

A detailed close-up photograph of industrial machinery, specifically a series of interlocking metal gears. The gears are made of a dark, possibly steel or cast iron, material and show signs of use, with some oil or grease visible on their surfaces. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and the sharp edges of the gear teeth. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the intricate mechanical details.

# **INITIATIVES FOR A SMART ECONOMY**

**Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive**

**June 2013**



**INITIATIVES FOR A SMART ECONOMY**  
**Erie County Economic Development Strategy**

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>1.1</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>	2
<b>1.2</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	5
<b>1.3</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	6
<b>2.0</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF KEY INITIATIVES</b>	7
<b>3.0</b>	<b>FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA</b>	11
<b>3.1</b>	<b>WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>	12
3.11	New ECC Building	14
3.12	Regional Workforce Advancement Center	15
3.13	Apprenticeship Law	15
3.14	Employment Resource Coordinating Council	16
3.15	Employment Training Resource Guide	17
3.16	Workforce Development Summits	17
3.17	Vocational ESL Program	18
3.18	Workforce Development Conclusion	18
<b>3.2</b>	<b>SMART GROWTH</b>	19
3.21	Smart Growth Fund	21
3.22	Demolish Main Street Blight	21
3.23	Erie County Complete Streets Policy	22
3.24	Niagara River Greenway Funding	22
3.25	Cherry Farm Parcel in the Town of Tonawanda	23
3.26	Smart Growth Conclusion	23
<b>3.3</b>	<b>ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>	24
3.31	Niagara Region Ventures Fund	25
3.32	Support of LaunchNY	26
3.33	Entrepreneurship Bootcamp Event	26
3.34	M/WBE Participation for RWS project	27
3.35	M/WBE Participation for ECC STEM Building	28
3.36	Entrepreneurship Conclusion	28
<b>3.4</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	29
3.41	Agribusiness Park	30
3.42	Agribusiness Development Capacity at ECIDA	30
3.43	Food Hub Feasibility Study	31
3.44	Food Policy Council	32
3.45	Regional Agricultural Brand	32
3.46	Agritourism	33
3.47	Agriculture Conclusion	33

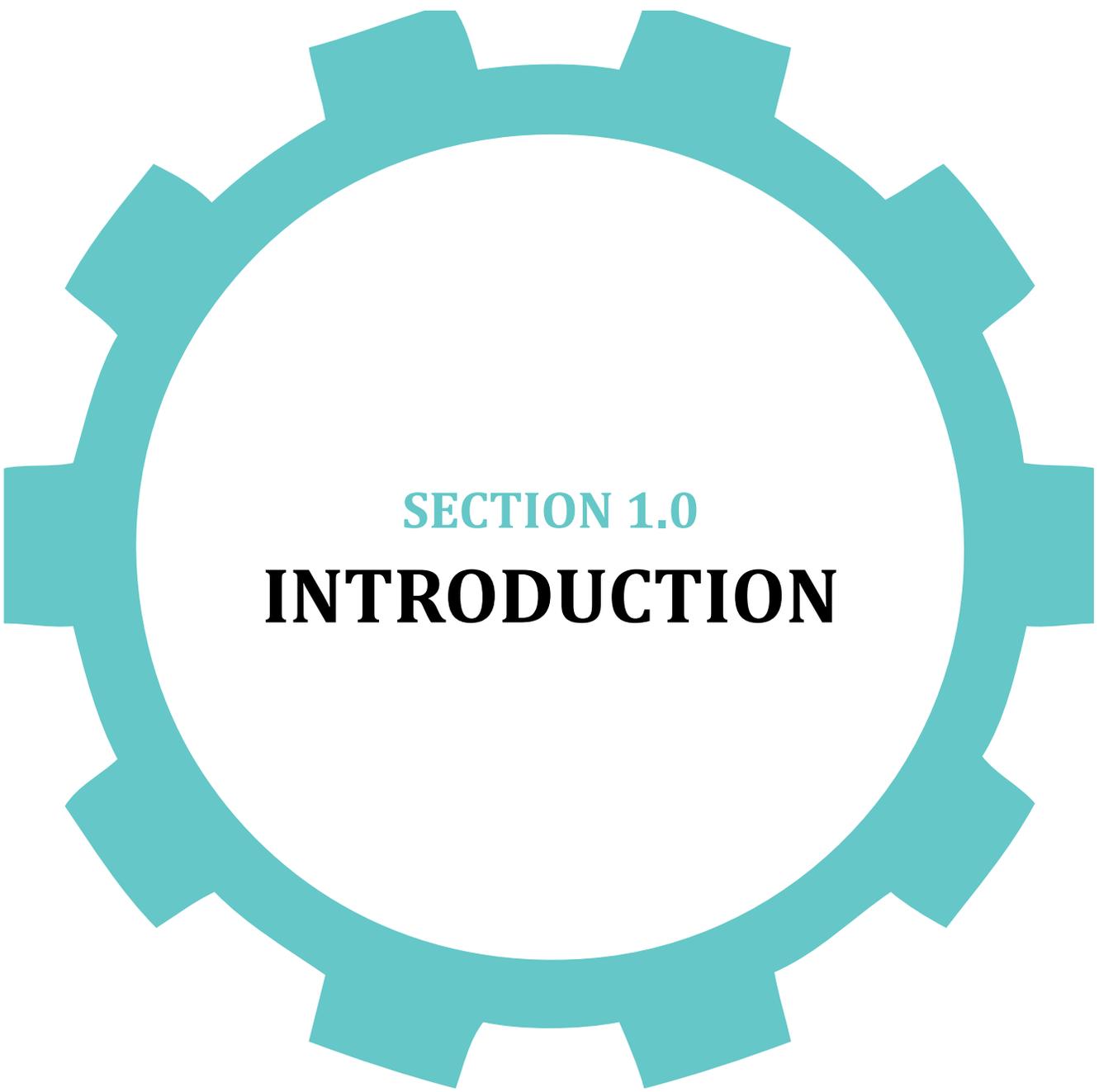
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>3.5</b>	<b>TOURISM</b>	34
3.51	New Convention Center Feasibility Study	35
3.52	VBN Funding Advisory Board	36
3.53	Tourism Conclusion	36
<b>3.6</b>	<b>ENERGY</b>	37
3.61	Erie County Energy Management Office	39
3.62	Interdepartmental Green Team	40
3.63	Energy Conservation Revolving Loan Program	41
3.64	WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable	42
3.65	Feed-In-Tariff Feasibility Study	43
3.66	Climate Smart Communities Coordinator	43
3.67	Energy Conclusion	44
<b>3.7</b>	<b>BI-NATIONAL LOGISTICS</b>	45
3.71	Erie County International Marketing Campaign	46
3.72	Manufacturing Distribution Capacity	47
3.73	Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge	48
3.74	Portageville Road Bridge	49
3.75	Bi-National Logistics Conclusion	50
<b>4.0</b>	<b>OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS</b>	51
<b>4.1</b>	<b>ECIDA REFORM AND ENHANCEMENT</b>	52
4.11	Implementation of New State Law	54
4.12	Adaptive Reuse Policy	54
4.13	“But-For” Test	55
4.14	Cooperation with Town IDAs	55
4.15	Economic Development One-Stop Shop	56
4.16	New ECIDA CEO	56
4.17	ECIDA Local Labor Policy	57
4.18	ECIDA Reform and Enhancement Conclusion	57
<b>4.2</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>	58
4.21	Economic Development Office in the GTA	59
4.22	Cross-Border Influence	59
4.23	Insourcing Initiatives	60
4.24	EB-5 Capital	60
4.25	ECIDA International Program	61
4.26	International Trade Conclusion	61
<b>4.3</b>	<b>LAND DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT</b>	62
4.31	Bethlehem Site in Lackawanna	63
4.32	North Youngmann Commerce Center Industrial Park	64
4.33	Riverbend Industrial Park	65
4.34	Brownfield Remediation	65
4.35	Land Development Conclusion	65

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>4.4</b>	<b>QUALITY OF LIFE</b> .....	66
4.41	County Funding for Arts and Cultural Institutions.....	68
4.42	Lease with the Buffalo Bills.....	68
4.43	New Stadium Working Group.....	69
4.44	Erie County Parks Master Plan.....	69
4.45	Division of Park Rangers.....	70
4.46	Quality-of-Life Conclusion.....	70
<b>4.5</b>	<b>THE BLUE ECONOMY</b> .....	71
4.51	Lackawanna Wastewater Treatment Plant.....	72
4.52	Rush Creek Interceptor Project.....	73
4.53	Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility.....	73
4.54	Beach Closure Forecasting.....	74
4.55	Identify Bacteria Sources Impacting Beaches.....	75
4.56	Eliminate Bacteria Sources.....	75
4.57	Public Access Along the Buffalo River Corridor.....	76
4.58	County Parks Along the Buffalo River.....	76
4.59	Blue Economy Conclusion.....	77
<b>5.0</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	79
<b>6.0</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	81
6.1	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	82
6.2	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	84

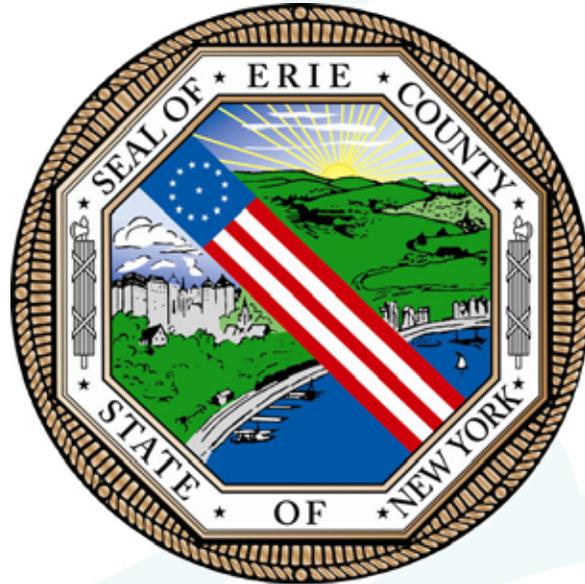


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**SECTION 1.0**  
**INTRODUCTION**

# BACKGROUND

*“Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.” – Robert F. Kennedy*



## 1.1 BACKGROUND: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

### THE OPPORTUNITIES: A CRITICAL MASS OF EXCITING PROSPECTS

Western New York is overflowing with positive opportunities. Sound leadership in Albany has yielded exciting change: on-time, balanced budgets; a newly enacted property tax cap; and the formation of the Regional Economic Development Councils, of which Western New York's Council (the "REDC") has been a leader, developing the award winning report, "A Strategy for Prosperity" (the "REDC Plan") that provides a framework for this document. Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has further propelled these positive opportunities with his commitment of \$1 billion in economic development monies for Buffalo, consisting of direct funding, tax breaks, and cheap power, as well as his recent announcement of "Tax-Free NY," a bold initiative to change the State's high-tax reputation. Tax-Free NY encourages the growth of new jobs by establishing tax free zones on State University of New York

("SUNY") and community college campuses. Companies that locate on campus will be able to grow their business without paying sales, property, business, or corporate taxes. With five SUNY locations throughout Erie County, we stand to benefit a great deal from this exciting new proposal.

Meanwhile, downtown Buffalo is in the midst of a building boom not seen since the early 1980's. The list of projects includes the Gates Vascular Institute, the just opened Hotel @ the Lafayette, the rebuilding of the Donovan Building, the rebirth of the Statler Building, the HARBORcenter project located on the Webster Block, the innovative reuse of the Larkin complex, and the explosive growth taking place at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus ("BNMC"). Growth at the BNMC includes plans for a new John R. Oishei Children's Hospital, a new University at Buffalo ("UB") medical school, and a new headquarters for Catholic Health Systems. All of this construction is on top of the decades of clean-up efforts, which have resulted

in approximately 1,000 acres of shovel ready land now online and available for further development.

Furthermore, the concept of sustainability has gained a foothold in Western New York and previous brownfield sites like Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, Buffalo RiverBend, Spaulding Fibre, and Bethlehem Steel have been or are ready for remediation. These efforts continue as New York State (“NYS”) Energy Research and Development Authority (“NYSERDA”) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) offer communities the opportunity to compete for tens of millions of redevelopment dollars for the presentation of a thorough, innovative, and collaborative sustainability plan for their region.

To add to the good news, Buffalo Niagara is being recognized nationwide on a growing list of accolades that demonstrate an important change in how Western New York is perceived: in 2010 Forbes Magazine called the region the 10th best place to raise a family; in 2011 Relocate America placed Buffalo Niagara among the top 100 best places to live and The Business Journals reported that Buffalo Niagara had the nation’s 18th strongest private sector job growth; and in 2012 the National Association of Home Builders ranked our region among the most affordable major U.S. housing markets.

Moreover, grassroots, non-profit, and neighborhood leaders throughout the cities, towns, and villages in Erie County are successfully reviving local commercial corridors in the heart of each community, rigorously promoting the important advantages of supporting local businesses, and giving a louder voice to our treasured assets. These individuals and institutions (some with national recognition) are also increasingly linked to and partnering with local governments throughout the County to serve the community and creatively address challenging problems. The remarkable success of the National Preservation Conference held in Buffalo in October 2011 is one demonstration of this work, as is the Building Alliance for Local Living Economies Conference coming to Buffalo in June 2013. Each of these is an example of the changing environment of Erie County.

## THE CHALLENGES: DECLINE, INEQUALITY, AND HIGH TAXES

Good news, however, is not enough to properly address our most challenging problems. Positive momentum must be strengthened with analysis of the problems; sound leadership; hard work; collaboration among government, private, and non-profit sectors; and a broader, more comprehensive, high-road approach to economic development.

The Poloncarz administration has analyzed Erie County’s problems and fully appreciates that the loss of over 195,000 residents since 1970 has resulted in the serious and expensive problem of vacant and abandoned properties. Such decline has also resulted in higher taxes, as far fewer people support infrastructure once built for many thousands more people.

The administration has also analyzed the demographic data available from the 2011 American Community Survey and finds the numbers relating to poverty and inequality to be alarming. While 15.3% of all residents in Erie County are below the federal poverty level (which is below the national average of 15.9%), 30.9% of the residents of the City of Buffalo are living below the poverty line. And, while only 10.1% of Whites in Erie County are living in poverty, 40% of Blacks/African Americans and 36.7% of Hispanics/Latinos are living in poverty. Compared to the national averages, Erie County is not unusually poor. What is alarming, however, is poverty in Erie County is unusually unequal.

## THE BLUEPRINT: ANALYSIS, INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

The Poloncarz administration embraces a comprehensive and innovative approach to economic development that builds meaningful partnerships in the private, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors as a blueprint to addressing our challenges and establishing our community as a region of choice for those considering relocating here. Such approaches are characterized by democratic, transparent, and innova-

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

tive policy development; public-private partnerships; effective workforce development; labor-management cooperation; sustainability; equitable economic opportunity; and a focus on investments in the public good.

As such, meaningful economic development for a region struggling with decline and inequality must include not only targeted, strategic public subsidies for projects that create new, livable wage job opportunities but also thoughtful land use planning; a commitment to smart growth, clean water, and sustainability; and conscientious investments in infrastructure, parks, arts, culture and waterfront development—all things which give our region a greater sense of place. It must fully appreciate the role agriculture plays in the Western New York economy and the growing emphasis on sustainable production and consumption of local food. It must also recognize our strategic location on the border with Canada and seek

to properly seize opportunities for tourism and international trade. And, finally, effective emphasis must be placed on entrepreneurship and workforce development with increased coordination among agencies, including Erie Community College (“ECC”) and Erie County Department of Social Services (“DSS”), and NYS. Human capital is one of our greatest resources and connecting local people with quality job opportunities is essential to increasing employment and reducing inequality and poverty in our community.

Erie County and the Poloncarz administration are deeply committed to a comprehensive and innovative approach to economic development—the kind that works for everyone in our community, seeking to increase employment and social equality. While the results will not be seen overnight, a sustained effort to implement this new economic development agenda will bear long-term fruit. The pages that follow detail how we intend to do so. ■

## 1.2 ERIE COUNTY'S ROLE IN HELPING OUR COMMUNITY REACH ITS POTENTIAL

As described in Section 1.1, this is a critical point in Erie County's journey toward a sound economic future. The positive climate created by innovative programs, financial resources and political leadership must be complemented by a similar commitment of County initiatives. The strategies described in this report outline a doable road map for Erie County.

This document recognizes the value, content, and direction of the REDC Plan as well as their more recently released February 2013 report, "A Path to Renewal: Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan" (the "Buffalo Billion").

The REDC Plan describes issues that affect the overall regional economy and require specific attention if the area is to move forward. In addition to identifying the systemic issues requiring specific attention, the REDC Plan describes industry sectors that are well positioned for growth.

The Buffalo Billion builds upon the important principals espoused by the REDC, including the pursuit of smart growth, building upon our strengths, the inclusion of all sectors of our population in economic recovery, and others. It focuses on three clusters of the region's economy where growth opportunities are strongest: Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Life Science, and Tourism.

The two REDC reports are landmark documents that provide sound guidance for all public and private sector partners working to achieve economic growth in the region. As an important member of the REDC, Erie County government will concentrate its many resources toward successful achievement of the REDC reports' recommendations.

**Since the REDC did an excellent job identifying area needs and projects, it is now up to Erie County to define a logical extension of this work and proceed with a local agenda. This "Initiatives for a Smart Economy" is such an extension.**



The County's annual budget is in excess of \$1.4 billion. These dollars support a variety of programs and agencies that either directly or indirectly contribute to the economic well-being of this region. Representatives from Erie County government or appointees of the County Executive are active members of many boards, commissions, and committees that make critical policy decisions that impact area development. These range from the Erie County Industrial Development Agency ("ECIDA") to the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation ("BUDC"). It is the intent of this document to identify important ways that these direct and indirect authorities can be used to carry out vital elements of the REDC Plan. This document will also serve as a model for others to similarly determine how their programs can further the particular action items of the REDC Plan.

Hopefully, this document and the policies defined herein will empower these groups to move forward with like agendas knowing that Erie County fully supports their efforts. ■

# ORGANIZATION

## 1.3 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report brings together, into one document, a description of key initiatives Erie County can undertake to achieve the goals outlined in the REDC Plan and further discussed in the Buffalo Billion. It is organized in a way that mirrors the topical categories contained in the NYS documents.

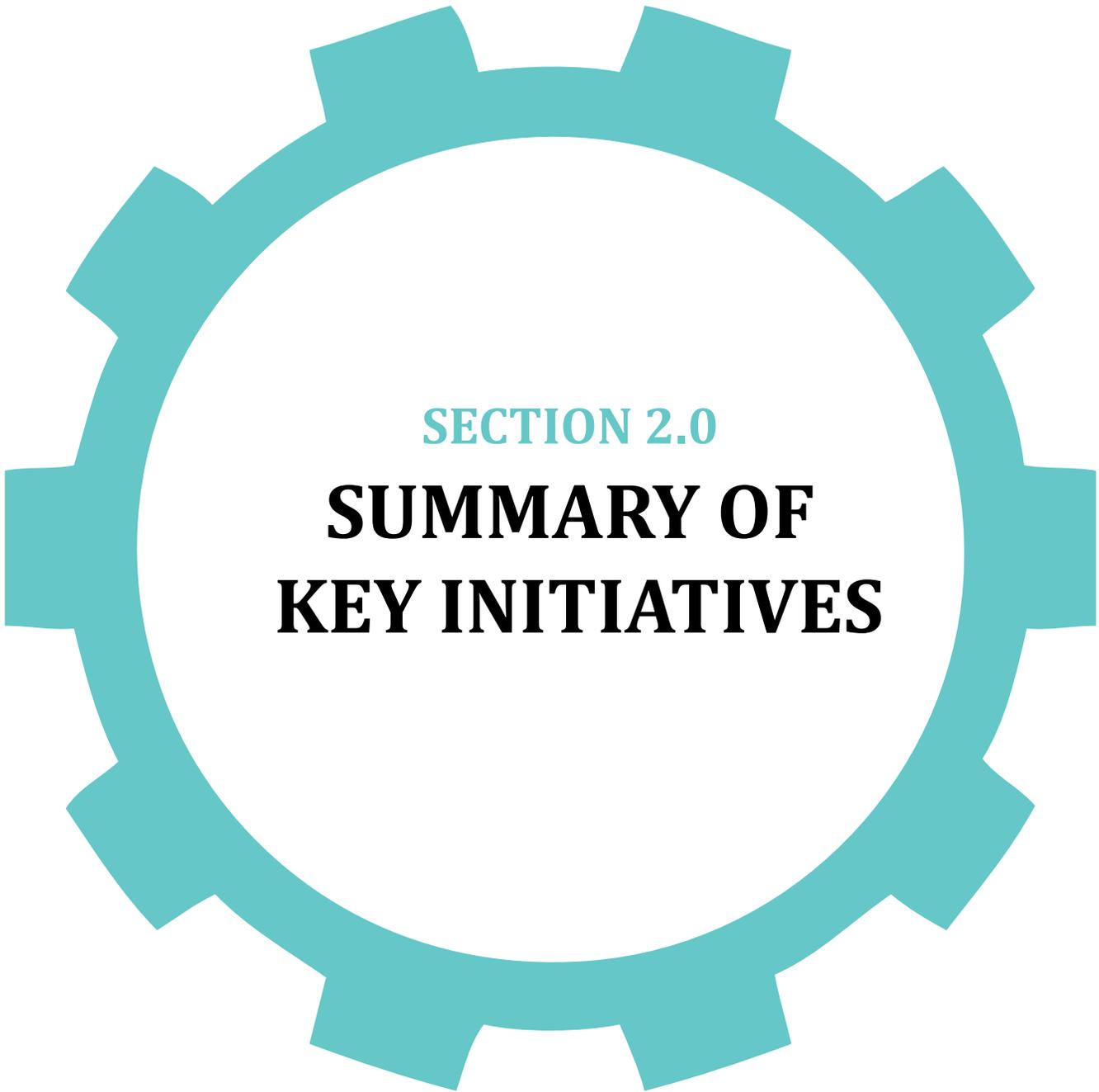
Section II, although not an executive summary, briefly highlights important new initiatives that Erie County will undertake. These are the cornerstones of the County strategy and warrant special focus.

