

Fisherman's Wharf Forward Concept Design Outreach Summary

October 2026



Executive Summary

Concept Design Outreach

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This stage of outreach solicited feedback on the project goals and three design concepts. Feedback we heard will be used to shape a preferred concept.

Engagement included:

- 2 **community meetings** at Fisherman's Wharf – a public open house (70 attendees) and a meeting with current maritime users of the harbor (20 attendees)
- **Online survey** (473 responses)
- 4 **pop up outreach** events in North Beach, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf
- **Digital outreach** – newsletters, social media
- **Ongoing communication** through community advisory committees and the project email
- We heard from **550+ people** – mostly San Francisco locals – representing a diverse range of relationships to the Wharf, project familiarity, and demographics



Concept Design Outreach

What We Heard

- Support for the **project goals**, with highest priority placed on supporting the **working waterfront**, followed by maintaining an **authentic place** and improving the **public realm and access**
- Broad support for **resiliency improvements** and **evolution** of the area
- Widespread desire to see **historic character** and **culture** preserved, with some concern about losing what makes this area special
- Broad alignment that the area's **authenticity** comes from its historical uses as a center of fishing and seafood sales
- Strong support for preserving a **seafood/maritime focus** in building programming, with an emphasis on **local, non-chain restaurants** and direct **fisher-to-consumer** sales
- Desire to see **legacy businesses** supported throughout the project
- Continued emphasis on making the area feel welcoming and inviting to **locals**, with a focus on **visitor comfort** and **walkability**
- Strong preference for **waterfront promenades** among open space concepts
- Support for **outdoor dining** and a **shaded corner pavilion** at Jefferson/Taylor. **Alioto's Plaza** is widely seen as a positive first step of the project and transformation in the area.
- **Shape of the Harbor**
 - Maritime users care deeply about honoring the historic character of the harbor, including a **central wharf J4** and current **berthing locations** for the different types of vessels
 - Maritime users are supportive of improvements that would improve **harbor navigation** and **public accessibility**, provided these upgrades are thoughtfully integrated with the fleet's **operational needs**

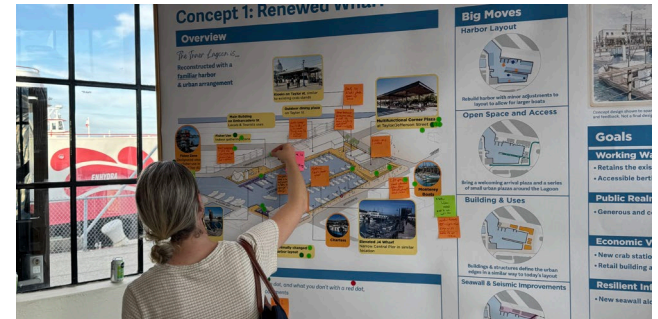
Outreach Overviews

September 9 – October 2, 2026

Community Meeting 2

Overview

- 9/9/26 at USS Pampanito Museum, Pier 45
 - Wednesday evening, 5:30-7:30pm
 - Hottest day since 2024
- ~70 members of the public
 - Mix of maritime users, neighbors, Wharf employees, SF locals, interested design/policy professionals
- Open house with presentation and staffed boards
- Focus on project goals and concept options



Community Meeting 2

What We Heard

- **Interest in Concepts.** Options 1 and 3 were generally more popular than 2. The most popular features were the promenades in 2 and 3 and corner pavilion in 1. Maritime users were skeptical of the harbor shape in concept 3 and expressed that the central pier is important to this group.
- **Support for Resiliency Improvements.** Broad acceptance of the need for change and excitement for the opportunity to improve fishing operations, open more views, and create more public space.
- **Critical Maritime Infrastructure and Operations.** Maritime users prioritize daily operational needs (fuel, ice, parking, gear storage), and their feedback prompted a follow-up maritime-specific engagement on 10/2/26.
- **Shoreline Access and Public Open Space.** Strong support for more waterfront views and public spaces, with preference for intimate waterfront promenades and plazas, shade and benches. Alioto's Plaza favorably referenced as an example.
- **Fishing Heritage.** Strong desire for programming and urban design to honor local fishing heritage – off the boat sales, places to eat/buy/learn about local seafood, views of fishing operations, working waterfront supportive businesses.
- **Cultural Preservation.** Strong desire to honor the Wharf's historic character through materials, interpretation, façade preservation, repurposed artifacts, use, and other strategies to blend old and new.
- **Local Feeling.** Desire to support local businesses and steer away from big chains/fast food options
- **Parking.** An important priority for fishers and local visitors.

Maritime Community Meeting

Overview

- 10/2/26 at Crab Boat Owners Association
 - Friday morning, 9:00-10:30am
 - Hybrid set up
- ~20 berth holders at Inner Lagoon or Hyde Street Harbor
 - Mix of charter boat operators, commercial fishers, Monterey boat owners
- Presentation with Q&A
- Focus on ongoing Port projects in Fisherman's Wharf, harbor configuration, ADA considerations for path of travel to charter boats



