

Niagara Gorge Corridor

***Robert Moses Parkway Removal
Main Street to Findlay Drive
Niagara Falls, NY***

Final Design Report/ Environmental Assessment

Appendix ii - Comment Documents Received

PIN 5761.90

November 2016

In cooperation with:

**New York State Department of Transportation
New York Power Authority
USA Niagara Development Corporation
The City of Niagara Falls, NY**



From: dahotwings@aol.com
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
Subject: "RMP" Removal Project Public Comments
Date: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 10:34:24 PM

Dear Mr. Donohue:

As a longtime user of the highway, I favor Proposal #3, the partial reuse of the RMP.

Best regards,

Dale Anderson

429 Richmond Ave.

Buffalo, NY 14222

716-860-2305

3.6

September 8, 2016

To: Thomas Donohue
Parsons
40 LaRiviere Drive – Suite 350
Buffalo, NY 14202
Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com

From: Bob Baxter
erbaxter@aol.com

Re: The Niagara Gorge Corridor: Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project: Main Street to Findlay Drive, Niagara Falls, NY
(Project Identification No. 5761.90)

In the for what it's worth category:

Note on parkway name change to "Niagara Scenic Parkway." When all else fails, change the name, not that the reality would change with it--the parkway provides no more scenic landscapes today from a car than it ever did, which is to say, very little. We, the Niagara Heritage Partnership, demonstrated this years ago by videoing the trip from a car. Additionally, "Niagara Scenic Parkway" is rather tepid, timid and uninspired at best. If it were to be renamed, we suggest that we should have gone all the way: "The People's Glorious and Shining Roadway for Automobile Travel Leading to Heavenly Eternal Life and Happiness," for example.

Bob Baxter, NHP Conservation Chair, April 2015

Two years ago last month the Niagara Heritage Partnership sent in comments to the appropriate state contractor on what we saw as a deeply flawed scoping report concerning the gorge parkway--and this past March we commented again on the "Niagara Gorge Corridor Project, Robert Moses Parkway--North--Phase I, Main Street to Findlay Drive." Because none of the evidence and rationales we presented two years ago appear to have altered in the slightest what seems to be the unalterable march toward Phase One, not even the music of the march, we chose to repeat what we said two years before, with one or two additional or amplified notes. We took the time to comment because we had the opportunity to do so, not because we believed anything additional we could say would change anything. We had, after all, advocated for a total removal option that would have provided the highest potential for environmental restoration and preservation--and presented the only option that also incorporated economic growth for the Niagara region. This option was supported by a study independent of the state; it was, however, ignored. We realize saying more now is for the historical record only, but we do so because we believe that's important. Our remarks from March of 2013 are posted at www.niagaraheritage.org under the title "The NHP Evaluation of the Niagara Gorge Corridor Project Robert Moses Parkway-North Segment, Scoping Report Presentation," under Recent Postings. Note: Two years ago, we were told that the conclusions and recommendations of the EDR study would not be considered because the study's completion date missed the scoping's deadline (by two days, we recall.) We therefore re-submitted the study for consideration this time: "Regional Economic Growth through

Ecological Restoration of the Niagara Gorge Rim." These study results are also posted online. If decisions had not already been made based on likelihood of funding, the endorsement of an MOU we postulated was outdated and compromised from the start, and other assertions made without supporting evidence, we'd have expected the following in light of EDR findings: 1) the reexamination of the "logical termini" at Findlay in favor of the City line, 2) a thorough investigation of the potential for regional ecotourism, with the methods and results made available to the public. We further noted that with a refurbished Whirlpool, Phase One will leave the parkway-as-commuter route intact, (the detour around most of the business districts of Niagara Falls); that there's no indication in this latest "Corridor Project" that the "stakeholders" have been extended beyond the Niagara area---with the reminder that this project involves state park property, and involves a tourism base that is literally world-wide, and as such, "stakeholders" should have included the thousands amassed by NHP in favor of total removal; that aside from mentioning "promote ecotourism," and "native habitat," etc., no design element appears to facilitate that environmental function, or potential. It's a positive that Phase One includes the removal of the overpass, for which NHP had previously argued (document on the NHP web site); given the piecemeal approach of removal, however, it's doubtful that the structural steel of that structure will be re-adapted (as we also recommended) for use in the remediation of damage caused by the NYPA access road, so that the now separated portions of Devil's Hole State Park could be rejoined. While NHP sees NYPA funding for this project altogether fitting, we also find it beyond curious that the use of Niagara River Greenway monies seem to have dropped out of the conversation. Gorge parkway removal and the restoration of natural gorge-rim landscapes as proposed by NHP couldn't be more appropriate in satisfying Greenway goals. From NHP to all those who have supported our vision for the gorge rim over the years: to the nearly 100 groups and organizations, to the Niagara Falls Business Associations, City Council, Tourism Advisory Board, all the block clubs, and to the thousands of individuals, residents and former residents of Niagara, to former tourists and those yet to come, to all those who were capable of imagining the natural environment they wanted to see in reality: thank you. For NHP, the evidence and rationale in support of total removal was, and remains, indisputable (removal at least to the City line, as supported by the EDR recommendation that the Findlay to City line section of parkway be the first removed). It is regrettable that unspoken agendas appear to have dictated that this evidence be ignored in favor of the current action.

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**Homeland Security at the NHPA Facility - July 2005
by Bob Baxter**

In October 2001, the commentary "Terrorists, Casinos, Creating Jobs" presented the Niagara Heritage Partnership concerns about traffic driving across the face of the Robert Moses Power Plant on the Moses parkway. This is posted at www.niagaraheritage.org. In April 2004 we wrote to C. Susan Mencer, then the director of the Office for Domestic Preparedness under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to express these concerns, copying eleven others we felt should be aware of our views, including our state and federal political representatives.

Each of those copied also received a photograph of the parkway lanes running over the generating plant, with traffic visible, accompanied by a personal query as to what might be done to reduce this risk. With the exception of Mencer, whose reply was prompt and instructive, others were nonresponsive or sent inadequate replies. James McMahon, then the Director of the NYS Office of Public Security, though he was also copied by Mencer and received a second follow-up letter from us asking that he at least acknowledge he was aware of our concerns, did not respond.

We brought up the topic of generating plant security during relicensing discussions in late summer of 2004, but the subject was dismissed by a NYPA spokesperson with the phrase, "We're prepared for any contingency," and the notion that revealing specifics might jeopardize security. Because our initial queries had generally resulted in an inadequate response, in April 2005 we repeatedly contacted some of those to whom we had initially written, the offices of US Senators Clinton and Schumer and Congresswoman Slaughter, specifically. Although two of these offices requested copies of our original correspondence, which we promptly sent, their responses to our concerns remained the same: that is to say, there have been no responses. They and others, however, spoke forcefully and eloquently for Niagara Falls base retention at recent BRAC Commission Hearings, in part because of the need for homeland security re our power generation facilities.

Meanwhile, newspaper articles have addressed the topic, and other groups, institutions, and individuals have made comments about the perceived lack of security at the plant re the Moses parkway in letters to the editor and in other venues. These comments have elicited the following negative reactions: 1) NHP is only using the homeland security issue as an "excuse" to close the parkway; 2) there are many other unprotected areas related to NYPA power production which pose risks to homeland security; 3) NHP and others are not qualified to make such comments, as most recently stated by Ronald Ciamega, former NYPA WNY regional manager.

We reject all these viewpoints. Since 1997, NHP has developed a multi-faceted rationale for gorge parkway removal between Niagara Falls and Lewiston, NY that involves economic and environmental benefits: historical and woodland preservation and reclamation, especially at the degraded Devil's Hole State Park and the old growth forest at DeVeaux, the creation of a genuine greenway with hiking and bicycling trails through a vehicle-free park of distinction. This is a general statement; the details of the proposal provide hundreds of related reasons for parkway removal. We believe reducing a potential security risk to the generating plant is yet another reason for parkway removal, an important consideration, certainly, but not an "excuse." Continued vehicle access across the plant either represents a potential threat or it doesn't. We believe the issue should be examined on its own merit, and that observing traffic elimination would advance the broader NHP agenda contributes nothing to the discussion.

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Those who demonstrate their opposition to eliminating traffic from the power plant via the Moses by listing other points of potential vulnerability employ an unclear logic. They do not develop arguments and often use sarcasm in presenting their lists. Do they suggest all points are equal threats? Do they suggest that since there may be multiple points that it's logical to take no action? If so, we reject those positions. We believe that protecting one location is better than protecting none, and we chose the power plant for the obvious reason: it's closest to the major power generating turbines where disruption would be damaging beyond our region and more difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to repair.

Ciamega attempts to discredit comments about security at NYPA's gorge plant by stating he's "astonished" that NYPA security could be questioned by anyone who hadn't taken part in "extensive engineering studies...to explore potential vulnerabilities" and in "weekly executive meetings conducted by the authority's president and senior staff to ensure that every reasonable measure was enacted." Since ordinary citizens were not invited to those post 9/11 sessions and because actions decided on there are understandably confidential, we're in the position, according to Ciamega, of having to remain silent, to accept on faith that all is secure.

Under these circumstances, NHP has not been critical of any internal, confidential security measures taken by NYPA. How could we be? Ignorant of the actions taken, we accept that the experts have done their jobs well, even brilliantly, certainly well enough, as Ciamega reports, to earn praise from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

We've restricted our comments to the action they haven't taken. These facts remain indisputable: pre 9/11, vehicles were permitted to drive across the face of the gorge power plant on the four lanes of the Robert Moses Parkway; post 9/11, vehicles are permitted to drive across the face of the gorge power plant on the four lanes of the Robert Moses Parkway.

Two possibilities are immediately apparent: 1) this condition represents a security risk, and 2) this condition does not represent a security risk. If there is no risk, some spokesperson should be willing to say that no truckload of explosives, no matter the size or type of truck, eighteen-wheeler or tanker, or type of explosive, or two trucks, or three, could cause significant power-interrupting damage under any imaginable circumstance. The plant is simply impenetrable, impervious to disruption of electrical production via the parkway.

Since few people are willing to give such absolute assurances, it seems some risk, however slight, does exist. Perhaps some of those "extensive engineering studies" combined with other calculations, intelligence information, computer modeling, intuition, and predictive processes that we can't even imagine have indicated that the concrete of the plant or roadbed would deflect "most" of the explosive force upward, etc., and that the likelihood of explosives being delivered over the concrete railing-side of the parkway is low, even very low. Some group of individuals then decided that probabilities of serious damage were minimal to the extent that action such as eliminating traffic on the parkway would not be required. There were, after all, minor political considerations involved in maintaining this unnecessary commuter route.

NHP finds such a compromise of security, no matter how minimal the threat, unacceptable. When such a threat is found acceptable, it remains constant through future years for as long as the potential for terrorism remains a reality for America. The ramifications may also be slight, but will also be constant. The potential need for first responders remains slightly elevated. The security concerns expressed by Niagara University also remain slightly elevated. Furthermore, the inaction that maintains an open parkway and the traffic it carries, not only maintains the risk, but also continues to deny access to the gorge for the students and staff of Niagara University and to the general public.

For over a century before power plant construction, since the founding of NU in 1856, the gorge rim across from the university was very different than it is today. Much of it, especially to the south, was as richly forested as the slopes just below the rim at Devil's Hole, a short distance away. It was possible to walk down over the University lawns, across the two-lane Lewiston Road, and step into this gorge-environment, then down below the rim under a canopy of foliage. There, the sounds of traffic were muted, replaced by the faint sounds of wind through the trees, the river flowing down below.

The possibility of experiencing this landscape has been erased for nearly half a century. With the passing of one more generation, no one alive will be able to describe it from memory. While access to the gorge is blocked by the parkway, the Power Vista now provides a wonderful panoramic view of the gorge and river to those from the University campus and many others; it also provides a view of the damage to Devil's Hole and the gorgeside caused by the NYPA road to the lower power plant.

It is because natural landscapes have been destroyed and degraded by the parkway along the gorge rim that the Niagara Heritage Partnership has been advocating for this highway's removal and the restoration of the natural environment. This would simultaneously lower the threat level since no vehicles would be crossing the plant. We believe that NYPA bears the responsibility of making this reparation a reality, since NYPA created the conditions under which we presently live. If they wish to defer to the Greenway Commission, using this newly-formed agency as a proxy, that is their choice, but it does not absolve them from their responsibilities to the people of our region, to our cultural, historical, and environmental legacy which they should be working to protect and restore for future generations.

William L. Ross, chairman of the Niagara County Legislature, recently made an extended statement in which he listed what he perceived to be homeland security risks in Niagara County. He is to be applauded for this public highlighting of our target-rich area, though some of his remarks were questionable, and yet others, intended to be reassuring based on Niagara County's Strategic Security Plan, were not reassuring at all. What he neglected to say was also troubling. We agree with Ross when he points out that the New York Power Authority generating plant on the side of the Niagara gorge could be a "prime target for terrorists," and that our international bridges increase "the potential for a major incident." Less convincing is his statement that the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base is "a prime target for terrorism activity" while it is also equipped with "highly trained personnel" capable of reacting "to any terrorism situation" and of bringing "any force needed...to maintain a sound protection capability in the shortest possible time." Unless, however, the base is equipped with fighter interceptor planes ready to scramble twenty-four hours a day (and it is not) then the base isn't equipped to deal with "any terrorism situation," and that should be glaringly obvious to anyone with a memory of recent terrorism on American soil. It is puzzling to the point of being ridiculous when Ross says that Niagara County's industry of "agriculture" would be a target of terrorism. Will swarms of al-Qaida suicide

bombers assault our corn fields and apple orchards? Our farmer's markets? Will they release an even more virulent plum pox virus than the strain we already have? In any case, it seems unlikely that the County Strategic Plan for homeland security, so highly praised by Ross, will protect farmers any more than it will anyone else. The Niagara County Strategic Plan was provided by Ecology and Environment, Inc. to the Niagara County Homeland Security Steering Committee in July 2005. The bottom line is this: it's long on response and short on prevention. Response is rushing in after the explosion to mop up and gather the pieces of victims; prevention is stopping the explosion, or at least reducing the risk of it happening. Prevention isn't a radical new idea. Most of us have heard of Smokey the Bear. In the euphemistic language of Chairman Ross, the horrific destruction of the Twin Towers would be called a "major incident." Nearly seven years after this "incident," the Niagara County Security Plan fails to reduce, or to even recognize, the potential for such an "incident" at the New York Power Authority generating plant in the Niagara gorge. Traffic crosses the entire length of this generating facility on the Robert Moses Parkway which, incidentally, also permits this traffic to drive directly under the Niagara County end of the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge to Canada. There's just enough room under the bridge so that an eighteen wheeler or a tour bus or a huge Ryder truck could roll snugly into place. Is this recognized as a threat? Apparently not. But terrorists in the tomato fields, now, that's another story. The Niagara Heritage Partnership (NHP) attempted to introduce power plant vulnerability as an issue during the relicensing process, but failed. We also failed to get the attention of elected state officials and the NYS Office of Homeland Security. Our attempts have been documented in "Homeland Security at the NYPA," and in "Comment of Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Niagara River Greenway" (paragraphs 17-20), which I signed, both of which are available at www.niagaraheritage.org. (We also respond here to the charge that we bring up this issue merely to advance our parkway removal agenda.) While the NHP has failed to bring attention to this issue, we're not alone in our failure. The NYS Power Authority has failed to show interest in pursuing the subject. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission failed to require a thorough homeland security assessment and verifiable action plan be implemented as part of relicensing deliberations. The stakeholders involved in NYPA relicensing talks--environmental, industrial, and union groups, state agencies, villages, cities, towns, school districts, counties, and others--all failed, either to recognize homeland security as an issue or to successfully insist that it be a topic of negotiations. The Office of State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, by its inexplicable failure to move toward total gorge parkway removal between Niagara Falls and Lewiston, NY, silently endorses continued traffic over the power plant and under the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission has failed to act in their own or the public interest. Elected officials and others have failed to take notice, let alone action. The newspapers of WNY have failed to examine the issue, either on the initiative of individual journalists or by editorial encouragement of investigative journalism. The local news programs of WNY television networks have also failed, as have our radio talk shows, to explore this topic of our infrastructure vulnerabilities. This is a monumental collective denial that has arisen out of irresponsibility, ignorance, indifference, and political concerns of little merit. There may also be other explanations. We're eager to hear them. In the meantime, we hope the plan is, as Ross says, "a living document that will be revised and amended as necessary in order to ensure that it continually reflects the county's current needs for emergency preparedness and the course of action that will be taken to meet those critical needs." If so, there's still a chance that someone will realize that allowing traffic to drive across the face of the power plant and beneath the underbelly of the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge isn't a good idea. Then the necessary "course of action" will be clear. --- Sincerely,
Bob Baxter Conservation Chair Niagara Heritage Partnership.

NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR

Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project Main Street to Findlay Drive

August 25, 2016 - Public Hearing

Comment Sheet

Name: Sybil Belcher-Calandra

Address: 2651 Whirlpool Street

City: Niagara Falls State: New York Zip: 14305

Email Address: sbbjpc@yahoo.com

Comments: _____ 1.15
 Will the utility infrastructure on Whirlpool St. be replaced?
 (Storm Water, Sewer, Water, Electric) Will adequate street _____ 1.16
 lights be installed on Whirlpool and Spring Streets?
 Will Spring Street be part of the reconstruction? Please do _____ 1.17
 not forget about Spring Street, it is a Street not an Alley.
 Will the property at the corner of Whirlpool and Bellevue be _____ 1.18
 cleaned up and properly maintained? The spoils from the
 Lewiston Road reconstruction still reside on the property.
 There were radioactive signs on the fencing, the signs have _____
 removed but the spoils remain.
 I am very excited about this project and believe it will bring
 an awareness to the natural wonders that are a mere two miles
 away from the American Falls. The Gorge Trails, Whirlpool _____ 7.1
 State Park and the Devil's Hole State Park are lost treasures.
 I appreciate all the hard work that each of the organizations
 have put into this process thus far.

MAIL COMMENTS TO:
 Niagara Gorge Corridor Project
 c/o Parsons Transportation Grp
 40 LaRiviere Drive – Suite 350
 Buffalo, NY 14202

E-MAIL COMMENTS TO:
 Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com

All comments must be received by Sept 9, 2016

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]

4 CARL BERNHARDT: Good evening. My main concerns
5 with this having finally seen the full plates
6 outside in the lobby -- it's a beautiful
7 pictorial representation of the vision in
8 what wants to be done. However, our first
9 speaker, Helen, I really do -- it's nice to
10 have heard her first. Because I think it's
11 important that we do approach this from a
12 natural perspective. That we instead of
13 making a manicured lawn that looks like
14 Canada's Niagara Falls, that we make ours
15 unique that wants to bring people in for our
16 uniqueness, not to just be another big
17 tourist entity that they've already developed
18 over there. Let's make it unique.

19 I walk that path regularly for exercise.
20 I see the tour buses come in. I see the
21 Japanese, the Koreans, the Italians. You
22 name it, I can name the countries of people
23 coming in looking at the natural wonders of

4.5

6.4

1 the Gorge. They want to see the birds. They
2 want to see the animals. They want to see
3 the plants too. They don't want just another
4 manicured lawn with a few trees in it. So,
5 we should make a unique to Niagara Falls for
6 those people. Because that word of mouth
7 would get back to their countries and bring
8 those tourists in. And that's what we're
9 looking for. We want outside money coming
10 in, not just inside money being spread
11 around. That will help Niagara Falls build.

12 Okay. Now, as far as the transportation
13 goes, I will comment on that. Because
14 looking at all the entry and access ways, the 2.10
15 difficulty I see with all those access ways
16 being at grade is that now you have the
17 potential for children and people coming
18 across regularly, which will require signals.
19 It will slow traffic down on Whirlpool Street
20 once it's rerouted. We already have Main
21 Street, which is all lights. Do we have the
22 capacity to deal with that? Are we saying
23 that the population in this area is going to

1 remain static? Or will it grow eventually
2 with what we're doing? So we also have to
3 prep for the future and not just today. So,
4 we have that.

5 The Rainbow Bridge is clogged. That 2.11
6 area is clogged with traffic. Holidays,
7 weekends, all summer long. What bottleneck
8 is that going for create there when we start
9 shutting these ways down? And we have the
10 easy access to help our neighbors in
11 Youngstown also get people up to Old Fort
12 Niagara and our historical hallmarks up there
13 at this point. So, how much of this do you
14 really want to shut down and direct through
15 residential neighborhoods increasing traffic
16 and increasing risks associated with that?
17 Particularly, if we have more children in
18 these areas.

19 Again, to end my summary, I think a 2.12
20 natural look that promotes our uniqueness and
21 our natural background with the Gorge is the
22 best approach. And then, the transportation
23 side, we need to, again, be looking at safety

1 for children, for school buses and to promote
2 adequate traffic flow into the City. Thank
3 you.

4 [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED]
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11 [REDACTED]
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NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR

Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project
Main Street to Findlay Drive

August 25, 2016 - Public Hearing

Comment Sheet

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|
| Name: | JOE CALANDRA | | |
| Address: | 2651 WHIRLPOOL ST | | |
| City: | NIAGARA FALLS | State: | NY Zip: 14305 |
| Email Address: | JPCSB@YAHOO.COM | | |

Comments: WONDERING WHAT KIND OF PARKING 2.7
ACCOMMODATIONS WILL BE MADE FOR RESIDENTS OF
WHIRLPOOL & SPRING STREETS, MY GARAGE OPENS ON
SPRING ST, I DO NOT HAVE A DRIVEWAY AND THERE IS
NO OVERNIGHT PARKING ON THE STREET. POSSIBLY
GRADING THE OLD MT. ST MARY'S NURSING HOME LOT
FOR TEMPORARY RESIDENT PARKING COULD BE A
SOLUTION. CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF RESIDENTS 2.8
ACCESS & EGRESS DURING THE DURATION OF THE
PROJECT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TAKING INTO ACCOUNT
THAT MANY OF THE RESIDENTS ARE ELDERLY, ALSO
WHAT IS THE EXPECTED DURATION OF THE PROJECT ONCE 7.5
IT BEGINS?
THANK YOU

MAIL COMMENTS TO:
 Niagara Gorge Corridor Project
 c/o Parsons Transportation Grp
 40 LaRiviere Drive - Suite 350
 Buffalo, NY 14202

E-MAIL COMMENTS TO:
 Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com

All comments must be received by Sept 9, 2016

From: [June Justice Crawford](#)
 To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
 Subject: Re: West River Parkway
 Date: Friday, September 09, 2016 11:31:37 AM

Thanks for forwarding my message but Angela has already talked to me about this. Your title indicates you are the principal project manager and since all these projects are supposedly related, I sent my comments to you.

The removal of the City of Niagara parkway sections without sufficient thought about the impact on residents is really outrageous. I had dinner on Wednesday with friends who live in the Niagara Falls area. They are angry, frustrated, and convinced that politicians are in collusion with commercial firms. Niagara Falls citizens have been taken for granted for years. Please spend some time talking to the people who pay the highest taxes in that city. Don't emulate Canada and turn the shoreline into a mess. Parks are what draw people to the area. Clean up the mess in City Hall in Niagara Falls and you will be doing the people a favor. They need the road - paved, maintained, available, just as we need the Parkway on the West River. Who dreams up these crazy ideas and do any of you folks live here?

7.7

June

----- Original Message -----

From: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
To: [June Justice Crawford](#)
Cc: [Berti, Angela \(PARKS\)](#)
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 10:54 AM
Subject: RE: West River Parkway

June,

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the West River Parkway. However, it does not pertain to the subject of this public review process which is the Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project from Main Street to Findlay Drive. In an effort to make sure your concerns are heard, by copy of this email, I will forward your comments to the appropriate State Parks representative.

Sincerely,

Tom

Thomas R. Donohue

Principal Project Manager
 40 LaRiviere Drive, Suite 350 ♦ Buffalo, N.Y. 14202
 Phone – 716.541.0733 ♦ Fax – 716.541.0760
thomas.donohue@parsons.com ♦ www.parsons.com

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From: June Justice Crawford [mailto:jjc1945@roadrunner.com]

Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 5:27 PM

To: Donohue, Thomas <Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com>

Subject: West River Parkway

I am writing to express my opposition to the closing of the West River Parkway on Grand Island. My home is pictured on Sheet 13 of the proposed plan and includes a plan for a large parking lot across the street. What's next? Porta-potties and hotdog stands in my front yard? Semis driving to the pharmaceutical plants on Staley Road? (We already get the ones who get lost.)

Our town supervisor, Nathan McMurray, a vice president for tourism at Delaware North, has indicated that the residents of Grand Island are in favor of this plan. Drive around the Island and see how many people have expressed their opposition to it through signs. We know there are at least 250 of them posted on front lawns around town and there will be more to come. We also know that if this plan goes forward, we will do everything in our power to stop it, to throw roadblocks in the way, to participate in protests, and to work with Native Americans and archaeologists to prevent the digging up of the possible burial grounds on the West River. Our Town Board has five members. Three of them voted to NOT close the parkway. That's a majority in any government and we did not elect Mr. McMurray as King of Grand Island. Opposition to this plan has been consistent at Town Board Meetings. Mr. McMurray even attended some of them.

Even if the Parks Commission is not in collusion with Delaware North, there is definitely a stink in the air and a suspicion on the part of many people that we are, once again, being sold down the river by New York State. Have you read the website: www.ourgrandisland.com[[ourgrandisland.com](http://www.ourgrandisland.com)]? There are two interesting articles about how a private business would operate Beaver Island State Park. The buildings they propose to build look suspiciously like the ones operated by Delaware North in our national parks. An RV park at Beaver Island, where the lagoon was just restored for wildlife, has to be the weirdest idea of all. Removal of the rocks at the entry to the marina? A hotel? (Gosh, could we name it, or would the corporation own the name?) A private firm running the golf course that was paid for by tax dollars? What next? An ice cream stand serving double dips? Maybe that could be called the Supervisor Special. The website is put out by an anonymous writer, but the ideas seem to coincide with Mr. McMurray's in *The Grand Island Dispatch*, and a good communications expert could probably find the patterns in writing needed to explain who is the author.

Those of us who live on the West River naively agreed to be the volunteer group to pick up garbage and papers for the State of New York along the highway. We were lied to about maintenance and so we all own riding mowers along the West River because the State of New York is a terrible neighbor and only mows occasionally and leaves the rest of it up to us. I have owned my home for 31 years and the State of New York has never trimmed a tree or bush in front of my house. I received permission and a permit to have the view cleared a few years ago and I paid a private contractor \$500 to do the work. What next? Will I be picking up hotdog wrappers from my yard? Will the porta-potties stink so much that I won't be able to sit on my front porch? I don't know where you live, but if you would like a parking lot in front of your house, move to Tonawanda. They have them all along Niagara Street and they are ugly. I don't live there for that reason.

Whatever chicanery is behind this idea will be exposed. We have had newspapers calling, television channels asking about what is going on, and we are actively meeting to oppose this action. An investigative reporter will get to the bottom of this and we will assist. Mr. McMurray has called us "old fogies" or "dinosaurs" and has told people we are selfish because we don't want parking lots in front of our houses. I think he, and you, if you are involved with his obfuscation, are the selfish ones. The commercialization of state and national parks for the greedy private corporations that want to own everything in this world is selfish and, in my estimation, nothing short of robbery since the citizens paid

for the development of those parks through taxes and providing a means of making a profit to private firms is just plain dishonest. In an election season where the Cuomo Administration is trying to convince us that all the cheating in Albany is being ended, this certainly smacks of cronyism and thievery. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Governor.

Mark me as OPPOSED. Build a bike path if you like but leave the road alone and do not commercialize the last remaining beautiful part of the Niagara River. Robert Moses did enough damage. Don't add to it or the next generation will be cussing about Donahue. (My friends in Niagara Falls and Lewiston and Youngstown are already doing that.)

June J. Crawford
1945 West River Road
Grand Island, NY 14072
716-775-9391

From: [Daniel Davis](#)
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#); [LEWIS BUTTERY](#); [Elaine Timm](#)
Subject: Historic sites
Date: Saturday, August 06, 2016 1:56:17 PM
Attachments: [A Novel Work-Gorge Route.docx](#)

Please note historic sites (bold, Italic in double brackets) Great Gorge Route Underpass (1895-96) White's Pleasure Grounds (Mid 1850s)
Original Car Barns (ca 1896).

5.3

Take Care,
Dan

A Novel Work

The Building of the Upper Part of the Great Gorge Route

Niagara Falls Journal September, 8 1895

While the lower portion of the railway, between the **Buttery Elevator** and Lewiston is in perfect operation and delighting thousands who make the trip upon it, the work on the upper portion running to the falls is being vigorously pushed.

The difficult and great work of cutting out the roadbed from the solid wall of rock south of Buttery's has proceeded wonderfully, considering the character of the work. The greatest part of the evacuation to be done here yet is in the vicinity of **Van Horn's Elevator** and for the remainder of the distance to the **Rapids View Incline**, the ledge has been cut down to almost the proper level. The evacuations, which are dumped into the water along here will have the effect of narrowing the river from 15 to 20 feet. The water wheel of **H. E. Woodford's Niagara Rapids Flour Mill** and the waiting rooms at the foot of the Rapids View Incline are in the direct path of the road and will have to be removed. Near the abutments of the **Cantilever Bridge** and interesting work is going on.

Abutments are being built for the Iron work of a bridge that will carry the road over the water and around the west of the Cantilever Bridge supports. The abutments of the Cantilever would be right in road if a straight course was pursued and it is necessary to take a roundabout way. The abutments are built so as to protect the bank from the water and are pretty solid pieces of masonry. The stone for the abutments is quarried from the bank and dressed upon the spot. Nearby is an improvised blacksmith shop where the tools used by the workmen are sharpened. Under a spreading of tree branches the gorge smithy stands, and as the smith his anvil rings, in accompaniment with the roar of the rapids, one cannot help but be struck by the novelty of the situation, if not charmed by the music.

From the Cantilever Bridge abutments to the **Old Pleasure Grounds** there is a continual incline and a roadway the width of 20 feet or more has been cut out for the entire distance. It is very smooth and quite hard and with a grade that is hardly perceptible. It is practical to drive a horse and buggy over this portion of the route. It would afford a most picturesque drive, too. The distance between the abutments and a large rock 100 yards south extends through rack and considerable heavy blasting had to be done. This **large rock 50 feet high** was in the path and about half of it had to be cut away. The other half remains standing and towers over the road. Near this rock a culvert is being built for the sewage from the Cleveland Avenue outlet to pass through. The large number of sewers running into the gorge will have to be well taken care of, or a most disagreeable order will prevail at various points on the route. South of the big rock to what is known as **the point**, the work has been mostly grading and the earth has been leveled off both above and below the road.

The whole panorama of this side of the gorge has been changed. Where there was once trees and shrubbery, it is now bare, in some places not even a vestige of foliage remaining. It looks as if there might have been a mammoth avalanche which carried everything before it into the river. The **old Maid of the Mist** path meets the new road about half way down and beyond that the old pathway has been buried. The old landing has been obliterated with earth and stones and the change effected is as great as it is unnatural. As one gazes upon the work of man in disturbing nature on this side and then looks across the gorge to the Canadian Side, beautiful in its natural elements, one cannot but admit the picturesqueness of the land on this side has been considerably marred. Near the point perpendicular cliffs tower above the road to a height of 75 feet or more, and to gaze up at them fills one with awe.

The road runs along the cliffs to the Pleasure Grounds where it will enter the rocky wall to reach the bank above. At this point much of the work is yet to be done. It was originally intended to have an overhead crossing over the Central Tracks near Spruce Street, but the plan has been reversed and the road will go under the Tracks. The work on the first plan had advanced to the building of a half a dozen piers for the overhead bridge. This work was thrown away and in addition much more excavations in the bank will have to be done to get a suitable grade. The same route will be pursued, practically for going under as would have been in they had gone over. At night the work can go on here as **electric light** has been provided. At the Pleasure Grounds a consignment of ties and rails has arrived. Although work is being vigorously pushed, it is safe to speculate the upper portion of the road will not be in running order this year.

From: [Thomas DeSantis](#)
 To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
 Subject: Niagara Gorge Corridor - Design Report / Environmental Assessment Comments
 Date: Friday, September 09, 2016 6:37:43 PM

Niagara Gorge Corridor (RMP North Phase-1 Removal) Design Report / Environmental Assessment Comments:

First, let me state that there are no issues or concerns with a Negative Declaration for this Project. The Design Report / Environmental Assessment (EA) should be considered a thoroughly comprehensive and rigorous investigation of the relevant issues as evidenced by the exhaustive and meticulously detailed analysis. It is seemingly in full accordance with SEQRA policy and procedures. In fact, the level of analysis is in all likelihood far more than necessary or required under the law.

7.8

That said, and in the spirit of collaboration, this seems an appropriate opportunity to point out several proposed design elements that should be changed or, at the very least, carefully reconsidered before advancing the design going forward from Volume #2. Namely...

The expansion of the parking lots within the park seems both unreasonable and unnecessary. One of the most important benefits of this Project —the massive reduction in paved surfaces from parkland areas. The need for additional parking lots is counterintuitive and more than a bit redundant since there are large existing parking areas throughout the length of the Project and immediately adjacent.

