



# **Initiatives for a Smart Economy**

**January 2017**

**Bi-Annual Report**



# MEMORANDUM COUNTY OF ERIE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

TO: Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive  
Maria Whyte, Deputy County Executive  
Erie County Legislature

FROM: Andrew Federick

DATE: January 2017

RE: Initiatives for a Smart Economy – 2016 Bi-annual Reports

---

In January of 2017, departmental staff provided updated reports on the 64 initiatives comprising *Initiatives for a Smart Economy* for the time period of July 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016. This memo will summarize the reports and highlight the successes already achieved as well as any areas of concern.

Please refer to the attached spreadsheet for a complete listing of the initiatives and the status of each. A full compilation of the reports is also available for your review.

## Completed Initiatives

To date, 32 initiatives have been fully completed (up from 27 at time of the previous bi-annual report), representing 50% of the total, including recently completed initiatives 3.33, which called for the ECIDA to support a series of entrepreneurial boot camps; 3.64, which called for the establishment of a Western New York sustainable business roundtable; and 4.57, which aimed at creating public access along the Buffalo River corridor.

## In Progress Initiatives

Twenty-eight of the remaining 32 initiatives are in progress, representing 87% of the total remaining to be completed. There are initiatives in progress in all twelve sectors. Six of the in-progress initiatives are at least 80% complete, which should lead to the total number of completed initiatives to substantially increase again within the next six months. Three of the in-progress initiatives are classified as “on-going” or “annual” obligations and are unlikely to ever be classified as completed.

See the attached spreadsheet for notes on individual projects, including a summary of the current status of each project by initiative supervisors.

### Initiatives Not Yet Begun

Four initiatives have not yet begun, representing 6% of the total. The four initiatives that haven't been started are generally evenly distributed throughout the sectors. However, there are no yet-to-be-started initiatives in Entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Tourism, ECIDA Reform, Land Development or Quality of Life.

### Conclusion

Of the 64 initiatives, a total of 60 (94%) are completed or in progress. Substantial progress has been made since the last bi-annual report and further progress is expected by the next reporting period, which will be January 1, 2017 – June 30, 2017.

## I4SE January 2017 Bi-Annual Report

Initiative Number	Sector	Initiative	Department	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
<b>Completed</b>									
3.12	Workforce Development	Regional Workforce Advancement Center - Buffalo Billion/ Advance Buffalo	WIB	X			100%	100%	
3.16	Workforce Development	Workforce Development Summits	WIB	X			100%	100% (Annual Summits will continue)	
3.22	Smart Growth	Main Street Blight Demolition	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.22.2	Smart Growth	Former BOCES Building Demolition/ Main Street Reconstruction		X			100%	100%	
3.22.3	Smart Growth	City of Lackawanna, Ridge Road Friendship House Demolition		X			100%	100%	
3.24	Smart Growth	Niagara River Greenway Funding	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.32	Entrepreneurship	Support of LaunchNY	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
3.33	Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship Boot camp Event	ECIDA	X			75%	100%	The project consisted of the ECIDA supporting four entrepreneurial events in partnership with UB's WIN incubator program, and as of August 4 the fourth and final event was held.
3.41	Agriculture	Agribusiness Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.43	Agriculture	Food Hub Feasibility Study	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.44	Agriculture	Food Policy Council	Health	X			100%	100%	
3.45	Agriculture	Regional Agricultural Brand	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.46	Agriculture	Agritourism	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.61	Energy	Erie County Energy Management Office	DEP	X			100%	100%	

3.62	Energy	Interdepartmental Green Team	DEP		X		40%	100%	As outlined in the Initiatives for a Smart Economy, this project is completed. That is, a Green Team has been established and has included all departments including those managed by other elected officials, such as the Legislature, District Attorney, Sheriff and Clerk. The Green Team met monthly throughout 2016 and identified projects related to energy use, solid waste, and fleet management. Many of those projects have been initiated, while others are in the planning process.
3.64	Energy	WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable	DEP	X			70%	100%	Through Empire State Development, Erie County secured U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant funding to help the local business community establish the WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable. Over the course of this two year grant, Erie County provided staff support to the Roundtable to achieve the goal of the initiative: establish a business organization dedicated to increasing the

