

ST GEORGE ISLAND

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Working Paper #1 - Filling in the Gaps

November 2018

INTRODUCTION

The community in St. George is hard at work on a local economic development strategy. As we develop this strategy, we will be sharing “Working Papers” with you to keep you up to date and in the conversation. Conversations are two-way. We need to keep getting your feedback to be sure the path to making St. George stronger reflects everyone’s values and ideas.



We are not starting from scratch. The City has had meetings. The Tribe has had meetings. APICDA and Tanaq have had meetings. We want to come together and build on this work. Members of the City Council and the Traditional Council got together in October to discuss the present situation, St. George’s vision for the future, as well as some of the issues and objectives that are important to the community. They clearly stated that a key to a stronger future is having everyone working together.

We may not agree on everything, but we do agree St. George deserves every opportunity to succeed. This economic development process will provide that opportunity.

Your input is needed to bring all of the voices and all of the pieces together into one local economic development strategy.

"We need our people to go home and fix what was broken by people and entities that have no idea who we are or how we came to be."

- Survey respondent



What has been said so far:

WHAT MAKES ST. GEORGE GREAT?

Let's identify our assets

A good local economic development strategy builds on a community's strengths. As we work on the strategy, we want to make sure we incorporate all of the community's assets. Some of St. George's assets that have been highlighted so far include:

- Strong, caring, and resilient people
- The land and its natural beauty
- Remote and wild
- St. George is surrounded by one of the richest fisheries in the world
- Home to incredible wildlife: birds, reindeer, seals, whales, etc.
- The Ice House Sea Food Processing plant
- Existing infrastructure – e.g., the airport, water system, new power plant/wind turbine, harbor, communication
- Community buildings - the church and the recreation centre
- Two stores (including St. George Canteen & Variety) Land on St. George, Unalaska (Pumice Stone Bay), and Umak Island
- Governance that can make a difference: City Council, Traditional Council, Tanaq
- Organizations that care: the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA), the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA), State and Federal agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), etc.
- Connections with other Unangan in the USA and Russia
- Grant opportunities available to the City and the Tribe
- The young leaders are loud, brave and strong

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES ST. GEORGE IS FACING?

Let's identify some challenges

Pulling together to build a stronger St. George will not always be easy. There are challenges we will have to keep in mind as we move forward. Some of the challenges the community highlighted are:

- Stabilizing our community (e.g., secure funding for fuel and maintenance, keeping school open)
- Improving quality of life (e.g., faster internet, recreation)
- More coordination and cooperation is needed between the City, Tribe, Tanaq and supporting organizations
- More communication about the pros and cons of new opportunities – in particular the Marine Sanctuary idea
- A complicated regulatory system
- Overfishing and the declining fishery
Accessing fisheries resources
- Climate change
- Declining wildlife (birds and seals in particular)
- Access to education
- Securing funding for major projects
- Maintaining momentum while waiting for these large -scale initiatives (ex. new harbour)
- The weather's impact on transportation to the island
- Cost of fuel



TELL US WHAT'S MISSING!

Go to our online survey: bit.ly/stgeorgesurvey

“We would all be HOME. Thriving, living, loving one another in a Safe, SOBER, cultural environment.”

- Survey respondent

What has been said so far:

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Let's agree on a vision of the future

A vision statement is meant to capture the community's aspirations for the future. St. George residents have shared what a great future for St. George means to them. We are working to bring these hopes into a short statement that captures the community's values.

