

Alternative DDC Site Analysis

Introduction

The Desert Discovery Center (DDC) Phase III committee commissioned Swaback Partners PLLC to conduct an analysis of possible sites for the DDC. Swaback Partners produce a report dated May 1st, 2013 that was the result of this effort. Unfortunately this analysis had one very serious flaw, it only analyzed each site from the perspective of how suitable it was for the DDC project and did not look at any other issues that may have made a site more suitable or more unsuitable, from the city's perspective, or from a potential operator's perspective, when looking at the big picture. This alternative site analysis looks at all the factors associated with each site, while retaining what was in the Swaback Partners analysis, and therefore represents a more complete analysis that should be used if and when a final site is selected.

Considerations

When doing a complete site analysis, all the advantages and disadvantages of each site must be listed allowing them to be ranked based on all considerations, not just how it relates to the mission of the DDC.

The major issues, lacking in the Swaback Partners report are as follows.

1. The DDC is totally incompatible with the Preserve in that it violates most if not all of the Preserve rules and will need to be managed in a way that is almost a total opposite of how the Preserve needs to be managed. Specifically:
 - a. The DDC needs to charge a fee for touring the DDC while the Preserve is free to all users. This creates another conflict in that there needs to be some sort of permanent barrier that separates the DDC from the Preserve that users of each can't cross over into the other. Any sort of wall or fence would also violate the whole concept of keeping all of the Preserve free of any such barriers so wildlife will be free to move within the Preserve.
 - b. The DDC will need to have concessions, specifically a café or restaurant and gift shop. This is a direct violation of the Preserve Ordinance.
 - c. The DDC will need sound amplification equipment, this also is a direct violation of the Preserve Ordinance.
 - d. The DDC will need to have night time operations which is a direct violation of the Preserve Ordinance. This one is particularly disturbing because the whole reason all human presence in the Preserve is limited to daytime hours is because dusk to dawn is the major time wildlife is active in foraging for food and moving from one area to another so it is critical to shut down everything in the Preserve at dusk.

- e. The DDC will have a significant footprint in the Preserve which was envisioned to have MINIMAL human improvements, limited to one very small building to locate facilities needed for the major trail heads. Putting larger structures and occupying a much larger footprint is in violation of the whole concept of a Preserve.

For these reasons, and others, the opposition that will be encountered if the DDC is located in the Preserve, and the Preserve Ordinance has to be modified to accommodate this use, should not be underestimated. It will not only be significant it will be very passionate.

- 2. Easy access to other tourist venues was not considered, specifically proximity to West World would be a huge advantage because of all the events hosted at West World bringing in far more tourists than the total number that would visit the Preserve, much less the number that would visit the one trailhead at the Gateway where the DDC would be located. Similarly, proximity to residential and a planned hotel would boost use of the restaurant and gift shop as a minimum.

Summary

This report will show that the location at 90th and Bell (or 94th and Bell as the intersection in the Swaback Partners report) has far more advantages than any other site and does not have any of the disadvantages of any of the sites located in the Preserve, including any opposition from all the preservationists. Furthermore, this site would appeal far more to a potential operator because of its more central location and the increased visitation that would be projected to come from West World, other tourist venues in the area, a planned hotel, and neighboring residential uses plus the lack of restrictions that would be imposed if located in the Preserve. The land is already owned by the city so similar to the sites in the Preserve, no land purchase would be necessary.

Site Comparison

The best way to compare sites is to put together a matrix of characteristics that should be considered and state how each site ranks in matching the desired result. The Swaback Partners report did that so we took the same matrix and modified it with the above considerations included. The result is shown in Table 1. In this table the Gateway location is considered the baseline as the recommendation of the Swaback Partners report was that the Gateway was the ONLY site that met the needs of the DDC. Therefore, the Swaback Partners report compared other sites to the Gateway site so we kept that relationship. The entries are color coded with green being good or excellent, yellow being marginal, orange below marginal, and no color neutral.

Locations - As seen in the “Location and Accessibility”, and all the Attendance rows of the table, all of the sites north, which include Pinnacle Peak Park, Alma School Pkwy & Pinnacle Peak Vista, and Pima Road & Dynamite, are not as suitable because of how far they are from the majority of the tourism activity and/or residential density and schools. This will reduce the attendance from all possible sources. The Pinnacle Peak Park and Alma School Pkwy & Pinnacle Peak Vista sites also have issues with surrounding uses and site size plus land would have to be

purchased, and rezoned a major downside.

