Mount Vernon Bike/Walk Trail

18.5 mile trail one-way

Directions:
- Exit hotel lobby and turn right.
- At the street (Lee Highway), turn left onto sidewalk.
- Cross over Fort Myer Drive and Lynn Street.
- Stay straight on Lee Highway sidewalk to enter trail.
- Entrance signs are posted.

Located just across the river from downtown Washington, D.C. is a great multi-use recreation trail. More than 18 miles long, the Mount Vernon Trail follows the Potomac's Virginia shoreline from Theodore Roosevelt Island (near Rosslyn, VA) to George Washington's estate located at Mount Vernon.

The surface of the Mount Vernon Trail is paved. Since this is one of the oldest trails in the area, it is not up to current design standards. In some spots, the trail is narrow and winding. However, a number a recent improvements; including resurfacing and widening, have been completed. Additionally, two new overpasses have been installed over National Airport's access ramps. Some of the bridge crossings are very narrow, so you may want to dismount your bike when encountering these tight spots. On nice weekends, expect a high traffic volume.

The Mount Vernon Trail is a big favorite of area cyclists. The trail offers wonderful views of the Potomac and D.C. monuments. There are also several neat sights along the way, including George Washington's home at Mount Vernon, Old Town Alexandria, Arlington National Cemetery, and the locals' favorite, Gravelly Point (at the north end of National Airport's main runway).

The trail is somewhat tricky to follow as it passes through Alexandria because there are actually two route choices, both of which are on streets. The original route followed Pitt Street through town. The newer "river route" has since become the preferred choice. (refer to detailed map). It follows Union Street, which provides easy access to waterfront parks and restaurants in the Old Town center (around King Street). Note that the river route can be easily missed, so review the detailed map of the Old Town before heading out.

For the most part, the trail is fairly flat with an occasional rolling hill. The last mile heading toward Mount Vernon has a pretty good climb. At the northern end at Roosevelt Island, you can either turn around and head back south, or you can cross the footbridge over the parkway and head west on the Custis Trail. This will take you to the Washington & Old Dominion Trail, a 45-mile-long rail trail through Northern Virginia (National Park Service, NPS.gov).