
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
San Francisco, California



Golden Gate National Recreation Area S T R A T E G I C P L A N 2016–2020





NPS



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Introduction

Dear Park Team Members and Friends,

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (including Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site) is well-positioned to realize the vision of a 21st Century national park—one that is available for all, is well-used, includes restored natural and cultural resources, features many collaborations and partnerships, and delivers a high level of service utilizing sustainable, sound facilities.

At the same time, we face challenges around aging infrastructure, increasing visitation, rising deferred maintenance, and reduced federal budgets. Creative thinking and new approaches in our operational strategies to address these challenges will strengthen the park's ability to deliver on the park's purpose well into the future.

To that end, the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan identifies areas of desired change in how the National Park Service conducts its work at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. This plan identifies how our aspirations and our

core values can be expressed in the service of near-term, attainable goals. The strategic plan does not account for all the work we will be conducting in the next five years, rather it identifies areas where focused effort by the National Park Service will be directed to make many of the key changes that are needed.

Listed from the most internal to the most community-facing, the emphasis areas include: A Thriving Workplace, Operational Excellence, Inspiring and Well-Planned Visits, Meaningful Community Engagement, and Catalysts for Change.

This Plan scripts initial key moves that will orient us in the right direction and help make immediate progress, but does not lay out a complete roadmap to successfully achieve every vision or goal. This flexibility allows us to revisit and adapt our strategies in the coming years, and to push further in areas as needed.

This Strategic Plan is the result of a collaborative effort, shaped by visitor, employee, and partner input from the

start. The park's leadership team has led a process to get the best thinking from every part of our organization and partners. Quotes are featured throughout this document from all-employee surveys and workshops, which were instrumental to this effort. Employee input helped articulate the specific needs and challenges the park is facing and ultimately informed all aspects of the Plan.

This Strategic Plan sets us on an ambitious path. The leadership team looks forward to working with staff throughout our organization to set the Plan in motion. Through this work together, our hope is that Golden Gate National Recreation Area continues to be a source of inspiration for employees and visitors alike—today, and for many years to come. We approach this task with humility, recognizing the great work of many that have come before us to create this special opportunity.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Our effectiveness as a team and an agency matters, so we can make these special places clean and safe for the public.

FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Core Values

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MISSION

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

PARK PURPOSE

The purpose of Golden Gate National Recreation Area is to offer national park experiences to a large and diverse urban population, while preserving and interpreting the park's outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values.

The fundamental beliefs of our organization and the guiding principles that dictate behavior for every action.

— Safety

We believe all visitor and employee injuries can be prevented and do all we can to prevent them.

— Respect

We value and respect our colleagues as whole people and champion personal and professional growth.

— Service

Our team exemplifies the best in service to the public and our colleagues and we believe volunteers are integral to our success.

— Sustainability

We demonstrate environmental leadership by pursuing sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations of the park.

— Innovation

We admire and promote creativity and try new things in the pursuit of excellence.

— Partnership

We embrace collaboration, trust, and open communication with our partners in order to achieve shared goals.

— Community

We strive to understand the values, aspirations, and concerns of community members, promoting better understanding.

— Inclusion

We stretch and change in order to promote equity, accessibility, and multiculturalism in our park programs and at all levels of our organization.

— Wellbeing

Visitors and employees leave our national parks feeling better in mind and in body than when they arrived.



Emphasis Areas

The areas of focus and our vision for change to address today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

THRIVING WORKPLACE

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area is a safe, inclusive, positive, and collaborative workplace, with modern resources and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

GOAL 1

Positive, Safe, and Healthy Work Environment

Increase wellness offerings, support work-life balance, update our safety systems, and modernize our workspaces and technology to foster a work environment where employees thrive.

