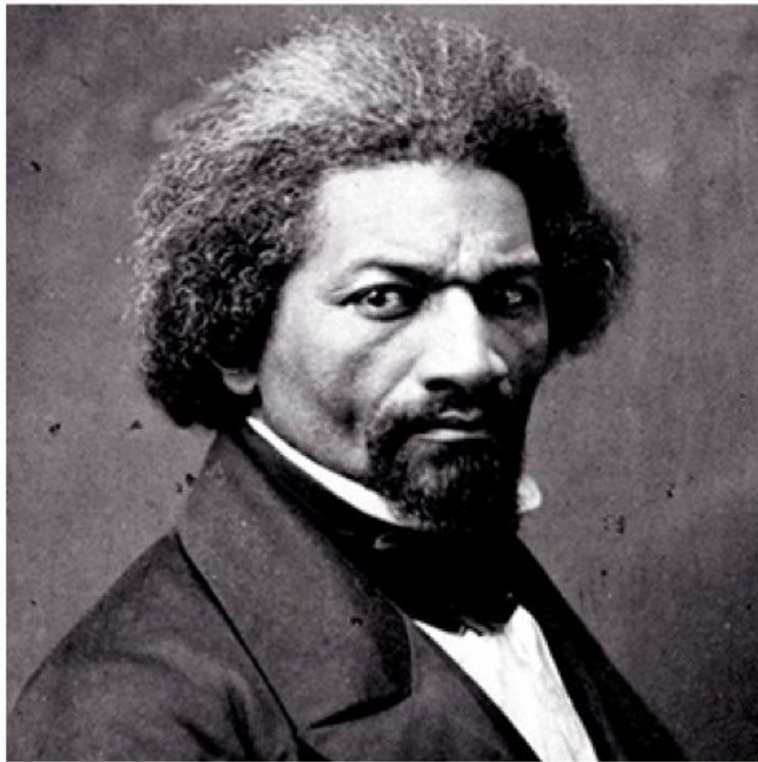


City of Niagara Falls

New York

Frederick Douglass Memorial Plaza



**I expose slavery in this country,
because to expose it is to kill it.
Slavery is one of those monsters
of darkness to whom the light
of truth is death.**

Frederick Douglass

Niagara River Greenway Commission

November 2017

Project Registration Number _____

***Niagara River Greenway Commission
Consultation and Review Form***

Type of Review Required: X Mandatory Consultation
 Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name: City of Niagara Falls
Mailing Address: 745 Main Street, P.O. Box 69, Niagara Falls
State: NY Zip Code: 14302-0069
Federal ID# 16-6002548 Charities Registration #

PROJECT TYPE

Check all that apply: Environmental X Cultural/Heritage Land or Water Public Access
 X Cultural Trail X Educational/Interpretive
 Waterfront or Land Based Development Signage
 Recreational Other

Funding Committee Request: X Host Community Standing Committee
 Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee
 Ecological Standing Committee
 State Parks Standing Committee
 Unsure at this time

Amount Requested: \$ 280,000

Matching Funds Available: \$ -0-

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: Frederick Douglass Memorial Plaza

Location: Niagara Falls

Site Address: 1925 Main Street

State: NY Zip Code: 14305

Minor Civil Division(s): City

County: Niagara

Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other): own

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name: Paul A. Dyster Title: Mayor

Business Address: 745 Main Street, P.O. Box 69, Niagara Falls

State: NY Zip Code: 14302-0069

Telephone Number: 716-286-4310 Cell Number:

Fax Number: 716-286-4349

E-Mail Address: paul.dyster@niagarafallsny.gov

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Thomas J. DeSantis Title: Acting Director-Planning, Environmental and Economic Development

Organization/Firm: City of Niagara Falls

Business Address: 745 Main Street, P.O. Box 69, Niagara Falls

State: NY Zip Code: 14302-0069

Telephone Number: 716-286-4477 Cell Number:

Fax Number: 716-286-4485

E-Mail Address: desantis@nfez.org

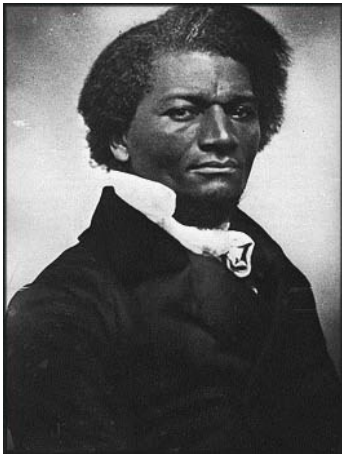
Project Narrative

In a brief paragraph, describe the project and its purpose, how and when it will be accomplished, and why it is important.

