

Niagara Scenic Parkway Project

Phase III: Findlay Drive, Niagara Falls NY to Center Street, Lewiston NY

Public Workshop #1

February 6, 2024 | 5:30pm – 8:00pm

SUMMARY OF MEETING

Public Workshop #1 was broken into two segments with an open house from 5:30pm to 6:30pm and a formal presentation and Q&A beginning at 6:30pm. During the first hour of the workshop, attendees were able to view a series of informational boards about the project as well as rollouts depicting the alternative designs retained from the 2013 Niagara Scenic Parkway Scoping Report. The formal presentation, which began at 6:30pm, was given by representatives from Empire State Development, NYS Parks and Colliers Engineering & Design. A Q&A portion was held at the end of the presentation. Postcards with information about the project website were also given to each attendee as they entered the venue. The public workshop had a strong turnout with approximately 110 attendees.

Additional information on the meeting format and feedback received is summarized below:

Open House

During this segment of the workshop, community members were provided the opportunity to learn more information about the project, to review the alternative designs for the parkway (from the 2013 Scoping Report), and to have the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions by writing comments directly on each alternative or a general “comments” board.

Presentation and Q&A

The presentation, as attached to this summary, covered the following key topics:

- Welcome and Introductions of the Project Team
- Background describing previous segments of the Niagara Scenic Parkway project
- Snapshot of Phase III Segment, including project area and scope of studies to be included in the current phase
- Review of baseline design alternatives, as retained from the 2013 Scoping Report
- Planning Evaluation/Criteria that will be considered when selecting a preferred alternative for Phase III
- Community Engagement envisioned for Phase III to incorporate robust community feedback opportunities
- Anticipated Project Schedule

A summary of comments received during very portions of the public workshop are summarized below:

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Feedback on 'Comments' Board:

- Niagara Scenic Parkway North (from Lewiston to 4-mile creek) needs to be repaired. It is an important piece of infrastructure used by many people every day! NO PHASE IV!
- Continuing the Phase II design into phase III would present a beautiful option for residents.
- ALT 4 covers all bases, nice trail, park areas, still road to use too.
- Connect southbound parkway traffic to I-190.
- Total removal parkway. Replace with world class trail- like #3. Please segregate bikes/ebikes.
- #3, #4 agreed (with above comment)- need separation.
- Security risk to power project.
- Carries a fraction of the traffic it was designed for.
- Blocks the city off from the famous waterfront of the Niagara gorge.
- Obsolescent, ugly and needs to go!
- Don't forget to spec EV chargeable stations at parking areas.

Comments on Rollouts

Alternative 3:

- Leave it as is.
- Abolitionist Devaux Memorial?
- Bed and breakfast at Devaux manor?
- No drive-thru on college x5
- Will decrease property value.
- Neighbors are very opposed to parking here on college (near Lewiston rd./college intersection).
- Won't Artpark be hurt by the re-rerouting?
- Need pedestrian crossover notice (Proposed Park Road and Vanderbuilt Ave).
- Fishermen parking lot- (above Proposed Park Road and Vanderbuilt Ave intersection by water/trail. - Chris robins
- Street removal? (Proposed Park Road and Maple Ave)- Chris Robins
- Protect the kids- no access to maple.
- Too dangerous to open al side streets to the gorge.
- Street access **very** necessary for safety of residents.
- Makes parking and traffic issues.
- No drive thru to parks on James.
- Too much traffic created on residential street.
- Drive thru's are hazardous to kids.
- No opening street access.
- Where will traffic be re-rerouted? – too much for Lewiston Rd.
- Need a roundabout here. (Between where Parking and pedestrian bridge are to be removed and revegetated)
- Keep the bridge!!
- Keep parkway as it is. Helps community and traffic.
- I agree with this one.