Section III reinforces the linkages between the REDC Plan, the Buffalo Billion, and this document by describing the tools Erie County will use to implement many REDC strategies. The County role is described through action items, lead and potential partner organizations, timelines, and where applicable, vision statements, and resources needed for successful implementation. **It is important to note that “potential partners” are public and private entities as well as advocacy groups that have been identified by the County as being related in mission or scope to the subject area of a given action. None of these potential partners have been specifically solicited or have endorsed any action item they are associated with in this document.**

REDC Plan elements targeted toward economic sectors having little County involvement are not specifically discussed within this document. However, that does not diminish their importance to the overall economic growth of the region. These include Health and Life Sciences, Higher Education, Professional Services and Business Clusters.

Section IV identifies five other areas important to the County’s economy. Although not given priority status in the REDC Plan, each was mentioned as a contributor to the achievement of the noted REDC strategies or was further discussed in the Buffalo Billion. The Poloncarz administration elevates these five areas to equal standing with those described in Section III. It recognizes the important role Erie County has in reforming the role of the ECIDA; furthering international trade; maintaining sufficient land for future business expansion; enhancing the quality of life for our residents; and improving our infrastructure while protecting our watershed.

Section V briefly describes the next steps the County will take to implement the plan described within this document. ■

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**SECTION 2.0**  
**SUMMARY OF**  
**KEY INITIATIVES**

# KEY INITIATIVES

## SUMMARY OF KEY INITIATIVES

Nine strategies to move Erie County in a **smarter** direction

Although many actions described in Sections III and IV comprise a comprehensive compendium of undertakings—both small and large—a few initiatives warrant special attention. These are major new programs, capital projects, and policy directives where County government will take the lead in achieving. The success of these efforts will ultimately be determined by the commitment of the County Legislature to fund these initiatives as well as the greater community's embrace of this new focus on economic development.

### LAND

**Redevelop the former Bethlehem Steel site:** The creation of a 400-acre business park in the City of Lackawanna will receive a “kick start” in 2013 through construction of a public access entry road off of NYS Route 5. This will be achieved through the investment of \$1.5 million in road, water, and sewer work at the site. Rail relocation, private investment by Welded Tube, and a comprehensive generic environmental analysis of the remaining business park phases are all targeted for completion by 2014. After thirty years of relative inactivity, the former Bethlehem site in Lackawanna will again be a major employment center within the region.

### WORKFORCE

**Construct new academic building for ECC:** ECC and the County will construct a new science, tech-

nology, engineering and math (“STEM”) academic building on the North Campus. The new building will provide critically important academic space for the strategic expansion of existing ECC programs as well as integrate new and expanded workforce training offerings. These investments in education and training will be fully compatible with the Regional Workforce Advancement Center announced by NYS in May 2013 and will contribute to a fully integrated regional workforce training system at all educational levels.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Establish an Erie County Economic Development Office in the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”):** For the first time, Erie County will aggressively market itself in Ontario as the home for Canadian businesses looking to expand in the United States. Located in the heart of the Canadian business community, this office will be charged with lead generation, appointment setting, event planning, and business facilitation. The County will collaborate with government and private sector partners to sharpen its focus on attracting international investment to Western New York.

### TOURISM

**Analyze the need for a new downtown convention center:** Efforts must begin to evaluate the long term need for a new downtown convention center. The existing 34 year old structure does not meet the demands of major events and convention planners.

It is time to determine the needs for and opportunities for a new facility or significant renovation of the current facility, and if construction of a new facility is appropriate, a location for the new facility. In 2014, \$500,000 will be set aside to begin the site analysis and design concepts for a state of the art center that furthers the reinvestment in downtown now underway.

### AGRICULTURE

**Establish a shovel-ready agribusiness park in Erie County:** Erie County has significant locational advantages to compete in the agribusiness industry. However, there is no one site in Erie County specifically dedicated to agribusiness. A location to be considered is the former Erie County Home and Infirmary located in the Town of Alden. Currently vacant, this 152-acre site presents a potential opportunity for multiple uses, including an Agribusiness Park. The Department of Environment and Planning (“DEP”) will oversee a feasibility study in 2014, which will determine market based redevelopment scenarios, environmental constraints, and demolition estimates.

### SMART GROWTH

**Create a Smart Growth Fund for use in the County’s Community Development Block Grant (“CDBG”) Consortium Area:** Erie County will create a new Smart Growth Fund within the federally funded CDBG program. Approximately \$1,000,000 total will be available to local governments through a competitive process over the course of 2013, 2014, and 2015. Projects will be sought which further smart growth principles that enhance village and hamlet centers, connect employment corridors with new neighborhoods, integrate a mix of housing and commercial activity into new land development, and other similar activities.

### ENERGY

**Establish an Erie County Energy Management Office:** Erie County will establish an Energy Management Office within DEP and in partnership with the

Department of Public Works (“DPW”) to implement energy conservation and renewable energy investments in County Buildings. This office will be charged with developing an energy policy with an initial focus on implementing cost saving energy conservation measures throughout County-owned facilities. The savings from reduced energy usage will offset any increase to DEP’s operating budget resulting from this new responsibility.

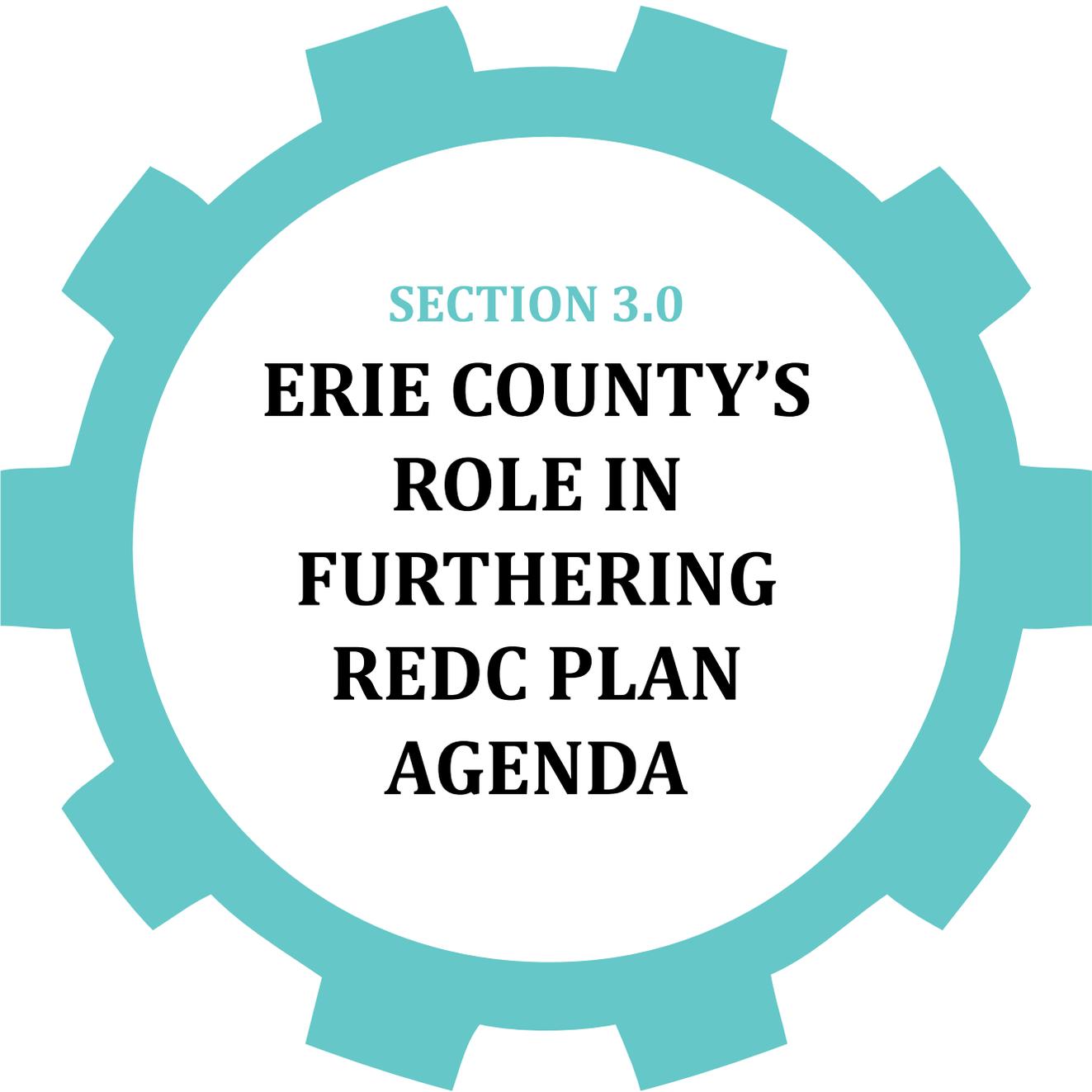
### CLEAN WATER

**Eliminate the Lackawanna Wastewater Treatment Facility (“WWTF”):** As the Lackawanna WWTF prepares to implement changes necessary to become compliant with its new State Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (“SPDES”) permit, it is an appropriate time to consider the possibility of sending Lackawanna’s flows to the City of Buffalo Sewer Authority (“BSA”). While this option would require construction of additional sewer infrastructure and a force main, a draft study completed in 2010 indicates that it will be less costly than implementation of the SPDES permit and a much better option over the long term. This project is one example of a regional collaborative infrastructure project that will provide additional necessary infrastructure to the outer harbor, create jobs, better protect our region’s watershed, and save taxpayer dollars over the long term.

### ECIDA

**Reform the ECIDA:** Under the leadership of the County Executive, the ECIDA will be refocused as an agency that is concerned with true wealth creation for the citizens of the County. The ECIDA will make targeted, strategic investments, consistent with New York State Law and in the interests of all Erie County taxpayers. Projects assisted by the ECIDA will be those that bring outside investment and good jobs to Erie County, strengthening our economic base and leading to stabilization of the population of the area. ■

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SECTION 3.0

**ERIE COUNTY'S  
ROLE IN  
FURTHERING  
REDC PLAN  
AGENDA**

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



***Erie County's workforce development system will be flexible, demand-driven and responsive to regional economic development goals, addressing the needs of job seekers and employers.***

## 3.1 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Erie County is at a critical point in its economic recovery and in the redevelopment of its workforce. Since the 1970s, the Western New York economy has been transitioning from a manufacturing economy with a focus on metals, chemicals, automobiles and aerospace to a more diversified economy. Although the region retains parts of its traditional base as an industrial economy, it is now characterized by a mix of industrial, light manufacturing, high tech, and service provider companies that operate in a wide array of sectors.

Like the rest of the United States, Erie County is experiencing a serious skills gap between its workforce and employers. If the economy can no longer grow or remain competitive because it cannot fill critical jobs with employees who possess the right knowledge, skills, and abilities, the entire sector will contract. According to The McKinsey Global Institute's June 2012 report, "The world at work: Jobs, pay and skills for 3.5 billion people, by 2020," there will be a global shortage of 38 to 40 million high skills workers and 45 million middle skills workers. Despite high unemploy-

ment numbers, employers are still struggling to find skilled workers to fill the growing number of openings around the country and in Erie County. This skills gap has three major causes: 1) an aging workforce, 2) younger generations of workers choosing not to enter high-growth fields, and 3) mismatches between the training being provided and the skills actually needed by employers.

President Obama, Governor Cuomo, and NYS Commissioner of Education John King, Jr. have all highlighted the need to transform education, particularly by enhancing the role of community colleges in training the next generation of workers. Erie County should be a leader in the implementation of these national and statewide efforts.

Because of this need and this opportunity, workforce development has been a top priority of the Piloncarz administration. In March 2012, a workgroup was assembled to assist with the County Executive's efforts to learn more about workforce training in the region and to study employers' needs as they relate to identifiable workforce gaps. The workgroup is

composed of key staff from the County Executive's Office, the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board, Inc. ("WIB"), the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium, Inc. ("WDC"), DSS, the Division of Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO"), and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership ("BNP").

Workforce training is a very large and complex enterprise in Erie County, which, unfortunately, is not clearly understood. Substantial overlap exists in the goals and outcomes of the various job training programs throughout Western New York. Employers frequently report confusion in navigating the training provider network. The workgroup organized a series of events that brought together stakeholders in workforce development and key employers in the region to identify the resources and needs of employers as well as the variety of training programs currently being provided in an effort to develop a plan that will effectively bridge the workforce gap. These events comprised the Workforce Development Summit Series.

One of the major aims of the Summit Series was to hear directly from employers about their needs, whether those needs are being met, and how the County could better serve the employers. There was a general consensus from the employers that employee candidates lack the technical and "soft skills" needed to be successful in their jobs, regardless of industry. The most common soft skills cited by employers, include communication skills, accountability, coping skills, conflict resolution, and work ethic. The lack of these soft skills creates high turnover, particularly in entry-level positions.

Employers are finding there are not enough people to fill jobs and an even smaller number of people in high schools, colleges, and vocational programs in training to take over these positions as current employees age out of the workforce. Employers stressed the need for marketing to high schools, community colleges, and training providers about the demand for skilled labor and to correct the many misconceptions about manufacturing jobs (dirty, unsafe, etc.). Employers also stressed their willingness to train employees for industry-specific skills if the employees come ready with basic-level skills. Furthermore, any

restructuring of job training programs can only be successful if there is significant engagement and buy-in from senior leadership of local employers at each step in the process.

The retooling of Erie County's workforce is fundamental to the success of the County's economic development efforts. Equally as important, retooling the workforce is also fundamental to the County's efforts to combat poverty and inequality in the region. Connecting local people with education and training that leads to job opportunities and career paths with living wages is an essential ingredient to achieving greater social and economic equality in the community.

Finally, Erie County must also examine its own workforce. While there are far fewer individuals employed by the County than there were just ten years ago, Erie County's workforce remains sizeable with over 4,000 employees and it is important that the demography of the County's workforce reflect the diverse demography of the general population. As stated in Erie County's Affirmative Action Plan (revised in 2012), "When departments recruit and retain an inclusive workforce—one that looks like the County it serves—and when individual differences are respected, appreciated and valued, diversity becomes an organization's strength that contributes to achieving results." As such, advancement and implementation of the County's Affirmative Action Plan are important components of the County's overall workforce strategy. ■

**Goal: Provide top-notch training to entry level and mid-level workforce.**

### 3.11 New ECC Building

**Construct new academic building for ECC:** As recommended by JMZ Architects in the May 2013 “ECC Program Needs Analysis and Space Utilization Assessment,” ECC and the County will construct a new STEM academic building on the North Campus. The new STEM building will provide critically important academic space for the strategic expansion of existing ECC programs already located on the North Campus that align with regional workforce needs in sectors of the economy with strong growth opportunities. This building will integrate new and expanded workforce training programs that respond to the needs of area employers while allowing ECC to continue its focus on one-year certificate and two-year degree programs. These programs will be fully compatible with the training offered by the Regional Workforce Advancement Center described below as well as offer students the opportunity to transfer to four-year colleges and universities, contributing to a fully integrated workforce training system at all educational levels. ■

**Timeline:** 18-24 Months

**Lead:** ECC

**Potential Partners:** DEP and DPW

**Resources:** \$15 million State funds, \$7.5 million County funds, and \$7.5 ECC funds (all funds already authorized by the respective legislative bodies).



### 3.12 Regional Workforce Advancement Center

**Support NYS efforts to build a Regional Workforce Advancement Center in the City of Buffalo:** On May 2, 2013, the REDC announced that, working with its partners, including ECC, NYS will create a Regional Workforce Advancement Center (“RWAC”) in the City of Buffalo. Both the new ECC STEM building on the North Campus and the RWAC in Buffalo are designed to fill important gaps in the continuum of training and education in order to create a fully integrated workforce training system for the 21st century. RWAC programs will focus on advanced manufacturing training linked directly to job opportunities. North Campus, where ECC’s current high tech, advanced manufacturing, science and health care programs are primarily located, will focus on one year certificates and two year degree programs. There will be full compatibility among the programs with stackable certificates from the RWAC standing on their own or providing credit towards one year and two year degrees. It is expected that ECC faculty will support the RWAC and students will be able to move seamlessly among the programs at the two institutions. Other partners in this continuum are the BOCES programs, science and technology programs at high schools and in charter schools, tech-

**Timeline:** 18-24 Months

**Lead:** ESD and ECC

**Potential Partners:** WIB, WDC, NYSDOL, local colleges and universities, BNP, local employers, Erie 1 BOCES, Erie 2 BOCES, Buffalo Public Schools, Charter School for Advanced Technologies

**Resources:** Funding through normal community college shared funding stream.

nical training schools, the four year colleges and universities and the various entities that provide funding for training such as the WIB, DSS and NYS Department of Labor (“NYSDOL”). ■



### 3.13 Apprenticeship Law

**Full implementation of the Apprenticeship Law:** As part of a comprehensive approach to training the next generation of construction and advanced manufacturing workers, it is necessary to focus upon entry-level training programs. Erie County Local Law 2-2006 requires contractors on County projects to submit a plan that demonstrates how apprentices will be utilized by the contractor on each project, including demonstrating that 10% of the workforce shall be participating in an Apprentice Program. Executive Order #11-2012 signed by the County Executive ordered full implementation of Local Law 2-2006 and that EEO shall review all County project for compliance. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Lead:** DPW

**Potential Partners:** DEP

**Resources:** Staff time- no new funding necessary.

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

**Goal: Create central database to assist County departments that provide employment assistance.**

### 3.14 Employment Resource Coordinating Council

**Establish internal Employment Resource Coordinating Council and database:** Multiple departments within the County are tasked with helping unemployed clients find employment. These departments also, independent from one another, develop relationships with local employers and create internal job banks to use in placing clients. Because there is no central clearinghouse for employer data within the County, information about training programs, job openings and employer needs is not necessarily shared among departments. In addition, employers do not have a single point of contact and may experience frustration when trying to access all of the resources available for placement assistance. The Employment Resource Coordinating Council will ensure best practices are shared by departments, resources are deployed strategically and results are monitored.

