



Great for Faro – Good for Tourism

June 26 – 27, 2015

A Community Workshop in response to the
Forever 2013 Faro Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)

Funded by:



A. Executive Summary

Forever Faro Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) 2013 states that: ‘The Economy’ is a key Goal for the Town of Faro, and proposes a vision where “Faro has a thriving and resilient economy that supports local livelihood, protects the natural environment and attracts visitors”.

For 2023, Faro envisions its economy to be thriving and on it’s way to being increasingly diversified through activities such as tourism, arts and culture, mining and mine reclamation and learning opportunities. In fulfilling this goal, the town aspires to attract new residents, attract new businesses, establish Faro as a tourism destination and staging area and explore and develop Faro-based training, trades and research opportunities.¹

With the workshop outcomes and priorities of the Town revealed during research and shared by the community in late June 2015, there is great alignment between documented visions and goals presented in the 2013 ICSP and the 2015 community dialogue and tourism and economic priorities.

Guiding Principles for Faro Tourism Planning

In line with principles of sustainable community building, the community envisions the goal of any investment in Faro, for tourism or otherwise, to first benefit and enhance the quality of life for its residents. Furthermore, the working assumption is that, with attractive amenities for residents, comes the potential to attract new residents.

Although the June workshop was focused on tourism, the town has the foresight to acknowledge that if current residents are happy and want to remain in Faro, that more residents can be attracted to move to the community, and these same attractors may work to attract visitors. In turn, the more residents there are in the community, the more recreation activity there will be, which can then create potential new consumers. Ideally, with growth in population and recreation, there would be growth in entrepreneurial opportunities. Figure 1 below illustrates this ‘attraction cycle’.

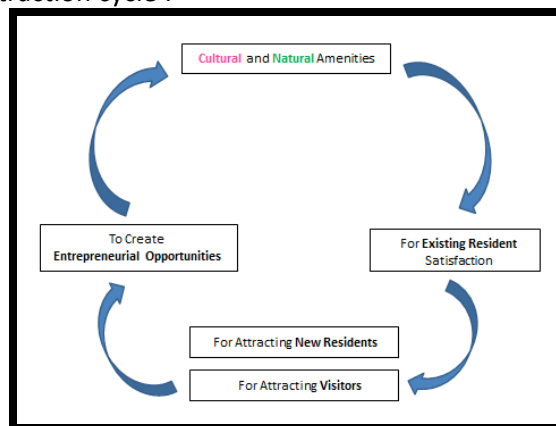


Figure 1. Cycle of Attraction

¹ Faro Forever Integrated Sustainable Community Plan (ICSP) 2013 – Centre for Sustainability Whistler

The second guiding principle going into tourism discussions was that Faro would be very selective and strategic in where and how they invest in development funds. The view is to start small, have some meaningful successes and build from there. The vision is to focus resources and efforts on a regional market first: to build awareness and visitation from Yukoners to the community – for recreation, for adventure and potentially, for an affordable new home or a ‘staycation’ home (People buying a second home as a holiday or vacation property not far from their primary residence).

The goal for the June Workshop Great for Faro – Good for Tourism was to engage the community in helping shape the priorities for the Town in tourism, and in working towards the vision statement of Faro’s ICSP. The program format aimed to meet this goal in a few stages.

First, existing assets and amenities were identified and prioritized. Second, participants took part in a session to help them understand the broader Yukon visitor market and their values, as well as Yukon visitation trends. Finally, participants generated ideas for several new visitor experiences and market ideas. Workshop participants agreed that their preferred visitor activities included:

- i. All-Inclusive Yukoner Package (summer or winter)
- ii. Trail Rejuvenation
- iii. River Landing Development
- iv. Training Centre and Education Development for Trades

The workshop then guided participants through a discussion about these four top rated activities aimed at viewing the ideas through two different perspectives: a visitor perspectives and a resident perspective. Finally, the session ended with a call to action exercise, which included a discussion on how to build champions for tourism in Faro going forward.

It is important to note that while these four ideas were generated and explored during the workshop, they will be a part of a second conversation in a larger community forum (scheduled for the Fall) and are not the final and approved outcomes that the Town will pursue.

Details to World Café discussion and outcomes can be found in Section C of this report. Other visitor oriented activity ideas that were identified, both existing and new, included:

- Promoting the Campbell Highway circle route
- Sporting Tournaments and Festivals
- Fireside Chats/Storytelling
- Inviting Authors or Artists in Residence
- Year-round Visitor Information Centre services
- Tours – mining, berry picking, gardens
- Geocaching
- Northern Lights Viewing
- Mountain Bike trail development, promotion and servicing
- Fossil Hunting
- Dene Cho Trail Revitalization

The entire list of ideas and flip chart notes from this session are available in Appendix 1.

Next steps to this conversation are very important. The community is armed with new information and visioning new possibility. This report will be circulated to residents through August and September with a forecasted community meeting in November 2015. At that time, the Town can further discuss and explore how they would like to see their community grow and the role that tourism will play in those future plans.

