Queens is a great place to work, raise a family and do business!

INTRODUCTION

Timeline: In June 2011, (a year before Resolute announced the closure of the Bowater Mersey operations), during the Region of Queens Municipality's Committee of the Whole Meeting, a "Revitalization" committee was formed which consisted of the Mayor, three councillors and Economic Development staff. On July 7th, 2011 the terms of reference were discussed, along with the need to review previous studies and the suggestion to expand the discussion to include the South Queens Chamber of Commerce. Over the next few months the **partnership** between these two entities was created, ideas were shared and previous reports were studied. The first meeting was on November 23rd, 2011. At this meeting it was decided that a joint group with two representatives from each organization would form an action committee to work on ideas for revitalization.

Steering Committee Formed: After the November 23rd meeting the Queens Revitalization Steering Committee met bi-weekly (and on occasions, weekly), to review various previous studies from Queens and further afield, and narrowed down our focus to the Three Pillar Attraction Strategy concept based on our wealth of assets in these areas – **Health & Wellness, Academic Research & Development** and **Arts & Culture.**

Community Buy-In: Having received the support of Council and the South Queens Chamber of Commerce Board in early June 2012, it was presented to a wider community audience, including representatives from the North Queens Board of Trade, at the Chamber's Annual General Meeting on June 25, 2012 (a week after the Bowater Mersey closure announcement). From this the Steering Committee was encouraged to forge ahead during the summer months. An official presentation was made to the North Queens Board of Trade in early September 2012. Logistical issues made it challenging for a representative from the North Queens Board of Trade to attend the daytime meetings, but they were provided with monthly updates on progress.

Focus Groups: Between July 18th & August 1st, 2012 a series of three Focus Groups, involving key individuals from all over Queens County, were held, each to discuss a different Pillar, as a planning tool for large stakeholder events in the fall and to gain a better understanding of the extent of activity in each pillar.

Funding Support from Province: Funding was received from both the Region of Queens Municipality and Nova Scotia Economic & Rural Development & Tourism, in order to continue to build momentum on this grass roots initiative, which has been **community-driven.**

Stakeholders' Meetings: In September, three Stakeholders' Meetings were held on each Pillar, facilitated by Donna Hatt, to broaden the discussion with a wider audience, and gain agreement on actions that the community could undertake in the short term to build capacity. Participants voted on the range of actions to determine the top three in each pillar, based on opportunities that could be actioned immediately. At the end people came forward and offered to be part of an Action Team.

Consultants Hired: After seeking proposals, DAA Stratégies were selected as experts in economic development to take the community's ideas, evaluate them based on their capacity to grow our local economy, giving consideration to the financial and human resources available to us. The Attraction Strategy for Queens being presented on February 13th, 2013 is the result of the consultants making visits to the community, hosting two public meetings (one in North Queens and one in South Queens) and taking **all** the community input for consideration, working with the Steering Committee's guidance and feedback to create the report.

PROCESS USED BY CONSULTANTS

DAA then took all the community output, plus copies of relevant previous studies on the area and validated our suggested actions. In the process they have provided us with tools which we can utilize for any proposed actions/ideas that are suggested, in order to determine whether they have the 'legs' to go forward. This includes whether there is a local champion for the idea, who can articulate the benefits of the idea to potential developers and investors. The process they have provided gives us the framework for economic development that is focused and measurable. The Champion/Promoter/Investor approach brings a new perspective to how we conduct economic development. This approach ensures that economic opportunities identified by the community are driven forward by the community. During the consultation process, members of the community identified themselves as possible 'Champions' for certain action items. This process ensures that each opportunity has community support, a 'Champion' to assist the 'Promoter' in navigating through the process and making local introductions which will further the chances of success of each action. It also provides us with a framework within which to manage future opportunities identified by the community and evaluate the success of those already underway.

In addition, they have provided some suggestions on what needs to be put in place to monitor the process and communicate back to the community on progress made.

ACTIONS

The following are the brief details of each proposed action:

General:

- Implement a registry to track progress on actions.
- Implement a system to manage leads and communication with those leads.

Health & Wellness:

- Extend the collaborative care model that has been used to attract physicians to other medical professions, e.g. nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, etc.
- Conduct a facility feasibility study for an assisted living project to be developed as part of an aging-in-place campus.
- Build Queens County's capacity to promote Health and Wellness, initially through a community survey.

Academic Research & Development:

- Define and document the scope, sites, locations, natural assets, facilities and research projects associated with the Biosphere, with a view to creating a one-stop shop to promote our research facilities and experience to potential users.
- Undertake research into commercialization opportunities associated with, for example, haskap berries. This process could also be applied to other natural products, e.g. seaweed, mushrooms, green crab, etc. to create secondary processing opportunities in food, pharmaceutical, bioscience, etc.
- Promote the North Queens Innovation Centre concept to potential tenants and partners.

Arts & Culture:

- Consider all options to expand and promote Queens County's niche arts festivals, e.g. Liverpool International Theatre Festival, Hank Snow Tribute, Liverpool Ukulele Ceilidh and Port Medway Readers' Festival.
- Build, promote and animate a joint virtual presence for arts & culture in Queens.
- Promote the use of the Liverpool waterfront for festivals and events.

MARKETING PLAN

The following suggestions were made for an overall Marketing Plan for Queens:

- Initiate a Branding Process for Queens.
- Determine our Unique Selling Point(s).
- Implement a Social Media Strategy.
- Develop a one-pager for stakeholders indicating "Reasons to live, play and work in Queens".
- Encourage businesses to incorporate the visual identity in their advertising.
- Research the "Queens Diaspora" and utilize their contact network for potential actions.

CONCLUSION

The Steering Committee would like to thank the community for their buy-in, engagement in the process so far and for their patience while this phase has been underway.

By far, the most valuable resource we have at our disposal is our community. Throughout this process it has been the community's residents, leaders, and thinkers who have developed a series of goals made clear through their passion, their expertise, and their ideas. It is obvious the community cares about the future of Queens and there is a collective desire to not only contribute ideas, but also to roll up sleeves and work to achieve growth. The hard work is about to begin and we look forward to working with you to mobilize the action teams and set them to work on the various initiatives.

To find the downloadable version of the full report, please visit:
http://www.regionofqueens.com/3pillars/

Sincerely,

Queens Revitalization Steering Committee

Joanne Veinotte (Chair)
Monica Howard
Sheldon Brannen (former Councillor)
John Horton
Jill Cruikshank
Phaedra Charlton-Huskins
Dana Henley