

To: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Commission
Director: Hal Morse
Public Input, Robert Moses Parkway
Quality Inn, Niagara Falls Blvd. Niagara Falls, NY

Robert Moses, “the master builder,” divided close-knit neighborhoods, demolished viable housing, relocated the poorest New Yorkers to the city’s edge and promoted flight to the suburbs. He rapidly transformed one section of the city into its poorest area. It became a dumping ground for the city’s environmental burdens. The land is overrun with power plants, waste transfer stations and toxic industry, and bisected by highways.

If you think I’m referring to Niagara Falls, I’m not. It’s another parallel Moses-built road story happening in the Bronx with a highway called the Sheridan Expressway.

A 2003 report found online stated the 1.25 mile Bronx segment of the Moses Sheridan Expressway is slated for reconstruction by the New York State’s DOT, but the Bronx locals are fighting back with a plan of their own.

It includes removing the highway altogether in the name of urban revitalization. Few vehicles use the Bronx Sheridan and it’s generally considered redundant.

The Bronx “Community Plan” would use the highway for open space as part of the Bronx River Greenway, a bike/pedestrian pathway and park planned for the entire 23-mile length of the Bronx River.

Sound familiar?

The Bronx plan started in 1998—and just like the 1997 Niagara Heritage Partnership plan to remove all four lanes of the Robert Moses Parkway between Niagara Falls and Lewiston—is part of a growing list of communities worldwide removing roads in favor of riverfront open space and water front access. This partial list includes the cities of San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Toronto, and Seoul, Korea. These examples prove that road removal is viable in urban areas. The Bronx plan—just like the Niagara Heritage Partnership’s plan --is part of a local, state, national and international movement. Planners globally are rectifying transportation mistakes.

Joan Byron of the Pratt Institute, a member of the South Bronx River Watershed Alliance, said, “If the citizen advocated alternatives seem radical, it’s because for 50 years, we have allowed highway engineers to be the primary shapers of huge parts of our cities, and allowed the movement of vehicles to trump all other considerations of urban design, public health and safety, and environmental quality.”
(Source: www.gothamgazette.com 18 Aug. 2003)

Seventy case studies from 11 countries and the opinions of over 200 transport professionals world-wide disprove the statements that displaced traffic will simply divert to neighboring streets, clogging them, and leading to worse traffic problems.

In summary, the studies found that “well-designed and well-implemented schemes to

reallocate road space improves conditions for pedestrians and cyclists without increasing congestion or other related problems. Ironically, one newspaper's predications of disaster may have been effective in preventing problems from actually occurring."

The studies listed benefits: air-quality improvements, reduced neighborhood severance, increased business investment, more attractive living and working conditions, and improved retail vitality.

The potential opportunities achieved are traffic reduction, urban regeneration, more efficient use of economic and scenic resources and other national policy objectives.
Source: Roadspace Reallocation Schemes, Institution of Civil Engineers, London, England, 06/12/2001.

The benefits, the rationale, the positive outcome that would come from total removal of all four lanes of the Robert Moses Parkway are documented and proven they are beneficial.

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