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**May 8, 2026**

**To:**

President Gail Gilman  
Vice President Stephen Engblom  
Commissioner Willie Adams  
Commissioner Steven Lee  
Commissioner Ken McNeely

**From:**

Michael Martin, Acting Executive Director

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*Michael Martin*  
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**Subject:**

Informational presentation and update on the Port's sole source grant to the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefits District.

**Acting Executive Director's Recommendation:**

Information Only – No Action Required

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On June 13, 2023, the Port Commission approved a sole source grant (Grant) in the not-to-exceed amount of \$2,188,446 over two years to the Fisherman's Wharf Association of San Francisco (DBA Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District) (FWCBD) to develop and implement a multi-faceted public space activation and stewardship program for Port property adjacent to the Fisherman's Wharf Landside District. The Port Commission subsequently approved a grant amendment on June 11, 2024, authorizing the reallocation of \$400,000 from the existing budget and increasing the not-to-exceed amount by an additional \$1,032,200, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$3,220,646, to allow the FWCBD to implement a new initiative creating the Fisherman's Wharf Promenade on the Little Embarcadero.

On May 9, 2025, after evaluating the success of the partnership and recognizing the ongoing need for economic revitalization in the neighborhood, the Port Commission increased the grant by \$3,147,590 for an additional term of 18 months. The new total not-to-exceed amount is \$6,368,236, and the grant expires in January 2027. The following is an update on their grant activities since the May 2025 amendment.

The FWCBD Grant, which started July 1, 2023, is central to the Port's economic recovery strategy in Fisherman's Wharf (The Wharf), by creating a clean, safe, and vibrant waterfront to attract and retain visitors and tenants while the Port works to re-

lease recently closed restaurant facilities in the area. The FWCBD grant outlines stewardship, beautification, events, and marketing activities that serve to sustain and strengthen tourism, draw local visitors, support businesses, and attract new businesses and activation partners to Port properties and the broader Fisherman's Wharf neighborhood, also known as "The Wharf". In addition to helping with the long-term economic vitality of the district, these activities are anticipated to support the Port's balance sheet by rebuilding lease revenues as well as the City's overall economic recovery, given Fisherman's Wharf's importance as a destination for Bay Area residents and visitors.

In the almost three years of the grant, the FWCBD has deployed community ambassadors daily to The Wharf; implemented the Fisherman's Wharf Promenade activation; introduced the successful event series Pier Party at The Wharf, in addition to other lively events; installed hanging flower baskets and new maritime murals; and supported Wharf businesses through marketing and promotional activations. More recently, they have undertaken a weekly pop-up fish market to re-inspire San Franciscans' engagement with our working waterfront. They have also been developing plans to introduce large-scale waterfront events to The Wharf, as well as to help maintain and activate the new public plaza on Taylor Street with educational programming focused on maritime history and education. These improvements and activations have beautified and improved public accessibility while hosting positive, family-friendly, and affordable activities during a time of transition in the neighborhood.

Exciting changes and additions are coming to the Wharf later this year, with a new tenancy on Jefferson Street and the opening of the new Alioto's Plaza as the initial delivery of the Fisherman's Wharf Forward project. The FWCBD is planning to celebrate and help support these new attractions under the FWCBD Grant until its expiration. The Port continues to develop plans to ensure the services and activations that have been successful here can be sustained with the continued economic recovery and further development of the district.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE**

### Economic Growth

The work of the FWCBD is intended to contribute to the effort to attract new tenants to vacant facilities and restore Port revenues to pre-pandemic levels through beautification and activation, increased marketing efforts, and targeted building improvements in Fisherman's Wharf. Improvements in the look and feel of Fisherman's Wharf have been observed by all and have contributed to a positive leasing environment, resulting in three new Port leases on Jefferson, two new operating agreements on Jefferson, and one lease in progress at the ground floor of Fisherman's Grotto.

### Equity

The FWCBD grant equitably advances public benefits that appeal to and attract a diverse population to the waterfront. The Port and its partners strive to ensure equal access to opportunities, particularly for BIPOC-owned and local business enterprises.

### Public Collaboration

Through the grant, FWCBD partners with area businesses and helps identify issues and implement responsive solutions. The Little Embarcadero activation has been successful due to the hyperlocal engagement between FWCBD and the adjacent Port tenants. This happened both in the context of design and continues in the program's day-to-day management efforts.

### **BACKGROUND**

The FWCBD grant is designed to implement a multi-faceted public space activation and stewardship program for the Port properties adjacent to those maintained by FWCBD, complementing the existing efforts within its district boundaries. The overarching goal is to revitalize and reposition the entire district as an important destination for residents and tourists.

