

## **Draft General Management Planning Issues and Menu of Goals**

GMP issues and opportunities are the main topics that the GMP will address and resolve.

### **1. Visitor Access: Transportation and Trails**

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will identify the long-term vision for visitor access to and within the park and will determine opportunities to improve visitor experiences, connections of park sites to the larger community, and resource protection.**

*Issue Description:*

The park is located within a complex multi-modal, land and water transportation system. However, due to a variety of reasons the current transportation system does not fully address the needs of some park visitors or adequately protect park resources. Despite crowded regional roadways and limited parking, many visitors continue to rely on their cars to visit the park. For other visitors, the lack of affordable, understandable, and/or nearby transit options suppresses some visitation. These conditions also create problems with informal parking, public safety, visitor experience, and access for the park's neighbors. Visitor information and way-finding is inadequate and leads to frustration and over/underutilization of park resources.

Trails are an important component of park access. The condition of trails, and their lack of connectivity to desired destinations, does not meet all visitor and resource protection needs. Connections from communities within the region to the park are not adequate. There has been specific mention of the need for improved, safe trail connections between park sites and between communities and park sites to provide seamless and safe direct access alternatives.

### **2. Recreation Opportunities and Conflicts**

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will develop a vision for recreation opportunities in different areas of the park by identifying the appropriate types of uses at park sites in relation to visitor demand and resource sensitivity. The GMP will provide long term guidance to promote, evaluate, and manage appropriate and desired recreation opportunities in the park. (Add carrying capacity or managed demand to issue statement)**

*Issue Description:*

The park's purpose is "to offer national park experiences to a large and diverse urban population while preserving and interpreting its

outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values." Recreation is the way to achieve this purpose of bringing national parks to an urban population. Current recreation opportunities in the park range from traditional opportunities such as camping, hiking, and picnicking to non-traditional opportunities such as special events and stewardship. In addition, many sites are national and international visitor destinations. Recreation in the park is an opportunity for promotion of public enjoyment, fitness, understanding, stewardship, inspiration, solitude, and social connections. To achieve these positive outcomes, recreation management in the park must address competing uses, demands for non-compatible opportunities, and levels of use that sometimes overwhelm resources and infrastructure. The park may not always be the most appropriate place for desired recreation opportunities, so the NPS may cooperate with other public and private entities to respond to demand. Visitor conflict exists at many park sites between people using different modes of transportation, especially on trails. The NPS needs to be proactive and responsive to recreation opportunities while balancing the types and levels of uses in order to preserve the park's fundamental resources and visitor experiences.

### 3. Better Communication and Reaching New Audiences

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will provide guidance to help the NPS better connect with all audiences including underserved communities. (Are emerging audiences already incorporated in this statement?)**

*Issue Description:*

The rich diversity of the San Francisco Bay area and the international visibility of San Francisco and California provide unparalleled opportunities to bring national park experiences to a diverse and urban population. Despite these assets, visitation does not reflect a dynamic population and demographic changes. Some groups may not be aware of, feel connected to, or view the park as either a recreational opportunity or a resource to be protected. Developing a park setting that is welcoming and inviting for underserved communities and emerging audiences is an important component. Changes in technology present new ways to connect but also present challenges to maintaining the park's relevance to future generations. Reaching these audiences is essential to relevant and effective park management and achieving civic engagement and stewardship goals. The collective efforts of NPS as well as its partners and stakeholders from underserved communities and **emerging audiences** will be needed to fulfill the vision of bringing "parks to people."

### 4. The Park's Diversity of Stories

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will develop a vision that provides visitors with opportunities to understand and experience the range of stories that can be told at the park.**

*Issue Description:*

The park has a wealth of diverse natural and cultural resources that are conducive to telling a range of exciting stories; however, all of the opportunities for interpretation and education at the park are not currently being maximized.

## 5. Global Climate Change

### *GMP Issue Statement:*

The GMP will provide guidance for how the park will assess and respond to the impacts of global climate change on the park's fundamental resources. The GMP will identify objectives for reducing the park's carbon footprint and in interpreting climate change.

### *Issue Description:*

Global climate change will affect the park and its visitors during the planning horizon of this GMP. The effects are predicted to include changes in temperature, precipitation, evaporation rate, local weather patterns, coastal vulnerability, plant communities, and sea level. These effects would have direct implications to resource management and park operations and could influence the way visitors experience the park. Proactive planning and management actions will allow the park to avoid, mitigate, adapt to, and interpret these changing conditions. (Include how climate change is effecting park resources, how park management contributes to the carbon footprint, and how NPS can be leaders in addressing issues and opportunities related to climate change.)

