

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECORD OF DECISION

ALCATRAZ FERRY EMBARKATION
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

California

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (Park Service; NPS), has prepared this Record of Decision (ROD) on the *Alcatraz Ferry Embarkation Final Environmental Impact Statement* (final EIS) for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). This ROD includes a description of the background of the project, a statement of the decision made, synopses of other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, a description of the environmentally preferable alternative, a listing of measures to minimize environmental harm, and an overview of public and agency involvement in the decision-making process.

In addition, as required by NPS Management Policies, a separate non-impairment determination for the selected alternative has been prepared.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT — PURPOSE AND NEED

The Park Service proposes to establish a long-term ferry embarkation site along the northern San Francisco waterfront for passenger service to Alcatraz Island (hereafter referred to as the Project). The Park Service desires an identifiable and well-functioning facility that will provide a quality welcome and support program for visitors, orient visitors to the history of Alcatraz Island, and provide a connection to other GGNRA parklands and orientation to the national park system in general. The Park Service also seeks to establish limited ferry service between the primary Alcatraz ferry embarkation site and the existing Fort Baker pier, provide interpretive cruises to GGNRA parklands around San Francisco Bay (the Bay), and programmatically address the potential for recreational ferry service linkages to other parklands in the Bay.

The need for the Project is driven by the following factors:

- **The Alcatraz ferry embarkation site and associated connections should be a consistent feature over time for visitors to the GGNRA.** An important objective for identifying a long-term site is to avoid having the site move when NPS contracts are awarded in the future (generally every 10 years), providing stability for the Park Service and the City of San Francisco.
- **The Alcatraz ferry embarkation site should allow for efficiency in making facility improvements when necessary and consistency in projecting facility costs.** Under the current scenario, the lease between the Port of San Francisco (Port) and the concessioner hinders the ability to create an identifiable and quality visitor welcome area and a unique visitor experience that starts with the arrival at the ferry embarkation site.
- **The Alcatraz ferry embarkation site and associated facilities should serve as a gateway to GGNRA, reflecting the Park Service's identity and providing a quality experience for visitors.** Lack of formal

authority, in combination with changing adjacent commercial uses and developments, hinders the Park Service's ability to create a clear sense of identity and quality visitor support services at the Alcatraz ferry embarkation site.

- **The Alcatraz ferry embarkation site should provide the space, circulation, and interpretive materials to appropriately and effectively orient visitors to Alcatraz Island and GGNRA.** The visitor facility does not currently provide a genuine park portal to GGNRA, and as such, many visitors or aspiring visitors to Alcatraz Island are unaware of the other recreational and educational opportunities provided by GGNRA.
- **The Alcatraz ferry embarkation site may provide a valuable opportunity for cross-bay ferry service to other GGNRA parklands.** Increasing numbers of park visitors choose to use transit, do not have an automobile, and perceive travel by ferry as an enjoyable experience. The potential to add another (third) berth and promote additional special event services from the ferry embarkation site would further enhance this opportunity.

DECISION (SELECTED ACTION)

The Park Service has selected the Pier 31½ Alternative for implementation, inclusive of the activities common to all primary embarkation site alternatives, as described in the January 2017 final EIS. This alternative would retain the current Alcatraz ferry embarkation site at Pier 31½ and would propose improvements to the existing facility. It would use the historic Pier 31 north and Pier 33 south bulkhead buildings on The Embarcadero, portions of the Pier 31 and Pier 33 sheds, and all of the outdoor space between piers 31 and 33 for embarkation services.

The Project would require the next concessioner to renovate the site—including installing new floats and gangways, bulkhead buildings at Pier 31 and Pier 33, and portions of the shed buildings at Pier 31 and Pier 33—with a combination of indoor and outdoor spaces that serve to welcome, orient, and provide basic services for visitors. Other improvements would include retrofit and repair of existing site infrastructure. The existing interior space plan of the bulkhead buildings would be extensively reconfigured on all floors.

