

Quick Bites

Proponents of the proposed income-restricted apartment complex in the forested habitat adjoining the Huckleberry Hill preserve advance a variety of arguments that are misleading and lacking in substance. Be prepared to refute them with confidence! Here is a handy reference.

The habitat is degraded because neighborhood children built a few bike ramps, there is trash, and a some trees are dead.

Rebuttal: Trash is easily picked up and bike ramps dismantled. Despite a few dead trees, the area continues to serve as a vibrant, functioning wildland and buffer for the Huckleberry Hill preserve. During the throes of a historic drought and related massive statewide tree die-off is hardly the time to needlessly destroy rare native forest.

Trees will be replaced in a two-for-one ratio, so the forest will be better than before.

Rebuttal: Prior PB Co mitigation efforts have failed abysmally. One needs only to look across the street at the pitiful state of the Sawmill Borrow after more than twenty years of “restoration”.

Sunset and 17-mile Drive (which has already been denuded of trees) is not an acceptable alternative because it is zoned commercial.

Rebuttal: The City of Pacific Grove zoning code already allows both commercial and residential use by right in this particular zone. No re-zoning would be required to locate the project there.

Area D is outside the sensitive Coastal Zone.

Rebuttal: This is a legal fiction rather than a substantive environmental difference. Area D serves as an extension of the Huckleberry Hill preserve ecosystem which it adjoins. The Coastal Zone boundary bisects the forested tract, arbitrarily excluding Area D from otherwise strict environmental protection.

The site is within walking distance of services such as schools, shopping, and banking so it is ideal for occupants without vehicles

Rebuttal: The apartments would be situated at a blind corner on a heavily trafficked artery, in an area completely lacking in sidewalks. There is no safe walking route to schools or services which are some distance away in Pacific Grove.

The site is zoned residential, therefore it is zoned for apartments.

Rebuttal: It is zoned for large-lot residential use, not apartments. The General Plan acknowledges that inclusionary housing is inappropriate for areas of large-lot zoning. In fact, County Supervisors previously rejected the Corporation Yard for the project, in part, because of its large-lot zoning. Curiously, Area D is zoned for even larger lots (4 units/acre as opposed to 6 units/acre at the Corporation Yard). So approving the project in Area D would constitute serious inconsistency in the application of land use regulations.

If the project isn't built in Area D, the forested tract would be subdivided into 31 single-family lots instead.

Rebuttal: If that is true, then PB Co. has been misleading the public about the scope of residential development in the Del Monte Forest. The Company has consistently maintained that the residential portion of its “final” build-out would be limited to 90 to 100 lots. Plans for another 31 lots would prove that these advertised and often quoted figures are materially understated.

Furthermore, whether Area D would in fact be otherwise developed is debatable. Currently, development plans throughout the Monterey Peninsula are highly uncertain because of the water shortage, traffic congestion, tree removal restrictions, and the overall difficulty in obtaining permits.

Area D is environmentally superior to the Sunset and 17-Mile Drive alternative because building at Sunset would leave Area D open for future development, resulting in greater total development.

Rebuttal: This is a blatant logical fallacy because the converse is also true. Building at Area D would, in turn, leave the Sunset alternative available for future development. So, in reality, total development in either alternative is about the same. Nevertheless, this fallacious reasoning was pivotal to the improper selection of Area D as the environmentally superior alternative in the EIR. If it were corrected, the Sunset site would emerge as the clear choice.

Cumulative impacts are mitigated by placing properties elsewhere into preservation.

Rebuttal: Refraining from destroying yet more forest does nothing to replace what is lost nor does it offer any remediation to the immediate vicinity.

The apartments will be a showcase because all Pebble Beach Company properties sparkle.

Rebuttal: PB Co's less visible properties are strictly utilitarian as can be seen in our photo gallery.

Anyone voicing concerns about the project must be a NIMBY and should be dismissed out of hand.

Rebuttal: The issue is the merit of project not its opponents. To disparage the people for raising concerns about their neighborhood, environment, and quality of life, is to disparage the very concept of public input.

Only organized advocacy groups such as Landwatch and the League of Women Voters are qualified to speak for the community.

Rebuttal: Advocacy groups are not the community. The community is comprised of its individual members. It is they who are endowed with the solemn responsibility of electing representatives to govern. And it is their own words which best express the views and concerns of the community.

Our EIR is hundreds of pages long, which proves that Area D is the right place for the project.

Rebuttal: Page count does not matter. Factors such as logical validity, completeness, internal consistency, and objectivity do. This EIR is profoundly flawed and has drawn intense criticism from scores of people in the community as well as P.G. Planning Director, Mark Brodeur and land use attorney William P. Parkin, representing Del Monte Neighbors United.