

George Washington Memorial Parkway
700 G.W. Memorial Parkway
McLean, VA 22101

12 July 2019

REFERENCE: Alexandria to Mt. Vernon Safety Study

The Park Police's moveable electronic 'Your Speed' signs at the Parkway intersections of Tulane Dr. (southbound) and the Wellington area (northbound) do not work at night or during the early morning hours. Recommendation: Park Police acquire permanent 'Your Speed' signs to replace the current unreliable signs. The Tulane sign should be relocated to an area before Belle Haven Rd and Belleview Blvd. for the southbound traffic. The speed limit at these intersections is 35 mph. I have seen numerous near mishaps at these intersections as the speed limit is routinely exceeded. A reliable permanent sign should also replace the current one at the Wellington area for northbound traffic.

The right pointing directional arrow sign on the median before the intersection at Tulane Dr. (southbound) should be accompanied with a 'No U Turn' or 'No Left Turn' sign. A dangerous situation has been created for traffic coming out on Tulane turning left, northbound, on the parkway because of people making illegal turns. On 26 September 2018 a serious accident occurred here closing the parkway for over 2 hours. There have been many other accidents at this intersection.

Park Police representatives have stated at the MVCCA Transportation Committee meetings there is only one officer assigned to the parkway, south of Old Town to the Mt. Vernon Estate. The addition of reliable 'Your Speed' and 'Speed Radar Enforced' signs are useless without enforcement. Before December 2018, there were periods when Park Police were enforcing the 35-mph zone between Belle Haven and Belleview. Since then I have seen only one police officer stop a car in the area this past week (8-11 July). I am a daily commuter on the Parkway before 6 am northbound and later in the morning southbound through this area. In the 45-mph area south of Tulane to the Mt. Vernon Estate, I have yet to see any Park Police enforcement. One officer cannot be expected to enforce the speeding throughout the entire stretch of the parkway. The consolidation of government offices at Ft. Belvoir and heavy development south have added to a tremendous increase in traffic. I am inclined to support speed cameras. This proposal was part of a 4 March 2018, resolution sent to Congressman Beyer by the Co-Chair of the MVCCA Transportation Committee. State Senator Surovell and Delegate Krizek supports cameras, as well. The money collected in fines would certainly help in the maintenance of the roadway; perhaps allow for the hiring of a second officer.

A retired architect who worked for the National Park Service (NPS) has proposed a solution to the unsafe parkway conditions. "The NPS should excess its parkways to state governments to be incorporated as state highways and parks for the following reasons:

- NPS parkways are a second priority for funding because they are not within the core mission
- Parkway staffs are ill-suited to highway management, maintenance and design
- Heavy use of parkway roads requires disproportionately high maintenance funding
- The Park Police have difficulty providing for public safety because of the wholly linear nature of the coverage zone."

For the G.W. Parkway, this suggestion may be a solution to the Park Police manpower shortage and allow Fairfax County Police to issue speeding ticket on the parkway. I would advocate this only for the G. W. Parkway and not all NPS parkways in the state.



Ron Cunningham

Westgrove Community Transportation Representative to the MVCCA