

# RESTORE GEORGE TOWN

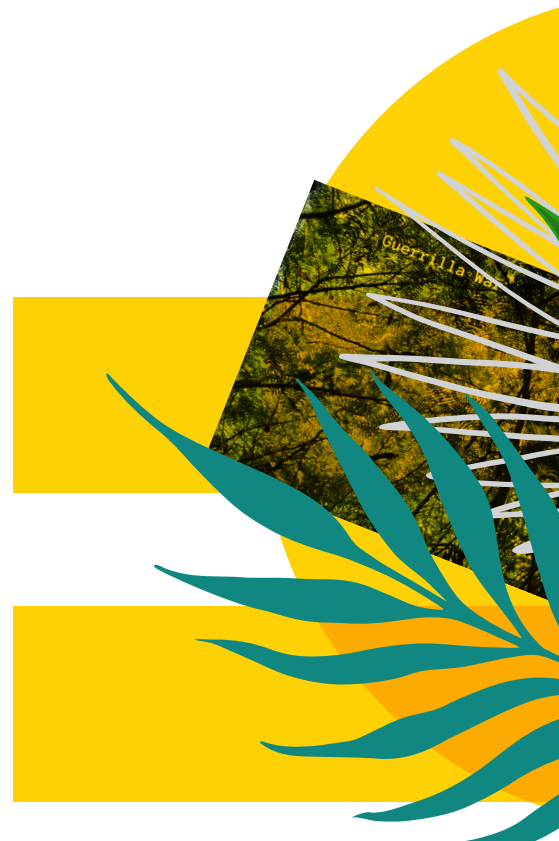
A Community Partnership

*~ An Exuma Pride + Team Cooper Initiative ~*



“A restored capital  
will bring a renewed  
sense of pride and  
create economic  
opportunities  
for Exumians.”

– I. Chester Cooper, MP







## Dear Residents:

As we work toward realizing eVision 2030, the capital of Exuma, George Town, will play an integral role in readying our island for sustained economic development.

It is well documented that downtown revitalization projects have a direct impact on local economies. Investment in revitalization creates jobs, increases property values, causes new investments, and attracts tourists. City centers also provide the pulse of that community, and is often where the 'heart' lies.

Team Cooper and Exuma Pride, in partnership with other stakeholders, will work to restore and rejuvenate George Town and encourage a sense of pride and responsibility. From this collaboration, a masterplan for the capital is in development to define each aspect of the project. These new and improved developments will also create an environment for new entrepreneurial projects.

We have had considerable input from a cross-section of the community on our plans moving forward, and will continue to engage others to ensure the redevelopment of a capital that makes us all proud.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you as we unlock the potential of Exuma!

*Chester Cooper*



RESTORE  
GEORGE  
TOWN

# RESTORING GEORGE TOWN: OVERVIEW

With the rapid growth of the island, a masterplan is currently in development for George Town, through engagement and focus groups. The plan will forecast the future growth of the island, over the next 30 years and will receive cross-sector support from stakeholders.

The overall concept includes the revitalization of Lake Victoria and surrounding areas; upgrades to Elizabeth Harbour and establishment of a Marina Village to include a permanent Regatta site and an Inner Harbour; construction of a major breakwater to protect the entire area and to attract boating to the mainland; relocation of the port to the Navy Base; relocation of the George Town Primary School; and establishment of a Sailing Museum and a Heritage Museum. Work has already begun on this phased initiative:

## **Phase I: WHAT'S BEEN DONE:**

Conceptual design; clean-up; mangroves management, area beautification, park development; Farmer's Market renovation; basketball court enhancement; and "The Evergreen Pavilion".