KEY MOVES

- Create a more regular, proactive, and customized safety training program to meet the varied needs of staff and enable the practice of operational leadership.
- Expand activities that enhance the health and mental wellness of our employees and explore opportunities to ease the stress of commuting.
- Assess the quality and suitability of park workspaces and communal areas to create a prioritized plan for improvements.
- Evaluate information technology resources, including web access and bandwidth, hardware, software, and support, and address substandard conditions.

GOAL 2

Collaborative and Supportive Culture

Park employees identify as part of an integrated, parkwide team that embraces cross-functional collaboration and multicultural contributions in fulfilling our common mission.

KEY MOVES

- Develop performance expectations for all employees that tie directly to our core values and integrate these into park training and orientation.
- Establish or deepen programs and communication channels to improve collaboration, information-sharing, and feedback throughout the organization.
- Fully implement a diversity and inclusion program to support a safe and effective workplace.

GOAL 3

Workforce Development

Strengthen our workforce through professional development and supervisory resources that support targeted recruitment, intentional succession planning, relevant training, employee success, and recognition.

KEY MOVES

- Create opportunities so employees can participate in at least 20 hours of relevant professional development activities annually.
- Provide all supervisors with training, tools, and performance expectations to help them empower employees and support teams that thrive.
- Establish best practices for both recruitment and succession planning to better meet staffing needs and to promote a diverse team.



My colleagues are very committed to the mission of the National Park Service and passionate about our work. This makes for a very meaningful, satisfying, and productive work environment.

NATURAL RESOURCES



Roland Greenberg/NPS

Working at this park is both challenging and exciting, and we are committed to identifying creative ways to solve problems and to pursuing new opportunities to achieve our mission.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We make critical investments in operations that sustain and enhance our service levels in the park and improve our resilience to address the unexpected.

GOAL 1

Unlock Existing Capacity

Reimagine and streamline internal park processes to create greater capacity, reduced workload, and better overall park function.

KEY MOVES

- Streamline our internal processes for efficiency, particularly those related to approval and compliance, so that staff are empowered to make decisions.
- Identify which park operations could be contracted, leveraged with volunteers, simplified, or enhanced with improved technology in order to increase our internal capacity to focus on activities that are best executed by National Park Service staff.

GOAL 2

Build Operational Capacity

Create flexibility and resilience in our operations and finances to sustain and improve our current visitor service and resource protection levels.

KEY MOVES

- Drawing on experience during holiday weekends and other events, create a plan to surge services on relatively short notice.
- Explore and assess new funding opportunities that can help sustain operations, and deploy our existing revenue toward operations with more flexibility.
- Increase operational viability by enhancing positions that have been difficult to fill or have high turnover through increased park housing, improved compensation, or other methods.

GOAL 3

Upgrade Critical Infrastructure

Strategically invest in critical infrastructure and assets, ensuring the park's heavily used areas are safer, resilient, and can be managed sustainably.

KEY MOVES

- Complete a total audit and condition assessment of park assets so we can plan proactively for renovation and replacements.
- Review critical infrastructure and systems that must be operational in the event of a parkwide emergency (such as an earthquake) and undertake contingency planning.
- Invest in modern technologies that are more operationally efficient and simplify daily park management, especially remote access monitoring and controls.
- When replacing equipment and systems, prioritize investments in energy efficiency that reduce the park's carbon footprint.

INSPIRING AND WELL-PLANNED VISITS

All visitors deserve an inspiring visit, even at our most heavily used sites. We actively manage park information, transportation, and crowding in a way that reduces congestion and makes it easy for park visitors to have an enjoyable and safe experience.

GOAL 1

Digital Information and Trip Planning

Find effective ways to provide park information to visitors before they arrive.

KEY MOVES

- Make up-to-date online information available to aid visitors in planning park visits, increase understanding of park sites, and highlight opportunities to participate in park activities.
- Expand our outreach programs that make contact with visitors at key intercept sites to answer questions and help visitors plan their visit.
- Partner with transit agencies, trip planning services, and the tour and travel industry in the Bay Area to make information about the park readily available to visitors before they begin their trip.

