loads.

- A common comment was to have Dry Dock at another time of year: from two weeks later (not right after Labor Day when school is just starting and the weather is good), to Springtime, October, June, May. The impact to small businesses such as artists and service providers as well as rentals should be considered, especially since September is a time of year when customers want to be on the Island.
- Many comments requested that Dry Dock be shortened to two weeks.
- There were requests for coordinated bus service on the mainland and more shuttle service on-island, including an expanded service area and more frequent service. There were several requests for a shuttle all year on-island.
- Dry Dock was considered a more favorable experience when the weather was good.
- Emergency access is a concern to many and it was expressed that we have been lucky to not have an event (eg., downed power lines, electrical outages, sickness injury) where we needed to get off the Island or get help on the Island.
- Parking for specific groups is a concern such as handicapped and mobility impaired and commuters who come back from work late uncertain if they can find a spot. It is frustrating that some park a vehicle on the mainland close by and don't use it often while others have to use theirs everyday.
- There were several requests for a vehicle ferry instead of a passenger ferry even if the boat would be smaller, but there were also questions about how much this would cost.
- A few commenters thanked the ferry crew for their pleasant assistance during dry dock and expressed that we chose to live on an Island and so should take more personal responsibility for the disadvantages of doing so.
- While information was widely available, a few comments identified that the County website is difficult to navigate to find the ferry and shuttle schedules and that the ferry sailing times posted on the dock were incorrect, which led to confusion and missed transportation.
- Better lighting, restroom facilities and waiting areas are needed. A tent or other temporary structure at Gooseberry was suggested to protect people from the sun and rain.

Suggestions for Improving Dry Dock

Dry Dock could be a positive, less-stressful event for a majority of Islanders and visitors if parking issues were addressed and combined with timely and possibly expanded bus and shuttle services. At a minimum, the goal should be to provide safe, accessible, consistent parking to minimize the uncertainty of finding a parking space on the mainland by providing clearly identified parking spaces and providing other reliable modes of transportation. Some of the suggestions below are easier and less expensive to implement and can be done in the short term. Others should be considered over time and as budget becomes available and is deemed to be cost-effective.

Long Term Planning for Parking

- LIFAC and the County should consider opportunities to provide permanent, free/low cost, safe, secure, accessible parking on the mainland when doing the day to day planning for improvements to the ferry. It is acknowledged that the parking issue on the mainland is complex; however, in the course of planning for the future of the ferry opportunities to provide parking should be pursued by LIFAC and the County.

Parking

- During Dry Dock, provide a consistent and simple parking system from year to year. This minimizes the changes that people have to react to and reduces stress about Dry Dock and uncertainty about parking. Parking should be close by, affordable, and secure.
- Investigate short term, cost-effective options for adding free and paid parking at Gooseberry during Dry Dock and even year round including:
 - Reaching out earlier to work with Islanders, Lummi Nation and the County to create a win-win situation for those that want to rent space and those that have spaces to rent. These spaces should be advertised or otherwise made known when they are available for rent well in advance of Dry Dock starting.
 - Identifying additional pockets of short term parking areas that could be provided for free during Dry Dock. Perhaps the fenced in area could be rented just for the Dry Dock period.
 - More clearly designating which roadways and areas are available for parking and which are not so that the stress of not knowing whether you are parking a vehicle illegally is reduced.
 - Striping parking space lines in the free areas that are available for use so that more vehicles can be accommodated and less space is wasted.

- Explore short and long term parking options at Gooseberry that accommodate daily users like commuters and students vs. less frequent users who need to move their vehicles less often.
- Provide adequate handicapped spaces. This may need to be combined with an application system so that during Dry Dock enough spaces for those with mobility issues can be accommodated.
- Provide secure off-site parking (e.g., I-5 and Slater, Airport) with a shuttle/commuter van service to the dock.

Other Modes

- Explore running a shuttle at Gooseberry for those that have to park far away, especially late at night.
- Explore implementing an organized shared vehicle or ride program for those who only need a vehicle for occasional appointments or for the security of knowing they have access to town when needed, especially in the case of an emergency. If people know they have options to get to town when needed, then they could choose to not park on the mainland reducing the number of “just in case” vehicles.
- Run on-Island shuttle all day and expand the coverage area.
- Coordinate public transit with the Dry Dock ferry schedule, especially the WTA #50.
- Publicize Lummi Nation transit schedule more widely.

Ferry Operations

- Consider moving Dry Dock to another time of year when demand for ferry use is not so high (eg, in September there is good weather, school is in, summer is over). The suggestions for other times ranged from starting two weeks later to specific months (e.g., May, June, October, spring).
- Shorten Dry Dock (e.g., two weeks instead of three).
- Explore the range of options and costs for providing a vehicle vs. passenger ferry during Dry Dock and as a back-up to use in case of emergencies. While this solution would go a long way toward minimizing the need for parking on the mainland, there is no agreement on whether we can afford or want to pay for this service. It would be helpful to know what the costs were and to have the discussion about whether we want to pay for it.

Information Sharing

- Have real estate sales people and rental property owners and operators disclose full information about Dry Dock to their tenants and customers.
- Provide temporary shelter at Gooseberry to protect from weather.

- Provide more information about what to do in case of emergency and what emergency services are available, especially ambulances, so that people know what to do in case of an emergency and know how they can quickly get off Island if needed. If people know what steps to take, it could reduce the need for a “just in case” vehicle parked on the mainland.
- Leave more ferry and shuttle schedules at the Library, Beach Store Café, Post Office and Islander.
- Communicate more clearly that the Dry Dock ferry schedule is not the same as the regular ferry to minimize confusion and wait times on the docks.
- Implement steps to improve communication among Islanders and the Lummi Nation and the County to reduce the perception that County does not prioritize ferry and Dry Dock issues and that Islanders don’t care about County issues.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions for improving the Dry Dock process in 2017. PLIC appreciates LIFAC and County efforts to work toward a less stressful and positive experience. For questions contact: Beth Louis at bwlouis60@gmail.com.

Attachments:

Dry Dock Questionnaire

Dry Dock Analysis of Results