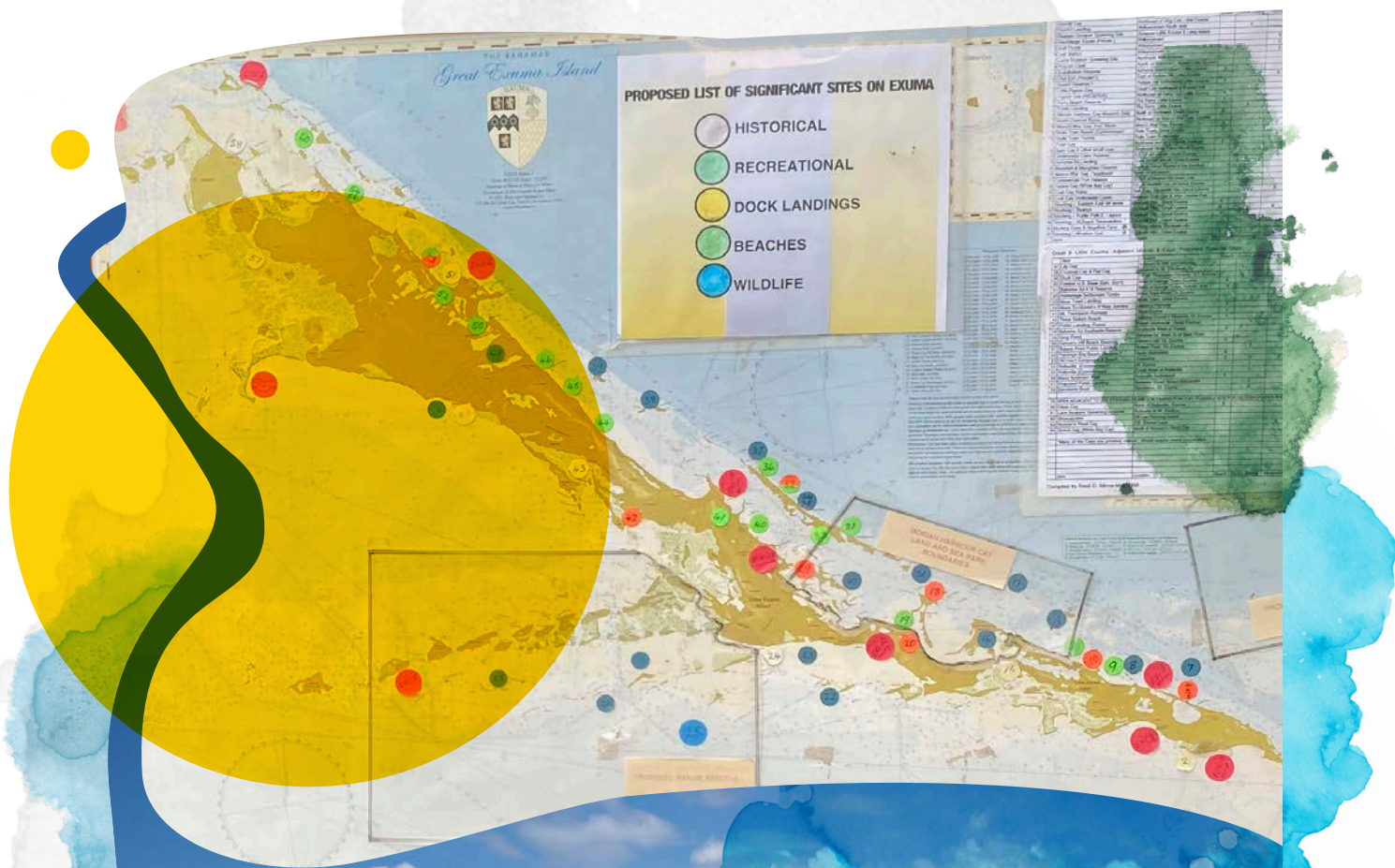
## **Phase II: WHAT'S NEXT:**

'Green-up George Town with green spaces'; tree-planting; secure turtle habitat; signage for towns, roads, and communities; develop walking paths; properly name communities rather than 'Bahama Sound'; properly illustrate Exuma map; fix boat ramps and create additional ones; develop George Town Fire Station; Redevelop Lake Victoria, Elizabeth Harbour and the Navy Base area.

## **Phase III: THE FUTURE:**

Achieve success with global alliances; increase entrepreneurial opportunities; improve quality of life; become a place for personal growth; live healthier; embrace the creative economy with events like rowing regatta at Lake Victoria; music exchanges; heritage festivals and other events.









Welcome to  
**Exuma**



RIGATIA CAPITAL OF  
THE BAHAMAS

*You Are Here!*  
You are standing in the town centre  
of George Town — the heart of Exuma. Welcome to the  
capital and second largest settlement in this chain of  
beautiful Bahamian islands. Comprised of two main islands,  
Great Exuma and Little Exuma, and a necklace-like string of  
smaller cays, Exuma is a member of the more remote and  
tranquil "Family Islands" of The Bahamas.

Exuma Island is spread over 100 miles long, with 365  
cays, one can experience something new each day  
of the year. A wealth of pristine reefs, deserted  
beaches, quaint towns, and history await  
your exploration.