Enhanced on-shore visitor facilities would provide visitors with expanded interpretive information about Alcatraz Island, the national park system, and the Port's historic district. To achieve the goal of connectivity to other parklands, the Project will construct a third berth at Pier 31½, which would replace the existing single dock and gangway with two parallel floating docks (to accommodate three berths) and gangways accessed from the existing bulkhead. This will aid in establishing limited ferry service between Pier 31½ and the existing Fort Baker pier and provide interpretive cruises to GGNRA parklands around the Bay. These elements would improve cross-bay connectivity and accommodate existing and future visitor demand for recreational travel to Fort Baker and the Marin Headlands, thereby enhancing GGNRA's operational effectiveness.

After public review of the draft EIS, in response to comments received and in consideration of other factors, the Park Service elected not to include constructing improvements to support or to implement special ferry service at Fort Mason as part of the preferred alternative.

Compared to the other two action alternatives considered, the Pier 31½ Alternative would have reduced impacts related to terrestrial biological resources, cultural resources, recreation, and socioeconomics. For other resource topics, impacts would be comparable between the three alternatives. While the other two action alternatives would result in short-term, minor, beneficial socioeconomic impacts during construction

and beneficial intersection traffic, increased impacts to other resource topics (including socioeconomics and transportation and circulation) outweigh these benefits.

Therefore, the Pier 31½ Alternative, inclusive of the activities common to all primary embarkation site alternatives as described in the final EIS, has been identified as the preferred alternative and the environmentally preferred alternative. Selection of this alternative would fulfill the Project objectives and result in reduced major transportation impacts and similar or reduced impacts to remaining resource topics as compared to the other action alternatives.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The EIS describes two other action alternatives and the no action alternative, each of which is summarized below. A comparison of potential major adverse impacts resulting from each alternative is shown in Table 1.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative was included as an alternative in the EIS pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) section 1502.14(d) of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations. The No Action Alternative, which represents no change from the Park Service's current management direction, provides a reference for comparing the other alternatives against, evaluating the magnitude of proposed changes, and measuring the effects of those changes. It assumes a continuation of existing conditions, where the location of the embarkation site would be determined through competition for future concession contracts subject to change every 10 years, and a permanent Alcatraz ferry embarkation site would not be established. There would be no construction costs to NPS, and no additional funding would be required to implement this alternative.

The existing site's program does not meet the Project's basic program requirements and has deficiencies in providing the desired high-quality visitor experience. The presence of an Alcatraz-themed souvenir shop in the bulkhead building, separate from the NPS concession and not operated by the Park Service, further diminishes the ability of the Park Service to provide a clear sense of identity and quality experience. Therefore, this alternative was not selected.

Pier 41 Alternative

The Pier 41 Alternative returns the embarkation site to Pier 41, which served as the Alcatraz ferry embarkation site between the early 1980s and 2006. This alternative would replace the existing floating docks and gangways (currently accessed from the existing Pier 41 bulkhead) with two parallel floating docks (to accommodate three berths) and gangways. The third berth would increase the site's operational capacity and provide visitors the opportunity to visit other park sites within the Bay, as well as limited service to Fort Baker.

This alternative would involve an expansion of the existing building footprint. Due to its age and condition, the old pier (and adjacent concrete bulkhead) would likely be demolished and replaced prior to major construction in the Pier 41 building. The timber bulkhead wall of the newer pier would be replaced, and piles under the existing building would be reinforced. A new gangway and float would be installed, including supporting guide piles. Abandoned utilities would be removed and replaced. The existing building, which was

constructed in the 1980s, would be expanded, remodeled, and updated to be compliant with seismic, life safety, and accessibility codes and guidelines.

The Pier 31½ and Pier 41 alternatives would result in equivalent negligible to minor adverse impacts in the categories of water quality and hydrology, aquatic biological resources, and visual resources. Compared to the Pier 31½ Alternative, the Pier 41 Alternative would have increased adverse impacts related to recreation (short-term) and socioeconomics. While the Pier 41 alternative would result in short-term, minor, beneficial socioeconomic impacts during construction and beneficial intersection traffic, increased adverse impacts to other resource topics (including socioeconomics and transportation and circulation) outweigh these benefits.