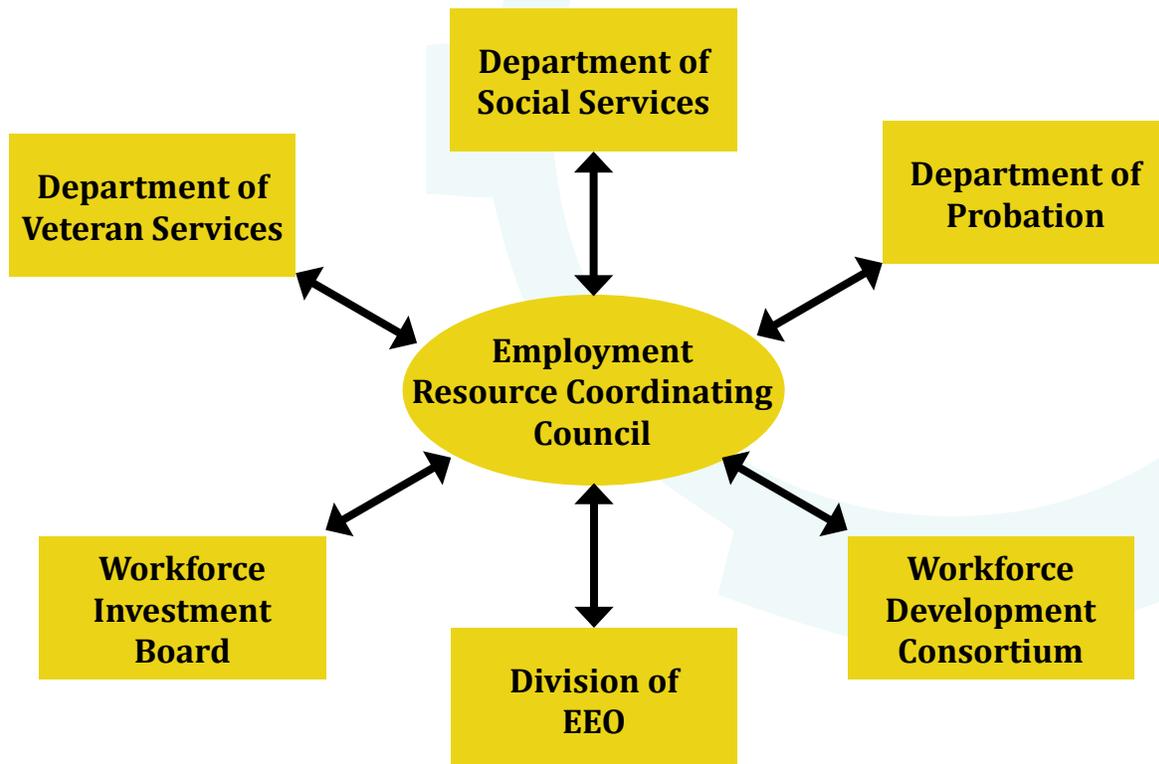
**Timeline:** 3-6 months

**Lead:** DSS, WIB, and WDC

**Potential Partners:** EEO, Erie County Departments of Veterans Services and Probation

**Resources:** Staff time- no new funding necessary.

A central database of employer needs and job openings will allow County staff to more efficiently screen candidates, match candidates to job openings, and respond to employer needs. This database will also be able to feed information into the Buffalo Niagara Skills Partnership as described in the Buffalo Billion. ■



**Goal: Encourage cooperation and collaboration among training providers and funders.**

### 3.15 Employment Training Resource Guide

**Publish annual Employment Training Resource Guide:** In 2012, 80 local training providers were surveyed about the training programs offered by each organization. The results were compiled into the Erie County Employment Training Resource Guide, which provides a snapshot of the types of services and training provided throughout the region. The guides were distributed to providers, funders, and employers and are available on the County website. The guide will be updated on an annual basis and serve as the basis for ongoing conversations with stakeholders about efficiency of service delivery and service overlap. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 months, published annually  
**Lead:** WIB  
**Potential Partners:** DSS  
**Resources:** \$250 for printing costs annually as well as staff time.

### 3.16 Workforce Development Summits

**Host Annual Workforce Development Summits:** Building on the success of the three-part 2012 Summit Series, future summits will continue to serve as working groups for workforce training providers, funders, clients, employers, and other stakeholders in the workforce development arena. Potential topics for discussion include addressing the skills gap, the role of primary and secondary education, transportation barriers, and public-private partnerships. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 months, held annually  
**Lead:** WIB  
**Potential Partners:** DSS, BNP, WDC, ESD, REDC, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (“NFTA”), and ECC  
**Resources:** \$1,000 annually.



Mark Poloncarz speaking at the initial Workforce Development Summit

**Goal: Address specific barriers to employment for DSS clients.**

### 3.17 Vocational ESL program

**Establish vocational ESL program for refugee clients of DSS placement programs:** DSS serves approximately 1,900 refugee or immigrant clients per year. These clients often have difficulty finding employment because they do not speak English. A number of local employers, particularly in manufacturing, have expressed a willingness to hire a group of workers with limited English proficiency provided a representative of the group has greater proficiency. Once the client is employed, English as a Second Language classes tailored to the vocabulary of the workplace can serve as a bridge to long term employment. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 months

**Lead:** DSS

**Potential Partners:** Erie 1 BOCES, Erie 2 BOCES, Buffalo Public Schools Adult Learning Center, International Institute of Buffalo, Journey's End, Jewish Family Service, and Catholic Charities

**Resources:** Funding is available through NYS's Employment Preparation Education program.

### 3.18 Workforce Development Conclusion

The alignment of available workforce training with the needs of employers is critical to the success of the County's economic development efforts. The skills gaps that exist in the Erie County economy present serious challenges to employers' abilities to sustain their businesses here, particularly in manufacturing and professional services. The initiatives outlined above, in connection with the work being done by REDC and other partner organizations, will help to stabilize the Erie County workforce, develop the pool of skilled workers, and narrow the skills gap. A flexible and inclusive system of training with close communication and coordination between the private sector, educators, and funders will help local employers to grow their business and attract outside investment to the County. ■

***Erie County shall fully embrace smart growth principles as the guiding tenet when making decisions that affect physical development within the region.***

## 3.2 SMART GROWTH

Just as the time is now to undertake a focused strategy for improving the region's economy, it is also time to get serious about "smart growth" in Erie County. Three major planning initiatives guiding the region's development efforts over the coming years are based on this concept. They include:

- "A Strategy For Prosperity in Western New York" (November, 2011) – Western New York Regional Economic Development Council
- "Western New York Regional Sustainability" (2012) – Regional Planning Consortium of Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Allegany, and Cattaraugus Counties
- "One Region Forward" (underway) – Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council ("GBNRTC") and the University at Buffalo Regional Institute

Utilization of smart growth principles is viewed as a "must" in each document. The term "smart growth" can be defined in many ways. Although entailing "common sense" principles, smart growth precepts are often ignored during the land improvement process. This may be due to uneducated decision makers or a view that it is too costly to effectively incorporate the concepts into development actions. It is important that Erie County not disregard the need for

the inclusion of smart growth principles in its actions and policies affecting physical development. As so clearly described in the REDC Plan, adherence to principles of smart growth must be followed if the region is to create the right environment for job growth and wealth creation.

The principles of smart growth are described in varying ways; however, the following provides a few concise statements which clearly illustrate their intention.

Smart growth concentrates investments in areas where infrastructure already exists. These include preserving historically important buildings and districts, reviving downtowns and main streets, reinvesting in established neighborhoods, and remediating former industrial lands for future industrial use. Smart growth also advocates new infrastructure investments that enhance walkability, provide for multiple transportation modes, connect disadvantaged communities with employment centers, and foster mixed use private investment. Lastly, smart growth supports protection of existing open space, natural resources, and water supply as well as preserves agricultural land and encourages the incorporation of natural ecosystem projects, including green infrastructure, into future land use development.

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

Erie County has been practicing smart growth both in its approach to long range planning as well as through various programs that affect area development including:

**a) “Erie and Niagara Counties Framework for Regional Growth” (2006).** This document established baseline data that informed the region about our expanding urbanized area even in an environment of population decline. An initial set of smart growth principles was established as important tenets to follow if reversal of this pattern was to occur. The document is used to evaluate and prioritize all county capital projects including extensions of sewer and water lines. Currently, DEP is working with “One Region Forward,” an initiative lead by GBNRTC and the UB Regional Institute to further refine the Framework and ensure that it is specific and detailed enough to guide county smart growth policy for years to come. Future establishment of a regional planning body may also be necessary to properly support implementation of the Framework.

**b) “Erie County Farmland and Agricultural Protection Plan” (2012).** This document defines a series of actions which supports the smart growth concept of protecting open space and natural resources. Section IV (E) of this report provides further information on this topic.

**c) “Erie County Parks System Master Plan” (2003).** This document clearly provides a vision for those parks, trails, open spaces, and ancillary facilities that comprise the County parks system. Design recommendations are outlined for each park following smart growth principles of natural resource protection. While the award winning plan is a model for other counties across NYS, the recommendations predate the County’s “Red-Green” fiscal crisis and are completely dependent upon significant new capital and operating resources.

**d) Natural habitat protection and passive activity parks** are now important components of County land holdings and include Times Beach, Seneca Bluffs, Bailey Peninsula, and River Front Parks.

**e) The introduction of green technology at the**

**County’s Black Rock Canal Park** in the City of Buffalo will serve as a model for other County parks in the system. This effort ranges from solar powered trash compactors to energy efficient lighting.

**f) County funds and manpower have been targeted toward the redevelopment of major brownfield sites,** notably Spaulding Fibre in the City of Tonawanda and the former Bethlehem Steel site in the City of Lackawanna.

**g) The smart growth principle of preserving historic buildings** is being carried out through the inclusion of \$500,000 in the 2013 County Capital Budget for the Darwin Martin House as well as \$1,000,000 toward restoration of the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens Complex in the City of Buffalo. The Roycroft Campus in the Village of East Aurora has also received County assistance toward its renewal.

**h) Smart growth is being practiced through bicycle trail development** along the Evans Lakeshore, Sherwood Greenway, and Erie Canal. This type of infrastructure helps enhance walkability and provides for multiple modes of transportation for area residents.

**i) The Commercial Center Improvement program,** funded through the County’s CDBG, assists business owners in village and hamlet centers in improving their building facades. This is smart growth as it channels resources toward revitalizing downtowns and main street areas.

**j) Erie County is also reinvesting in established neighborhoods.** The formation and funding of the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation promotes the smart growth principle of working toward the preservation and revitalization of existing neighborhoods.

Although smart growth is currently a leading principle that already guides County decisions, policies, and programming, it is important to align new smart growth initiatives in a way that reinforces the actions outlined in REDC Plan. ■

**Goal: Concentrate investments in areas where infrastructure already exists.**

### 3.21 Smart Growth Fund

**Create a Smart Growth Fund:** Erie County will create a new Smart Growth Fund within the federally funded CDBG program. Approximately \$1,000,000 total will be available to local governments through a competitive process in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Projects will be sought that further smart growth principles like enhancing village and hamlet centers, connecting employment corridors with new neighborhoods, integrating a mix of housing and commercial activity into new land development, and other similar activities. ■

**Timeline:** 3 years  
**Lead:** DEP  
**Potential Partners:** HUD and local governments  
**Resources:** \$1,000,000 federal funds and \$250,000 local funds.

### 3.22 Demolish Main Street blight



**Provide federal CDBG Funds to the Village of Springville for the demolition of the former Springville Hotel and the Village of Lancaster for removal of a portion of the former BOCES Building on West Main Street in the village center:** These are two smart growth projects that will further the goals noted above, especially those relative to reviving main streets, village centers, and historic buildings.

The Springville Hotel, located in the village center area, is in disrepair and represents a blighting influence on surrounding properties. Removal of the old hotel will complement the new interest in smart growth revitalization efforts within the village, sparked by an infusion of monies via Round Two of the REDC initia-

**Timeline:** 2 years  
**Lead:** DEP  
**Potential Partners:** Villages of Springville and Lancaster, and HUD  
**Resources:** \$900,000 in federal CDBG funds and \$75,000 in other funds.

tive. Specifically, \$434,310 in funding was awarded to the Springville Center for the Arts for critical improvements to their facility at 37 North Buffalo Street and \$394,810 in funding was awarded for the acquisition and conversion of 5 East Main Street into an arts café, artisan marketplace and artist housing.

Additionally, the Lancaster project will utilize over \$550,000 in federal CDBG funds and allow the reopening of an important through-street in the village center area. The thoroughfare has been closed to traffic since construction of the failed urban renewal project in the 1960's. Partial demolition and asbestos abatement of a nearby blighted building (former BOCES building) and reopening of West Main Street will enable the Village to achieve a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly downtown. ■

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

**Goal: Undertake new road, bridge, and sewer projects that enhance walkability, provide multiple transportation modes, connect disadvantaged communities with employment centers, and encourage mixed land uses.**

### 3.23 Erie County Complete Streets Policy

**Adopt an Erie County Complete Streets Policy:** A Complete Streets Policy would require consideration of design features such as sidewalks, paved shoulders suitable for use by bicyclists, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and other items on major County road projects. This is intended to complement the 2009 NYS Complete Streets Legislation.

The various functions and location of County roads will require a flexible policy. Strong coordination between DPW and DEP will be required to insure that the initiative is successful. ■

**Timeline:** 3 years

**Lead:** DEP and DPW

**Potential Partners:** Local governments, GBNRTC, and NYSDOT

**Resources:** Additional costs to current County road design/reconstruction will likely occur given the added features. Actual increase is unknown at this time.

**Goal: Protect existing open space, natural resources, and water supply.**

### 3.24 Niagara River Greenway Funding

**Adopt a review process for evaluating applications for Niagara River Greenway funding:** A review process should place a strong priority on projects seeking permanent capital infrastructure assistance which advance the concept of a linear system of parks and conservation areas linked by a network of multi-use trails. This description of a greenway mirrors the definition contained in the original State law establishing the Niagara River Greenway Commission (“NRGC”) in 2004. DEP will establish a point-based evaluation system for consideration by the Erie County Standing Committee, which would consist of representatives from Erie County, City of Buffalo, and the Olmsted Parks Conservancy. The Standing Committee’s role is to review and approve projects for funding through the Niagara Relicensing Agreement process. Emphasis will also be placed on new acquisitions and innovative uses of Greenway monies when these acquisitions result in added maintenance responsibilities. ■

**Timeline:** 6 months

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** City of Buffalo, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, New York Power Authority (“NYPA”), Partnership for the Public Good

**Resources:** Commitment of staff resources from the DEP and other organizations comprising the Erie County Standing Committee.



### 3.25 Cherry Farm parcel in the Town of Tonawanda

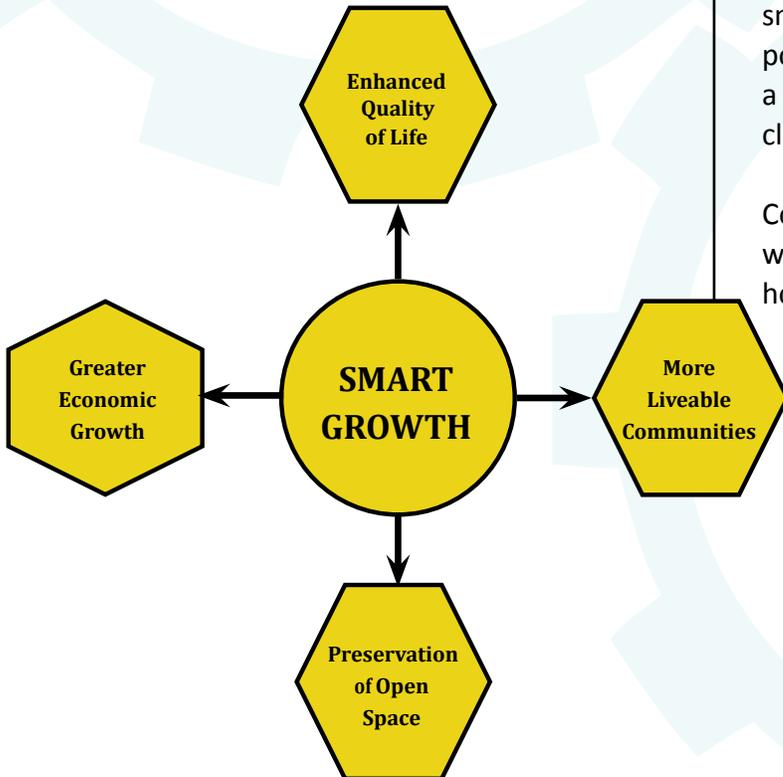
**Pursue public acquisition of the Cherry Farm parcel in the Town of Tonawanda with the ultimate action of acquiring the land as a new public waterfront park:** The 55-acre former landfill located immediately south of the Grand Island Bridges in the Town of Tonawanda has been viewed as an attractive addition to the County’s public waterfront landscape for many years. The availability of NRGF funding presents a unique opportunity to move forward with this initiative. An initial feasibility analysis would be necessary, however, to insure that any public use of the land is compatible with its former life as a private landfill. This would build on the recommendations contained in the 1997 report titled “Cherry Farm Park Redevelopment” prepared by Wendel for the Town of Tonawanda.new land development, and other similar activities. ■

**Timeline:** 3 years  
**Lead:** DEP  
**Potential Partners:** Erie County Standing Committee Members, Niagara River Greenway Commission, Town of Tonawanda, and private owners  
**Resources:** \$100,000 from NRGF in 2014 for feasibility analysis. Balance of funding unknown at this time.

### 3.26 Smart Growth Conclusion

A smart economy relies on the efficient use of limited resources. Incorporating sound approaches to land development makes sense because applying smart growth concepts is primarily driven by public policy and requires few public dollars. As noted above, a more appealing physical environment creates the climate for economic growth.

The more efficient, smart, and attractive the County grows, the more people and businesses will want to stay, thereby creating flourishing neighborhoods and jobs accessible to all income groups. ■



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP



***Erie County will be home to a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports home-grown talent and fosters a sustainable culture of innovation.***

## 3.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Western New York has a long legacy of innovation, from the automotive and aerospace industries to life sciences. In the early 20th century, Buffalo was supportive of inventors and risk-takers, and open to new ideas, and was rewarded with a robust economy. Up until World War II, there were wealthy business leaders willing to start, mentor and fund companies in Western New York. However, with the decline of the manufacturing economy in the late 20th century, the pipeline of inventors and capital dwindled. In recent years, we have failed to invest in our homegrown talent while we have seen too many local companies either fail to flourish or move to other more receptive locations.

The 21st century economy is technology driven, knowledge based, and entrepreneurial. By renewing our own culture of entrepreneurship, Erie County has the opportunity to grow its economy, create long-term sustainable wealth, and thrive in the global marketplace. The challenge, however, is to create an environment that encourages innovation and is hospitable to new ideas.

Local leaders are wrestling with the appropriate role for government in encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Innovation can play an enormous role in job creation; start-ups have the potential for high growth in ways that existing businesses do not, providing a higher rate of return on public investment than traditional companies. However, entrepreneurial activities have different needs from traditional firms. For example, they require different investment and debt strategies and have unique capital needs. Access to early-stage capital is fundamental to the success of any start-up. Additional support services to direct and foster growth are essential, and because venture capital prefers larger investments, there is also a need for capital to sustain start-ups while they scale up their operations. Traditionally, the financial assistance available from Erie County through ECIDA takes the form of tax abatements or loans and may not be particularly helpful to an emerging company. Erie County needs to re-examine the ways in which it can be supportive of the ECIDA's efforts to promote entrepreneurship throughout Western New York.

