

BUFFALO SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TIFFT NATURE PRESERVE

1020 HUMBOLDT PARKWAY, BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14211-1208 (716)896-5200 FAX(716)897-6723

May 12, 2014

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Hon. Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive
95 Franklin Street, Suite 1600
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear County Executive Poloncarz:

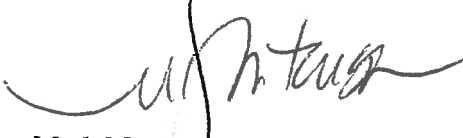
The Buffalo Museum of Science has recently submitted a letter of interest for the Consolidated Funding Application process for a project to restore the front entrance of the Museum of Science building (see attached document). This entrance has not been open since the late 1970s and is unable to be used due to the current level of structural degradation.

As you know, we have focused our current fundraising efforts on renovating and updating the interior exhibitions spaces throughout the Museum. The renovation of our permanent exhibit spaces has afforded us the opportunity to share more of the collection and create rotating exhibit themes to provide more visibility to these unique community assets. Through the philanthropic support of local foundations, corporations, private individuals and our Board of Managers, we have secured \$5.8M against our \$6.8M goal.

The enhanced exhibition spaces coupled with the on-going generous support of Erie County, we are able to manage our unique collection and provide dynamic programming for the benefit of the community. The community feedback has been positive and we have seen an increase in visitation. By the end of 2017, we anticipate serving over 225,000 visitors annually which represents a 300% increase over our visitation in 2007. We are fortunate to have experiences that draw visitation from across the United States, especially when they are visiting local family and friends. Our Southern Ontario visitation has also increased.

Re-opening the front entrance is critical to the ongoing renaissance of the Buffalo Museum of Science. In its current state, the outside of the building looks abandoned and does not reflect the amazing transformation that has already taken place inside. We have not asked for County capital funding in the past, but we are hopeful that you will consider a \$1.5M matching contribution to our CFA grant application. We are also requesting a similar commitment from the City of Buffalo.

Respectfully,



Mark Mortenson
President and CEO
Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences
Managing the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tifft Nature Preserve

Attachment

c: The Honorable Erie County Legislature – Clerk Scott W. Kroll
Honorable Stefan I. Mychajliw
Honorable Maria Whyte
Mr. Robert Keating

Comm. 11M-2
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CFA LOI 2-Front Entrance

Project Name: Re-opening of the historic entrance at the Buffalo Museum of Science

Describe the purpose of your project in a single sentence

Revitalization of the East-Side area/Museum through the re-opening of the front entrance and plaza.

Describe the project's major activities

Founded in 1861, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences operates the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tiff Nature Preserve. Since 1929, the Buffalo Museum of Science has been located on Humboldt Parkway, on the edge of Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, part of the historic Fredrick Law Olmsted Park system. One of the hurdles we have to overcome is the location of the Buffalo Museum of Science and the perceived reputation of our neighborhood to our visitors throughout Western New York and Southern Ontario. Supporting that reputation is the state of the exterior of the Museum building. The current conditions of the main steps, plaza, and East and West entrances are so dire that the City of Buffalo has eliminated all access and pedestrian traffic in the area. At this time, the entrance has been closed longer than it was originally opened. The Buffalo Museum of Science has been a long-standing resource on the East Side of Buffalo, even though there has been decades of decline. Through the approval and support, investing 6.8 million into the interior renovation of the Museum, the Board of Managers remains committed to the current location and the East Side of Buffalo. As the sole accredited science museum in the entire Western New York and Southern Ontario region the Buffalo Museum of Science has successfully started the process of transforming its current interior exhibit space into themed science experiences we call Science Studios. With the investment in the interior spaces at the museum, we have seen an increase in both school group and general visitation. The front entrance project would complement the current interior transformation and provide a prominent visual link to other improvement projects in the surrounding area and make the Museum a destination experience for the residents of Western New York and visitors to the region. The conceptual design was completed by Hamilton, Houston and Lownie, an architectural resource that has had significant success in historic restoration projects. With this design, we received a preliminary cost estimate of \$4.2 million and façade work of \$800K. With our current interior renovation, we have not leveraged any public funding (City, County and State) to date. We have met with public leaders to discuss this project and potential funding. All asks have been well received and supported, we are anticipating match grants for this project.

Timeframe for implementation

Schematic design would last 5 months, design documents, estimate and review would take 6 months, Construction documentation, estimate and review would take 7 months, Permit process would take 2 months, Bid and Award would take 4 months. Construction would take 12 months and close out 1 month.

Total Project duration: 36 months/3 yrs.

What are your anticipated outcomes?

The project is to re-open the front entrance of the Buffalo Museum of Science for a better visitor arrival and visitor perception of the museum. The re-opening of the Museum's front entrance will continue to signal the renaissance of the East Side of Buffalo and re-establish a critical connection between the park and the Museum. In addition to the neighborhood revitalization, the entire project design respects the historic design of the entrance. The expected outcome will be a historically sensitive reconstruction that will allow us to re-use the true, proper and safe entrance of the Museum and ADA access to the building. In the re-opening of the front entrance, our Museum facility will offer an architectural and science resource for residents of New York State, visitors from Canada and tourists to the Buffalo Niagara region. The re-opening of the front entrance will support incremental construction growth jobs in the region and also afford long term positions as the Museum's admissions grow from both the exterior and interior transformations.

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Buffalo Museum of Science

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