



Welcome!

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting for the George Washington Memorial Parkway South Section and Mount Vernon Trail Improvements Plan / Environmental Assessment

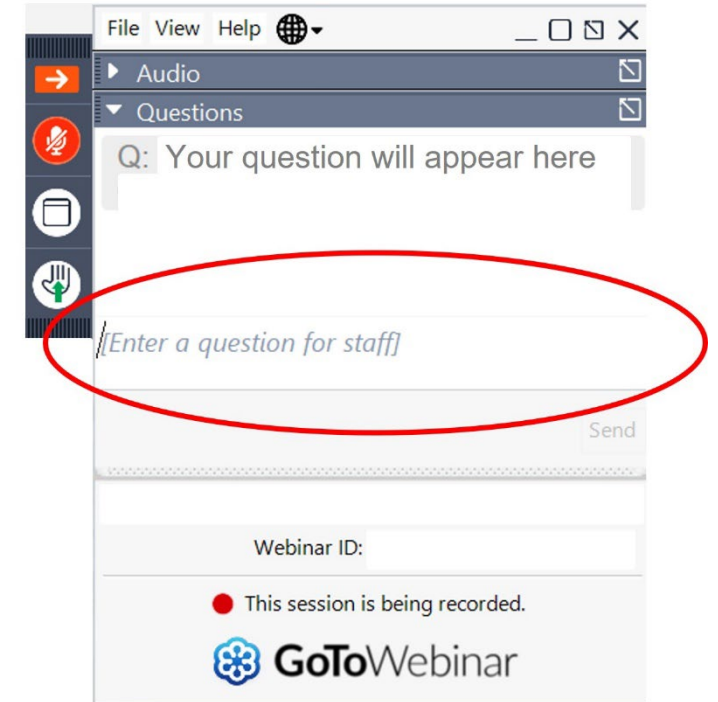
December 6, 2022

For live captioning during the presentation please click here: [BIS-DOI-NPS-TS : Real Time Text \(streamtext.net\)](https://www.streamtext.net/BIS-DOI-NPS-TS)



Meeting Protocols

- This meeting is being recorded
- As an attendee, you will be in listen-only mode
- Type your questions at any time during the meeting
 - On computer: Expand the **Questions** box on the side panel
 - On mobile device: Click the **Question Mark (?)** at the top of your screen
- Questions will be answered at the end of the presentation, as time allows





Questions and Comments

- Questions or comments submitted as part of this meeting will not be considered formal comments on the project – we require written comments.
- Your participation in this project is important to us. Your comments will help shape this plan!
- To submit comments online, visit the project website:
http://parkplanning.nps.gov/GWMP_South
- Send written comments by U.S. Mail to:

Superintendent

Attn: GWMP South and MVT Plan / EA

700 George Washington Memorial Parkway

McLean, VA 22101

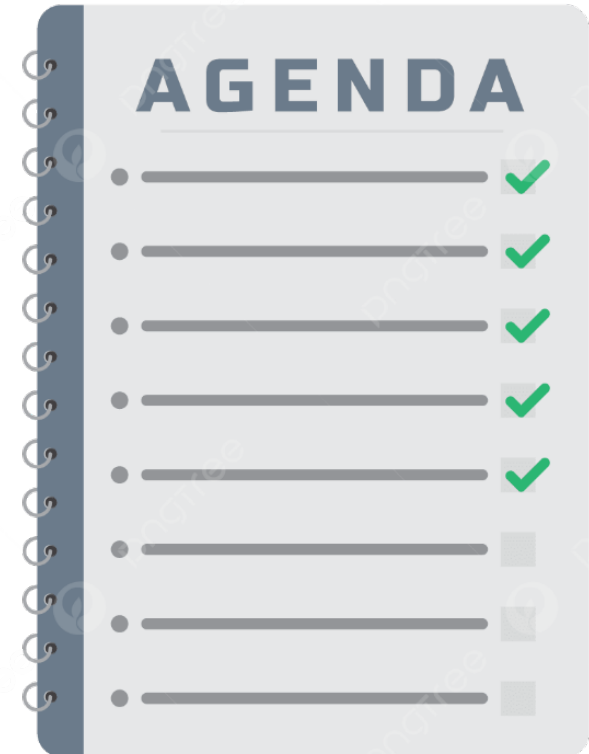
IMPORTANT!

Comments must be submitted online or postmarked by January 4, 2023 to receive consideration.



