

## RESOURCE EVALUATION

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DATE: February 9, 2009

PROPERTY: Henry Hudson Parkway

**PROJECT REF: 09PR00196**

STAFF: Kathy Howe

MCD: Manhattan and the Bronx

COUNTY: New York & Bronx cos.

USN: 06101.017139 and

00501.001462

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- I.  Property is individually listed on SR/NR:  
name of listing:
- Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:  
name of district: Section between W. 72<sup>nd</sup> & St. Clair Place is in the Riverside Park & Drive listing
- II.  Property meets eligibility criteria.
- Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.
- Pre SRB:  Post SRB:  SRB date

### Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- A.  Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B.  Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C.  Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D.  Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

See attached.

## **HENRY HUDSON PARKWAY<sup>1</sup>**

### **Manhattan and the Bronx, New York & Bronx Counties**

#### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

##### **Introduction**

The Henry Hudson Parkway (HHP), completed in 1937, is a limited-access urban road that extends from West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York City, 11.2 miles north to the beginning of the Saw Mill River Parkway at Westchester County, New York. The parkway parallels the east bank of the Hudson River and it connects five major city parks, four in Manhattan and one in the Bronx. From south to north, these are Riverside Park, Fort Washington Park, Fort Tryon Park, Inwood Hill Park, and Van Cortlandt Park. The HHP is significant under Criterion A in the fields of transportation, community and regional planning, and recreation, and under Criterion C in the areas of engineering and landscape architecture as a representative example of a twentieth-century limited-access urban parkway. It is also associated with the evolving social, cultural, and economic changes that transformed America into the premier automobile nation. Robert Moses and his engineers conceived and constructed the Henry Hudson Parkway during the height of the American parkways movement; as such, its design fulfilled the ideals of “parkway” as a “park with a road.” The road took advantage of natural and man-made terrain, offered easy access to recreational areas, passed through pleasant urban and suburban landscapes, and presented magnificent views of the Hudson River. The HHP also catered to pedestrian needs by providing access via underpasses to parkland. The parkway was more than a destination; it was also designed as a commuter thoroughfare to help alleviate traffic congestion. The entire road reads as a complete work that was designed and built according to a specific philosophy and to the highest standards of the day, within a limited period of time. The period of significance recognizes the construction of the parkway between 1934 and 1937. This determination of eligibility also takes in several features that pre-date the period of significance such as monuments in Riverside Park. These have significance as they were reused or reinterpreted within the context of the parkway. The section of the HHP that falls within the boundaries of the park – between West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and St. Clair Place – was previously listed as a component within Riverside Park and Drive (NR listed 1983).

On a cold rainy day in December 1936, Robert Moses opened the Henry Hudson Parkway (HHP), declaring: “There is nothing new in New York, at least in the field of physical public improvements...We do not invent great city plans in these days. We simply discover and inherit what others have recommended long ago...”<sup>2</sup> Moses was of course being deliberately modest, because by the time the entire roadway was completed in October 1937, the public

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<sup>1</sup> **Much of the content for this resource evaluation is directly from “Henry Hudson Parkway,” HAER No. NY-334, prepared by Elizabeth Michell and Katharine Reed, September 2005, Justine Christianson, HAER Historian, 2005-2006, with contributions by Christopher Marston, Project Leader, 2005-2006. Historic American Engineering Record, NPS, US Department of the Interior.**

<sup>2</sup> The Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, *Opening of the Henry Hudson Parkway and Progress on the West Side Improvement* (New York: The Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, 1936), 7.

could see that the parkway was indeed something new and grand on an unprecedented scale. The construction of the parkway was conceived as part of the larger West Side Improvement, a joint endeavor of the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, New York City Department of Parks, New York State Department of Public Works and the New York Central Railroad. The project included completing the West Side Highway<sup>3</sup> from Canal Street to West 72nd Street, covering the railroad tracks from West 72nd to 125th streets, reclaiming the deteriorating Riverside Park along that same stretch, building the new Henry Hudson Parkway from West 72nd Street to the city limits in the Bronx, and constructing the long-promised Henry Hudson Bridge across the Harlem Ship Canal. Robert Moses finished the project in an astounding three years. The resulting West Side Improvement and parkway

....for its entire length down to the tip of Manhattan Island, constitutes one of the greatest public projects ever undertaken in any city. Riverside Drive, now that through traffic passes along the parkway at the river's edge, is an elongated park and drive surpassed by few similar developments anywhere. The parkway makes a superb approach to and provides an unequalled view of the city.<sup>4</sup>

The road provided motorists with easy access to the magnificent scenery and recreational areas on both sides of the Hudson River in New York and New Jersey (through the parkway connection to the George Washington Bridge) as well as to Westchester County, and beyond. In addition, the parkway formed an important transportation link in the projected network of highways and roadways designed to connect all points in Manhattan with each other and with the rest of New York and the surrounding regions.

The Henry Hudson Parkway was a superb expression of the parkway ideal. Using the Bronx River Parkway in Westchester County (acknowledged to be the first limited-access road parkway in America) as a prototype, the HHP was not only a roadway but also a reclamation project that improved the Hudson River shoreline. The HHP was a completely grade-separated, limited-access, divided road gently winding through the scenic Hudson River corridor.<sup>5</sup> It was a parkway in the fullest sense: it was a road that has its own park, the rehabilitated and expanded Riverside Park, and it also connects several other city parks in a facsimile of Frederick Law Olmsted's idea of a "ribbon" of parks.

The HHP was always more than just a bucolic road through parklands, however, since it was an *urban* parkway, representing an evolution in parkway development. Its location in a densely populated urban metropolis with residential development along its corridor ensured

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<sup>3</sup> Built in 1929-1936, the West Side Highway (known as the Miller Elevated Highway) is not included within the National Register-eligible boundaries of the Henry Hudson Parkway. The two roadways were totally different in design; the West Side Highway was an elevated highway, while the HHP was set within a park landscape. The West Side Highway was one of the first elevated urban expressways built in America. In 1973 a truck crashed through a section of the highway at Gansevoort Street. In the midst of the 1970s fiscal crisis, the city declined to reconstruct the highway and closed it from West 46<sup>th</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> streets. Workers demolished the old West Side Highway consisting of a surface "boulevard" south of West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, and a completely rebuilt elevated portion from West 57<sup>th</sup> to 72<sup>nd</sup> streets. At West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, a stub of the old Miller Highway remains in place just west of the new highway.

<sup>4</sup> Cleveland Rodgers, *Robert Moses: Builder for Democracy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), 89.

<sup>5</sup> There may have been a traffic signal at Fort Tryon Park, but that has not been definitively ascertained.

that the parkway would be an important route to downtown Manhattan as well as a gateway to the city for travelers from the north. As automobile usage evolved from a recreational diversion to a serious mode of transportation, so too did the need for routes through and around the increasingly congested city, and the HHP was part of a system Moses developed to meet that need. The HHP remains a testament to Moses' vision of a transportation route through some of the city's most beautiful natural and manmade landscapes.<sup>6</sup>

## Criterion A: Significance in Planning, Transportation, and Recreation

### *Regional Plan framework*

The 1929 *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs* was a landmark document in American planning history because it established a comprehensive plan of development for New York City. The Russell Sage Foundation of New York City, a general purpose foundation established in 1907, funded the study. The study, prepared by prominent urban planners and landscape architects including Thomas Adams, John Nolen, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Harland Bartholomew, has been called "the first fully comprehensive regional plan ever undertaken for an American city."<sup>7</sup> The plan served as a guide for Moses' road construction plans, because it "superimposed the loop diagram on a map of the metropolitan region, then adapted the diagram—presumably allowing for existing conditions and topography—to create a feasible highway plan." The map showed "most of the expressways and parkways that Moses or the Port Authority would build in New York beginning in the 1930s" such as the Bronx, Trans-Manhattan, Brooklyn-Queens, and Long Island expressways, and the Henry Hudson Parkway. Also present were the future Triborough, Whitestone, and Verrazano-Narrows Bridges, as well as a few projects that Moses failed to get built, including the Lower Manhattan and Mid-Manhattan expressways and a highway across 125<sup>th</sup> Street in Harlem.