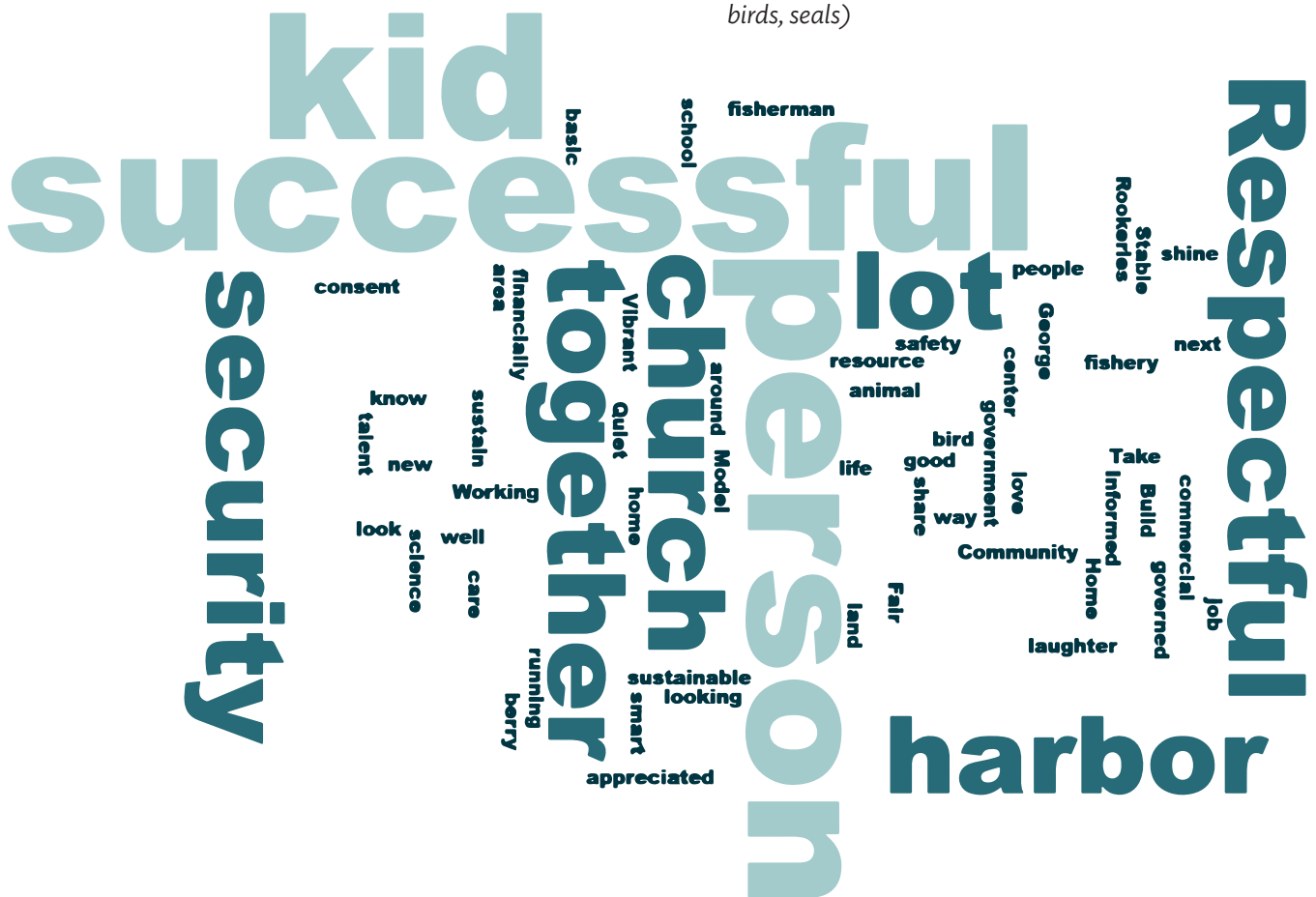
A strong local economy that allows us to take care of St. George, our way of life, and each other.

WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES?

Let's understand why we want economic development

Why are we doing this work? What are the goals that would get St. George to its vision? Objectives outline our community priorities. Some of St. George's objectives are:

- Jobs for Unangan people
- Attract Unangan people to our Island
- Increase cooperation
- Increase financial sustainability
- Secure informed consent and consultation from the government
- Look after the resources that support us (e.g., fish, birds, seals)



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“More jobs, better fuel prices, bigger fisheries, bigger boats and more people to come back.”

- Survey respondent

What has been said so far:

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP ST. GEORGE'S ECONOMY THRIVE?

Let's build on our assets, pursue our objectives, and achieve our vision

We want the strategy to identify all of the opportunities available to St. George, so the community can know where to focus its energy and attention.

- *New harbor development*
- *New ways to take advantage of fisheries – kelp farming, shell fish farming, fishing cod, small-scale fishing and processing, diversifying the fish plant*
- *Improve quality of life (e.g., better internet)*
- *Building the tourism industry – building partnerships, developing products that showcase St. George's natural beauty*
- *Research and Stewardship – research institute, monitoring programs, marine sanctuary, working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)*
- *Education – developing a summer institute, partnering with universities and researchers, language programs*
- *Taking advantage of state and federal grant opportunities*
- *Improving infrastructure – homes, water systems, etc.*
- *Develop innovative programs (e.g., with APICDA, NGO's, Gov't Agencies)*
- *Addressing fuel issues (cost/funding, delivery/access,*
- *Support our entrepreneurs (coffee shop, home business, artists, etc.)*
- *Improve access (air, boat)*



**NAME THE PLAN!
WIN A PRIZE!**

We already have some great ideas for what to call St. George's local economic development strategy. Do you have another one to contribute?

Names so far:

- *Surviving and Thriving*
- *Pulling Together – its our future*
- *Taking Care– our land, our home, our kids, our future*

Send an email to William Trousdale (william@ecoplan.ca) with your ideas and a chance to win a prize.



TELL US WHAT'S MISSING!

Go to our online survey: bit.ly/stgeorgesurvey

STAY A PART OF THE CONVERSATION!

Please contribute, your ideas are needed. Here are some simple ways to participate:

Go to our online survey and give your input about where St. George should go and how we should get there.

► bit.ly/stgeorgesurvey ◀

Send an email or contact:

St. George Mayor
Patrick Pletnikoff, patplet714@gmail.com

Project Support
William Trousdale, william@ecoplan.ca

