

REIMAGINING THE PRESIDIO'S NORTHERN WATERFRONT

About the Presidio Parkway Project

In 1937, Doyle Drive was completed—a critical highway that enabled motorists to get to the new Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The Army allowed the state to build it through the Presidio Army Post, but they wanted it to be an above ground pass through roadway to protect the post's security. That essentially divided the Presidio in two, separating the waterfront from the rest of the post.

In 1989 when the Loma Prieta earthquake struck, it was clear that Doyle Drive was seismically unsafe and needed to be replaced. That same year, the Army announced the closure of the Presidio as a military post, and it appeared it may become a national park site. But how to build a highway through a national park? Government agencies, neighbors, and community organizations struggled with this.

In 1992, landscape architect Michael Painter proposed a design that would put tunnels over the at-grade roadway, revealing long hidden views and essentially joining the Presidio back together. After years of debate, his design was selected, and The California Transportation Agency, Caltrans, began construction of the new Presidio Parkway in 2009. In July of 2015, the tunnels were completed, and traffic began flowing along the new parkway.

With the highway project complete, CalTrans turned the site over to the Presidio Trust. In partnership with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the NPS, plans to build on this infrastructure were initiated to fulfill the Presidio Trust's requirements for landscaping along the highway corridor and waterfront. The total project comprises 50 acres over the two sets of highway tunnels, the Battery Bluff site (with the adjacent Cavalry Bowl) and the Presidio Tunnel Tops, and the restoration of Quartermaster Reach Marsh under the roadway.

Major Milestones

Doyle Drive Opens (1937)

The 1.6-mile Doyle Drive, known as HWY 101, was completed and served as one of San Francisco's key access roads to the Golden Gate Bridge. The raised highway cut through the Presidio, isolating the northern waterfront from the interior and the Main Post.

Construction Begins on the New Presidio Parkway (2009)

Caltrans began working on the \$1.2 billion project to replace the seismically unsafe Doyle Drive highway with the new "Presidio Parkway."

Opening of the Presidio Parkway (2015)

The parkway opened on July 12, 2015. Work began to transform and revitalize 50 acres of land surrounding the project, to restore native ecology and landscape beautiful new areas for the public to enjoy.

Quartermaster Reach Marsh (2019 to 2020)

Restoration of an 850-foot length of a stream and the addition of an adjacent trail, bringing the water of the Tennessee Hollow Watershed to the Bay at Crissy Marsh for the first time in decades. This was a significant phase in restoring the 271-acre watershed. Plants and animal species now thrive in the multiple habitats within the watershed, including serpentine and coastal prairies, riparian, seasonal wet meadow, dunes, brackish marsh, and salt marsh.

Battery Bluff Opens (April 2022)

Battery Bluff (six acres) and Cavalry Bowl (ten acres), both designed by Page, open to the public, with overlooks on the Bay and Golden Gate Bridge, picnic areas, a multi-use path and gardens for visitors to enjoy. The bluff also reveals four newly preserved historic batteries – Slaughter, Baldwin, Sherwood and Blaney – on view to the public for the first time since 1936.

Presidio Tunnel Tops Opens (2022)

The 14-acre Presidio Tunnel Tops is designed by James Corner Field Operations and funded by generous donors to the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. It's grand opening in 2022 completes the Presidio Parkway Project.

Agencies that Built the Presidio Parkway

California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

The Presidio Trust

Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District

The National Park Service