By 1941, many of the recommendations of the *Regional Plan* had been followed, "mostly with automobile-only parkways." In January 1941, the New York City Planning Commission "noted that the city had a long way to go before it could claim a unified, integrated system that would move both passenger and commercial vehicles. This system was needed, the Commission said, because of New York's chronic traffic problems, which grew out of a four-fold increase in city motor vehicle registrations between 1920 and 1939, to a level of nearly one million."<sup>8</sup>

Moses and other planners were able to manipulate the regional plan framework to construct a series of parkways connecting NYC and NYS parks, and regional parks such as those of

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<sup>6</sup> Riverside Park and Drive from West 72<sup>nd</sup> to 129<sup>th</sup> streets has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places; Riverside Park and Drive from West 72<sup>nd</sup> to St. Clair Place has been designated a New York City Landmark. In addition, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, the New York State Scenic Byway Advisory Board, and Scenic America have identified the parkway as a potential scenic byway.

<sup>7</sup> Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Caratzas, "Cross-Bronx, Trans-Manhattan: Preserving a Significant Urban Expressway and its Megastructure," (MA thesis, Columbia University, May 2002), 10, 11. See also, Committee on the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, Volume 1: The Graphic Regional Plan* (Philadelphia: Fell Co., 1929).

Westchester County, with one another.<sup>9</sup> Together these parkways created a massive limited use transportation network, combining New York City and State parklands with much needed roadways to and from the city. The pioneering Westchester County system of parkways, for example, included the pioneering Bronx River Parkway (NR listed), Saw Mill River (built by the Westchester County Parks Commission, 1925-54), Hutchinson River (whose Westchester County portion was built by the Westchester County Parks Commission, 1924-41), and the later Sprain Brook (1958-80). The Hutchinson River Parkway further connects the New York City, State, and county parks system to Connecticut's Merritt Parkway (see HAER, No. CT-63), while the Sprain Brook and Saw Mill River parkways allow traffic to travel upstate via connections to the Taconic State Parkway (NR listed; see HAER No. NY-316) and Bronx River Parkway (NR listed) and extensions. In addition to building the Henry Hudson Parkway, Moses and his team of engineers and landscape architects built other early urban limited-access highways including the Grand Central Parkway (1933), Interborough (1935), and the Belt System (1941), which included the Cross-Island, Shore, Laurelton, and Southern parkways. Within the city limits, the Interborough Parkway in Brooklyn and Queens and Grand Central Parkway facilitated access to Long Island and its corresponding network of parkways and shoreline parks.<sup>10</sup>

"In 1939, limited-access highways, especially those located within cities, were rare . . . . Not many cities were building limited-access highways, but New York was one of the few that had built them extensively, and it was doing it to the highest standards of the day."<sup>11</sup> The U.S. Bureau of Public Roads in *Toll Roads and Free Roads* of 1939 praised the West Side Highway and the Henry Hudson Parkway "together with their connecting parkways in Westchester County, New York, and the Merritt Parkway in Connecticut" as "outstanding among the few instances that can be cited, both for their completeness and the vigor of their execution."<sup>12</sup> The report further noted the difficulty of road construction in the urban environment, stating "city administrators have been deterred...by what appear to be literally stupendous difficulties and expense involved – with difficulties and expense partly of an engineering nature, but first and usually in much the greater measure generated by the acquisition of right-of-way and the damage to, or obliteration of, private property," illustrating even further Moses' remarkable accomplishment in pushing through the construction of the parkway.<sup>13</sup> Plans were important for guiding the development of the metropolis, but strong figures in government, like Robert Moses, were necessary to carry through the plans.

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew Dalbey, *Regional Visionaries and Metropolitan Boosters: Decentralization, Regional Planning, and Parkways During the Interwar Years* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 25.

<sup>10</sup> See Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), for more on Moses' involvement in these and other parkway projects.

<sup>11</sup> Caratzas 14.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, *Toll Roads and Free Roads. Message from the President of the United States transmitting a letter from the Secretary of Agriculture, concurred in by the Secretary of War, enclosing a Report of the Bureau of Public Roads, United States Department of Agriculture, on the feasibility of a system of transcontinental toll roads and a master plan for free highway development* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), 93.

<sup>13</sup> *Toll Roads*, 94.

*West Side Improvement and the Henry Hudson Parkway*

Years before the HHP was built, various transportation improvement plans had been proposed for the west side of Manhattan, which included the goals of eliminating dangerous New York Central railroad crossings at the street level, covering the unsightly RR tracks in Riverside Park and cleaning up the Hudson River waterfront, and eliminating vehicular traffic congestion. As part of the West Side Improvement, the West Side Highway (known officially as the Miller Elevated Highway) was begun in 1929 with its route running from Chambers Street north to West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. Under the same plan, the 13-mile long elevated New York Central Railroad viaduct (known as the High Line) was built. The High Line (NR eligible) ran from 35th Street down to St. John's Park Terminal, covering four riverfront blocks between Clarkson and Spring Streets. In addition, some preliminary work had begun in Riverside Park in the late 1920s in preparation for covering the railroad tracks. West Side Highway construction and the associated work in Riverside Park stalled because of the Depression. By 1931, major portions of the highway were still incomplete. As for Riverside Park, only the foundations and the retaining walls between West 72<sup>nd</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> Streets were in place. At this point, Robert Moses stepped into the fray.

Robert Moses, heading the City Parks Department at the time, saw the potential of Riverside Park as an active recreation space. In 1930, at the annual Park Association dinner, Moses presented his proposal for the West Side Improvement. In his sweeping plan, he called for the extension of the West Side Highway (to be known as the Henry Hudson Parkway) through Riverside Park, across a new "Henry Hudson Bridge" into the Bronx and onward to the city line. Within the park, the muddy flats would be transformed into a beautiful park for the public to enjoy the Hudson River vista. If all this were done, motorists would be able to have an unimpeded drive from Manhattan to the new George Washington Bridge, at which point they could choose to cross the bridge over to New Jersey, or continue the quick drive to the Bronx and beyond. The West Side Improvement goals under Moses were to remove the danger and unsightliness of railroad tracks; provide for express traffic up the west side of the island and relieve congestion on other north and south arteries; redeem the beauty of the riverfront and improve recreational offerings; and provide a link to an expanded network of roads and parkways connecting NYC to its surrounding environs.

In 1934, work finally resumed on the West Side Improvement, with Robert Moses in charge of everything north of West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. In three short years the entire project was completed but it was not without its detractors. The City Club, for example, issued its opinion in March 1935 that parkway construction was ruining the woodland in Inwood Hill Park. In June 1935, residents of Spuyten Duyvil attempted to have the HHP routed away from their community for fear that it would cut it in two and lead to uncontrolled development that would destroy their country-like sanctuary. All the protests were for naught and the HHP moved forward.

*Financing the Parkway*

The financing of the HHP was a brilliant illustration of Robert Moses' particular brand of genius – his ability to “get things done.” During the Depression he single-handedly raised approximately \$109 million to build the parkway.

Moses successfully assembled funds from a variety of sources. Moses found \$13.5 million in New York State's Grade-Crossing Elimination Fund. “Grade crossings” traditionally referred to a highway elevation over a railroad crossing at a single point. In Moses' mind, it was enough that his project involved both a “highway” *and* a “railroad.” Another \$4 million was raised in payment from the New York Central Railroad for hauling fill. His liberal interpretation of the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Basin as part of a “grade elimination structure” opened up another \$5.1 million, this time from the Public Works Administration. For the section of the parkway south of the George Washington Bridge, Moses tapped into \$12 million in federal aid available for projects involving highways, housing, railroads, rivers and harbors. He cut plans for improvements and amenities in the northern 4.7 miles of Riverside Park (from West 110<sup>th</sup> Street northward, including Harlem) and saved \$29 million in construction costs. He received \$30 million from the Civil Works Administration (CWA) by calling the six-lane highway a “park access road” in its route through Riverside Park. Then, by running this “park access road” through city-owned Fort Tryon, Inwood Hill, and Van Cortlandt parks, Moses not only saved on land acquisition and right-of-way expenses, but he was also able to utilize free CWA labor. Finally Moses, as the sole member of the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, met the last \$10 million through the issuance of bonds.

