



MEMORANDUM

**COUNTY OF ERIE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

TO: KAREN McCARTHY, Clerk of the Erie County Legislature

FROM: THOMAS J. DEARING, Commissioner

CC: JOSEPH C. LORIGO, Majority Leader, Erie County Legislature
JOHN J. MILLS, Chairman, Erie County Legislature
TED B. MORTON, Chairman, Energy & Environment Committee, Erie County Legislature
JONATHAN RIVERA, Legislative Liaison

DATE: March 9, 2016

SUBJECT: Erie County Park Master Plan – Response to Issues Raised at March 3, 2016 Caucus

The following responds to two issues raised at the legislative caucus relative to the Erie County Park Master Plan. Information is provided which highlights the major work areas being undertaken by DEP staff. It is intended to reflect the limitations on time to devote towards preparing a major Park Plan update. The latter would consume all unrestricted Division resources for 12 months or more. The second item summarizes how the 2003 Park Plan has been implemented via County capital spending and policy reference.

I. CURRENT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING WORKLOAD
(Not inclusive of Sewer Division and Grant Restrictions)

A. DIVISION OF PLANNING

1. Staff Resources (Unrestricted By Funding Source)
 - Planner (3)
2. Major Work Program Items
 - New York State General Municipal Law – 29M Zoning Referral and Site Plan Reviews (1,000 annually).
 - Housing Rehab Environmental Reviews (100 annually).
 - Manage County Agricultural District – Recertification Process.
 - Manage County Agricultural District – Open Enrollment Process.

- Manage all aspects of Erie County Arts and Cultural Application, Contract, and Contract Monitoring Process.
- Manage Local Planning Assistance Program (2016 – Topic – Solar Installations).
- Develop Erie County Complete Streets Policy and Program.
- Agricultural Promotion – Farmer’s Market Inventory, Brochure Preparation, Coordination with area Agricultural Groups.
- Map Conservation Easement, Purchase Development Rights Land Areas and Other Dedicated Open Space Properties.
- Respond to Ongoing Current Issues Affecting Erie County (e.g. Wireless Transmission Facility Requests).
- Grant Writing.
- Manage Design, Land Acquisition, and Grant Administration Tasks Associated with Shoreline Trail – Beaches Section – Phase 3.

B. OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICES

1. Staff Resources (Unrestricted by Funding Source)
 - Director of Geographic Information Services
 - Senior Planner – Geographic Information Services

2. Major Work Program Items – 2016
 - The GIS Office maintains and operates the County’s enterprise level geo-spatial infrastructure. This includes:
 - i. Maintaining and updating over 70 layers, or features, of spatial data that are available for all County departments to use.
 - ii. Keeping the County’s GIS servers up to date with current versions of GIS software from a variety of mapping vendors.
 - Erie County’s “On-Map” program is an Internet mapping application developed and maintained by the GIS Office. The GIS Office has developed and maintains an Internet mapping site for use by the public, and also provides custom mapping sites used by a variety of County departments.
 - The GIS Office provides GIS consulting to County departments to meet their mapping needs for a wide range of projects. Departments served recently by the GIS Office include: Environment and Planning (Planning & Economic Development), DPW, Parks, Sewers, Health, Sheriffs, Tax Mapping, Central Police Services, and Emergency Services.
 - The GIS Office addresses the mapping needs of the emergency response community, especially when the Emergency Operations Center is activated. The GIS Office deploys staff and equipment to the EOC for the duration of any large scale event.

- Erie County provides geo-spatial services to Niagara County under an “Intermunicipal Agreement for Shared GIS Services”. This arrangement for sharing of GIS services between the two counties has proven to be a cost-effective means for providing the necessary GIS infrastructure that both counties rely upon.
- The GIS Office coordinates the Erie County GIS program with GIS activities at the state, local, and private levels through sharing of data and information. As part of this, Erie County provides basic GIS services to local governments, typically through the Internet.

C. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Staff Resources (Unrestricted By Funding Source)
 - Director of Business Assistance
 - Industrial Assistance Program Coordinator
 - Senior Planner

2. Major Work Program Items – 2016
 - Manage and Technical Assistance in Support of the following Studies:
 - Broadband Feasibility Study
 - Agricultural Industrial Park Feasibility Study
 - New Convention Center Feasibility Study
 - Oversee all Aspects of Land Acquisition, Infrastructure Development, Inter-Agency and Property Owner Coordination, and Grant Management Associated with the Former Bethlehem Steel Property
 - Manage Design and Construction Activity for the Erie County Black Rock Canal Park – Phase 3 Improvements
 - Coordinate County Funding and Provide Technical Guidance for Phase 1 – Naval Park Improvements
 - Erie County Liaison to ECIDA Programs, Policy Development activities
 - Manage Design, Land Acquisition, and Grant Administration Tasks Associated with Federal Aid Bike Path Project Along Route 5 in the City of Lackawanna
 - Respond to Ongoing Current Issues Affecting Economic Development in Erie County (e.g. Huntley Power Plant Closure)
 - Grant Writing

D. DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE SERVICES

1. Staff Resources (Unrestricted By Funding Source)
 - Associate Engineer Environmental Compliance

- Pollution Prevention Program Coordinator
 - Solid Waste Recycling Specialist
2. Major Work Program Items
- Grant Writing
 - Provide coordination, staffing and administration for both the County Environmental Management Council and County Fisheries Advisory Board.
 - Plan and Coordinate 3 annual countywide Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events, 2 annual Small Quantity Generator programs and assist local sponsors annually with a regional Electronics collection event.
 - Implement countywide solid waste reduction plan to increase county recycling and lower waste management and disposal costs.
 - Provide oversight, management and administrative services, and the local in-kind match for the following current ECS grant programs:
 - WNY Stormwater Coalition Assistance grants
 - WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable Coordination Grant
 - Buffalo River Habitat Restoration Grants
 - NYSERDA Erie County Green Team and Sustainability Grant
 - Healthcare Pharmaceutical Disposal grant
 - NYS Department of State Lake Erie Watershed Management Plan Grant
 - Assist the Coordination and provide management as a board member of the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance and the Erie County Water Quality Committee.
 - Provide technical services to the Economic Development Office, the ECIDA, BENLIC and municipalities for Brownfield and other redevelopment initiatives.
 - Member of County Energy Management team. Responsible for development of the County Energy Plan as well as the development of County Renewable Energy initiatives.
 - Assist all county agencies and facilities in the implementation of best management practices to efficiently and effectively comply with environmental regulations and requirements.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF 2003 ERIE COUNTY PARK MASTER PLAN

A. LINE ITEM IN 2004, 2009, 2010, 2012-2014, 2016 CAPITAL BUDGETS

Each of the adopted capital budgets noted above included a project intended to fund park improvements recommended in the 2003 Park Master Plan. The Plan is specifically referenced in the budget adopted by the Legislature as the document to serve as the guide in

these bond fund expenditures. A total of \$10,164,000 was included over the seven years noted above.

B. OTHER PROJECTS – Other projects recommended in the 2003 Plan that have been funded since 2004 include:

1. Tow Path Park Improvements – \$526,000
2. Black Rock Canal park – \$2,000,000 (approximately)
3. Sherwood Greenway Trail – \$95,776
4. Evans Shoreline Trail – \$3,000,000 (approximately)
5. Seneca Bluffs, Red Jacket, Bailey Avenue Peninsula – Improvements Ongoing

C. PARK PRESERVATION REPORTS:

In 1993 the Erie County Legislature adopted Local Law #12-1993 Park Preservation Law. This required the Department of Environment and Planning to prepare an analysis of how certain proposed private actions within County Parks were consistent with County Park policies and plans contained in the most recent Park Master Plan.

These reviews occur on a regular basis prior to the Parks Department undertaking certain actions. Recent reviews pertained to the Tribute Garden, Bailey Avenue Bridge Land Transfer, and Niagara Street Culvert easement.

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