

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition to the Cato project proposal  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 17, 2021 11:31:17 AM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

---

Hello City Council,

I'm a long-time resident of College Terrace, and own my home on a substandard lot.

I would like to register my opposition to the Cato proposal, and urge the Council to consider other options.

Other homeowners, like myself, who live on lot sizes under 5000 sf, have the ability to add rental unit(s), but may not have the knowledge, wherewithal, or resources to do so. Instead of the Cato proposal, how about creating a program where the city would work with owners like myself to increase the density of the area in a cohesive and responsible manner. Partnerships between Palo Alto residents and the city seem like a more palatable option to satisfying the need for housing while maintaining the irreplaceable neighborhood feel.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]  
College Avenue

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 2239 Wellesley  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 17, 2021 6:33:45 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Hi-

I agree with those who feel that the planned development has too many units, the units are too small for families and the parking is inadequate. I live nearby and parking is already an issue as well as the lack of housing that is designed for families (these units are not). Thanks.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Support FOR the proposed development on Wellesley Street in College Terrace  
**Date:** Thursday, March 18, 2021 11:55:41 AM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

March 2021

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members,

As a homeowner and 30 year resident of College Terrace (CT) I am writing to express my support for the proposed development at the corner of Wellesley Street and College Avenue. I know the College Terrace Residents Association (CTRA) wrote to the City Council opposing the project. The CTRA may represent the views of the majority of our current residents, but I want you to know that there are residents of CT who disagree with the letter, and who support the project in a general sense.

The CTRA correctly states that “College Terrace boasts a welcoming community filled with a wide variety and healthy mix of multi-unit, multifamily home structures, single family homes ...” and that “College Terrace supports affordable housing goals when they are pursued responsibly”. But the CTRA then brings up all the overworked, outdated and frankly “exclusivist” reasons to suggest that this is the wrong place and time for more affordable/denser housing. It is not the wrong time and it is not the wrong place.

I think a project like this in this location is exactly the right thing and indeed matches the character of our neighbourhood. Yes, there is a physical character to our neighbourhood that is to be protected - trees, variety of houses, parks, access to Stanford, the hills, small businesses and transit. But the more important character of CT is the people - both current AND future residents. A well designed version of this building can be made to fit and will certainly not destroy what we value in College Terrace. As correctly implied in the CTRA letter to CC, we do support diversity, multi-generational housing, equity, affordability etc. but we never miss an opportunity to dismiss all housing projects for the same old reasons like traffic, too cramped, too big, parking, safety, wrong time, etc. If we in CT are so welcoming, then it is time for us to step forward and lead Palo Alto’s housing initiatives with our actions locally in our neighborhood.

The CTRA letter spends much of its argument assailing the developer CATO, and complaining about the lack of engagement. This is an irrelevant argument. The developer’s job is to build houses and other properties. I did not build my house, nor did almost all of my neighbours. As for the posture of, and engagement with the developers, seriously! College Terrace (and the CTRA) has always been antagonistic

to most developers (and Stanford) and has approached projects with a "stop it at any cost" attitude. One of our neighbours even suggested marching on city hall "with pitchforks". CTRA and CT are losing credibility here. Developers build houses - unless we intend to do it ourselves we need to engage positively.

If we take the developer's proposal as a starting point, I believe good minds could make it fit. On the corner in question we have 2 large double story houses, across the road we have a 2 story apartment, next door we have a 2 story house (whose impact DOES need to be alleviated by the developer), behind we have a 2 story apartment, and sort of next door we have an unoccupied brand new single story house. Adding a 3 story apartment building amongst all the 2 story buildings in this location is exactly the best way to ensure densification happens only in a capped way.

In closing, I suggest that if the CC motivates the CT residents to come to the table in good faith and style, and if staff is instructed to engage with professional designers, planners and developers, we can work out reasonable changes with the developer to protect the immediate neighbours and to ensure the building has the right mix of units. There are going to be many reasons to not do this project, and I hope my letter challenges some of them, but the more important thing to do is to find a way we can say YES to buildings like this, because it will keep our city diverse, young, vital, and alive. I believe it's in the character of College Terrace to lead so let's get on with it and be a good example for all of Palo Alto how to work through a housing project that can make a difference.

Sincerely,



College Terrace

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Cato Investment's Wellesley Street Project in College Terrace  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 11:14:44 AM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Dear Council Members,

Can we put to rest the fiction that a SF-based equity investment firm whose purpose is to protect and grow the assets of its very wealthy clients has somehow chosen College Terrace to build "affordable housing"? It's simply an insult to everyone's intelligence.

