

St. Paul Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) October 10-11, 2023 Community Conversation – Meeting Notes

Conversation Purpose	Share what we've learned so far from interviews, community survey, past plans, and data.	Document priority community concerns and needs.	Share an update on what's currently planned/coming from partners.	Share emerging strategies/ideas and get input; prioritize ideas.
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Day 1: October 10, 2023: Setting the Stage

Description of Day 1 Activities

The project team kicked off the first evening with an introduction to the project purpose, timeline, and a list of community accomplishments since the last CEDS was completed. Highlights were shared from the community survey, April 2023 Open House, and interviews, including how residents evaluated the quality of life on St. Paul, and the things residents love most about the community.

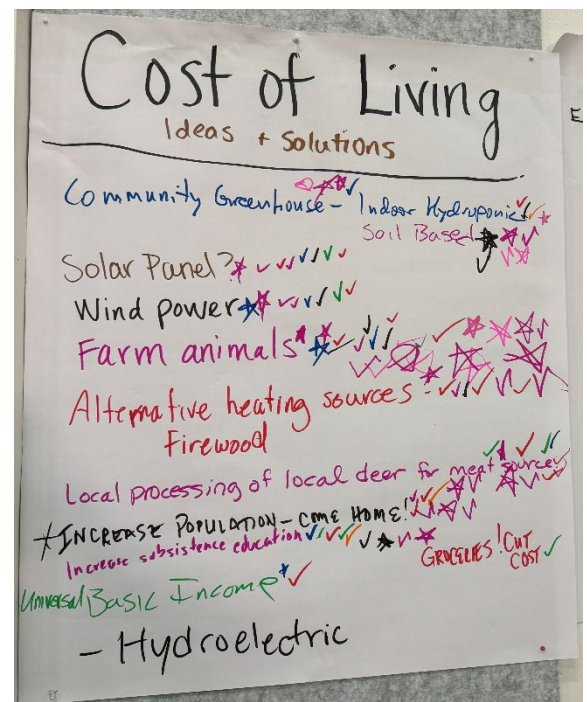
The project team also shared what we've heard as the community's biggest concerns, challenges, and needs. Each challenge was set up as a station around the room. Participants were invited to circulate the room and write down their ideas/solutions for addressing each challenge.

How To Interpret These Notes

Open house participants were asked to add stars or checkmarks next to ideas and comments that they agreed with; “(#)” indicates the number of stars or checkmarks following a response. Within each section, items with the most stars are at the top of each list. When similar responses were written to the same question, those responses have been combined.

Cost of Living – Solutions and Ideas

- Farm animals (x24)
- Community greenhouse – indoor hydroponic or soil-based (x14)
- Local processing of local deer for meat source (x10)
- Increase subsistence education (x10)
- Increase population – come home! (x9)
- Solar panel (x8)
- Wind power (x8)
- Alternative heating sources – firewood (x7)
- Universal basic income (x2)
- Groceries! Cut cost (x1)
- Hydroelectric



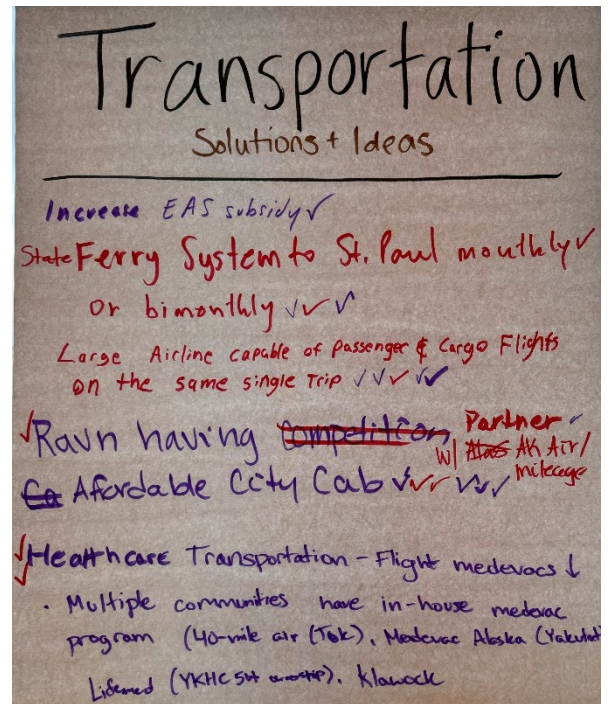
Health and Wellness – Solutions and Ideas