Pier 3 Alternative

The Pier 3 Alternative would locate the ferry embarkation site in Fort Mason's historic Pier 3 shed, which was constructed between 1910 and 1915. Nearly all services and functions would be located in less than half of the rehabilitated Pier 3 shed building, leaving an opportunity for a compatible use to occupy the remaining space. The Alcatraz ferry embarkation program would be located in the front (southern) portion of the pier shed, and the compatible use space would be located in the back (northern) portion. A walkway along the eastern side of the building would provide direct and autonomous access to the compatible use space and would not overlap with the Alcatraz ferry embarkation area. Retrofit of the existing Pier 3 substructure would be needed, including repair and installation of support piles; installation of two new gangways and floats (between piers 2 and 3 and piers 1 and 2, for a total of three berths, as with the other action alternatives); repair or replacement of damaged concrete and reinforcing bars; and replacement of fender piles, asphalt paving, and guardrails.

Abandoned utilities would be removed and replaced. The existing Pier 3 shed building would require architectural improvements for seismic retrofit, life safety, Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards compliance, historic preservation, and interior design and remodeling upgrades.

The Pier 31½ and Pier 3 alternatives would result in equivalent negligible to minor adverse impacts in the categories of water quality and hydrology, aquatic biological resources, and visual resources. Compared to the Pier 31½ Alternative, the Pier 3 Alternative would have increased adverse impacts related to terrestrial biological resources, cultural resources, recreation (long-term), traffic, parking, and socioeconomics. While the Pier 3 alternative would result in short-term, minor, beneficial socioeconomic impacts during construction and beneficial intersection traffic, increased impacts to other resource topics (including socioeconomics, traffic and parking) outweigh these benefits.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF MAJOR ADVERSE IMPACTS

Resource Topic	Pier 31½ Major Impacts	Pier 41 Major Impacts	Pier 3 Major Impacts
Land Use			
Transportation and Circulation			
Construction Period			
Intersection Traffic		•	•
Transit	•	•	•
Bicycle Facilities			
Pedestrian Facilities			
Parking Facilities			•
Air Quality			
Construction Period	•	•	•
Operation			
Noise and Vibration			
Construction Period	•	•	•
Operation			
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	•	•	•
Water Quality and Hydrology			
Aquatic Biological Resources			
Terrestrial Biological Resources			
Aesthetics			
Cultural Resources			
Recreation			
Socioeconomics		•	
Public Services and Utilities			
Hazardous Materials			

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The Park Service typically identifies an environmentally preferable alternative in its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents so as to inform public review and comment. Guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality states that the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that “causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment,” and that “best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.” (Question 6(a) from “NEPA’s Forty Most Asked Questions.”). One or more alternatives may be identified as the environmentally preferable alternative.

For each of the action alternatives, impacts by resource topic are generally consistent with the No Action Alternative, with major adverse impacts limited primarily to transportation, and short-term, adverse impacts to air quality, and noise. Each of the action alternatives would fulfill the Project objectives, while the No Action Alternative would not meet all of the Project objectives.

Compared to the other two action alternatives, the Pier 31½ Alternative would reduce impacts to transportation and circulation, and socio-economics (Table 1). For other impacts in Table 1 still noted as major for Pier 31 ½, impacts at Pier 31 ½ are still reduced as compared to the other sites.

Therefore, the Pier 31½ Alternative, inclusive of the activities common to all primary embarkation site alternatives, has been identified as the environmentally preferred alternative. Selection of this alternative would fulfill the Project objectives while incurring reduced major transportation impacts. The Pier 31½ Alternative, inclusive of operating limited ferry service to Fort Baker and interpretive cruises to GGNRA parklands around the Bay, was also been identified as the NPS preferred alternative, and has been selected for implementation.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

Mitigation measures are the practicable and appropriate methods that will be used under the selected action to avoid or minimize harm to natural and cultural resources, wilderness character, visitors, and the visitor experience. Relevant for Fort Baker, Congress has charged the Park Service with managing the lands under its stewardship “in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (Park Service Organic Act). Park Service staff routinely evaluate and implement mitigation measures whenever conditions occur that could adversely affect the sustainability of national park system resources.

The Park Service will prepare implementation plans with appropriate environmental compliance (i.e., those required by NEPA and the National Historic Preservation Act [NHPA], as amended, and other relevant legislation) for the Project. The requirements of other future regulatory actions required for the Project, such as the requirements of CEQA, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act will be incorporated as applicable.

Table 2 identifies mitigation measures identified in the EIS that will be applied to avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts from implementation of the selected action. The mitigation measures have been developed using existing laws and regulations, best management practices, conservation measures, and other known techniques. As noted above, there may be other future mitigation requirements derived from CEQA or other state and federal regulations that apply to either Pier 31 ½ or Fort Baker.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure	Description	Pier 31½ Responsible Party	Fort Baker Responsible Party
Transportation-MM-1	The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) routinely monitors and adjusts its transit service to respond to changing demands and travel patterns over time. While it may be possible that SFMTA would adjust transit service in response to this alternative such that impacts to transit capacity utilization would be reduced, the Park Service cannot guarantee that this would occur. Thus, the Park Service should consider operating a supplemental shuttle service connecting key park destinations with major hotel and regional transit connections. However, the details of such a system, including its effectiveness and costs, would require further coordination, planning, and outreach. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed at this time.	Port of San Francisco and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy	N/A
Air-MM-1	The idling time of diesel powered construction equipment would be minimized to 2 minutes.	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts
Air-MM-2	The Project shall develop a plan demonstrating that the off-road equipment (greater than 50 horsepower) to be used in the construction project (i.e., owned, leased, and subcontractor vehicles) would achieve a project-wide fleet-average 20% nitrogen oxides reduction and 45% particulate matter reduction compared to the most recent California Air Resources Board fleet average. Acceptable options for reducing emissions include the use of late model engines, low-emission diesel products, alternative fuels, engine retrofit technology, after-treatment products, add-on devices such as particulate filters, and other options as they become available.	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts
Air-MM-3	The Project shall use tugboats with Tier 4 propulsion engines, and Tier 3 auxiliary engines. This measure has	Port of San Francisco, through construction	Park Service, through construction contracts

Mitigation Measure	Description	Pier 31½ Responsible Party	Fort Baker Responsible Party
	been adjusted since the EIS, to match current requirements, as the Tier requirements have changed over time.	contracts	
Noise-MM-1	<p>The construction contractor would be required to adhere to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids simultaneous use of equipment that exceeds 90 decibels (A-weighted; dBA), particularly impact and vibratory pile drivers • Avoids simultaneous use of nonimpact equipment that exceeds 70 dBA, particularly pavers and trucks • Installs noise mufflers to stationary equipment and impact tools that are no less effective than those provided by the manufacturer • Installs barriers around particularly loud activities at the construction site to eliminate the line of sight between the source of noise and nearby sensitive receptors • Uses construction equipment with low noise emission ratings • Locates equipment, materials, and staging areas as far as practicable from sensitive receptors • Prohibits unnecessary idling of vehicles or equipment • Requires applicable construction-related vehicles or equipment to use designated truck routes to access the Project site • Restricts construction activities between 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday 	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts
Vibration-MM-1	The construction contractor would conduct vibration monitoring when construction activities occur within 50 feet of the historic Pier 33 bulkhead.	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	N/A

Mitigation Measure	Description	Pier 31½ Responsible Party	Fort Baker Responsible Party
Aquatic-MM-1	<p>The project proponent shall develop and implement a marine noise monitoring plan which would be subject to review and approval by the National Marine Fisheries Service.</p> <p>As part of this plan, the following measures will be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pile Driving Restrictions:</i> Pile driving will only occur from July 1 to November 30 at Pier 31½ and from July 1 to September 30th at Fort Baker, when salmonids are not expected to be present in the Project area. • <i>Equipment Controls:</i> The Project will be required to bring loud mechanical equipment online slowly (employ a "soft-start"). • <i>Noise Monitoring:</i> A trained biologist will conduct underwater noise monitoring during marine construction to ensure that pile driving noise levels do not exceed the levels identified through noise modeling for the Project. If noise levels are exceeded, the Project will implement cushion blocks in the hammer to reduce sound levels and prevent exceedance of the levels projected through noise modeling, and noise level exceedances will be reported to the National Marine Fisheries Service. <p>A separate, specific plan would be needed for Pier 31½ and Fort Baker.</p> <p>This measure has been updated since the EIS because the Biological Opinion (BO) has been issued.</p>	Port of San Francisco	Park Service

Mitigation Measure	Description	Pier 31½ Responsible Party	Fort Baker Responsible Party
Aquatic-MM-2	<p>The Park Service would ensure that the contractor does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a 500-meter safety zone around sound sources in the event that the sound level is unknown or cannot be adequately predicted. • Halts work activities when a marine mammal enters the 500-meter safety zone. • Brings loud mechanical equipment online slowly. 	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts
Visual-MM-1	All new and upgraded lighting on the Pier 31½ site would employ shields over lamps or be located under building/structure overhangs to minimize light pollution of the dark sky.	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts
Visual-MM-2	New and upgraded float lighting within the site would employ motion activation sensors after operation hours, to minimize the amount of time lamps would be illuminated.	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts
Visual-MM-3	Upgraded public access to water viewpoints on-site would be provided through the design.	Design drawings would be reviewed and approved by the Park Service, the Port, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, including review by the Design Review Board and Waterfront Design Advisory Committee.	N/A
Utilities-MM-1	<p>A detailed study identifying locations of utilities within the study area would be conducted during the design phase of the Project. For areas with the potential for adverse impacts on utility services, the Project would implement the following mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility excavation or encroachment permits would be obtained from the 	Port of San Francisco, through construction contracts	Park Service, through construction contracts

Mitigation Measure	Description	Pier 31½ Responsible Party	Fort Baker Responsible Party
	<p>appropriate agencies. The permits would include measures to minimize utility disruption, which would be included in construction contract specifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility locations would be verified through field surveys. • Detailed specifications would be prepared as part of the design plans to include procedures for excavation, support, and fill of areas around utility cables and pipelines. All affected utility services would be notified of construction plans and schedule. Arrangements would be made with these entities regarding protection, relocation, or temporary disconnection of services. • Residents and businesses in the vicinity of the site would be notified of planned utility service disruption in advance, in conformance with City/County and state standards. • Disconnected cables and lines would be reconnected promptly. 		

PUBLIC, NATIVE AMERICAN, AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The EIS was developed based on input from the Park Service, other agencies, Native Americans, and interested persons and organizations. Consultation and coordination was an important part of the Project. The public had two primary avenues for participation during the development of the draft and final EIS: 1) participation in public scoping meetings; and 2) providing comments on the draft EIS. The Park Service has consulted with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, as well as with Ohlone and Costanoan tribal representatives.

Plan Development

Public meetings were used to keep the public informed and involved regarding the purpose, need, and objectives of the Project and concepts for possible alternatives. Early agency and stakeholder scoping for the Project began in 2012. The Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Project was published in the Federal Register on June 1, 2012. The NOI announced the preparation of an EIS by the Park Service as the federal lead agency. The NOI also included background information, potential alternatives, and methods for public comment. The comment period closed on July 31, 2012.

The Park Service sent an electronic public scoping newsletter to 1,626 email addresses followed by printed copies to 569 individuals, agencies, and organizations. Scoping meetings were held on June 26 and 28, 2012, at Fort Mason and Sausalito, respectively. Both meetings presented information about the purpose, need, and objectives of the Project and concepts for possible alternatives.

In addition to the website, mailing, and public meetings in June, the Park Service conducted outreach with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the California State Lands Commission, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and Ohlone and Costanoan tribal representatives.

Release of the *Draft Alcatraz Ferry Embarkation EIS*

The Park Service released the draft EIS for public review and comment on February 27, 2015. The draft EIS was originally available for public review and comment until May 20, 2015; however, an extension was granted to extend the review and comment period through June 4, 2015.

