

Looking South toward Niagara Falls



Looking North toward Whirlpool Bridge



Niagara Gorge Corridor

Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project
Main Street to Findlay Drive - PIN 5761.90

Public Hearing

August 25, 2016 - 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM



Copies of the DR/EA are available for review at the locations listed below (during normal business hours):

- Niagara Falls State Park - Admin Bldg - 332 Prospect Street - Niagara Falls, NY 14303
- DeVeaux Woods State Park - Admin Bldg - 3180 DeVeaux Woods Drive East - Niagara Falls, NY 14303
- Earl W. Brydges Public Library - 1425 Main Street - Niagara Falls, NY 14305
- Niagara Falls City Hall - City Clerk's Office - 745 Main Street - Niagara Falls, NY 14302

The report is also available online at <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx>
(Scroll down to: "Robert Moses Parkway - North Segment").

Contact Us

Comments on this project will be accepted through September 9, 2016.

Mail comments to:

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

Email comments to: thomas.donohue@parsons.com

PROJECT PARTNERS:

NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation & Federal Highway Administration

IN COOPERATION WITH:

NYS Department of Transportation
New York Power Authority
USA Niagara Development Corporation
City of Niagara Falls, NY

For more information, please call Paul Tronolone, USA Niagara Development Corporation at 716-284-2556

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of today's hearing is to provide an update on the progress of the project, present the findings of the Design Report/Environmental Assessment and to give you the opportunity to voice your comments on the project.

Feedback is being sought on the advances made on the project designs and on the results of the environmental, social and economic studies contained in the Design Report/Environmental Assessment. You can review the entire Design Report/Environmental Assessment at locations listed on the back cover or at today's Public Hearing.

MEETING FORMAT

Displays of the Build Alternative are available for viewing within the lobby beginning at 5:00 PM. Project staff will be available to answer your questions and to receive your thoughts on the design.

Environmental stations have also been set up within the lobby to provide information on the studies that have been conducted and to receive any comments on the environmental, social or economic issues that are of a special concern to you. A listing of the results of the studies are included on pages 4 and 5 of this handout.

A formal presentation on the status of the project and the results of the completed studies will begin at 6:00 PM in the Meeting Room followed by the hearing of public comments. A stenographer will be in the Meeting Room to record all comments made during the hearing.

Comment sheets are available for written comments which can be handed in during the meeting or mailed to the address on the back of this handout. Comments are also welcome via email. The email address is also located on the back cover.

SINCE OUR LAST MEETING WE HAVE

- Refined the Build Alternative.
- Completed numerous environmental studies.
- Completed Section 4(f) and 6(f) assessments.
- Completed Section 106 process.
 - Completed Phase 1B archaeological survey (shovel tests).
 - Held meetings with "Consulting Parties".
 - Completed Section 106 Findings Documentation.
- Completed the Design Report/Environmental Assessment (DR/EA)

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve Access and Transportation

- Remove barriers that impede access between the Niagara Gorge Corridor (NGC) and adjacent business / residential districts.
- Provide an attractive multimodal trail.
- Link parks, communities, and attractions adjoining the NGC.
- Remove miscellaneous temporary appurtenances (cones, barrels, etc.) on the current RMP along with any surplus pavement.

2. Promote and Conserve the Ecology and Environment of the NGC

- Reduce environmental impacts of transportation related activities.
- Utilize areas of pavement removal to help restore (expand) natural habitat.
- Promote eco-tourism and heritage-tourism.
- Provide additional areas for enjoyment of the NGC's natural and scenic beauty.
- Protect existing areas of natural habitat and restore new areas to a native plant based landscape.

3. Support Local Economic Vitality

- Encourage visitor migration into local business districts.
- Create an atmosphere that encourages visitors to remain in the NGC region longer.
- Reduce the current RMP's function as a bypass route while maintaining an attractive scenic link between communities.
- Link a multimodal trail with the adjacent communities.
- Provide effective wayfinding information.

4. Minimize Impacts to Adjacent Neighborhoods

- Promote vehicle travel patterns that minimize traffic impacts in residential areas.
- Improve the fringe areas between the parkland and adjacent residential properties.

5. Support NR Greenway Plan

- Increase access to and connections between the Niagara River region's many resources.
- Celebrate and interpret our unique natural, cultural, recreational, scenic and heritage resources in the NGC area and provide access to and connections between these important resources while giving rise to economic opportunities for the region.

