

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Dwyer, Florence](#); [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Community Opposition to Holton Arms Expansion Application -- CBA-1174-E
Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2025 7:03:37 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We are writing to urge you to **OPPOSE** Holton Arm's application for modification to existing special exception CBA-1174-E (Holton Expansion Proposal). Holton Arms vehicles already cause significant traffic disruptions, and unlike many other private schools in the area, Holton Arms refuses to mandate busing, carpools, or other meaningful traffic mitigation strategies. The amended TMP recently submitted by Holton Arms fails to address any of the concerns expressed by our neighborhood to the school, including concerns expressed by MD State Delegates Sarah Wolek & Marc Korman.

In the words of Holton's attorney, Holton's application to expand their academic & camp enrollments as well as renting out their facilities to 870 non-Holton people, if approved, would result in **"huge surges"** of traffic along River Road. Holton wants to continue to incentivize students, parents, and faculty to use our neighborhood as a cut through thus permanently reducing access to and safety for our community. The application does not meet the special exemption criteria on many levels and should be **rejected**.

Since Holton Arms refuses to consider meaningful mitigation strategies that have worked very successfully by other private schools in an effort to be good neighbors, **the State and County should require that Holton Arms MANDATE busing & carpooling AND to pay for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton Arms cars can use Al Marah as a cut through!**

We have lived in the Al Marah neighborhood for over 20 years and are Maryland voters. We have suffered from the significant increase in traffic — caused largely by the surge of hundreds of vehicles attempting to access Holton Arms every morning and every afternoon. During peak traffic periods, coupled with Primary Day traffic (located in our neighborhood directly across from Holton Arms) & traffic associated with nearby St. Bartholomew's School at the Nevis Road intersection with River Road approximately 1000 feet from Holton Arms entrance, it is increasingly difficult to get in and out of our neighborhood as there are only two access points. Holton Arms students, parents, employees, faculty, as well as commercial vehicles entering Holton Arms use our neighborhood as a cut through and routinely speed through our neighborhood to enter Holton Arms — causing serious safety and traffic problems (we do not have sidewalks or stop signs).

Holton Arms held a virtual briefing on 9/9/25 that the Al Marah neighbors were NOT notified about. We found out about it and many of us participated and there was 100% opposition to the Holton expansion. The Head of School told us that, unlike many other private schools that negatively impact local neighborhood traffic, they do not think it is "appropriate" to mandate

busing their students. Holton Arms plans to offer "**incentives**" like free breakfast for students and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to the school! Holton Arms offers no guarantees that "education & incentives" will work (the Head of School routinely uses our neighborhood to access the school). Our son attended the **McLean School** which **MANDATES** busing just like many other private schools — including **The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St. Patrick's, The Lab School, etc.** Once Holton gets approval for their expansion of both their enrollment, summer camps, and outside groups — and traffic & public safety conditions worsen as expected, what can the County and State do to reverse the damage inflicted on the community for the benefit of a private school (with many students from DC & VA).

There already are significant traffic backups on River Road during the morning and late afternoon hours as Holton Arms students are dropped off or picked up from the school. The traffic is especially bad during the late afternoon hours when many Federal Government employees are commuting home at the same time that Holton Arms students are being picked up from school. The Holton expansion would also cause longer backups on eastbound lanes on River Road waiting to turn left into Holton Arms that would present greater traffic hazards as vehicles stack up, overflowing the dedicated left turn lane and effectively closing off one of the regular lanes. We have always believed that the State and County seek to increase the usage and efficiency of public transportation rather than create hurdles to its usage. Public transportation, especially eastbound on River Road, would be adversely affected from such left turn lane overflows. There are bus stops immediately outside the Holton entrance, on both the same side and opposite side of the road, and accompanying pedestrian traffic.

The TMP submitted by Holton Arms offers no solutions to the problems they are creating while causing great harm to our neighborhood, surrounding neighborhoods, and significantly increasing traffic congestion along River Road and 495. Holton's proposed mitigation would actually make getting out of our neighborhood much worse. Holton Arms, which has another entrance off of Burdette Rd near Burning Tree Country Club that according to the school is only used for emergencies, is proposing traffic mitigation solutions that only benefits the school and significantly harms our neighborhood.

Holton Arms, who should not be allowed to use our neighborhood in the first place, is proposing a dedicated left-hand turn lane (rather than a dedicated right-hand turn lane) out of Al Marah on Royal Dominion. Holton Arms vehicles going straight through the intersection will prevent those of us trying to get to work or an appointment from turning right onto River Road (**see attached photos of a Holton student from VA recently preventing me from leaving my neighborhood to go to work**). The left-hand turn lane might help Holton Arms families and faculty who cut through Al Marah on a daily basis (entering Burdette and then using Royal Dominion to go straight across River Road in an effort to avoid the heavy Holton Arms traffic on River Road). However, the dedicated left-hand turn lane would harm Al Marah residents by encouraging Holton Arms vehicles to cut through our neighborhood exacerbating a safety hazard for our children while getting on Montgomery County school buses while Holton cars

speed by, AND by making it more difficult for Al Marah residents to turn right from Royal Dominion.

Furthermore, the intersection construction would close the Royal Dominion entrance to our neighborhood for many months causing extreme traffic and emergency access problems by limiting the **172 Al Marah families**, service providers, Montgomery County School buses, and emergency responders to a narrow entrance at Burdette.

The bottom-line is that the Al Marah community has only two access points — the intersection of River Road with Burdette and the intersection of River Road with Royal Dominion (both directly affected by Holton Arms traffic). If the Holton Expansion Proposal is approved by the County/OZAH — there will be a PERMANENT reduction of access to Al Marah, and a PERMANENT reduction of community safety! Approval of Holton's expansion plan will also decrease the value of our property, and quite simply make our lives more difficult so that a private school can increase its bottom-line (estimated \$10 million) while causing Maryland resident's significant harm.

We urge you to **OPPOSE** the Holton Arms Special Exception and **REQUIRE** Holton Arms, like many other private schools, **to mandate busing and carpooling as well as paying for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton Arms vehicles can use Al Marah as a cut through**. This is a real mitigation strategy and significantly reduces traffic congestion, improves access to public transportation, and increases public safety in our neighborhood. We look forward to your response.

Thank you.


20 Royal Dominion Ct.



Royal Dominion

River

2026 SENIOR

BRONCO
SPORT

VIRGINIA
TJB-3388
VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Concerns about Expansion of Holton-Arms private school
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 5:59:42 PM
Attachments: [Significant Concerns and Recommendation Against Holton Arms Expansion Proposal 1.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan:

We are residents of a community called Al Marah located off of River Road (Maryland State 190) in Bethesda, Maryland. Residents of our community only can get in or out of our community by using a stretch of River Road that is just inside the 495 Beltway and is directly affected by traffic related to Holton Arms School, which is directly across River Road from our community. In other words, there is no way for us to avoid River Road traffic generally and Holton Arms traffic specifically. Unfortunately, due to existing Holton Arms traffic, westbound River Road traffic is often backed up from Wilson Lane to 495, and eastbound River Road traffic is often backed up from Seven Locks Road to Wilson Lane.

Holton Arms recently has proposed expanding their academic year student body by 30% (another 200 students) and expanding their summer camp enrollment by 44% (another 300 campers). We are very much opposed to the proposed Holton Arms expansion in its current form since existing Holton Arms traffic already causes congestion on River Road and causes significant problems with Holton Arms families who cut through our neighborhood to avoid the congestion on River Road (thus making it very difficult to get into or out of our neighborhood at certain times, and often making it unsafe to walk in our neighborhood, which does not have sidewalks). We believe that the only way that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand would be if they: a) implemented MANDATORY busing for ALL students (something other local area private schools have done) and b) mandated and paid for signage and traffic cameras to implement a rule of no Holton Arms traffic through our neighborhood (also something that other local area schools have done for other neighborhoods).

We sent the attached PDF document outlining our preliminary concerns regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion to the Montgomery County DOT and the Maryland DOT web pages, but we thought it was worth bringing the situation directly to your attention as well.

We would very much appreciate your support in opposing or at least modifying (with mandatory busing and neighborhood signage and traffic cameras) the proposed Holton Arms expansion.

Your constituent,

[REDACTED]

7509 Royal Dominion Drive
Bethesda MD 20817

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace; deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov)
Subject: Expansion of Holton-Arms (CBA-1174-E)--Comment
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 7:26:36 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Madame and Sir,

My name is [REDACTED]. I live at 7512 Royal Dominion Drive in the Al Marah neighborhood directly across River Road from Holton-Arms. I am writing in opposition to the Holton-Arms Expansion (Case No. CBA-1174-E). I appreciate your consideration of my views. I also appreciate the postponements of consideration of this application to a reasonable time, due partially I understand to the school's failure to notify the neighborhood of its plans in accordance with local rules. If someone else should receive this message and place it in the hearing record, please advise. It would be great if you could pass it along.

Holton-Arms is seeking approval for a 30% increase in their enrollment to 870 students, along with an even greater summer camp increase in enrollment to 970 students. Since at least 1982, Holton-Arms has had residential zoning of R-200 and R-90 and has only been permitted by the county to operate as a private school under special exception. Over the course of several decades, Holton-Arms has applied for a series of special exemptions allowing creeping substantial growth in its enrollment to the present enrollment cap of 665 students plus 5 students, along with a summer camp enrollment of up to 670 campers. The most recent special exemption specifically required the only exit and entrance to the school to be at River Road (in order to protect other neighborhoods, I am told).

Al Marah was established in the late 1970s and sits directly across River Road from Holton-Arms. There are only two entrances to the community at Bradley Boulevard and Royal Dominion Drive, at successive traffic lights. Entrance to Holton-Arms is on the other side of River Road at Royal Dominion Drive. There is also a private elementary school, the Primary Day School, which is located to the left of Royal Dominion Drive at that entrance to the community. That school also contributes traffic to the intersection of River Road and Royal Dominion Drive, of course.

The current operation of Holton-Arms has already impacted the Al Marah community, reducing quality of life, public safety, and property values. There are always bottlenecks from greatly increased traffic at Royal Dominion Drive. Further, some parents dropping off students to the school grow frustrated with that and rather than making the more difficult left turn into the school at Royal Dominion Drive, opt to enter our neighborhood at the Bradley light and travel the loop through the neighborhood to enter the school by a straight-shot across River Road at Royal Dominion Drive. This impact of course is made worse by the drop-off traffic for the Primary Day School also entering the neighborhood at Royal Dominion Drive. Increasing the enrollment for Holton-Arms by 30% will greatly exacerbate this impact. Please do not approve the expansion to allow it.

Granting yet-another special exemption—especially one allowing a substantial 30% increase in enrollment—is exceedingly unfair to Al Marah, which has borne the brunt

of earlier expansions by the limitation of entrance to the school at River Road. Further, continued granting of special exemptions as has occurred over the past decades makes a mockery of the underlying residential zoning on which livability along River Road depends. Al Marah was established in the 1970s and homeowners then and later purchased their properties with the reasonable expectation that the zoning was not commercial. While it is laudable that the new current management of Holton-Arms has lofty goals and seeks to offer the benefits of the school to a larger population of young women, quite simply this has reached the point at which the school needs to relocate to achieve more aggressive enrollment goals.

While I do not support this approach to this application (because it relies on self-policing), I understand that other private schools in the area—such as the Potomac School, McLean School, French International School, and Field School—have been required to go to mandatory busing as a condition for special exemption to expand further. That would reduce regular traffic in the area if a decision is made that the special exemption must be granted.

