

4.4 VISION (VI)

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VI-1. *Articulate a Clear Vision*

Several commentors, including the NPS and GGNRA Citizens' Advisory Commission, request that the Trust articulate a clear vision for the Presidio or overall concept of the Trust's purpose. They maintain that the vision statement of the PTIP would benefit from a clear restatement of goals, both for the Trust, and for the planning document. The NPS offers that the Trust Act in Sections 101(5) and (7) sets two equal and essential agency goals: (1) to protect the Presidio's resources from development; and (2) to minimize cost to the U.S. Treasury. They recommend that these two goals should provide the basis for a more explicit vision. The NPS acknowledges the Trust's financial mandate (to be financially sustainable by 2013), but believes that the fundamental course for the Presidio should remain focused on the values which the NPS finds essential to the Presidio. ("The Presidio's unique park character – its significant cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources – must be the cornerstone that guides our vision.") The NPS urges a stronger commitment to the national park character of the Presidio and the preservation of its cultural and natural resources. ("The value of the Presidio to future generations of this nation is that it is, no matter the management structure, a national park.") They ask the Trust to "stay on a course that protects the integrity of the National Historic Landmark District, restores valuable natural resources, and preserves the visitor experience originally planned for this park." The GGNRA Citizens' Advisory Commission "hopes that the Presidio

Trust will affirm its long term commitment to keep the Presidio as a great National Park." The University of San Francisco believes that the "core spirit" of the plan must "flow from a fundamental commitment to meaningful educational, cultural and non-profit activity together with a suitable global and local community vision." An individual notes that the scale and complexity of the Presidio's resources have created special demands which Congress has met by creating a unique management structure with unique performance standards and requirements. He feels the Trust is correct in saying that its first priority is "to protect and preserve the park's unique resources for the future," and wishes to add "enhance" to that sentence. Others are more scornful and "find little sense of vision or cohesiveness" in the PTIP. One individual criticizes the plan as "a discordant stew of planning concepts with no unifying theme" that would "reduce the Presidio to an odd hybrid: one part redevelopment project, one part corporate business park, and one part grandiose 'cultural destination' or 'center for arts and culture.'" Another individual remarks that the plan "reads like a city development plan for a dense live/work area populated by financially sound tenants" that "lacks a sense of grandeur, higher purpose, vision."

Response VI-1 – The NPS begins its comments by saying that "we believe that the fundamental course for the Presidio, as adopted in the GMPA should remain the same. The Presidio's unique park character – its significant cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources – must be the cornerstone that guides our vision. We urge the Presidio Trust to put this vision first." The Trust agrees. The Final Plan includes a clearer statement of the overall concept of the Trust's purpose and vision than was presented in the Draft Plan. As suggested by the NPS, the revised statement of the Trust's vision begins with an explanation of two equal and essential Trust goals that derive from mandates of the Trust Act: to protect the Presidio's diversity of resources and to generate revenues sufficient to do so without need for annual federal funding. From there, the Trust has restated its commitment to make the cornerstone of its vision the national park character of the Presidio and the preservation, protection, and enhancement of its cultural and natural resources. While these concepts have in the Trust's view been carried over from the Draft Plan's vision statement, some comments on the Draft Plan illustrated that these concepts were not clearly articulated. The Trust believes the restatement of the vision in the Final Plan is a clear affirmation of these

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important priorities. The Trust vision statement acknowledges that these essential priorities must be met by first building a sufficient financial base to meet the congressionally established financial condition of self-sufficiency for the long-term. In sum, the Trust's revised vision statement affirms the Trust's commitment to keep the Presidio as a great national park.

Certain comments revealed that an aspect of the vision statement that confounds the public is the extent to which the Trust's management of the Presidio is driven by a "unifying theme," a "sense of . . . higher purpose," or a "suitable global or local community vision." See Response VI-7 for discussion of this aspect of public comments.

Goals of the planning process are included in Section 1.3 of the EIS, while goals of the Plan are articulated throughout the Final Plan as principles, guidelines, and statements of intent. All of the Plan goals stem from the overarching mission of the Trust to preserve and enhance the Presidio's cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment. This is the unifying theme of the document, which calls for increased open space and decreased building space, and emphasizes public uses and programs. Financially sound tenants are prerequisites for achieving Plan goals, but do not make the Plan a "development plan."