*Relax and Enjoy Your Vacation!*





## TOWN CENTER:

The Town Center holds the key to a revitalized George Town. The first objective is to make the area clean and safe, followed by activating underutilized spaces to facilitate long-term development and improve public spaces. A few of the initiatives of the redevelopment include:

- Return to George Town's Victorian-style architecture; redo walls; refurbish and paint; introduce picket fence throughout; develop board walk
- Demolition of dilapidated buildings
- Restore Library: one of the oldest buildings
- Renovation of Government buildings and privately-owned structures
- Restore Chim Pond and Chim Pond Canal to improve flow
- Relocate George Town Primary and accommodate a Sailing Museum.
- Relocate Administration Building near Navy Base and make existing building the Exuma Heritage Museum.
- Straw Market redevelopment for 'made in Exuma products'
- 18-ft Memorial Wall: Names of Exumians who served in World War I and II.



## LAKE VICTORIA RESTORATION:

Lake Victoria is adjoined to Elizabeth Harbour. Due to current flows the lake has been a collection point for waste from the harbour. The lake is at the heart of George Town and potentially one of the most visible landmarks on the island. The project will clean up the debris and treat the water to restore the natural beauty. The shoreline will be beautified with benches and boardwalks and foreshadow low density use by entrepreneurs e.g. spas.

\* For the purpose of this project, the 'Restore George Town' project will encompass the area from Darville Plaza to February Point.



## **ELIZABETH HARBOUR MANAGEMENT:**

Develop Elizabeth Harbour into a properly managed world-class harbour beneficial to the creation of light industries and commerce in the Harbour community. Also, like air service, Exuma should have a well-developed port facility that would serve as a regional hub for shipping.

Elizabeth Harbour, home of the National Family Island sailing regatta, is naturally one of the world's most beautiful harbors. It attracts, on an annual basis thousands of boats that anchor in the harbour for months at a time. There is no active pump-out service. Based upon estimates by previous pump-out service it is estimated that in excess of 500,000 gallons of sewerage is discharged in the harbour annually. Lake Victoria has been the unfortunate recipient of much of the same. This project will put in place a self-management authority, re-establish the pump-out service and install 25 moorings in the first phase to reduce the destruction of the sea bed by anchors. This project is led by the Elizabeth Harbour Conservation Partners which is a committee of local stakeholders.

## **MINI HOSPITAL:**

With the opening and PPP for its operations, the mini hospital in Exuma will become a strategic asset for sustained economic and community development.

## **FORMER CLINIC USE:**

With the masterplan for George Town, the best use of the Government Building, formally-used as the clinic, will be determined to fit into the overall redevelopment plans for the capital.



**REMOVE  
SUNKEN BARGE;  
OLD CARS:**

For many years, a sunken barge has remained an eyesore for Exuma. We will ensure that the barge is removed and that the old cars are shipped out.









## PHASE I: WHAT'S BEEN DONE

### LAKE VICTORIA: MANAGEMENT OF MANGROVES

Pruned mangroves  
Reclaimed area from the Lake

### FARMER'S MARKET

Renovated marketplace for farmers

### LAKE FRONT PARK

Installed natural fauna and flora

### BASKETBALL COURT

Sponsored basketball rims

### AREA BEAUTIFICATION: VERGES AND TREES

Beautified roundabout in partnership  
Planted shade trees and installed benches  
Demolished dilapidated building

Built new cabana  
Cut verges and replanted trees  
Cleaned the surrounding area



### Naima Nixon Our Future



"The keyword to moving forward is sustainability. We must act responsibly towards our society, economy and environment. Only if we focus on those pillars will our future be bright."

### Ashford Ferguson Jr. Become Involved



"The young people of Exuma must be engaged in the process of restoring George Town. It is for our future."





## PHASE II: WHAT'S NEXT

### RE-ENERGIZE GEORGE TOWN

With the emphasis placed on the restoration of George Town, rebrand the capital with new logo design, signage, and print promotional material.

### DOWNTOWN BUILDING RESTORATION PROGRAM

Creation of a Downtown Building Restoration Program to incentivize structural and decorative building improvements for a restored George Town.

### LAKE VICTORIA PARK

The Lake will become a focal point for George Town, and bring with its rejuvenation, a whimsical look and feel. From romantic walks on the boardwalk to boat rowing (in partnership with Exuma Sailing Club).

### REFURBISHED LIBRARY

The library will be renovated, in collaboration with sister cities.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

We will ensure protection of the environment and sacred spaces. As Lake Elizabeth is home to an abundance of mangroves, we will ensure that pruning is carried out in an environmentally-friendly way.