The fact is that Cato has bought up nine properties in College Terrace and Barron Park and is using its Wellesley Street project (WSP) as a test to see what it can get away with in the area while crippling R-1 zoning throughout the city.

The fact is the project calls for numerous exceptions to the zoning code while cramming as many tiny inhuman dormitory-like 'rooms' onto a lot way too small for their number and at a height way out of scale and what looks to be the cheapest construction imaginable.

The fact is that an outside investment firm has bought into a closely knit neighborhood in order to make an obscene amount of money and is now asking the city if it can break the law so it can do so.

It's outrageous and should be stopped dead in its tracks.

There are so many more negatives to address with this project but for now, I urge the Council to please vote against weakening R-1 zoning in order to accommodate the greed of Cato and others like them. Vote against the Wellesley Street project.

**From:** [College Terrace Residents Association](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Letter from the CTRA re: Wellesley Project  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 11:54:27 AM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

---

March 10, 2021

Dear Mayor DuBois and Council Members,

The College Terrace Residents' Association (CTRA) writes to you today to express our opposition to Cato Investments' proposed development at the corner of Wellesley Street and College Avenue.

We oppose the plan by developer Cato Investments because it is the wrong project in the wrong location. The plan proposes to replace two single family lots with a 24-apartment, 3-story building surrounded by R-1 zoned homes. The proposed complex does not fit with the proportionally smaller neighboring homes, violates many planning regulations, and ignores the reality that there are no 3-story buildings of any sort in the College Terrace neighborhood off of El Camino Real. Finally, the project lacks adequate parking and poses a potential traffic-safety liability due to its close proximity to an active childcare center and a public library.

As one of Palo Alto's oldest neighborhoods, College Terrace is home to a warm, eclectic collection of residents and an even wider variety of charming architectural styles—from high-end modern to modest and humble. The atmosphere is that of a small community where residents closely identify with their environment and each other. College Terrace boasts a welcoming community filled with a wide variety and healthy mix of multi-unit, multi-family home structures, single family homes and pre-war cottages on substandard-sized lots.

The purpose of the CTRA is to enable residents to work together to maintain and enhance the quality of life in College Terrace.

The CTRA's objection starts with posture of the developer, Cato Investments, towards the neighborhood, followed by the adverse characteristics of the project, and finally their stated goal of making this their chosen "flagship" project that they would repeat in our neighborhood and others, if successful. It should be noted Cato currently owns at least 9 lots in the neighborhood, as well as more in other parts of Palo Alto.

The developer deliberately avoided the CTRA and city by first contacting the press to debut the project. They continue to demonstrate avoidance behavior by neglecting to answer calls or respond to email inquiries by neighbors and have yet to even schedule their promised "community meeting" nearly two months after the project was first announced.

Thus, the developer has clearly demonstrated their modus operandi, which is not only blatantly disrespectful, but should also serve as a warning to the City of what to expect if this project moves forward. Since they have decided to not engage with the community, College Terrace residents used public information requests and research to understand Cato Investments. We learned their mission is to create wealth for ultra-high net worth individuals and not, as they seem to imply, seek a path for affordable housing for many. They avoid building large apartment complexes in their own hometown, but instead seek to do so and repeat a profitable formula in Palo Alto neighborhoods – not just College Terrace.

The developer asks for special, preferential treatment, through several means we see as unreasonable and adverse to our community:

1. A 3-story building: No other building in College Terrace compares to this size and bulk and this plan would be better suited along El Camino Real, perhaps as a mixed business/residential space.

2. 24 units: Most of the multi-family complexes in the surrounding area are four units – as mentioned above College Terrace features several multi-family, multi-unit homes but they are four units or less per property, with on-property parking.

3. The plan indicates building 24 units on two lots; this would be equivalent to 72 units per acre, far greater than any existing density in the neighborhood.

4. Planning issues: This oversized complex would require numerous planning and building variances setting new precedents within Palo Alto. The variances include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. a variance to build above current height limits
- b. a variance to build a very steep increase in units per acre
- c. a variance to join two single family lots together
- d. a variance to violate existing regulations on setbacks and parking requirements
- e. a variance on existing regulations of daylight plane and sightlines affecting surrounding properties

The volunteer CTRA board meets monthly and seeks to engage our residents. In January, we enjoyed one of the largest (virtual) gatherings of our neighbors in recent memory. At that meeting, residents spoke overwhelmingly in support of the neighborhood and ten to one against this developer proposal. The message was clear – speakers support affordable housing, but oppose this project in this location.