Thanks for your attention to this matter and consideration of my views. Life in Al Marah depends on it.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](mailto:Bogdan_Grace); kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; florence.dwyer@montgomerycountyp planning.org; sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Follow up
Date: Thursday, October 2, 2025 2:57:33 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am following up on outreach from earlier this summer regarding the Holton Arms Expansion Proposal (CBA-1174-E). For reference, I live on Jensen Place, the first cul de sac as you enter the Al Marah neighborhood via Royal Dominion Drive and the street with the 22 townhomes. Since our last communication, Holton Arms held an online community meeting, and despite hearing various concerns from neighbors in Al Marah and other surrounding neighborhoods, they are still determined to move forward and not scale back their request. We were advised that Holton made some changes to their traffic mitigation strategies which you now have. Please be advised that their recommendations will in no way help our community, but rather help Holton. As you are aware, traffic is already challenging during peak travel times and with an increase of over 30% for students and 40% for summer campers, traffic will only get worse. In addition, if they expand evening rentals to accomodate over 800 people, our existing traffic woes will carry into the evenings and the weekends.

To mitigate cut through traffic, Holton's proposal is to discourage, not mandate, their families from cutting through our neighborhood. This will have a negative effect by providing this cut through as an option for their families and students. More families would be inclined to cut through Al Marah since there are no consequences to doing so. If the school made families register their cars and install some type of monitoring camera like another school in the area did, it would suggest Holton actually cares about being a good neighbor.

Their other recommendation is to create a designated left turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive on the Al Marah side of River Road. This would entail closing down that intersection for a significant period of time which would exacerbate the already difficult situation for our neighborhood and surrounding roads. The only way to get in and out of the neighborhood would be going up to Burdette and River. Besides causing massive backups on Burdette and River, County school buses and emergency vehicles would have even more difficulty navigating the Al Marah neighborhood. Thus creating a safety hazard. During peak morning times, most Al Marah neighborhood traffic is trying to turn right at Royal Dominion rather than left so redesigning the intersection for a left turn lane would be moot. Since River Road light cycles are significantly longer, people wanting to turn right on a red light are often blocked by the traffic going straight into Holton. Again, there should not be any Holton traffic except for the few Holton families who live in our neighborhood.

Holton is recommending a very nominal increase in carpools and busing along with some incentives which are not mandated or enforceable. Really, the only solution for reasonable traffic mitigation even now, would be to **require mandatory busing for all students**, not the small percentage increase that Holton is recommending. Again, Holton is not mandating any

busing.

After learning of Holton;s proposals, and their lack of concern for the Al Marah neighborhood, I am now even more opposed to the expansion of enrollment and the expansion of evening space rental.

I appreciate you taking the time to review mine and others' concerns.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

7923 Jensen Place
Bethesda, MD

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Holton Arms and River Road
Date: Monday, October 6, 2025 10:42:33 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

I am writing to you in dismay regarding the proposal by the Holton Arms school to expand its class size and change traffic patterns on Royal Dominion Drive. This proposal will create a traffic nightmare for our area. It also presents an immediate danger to our community, particularly to our children.

Our community, Al Marah, has approximately 150 single-family homes and 22 townhomes. It is situated just off River Road, just to the east of Seven Locks Road and is directly across from Holton Arms. I live on Royal Dominion Drive and use it every day, multiple times. For residents of my community, it is our primary access to River Road.

Holton Arms is currently proposing an expansion of student body under proposal CBA-1174-E. The school's class size would increase from 670 to 870; summer camp enrollment would rise from 665 to 970, and facility rentals to groups as large as 870 would be permitted. Let me be clear—this is unsafe because of the volume of cars involved and the way in which our neighborhood is used as a “cut through.” It would also create unnecessary and extraordinary traffic obstacles in an area that has horrendous traffic during morning and afternoon rush hours to begin with.

Currently, Holton families, faculty, and staff who are heading westbound on River Road (toward Potomac), turn right. Even with the school's current enrollment, this often backs up the westbound lanes of River Road nearly three quarters of a mile to Wilson Lane. If heading eastbound (toward Washington), drivers turn left at Royal Dominion, using the dedicated left turn lane to enter Holton. In an effort to avoid this left turn, they frequently turn right on the previous street, Burdette Drive, using our neighborhood as a cut-through, they then turn left on Royal Dominion and proceed straight across River Road to Holton Arms. This is not particularly efficient for them, but morning commuters frequently look for desperate short-cuts.

If anyone from our neighborhood is unfortunate enough to have to use Burdette, Royal Dominion, or River Road during this time, it can take an extra 10-15 minutes simply to access River Road.

The traffic snarl has the unfortunate additional effect of creating unsafe conditions for our families as parents and children walk to bus stops, wait at bus stops, or try to drive to school. In an obvious hurry to reach school or continue their morning commute Holton students/parents, race through Burdette Road, turn left on Royal Dominion at high speeds, then barrel through our neighborhood before coming to the traffic light at Royal Dominion and River Road.

Our neighborhood does not have sidewalks, and I frequently witness near accidents involving pedestrians, people walking their dogs, and head-on collisions from cars near the corners of River Road and Burdette, and River Road and Royal Dominion Drive. Morning and afternoon walks in our neighborhood are becoming unsafe even with the current enrollment of Holton Arms.

When contacted about this, the Holton Arms administration indicated that they would notify their community to avoid cutting through our neighborhood on the way to school.

“Encouragement” and voluntary measures are not enough. Holton has not been collaborative as a neighbor in this process. They are not willing to make any commitments to mandate busing, carpools, or other meaningful traffic mitigation strategies if they are allowed to increase academic year enrollment, summer camp enrollment, and/or facility rentals. Instead, Holton Arms hopes that “education and incentives” will influence the Holton Arms families’ willingness to use busing or carpools. Unfortunately, once increased enrollment and rentals are approved, there is little we can do to limit traffic, so we and our neighbors believe that we need your help in protecting our safety and our neighborhood access now!

Holton Arms said that mandatory busing is not appropriate for their student body. While I am loathe to deny students the privilege of being chauffeured to school by their parents, I am puzzled why Holton is unable to mandate busing as other local private schools do, (e.g. - The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St Patrick's, The Lab School, etc.). They admit that their planned efforts to incentivize (rather than require) students and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to Holton Arms might take a long time and are not guaranteed to be successful.

Holton claims that its mission rests on “a deep connection to community, and a burgeoning commitment to make the world a better place.” They are not living up to that creed. Their priority is profit and a privileged pursuit of independent action, rather than any sense of community or coexistence.

As a concerned resident of the Al Marah neighborhood who is directly harmed (together with my entire neighborhood) by the speeding cars cutting through our neighborhood, increased pollution and noise, and by the ever-increasing gridlock in the area, I request that you make recommendations to OPPOSE (i) the proposed Holton Arms expansion and (ii) their proposal to designate a left turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. The proposals must be rejected to help protect our children’s safety and our ability to go in and out of our neighborhood in a safe way.

In fact, even with the current academic and camp enrollments, Holton Arms should be compelled to mandate busing and pay for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that prohibits Holton Arms cars from using Al Marah as a cut-through. This is a strategy that has been used very successfully by other private schools (e.g. Rochambeau locally) as part of other schools’ efforts to be good neighbors.

If they are unwilling to make these concessions, I suggest they move their enterprise to a larger campus in a less populated area, where they can commercialize to their heart’s content.

Yours,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: HOLTON ARMS EXPANSION
Date: Thursday, September 18, 2025 7:00:31 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Grace:

I am a resident of the Al-Marah community, and my neighbors and I have serious concerns about the proposed expansion by the Holton-Arms School. Our community, which is located just inside the 495 beltway off of River Road, is directly across from Holton-Arms and already deals with traffic from the nearby Primary Day School. The proposed plans would significantly worsen an already problematic situation for our neighborhood.

Our community relies on just two access points from River Road: Burdette Road and Royal Dominion Drive. Both of these entrances are directly in the path of Holton-Arms traffic, and the current volume already causes significant congestion. We are particularly concerned about the school's plan under CBA-1174-E, which would dramatically increase enrollment and allow for large-scale facility rentals. Even the school's own traffic consultant admitted these changes would result in hundreds of more cars coming through River Road causing worse congestion than before. A further concern is the significant "cut-through" traffic we experience as Holton-Arms families and staff use our neighborhood to avoid congestion on River Road.

The school's proposed expansion offers no realistic solution to this problem. In fact, their primary suggestion to build a dedicated left-turn lane at the Royal Dominion Drive exit would only encourage more of this dangerous and disruptive behavior. This "solution" does nothing to address our concerns and would only allow the school to encourage more drivers to use Al-Marah as a bypass rather than use River Road. This plan would exacerbate safety hazards for our residents, including children and elderly walkers, and would limit our own access to our homes. Additionally, the school's planning information includes renting out facilities when school is not in session, further congesting a stretch of River Road that is already heavily impacted by traffic.

We are disappointed that the school has been unwilling to consider proven traffic mitigation strategies, such as mandatory busing and carpooling. Instead, their plan relies solely on education and monetary incentives, strategies that school representatives themselves have conceded might not be effective and would require a significant amount of time to implement. Other local private schools, like The McLean School, The Potomac School, and Georgetown Day School, have successfully implemented mandatory busing. Holton-Arms also has a second entrance on Burdette, but the school was unwilling to consider having traffic use this alternate path. They also refused to discuss expanding the lanes within their main entrance to better manage traffic, preferring to burden our neighborhood instead. The school's lack of transparent communication with our community has also been deeply disappointing. During a recent Zoom meeting on September 9th, only a select number of our residents were invited, and no public notice was placed in our neighborhood, unlike the notices given

to residents in nearby communities. It is clear that the school views our neighborhood as an extension of their entrance rather than a community.

From a neighborhood standpoint, increasing through traffic at our Royal Dominion Drive exit would make it far more difficult for residents to get to work or appointments. We would be blocked in by Holton-Arms cars trying to cross River Road, a problem that many of us have experienced for years.

In conclusion, my neighbors and I urge you to oppose this expansion. We **do NOT** want Holton-Arms to expand, and we **do NOT** want a dedicated left-turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. The school should be required to implement crucial safety measures, such as mandatory busing, and to fund license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton-Arms cars can use Al-Marah as a cut-through. We hope you will make recommendations to help protect our safety and access to our homes.

Best Regards,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

Organizing & Taking the stress out of your move!

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Holton Arms Expansion
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:45:56 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We write to join our neighbors in the Al Marah neighborhood to express our concerns regarding a major expansion of **Holton Arms**.

You have heard from others with the details of the concerns so I will spare you the extra reading. Suffice it to say that we have a significant amount of traffic already every morning and afternoon with parents going through our neighborhood in both directions to avoid turning off or onto River Road and rather go straight across into and out of the Holton Arms campus. This occurs while children are waiting for or getting off Montgomery County school buses. Our streets have no sidewalks, which makes this even more concerning. And, having been one of those parents dropping off kids and rushing to work, the cars are moving rather fast for side streets.

We support education and support the mission of Holton Arms; however, an expansion such as that proposed does not seem advisable given the school's location and the unintended consequences for our neighborhood and the safety of our children.

Thank you for your consideration to NOT approve this rather large expansion.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace; kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.org](mailto:kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.org)
Subject: Holton Arms expansion plan
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 9:14:43 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan and Mr. Woodroffe,

I am writing about major concerns regarding the Holton Arms Expansion Proposal (CBA-1174-E). My name is [REDACTED] and I am the president of the Al Marah Homeowners Association. This HOA represents 22 townhomes on Jensen Place which is the first street directly across from the Holton Arms entrance. Please note that the wider Al Marah neighborhood also consists of over 100 single family homes and there are only two entrances into the neighborhood, one at Burdette and River Road and the other at Royal Dominion and River Road.

I have lived in this neighborhood for 11 years and have noticed an increase in bottlenecks and safety at our two neighborhood entrances and along our streets due to the Holton Arms traffic. If the proposal is approved without any concessions for additional traffic mitigation, I fear it will continue to negatively impact our neighborhood streets, our safety, and also our property values.

