

# **Glace Bay Revitalization Plan**

## ***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 displayed 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 have 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. Examples of 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; the 116 year old historic former Town Hall known now as 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.

Downtown Glace Bay has been experiencing signs of decline in spite of its many assets. There are fewer businesses and except for a few, the business infrastructure on Main Street has for the most disappeared. Commercial Street along with the remaining business district has become tired with little progress and a deteriorating customer base.

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 Glace Bay's preferred future!* It is with this spirit and vision that the Cape Breton Regional Municipality wishes to develop a comprehensive Glace Bay Revitalization Plan. This plan will become the blueprint for immediate action.

### ***Proposed Structure***

As mentioned, the last update for Glace Bay was done in 2002 and was based on Principal Strategic Directions with the overall objective 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.

Currently working with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Business Cape Breton is looking at exploring a partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia to engage in the development of a Glace Bay Revitalization Plan. This direction would provide Glace Bay the opportunity to have a pivotal impact on its community resulting in an overall economic contribution to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

Business Cape Breton will work with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality's Economic Development Office, and a Glace Bay Working Committee to develop and flush out the Terms of Reference for the development of the Glace Bay Revitalization Plan.

### ***Project Time Period***

Start Date: November 1, 2016

Completion Date: May 31, 2017

### ***Funding Request***

Amount requested: \$225,000

These funds will cover Business Cape Breton's operational costs. Inclusive in the amount of \$225,000 as well will be the cost to engage a consultant to develop the Glace Bay Revitalization Plan.

### ***Notes:***

Business Cape Breton will work with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality by managing this project. Their responsibilities will include facilitation of the process, developing Terms of References (Request for Proposal) and evaluation process, working with Glace Bay Working Committee, overseeing work of the consultant, providing communications among all partners. These responsibilities are not to be determined all inclusive.