Looking at all the desirable characteristics, the sites are pretty much limited to the three in the vicinity of Thompson Peak Pkwy and Bell. Of these three sites, the one at 94th and Bell is the most centrally located and fits well into plans for that whole area. The whole Horseman's park area was envisioned as the prime location for tourist venues. West World and a golf course are already there. The city also desperately needs overflow parking for West World, the TPC, and other events which is why the 94th street and Bell site was acquired in the first place, so co-locating more tourist venues in that area makes them all more successful and able to maximize the use of parking facilities as well as restaurants. Just for the events at West World, about 1 million visitors a year are expected, dramatically boosting the potential of visitation of the DDC over the Gateway site. A hotel in that area was also planned but not yet built because of the recession, but when it is built, there would be easy access to the DDC from it, again making the DDC more viable from an operator's standpoint. The reality is that the city should also try to either get Rawhide back or build a replica of it in the same area as Rawhide was a MAJOR tourist venue, the only one we really had that created the western experience. An ideal location for it would be across the street from the 94th and Bell site, which is currently State Trust land bounded to the east by that same large wash that is on the east side of the 94th and Bell site. What a great tourist area the city would have with the DDC, Rawhide, West World, and the TPC all in the same area, within walking distance of the hotel that was to serve West World. The concentration of all these venues makes all of the individual pieces more successful. See Figure 1 for an overview of the locations of 94th & Bell and the Thompson Peak & Bell sites relative to the Preserve and other venues in the area.

Preserve Access - One of the prime considerations in the Gateway site is that it is in the Preserve so anyone who has gone through the DDC can then hike into the Preserve. Any site in the Preserve (3 of them) will have that quality and the 94th street and Bell site is within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the preserve, accessed via a trail through a major wash, which is a Preserve experience in itself.

Views of the Preserve - Views into the Preserve were also noted as being very important so pictures were taken from the 94th and Bell site as well as from the site at the SW corner of the Gateway area (Thompson Peak and Bell) to show that the views from both of these sites rival the views from the Gateway, thus nullifying that argument. The site at 94th street and Bell is higher than most of the land to the east toward the Preserve so although there is some development there, it isn't seen as the pictures show. There is also a major wash on the east side of this site that turns and goes to the Preserve, which would be great to include in the whole desert education process. The trail in this wash goes directly to the Preserve and would be a great way to access the Preserve on foot from the DDC if it was located here. The pictures taken from this site are shown in Figure 2 to Figure 5. It should be noted that the 94th & Bell site is the only one where Pinnacle Peak can be seen in addition to the Preserve, which is not only a landmark but another great place for tourists to go to either explore the desert, or just hike, with fantastic views in all directions. Since the DDC was to be a place for orientation as well as experiencing its educational venues, this site offers the best place for that as it is more central with views of all the important places including the Preserve, Pinnacle Peak, West World, etc.. Pinnacle Peak was also the initial site for a DDC type experience.

For the Thompson Peak and Bell site (SW corner of the Gateway Area, the pictures also show great views of the Preserve, as shown in Figure 6 to Figure 9. Of course this site has most of the problems of being located in the Preserve, but the impact of the DDC on the Preserve, and its users, would be far less at this site than next to the Gateway Trailhead. It would also be easier to mitigate some of the negative issues with locating the DDC in the Preserve, including naturally separating the DDC from the trail head mitigating the need for fences or other barriers, mitigating the impact of night time operations in the Preserve, and to some degree mitigating the impact of noise and other human activity. While this site is also closer to West World, and the other tourist venues planned for that area, it isn't as close as the 94th and Bell site. It is also in the Preserve so there is still the major issue of modifying the Preserve Ordinance to allow it and mitigating all the other negative issues with locating the DDC anywhere in the Preserve. Because it is still in the Preserve, opposition should be expected, but would be far less than the Gateway trailhead site. Also, this site could be cut out of the Preserve, either with a public vote or by the council slowly removing pieces of it from the Preserve, thus eliminating all issues with the Preserve. It would be a much easier sell to the public than cutting out a hole the desert next to the major trailhead into the Preserve.

