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# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 25, 2016

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, NY 147202

**RE: Bi-annual report on Initiatives for a Smart Economy**

Dear Honorable Members:

Please find attached the 2016 bi-annual report for Initiatives for a Smart Economy. The report covers January 2016 through June 2016 and demonstrates some considerable progress towards completion of many initiatives.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the findings of this report with your Economic Development Committee at your convenience.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Deputy County Executive, Maria Whyte. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq." in a cursive style.

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.  
Erie County Executive

MCP/mw



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

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

**FROM:** Andrew Federick, Siobhan Maloney

**DATE:** July 21, 2016

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

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In June of 2016, departmental staff provided updated reports on the 64 initiatives comprising Initiatives for a Smart Economy for the time period of January 1, 2016 – June 30, 2016. This memo will summarize the reports and highlight the successes already achieved as well as any areas of concern.

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

Completed Initiatives

To date, 27 initiatives have been fully completed (up from 16 at time of the previous bi-annual report), representing 42% of the total. Including the most recently completed initiative 3.46 ‘Agritourism,’ which went from not started to complete in the last six months.

In Progress Initiatives

Thirty-two of the remaining 37 initiatives are in progress, representing 86% of the total remaining to be completed. There are initiatives in progress in all twelve sectors. Seven of the in-progress initiatives are at least 70% complete so the total number of completed initiatives is expected to increase again substantially within the next six months. Five of the in-progress initiatives are classified as “on-going” or “annual” obligations and are unlikely to ever be classified as completed.

See the attached spreadsheet for notes on individual projects, including a summary of the current status of each project by initiative supervisors. Initiatives that have shown measurable progress or movement from one phase to a new phase are highlighted in yellow.

### Initiatives Not Yet Begun

Five initiatives have not yet begun, representing 8% of the total. These initiatives are generally evenly distributed throughout the twelve sectors; however, there are no yet-to-be-started initiatives in Entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Tourism, ECIDA Reform, Land Development or Quality of Life.

### Areas of Concern

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

### Conclusion

Of the 64 initiatives, a total of 92% are completed or in progress. Substantial progress has been made since the last periodic report and is expected by the next biannual reporting period, which will be July 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016.

Initiatives for a Smart Economy  
June 2016 Progress

Initiative Number	Sector	Initiative	Department	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
<b>Completed</b>									
3.12	Workforce Development	Regional Workforce Advancement Center - Buffalo Billion/Advance Buffalo	WIB	X			Pilot phase 100% complete, scale up/permanent facility just beginning	100%	WIB is no longer directly involved but stands ready to assist NYS DOL as the department evaluates the successes and failures of the pilot and makes plans for the future.
3.16	Workforce Development	Workforce Development Summits	WIB	X			60%	100% (Annual Summits will Continue)	Using feedback gained from the County Executive's 2013 Hospitality Summit, the WIB convened a committee of employers to develop a training program for entry level positions in the hotel industry. Representatives from Delaware North, Seneca Gaming, Adams Mark Hotel, Buffalo Niagara Hotel/Motel Association, Visit Buffalo Niagara, and the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center participated in this project, which resulted in the development of a 260 hour training program in Hotel Front Desk Operations offered by Erie 1 BOCES. Participants were recruited through the One Stop Career system, which also covered tuition costs and related training needs. Nine participants completed the program in April 2016. To date, five have secured employment.
3.22	Smart Growth	Main Street Blight Demolition	DEP	X			100%	100%	Three initial projects are complete. Departmental staff will develop additional candidate sites to use appropriate available resources.
3.22.2	Smart Growth	Former BOCES Building Demolition/ Main Street Reconstruction		X			Phase 1 - 100%; Phase 2 dependent on Lancaster's redesign of road	100%	Village of Lancaster has decided to get more public input and revisit design of road.
3.22.3	Smart Growth	City of Lackawanna, Ridge Road Friendship House Demolition		X			100%	100%	
3.24	Smart Growth	Niagara River Greenway Funding	DEP	X			100%	100%	Completed - 7/21/15

