

# Glencarlyn Citizens' Association

5901 2nd St S.  
Arlington, VA 22204  
April 9, 2012

Arlington County School Board  
Arlington Education Center  
1426 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22207

## Members of the Board:

The members of the Glencarlyn Citizens' Association support addressing the capacity needs of the school system. We wish to express, however, our strong concerns about the process and potential adverse consequences of the Arlington Public School's (APS) Capacity Planning Process. The process appears to be driven by the APS's desire to identify specific construction projects prior to placing a bond referendum before the public in November 2012.

With regard to process, we believe this accelerated schedule to identify specific projects will preclude careful consideration of all viable options to address projected future capacity needs and abbreviate what should be a more thorough consideration of the impacts and the development of mitigation measures for whatever option is ultimately selected. At the beginning of the capacity planning process, the School Board committed to including the effect on Neighborhood Resources as a criteria for site selection. To date, the process has effectively excluded the affected neighborhoods from participation. The result is that APS has failed to incorporate the impact on neighborhoods in any meaningful way.

The School Board needs to recognize that the construction of new schools will have a significantly larger community impact than the replacement or expansion of an existing building. We believe that other neighborhoods being affected by these construction plans share this view, and we plan on meeting with them. Given APS's experience with late and costly modifications to approved capital improvement plans and past criticism of its ability to address legitimate concerns raised by affected communities, we believe the current schedule will undermine public support and confidence in APS's ability to address future capacity needs.

We, therefore, urge the School Board to refrain from selecting new school sites until additional alternatives have been considered and outreach efforts with the affected communities have resulted in plans to mitigate major concerns. We believe there is adequate precedent for the Board to proceed with a bond referendum without tying it to site specific capital improvements. Adoption of the enclosed resolution adopted at our April 2, 2012 Glencarlyn Citizens' Association (GCA) meeting reflects these sentiments.

Should the board proceed with approval of Option Set D that includes the construction of a new elementary school at the Carlin Springs/Kenmore site, we believe there are a number of traffic, safety and recreational impacts that will affect school operations and afterschool public amenities.

We believe these adverse impacts need to be properly identified, fully mitigated and the costs fully accounted for in the November bond proposal.

As you are aware, the Glencarlyn community is already the site of three of Arlington's schools, Kenmore Middle School and Carlin Springs and Campbell Elementary schools. The first two schools share a single site. All three schools are within one third mile of each other and are all primarily served by just one road, Carlin Springs, which currently operates at over capacity. In fact, traffic conditions are already so bad as to occasionally disrupt morning programs at the schools with late arrivals. Operating a fourth school in that same small area is certain to compound existing traffic conditions and raise new safety concerns given the number of students who walk to school along a busy road on narrow sidewalks next to the roadway.

Parking will be an immense challenge both during and after the schools' regular operating hours. Demand for parking spaces for recreational use of the athletic fields and afterschool programs, including the Kenmore theaters, often results in use of adjacent residential streets. With the loss of overflow parking on the Kenmore site and more afterschool events to accommodate, there may be a doubling of the demand for parking on neighborhood streets. As one of the oldest communities in Arlington, many of the Glencarlyn streets are very narrow and don't have sidewalks, since they predate county ordinances governing street width and emergency vehicle access. Imposing additional parking demands on neighborhood streets creates new safety concerns and degrades quality of life for local residents.

Finally, the county and residents place a high premium on open space and recreation. Construction of a new school on the Carlin Springs/Kenmore site necessitates the loss of both.

In addition to the April 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution, we have attached a listing of a number of key concerns and comments which we have identified so far and would expect to be resolved prior to a decision to identify Kenmore/Carlin Springs site as a location. We are available to work with the School Board or the staff in any way. You can contact us at [gca\\_exec@glencarlyn.org](mailto:gca_exec@glencarlyn.org).

Sincerely



Peter Olivere  
President  
Glencarlyn Citizens' Association

cc: Arlington County Board  
Williamsburg Civic Association  
Rock Spring Civic Association

**The Glencarlyn Citizens' Association**  
**Resolution Adopted Unanimously, April 2, 2012**

*The Glencarlyn Citizens' Association requests the Arlington School Board to remove the Kenmore / Carlin Springs location as a possible site for construction of a new school. We request that as an alternative, the School Board strongly pursue alternate locations for new construction, possibly using other properties from the County. The addition of a fourth school, particularly a choice school, will substantially increase the current serious traffic congestion in the neighborhood with one-third more bus and automobile trips to the schools, will result in a substantial loss of green space and will create other negative impacts.*

