THE JAMAICA NOW ACTION PLAN

Now is the time to harness the interest of the community, City, and Queens Borough President to set forth an ambitious agenda for a diverse, vibrant, and accessible community around one of our City’s great central business districts and inter-modal transportation hubs – Jamaica, Queens.

The City has made significant investments in recent years to lay the groundwork for increased growth and economic opportunity in Jamaica, including the investment of $1.9 billion in the construction of the AirTrain to JFK Airport in 2003 and the rezoning of 368 blocks of the downtown core in 2007. However, high unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and limited supportive programs have contributed to a decline in job growth and real estate activity over the last decade, precluding Jamaica from realizing the potential of these investments.

The Jamaica Now Action Plan seeks to address these challenges by using Jamaica’s strengths as a dynamic commercial, cultural, and arts hub to increase quality jobs and small business support, promote commercial growth and economic development, and improve livability. The strategic actions proposed in the Plan are the product of a nine-month community engagement process and incorporate recommendations from more than 30 meetings and two public conferences with Jamaica residents, businesses, community leaders, and elected officials.

Today, new housing, retail, and commercial projects are underway and estimated to produce approximately 3,000 housing units, 500,000 SF of retail space, and 800 hotel rooms over the next five years. The time is right to leverage this momentum and help Jamaica thrive as an attractive and affordable destination to live, work, shop, and play.

THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Jamaica Action Plan study area encompasses the neighborhoods in and around the heart of the downtown, including Jamaica Estates, Hollis, St. Albans, Addisleigh Park, South Jamaica, and others. Downtown Jamaica is characterized by a mixture of residential, commercial, retail, and light industrial uses. Neighborhoods outside of the downtown are predominantly residential with 1- and 2-family homes and some lower-density multifamily buildings containing ground-floor retail establishments along prime commercial corridors.

VISION FOR JAMAICA

Partnerships among the City, Queens Borough President, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, Regional Plan Association, York College, community, and private sector will build upon existing community assets to enhance Jamaica as a diverse and vibrant destination that includes:

- Increased housing options for residents at diverse income levels
- Improved transportation connections and attractive public spaces and streetscapes
- Vibrant commercial districts that showcase Jamaica’s identity as a fashion, arts and cultural hub
- Strong educational and community resources for youth and young professionals
- A robust economy providing quality jobs for both residents and entrepreneurs

TIMELINE AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

**FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF JAMAICA CONFERENCE**
June 24, 2014
200+ participants & breakout sessions

**JAMAICA PLANNING INITIATIVE CONFERENCE**
November 22, 2013
150+ Participants & workshop sessions

**INTER AGENCY COORDINATION**
October – January 2015
A series of meetings with City and State entities to evaluate and share existing and future commitments to Jamaica.

**RELEASE OF ACTION PLAN**
February 2015
Final implementation process

**COMPLETE SHORT TERM GOALS**
0-3 years

**COMPLETE MEDIUM TERM GOALS**
3-5 years

**COMPLETE LONG TERM GOALS**
5+ years

**EXTENSIVE OUTREACH**
July-October 2014
12 Issue-based Roundtables
Dozens of stakeholder meetings
Issue-based mailings

**STUDY AREA AND EXISTING ASSETS**

JAMAICA SNAPSHOTS

- Home to 150,000+ residents
- Provides employment to 60,000+ workers
- Served by:
  - 50+ city and regional bus lines
  - 4 subway lines, with 115,000+ daily riders
  - 10 Long Island Rail Road lines with 200,000+ daily commuters
  - AirTrain to JFK International Airport, carrying 15,000+ daily riders
- Jamaica is also a vibrant center for arts, culture, and commerce. Once home to many legendary musicians, the community has a growing reputation as a venue for theater, musical and dance performances, and fashion designers. The neighborhood boasts more than a dozen cultural institutions and hosts hundreds of festivals, concerts, and live performances every year, and has four Business Improvement Districts representing more than 800 businesses. Multiple large anchor institutions such as the United States Food & Drug Administration’s Northeast Regional Laboratory, Queens Hospital Center, Jamaica Hospital, Queens County Family and Civil Courts, and York College of the City University of New York are all located near downtown Jamaica.
INCREASE QUALITY JOBS AND SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Steadily drive economic growth in Jamaica by connecting workers to high growth industries and quality employers, enhancing and expanding youth and adult training programs, and supporting existing businesses and budding entrepreneurs.

**Actions + Lead Partners**

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<tr>
<td>Launch a program to train and jump start the next generation of Jamaica entrepreneurs and food businesses (EDC)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand JobNet and existing youth programs to support additional afterschool job preparation and placement activities (DYCD, QbPO)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect residents to quality job opportunities through New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (NYACH) (SBS)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming at Thomas Edison High School by increasing access to work-based learning for students and improving partnerships with businesses (DOE, SBS)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a working group with local workforce providers, employers, and local academic institutions to identify opportunities to provide stronger, industry-linked skills training and workforce development programs that align with the City’s Career Pathways framework (SBS, CUNY, EDC)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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**Promote Commercial Growth and Economic Development**

Leverage existing assets to spur the local economy and build a more dynamic neighborhood identity by revitalizing commercial corridors, bolstering Jamaica’s cultural district, and strengthening York College’s role as a downtown anchor.

**Actions + Lead Partners**

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<td>Fund redesigns of store fronts for local businesses on Sutphin Blvd and release a Business Guide for Hillside Ave and other key corridors (SBS)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively explore unification of downtown Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to strengthen marketing, programs, and service delivery (SBS, QbPO)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish the Jamaica Arts Alliance to better strengthen connections between artists and existing arts and culture institutions (QbPO)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund a $250,000 study to determine the cost and scope of Jamaica Avenue streetscape improvements (DOT)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide technical assistance to support York College’s effort to develop underutilized properties through the START-UP NY Program (EDC, DCP, City Hall)</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage absentee property owners to activate vacant and derelict sites in Jamaica’s downtown core with new housing and economic activity (EDC, HPD, DCP)</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
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Increasing coordination and partnerships between key players in workforce development will help ensure that the local workforce is equipped with skills that match the needs of employers.

Increasing access to skills training will provide low-income residents with pathways to job opportunities with higher wages and better career potential.

Cross-marketing and collaboration will increase the capacity of local organizations to promote programs, develop new large-scale events, seek resources for local artists, and design and fund public art projects highlighting Jamaica’s cultural legacy.

Additional seating, increased plantings, and improved pedestrian circulation will create a more walkable, attractive, and inviting downtown.
**IMPROVE LIVABILITY**

Improve quality of life for residents and visitors alike through targeted investments in transportation, health and safety, parks and open space, and affordable and mixed-income housing.

**ACTIONS + [LEAD PARTNERS]**

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<td>Develop a mixed-income and mixed-use project at the former NYPD garage on 168th St (EDC, HPD)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<td>Install WalkNYC directional maps and obtain funding to study and develop a strategic transportation plan with multi-modal transit options in the downtown core (DOT, MTA, TLC)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<td>Implement a new Select Bus Service Route from Jamaica to Flushing and study service needs on additional high-demand corridors (DOT, MTA)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<td>Connect homeowners, tenants, and property owners to educational programs, such as foreclosure counseling and financial literacy, through HPD’s Public Outreach and Education unit (HPD)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund and install additional NYPD surveillance cameras to improve safety in high-traffic corridors (QBPO, NYPD)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide increased resources and assistance to community partners to reduce health risks related to cardiovascular disease (DOHMH)</td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance Rufus King Park to accommodate improved usage and programming and identify funding to create and implement community-sourced designs to upgrade Brinkerhoff Mall and other parks (DPR)</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete the Station Plaza project to improve safety and traffic circulation on Archer Ave and Sutphin Blvd (EDC, DOT)</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
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<td>Construct new water mains and relieve constraints in the existing sewer network to accommodate demand for new development (DEP, DOC)</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
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Illustrative examples of ideas discussed by community participants at the Jamaica Planning Initiative charrette sessions on improving transit connections, safety, and open spaces to enhance livability and activate street life throughout the downtown.
IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The 21 strategic actions outlined in the Jamaica Now Action Plan will guide catalytic investments for the revitalization and growth of Jamaica as a thriving destination. Sixteen of these actions will be launched and implemented in the next 3 years, providing immediate and ongoing service improvements in the community.

In support of the Jamaica Now Action Plan, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz will create a council of Jamaica stakeholders to provide oversight and evaluation of the implementation process. This effort will ensure the sustained growth of Jamaica as a mixed-income neighborhood with vibrant commercial corridors, inviting public spaces, improved transit networks, and a diverse economy providing quality jobs for local residents.

TO LEARN MORE

Visit our website  www.nyc.gov/jamaicanow
Email  jamaicanow@cityhall.nyc.gov

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the development of the Jamaica Now Action Plan:

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- Hon. David Weprin, NYS Assembly
- Hon. Michele Titus, NYS Assembly
- Hon. Vivian Cook, NYS Assembly
- Hon. William Scarborough, NYS Assembly
- Hon. Donovan Richards Jr., NYC Council
- Hon. I. Daneek Miller, NYC Council
- Hon. Mark Weprin, NYC Council
- Hon. Rory Lancman, NYC Council
- Queens Community Board 8
- Queens Community Board 12
- Queens Community Board 13
- A Better Jamaica
- A Better Way Family & Community Center
- Addisleigh Park Civic Organization
- Alliance of South Asian American Laborers
- America Works
- Antioch Baptist Church
- Brinkerhoff Action Association, Inc.
- Center for Integration & Advancement for New Americans
- Center for New York City Neighborhoods
- Chhaya Community Development Corporation
- Citizens Housing & Planning Council
- Community Healthcare Network of New York City
- Cultural Collaborative Jamaica
- Damian Family Care Center
- Edge School of the Arts
- Exploring the Metropolis
- Farmers Boulevard Community Development Corporation
- First Presbyterian Church In Jamaica
- Fortune Society
- Goodwill Industries of Greater NY & Northern NJ
- Greater Allen Development Corporation
- Greater Triangular Civic Association
- Indo Caribbean Alliance
- Jamaica Center Business Improvement District
- Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning
- Jamaica Hospital
- Jamaica Muslim Center
- Jamaica Performing Arts Center
- Jamaica YMCA
- King Manor
- LaGuardia Community College Adult & Continuing Education
- Mutual Housing Association of New York
- Neighborhood Housing Services Jamaica
- New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare
- Queens College
- Queens Council on the Arts
- Queens Economic Development Corporation
- Queens Hospital
- Queens Legal Services
- Queens Library
- Queens Workforce1 Center
- Self Help
- Sikh Cultural Society
- Sunnyside Community Services, Inc.
- Sutphin Boulevard Business Improvement District
- The 165th Street Business Improvement District
- The 180th Street Business Improvement District
- The Jamaica Young Professionals
- The Jamaica Youth Leaders
- The Tate Group
- Upwardly Global

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