

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Blue Hills Parkway, Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS

other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number Blue Hills Parkway N/A not for publication

city or town Boston, Milton N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Suffolk/Norfolk Counties code 021,025 zip code 02186

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Betsy Friedberg for

Signature of certifying official/Title

Cara H. Metz, Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

5/1/03
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

☐ removed from the
National Register

☐ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

for Daniel J. Vinz 6/23/03

Blue Hills Parkway
Name of Property

Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ private | ☐ building(s) |
| ☐ public-Local | ☒ district |
| ☒ public-State | ☐ site |
| ☐ public-Federal | ☐ structure |
| | ☐ object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	building
1	0	sites
5	1	structures
2	0	objects
8	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE – outdoor recreation

LANDSCAPE – park, natural feature

TRANSPORTATION – road related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE – outdoor recreation

LANDSCAPE – park, natural feature

TRANSPORTATION – road related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other asphalt, concrete, granite, plantings, stone, wood

Narrative Description

See Section 7 Continuation Sheet

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Blue Hills Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Boston/Milton (Suffolk/Norfolk), MA

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DESCRIPTION

The **Blue Hills Parkway (#1 on the data sheet)**, beginning in Boston (Suffolk County) but located almost entirely in Milton (Norfolk County), Massachusetts, is a 1.5-mile-long, multi-lane, divided-roadway connecting parkway in Boston's regional parkway system. It is a heavily traveled formal boulevard through a medium-density suburban residential neighborhood. At its northern terminus, the Blue Hills Parkway connects with Blue Hill Avenue, a major north-south artery (also known, from Franklin Park southward, as State Route 28). The southern terminus of the Blue Hills Parkway is Unquity Road (discussed in a separate nomination for the Blue Hills Reservation Parkways) and the Blue Hills Reservation. The Blue Hills Parkway provides a direct connection to the Blue Hills Reservation from Boston and the Neponset River Reservation. The Blue Hills Parkway is described from north to south, generally the historical order of its development.

The Blue Hills Parkway begins in Boston near the southern edge of Mattapan Square, a busy, late 19th- and 20th-century commercial hub on the southern edge of Boston. Mattapan Square is formed by the intersection of three major Boston roadways—Blue Hill Avenue, River Street, and Cummins Highway—as well as Edgewater Drive, and the Mattapan MBTA station and its access road. Located at the southern edge of the square is the Neponset River Reservation—with MDC-owned parkland that borders both sides of the Neponset River in the area of the parkway. The northern terminus for the parkway corresponds to a line of convenience drawn across the northern edge of the Mattapan Bridge, a structure that was built to carry the Blue Hills Parkway across the Neponset River. The bridge also crosses the Boston/Milton municipal line, which corresponds to the southern edge of the Neponset River. South of the river, the parkway travels exclusively through Milton.

Built 1901-1903, the **Mattapan Bridge (#2 on the data sheet)** serves as the formal entry to the Blue Hills Parkway. It is a massive, granite-faced, triple-arched bridge that features granite side rails topped with flat, granite capstones that measure two feet wide and four feet long (**PHOTO #1**). This is a wide bridge, two to three lanes each northbound and southbound, with a three-foot-wide concrete median in the center, all lined with vertical granite curbs, and four-foot-wide concrete sidewalks on either side. Beneath the roadway, the two smaller fourteen-foot channels to the south silted in long ago, and the Neponset channel is now restricted to the fifty-foot main arch of the bridge, on its north end. The partially granite-faced, cement wing walls are now almost completely hidden in brush and trees, and topped by the continuous granite-faced rail. This bridge is an important element of the parkway and is considered a contributing structure.

On the northern bank of the Neponset in the City of Boston, in a patch of turf adjacent to the northwest corner of the bridge and directly adjacent to its northwestern wing wall, is the **Mattapan Veterans**

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Memorial Monument (#3 on the data sheet), seven feet by five feet, and two feet deep, picturing an eagle and bearing the following inscription: DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE FROM MATTAPAN WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. It is not dated, but appears to be ca. 1920. It is within the boundary of the parkway and is considered a contributing object.

South of the Mattapan Bridge, the Blue Hills Parkway continues as a divided boulevard. Like the northern side, the southern side of the bridge marks the junction of several major roads, all branching off the main route of the Blue Hills Parkway. The most significant is the MDC-managed arterial Truman Parkway (discussed individually in a separate nomination), formerly the Neponset River Parkway and also known as Brush Hill Road. Blue Hill Avenue, the Boston arterial, also reemerges at this corner, heading southward toward the western end of the Blue Hills Reservation where it merges with Canton Avenue at the base of Great Blue Hill. To the east are two smaller side streets, Eliot Avenue and Curtis Road, a former private lane. All of these roads appear in a 1901 ground plan for the Mattapan Bridge in a configuration similar to their present one. Unlike the northern side of the bridge, however, where all roads meet in an open circle at Mattapan Square, the roads here are connected to one another through Blue Hills Parkway.

A system of landscaped traffic islands, the **Blue Hills Parkway Median Islands (#4 on the data sheet)**, divides the northbound and southbound lanes of the parkway and are located at this intersection to aid in traffic maneuvers. Located immediately south of the Mattapan Bridge, these islands appear on the 1901 plans for the parkway. Turn lanes have been opened through the islands for Curtis Road, and the several miters (small triangular islands) in the southbound lane direct traffic onto Truman Parkway and Blue Hill Avenue. The islands have been landscaped and appear parklike with approximately 50-year-old oaks, maples, pine trees, and a massive copper beech. Some young replacement trees of like species have replaced older trees that were lost as a result of disease or age. The Blue Hills Parkway Median Islands are quite wide in this stretch, reaching their widest point (about 25 feet) where the parkway intersects with Eliot Avenue to the east and Truman Highway to the west.

In the area of the Blue Hills Parkway Median Islands, the Blue Hills Parkway widens considerably to four lanes northbound and southbound, with the inside lanes doubling as turning lanes. The northbound lanes are relatively straight in this stretch, but the southbound lanes curve west substantially to allow for the central islands (again, consistent with the 1901 ground plan). The roadways are bituminous concrete, and the curbing on the sides and the islands consist of vertically placed granite block. The lights on islands and along the parkway consist of cobra-head fixtures on cement poles. Concrete and asphalt sidewalks, set back behind a six-foot-wide planting strip, parallel both roadways.

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(End)

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Despite the volume of traffic, the setting in this first stretch is picturesque, especially with the large trees on the islands. To the east of the parkway is a late 19th- to early 20th-century residential neighborhood of substantial two-story houses. To the west is the meandering Neponset River corridor, at this point a park with turf, modern wooden park benches on metal poles fixed into concrete pads, and mature trees (ash, locust, beech, and evergreens). Across from Eliot Avenue is a small dead-end street, Eliot Circle Road. Just south of Eliot Circle Road and oriented towards it is the Neponset District MDC Special Services building, a two-story brick structure with a hipped roof, apparently a former residence. In addition to these elements of setting, between Mattapan Bridge and Eliot Circle on the west side of the parkway, within the planting strip, are a standard modern MDC sign for the Blue Hills Parkway and the rough granite **J. McLean Mile Marker (#5 on the data sheet)**. Only two feet from the roadway, this marker, squared and smoothed, is four feet high, two feet wide, and six inches thick. Heavily worn, it reads: BOSTON 7 MILES J McLEAN 1823. Although it predates the parkway, it has been present during the

parkway's entire history and is considered a contributing object in this nomination. Unlike many other mile markers in Massachusetts, this one has not previously been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The character of the roadway changes somewhat south of the Truman Parkway intersection, as the Blue Hills Parkway Median Islands give way to the fifteen-foot-wide **Blue Hills Parkway Median (#6 on the data sheet) (PHOTO #2)**. The parkway corridor here narrows slightly compared to its width north of the Truman Parkway intersection. The median, original to the parkway, is planted with 50- to 75-year-old maples and oaks in an allee formation. The planted median dramatically frames the inner edges of the parkway and is a contributing feature of the parkway. The roadway here is three lanes wide in each direction, each lane about twelve feet wide, with the outside lanes doubling as informal parking areas. There are several turning breaks in the median here, sometimes without accompanying side streets. The medians in this section are turf, with a mix of new and established trees. Vertically placed granite blocks continue to define the inner edges (along the median) and outer edges of the parkway throughout this section. In the planting strips that border the outer edges of the parkway are mature, deciduous trees of a species consistent with those in the median (**Tree Allee, #7 on the data sheet**) and cobra-head light fixtures on cement poles. Beyond the planting strips are concrete walks. The setting in this stretch is one- to three-story, early 20th century residential. This configuration is consistent, with some minor variations, for the rest of the parkway until it terminates at the northern edge of the Blue Hills Reservation. South of Brook Road, State Route 28 follows Brook Road to the east and traffic on the Blue Hills Parkway lessens considerably. The median here is cut into to form a miter and to accommodate a cut-off from the Truman Highway to Brook Road.

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South of Brook Road, the road travels directly south without the slightest curve. The roadway here is two lanes southbound (the former Mattapan Road and the original parkway travel lanes) and three lanes northbound (land acquired for the parkway, which became the pleasure lanes) (**PHOTO #3**). Median breaks here usually correspond to side streets, but are not present at all side streets. The outside lanes on both sides function as impromptu parking, and the roadway curbing becomes intermittent after Kahler Avenue. The setting is one- to three-story, early 20th century residential, with a school and several churches (with a sidewalk laid across the median in front of one church). The tree alley that frames the outer edges of the parkway combines with the trees in the median to form a picturesque canopy of trees down this uncharacteristically flat and straight corridor. The roadway, which is as flat as it is straight south of Brook Road, travels consistently at approximately 32 feet above sea level.

At Audubon Road, the parkway passes along the edge of Pope's Pond Park, a 47-acre municipal park. The section of the park along the parkway is mostly brush and multi-story deciduous woodland. The sidewalks in this stretch are bituminous concrete, with the walk on the west side narrower, only three feet from the roadway, and nearly buried in places. In the center of the raised turf median, a faint trace of the former dirt bridle trail remains.

The parkway passes over the **Pine Tree Brook Culvert (#8 on the data sheet)**, a diagonal concrete drainage structure that allows a small outlet from Pope's Pond to flow northeast under the parkway to the Neponset River. The top of the culvert is visible in the median. Concrete bridge side rails above the

channel here bear an incised date of 1962. Although drainage systems are generally not noted in these nominations, the prominence of this structure makes it an integral part of the parkway. Since it was constructed after the period of significance, however, it is considered a noncontributing structure.

Both sides of the parkway immediately south of Pine Tree Brook are wooded. Just south of Pine Tree Brook, outside of the parkway boundary, on the east side of the road, two large fieldstone gate piers (with cement caps topped with ball finials) frame a now overgrown path. This was the entry to the former Rosamund Lamb Estate, now redeveloped as elderly housing and accessed from a side street. Pine Tree Brook Road, to the east, is the one modern intrusion on the parkway, the roadway a spine leading up into a 1980s housing subdivision. The wooded setting continues on the eastern side south of this point. Across from the subdivision on the west side of the parkway is an early to mid-20th century, one- to two-story residential neighborhood, with Pope's Pond Park woodlands intermittently visible behind this row of houses.

