

Getting Out and About in St George

Roads

One of the key factors that contribute to the “quaint” “old world” feel of St George is the narrow, winding roads of an earlier age. Unfortunately, these aren’t best suited to modern day modes of transport. The main throughfare is Duke of York Street, which is only just wide enough for two-way traffic. Branching off Duke of York Street to the north is a network of winding arteries most of which can only accommodate one lane of traffic at a time, and as a result a one-way system operates to guide vehicular traffic through this maze.

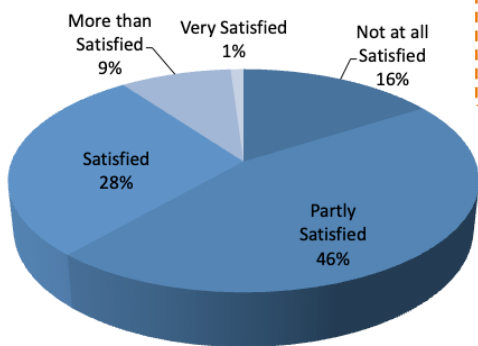
Running parallel and south of the main throughfare is Water Street. Both Duke of York Street and Water Street are lined with small, mainly boutique style shops and restaurants. Water Street is currently closed to traffic between 10 am and 4 pm. Duke of York Street continues east through the town taking traffic to the north easternmost extent of the parish via Gates Fort at the Town Cut maritime entrance into St George’s Harbour. Water Street also continues east where traffic flow is interrupted, but the Street continues on to the east of the Square.

Improved traffic management and traffic flow, although mentioned by a few respondents, was clearly not considered a major concern for the majority. However, suggestion of a route north of the town as an alternate route was made. This was visited previously in the World Heritage Management Plan 2014, where the suggestion of a connection between Suffering Lane and Secretary Road was made.

What people said

- “Re-design transportation route North of the town but keep Duke of York street as vehicular traffic especially for the public bus”
- “Better road structure North of town.”
- “Need a better way to slow down bike and car speeds.”
- “Stop Lights at Somers Supermart junction.”
- “Bridges need to be fixed and operational as well.”
- “3 bridge exits out of St George, to David’s and to Coney Island.”
- “Proper circulation of public transportation buses minibus and taxis.”
- “Enforcement of town ordinances prohibiting car parking on some streets.”
- “Less speed bumps.”
- “Ticketing those who choose to double park on yellow lines.”

Level of Satisfaction with Road Maintenance



Only **38%** are only partly satisfied to not at all satisfied with road maintenance



Parking

Let's face it, if we're running errands, or enjoying a meal out at a restaurant, most of us like to park close to where we are going! The trouble is, the layout of St George's and the 400 year-old network of roads and paths doesn't make this practical.

All parking in St George is free. All-day car parking is available at Todd's Wharf to the east of the Town, and at Tiger Bay to the west of the Town. In the rest of the Town, one hour parking between 9:00am and 5:00pm on week days is permitted along the edge of King's Square, Custom's Square, Hunter's Wharf and along marked bays on York Street. Resident's parking is also permitted along Church Lane with a special permit issued by the Corporation of St. George. All-day cycle parking is allowed on Ordnance Island, whilst one-hour cycle parking is available at Kings Square and Custom's Square, between 8:00am and 4:00pm.

Despite 44% of respondents saying they weren't satisfied with public parking, it did not appear to be a major concern for most in the comments section, with the exception of the need for the elderly and physically challenged. This is important because if the Town decides it does want to grow commercially and/or residentially, parking may become more of a consideration.

44%
are not satisfied
with the public
parking

Planning for electric vehicles also needs to be considered. With all the major car manufacturers indicating all new vehicles will be fully electric by 2035, although not seen as a priority, this is a critical infrastructure need that must be planned for. There are very few publicly accessible electric vehicle outlets in the Town. Better parking for physically challenged people was also highlighted as a real need.

It is worth noting that the World Heritage Management Plan 2014 reports that the Corporation of St. George and the St. George's Foundation did develop a plan to improve transport options for residents and visitors to St. George's. That WHMP report states that the

What people said

"There is ample parking at Tiger Bay, but perhaps the signage is unclear and/or /lighting and safety an issue for night time parking."

"There is insufficient parking without walking."

"Parking is at odds with the historic street patterns and so expectations for on-site parking must be modified."

"Delivery parking"

"There should be no traffic on the square; the square should be for pedestrians only and possibly the horse and carriage ride."

"..all parking should be moved to "chicks" parking lot."

"Just more parking options."

"Parking for Handicapped and sidewalks should be better equipped for wheelchair access."

"Build an electrification program for any vehicle that has a gas or diesel engine."

primary objective of transportation improvements for St. George's is to "develop outlying areas for parking of individual modes of transport (such as cars and bikes)," whilst reserving the more central areas "for higher capacity modes of transport (bus, ferry, mini-bus, and taxi)." The report suggests minimising vehicular traffic in the central area the plan will encourage further improvements in the pedestrian environment and in the quality of the historic Town generally." This would seem to be in harmony with the wishes of most respondents to the current survey. However, the report did comment that there were objections from the business community about the loss of parking spaces near the shops in the centre of the Town.

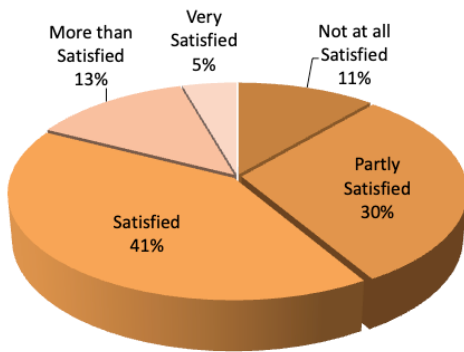
Pedestrians

However we arrive at or leave a place, nearly all of us have to walk at some point. Narrow streets are characteristic of St George. We can't change that. As a result, some of the sidewalks are so narrow, it feels a bit like being a gymnast balancing on a beam! But this also adds to the perceived charm of our historic town. Red brick pathways and meandering wall lined roads invite visitors to explore further. Many residents also benefit from ease of being able to walk from home to the shops, or to take the dog for a walk without worrying about where to park.

Creating a safe, pedestrian environment is important. Over 50% of people are satisfied that the sidewalks are adequately maintained. But improving sidewalk access for wheelchairs and child strollers has been called for.

There has also been much debate about pedestrianising the Town an particularly Water Street. However, generally respondents did not seem to feel this was a priority.

Sidewalk Maintenance



Cyclists

There were several calls for better provision for cyclists, including the provision of supporting infrastructure (e.g. bike racks in the Town and also even for carrying bikes on the back of the buses allowing people to make a journey out on a bike, but opt for public transport on the way back – or vice versa).

Taxis

The taxi service in St George has long been identified as problematic. Finding taxis is a challenge, despite a dedicated parking area for them in four areas; on the Square in front of White Horse Tavern; on the Ordnance Island Bridge (west side only); on Ordnance Island, close to the Cruise Ship Terminal and, when cruise ships are in port, at the western end of Penno's Wharf Cruise Ship Terminal. It is likely that taxi service will improve with the opening of the St Regis Hotel.

73%
Are only partly satisfied with the taxi and minibus service

Minibus

There is a private mini bus service (St. George's Mini-bus Service) that operates in the Town providing trips for residents as well as visitors between the Town Square and Tobacco Bay/Fort St. Catherine.

What people said....

"More pedestrianised areas, especially Water Street."

"More sidewalks."

"Water Street blocked off during April through to September tourist season."

"Bicycling friendly."

"Infrastructure that supports cycling i.e. bike racks, stations."

"Open a pedal bike Lane to encourage physical activities between St. George's and David's."