## 6. Land and Water Protection

### *GMP Issue Statement:*

The GMP will provide a vision and guidance for future land protection and boundary changes.

### *Issue Description:*

Regional growth pressures and urbanization has influenced land acquisition at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and resulted in a wide variety of park lands. The increase in park acreage has presented challenges for land and boundary management. The park could strengthen its strategic approach to land protection by identifying guidelines and priorities for land acquisition, including a coordinated regional approach to land protection and management. (Add narrative of how NPS could work with others to protect important resources through collaboration and shared objectives.)

## 7. Sustained Natural Resource Preservation and Management

### *GMP Issue Statement:*

The GMP will develop a vision to understand, sustain, and steward the park's fundamental natural resources.

### *Issue Description:*

Natural resources, specifically including geologic resources, the marine environment, coastal ecosystems, threatened and endangered species, and water resources, are fundamental to Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument. This suite of natural resources, and the threats and influences upon them, extends beyond the park's boundaries. The park's urban setting produces persistent threats and influences on these resources and presents major challenges for sustained resource preservation, management, and restoration. The park's enforcement capacity for marine areas and outreach related to marine and estuarine resources is limited. Improving the park's capacity to address resource preservation and management needs requires regional collaboration. (Add narrative such as collaboration and integration of resource management however possible. Include the need to integrate the consering cultural resources with preserving the natural resources. )

## **8. Muir Woods National Monument**

*NOTE: Most of the GMP issues listed in this packet will be addressed at Muir Woods National Monument in addition to the following site specific issue.*

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will develop a vision to sustain the monument's primeval redwood forest ecosystem and provide a high quality national park experience to a diverse range of visitors, while preserving those cultural resources that convey the monument's significance in the early conservation movement.**

*Issue Description:*

Some of the infrastructure in Muir Woods National Monument adversely affects the natural resources and ecological processes of the site. Further, long periods of high levels of visitor use overburden park facilities and parking, which compromise visitor experiences and strain the park's management capabilities. The monument often represents a visitor's first visit to, and experience in, a national park unit. (Add narrative of nationally significant landscape and features that perpetuates more than 100 years of conservation.) And discuss the need to integrate preservation of both cultural and natural resource values.

## **9. Alcatraz Island National Historic Landmark**

*NOTE: Most of the GMP issues listed in this packet will be addressed at Alcatraz Island National Historic Landmark in addition to the following site specific issue.*

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will develop a vision that integrates protection of natural resource values with the preservation of the National Historic**

**Landmark on Alcatraz Island, while providing a high quality national park experience to a diverse range of visitors.**

*Issue Description:*

Alcatraz Island is a designated National Historic Landmark because of its national significance in the areas of military history and social history (penology). Although Alcatraz is a highly visible and popular site in the San Francisco Bay, many of its buildings and landscape features are deteriorating, and sections of its shoreline are eroding. The park is in need of additional financial resources to protect and preserve all of the island's historic landscape resources.

The Island also contains important wildlife habitat, especially for colonial seabirds. Over 1,000 pairs of western gulls nest on the Island and it is home to the largest regional populations of several species of pelagic birds. Conflicts have arisen over management strategies for protecting the Island's cultural and natural resources (e.g., protecting important bird nesting habitat and developing new adaptive uses). Resource management on the Island needs to integrate preservation of both natural and cultural resource values.

Furthermore, Alcatraz Island is an extremely popular park destination, receiving over 1.4 million visitors annually. Improving and managing visitor experience is an important consideration.

## **10. Sustained Cultural Resource Preservation and Management**

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will develop a vision to sustain cultural resource preservation and the management of the park's historic structures, cultural landscapes, archeological sites, and museum collections.**

*Issue Description:*

The park has an extraordinarily broad collection of historic military posts (including nationally-significant fortifications), ranching and recreational landscapes, archeological sites, and associated museum collections. The management of all these historic properties according to NPS standards (to say nothing of best management practices) is well beyond the internal capacity of the park, even accounting for the present level of partnership engagement. The challenge of identifying appropriate adaptive re-use options, the high cost of preservation treatments, environmental degradation, remote locations, the need for integration with natural resource management issues, and a certain lack of public appreciation all present obstacles to effective resource management.

The GMP will articulate the human meaning and value of the park's varied cultural resources. It will propose a well-balanced and functional overall preservation strategy to direct funding, staffing

and public support towards where it will have the most benefit: by applying preservation, rehabilitation and restoration treatments to the most significant and meaningful historic properties that represent a diverse range of the fundamental park resource values and provide a maximum of opportunity for visitor engagement and understanding.