*Transportation and Recreation trends*

The HHP was a new pathway to the recreational opportunities of the City parklands it passed through and the connections it offered to New York State's and Westchester County's parks and parkways. The HHP Authority's approach to meeting the city's and state's recreational needs was affected by the many trends that changed American life in the twentieth century, among them industrialization, urbanization, demographic changes, and the widespread use of automobiles. For the pleasure driver, the HHP is a destination unto itself that offers changing scenic views and vistas. It also provided opportunities for access to the recreational amenities found in city parks and for pedestrians in these parks to pass under the parkway. Urban amenities included playgrounds, promenades, boat basins, playing fields, cafes, tennis and basketball courts, overlooks, and pedestrian and horse trails.

Moses anticipated the impact of the automobile on the city. The HHP was a modern parkway that combined scenic landscapes and recreational opportunities with the efficiency of a freeway by moving traffic quickly and efficiently. It became a busy commuter corridor used by city and suburban dwellers and attempted to relieve congestion on the west side of Manhattan by providing a direct route from downtown all the way north to the Bronx.

*Residential Development*

The opening of the HHP helped spur residential development particularly in the Bronx. Many realtors anticipated a building and business revival associated with the completion of the Henry Hudson Parkway. Some touted the "twenty-two minutes traveling time [to] Wall Street" and the "opportunity to own a real suburban home within city limits."<sup>14</sup> Although there was a slow-down during World War II, the post-war building boom more than fulfilled the developers' dreams. Developers built large apartment complexes along sections of the parkway to accommodate those who preferred to leave Lower Manhattan for the then less densely crowded neighborhoods of Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. As apartments took over lots formerly occupied by private estates and mansions, the density of the neighborhoods increased dramatically. All the development placed an enormous burden on the HHP. Communities such as Riverdale became increasingly suburbanized, which then encouraged commuter use of the parkway as a highway. While the HHP was intended to help make commuting more efficient it actually caused more congestion.

**Criterion C: Parkway Design***Parkway precedents*

Parkways were descendents of the nineteenth century "boulevard," referring to a grand, landscaped affair for strolling and leisurely riding that usually approached, or connected, city parks. The earliest examples of parkways (which pre-dated the automobile), such as Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.'s Eastern and Ocean Parkways in Brooklyn (ca. 1870; NR listed 1983) and the Buffalo Parks and Parkways System (ca. 1870s-ca. 1890s; NR listed 1982), were urban in context, connecting residential areas with urban parks. Although Olmsted and others continued to develop the idea, the earliest example of a limited access automobile parkway as we know it today was the Bronx River Parkway (NR listed 1990), conceived and developed between ca. 1912 and 1925. The Bronx River Parkway (BRP) defined the context within which numerous other automobile parkways around the country were conceived over the next half century, including the HHP. The BRP was a 15-mile-long scenic road that extended from the Bronx through the center of Westchester County that combined planning, engineering, and landscape components and provided a new kind of recreational connection between city and country. The BRP "quickly set the standards for a new type of roadway development. It demonstrated that modern motorways could combine beauty and efficiency. The careful coordination of landscape design and highway engineering produced a safe and efficient thoroughfare surrounded by a beautifully landscaped right-of-way offering informal recreational amenities."<sup>15</sup> The BRP pioneered the features that would come to be the "hallmarks of parkway design," including: gentle grade changes and curves; removal of at-grade crossings; landscaped medians dividing the opposing lanes of traffic; and the use of

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<sup>14</sup> "Hudson Parkway Opens New Areas for Development," *New York Times*, December 13, 1936, REI.

<sup>15</sup> Dawn Duensing, "Bronx River Parkway Reservation," HAER No. NY-327, Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 5.

structures designed to harmonize with the surrounding landscape. The parkway also featured rigid-frame bridges designed by Arthur Hayden that revolutionized bridge building.<sup>16</sup>

### *Hallmarks of the parkway*

Built a decade later, the HHP incorporated many of the hallmark design features of the Bronx River Parkway with the most up-to-date, engineering safety features of the day. The HHP was built during the height of the American parkways movement; its design fulfilled the ideals of “parkway” as “a park with a road.” Its design embodies the characteristics of the limited-access scenic pleasure drive, repeating and improving upon the features of the Bronx River Parkway and other earlier parkways.

The HHP is a long, linear park that is experienced by moving through it. It is defined by restricted access, the elimination of cross traffic, a landscaped right-of-way, fully separated driving lanes, and connections to scenic and recreational attractions in the adjacent parkland. The design of the road, which features straight-aways, broad sweeps, and curves, was meant to enhance freedom of movement and to engender pleasurable driving. The roadways were set within natural and man-made topography and took advantage of scenic views and vistas. State-of-the-art engineering features were also incorporated into the final design such as spiral curves and superelevations, which help ease the effect of centrifugal force when transitioning from straight to curve. With three lanes in each direction for much of its length, the HHP carried more traffic more efficiently than its predecessors and yet was still clearly a parkway, with designed and natural landscapes and vistas.

The landscaping along the parkway and in Riverside Park was carefully planned to enhance the park-like setting, with a wide variety of trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses planted along the new and existing sections of Riverside Park, as well as at the roadside, in the medians, and as slope protection areas along the rest of the parkway. Where trees had been removed for the parkway construction, new saplings and trees were replanted both for roadside beautification and to prevent soil erosion. Climbing vines on median guardrails helped reduce headlight glare, while vegetation on rocky outcrops stabilized the slopes.

Each section of the project presented its own unique topographic, scenic and community features; hence highway structures, alignments, landscaping and architectural detailing varied from section to section. Moses could have decided on one standard for the entire parkway, but his choice of Gilmore Clarke as landscape architect demonstrated his commitment to a parkway vision that respected the surrounding environment. Like all of Clarke’s parkways, the HHP was built “to follow the land,” and this decision ultimately created a unified aesthetic experience for the driver that was also visually stimulating.

For much of the parkway, the scenery was part of a free-flowing, kinetic experience. The car was the primary mediator of the driver’s sensory experience of the environment – an endless succession of visual images framed by windshields, side windows and mirrors. Engineering

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<sup>16</sup> Duensing, 62-63.

concerns such as road geometry, line of sight, grading, and alignments were crucial safety concerns as well as determining the visual appeal of the roadway from the driver's viewpoint.

### *Moses and his team*

The design of the HHP was the result of a collaborative process involving planners, engineers, and landscape architects who were among those most influential in the development of the parkway form. As the sole head of the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, Robert Moses entrusted the creation of this urban parkway to a select group of planners, engineers, and landscape architects with whom he had worked on other projects: engineers Madigan-Hyland, Emil H. Praeger, Robinson & Steinman, and Waddell & Hardesty; architects Clinton F. Loyd and Aymar Embury II; and landscape architect Gilmore D. Clarke. Other work related to the HHP was overseen by William H. Latham, Park Engineer, of the New York City Department of Parks; Joseph J. Darcy, District Engineer, of the New York State Department of Public Works; and J.W. Pfau, Chief Engineer, of the New York Central System.

Madigan-Hyland became Robert Moses' favorite engineering firm; their many projects included the Triborough and Bronx-Whitestone Bridges, the Belt Parkway, and the reclamation of the Flushing site for the 1939 World's Fair. Emil Praeger, who worked for Madigan-Hyland, served as the Chief Engineer for the HHP. Among his many accomplishments was the design of floating concrete piers for the Normandy invasion during World War II, the Tappan Zee Bridge (1952-55), and Dodger Stadium in LA.

David B. Steinman of Robinson & Steinman was already a well-known bridge builder when he became a consultant on the Henry Hudson Bridge. Waddell & Hardesty was another well-respected firm used by Moses that specialized in bridge design.

