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1-24-09

**Statement to the Alexandria City Council- January 24, 2008
by Gary J. Carr**

**“Some see things as they are, and say why?,
Some see things that never were, and say why not?”**
Paraphrasing Ted Kennedy, “The Lion of the Senate”

Mr. Mayor, Mr. Manager, Members of Council, Fellow Citizens my name is Gary Carr and I rise once again asking you to *pay it forward* and restore the running tracks to Francis Hammond and George Washington Middle Schools.

If I live a hundred years, I never expected to see in my lifetime what me and more than a million other citizens stood in the cold to see. We hired a new president. I recalled the day before, we honored a man who played no small part in making it all possible. An in the spirit of both men, I recommitted myself to this lonely crusade of getting this community to do the right thing, and fix what is demonstrably and obviously in need of repair- the running tracks at our middle schools. This is especially true at Hammond, where any measurable rain renders the track flooded and the field unusable for days.

If I believed that the condition of these facilities was having a deleterious effect on our children and didn't speak out, it would be my shame. And if, after you become keenly aware of the situation and did not act, it becomes your shame, and the shame of the village that it takes to raise a child.

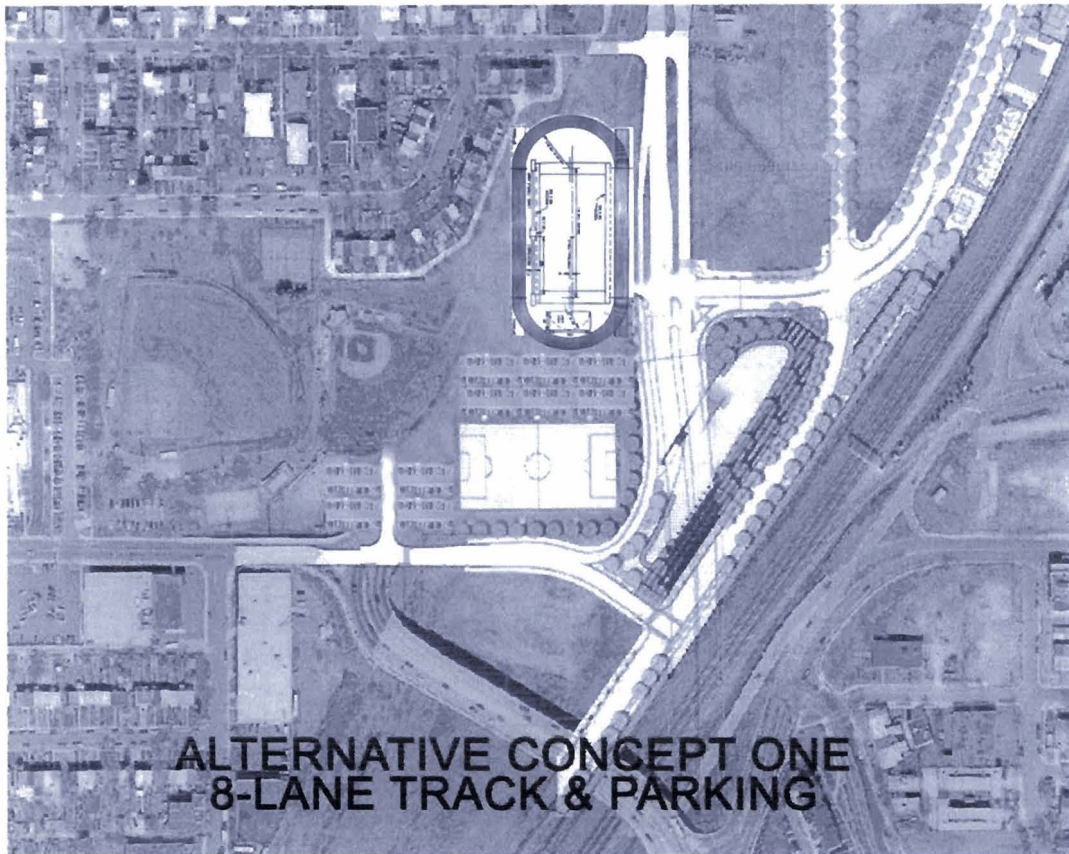
What do we do now? This is my plan-

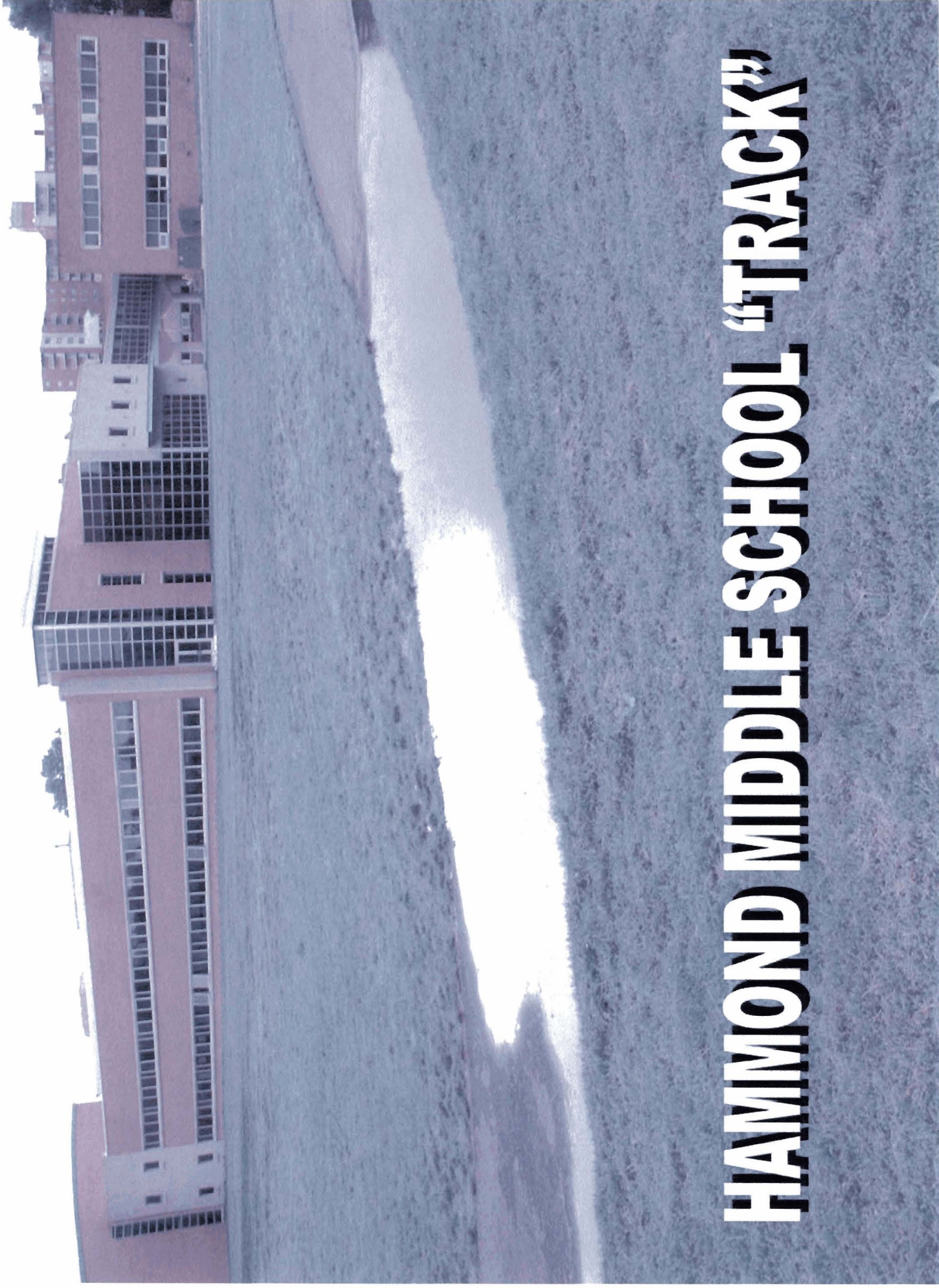
1. Hammond should be restored this year, we a talking about a quarter mile of asphalt. It is inexcusable to allow this situation to persist. Even if it is without the artificial field or fancy rubberized surface, and asphalt track, with a leveling and reseeding the field adequately addresses this deplorable situation.
2. Master Plan the George Washington/Braddock Field Site. I design competition may be a good idea, the point is to make this site “shovel ready.” This site's potential is tremendous, and it is time to start.
3. Call for a meeting of any and all groups that have a interest in running, a track, and using running to promote healthy behaviors. The Running in Alexandria Coalition (TRAC) could include High School Track Team, Turkey Trot, Alexandria Marathon, Alexandria Mile, local running groups and others such as the convention and visitor organizations with ideas on how to leverage the track for social and economic benefits.

