

Revealing Niagara:

A Citizen Vision for Heritage and Cultural Tourism in the Bi-National Niagara Region



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The Urban Design Project

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Preface

This volume presents a citizen vision for heritage and cultural tourism development in the bi-national Niagara region. It was originally developed as part of an ongoing public conversation we called *Rethinking Niagara*. We offer that vision again for further public consideration here.

It is important to talk about who and where we are and what we hope to become. Such public conversations reveal, not only what aspirations we inhabitants hold for our region, but they also reveal what we know about our home. When those conversations are broadened to include participants from across the nation and beyond, they may also help reveal the possible roles our region may play in the world.

The vision described here asks us to imagine our region simultaneously as both a home, worthy of our love and care, and as an international tourism destination attractive to the world for all the same reasons that we cherish it.

This vision has literally sprung from the lips of hundreds of participants in *Rethinking Niagara* since 1999. They have spoken eloquently about our great wealth of history and historical places, of great art and architecture, of the beauty and bounty of nature we share. They know these are stories the world wants to hear, places it wants to see.

Along the way, we need to understand that the work of drawing visitors from around the world and the work of making a better community for ourselves and our families are the same work. When visitors come here they help build our economy, of course. But when we protect our natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of tourism, we also protect it for ourselves. And when we tell our stories to the world it also brings meaning to our own lives.

Our wealth in heritage resources is so vast and varied that it is hard to appreciate the full scope of what our region has to offer. One way to cope with such largesse is to organize our sites and stories according to a simple set of themes. An explanation of this thematic framework makes up a large part of this report. So, we have:

- *The Landscape*, encompassing the river, two Great Lakes, the Niagara escarpment, the gorge, and Niagara Falls itself, as well as a network of trails and parks;
- *The Bounty of Nature*, including all of the food the land produces, the wines made here, and the great variety of cuisines practiced in the region;
- *War, Peace and Freedom*, for the stories of the First Nations, of military conflict along the international frontier, the flight to freedom along the Underground Railroad, and the lasting legacy of peaceful cooperation here;
- *The Wealth of a Region*, honoring the region's extraordinary industrial heritage including canals, railways, steel, grain, the birth of hydroelectric power, and more;
- *Enterprise in the Arts*, celebrating the region's riches in visual and performing arts from Shea's Buffalo to the Albright Knox Art Gallery to The Shaw Festival and more.

The thematic framework will serve two audiences and two purposes. It will help make the variety of attractions visible and comprehensible to those who come to visit our region. It will help them understand what is here, what there is to learn, and why it is important.

The thematic framework will also guide our own work to develop, interpret and promote these resources. Being clear about what sites and stories are important will help us be clear about where we invest our time, energy, and money.

This thematic framework, then, is a plan in two senses of the word. It can be a plan for those who decide to visit our region, and it can be a plan for those of us who will join the work to develop our region.

Also presented here is a sampling of mapping work undertaken as part of *Rethinking Niagara*. Our tendency historically has been to think of the Niagara River as the boundary between two nations and two regions. The current effort depends on seeing the river as the center of a single region in two nations. The maps shown here were created to manifest that new reality in a graphic way. It is, with no exaggeration, a new way of seeing ourselves.

Meanwhile, there is an extraordinary amount of practical work now being done to make this new vision of Niagara a reality. Government agencies, institutions of higher education, companies, not for profit advocacy organizations, cultural organizations, and citizens of all kinds are working together across this international border to re-imagine and remake this great region. Some of those initiatives are mentioned here.

Finally, we must acknowledge this vision did not begin with *Rethinking Niagara*. We value the contributions of all those who participated in this conversation. But the vision also owes a great debt to the work of many others who came before. We are drinking from a deep well we have not dug. Thus, it is with great appreciation

that we offer this version of the emerging vision. We hope it will prove true and be useful as we all address the work ahead.

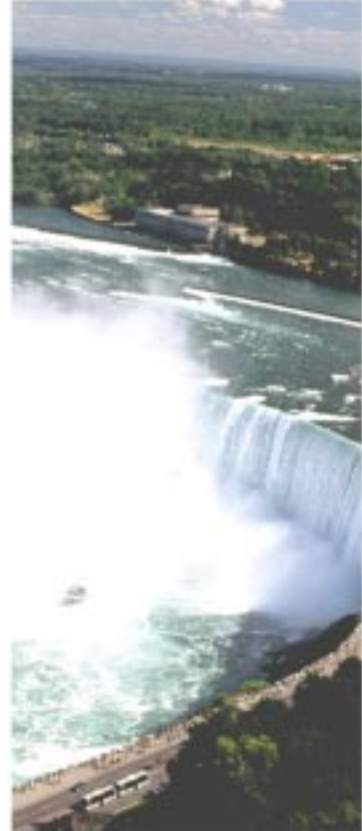
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Introduction: Two Nations. Many Stories. One Destination.

This is the promise of heritage tourism in the bi-national Niagara region. The people of the Canadian and U.S. “Niagaras” share a belief in the great promise that heritage tourism holds for our bi-national region. We need to measure that potential, sketch a proposal for how to organize it, and outline a strategy to achieve it.





Extraordinary Stories

We have an extraordinary array of stories to tell and sites to see. We know this, but it is a reality that remains to be fully revealed. We have the number one brand name tourist attraction in the world – Niagara Falls – and all of its associated stories of geology, exploration, daring-do, power, and romance. We have the Erie Canal, and its successor, the Welland Canal, great stories of engineering, migration, and commerce. But that's only the very beginning.



A Wealth of Heritage

We possess a wealth of history, culture, and natural beauty: pre-European times, colonial history, the underground railroad, hydropower and industry; great collections of art, theater and music of all types; an incredible landscape, not just the falls, but the river, the gorge, escarpment, and two great lakes.

How do We Make the Most of These Things?

How do we turn this wealth of heritage resources into an engine of economic growth? How do we use it to improve the quality of life for all of us who live here? How do we use it to regenerate our damaged environments?

Part of the answer lies in acknowledging that tourism will continue to grow, and heritage tourism, especially, will continue to grow, despite our tribulations. In fact, it is more important than ever for all of us to satisfy our curiosity about other people and places.





A Strategy for Development

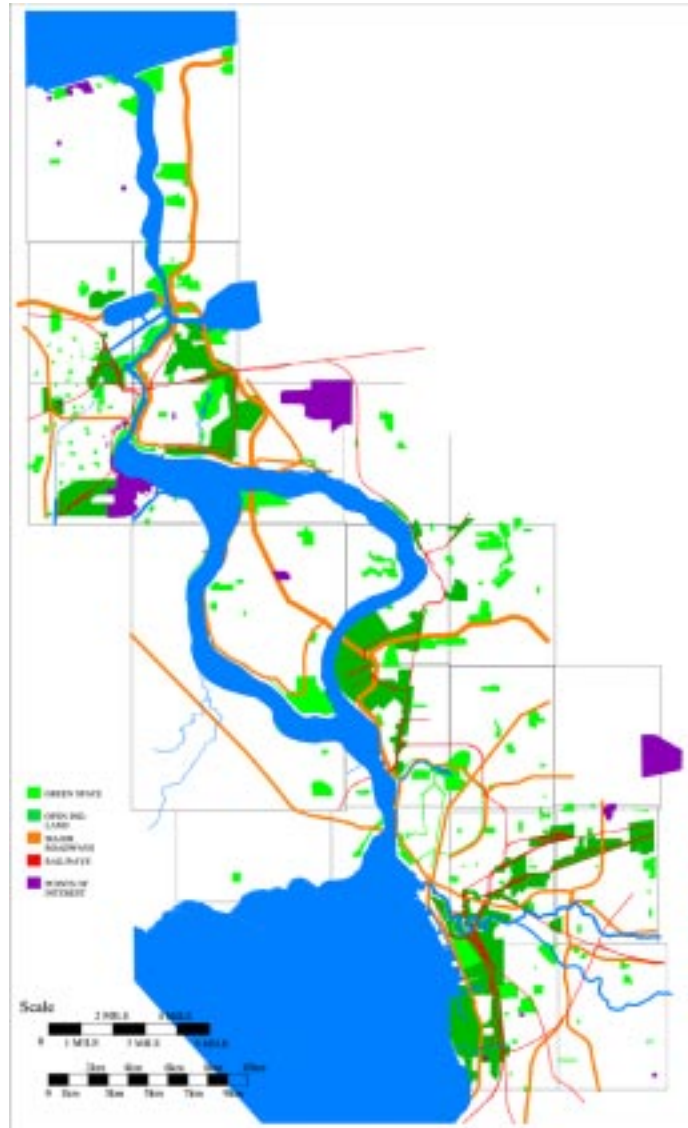
Creating an effective regional heritage tourism development strategy will require that we come to some agreement on the purposes of heritage development; that we share a general vision of the region as a fully-developed heritage tourism destination; that we recognize, at least generally, a common binational geography; and that we agree on an action plan for that development even as we work in our respective organizations and jurisdictions in two nations. These are difficult criteria – but we suspect we are closer to meeting them than we might think.



Investing our Inheritance

We take the meaning of heritage quite literally. It is about the things we have inherited, from nature – the falls, the river, the lakes, the landscape — and the things we have inherited from the people who have lived here before us – our cities and towns, the stories they tell, the traces of struggle, creation, and meaning.

We also see heritage development as a process in which community development, economic growth, and environmental regeneration are allied, not at odds. And we see it as a process that pays dividends for residents and visitors alike.



The Work of Heritage Development

Strategically, heritage development is simple. But it is very hard work. First, we need to invest in our sites and our stories, preserving the places that tell our stories, and developing the historical knowledge and narratives that can make these stories come alive, and make them vivid and authentic.