1.27

The new parking lot expansion in Niagara Falls State Park (NFSP) may or may not serve other purposes, but it is an expansion of paved parking area within the park. Related to that, the maintenance of four lanes of pavement between the NFSP parking lots for Niagara Falls Bridge Commission (NFBC) "access" again seems unnecessary and redundant given the adjacent two lanes of pavement being kept for trolley services — a greater reliance on shared roadways could provide a solution for reducing this section of roadway pavement while expanding greenspace in this area of the park. Additionally in this regard, does the NFBC access road need to have two ingress/egress points? Particularly troublesome is the entrance/exit roadway being maintained at Main Street. Can the needs of the NFBC be satisfied by one ingress/egress point, or can the second entrance/exit be internalized on NFBC property?

1.28

1.29

The expansion of parking and all newly paved areas are entirely reliant on asphalt. While the various pathways will be replacing a much larger quantity of impermeable surface, why not specify permeable asphalt or permeable concrete? Alternative porous materials for pavement, particularly for pedestrian pathway, as well as, a significant implementation of bio-engineered / green infrastructure elements should be promoted as much as practically possible.

1.11

Within the area abutting Main St. (and north to Walnut Avenue) there seems to be a lack of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, or the wrong accommodations. Given that First Street is a major entry point, there should be greater emphasis here in final design. Preliminarily, there is one point of entry/exit from the park onto city streets and into the downtown urban realm. Similarly, this same point must be used to access the new parkland. In this location the accommodation is a 13-foot multi-use path. Except for the (inadequate) connection with Main Street, this path does not need to be 13-ft. the adjacent and parallel trolley lanes can be used for bicycles and the pedestrian path could then be less robust. Elsewhere there

1.30

will only be 12-foot wide travel lanes on all new roadways being constructed. The ability of bicyclists to approach the park from other locations is thus constrained unnecessarily. Bicyclists appreciate off-road trails when access is relatively easy and safe. However, most bicyclists simply use public roadways for getting to where they want to go. The “New (Scenic) Park (way) Road,” Third St., and Whirlpool St. all have this fault. Cleaning up these faults and redundancies in the final designs will enhance the visitor experience and provide a far more natural landscape setting.

The separate driveway for State Parks Police access to the Scenic Parkway is unnecessary and redundant and should be eliminated in the final designs. Additionally, the multiuse path and the Aquarium of Niagara’s entry plaza should be given greater prominence, if not some significance in the final design.

1.31

1.32

The Cedar Avenue overlook (3 or 5-car) parking lot is, at worst unnecessary and, at best, over built. If over-designed, then its separate southbound driveway / slip-lane really should be eliminated.

1.33

Within the area north of Walnut Avenue (Discovery Center) there are three fundamental design flaws:

1.34

- The reliance on 13-foot wide multi-use trails. While this may be a highway standard, it is simply inappropriate to use throughout the Project. The design, as presented, includes pedestrian footpaths that are 6-foot wide, parallel to multiuse paths, which are to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists on the same facility that are 13-foot wide. [On this point there is some confusion in the drawings. The colored concept drawings found in Volume #2, Appendix B, show only 13-foot wide multi use trails. The schematic plan found in Volume #2, Appendix A, shows both 6-foot and 13-foot paths.] The multiuse trails should be used only where separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities are impractical, and even then these should be reduced in width to no more than ten feet. Otherwise, pedestrian facilities should be separated. Given that there are no bicycle facilities along Whirlpool Street, access onto the internal bike paths, from points east of the Project, need greater design consideration. Likewise, bikers on the internal trail system cannot easily exit except by using the narrower 6-foot wide walking paths, which provide access to crosswalks and 5-foot wide city sidewalks, or 12-foot traffic lanes. As a general guide, path alignments and width need major adjustments.

- The suggestion that an additional 30-car parking lot is somehow necessary across from Pierce Ave (driveway starting across from Willow Ave) in addition to the 70-car parking lot at Ontario Avenue (near Whirlpool Bridge) —it is not and should be considered for elimination. If additional vehicle parking is necessary in the vicinity of Pierce Ave., then first consideration should be for the installation of additional on-street parking, and if on-street parking is considered necessary there, then it should be along the west- or park-side of Whirlpool Street.

1.25

- The lack of any left-hand turn lanes for traffic on Whirlpool. Despite Level-of-Service (LOS) for traffic generally being unaffected by the Project as designed, there will be some low-level congestion that results as well as driver inconvenience during peak periods of heavy use. For this reason,

2.9

consideration should be given to widening the roadway at certain key intersections to allow for left-hand turning lanes. For southbound traffic, at the intersection of: Whirlpool Street and Cedar Avenue; Whirlpool and Pine Avenue, and; Whirlpool and Cleveland Avenue. For northbound traffic, at the intersection of Whirlpool Street and Pine Avenue, as well as at Whirlpool Street and Bellevue Avenue—in consideration of the NFBC projected plaza expansion.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I look forward to working to implementation.

--

Thomas J. DeSantis
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City of Niagara Falls
305 City Hall
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Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069

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email: DeSantis@nfez.org

Niagara Gorge Corridor Project
 c/o Parsons Transportation Grp
 40 LaRiviere Drive – Suite 350
 Buffalo , NY 14202

Sir:

This letter is in response to a call for comments on the Robert Moses Parkway (RMP) Removal Project, Main Street to Findlay Drive.

Most importantly, I must first state that I am in total support of the proposed removal of all four lanes of the RMP between Main Street and Findlay Drive. I am presently submitting comments on details of the proposed plan as laid out to the public on August 25, 2016. 7.1

Some basic facts need to be remembered. One, the project area is less than 2 miles, 1.9 to be exact. According to Google maps, it takes 39 minutes to walk and 3 minutes to drive the length. Two, the purpose of the project is to remove a roadway that is redundant and underutilized and to provide access for people to the Niagara River Gorge rim.

My overarching concern is that the project to remove the 4 lanes of highway along the Niagara River Gorge Rim be just that- to remove the 4 lanes of concrete. The resulting parkland should be a nature preserve that provides recreational opportunity for people along the Niagara River Gorge Rim. 1.4

The following are specific ideas and basic design principles I believe should be considered in moving forward.

1. A certified arborist specializing in native trees and old growth forests should be hired to survey trees in the project area and to tag trees to be saved before work begins. Some mature trees along the Whirlpool Street line along the existing RMP, along the gorge rim and within the project area in general should be saved so that there is a good mix of both mature trees and new plantings in the finished project. It is imperative that the area under consideration not be bulldozed completely. 1.5
2. The plan as outlined on the 25th of August included bike paths of 13 feet in diameter. Putting in "bike paths" of that width would be replacing a roadway with a roadway. To the outsider, this would appear to be a road to be shared by bicyclists, pedestrians and NYS Parks service vehicles. This cannot be. 1.6
3. In the legend of the maps in the build alternative sheets, there are designated areas for "street trees" and for "proposed meadow". There are also great swaths, well over 50% of the total area, of green that are not referenced in the legend. I fear this is meant to be mown areas. I would argue that the entire area should be a mix of forest and meadow and that there be NO MOWING IN THE BULK OF THE PROJECT AREA. Rather, trimming of view areas and shrubby growth in meadow areas should occur every 2 years or so. More than one speaker on the night of August 25th specifically called for a "park" that is not manicured. This would be in sync with the ideas of those people advocating for the removal of the parkway these past 20 years. My 1.7

vision for the project would be to have the areas near existing infrastructure on both ends (the Gorge Discovery Center, the Whirlpool Bridge) be “manicured” and that the bulk of the middle be a wildlife habitat area that has a bike and pedestrian path running through it.

4. In some parts of the project area, particularly near Findlay Drive, there are several acres of land that have been left basically forgotten and undisturbed. It’s become a defacto wildlife habitat area. It is important to preserve as much of this meadowland as possible. 4.3
5. There are existing footpaths in several spots on the Gorge Rim. These should be left as is for the most part. 1.8
6. In the Build Alternative Sheet 4, there is a depiction of a 30 space parking area with a 160+ foot roadway within the project area. I do not believe this is necessary. As noted in item 2 above, this would be replacing a roadway with a roadway. And there is adequate parking available in the area already. In observing the work being done in the Robert Moses Parkway South project, it’s very obvious that what looks like a tiny project in a design plan is in actuality a significant construction project. I would suggest that creative alternatives be considered. For example, the parking on Whirlpool, between Ashland and Chilton Avenues could be moved to the west side of Whirlpool, where the elevation difference between the existing parkway and Whirlpool is at a minimum (where in fact local residents have beaten a path to the project area.) Most of the spaces in this bump out are could be designated handicapped only, if that is the purpose of the lot in sheet 4. And you could consider a ramp for wheelchair access of wooden decking material – rather than building a roadway and a parking lot. Let’s think creatively! 1.9
7. A speaker at the meeting of August 25th called for Trolley stop bumpouts. Those trolley stops should exist at the Discovery Center and at the Trailhead and parking area at the Whirlpool Bridge only. The length of the project is only 1.9 miles long. 2.3
8. Lastly, the division between the park created by the Parkway removal (presumably NYS Parks) and the City of Niagara Falls should be invisible. 7.2

In conclusion, I think this project is a tremendous opportunity to create public access to the Niagara River Gorge Rim. The Niagara River Gorge is to me a sacred and wild place, where I spent many, many hours in my youth. I firmly believe the result of the RMP removal should be an extension of that sacred and wild place. The park created by the removal of these 4 lanes of highway should look like the Niagara Glen not Queen Victoria Park. The approach should be light handed and not a wholesale earth moving exercise. We have this one chance to do it right, let’s not blow it!

Thank you,

Rebecca Dyster
626 Orchard Pkwy
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
Becky.dyster@gmail.com

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED]

6 DOUGLAS FUNKE: When I was a teenager, when they
7 took my grandmother's house, on Whirlpool
8 Street, and put a Thruway through the
9 beautiful Niagara Falls Park, I couldn't
10 understand why we did it then and I'm so glad
11 that we are now undoing that huge mistake.
12 Again, my name is Doug from -- I'm the
13 president of Citizens Regional Transit.

14 A couple of quick comments here. I did
15 have written comments last time and my
16 comments are very similar to those today. If 2.5
17 you look at the objectives of this project,
18 include access, bike, pedestrian and
19 vehicular -- which I would include transit
20 vehicles as well as personal
21 vehicles -- conserve the ecology, minimize
22 impact to neighborhoods, support the green
23 plan. All of those scream for public

1 transportation.

2 We are thrilled to see that we now have
3 a trolley that takes tourists from Niagara
4 Falls up to Fort Niagara and back. My wife
5 and I rode it a couple weekends ago and loved
6 it. Great step in the right direction.
7 Those things run every half an hour. I give
8 Mayor Dyster a lot of credit for helping to
9 make that happen. We need to continue to
10 make sure public transportation is an
11 important part of this project moving
12 forward.

13 And I just want to mention that we have
14 actually partnered with the Partnership for
15 the Public Good. So, my comments today
16 reflect both my organization, Citizens
17 Regional Transit, as well as the Partnership
18 for the Public Good, which is a conservancy
19 of over a hundred committal-based
20 organizations. We want to see better public
21 transportation along the greenway.
22 Ultimately, we would like to see green
23 transportation. We'd like to see those

2.5

2.13

1 trolleys become electronic to highlight the
2 benefits of the hydropower that we have here
3 in Buffalo to demonstrate the value of that
4 power.

5 So, we're very happy with what's
6 happening. We want to keep public
7 transportation in mind as we move forward.
8 Thank you.

2.5

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]

22 [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED]

6 JIM HUFNAGEL: Four storms, seven years ago, our
7 forefathers began the process of removing the
8 parkway. Wrong speech. Sorry. Yesterday, I
9 was driving into the City of Niagara Falls on
10 the Moses Parkway north of Lewiston. I came
11 up behind a large RV. It was big.
12 Literally, a house on wheels. I followed it
13 over the Power Project where for some reason
14 it slowed down to twenty miles per hour. And
15 the thought crossed my mind, what if that
16 huge camper bus was packed (inaudible) with
17 dynamite? What if there was a terrorist at
18 the wheel and what if it was detonated on the
19 Moses Parkway in the middle of the Power
20 Project just a couple of hundred feet away
21 from me?

22 Some would recognize such as threat. In
23 this day and age, you have to take off your

1 footwear in the airport then get a full body
2 scan before you can board a plane. We're
3 spending billions on border security,
4 including cameras to scrutinize every inch of
5 border from here to Youngstown, twenty-four
6 hours a day. And an outfit called Isis has
7 motivated (inaudible) tax from Paris to
8 Brussels to San Bernardino. Meanwhile, our
9 Albany leaders bury their heads in the sand
10 when it comes to the Robert Moses Parkway
11 affording twenty-four hour a day, seven days
12 a week, unrestricted vehicular access to one
13 of the largest hydropower generated plants in
14 the world located right here.

15 Think about this. In 1993, a bomb
16 hidden in a van exploded underneath the World
17 Trade Center in New York City killing several
18 people and injuring hundreds more. In 1994,
19 (inaudible) airplane crashed onto the south
20 line of the (inaudible) of the White House
21 killing the pilot. The plane came to rest at
22 the base of the building. So, this is what
23 we have. Terrorist targeting the World Trade

1 Center in '93 and a disturbed individual
2 flying a plane into the White House in '94.
3 A few years after the 9/11 catastrophe,
4 Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, stated
5 in a radio interview that -- and I quote, I
6 don't think that anybody could have predicted
7 that these people would take an airplane and
8 slam it into the World Trade Center.

9 Then, of course, there was the famous
10 quote, Bin Ladin determined to strike in U.S.
11 memo that arrived on the president's desk
12 thirty-six days before the 9/11 attacks.
13 This is how we expect our government to
14 address potential threats, which is to say,
15 with gross incompetency. And now we
16 potentially have deja vu all over again.

17 Well, (inaudible) supposedly, quote,
18 hardened the Niagara Power Project. Any
19 terrorist can pack a semi-truck with enough
20 plastic explosives to blow the Power Project
21 to kingdom come thanks to direct access on
22 the Robert Moses Parkway. Or even some in
23 unbalanced individual. Seem farfetched? In

1 1995, domestic terrorists loaded a truck with
2 fertilizer bombs and exploded it, destroying
3 a federal building in Oklahoma City. You may
4 recall the name of the perpetrator. His name
5 was Tim McVeigh. Tim McVeigh grew up in
6 Pendleton. That's two towns over. About
7 twelve miles from the Power Project. Had he
8 chosen the Power Project for his attack, we
9 probably wouldn't be here tonight.

10 Must anyone dismiss these comments as
11 hysteria, allow me to point out that in the
12 days after 9/11, the State Department of
13 Transportation blocked the parkway off as it
14 enters the Power Project at Devil's Hole
15 State Park with large dump trucks. The
16 Buffalo News and Niagara Gazette both
17 featured this issue in news articles at the
18 time. The Gazette had a front-page headline
19 revealing that NIPA carelessly released
20 detailed schematics of the Power Project as
21 part of its fifty year relicensing.

22 The Niagara Power Project is readily
23 examinable on Google Earth. And besides the

1 probability of a bomb being transported on
2 the Parkway and detonated, blowing the Power
3 Project to smithereens, imagine some radical
4 element discharging gasoline in the length of
5 the facility along the Parkway and then
6 setting it to light. You'd be able to see
7 that from outer space. The possibility for 3.7
8 terrorist attacks on the Niagara Power
9 Project via the Robert Moses Parkway are
10 endless.

11 Over the years, concerned citizens have
12 repeatedly brought this situation, via
13 e-mails, letters and newspaper articles, to
14 the attention of elected officials, such as
15 Hilary Clinton when she was New York's
16 Senator, and subsequently to the attention of
17 governor, Andrew Cuomo. And they have done
18 nothing. They have decided to, for political
19 reasons, put us at risk by leaving the
20 Parkway intact as it traverses the Power
21 Project. Heaven forbid that there would ever
22 be need for them to answer to that. Shutting 3.7
23 down and removing the parkway all the way to

1 the city line is the only rational way to
2 mitigate risk.

3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED]
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7 [REDACTED]
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9 [REDACTED]
10 [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED]
12 [REDACTED]
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17 [REDACTED]
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21 [REDACTED]
22 [REDACTED]
23 [REDACTED]

From: stopat2@lycos.com
To: Donohue.Thomas
Cc: info@niagarafallsreporter.com; news1926@gmail.com
Subject: North Robert Moses Parkway design report/environmental assessment (DR/EA) public comment
Date: Friday, September 09, 2016 2:58:52 PM

Dear Mr. Donohue,

Please accept the following public comments, and append them to the *public comment section of the 2016 design report/environmental assessment (DR/EA) for the north Robert Moses Parkway removal project*. Thank you.

