



MARIGOT SUNSHINE LTD.

YACHTING AND WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT IN VIEUX FORT

INTRODUCTION

The town of Vieux Fort has tremendous potential for development of the Yachting Industry, associated Marine Industries and of its waterfront area. Vieux Fort features a deep, sheltered bay in line of sight to the popular yachting destination of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and superb international transportation afforded by Hewanorra International Airport.

This paper seeks to bring together a number of ideas into a cohesive development plan for Vieux Fort Bay and waterfront while maintaining strong community involvement both in its development and its skills and employment implications.

A phased implementation is proposed with each phase representing a significant development of both infrastructure and community in its own right.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The author, as past chair of the joint Visitor Safety and Security Committee, is well aware of the checkered history of yachting security in Vieux Fort Bay.

It is my strong view that security issues are significantly improved by direct community involvement in and benefit from yachting visitors. These benefits can and should take many forms reflecting the aspirations and needs of the community and the various business models that can realistically be applied.

TRAINING

The sequence of proposals is specifically designed to increase the exposure of the Vieux Fort Community to yachting visitors and would require extensive training and sensitization of prospective employees and those associated with the venture. In addition to technical training, there will be the need for training in visitor awareness, customer relations and other soft skills. Each proposal budget includes an allowance for such training which is envisaged to be coordinated by the Southern Tourism Development Corporation and exercised by the Vieux Fort Centre of the NSDC.

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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AND PHASES

More details of each proposed development follow in later papers. The sequence is deliberate although some overlaps are eminently possible and desirable.

1. INSTALLATION OF MOORING BUOY FIELD

Installation of a field of initially 20 mooring buoys in the area northwest of the Fishing Harbour and to seaward of the “Backadare” beach.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$20,000

INVESTOR: Private Sector, ideally local to Vieux Fort and community based. One option is to use this investment as an income generator for Tourism Training and Local Development undertaken by the Southern Tourism Development Corporation.

OPERATOR: Local Association of water based vendors following appropriate training.

BENEFITS: Low key introduction of yachting to the community enabling some shore based development of yachting oriented facilities, restaurants, provisioning, tours and excursions but fundamentally sensitization of the community to the yachting industry and yachtspersons’ needs.

2. YACHTING FACILITIES WITHIN FISHING HARBOUR

Construction of a yacht, superyacht tender and dinghy dock within the Fishing Harbour, preferably against the North West breakwater. This would provide yacht standard berthing for locally owned yachts and excursion craft, safe and secure berthing for superyacht tenders collecting guests from HIA and safe, secure berthing for dinghies from yachts at anchor and on mooring buoys.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$100,000

INVESTOR: Private Sector with Lease from Fisheries Department.

OPERATOR: Local residents (2) trained to Dockmaster standards and employed by the investor.

BENEFITS: The next stage in introducing yachting to the community enabling more shore based development of yachting oriented facilities, restaurants, provisioning, tours and excursions and further sensitization of the community to the yachting industry and yachtspersons’ needs.



3. PEDESTRIAN BOARDWALK FROM FISHING HARBOUR TO BEACH

Construction of a lit pedestrian boardwalk from the northern corner of the Fishing Harbour at the seaward end of Church Street to the Old Vieux Fort River entrance at the seaward end of Lewis Street and then onto the Beach with an appropriate river crossing. Pedestrian connections between the Boardwalk and the seaward ends of Gravey, Giraudy and Laborie/Commercial Streets.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$100,000

INVESTOR: Public Sector CDP Funding (or successor)

MAINTENANCE: Local Council.

BENEFITS: Improved access for Vieux Fort residents to the Beach, improved access for yachting visitors to the beach, potential for the opening of waterfront restaurants, craft stalls and other vendor outlets on the land side of the Boardwalk.

4. USE OF CONTAINER PIER FOR SUPERYACHT FUELING, LOADING AND GUEST EMBARKATION

The SLASPA / Southern Marine Terminals pier at Vieux Fort is currently underutilized. This proposal would enable its use for fueling, provisioning and guest embarkation and disembarkation from Superyachts up to 180 metres in length overall thus increasing the use of Vieux Fort as a guest pickup port for large private and charter yachts requiring discrete service.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$20,000 (Cleanup and fendering)

INVESTOR: SLASPA

OPERATOR: SLASPA

BENEFITS: Low key introduction of “superyachts” to the community enabling further shore based development of yachting oriented facilities, restaurants, provisioning, tours and excursions.



5. 150 BERTH YACHT MARINA

Construction of a yacht marina, docks and breakwater system largely focused on the yacht charter industry and capable of accommodating yachts in the range 10 – 200 metres in length overall. (The longest yacht in the current fleet is 181 metres LOA). The basic facility would include technical and retail space, government offices to accommodate Customs, Immigration, Marine Police and Port Authority staff and a small hotel / condo development in the 60-100 room range.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$40 Million

INVESTOR: Private Sector or PPP possibly associated with HIA Development.

OPERATOR: Investor appointed Management Company employing, as far as possible, local staff after necessary training and certification.

BENEFITS: The yachting visitor has been established to be the highest per capita / per day spender in local communities in the Caribbean. Dollar for dollar of investment a yacht marina will provide the highest return to the Vieux Fort Community and make best use of existing facilities and skills as well as acting as a seed for expansion of the tourism industry in the south of the island.

6. YACHT REFIT YARD

Construction and equipping of a yacht refit yard capable of dry docking yachts from 10 to 70 metres in length overall and working on yachts up to 150 metres LOA on alongside refit berths.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$50 Million

INVESTOR: Private Sector

OPERATOR: Investor appointed Management Company employing, as far as possible, local staff after necessary training and certification.

BENEFITS: The development of this facility would encourage and enable “homeporting” in Saint Lucia by the largest yachts in the superyacht fleet. The work undertaken would introduce a complete new industry to Saint Lucia with significant employment and skills development potential.



7. CRUISE SHIP PIER

Construction of a pier as an addendum to the marina breakwaters capable of accommodating 1 cruise ship of approximately 370 metres in length overall, 70 metres in beam and 10 metres in draft and another of approximately 330 x 60 x 9. The estimated costs assume a pre-existing Marina breakwater system and government buildings and include for the cost of pier construction, dredging, additional retail and leisure facilities.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$10 Million

INVESTOR: Private Sector or PPP.

OPERATOR: Investor appointed Management Company employing, as far as possible, local staff after necessary training and certification.

BENEFITS: For a relatively small investment this proposal opens up Vieux Fort as a cruise homeport with superb air connections to North America and Europe. The implications for the local economy are substantial.

8. FERRY TERMINAL

Modifications to the secondary cruise ship pier to enable its use as a ro-ro ferry terminal.

INVESTMENT: Approximately US\$500,000

INVESTOR: Private Sector or PPP.

OPERATOR: Investor appointed Management Company employing, as far as possible, local staff after necessary training and certification.

BENEFITS: For a relatively small investment this proposal opens up Vieux Fort as regional transportation hub with superb air connections to North America and Europe. The implications for the local economy are substantial.

Bob Hathaway
4th July 2016

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