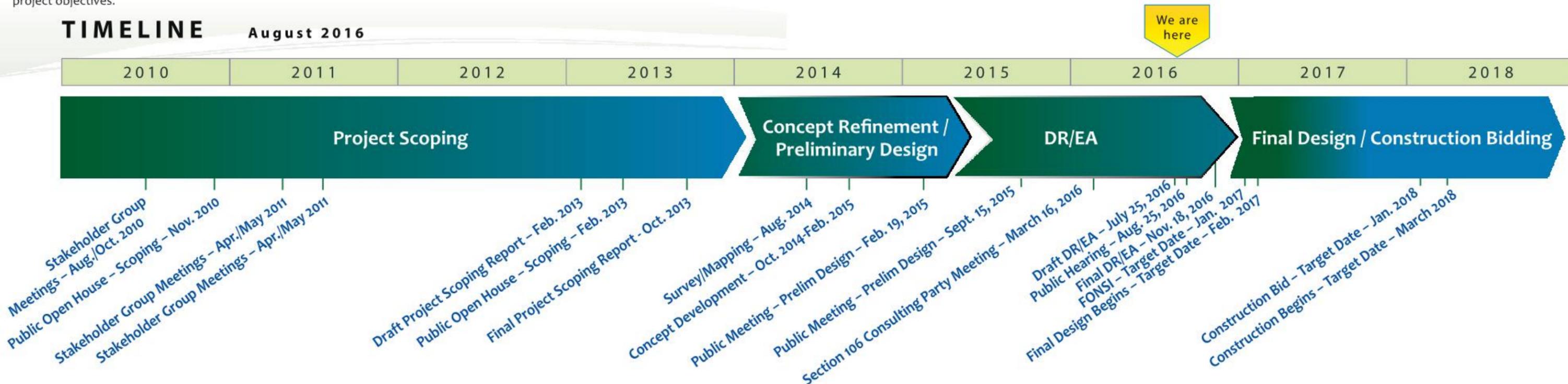
FEASIBLE BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The Build Alternative has been developed based on the concepts presented at the February 2015 Public Meeting, July 2015 Neighborhood Meeting and the September 2015 Public Meeting along with comments received as a result of those meetings. The goal of the design is to construct a project that will best meet the project objectives.

Preliminary Plans of the project are located in Appendix A of the DR/EA and are shown conceptually in the middle pages of this handout (pages 6-19). Your input today will be very helpful in creating the modification needed to make this project the best it can be.

TIMELINE

August 2016



EA = Environmental Assessment

DR = Design Report

FONSI = Finding of No Significant Impact

Target Date – Dependent on other factors

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS OF THE BUILD ALTERNATIVE

SOCIAL EFFECTS

- Would reconnect City neighborhoods to the Niagara Gorge rim:
- No adverse effects to land use or demographics
- Improve community cohesion
- No displacement of homes/residences
- No disproportionate adverse effects to low income or minority populations (Environmental Justice)
- No significant effects to schools or places of worship or other community facilities
- Consistent with City's Comprehensive Plan & Zoning
- One of the "Big Moves" of the City Comprehensive Plan

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

- Construction would result in \$35 million in direct expenditures during construction
- Would create almost 430 direct, indirect, and induced jobs during construction
- Longer term - Consistent with City's and State's economic development objectives
 - Reconnects the City to its greatest resource
 - Facilitates planning, definition, and realization of City's concept for "Cultural District"
- Consistent with other City and State's recent/planned economic development projects
 - Public Safety Complex
 - New Intermodal Train Station
 - Underground Railroad Interpretative Center
- Business Districts
 - No business displacements
 - Potential in the long term to "re-define" these districts
 - *One Region Forward Plan* – Main Street Scenario Identified:
 - Opportunities for 30 discreet development projects
 - Potential for transforming 24 acres of land
 - Notable reductions in the use of fossil fuel, storm runoff, and other negative environmental effects of development

