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: Suitland Parkway

other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

location: Anacostia River, District of Columbia to Pennsylvania Avenue, Prince Georges

street & number: County Maryland [ ] not for publication

city or town: [ ] vicinity

state: DC and Maryland code: DC and MD county: District of Columbia and Prince Georges code: 001 and 033

zip code:

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.

Signature of certifying official 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 commenting or other official 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 Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

ownership of property (check as many boxes as apply): [ ] private [ ] public-local [ ] public-State [x] public-Fe al

category of property (check only one box): [ ] building(s) [x] district [ ] site [ ] structure [ ] object

number of resources within property:

contributing		noncontributing	
___		___	buildings
___		___	sites
(structures) 85		2	structures
2.89	miles stone curbing	___	objects
0.14	stone-lined ditches	___	Total

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

name of related multiple property listing: Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913-1965

enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing:

6. Function or Use

historic functions (enter categories from instructions)

category: transportation/vehicle-road related

subcategory: transportation/parkway

current functions (enter categories from instructions)

category: ___ subcategory: ___

7. Description

architectural classification (enter categories from instructions)

category: other/parkway

other/National Park Service Landscape Architecture

materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

roof

walls

other steel, concrete, asphalt, stone, native vegetation

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

[x] 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.
[x] 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)

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

areas of significance (enter categories from instructions)

transportation/vehicle-road related
landscape architecture

period of significance

1942-1944

significant dates

1937, 1943, 1944

significant person
(complete if criterion B is marked above)

cultural affiliation

N/A

architect/builder

NPS and Bureau of Public Roads
(Federal Highway Administration)

narrative statement of significance (explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

references (cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

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 #

primary location of additional data

[ ] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] other State agency
[x] Federal agency
[ ] local government
[ ] university
[ ] other

name of repository: National Archives and Records Service, Federal Highway Administration

10. Geographical Data

acreage of property: NPS - 418.9 acres, DC

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	xxx	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxx	3	xx	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxx
2	xxx	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxx	4	xx	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxx

[x] See continuation sheet.

verbal boundary description: The boundary of the nominated district is delineated by an elongated polygon whose vertices are marked by the UTM coordinate points A-Z for the Suitland Parkway.

boundary justification: The boundary is coterminous with the original right-of-way determined by the Bureau of Public Roads (Federal Highway Administration) and maintained by the National Park Service and the District of Columbia. It encompases numerous features: bridges, culverts, landscape architectural elements, and the natural topographic features.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jere L.Krakow

organization: National Park Service, Denver Service Center — date: August 1993

street & number: 12795 W. Alameda Parkway, PO Box 25287 — telephone: (303)969-2909

city or town: Denver — state: Colorado — zip code: 80225-0287

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

[ ] continuation sheets

[X] maps
one USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
one sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources

[X] photographs
representative black and white photographs of the property

[ ] additional items (check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name: National Park Service, National Capital-East

street & number: 1900 Anacostia Drive SE — telephone: (202) 690-5185

city or town: Washington, D.C. — state: — zip code: 20020

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-[illegible]), Washington, DC 20503.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Suitland Parkway, which links Andrews Air Force Base with Washington, D.C., is one of the parkways that make up the network of entryways into the capital. It has hosted both triumphal and mournful processions of public officials: from presidents returning from diplomatic achievements to the funeral procession of President John F. Kennedy. Presently its use is by commuters and local traffic.

It consists of 9.18 miles of roadway (2.8 in the District of Columbia and 6.38 in Maryland) through a park corridor comprised of 418.9 acres managed by the National Park Service and the balance managed by the District of Columbia. The roadway extends from the Anacostia River to Marlboro Pike at the North Gate of Andrews Air Force Base.

Suitland Parkway came into existence during World War II to improve transportation for defense industry employees. It has provided many foreign dignitaries with their first glimpse of the nation's capital, albeit an inauspicious one with traffic delays caused by several at-grade crossings and stretches where only two lanes have been completed. Despite increased usage, it still remains essentially unfinished some 45 years after it officially opened.

For purposes of this parkway nomination the multiple property nomination historic context statement, "Parkways Of The National Capital Region, 1913 to 1965," is attached to this document.

DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORY

As part of the effort to design and build parkways in the Washington, D.C., area the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC) decided by 1937 to locate a parkway that would connect South Capitol Street with Bolling Field and Camp Springs Field. The planning commission agreed that Suitland Parkway would "be a dual highway with separate east and westbound two-lane traffic arteries."[1] Because of a lack of funding sources and the impending war, however, the plans did not materialize until 1943.

Designer T.C. Jeffers "submitted a preliminary study" for the parkway to the NCP&PC in early 1942, ostensibly to connect the building sites of the Suitland, Maryland, government offices with a new bridge proposed for South Capitol Street.[2] Jeffers' expressed rationales for building the road included a heavy concentration of government workers at Suitland and several defense housing projects in the area.[3] Jay Downer of the Public Buildings Administration (former chief engineer of the Westchester County, New York, Parkways) urged that Suitland Parkway extend westward from Naylor Road at the District line and connect with South Capitol Street.[4] He explained that utilities could be provided to the area, enabling development of more offices. In February 1942, the NCP&PC approved the staff recommendation for the project within the District of Columbia.[5] The land acquired comprised 87.79 acres, which consisted of 425 lots, seven parcels, and 93 improvements with an assessed valuation of $205,817.[6]

The commission then agreed to submit the request to the Public Buildings Administration as a desirable project. Furthermore, the land should be acquired under the auspices of the Capper-Cramton Act and the "Federal Works Agency [should]

1. *Washington Times-Herald*, December 17, 1944, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
2. National Capital Park and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, January 15-16, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. National Capital Park and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, February 19-20, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
6. Jeffers to Nolen, February 27, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

undertake construction of the road with Federal funds."[7] Noted by the commission was the parkway location relative to the site of the proposed Camp Springs airport. Funding to acquire the lands would be sought through a budget request for a supplementary appropriation.[8] Frederic A. Delano, chairman of the NCP&PC, sent the request for support to the commissioner of the Public Buildings Administration in late February. In it he emphasized how the planning commission "revived a proposal considered some years ago for a parkway extending from the proposed South Capitol Street Bridge, up the valley of Stickfoot Creek, through the Barry Farm area, to Suitland, with possible further extension to Camp Springs."[9]

Delano added that the land chosen for acquisition seemed "ideally suited for a grade-separated parkway of high design standards."[10] Though he reiterated the assessed value noted above, he estimated the actual cost of acquisition at somewhere between $400,000 and $500,000. The first response came from J.C. Nichols, Kansas City real estate developer and member of the Public Buildings Administration. Nichols believed the idea had much merit but sought a delay until Public Buildings Commissioner W.E. Reynolds could be consulted.[11] In March 1942, the NCP&PC received an unqualified endorsement of the parkway from Reynolds who emphasized the access it provided to the Suitland area and the connection with Camp Springs airport.[12] He questioned whether the federal government could fund it and stated that arrangements for construction were underway with the Public Roads Administration on the portion from Silver Hill to Suitland.[13] In addition, he asked the commission to fund the right-of-way in the District. Reynolds also opened communication with representatives of the Army Air Corps regarding a road to Camp Springs.[14] The planning commission unanimously passed a motion that Suitland Parkway be added "to its comprehensive plan for the park, parkway and playground system of the National Capital."[15] This eastern portal represented a significant addition to the plan for parkways in the Washington, D.C., area. And once the concept obtained approval, construction began almost immediately.

