

(Fig. 7) help relieve driver fatigue and indirectly make the parkway safer to travel.

By combining good engineering and landscape design principles the Garden State Parkway provides the people of New Jersey as well as out-of-state motorists with a parkway that makes driving to business or to shore recreational areas a comfortable, rapid and safe trip.

III. The Protected Travelway

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The modern motor parkway originated in the metropolitan area of New York City shortly after World War I. Later, the parkway idea was extended to include long cross-country scenic drives, such as the Blue Ridge National Parkway, traversing mountains, plains, and fields. Important features of these national parkways are full control of access, restriction of traffic to non-commercial vehicles, and complete scenic control achieved by ownership of a wide belt of land, the right-of-way being, in fact, an elongated park.

The wide belt of land required for a road of national parkway standards and the pre-emption by existing roads of most of the potential corridors where parkways might be planned, has led to the development of a third concept under which roads of parkway-like character might be developed. This "protected travelway" concept is best exemplified by the Great River Road proposed for construction by the ten Mississippi River states, with Federal assistance, in a location generally parallel to the Mississippi River, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The principal characteristics of the Great River Road are: (a) ownership and control by the individual states; (b) design and construction by state forces with Federal advisory services where requested; (c) Federal assistance in financing through the usual Federal-aid channels; (d) partial or complete control of access; (e) an adequate protective scenic corridor by land controls over the adjacent roadside, these controls to consist principally of scenic easements; (f) marshaling of the scenic, recreational, historic, cultural, and geographic resources along the route by interpretive and public-use facilities; (g) utilization of existing highways where these are suitable; and (h) construction of occasional sections on new location excluding commercial traffic where other satisfactory highways exist for such traffic.

In 1907, a decade before World War I, a very civic-minded group of men with vision had the idea of converting the dreary waste-dumps of New York's Bronx River Valley into a narrow ribbon park, through which was threaded a motor road of restful alignment and pleasing roadsides. This was not only brilliant and creative engineering and planning, but also shrewd, practical common sense, because the blighted land could be obtained for a fraction of the cost of other land nearby. The Bronx River Parkway Reservation Commission was authorized on June 5, 1913, to acquire lands for the purpose of cleaning up the sewage pollution in the valley.

Today, the Bronx River Parkway, for which general plans were approved and published in 1918, would be considered old-fashioned in geometrics, yet, because of its access control feature, it still retains its original capacity to handle traffic at moderate speeds, and indeed, is successfully carrying traffic volumes far beyond its planners' expectation. The shrubbery and trees, now fully matured, are restful and pleasing to the eye, and also serve to muffle traffic noises and screen headlight glare, so that nearby residents are scarcely conscious of the parkway's existence. This pioneer parkway, and others successively developed in the New York metropolitan area, have firmly established the usefulness and practicality of the parkways for moving large volumes of commuter traffic and for providing opportunities for recreational driving in crowded urban areas.

In the middle 1930's, the parkway idea was enlarged and somewhat changed in the development of the national parkways, notably the Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace Parkways. In these, the "park" aspect of the parkway received greater emphasis than was possible in urban areas, due to lower land values, thus permitting the addition of recreational and public use features, such as picnic areas, camp grounds, historic sites, and interpretive facilities. The importance of the motor road or "way" aspect of the parkway was correspondingly reduced by its removal from centers of population with their large volumes of commuter traffic. The parkway became a destination in itself—actually an elongated park—rather than a segment of a city, county, or state highway system.

Thus by the middle 1930's there had developed two parkway concepts: the landscaped commuter artery in metropolitan areas; and the elongated cross-country national park of mountains, plains, and fields, with its component parts connected by a recreational rural motor road designed for leisurely traffic. Both types, however, retained the essential parkway elements of: (a) exclusion of commercial traffic, (b) complete control of access, (c) scenic control over the roadsides by outright possession of a comparatively wide right-of-way, and (d) graceful, free-flowing curvilinear alignment and grade.

These characteristics severely restricted the early development of parkways, as indeed they still do in many parts of the country, often because of lack of enabling legislation. The principle of access control

has only recently received wide acceptance, and then only for arterial highways carrying heavy volumes of traffic. The wide rights-of-way required for adequate scenic protection are not only costly to acquire, but are regarded by many parkway opponents as wasteful of land. Exclusion of commercial traffic as such from any public highway is not legally possible in many jurisdictions, and proposals for such exclusion meet prompt organized opposition almost everywhere.

And yet, there is an insistent demand for wider extension of parkways throughout the country, particularly national parkways, reflected in legislation perennially before the Congress to establish such parkways. One such effort has resulted in the establishment of the Mississippi River Parkway, now known as the "Great River Road," which traverses the Mississippi Valley from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

Originally proposed by its backers as a national parkway, the Great River Road has developed in quite a different manner, and the plan now being followed in its realization will result in a state-owned facility with parkway features, rather than a parkway of classic type. This has come about as a result of a comprehensive survey and study of the possibility of establishing a national parkway in the Mississippi Valley made in accordance with the Act of August 24, 1949 (Public Law 262, 81st Congress). The joint report to the Congress by the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Commerce submitted in 1951 pursuant to this law, pointed out that a Federal parkway on the Blue Ridge Parkway pattern, following an entirely new route (as would be required by the Federal Government) would be prohibitive in cost, both for right-of-way and construction, and would, in great part, duplicate existing highways. Furthermore, many of the most desirable and scenic locations would not be available for such a parkway, because they are already occupied by railroads or existing commercial highways.