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Increased Greenspace

- Net removal of 12 acres of pavement
- Net creation of almost 7 acres of new park/open space
- Links isolated open space, creating almost 20 acres of continuous park/open space along Gorge rim
- Realizes a ~140-acre unbroken ribbon of park/open space along the Gorge rim
- Opens direct access to over 400 acres of open space within the Niagara Gorge
- Improvements to Surface Water Quality and Stormwater Management
 - Reduction in runoff
 - Opportunities for green infrastructure
- Improvements to Terrestrial Ecology & Wildlife
 - Reduction in habitat fragmentation
 - Enhancement of diversity
 - Long-term enhancement of important bird area
- Consistent with Coastal Policies
 - Approved by the NYS Dept. of State
- No impacts to wetlands, floodplains, aquifers, or farmlands
- "Use" of parkland, wildlife refuges, or historic resources per Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966
 - Only "de minimis" temporary use of Robert Moses Parkway Trail (SB expressway lanes) and City's closed DiFranco Park during construction – both substantially improved after construction
 - Build Alternative would have "No Adverse Effect" on historic resources, thus no "use" under 4(f)
- "Conversion" of parkland funded & protected under Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act
 - No reduction of parkland
 - No effects to parks funded under the program
- No significant traffic impacts:
 - Air quality
 - No carbon monoxide hot spot effects
 - No exceedance of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQSs)
 - Energy
 - Short-term uses during construction
 - Long term – no significant change resulting from road changes
 - Noise
 - Traffic levels would not approach FHWA/NYS DOT Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) levels

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

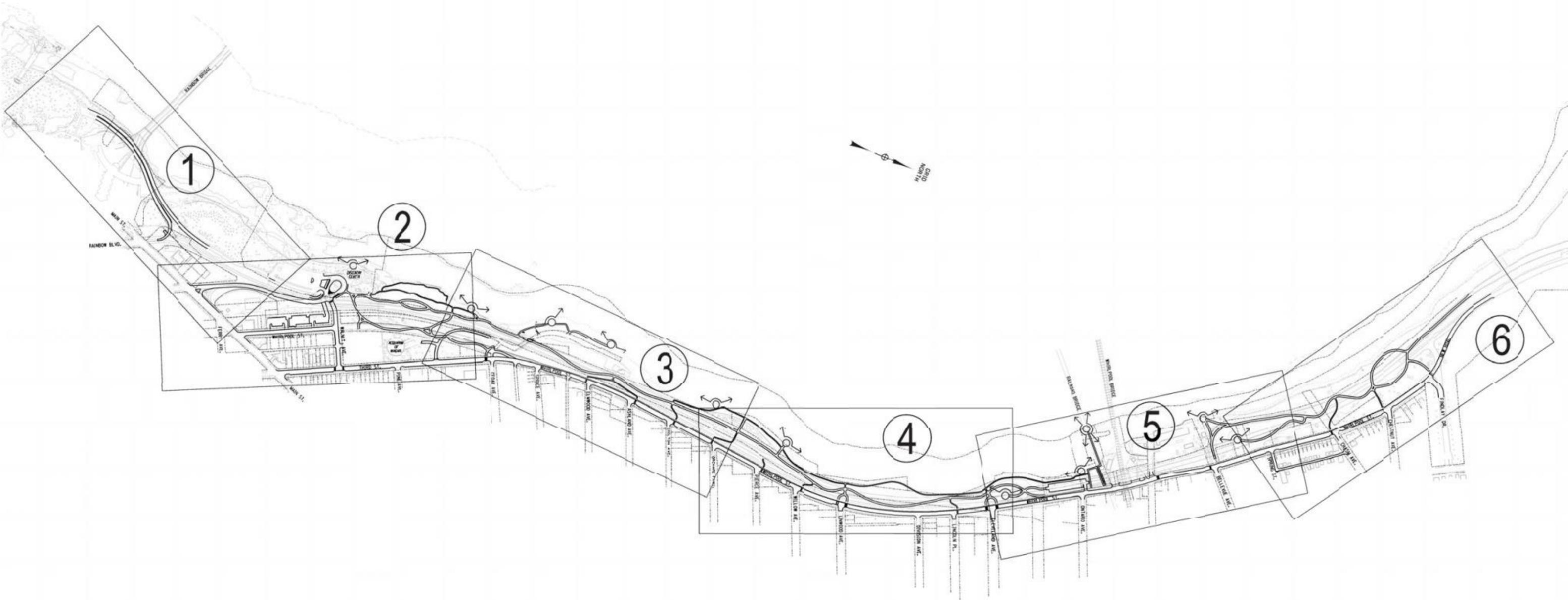
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act – Consultation Process
 - Undertook Phase IA and Phase IB Cultural Resource Assessments
 - Participants:
 - Federal Agency – FHWA
 - New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
 - New York State Department of Transportation
 - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
 - Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council)
 - Federally Recognized Tribes
 - Other Consulting Parties and the Public
 - Effects on Built Resources:
 - No effects to historically-eligible bridges
 - No effects to historic districts
 - No adverse effects to Aquarium and U.S. Customs House – improvement to site context
 - Effects on Archaeological Resources:
 - No National-Register-eligible resources encountered in undisturbed areas of the corridor
 - Overall Section 106 Finding
 - Anticipate FHWA determination of No Adverse Effect
 - Section 106 Findings Document:
 - SHPO concurrence
 - Circulated to Tribes & other Consulting Parties
- Hazardous Materials
 - Areas of Known/Potential Concern
 - Multiple sites along corridor
 - Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs)
 - Pipe wrapping & other utilities
 - Bridge features
 - Radioactive Materials
 - Encountered on Lewiston Road project and along Gorge rim
 - Gamma survey conducted – preliminary readings near Findlay, Whirlpool Bridge and Aquarium
 - Likely to encounter materials requiring disposal
 - Protocols in place and allowances in cost estimate
 - No environmental issue to general public or nearby residents