From Parkway Crescent to Canton Avenue, there are no side streets, with the single exception of the later Pine Tree Brook Road. Fences flank the parkway, near the back edge of the sidewalk, double-lapped

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wooden rails on square and triangular reinforced cement posts. Except in places where they are broken or missing, these are intermittent on the west and consistently present on the eastern side, apparently marking the former bounds of the Lamb Estate. As such, they are part of the setting rather than a feature of the parkway. The Blue Hills Parkway ends at its intersection with Canton Avenue, an intersection rebuilt in 1900 as a broad circle (**Canton Avenue Circle, #9 on the data sheet**) without a center island. The parkway ends at the southern edge of the rotary where Unquity Road and the Blue Hills Reservation begin.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are known within the boundaries of the Blue Hills Parkway, sites may be present. Sixteen Native sites are located in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the area indicate the presence of locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for locating Native sites. Well-drained soils on level to moderately sloping topography characterized much of the parkway prior to road construction. Most of the route is also located within 1000 feet of wetlands including the Neponset River, Pine Tree Brook, and Pope's Pond. In spite of the above information, construction of the road surface, sidewalks, utilities and drainage precludes the survival of cultural resources within the narrow nominated corridor. A low potential exists for the recovery of archaeological resources, either ancient Native American or historic in the nominated area.

(end)

Blue Hills Parkway

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

See Section 8 Continuation Sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Section 9 Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development _____

Engineering _____

Landscape Architecture _____

Transportation _____

Period of Significance

1893-1939 _____

Significant Dates

1893-1903: Blue Hills Parkway planned and constructed

1901-1903: Mattapan Bridge constructed

1931-1939: Roadway graded, repaved and partially reconstructed and sidewalks added

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Charles Eliot, Olmsted Brothers, Edmund M.

Wheelwright, Works Progress Administration (WPA) _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☒ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Metropolitan District Commission, Boston, MA _____

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Boston/Milton (Suffolk/Norfolk), MA

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Blue Hills Parkway, a 1.5-mile-long boulevard in Boston and Milton, is significant as one of the earliest connecting parkways designed for the Metropolitan Parks Commission (MPC) by Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot and its successor firm, Olmsted Brothers, and it is emblematic of the firm's principles of parkway creation. A divided highway that runs directly south through early 20th-century residential neighborhoods, the Blue Hills Parkway directly connects the Blue Hills Reservation (the largest open space in Metropolitan Boston) with Boston, the Neponset River Reservation, and Truman Parkway (the subject of a separate nomination).

Blue Hills Parkway possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It meets National Register Criteria A and C in the significance areas of community planning and development, engineering, landscape architecture, and transportation at the state level and fulfills the Parkways Registration Requirements for the associated Connecting Parkway property subtype, under Section F of this Multiple Property Documentation Format nomination. The period of significance for the Blue Hills Parkway is from 1894, the beginning of acquisition for the parkway, through 1939, the last year any major changes were made to the parkway.

The Blue Hills Parkway was laid out in 1894, running south from Mattapan Square in Boston—taking advantage of the widening of Blue Hill Avenue just completed by the city—to Canton Avenue at the north end of the Blue Hills Reservation. The Blue Hills Reservation's 6,700 acres today comprise nearly 40% of the total holdings of the Metropolitan Park System, and from its beginning, access to the reservation was essential. In the second annual report of the MPC, Charles Eliot included a sketch map showing the importance of the two connecting parkways that would tie the two great reservations, the Middlesex Fells and Blue Hills, to Boston.¹ The nine-mile distance from the Massachusetts State House to Crossman's Pines, the northwesternmost corner of the reservation as then proposed, made the Blue Hills four miles further away than the Middlesex Fells. But Eliot still saw an important symmetry:

Owing to the fact that the municipality of Boston extends four times as far south of the State House as it does north, and because Boston has undertaken the construction of a broad highway out to her uttermost boundary at Mattapan, the length of the Blue Hills parkway proposed to be acquired by the Metropolitan Commission is no greater than the length of the proposed Fells parkway.

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¹ "Diagram Showing Relation of the Proposed Blue Hills and Fells Parkways to the Metropolitan District of Boston," MPC Annual Report, January 1895, between pp.42-43. All further quotes and dates are from subsequent editions of the Annual Report or plans in the MDC plans room, unless otherwise noted.

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Eliot proposed a Blue Hills Parkway three miles in length, composed of the current parkway, from Mattapan south to Canton Avenue, and a further extension south from Canton Avenue to Crossman's Pines. This southern half became the park drive known today as Unquity Road (Unquity Road is considered separately from this nomination, as part of the Blue Hills Reservation Parkways).

Eliot acknowledged other key differences between the two parkways. Unlike the twin reservation access points for the Middlesex Fells Reservation (i.e. where Fellsway West and Fellsway East enter the Middlesex Fells Reservation from the south), the Blue Hills Parkway had a single entry point from the north (where Unquity Road is today). The Blue Hills Parkway was not curvilinear, like the Fellsway (the Fellsway, Fellsway East, and Fellsway West are discussed in a separate nomination for the Fellsway Connector Roads) but plunged straight south through a sparsely populated countryside. Because it did not serve an established neighborhood, its primary function was "only as a means of approach to this great public domain." But its arrival would open these areas up for rapid development. Eliot noted, "its electric railroad will . . . populate a large region that has hitherto been inaccessible from the city." Although the railroad was never built, the Blue Hills Parkway did speed development in Milton.

Two key design ideas would characterize both the Blue Hills and the Middlesex Fells parkways. Eliot proposed a standard right of way 120 feet wide, "simply the narrowest width within which it is safely practicable to make a separate reservation for electric cars." Secondly, one of the two parallel travel lanes was planned as disproportionately wider, "to be restricted to pleasure carriages, except for the necessary service of the houses fronting upon it." Despite the fact that the surface trolley and the horse-drawn carriage both have long since vanished from the parkways, their presence remains in the design of the wide medians and 3:2 lane ratios that still characterize both of these parkways.

