

# Proposed Arterial System For the Post War Bronx

By **ROBERT MOSES**

**City Park Commissioner, Chairman of the Triborough Bridge Authority, Member of the City Planning Commission, President of the Long Island State Park Commission and Chairman of the State Council of Parks**

**T**HE various departments and bureaus of the City have been working steadily on a large post war program of public works since the fall of 1942. A substantial part of the program involving the construction of new schools, health centers, sewage disposal plants, public housing, arterial highways, parkways, parks and play grounds, hospitals and for various other public structures, has been allocated to the Borough of The Bronx. These improvements will meet recognized needs in the borough, beyond what could be accomplished with public works and work relief funds during the depression and with normal prewar city appropriations. With the embargo on construction necessitated by the war the City turned to the making of detailed plans for post war construction and made available large sums for this purpose, which were supplemented by Federal and State design contributions.

The program under design is a large one and cannot be wholly carried out without State and Federal assistance. There is every indication, however, that there will be Federal and State contributions to municipalities for public works as a means of expediting construction and alleviating serious unemployment at the end of the war. I believe there is little doubt that most of the plans will be carried out.

The State has taken definite steps toward effective support of this construction program, especially in the fields of housing and highways, and has made design funds available for smaller projects. I am limiting the rest of this article to the highway program. The post war park program was covered in last year's article.

The Federal and State governments in 1943 and 1944 established a State arterial system of highways

within New York City, authorized substantial contributions toward the preparation of plans and toward construction under the supervision of



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the Superintendent of Public Works. There are now pending in the state legislature amendments which provide that the State and Federal governments will also bear one-half of the cost of land for certain new routes approved as part of the system. The Cross Bronx Expressway, Major Deegan Boulevard Extension and Bronx River Expressway are examples of arterial highways to be planned and constructed in accordance with the legislation.

As the Mayor's representative in negotiations with State and Federal officials, I have been intimately connected with the program since its inception and I have been particularly interested in the phases relating to arterial highway improvements. As in other boroughs, the

arterial improvements are so related to the park program that it is difficult to separate them. The coordinated system of mixed traffic express highways and parkways throughout the borough has been worked out jointly by the Borough President and the Park Department and plans have been completed or are well under way on all of the accepted routes.

Plans were completed some time ago for the reconstruction and extension of the Bronx River Parkway from the Westchester County line to Bruckner Boulevard, and if it were not for delays caused by the war, the parkway would be open for use today. It is to be constructed with State funds which are earmarked for this particular job, and work will be started as soon as priorities are removed. From Gun Hill Road north to the Westchester County line, the parkway will be relocated on the existing right-of-way. From Gun Hill Road south to 180th Street, it will be near the easterly border of the park and the portion of the park remaining between Bronx Park East and the new Parkway will be developed with promenades, benches, and recreation areas for the residents of the adjacent communities. The new southerly extension from 180th Street south to Bruckner Boulevard will be built on a right-of-way acquired by the City some years ago which follows approximately the lines of Metcalf Avenue. Through Bronx Park, it is located on land released by the New York Zoological Society and the New York Botanical Garden for this purpose.

Mosholu Parkway from Van Cortlandt Park to Bronx River Parkway, and Bronx and Pelham Parkway from the Bronx River