Aymar Embury II built twenty bridges, including the Triborough Bridge in New York City. In the 1930s, he held the position of principal designer for Robert Moses, designing buildings at Prospect Park Zoo and Central Park Zoo. He also designed Beaux-Arts style Long Island mansions. Embury was also known for his work with concrete and steel.<sup>17</sup>

Gilmore D. Clarke was one of the most famous parkway designers in America. He worked for the Bronx Parkway Commission from 1916 to 1923. After his term with that commission ended, he joined the Westchester County Park Commission as its chief landscape architect, where he participated in the development of the Saw Mill River Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway. He was a consultant to the federal government's work on the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. In 1934, Clarke went into private practice, starting his own firm: Clarke and Rapuano, which designed the Palisades Interstate Parkway and worked on numerous other landscaping and transportation projects in the New York City area and throughout the country.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Biographical information from Artnet, "Embury, Aymar II [article online], accessed September 8, 2005, available at [www.artnet.com/library/02/0259/T025976.asp](http://www.artnet.com/library/02/0259/T025976.asp).

<sup>18</sup> For more information on Clarke, see Domenico Anese, "Gilmore Clarke," in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, eds. Charles Birnbaum and Robin Karson (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000), 56-60; see Richard Quin,

## **DESCRIPTION**

The Henry Hudson Parkway (HHP), officially designated NY Route 9A, is a limited-access parkway that runs along the east side of the Hudson River, through the New York City boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx.<sup>19</sup> It extends a total of 11.2 miles from West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan to its terminus at the Saw Mill River Parkway on the border between the Bronx and the City of Yonkers in Westchester County. The Henry Hudson Parkway is also a component of a regional transportation system, linking the West Side Highway to the south with the Westchester County parkways and interstate systems to the north and east.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the HHP converges with interstate highway I-95, which stretches from Maine to Florida, at the George Washington Bridge interchange.<sup>21</sup> The HHP is also an important component of the local recreational system since it connects and provides access to five major city parks, including Riverside, Fort Washington, Fort Tryon, Inwood Hill, and Van Cortlandt parks. Over the 11-mile parkway, engineers provided seventeen access points, beginning at West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and ending with the Mosholu Parkway. Throughout each of the parks, there are access points for pedestrians to reach the Hudson Riverfront as well as the recreational opportunities of the park. The parkway includes four major interchanges that incorporate a complex system of ramps and roadways. These are located at West 79<sup>th</sup> Street at the Rotunda, West 96<sup>th</sup> Street, the George Washington Bridge, and the Mosholu Parkway. Most of the other interchanges can be classified as "minor," since they comprise a single system of partial cloverleaves, each with underpasses, overpasses and ramps.

The HHP travels through a varied urban and suburban landscape that is unified by its proximity to the Hudson River. The urban landscape includes views of the New York City skyline and the George Washington Bridge interchange in Manhattan, while the Bronx offers a suburban landscape of single and multiple family residences. Throughout its route, the HHP follows the topography of the area through which it travels, creating a varied and pleasurable driving experience.

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"Blue Ridge Parkway," HAER Nos. VA-NC-42, Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1997, 33-37; for Clarke's involvement in Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and George Washington Memorial Parkway, see Timothy Davis, "George Washington Memorial Parkway," HAER No. VA-69, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1994/98. See also Dawn Duensing, "Bronx River Parkway," HAER No. NY-327, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

<sup>19</sup> Several highways make up Route 9A. It is known as the West Side Highway from Battery Place in Lower Manhattan to West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. South of West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, 9A has characteristics of an urban boulevard with distinctive streetscaping and park infrastructure and elements. There are stoplights at long intervals to provide access to the route. In 1999, it was proposed that the West Side Highway be renamed Joe DiMaggio Highway for its entire length between Battery Place and West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. The elevated portion of West Side Highway between West 59<sup>th</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> streets was called the Miller Highway after Julius Miller, Manhattan Borough President during the 1920s. The Henry Hudson Parkway officially encompasses the section of Route 9A that extends from West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street to Saw Mill River Parkway (which terminates at a junction with I-684).

<sup>20</sup> Westchester County parkways include: Saw Mill River, Hutchinson River, and Sprain Brook.

<sup>21</sup> Just over the George Washington Bridge in New Jersey, I-95 meets with the Palisades Interstate Parkway, a limited access roadway that cuts northward through Palisades Interstate Parkway, a strip of parkland along the west side of the Hudson River. Palisades Interstate Parkway continues into New York State terminating at Harriman and Bear Mountain state parks, both in Bear Mountain, New York.

Since the parkway serves the important role of linking five major New York City parks, the following description includes important features of those parks, particularly in Riverside Park. The following section describes the route of the parkway from south to north and its setting. Note that some prominent landmarks and features along its route, such as the George Washington Bridge, Riverbank State Park, and the Cloisters, among others, are included in this narrative because of their visual prominence, but do not fall within the National Register eligible boundaries of the parkway as they are part of different contexts.

### **West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street to George Washington Bridge, including Riverside Park**

From West 72<sup>nd</sup> to 155<sup>th</sup> streets, the HHP travels through Riverside Park. The topography is such that the parkway sits between the Hudson River and the western edge of the ridge on which Riverside Drive and parts of Riverside Park have been built. The southern end of the HHP and Riverside Park begins at the terminus of the elevated section of the West Side Highway, at West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. The refurbishing of Riverside Park and the construction of the HHP occurred simultaneously in the 1930s as part of Robert Moses' West Side Improvement plans. This section of the parkway is an integral part of Riverside Park and is listed on the National Register as a contributing feature of Riverside Park and Drive.

This major park and parkway project included covering the already existing railroad tracks and creating a promenade on top, building recreational facilities (including a marina), and extending the shoreline by dumping fill and then building a sea wall. Throughout Riverside Park, pedestrian underpasses and overpasses were built to allow pedestrians to travel from one side of the park to another. The use of similar building materials, such as broken range work masonry and granite, on structures such as bridges, viaducts, underpasses, and walls provides visual continuity between the parkway and parks structures.

Riverside Park contains memorials along Riverside Drive and recreational facilities are scattered throughout the park. This combination is the result of two different eras and conceptions of the park: that of the City Beautiful movement, seeking to uplift the city's residents, and of Robert Moses, who was concerned with improving the city's recreational opportunities.

The Rotunda, located at West 79<sup>th</sup> Street, is arguably the preeminent feature of the park and serves as a gateway both to the park and to the waterfront. A major interchange/traffic circle occurs at this location on the parkway, the first of four major interchanges that occur along the HHP. Once past the Rotunda at West 79<sup>th</sup> Street, the northbound lanes take a slightly higher grade than the southbound, allowing both lanes to enjoy views of the Hudson River to the west.

The parkway gently curves after West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street to run more closely along the Hudson River before turning back inland beginning at West 89<sup>th</sup> Street. At the underpass between West 92<sup>nd</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> streets are ramps on both the south and northbound lanes of the parkway. The northbound ramp exits to Riverside Drive at West 95<sup>th</sup> Street. There is also an entrance ramp at this location; a triangular grassy median separates the two ramps. The short entrance ramp here is typical of 1930s ramp design, with a tight curve requiring quick acceleration for cars entering the parkway and fast deceleration for existing traffic. The

shortness of the ramps causes little impact on the surrounding landscape, resulting in minimal usage of valuable parkland.

The second major interchange is at West 96<sup>th</sup> Street, where there is another exit ramp on the northbound side as well as an entrance ramp that allows traffic to either enter northbound lanes or travel under the parkway via the West 100<sup>th</sup> Street underpass and then enter the southbound lanes via an entrance ramp.

From West 112<sup>th</sup> to 119<sup>th</sup> streets, the parkway continues running directly alongside the Hudson. At West 119<sup>th</sup> Street, the north and southbound lanes of the parkway break further apart before returning to run alongside one another at West 125<sup>th</sup> Street. The northbound lanes at West 119<sup>th</sup> Street have a long exit ramp running to West 129<sup>th</sup> Street. Around West 124<sup>th</sup> Street, the railroad tracks come out of the tunnel in which they were enclosed through Riverside Park and run in the open air.

