

Cultural Resources GIS and Historic American Engineering Record: The Henry Hudson Parkway Recording Project

The Henry Hudson Parkway Recording Project reflects a unique collaboration between CRGIS and Historic American Engineering Record (HAER.) On behalf of the New York Metropolitan Transit Council, these NPS programs helped to assist in the creation of a corridor management plan for the parkway.

The Henry Hudson Parkway extends 11.1-miles through Manhattan to the Bronx-Westchester border. Designed and constructed under Robert Moses, the parkway offered easy access to recreational areas, passed through urban landscapes, and presented the majesty of the Hudson River. Over time, however, the parkway has transformed from a scenic/recreational corridor into an expressway with blighted overpasses and orphan public spaces, paved buffers that fail to screen the traffic, and parkland inaccessible to residents. Concerned activists and city and state officials are now taking action to remedy the situation by removing blight from scenic vistas, providing access to recreational features throughout the parkway corridor, and improving the safety of the engineered design for sections of the roadway.

To assist in these efforts, HAER conducted research and documentation on the history of the parkway, resulting in the creation of a historic report and an inventory of historic structures along the parkway corridor. CRGIS used GPS to record cultural features and transportation-related structures within the study area, and GIS for cartographic production and analyses. Specifically, GIS is being used in the assistance of land title research, with the hope of better identifying changes in land ownership along the parkway over time. Additionally, GIS is helping to resolve issues related to the placement and use of “oversized” signage and billboards that may be obscuring scenic vistas. The goal of these efforts is to create documentation in support of a potential Scenic Byways nomination.

Photos:



South-bound view from 79th St. of the Henry Hudson Parkway under construction, circa 1936-37.



Scenic and sweeping views have given way to blighted buildings and obtrusive billboards and signage