

As neighbors, we ask for a moment of your time to consider some of the impacts of Castilleja's proposed expansion.

We support Castilleja's mission to educate young women.

Castilleja's conditional use permit (CUP) allows for 415 students. Enrollment is currently at 438. The school wants to increase enrollment by 30% to 540 students. They have outgrown the small 6-acre parcel in an R1 neighborhood. They have the options to split their campus, find a new location, or work with residents to determine an enrollment number that does not increase the negative impact on the neighborhood. The school has refused to explain their long-term plans for the property or if they plan to eventually split the campus. Castilleja serves about 100 students from Palo Alto, approximately 25% of the student population.

We oppose the plan for a garage.

The current underground garage plan is inherently flawed. It would require all cars to enter on the Bryant Bike Boulevard and to exit into the neighborhood at Melville and Emerson. During peak traffic hours, motorists would have to exit onto Embarcadero Road heading east. 75% of Castilleja students live outside of Palo Alto and would be heading west as they leave the campus.

Bottom line: The garage will not be used during peak hours, just for the 90+ events that are held during the year (plus 2 summer camps). Students will be dropped off on side streets, effectively making it worse than it is today. The school has outgrown its current location.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBORHOOD

As you can see in the photos to the right, the school campus is situated along Embarcadero Road, in the heart of an R1 neighborhood.

Instead of homes and trees, Emerson would be left with one home on the corner. The underground garage exit would empty into the neighborhood at Emerson and Melville. An exhaust chimney for the garage would also be located at this corner.