In May 1942, the planning commission requested $600,000 from the Bureau of the Budget for acquisition of land for Suitland Parkway. Land appraisers had arrived at this amount, which only pertained to land in the District. Land outside District boundaries would be acquired by the Public Buildings Administration.[16] Chairman Delano underscored that the recommendations for the parkway emanated from Jay Downer and Gilmore Clark, consultants to the Public Buildings Administration on matters regarding "more adequate highway facilities between Suitland and downtown Washington."[17] Delano emphasized the need for acting quickly because land development underway was driving up land values.

During the summer of 1942, Public Roads Administration Engineer H.J. Spelman estimated the costs for the area from the end of the bridge on South Capitol Street to the District line, with a special notation of the need to cross the railroad tracks.[18]

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7. National Capital Park and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, February 19-20, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
8. Ibid.
9. Delano to Reynolds, February 27, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
10. Ibid.
11. Nichols to Delano, March 2, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
12. Reynolds to Delano, March 18, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. National Capital Park and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, March 19-20, 1942, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
16. Smith to Delano, May 22, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.
17. Ibid.
18. Spelman to Vint, June 11, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

Grading	$ 300,000
Drainage	100,000
Concrete pavement	300,000
Landscaping and erosion control	60,000
Miscellaneous items	40,000
Engineering landscape and contingencies	120,000
Total road items	$ 920,000
Total bridge items	$1,285,000
Total for both	$2,205,000

Spelman went on to calculate the length of the road to be 2.8 miles and the pavement estimated to include two 24-foot roadways.

Supportive letters urged action from the Bureau of the Budget, though the commissioners of the District thought the federal government should fund it and not use monies from the Capper-Cramton Act. District officials thought benefits would accrue to the federal government with the offices located at Suitland and the Camp Springs facility on east; they were not persuaded by arguments that a tax base improvement for the District would result from the development of southeast Washington, D.C.

During August 1942, the issue continued to be raised at planning commission meetings. As for Baltimore-Washington Parkway, participants noted the possibility of getting "some government agency to certify that this is a war necessity," so that funding for the portion beyond the district line would be covered.[19] Construction of the South Capitol Street bridge hindered declaration of the parkway as a war necessity. Word arrived later in August that the secretary of war had approved Camp Springs for a new airport.[20] A strategy to fund the parkway now seemed apparent: persuade the president to include the road right-of-way in the purchase of land for the new airport.[21] This idea originated with Brig. Gen. Thomas M. Robins and received the endorsement of Brig. Gen. John J. Kingman.[22] Quickly the strategy took form when President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote the secretary of war:

> In connection with the installation of an army air base camp at Camp Springs Meadows, you are directed to acquire the necessary land for the proposed installation at Camp Springs including the right of way for a suitable access road from the Camp Springs site via the contemplated Suitland Parkway route to Bolling Field or an alternate route. This road upon completion of the South Capitol Street Bridge will afford quick access to the city of Washington, not only from the Camp Springs airfield but also from the Federal buildings and the Suitland area.[23]

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designated Col. J.J. O'Brien, chief of real estate branch, as land acquisition officer for the new parkway. By early September, he had approached the NCP&PC for detailed maps of the land to be acquired.[24] President Roosevelt "allocated $6,000,000 for acquisition and construction of Camp Springs Airport, including Suitland Parkway and its extension to Camp Springs."[25] Commission minutes reveal a sensitivity to evicting occupants of

19. National Capital Park and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, August 13-14, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

20. Nolen to Delano, August 17, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Roosevelt to Secretary of War, August 25, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

24. Settle to Nolen, September 5, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

25. Demaray to Director, September 11, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2835.

properties. Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant III asked that the War Department not evict anyone until the property was needed because housing shortages existed, in particular for "people of small incomes."[26] District officials submitted plans and accompanying documents in late September for use by the Office of the Chief of Engineers. Plans for the Maryland portion received priority attention, followed by the portion from the District line to the Suitland office buildings, and then by the last section to Camp Springs.

A reluctant War Department, despite the directive of the president, delayed purchasing right-of-way and instead pressed the Public Roads Administration to acquire it.[27] The National Defense Highway Act of 1941 lacked clarity, and even the Public Roads Administration seemed hesitant. After an exchange of correspondence, Commission Chairman Delano, in a strongly worded letter, appealed to the War Department for interpretation of the Highway Act and the seeming need for a roadway connecting the various government installations along the parkway corridor. Action, however, was not forthcoming until the summer of 1943. Prompting action then was a coordinating committee from the NCP&PC and a considerable lobbying effort by the many parties interested in the proposed parkway.

An important result of the effort consisted of reasons for the parkway. Advocates pointed to the lack of suitable roads and justification that the road would "serve nine war housing projects immediately adjacent totalling 4000 units, of which more than 3200 are family dwellings."[28] Buildings already in use at Suitland included the Hydrographic Office of the Navy and the Bureau of the Census. Supporters reported the lengths of various sections:[29]

S. Capitol St. Bridge to D.C. Line	2.9 miles
D.C. Line to Suitland Building Area	1.3
Through Suitland Building Area to Silver Hill Road	.8
Silver Hill Road To Camp Springs Entrance	4.1

During the first half of 1943, a coordinating committee was established to resolve differences on funding land acquisition and on various other matters. A complication arising in the land purchases phase stated "that a number of the owners of improved properties have refused to sign leases and others have stated that they do not see why they need to sell their property now when no construction is contemplated."[30] This, of course, complicated the issue of land acquisition for defense purposes. The logjam could only be broken by President Roosevelt. That occurred in July when a directive from the acting secretary of war informed the commanding general of the army service forces to proceed with construction of a military highway on the parkway route.[31] Various officials from District, state, and federal agencies and the planning commission met in early August to "consider recommended action on street closings, highway changes, land transfers, standards of construction, grade separation widths and clearances, and other details of design and construction."[32] The chief of engineers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, delegated matters of land acquisition, planning, and easements to the District Engineer Col. Clarence Renshaw.[33] The same letter spoke of construction having been authorized between the District and Camp Springs.

