

Tom Kemp
570 Berkeley Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

June 11, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Saggarwal@smcgov.org

RE: Public Comment — Major Development Pre-Application Workshop, The Peninsula School East Campus (Planning Case File No. PRE2025-00012; APN 062-181-050)

Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

I own and reside at a property on Berkeley Avenue near The Peninsula School's East Campus. I am submitting this comment in connection with the Major Development Pre-Application Workshop scheduled for June 17, 2026, regarding the School's proposed remodel and Use Permit Amendment (PRE2025-00012). Per your Notice, you offered to take questions on the Pre-Application, and this letter represents some of my initial questions.

Questions Regarding the Berkeley Pedestrian Access Gate

As you may be aware, Berkeley Avenue between Colby Avenue and Peninsula Avenue is only 14 to 18 feet wide. Berkeley Avenue is slightly curved between those streets, and visibility is partially impaired if you were to walk or drive either way, given the trees in the easements opposite the school. The easement areas on both sides of the street not only have trees but also contain shrubs and other vegetation, telephone poles, and mounds of dirt, so it is not easy, or even possible, to park in the easements in various stretches of Berkeley because of these obstructions. Cars often try to park around these obstacles, leaving their driver's-side tires on the road, thus making Berkeley less safe.

There is no drainage in this part of Berkeley Avenue, and during rainstorms, portions of Berkeley Avenue are flooded. There are no sidewalks, so bikers and pedestrians must use the street. Finally, there are often significant home construction projects on Berkeley Avenue, meaning large trucks enter properties during the week, including one currently underway between Colby and Peninsula.

I assume that the goal of the proposed Berkeley Pedestrian Access Gate is to allow and even encourage children and their parents to enter and access the campus through this Gate;

otherwise, why would it be proposed? This Gate will serve as an incentive for parents to park along this stretch of Berkeley Avenue to enable pickup and drop-off via the Gate, as the plans clearly document (“PARALLEL PARKING SPACES WITHIN BERKELEY WAY RIGHT OF WAY TO REMAIN”).

To me, this is a significant safety issue on multiple fronts. Children will be exiting the Gate while cars are parking near the Gate on a narrow, partially visible street that frequently floods and has inconsistent parking, given the state of the easements. My questions are the following:

1. If they plan to have Pedestrian Access to the Campus from Berkeley Avenue via a Gate, why is there not a sidewalk alongside the fence to ensure children are not at risk of being hit by cars pulling into the easement to park?
2. Or does the School plan to not allow any Berkeley parking (e.g., add obstructions in the easement on the School side of Berkeley), so as to avoid children from being hit by cars that are being parked, and to use the easement as a dirt-based pedestrian thoroughfare?
3. Or is the plan to have the children walk into the street as they exit, having to walk past and/or around parked cars, on a street that has partial visibility?
4. What are the plans, if any, to create set parking spots in the school’s easement along Berkeley, given the chaotic and “wild west” nature of the easements (especially on the School’s side of the road) with telephone poles, trees, shrubs, dirt mounds, etc., to factor in the additional parking that will occur on Berkeley given the Gate?
5. Will there be removal of telephone poles, trees, shrubs, dirt mounds, etc., for these parking spots in the easement to ensure that tires of parents’ cars are not parked on the actual street?
6. Given the lack of drainage, what, if any, are the plans to provide drainage of standing water in the school’s easement area along Berkeley, or is the plan to simply let children walk even deeper into the street when it rains?
7. There is no stop sign at the corner of Peninsula and Berkeley, so often it is not clear who has the right of way. Given that the Berkeley Gate encourages pedestrians to walk along Berkeley Avenue, will a stop sign be installed on Peninsula, or will a crosswalk be installed?

The Plan as presented do not address any of these concerns. If they put in a Pedestrian Gate, it will encourage pedestrians — namely, children — to walk along Berkeley Avenue and have their parents park on Berkeley. Yet the plans provide no details in terms of what will be done to mitigate these risks that I detail above in terms of plans for sidewalks, parking obstructions or creating cleaner and more well-defined parking spots, adding a stop sign, etc. I would like to see more detailed documentation in the Plan itself on what the easement along Berkeley would look like, if parking is allowed, if there is a sidewalk, etc.

Questions Regarding Traffic and Traffic Management

We are being asked to give feedback on a Plan, but it is hard for us, as neighbors, to comment on a Plan when we don’t know what the Plan's most significant impact on us is—traffic. For example, if we knew the impact of an increase of 63 students on traffic, we could better weigh

whether the Berkeley Gate makes sense. The PDF filename of the Plan is dated 10-22-2025, so you would think that over the last 8 months, a traffic analysis and projection document could have been created to reflect current school traffic associated with 223 students and to project the addition of 63 students.

Furthermore, I have never seen any Peninsula School personnel monitor school-related parking or traffic in the neighborhood. On two occasions, as a pedestrian walking my dog down Peninsula Avenue, I was nearly hit by a car turning left from the circular driveway, even though the signage says they can't turn left during the timeframe when I was walking. No one from the school was there to monitor if parents were properly exiting. Furthermore, there are often instances of parents parking their cars with their tires on the street, yet I have never seen any school personnel physically out in the neighborhood to observe this or issue warnings. A dramatic increase in enrolled students should trigger a traffic management plan — this was required of a comparable private school in the area (Castilleja) prior to its increase-in-enrollment plan being approved.

So, my questions on this topic are the following:

1. Why have the neighbors not been given a Traffic Analysis as part of this initial public comment period?
2. Why has no Traffic Management plan been provided as a supplement to the Plan, as has been the case for other private schools in the area that have looked to increase enrollment?

My concern is that the absence of Traffic Analysis and a Traffic Management Plan constitutes a “hide the ball” scenario in which neighbors are being asked to provide public comment on a Plan for which we have zero visibility into what will most significantly impact us. When you couple this with the lack of documentation regarding what the Berkeley easement would look like with respect to the addition of the Pedestrian Access Gate, it further calls into question whether neighbors have the appropriate data to provide initial public comment.

As such, I request that the public comment period be extended until further documentation described above is provided, so that neighbors can make fully informed comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Kemp
Berkeley Avenue resident, Menlo Oaks

June 15, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Saggarwal@smcgov.org

RE: Exhaustive Public Comment, Substantive Legal Objections, and Threshold Inquiries Major Development Pre-Application Workshop — The Peninsula School East Campus Remodel Planning Case File No. PRE2025-00012; APN 062-181-050
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Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

I reside at 600 Berkeley Avenue, near Peninsula School's East Campus. I am writing in advance of the June 17, 2026 Major Development Pre-Application Workshop to make my public comment about the school's remodeling proposal.

Peninsula's current parking practices are both unsafe and inconvenient, and the proposed plan will exacerbate these problems.

Peninsula's current parking practices are both unsafe and inconvenient.

Peninsula's current parking practices are unsafe. Berkeley Avenue is narrow and, even under normal conditions, vehicles must pull aside to allow oncoming traffic to pass. This situation becomes particularly precarious during Peninsula School events: cars are frequently parked bumper to bumper on both sides of the street, reducing the roadway to a single narrow passage. This creates safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists - many of whom are children - who must walk or bike directly in the roadway and dart out between parked vehicles to access the road.

The congestion also raises concerns about emergency access. The narrow roadways and limited maneuvering space could prevent or delay emergency responders who are attempting to reach the school or homes in the neighborhood. In short, the existing narrow road and limited parking are already a safety issue.

Peninsula's current parking practices inconvenience residents. Cars affiliated with Peninsula park in front of our home every weekday. They frequently block access to our mailbox and delivery bin (the mail carrier has complained twice), as well as to pedestrian gates that we use to put out our trash cans, and take bicycles and strollers in and out of our property. During school events, Peninsula cars are parked on both sides of the street for blocks, requiring our guests to hunt for parking and park a long way from our home.

Peninsula's proposed plan will exacerbate these problems by increasing enrollment without a plan for managing parking, and by drawing more traffic onto Berkeley Ave.

Peninsula's plan increases enrollment without a commensurate increase in parking. The proposal increases student enrollment by 63 students while adding only 14 parking spaces. Our neighborhood streets simply cannot absorb this increased demand for parking.

Peninsula's proposed Berkeley Avenue pedestrian gate will draw even more traffic onto Berkeley Ave. Many Peninsula students commute by car from other Bay Area communities. A new entrance on Berkeley Ave will encourage pick-up and drop-off traffic and parking on a street that is already constrained by its limited width and on-street parking.

Potential Alternatives:

The school already has infrastructure that should be considered as a way to address these concerns. Peninsula's large driveway appears capable of a drop-off and pick-up system that would not require daily on-street parking or drop-offs and pick-ups on Berkeley Avenue.

In addition, with creativity and determination, it seems that the school could add some additional parking spots on campus, perhaps along the part of campus that borders Peninsula Way.

There also needs to be some reasonable plan for overflow parking during major school events. It was my understanding that, at one point, Peninsula mandated their families to park on only one side of the street during school events, reserving the other side of the street for residents and their guests. Since residents and their guests do not park bumper to bumper the entire length of the street, this left more clearance for emergency vehicles and pedestrians. It may be worthwhile to consider re-instituting this plan. In any case, I want to be certain that emergency services are always able to reach my home and the school.