As the Poloncarz administration values equal opportunity, attention must be paid to minority and women entrepreneurs. They not only face tougher start-up challenges as they try to access capital, but also face increased obstacles in their efforts to secure contracts and business. The growth and development of minority- and/or women-owned business enterprises (“M/WBEs”) has a substantial positive impact

on the health of the County economy and as such should be strongly supported, consistent with sound management practices, and local, state and federal laws. MWBE participation policies and goals in procurement can be powerful tools for governments to promote equal economic opportunities and to counteract discrimination in the marketplace. ■

***Goal: Increase access for local emerging companies to early-stage capital and strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Western New York.***

### 3.31 Niagara Region Ventures Fund

**Revive the Niagara Region Ventures Fund:** The Niagara Region Ventures Fund was established in 1996 by the ECIDA to provide early-stage funding to local emerging companies with high growth potential. The fund was initially capitalized with \$9 million and 34 deals were funded over the following 15 years with a cash-on-cash return, so far, totaling approximately \$13 million. The fund, however, was shut down during the previous administration. The average size of investment made by the restarted fund will be \$300,000 or less. Each public investment will be leveraged with private money from angel investors or venture capitalists to minimize the risk to the fund while seeking to maximize the total capital available in each transaction. ■

**Timeline:** 6 Months

**Lead:** ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** Buffalo Angels and LaunchNY

**Resources:** \$7-10 million over 10 years.



### 3.32 Support of LaunchNY

**Support the efforts of LaunchNY by making an annual funding commitment:** LaunchNY is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create jobs by supporting high-growth potential firms with capital, management, and resources. LaunchNY represents 27 counties of Upstate New York and aims to link regional organizations and resources into a network that can connect funding resources with business growth opportunities. Modeled on and working in partnership with the highly successful JumpStart of northeast Ohio, LaunchNY will help develop or attract the resources necessary to an environment of entrepreneurship and innovation. LaunchNY is currently raising money to fund the first two years of operations and has agreed to use its best efforts to secure \$5 million in matching funds. Erie County, through ECIDA, will commit \$100,000 annually of federal Urban Development Action Grant reflow funds to LaunchNY. ■

**Timeline:** 3 Years  
**Lead:** ECIDA  
**Potential Partners:** LaunchNY  
**Resources:** \$100,000 annually.



# LaunchNY

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***Goal: Increase the amount of entrepreneurial talent in Western New York with business expertise.***

### 3.33 Entrepreneurship Bootcamp Event

**Host Entrepreneurship Bootcamp weekends:** Entrepreneurship bootcamp programs have been held at locations around the country as intensive educational experiences for potential entrepreneurs. Programs typically include workshops on strategic thinking, self-assessment, development of business plans, marketing, attracting investors and basic business and financial literacy. Erie County and ECC will host an annual bootcamp weekend to encourage budding local entrepreneurs, particularly in M/WBE circles, and to foster networking with investors. Programming will be coordinated with ECC's Entrepreneurship Certificate Program. ■

**Timeline:** 6 Months  
**Lead:** ECC  
**Potential Partners:** Small Business Development Center, Black Chamber of Commerce, and Hispanic Business Association  
**Resources:** \$10,000 (Grant funding opportunities available through U.S. Small Business Administration).

**Goal: Promote equality of economic opportunities for minority and women entrepreneurs.**

### 3.34 M/WBE participation for Ralph Wilson Stadium project

**Fully implement the M/WBE plan for the recently negotiated lease of Ralph Wilson Stadium:** The recently negotiated documents for the lease of Ralph Wilson Stadium between the County, the Buffalo Bills and NYS include an ambitious plan for M/WBE participation in the \$130 million renovation of the stadium as well as the annual maintenance and repairs. The plan includes a goal of 23% M/WBE participation in all construction contracts for the stadium, subject to limited exclusions. The Buffalo Bills will be responsible for achieving the participation goal with respect to the renovation, while the County will be responsible for achieving the goal with respect to the annual maintenance and repairs. NYS will monitor both processes and has the ability to impose financial penalties if the participation goals are not met.

The County, NYS and the Bills are working closely together to ensure achievement of the goals. Educational events are planned to increase awareness of M/WBE contract opportunities, including a job fair for M/WBE contractors and seminars about the process

**Timeline:** 3 years of stadium renovation, 10 years of annual maintenance and repairs

**Lead:** EEO

**Potential Partners:** DPW, ESD, and Buffalo Bills

**Resources:** Staff time – no additional resources needed.

of becoming certified to take advantage of these opportunities. The County and NYS are developing a fast-track process to cross-certify contractors that are already certified by the County in order to allow the contractors to quickly become certified by NYS. Staff from EEO, DPW, the Bills and NYS will continue to meet weekly to coordinate their efforts and make certain progress is being made toward achieving the participation goals. ■



### 3.35 M/WBE participation for ECC STEM Building project

**Develop and implement M/WBE plan for new ECC STEM building:** The investment of \$30 million in a new STEM building on ECC's North Campus presents another major opportunity for M/WBE contractors in Western New York. As part of the pre-construction process, the County will develop an M/WBE plan for this construction project that is similar in scope and scale to the M/WBE plan for Ralph Wilson Stadium. ■

**Timeline:** 2 years of construction

**Lead:** EEO

**Potential Partners:** ECC, DPW, SUNY and other possible NYS partner agencies.

**Resources:** Staff time – no additional resources needed.

### 3.36 Entrepreneurship Conclusion

Erie County and Western New York have a large amount of university research, a legacy of innovation, and a well-educated workforce, producing a modest number of new high potential startup opportunities each year. However, these opportunities have not been exploited to their fullest due to a shortage of entrepreneurial assistance, experienced entrepreneurs, and investment. The action items described above will have a direct and positive impact on these deficiencies, leading to a more fruitful entrepreneurial ecosystem. An economy steeped in the culture of innovation and with a strong commitment to economic parity is more resilient, flexible, and grows more quickly than a traditional economy. ■

***Erie County will be a statewide leader in undertaking new and innovative programs which elevate agriculture to equal standing with other priority sectors of the local economy.***

## 3.4 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is often the overlooked economic engine of our national economy. In New York State alone, agriculture and agriculture-dependent business—from the farm stand to the yogurt producer—have a \$38 billion impact on state economic output, including 196,200 jobs. Of that \$38 billion in total output, \$15.6 billion is value added, which stays within the community, such as money spent on payroll, state and local taxes, and at local businesses. While more difficult to quantify, agriculture also protects open space, air and water quality, and attractive landscapes, which contribute to the budding agritourism industry, increase our quality of life, and promote smart growth.

Locally, it is estimated agriculture sales contribute \$117 million into the Erie County economy. The economic impact of agriculture in Erie County also extends to secondary industries like food processors, which rely upon local farms to supply raw agricultural materials for processing. Erie County's proximity to major markets and agricultural suppliers has contributed to the success of agribusinesses in the area. Companies like Steuben Foods, Goya, Sorrento Lactalis, Perry's Ice Cream, and Rich Products exemplify the Buffalo Niagara region's significant advantages in the agribusiness sector. As stated in Buffalo Niagara Enterprise's ("BNE") "Food and Food Processing, Buffalo

Niagara Industry Cluster Profile," the eight-county Buffalo Niagara region is the top area in the country for the Food and Food Processing industry cluster, with the highest employment concentration out of the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the nation. Recognizing the significant economic impact of agriculture, the REDC Plan incorporated agriculture as part of the regional industry sectors.

Despite this, Erie County's farms are struggling. Between 2002 and 2007 the number of farms decreased by 6%, while acreage in farms decreased by 8%. In an effort to combat the loss of agriculture, Erie County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board recently completed the "Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan." This document provides a snapshot of the agriculture industry in 2012, identifying issues and recommending actions to protect farmland and enhance the economic viability of agriculture. Some of the issues identified in the plan include farmer access to local markets, burdensome regulatory environment, educating the public about the value of agriculture, access to financial assistance, and an aging workforce. Recommendations such as a need for a Western New York regional brand for marketing local foods, enhancing linkages between producer and consumer, and promotion of careers in agriculture were echoed in the REDC Plan. ■

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

**Goal: Attract new agribusinesses to Erie County and increase the profitability of local agriculture.**

### 3.41 Agribusiness Park

**Establish a shovel-ready agribusiness park in Erie County:** Erie County has significant locational advantages to compete in the agribusiness industry; however, there is no one site specifically dedicated to agribusinesses. Establishing a shovel-ready agribusiness park will allow food and agricultural processing facilities to serve as an additional market for raw agricultural products for farmers, while also creating new jobs and adding to the local tax base.

Agribusiness parks are typically located relatively close to agricultural producers or suppliers. Important site-determining factors include good transportation connections and sufficient utilities to accommodate food processors.

Two possible locations have been identified. First is the former Eden Angola Airport located in the Town of Evans. DEP will work with the Town of Evans and ECIDA to further this redevelopment concept. Second is the former Erie County Home and Infirmary located

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** ECIDA, BNE, and town(s) with potential sites

**Resources:** Approximately \$200,000 for feasibility study (funding through ESD and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets).

in the Town of Alden. This vacant 152 acre site presents a potential opportunity for multiple uses, including an agribusiness park. DEP will oversee a feasibility study in 2014, which will determine market based redevelopment scenarios, environmental constraints and demolition estimates. ■

### 3.42 Agribusiness development capacity at ECIDA

**Create dedicated economic and business development capacity at the ECIDA for agricultural industry sector:** DEP will work with the ECIDA to identify existing programming which can be marketed to agribusinesses; explore the feasibility of a loan program set-aside, dedicated specifically to agribusiness; research and apply to funding sources for agricultural economic development projects; assist with agribusiness attraction efforts; and explore innovative financing options for agricultural businesses. ■

**Timeline:** 3-5 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** ECIDA and BNE

**Resources:** ECIDA and DEP staff time.

***Goal: Increase market access and profitability for small to medium sized farmers.***

### 3.43 Food hub feasibility study

**Initiate a food hub feasibility study:** Food hubs are centrally located facilities with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, and distribution and/or marketing of locally produced foods. The majority of agricultural operations in Erie County are considered small farms by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”). A food hub could potentially increase the profitability for small farmers by facilitating collaboration on marketing and distribution. DEP will pursue applying for funding for a food hub feasibility study. The study will determine whether there is a need for a food hub, and if so, where would be the best geographic area within the County for one to be located. Most food hubs serve as a drop-off point for several farms in a region and a pick-up point for distribution stream and customers who want to buy food from local and regional family farmers. In the past, Erie County assisted Eden Valley Growers, Inc. with the purchase of coolers for produce, which led to increased sales, lengthened the growing season, and allowed local farmers to supply large grocery stores like Tops and Wegmans. A food hub could potentially serve a similar role for small farmers.

If feasible, a food hub could be located within the agribusiness park at the County Home and Infirmary or former Eden Angola Airport as means to facilitate food hub and food processor partnerships.

A food hub would include elements like co-packing facilities; public cold storage; branded community marketing initiatives; global GAP certification capability designed into the operating and management systems; USDA inspected facilities; and shared-use processing facilities with business support systems, e.g., business incubation services. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** Field and Fork Network and Erie County Farm Bureau

**Resources:** Approximately \$150,000 (funding through NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets).

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

**Goal: Increase the amount of healthy, locally produced food purchased by citizens of Erie County.**

### 3.44 Food Policy Council in the Department of Health

**Establish a Food Policy Council in the Department of Health:** The agricultural industry connects many interrelated Erie County priorities, such as strengthening the economy, protecting the environment, and improving public health. The creation of a Food Policy Council acknowledges the complexity of the local food system by bringing together agricultural producers, grocery stores, restaurants, food disposal services, and consumers to focus on connecting consumers with healthy, locally produced food. Working under the organizational framework of the Department of Health (“DOH”), a Food Policy Council will be charged with promotion of local agricultural products into local grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions. Additionally, it will work to connect healthy, nutritious food with underserved urban markets as a means to combat the obesity epidemic and eliminate “food deserts,” which are geographic areas with little or no access to grocery stores with fresh and affordable foods needed to maintain a healthy diet. Lastly, it will work to strengthen the local food system by exploring issues in food production (farming), food processing, food wholesale, food distribution, and food disposal. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** DOH

**Potential Partners:** BNMC, DEP, local governments, UB, school districts, local farmers in both rural and urban communities, and Erie County Farm Bureau

**Resources:** DOH staff time.

### 3.45 Regional agricultural brand

**Develop a regional agricultural brand:** It can be difficult for consumers who want to purchase local agricultural products to identify which products are actually produced in Western New York. A regional brand provides a quick and visible indication of where the product comes from. Through funding provided by Erie County, Cornell Cooperative Extension will coordinate the identification of a regional brand. This will directly carry out an important item on REDC’s agricultural agenda. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** Cornell Cooperative Extension

**Potential Partners:** DEP, Field and Fork Network, and Erie County Farm Bureau

**Resources:** DEP staff time.

**Goal: Assist in the promotion of agritourism.**

### 3.46 Agritourism

**Support agritourism efforts:** Although Erie County does not have a direct role in promotion of agritourism, it is important that DEP work with the Southtowns Community Enhancement Coalition in their efforts to provide opportunities in this area. This could be done directly through CDBG monies (if eligible for planning studies) or indirectly by encouraging Visit Buffalo Niagara (“VBN”) to provide technical resources. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years  
**Lead:** DEP  
**Potential Partners:** Field and Fork Network, VBN and Erie County Farm Bureau  
**Resources:** Approximately \$150,000 (funding through NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets).



### 3.47 Agriculture Conclusion

Erie County will leverage its limited economic development resources by working cooperatively with agricultural and economic development partners to maximize the return on our investment and help agriculture thrive in Erie County. Our combined efforts will attract new agribusinesses and increase the profitability and market access for small to medium sized farmers, while also increasing the amount of healthy, locally produced food purchased by citizens of Erie County. ■



***By capitalizing on the abundance of natural, cultural and athletic tourism opportunities and assets, Erie County will become the international tourism destination we know it can be.***

## 3.5 TOURISM

Erie County is blessed with an embarrassment of riches when it comes to tourism attractions. Visitors travel from all over the country and the world for the outstanding art, architecture, history, theater, culture, professional sports, and parklands—bringing \$1.5 billion in tourism spending annually to Erie County.

Canadians, particularly residents of the GTA, are the most powerful visitor segment to the region. They come to shop, attend sporting events, and use the Buffalo Niagara International Airport (“BNIA”). Much of this spending happens organically and is driven by word of mouth. Canadian shoppers visit 3.1 times per year and stay overnight just once a year. According to a study completed for Visit Buffalo Niagara in 2012, there is the potential to draw an additional \$310 million into the regional economy by increasing the average number of visits per year to 4.1 through targeted marketing campaigns.

Cultural travelers also represent a significant tourism growth opportunity for Erie County. Western New York has a collection of buildings and architecture from the golden era of Buffalo industry, created by

legends such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Elbert Hubbard, Louis Sullivan and H.H. Richardson. After close to \$100 million in public investment over the past 15 years, most of the projects are nearing physical completion. The challenge now is to market them properly and achieve the highest rate of return on this public investment as possible.

Amateur athletics is also a major driver of tourism in Erie County, with 52% of the business booked by VBN related to such events. The region has played host to competitions sponsored by NCAA Basketball, USA Hockey, NCAA Swimming and Diving, ESPN Bassmasters, and the International Ice Hockey Federation as well as countless other tournaments and meets at the scholastic level. Additionally, construction of the HARBORcenter project downtown promises to bring even more amateur hockey to Buffalo.

Beginning in 2013, the supply of hotel rooms in Erie County will increase significantly—nearly 15% by 2015. Destination promotion will be essential in maximizing tax revenue derived for Erie County, making regional branding and marketing crucial. An increase

in VBN's marketing budget will allow it to aggressively court the travelers described above and will allow for greater collaboration with regional partners, such as the Niagara Tourism Convention Corporation.

The Buffalo Niagara Convention Center ("BNCC") hosts approximately 200 events per year. Unfortunately, the current structure is 34 years old and no longer meets the demands of the major events and

convention planners. With the tremendous growth occurring at the BNMC, significant waterfront development in downtown Buffalo, and the possibility of a new NFL stadium on the horizon, it is an appropriate time to determine the needs for and opportunities for a dramatic renovation or construction of a new convention center. ■

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***Goal: Transform Buffalo and Erie County into a first class destination for top tier conventions.***

### 3.51 New downtown convention center feasibility study

**Conduct market study to determine feasibility and appropriate size for new downtown convention center:** The current BNCC is maximizing its potential with the help of an excellent sales team and recent capital improvements to the 34 year old building. This is evident by the recent success of conferences such as the National Preservation Conference held in Buffalo in October 2011. However, due to its small size, the BNCC is only able to accommodate conferences that require contiguous exhibit space of 65,000 square feet or less. According to a query conducted from the database managed by Destination Marketing Association International, the potential universe of available meetings in need of space this size is approximately 740 meetings. These meetings have an average group size around 1,000 people, requiring approximately 750 hotel room nights on peak night, and staying 2.5 days. The economic value of conferences of this size and duration can be in excess of \$1.2 million.

However, if Buffalo were to increase the size of the exhibit floor from 64,000 to 180,000 square feet of contiguous space (which would make the size of Buffalo's convention center average according to a 2006 Price Waterhouse Cooper report conducted by the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau), the meeting universe becomes almost 1,200 potential meetings. These meetings have average group sizes of approximately 3,000 attendees, requiring 1,500 hotel rooms on peak night, and staying 2.5 days. If Buffalo could

**Timeline:** 1 year

**Lead:** DEP and VBN

**Potential Partners:** REDC and ESD

**Resources:** \$500,000.

approximately triple the size of its convention center exhibit space, it could also nearly triple the economic benefit to the region as conferences of this size and duration can have an economic value greater than \$3.1 million. ■

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

**Goal: Increase public funding for regional branding and marketing.**

### 3.52 VBN funding advisory board

**Establish an advisory board to explore mechanisms for increasing and stabilizing funding for VBN:** The Hotel Occupancy Tax was created by the County Legislature in 2005. Since then, annual appropriations have been made as part of the County's budget process, resulting in instability and static overall funding. The advisory board would be comprised of County staff, business leaders, hoteliers, representatives from local charitable foundations, the labor community, and others. The board would be charged with developing and evaluating alternate revenue models and would then recommend the model that best achieves the goal of stability in VBN budgeting. ■

**Timeline:** 6-12 months

**Lead:** VBN

**Potential Partners:** Legislature, Western New York Hotel/Motel Association, BNP, Partnership for the Public Good, Western New York Area Labor Federation ("WNYALF"), and charitable foundations

**Resources:** No resources needed for the advisory board other than staff time. Additional funding for VBN to be recommended by advisory board, subject to County Executive approval and submission in any tentative budget.

### 3.53 Tourism Conclusion



Erie County has a long history of investment in our unique tourism assets and the potential return on this investment is substantial. This region is rich with assets that can draw visitors from around the world, but the tourism sector still underperforms. The initiatives laid out in this section seek to capitalize on the investment already made by the public sector. The new convention center study will enable the County to make an informed and responsible decision about how to best use public funding when the time comes to construct a new facility. The advisory board will help the County determine the most appropriate way to ensure appropriate funding for marketing and branding the Buffalo Niagara region and to maximize the amount of outside revenue flowing into the community. ■

***Erie County will establish an Energy Management Office to create economic drivers through energy conservation and renewable energy investment.***

## 3.6 ENERGY

As stated in the REDC Plan: “Western New York is already an important center of renewable energy production by virtue of the hydropower facility in Niagara County. Our natural potential to participate in development of a broader range of renewables—solar, wind, biomass, and geo-thermal—combined with strengths in research and manufacturing make it possible to imagine our region as a global hub for renewable energy.”

Various private and public entities in Erie County have completed, and continue to pursue, energy conservation measures and renewable energy investment. For example, UB has had an energy office for more than 25 years resulting in hundreds of thousands of annual savings and last year installed a 750 kilowatt photovoltaic “solar strand.” Also in 2012, six more wind turbines were brought on-line at the highly visible Steel Winds Project in the City of Lackawanna. Additionally, People United for Sustainable Housing (“PUSH Buffalo”) has established a Green Development Zone, which uses green energy and conservation as part of its strategy to bring neighborhood resources under community control and stewardship.

Erie County government has pursued energy savings projects leveraging both state and federal funding; however, there is much more that can be done. It is important to note that such investments



will not only save money but also spur economic development.

The REDC calls out this potential in their strategy: “Western New York once led the nation and the world in innovation in the development and long distance transmission of electrical energy, particularly using hydropower, and in the development of oil and natural gas as energy sources, thus creating one of the strongest economies in the U.S. Re-harnessing the region’s natural and human resources through the use of renewable energy, conservation, smart grid and new energy technology will spur sustainable economic revival.”

Energy conservation and renewable energy investment not only protect our quality of life by reducing air pollution, but they are also economic drivers because they create jobs both directly and indirectly over both

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

the short- and long-term. In the October 2012 white paper by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, “Energy Efficiency Job Creation: Real World Experiences,” it was calculated that for every \$1 million of investment in energy efficiency and conservation, 20 jobs were created either directly or indirectly, as opposed to the 17 jobs created directly or indirectly through “business as usual.” Even more importantly, in the long-term, 7 jobs are created for every \$1 million of energy savings per year. Thus, if a project results in \$3 million of energy savings per year for 20 years, 21 more jobs will be created every year for those 20 years than if the energy efficiency measures had not been put in place. According to the white paper, this long-term impact is the result of freeing up funds to “support more jobs in the economy by shifting jobs in the energy generation and distribution industries (lower labor intensity: 10 jobs per \$1 million) to jobs in all other industries (higher labor intensity: 17 jobs per \$1 million on average).”<sup>1</sup>

Despite New York State lacking a defined State Energy Policy, this issue has, nevertheless, been identified as a priority at both the state and federal levels, with many different resources and funding sources for planning and implementation made available. Both NYSERDA and the U.S. Department of Energy (“DOE”) have programs to assist with analysis of opportunities. For example, DOE has a Technical Assistance Program (“TAP”) that provides local officials with resources to advance successful, high-impact, and long-lasting clean energy policies, programs, and projects. NYSERDA and other agencies often solicit grant applications to assist with the implementation of projects. Furthermore, there is \$5.5 million in very low interest (currently 1%) Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (“QECB”) for Erie County to implement energy conservation projects. These bonds can be utilized as a match to leverage the funding opportunities, which often require a local contribution. Finally, in March 2012, NYPA established the Western New York Economic Development Fund (“WNYEDF”), with \$20 million to invest in economic development proj-

ects, 15% of which must be energy related and located within a 30-mile radius of the Niagara Power Project.

