Q2030
A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN
Cool • Creative • Connected • Prosperous

June 30, 2016
Contents

FROM THE TRI-CHAIRS ................................................................. 3
WHAT IS Q2030?........................................................................... 4
Q2030 Process .............................................................................. 4
  Volunteer Leadership .................................................................. 4
  Community Input ....................................................................... 5
  What the community said: Embrace shared principles ............... 5
  The Big Lessons ....................................................................... 5
  Bringing the plan to life ........................................................... 6
  Key Initiatives .......................................................................... 6
Q2030: WHO WILL DO IT? ........................................................ 6
  Community ............................................................................. 6
  Delegates .............................................................................. 6
  Advisory Board ..................................................................... 6
  Steering Committee ................................................................ 7
  Priority Workgroups; Champions, Loaned Experts ................. 7
Q2030: HOW WE’LL DO IT ................................................................ 7
  Your Organization ................................................................... 7
  You (personally) .................................................................... 8
  Using the Brand ..................................................................... 8
  To Start a Workgroup ............................................................. 8
Q2030: WHY IT MATTERS ............................................................ 9
  Talent ................................................................................... 9
  Economic Opportunity............................................................ 9
  Community Satisfaction .......................................................... 9
  Backbone Support .................................................................. 9
Cool Places ................................................................................. 10
  - MISSISSIPPI RIVER .............................................................. 10
  - CULTURAL AMMENITIES .................................................. 10
  - DOWNTOWNS .................................................................... 11
  - NEIGHBORHOODS ........................................................... 11
  - SIGNATURE EVENTS .......................................................... 12
  - RECREATION .................................................................... 12
  - NON-TRADITIONAL FORUMS .......................................... 12
Creative People .......................................................................... 13
  - CRADLE THROUGH CAREER ............................................. 13
  - 21st Century Workforce Skills ............................................ 13
- WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ........................................................................................................... 14
- TALENT MARKETING AND ATTRACTION ................................................................................ 14
- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ..................................................................................................... 15
- HEALTHY PEOPLE ....................................................................................................................... 15

Connected Region .......................................................................................................................... 16
- REGIONAL ATTITUDES AND ENGAGEMENT ......................................................................... 16
- COMMUNITY COLLABORATION ................................................................................................. 16
- INTRA-REGIONAL MOBILITY ....................................................................................................... 17

Prosperous Economy ......................................................................................................................... 18
- CATALYSTS: Manufacturing Innovation Hub, RI Arsenal, I-74 Gateway ...................................... 18
- COMPETITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE ............................................................................................. 18
- RETENTION AND EXPANSION ................................................................................................. 19
- ENTREPRENUERAL ECOSYSTEM ............................................................................................ 19
- RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ................................................................................................. 20
- POLICY AND ADVOCACY .......................................................................................................... 20
- TARGETED MARKETING ........................................................................................................... 20
FROM THE TRI-CHAIRS

Over the last two years, more than 4,000 people have contributed to the understanding of our area’s strengths and challenges. The research has been exhaustive, the voices wide-ranging and our enthusiasm for change contagious.

For the first time in the history of our region, business, government, non-profit, academic institutions and the trades have come together for the shared purpose to move our region forward economically. Like never before, Quad Citizens understand the advantage in working together to grow businesses, strengthen our cool place to live and prepare workers for the future.

What has resulted from the Q2030 process is far from your typical regional plan. This one embraces the collaborative spirit of the Quad Cities and the unique characteristics and strengths that make us an extraordinary place with rich resources and high potential.

The framework of the plan tackles ugh issues facing our bi-state region and leverages opportunities with the highest odds for transformational change. Those issues fall within four priority themes for action:

- **Cool Places**: Create strong, attractive and functional places in which we live.
- **Creative People**: Provide young people and workers with the skills and competencies to contribute to the economy and the community.
- **Connected Region**: Come together to help one another in new ways to improve efficiencies, attitudes and perceptions.
- **Prosperous Economy**: Use our strengths as a region to retain, attract and create businesses and jobs.

There is no better time for our region to be planning its future. The uncertainty in the global and national economy, Iowa and Illinois’ challenges for adequate equitable school funding and the current Illinois budget woes have created urgent calls for solutions. Communities that come together and have their priorities in line will be the ones that are most competitive.

While there are new ideas and priorities in the Q2030 Regional Action Plan, there are many ideas already underway that have the possibility for greater potential, capacity and results for our region. By leveraging our collective strength and diversity, exercising a no-excuse attitude and committing collaboration to align efforts, we can build on the work of our existing community groups and quickly multiply the impact for our region.

The Quad Cities area can be a region that models success. We now have a defined path for transforming it into a place that provides economic opportunity for all who call this area home. It’s called Q2030.

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WHAT IS Q2030?

The goal of Q2030 is to grow talent, jobs, investments and economic opportunity for all who call the Quad Cities home. It supports transformational ideas that promote alignment of people, organizations and money that will attract and keep talented people, grow new and retain jobs and enhance the financial well-being of all Quad Citizens. **All of us share interest in and responsibility for its success.**

The plan’s vision is: “The Quad Cities region is recognized globally in 2030 for growing and attracting talent and businesses, is energized by a diverse and culturally rich community, inspires innovation and embraces lifelong learning.”

We know this is a great place to live. We boast of the iconic Mississippi River, Midwest values, numerous cultural amenities and quality of life options, growing neighborhoods, a strong business community and affordable housing. We also know we have challenges that we must face, including slow population growth, disparity in the bi-state business climate, lack of retail options, rising numbers of poor, too many kids entering school unprepared to learn and not enough people equipped with 21st century workforce skills.

In 2010, the region began to come together in new, innovative ways. The Quad Cities Chamber, our first bi-state-regional economic and business organization was established and its leading investors, the Regional Opportunities Council assembled a diverse-sector of community collaborators to initiate a regional vision process. A movement was ignited when more than 145 business, government and non-profit leaders publically endorsed the idea of a unified regional vision that would inspire and influence us to think, speak and behave in new ways that would transform our region. What resulted from this movement is the Q2030 Regional Action Plan, the strongest signal yet that the Quad Cities is ready to approach our future in a more unified, collaborative and connected way.

Q2030 is designed to be inclusive and broad in its scope. It’s intentional that geographical boundaries are not defined. The plan recognizes a six-county service area that shares common traits and challenges and appreciates the advantage we have in expanding our collaborations and our shared goals.

Q2030 PROCESS

Transforming the region is an aspiring goal that needs an ambitious effort behind it. We understand to fulfill our collective vision, partners from public, private, civic, non-profit and institutional organizations must work together to make it a reality. There has never been a more competitive time in our nation’s history. By coming together around a regional plan, the Quad Cities is making a bold statement that it is ready for the challenges of today’s economic realities and taking the necessary steps to overcome them. Community and economic development is a “team sport” and relies on coordinated and collaborative participation from multiple local entities in order to be successful.

**Volunteer Leadership**

A Steering Committee of 60 community volunteers representing public and private sectors: business, government, education, non-profit and trades was created. Their job was to dive deeply into what will make the Quad Cities more competitive for jobs, investments and people.

The process started with a review of past studies, plans and reports. New research, stakeholder input and data analysis was then layered in to create an objective interpretation of the region’s key opportunities and challenges. The Steering Committee worked to identify opportunities and unmet community needs as well as to understand the big picture. The idea was not to reinvent the wheel, but rather to build upon the strong foundations already underway wherever possible.
Community Input
In order to obtain a representative sample of the region’s residents, it was important to hold focus groups and conduct a broad-based community survey. More than 4,000 Quad Citizens participated in the dialogue by providing their input on what they thought was most important to our region’s long-term economic health and quality of life. Q2030 organizers melded together the conclusions from the past and present data, input from community focus groups and the survey, and the results were powerful. Four themes emerged:

What the community said: Embrace shared principles
Residents, delegates, volunteers and partners helped to identify the guiding principles in which to hold each other accountable in furthering the work and spirit of the Q2030 Regional Action Plan:

- Collaborate
- Be open to new ideas
- Encourage diversity of opinion
- Think and act in the best interest of the region
- Speak with respect and regard for all partners
- Share credit for successes and responsibility for challenges
- Demonstrate pride and a positive attitude about the Quad Cities.

The Big Lessons
Through the focus groups and survey, the community provided insights that helped guide the formation of the Q2030 Regional Action Plan. Here are the big lessons learned:

1. People are ready for regional approaches that benefit many, leveraging the efficiencies that can be gained through collaborative efforts. They expect us to work together.

2. Money is not the issue. A lack of money is often used as an excuse for doing nothing. Sure, funds will be scarce in many cases, so it is important to remember the value of aligning resources and leveraging capacity for creative solutions. A willingness to work closely with local partners can elicit resources from those involved to activate and enhance priorities in a way that no single entity can do on its own.

3. We must address multiple needs: economic development, training and education, quality of place and quality of life in a way that ultimately connects job and career opportunities for our residents.

4. We can’t do it alone. Ultimately, the Quad Cities strength lies in its ability to work as a region. We only become more competitive nationally and globally by aligning our priorities and working together for the betterment of our region.

5. It can be done. Every community has naysayers. When an idea stretches beyond the reach of an organization or a jurisdiction, someone might be tempted to say is, “it can’t be done.” What they really mean is, “we’ve never done things that way before.” There is broad consensus to embrace a rallying cry to transform our region. Quad Citizens are united around a vision for their community to be a hub for growing business, jobs and opportunity. This time is different; it will be done because there is a movement underway to make it happen.

6. Accountability is crucial. People are ready for change that is obvious, dramatic and sustainable. They will want to know the connection between the priorities and the plan is real.
Bringing the plan to life

To implement the plan, Q2030 must be the common guide in planning for cities, counties, businesses, non-profits and academic institutions. It should be held as the ultimate litmus test in the determination of the use our region’s public and private resources. Success is dependent on the involvement of scores of community partners. Many of the priorities in the plan are already underway in some manner. We expect and encourage current organizations, groups and individuals that are already living out elements of the plan to organically accelerate it by quickly aligning with Q2030, adopting its guiding principles and institutionalizing its leadership and/or support.

Key Initiatives

Noted in bold in the diagram above are the key initiatives. They are the “big rocks” that will cause the broadest domino effect to move the Quad Cities towards its goals.

Q2030: WHO WILL DO IT?

Community

The plan is designed to bring economic opportunity to everyone who calls the Quad Cities home. The community owns this plan and will be the stewards who bring it to fruition by:

- Providing talent, time and treasure
- Moving priorities into action
- Sharing enthusiasm for region and plan
- Embracing the collaborative spirit of coordination, collaboration, alignment and partnerships.

Delegates

More than 145 business, government and non-profits endorsed the idea of a regional plan that would inspire and influence us to think, speak and behave in new ways. They pledge to be delegates who take an active role in embedding the plan in their organizations and community.

Advisory Board

The coordination of Q2030’s strategic implementation will be run by a volunteer group, the Q2030 Advisory Board who serves as the governance body overseeing use of and the implementation of Q2030. Ultimately, the Advisory Board represents the Q2030 Steering Committee.
Steering Committee
It is important that an influential group of leaders from the public and private sectors serves as the “keepers of the goals” of the Q2030 Regional Action Plan. They ensure that implementation honors the development and approval of the visioning process and plan.

