

July 12, 2009

I am a strong supporter of Mayor Dyster. I feel his philosophy of a greater and greener Niagara Falls and region is right on target. We can attain both goals by removing the ugly concrete parkway that separates residents from the awesome natural beauty of the gorge, and rebuild our Main Street business district.

What a legacy to leave our children, Mr. Dyster, if under your watch we regained our gorge. Let's turn it back to the way the Creator intended. Let nature take its course once again. Times are so different now than when that parkway was first built. Now green space is at a desirable premium. We are blessed with the awesome natural beauty of both the Falls and the Gorge. I often feel residents don't truly appreciate these gifts as they speak about the decline of Niagara Falls.

Many factors contributed to the decline of Niagara Falls but I definitely feel the Robert Moses Parkway is one of them. I believe young families are looking for communities that offer this God given natural beauty to counter the fast paced technological world we live in today. I am a DeVeaux resident and would love to see green space and wild flowers instead of concrete. Other communities cherish their natural wonders and who can improve on what God made. I feel this would enhance our area tremendously. Develop our downtown areas and leave nature untouched. We can have it all.

I've been following this issue for many years and can't understand how anyone who has taken Business 101 would say it is good for business to circumvent the business district. Main Street is a deserted mess of boarded up buildings right now, yet people still go to the Book Store and Di Camilos. If we develop it right, we can service residents of Niagara Falls and Niagara University students as well as tourists and visitors from the north of us. I feel many Lewiston voices are a bit arrogant in suggesting that this parkway is good for Lewiston without truly understanding the ramifications for Niagara Falls. There are many other routes in and out of Niagara Falls to Lewiston and points north. Our entire region is marketed as one, and that's good for everyone. But let's be fair, continuing to bypass Main Street is not going to make our city grow and flourish as it should. Wouldn't everyone like to see a rebirth of the old downtown area that was once our Main Street? It could happen. Just get rid of that Parkway. Remember people come from all over the world to see the Falls first. Each community should be working with, not against the others.

Regarding the flow of traffic down Lewiston Road and how it would affect Maple Ave School children...I say, not much. Many school districts deal with this by strictly enforcing traffic laws which they should be doing anyway. I dare say, most students, in this day and age, are either walked to school, driven by parents or bused. Hyde Park School deals with this, so does Niagara Street, even St. Peter's in Lewiston is right off Center Street.

I see this as a pivotal moment in time. Mayor Dyster is the one mayor who understands what the greening of a region really means. Niagara Falls could once again become a desirable place for business and home owners. Get rid of that albatross of a parkway and refurbish Main Street. This would be the best legacy to leave our children, a greater and greener Niagara Falls. If you agree, sign the petition at www.niagaraheritage.org, or write an editorial. Let your voice be heard.

Beverly Barthel
Niagara Falls, NY