

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2006-073**

**URGING INCLUSION OF MERCHANT ROAD SLIP RAMP OPTION  
IN PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 5, PRESIDIO PARKWAY,  
FOR THE DOYLE DRIVE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

September 8, 2006

**THIS RESOLUTION IS ADOPTED WITH REFERENCE TO THE FOLLOWING FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH ARE FOUND AND DETERMINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

1. The Doyle Drive Replacement Project (Doyle Drive Project) is an important and necessary project that has been in development for several years, with the expressed purpose of improving the seismic, structural and traffic safety of the Doyle Drive roadway within the setting and context of the Presidio of San Francisco as a National Park.

2. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is the local project sponsor for the Doyle Drive Project. SFCTA has sought the participation of multiple governmental agencies, as well as community input, to develop various project alternatives that were analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIR). On September 19, 2006, the SFCTA Board of Commissioners will consider the selection of a preferred alternative for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIR) of the Doyle Drive Project.

3. The project staff recommends as its preferred Alternative 5, Presidio Parkway, which would create a parkway compatible with the setting of the Presidio as a National Park, with the recognition that the transformation of the Presidio from a former military base to a national park open to the public calls for providing safe roadway access designed with wide landscaped medians, continuous shoulders and traffic calming features.

4. Included within preferred Alternative 5, Presidio Parkway, are various design options. At the Bridge District's request, in light of impacts on traffic safety, access and circulation to and around the environs of the Golden Gate Bridge and Fort Scott, one of the design options is a new exit ramp from Doyle Drive to Merchant Road for northbound traffic (the Merchant Road Slip Ramp). Currently, northbound vehicles that exit Doyle Drive to Merchant Road must cross two lanes of traffic over the same area where traffic is merging onto Doyle Drive (U.S. Highway 101) from Park Presidio Boulevard (State Highway 1). The Merchant Road Slip Ramp would eliminate this conflict by creating a new Merchant Road off-ramp for northbound Doyle Drive traffic before the merge of Park Presidio traffic onto Doyle Drive.

5. Traffic studies for the Doyle Drive Project describe the weaving condition between Park Presidio and Merchant Road as "less than adequate," "deficient" and "a severe weaving problem." The studies further describe the Merchant Road Slip Ramp option as eliminating this "deficiency" and "potential problem."

6. The Merchant Road exit from Doyle Drive is used as access for the Presidio, the western regions of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Golden Gate Bridge viewing area. Typically, there is heavy congestion at this exit on weekday afternoons and on weekends. SFCTA project engineers forecast that peak hour traffic will increase 10% to 20% due to changing travel patterns brought about by planned development by the Presidio Trust, particularly in the Fort Scott area. Specifically, the Doyle Drive Traffic and Transit Operations Report identifies A.M. peak volumes on the existing ramp from Doyle Drive northbound to Merchant Road as averaging 220 vehicles per hour, and are projected to increase to 242 vehicles; current P.M. peak volumes average 306 vehicles per hour, and are projected to increase to 363 vehicles. According to a 1998 traffic study conducted for The Presidio Trust, several thousand vehicles use this exit ramp every day.

7. Due to concerns about cost and the use of additional parklands, the SFCTA staff has not included the Merchant Road Slip Ramp in its recommendation for the Presidio Parkway preferred alternative. The added cost of the Merchant Road Slip Ramp is approximately \$8.6 million, or just over 1% of the total project cost of over \$700 million. The additional space needed for the Merchant Road Slip Ramp is approximately 1.0 acres, and will require the demolition of four structures that do not have significant architectural or historical value, as stated in the DEIR.

8. As acknowledged by the Doyle Drive Project engineers, the existing weaving length of 270 meters at the Merchant Road exit does not meet highway standards. The proposed design will have a weaving length of 330 meters, still 70 meters short of the minimum standard weave length of 400 meters under highway design standards specified by project engineers as applicable to the Doyle Drive Project.

9. Without the inclusion of the Merchant Road Slip Ramp, the Bridge District Engineer has advised that the Doyle Drive Project will continue to pose a difficult traffic maneuver for motorists exiting to Merchant Road, and presents an undesirable situation that is likely to worsen with growing travel levels associated with the Presidio development plans and increased National Park visitation.