Initiatives for a Smart Economy  
June 2016 Progress

Initiative Number	Sector	Initiative	Department	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
3.32	Entrepreneurship	Support of LaunchNY	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	Board approved disbursement of 2014 and 2015 allocation effective January 2015. 2016 allocation expected in January 2016.
3.41	Agriculture	Agribusiness Park	DEP	X			10%	100%	The initiative was to complete a feasibility study. Implementation of the recommendation will be on-going.
3.43	Agriculture	Food Hub Feasibility Study	DEP	X			100%	100%	Completed in June 2015, Eden Valley Growers was selected as the Hub.
3.44	Agriculture	Food Policy Council	Health	X			90%	100%	Council is up and functioning as a subcommittee of the EC Board of Health. All seats are filled, new members have been trained.
3.45	Agriculture	Regional Agricultural Brand	DEP	X			20%	100%	Niagra County Cooperative Extension developed the brand, additional work is needed to publicize the brand.
3.46	Agriculture	Agritourism	DEP	X			0%	100%	Farm trail map created, website launched with interactive map
3.61	Energy	Erie County Energy Management Office	DEP	X			100%	100%	Energy Officer has been hired and has begun work of drafting an energy plan.
3.65	Energy	Feed-in-Tariff Feasibility Study	DEP	X			0%	100%	There has been a move away from this initiative from the environmental community as the Public Service Commission is working on other ways to promote renewables through REV (Reforming the Energy Vision).
3.71	Bi-National Logistics	EC International Marketing Campaign	ECIDA	X			90%	100%	The ECIDA provided \$100K in financial support to the Invest Buffalo Niagara organization to begin their business attraction efforts in Canada.
4.11	ECIDA	Implementation of new State law	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.15	ECIDA	ECIDA Move	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	

Initiatives for a Smart Economy  
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4.16	ECIDA	New ECIDA CEO	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.17	ECIDA	ECIDA Local Labor Policy	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.21	International Trade	Economic Development Office in GTA	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	Building off the success of the first contract between Invest Buffalo Niagara and CIDEF, both parties signed a new contract to continue the relationship using \$100,000 from the ECIDA. The program has made great headway in building relationships with Erie County and the business community of Southern Ontario, which has resulted in several businesses expanding into the
4.24	International Trade	EB-5 Capital	ECIDA	X			100%	100%	
4.25	International Trade	ECIDA International Program	ECIDA	X			75%	100%	The initiative has generated new leads and the potential for new job creation in Erie County.
4.32	Land Development and Redevelopment	North Youngmann Commerce Center Industrial Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	Completed 12/31/2015
4.33	Land Development and Redevelopment	River Bend Industrial Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	Land purchase completed, construction underway.
4.34	Land Development and Redevelopment	Spaulding Commerce Park	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.34.2	Land Development and Redevelopment	5335 River Road (Former Petroleum Tank Farm)	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.34.3	Land Development and Redevelopment	3445 River Road, Polymer Applications Site	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.34.5	Land Development and Redevelopment	1815 Eggert Road, abandoned dry cleaner	DEP	X			100%	100%	
4.41	Quality of Life	Arts and Cultural Institution Funding	DEP	X			100% for 2015, funding must be secured on annual basis.	100%	

Initiatives for a Smart Economy  
June 2016 Progress

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4.42	Quality of Life	Buffalo Bills Lease	DPW	X			100%	100% (renovations); annual obligations ongoing	
4.45	Quality of Life	Division of Park Rangers-Feasibility	Parks	X			100%	100%	Completed 8/3/15 when last of three Rangers started. A consultant was not hired, as originally proposed.
4.55	Blue Economy	Identification of Beach Bacteria Source	Health	X			0%	100%	This project concluded in 2015, at the end of the grant period. Final reports were delivered and accepted by the grant sponsor. We have a better understanding of beach water quality, and coupled with an initiative to predict water quality this initiative has improved our ability to protect the health of swimmers at the 4 studied beaches (Hamburg Beach, Bennett Beach, Lake Erie Beach and Evans Town Park Beach).
<b>In Progress</b>									
3.11	Workforce Development	Academic Building for ECC	DPW		X		30%	40%	Contract was awarded to lowest bidder but the project has been halted due to unforeseen circumstances
3.13	Workforce Development	Apprenticeship Law	EEO		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	Apprenticeship participation of at least 10% of workforce hours must be achieved on County projects at \$250K and above. The DEEO monitors all County projects for apprenticeship participation and calls attention when a contractor is not achieving or trying to achieve the goal.
3.15	Workforce Development	Employment Training Resource Guide	DSS		X		Annual	50%	Initial Training Resource Guide completed and posted to DSS website. Recommendations for changes to information collected and layout discussed. Next step to redesign agency training profile template and obtain updated information from training providers and update the guide.

