

# Jamaica, Queens | Downtown Revitalization Initiative

## Local Planning Committee Meeting #1

Wednesday, November 9 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### Meeting Overview

The meeting began with a welcome address from District Borough President Melinda Katz. Following introductions, the consultant team presented information on the following: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI); Project Context and Goals; Work Plan; and the Community Engagement Strategy. Please view the full PowerPoint presentation by clicking [here](#) for more details.

After the presentation, members from the Local Community Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee, and the public all participated in a discussion. The following provides an overview of key topics that were discussed.

### Key Discussion Topics

#### *Community Housing and Target Demographics*

- Importance of housing, especially how vulnerable current residents might be of getting priced out of the area when Jamaica improves.
  - Concerns that artists will be priced out of neighborhood
  - Needs to be a balance between new residents and existing residents
  - Preserving diversity and multiculturalism is a priority
- Young people who grow up in the area often end up moving to other areas of the city; how can Jamaica become more attractive to this demographic (i.e. millennials?)
  - Suggestion to reach out to Zara Realty Company
  - Potential for micro-units
  - “Live, Work, Play”
    - Example of Astoria
- Potential to improve Jamaica for older demographic as well, who often have many of the same needs as millennials (“age in place”)

#### *Transportation*

- Focus on improving the natural flow and movement within the area for all (autos, public transportation, school kids, etc.); Improve multimodality
- Light rail proposals should consider extending the line further to connect additional communities; possibility of freight should also be considered

#### *Employment*

- Jamaica needs to attract opportunities for quality careers (not just jobs)
  - How can this project help attract companies such as Google?
- Ideas for consideration:
  - Existing plans to transform area into ‘Technology Corridor’
  - Focus on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math)
  - Manufacturing on the periphery, allowing Jamaica residents to walk to work

- Life sciences technology industry as well as workforce development for veterans
- Potential to set up processes that allow businesses to share resources (e.g. professional services, supplies, etc.) to enjoy efficiencies of larger businesses
- Possibility of offering employer incentives to consider Jamaica residents first when hiring

#### *Technology*

- Technology should be integrated throughout all spectrums of this project, including the arts
- Discussion that technology is not a single industry sector but cuts across industries
- Strong need for high-speed broadband internet in the area, without which tech companies cannot operate and will not locate
  - Local organizations have begun to work with Verizon
- Sutphin Boulevard BID and Jamaica Center BID
  - Have a 5-year plan around technology
- York College is a START-UP NY campus, which gives local businesses tax breaks. The College has incubator efforts underway

#### *Branding*

- Branding is the key; Jamaica needs a distinct identity, like Brooklyn, to attract new residents, businesses, and tourists
- Improve tourism but maintain balance between needs of tourists and community (refer to Jamaica NOW)
- Branding ideas:
  - Arts District
  - Industrial Improvement District
  - Healthy Community
  - Technology Corridor

#### *Parks and Open Space*

- Rufus King Park exists but needs additional open space
- Need programming in existing open space to bring out the community and activate downtown

#### *Education and Schools*

- An effort should be made to work with the education system with a focus on kids who are still in school but have a high risk of dropping out

#### *Project Process and Questions*

- Emphasis on the project timeline
  - Efforts should be made to ensure the results of this effort will still be useful in 5-10 years
- An attendee asked whether selected projects can be both short- and long-term. In response, the consultant team explained that there is no limitation as to when a project must be implemented.
- RPA representative Pierina Ana Sanchez offered to help play a coordinating role among key Jamaica entities.

## Outreach Tools

The following is a summary of suggestions that were received during this meeting. Additional research will be conducted to supplement this list.

Name	Outreach Type	Contact	Notes
Building Community Capacity/ NYC DCA		Rosemary Reyes*	Organization is doing similar research and surveys – opportunity to combine efforts
Building Community Capacity/ NYC DCA	Social media	Rosemary Reyes*	
BIDs	Website Social media		
Centro Hispaño Cuzcatlan Inc.		Greg Mays*	
Community Board 12	E-mail newsletter/ blast		
Elected officials (including State Senator Comrie)	E-mail newsletter/ blast		
Jamaica311.com	Blog	Greg Mays*	
Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning	Social Media	Cathy Hung*	Facebook
Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning	E-mail newsletter/ blast	Cathy Hung*	
Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning	Potential meeting coordination	Cathy Hung*	Public cultural programs for in-person engagement
Jamaica YMCA	Potential meeting coordination	Cedric Drew*	Standing meetings and forums would allow for outreach to families
Local press and radio NYC Minority Business Council		Vedesh Persaud*	
Queens Federation of Churches			
Queens Library	Potential meeting coordination	Dennis Walcott*	Tables set up to distribute information and collect feedback.
York College	Student App	Marcia Keizs*; Earl Simons from Communications	
York College	Website	Marcia Keizs*; Earl Simons from Communications	
York College	Brochure	Marcia Keizs*	Continuing Education brochure (3X distribution/year, 60,000 contacts).

\*indicates member of the Local Planning Committee