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Middletown Residents Push Back Against Plans for 14-Story Apartment Building

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A proposed 14-story apartment tower in San Diego's Middletown area has sparked growing opposition from locals who say the project threatens the integrity and livability of their neighborhood.

Over the weekend, residents gathered in protest against the Celine Residences, a 172-foot-tall building proposed by Elda Developments. The plan includes 161 housing units and is set to rise on Columbia Street. While the company touts the inclusion of affordable housing,

many who live in the area believe the scale of the development is incompatible with the surrounding community.

“This ruins the landscape, the uniqueness of the neighborhood,” says a long-time resident. “We’ve all worked to preserve our homes and each other’s views.”

Among the key concerns raised are parking shortages, worsening traffic, and potential delays for emergency vehicles navigating the area’s narrow streets. Critics of the project also question how Elda Developments is utilizing San Diego’s Complete Communities Housing Solutions Program, an initiative that allows higher-density development in exchange for affordable housing. Scott Case argued that the six affordable units proposed are insufficient and could ultimately be relocated elsewhere. “Small studios do little to support families,” he added.

In response to the backlash, Elda Developments has paused the project. Chief Executive Officer Ahmed Eldahmy issued a statement acknowledging the tension and outlining the company’s efforts to resolve it.

“After learning about community concerns about our Celine Residences project on Columbia Street in Middletown, we paused development so we could engage in meaningful dialogue with residents and better understand their perspectives,” Eldahmy said.

Regarding safety, Eldahmy said no active fault lines have been confirmed on the property. He assured that Geocon Geotechnical Engineers are handling all necessary geological assessments under city regulations. “Safety is non-negotiable,” he stated.

Eldahmy defended the project as part of a broader effort to help address San Diego’s growing housing crisis. “It’s unfortunate that area developers who are working tirelessly to help solve San Diego’s housing crisis are continually being bullied by community members who refuse to participate in the solution,” he said. “It appears the wealthy neighbors living up the hill do not care about the San Diego housing crisis and those who cannot afford to live here, and instead appear to only care about protecting their own net worth.”

He also called for a more open and respectful public dialogue. “Community feedback shapes how we approach everything from design to execution because Celine Residences and all Elda Developments projects are being built with the community in mind, not just around it.”

Still, those opposed to the project remain unconvinced. They argue the Celine Residences is part of a troubling trend across the city.