In 1896, the MPC began building the parkway link (Unquity Road) from Canton Avenue south into the new reservation, and in April began acquiring land for the Blue Hills Parkway from the Neponset River south in Milton, mostly along the pre-existing Blue Hill Avenue and Mattapan Street, to Canton Avenue. Construction of the first segment of the Blue Hills Parkway, from the Neponset River 1,500 feet south to Brook Road in Milton, began September 3, 1897, and finished July 21, 1898. The parkway here ranged from 120 feet to 230 feet wide, with an average width of 136 feet. Each of the two roadways had "broken-stone surfacing," and the taking lines were defined with stone bounds. At the same time, Milton widened Brook Road, and the MPC realigned its intersection slightly to accommodate it. This stretch of road, from Blue Hill Avenue in Boston to Brook Road in Milton, via the Blue Hills Parkway, is known today as State Route 28.

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In 1898, the MPC completed plans for the second segment of the Blue Hills Parkway, from Brook Road to Canton Avenue. The following year, the MPC began construction, based upon the designs of Olmsted, Olmsted, & Eliot. The plans called for a total width of 120 feet with a straight alignment, terminating in a large circle at Canton Avenue. Two driveways, 26 feet and 36 feet, separated by a 32-foot strip of lawn, extended the complete length. The narrower western roadway, the former Mattapan Road, was given a broken stone surface "suitable for combined travel," while the broader eastern roadway, all new construction, was given a fine gravel surface, more suitable for "pleasure driving." Construction was completed May 8, 1900.

In 1899, the MPC began the final link in the Blue Hills Parkway, as it commissioned a design for a new bridge to replace the existing bridge) over the Neponset River to connect the Blue Hills Parkway to Blue Hill Avenue. The following year, architect Edmund M. Wheelwright of Wheelwright & Haven, in cooperation with the engineer William T. Pierce and the landscape architect, Olmsted Brothers, produced a final design. The primary bridge architect for the MPC (including the Longfellow Bridge on the Charles River), Wheelwright was Boston's City Architect, designing schools, fire department headquarters (Pine Street Inn), the Massachusetts Historical Society, and Horticultural Hall in Boston, as well as the Harvard Lampoon Building in Cambridge. In their section of the January 1901 annual report, the Olmsted Brothers firm compared two approaches to the design of "this important bridge":

Two different methods of treating this problem present themselves: either to consider the bridge as a mere part of the formal parkway, under which openings or culverts have to be provided for the water of the river; or as an important bridge, spanning the second largest river in the district, the scenery of which has seemed of sufficient importance to justify a large expenditure for its preservation...It seems to us that in view of the part which the Neponset is to play in the park system of the future the latter treatment is more appropriate and more dignified than to subordinate its continuity to that of a roadway.

Construction began in 1901 on a Mattapan Bridge that fulfilled the second, loftier set of goals. Construction necessitated the demolition of Mattapan Station on the Boston side of the Neponset, but the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad was given other land, in exchange, for the construction of a new station. Given the importance of the design, the ground plan, elevation, section, and even an architect's sketch were printed in the annual report for January 1902, along with a description of its distinctive design by MDC Chief Engineer William T. Pierce:

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The plans adopted provide for the extension of the parkway, of the full width of 130 feet, northerly, towards Boston, across the raceway to the proposed bridge. The total length of the bridge and curving wing walls will be 175 feet, with a clear width of 80 feet over the arches. There will be three arches for the river, one of 50-foot span and two of 14-foot span each. The raceway will be carried across the parkway through a culvert with an arch of 20-foot span. The entire masonry construction will be of concrete faced with granite, the arches reinforced with arched steel ribs on the system known as Melan construction.

The bridge would even boast 12-foot-wide sidewalks. The descriptions and views of the bridge (including a photograph of the bridge as completed) in the 1904 report show the structure of the bridge has not changed appreciably during the past one hundred years, although the banks of the Neponset are overgrown and the two smaller arch channels have silted closed. The main change is the disappearance of the raceway at the southern end of the bridge, which has either been completely channeled or simply filled in, as the area above it now is lawn. The first lighting, Welsbach naphtha lamps on tall poles, was added in 1903, shortly after the bridge was completed.

Within the first decade of the Parkway's existence, automobiles began to displace horses along the Blue Hills Parkway. In its first years, horse-drawn conveyances were the only traffic. In 1902, a portion of the easterly pleasure roadway without side streets was closed off for an automobile speedway on certain days, while the westerly roadway was left open to traffic and for observing the sport. In 1904, a recreational bridle path was laid out in the median of the Blue Hills Parkway between Brook Road and Canton Avenue to accommodate equestrians. But by the next year, reckless automobile drivers were tearing up the roads and frightening horses. The MPC addressed the problem temporarily with motorcycle police officers and experimental tar and petroleum road treatments. Between 1910 and 1912, the MPC surfaced the entire length of the western travel roadway with bituminous macadam, although the pleasure road—the southern section of the eastern roadway—remained surfaced with crushed stone only. By the middle of that decade, Mattapan Bridge often had the highest traffic counts of any MPC roadway. A weekly census for October 10 to 16, 1915, yielded 35,835 automobiles, 2,780 other motorized vehicles (primarily trucks), and only 5,000 horse-drawn vehicles. By August of 1924, the flow had increased so that daily traffic averages across Mattapan Bridge were 15,328 automobiles, 1,420 commercial vehicles, and a mere 92 horse-drawn vehicles.²

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² Annual Report of the [MDC] Division of Metropolitan Planning, November 1924, p.9.

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Although designed with a wide median to allow for streetcars, the Blue Hills Parkway apparently never hosted a trolley line. Streetcar access to the Blue Hills Reservation was provided via Randolph Street and Blue Hill Avenue, with tracks for the latter crossing Mattapan Bridge. During the winter of 1920, this line ceased operating. In 1931, the MPC removed the old pavement and car tracks at Mattapan Bridge and laid new asphalt pavement.