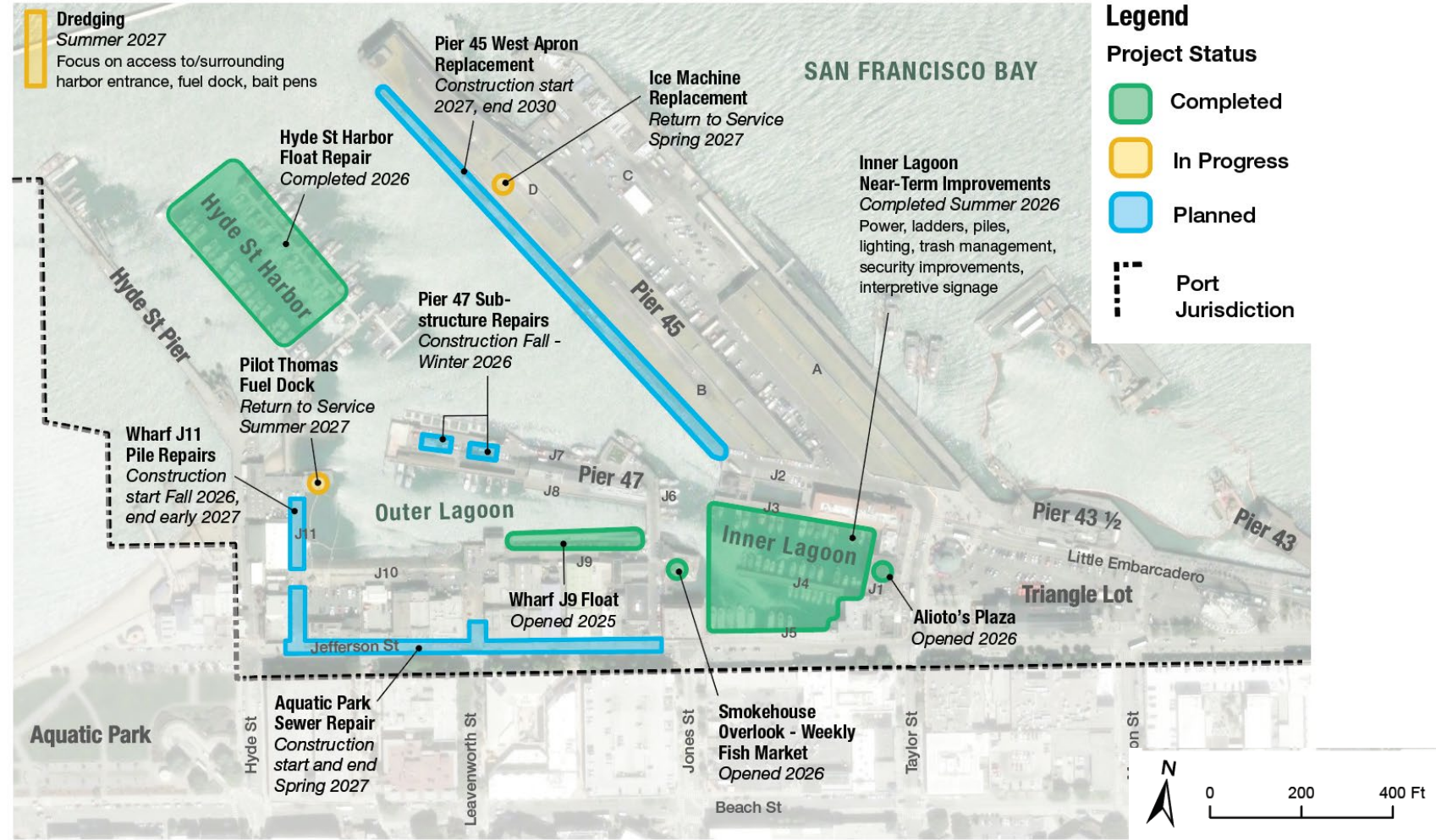
Maritime Community Meeting

What We Heard

Maritime user priorities include:

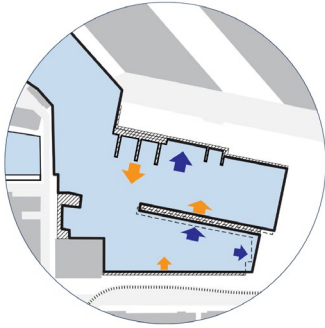
- Honoring the **historic character** of the lagoon (form, central wharf, berthing locations)
- Providing locations to **park**, stage gear and load boats
- Port focus on key **infrastructure** in the surrounding area (piles, ice, fuel) - *see next page*
- Minimizing **disruption** to operational activities and needs during construction
- Harbor **functionality** (utilities, ladder alignment with berths)
- **Amenities** to improve the working environment
- Maintaining **similar berth count** and **mix** of boat sizes; not a priority to accommodate much larger boats
- Creating opportunities to **educate** the public about fishing and historic vessels.
- Meaningful **engagement** and clear communication

Status of Port Projects in Fisherman's Wharf



Maritime Community Meeting

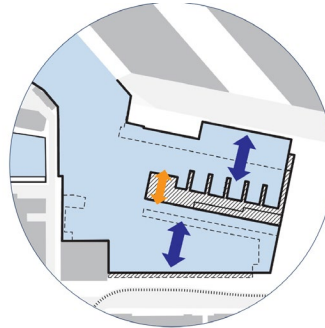
Qualitative Harbor Design Feedback



Concept 1

Minor harbor adjustments

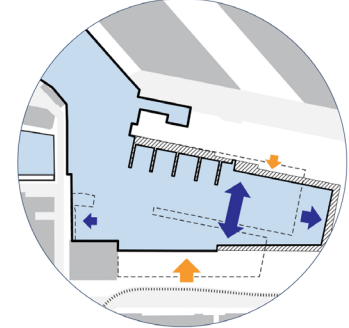
- (+) Similar harbor form
- (-) Current navigation challenges remain
- (-) Jefferson sidewalk remains narrow



Concept 2

Expand harbor north

- (+) Harbor expanded north
- (+) Wider fairways
- (-) Public central dock



Concept 3

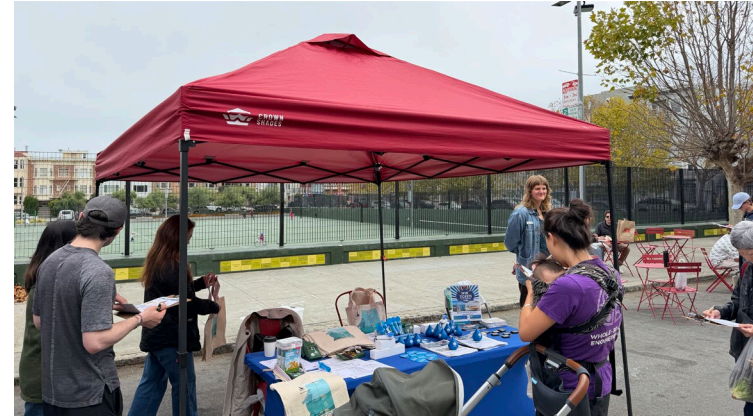
Elongate harbor east

- (+) Easier navigation
- (+) Additional space and resilience at Jefferson st
- (-) Fewer berths
- (-) Changes character of harbor

Pop Up Outreach

Overview

- Port tent with project swag at **weekend community events**, with outreach staff focused on collecting paper survey responses
 - **9/11 Chinatown Night Market**
 - **9/19 North Beach Farmers Market**
 - **9/19-9/20 Chinatown Autumn Moon Festival**
 - **9/26 Pier Party at Fisherman's Wharf**
- **283** paper surveys collected total
- **Wide range of audiences** including families, recent graduates, neighborhood locals, and young professionals
- **Common questions:** who leads the project, where funding comes from, whether properties in the area would be removed or demolished to allow for the work at the wharf, will summaries of community feedback be posted on the project website



Online Survey

Overview

- Ran for three weeks, September 9-30, 2026
- 13-14 questions (one maritime specific) + optional demographic info
- Publicized via:
 - Community meeting 2
 - Pop up outreach at Chinatown night market, Chinatown Autumn Moon festival, North Beach farmers market, Pier Party at Fisherman's Wharf
 - Port community advisory group and partner community-based organization newsletters
 - Port social media
 - Posters in neighborhood
- **473** total responses