### PROPER COMMUNITY NAMES

Through stakeholder participation, rename 'Bahama Sound' numbered communities with appropriate names to represent each community.

### RESTORE OLD ACCESS ROADS

There are many old roads in the heart of George Town that have become overgrown. We will restore and name these roads, as a part of the rich history.

### HISTORICAL SITES

Restore, transform and market all historical sites of George Town, thus capturing our rich heritage. This initiative will be extended to the entire island of Exuma.

**Jazell Patton**  
Youth Engagement



"Be the change you want to see in your country, because the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow."

**Basil Minns**  
Preserving Sites



"I want a protected environment for future generations. Also, the focus on historical sites is important to showcasing Exuma's rich legacy."







### **REGATTA PARK ENHANCEMENT**

As George Town is restored, Regatta Park will receive much needed rejuvenation. This fits into the overall master design, that connects with the significance and use of the site.

### **RELOCATE SCHOOL**

It is proposed that the George Town Primary School transitions out of George Town to crown land near the Navy Base. This will allow greater expansion of the school to satisfy the educational needs of the young people of Exuma.

### **SAILING MUSEUM**

With Exuma's rich sailing legacy, as well as the headquarters of the National Family Island Regatta, a Sailing Museum will be developed. We will also advocated for sailing to become the national sport of The Bahamas, as sloop sailing in a Bahamian invention.

### **HERITAGE MUSEUM OF EXUMA**

The story of the History of Exuma must be captured. This includes the significance of Pompey, the history of the Navy Base and others. A key to the development of the museum will come from international partnerships in best practices in the development of museums to create a historical 'revenue generating' experience that highlights Exuma's place in history with the slave trade, war planes, sea planes, bombs, magazines, and more.

### **NEW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Construct a new administration building in the area at the Navy Base site.

### **GEORGE TOWN FIRE STATION**

Construct a state of the art fire station with a fire truck, trained personnel and accompanying equipment to service Great Exuma.

**Victoria Marshall**  
The Good Old Days



"The community was so much together. We need to incorporate some of the things that made us who we are — This island was built on community spirit."

**Danny Strachan**  
Regatta Village/Museum



"Sailing should become the national sport of The Bahamas and boat building should be included in the school curriculum with Exuma leading the way."







## **RELOCATE PORT**

The public dock/mail boat operations is too big for the minimal Downtown George Town space. The relocation of these port operations is proposed for the original Navy Base location that will allow a proper holding area, and better organization of shipping containers.

## **INNER HARBOUR FOR YACHTING**

Although a rather costly exercise, the creation of an Inner Harbour will become a significant revenue generator for George Town. Over the years, thousands of boaters enter our waters. As there are no proper facilities for these boaters to come on shore, we are missing a valuable opportunity. The objective is to create a year-round waterfront development. This means yachtsmen coming onshore, in a newly developed, authentically Bahamian development, will inject funds into the local economy. This initiative can be a public private partnership.

## **BICYCLE LANES**

Introduce bicycle lanes to encourage international cycling.

## **PUBLIC PARKS**

Beautify and properly upkeep community parks.

## **NEW CEMETERY**

Introduce a public cemetery to Exuma.

## **EMPOWER LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Local Government must be empowered to act on behalf of communities, with more autonomy for basic infrastructural maintenance and management, specific assignments, and a budget that allows much more effective representation.

## **ENHANCE FISH FRY**

Create a tourism mecca with an improved Fish Fry experience with new and enhanced Bahamian-owned restaurants, weekly entertainment, and innovative products. With consultation from the wider Exuma community, relocate if necessary.

## **THE MUSIC CABANA**

Music Heritage to be relaunched, in conjunction with Nashville Sister Cities music project. This will provide opportunities for Exuma natives to explore music and culturally immersive opportunities with their sister city.

### **Kenneth Nixon** Town Planning



“The ‘Restore George Town’ project ties into our quest for a comprehensive, sustainable programme that greatly impacts the growth and development of Exuma Island and Cays.”

### **Nancy Bottomly** Kid’s Cove



“The plan for Kid’s Cove is a welcomed addition to the redevelopment of George Town and Regatta Village.”



## EMBRACING GROWTH

As we develop the airport and hospital as southern hubs for aviation and medical tourism, this will create demand to accommodate this population growth in residents and visitors.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** We will encourage the development of residential communities in the area behind the hospital and in the Hopper's Bay settlement. This centrally located area is a 5-minute drive from both the airport and town center.

