

Negril Chamber of Commerce

April 2019

Negril 2030: Call for Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this document, prepared by the Negril Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in association with other stakeholders and the wider community, is to describe the problems and issues that we face in Negril today and to offer solutions and innovative and creative ideas to address these problems so that we have a Negril fit for purpose well into the 21st Century.

The main issues identified by the Stakeholders are prioritized as follows:-

Appendix One highlights some of the other issues that we will seek to secure funding for.

1. Fruit and Vegetable Market

Progress and recommendation:

This is a project the Negril Chamber of Commerce (NCC) has been lobbying for over 20 years with the Jamaican Government. Local Government Minister Desmond McKenzie visited Negril in August 2018 and again in May 2019 with an approved preliminary design for the Negril Fruit and Vegetable Market which was acceptable by the community. Please see links below:

- http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/observer-west/mckenzie-pledges-to-make-proposed-negril-market-a-reality_142802?profile=1431
- http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20181112/negril-get-much-needed-market-next_year
- <https://www.facebook.com/negrilchamber2018/photos/a.2406373202920105/2406373519586740>

2. West End Sidewalk (from the town center to the Negril All-Age School around dangerous church corner)

Progress and recommendation:

This is a project that the parents of children attending the Negril All Age School and citizens have lobbied for years. The NCC has received permission from the Church to acquire a sliver of their land to provide the space for the sidewalk.

The NWA (National Works Agency) has drawn the plans, a budget has been approved, \$30M from TEF (Tourism Enhancement Fund) to commence work and the NWA has advised that the contract is now out to tender. The NCC and the community had asked Dr. Craig Travis of Llantrisant Resort to donate a section of his land to continue the sidewalk to the library and we are hoping once the project starts, he will acquiesce. Otherwise, the Government of Jamaica will have to do a “forced sale” which could take some time. This is a major child safety issue.

3. Negril Beach Park

Progress and recommendation:

This project has encountered many obstacles, changes and a lack of consensus over the years. Several plans have been presented; each time the community felt that they had not been consulted and were being given a vision from Kingston that had no Negril input! The latest plan encompasses both the park and the community center, craft market and fish market etc. It is recommended that the project be split into the following 2 parts:-

1. The Park Side to be developed with recreational areas, beach access etc., which many expressed that they liked the Emancipation Park concept in Kingston. This could be achieved in a short time; we suggest that the plans be revisited as soon as possible.
2. The Community Center Side. The craft market has been a political issue which hopefully can be dealt with. Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett had proposed an Artisan Village, but many people feel that it is a valuable piece of real estate that the GOJ and locals should benefit from and so a proposal of a public/private partnership has been discussed. This project probably needs further negotiation. These are ideas previously put forward, courtesy of past NCC President Mr. Lee Issa. Please see link: <https://youtu.be/Xkcy3T2hwfE>

4. Negril Health Center Expansion

Progress and recommendation:

The Health Center has not grown in line with the increase in local population and visitors. The plan is for the Minister of Health to build an extension and the equipment be supplied by donors. The NCC is raising funds to help upgrade the center into a type A Health Center enabling 24-hour service. Several partners are on board including (ISSA TRUST - Diane Pollard, Manager diane.pollard@issatrustfoundation.com, The CHASE Fund, The JahJah Foundation and the Rotary Club of Negril.

Working with other rotary partners in Calgary, Canada; the Rotary Club of Negril has secured US\$107,000 and has now started to upgrade the existing clinic building with the assurance that it will remain as is when the Ministry of Health (MOH) decides to start with the extension. It is also hoped that the foundation is strong enough to have a 2nd floor for future planning. The MOH has the plans. Negril as a tourist destination, should have a clinic that can accept patients, stabilize them and then send them on for further care. Please see link below to the 2016 Plans for the Negril Health Center:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KIIYvsUPRMS56tDlmoMaeXPvEkjs22V5/view?usp=sharing>

5. Skills Training Leading to Employment and Reduction of Poverty and Deprivation

Progress and recommendation:

The NCC owns a 1½ acre plot of land in Whitehall, Negril which was donated by William Cargile III to improve educational opportunities in Negril. The NCC has a plan to use two containers to create training rooms and workshops as the tourism industry needs trained and skilled maintenance staff. To achieve this the NCC needs assistance and a budget to set it up to train young people in maintenance, basic plumbing, electrics, carpentry, joinery and welding. This is a project which could be set in motion quickly in conjunction with training providers and suitable funders.