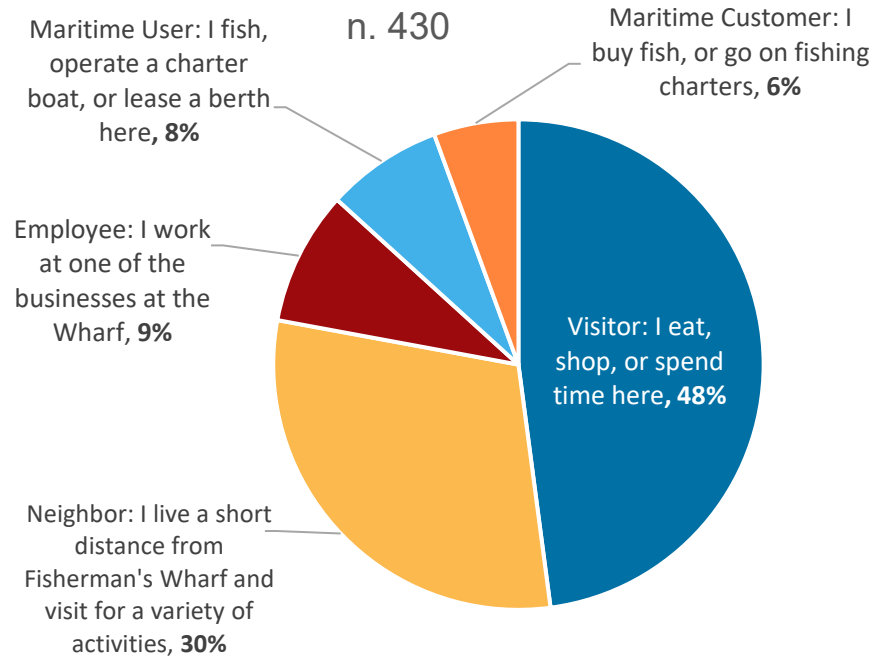


Survey Results

Note - incorporates quantitative feedback from Community Meeting 2 boards

User Identity

“What best identifies your primary relationship to Fisherman’s Wharf?”



Demographics

Optional Info

Survey results were reviewed by demographic subsets to assess for equity considerations – unless otherwise noted, responses were statistically similar across groups to the main sample



Where do you live?

Multiple choice • 381 responses

San Francisco	266 (69.8%)
Bay Area	82 (21.5%)
California	15 (3.9%)
United States (outside CA)	14 (3.7%)



What age group do you belong to?

Multiple choice • 371 responses



60+	144 (38.8%)
30-44	87 (23.5%)
45-60	84 (22.6%)
18-29	48 (12.9%)
Under 18	8 (2.2%)



What race do you identify as? Select all that apply.

Checkboxes • 365 responses



Asian or Pacific Islander	150 (41.1%)
White	125 (34.2%)
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	43 (11.8%)
Prefer not to respond	33 (9%)
Mixed Race	11 (3%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	8 (2.2%)
Black or African American	5 (1.4%)



What gender do you identify as?

Multiple choice • 377 responses

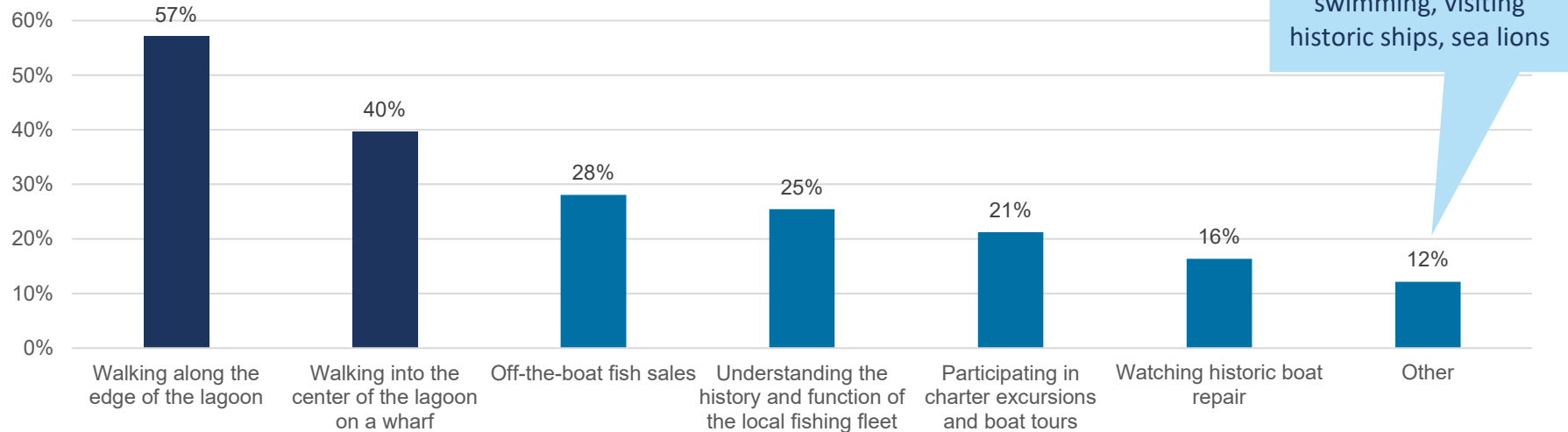


Female	193 (51.2%)
Male	146 (38.7%)
Prefer not to disclose	23 (6.1%)
Genderqueer / Gender Non-binary	7 (1.9%)
Trans Male	3 (0.8%)
Trans Female	2 (0.5%)

