



Safe Routes to School Assessment

George Washington Middle School

Final

Prepared For



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



Overview

NOTE: The final report and recommendations have been modified by the City of Alexandria to align with project goals and to focus on high-impact projects.

George Washington Middle School



Methodology

Data, Mapping and Setting the Context

- Data was assembled to create maps and graphic data summaries for each school to provide context for the walk audits and establish walk audit parameters.

Community Engagement

- A community feedback form was created and shared online to provide an opportunity for parents, administrators, staff, students and community members to provide input. Outreach materials were developed by NeoNiche Strategies and distributed/posted in schools and in community spaces.

School Walk Audits

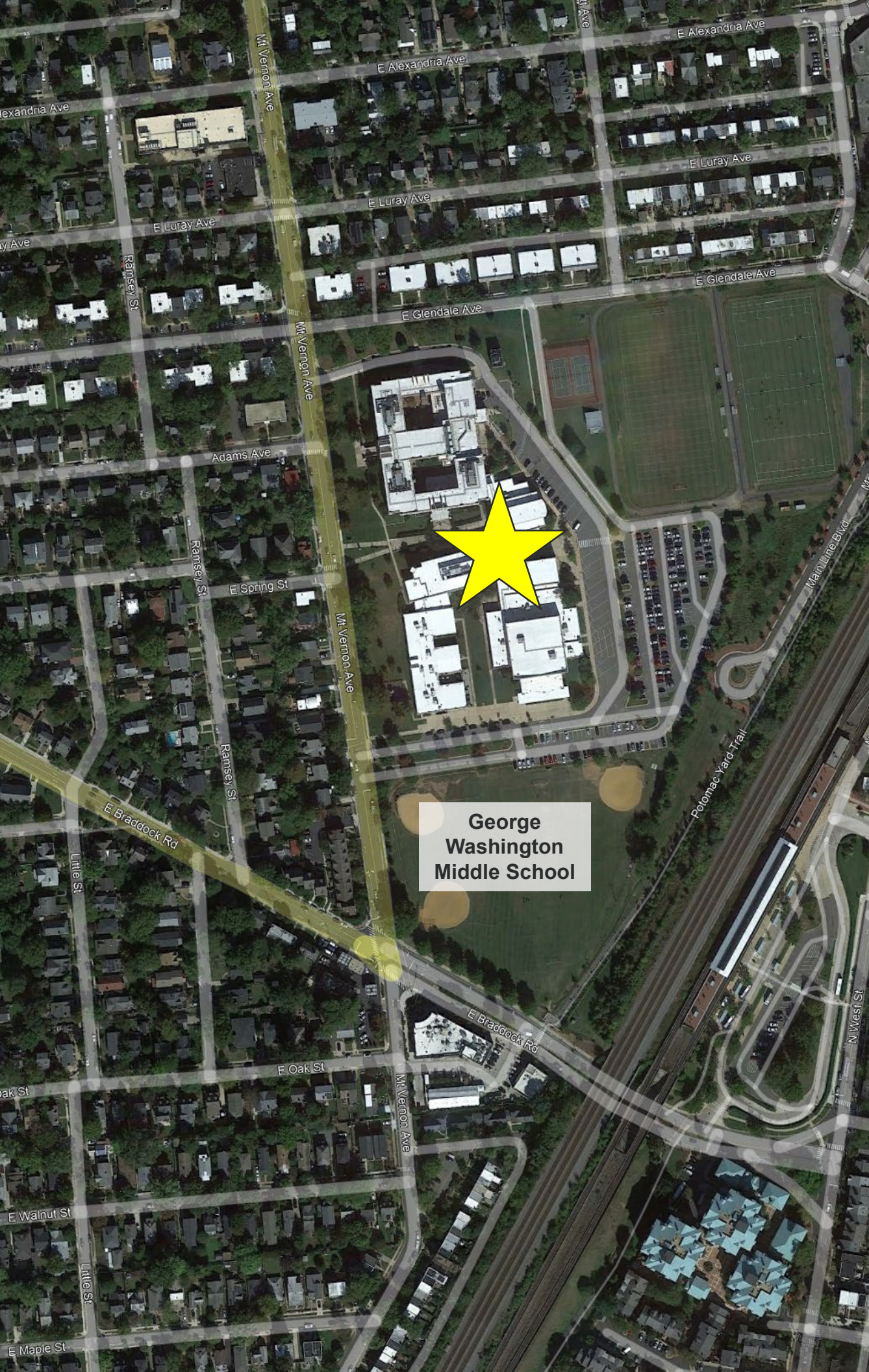
- Arrival or dismissal operations were observed at each school and the walk audit teams assessed the behavior of students, parents and commuters. Additionally, Toole staff collected field data in the walk areas of the schools to examine existing conditions to include the condition of sidewalks, crosswalks, signs and other roadway elements.