The NCC also manages the Negril Vendors Plaza where it has its Office and a fully equipped Training Room which it would like to set for training in Coding and Animation for young people in the area in line with the Prime Minister's promise. We already have the hardware, software, and the ongoing maintenance costs.

In addition, we have secured a qualified Tutor to deliver these courses as soon as funding can be secured to pay the Tutor's Expenses and we have been in discussion with the Heart Trust to approve certification.

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BACKGROUND

The Negril Chamber of Commerce takes their role very seriously as advocates for change and this role is reflected in our mission statement below.

Mission: The Mission of the NCC is to promote economic progress, to improve the general welfare and prosperity and to foster a better quality of life for the community within Negril and its environs.

We also aim to encourage and support a climate in which Commerce, Educational Opportunities, Community Health, Industry, Agriculture and the local Community will flourish and to protect and sustain our incredibly unique natural environment.

We will engage in fundraising activities that will support the development of Projects in these areas; thereby reducing the suffering and distress caused by poverty, deprivation and unemployment.

And we will seek and maintain a range of appropriate partnerships with government agencies and private companies to ensure the Projects have the funding necessary to implement them and to undertake the administrative processes required by these agencies.

The following visionary document that represents the collective views of the local businesses, community members and other stakeholders has been developed by the 2019 Negril Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, named below, as our response to the perceived and expressed needs of all the local community.

Richard A.M. Wallace, President Pansy Rayson, 1st Vice President Damian Salmon, 2nd Vice President Winthrop Wellington, 3rd Vice President Sophie Grizzle-Roumel, Treasurer Nola Stair, Secretary Andrea Rhule-Hudson Barry Hough Sr.	Diane Ennevor Elaine Allen-Bradley Kevin Hammond Lady Jan Samuels DL Lee Issa Michael Russell Nestor Absera	Directors Emeritus: Daniel Grizzle Nehru Caolsing Ray Arthurs Honorary: Ras Iyah V
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INTRODUCTION:

Many years of hard work and perseverance have led to the Negril that Jamaica is blessed with today. It is with great pride that we welcome the prospect of the enhancement of Negril and surrounding areas. However, it stands to reason that the existing Negril be given some much-needed attention. There is an obvious reason that the new developments will share the name Negril with us as we, as a community, have together made it one of the most popular destinations in the world. Needless to say, tourists do not flock here year after year just by chance. From the smallest hotel to the biggest, to attractions and street vendors, the people of Negril are driven by a common good; to show our visitors the utmost hospitality in an environment they can call a second home.

Most people will tell you that they have come to Negril specifically to escape the big resort towns they have grown tired of. The “up-and-coming” destinations of the world are not dotted in high rise buildings for a reason; it is monotonous, unattractive and unappealing.

There have been similar massive developments just like this proposal for a New Negril in many parts of the world that have actually failed. This is not to say that this one will suffer the same misfortune, in fact we wish all concerned great success. Simply put we urge those concerned not to “throw out the old bucket before they know if the new one holds water”.

Many of the setbacks Negril suffers from are results of how neglected we are by the powers that be. However, we appreciate that the country as a whole is faced with many challenges and so we do not wish to point a finger of blame but rather to remind those in power that Negril desperately needs their help and that we are capable and willing to join in the process.

Let us not forget that without the Negril we have created the name “Negril” would have no meaning at all.

We recognize the need to work collaboratively in partnership with Government Agencies and Stakeholders to achieve our vision, our dreams for Negril as a whole. We understand the words “Stronger Together” and we believe that the ideal conditions for being successful are twofold.