Of the three sites the Thompson Peak and Bell site has all the advantages of the Gateway trailhead site but with lots of options to mitigate or eliminate all the issues associated with the Gateway trailhead site.

Table 1 Site Applicability Matrix

Parameter	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6
	Thompson Peak Parkway & Bell Road	94th Street & Bell Road	Pinnacle Peak Park	Alma School Parkway & Pinnacle Vista Drive	Pima Road & Dynamite Bouleyard	McDowell Sonoran Preserve Gateway
Location and Accessibility	Good - 3 Miles to 101 & Pima Relatively close to West World SW Corner of Gateway w/bus bay	Good Excellent -1.5 miles to 101 & Pima Close to West World Close to intended hotel 0.75 mi to Preserve via trail	Moderate - 7.5 miles to 101 & Pima	Moderate - Over 8 miles to 101 & Pima	Moderate - 6.5 miles to 101 & Pima	Good - 2.75 miles to 101 & Pima
Visibility and Prominence	Excellent	Excelent	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Good
Site Size and Qualities	40 acres -Excellent	40-acres -Moderate	20 acres - Small	38 acres- Moderate	290 acres - Good	33 acres - Excellent
Connectivity to Preserve	On Preserve land	Yes - connection to Preserve via trail 0.75 mi	No connection to Preserve But adjacent to Pinnacle Peak park	No connection to Preserve but trail connection to Pinnacle Peak Park	On land intended for the Preserve	On Preserve Land
Adjacent and Nearby Uses	No negative impacts	Potential impacts from nearby uses	Some impacts from nearby uses	Some impacts from nearby uses	No impacts, except possibly high tension electric wires	No negative impacts
Building Program and Visitor Experience Potential	Can accommodate full DDC buildout	Can accommodate full DDC buildout	Buildout constrained by site size	Can accommodate full DDC buildout	Can accommodate full DDC buildout, but could add other partners and	Can accommodate full DDC buildout
Availability and Developability	In existing Preserve	City owned	Potentially available but would have to be purchased	Potentially available but would have to be purchased	State Land intended for the Preserve	In existing Preserve
Issues	Incompatible with Preserve (1) Moderate Impact on Preserve	None	Must Purchase Land Not close to major roads Too close to residential	Must Purchase Land Not close to major roads	Incompatible with Preserve (1) Moderate Impact on Preserve	Incompatible with Preserve (1) Huge negative impact on Preserve (2)

Parameter	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6
	Thompson Peak Parkway & Bell Road	94th Street & Bell Road	Pinnacle Peak Park	Alma School Parkway & Pinnacle Vista Drive	Pima Road & Dynamite Boulevard	McDowell Sonoran Preserve Gateway
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL SITE IMPLICATIONS						
Attendance Potential	Attendance potential somewhat lower HIGHER than at Gateway (intersection of two major roads and closer to other attractions)	Highest Attendance potential somewhat lower HIGHER than at Gateway (On major road plus close to West World and planned hotel)	Attendance potential lower than at Gateway	Attendance potential lower than at Gateway	Attendance potential somewhat lower than at Gateway for stand alone DDC, but possibly concept could be expanded to attract other audiences at this site	Baseline Highest attendance potential for a stand-alone DDC (Requires other Preserve users to use DDC facilities to meet projections)
Resident Market Attendance	Resident attendance potential somewhat lower HIGHER than at Gateway (closer to residential)	Resident attendance potential somewhat lower HIGHER than at Gateway (closer to residential)	Resident attendance potential lower than at Gateway	Resident attendance potential lower than at Gateway	Resident attendance potential somewhat lower than at Gateway	Highest resident attendance potential for a stand-alone DDC requires other Preserve users to use DDC facilities
Tourist Market Attendance	Tourist attendance potential lower HIGHER than at Gateway (closer to West World and intended hotels)	Tourist attendance potential lower HIGHER than at Gateway (closest to West World and intended hotels)	Tourist attendance potential substantially lower equivalent to that at Gateway (Close to 4 Seasons and other planned resorts)	Tourist attendance potential substantially lower equivalent to that at Gateway (Close to 4 Seasons and other planned resorts)	Tourist attendance potential lower than at Gateway	Baseline Highest tourist attendance potential for a stand-alone DDC based on tourist hikers going to DDC (questionable assumption)
School Group Attendance	Highest School group attendance potential similar to Gateway due to easy access and adjacent to Preserve and residential uses.	2nd Highest School group attendance potential similar to Gateway due to easy access and adjacent to residential uses.	School Group attendance potential lower than at Gateway	School Group attendance potential somewhat lower than at Gateway	School Group attendance potential somewhat lower than at Gateway	Baseline Highest school group attendance potential for a stand-alone DDC (not as convenient as sites on Bell Road)
Restaurant Market	HIGHER Lower than Gateway (close to West World, residential uses and industrial uses)	HIGHEST potential Lower than Gateway (closest to West World, residential uses and industrial uses)	Lower than Gateway	Lower than Gateway	Lower than Gateway	Good opportunity (assumes users of Preserve will use DDC facilities, questionable assumption)
Meetings and Events Market	Similar to Lower than Gateway (Must violate Preserve ordinance and management objectives)	Higher Lower than Gateway due to being closer to West World, intended hotels, and industrial uses.	Minimal opportunity	Lower than Gateway	Lower than Gateway	Good opportunity (Must violate Preserve Ordinance and management philosophy to do this)
Capacity to Fulfill Mission	Strongly supports DDC Mission	Strongly Potentially supports DDC Mission	Lower potential for support of DDC Mission	Lower potential for support of DDC Mission	Potentially supports DDC Mission	Strongly supports DDC Mission