James Hufnagel

225 Ontario Street

Wilson NY 14172

716-930-1043

It's Time to Remove the Parkway

3.5

November 30, 2010

Did you know that at one time there were five Niagara Falls? It's hard to believe, but it's true.

Ice Age glaciers began melting 12,500 years ago, covering the region with a vast lake. This lake, called Lake Tonawanda, spilled over the Niagara escarpment at five different locations: Lewiston, Lockport, Gasport, and Holley and Medina in Orleans County, each sporting waterfalls similar to the present-day Niagara in grandeur and power, strung out across Western New York like jewels on a necklace. If you look on the Internet at topographical maps of these communities, you can easily discern the outlines of the huge basins carved out of the landscape by these prehistoric waterfalls.

When I drive down the steep Niagara Street hill in Lockport, on my way to hike on one of my favorite trails in the Rollin T. Grant Gulf Wilderness Park, I wonder how many people routinely pass that way every day, unaware that they are traveling straight down the maw of an ancient cataract.

As the glaciers retreated and the earth heaved upward, Lake Tonawanda receded and these waterfalls dried up one by one, eventually leaving only the falls of Niagara to drain the entire Great Lakes system. Then Niagara Falls set to work over the succeeding millennia, carving out the Niagara Gorge and exposing bedrock that dates to the birth of the planet.

Fun Fact No. 2: The Niagara escarpment extends west for hundreds of miles, through Canada all the way to northern Michigan.

The escarpment, for the benefit of out-of-town readers, is a geological ridge formation that bisects Niagara County from east to west, varying in height from mere inches to hundreds of feet. Niagara Falls plummets 173 feet over the escarpment into the Niagara River.

The next time you're on Ridge Road (Route 104), or on Clinton or Market Street hills in Lockport, Shawnee Road (Route 93) in Cambria, or Lewiston Hill, point out the escarpment to your passenger and then ask them if they would be willing to hike west on the escarpment all the way to Michigan for \$1 million. You'll be surprised at how many people, even some who have spent their entire lives here, don't make the connection.

The difference in elevation between the northern and southern halves of Niagara County has had a profound impact on the history and culture of not only "Buffalo Niagara," but the nation as a whole.

The uniquely American icon Niagara Falls, as we've noted, owes its existence to the escarpment. Eighteen miles to the east, the Flight of Five Erie Canal locks at Lockport defeated the escarpment and opened the entire midwestern United States to immigration and commerce, vaulting New York City into its key role as the largest U.S. port, surpassing New Orleans.

Engineers and industrialists from all over the world traveled to Lockport to see the miraculous Flight of Five, more remarkable for its time than the Brooklyn Bridge, Hoover Dam and Empire State Building all rolled into one.

It can reasonably be stated that Niagara County is host to two of the pre-eminent wonders of the world, one natural and the other manmade.

Speaking of people who don't make the connection, a group of "Parkway Preservationists" met recently at the behest of ex-Lewiston mayor Richard Soluri to strategize on how to save their commuter route to downtown Niagara Falls, also known as the Robert Moses Parkway, from being consigned to the ash heap of history.

Soluri was ignominiously booted off the Niagara Greenway Commission amid allegations made to a state ethics board regarding conflicts of interest unbecoming a public servant. His sole environmental credential for sitting on the commission was that he would occasionally patrol Center Street, Lewiston, picking up litter.

As one of the board members of One Niagara, you'd think he'd be happy as a clam picking up the litter of the millions who visit Niagara Falls every year, but no, he'd rather spend his golden years trying to save an ugly, useless roadway that never should have been built in the first place.

"ARE YOU AWARE?" was the battle cry of an e-mail sent by Soluri to his fan base of white, affluent commuters, which, as we know from New York State Department of Transportation statistics, are the tiny minority who use the parkway as an exclusive shortcut to downtown, and then again at day's end to flee back to bedroom communities north of the city.

It would be impossible to reprint the entire garbled, rambling, alarmist message here, but there are highlights: "The group advocating closure has gathered a multitude of supporters, many from faraway places who have probably never visited Niagara or if so probably spent one or two days."

By these, Soluri must be referring to the mayor of Niagara Falls, the City Council (by unanimous vote), 28 Niagara Falls block clubs, the city Tourism Advisory Board, the Main, Niagara Street and Pine Avenue Business and Professional Associations, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, the Niagara County Environmental Management Council, and many others.

Removal of the Moses Parkway and reclamation of the Niagara Gorge rim will garner the attention of the national media and entice a whole new market of tourists who will hike and bike along the scenic landscape of the gorge, ending their afternoon in Lewiston, where they will avail themselves of the restaurants, shops and spas on Center Street, before catching a trolley back to the Falls. Or maybe just spend the night right there in the cozy, attractive village.

Not according to Soluri and the Parkway Preservationists: "A bike path might appeal to one or two riders out of 1,000. ... It can also be dangerous for inexperienced riders going downhill!"

The memo raises other "points" that "have been developed by the committee over a considerable time span," such as the tired argument over access: "How are older citizens and people with disabilities going to access the Parks overlooking the river?"

Of course, the word "access" wouldn't even come up were it not for the parkway, which blocks "access" to the entire length of the Niagara Gorge.

Establishment of a world-class park along the Niagara Gorge, according to the Parkway Preservation crowd, would create a haven for "partying and drug dealing," "force traffic to share the roads with garbage trucks scattering part of their loads and liquids onto the driving surface," and "block the fastest route to Memorial Hospital."

Left out are dogs sleeping with cats, and the general decline of motherhood, baseball and apple pie.

Restoration of the Niagara Gorge rim is emblematic of a new way of thinking, a fresh look at the natural and economic resources with which our region is so abundantly blessed. Cities all over the world are removing obsolesced roadways to reclaim open and green space, benefiting their local economies, property values and quality of life.

It's past due time Soluri and his followers recognize progress and embrace the exciting future that is taking shape here in

Niagara County. Parkway Removal Debate Continues

February 26, 2013

It's been eight years to the month since New York State Parks, USA Niagara, the NYS Dept. of Transportation and the city of Niagara Falls signed a memorandum of understanding to remove/reconfigure the north section of the Robert Moses Parkway. Last week at an open house at the Niagara Falls Conference Center, State Parks unveiled its plans for future disposition of the parkway: either total removal or removal up to Findlay Drive.

However, according to State Parks, no actual construction or removal is anticipated to take place for another two years, during which time further planning, design and engineering, and yet more public hearings and scoping sessions will drag on.

That means a decade will have elapsed between the time the four government bureaucracies concluded that something must be done about the concrete albatross that strangles the city off from the scenic Niagara Gorge and funnels tourists exclusively into Niagara Falls State Park, and when the project will finally commence.

Perhaps it's understandable that such a grand undertaking would take an entire decade. The Herculean task of busting up the pavement of the Moses Parkway and replacing it with trees, trails and open space, presents such a challenge for modern-day government.

But we know they will come through, someday. As an encouragement to the state agencies who have proven themselves so eager to move us forward, we decided to delve into history and come up with some examples of far simpler government projects from days of yore before scoping sessions, stakeholders, master plans and environmental impact statements became tools by which the government obfuscates, delays and impedes.

For example, the 360-mile Erie Canal was dug mostly by hand and mule from one end of the state to the other and included the construction of 83 locks. Ground for the canal was broken on July 4, 1817 at Rome, New York, and completed on October 26, 1825. That's 8 years, 4 months. How did they ever pull it off without 200-page glossy reports prepared by consultants?

President Coolidge signed the bill authorizing the Hoover Dam on Dec. 21, 1928. The dam was dedicated on Sept. 30, 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. That's a project duration of 6 years, 9 months. They even built a road on top, like the parkway across the Niagara Power Project, that you can drive on, or at least you could until 9/11 happened.

In a letter dated August 2, 1939, Albert Einstein alerted President Roosevelt to the possibility that atomic fission may be harnessed to create a bomb. Five years and 11 months later, on July 16, 1945, the first nuclear explosion took place at Alamogordo, New Mexico. And these people were so dumb that they couldn't even put together a decent Powerpoint presentation if their life depended on it!

It's safe to say nobody thought about D-Day before Pearl Harbor occurred on Dec. 7, 1941, but no problem for the cando generation, because D-Day took place a mere 2 years and 6 months later, employing newly-developed logistical techniques that are still used by corporations today. It's said the Allies removed a few highways themselves on their way to Berlin.

On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged the nation to land a man on the moon and return him safely to the earth, which we accomplished a scant 8 years and 2 months later, on July 21, 1969. JFK probably would have liked the Moses Parkway, which allows a man to land in Niagara Falls and return safely to Lewiston.

From the date that John F. Kennedy challenged America to put a man on the moon and its successful accomplishment, eight years and two months had passed. It's been eight years since the MOU was signed to remove/reconfigure the Robert Moses Parkway.

Parkway Comments Due by Wednesday, Hints on what to say seen on past Parkway comments

March 19, 2013

The deadline for public comments on Robert Moses Parkway reconfiguration is this Wednesday (March 20). Comments may be emailed to Moses.parkway.north@parks.ny.gov.

The remaining alternatives for the parkway include removal up to Findlay Drive (alternatives 3 and 4) and removal to the city line (alternative 6). Alternatives 1 and 2, which were rejected, involved complete restoration of 4 lanes.

To assist readers who wish to comment before Wednesday's 5 p. m. deadline, we are reprinting selected comments from two years ago from the original scoping session that evaluated all six alternatives.

Comments from Lewiston, Youngstown and Wilson greatly outnumbered those submitted by Niagara Falls residents. Most of those were in favor of parkway restoration/improvements.

For example, Audrey Shedd of Lewiston stated, "Please keep just the way it is so I have a direct route to Niagara Falls. Otherwise I might think twice about going to the Falls."

George Spira of Youngstown seconded that: "I do not want to drive in city traffic any more than necessary."

Jack Hanrahan of Lewiston agrees with both: "I have been a Lewiston resident for the past 40 years. I believe that the parkway is the only way to get from Niagara Falls to Lewiston... It is the "life line" for the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown... you may see many partitions (sic) signed by the Niagara Heritage Organization but most of the signatures come from people who have no use for parks in the first place... for the people in Lewiston

and Youngstown it is a godsent (sic)."

Some residents from outlying areas were seemingly bitter about the parkway situation, including Ruth B. Kushner of Lewiston, who "has been furious for 10 years that the parkway was totally botched up."

E.A. Franklin of Pekin said to "Kindly put me down for reopening the Parkway. The grand experiment (removal of the southbound lanes) has failed... As all things Niagara Frontier, all the alternatives presented will never be decided because of petty bickering."

Commuters into the city were concerned about whether removing the parkway might result in an unsafe situation. "The original four lanes is safer in bad weather, fog, etc." concluded Sandra E. Jackson of Wilson. Other Wilson residents also chimed in. Marlene Schotz said that "I represent no one but myself, but I do attempt to interject common sense into political situations. Forget about Olmsted's view of the whole gorge being left natural. That was the horse and buggy age. Taking out the Robert Moses Parkway will be the same." And Thomas J. Baia said that "As a Wilson resident the Parkway is also very important to the people of Wilson."

John and Wendy Caputo of Lewiston were worried about the impact of parkway removal on their business. "We are owners of an artisan's shop in quaint Lewiston. Our investment is based on the continuation of the parkway." Marcella's Hair Salon, also located in Lewiston, pleaded "Please do not close the Parkway! It is imperative to the flow of traffic and the livelihood of the residents of Lewiston. Please!!"

Tourism was the subject of other comments. An anonymous commenter declared that "one side wants to cut off the rest of the county so they can keep all the tourists to themselves in Niagara Falls (where it would only take a couple of hours to see everything Niagara Falls has to offer)... screw the people and attractions to the North - how dare they have anything to offer... Niagara Falls says give us Artpark. How ridiculous is that... Main Street will never be a Center

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Street with shops and restaurants galore."

Ecotourism is apparently not a big deal to the city's neighbors to the north either. Karen Allen of Stella Niagara "would prefer traffic travel on the present Robert Moses Parkway over plants for there is no environmental reason to get off at Devil's Hole." "How long would it take for the foliage to grow to provide a native based plant luscious to the visitors? And at what cost to taxpayers?" questioned Margaret A. Salada of Lewiston. Joel Kew of Lewiston took the occasion to remind us that "Prior to the Parkway there was a railroad track and if so then the people didn't have access to the gorge."

According to Arlene and Darlene Polniak of Lewiston, the state of the parkway is a direct cause of suffering. "Restore the 4 lanes! Lewiston drivers have suffered with 2 lanes." and "4-5 people who walk their dogs must love the empty road. Everyone else suffers."

Others say it must be the result of mental illness. Sylvester and Kathleen Barone of Lewiston wrote "Save the Parkway, we need this parkway. We need to emulate our Canadian neighbors. If the Canadians took out their parkway it would be insane! The same would happen here!" And another anonymous comment asked "in reference to removal of the Robert Moses Parkway are the people in favor of the closure totally insane?"

Transportation issues were topmost in the minds of some commenters. "The Robert Moses is an umbilical cord of sorts for ease of access to the bridges - Whirlpool and Rainbow" observed Randy Hain of Lewiston. "(I) like the access road for Artpark, gets the crowd out nicely" from an appreciative Sarah Waechter of Lewiston.

"We have endured too much self-serving public pressure from those who thrive on letters to the newspapers" complained G. Russell Crane, resident of Lewiston. Ken Candella of Lewiston summed up everyone's comments appropriately when he wrote "Removal would be detrimental and devastating (sic)."

State Parks, DOT hold Public Hearing at City Hall One Citizen Shows Up

August 20, 2013

Seasoned bureaucrats of agencies like the New York State Department of Transportation and State Parks know all the tricks when it comes to subverting the public will, running interference for influential politicians and the fat cat campaign contributors who own them. One of their favorites is to gather "public comments" at a "scoping hearing" to be considered when formulating a "master plan".

For example, "Public blasts Robert Moses Parkway Proposals for Redesign Project" as headlined in the April 28, 2009 issue of the Niagara Gazette.

According to the article, "New York State Park officials presented three different scenarios Tuesday to modify the south portion of the Robert Moses Parkway... However, most of the 100 plus people listening were still demanding a fourth option - removing the roadway entirely and allowing the city to reconnect with the waterfront."

The hearing at the Niagara Falls Conference Center was actually the second on the disposition of the south Moses parkway. A session had previously been held at the Lehman Visitors Center at which numerous citizens called for removal of the highway and development of the waterfront of the Niagara River. So as people filed into the Conference Center a year later under the naive assumption that State Parks had carefully considered public comments reflecting the will of the people, and began to view the various designs and displays all detailing an upgrade of the deleterious roadway, a steady undercurrent of incredulousness and outrage began to foment and spill over at the microphone.

"The whole world seems to understand the uniqueness of this area except for the state of New York and the state parks," yelled out Lisa Vitello, (representing) the Niagara Falls Tourism Advisory Board and a vocal supporter of removing both the south and north Moses Parkway sections... Ruth Knepp, who has lived in the city for 56 years, told park officials they should be ashamed of themselves. 'This is supposed to be a vibrant city and it was once a vibrant city,' she said. 'It's a disgrace what you've done.' The state park (sic) refuses to acknowledge the community's plea of removing the parkway (this writer stated). 'You are not listening to us... You do what benefits Albany, you do what benefits downstate and you do what benefits your corporate masters.'"

Four years later, the plan is to move forward with a rebuilt south Moses Parkway, the overwhelming public opposition to it as expressed at the Conference Center hearing having been waited out by the state until it was a faded memory.

In case you were attending the concert at Artpark last Tuesday night, or your kid's ballgame or a cook-out in the backyard, or gone boating or otherwise engaged in myriad summertime activities, you have a good excuse for not showing up at 5 pm at city hall for an official hearing - complete with recorded public comments committed to transcript - conducted by State Parks and the DOT on renovation of Olmsted-inspired bridges in the Niagara Falls State Park.

Clearly, when it comes to public hearings on parkways and the park, Western Region State Parks director Mark Thomas has learned his lessons well. He didn't want a repeat of the south Parkway meltdown at the Conference Center. And he sure didn't want a replay of the Gov. Paterson town hall meeting in Niagara Falls where he was shouted down by angry

citizens, which you can watch by searching "Niagara Falls uproar" on Youtube.