Priority Workgroups
Many priorities will require organized workgroups that will include practitioners and representatives of entities that have implementation roles for that strategy. The workgroups will be charged with integrating the Q2030 Regional Action Plan into their own programs of work, identifying gaps between what is taking place and what is proposed in the plan and working to close those gaps.

- Champions
  Each workgroup will have one or more volunteer champions to ensure implementation partners are effectively engaged and focused on activation of the key priorities. Champions also will provide oversight for implementation of initiatives to ensure momentum is maintained and results and milestones are being reached.
  - Proven history of initiating lasting change
  - Passionate about Q2030 and committed to its success
  - Ensures the priority has aligned scope, collaboration and relevant metrics and challenges status quo
  - Drives progress and process ensuring momentum
  - Serves as a member of the Steering Committee to report progress

- Loaned Experts
  - Loaned experts from public and private Quad Cities partners will help inform, advance and apply tactics for strategic application.
  - Authorized by employer organization to expend time to manage, facilitate and direct assigned priority
  - Provides expertise and leadership on assigned priority
  - Works with Champion to ensure progress and fulfillment
  - Reports progress

- Talent “Creative Authority”
  - Talent is the critical element of advancing the plan - they make up the workgroups
  - Contribute passion and commit to hands-on engagement to ensure priorities advance
  - Help workgroups identify the current and anticipated capacity or shifts in terms of policies, programs, personnel and funding to effectively implement key strategic recommendations and aligning of metrics
  - Commits hands-on support, time and expertise
  - Implement agreed-upon action steps to advance priority.

Q2030: HOW WE’LL DO IT
Ultimately, the success of this plan rests on our shoulders. Our individual involvement and commitment will be the underpinnings of transforming the entire region. We must accelerate collaboration by leading the way and setting the example. Here is where you can start:

- Your Organization
  - Align your efforts with identified Q2030 action priorities wherever possible
  - Identify partners you can collaborate with to add speed and impact to your work
  - Encourage civic engagement. Our region will only transform when people feel responsible for actively shaping the future of our community
  - Boast about how Q2030 influences your current work and report any outcomes
  - Publically endorse the Q030 Regional Action Plan.
➤ You (personally)
   • Get involved. Determine your Q2030 personal passions and contribute to advancing
   • Share Q2030 with the boards you serve
   • Always demonstrate pride, enthusiasm and positive attitude about the Quad Cities. When talking
     about our region and its parts, use a tone of regional unity, pride, confidence and energy.
   • Utilize social media and #IntheQ2030 to trend your stories, efforts and milestones and use #tagtheQC
     to share Quad Cities pride.

Use of Q2030 Brand
Interested organizations are invited to seek the use of the Q2030 brand. Alignment will add lift to your efforts
accelerate Q2030 priorities and expedite regional collaboration to build more capacity for greater impact. Find
the right fit for you and your organization:

➤ “Aligned”
Q2030 aligned organizations are part of a workgroup that is advancing a
priority. These workgroups are collaborating to align people, policies,
projects, capital and programs in ways that leverage the strength of all for
the advancement of their priority and the common goal of making the Quad
Cities more competitive and successful.

Workgroups are expected to report their activity and progress on their priority’s goals and metrics to Q2030
staff regularly.

➤ To Start a Workgroup
   • Submit a brief outline of your interest and how you’re are equipped to lead or support it
   • Identify potential collaboration partners
   • Describe how you would use the Q2030 brand in a mutually advantageous way
   • Define expected timeline, milestones, noting early and long-term success goals
   • State unique and common Q2030 metrics that will be used to measure success.

What Q2030 workgroups and aligned partner organizations can expect from Q2030 staff and Steering
Committee
   • Sharing of knowledge, networks, perspectives and approaches as requested
   • Referring potential partners, information and talent to advance and achieve project outcomes
   • Communicating your workgroup’s achievements to the community, including listing on the Q2030
     website and promotion via social media and other channels
   • Public endorsement of your workgroup and organization, including listing on the Q2030 website
   • Use of the “ALIGNED” Q2030 logo.

➤ “Endorser” of Q2030*
Individuals, organizations and businesses who individually are working on
priorities related to Q2030, promote innovative ideas, advance civic
ingagement or aim to be a stand-out in their field are invited to formally
endorse Q2030 by committing publically to:
   • Seek collaborative solutions whenever possible
   • Think and act in the best interest of the region
   • Share credit for successes and responsibility for challenges
   • Speak with respect and regard for all partners in the region
   • Demonstrate pride and a positive attitude about the Quad Cities
   • Be open to new ideas
   • Encourage diversity of opinion

*Logo available upon request.
Q2030: WHY IT MATTERS
There is no better time for our region to be planning for its future. The disparity in our bi-state business climate, the increase in poverty, challenges in meeting workforce needs and the volatility in the nation’s economy have created urgent calls for solutions. Metro areas that have their priorities inline will be the ones that are more competitive, receive more federal funding and stand to outperform their peer communities. They will become models for other regions to emulate.

At the heart of Q2030 is the rally cry of increasing talent, jobs and economic opportunity for all by 2021. Here is how you can measure success by that year:

- **Talent:** 54,000 or 20 percent more 5-34 year-olds in our region’s population and doubling the percentage of our workforce with education beyond high school.

- **Economic Opportunity:** Per capita income will increase 20 percent and the region’s GDP will grow 25 percent.

- **Community Satisfaction:** Our residents will foster civic pride and report high community satisfaction and love factor with the Quad Cities.

**Backbone support**
The real work is just beginning. Just as the development of the Q2030 Regional Action Plan has been a community effort, so too will be its implementation. The breadth and scope of the plan are expansive and aggressive, but anything less would not be consistent with the feedback from the public and private leaders and stakeholders who understand what will be necessary for the Quad Cities to achieve its vision. Partner organizations and governments will need to assess their current and needed resources and capacity to support strategic implementation and plan accordingly.