- Community gym/recreational building (x10)
- Indoor swimming for locals (x9)
- 4-day work week (x8)
- Encourage teaching the value of making life changes early in life versus being dependent on medicines (x7)
- Help people heal from trauma (x5)
- Fire/EMS/SAR – more volunteer engagement and involvement (x4)
- Mental health days – paid (like 1 or 2 days per year, 10 days also suggested) (x4)
- Personal care attendant for Elders/disabled (x3)

- 6-hour workdays (x3)
- Memory/dementia care for Elders (x3)
- Subsistence days - paid (1 or 2 days per year) (x2)
- Transfer alcohol sales to private ownership (x2)
- Community park, baseball field, and outdoor basketball court (x1)
- Increase community gatherings

Transportation – Solutions and Ideas

- Affordable city cab (x6)
- Large airline capable of passengers and cargo flights on the same single trip (x5)
- State ferry system to St. Paul monthly or bimonthly (x4)
- Reduce outward flow of money from community (x3)
- Ravn establishing partnership with Alaska Airlines mileage program (x2)
- Healthcare transportation – flight medevacs (x2)
 - Multiple communities have in-house medevac program - 40-mile air (Tok), medevac Alaska (Yakutat), Lifemed (YKHC), Klawock
- Increase EAS subsidy (x1)



Workforce Development and Training – Solutions and Ideas

- More teachers and daycare (x15)
- Engage youth at a young age – in school, afterschool program (x12)
- Bering Sea Campus – jobs training (x9)
- Bring the training to island to teach many people. They will have a support system while learning together (x8)
- Youth mentorship (x7)
- Youth OJT programs – hand on stuff (x6)
- Professional fishing captain/crew training and jobs (x5)
- Preschool/Headstart hire a diaper changer or find a grant for it! (x5)
- Send individuals seeking training out (AVTEC) for training with an opportunity for them to pass on knowledge to locals (x1)
- Assist with basic needs (clothes, housing) can't learn or move up when worried about what you're going to eat
- Bartering and trading

Housing – Solutions and Ideas

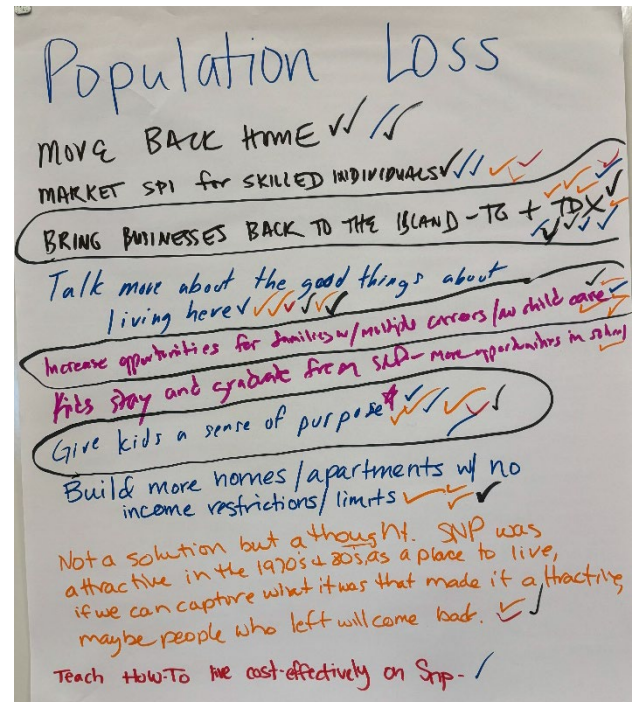
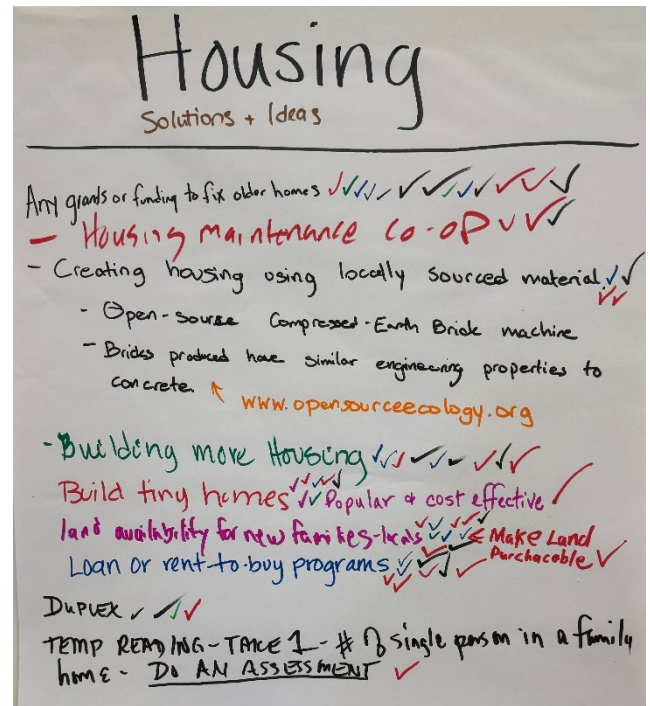
- Any grants or funding to fix older homes (x13)
- Land availability for new families and locals (make land purchasable) (x11)
- Building more housing (x9)
- Build tiny homes (popular and effective) (x8)
- Loan or rent-to-buy programs (x8)
- Creating housing using locally sourced material (x4)
 - Open-source compressed-earth brick machine
 - Bricks produced have similar engineering properties to concrete (www.opensourceecology.org)
- Duplex (x4)
- Housing maintenance co-op (x3)
- Temp reading (take 1) number of single person in a family home – do an assessment (x1)