The final section of Riverside Park from West 119<sup>th</sup> to 129<sup>th</sup> streets features Grant's Tomb at West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Parkway runs between the Hudson River and the railroad from West 129<sup>th</sup> to 135<sup>th</sup> streets. The deep Manhattan Valley cuts through this area, so viaducts had to be built to carry both Riverside Drive and the parkway in order to maintain the same grade. The northern extension of Riverside Park begins after the viaducts at West 139<sup>th</sup> Street.

From West 137<sup>th</sup> to 153<sup>rd</sup> streets, the parkway sweeps several yards further inland. Riverside Drive and Park (extension) continue to form the eastern edge, along the exposed railroad tracks, while Riverbank State Park is to the west. The topography of this section is such that Riverside Drive is at a higher grade than the parkway, so there is a heavy masonry retaining wall between the road and the railroad tracks, which are located at a significantly lower grade than Riverside Drive.

From West 154<sup>th</sup> to 160<sup>th</sup> streets, viaducts carry the HHP due to the deep valley in this area. Around West 158<sup>th</sup> Street, the HHP moves further inland and begins the ascent to Washington Heights. The median widens and contracts until West 171<sup>st</sup> Street, where the northbound lanes head further inland and southbound to stay to the west. The grassy and tree-filled areas between the north and southbound lanes are part of Fort Washington Park, the second major park along the HHP's path. Fort Washington Park, totaling over 158 acres, extends from West 155<sup>th</sup> to Dyckman streets. At West 160<sup>th</sup> Street, both lanes of the parkway cross over the railroad tracks, which then run on the western side of the parkway.

### **George Washington Bridge to Henry Hudson Bridge**

Extending from West 171<sup>st</sup> to 180<sup>th</sup> streets, the most complex and expansive interchange on the parkway is the series of thirty bridges, over- and underpasses, and ramps at the junction of I-95, US 1, the Trans-Manhattan Expressway, Riverside Drive, Broadway (US 9), and the double-deck George Washington Bridge (NR-eligible). The George Washington Bridge was longest suspension bridge in the world when it opened in 1931. At West 171<sup>st</sup> Street, northbound, the HHP diverges into one lane for the HHP and another for George Washington Bridge traffic. The four southbound lanes diverge into two left lanes that head off the parkway towards the George Washington Bridge and two lanes that continue as the HHP.

Traffic from the bridge onto the southbound lanes enters just south of the bridge from the left.

The north and southbound lanes of the HHP travel beneath the George Washington Bridge. The northbound lanes of the parkway pass under three bridges. The southbound lanes of the parkway travel directly under the George Washington Bridge interchange. The Little Red Lighthouse (NR listed) is located at the southeastern foot of the bridge and is visible from the southbound lanes.

Beyond the George Washington Bridge (West 179<sup>th</sup> Street), the railroad follows the shoreline of the Hudson River while the parkway is to the east of the railroad tracks. Around West 181<sup>st</sup> Street, the railroad cut is visible.

Inspiration Point was built in 1925 at West 190<sup>th</sup> Street, along with the extension of Riverside Drive, and was meant to be a focal point of the drive for both drivers and pedestrians since it overlooks the Hudson and Palisades beyond. When it opened drivers could stop at a large turnoff to take in the view from the Inspiration Point shelter. Inspiration Point is intact but not currently accessible from the parkway since it is separated from the road by jersey barriers.

Moving northward the HHP hugs the elevated sections of Fort Tryon Park to its east. Fort Tryon Park is the third of the major city parks through which the HHP travels. The northbound lanes of the HHP have an interchange at Fort Tryon Park (NR-listed 1978). Cars may exit to the park road or enter from the park to the northbound HHP lanes, but the southbound lanes bypass the park. Entering Fort Tryon Park from Riverside Drive, the park drive passes under a concrete arch bridge clad in stone. The bridge loops around to the Cloisters and connects to Riverside Drive and West 190<sup>th</sup> Street. The rustic stonework used on the bridge and other structures in the park unifies the structures and enhances the architecture of the Cloisters. Fort Tryon Park was originally the home of the C.K.G. Billings estate, which John D. Rockefeller, Jr. acquired and the commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to design a park there in 1925. In 1926, the Billings mansion burned and the city accepted the donation of the estate from Rockefeller. The city completed the 67-acre Fort Tryon Park in 1935. Rockefeller had the medieval arts branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, known as the Cloisters (NR-listed), built at the park. Fort Tryon Park also features playgrounds, pedestrian paths, and unparalleled view of the Hudson River Palisades to the west.

After Fort Tryon Park, the parkway crosses above Inwood Valley to Inwood Hill Park. The northbound lanes mount fairly steep wooded hills, with three lanes of curving roadway. Upwards to Inwood Hill Park, northbound traffic continues to climb through more wooded landscapes on its ascent to the upper deck of the Henry Hudson Bridge. At this elevation, the parkway crosses high above the Harlem River to Spuyten Duyvil, on the western edge of the Bronx. Conversely, the southbound lanes follow the gentle curvature of the northern roadway, but at a lower grade so the opposite lanes of traffic cannot be seen. The wooded surroundings and the invisibility of the opposite lanes of traffic enhance the park-like setting.

Inwood Hill Park is the fourth major city park through which the HHP passes. It was created in 1916 and encompasses 196 acres made up from lands bought by the New York City Parks Department from institutional and private owners. While the park does contain recreational facilities its natural features are its biggest draw. These include two large ridges with a valley in between and lowlands beside the river and Spuyten Duyvil Creek. The park includes two pedestrian structures: one over the railroad tracks at approximately West 213th street and the second, an underpass under the southbound lanes.

The Dyckman Street Bridge links northbound HHP traffic between Fort Tryon and Inwood Hill parks. Two bridges carry the HHP over Dyckman Street. The four-span open spandrel concrete arch rigid frame bridge carries the northbound HHP lanes and dates to the original construction of the parkway.

### **Henry Hudson Bridge to Van Cortlandt Park**

The Henry Hudson Bridge spans the Harlem River and connects the Manhattan and Bronx sections of the HHP. The Henry Hudson Bridge, built from 1935-36 with the addition of an upper deck in 1937, is a fixed plate girder arch with upper and lower decks. Considered an engineering marvel in its day, it was the longest fixed plate girder arch bridge in the world. The upper deck carries three lanes northbound, while the lower deck carries four lanes southbound. Granite faced tollbooths for both south and northbound traffic are located on the Manhattan end of the bridge.

After crossing the Henry Hudson Bridge, the parkway enters the Bronx and begins to move further inland, away from the view of the Hudson River. After the Harlem River crossing, the HHP passes over Kappock Street. This interchange provides access to the small Henry Hudson Memorial Park at Kappock Street and Independence Avenue, west of the HHP. Within the park is a 16' bronze statue of Henry Hudson standing atop a 100' column, funds for which came from the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority. Although the statue had been planned since the Hudson-Fulton celebration of 1909, it was not completed until 1938.

The character of the parkway changes as it passes through the Bronx, becoming more suburban in nature with service roads flanking each side. The service roads provide access to and from the parkway, and also provide a buffer between private homes and the highway. The service roads are set off from the HHP by curbed and planted medians that contain directional signs as well as light standards. There are also numerous interchanges in the Bronx that connect to the service roads along the parkway corridor. In this section of the Bronx, the HHP partially follows the path of the former Spuyten Duyvil Parkway. The parkway bypasses many minor neighborhood parks created when the HHP was first built as well as others added in the late 1990s. The path of the northbound and southbound lanes snakes beneath overpasses through the neighborhoods of Riverdale, making another wide turn inland just beyond West 252<sup>nd</sup> Street. Jersey barriers throughout this section serve as the median. The southbound lanes are at a higher grade in some areas. At other points, the roadway cuts into the ridge that stretches from Riverdale through Van Cortlandt Park, while elsewhere, most notably at the western entrance to Van Cortlandt Park, it veers around higher elevations. The remnants of the rocky outcroppings are still visible.

Bridges within this section of the Bronx vary greatly and, for the most part, carry local traffic over the HHP. Most are double and triple segmental arched rigid concrete bridges faced in broken range work masonry. The stonework detailing varies to make each bridge unique.