Meeting Agenda

- Meeting Goals
- History and Character
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Schedule
- Project Background
- Proposed Action and Alternatives
- How to Comment
- Question and Answers





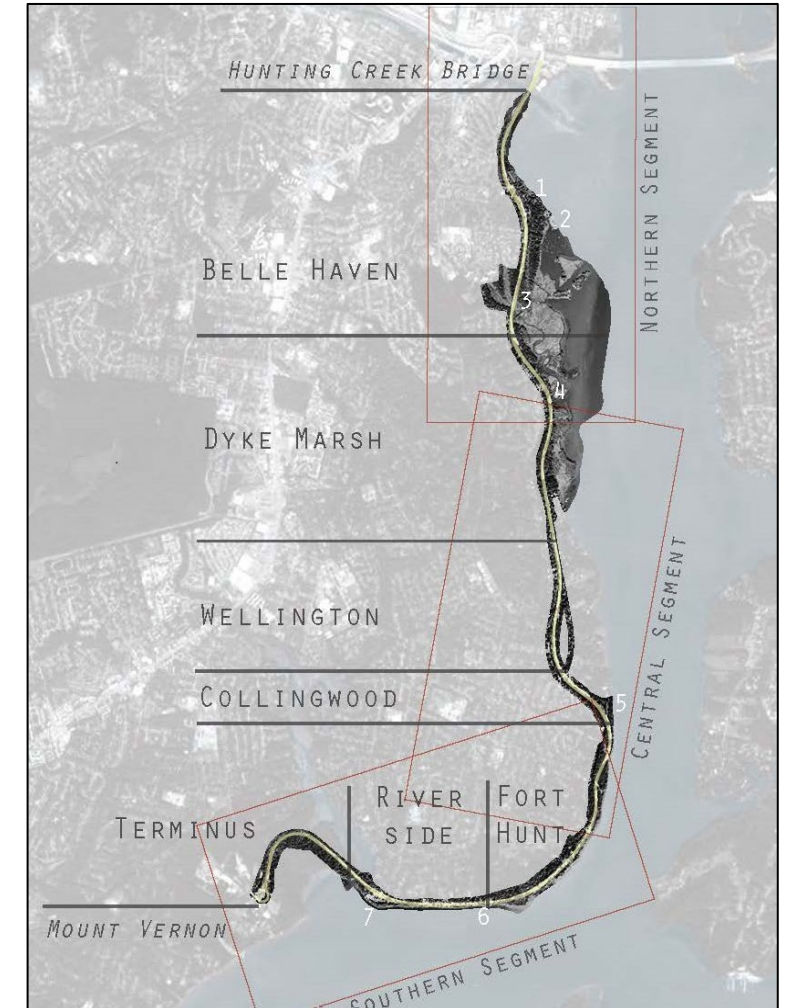
Meeting Goals

- Review the federal regulations governing this planning process
- Provide an overview of the proposal and why the NPS believes it is needed
- Present the details of the proposed action alternative under consideration
- Review the potential environmental issues that have been identified by NPS
- Discuss the next steps in the compliance process
- Provide you with an opportunity to ask questions



George Washington Memorial Parkway

- Opened in 1932 to:
 - Honor the legacy of George Washington
 - Provide recreational opportunities
 - Maintain ceremonial entrance
 - Provide transportation
 - Preserve views and vistas
 - Connect historic sites, scenic overlooks, memorials, monuments, stories, and people.
- Built for 'auto touring,' with slower speeds to provide for a unique and memorable recreational driving experience.
- Semi-limited access (few on and off ramps), designed landscapes, medians, broad rights of way, curving roadway, and improved broad intersections.
- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places





National Register of Historic Places

- Special status to protect unique places and cultural resources of national heritage
- Limits the amount and type of physical changes that can be made
- Requires formal review before any construction, repair, and ground/ visual disturbances through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation





Key Character Defining Features

1. **Alignment** – The curvilinear alignment of the parkway has few straight lines that generally follows the Potomac River
2. **Recreation and Conservation** - The trail along with concentration of pullouts, overlooks, and picnic areas along the south and eastern extent of the parkway
3. **Commemoration** - First parkway to celebrate a historical association. Includes commemorative features such as boulders with plaques and signs. Terminus of the parkway at Mount Vernon reconfirms its commemorative
4. **Naturalistic Design** - "Natural charm" with relative simplicity of design as evident by rustic or naturalistic qualities, limited signage and lighting, narrow paved shoulders, low-profile curbs, and minimal infrastructure such as guard walls/rails and stone retaining walls.
5. **Relationship to Adjacent Communities** - Designed to accommodate nearby residential communities resulting in a "domestic feel." Presence of the Mount Vernon Trail and bus stops reinforces this relationship.
6. **Scenic Drive and Views** - Both filtered and unobstructed views of the Potomac River from the parkway.





National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Compliance

- Effects to historic properties will also be assessed to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- There are several historic properties within the “area of potential effect”
 - George Washington Memorial Parkway / Mount Vernon Memorial Highway
 - Mount Vernon Estate
 - Fort Hunt
 - Washington National Airport Terminal
 - Arlington Memorial Bridge
 - Theodore Roosevelt Island National Memorial
- You are invited to submit comments regarding historic preservation issues and to request “consulting party” status to participate in the Section 106 review for this project





What is NEPA?

