

Honorable Mayor, Honorable Vice-Mayor, and Councilmen and Women,

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1-12-13

My name is Jessica Wisser, Executive Director of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. Please allow me to also introduce Ronal Butler, Chair of the ASO Board of Trustees. It is our pleasure to join you this morning. During this 2012-13 Season, we celebrate a very special milestone, the 25th Anniversary of our Music Director, Kim Allen Kluge, and reflect on the ASO's journey from humble beginnings to "local world-class symphony".

On February 9 and 10, we present performances entitled "Our City, Our Symphony", a tribute to the abundant musical talent of the Alexandria community. Claudia Chudacoff, the ASO's concertmaster, will be featured on Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Major. First performed in 1775, this piece would have been a favorite in the early days of Alexandria, and we will present the Mozart Concerto alongside works of Handel and Bach, as they would have been heard here over 200 years ago.

Today, the Symphony is a proud member of the Alexandria Arts Forum and we will collaborate on this program with three members: Virginia Bronze Handbell Ensemble, the Alexandria Choral Society, and Heritage Signature Chorale. With a combined 132 years of performing in the Alexandria community, we will come together to present the centerpiece of this 25th Anniversary Season, a new work written by Maestro Kluge and his wife Kathryn Vassar Kluge entitled *River Poem*.

River Poem is an ode to the City of Alexandria. In the words of Maestro Kluge:

"We took our inspiration from our beloved long walks along Alexandria's magical waterfront. The stories of past and current Alexandrians seemed to come alive – their spirits and voices living and flowing perpetually through the Potomac".

I would like to invite all of you to join us on February 9 and 10 at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Center on Northern Virginia Community College's Alexandria Campus for a celebration of the spirit of Alexandria and the impact that Maestro Kluge has had on the culture of this city over 25 years. In addition, we will be throwing a proper party! And on behalf of the Symphony Orchestra League of Alexandria, I invite you to attend "25 Years of Music and the Maestro", SOLA's 26th annual Ball and Auction, on Saturday, March 2nd at the Westin Hotel. Kindly, the Honorable Mayor will be serving as our Honorary Chair for the event and we look forward to a wonderful evening of celebration. You will be receiving invitations soon and we hope you will join us.

Thank you on behalf of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and the Alexandria Arts Forum for your continued support of this city as an arts destination; it is vital to the growth of Alexandria's arts community.

Respectfully,

Jessica Wisser
Executive Director
Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

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1-12-13

**A statement by Bert Ely to the Alexandria City Council
on Union Street turn restrictions that will be pilot tested**

January 12, 2013

Mr. Mayor and members of Council, I am Bert Ely and I am here to offer some comments on an upcoming test of left-turn restrictions on Union Street. These comments follow up on my statement to Council last month during the public hearing on the Union Street Corridor Study.

Although I am a director of the Old Town Civic Association and a co-chair of Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront and was a member of the City's Waterfront Plan Work Group, I am speaking today only for myself.

City staff has proposed a test of three left-left turn restrictions at King and Union – from northbound Union onto westbound King; from eastbound King onto northbound Union, and from westbound King onto southbound Union. The attached page 14 from a December 15 staff presentation to Council illustrates the turn restrictions to be tested. As I understand it, left-turn restrictions might also be tested at a few other intersections along Union.

These proposed turn restrictions have raised concerns from residents that these restrictions will divert traffic onto parallel north-south streets, notably the especially narrow Lee Street and Fairfax Street. These are very legitimate concerns based on the well-known traffic diversion effects of turn restrictions of any type.

While the citizens I have spoken with are not opposed to a pilot test of the proposed left-turn restrictions, they do believe it is important to measure the restrictions' impact on nearby streets. That can be accomplished by collecting baseline traffic data on Lee and Fairfax and perhaps a few east-west streets, before posting the left-turn restriction signs, so that the impact of the pilot test on Lee, Fairfax, and other streets can be measured after the turn-restriction signs have been in place for a few months.

As the attached Figure 2 from last year's traffic study of the Union Street corridor shows, traffic counts were done only on Union and Royal but not on the intervening Lee and Fairfax Streets. That gap in traffic data needs to be filled before the left-turn restriction signs are installed.

On a related point, several residents living nearing Union Street have expressed concern about the proposed 24-hour applicability of the turn restrictions. The effect of those all-the-time restrictions will be to force these residents to travel further to reach their destinations at times when traffic is light on Union and King. That would hardly be eco-friendly.

Is it really necessary to ban a left turn from northbound Union onto westbound King at 11:00 p.m. on a Wednesday evening or at 7:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning? I doubt it. Consideration needs to be given to limiting the hours of these turn restrictions, especially if turn restrictions also are tested elsewhere along Union Street.

Thank you for your time this morning. I welcome your questions.

King & Union Street: Short-term

PILOT LEFT-TURN
RESTRICTIONS





Union Street Corridor Study
 City of Alexandria
 Alexandria, VA

Figure B: Observations and Data Collection Location Map
 DRAFT

Statement to the Alexandria City Council by Gary Carr January 12, 2013

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1-12-13

An Epiphany by Serendipity.