### **Van Cortlandt Park to Westchester County Line**

Upon entering Van Cortlandt Park, the last of the five major city parks through which the HHP passes, the parkway curves to resume its north/south axis. As the parkway passes through Van Cortlandt Park, it cuts through densely wooded areas. Swathes of hardy grasses and overgrown vegetation cover the ground and trees line the half-mile of the HHP before it connects with the Saw Mill River Parkway in Westchester County.

Van Cortlandt Park is a New York City park spanning over 1100 acres that has recreational facilities, an historic house (Van Cortlandt Manor, NR listed), an equestrian center, a golf course, sports fields, and trails. Also within the park is Van Cortlandt Lake.

There is an interchange just within the eastern border of Van Cortlandt where a semi-cloverleaf design takes north and southbound traffic to and from the parkway and Broadway. A 1937 riveted steel arch girder bridge carries the HHP over Broadway.

There are two bridges within Van Cortlandt Park: a pedestrian bridge and an equestrian bridge. The first is a riveted steel girder pedestrian bridge built in 1937. The second is a 1937 double span concrete girder bridge used as an equestrian bridge.

The final and fourth major interchange along the HHP is at the Mosholu Parkway. Traffic from the Mosholu Parkway converges with the left lane of the two northbound HHP lanes, just beyond the Major Deegan Extension Bridge. The HHP southbound lanes for the Mosholu Parkway diverge into one lane to the left and travel over the bridge. At Mosholu Parkway is a bridge, dating from 1951, that crosses the northbound lanes of the parkway and interchange, taking traffic from Mosholu Parkway to the HHP southbound.

After this interchange, the HHP continues to the Westchester County line, where it becomes the Saw Mill River Parkway.

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION**

The National Register eligible boundary was drawn to include the entire length of the Henry Hudson Parkway from West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan, its southern boundary, to the Bronx County border with Westchester County, its northern boundary, where it connects with the Saw Mill River Parkway. The parkway runs along the Hudson River in Manhattan and curves inland in the Bronx. The decision as to where to draw the boundary is based on a number of factors including existing conditions and historic documentation (maps, site and landscape plans, photographs, etc.). The boundary was drawn to include the historic road, right-of-way, and all of the landscape-, recreation-, and transportation-related features (bridges, interchanges, ramps, cloverleaves, underpasses, and overpasses) directly associated with the parkway during the period of significance.

The parkland adjacent to the parkway corridor which provides the recreational, scenic, and natural setting for the HHP is also included within the boundary although the extent varies based on its historic connection to the development and landscaping of the HHP.

The shoreline of the Hudson River serves as the western boundary for the Manhattan portion of the HHP since the visual connection to the Palisades was an important design component. In addition, the shoreline is also included to represent the parkway's recreational goals as are many of the park facilities, especially those in Riverside Park.

Moses conceived of the major redevelopment of Riverside Park and the HHP simultaneously as part of the West Side Improvement Project, so that the two were seamlessly integrated. Therefore, the boundaries of the southern portion of the HHP, below St. Clair Place, include all of the National Register listed Riverside Park and Riverside Drive. The West 79<sup>th</sup> Street marina in the Hudson River, which was excluded from the boundaries of the Riverside Park and Drive nomination, is included within boundary of the HHP since it was part of Moses' West Side Improvement Plan and played an important role in the funding which was used to build the HHP.

The boundary narrows as the HHP passes over the Manhattan Valley between St. Clair Place and West 135<sup>th</sup> Street and follows the eastern edge of the railroad tracks on the east and the river's edge on the west. The boundaries begin to broaden again as the HHP moves northward through the northern extension of Riverside Park between West 135<sup>th</sup> Street and West 153<sup>rd</sup> streets. Although the northern extension of Riverside Park was completed in the early 1900s, photographs from ca. 1937 show additional grading and landscaping being done in the park as part of the construction of the HHP, including work up to the eastern edge of Riverside Drive, hence the boundary follows the western edge of Riverside Drive in this area. Along the west, the boundary follows the edge of the river but excludes the large Riverbank State Park property (1980s) by skirting along its eastern edge.

Between West 153<sup>rd</sup> and the alignment of West 159<sup>th</sup> streets the boundary narrows again following the western edge of Riverside Drive. As HHP enters Fort Washington Park the boundary broadens, continuing to follow the river's edge on the east and the western edge of

Riverside Drive West. The boundary includes the complex ramp and interchange system of the HHP at the George Washington Bridge as well as the underpass to the north side of the bridge. While the boundary includes the exit ramp from the George Washington Bridge, this eligibility does not take in the bridge itself, which is individually NR eligible.

North of the George Washington Bridge, the boundary follows along the eastern edge of the northbound lanes of the HHP. The northbound lane hugs the elevated sections of Fort Tryon Park and continues to form the east boundary. While the HHP connects to the recreational and cultural offerings of Fort Tryon Park, the park was previously listed on the National Register and is not included in the boundaries of the HHP.

The eastern boundary includes the connection along Staff Street and Dyckman Street to the Dyckman Street Bridge. The western boundary at the river excludes the Dyckman Street Marina, which was built in 1987.

The western boundary in Inwood Hill Park continues along the edge of the Harlem River. The eastern boundary in Inwood Hill Park has been delineated at 100' east from the northbound curb line. The decision to extend 100' from the curb is based on planting schemes from the Moses period.

The outer edges of the Henry Hudson Bridge define the boundary over the Harlem River. As the HHP enters the Bronx its boundaries are defined by the dense residential development along its route up until Van Cortlandt Park. At Kappock Street the boundaries extend westward to pick up the Henry Hudson Memorial Park, which was completed by the Henry Hudson Park Authority in 1938. The boundary in the residential section of the Bronx is largely formed by the outer edges of the flanking service roads and their retaining walls; these service roads are known as Henry Hudson Parkway West and East. As the HHP curves eastward (around West 252<sup>nd</sup> Street) the boundary is delineated by the south edge of West 254<sup>th</sup> Street and the south edge of West 253<sup>rd</sup> Street (another HHP service road) in order to include the green areas on either side of the HHP, which were included in historic planting plans. The boundary through Van Cortlandt Park is being drawn 100' on either side of the parkway based on 1937 landscape plans<sup>22</sup> and includes the Broadway interchange, the railroad and equestrian bridges, and the Mosholu Parkway interchange. The north boundary of the HHP ends at the Westchester County line.

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<sup>22</sup> "The Henry Hudson Parkway Stabilization Protection" drawings, October 1, 1937 (XE 110-88. HHP 37.1. 13 sheets). Contract covering area from Westchester County line south to approx. 237<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **INTEGRITY ANALYSIS**

While changes have been made to the HHP to accommodate evolving vehicle design and driving habits, increased usage, changing safety standards, and signage, as a whole, the parkway retains substantial functional and design integrity and continues to represent its historic character. The completion of the HHP helped to create residential development along its corridor and subsequently increased commuter traffic. Primary non-contributing features found along the parkway are largely the result of safety concerns and include signage, galvanized steel W-beam guardrails, concrete Jersey barriers, bollards, emergency metal retention netting, Deskey-style highway lights, and chain link fencing. Although the accumulation of these features has resulted in a sense of visual clutter in some areas, the parkway continues to retain its historic parkway design (route, alignment, grade variation, exits and entrances), built components (bridges, tunnels, stone walls, park structures, designed park landscapes), natural components (vegetation, water features, topography, rock outcrops), and sequence of unique views (river, Palisades, city skyline, and park views).

The HHP continues to serve its primary role as an urban transportation corridor within a linear park system with recreational offerings, providing scenic views from multiple vantage points in addition to views from the road itself. It continues to be a gateway to New York City for the Taconic, Saw Mill River, and Palisades Interstate Parkways, and other connections in the Hudson River Valley. The route, alignment, and setting of the HHP remain intact, and it remains a well-defined transportation corridor closely surrounded by and connected to naturalistic parkland, forested areas, urban residential development, and the river. Definitive characteristics of the road include a combination of gentle curves, broad sweeps, and straight-aways, following topographic lines at different elevations. Original interchanges, bridges, walls, and other structures survive largely intact. The landscape continues to reflect the original naturalistic intent, characterized by indigenous woody and herbaceous plants of the northeast, rock outcroppings, variable topography (some manmade), and water features. Views and vistas survive to an outstanding degree, particularly those of the Hudson River and the Palisades.

### **Character-defining features:**

The following are the essential intact historic features of the Henry Hudson Parkway that convey its significance.

### **Spatial Organization**

- A well-defined and structured urban linear transportation corridor surrounded by and connected to a variety of natural and built features, including city parks, hilly terrain, dense urban development, and suburban-like residential development.
- Route defined by and functioning to connect a series of city parks with natural, recreational, and cultural features and attractions.
- route laid out to establish clear connections to other transportation/recreational features, including the Saw Mill River Parkway, Bronx River Parkway, the Taconic State Parkway, the Westchester County Parks and Parkway System, the Palisades Interstate Parkway, and other parkways.

- roadway varies from straight-aways, broad sweeps, and curves.
- separated roadways (northbound and southbound) distinct from each other in two separate linear spaces, yet contained within the same overall corridor.
- adjoining or contiguous spaces along the corridor, including entry/exit points, and passive and active recreational features.
- internal and external views and vistas; internal views narrow and constructed; external views broad - across the Hudson - expansive and dramatic.

**Topographic Features**

- dramatic views of the Hudson River and Palisades.
- adjacent or contiguous natural and man-made topographic features including steep hills, embankments, and flat areas.
- Man-made landscape on fill along the shoreline in Riverside Park includes both contours and flat areas to accommodate hidden railroad tracks, promenades, terraces gardens, recreational areas, and pleasing views.
- water crossings.
- rocky terrain with rock outcroppings.

**Circulation Features**

- limited access, grade separated highway.
- uninterrupted, well defined linear corridor.
- alignment of and access to the parkway determined, in part, by the corresponding development of city parks and, in part, by the ability to connect with other transportation features.
- alignment, in part, follows natural and man-made topographic lines.
- road path gently curves especially as it moves inland away from the river.
- right-of-way characterized by natural and naturalistic landscapes.
- surface treatment is paved and regular.
- overpasses and underpasses rather than at grade crossings.
- drainage system with cast metal grates at regular intervals.
- A series of minor and major interchanges along the route; configurations vary depending on location. Use of spiral curves and superelevations at transitions from straight to curve.

**Vegetation**

- Naturalistic landscape corridor with a wide variety of trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses for the roadside, medians, and slope protection areas. The preservation of external views and vistas taken into consideration.

**Water Features**

- The Hudson River is the primary waterway and scenic feature of the HHP. Other water features include the Harlem River between Manhattan and the Bronx and Van Cortlandt Lake in the Bronx.

## Buildings/Structures

- **Bridges.** Vehicular, pedestrian, and railroad bridges (overpasses and underpasses) occur throughout the Parkway. Some bridges are components of the Parkway's interchanges. The two main bridge types are used on the parkway:

**Rigid-frame concrete bridges** - Well-suited for short spans. Built between 1936 and 1938 with most being single- or double-spanned arched structures; most faced with random-range quarry-faced ashlar with various decorative granite cutwaters and parapet treatments.

**Girder and floorbeam bridges** - Built of steel or concrete. Was typically used for longer spans and for railroad crossings, especially when done in steel. Most built between 1935 and 1938 with a few earlier and later exceptions. Frank expression of structure though some had abutments and retaining walls faced in dressed face ashlar masonry, for example.

The three most prominent bridges of the Parkway are:

**Henry Hudson Bridge: a fixed plate girder arch steel bridge**

Spans the Harlem River Ship Canal. Built from 1935-36 with the addition of an upper deck in 1937, is a fixed plate girder arch bridge with upper and lower decks. Was the longest bridge of its type when built. Granite faced tollbooths on Manhattan side.

**Dyckman Street Bridge, northbound: a continuous open spandrel, concrete arch bridge of steel girder and floorbeam system with a tied four-arch span.** Completed 1937. Features an ornamental metal balustrade; concrete façade of abutments and battered walls treated to look like clapboard siding.

**Stone walls.** Retaining walls, scenic overlook walls, and guide rails; many faced with random-range ashlar.

- **Recreational Facilities.**

There are various recreation related buildings and structures in Riverside Park that were built as part of the West Side Improvement project in the 1930s including **playgrounds with comfort stations, promenades, gardens, playing fields, tennis courts, playing fields.** The comfort stations, promenade (covering the railroad tracks), stair walls, and café are largely faced in the typical random-range ashlar with granite trim.

- **Furnishings/Objects**

**Guide Rails (very few historic guiderails remain)**

NYC Parks Department designed the earliest **Art Deco guide rail.** The rail consists of panels of overlapping vertical metal bars bent to form arcs that are welded to horizontal metal bars. These rails are found primarily in Riverside

Park and appear in variety of shades of green. It is unknown which rails of this type are original and which are reproductions.

A second original guide rail type is the **spring cable tension guide rail** located on the western side of the southbound lanes of the parkway between West 85<sup>th</sup> and West 96<sup>th</sup> streets.

The third original guide rail type is a **low wall of random-range ashlar** just before the Henry Hudson Bridge on the western side of the northbound lanes. There is also a masonry guide rail at the Rotunda traffic circle.

### **Sculpture and Monuments**

In addition to the recreational facilities in Riverside Park, most of which date to the 1930s reconstruction of the park under the West Side Improvement plan, there are numerous earlier monuments.

#### **Henry Hudson Statue**

In the Henry Hudson Memorial Park is the 16' bronze figure of Henry Hudson atop a 100' column, which was installed in 1938 under the auspices of the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority.

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**Historic photographs, maps, drawings, postcards showing the Henry Hudson Parkway and associated city parks available at:**

Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York.

New York Public Library Digital Gallery: <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm>.

Parks Photo Archive and Drawings, City of New York Parks & Recreation, The Arsenal, Central Park, New York, New York.

New York Central Railroad drawings and Parks Photo Archives, City of New York Parks & Recreation, Olmsted Center, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Flushing, New York, Steven Rizick, Director of Document Services, Capital Projects.

Metropolitan Transit Authority Bridges and Tunnels, Special Archives, Historic Photographs, 2 Broadway, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, New York, New York.

New York City Municipal Archives.