In sum, Peninsula's proposal expects its neighbors to absorb increased parking, traffic, and safety issues. I hope the school can find a way to remodel their grounds in a way that does not compromise our ability to walk and drive safely, to receive emergency services, and to access our home. Accordingly, I respectfully request that the County carefully evaluate the project's parking, traffic, pedestrian safety, and emergency-access impacts before the project proceeds.

Thank you for your consideration,



Corry Watrous
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Barbara Gottesman & Michael Mitgang
626 Berkeley Avenue, Menlo Park CA 94025
Barbara: 650-868-0610; Michael: 650-888-2468

June 15, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
SAggarwal@smcgov.org
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
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Redwood City, CA 94063

cc. District 4 Supervisor Lisa Gauthier
lgauthier@smcgov.org

Re: Peninsula School East Campus Expansion (PRE2025-00012)

Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

We are residents of Berkeley Avenue and write regarding The Peninsula School's proposed East Campus expansion, including the requested enrollment increase and the proposed new pedestrian entrance on Berkeley Avenue.

Our position:

Before this project advances, and given the permanent and significant impact on the nearby residents, we believe the County should require The Peninsula School to clearly demonstrate both the necessity of the proposed expansion and the safety and appropriateness of the proposed Berkeley Avenue entrance.

Our primary concern is traffic, access, and safety, as well as the removal of healthy trees.

Context:

We value The Peninsula School as a long-standing and important member of our community. We are not opposed to the School's continued success, nor are we opposed to thoughtful improvements to its facilities. However, Berkeley Avenue is a narrow residential street that intentionally does not have sidewalks in order to preserve the character of the neighborhood. Pedestrians, cyclists, residents, dog walkers, service and emergency vehicles, and automobiles all share the same roadway. Introducing a new concentration of school-related pedestrian activity on this frontage raises unique safety concerns that would not exist on a wider street with sidewalks and dedicated pedestrian infrastructure.

In addition, and while we have significant concerns regarding the impacts of the proposed project on Berkeley Avenue in general, including the removal of mature trees, we are particularly concerned for the properties within the Berkeley Avenue block shared by The Peninsula School (between Peninsula Avenue and Colby Avenue), and especially the three (3) homes that rely on the narrow laneway leading to our home (serving 622, 624 and 626 Berkeley Avenue) located almost directly opposite the proposed pedestrian entrance.

Impact of a new pedestrian access on the homes sharing the Berkeley Avenue block with The Peninsula School:

A total of eleven homes are most directly affected by the proposed pedestrian entrance as they share the block with The Peninsula School. Six of these homes are flag lots served by narrow laneways; the pedestrian entrance itself would be located almost directly opposite the laneway serving our home (626) and two neighboring properties (622 and 624). The narrow laneways in this block as a whole already pose limited sightlines every time we exit our properties (see photos attached). Unlike other residents who may be affected indirectly by increased school traffic, our families must pass through this location every time we enter or leave our homes. Any increase in pedestrian activity, vehicle stopping, turning movements, congestion, or visibility conflicts created by the proposed entrance will be experienced daily by the residents who rely on the access laneways to our properties.

The Berkeley roadway adjacent to the School specifically is already constrained. This block of Berkeley Avenue in particular is narrower than other sections. Vegetation, PGE poles, and tree stumps all limit shoulder access on both sides of the street. We are attaching photographs showing that when one vehicle is entering or exiting the laneway, there is often barely sufficient room for an opposing vehicle to pass without moving onto the shoulder. We already experience these constraints when the School hosts events and its attendees park partly on the shoulders of this block. If a new pedestrian access onto Berkeley Avenue is approved, inevitably parents, visitors, or rideshare vehicles will stop along the shoulder near the proposed entrance, and the effective width of the roadway will be further reduced, creating conflicts between vehicles traveling in opposite directions and potentially blocking access for residents. Safety is diminished even more when we add pedestrians and bikers to this mix.

These concerns extend beyond convenience. Waste collection vehicles, delivery trucks, landscapers, contractors, and other service vehicles already face challenges navigating this section of Berkeley Avenue. If the roadway becomes obstructed during school arrival or dismissal periods, access for emergency vehicles could also be compromised. We believe emergency access should be carefully evaluated as part of any traffic and safety review.

We are also concerned about visibility and sightlines. The alignment of the roadway, combined with existing vegetation opposite the location of the proposed entrance creates conditions that warrant careful analysis. Residents exiting their laneways by car must be able to safely observe approaching pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. The proposed entrance has the potential to introduce new conflicts at precisely the point where residents must enter and exit the roadway.

Has the need for an additional pedestrian access been evaluated? And has the impact been evaluated against other options?

In addition, we question whether the applicant has adequately demonstrated the need for a new pedestrian entrance at this location. The School has operated successfully for decades without a Berkeley Avenue entrance and already benefits from established access arrangements elsewhere on campus. We respectfully ask whether alternative entrance locations were considered and whether there are other options that would meet the School's objectives while imposing fewer impacts on neighboring residents.

Given the significant impact an enrollment increase brings to the neighborhood, has it been evaluated against other options?

More broadly, the proposed enrollment increase would permanently alter both the physical character of the campus and the surrounding neighborhood. The impacts are not limited to increased traffic and pedestrian activity. The proposal also includes the removal of multiple

protected and mature trees, changes to the Berkeley Avenue frontage, and increased intensity of use on streets that were not designed to accommodate significant additional activity. Taken together, these are substantial and irreversible impacts. For that reason, we believe it is reasonable for the County to ask the applicant to demonstrate why a 28% enrollment increase is necessary and whether less impactful alternatives were fully evaluated before imposing these changes on the neighborhood.

For example, were other strategies considered to address the School's long-term financial and operational goals, including fundraising campaigns, philanthropic support, operational changes, partnerships, phased improvements, or other approaches that would not require increased enrollment, removal of healthy mature trees, and the resulting impacts on surrounding residents? We are not suggesting any particular solution; rather, we believe that where a project creates permanent neighborhood impacts, decision-makers should understand whether reasonable alternatives were considered before those impacts are imposed. In other words, the question is not simply whether the School should be able to expand. The question is whether the permanent impacts on the neighborhood—including increased traffic, safety concerns, changes to neighborhood character, and removal of healthy mature trees—are justified and necessary.

Our request:

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the County require the applicant to address the following questions before any approval is considered:

1. Why is a new pedestrian entrance on Berkeley Avenue necessary? What alternative entrance locations were evaluated, and why were they rejected? Why was Berkeley Avenue selected given its narrow width and limited shoulders?
2. What measures will prevent parents and visitors from stopping, parking, waiting, or conducting drop-off and pick-up activities near the proposed entrance?
3. What impacts will the entrance have on the three homes that rely on the laneway directly opposite the proposed location? Or on the other three flag lots in this block with laneway access?
4. What analysis has been performed regarding emergency vehicle access?
5. What analysis has been performed regarding sightlines and pedestrian safety?
6. What pedestrian volumes are anticipated during arrival and dismissal periods?
7. Why should the County approve a new Berkeley Avenue entrance before completion of a comprehensive traffic and safety analysis based on actual observed conditions during school drop-off and pick-up periods?
8. What alternatives to expansion were considered to meet the School's stated objectives, and why were those alternatives determined to be insufficient? Given the traffic impacts, neighborhood impacts, and removal of healthy mature trees associated with the proposal, what alternatives were considered to achieve the School's stated goals with fewer impacts on the surrounding community?

At the very least, we respectfully request that the County require a comprehensive traffic and safety analysis, based on observed conditions during actual school arrival and dismissal periods, before considering approval of any enrollment increase, removal of mature trees, or a new Berkeley Avenue pedestrian entrance.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns and for ensuring that the interests of existing residents, neighborhood safety, and community character are carefully considered as part of the review process.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gottesman & Michael Mitgang
626 Berkeley Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025



Photo taken on Berkeley Avenue in front of entry to laneway serving 622, 624, 626 Berkeley Avenue, looking toward Colby Ave and Bay Road. Note narrow roadway with limited shoulders (PGE pole on the left side, vegetation on the right side) and limited line of sight to oncoming traffic. There is insufficient space for a car to pass in the opposite direction and insufficient space to pull onto shoulder.



Photo taken standing at entry to Berkeley Avenue from laneway access to 622, 624, 626 Berkeley Avenue looking towards Colby Avenue & Bay Road. Note limited sightlines up the street.



View from inside driver's seat from laneway serving 622, 624, 626 Berkeley Avenue entering onto Berkeley Avenue. Note mailboxes on the right for context – I am not yet on Berkeley Avenue yet you can see how narrow the street is, and the limited lines of site already posing traffic safety issues in its current state.



View from laneway access to 626, 624, 622 Berkeley Avenue looking toward Peninsula Way and Coleman Avenue. Street is narrow, no shoulders on the left side.