Mr. and Members of Council, my name is Gary Carr. I rise as an advocate of running and running tracks to combat childhood obesity and the general malaise of sedentary ways. I have spoken about this issue for many years and recent progress has made with the dedication of the new running track and field at Francis Hammond Middle School. They went from having one of the worst playing fields in the area, to what is one of the best. While this upgrade is commendable, it has created a dilemma for you- a wide disparity between the two middle school campuses. The George Washington Middle School running track is uneven, unmarked and unacceptable. It is a situation you are obligated to address. The running track at Hammond is so good, and the one at GW so poor, that it has created an physical education situation of separate and unequal, and all the important implications that implies. It has also caused an epiphany of serendipity.

By advocating for what seemed obvious for a decade, I have had a running revelation. Children run freely in elementary school, they are basically told to walk in middle school, so that by high school children have lost the innate human desire to run. The solution, construct running tracks at our middle schools. Then, not only will impressionable children engage in rigorous cardio-vascular exercise, it becomes part of their lifestyle, and the entire community has a important recreational resource. An epiphany by serendipity.

Every middle school child in Alexandria has access to a quality running track (public and private) except one. This is a situation you must address. But there is no plan. There is not even a plan to have a plan. So equal opportunity in facilities is not present at our middle schools, and correcting this should be your priority. This has the support of the physical education instructors, it has the support of the community (see attached survey), it is cost effective, low maintenance, and is suitable for the site with very little preparation because it was the site of a track for over fifty year. George Washington Middle School is the site of one of the finest track an field of its time.

It is time for one to be there again. An epiphany of serendipity- if you build it they will run.

The Alexandria City Public School Track & Field Meet Initiative

by Gary J. Carr

Goals of the Track & Field Meet Initiative

To foster a friendly and healthful running competition between the city's five middle schools, and among all of the elementary schools. Additionally, it will encourage physical fitness at the high school and to all members of the community with a concurrent bi-annual citywide track meet and Mini-Marathon Run/Walk between the schools.

Essential Concepts

A Spring Track Meet at G.W. Middle School Track

A Fall Track Meet at Hammond Middle School Track

Concurrent Biennial Community-Wide Mini-Marathon Run/Walk

Specifics

Track meet open to all students of the city, public and private.

An opportunity for interaction between not only the city's two middle schools, but also between the students attending the public and private school's on every grade level within the city (who currently rarely interact).

Highly desirable prizes to encourage participation, (potentially including college scholarships).

Multiple races with modifications to assure a equitable competition (i.e. staggered starts), and races for the mentally or physically challenged.

Encourage development of school based intermural teams of all age and skill levels to compete against each other in various events.

Encourage winners to participate in the National Track & Field Competitions like The Hershey Invitational Track and Field Program.

Novelty Races to enhance fun and camaraderie (Parent -Child Races, Faculty Races, Male-Female Team Races, Age related Races)

The Alexandria City Schools Mini-Marathon Run/Walk from Hammond Middle School traversing T.C. Williams High School to G.W. Middle School. (Seminary Road to North Howard to Braddock Road to Mount Vernon Avenue- [4 miles / 5000 meters])

Bus transportation between the two school so that spectators can be at the start and finish.

Possibly held at end of normal school hours to assure maximum student participation and spectators, and a liberal policy to encourage all city employees to participate or attend.

The 'Mayor's Cup' for the "City's Fastest Person" as measured by the 100 meter dash, and the "Fastest Miler" measured at 1 mile.

The "Alexandria Trophy" to reside at the school with the best total score.

A photograph of a track and field facility at Francis Hammond Middle School. The track is dark grey with white lane markings. A grassy field is visible in the foreground. In the background, there is a chain-link fence, trees, and residential buildings under an overcast sky.