After careful study, it was acknowledged that an all-new parkway route was not feasible, and that long segments of any practicable route would have to follow existing highways. These highways were necessary parts of the highway system in each state and they should, therefore, remain under the maintenance and police control of the states. Inasmuch as these highways were open to all kinds of traffic, the continuation of which was vital to many local communities, it was also apparent that exclusion of commercial traffic would not be attainable for the entire length of any practicable Mississippi River Parkway.

Another conclusion of the Joint Report of 1951 was that outright ownership of a wide belt of land for a "scenic corridor" along the Mississippi was not practicable, due to the high value of the land and improvements. Instead, the report recommended taking at least 220 or 250 ft of right-of-way supplemented by scenic control over an additional width of 300 ft on each side by means of scenic easements. Other recommendations were that full or partial access control be obtained, that towns and cities be bypassed, that short sections of classic parkway be constructed on new location where conditions are favorable, and that the scenic, recreational, historic, cultural, and geographic resources along the route be marshaled for public use and appreciation by appropriate interpretive and public-use facilities.

These recommendations described what was in effect a new kind of interstate highway facility, intended primarily for recreational travel, but available also for normal community and commercial use. Such a road could hardly qualify as a parkway in the strict sense, but might logically be designated as a "protected travelway" to distinguish it from ordinary highways. In other words, it is a hybrid or blend of the ordinary highway and the controlled-access parkway making the most of the best of each in conserving and providing park-like values and facilities for motorists.

The Federal Highway Act of May 6, 1954, authorized the Bureau of Public Roads to spend up to \$250,000 from its own administrative funds "for the purpose of expediting the interstate planning and coordination of a continuous Great River Road and appurtenances thereto traversing the Mississippi Valley from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. . ." Under this Act, the Bureau, with the assistance of the National Park Service, has supplied advisory services to the highway departments of the ten Mississippi River states, following generally the plan set forth in the Joint Report of 1951. The advisory service requested so far has been principally in the selection of the general route, but in some states recommendations for scenic easement limits and partial control of access have also been made.

It is still too early to predict whether the "protected travelway" concept set forth in the Joint Report of 1951 can be successfully applied to a project of such vast geographical scope and political diversity as the Great River Road. For example, in only three of the Mississippi River states do the highway departments have legislative authority to acquire scenic easement, and only three states have officially designated any part of the route within their boundaries. It probably will be more difficult for ten separate states to achieve the unity in design features, land controls, signing and recreational and interpretive development that would exist if the project were under one jurisdiction.

The essential ingredient of the protected travelway is the "scenic corridor" or wide band of protected land which insulates the motor road from uncontrolled development of the roadsides and makes it possible to preserve unspoiled some of the rural scene through which it passes. There are several ways in which some degree of protection can be achieved or enforced over the scenic corridor, such as: (a) outright acquisition in fee simple, (b) zoning restrictions, and (c) acquisition of development rights.

Under the first of these alternatives, the entire corridor can be acquired outright, in fee simple, along with all development rights, as is done for national parkways. This is very costly where parkway traverses highly developed agricultural or suburban land, and is actually scenically unsatisfactory, unless some of the land in the corridor is leased for agriculture to preclude its reversion to scrub brush, trees, and bushes.

A limited degree of control can be exercised under the police power by zoning restrictions, but seldom enough to provide adequate or permanent protection.

The approach to the problem of the Joint Report of 1951 was to control the use of the land by purchasing the development rights without acquiring title. By doing this, the land can continue to be used for productive farming, pasturage, or other pursuits compatible with the parkway's scenic objectives, while at the same time the use of the land can be denied for billboard advertising, dumps, and other unsightly purposes. It was anticipated that approximately two-thirds of all the land within the scenic corridor would be under scenic easement.

The design of the motor road within the scenic corridor will depend on the anticipated traffic, and the number of traffic lanes might vary from two to four, or more. The anticipated traffic would also influence the degree of access control taken, and this might vary from full control, as with freeways, to partial control.

The application of the protected travelway idea is not limited to the Great River Road. Some of the toll roads and interstate highways already have a degree of control over roadside advertising, but on those highways the movement of traffic is a paramount consideration, and facilities for rest, recreation, and enjoyment of the roadsides are incidental. In any state, the most likely candidates for improvement as protected travelways are minor roads, often in out-of-the-way parts of the state. Many of these have outstanding scenery or historic sites worthy of preservation, and in many cases these values are imminently threatened by urban sprawl, as the expansion of great cities engulfs the rural areas around them. The protected travelway appears to be a promising device for preserving, or providing, facilities for recreational driving at less cost than would be required for parkways.