



**MEMORANDUM
COUNTY OF ERIE
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

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

FROM: Elizabeth A. Burakowski, Sr. Economic Development Specialist *EAB*

DATE: May 10, 2015

RE: Initiatives for a Smart Economy – January 2015 Reports

In January 2015, departmental staff provided periodic reports on the 64 initiatives comprising Initiatives for a Smart Economy. This memo will summarize the reports and highlight the successes already achieved as well as any areas of concern.

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

Completed Initiatives

To date, 12 initiatives have been fully completed, representing 19% of the total. This is double the number of completed projects from the July 2014 periodic report. The newly completed initiatives are: 3.12 Regional Workforce Advancement Center/Advance Buffalo, 3.22 Main Street Blight Demolition, 3.32 Support of Launch NY, 3.61 Energy Management Office, 4.21 Economic Development Office in GTA, and 4.33 Riverbend Industrial Park.

In Progress Initiatives

39 of 64 initiatives are in progress, representing 61% of the total. There are initiatives in progress in all twelve sectors. 6 of the in-progress initiatives are at least 80% complete so the total number of completed initiatives is expected to increase again substantially within the next six months. For example, 3.31 Niagara Region Ventures Fund, 4.34 Brownfield Remediation and 4.54 Beach Closure Forecasting could all be completed by the date of the next periodic report. In addition, 6 of the in-progress initiatives are classified as “on-going” or “annual” obligations and are therefore unlikely to ever be classified as completed.

See the attached spreadsheet for notes on individual projects, including suggestions by initiative supervisors as to how the Administration can help advance projects that may be encountering challenges.

Initiatives Not Yet Begun

13 initiatives have not yet begun, representing 20% of the total. These initiatives are generally evenly distributed throughout the twelve sectors; however, there are no yet-to-be-started initiatives in Tourism, ECIDA Reform, or Land Development.

Areas of Concern

There are no areas of concern to report at this time.

Conclusion

Of the 64 initiatives, a total of 51 (80%) are completed or underway. Substantial progress has been made since the last periodic report and is expected by the next reports, which will be due in July 2015.

**Initiatives for a Smart Economy
January 2015 Progress**

Initiative Number	Initiative	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
3.12	Regional Workforce Advancement Center Buffalo Billion/Advance Buffalo	X			Pilot phase 100% complete, scale up/permanent facility just beginning	100%	WIB is no longer directly involved but stands ready to assist NYSDOL as the department evaluates the successes and failures of the pilot and makes plans for the future.
3.22	Main Street Blight Demolition	X			66%	100%	Three initial projects are complete. Departmental staff will develop additional candidate sites to use appropriate available resources.
3.32	Support of LaunchNY	X			10%	100%	Board approved disbursement of 2014 and 2015 allocation effective January 2015. 2016 allocation expected in January 2016.
3.61	Erie County Energy Management Office	X			10%	100%	Energy Officer has been hired and has begun work of drafting an energy plan.
4.11	Implementation of new State law	X			100%	100%	
4.15	ECIDA Move	X			100%	100%	
4.16	New ECIDA CEO	X			100%	100%	
4.17	ECIDA Local Labor Policy	X			100%	100%	
4.21	Economic Development Office in GTA	X			75%	100%	Contract with PSD Global executed 11/1/14.
4.24	EB-5 Capital	X			100%	100%	

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Initiative Number	Initiative	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
4.33	River Bend Industrial Park	X			5%	100%	Land purchase completed, construction underway.
4.41	Arts and Cultural Institution Funding	X			100% for 2015; funding must be secured on annual basis.	100%	
3.11	Academic Building for ECC		X		20%	25%	Article 78 challenge resolved. Architect selection and CM selection expected to be completed in Q1 2015.
3.13	Apprenticeship Law		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	
3.15	Employment Training Resource Guide		X		Annual	Annual	
3.16	Workforce Development Summits		X		Annual	Annual	2015 events focused in two areas: travel/tourism and construction. See report for detailed info.
3.17	Vocational ESL Program		X		5%	10%	Preliminary discussions held to tie in to Travel and Tourism Training program in development at WDC.
3.21	Smart Growth Fund		X		15%	25%	
3.24	Niagara River Greenway Funding		X		0%	75%	Analysis in EC Standing Committee funding process complete, review by EC Standing Committee expected in March 2015.
3.25	Cherry Farm Feasibility Analysis		X		5%	5%	Awaiting approval of the Greenway Application by the EC Standing Committee in March 2015.
3.31	Niagara Region Ventures Fund		X		75%	85%	Fund reactivation to be presented to ECIDA board for approval in March 2015.
3.34	M/WBE Ralph Wilson Stadium		X		85%	85%	MBE 15.63%, WBE 18.04% (Total 33.67%) Goal was 23%; Apprenticeship 13.87%