Erie County can play a vital role in creating an economic driver through energy conservation and renewable energy investment. Additionally, Erie County government can more aggressively conserve energy and invest in renewable energy while also partnering with other agencies to help more residents, businesses, municipalities, and institutions conserve energy. For example, Erie County will work with the REDC’s Energy Work Group to support positioning the region as a “global energy hub.” Erie County will also work with the REDC’s Smart Growth Work Group and the NYSERDA Greener Cleaner Consortium to assure the development and adoption of an effective implementation strategy for the recently adopted “WNY Sustainability Plan.” Many other opportunities for community partnerships exist and are outlined in the action items below. ■



<sup>1</sup> “Energy Efficiency Job Creation: Real World Experiences” by Casey J. Bell, October 2012, an American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) White Paper, Page 14

**Goal: Invest in energy conservation measures and secure renewable energy resources at County facilities, utilizing low cost financing and grants.**

### 3.61 Erie County Energy Management Office

**Establish an Erie County Energy Management Office to implement energy conservation and renewable energy investments in County buildings:** Due to the size of Erie County government, the County should hire or designate an Energy Officer and any other staff needed to establish an updated County Energy Policy and oversee the analysis and implementation of energy conservation measures in County buildings. As has been seen in other large-scale public entities, such as UB, the expense associated with this position(s) will be offset by energy cost savings.

The Energy Officer will use existing energy audits, such as the audits for Erie County Small Buildings put together by CJ Brown Energy PC, to implement energy conservation measures. The Energy Officer would also review other previous energy audits and determine the need for a schedule of additional audits. Securing grant funding, outside technical resources for audits, and implementation funding will also be a priority for this position. Finally, the Energy Officer will utilize energy benchmarking to document energy and cost savings. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** DPW

**Potential Partners:** DEP, NYSERDA, and National Grid

**Resources:** Annual funding for an Energy Officer and lower level staff.

The UB Solar Strand (picture right) is one example of the work being done by their Energy Management Office.



## 3.62 Interdepartmental Green Team

**Create an interdepartmental Green Team to encourage conservation within County buildings:** Through the creation of an interdepartmental Green Team, which would focus on energy reduction through behavior modification as well as other resource conservation projects, Erie County would realize tremendous energy savings. The Green Team, made up of representatives from a variety of county departments, would implement energy conservation and waste reduction projects and track energy use, waste reductions, and cost savings. Other counties that have found cost savings with such a program have hired a Sustainability Coordinator to organize the Green Team, oversee the implementation of projects, and report energy conservation and cost savings figures to the Energy Officer. Initially these projects would focus on three areas: energy use, solid waste, and fleet management.

Opportunities to conserve energy within County buildings could include projects such as an education and incentive program regarding shutting down com-

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

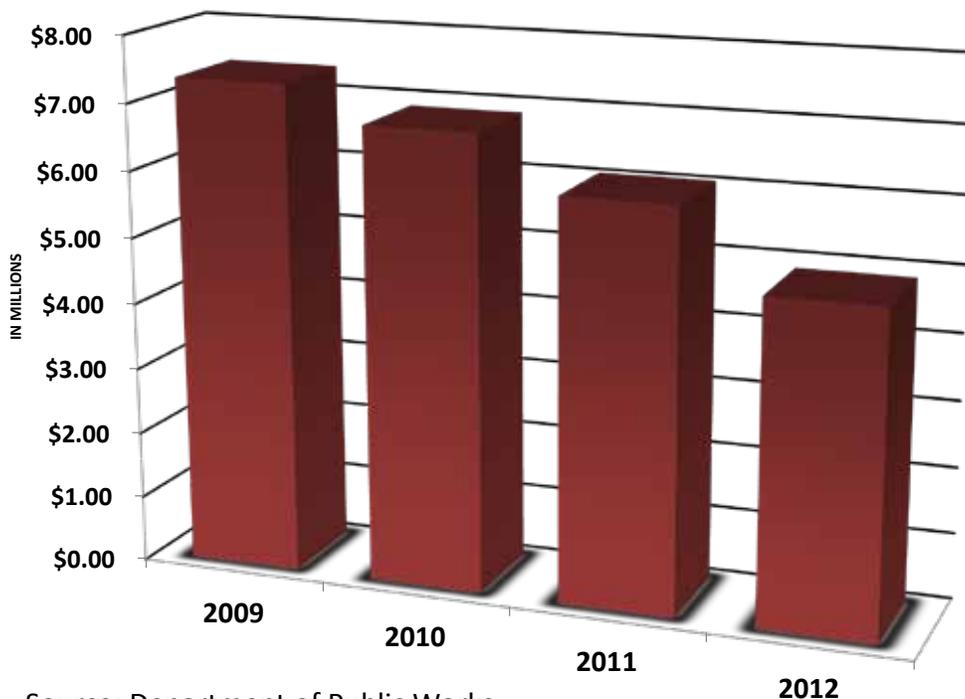
**Lead:** DPW

**Potential Partners:** DPW and Erie County Departments of Information Support Services, Purchasing, and Parks

**Resources:** Funding for a JG-12 or higher (Project on list for 3 year of funding through NYSERDA Cleaner, Greener Communities Phase 2).

puters and the enforcement of policies regarding the use of personal heaters and/or replacing non-County owned equipment such as refrigerators. The Green Team would also pursue fleet management projects, which could include training regarding anti-idling and fuel conservation driving techniques, as well as pursuing grants for alternative fueled vehicles. ■

### ERIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT ENERGY COSTS



Source: Department of Public Works

***Goal: Increase the number of Erie County residents who retrofit their homes to conserve energy.***

### 3.63 Energy conservation revolving loan program

Work with partners to create a revolving loan fund as a resource for energy conservation and renewable energy projects for low- and moderate-income homeowners: The homeowners that would be served by this loan fund have not been served by NYS energy efficiency rebates and incentives because of their inability to borrow or self-finance retrofits. Instead of using typical credit ratings, this program would use utility bill history as credit and allow low income homeowners who are not currently being served to pay back the loans on their utility bills, called “On-Bill Financing.”

In addition to its immediate value of saving energy costs for lower-income households, the first years of the program are critical for testing the power of On-Bill Financing to make low-risk loans to underserved communities. Such an investment would support a pilot to assess On-Bill Financing to customers with credit barriers: low- and moderate-income homeowners, primarily in cities, who have been left out of the energy efficiency economy because they have not been able to “spend money to save money.”

This project will also create jobs. It is estimated that the \$2.5 million investment in this revolving loan fund will result in the creation of 25 jobs in energy retrofits as well as 25 indirect/induced jobs in the local economy. More importantly, the estimated \$3.25 million in annual energy savings will create approximately 23 jobs every year over that 15-year period. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** PUSH Buffalo, National Grid, and other utilities

**Resources:** \$2.5 Million (through potential grant through U.S. Department of Commerce (“Commerce”), Quality Environmental Conservation Bonds, and/or partner contributions).



## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

***Goal: Increase the economic viability of private businesses and industry through investment in energy efficiency practices, renewable energy generation, and support of innovative energy supply and delivery mechanisms.***

### 3.64 Western New York Sustainable Business Roundtable

**Create and provide initial support for a Western New York Sustainable Business Roundtable:** Erie County, working with a group of 8 to 10 existing sustainable businesses, will pursue grant funding to provide the necessary coordination and staff support to establish a self-sustaining business organization dedicated to increasing the implementation of sustainable business practices. The implementation of such strategies within the private sector will increase their economic viability and value to the community. This work will also result in an increase in the private investment in energy efficiency and weatherization projects and services, creating more energy related jobs and improving the economic viability of energy service contractors. County and grant support would be provided initially to help the businesses establish the organization's goals, objectives, format, and services as well as build the membership to the point where the organization's fees could fund the necessary programs and services to be self-supporting. ■

**Timeline:** 3 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** Existing sustainable businesses, NYSERDA, BNP, WNYALF, and NYSP2 Institute

**Resources:** \$350,000 over three years (Project on list for 3 years of funding through NYSERDA Cleaner, Greener Communities Phase 2; March 2013 application to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") funding through ESD).



### 3.65 Feed-in-Tariff feasibility study

**Support the development of a feasibility study to assess the opportunity for NYPA to enact a Feed-in-Tariff:** A Feed-in-Tariff (“FIT”) guarantees renewable energy producers access to the grid and competitive pricing for the energy they produce. This strategy has been used in European countries and over 80 locations around the world to significantly increase the production of renewable energy facilities as well as increase the number of facilities that manufacture parts and provide services to renewable energy producers. A feasibility study would not only help determine whether similar economic benefits could be realized by enacting a FIT in this region but would also enable NYPA to assess the initial impacts to current rate payers and determine how to structure, set up,

**Timeline:** 1 year

**Lead:** NYPA

**Potential Partners:** DEP, environmental community, Sierra Club, and United Steel Workers

**Resources:** Dependent upon the scope and cost of the feasibility study as determined by NYPA.

and implement the program. The local environmental community is strongly in support of enacting a FIT and has encouraged Erie County to join them in this effort. ■

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***Goal: Facilitate energy education opportunities for the public, municipalities, institutions, and businesses in Erie County.***

### 3.66 Climate Smart Communities Coordinator

**Establish a Climate Smart Communities Coordinator:** Local municipalities often do not have the resources or expertise necessary to access the programs, services, and incentives available to them to support energy projects. Providing a regional coordinator to help them access and understand the available opportunities will increase the area’s investment in energy related work which will, in turn, result in the creation of new jobs as well as reduce operational costs. Through the Climate Smart Communities initiative, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (“NYSDEC”) has been encouraging municipalities to sign a pledge to compile a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and undertake strategies to reduce greenhouse gas generation in their communities. Unfortunately, the program does not provide municipalities any technical or financial assistance to do this work. Through this initiative, however, Erie County would establish the technical and financial resources necessary for municipalities to effectively utilize the

**Timeline:** 3 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** NYSDEC, local municipalities, Erie County Association of Governments, NYSERDA, and League of Women Voters

**Resources:** \$350,000 over three years (Project on list for 3 years of funding through NYSERDA Cleaner, Greener Communities Phase 2).

Climate Smart Communities program as well as other resources available to realize cost savings and contribute to the creation of jobs through their investment in energy services. Erie County is actively trying to identify a grant source that would support this initiative. ■

### 3.67 Energy Conclusion

A county-wide energy management directive that includes the general public, non-governmental organizations, municipalities, institutions, and business will improve economic opportunity for all residents, public entities, and private enterprise. Unlike many other types of economic development programs, energy conservation and renewable energy also have a direct correlation to environmental issues. As stated in the Energy Chapter of the “2012 State of the Environment Report,” authored by the Erie County Environmental Management Council, “[r]eliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy use is key to the County’s economic growth and quality of life; increasing energy efficiency and encouraging renewable energy in Erie County will cut costs, while mitigating the effects of climate change.” Making smart choices about energy programs both internally and externally will create efficiencies with a multitude of benefits, including long-term job creation and environmental protection. ■

# BI-NATIONAL LOGISTICS

***Erie County shall become the primary destination along the U.S. – Canadian border for the distribution of domestic and international goods.***



## 3.7 BI-NATIONAL LOGISTICS

Western New York is ideally located along the U.S.-Canadian border to become an international logistics center. Within one day's drive is 60% of the Canadian population and 40% of the U.S. population.

A strong foundation already exists for every type of transportation utilized in the shipment of domestic and international goods. Manufacturers and distribution companies can accept and deliver raw materials and finished products via rail, air, highway, and water transportation systems.

The Buffalo Niagara combined points of international entry have enabled our region to be the third largest port of entry in the United States for the volume of goods, providing access to over \$57 billion of trade between the two countries.

Western New York is home to two international airports capable of handling any size of air plane and air cargo. There are currently 2.37 million square feet of dedicated air cargo ramp facilities at the BNIA. BNIA is only two miles from Interstate 90 and 30 minutes from international crossings between the U.S. and Canada.

There are 28 marine terminal facilities (8 public, 20 private), 9 of which have rail service, in Western New York, located within 30 minutes of the U.S.-Canadian border crossings. However, only about half of

the marine terminal facilities currently have maritime activity.

There are also two U.S. and two Canadian major railroads which operate or have access to intermodal facilities in Erie County. CSX Transportation ("CSXT") and Norfolk Southern provide immediate rail access to over half the U.S. population. Canadian Pacific and Canadian National provide immediate freight access to over 75% of the Canadian population.

Recently, CSXT and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey ("Port Authority") invested over \$14 million to reconstruct and expand the Seneca Yard into the first "inland port" in New York State. The Seneca Yard traverses the City of Buffalo, the City of Lackawanna, and the Village of Blasdell. Oceanic shipping containers are directly loaded from ship to rail at the Port Authority and shipped to the Seneca Yard where, for the first time, they are inspected and broken down for more efficient distribution throughout the United States.

Along with the transportation infrastructure, Erie County is host to a cluster of international distribution professional support services including banking, customs brokerage, insurance, and legal services as well as expertise in speed to market services.

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

It is time for Erie County to take advantage of our geographic assets. Currently, key points of entry along the West Coast and Northeast are near capacity. Their physical ability to expand is hampered by the amount of available land and environmental concerns. The Panama Canal expansion is nearing completion, which will allow ships to nearly double the amount of cargo volume they transport from the Pacific Rim to the

Northeast, Midwest and Canadian markets. Already U.S. imports from China have increased fivefold since 1998. These factors will create a bottleneck for the distribution of imports and exports along the eastern seaboard. As delays grow along the U.S. eastern ports, freight forwarders will look for secondary ports of entry for the unloading and distribution of international goods in a timelier manner. ■

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***Goal: Develop Erie County as an international gateway and become recognized as the primary second tier port of entry for all international goods being delivered to the Northeast, Midwest and Canadian markets.***

### 3.71 Erie County international marketing campaign

Create an international marketing brand that focuses on the available assets, excess capacity, and international brokerage support services that are already in Erie County: When the five primary ports of entry along the East Coast are at capacity or unable to handle imports and exports in a timely matter, Erie County should become the very next destination as a port of entry for international goods. Erie County will partner with the World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara (“WTCBN”) and BNE in developing this brand. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** WTCBN

**Potential Partners:** Erie County, ECIDA, BNE, and VBN

**Resources:** \$500,000.

***Goal: Partner with local municipalities and the private sector to increase the available capacity of industrial zoned property for manufacturing, distribution and value added services.***

### **3.72 Manufacturing distribution capacity**

**Partner with local municipalities and the private sector to increase the available capacity of industrial zoned property for manufacturing, distribution and value added services:** Erie County shall target a primary site to facilitate the development of a new intermodal yard to attract new companies requiring national and international distribution of their goods. This will include the installation of new infrastructure to handle the growing logistics market.

The former Bethlehem Steel site in the City of Lackawanna is the strongest site under consideration. In partnership with the ECIDA, the County has already started a rail improvement project that will relocate the current rail track along NYS Route 5 to a location within the property that will allow easier access to rail for new rail dependent companies. The County has also begun the installation of new infrastructure to open up 400 acres of industrial land for development on the site. This site currently has national/international rail service and deep water port facilities and is only three miles from Interstate 90 and six miles from the Peace Bridge. The Bethlehem site has several hundred acres of brownfields west of the Port of Buffalo that may be utilized for various intermodal facilities including direct ship to rail.

The former Bethlehem Steel site is the last remaining industrial site in Erie County that provides those from outside our region the image of Buffalo and Erie County continuing to be a Rust Belt city. Utilizing a portion of the Governor's Buffalo Billion investment in Erie County in a concentrated effort to attract new industry and logistics facilities to this site will help extinguish the region's Rust Belt image. This investment, along with the continuation of New York State's Brownfield Clean-Up Program, will encourage private investment by companies requiring national and international distribution of their goods and create new jobs, growth and stability in property taxes. ■

**Timeline:** Initial Phase 1-5 years, completed build out 5-15 years

**Lead:** ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** DEP, City of Lackawanna, Genesee & Wyoming Rail Road, Gateway Trade Center, and Tecumseh Redevelopment

**Resources:** \$5 million next 1-5 years, \$30 million 5-15 years out (DEP and DPW to aggressively pursue NYS and federal grant funding opportunities).

## SECTION 3: FURTHERING REDC PLAN AGENDA

**Goal: Support the completion of rail projects in Western New York that are critical to allowing Erie County to develop its capacity as a major logistics hub.**

### 3.73 Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge

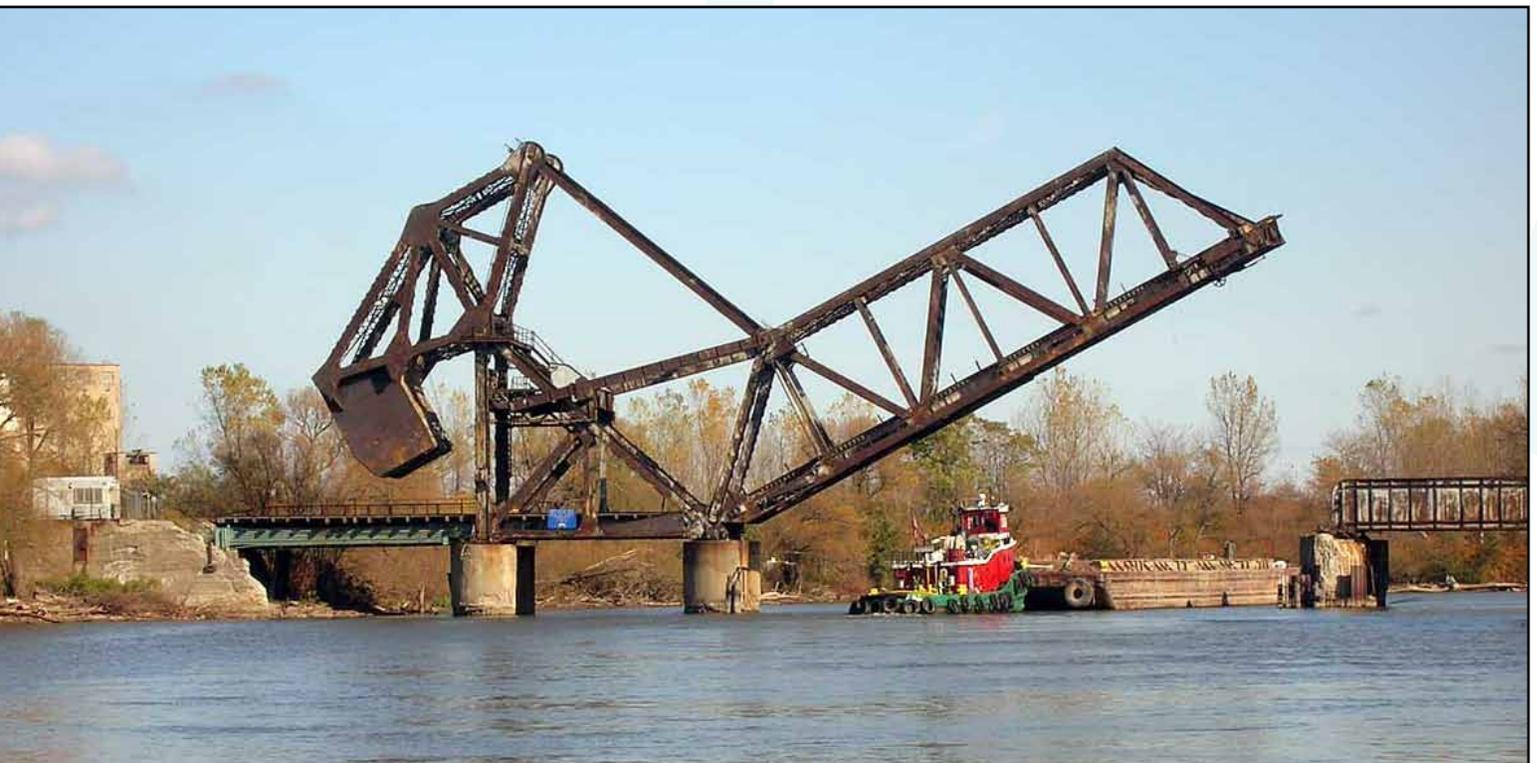
**Replace the Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge:** The Canadian Pacific Draw bridge has been non-operational for over 15 years leaving only one rail crossing across the Buffalo River for local and national main-line rail traffic for east-west traffic, which has created a log jam of rail traffic in Buffalo. The remaining rail bridge is controlled by CSXT, thus also creating a huge disadvantage for competing rail carriers in scheduling rail deliveries. CSXT competitors have trains idling at times from 3-8 hours while waiting for authority from CSXT to cross the bridge. Repairs, and/or the replacement, of the Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge will open up competition for rail service to Erie County and thus encourage continued investment into logistics centers. A replacement for the existing bridge or the development of new rail connections that will relieve the Canadian Pacific Draw congestion should be in place within the next 5-10 years. ■

**Timeline:** 3-5 years

**Lead:** ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** DEP, GBNRTC, Genesee & Wyoming Rail Road, Norfolk Southern, Burlington Northern Rail Road, and City of Buffalo

**Resources:** \$12-15 million (ECIDA and DEP to aggressively pursue NYS and federal grant funding opportunities).



### 3.74 Portageville Road Bridge

**Replace the Portageville Road Bridge:** The rail bridge in Portageville was built in 1875 and crosses the Letchworth State Park gorge. Due to its age and condition it now has severe load restrictions on it, which are increased in winter months. The rail line that crosses this bridge is the primary conduit for Norfolk Southern to service Western New York.