Additionally, Cato's timing is also clearly poor as we are experiencing a record number of vacant rentals in the neighborhood—and at significantly reduced rental rates.

Since Cato has introduced the subject of affordable housing (we believe in bad faith), we want our city council to understand two very important points. But first, we want to remind you that, even including commercial corridors like San Antonio and downtown, College Terrace has the 7th highest housing density of the 31 neighborhoods in Palo Alto. The many small cottages on undersized lots and multi-unit apartments in our neighborhood are regarded by everyone who has chosen to live here as one of its great strengths. This originally zoned assortment of mixed used housing adds to the socioeconomic diversity and architectural character of our little neighborhood. Thus, the character of our community is naturally inclined to be affordable housing supporters, when affordable housing planning is done right.

However, where new affordable housing needs to be built to meet new policy goals embraced by the city, it must be genuine, not fraudulent, and it must be pursued with a rational plan and map developed by the city, not driven by opportunistic developers engaging in land speculation. Here is where our two points come in: (1) City Council should clear up the ambiguity in the Planned Housing Zone, which Cato's proposal has targeted, by formally clarifying that the PHZ tool is, and was always intended, as some council members have already indicated, to be restricted to commercial areas, and (2) affordable housing policy cannot be responsibly driven through ad-hoc zoning tools that allow land speculators to opportunistically disguise their extractive profit-motive as public-minded leadership; instead, affordable housing goals should be pursued through a thoughtful planning process to develop a city-wide map that, among other things, strives to make housing density from neighborhood to neighborhood more equal. College Terrace supports affordable housing goals when they are pursued responsibly. Cato's proposal has inadvertently demonstrated the above two ways Palo Alto can improve its pursuit of affordable housing goals.

The CTRA opposes this project and requests the City of Palo Alto oppose it, too. Although the intentions of the developer are not communicated clearly, it is easy to trace their records and presume their interest is to serve their billionaire investors who are not necessarily connected in any other way to our community. Our intentions are clear: we welcome new residents with open arms and seek housing projects better suited to the space and the neighborhood. The CTRA strongly advocates for more affordable housing but views this proposal as ill-suited to both the space and the community.

In closing, the CTRA requests that the City provide guidance to landowners and developers about where and what to build, rather than cede this responsibility to developers. Without clear guidelines, we end up with misguided projects like this one, not to mention other projects like this throughout our City and neighboring areas, as detailed in communications unearthed through the freedom of information request.

Sincerely,

The College Terrace Residents' Association Board



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Wellesley project  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:29:40 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Honorable Palo Alto City Council,

A three story building of any sort beyond El Camino in the College Terrace neighborhood is completely out of context. One only need to look around - even in the neighboring business area along California Ave. Those taller buildings in Stanford's California Avenue development are way off the street and not integral to the neighborhood. This new development neighbors a collection of several 2-story apartment buildings and single story homes. It should be made harmonious with those.

Underground or on site parking should be a requirement for this development.

Thank you for considering the concerns of College Terrace residents.

[REDACTED] (CT resident since 1970)  
[REDACTED] College Ave

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** re: Wellesley/College proposal  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:54:10 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

---

Dear City Council,

The current proposal by Cato Investments to build a 24-unit 3 story apartment complex on the site of 2 tiny College Terrace lots seems to me like a no brainer for any City Council to shoot down, but it seems you are entertaining the idea, so I would like to add my voice to the opposition.

Density: Adding 24 more families to the 2 tiny lots meant for 2 families brings us into a density situation that is getting uncomfortable, not only for the families themselves but for the neighbors. If you live in high-density areas like NYC or Hong Kong, you get something in exchange in the way of public transportation, shopping convenience, culture. At the corner of Wellsley and College, you get nothing - just crowded.

Parking: 24 units means at least 24 cars, likely ~30 cars added to that single corner. The idea of the "El Camino" transportation corridor" meaning people won't need cars is a distant dream at this point - they will need cars to get to work, shop, take kids to school. Where will all these cars park? And when the 24 families' friends come to visit, where will they park? You can keep selling residential parking permits but if there is no space it will be a mess anyway.

Traffic: and when the cars are used, 30 cars going in and out all day, this can only add to the traffic in a substantial way; it's right near the CT Library, young kids crossing the streets.