## 11. Operational Facilities

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will present a vision for locating operational facilities.**

*Issue Description:*

The maintenance and law enforcement facilities are scattered throughout the park at sites and facilities that were not intended for operational uses. These functions have been forced to adapt to site and facility conditions that do not adequately meet their space, size, function, mobility, and security requirements. Both maintenance and law enforcement operations have moved numerous times over a short period into inadequate spaces, requiring them to reprogram their operations and resulting in operational inefficiencies.

*(Need to review park studies to correctly capture the actual facts and problems for this section.)*

## 12. Workforce Housing

*GMP Issue Statement:*

**The GMP will create a long-term vision for NPS and partner housing that supports a high quality and productive workforce, volunteers, and interns.**

*Issue Description:*

The high cost of living in the San Francisco Bay area, particularly the cost of housing, is a major barrier to workforce (employees, volunteers, park partners, etc.) development. Affordable housing is essential for recruiting and retaining a qualified, diverse, and productive workforce. *Include ideas that solutions could be found through a comprehensive approach of housing within and outside the park boundaries. (Note to planning team: to issues could become a policy statement where the GMP states the need for housing to support park partners and to attract and retain a qualified park staff.*

## General Management Plan – Guidance

The following topics are not likely an issue that will drive the development of alternatives; although the planning team will continue

to test this assumption. Nonetheless, guidance on these topics will be provided in the general management plan.

## **A. Scenic Beauty and Natural Character**

*GMP Guidance:*

**The GMP will provide guidance on the preservation and enhancement of the park's most valued scenic resources.**

*Guidance Description:*

The park's multi-sensory experiences, scenic beauty, and natural character provide opportunities for visitors to experience dramatic settings that highlight contrasts between land, water, and sky; and between urban and rural landscapes. Preserving these important resources and making them available to the public is one of the primary reasons the park was established. The NPS in collaboration with adjacent landowners needs to protect these resources from degradation due to intrusions, including new development and the surrounding uses of land, air, and water.

## **B. Regional Cooperation: "The Park is Not an Island"**

*GMP Guidance:*

**The GMP will provide guidance to improve communication, coordination, and participation with public and private stakeholders. A team at the February workshop will be formed to rewrite and address this statement. It needs to talk about ecosystems and protecting long-term park resources.**

*Guidance Description:*

Visitor experience, public safety, and resource protection in the park are affected by a variety of outside influences. Watersheds, viewsheds, ecosystems, and trail and transportation systems all extend beyond park boundaries; and their management and preservation requires cooperation with other adjacent public land managers, local jurisdictions, and private landowners. The park is located in an urban/suburban setting, which places demands on park lands and resources (especially local public utility needs). The park cannot meet its goals without recognizing and embracing these complexities and interrelationships.

## **C. Park Identity**

*GMP Guidance:*

**The GMP will provide guidance on improving and promoting the National Park Service identity of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.**

*Guidance Description:*

The park does not have a strong identity as a unit of the national park system. Many things contribute to this, including the park's name as a national recreation area rather than a national park; the large number of points of entry with minimal or no identifying entry features; the lack of NPS staff presence in many locations; the close juxtaposition of city, county, and state lands with NPS lands; the lack of clearly marked park boundaries; and the tradition of public use at many of the sites prior to them becoming part of the park. Because of this lack of identity with the national park system, it is difficult to promote behavior consistent with expectations for a national park and build community support.

## **D. Partnerships**

*GMP Guidance:*

**The GMP will provide guidance for partnership development and management that enables the park to make effective partnership decisions and fosters flexible, productive relationships.**

*Guidance Description:*

Partners are fundamental to long-term sustainability of the park. The park can not accomplish parts of its mission without partners. Partners are fundamental to helping the park manage natural and cultural resources, deliver programs, reach new audiences, and remain relevant and inclusive. They also help the park innovate and build community support.

Despite the many commonalities and objectives shared by the park and its partners, such a diverse set of partners creates a diversity of goals and interests that can cause concern about compatibility with park goals, plans, and management. Partners' needs for growth cannot always be accommodated in the park. Further, the park capacity for partnership oversight is limited, which hinders effective and efficient management of NPS and partner relations.

## **E. Native Americans**

*GMP Guidance:*

**The GMP will develop a vision for reflecting the Ohlones and Coast Miwoks values into the preservation, management, and interpretation of the park's resources.**

*Guidance Description:*

In the late 1990s - in equal measures due to evolving NPS policy and to the rekindling of California Indian tribal life - the park made its first efforts to reach out to the Coast Miwok and Ohlone communities, native peoples traditionally associated with parklands. The GMP

provides an opportunity for the park and the tribes to explore how they wish to move their relationships beyond this nascent stage, deepening and institutionalizing bonds developed over the past decade.