In an effort to promote the city's rich cultural heritage, the City of Niagara Falls respectfully requests a consistency determination for the development of a memorial plaza honoring Frederick Douglass in front of the Niagara Falls Municipal Complex (Complex) on Main Street. The Complex stands near the historic First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls, where Douglass delivered a speech advocating abolition in 1856. Within walking distance of the Complex is the restored U.S. Customhouse which will house the Underground Railroad Interpretive Center, set to open in 2018. The newly developed Harriet Tubman Plaza, outside the Customhouse, is situated across from the site of the Suspension Bridge, the final crossing point on the Underground Railroad for fugitives seeking freedom in Canada.



Niagara Falls Municipal Complex



The primary focus of this project is the fabrication and installation of a sculpture honoring Frederick Douglass. A plaza will be created in front of the Complex for the artwork's installation. The area will be landscaped and paved with stone pavers representative of the Underground Railroad period. Historic interpretation will be conducted on Douglass' role in the abolition movement and his time spent in Niagara Falls and displayed at the site.

As a link on the city's proposed historic walking trail, the plaza will serve as a vehicle in the rediscovery and interpretation of the city's many cultural assets. The trail will promote the city's role in the Underground Railroad and stimulate heritage tourism, an important economic driver of our local economy.

The anticipated cost of the project is \$280,000.

Niagara River Greenway Vision Statement:

The Niagara River Greenway is a world-class corridor of places, parks and landscapes that celebrates and interprets our unique natural, cultural, recreational, scenic and heritage resources and provides access to and connections between these important resources while giving rise to economic opportunities for the region.

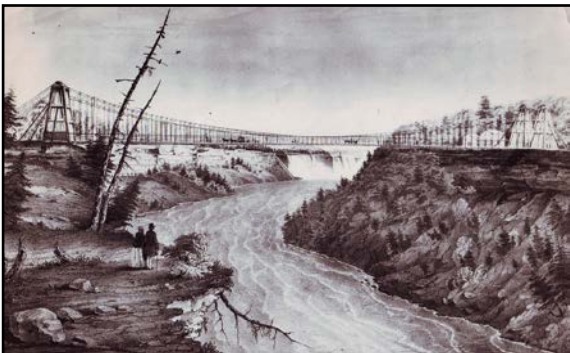
Development of the Plaza in front of the Complex will promote the Greenway vision by **celebrating and interpreting our diverse cultural heritage**. Located on Main Street & Cleveland Avenue, in the heart of the city's heritage area, an area replete with historic resources, the Complex is just a few feet from the First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls on Cleveland Avenue and only a few blocks from the U.S. Customhouse and the site of the Suspension Bridge.

Niagara Falls is home to an abundance of sites that played a prominent role in the Underground Railroad. As a means to their re-discovery and interpretation, the City began with the restoration of the historic customhouse and the creation of the Harriet Tubman Plaza on its north side. Within that plaza, a statue honoring Tubman is to be erected. That site will serve as the hub of an historic walking trail. The Douglass plaza will be a component of the trail linking such existing landmarks as the First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls and St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Oakwood Cemetery, as well as the sites of the Suspension Bridge, the International Hotel, the Cataract House, the Augustus Porter House and the Free Soil House.



U.S. Customhouse

Frederick Douglass was a central figure in the abolition of slavery and the women's suffrage movement. Born into slavery in 1818, he successfully educated himself and escaped slavery, becoming a powerful international orator, speaking against slavery and promoting the women's suffrage movement.



It was on a speaking tour throughout the country that Douglass traveled to Niagara Falls in 1845, and again in 1848 when he stayed at the St. Lawrence Hotel on Main Street. The later trip corresponds with Douglass' attendance at the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, NY in July 1948 and the dedication of the first Suspension Bridge

crossing the Niagara River. It is believed that Douglass identified the bridge as a major route to freedom for escaping slaves and that Harriet Tubman first crossed to Canada with eleven freedom seekers in 1851.



Douglass' last known visit to Niagara Falls was in 1884 on his honeymoon with his second wife, Helen Pitts.