Lead for parkway design and construction fell to the Public Road Administration, in close coordination with the District of Columbia engineer, NCP&PC, National Park Service, Commission of Fine Arts, and relevant Maryland authorities. For

26. National Capital Park and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, September 17-18, 1942, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

27. Nolen to Grant, October 21, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

28. Grant to Somervell, December 12, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

29. Nolen to Grant, December 28, 1942, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

30. Demaray to Grant, July 21, 1943, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

31. Nolen to Grant, July 31, 1943, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

32. Ibid.

33. Renshaw to Demaray, August 18, 1943, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

example, the National Park Service/National Capital Parks had responsibility for designing five major bridges along the parkway, but these designs had to be approved, particularly by the Commission of Fine Arts.[34] Likewise, authorities communicated on issues such as placing utility lines underground (NCP&PC policy) or aboveground; however, all agreed to place them underground after the war, and upon completion of the parkway.[35]

After all the preliminaries had been completed, construction of the parkway commenced on September 27, 1943. A rather remarkable set of conditions had led to this point, following the initial presidential direction of August 1942. The NCP&PC had conceptualized a parkway layout and then the division engineer of the Public Roads Administration prepared drawings showing the land needed from the District boundary to Camp Springs. The making of topographic surveys and maps from these drawings began in September.[36] The maps were then used by the commission to establish taking lines for right-of-way. This information formed the basis of a detailed survey made by the U.S. engineers supervised by the District Engineer's office.[37] The Real Estate Branch of the War Department completed the land acquisition phase for the parkway project.

The request to begin construction came to the administrator of the Federal Works Agency from the Secretary of War. Actual responsibility for the work was delegated to the Public Roads Administration which assigned it to division 15.[38] All would be reviewed by the planning commission, by the Commission of Fine Arts, and by the National Park Service, the ultimate manager, when it no longer was deemed necessary as a defense highway. The request specified

> that the construction should include the grading, drainage and structures necessary to provide for an ultimate four-lane divided highway but to construct only one two-lane pavement strip at this time; that grade separations be constructed where necessary but it was contemplated they would be needed at Nichols Avenue and Alabama Avenue in the District of Columbia, and at Branch Avenue, Suitland-Silver Hill Road and the Camp Springs Air Base entrance to Prince Georges County, Maryland.[39]

For construction purposes management divided the length of the parkway into four sections, A, B, C, and D. The roadway surface proper varied to some extent by section. From Firth Sterling Avenue to just east of the Nichols Avenue bridge, bituminous surfacing covered the roadway, no curbs were added, and the width varied between 24 and 36 feet.[40] This design would accommodate the eventual construction of the South Capitol Street bridge over the Anacostia River. Extending from Nichols Avenue to the north entrance of Camp Springs (Andrews Air Base), the road surface consisted of reinforced concrete 25 feet wide and 9 inches thick.[41] A parkway-type curb added to this section measured 3 inches high and 6 inches wide, uncolored, to contrast with the darkened concrete road surface.[42]

The entire length of Suitland Parkway opened in mid-December 1944, although short sections saw some use earlier in the fall. The planners from both the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the NCP&PC intended for the parkway to eventually extend all the way to Chesapeake Bay; numerous residents of the Washington, D.C., area

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34. Thompson to Clarke, August 27, 1943, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

35. Nolen to Peters, November 9, 1943; Nolen to Peters, November 27, 1943; both in National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

36. "Military Highway Part I," *Federal Works Agency Public Roads Administration, FINAL CONSTRUCTION REPORT MILITARY HIGHWAY, From Bolling Field In The District Of Columbia To Camp Springs Army Air Base In Prince Georges County Maryland, Part I Grading and Drainage*, January 1946. Federal Highway Administration Files, Arlington, Virginia, p. 11. (Hereafter cited as, *FINAL CONSTRUCTION REPORT*).

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 12.

39. Ibid.

40. "Military Highway Introduction," *FINAL CONSTRUCTION REPORT PART III*, p. 6.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

traveled to the shore for recreational purposes. Not only would the parkway enhance movement near the District but it would facilitate transportation to outlying areas—a "definite asset" according to planners. The expenditure of approximately $3.6 million for the parkway would have been augmented by an estimated $55 million for the extension. Upon the opening of the parkway in 1944, management of the parkway became the responsibility of Capital Parks. This arrangement began with an agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Department of the Army. It became secure when the parkway became surplus property in the late 1940s.

Legislation

During World War II, the War Department considered the parkway connecting Bolling Field and Camp Springs to be of inestimable value for defense purposes.[43] As one official indicated, the creation of Suitland Parkway was predicated on the strategic importance of establishing "an airfield of major proportion to protect the Atlantic Coast during the early stage of the war.[44] After the war, the War Department proclaimed Suitland Parkway surplus to defense needs and burdensome to maintain. In other respects, however, the road was considered important because of the increasing government work force at Suitland. In fact, the service to federal employees living near the parkway and the parallel desire to control the density of government workers in downtown Washington, D.C., became the principal reasons that the route was considered a regular component of the federal highway system. Further, the parkway was viewed as providing one of several major radial arteries bringing general traffic into Washington, D.C. It was determined that the parkway could best be administered by the Department of the Interior under the auspices of the National Park Service, and temporary provisions for this were arranged.

In 1949, legislation was introduced for the permanent transfer of the parkway along with "all [its] lands and easei :s heretofore or hereafter acquired by the United States." Backed by such offices as the Federal Works Agency, the Department of the Army, the War Assets Administration (which held jurisdiction over the surplus property), and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, H.R. 2214 passed Congress on August 17, 1949.[45] This law specified that the parkway be "developed, operated, and administered as a limited access road primarily to provide a dignified, protected, safe, and suitable approach for passenger-vehicle traffic to the National Capital and for an uninterrupted means of access between the several Federal establishments adjacent thereto and the seat of government in the District of Columbia."[46]

PRESENT CONDITION

The Suitland Parkway crosses the Atlantic Coastal Plain from the Anacostia River easterly to its terminus at Marlboro Pike. A variety of hardwoods historically covered this road corridor, principally oak and sweet gum. Topographically, the area is gently rolling and crosses or follows several creek drainages. The median is a grassy strip mown to present a park-like character for users, and most of the structures are stone clad in the traditions of parkway design stemming from the Westchester County New York antecedents. The uncompleted portion (B road) is grass-covered except for a barren lane made so by users on foot, bike, horseback, or vehicle.

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43. National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2835. Records of the National Park Service. National Capital Park and Planning Commission, "House of Representatives Hearings before the Committee on Public Works," April 11, 1949, pp. 3-4, 21; U.S. Congress, House, *Providing for the Development, Administration, and Maintenance of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Suitland Parkway in the State of Maryland as an Extension of the Park System, of the District of Columbia and Its Environs by the Secretary of the Interior*, H. Rept. No. 767, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 1949, pp. 1-6; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Providing for the Development, Administration, and Maintenance of the Suitland Parkway in the State of Maryland as an Extension of the Park System of the District of Columbia and Its Environs by the Secretary of the Interior.* S. Rept. No. 747, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 1949, pp. 1-2; U.S., *Statutes at Large*, LXIII, pp. 612-13.

44. National Archives, Record Group 79, Hearings, April 11, 1949. p. 45.

45. National Archives, Record Group 79, Hearings, April 11, 1949, pp. 18-20, 42-43, 49; H. Rept. No. 767, pp. 1-6; No. 747, pp. 1-2.