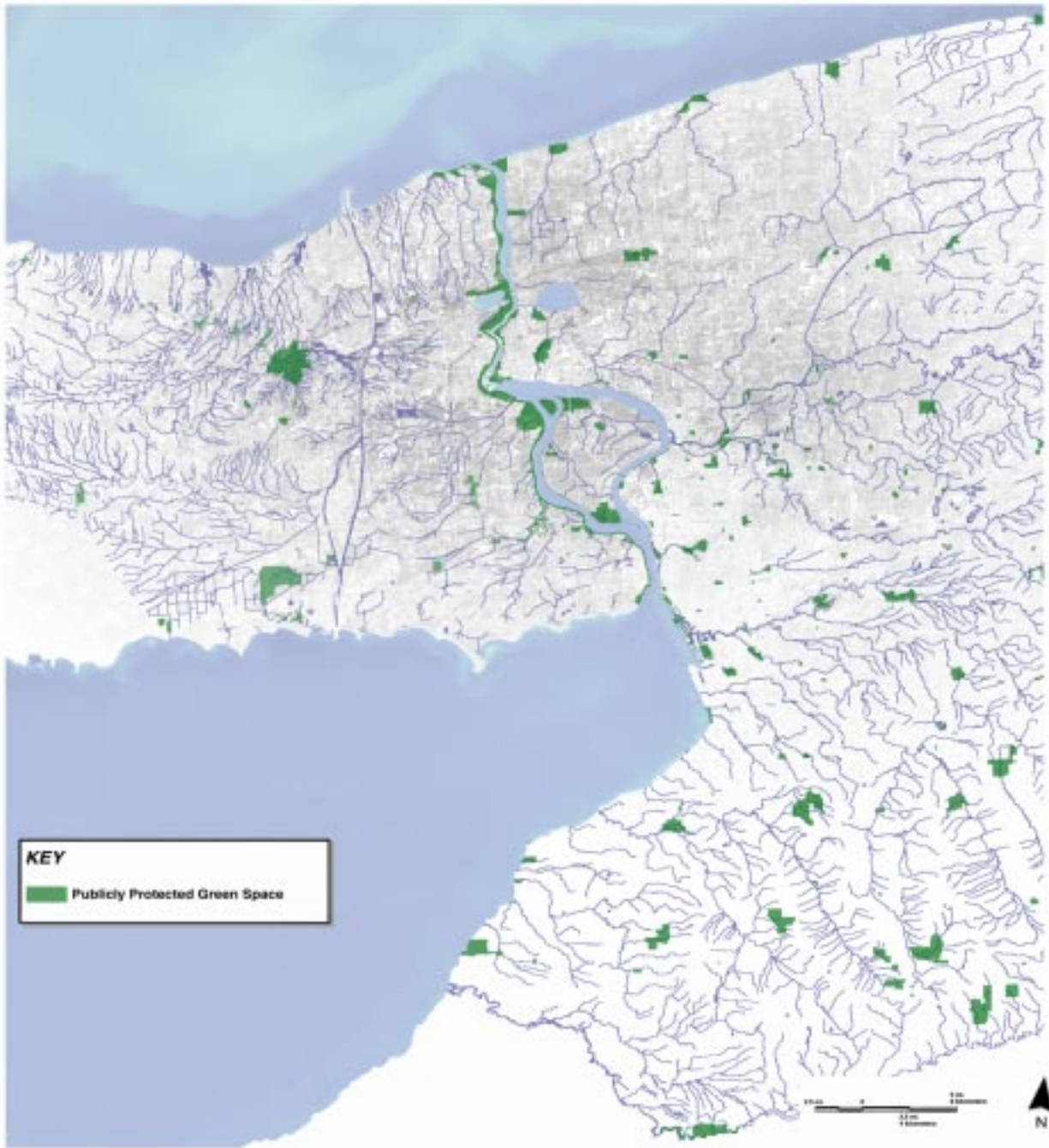
Second, we need to link them together. Sometimes this is a matter of hardware: transportation infrastructure or other facilities. Sometimes it is about software — information about what is here to experience and how to get from place to place.

Third, we need to work together with a regional bi-national destination in mind. We don't need a single organizational structure. But we need to find ways to take advantage of the variety, density, richness, and power of heritage attractions in this very confined piece of geography – ten or fifteen miles on each side of a river 30 miles long.



Niagara: Waterways

David Crombie offered some good advice at the beginning of the *Rethinking Niagara* process. He suggested that work on a bi-national heritage development strategy ought to start with re-mapping the region. Which is what we have done. David told us that in order to undertake new projects and work in new ways we need to redraw the images and dreams, the mental maps, we have of the region.



Niagara: Public Parks

In early 2001, Corwin Cambray, Ken Forgeron and George Nicholson of the Planning Department of the Region of Niagara began this work, in collaboration with Lynda Schneekloth and Steve Watchorn of the Urban Design Project. They built on a strong foundation of extraordinary environmental mapping the team had already completed for the Region of Niagara and joined it with other resources from the U.S. side.



Niagara: Parks, Wetlands & Protected Habitat Areas

The work of mapping a two-nation region revealed for us some of the difficulties that might be part of any bi-national collaboration. But the process also demonstrated to us the wisdom of David Crombie's advice. Creating these maps helped us see in new ways the great potential for heritage development and cross-border cooperation.



*Niagara: Parks, Agricultural Districts
& Other Protected Lands*

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Niagara: Protected & Unprotected Lands

A Thematic Framework

A Thematic Framework for Heritage

When Mary Means addressed the first *Rethinking Niagara* conference she talked to us about the “closet organizer” theory of heritage development. When you have a lot of stuff, you need a good closet organizer. It won’t give us any more room. It won’t give us any less stuff. But it will make it easier for us to see what we’ve got and find what we want. The same is true of heritage themes. They act as an organizing framework to tell visitors what we’ve got – and we have a lot of stuff – and how to find it.

Our mapping has helped us identify five themes: the landscape; the bounty of nature; stories of war, peace and freedom; the wealth of a region; and enterprise in the arts.

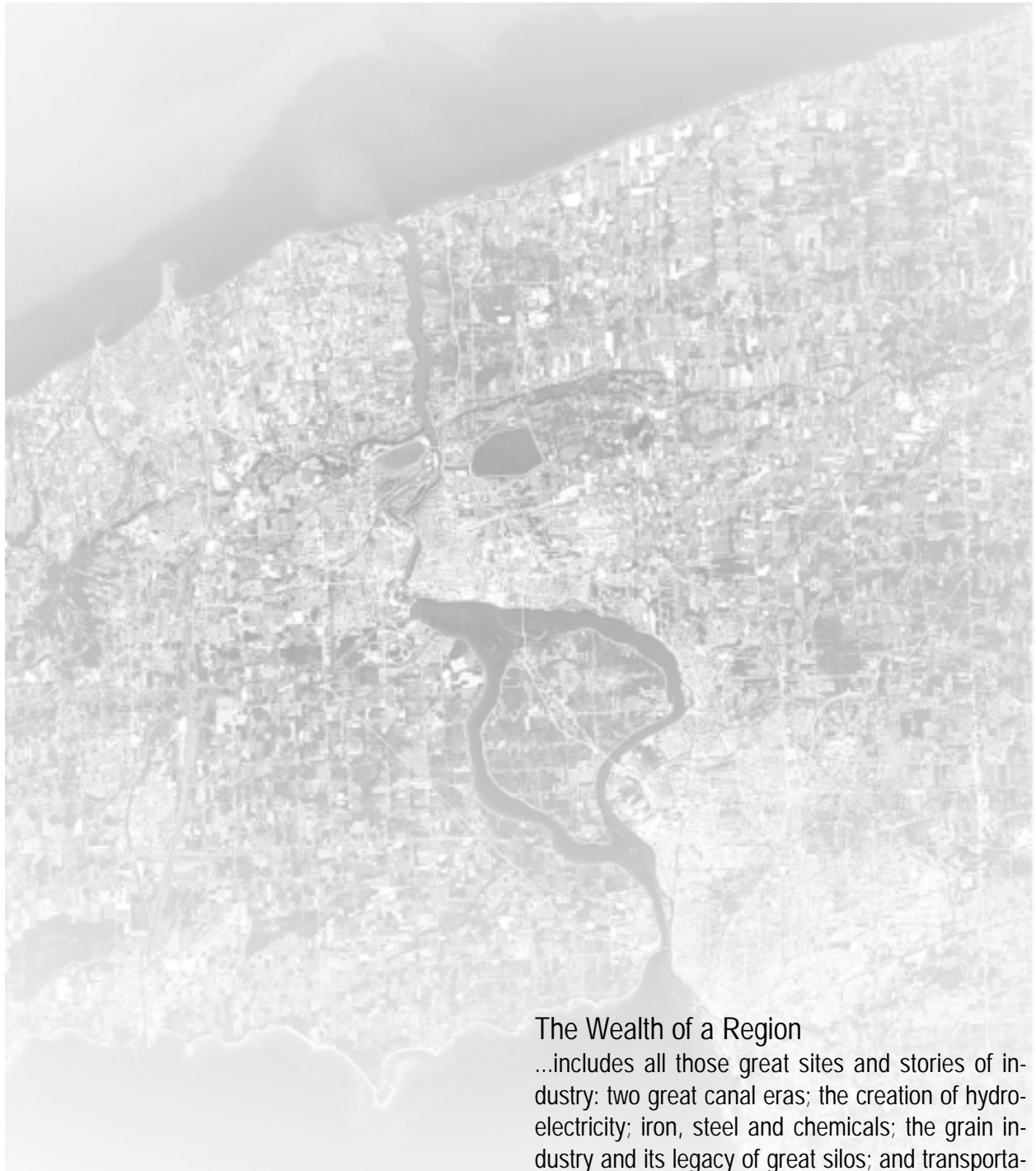
Not every heritage attraction will find a home in these themes. Not every story will fit neatly into a single category. But these themes can help make our heritage riches more visible and understandable, not only to visitors, but to ourselves as well. We can see on the maps in the back of this book how these themes are truly bi-national – and how all of these stories are told better and more completely in two nations rather than one.

The Landscape

...encompasses our land, water, and life; our parks, paths, and greenways; the human-made fabric of our cities; and what we call our green structure – the green and natural parts of our landscape, whatever jurisdiction they may fall under.

The Bounty of Nature

...comprises the natural products of our region: grapes and wine; other food and agricultural products, including tender fruit; and the cuisine of the region – our unique ways of enjoying this bounty.



War, Peace and Freedom

...includes the many stories about life on this great river – before it was an international frontier, in pre-European days; during the struggles for empire, independence, and sovereignty; and the extraordinary story of the 19th century freedom seekers of the Underground Railroad.

The Wealth of a Region

...includes all those great sites and stories of industry: two great canal eras; the creation of hydro-electricity; iron, steel and chemicals; the grain industry and its legacy of great silos; and transportation – shipping, rails, auto-making, and aerospace.

Enterprise in the Arts

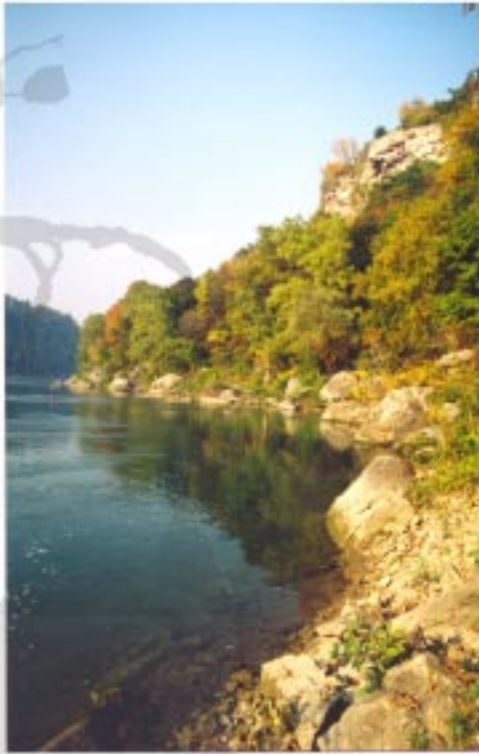
...spans the range of artistic and cultural attractions from world-class visual arts, to a wealth of live theater productions, great music of all kinds, and cutting edge contemporary art.