Francis Hammond Middle School

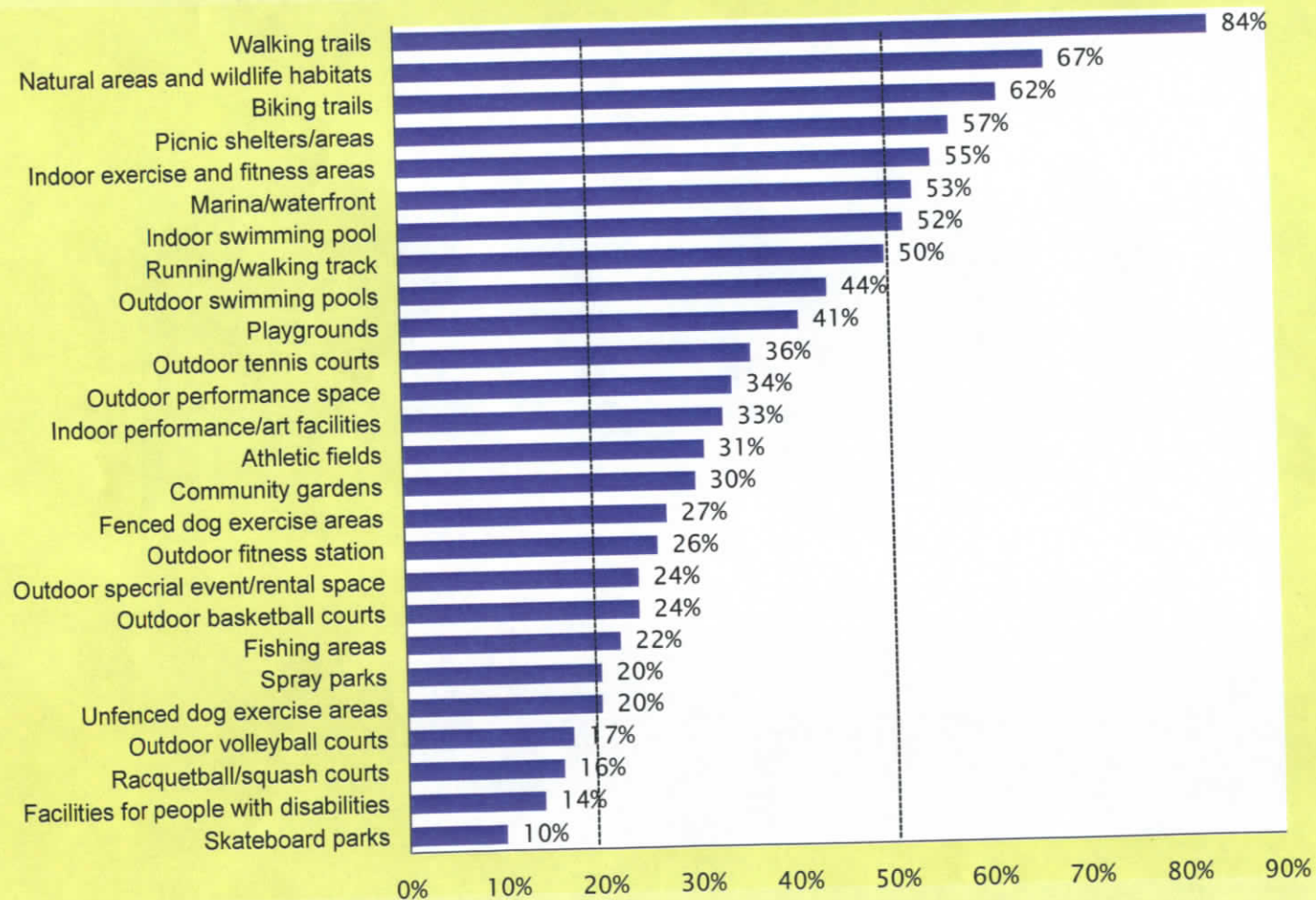
Citizens Community Vision for the Future

- ▶ Significant needs exist for parks, recreation, and cultural facilities and programs
- ▶ Walking trails and biking trails most important parks, recreation and cultural amenities
- ▶ Farmers Market and cultural special events most important programs
- ▶ Programs should be paid through combination of fees and taxes
- ▶ Improving existing trails and passive use of neighborhood parks, acquiring open space, and developing trails most important actions to support with tax dollars