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is part of a federal planning and decision-making process
- Federal projects, funding, permits, etc., require compliance with NEPA
- NEPA requires federal agencies to:
 - analyze the environmental impacts of actions, and
 - engage the public as part of project planning
- NEPA ensures informed decision-making





Environmental Assessment

- NPS will prepare an EA to document and disclose potential environmental impacts that would occur if the Plan is implemented
- Preliminary Issues and Impact Topics:
 - Vegetation
 - Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
 - Wetlands and Waterways
 - Historic Districts
 - Cultural Landscapes
 - Archeological Resources
 - Visitor Use and Experience



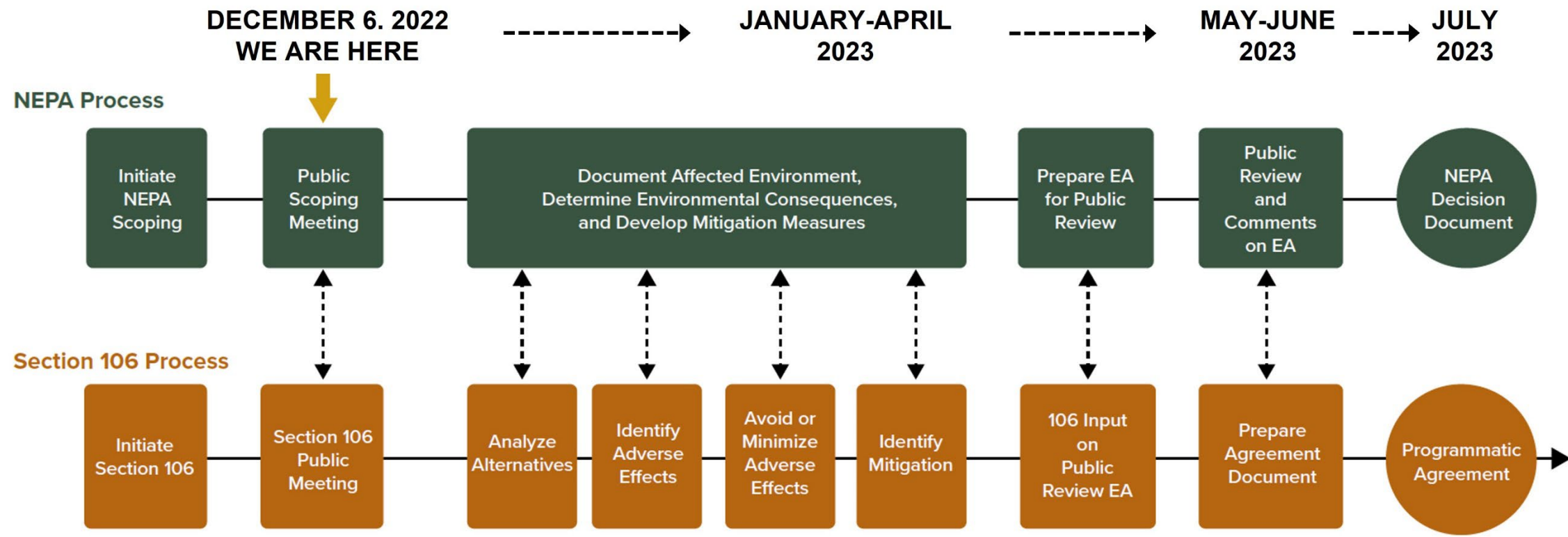


NEPA Scoping Process

- NPS is currently in the “scoping” phase of the NEPA compliance process
- Scoping occurs early in planning and typically involves:
 - Internal Scoping
 - Developing a proposed action, identifying the purpose of and need for the action, determining the scope of the plan, and determining preliminary issues and alternatives
 - Public Scoping
 - Engaging interested and affected public related to the proposed action, alternatives, issues, and existing environmental conditions