Q2030 is intended to be a living, breathing document, a plan that in essence is never complete. It will grow and change organically with the circumstances of our region. The goal is that it will guide us past the next decade. To that end, the effort needs a steward, a group responsible for shepherding its promise to transform our region. And so, a Q2030 fund will be established at the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend, governed by a designated group of volunteer leaders serving on the Q2030 Advisory Board, a subsidiary of the Steering Committee and will be staffed by the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce.

**Transparency.** We will be transparent and track and report progress on Q2030 goals. This includes maintaining the Q2030 website, producing reports and creating comparisons of our progress to benchmark communities.

**Consistent.** We will strive to report the activity and achievements of priorities into public view and work to make communications robust, rich and consistent with a broad reach. We will use social and mobile media to seek and report real-time information.

**Collaborative.** We will help engage and connect Champions, Loaned Experts and Talent to advance and achieve project outcomes. We’ll share knowledge, networks, perspectives and approaches.

**Respectful.** We will listen. We’ll work to foster mutual trust. We’ll work together to enhance our civic pride and the prosperity for our region.

The goal of Q2030 is to grow talent, jobs, investments and economic opportunity for all who call the Quad Cities home. All of us share interest in and responsibility for its success.
COOL PLACES
Create strong, attractive and functional places in which we live, work, experience and play

Cool Places refers to the physical structures where residents live, work, journey and play and how those elements enhance our lives. Cool is an attitude, behavior, appearance and style. Cool places do not just happen because you say it, but must be created. And in today’s talent-driven economy, cool places matter because they attract people and businesses with an array of options. The Quad Cities has many attributes that give it a sense of a cool place. With that said, more intentional effort must be dedicated to building additional capacity and promoting existing advantages not only to external audiences, but also to its existing population.

- MISSISSIPPI RIVER
The presence of the Mississippi River and the opportunities it provides to enhance the Quad Cities’ quality of life, economy and destination appeal was identified as the region’s number one untapped asset by the majority of public input respondents. There are catalytic opportunities to better leverage the Mississippi River to enhance quality of life, quality of place, attraction to talent and regional job creation.

1. **Fulfill the vision of the Mississippi River as a transformative Quad Cities amenity:** The Mississippi Riverfront in the Quad Cities will become a known destination for its beauty, recreation amenities, shopping and dining opportunities, signature festivals and historical and cultural sites. The River will become a connector, not a divider, and a literal and figurative bridge for Quad Cities communities and constituencies.

2. **Create an iconic world-class destination on the Mississippi River:** The Mississippi River is a unique Quad Cities amenity that offers the single most transformative opportunity for signature, high-profile cultural, recreational and commercial development that will be magnets for people and national attention.

3. **Support the environmental sustainability of the Upper Mississippi River ecosystem:** Positioning the Mississippi River as the Quad Cities’ signature amenity will not detract from the need to ensure the river remains environmentally sound and sustainable. Many organizations already work to protect the Upper Mississippi River ecosystem and will receive the support and resources necessary to accomplish their missions.

- CULTURAL AMENITIES
For a region of its size, the Quad Cities area has a wealth of arts and cultural programs, destinations, events, performance spaces, musical performers and venues and educational curricula. Better capturing and leveraging this capacity, coordinating and championing existing organizations and resources and consistently focusing on developing new and exciting product will be important to enhancing the Quad Cities’ quality of life and place.

1. **Bring regional partners together behind a consensus, collaborative vision to enhance arts and culture in the Quad Cities:** A strong collection of arts and cultural elements will be integrated into a more cohesive and holistic vision for how the Quad Cities can become a recognized arts capital, a magnet for creative professionals and an even more compelling quality of life amenity for existing residents. Potential action steps include producing arts and culture master plan that correlates value and investment and regionalizing funding to ensure access and sustainability.

2. **Make the Quad Cities an artistic hotbed of the “maker” movement:** Advances in so-called “additive” technologies have made designing and producing manufactured goods and materials more accessible and affordable to professionals and hobbyists alike. With its history as a production center and its associated talent capacities, the Quad Cities will become a center of gravity for industrial arts practitioners and purveyors.
3. **Enhance the voice and impact of the regional music sector**: With a solid base of musical talent, performance venues, non-profit organizational support and employers, the Quad Cities has the opportunity to leverage this capacity to expand region’s internal and external awareness, success and impact as a music economy. Stakeholders both within and outside the regional music sector will become more vocal in championing the Quad Cities as an existing and potential destination for music.

- **DOWNTOWNS**

Long-time and recent Quad Cities stakeholders commented often in public input about the development momentum and growing dynamism of the region’s multiple downtowns and central cities. From the construction of new and renovated lofts, the success of existing and new restaurants and shops, greater appreciation of the districts’ walkability and number of patrons returning to downtowns to work and play, the promise of the region’s core districts is great. Working to sustain and further these trends will help provide dynamic urban environments increasingly in demand by today’s young talent.

1. **Ensure the continued success of residential and retail and amplify commercial development in the Quad Cities’ downtowns**: Each of the region’s major core districts has experienced revitalization in recent years. With a major planning process moving forward, Bettendorf is also poised to enhance the dynamism of its core. This success must not be taken for granted. Ongoing efforts from cities, counties, downtown organizations and supporters will continually assess how to sustain and grow all categories of development to continue investment momentum and build a critical mass of assets.

2. **Cultivate distinctive downtowns to support collective regional goals**: The amenities and opportunities in the Quad Cities’ downtowns are far more powerful when considered as a whole. The distinctive character and assets of each principal downtown will be recognized and celebrated as advancing the competitiveness of the entire region. This will be manifested by more coordinated promotion and event planning to provide a dynamic array of choices for regional residents and visitors.