The landscape is the most basic element of our rich inheritance. It is the table on which all of our other gifts are spread. The Niagara River is at its heart, connecting two Great Lakes and joining two great nations. Our communities are interconnected by a common historic landscape – by rivers, creeks, for-

ests, parks, greenways and trails, and by a great escarpment that extends far beyond our region. Much has been done on both sides of the river much to recognize, restore, protect, and enhance these treasures.

landscape



A Demand for Stewardship

Our common landscape, first of all, is a bio-region, a geography, a natural place. The backbone of this landscape is the Niagara Escarpment. It begins in Western New York, crosses the river at Queenston and traverses the Niagara peninsula as far as the head of Lake Ontario before turning north to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. On the Canadian side it forms a 725 kilometer-long green corridor protected by legislation since 1973 and supervised by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. It was designated a World Biosphere by UNESCO in 1990 as representative of the world's important ecosystems. Our task is to demonstrate how the conservation of bio-

logical diversity and the promotion of environmentally appropriate development can proceed together.

The region is blessed with other great ecological resources. The Niagara River has been recognized internationally as an important bird area, providing habitat for 19 species of gulls. The River, the Falls, the Gorge, and the Lakes are all ecological treasures that demand our stewardship, for our long term well-being, let alone the success of a heritage tourism initiative.

landscape a bio- and geo-region



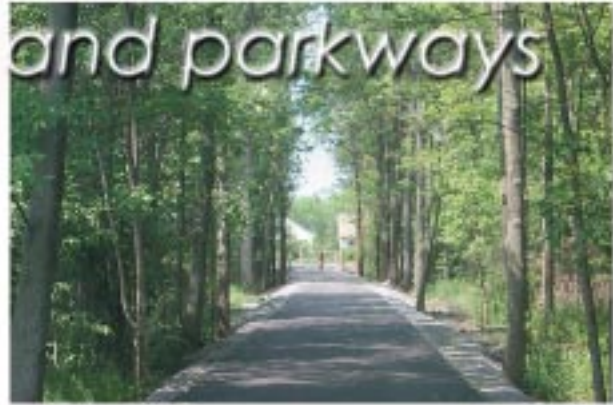
A Regional Network

We must also address our responsibility to preserve, protect, and extend a great legacy of public green space – parks, paths, and greenways that connect us to the beauty of our region and to each other. In the late 19th century, governments on both sides of Niagara Falls saw the wisdom of recovering the lands around the cataract from exploitation. The Niagara Parks Commission in Ontario went even farther, acquiring most of the land along 56 kilometers of riverfront from Fort Erie to Niagara on the Lake. Today, the commission combines responsibility for protecting the river's environmental and historical heritage with a mandate to provide for the growing millions of tourists who visit annually.

Likewise, both nations have pursued the elaboration of trails and pathways to make waterfronts and other natural environments accessible for hikers, cyclists, and others. Waterfront greenways on the U.S. side have been stitched together, piece by piece, over the years along the Buffalo River, Niagara River, Scajacqua Creek and more. These pathways build on the 19th century legacy of Buffalo's Olmsted Parks and Parkways. The City of Niagara Falls is committed to extending its waterfront trail from City line to City line, including along the recently closed Robert Moses Parkway.

landscape

parks, paths and parkways



On the Canadian side we have been even more aggressive, creating an ever-growing system of trails that now link the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, along the escarpment, with Niagara Parks Commission lands, all the way to Fort Erie, and soon in a Great Circle Route, along the Welland Canal Parkway Trail and the Friendship Trail. The system includes regional, inter-regional, and even national trails – the Bruce Trail, the Waterfront Trail, the TransCanada Trail and the Niagara Parkway. Right now a \$45 million capital proposal for expansion and enhancement of the Ontario Waterfront Trail, sponsored by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, the Region of Niagara, and more than two dozen

other local and regional governments, is pending with the Ontario Superbuild Corporation. Such investments have great leverage for heritage tourism.



A Hidden Resource

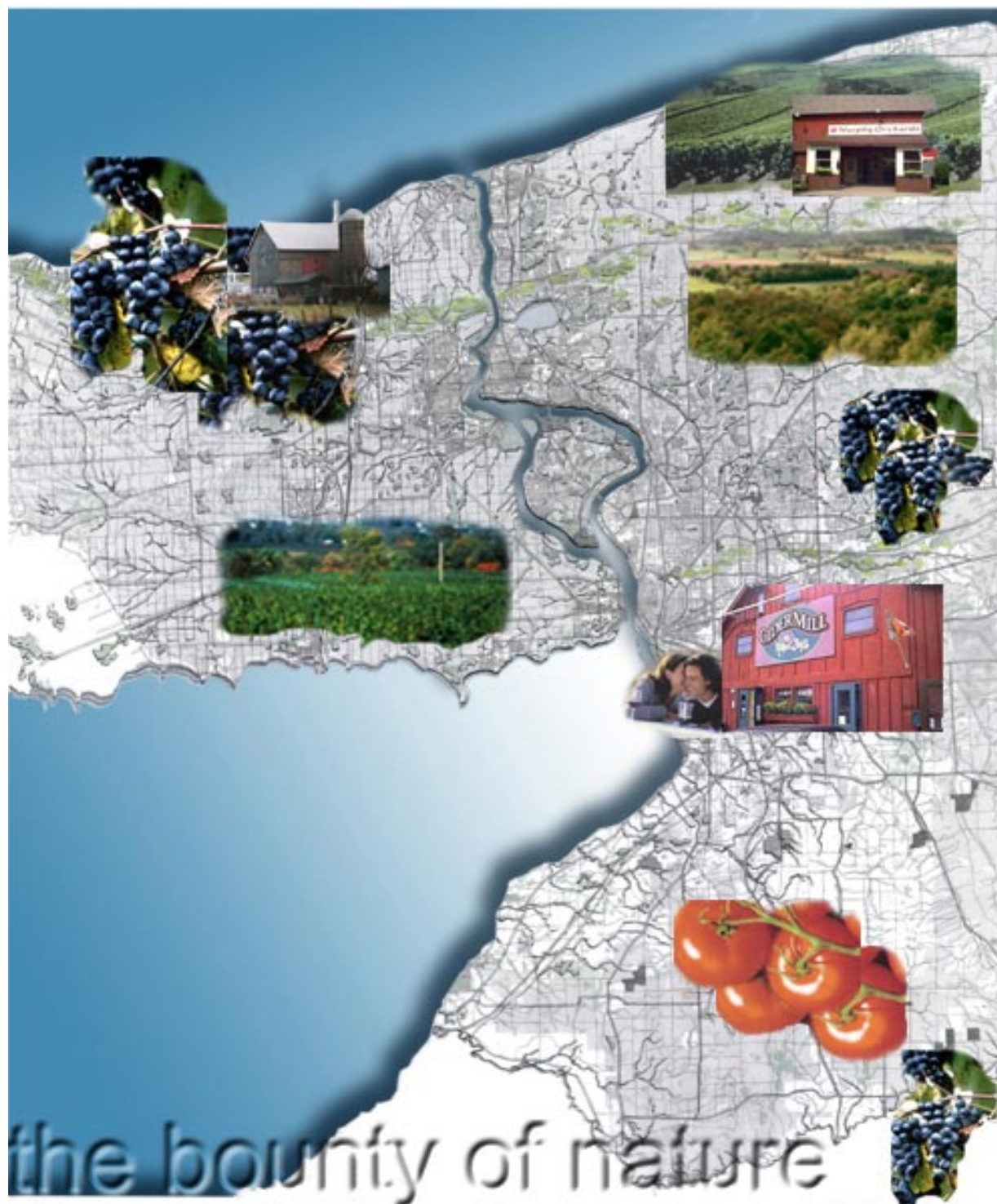
Our concern with the landscape also must extend to something we call the green structure. Not all of the green space or natural resources of our region are in publicly protected lands. Stream corridors, wetlands, institutional lands, privately held lands, including disused railway rights of way, old industrial sites, and more, all make up a part of our region that is rich with potential for the continuing elaboration of public open spaces, trails, and other connections. Now is the time to study these lands and prepare for their long-term redevelopment. Environmental repair and the continuing interweaving of the natural and the urban will make our region both more livable for residents and more alluring for visitors.



A Legacy of Great Architecture

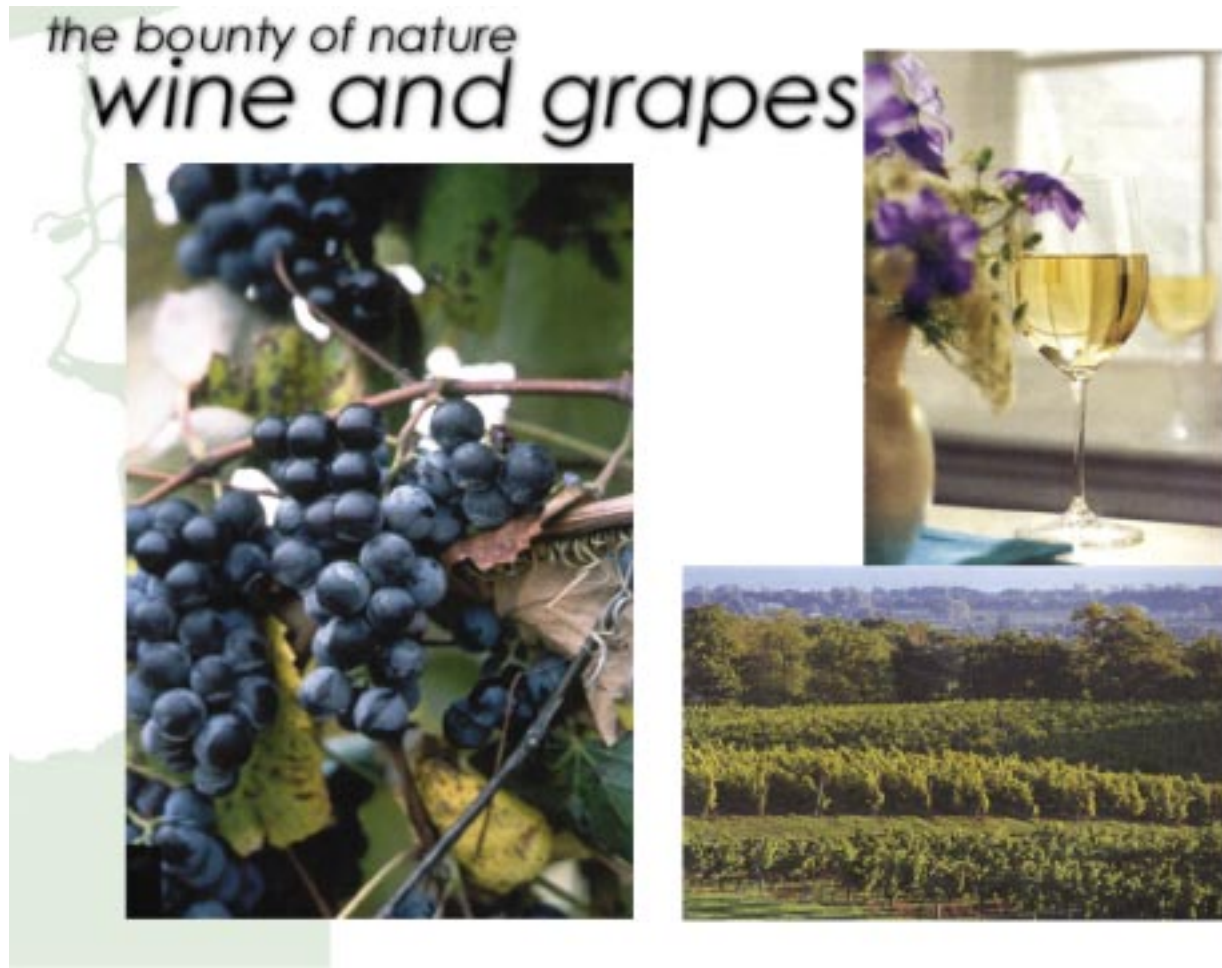
The human made environment – our cities and towns – are also part of the landscape and part of why visitors will want to come here. The region possesses truly world class architecture – Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin Martin complex, Louis Sullivan's path-breaking Guaranty Building, and H.H. Richardson's Buffalo State Hospital just to name a few. These are enough to make architectural tourism flourish in this region. But we also have the vernacular built landscapes – alluring villages like Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lewiston, and Youngstown – as well as lively cities – Buffalo, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines. We need to protect and promote both