Tentative NEPA & NHPA Compliance Process Schedule





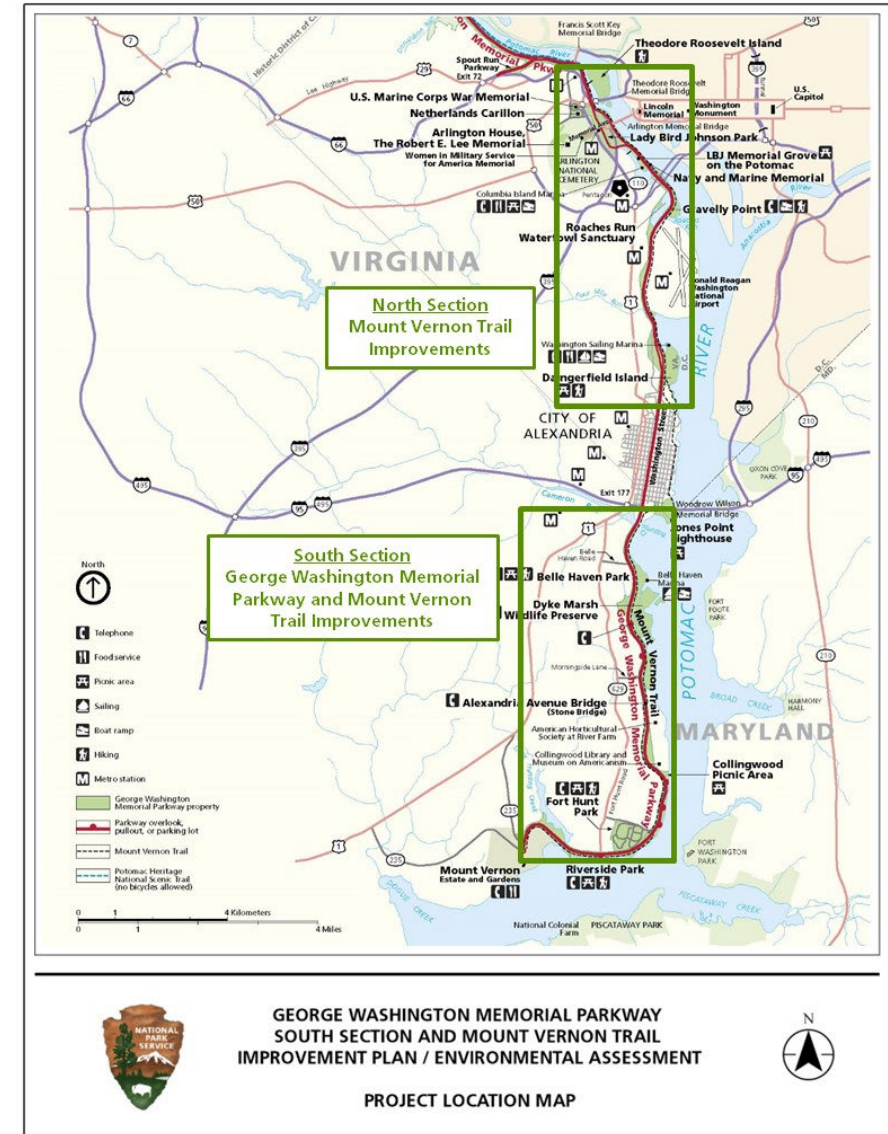
Why a Plan?

- The Parkway design is a significant contributing element that qualifies it for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and any proposed changes must be carefully considered
- The Plan will consider the road and trail improvements as complimentary projects that address safety and maintenance needs and improve the visitor experience
- The road and trail are interconnected and so changes to one should take into consideration how that change might affect the other



Purpose and Need

- The purpose of the Plan is to address deferred maintenance and safety issues
 - South section of the GW Parkway between the City of Alexandria and Mount Vernon Estate
 - Mount Vernon Trail (MVT) from Theodore Roosevelt Island to Mount Vernon Estate
 - Road limits within the City of Alexandria and trail through Old Town are not included
- The Plan is needed to help preserve the historic parkway for future generations, improve the visitor experience, reduce annual park operations and maintenance costs, and improve visitor safety