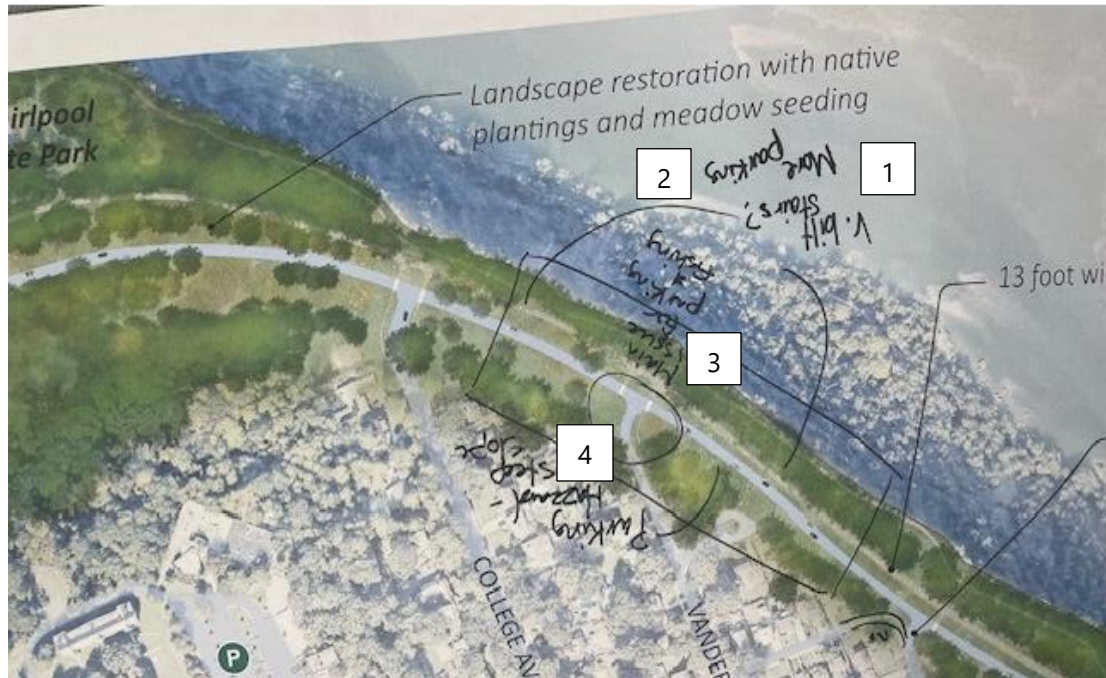
- Near parking areas near steps to parks.
- Tie multi-use trail into Lower Gorge Trail.
- On-ramp to I-190 would help on Southbound Lane.
- No parking or access in this neighborhood (Between Barton Drive and Fort Gray).
- Show access from 190 onto parkway or Military Road.
- Should increase MPH back to 55 MPH- Barton drive/ Fort Gray Neighborhood).
- Yes, must have parking access for cars.
- This definitely needed an overlook to experience the river, lake and sometimes Toronto x3.
- This alternative makes most sense.
- Should open both lanes each way at least until traffic can get to I-190 (Artpark side on Park Road).
- Bike hazard (Lewiston Trailhead).
- Please pave the 50-year-old concrete roadway.
- Lewiston Road 104-Military Road to Upper Mountain.

Alternative 4:

- Insufficient width of Phase II trail.
- Remove all parkway road from Findlay to Devil Hole-ecologically diverse!
- Increase property values.
- Trail width of Phase II is inadequate- strollers vs. bikes.
- Maintenance on phase II trail lights.
- Deliberate trailheads to direct visitor traffic (they o where google sends them).
- No parking access to College Ave.
- DO NOT want access from College Ave to parkway.
- No drive thru on College Ave.
- Neighbors opposed to parking in this area (marked on map in between College Ave and Maple Ave.
- Do not see the benefit of connecting this road- College to the parkway.
- Park Access. Yes. Where do visitors park?
- Limit neighborhood connections.
- Lewiston road does not need an increase of traffic.
- Bike lane desire on the local road.
- Traffic? (Lewiston Road).
- Sidewalk connections only? (By trails).
- Desire to keep it as is- love scenic drive.
- Connections are good (little added traffic, lots of convenience).
- Think Howe's Cavern.
- Neighborhood parking pressure.
- Brilliant (proposed multi-use trail/ proposed park road).
- Dig out the cave at Devil's Hole.
- Parking should stay-used all the time.
- Top side access or elevator/ stair access.
- Good roundabout. (between Hyde Park Blvd. and University Drive).
- Need more parking (at devil's hole).