Parameter	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6
	Thompson Peak Parkway & Bell Road	94th Street & Bell Road	Pinnacle Peak Park	Alma School Parkway & Pinnacle Vista Drive	Pima Road & Dynamite Boulevard	McDowell Sonoran Preserve Gateway
Outside Funding and Partnering	Possible	Possible	Lower potential due to smaller site footprint	Possible	Good opportunity	Possible
Sustainable Operations	Operating potential and sustainability is somewhat HIGHER lower than at Gateway (Closer to compatible venues)	Highest operating potential and sustainability is somewhat lower than at Gateway (Closer to compatible tourist venues)	Operating potential is lower than at Gateway	Operating potential is lower than at Gateway	Operating potential is somewhat lower than at Gateway	Operating potential is questionable highest at Gateway
Tourism / Economic Impacts	Tourism / Economic Impacts potential is somewhat HIGHER lower than at Gateway (close to West World and intended hotels)	Highest Tourism / Economic Impacts potential is somewhat lower than at Gateway (close to West World and intended hotels)	Tourism / Economic Impacts potential is lower than at Gateway	Tourism / Economic Impacts potential is lower than at Gateway	Tourism / Economic Impacts potential is somewhat lower than at Gateway	Baseline Tourism / Economic Impacts potential is highest at Gateway
Community Benefits	Community Benefits are HIGHER somewhat lower than at Gateway (less opposition)	Community Benefits are HIGHER somewhat lower than at Gateway (less opposition, none from Preserve standpoint, some from adjacent residential)	Community Benefits are lower at this site. than at Gateway.	Community Benefits are lower at this site. than at Gateway.	Community Benefits are low at this site somewhat lower than at Gateway	Community Benefits are LOWEST highest at Gateway (there will be substantial public opposition to this site)
Land Ownerships Status	City of Scottsdale - McDowell Sonoran Preserve	City of Scottsdale	City of Scottsdale / Arizona State Land Department	Private	Arizona State Land Department	City of Scottsdale - McDowell Sonoran Preserve
Zoning	R1-10 PCD ESL & R1-18 ESL & RI-10 ESL (Assume COS ESL in future)	P1-7 ESL (HD) PCD (very dense)	SC ESL / C-2 ESL (RD / HC)	C-2 ESL (HD)	R1-190 ESL (HD) PCD (Assume COS ESL for Future)	RI-10 PCD ESL & R1-18 ESL & R140 ESL (Assume COS ESL for future)
Summary	2nd Best Site but has conflict with the Preserve	Best site, close to Preserve and other tourist venues	Worst site - too small, poor access, no easy Preserve access	2nd Worst site - poor access, no easy Preserve access	3rd worst site, too far from major tourist center	3rd best site but has a major conflict with the Preserve