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3.41	Agribusiness Park		X		10%	10%	Proposals from consultants have been received; selection expected in February 2015.
3.42	ECIDA Agribusiness Development		X		25%	25%	
3.43	Food Hub Feasibility Study		X		50%	80%	Feasibility portion of study complete, Eden Valley Growers selected as food hub operator and will begin work on business plan.
3.44	Food Policy Council		X		80%	90%	Strategic plan has been developed, Board of Health has formally adopted as subcommittee. Grant funding has ended, so staff are exploring other funding mechanisms.
3.45	Regional Agricultural Brand		X		20%	20%	NYS Ag & Markets has indicated that regional efforts should be put on hold in light
3.51	Downtown Convention Center Feasibility Study		X		5%	10%	Draft RFP prepared.
3.52	VBN Funding Advisory Board		X		10%	10%	
3.62	Interdepartmental Green Team		X		0%	Less than 10%	Project has been funded and staff are working with NYSERDA to develop a final work plan for grant contract.
3.63	Energy Conservation Revolving Loan Program		X		25%	25%	Staff are exploring the risks/rewards of the PACE program as well as opportunities to collaborate with SolarCity.
3.64	WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable		X		50%	50%	Received two years of USEPA grant funding.
3.71	EC International Marketing Campaign		X		0%	33%	ECIDA has organized initial stakeholder efforts and will coordinate an inventory of
3.72	Manufacturing Distribution Capacity		x		0%	35%	Rail utilization plan to be complete by March 2015. Property acquisition funds awarded through CFA and negotiations underway.

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3.74	Portageville Road Bridge		X		30%	30%	Final design and engineering complete.
4.12	Adaptive Reuse Policy		X		20%	20%	High project volume has slowed policy development.
4.13	"But-for" Test		X		10%	15%	High project volume has slowed policy development.
4.14	Cooperation with Town IDAs		X		50%	Ongoing	Improved collaboration on policy work, especially Senior Housing Policy
4.22	Cross-border influence		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	
4.25	ECIDA International Program		X		50%	75%	Focus on effective marketing of Foreign Trade Zones and collaboration with WTCBN.
4.31	Bethlehem Steel		X		30%	35%	Rail rationalization plan expected to be complete in March 2015. Land acquisition funds awarded in 2014 CFA. Negotiations underway with Tecumseh.
4.32	North Youngmann Commerce Center Industrial Park		X		15%	40%	Construction to resume after winter break.
4.34	Brownfield Remediation		X		Ongoing	85%	Four of five projects are completed and the fifth is 25% complete. Staff will continue to identify additional candidate sites for remediation.
4.42	Buffalo Bills Lease		X		86% (renovations); annual obligations ongoing	100% (renovations); annual obligations ongoing	
4.43	New Stadium Working Group		X		5%	5%	On hold following purchase of team by Pegulas.

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Initiative Number	Initiative	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
4.51	Lackawanna Wastewater Treatment Plant		X		10%	15%	Awaiting comments on draft final study from NYSDEC.
4.52	Rush Creek Interceptor Project		X		50%	55%	First phase of construction in progress. Second phase bid opening in February 2015.
4.53	Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility		X		5%	10%	
4.54	Beach Closure Forecasting		X		90%	90%	Weather related delays and technical difficulties lead to need for additional year of data collection to produce workable statistical models. 2015 effort will be scaled back from 2011-2014 work, but still significant.
4.57	Buffalo River Habitat and Corridor Public Access		X		20%	25%	Timing problems presented by City of Buffalo and NYSDOT projects at Bailey Avenue site.
3.14	Employment Resource Coordinating Council			X	0%	0%	Project not prioritized, expected to begin Q3 2015.
3.23	Erie County Complete Streets Policy			X	0%	0%	Project not prioritized, expected to begin June 2015.
3.33	Entrepreneurship Boot camp Event			X	0%	0%	Project not prioritized, expected to begin after reactivation of Niagara Region Venture Fund.
3.35	M/WBE ECC STEM Building			X	0%	0%	Project dependent on design and construction of building
3.46	Agritourism			X	0%	0%	Project not prioritized, expected to begin Q2 2015.

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3.65	Feed-in-Tariff Feasibility Study			X	0%	0%	Funding not secured. There seems to be a move away from this initiative by the environmental community as the PSC is working on other ways to promote renewables through REV.
3.66	Climate Smart Communities Coordinator			X	0%	0%	Funding not secured, will apply through 2015 CFA.
3.73	Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge			X	0%	0%	Funding not secured.
4.23	Insourcing Initiatives			X	0%	0%	Project not prioritized.
4.44	Erie County Parks Master Plan Update and Implementation			X	0%	0%	Project not prioritized, expected to begin Q1 2015.
4.45	Division of Park Rangers-Feasibility			X	0%	0%	Requesting 2016 Operating and Capital Budget support.
4.55	Identification of Beach Bacteria Source			X	0%	0%	Funding not secured.
4.56	Eliminate Bacteria Sources			X	0%	0%	Project dependent on outcome of Initiative 4.55.