Recommendations

- Field data, observations and feedback form results were used to identify issues and corresponding recommendations.

Walk Audit Reports

- School details, observations, field data, feedback form results and recommendations were finalized in a report.

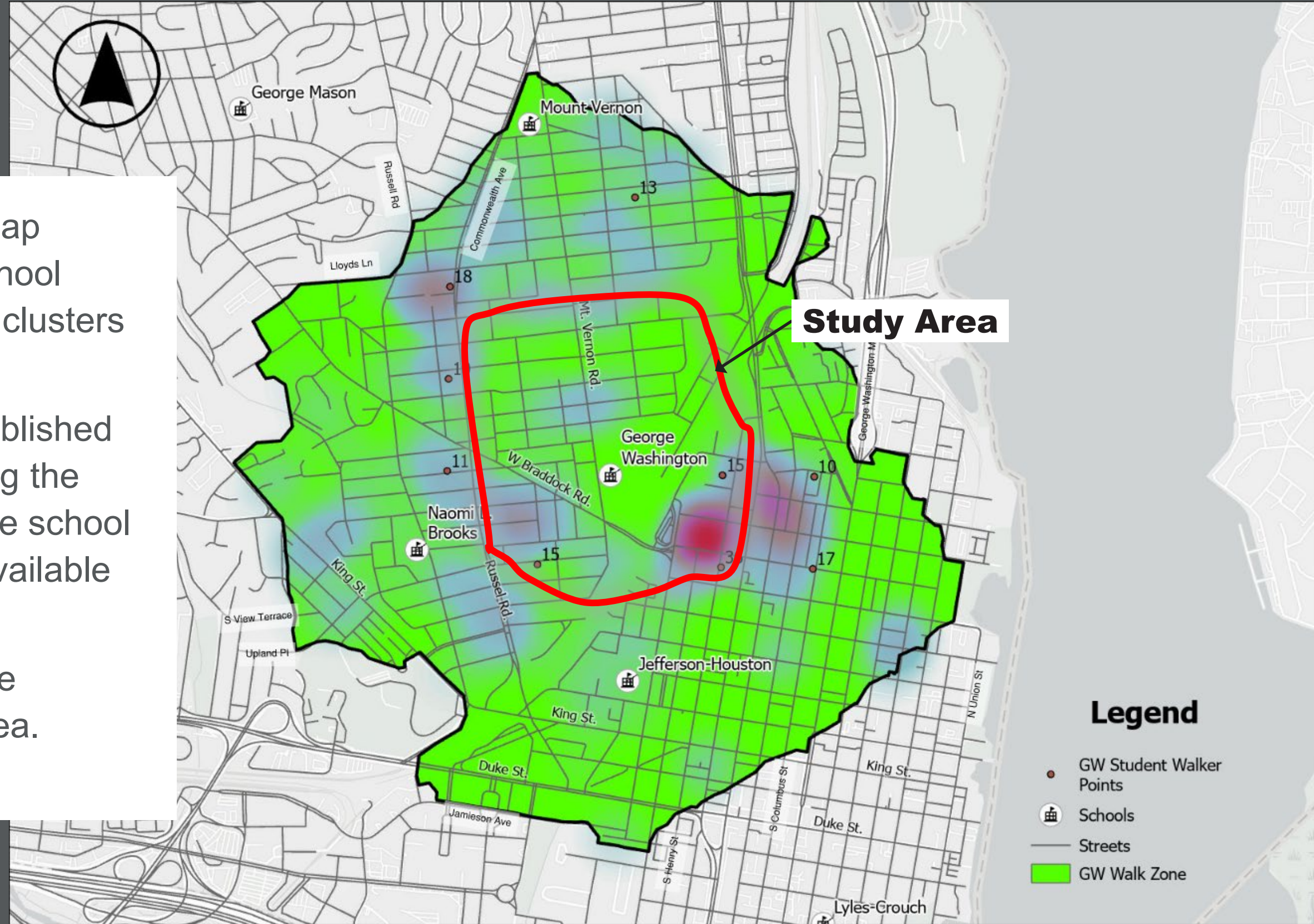


School Site

- George Washington Middle School is located at 1005 Mt. Vernon Avenue. It serves grades 6-8. The school operates from 8:30am - 3:15pm.
- It is located near the center of a residential area bounded by the WMATA Metro Blue Line on the east, E Glendale Avenue to the north, Mt. Vernon Avenue to the west, and E Braddock Road to the south.
- The neighborhood contains multi-family and single-family housing.
- Mt. Vernon Avenue is a minor arterial with a posted speed limit of 25 mph/15 mph school speed limit.
- For the 2022-2023 school year, there were 1,530 students enrolled at GWMS in grades 6 through 8. The school reports that most students (about 1,050) take the school bus, 250 ride in cars, approximately 50 walk, and 30 bike.

Walk Zone

- The Walker Cluster map shows the existing school walk zone, as well as clusters of student addresses.
- The walk zone is established by ACPS by evaluating the walking distance to the school in combination with available infrastructure.
- The red line shows the approximate study area.



George Washington MS Walker Clusters

Map Source: ACPS, Office of Capital Programs, Planning and Design
SY2022-2023

DCGIS, Fairfax County, VA, M-NCPPC, VGIN, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Walk Audit Participants

- COA – Daniel Briel
- COA – Alex Carroll
- COA – Bryan Hayes
- COA – Ian Torrance
- COA – Daniel Scolese
- ACPS – Sophie Huemer
- ACPS – John Contreras
- NeoNiche – Elizabeth Jones
- Toole Design – Ayden Cohen