**BOUTIQUE HOTELS:** We will promote the development of boutique hotels in the area between the airport and the town center to accommodate Exuma's anticipated growth in visitor arrivals.



## PHASE III: THE FUTURE

**AS GEORGE TOWN IS RESTORED,  
ENABLING A COMMUNITY SPIRIT,  
PRISTINE ENVIRONMENT AND  
THRIVING ECONOMY, IT IS  
WELL-POSITIONED FOR:**

**Global Connectivity:** Through sister city and people to people exchanges, Exuma will become a home-away from home for many.

**A Place for Growth:** Exuma will become a place recognized for personal growth and development.

**Quality of Life:** Exuma's quality of life will become unmatched — a great place to mix business with pleasure.

**Healthy Living:** As the medical tourism center for the region with collaborations with internationally recognized institutions, Exuma will offer the best in healthcare services.

**High-Performance:** Exuma will become the model of excellence for The Bahamas.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Through empowerment and entrepreneurial initiatives, the number of entrepreneurs in Exuma will significantly increase. This will be achieved in partnership with Team Cooper, through business workshops and mentoring programs, and other initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and Bahamian ownership.

### CREATIVE INDUSTRY

As the Home of Regatta, Exuma will become an entertainment destination for world class festivals and events — a melting pot for creatives. We will make Exuma a place where creatives can thrive!

### BLUE ECONOMY

Exuma is home to the most beautiful waters of The Bahamas, and a get-away for boaters. With the development of the Inner Harbour, and with sailing as the National Sport of The Bahamas a bustling blue economy will be achieved.

**Craig Parotti**  
Elizabeth Harbour



"The key to a restored George Town begins with how we manage Elizabeth Harbour. An active pump-out system is critical for sustained harbour development."

**Kendal McPhee**  
Community + Parks



"Empowering Local Government with the resources to adequately administer services will go a long way in beautifying George Town."



## ABOUT EXUMA PRIDE

**One People. One Purpose.**

The Exuma Pride Project is designed to have a visible impact on the island in terms of **cleanliness** and **pride**; to make Exuma Island and Cays the **model of excellence** for The Bahamas; and to deliver a comprehensive, **sustainable** program that greatly impacts the growth and development of Exuma Island and Cays. The plan was launched late 2018 and has received significant publicity and momentum. Exuma's MP, I. Chester Cooper, donated his entire 2019 member of parliament salary (\$28,000) towards the initiative.

### **Education**

- Exuma Pride Ambassador Program
- Getting the word out; public awareness; enforcement

### **Environment**

- Cleanup Projects
- Refurbishment and Maintenance

### **Sheila Moss** Member, Exuma Pride



“The work we have started on Lake Victoria Park is the beginning of great things to come. We can bring George Town back to its glory days.”

### **Cleo Turnquest** Member, Exuma Pride



“Of critical importance to a restored George Town, is the upkeep of public spaces, historical sites, and keeping the area clean and maintained.”



## PROGRAMMES

- **George Town Revitalization**
- **Exuma Yard Competition**
- **Poster + Essay Competition**
- **Exuma Best Competition; Best Yard, Best Settlement**
- **Tree Planting**
- **Removal of Derelict Vehicles, old appliances and barge (Navy Base)**
- **Painting and/or demolition of old buildings**
- **Upkeep of public spaces and historical sites**
- **Installation of proper signage**
- **Waste management and recycling**
- **Adopt-A-Programme: parks, settlements, beaches and public spaces with the support of businesses and investors**
- **Spay & Neuter**
- **Curbside Maintenance**
- **Build and maintain playgrounds**
- **Harbour Management**



**Reginald Smith**  
Chair, Exuma Pride

“It is envisioned that the revitalized George Town (Old Town) will offer a high-end experience for residents and visitors with entertainment, sight-seeing, lake-front adventures, board walk, romantic strolls, and become a focal point of the Exuma experience.

The area near the new Port [Navy Base] will become a new business community (working town), and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship and development with an increased population.”









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#team  
COOPER

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involved  
today...*

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EXUMA  
PRIDE

we are all one.



[www.exumapride.com](http://www.exumapride.com)



Exuma Pride Project



[exumapride242@gmail.com](mailto:exumapride242@gmail.com)



[www.teamcooperexuma.com](http://www.teamcooperexuma.com)



Team Cooper — Chester



Cooper

@teamcooper242



@chestercooper\_mp



[teamcooper242@gmail.com](mailto:teamcooper242@gmail.com)



242.336.3030



242.524.8587