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Senator Tim Kennedy, Congressman Brian Higgins Deliver New Funding for The Riverline Project

The Riverline Will Create a 1.5 Mile Nature Trail & Green Space in the City of Buffalo

Funds Secured by Kennedy in This Year's State Budget Will Cover Local Match of Previously Announced Federal Funding

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Congressman Brian Higgins joined Michael Hughes, Chair of the NFTA's Board of Commissioners, and The Riverline Director Jeff Lebsack on Tuesday to announce \$225,000 in state funding for The Riverline project. The funds, which were championed by Senator Kennedy and ultimately approved in this year's budget, provide the local 20% match of a \$900,000 federal award that was announced in March 2022.

The Western New York Land Conservancy is developing The Riverline, a proposed 1.5-mile nature trail and greenway near downtown Buffalo, based on a vision created by the community. More than a thousand people have helped create this vision, generating hundreds of innovative ideas tailored to Buffalo, the waterfront, and the Old First Ward, Perry, and Valley neighborhoods through which The Riverline runs.

Once completed, The Riverline will transform the elevated former DL&W rail corridor along the Buffalo River into a string of vibrant and engaging experiences in nature that everyone can enjoy—right in the city, only minutes from downtown: an inspiring gathering place that connects people to water, nature, and one another. A member of the High Line Network, an international organization dedicated to advancing infrastructure reuse projects— like Detroit's Dequindre Cut or New York City's High Line—The Riverline will attract thousands of visitors annually.

“Over the past decade, we've worked hard to transform our waterfront into a recreational space unlike any other - a space that inspires people to get outdoors and embrace all that our city has to offer,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “The creation of The Riverline will enhance the foundation we've been building for years, and serves as yet another infrastructure opportunity inspired by connectivity and sustainability. With this new funding, we're continuing to invest in the community's shared vision for The Riverline, and building a vibrant, inclusive public space.”

“The Riverline is a vision created by the Western New York Land Conservancy in conjunction with the community that reimagines our past and connects historic neighborhoods to the Buffalo Waterfront,” said **Congressman Brian Higgins**. “Thanks to this federal and state partnership we are delivering critical funding toward another investment in sustainable infrastructure that will connect our community with urban greenspace. The Riverline is an important part of our vision

for a redeveloped waterfront and we are proud to work closely with Senator Kennedy to take another step forward in creating this new, transformational and recreational space.”

“The NFTA is very appreciative of Senator Tim Kennedy for securing state funding for The Riverline project,” said **NFTA Executive Director Kim Minkel**. “This financial support will provide the local match for federal funds secured by Congressman Brian Higgins. We are grateful to our government partners who are working diligently to advance this project.”

“These state funds obtained by Senator Kennedy are crucial for leveraging the full amount of federal funding and for moving The Riverline through the required environmental and design approvals,” said **Jeff Lebsack, The Riverline Director**. “Once we have completed this stage of the project in early 2024, we will move on to design and build the first part of The Riverline in late 2024 or early 2025. We are grateful to Senator Kennedy and his staff for their commitment to making The Riverline a world-class public space in the heart of our city.”

The allocated money will fund the preparation of a Design Approval Document to assess the applicable environmental impacts of The Riverline that will allow the project to move into the detailed design process. It will also allow The Riverline to undertake a Social and Community Impacts Study to assess the effects it could have on nearby development, the real estate market, job creation, and other social and economic impacts to the community. In addition, the money will fund a Cultural Resources and Relevance Study to provide the historical context and current perspectives of Haudenosaunee nations and local communities, with the goal of establishing a culturally relevant framework for long-term collaboration between The Riverline and the traditional indigenous stewards of this property and surrounding areas.

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