- Toole Design – Cipriana Thompson
- Toole Design – Tina Fink
- Toole Design – J Swiderski

Observations and Crash Data



Students walking across the field to get to school



Students crossing the drop-off line

Arrival Observations

- Observation Period: Tuesday March 21, 2023, 7:30am – 9:00am.
- Students are usually dropped off at the front of the line. At times, students leave multiple cars at once, and drivers leave the drop-off line to bypass other vehicles.
- The parking aisle for dropping off students with disabilities is sometimes used by staff and passers-by, causing conflict with students getting out of cars.
- Motorists leaving the parking aisle turn right, causing potential conflicts with students crossing the aisle.
- Students access the school from the field on the south of the campus and cross the vehicle and bus drop-off line. Student drop-off was most efficient and safest when school staff served as crossing guard.
- Students wait outside of the school until 8 AM when the doors open.

General Observations

- There is no marked crossing connecting students from where parents drop them off and the school door.
- Students leave the drop-off line and cross the bus drop-off aisle at several locations near the existing crosswalk.
- Parents reported that when buses are stopped in the bus drop-off area, the crosswalk is obscured by oncoming buses.
- ADA ramp faces parking lot at a skewed angle and has no detectable warning surface.
- Bike parking is uncovered. There is no ramp to access the bike racks. At least one student was observed parking their bicycle somewhere other than the bike racks.



Students crossing drop-off line

George Washington Campus and Vicinity



Parking lot and field intersect at a point where it dumps students into the drop-off line, with no marked crossing.