MITCH AND DAREN TUCHMAN

640 Berkeley Avenue • Menlo Park, California 94025

June 9, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
saggarwal@smcgov.org

RE: Written Comment — Pre-Application Workshop, The Peninsula School East Campus (PRE2025-00012) — Request for Traffic Analysis, and Ancillary Comments on Colby Avenue Access, Proposed Berkeley Avenue Entrance, and Setback Reduction

Dear Ms. Aggarwal:

Primary Request: Traffic Analysis Before the Application Advances

We are owners and residents at 640 Berkeley Avenue, directly across from The Peninsula School's East Campus, and we submit this comment in advance of the June 17, 2026 Major Development Pre-Application Workshop. We do not oppose the School. We ask the County to require one thing before this application advances: a Traffic Analysis Report grounded in observed field conditions on Berkeley Avenue, Peninsula Way, and Colby Avenue during actual AM drop-off and PM pick-up periods, not solely modeled trip-generation estimates. A 28-percent enrollment increase cannot be meaningfully evaluated by the public, or conditioned by the County, without that document. The workshop's stated purpose is to identify potential issues before the applicant proceeds; traffic is the central issue here, and deferring the study past the workshop is inconsistent with that purpose.

The County's own published standards reinforce this request. San Mateo County Public Works requires that both a Level of Service analysis and a Vehicle Miles Traveled analysis be completed prior to project approval for developments subject to CEQA review. Those are mandatory components, not optional ones. The 1973 staff reports for Use Permit amendments ZA-UP-26-73 and ZA-UP-27-73 further document that Berkeley Avenue, Peninsula Way, and Colby Avenue have only 16 to 18 feet of asphalt pavement, well below the roughly 24 feet a standard two-way residential street requires. Because of that constraint, the 1973 County Engineer conditioned the School's permit on a right-of-way dedication and a recorded street-improvement agreement triggered by any future increase in the usage of the property. We ask the staff comment letter to confirm whether that obligation is activated by the proposed enrollment increase, and to require that the traffic study be scoped now so its findings are available before the formal application is filed.

Ancillary Issue 1: Colby Avenue Rear Access

The School has used its Colby Avenue rear access — permitted for emergency egress only — as a routine daily drop-off route since the COVID period, producing vehicles that regularly block a street measured at 16 to 18 feet of pavement. Formal complaints have been submitted to both the School and the County on multiple occasions; the County Sheriff has been called to ticket vehicles blocking the roadway. We ask the traffic study to specifically address this existing unauthorized use and whether it should be restricted to its permitted purpose.

Ancillary Issue 2: Proposed Berkeley Avenue Entrance

The campus has operated since 1960 with primary access on Peninsula Way, where a purpose-built circular drive queues vehicles on site and keeps them off the public street. A new entrance on Berkeley Avenue — which has no comparable infrastructure — would disperse arrival and dismissal onto the street least equipped to absorb it. The Colby experience is instructive: a gate labeled pedestrian does not remain pedestrian in practice. We ask the

County to require the applicant to justify the new entrance and confirm its consistency with the access arrangement governing Use Permit No. 1321 since 1960.

Ancillary Issue 3: Setback Reduction

The proposed reduction of the Berkeley Avenue front setback from 45 to 40 feet places new classroom buildings, the new entrance, and the protected trees marked for removal all on the same frontage — the one the County documented at only 16 to 18 feet of pavement. We ask that these elements be evaluated together for their combined effect on Berkeley Avenue rather than as unrelated line items in the application.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment at this stage and support the School being a good long-term neighbor. We intend to attend the June 17 workshop and welcome further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch and Daren Tuchman

640 Berkeley Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025

cc: Lisa Gauthier, San Mateo County Supervisor, District 4

From: [Anas Osman](#)
To: [Sonal Aggarwal](#); wslocum@smcgov.org; lketcham@smcgov.org
Cc: [Suzan Halabi](#)
Subject: PUBLIC RECORD SUBMISSION: Substantive Objections & Written Demands — Case PRE2025-00012 (650 Berkeley Ave Proxy)
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2026 11:54:23 AM
Attachments: [Exhaustive Public Comment and Substantive Legal Objections \(Case No. PRE2025-00012\).pdf](#)
[Exhibit A - Gmail - Neighbor concern - 650 Berkeley.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

Please find attached our formal, exhaustive public comment and legal objection packet regarding Planning Case File No. PRE2025-00012 (The Peninsula School East Campus Remodel Pre-Application Workshop).

As the 10-year homeowners at 650 Berkeley Avenue sitting exactly opposite the proposed development path, altered 40-foot front setback, and active pedestrian gate frontage, our property stands to absorb the highest direct concentration of this project's structural and safety externalities. Because we are departing on pre-scheduled international travel today, **this submitted letter serves as our official administrative proxy for the record.**

We want to emphasize personally that we are deeply supportive of independent education and local community infrastructure. In fact, our daughter attended Castilleja School, and we proudly donated to support their campus expansion. Through that process, we learned firsthand that a major institutional expansion can achieve its core operational objectives only when the school works transparently and cooperatively with its immediate neighbors to reach a real, binding compromise.

Unfortunately, The Peninsula School's current proposal does the exact opposite: it introduces unmitigated public safety hazards and directly violates explicit, recent written commitments made to us by the school administration. We want the school to succeed, but it must be done right, safely, and in a truly collaborative manner.

Pursuant to San Mateo County zoning procedures and your explicit statutory duties under CEQA, we demand that the Planning Department formally address, itemize, and provide detailed written answers to each of our structured threshold inquiries within the County's official staff comment letter to the applicant.

Please respond to this email to confirm receipt and verify that this submission and its attached Exhibit A have been uploaded to the official PRE2025-00012 record.

Respectfully submitted,

Anas Osman & Suzan Halabi
650 Berkeley Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Anas Osman & Suzan Halabi | 650 Berkeley Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025

June 15, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner

cc: Warren Slocum, San Mateo County Supervisor & Lisa Ketcham, Legislative Aide, District 4
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department

455 County Center, 2nd Floor

Redwood City, CA 94063

Saggarwal@smcgov.org

**RE: Exhaustive Public Comment, Substantive Legal Objections, and Threshold Inquiries
Major Development Pre-Application Workshop — The Peninsula School East Campus
Remodel Planning Case File No. PRE2025-00012; APN 062-181-050 FORMAL DEMAND FOR
WRITTEN ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE IN STAFF PACKET**

Ms. Aggarwal,

As 10-year owners and residents of the property at 650 Berkeley Avenue, we are writing to submit our formal public comments for the Major Development Pre-Application Workshop on June 17, 2026. Because we are departing on pre-scheduled travel the same day as the live workshop window, this comprehensive document serves as our official proxy and formal stand-in for the administrative record. Pursuant to San Mateo County planning procedures and your explicit statutory duties under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), we hereby demand that the Planning Department formally address, itemize, and provide detailed written answers to each of the structured threshold inquiries below within the County's official staff comment letter to the applicant. Our home, front door, and private driveway sit exactly and directly opposite the proposed East Campus perimeter fence modifications, the altered 40-foot front setback, and the newly introduced pedestrian access gate. While we value education and have consistently strived to be supportive neighbors to The Peninsula School, the current proposal introduces severe safety, fire, environmental, structural, and civil liability issues that place an unfair, highly disruptive, and highly disproportionate burden on our private property.

Under San Mateo County Zoning Regulations Chapter 24, Sections 6500 through 6505, the Planning Department is legally barred from approving a Use Permit Amendment without making explicit, affirmative findings that the proposed expansion will not be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, comfort, or general welfare of the neighborhood. The complete omission of a Traffic Analysis Report at this stage deprives the public of necessary documentation. To fulfill your statutory obligations, we compel the Planning Department, Public Works Department, and County Counsel to incorporate the following inquiries into the official review record and require explicit written compliance from the applicant:

1. Breach of Recent Written Commitments & Frontage Fencing "Bait-and-Switch"

Following direct communications we initiated regarding our deep concerns about tree removal and

East Campus layout changes ("**Neighbor concern - 650 Berkeley,**" attached hereto in full as **Exhibit A**), the school administration issued a definitive response on **February 13, 2025**. School officials Johanna Aeschliman and B. Bailey explicitly stated via email and in writing to us:

"Regarding plans to replant, as stated in my last email, 'At present there is no plan to replant along the east side of the property. However, we are in a design process that will reimagine much of our east side of campus. The landscape architect has worked diligently to preserve the neighbors' street side experience of the campus. This will include solid fencing on the perimeter with plantings on both sides of the fence to soften the experience.' The timeline of this project is still unfolding."

The submitted project plans under Case No. PRE2025-00012 directly violate this recent bilateral commitment. Instead of a continuous, sound-attenuating, solid visual privacy barrier to insulate the neighborhood from institutional noise, the school has substituted an active, high-traffic pedestrian access gate directly facing our private driveway and front door.

- **To the Peninsula School:** Why is the school explicitly breaching the written neighborhood directive and commitment provided to us on February 13, 2025? What operational changes occurred between February 2025 and this filing that justified converting a promised continuous, solid safety fence into an active pedestrian traffic generator? Why would you not reach out proactively and provide an update to a concerned neighbor when these major changes occurred?
- **To the Project Planner:** Under the mandatory non-detriment findings required by Chapter 24, will the Planning Department condition any future permit to mandate a continuous, solid, high-quality wooden fence along the entire Berkeley Avenue frontage—completely eliminating active pedestrian or vehicular gates opposite residential driveways—to enforce the school's prior written commitments and mitigate severe acoustic blight?