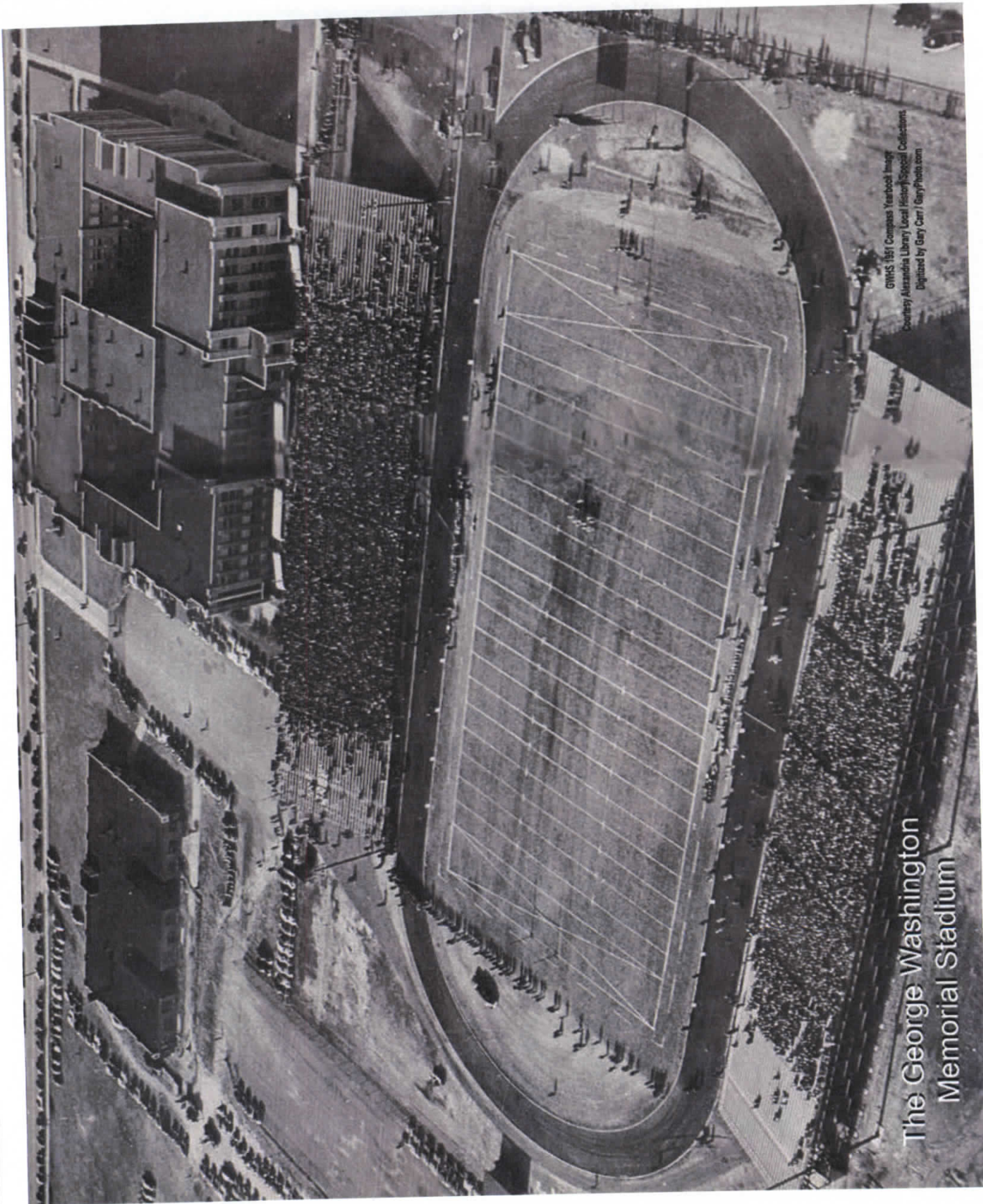
Q6. Parks, Recreation, or Cultural Amenities That Households Have a Need For

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



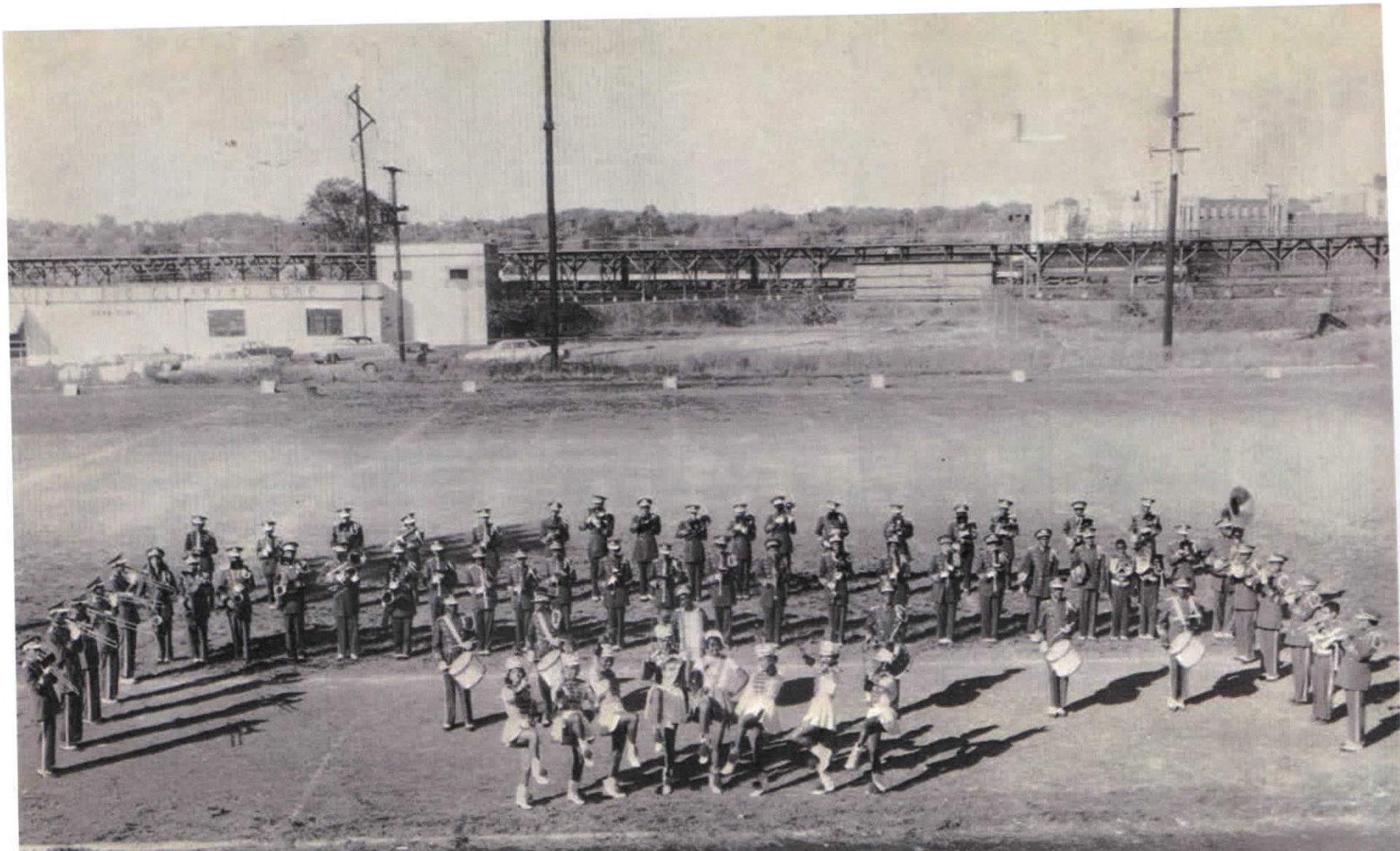
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July 2011)





