the proposed
WEST COAST
SKYLINE
NATIONAL PARKWAY

ON MICROFILM

Wilsey & Ham
"As with many other creations born out of the spirit of this age, the meaning and beauty of the parkway cannot be grasped from a single point of observation, as was possible when from a window of the chateau of Versailles the whole expanse of nature could be embraced in one view. It can be revealed only by movement . . . by going along in a steady flow as when driving, the wheel under one's hand, up and down hills, beneath overpasses . . . ."

S. Giedion
Space, Time and Architecture

A REPORT TO CONGRESS ON THE PROPOSED WEST COAST SKYLINE NATIONAL PARKWAY

Prepared for the California Counties of SAN MATEO, SANTA CRUZ, and SANTA CLARA and the City and County of SAN FRANCISCO

contents

3 Introduction
4 Parkways—In General
5 Desire and Need
9 The Pacific Coast
11 The Bay Region
15 Standards of Development

The Proposed Route (Fold-out Map)
Proposed Legislation (Inside Back Cover)

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INTRODUCTION

Each year millions of visitors from all over the world travel to see and enjoy the famed wonders of California. At the same time the population of the state and the consequent demand for outdoor recreation opportunities are growing at a tremendous rate.

In recognition of this growing need amidst dwindling forests and scenic areas, four counties representing the first segment of a potential Canada to Mexico Parkway have initiated the preparation of this report. It is the function of this report to discuss the features of outstanding scenic and historic interest which might be given access and enhancement by such a Parkway, to indicate the most desirable route, and to stimulate recognition of the national importance of the Pacific Coastal Area to the future enjoyment and well-being of millions of Americans.
PARKWAYS... IN GENERAL

What is a Parkway? In the words of Dudley C. Bayless of the National Park Service, it is an “elongated park” with an incidental roadway passing through it. It connects recreation areas not necessarily in a straight line. In Virginia and North Carolina it passes along the ridge of high country overlooking the Shenandoah and the Piedmont. In Washington it skirts the edge of the Potomac, from the first president’s estate at Mount Vernon to his memorial in the District of Columbia. In California it would follow the edge of the continent, meandering through unequaled groves of big trees, and pausing for breathtaking vistas of checkered valleys and blue reaches of the Pacific.

A Parkway should be conceived purely for inspiration and enjoyment. It would have no rush of traffic or rumble of trucks. It would hang gracefully on the land contours with easy cuts and fills.

In its verges and alignment it would pay homage to the works of nature, and along the wayside the traveler would find a thousand delights: a fine grove of giant Redwoods in which to rest . . . an inspiring view from high elevation of Monterey Bay and the distant Santa Lucias . . . a sweeping panorama of the broad Pacific from above the Golden Gate . . . a charming outlook cafe set in the rocks and pines above Big Basin . . . rhythmic glimpses of the surf-worn abutments of Point Reyes . . . a casual swing through the dim light at the bottom of a Redwood canyon.

Frequent pull-overs would be provided for dining, fueling, picnicking or browsing through museums and displays of indigenous botany and geology. The remains of Spanish California would be marked and exhibited with appropriate explanation.

AUTHORISED NATIONAL PARKWAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parkway</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Authorized</th>
<th>Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Washington Memorial</td>
<td>Md. Va.</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial</td>
<td>Va.</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natchez Trace</td>
<td>Ala. Miss. Tenn</td>
<td>*1934</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge</td>
<td>N.C. Va.</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foothills</td>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake and Ohio Canal</td>
<td>Md.</td>
<td>*1948</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitland</td>
<td>D.C. Md.</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore-Washington</td>
<td>D.C. Md.</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPOSED SKYLINE</td>
<td>CALIF.</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Study Authorized
Dreaming and hoping for a Coastal route for vacation travel has occupied the thoughts of many people throughout the country. One expression of this desire is the Mission Trails Association, which has been successful in establishing a clearly marked and well documented route along the road of the Spanish Padres. Visits to the old Missions number in the millions each year, yet many segments of the route run through “gasoline alley” between the billboards. Numerous visitors have expressed a desire for an esthetically pleasing roadway along the entire coast from Canada to Mexico, which would pass by the many historic and scenic points of outstanding interest.

