

The Presidio Heritage Program: A Museum Without Walls

I. INTRODUCTION

Since its founding by the Spanish in 1776, the Presidio has played an important role in the history of the Bay Area and the United States. The Presidio's historical significance was acknowledged when it was declared a national historic landmark district in 1962, and later in 1972, when the base was preserved as a national park site.

There are many ways to capture and portray the history of the Presidio and the broader history of the American West. In order to make the Presidio's history accessible to a broad cross section of local residents and national/international visitors alike, the Presidio Trust has undertaken a process to develop a state-of-the-art heritage program – a program focused on the many historic, cultural and environmental stories of the Presidio, the role the Presidio has played in American history, and on the many individuals who have shaped it.

As a national park and National Historic Landmark District set within the San Francisco Bay Area, the Presidio has a number of unique opportunities that, if properly leveraged, could create a world class heritage program, including:

- An uncommon richness of intact historic resources concentrated within a relatively small area -- most notably in and around the historic Main Post district.
- Existing heritage-focused programs, special events, program centers (Archaeology Center, Crissy Center), and partners (NPS, Parks Conservancy, PHA)
- A large and diverse nearby urban population that can reach the Presidio relatively easily
- A rich collection of nearby academic institutions and museums focused on history, cultural heritage and the arts
- A location amidst one America's most popular tourist cities, renowned for its vibrant cultural/arts scene, and adjacent to an international icon – the Golden Gate Bridge
- Current efforts to rehabilitate and revitalize the Presidio Main Post's buildings and landscapes, creating new platforms for public education and enjoyment at the heart of the park

The Presidio already attracts hundreds of thousand of visitors annually and has the potential to attract many more national and international visitors by creating a unique educational experience focusing on the history of the Presidio. The Presidio already plays an important role in the lives of many San Francisco residents and has the potential to play a significant role in the life of our community, and particularly, in the lives of our children, by creating a vibrant, new platform for historical education right in our backyard – a place where history comes alive. This study develops a concept for a

new world-class Presidio Heritage Program that leverages these unique opportunities to transform the Presidio into a “museum without walls.”

II. PRESIDIO HERITAGE PROGRAM CONCEPT

As Edward P. Alexander says in his book, *Museums In Motion*, the conflict between fluid history and static museum objects, helps account for the popularity of the outdoor history museum. It appeals to the visitor’s sensory perception and thus gives hints of what it was like to live in another age. Because of its unique characteristics, the Presidio should not house a typical history museum – rather it should make every attempt to convey understanding of the continuous flow of human history through objects, architectural sites, stories and audio and video presentations. It will capture not only one period of history but rather will portray the different roles the Presidio has played throughout its history —past, present, and future.

The Presidio is richly endowed with historic layers –natural areas, native American sites, the foundations, walls, and archaeological record of the Spanish *el Presidio*, and American military buildings from the Civil War through the Cold War – all within walking distance of the heart of the Presidio – the historic Main Post. Given this richness of historic resources, cultural and natural sites in a relatively small area, it is possible to utilize the historic sites themselves to create a narrative of Presidio history instead of depending on a simulated experience in a museum.

Evolving digital and multi-media technologies provide another opportunity to create an affordable, adaptable, multi-lingual, decentralized visitor experience. Technology will play a key role in transforming the relatively mute Presidio landscape into a museum without walls. When fully implemented, the Presidio’s Heritage Program would provide an array of easy-to-update onsite digital interpretive materials designed to serve multiple audiences, provide access to primary source material, and magnify opportunities for rich and varied educational programming throughout the year. Using new technologies, visitors will learn first hand about the Presidio’s rich past directly, by visiting locations throughout the park, and will be able to direct their own learning experience. By creating multiple learning opportunities and easy to update educational media, visitors will be inspired to return again and again.

The Presidio’s Heritage Program concept builds on both of these opportunities to create a new comprehensive heritage experience that utilizes the entire Presidio as an outdoor museum. It also builds upon a number of projects currently underway at the Main Post, including the Main Parade, Anza Esplanade, Presidio trails, parking and transit improvements, and historic building rehabilitation projects.

