

Parkway Removal and Gorge Rim Restoration Is a Win-Win for Everybody

Removal of the Robert Moses Parkway and restoring the landscape makes economic, environmental, and ecological sense.

Some may not want the road removed for self-serving reasons, but to deliberately ignore the socioeconomic, quality of life facts does everyone in this struggling region and economy a major disservice.

It's a given that removal is the most cost-effective alternative. It's also a given that restoration could create high-paying careers for the next 100 years. It will take longer than that to restore our Old Growth Forest, the one cut in two by the Parkway when it was built.

The principals guiding our National Heritage Area and the Niagara River Greenway list the natural environment first, yet it is the last one being addressed. I expected better, great things, from both Commissions, from the people listed above. {the mailing list has been deleted here.}

When was the last time anyone asked you to create or do something great? I'm asking. I'm asking you to do something magnificent with the Niagara Gorge Rim. I'm asking each of you to stand up and actually fight for this City.

I'm asking each of you to read the articles and website listed below.

We could go from being the Love Canal disaster story to an ecological and economic innovation, a rebirth, just through the removal of a redundant road. We could become world-recognized leaders, or ho-hum followers, remaining at the uninformed status quo, getting out of everyone's way, run over, another missed opportunity.

I choose to lead, but it works better with you as a team.

Removal and restoration is a win-win for everybody, including State Parks.

Here are some of the facts and resources the Niagara Heritage Partnerships is mocked about, denigrated in newspapers.

If you haven't seen *Fading in the Mist*, ask Bob Borgatti to screen it. It changed my perception about the waterfalls and the city.

If you want to educate yourself, read the benefits of non-motorized trails, see the Rails-to-Trails website.

<http://www.railstotrails.org/ourWork/advocacy/activeTransportation/campaignForActiveTransportation/index.html>

There's even a Federal funding source.

Here are articles detailing what others have done and one about the benefits of Urban Parks:

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/48838>; How an inner city freeway disappeared.

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/45909>; Freeway Teardowns A Prudent Choice

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/35185>; Top Freeway Teardowns

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/45380>; Reviving Struggling Urban Areas with Parks

Michelle Vanstrom, President
Wild Ones Niagara Falls and River Region