United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Denver Service Center - Steve Culver, Transportation
12795 West Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver CO 80225-0287

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE $300

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PERMIT NO. G-83

Planning Timeline

2014		2015		2016	
Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer-Winter	Spring	Summer
■ Data Collection & Pilot Projects ■ PUBLIC SCOPING ← You Are Here ■ NPS Reviews Comments	■ Alternatives Development, Including an Alternatives Planning Charrette	■ Public Review of Preliminary Alternatives	■ Alternatives Refinement ■ Analysis of Environmental Impacts of Alternatives	■ Public Review of the Plan/Environmental Assessment	■ NPS Decision Document

GET INVOLVED!!

This is your chance to be a part of the legacy.

Help us spread the word, and comment on the proposed alternatives for improving transportation in and around Memorial Circle.

Online
parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp
OR
by Mail
Superintendent
Re: Memorial Circle Plan/EA
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

What's Next?

After receiving and reviewing the public and agency comments collected during this comment period, the planning team will consider the comments in conjunction with previous studies and newly collected data (through traffic counts and some pilot projects such as the rectangular rapidly flashing beacons used this past winter) to create a preliminary set of alternatives. This set of alternatives will be presented to the public during another public comment period (currently anticipated to take place in spring of 2015).

Stay Informed!

Project updates will be posted on the web at:
www.nps.gov/gwmp
and
parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp

George Washington Memorial Parkway
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Memorial Circle

Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment

The National Park Service (NPS) is starting a Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment (plan/EA) for the Memorial Circle area of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (the park). 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 bicycles.

The project area is heavily used by motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians both for recreation and for commuting (or other local travel). The Circle is often part of the funeral procession route to Arlington National Cemetery. The Mount Vernon Trail travels through the project area along the waterfront, contributing greatly to the bicycle and pedestrian use within the Circle.

The heavy use of the roads, bridges, trails, and sidewalks within the project area contribute to a number of safety concerns, especially at the six un-signalized, crosswalks within the vicinity of the circle.

I encourage you to get involved with the process and add your voice to the planning for the Memorial Circle area. NPS staff will be present at a number of community events this summer and will be providing information on site to spread the word about this important project. You can find out more, submit comments, and get project updates on our website at www.nps.gov/gwmp or parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp.

Sincerely,

Alexcy Romero
Superintendent

How You Can Be Involved

The park welcomes your input on what the current issues are within the project area and potential ideas for how safety and circulation could be improved while maintaining the memorial character of the area.

On-Site Informational Booth

Park staff will be available in or near Memorial Circle to provide information on the project and on how you can provide comments. Look for staff during the following dates and times:

- September 9, 7am to 10am
- September 10, 11am to 2pm
- September 11, 3pm to 6:30pm

Please note that these dates are subject to change due to weather. For the latest information, please check the park's website: www.nps.gov/gwmp

Community Events and Meetings

Park staff will be attending the following community events and meetings:

- Arlington Co. Transportation Commission, September 4
- Alexandria Farmers Market, September 13

How to Comment

Please submit comments online at:
parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp

Comments can also be mailed to:
Alexcy Romero, Superintendent
Re: Memorial Circle Plan/EA
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Comments are requested by September 30, 2014

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the plan is to develop a set of recommendations that would reduce conflicts between trail, walkway, and roadway users and to increase overall visitor safety. Recommendations should also strive to maintain the memorial character of the area and to improve mobility for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. The project is needed because of the following issues:

- orientation and wayfinding as users travel through the project area can be overwhelming, confusing, or lacking depending on the destination and route of individual users
- existing infrastructure design includes elements that are not intuitive and provide limited accommodation for the needs of the many site users
- the issues described above associated with orientation, wayfinding, and infrastructure contribute to the safety risks within the project area because of the heavy use of the site by both commuters and recreational visitors in cars, on bikes, and on foot

ISSUES IN THE PROJECT AREA

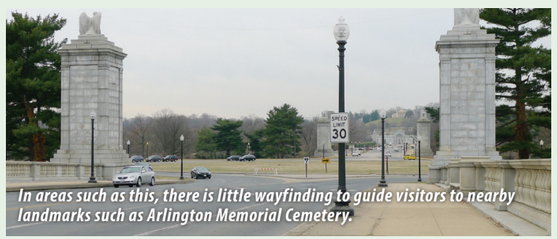
Safety

- The project area is heavily used by motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists for both commuting and recreation.
- The expectations of motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists approaching crosswalks in the project area may place each of these modes in conflict with each other. Cyclists and pedestrians may expect approaching vehicular traffic to reduce their speed and yield, but drivers may expect to be able to speed up on certain approaches.
- In general, the speed of traffic causes safety concerns where paths in traffic cross or merge. These maneuvers occur in limited space and include interactions between motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

There are multiple conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles within the project area.