The bridge was rebuilt in 1855 and was the first working suspension bridge to accommodate railway traffic, further enabling safe passage for freedom seekers. An article appearing in the Niagara Gazette on Sept. 22, 1858 reports that Douglass put four black persons (chattel) on a train in Rochester that safely crossed the Suspension Bridge to Canada.

Niagara River Greenway Commission Goals

The goals and objectives of the Niagara River Greenway Commission will be served by the development of this memorial plaza honoring one of the area's most influential visitors and promoting the area's cultural heritage. The plaza will be one of many sites identified to visitors throughout the city.

Improve Access

The plaza, as a link in the city's historic trail, will contribute to the promotion of the area as a heritage tourism site and facilitate intellectual access to the area's heritage by promoting the City's connection to Frederick Douglass and the Underground Railroad.

Make Connections

Conceptual linkages will be created through the historic interpretation conducted at this and other sites along the historic walking trail. The historic interpretation provided at the site, will not only explain the significance of the statue, but will encourage visitors to move along the trail to the many other historic sites within the area.

Celebrate History and Heritage

The Frederick Douglass Memorial Plaza will ensure is designed to celebrate and share the City's historic role in the Underground Railroad movement. As a former slave and committed abolitionist, Douglass' presence in Niagara Falls was testimony to the area's importance to the liberation of enslaved black Americans their final destination – Freedom.

The historic interpretation to be performed during the course of this project will not only tell Douglass' story, but will also become part of the roadmap connecting the multitude of historic sites within the city's limits that were a crucial part of this nation's history.

Spark Revitalization and Renewal

Heritage tourism has been shown to be a powerful economic development tool. Numerous studies have shown that heritage tourists generally stay longer, spend more and return more often than other tourists. The increase in tourists will lead to more economic development/revenues, creation of jobs and the preservation/renewal of more historic sites within the Niagara River Greenway Corridor.

Promote Long-Term Sustainability

The City of Niagara Falls is committed to preserving and promoting its rich, diverse cultural heritage. To this end, the City has partnered with the federal government, New York State, the Preservation League of New York State, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area, the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission and other agencies to ensure the preservation of the its historic sites.

The City of Niagara Falls is committed to preserving and maintaining the history contained within its borders ***through continued investment in regional assets...*** The development of this plaza as a connection to the many other historic sites on the proposed historic walking trail furthers that goal.

Niagara River Greenway Principles

The guiding principles of the Niagara River Greenway Commission will be met as follows:

Excellence: The Underground Railroad was a powerful movement that shaped the fate of our nation and held lasting international significance. As a result, the city's historic heritage resources are **"Globally Significant"** In accordance with Greenway principles, as a link on the historic walking trail, the plaza will *"meet world class standards"*.

Connectivity: The location of the plaza within the heart of the city's heritage tourism area will **increase connectivity and access** by promoting access to other sites within the city and other regions of the Greenway Corridor.

Authenticity and Celebration: Development of this plaza and its place on the historic walking trail will preserve and promote the vital role the City played in the abolitionist movement, thereby establishing a **connection to the character, culture and history of Niagara Falls**.

Partnerships: The City has forged several partnerships for the plaza's development as a link to its heritage. The City has been heavily involved with the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area in their mission to preserve the area's history and promote its heritage as a cultural tourism attraction. Several additional community organizations have come together to support the project, including the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission, the Niagara Beautification Commission, and the Niagara Falls Block Club Council.

Community Based: Development of this memorial plaza furthers the goals of the City of Niagara Falls USA Niagara River Greenway Vision and Project Proposals by creating a "series of interrelated and linked museums, exhibits and attractions". As a link in the historic walking trail, this plaza will "celebrate and promote the unique natural and cultural heritage of Niagara to enhance the waterfront as a tourist destination and to grow the economy", one of the City's goals in its Greenway Vision and Project Proposals.

Public Well-Being: The plaza, as part of the city's proposed trail, will also become an important agent in promoting community pride and enhancing quality of life. Interpretation of the city's many cultural heritage resources will foster a greater appreciation for its history and help to retain the community's unique sense of place. As a result, this project will "achieve and promote physical and emotional wellness through the experience that it offers to the public".

Criteria

Consistency with Principles: As previously demonstrated, the restoration of the customhouse is in accordance with the Niagara River Greenway principles of Excellence, Connectivity, Authenticity, Celebration, Partnerships, Community Based and Public Well-being.