# HAER Inventory Resources

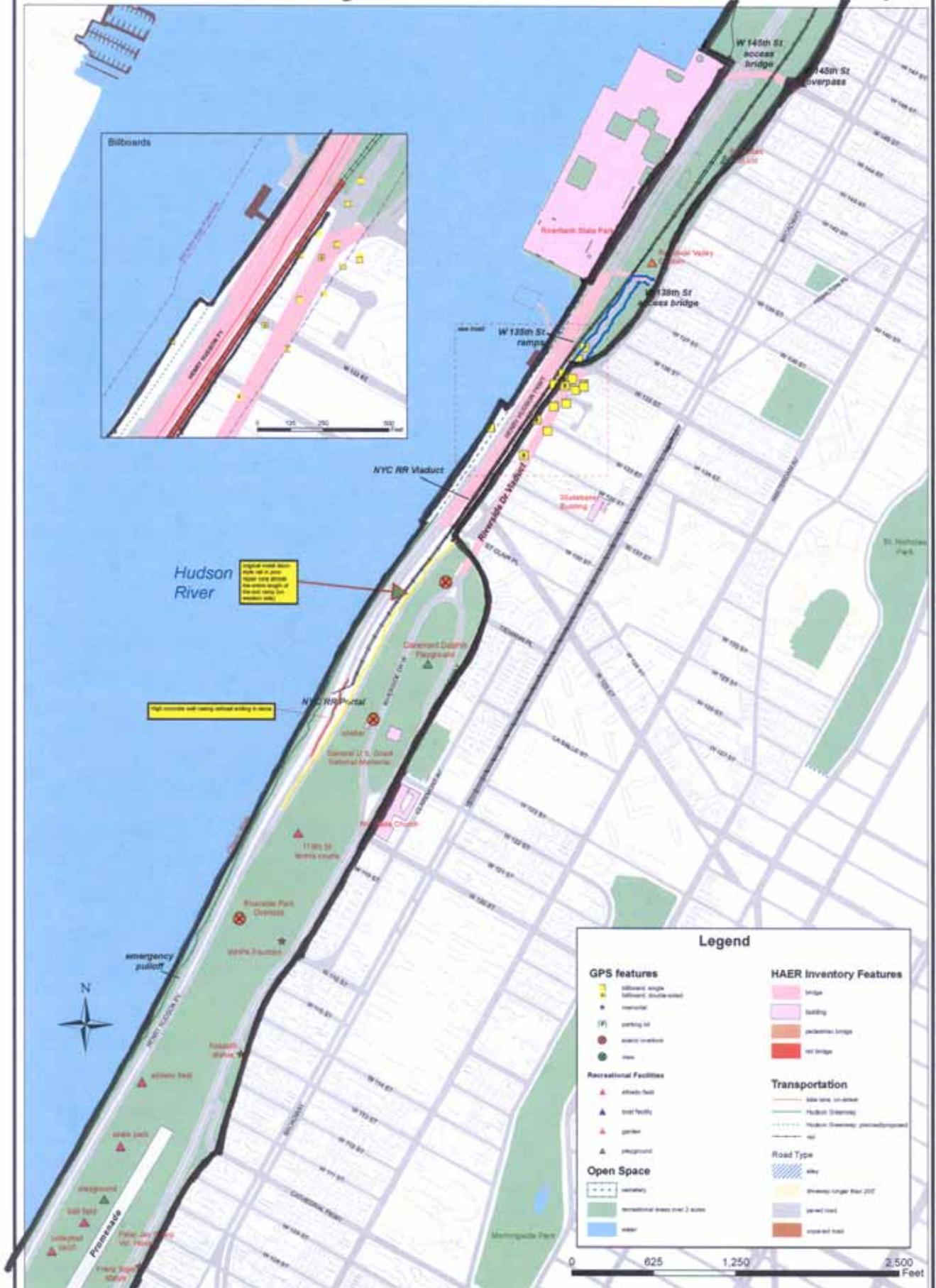
Map 1





# HAER Inventory Resources

Map 2





# HAER Inventory Resources

Map 3



**Legend**

<p><b>GPS features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> billboard single</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> billboard double-sided</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> memorial</li> <li>(P) parking lot</li> <li><span style="color: red;">●</span> transit overpass</li> <li><span style="color: green;">●</span> view</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">▲</span> athletic field</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">▲</span> boat facility</li> <li><span style="color: red;">▲</span> garden</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">▲</span> playground</li> </ul> <p><b>Open Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> cemetery</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> recreational area over 2 acres</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> water</li> </ul>	<p><b>HAER Inventory Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: pink;">■</span> bridge</li> <li><span style="color: pink;">■</span> building</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> pedestrian bridge</li> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> rail bridge</li> </ul> <p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">—</span> New York Thruway</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">—</span> Hudson Greenway</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">—</span> Hudson Greenway, planned/improvement</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">—</span> rail</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">—</span> spur</li> </ul> <p><b>Road Type</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> alley</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> already longer than 200'</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> paved road</li> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> unimproved road</li> </ul>
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# HAER Inventory Resources

Map 4





# HAER Inventory Resources

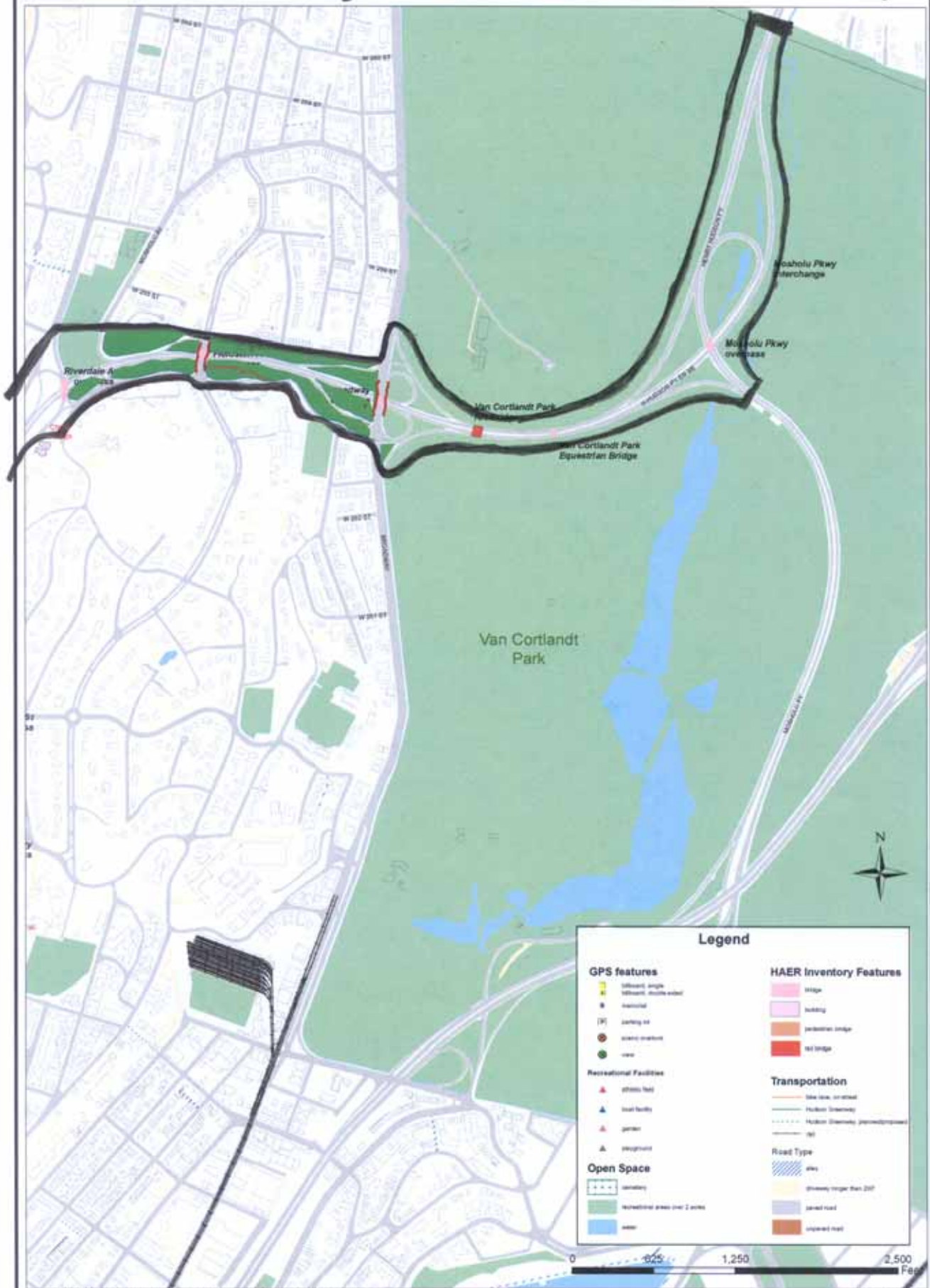
Map 5





# HAER Inventory Resources

Map 6



**Legend**

<p><b>GPS features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> different angle</li> <li> different double entry</li> <li> historical</li> <li> parking lot</li> <li> scenic overpass</li> <li> view</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreational Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> athletic field</li> <li> boat facility</li> <li> garden</li> <li> playground</li> </ul> <p><b>Open Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> cemetery</li> <li> recreational areas over 2 acres</li> <li> water</li> </ul>	<p><b>HAER Inventory Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> bridge</li> <li> building</li> <li> pedestrian bridge</li> <li> toll bridge</li> </ul> <p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> one lane, one way</li> <li> Hudson Greenway</li> <li> Hudson Greenway (proposed/underway)</li> <li> I-95</li> </ul> <p><b>Road Type</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> park</li> <li> driveway longer than 200'</li> <li> paved road</li> <li> unpaved road</li> </ul>
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