Don't allow the nay sayers to say why, dream the possibilities of why not.

The time for this project has come, for if you build it, they will run!

AN ALTERNATIVE AT POTOMAC YARD FIELDS BY GARY CARR





HAMMOND MIDDLE SCHOOL "TRACK"

THE CASE FOR RESTORING THE RUNNING TRACKS AT FRANCIS HAMMOND AND GEORGE WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

The running tracks at Alexandria, Virginia former high schools were eliminated when the facilities were renovated after being converted into middle schools. The basis for case for the restoration of running tracks at Francis Hammond and George Washington Middle Schools is the following:

Community Need- The simple fact is that for a community of better than 150,000 a single track is insufficient to meet the need. Tracks are focused on the schools, but used by all.

Childhood Obesity- Overweight children represent a significant and growing number of child who through overeating and lack of exercise put their long term health at risk. Overweight or obese children and adults could comprise a majority of population

Type II Diabetes- This largely preventable malady is the scourge of the 21st Century primarily a result of sedentary lifestyles and poor dietary choices. Incidence of other metabolic related disease are also increased.

Cardio-vascular Disease- Experts also warn that if left unchecked, childhood obesity and a sedentary lifestyle may undo advancements that have been made in heart disease prevention and survival. It is the leading cause of death in the United States.

Standards of Learning- Numerous SOL items could be addressed in a practical manner. Time, distance, speed, velocity, decimals, fraction, ratios to mention just a few.

College Scholarships- nearly 15,000 scholarship are offered and track and field annually.

Universal Usage- All segments of the community from the very young to the very old will be patron of the tracks. It will be used males and female equally. In shape or out of shape, come one come all.

High School Track Unavailable to Community- Single track at High School not available during school hours, many times after-school due to practices or games, and never at night due to no lighting apparatus.

Track Surfaces- Specialized track surfaces are much healthier for the feet, knees and legs of runners.

Enhances Limited Field Inventory- Addition of a track whenever possible dramatically increases the usage of a finite resource without diminishing field inventory. Running can occur simultaneously in most case with field usage.

Use By All Athletes- Athletes in every sport, from swimming to golf, will benefit from usage of the running tracks. Cardio-vascular fitness is a requisite for success.

Loss of Physical Activity During School Day- As Academics take priority there are fewer opportunities to engage in exercise during school

Economic Benefits- Running tracks draw runners to the area both locally and nationally,

would purchase everything from water to hotel rooms and everything in between.

Better Dietary Choices- Individual who run make better dietary choices

Disproportionately Affects Minorities- African Americans and Hispanics are more like to bear the negative impact of sedentary lifestyles. They are also growing faster than the general population.

Reduces Smoking and Drug use- Studies clearly show that runner statistically smoke tobacco products and illegal substance at a much lower rate

Cost- Obesity and cardio-vascular related diseases represent billions of dollar in health related cost, loss of productivity. One and every six health care dollars are spent on obesity related illnesses.

Prestige- The positive notability that would be brought to the city from hosting a regional track event. Alexandria would receive incalculable free advertisement.

Piggyback Promotions- Track related events that corresponds to The Marine Corps Marathon and Army Ten-Miler and others would bring thousands of visitors to the city.

Character- Running builds and reinforces positive character attributes. (i.e. work ethic, judgment, commitment, focus, resolve, and determination)

Self Esteem- Studies have shown that physically active children, especially adolescent girls, have a markedly improved self confidence, resulting in better overall performance gains.

Reduces Inhibitions- The group mentality encourages the hesitant to engage in physical activity.

Safety- Running tracks provide a safe environment for exercise for children and women. Running or jogging on the city streets or in isolation have inherent dangers

Self Esteem- Weight loss and physical fitness have been proven to improve self images and positive outlook.

Inangible Benefits- Things that have not been mention here. Like Walking. Or the Olympics.

School Cafeteria list caloric value of meals

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

Presidential Walk
(Bronze Plaques)

Bike and Cross Country Path (Connects to GW Parkway)

PARKING

Tennis

Buses

Cafeteria

Auditorium

Library

Basketball
Court
& Weight
Room

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