Harbor Experience

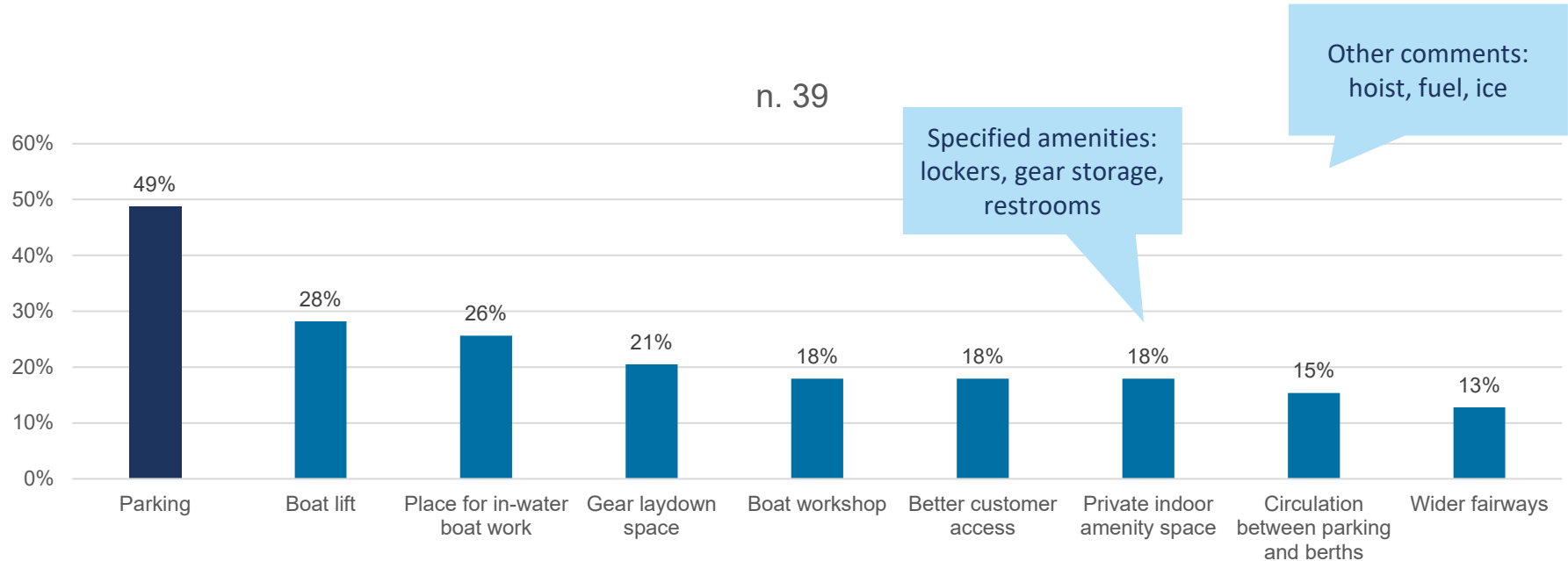
“Which of these harbor experiences is most interesting to you? Pick 3”

n. 452



Harbor Priorities – Maritime Users Only

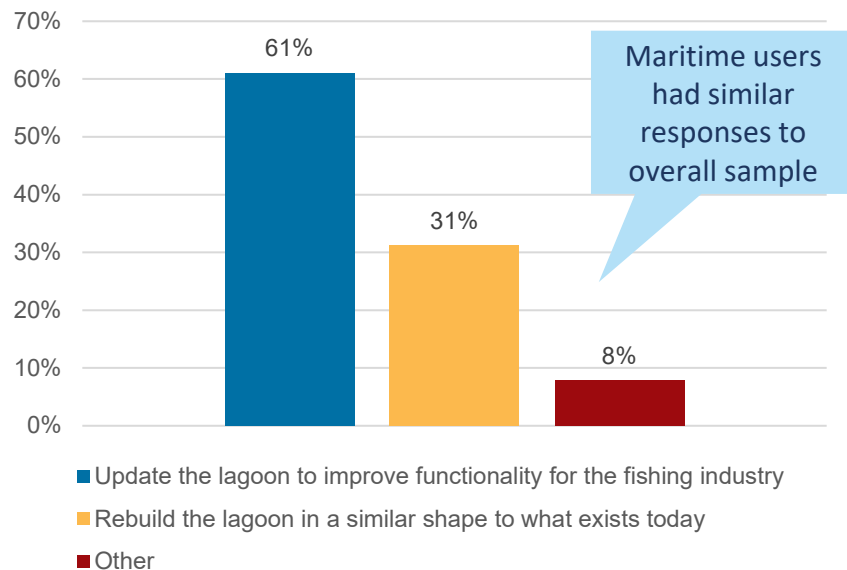
“Which of these harbor amenities is most important to you? (pick 3)”



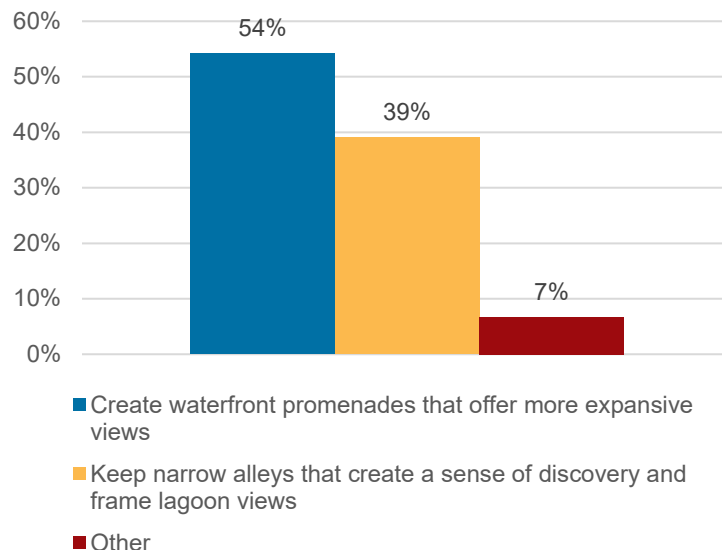
Authenticity

“How do you think Fisherman’s Wharf should maintain an authentic sense of place as it evolves?”

Shape of the Lagoon (n. 398)



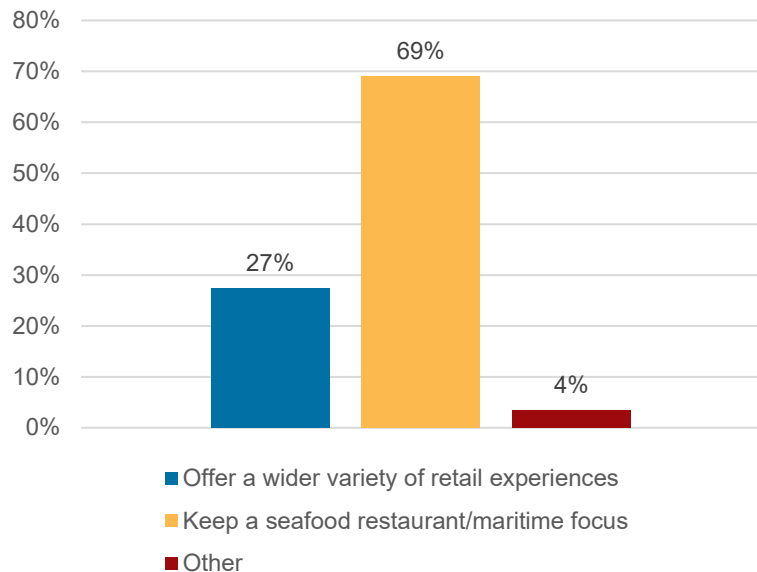
Public Space and Access (n. 402)