In the past year since the grant was amended, FWCBD has accomplished an impressive list that includes the following:

**Stewardship Assistance** – FWCBD has implemented a robust stewardship program that supports daily use of Fisherman's Wharf's public spaces, with a particular focus on comfort, ensuring safety, and quality of experience for visitors. Community ambassadors set up tables, seating, and activation elements in public spaces daily and act as monitors at Fisherman's Wharf Promenade. Ambassadors also spot and respond to cleanliness issues such as litter and Big Belly garbage receptacle issues, and address quality of life issues, including homeless encampments, graffiti, and illegal vending in concert with Port maintenance and security teams and other city agencies. In the past year, ambassadors completed the following:

- 6,470 pan and broom sweeps of Port block faces
- 2,620 bags of trash collected (117,900 lbs.)
- 4,977 instances of overflowing trash cans
- 4,582 instances of graffiti or stickers on Port property
- 2,491 quality of life/wellness checks
- Initiated 170,231 hospitality engagements along the Fisherman's Wharf Promenade and an additional 131,134 hospitality engagements throughout the rest of Fisherman's Wharf Port property.

**Beautification Elements** – FWCBD developed and implemented small-scale beautification projects and temporary amenities that facilitate area use and reduce blight, such as temporary murals and art installations, and landscaping elements. In the past year, FWCBD completed:

- Live flower baskets were recently installed along Jefferson and Taylor Streets, just in time for summer.
- FWCBD supported the installation by Big Art Loop of a temporary sculpture, Desert Shark, in the Pier 45 plaza.

**Outdoor Events and Storefront Activations** – FWCBD developed and implemented regular event programming for the area's public spaces, with a focus on adding new kinds of family-friendly activation in addition to concert events. In the past year, FWCBD completed the following activations:

- In Summer 2025, in partnership with local wineries, the FWCBD hosted its first **Wine Walk** along the Fisherman's Wharf Promenade.
- In Summer 2025, FWCBD hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of **Pier Party at The Wharf** with eight concerts from June to October. FWCBD partnered with Franco Finn and Spot On Productions to elevate Pier Party, bringing in larger bands and helping promote the concert series.
- In October 2025, FWCBD collaborated with SF Fleet Week Association to quickly pivot **Fleet Fest** to the triangle lot in Fisherman's Wharf during the government shutdown, securing a vital long-term partner for The Wharf. Featuring a variety of entertainment, vintage and military car shows, and booths from various emergency services, the weekend positioned The Wharf as a key site for Fleet Week programming in future years.
- Hosted 17 small-scale activations, including:
  - A **Sunset Sip & Paint** event hosted by a local artist/woman-owned small business owner.
  - A free **summer dance class series** in partnership with SF-based artists from Rae Studios.
  - Two **arts and crafts workshops** with local nonprofit SCRAP SF.
  - **MerryTime Market**, in celebration of the holidays, featuring San Francisco small businesses and artists.
  - Two **Wharf Wednesdays** at Port tenant restaurants. This new initiative pushes consumers directly into businesses by offering free to low-cost programming at different restaurants throughout The Wharf.
- Utilizing new California State Fish Market legislation, the FWCBD partnered with the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association to host a weekly **pop-up fish market** on Pier 47. The fish market sells locally caught filets of fresh caught fish at market rate, and a service to cook and crack crab caught by local fishers and sold from nearby boats. Since January, the fish market has served 704 customers. The market will be extended through September and is preparing to welcome salmon back after a three-year hiatus.
- Hosted a two-day family-friendly event, **Warm Up at The Wharf**, in celebration of the Super Bowl. The event featured sensory play activities hosted by local business Oogubi, an agility course by Golden Gate CrossFit, and a digital football simulator by Interactive Entertainment. One important takeaway: The Wharf is *the premier* family-friendly destination in San Francisco.
- Hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> **Crab Crawl** event in March 2026, attracting over 200 visitors and engaging six Fisherman's Wharf restaurants. The Franciscan served 174 crab dishes, and Palette Tea House (a landside restaurant) leveraged the Crab Crawl

audience to sell additional offerings through wine pairings. This creative approach signals what's possible with this type of district-wide program.

- Worked with the Board of Supervisors to pass the **Fisherman's Wharf Entertainment Zone** Legislation. The FWCBD will host the first Entertainment Zone events this summer. During events, Port bars and restaurants within the activated Entertainment Zone area will be able to sell to-go alcohol beverages.
- FWCBD hosted **experiential activations** with Harry Styles' unisex lifestyle brand, Pleasing, an activation with Nike during Super Bowl weekend, and a retail pop-up location for JEB Enterprises/Legends merchandise the month leading up to the Super Bowl. All revenue collected from these activations is being reinvested into programming and services on Port property.