2. Institutionalizing and Scaling Unsafe "Over-the-Fence" Drop-offs

The school's attempt to minimize this modification as a minor "pedestrian gate" fundamentally ignores documented parental behavioral patterns. Currently, even with the existing solid fence line and a lower student population, we repeatedly witness families stopping or idling vehicles on Berkeley Avenue and physically passing their children over the fence to drop them off or pick them up. This occurs regularly, creates severe pedestrian safety hazards, and stands in direct contradiction to the school's own stated principles. There is no possible way the school administration can claim to be unaware of this repeated, highly unsafe practice. Furthermore, this danger is compounded daily by aggressive driver behavior during peak hours. For years, we have endured parents in a rush who, rather than yielding to residents safely backing out of our private driveways, actively attempt to force their way through and around our vehicles. Despite our placing several direct phone calls to the school administration over the years to report these specific traffic hazards, no meaningful enforcement has occurred. Formalizing a high-volume pedestrian gate at this exact flashpoint will structurally institutionalize these near-miss vehicular conflicts.

- **To the Peninsula School:** Given that the school is fully aware of these ongoing, dangerous "over-the-fence" drop-offs, how can you justify building a formal gate that will actively incentivize, formalize, and multiply this exact behavior?
- **To the Peninsula School:** Since a pedestrian gate functions as an active traffic generator, drawing vehicles to park on the closest street shoulder, how does the school plan to physically enforce a ban on parent drop-offs, pick-ups, and vehicle idling along Berkeley Avenue? Will school staff be physically stationed at this gate during peak AM/PM hours to turn away parent vehicles and prevent Berkeley Avenue from becoming a chaotic, secondary loading zone?
- **To the Project Planner:** Because San Mateo County Zoning Regulations Chapter 24, Sections 6500 through 6505 legally bar the approval of a Use Permit expansion that compromises public safety, the Planning Department should deny this gate generator out of hand. However, if it moves forward over our vehement objections, will the County explicitly condition the Use Permit to mandate that this portal remain a secured, keys-locked emergency-exit portal strictly closed to daily student ingress and egress to prevent an unmitigated pedestrian-vehicular safety hazard under CEQA?

3. Historical Over-Entitlement Beyond 1974 Thresholds under S-100 Overlay

The project proposes adding 63 students, raising the maximum student enrollment cap from 223 to 286 students—a massive **28.25%** spike in operational intensity. This extreme expansion completely reverses the historical trend of reducing institutional density within the protected R-1/S-100 Menlo Oaks Combining District to preserve neighborhood traffic tolerances.

- **To the Project Planner:** Use Permit UPX7D-1321, approved by the County in 1974, authorized an absolute maximum enrollment of 240 students. Since subsequent administrative actions restricted the cap to 223 to align with neighborhood infrastructure capacities, how can the Planning Department legally justify leapfrogging past the historical 1974 peak to 286 students (representing a **19.17%** increase beyond the 50-year historical maximum) on a localized road network that has not changed or widened in over half a century?
- **To the Peninsula School:** The project proposes adding 63 students but only increases on-site parking stalls from 35 to 49. Since an additional 14 spaces cannot mathematically absorb the peak morning and afternoon traffic surge for 63 additional families, nor can 14 spots account for the massive influx of vehicles added during school events that routinely crowd neighborhood roadways, why is the school violating its successful historical planning model by diverting traffic access to Berkeley Avenue instead of expanding its engineered on-site queuing loops off Peninsula Way?

4. Administrative Interrogatory: Activation of 1973 Road-Widening Covenants

The County's own historical records establish that the surrounding streets cannot absorb this intensified use. In the staff engineering reports for the 1973 amendments to this exact Use Permit (**ZA-UP-26-73 and ZA-UP-27-73**), the County Engineer officially documented that Berkeley Avenue, Peninsula Way, and Colby Avenue possess a severely constrained 16 to 18 feet of asphalt

pavement within a 40-foot right-of-way. Because a standard two-way residential street requires 24 feet of pavement, the County Engineer explicitly required the School to execute and record a binding agreement guaranteeing financial participation in the future engineering and construction costs of widening and structurally improving these roadways. The historic record explicitly mandates that this road-widening obligation attaches the moment there is any "increase in the usage of the property."

- **To the Project Planner, County Engineer, and County Counsel:** Does the County acknowledge that a **28.25%** enrollment expansion past the 50-year-old 240-student peak constitutes a material "increase in the usage of the property" under the terms of the 1973 recorded covenants?
- **To the Project Planner and County Counsel:** Will Public Works formally execute a title and administrative record search to enforce the 1973 agreement, and will the County explicitly compel the applicant to deposit a fully capitalized infrastructure bond for its proportional share of street-widening costs across Berkeley, Colby, and Peninsula Way before a formal application is accepted for processing?

5. Acute Electrical Fire & Public Safety Risks via PG&E Infrastructure

The presence of PG&E high-voltage overhead utility lines and active distribution poles running along Berkeley Avenue introduces immediate structural and liability risks. The school's own December 2023 Arborist Report documents a dangerous, pre-existing pattern of severe tree overgrowth and utility line interference directly along the proposed development path:

- **Tree #22 (Coast Live Oak):** Officially documented as having its **"crown resting on utility lines."**
- **Tree #29 (Coast Live Oak):** Officially documented as **"rubbing on utility wires."**
- **Tree #316 (Coast Live Oak):** Officially documented with **"branches resting on utility wires; topped under power line."**
- **Tree #37 (Coast Live Oak):** Officially documented as **"leaning south; resting on utility lines."**
- **Tree #73 (Coast Live Oak):** Officially documented as having a **"heavy lean south; resting on utility lines."** * **Tree #244 (Coast Live Oak):** Explicitly notes a **"guy wire from power pole on trunk."**

By placing an institutional gate directly beneath these lines, the school is deliberately introducing high-volume human traffic (children holding parents' hands) into a corridor with active, wind-swayed lines that are already physically entangled with the tree canopy. Furthermore, in the February 13, 2025 email, B. Bailey admitted that during the last round of PG&E's Vegetation Management work, they clear-cut two mature Acacias from the street side of the property, leaving bare stumps.

- **To the Project Planner & Menlo Park Fire Marshal:** Given that the school's own Arborist Report officially documents multiple mature trees along the Berkeley frontage as actively

"resting on utility lines" and "rubbing on utility wires" , does the County acknowledge that approving an institutional pedestrian gate that concentrates hundreds of children directly beneath these active electrical drop-lines creates an unmitigated public safety and fire ignition hazard under CEQA?

- **To the Project Planner:** Under California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order 95, PG&E maintains a non-negotiable right to slash, top, or entirely remove any vegetation threatening their lines. Because the school's proposed 40-foot front setback layout sits directly under these high-voltage lines, how can the applicant legally guarantee the "planted buffer fence" they promised, when any landscaping installed is subject to immediate, aggressive eradication by PG&E crews?
- **To the Peninsula School:** The school's layout plans indicate a new 6-foot perimeter fence running right along the Berkeley Avenue property line. Has the school obtained formal structural clearance from PG&E to execute sub-surface post-hole augering and trenching immediately adjacent to the high-voltage utility poles and sub-grade anchoring guy wires? If a fence post hole damages or causes a localized structural failure of a utility pole, what specific bond is the school posting to protect adjacent residential properties from the resulting electrical fire or grid blackout?

6. Physical Right-of-Way Obstruction and Civil Liability Shifting

Berkeley Avenue between Colby and Peninsula is a highly constrained, substandard semi-rural right-of-way measuring a mere 14 to 18 feet in paved width. It completely lacks concrete sidewalks, curbs, gutters, streetlights, or storm drainage, and experiences significant localized flooding during rainstorms. Under Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 080390, the County officially designated Berkeley Avenue as a **Priority 2** infrastructure deficit roadway and Colby Avenue as **Priority 3**, specifically categorized under the "**Drainage/School or Public Facilities**" prioritization category. This county-level designation proves that the local authority acknowledges school operations are a direct driver of structural stress on these streets.

Crucially, properties in Menlo Oaks hold fee title to the edge of the paved road surface ; the unpaved dirt shoulders are private property subject only to a public travel easement. Under California Street and Highways Code Section 5610, adjacent homeowners bear the direct civil tort liability for maintenance, erosion, and pedestrian slip-and-fall hazards in these unpaved stretches.

- **To the Project Planner:** Because the existing PG&E utility poles, structural guy wires, and mature trees physically block the unpaved shoulders, parents utilizing this gate will be structurally blocked from pulling completely out of the right-of-way. Vehicles will be forced to park with their driver-side tires remaining on the active, 16-to-18-foot paved road surface. Will the County require the applicant to submit a clear, engineered civil profile showing how a vehicle can park at the Berkeley gate without narrowing the active travel lane down to a single lane, which would completely block emergency fire apparatus routing?
- **To the Project Planner and County Counsel:** Since the proposed gate actively invites parents to stand, park, and compact the unpaved dirt shoulders on our private property, does the County acknowledge that approving this gate actively shifts severe civil tort

liability, property damage, and maintenance costs directly onto us without our consent or compensation?