46. U.S., *Statutes at Large*, LXIII, p. 613.

A design speed of 55-60 miles per hour permitted motorists to travel the length of the parkway and over or under five grade separations without major delays. Curve design and cloverleafs allowed a steady driving pace. The planning commission recommended that utility lines be placed underground, though the power company refused to do so.

Landscape

Landscaping along the parkway corridor commanded attention from the beginning. Journalists reporting the opening noted how the scenery was enhanced because larger trees were left standing in the medians, grass was planted after topsoil dressing on cuts and fills, and developments were screened where necessary to present a rural-like setting. Topsoil specifications included 4 inches to be placed on the cut and fill slopes outside the paved lanes and in the median. An Italian rye was seeded on the prepared bed, however, steeper slopes had sod applied to them. Guardrails were to be of a wood post and rail type, and concrete was to be colored with lamp-black.

Bridges, Culverts, Curbing, Ditches, and Drop Inlets

The Public Roads Administration contracted for and had seven bridges constructed on the alignment of the Suitland Parkway during 1944. Nineteen years later a set of bridges carrying Interstate 95 over the parkway brought the total number of bridges on the parkway to nine. Concrete arch bridges with stone facing and generous parapets closely followed designs initially used on the Westchester parkways and subsequently on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and on Blue Ridge Parkway.

All but the interstate bridges consist of "double reinforced concrete rigid frame arches" that have stone-faced wing walls and spandrels, trimmed with "granite dimensioned masonry."[47] Stone for facing the concrete came from quarries in Maryland; it was chosen because of its similarity to that used on the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway near the Pentagon.[48] Granite used in the dimensioned masonry came from a quarry at Mt. Airy, North Carolina, where it was cut to specifications; it was placed by numbers, with concrete poured behind them and held by steel anchor bars between the joints extending back into the concrete.[49]

Some 38 culverts are located along the parkway and include a variety of small tubes, multiple tubes, and box culverts. Most have stone-faced headwalls, some of which have been recently restored and tuck pointed on the newly rehabilitated portions of the parkway. Several headwalls have fallen off and are covered with silt from erosion problems over the years since construction. There are 39 drop inlets along the parkway, 0.14 miles of stone lined ditches, and 2.89 miles of curbing.

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47. *Federal Works Agency Public Roads Administration, FINAL CONSTRUCTION REPORT MILITARY HIGHWAY, from Bolling Field In The District Of Columbia To Camp Springs Army Air Base In Prince Georges County, Maryland*
, Part II, January 1946. Federal Highway Administration Files, Arlington, Virginia.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

INVENTORY OF STRUCTURES:

Listed from the Anacostia River eastward to Marlboro Pike with bridge inspection report numbers where available.
* = noncontributing

Bridge Under Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue (Nichols Avenue): Built in 1944; 0.4 miles east of Interstate 295; concrete, rigid frame, double arches, stone-faced spandrels and wing walls; two lanes; 0.02766 mile long; carries Nichols Avenue over parkway; completion cost $132,850.

Bridge Under Alabama Avenue: Built in 1944; 0.4 miles west of District of Columbia line; concrete, rigid frame, double arches, stone-faced spandrels and wing walls; two lanes; 0.0195 mile long; carries Alabama Avenue over parkway; completion cost $122,005.

Parkway Over Branch Avenue (3564-001P): Built 1944; 0.1 miles to Naylor Road; concrete frame; four lanes; one span, 65 feet; carries parkway over Branch Avenue; completion cost $80,939.

Bridge Under Silver Hill Road: Built in 1944; 0.8 miles east of Route 5 (Branch Avenue); concrete, rigid frame, double arches, stone-faced spandrels and wing walls; two lanes; 0.018 mile long; carries Silver Hill Road over parkway.

Parkway Over Suitland (Mayhew) Road (3564-002P): Built 1944; 1.0 miles to Meadowview Drive; concrete frame; stone-faced wing walls; two lanes; one span, 55 feet; carries parkway over Suitland Road; completion cost $103,799.

*Interstate 95 Bridge (16 160 5): Built in 1963; 0.78 miles south of Maryland Route 4; steel, stringer/multi-beam or girder; eight lanes; seven spans, 392 feet; carries interstate highway clockwise over parkway.

*Interstate 95 Bridge (16 160 6) : Built in 1963; 0.78 miles south of Maryland Route 4; steel, stringer/multi-beam or girder; eight lanes; seven spans, 387 feet; carries interstate highway counterclockwise over parkway.

Parkway Over Texas (Patrick) Avenue (3564-003P): Built 1944; 0.5 miles to Allentown Road; concrete frame; two lanes; two spans, 94 feet; carries parkway over Texas Avenue.

Bridge at North Entrance to Andrews Air Force Base: Built in 1944; concrete rigid frame, double arches, stone-faced spandrels and wing walls; four lanes; 700 feet west of Pennsylvania Avenue; carries parkway over entrance to air base; completion cost $208,127.

Culverts: The culverts represent a variety of sizes, designs, and physical conditions along the parkway. There are 38 of them and some are box culverts, while others are small tube, and multiple tubes. Most have stone-faced headwalls, though some are in a state of disrepair.

Curbing: Rock curbing exists along portions of the parkway, and total 2.89 miles.

Ditches: A very small number of stone-lined ditches are to be found along the parkway. They comprise 0.14 miles.

Drop Inlets: There are 39 drop inlets along the entire parkway.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The various parkways of the national capital reflect the culmination of several national trends after the turn of the century: the City Beautiful movements' emphasis on integrated urban green space; automobiles and the rapid development of road systems; and the decline in the quality of city living and resulting popularity of outdoor recreation. In Washington, D.C., the McMillan Commission's recommendation for a series of parks and parkways was coupled with the American Institute of Architects's assessment of a cityscape badly in need of formal planning and direction – in keeping with the original eighteenth-century urban scheme of Pierre L'Enfant. Parkways and strip parks in the Washington, D.C., area are the culmination of efforts of Maryland, Virginia, and District interests. After the precedent-setting network of suburban New York parkways, after which it was idealized, Washington's system is the most comprehensive and monumental extant in the nation. Aesthetically unaltered, the parkways remain vital components of the regional transportation arteries and they continue to contribute to the historic symbolism and design of the nation's capital.

The Suitland Parkway, one of several in the Washington, D.C., area, was conceived by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission as an appropriate entryway to the federal city. This parkway is a descendant of the parkways built earlier in the century in Westchester County, New York, and subsequently in Virginia, North Carolina, and Mississippi (Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Blue Ridge Parkway, and Natchez Trace Parkway). Unlike the forenamed, however, Suitland Parkway is principally a route of travel between federal installations: it connects Bolling Air Force Base and the District of Columbia to Andrews Air Force Base. Not originally designed as a recreational drive, it falls on the parkway end of the continuum of parkway to freeway. Like Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Suitland Parkway represents a utilitarian roadway with design features intended to move traffic expeditiously, but with elements of design intended to convey a scenic driving experience characteristic of earlier parkways.