Population Loss – Solutions and Ideas

- Bring business back to the island to TDX (x12)
- Give kids a sense of purpose (x9)
- Talk more about the good things about living here (x9)
- Market SPI for skilled individuals (x6)
- Increase opportunities for families with multiple careers with childcare (x6)
- Move back home (x4)
- Build more homes/apartments with no income restrictions or limits (x4)
- Not a solution but a thought. SNP was attractive in the 1970's-80's, as a place to live if we can capture what it was that made it attractive, maybe people who left will come back (x3)
- Kids stay and graduate from SNP – more opportunities in school (x1)
- Teach how to live cost effectively on SNP (x1)

Other Solutions and Ideas

- Tourism tours, attractions, hotel, tour packages (x10)
- More mechanics (x8)
- Collect taxes to help school funding to help increase staffing, programs, expanded curriculum to encourage families and students to stay and complete K-12 here instead of leaving (x8)
- Legal marijuana sales (x7)
- Attractive job offers (x5)
- Sin tax (alcohol and tobacco) (x4)
- Theatre (x4)
- A plan to increase the population – start with employees of organizations (belonging to SPI) to live on island (x3)
- Other opportunities for different fisheries



Day 2: October 11, 2023: Visioning the Future

Description of Day 1 Activities

The focus of Day 2 of the community conversation was to look to the next five years and beyond – how can we grow the St. Paul economy, become more economically resilient, and help fund the things we need for a better life on St. Paul? What are the community’s ideas for growing key sectors?

The room was set up with five stations:

- Fisheries
- Research
- Tourism
- Arctic Opportunities
- Other

For the four focus area stations, participants were invited to identify strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats for each focus area, their level of support to see that industry grow/shrink/stay the same, and ideas for growing that sector. Each station was facilitated by community partners involved in that industry, and residents circulated through each station in fifteen-minute intervals.

At the “Other” station, residents could expand on topics from day 1 and explore other ideas for growing the economy beyond the four focus area stations already identified.

Results from the stations are shown on the following pages.



Fisheries

Goal: Support and protect existing fisheries and create new fishery opportunities.

Strengths and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bering Sea location • Protect subsistence • Localize – fleet, food and fishery harvest and processing (cod, halibut, octopus, sablefish, salmon, crab, kelp farming, community smokehouse), salmon or halibut hatchery • CBSFA • Multigenerational participation • Multigenerational fishing opportunities • Passing along local and traditional knowledge • New opportunities created by climate change – new fish species by SNP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trident closure • Crab crash • Climate change • Overfishing • Distance from markets • Trawl - halibut and crab bycatch, affects Bering Strait ecosystem • Boatyard is dangerous and unsightly • Regulatory changes take time

When you think of the future of St. Paul, would you like to see...		
More fishing	Same as today	Less fishing
30	-	2

Fisheries Ideas: What do we want our fisheries to look like in the next 5 years? How can we grow our economy through fisheries?