The traffic study provided by Holton Arms (HA), is insufficient since it does not show an accurate accounting for the HA traffic and how it impacts the Al Marah neighborhood. In the mornings, many cars dropping off kids cut through our neighborhood in order to avoid the backup on River Road due to traffic turning left into HA. This backs up traffic on Royal Dominion and causes delays for our residents trying to get to work in the mornings. I was often late for work because it took 2-3 long light cycles to get out of our neighborhood, and I am only one block off River Road. The Primary Day School is also located at River and Royal Dominion which adds to the congestion. In addition, Al Marah does not have any sidewalks and it already is dangerous for our children walking to their bus stop. The HA traffic study did not provide a viable solution to the already congested intersection or our neighborhood roads. It only recommended modifications to signal light cycles. In addition to the Al Marah neighborhood, traffic backs up on River Road during peak rush hours. The additional HA traffic just exacerbates the bottlenecks. Traffic on River Road can back up to Seven Locks in the mornings and back near Wilson Lane in the afternoons. If the proposal is approved, it will add to an already frustrating situation. It would be helpful to have an independent traffic study done by the appropriate Montgomery County or State of Maryland department during school hours over the course of a full school year to better get an accurate accounting of the traffic flow and safety concerns.

Below are a few ideas that would help alleviate the traffic issues and to consider before an increase in enrollment is even considered.

- It would be beneficial to look at the River Road/Royal Dominion intersection and consider making modifications to Royal Dominion Drive. It would help to have a designated right turn lane so traffic can turn right onto River Road without getting caught in the backup to enter HA or turning left onto River Road.
- Add signage and traffic cameras to restrict entry to the Al Marah neighborhood via Burdette to residents (no Holton Arms families unless they live in Al Marah).
- Not allow any Holton Arms or Primary Day parking on Al Marah Neighborhood streets,

or at least restrict it to only one side.

- Like other private schools in the local area, require busing for all students to help alleviate the traffic problems in the nearby neighborhoods.
- Another access to HA that is NOT on River Road would help alleviate the bottleneck at River and Royal Dominion.

I appreciate your time as you evaluate all the concerns of the surrounding neighborhoods. Please advise **AGAINST** the current form of the Holton Arms application for modification to the existing special exception.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

7923 Jensen Place

Bethesda, MD 20817

[REDACTED] - [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); florence.dwyer@montgomerycountypanning.org; kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Holton Arms Expansion: OPPOSED
Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 12:09:57 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

All,

This is to confirm our strong opposition to the proposed expansion of Holton Arms.

We live on Royal Dominion Drive, on the “shortcut” used by Holton Arms parents to race through our neighborhood, Al Marah, to get to and from Holton Arms. I have personally witnessed the stream of cars speeding by as I walk. Our neighborhood has no sidewalks, which only makes it more of a hazard.

There are three bus routes (high school, middle school, and elementary school) for Montgomery County Public Schools. There are four bus stops within the neighborhood, two of which are on the “shortcut” route (Burdette Road and Royal Dominion Drive). There are many children on our streets waiting for buses.

I participated in the virtual meeting hosted by Holton Arms on September 9. I spoke up about our concerns for safety and referenced other schools in the area that protect the neighboring streets by prohibiting parents from driving on the adjacent roads. I have personal experience with The French School/Rochambeau, Maplewood campus. Parents of first graders and older are not permitted to drop off on campus. There are shuttle bus collection points. I once inadvertently turned onto a local street by the school and received a warning from the school.

The lawyer for Holton Arms actually stated that Holton Arms was “special” and that such options and behavior changes were not possible for them.

However, it was mentioned that the neighborhood bordering Holton Arms on Burdette Road north of River Road has had such a prohibition against an entrance/exit to the school on Burdette for many years. That neighborhood successfully avoided the additional traffic that we in Al Marah experience daily. And there are no speed bumps and no stop signs in our neighborhood as there are on Burdette, which is a thoroughfare.

I will not repeat the concerns that I know my neighbors have expressed to you. The

current traffic situation is already bad. We oppose any expansion that will only make it worse. And the proposed left turn lane at Royal Dominion and River Road will NOT solve this issue. In fact, we think it will only make it worse.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7437 Royal Dominion Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); Kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; Sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov; Sarah.wolek@house.maryland.gov
Subject: Holton Arms expansion: urgent traffic and safety concerns for Al Marah
Date: Sunday, October 26, 2025 7:48:29 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear all,

Together with my husband and 3 kids, I'm writing as a resident of Al Marah off River Road, directly across from Holton Arms. Our only way in and out is via Burdette and Royal Dominion — the same stretch already clogged by Holton traffic.

Today, Holton families and staff routinely cut through our neighborhood: they come in on Burdette, exit on Royal Dominion, then drive straight across River Road into Holton to avoid the school's own backups. This is already unsafe for our kids at bus stops, our elderly walkers, and frankly for anyone just trying to leave for work.

Holton is now asking to expand (CBA-1174-E): higher school enrollment, bigger summer camp, and large-scale rentals — which they acknowledge will mean hundreds of extra car trips a day and “huge surges” on River Road. They also confirmed they do not plan to require busing or carpooling, unlike many other private schools in the area that already mandate it.

Instead of proposing real traffic limits, Holton is suggesting a dedicated left-turn lane out of Royal Dominion — on our side of River Road — which would mostly help Holton drivers cut through Al Marah faster. That would (1) increase cut-through traffic in our neighborhood, (2) box in Al Marah residents trying to turn right, and (3) disrupt our only exits during construction. It also directly affects emergency access.

To make matters worse, when Holton briefed “neighbors” on Sept 9, most Al Marah homeowners were not invited to the Zoom call, despite repeated requests.

We are asking you to oppose this expansion. We cannot absorb more traffic without serious safety, access, and property value consequences. At a minimum, Holton should be required to:

- cap enrollment and event size,
- mandate buses/carpools for existing levels,
- and fund enforcement to stop Holton traffic from using Al Marah as a cut-through.

Thank you for helping protect our neighborhood’s safety and access.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Al Marah, Bethesda MD

Dear Members of the Review Board

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed expansion by Holton Arms School under CBA-1174E which would increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870, increase summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970, and allow facility rentals to groups as large as 870.

I live in Al Marah, a community with approximately 150 single family homes and 22 townhomes in Bethesda, MD. Al Marah is located just inside the 495 Beltway off River Road and is directly across from Holton Arms.

Al Marah already is negatively impacted by Holton Arms traffic on River Road since we only can enter our community using either Burdette or Royal Dominion, both of which are on the stretch of River Road directly affected by Holton Arms traffic.

In addition, Holton student families and faculty/staff already are using our neighborhood as a cut through to avoid the left turn lane on River Rd into Holton. They enter our neighborhood on Burdette and leave via Royal Dominion to enter Holton. Many of them use excessive speed while doing this. This not only increases local traffic, but is a safety hazard, especially since children are waiting for school buses on this route at the times the cars are whizzing by to save time.

I am concerned that the situation will only get worse if Holton Arms is allowed to pursue their proposed expansion.

Holton Arms seems determined to expand their academic and camp enrollments in ways that they admit would result in hundreds of additional cars entering and leaving the school each day. Holton Arms also is determined to rent out facilities to as many as 870 non-Holton people on evenings and weekends, which their traffic consultant admitted would result in "huge surges" of traffic along River Road. This not only affects our neighborhood, but also commuters and other traffic using River Road.

I do not think that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand their student or camp enrollment, nor rent their facilities to large groups. In fact, I would like to see measures taken now, even with their present enrollment to prevent cars from using our neighborhood as a cut through. Restricting traffic to only right or left turns at the intersection of Royal Dominion and River and prohibiting going straight into the Holton entrance would prevent this unless Holton drivers are willing to break the law.

I hope you will make recommendations to oppose the proposed Holton Arms expansion and to help protect our safety, our children, our access to our neighborhood, and our property values.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

[REDACTED]
7528 Pepperell Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Holton Arms School Special Wxemption CBA-1174E
Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 10:03:36 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Review Board Members,

As a resident of the Al Marah neighborhood in Bethesda, across River Rd from the Holton Arms School, I am against the proposed exemption CBA-1174E which will allow for higher school year and summer student enrollment, and the possibility of large events with gatherings of up to 870 people.

Our neighborhood is already impacted by the numerous and often speeding Holton Arms School drivers. Traffic on River Rd and the ramps getting on and off the beltway often get backed up during the morning and afternoon school commutes. Since we have no sidewalks, walkers and students waiting in the streets for buses are often put at risk from cars speeding through our streets in order to get to Holton via Burdette Rd and Royal Dominion Dr. Anyone driving in or out of our neighborhood during the am & pm commutes is already often inconvenienced by the gridlock on River Rd and the beltway ramps caused by the already too high volume of cars trying to access the school.

Increasing the enrollment numbers without instituting measures to alleviate traffic and increase safety will only make a bad situation worse. The school should be required to have a mandatory carpool or busing system. They could increase the size of their River Rd entrance to accommodate more vehicles at one time. It would make more sense to create better access to the school first, before allowing more students and more potential cars on the road.

Thank you for all your efforts to make our county and state better.

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

7504 Pepperell Dr
Bethesda, MD 20817
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Holton Arms Traffic and Proposal
Date: Monday, September 29, 2025 7:14:02 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mrs. Grace Bogdan,

My husband, four kids and I live in Al Marah, a community directly across from Holton Arms School. Our only entry way and exits are Burdette Road and Royal Dominion. These two streets are already heavily affected by Holton traffic daily. In addition to frequent backups on River Road, many Holton families and staff cut through Al Marah to avoid congestion, creating safety risks for children, walkers, and school buses.

Holton's proposed expansion under CBA-1174-E would significantly worsen these problems. The plan would increase student enrollment from 670 to 870, expand summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970, and allow rentals of its facilities to groups of up to 870 people. By Holton's own admission, this could add hundreds of cars per day to an already overburdened roadway. On a September 9 Zoom call, despite strong opposition from neighbors, Holton refused to consider mandatory busing or carpooling- a common sense measures that other local private schools have successfully adopted. Instead, the school relies on "education and incentives," which will do little to reduce traffic once expansion is approved. This would not only harm our neighborhood but also intensify backups for all residents trying to access the Beltway from River Road.

Equally troubling, Holton proposes adding a dedicated left-turn lane out of Al Marah on Royal Dominion. This would invite even more cut-through traffic from Holton families, block residents attempting to turn right, and restrict community access during construction. It would also heighten risks for pedestrians and children boarding buses on our neighborhood streets.

Our family and neighbors are deeply concerned about the impacts on safety, accessibility, and property values. We strongly believe Holton should not be permitted to expand student or camp enrollment or rent its facilities to large groups. At a minimum, the school should be required to implement mandatory busing and enforce restrictions on cut-through traffic, as other private schools have responsibly done.

We respectfully ask for your help in opposing Holton's proposed expansion and in safeguarding the safety, access, and wellbeing of our community.

With appreciation,

[REDACTED]
7533 Pepperell Dr.
Bethesda, MD 20817

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Holton Arms traffic
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 12:45:54 PM
Attachments: [Significant Concerns and Recommendation Against Holton Arms Expansion Proposal 1.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Madam/ Sir,

My family and I are residents of a community called Al Marah located off of River Road (Maryland State Highway 190) in Bethesda, Maryland. Residents of our community only can get in or out of our community by using a stretch of River Road that is just inside the 495 Beltway and is directly affected by traffic related to Holton Arms School, which is directly across River Road from our community. In other words, there is no way for us to avoid River Road traffic generally and Holton Arms traffic specifically. Unfortunately, even with the existing Holton Arms traffic, westbound River Road traffic is often backed up from Wilson Lane to 495, and eastbound River Road is often backed up from Seven Locks Road to Wilson Lane.