The Suitland Parkway, in conjunction with George Washington Memorial Parkway, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, and Baltimore-Washington Parkway, should be included in the National Register of Historic Places. As a multiple-property nomination of national significance, it should be considered in criteria (A) transportation and (C) landscape architecture. It achieves extraordinary significance under criteria (G) as a contributing element to the national capital park and parkway system developed during the first half of the 20th century, though the parkway is not 50 years old.

When the planners for the nation's capital promulgated the McMillan Plan in 1902, they advocated a system of roads and parkways consistent with L'Enfant's earlier design, including entryway to the capital commensurate with its stature. Suitland Parkway continues to serve that purpose as the entryway used by numerous foreign dignitaries arriving in the United States via Andrews Air Force Base. It provides a "dignified, protected, safe, and suitable approach for passenger vehicle traffic to the National Capital." The design concepts used on parkways throughout the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area are identifiable on Suitland Parkway too. Significant individuals, who were involved in several other parkways, incorporated the same design features in Suitland Parkway.

As with the other parkways in the Washington, D.C., area, Suitland Parkway is associated with key historical figures who played important roles in planning and design including Gilmore D. Clarke and Jay Downer, principal designers in the Westchester County and Virginia parkways. NCP&PC Chairman Frederick Delano and Thomas Jeffers of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission had substantial roles in the origins of the parkway, especially when funding sources seemed exhausted because of the depression and World War II.

Though not 50 years old, the parkway merits significance under criteria (A) broad patterns of history and (C) landscape architecture related to the parkway system developed during the first half of the 20th century. Suitland Parkway manifests integrity of topography, design, and architecture with bridges, culverts, and drainage installations.

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SUITLAND PARKWAY

	ZONING/EASTING	NORTHING	USGS QUAD
A	18/326470	4303500	Anacostia, DC - MD
B	18/327160	4302900	Anacostia, DC - MD
C	18/327170	4302450	Anacostia, DC - MD
D	18/327390	4302270	Anacostia, DC - MD
E	18/328500	4302410	Anacostia, DC - MD
F	18/328840	4302080	Anacostia, DC - MD
G	18/330900	4302360	Anacostia, DC - MD
H	18/332370	4301310	Anacostia, DC - MD
I	18/333150	4300320	Anacostia, DC - MD
J	18/334000	4300090	Anacostia, DC - MD
K	18/335720	4300360	Anacostia, DC - MD
L	18/337240	4299630	Upper Marlboro, MD
M	18/338700	4299600	Upper Marlboro, MD
N	18/338960	4299080	Upper Marlboro, MD
O	18/337230	4299120	Upper Marlboro, MD
P	18/335660	4299860	Anacostia, DC - MD
Q	18/334000	4299610	Anacostia, DC - MD
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U	18/329000	4301420	Anacostia, DC - MD
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X	18/326810	4302340	Anacostia, DC - MD
Y	18/326800	4302800	Anacostia, DC - MD
Z	18/326260	4303260	Anacostia, DC - MD

Suitland Parkway
Photographic Index
National Register of Historic Places

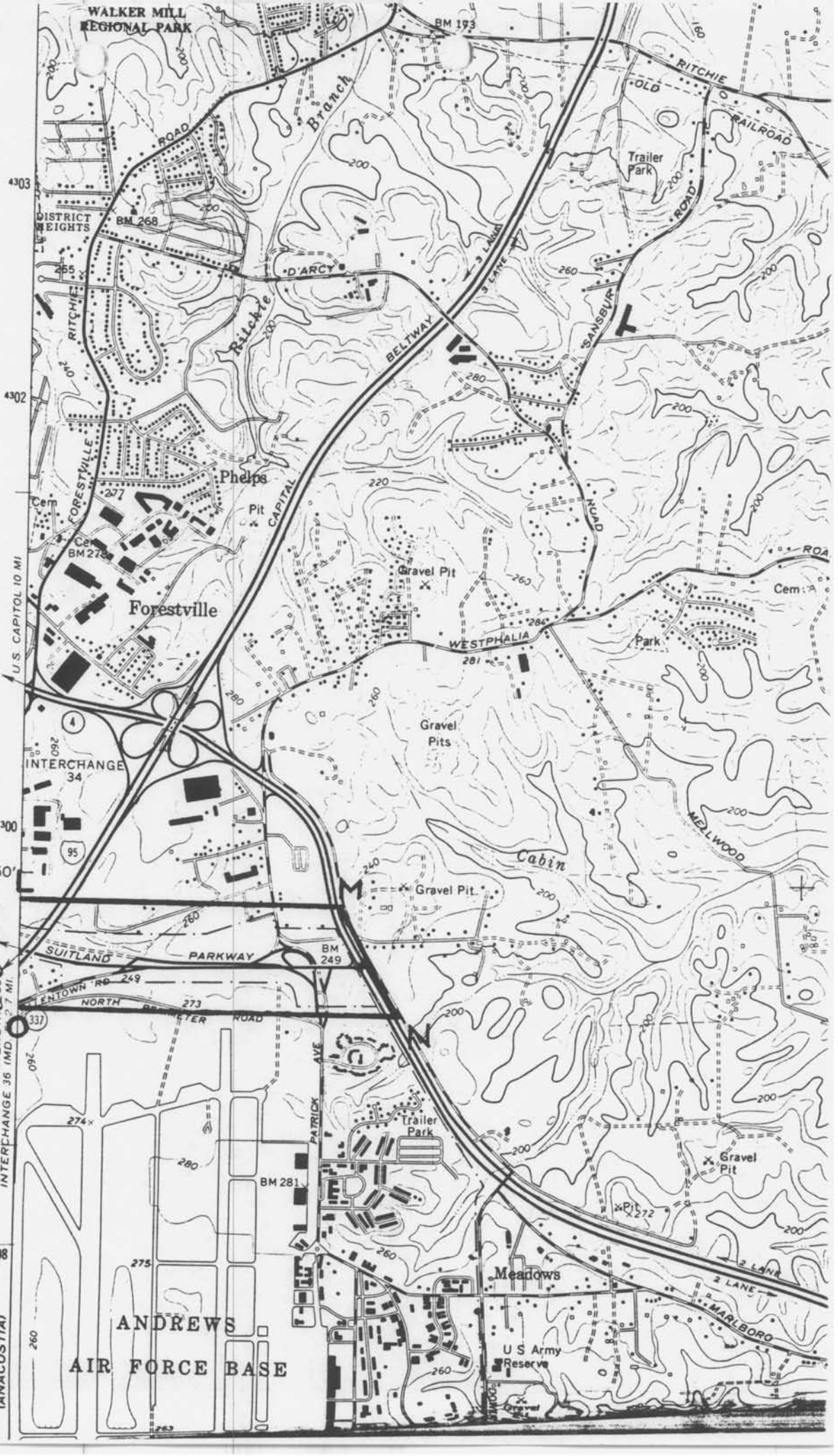
Suitland Parkway

Photographer: Jere L. Krakow

Date: September 1990

Negatives: Denver Service Center, National Park Service
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

