

**From:** [Carol C. Friedman](#)  
**To:** [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Enthusiastic support for Castilleja Reimagined!  
**Date:** Thursday, March 24, 2022 4:52:44 PM

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Dear Honorable Mayor Burt, Members of the City Council and Planning Commission,

I am writing in support of Castilleja School's *Reimagined Project*. The project is before you once again, more than a full year after you last recommended approval of the project to the City Council. I am a nearby neighbor on Lowell Avenue, and I am enthusiastic for the modernization to begin, so thank you for your approval last time. I hope this will be the last time you approve the project, and we can begin to see positive change in the neighborhood. I was pleased to learn that the ARB voted to move the project forward at their March 17 meeting. Many times Commissioners spoke of compromise, and they too modeled such behavior.

I hope you, too, see the many benefits of Castilleja's project just as the ARB has.

I'm aware that the school has offered several parking options for you to consider that preserve trees, reduce noise, remove cars from the street, and update the aging buildings to be able to provide an excellent all-girls education to more students. With the different options for underground parking, I hope you will choose the one that maximizes spaces without impacting trees. I believe that one has 69 spots with no impact on healthy trees. The ARB voted in favor of the parking garage option that moves more cars off the street, and yes, does not harm trees. It can be done! The more cars underground the better as far as I'm concerned. We should thank Castilleja for making this investment in the beauty of my neighborhood. If the cars don't go below ground, they will stay on the surface. Let's take advantage of moving as much below ground as possible.

Please maintain Speaker Field as a recreational space for girl's sports and fitness.

The goalposts for this project can not keep moving, and it has to stop. Castilleja has worked to design a campus that best meets our community's needs. Please review the work that the school has done, and select from the excellent choices before you. I hope that you will soon recommend approval of this project so that neighbors like me can enjoy the benefits. It seems as though I have been writing to you for a decade.

Please be bold and have the courage to finally make a decision for quality girls education at Castilleja School.

Best regards,

Carol C. Friedman



**From:** [Shames Panahi](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** In support of Castilleja's Development Project  
**Date:** Thursday, March 24, 2022 3:25:39 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in support of Castilleja School. Thank you for your dedication to the city of Palo Alto. As a longtime Palo Alto resident, I have seen many changes over the years, some better than others, and I am writing to ask you to support one I feel could greatly benefit our community—the proposal to modernize Castilleja's campus and to allow the school to enroll more students **without adding traffic**.

Castilleja School has been an institution in this city longer than any of us have been alive. Along with the many advantages that are brought by such an established and nationally well-respected school in our city comes the inevitable need for change over time. Castilleja's plan to modernize their campus and gradually admit more students would allow them to adapt to the changing nature of our community. The Palo Alto we know today is not the same town as it was 10 years ago, or 20 years ago, or even 60 years ago (even though that is the age of many of Castilleja's current buildings). We should encourage and support schools like Castilleja to reflect those changes. The other schools in Palo Alto have been allowed to update and grow with time; why not Castilleja?

Castilleja's modernization plan is truly a win-win for the community and the school. They have shown their commitment to reducing traffic for years, including by increasing the number of buses during the pandemic when students no longer felt comfortable taking the Caltrain. As they can only enroll new students if they keep the traffic counts level with current numbers, we can have faith that we will not see an increase in traffic. I truly hope you will recommend this project for approval so that more students from different backgrounds will have the opportunity to access the only secular all-girls school in the Bay Area. Castilleja is presenting you with a meaningful set of compromises that will improve the neighborhood and strengthen our city, and I think it's time we listen. It's clear that the ARB did, as evidenced by their approval of the project last week. Will you support these next steps, too?

Thank you,  
Shames Panahi

  
Palo Alto, CA

**From:** [Jim Fitzgerald](#)  
**To:** [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Emily McElhinney; Elke Teichmann](#)  
**Subject:** In support of Castilleja  
**Date:** Thursday, March 24, 2022 10:27:13 AM

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Members of the Planning and Transportation Commission,

I am writing in support of Castilleja School's project. I was pleased to learn that the ARB saw the many, many, merits of the school's project. From the beginning, Castilleja has listened and responded with new designs that are reflective of the comments they received. This time around, they heard feedback from the ARB that a garage option with more parking spots (Option D), combined with a shift of the swimming pool and removal of the underground delivery space (Option E) would be the best compromise. This hybrid option also saves an additional oak tree. Not only am I glad to hear of this resolution, but also, did it have to take this long? Here's where you come in. I sincerely hope you build on the momentum of the ARB, following their lead of compromise, and continue to advance this stellar project.

After all, has any applicant ever worked so hard to listen to feedback, respond with creativity, and move forward in the spirit of compromise? You have already approved this project once, and with wonderful choices in front of you will surely be able to do so again during your upcoming hearing.

The changes to the garage, the adjustments to the pool, and the new option for the loading entrance all preserve more trees. More cars below ground is better for the neighborhood, as it moves cars off the street. More trees are preserved in this situation. And contrary to the belief of many naysayers, a parking structure with more spots does not, will not, and can not increase car trips. The project has stringent built-in compliance measures that ensure car trips will remain capped at current levels. This project is ready for approval.

The greatest step forward for the neighborhood and the city will come when you approve this for the last time and allow the school to break ground on this exciting and beautiful update.

Thank you,  
Jim Fitzgerald

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**From:** [Jennifer Carolan](#)  
**To:** [Architectural Review Board](#)  
**Cc:** [Council, City; Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Castilleja School Plans  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 23, 2022 7:22:31 PM

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Dear Architectural Review Board Members,

I am a resident of Palo Alto and a former JLS tenured teacher.

I am writing in support of Castilleja School and want to take a moment to express my appreciation for the school's responsiveness to requests for changes—particularly the garage plans—over the last several years. Have you noticed that each time the school is asked to delineate plans in ever-more detail, it responds with a variety of options—each one viable, compliant, and thoughtful. Have other applicants been as thorough or worked as hard to listen to community feedback and circle back with new ideas and plans, all in the spirit of compromise?

This plan has already been approved by you in 2019. You've seen it before, most recently in December 2021. Following feedback from you and from Kellogg neighbors, the school now presents to you changes to the Kellogg facade. The modified design has been updated with windows that give the building even more of a residential feel. The roof is sloped so it looks more like a home. The roof line is even lower than the existing buildings. The building is set back even further from the street to contain sounds coming from campus. Castilleja has been responsive, it has provided multiple options, and it has patiently listened to a multitude of feedback. Their project is better than it's ever been. Please, approve it again.

Lastly, I urge you to support the parking option that allows for the maximum number of cars to be below ground and not at the surface level. City code permits underground parking for non-residential use in R-1 zones. Up to 69 spaces can be constructed without impacting trees. That should be the allotment for Castilleja's below-ground parking option. Supporting this option will still require the school to limit car trips and not exceed current levels. Setting an arbitrary limit to underground parking spaces runs counter to neighbor requests of moving parked cars off the City streets. Again, a 69-car garage is *allowed; poses no threat to trees; and moves cars off the street.*

Please recognize these many improvements and approve their latest plan. Thank you for your time and attention to this project.

Finally, I know PAUSD has lost about 2,000 students over the last few years and I expect this trend to continue due to overall trends in public education. We should be supporting our local institutions (both public and private) that make Palo Alto such a desirable place to live. For many, The Great Reshuffling has untethered us from our work locations which necessitates that every

municipality welcome and retain beloved institutions. Happy to speak with you more about this.

Thank you,  
Jennifer

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**Jennifer Carolan**

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