D. Recommendations

Recommendations are presented in support of continuing the dialogue with a broader representation in the community and building consensus, support and champions going forward. While options in a Phase Four are proposed below, this Phase will ultimately be determined by community priorities and the guidance of the Advisory Committee.

Phase Three: Post-Workshop and Report Activities

In the community there are several events occurring in the fall in Faro impacting communications and focusing leadership for this conversation. There will be a new Chief Administrative Officer beginning in September and a Municipal Election expected for October. As a result, community distribution and engagement will take place now and building a leadership or advisory team is forecasted for November 2015.

1. Distribute the Workshop Report and a Structured Community Feedback Survey

Distribute outcomes from the June workshop and build community consensus for next steps. Consensus building can occur through a variety of activities including the following:

- 1) Distribute the report through social media (Facebook, community notices, and the advisory committee (in #1 above), and include a three to five question survey aimed at assisting with the design of a fall consensus-building and decision-making workshop (see 2 below).
- 2) Notification through a mail-drop that the draft report and survey are available to pick-up.
- 3) Town Meeting hosted by Town Council with facilitator present to explain background, outcomes and next steps – forecasted for November 2015.

2. Fall 2015 Decision-Making Workshop

Using the Workshop report and the survey results, design and deliver a workshop to specifically identify and assess community support for tourism in the community and of the activities from the report including the four prioritized ideas for tourism product development. The outcome of the survey and follow up fall workshop is to decide upon the 1 or 2 initiatives of those identified in the workshop and/or agreed upon by the community, that will be pursued by Faro. Once the community has had an opportunity to contribute to priorities, the workshop will give insight and direction to a forecasted Advisory committee.

3. Establish a Faro-based Advisory committee

Establish a Faro-based Advisory Committee to guide future steps in this process

(E.g.: a town representative, a member of council, the Town CAO, a representative from Regional Economic Development and/or Tourism Yukon, etc. whose role is to ensure process remains embedded in the community (specific duties TBD, but could include: liaise with Mayor and Council, the community, Government Representatives, the business community, neighbouring communities, tourism operators, etc.).

Proposed Phase Four: Product Development Implementation

This section cannot be finalized until after the community has a Fall Workshop about Tourism and the Town finalizes their priorities. While many ideas arose from the June Workshop, it is prudent to consider that all ideas do not have to be implemented and recommended that no more than 1 or 2 initiatives be decided upon for moving forward.

Next steps might include:

A. Develop a Faro Community Coordination and Marketing Plan (FCCMP)

Implement action plans on the selected product development priorities with activities such as:

- Social Media for Yukon marketing, etc.
- Linking and liaising with Tourism Representatives in Yukon
- Leverage the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund where possible
- Help organize familiarization tours for Yukon Receptive Tour Operators and Tourism Yukon representatives
- Liaise with Mining Reclamation Fund and project managers to advance the concept of a tour for development, perhaps in 2016
- Network with neighboring communities, receptive tour operators, transportation companies, etc.
- Supporting and assist the local Arts Market in funding, marketing and coordination

1. Rationale: This initiative supports foundational coordination and marketing support not currently available for the Town, and is likely the greatest obstacle to initiating any tourism momentum for the Town and region.

2. Caution: A coordination and marketing plan is not an administrative task. It will require prioritizing all the initiatives deemed important by this small and diverse community together with skills and knowledge in the Yukon, marketing, tourism, project management and networking.

3. Performance Measurement: That by March 2016, there is a plan, support for coordination and marketing and a weekender package being actively promoted in the Territory with a tone of 'you can't miss this event' urgency.

B. Advocacy and Research – by Town with FCCMP and business community as relevant

Advocacy

Depending upon which product development activity(s) are decided upon in Phase Three, diverse advocacy campaigns will be required. Examples of advocacy campaigns that may be required include:

- To Education and Yukon College re: training and education opportunities in Faro
- To Energy, Mines and Resources re: reclamation support in providing accessible spaces for visitors or a tour/interpretive program

- To Tourism Yukon and tourism organizations about the activities and events of Faro, keeping the community on the radar
- With Ross River First Nation and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation about collaboration.

Research

Once the product development activities are decided upon, research will need to be organized and assessed for its usefulness to the Faro initiatives. Examples of resources are included in Appendix X.

- Rationale: Many of the ideas and priorities stem from a greater appreciation by multiple government and educational organizations about the goals and objectives of the Town of Faro – in education, economy, tourism and community endeavors. An advocacy strategy can include building relationships with key representatives and leaders to champion the priorities of the community and engage them in the various initiatives pertinent to a Faro-refresh.
- Caution: There are many pieces to this puzzle and Faro needs to be strategic about what it is asking for. It is also recommended that they devise ways of showing other resources, partners, volunteers, neighbors, the tourism industry, the Yukon College and First Nations in future plans.

Performance Measurement: That as the Town determines its top priorities, that there is a very clear path and plan with roles, responsibilities and timelines to keep everyone informed and on track. The Advisory Committee set upon Stage I will be useful to ensure relevant and useful performance measurement is achieved.