									implementation of sustainable business practices.
3.65	Energy	Feed-in-Tariff Feasibility Study	DEP	X			100%	100%	
3.66	Energy	Climate Smart Communities Coordinator	DEP	X			0%	100%	In 2014 DEP sought funding to establish a Climate Smart Communities Coordinator through NYSERDA's Cleaner, Greener Communities program. That grant was not awarded. However, in order to establish Erie County as a Certified Climate Smart Community and potentially assist other communities with limited assistance for certification, a grant through NYS Department of Environmental Conservation was pursued and recently awarded. That grant will provide funding for some sustainability initiatives and the documentation needed to become a Certified Climate Smart Community.
3.71	Bi-National Logistics	EC International Marketing Campaign	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.11	ECIDA	Implementation of new State law	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.13	ECIDA	"But-for" Test	ECIDA	X			15%	100%	ECIDA staff along with the NYS Economic Development Council worked to develop a set of best practice documents and policies as a result

									of the June 2016 IDA reform legislation. ECIDA staff co-chaired the committee which worked to develop statewide standard applications for IDAs, which as a result of this effort and the IDA reform legislation included a section for "But For" information. As a result all applicants for IDA assistance are required to answer two "but for" questions, which are part of the record of information provided to IDA boards to deliberate as part of their project consideration process.
4.15	ECIDA	ECIDA Move	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.16	ECIDA	New ECIDA CEO	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.17	ECIDA	ECIDA Local Labor Policy	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.21	International Trade	Economic Development Office in GTA	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.24	International Trade	EB-5 Capital	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.25	International Trade	ECIDA International Program	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.32	Land Development and Redevelopment	North Youngmann Commerce Center Industrial Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.33	Land Development and Redevelopment	River Bend Industrial Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.34.1	Land Development and Redevelopment	Spaulding Commerce Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.34.2	Land Development and Redevelopment	5335 River Road (Former Petroleum Tank Farm)	DEP	X			100%	100%	

4.34.3	Land Development and Redevelopment	3445 River Road, Polymer Applications Site	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.34.5	Land Development and Redevelopment	1815 Eggert Road, abandoned dry cleaner	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.41	Quality of Life	Arts and Cultural Institution Funding	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.42	Quality of Life	Buffalo Bills Lease	DPW	X			100%	100% (renovations); annual obligations ongoing	
4.45	Quality of Life	Division of Park Rangers-Feasibility	Parks	X			100%	100%	
4.55	Blue Economy	Identification of Beach Bacteria Source	Health	X			100%	100%	
4.57	Blue Economy	Public Access along the Buffalo River Corridor	DEP	X			70%	100%	\$325,000 was awarded to Erie County by US Fish & Wildlife Service for the entire purchase price of approximately 10 acres adjoining Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park.
<b>In Progress</b>									
3.11	Workforce Development	Academic Building for ECC	DPW		X		40%	50%	Environmental Analysis – 100% Complete; Architect Selection-100% complete; Construction Management Selection Process-100% complete; Design- 100%; Bids received \$3.4M under budget and waiting for contracts; 7 prime contracts executed; contractors mobilized on site; foundations and underground utilities are complete; structural steel and deck installation in



									progress.
3.13	Workforce Development	Apprenticeship Law	EEO		X		Ongoing	90%	Apprenticeship participation of at least 10% of workforce hours must be achieved on County projects at \$250K and above. The DEEO monitors all County projects for apprenticeship participation and calls attention when a contractor is not achieving or trying to achieve the goal.
3.15	Workforce Development	Employment Training Resource Guide	DSS		X		50%	70%	Initial Training Resource Guide completed and posted to DSS website with annual updates. In process of obtaining updated information from training providers and redesign of layout. Continue to explore methods to develop an electronic version that is more user-friendly.
3.17	Workforce Development	Vocational ESL Program	DSS		X		20%	70%	A collaboration of refugee resettlement agencies and vocational ESL training providers have come together to address the needs of DSS refugee clients and hiring needs of employers. Partners on this initiative include: Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, International Institute, Journey's End, Erie I BOCES,

									Erie II BOCES, Buffalo Public Schools Adult Learning Center Trocaire College, and WDI. Meetings were held with the partners and McGuire Group to brainstorm how to train and place refugees into a variety of position at various McGuire Group facilities.
3.21	Smart Growth	Smart Growth Fund	DEP		X		75%	80%	100% of Funding secured V. Springville-Franklin/Mechanic-smart growth improvements phase I- 100% complete. V. Springville-Factory Street-smart growth improvements-phase II- 50% complete. C. Tonawanda- Main Street/Intermodal HUB- smart growth improvements- 25% complete.
3.25	Smart Growth	Cherry Farm Feasibility Analysis	DEP		X		10%	15%	The Town of Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area project is enlisting legal assistance to create the framework for a trust fund which can be used to cover the ongoing operational costs to the environmental treatment at the site. This is the first step in securing public ownership.