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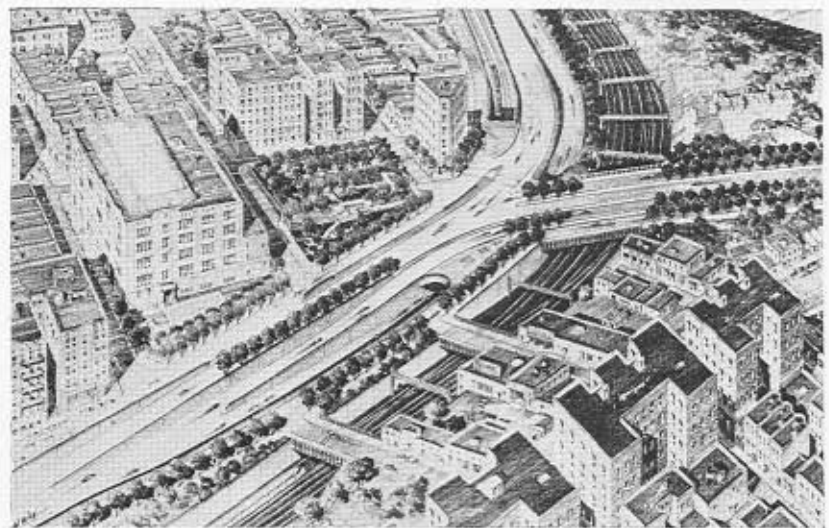
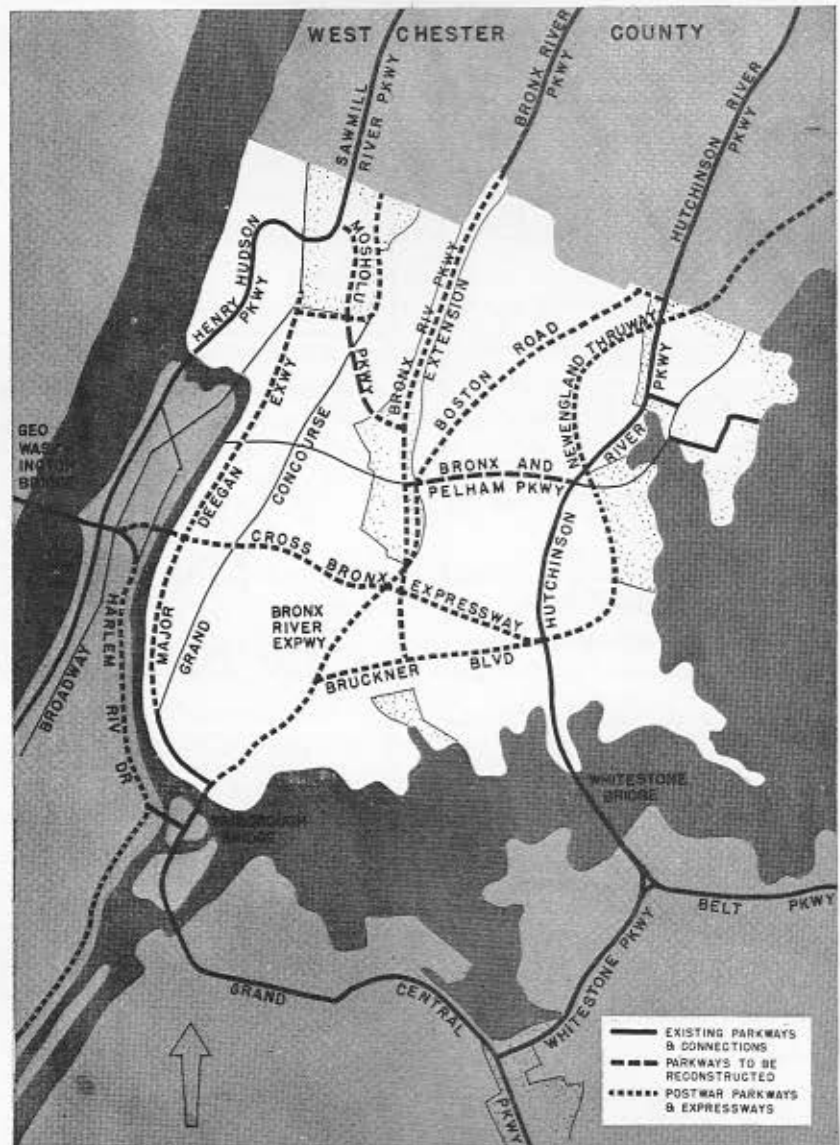
Parkway to Hutchinson River Parkway and Bruckner Boulevard will provide the main east and west scenic drive across The Bronx with grade eliminations, service roads, new concrete pavement, landscaped areas, adequate recreation facilities, and paths and benches along their borders to serve the great congested sections on both sides of the right-of-way. These are City projects and are not part of the arterial system.

Moshulu Parkway will be extended easterly to the Bronx River Parkway in Bronx Park at about Allerton Avenue and northerly through Van Cortlandt Park to the Henry Hudson Parkway just south of the city line. The existing section of the parkway will be reconstructed to meet modern standards. The bridges which will carry this parkway over the Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad at the north end of Bronx Park and the Putnam Division in Van Cortlandt Park have already been built.

