

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Golden Gate National Recreational Area Fort Point Accessibility Public Comment



### REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment Period is May 11th-May29th 2009.

Proposed Accessibility Improvements at Golden Gate National Recreation Area:

### FORT POINT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

#### Introduction

From its vantage point overlooking the spectacular Golden Gate, Fort Point protected San Francisco harbor from Confederate & foreign attack during & after the U.S. Civil War. Its beautifully arched casemates display the art of the master brick mason from the Civil War period. Fort Point has stood guard at the narrows of the Golden Gate for nearly 150 years. When construction began during the height of the California Gold Rush, Fort Point was planned as the most formidable deterrence America could offer to a naval attack on California. The fort was built in the Army's traditional "Third System" style of military architecture (a standard adopted in the 1820s), and would be the only fortification of this impressive design constructed west of the Mississippi River. Although Fort Point never saw battle, the building has tremendous significance due to its military history, its architecture, and its association with maritime history. In the late 1930s, plans for the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge involved plans for the demolition of Fort Point. Fortunately, Chief Engineer Joseph Strauss recognized the architectural value of the Fort and created a special engineered arch which allowed the construction of the bridge to occur safely over the Fort. On October 16, 1970, Fort Point became a National Historic Site.

#### Key Experience

The key experience at Fort Point is that of the dramatic location where the San Francisco Bay meets the Pacific Ocean and the Golden Gate Bridge soars overhead. All of the visitors to Fort Point have the opportunity to experience the location and see the outside of the Civil War era fort. The interior of the Fort is only open to visitors three days a week. Entering the Fort is a key experience for many, and this is one of GGNRA's most popular destinations. Within the fort, accessing the roof to see the views and experience the underside of the Golden Gate Bridge, the noise, wind and weather is also considered a primary experience.

Secondary experiences include seeing and learning the history of the fort, the armaments, and learning about the soldiers and coastal defense, as is learning about the Golden Gate Bridge. Outside the fort visitors can watch the surfers, ships and birds, hear the traffic above and hear and watch the nearby waves crashing on the riprap shore. Using the restrooms is an important secondary experience.

The Mine Depot is included as part of the Fort Point Historic District. The primary experiences are the views, fishing, crabbing, and use of the restrooms. Secondary experiences include use of the Warming Hut, shopping, interpretive signs, and travelling regional trails between Marin and San Francisco.

### Proposed Accessibility Improvements & Questions for Public Input

1. **Parking:** Accessible parking spaces were installed adjacent to the restroom building in May 2008.
  
2. **Exterior Routes:** The entry into the Sally Port and Parade have running slopes up to 12 percent. This route is proposed to be corrected in coordination with a Repair/Rehabilitation project (FOPO 018147) to repair the drainage on the south and east sides of the fort. The project is formulated for construction funding in 2010.
  
3. **Vertical Access:** Currently, the Fort lacks vertical access to the second and third floors and barbette tier. The proposed short and midterm accessibility solutions include providing raised maps for wayfinding, large print media and alternate format materials. A large format book of exhibit panels upstairs will be developed. Midterm, it is proposed to install remote control cameras for virtual access to the barbette tier and to develop a virtual tour of upper levels through accessible computer system. The development of 3-D models of fort and other tactile elements are also proposed. Long term, the park proposes to make a final determination on the placement for the installation of an elevator or lift to create vertical access to the barbette tier if the installation does not create a negative impact on the historic preservation of the fort.

*Questions: Do the proposed short and midterm solutions provide equivalent facilitation to the information presented on the second and third floors of the fort? Please provide comment on the methods of proposed facilitation (raised line maps, 3-D models, picture books of exhibits, etc). Please provide comment on the long term proposal for vertical access.*

4. **Casemates:** Interpretive talks and cannon demonstrations are conducted at the casemates where there can be up to a 2 inch change in level. The proposed short term accessibility solution is to relocate the demonstration on an accessible route. The proposed midterm solution is to review, obtain compliance for and implement proposals from June 1993 KCA Engineer Comprehensive Design Plan to create accessible routes from the Parade to the various casemates.
  
5. **Restroom Building:** Several short term accessibility improvements are proposed for the restrooms at Fort Point, including striping an accessible pedestrian walkway, adjusting the door opening force, replacing lavatories, correcting the height of the accessible drinking fountain, correcting the grab bars in toilet stalls, lowering the hand dryers and mirrors, correcting the centerline of the toilets and installing accessible signage.

6. **Visitor Orientation, Publications and Website:** Within six months the park web site will be updated with the most current available information regarding accessible facilities, areas, and programs and will be routinely updated to reflect the latest information as the park Accessibility Action and Transition plans are implemented. The web site will include specific point of contact information for those who may need to request accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, in advance. Within the short term, the park will design the Fort Point primary park brochure in large print and format the content for Braille, audio formats, and electronic file for posting on the park web sites. Within the short term, the park will develop a thermoplastic, raised-line map as temporary/portable visitor use and orientation.

7. **Videos:** The two videos "Building the Golden Gate Bridge" and "Guardians of the Golden Gate" are shown at Fort Point. The proposed short term solution includes adding open caption and audio description to the videos, and acquiring four assistive listening devices.

8. **Exhibits:** The proposed short term accessibility improvement for exhibits includes the development of an audio described tour for all Fort Point exhibits and a Braille version of all exhibits. Midterm, the park proposes to construct 3-dimensional models of the Fort and key elements within the Fort. Within one year, the Park proposes to develop a system-wide design and implementation plan to update all fundamental (i.e. key to enjoying the primary experience of a site) park orientation kiosks, panels and maps to include visitor information in multiple modes such as graphics, text, tactile elements and audio. Within the second year, the Park proposes to develop a comprehensive plan for the use of audio description at waysides and begin implementation of the delivery system park-wide.

9. **Tours and Talks:** Within the short term, the park will acquire a portable assistive listening system that can be used by park visitors for tours and talks. In addition staff have identified qualified local service providers for real time captioning, live audio description and sign language interpreters; and will establish a policy where the request for these services is five days in advance and publically post the policy in the program marketing materials including brochures, advertisements, the Fort Point web sites.

*Questions: Public comment is requested on the type of assistive listening system and features that should be acquired. Comment is also requested on user experience with various models including performance and any maintenance issues. In addition, the park seeks comment on whether to establish a weekly or monthly schedule to more regularly provide sign language interpreters for day visits to Fort Point.*

### Additional Comments

*Please provide comment on other areas of accessibility concerns that may not be presented in this summary document.*

### ***Accessibility Comment Sheet***

(or)

*e-mail us*



**Did You Know?**

Fort Mason's San Francisco Port of Embarkation played a critical role during World War II. During the 45 months of war, 1,647,174 passengers and 23,589,472 measured tons of supplies were shipped out to the Pacific from here.

Last Updated: June 10, 2009 at 18:24 EST