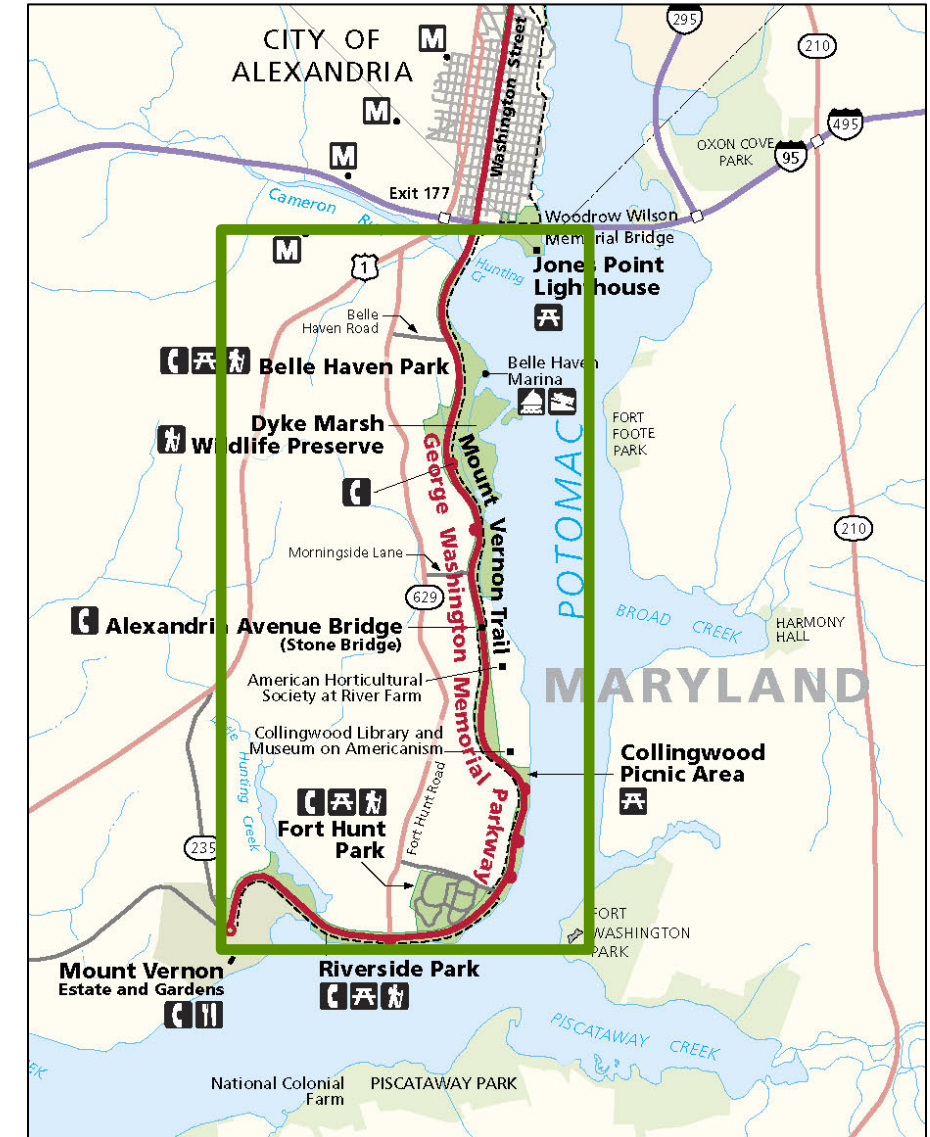




Project Background

GW Parkway South Section

- Improvements based on a *Traffic and Safety Context Sensitive Solutions Assessment* completed in 2021
- Traffic and operational issues investigated
- Context-sensitive solutions developed to maintain the GW Parkway's scenic and historic character

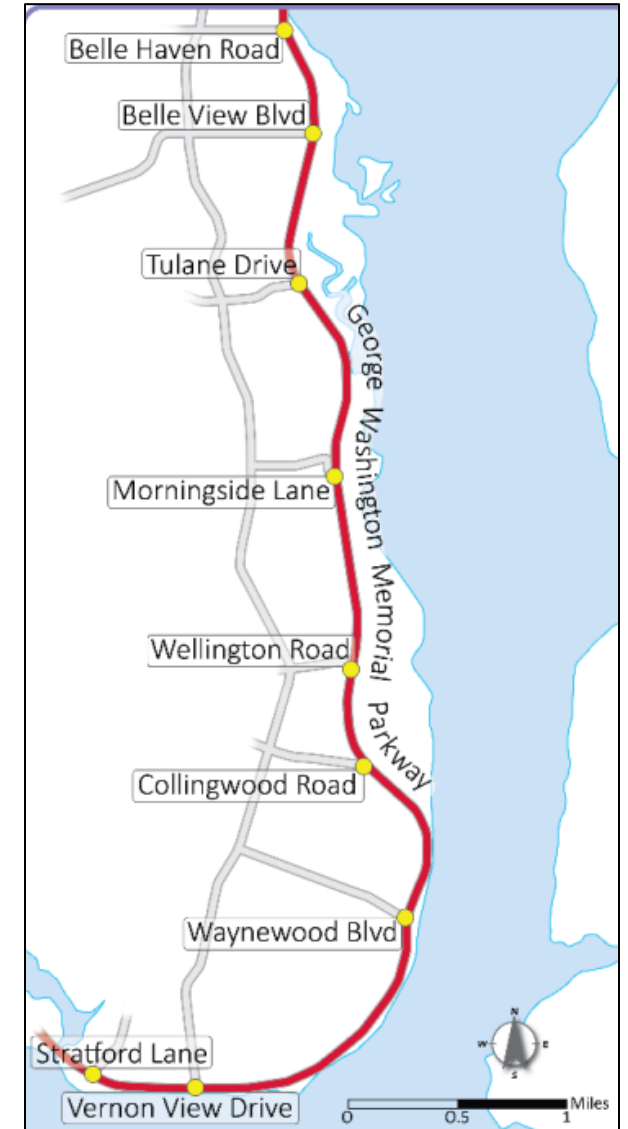




Project Background

GW Parkway South Section

- The assessment was completed in response to community concerns about traffic safety on the South Parkway
- Traffic safety evaluations and crash analysis were completed for nine intersections to develop recommendations for improvements
- Potential concepts for enhancing traffic safety at each intersection were identified that are also appropriate for a national park setting

