



Testimony of Michael D. DeLapa, Executive Director, LandWatch Monterey County

[Grant Appeal and Approve Application AP-19-0186 to: \(1\) Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration; \(2\) Adopt an Ordinance Creating Overlay District for Certain Properties Located on the South Side of Garden Road \(Zone Amendment Application TM-17-0462\) that Would Allow Multifamily Residential Uses; and \(3\) Adopt a General Plan Land Use Element Amendment to Allow Multifamily Residential Uses in the Industrial Land Use Designation, and to Include Garden Road as an Area Appropriate for Workforce Housing; Applicant Brad Slama; I-R-130-RA-ES Zoning District; Industrial General Plan Land Use Designation \(Public Works - 701-11\)](#)

Good evening. Michael DeLapa, Executive Director, LandWatch Monterey County.

As you know, I generally appear before you to argue in favor of producing an EIR. Tonight, I'm delighted to be here to argue against an EIR and in support of your staff's recommendation [to allow multifamily residential uses on the south side of Garden Road and to amend the General Plan to allow multifamily residential uses in the industrial zones]. As the staff report points out, the City of Monterey is required to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment of 650 dwelling units by 2023. This proposal would make it more likely the City will achieve this goal.

Housing is of course a critical issue on the Monterey Peninsula. LandWatch released a report today showing how the housing supply in the County is grossly mismatched with housing demand. We documented more than 9,000 approved but unbuilt residential units in Monterey County and a pipeline of potentially 14,000 more units in Salinas Valley. As we note, local governments are failing to address the housing needs of local working families because they are adhering to outdated general plans and zoning ordinances that favor large lot, low-density single-family homes over residences that are, by design, relatively more affordable.

LandWatch supports the Garden Road rezoning because it will generate apartments that will be more affordable to local working families than single family homes.

There are other compelling reasons to support rezoning Garden Road. Integrating residential and industrial uses is more sustainable and climate-friendly than either industrial or residential zoning alone because it gets people closer to jobs, out of their cars, and on their feet and bicycles. Reducing VMTs, that is, vehicle miles traveled, reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The new overlay stimulates more variety in the design of and options for single and multifamily housing. It also creates pedestrian-friendly environments thanks to the short distances between living, work, commercial and recreational destinations. Finally, it makes efficient use of land resources by encouraging compact development, which serves as an alternative to suburban sprawl.

Rezoning Garden Road helps the city achieve its housing goals while avoiding sprawl onto the natural lands on the former Fort Ord. Infill here a much better alternative than residential sprawl on open space. Garden Road is already semi-urbanized. Grocery stores and public services are relatively close, and mixed-use zoning should allow for other retail businesses to serve new residents.

LandWatch joins the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership who are also on record in support.

The City's approval of the project will also demonstrate the kind of leadership on sustainability and climate change that will ensure a better future for Monterey residents – not just today's, but future generations. Tonight, the City Council can lead by rezoning Garden Road.