

FORT BAKER

Proposed Plan EIS

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT



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This section discusses considerations of long-term impact of the Proposed Action and alternatives, and the effect of foreclosing future options.

5.1 RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

5.1.1 Proposed Action

Buildings and cultural landscapes within Fort Baker would be rehabilitated and preserved or restored under the Proposed Action. This would contribute to regional efforts to preserve such resources and their settings, including those related to military history. Existing efforts to maintain, enhance and actively restore natural ecosystems would enhance the long-term productivity of native habitats. Improvements to existing infrastructure would be considered sustainable actions that are expected to improve the operation of systems and reduce environmental impacts on the bay ecosystem. Operational activities or recreational uses would not have significant effects on long-term productivity. The NPS would promote environmental protection and sustainable design and demonstrate technologies and practices that would reduce environmental impacts or produce environmental benefits in water conservation and reclamation, energy conservation, solid waste management and transportation.

5.1.2 1980 GMP Alternative

Under this alternative, the long-term productivity of Fort Baker would be similar to the Proposed Action with fewer efforts to restore natural ecosystems. The development of a water shuttle landing in combination with a more landscaped zone along the waterfront, could have localized impacts on the bay ecosystem. In addition, the environmental study area and overnight group campsite proposed near Battery Cavallo would need to be developed in such a way that it could continue over the long term without affecting the battery's appearance and significance for future generations.

5.1.3 Office and Cultural Center Alternative

Under this alternative, the productivity of park resources would be similar to the Proposed Action. Park partners would take actions to assist the NPS in complying with all laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies pertaining to cultural properties and natural resources.

5.1.4 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not be a sustainable action that could continue over the long term without environmental problems. The No Action Alternative would not meet the needs of the present in such areas as habitat restoration, infrastructure improvements, interpretation, and visitor management, and it could also compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Further deterioration of the historic structures could foreclose options for future preservation and use due to higher costs of rehabilitation.

5.2 IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

5.2.1 Proposed Action

The NPS would conduct its activities in a manner that ensures that energy is used in a wise and economical manner. Fort Baker's resources and values would not be degraded to provide energy for NPS purposes. Facilities would be designed and constructed to minimize consumption of energy and

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development of nonrenewable fuels. Renewable sources of energy and new developments in energy-efficient technology, including recycling of materials and waste, would be used where appropriate and cost-effective. NPS personnel and visitors at Fort Baker may be provided with onsite public transportation (shuttles) as an energy-conserving alternative to private cars. The NPS would interpret the wise use of energy to the public and would educate and motivate its personnel and operators to conserve energy.

Although most developed areas could be restored to previous conditions over time, the use of land, construction materials, energy, and financial resources to implement the Proposed Action would, in a practical sense, be an irretrievable commitment of resources.

Archaeological resources would be avoided where possible and historic resources would be protected. Where this was not possible, disturbance would be mitigated through recovery of cultural information and significant artifacts.

The NPS would work in cooperation with local communities, contractors, and various environmental regulatory agencies with the objective of creating cost-effective alternatives to the demolition of military installation structures.

5.2.2 1980 GMP Alternative

The 1980 GMP Alternative would result in generally the same commitments of resources as the Proposed Action. Although the Capehart area could be restored to previous conditions over time, its use as a parking area would be an irretrievable commitment of resources.

5.2.3 Office and Cultural Center Alternative

The Office and Cultural Center Alternative would result in generally the same commitments of resources as the Proposed Action.

5.2.4 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in generally fewer commitments of resources than the Proposed Action since minimal development would occur. However, this alternative would not explore recycling or conservation to the degree that would be implemented in the Proposed Action.

5.3 ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

In accordance with NPS-12 (NPS NEPA Guidelines), this discussion focuses on the “real” environmental issues surrounding the proposed project, including those which cannot be fully mitigated or avoided.

5.3.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have cumulative effects that range from beneficial to moderately adverse after mitigation. For a complete discussion of cumulative impacts, refer to Chapter 4.

The Proposed Action would contribute additional traffic to existing and future (cumulative) significant traffic conditions. Although these conditions would occur with or without the project, the Proposed Action would have an incremental effect. The NPS has developed extensive mitigation measures (see Section 2.6.6) to reduce or avoid contributing to the problem, but complete avoidance is not possible. On a regional basis (i.e., US 101), the Proposed Action’s contribution would small and would fall within the normal daily fluctuation in traffic levels. On the segment of Alexander

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Avenue between Danes Drive and US 101, the Proposed Action would have a minor to moderate effect. This segment of roadway would receive the majority of trips accessing Fort Baker. To reduce the effect of the project (both individually and on a cumulative basis), the NPS would open Conzelman Road as a one-way exit during peak hours, enforce a transportation demand management program (TDM) at Fort Baker, and implement several other measures aimed at reducing the effect of the project on this roadway segment.