- **To the Peninsula School:** If a parent or child is injured, or private property is damaged on the unpaved shoulder of 650 Berkeley Avenue due to school-generated gate traffic, will the Peninsula School execute a legally binding, recordable indemnification agreement holding us completely harmless from all associated civil claims and liabilities?

7. Pre-Application Stormwater Infrastructure Disruption & Environmental Compliance Under CEQA

The project's Preliminary Outline Specifications reveal a substantial civil utilities intervention within the front setback, including trenching new electrical/data subpanels, dual-plumbing laundry installations to grade-level gray water stub-outs, and a **5,000-gallon stormwater retention storage tank** with gravity-fed overflows directed into rock-lined swales right facing our frontage. This intensive sub-surface excavation occurs directly inside the driplines of Menlo Oaks' protected native canopy. The school's arborist report documents 335 trees on site, noting that 154 trees possess low suitability for preservation and 93 trees are already in a poor, structurally degraded condition.

Furthermore, the current site plan proposes the complete demolition of Building 1 ("**Rainbowland**"), an English Cottage Revival structure designed in 1930 by master architect Charles K. Sumner. This building stands as a qualified historic resource under CRHR Criterion 3. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 21084.1, its demolition constitutes an automatic, substantial adverse change to the environmental record that cannot be brushed aside during a pre-application review.

- **To the Project Planner:** How can the County collect meaningful environmental input or complete a valid CEQA Initial Study during this public workshop window when the applicant has completely omitted an independent Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) or an enforceable Traffic Management Plan (TMP)?
- **To the School's Arborist and Project Planner:** The project explicitly requires permits to remove 10 protected trees. Furthermore, digging post holes for the proposed 6-foot wooden perimeter fence along Berkeley Avenue can sever critical structural roots of nearby mature oaks. Under the Significant Tree Ordinance, unpermitted root zone or dripline damage carries cumulative fines of up to **50%** of each tree's total appraised value. Will the County mandate a completed, tree-by-tree Root Protection Map detailing exact post-hole trenching and 5,000-gallon tank excavation impacts along the Berkeley fence line before this pre-application process is allowed to advance?

Conclusion and Enforceable Threshold Requests

The complete absence of a Traffic Analysis Report, combined with the lack of structural site details for the Berkeley easement and the blatant violation of the school's February 13, 2025 fencing commitment, constitutes an unacceptable "hide the ball" scenario for the most directly impacted

residents.

As the property owners forced to absorb the highest concentration of this project's physical, visual, and safety externalities, **and because our physical absence from the June 17 workshop limits our ability to cross-examine the applicant in person**, we respectfully request that the County's staff comment letter enforce the following threshold requirements before a formal application is accepted for processing:

1. **Denial of the Berkeley Pedestrian Gate:** Maintain the successful historical access design by keeping primary vehicular and pedestrian access strictly restricted to Peninsula Way, replacing the proposed gate with a continuous, sound-attenuating solid wood privacy fence as promised to us in writing.
2. **Trigger Historical Widening Obligations:** Compel the formal activation of the 1973 recording agreement (ZA-UP-27-73) to determine the exact proportional cost-share the School must legally dedicate toward road improvements and physical lane widening before any formal application moves forward.
3. **Mandate an Enforceable Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan:** Require a strict TDM featuring a legally binding "Zero Net New Trips" mandate, carpooling quotas, and active on-street monitoring by school personnel, matching the zoning precedents set for other expanded private schools in the area.

We request formal written confirmation that this letter has been successfully added to the official PRE2025-00012 record and look forward to receiving a copy of the County's written staff response packet.

Respectfully submitted,

Anas Osman & Suzan Halabi *10-Year Residents and Owners, 650 Berkeley Ave*

Attachment: * Exhibit A: Complete Written Correspondence Record via Gmail: "Neighbor concern - 650 Berkeley" (Dated Dec 6, 2024 – Feb 13, 2025).



Anas Osman <anasosman@gmail.com>

Neighbor concern - 650 Berkeley

B Bailey <bailey.d@peninsulaschool.org>
To: Anas Osman <anasosman@gmail.com>
Cc: Johanna Aeschliman <johanna.a@peninsulaschool.org>

Thu, Feb 13, 2025 at 1:29 PM

Hello Anas,

My mistake that I had confused your address with our neighbor at 600 Berkeley Ave., also described as a white farmhouse.

Speaking specifically to the removal, during PG&E's Vegetation Management last round of work they did remove two Acaia from the street side of our property facing your house, stumps still remaining. During that work some other shrubbery, living and dead within our fence line, was removed. If you have additional questions about PG&E's work their Vegetation Management Department may be able to provide more information.

Regarding plans to replant, as stated in my last email, "At present there is no plan to replant *along the east side* of the property. However, we are in a design process that will reimage much of our east side of campus. The landscape architect has worked diligently to preserve the neighbors' street side experience of the campus. This will include solid fencing on the perimeter with plantings on both sides of the fence to soften the experience."
The timeline of this project is still unfolding.

With regard,
Bailey

On Tue, Feb 11, 2025 at 2:05 PM Anas Osman <anasosman@gmail.com> wrote:
Thanks. I was reminded of this recently again when working on my office.

To be clear, I am not talking about the corner. My house is not in a corner. We are exactly opposite the school on Berkeley at 650 Berkeley Ave. I don't believe this work was P&G. Can you speak specifically to that removal and plans to replant both for neighbor experience and that of the students at the school.

Many thanks,

Anas Osman
847-323-7940

On Fri, Jan 3, 2025, 12:14 PM B Bailey <bailey.d@peninsulaschool.org> wrote:
Hello Anas - My apologies for the delayed reply. Catching up now after our holiday break.

We, too, have an appreciation for healthy relationships with our neighbors.

It's true some greenery was removed from the corner of the campus. Largely this was the work of PGE which removed problem species of Ailanthus and Acacia. Additionally we groomed out some dead and unhealthy plant material. Also true that visual & audible exposure has increased for us and our neighbors.

At present there is no plan to replant in this corner of the property. However, we are in a design process that will reimage much of our east side of campus. The landscape architect has worked diligently to preserve the neighbors' street side experience of the campus. This will include solid fencing on the perimeter with plantings on both sides of the fence to soften the experience.

Please keep in touch



Bailey (he/him)
Director of Facilities
bailey@peninsulaschool.org
650-325-1584 ext. #316
920 Peninsula Way, Menlo Park, 94025

On Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 8:21 PM Anas Osman <anasosman@gmail.com> wrote:
Hi Johanna and David,

Bumping up this email, and hoping to hear back from you soon.

Many thanks,

Anas

On Mon, Dec 9, 2024, 3:13 PM Johanna Aeschliman <johanna.a@peninsulaschool.org> wrote:
Dear Anas,

Thank you for reaching out to me. My Director of Facilities, Bailey, will reach out to you before Wednesday afternoon to let you know about the brush that was cut down. We also desire to have a natural buffer between us and our neighbors.

Sincerely,

Johanna



Johanna Aeschliman (she, her)
Head of School
johanna.a@peninsulaschool.org
650-325-1584
[920 Peninsula Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025](https://www.peninsulaschool.org)
[peninsulaschool.org](https://www.peninsulaschool.org)
[@peninsulaschool](https://www.instagram.com/peninsulaschool)

On Fri, Dec 6, 2024 at 7:51 PM Anas Osman <anasosman@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Johanna,

My name is Anas, and I live directly across from The Peninsula School at 650 Berkeley – the white "farmhouse." My family and I have enjoyed living in Menlo Oaks and appreciate the school's efforts to manage parking during events and offer the grounds for neighborhood use. We have always valued the school's responsiveness when addressing occasional concerns about traffic.

Recently, we noticed a significant amount of foliage was removed from the area opposite our home. This greenery previously provided privacy for both the schoolchildren and our home. The removal has left the area more exposed, and I've noticed an increase in noise levels in my home office, which faces Berkeley directly not far from the cleared trees.

I understand the school has a commitment to maintaining a natural buffer between the school and the neighborhood. Could you please let me know if there are plans to replant and restore the trees and foliage that were removed?

6/17/26, 10:55 AM

Gmail - Neighbor concern - 650 Berkeley

I look forward to your response and to continuing a positive, neighborly relationship with the school.

Sincerely,
Anas Osman
847-323-7940

Brent Brown
680 Berkeley Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

June 9, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Saggarwal@smcgov.org

RE: Public Comment — Major Development Pre-Application Workshop, The Peninsula School East Campus (Planning Case File No. PRE2025-00012; APN 062-181-050); Request for a Traffic Analysis Report Addressing Existing Colby Avenue Rear-Access Conditions, Reconsideration of the Proposed New Berkeley Avenue Entrance, and Binding Circulation Conditions Prior to Formal Application

Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

I own and reside at the property on Berkeley Avenue directly across the street from the side of The Peninsula School's East Campus. I am submitting this comment in connection with the Major Development Pre-Application Workshop scheduled for June 17, 2026 regarding the School's proposed remodel and Use Permit Amendment (PRE2025-00012). I am not writing to oppose the School. I am writing to ask that the County require the single study that this application most needs → a Traffic Analysis Report grounded in observed existing conditions, and adopt enforceable circulation conditions, before the matter advances to formal application and the Planning Commission.