Bronx and Pelham Parkway will be rebuilt within the limits of the existing right-of-way, and will provide for the elimination of all crossings at grade between Bronx Park and Pelham Bay Park. The existing thru-roadways will be shifted to the outside of the right-of-way, and the large interior space will be improved with neighborhood recreational facilities, sitting areas and paths. The parkway will be converted from its present primary use as a highway to a true parkway, with recreational facilities adequate to meet future residential development of the surrounding areas.

There have been many suggestions advanced for an east-west mixed traffic express artery across The Bronx, but because of the difficult topography and the high cost of the rights-of-way and construction, little progress was made. A route, known as the Cross Bronx Expressway, has now been selected and approved as an addition to the State Arterial System. The preliminary studies were directed by the Borough President of The Bronx, were accepted by the State

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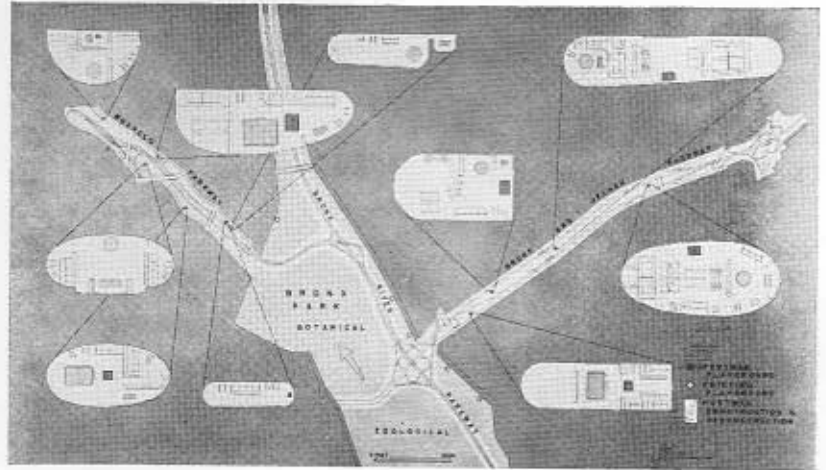
Bronx River Expressway at junction with Bruckner Boulevard.

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and Federal authorities, and contracts for the preparation of final contract drawings have been let by the State Superintendent of Public Works to consultants.

The Cross Bronx Expressway will extend from Washington Bridge to Eastern Boulevard at Westchester Creek. The westerly section from Washington Bridge to the Bronx River will be on an entirely new right-of-way which cuts across the existing street system. Easterly from the Bronx River, it will be built along East 177th Street which will be widened to accommodate the express roadways. There will be access and exit roads at the main north and south street and complete interchanges at the Bronx River Expressway and Bronx River Parkway. There will be incidental playgrounds, small sitting parks and of course landscaping. At the Manhattan end of the Washington Bridge, there will be a direct exit leading to the tunnel approaches to the George Washington Bridge.