Initiatives for a Smart Economy  
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3.17	Workforce Development	Vocational ESL Program	DSS		X		10%	20%	Initial conversation with Erie 1 BOCES and Buffalo Public Schools Adult Learning Center held. Both have included in their ESL curriculum workplace language.
3.21	Smart Growth	Smart Growth Fund	DEP		X		66%	75%	100% of Funding secured
3.25	Smart Growth	Cherry Farm Feasibility Analysis	DEP		X		10%	10%	Consultant selection process through Parks Master Plan is occurring. 100% of funding secured.
3.31	Entrepreneurship	Niagara Region Ventures Fund	ECIDA		X		Ongoing (50% of funding secured)	Ongoing (100% of funding secured)	100% of Funding secured. Continuing to build pipeline of applicants.
3.33	Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship Boot camp Event	ECIDA		X		5%	75%	The ECIDA board voted earlier in 2016 to provide Western New York Incubator Network (WIN) in conjunction with UB with \$20,000 to fund several entrepreneur/mentoring training events. Three of the four events have been held so far with the fourth being held later this year.
3.34	Entrepreneurship	M/WBE Ralph Wilson Stadium	EEO		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	M/WBE goals achieved during \$130 million renovation. Maintenance and repairs are performed annually for up to 10 years. Current Capital Improvement Allowance Projects underway have 30% M/WBE participation goals and they are being achieved. As well as apprenticeship goals too. CIAP target for complete is August 2016.
3.35	Entrepreneurship	M/WBE ECC STEM Building	EEO		X		0%	40%	The project is on hold, due to a bidder's challenge over the bid process. Other than that all bids came in under budget with 32% or exceeding the 32% goal for M/WBE business participation.

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3.42	Agriculture	ECIDA Agribusiness Development	ECIDA		X		25%	70%	ECIDA has assigned business development staff, micro bdf loan programs are funded, Agribusiness Park Study funded.
3.51	Tourism	Downtown Convention Center Feasibility Study	DEP		X		10%	10%	Draft RFP prepared.
3.52	Tourism	VBN Funding Advisory Board	DEP		X		10%	30%	Erie County partnering with Visit Buffalo Niagara to continue meetings with hoteliers and others on revenue.
3.62	Energy	Interdepartmental Green Team	DEP		X		10%	40%	A Sustainability Coordinator has been hired and the internal Green Team has been formed. Monthly Green Team meetings have been held and several committees established, including Alternative Fuels, Recycling, and Paper Reduction. These committees have already begun initiatives such as the paper reduction contest, working to secure funding for alternative fueled vehicles, and rolling out a co-mingled recycling program in the Rath building. The project has also engaged both the public and employees through regular meetings.
3.63	Energy	Energy Conservation Revolving Loan Program	DEP		X		25%	40%	A Sustainability Coordinator has been hired and the internal Green Team has been formed. Monthly Green Team meetings have been held and several committees established, including Alternative Fuels, Recycling, and Paper Reduction. These committees have already begun initiatives such as the paper reduction contest, working to secure funding for alternative fueled vehicles, and rolling out a co-mingled recycling program in the Rath building. The project has also engaged both the public and employees through regular meetings.

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3.64	Energy	WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable	DEP		X		70%	70%	Over 60 Businesses and organizations, including Erie County, have signed a pledge to officially participate in the Roundtable and develop a Sustainable Business plan for their organization. Over the past year, the Roundtable has adopted bylaws, as well as elected a board of directors and officers. The Roundtable has sponsored monthly Sustainable Business planning sessions, working sessions, and a tradeshow. The annual WNY/SBR EXPO was held March 10, 2016 at the Adam's Mark Hotel and featured acclaimed author Andrew Winston. Currently 3 interns are assisting members with their sustainability plans and metrics.
3.72	Bi-National Logistics	Manufacturing Distribution Capacity	ECIDA/ DEP		X		10%	35%	RFQ has been released to hire consultant for rail design work. Negotiations with Tecumseh continue on purchase of property.
3.74	Bi-National Logistics	Portageville Road Bridge			X		40%	50%	Presently under construction.
4.12	ECIDA	Adaptive Reuse Policy	ECIDA		X		20%	20%	High project volume has slowed policy development.
4.13	ECIDA	"But-for" Test	ECIDA		X		10%	15%	High project volume has slowed policy development.
4.14	ECIDA	Cooperation with Town IDAs	ECIDA		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	Improved collaboration on policy work, especially Senior Housing Policy