the extraordinary and the ordinary in the human made environment because heritage tourists come to visit real places.



The bounty of nature... is ours. The combination of our climate, geography, soils, and years of toil and learning have produced a rich agricultural heritage of farms, horticulture, orchards, and vineyards nurturing tender fruit crops and other produce. Our region produces great wines, grows exquisite fruit and

vegetable crops, and celebrates the joys of food with a vast array of ethnic, contemporary, and country cuisines. All of these are magnets for the heritage tourist – indeed, for all types of tourists who want relief from the rigors of urban life.



The Vintner's Craft

Along the shores of Lake Ontario, and beyond the immediate region to Chautauqua and the Finger Lakes, grape growing and wine making are an important and expanding part of our heritage. In Ontario, the Niagara Wine Route draws a growing number of visitors who want to experience the gentle rural landscape and small communities, learn about wine making, and enjoy our native wines. Vintners, area restauranteurs, and others are becoming increasingly sophisticated, not only about promoting their own products, but also about cross-promoting the wares of other producers in the region, and taking advantage of the benefits of cross-border co-operation to expand their markets.

There are benefits of extending the Niagara Wine Route concept across the border into New York. But there is also a need to protect our wine- and fruit-growing regions. Vineyards are a delicate landscape, under pressure from urban growth, automobile traffic, and air pollution. The growers are leery of the impact that tourists can have on their operations, and on their small communities. Enough tourists would be a good thing but too many tourists would not. We need to strike the appropriate balance.

the bounty of nature food and farming



From Fertile Croplands

The story of agricultural production in our bi-national region is, likewise, a compelling one — from the hunter-gatherers of the ancient First Nations, to the Mennonites and Pennsylvania Dutch who followed the trail of the black walnut to find the most fertile croplands as they migrated to the Niagara Frontier, and on to the modern scientists of viniculture and hydroponics. Visitors to the Ontario Agricultural Museum in the heart of Halton can learn about this story. But the potential of the story to captivate heritage tourists is also evident in the simple growth in popularity of urban farmers markets, organic produce, and food festivals like the annual strawberry festival in Brant, or the Eden Corn Fest. Our region

produces wonderful apples, cider, peaches, tomatoes, prize-winning pumpkins, and much more. Why do we think that only local people would be interested?

Another important strand in the story of agriculture is carried by our formal gardens and horticultural institutes,

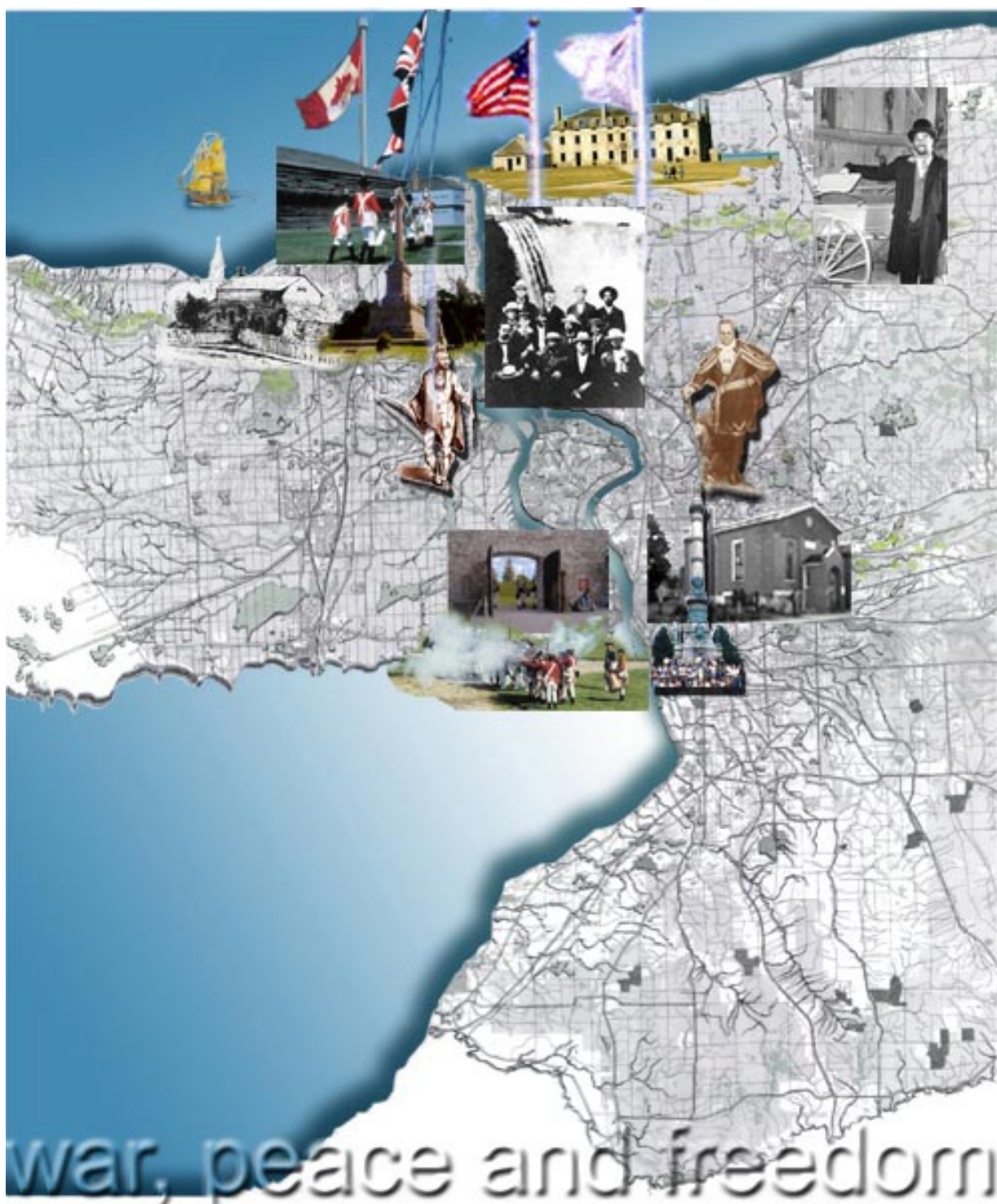
where the diversity of our flora is celebrated and the science of growing is advanced. It is a veritable archipelago of institutions, extending from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Hamilton, to the horticultural institute in Queenston, to the South Park Conservatory in Buffalo.