The workshop's purpose argues for addressing traffic now, not later.

The County's own notice states that the Major Development Pre-Application Workshop exists "to provide for and foster early public involvement and input on a major development project and, to the extent feasible, identify potential issues before the applicant continues the necessary Planning applications." **Traffic and pedestrian circulation are, by a wide margin, the most significant potential issues this project raises for the surrounding residential neighborhood.** Yet the notice also states that a Traffic Analysis Report "has not been prepared" and will only be required "at the time of the formal application." Deferring the central impact analysis past the workshop means the public is being asked to comment on a 28% enrollment increase without the one document needed to evaluate it. I respectfully ask the County to identify this as a threshold issue in its staff comment letter and to require that the traffic study be scoped now.

The proposal materially intensifies use on streets that already fail during peak hours.

The application seeks to raise maximum enrollment from 223 to 286 students. Berkeley Avenue, Peninsula Way, and Colby Avenue are narrow residential streets without the standard width to accommodate two-way travel when vehicles are stopped along the curb. During morning drop-off and

afternoon pick-up, parents routinely stop and park partially within the travel lane, at times halfway into the roadway, leaving vehicles unoccupied, to load and unload children. The result is that through-traffic cannot pass, sight lines are obstructed, and the street periodically ceases to function for residents and for emergency access. These are existing conditions, before any enrollment increase. Adding students without first studying and mitigating this pattern will predictably worsen a condition that is already unsafe.

The County's own historical record establishes that these streets cannot absorb intensified use.

The County need not rely on my account of street conditions, because the County measured them itself. In the staff reports for the 1973 amendments to this very Use Permit (ZA-UP-26-73 and ZA-UP-27-73), the County Engineer found that the three streets surrounding the property - Peninsula Way, Berkeley Avenue, and Colby Avenue - have only 14 to 18 feet of asphalt pavement within a 40-foot right-of-way. A standard two-way residential street provides roughly 24 feet or more of pavement. At 14 to 18 feet, these streets physically cannot accommodate two-way travel when a vehicle is stopped halfway in the road which is precisely the condition that occurs throughout every drop-off and pick-up period today. This is not a matter of neighborhood preference; it is a matter of pavement width that the County documented half a century ago and that **has not changed since.**

Because of that constraint, the County in 1973 required the School to dedicate an additional five feet of right-of-way and to enter a recording agreement guaranteeing participation in the cost of future street improvements. **The County Engineer stated on the record that this obligation would attach when there was an increase in the usage of the property.** The current application proposes precisely such an increase → raising the maximum enrollment to 286 students. I respectfully ask the County to confirm whether the 1973 recording agreement and street-improvement obligation are triggered by the proposed intensification of use, and to address that question in its staff comment letter.

Berkeley Avenue is a residential street already carrying a through-route's traffic load.

Context on Berkeley Avenue is important. Within Menlo Oaks, Berkeley is one of the principal north-south routes connecting to Bay Road, and it carries cut-through traffic accordingly (yet it is also a residential street of roughly 80 homes), and it runs along the side of the School's campus. It therefore already absorbs a through-route's traffic burden on residential-scale infrastructure. Neighborhood traffic counts bear this out. Using aggregate hourly vehicle-passage counts from neighborhood installed cameras (camera-detected passages rather than de-duplicated unique vehicles, and so a relative indicator of volume rather than a precise count) averaged across four weeks of weekdays in April 2026, the data show a pronounced twin-peak pattern on these streets that aligns directly with school arrival and dismissal: a sharp spike in the 8 a.m. hour and a second large peak in the mid-afternoon, with markedly lower volumes in between. In other words, the streets serving this campus are already most heavily loaded at precisely the hours a newly proposed Berkeley Avenue entrance would intensify. Notably, Colby Avenue, the minor cross-street with the School's informal rear emergency access, already shows the most extreme morning peak of any street measured, which is consistent with the conclusion that an informal access point concentrates peak-hour traffic onto a narrow street. I offer this as a neighborhood-level indicator, not as a substitute for a professional analysis, and precisely because it underscores why a rigorous Traffic Analysis Report of observed conditions is warranted before this application advances.

The campus already demonstrates this exact problem on Colby Avenue.

The County does not need to speculate about what an informal pedestrian access point does to a narrow street, because the School is already operating one. Since the COVID period (and even before), the School has used the rear access point on Colby Avenue (originally provided for emergency egress), as a routine drop-off and pick-up route. That access point was never designed for daily peak circulation, and the predictable result has followed: during drop-off and pick-up, vehicles queue and stop on Colby Avenue, at times blocking the roadway entirely, on a street the County measured at the same 14 to 18 feet of pavement. This is not a hypothetical. It is an ongoing condition that the surrounding neighborhood has experienced for several years.

This point deserves emphasis, because it anticipates the likely response. The application characterizes the Berkeley element as a “pedestrian” gate, with the implication that it will not generate vehicle traffic. The Colby rear access is also a non-vehicular access point- and yet, in practice, parents park along Colby Avenue and use it for daily drop-off and pick-up regardless. A pedestrian gate does not stay pedestrian: parents drive to it, stop along the side of the road, and load and unload, exactly as they do on Colby today. There is no basis to expect Berkeley Avenue to behave differently from the School’s own existing rear gate, and the Colby experience is direct evidence that it will not. I would ask the County to weigh the proposed Berkeley entrance against this observed reality rather than against the assumption that a “pedestrian” gate carries no vehicular consequence.

The Colby conditions are well documented. I have submitted complaints regarding drop-off and pick-up traffic at the Colby rear access on numerous occasions over the past two years, and these concerns have also been raised formally with the School by the neighborhood association on multiple occasions over the same period. In particular, Jim Bird, a member of the Menlo Oaks District Association board and the community’s primary point of contact with The Peninsula School, has formally notified the School of these traffic conditions on several occasions over the last year alone. The conditions have at times been serious enough that the County Sheriff has been called out to ticket vehicles parked partially in the roadway. I ask that the County’s staff comment letter acknowledge this documented history and the School’s awareness of it.

The proposed Berkeley Avenue entrance would open a previously closed side of the campus.

This Use Permit traces to 1960 (Resolution Z-376, Use Permit No. 1321), when the campus was approved for approximately 200 children, and was amended in 1973 (ZA-UP-27-73) to a maximum of 240 students. Throughout that history, the School’s front and primary access has been on Peninsula Way, served by a large circular driveway specifically engineered to draw vehicles off the public street, queue them on site, and return them safely to the road. Berkeley Avenue, by contrast, runs along the side of the campus and has never had an entrance or exit at all, it has been a closed frontage for the entire life of the School. The proposal would cut a new opening into that previously closed side, introducing school pedestrian and drop-off activity onto a frontage that has never carried it, on a street with no circular drive, no queuing capacity, and the same 14-to-18-foot pavement the County measured and drew concerns about in 1973.

The streets have not changed, the lots have not changed, and the pavement width has not changed.

And the traffic that exists today is worse than it was in 1973. It is therefore unclear why a new opening is now proposed on the Berkeley side, a street the County’s own engineer documented as inadequate for two-way traffic. Because the campus has operated without any Berkeley access since well before 1960,

there is no “this is how it has always worked” justification available here; the Berkeley entrance would be an entirely new condition. I would ask the County to require the applicant to explain the rationale for opening the Berkeley side. Because the new classrooms and the tree removals appear to be concentrated on that same Berkeley-facing portion of the site, it is also fair to ask the applicant to explain what siting alternatives were considered on this 6.8-acre campus, and why the eight healthier protected trees could not be preserved.

More fundamentally, it is worth asking why a new Berkeley entrance is needed at all. Schools typically consolidate arrival and dismissal into a single, managed drop-off area, precisely because consolidation is what allows staff to control queuing, monitor who is coming and going, and keep activity off the surrounding public streets. This campus already has the circular drive on Peninsula Way built for exactly that purpose. Adding a Berkeley gate — on top of the Peninsula Way circle and the existing Colby rear access — moves in the opposite direction, dispersing drop-off and pick-up across three sides of a campus bounded by three narrow streets. It is fair to ask why three separate access points are warranted when the standard and safer approach is a single consolidated one.

Dispersing access across three frontages is not only a circulation concern; it is also a child-safety and supervision concern. Three gates on three streets are inherently harder for staff to monitor than one controlled point, both for managing traffic and for overseeing the children themselves. I would ask the County to require the applicant to justify the need for a third access point on Berkeley Avenue, rather than consolidating arrival and dismissal at the existing Peninsula Way circle as the campus was originally designed to do.

The setback reduction compounds the impact on the Berkeley frontage.

The application also proposes to reduce the Berkeley Avenue (east) front setback from 45 feet to 40 feet. The plan set confirms that 45 feet is the setback under the current Conditional Use Permit; the four new K-2 classroom buildings are arrayed along the Berkeley frontage, inside the reduced setback, and the protected trees marked for removal are clustered in that same band. In other words, the new buildings, the tree removals, the reduced setback, and the new pedestrian entrance are all concentrated on the one frontage the County has documented at just 14 to 18 feet of pavement. These elements should be evaluated together for their combined effect on Berkeley Avenue, rather than as unrelated line items.

