

Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster
Robert Moses Parkway Event
03.22.16

Thank you Cindy – and good afternoon to all of you! It's always a great day in Niagara Falls when Governor Cuomo comes to town, and today is no exception.

In fact, today is more than just a great day. It's proof that Niagara Falls has many great days ahead – this year, next year, and for many years to come.

That's because we're seeing collaboration and support and *vision* from state government unlike anything we've seen in a long time.

I've had the honor to serve as mayor of this city for just over 8 years – and I've lived in this community for most of my life – and I can't remember anything like the support and partnership and visionary leadership we have today with Governor Cuomo.

He's made Western New York a priority once again, he's bought into our vision and is investing in us, and is helping us move forward with the things we care about most – and he's helping us build a better Niagara Falls as a result.

As you all know, one of our city's greatest strengths has always been our unparalleled outdoor spaces. From our parks, to the miles of waterfront, to the beautiful Niagara River Gorge, to the Falls themselves – we have what no other community has. But for a long time, we lost it.

For years, so many of those assets were separated from people in our communities by the Robert Moses Parkway. (I want to give an acknowledgment here to Allison Pasquantino, who moved into one of the neighborhoods adjacent to the section of Robert Moses Parkway North we're here to talk about today. I think that was in 2002, am I correct? You've waited a long time—well, not just waited—like many of your neighbors you became an advocate for improved access to the waterfront. Well, Allison, today your patience and hard work are being rewarded.)

It's simply illogical that we should allow part of what makes Niagara Falls so great to be choked off by lanes of concrete that were scarcely used. That's not how you build a city. That's why sometimes it's really great to have a former HUD secretary as your governor—because he's someone that knows and loves cities.

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Everyone knew the Parkway was a mistake, almost from the day it opened. But decade after decade went by, and while everybody talked about the Parkway, no one figured out how to do anything about the Parkway. No one, that is, until Andrew Cuomo.

At an auto shop where I worked as a college student, there was a sign on the counter that read, "The difficult we do immediately. The impossible takes a little longer." I looked it up. According to *The Home Book of American Quotations*, that was the motto of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II.

Governor Cuomo, I think that should be *your* motto, because I've learned over the years that nothing fires you up more than someone telling you that something you know needs to happen "can't be done."

For years, removing the Parkway and taking back the waterfront for future generations was viewed as an impossible dream.

Thanks to the Governor's support, we're changing that. Robert Moses took our waterfront away, but Andrew Cuomo is giving it back! Whether you're talking about Buffalo or Niagara Falls, reconnecting our citizens to their waterfront heritage is going to be a major part of Governor Andrew Cuomo's legacy of accomplishment. Not since Frederick Law Olmsted created the nation's first state park in 1885 has anyone done so much to preserve, protect and expand the park at Niagara for future generations as Governor Andrew Cuomo.

\$40 million is being invested to revitalize public access facilities from Prospect Point to Terrapin Point to Three Sisters Islands. The Southern Portion of the Robert Moses Parkway is being fundamentally reimagined to give people more access to the riverfront, and we're so happy to see that project almost completed. I don't think it's a coincidence that we're going to cut the ribbon on three hotel projects within sight of the new park this year, Governor.

And with the Governor's support, I know the best is yet to come.

Now, please join me in welcoming the man who continues to make dreams come alive for the people of Niagara Falls, the man for whom no challenge is too great, the man who is making the people's vision of a better future a reality all across

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this state, but especially right here in Western New York, the great “green”
Governor of the State of New York, Andrew Cuomo.