Norfolk Southern has undergone a massive capital improvement campaign over the past several years to increase its service from Western New York to the East Coast and southern territories. All tunnels and overpass bridges along the Buffalo connection line have been raised to accompany a double-stacked rail car. All bridge crossings have been upgraded to handle the industry standard 286 ton rail. The Portageville Bridge remains the only bridge unable to handle the 286 ton rail. Norfolk Southern has recently completed the environmental impact statement for the bridge replacement. Norfolk Southern has already increased its yard space and added employees to its local operations because of increased demand for its services.

CSXT currently controls the market for U.S. rail users in Western New York with little competition. The replacement of the Portageville Bridge will allow unlimited service by Norfolk Southern to Western New York companies for importing and exporting their materials to other parts of the world. Although Erie County involvement is in a supporting role, all Western New York counties would greatly benefit from the completion of this project. ■

**Timeline:** 4 years

**Lead:** Norfolk Southern

**Potential Partners:** Wyoming County, Livingston County, NYSDOT, Erie County, and Niagara County

**Resources:** No County funds necessary.



### 3.75 Bi-National Logistics Conclusion

Increasing the viability of Erie County as a primary port of entry into the U.S. from Canada and other international ports will have an immediate impact on our region. There is tremendous opportunity to create new jobs by shipping and rail companies and to continue growth of distribution facilities. For example, Norfolk Southern has created 32 new jobs over the past two years at its new Bison Intermodal Yard, while Sonwil Company has recently completed a new warehouse/distribution facility. Improvements to our intermodal capabilities will create a business climate conducive for international shippers and manufacturers, who will in turn bring new investments from outside our region, generating new wealth within Erie County. ■

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SECTION 4.0

**OTHER IMPORTANT  
AREAS**

# ECIDA REFORM & ENHANCEMENT



***The ECIDA will focus on true wealth creation for the community at large through targeted, strategic investment consistent with NYS law and in the interest of all Erie County citizens.***

## **4.1 ERIE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY REFORM AND ENHANCEMENT**

### **BACKGROUND**

Industrial development agencies (“IDAs”) were created in New York State to induce job creating and wealth producing activities by private sector companies that would not have otherwise occurred, or would have occurred at a smaller or slower rate. In large part, IDAs were created to offset certain well known disadvantages that companies that were competing nationally or globally faced by being located in New York State. The IDAs were created to help stem the flow of New York State companies out of state by the offer of valuable inducements.

IDA inducements are not direct payments to companies, but rather reduce or eliminate for a period of years certain tax liabilities related to an investment a company makes in its business. These tax liabilities fall into three categories: 1) local real property taxes on the value of a new building or improvements made to an existing building, 2) state and local sales tax on materials and equipment that are used to construct and equip a building, and 3) state mortgage recording tax on the project.

Over the years, particularly after the state ban on IDA benefits for retail activities lapsed in 2008, many IDAs began to offer incentives to retail type projects. In most instances, retail projects do not bring

new wealth or new jobs to a community, but only shift retail sales and jobs from one local company to another. Such shifts are inevitable and are part of our free market system. However, government should not distort the marketplace by favoring one retail establishment over its competitors through the granting of tax benefits. Nor are the governmental purposes of creating net wealth and net new jobs through the granting of tax relief enhanced through the support of retail projects.

### **SHIFTING TAX BURDEN**

The effect of granting tax benefits to companies that do not create new wealth is to shift the tax burden from these companies to all other companies and individuals who pay property and sales tax in the community. When a company receives a tax benefit without producing net new jobs and net new wealth for the community, the community becomes that much less attractive for all other companies and for all other residents. For example, one project undertaken with benefits from the ECIDA that commenced construction prior to an inducement by the ECIDA board and which would have gone ahead to completion even without benefits cost Erie County over \$1 million in sales tax collections in 2013 and 2014. Other taxing

jurisdictions lost similar or larger amounts. All other taxpayers will have to make up for this loss of revenue and/or all residents will have to bear the reduction of services.

### INDUCEMENT OR GIFT

The New York State Constitution, in Articles 7 and 8, bans state and local governments from making gifts or loans to private companies. While these provisions do not directly apply to IDAs because they are not local governments as defined in the Constitution, the intent of New York Law is clear. Private companies may be induced, through the use of taxpayer support, to undertake an activity beneficial to the state that they would not otherwise undertake. However, public support cannot and should not go to a company to simply increase its profits. Thus, when a company undertakes a project it would do even without subsidies it is an improper and perhaps illegal gift for an IDA to provide benefits.

### COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In certain limited instances, it is appropriate for IDA benefits to be made available to a project where the primary purpose is community development rather than economic development. This is done to support the redevelopment of downtown business districts that have fallen on hard times, to redevelop certain identified buildings through adaptive reuse and to enhance smart growth initiatives. This should be done carefully with narrow targets to prevent the exception from swallowing up the rule.

### UNIFORM TAX EXEMPTION POLICY

In addition to the ECIDA, there are five IDAs operated by the towns in which they are located (Amherst, Clarence, Concord, Hamburg, and Lancaster). ECIDA has power countywide, but focuses its activities in the three cities and twenty one other towns which do not have their own IDA.

In order to coordinate activities and to reduce or eliminate forum shopping by developers, a Uniform Tax Exemption Policy (“UTEP”) had been adopted by the six Erie County IDAs. Unfortunately, there are

significant variations in the application of the UTEP among the IDAs, with regard to the granting of benefits to retail activities. Town IDAs in recent years have granted benefits to auto dealerships, super markets, pizza parlors, liquor stores, a donut shop, doctor’s offices, and other retail activities.

### CULTURE OF ENTITLEMENT

A culture has developed in Erie County economic development circles among major developers, commercial real estate brokers and economic development professionals that every project is entitled to a taxpayer supported benefit simply because a developer or company is undertaking a project. This runs counter to good economic theory, distorts the free market, and weakens an already fragile tax base. Not every project should receive tax payer support. Such benefits should be reserved for projects that would not otherwise have occurred, have significant job and wealth creating benefits to the community or provide targeted community redevelopment benefits. The culture of entitlement must end.

### 2013 CHANGE IN STATE LAW

At the initiation of Governor Cuomo, the 2013/2014 state budget made significant changes in the law that applies to all IDAs. It imposed a requirement that all projects contain a “claw-back” provision and established a prohibition on projects that are more than one-third retail, with limited exceptions. These provisions became effective on March 28, 2013 and are now the law.

The law provides that projects that are more than one-third retail, based upon cost, are prohibited from IDA support unless they are a regional tourist attraction, located in a highly distressed area, or provide goods or services not reasonably available to the community.

In addition, with regard to retail projects that qualify because they are in highly distressed areas, or provide otherwise unavailable goods or services, the chief elected official must certify the action. With regard to ECIDA, the chief elected official is the County Executive. ■

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

**Goal: Refine ECIDA policies to address identified weaknesses.**

### 4.11 Implementation of new state law

**Fully, promptly and properly implement the provisions of the new state law:** While the provisions of the law took effect immediately in March 2013, the law does not specify a number of important issues, such as how to treat a speculative space for which there is not yet a user, how to determine the material facts that would trigger a claw-back and how to provide needed due process rights to companies. The ECIDA has not declared a moratorium on projects while it wrestles with these questions, but is dealing with each project on a case by case basis and using the results of the committee and Board discussions in developing a comprehensive policy. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 months

**Lead:** Erie County Industrial Development Agency

**Potential Partners:** Town IDAs, Department of Environment & Planning, County Executive's Office.

**Resources:** ECIDA and County staff time.

### 4.12 Adaptive reuse policy

**Revise existing adaptive reuse policy to be consistent with new state law:** As part of the current UTEP, the ECIDA's Adaptive Reuse Policy authorizes ECIDA benefits to certain projects that reuse buildings that have become or are in danger of becoming eyesores. This policy has focused more on the building and less on the type of activity that occurs within it (retail, commercial, manufacturing, etc.). Under the recently enacted state law, ECIDA must now focus on the activity that will occur within the building to determine if the project is more than one-third retail. Projects that contain a high amount of retail must also fit one of the exceptions to be eligible. Whether or not the project meets the retail threshold, ECIDA still has the ability to consider adaptive reuse criteria as additional factors when weighing the decision to grant benefits. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 months

**Lead:** Erie County Industrial Development Agency

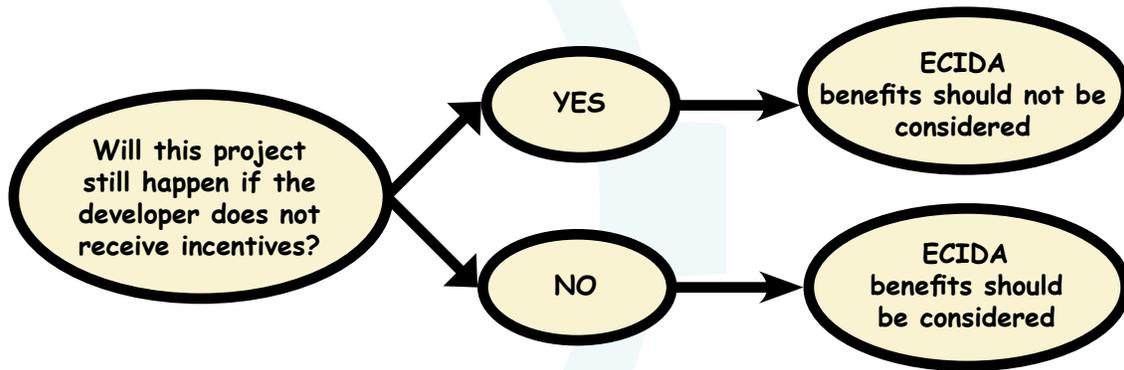
**Potential Partners:** Town IDAs, Department of Environment & Planning, County Executive's Office

**Resources:** ECIDA and County staff time.

### 4.13 “But-for” test

**Establish a “but for” test:** The purpose of ECIDA benefits is to encourage private sector development of certain projects that would not otherwise occur unless ECIDA benefits are provided. Establishing a formal “but for” test will allow for more targeted, strategic investment of public benefits resulting in the wise investment of limited public resources. The test will apply to all projects but focus primarily on those that are not manufacturing. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 months  
**Lead:** Erie County Industrial Development Agency  
**Potential Partners:** Town IDAs, Department of Environment & Planning, County Executive’s Office  
**Resources:** ECIDA and County staff time.



**Goal:** Position ECIDA for success in new era of economic development by fostering collaboration and innovative thinking.

### 4.14 Cooperation with town IDAs

**Renew Erie County’s commitment to work cooperatively with town IDAs:** It often seems that ECIDA and the County are at odds with the five town IDAs. In fact, ECIDA and the town IDAs have far more in common than we have differences. We share a desire for prosperity and jobs for our community and we all use the same limited resources to achieve these goals. We all have felt the impatience from the public that we serve and their questioning of actions taken by each of the IDAs. We must now all face the new state law and recognize the forces that brought this law into effect. ECIDA and Erie County will renew their commitment to work with the five town IDAs to amend and re-enact the UTEP to reflect the changes that have occurred. The County looks forward to open dialogue involving all six IDAs in the County and representation from the three cities and 21 towns represented by ECIDA. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing  
**Lead:** ECIDA  
**Potential Partners:** Town IDAs, representatives from 3 cities and 21 towns that ECIDA serves  
**Resources:** ECIDA and County staff time.

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

### 4.15 Economic development one-stop shop

#### **Create one-stop shop for economic development:**

For too long, economic development services in our community have been fragmented and it has been very difficult for companies to access the benefits that are available. In order to improve the delivery of services, ECIDA will co-locate with ESD, NYPA and the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation at 95 Perry Street in Buffalo. This will bring under one roof the leading state and local development agencies. BUDC is expected to accompany ECIDA in the move. It is anticipated that other economic development agencies will follow into additional space that will be available.

**Timeline:** 6-9 Months

**Lead:** ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** ESD and BUDC

**Resources:** \$67,000 annually plus \$250,000 one-time costs (likely to be offset from revenue from leasing current ECIDA space).



95 Perry Street will house ECIDA, ESD, NYPA and ECHDC.

### 4.16 New ECIDA CEO

**Attract a new CEO to ECIDA to lead it into a new era of prosperity and success:** The long-time acting CEO/COO of ECIDA has announced his retirement at the end of 2013. This is a time to conduct a search for a new leader who will help move ECIDA into the next generation of economic development. It is an opportunity to gain new ideas and to implement new approaches to the changing marketplace and to break the mindset of the past as we move into the future. The County Executive will lead the search for a new CEO which will be facilitated by a national search firm.

**Timeline:** 6-9 Months

**Lead:** ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** BNP and BNE

**Resources:** \$50,000 for search expenses.

**Goal: Ensure that the local workforce benefits from ECIDA-induced**

**4.17 ECIDA local labor policy**

**Fully implement ECIDA Local Labor Policy:** On May 20, 2013, ECIDA adopted a policy to mandate that 90% of construction workers on an ECIDA-induced project, whether union or non-union, must live within the eight counties of Western New York. This policy was developed jointly by ECIDA and the local labor unions. It will guarantee that the benefits granted by local taxpayers to developers stay within our community in the wages of those who build the project and add to our prosperity during construction and thereafter. ECIDA began to implement this requirement at its May 20, 2013 meeting. The County will work with ECIDA to ensure that this new policy is fully and properly enforced. ■

**Timeline:** 3-6 Months  
**Lead:** ECIDA  
**Potential Partners:** Town IDAs and WNYALF  
**Resources:** ECIDA staff time.

**4.18 ECIDA Reform and Enhancement Conclusion**

Under the leadership of the Erie County Executive, the ECIDA will be refocused as an agency that is concerned with true wealth creation for the citizens of the County. The ECIDA will make targeted, strategic investments, consistent with New York State Law and in the interests of all Erie County taxpayers. Projects assisted by the ECIDA will be those that bring outside investment and good jobs to Erie County, strengthening our economic base and leading to stabilization of the population of the area. ■



# INTERNATIONAL TRADE



***By leveraging its unique geographic location, Erie County shall become the primary American home of Canadian subsidiary businesses and the first choice location for foreign investment in the United States.***

## 4.2 INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Erie County is unique in its easy access to much of the Northeast, a large portion of the Midwest and, of course, its proximity to Canada. As noted in the Bi-National Logistics section, Erie County is within one day's drive of 40% of the U.S. population and 60% of the Canadian population. This radius includes major metropolitan areas like Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Toronto, and Montreal. Erie County must take advantage of its strategic location to attract investment and capitalize on the region's potential as an international center of trade.

Toronto is only about a 90 minute drive from Erie County and is home to the third largest financial center in North America. The GTA as a whole generates about one-fifth of the Gross Domestic Product of Canada and is home to 40% of Canada's business headquarters. Traffic across the Peace Bridge is linked to \$11.9 billion in yearly regional sales, income, and local taxes; 25% of Walden Galleria shoppers and 38% of the passengers at the BNIA come from Ontario; 40% of Canada's population resides in Southern Ontario; and two-thirds of all Canadians and nearly half the U.S. population are within a 12 hour drive from Buffalo Niagara.

Despite this, the County has not been significantly involved in international investment attraction or export promotion activities. In order to harness additional international investment, Erie County must highlight and market its existing assets, including those described in the preceding Bi-National Logistics section. Numerous partners already operating within Western New York have significant experience with international trade, bi-national initiatives, investment attraction, and export assistance, including WTCBN, BNE, Commerce, the Small Business Development Center, the BNP, the Bi-national Alliance, and the ECIDA. Significant opportunities exist for Erie County to collaborate with these and other partners in ways that will maximize the resources and expertise each partner brings to the table. ■

**Goal: Brand and market Erie County as a trade gateway to attract overseas investment.**

## 4.21 Economic Development Office in the GTA

**Establish an Erie County Economic Development Office in the GTA:** Until April 2012, ESD maintained Canadian outreach offices in Toronto and Montreal. The closure of these offices, as well as the closure of the Canadian consulate in Buffalo, left a void in terms of advocacy for and awareness of Erie County. BNE, in partnership with National Grid, has funded a one year contract with the former head of ESD's Canadian offices to temporarily fill this void. Erie County will collaborate with BNE and other partners in the private sector to establish a permanent office in Toronto that will be charged with lead generation, appointment setting, event planning, and business facilitation. ■

**Timeline:** 1 Year

**Lead:** DEP and County Executive's Office

**Potential Partners:** BNE, BNP, WTCBN, ESD, and ECIDA

**Resources:** \$750,000 annually (significant costs savings possible through collaboration with partners and in-kind contributions).



## 4.22 Cross-border influence

**Develop cross-border influence and relationships:** The closing of the Canadian consulate in Buffalo in summer 2012 resulted in a void in terms of advocacy for Erie County in Canadian government circles. A concerted effort to establish and maintain ties with political counterparts in Southern Ontario as well as with consular officials in Detroit and New York City is important to the success of our international trade efforts. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Lead:** County Executive's Office

**Potential Partners:** BNE and BNP

**Resources:** \$5,000-10,000 annual budget for events.

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

### 4.23 Insourcing Initiatives

**Develop and promote insourcing initiatives:** After decades of watching North American companies outsource jobs to other countries, more and more companies are reconsidering America's quality infrastructure and skilled labor and are deciding to return their manufacturing to North America. Western New York's legacy of manufacturing activity makes the region very attractive to companies considering reshoring. The County will identify and pursue federal funding opportunities for projects that support insourcing as well as develop and host major insourcing events as a component of overall business attraction efforts. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** U.S. Small Business Administration, Commerce, WTBNC, BNE, ECIDA, and WNYALF

**Resources:** \$5,000-10,000 for events (opportunities for cost sharing by partners).



### 4.24 EB-5 capital

**Promote and market the use of EB-5 capital:** Created by Congress in the 1990s, the EB-5 program attracts overseas capital for job creation in high unemployment or rural areas. This flexible financing can be used for revitalizing an existing building, developing a new building, constructing related infrastructure, and purchasing/financing equipment or working capital. Through ECIDA, the County will promote the use of EB-5 capital to project developers. DEP will also explore the use of EB-5 funds in financing large public projects such as major infrastructure projects or new stadium construction. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Lead:** DEP and ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** ECIDA, EB-5 New York State Regional Center, and BNMC

**Resources:** No new funds needed.

## 4.25 ECIDA International Program

**Restructure ECIDA International Program:** The current ECIDA international program almost exclusively targets Western New York companies interested in doing business overseas. Current services offered include educational programs for exporters, administration of the Foreign Trade Zone, and sale of worldwide credit reports. ECIDA will seek out new ways to collaborate with partners who currently provide services to exporters. In addition, ECIDA will explore ways to work with partners to provide assistance to attraction efforts. For both export and attraction, ECIDA will coordinate with partners to maximize regional resources and eliminate duplication of services. ■

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Lead:** ECIDA

**Potential Partners:** BNE, BNP, WTCBN, and Commerce

**Resources:** No new funds needed.



## 4.26 International Trade Conclusion

Attracting investment from Canada and around the world to Erie County is a top economic development priority of the Poloncarz administration. The County will sharpen its focus and make a strong push toward attracting Canadian companies that wish to expand in the United States. By developing stronger cross-border relationships, marketing the County more aggressively and helping international businesspeople navigate the economic development community in Erie

County, the Poloncarz administration will facilitate and encourage significant international investment in our region. We have already seen the success Canadian companies like Welded Tube of Canada have had in locating their American subsidiaries in Erie County; the initiatives outline above will contribute to international investment on a much greater scale. ■

# LAND DEVELOPMENT



***Erie County shall re-create a built environment that can grow in a sustainable manner and has available sites and buildings to allow growth in all sectors.***

## 4.3 LAND DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Erie County has a strong manufacturing legacy, with a number of large facilities producing iron and steel, automobiles and auto parts, tires, chemicals, and all manner of other manufactured items. Today, however, this legacy is marked in the landscape as vacant, abandoned, and often hazardous brownfield sites.

