



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

August 21, 2019

Mr. Charles Cuvelier, Superintendent
George Washington Memorial Parkway
c/o Turkey Run Park
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
McLean, Virginia 22101

Reference: George Washington Memorial Parkway Traffic Safety Study

Dear Superintendent Cuvelier:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) Traffic Safety Study. This study is of great interest to the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT). The GWMP is a major link in the roadway network in the Mount Vernon area. As such, changes to traffic operations could greatly affect the network as a whole. Following are FCDOT's staff comments on the study, as presented at the July 11, 2019 public meeting.

Impacts of Potential Capacity/Access Modifications:

Several options were discussed as potential mitigation measures to be studied. Alternatives included restricting left turns onto GWMP from the local roadway network, due to the difficulty in finding gaps during peak periods, sight distance improvements, signing and pavement marking, roundabouts, and road diets.

Restrictive measures, in particular turn restrictions and road diets, can be effective tools to improve safety at appropriate locations. However, restriction of traffic at targeted locations leads to redistribution of traffic volumes over the adjacent roadway network. Considering that the subject study precludes analysis of any intersections and segments apart from the GWMP, FCDOT has serious reservations about potential impacts of such restrictive measures on the existing local roadway network. In particular, Fort Hunt Road, as a close, parallel route to GWMP, could potentially see greatly increased volumes, if traffic on GWMP is restricted. For this reason, FCDOT believes that major capacity and/or access modifications cannot be made to GWMP without examining the potential impacts to the local roadway network. The GWMP does not operate in isolation.

Additionally, crash data indicates that there are a significant number of crashes at several of the intersecting side streets within the study area. If traffic signals are found to be warranted at these locations, they should be considered as a potential solution to the crash issue. However,

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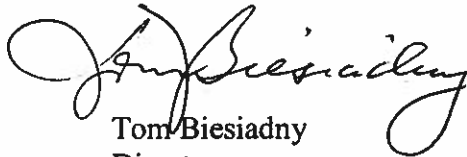
given the historically significant nature of GWMP, traffic signals may be undesirable and not in keeping with the established roadway environment. To this end, roundabouts may be a reasonable solution at some locations to both calm traffic speeds and provide safer intersections, while doing so without poles, controllers, or other modern, vertical components.

Consideration of Alternate Modes:

Pedestrian, cyclist, and transit safety and accessibility were discussed within the scope of the subject study. FCDOT would like to emphasize the importance of all modes, which includes safe access for all users. Currently, pedestrian crossings of GWMP to access the Mount Vernon Memorial Trail are not safe. The width of the roadway, coupled with vehicular speeds, are not conducive to safe pedestrian or cyclist crossings. In addition, access to established bus stops, particularly on the northbound GWMP, is difficult, due to the aforementioned impediments to safe pedestrian and cyclist crossings. The subject study should focus on improving and expanding facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and making existing facilities safe and accessible for all users.

As the study progresses, please continue to keep FCDOT involved and informed. We look forward to continuing to work with you, and to the outcome of the study. If you have any questions, please call Vanessa Holt at 703-877-5686, or me at 703-877-5663.

Sincerely,



Tom Biesiadny
Director

cc: Dan Storck, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
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