Priority Status: This project will and contribute to the **revitalization of Niagara Falls' downtown center** by promoting the city's status as an important cultural heritage tourism destination. The sites along the historic walking trail will promote the array of sites and stories that command the interest and curiosity of heritage tourism visitors. The plaza will provide "...**education about the region's cultural, natural and historic resources**".

Focus Area: The plaza site is located within the core area of the Greenway boundaries. Situated close to the Niagara River Gorge and the Canadian border, the development of this plaza will contribute to the Greenway mission by promoting the City's heritage locally, regionally and internationally.

Environmental Soundness: Since the plaza will be created in front of the newly developed Municipal Complex, the project will have no negative impacts on the surrounding environment.

Implementable: Upon award of the funding, the City will begin the necessary preparations for the project. A consultant experienced in historical interpretation and architectural design will be selected. Once the plaza design is finalized, a Call for Artists will be issued for the design and fabrication of the statue. While the statue is in development, the foundation work and site amenities will be installed. The project is anticipated to be complete within twenty-four months. The estimated cost is based upon recent similar projects.

Economic Viability/Local Sponsor: As the local sponsor, the City will oversee completion of the project whereupon it will consistently allocate the funding necessary for the plaza's maintenance in its annual budget.

Consideration of Other Planning Efforts: The creation of this plaza is an extension of the ongoing promotion and interpretation of the area's heritage by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area. The plaza will also serve the Niagara River Greenway's mission and the City's own vision for celebrating the area's cultural heritage and expanding cultural heritage tourism.

Clear Benefits: The development of this plaza will assist in the promotion of the area's diverse cultural heritage, encourage access to other sites within the city and other points of the Greenway corridor and, ultimately, contribute to the economic revitalization of the area.

Budget

SOURCES OF FUNDS	
Loan #1	\$
Grant #1	\$ 280,000
Other Source #1	\$
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS	\$ 280,000
USE OF FUNDS	
Planning	\$ 10,000
Construction	\$ 270,000
Acquisition	\$
Administration	\$
Operation and Maintenance / Year	\$
TOTAL USES OF FUNDS	\$ 280,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 280,000

Budget Detail

Architecture/Engineering	\$ 5,000
Foundation/site amenities	40,000
Fabrication/installation of sculpture	230,000
Historic interpretation	5,000
Project Total:	\$280,000