VI-2. *De-Emphasize Financial Self-Sufficiency*

One commentor asserts that the need for financial self-sufficiency is merely one of several "rather mundane" constraints, and that it would be a "great mistake" to be viewed as part of the Trust's higher mission. ("This seems analogous to an individual declaring that 'making ends meet' is half the purpose for living, or the NPS declaring that 'partially relying on federal appropriations' is half its mission.") The commentor asks whether Congress "hasn't charged the Trust with a higher purpose. . .?" Several individuals submitting a petition believe that the mission statement in the PTIP has goals that are much more ambitious than the mission statement of the Trust and go beyond the Presidio as a national park. ("We believe the mission is circumscribed and contextual, while the PTIP describes a much broader charter, necessitating too high a level of commercial activity to support it.") Another individual asks why the GMPA should be replaced with the Trust's "vision of commercial over-development, since the GMPA meets the goal of

financial self-sufficiency?" Another individual questions whether real estate profits should fund the visionary work of solving major world problems and whether the intent of the legislation that created the Trust makes business sense.

Response VI-2 – Congress charged the Trust with managing property within its jurisdiction in accordance with the purposes of the GGNRA Act and the general objectives of the GMPA. From this charge, the Trust derives its mission of preserving and enhancing the Presidio's cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources for public use. In establishing the Trust, Congress created a financial condition of self-sufficiency – the park would have to be managed in a way that would pay for itself without annual federal appropriations after 2013. The Trust agrees with commentors that the Trust Act's requirement of financial self-sufficiency should be viewed as a constraint on or a precondition of its mission. It nevertheless is an essential condition, which if not met, has irreparable consequences under the Law: the loss of the Presidio as federal parkland, its removal from the boundaries of the GGNRA, and its sale by the General Services Administration. These consequences are not a product of speculation – they would be a direct result of the Trust's failure to meet the explicit self-sufficiency requirement of the Trust Act, established by Congress. The Trust therefore considers financial success to be vitally important; it influences the factors to be considered, the way in which opportunities are viewed, and the approach to the Trust's management and decision-making. With financial success as a condition, decisions and commitments by the Trust about the Presidio can only be made after considering the financial consequences and effect of any action on the overall financial viability of Area B of the Presidio as whole.

The Trust disagrees with those commentors who suggest the Trust has broadened its congressional mission and with commentors who feel the Trust's mission should be broadened to include the "visionary work" of solving world problems. The mission of the Trust is fundamentally the preservation and protection of the Presidio and its resources as a park for public use in perpetuity. Congress recognized, as does the Trust, that this mission alone will be extremely costly and in itself a challenge. The basic tenet of the Trust Act is that leasing revenues from Presidio building space must fund the preservation of the Presidio.

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The Trust further disagrees with those commentators who suggest the Trust's vision is one of "commercial over-development." The Final Plan makes plain that the essential park-like character of the Presidio will not change. Instead, open space will increase substantially over time, and the amount of building space will decrease. Any new construction will occur in already developed areas, and will simply replace some of the building space removed elsewhere. Physical changes will be in keeping with the Presidio's designation as a National Historic Landmark, a diversity of tenants will be accommodated, and natural resource and sustainability goals will be pursued.

VI-3. Recognize the Presidio as a Neighborhood vs. National Park

One group of commentators admonishes that "the park is both a neighborhood park and a national park" and therefore "the Trust needs to openly recognize and address relevant neighborhood issues." An individual is "troubled by the confusion" in the opening chapter of the PTIP caused by stating that the Presidio is a national park located in a heavily urban environment, and doubts whether "folks from around the country are going to be commenting on this document." A local business in its comments took the opposite position: "The Presidio is a national park, not a neighborhood park."

Response VI-3 – The Presidio lies within the GGNRA, a national recreation area, and at 77,000 acres the largest urban park in the nation. Like the greater GGNRA, the Presidio is used heavily by local residents, but nevertheless must be managed by the Trust to serve a larger constituency than the immediately adjacent communities. The Presidio is rich in national history and houses the nation's preeminent collection of historic military structures. To say that these characteristics, and others like them, should be managed only with a local constituency in mind is in the Trust's view inappropriately insular. In spite of doubts expressed by some commentators about the scope of the public interest in the Presidio, the Trust received comments on the Draft Plan and Draft EIS from every state in the nation except North Dakota. As noted earlier in Section 3.1 above, roughly 83 percent of the public comments on the PTMP and EIS were received from outside the City (58 percent from outside California).

The Presidio is not a neighborhood park, but is a national park in an urban area. The Presidio Trust, nonetheless, has a responsibility to its neighbors and

recognizes the need to address relevant neighborhood issues. The Trust is continuing to actively work to identify and mitigate potential effects on adjacent neighborhoods and to solve problems brought to the Trust's attention by its neighbors. As an example, the Final EIS includes mitigation measures to address potential future traffic congestion at local intersections outside the park. The Trust will continue to pursue good relations with residents near the Presidio, but cannot do so at the expense of turning the Presidio into a local park with a purely local constituency.

VI-4. Develop Vision through a Public Process

The NRDC letter states that the Trust should not have "improperly" provided elements of a new vision outside of a public planning process, and should develop its own vision through an open public process.

Response VI-4 – The commentator mistakes a characterization made in the September 2001 Presidio Post, the Trust's monthly public newsletter, as an articulation of the Plan's vision statement. The Trust's initial vision statement was published as part of the Draft Plan in July 2001. This commentator criticized the Draft Plan for not "clearly stat[ing a] comprehensive vision analogous to that of the original GMPA," and for some reason looked outside the Draft Plan for a different statement. The commentator found on page 2 of the September 2001 Post a statement about the Presidio as a "center for arts, education, and innovation," but the Draft Plan had made no mention of this as part of its vision. This issue of the Post cited by the commentator preceded the close of the public comment period on the Draft Plan, and so could not have reflected any modifications by the Trust as none had been considered, proposed, or adopted at that time.

As described in responses, above and below, the Final Plan includes a clear description of the plan "vision," developed as a direct result of public comments and suggestions. This vision embraces the overall mission of preserving the Presidio, but rejects the notion of the GMPA that the park must have a higher social purpose.

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VI-5. Describe Differences from the GMPA Vision

One individual asks the Trust to describe how its vision differs from the GMPA vision, and if and how Trust Board Resolution 99-11 changed the GMPA vision. The Pacific Heights Residents Association tells the Trust that it does not recognize Resolution 99-11 as an adequate replacement for the GMPA's objectives. ("Resolution 99-11 is sufficiently vague to allow for almost any kind of development in the Presidio and provides for uses antithetical to a National Park.") Another individual states that Resolution 99-11, "which formalizes the GMPA's General Objectives ignores or dilutes the GMPA's central objectives, dangerously broadens the range of potential uses, and threatens the creation of a cohesive national park as envisioned under the 1994 GMPA." The commentor continues, "Resolution 99-11 makes no mention of creating an environmental study center, it ignores or dilutes some of the GMPA's other central objectives (such as minimizing new construction, attracting mission-related tenants, relying on tenants – in concert with the NPS – to provide public-interest programs, and committing to a modest level of overall activity and visitation). And Resolution 99-11 dangerously broadens the range of potential uses of the Presidio to include unspecified 'research, innovation, and/or communication.'"

Response VI-5 – In response to comments, the Final Plan includes a clear description of the GMPA vision and how that vision will be modified by the Plan. The GMPA presented a vision in which tenants in the Presidio would address "the world's most critical environmental, social, and cultural challenges."

The GMPA's vision was also based on four principal assumptions: (1) that Congress would continue to appropriate funds for the Presidio, (2) that tenants who shared the GMPA vision would be found who would have the capacity to undertake rehabilitation of historic buildings as well as provide programs, (3) that philanthropic dollars would be found to make up the short-fall, and (4) that time was not a significant factor. Time, changing circumstances, and experience have eroded each of these assumptions.

The Presidio Trust Management Plan owes much to the GMPA that preceded it, but the PTMP is built on a very different financial reality: (1) Congress has said it will not continue to appropriate funds and appropriations will decrease

to zero by 2013, making near-term revenues critical to operation and maintenance of the park over the long term; (2) the Trust's expectation is that limiting the pool of potential tenants to only those who share the GMPA vision, will make it difficult or impossible to attract the number and variety of financially viable tenants needed to rehabilitate and reuse the Presidio's historic buildings; (3) while the Trust welcomes and will pursue philanthropic dollars, they cannot be viewed as a certainty or counted on as a way for the Trust to meet its financial obligations; and (4) the Trust is aware that time is criteria factor given with the end of appropriations in 2013 and the rapid deterioration of resources.

As described in the Final Plan, the Trust's vision was created by Congress to preserve the Presidio as a park for the American public. This vision is neither mundane or insufficient, and the challenges it imposes are formidable. The task is to safeguard for posterity one of the world's great natural settings and the nation's most complete assemblage of military architecture. The Presidio's buildings must be leased to pay for the restoration and maintenance of the park, and if they are not, the park will cease to exist. The Trust's Plan in no way precludes the kinds of activities that the GMPA envisioned, but the Trust cannot give priority to those activities over the core mission of rehabilitating the buildings and preserving the natural and cultural resources of the Presidio for the public.