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

- Threatened & Endangered Species
 - Northern Long-Eared Bat
 - No direct loss anticipated – prevent impacts by limiting periods for any tree removals as part of the Build Alternative
- Construction Effects
 - 18 to 24 month project
 - Periodic/short-term traffic disruptions: Short-term inconvenience of loss of Gorge Rim Trail during demolition
 - Construction noise and dust
 - Short-term loss of wildlife habitat and displacement
 - Periodic minor disruptions to business districts
 - Potential for asbestos and hazardous waste site exposure to site workers
- Limiting Construction Effects
 - Advising the public of project staging & maintaining community advisory information network
 - Use of "Best Practices" during construction
 - Soil erosion/sedimentation control
 - Road wetting to lessen dust emissions
 - Limiting hours of construction to limit noise impacts
 - Incorporation of standard protocols when encountering hazardous materials

NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE AUGUST 2016

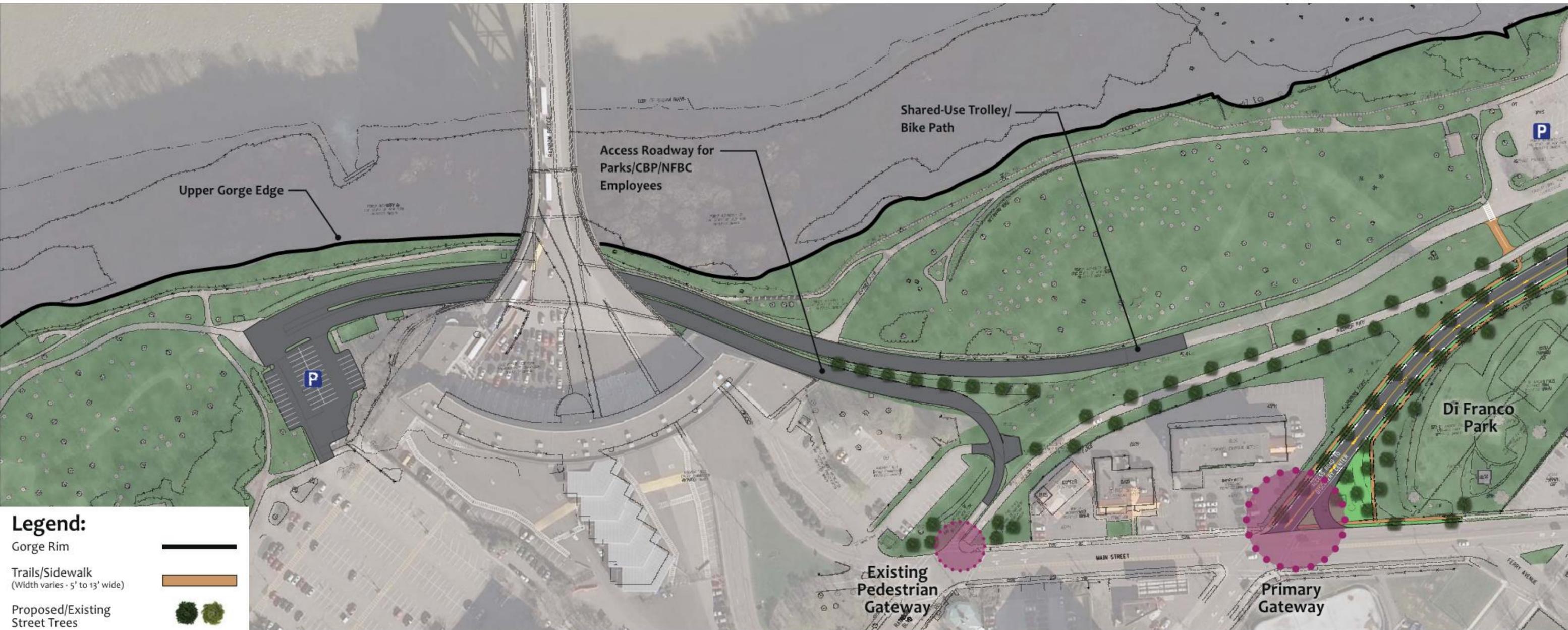
BUILD ALTERNATIVE INDEX SHEET



 
In cooperation with:
New York State Department of Transportation
New York Power Authority
USA Niagara Development Corporation
The City of Niagara Falls, NY

NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE AUGUST 2016

BUILD ALTERNATIVE SHEET 1

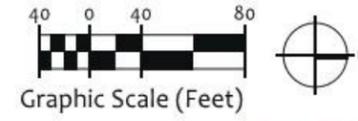


- Legend:**
- Gorge Rim 
 - Trails/Sidewalk (Width varies - 5' to 13' wide) 
 - Proposed/Existing Street Trees 
 - Proposed Meadow 
 - Gorge Trail Access 
 - Parking 

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

NEW YORK STATE
Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

In cooperation with:
New York State Department of Transportation
New York Power Authority