The new Presidio Heritage Program has several components, and is designed to ramp up over time to ultimately serve as many as 1,000,000 visitors per year. At its heart is a new Heritage Orientation Center, a gateway facility providing visitors with an overall framework for understanding the Presidio’s natural and cultural history, as well as badly needed visitor services and amenities. The Heritage Orientation Center would serve as a

gateway to key heritage sites throughout the Main Post and broader Presidio. It would be linked thematically and physically via audio tour/walking tour to a network of decentralized educational exhibits at key Heritage Sites such as the rehabilitated interiors, buildings, and landscapes of Funston Avenue, where visitors can experience history first hand. Visitors interested in a deeper engagement in Presidio history can get more deeply involved in education, research, and volunteer programs at one the Presidio program centers such as the Archaeology Education Center. Finally, individuals who are deeply interested in getting engaged in the “artifacts” of Presidio history could experience them first hand via “open storage.” Each of these components of the Presidio Heritage Program is described in greater detail below.

A. The Heritage Orientation Center: The Portal to the Presidio

To be successful, the Presidio’s Heritage Orientation Center should contain the following three components: a focus on the over-all themes that can be found throughout the Presidio; emotional impact that makes the orientation program itself a feature of the visit; and exhibits that will appeal to visitors and help them decide what additional experiences or programs they would like to engage in upon leaving the Center.

Some orientation centers offer spectacular experiences that engage all of the visitor’s senses. When the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City opened, it had a very dramatic show that tells the story of the Toltecs, Aztecs and Mayas, providing a central theme to orient the visitor as he visits the different exhibitions within the museum. The National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian has a wide-screen film, *To Fly*, which makes the viewer feel that he is aboard various aircraft. Colonial Williamsburg has another wide-screen film that offers *The Story of a Patriot*. Mount Vernon has created a wide-screen action film that tells the story of George Washington as the leader of the Revolutionary Forces. All of these films orient the visitors to the sights and stories that they will learn more about as they visit the site. The Presidio, as well, has an opportunity to select one or more key stories from its history that will excite the imagination of the visitor and prepare him for the many sites that can subsequently be visited.

To best serve members of the visiting public, at minimum, the orientation center should include:

- 2000 square feet for a 150 – 200 person multi-media theater, with a 20 – 30 minute recurring multimedia presentation focused on the Presidio and its history; space would also be used for lectures, symposia, and other special presentations
- 5,000-10,000 square feet of permanent exhibition, where major themes and individuals from Presidio history are again introduced to visitors; Exhibits would incorporate film, audio and video presentations, and historic artifacts to introduce ideas and images to visitors

- 3,000-6,000 square feet of changing exhibition space where exhibits focused on a particular aspect of the history of the Presidio are mounted
- 1,500-2,000 square feet for interactive visitor orientation and information, where basic visitor orientation information is dispensed and where downloadable digital and print media guides to the “museum without walls” are dispensed
- 500 square feet of classroom/multi-purpose space
- Offices should include approximately 110 square feet of office space per person with about 150 square feet for the director. Back office space should include a conference room as well as work room. The total space remains to be determined based on the number of staff to be housed in this location.

The center would offer these choices to prepare visitors for the rest of their visit, whether it be heritage-focused or more general. While there will be historic objects and artifacts located in the Center, many objects would be located onsite within the historic buildings throughout the Presidio.

Location

Within the Main Post, the Presidio Heritage Orientation Center should be located where it can best serve visitors. It should be:

- Close to primary routes used by visitors to come to the Presidio, including the Lombard Gate, Transit Hub, and future Doyle Drive off-ramp at Girard Street
- Convenient to long-term visitor parking
- Prominently located so it is easy for visitors to find
- Close to visitor services such as food service and refreshments
- Within convenient walking distance of most of the key historic sites and program centers to be developed as part of the Heritage Center
- Close to the Anza Esplanade and other future Presidio trails

This suggests the Heritage Center would ideally be located at either the north end of the Main Post, close to the Presidio Transit hub, future Doyle Drive offramp, future visitor parking and other visitor amenities, or it might be located at the south end of the Main Post, close to the historic *el Presidio* and the future home of the Presidio Archaeology Program (Figure 1).