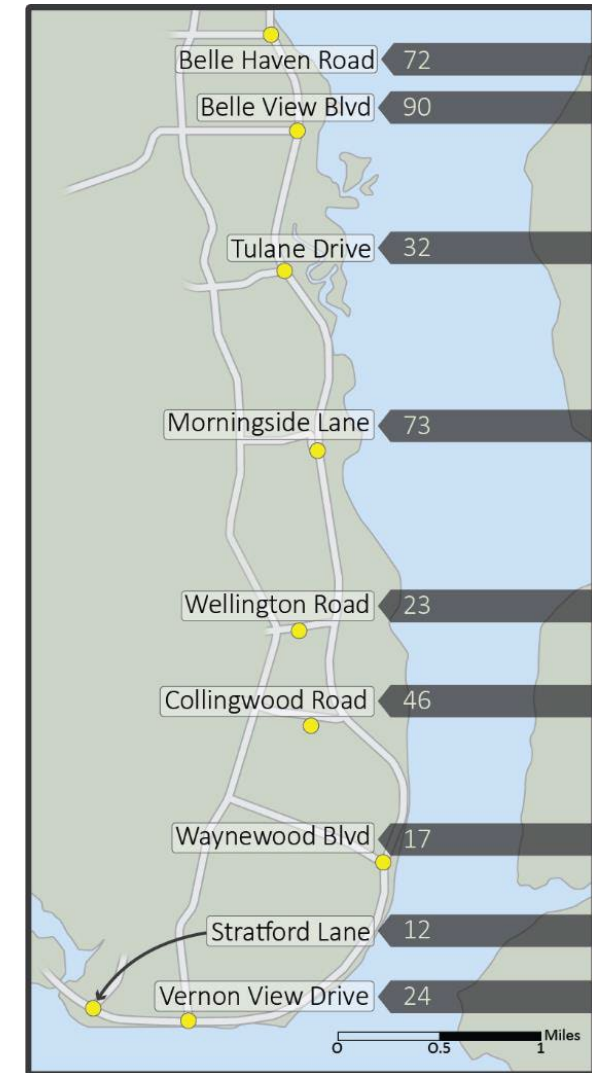




Project Background

GW Parkway South Section

- Heavy commuter volumes and high travel speeds create challenges for vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- Typical travel lane widths are 10 feet wide with some widths as narrow as 8 feet; raised and marked median widths vary
- Right- and left-turn auxiliary lanes and medians are present at some intersections
- A total of 389 crashes were recorded at the nine intersections during 2005-2015 and 2018-2019



Number of Crashes



Short-Term Safety Recommendations Implemented Late 2021

Southbound Lane Reduction



Contrast Pavement Markings



Belle Haven Drive Intersection Changes





Short-Term Safety Recommendations: Feedback We've Heard

Southbound Lane Reduction



- +** *Did not cause traffic congestion*
- +** *Reduced speeding and resulted in safer driving in the single SB lane*
- *Inconsistency of the presence of the road diet may increase speeding in the two-lane sections*
- *Lacks shoulder next to the SB lane despite extra road space*

Contrast Pavement Markings



- +** *Lane lines are easier to see on the light-colored concrete*

Belle Haven Drive Intersection Changes



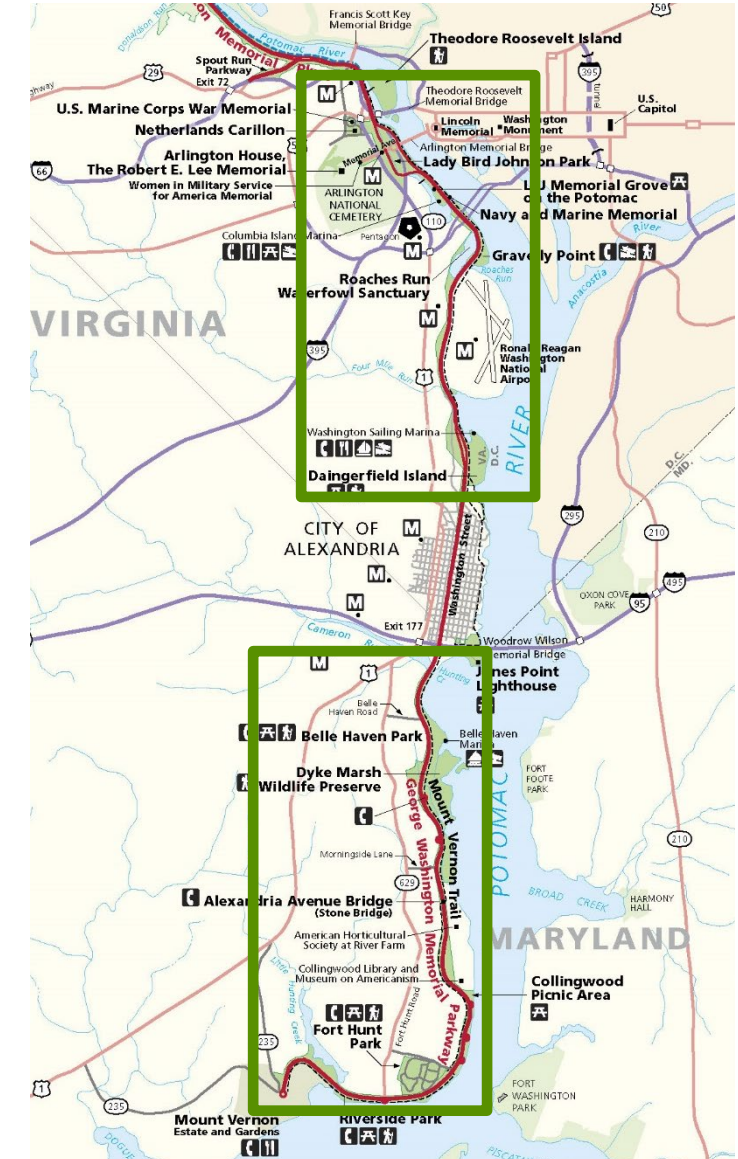
- *Confusion about who has the right-of-way and speeding drivers still make the intersection feel unsafe*
- *Did not address bicyclist/pedestrian safety while users continue to cross at the intersection to access Mount Vernon Trail*



