

HOW Part 1



6 Key Strategies for Success



■ *It was OneComm leader Kory Outlaw who coined the phrase that quickly became the mantra of plan leaders - "We Support Each Other." It also became a vital strategic plank.*

If it will ever succeed, the One Community Plan will need to incorporate and punctuate evolutionary new strategies. The work of plan leaders entails more than simply leading the step-by-step implementation of Big Ideas for economic growth. They will have to become stewards of strategies that change the collective self-image and capacity of a community that has reached historic levels of fragmentation over the past six years.

It isn't that the Big Ideas encased in the new plan are so hard. The reality is, all of them are already in operation in communities across America. In some places, they are thriving. But it will take a mental leap and a concerted effort at healing our divides if we will succeed in harnessing Big Ideas here in St. Petersburg.

Following is a summary of the six strategies that dominated dialogue during the OneComm planning year.

Be Clear & Competitive About Pursuing Resources

Get over taboos & timidity about money

As it stands, African Americans create and control only 13% of the city's \$8.1 billion aggregate income, despite being 25% of the city population. Black workers earn far less than their white neighbors and black-owned businesses are far smaller (in revenue and employment). The net effect is that the city's African American community has precious few discretionary dollars to save, invest and seed innovation, and relatively little experience in pursuing and winning resources from public and private sources. Economic and systems leaders continue to invest and spend the overwhelming share of their resources with white-led organizations.

Keys to Success:

- Become competitive about pursuing opportunities and resources
- Be realistic about how resources will be raised, won and secured
- Build capacity to position ourselves and others for success
- Know that committed people will need to organize and access large sums of money in order to reach transformative levels of impact for the economy of South St. Petersburg

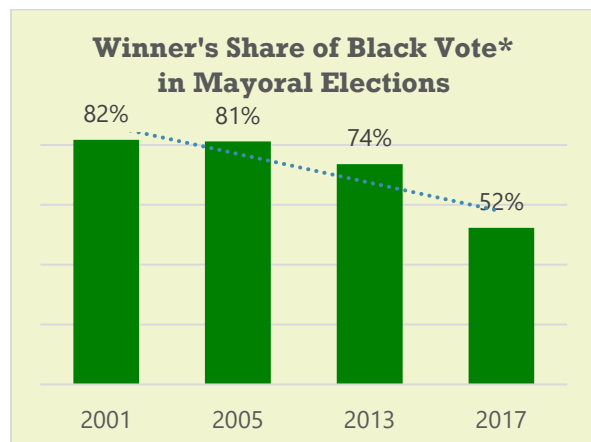
Support Each Other

Battle the perception & reality of community fragmentation

St. Pete's African American community reached historic levels of fragmentation in 2017 after a decade of simmering tensions, and six decades of mostly unrequited hope for transformative change.

One has only to check social media to see an almost constant wave of contentious comments between and about black community leaders.

But the divide shows up in data as well. Voting data offer the clearest case. The 2017 Mayoral election was the first time in recent history (and possibly ever) that St. Petersburg's black vote was split down the middle. Following a heated race that pit family and friends on opposite sides, 52% of voters in the city's majority black precincts voted for incumbent Mayor Rick Kriseman, while 48% voted for former Mayor Rick Baker.



**Precincts where black voters cast a majority of votes*

The split wasn't solely due to voters' loyalty or preference for one man over the other; the divide was socioeconomic and ideological as well. Lower-income and older African Americans favored Baker, while moderate, middle and upper-income blacks backed Kriseman in greater numbers, as did younger African Americans. And neither group ruled the day; 2017 was the first year on record when St. Pete's black voters did not vote in a bloc to help decide the city's next mayor.

The months leading to the election saw a brutal onslaught of online insults and arguments, combined with grassroots acts of sabotage and face-to-face confrontations.

It was in the wake of that election when the OneComm planning year took flight. Within weeks of its start, OneComm leader Kory Outlaw coined the line that would become the hashtag sign-off in team communications: **#WeSupportEachOther**.

OneComm stakeholders readily seized the new mantra as an anecdote to the culture of division in black St. Petersburg.

In the decade ahead, the strategy of mutual support will be more important than ever.