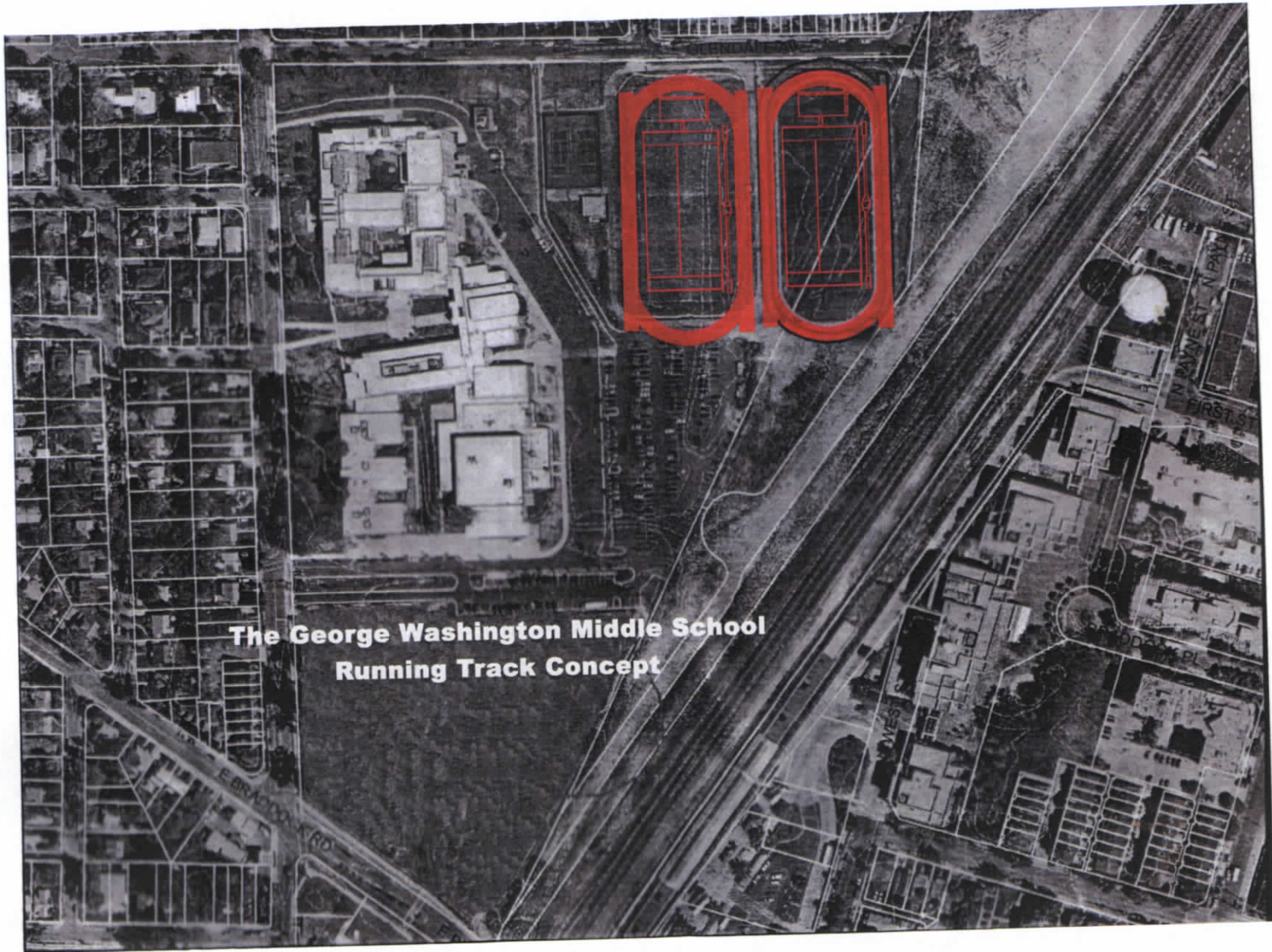
GWHS 1957 Compass Yearbook Image
Courtesy Alexandria Library Local History Special Collections
Digitized by Gary Carr / GaryPhoto.com