Project Background

Mount Vernon Trail

- The Plan would also improve the MVT from Theodore Roosevelt Island to Mount Vernon Estate, excluding the trail section under jurisdiction of the City of Alexandria
- Improvements based on an analysis of trail conditions, safety concerns, users' needs, and resource management considerations documented in the *Mount Vernon Trail Corridor Study* prepared in 2020





Project Background

Mount Vernon Trail

- Hosts over **one million** pedestrians and bicyclists annually
- The trail north of Alexandria is one of the most heavily used multi-use trails in the country
- Constructed in the 1970s and 1980s when there were no design standards for multi-use trails
- Growing usage of the trail, particularly during commuting periods, contributes to trail crowding, user conflicts, and crashes





Project Background

Mount Vernon Trail

- Trail Safety Concerns
 - Crashes occur mainly in high-use trail segments, intersections, and at-grade crossings
 - Trail crowding, high speeds, poor sightlines, and a mix of trail users increase the likelihood crashes
 - The trail width averages 9 feet, which makes passing difficult and contributes to pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts
 - At-grade crossings lack consistent, modern signage, pavement markings, and accessibility features on both the trail and intersecting roadway or trail
 - Poor trail pavement conditions – ruts, cracks, potholes and root heaves – present safety hazards



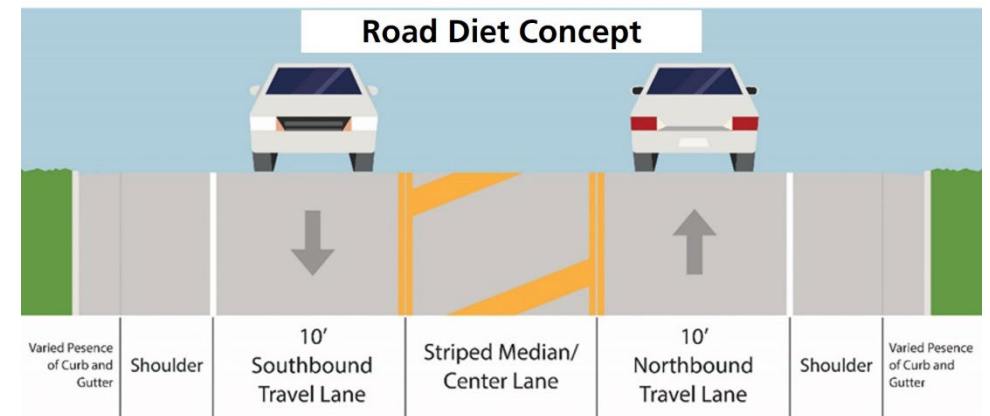
Proposed Action and Alternatives

GW Parkway South Section

- Based on the recommendations from the *Traffic and Safety Assessment*, the proposed action alternative includes:

- Mainline

- Rebuild the concrete pavement, maintaining general geometry of existing roadway section, mountable curbs, and grass shoulders
- Ensure the historical intentional design of the parkway and character-defining sections remain
- Road Diet
 - Reduce the number of travel lanes to one lane northbound and one lane southbound
 - Reallocate space for two right hand shoulders and center turn lane or striped median
 - Accomplish using stripping – no physical alteration of the road alignment