3.31	Entrepreneurship	Niagara Region Ventures Fund	ECIDA		X		Ongoing (100% of funding secured)	Ongoing (100% of funding secured)	100% of Funding secured. Continuing to build pipeline of applicants.
3.34	Entrepreneurship	M/WBE Ralph Wilson Stadium	EEO		X		Ongoing	70%	Maintenance and repairs are performed annually for up to 10 years. Current Capital Improvement Allowance Projects are being prepared for the bid process following Legislative approval. The project still has 30% M/WBE participation goals for this year 2017 and they are tracked for achievement. As well as apprenticeship goals too. Capital Improvement Allowance Project (CIAP) target for complete is August 2017.
3.35	Entrepreneurship	M/WBE ECC STEM Building	EEO		X		40%	40%	The project is underway. The bids came in under budget with 32% or exceeding the 32% goal for M/WBE business participation. The STEM Project has underground utilities complete and backfilled, first structural steel columns set, structural steel erection ongoing some complete and electrical duct bank & vault is in. MWBE participation equals 33.47% compared to goal of 32%. MBE = 16.97% and WBE =

									16.5%. Apprenticeship participation is at 6.20% to a goal of 10% or above; anticipate increase with the additional work by other project primes.
3.42	Agriculture	ECIDA Agribusiness Development	ECIDA		X		70%	80%	County DEP has completed the Agribusiness Park study and identified several potential priority sites. The ECIDA completed an appraisal of one of the priority sites and is presently negotiating with the existing owner to acquire the major parcel for the park.
3.51	Tourism	Downtown Convention Center Feasibility Study	DEP		X		10%	10%	The RFP will be released in the first quarter of 2017.
3.52	Tourism	VBN Funding Advisory Board	DEP		X		30%	50%	
3.63	Energy	Energy Conservation Revolving Loan Program	DEP		X		40%	60%	Since this project was first put forward, it has evolved into two projects: Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing and the Erie County Low Income Program for Sustainable Energy project. Energize NY has presented PACE financing to the County as an option to increase investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for commercial buildings, including multi-family housing. ECLIPSE

									will work to decrease energy costs for low income residents, with a focus on those families receiving HEAP benefits. ECLIPSE has been awarded funding by NYSERDA and is now in the contracting phase.
3.72	Bi-National Logistics	Manufacturing Distribution Capacity	ECIDA/DEP		X		35%	40%	Rail relocation project design is 80% complete. Negotiations continue with Tecumseh on purchase of property.
3.74	Bi-National Logistics	Portageville Road Bridge			X		50%	50%	Project broke ground in the fall of 2015 and is presently under construction. Construction is planned to be completed by fall of 2017.
4.12	ECIDA	Adaptive Reuse Policy	ECIDA		X		20%	50%	The NYS Legislature enacted legislation, which limited IDAs ability to provide incentives to retail projects. This prohibition removed a class of Adaptive Reuse projects seen as the most controversial, mainly retail type projects. In addition to the statutory change the ECIDA has engaged a consultant to analyze the ECIDA Adaptive Reuse program to determine its effectiveness, impact and to

									recommend changes to the program moving forward. The Adaptive Reuse study is anticipated to be completed in March of 2017.
4.14	ECIDA	Cooperation with Town IDAs	ECIDA		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	Setting up a meeting between the Town IDAs and the consultant to engaged to study the ECIDA's Adaptive Reuse policy.
4.22	International Trade	Cross-border influence	DEP		X		50%	50%	This work will be re-revisioned as part of the Southern Ontario Marketing and Attraction section in an updated version of Initiatives for a Smart Economy
4.31	Land Development and Redevelopment	Bethlehem Steel	DEP		X		10%	30%	Rail relocation project is under design and bid documents being developed.
4.34	Land Development and Redevelopment	Brownfield Remediation	DEP		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	County has foreclosed on property in Tonawanda and is preparing plans for site debris cleanup. Erie County no longer has to reimburse Tonawanda for unpaid taxes on the INS site in Tonawanda.
4.34.4	Land Development and Redevelopment	5565 River Road unlicensed landfill	DEP		X		30%	30%	The NYSDEC Superfund work continues although at a slow pace due to State funding limitations. DEP will continue to monitor progress at the site.

4.43	Quality of Life	New Stadium Working Group	Executive Office		X		5%	5%	On hold following purchase of team by Pegulas.
4.44	Quality of Life	Erie County Parks Master Plan Update and Implementation	DEP / Parks		X		10%	50%	The Consultant conducted stakeholder sessions in early December, provided a summary of the input from these groups, and drafted a survey to get additional input from the public. Should have results within two months by April.
4.51	Blue Economy	Lackawanna Wastewater Treatment Plant	DEP		X		15%	15%	In the study phase; draft final report submitted to the NYSDEC in September 2014. Met with NYSDEC in December 2014 to present the findings and discuss next steps. Comment letter received in March 2015, with response by County and BSA in April 2015. As a follow-up, additional analyses were completed and submitted to the NYSDEC in April 2016. A meeting was held in July 2016 to present a high level summary of the findings. Awaiting input from the NYSDEC. Received CFA grant awards in December 2016.
4.52	Blue Economy	Rush Creek Interceptor Project	DEP		X		85%	98%	Construction is substantially complete and only final restoration remains. Final restoration will be

									performed in Spring 2017.
4.53	Blue Economy	Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility	DEP		X		10%	10%	In the study phase; consultant was retained at the end of 2013. Three (3) interim milestone reports submitted to NYSDEC by the end of 2014. Draft final report was submitted to the NYSDEC in November 2015. Kickoff meeting for the No Feasible Alternatives analysis was held in Summer 2016. A meeting with the NYSDEC was held in November 2016 to discuss the November 2015 draft final report.
4.54	Blue Economy	Beach Closure Forecasting	Health		X		90%	90%	Beach water quality forecasting models have been developed and evaluated. Further refinement is expected annually for some period of time to achieve greater accuracy. Beaches must be sampled daily for turbidity, and are currently sampled for bacteriological quality daily to help refine the models. Sampling is currently being done by a combination of beach operators, county staff and contractors.



4.56	Blue Economy	Eliminate Bacteria Sources	DEP			X	0%	20%	Working with the ECWQC and LEWPA to establish some baseline monitoring that would help complete a 9 element watershed plan creating eligibility for GLRI funding for trackdowns.
4.58	Blue Economy	Maintain and Enhance the existing County Natural Parks along the Buffalo River	DEP		X		40%	95%	The shoreline and habitat restorations at Bailey Peninsula and Red Jacket Natural Habitat Parks are in the construction phase. During 2016, hardscape shoreline and near-shore restoration features were completed.
<b>Not Yet Begun</b>									
3.14	Workforce Development	Employment Resource Coordinating Council	WIB			X	0%	0%	Though the Employee Resource Coordinating Council has not been convened, collaboration and communication between County departments and community stakeholders continues, and working relationships are strong. Collaboration occurs through participation in outreach events such as the WNY Employment Strikeforce, led by NYSDOL, career fairs hosted by the One Stop system, and participation in the Workforce Coalition, led by the Buffalo

									Niagara Partnership. These efforts have resulted in an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent, which is the lowest unemployment rate that the County has seen since 2007.
3.23	Smart Growth	Erie County Complete Streets Policy	DEP			X	0%	0%	
3.73	Bi-National Logistics	Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge	ECIDA			X	0%	0%	The project has not been initiated to date. The bridge is presently in ownership of CSX railroad and is operating to serve the needs of the Buffalo rail terminal. The ECIDA is working on scheduling a meeting to determine the status of the initiative.
4.23	International Trade	Insourcing Initiatives	DEP			X	0%	0%	No further work will be performed on this item. The overall goals will be rolled into the Southern Ontario Marketing and Attraction section in 2.0.