

Friends of Fox Hills West — County Council Testimony—FY 2027–2032 MCPS Capital Improvements Program

Dear County Councilmembers,

We write as Friends of Fox Hills West, representing families in the broader Potomac and Cabin John Middle School community. We appreciate the Council’s role in overseeing and approving the MCPS Capital Improvements Program, particularly during a time of significant systemwide change.

As you consider approval of the FY 2027–2032 MCPS CIP—while a boundary study and regional program changes are actively underway—we respectfully ask that the Council consider the long-term alignment of Cold Spring Elementary School with the Potomac community as part of a coherent planning framework.

Young families move to Potomac because they grew up here, maintain strong social and community ties, or rely on the county’s excellent public schools. Preserving continuity across elementary, middle, and high school pathways is essential to sustaining those community investments.

The current feeder progression for Cold Spring students is Cold Spring ES → Cabin John Middle School → Wootton High School. At the same time, early research indicates that regional program implementation could help relieve overcapacity at Churchill High School, creating an opportunity to explore phased, data-driven alignment options for Cold Spring students that better reflect Potomac-area pathways—without resorting to disruptive rezoning.

Importantly, as the Council evaluates the CIP during an active boundary study, this moment presents an opportunity to reexamine longstanding assumptions that have shaped school alignment decisions. Conditions that influenced past decisions—such as earlier capacity projections or political constraints—may no longer reflect current enrollment trends, housing turnover, or the new planning tools available through regional program implementation. Revisiting these assumptions now can help ensure that capital investments support coherent, sustainable, and fiscally responsible school pathways.

Cold Spring Elementary School’s inclusion in the CIP is a significant and overdue milestone. Aligning capital investment decisions with thoughtful, forward-looking boundary and program planning will help maximize the return on those investments and support long-term equity for Potomac-area students.

Our group is also preparing a community survey to gather additional input on neighborhood continuity, program priorities, and student pathways. We intend to share those findings as part of ongoing discussions with MCPS and the Council.

We respectfully urge the Council to approve the MCPS CIP with Cold Spring ES included, while supporting planning approaches that allow regional program implementation to address capacity, continuity, and equity together—at a moment when the system is already contemplating unprecedented change.

Thank you for your time and service.

Respectfully,

Alison Abrams

Friends of Fox Hills West