the bounty of nature dining and cuisine



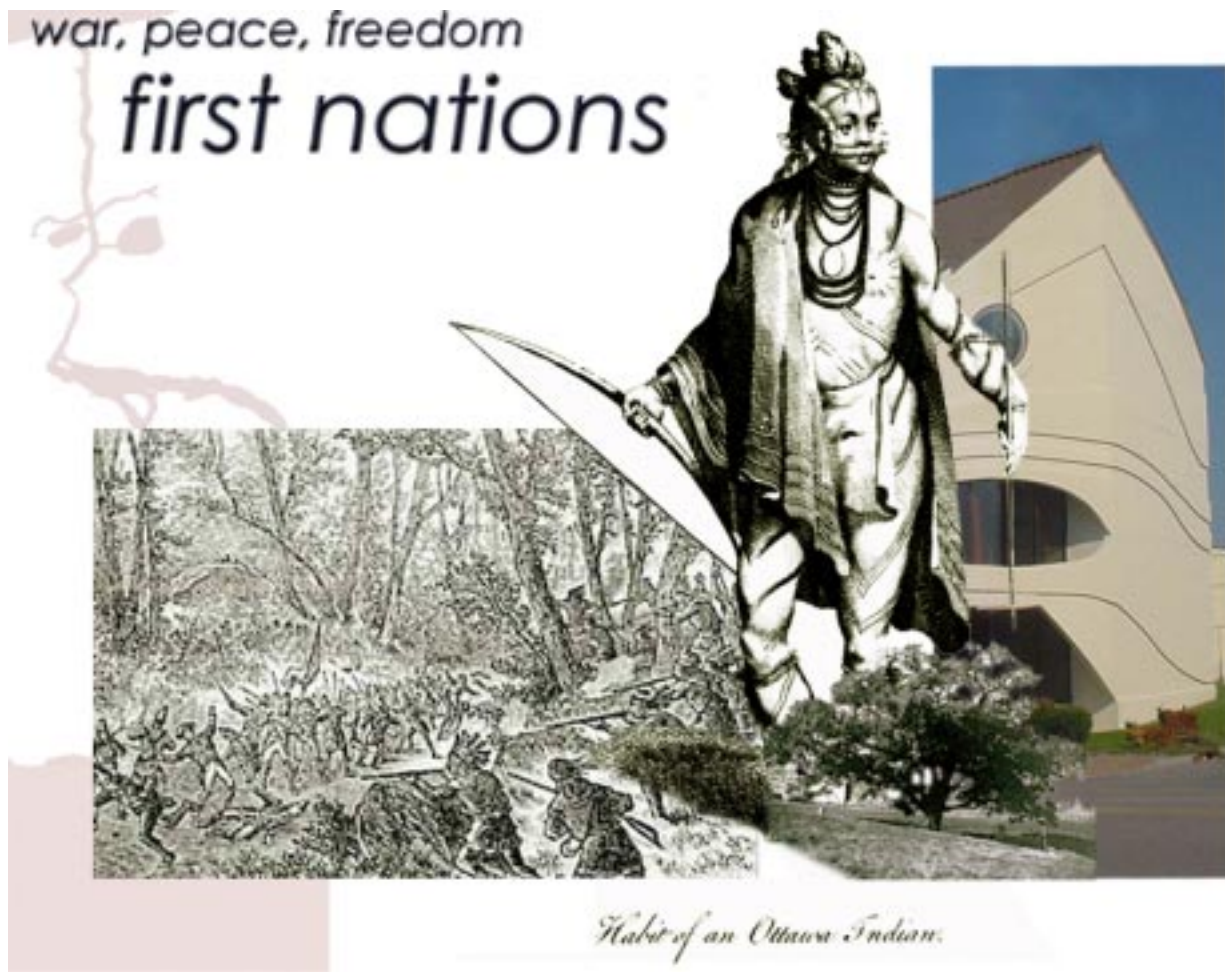
Glorious Food

And then there is the thing we like best about food: eating it. Our bi-national region is rich with traditional ethnic foods, fine contemporary cuisines, and just a lot of good places to eat. Growing attendance at The Taste of Buffalo, the Italian Festival, and many other events testify to the power of good food. And, again, why do we assume that such things will be of interest only to people who live here? These attractions need to be integrated into our marketing and promotion efforts aimed at the heritage tourist.



The two banks of the Niagara River, the River itself and the territory beyond have seen dramatic moments of conflict. These stories are of continuing interest and deserve further development and interpretation. But this River has also been the basis for enduring peace and friendship. The river and sur-

rounding region have been a meeting ground – a “middle ground” in the terms of historian Richard White -- for our nations. It has drawn together neighbors, each with their individual identities and traditions, and created a dynamic history and a diverse community.



Thousands of Years Here

The region has been a meeting ground for thousands of years. Long before Europeans arrived in the area, Native Americans or First Peoples were living here, initially hunting and gathering, then farming, building communities, making tools and implements, warring and trading, developing their cultures. They are still here today, and the stories of their past and present culture play an important role in the development of the heritage of our region.



34

Once a Tumultuous Relationship

This border has seen its share of conflict, of course, and the traces of it can be found up and down this River. The early explorations, the 18th century struggle for European supremacy, the settlement of the frontier, the conflict between the newly-formed United States and the British colonial masters for control of Upper Canada in the War of 1812, the stories of sporadic uprisings and revolts throughout the 19th century – the Caroline Incident, the Fenian invasion — are among the most dramatic elements of this regional history. These stories lend themselves to graphic depiction in forts and battle-grounds where people fought and died. Re-inter-

preting them in light of our common contemporary understanding of ourselves, and our relationships is an important heritage development task.



One of our most compelling stories was that of the 19th century freedom-seekers – the story of the Underground Railroad. This is the quintessential bi-national story.

If not for the Canadian abolition of slavery in 1794, there would have been nowhere for American slaves to flee. And the safe passage of freedom-seekers into Ontario required a sophisticated organization on both sides of the border to harbor, transport, and receive these refugees. This is evident in the network of sites from the Michigan Avenue Baptist Church and the Murphy Orchards, to Broderick Park

The Quintessential Bi-national Story

and the Whirlpool crossing, to havens in Fort Erie and St. Catharines.

The Freedom Seekers' story is one of world significance with power to draw visitors to our region. Much work has been done to develop and interpret this story; much work remains to be done to tell the story fully and bi-nationally.

war, peace, freedom

peace and friendship



An Undefended Border

Ultimately, the story of our region and our border is one of peace and friendship. Those who sought to exert control, by war or other means, were not the only newcomers to arrive and settle in the region. There were peace lovers, non-conformists, Quakers, Mennonites, Baptists, Methodists, and others who had no wish to fight, but only to live their lives in peace and freedom, away from strife. They too have had their influence on the evolution of the region.

Niagara came to symbolize the peaceful relationship and profound friendship between the two sides of the border. This sentiment is as strong today as it

was when in 1927 the Peace Bridge was dedicated, and in 1945 when an Island in the middle of the river – Navy Island – was proposed as the location for the United Nations Headquarters Building. These are traces to be recovered and developed.



ments of transportation – rails, shipping, bicycles, automobiles, and aircraft – these are also what made Buffalo, Hamilton, two cities named Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Lackawanna, Welland, and Lockport.

wealth of a region

canals



Our region has been shaped by two great canals and two canal eras. The story of the Erie Canal, which crossed upstate New York and ended in Buffalo, is nothing less than the story of the great westward migration across North America. The western terminus of the Erie Canal constituted a kind of inland Ellis Island through which millions of immigrants and settlers passed on their way west. Much work has been done to interpret the stories of the canal and the cities and towns through which it passed and much work continues. The recreational and tourist potential of the canal is also being developed under the auspices of a panel appointed by Commissioner Bernadette Castro. But much more work

Connection to the West and the World

remains to be done -- including the recovery of the physical remains of the western terminus of the canal, a pivotal site in our national history -- to tell the story that was so central to our emergence in the 19th century as a truly great nation.

The Welland Canal is nearly as old as the Erie Canal. In fact, it was financed by the same interests and built by the same laborers. But its story and its impact continue to the present. It remains a vital link in the St. Lawrence Seaway system, connecting the upper Great Lakes with Lake Ontario and on to the Atlantic and the world. As a working canal it has great potential to draw visitors who want to see the

wealth of a region

electricity



Lighting the Way

locks work and the ships move. But we are also working to develop the recreational, tourist, and heritage potential of the canal. The Region of Niagara has created a master plan to achieve these goals as it maintains its basic transportation function. Altogether, this has the potential to transform the surrounding communities and landscape.

The center of our region, Niagara Falls, is uniquely the home to another story of world significance, the harnessing of hydroelectric power. Nineteenth century industrialists made the cities of Niagara Falls centers of manufacturing when they harnessed the mechanical power of falling water.

But at the turn of the last century, when Nicola Tesla discovered the potential of alternating current, Niagara Falls changed the whole region, and indeed, the world. The New York Power Authority recently unveiled some truly marvelous hands-on interpretive exhibits on the story of hydroelectricity. But there are other sites to develop and stories to tell – of the early hydro plants on both sides of the river.



Forging the Future

The availability of cheap and plentiful energy – first coal, then hydroelectricity – helped give rise to other industries, notably the forging of iron and steel, the production of nickel, and the manufacture of chemicals. The stories of these industries, and the workers and business men who made them, also have the power to fascinate visitors and deserve to be told. But there are other legacies of these endeavors – the personal, corporate, and institutional monuments these industrialists built for themselves. They, too, are worth preserving, interpreting, and exploring.

wealth of a region

grain

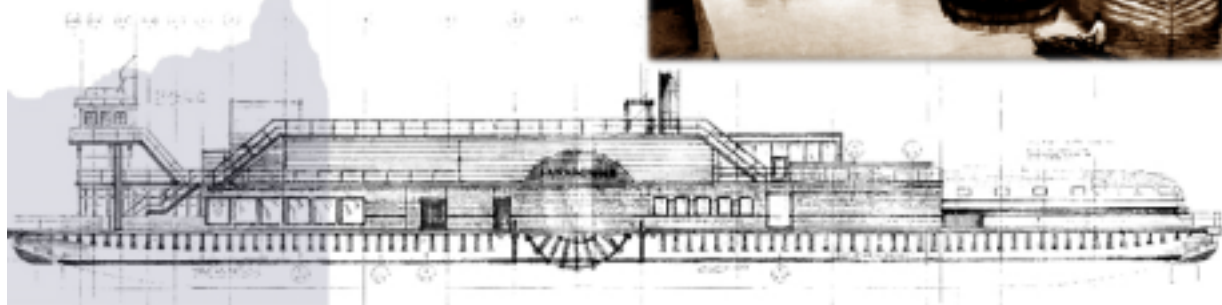


Fruit of the Prairie

Other industries left great monuments – most notably the business of shipping, storing, and processing grain. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, merchants in Buffalo built great elevators for the storage of grain: initially imposing masonry structures, later pure concrete cylinders, which are still notable features on our urban landscape. Here the stories of industry and architecture intertwine, for the reinforced concrete grain elevators were an early and primary example of the modernist impulse in architecture. These, too, deserve to be preserved and interpreted, both for the stories of the lives of those who worked in the industry, and for the story of these monumental structures.