The George Washington
Memorial Stadium

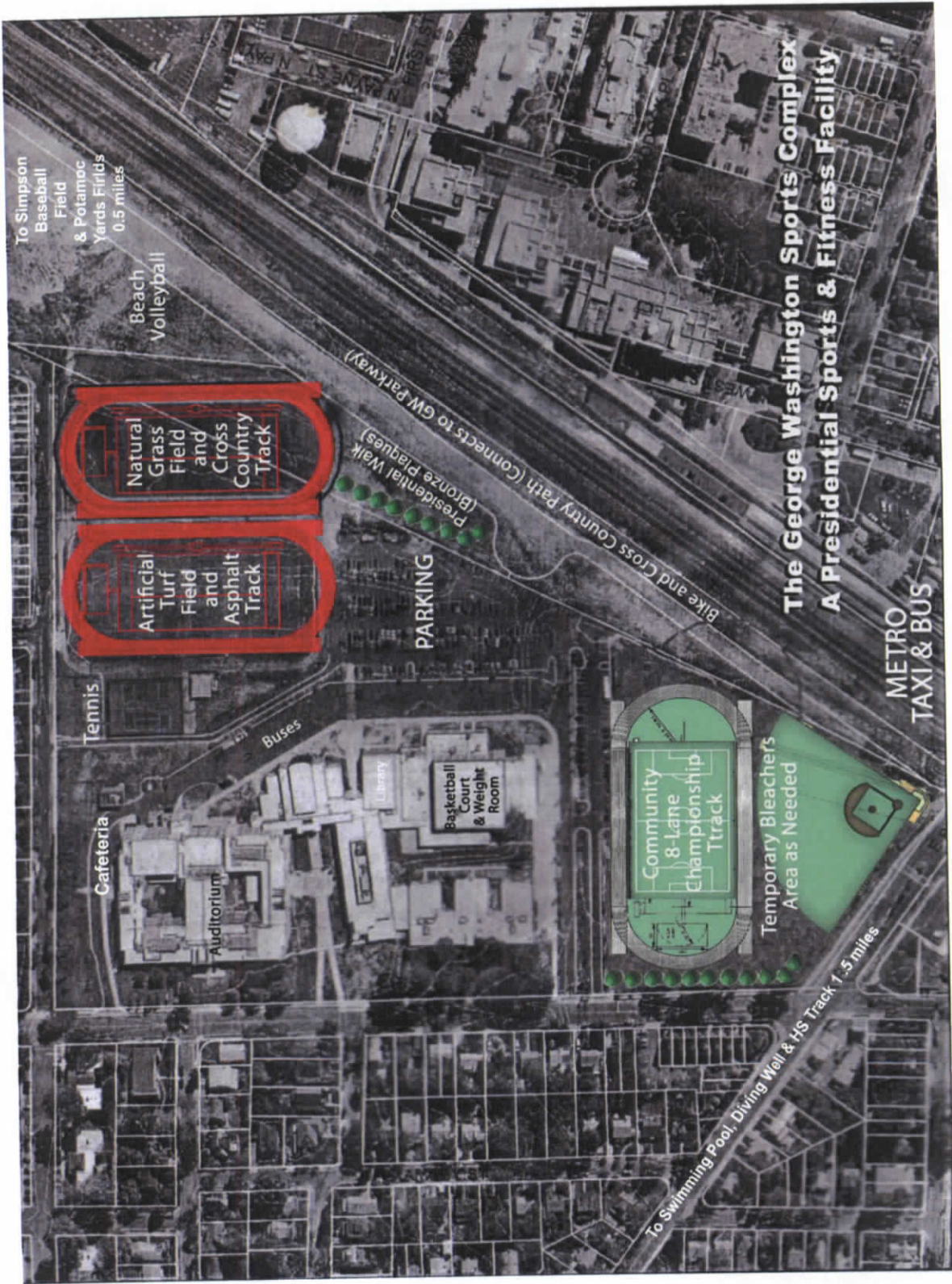


Parker-Gray High School Alexandria, Virginia

Park-Gray HS 1960 Yearbook Image
Cortesy Alexandria Library Local History/Special Collection
Digitized by Gary Garri/GaryPhoto.com
(George Washington High School can be seen in the background)



**The George Washington Middle School
Running Track Concept**



To Simpson
Baseball
Field
& Potomac
Yards Fields
0.5 miles

Beach
Volleyball

Natural
Grass
Field
and
Cross
Country
Track

Artificial
Turf
Field
and
Asphalt
Track

PARKING

Presidential Walk
(Bronze Plaques)

Community
8-Lane
Championship
Track

Temporary Bleachers
Area as Needed

To Swimming Pool, Diving Well & HS Track 1.5 miles

The George Washington Sports Complex
A Presidential Sports & Fitness Facility

METRO
TAXI & BUS

Tennis

Cafeteria

Auditorium

Buses

Library

Basketball
Court
& Weight
Room

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1-12-13

Jan 7, 2012

To: Mayor, Vice Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Boyd Walker, Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance

Re: American Legion Building/William Thomas Post/Carver Nursery School

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Members of City Council,

Congratulations on your victories and welcome to a new year. The Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance (GAPA) would like to work with this new City Council, with both its two new, and returning members, in the coming year to help tackle some of the challenges that we as a community will face. GAPA will continue to be focused on the Waterfront, issues of redevelopment on the West End, implementation of management at Ft. Ward, and most immediately the American Legion Building at 224 N. Fayette St. The last item is of the most immediate concern because time is running out, and as the legal agreement with the owner, William Cromley will expire on Feb. 1st, whereas he can demolish this building outright, and begin to replace it with the condominium project he has envisioned for the site. Therefore the building, without the City's intervention, could be torn down during February, Black History Month. That would be a tragedy for the city.

