

August 19, 2019

GWMP / Alexandria to Mount Vernon Safety Study

When moving here for my husband's Air Force career 13 years ago, I recall how awestruck we were by how beautiful our first drive down the GW Parkway ~~was~~. However, hazards known only to locals became quickly apparent with subsequent drives. We have had close calls and have seen or heard of numerous accidents since then. Here are my top six concerns:

1. **Pavement Condition** - really bad bumps as well as potholes, not only for cars but especially for motorcycles. The pavement's poor condition does not make a positive impression on tourists or the driving experience from DC toward Mount Vernon, especially past Old Town Alexandria. Large trucks and busses certainly have a negative impact on roads, particularly one as old as this section of the Parkway. The painted lane lines are really faint.
2. **Arrows need to be painted on the pavement at all turning points and crossings**, like at the Belle Haven intersection. Quite frequently, cars are crossing on the opposite side of where they should be. *Stratford on the Potomac* neighborhood is an example of a location where people are often turning on the wrong side. Having the roads marked would clarify that turning maneuvers are the same as any intersection - staying to the right.
3. The Parkway is a **narrow roadway with insufficient signage**. Posting "drive in right lane except to pass" as well as frequent and larger warning signs to truckers (and busses) might help.
4. **Busses and large trucks driving on the Parkway** are much to big a vehicle to navigate safely on the narrow Parkway. They are most often in the left lane, straddling the center line. When an opportunity arises to pass (undertaking in right lane usually), you pray the bus doesn't cross into your lane. Is there a way to ensure they stop traveling down the Parkway and use Route 1 instead to get to Mount Vernon? It would also improve their arrival to Mount Vernon and navigating the Mount Vernon Roundabout.
5. **Crosswalks** - There are many people using the GW trail but there are no safe places for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross the Parkway to and from neighborhoods after leaving Old Town. Belle Haven and points south are very dangerous.
6. **Roundabout at Mount Vernon** - culminating at one of our Nation's most historic sites, this is one of the worst portions on the Parkway.
 - The Mount Vernon Roundabout **does not follow the Virginia Driving Manual rules** for driving on a roundabout. In fact, the Mount Vernon Roundabout rules are

Going north
bound
Also, turn
from GW
onto
Vernon
View -
dangerous
from
driver's
really
cutting
corner
~~there~~
Maybe
some
of
those
Tall
Bump
to
discourage

quite the opposite. Frequently, drivers do not yield at the posted yield sign coming around to the left and off the Parkway (just in front of *Fairfax Connector* bus stop and the restaurant). Instead, they will simply drive through that posted sign without any pause, often crossing in front of traffic from Fort Belvoir/ Route 1, who have the right of way, so they can deposit passengers at the curbside. Perhaps they don't recognize it as a roundabout at all. Even so, people **do not after yield** as signs direct.

- Driving past the Visitor Center and then the parking lot entrance on the right and just as the Parkway begins (heading toward Old Town), there clearly **appear to be three lanes** when in fact there are only two. I have seen more 'near head-ons' than I can count, with people rounding that curve in the non-third lane, finding out abruptly that they are actually not in a lane at all. That same area is also a **difficult location for exiting both of the parking lots.**

I have submitted this form electronically and will post this copy as well. I am extremely grateful for your undertaking this study. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,



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