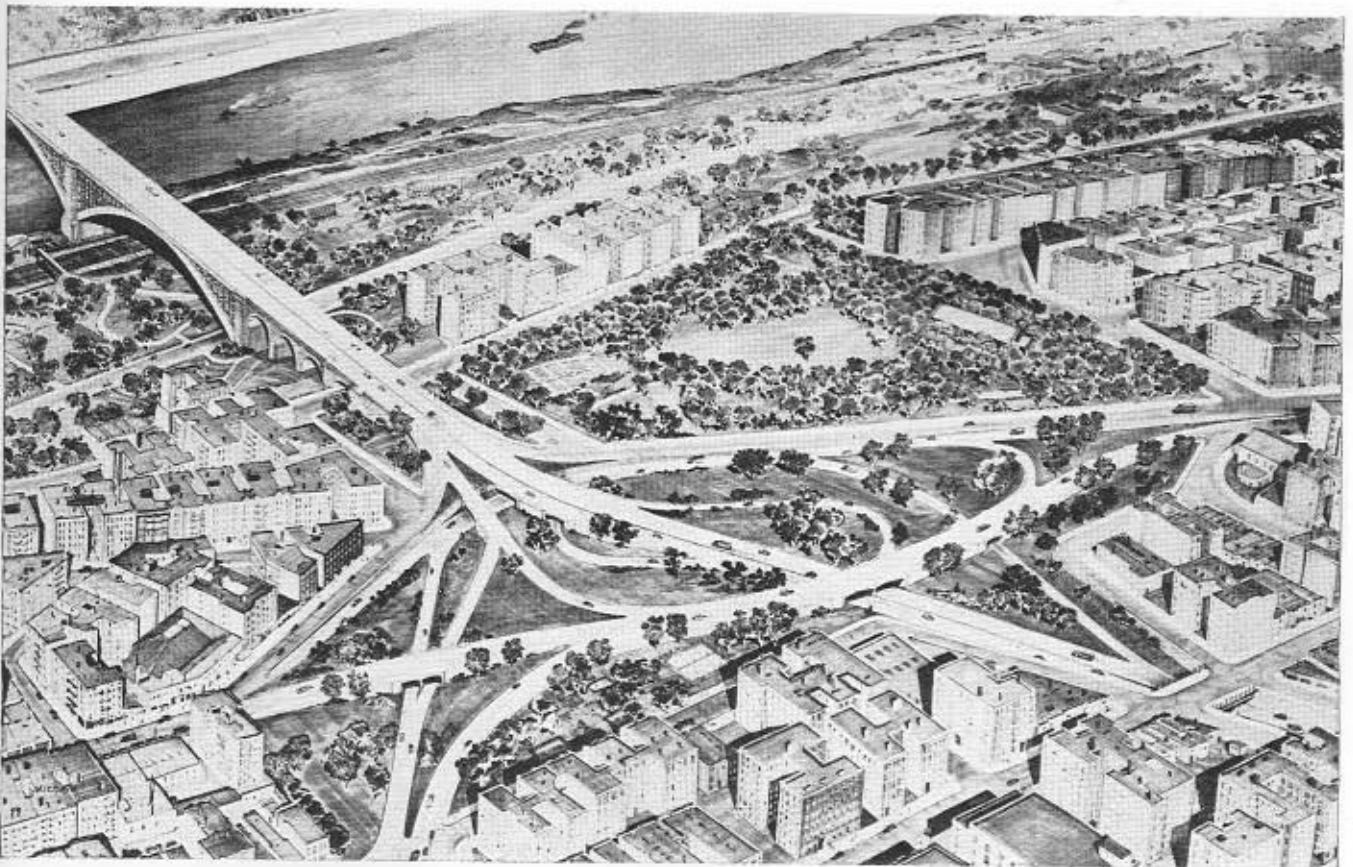


Playgrounds in development of Bronx and Pelham Parkways and Mosholu Parkway.

Cross Bronx Expressway is only a part of the modern highway system designed to distribute commercial traffic from up-state New York and New England to commercial sections of The Bronx and to facilitate its movement through The Bronx to Manhattan, Long Island and New Jersey. Another important project on the state ar-

terial system is the northerly extension of Major Deegan Boulevard from its present terminus at the Grand Concourse northerly along the Harlem River to Van Cortlandt Park. At the park the main roadway will swing to the east and enter Central Avenue in

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Cross Bronx Expressway Connection to east end of Washington Bridge.



