

THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT JANUARY 25, 2021 OPEN HOUSE COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Online Comment Form – Community Comments

Do you have any comments for the School Board to consider prior to making a decision on whether or not affordable housing will be colocated at the Minnie Howard Campus?

The schools need to focus on OUR KIDS and getting them the space and education, they deserve. We do NOT need to get bogged down with housing and the unique challenges that come residences vs. schooling.

I am NOT in favor of placing any housing on school property. ACPS needs to keep & protect land space for the purpose of education (and future expansion of education). I feel even if the intent is to house teachers / city employees / students it is not possible to control this. I haven't found / heard compelling reasons to add massing for housing on school property. I appreciate the presentation on the "test fits" for the Minnie Howard space. As a community member whose community abuts the Minnie Howard campus, I think that the test fits that keep all the buildings in a concentrated space and the fields in another make the most sense from a space, traffic flow, and use perspective. I look forward to seeing how this project develops and hope that community input is taken into serious consideration.

Why does affordable housing have to be a part of the architectural plan/design of the need of more space for a single high school in an already over-populated school district? Is this a requirement from the City of Alexandria? If is not a requirement of the city of Alexandria, then ACPS must be a separate entity without the inclusion of affordable housing OR any housing co-located on school grounds.

I have not heard any reason why this is being considered and cannot think of any reason why it should be. ACPS already has a shortage of schools and many existing schools are overcrowded. It makes no sense to put anything on the Minnie Howard site that either isn't directly related to the school and/or its students or easily convertible to space for the school. Admin buildings would be fine because they could be converted. Affordable housing -- or any housing -- would not, because that would use space that could not later be converted to school use if needed. In addition, creating additional housing anywhere in Alexandria, without also creating additional schools, is short-sighted. The city needs to be careful to create infrastructure (e.g., schools, roads, parking, etc.) in tandem with any increase in housing.

I have several concerns about colocating affordable housing on the Minnie Howard campus. First, I am concerned that the housing will limit the ability of the school to expand in the future as enrollment increases. Second, the immediate neighborhood is already gaining a very large affordable housing unit, the Waypoint. Having two affordable housing units so close together seems unnecessary and will alter housing values of the neighborhood. Third, I have safety and aesthetic concerns. Many of the ARHA run housing complexes in the city are unsafe, have high crime (for example the multiple shootings), and are not well maintained

(ripped screens, rusty AC units, doors hanging off the hinges, crumbling cement, etc). I worry about the safety of the school children as well as the potential eye sore the housing could be. Affordable housing should NOT be located on school grounds. School property should be used for schools and open space should be saved for future expansion.

Do you have any comments on the other colocation opportunities being considered at the Minnie Howard Campus?

Teen Wellness Center - I support this center being located at Minnie Howard.

Early Childhood Learning Center - I support this center being located at Minnie Howard.

Shared Use Spaces (i.e. benefit programs outreach, domestic violence/sexual assault, childhood development, etc.)

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Shared use of Fields, Gymnasium and Pool

Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns about The High School Project?

I am all about co-locating things that benefit the students directly — teen wellness, ACPS offices, childhood learning. But that is it.

I was surprised to see one colocation option for housing and would echo the prior community input that it does not seem to be a good use of the space. Given an ongoing and ever-present issue with space for education/schools, it would seem to be counterproductive and decrease flexibility for further expansion of school sites. I would support keeping the Minnie Howard Campus for educational purpose, whether as a school, or colocating specifically related educational benefits, e.g., teen wellness center, administrative offices, early childhood, etc.

I am aware that a decision was made to only have one high school in ACPS. I am a constituent of city of Alexandria and myself and spouse spoke strongly against only one high school to remain in ACPS. However, after viewing the test items and my understanding of the anticipated population growth of the city, there should be more than one high school. The singular high school is larger than most community colleges and the population is larger than many IHE. Students will just be a number. This seems as a tool for ACPS to 'save' money/resources without student focus to be first!

For these spaces, would they specifically be for students, or also for community members? If the latter, I would again have concerns that we are taking school space and allocating it for non-school use.

Even if the programs (including the DV/SA program) is meant to be a part of the school and available only to school members, I would be considered about safety issues. The security assessment and protocols would need to be thorough, to ensure that DV perpetrators are not able to access the space or the school itself. One idea to consider would be to have domestic violence resources situated within another program, which would allow students to access DV resources without alerting the perpetrator to that fact. For example, a DV program could

be within the Teen Wellness Center, such that a teen could appear to be going to the Wellness Center but actually (or also) receive DV-related assistance.

I support the High School Project being located at the Minnie Howard campus.

Emailed Community Comments

How about moving the high school to the Inova Alexandria Hospital location when it moves to Landmark?

I strongly oppose putting any affordable housing units at the Minnie Howard campus or any other ACPS campus. This extremely dumb idea places the safety of students at risk and is a horrible idea for many other reasons.

I realize the stupidity of this idea comes from a City Council hell-bent on waging war against its residents. My sincere hope is that many of the City Council members will no longer be in office after the current term. I would hope the School Board has the good sense to not follow our out-of-control Mayor and his minions and oppose this effort.

I am fully opposed to colocating any type of housing, affordable or luxury, with our high school. We have a limited opportunity to create an exceptional learning experience for the students in Alexandria, combining these two non-related missions will only work to create conflicting priorities. Regardless of the income level, the ability to legally have alcohol, weapons and (shortly) marijuana within close proximity to the school can create potential challenges. That and the need to have a level of maintenance maintained to enable the school to continue to function without impediments has the potential to distract from the school mission to provide an education for our children.

I am a graduate of the Alexandria school system and my son is currently a senior, we will not have a long-term direct interest in the running of the school but I am strongly opposed to the proposal. Again, this is not about the idea of low-income housing but housing in general. I am opposed to any housing colocating with a school.

On behalf of existing and future generations of children of Alexandria,

Please reject this project. If you were able to grow up with trees and fields on your school property, why would you advocate to urbanize a high school campus?

What accommodations will ACPS be making to keep Minnie Howard students/members separate from the townhouses behind Minnie Howard (e.g., fencing/wall, etc.)? Students coming over/through fencing into the community is a long outstanding issue. The expanding number of students and activities warrants a school-maintained fence line, with a low-maintenance durable structure such as brick or stone, built to withstand the increased activity levels on the school campus.

For the record, as a member of the community, I oppose including affordable housing on the site with children but am in favor of all buildings being located on the east side of the complex near Bradlee Shopping Center to minimize disruption to nearby residents.

So the idea is to move the sports fields, (no buffer, no playground, no trees, no grass (except fake), basketball and tennis courts and soccer and baseball to back up to existing residential houses and townhouses with no buffers or separation?

Is this the same school board that had to back down and pay out big buck in damages to settle the football stadium mess at HS (formerly TCW).

Is there anyone who actually does any research - when trying to cram all this stuff on a site!!

Only seen this silliness on a Sim City game! They lost city collapsed.

What a TERRIBLE idea! School grounds should be strictly used for classrooms and other school buildings. Allowing strangers to live on school grounds is outrageous and dangerous!! This whole topic should not even be under consideration!! Doesn't this school system have enough problems—do you need to borrow more??