

Glace Bay Revitalization Strategy

Introduction:

Glace Bay has a rich heritage, culture and social fabric. For the past one hundred years, Glace Bay's economy rested on the twin pillars of coal mining and fishing. It mined coal from the depths of the earth and from under the Atlantic Ocean. In its' history it was noted as the largest town in Canada and the site of 12 collieries. Its population peaked in 1951 at 25,586. For much of its history Glace Bay has had a positive impact on the economy of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and Canada. For over 100 years, coal represented one of the largest revenue sources for Nova Scotia and Glace Bay played a significant part in this revenue. It was this vibrant economy, along with the natural beauty of the area that was key factors in attracting men like Bell and Marconi to the Island.

The region remembers a past filled with the faces of many cultures, busy streets, successful merchants and a vibrant social scene. Around the turn of the last century Glace Bay's photography displays a spirited town, with beautiful architecture and vital enterprises. But times change and memories fade and the large contributions of Glace Bay have mostly been forgotten.

With the onset in the mid 1990's of the demise of the coal and steel industries plus the dramatic reductions in fishing quotas Glace Bay's future came into question. Many residents have had to leave the area for employment. Glace Bay's downtown core deteriorated, businesses closed, population declined (2011 census – 19,076) and apathy began to set in. The younger generation in the community has grown up in a time of continuous decline. The spirit, however, that has been passed from generation to generation doesn't recognize the term "quit".

Glace Bay still has a lot to offer. It is home to the Savoy Theater, the cultural center of Cape Breton Island, as well as to one of the largest municipal park complexes on the Island- Renwick Brook and Queen Elizabeth Park. The Cape Breton Miner's Museum static displays and underground mine tour as well as Parks Canada Marconi Museum play a pivotal role in attracting tourist to the island. Other significant assets include Bayplex (an arena/entertainment complex), South Street Ball Park, Convergys Call Center employing hundreds of employees with plans to increase its work force, our 116 year old Historic former Town Hall now the Glace Bay Heritage Museum, the Cape Breton Regional Police Service, the UNIA Cultural Museum representing the history of African Canadians in Cape Breton and a renewed entrepreneurial spirit among Glace Bay residents.

The most recent revitalization plan for the Glace Bay and Area was prepared in 2002, over fourteen years ago. Although some key recommendations regarding infrastructure enhancements and the implementation of a facade program were successfully implemented and embraced by the entire community, many other recommendations were never pursued and many are now obsolete.

It is Time Now Again - to ignite that generational spirit that doesn't recognize the term "quit" and define our preferred future!

It is with this spirit and vision that the Cape Breton Regional Municipality wishes to develop a comprehensive Glace Bay Revitalization Strategy Plan. This strategy becomes the blueprint for immediate action.

STRUCTURE OF THE GLACE BAY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

VISION, GOALS AND PRINCIPLES:

Comprehensive statement of where Glace Bay needs to head and the significant new directions to take.

PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (PSD):

The main directions to take in order to:

- Achieve the Vision
- Improve Standards
- Improve Competitiveness

GOALS:

What the PSD are expected to achieve.

TASKS:

Major undertakings required to achieve the goals of each PSD.

OBJECTIVES:

Each task must reach the identified target

Activities

Actions that must be undertaken in each task if the objectives are to be met.

The Plan would be outlined as follows:

Background and Introduction

Indicated in this section would be the background information, need for the Revitalization Strategy, the study's goals and objectives, key issues,

Approach and Methodology

Contains the approach, methodology and work plan.

Existing Conditions Review

Entails an examination of existing and potential future assets of the Glace Bay region, particularly those that may influence development of the community as a whole. With this analysis, the Revitalization Team can define development areas where the efforts should be focused.

Development of a Marketing and Communications Plan

Development of a broad-based marketing plan and communications strategy is critical in pursuing the goals and objectives of the revitalization program. It will demonstrate that the plan must be based in reality, on a thorough understanding of where we start and where we are going. It will require consensus forged with a common purpose and direction that a plan provides.

Elements of the Revitalization Plan

To contain the rationale/vision statement/plan objectives/any boundary definitions/community image/architectural branding and key elements of the revitalization Plan.

Implementation of the Strategy and Costs

Identifies long- term strategy/new planning tools/redevelopment strategy/construction phasing/cost estimates.

Funding Program Recommendations

To identify possible funding partners, their resources and programs.

Economic Impact

The preparation of the economic impact for the Glace Bay Revitalization Plan. This consists of measuring the direct, indirect and induced impacts of the construction and operational phase of the phase.

The overall objective is to establish Glace Bay as a vibrant community within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality that attracts new business, encourages local entrepreneurship, new residents and visitors in a sustainable manner.