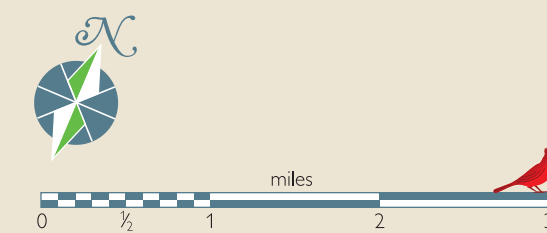


-  Old Parkway exit numbers
-  New Parkway exit numbers
-  Service stations
-  Rock outcrops
-  Stone walls
-  Garden club plaques
-  Wetlands
-  Lakes and rivers
-  Notable trees
-  Train stations
-  Where tollbooths used to be
-  Arts and science
-  Historic places of interest
-  Town centers
-  Parks, natural areas, environmental centers
-  Public golf courses
-  → Suggested route to selected off-parkway places of interest
-  → Worth a detour



Merritt Basics The Merritt Parkway—it received the CT15 designation in 1948—stretches 37.5 miles from the New York State line in Greenwich to the western end of the Sikorsky Bridge over the Housatonic River. Generously landscaped, the Merritt feels like a road through a park. It is a vital link which is used by about 100,000 people every day, most of them commuters.

The Bridges

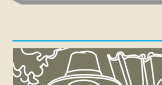
Shown here is a selection of the bridges crossing over the Merri. All of the original 69 overpasses and underpasses were designed by George L. Dunkelberger.

Lake Avenue Bridge (1940)
The arches are covered in cast-iron vines, “like some twentieth-century Piranesian ruin.” The frames, railings, grapevine grilles, urns and scrolls were originally painted contrasting and varied colors.

Guinea Road Bridge (1937)
Connecticut saved money (and sparked the ire of local residents) by using concrete for virtually all of the Merritt Parkway's bridges. Stone facing was the norm for the nation's parkways at this point on the Merritt it is the exception. Only three bridges use stone facing: Guinea Road in Stamford, Main Avenue in Norwalk, and Rippowam River Road Bridge in Stamford.

Comstock Hill Road Bridge (1938)

When viewed in full, this bridge is a series of projecting and stepping faces, a short solid railing with an undulating face and pictorial panels molded into the top of each pylon.



Son & Father

Close-up of Edward Ferrari's bas relief Pilgrin in precast concrete. On bridge's opposite pylon bas-relief of an Indian. They were the only parkway panels fabricated by Ferrari where Dunkelberger let sculptor pick the theme.

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North Avenue Bridge (1939)
Stylistically Art Deco, the North Avenue Bridge has 16-inch-wide panels which appear to overlap on the wing walls. This achieves a vertical emphasis. At the pylons, these panels are replaced with sgraffito panels of a white floral pattern which tapers to a single stalk with curled offshoots, which are repeated in the wrought iron railing.

Merwins Lane Bridge (1940)
This bridge features one of the most whimsical of Dunkelberger's designs on the Merritt. Each 7-foot panel of the metal railings contains three sections. The center section is filled with a cobweb inhabited by a spider. The spiders' location is different on each railing panel. Each end section features a butterfly on a bent stalk. Large precast butterflies perch on triangular shapes on the pylons while smaller butterflies sit at the pylon corners.



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Frenchtown Road Bridge (1942)
The double-span Frenchtown Road bridge was not originally planned as part of the parkway, but at local residents' request the Highway Department designed and built this bridge in 1941. The bridge displays one of the most extensive uses of cast stone which was used to effect a fortified bridge in the French Renaissance style.

James Farm Road Bridge (1940)
Residents of Stratford, fearful of the Merritt's proposed route to an existing bridge further south, campaigned successfully for a new bridge to cross the river, thus necessitating the James Farm Road double-span, barrel-type bridge which was built in 1940. The end pylons (main structural supports) feature a shield with the initials CHD, another "celebration" bridge honoring the Connecticut Highway Department.

Spiders, vines and flowers
Craftsman Kenneth Lynch, known for his gargoyles and fittings on the 1930 Chrysler Building in NYC, created all of the decorative metal work on the Merritt Parkway bridges. After his work on the parkway, Lynch moved his studio from Long Island to Wilton.

Landscaping
Some 70,000 trees and shrubs were used to landscape the Merritt Parkway, including 47,000 mountain laurels (the Connecticut State flower, below), 11,000 evergreens and 3,777 dogwoods. One story has it that Eleanor Roosevelt drove the Parkway every year to see the mountain laurels and dogwoods in bloom.

→ A Note About the Points of Interest

These drives were selected for their consistency with the delightful, uncommercial and naturalistic setting of the parkway, as well as their proximity to a parkway exit. Additionally, the Merritt Parkway provides the opportunity to visit many nearby places of interest in Fairfield County. These sites are representative, not comprehensive.

Motorists who would like to provide feedback on this map should contact the Merritt Parkway Conservancy through its website at www.MerrittParkway.org.



DESIGNED AND DRAWN BY NIGEL HOLMES, 2004 (updated 2025)