Keys to Success:

- Create connected networks of like-minded people and be intentional about nurturing the connection
- Build mentoring, coaching and peer support elements into OneComm plan implementation
- Prioritize the creation of positive media
- Get active with and lend support to organizations doing good things

Flip the Script

Change the narrative - stop speaking failure; celebrate and promote success

The prevailing media image of African Americans in St. Pete is tarnished by false perceptions of ubiquitous failure. Stories of crime and

incarceration, school failure, health crises and economic impotence far outnumber the positive images and stories coursing through local media.

The New Image News project (one of the OneComm 19 Big Ideas) was conceived to help change the prevailing negative media image of South St. Petersburg by creating, airing and promoting media products such as TV commercials showcasing the many people who are charting successes in the community – but whose successes are not widely known or celebrated.

The project would have the added benefit of using community businesses for production of content (such as interviews on social media).



Founders of the New Image News project and OneComm Plan Development Committee members Bro John Muhammad, Jabaar Edmond and Bruce Green (April 30, 2019 at VISIONDISTRICT EXPO)

Keys to Success:

- Leverage media and communications strategies as equally important to programmatic interventions
- Support black media collaborations that increase the volume of quality and positive media
- Become active in raising awareness among mainstream media outlets, and working to influence their coverage of the community
- Begin to track and celebrate successes; tell the stories of victory and progress

Leverage our Strengths; Build From Where We Are

Harness our limited capacity, leverage our social and financial capital and watch results begin to snowball

Though race-based and place-based gaps remain in every facet of life in St. Petersburg, city leaders and residents have made monumental progress in paving the way for change. More and more people are working together to create the policies, programs and initiatives that are moving the needle. Opportunities are ripe. If we are to “seize” the day, **social capital** will be key.

“The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair.”

-Proverbs 20:20 NASB

Keys to Success:

- Engage the magic combination of young and elder leaders, the former for their energy and as-yet-unbridled optimism; the latter for their experience and influence
- Be realistic about what it will take to alter our economic trajectory
- Aggressively build from where we are, brick-by-brick
- Start small, secure victories, repeat
- Share successes broadly

Build the Apparatus of Equity

Erect the programmatic interventions & organized approaches that are needed to achieve equity

Diverse city leaders have spent six productive years building the framework to one day achieve economic equity in St. Petersburg. As one prominent recent example, Unite Pinellas has

made a strong start in raising awareness about pervasive race-based gaps in Pinellas County, while the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg has become a catalytic leader in equity investments (e.g., with the Grow Smarter Initiative, Unite Pinellas, and The 2020 Plan).

The next strategic focus must be to construct the opportunity pathways and programmatic interventions that are needed to grow the “bank accounts, paychecks and balance sheets” of the City’s black and brown residents.

While other cities across America have embraced leading edge program models with great success, we as a city have only just begun to build the programmatic apparatus for accelerating progress.

Examples of program types that are largely absent from South St. Petersburg’s landscape (at least until very recently) include:

- Supplier Diversity & Inclusion Programs
- Minority Business Accelerators
- Equity Access Initiatives
- Incubator & Shared Space Development
- Real Estate Investment Collaboratives
- Pooled Equity Initiatives
- Community Development Corporations



Dr. Cynthia Johnson (center), Director of Florida SBDC at Pinellas County Economic Development with Cassius Butts (left), former regional administrator for 11 states with the U.S. SBA and Troy Taylor (right), owner and CEO of a Coca-Cola distributorship with \$12 billion in revenue in 2017).

The OneComm Plan incorporates leading examples and proven partners into the matrix of

implementation priorities. Several key leaders of the plan have hands-on experience implementing best practice models, including Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Ernest Coney, Winston Johnson, Nikki Capehart, Albert Lee, Watson Haynes, and Gypsy Gallardo.

Keys to Success:

- Replicate models that have worked in similar communities
- Continue learning from others and continue relationship with Durham contacts

Stick With It! Keep Going

Break the cycle of start and stop; keep moving and growing

A consistent message from community feedback is that it will be crucial to “keep moving forward!” The community has witnessed too many abandoned and unfinished plans and worse – plans that never took shape or took flight.

“It isn’t enough to create a plan. Black St. Pete needs sustained, strategic action to see real economic growth. The question is ‘how will we become a force to be reckoned with?’”

- Pastor Louis Murphy, Sr., OneComm Planning Leader

Keys to Success:

- Maintain consistent and organized work effort, even in the face of setbacks and fading enthusiasm
- Be realistic about the hard work and time (months and years) needed for ideas to bear fruit
- Track and transparently report victories, defeats, progress and setbacks