On-site parking is not the same as drop-off and pick-up capacity.

The application increases on-site parking from 35 to 49 spaces. That addresses staff and visitor parking, but it does not address the queuing of parents during drop-off and pick-up, which is where the safety problem occurs and which happens in the public right-of-way. The relevant question is not how many cars can park on site, but whether the site can absorb the peak surge of arriving and departing vehicles off the public street. I ask that the County require the traffic study and site plan to address dedicated on-site drop-off and loading capacity sized to the proposed enrollment.

Specific requests.

I respectfully request that the County’s staff comment letter, and any subsequent conditions of approval, include the following:

1. A Traffic Analysis Report scoped to document observed existing AM drop-off and PM pick-up conditions on Berkeley Avenue, Peninsula Way, and Colby Avenue (including roadway width, vehicle queuing, on-street parking behavior, passability, and sight-line and emergency-access impacts) not solely modeled trip-generation estimates.
2. A requirement that the site plan provide an adequate on-site drop-off and loading area sized to the proposed enrollment, with the goal of removing queuing from the public right-of-way.
3. That the Traffic Analysis Report and any conditions specifically study and address the existing use of the Colby Avenue rear access for daily drop-off and pick-up, including whether that use should be limited to its original emergency-egress purpose, given that it currently results in vehicles blocking Colby Avenue.
4. A requirement that the applicant explain the rationale for opening a new entrance on the Berkeley Avenue side (a frontage the campus has operated without since well before 1960) and that the County reconsider it in light of the School's long-standing primary access on Peninsula Way and the circular driveway built to contain drop-off and pick-up there.
5. A requirement that the applicant justify the need for a third campus access point on Berkeley Avenue (in addition to the Peninsula Way circular drive and the existing Colby Avenue rear access) rather than consolidating arrival and dismissal at the existing circular drive, considering both circulation and the child-safety implications of dispersing access across three narrow streets.
6. Confirmation of whether the five-foot right-of-way dedication and street-improvement recording agreement required by the County Engineer in the 1973 proceedings are triggered by the proposed increase in enrollment, and what obligations that imposes on the applicant.
7. Reconsideration of the proposed reduction of the Berkeley Avenue (east) setback from 45 feet to 40 feet, evaluated together with the new entrance, the new Berkeley-side classrooms, and the tree removals, given their combined effect on a roadway the County has documented at only 14 to 18 feet of pavement.
8. A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan as an enforceable condition of any permit-for example, staggered arrival and dismissal times, carpool requirements, designated drop-off procedures, and active management of staff and parent parking.
9. Acknowledgment in the staff comment letter of the prior formal complaints submitted to the School and the County regarding drop-off and pick-up conditions, and their disposition.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment at this early stage, and I support the School being a good long-term neighbor. The most direct path to that outcome is to study and address circulation now, while the project is still being shaped, rather than after the design is fixed.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Brown

Berkeley Avenue resident, Menlo Oaks

cc: Lisa Gutierrez, San Mateo County Supervisor, District 4

Susan Brazeal
920 Colby Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

June 10, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Saggarwal@smcgov.org

RE: Public Comment — Major Development Pre-Application Workshop, The Peninsula School East Campus (Planning Case File No. PRE2025-00012; APN 062-181-050); Opposition to Proposed Enrollment Increase and Renovation Plan; Request for Traffic Analysis and Binding Safety Conditions Prior to Formal Application

Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

I am the owner and resident of 920 Colby Avenue, located diagonally across the street from The Peninsula School's rear access gate. My home sits directly in the sightline of the gate and is continuously affected by the drop-off and pick-up activity it generates on Colby Avenue. I am submitting this comment in connection with the Major Development Pre-Application Workshop scheduled for June 17, 2026, regarding the School's proposed remodel and Use Permit Amendment (PRE2025-00012). I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed renovation plan and the requested 28% enrollment increase. My opposition is rooted in concrete, ongoing harms to the quality of life and physical safety of myself, my family, and my neighbors. I request that the County require a traffic analysis and allow the School's neighbors in the Menlo Oaks community to review and comment on it prior to the School's submission of its permit application. I am confident such analysis will show that the proposed renovation is totally inappropriate given the nature of the neighborhood streets surrounding the Peninsula School.

Traffic analysis must happen during the school year, and it must reflect what actually occurs on these streets.

The County's workshop notice acknowledges that a Traffic Analysis Report has not been prepared, and indicates it will only be required at the time of the formal application. I strongly urge the County to require that study as a pre-condition to the application advancing, and to require that it be grounded in observed, real-world conditions. Standard trip-generation models will not capture the dynamic that makes these streets dangerous: the bunching of vehicles during discrete drop-off and pick-up windows, the partial-lane stopping behavior of parents, and the resulting effect on roadway openness and emergency access. The study must include direct observation of AM drop-off and PM pick-up behavior on all three streets, and it must be available to the public well before any future plan submission so that residents can comment on it. Now that school is out of session for the summer, a meaningful analysis cannot be begun before mid-September of this year.

I live the consequences of this proposal every school day.

I do not need to speculate about what increased enrollment and expanded campus access will mean for Colby Avenue. I experience it directly, every morning and every afternoon when school is in session. From my front windows and from my own driveway, I witness the rear gate operating as an active, daily drop-off and pick-up point — a use it was never designed or permitted for. Vehicles stop and double-park directly in front of my property. The roadway is blocked. Emergency access is compromised. My ability to exit my own driveway during these periods is regularly impaired or impossible. This is my quality of life as a resident of 920 Colby Avenue today, before any enrollment increase. I am asking this County to recognize that what is proposed will make it substantially worse.

The rear gate on Colby Avenue is being operated outside its permitted purpose, and this application does not propose to fix that.

The rear access on Colby Avenue was provided for emergency egress, not for daily student circulation. Since the COVID period, the School has used it routinely as a drop-off and pick-up access point. That conversion happened without any amendment to the Use Permit, without any study of its impact on Colby Avenue, and without any input from the residents who bear its consequences. The result is a daily pattern of vehicles queuing along a street the County's own records document at only 16 to 18 feet of pavement — a street that physically cannot accommodate stopped vehicles and two-way travel at the same time. Every parent who parks in front of my home to drop off or retrieve a child creates a condition in which through-traffic cannot pass, emergency vehicles cannot proceed, and I have difficulty leaving and entering property. This is not occasional. It happens every school day. It has happened for years. And this application proposes to increase enrollment by 28%, drawing more vehicles to the same three narrow streets in the Menlo Oaks neighborhood, without first addressing the problem that already exists.

The safety hazards on Colby Avenue are real, documented, and ongoing.

The conditions on Colby Avenue during school hours are not a matter of neighborhood inconvenience. They are a genuine public safety hazard. Vehicles routinely stop in the street and at times block it entirely. Sight lines from driveways and to the School's rear gate are obscured. Children on foot and on bicycles move through a corridor of stopped vehicles where drivers cannot see them. Peninsula parents understand these hazards and often exit their cars and leave them in the road while escorting their children to the back gate. I have witnessed near-misses. I have had to wait in my own driveway for minutes at a time before traffic cleared enough to safely back out. On multiple occasions, conditions have been serious enough to require the San Mateo County Sheriff to respond and issue citations for vehicles blocking the roadway. The fact that law enforcement has been called to address traffic conditions directly in front of a school is not a minor administrative matter. It is evidence that the current situation presents an unacceptable risk to pedestrians, cyclists, children, and drivers. Increasing enrollment and adding a new Berkeley Avenue entrance will redistribute and intensify that risk throughout the neighborhood.

The School has been repeatedly notified of these conditions and has been unable to stop them.

These conditions have been raised formally with the School by the neighborhood association on multiple occasions over the past several years, including by a member of the Menlo Oaks District Association board and the community's primary liaison to The Peninsula School. This County planning record should reflect that awareness. I ask that the staff comment letter acknowledge this documented complaint history and confirm that it is part of the record as this application advances. The County should not allow a Use Permit expansion to proceed as though the existing conditions it would intensify are unknown or undocumented. What makes this history particularly significant is not merely that the School was notified, but that it was notified repeatedly, over multiple years, and was unable to solve the problem.

The School has been asked on numerous occasions to prevent families from parking on Colby Avenue. We have witnessed several weak attempts to curtail the problem; indeed, as a former parent of Peninsula School students I received school communications at the start of every school year reminding the community not to use Colby Avenue as a drop off location or entry to the school. I believe the School's weekly digital newsletter included the same reminder at the bottom. However, there was no monitoring of the gate by school staff nor were there consequences for using the back gate, and parents ignored the School's reminders. For a time two years ago, the School put metal "No Parking" signs up along the side of the street opposite the School, but these signs did nothing to curtail the drop offs and pickups; they only kept drivers from parking for extended periods during the school day. The signs also deterred guests of the residents on Colby Avenue from parking in front of the homes they visited.

