



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Golden Gate
National Recreation Area

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Update from the National Park Service, Fort Baker Project Office

The National Park Service has started a series of conspicuous, sequenced construction projects in and around the Bay Area Discovery Museum (BADM) and the historic parade ground at Fort Baker. While we work to complete ground-disturbing activity before the start of the rainy season, you'll be seeing a series of changes at the site - some temporary - and then some permanent improvements.

Today we are mobilizing for the "BADM Southern Parking Lot" construction, an NPS project with a duration of approximately eight weeks (expected to end in the first week of October). As illustrated in the concept drawings in the approved Fort Baker plan and FEIS, this will create a new dedicated parking area and "drop-off" circle immediately south of the museum campus and pave a section of currently unpaved road adjacent to this parking area. The new drop-off is intended to help create a safe and efficient visitor entrance to this important destination, and the completion of this project will allow NPS to start both restoration of the historic Parade Ground and then, repaving of Center Road itself between the museum and the U.S. Coast Guard Station (USCG).

While this parking and drop-off project is under construction, a large area south of the museum campus to the waterfront will be fenced off (although all of the waterfront parking will continue to be in service - accessed only by Sommerville Road, the street that runs parallel to the water between the USCG station and the Travis Marina). Because of this, we've established temporary parking for about 100 cars in a fenced enclosure on the parade ground erected today and in effect through mid September. This will allow museum visitors to get safely to the museum entrance while the construction of the permanent lot and drop-off is underway. We're working to complete the new parking and drop-off by the first week of October, when the museum reopens after its annual two-week-long closure period.

When we complete this new parking and drop-off, we expect to close the existing paved parade ground lot permanently and begin removal of the asphalt. That will mark the start of our parade ground restoration project, which will include re-turfing the 14-acre parcel with a drought-tolerant grass (we've chosen a special type of hybrid fescue called "Aurora Gold" after monitoring a 16-month-long test plot we established to evaluate the performance of a number of different seed mixes in our own unique microclimate). When the parade gets seeded, we'll have to close off all access until the turf is established next spring - then, it will be open again for public access. The parade ground restoration will roll right into rehabilitation and repaving of Center Road. Earlier today, NPS contractors completed removal of a cluster of cypress trees adjacent to the USCG station, and some trees across the street adjacent to the current Building 691 garage. Building 691 is a non-historical building recommended for removal in the Fort Baker FEIS and the subsequent Cultural Landscape Plan (2005), in order to restore the parade ground to the period of significance immediately prior to World War II - circa 1939.

With this restoration of the parade ground and the repaving of Center Road, there will be a major tree replanting program by NPS contractors in late October and November, when a new "allee" of approximately 20 trees is planted along each side of Center Road between BADM and USCG, and approximately 30 trees are planted ringing the parade ground along Murray Circle.

One question we sometimes get asked is, "Are we cutting down trees to maximize views for the new Lodge project?" The answer is no - we will actually be replanting many trees that may in effect interrupt what now may appear as uninterrupted views of the water from the historic buildings around Murray Circle. Our new trees will be returning the parade ground experience to the historically significant period of Army building and planting approximately 75 years ago. Later this summer and next spring, we will probably be removing or limbing additional trees on the Alexander Avenue side of the project, in order to reduce wildland fire hazards adjacent to our buildings.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Meantime, construction is continuing on the Lodge project - the historic buildings around the parade are being rehabilitated, and new guest lodging buildings are taking shape in the former Capehart areas. Also, the Coast Guard is expected to begin construction of a small addition to their existing station building in the next two months.

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