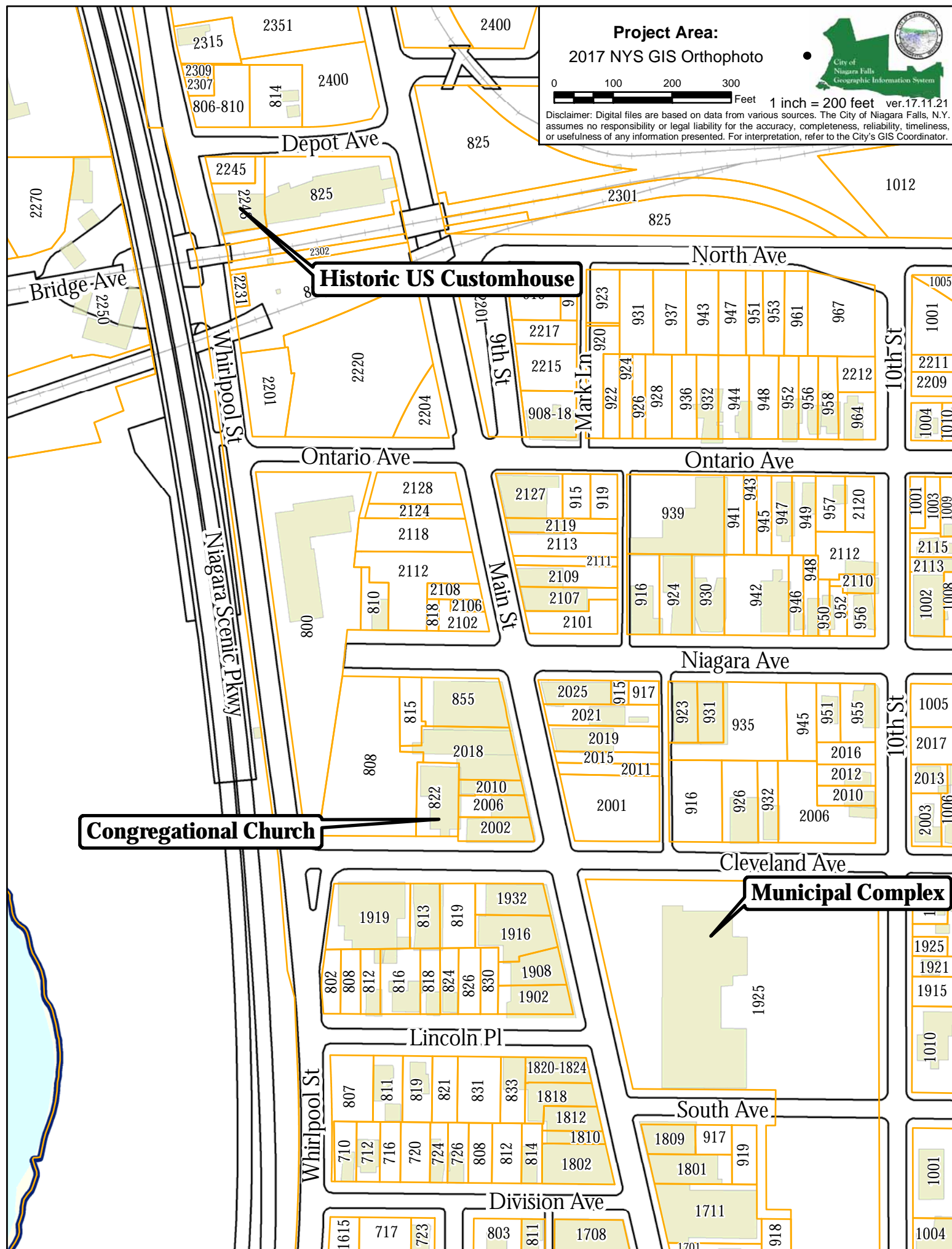
Describe the measures taken at the local level to gain community and government support for this project (hearings, petitions, public surveys, resolutions of support or other methods). If this project has been cited or described in a local planning document or some equivalent thereof, attach copies of that documentation highlighting the sections that are relevant to the proposed project. Describe the role of municipal agencies, stakeholder groups, consultants, volunteers or others who will be involved in the proposed project.

As previously stated, the creation of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Plaza is an extension of the ongoing promotion and interpretation of the area's heritage by the City, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area, and furthers goals of the Niagara River Greenway for celebrating the area's cultural heritage and expanding cultural heritage tourism.

As evidenced by the attached letters of support, this plaza is also supported by various community groups dedicated to the revitalization of the area.

Describe and document the environmental setting and existing conditions at the proposed project site. If you are not the owner of the property include a letter(s) or resolution(s) evidencing support for the project by the owner. Provide photographs, conceptual plans and drawings that show the site as it presently exists and how the site will change with the addition of the proposed project. Describe how your project will comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The existence of wetlands, significant upland and aquatic habitats, and plant or animal species that are classified as rare, threatened, or endangered should be noted. Explain how such natural resources will be protected and/or enhanced. Cite any relevant project-related studies.

The Municipal Complex was selected as the site of the plaza because of its location within an area of abundant historic resources related to the Underground Railroad. As a newly developed facility, there is little disturbance to the site anticipated and the project will have no negative impacts on the surrounding environment.





NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

119 TIMON HALL / P.O. Box 1932
NIAGARA UNIVERSITY, NY 14109
(716) 286-8579

November 20, 2017

Gregory D. Stevens, Chairman
Niagara River Greenway Commission
DeVeaux Woods Park
3160 DeVeaux Wood Drive
Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Dear Chairman Stevens,

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area fully supports the City of Niagara Falls' proposal to create a plaza honoring Frederick Douglass in front of the Niagara Falls Municipal Complex. The site of the plaza is near the First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls, where Douglass delivered a speech advocating abolition in 1856, and the site of the Suspension Bridge, the final crossing point on the Underground Railroad for enslaved persons seeking freedom in Canada. The plaza will feature a sculpture honoring Douglass and interpretation of his role in the abolition movement and his time spent in Niagara Falls. The total budget for the project is \$280,000.

In 2018, the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center will be opening in the U.S. Customhouse at the site of the Suspension Bridge, further encouraging visitors and residents to explore the rich heritage of Niagara Falls. The city's proposed historic walking trail will serve as a vehicle in the rediscovery and interpretation of its many cultural assets. The plaza, as a link on that trail, will promote the city's role in the Underground Railroad and stimulate heritage tourism, an important economic driver of our local economy.

Projects like these serve as important agents in promoting community pride and enhancing quality of life. They foster greater appreciation for its history and help to retain the community's unique sense of place.

For these reasons, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is pleased to support this project and look forward to the creation of the Frederick Douglass Plaza. Please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at sara@discoverniagara.org or by telephone at (716) 778-4607 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sara Capen
Executive Director



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



P.O. Box 1945
Niagara Falls, NY 14302
(716) 285-5030
Niagara.Beautification@gmail.com

Nov. 16, 2017

Gregory D. Stevens, Chairman
Niagara River Greenway Commission
DeVeaux Woods Park
3160 DeVeaux Wood Drive
Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Dear Chairman Stevens,

I am writing in support of the City of Niagara Falls' proposal to create a plaza honoring Frederick Douglass in front of the Niagara Falls Municipal Complex. The site of the plaza is near the First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls, where Douglass delivered a speech advocating abolition in 1856, and the site of the Suspension Bridge, the final crossing point on the Underground Railroad for fugitives seeking freedom in Canada. The plaza will feature a sculpture honoring Douglass and interpretation of his role in the abolition movement and his time spent in Niagara Falls. The total budget for the project is \$280,000.

The city has a rich cultural history that has yet to be fully explored. The city's proposed historic walking trail will serve as a vehicle in the rediscovery and interpretation of its many cultural assets. The plaza, as a link on that trail, will promote the city's role in the Underground Railroad and stimulate heritage tourism, an important economic driver of our local economy.

The plaza, as part of the city's proposed trail, will also become an important agent in promoting community pride and enhancing quality of life. Interpretation of the city's many cultural assets will foster a greater appreciation for its history and help to retain the community's unique sense of place.

For these reasons, I am pleased to support this project and look forward to the creation of the Frederick Douglass Plaza. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Lowe".

Tom Lowe
Chair



City of Niagara Falls, New York

P.O. Box 69, Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069

Gregory D. Stevens, Chairman
Niagara River Greenway Commission
DeVeaux Woods Park
3160 DeVeaux Wood Drive
Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Dear Chairman Stevens,

The City of Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the City of Niagara Falls' proposal to create a plaza honoring Frederick Douglass in front of the Niagara Falls Municipal Complex. The site of the plaza is near the First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls, where Douglass delivered a speech advocating abolition in 1856, and the site of the Suspension Bridge, the final crossing point on the Underground Railroad for fugitives seeking freedom in Canada. The plaza will feature a sculpture honoring Douglass and interpretation of his role in the abolition movement and his time spent in Niagara Falls. This proposal is consistent with preservation goals of integrating historic resources into economic development opportunities.

The city has a rich cultural history that has yet to be fully explored. The city's proposed historic walking trail will serve as a vehicle in the rediscovery and interpretation of its many cultural assets. The plaza, as a link on that trail, will promote the city's role in the Underground Railroad and stimulate heritage tourism, an important economic driver of our local economy.

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For these reasons, I am pleased to support this project and look forward to the creation of the Frederick Douglass Plaza. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

James Bragg, Historic Preservation Specialist
Planning, Development & Environment



NIAGARA FALLS BLOCK CLUB COUNCIL, P O BOX 2132
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14302

Michael Henderson, President
C/O P O Box 2132
Niagara Falls, New York 14302

Gregory D. Stevens, Chairman
Niagara River Greenway Commission
DeVeaux Woods Park
3160 DeVeaux Wood Drive
Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Dear Chairman Stevens,

I am writing in support of the City of Niagara Falls' proposal to create a plaza honoring Frederick Douglass in front of the Niagara Falls Municipal Complex. The site of the plaza is near the First Congregational Church of Niagara Falls, where Douglass delivered a speech advocating abolition in 1856, and the site of the Suspension Bridge, the final crossing point on the Underground Railroad for fugitives seeking freedom in Canada. The plaza will feature a sculpture honoring Douglass and interpretation of his role in the abolition movement and his time spent in Niagara Falls. The total budget for the project is \$280,000.

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For these reasons, I am pleased to support this project and look forward to the creation of the Frederick Douglass Plaza. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

NIAGARA FALLS BLOCK CLUB COUNCIL

Michael Henderson

Michael Henderson, President