As of this most recent academic year, it appeared there were absolutely no attempts by the School to curtail the use of the Colby Avenue gate as an entrance/exit. On nearly every school day, at least one school family is parked in front of my home for some portion of the day. That failure is directly relevant to this application. The School is now asking the County to approve a 28% increase in enrollment on the representation, implicit or explicit, that it can manage the circulation impacts on the surrounding streets. The record of the past several years demonstrates that it cannot manage the circulation impacts it already produces. The County should weigh that record carefully before approving any expansion.

A 28% enrollment increase will degrade the quality of life on Colby Avenue from difficult to unlivable during school hours.

The application proposes to raise maximum enrollment from 223 to 286 students. More students means more families. More families means more vehicles. More vehicles on Colby Avenue, a street of 16 to 18 feet of pavement with no designed queuing capacity, means longer blockages, more dangerous conditions, and a further erosion of my ability to use and enjoy my home and property during school hours. Adding 63 students without first eliminating or mitigating that condition is not a reasonable outcome, and this County has the authority to prevent it.¹

The proposed Berkeley Avenue entrance will create the same crisis on a second residential street.

¹ It is my understanding that over at least the past 8 years, the school has never been fully enrolled. Thus, the amount of School-related traffic currently "managed" by the School does not reflect the amount that they would need to accommodate at its currently-permitted numbers, emphasizing how exceedingly difficult the School will find managing the traffic for the proposed increased to be.

What is happening on Colby Avenue today is a working preview of what the proposed Berkeley Avenue entrance will produce. The School has characterized the proposed Berkeley entrance as a “pedestrian” gate, but that characterization offers no protection for Berkeley Avenue residents. Parents drive to whichever entrance is closest to their child’s classroom, stop in the roadway, and use it as a drop-off or temporary stopping point. Adding a third access point on a street with the same narrow pavement and no capacity to absorb peak load will produce the same result on Berkeley Avenue that I live with on Colby Avenue today. I urge the County not to replicate this harm on a second residential street before it has addressed it on the first.

Specific Requests.

I respectfully request that the County’s staff comment letter, and any subsequent conditions of approval, include the following:

- That the rear Colby Avenue gate be evaluated as part of this application, and that any Use Permit amendment include a binding condition limiting its use to emergency egress as originally permitted.
- A Traffic Analysis Report scoped to document observed, AM drop-off and PM pick-up conditions on Colby Avenue, Berkeley Avenue, and Peninsula Way — including roadway width, vehicle queuing, lane passability, sight lines, driveway access obstruction, and emergency vehicle access — not solely modeled trip-generation estimates. This must be done during the school year, not over the summer.
- A binding Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan as an enforceable condition of any amended Use Permit, to include staggered arrival and dismissal times, active staff management of drop-off and pick-up at all access points, designated loading zones within the campus boundary, and a prohibition on parent vehicles stopping in the Colby Avenue or Berkeley Avenue travel lanes.
- That the enrollment increase to 286 students not be approved unless and until enforceable traffic and circulation conditions have been adopted that demonstrably eliminate the existing hazardous conditions on Colby Avenue, as documented in the complaint history and in the Sheriff response record.
- Reconsideration of the proposed Berkeley Avenue entrance in light of the Colby Avenue experience, which demonstrates that a non-vehicular gate on a narrow residential street functions in practice as a daily drop-off and pick-up point. If the Berkeley entrance is not eliminated, it should require a dedicated on-site queuing and loading area that prevents any parent vehicle from stopping in the Berkeley Avenue travel lane. The School has plenty of land along Berkeley Avenue upon which to build such a queuing and loading site.
- A requirement that the site plan demonstrate adequate on-site drop-off and loading capacity sized to the proposed enrollment of 286 students, with the goal of eliminating all parent vehicle queuing from the surrounding public streets.
- Confirmation of whether the 1973 recording agreement and street-improvement obligation are triggered by the proposed enrollment increase, and what obligations that imposes on the applicant.

- Acknowledgment in the staff comment letter of the formal complaints submitted to the School by the neighborhood association regarding Colby Avenue drop-off and pick-up conditions, the documented history of those conditions, and the School's failure to resolve them despite repeated notification, including the Sheriff's responses.

I live across the street from Peninsula School and am directly affected by all activities at the School. I am not raising abstract concerns about traffic modeling or general neighborhood aesthetics. The School has been asked to address these conditions many times and has been unable to do so. Those conditions will worsen materially if this application advances without binding remediation. I urge the County to treat the existing Colby Avenue situation as a threshold issue and to require that it be resolved before this expansion proceeds.

I intend to attend the June 17 workshop and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you directly about the conditions at 920 Colby Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Brazeal

920 Colby Avenue, Menlo Oaks
Menlo Park, CA 94025

cc: Lisa Gauthier, San Mateo County Supervisor, District 4

Sonal Aggarwal

From: Michelle MacKenzie <michellehmackenzie@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2026 1:05 PM
To: Sonal Aggarwal
Subject: Peninsula School Expansion

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

I write regarding the referenced proposed expansion as a neighbor of the school. I reside at 980 Berkeley Ave.

First, we already experience a great amount of traffic when school is in session. Drivers to and from the school frequently speed through the narrow streets of our neighborhood, making it unsafe to walk at that time.

Second, I am greatly concerned about the proposal to remove 9 native, mature trees as well as a number of non native trees. Our neighborhood is called Menlo Oaks in homage to the native oak trees which comprise our neighborhood canopy. This canopy benefits the entire neighborhood by cooling the neighborhood significantly - something that is more and more enjoyed as temperatures climbing higher with global heating. It is also well established that mature trees in a neighborhood increase property value. Finally, these trees provide important habitat to our local birds. Habitat loss and fragmentation is an increasing problem. Consequently, it is important to preserve mature native trees as much as possible. I would ask that Peninsula School make an effort to redesign their plans to preserve the native trees.

Lastly, I worry about the impact of the new Berkeley pedestrian gate. This is an area which tends to have large puddles when it rains. How does the school intend to address this to reduce impacts on the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Michelle MacKenzie
980 Berkeley Ave

From: [Ray C. He](#)
To: [Sonal Aggarwal](#)
Subject: PRE2025-00012 — Request for Extended Comment Period — Adjacent Resident, 1000 Colby Ave
Date: Monday, June 8, 2026 10:02:53 PM

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Dear Ms. Aggarwal,

I am writing regarding Case File PRE2025-00012, the Major Development Pre-Application for Peninsula School's East Campus remodel and Use Permit Amendment at 920 Peninsula Way.

I am a resident at 1000 Colby Ave, directly adjacent to the school's Colby Avenue boundary. The proposed project includes fence replacement along Colby Avenue and would significantly increase enrollment and campus intensity approximately 150 feet from my home, where the school operates a side entrance used for student drop-offs and event parking.

I want to participate meaningfully in the Pre-Application Workshop on June 17, but I have a concern about timing. I have submitted six Public Records Act requests to the Planning & Building Department today for records directly relevant to this project, including the original Use Permit UPX7D-1321, building permit history, CEQA determinations, arborist assessments, code enforcement history, and pre-application correspondence. Under the PRA, the County has 10 calendar days to respond — which would be June 18, one day after the workshop.

Without these foundational records, I cannot prepare informed public comment. For example, the notice states that the applicant seeks to increase enrollment beyond the original 1974 cap of 240 students, but I have no way to review what conditions were attached to that permit — traffic management, hours of operation, setback requirements — or whether those conditions have been complied with over the past 50 years.

I respectfully request one of the following:

1. That the public comment period be extended to allow residents time to receive and review PRA responses before the comment window closes; or
2. That my PRA requests be expedited so the records are available before June 17; or
3. That a subsequent opportunity for written public comment remain open after the workshop to accommodate residents who are still awaiting public records.

I understand the Pre-Application Workshop is an early step in the process. But the notice itself states that the purpose is to "foster early public involvement and input." That purpose is undermined if residents cannot access the records they need to participate

meaningfully.

I appreciate your attention to this and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Ray He
1000 Colby Ave
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-704-5278
rayche@gmail.com

From: [Lola Falasinnu](#)
To: [Sonal Aggarwal](#); [Tosin Falasinnu](#)
Subject: Proposed Changes to Peninsula School, Menlo Park
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2026 10:47:47 PM

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Tosin and Lola Falasinnu

750 Berkeley Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025
June 16, 2026

Sonal Aggarwal, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Saggarwal@smcgov.org

Dear Ms. Aggarwal

Re: Proposed Changes to Peninsula School, Menlo Park

We have been living on Berkeley Avenue for more than three years. Our kids bike on Berkeley Avenue every day and one of us walks to the bus stop to take the bus to work every day. We have noticed many parents from Peninsula School driving their cars very fast on Berkeley Avenue and have felt unsafe biking or walking down the street.

We fear that adding a pedestrian street to Berkeley Avenue will further jeopardize the safety of pedestrians and bikers on Berkeley Avenue. We ask that the county restrict the access to Peninsula School to Peninsula Avenue. In addition, increasing the enrollment of the school from 223 to 286 students will also increase the number of cars going down the neighborhood street, further endangering the safety of pedestrians and bikers on the street.

Thank you for your attention to the matter,

Tosin and Lola Falasinnu