"St George needs its own taxi group."

"Lack of taxi at night and other transportation make it less desirable."

"Town owned mini bus"

"Mini buses servicing Southside and the outer town area."

"An inexpensive "loop" mini bus type transport service around the town, to the beaches and new hotel, tourist spots, ferry reach, to St. Davids and back."

"A local (Clearwater, Lighthouse, Grotto, Tobacco Bay, Fort St. Catherines, Victoria, Gates Ordnance Island) jitney service should be created using small buses. Day passes should be under \$10."

Public Transport

Bus

St George is serviced by several routes to Hamilton (Route 1,3 10 and 11, with Route 10 commencing at 6.15, and during most of the day, scheduled to run four times an hour. The fastest route takes 50 minutes; the slowest, route which takes in various tourist attractions takes 65 minutes. Route 6 offers an hourly service between St George and St David’s.

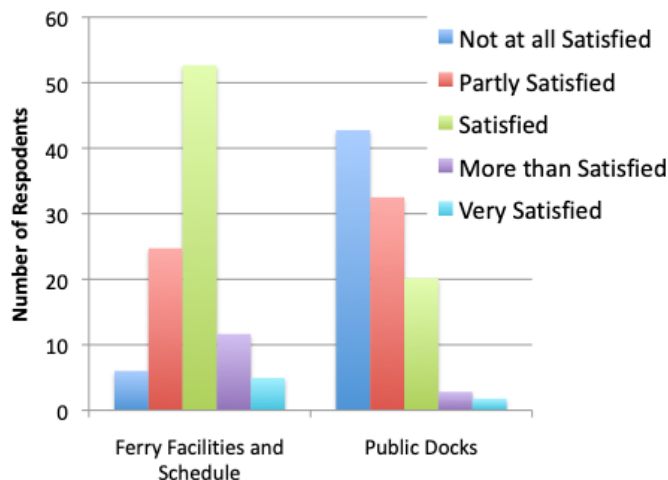
Generally people seem happy with the bus service but a direct route from St George to Dockyard with a stop in Hamilton was one suggestion received. Better service to St David’s was also identified as a need, along with a need to service Cut Road and Ferry Reach. The integration of electric buses was also suggested.

74%
Are satisfied to very satisfied with the Public Bus Service

Ferries and Boats

The harbour also provides the opportunity for commuters to arrive or depart from the centre of the town. However, the majority of respondents are only partly to not at all satisfied with the current ferry service. An increase in the use of ferries to improve local access to and from St. George (primarily to Hamilton), has been identified by residents as highly desirable. The use of a small ferry/water taxi to improve transport between St. David’s and St. George may also present opportunities such as encouraging residents of St. David’s to work, shop and recreate in the old town.

Level of Satisfaction with Ferries and Public Dock Facilities



What people said

Buses:

“Bus service to Ferry reach and Cut Road and better service to St Davids.”

“A specific for the purchase of bus tokens and passes.”

“Bus service is adequate but we need a direct, express service to Dockyard with a stop in Hamilton.”

“Free seniors bus service from town to cut and out to Wellington.”

“Transportation for the elderly and others to and from the town and outer areas.”

Ferries:

“A regular, year round ferry to Hamilton.”

“Would like to finally after at least 15 years have the St George ferry accept scooters.”

“Regular Ferries to Hamilton for commuters and school kids and dining in Hamilton (home on ferry) or dining in St G and back to Hamilton on ferry.”

“Ferry: Weekend + Evening ferry”

“Should invest in own ferry.”

“We need a ferry service. Ferry service should not be a matter of revenue. Building ridership requires the service to be in place for years.”

Boats:

“Public docks: more spaces for leisure boats to park.”

“Public boat docking - ramps, public docking for short term visitors.”

75%
Are only partly to not at all satisfied with the ferry facilities and schedule

70%
Are satisfied to very satisfied with the Public Docks