No.	Subject	Direction Camera Pointing
1	Retaining Wall Anacostia Ave.	SSE
2	Silver Hill Road bridge	W
3	parkway landscape	E
4	parkway landscape	W



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Suitland Parkway
District of Columbia
Prince Georges, Maryland

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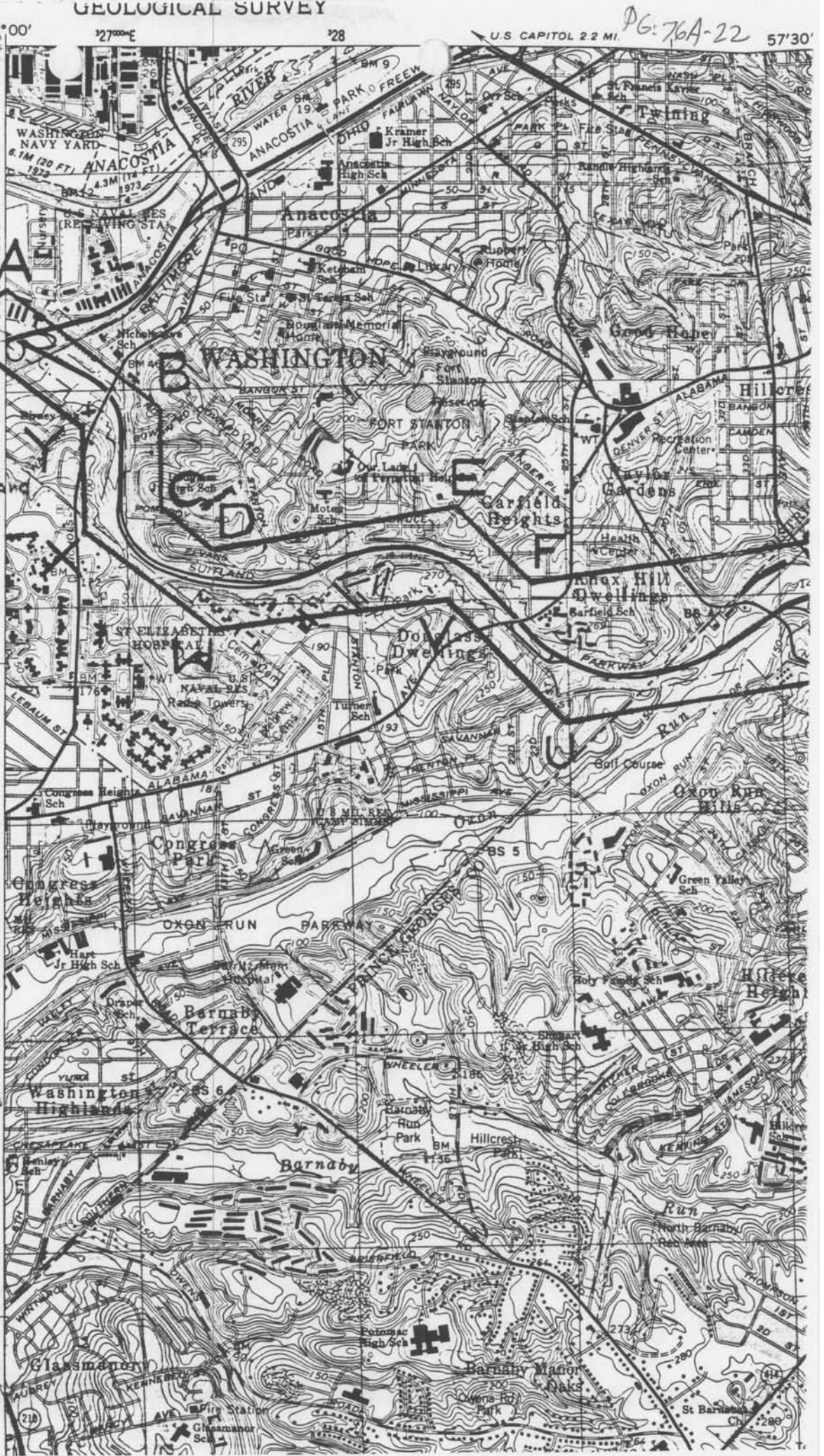

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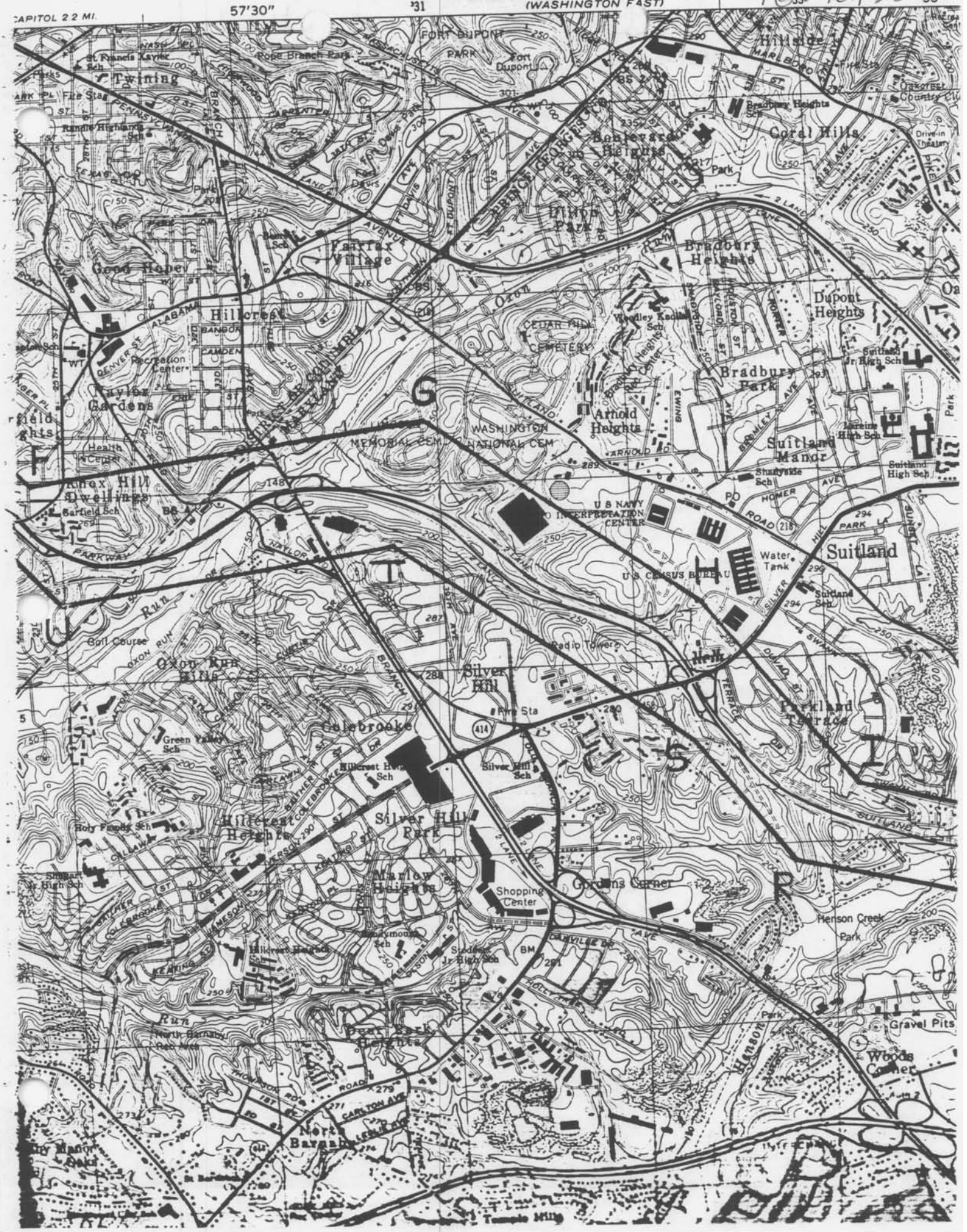

