

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE ...

IN 50 years time, I see Niagara Falls offering residents and visitors alike the opportunity to walk, cycle, or go in-line skating from one end of the city to the other on a system of trails. The Community Centre, which is currently under construction, will only be the beginning of recreation and cultural facilities that will fill the needs of local residents of all abilities and be an additional draw for visitors. Councils will have recognized and found the resources for these important activities that enhance quality of life.

Adele Kon

Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture

“THE creation of a world-class tourism destination is envisioned for Niagara Falls—a modern urban centre at the heart of one of the world’s most beautiful landscaped settings and natural wonders.” (City of Niagara Falls Official Plan, Part 2, Section 4.1)

This vision statement is an integral part of our city’s official plan. It is a statement about the future—what Niagara Falls is intended to look like in the next 20 years. In order to achieve this vision, a high quality tourism environment needs to be created. This will require improvements to parking and transportation systems, the greening and animation of streetscapes, the establishment of new attractions to enhance the visitor experience, and the protection of the natural environment. A substantial commitment will be required on the part of all stakeholders to position Niagara Falls as a world-class tourist destination and to achieve its vision.

While the task might not be easy, the groundwork has been laid and the process of city building has begun. Pivotal decisions will need to be made in order to shape our community and define its character over the coming years. Establishing a vision is clearly a necessity given the measure of activity and the quickening pace of change in Niagara Falls. The opportunity is certainly present to create a strong and vibrant future.

Doug Darbyson

City Planner

THE Niagara Falls Public Library of the future may be a completely virtual library, with no books, but with all text, sound, and images accessible on the internet. Or it may still be full of books which borrowers will check-out themselves using eye-recognition technology instead of a plastic library card. Or the internet will disappear and the library will re-invent itself once again.

Publications such as this remind residents of the notable changes realized in the past and help preserve our community’s heritage. With this increased knowledge, future changes in our city will always have a visual benchmark to help plan a strong tomorrow. A public library with print, audio-visual, and electronic heritage materials welcomes such additions and makes them accessible to generations to come.

**Joe Longo, Chief Librarian,
Niagara Falls Public Library**

IN 1967, those looking towards the future of the City of Niagara Falls stated that “The resident of 1867 would not have

understood or believed anyone who described the city as we know it now.” (Niagara Falls, Canada: A History of the City and The World Famous Beauty Spot: An Anthology, 1967) The resident of 2004 would similarly be hard-pressed to see the 1967 Niagara Falls in today’s city.

Changes to the City of Niagara Falls occur at a rapid pace, following closely with the general worldwide trend of having everything instantly. Visitors to our city can keep in touch with loved ones at home via the internet, cellphones, and digital video. In order to stay competitive, businesses must “modernize” and upgrade on an almost yearly basis. Contrast this to the picture postcard of days gone by, or the souvenir stereoview often brought home by tourists in the nineteenth century. Letters sent home by those travelling in the Niagara area were a family affair as well as a way to get news. Today, digital media make most paper means of communication nearly obsolete.

All the changes of the past 100 years, and those to come in the next 100 years, lead us to ask, what will the city look like for the resident of the year 2104? It is difficult to guess at what might happen in the future: flying cars; telecommuting; smaller, faster, less expensive computers; and more ways to make the world a smaller place are all possibilities. In fact, as far as technology goes, the sky’s the limit.

Whatever differences are to come for our city, what will never change is the feeling of nostalgia for times past. The depth and colour of our community has been shaped by all the changes it has

seen, from the Clifton Hotel to the Hilton Hotel, from the Oneida Tower to the Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort, from flappers to bell bottoms, all of these have created the truly unique community that is Niagara Falls. As we look into the future we must also look to our past and be proud of the entirety of our heritage, and remember that today will be tomorrow’s history - so enjoy it!

Kathleen Powell

Manager, City of Niagara Falls Museums

IT is my hope that as time goes on, our city will get closer to our vision for the future, a future that will see Niagara Falls as the number one choice for Canadians to live, work, and play. It will see a diversified economy employing our residents in virtually every sector of business, industry, and tourism. There will be many new and exciting developments and a well-balanced mix of activities, events, and attractions. Our city will have moved forward but its heritage will have been preserved, as well as the natural beauty and pristine nature of the majestic “Falls.”

In essence, I see Niagara Falls becoming a vibrant blend of the old and the new. A place where every resident will find a well-paying job in their chosen field, where there are many parks and recreational activities and attractions for individuals and families, where our past is not lost to new developments, but preserved as a reminder of where we came from, a place where our natural attributes remain untouched gems to be marveled at throughout the world.

**R. T. (Ted) Salci
Mayor**