Some commentors would like the Trust to evaluate whether the General Objectives of the GMPA articulated in Trust Board Resolution 99-11 changed the GMPA vision. They do not. In July 1994, the NPS adopted the GMPA and Final EIS to guide planning for the Presidio. The GMPA is contained in the 150-page document entitled *Creating a Park for the 21st Century: From Military Post to National Park, Final General Management Plan Amendment, Presidio of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California*. Initial drafts of legislation that eventually became the Trust Act required the Trust to manage the Presidio in accordance with the GMPA. See U.S. Congress 1993, 1995. The term "general objectives" was added, however, in recognition of both the Trust's need for flexibility in light of changing conditions and the need to meet the 2013 deadline for self-sufficiency. In this regard, the House Resources Committee noted: "The Committee finds that the cost of the plan for the Presidio as completed by the NPS is unrealistic. While

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the Committee does endorse the ‘general objectives’ of the [GMPA], the Committee recognizes that development of a reasonable program is essential to ensure the success of the Presidio Trust and the long-term preservation of the historical and other resources of the Presidio” (U.S. Congress 1995). The Trust Act directs the Trust to fulfill both the purposes outlined in Section 1 of the 1972 legislation creating the GGNRA and to follow the “general objectives of the GMPA.” Congress, therefore, explicitly did not accept all of the particulars of the GMPA because of conflicts with the economic requirements and the changing user environment already evident in 1996 when the Trust Act was enacted. Congress intended that its directive to follow the “general objectives” of the GMPA “be interpreted to mean such things as the general relationship between developed and undeveloped lands, continued opportunities for public access and protection of the most important historic features as expressed in the Plan, not to mean any specific elements of the Plan” (Hansen 1999).

The term “general objectives” of the GMPA as enacted as part of the Trust Act was not precisely identified either by Congress or within the text of the GMPA. It therefore fell to the Trust to interpret the provisions of its authorizing statute. See Response EP-5. Construction of a statute which is open to interpretation by the executive agency charged with implementing its provisions is a basic maxim of administrative law. The Trust’s adoption of Resolution 99-11 ensured a common understanding of how the Trust would interpret the statute and memorialized a comprehensive set of objectives that are not only true to the spirit of the GMPA, but are also consistent with congressional guidance for the management of the Presidio and with the meaning of the term as used in the Trust Act.

The Trust disagrees with commentors that the General Objectives “ignore or dilute the GMPA’s central objectives.” The specific ideas noted by commentors (i.e., creating an environmental study center, minimizing new construction, attracting mission-related tenants, relying on tenants to provide programs) are the means specified in the GMPA to achieve what are its larger objectives, such as preserving and enhancing Presidio resources; addressing the needs of Presidio visitors, tenants and residents; increasing open space, consolidating developed space, providing for appropriate uses of the Presidio; and sustaining the Presidio indefinitely as a great national park in an urban

area. The General Objectives defined in Trust Board Resolution 99-11 take from the GMPA the broader goals that are consistent with Congress’ intent.

It is the Trust’s Final Plan, rather than the General Objectives defined in Trust Board Resolution 99-11, that adjusts the 1994 GMPA vision by focusing on the Trust’s core mission of preservation and enhancement of Presidio resources rather than on creating a center to address “the world’s most critical . . . challenges.” The Board Resolution defining the General Objectives takes into account the legislative intent not to restrict unduly the efforts of the Trust to achieve its goals under the mandate imposed by Congress; this level of generality is appropriate because the General Objectives are not the land use plan or management policy of the Presidio. It is the Final Plan that establishes the framework and guidance for how the General Objectives are to be attained.

VI-6. *Retain the 1994 GMPA Vision*

A number of commentors recommend that the Trust should implement the original vision for the Presidio articulated in the GMPA (“to create a global center dedicated to addressing the world’s most critical environmental, social, and cultural challenges”) rather than replace it. NPS acknowledges that the Trust’s financial mandate (to be financially sustainable by 2013) necessitates some revisiting of the GMPA. At the same time, NPS believes that the fundamental course for the Presidio as adopted in the GMPA should remain the same: “The Presidio’s unique park character – its significant cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources – must be the cornerstone that guides our vision.” The NPS urges that “[l]and use and leasing proposals should not drive the direction of the overall plan.” (“The value of the Presidio to future generations of this nation is that it is, no matter the management structure, a national park.”). They ask the Trust to “stay on a course that . . . preserves the visitor experience originally planned for this park.”