CAPITOL 2.2 MI.
57'30"
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(WASHINGTON EAST)
55'
FORT DUPONT PARK
Fort Dupont
Pope Branch Park
Twining
Hillside
Coral Hills
Boulevard Heights
Dillon Park
Fairfax Village
Good Hope
Bradbury Heights
Dupont Heights
Hillcrest
Recreation Center
Naylor Gardens
CEDAR HILL CEMETERY
Bradbury Park
Arnold Heights
WASHINGTON NATIONAL CEM
MEMORIAL CEM
Suitland Manor
Suitland High Sch
Knox Hill Dwellings
U S NAVY INTERPRETATION CENTER
Water Tank
Suitland
U S CENSUS BUREAU
Golf Course
Oxon Run Hills
Silver Hill
Radio Tower
Fire Sta
Parkland Terrace
Colebrooke
Green Valley Sch
Hillcrest Heights Sch
Silver Hill Sch
Hillcrest Heights
Silver Hill Park
Marlow Heights
Shopping Center
Gordons Corner
Henson Creek Park
Gravel Pits
Woods Corner
Deer Park Heights
North Barnaby
Temple Hills

PG: 764-22

ANACOSTIA QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA–MARYLA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC–BAT

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA–MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC–BATHYMETRIC)

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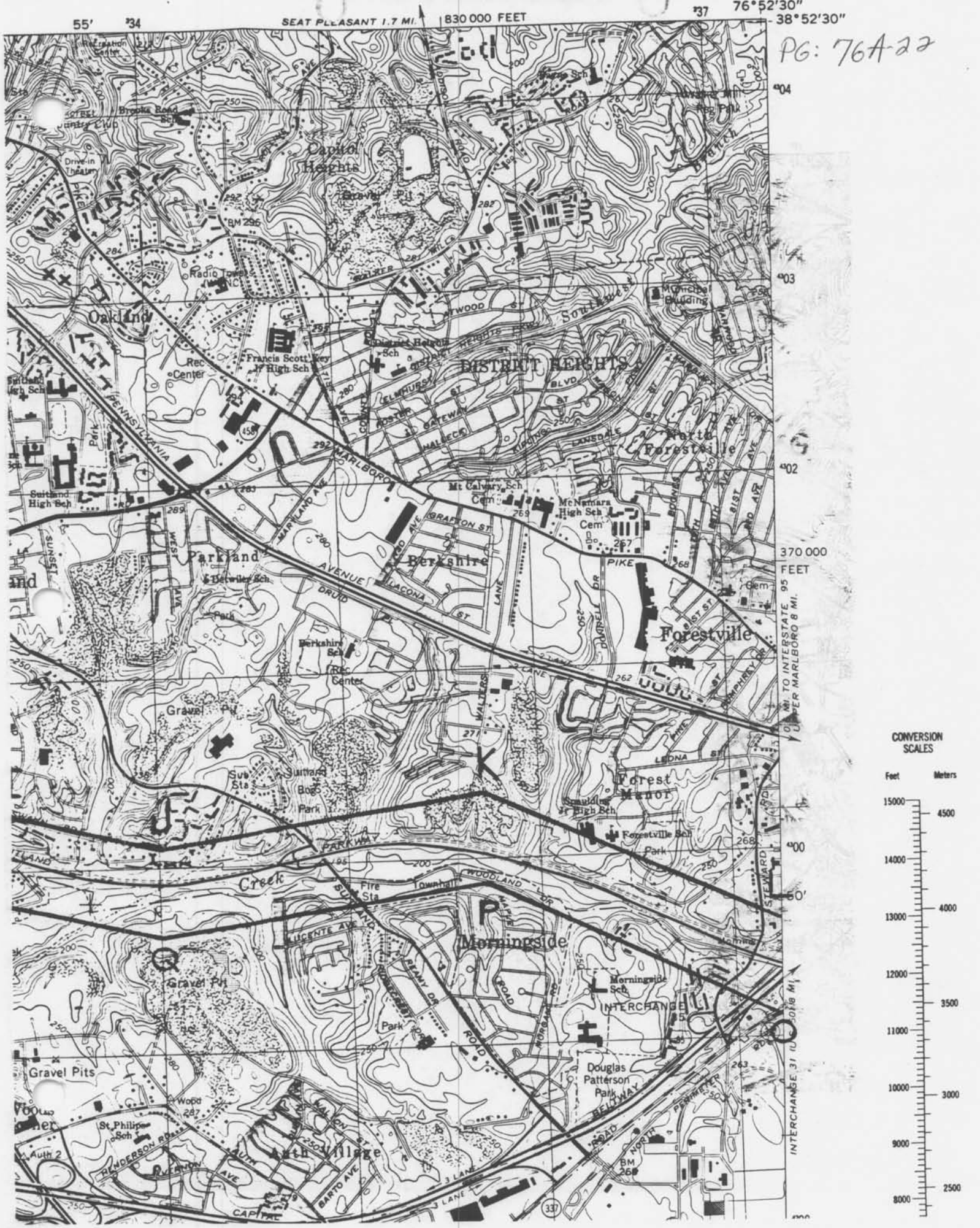