Holton Arms has proposed expanding their academic year student body by 30% (another 200 students) and expanding their summer camp enrollment by 44% (another 300 campers). We are very much opposed to the proposed Holton Arms expansion in its current form since existing Holton Arms traffic already causes congestion on River Road and causes significant problems with Holton Arms families cutting through our neighborhood to avoid the congestion on River Road (thus making it very difficult to get into or out of our neighborhood at certain times, and often making it unsafe to walk in our neighborhood, which does not have sidewalks). We believe that the only way that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand would be if they: a) implemented MANDATORY busing for ALL students (something other local area schools have done) and b) mandated and paid for signage and traffic cameras to implement a rule of no Holton Arms traffic through our neighborhood (also something that other local area schools have done for other neighborhoods).

We sent the attached PDF document outlining our preliminary concerns regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion to the Montgomery County DOT and the Maryland DOT web pages, but we thought it was worth bringing the situation directly to your attention as well.

We would very much appreciate your support in opposing or at least modifying (with mandatory busing and neighborhood signage and traffic cameras) the proposed Holton Arms expansion.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

Residents of AlMarah neighborhood

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Holton Arms-Traffic Nightmare
Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 7:41:28 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

I am a long time resident of the Al-Marah community, and my neighbors and I have serious concerns about the proposed expansion by the Holton-Arms School. Our community, which is located just inside the 495 beltway off of River Road, is directly across from Holton-Arms and already deals with traffic from the nearby Primary Day School. The proposed plans would significantly worsen an already problematic situation for our neighborhood.

Our community relies on just two access points from River Road: Burdette Road and Royal Dominion Drive. Both of these entrances are directly in the path of Holton-Arms traffic, and the current volume already causes significant congestion. We are particularly concerned about the school's plan under CBA-1174-E, which would dramatically increase enrollment and allow for large-scale facility rentals. Even the school's own traffic consultant admitted these changes would result in hundreds of more cars coming through River Road causing worse congestion than before. A further concern is the significant "cut-through" traffic we experience as Holton-Arms families and staff use our neighborhood to avoid congestion on River Road.

The school's proposed expansion offers no realistic solution to this problem. In fact, their primary suggestion to build a dedicated left-turn lane at the Royal Dominion Drive exit would only encourage more of this dangerous and disruptive behavior. This "solution" does nothing to address our concerns and would only allow the school to encourage more drivers to use Al-Marah as a bypass rather than use River Road. This plan would exacerbate safety hazards for our residents, including children and elderly walkers, and would limit our own access to our homes. Additionally, the school's planning information includes renting out facilities when school is not in session, further congesting a stretch of River Road that is already heavily impacted by traffic.

We are disappointed that the school has been unwilling to consider proven traffic mitigation strategies, such as mandatory busing and carpooling. Instead, their plan relies solely on education and monetary incentives, strategies that school representatives themselves have conceded might not be effective and would require a significant amount of time to implement. Other local private schools, like The McLean School, The Potomac School,

and Georgetown Day School, have successfully implemented mandatory busing. Holton-Arms also has a second entrance on Burdette, but the school was unwilling to consider having traffic use this alternate path. They also refused to discuss expanding the lanes within their main entrance to better manage traffic, preferring to burden our neighborhood instead. The school's lack of transparent communication with our community has also been deeply disappointing. During a recent Zoom meeting on September 9th, only a select number of our residents were invited, and no public notice was placed in our neighborhood, unlike the notices given to residents in nearby communities. It is clear that the school views our neighborhood as an extension of their entrance rather than a community.

From a neighborhood standpoint, increasing through traffic at our Royal Dominion Drive exit would make it far more difficult for residents to get to work or appointments. We would be blocked in by Holton-Arms cars trying to cross River Road, a problem that many of us have experienced for years.

In conclusion, my neighbors and I urge you to oppose this expansion. We **do NOT** want Holton-Arms to expand, and we **do NOT** want a dedicated left-turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. The school should be required to implement crucial safety measures, such as mandatory busing, and to fund license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton-Arms cars can use Al-Marah as a cut-through. We hope you will make recommendations to help protect our safety and access to our homes.

Thank you for your attention,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); Kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; Sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Holton-Arms Expansion Concerns
Date: Monday, September 22, 2025 5:14:16 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the Members of the Montgomery County Planning Commission,

I am a longtime resident (27+ years) of the Al Marah community located in Bethesda right off of River Road and I-495 and in close proximity to the Holton-Arms school. I am writing to you today to express my deep concern with a recent application that the school has submitted to expand student enrollment under CBA-1174-E. This proposed expansion would increase regular school year enrollment from 670 to 870 students and additionally increase summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970.

Some background, thanks to its location, our neighborhood provides an easy short-cut for students, families and staff looking to get to the Holton Arms campus. A person can simply enter Al Marah on Burdette and leave Al Marah on Royal Dominion to drive straight across River Road to enter Holton Arms. This is frequently done today by many students and staff in an attempt to avoid the heavy Holton Arms traffic on River Road leading to the campus entrance. By expanding the enrollment, you will likely also increase the traffic through our neighborhood, which already is impacted with traffic heading to Primary Day pre-school (corner of Royal Dominion and River Road). Increased school related neighborhood traffic represents a real threat to the safety of our resident pedestrians and children walking to one of several public school bus stops.

A September 9th Zoom call with the school was scheduled to discuss the expansion plans and current status. I was appalled when I learned that the school neglected to send Zoom invitations to residents of our neighborhood after being asked on multiple occasions to do so. Their blatant disregard in this manner is disrespectful to our community. Fortunately for us, the word got around, and several residents were able to join the call.

During the call, it was evident that Holton Arms is aggressively pushing forward to expand enrollment, while admitting that this will cause traffic surges and additional commuting time for River Road drivers. This is a problem since we already frequently have traffic backed up along River Road between Seven Locks Road and Goldsboro Road, including the stretch of River Road where the Holton Arms entrance and the only two entrances to Al Marah are located. When concerned residents raised the possibility of mandating busing and car pools, they were met with resistance. They are simply not willing to make those commitments. Many local private schools use mandatory busing. Instead, Holton Arms is hopeful that internal education and incentives will affect the Holton Arms families willingness to use busing or car pools. Holton Arms also admitted that their planned efforts to incentivize students

and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to Holton Arms might take a long time to implement and there are no guarantees that this will be successful in the end. It is easy to see why the neighborhood is very skeptical that any of this will come to fruition and actually work.

Unfortunately, once increased enrollment and rentals are approved, there is little we can do to limit traffic, so we and our neighbors believe that we need your help in protecting our safety and our neighborhood access now!

It is evident that Holton Arms also has no plans to limit the traffic through Al Marah. This is not shocking since we have seen their student and staff use the neighborhood as a cut through for many years to avoid heavy River Road traffic attempting to enter the campus on many occasions.

In fact, what Holton Arms is proposing would make Al Marah traffic worse, since they are suggesting the construction of a dedicated left hand turn lane out of Al Marah on Royal Dominion (the opposite side of River Road from the school and a road that Holton Arms students and faculty should NOT be using anyway!!!).

This would:

a) encourage and make it easier for Holton Arms families and faculty/staff to cut through our neighborhood, thus exacerbating a safety hazard for our elderly walkers and our children trying to get on or off Montgomery County School buses while Holton cars speed by,

b) make it more difficult for Al Marah residents to get to work or appointments by turning right from Royal Dominion since we would be blocked in by the Holton Arms cars trying to go straight to cross River Road into Holton Arms, and

c) limit the 172 Al Marah families, our service providers, Montgomery County School buses, and emergency responders to using one narrow entrance at Burdette into or out of our neighborhood during a long period of time while the Holton sponsored construction occurred on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion!

Needless to say, I am concerned with this expansion proposal. There are many negatives for the community and the school itself is offering very little in an effort to curb those concerns. I do not think that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand their student or camp enrollment. I believe that even with the current academic and camp enrollments, Holton Arms should be forced to mandate busing, car pooling

and posting of street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton Arms cars can use Al Merah as a cut through. This is a strategy that has been used very successfully by other private schools (e.g. Rochambeau locally) as part of other schools' efforts to be good neighbors.

My hope is that you will consider my concerns and make the recommendation to oppose the school expansion proposal. This action would protect our neighborhood's safety, residential traffic flow and property values.

Thank you for your time,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Holton-Arms proposed expansion under CBA-1174-E
Date: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 1:01:40 PM

Dear Ms Bogdan,

I am writing to you in dismay regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion and the school's disastrous proposal to increase its student enrollment and construct a dedicated left-hand turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. I live on this road and use it every weekday to take my son to his school, Bannockburn Elementary School, or to his bus stop in our neighborhood.

Our community has approximately 150 single-family homes and 22 townhomes in Bethesda, MD. Al Marah is situated just inside the 495 beltway, off River Road, and is directly across from Holton Arms.

Our neighborhood, Al Marah, has many small children, and I regularly witness speeding cars endangering their safety as they cut through our neighborhood at high speed on weekday mornings to get to Holton Arms. My son's safety at his bus stop is jeopardized.

Currently, Holton student families and faculty/staff enter the neighborhood from River Road to Burdette and then turn left on Royal Dominion Drive at high speeds without stopping. Then they continue straight on Royal Dominion Drive to cross River Road and enter the Holton-Amers school. There is no stop sign at the intersection of Burdette and Royal Dominion Drive. In addition, our neighborhood does not have sidewalks, and I frequently witness near accidents involving pedestrians and head-on collisions from cars near the corners of River Road and Burdette, and River Road and Royal Dominion Drive. I don't feel safe going for walks in my own neighborhood even with the current enrollment of Holton Arms.

We are concerned that the situation may get worse if Holton Arms is allowed to pursue its proposed expansion under CBA-1174-E (which would increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870, increase summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970, and allow facility rentals to groups as large as 870).

When contacted about this, the Holton Arms administration indicated that they would notify their community to avoid cutting through our neighborhood on the way to school. However, rather than discouraging them from cutting through our community, their proposal to create a designated left-turn lane on our street would encourage Holton Arms cars to cut through Al Marah and would make it much more difficult for Al Marah residents to get out of Al Marah. This would:

a) encourage and make it easier for Holton Arms families and faculty/staff to cut through our

neighborhood, thus exacerbating a safety hazard for our elderly walkers and our children trying to get on or off Montgomery County School buses while Holton cars speed by,

b) make it more difficult for Al Marah residents to get to work or appointments by turning right from Royal Dominion since we would be blocked in by the Holton Arms cars trying to go straight to cross River Road into Holton Arms, and

c) limit the 172 Al Marah families, our service providers, Montgomery County School buses, emergency responders and all Primary Day School cars to using one narrow entrance at Burdette into or out of our neighborhood during a long period of time while the Holton sponsored construction occurred on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion!

Furthermore, Holton Arms stated that they are not willing to make any commitments to mandate busing, carpools, or other meaningful traffic mitigation strategies if they are allowed to increase academic year enrollment, summer camp enrollment, and/or facility rentals. Instead, Holton Arms hopes that “education and incentives” will influence the Holton Arms families’ willingness to use busing or carpools. Unfortunately, once increased enrollment and rentals are approved, there is little we can do to limit traffic, so we and our neighbors believe that we need your help in protecting our safety and our neighborhood access now!

Holton Arms said that they think that mandatory busing is not appropriate for their student body, even though other local private schools use mandatory busing (e.g. - The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St Patrick's, The Lab School, etc.). Furthermore, Holton Arms admitted that their planned efforts to incentivize (rather than require) students and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to Holton Arms might take a long time and are not guaranteed to be successful.

