



Parkway currently (©New York State)

Niagara Scenic Parkway

City of Niagara Falls,
New York

New York Power Authority

Removing a parkway helps reconnect neighborhoods with natural wonders and the city.

CONTEXT

- Under removal.
- Northeast.
- Urban.
- \$42 million.
- 2 miles.
- Less than 200 vehicles in either direction during peak hour.



HIGHWAY TRANSFORMATION

- Removal of 2 miles of parkway and replacing with open spaces and a trail network.
- Linking isolated green spaces into an unbroken green corridor along the Niagara Gorge rim.

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT DRIVER?

The Robert Moses Parkway was part of a larger planned park and expressway network intended to connect nearby parks, communities, and attractions, as the region grew. However, much of the network remained unbuilt and unneeded as projected growth did not materialize. It was underutilized and a barrier to the waterfront. The local community identified the parkway as an economic impediment as well.

HOW DID THIS CONNECT THE COMMUNITY?

The New York Power Authority, as part of a multi-agency effort, is funding the removal of a two-mile stretch of the Robert Moses Parkway North that provided expressway access to the Niagara Gorge rim – the ultimate **road diet**. In its place is a new trail system that provides new open space, waterfront access, and scenic overlooks. It will now be known as the Niagara Scenic Parkway. It will also include the reconstruction of the parallel roadway, Whirlpool Street, into a two-lane **Complete Street** as the primary access to the Niagara Gorge Corridor. This will help create a “Gorge-front” boulevard between the commercial areas and natural resources nearby.

This project is the culmination of multiple planning studies on **community impacts**, such as the 2005 Downtown Niagara Falls Multimodal Access Program, 2006 Niagara River Greenway Vision, 2009 City of Niagara Falls Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Niagara Gorge Corridor project, a 2011 Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan, and 2014 Neighborhood **Scenario Planning** and Visioning process.

It also benefited from a two-year **pilot project** in 2000 to study the effects of reducing the Robert Moses Parkway to one lane in each direction. Travel time in the corridor increased by only two minutes while crashes and emissions were reduced. However, this pilot did not address the parkway's expressway features blocking access between the Niagara Gorge and adjoining City neighborhoods.

During the project scoping process of the 2010 Niagara Gorge Corridor plan, many different community and **stakeholder meetings** were held. Stakeholders were grouped in different ways: municipal representatives, elected officials/public agencies, and cultural, commercial, and environmental groups. During a subsequent environmental process with community groups, many were engaged from general public open houses to targeted ones for the Whirlpool Street neighborhood, nearby Niagara Falls Housing Authority locations, and with nearby tribal nations. The project also continues longstanding collaboration between the New York Power Authority (landowner), the New York Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (land manager), and the New York Department of Transportation (co-project sponsor) and others such as the City of Niagara Falls, Federal Highway Administration, and the USA Niagara Development Corporation. In all



Existing view looking south



Artist rendering looking south

Existing and Proposed Redesign (©New York State)

cases, different **visualization techniques** were used, such as renderings, photo simulations, design concepts, and traffic video simulations.

WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS?



RESTORE

From a transportation perspective there was 50 percent more roadway capacity than was needed.

Over 300 acres of green space will be opened up and will link the Niagara River Gorge and Falls into a single destination to allow easier access to the water's edge. It is the largest expansion of green space since the Niagara Reservation was designated in 1885.

For more information:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/video-photos-rush-transcript-governor-cuomo-announces-42-million-project-remove-two-mile> and <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx>