

*F O R T B A K E R P L A N
F I N A L E N V I R O N M E N T A L I M P A C T S T A T E M E N T*



October 1999



Volume I



The fundamental purpose of all units of the National Park Service is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

—From National Park Service Organic Act, 1916, as amended 1988.

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Lead Agency: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Project Title: FORT BAKER PLAN

**Project Location: GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes and analyzes four alternatives for the reuse of Fort Baker, a unit of the National Park System. Consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act Guidelines (NPS-12), a 60-day public review of the Draft EIS was completed. The review period closed on December 7, 1998. A public hearing on the Draft EIS was held on November 18, 1998 to receive oral comments. In total, 127 letters, e-mail messages and oral comments were received and are presented, along with NPS responses, under separate cover in *Volume II: Response to Comments* of this Final EIS.

The alternatives evaluated in this EIS were developed to evaluate future uses of portions of Fort Baker that would be transferred from the Army to the National Park Service (NPS) by 2001, as well as the portions of the site currently managed by the NPS. The following alternatives were formulated as a result of the public scoping process, information collected about the site, and analysis performed by the NPS and its consultants:

1. *Proposed Action:* Rehabilitation of 28 historic buildings and new construction for a conference and retreat center, expansion of the Bay Area Discovery Museum, conversion of the marina/historic boat shop to public use, and waterfront and habitat restoration.
2. *1980 General Management Plan Alternative:* Use of 19 historic buildings as conference center, waterfront improvements, no expansion of park partner facilities, boat shop and marina converted for public use, 700-car parking lot/transportation hub.
3. *Office and Cultural Center Alternative:* Buildings leased to nonprofit and private groups for office and program space. Treatment of waterfront, boat shop, marina and open space would be the same as the Proposed Action. No new construction.
4. *No Action Alternative:* The NPS would manage the site with minimal actions to protect resources and provide for visitor safety. Existing park partners would remain. Building reuse would be limited to leasing of some residences.

Impact topics assessed in this EIS include: geology and soils; coastal processes; water resources; biological resources; cultural resources; traffic and circulation; air quality; noise; land use and community resources; visual and aesthetic resources; recreation and visitor enjoyment; infrastructure; and human health, safety and the environment.

Copies of this Final EIS have been filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a notice of its availability published in the *Federal Register*. The EPA will publish a separate notice of availability of this Final EIS that marks the beginning of the 30-day no action period. The Record of Decision (ROD) for the project will be prepared and published in the *Federal Register* following the close of the 30-day no action period. Copies of the Final EIS have also been sent to all agencies, and individuals/groups who submitted substantive comments on the Draft EIS, and/or those who have requested a copy. Additional copies are available for review at local libraries and can be ordered by contacting the Fort Baker Planning Team at:

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The Final EIS will also be available on the Internet at the following address:

www.nps.gov/goga/

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Proposed Plan EIS

SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of this action is to provide a comprehensive plan to guide new uses and site improvements at Fort Baker as it is converted from a military installation to a unit of the national park system. Fort Baker is located within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The GGNRA is a unit of the national park system, managed by the National Park Service (NPS). The plan is needed for those lands to be transferred to the NPS from the Army by 2001, as well as the lands currently managed by the NPS. The plan's purpose is to assure the preservation of historic and natural resources of the site, and provide for the enjoyment of current and future generations, consistent with the NPS mission.

The main planning challenge was to find new uses that that would preserve the special character of Fort Baker, be compatible with the park and its mission, as well as generate resources to contribute to the preservation and long-term care of the historic buildings and the site. Despite the charm of Fort Baker's architecture, preserving these historic resources requires a substantial infusion of technical and financial resources.

SCOPE OF THE EIS

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluates the environmental consequences of four alternatives for management and re-use of Fort Baker, and identifies mitigating measures to avoid or reduce adverse effects. The alternatives were developed to present a range of use options for Fort Baker, to reflect the site's significance, and to take into consideration the issues and concerns identified in the planning process. Fort Baker's cultural landscape and impressive array of historic structures, its open space, scenic vistas, many natural features, and its tremendous potential for recreation, interpretation, and programming were all factors that contributed to decisions about how the site might be managed in the future.

The alternatives differ primarily in their approach to the use of the buildings around and north of the Parade Ground and in the treatment of the waterfront, including the beach, the historic boat shop and the marina. All action alternatives have the following in common: protection, enhancement and interpretation of the site's natural and cultural resources; improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access; design to minimize the intrusion of traffic and parking; retention of existing onsite park partners; and upgrading or replacement of utility infrastructure systems.

The major impact topics assessed were based on issues and concerns identified by the planning team, other agencies and the public during scoping. Impact topics addressed in this EIS include: geology and soils; coastal processes; water resources; biological resources; cultural resources; traffic and circulation; air quality; noise; land use and community services; visual and aesthetic resources; recreation and visitor enjoyment; infrastructure; and human health, safety and the environment.

Based on comments received during the public review period on the Draft EIS, some sections of EIS have been revised to clarify issues raised by the public and other government agencies. For a detailed discussion of comments and responses, please refer to Volume II: Response to Comments (bound under separate cover).

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PROPOSED PLAN FOR FORT BAKER

Actions

The Proposed Plan for Fort Baker is the National Park Service's Proposed Action. The Proposed Action envisions the creation of a conference and retreat center in the historic buildings around the Parade Ground and in the adjacent nonhistoric Capehart area. This EIS evaluates impacts of the largest conference center that would be considered—a maximum of 350 rooms. At this maximum size, net new construction would be 85,000 square feet (sf). New compatibly designed construction would provide adequate space for meetings, dining and accommodations. The Bay Area Discovery Museum would be retained and would expand into historic buildings totaling 10,000 sf and a new, compatibly designed structure or structures totaling 25,000 sf. The Coast Guard Station would also be retained and would expand by up to 1,500 sf (meeting/training facility or quarters).

The historic boat shop would be used as a public center with meeting and program space, and supporting food service, bicycle rental, restrooms and other visitor facilities. The marina would be converted to a public (non-membership-based) facility that accommodates up to 60 boats through a combination of moorings/slips for day or overnight use. Docks would be provided for the Coast Guard to use for mooring of disabled rescued boats, and for other NPS programs. Programs in this area would relate to the site's historic role in coastal defense.

The wooden bulkhead along the waterfront would be removed and the beach restored, with an adjoining 6 acres of meadow, a picnic area and boardwalk. Improvements to the fishing pier include the addition of fish-cleaning stations, railings and benches. The batteries and other fortification structures would be stabilized, preserved and interpreted (Battery Cavallo would be subject to a separate plan and environmental analysis). An NPS visitor center would be established and an interpretive trail would be created from Lime Point along the waterfront, continuing as the San Francisco Bay Trail to East Road, Battery Duncan and the chapel. Other site-wide improvements include:

- Restoration or enhancement of more than 40 acres of natural habitat, including habitat for the federally endangered mission blue butterfly.
- Improvements to hiking trails and bicycle routes.
- Rehabilitation of historic landscape features such as stone retaining walls, the tennis court, walkways and roads.
- Improvements to circulation routes and parking, with sufficient, unobtrusive parking around the site.
- Installation of directional signage and exhibits for park partners and for interpreting the site's resources.
- Repair and replacement of utilities with sustainable systems that meet or exceed building and energy efficiency codes.

Impacts

The Proposed Action would result in few unavoidable adverse environmental effects. Overall, the Proposed Action would result in substantial improvement to historic, natural, and recreational resources of the site. A brief summary is provided below. For a complete description of the Proposed Action's effects, refer to Chapters 3 and 4 of this EIS. Section 2.6 presents all mitigation measures incorporated into the project.

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Potential damage to the ecological values of the site could result from increased visitor use, temporary construction impacts and soil disturbance. Most impacts would be short-term and minor, and the maintenance and restoration of native habitats would have long-term positive effects on soil stabilization, erosion, water quality and natural ecological communities, including habitat for the mission blue butterfly. Through proposed habitat improvements, the Plan would attempt to achieve a net benefit. Proposed development would be confined to the existing developed footprint and previously disturbed sites. Visitor impacts would be monitored to determine the need for modification of visitor use to protect natural resources.

Adverse impacts to the National Register District would occur through removal of 11 contributing ancillary structures; however, their removal would not affect the National Register status of this site and is not considered a significant impact. Rehabilitation of the remaining historic buildings and restoration of the Parade Ground would have a beneficial impact on the historic setting.

The Proposed Action would increase the total number of vehicle trips to Fort Baker. Several mitigation measures were developed to reduce project-generated trips and minimize potential impacts, including implementation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for Fort Baker, physical improvements to intersections, and provision of a shuttle. Parking supply would increase from the current 818 spaces to 895 spaces.

Daily visitor use numbers would increase under the Proposed Action (approximately 2,700 during peak times) due to site improvements, new public facilities and increased awareness of Fort Baker as a national park area. This could change the feeling of Fort Baker as an undiscovered site, however, mitigation measures designed to protect and preserve the site's character would reduce this effect.

Conversion of the existing marina to a public (non-membership-based) facility would provide additional recreational opportunities for visitors. However, current users of the Presidio Yacht Club would lose existing membership privileges resulting in a loss of the intangible value of the community of yacht club members that has grown over the years under military sponsorship, and loss of the membership privileges.

The Proposed Action would have direct economic benefits through both one-time construction-related and permanent employment opportunities, and the indirect economic benefit of visitor spending.

1980 GMP ALTERNATIVE

Actions

The 1980 GMP for the park is the basis for this alternative. It would create a conference center, hostel and artists-in-residence program in the historic buildings around the Parade Ground. Twenty-three nonhistoric structures in the Capehart area would be removed and replaced with a 700-car parking lot for staging a shuttle to the Marin Headlands, and an NPS maintenance facility would be constructed. The Bay Area Discovery Museum and Coast Guard Station would be retained with no new construction or expansion. The historic boat shop and marina would be used in a similar way to the Proposed Action, with 50 slips provided for short-term public mooring. Treatment of the waterfront would also be similar, but a more urban landscape would be created. The fishing pier would be improved as in the Proposed Action. A ferry landing would be created at the pier. Historic fortifications would be preserved, and an environmental study and overnight campsite established

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near Battery Cavallo. An NPS visitor center would be established in a historic building, and roads and trails improved.

Impacts

The GMP Alternative would have many of the same environmental consequences as described for the Proposed Action. Additional potential impacts would be associated with the removal of Capehart structures for construction of a 700-car parking lot to stage bus shuttles into Rodeo Valley, and development of the environmental study and overnight campsite and water shuttle landing. Temporary disturbance of native ecological communities would be the same or greater than the Proposed Action, although there would be far less enhancement of ecological communities, including mission blue butterfly habitat.

Development of the 700-car parking lot would not be in keeping with the overall existing character of Fort Baker and would diminish the integrity of the site. While parking would be dispersed and screened from view, the increased number of visitors, level of traffic activity and intrusion of the large parking lot would result in adverse effects on visual, aesthetic and historic resources. In addition, internal vehicular traffic associated with the parking lot could result in hazards to pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly during peak use weekends.

Increased numbers of visitors would have the potential to cause adverse impacts to the battery's cultural resources, ecological communities and resident wildlife species, including the mission blue butterfly. The battery would be stabilized, preserved, and made available for interpretation, subject to routine monitoring and inspection to ensure long-term preservation, protection of native habitat, and safe conditions for visitors. Management actions would be identified through subsequent environmental analysis.

Water shuttle improvements would have a beneficial impact on visitors and employees. However, the use of a water shuttle service could have adverse impacts on water quality, marine animals and resting and feeding birds. Water shuttle use would need to be regulated to mitigate impacts from pollution and general disturbance. Additional environmental analysis would be conducted before the service was initiated.

The 1980 GMP Alternative would generate 4,783 daily vehicle trips. This represents a 210% increase over the Proposed Action. In addition, increased visitor use (4,000 during peak times) would be greater than under the Proposed Action. Congestion on peak use weekends may result in visitor inconvenience and dissatisfaction, and may compromise the nature and character of the site.

OFFICE AND CULTURAL CENTER

Actions

The historic Parade Ground buildings would be used for offices, meeting and program space, and performance space and restaurant/food service space for private and nonprofit groups. Some nonhistoric residential structures would be used for park partner residences, and others would be removed to provide parking for the center. The Bay Area Discovery Museum and Coast Guard expansion would be the same as under the Proposed Action. The marina and boat shop use would be similar to the existing condition, with some short-term public mooring provided and public activities provided in the boat shop. Treatment of the waterfront, fishing pier, open space, natural habitats and historic fortifications would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

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Impacts

The Office and Cultural Center Alternative would have fewer adverse and beneficial environmental consequences than the Proposed Action, because no new construction would occur. The NPS and park tenants would assume responsibility for stabilization, rehabilitation, and preservation of the buildings they managed and occupied. Additional impacts would be associated with increased parking (1,300 spaces) to support the office and cultural center's projected needs and increased visitor use (3,500 during peak times).

The alternative would generate 3,473 daily vehicle trips, a 150% increase over the Proposed Action. Internal vehicular traffic associated with additional parking could result in hazards to pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly during peak use weekends. Additional visitation on peak use weekends may result in traffic congestion, visitor inconvenience and dissatisfaction, and may compromise the nature and character of the site.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Actions

The residential buildings in the Parade Ground and Capehart Area would be leased or permitted as residences. Nonresidential structures would be stabilized for preservation with no new use. There would be minimal changes to the waterfront to provide for visitor safety, and no expansion of the Bay Area Discovery Museum or Coast Guard. The marina would be closed, the slips and docks removed, and the boat shop would be stabilized for preservation with no new use. Minimal preservation treatment of natural and cultural resources would be carried out to meet legislative requirements and to complete restoration efforts currently underway.

Impacts

None of the adverse or beneficial environmental effects described for the Proposed Action would occur, except for the loss of the Presidio Yacht Club and marina. Residential and nonresidential structures in the Parade Ground and Capehart Areas would receive minimum rehabilitation. Buildings would continue to deteriorate until tenants were found.

Because no new native plant restoration would occur, no additional benefits to native ecological communities or wildlife habitat would be expected.

No major road system modifications or transportation demand management measures would be implemented, including public transit. Changes to existing parking (currently 818 spaces) would be minimal. Compared to the action alternatives, this alternative would be the lowest trip generator with 502 daily vehicle trips. No significant new jobs would be created.

Dilapidated buildings and existing exotic vegetation would continue to detract from the site's visual quality. Other than potential further deterioration of mothballed structures, the overall character of Fort Baker would remain much as it is today.

Few actions would be taken to expand visitor opportunities. Current users of the Presidio Yacht Club would be displaced: Visitors during peak use would be expected to decrease from 1,558 under existing conditions to 1,433 due to closure of the marina.

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* Bound under separate cover.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AST	aboveground storage tank
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
BADM	Bay Area Discovery Museum
BCDC	Bay Conservation and Development Commission
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure Act
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CO	carbon monoxide
COCs	chemicals of concern
Corps	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
dBA	decibels
dbh	diameter at breast height
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EA	Environmental Assessment
EBEP	Enclosed Bays and Estuaries Plan
EBS	environmental baseline survey
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FUDS	Formerly Used Defense Sites
GGB	Golden Gate Bridge
GGBHTD	Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District of California
GGNRA	Golden Gate National Recreation Area
GMP	General Management Plan
gpd	gallons per day
gpm	gallons per minute
IPM	integrated pest management
IRA	interim remedial action
ISWP	Inland Surface Waters Plan
ITE	Institute for Transportation Engineers
KV	kilovolt
LCS	List of Classified Structures
LOS	Level of Service
LTMS	Long Term Management Strategy
MCLs	California Maximum Contaminant Levels
MLLW	mean lower low water level
MMWD	Marin Municipal Water District
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NAC	noise abatement criteria
NB	northbound
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act

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NFPA	National Fire Protection Association Code
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
O ₃	ozone
PAH	polyaromatic hydrocarbon
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PM ₁₀	inhalable particulate matter
ppm	parts per million
RA	remedial action
RAP	remedial action plan
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RI/FS	remedial investigation/feasibility study
ROD	Record of Decision
ROG	reactive organic gases
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	southbound
sf	square feet
SHBC	California State Historic Building Code
SHPO	California State Historic Preservation Officer
SIPs	state implementation plans
SMEMPS	Southern Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System
SMCSD	Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
tpy	tons per year
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
vph	vehicles per hour

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INTRODUCTION

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

The National Park Service (NPS) and Golden Gate National Parks Association have completed the planning process for the Proposed Plan (Proposed Action) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Fort Baker. Fort Baker is a site within the boundary of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), a unit of the National Park System. The Army post was developed around the turn of the century as a part of the extensive seacoast fortification network on San Francisco Bay. The nine batteries and the support structures built for the garrison represent a particularly fine example of military architecture, fortification technology, and history in the first half of the twentieth century. In recognition of Fort Baker's significance and integrity, it was entered into the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1973.

The 335-acre Fort Baker site is a bowl-shaped valley bounded on the west by Highway 101, on the north by Alexander Avenue, and on the south and east by the shores of San Francisco Bay in Marin County. One hundred eighty-three acres of federally owned tidelands further enhance this property, featuring more than a mile of relatively pristine rocky bay shoreline and the 10-acre breakwater-protected Horseshoe Bay. Two dozen historic buildings arranged around the perimeter of a 10-acre Parade Ground and an open area of similar size linking it to the waterfront lend it a campus-like appearance. Habitat protected for the federally endangered mission blue butterfly and the natural values of the surrounding open space and hillsides also contribute to the site's significance and to the peace and solitude that characterize Fort Baker.

To many observers, Fort Baker is one of the most special gems of the GGNRA. Nestled against the leeward flank of the Marin Headlands in the shadow of the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge, its scenic setting is spectacular. The site exemplifies what makes the GGNRA unique: a rich tapestry of historic structures, natural systems and varied recreational opportunities, all at the heart of the Bay Area.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Public Law 92-589 established the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) in order to "...preserve for public use and enjoyment...outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values, and in order to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational open space necessary to urban environment and planning..." (16 USC 460bb). According to 16 USC 460-bb-2, "...the easterly half of Fort Baker in Marin County, California shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army. When the property is determined by the Department of Defense to be excess to its needs, it shall be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Secretary [of Interior] for purposes of this Act." In 1995, Fort Baker was added to the base closure list by the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure Committee. The Base Closure Act requires that the facility be closed and transferred to the NPS by July 17, 2001.

In 1985, the Army transferred 258 acres of the site and nine buildings to the NPS, representing most of the area's undeveloped open space and leaving Horseshoe Bay, the waterfront, Parade Ground and most of the buildings under Army control. In 1986, the Army transferred an additional 6.63 acres to the NPS for the purpose of accommodating the U.S. Coast Guard's proposed move of their Fort Point Station. Through an extensive planning process this move was approved in 1987. Assets to be

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transferred to the NPS in the next two years amount to 71 acres of land, more than 200,000 square feet of space located in 53 buildings, and 183 acres of tidelands.

SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Proposed Action focuses on new building uses, site improvements, visitor enjoyment, and the protection, restoration and maintenance of important natural areas within the developed areas of Fort Baker that will be transferred to the NPS by the Army, including historic buildings and the waterfront. The Proposed Action also addresses the building uses, site improvements, cultural and natural resource protection, restoration and interpretation, parking, circulation, trails, and visitor services for the entire site including portions currently managed by the NPS. Representatives of the community, environmental and historic preservation organizations and public agencies participated in the scoping process to identify the range of alternatives and the impacts that have been evaluated in the Proposed Plan and EIS.

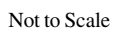
The future use of Fort Baker was addressed in the NPS's *1980 General Management Plan* (1980 GMP) and environmental analysis for the GGNRA. The approved concept in the 1980 GMP included use of the historic buildings as a conference center, removal of a wooden bulkhead to restore a portion of the beach, and landscape improvements in the waterfront area to better accommodate park visitors. It also envisioned removal of nonhistoric buildings and provision of parking. Since that time, changes have occurred that required a more comprehensive analysis of the uses of Fort Baker proposed in the 1980 GMP. These changes include discovery of a federally listed endangered species on the site, different proposals for potential uses within the site, and a more complete understanding of the resource values of Fort Baker. As a result, the NPS decided that this site-specific EIS should be prepared to analyze the Proposed Plan for future use of Fort Baker. Appropriate elements of the original 1980 GMP and environmental analysis dealing with Fort Baker are referenced within this EIS.

Battery Cavallo is specifically excluded from the planning area and will be subject to a future planning and environmental analysis process. During this process, the NPS will provide for the stabilization, preservation and interpretation of both natural and cultural resources at the battery.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE 1980 GMP

The Proposed Plan is consistent with the basic objectives of the 1980 GMP and provides refinements, modifications, and more detail regarding plan elements and implementation. The Proposed Plan is similar to the approved concept envisioned in the 1980 GMP, which has been refined to reflect current knowledge of the site, and new park programs and partners (that were not present in 1980). The primary differences between the development concept in the 1980 GMP and the Proposed Action is that the Proposed Action includes a more natural landscape treatment of the waterfront, allows reuse or replacement of the nonhistoric residences north of the Parade Ground for the conference and retreat center or other residential use rather than as a 700-car parking/staging area.

Proposed Plan EIS



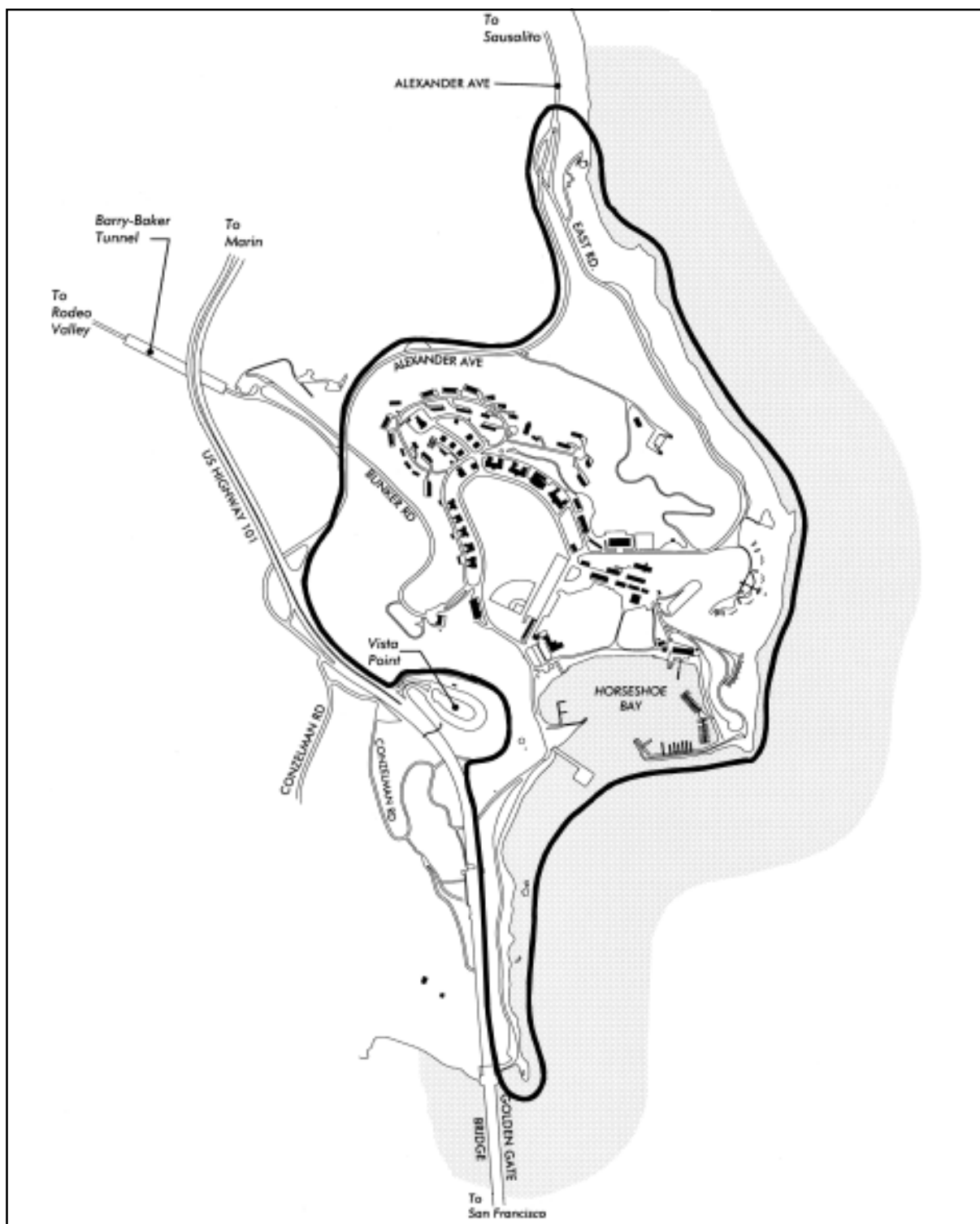
Source: GGNRA

DATE: **October 1998**



FORT BAKER

Proposed Plan EIS



Planning Area Boundary



DATE: October 1998

