

DeMaso

1005 Neal Drive
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George Washington Memorial Parkway
Attn: Alexandria to Mount Vernon Safety Study
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
c/o Turkey Run Park
McLean, Virginia 22101

Point of Contact: Aaron LaRocca, aaron_larocca@nps.gov, 703-289-2500

Aaron

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration's study on ways to improve safety on the George Washington Memorial Parkway between the City of Alexandria and Mount Vernon. I look forward to seeing how my suggestions are considered as recommendations are developed to improve safety. Keeping the Parkway's ambience is paramount in my opinion and funding should be approved to enhance safety.

Since the study states that the recommendations are to be constrained by "using existing funds", I would like to know what funds are in play and the value of those funds in this, and next, fiscal year.

Additionally, I found it impossible to provide these comments electronically via your website. While there were numerous references to submit comments via the park Planning, Environment & Public Comment webpage, finding the actual location to submit comments was impossible.

I appreciate you taking my comments into consideration and offer to provide more detail at your request.

Suggestions for improved safety:

1. Add rumble strip down centerline of the Parkway. While there may be challenges to doing this in a concrete surface, I think there are other options open to consideration.
2. Add rumble strips to passing lane at main intersections. As vehicles on the Parkway approach an interchange, drivers in the left lane would be encouraged to move to their right to allow entry of vehicle from the left. I consider Waynewood Road, Collingwood Road, Morningside Drive, etc. to be good areas for this technique.
3. Adjust speed limit along section between Belle View and Old Town. While the area of Belle View is congested with both vehicles and pedestrians and the speed limit should be critically enforced at 35 mph, the area to the north of Belle View should return to 45 mph until reaching Old Town. It's an uncongested space that encourages speeding due to the unrealistic speed limit.
4. Add speed cameras. I'm sure there's policy that needs to be changed, but the advent of proper use of cameras to assist with speed control is upon us.
5. Add means for citizens to report license plate numbers of excessive speeders. Consider the use of an NPS-sponsored website for drivers to vent their concerns; NPS could use this to target messaging to particular habitual abusers that are likely to be easily identifiable.



6. Employ a contractor to assess speed at critical points. I appreciate the fact that NPS Park Police are a scarce resource, so use of a third party to could capture and report violators to NPS police for action could be a viable solution. If not to fine, at least to be visible to the public that safety concerns are paramount.
7. Engage in neighborhood campaigns to calm the racing down the parkway. This attitude starts at home and can be slowly adjusted over time so that the tendency to violate the road rules diminishes.
 - a. One such campaign could display the difference in amount of time between main intersections when traveling at varied speeds along the Parkway. Drivers might associate the exponential rise in risk to fellow drivers that's not justified by shaving off seconds of a drive.
 - b. Another campaign would be to work with Ft Belvoir, a large employer along the Parkway, to campaign to those using the Parkway for their commutes.
8. Elevate fines for out-of-state drivers violating the limits. While only a single person's observation, but I would argue that drivers from Maryland in particular, using the Parkway to commute to Ft Belvoir, are above normal abusers of the speed limits. (See neighborhood campaign suggestion above for Ft Belvoir.)
9. Use speed sensing devices to alert drivers of their excess speed. Rather than temporary trailer-based sensors, add permanent devices along the roadway at particularly abused areas to provide continuous driver feedback.
10. Emphasize the beauty of the route and the sheer benefits that exceed the "simply commuting" mentality.
11. Allow bicycle riders to use the Parkway during weekends and national holidays. This change to ban bikers was done within the last decade and I think it was a poor decision not to allow weekend recreational use.
12. Add crossing light/walk to areas along Belle View. It amazes me that we have a beautiful bike path on the opposite side of a significant community without a way to cross safely. There are plenty of crossing devices in use around the county today, so installing something would not be extreme. However, the crossing device MUST be responsive to pedestrians but not excessively long in duration as to overly frustrate drivers.
13. Fix the signage at Mt Vernon roundabout. When heading south, the "right lane must turn right" sign that comes prior to parking lot entry is not logical. Also, the "right lane must turn right" as you approach Old Mt Vernon Hwy intersection must be more clear and early noted.
14. Improve the lane markings at Morningside Lane. The southbound lane markings are poor and need to be brighter. Use of rumble stripping along the left lane would be helpful to distinguish between the turn lane and the thru lane for traffic trying to emerge from Morningside.
15. Add turn lane at Morningside Lane, if possible. The northbound lanes could use a turn lane onto Morningside and this same turn lane area could help with merging from Morningside onto the northbound lanes.

Thank you



William DeMaso