As a concerned resident of the Al Marah neighborhood who is directly harmed (together with my entire neighborhood) by the speeding cars cutting through our neighborhood and by the ever-increasing traffic gridlock in the area, I humbly request that you make recommendations to OPPOSE (i) the proposed Holton Arms expansion and (ii) their proposal to designate a left turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. A rejection of these ill-conceived proposals will help protect our children’s safety and our ability to go in and out of our neighborhood in a safe way.

In fact, even with the current academic and camp enrollments, Holton Arms should be compelled to mandate busing and pay for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that prohibits Holton Arms cars from using Al Marah as a cut-through. This is a strategy that has been used very successfully by other private schools (e.g. Rochambeau locally) as part of other schools’ efforts to be good neighbors.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

7509 Royal Dominion Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

[REDACTED]

To: the Montgomery County Office of Zoning and County Hearings
Subject: Opposing Holton Arms School Proposed Expansion and Traffic Disruption

October 29, 2025

Dear Ms. Robeson Hannan,

As a resident of Montgomery County for over 30 years who lives in the Al Marah neighborhood, I am writing to strongly oppose: a) the proposed Holton Arms expansion, and b) the proposal by Holton Arms to build a dedicated left hand turn lane on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion Drive (a road that Holton Arms families should not be using anyway).

Specifically... **I am opposed to the proposed Holton Arms expansion of their academic year and camp enrollments**, both of which would exacerbate the already bad traffic on River Road and the disruptive and dangerous Holton Arms traffic through Al Marah. **I also am strongly opposed to the rental of Holton Arms facilities to groups of up to 870 people which would cause huge uncontrollable surges of traffic** along River Road and potentially through Al Marah.

I also am disappointed that Holton Arms, unlike many other local private schools (e.g. The McLean School, Rochambeau, Georgetown Day School, etc), is UNWILLING to MANDATE busing, car pooling or any other meaningful and effective traffic mitigation strategy. Any local school should factor in community impact.

I am also strongly opposed to that Holton Arms suggested strategy of adding a dedicated left hand turn lane on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion. It would benefit only their families and faculty and add child safety risks and major inconvenience for many others. The left hand turn lane might help Holton Arms families and faculty who already cut through Al Marah on a daily basis (entering on Burdette and then using Royal Dominion to go straight across River Road in an effort to avoid the heavy Holton Arms traffic on River Road).

Such a dedicated left hand turn lane would harm Al Marah residents by: a) encouraging Holton families and faculty to cut through our neighborhood, thus exacerbating a safety hazard for our children as they try to get on or off Montgomery County School buses while Holton cars zoom by, b) making it more difficult for Al Marah residents to turn right from Royal Dominion to go to work or appointments (since we would be behind Holton cars going straight across River Road to enter Holton), and c) limiting the 175 Al Marah families, our service providers, Montgomery County School buses, and emergency responders to using one narrow entrance at Burdette into and out of our neighborhood during a long period of time while the Holton sponsored construction occurred on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion. This trade off is clearly not justified.

Holton Arms does not seem to want to be a good neighbor and does not consider community impact.

Thank you for help in ensuring that the proposed Holton Arms expansion and the proposed construction on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion Drive do NOT happen.


Pepperell Court, Bethesda

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; sholcombe@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Opposition to Holton Arms Application for Special Exemption
Date: Friday, September 19, 2025 9:23:33 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am aware that Holton Arms submitted its application for a special exemption for a significant expansion of their student body and camp enrollment. Like others who reside in the AlMarah/Riverway neighborhood, my husband and I are strongly opposed to the exemption. As detailed in the below comprehensive letter from our neighbor, [REDACTED] approval will trigger significant safety issues, exacerbate already terrible traffic on River Road in the vicinity of Holton Arms, which borders the River Road entrance to the Beltway, and impact our and our neighbors' abilities to commute to work in a timely and safe manner. Holton Arms wants to expand their student body and camp enrollment to generate revenue. Approving the expansion will negatively and significantly impact our property values. We hope you will consider these impacts and deny the Holton Arms exemption request.

Below is the comprehensive summary of the likely impacts provided to you by our neighbor, [REDACTED]. We have been following Holton Arm's submission closely, and we know [REDACTED] summary is accurate. We have also been tracking the traffic in and out of Holton Arms and our neighborhood and can confirm that the traffic is already substantial. At a minimum, we believe that Holton's exemption request warrants a traffic study during the hours that students and campers arrive and leave school before Montgomery County Planning and the Maryland DOT makes any decisions on the exemption request.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

7634 Royal Dominion Drive

Bethesda, Maryland 20187

Begin forwarded message:

[REDACTED] [com](#)>

Date: September 16, 2025 at 4:14:21 PM EDT

[REDACTED]

avoid safety and
community access problems

Now that Holton Arms has submitted their updated documents (see:

<https://www.holton-arms.edu/about/specialexception>), Montgomery County Planning and the Maryland DOT will review the Holton documents and send a recommendation to OZAH regarding whether or not OZAH should approve the Holton Arms proposed expansion. Below is the note that I sent to MoCo Planning and MD DOT. I hope you will send similar notes (using your own words so it doesn't look like a form letter).

Thanks, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

[REDACTED]

Subject: Request for help to avoid safety and community access problems
To: Bogdan, Grace

<grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>,
<florence.dwyer@montgomerycountypolanning.org>,
<kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov>,
<sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov>

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following up on communications with you several months ago, my husband and I live in Al Marah a community with approximately 150 single family homes and 22 townhomes in Bethesda, MD. Al Marah is located just inside the 495 beltway off of River Road and is directly across from Holton Arms.

Al Marah already is very negatively impacted by Holton Arms traffic on River Road since we ONLY can enter our community using either Burdette or Royal Dominion, both of which are on the stretch of River Road directly affected by Holton Arms traffic. We also are very negatively impacted by Holton Arms traffic through our community since Holton student families and faculty/staff enter Al Marah on Burdette and leave Al Marah on Royal Dominion to drive straight across River Road to enter Holton Arms, in an effort to avoid heavy Holton Arms traffic on River Road. We are concerned that the situation may get worse if Holton Arms is allowed to pursue their proposed expansion under CBA-1174-E (which would increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870, increase summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970, and allow facility rentals to groups as large as 870).

We are even more concerned about the situation after listening to a Holton Arms Zoom call on Sept 9. The Zoom call was supposed to update neighbors about the proposed expansion. However, Holton Arms declined to send Zoom invitations to residents of the 150 single family homes in Al Marah despite multiple requests for the school to do so (although the school did invite the residents of the 22 Al Marah townhouses as well as residents of other communities who would be less impacted by the proposed expansion).

Luckily, several of us in Al Marah were able to register for and participate in the Sept 9 Zoom call with Holton Arms. It was a very disappointing and unproductive call. Despite significant traffic concerns voiced by EVERY neighbor who spoke on the call, Holton Arms is determined to expand their academic and camp enrollments in ways that they admit would result in hundreds of additional cars entering and leaving the school each day. Holton Arms also is determined to rent out facilities to as many as 870 non-Holton people, which their traffic consultant admitted would result in “huge surges” of traffic along River Road. This is a problem since we already frequently have traffic backed up along River Road between Seven Locks Road and Goldsboro Road, including the stretch of River Road where the Holton Arms entrance and the only two entrances to Al Marah are located. Furthermore, Holton Arms said they are **NOT willing to make any commitments to MANDATE busing, car pools or other meaningful traffic mitigation strategies** if they are allowed to increase academic year enrollment, summer camp enrollment and/or facility rentals. Instead, Holton Arms is hoping that “education and incentives” will affect the Holton Arms families willingness to use busing or car pools. Unfortunately, once increased enrollment and rentals are approved, there is little we can do to limit traffic, so we and our neighbors believe that we need your help in protecting our safety and our neighborhood access now!

Holton Arms said that they think that mandatory busing is not appropriate for their student body, even though other local private schools use mandatory busing (e.g. - The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St Patricks, The Lab School, etc.). Furthermore, Holton Arms admitted that their planned efforts to incentivize (rather than require) students and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to Holton Arms might take a long time and are not guaranteed to be successful.

Additionally, Holton Arms has no realistic proposal to limit the dangerous and disruptive Holton Arms traffic through Al Marah. It is not surprising that Holton Arms is not proposing any way to stop Holton Arms traffic

through our neighborhood, since even Holton Arms senior staff and faculty use Al Marah as a cut through to avoid heavy Holton Arms River Road traffic.

In fact, what Holton Arms is proposing would make Al Marah traffic worse, since they are suggesting the construction of a dedicated left hand turn lane out of Al Marah on Royal Dominion (the opposite side of River Road from the school and a road that Holton Arms students and faculty should NOT be using anyway!!!). This would:

a) encourage and make it easier for Holton Arms families and faculty/staff to cut through our neighborhood, thus exacerbating a safety hazard for our elderly walkers and our children trying to get on or off Montgomery County School buses while Holton cars speed by,

b) make it more difficult for Al Marah residents to get to work or appointments by turning right from Royal Dominion since we would be blocked in by the Holton Arms cars trying to go straight to cross River Road into Holton Arms, and

c) limit the 172 Al Marah families, our service providers, Montgomery County School buses, and emergency responders to using one narrow entrance at Burdette into or out of our neighborhood during a long period of time while the Holton sponsored construction occurred on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion!

Needless to say, my husband and I and our Al Marah neighbors are gravely concerned about the proposed Holton Arms expansion. Not only would it result in increased congestion on River Road and increased dangerous and disruptive traffic through our community, but it would make it difficult for us to access our neighborhood and would decrease our property values.

We do NOT want Holton Arms to expand, and we really do NOT want a dedicated left hand turn lane on Royal Dominion going out of Al Marah!

We do NOT think that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand their student or camp enrollment and we do NOT think that Holton Arms should be allowed to rent their facilities to large groups. In fact, we believe that even with the current academic and camp enrollments, Holton Arms should be forced to mandate busing and to pay for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton Arms cars can use Al Marah as a cut through. This is a strategy that has been used very successfully by other private schools (e.g. Rochambeau locally) in other schools' efforts to be good neighbors.

We hope you will make recommendations to oppose the proposed Holton Arms expansion and to help protect our safety, our access to our neighborhood, and our property values.

Thanks, 

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Opposition to Proposal CBA-1174-E
Date: Monday, October 6, 2025 11:53:34 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

I am reaching out with deep concern regarding Holton Arms School's plan to increase its enrollment and alter traffic flows on Royal Dominion Drive. This initiative threatens to overwhelm our local streets with congestion and poses a direct risk to the safety of our community — specially our children. Our neighborhood, Al Marah, is made up of roughly 150 single-family residences and 22 townhomes. Located just off River Road, east of Seven Locks Road and directly opposite Holton Arms, Royal Dominion Drive is the main route our residents use to access River Road each day.

Under proposal CBA-1174-E, Holton Arms intends to boost its student population from 670 to 870, expand summer camp attendance from 665 to 970, and allow facility rentals for groups up to 870. Such increases will dramatically raise the number of vehicles passing through our area, turning our neighborhood into a shortcut for school traffic. The result will be even more severe gridlock during already busy morning and afternoon periods.

Currently, Holton families and staff traveling west on River Road (toward Potomac) turn right, which frequently causes backups stretching nearly three-quarters of a mile to Wilson Lane. Eastbound drivers (toward Washington) use the left turn lane at Royal Dominion to enter Holton. To avoid this left turn, many opt to turn right onto Burdette Drive, cut through our neighborhood, then turn left onto Royal Dominion and cross River Road to reach the school. This detour is not ideal, but it is a common shortcut for those seeking to bypass traffic. For residents, attempting to use Burdette, Royal Dominion, or River Road during these times can add 10-15 minutes to their commute just to reach River Road.