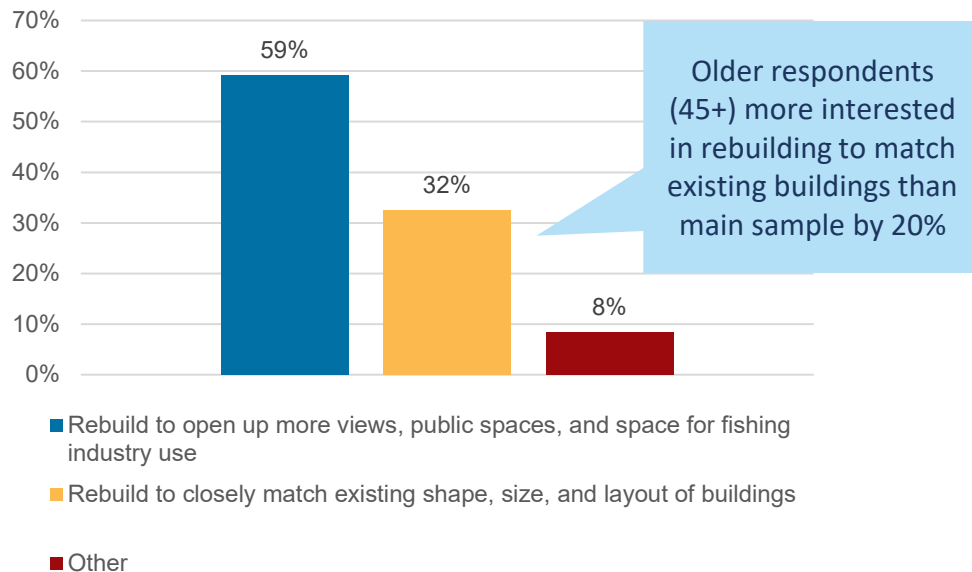
Authenticity

“How do you think Fisherman’s Wharf should maintain an authentic sense of place as it evolves?”

Building Uses (n. 426)



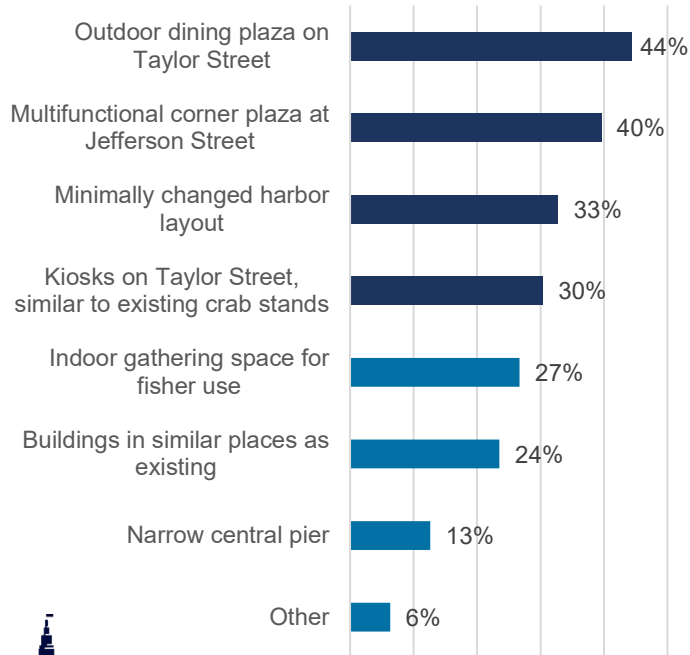
Architecture / Urban Design (n. 407)



Concept 1

Favorite features – pick 3

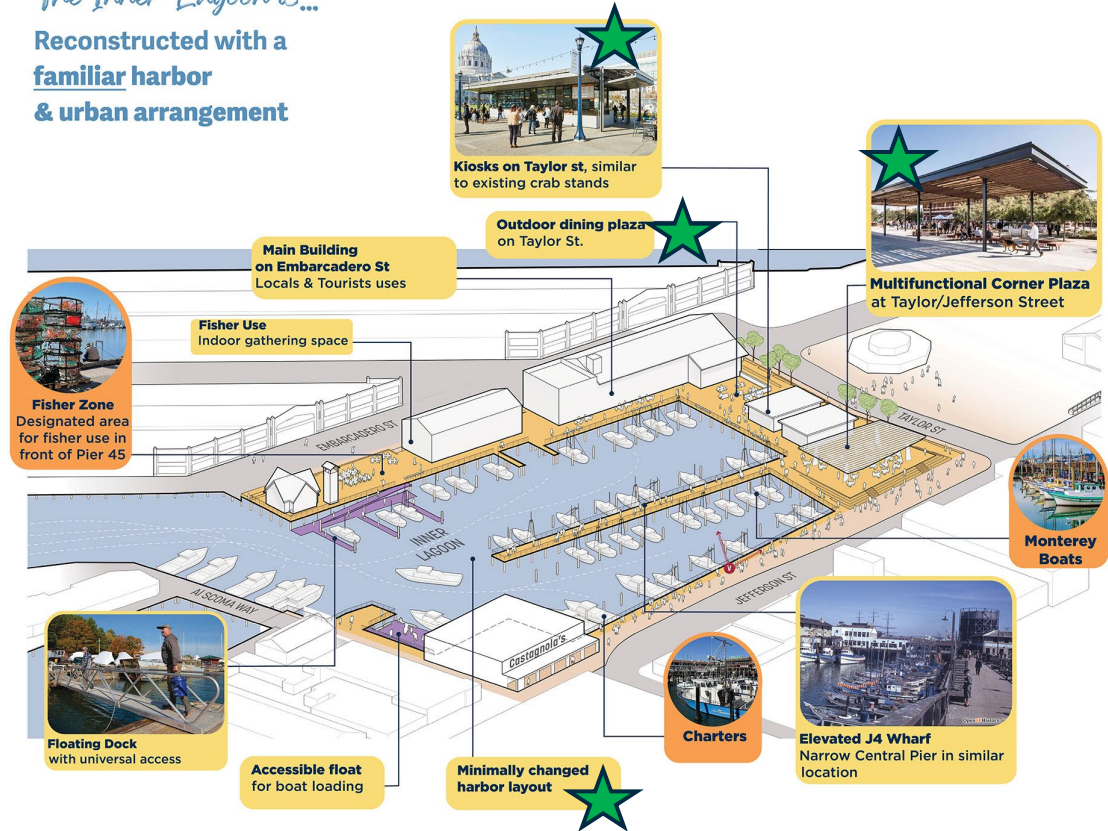
n. 412



Concept 1: Renewed Wharf

The Inner Lagoon is...