Other important changes were made to the Blue Hills Parkway during the MDC construction boom of the 1930s. In 1931, portions of the Parkway southerly from the bridge and near Brook Road were resurfaced. In 1935, the pleasure lane was phased out completely, and each of the roadways of the Blue Hills Parkway was made one way for its entire length. In 1939, a Works Progress Administration project constructed 6,900 feet of six-foot-wide bituminous concrete sidewalk along Blue Hills Parkway from Kahler Avenue to Canton Street. The project included regrading, loaming, and seeding of 920 feet of nine-foot-wide planting space, and 4,600 feet of 5-foot-wide planting space.

Beyond occasional resurfacing, the Blue Hills Parkway has had almost no changes since 1939. For this reason, 1939 marks the end of the period of significance for Blue Hills Parkway.

(end)

Blue Hills Parkway
Name of Property

Norfolk County, Massachusetts
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 12 acres

UTM References

1. 19 Zone	327280 Easting	4681380 Northing (at the north end of the Mattapan Bridge)	3. 19 Zone	327240 Easting	4678900 Northing (at the southern edge of Canton Avenue)
2. 19 Zone	327280 Easting	4680040 Northing (at Audubon Road)			

Boundary Description & Justification

See Section 10 Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title V. Adams, S. Berg, E. Maass, T. Orwig, PAL with Betsy Friedberg, Michael Steinitz, MHC
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 2003
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO, FPO or MDC for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Metropolitan District Commission
street & number 20 Somerset Street telephone (617) 727-5264
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02108

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Blue Hills Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Boston/Milton (Suffolk/Norfolk), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary for the Blue Hills Parkway includes the parkway and adjacent planting strips and sidewalks, where they exist. Where sidewalks and planting strips do not exist, the nomination includes all the land that extends back 10 feet from the current edge of the parkway. Additionally, the boundary corresponds to the footprint of the Mattapan Bridge (including its wing walls). The boundary does not include adjacent MDC-owned parkland that is not directly related to the parkway.

The northern terminus of the Blue Hills Parkway is a line of convenience drawn across the parkway at the northern edge of the Mattapan Bridge (including its wing walls). The southern terminus of the parkway corresponds to a line of convenience drawn along the outer perimeter of the Canton Avenue Circle where it meets Unquity Road at the northern boundary of the Blue Hills Reservation.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Blue Hills Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Boston/Milton (Suffolk/Norfolk), MA

