A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATOR SAVAGE

RE: Support Conversion of the Scajaquada Expressway into an Urban Parkway

WHEREAS, underscoring the terrible accident that took the life of three-year-old Maksym Sugorovskiy, and seriously injured his five-year-old sister Stephanie, and injured their mother Mary, is the fact that for more than twenty years Buffalo's Parkside residents and neighborhood activists, as well as the Olmsted Parks Conservancy, had sought a lowering of the speed limit or reconfiguration of the Scajaquada Expressway (Rt. 198) where the roadway borders Delaware Park; and

WHEREAS, those voices have called for a reconfiguration of the roadway for safety concerns, as well as a change that would be more in harmony with what Frederick Law Olmsted envisioned for Delaware Park; by either eliminating altogether or converting the expressway into a lower-speed parkway for leisurely travel, rather than maintained as a major thoroughfare connecting the Kensington Expressway with the Niagara Thruway; and

WHEREAS, immediately following the accident, Governor Cuomo appropriately ordered the lowering of the speed limit to 30 miles per hour and directed that the Department of Transportation install a system of concrete barriers along the roadway's Delaware Park corridor, and an analysis was undertaken for future changes in order to ensure for the safety of residents, park visitors and motorists; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Governor Cuomo and Assemblyman Sean Ryan, New York State is preparing a conversion of Rt. 198 into a low-speed parkway, with improved infrastructure and traffic-calming elements to restore Olmsted's vision of connecting our park system with parkways and increase safety; and

WHEREAS, government has a responsibility to ensure for the safety of its residents, and the proactive measures undertaken by the State of New York following the horrible events of May 30, 2015 are appropriate, and the proposal to convert the Scajaquada Expressway into a parkway offers a unique opportunity to enhance Olmsted's vision for Buffalo's park and parkway system and improve public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Legislature desires to join the many community and governmental leaders and stakeholders in expressing its public support for returning the Scajaquada Expressway to an urban parkway which connects Buffalo's magnificent parks in a manner that protects the public safety.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature express deep sorrow and condolences to the Sugorovskiy family for the terrible events of May 30, 2015, the loss of Maksym and injury to Stephanie and Mary in Delaware Park that Saturday afternoon, when an out-of-control vehicle left the Scajaquada Expressway, and entered the park striking Maksym, Stephanie and Mary; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in order to make certain that such a horrible tragedy never occurs again, this Legislative Body goes on record in support of the proposed initiative to implement a conversion of the Scajaquada Expressway, from an expressway into a parkway, to better ensure for the safety of neighborhood residents and visitors, as well as motorists, which has been advanced for years by Parkside residents, community stakeholders, the Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and elected officials; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature forward certified copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of New York, the Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo; the leaders of the New York State Senate and Assembly; the Western New York Delegation to the New York State Legislature; the Erie County Executive, the Honorable Mark C. Poloncarz; City of Buffalo Mayor, the Honorable Byron W. Brown; the Buffalo Common Council; the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Transportation, Joan McDonald; and to the Olmsted Parks Conservancy.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for this resolution