Vehicle paths cross where roads intersect the circle, leading to conflicts between the approaching vehicles.

The project area is used heavily by motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.



In areas such as this, there is little wayfinding to guide visitors to nearby landmarks such as Arlington Memorial Cemetery.

In other areas, the close spacing and number of wayfinding signs may contribute to driver confusion.

Orientation & Wayfinding

- Visitors within the project area may not be aware that they are in a unit of the national park system. There are no signs that educate recreational visitors to the project area on the circle's historical and cultural values.
- The complicated vehicular traffic pattern in the project area requires drivers to make quick decisions, causing them to rapidly change lanes and to merge with other traffic. In less than a mile, there are 10 traffic merges.
- Roads within the study area serve multiple destinations, some of which have multiple options for routes. This may contribute to motorist confusion as they drive through the project area.
- Within the study area there is little wayfinding to direct pedestrians and cyclists to tourist attractions, major trails, and other designated paths.

Infrastructure

- The Mount Vernon Trail narrows to 4.5 feet (half the average width of the trail) as it crosses under Arlington Memorial Bridge.
- To handle morning commuter traffic, a section of the circle must be manually barricaded each morning until the peak traffic dissipates. Northbound traffic approaching the circle from Washington Boulevard (Route 27) and from a spur from the northbound parkway (Route 0508A) is channeled over the Arlington Memorial Bridge.
- Because of the location of existing crosswalks and sidewalks/trails, many visitors use social trails (unofficial trails created by users of the project area) to connect to the Mount Vernon Trail which leads to trail users crossing roads in unsafe areas.

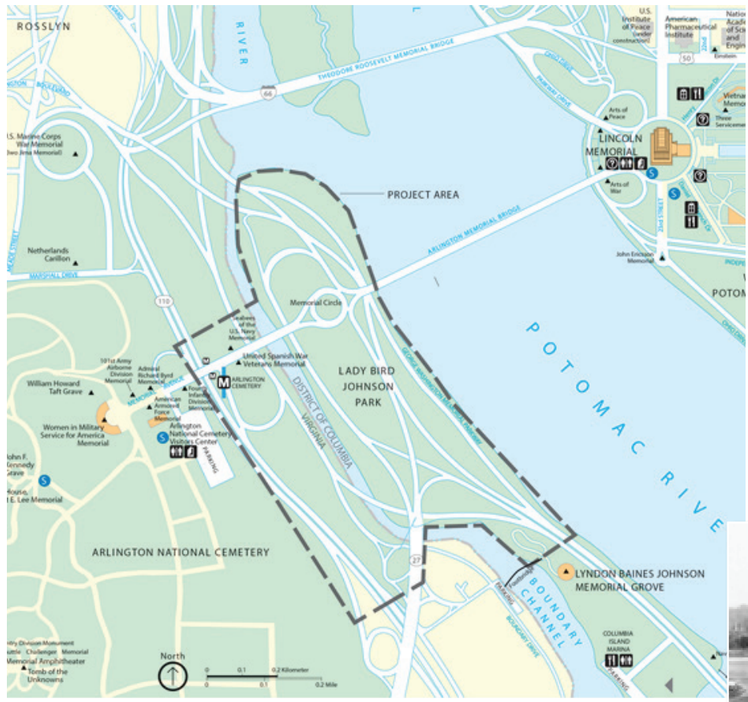
The Mount Vernon Trail narrows to about half its average width as it passes under the Arlington Memorial Bridge.

In the morning, the NPS sets up temporary traffic controls to regulate the flow of traffic into DC.

Trails and sidewalks do not offer direct access to the Mount Vernon Trail north of the Memorial Bridge, resulting in heavy social trail use.

PROJECT AREA

The NPS will be evaluating options for improving the project area outlined in the figure below. This includes Memorial Circle and its many connections with the surrounding roadways and landmarks.



Site History and Significance

Over the years many changes have been made to the circulation patterns around Memorial Circle, but the changes have respected the memorial character and the culturally significant features including the views and vistas, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/ George Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington Memorial Bridge and Memorial Avenue corridor, Arlington National Cemetery and the western extent of the National Mall.

In addition to serving a heavy flow of commuters and recreational users, the circle continues to act as an important connection along the corridor between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery and is often used as a staging area for funeral processions. During development of potential improvements in the project area, the planning team will carefully consider how to maintain the memorial character of the site while providing improvements to safety, infrastructure and wayfinding.

Intersection of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway at Memorial Avenue, facing west, 1936.