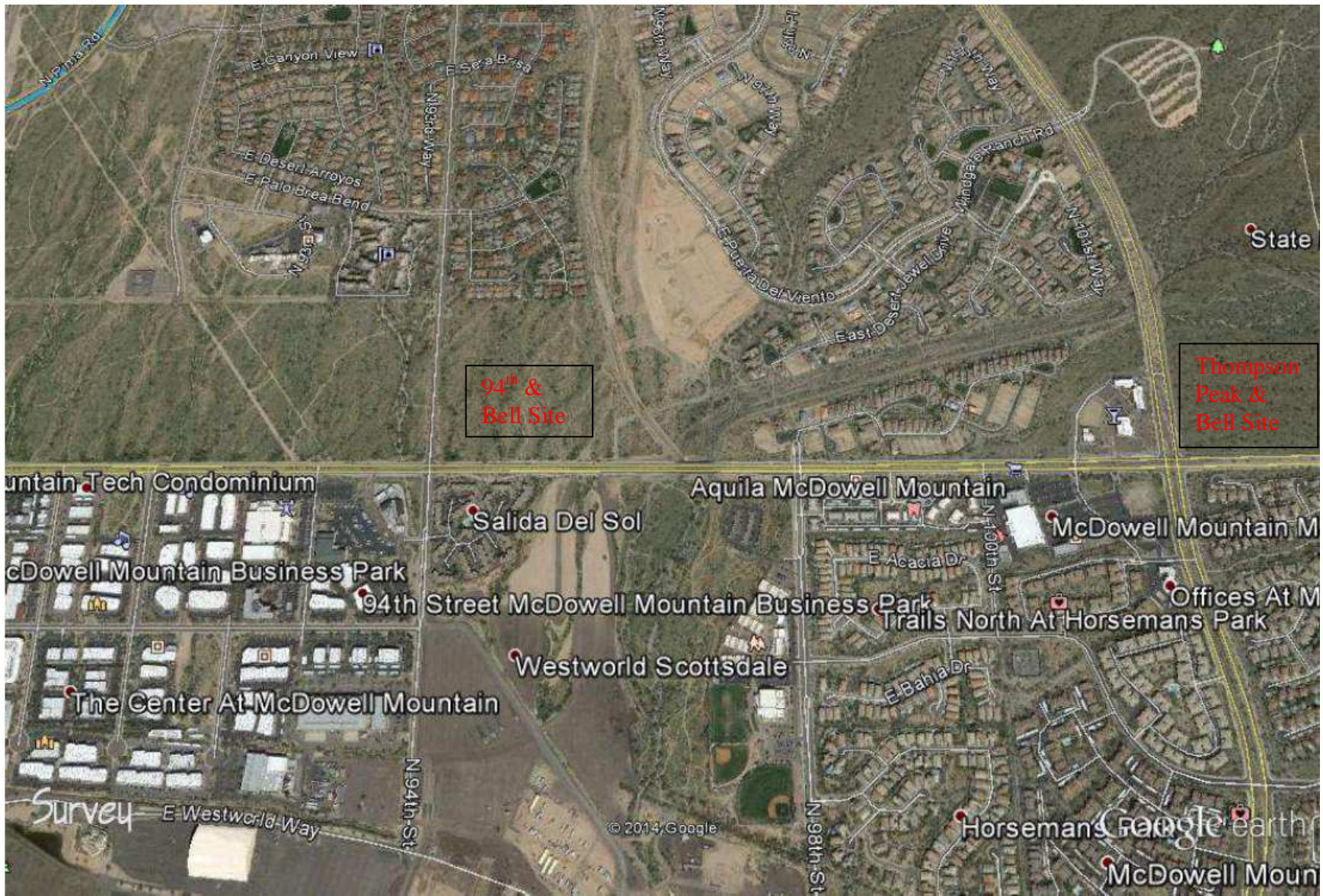


Figure 1 Aerial of Thompson Peak & Bell Sites



Figure 2 View of Pinnacle Peak from 94th St. & Bell Site



Figure 3 View from 94th & Bell Site Looking North East



Figure 4 View from 94th & Bell Site Looking East



Figure 5 View from 94th & Bell Site Looking at Thompson Peak



Figure 6 View of Tom's Thumb from Thompson Peak & Bell



Figure 7 View North East from Thompson Peak & Bell



Figure 8 View of Thompson Peak from Thompson Peak & Bell



Figure 9 View of Tom's Thumb from Thompson Peak & Bell