Commentors note that the GMPA vision was a product of a four-year planning process that included “wide, deep, and exceptional” public involvement. They observe that the mandate of preserving the Presidio’s historic, natural, and recreational resources was at the heart of GGNRA legislation and was reiterated in the Trust Act. They also believe that the original vision (“the challenge of shifting the world from swords to plowshares, from war to peace

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and plenty”) was as inspiring as the nature of the park resource itself. They contend that the PTIP vision is not of the same caliber, nor is its expression in the plan as evocative of the public input. (“The original vision must not be lost. The lack of mention of the substance of the GMPA mission is disturbing.”) The Tides Foundation and others, such as the Pacific Heights Residents Association, allege that the Trust has abandoned the theme of global sustainability entirely. They maintain that the focus on operating costs, building projects, and the Trust’s primary control of programming in Area B is “hardly visionary.” Instead, they request the Trust to adopt a vision similar to the GMPA vision that “recognizes that national security is no longer based solely on political and military strength, but on stewardship of the world’s human and physical resources through global cooperation.” The Presidio Tenants Council notes that tenants used to be responsible for playing a role in the vision of the park, and that responsibility should remain with the tenants and be supported by the Trust. They invite the Trust to bring “experts in the world scene and identify groups who look at world issues and those who are working on those issues.” (“These are the individuals and groups who belong in the park.”)

Response VI-6 – The Trust fully recognizes that the 1994 GMPA vision was one that captured the interest of many. Under that vision, the Presidio would not simply be preserved but would serve a purpose greater than itself, to work toward resolving the world’s most critical environmental, social, and cultural challenges. It would accomplish this higher purpose by housing “a network of national and international organizations devoted to improving human and natural environments and addressing our common future.” In essence, the GMPA vision was that those who would have the privilege of occupying Presidio buildings would be held to a higher standard; they would have to demonstrate commitment to the higher purpose of addressing the world’s critical challenges.

The Trust’s Plan no longer makes adherence to such a vision a mandatory precondition for all tenants (although it welcomes those who share it). The Final Plan does retain what is to the Trust and what is acknowledged by some to be the cornerstone of the GMPA, the Trust Act and the GGNRA Act – preservation of the Presidio’s “significant cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources.” The Trust’s vision is the one established by

Congress, to preserve the Presidio and its resources as a park for the American public – to rehabilitate its buildings and to preserve the natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources that were the reasons the nation moved to protect it. To adopt the GMPA vision would require the Trust to lease only to “a network of national and international organizations devoted to improving human and natural environments and addressing our common future” so as to “creat[e] a global center dedicated to addressing the world’s most critical environmental, social, and cultural challenges.” While the Trust welcomes the types of tenants and activities called for in the GMPA vision, the Trust cannot limit itself to soliciting and leasing to only those tenants dedicated to solving the world’s most critical challenges without jeopardizing our more fundamental mission – permanently preserving the park and its resources. The challenges that mission imposes are formidable: the buildings must be rehabilitated and leased to pay for the park, and if they are not, the Presidio will cease to be protected federal parkland. Instead, it will be transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA) to be disposed of as federal property and deleted from the boundaries of the GGNRA. The price of failure is high, and the Trust therefore cannot allow a policy – one that was neither mandated nor embraced by Congress – to take precedence over the mission.

Instead, as stated in the Final Plan, the Trust envisions a place where public, private, and non-profit sectors come together and share their ideas and resources; where educators and students explore the world around them; where artists, scientists, and storytellers pursue their passions; where parents and children play; where visitors deepen their understanding of the connections between human and natural history; and perhaps most important, where an individual, alone or in concert with others, can find peace of mind and personal inspiration.

VI-7. *Emphasize the Swords into Plowshares Concept*

Some commentators advocate that the Presidio’s vision should symbolize the swords-into-plowshares concept. Presidio Challenge asks “Why has the Trust thrown out the GMPA vision statement, particularly the ‘swords-to-plowshares’ concept?” San Francisco Tomorrow questions “What happened to the guiding philosophy that this is a time to give back a ‘park to the people’ and with tenants whose purpose is ‘swords into plowshares’?” Another

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individual writes “The events of September 11 demonstrate that such a center is desperately needed, now more than ever before.”

Response VI-7 – The Presidio cannot help but symbolize the swords-to-plowshares idea; it was a military post for more than 220 years and is now a new kind of national park. By focusing on the Presidio’s historical resources and emphasizing active public use for generations to come, the Trust’s vision retains the sword-to-plowshares ideal and seeks a park for the people. The

swords-to-plowshares concept is also related to one of the five themes included in Chapter One of the Final Plan as the subject of collaborative planning between the Trust and the NPS. At the commentors’ suggestion, the theme related to transformation of the Presidio “from Post to Park” is described in part through the phrase “swords-to-plowshares.” With other interpretive themes, this subject may serve as the basis for future interpretive programming, offering the public a deeper understanding of the past, present, and future of the Presidio.