This traffic mess also creates unsafe conditions for families—parents and children walking or waiting at bus stops, or driving to school, as well as commuters using the M84 bus which stops along River Road. In their rush to get to Holton or continue their

commute, drivers speed through Burdette and Royal Dominion, endangering pedestrians and other vehicles as they race toward the traffic light at River Road. Our streets lack sidewalks and are poorly illuminated, leading to frequent close calls between cars, walkers, and pets. Even with current enrollment, morning and afternoon walks have become risky.

When approached about these issues, Holton Arms stated they would encourage their community to avoid using our neighborhood as a shortcut. However, voluntary measures and “encouragement” are insufficient. The school has not shown a willingness to require busing, carpools, or other effective traffic solutions if their expansion is approved. Instead, they hope that education and incentives will persuade families to change their habits. Once the expansion is authorized, our ability to control traffic will be minimal, so we urgently need your support to safeguard our neighborhood. Holton Arms claims that mandatory busing is unsuitable for their students. While I understand the desire for convenience, I am perplexed as to why Holton cannot adopt mandatory busing like other private schools in the area (such as The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St. Patrick's, The Lab School, etc.). The school admits that relying on incentives rather than requirements may take years and offers no guarantee of success.

As a resident of Al Marah directly affected by increased traffic, pollution, and noise, I urge you to OPPOSE (i) the proposed expansion of Holton Arms and (ii) the plan to designate a left turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. These proposals must be rejected to protect our children and preserve safe access to our homes for residents, as well as emergency vehicles.

Even with current enrollment, Holton Arms should be required to implement mandatory busing and fund license plate monitoring and signage to prevent school traffic from cutting through Al Marah. Other schools, such as Rochambeau, have successfully adopted these measures to be responsible neighbors.

If Holton Arms is unwilling to make these changes, I suggest they consider relocating to a larger, less congested site where expansion would not harm the surrounding community.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); [Kwesi Woodroffe](#); Sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Opposition to Proposed Holton-Arms Expansion
Date: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 9:52:07 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I am writing to express my opposition to the expansion plans of the Holton-Arms School. My family and I live in the Al Marah neighborhood directly across from the school on the other side of River Road. We moved to our home here in 1996.

Our children are now grown, but I care deeply about my neighbors' children who use our five MCPS school bus stops (for Bannockburn Elementary, Pyle Middle, and Whitman High School) and the rest of us who bike and run in our neighborhood. We also have many residents taking walks in our neighborhood who are elderly and/or take infants for walks in strollers. This walking occurs in the street because we do not have sidewalks. We are tired of having to "look out" for Holton families who rush through our neighborhood to go to and from their private school because they have a problem waiting in traffic on River Road with everyone else. Our neighborhood is being used as a parking lot that they cut through to save a minute or two.

We fear that any expansion of Holton will greatly worsen the current situation. I was on their zoom call and asked what they plan to do to help improve this situation. Their attorney responded that some of these cars are Holton families who live in our neighborhood, even when I told them about a car I saw that had turned into our neighborhood from River Road onto Burdette, then turned left onto Royal Dominion and crossed River Road to go to Holton. I was in my car and followed this vehicle just to the boundary of our neighborhood. This car had a Virginia license plate! In fact, I have spoken to a Holton family in our neighborhood, and they said they are opposed to the expansion; they do not want their school to become larger. I have heard that there are many Holton families opposed to the expansion. The limited size of the school seems to be one of its qualities.

Please take into serious consideration the lives and homes of our 153 property owners and their families. We are a close-knit community with so many children that are out and about in our neighborhood, especially when they are waiting for the school bus and when they come home in the afternoon - times that Holton drivers are also out and about in our neighborhood when they should be staying on River Road. I recently met a man walking in our neighborhood who is a resident of the retirement community Fox Hills that is across from us on River Road. He crosses River Road to walk in our neighborhood mid-day when there is less traffic and because it is such a pleasant area. Please help us keep our neighborhood from having more cut-through traffic by motorists who have no interest in our residents' safety and quality of life.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

7528 Pepperell Drive

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Planned expansion for the Holton Arms School in Montgomery County - Significant Concerns
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:27:20 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

We are writing as residents of the Al Marah community, located just off River Road (Maryland State Highway 190) in Bethesda, within the I-495 Beltway. Our neighborhood's only access point is via River Road—a corridor already heavily impacted by traffic, particularly during drop-off and pick-up times at Holton-Arms School, which is situated directly across from our entrance.

Given this configuration, we are unavoidably affected by general congestion on River Road and specifically by traffic associated with Holton-Arms. Currently, westbound River Road often experiences significant backups from Wilson Lane to the Beltway, while the eastbound side sees similar delays stretching from Seven Locks Road to Wilson Lane.

We are deeply concerned about Holton-Arms' proposed expansion, which would increase enrollment during the academic year by 30% (approximately 200 additional students) and grow summer camp capacity by 44% (an additional 300 campers). As it stands, the school's traffic already strains the surrounding infrastructure and leads to frequent cut-through driving in our residential streets. This not only disrupts neighborhood access but also poses serious safety risks, especially as our streets lack sidewalks.

Given these existing challenges, we strongly oppose the proposed expansion in its current form. However, should the school wish to proceed, we believe the following conditions must be met to protect neighborhood safety and quality of life:

Mandatory busing for all students – This policy is already successfully implemented by several other private schools in the region and would significantly reduce traffic volume.

Installation of traffic signage and enforcement mechanisms – Specifically, the school should fund signage and traffic cameras to prohibit Holton-Arms-related cut-through traffic in our neighborhood. Similar measures have been adopted elsewhere and have proven effective in preserving residential street safety.

Your support in advocating for either the rejection of this proposal or the inclusion of strong traffic mitigation measures—such as mandatory busing and neighborhood traffic restrictions—would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]

From: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Brockmyer, Richard](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A ticket is assigned to you (Holton Arms)
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 4:54:00 PM
Attachments: [image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)

[REDACTED]

My apologies for the delayed reply. I also want to let you know I will be out of the office starting tomorrow, June 11th through Friday, June 20th. I've provided responses below, but will be available to continue the conversation upon my return.

1. While we have a database of various approvals for the schools you mentioned below, the specifics are not organized in the way you've outlined. I suggest reviewing the [Development Activity Information Center \(DAIC\)](#), which can be search a project by name, address, or application number.
2. MCDOT and SHA do not conduct their own analysis. The Applicant submits the Transportation Study as part of the application and then it is reviewed by Planning and the other agencies to ensure it meets the standards and criteria set forth in the County Code and the latest Growth and Infrastructure Policy and the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR). The motor vehicle component of the study is based on the requirements of the LATR and what was scoped for the LATR study prior to the application submittal.
3. While the project was initially scheduled to be considered by the Hearing Examiner in July, it has been postponed to this fall to allow further review.

Sincerely,

Grace



Grace Bogdan (she/her/hers)
Planner IV, DownCounty Planning Division
Bethesda Design Advisory Panel (DAP) Coordinator

Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reedie Drive, 13th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902
grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301.495.4533



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:45 PM
To: Bogdan, Grace <grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]; Dickel, Stephanie
<Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Re: A ticket is assigned to you (Holton Arms)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

Thank you for your willingness to answer questions regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion (Case No: CBA-1174-E).

As you know, we are opposed to the proposed Holton Arms expansion and we believe that the information that Holton Arms has presented in the special exception application has several deficiencies. We and our neighbors are not zoning experts and we would like to avoid having to pay \$20,000 or more to hire attorneys to oppose, or at least modify, the proposed Holton Arms expansion. With that in mind, we have the following questions:

1) We are aware that several local area schools (e.g. the McClean School, Rochambeau, the Potomac School) have mandatory busing of students in order to avoid the types of traffic problems in their neighborhoods that we already experience in our neighborhood due to Holton Arms traffic. We also are aware that some local schools have staggered drop-off times, assigned entrances, and have clear rules against school families taking shortcuts through local neighborhoods (enforced by traffic cameras and fines). The Holton Arms application lists these schools and the size of their student bodies, but the Holton Arms application does not address the restrictions that these schools have used to prevent traffic problems. We suspect that Montgomery County already has a database containing traffic related restrictions for other area private schools. Does your office already have information regarding the restrictions that other private schools have put in place, or do we need to research and present that information for your consideration?

2) We sent the Montgomery County Department of Transportation a preliminary list of our concerns about the proposed Holton Arms expansion and a summary of certain deficiencies associated with the traffic study commissioned by Holton Arms (see attached PDF document for your ease of reference), but we want to ensure that we have done what is necessary for these concerns to be addressed fully and in a proper manner for the record. We have received conflicting advice regarding what we need to do. It was our understanding that Montgomery County and the State of Maryland would do their own analysis of the traffic considerations, and that individual tax payers did not need to commission a traffic study of our own. However, we recently received advice indicating that we may need to pay a lot of money for a traffic analysis of our own. Can you please let us know whether Montgomery County and/or Maryland will do their own traffic analysis?

3) The hearing administrator (Kathleen Byrne) has asked the newly appointed Holton Arms attorney (Soo Lee-Cho) to coordinate with us (and others who have opposed the proposed Holton Arms expansion) to determine an appropriate hearing date. We want to ensure that the hearing date allows enough time for Montgomery County and the State of Maryland to do a thorough analysis of the situation, taking into account usual summer absences and the importance of conducting sufficient on-site examinations during in-school periods. Can you please let us know approximately how much time you and your colleagues will need to complete your own analysis and review and when such analysis will be made available?

Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

On Mon, Jun 2, 2025 at 12:06 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Thank you! We really appreciate your help with all of this!

On Mon, Jun 2, 2025 at 12:03 PM Bogdan, Grace <grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Hi [REDACTED] -

Yes, Kwesi Woodroffe is with MDSHA. He was cc'd on the email sent by Mr. Somarajan which also includes a copy of your letter so he has the documentation. You are more than welcome to reach out to him individually.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Grace



Grace Bogdan (she/her/hers)

Planner IV, DownCounty Planning Division
Bethesda Design Advisory Panel (DAP) Coordinator

Montgomery County Planning Department
[2425 Reedie Drive](#), 13th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902
grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301.495.4533



From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 11:25 AM

To: Bogdan, Grace <grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Fwd: A ticket is assigned to you (Holton Arms)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

In his note below, Deepak Somarajan suggested that we contact you with any questions. Based on the note below, it appears that MCDOT has received the attached document outlining our concerns regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion. However, I could not tell if anyone at MDSHA has received our document or whether I need to send it to someone at MDSHA. Is Kweskin Woodroffe at MDSHA?

Thank you in advance for your assistance in keeping our Al Marah community accessible and safe.

Best regards, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Somarajan, Deepak <Deepak.Somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Date: Mon, Jun 2, 2025 at 10:18 AM

Subject: RE: A ticket is assigned to you (Holton Arms)

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:[REDACTED]@montgomeryplanning.org)>, Torma, Rebecca <Rebecca.Torma-Kim@montgomerycountymd.gov>, Brockmyer, Richard <richard.brockmyer@montgomeryplanning.org>, grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org <grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>, Kwesi Woodroffe <kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov>

[REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting us with your concerns. We will consider them as part of the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) review. Please see below for our response to your comments:

1. In regards to noticing, the Project is required to provide noticing based on the standards within Section 59.7.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. Conditional Use/Special Exception applications and noticing are coordinated with the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings (OZAH). If you'd like more information on noticing, please reach out to OZAH at 240-777-6667. If you'd like to know more about the application and process, you can contact Grace Bogdan, the Lead Reviewer for the application, grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4533. We've coordinated with Grace to ensure

these comments will be included in the staff report to the Hearing Examiner when considering the application.

2. We understand your concerns, and they will be evaluated as part of the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) review process. The traffic study is currently under review by both MCDOT and MDSHA. Since River Road is maintained by MDSHA, they will have final authority in approving or denying the Traffic Impact Study (TIS).

