

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Telephone: (716) 286-4310

August 30, 2019

The City Council
Niagara Falls, New York

RE: City participation in funding for Niagara Global Tourism Institute (“NGTI”)

Council Members:

Recall that several years ago the NGTI was created as a result of collaboration between Niagara University, Empire State Development, the New York Power Authority and the City of Niagara Falls. The goal of the NGTI is to work with local, state and federal agencies in partnership with the tourism industry to create the conditions that turn around the reputation and economic viability of Niagara Falls. The core components of the NGTI are as follows:

1. Research – produce reliable data to inform strategic decision making and improve competitiveness.
2. Technology – to utilize new and emerging technologies in support of destination development, marketing and visitor servicing.
3. Identifying tourism workforce needs and developing a skills and abilities pipeline.
4. Tourism business incubation to encourage entrepreneurial creativity and the development of new businesses in the tourism sector.

It is recognized that the region employs over 50,000 people in the tourism sector with well over two billion dollars in economic impact. Technology is changing the face of tourism and tourism marketing and the goal of the NGTI is to establish Western New York as a world leader in developing and leveraging these emerging technologies in order to grow our tourism economy and to attract requisite talent to the region. This was an observation made by Howard A. Zemsky, former Co-chair of the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council and Chair of Empire State Development Corporation.

The NGTI will be an anchor tenant in the 616 Niagara Street project which is under construction at the corner of Niagara Street and 7th Street. From this location, NGTI will be positioned to strengthen tourism technology by developing the workforce.

Niagara University has committed funding to the NGTI in the amount of \$300,000.00 per year for five (5) years. It is requested that the City commit to financing in the amount of \$50,000.00 for year 2019. Funding for this initiative in 2019 is available from casino reserves. City funding for this initiative over the next four (4) years will be considered annually subject to the City’s financial condition at that time including the status of the continuing dispute between New York State and the Seneca Nation of Indians regarding casino revenues.

Kennedy **Scott** **Tompkins** **Voccio** **Touma**

Will the Council so approve and authorize the Mayor to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the NGTI provided the same is in form and content acceptable to the Corporation Counsel?

Respectfully submitted,

PAUL A. DYSTER
Mayor

Funding is in place

Daniel Morello
City Controller