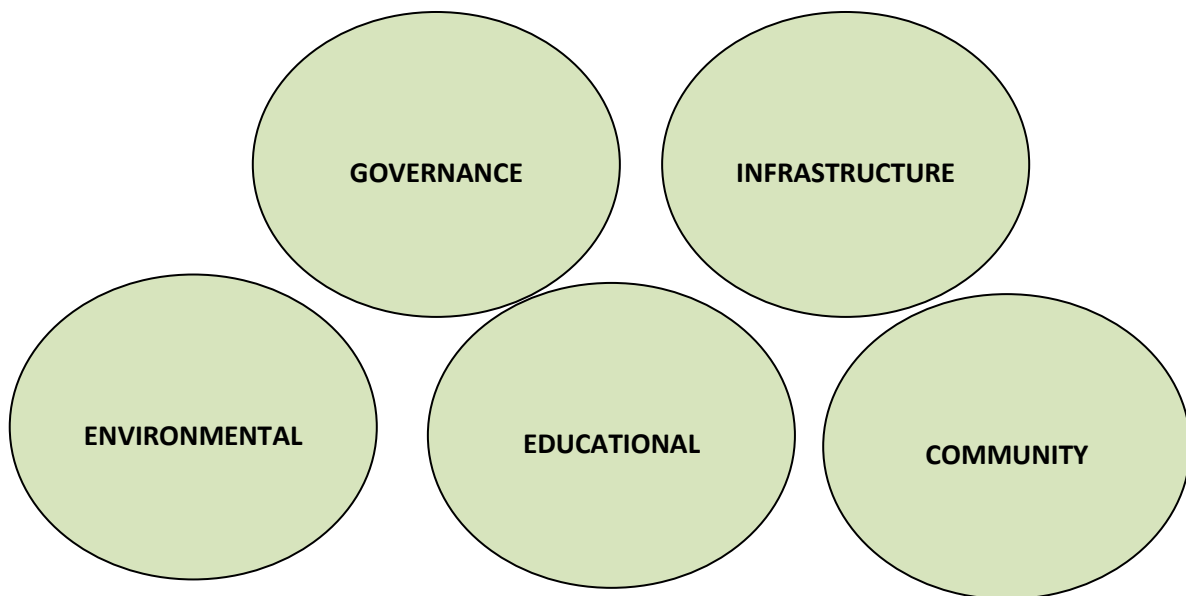
The first is that Government agencies will be taking heed of what we want and are listening to our needs and aspirations. And the second is that if the local organizations feel that they have some level of ownership of the

proposals and ultimately the projects that we advocate for, then these will be strongly supported by all concerned and have a better chance of success.

PROCESS:

We tackled this massive undertaking through a series of structured workshops, facilitated by Lady Jan Samuels and Ms. Nola Stair, where we inspired participants to dream about what they thought would be their top five ideas for improving Negril, how these could be achieved and what action would need to be taken, by whom and in what timescale. We recognized that these first steps needed to be well grounded in community beliefs and values as knowing the important issues in our community was vital for the development of a strong, effective and enduring Plan.

In questioning participants, we encouraged everyone to share their most idealistic, hopeful and positive ideas to shine through. We told them not to worry right now about what was practical and what is not as this could be narrowed down later. We encouraged them to be bold and to remember that we were trying to articulate a vision for a better Negril. After gathering their ideas, thoughts and opinions about how they would like to see their community transformed and what mattered the most to them we developed a range of vision statements and objectives that we could all agree on and from these we developed some clear and concise action plans and strategies under five main themes: Governance, Infrastructure, Environmental, Educational and Community.



VISION STATEMENTS:

GOVERNANCE

- **Well planned city** with proper zoning for schools, health, parks, shopping, entertainment, hotels, play areas, green space, public community pool and residential housing.
- **Compliance and enforcement** of existing laws with modern and efficient police force with an effective Visitor Safety Coordinator and Tourism Police with powers of arrest. Increase Police visibility and effectiveness. Updating of current laws / punishments to better protect the tourism industry product (i.e., harassment, loitering, unlicensed vendors, horses on the beach and gigolo's) and to deal with the other modern-day issues relating to technology and the digital world.
- Negril to be designated a **"municipality (or some form of self-governance)"** to better deal with local issues that are unique to Negril, such as reclassification of Negril Police Station. At present we are straddled between two Parish Councils, Hanover and Westmoreland, and therefore we are often forgotten by either or both Councils.
- **Enforcement of environmental laws** surrounding wildlife, coral reef, wetlands and marine life. Fishing areas to be monitored to protect small fish. The Morass and the Royal Palm Reserve need protection.
- Develop a **profitable tourism center** with room for profitable investors
- **Increase Negril Green Island Local Planning Authority's (NIGALPA)** power and appoint local representation (nonpolitical appointments), during the interim period while moving toward self-governance.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Roads:**
 - Proper road **maintenance** with adequate lighting, better drainage and sidewalks on both sides of Norman Manley Blvd and West End Road.
 - Secondary roads for West End, with expansion of the commercial space and pedestrianized in certain areas.
- **Water:**
 - Adequate water **supply** and delivery to meet the current needs and future growth (encourage water harvesting options)
 - Construct Tertiary **Sewage System**/Waste Water Treatment Facility for entire Negril and environs, including residential and commercial properties.
- **Facilities:**
 - Identify and procure financing to develop new Negril **airport** for small jet access
 - Upgrade facilities: Negril Health Center (or hospital), Ambulance services and Fire Station
 - Local presence of government offices and departments in Negril Town.
 - Well- coordinated and managed Markets for fruit/vegetable, craft, fisherman village




- Improve **Waste management** / garbage collection / recycling and education / enforcement
- Stable **electricity** supply and explore solar energy, wind and clean energy options
- **SMART** city with technology (internet, CCTV) for surveillance and security
- **Aesthetics:**
 - **Jamaican Tropical** Aesthetics for entire Negril area - organized and modernized thriving town center with shops, bars, restaurants
 - **Signage** / maintain designated (five) beach access routes, including special needs access from Norman Manley Boulevard.

- **Transportation:**


- **Negril Bus Park** - Develop reliable and scheduled transportation system for workers/visitors/residents, establish regular links with other small towns, proper advertised timetables and prices, along with permanent signage, construct suitable Bus Stops with seats for the elderly thereby reducing the # of taxi licenses.
- **Motor Vehicle Noise**, Apply for Silent Zones on Norman Manley Blvd and West End
- **Motor Bikes** - Reduce the number and problems associated with them, enforce the wearing of helmets to reduce loss of life and accidents which puts pressure on Health services

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Protect and maintain Negril’s **unique fragile ecosystem** (morass, beach, reef)
- Full maintenance of **great morass / royal palm reserve**, develop Education Centre and Oceanarium.
- Explore **beach nourishment** options to improve current status as included in the Top 10 Beaches Worldwide.
- Build a **Community Park** similar to Emancipation Park in Kingston with an amphi-theatre, cultural center and tourist information site.
- Increase # of **green spaces** for community - Develop play areas, parks and green spaces
- **Beautification** of Negril – Good clean surroundings free from garbage and ability to walk around day and night peacefully and safely.
- Better management and protection **of Marine Park assets**.
- Protect **rights to access beach** with acceptable fees to maintain beach, toilets and showers.



National Environment and Planning Agency



IWEco.Jamaica
Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management
in Caribbean Small Island Developing States
#CaringForOurFuture

Integrated Water, Land and Ecosystem Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWECO)

Key Activities

- Select appropriate hydrological models that determine specific restoration needs
- Apply hydrological solutions to control water level and movement geared towards hydrological improvement of zonal waters
- Undertake land use surveys to determine historical wetland boundaries
- Develop and pilot an integrated pollution control and management programme
- Implementation of the Green Business initiatives within Tourism related entities and related SCP strategy and action plan
- Assessment of the spatial distribution of seagrass beds within Long Bay
- Develop and implement an effective ecosystem restoration programme
- Integrated land tenure programme implemented to resolve the current issues affecting the Negril Great Morass
- Establish an interactive, interpretive research and knowledge sharing centre within the Negril Royal Palm Reserve
- Work with private land owners to reduce wetland impacts by employing best environmental practices for wetland conservation and protection
- Develop a marketing and management plan for the Negril Royal Palm Reserve
- Train farmers in sustainable farming practices and alternative livelihood programs, using best environmental practices (BEP).