Lesson number one is: avoid them. That's why the last public meeting concerning Niagara Falls State Park, the draft EIS hearing for the Observation Tower, was way back in 1999. Second, if you're going to dip your toe back into hostile public waters, do it during the dinner hour in the middle of the dog days of August, and don't send notices of the hearing to either the Niagara Gazette or Buffalo News. As it turned out, Niagara Falls writer and historian Paul Gromosiak was the only individual to show up, to be fawned over by no fewer than three State Parks officials, including Thomas and Angela Berti, and five DOT staffers.

"I told them I was both honored and taken aback," Gromosiak told me on the phone, "and that attendance may have been improved had they publicized the meeting as something to do with the Buffalo Bills. They are talking about totally replacing the Olmsted bridges instead of fixing them... the bridges are an important part of the history of the Reserve. Would you tear down the Eiffel Tower?"

State Government Decisions Tinged by Racism?

December 10, 2013

On December 14, 1995, a young woman named Cynthia Wiggins stepped off the bus onto a busy multi-lane highway next to the Walden Galleria mall in Cheektowaga, N. Y. Hurrying across the street to get to her job at the mall, she was run over by a large truck and killed. The incident drew national attention to Western New York, focusing on the tragedy's ugly racial overtones. Questions were raised as to why the bus, used predominately by African-American shoppers, did not discharge passengers directly at the mall entrance.

Today, there is a subway in Buffalo that stops short of the obvious destination of the University at Buffalo North Campus, located a couple of miles north of the city of Buffalo at Amherst, N. Y. It's commonly believed that the train wasn't built out to this center of Western New York culture and commerce for the same reason the Walden Galleria kept Cynthia Wiggins at arm's length.

This columnist is in possession of the memoirs of a founding board member of Niagara County Community College. The papers, which will one day be consigned to the local history department of the Niagara Falls Public Library, relate a first-hand account of the sequence of events that led to the establishment of the new community college back in the 1960's. Due to the provocative and incendiary nature of some of the narrative, we are compelled to maintain the anonymity of the source.

This individual understood the advantages of siting institutions of higher learning in an urban setting, and lobbied hard to keep NCCC in downtown Niagara Falls. It's well known that the original college was, in fact, located here, in abandoned Nabisco offices and a nearby hotel. However, that was changed once the politicians started feeling the heat.

"What we were going to use the Community College for was to help local students get retrained for jobs... I was explaining how we wanted to run the college. We wanted to have culinary courses because there were so many jobs available. We wanted to have hotel and motel management, housekeeping and bookkeeping so they could run a hotel or motel... The Parks Commission had agreed to hire 42 new students to work every summer down by the falls."

The next few sentences are painful to read, as they give us an unvarnished glimpse into the history surrounding the decision to locate NCCC in suburban acreage miles outside of the city. "Mrs. (name withheld) told me one day, she didn't like the idea of black people going to this college. Of course, we wanted to get as many blacks in as we could to get them in school... (but) they went to Sanborn, so the blacks couldn't get at it without difficulty."

The north Robert Moses Parkway is another example of how land use and transportation planning policies can play a key role in creating and maintaining the racial status quo. The Moses Parkway is a limited-access expressway that separates the city of Niagara Falls from six miles of its waterfront, deflects tourist traffic away from downtown, and mars a 12,000-year-old wonder of natural history, the Niagara Gorge, so that exclusively white suburban enclaves to the north can have an easier commuter route to downtown.

One of the scare tactics used by Moses Parkway removal opponents is the specter of parkway traffic being diverted past the Maple Avenue School on Lewiston Road, endangering schoolchildren. It has proven to be an effective tactic, considering that State Parks is proposing removal only as far as Findlay Drive, despite the fact that NYS Department of Transportation studies show that parkway closure would result in only one additional vehicle every two minutes on alternative routes into the city.

It's perfectly understandable that parents of young children in the DeVeaux neighborhood would approach perceived traffic issues in the vicinity of their elementary school with great caution. That's why the speed limit past Maple Avenue School is 20 mph. But it so happens that the speed limit past Hyde Park School, located on the other side of the tracks, practically abutting State Route 61 (also known as Hyde Park Blvd.), is 35 mph. Hyde Park School, of course, has a sizable attendance of children of color.

Perhaps the question that needs to be asked is, why do State Parks and the NYS Dept. of Transportation bend over backwards to defer to the safety concerns, however real or unfounded, of an overwhelmingly white neighborhood, yet have different standards entirely for traffic safety in front of an elementary school mere blocks away that is characterized by a diverse student body?

Final "Riverway" Plan Released, Enhances Albany Tourism Monopoly

April 1, 2014

Instead of State Parks, we should call it the New York State Office of "Stealth Parks".

Unlike his predecessor, retired Buffalo Bill Ed Rutkowski, State Parks Western Region director Mark Thomas is a crafty one. A seasoned politician who, in a previous life, served as Chautauqua County Executive and ran for Congress three times, he knows exactly how information flows can be managed to maximize media exposure and public attention when the Albany big shots come to town to cut a ribbon in Niagara Falls State Park. Alternatively, he slips it through under the radar when it's likely to produce criticism and controversy.

Until recently, the last meeting held by State Parks, at which the general public had the opportunity to make official comments regarding activities in the Niagara Falls State Park, was way back on February 18, 1999. Its purpose was to receive public comments on the environmental impact statement for the Observation Tower.

More than fourteen years went by (you're reading that correctly, fourteen years) before State Parks held another meeting where local citizens could comment for the public record regarding something taking place in the Niagara Falls State Park.

The occasion was August 13, 2013 at City Hall, and the arcane topic was what to do about the decaying Olmsted-style bridges in the park.

Just to be on the safe side, Thomas scheduled that meeting for dinner hour on a Tuesday, when the majority of us were at ballgames or cook-outs, an Artpark concert or possibly on family vacation. In addition, there was no prior announcement of the time and location, and the strategy worked because only one lone person showed up to offer comments.

There's good reason for Thomas' reticence, and thanks to the miracle of the modern internet, you can witness firsthand what it is. The video "Niagara Falls Uproar" on Youtube, which we never tire of bringing to the reader's attention, shows a flustered Mark Thomas being shouted down by irate citizens at a Gov. Paterson town hall-style meeting over remarks he was making trying to justify Albany's stranglehold on the parking, dining, sightseeing and souvenir store concessions in the Niagara Falls State Park.

Eight million tourists visit Niagara Falls State Park every year, without need or reason to set foot or spend a dime in Niagara Falls, a city that suffers from one of the highest rates of crime and per capita poverty in the entire northeastern United States.

Besides the meltdown at the Paterson event, there was also the near riot at the South Robert Moses Parkway scoping hearing of April 27, 2009, held at the Niagara Falls Conference Center.

Assorted State Parks officials and representatives of consultant firm Hatch Mott McDonald milled around, grinning stupidly at the interested citizens taking in displays featuring large posters of a newly rebuilt south Moses Parkway sprawling along the waterfront, cutting the city off and serving as a driveway into the Niagara Falls State Park.

Over the succeeding hour during the public comment session, all Mark Thomas could do was stare at his shoes, while the blood drained from the faces of the Hatch Mott people, looking like they were about to faint.

"The whole world seems to understand the uniqueness of this area except for the state of New York and State Parks," yelled Lisa Vitello, representing the Niagara Falls Tourism Advisory Board.

"This is supposed to be a vibrant city and it was once a vibrant city," Ruth Knepp, a resident of Niagara Falls for 56 years, scolded. "It's a disgrace what you've done."

"State Parks refuses to acknowledge the community's plea of removing the parkway. You are not listening to us. You do what benefits Albany, you do what benefits downstate and you do what benefits your corporate masters," berated another angry individual.

In case you missed it, and you probably did since, like the Olmsted bridge hearing, there was no mention of it in either the Niagara Gazette or the Buffalo News, the Final Design Report/Environmental Assessment for the Robert Moses Parkway South Segment - "Riverway" was released two months ago, on January 29, 2014.

For more background and an analysis of the South Moses Parkway project, and how badly damaging it is to the city and its future, see the article in this week's edition entitled "New One-Way Robert Moses South Parkway Plan Directs Motorists to State Park, Avoiding City and its Businesses."

Deaf to the demands of the public, oblivious to the overwhelming desire to determine for ourselves the destiny of our waterfront as expressed at the 2009 hearing, State Parks has finalized the plan to replace the south parkway with an upgraded road that cuts off the city from the Niagara River, conveys tourist traffic directly from the Grand Island Bridge into the State Park, and completely bypasses the downtown and businesses of the city of Niagara Falls.

Dr. Dyster, or How I Learned to Stop Complaining and Love the Moses Parkway

February 17, 2015

Taxes on both residents and businesses will steeply increase this year as the city of Niagara Falls experiences fiscal distress worse than any in memory, even though it enjoys millions in

revenues not commonly received by the average city, and he's been mayor for seven years.

Shootings, burglaries and assorted violent crimes are, according to FBI statistics, at an all-time high, and he's been mayor for seven years.

Empty storefronts and abandoned, dilapidated buildings predominate on the city's thoroughfares of Main and Niagara Streets, within a block of City Hall, and in close proximity to one of the most visited parks in the entire world, and he's been mayor for seven years.

Last but not least, over the seven years Paul Dyster has been in office, nothing has happened with the north Robert Moses Parkway, an ugly concrete barrier to the Niagara Gorge and twice-a-day commuter route for white suburbs to the north, other than repaving and new on-ramps at Findlay Drive and at Lewiston for Artpark, even as the state directs millions of dollars into crash plans to "improve" the Niagara Falls State Park as a tourist attraction separate and distinct from the city, "upgrade" its dedicated feeder highway, the south Parkway, and ignores numerous regulations so that James Glynn, who contributes nothing to the city other than the odd charitable donation to a soup kitchen, could get his new boatyard in a matter of months.

Of the latter three projects, you couldn't find a more enthusiastic advocate than Mayor Dyster. Between Niagara Falls State Park, the south Moses Parkway and the Maid of the Mist boatyard, he's cut more ribbons, given more speeches and shoveled more shovelfuls of symbolic dirt for State Parks, Glynn and Albany than he has for new construction in his own city. He even publicly referred to critics of the Glynn boatyard as "self-haters".

When State Parks started construction of a police barracks on the gorge rim, which would have made obvious to Parkway removal proponents (his most ardent supporters) that the north Parkway was here to stay, Mayor Dyster acted to halt the project. When it comes to north Moses Parkway removal, however, he contents himself with the occasional Facebook post "hoping" that someday he can facilitate parkway removal, with the help of unidentified "friends".

Where does all this bring us? To yet another "Public Information Session", of course, to be held Thursday, Feb. 19 at the Niagara Falls Conference Center, hosted by State Parks, the NYS Dept. of Transportation, USA Niagara and the city of Niagara Falls, on north Robert Moses Parkway removal.

According to the press release (and feel free to ask your lawyer to interpret): "Currently, a Design Report/Environmental Assessment process has been initiated to publicly evaluate the proposed project (north Moses Parkway removal) in accordance with Federal Highway Administration regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulations and other associated federal requirements. This process is also intended to meet state agency review requirements under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)."

All of those statutes, NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act, FERC approvals and SEQRA were completely disregarded by state authorities in their haste to implement both the Niagara Falls State Parks Landscape Improvements Plan and Glynn's new Maid of the Mist boatyard at the former Schoellkopf. So why is north Moses Parkway removal being subjected to regulatory scrutiny under these various laws, if not to deliberately place interminable bureaucratic hurdles in its way?

According to Paul Tronolone, USA Niagara Sr. Project Manager for the illusory "Niagara Gorge Corridor Project", Thursday's public session will be for the purposes of "design approval", towards the end of "preliminary engineering" that will not be completed this year. No start date will be announced on Thursday.

On Oct. 13, 2009, Michael Parsnick, a strident opponent of Parkway removal, said in a letter to the Gazette: "In an effort to help resolve this dispute, we sought a compromise that would seek the removal of the parkway from downtown to Findlay Drive only... Our elected officials apparently heard us as indicated..."

"It appears we have been successful," crowed Parsnick.

That Dyster made promises behind closed doors over five years ago to Parsnick and others in favor of Parkway retention or limited removal, while continuing to lead total removal advocates down the primrose path, is obvious given that you haven't heard a single whine or complaint from Parsnick or any other DeVeaux resident over the past five years on the issue.

Then in 2009 through 2011, Dyster championed the \$140,000 "Regional Economic Growth Through Ecological Restoration of the Niagara Gorge Rim" study by consultants EDR Companies of Syracuse, NY, which conclusively lays out the case that the maximum economic and environmental benefit to the city will only be realized when the Parkway is removed to the city line. He advanced it through the Greenway funding process, all the time having complete knowledge that the fix was in. It was Findlay or no way.

It's been two long decades since the organized campaign to remove the north Moses Parkway got underway, and the Parkway remains in place for one and only one reason: Dyster doesn't think it is in his political self-interest to demand state agencies do anything about it.

Some years ago, when Mayor Dyster was working overtime to stop the Wallenda walk, he told this writer, a longtime supporter of total removal of the Parkway, "Maybe it's a plot. They want people to line up on the parkway overpass to watch Wallenda, so that they can keep the Parkway." Apparently, he wanted to see that in print. Opportunity Lost - South

Moses Parkway Upgrade A Quality of Life, Economic blow to City

June 2, 2015

The south Robert Moses Parkway opened last week for traffic in both east and west directions. All that remains to be done is some final landscaping.

As one local columnist wrote, "Every day on my way to work, I drive onto the Robert Moses Parkway beneath the Grand Island Bridge so I can enjoy the scenic route past the most beautiful river in the world."

If it's the "most beautiful river in the world", did it make sense to build a highway along its entire length so that commuters could enjoy 60 seconds of viewscape out their vehicle window on their way to work?

Is that really the best possible use of this "scenic" waterfront, an asset and a jewel the like of which few cities are privileged to have?

That the Parkway saves a few seconds for individuals who work in Buffalo has been a recurring point on social media the past week.

People have stressed the convenience of the high-speed, dedicated highway over Buffalo Avenue, even though Buffalo Avenue served the region just fine during the 1950's when it was the sole connection to the thriving city of Buffalo, and the population of Niagara Falls was over 100,000, more than twice what it is now.

One woman made a snide comment with respect to how well the south Moses Parkway fulfills her sense of entitlement, given that she drives on it to work "unlike most of the unemployed in the city of Niagara Falls".

With all due respect to the daily commuters who so cherish their shortcut to Grand Island, if the space along the river was a world-class park and green space such that it drew business and investment to the city thanks to improved quality of life and increased property values, maybe there would materialize gainful employment for them right here in Niagara Falls and they wouldn't have to make that rat race commute to Buffalo every day.

One writer, Michelle DeLuca, said, "Construction crews have been busy for weeks ripping out the Robert Moses as part of a master plan to give people access to the water. I can't wait until it's gone. I hate the dang thing."

In reality, she is advancing a premise that is simply wrong. The south Robert Moses Parkway has not been "ripped out". Really. Any rational person who has driven there over the past two weeks can attest to that fact. Go see for yourself.

It's still there.

For years planners and politicians extolled the new "Riverway" project that was to replace the south Moses Parkway. Instead, signs from the Grand Island bridge all the way to the city line identify the recently upgraded highway not as Riverway, but the same old Robert Moses Parkway. Not a single sign identifies the new route as "Riverway".

Several signs on the 190 and the Grand Island bridge make clear that the Moses is here to stay.

But that's exactly how it's been framed since the early planning stages for the Parkway project commenced years ago - politicians and local media alike talking out of both sides of their mouth, depending on their target audience.

Waterfront advocates feeling a warm glow upon hearing the word "removed" while commuters breathe a sigh of relief the first time they navigate the new road, happy that their precious pavement is still very much intact, despite nonstop pronouncements to the contrary from State Parks, the state DOT, and Mayor Paul Dyster.

Witness the May 21 Gazette headline that read, "Southern stretch of Robert Moses Parkway back in full service on Friday".

The same day, the Buffalo News reported, "The Robert Moses Parkway opened Thursday, one day ahead of schedule... The opening means the traffic detour onto Buffalo Avenue in place since November has been discontinued."

"We're back in business on the Robert Moses Parkway south. It's now open to traffic in both directions — (and) on the newly reconfigured Robert Moses traffic circle" echoed the Downtown Niagara Falls Business Association.

The reality of the situation is that the south Robert Moses Parkway will be with us for the next fifty years, sprawling across and cutting off access to waterfront, and through signage, encouraging tourists to bypass the city's business district and drive directly into the state park.

This reconfiguring of the Robert Moses cost \$18.8 million. The population of Niagara Falls is 49468. That's approximately \$380 for every man, woman and child living here.

Could that money have been better used for real improvements to infrastructure, lower taxes, micro loans for small businesses or funding charities, festivals and cultural institutions?

It could have been removed altogether for a fraction of the cost.