Roof line: The height here is all wrong. Look at the surrounding single story homes, or the elevated single story 4 unit apartment across the way - they look, well, 50s suburban - they fit together in their own offbeat style. I can't imagine what it would look like to have a 24-unit 3 story unit plopped next to my little CT house much less how it would sound filled with 24- families clamoring to spread out.

Finally: Stanford Housing just built 2 little tasteful single-family residences right next door. Why not talk to Stanford Housing about buying out Cato and plopping in a few more of those. I know, Stanford.... yeah, yeah. But I think we'd all regret a few more faculty houses much less than if this monstrosity goes through.

I urge you to reject the proposal by Cato Investments.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]  
Hanover St.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Cato Investments in College Terrace  
**Date:** Thursday, March 11, 2021 9:03:35 AM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Dear City Council Members,

Even though I don't live in College Terrace, I used to about 30 years ago, and I appreciate the unique and warm neighborhood atmosphere that seems to go unchanged year after year in College Terrace.

I understand that Cato Investments has invested vigorously in the College Terrace neighborhood in hopes that the City of Palo Alto would welcome such a dramatic change in zoning in that area. Perhaps because they saw the new housing built around that neighborhood within the last decade, which was tremendous.

However, College Terrace has already absorbed a lot of new neighbors with the recent building boom, and why not point Cato to more appropriate places like the old Roller, Hapgood and Tinney Funeral Home, which is perfect for their type of project. Cato could easily reach out to the current owner and perhaps coordinate a win for them, and a win for the current owner, and a win for the City of Palo Alto with a more dense and lower income housing development.

As an FYI, this is NOT a NIMBY request, as I currently live one block from the old funeral home site, and realize a more densely built affordable housing option there would be much better suited than on an R-1 zoned parcel.

Hopefully you are familiarizing yourselves with the College Terrace residents, as well as the Cato Investments development team, and that you are leaning more towards preserving unique classic neighborhoods, and point these developers to more appropriate targets.

Thank you for "listening". [REDACTED] Webster Street, Palo Alto

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** College Terrace zoning change application  
**Date:** Thursday, March 11, 2021 11:53:46 AM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

---

Dear Mayor DuBois and members of the City Council,

The upcoming application of Cato to change the R-1 zoning on Wellesley Street in College Terrace is very concerning. It is an example of that old adage of being wary of allowing a camel to push its nose into the tent because of the resulting damage.

If this application to change the zoning is permitted then our entire neighborhood, which is an eclectic mix of homeowners and renters, will be under continuous assault from Cato and others who pose as wanting to provide “affordable” housing when the aim is to destroy R-1 housing and build for profit. And, arguably, this zoning attack will spread to other neighborhoods in Palo Alto as well.

Please reject the application.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Dartmouth Street

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed building at 2239 and 2241 Wellesley St  
**Date:** Thursday, March 11, 2021 12:46:25 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

---

Council,

I'm writing to ask you to scrutinize Cato Investments' proposal to build apartments at 2239 and 2241 Wellesley St in College Terrace.

The amount of lower rent units proposed for the building is small so it won't make a dent in our housing needs.

It would be a 3 story apartment building inside a predominantly 1 story neighborhood.

It asks for a reduced amount of off street parking in a neighborhood that already uses parking permits in order to have adequate parking for existing tenants and visitors.

The proposed units are all small studio and 1 bedroom units. Housing units targeted for teachers and other city employees should be large enough for families, especially if it would replace existing multi-family units.

There is very little outdoor space proposed for tenants to use and the balconies are tiny.

Cato contacted neighborhood residents to fill out a survey but didn't explain exactly what they were proposing and didn't identify themselves as the developer. I believe that it was disingenuous. Rather than trying to work with residents I believe they were identifying issues they will have to try to defeat.

I hope we can attract site-appropriate, more reasonably priced and more adequately sized units that take parking and outdoor space needs into account.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]  
Amherst Street  
Palo Alto CA 94306  
(650) 213-6836

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Wellesley Apartments  
**Date:** Thursday, March 11, 2021 1:33:39 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

To the Members of the Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed Apartments on Wellesley Street for the following reasons:

1. Too small percentage of affordable units.
2. Units are all studio and small one-bedroom so they are too small for families and are inadequate for our housing needs.
3. Not enough outdoor space on property for tenants to use, tiny balconies and unhealthy crowding for people.
4. Three stories in a one story neighborhood is unfair to current residents and infringes on daylight and privacy.
5. Inadequate parking for residents and visitors (proposal reduces parking normally required.)
6. Parking is already tight with the College Terrace Library on the same street. The already established library should take precedence over a building that is not suitable for the College Terrace neighborhood.
7. The developer has already indicated signs of non-transparency. Cato contacted some residents with a survey without adequate explanation of their proposal and didn't identify themselves as the developer.
8. Cato has not attempted to work with residents or responded to the attempts to contact them.

Other options for affordable housing need to be looked at that address the real needs of the community, not what the developer wants and sees fit in order to fulfill minimum and below minimum guidelines that don't serve the residents of this city.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE Proposed Apartment Project at 2239 Wellesley  
**Date:** Thursday, March 11, 2021 2:40:30 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Dear Council Member,

I want more affordable units for our current housing needs. In my opinion this developer isn't proposing what we need. My message to council as to what I find lacking in Cato Investments' proposal: – too small % of affordable units – units are all studio and small 1-br so too small for families, inadequate for our housing needs – not enough outdoor space on property for tenants to use (and tiny balconies) – 3 stories in a 1 story neighborhood – inadequate parking for residents and visitors (proposal reduces parking normally required) – Cato contacted some residents with a survey without adequate explanation of their proposal and didn't identify themselves as the developer – Cato has not attempted to work with residents or responded to our attempts to contact them

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
College Terrace Neighborhood Resident.

**Sent:** Monday, April 12, 2021 12:38 PM  
**To:** Council, City <[city.council@cityofpalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpalto.org)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Letter from the CTRA re: Wellesley Project

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Dear Council members,

I think that most of us can agree that the Cato proposal for redevelopment of two single-home lots in College Terrace is a truly terrible idea for all the reasons outlined in the attached March 10th letter to you.

I'd just like to add that this seems like a great opportunity for the City Council to take a leadership role that will help developers in the future not waste their time and money proposing such outrageous projects.

I strongly endorse the recommendation contained in the final paragraph of the attached letter:

In closing, the CTRA requests that the City provide guidance to landowners and developers about where and what to build, rather than cede this responsibility to developers. Without clear guidelines, we end up with misguided projects like this one, not to mention other projects like this throughout our City and neighboring areas, as detailed in communications unearthed through the freedom of information request.

Thanks for taking these views into account as you deliberate on this matter at tonight's Council meeting.

And thanks for serving our City so well.

Cordially,



 Melville Ave  
Palo Alto, CA

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Andrew Fetter <[andrewfetter@hotmail.com](mailto:andrewfetter@hotmail.com)>  
**Date:** March 10, 2021 at 12:33:42 PM PST  
**Subject: Fw: Letter from the CTRA re: Wellesley Project**

FYI. This is a letter from our neighborhood association to the City Council....



**From:** College Terrace Residents Association <[web@collegeterrace.org](mailto:web@collegeterrace.org)>

**Date:** March 10, 2021 at 11:54:21 AM PST

**To:** [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)

**Subject: Letter from the CTRA re: Wellesley Project**

March 10, 2021

Dear Mayor DuBois and Council Members,

The College Terrace Residents' Association (CTRA) writes to you today to express our opposition to Cato Investments' proposed development at the corner of Wellesley Street and College Avenue.

We oppose the plan by developer Cato Investments because it is the wrong project in the wrong location. The plan proposes to replace two single family lots with a 24-apartment, 3-story building surrounded by R-1 zoned homes. The proposed complex does not fit with the proportionally smaller neighboring homes, violates many planning regulations, and ignores the reality that there are no 3-story buildings of any sort in the College Terrace neighborhood off of El Camino Real. Finally, the project lacks adequate parking and poses a potential traffic-safety liability due to its close proximity to an active childcare center and a public library.

As one of Palo Alto's oldest neighborhoods, College Terrace is home to a warm, eclectic collection of residents and an even wider variety of charming architectural styles—from high-end modern to modest and humble. The atmosphere is that of a small community where residents closely identify with their environment and each other. College Terrace boasts a welcoming community filled with a wide variety and healthy mix of multi-unit, multi-family home structures, single family homes and pre-war cottages on substandard-sized lots.

The purpose of the CTRA is to enable residents to work together to maintain and enhance the quality of life in College Terrace.

The CTRA's objection starts with posture of the developer, Cato Investments, towards the neighborhood, followed by the adverse characteristics of the project, and finally their stated goal of making this their chosen "flagship" project that they would repeat in our neighborhood and others, if successful. It should be noted Cato currently owns at least 9 lots in the neighborhood, as well as more in other parts of Palo Alto.

