

Alexandria Transportation Commission
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Honorable Mayor William D. Euille and Members of City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

September 19, 2014

Re: Memorial Circle Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

At its September 17, 2014 meeting, the Transportation Commission (Commission) received an update from the National Park Service (NPS) on its Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Memorial Circle area of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Memorial Circle is located on Columbia Island in the District of Columbia east of Arlington Cemetery and immediately west of the Memorial Bridge. The National Park Service explained that the purpose of the plan is to reduce conflicts between trail, walkway and roadway users and to increase overall visitor safety, while maintaining the memorial character of the area and improving mobility for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

As described in the presentation to the Transportation Commission by NPS, the area is heavily used by motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians both for recreation and for commuter travel. The Mount Vernon Trail travels through the project area along the waterfront, contributing greatly to the bicycle and pedestrian use near the Circle. The heavily travelled transportation facilities within the project area contribute to a number of safety concerns, especially at the six un-signalized, at-grade crosswalks within the vicinity of the Circle. Attachment 1 includes a project information flyer.

In response to the National Park Service's request for feedback on the project, the Transportation Commission recommends that the City submit the following input:

- Bicyclist and pedestrian needs should be given parity with motorists, and should not be subordinate to motor vehicles as currently prioritized by the Park Service. The National Park Service needs to take a Complete Streets approach to the Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Memorial Circle that includes a plan that provides safe routes for all users of the Parkway, including bicyclists and pedestrians. This

approach has proven effective in Alexandria, and should be embraced by federal stewards of the multi-use recreation and transportation corridor.

- Signalization should be considered through the plan to address safety issues and conflict points, including the use of High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) Beacons, which have been demonstrated with success at several crossings in Alexandria.
- The plan should consider grade separation where trails intersect with the roadway. The Boundary Channel Humpback Bridge Replacement Project, completed by the National Park Service in 2012, is a good example of where this has been done recently.
- The plan should also consider simplifying the flow of traffic to reduce conflict points between roadway and trail users.
- More frequent enforcement by U.S. Park Police is warranted in the Memorial Circle area of the Parkway, and the plan should design improvements to allow for police to have pull-off areas necessary for safe enforcement. Since the Circle is located in the District of Columbia, where automated speed enforcement is legal, NPS and the Park Police should consider employing speed cameras near Parkway crosswalks.

We appreciate your consideration of the Commission's position on the Memorial Circle Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan M. Macek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Nathan M. Macek

Chair, Alexandria Transportation Commission

cc: Alexandria Transportation Commission