GOAL 2

Improve Visitor Arrival and Circulation

Improve the services, facilities, and infrastructure at our sites to enhance visitor safety, enjoyment, and resource preservation.

KEY MOVES

- Make priority improvements to enhance pedestrian, bicyclist, and driver safety and circulation at problematic areas and intersections within the park.
- Pilot new systems that allow us to monitor congestion at park sites, adjust operations accordingly, and provide real-time information to manage visitor flow.
- Increase alternatives to driving personal vehicles to the park by working with local transit agencies and other partners.



Team members at the GGNRA are always excited to be part of the community and welcoming new audiences is meaningful and personally rewarding work for me.

INTERPRETATION



The public loves coming to the GGNRA; it's convenient, beautiful and expansive, and has something for everyone.

VISITOR AND RESOURCE
PROTECTION

MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We have a high-quality dialogue with the public that brings broad perspectives to the table and results in greater mutual understanding and trust.

GOAL 1

Broaden Our Audience

Use more personalized, face-to-face engagement in the community and in the park whenever possible to better understand community needs and concerns, and to expand our relationships and create more common understanding with a broader spectrum of community members.

KEY MOVES

- Expand our community liaison approach to every county we serve, enabling customized approaches for specific neighborhoods and stakeholder groups.
- Create special field trips, events, and “pop-up” booths in and outside of the park to educate and create dialogue on management issues.
- Develop an integrated approach among the park’s communications, planning, and interpretation divisions that leverages existing programs and relationships to invite new voices into the dialogue about park management.
- Use more frequent briefings to prepare internal staff, partners, and park volunteers to speak to current issues.

GOAL 2

Build a System for Consistent Communication

Update our methods to engage with community members on key issues and park processes, with increasing clarity about how public input is incorporated in our policies and actions.

KEY MOVES

- Participate in community dialogue regularly through established forums and channels.
- Employ best practices in communicating across multiple platforms, and routinely evaluate the effectiveness of our communications.
- Always explain how community input will be used, and reflect back to the community our understanding of their interests.

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

By acting as an agent for social and environmental change, the park improves the lives of urban populations who are most in need of access to healthy places to live, work, and play.

GOAL 1

Increase Equity and Access

Increase participation among traditionally underserved urban communities throughout our programs, facilities, and partnerships.

KEY MOVES

- Adopt parkwide standards for “relevancy and inclusion” that reflect the needs and interests of diverse urban populations to be used in the planning, design, and programming of visitor serving areas.
- Fully utilize fee waiver criteria and transportation scholarships for low-income communities and Title I schools in the Bay Area.
- Expand opportunities for youth and families by realizing Park Youth Collaborative goals and broadening membership to other partners serving youth in the park.
- Expand vocational and skill-building opportunities as a viable ladder to park employment and stewardship, including robust cooperative field work programs.

GOAL 2

Expand Our Role as Catalysts

Strengthen the park’s role as a change agent by continuously collaborating internally and externally to effect positive social and environmental change.

KEY MOVES

- Seek partnerships with external organizations and other agencies to develop a holistic and compassionate approach to addressing homelessness in the park.
- Work with care facilities, support groups, and community organizations to provide veterans and others who are experiencing trauma a place to reduce stress, heal, and gain mental and physical strength.
- Advance climate change literacy, mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency strategies throughout the park by updating and implementing the Climate Change Action Plan.
- Equip and encourage internal champions throughout the organization to be change agents in the context of their daily work.
- Continue to adapt and evolve our role as a catalyst for change, inviting partners in the community to guide us on how we can participate in the most meaningful ways.



I want to grow to be a leader and advocate so I can encourage the next generation to care for the parks.

PARK INTERN

Three park rangers in uniform are working in a field of tall grass. One ranger is kneeling on the left, another is kneeling in the center, and a third is leaning over on the right. They are all smiling and appear to be engaged in a conservation activity. The background shows a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Stewardship Initiatives

Opportunities to demonstrate progress through our work on the ground at these special places.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

The Stewardship Initiatives represent priority geographic areas and topics that will receive our focused efforts over the next five years.