10. The volume of visitors, residents and employees to the Presidio and Golden Gate National Recreation Area is expected to grow significantly due to plans that call for development of the northern and western areas of the Presidio as a location for residential and employment ventures. Already, the development of Lucas Films' Letterman Digital Arts Center on the eastern portion of the Presidio includes a 1,500 car parking garage. The Presidio Trust Management Plan (May 2002) calls for an increase in building space of 100,000 square feet in the Fort Scott area, and 30,000 square feet at Crissy Field, both of which will have significant traffic impacts as employees and residents seek access to and through the northern and western areas of the Presidio.

11. The Doyle Drive Project is critical to the reuse of the Presidio as a national park where public access is invited, rather than discouraged, as was the case when the Presidio was a military installation. This reuse will exacerbate current undesirable traffic conditions on Doyle Drive between the Park Presidio Interchange and Merchant Road exit ramp unless it is adequately addressed in the design for the Presidio Parkway. While the Doyle Drive Project has in some respects addressed the need for enhanced access to the Presidio (e.g., the inclusion of a new interchange with Girard Road near its southern terminus), it fails to do so at its northern terminus.

12. Through numerous consultations, correspondence and meetings with the Doyle Drive Project sponsor and its consultants, as well as in formal comments submitted to SFCTA on the DEIR, the Bridge District's Board of Directors and its staff have stressed the importance of addressing the significant existing traffic issues on Doyle Drive at the northbound Merchant Road exit, and have urged the development of a solution to this existing problem. The Merchant Road Slip Ramp was proposed by the project traffic engineering consultant to address this issue, thereby enhancing overall motorist comfort and safety while minimizing liability risks.

13. The Bridge District's Board of Directors finds that the significant benefits achieved by correcting the deficient weaving section of Doyle Drive at the Merchant Road exit clearly outweigh the small take of land and structures and minor increase in the overall project cost required by the Merchant Road Slip Ramp option. The Bridge District's Board of Directors finds that the cost increment to construct the Merchant Road Slip Ramp is reasonable and appropriate given the increasing importance of Doyle Drive as a major access route to the Presidio as a whole, and Merchant Road as the specific access road to the Fort Scott area of the Presidio. The Presidio is currently making significant improvements to the routing of Merchant Road on the west side of Doyle Drive in response to the anticipated traffic increase due to development of Fort Scott, yet is not making sufficient traffic improvements on the east side of Doyle Drive as relates to Merchant Road.

14. The Bridge District's Board of Directors finds that without the Merchant Road Slip Ramp, an undesirable existing condition will only intensify, and that inclusion of the Merchant Road Slip Ramp option in the Doyle Drive Project presents a unique opportunity to address this concern.

15. Improvement of access to the Presidio and traffic safety are core purposes of the Doyle Drive Project. Consistent with that purpose, the Board finds that removal of the congested weaving condition on Doyle Drive at the Merchant Road exit will enhance access and safety to the Presidio and the Golden Gate Bridge now and in the future as traffic growth continues with the development of the Presidio.

16. The Building and Operating Committee, at its meeting of August 24, 2006, has so recommended; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District hereby authorizes the following:

1. The Board of Directors hereby expresses its strong support for the inclusion of the Merchant Road Slip Ramp option as part of the preferred alternative for the Presidio Parkway for the Doyle Drive Replacement Project, to address existing and predictable future intensified operational and safety concerns associated with Doyle Drive traffic.

2. The Board of Directors strongly urges the SFCTA to include the Merchant Road Slip Ramp option in preferred Alternative 5, Presidio Parkway, in the Final Environmental Impact Report for final design and construction, as part of the Doyle Drive Project, and directs staff to transmit this resolution to the SFCTA forthwith for consideration at the meeting of the SFCTA Board of Commissioners on September 19, 2006.

**ADOPTED** this 8<sup>th</sup> day of September 2006, by the following vote of the Board of Directors:

**AYES ( ):**

**NOES ( ):**

**ABSENT ( ):**

---

**Maureen Middlebrook**  
**President, Board of Directors**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Janet S. Tarantino**  
**Secretary of the District**