Meanwhile, the need for rapid response to companies wanting to locate new facilities, combined with more stringent engineering standards and state and federal environmental reviews, means that business park sites must be pre-designed, pre-permitted, and constructed to allow firms to begin construction with a minimum of delays. As such, shovel-ready sites must replace vacant, abandoned, and often hazardous structures, which are not acceptable in the 21st century landscape and cannot serve the needs of the business community.

Fortunately, Buffalo and Erie County have a great deal to offer the 21st century business community. As noted in the preceding Bi-National Logistics and International Trade sections, Erie County has served as

a transportation hub for more than 100 years. The ability to provide business sites with these transportation options is a major advantage for Erie County.

Additionally, Erie County has made significant progress through successful public-private partnerships in remediating the brownfields remaining in the built environment. Exciting examples include the 200 acres remediated in the City of Buffalo to become the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park and the 47 acres remediated in the City of Tonawanda to become the Spaulding Commerce Park. In each case, many millions of dollars were raised through local and state governmental sources as well as private sector grants, resulting in shovel ready land now available for development.

Erie County must continue its role as catalyst for the initiation and implementation of additional projects that remediate our remaining brownfields and result in increased opportunities for physical development. ■

**Goal: To have shovel ready business sites totaling over 1,000 acres in all geographic areas of the County suitable for all industrial sectors including office, research, medical, logistics, and warehousing, as well as light and heavy manufacturing.**

### 4.31 Bethlehem site in Lackawanna

**Begin construction of main access road at the Bethlehem site:** There are 400 acres of land along Route 5 in Lackawanna that will be the location of the first Phase of business park development at the Bethlehem site. Work on design, pre-permitting and engineering are underway. ■

**Timeline:** 2 Years

**Lead:** DEP and DPW

**Potential Partners:** ECIDA, City of Lackawanna, NYSDOT, ESD, NYSDEC, and Tecumseh Redevelopment

**Resources:** 1) Rail Phase I- \$4.4 million, committed, under contract and work has commenced; 2) Road design and engineering- \$500,000 – Erie County Bond funds available; 3) Road construction Phase I- \$1.9 million in Erie County Bonds funds available.



## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

### 4.32 North Youngmann Commerce Center Industrial Park

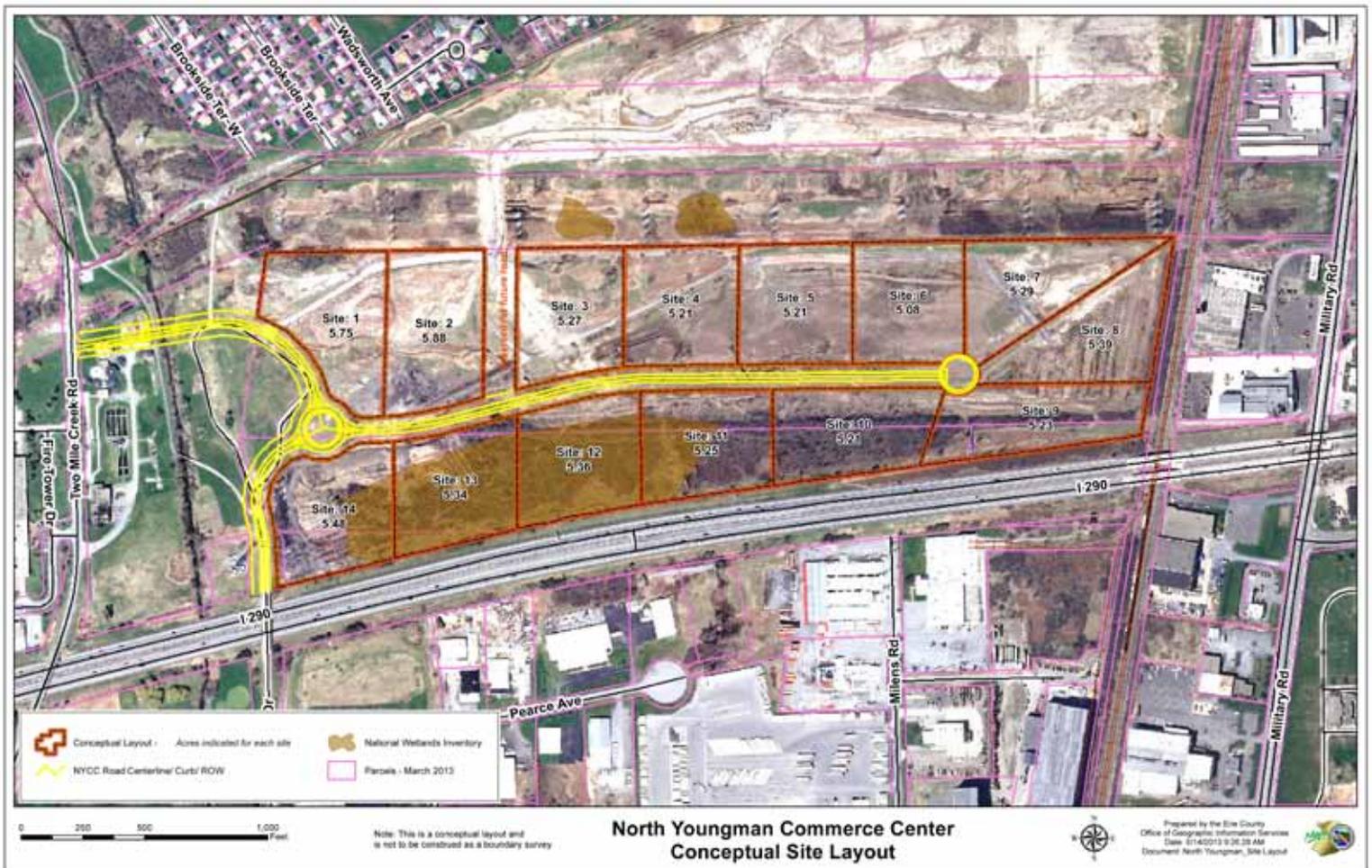
Complete engineering and design work and begin construction of the North Youngmann Commerce Center Industrial Park: This is a 92 acre industrial site owned by the Town of Tonawanda. ■

**Timeline:** 2 Years

**Lead:** DEP and DPW

**Potential Partners:** Town of Tonawanda, ECIDA, and ESD

**Resources:** 1) Road design, engineering and construction – Phase I- \$3 million; 2) PILOT increment financing through GEICO project- \$2 million; 3) ESD infrastructure grant- \$500,000; 4) Town Bonding- \$1 million.



### 4.33 RiverBend Industrial Park

Assist in the initiation of construction at the RiverBend Industrial Park in Buffalo. ■



**Timeline:** 2 Years

**Lead:** DEP and DPW

**Potential Partners:** City of Buffalo and BUDC

**Resources:** Phase 1-\$3 million with possible sources including City and/or County capital funds, as well as state and private sector grant funds.

### 4.34 Brownfield Remediation

Continue to identify additional brownfield sites and initiate efforts to raise money for remediation expenses: Possible sites include the NYSDEC Class 2 Superfund site at 5655 River Road in the Town of Tonawanda and a former gas station/dry cleaners at 1815 Eggert Road in the Town of Amherst. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** Local municipalities with brownfields, NYSDEC, ESD, and private property owners

**Resources:** Dependent on the needs of the sites.

### 4.35 Land Development Conclusion

The implementation of the projects outlined in Land Development and Redevelopment will allow Erie County to have sufficient shovel ready, pre-permitted sites for years to come. These sites will be strategically located to meet the needs of new and expanding businesses and make the greatest use of existing infrastructure. The clearance of decrepit buildings and remediation of brownfield sites will also begin to change the perception of visitors and residents of the area's previous Rust Belt image, changing it to a modern, clean and visually exciting community. ■

# QUALITY OF LIFE



***Erie County will be a place of choice for residents and newcomers with a quality of life rich in art, history, culture, and sports; public access to parks, natural habitats, and prime waterfront property; and affordable housing, clean water and reliable public safety.***

## 4.4 QUALITY OF LIFE

Erie County and Western New York are blessed with man-made and natural assets that have been built and cultivated over generations. Many of these assets have been protected and supported over the years, resulting in rich contributions to Western New York's quality of life.

Protecting and improving the quality of life of a region must not be a footnote on some larger economic development strategy. It is instead a key enabler of growth as it is a major reason why some regions succeed at attracting new residents, professionals, and businesses, while others do not.

Our assets include world renowned architecture, historic parkland, and thriving arts and cultural institutions. Specifically, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Buffalo Museum of Science, and the Buffalo History Museum are all celebrating over 150 years in this community. Over the course of more than 30 years, Erie County has provided public funding for arts and cul-

tural institutions in the County's Operating Budget. During most of that time, funding was determined with a competitive process and applications were evaluated by a Cultural Advisory Board.

However, because funding for the arts is discretionary, there were many times including recently when public funding for the arts was dramatically cut out of the County's Budget. These cuts came despite a December 2006 study by the UB Regional Institute, which reported that for every \$1.00 invested in local art and cultural organizations, \$9.65 are returned to the local economy. In addition, the 22 arts and cultural organizations studied by UB supported 3,819 full and part time jobs in Erie and Niagara Counties and generated \$5 million in sales tax revenue for Erie County alone. This is on top of the \$46 million spent locally by the organizations, further impacting the region's economy.

Without a doubt, Erie County's residents love their

sports. Minor league and amateur athletics thrive in a community with sports fans of all varieties. Major teams like the Buffalo Bills and the Buffalo Sabres are an integral part of Western New York's identity. Erie County residents, as well as those in neighboring counties and Canada, turn out in droves, no matter the weather, to fill Ralph Wilson Stadium and the First Niagara Center on game days. A variety of other sport centers, like the Flickinger Center in downtown Buffalo, the Northtowns Center in Amherst, and HARBORcenter to be built on the Webster Block, also provide arenas that make Western New York a competitive center for amateur athletic conferences.

Lastly, Erie County is also blessed with a beautiful parks system, which includes diverse landscapes ranging from heavily forested areas to waterfront beaches. 11,000 acres of land are spread throughout 38 sites in the County. The County's parks support lots of different activities including hiking, biking, sledding, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, fishing, boating, swimming, and more. In May 2003, Erie County completed a comprehensive and award-winning Parks Master Plan, which assesses existing conditions, identifies the best strategic uses for specific areas of the

park system, and recommends necessary capital improvements to ensure the parks are safe and properly maintained.

The Erie County Parks System, first established in 1925, is also historic with five parks including Chestnut Ridge, Ellicott Creek, Akron Falls, Como Lake, and Emery parks designated as "Heritage" parks by Erie County's Parks Master Plan. Some features throughout these five parks were built during the Great Depression as part of the Work Projects Administration.

As such, a robust quality of life agenda must be outlined and implemented. Local governments, public safety personnel, non-profits, and citizen advocates all have an important role in implementing the agenda. Some of this was discussed in the earlier section on Smart Growth in reference to land use planning, waterfront development, and vacant property abatement as well as in the Infrastructure section where clean water was discussed. Below is a discussion of Erie County's role in protecting and enhancing the region's quality of life as it relates to cultural institutions, major league sports, and parks. ■



## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

**Goal: Provide consistent public funding for arts and cultural institutions.**

### 4.41 County funding for arts and cultural institutions

**Increase county funding for arts and cultural institutions by 1-2% annually:** The unpredictable nature of public funding for the arts has affected local arts and cultural institutions, dramatically limiting their ability to engage in multi-year planning efforts that result in better outcomes for each institution and the community at large. As such, a more predictable approach to arts funding is warranted.

The administration will work with members of the Erie County Legislature to ensure an annual increase in arts and cultural funding has their support throughout the County Budget process. Although an increase of 1-2% is very small, it allows the County to fund new applicants entering the County's competitive funding

**Timeline:** Annual

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** Legislature, arts and cultural organizations and enthusiasts, and VBN

**Resources:** Approximately \$60,000-\$120,000 annually.

process without taking money away from already existing, well-established institutions who continue to rely on public support. ■

**Goal: Retain major-league sports teams.**

### 4.42 Lease with the Buffalo Bills

**Implement the recently renegotiated lease with the Buffalo Bills:** Retention of NFL and NHL franchises in Western New York is not only important in our regional character, but also important to the local economy. In the case of the Buffalo Bills, Erie County, New York State, and the Buffalo Bills will invest \$130 million consistent with the newly negotiated lease to upgrade Ralph Wilson Stadium. The Poloncarz administration, through DPW and partners, will proceed with the improvements to the stadium as described in the lease documents. ■

**Timeline:** 1-10 Years

**Lead:** DPW

**Potential Partners:** New York State, Buffalo Bills, NFL, and Legislature

**Resources:** \$40 million in renovation capital (Erie County's share).

County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy and Buffalo Bills President/CEO Russ Brandon announcing the Ralph Wilson Stadium lease agreement in December 2012.



### 4.43 New Stadium Working Group

**Investigate the possibility of a new, state of the art, covered stadium:** Establish a New Stadium Working Group, as provided for in the Stadium Lease Agreement between the Buffalo Bills, NYS, and Erie County to investigate the feasibility, cost, and location of a new stadium. ■

**Timeline:** 5 Years  
**Lead:** Erie County  
**Potential Partners:** New York State and Buffalo Bills  
**Resources:** \$11.8 million in combined public and private funds will be available in the New Stadium Fund over the term of the lease for studies related to new stadium development, location and design. The New Stadium Working Group will determine the resources needed to build a new stadium.

***Goal: Fully implement Erie County’s award-winning Parks Master Plan and establish a Division of Park Rangers to protect the parks and provide public education about parkland.***

### 4.44 Erie County Parks Master Plan

**Make strategic infrastructure improvements in the County parks and forest consistent with the Parks Master Plan:** Full implementation of the Parks Master Plan is an important component to protecting the community’s overall quality of life. The Poloncarz administration will continue its policy of increased capital investment in the Parks and increase annual operating expenses to more properly care for the parks and forests. ■



**Timeline:** Annual  
**Lead:** Parks Department  
**Potential Partners:** DPW, DEP, Budget and Management, and Legislature  
**Resources:** \$1,000,000 per year in capital investments, and \$1,000,000 per year in increased operating expenses.

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

### 4.45 Division of Park Rangers

**Determine the feasibility of creating a Division of Park Rangers in the Parks Department to protect the natural environment within the parks and educate our residents on issues of forestry and parkland:** Park Rangers have been used successfully in federal, state and local parks and forest land to protect the natural habitat in the parks, the park shelters and other park assets, as well as to educate residents and park users about the natural environment existing in the parks and forests. A consultant could be engaged to study the use of park rangers in other municipalities across the country and determine the costs and benefits of such a program in Erie County. ■

**Timeline:** 1 Year

**Lead:** Parks

**Potential Partners:** Consultant

**Resources:** \$20,000 for feasibility study.



### 4.46 Quality-of-Life Conclusion

Protecting and enhancing the region's quality of life is an essential component of a smart economy. The arts and cultural organizations in Erie County not only contribute to the retention of our current residents but they are also a tourist attraction and an economic engine for the local economy, employing thousands of people. The same is true for our region's professional and amateur sports teams and the appeal of numerous local venues for athletic conferences. All the while, Erie County's vast network of historic parks and forests showcase the region's natural beauty in any season.

These assets—arts and cultural organizations, professional and amateur athletic teams, and historic parks—are key enablers of economic development by bringing in outside revenue and retaining and attracting residents to the community. Stopping the region's continued population loss and addressing unemployment will not be possible if our quality of life and the vitality of these sectors is not adequately protected. ■

***Erie County shall invest in the protection and improvement of its water resources.***



## 4.5 INFRASTRUCTURE, THE BLUE ECONOMY, AND CLEAN WATER

Western New York's water resources are a vital part of our economy. In fact, water access and the waterfront are highlighted as assets for both smart growth and tourism in the REDC Plan. Preserving and restoring water quality builds upon these assets. Moreover, keeping our drinking water and beaches safe, investing in improved water treatment infrastructure, and other water quality projects can be an economic driver for the region. The concept of the "Blue Economy" has been developed to refer to the jobs and economic development that can be created as a result of protecting our watershed and water resources.

Erie County government plays a large role in water quality, access and infrastructure. DEP's Division of Sewerage Management ("DSM") is responsible for seven County sewer districts that provide sanitary sewer service to a geographically diverse area. DEP's Environmental Compliance Services Division is also a leader in three local stakeholder groups working on water quality: Erie County Water Quality Committee, Western New York Stormwater Coalition, and the Lake Erie Water Protection Alliance. DEP's Planning Division is a partner in the redevelopment of the Inner

and Outer Harbors as well as the leader with respect to the development of the waterfront trail system. Lastly, Parks Department is responsible for managing and maintaining two beaches on Lake Erie as well as four natural habitat parks along the Buffalo River. Erie County's investment in enhancing and managing all of these programs and assets contributes to our local Blue Economy.

NYSDEC released a report in 2008 outlining the infrastructure investment that should be made in New York State to protect water quality. This report estimated that in Erie County alone we would need to spend between \$250 million to \$ 1.1 billion on our water related infrastructure over the next 20 years to adequately protect our valuable fresh water resources. An investment of this magnitude in the local economy would result in thousands of engineering and construction related jobs.

Erie County government plays a vital role in the region's water resources. There are many opportunities for investments to be made in water quality, water infrastructure and water access, which will serve as economic drivers in that they will create jobs, improve tourism, and encourage smart growth. ■

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

***Goal: Provide adequate sanitary sewer facilities and capacity to serve the future development of Buffalo's Outer Harbor and the City of Lackawanna.***

### 4.51 Lackawanna Wastewater Treatment Plant

**Eliminate the Lackawanna WWTF:** The Cities of Buffalo and Lackawanna in Western New York share approximately five miles of waterfront along Lake Erie. This stretch of prime real estate has long been underutilized. Waterfront development along this corridor has been seen as a goal of numerous local, state, and federal officials to promote residential, recreational, commercial and light industrial growth. These efforts would provide public access to a beautiful lakefront within these communities, ultimately improve the quality of life to residents in an area that has seen stagnant growth over the past few decades, and promote migration of residents and jobs back to the cities.

A significant roadblock to growth is insufficient wastewater conveyance and treatment capacity. Within the City of Buffalo, only about half of the Outer Harbor Waterfront area targeted for development contains sewers. In some portions of Buffalo's waterfront areas – due to the size of the BSA infrastructure – the type of development that can occur may be limited.

Meanwhile, Erie County Sewer District No. 6 ("ECSD No. 6"), which serves the City of Lackawanna, is facing the challenge of implementing major capital improvements in order to come into compliance with its recently renegotiated SPDES Permit. ECSD No. 6 recently retained the services of a consultant to evaluate the regulatory and long-term viability of the Lackawanna WWTF. Capital improvements to bring the facility into compliance for two parameters—chlorine residual and ammonia—could be over \$9 million. Another \$10 million of capital improvements have been identified to address aging components of the treatment plant. Improvements of this nature only allow the facility to process wastewater at its current capacity. If however, development at the former Bethlehem Steel site, Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, and/or at some southern locations along the outer harbor includes any major water users, it could cost as much as \$53 million to increase the capacity of the land-locked facility and

**Timeline:** 3-10 Years

**Lead:** DSM and BSA

**Potential Partners:** City of Buffalo; City of Lackawanna; NYSDEC; NYSDOT; NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation ("NYSEFC"), Local, State, and Federal officials; and funding agencies

**Resources:** Initial estimates of total project cost are \$40 million; most (50%+) funding by ECSD No. 6 and BSA; however, significant grant funding needed to offset impacts to ratepayers.

ensure it is SPDES compliant. All of the above costs do not include the additional operation and maintenance expenses associated with the new components.