The initiatives give the Strategic Plan meaning; they engage the whole organization in the implementation of the Plan and provide important opportunities to test key moves and realize goals on the ground.



Christina Neilson/NPS

Alcatraz Island Stewardship and Embarkation

Alcatraz Island will be the focus of the park's largest and most concentrated preservation effort in the coming years. This Stewardship Initiative preserves an iconic National Historic Landmark by stabilizing key structures and enhancing ferry services so we can continue to provide visitors with a world-class experience.



Kirke Wrench/NPS

Dog Management

To resolve a long-standing park management issue, the park will begin to implement clear, enforceable rules that welcome responsible dog walking, reduce user conflicts, and protect park resources for present and future generations. Shared understanding of the new rules and increased communication among visitors and staff will help to ensure these programs are implemented successfully.



Muir Woods and the Redwood Creek Watershed

The park and partners have made significant progress preserving and restoring habitat in this important landscape. Both the ecological integrity of the watershed and the visitor experience will be further enhanced in the next phase of projects realizing the *Redwood Creek Watershed: Vision for the Future*.



Rancho Corral de Tierra

The National Park Service's acquisition of Rancho Corral de Tierra in 2011 expanded one of the largest protected landscapes in the Bay Area. We have an opportunity to create a new sustainable park site through meaningful community engagement, employing our best planning principles as we introduce national park stewardship to this site.



Crissy Corridor

The coastal corridor extending from Crissy Field's East Beach to Fort Point contains many national treasures. With the Presidio Trust and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, we remain dedicated to achieving the long-term vision for a spectacular, rejuvenated landscape at the heart of the park, including the much-anticipated new Presidio Parkland, a refresh of Crissy Field, and climate adaptation.



Chee Tung/Parks Conservancy



Kirke Wrench/NPS



NPS

Thank You

Golden Gate National Recreation Area Leadership Team

Chris Lehnertz, *General Superintendent*

Aaron Roth, *Deputy Superintendent*

Brian Aviles, *Chief of Planning and Compliance*

Jessica Carter, *Chief of Business Management*

Dan Collman, *Facility Manager*

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Abby Sue Fisher, *Chief of Cultural Resources and Museum Management*

Michele Gee, *Chief of Interpretation and Education*

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Howard Levitt, *Director of Communications and Partnerships*

Michael Savidge, *Chief of Strategic Planning*

Noreen Schirmer, *Major, United States Park Police*

Jerry Scheumann, *Chief of Facility Management*

Jennifer Treutelaar, *Chief of Administration and Finance*

Brian Ullensvang, *Chief of Environmental and Safety*

Frank Dean, *General Superintendent (retired)*

Nancy Hornor, *Chief of Planning and Compliance (retired)*

Don Mannel, *Chief of Facility Management (retired)*

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Our capable and indispensable consultants: David Sibbet, Stefanie Martin, Stephanie Karp, and Camey Yeh

Our Park Partners, especially the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and Presidio Trust, who informed and refined our thinking

And in honor of the park founders, visionaries, and builders, without whom this future for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area would not be possible.

“Here the Park Service is responsible for one of the grandest places on earth.”

BRIAN O’NEILL

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT, GGNRA 1986 – 2009

“Every successful deed has a thousand mothers.”

PHIL BURTON

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE AND SPONSOR OF THE LEGISLATION THAT CREATED THE GGNRA

“How grateful I am we were able to save the Golden Gate for public use in perpetuity.”

AMY MEYER

ADVOCATE FOR THE CREATION OF THE GGNRA

“It seemed incredible to me that there were no cities or suburbs built on those Marin hills. . . I wondered how long that miracle would last.”

DR. EDGAR WAYBURN

ADVOCATE FOR THE CREATION OF THE GGNRA