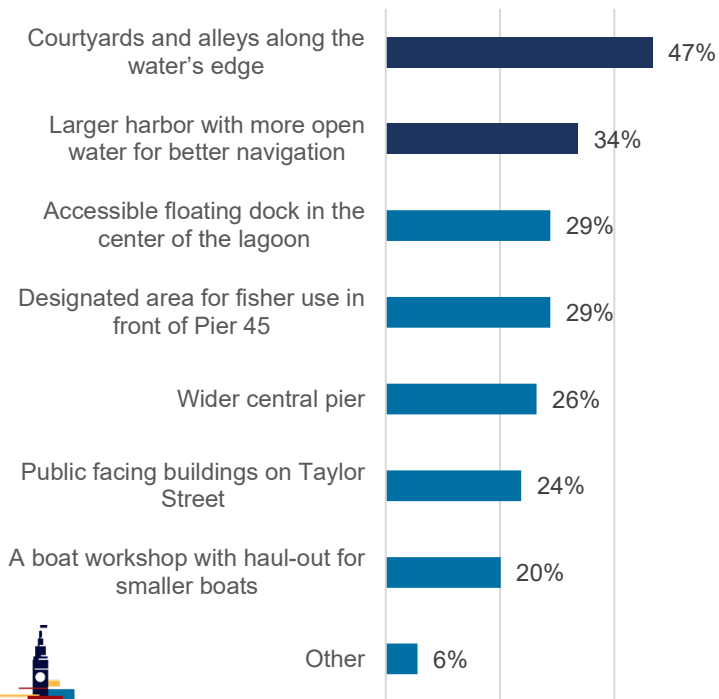
Reconstructed with a familiar harbor & urban arrangement



Concept 2

Favorite features – pick 3

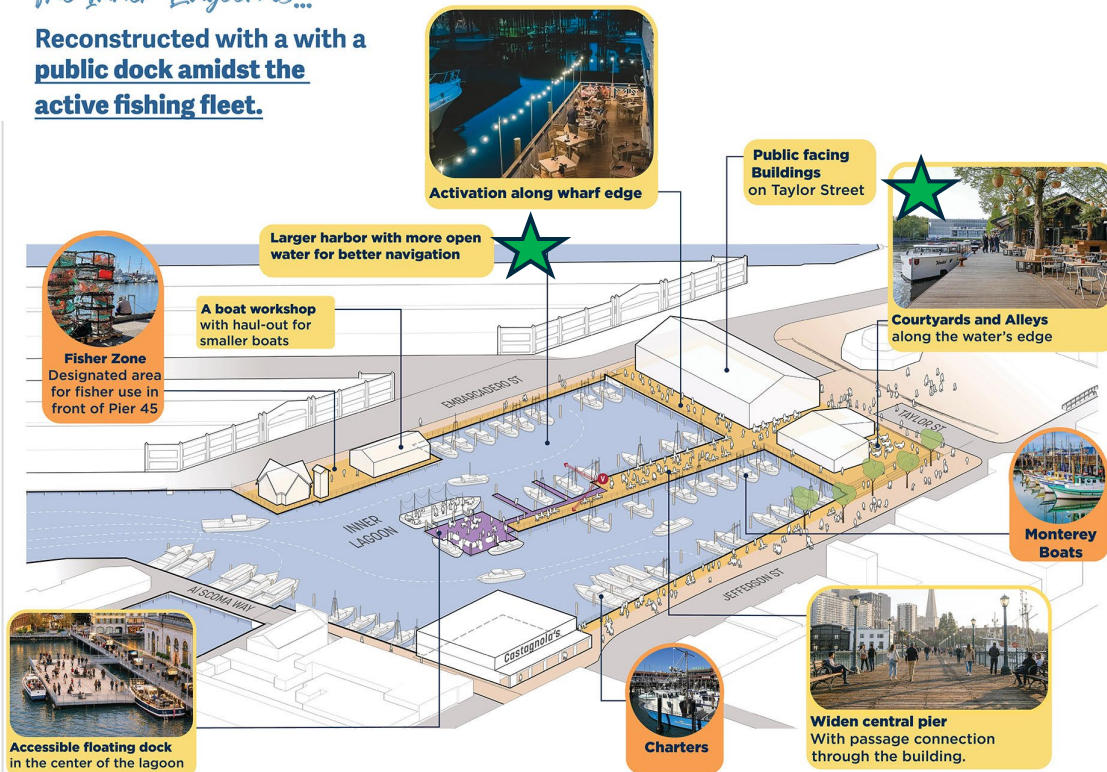
n. 412



Concept 2: Central Dock

The Inner Lagoon is...

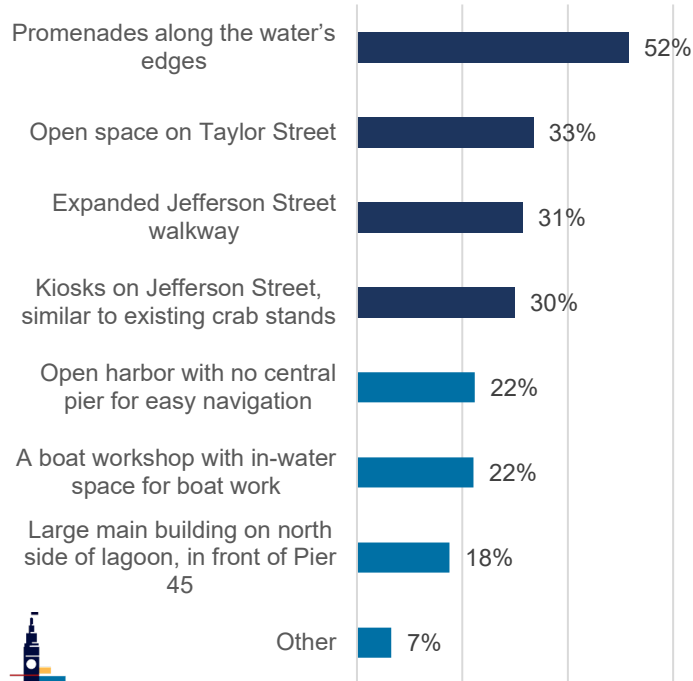
Reconstructed with a with a public dock amidst the active fishing fleet.