Something to contemplate as we drive around in a circle.

Rep. Higgins leads Buffalo Waterfront Renewal, While Niagara Falls Asks, "When is it Our Turn?"

August 11, 2015

Cautious optimism was the watchword two and a half years ago when Congressman Brian Higgins set up shop in the city of Niagara Falls, having easily won the newly-formed 26th district, which also comprises most of Buffalo and North Tonawanda.

Higgins took over from the venerable Louise Slaughter, who had represented the city since 2002. Slaughter's enduring legacy includes saving the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, passing legislation that established the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and winning \$14 million for improvements to the Niagara Falls International Airport. She also obtained millions for street repaving here.

However, it would take Higgins, Slaughter and most of the Legion of Superheroes decades to undo the damage visited on the city by Congressman John LaFalce. For 28 long years, LaFalce presided over the gut-wrenching economic decline of the city of Niagara Falls. A lawyer by training, late in his career LaFalce took a shine to finance and got himself appointed ranking Democrat on the Financial Services Committee in time to push through Bill Clinton's deregulation of Wall Street and the banking industry.

So five full years after he thankfully exited the scene in 2002, John LaFalce once again managed to sucker punch the city, this time by having lit the fuse on the ticking time bomb of the great 2007-2009 recession.

One lesson that may be learned from this distressing history is that if competence in government is desired, our best bet is to look for it outside of the local gene pool. There's something about the cynical, parochial politics of Niagara Falls and Niagara County that precludes great leaders from springing up here. Higgins and Slaughter, as imports, turned out to be not so bad.

As everyone knows, Congressman Brian Higgins has performed miracles on the Buffalo waterfront. The transformation of the Inner and Outer Harbors, improvements at the Harbor Marina and the Times Beach Nature Preserve and along the Buffalo River, all are due to the tireless advocacy, hard work, organization and funding provided by Higgins and his office.

He obtained hundreds of millions of NYPA relicensing dollars for Buffalo projects, and before the ink was dry on the agreement, demanded an additional \$2 million in Greenway funds annually for Buffalo waterfront, and got it.

How important is this to Western New York's future? With record droughts in California, midwest aquifers running dry and Florida's water table fouled by seawater, our local water resources and waterfront will play an inestimable role in the nation's future. Higgins' efforts in Buffalo will pay off, but what about here in Niagara Falls?

"To get this thing started, to get the renewal, to get the energy that is needed in Niagara Falls, you've got to reclaim the waterfront for the people of this great, great city, and that's what this does today," Higgins said at the November, 2014 ceremonial ground-breaking for the south Robert Moses Parkway reconstruction, as reported in the Buffalo News.

However, the newly-rebuilt south Moses Parkway, with its expanded footprint and useless traffic circle will, contrary to his assertion, do little to "reclaim the waterfront". Congressman Higgins was probably nudging closer to the truth in using the word "renewal". As in, the disastrous "urban renewal" that destroyed downtown Niagara Falls back in the day.

With regards to the north section of the Parkway, six miles of ugly, redundant roadway that cuts communities off from the Niagara Gorge, the purpose of which is to provide a short cut into the city for Lewiston commuters, Higgins has been unequivocal in both word and deed.

"Removal of the parkway is a critical step in giving the city the waterfront it deserves and unleashing the limitless economic potential that comes with it," Higgins stated at a January, 2014 press conference announcing a \$2 million NYPA grant to get the ball rolling on the long-awaited project, "The New York Power Authority did the right thing, and the future of Niagara Falls will be better because of it."

Unfortunately, "Phase 1" of North Moses Parkway removal, only up to Findlay Drive instead of the city line, falls short of expectations in terms of both vision and impact. The "limitless economic potential" predicted by the Congressman will actually be quite limited, especially considering that it will cost much more to remove the Parkway in piecemeal fashion.

Further, the "Niagara Gorge Corridor Project" won't commence until late 2017, over two years from now, if it happens at all. James Glynn, owner of Maid of the Mist, cleared regulatory hurdles and built his boatyard in a matter of months, while state agencies and local politicians have dragged out Parkway public scoping and planning for 20 years.

Terrorist Threat in our Backyard ignored by Cuomo, State Agencies

September 10, 2013

In May of this year the Police Commissioner of New York City, Raymond W. Kelly, publicly commented on burdensome security procedures in place to screen tourists visiting the newly-reopened Statue of Liberty: "This screening was put in just after the horrific events of Sept 11. And I can tell you, in our judgment, the threat has not abated."

Closer to home, senior New York Senator Charles Schumer recently warned "Clearly, now is not the time to dial back on border and transit security" in reference to Department of Homeland Security delays in funding a Western New York anti-terrorism task force. He specifically referred to foiled terrorist attack attempts including the April, 2013 passenger train incident which imperiled citizens of the city of Niagara Falls, resulting in the arrest of two terrorists who planned to detonate an explosive device on key bridge infrastructure over the Niagara River, and the Boston Marathon bombing. "The Canadian terror plot, the Lackawanna Six and the terribly unfortunate events in Boston should make us more vigilant in New York's big cities and transit systems, not less."

It is inexplicable, therefore, why the Cuomo administration persists in keeping open the Robert Moses Parkway, a little-used roadway that traverses the center of the Niagara Power Project at Lewiston, NY. Cars, trucks and buses have unrestricted access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, over the dam, past the turbines and through the very heart of this huge hydropower facility, which supplies electric power to all of New York and several other states of the Northeast.

In the days following 9/11, the Moses Parkway at the entrance to the Power Project was blocked off by large Department of Transportation dumptrucks. Detailed schematics of the Niagara Power Project were carelessly released to the public during the relicensing process several years ago. The Parkway as it traverses the Power Project is readily visualized on various internet sites such as Google Maps. There have been numerous newspaper articles over the years, some still accessible on the internet while others have been inexplicably removed, spotlighting the vulnerability to terrorist attack unfettered vehicular access across the Power Project on the Robert Moses Parkway allows. Cumulatively, these factors make for an open invitation to terrorists, and an intolerably dangerous situation.

While it is true that a "hardening" of the critical infrastructure of the Niagara Power Project was attempted after 9/11, it did little to mitigate the danger to the facility, its workers or residents of neighboring communities. The mere publicity surrounding a successful detonation of an explosive device in the center of a large power plant in the United States would more than serve the purpose of terrorists even in the event the actual physical

damage to the facility was minimal.

The record since 9/11 is replete with instances where roads across such sensitive facilities have been closed, including one traversing the Hoover Dam. Unlike the Hoover Dam, however, there are alternative roadways entering and exiting the city of Niagara Falls onto which the few hundred vehicles (According to NYS Dept. of Transportation studies, an average of one car every two minutes) that use the parkway on a daily basis could be easily be re-routed.

A scoping process exploring Parkway closure and removal has dragged on for over a decade. Now we are told there will be no decision on parkway removal for another year, and that probably will not include closure/removal over the power generating plant.

In this era of body scans at the airport, monitoring of the phone calls and emails of average citizens by federal agencies and lengthy delays at our international borders, it is unconscionable that terrorists have complete, unrestricted access to this vital component of our energy infrastructure.

Of the three "Alternatives" being considered in the scoping process for Parkway removal, only Alternative 6 requires closure of the Parkway over the Niagara Power Project. Governor Cuomo must act now to head off further terrorist threats to Western New York, and expedite the implementation of Alternative 6, closing and removing the Moses Parkway.

After all, Cuomo is plenty conscientious when it comes to his own personal safety. When visiting Western New York, as he has several times over the past year, invariably he is whisked by motorcade from the airport to the easily secured confines of either Buff State or the UB campus, where layers of campus cops and local and state police provide protection for the governor and the favored few invited to his appearances. Would that he cared so much for our safety.

High Profile Anti-Terror Drills Target Public Opinion, Terrorism Not so Much

September 24, 2013

On Feb. 26, 1993, a bomb hidden in a van exploded underneath the World Trade Center in New York City, creating smoke, flames and debris, killing several people and injuring hundreds more.

Less than two years later, on Sept. 12, 1994, a Cessna 150L airplane crashed onto the south lawn of the White House, killing the pilot. The plane came to rest at the base of the building, its crumpled and twisted wreck bearing mute testimony to a new and deadly terror tactic.

Unfortunately, government agencies responsible for protecting the nation against surprise terrorist attacks failed to predict the where and how of the next strike, even though these tragic events of the 1990s foreshadowed the use of an airplane as a weapon and Al-Qaida's obsession with the tallest buildings in the country.

Now we are experiencing the same kind of head-in-the-sand, keep-your-fingers-crossed denial right in our own community courtesy of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, his Office of State Parks and NYPA.

Despite pointed public comments submitted by the city of Buffalo, Niagara University (which adjoins the facility), local emergency first responders and various citizen's groups during the relicensing of the Niagara Power Project at Lewiston, NY, the Robert Moses Parkway remains open. Unrestricted vehicular traffic is allowed to traverse vital areas of the vast hydropower-generating facility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, rendering it vulnerable to terrorist attack.

For any who think the concrete of the Power Project, supposedly "hardened" in the months

following 9/11, is impenetrable to a bomb exploded over the plant's critical components, consider this: The Oklahoma City bomb created by home-grown terrorist Timothy McVeigh, who incidentally grew up and attended school in the small Niagara County town of Pendleton, a stone's throw from the Niagara Power Project, was crude in its construction, using bulk materials. In fact, halfway through bomb construction, McVeigh ran out of a key ingredient, considerably diminishing its subsequent yield. Nevertheless, the bomb carved a crater out of concrete 20 feet in diameter and over 8 feet deep.

Not only does the Moses Parkway expose the Niagara Power Project to terrorist attack by international terrorists such as those who recently attempted to blow up a Niagara Falls bridge and passenger train, but also domestic terrorists like McVeigh or a similarly demented malcontent who gets it in his head to load a pick-up truck with explosives and write their own sordid chapter in history.

It may have been a coincidence, but one week after this dangerous situation was brought to the public's attention in the Sept. 10 issue of the Reporter, the Rainbow bridge, which connects the US to Canada at Niagara Falls, was shut down during morning rush hour so that no fewer than ten mostly state and local border and police agencies could conduct what was called an "international emergency preparedness exercise." "Don't be alarmed by those helicopters overhead" reassured the Gazette, "and the heavy presence of security personnel at the Rainbow Bridge this morning."

And while some might attribute it to pure chance, it was also announced last week, shortly after our story ran, that Buffalo Niagara Airport will be serving (over the weekend) as the scene of a "field training exercise" by first responders and law enforcement, practicing responses to a bomb incident on an incoming flight. According to the Buffalo News, "Officials say the public shouldn't be alarmed by emergency vehicles converging at the airport during the drill."

Then there was the heartwarming story headlined last week in the Niagara Gazette about the grandmother who was reported to be suspiciously cruising around the gates of the Niagara Falls Air Force Base. When law enforcement tracked her down and questioned her, it turned out she had been innocently keeping tabs on her granddaughter, who lived nearby.

Only the most cynical would wonder how it happened that this trivial incident gained prominent local media play simultaneously with the closely-timed and well-publicized drills by first responders at the Rainbow Bridge and Buffalo Niagara Airport.

Terrorists prefer anniversaries of attacks because of their symbolic value. The Benghazi attack took place on the anniversary of 9/11. Therefore, the logical question that should be posed to the Cuomo administration is, why were the security drills at the airport and Rainbow Bridge not performed during the run-up to 9/11, when they would have had the maximum deterrent effect on terrorist attack, instead of the week after? Could it have been because the drills had little to do with actual preparedness, and had everything to do with reassuring the public in the wake of our Sept. 10 story? Gov.

Cuomo, NYPA On Guard Against Terrorism - Downstate, That Is.

October 15, 2013

On Oct. 24, 2005, the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, where numerous journalists and other westerners resided, was the target of bombing attacks by two vehicles in rapid succession. The first blew a hole through the 12-foot concrete wall surrounding the hotel, and a second truck drove through the hole and detonated next to the building, causing extensive damage and killing 20 people.

One month later, on Nov. 18, another Baghdad hotel, the Hamra, was attacked. A van

exploded next to the concrete blast wall protecting the hotel complex, creating a large hole in the barrier. Less than a minute later, a water tanker packed with explosives drove through the opening and exploded, killing eight.

On April 12, 2007, Al-Qaida detonated a bomb on Baghdad's Sarafiya Bridge, killing nine people. Two weeks later, Risk Management Solutions, Inc., a California firm which provides qualitative risk analysis assessments for insurance companies worldwide, released a report on the incident. That report should have been closely scrutinized by New York Power Authority security officials in charge of protecting the Niagara Power Project from terrorist attack.

The report stated, "Bridges are notoriously difficult to destroy, so the triggered collapse of the span marks a new level of sophistication in engineering analysis for bomb placement... The large-yield blast shattered coupling bearings between sections of the box girders, causing them to collapse into the river." The report goes on to state that terrorist attempts to blow up similar structures had previously failed, but it is now clear that Al-Qaida has added such attacks, designed specifically to destroy key infrastructure, to its terrorist repertoire.

Clearly, terrorists years ago figured out how to circumvent concrete "hardening" methods such as those NYPA has assured us have made the Niagara Power Project impervious to attack by one or more dynamite-laden vehicles driving across the facility on the Robert Moses Parkway. Not that any explosive device would have to be detonated on the parkway in order to damage the power plant. According to detailed schematics released to the public as part of the relicensing process, suicide bombers could simply drive over the edge of the parkway to destroy critical turbine infrastructure at the base of the dam.

While Gov. Andrew Cuomo's policy position with respect to the Moses Parkway so far is to whistle past the graveyard, it's no surprise that certain downstate areas get more attention. For example, all vehicular traffic across the Kensico Dam, located in Westchester County just north of New York City, has been permanently ended due to the dam's vulnerability to terrorist attack. Local officials joined in with this decision, since catastrophic flooding would engulf over 250,000 people in the event of a successful terrorist attack.

The dam of the Niagara Power Project, less than a mile south of the village of Lewiston, NY, holds back a reservoir containing approximately 164 billion gallons of water.

Former Niagara County Sheriff Thomas Beilein once accompanied a Homeland Security delegation conducting an aerial survey of key infrastructure here. Beilein was quoted in the media as stating, "To be able to point out the vulnerabilities of this area to the decision makers was important to me... I could point (from the helicopter window) and say, =Down there is the power plant that supplies the electricity for most of the East Coast."

Another local official, Lockport Mayor Mike Tucker, demonstrated that he is way ahead of state politicians and bureaucrats when he ordered the permanent closure of a section of North Transit Street to enhance security around the Isochem chemical plant. The plant manufactures chemicals considered hazardous to the public if they were to fall into the hands of terrorists. As Lockport City Attorney John Ottaviano explained when interviewed on WLVL-AM morning news: (The Department of) Homeland Security has certain regulations and protocols that industries now have to follow, such as Isochem... part of that is to keep the general public a certain distance from these facilities... allowing the general public to travel on that road violated that, so that is why (the roadway) had to be closed down after 9/11."

On the other hand, here in Niagara Falls, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the White Plains, NY-based New York Power Authority allow an underutilized and redundant stretch of road, the Moses Parkway, to traverse the heart of the Niagara Power

Project and provide access to random vehicular traffic 24 hours a day, seven days a week, exposing the most critical areas of the facility to direct terrorist attack.

Terrorist Bomb Plot on Power Project Foiled, Cuomo, NYPA Refuse Comment

November 19, 2013

It has been revealed that the FBI successfully detected and averted a terrorist plot to blow up the Power Project, arresting several terrorists and confiscating cases of dynamite. The well-trained terrorists, four of whom actually infiltrated New York State with cash, disguises, explosives and a detailed plan to permanently destroy the massive hydroelectric facility on the Niagara River, were held to be tried before a military tribunal.

Granted, it happened seventy years ago, but the accounts and events spotlighting the vulnerability of our critical energy infrastructure are as relevant today than they were then.

On June 12, 1942, a group of Nazi saboteurs landed by raft on an isolated Long Island beach, tasked with the destruction of critical American strategic manufacturing and transportation targets. Top of the list: the Schoellkopf Power Station located at Niagara Falls, NY, a facility which, like its present-day incarnation, the Niagara Power Project, supplied the electricity that powered the industry of the region and beyond.

The Nazi secret agents had previously received weeks of training in infiltration and sabotage from Abwehr military intelligence experts prior to being ferried to New York by U-boat. According to Wikipedia, "The team came ashore wearing German Navy uniforms so that if they were captured, they would be classified as prisoners of war rather than spies. They also brought their explosives, primers, and incendiaries, and buried them along with their uniforms, and put on civilian clothes to support an expected two-year campaign in the sabotage of American defense-related production."