USA Niagara Development Corporation
The City of Niagara Falls, NY



NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE

AUGUST 2016

BUILD ALTERNATIVE SHEET 2



Public elevator to lower gorge

Gorge Rim overlook

Niagara Gorge Discovery Center

Upper Gorge Edge

Primary Gateway to Discovery Center

Di Franco Park

NYS Parks Police Station

AQUARIUM OF NIAGARA

Primary Gateway to Aquarium and Discovery Center

Aquarium of Niagara

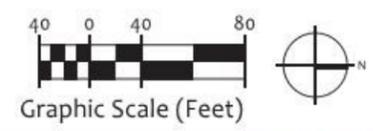
Legend:

- Gorge Rim 
- Trails/Sidewalk (Width varies - 5' to 13' wide) 
- Proposed/Existing Street Trees 
- Proposed Meadow 
- Gorge Trail Access 
- Parking 

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

NEW YORK STATE
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

In cooperation with:
New York State Department of Transportation
New York Power Authority
USA Niagara Development Corporation
The City of Niagara Falls, NY



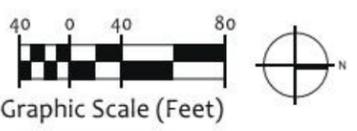
NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR
ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL
 MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE AUGUST 2016

BUILD ALTERNATIVE
SHEET 3



Legend:

- Gorge Rim
- Trails/Sidewalk
(Width varies - 5' to 13' wide)
- Proposed/Existing
Street Trees
- Proposed Meadow
- Gorge Trail Access
- Parking



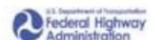
In cooperation with:
 New York State Department of Transportation
 New York Power Authority
 USA Niagara Development Corporation
 The City of Niagara Falls, NY

NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE AUGUST 2016

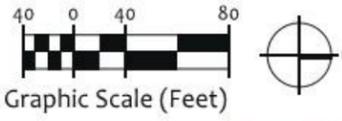
BUILD ALTERNATIVE SHEET 4



- Legend:**
- Gorge Rim 
 - Trails/Sidewalk (Width varies - 5' to 13' wide) 
 - Proposed/Existing Street Trees 
 - Proposed Meadow 
 - Gorge Trail Access 
 - Parking 