During the comment period, one public meeting was held. This meeting occurred on March 31, 2015, from 3:30 to 7:00 p.m., at the Port's Pier 1 building in San Francisco, California. The meeting was advertised through several outlets, including the Federal Register, the Project newsletter, the Project website, direct emails, and various media publications and broadcasts. During the meeting, multiple stations were set up allowing the public to review proposed Project elements and alternatives presented in the draft EIS. NPS staff and the consultant team were available to answer questions and provide additional information to meeting participants.

Comments on the draft EIS could be submitted using any of the following methods:

- Electronically through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website
- In person at the public meeting
- By physical mail

The Park Service received 277 correspondences during the public review and comment period, most which were submitted by California residents and members of organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Five correspondences were received from federal, state, and local government offices; five correspondences were received from businesses; and 30 correspondences were received from organizations.

Release of the *Final Alcatraz Ferry Embarkation EIS*

The final EIS was released on January 13, 2017. On January 24, 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published its notice of filing of the final EIS in the *Federal Register* (vol. 82, no. 14, pages 8206-8207) initiating the minimum 30-day no action waiting period. The public was informed of the release of the EIS for public inspection through email messages to individuals and organizations on the park's mailing list and via a

press release. The 30-day no action period ended on February 23, 2017. Following release of the final EIS, the Park Service received no additional communications from interested agencies or from the public.

REGULATORY AGENCY AND OTHER CONSULTATION

Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and Native Americans

Section 106 of the NHPA requires that agencies consult with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the SHPO, interested and affected federally recognized Indian tribes, other interested parties, and the public. Section 106 regulations at 36 CFR 800.8(c) allow agencies to use “the process and documentation” required under NEPA to fulfill all or part of the section 106 requirements.

On April 20, 2013, the Park Service notified the ACHP, the SHPO, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and Ohlone and Costanoan tribal representatives of the Project. The notification included the NOI to prepare an EIS and a statement that the NEPA process would be used to fulfill some section 106 requirements related to consulting the public and other interested parties.

On December 17, 2013, the SHPO concurred with the Area of Potential Effects proposed by the Park Service. The SHPO also agreed that efforts to identify historic properties in the Area of Potential Effects were sufficient.

The Park Service has determined that the Project will have no adverse effect to historic properties. This determination and supporting information has been provided to the SHPO for concurrence, and interested and affected Native American tribes for review.

On August 10, 2017, the SHPO concurred with a Finding of No Adverse Effect for the Project.

Endangered Species Act Section 7 and Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act Consultations

The Park Service sent scoping letters to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on December 28, 2011, and did not receive an initial response. The letters described the Project and sought comments from each agency on a range of possible alternatives. The Park Service provided the draft EIS to NMFS and USFWS in the spring of 2015 to initiate the Project’s Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations; however, because a preferred alternative was not identified, the consultations did not begin at that time.

On November 16, 2016, after identifying the preferred alternative, the Park Service submitted letters requesting initiation of the Project’s ESA consultations with NMFS and USFWS under section 7 of the ESA of 1973, and with NMFS under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. The Park Service had determined that the Pier 31½ Alternative, inclusive of activities at Fort Baker, may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect several marine species, and that the Pier 31½ Alternative would have only temporary and minimal effects on essential fish habitat. A “no effect” determination was reached for the Project for terrestrial and avian impacts under the jurisdiction of the USFWS.

During consultation, NMFS determined that after incorporation of reasonable mitigation measures, including a bubble curtain and underwater sound pressure monitoring, and updated construction windows, anticipated

underwater sound levels related to Project pile driving exceeded allowable limits for potential impacts to green sturgeon. Due to engineering requirements, and the need to limit disruption to operations, the Park Service could not agree to limitations on pile type, size, or driving requirements. Therefore, formal consultation under Section 7 of the ESA was initiated for the Project, and concluded on October 3, 2017 with issuance of Biological Opinion.

Coastal Zone Management Consistency Determination and Consultation

Federal agency activities in or affecting California’s coastal zone must comply with Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and implementing regulations, which require that such federal activities be conducted in a manner consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission’s (BCDC) Bay Plan and Special Area Plan for the San Francisco Waterfront.