*The Glencarlyn Citizens' Association further requests that if it is determined that no alternate locations are available, the Arlington School Board agrees to have staff work with the community to determine that satisfactory solutions do exist to mitigate the key concerns of the community and that the School Board agrees to implement those solutions as part of the plan. Specifically, traffic safety, adequate traffic entrance and egress and adequate parking for all anticipated uses of the facility must be addressed before the School Board identifies the Kenmore / Carlin Springs sites as anything more than one possible future project. If satisfactory solutions are not able to be reached, the construction of a new school at Kenmore / Carlin Spring will be removed from the list of possible locations.*

# Glencarlyn Citizens' Association

## Key Concerns and Comments

April 9 2012

Glencarlyn would like to have:

- School staff work with the community to determine that one or more satisfactory solutions exist to mitigate the issues identified, and
- the School Board agree to implement those solutions as part of any plan before the Kenmore/ Carlin Springs sites is identified as anything more than one possible future project.

If satisfactory solutions are not able to be reached, the construction of a new school at Kenmore/ Carlin Spring will be removed from the list.

### Process

We believe that the affected neighborhoods need to have the opportunity to provide meaningful input into the decision on the location of a new school. The process used by APS to date has focused almost exclusively on addressing the needs of the schools. Although the capacity planning process included "Neighborhood Resources" as a site evaluation criteria, it was only weighted 11%. This criteria lists the impact on playgrounds, playfields, parking, green space and a generic category called neighborhood impact. Traffic, a major concern in many areas of the county, is not separately mentioned. Since neighborhoods have been effectively excluded from participation, APS has failed to incorporate the impact on neighborhoods in any meaningful way. It is critical for this to be remedied before decisions on specific sites are made.

### Traffic

This is a huge concern in Glencarlyn. This issue consists of two components.

The first part is overall congestion; Carlin Springs Road backs up in the morning on a regular basis at each of the entrances to the three existing schools. Northbound Manchester Street, south of Arlington Boulevard backs up past the County line, which delays busses on route to Kenmore via the Arlington Boulevard service road. Parents dropping off students at Kenmore tie up traffic at Carlin Spring Road and 3rd Street delaying busses going to Carlin Springs Elementary. With the addition of a choice school, there will be an increase of one-third or more bus and automobile trips to the schools. The additional congestion will affect the transportation to the three existing schools.

The second part would be how buses and vehicles will have access the new building. Feeding from Carlin Springs Road without substantial road modification to manage the additional traffic will create problems. Access through the currently closed off 2nd Street South is unacceptable because it would create a major cut-through for Fairfax residents.

While traffic management not on school property is beyond the purview of the School Board, we expect APS and County to work together to assess the scope of the problem and define a solution, to what could be a major traffic issue, prior to selection of the site.

**Green space** - Prior to the construction of Carlin Springs Elementary School in 2001, there was a single school building, the old Kenmore on a parcel of 32.2 acres. A substantial fraction of this parcel was used for playing fields and the rest was green space used for less structured recreational activities. The construction of the Carlin Spring with its extensive parking and the new Kenmore building with additional parking substantially reduced the area for playing fields and open space. It did not diminish the demand on use of the remaining fields which are now in use into the late evening. Construction of a third school on this site, with all of the parking which will be needed, will reduce the green space to a small fraction of what existed just over a decade ago. From a County wide perspective, substantial reduction to a major recreational area is very undesirable.

Although construction of a multi-level building reduces the footprint, the APS, possibly in conjunction with the county, needs to consider additional measures, such as non-surface parking, as a way to preserve what remains as open space.

### **Parking**

Parking available on the site today is insufficient for peak usage. When Kenmore was expanded, with two theaters for intended for community use, Glencarlyn insisted that additional permeable overflow parking be provided on the south side of the field. Even with that, some events are large enough to cause parking to fill all of the existing and overflow lots and spill onto neighborhood streets. We also regularly have problems just from heavy use of the fields. The schools will need to enforce restrictions on use of space across all three buildings and fields to ensure they do not exceed a maximum attendance/parking number.

Glencarlyn will probably strongly recommend the use of non-surface parking to decrease the loss of green space. Some of this could be partially sunken structure open on the sides with fields on the roof.

### **Lighting on the Fields**

When the Kenmore field lights were installed over a decade ago, they were very poorly designed. The light spillage into the neighborhood homes is appalling. If the construction results in relocations of fields the current lighting situation needs to be corrected.

### **Adjacency to Residences**

The location of building equipment, bus loops and other causes of noise and their relationship to existing residences needs to be considered. After Kenmore was constructed, the decision to have buses pickup by the cafeteria resulted in buses idling for extended periods just outside an elderly resident's bedroom.