At the north end of the Main Post, Trust staff identified several structures that might serve as possible Heritage Orientation Centers. A center in this location has the advantage of being close to the major point of entry for most visitors, whether it be by transit (Transit Hub) or by car (Lombard Gate - today; Doyle Drive offramp – future). Building 2 (former Army Museum) and the ground floor of Building 105 (northernmost Montgomery Street barracks) were identified as potential candidates because of their excellent location and suitability to house the mix of uses identified above. Conceptual

diagrams showing how these buildings might accommodate the Heritage Orientation Center were developed by Trust staff, and are attached (Figure 2 & 3).

At the south end of the Main Post, the Officers' Club was also identified as a potential candidate for the Heritage Orientation Center. The Officer's Club today houses the archaeology program, store, special events space, and a changing exhibition space. It stands proudly at the head of the Parade Ground. Because of its size and location, it lends itself to being retrofitted into the Orientation Center while still serving as a special events venue. Visitors would be welcomed in the Moraga "living room" with information about the Presidio as they wait to view the orientation film. During their wait they could also visit the changing exhibition, drop in at the archaeology center and view the permanent installations. Once they emerge from the orientation film, they could spend more time in the orientation center or begin a walking tour of the *e/ Presidio* by walking down the Anza Esplanade. A proposed conceptual floor plan has been developed by Trust staff and follows (Figure 2).

Because many visitors will arrive at the bottom of the Parade Ground, the success of an Orientation Center at Building 50 will depend on creating good pedestrian, shuttle, and vehicular connections between the north end of the Main Post and the Officers' Club. By slightly reworking the existing PresidiGo shuttle's route to more directly connect transit, parking, visitor amenities, the Heritage Center, Heritage sites and other program centers, the shuttle can play a key role in the success of the Heritage Program.

B. Onsite Education and Tours

The Presidio is made up of 1,491 acres in the middle of San Francisco and has a number of historic buildings and locations that lend themselves to interpretation- the Old Post Hospital, the Montgomery Street Barracks, Pershing Hall, which can be used for exhibitions that relate to historic events that took place within the building. The Presidio includes civil war buildings and Spanish-style buildings, many of which can be used to tell the stories of the men and women who lived at the Presidio and participated in the life of their nation. Other sites, including the Parade Ground, would offer interpretive stations that tell stories through objects and audio and video programs. Sites would be developed over time, increasing in number as time and funding permits, in many cases as part of larger landscape or building rehabilitation projects. Decentralized new educational exhibits, artifacts, and programming at these sites will play a key role in telling the Presidio story and transforming the Main Post into a "museum without walls."

These sites will be linked to the Heritage Orientation Center and to each other via new paths and trails, some of which are being developed as part of the Presidio trails initiative. The Heritage Program would depend heavily on a few key trails, most notably the Anza Esplanade, Presidio Promenade, and the Ecology Trail. Tours would be either self-guided or conducted by docents.

Listed below the Trust staff has identified a number of historic buildings and sites that illustrate important elements of Presidio history and that lend themselves to educational programming. Development at each of these sites would vary, from simple onsite educational signage to restorations of period interiors and would be linked to the Main Post Heritage Orientation Center via walking tour or thematic shuttle tour.