The primary embarkation site at Pier 31½ is not located on federal lands and is within the coastal zone and subject to BCDC’s jurisdiction. The Park Service submitted a consistency determination to BCDC for this portion of the Project, finding that the Project is consistent with the Bay Plan and the Special Area Plan. The Fort Baker pier is located on tide and submerged lands owned by the United States. As federally owned property, the pier is outside the coastal zone, but because work on the pier could have effects on resources and uses in the coastal zone, the Park Service also prepared a consistency determination for this portion of the Project. The Park Service determined that the Fort Baker portion of the Project is consistent with the Bay Plan.

After extensive coordination, BCDC and the Park Service agreed to a phased consistency determination. The consistency determination was issued on October 19, 2017.

BASIS FOR DECISION

As described in the EIS, the Park Service began the Project’s alternatives development process by developing the core program for the embarkation facility in 2008. The core program characterized a number of needs and objectives, including location and proximity to Alcatraz Island, embarkation site functions (both current functions that needed to be maintained as well as improvements), and the spatial arrangements and relationships of the interior and exterior spaces and facilities to accommodate site functions. Using those parameters, and the standard NEPA screening process, a number of locations along the northern San Francisco waterfront that have the potential to accommodate the Alcatraz embarkation site were identified for consideration. The locations that were initially considered included the Ferry Building Pier, Pier 19½, Pier 29½, Pier 31½, Pier 41, Pier 45, Hyde Street Pier, Municipal Pier, and at Fort Mason between piers 3 and 4, between piers 2 and 3, between piers 1 and 2, and at Pier 4.

Subsequently, the Park Service reviewed the potential locations more closely in relation to the core program and conducted a series of studies and stakeholder and public outreach efforts focused on developing and screening the range of alternatives. The alternatives that resulted were evaluated in the EIS.

Key studies and outreach efforts are listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3. ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Event	Date	Highlights
Draft Feasibility	Spring 2011	Evaluated 12 potential alternatives; eliminated three from

Event	Date	Highlights
Study		further consideration
Site Planning Workshop	Fall 2011	Evaluated nine potential alternatives; eliminated four from further study and refined remaining alternatives, which resulted in six alternatives to be carried forward
Public and Agency Scoping	Spring/ Summer 2012	Identified key issues and concerns; did not result in the elimination of any alternatives from further consideration; no additional alternatives identified to be carried forward
VA Process	Summer/Fall 2012	Evaluated, screened, and refined the remaining six alternatives through a series of meetings and workshops; eliminated three alternatives and carried forward three alternatives for analysis in the EIS
Public Review of the Draft EIS	March to June 2015	Public review and comment on the EIS

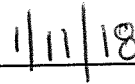
After conclusion of the steps listed in Table 3, and careful consideration of each alternative and its foreseeable environmental impacts, the expressed purpose and need for federal action, and all public and agency comments, including comments on the draft EIS, the Pier 31½ Alternative has been selected for establishing primary ferry service to Alcatraz Island from the San Francisco's northeastern waterfront. This alternative best meets the Project objectives, and best complies with NPS management policies for Fort Baker.

CONCLUSION


As documented in the final EIS, the following key factors support implementation of the preferred alternative:

- The environmental impact analyses demonstrate that the selected alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative
- The selected alternative will have a high likelihood of achieving the expressed purpose, need, goals, and objectives
- The selected alternative is fully consistent with the Park Service's mission and policies, the policies and programs of the Port and City and County of San Francisco, and other pertinent laws and regulations
- As documented in Attachment A, the Project would not result in impairment to park resources and values
- The completed environmental impact analysis process is a thorough and rational effort, supported by extensive outreach efforts to the community, stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and park partners.

Based upon the above considerations, the Park Service has selected the Pier 31½ Alternative, inclusive of activities described as common to all action alternatives in the final EIS, for establishment of a ferry embarkation facility. The selected action best meets the Project objectives, and best complies with NPS management policies for Fort Baker. The selected action is also fully compliant with other pertinent laws and regulations.



Date

 Martha J. Lee
Acting Regional Director
Pacific West Region, National Park Service