Section number photos Page

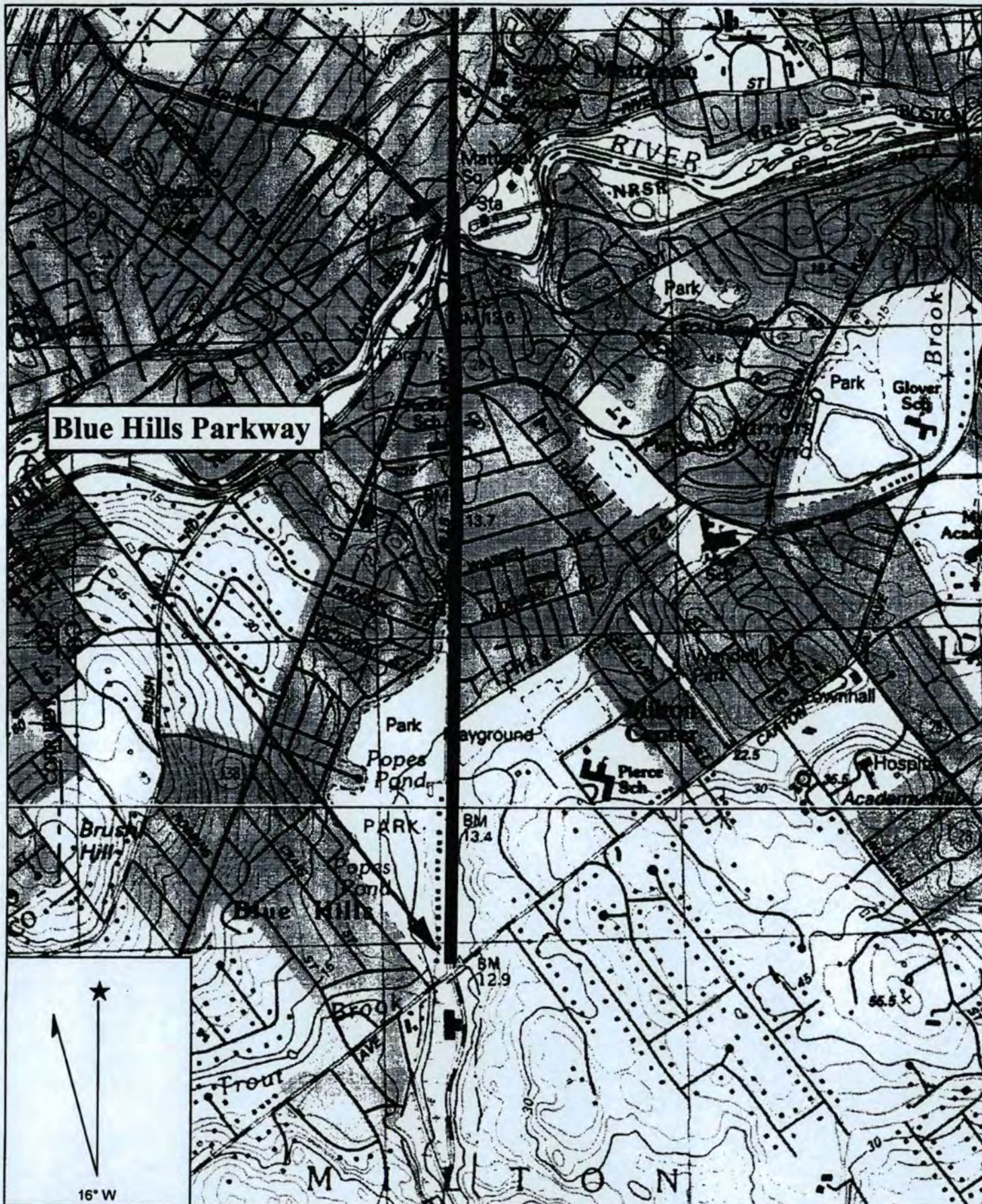
Photographs

Photographer: Emily Maass, PAL

Date: July 2002

Negatives at: PAL, Pawtucket, RI

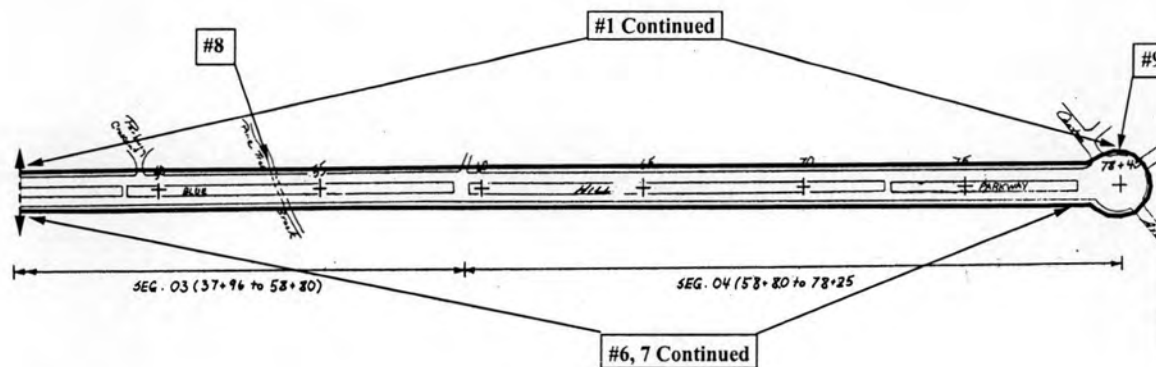
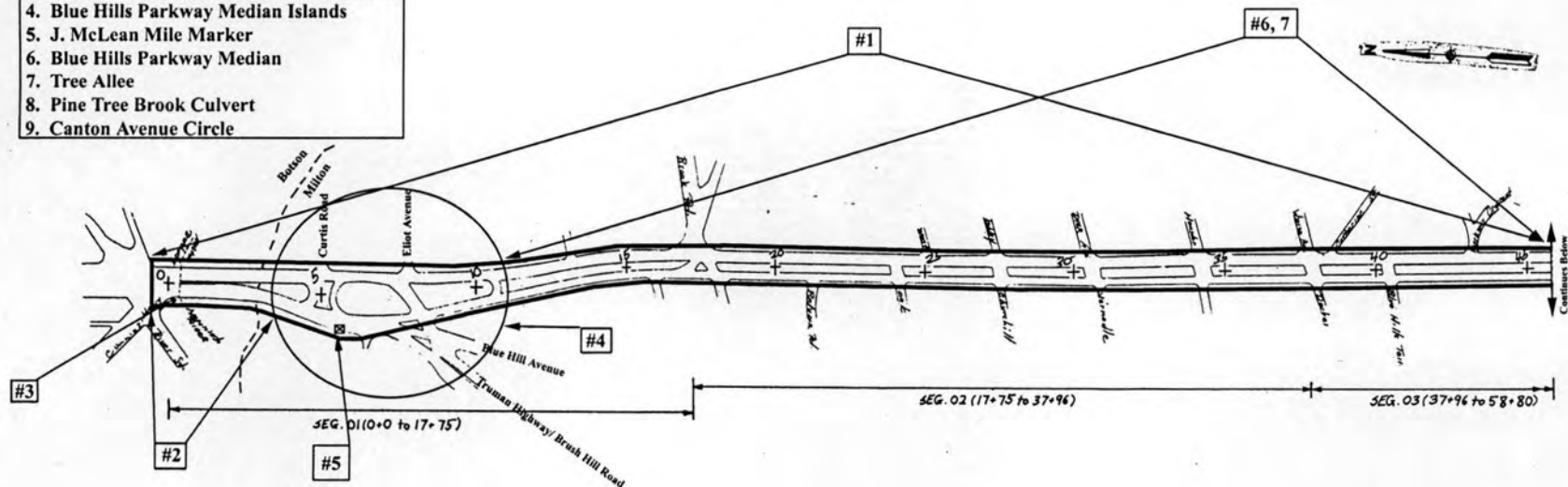
1. West side, Mattapan Bridge, looking north
2. Parkway median, looking south
3. Tree allee, looking south



Name: BOSTON SOUTH
 Date: 9/3/2002
 Scale: 1 inch equals 1333 feet

Location: 042° 15' 21.6" N 071° 05' 32.4" W
 Caption: Blue Hills Parkway
 Milton, Massachusetts

1. Blue Hills Parkway
2. Mattapan Bridge
3. Mattapan Veterans Memorial Monument
4. Blue Hills Parkway Median Islands
5. J. McLean Mile Marker
6. Blue Hills Parkway Median
7. Tree Allee
8. Pine Tree Brook Culvert
9. Canton Avenue Circle



STATION AND SEGMENT PLAN:
BLUE HILLS PARKWAY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION
PARKWAY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - STA. AND SEG. PLAN
BLUE HILLS DIVISION
BLUE HILL PARKWAY - #722