A process was set up to find a private buyer for the property, but no private buyer has come forward with the ability to buy the building. This is not likely to happen in the time we have left, either. There were certainly some roadblocks along the way. The price of \$675,000 agreed to by the owner (175,000 more than his purchase price) was probably too steep, especially since it is difficult to gauge how much the renovation of the building would take, and that would depend highly on what purpose it would be put to. The city has already invested considerably in the property, by buying a \$25,000 dollar option to sell the building, and allowing the property owner to not have to pay property tax for the last two years. It would be a shame to lose the investment the city has already made in the property. I would also like to thank the Mayor for supporting the appeal from the Board of Architectural Review for the Parker Gray District to the City Council, even though he voted to support the demolition of the building. Ultimately, with the pro-bono assistance of Williams and Connolly, a DC Law Firm, the case was heard in Circuit Court and a settlement Agreement was reached.

When the issue of Demolition did come to City Council, over two years ago, I was asked why more people, especially African American community members did not come to the City Council meeting to protest the Demolition. As you will soon realize, or already know, when an issue is heard it is up to the Mayor and members of council when issues are heard and this issue was not heard till late on a Saturday afternoon, and some of the supporters were not able to stay all day. One who did, Carlton Funn, whom all of you I am sure know, passed away last fall. Two of the signers of the petition to appeal the demolition, Mabel Burts, and her daughter, Vera Henderson, both passed away before the issue even reached the court. Two people who gave affidavits in the court case, Lilliea Finklea, and Ferdinand Day, are not always able to come down to city hall. The court case, Chisley vs. the City of Alexandria, is named after Margaret Chisley, who is 101 years old. I am sure the Mayor will remember giving here a proclamation that she proudly displays in her front parlor. It is for these people and countless others who have passed on, moved on, or who don't know there is still a possibility to save this building that the effort continues.

But I have to say, that I think the question, and the relevance today, if you wonder why there is not a crowd standing up for this building, is that it is for the African Americans who experienced segregation, discrimination, and marched on City Hall, like Dorothy Turner, whose brother participated in the 1939 Sit-in, or Lilliea Finklea, who fought and left us the legacy of the Freedman's Cemetery, or Ferdinand Day, the first African American School Board member in Alexandria and the State of Virginia that we need to save this building, a testament to the journey that African Americans in Alexandria had to go through to get to where we are today. It is because they cannot always be there, and will not always be there that a building like the Carver Nursery School should be saved and preserved for future generations. No one

fighting to save a colonial, or even a civil war history building would be asked why George Washington and Robert E. Lee were not present to preserve the properties they are associated with. In preservation, we always have to carry on for those in the past to preserve their memories for future generations.

The Parker Gray Neighborhood, or as it was also known as the 16th Census Tract, was shown in the 2010 Census to have a vastly decreasing African American population. With the redevelopment of Bland, and with the fixing up and improving of many houses in the neighborhood, and new condominiums coming on line, African Americans are no longer the majority of the neighborhood. The Parker Gray Historic District was created in 1984 with a review board partly because there would be the pressure of development, and the City Council at the time recognized that like Old Town, Parker Gray was a unique and distinct neighborhood that needed to be preserved. In 2004, \$100,000 dollars was allocated by City Council to survey the district and nominate it for the National Register of Historic Places. Now called the Uptown/Parker Gray Historic District, it actually encompasses a slightly larger area than the local review district. The Carver Nursery School is a contributing structure in that district and its loss would be significant to the district. It was put on the list of Preservation Virginias most endangered sites in 2010: (http://preservationvirginia.org/docs/endangered_sites_2010.pdf). The nomination was supported by several preservation groups, including the Historic Alexandria Foundation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 2011 GAPA was given a grant by the Historic Alexandria Foundation to do a Historic Structures report, which I am giving you each a copy of tonight.

The Historic Structures Report (HSR) shows distinctly that the building is of historic significance. It was built as a nursery school in 1944 during WWII for African American Children, and named after George Washington Carver, which became the name for the whole corner, and the movie theater built in 1948 across the street. Gwendolyn Day Fuller, and other children in the neighborhood went to the school so that their parents could help in the war effort. Miriam Bracey, later owner of Bracey's Flower Shop (now, Peoples Flower Shop), was one of the teachers at the school. The property once extended to the corner and the playground (now Hunter-Miller Park) was built as part of the Nursery School. The building was funded through an act of Congress, and even though there were six schools opened in Alexandria, the report shows that this is the only existing building built for African American Children. As such, it is the last remaining school built for African Americans from the era of segregation in Alexandria.