An area particularly well endowed with scenic attractions, yet having relatively small and few areas set aside for public enjoyment, is the San Francisco Bay Region. It is fitting, therefore, that a study for the first segment of a west coast parkway should be initiated by Bay Region Counties.

Desire for a west coast parkway is further evidenced by a 1940 study and proposed route which was set aside for World War II. Three counties participated in mapping a route through the Redwoods from the Golden Gate to Hecker Pass above Santa Cruz.

In the recently adopted Master Plans for San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties, there is a Skyline route designated “Parkway.”

Vacationers crowd the beaches all along the Coast from San Francisco south, and Big Basin Redwood State Park had over a quarter-million
visitors in 1958, far outstripping the capacity of the Park to care for them.

Overcrowding is also evident at Portola State Park, San Mateo County Memorial Park, and other recreational areas along the Peninsula. The cities of Palo Alto and Sunnyvale have recently established mountain parks for their own citizens. There are well-utilized areas devoted to summer camping activities of such organizations as the Y.M.C.A., Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. Throughout the area, there is a note of desperation in efforts to expand facilities to meet existing recreational demands.

With a State population of 15,000,000 and a Bay Region population of 3,500,000, recreation facilities along the Coast are already heavily used, in some cases over-used. It is easy to anticipate a
need for greatly increased facilities in the face of predictions for a State population of 40,000,000 and a Bay Region population of 10,000,000 by the turn of the century. This alone would indicate more than a two-fold increase in the present demand without even considering the increasing pressure on California recreation facilities by the rest of America. The country as a whole will gain more than 50 per cent in population during that time, and the development of jet transports and a continental freeway system will put many more potential tourists within range of the Pacific Ocean. The number of tourists in California from out-of-state increased 132 per cent in the years 1940-53. Adding to that an estimated increase of about 40 per cent in per-capita outdoor recreation by the turn of the century (based on California Water Resources Study in the Cache Creek Basin), it becomes apparent that at least a three-fold increase in demand for outdoor recreation facilities in this region is a very conservative estimate.

At the present time there are some 12,000 acres of recreation land lying along the proposed four-county route. If it could be assumed that the acreage requirement per recreationist remained constant while the number of recreationists increased, then it is possible to foresee a need for an additional 24,000 acres along that route! Examination of state and local recreation plans reveals no such amount of land presently earmarked for recreation purposes in this area.

The conclusion seems inescapable that this region of prime national recreational importance is not going to meet the challenge of the next 40 years without assistance from the nonresidents who share in the enjoyment of these resources.

A National Parkway from the Golden Gate to Santa Cruz would provide nearly 6,000 acres of additional recreational area. This would go far toward meeting the need.

Major portions of such a route are under contemporary pressure for urbanization. Once developed, they will never again fulfill the life-giving functions of providing wholesome relief from work-a-day life and celebrating the strongest wellsprings of our tradition—history and wilderness.
THE PACIFIC COAST

The points of major Federal interest to be reached and ultimately welded together into a national facility may include the Olympic Peninsula, the Oregon Dunes, the Redwood Empire, Mendocino Coast, Point Reyes, the Golden Gate, Southern Redwoods, Monterey Peninsula, Big Sur Coast, San Simeon-Morro Bay, and the southern beaches. There are literally hundreds of way-places to be considered, including the historical remains of the Russian and Spanish worlds.

The Olympic National Park and Forest is the last remaining extensive virgin forest in America. This alone makes it an attraction of almost historical significance, but it is also breathtakingly beautiful. It rises 9,000 feet out of the sea, surrounded on three sides by water. It is snow-capped most of the year. On the southern slopes where the rain falls is a lush rain forest which is too thick to penetrate. On the northeast side in the rain “shadow” lie the San Juan Islands with an annual rainfall and sunshine equivalent to California’s.