- Overall
 - Sustainable and flourishing (x1)
 - Protect subsistence
 - Reduce bycatch
- Training and employment
 - Youth and training opportunities; commercial fisherman training, navigation, safety, mechanical, etc.
 - Vessel pilot training: ecotourism, halibut and cod charters, researchers
 - Multigenerational participation
 - Local processing training and employment (OSHA/engineering)
 - Teach fisheries in school
 - Pass along local and traditional knowledge: techniques and understanding
- Harvesting and processing
 - Local fishery harvest
 - Study: make Trident plant more efficient
 - Increase accessibility of halibut, increase local consumption at schools and restaurants (sashimi, crab, octopus, cod, halibut, urchins, snails)
 - Local fish plan – creating a fish company (PASCO?)
 - Look for ways to grow the halibut fishery – loans, community quota acquisition, bycatch reductions
 - Mariculture: fishery enhancement, crab and halibut, octopus, cod
 - Local cod processing and harvesting

- Salmon hatchery – ice house lake salmon
- Establish local smokehouse
- Management and advocacy
 - Ecosystem-based management: protect vulnerable species (crab, halibut), sustainability of resources (reduce bycatch)
 - Responsible fishery management – no overfishing
 - Advocacy – youth and education fishery management
 - Trawl fishery affecting the Bering Sea ecosystem
 - Regulatory changes take time
- Marketing
 - Educate consumers
 - Halibut markets – access to Asia markets
 - Showcasing local fishery and boating history (tourism)
- Diversification and change
 - Dungeness crab study – fishery?
 - As climate changes some species will fare well and others will struggle
 - Kelp farming
- Clean up
 - Pollution clean up
 - Boat yard is dangerous and unsightly
- Other
 - On island fish stocks – populate local lakes
 - Halt commercial fur seal leases



Research

Goal: Develop St. Paul Island Facilities and Workforce into a Leading Climate Change and Coastal Resilience Research Center.

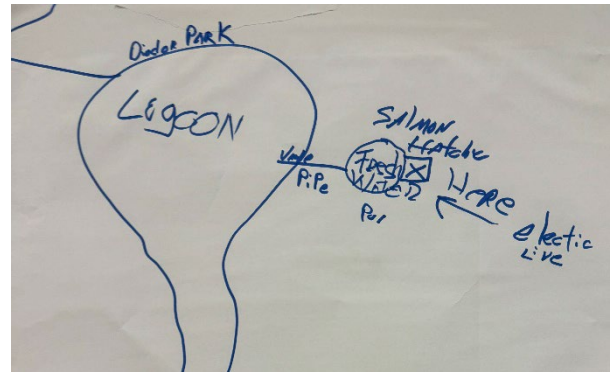
Strengths and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation on St. Paul • Increase local knowledge • Increase year-round visitation • Location • Bering Sea Campus • ISN • Fisheries classes and cultural teaching • Education and storytelling • Youth engagement and education • Community participation and driven • Health impacts research • Offer more resource management jobs (seasonal and training opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just doing research for sake of doing research – sideshow is not inclusive • Ensure research doesn't disrupt daily or cultural activities • Cost of airfare • Housing • Politics of research • Research is slow • Internet and wifi • Japan radiation brings pollution threats and toxins • Decline of populations

When you think of the future of St. Paul, would you like to see...		
More research	Same as today	Less research
23	-	-

Research Ideas: What do we want research to look like in the next 5 years? How can we grow our economy through research?

- Workforce and Training
 - More resource management jobs
 - Seasonal
 - Training opportunities
 - Culture camp
 - Job shadowing
 - Education incentives
- Facilities
 - Establish research center
 - Housing -> POS camp, NOAA facility, CBSFA, ADF&G crab and halibut, salmon lagoon research
- Partnerships
 - Require/develop an enrichment program with researcher that come to island
 - Science communication - Film makers, education, holistic (can't stand alone)
 - ECO and Seal harvest is a sideshow
 - Partnership development with Japan to counter pollution threats and toxins?

- Fisheries and food security research
 - Research saltwater lagoon salmon stocks, etc.
 - Crab and fisheries economy to revitalize species -> economy is tied
 - Introducing species, food security – bison, moose, fresh water, fish, muskox was on a neighboring
 - Human health impacts
- Traditional knowledge
 - Involve local knowledge holders in research design. Indigenous led and community driven.



Tourism

Goal: Grow St. Paul Island into a Culturally & Ecologically Unique Tourism Destination.

