

# Symposium on Parkway Concepts and Principles

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The modern American parkway concept began with the development of the Bronx River Parkway in Westchester County, New York, soon after the end of World War I. This parkway, which was begun in 1918, and other Westchester County parkways which followed (Hutchinson River, Saw Mill River, and Cross County) were developed by the Westchester County Park Commission. They were designed primarily to provide easy access for passenger cars to Westchester County parks. Special attention was given to the aesthetics of alignment, profile, and section. Special care was given to the blending of slopes with the adjacent existing contours and to planting for a park-like appearance.

The Long Island State Park Commission soon began work on a network of parkways leading from New York City and connecting with various Long Island State parks. This was followed by the development of parkways in New York City connecting with the Westchester and Long Island parkways.

At about this same time, the Eastern State Parkway (now called Taconic) was begun as an extension of the Bronx River Parkway Extension. In recent years, the Bronx River Parkway Extension, the Bear Mountain Parkway, and the Sprain Brook Parkway, originally developed by Westchester County, were transferred to the Taconic State Park Commission. In 1960, the legislature created the East Hudson Parkway Authority to administer the Taconic State, Hutchinson River, Saw Mill River, and Cross County parkways.

Beginning in the early 1930's and partly as a CCC project, the Genesee State Park Commission started construction of the 15-mi Lake Ontario State Parkway connecting Rochester with Hamlin Beach State Park.

Another recent parkway development in New Jersey and New York State is the Palisades Interstate Parkway connecting the George Washington Bridge with Bear Mountain Circle. Construction began on this parkway in the summer of 1948.

Connecticut, in the mid-1930's, began construction of the Merritt Parkway extending from the Hutchinson River Parkway to the vicinity of New Haven, and followed this with the Wilbur Cross Parkway bypassing New Haven and continuing on to Hartford.

New Jersey recently has completed the construction of the 173-mi Garden State Parkway from a connection with the New York Thruway southward along the Atlantic coast to Cape May.

Florida is in the process of completing the 114-mi Sunshine State Parkway from Fort Pierce southward to near Miami.

The California State Park Commission is administering the recently created 20-mi Avenue of the Giants Parkway.

Arizona, in January 1961, designated its first parkway—a 30-mi project in a Sonoran Cactus forest.

Still another phase of parkway development began with the construction of the first of a series of eight Federal parkways. Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, the first national parkway, was begun in 1929. Extending from Washington, D.C., to Mount Vernon, Virginia, it is a section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It is planned that the Parkway eventually will extend from Mount Vernon to Great Falls on the Virginia side of the Potomac River, and from Great Falls to Fort Washington (excluding the District of Columbia) on the Maryland side. Completed National Parkways are the Colonial National Parkway in Virginia and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway in Maryland. Other National Parkways under construction are the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina, the Natchez Trace Parkway in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, the Foothills Parkway in Tennessee, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway in the District of Columbia, and the Suitland Parkway in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

In 1950-51, a survey was made of the proposed 2,000-mi Mississippi River Parkway (now called the Great River Road) from Itasca State Park in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana to determine the feasibility of developing a parkway through the ten States bordering the Mississippi River. As a result of the survey a changed parkway concept was recommended whereby the project would be developed by the various States with some assistance by the Federal Government.

Through the years, factors of circumstance and condition have imparted to parkways characteristics which make it possible to classify them, in broad terms, as National Parkways, State Parkways, and Federal-Aid Parkways. Because of the differences which exist between the three classes of parkways, and the awakening interest of many sections of the United States in parkway concepts, it is believed to be pertinent and of value to present papers describing and explaining these differences.

The papers which follow have been written by persons who have had many years of training and experience in their professional fields and are singularly well qualified in the area of their special class of parkway.

It is the belief of the Committee that an understanding of the principles and practices embodied in the development of the various parkways may be of interest to administrators, planners, engineers, and others

who are now faced, or who may be faced, with the responsibility of planning, developing, maintaining, and administering other parkways.

Knowledge and improvement stem from research and an exchange of ideas and experiences.

This symposium will have served its purpose if the information presented can be found to be useful to others.

A tabulation of general data relating to parkways is included in an appendix.