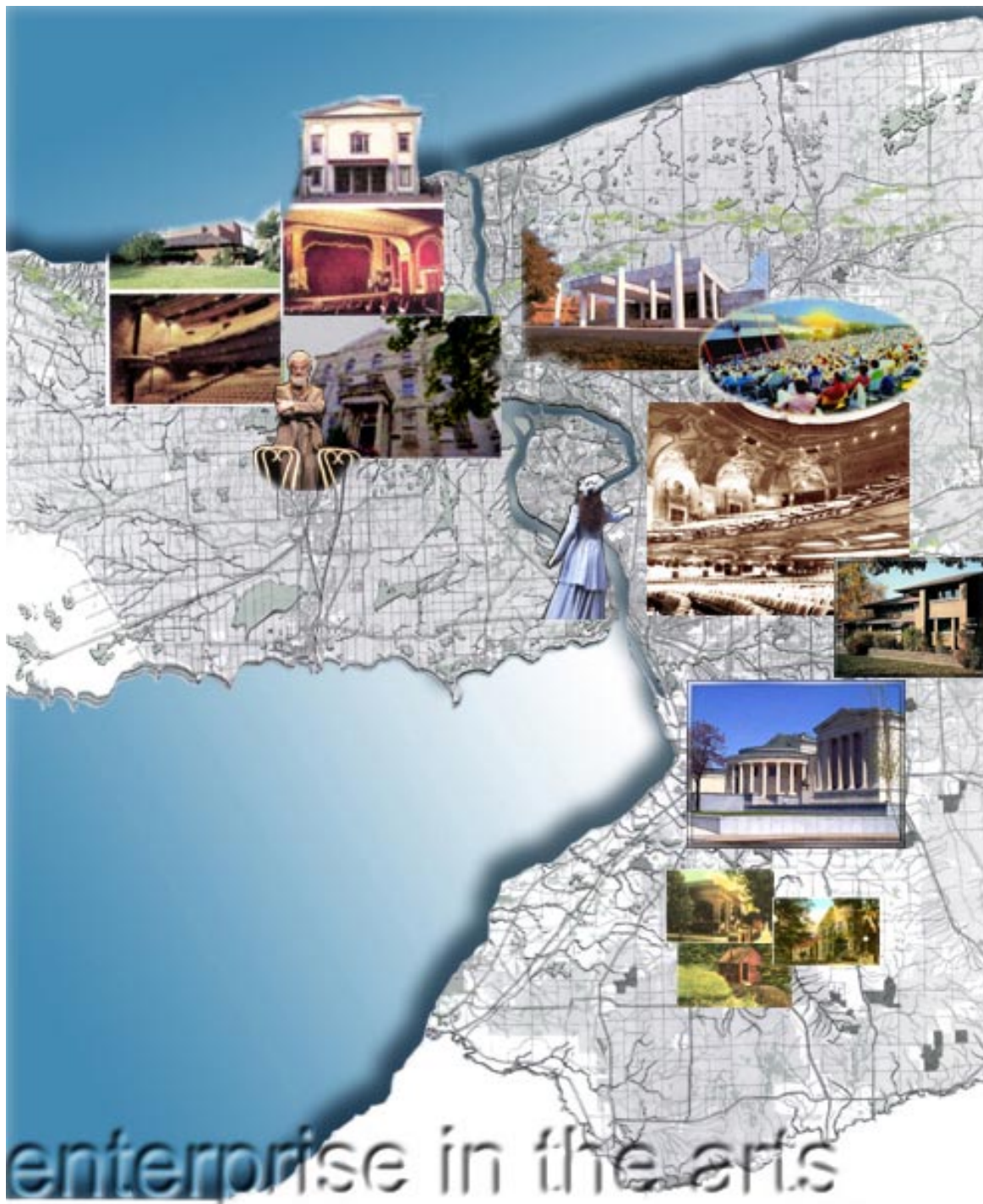
wealth of a region

transportation



Niagara in Motion

Finally, beyond the stories of the canals, there are stories of the other great transportation enterprises of the modern age: railways, automobile manufacturing, aircraft, and even bicycles. These stories have left such a deep imprint on our region, not to mention our societies in general, that they, too, need to be developed, interpreted, and told.



Enterprise in the arts.... The region has a wealth of assets almost too numerous to mention -- theatres, galleries and museums, festivals, and more – and a dense organizational infrastructure dedicated to promoting all forms of cultural endeavor. We believe in art for arts sake, but we also know that it can

make a major contribution to the project of heritage tourism. And while cultural institutions have long promoted themselves to residents and tourists on their own, there is a growing awareness that a larger market is available if they work to promote these assets cooperatively.

enterprise in the arts the visual arts



The region possesses a remarkable wealth in the visual arts. There are many great museums in the region including the Hamilton Art Museum, the Albright-Knox, the Burchfield-Penney, the Castellani, Hall Walls and a wide variety of galleries devoted to photography, ethnic art, and many other specializations. The arts are also promoted in our parks, at craft shows and in our festivals.

The Canvas of Imagination

enterprise in the arts theater



A Drama of Transformation

Our abundance of live theater also offers great potential for heritage development. The Shaw Festival has had a transformative effect on Niagara-on-the-Lake. This small town has become one of the outstanding communities of the region and of the country, with a tourism attraction so significant that at times

it seems almost overwhelming. The same benefits of linkage and shared promotion can be seen in Buffalo's Theater District – one of seventeen state-designated heritage districts across New York -- where investments in Shea's Performing Arts Center, the Irish Classical Theater and others have formed the center of gravity for a new regional attraction.

Another arena with untapped potential is the wealth of music and dance available in the region from the Buffalo Philharmonic at Kleinhans Music to popular presentations at ArtPark in Lewiston, and across the region.

enterprise in the arts music



A Collaborative Adventure

But the real story is in the results achieved when institutions join forces to expand their markets. The Olmsted Crescent in Buffalo unites ten major cultural attractions – the Buffalo Zoological Gardens, Museum of Science, Historical Society, The Albright-Knox, Burchfield-Penney, Wright's Darwin Martin complex, Delaware and Martin Luther King Jr. Parks, Forest Lawn Cemetery, and the Tri-Main Center – in common projects to help them all reach a larger market.

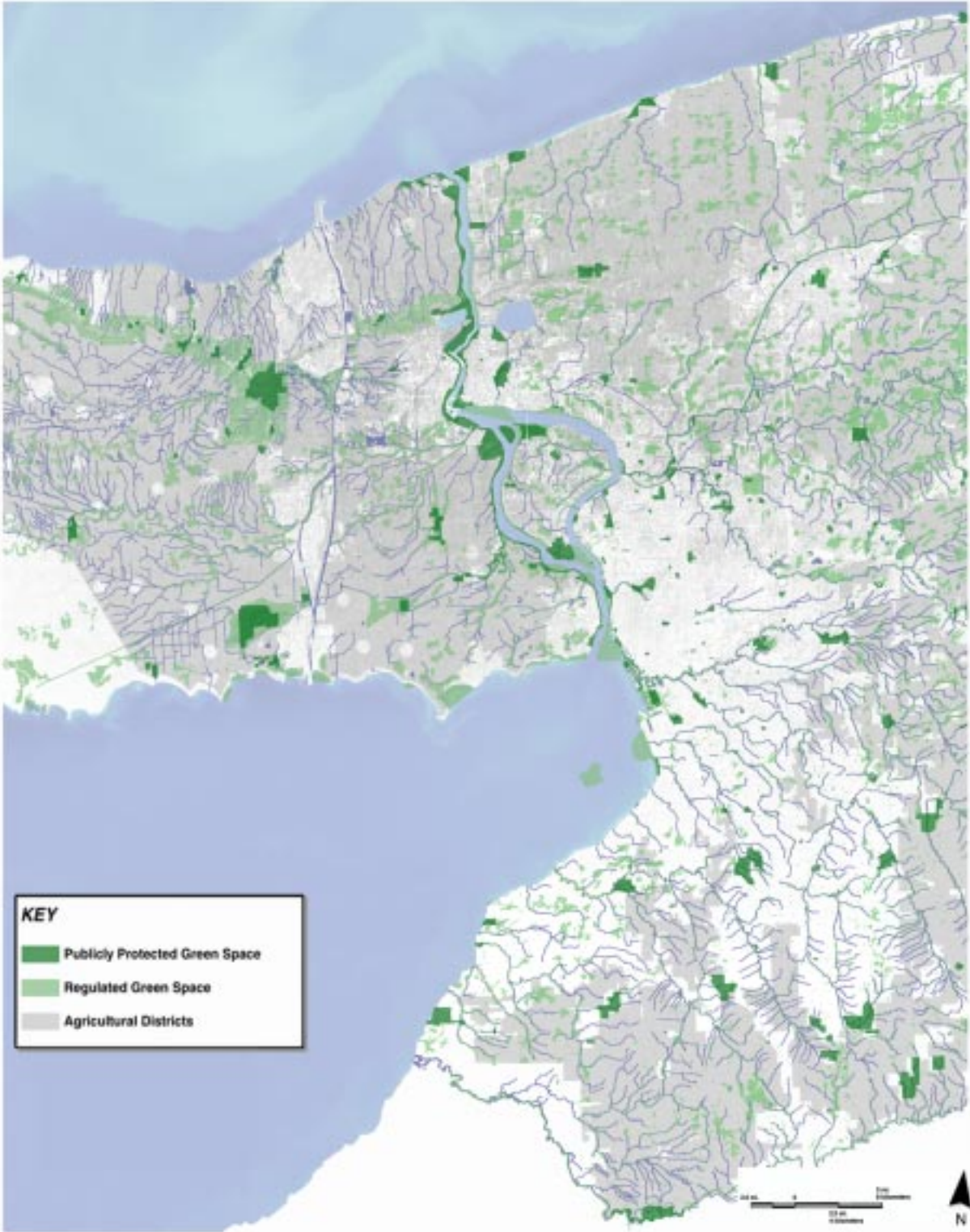
The Ontario Heritage Foundation pursues its mandate to protect and promote both the natural and cultural heritage of the province with imaginative pro-

grams like Passports to Heritage, a series of recommended heritage routes that combine visits to its own properties with suggestions for other heritage attractions along the way, and an expansion of Toronto's highly successful Doors Open program. When we talk about making one destination out of many sites and stories, this is exactly what we mean.

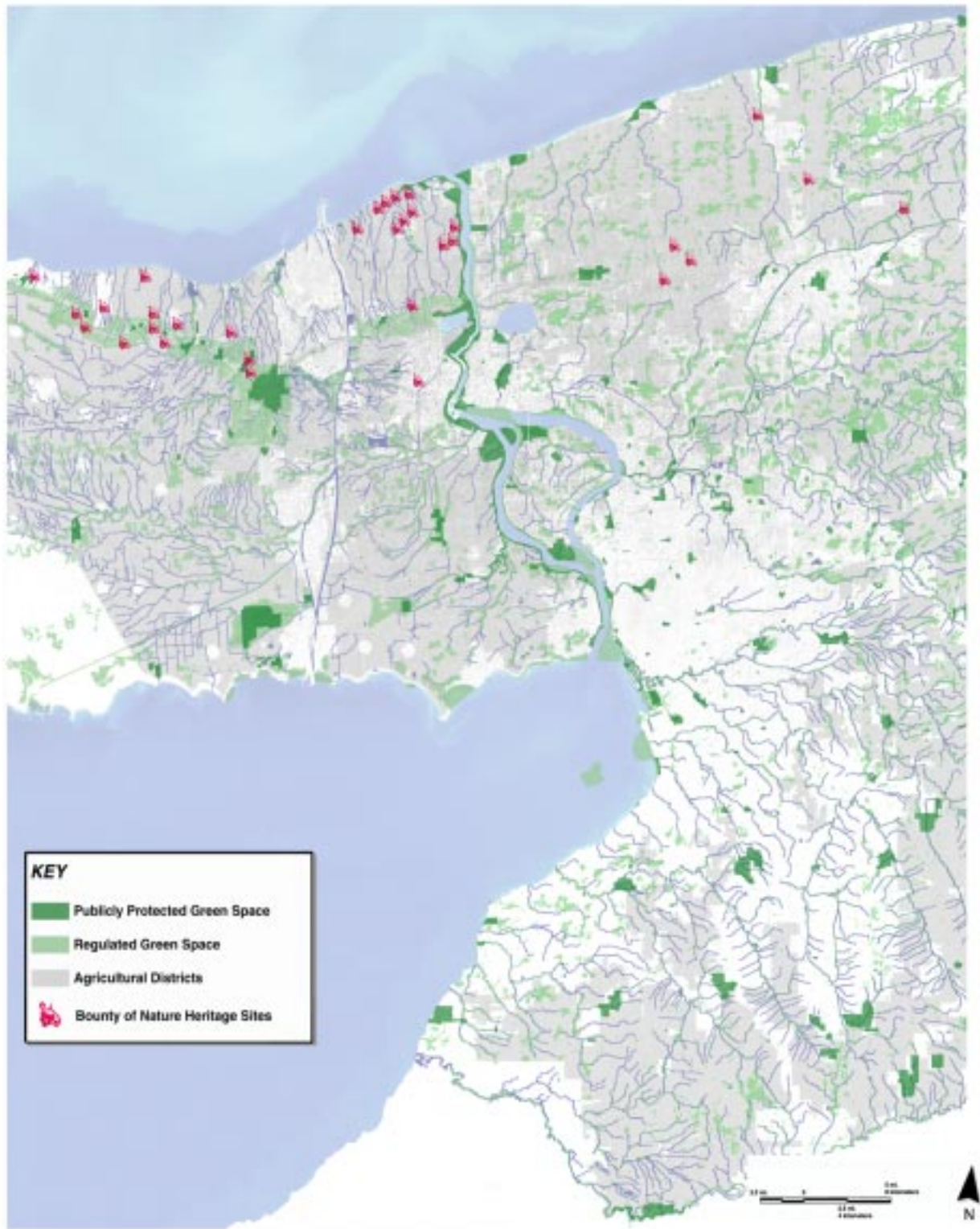
Heritage Mapping

David Crombie's advice about mapping also extends to understanding the real depth of the attractions we possess. Part of our work on bi-national mapping has involved creating a database of heritage sites across our five themes and then displaying those sites on the map.