Concept 3

Favorite features – pick 3

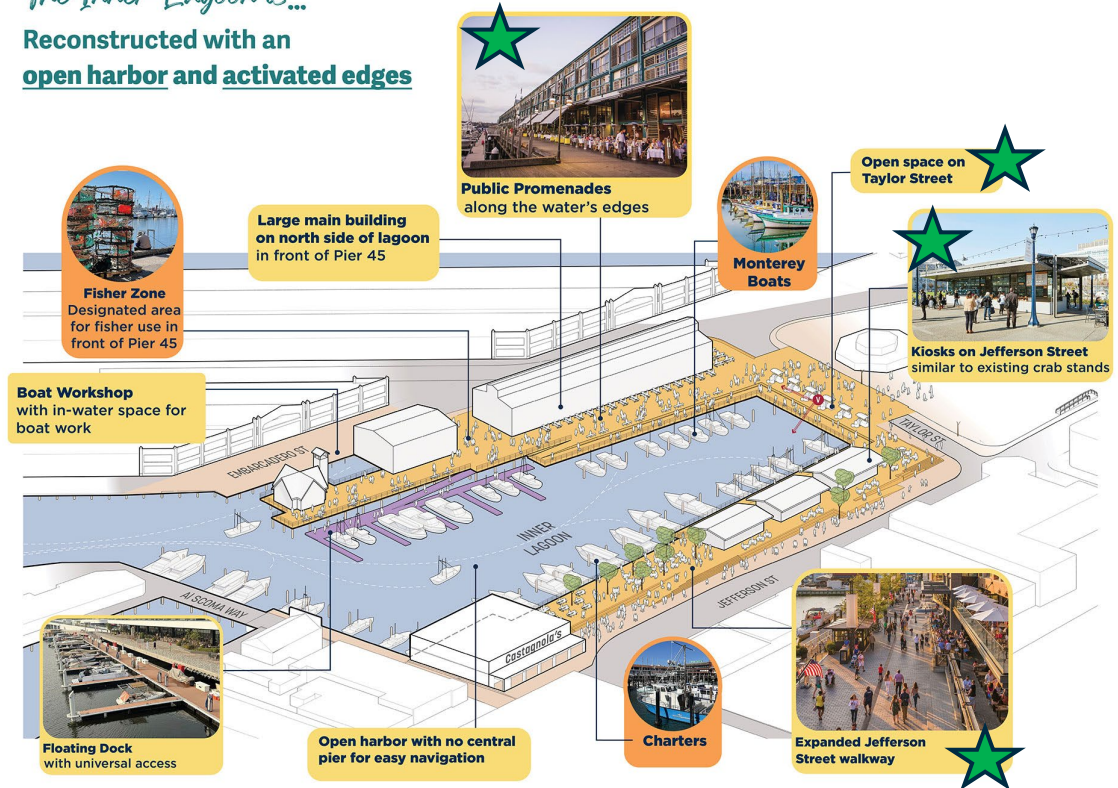
n. 398



Concept 3: Harbor Promenade

The Inner Lagoon is...

Reconstructed with an open harbor and activated edges

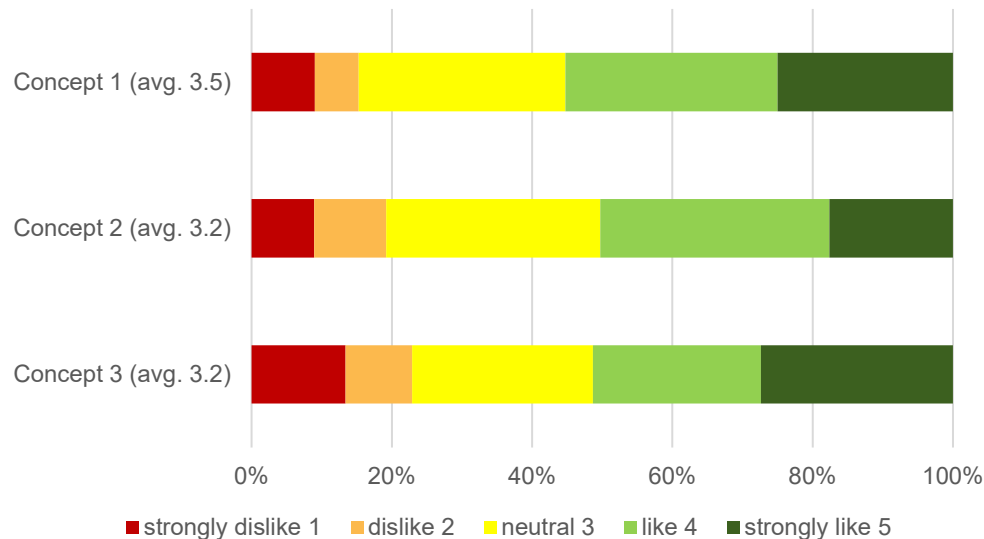


Concept Rank Overall

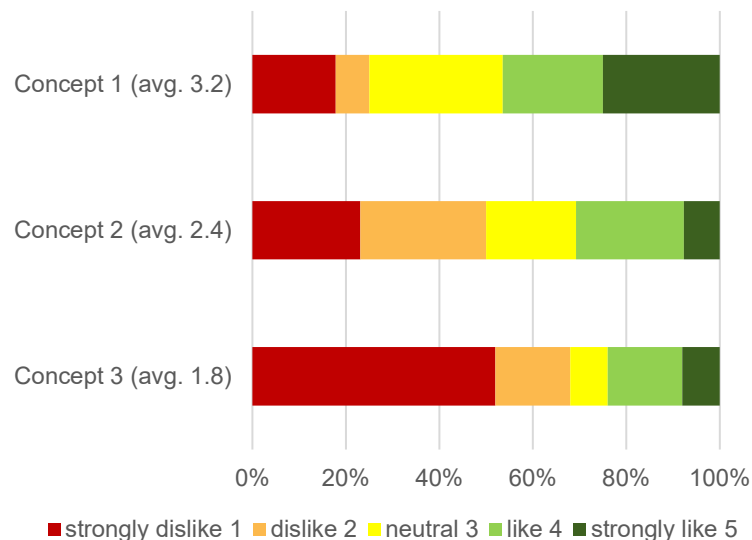
“Please rate the three concepts overall.”

Overall, all 3 concepts score similarly (slightly more positive than neutral). Older respondents and neighbors rank concept 1 higher among others than the main sample. Maritime users strongly dislike concept 3.