## *Appendix*

### NONFEDERAL PARKWAYS<sup>1</sup>

State	Administering Agency	Name of Parkway	Mileage		
New York	Genesee State Park Commission	Lake Ontario State Parkway	15		
		Long Island State Park Commission	Bethpage State Parkway	2.4	
		Captree State Parkway	7.7		
		Cross Island State Parkway	13.3		
		Meadowbrook State Parkway	20.5		
		Northern State Parkway	31.6		
		Ocean Parkway	14		
		Sagtikos State Parkway	6		
		Southern State Parkway	18.7		
		Sunken Meadow State Parkway	8		
		Wantagh State Parkway	13.4		
		Total, Long Island Parkways		135.6	
		Niagara Frontier State Park Commission	West River State Parkway	8	
			Grand Parkway	2.3	
			Total, Niagara Parkways		10.3
		Palisades Interstate Park Commission	Palisades Interstate Parkway	44	
		Taconic State Park Commission	Bear Mountain State Parkway	6.6	
			Sprain Brook State Parkway	?	
			Taconic State Parkway	82	
			Total, Taconic Parkways		88.6
		Westchester County Park Commission	Bronx River Parkway	16.1	
			Hutchinson River Parkway	14.6	
			Saw Mill River Parkway	25.1	
	Cross County Parkway		4.9		
	Total, Westchester Parkways			60.7	
	New York City	Grand Central Parkway	11		
		Gowanus Parkway	4.2		
		Henry Hudson Parkway	11.9		
		Interborough Parkway	4.7		
		Shore Parkway	15.9		
		Southern Parkway	6.9		
		Whitestone Parkway	2.8		
		Total, New York City Parkways		57.4	
Connecticut	State Highway Department	Merritt State Parkway	44		
		Wilbur Cross State Parkway	40		
Florida	?	Sunshine State Parkway (Fort Pierce to vicinity of Miami)	114		
New Jersey	New Jersey Highway Authority	Garden State Parkway	173		
California	California State Park Commission	Avenue of the Giants Parkway	20		
Arizona	Arizona State Highway Commission	Sonoran Cactus Forest Parkway	30		

<sup>1</sup>Information compiled from road maps and other information available in Washington Office of National Park Service.

## NATIONAL PARKWAYS ADMINISTERED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

State	Name of Parkway	Total Mileage	Mileage Completed
Maryland	Baltimore-Washington	19.5	19.5
North Carolina and Virginia	Blue Ridge	478	375
Virginia	Colonial	23	23
Tennessee	Foothills	76	4
Maryland and Virginia	George Washington	47	21
Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee	Natchez Trace	450	158
District of Columbia	Rock Creek and Potomac	4.4	3.4
District of Columbia and Maryland	Suitland	9	4.9

## I. National Parkways

DUDLEY C. BAYLISS, Chief of Parkways, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior

The National Park Service entered headlong into a new and hitherto unexplored field of park development—National Parkways—late in 1933. Announcement was made by the then Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, that \$16,000,000 of Public Works funds had been made available for development of a national parkway to connect Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks, almost 500 mi apart in Virginia and North Carolina (Fig. 1). With completion now in sight by 1967, the Blue Ridge Parkway is that pioneer parkway project, and over a period of almost 30 years has served as a proving ground for many concepts and principles now firmly established and being followed on succeeding national parkways.

As defined by the National Park Service, a national parkway is a federally owned, elongated park featuring a road designed for pleasure travel, and embracing scenic, recreational or historic features of national significance. Access from adjoining properties is limited and commercial traffic is not permitted. A national parkway has sufficient merit and character to make it a national attraction and not merely a means of travel from one region to another. A national parkway can be established only by an Act of Congress.

Under MISSION 66, the National Park Service's 10-yr program which has as its target the completion by 1966 of development and staffing of the 183 parks, parkways, and other units of the National Park System, there are ten national parkway projects totaling 1,138 mi in various stages of completion in a program totaling about \$331,800,000 including funds appropriated prior to MISSION 66. This program includes other major national parkways such as the Natchez Trace Parkway, 450 mi in length through portions of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi; the Foothills Parkway, 72 mi long paralleling the northern boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee; the Colonial Parkway, most recently completed, 22 mi in length, connecting Jamestown, Williamsburg and Yorktown, Virginia; and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, 47 mi long, linking Mount Vernon and Great Falls, Virginia, and Fort Washington and Great Falls, Maryland, on both sides of the Potomac River near Washington, D. C.

About two-thirds of the total mileage, or 800 mi has been completed or is under way within an annual authorization of \$16,000,000 in the Federal-Aid Highway Act. The general policy is that the states through which the parkway passes acquire and deed to the United States the lands necessary for the parkway road, including interchanges with highways, parallel service roads, and protective buffer areas, plus adjoining parks where recreational developments are provided, such as campgrounds, picnic areas, scenic overlooks, historic or archeological sites and nature trails as well as necessary public service and maintenance facilities (Fig. 2). All of these integral parkway features may be accommodated within an area of varying width averaging 125 acres per mi.

Over a period of many years the ratio of cost, with the state acquiring the land and the Federal Government building the road and other facilities, is ten percent state and 90 percent Federal—the same, for some unknown reason, as that recently established for the Interstate Highway System.

From the very beginning the National Park Service has been fortunate in being able to use the engineering services of the Bureau of Public Roads by means of an interbureau agreement called "Road Regulations," which covers the national parkways and all major road projects in the national parks and other units of the National Park System. The Bureau has assigned many of its best engineers to the special requirements of national park and parkway work. Projects are handled by the Bureau's Regional Offices and the Park Service's Eastern and Western Offices of Design and Construction. The landscape architects and architects of the Park Service, and engineers of the Bureau, work together as a team in all phases of reconnaissance, location, design and construction of the parkway road. Following completion of construction contracts the