To adequately plan for future growth and properly protect our watershed, it has been proposed that a cooperative project be initiated whereby the Lackawanna WWTF is eliminated, sewage flows from ECSD No. 6 are redirected north to the City of Buffalo via force main, and a new gravity sewer is installed along the outer harbor waterfront with sufficient capacity to service the entire area and convey flows from ECSD No. 6. This proposed project would provide the following benefits:

- A regional, co-operative, watershed-based approach to wastewater services that is environmentally beneficial;
- Additional revenue for the BSA. The BSA has the need to provide or upgrade infrastructure and would have an additional partner in funding it;
- Full wastewater capacity to service the entire Lake Erie waterfront corridor in the Cities of Buffalo and Lackawanna; and
- Creation or maintenance of numerous construction and engineering jobs to successfully complete the project. ■

**Goal: Invest in the necessary upgrades and improvements to meet the conditions and criteria in the new SPDES Permits for Erie County's WWTFs.**

## 4.52 Rush Creek Interceptor Project

### Implement the Rush Creek Interceptor Project:

In 2003 and 2007, Erie County merged the Village of Blasdell sanitary sewer system (including the Blasdell WWTF) and a portion of the Town of Hamburg's sanitary sewer system with Erie County Sewer District No. 3 ("ECSD No. 3"). With these mergers, ECSD No. 3 took over three existing sanitary sewer overflows ("SSOs") that presently discharge to waterways upstream of Lake Erie and Woodlawn Beach State Park.

Since the time of the mergers, the Erie County Division of Sewerage Management has actively been pursuing a solution to eradicate these SSOs. The Rush Creek Interceptor project was conceived in the early 2000's to eliminate the SSOs, the Blasdell WWTF, and several pumping stations in the area. A gravity interceptor sewer would be constructed to convey flows tributary to the Blasdell WWTF and these SSOs to the ECSD No. 3 Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility ("AWTF"). Modifications of the Southtowns AWTF would be completed to handle the addi-

**Timeline:** 2-4 Years

**Lead:** DSM

**Potential Partners:** NYSDEC, Town of Hamburg, Village of Blasdell, NYSDOT, NYSEFC, and railroad companies

**Resources:** Total project cost approximately \$12.5 million; this project was awarded a \$5 million grant from the NYSDEC through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. ECSD No. 3 will fund the remainder.

tional flows. Through the treatment plant elimination, the requirements of the Blasdell WWTF SPDES permit are satisfied.

This project will better protect water resources. It will also create or sustain dozens of jobs during the course of construction. ■

## 4.53 Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility

**Upgrade the Southtowns AWTF:** The newly modified SPDES permit for the Southtowns AWTF contains several limitations that require additional upgrades to the treatment plant. The upgrades will include capacity and treatment enhancements that will allow for the sewer district to continue protection of water quality into the future. ■

**Timeline:** 5-10 Years

**Lead:** DSM

**Potential Partners:** NYSDEC

**Resources:** Unknown at this time. A study will be conducted with a completion date in 2014 to better define the necessary upgrades. ECSD No. 3 will fund the upgrade costs unless grant funding is identified.

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

**Goal: Protect and improve water quality at our Lake Erie beaches to increase the public's use and enjoyment of these resources.**

### 4.54 Beach closure forecasting

**Improve the system for forecasting beach closures:** DOH is currently improving their forecasting and modeling efforts to more effectively close and reopen beaches during and after rain events. Through EPA Great Lakes Funding, DOH has installed additional weather stations in the vicinity of local beaches. For the next two years, DOH will conduct sampling and bacteria analysis at these beaches during rain events to be able to better set the criteria for closing the beaches due to wet weather events. As part of this project, DOH has done some additional sampling in the streams that are tributary to the beaches, as well as the storm sewer outfalls discharging just upstream of the beaches, to try to identify the presence of human bacteria sources impacting the beaches. This work will enable them to use better weather data and its direct relationship to bacteria levels to forecast when the beaches need to be closed and reduce the number of beach closings. ■

**Timeline:** 2 years

**Lead:** DOH

**Potential Partners:** DEP, Buffalo State College, Erie County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, and NYS Departments of Health and Parks

**Resources:** DOH is currently working under grant funding from the EPA on this action item.



## 4.55 Identify bacteria sources impacting beaches

**Conduct source track-down studies to identify bacteria sources impacting beaches:** Bacteria sources through tributaries and the storm sewer systems upstream of the beaches need to be tracked-down in order to prevent contamination. Through their current sampling and analysis, the DOH has identified the presence of human bacteria in specific creeks as well as stormwater outfalls to these creeks, immediately above where the creeks empty into the beaches. In order to successfully reduce the bacteria levels at the beaches as well as beach closings, it is necessary to conduct source track-down studies in these creeks and the stormwater systems tributary to the outfalls where human bacteria has been identified. Tracking down the sources of the bacteria is the first step to develop strategies to eliminate the sources and improve water quality at the beaches. ■

**Timeline:** 2-3 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** Erie County Water Quality Committee, Western New York Storm Coalition, DOH, Multiple Municipalities, NYSDEC, NYSDOT, and NYS Department of Parks

**Resources:** \$300,000 to implement the first two track-down studies.

## 4.56 Eliminate bacteria sources

**Develop and implement strategies and Water Quality Improvement Projects to eliminate bacteria sources:** Building from the results of source track-down efforts, DEP with the Erie County Water Quality Committee, the Western New York Stormwater Coalition, and multiple other municipal, state and community partners, will organize and pursue resources to implement the projects necessary to effectively eliminate the identified sources of bacteria negatively impacting beaches. As a result, fewer beach closures will be necessary in wet weather events. ■

**Timeline:** 2 years

**Lead:** DEP

**Potential Partners:** Erie County Water Quality Committee, Western New York Storm Coalition, DOH, Multiple Municipalities, NYSDEC, NYSDOT, and NYS Department of Parks

**Resources:** To be determined on a project by project basis. Dependent on the scope of specific projects identified.

## SECTION 4: OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS

***Goal: Work towards removing the Buffalo River Area of Concern from the Great Lakes List of Toxic Hot Spots.***

### 4.57 Public access along the Buffalo River corridor

**Contribute to the expansion of natural habitat and public access along the Buffalo River corridor:**

There is only one impairment goal remaining in order to delist the Buffalo River Area of Concern from the Great Lakes List of Toxic Hot Spots: the restoration of natural habitat and public access along the banks of the Buffalo River. Erie County, through the development of four natural pocket parks along the Buffalo River and Times Beach at the Buffalo River's mouth, has played a role in creating habitat to address this goal. Working with Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, NYSDEC, the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency, and the other agency and community partners that serve as the Buffalo River Remedial Action Committee, DEP will investigate opportunities for the County to again assist and contribute to efforts to increase habitat and reach the delisting goal for the Area of Concern. ■

**Timeline:** 3-5 years

**Lead:** Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and Buffalo River Remediation Committee

**Potential Partners:** DEP, NYSDEC, Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency, and EPA

**Resources:** Will depend on specific sites selected, scope of restoration efforts identified, and the availability of grant resource.

### 4.58 County parks along the Buffalo River

**Maintain and enhance the existing County Natural Parks along the Buffalo River:** DEP, along with Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and the community centers and citizens that act as stewards and utilize the natural habitat parks along the Buffalo River, continue to identify strategies and projects that will enhance, protect, and better maintain Erie County's four Natural Habitat Parks. These parks include Bailey Peninsula Natural Habitat Park, Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park, Red Jacket River Front Natural Habitat Park, and the Times Beach Nature Preserve. DEP will continue to identify and pursue resources to implement these projects. ■

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Lead:** DEP and Parks Dept.

**Potential Partners:** Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, Valley Community Center, Seneca Babcock Community Center, South Park Middle School, and Friends of Times Beach

**Resources:** Existing Parks maintenance budget as well as volunteer efforts and contributions and grants as they become available.



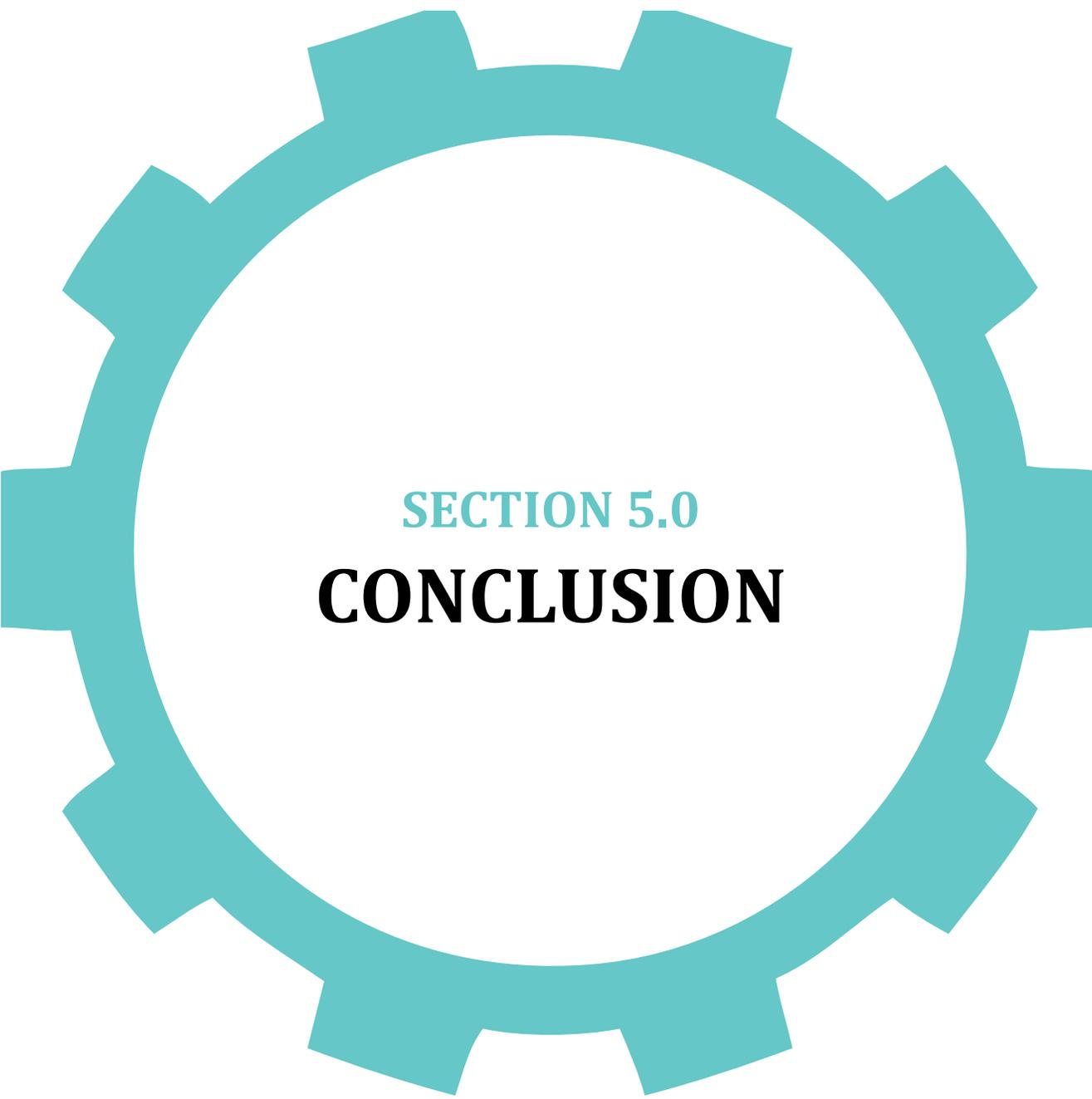
## 4.59 Blue Economy Conclusion

Erie County is blessed with its strategic location on the Great Lakes and the Niagara River. In advancing these Blue Economy initiatives and supporting other water quality programs, the County will receive a tremendous return on investment. The Brookings Institute issued the September 2007 report, “Healthy Waters, Strong Economy: The Benefits of Restoring the Great Lakes Ecosystem,” which estimated that every \$1 spent on Great Lakes restoration activities will lead to \$2 of benefit. This benefit to the Great Lakes economy was quantified considering enhancements to tourism, fishing, and recreation; coastal property values; reduced costs to municipalities; economic ac-

tivity by making the region more attractive to business and workers; and short-term multiplier effects for the jobs supported during restoration activities.

Driving revitalization through the protection and restoration of the health and integrity of Western New York’s fresh water systems is not only sound environmental policy but also represents a smart investment in our economic future. ■

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**SECTION 5.0**  
**CONCLUSION**

# CONCLUSION



## NEXT STEPS FOR A SMART ECONOMY

### Moving from idea to actions

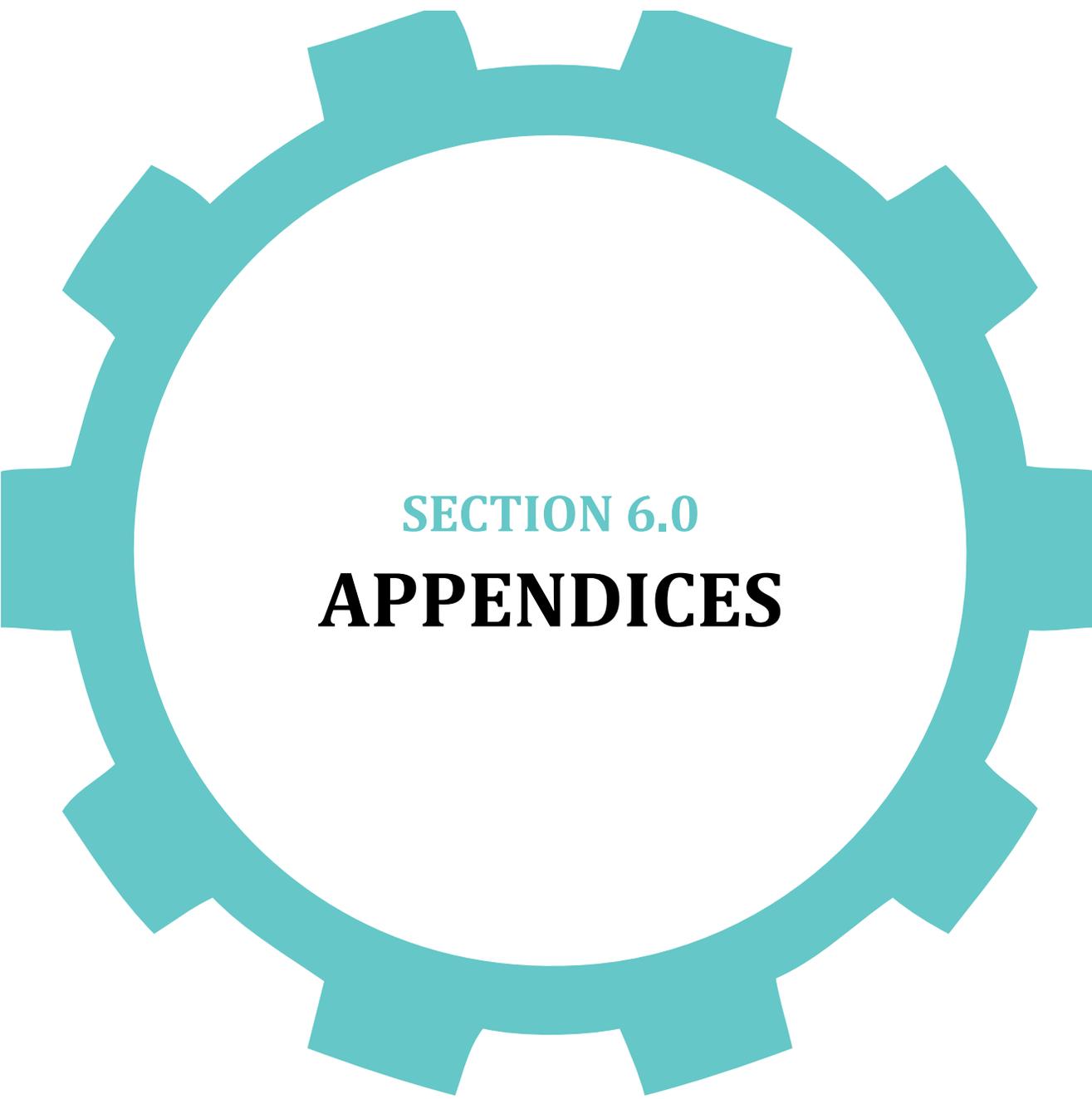
As noted in the State of the County address earlier this year, when speaking of the need for private investment in our community, we must recognize that no outside business will choose to invest in our community if they believe we are unwilling to invest in it ourselves. Lack of revenue in future years puts at risk not only our libraries, health and welfare programs, and the safety of our roads and bridges but also our ability to properly fund economic development opportunities going forward.

In recognizing such budget challenges and the limited financial resources available, the Poloncarz administration has developed an economic development strategy that works in concert with the REDC to leverage regional assets and local partnerships—both public and private—to maximize the impact of each dollar invested.

“Initiatives for a Smart Economy” represents the Poloncarz administration’s deep commitment to a comprehensive, innovative approach to economic development that contributes to a more vibrant local economy that works for everyone in our community.

Taking into account the availability of necessary resources and collaboration of identified partners, the Poloncarz administration will now begin to develop a detailed work plan for the implementation of the initiatives included in this document. The work plan will create a timeline for the initiation, duration and completion of initiatives. Additionally, a concerted effort will be made to solidify support for initiatives included within this document among the potential partners identified throughout as well as other key stakeholders, government officials and the public.

Going forward, the Poloncarz administration, and specifically DEP, will continue to lead the next steps in the planning process, monitoring its implementation, measuring progress, and updating the plan as needed.

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**SECTION 6.0**  
**APPENDICES**

## 6.1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
AWTF	Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility
BNCC	Buffalo Niagara Convention Center
BNE	Buffalo Niagara Enterprise
BNIA	Buffalo Niagara International Airport
BNMC	Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
BNP	Buffalo Niagara Partnership
BSA	City of Buffalo Sewer Authority
BUDC	Buffalo Urban Development Corporation
Buffalo Billion	A Path to Renewal: Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
Commerce	U.S. Department of Commerce
CSXT	CSX Transportation
DEP	Erie County Department of Environment and Planning
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
DOH	Erie County Department of Health
DPW	Erie County Department of Public Works
DSM	Division of Sewerage Management
DSS	Erie County Department of Social Services
ECC	Erie Community College
ECIDA	Erie County Industrial Development Agency
ECHDC	Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation
ECSD No. 3	Erie County Sewer District No. 3
ECSD No. 6	Erie County Sewer District No. 6
EEO	Erie County Division of Equal Employment Opportunity
EPA	U.S. Environment Protection Agency
ESD	Empire State Development
FIT	Feed-in-Tariff
GBNRTC	Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
M/WBE	Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprise
NFTA	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
NRGC	Niagara River Greenway Commission
NYP&A	New York Power Authority
NYS	New York State
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDEL	New York State Department of Labor
NYS DOT	New York State Department of Transportation
NYSEFC	New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
Port Authority	Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
PUSH Buffalo	People United for Sustainable Housing
QECB	Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds
REDC	Western New York Regional Economic Development Council

## *Appendix A: Glossary of Terms*

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
REDC Plan	Western New York Regional Economic Development Council's November 2011 report "A Strategy for Prosperity"
RWAC	Regional Workforce Advancement Center
SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems
SSO	Sanitary Sewer Overflow
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math
SUNY	State University of New York
TAP	Technical Assistance Program
UB	University at Buffalo
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
UTEP	Uniform Tax Exemption Policy
VBN	Visit Buffalo Niagara
WDC	Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium, Inc.
WIB	Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
WNYALF	Western New York Area Labor Federation
WNYEDF	Western New York Economic Development Fund
WTCBN	World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara
WWTF	Wastewater Treatment Facility

## 6.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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