Candidate sites and possible topics to be covered there include:

- Anza Esplanade – Walk through time
- Crissy Field native American sites – Native American life; 21st century restoration
- Mesa Room and Archaeology Center in the Officers' Club – Native American peoples, and Spanish and Mexican settlers
- Excavation site next to Officers' Club – Spanish colonial life, 1776-1835
- South half of 16 Funston Avenue – Victorian officers' family life
- Central hall or front lounge of Pershing Hall – bachelor officers' life
- Pershing Square excavation – Pershing
- One Montgomery Street Barrack rehabilitation – life in an Army barracks; possible living history camp children's program
- DeWitt Office & Building 640 – WWII & Nisei School; Internment Order
- Bld 1347 – WWII barracks converted to overnight lodging for kids
- Old Post Hospital, Building 2 rehabilitated surgery – military medicine and innovations; possible secondary orientation facility
- One ward at Old Letterman Hospital or better exhibits in Bldg 1016 – military medicine & innovation; environmental sustainability and future
- Crissy Army Air Field – pioneer aviation and transcontinental flights
- Fort Point, Battery Dynamite & Battery Chamberlin with its Disappearing Gun [NPS] – coastal defenses & life underground
- The Post Chapels – chaplains and military ritual
- San Francisco National Cemetery – lives of soldiers through time; national service
- Cavalry Stables – pre-NPS horse patrol / Buffalo Soldiers in the Cavalry; service
- El Polin Spring site & ethnobotanical garden – native American & Spanish era life; attitudes about land and water; Juana Briones
- Historic Funston streetscape including the Alameda and historic forest – Frontier attitudes about landscape
- Montgomery Street barracks landscape -
- Dragonfly Creek & the Presidio Nursery – 21st century environmental restoration

Self-guided tours

If visitors select one of the self-guided tours, using hand-held devices, they can pace themselves, stopping at the different locations that are available throughout the Presidio. Visitors might take an architectural tour, tours of the different historic periods, cultural history, or natural history. Digital audio tours will be available for purchase and/or download for use with iPods or cell phones. Audio tours can be translated into multiple languages, which will be enormously helpful to visitors from other countries. These self-guided audio tours will be linked with a variety of preexisting locations tied to the specific tour the visitor selects. Visitors can choose the path they would like to take based on their interests and can take one or many tours. Self-guided tours will be enriched along the way at either the historic sites available throughout the Presidio or at kiosks or way stations where extended audio-visual presentations will be available. These systems can be changed and updated relatively easily. Sequencing of experiences can be arranged around a timeline, theme or hierarchy of information. The exhibitions throughout the site will provide a sequence of experiences for the visitor.

Docent-led tours

At regularly scheduled times, trained docents will be available to accompany groups on a walking or shuttle-bus tours of the Presidio. Different tours will be available at different times throughout the week. Docents may also be available at the various locations for interpretation of the sites and to tell stories that will enrich a visitor's experience. For example, at the old Letterman Hospital building, which could house a small exhibition, a docent would be able to bring the exhibition to life through discussions, demonstrations, interactive activities and role-playing.

C. Educational Programming

The Presidio currently produces a number of educational materials and sponsors an array of events focused on history and culture throughout the year. Because of its urban location, the Presidio is well-positioned to develop particularly rich youth-focused educational programming, and could play an important role in the educational lives of Bay Area youth and young adults. The items listed below are additional suggestions that would provide opportunities for deeper engagement by the local community in the Presidio and its history, and would be designed to complement the physical components (waysides, exhibits, heritage sites) of the Heritage Program.

Interactive Website: The website could be designed as a virtual tour showing the archaeological as well as the historical landscape. The site could include maps, photos and interpretive text that would enrich the viewers understanding of the Presidio over time. A DVD of this same material could be created to reach people who do not have internet availability. Additional technological components can be added and will be discussed with advisors who have this knowledge.

Interpretive Signs/ Kiosks: The presidio has created interpretive signs throughout the park but with technology these signs can be enhanced so that they have information that can be downloaded on to PDAs and cell phones and can provide more extensive information than they are presently.

Signature Events: A number of events could be presented annually so that visitors gain a better understanding of different aspects of the Presidio's history. By selecting key events to repeat annually, the Presidio would become known for these events and build audiences.

School Tours: Tours for school groups will be an integral component of the Heritage Program. The Presidio will bring history alive for students and their teachers and provide opportunities for teachers to support the California history curriculum as well as the world history curriculum. In preparation for school visits, the Heritage program could provide outreach packets for the students.