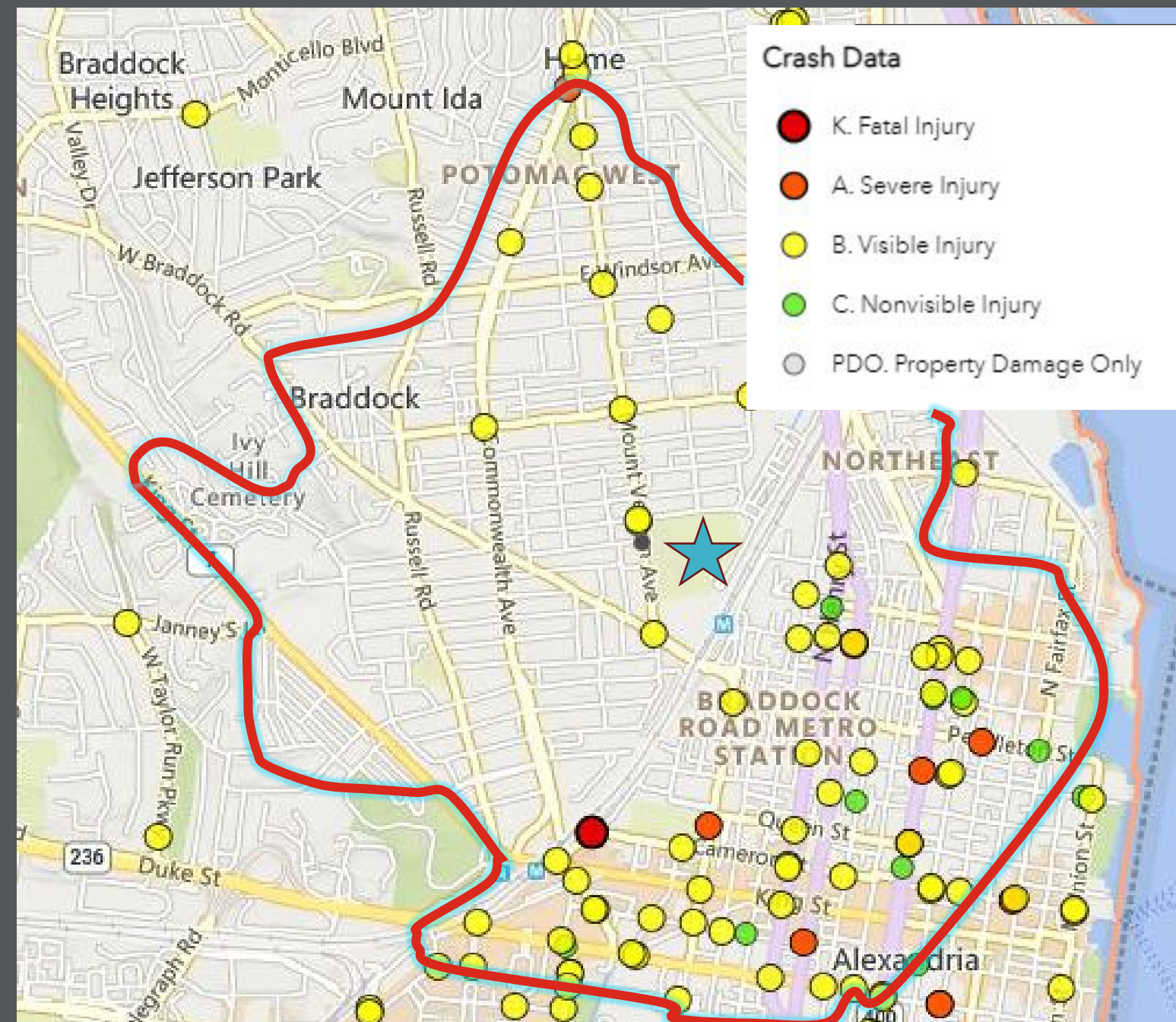
Intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and E Glendale Avenue, where many students cross to access the school campus.



There is a desire line from E Braddock Road that leads students across the athletic fields, which gives them direct access to the school.

Crash Data

- Crash Data was gathered for the school walk area for the years 2018-2022.
- Within the walk zone, there were 831 crashes. Of these crashes, 58 involved a pedestrian, 13 involved a bicyclist. There was 1 pedestrian fatality.
- There was a pedestrian crash at the intersection of E Braddock Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue involving a 14 year old at 3:23pm, aligning with dismissal time. Pedestrian had a visible injury.



Crashes for all modes 2018-2022
 Source: VDOT
 Red line shows approx. walk zone.

CRASHES WITHIN WALK ZONE	Total Crashes	Injury	Fatality
All Modes	831	214	3
Pedestrian-involved	58	51	1
Bicyclist-involved	13	9	0

Community Feedback Form Results



Participants

- Community feedback was solicited through an online community feedback form. For George Washington Middle School, there were 70 participants.
- Table 2 summarizes the mode participants typically use and their ideal mode to get to school.

Table 1. Summary of Form Participants

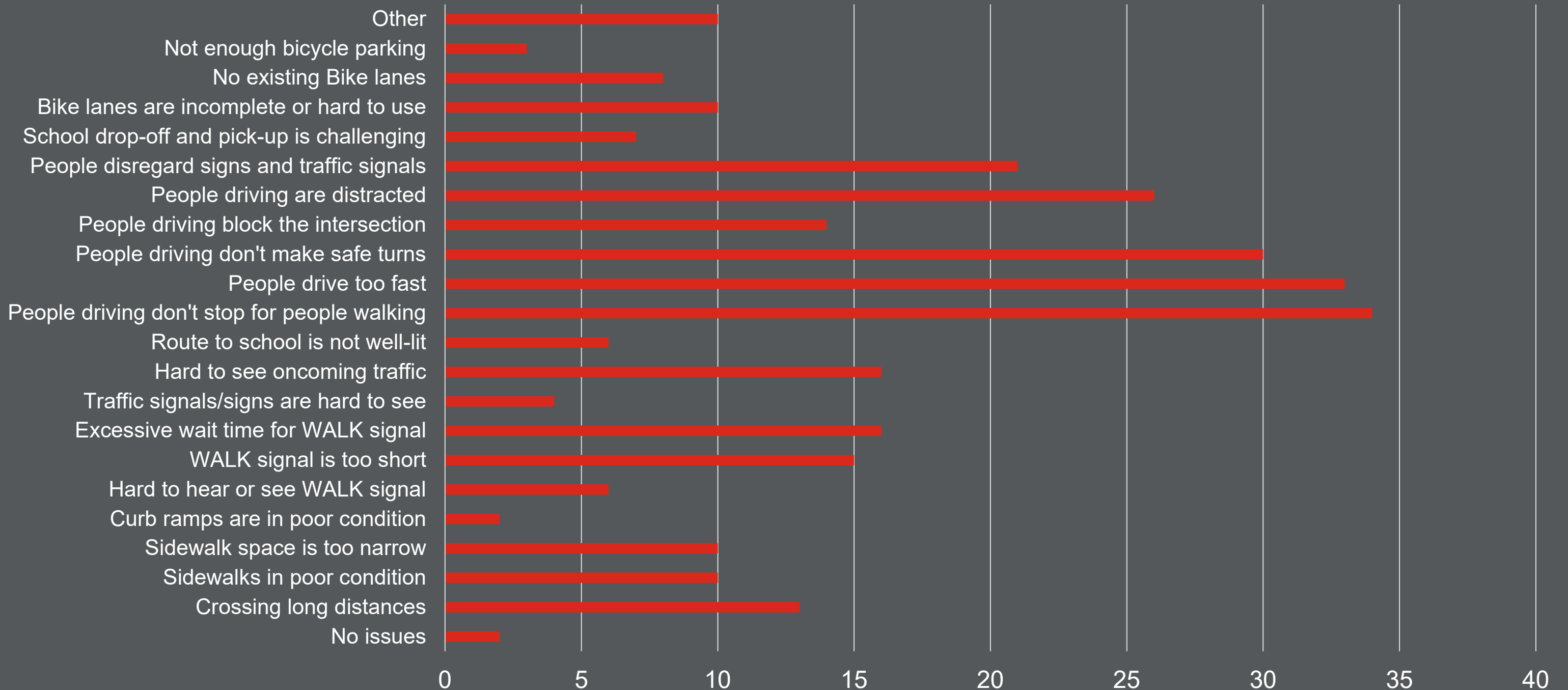
Community Feedback Form Participants	
Total number of responses	70
Student Responses	2
Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian Responses	54
Teacher, Admin, School Staff	1
Alexandria resident interested in the project	19
Other	3

Table 2. How Respondents Are Getting to School

Mode Options	Typical Mode	Ideal Mode
Walk	43	40
Bike	4	7
Drive	11	0
Carpool	0	0
School Bus	6	5
Public Transit	3	1
Other	0	1

Results

Issues experienced on the way to school



Community Feedback Form – Free Response

- Community feedback form participants provided free responses to the following free response questions. Responses are summarized in the table below.
- What would it take for you to walk or bike to school more often than you do now?
- Please provide more detail about the issues you experience getting to school.

Intersections of concern

Mt. Vernon Ave and Braddock Rd - Right turn on red violations, short pedestrian interval, long crossing distance, long wait time, pedestrian and protected left turn phase occur at the same time, pedestrian walk signal doesn't always actuate

Mt. Vernon Ave and E. Braddock Rd in front of Yates Automotive - Additional and improved curb ramps desired.

Mt. Vernon Ave and Oak St. near 7-11 - Pedestrians walk through here. Crosswalk desired at this location. Pedestrians walking from Metro trail.

Mt. Vernon Ave and Walnut St. - Pedestrians walk through here. Crosswalks on all three legs and stop signs desired at this location

Commonwealth Ave and Walnut St. - No existing walk signals

Commonwealth Ave and E. Linden St. - Dangerous to cross

GWMS drop off exit and Mt. Vernon Ave. - Exiting, left-turning vehicles have limited sight distance of pedestrians. Cars do not stop for pedestrians. Crossing guard at this location is desired.

E. Braddock Rd and Ruffner - All-way stop and sidewalk improvements desired.

E Braddock Rd, N West St, Wythe St - Traffic is backed up, vehicles block crosswalks.

Community Feedback Form – Free Response

Bike Infrastructure	E Braddock Ave protected bike lanes desired
	Bike lanes with vertical protection "not just paint" desired.
	Currently not safe enough to allow their children to bike
	Commonwealth bike lane ends before getting to GWMS
Safety Concerns	Speeding, vehicles yielding/stopping at crosswalks, sight distance around parked vehicles
	Path behind school from Braddock Metro - children being harassed
	Two children hit by cars on Monroe Ave near Simpson Field
	Lighting is limited at intersections during dusk/early morning and inclement weather
Drop-off / Pick-up	Crossing Mt. Vernon
	Drivers "break the rules" in the parking lot during drop-off/pick-up
	Pick-up and drop-off guidance is not followed.
	No official drop-off location.

Walk Audit Recommendations

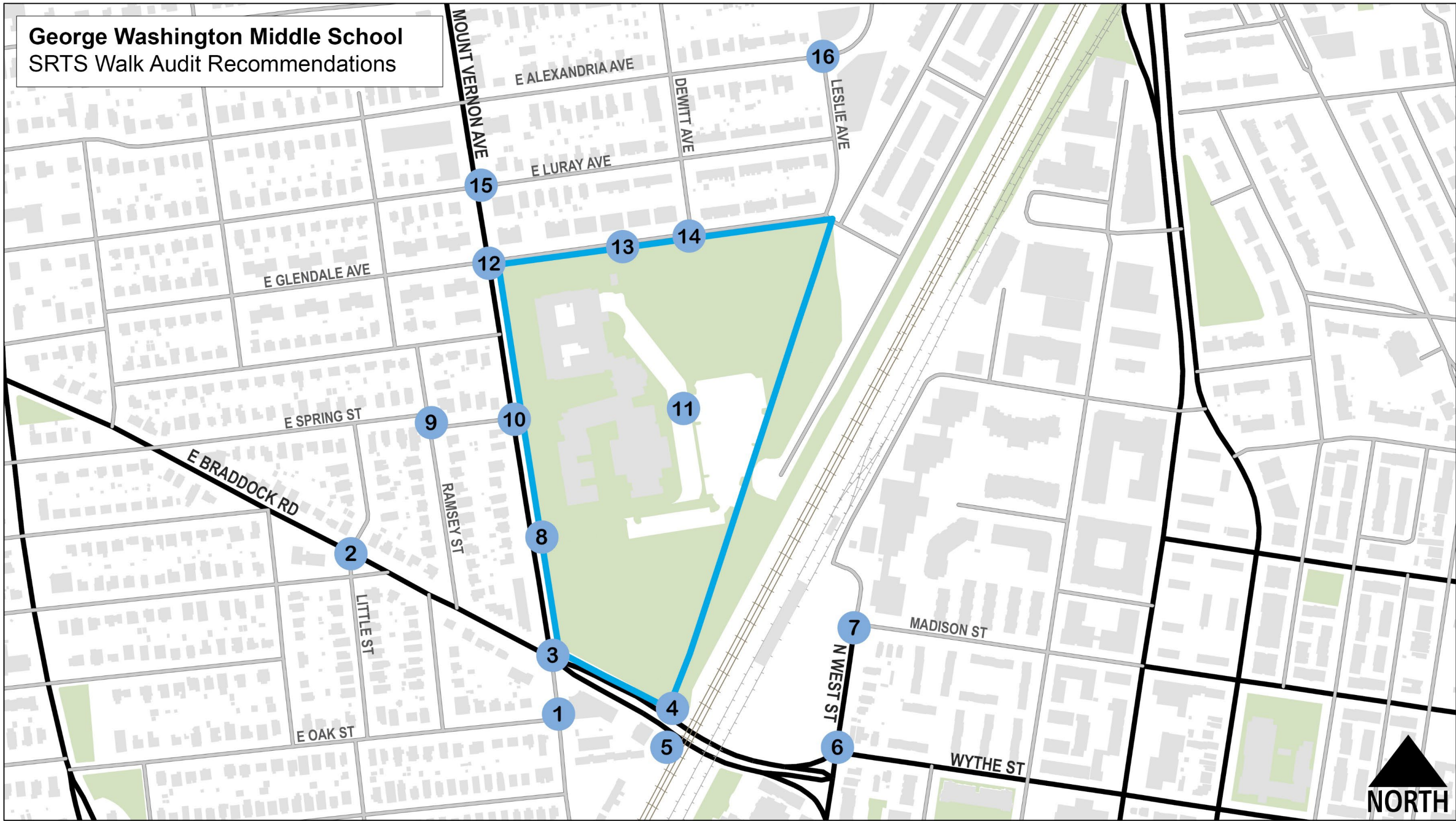
Recommendations Approach

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure recommendations aim to improve safety and accessibility for students to walk and bicycle to school. This may include reducing vehicle speeds, addressing conflicts between pedestrians/bicyclists and drivers, and providing fully accessible sidewalks and crossings near schools.

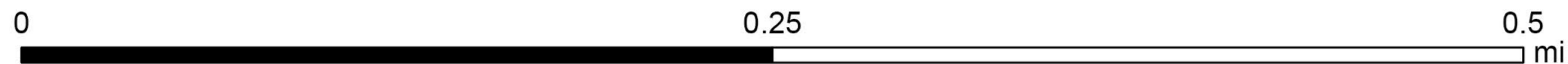
The following map and tables summarize infrastructure recommendations within and outside of the current school walk zone as relevant. Key student walking or bicycling routes were identified based on information received from school administration, parent surveys, and school observations.

Note that other projects or planning/feasibility studies may be planned or ongoing within the study area. The City of Alexandria will confirm the approach to implementing recommendations from this SRTS Study to ensure they align with other projects as necessary.

George Washington Middle School SRTS Walk Audit Recommendations



- School
- Intersection or Crossing Recommendation



Recommendations Overview

The following pages provide tables of the recommendations for each location. Below is a description of the column within the tables.

- Map ID – Label number on the map. Points with multiple recommendations will have a suffix of a, b, etc. Corridor recommendations are identified with the prefix of “C” (e.g. C2).
- Location, Recommendation Type – Location of recommendation and the type of the recommendation. The extents of corridor recommendations are defined in parenthesis.
- Issue – Description of the issue at the identified location.
- Recommendation – Description of the proposed recommendation.
- Complexity – Scale of complexity for recommendation implementation. The ranking considers costs, timeframe, and overall difficulty from one to five, with one being the least complex and five being the most complex.
- Responsibility – Responsible party for implementation.

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
1	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave & E Oak St, Intersection or Crossing	Eastern crossing of Oak St is missing crosswalk markings and both ramps (northwest and southwest corners) have insufficient level landing and lack detectable warning surfaces.	Install new standard (transverse) crosswalk and reconstruct curb ramps.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
2	George Washington MS	Little St & E Braddock Rd, Intersection or Crossing	Western crossing is not marked and no curb ramps exist. Crossing at this location support both the school and the bus stop on the south side. Northern crossing has no stop bar.	Install high-visibility crosswalk markings and install new curb ramps. Install new stop bar at northern crossing. Exploring installing crosswalk at Ramsey Street for westbound bus stop.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
3	George Washington MS	E Braddock Rd & Mt Vernon Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Crossings are relatively long, and motorists were observed taking turns quickly; not all crossings are high visibility; not all curb ramps are present (northwest and southwest corners) or ADA compliant; no auto-recall for pedestrians crossing Braddock Rd.	Explore modifying intersection design to provide safer crossings and better pedestrian access, including geometric improvements and/or signal timing changes.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
4	George Washington MS	Potomac Yard Trail & E Braddock Rd, Intersection or Crossing	There are concerns about motorist speed and not yielding as well as a multiple threat condition on the northern portion of the crosswalk.	Study crossing to determine changes to improve safety at the crossing; possible recommendations include: install RRFB, install school crossing signs, reduce speed limit to 15 MPH during school hours, reduce to one lane in each direction through crossing.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City
5a	George Washington MS	Metro Trail & E Braddock Rd, Intersection or Crossing	Ramps lack detectable warning surfaces and level landing.	Reconstruct ramps.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
5b	George Washington MS	Metro Trail & E Braddock Rd, Intersection or Crossing	Western crossing is missing high-visibility crosswalk marking.	Install high-visibility crosswalk marking (when street is repaved).	■ □ □ □ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
6	George Washington MS	E Braddock Rd & N West St & Wythe St, Intersection or Crossing	Intersection has many challenges for pedestrians. The slip lane on the northwest corner introduces conflicts, especially when southbound and westbound motorists have the green indication but also have to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. There is one missing curb ramp (northwest corner of E Braddock Rd and N West St), many lack detectable warning surfaces, and some may have insufficient level landings.	Study options to improve intersection design and operations. Improvements may be contingent on redevelopment.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	City
7	George Washington MS	Madison St & N West St, Intersection or Crossing	Northern crosswalk markings faded and no pedestrian crossing signs present.	Update high-visibility crosswalk and install pedestrian crossing signs	■ □ □ □ □	City
8a	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave at south driveway, Intersection or Crossing	Sidewalk on the east side is too narrow, kids walking from the south of the school end up having to walk through the grass if anyone is walking from the opposite direction.	Widen sidewalk.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
8b	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave at south driveway, Intersection or Crossing	Eastern crossing does not have stop bar.	Install new stop bar.	■ □ □ □ □	ACPS
8c	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave at south driveway, Intersection or Crossing	Northern crossing of Mt Vernon Ave is missing high-visibility crosswalk marking. Ramps are missing at this crossing.	Install high-visibility crosswalk markings and install new curb ramps.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
9	George Washington MS	Ramsey St & E Spring St, Intersection or Crossing	Crossing of Ramsey St has no marked crossing or ramps. Eastern crossing of Spring St is missing crosswalk marking and neither ramp has a level landing or detectable warning surface.	Install transverse crosswalk markings and install new curb ramps.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
10	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave & E Spring St, Intersection or Crossing	Northern and southern crossings of Mt Vernon Ave lack pedestrian crossing signs and are a relatively long crossing. Concerns about motorists speeds and yielding.	Install curb extension; restrict parking in advance of the crosswalk; install school crossing signs with downward pointing arrows.	■ ■ □ □ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
11	George Washington MS	Bus Drop Off Loop and Parent Drop Off Loop, Intersection or Crossing	Ramp lacks detectable warning surface.	Reconstruct or repair existing ramp.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
12a	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave & E Glendale Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Western crossing of Glendale Ave is missing crosswalk markings and relatively wide due to perpendicular parking on Glendale Ave.	Short-term recommendation: install in-street crossing sign on southern crossing to match northern crossing. Install curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks, and pedestrian crossing signs on each leg of the intersection. Explore benefit of RRFB.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City
12b	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave & E Glendale Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Students were observed taking the inbound/southbound 10A/B bus and getting off at E Glendale Ave. It is likely that they take the outbound/northbound bus. There is no shelter for the outbound/northbound bus.	Add a shelter to the northbound bus stop.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City
13	George Washington MS	E Glendale Ave & School Drwy, Intersection or Crossing	Southern crossing of school driveway is missing crosswalk markings and a stop bar.	Install new stop bar and crosswalk.	■ □ □ □ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
14	George Washington MS	E Glendale Ave & Dewitt Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Eastern crossing is not marked and no curb ramps exist.	Install new ramps; install crosswalk markings; install school crossing signs with downward pointing arrows.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
15	George Washington MS	Mt Vernon Ave & Luray Ave	Northern and southern crossings of Mt Vernon Ave lack pedestrian crossing signs and have relatively long crossing distances.	Install pedestrian warning signs and consider parking restrictions or curb extensions to improve visibility.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City
16	George Washington MS	Leslie Ave & E Alexandria Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Eastern crossing of Leslie Ave is along a horizontal curve and lacks appropriate crossing signage.	Install pedestrian crossing signs with downward pointing arrows; evaluate sight distance and consider a curb extension on the northside to improve visibility.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City

Notes

All images by Toole Design unless noted otherwise.

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