Strengths and Opportunities

- World class birding
- Foxes, fur seals
- Beautiful island
- Growing Alaska tourism market
- Respected visitor program
- Reindeer herd
- Increase in cruise ships in region
- No dogs scaring people
- No trees
- Increased travel demand – could lower travel costs and increase flights (plane schedule)

Weaknesses and Threats

- Squatters; budget travelers that come but don't use hospitality services (but want advice, internet, showers, etc.)
- Seasonality
- Flight reliability and cost
- Distance from mainland
- Limited flight schedule
- Deteriorated buildings, junk cars
- Unsightly boatyard
- Healthcare meeting the needs for tourists (excess people)

When you think of the future of St. Paul, would you like to see...

More tourism	Same as today	Less tourism
29	-	-

Tourism Ideas: What do we want tourism to look like in the next 5 years? How can we grow our economy through tourism?

- More local businesses/ Self employment: restaurants, cabs, food, arts, crafts, SNP button patches, weekend market, gift shop, sign sales, Airbnb or town hotel
- Town events for tourists (Marathons, triathlons)
- More activities
 - Bikes,
 - Side-by-side tours
 - Paddleboards
 - Boat tour, boat rides
 - Jet skis
 - Cultural activities
 - Guiding/tours (fishing tour, reindeer tours)
 - Tourism researcher to help us
 - Winter tours and activities
 - Local artist share knowledge and stories
 - Fish local lakes (trout and salmon fisheries)
 - Weekend food, crafts, sales
 - Food carts
 - Car rentals

- Clean up (demolish vacant buildings, remove old cars, airport area – vehicle, tanks, wood)
- Improve planes and schedule
- Airbnb, hotel in town
- Community involvement from all entities
- Tourists share with locals their experiences at community events
- Entity fairness of revenue/business
- Dinner prep sales
- Historical signs, brochure
- Boat interp display using old unused boats
- Movie/information video of island and people



Arctic Opportunities

Goal: Establish St. Paul as a gateway to the Arctic, with regional research capabilities and infrastructure to support improved understanding and response (economic, environmental, defense) in the increasingly strategic Arctic region.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Increasing vessel traffic
- Harbor
- Strategic western location
- Sustainable energy sources
- Military interest in western Alaska
- Disaster/spill response
- Protection of natural resources (including Unangax̂)
- Airport
- Vessel repair building

Weaknesses and Threats

- Limited/aging infrastructure
- Trauma of historical government treatment
- St. Paul may become a target
- Loss of local context with military presence
- Environmental harm (threat of)
- Ship noise for marine life

When you think of the future of St. Paul, would you like to see...

More involvement in Arctic activities	Same as today	Less involvement in Arctic activities
(activity not completed at this station)	(activity not completed at this station)	(activity not completed at this station)

Arctic Opportunity Ideas: What do we want this sector to look like in the next 5 years? How can we grow our economy through playing a role in the Arctic?

- Types of investment
 - Coast guard station
 - Port of shelter
 - Fuel spill response (\$\$)
 - Other military
 - Community defense - would we be a target? Would DoD defend us?
- Benefits of infrastructure investment
 - Cheaper flights
 - Improve travel
 - Bigger and better runway, larger runways E/W
 - Support tourism
 - Improve disaster response on site
- Any activity must consider:
 - New opportunities must support stable and growing population (of full-time citizens)
 - Commitment/plan for economic sustainability
 - Community consultation



Other

- More reliable internet and telephone service
- Small businesses needed
 - Cab
 - Tourism, hotel
 - Skilled trades: mechanic, plumber
 - Services: shopping, snow removal, digging graves
 - Meds and teas from local plants
 - Marijuana growing and sales
 - Horses – rent for riding
- Supporting small businesses
 - More small business to start and survive for individuals and families
 - Small business loan program
 - Technical training – plumbing, carpenters, maintenance, painters, mechanic
- Food security and cost of living
 - Raise and process local meats for purchase (whole animals)
 - Barter, trade more internally as well as with other communities and individuals
 - Competitive fuel prices
 - Incentives for families to move here
- Housing
 - Loan program
 - Affordable options for home renovations; working together
 - Rebuild abandoned houses
- Parks, recreation, and community
 - Weekly gatherings - Central gathering location
 - Sports – floor hockey, soccer
 - Parks
 - More Social activities – central lake space, teen center
- Sin tax on alcohol and tobacco, could go towards childcare
- Dogs – service dogs, emotional support