EDUCATIONAL

- Develop a **community college** to adequately train Negril’s workforce to international standards through community capacity building and building Social Capital
- Develop **curriculum choices**, for adults and young people involving trade skills, apprenticeships, short courses, such as: Health, Language education classes, Animation and Coding, Music and arts programmes, Landscaping and other technical skills to meet existing identified needs in the workplace.

- Develop **child nursery** for workers with different operating hours to accommodate shift patterns.
- Determine appropriate **location** for early childhood education facilities and possible tertiary school for
 - Environmental or Community Tourism
 - Vocational and non- vocational
- Explore options for establishing a **museum** to honor and safeguard the rich and varied Negril and Jamaican History.

COMMUNITY

- Establish Entertainment Zones to offer a wide range of choices to Tourists and Locals alike.
- Increase community involvement (Governance, Jamaican tourism product)
- Reduction in Harassment.
- Licensed Vendors – at present they are classed as itinerant with non- fixed locations
- Explore affordable housing options for young workers, in collaboration with the National Housing Trust (NHT)
- Better management and use of government-owned lands, reduction of Squatters on these lands.
- Recognition of Negril as a major contributor to the economic well-being of Jamaica through taxation.
- Enhance the Community Centre and develop a multi- sport center.
- Advertise Entrepreneurial opportunities: (nurseries, high end clothing/ shopping, explore in-bond opportunities) etc.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a work in progress, in which we are currently developing action plans and specific objectives for our five key themes. We realize that much has already been done to address some of the outstanding problems facing Negril and some proposed interventions have already been announced by Government Ministers including:

1. Announcement by Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett that he has appointed a Permanent Secretary, in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith to lead a team designated to reimagine the tourist destination of Negril in Westmoreland.
2. Announcement of IWECO Project - a five-year US \$3 million funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to address water, land and biodiversity management as well as climate change in the Negril Environmental Protection Area, Negril Morass and Negril Royal Palm Reserve.
3. Announcement by Local Government Minister, Desmond McKenzie for the development of the Fruit and Vegetable Market.
4. In 2019 Budget Speech it was announced that Westmoreland will be the priority for improved Water Services through the NWC.

The NCC have proved themselves to be an extremely competent organization who are best placed as advocates for change and lobbyists for the wider community. They are properly administered following the laws of the Companies Office of Jamaica and have the ability to seek external funding without Government Agencies involvement from private investors and contributors.

They are able to hold funds, use them appropriately for the correct purpose they were designed to meet, manage budgets and spending streams and get best value for the money by using local suppliers and tradesmen.

We, the NCC, have earned our place at the table with our track record including managing the following successful new and upcoming projects:

1. TEF Road repair in West End.
2. Digicel Foundation Grant for Negril Recycling Center.
3. Health Fund for upgrading the Negril Health Clinic.
4. Development and management of Vendors Plaza for small businesses and prospective entrepreneurs.
5. IWECO Project (after years of environmental lobbying by the Negril Chamber of Commerce)
6. TEF co-sponsorship of New Year's Eve Fireworks Project.
7. UWI Mona School of Business MBA Student Projects (focusing on Negril and its issues).
8. Development of plans and agreement with the Church to build new sidewalk at Negril All Age School to improve health and safety for the children.
9. Independent environmental assessment was undertaken to investigate the possibility of mining peat for energy production from the Negril Morass.
10. Assistance of a global Wetland expert, Edward Maltby, Professor Emeritus of Wetland Science, Water and Ecosystem Management at Liverpool University in the UK.
11. JahJah Foundation Dental Clinic, Ambulance and Medics for Negril in a partnership to save lives.

APPENDIX ONE – DEVELOPING PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS.