The Proposed Action would also contribute vehicle trips to the downtown Sausalito network, which operates poorly during peak hours (now and is projected to in the future). The existing congestion in downtown Sausalito currently occurs without the Proposed Action and would similarly continue if the project was not implemented. Implementation of the Proposed Action would incrementally contribute a 1-4% increase in traffic in downtown before mitigation. Mitigation measures to reduce or avoid this increase include provision of shuttle service to and from Fort Baker and Sausalito, informing patrons of Fort Baker about the existing congestion problems in downtown, potentially closing East Road to make access to Sausalito via car more difficult, and other measures described in Section 2.6.6. These measures would reduce the 1-4% increase, however, the project would still have a small contribution to this existing significant adverse condition.

The NPS is actively engaged in a regional effort to promote and support water transit. Fort Baker was identified as one of three GGNRA sites where ferry service was recommended for further consideration, and the NPS is currently studying these sites as a part of a separate planning process. As a result, ferry service was evaluated as a cumulative project in this EIS.

Detailed information on the type of service (i.e., size of boats, frequency of trips, land-side facilities, etc.) and subsequent environmental effects are unknown at this time. Future plans for ferry service at Fort Baker would be subject to environmental review in accordance with NEPA, and mitigation would be developed as needed to reduce or avoid significant effects. Because that analysis has not been prepared, the effectiveness of mitigation measures in reducing potential impacts is also unknown and could be considered potentially significant. Individually, the Proposed Action would have a less-than-significant, and in some instances beneficial, effect on water quality and biological resources. As a result, the Proposed Action would incrementally but not substantially contribute this potentially significant impact. The NPS would, however, mitigate the effects of ferry service to the greatest extent possible. Use of a ferry would provide alternative transportation options for visitors of Fort Baker and would provide beneficial effects on traffic conditions.

Conversion of the yacht club and marina to a public facility would require current members with boats to travel greater distances to find facilities at comparable rates. The displacement of current users would represent an unavoidable loss of the intangible value of the community of yacht club members that has grown over the years that the club has existed at Fort Baker under military sponsorship, and an unavoidable loss of a recreational resource to its members.

5.3.2 1980 GMP Alternative

Increased visitors associated with development of an environmental study area and overnight group campsite near the Battery Cavallo area would have the potential to cause adverse impacts to the battery's cultural and natural resources.

Removal of the existing marina facilities and replacement with a combination of slips and moorings would require current members with boats to travel greater distances to find facilities at comparable rates. The displacement of current users would represent an unavoidable loss of the intangible value of

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the community of yacht club members that has grown over the years that the club has existed at Fort Baker under military sponsorship, and an unavoidable loss of a recreational resource to its members.

The water shuttle service to and from Fort Baker could adversely impact marine animals. Disturbance from direct noise and wave action could also impact resting and feeding bird species. Water shuttle use would need to be regulated to mitigate impacts from noise, pollution, and general disturbance to a level of insignificance. Additional environmental analysis would be conducted before the service was initiated.

Structures within the Capehart area would be removed to accommodate parking for 700 cars. Parking areas would be dispersed, designed and sited to avoid an adverse effect to the National Register property or its status. Internal vehicular traffic associated with the 700 cars could result in hazards to pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly during peak use weekends. The major increase in the number of visitors, cars and intrusion of the large parking lot would have an unavoidable adverse impact on the site's character.

5.3.3 Office and Cultural Center Alternative

The major increase in the number of visitors, cars and intrusion of parking would have an unavoidable adverse impact on the site's character.

5.3.4 No Action Alternative

Although stewardship of natural and cultural resources would be less than the Proposed Action, it would be adequate to avoid adverse impacts.

5.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

5.4.1 Proposed Action

New employee households would create increased demands for goods and services in areas surrounding their homes and throughout the Bay Area.

Increased visitation at Fort Baker would increase the demand for lodging, restaurant, and other tourist-oriented services in surrounding areas, especially in Sausalito, Tiburon and San Francisco. This business growth, combined with other park improvements, would potentially increase demand for local hotels (Sedway Group, 1998).

Infrastructure improvements would not encourage additional growth outside of Fort Baker because these improvements are only for onsite services.

Planned traffic circulation and safety improvements would not increase the capacity of affected transportation networks beyond that needed to accommodate Fort Baker traffic and transit services. Therefore, additional indirect population and housing growth in other areas served by the same traffic network is not expected.

5.4.2 1980 GMP Alternative

Growth-inducing impacts would be comparable to the Proposed Action.

5.4.3 Office and Cultural Center Alternative

Growth-inducing impacts would be comparable to the Proposed Action.

5.4.4 No Action Alternative

No growth-inducing impacts are expected.