Outreach Packets for Schools: For classroom use, materials could be created that include lesson plans, artifacts, photographs, maps and audio guides to prepare students and teachers before they visit the Presidio. Programs would be designed to complement school curricula to ensure it has maximum relevance to Bay Area youth and their families.

Publications: Educational Brochures: These brochures could be available to visitors free of charge and could highlight specific topics that might otherwise not be treated at the Presidio. The brochures might include maps and other information.

Lectures and Seminars and Classes: Adults could participate in any number of these programs that focus on the archaeological, natural or cultural history of the Presidio

D. Open Storage

Because of its many layers of history, the Presidio is particularly rich in historic artifacts and other collections, and contains both an Archive/Collections Facility, operated by the National Park Service, and an archaeology lab. Both facilities contain hundreds of thousands of artifacts from the Presidio – ongoing research and investigations will continue to generate artifacts and attract salient historical and art collections. The management and operation of these collections provides an opportunity to more deeply engage interested members of the public in Presidio history. “Open Storage,” whether physical or digital, would allow the public to have access to the different collections either when they visit the Presidio or online, and could provide in-depth information about each of the objects. Many museums have used open storage to show the depth of their collections: a way to present objects that they do not have the space to exhibit in their galleries. While open storage is not inexpensive, it is less expensive than creating finished galleries for exhibition and allows visitors to have access to objects not on exhibit at all times. The open storage facility could be used by historians to tell a variety

of stories that would complement the orientation center and extend and expand the exhibits throughout the park.

E. Audience

The Presidio already attracts approximately 4,000,000 visitors each year. With the addition of the Heritage Center, which could attract as many as 1,000,000 visitors per year, it could attract even more visitors. By providing educational programming for students and teachers from the college level through elementary school, for SF Bay Area residents and visitors including families, adults and seniors and for the general public, the Presidio can provide meaningful history-focused experiences for both local and national/international audiences alike. The Presidio Heritage Program is designed to create a “ladder of engagement” that will provide increasingly deeper and richer opportunities for interested individuals to get engaged in the Presidio and its history.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Costs

A facility/program such as is being proposed for the Presidio will have an annual budget that breaks down in the following way:

<u>Operating Costs:</u>	<u>Approximate % of Budget</u>
A. Personnel:	51%
B. Program	25%-30%
C. Administrative	20%
D. Development	4-5%
E. Marketing & Retail	2-3%

Program costs at the Presidio could be higher than at many museums because the focus is going to be experiential and based on a great deal of technology, which will have to be maintained in good working order in order to provide visitors with a high-quality experience

B. Staffing

Staff required to develop and sustain a facility/program such as is being proposed for the Presidio are outlined below. Staffing projects are provided for the development phase, and for Years 1 and 10 of full operation of the program. Staffing would ramp up as programming expands and as new Heritage Sites are developed. In addition, typical salary ranges are provided.

1. Development Team - Years 1 & 2

Project Manager \$100,000- \$125,000

Consultants \$ 300,000 yr 1 / \$200,000 yr 2

The consultant team would be assembled by the Project Manager and should include: Curators, Educators, Scholars, Exhibition Design Team and the Film Production Team.

2. Permanent Staff

In this staffing plan, I am assuming that the following staff members are already part of the existing Presidio Trust Staff: Chief Financial Officer, Development Director, Marketing and PR and Special Event Coordinator. Some of the positions identified below may already be on the Trust staff either within the PPP Division or in other divisions.

Year 1 represents the first year the Heritage Center is operational.