Thank you

Deepak Somarajan

*******Please see the link below for new Application Process & Sight Distance Form*******

Application: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/DevRevApplication.pdf>

Sight Distance Form: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/SightDistanceForm.pdf>

Deepak Somarajan, PE, PTOE, LEED AP BD+C

Engineer III, Development Review Team

Director's Office, Department of Transportation

[101 Monroe Street, 10th floor](#)

[Rockville, MD 20850](#)

[Office 240-777-2194](#)

Cell: 240-383-5237

deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov

Stay connected



From: PowerApps EPS <PowerApps.EPS@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 8:01 AM

To: TrafficOps <TrafficOps@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Subject: A ticket is assigned to you

Hi TrafficOps:

[A ticket](#) has been assigned to you. Please take a look.

Choose your topic Other topic

Name

[REDACTED]

Street Address

[7713 Zulima Court](#)

City

Bethesda

State

MD

ZIP Code 20817

Email

Phone Number

Citation Number

My comment or question is

We are residents of Al Marah (a community directly across the street from Holton Arms). We have significant concerns about the proposed expansion of Holton Arms. We think that the increased traffic would not only significantly exacerbate local traffic problems, but would create safety issues for our community and would decrease the value of our homes. We have explained our concerns in the attached document, and we are requesting that the MCDOT recommend against the Holton Arms application for modification to existing special exception CBA-1174-E. Thanks in advance for your help in keeping our community accessible and safe. Best regards, Meg VanDeWeghe and Richard Bowe

Thanks

Director's office

For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

From: 
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); Kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; Sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Request for Assistance within Al-Marah Neighborhood
Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 3:59:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Members of Montgomery County Planning and Maryland DOT,

I am writing to you today as a 36-year resident of the Al-Marah community to share a serious concern my neighbors and I have regarding a proposed expansion by the Holton-Arms School. Our community, with its 172 homes, is located just inside the 495 beltway off of River Road and is directly across from Holton Arms and already contains the elementary school Primary Day. My neighbors and I believe the proposed plans by the Holton Arms School could significantly worsen an already problematic situation.

Al Marah relies on just two points of access from River Road: Burdette Road and Royal Dominion Drive. Both of these entrances are in the direct path of Holton-Arms traffic, and the current volume already causes significant congestion. We are particularly concerned about the school's plan under **CBA-1174-E**, which would dramatically increase enrollment and allow for large-scale facility rentals. These changes would bring hundreds of additional cars to River Road daily, a fact even the school's traffic consultant admitted would result in "huge surges" of traffic. A further concern is the significant "cut-through" traffic we experience as Holton-Arms families and staff use our neighborhood to avoid congestion on River Road.

The school's proposed expansion offers no realistic solution to this problem. In fact, their flagship suggestion to build a dedicated left-turn lane out of our neighborhood on Royal Dominion Drive would only encourage more of this dangerous and disruptive behavior, and does nothing to address the concerns of myself nor my neighbors as it only allows the school to encourage more drivers through Al-Marah rather than utilize River Road. This plan would exacerbate safety hazards for our residents, including children and elderly walkers, and would limit our own access to our homes. Furthermore, the school's planning information includes renting out facilities to up to 870 non-Holton-Arms affiliated individuals on days when school is not in session, like weekends or for summer camps. The school's own traffic consultant noted this would further congest River Road, a stretch that is already heavily impacted by traffic between Seven Locks and Goldsboro Road and frequent 495 backups.

The school was unwilling to consider proven traffic mitigation strategies, such as mandatory busing and carpooling, in favor of a plan that relies solely on education and monetary incentives. When questioned about the past effectiveness of such incentives, school representatives were non-committal, and one even conceded that these plans might not be successful and would require a significant amount of time to implement. Additionally, Holton Arms representatives mentioned that "mandatory busing is not appropriate for their student body", even though other local private schools use mandatory busing (e.g. - The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St Patricks, The Lab School, etc.). Holton-Arms also has a second entrance on Burdette, but when neighbors asked why traffic couldn't use this alternate path, the school was unwilling to consider it. They also refused to discuss expanding the lanes within their main entrance to

better manage traffic during prolonged light cycles, preferring to burden River Road and Al-Marah instead. Holton-Arms has not offered a realistic proposal to limit dangerous cut-through traffic. Instead of using their own large campus to create alternative entrances or exits, they are treating our neighborhood as a convenient bypass.

From a neighborhood standpoint, increasing through traffic at our Royal Dominion Drive exit would make it far more difficult for residents to get to work or appointments. We would be blocked in by Holton-Arms cars trying to cross River Road, a problem I have experienced numerous times over the decades I have lived here. As a physician working in Washington D.C. and a resident of Zulima Court, which is close to the Royal Dominion exit and already congested by traffic to Primary Day School, this proposal would significantly affect my ability to even reach the main road, let alone get to work on time.

The school's lack of neighborly treatment has also been deeply disappointing. For example, during a recent Zoom meeting on September 9th, only a select number of our residents were invited. No public notice was placed in our neighborhood, unlike the notices given to residents in the nearby Burdette and Burning Tree communities. It is clear that the school views our neighborhood as an extension of their entrance rather than as a community of neighbors.

In conclusion, my neighbors and I urge you to oppose this expansion. We **do NOT** want Holton-Arms to expand, and we **do NOT** want a dedicated left-turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. At their current enrollment, Holton-Arms should be required to implement crucial safety measures, such as mandatory busing, and to pay for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton-Arms cars can use Al-Marah as a cut-through. We hope you will make recommendations to help protect our safety and access to our homes.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; Sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Request for Assistance within Al-Marah Neighborhood
Date: Thursday, September 18, 2025 6:24:21 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Members of Montgomery County Planning and Maryland DOT,

I am writing as a newer resident of the Al-Marah neighborhood to share my concerns about Holton-Arms School's proposed expansion. My fiancé and I recently made our home here, and we hope to raise a family in this community one day. We value the safety, quiet, and sense of neighborhood life Al-Marah provides, but the school's plans would put those qualities at risk by worsening traffic, encouraging cut-through driving, and making it more difficult for residents to safely access our homes.

Al-Marah has only two entrances from River Road: Burdette Road and Royal Dominion Drive. Both already back up during school arrival and dismissal times, and traffic from Holton-Arms frequently spills into our neighborhood. The proposed expansion under CBA-1174-E would bring hundreds of additional cars each day, a problem even the school's own traffic consultant admitted would result in "huge surges." Cut-through driving is already an issue, and this plan would intensify it.

One element that deeply concerns me is the idea of building a dedicated left-turn lane from Al-Marah onto River Road at Royal Dominion Drive. Rather than easing congestion, it would funnel more school traffic through our neighborhood. This is particularly unsafe because many residents, including children and older adults, regularly walk here for exercise. My fiancé frequently runs through the neighborhood, and I often take walks throughout the day. We want our neighborhood to remain safe and free from heavy traffic that would endanger us and our neighbors. For this reason, the left-turn lane should not be considered as part of any future plan.

Adding to the problem, Primary Day is located along the road where this proposed left-turn lane would be built. Increased traffic here would be a disaster, both during construction and permanently afterward. Just today around 3 p.m., I turned into our neighborhood during school pickup, and the backups from Primary Day parents were overwhelming. We simply cannot afford to add another layer of congestion.

Morning commutes are another major concern. Turning left out of Al-Marah to head toward I-495 South is already unreasonably congested—it can take more than 20 minutes just to reach the highway. Adding more cars from Holton-Arms' expansion could easily make that backup worse, further trapping residents in their own neighborhood and delaying their ability to get to work, school, or appointments.

What is most frustrating is that Holton-Arms has not pursued proven solutions. Other independent schools in our region require busing or enforce carpooling, but Holton-Arms has dismissed those approaches in favor of voluntary incentives they admit may not be effective. They have also declined to consider improvements on their own property, such as widening their main entrance or better utilizing their Burdette Road access point, which could alleviate

congestion without shifting the burden onto our neighborhood.

As someone invested in Al-Marah's future, I strongly oppose this expansion and, in particular, the construction of a left-turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. This should not be considered under any circumstances. At the very least, the school should be required to adopt meaningful measures, like mandatory busing and enforceable limits on neighborhood cut-through traffic, before any growth is considered.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for helping to protect the safety and quality of life in our community.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Dwyer, Florence](#); [Bogdan, Grace](#); kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Request for help to Avoid Safety and Community Access Problems
Date: Friday, September 19, 2025 2:01:54 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hi there-

I'm going to keep it short and sweet. I'm no one important and don't have any titles in front or behind my name. My husband, daughter and I live off of Royal Dominion Drive in Bethesda MD. I am emailing in regards to the Holton Arms School Expansion. My husband and I believe our neighborhood won't be able to stop the expansion because they have expensive lawyers and loads of money (which usually seems to get you what you want around here). BUT, I do want you to know the traffic in our neighborhood AND River can be REALLY bad during certain parts of the day. Holton students/parents will come cruising through our neighborhood so they can cut across River to get to school/avoiding the light and rarely look for other people when turning onto Royal Dominion. I know they had people out there taking a survey to see how many were cutting across last week or so, but I'm also sure there was an email the day before which said "don't cut through the neighborhood".

I will simply say "we are not for the plan" but chances are slim we can stop it therefore my husband and I would REALLY like a DO NOT ENTER from 7-9:30am M-F (except buses) on River/Burdette like they have EVERYWHERE in the communities all throughout Bethesda/Chevy Chase. Interestingly enough, I overheard a parent telling me they went to see their daughter's field hockey game at Holton the other day and it took them 30min from the River Road traffic and the traffic/pick up in the school. She even said "I thought our school was bad, but it's horrible at Holton".

I will finish with making sure you know we are COMPLETELY against having any new roads/turn roads built. That will just be an open invitation to come cruising through our neighborhood. We are a very very small neighborhood with no sidewalks. It makes better sense to put up a sign and keep kids, adults, dogs safe with a "do not enter" during the impactful times.

Thanks for your time,

[REDACTED]
7621 Royal Dominion Dr
Bethesda MD 20817
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](mailto:Bogdan_Grace); florence.dwyer@montgomerycountyp Planning.org; kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Request for help to avoid safety and community access problems
Date: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 3:58:17 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following up on communications with you several months ago, my husband and I live in Al Marah a community with approximately 150 single family homes and 22 townhomes in Bethesda, MD. Al Marah is located just inside the 495 beltway off of River Road and is directly across from Holton Arms.

Al Marah already is very negatively impacted by Holton Arms traffic on River Road since we ONLY can enter our community using either Burdette or Royal Dominion, both of which are on the stretch of River Road directly affected by Holton Arms traffic. We also are very negatively impacted by Holton Arms traffic through our community since Holton student families and faculty/staff enter Al Marah on Burdette and leave Al Marah on Royal Dominion to drive straight across River Road to enter Holton Arms, in an effort to avoid heavy Holton Arms traffic on River Road. We are concerned that the situation may get worse if Holton Arms is allowed to pursue their proposed expansion under CBA-1174-E (which would increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870, increase summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970, and allow facility rentals to groups as large as 870).

We are even more concerned about the situation after listening to a Holton Arms Zoom call on Sept 9. The Zoom call was supposed to update neighbors about the proposed expansion. However, Holton Arms declined to send Zoom invitations to residents of the 150 single family homes in Al Marah despite multiple requests for the school to do so (although the school did invite the residents of the 22 Al Marah townhouses as well as residents of other communities who would be less impacted by the proposed expansion).