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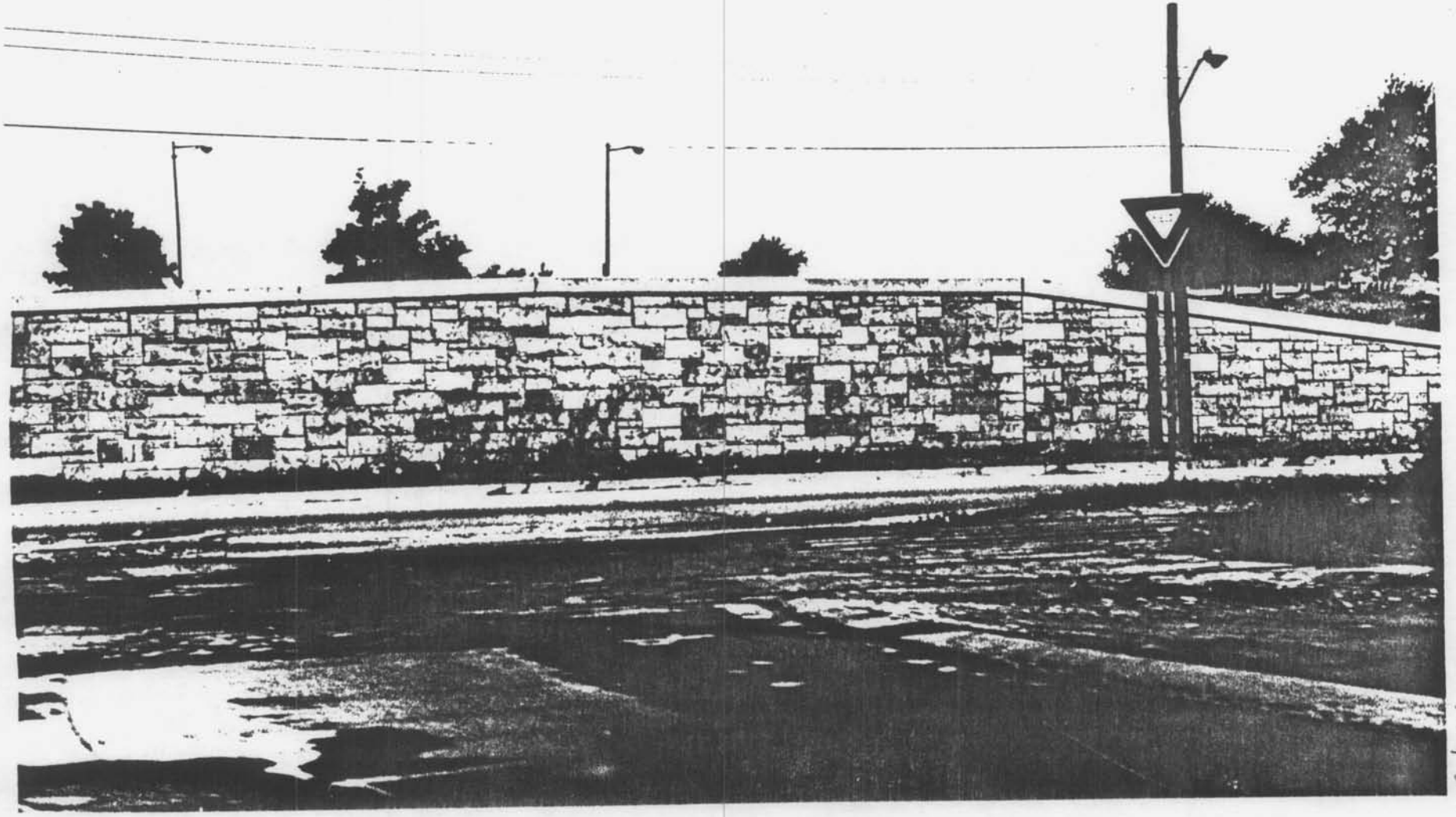

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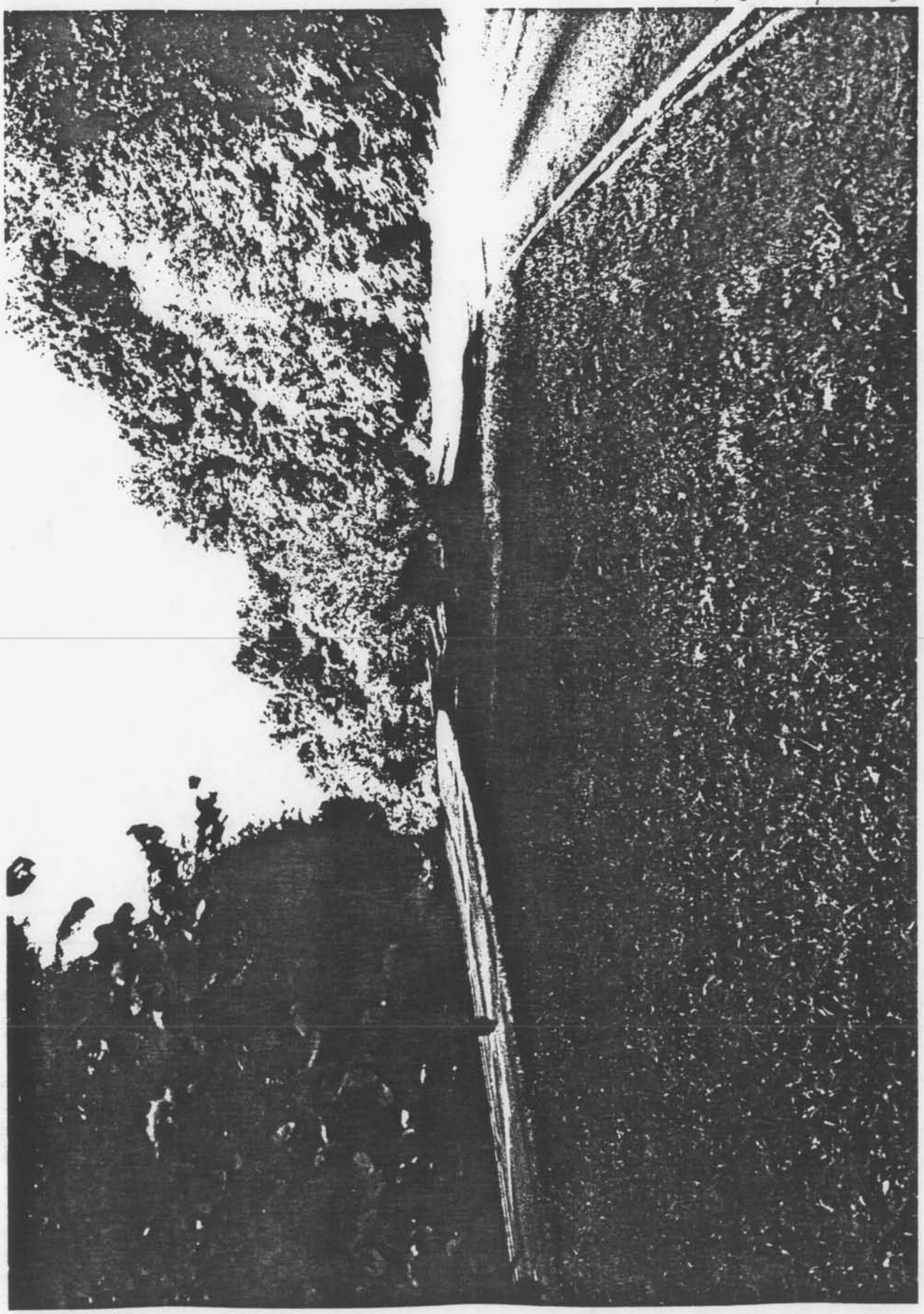

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