The Oregon Coast is as beautiful and rugged as any in the world. White sand beaches reflect the grey-blue kaleidoscope of rain-laden scud clouds moving inland over the Douglas Fir forests.
Driving southward through the incomparable north coastal Redwoods, the visitor comes upon the outstanding scenery of Point Reyes, with its surf-lashed rugged headlands girt in Pinion Pine and rolling grassy hills.

Farther south is the Golden Gate—symbol to millions of America’s westward surging manifest destiny. Passing through the southern coastal Redwoods, the traveler enters the world-famed Monterey Peninsula, the capital of Spanish, Mexican, and early American California. It was at the old Custom House at historic Monterey where Commodore Sloat, in July, 1846, first raised the American flag on the Pacific Shore.

South of Monterey, between the Los Padres National Forest and the sea, stretches a fabulous coastline, rivaling the French and Italian Rivieras. From wave-washed rocks where sea lions bask, the western ramparts of the continent precipitously heave themselves to thousand-foot heights in a scant half-mile. The escarpment is etched with deep Redwood canyons and the southern slopes are smooth-sculpted by storm winds into the brilliant gold, live oak-studded landscape characteristic of California. This unspoiled hundred miles reaches south to fabled San Simeon and thence along the warm-water beaches into old Mexico.

A carefully designed Parkway connecting these coastal points would undoubtedly prove an inspiration to many millions of visitors, and become a national recreation facility of prime importance.
High on the cliffs overlooking the entrance to the Bay, Fort Point and the Golden Gate, lies Lincoln Park. This is the setting for the Palace of the Legion of Honor and the western terminus of the transcontinental Lincoln Highway. From the pillared terrace of the Palace, a full-circle panorama can be enjoyed encompassing the Farallon Islands, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Bay, the Skyline of San Francisco, and Golden Gate Park.

See fold-out map.
A short distance along the cliffs stands the bridge of the cruiser U.S.S. San Francisco, shattered by Japanese gunfire in 1943.

From there the route skirts Golden Gate Park along the Great Highway and the beach, south to the beginning of the Skyline of the coastal mountains, from which point Portola first glimpsed San Francisco Bay. Just a few miles south of the crowded metropolis the road skirts a Redwood canyon called Pilarcitos, and thence back to the Skyline again, from which, at frequent intervals, can be seen the Pacific beaches on the west side and the Santa Clara Valley on the east side. After about 40 miles of magnificent mountain-top scenery, a spur from the Parkway would carry the traveler to the cathedral-like groves of Redwood trees near Big Basin and Butano Canyon. In this area a park facility of several thousand acres is located which affords eating and living accommodations, camping and hiking, riding and swimming, and an opportunity to absorb the unique and mystifying atmosphere of the Giant Redwood forests.
Continuing along the route, the road would weave southerly to the ridge at Loma Prieta, the highest elevation, from which a full-circle panorama can be had of San Francisco Bay, around to Mt. Hamilton, south to the peaks of the Los Padres and to an unforgettable vista of the sweeping arc of Monterey Bay.

South of Loma Prieta the route would follow to the end of the ridge overlooking Salinas Valley, and thence eventually to Monterey and down the coast.
STANDARDS OF DEVELOPMENT
location, alignment and paving

A Parkway should be more concerned with access to points of interest and minimum damage to natural cover than with shortening the route or speeding the traveler. Minimizing cut and fill is a prime consideration. The roadway should be laid along the natural contours as much as possible, and may curve where necessary to avoid a deep cut. The direction of wind, sun, and outlook should influence the selection among alternate routes. Where any physical feature needs emphasis, the road may point straight at it so the traveler is extra conscious of its presence. In particularly steep terrain, or to avoid removing significant outcrops or fine groves of trees, the roadway may be split into two levels. This has the further advantage of allow-
ing for stopping and resting on either side without crossing moving traffic; and in making a round trip the traveler may see both sides of an interesting feature. Such “splitting” also provides excellent areas for safe roadside facilities, accessible from either direction.

The advantage of keeping to the ridges wherever possible is that the grades are easier, requiring less ground distances or switch-backs, and views can be had both toward the valley and the Pacific.