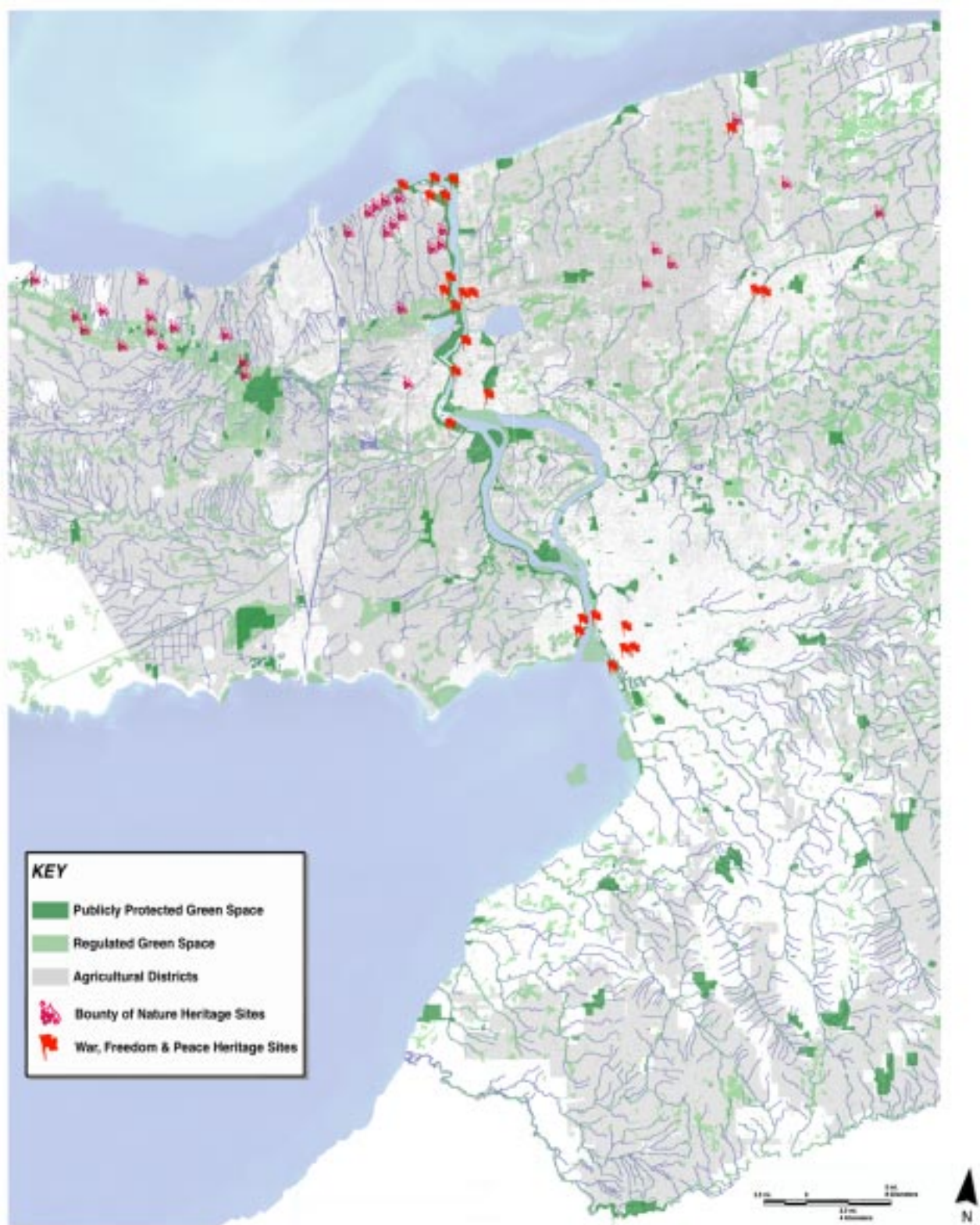




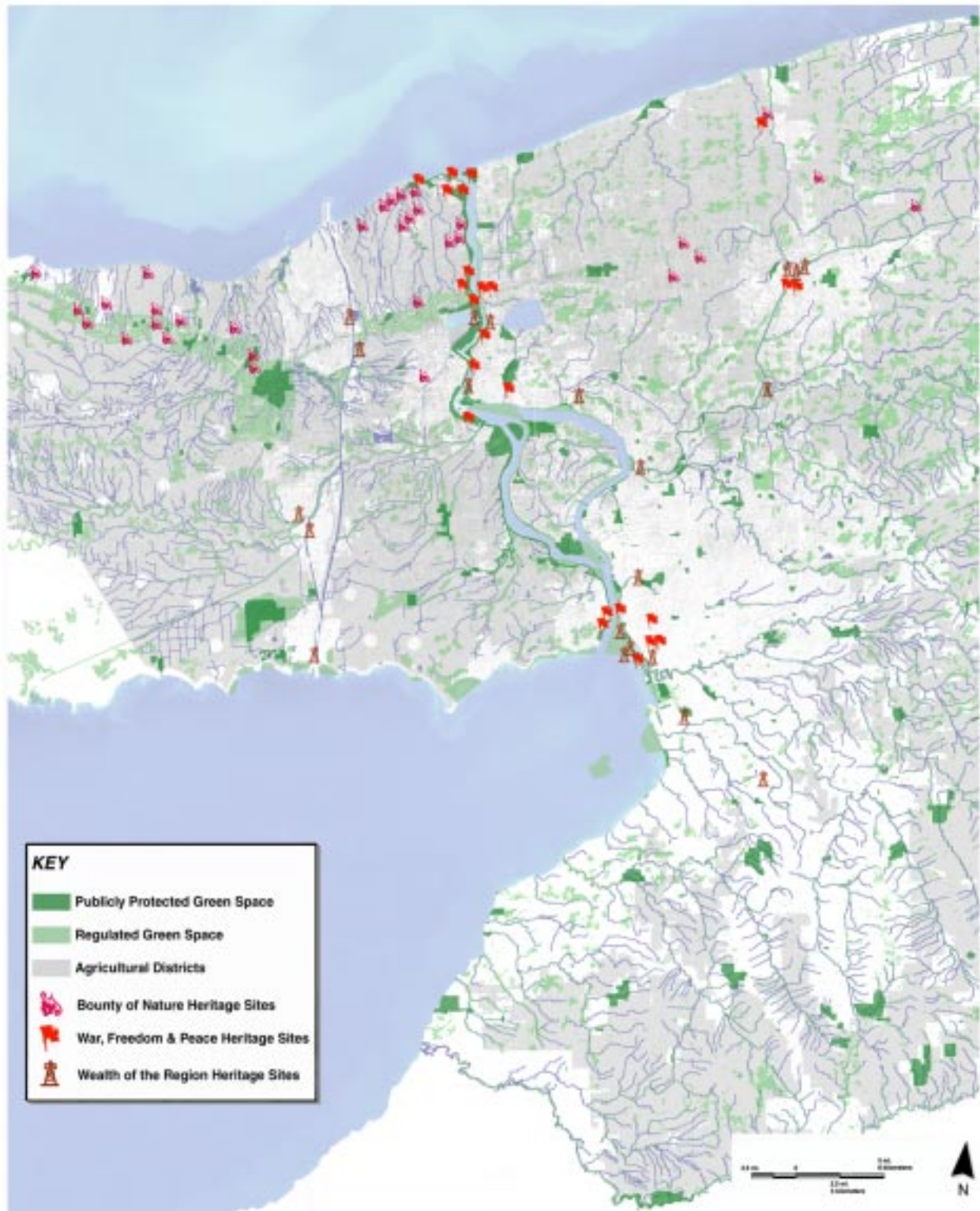
Parks, green spaces, protected lands, and agricultural districts are shown above.



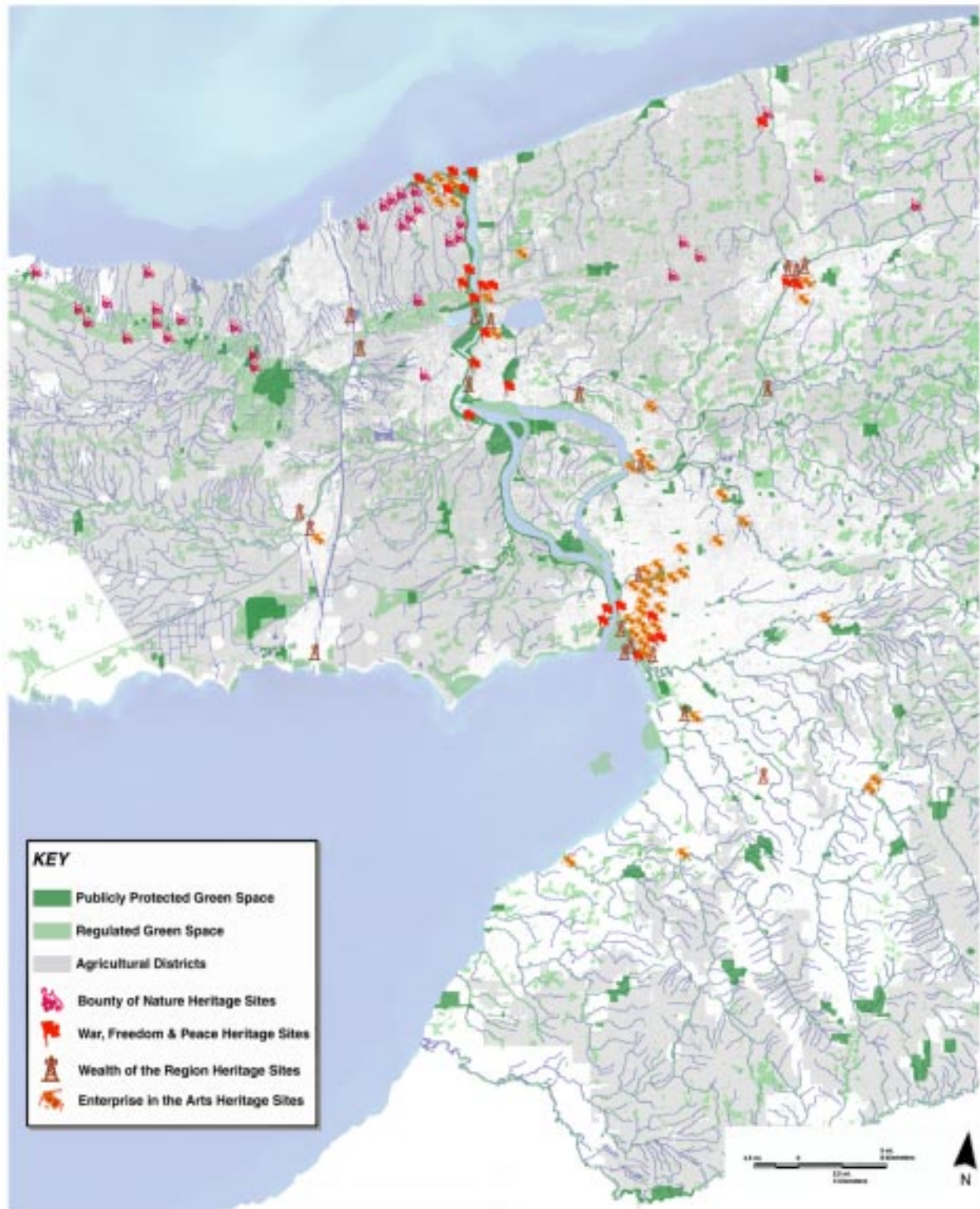
Next we see the vineyards, orchards, farms, and other sites encompassed in our theme “The Bounty of Nature” marked by purple clusters of grapes.



Marked by red flags are the sites that tell the stories of the theme "War, Peace, and Freedom."



Marked by the symbol of a tower on a power transmission line, we have the sites where we can tell the stories of "The Wealth of a Region."



Finally, marked by the symbol of the masks of comedy and tragedy, we have the museums, galleries, theaters, and other venues of "Enterprise in the Arts."

The Promise of Heritage

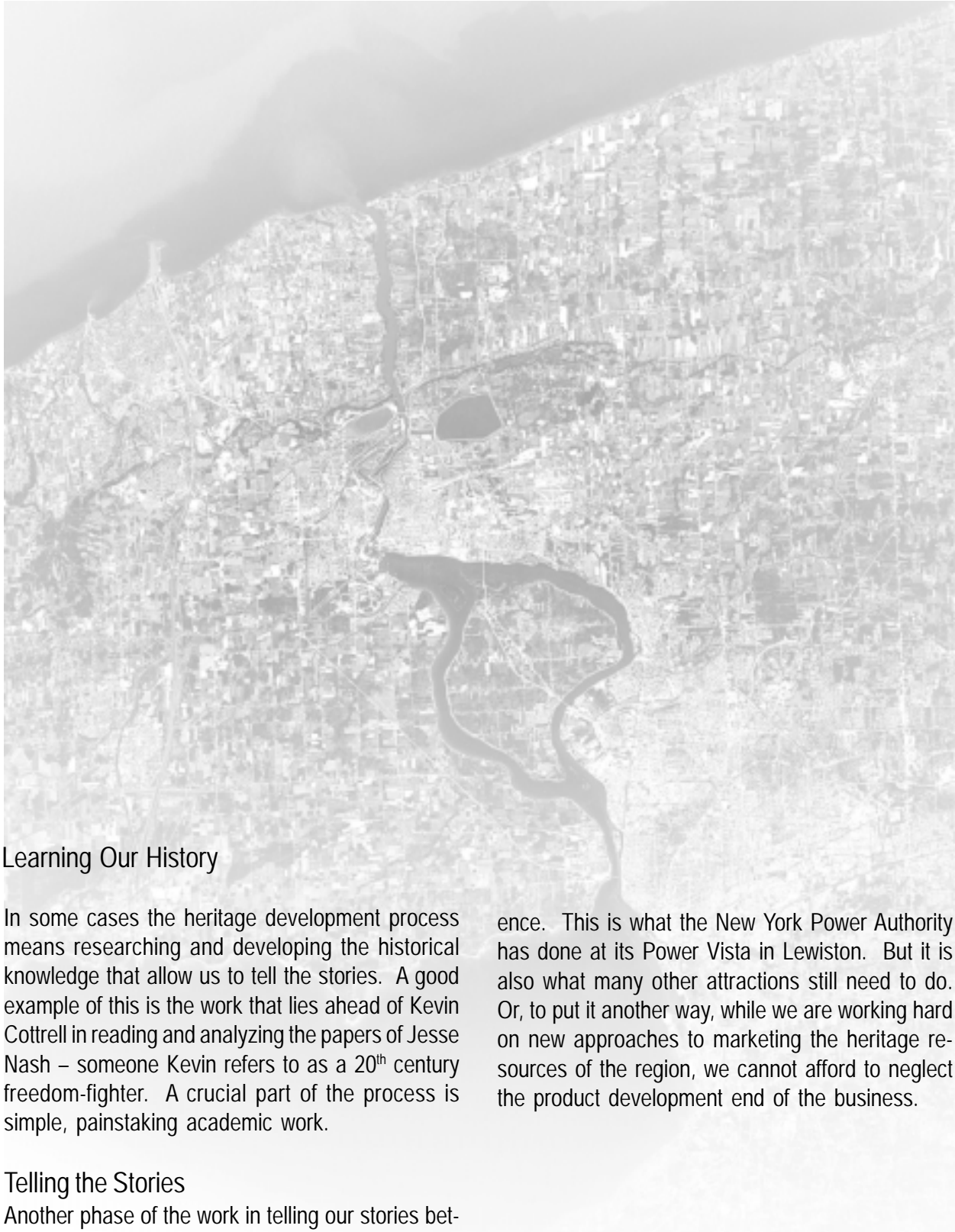
What do we do Next?

The vision outlined here is decidedly a work in progress. But it begins to suggest the full potential we have in the heritage resources of our region. And it shows the kind of work we need to do to develop, interpret, and connect those resources. Even now, it provides a pretty good picture of the real wealth of heritage resources this region possesses.

It is easy to agree that the potential is enormous. But what do we do? How do we deliver on the promise of heritage tourism in a bi-national Niagara? To some extent we are already doing exactly what we need to do.

Work is in Progress

Organizations all across the region are already working to tell their stories in ways that are more compelling and more complete. The first phase of this process involves recovering the places that offer us somewhere to tell the story from. Folks in Buffalo, for example, haven't invested about \$24 million not only in restoring the Darwin Martin House – the Frank Lloyd Wright masterpiece – but also to rebuild from the original plans three structures in the complex that were previously demolished. These kinds of projects need to continue.



Learning Our History

In some cases the heritage development process means researching and developing the historical knowledge that allow us to tell the stories. A good example of this is the work that lies ahead of Kevin Cottrell in reading and analyzing the papers of Jesse Nash – someone Kevin refers to as a 20th century freedom-fighter. A crucial part of the process is simple, painstaking academic work.

Telling the Stories

Another phase of the work in telling our stories better involves creating the materials – exhibits, catalogs, signage, videos, recordings, and much more – that directly communicate the story to the audi-

ence. This is what the New York Power Authority has done at its Power Vista in Lewiston. But it is also what many other attractions still need to do. Or, to put it another way, while we are working hard on new approaches to marketing the heritage resources of the region, we cannot afford to neglect the product development end of the business.



Developing Sites

We are also working to invest in key heritage projects. These are in very different stages of development, but there are a surprising number of significant ones. The Welland Canal Park and Parkway

represents a key investment in connecting heritage sites to one another. The U.S. National Park Service reconnaissance study for a potential National Heritage Area is a big step toward creating a mechanism to coordinate the development of a wide range of natural and cultural resources. The Buffalo Inner Harbor and Erie Canal District project will be a major step in preserving that crucial site for interpretation. And USA Niagara – just getting started in 2002 – is taking on the vital work of redeveloping a site at the very center of this region, downtown Niagara Falls, New York.



The Sum of Many Parts

But there are even more projects that contribute to the overall program of heritage development in our region. The Niagara Parks Commission is beginning implementation of its long-range master plan for the improvement of its many assets. Both cities of Niagara Falls are undertaking new planning for recovery and enhancement of their waterfronts. The New York State Office of Parks has new plans for improvement of its assets by the Falls and along the gorge. The City of Buffalo is beginning work on planning and implementation for its waterfront communities. And Fort Erie is working on implementation of its recent heritage tourism master plan. In some sense, all we need to do is keep going.



Keep Working Together

Finally, we need to keep working together. There is an amazing number of new collaborative ventures of varying size and scope. Surely one of the most significant is the ongoing conversation on issues of common interest between Ontario and New York. We're confident that the Harris-Pataki Summit in June 2001 was just the beginning, and that State-Provincial cooperation will continue.



A Bi-National Commitment

Other initiatives include the Bi-National Leadership Forum, spearheaded by Debbie Zimmerman and Joel Giambra – two people committed to bi-national regional cooperation. The Bi-National Tourism Alliance is developing approaches to cross-marketing the many festivals in the region. In a more limited way, the Cultural Tourism Alliance in the U.S. is working to coordinate marketing for arts and culture with marketing for the hospitality industry. And an example of an even more targeted partnership is the alliance between the Art Museum of Hamilton and the Burchfield Penney art center. In all of these ways, we are learning to work together, and understanding the benefits that collaboration can bring.



There is Much More to be Done

There is much more work to do in all these areas. But it is clear that if we invest more in telling the compelling stories of our region in a bi-national way, we can do much more to capture the 20 million visitors that come to Niagara Falls each year simply to see that wonder. If we invest in key heritage projects – those on our agenda now and projects for the future – we will make it easier for visitors to come, stay longer, and spend more money. And to do that, we have to continue to find new, more imaginative and more effective ways of working together to link our sites and stories and to reach out to new markets.



Seize the Opportunity

The promise of bi-national heritage tourism development in the Niagara region is enormous. There is much more to say about how that promise is already being delivered. There is much more to talk about what else needs to be done. But heritage tourism development is a profound opportunity for the transformation of this region. Let's seize that opportunity.