

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 30, 2019

## Beyer Urges NPS To Accelerate Traffic Study In Wake Of Fatal GW Parkway Crash

April 30, 2019 (Washington, D.C.) – Rep. Don Beyer today urged the National Park Service to again expedite its traffic study of GW Parkway in the wake of a fatal crash in Alexandria. The National Park Service responded that the traffic study analyzing historical vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle crash data is underway with an expected completion date in October, 2019.

Beyer said:

“Yesterday’s fatal accident is another tragic reminder that GW Parkway needs significant changes to improve safety. The history of serious accidents is a major reason why I originally asked the National Park Service to conduct a traffic study and then pushed NPS to expedite it. I will continue to work with Sen. Scott Surovell, Del. Paul Krizek, and Supervisor Dan Storck to translate the sense of urgency our constituents feel into action, and eagerly await the upcoming community meeting where NPS will receive input and suggestions from the public.”

Beyer [sought a traffic study](#) along [GW Parkway](#) to address [concerns about safety](#) brought to him by constituents during his first term in office. He regularly raises the issue with the National Park Service, and continues to press for safety improvements for the roadway.

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## THE DIXIE PIG

THE ONLINE NEWSLETTER FOR SENATOR SCOTT SUROVELL. THE DIXIE PIG WAS MY GRANDMOTHER'S FAVORITE RESTAURANT ON U.S. 1 LOCATED ACROSS FROM BEACON MALL WHERE A RITE AID USED TO STAND.

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- [Scott's Blog Roll](#)
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THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2019

### Thoughts On Changes to the GW Parkway



Due to last week's fatal collision, there has been renewed discussion in safety on the George Washington Parkway (GWP) in the last week.

Delegate Paul Krizek and I have been working with Congressman Don Beyer to do something about this for some time.

Michael K. Bohn, "Parkway Problems Will Get Worse," Mt. Vernon Gazette (May 24, 2017)

Two years ago, the National Park Service stated they intended to conduct a traffic safety study. That has not occurred yet.

In the meantime, as we move forward with a discussion about dealing with safety deficiencies on the road, we have been hearing lots of ideas about how to reconfigure the road including major changes to intersections, lanes, or stoplights.

However, it is important to understand the legal restrictions that we are operating within. First, the GWP is a National Park controlled by the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior. State government and the Virginia Department of Transportation have nothing to do with the road or its configuration.

Next, please keep in mind that the GWP was opened in 1932 as a memorial to George Washington (like the Lincoln/Jefferson Memorial or the Jamestown-Williamsburg-York Parkway). It is also designated as a National Historic Landmark - the highest protection that an historic asset can enjoy.

GW Parkway National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Apr. 24, 1995)

Origins of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, WETA (Mar. 11, 2015)

The GWP was the first modern highway in America. Had several unique design features incorporating vistas, pulloffs, picnic areas, etc. It was designed to be a pleasurable drive through the then-Virginia countryside down to Mt. Vernon and was originally conceived as part of Washington, D.C.'s monumental core back when our area was nothing but farms when my grandparents moved and built Tauxemont with nineteen other families back in 1940-41.

Due to the National Landmark status, **there are significant legal restrictions on any modifications to the road pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act** - the same act that forced us to redirect U.S. 1 away from the Woodlawn Mansion instead of widening it in place. While entrances have been added

over time that were not original (e.g. Tulane Drive, Belleview, Morningside Lane, Waynewood, Vernon View, Stratford Landing were all added later), stop lights, major reconfiguration of lanes or intersections are very unlikely and would probably be met with litigation from the preservation community.

That is why I have focused on speed cameras which are minimally intrusive and I think would go a long way towards getting the speeds down and perhaps dissuade some of the commuters from using the road.

The continued collisions, deaths, injuries, and danger posed also underscores why we need to hurry up and move along bus rapid transit to Fort Belvoir to get commuters onto transit.

Congressman Beyer has renewed his call for the safety study and we have been advised there will be some kind of public meeting in June. In the meantime, keep coming up with ideas about how we can make this community treasure a safe place for everyone.

POSTED BY [SCOTT A. SUROVELL](#) AT 1:16 PM 

LABELS: [GEORGE WASHINGTON PARKWAY](#), [MOUNT VERNON ESTATE](#), [MOUNT VERNON HISTORY](#), [TRANSPORTATION POLICY](#)

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May 1 2019

#### Safety on GW Parkway

The George Washington Memorial Parkway, especially the portion that is south of Alexandria, is not the safe and scenic Parkway as was envisioned back in the 1930s when it was built. It is too narrow and curvy, has no shoulders, very few median areas, and too many cars speed on it. It is almost impossible for bikes and pedestrians to cross, and it can be extremely difficult and dangerous for cars to go north (left as you are facing the river) from most of the intersections coming out from our neighborhoods.

On Monday, April 29th, there was not just a serious accident that stopped all traffic going in both directions during rush hour, but tragically, a 55-year old taxi driver lost his life, and two others were airlifted by helicopter to the hospital for emergency treatment of serious injuries. A third injured person was taken away by ambulance. It was a

very bad accident, and this was on a day where the weather was wonderful. Indeed, from a 2016 study by the Federal Highway Administration of just the “Morningside Lane intersection reported that 30 crashes had occurred there from 2006-2012, an average of 4.3 per year, and the vast majority of the incidents happened in clear, dry and daylight conditions,” as was reported in the Mount Vernon Gazette on October 26th, 2017.

Your local elected officials, following Congressman Don Beyer’s lead, have worked hard to push federal officials to focus on making this federal road safer for the community. Senator Scott Surovell and I, having grown up in the Mount Vernon community and witnessed the increased speeds and volume of traffic on the Parkway, have long been concerned about its safety. After a serious crash in 2017, I sent a letter to the Superintendent of the National Park Service citing safety issues brought up to me by constituents and other stakeholders promoting improvements that can be made to address these concerns while preserving the beauty of our neighborhoods. Some of these include reducing the speed zone between Belle Haven and Mount Vernon, creating a median at Morningside Lane, or putting in a rumble strip along the centerline of the Parkway. Senator Surovell has also suggested the addition of speed cameras at intersections as a method to reduce the speed of traffic.

The National Park Service is currently conducting a traffic and safety study along the Parkway that we pushed for and that the Congressman urged be expedited. This study began on February 25th of this year, but its completion was delayed due to the government shutdown earlier this year. There will be an opportunity for public comments on the final draft of the traffic study at a soon-to-be-scheduled meeting with National Park Service officials to be held in June at the Martha Washington Library on Fort Hunt Road. Though the exact date for this meeting has yet to be set, I will be sure to provide updates and more details as I receive them on social media and in my weekly newsletter.

Our communities have grown, the number of cars on our roads has increased, and changes are necessary to ensure we can travel safely. This study is critical to making this happen. I will continue to work with Congressman Beyer, Senator Surovell, Senator Adam Ebbin, and Supervisor Dan Storck to explore all possible avenues for keeping our Parkway a safe byway for residents to enjoy.