



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Executive Order #012 Implementation of the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

WHEREAS, An emerging interest in local farms and local foods has boosted agriculture's visibility as an economic driver creating new opportunities for farmers in both rural and urban areas of Erie County;

WHEREAS, Supporting farm business viability and protecting the land base needs to farm provides a host of benefits;

WHEREAS, Farms contribute to the local economy—in 2007 the market value of agricultural products sold in Erie County was over \$117 million;

WHEREAS, Farms also provide jobs, use less in services than they pay in property taxes, maintain wildlife habitat and water quality when well-managed, create beautiful scenic vistas, highlight the cultural heritage of many rural areas in the County, and offer fresh, local food to County residents;

WHEREAS, Farming can also fall prey to the variability of markets and weather, regulations, and low profit margins, all of which may contribute to a decision to sell a farm for development;

WHEREAS, Strengthening land tenure, improving profitability, and building support among consumers and elected officials will ensure that agriculture remains viable in Erie County, and contributes to the well-being of all County residents;

WHEREAS, Erie County's first Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan was developed in 1996 and, in the past 16 years, much has changed throughout the region;

WHEREAS, In 2010, Erie County embarked on a process to develop a new Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan to guide County efforts to support local farms and protect farmland. The New York State Department of Agriculture and markets and the Erie County Community Development Block Grant program provided key funding for the project, and the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning led the local effort to gather and assess public input with guidance from the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board;

WHEREAS, The result of the more than two-year process is an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan intended to direct Erie County's agricultural planning for the next decade;

WHEREAS, There were substantial opportunities for public input as the Plan was developed;

WHEREAS, While agriculture has many challenges—during this 20-month planning timeframe County farms experienced very damaging frosts and a significant drought—farmers and consumers alike see opportunities in Erie County to improve farm profitability and connect farms with the consuming public by addressing interest in local farms and local food; and,

WHEREAS, Included in the Plan are:

1. An analysis of agriculture and development pressure in the County;
2. Summaries of the various public meetings and individual interviews that were conducted as part of the process;
3. Summaries of other planning documents specific to agriculture that are currently being used in the County;
4. Information about the “tools in the toolbox” that Erie County does and can use to support farms in protecting farmland; and,
5. A set of strategies with goals and recommended actions for implementation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I MARK C. POLONCARZ, Erie County Executive, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Erie County Charter §§301 & 302, do hereby order as follows:

1. It is ordered all applicable Erie County Departments to follow the policies and recommendations contained within the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan in connection with all actions and decisions affecting agriculture and farmland preservation within Erie County; and it is,
2. Further ordered that the findings contained therein be utilized in carrying out departmental missions, especially within the areas of capital programming, sewer district extensions, agricultural district activity, review of municipal development actions under General Municipal Law §239(L) & (M), water and sewer system approvals, SEQR reviews, and all other activities that influence where and how development occurs within Erie County’s rural areas.

GIVEN, under my hand and the Privy Seal of the County of Erie in the City of Buffalo this twentieth day of February, in the year two thousand thirteen.

County of Erie



By: Mark C. Poloncarz
Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive