



A rendering of the West River Parkway Connector Park. (Provided by New York State Parks)

## State makes move to close Grand Island's West River Parkway

By [Nancy A. Fischer](#) | Published April 10, 2018 | Updated 7 hours ago

After several years of discussion and protests, New York State Parks began Tuesday its first step to transform West River Parkway into a multi-use trail along the Niagara River on Grand Island. Residents began seeing construction vehicles setting up and blocking off roads Tuesday, and a notice that work is expected to commence next week. A large neon sign informed drivers the closing of the road will happen on April 16. The \$2.5 million project was introduced to residents in a public meeting in the fall of 2015.

But, the plan to permanently close the seasonal road has raised the ire of some residents – especially those living along West River Parkway, who are concerned about traffic closer to their homes and maintenance of the pathway and park. The eight-mile path will run between Long Road and Oakfield Road and is expected to be completed this fall.

The State Parks office announced Tuesday the project will transform two lanes of highway into a trail that runs along the Niagara River from Beaver Island State Park to Buckhorn State Park, ultimately connecting Buffalo to Niagara Falls. "Connecting our communities to our waterfront enhances tourism opportunities and energizes economic development," said State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey, in a statement.

State Parks is using a \$1.6 million federal transportation grant and \$900,000 from the New York State Power Authority and the Niagara River Greenway. The trail, which will replace a two-lane, 55-mile-per-hour state highway, is expected to be in place this fall.

Rep. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo, called the work an "investment in Grand Island" which will "provide residents with new opportunities to explore the water's edge" and also expand a network of waterfront trails.

Town Supervisor Nathan McMurray said, in the statement, "Grand Island is a unique and beautiful place. Eighty percent of North America's fresh water – and 20 percent of the world's fresh water – flows around it. Once the West River Parkway Multi-Use Path is in place, the riverfront will be open for all to enjoy."