In order to preserve the most natural appearance, the roadway and its adjacent ground should be a continuous flat surface, with the verges shaped and seeded right up to the edge of the curb or pavement. The fewer the breaks and fences between the roadway and wilderness, the better.
An appropriate paving could be achieved by placing country rock aggregate on an asphaltic base. This avoids the heavy black color of typical paving and makes for pleasant blending of the roadway with the natural surroundings. It is also more visible at night.

The apron or pull-outs could be decomposed granite, with masonry rock used for drainage facilities and safety walks.

In general, the alignment, gradient, curvature, and sight distance should be designed for speeds at or below 45 mph. A maximum gradient of 7 per cent is advised. Speed is controlled by regulation rather than by making it uncomfortable or physically impossible to travel above a “snail’s pace.” Twelve-foot lanes with six-foot shoulders would be typical. In some locations a sidewalk for camera fans might be considered.
Where it is necessary to grade an area through grassy cover, the toe of cut and top of fill should be rounded and shaped and re-seeded to blend the developed area into the undeveloped area. Where the cut is too rocky for shaping, every attempt should be made to plant native cover that will screen fresh breaks in the natural terrain. In grading, the topsoil should be saved, later to be spread on shoulders so that native grasses could grow on all but the hard surface. Tunnels through ridges should be given serious consideration in preventing excessive alteration of the natural scene.

No attempt should be made to obtain a uniform width right-of-way for the Parkway. Governmental criteria requiring a minimum average 100 acres of right-of-way per mile can be satisfied by the inclusion of large parks—either existing or new—and the acquisition of "bulges" at rest stops or points of scenic and historic interest. Scenic easements adequate to satisfy the average of 50-acres-per-mile requirement should be negotiated with land owners to assure the retention of significant vistas beyond the Parkway limits. The Federal requirement of a minimum 200-foot right-of-way width would influence the Parkway alignment only in the highly urbanized portions of the route.

Access to the Parkway should be provided infrequently, from frontage roads. Crossings of other major roads should be grade separated.
planting

Quick growing species requiring no maintenance are scrub oak, toyon, manzanita, and madrone, as well as many conifers.

Mature species should be left undisturbed. This particularly applies to Redwood, Pines, and Live Oak. Eucalyptus is not a native tree, but has become a characteristic element in local scenery, and high stands should be protected, especially where it is desirable to hide an incompatible view.

In the lower coastal regions, Monterey Pine and Cypress should be liberally planted to give a sense of enclosure to spaces reserved for picnicking or other pedestrian assembly. This would provide a pleasant contrast to long vistas.

All parking spaces for more than a few cars should be extensively screen-planted as in the excellent development in Mt. Vernon on the George Washington Parkway, where no cars are visible from the road.

There are many styles of architecture existing along the route, from San Francisco Victorian row houses to Monterey adobes. It will be difficult to avoid proliferation of building types; but all structures built by the Federal agencies at the time of development should be of consistent pattern to give a sense of continuity to the trip and function as a “trademark” for the Parkway. A “California” ranch house with a covered front porch is simple and appropriate. Redwood siding or board and batten, with cedar shake roof, are typical materials.

Redwood picnic tables with country rock or black iron barbecues should be frequently provided.

Springs, reservoirs, or other potable water supplies should be channeled and protected against contamination. Adequate verges and pull-overs are required for travelers stopping to slake their thirst.
other details

No utility lines should remain visible above ground within the right-of-way.

Redwood logs make excellent car stops in parking areas, and for fencing where necessary.

Franchised service stations or eating places along the route must conform to architectural standards, including landscaping and sign control.

A standard sign should be designed to mark entrances and exits and all points of interest. All other signs should be designed in harmony with these.

Center striping in some light green or golden color, beaded for night-time reflection, would seem appropriate.

Lighting standards, where needed, should be of simple, compatible design, and reflected flood-lighting from trees and shrubs could signal and illuminate areas of special interest or pedestrian assembly. It is not necessary or desirable to illuminate the entire roadway.
This report was prepared by the engineering and planning firm of Wilsey & Ham, Millbrae, California.