- **NEIGHBORHOODS**

If neighborhood revitalization and growth can be empowered, healthy communities can be created out of neighborhoods that have experienced disinvestment and decline. Healthy neighborhoods are stable ones where clean and safe streets lead to the retention of businesses and families, and where home values remain strong. Neighborhoods grow by attracting and retaining residents, promoting and growing commercial activity and fostering a sense of community pride.

1. **Foster pride in the Quad Cities by prioritizing neighborhood revitalization to create healthy communities with resident appeal and commercial growth**:
   - Neighborhoods are the core units that affect regional health. By strengthening citizens’ affiliations with their residential and commercial districts, the Quad Cities’ municipalities and the region as a whole will benefit. This will be manifested through processes to define and brand new neighborhoods and refresh existing ones.
   - Eligible home, land and business owners will take more advantage of existing tools in cities across the region to upgrade their properties. This will not only come from better awareness of available programs but also from the creation of new incentives that warrant application for one or more Quad Cities neighborhood.
   - Neighborhood affiliation and solidarity will be fostered through the development of diverse and dynamic local events. Information will be provided and easily accessible for community leaders looking to plan and promote neighborhood events.
- **SIGNATURE EVENTS**

As many public input participants noted, “there’s never a lack of things to do in the Quad Cities.” This is a tremendous asset for talent and tourism. Capitalizing on this capacity is important as are efforts to add to the diverse mix of established events, especially during the winter months.

1. **Support and celebrate existing local and regional events**: Rather than adding an array of new events, the region will ensure that existing concerts, festivals and other activities experience maximum promotion and participation.

2. **Create a major new off-season event in the Quad Cities**: According to public input, the exception to the rule of the Quad Cities’ event culture in the winter months. The lull in destination events during this period was cited often as a real opportunity to boost local spirits by filling this obvious gap. Working together, the Quad Cities will develop a signature winter festival to attract participants from the region and beyond.

- **RECREATION**

The Quad Cities already has an impressive array of parks, recreation and trails capacity, especially along and adjacent to the Mississippi River. Extensive planning has also been done to ensure that this capacity remains strong and growing. As with so many other strategic categories in this plan, the goal should be to leverage and sustain existing capacity while also determining the highest-value enhancements to current resources.

1. **Provide and maintain the best collection of recreation amenities in the Midwestern U.S.**: The Quad Cities will continue planning and development of a compelling array of assets, from passive and active parks and play-spaces to walking and biking trails and opportunities for river activities.

2. **Increase the awareness and usage of local and regional facilities**: Quad Citizens will venture more frequently to facilities and systems across the region. As with so many components of the Quad Cities quality of life assets, the full breadth of regional amenities can differentiate the community’s standing as a residential and tourism destination.

- **NON-TRADITIONAL FORUMS**

A consistent theme of public input during the Q2030 process was the lack of a “voice” for certain members of the community – principally the younger generations – who are looking for virtual and physical environments to express their opinions, learn about the viewpoints of others and discuss and share ideas about the Quad Cities and how to improve the region. It will be critical that non-traditional forums provide opportunities to include “new” voices and advance efforts to engage diverse populations in organizations, leadership networks, political discourse and other outlets.

1. **Provide opportunities for different Quad Cities constituencies to have their voices heard and pursue collective avenues to affect change**: The Quad Cities will become and be seen as a diverse and inclusive place where newcomers and existing residents feel they have outlets to find their niches, speak and be heard, teach and learn, produce art and ideas and work collectively with like-minded individuals to improve their lives and their community.
CREATIVE PEOPLE

*Provide young people and workers with the skills and competencies to contribute to the economy and community.*

Beginning in school, we must prepare our current and future workers with the skills necessary to find good jobs. Education is the key to providing economic opportunity for everyone who calls the Quad Cities home. We must prepare young people for the jobs of the future as well as retrain workers in industries that are shrinking to take the jobs in industries that are growing. Businesses move and grow where there are qualified, educated workers.

The work of Q2030 recognizes that we must bridge the gap between what our children are learning and what they need to learn to succeed in the world. Importantly, the very notion of talent development itself must be broadened from just education and training programs to a complex web of systems involving diversity and inclusion practices, leadership development, resident health and wellness, internal and external talent marketing and others.

- **CRADLE THROUGH CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

The best way to formalize and manage a talent-development pipeline is through the creation of comprehensive, all-inclusive coalitions of public and private partners working together to foster positive student outcomes. As the name implies, our C2C coalition will feature strong focus on early childhood health and learning and extending beyond a cradle-to-career pipeline into the field of adult education and retraining/up-skilling programs.

1. **Optimize school readiness for the Quad Cities’ pre-school population ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable early childhood education programs:** Support will be provided to ensure that all regional children enter kindergarten eager and prepared to learn. Parents will be aware of the programs available to them and utilize them fully in the support of their children’s early development.

2. **Ensure regional students meet or exceed established performance metrics throughout elementary school:** A suite of support programs will prepare students in elementary school to excel in all aspects of learning. They will perform at or above measures corresponding to competencies needed to successfully advance in school.

3. **Position all students to graduate high school interested and prepared for college and careers:** Regional graduation rates will reflect a philosophy that “no child gets left behind.” Students will leave high school primed for success in their next chosen path, whether it is two or four-year colleges or universities or a high-value career.

4. **Support and retain local talent and increase degree-attainment through effective higher education, training and job-placement programs:** Graduates from high school and college in the Quad Cities will be informed of and connected to opportunities to start and sustain their careers in the region. Skilled talent will know they are wanted in the Quad Cities and have a future in the region.

5. **Dramatically increase the number of residents with post-secondary certifications and degrees by successfully accommodating Quad Cities adults interested in entering or re-entering the workforce, up-skilling in their existing jobs or changing careers:** Adults at all ages and life stages will be supported in their ambitions to obtain quality employment. Employers seeking assistance in providing additional skills for incumbent workers will be familiar with and increase the utilization of, options available to them.

- **21st CENTURY WORKFORCE**

The Quad Cities will be competitive by meeting and exceeding the needs and ambitions of companies and industries that are starting, expanding and relocating in the region.

1. **Encourage partnerships between schools, community colleges, universities and policy entities to formalize career training pipelines.** With shortages in key occupational categories, a growing segment of under-skilled and under-employed workers, and greater numbers of economically disadvantaged students, much work must continue to be done to maintain the Quad Cities “human capital.”
2.  Enhance efforts to optimize data collection and assessment protocols to inform common curricula and program development for the region. Forecasting where the jobs will be and what education and training is in highest demand will identify opportunities to build career pathways for current workers and students in the regional talent pipeline.
3.  Better leverage existing employers to retain and attract talent by increasing employers’ awareness and utilization of internship programs.
4.  Align and expand workforce training and job placement efforts.

- WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE

We must create a welcoming community in which all people are embraced, have an equal opportunity for success and know that their differences are the foundation for the region’s successes.

While fostering a community culture that is welcoming and inclusive is important to the retention of new residents, it is also vital to ensuring existing residents of all races, ethnicities, ages, political affiliations, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations and viewpoints feel engaged and embedded in the community.

1.  Accept and celebrate new migrants to the Quad Cities from all points of origin
   - New residents to the Quad Cities will know they are wanted and appreciated. Formal and informal efforts to develop goodwill among new migrants will serve as starting points for relationship-building and incorporation of new talent into the life of the region.
   - Immigrant and refugee populations relocating to the Quad Cities will be welcomed and assimilated into local life through purposeful outreach and inclusion. The Quad Cities will become known as region friendly to international migrants, which will create a pipeline of foreign talent into the community. More broadly, efforts to welcome newcomers to the Quad Cities regardless of where they are from will be implemented to ensure they become engaged in and committed to their new home.
2.  Incorporate principles and practices of inclusion into the community fabric of the Quad Cities: Respecting and reflecting diversity of all peoples will become second nature in the Quad Cities. Community dialogue between different constituencies will be open and honest and always pursued constructively to achieve solutions to issues rather than perpetuate distrust and disagreement.

- TALENT MARKETING AND ATTRACTION

Decisions to remain in or leave a particular geographic area are driven by many factors, including market potential, political and policy considerations, overall geographic appeal and surrounding supports. The bottom line is that geography matters greatly. Findings show that the vibrancy of a city as well as civic engagement are of significant importance regardless of age.

1.  Create opportunities for civic involvement: Connect young adults with internships, survey for their opinion, communicate development plans and promote a young adult lifestyle that will improve the chances of reversing net migration trends and supplementing local talent with newly relocated residents.
2.  Seek the opinions and engagement of young Quad Citizens
3.  Design and implement an external talent attraction marketing program to improve the awareness of the Quad Cities as a competitive destination for talent: The Quad Cities will become known beyond its borders as a modern, dynamic, diverse, interesting quirky, family-friendly, attractive and compelling region to attend college, live, work and play. In-migration of skilled talent will raise regional levels of educational attainment, support the growth of local knowledge businesses and attract new and different types of destination retail establishments.
- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Communities become successful because of the capacity of their public and private leadership. The full diversity of local residents should be solicited for engagement in leadership programs at multiple stages of personal and professional development. Established professionals should be available as mentors or coaches for aspiring leaders, sharing their experiences and wisdom on the most effective ways to advance their careers, serve their community, balance work and life responsibilities and network effectively. Elected and appointed representatives of local governments and regional organizations should reflect the community’s diversity, attitudes and commitment to shared goals.

1. Provide the tools necessary to identify, develop and sustain public and private leadership in the Quad Cities: Though to some extent the capacity to lead is an inherited trait, the ability to lead is still largely a learned capacity. The Quad Cities will support and create effective programming to ensure that leadership development in the region is successful and sustained. Critical to the programming will be the understanding and leadership of the shared guiding principles and goals for the region.

2. Increase the understanding of critical issues facing our region for current and aspiring local leaders.

3. Ensure the Quad Cities’ public and private leadership networks reflect the diversity of its citizenry: The Quad Cities will effectively engage and leverage its next-generation leadership. Building from a strong base of all races, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, coordinated efforts will ensure the voice, perspectives and passions of young leaders are fostered, respected and reflected in public decision-making.

- HEALTHY PEOPLE

A healthier Quad Cities would not only support employers but also make the community a more attractive place to live and work. Continuing education on physical and mental health issues and programs will help residents understand their risks as well as opportunities to make healthier life choices and contribute fully to their families, businesses and employers.

1. Improve the health and wellness of Quad Cities residents and workers: The Quad Cities will provide the support capacity necessary to ensure that residents of all ages are aware and utilizing health and wellness programs and information through multiple access points.

2. Promote wellness.

3. Seek to make the Quad Cities a hunger-free community: While many regions in the country talk about “ending hunger,” the Quad Cities will make tremendous strides towards this goal by collaboratively developing and implementing a coordinated set of hunger-reduction strategies. No adult will be limited in accessing education, training or employment because of hunger-related issues.
CONNECTED REGION
Come together and help one another in new ways to improve efficiencies, attitudes and perceptions.

At the root of everything we do to move the region forward economically – grow businesses, create a quality place to live, prepare workers for the future – is the need for our region’s many organizations, businesses, cities, counties and townships to work together. When we are connected by a broader regional plan, we leverage the benefits of our collective strength and increase our capacity and impact for economic opportunity for all.

- REGIONAL ATTITUDES AND ENGAGEMENT

Quad Citizens must become the ambassadors of our region and help create and demonstrate a “swagger” and civic pride. Positive attitudes and perception about what we love about our region at the grassroots level will establish a base for broader, more pervasive and lasting improvements in outlooks and expectations for a more dynamic and connected future Quad Cities.

1. Create and implement a well-recognized, electrifying image and brand for the Quad Cities that will enhance its regional self-image and community buy-in: The Quad Cities will be bragged about by those who live and work in the region. Stakeholders will understand and talk about the great things the region has to offer and mean it.

2. Develop opportunities for community engagement and leadership for the next generation of Quad Citizens: Deliberately seek out the opinions of young people of all races, ethnicities, political affiliations, religious backgrounds and sexual orientations to help shape the region.

3. Residents and organizations will promote our region by sharing pictures and telling stories about what they love in our communities.

- COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The Q2030 process itself is a strong portent of what is possible when stakeholders across all public and private constituencies come together behind a common goal. As the regional vision is implemented, opportunities for cross-community partnerships and coalitions will increase exponentially across all segments of the community: private, public, non-profit and governmental.

1. Identify opportunities for cross-community partnerships and coalitions.

2. Embed of a culture of collaboration into the fabric of the Quad Cities: Collaboration in the Quad Cities will become more purposeful and sustainable through the establishment of formal and informal frameworks and agreements to work more effectively together across community, state, sector and inter-personal lines. Partnering regionally will become a hallmark of the Quad Cities culture.

3. Increase regional leadership capacity by building relationships that share a spirit of openness and teamwork.

4. Work collectively to support and enhance the Quad Cities’ civic and non-profit sectors: Non-profit entities in the Quad Cities will more effectively support their clients and constituencies through enhanced coordination and collaboration and more dynamic support and guidance from community partners. Improved programmatic outcomes will reflect metric-driven goal-attainment.

5. Enable local governments, regional organizations and non-profits to better serve the region and their constituencies by identifying and pursuing opportunities to improve efficiencies and maximize their capacity for sustained impact: The Quad Cities’ municipal and county governments, regional organizations and non-profits will more purposefully look for opportunities to increase capacity through streamlining programs and services. They will identify additional forums for discussion and collaboration to support goals of improved local and regional efficiency.
-  **INTRA-REGIONAL MOBILITY**

Forging virtual connections is not enough to truly bind a region together. Creating physical linkages between Quad Cities communities through the development and enhancement of transportation systems must also be a priority. These connections must move people and products around and through our region. Maintaining and expanding roads, bridges, supporting public transportation and moving freight efficiently are important for attracting and retaining businesses and for overall economic development as well as good quality of life.

1.  **Continue planning and investment in enhanced transportation systems:** Road and highway networks in the Quad Cities will continue to be upgraded and expanded based on timely and accurate projection data. Planning for enhanced systems will reflect local and regional priorities and be informed by consideration of the mobility needs of all Quad Cities constituencies.

2.  **Develop more integrated, higher capacity transit networks:** Transit will be seen as a public good, not a service for marginalized populations. This will be reflected in positive rider experiences across all systems, communities and constituency groups.

3.  **Assess opportunities for improved local water transportation services:** The unique Quad Cities benefit of water transportation for commuting and leisure purposes will be enhanced through more frequent headways and destination Water taxi services on the Mississippi River will become one of the region’s signature amenities.
PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

*Use our strengths as a region to retain, attract and create businesses and jobs.*

A diverse, vibrant business community is the foundation for a healthy region. It creates jobs, which attract talented people and brings economic opportunity to everyone who lives here. Strong businesses also increase our tax base and contribute to our community through their products and services, their philanthropy and in many other ways. We must work harder to grow jobs. The best to do that is to help existing businesses expand, promote a hotbed of entrepreneurial support and culture and attract new companies to locate here.

- **CATALYSTS**

The Quad Cities has many key assets to potentially drive its growth. There are three catalysts in particular that serve as the highest-value opportunities to spur dynamic job and wealth creation.

1. *Ensure the well-being, strategic importance and economic impact of the Rock Island Arsenal:* While current capacity will be leveraged, new public and private investment ensure the Arsenal remains a Quad Cities institution for decades to come.
2. *Establish the Quad Cities as a global hub of innovative manufacturing:* The Quad Cities will help lead the world into a new era of product development and fabrication.
3. *Charge public and private regional leaders with driving a process to maximize the impact of the billion-dollar renewal of the I-74 Gateway Corridor over the Mississippi River:* Public and private regional leaders will drive a process to maximize the impact of this infrastructure investment for the benefit of the Quad Cities’ economy, quality of life, connectivity, image and public realm.

- **COMPETITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Currently, lack of a sufficient regional stock of modern development sites and buildings hampsters efforts to market the Quad Cities to incumbent or prospect firms because the region cannot always accommodate client specifications for sites and buildings. Finding solutions to this will seed success across all economic development programmatic categories, from existing business retention and expansion to corporate attraction and the creation of new companies that will ultimately grow out of their current space and look for locations to expand.

1. *Ensure existing and prospect businesses have a sufficient supply of competitive development sites and buildings to accommodate growth:* A system will be established to formalize sustainable product development to satisfy future growth ambitions.
2. *Significantly enhance the Quad Cities’ capacity for waterborne commerce:* Infrastructure will be developed to greatly increase the region’s ability to accommodate cargo shipping along the Upper Mississippi River. The Quad Cities’ long-standing role as a center of river commerce will be renewed and reinvigorated as larger and more lucrative barges are able to dock, offload and be supplied in the region.
3. *Optimize the Quad Cities’ accessibility for business and leisure travel:* The Quad Cities will continue to improve connections to and from the region by expanding direct flight destinations and fully capitalizing on the potential of a high-speed rail linkage to metro Chicago. Greater connectivity will lead to more options for utilizing the Quad Cities as a base for corporate or small business operations.
4. *Provide businesses with best-in-class broadband connectivity:* The increased ability of residents and businesses to access the internet at gigabit speeds will position the Quad Cities more solidly as a destination for talent, technology entrepreneurs, and data-intensive businesses. The risk of a “digital divide” will be eliminated by implementing equitable accessibility strategies.
- **RETENTION AND EXPANSION**

Supporting the growth of existing companies is an essential component of a comprehensive regional economic development program. According to public input gathered for this visioning process, Quad Cities businesses are satisfied with the support they derive from economic development officials and, on the whole, city and county government. Even so, more can be done to support the expansion of existing businesses.

1. **Leverage established and emerging economic clusters:** Economic clusters are areas of industry concentration or strength. All communities have them. The very successful ones connect those strengths purposefully, so they can identify opportunities to grow, attract related businesses and develop new ones.
   
   a. Connect related business with one another to look at ways to collaborate and grow their business
   b. Engage the leaders in cluster in industries to help recruit companies to move here
   c. Look for opportunities to spin-off startup businesses from larger companies

2. **Customize support for medium-sized businesses poised for rapid expansion:** Practitioners will provide research and market development services to take qualifying businesses to the next tier of success. Efforts will ensure that high-growth companies are retained in the Quad Cities.

3. **Foster opportunities to develop a cooperative economy in the Quad Cities:** Regional anchor corporations and institutions will direct portions of their purchasing budgets to networks of employee-owned local businesses. Efforts will provide onramps to the workforce and wealth-building opportunities for underserved Quad Cities communities.

- **ENTREPRENUERAL ECOSYSTEM**

To rise to the next level of activity, the Quad Cities will have to purposefully strive to alter its mindset from a community culture hesitant of embracing uncertainty and accepting failure to a mindset that welcomes risk-taking and understands that failure is a stepping stone on the path to future entrepreneurial success.

1. **Establish a “center of gravity” for the Quad Cities’ entrepreneurial ecosystem:** Recognizing the local climate for entrepreneurship is enhanced through the presence of a hub of activity; the Quad Cities will identify and designate a program as the startup ecosystem’s so-called center of gravity. This process will be informed and owned by regional entrepreneurs, who will serve as the driving force behind the growth in the Quad Cities’ startup culture.

2. **Capitalize on the entrepreneurship opportunities of the “maker” economy:** As a region that makes things, the Quad Cities is perfectly positioned to utilize this capacity and knowledge base to foster an entrepreneurial niche tied to additive manufacturing. This will be accomplished through the provision of spaces, materials and support to launch a new breed of local entrepreneur and startup enterprise.

3. **Accelerate the launch and growth of startup firms in key Quad Cities target sectors:** Beyond simply providing space for entrepreneurs to work and shared services to save them money, the Quad Cities will develop programs – potentially across multiple industries – to leverage experienced entrepreneurs as advisors and advocates for the successful launch of new local firms. Startups “graduating” from these programs will have achievable paths forward to launch and scale their businesses.

4. **Provide and promote opportunities for entrepreneurial education:** Entrepreneurship can be a learned skill and one that is instilled from an early age. The Quad Cities will expand and develop capacity to expose students and adults to the process of small business creation and successful self-employment.
**RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

While the Quad Cities is not home to the campus of a major public or private research university receiving hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars in sponsored research investment, the region nevertheless has powerful assets contributing to dynamic potential research and innovation results. These assets are largely focused on advanced materials and manufacturing processes advancing multiple innovative technologies to improve goods production.

1. **Become a recognized center for manufacturing research activities:** Public and private investment in manufacturing-focused research in the Quad Cities will rise along with the standing of the region as a major hub of innovation in production technologies. Emphasis will also be placed on the possibilities of translating this research into regional job creation.

2. **Cultivate a high-capacity institutional research presence in the Quad Cities:** Access to world-class corporate and military ties in the Quad Cities will serve as a compelling draw for research institutions to co-locate in the on. These partners will form a cluster of activity focused on an untapped research opportunity in the Quad Cities.

**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

Local and regional organizations and their partners have long been active in supporting and recommending state and federal policies and legislation that improve the regional business climate. This strong advocacy has continued even as certain of these organizations have merged and others have seen their resources diminish. With so much of the Quad Cities’ enhanced competitive capacity (including multiple recommendations in this Q2030 plan) dependent on state and federal funding, region advocacy efforts must remain aggressive and effective to reinforce the success of the overall initiative.

1. **Ensure state and federal policies are supportive of quality economic growth in the Quad Cities:** Become a leading voice for policies and programs that enhance the Quad Cities competitive position.

**TARGETED MARKETING**

Beyond sustaining current efforts, recommended enhancements to the Quad Cities regional marketing program reflect adjustments rather than wholesale changes.

1. **Invest in multiple media to advance growth in emerging and established targeted employment sectors and clusters:** Regional marketing will pursue strategies to promote the Quad Cities across a spectrum of paid, owned and earned media.

2. **Focus inbound, outbound and international marketing efforts on priority influencers, events and destinations:** Relationships will be built and sustained with prospects and their existing and potential representatives to position the Quad Cities as a competitive market for high-value corporate relocations.

3. **Effectively coordinate local and regional economic development partners:** Professionals marketing the region and its localities will collaborate to present a unified voice and value proposition to prospect employers and investors.

The Q2030 Regional Action Plan is designed to transform the Quad Cities region into a leading metropolitan area for talent, jobs and economic opportunity.