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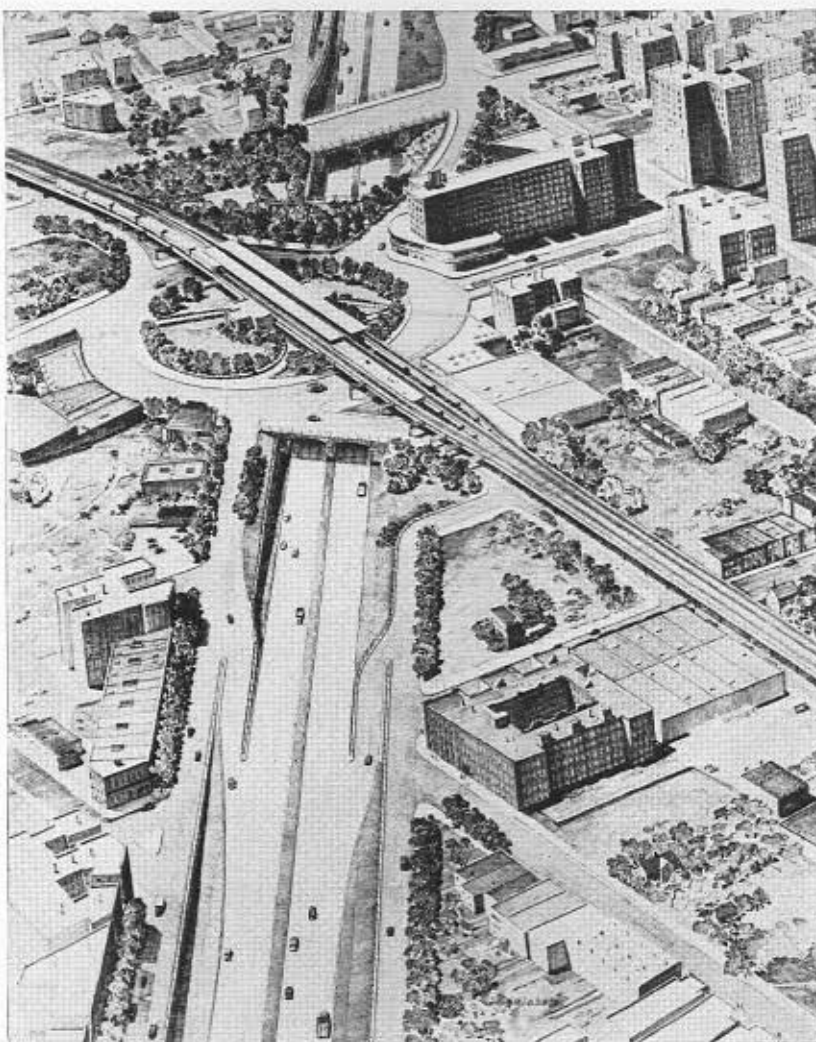
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Westchester County by the way of Jerome Avenue. A short branch will connect with Broadway in the vicinity of Spuyten Duyvil Parkway. This highway will accommodate commercial traffic from up-state New York which now has to use such overcrowded and inadequate streets as Jerome Avenue, Broadway and White Plains Road.

The New England Throughway was made a part of the State program by special legislation and is really an extension of a major highway in Westchester and Connecticut, designed as a relief artery for Boston Road. It will be built across the northerly end of Van Cortlandt Park, will be carried over Eastchester Creek on a lift bridge, and will swing around the old Curtis Airport to Baychester Avenue and thence to Bruckner Boulevard at Pelham Park. Bruckner Boulevard itself is scheduled in the post war program for reconstruction as an express highway without grade crossings. The State will pay the complete cost of this improvement.

There are two other important arterial projects. One of these is the widening and extension of Boston Road from the Westchester County line to 180th Street. Preliminary plans for this work are now being prepared by the Borough President of The Bronx. At 180th Street it will continue south along the Bronx River to Bruckner Boulevard as the Bronx River Expressway. This latter section is on the State arterial system and contract drawings are now being prepared by engineers recommended to the State Department of Public Works by City officials.

This is a big arterial program. It is being worked out with the wholehearted cooperation of City, State and Federal officials. It has, I believe, the full support of business, civic and other organizations of The Bronx. Its effect on the Borough will be enormous, and few people, outside of the public officials immediately involved, can visualize the future which these and other post war improvements will usher in.

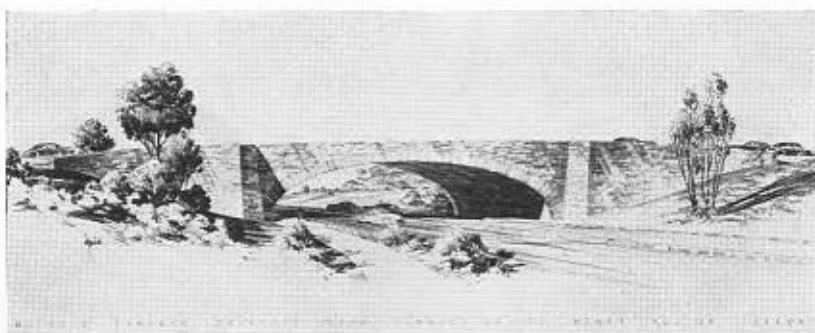


Connections at Hugh J. Grant Circle.

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## CONTRIBUTE TO THE RED CROSS WAR FUND

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Mosholu Parkway Bridge, near connection with Henry Hudson Parkway.