It also served as a social hub, and one of the centers of the African American Community (which did not have a lot of choices where to go) when it became the William Thomas Post 129 of the American Legion in 1950. The post is still in existence and was in the building until the Legion was forced to sell in 2007. A lot of opposition to saving the building stems from the last years as an active building, when the legion rented the building in order to make enough money to pay back money it had borrowed on the property. In the end it, with dwindling membership, it did not have enough money to either repay its debt or to keep the building in good shape, which left some neighbors a more negative impression. But it did serve proudly as a legion hall, as many of the photographs left to us by the William Thomas Post attest to, with many elegant parties, award ceremonies, a beauty contest, and cooperation with the American Legion Post on Cameron St. The history of a separate American Legion Post for African Americans is certainly another important story this building has to tell.

The HSR also shows that the features of the building are still in tact and that the building can be restored, renovated or adaptively reused. There is nothing that cannot be replicated, reproduced. It was built using simple materials, relatively simple construction, and in fact, volunteers could easily do much of the rehabilitation work. The question was also brought up of why we should preserve a building of such simple construction when we have buildings associated with George Washington, and Robert E. Lee, or designed by Benjamin Latrobe. I think someone with an understanding of history would realize that because African Americans were discriminated against for more than half the 20th Century, and had to live lives that were separate and not equal, that to expect a building representing African American History in the middle of the 20th Century to meet the same architectural standards of a monument to say, Colonial history is absurd. In fact, it is the simplicity of the building that tells a visitor immediately that something was not right at the time. It is a frame building with only two classrooms, made out of wood, no brick, with the most inexpensive new materials available, like gypsum board, asphalt shingles and asbestos siding. It was an experiment in early childhood education, behavior modification as well as building materials.

And the fact that the building could only be built through a Federal grant, assisted by the state board of education, and built by a builder from Richmond also shows what it took to build such a school in 1944.

Another question I have often been asked is if the building is saved, what should be done with it? The primary purpose of my efforts has been to save the building so that we can maintain its legacy, protect the integrity of the Parker Gray neighborhood, and pass on a building with an important story to tell to future generations. It certainly meets many of the criteria against demolition of a building in an historic district, in that it is associated with a person of historic significance, GW Carver, Ferdinand Day, William Thomas, (the first African American to die in WWI) and others. As the HSR shows, it has social significance that contributes to the district, and it would be a place that scholars or historians would surely like to visit. It is the only known building of its type. Its building type and history are also part of the history of schools built for African Americans. I saw an early example from the 1800's in Waterford VA, and a later example from the early 20th Century in Leesburg. Then there is also the Rosenwald schools, 5000 of which were built across the south, partially funded by the president of Sears and Roebuck, Julius Rosenwald. There was a Rosenwald School on the grounds of the present day TC Williams which was dedicated in 1927, when the area was still part of Fairfax county. Called the Seminary School for its proximity to the Episcopal Seminary, it was closed in 1950 and torn down to make for the new TC Williams High School.

Even though my first goal is to save the building, I feel like I must try to address this question. Because I see the school as a teaching tool and a resource to the local community and visitors interested in history to Alexandria, I see the best and highest use of the school as a part of the Black History Museum. The Black History Museum could manage it, use it as additional assembly and display space, and help it house some of its extensive archives, which it does not have room for at the Wythe St. location. This would include a model of the building that was recently on display at their dollhouse exhibit. It also might include the extensive collection of the before mentioned Carlton Funn, which he has donated to the museum. It would put a branch of the museum much closer to King St. and some of the other tourist attractions, and it would be right on the trail of African American History that will lead from the museum to the Freedman's Cemetery when it is complete. It could also then be used for neighborhood meetings, perhaps tutoring or other non-profit groups, etc. It would definitely be up to the community to decide how the building should be rehabilitated and used.

There are many uses, under zoning, that it could be used for if it was in private ownership. It could be a restaurant, an architects office, or a private residence. If the city would still like to pursue finding a private buyer for the property perhaps it could negotiate to extend the current agreement for another year. I would work vigorously to help find a buyer, especially if it was a slightly amended process that allowed greater access to the building, and a non-profit group to spearhead the sale, as opposed to the limited efforts of the city to sell the building, or to help meetings of the steering committee. I would be happy if a private use was found for the building, but I think the best result would be a public use that would help the building see its full potential realized. It could be a catalyst for economic development in the neighborhood, and could help draw heritage tourists to Alexandria. It would certainly be a positive public relations story for the city to step in.

The city is probably the last resort to save this important building. Without the cooperation or intervention of the city, the building will soon be lost, and no more will be learned from it, and visitors will not be able to see it or understand the complete context of the Parker Gray Neighborhood. I urge you each to do all you can and consider this first great challenge of your term on council, and work to find a positive outcome and solution, as I hope you will do in all matters, especially when it comes to preserving this great city we live in.

Boyd Walker
Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance
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