Year 1	FTE	Year 10	FTE
Heritage Program Director	1	Heritage Program Director	1
Director of Visitor Services	0.5	Director of Visitor Services	1
		Assistant Director	1
Director of Education	1	Director of Education	1
Outreach Coordinator	0.5	Outreach Coordinator	1
Docent Coordinator	1	Docent Coordinator	1
Interpreters	2	Interpreters	4
Program Scheduler	0.5	Program Scheduler	2
Volunteer Coordinator	1	Volunteer Coordinator	1
Information Officer	0.5	Information Officer	1
		Systems Manager	2
Facilities Manager	1	Facilities Manager	1
		Assistants	2
Store Manager	1	Store Manager	1
Clerks [volunteers]	2	Clerks [volunteers]	3

In addition, for the first two years after the Center is operational, several positions could be outsourced -- Curator, Registrar, Exhibit Designer, Preparator. At the beginning of the third year of operation as the permanent exhibitions need to be refreshed, the Director should make the determination as to whether curatorial and design staff should become permanent staff or remain in a consulting capacity.

3. Salary Ranges

Heritage Program Director:	\$125,000-\$150,000
Director of Education	\$70,000-\$80,000
Education Coordinators	\$40,000-\$47,000
Education Assistants	\$27,000-\$31,000
Volunteer Manager	\$40,000-\$50,000
Chief Information Officer	\$75,000-\$85,000
Systems Manager	\$50,000-\$55,000
Store Manager	\$42,000-\$50,000
Facilities Manager	\$50,000-\$60,000
Visitor Services Manager	\$40,000-\$50,000

4. Volunteers

Volunteers play a very important role in many museums. In order for them to be successful, they must be given meaningful work. The most important role that volunteers can play in the Presidio Heritage Program is interfacing with the public by staffing visitor services desks, providing information about the site and the city and by being goodwill ambassadors for the programs. They can staff telephones, work in the education department and generally make visitors feel welcome. Some museums offer excellent training programs for their volunteers and generally integrate them into the operations of the institution.

5. Docents

Docents are an extension of the Education Department and can provide a wide variety of educational programs for visitors to the park. They are given extensive educational training by the Education Department in touring techniques as well as content. Curators and scholars are often included in the training so that the docents become really knowledgeable and can embellish and enhance all visitors' experiences. Docents generally give organized tours to both school groups and adults. At the Presidio they will be able to work with organized groups but also could be available throughout the park at the historic sites on the self-guided tours. Docents often work closely with school teachers to prepare them for their visits and provide interactive programs that engage

students during their visits. Most museums have adult docent programs but many museums are now offering high school students the opportunity to become docents and earn school credit. This type of program has proved to be very successful when the students participate in its organization and content.

Docent and volunteers programs are unique, and will play different roles at the park -- to be most successful they should have clearly articulated goals and objectives. Active volunteer and docent programs provide hours of labor that the Presidio would otherwise have to pay for. Not only do these individuals provide services to the public who visit the Presidio, they also serve as wonderful ambassadors to the community.

6. Partnerships

The Presidio has already established numerous partnerships throughout the Bay Area, Some of these partners are Presidio neighbors and others exist throughout the community. By working together all of these organizations enrich their programs and enhance the visitor's experience. The Presidio offers numerous venues in which these partners could provide programs on an ongoing basis and, therefore, cut down the number of programs the Presidio itself has to offer. However, to make these partnerships really effective a staff person will have to be assigned to work on them.

- National Park Service
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Crissy Field Center, etc)
- SF Unified School District
- Presidio Historical Association
- The Garden Conservancy
- History Museums and Historic Houses in the Bay Area
- California Academy of Sciences
- Stanford University (History Center & Archaeology Program)
- UC Berkeley (Education Department; Bancroft Library)
- Cabrillo College (Archaeology Program)
- Additional partners as the program develops

IV. FUNDING SOURCES

Funding sources include earned revenue, contributed revenue, government support and investments. If the Heritage Program is going to be a program of the Presidio, I do not know if it will be eligible for any government funding and if there will be any investment income. For History museums that are private, revenue percentages are the following:

Government: 30%

Contributed: 32%

Earned: 30%

Investment: 8%

The following components contribute to a museum's earned income stream – visitor admissions, membership, store sales, facility rental, program fees, and benefits. The Presidio Heritage Program will want to build a membership program.