- Love the roundabout (by devil's hole) but needs ped/bike crossing connections.
- Publicize project to nearby communities.
- Add trees as wind buffer (water side of trail).
- More new tree planting in phase III than phase II- too open.
- Access to more restrooms along the trail.
- Not safe (where Upper Mountain Road and Niagara Expressway meet).
- Show access off I-90N onto Military or parking.
- Proposed roundabout gateway feature off Niagara Expressway.
 - No. Please No.
 - Horrendous.
 - This is great.
 - Says "parkway" brilliant.
 - Yes, this is fine.
- Truck route conscious design.
- Once you get used to roundabouts, they are very good.
- Security of Lewiston- Queenston Bridge?
- Neighbors very opposed to parking anywhere in this area.
- Twin span leave room (Queenston Bridge).
- Maintaining open views.
- Vegetation maintenance.
- Are there any plans with the land taken thru eminent domain?
- No- have to get on 104 to get to Youngstown.
- This intersection (Military and Lewiston Road) southbound traffic stops unnecessarily.
- Make this generous (Artpark overlook parking).
- Parking is a must at the artpark overlook. QTY: 20 or less.
- Great idea- overlook parking!
- Electric bikes will make this area more popular (Artpark overlook).
- Access Lewiston/ Artpark/etc.
- Lewiston Parkway access to I-190 (104 accident concern).
- Overlook yes. More parking.
- Brox Mourm is a great precedent-a great success.
- Desire for better views-cut trees here (between proposed multi-use trail and Richard F. Soluri Park).
- Needs to meander slightly (Lewiston Road- above The Village of Lewiston, below Richard F. Soluri Park).
- Overlook ADA Access at Northern Section.
- Tunnel Access for Autos from upper Mountain Rd to Center Street.
- Please pave the 60-year-old concrete roadbed up to RT 18.
- Route 18 tunnel from Upper Mountain Road to RT 18.
- Leave it as is- just repair (RT 18).
- This is a good one.

Area Specific comments are noted below:



1. V. Bilt stairs?
2. More parking.
3. Main issue for parking and fishing.
4. Parking hazard steep slope.

Alternative 6:

- Leave it as is.
- Use the money to re-pave it and leave as is.
- Fix what Robert Moses did.
- Keep nature as is.
- THIS ONE
- Leave it as it is.
- We do not want a drive thru on College Avenue.
- Now, go where? (near Whirlpool State Park).
- Nature, yes!
- Make path big enough for bikers and walkers.
- Where's the scenic attraction?
- Total Removal.
- Yes x 3.
- No x 4
- More parking here (Devil's hole).
- Simplify, this has always been a mess (Irving Drive to Lewiston, Upper Mountain Rd/Niagara expressway to Lewiston).
- We could simply replace and leave it alone.
- Please pave the 60 yr old concrete roadbed up to rt 18
- Many in this neighborhood are very opposed to parking anywhere in this area (Between Barton and Fort Gray Drive).
- No parking near our neighborhood (Between Barton and Fort Gray Drive).
- What does North Bound traffic off I90 take to Youngstown?
- Traffic increase on military road exiting off I90 going North.
- Would the overlook be closed during Artpark events? Conflict!!
- Definitely need an overlook.
- Need parking to access (overlook).
- Yeah!!! (an overlook).
- Safety concerns of parking under the Lew-Queenston Bridge.
- Historically traffic accidents rt 104
- Traffic history study on route 104.
- Realign from I90 Rt 31 to LAFF Road. Cooperation from town of Niagara required.
- Divert all traffic to Upper Mountain Road.