One of the saboteurs lost his nerve and gave himself up in New York City, spilling his guts to the FBI before the plot was carried to its conclusion. The Feds didn't believe him at first, but he got their attention by dumping out a briefcase full of cash before the disbelieving G-men.

George John Dasch was a German agent who landed on American soil during World War II. Luckily, he betrayed Nazi Germany's espionage program in the United States.

"Promise Arrest of more Nazi Spies who Marked Falls Power Plants, Big US War Factories for Destruction," announced the headline on the front page of the Niagara Falls Gazette on June 29, 1942.

A related story on the same day quotes then-Niagara Falls Mayor George R. Inglis in words strikingly similar to what we have heard repeatedly from government leaders since the Sept. 11, 2001 World Trade Center attack, the Boston Marathon bombings, the Lackawanna Six and the disruption of a recent terror plot to topple a bridge over the Niagara River by blowing up a train as it passes over.

"The incident adds emphasis to our government's warning that we here on the border must exercise the greatest possible vigilance against saboteurs" said Mayor Inglis. "We get quite a shock when we are told that agents actually landed on this continent with the intention of blowing up power plants here, but we have been told all along that our area is one of the chief target spots on the continent."

If Mayor Inglis were around today, he'd probably also get quite a shock to learn that a vast quasi-public bureaucracy called NYPA now commandeers the electrical power generated from the Niagara River and sends it all over the northeastern United States. In his day, power generation by the Schoellkopf was strictly a private sector enterprise, and Western

New York thrived because of it.

He'd also be scratching his head over the fact that this NYPA, after closing down the Robert Moses Parkway during 9/11 by blocking it with large State dump trucks, now keeps the parkway open across the entirety of the Power Project 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That wartime mayor would probably question NYPA's strategy of protecting against terrorist attack by putting up a couple of chain-link fences and a tiny little guard booth with venetian blinds. He might demand to know why NYPA released detailed schematic diagrams of its most sensitive infrastructure to the general public as part of something called "relicensing". He'd wonder why we had a governor who sits on his hands when it comes to doing what's necessary to ensure public safety in the face of repeated terror attempts. Of course, he wouldn't get any answers to his questions, since Cuomo and NYPA don't answer to anybody. It's not like we're facing some kind of world-wide threat like Mayor Inglis was, and of course, nobody likes to think the extensively planned, nearly successful Schoellkopf plot could ever happen again.

Someday, an Al-Qaeda terror squad or Timothy McVeigh-wannabes could very well barrel down the Robert Moses Parkway in pick-up trucks and detonate a couple of tons of TNT in the middle of the Niagara Power Project. Obviously, this is a risk NYPA and Gov. Andrew Cuomo have decided they are willing to take for us.

Dear Mr. Donohue,

August 29, 2016

Below are my comments for the "Build" Niagara Gorge Corridor Project.

- 1, Signage - I would like the designer to consider appropriate signage for the project area. 1.1
 Current signage is more suitable for an interstate highway rather than a parkland road.
 Consideration should be give wood or wood like signs that will enhance the natural aesthetics of the gorge rim. The aluminum and steel signs, while durable, underscore the primacy of the car culture that visitors would like to escape. I recognize Whirlpool Street would be bordering the city streets but regardless, may still warrant some natural appearing transitional signs.
 - 2, Water Fountains - Being a cyclist for the last 50 years in Niagara Falls I have noticed a steady decline in the number of drinking fountains. 1.2
 Between The Devils Hole and the Rainbow Bridge I count 2 functioning fountains, one at Whirlpool and one at the Discovery Center. The Devils Hole fountain water pressure is so low it is very nearly unusable. We should be encouraging the use of reusable water containers and not forcing visitors to rely on environmentally wasteful water bottles. I would suggest the addition of at least one new fountains near the Whirlpool Bridge and close to a Whirlpool water line .
 - 3, Whirlpool Bridge Parking Lot - The lot seems oversized. I would not expect, at least in the several years demand to be that great at this location. 1.3
 Halving the lot size would allow for more green space and still provide ample parking. If demand later warrants, it could be enlarged.
 - 4, Traffic Predictions for Whirlpool Street. 2.1
 Wondering if traffic engineers considered the condition of the roadway when calculating traffic. I, for one avoid that street because of the poor condition of the road surface.
 - 5, Traffic Verification. 2.2
 Wondering if it would make sense, after completion of this phase, to close the Scenic Parkway for a few months between Findley and Devils Hole to see exactly how Lewiston Road traffic is impacted. This "trial" might give comfort to those living off Lewiston Road as we enter the next phase of the project.
- I do not consider the "no-build" option a even remotely viable one. It features redundant asphalt surfaces considering traffic needs, and it sacrifices valuable corridor green space. 3.1

Best regards,
 Gerald Grose
 1318 Thorndale Ave
 Niagara Falls, NY 14305
grose48@gmail.com
 716 799-3449

1 [REDACTED]

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15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED]

20 HELEN KRESS: There are over twelve thousand

21 years of natural history in and along the

22 Niagara Gorge. And the Gorge is a latecomer

23 according to the planet's geological clock.

1 Unfortunately, the current proposal is about
2 vehicles and social history. It's not about
3 the ecological uniqueness of Niagara Falls
4 that brings tourists here. So why did these
5 design plans focus on social and cultural
6 rather than environmental industries and
7 futures?

8 Pulled from astrophysicist, Carl Sagan,
9 in 1994 -- said it better than I can. He
10 described how if aliens were to approach
11 earth from outer space -- so think of an
12 aerial view -- they might think that the
13 dominant life forms here are vehicles. About
14 zooming in closer to earth, the aliens would,
15 quote, see -- quote, this is Carl Sagan's
16 quote -- see the dominant life form on the
17 planet, the streets of the cities and the
18 roadways of the countryside are evidently
19 built for their benefit. Then the aliens
20 would discover tiny parasites that
21 occasionally enter and exit the dominant
22 organism. The tiny parasites play some
23 deeper role, but this is puzzling. But the

1 dominant organism, whoever they are, have
2 gone to so much trouble to rework the surface
3 of the earth are simultaneously destroying
4 the o-zone layer and the forests, eroding
5 their topsoil and perform massive
6 uncontrolling (inaudible) on the planet,
7 unquote.

8 So obviously, in that story from Carl
9 Sagan, humans are the tiny parasites that
10 occasionally enter and exit the dominant
11 organisms, vehicles. And this designed
12 proposal is about vehicles and transportation
13 more than anything else. For instance, the 4.2
14 first place in the proposal where wildlife
15 habitat is discussed is chapter four.
16 Chapters one, two and three are about
17 transportation. I did a crude
18 measurement -- and I apologize to Carl
19 Sagan's legacy. A crude measurement of part
20 of the proposal with a ruler, the appendix
21 "F", entitled, ecological information is one
22 eighth of an inch thick, while the appendix
23 of cultural and social resources is one and

1 five eighths inches thick. Why is there
2 thirteen times more information devoted to
3 social rather than environmental history and
4 futures?

5 With the growth in -- of companies such
6 as Solar City, for example, in Western New
7 York, we seem to be moving towards a green
8 economy, a little economy, low-carbon
9 economy, maybe even a nature-rich economy.
10 And that's good. And as we do this, tourists
11 will recognize more and more and not be
12 fooled by a green washing, meaning the
13 appearance of being eco-friendly. Our
14 tourism industry should incentivise(sic)
15 ecological restoration and environmental care
16 so that tourism customers spend more time
17 outside of their vehicles experiencing the
18 restored native habitats of the Gorge.
19 That's tourism that walks, listens, observes,
20 photographs, studies the natural world around
21 it. And they come here to see that in
22 Niagara Falls.

23 Tourists who stayed for days or weeks at

1 a time, not just the minutes it takes to
 2 drive by, even on a park road, drive away
 3 from twelve thousand years of natural
 4 history. So, based on these remarks, I do
 5 not believe this parkway removal project
 6 recognizes the value of Niagara's natural
 7 environment in a meaningful way. I would
 8 like to see much more attention devoted to
 9 the ecological distinctiveness of the Niagara
 10 River Gorge and Gorge rim and to future
 11 sources of tourism that would enrich that
 12 ecosystem. Perfect time.

4.1

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August 30, 2016

To:

Mr. Thomas Donohue
Parsons
40 LaRiviere Drive – Suite 350
Buffalo, NY 14202
Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com

From:

Helen M. Kress, Ph.D.
2965 Weston Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14305
Professor.kress@gmail.com

Re:

The Niagara Gorge Corridor: Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project: Main Street to Findlay Drive, Niagara Falls, NY (Project Identification No. 5761.90)

The natural ecological history of the gorge is scenic if it is experienced and seen outside. There are over 12 thousand years of natural history in and along the Niagara River gorge (see <http://www.niagarafrontier.com/origins.html#a>). The gorge is a latecomer according to the planet's geological clock of over 4.5 billion years. About 12,000 years ago the gorge and what would become the waterfalls began at Youngstown. Twelve thousand years is a long time before the American Revolutionary War. Our tourism industry on both sides of the border pays tribute to this natural history INDOORS. Inside a cinema watching a movie about the river and waterfalls, inside a museum about geology, inside a bus with a tour guide sharing tidbits about the natural world, and inside your car driving on a scenic parkway. Just today (8/30/16) at Whirlpool Park I watched a tour guide walk his customers from the bus to the illustration of the lower river that is mounted on the wall near the bathrooms: "This description will only take five minutes to tell you." I've also seen tour buses leave their engines running while tourists are walked quickly through that park. The current proposal is about vehicles and social history. It is not about the ecological uniqueness of Niagara Falls that tourists come here to see. Why do these design plans focus on social-cultural rather than environmental histories and futures?

4.1

A quote from astrophysicist Carl Sagan in 1994 said it better than I can. He described how, if aliens were to approach Earth from outer space, the aerial view they have might lead them to guess that the dominant life-forms are vehicles. Upon zooming in closer to Earth the aliens would see

"...the dominant life-form on the planet. The streets of the cities and the roadways of the countryside are evidently built for their benefit. [...then the aliens would] discover tiny parasites that occasionally enter and exit the dominant organisms. [The tiny parasites] play some deeper role. [...] This is puzzling. [...]"

The dominant organisms, whoever they are --- who have gone to so much trouble to rework the surface [of Earth] --- are simultaneously destroying their ozone layer and their forests, eroding their topsoil, and performing massive, uncontrolled experiments on their planets climate.”

Carl Sagan, Pale Blue Dot, 1994, pages 72-79.

Obviously, humans are the tiny parasites that occasionally enter and exit the dominant organisms: vehicles. This Niagara Gorge Corridor redesign proposal is about vehicles more than anything else. For instance, the first place in this proposal where “wildlife habitat” is discussed is in chapter 4. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are about transportation. I took a crude measurement of part of this proposal with a ruler: the appendix titled “ecological information” is 1/8th of an inch thick while the appendix about “cultural resources” is 1 and 5/8th inches thick. Why is there 13 times more space devoted to social rather than environmental history? And futures. Citing archeological evidence from previous eras means nothing unless the tourism industry will be showing off that history in the future.

4.2

Yes, the Robert Moses Parkway did extensive damage to the natural ecology and biological diversity of the gorge rim. It was one of the environmental shocks to the region. The remedy requires extensive greening to restore and renew some of the biodiversity that was lost. Yes, “scenic” is a better name than “Robert Moses.” The natural beauty of the gorge and gorge rim is scenic if it is SEEN. Viewed and experienced outside of your vehicles. With the growth of companies such as Solar City, for example, Western New York seems to be moving towards a “green economy” and “blue economy” and “low-carbon economy” and maybe even a “nature-rich economy.” That’s good. As we do this, tourists will recognize and not be fooled by “greenwashing” meaning the appearance of being eco-friendly. To showcase a “reduction in paved surfaces” is greenwashing (see <http://untamedpath.com/eco-tours/greenwashing-travel.shtml>).

Our tourism industry could incentivize ecological restoration and environmental care so tourism customers spend more time outside of their vehicles experiencing the restored native habitats of the gorge. That is tourism that walks, listens, observes, photographs, or studies the natural world in detail. These are tourists who stay for days or weeks at a time, not just for the minutes it takes to drive by and drive away from 12,000 years of natural history. Tour guides need as much education about environmental care as anyone else. The natural landscape/seascape can be a tourist attraction and a part of a greener lifestyle for non-tourists. A nature-rich business incubator could be located in Niagara Falls, with staff integrally involved in all aspects of low-carbon investments, including the identification of potential investments, the due diligence related to those investments, post-investment monitoring activities, and events like the design & operation of a multi-year, state-wide low-carbon business plan competition.

The kinds of tourism consistent with wildlife habitat restoration are: ecotourism, scientific tourism, nature tourism, sustainable tourism, green tourism, responsible tourism, low-impact tourism, holistic tourism, voluntourism, conservation tourism. Imagine all the university grants that could be secured for the kind of science that makes the gorge rim a living laboratory! A greener economy needs people with skills for building greener enterprises. That might mean more educational or workforce programming and entrepreneurial projects devoted to environmentalism. New learning experiences for K-12 students or teachers and regional community centers are possible, too.

If someone thinks that a zip-line is ecotourism, they might as well also think ketchup is a serving of vegetables. Here is the definition of ecotourism from The Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org/greenliving/what-is-ecotourism.xml>). Ecotourism possesses the following characteristics:

- Conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior
- Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of, local cultures and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation efforts
- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Local participation in decision-making
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

You might be surprised to know that even though I am an environmentalist, I am also grateful for all of the factories in Niagara Falls, NY. Olin, Hooker, DuPont, Carborundum, Saint-Gobain, etc. Thankful they brought all that 20th century wealth to my city and all those jobs that lifted many families –including mine -- into a middle class lifestyle. However, there is nothing “scenic” about driving past those factories on the Niagara Scenic Parkway between the Grand Island bridge and the upper rapids. Very few places on earth are scenic from a car or tour bus window. But I will concede one place that is – California’s 17-Mile Drive. It is described thus: “17-Mile Drive is widely recognized as one of the most scenic drives in the world. The famous coastal landmark runs through Pacific Grove to Pebble Beach, from the dramatic Pacific coastline to the majestic Del Monte Forest.” The website suggests you can “marvel at some of nature’s treasures” and features wildlife and shoreline. (see <https://www.pebblebeach.com/activities-and-sightseeing/nature-and-outdoors/>). Granted, Niagara Falls does not have an equivalent to Pebble Beach Resort, nor do we have broader community like the Monterey Peninsula that places a high value on outdoor activities and natural habitat preservation. But we could have an eco-friendly parks system that becomes a leader in a green, blue, and low-carbon future. We could see such a transformation help the immediate communities along the gorge rim who I am sure would have nature-rich ideas to offer, if asked about environmental topics. Tourism money could be reinvested in green projects within walking distance of the

lower river. The possibilities are endless if there is first a fundamental shift in mindset from 20th century transportation and business models to low-impact greener futures. Outside.

Therefore, based on these remarks, I do not believe “The Niagara Gorge Corridor: Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project: Main Street to Findlay Drive, Niagara Falls, NY (Project Identification No. 5761.90)” recognizes the value of Niagara's natural environment in a meaningful way. I would like to see much more attention devoted to the ecological distinctiveness of the Niagara River gorge and gorge rim and to future sources of tourism and related businesses that would enrich its ecosystem. Finally, please add an acknowledgement of the several decades of work by Bob Baxter and Niagara Heritage Partnership to outline these objectives and resources.

From: [Steve Lakomy](#)
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
Subject: "RMP" Removal Project Public Comments
Date: Sunday, August 07, 2016 2:35:45 PM

Dear Mr. Donohue:

I am totally in favor of full removal of the RMP, minimizing the accommodation of motor vehicles (but allowing parking along the route for sight-seeing and recreation), and maximizing the accommodation of pedestrians and cyclists.

3.5

I favor Alternate 6.

Steve Lakomy, MD

168 College St.
Buffalo, NY 14201-1322

716-886-3236

From: [Herbert Lewis](#)
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
Subject: Gorge Project
Date: Friday, September 09, 2016 6:41:44 AM

These are some of the things I believe would make an excellent addition to what is being planned:

An area for artist, entertainers to market their wears to interested people. This type of business/ environment adds to the fabric of an city as well as allows those who can't market their items in a more traditional way. A stage or 25 seat to 50 seat amphitheater to could allow an added way for those who are more inclined in the arts to display their talents. I've visited other cities & the one thing I noticed is there always seems to be warm inviting tone created by those citizens who are cast offs because their individual talents & abilities don't fit in anywhere else. These individuals need a place to thrive while being able to create a landscape & ambiance that is unique to the city of Niagara Falls, NY. Also, space needs to be included for foot traffic that wouldn't impede as well as picnic areas.

6.2

The redesign of this segment of the Parkway must be integrated with the Cultural District Development Plan. These two studies should occur concurrently or may be completely integrated as one development Master Plan. Phasing of the project would be determined by the partnership. The redesign of the Robert Moses Parkway would provide a new edge to the urban fabric of Niagara Falls between Niagara Street and Cedar Avenue. The new riverfront drive would travel along what is currently Whirlpool and Third Streets, with the new Cultural District to the west and the boutiques and restaurants of the [Wright Park] Park Place Heritage District

6.3

to the east, then along Main Street, between the Cultural District and the Falls Precinct. The redesign would provide a high-value setting for new boutique hotels, restaurants and galleries, residential developments and other appropriate reinvestment projects.

The new roadway should take on an urban character with urban-style development at its interface with the Cultural District, with sidewalks extending to the curb on both sides of the street and continuous parallel parking permitted. A double row of street trees would distinguish the precinct, with the new Parkway designated as a Pedestrian Priority Zone (see Section 4.1.3) characterized by pedestrian crossings, high quality development and special streetscape treatments that prioritize pedestrian and non-vehicular forms of movement. The redesigned new Park roadway should perform as an integrated pedestrian and vehicular boulevard."

1.26

NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR

Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project
Main Street to Findlay Drive

August 25, 2016 - Public Hearing

Comment Sheet

Name: Barbara Marchelos

Address: 710 Oriskany Parkway #2

City: Niagara Falls State: NY Zip: 14301

Email Address: bmarchelos@roadrunner.com

Comments: *My comment brings an understanding the Gorge Corridor that will unravel what R. Moses built into a environmental success. Hopefully, by 2040, this project will succeed in an environmental success. I sincerely hope that the design to improve the corridor to a green center for all to enjoy.*

4.4

| | |
|---|--|
| MAIL COMMENTS TO: Niagara Gorge Corridor Project c/o Parsons Transportation Grp 40 LaRiviere Drive – Suite 350 Buffalo, NY 14202 | E-MAIL COMMENTS TO: Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com All comments must be received by Sept 9, 2016 |
|---|--|

NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR

Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project
Main Street to Findlay Drive

August 25, 2016 - Public Hearing

Comment Sheet

Name: Lynn Miller

Address: 101 Evergreen Place

City: Buffalo State: NY Zip: 14225

Email Address: ~~8~~ Lynn.Miller@cseainc.org

Comments: Please consider emergency phones along the new paths. 1.13
As a female and a runner, I'm always thinking about
safety. It's important that the new paths be open, 1.14
wide and that they offer visibility for anyone
(females, in particular) who may be alone. Think of
your daughter out there when finalizing plans.

Other than safety, the project looks great!
We'll miss the Whirlpool Bridge overpass though.
It's great for hill training

MAIL COMMENTS TO:
 Niagara Gorge Corridor Project
 c/o Parsons Transportation Grp
 40 LaRiviere Drive - Suite 350
 Buffalo, NY 14202

E-MAIL COMMENTS TO:
 Thomas.Donohue@parsons.com

All comments must be received by Sept 9, 2016

Niagara Gorge Corridor
Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project
Main Street to Findlay Drive
Comment Sheet

Robin Ray
2647 Whirlpool Street

email address: ez2brobray@yahoo.com
Niagara Falls, New York 14305

I would like to request two items; the first is changing Spring Street to a One- Way Street. To remove the danger of an accident because of the blind corner at the turn on Spring Street, I would like to request that traffic on Spring Street be changed from a Two-Way to a One-Way (flowing South) from Chasm Avenue to Whirlpool Street. This was addressed at a prior Niagara Gorge Meeting sometime last year. Mayor Dyster commented on creating a petition for this purpose. I am presently working on the petition listing the residents on Whirlpool and Spring Street requesting consensus via signatures. Some neighbors need additional signage promoting No Parking included.

1.36

The second concern is the parking lot behind Old St. Mary's Manor that was used to dump contaminated dirt from Lewiston Road (we also spoke about this at the same Niagara Gorge meeting with the Mayor). About two months ago, I watched some individuals with a Bob Cat begin to spread the dirt down at the front of the gate. It doesn't look good and as discussed at the above mentioned meeting, we believe the dirt should be totally removed. There is also a mound of dirt closer to 2641 Spring Street inhabited by woodchucks – the hole is quite large and scary! There are also railroad ties, broken cement, and some type of drainage tubes which should also be removed. Perhaps the City could help the owner make it look more like *Green Space* instead to tie in with this current project.

4.6

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Robin Ray

From: [Rick Roll](#)
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
Cc: [Norman Allen](#); [Rich Rotella](#); [Paul Drof](#); Robert.Buzzelli@niagarafallsny.gov
Subject: RMP Removal Project
Date: Wednesday, August 03, 2016 9:30:23 AM
Attachments: [NGI#10-1of2.png](#)
[NGI#10-2of2.png](#)

Tom : We've had a chance to look through the DR/EA document and have some thoughts to offer :

- 1) Some of our structures near the Whirlpool Bridge overpass are briefly mentioned w/r to asbestos sampling, but some substantial modifications will be required to maintain access to our underground infrastructure while conforming to the bridge/parkway removal. As one example, the Gorge Interceptor Shaft #10 is a 10' x 10' reinforced concrete vault with a removable cover. We will require access to the full cross section for future tunnel maintenance (see attached photos, also note the type and size of equipment necessary). There is a very similar structure (Shaft #14) along the west curb line at Whirlpool and Chasm. There is a dissimilar structure (Shaft #6 - using a vertical steel casing in lieu of reinforced concrete) along the west curb line at Whirlpool and Ashland. 1.19
- 2) In section 2.3.3.9 a statement is made that "There are no major utilities along the RMP other than the City of Niagara Falls' sewer line crossing under the parkway near Ashland Avenue." Not so. The Water Board has several sewer crossings and should probably be included in Table 2-22 for water and sewer infrastructure. 1.20
- 3) I did not see any mention of our pedestrian access tunnel beneath the RMP at Ashland Avenue. That tunnel, the connected stone access building, and maintenance access to the adjacent Gorge Interceptor Shaft #6 will need to be preserved. 1.21
- 4) The Gorge Force Main appears well identified; we will require stringent protective measures during the construction effort. 1.22
- 5) Some parkway storm sewers connect to our tunnels and/or outfalls downstream from combined sewer overflow (CSO) diversion points, and do not contribute to CSO. These are at the Rainbow Bridge Plaza and Chasm Avenue. Our CSO diversion points at Walnut Avenue and Bath Avenue have been sealed as part of our CSO LTCP, and continue to serve only as outlets for storm drainage. The exception is Cleveland Avenue, which accepts RMP drainage upstream from the diversion point. Redirecting storm drainage from here would further the stated project goal of reducing CSO. 1.23
- 6) The Water Board is presuming no involvement with maintenance measures for new stormwater green infrastructure elements. While the Water Board is a non-traditional MS4, it does not have authority or responsibility for construction and post-construction portions of the MS4 program. 1.24

As we've briefly discussed, we would be pleased to walk the project area with you to identify and discuss incorporating our infrastructure maintenance needs into your design vision.

Richard R. Roll, P.E., DEE
 Director of Technical & Regulatory Services
 Niagara Falls Water Board
 5815 Buffalo Avenue



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[REDACTED]

CARL SKOMPINKSI: My name is Carl Skompinski.

Couple things. Regarding transportation, I'm hoping that they have some sort of bump-outs for traveling where you can safely get on and get off. Regarding one of the other items -- regarding the cultural district, I

2.4

1 think this is a great opportunity to start
 2 looking at maybe a branding of the suspension 5.1
 3 bridge village area. And the third thing is,
 4 I hope you post all of your documents online. 7.9
 5 You didn't do that for the south Robert
 6 Moses. Some of those documents, especially
 7 the appendix's, were not online. If you can
 8 get them online, that'd be great. Thank
 9 you.

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Niagara Gorge Corridor Robert Moses Parkway
Removal from Main Street to Findlay Drive Niagara Falls, NY
PIN 5761.90

8 September 2016

Mr. Thomas Donohue

Niagara Gorge Corridor Project

c/o Parsons Transportation Group

40 LaRiviere Drive – Suite 350

Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Mr. Donohue:

I'm writing in response to the recent Design Report/Environmental Assessment (DR/EA) presentation and on-line support documents. My comments fall into three categories:

1. Transportation
2. Environmental
3. Historical

Transportation

The project's overall objective is well presented and agreed to by the community. With the trial balloon Niagara Falls Trolley to Ft. Niagara being such a success, it's only a matter of time that a long-term solution for a scenic Trolley will become part of the landscape. Where the RMP-N Plan (referred to after as "The Plan") falls short is in providing safe boarding and off-loading locations along the length of the project envelope.

As stated in the August 26, 2016 public presentation as well as other project documents, one of the project goals is to:

- Improve Access and Transportation (Pedestrian, Bicycle, Vehicular)

To this end, the project does provide much better access but the plan is limited to automobile access given the few parking areas along the project's length. There is NO plan for road infrastructure to allow trolleys or buses to pull over and on-board/off-board people and support equipment – bikes, strollers, etc... 2.4

By limiting "vehicular" traffic infrastructure to only cars and not public transportation, the project is not fully embracing the intent of one of the project's goals. This is bad precedent for the following reasons: 2.5

- It doesn't support local residents and families what do not own a car. While I don't have statistics for the City of Niagara Falls, in the City of Buffalo a little over 30% of families do not have an automobile and rely heavily on public transit. I suspect Niagara Falls would have a similar statistic given similar characteristics. This project is

not only to help the City's tourist business but it should also enhance the quality of life for residents. Public transit and supporting infrastructure needs to be part of the project.

- This segment of the "Robert Moses Parkway - North" redesign will set a precedent for the future re-design north of Findley Ave. What is done here will carry forward in style, design, and in its connection to Public Transit.

Environmental

One of the items I would like to see is permeable surfaces and raingardens via sustainable landscaping to limit runoff into sewers and gorge; and allow for filtering of surface oils (car/etc....) to be filtered by ground infrastructure. There are several local companies that do this type of work or could be used for consulting purposes, one of the best is: [SRG of Buffalo](#). SRG developed a landscape plan in the City of Buffalo that processes over 200,000 gallons of runoff to be naturally filtered before emptying into city sewers. It has been awarded several EPA Quality award for design and exceed project goals. With the landscape in question and the proximity to the Lower Niagara, runoff should be filtered as much as possible. 1.11

Where possible, historic native plants should be planted to help repopulate the environment as well as serve as an education point for residents and visitors. 1.12

Historical

While outside of the project, three items should be an area of focus:

- Development of a destination in the form of "*Suspension Bridge Village*" and appropriate signage and waymarking. The parking lot which will be developed at the foot of the Michigan Central Bridge should be part of an education center that focuses on the history of the Suspension Bridge and the history of the area around it. 5.1
- Development of the Michigan Central Bridge as Niagara's version of NY City's High Line. Branded as Niagara's *SkyPark*. The Bridge could still have a barrier between the US and Canada with future plans to open up the bridge for pedestrian traffic as US Representative Brian Higgins is working on for the Whirlpool Bridge. 2.6
- Statues, like the Tuscarora Heroes Monument statue in Lewiston could be employed along the length of the parkway bringing old Native, French, and British history to the forefront allowing the City to benefit from its history. 5.2

Respectfully submitted,



Carl Skompinski

Williamsville, NY

From: [Amy Smith](#)
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
Subject: Niagara Gorge Corridor: Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project ID# 5761.90
Date: Wednesday, September 07, 2016 7:59:06 PM

I am writing to express my concern about plans for the Robert Moses Parkway. I am a Senior Manager of Clinical Compliance for an international healthcare company, and have recently relocated to Niagara Falls from Denver, Colorado. I approached my headquarters in Denver to allow me to work remotely from Niagara Falls for several reasons. One of the most prominent reasons was my love of nature and my immediate love for the Falls and the Gorge.

4.4

You are probably aware that Colorado is well known for the availability to connect with nature in the mountains for busy young professionals. As the city of Denver has expanded it becomes more difficult to reach that beautiful nature without encountering traffic, and amazing natural beauty torn down to develop businesses and parking lots.

I moved to Niagara Falls with my 3 year old twin girls because I wanted them to have that same love of nature that I have. With the ability to reinvest in the areas that are already developed, I was excited about opportunities for myself and my family in Niagara Falls.

I am writing to encourage natural development of the Robert Moses. The gorge and the Falls are the most compelling draw of Niagara Falls for young professionals, like myself, who are looking for small town atmosphere, beautiful homes at extremely reasonable prices, and nature right at our finger tips. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,
Amy

From: [Pam Smith](#)
 To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
 Subject: Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project
 Date: Thursday, September 08, 2016 7:57:25 PM

Niagara Gorge Corridor Project
 C/O Parsons Transportation Group
 40 La Riviere Drive - Suite 350
 Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Mr. Parsons,

I have been advocating for RMP removal (all four lanes) for the better part of 20 years. While I believe the roadway must be eliminated to the city line, my comments are in reference to the current plan calling for all all four lanes of RMP removal from Main Street to Findley Drive.

In my opinion, the most important aspect of this project is the emphasis on our **unique natural environment**. We are most fortunate in Niagara Falls to be able to enjoy old growth forested areas right in the center of our city - only minutes from the falls along the awe inspiring gorge rim trails. It is essential that native trees, vegetation and wildlife habitat are protected, maintained and enhanced. To best preserve and protect the natural environment it is critical that the amount of concrete and manicured lawn areas be severely limited. Park lands of this type can be found everywhere!

4.5

A specific aspect of the plan that appears completely unnecessary is the 30 space parking lot coupled with another rode way. There exists plenty of parking at the Discovery Center and at Whirlpool Park. Although I realize that the Niagara Heritage Partnership folks have created abundant controversy over the years, I implore you and your team to take a serious look at the various studies, concepts and proposals posted on their website. Those responsible are passionate because of their love and respect for our gorge and surrounding areas. You will find many good ideas that have been well considered and represent the views of many whose lives have been shaped enjoying the peace, serenity and excitement of times spent in this cherished and beloved area.

1.25

We have both an obligation and an opportunity to protect and showcase our natural heritage for residents and visitors alike - now and for future generations to come.

7.6

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Pamela Smith
 815 Vanderbilt Avenue
 Niagara Falls, NY 14305

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16 LISA VITELLO: This community has waited nineteen
 17 years for this project. We now have a
 18 historic opportunity to show the world what
 19 is on the other side of the rainbow,
 20 so-to-speak. So, I urge the decision makers
 21 to listen carefully to the comments and
 22 requests made by this community and its
 23 leaders. We have one shot here to get this

1.35

1 right. We shouldn't cut corners. We
2 shouldn't look for the cheapest or easiest
3 route here. Bricks, mortar, asphalt should
4 be kept at a minimum. Again, we shouldn't
5 look for the easiest way to get this done or
6 the least expensive.

7 This community hosts a number of
8 entities that have made hundreds of millions
9 of dollars off of our resources and our land
10 and will continue to do so. Those entities
11 now have the opportunity to give back to this
12 community the beauty and grandeur that we
13 lost a long time ago. So, please, let's move
14 carefully and thoughtfully, keeping in mind
15 the revered space that we are hoping to
16 showcase.

17 Once again, listen carefully to the
18 suggestions made by the people who know best,
19 which are the people of this community and
20 their elected leaders. I'd like to thank all
21 of the people who worked on this project.
22 All of the organizations, state and
23 otherwise, their staff. Let's just not mess

1 up the end game. Thank you.

2 [REDACTED]

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From: [lisa vitello](#)
To: [Donohue, Thomas](#)
Cc: [Mayor Paul Dyster](#); [Mark Thomas](#); [Angela Berti](#); [tom desantis](#)
Subject: Gorge corridor project
Date: Wednesday, September 07, 2016 2:41:23 PM

Dear Tom,

After reviewing the final design report I would like to discuss the road (multi-use) trail that would run through the park. It was explained to me that the "trail"

would be 13 feet wide. A "trail" of this size is a road. We couldn't possibly support this.

The community expects that this area will remain as natural as possible. Trails and roads are two different things. It is vital that the design reflect the wishes of this community.

The gorge rim and surrounding area is not a place for a 13 foot wide asphalt road. This is simply unacceptable. The integrity of the gorge rim needs to be protected. I am attaching several pictures from around the country for your consideration.

These pictures reflect what we envision. We do not want this overbuilt. I was also told that 13 feet is the required size for a multi-use trail. If that is the case we need to change the design to eliminate any possibility that a 13 foot wide road would be built along the gorge rim.

Sincerely

Lisa Vitello

Niagara Falls Tourism Advisory Board

Sent from my iPhone

