

March 15, 2026

Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Comments on Holton-Arms Proposed Expansion Plans — Case #CBA1174-E

Dear Hearing Examiner,

My name is Elizabeth Wilson, and I reside at 7700 Zulima Court in the Al-Marah community. My fiancé owns our home in this neighborhood, where I currently reside. We are planning to make this our long-term home as we start our family. We chose this area because it is peaceful, safe, and family-oriented — qualities that are now at risk under certain aspects of Holton-Arms' proposed expansion plan.

I am writing this letter in reaction to the March 3, 2026, filing by Holton Arms to formally state my opposition to several components of their expansion proposal. While I previously submitted comments in November 2025, I understand those may not yet be part of the official record, and the school's updated filing necessitates these additional remarks.

Furthermore, I must correct the record regarding community outreach. Despite claims by individuals who have prior or current affiliation with the school, most Al-Marah residents (my home included) have NOT been kept informed by Holton-Arms. Most of us were not invited to the November 13, 2024 meeting at Holton-Arms, and have never received direct information from the school outside of a ZOOM flyer from the mail for September 9th 2025. We only learned of these plans via word-of-mouth from neighbors, and upon learning of them, our reaction has been one of firm opposition.

To be clear, I am not opposed to Holton-Arms' mission. However, I am *strongly opposed* to the current traffic and access components of the proposal.

1. Significant Enrollment Increases (Academic and Summer Camp): Holton-Arms is proposing to increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870 students (a 30% increase) and summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970 (a 45% increase). Despite the school's characterization, these increases are not "modest" and will create a substantial, year-round burden on our local infrastructure, which it was never designed to support. Of grave concern is the safety of our residents. We have already seen incidents of traffic speeding through Al-Marah

to bypass River Road, leading to "near-misses" with neighbors walking and children boarding or exiting school buses.

2. Dedicated Left-Turn Lane and Tree Removal: I am *vehemently opposed* to the proposed dedicated left-hand turn lane that would direct traffic through our neighborhood. Al-Marah residents did NOT ask for this, and we do NOT want it. This lane will not help residents; instead, it will encourage more school traffic to cut through our neighborhood while actively hindering residents trying to turn right out of our own community. Effectively, this plan turns Al-Marah into a "Holton-Arms Driveway."

Our streets were not designed for commuter or institutional traffic, and this plan would create unnecessary hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, and children. This would be the second time the Royal Dominion Drive entry way has been adjusted in the last 27 years, despite no significant change in the number of homes in our neighborhood. Inferred use of Al-Marah as a thorough way to avoid River Road traffic is not an appropriate solution, as evidenced by the backlog of traffic during afternoon pick-up hours on February 2nd 2026 which delayed my fiancé from exiting our cul-de-sac while on-call at the hospital (see attached images). If this is the current reality, a 30% increase in students would make exiting our own home during peak hours nearly impossible.

Regarding the environmental impact, the proposed tree removal to accommodate these expanded road changes contradicts the residential character of our community and further degrades the buffer between our homes and the state highway, River Road.

3. Overflow Parking and Shuttle Service at Primary Day School (PDS): Even without the expansion, our neighborhood already experiences overflow parking from both Holton-Arms and the nearby Primary Day School. I live in the cul-de-sac next to Primary Day, and it is common to see nonresidents parking at the top of the cul-de-sac during school hours and events. The proposed use of Primary Day for overflow and mitigation would greatly intensify this issue. This issue in particular is not something that was asked for by residents who live along Royal Dominion Drive.

4. Summer Camp Expansion and Facility Rentals: While I understand the desire to expand programming, allowing increased summer camp enrollment and additional facility rentals will bring year-round traffic and activity to what is currently a quiet residential area. This is simply not compatible with the scale and layout of our neighborhood.

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In summary, I support Holton-Arms' academic goals, but I urge the Hearing Examiner to reject any portion of the plan CBA1174-E that would divert traffic, parking, or construction impact into surrounding residential neighborhoods. Growth should not come at the expense of community safety and livability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth Wilson

Resident, Al-Marah Neighborhood

7700 Zulima Court
Bethesda, MD 20817