The developer deliberately avoided the CTRA and city by first contacting the press to debut the project. They continue to demonstrate avoidance

behavior by neglecting to answer calls or respond to email inquiries by neighbors and have yet to even schedule their promised “community meeting” nearly two months after the project was first announced.

Thus, the developer has clearly demonstrated their modus operandi, which is not only blatantly disrespectful, but should also serve as a warning to the City of what to expect if this project moves forward. Since they have decided to not engage with the community, College Terrace residents used public information requests and research to understand Cato Investments. We learned their mission is to create wealth for ultra-high net worth individuals and not, as they seem to imply, seek a path for affordable housing for many. They avoid building large apartment complexes in their own hometown, but instead seek to do so and repeat a profitable formula in Palo Alto neighborhoods – not just College Terrace.

The developer asks for special, preferential treatment, through several means we see as unreasonable and adverse to our community:

1. A 3-story building: No other building in College Terrace compares to this size and bulk and this plan would be better suited along El Camino Real, perhaps as a mixed business/residential space.
2. 24 units: Most of the multi-family complexes in the surrounding area are four units – as mentioned above College Terrace features several multi-family, multi-unit homes but they are four units or less per property, with on-property parking.
3. The plan indicates building 24 units on two lots; this would be equivalent to 72 units per acre, far greater than any existing density in the neighborhood.
4. Planning issues: This oversized complex would require numerous planning and building variances setting new precedents within Palo Alto. The variances include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. a variance to build above current height limits
  - b. a variance to build a very steep increase in units per acre
  - c. a variance to join two single family lots together
  - d. a variance to violate existing regulations on setbacks and parking requirements
  - e. a variance on existing regulations of daylight plane and sightlines affecting surrounding properties

The volunteer CTRA board meets monthly and seeks to engage our residents. In January, we enjoyed one of the largest (virtual) gatherings of

our neighbors in recent memory. At that meeting, residents spoke overwhelmingly in support of the neighborhood and ten to one against this developer proposal. The message was clear – speakers support affordable housing, but oppose this project in this location.

Additionally, Cato's timing is also clearly poor as we are experiencing a record number of vacant rentals in the neighborhood—and at significantly reduced rental rates.

Since Cato has introduced the subject of affordable housing (we believe in bad faith), we want our city council to understand two very important points. But first, we want to remind you that, even including commercial corridors like San Antonio and downtown, College Terrace has the 7th highest housing density of the 31 neighborhoods in Palo Alto. The many small cottages on undersized lots and multi-unit apartments in our neighborhood are regarded by everyone who has chosen to live here as one of its great strengths. This originally zoned assortment of mixed used housing adds to the socioeconomic diversity and architectural character of our little neighborhood. Thus, the character of our community is naturally inclined to be affordable housing supporters, when affordable housing planning is done right.

However, where new affordable housing needs to be built to meet new policy goals embraced by the city, it must be genuine, not fraudulent, and it must be pursued with a rational plan and map developed by the city, not driven by opportunistic developers engaging in land speculation. Here is where our two points come in: (1) City Council should clear up the ambiguity in the Planned Housing Zone, which Cato's proposal has targeted, by formally clarifying that the PHZ tool is, and was always intended, as some council members have already indicated, to be restricted to commercial areas, and (2) affordable housing policy cannot be responsibly driven through ad-hoc zoning tools that allow land speculators to opportunistically disguise their extractive profit-motive as public-minded leadership; instead, affordable housing goals should be pursued through a thoughtful planning process to develop a city-wide map that, among other things, strives to make housing density from neighborhood to neighborhood more equal. College Terrace supports affordable housing goals when they are pursued responsibly. Cato's proposal has inadvertently demonstrated the above two ways Palo Alto can improve its pursuit of affordable housing goals.

The CTRA opposes this project and requests the City of Palo Alto oppose it, too. Although the intentions of the developer are not communicated clearly, it is easy to trace their records and presume their interest is to serve their billionaire investors who are not necessarily connected in any

other way to our community. Our intentions are clear: we welcome new residents with open arms and seek housing projects better suited to the space and the neighborhood. The CTRA strongly advocates for more affordable housing but views this proposal as ill-suited to both the space and the community.

In closing, the CTRA requests that the City provide guidance to landowners and developers about where and what to build, rather than cede this responsibility to developers. Without clear guidelines, we end up with misguided projects like this one, not to mention other projects like this throughout our City and neighboring areas, as detailed in communications unearthed through the freedom of information request.

Sincerely,

The College Terrace Residents' Association Board