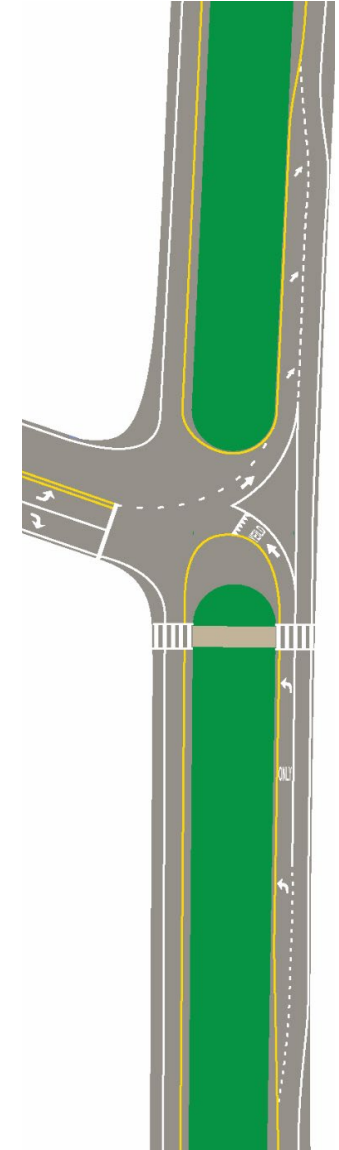


Proposed Action and Alternatives

GW Parkway South Section

– Intersection Geometry and Design

- The road diet would allow the parkway to be restored to its original design intent while striping safer intersections within the original parkway footprint
- Striping channelization lanes (without physical infrastructure)
- Mumble strips as a safety measure
- *Belle Haven Road, Morningside Road, Belle View Boulevard, and Tulane Drive*
 - These intersections have higher cross-traffic and could be considered for striping as ‘continuous green T’ intersections within the original geometry of the parkway
- *Marina Driveway, Wellington Road, Collingwood Road, Waynewood Boulevard, Vernon View Drive, and Stratford Lane*
 - These intersections are relatively low traffic and more minor striping improvements are anticipated to be sufficient to safely process traffic volumes





Proposed Action and Alternatives

GW Parkway South Section

– Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety & Access

- The road diet also creates an opportunity to safely designate crosswalks while avoiding “double threat” crash scenarios
- *Belle Haven Road, Belle View Boulevard, Tulane Drive, Vernon View Drive, and Stratford Lane*
 - Establish Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant crosswalks including pedestrian refuge in the median
 - Rectangular rapid flashing beacons
- *Marina Driveway, Morningside Road, Waynewood Boulevard, Wellington Road, Collingwood Road, W Boulevard, and River Farm Drive*
 - Crosswalks not warranted at these intersections



Proposed Action and Alternatives

Mount Vernon Trail

- Based on the recommendations from the *Trail Corridor Report* the proposed action alternative for the MVT improvements includes:
 - Widen the northern section of the trail to 11 feet (where feasible so as not to impact Parkway landscape design)
 - Widen the southern section of the trail to 10 feet (where feasible)
 - Trail bridges slated for replacement would be wider at 14 feet rail to rail
 - Trail intersection treatments





Proposed Action and Alternatives

Other Improvements

Comfort Stations

- Rehabilitate the comfort station at Belle Haven picnic area
- Build new comfort station at Gravelly Point Park (funding dependent)
- Permanently remove the porta-john facility at Riverside
- Comfort stations may include public restroom facilities, water fountains, benches, bicycle rack, etc.



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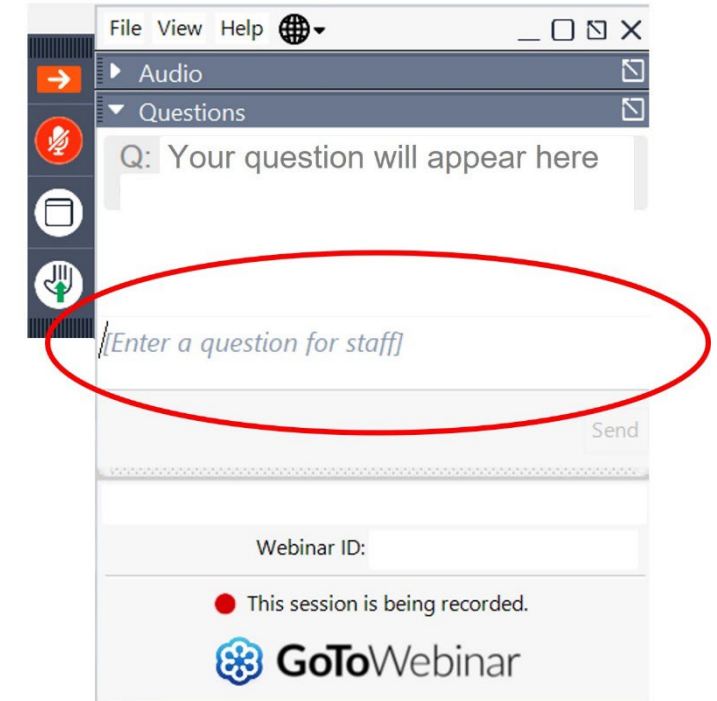
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