Overall Respondents (n. 406)



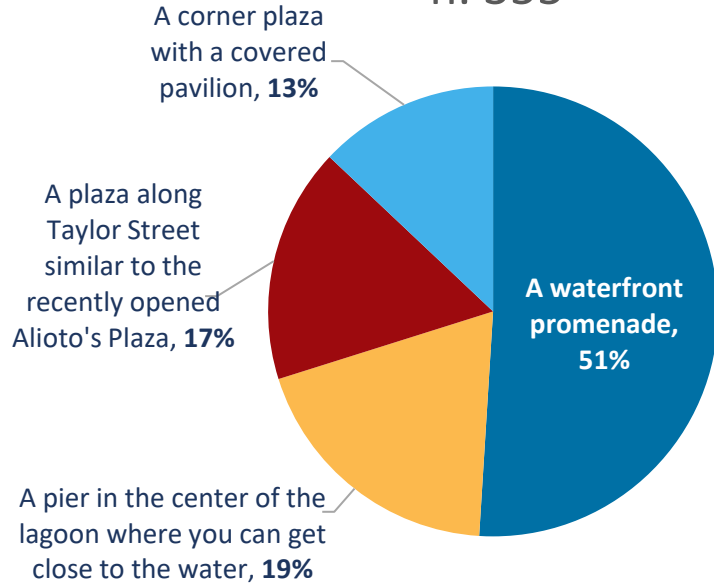
Maritime Users (n. 29)



Open Space

“What kind of open space feels most attractive to you for this area?”

n. 355



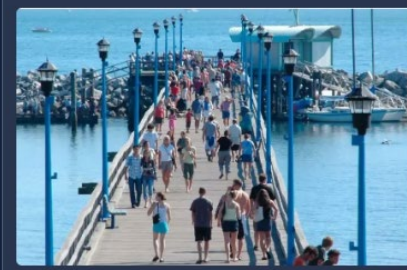
- ☐ A plaza along Taylor Street similar to the recently opened Alioto's Plaza



- ☒ A waterfront promenade



- ☐ A corner plaza with a covered pavilion



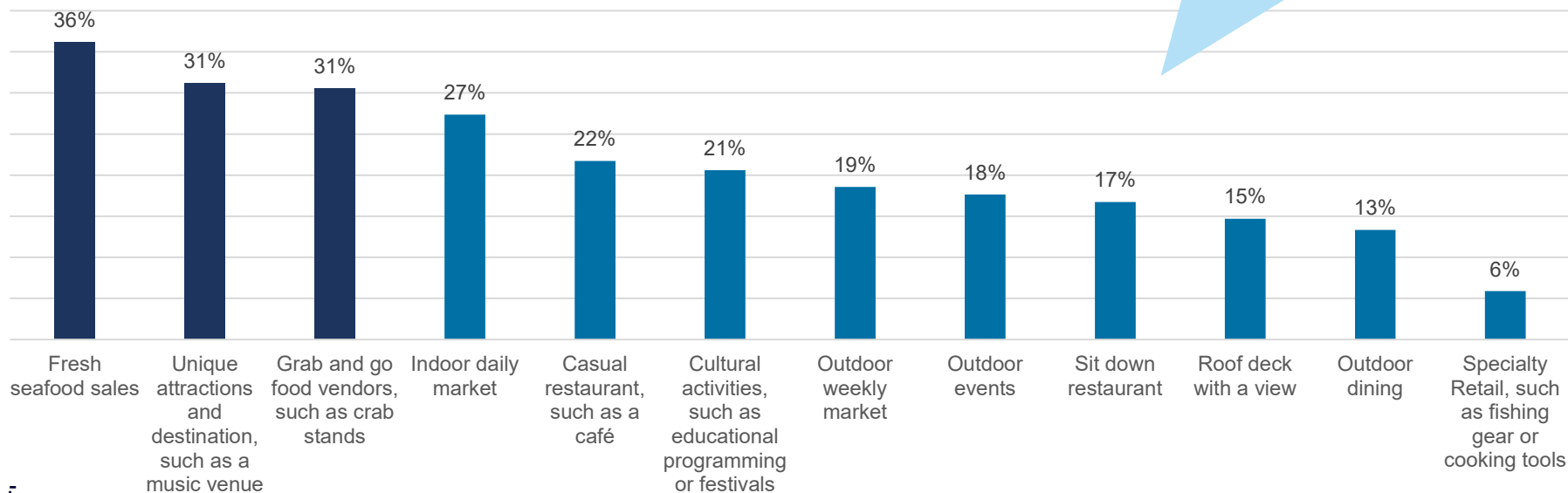
- ☐ A pier in the center of the lagoon where you can get close to the water

Building Uses and Programming

“What types of experiences, events, and activities would make you more likely to visit Fisherman’s Wharf? Pick 3”

n. 442

- **San Francisco locals and neighbors** rank seafood sales highest.
- **Visitors and Bay Area locals** rank grab and go highest.
- **Younger respondents** rank unique attractions highest.
- **Maritime Customers** rank indoor daily market highest.



Survey Results – Open Ended Feedback

Key themes from hundreds of written comments include:

Working Waterfront – general sentiment that fishing operations and needs should be prioritized here, fishing is what makes the area authentic, desire for design and programming to center maritime heritage

Public Realm and Waterfront Access – strong support for waterfront promenades, views, and seating; suggestions about types of open spaces and circulation; desire for more public restrooms and short term parking reserved for maritime customers

Legacy Businesses – love for local legacy businesses and desire to see them supported throughout the project

Historic Character – fear of losing the historic character of the area; differing opinions on strategies to honor historic character and overall comfort with/acceptance of change

Local Flavor – desire for something unique and attractive to San Franciscans, fear of chain businesses and over-commercialization, calls to keep the area “family-friendly” and “affordable,” “the Pike’s Place of San Francisco”

Historic Feedback

Character defining features (most to least referenced):

- Use of the harbor – fishing industry
- Use of buildings – cooking crab, local seafood
- Historic, family-owned businesses – 100 years of Sabella & LaTorre
- Wharf J4 central pier
- Neon Signage
- Nooks and crannies / fine grained urban scale
- The Grotto
- Orientation of buildings onto Taylor
- “Quirky” “whimsical” architecture / urban design where not all buildings look the same

Suggested strategies for honoring character (most to least referenced):

- Keeping crab stands
- Educational and cultural programming
- Interpretive programs/signage
- Boat workshop
- Preservation/reuse of restaurant signage and materials
- Change nothing
- Architectural preservation

Thank you

For questions and ongoing project updates, visit sfport.com/fwforward or email fwf@sfport.com