VH		Vanasse/Hangen Consulting Engineers & Planners 60 Birmingham Parkway, Boston, MA 02135 617/763-7000	
DESIGNED BY VAG	DATE APRIL, 1986	DRAWING NO. BH-8	
DRAWN BY NBF	SCALE NOT TO SCALE	SHEET NO. 1120	
CHECKED BY VAG	SHEET OF 11	JOB NO. 1120	

510112

**Blue Hills Parkway
Milton, Massachusetts
District Data Sheet**

#	NRHP Listed	MHC #	Name	Town	Location	Date	Status	Type
#1			Blue Hills Parkway	Boston and Milton	Between the north end of the Mattapan Bridge in Boston and the northern edge of the Blue Hills Reservation	1897-1903	C	Structure
#2			Mattapan Bridge	Boston and Milton	Marks the northern terminus of Blue Hills Parkway. Spans the Neponset River	1901-1903	C	Structure
#3			Mattapan Veterans Memorial Monument	Milton	Located adjacent to the northwestern wingwall of the Mattapan Bridge	1920s	C	Object
#4			Blue Hills Parkway Median Islands	Milton	Marks intersection of Truman Parkway/Brush Hill Road, Blue Hills Avenue, Eliot Avenue and Curtis Road with the Blue Hills Parkway	1897-1903	C	Structure
#5			J. McLean Mile Marker	Milton	Located on the western side of the parkway between the Mattapan Bridge and Truman Parkway. Brush Hill Road	1823	C	Object
#6			Blue Hills Parkway Median	Milton	Between Truman Parkway/Brush Hill Road and the north edge of the Canton Avenue Circle	1897-1903	C	Structure
#7			Tree Allee	Milton	Tree allee borders outer edges of the parkway between Truman Parkway/Brush Hill Road and the north edge of the Canton Avenue Circle	1897-1903	C	Site
#8			Pine Tree Brook Culvert	Milton	Near Pope's Pond(south of Parkway Crescent Road)	1962	NC	Structure
#9			Canton Avenue Circle	Milton	Marks the intersection of Blue Hills Parkway at Canton Avenue. Blue Hills Avenue terminates at the southern edge of the circle	1900	C	Structure

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Blue Hills Parkway
NAME:

MULTIPLE Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 5/16/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/06/03
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/22/03 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/30/03
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03000574

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: Y PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT ☐ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

One of the earliest examples of a parkway designed by the Metropolitan Parks Commission by Olmstead, Olmstead and Eliot and its successor firm, Olmstead Bros. Significant in the areas of community planning and development, landscape architecture, and transportation. Meets criteria A and C.

RECOM./CRITERIA A, C
REVIEWER Petrach Andrus/Daniel Vivian DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE (202) 354-2252 DATE 6/23/03

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



Blue Hills Parkway
Boston, MA

#1

END. 003 @ BN
0034 37 N N N N NN GR08 Z101/100



Blue Hills Parkway
Milton, MA

#2

<NO 007 @ BN
0034 37 N N N-8 NN GR08 Z101/100



Blue Hills Parkway

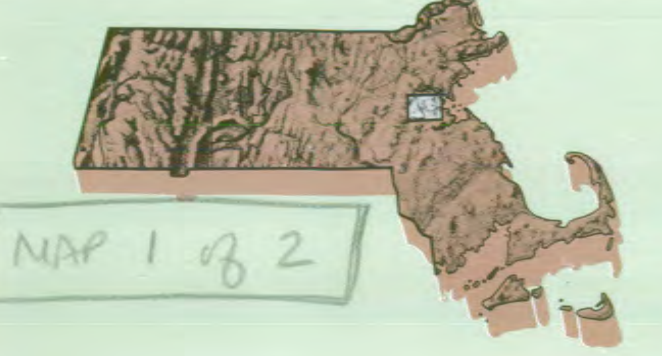
Milton, MA

#3

<NO. 4 >010 © BN
0034 37 N N N-8 NN GR08 Z101/100



Blue Hills Parkway 42071-C1-TM-025
BOSTON/MILTON (SUFFOLK/NORFOLK)
Boston South
MASSACHUSETTS (METROPOLITAN)
1:25 000-scale metric
topographic map



- 7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING
- Contours and elevations in meters
 - Highways, roads and other manmade structures
 - Water features
 - Woodland areas
 - Geographic names



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
in cooperation with Massachusetts Department
of Public Works
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth
of Massachusetts agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1987.
Supersedes Newton and Boston South 1:25,000-scale
maps dated 1979.
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 13270 (1982)
and 13272 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.
Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal
Transverse Mercator, zone 19
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate
system, mainland zone
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
move the projection lines 6 meters south and
42 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map.
CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS
DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SOUNDING SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE
OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.9 METERS
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet						
1	3.2808			1	2	3	
2	6.5617			4	5		
3	9.8425						
4	13.1234						
5	16.4042						
6	19.6850						
7	22.9659						
8	26.2467						
9	29.5275						
10	32.8084						
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (GV) and 1987 magnetic declination (MN) at center of map Diagram is approximate		1	2	3	
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048				4	5		
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Norwood

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON / MILTON

(SUFFOLK / NORFOLK) MA

1:25 000-scale metric

topographic map



METROP. PARK SYST.
OF GREATER BOSTON
MAP

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1985

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
in cooperation with Massachusetts Department
of Public Works

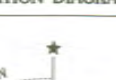
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of
Massachusetts agencies

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1985
Supersedes Norwood and Blue Hills 1:25,000-scale
maps dated 1970 and 1971

Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal
Transverse Mercator, zone 19
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate
system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 6 meters south and
41 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

INVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
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10	32.8084						
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (GN) and 1983 magnetic declination (MN) at center of map Diagram is approximate		1	2	3	
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048				4	5	6	
				7	8	9	



Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface	.....
Secondary highway, hard surface	.....
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	.....
Unimproved road, trail	.....
Road marker: Interstate, U. S. State	.....
Railroad: standard gauge, narrow gauge	.....
Bridge: drawbridge	.....
Footbridge; overpass; underpass	.....
Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	.....
House; barn; church; school; large structure	.....
Boundary:	.....
National, with monument	.....
State	.....
County, parish	.....
Civil township, precinct, district	.....
Incorporated city, village, town	.....
National or State reservation; small park	.....
Land grant with monument; found section corner	.....
U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section	.....
Range, township, section line: location approximate	.....
Fence or field line	.....
Power transmission line, located tower	.....
Dam; dam with lock	.....
Cemetery; grave	.....
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	.....
Wellhead; water well; spring	.....
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	.....
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	.....
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	.....
Distorted surface: steep slope, low, and	.....
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate	.....
Personal lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	.....
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	.....
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	.....
Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland	.....
Scrub; mangrove	.....
Orchard; vineyard	.....

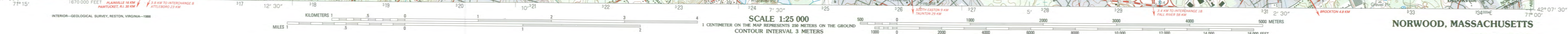
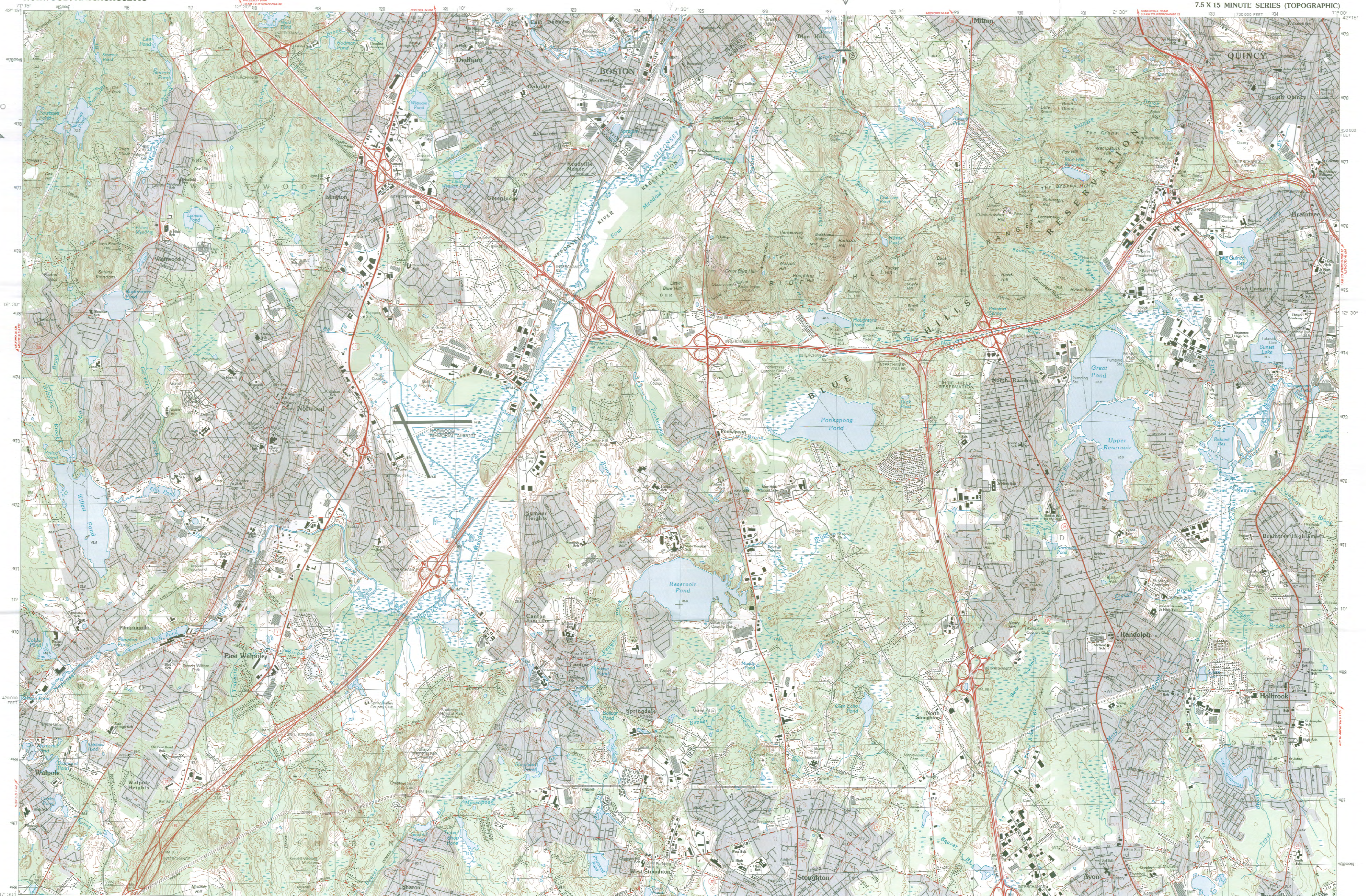
A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225

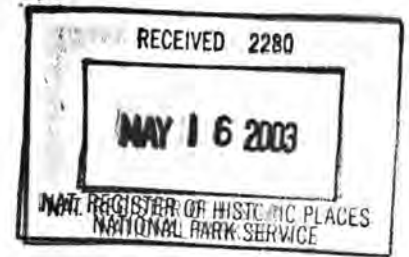
NORWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS

42071-B1-TM-025

1985



3.
327240
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

May 1, 2003

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination:

Blue Hills Parkway, Boston/Milton (Suffolk/Norfolk), MA
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston (Parkways) MPS

The nomination was voted eligible by the State Review Board and been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

We request expedited review of this nomination.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure