Niagara National Heritage Area

NIAGARA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STUDY

National Park Service
Northeast Region
Department of the Interior
What is a National Heritage Area?
It is a regional place...
where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine
to form a nationally distinctive landscape and pattern of human activity
Niagara National Heritage Area - Background
Background & Timeline:


-- NPS (preliminary) Reconnaissance Study Mar-July 2001

-- 2002 Congress passed the NF-NHA Study Act, directing a full “feasibility study” process...*

-- NPS kicked off the NF-NHA study process in 2003.

-- A working draft study developed in 2004.

-- The final study report completed in 2005.

-- Final public comments were taken through Jan. 2006.

-- Awaiting Department of Interior action to establish the Niagara National Heritage Area.
Niagara National Heritage Area Development Strategy
The heritage development strategy

People will visit here for the same reason we love to live here.

Developing our region for heritage visitors will make it better for us.

Telling the stories of our region provides knowledge and positive identification for visitors, and

Shared cultural experiences are a source of meaning and pride for us.
Principles for Cultural based Tourism Development

- reconnect Niagara River communities with their River & heritage.
Principles for Cultural based Tourism Development

• Repair and improve urban and natural environments
Principles for Cultural based Tourism Development

• develop the means to tell the compelling stories of the region
NPS-NHA Study Process:

-- Establish the study area
-- Conduct resource inventory and assessment
-- Define thematic framework
-- Define the management alternative
-- Public consultation and participation

-- Recommendation transmittal to Congress...
Building on Solid Planning

`Rethinking Niagara`

- Three major conferences
  - Exploring redevelopment strategies
  - The heritage opportunity
  - Broad public participation and support, including cross-border
  - Supports a new regional approach

- Municipal Planning
  - Citizens Map
  - Achieving Niagara Falls’ Future
  - Blueprint for Downtown
  - Strategic Master Plan
A thematic framework for Niagara Heritage Area stories:

- The landscape, and natural phenomenon
- Tourism and recreation
- Power and industry
- Borderland and border crossing...
landscape
Niagara’s Natural Heritage

• The Niagara River Corridor
  – The Falls, The Gorge & The Escarpment — Connected ecosystems and landscapes
  – DeVeaux Woods — 1,000 years old growth
  – UNESCO World Biosphere
  – Globally “Important Bird Area” — Major continental flyway

• Environmental & Conservation Heritage
  – 1st Public Environmental Restoration — Niagara Reservation
  – Birthplace of US Environmental Protection law — Love Canal
landscape

a bio- and geo-region
Eco-tourism

- Eco-Tourism & Heritage Tourism are fastest growing segments in the tourism industry
- Experiencing nature & outdoor activities
- Natural beauty is most important for selecting outdoor recreation
- Conserving Niagara River waterfront will provide the environmental context for activities that attract visitors while ensuring an amenity-rich “quality community”
landscape

parks, paths and parkways
Tourism

- One of the Largest and fastest growing industries worldwide
- $700 - $800 billion
- Employs more than any other industry
- 10-12 million visitors to ‘Bi-National Niagara Region annually
  (Projected to 20+ million in 10-15 years)

- Spending / Revenues relates to “length of stay”
- Goal: encourage longer & more frequent visits
- By providing more of what visitors want...
- Niagara’s strategic assets: nature, history, culture
war, peace, freedom

first nations

Habit of an Ottawa Indian.
war, peace, freedom

conflict on the border
“Discovering” Niagara’s heritage stories

• European Exploration and Colonization

• The Olmsted Legacy

• Civil engineering and bridges

• Natural heritage / Geology / the River and Gorge

• The environmental & conservation legacy

• Native American history

• The Underground Railroad

• Hydro & Industrial heritage

• The bounty of nature

• War and Peace

• Enterprise in the Arts
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The City of Niagara Falls, New York’s “Future Strategy”

1. **Naturalize the riverfront and gorge**

   - Native trees and plants on upper river
     - Improve views and environmental quality
     - Reduce maintenance costs
   - Renewing Olmsted’s vision for the Niagara Reservation and Parkway
   - Repair and enhance gorge ecology
   - Build new “green infrastructure” extending along the gorge and river, and into the city
2. Connect city to waterfront

- Reconfigure the Robert Moses Parkway
- Link neighborhoods and commercial districts to the river’s edge
- Complete the waterfront pedestrian and cycling trails throughout the river corridor
3. Link neighborhoods to the river

- New at-grade intersections, along the Moses Parkway at:
  - Portage Road (12)
  - Hyde Park Boulevard (8)
  - 53rd Street pier (7)

- New access points along the Moses Parkway at:
  - RiverView Park (13)
  - Intake Park (10)
  - LaSalle Trailhead (6)
4. Connect downtown to the Niagara Reservation State Park

- Rainbow Boulevard
  - two way traffic - loop
  - traffic calming measures
  - Streetscape enhancements

- Old Main Street
  - traffic calming measures
  - Re-invent “West Mall” area
  - Modify Wintergarden …

- State Park “Discovery Center,” North Entrance, & Trail Access
  - Reduce parking areas within state park
  - Hydro-canal Interpretation
  - Olmsted Interpretation

- Re-Configure Robert Moses Parkway (RMP)
  - Remove unused remnants and expand “the park” into the City
  - Combine Whirlpool St and RMP
5. **Tell Niagara’s Stories**

- Create a new Family Museum and Visitors “Experience Center” in downtown

  - A Significant architectural statement
  - Point of arrival and orientation for visitors
  - Exciting, high-tech, high-touch, destination attraction
  - Point of education and exploration of Niagara’s Heritage “stories”
  - Point of departure for all of the bi-national Niagara Region’s interpretive sites and attractions
Niagara National Heritage Area

- International branding of the Region will generate new investments and synergistic marketing
- Waterfront will become desirable places to live and invest – linking the region
- Heritage and Eco-tourism offerings will generate additional markets for tourism
- Greater Accessibility (trans. improvements) will integrate regional places and cross-border economies
- National & international recognition leads to cross-border and multi-jurisdictional cooperation and financial assistance
- Greater organizational capacity
- A larger marketing and media umbrella
City of Niagara Falls, NY