We are continuing to develop and flesh out these specific objectives and action plans for each of our priorities:

GOVERNANCE

ACCESS TO PUBLIC BEACH AREAS

- Objective - Protect rights to beach access for all with minimal fees for amenities
- Action - Use private companies to maintain beach facilities
- Why - Residents need un-inhibited and unrestricted access
- Who - NCC or UDC (?) will serve oversight body of fees?
- When - 2-5 years?
- Where - Identification of beach area for adequate access in the future, determine density ratio (population, beach)

ZONING IN NEGRIL

- Objective - Will standardize and dictate how properties can or cannot be developed/used.
- Actions - Penalize those who don't / Incentivize those who do develop properly.
- Why - Allows for an overarching plan for a structure in which people can conform, spur economic development
- Who MP, Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government, Parliament,
- When - Urgent!
- Where - All areas surrounding Negril (Little London, Green Island, Orange Bay, Sheffield, West End, Orange Hill, Mount Airy, Brighton)

INFRASTRUCTURE

GOOD LIGHTING

- Objective - Have proper lighting along multi user walkways.
- Action (What) – solar and other energy forms to be considered.
- Why - ensure safety at night and enhance the tourism product, cost effective.
- Who – JPS, Municipal Corporation?
- When – within three months.
- Where – along Norman Manley Boulevard.

Transportation – Workers / Visitors

- Objectives: Design mass transportation system for residents and visitors / Regulate existing services.
- Actions:
 - Investigate efficient systems in other places (i.e., Barbados).
 - Create properly run taxi stands, redevelop Negril Bus Park.
- Why - Create better organized options for workers and visitors.
- Who - Public/Private Partnership?
- When - Within Five years.
- Where - Define Negril area (see Zoning Objective).

ENVIRONMENTAL

DEVELOP PLAY AREAS AND GREEN SPACES

- Objective - Increase social interaction for community members and visitors.
- Action - Identify potential spaces.
- Why - People need recreational spaces to enhance health potential and quality of life.
- Who - UDC, NEPA, local organizations, TPDCO. HMC, WMC?
- When - 6-12 months.
- Where – government owned lands in Negril.

FULL MAINTENANCE OF GREAT MORASS / ROYAL PALM RESERVE (ECOQUARIUM)

- Objective - Preserve, protect and sustain flora and fauna, as well as health of coral reef and stability of beach.
- Action - Re-wetting / rehydration, eliminate evasive species.
- Why - Preserve and enhance tourism product, highlight as an educational tool and experience.
- Who - NEPA, local community, Petro Jam, UDC, NLA?
- When – Within Five years.
- Where – Negril Great Morass.

Beautification of Negril

- Objectives -
 - Implement visual improvements to boost tourism or other commerce.
 - Improve the quality of life for residents.
- Action - Develop community committee with specific skills to guide and implement the beautification process.
- Why - Attract more tourists, boost community morale, bring people together as part of a community.
- Who - NIGALPA, TPDCO, NCC, local stakeholders?
- When - 1-2 years (low hanging fruit).
- Where - From end to end of Negril.

EDUCATIONAL

HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Objectives:
 - Improve employability for local community by providing opportunities that ensure the training is fit for purpose for the available job opportunities.
 - Improve the overall social and economic fabric of the community through adult and continuing education programmes.
 - Develop a broad range of skills training for all sections of the community.
 - Work with organizations to ensure appropriate accreditation and certification is in place and that participants achieve recognized qualifications.
 - Encourage our local businesses to offer work experience to students who may become future employees.
- Action - Identify location, potential student numbers and sources of funding.
- Why - Enhance skills to the tourism industry.
- Who – HEART, Ministry of Education?
- When – within two years.
- Where – one campus on NCC land? Virtual classes.

COMMUNITY

WEST END ROAD AS PEDESTRIAN ONLY

- Objective - Plan and identify pedestrianized zone which will enhance the economic stability of the West End.
- Action - Review and update existing plan in order to install secondary feeder roads.
- Why - It is currently unsafe. Create entertainment zone for open air cafes, art exhibitions, street fairs, which increases involvement with community and enhances safety.
- Who – NWA, TPDC, WMC, JPS, Local Minister for Roads?
- When – 1-2 years.
- Where – sections of West End Road, Negril.