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4.22	International Trade	Cross-border influence	DEP		X		Ongoing	50%	Cross border relationships were based on using the Niagara 10 Group as a basis for networking and sharing cross border interests. The Niagara 10 Group has not been functioning in the past year.
4.31	Land Development and Redevelopment	Bethlehem Steel	DEP		X		Phase 1 complete; Phase 2 - 5%	Phase 2 - 10%	RFQ has been released to hire consultant for rail design work. Rail design to start in July, 2016
4.34	Land Development and Redevelopment	Brownfield Remediation	DEP		X		Ongoing	Ongoing	Negotiations with Tecumseh continue on purchase of property. County in process of foreclosing on property in Tonawanda.
4.34.4	Land Development and Redevelopment	5565 River Road unlicensed landfill	DEP		X		25%	30%	NYSDEC performing Superfund investigation and engineering
4.43	Quality of Life	New Stadium Working Group			X		5%	5%	On hold following purchase of team by Pegulias.
4.44	Quality of Life	Erie County Parks Master Plan Update and Implementation	DEP / Parks		X		5%	10%	Funding is secure.
4.51	Blue Economy	Lackawanna Wastewater Treatment Plant	DEP		X		15%	15%	In the study phase; draft final report submitted to the NYSDEC in September 2014. Met with NYSDEC in December 2014 to present the findings and discuss next steps. Comment letter received in March 2015. Construction project is in progress. Phase I is 99% complete; Phase II is roughly 50% complete.
4.52	Blue Economy	Rush Creek Interceptor Project	DEP		X		75%	85%	Construction project is in progress. Phase I is 99% complete; Phase II is roughly 50% complete.

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4.53	Blue Economy	Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility	DEP		X		10%	10%	In the study phase; consultant was retained at the end of 2013. Three (3) interim milestone reports submitted to NYSDEC by the end of 2014. Draft final report was submitted to the NYSDEC in November 2015. Kickoff meeting for the No Feasible Alternatives analysis will be held in Summer 2016.
4.54	Blue Economy	Beach Closure Forecasting	Health		X		90%	90%	Beach water quality forecasting models have been developed and evaluated. Further refinement is expected annually for some period of time to achieve greater accuracy. Beaches must be sampled daily for turbidity, and are currently sampled for bacteriological quality daily to help refine the models. Sampling is currently being done by a combination of beach operators, county staff and contractors.
4.57	Blue Economy	Public Access along the Buffalo River Corridor	DEP		X		20%	70%	Waiting for the County Attorney's office to finalize land purchase agreement.
4.58	Blue Economy	Maintain and Enhance the existing County Natural Parks along the Buffalo River	DEP		X		35%	40%	\$1.95 Million in USEPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding has been secured. Construction contracts have been awarded for both Red Jacket, Bailey and Smith Street. These contracts were approved by the legislature on 6/23/16.
<b>Not Yet Begun</b>									
3.14	Workforce Development	Employment Resource Coordinating Council	WIB			X	0%	0%	Though the original objective of developing a central clearinghouse for employment resources has not yet occurred, improved working relationships among stakeholders has resulted in increased awareness of employment opportunities, and significant reduction in the unemployment rate.
3.23	Smart Growth	Erie County Complete Streets Policy	DEP			X	0%	0%	Re-scheduling of work flow due to staff loss in Planning Division, expected to begin 3/1/2017. 100% of funding secured.

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Initiative Number	Sector	Initiative	Department	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Begun	% complete at last report	% complete at this report	Notes
3.66	Energy	Climate Smart Communities Coordinator	DEP			X	0%	0%	There are some resources in the current NYS Consolidate Funding Application which might help some communities in Erie County with their Climate Smart Community Pledge. This potential pot of NYSDEC funding is being explored. If awarded, funding would be available in the spring
3.73	Bi-National Logistics	Canadian Pacific Draw Bridge	ECIDA			X	0%	0%	The project has not been initiated to date. The bridge is presently in ownership of CSX railroad and is operating to serve the needs of the Buffalo rail terminal
4.23	International Trade	Insourcing Initiatives	DEP			X	0%	0%	This effort has been delayed in part because of a priority placed on initiative 4.21.
4.56	Blue Economy	Eliminate Bacteria Sources	DEP			X	0%	0%	DEP has identified some monitoring money to continue to do the analysis work to identify and quantify the pollutant sources that need to be eliminated.