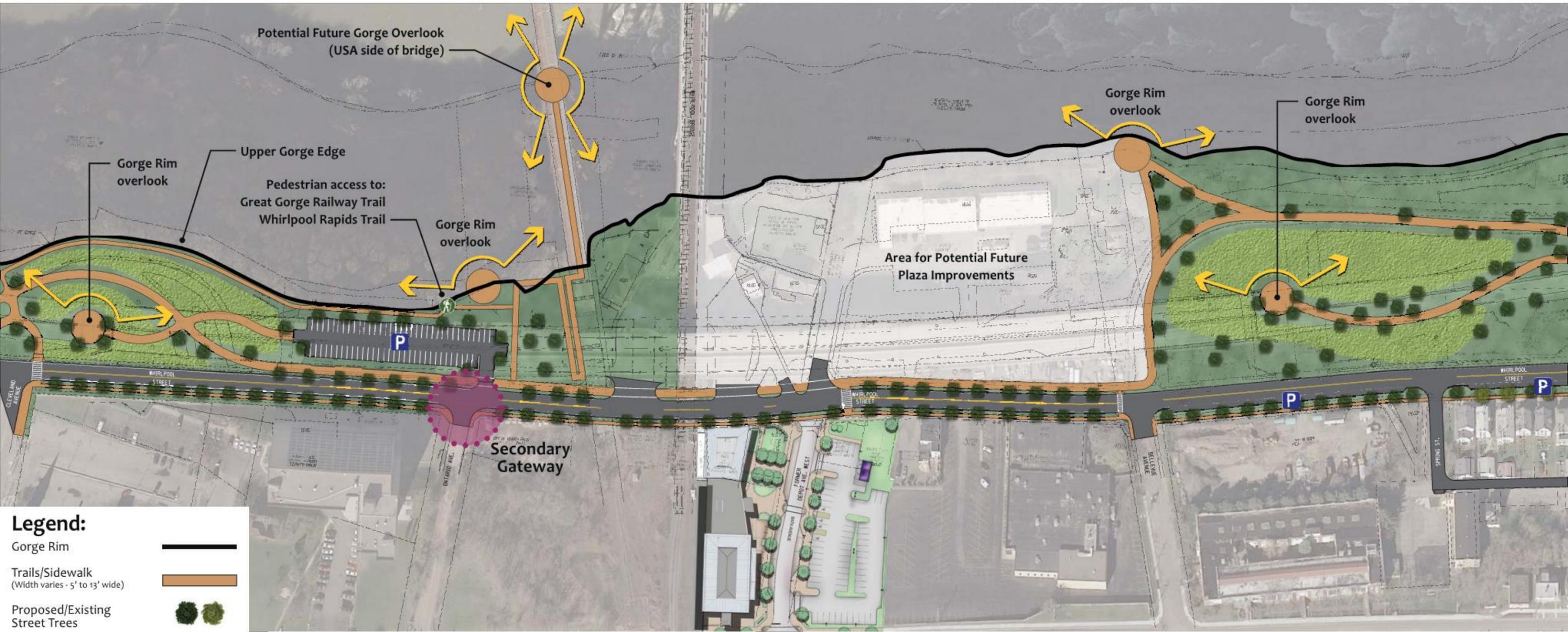


 In cooperation with:
 New York State Department of Transportation
 New York Power Authority
 USA Niagara Development Corporation
 The City of Niagara Falls, NY



NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE AUGUST 2016

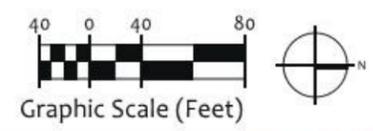
BUILD ALTERNATIVE SHEET 5



Legend:

- Gorge Rim
- Trails/Sidewalk
(Width varies - 5' to 13' wide)
- Proposed/Existing
Street Trees
- Proposed Meadow
- Gorge Trail Access
- Parking

In cooperation with:
 New York State Department of Transportation
 New York Power Authority
 USA Niagara Development Corporation
 The City of Niagara Falls, NY



NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR

ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY REMOVAL

MAIN STREET TO FINDLAY DRIVE AUGUST 2016

BUILD ALTERNATIVE

SHEET 6



Legend:

- Gorge Rim
- Trails/Sidewalk
(Width varies - 5' to 13' wide)
- Proposed/Existing
Street Trees
- Proposed Meadow
- Gorge Trail Access
- Parking

In cooperation with:
 New York State Department of Transportation
 New York Power Authority
 USA Niagara Development Corporation
 The City of Niagara Falls, NY