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George S. Gatter, Planner
Robert S. Reed, Landscape Architect
Donald W. McGlashon, Highway Engineer

Cover Photo by Ray Zircle

Acknowledgment is gratefully made to the many citizens and officials who aided this study, especially including the personnel of the local office of the National Park Service, and the planning, engineering and park department staffs of the four counties:

National Park Service
Bureau of Public Roads
Federal Aviation Agency
Federal Communications Commission
U. S. Army, Corps of Engineers
U. S. Coast Guard
U. S. Air Force
U. S. Weather Bureau
Division of Highways
Division of Beaches and Parks
California Public Outdoor Recreation Plan Committee
Division of Forestry
Division of Mines
Department of Fish and Game
San Francisco Water Department
San Mateo County Historical Society
San Jose Historical Landmarks Commission
Santa Cruz County Historical Society
California State Historical Society

Society of California Pioneers
Native Sons of the Golden West
Sierra Club
San Mateo County Horsemen’s Association

Stanford University
San Francisco State College
Stanford Research Institute
San Lorenzo Valley Chamber of Commerce
Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce
American Automobile Association
Federal Outdoor Recreational Plan Review Commission
National Conference of State Parks

Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Co.
Mackay Radio & Telegraph
R.C.A. Communications, Inc.
American Telephone & Telegraph
Globe Wireless
PROPOSED DRAFT
CONGRESSIONAL ENACTMENT AUTHORIZING A STUDY
FOR THE SKYLINE NATIONAL PARKWAY

WHEREAS, the West Coast of the United States is one of the most frequently visited recreation areas in the Country; and

WHEREAS, the phenomenal growth of population and outdoor recreation in the Western Region has overtaxed the resources of local government to provide suitable and adequate areas and facilities for such recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Western Coastal Region includes places of outstanding scenic and historic interest to all the people of the United States, which places are suffering encroachment and obliteration by urban development; and

WHEREAS, the system of national parkways is enhancing and aiding in the development of extensive areas in various sections of the country and furnishes limited access roadways paralleling which there are publicly owned strips of land of considerable width reserved for landscaping, picnic grounds and other public recreation purposes, and upon which traffic is restricted principally to passenger automobiles and, occasionally, buses under special control; and

WHEREAS, and proposed as the first stage program of a west coast national parkway, among the most desirable potential developments as a national parkway in the entire United States is the beautiful Skyline Boulevard which carries the automobile traveler from north to south through an extension from the San Francisco Presidio and the proposed Fort Point National Monument, along the Great Highway at San Francisco’s Ocean Beach, past Fort Funston, along the westernmost ridges of the incomparable Crystal Springs Lakes and their game refuges, through majestic groves of ancient Redwoods, with inspiring views of the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay and the scenic Peninsula, finally terminating on the crests above the City of Santa Cruz; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco, the County of San Mateo, the County of Santa Cruz and the County of Santa Clara have separately and collectively memorialized the Federal Government to take such action as will culminate in the designation and development of a national parkway generally along the route of the Skyline Boulevard from San Francisco to Santa Cruz as the first stage of a potential national parkway traversing the entire west coast of these United States; now therefore

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled that there is hereby authorized to be appropriated a sum not exceeding xxxxxxx dollars to be used by the Department of the Interior through the National Park Service and by the Federal Works Agency through the Public Roads Administration, to make a joint survey of a route for a national parkway to be known as the Skyline National Parkway. This survey shall follow, in general, the route from the Golden Gate Bridge to the crests above Santa Cruz. An estimate of cost of construction of the national parkway or any portions thereof found to be practicable by said survey, together with such other data as will be valuable, shall be obtained with the objective of determining the desirability of authorizing the construction of the parkway or any portion thereof. A report of the survey, upon its completion, shall be transmitted to the Congress by the Secretary of the Interior and the Administrator of the Federal Works Agency, together with their recommendations thereon.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Administrator of the Federal Works Agency are hereby directed to complete such joint survey within one year after the enactment of this Act.