Q & A Discussion

- Residents do not want parking and traffic through their neighborhoods.
- Consider a hybrid alternative that removes the parkway from Devil's Hole to Center Street.
- Project would add 15 minutes to the commute. Residents would rather have a fast parkway than a slower roadway.
- From several speakers: "The project will cut us off."
- Should have all four lanes at least until I-190.
- Request for weekly updates on the website about the project.

- Request for information about the project to be published in the newspapers more. Or other means than just online.
- Complaint that it was too difficult to read or hear the first 15 minutes of the presentation. Request for handouts.
- From a tourism perspective: Niagara Scenic Parkway provides a continuous experience along the Gorge. Currently, the experience is unbroken relative to the Gorge. If you have to get on it and off it, you take away the motivation to keep going – the romance of travel is lost. As a tourist, you want to be entertained, and by breaking it up, you lose the integrity of that entertainment.
- If it stays a continuous roadway, request to re-pave it.
- Devil's Hole parking lot is always full. Need more parking there. No one would go there if the Parkway is removed.
- Where will traffic be rerouted? There is already fast traffic on 104.
- What are the plans for the balance of the Parkway north to Lake Ontario? Many people use that stretch. Do not remove it.
- If the final project has not yet been decided, it is a misnomer to call this project "Parkway Removal."
- We don't need four lanes of Parkway.
- Positive feedback about the current ped/bike trail – any design going forward should ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Currently, the 2-way vehicle roadway is narrow and because of the minimal traffic, vehicles feel they can make 3-point turns, other unsafe maneuvers.
- Will there be a study of the economic impact of the project? Lewiston businesses rely on visitors from Niagara Falls. They will not come to Lewiston if they have to drive through various neighborhoods to get there.
- The closure on the hill from 2 lanes to 1 lane is disastrous.
- Parkway is an ugly, underutilized barrier.
- Mayor of Lewiston: A continuous roadway would be great – just like the two-way River Road from Lewiston to Youngstown.
- Improve the intersection at Niagara University.
- For and against making connections to the project from the DeVaux district. Concerns about College Street. Safety issues.
- The current "weed park" looks like what residents would be fined for.
- The total removal – converting to parkland – would be worldclass. Would attract so many tourists and they would go to Lewiston.
- Most residents frustrated with change are 50+.
- Question: Golf carts to rent? Electric bikes? Scooters? Water activities?

Answer: No rigorous review of use and water potential. Project is to focus on trails and roads.

- Money spent on parks, what is the return on investment? Answer: Hotels and building upgrades have happened since phase I. (asking for the park to provide economic impact. Parks don't necessarily help this problem.
- Problems with traffic and events affect the Lewiston Community.
- Careful consideration to Deveaux Woods.
- Remove Devil's Hole to North Parkway.

- Who is using the trails now?
- Keep roads connected-allow for flow of traffic and reduce stress on neighborhood.
- How does this affect the NYPA construction? 2021-2031. Publish in paper. Make these meetings more publicly known. *Answer: NYPA has not notified the public yet because they're not quite ready.*
- "Attraction" "Niagara Scenic Parkway"- provide more attraction. Keep the road continuous, keep tourist entertained, provide a brochure.
- How would traffic be rerouted? Please repave it.
- What is the traffic impact? What is the design? One road in each direction or two with the trail on the side?
- Change the name? 'Removal' is confusing.
- People walk their dogs a lot. Speed of roads should be slow.
- How does this effect the economic value to nearby towns.
- Below the hill, one direction would not be enough.
- How does the intersection near Niagara University get affected?
- Some are in favor of the Deveaux connection and others.
- "World Class" trail and gorge.