Luckily, several of us in Al Marah were able to register for and participate in the Sept 9 Zoom call with Holton Arms. It was a very disappointing and unproductive call. Despite significant traffic concerns voiced by EVERY neighbor who spoke on the call, Holton Arms is determined to expand their academic and camp enrollments in ways that they admit would result in hundreds of additional cars entering and leaving the school each day. Holton Arms also is determined to rent out facilities to as many as 870 non-Holton people, which their traffic consultant admitted would result in “huge surges” of traffic along River Road. This is a problem since we already frequently have traffic backed up along River Road between Seven Locks Road and Goldsboro Road, including the stretch of River Road where the Holton Arms entrance and the only two entrances to Al Marah are located. Furthermore, Holton Arms said they are **NOT willing to make any commitments to MANDATE busing, car pools or other meaningful traffic mitigation strategies** if they are allowed to increase academic year enrollment, summer camp enrollment and/or facility rentals. Instead, Holton Arms is hoping that “education and incentives” will affect the Holton Arms families willingness to use busing

or car pools. Unfortunately, once increased enrollment and rentals are approved, there is little we can do to limit traffic, so we and our neighbors believe that we need your help in protecting our safety and our neighborhood access now!

Holton Arms said that they think that mandatory busing is not appropriate for their student body, even though other local private schools use mandatory busing (e.g. - The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St Patricks, The Lab School, etc.). Furthermore, Holton Arms admitted that their planned efforts to incentivize (rather than require) students and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to Holton Arms might take a long time and are not guaranteed to be successful.

Additionally, Holton Arms has no realistic proposal to limit the dangerous and disruptive Holton Arms traffic through Al Marah. It is not surprising that Holton Arms is not proposing any way to stop Holton Arms traffic through our neighborhood, since even Holton Arms senior staff and faculty use Al Marah as a cut through to avoid heavy Holton Arms River Road traffic.

In fact, what Holton Arms is proposing would make Al Marah traffic worse, since they are suggesting the construction of a dedicated left hand turn lane out of Al Marah on Royal Dominion (the opposite side of River Road from the school and a road that Holton Arms students and faculty should NOT be using anyway!!!). This would:

a) encourage and make it easier for Holton Arms families and faculty/staff to cut through our neighborhood, thus exacerbating a safety hazard for our elderly walkers and our children trying to get on or off Montgomery County School buses while Holton cars speed by.

b) make it more difficult for Al Marah residents to get to work or appointments by turning right from Royal Dominion since we would be blocked in by the Holton Arms cars trying to go straight to cross River Road into Holton Arms, and

c) limit the 172 Al Marah families, our service providers, Montgomery County School buses, and emergency responders to using one narrow entrance at Burdette into or out of our neighborhood during a long period of time while the Holton sponsored construction occurred on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion!

Needless to say, my husband and I and our Al Marah neighbors are gravely concerned about the proposed Holton Arms expansion. Not only would it result in increased congestion on River Road and increased dangerous and disruptive traffic through our community, but it would make it difficult for us to access our neighborhood and would decrease our property values. We do NOT want Holton Arms to expand, and we really do NOT want a dedicated left hand turn lane on Royal Dominion going out of Al Marah!

We do NOT think that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand their student or camp enrollment and we do NOT think that Holton Arms should be allowed to rent their facilities to large groups. In fact, we believe that even with the current academic and camp enrollments, Holton Arms should be forced to mandate busing and to pay for license plate monitors and street signs to enforce a rule that no Holton Arms cars can use Al Marah as a cut through. This is a strategy that has

been used very successfully by other private schools (e.g. Rochambeau locally) in other schools' efforts to be good neighbors.

We hope you will make recommendations to oppose the proposed Holton Arms expansion and to help protect our safety, our access to our neighborhood, and our property values.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
Subject: Request to protect our access to our neighborhood
Date: Monday, September 29, 2025 3:56:48 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I write to you in dismay regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion and the school's disastrous proposal to construct a dedicated left hand turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive, the road I live on and use every weekday to get to work. Our neighborhood, Al Marah, has many small children, and I regularly witness speeding cars endangering their safety as they cut through our neighborhood at high speed on weekday mornings to get to Holton Arms. I know that they are going to Holton Arms, because I regularly see them entering the school while I am on Royal Dominion Drive on the way to work in the morning. When contacted about this, the Holton Arms administration indicated that they would notify their community to avoid cutting through our neighborhood on the way to school. However, rather than discouraging them from cutting through our community, their proposal to create a designated left turn lane on our street would encourage Holton Arms cars to cut through Al Marah and would make it much more difficult for Al Marah residents to get out of Al Marah.

Our road, Royal Dominion Drive, is narrow and already suffering from over-congestion during the morning commute. Holton Arms' lack of transparency and communication to neighbors and other stake-holders in the community is disappointing. They appear to be trying to ram this proposal through without community input so that they can minimize the commute time of their private school students while creating gridlock for the neighborhood and the rest of the community. The ever-increasing gridlock has even affected public school buses, as they sometime have difficulty getting through the traffic to pick up my third grader to take him to elementary school

Furthermore, Holton Arms said they are not willing to make any commitments to mandate busing, car pools or other meaningful traffic mitigation strategies if they are allowed to increase academic year enrollment, summer camp enrollment and/or facility rentals. Instead, Holton Arms is hoping that "education and incentives" will affect the Holton Arms families willingness to use busing or car pools. Unfortunately, once increased enrollment and rentals are approved, there is little we can do to limit traffic, so we and our neighbors believe that we need your help in protecting our safety and our neighborhood access now!

Holton Arms said that they think that mandatory busing is not appropriate for their student body, even though other local private schools use mandatory busing (e.g. - The McLean School, The Potomac School, Rochambeau, The Field School, Georgetown Day School, St Patrick's, The Lab School, etc.). Furthermore, Holton Arms admitted that their planned efforts to incentivize (rather than require) students and faculty to reduce single occupant car trips to Holton Arms might take a long time and are not guaranteed to be successful.

Additionally, Holton Arms has no realistic proposal to limit the dangerous and disruptive Holton Arms traffic through Al Marah.

As a concerned resident of the Al Marah neighborhood who is directly harmed (together with my entire neighborhood) by the speeding cars cutting through our neighborhood and by the ever-increasing traffic gridlock in the area, I humbly request that you make recommendations to oppose (i) the proposed Holton Arms expansion and (ii) their proposal to designate a left turn lane on Royal Dominion Drive. A rejection of these ill-conceived proposals will help protect our children's safety and our ability to go in and out of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Steve

[REDACTED]
7509 Royal Dominion Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Seeking Your Assistance
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 5:59:43 PM
Attachments: [Significant Concerns and Recommendation Against Holton Arms Expansion Proposal 1.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Ms Bogdan,

We are residents of a community called Al Marah located off of River Road (Maryland State Highway 190) in Bethesda, Maryland. Residents of our community only can get in or out of our community by using a stretch of River Road that is just inside the 495 Beltway and is directly affected by traffic related to Holton Arms School, which is directly across River Road from our community. In other words, there is no way for us to avoid River Road traffic generally and Holton Arms traffic specifically. Unfortunately, even with the existing Holton Arms traffic, westbound River Road traffic is often backed up from Wilson Lane to 495, and eastbound River Road is often backed up from Seven Locks Road to Wilson Lane.

Holton Arms has proposed expanding their academic year student body by 30% (another 200 students) and expanding their summer camp enrollment by 44% (another 300 campers). We are very much opposed to the proposed Holton Arms expansion in its current form since existing Holton Arms traffic already causes congestion on River Road and causes significant problems with Holton Arms families cutting through our neighborhood to avoid the congestion on River Road (thus making it very difficult to get into or out of our neighborhood at certain times, and often making it unsafe to walk in our neighborhood, which does not have sidewalks). We believe that the only way that Holton Arms should be allowed to expand would be if they: a) implemented MANDATORY busing for ALL students (something other local area schools have done) and b) mandated and paid for signage and traffic cameras to implement a rule of no Holton Arms traffic through our neighborhood (also something that other local area schools have done for other neighborhoods).

We sent the attached PDF document outlining our preliminary concerns regarding the proposed Holton Arms expansion to the Montgomery County DOT and the Maryland DOT web pages, but we thought it was worth bringing the situation directly to your attention as well.

We would very much appreciate your support in opposing or at least modifying (with mandatory busing and neighborhood signage and traffic cameras) the proposed Holton Arms expansion.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Best regards, [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Dwyer, Florence](#); kwoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov; sholcomb@mdot.maryland.gov
Subject: Special Exception-Holton Arms
Date: Sunday, September 21, 2025 2:13:27 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Members of the Review Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of Holton Arms School under application CBA-1174E. The expansion would increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870 students, summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970 participants, and permit facility rentals to groups as large as 870 individuals.

I reside in Al Marah, a residential community in Bethesda, MD, consisting of approximately 150 single-family homes and 22 townhomes. Our neighborhood is located just inside the 495 Beltway off River Road, directly across from Holton Arms School.

Currently, Al Marah is already adversely affected by traffic generated by Holton Arms. Our only access points—Burdette and Royal Dominion—are situated along the stretch of River Road most impacted by school-related traffic. Additionally, many Holton Arms families and staff use our neighborhood as a cut-through to avoid the left turn into the school from River Road. Vehicles enter via Burdette and exit through Royal Dominion, often at excessive speeds. This behavior poses a serious safety risk, particularly during morning hours when children are waiting for school buses.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed expansion will exacerbate these issues. During the September 9 Zoom meeting hosted by Holton Arms, several Al Marah residents participated and heard directly from school representatives and their traffic consultant. It was acknowledged that the expansion would result in hundreds of additional vehicles entering and exiting the campus daily. Furthermore, the plan to rent out facilities to large groups on evenings and weekends would create “huge surges” of traffic along River Road, impacting not only our neighborhood but also the broader commuting public.

We firmly believe that Holton Arms should not be permitted to increase its student or camp enrollment, nor should it be allowed to rent its facilities to large external groups. In fact, we urge that immediate measures be taken to mitigate current traffic issues. One potential solution would be to restrict traffic at the intersection of Royal Dominion and River Road to right or left turns only, thereby preventing direct access into the Holton Arms entrance unless drivers are willing to violate traffic laws.

We respectfully request that you recommend against the proposed expansion and take steps to protect the safety of our children, preserve access to our neighborhood, and safeguard our property values.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
7504 Pepperell Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817

[REDACTED]

From:

Subject:

Date:

Traffic on River road and Al Marah due to Holton Arms Extension

Thursday, September 25, 2025 2:04:35 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We live in the Al Marah community and would like to express to you our strong opposition and concern with the proposed Holton Arms expansions. We would like to kindly request your help in avoiding safety and access problems with calling your attention to the following:

- 1) Traffic on River Road and through Al Marah already is bad, and we think that, even with existing academic and camp enrollments and no additional facilities rentals, Holton Arms should be forced to MANDATE busing (as other private schools have done). We also think Holton Arms should set up signage and license plate monitors to prevent Holton Arms families/faculty/staff from driving through Al Marah (also something other private schools have done for other neighborhoods).
- 2) We do not support the proposed Holton Arms expansion since it would cause additional traffic congestion and safety issues for River Road and Al Marah (especially since Holton Arms refuses to MANDATE busing or any other meaningful traffic mitigation strategy).
- 3) We absolutely do NOT want construction of a dedicated left hand turn lane on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion which would only encourage more Holton Arms families/faculty/staff to drive through our neighborhood to avoid Holton Arms traffic on River Road. A dedicated left hand turn lane also would really hurt Al Marah residents ability to turn right out of our neighborhood on a long term basis since we would be stuck behind Holton Arms cars going straight across River Road as they try to avoid heavy Holton Arms traffic on River Road. Furthermore, the construction of a dedicated left hand turn lane would restrict all 172 Al Marah families, our service providers, school buses and emergency responders to using ONLY the narrow Burdette entrance during a long period of time (a safety hazard and an enormous inconvenience that is unnecessary).

Thank you!

7712 Zulima Court
Bethesda, MD