**Marketing** – FWCBD continued marketing the area through social media, press, and potential tenant engagement. Their efforts generated the following attention:

- Published 455 social media posts across Fisherman's Wharf social media accounts, resulting in over 2.4 million social media views across Fisherman's Wharf accounts.
- In August 2025, FWCBD collaborated with Port staff to pitch a press release covering improvements along Fisherman's Wharf Promenade. The story was picked up by the San Francisco Chronicle, which published a story featuring Promenade improvements and upcoming Port projects on the waterfront.
- Fleet Fest activities in Fisherman's Wharf generated 19 pieces of coverage across outlets like SF Chronicle, NBC Bay Area, SFGATE, and ABC7, with 37k estimated views across all pieces.
- FWCBD and the Port collaborated on a press release to announce Dungeness crab season and promote the pop-up Fish Market at The Wharf. This resulted in 14 stories with approximately 353k views.
- Conducted outreach to neighboring communities, like North Beach, Chinatown, Russian Hill, and the Marina, with postcards and through partners.
- Engaged with local social media influencers to promote events like the Fisherman's Wharf Crab Crawl and Pier Party at The Wharf.

**Fisherman's Wharf Promenade** – In 2024, FWCBD engaged Street Plans, an urban design firm, to guide FWCBD and Port staff through the installation of plaza improvements that included landscaped planters, decorative pergolas, shipping containers for pop-ups, including a staffed welcome kiosk, and movable furniture. In Summer 2025, FWCBD and Street Plans implemented a series of ground murals depicting fish swimming throughout the area. FWCBD was also able to open The Berry's Boba in one of the temporary shipping container kiosks. It has been an extremely successful pop-up, and FWCBD has extended its agreement through the end of the FWCBD license.

**Advocacy Efforts** – Over the past year, FWCBD has strengthened relationships with key City leaders through consistent engagement and a series of district walks. This includes walks with Mayor Daniel Lurie, Supervisor Danny Sauter, District Attorney

Brooke Jenkins, Central Station Police Captain Christopher Del Gandio, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Office of Small Business, SF Planning, SF Municipal Transportation Agency, and SF Travel. FWCBD has collaborated with Port leadership on all of these walks, highlighting our strong and successful partnership, and increasing visibility on Port-led projects and district priorities in The Wharf. Advocacy efforts have resulted in greater cohesion between the district, City leadership, and stakeholders. Most tangibly, it led to the return of the SFPD foot beat officers in March of 2026.

## **RESULTS TO DATE**

**Visitor Data** – Fisherman's Wharf (Portside and Landside - Pier 39 to Ghirardelli Square) saw nearly 11.5 million unique domestic visitors in 2025, surpassing 2024's total of 10.9 million and continuing a steady recovery post-pandemic. That momentum has carried into 2026, with March bringing in 1 million domestic visitors, a milestone that signals The Wharf is approaching its pre-pandemic footing. Monthly domestic visitation throughout 2025 remained consistently strong, with summer peaks reaching 1.3 million in July and year-end numbers holding well above 800,000 even in traditionally slower months.

**Sales** – Based on recent reported sales by Port tenants, there have been material increases in sales in 2026 as compared to the same periods in 2025. Sales were up more than 20% in several cases. While a number of factors contributed, including weather and the Super Bowl, the continued focus on events, activations, and marketing of the district seems to be supporting improved tenant activity and patronage.

**Interviews** – In a series of interviews, online surveys, and other stakeholder feedback collected in 2025 and 2026, visitors expressed high satisfaction with events, and area businesses noted increases in foot traffic corresponding to activations like Pier Party, Fleet Fest, Warm Up at The Wharf, and other programs. Business owners broadly recognized that these events helped sustain and, in some cases, improve revenues, even in a challenging year without the Blue Angels air show during Fleet Week. Comments gathered included praise for the effectiveness of the community ambassador program: "it's prettier and cleaner than it's ever been." Other thoughtful feedback included sharing gratitude for the energy and liveliness brought to The Wharf by concerts and activations, the high quality and family-friendly nature of Fleet Fest, and the growing popularity of the Pier Party concert series. Area businesses and visitors were also very pleased with the Fisherman's Wharf Promenade improvements, noting the removal of unpermitted vendors, the addition of play-oriented furniture that has been a hit with visitors of all ages, and the overall transformation of the promenade into a more welcoming and vibrant waterfront destination.

## **UPCOMING PLANS**

FWCBD is poised to become a key partner in launching the first phase of Fisherman's Wharf Forward in the summer of 2026, which is creating a new plaza in place of the former Alioto's restaurant.

- **Stewardship:** FWCBD will expand its stewardship efforts to launch Fisherman’s Wharf Forward activations, starting with the new Alioto’s Plaza in Summer 2026. They are currently developing a soft-launch event partnering with Sabella La Torre and the future Grotto ground-floor tenant. The FWCBD will seamlessly fold the new plaza into its existing community ambassador stewardship program.
- **Beautification:** FWCBD is partnering with the Port to place window coverings on the Taylor Street buildings that remain vacant. Additionally, the three-year-old banners on Jefferson Street will be replaced this late spring. FWCBD will also extend the existing colorful murals in the Crab Wheel Plaza to the west end of Jefferson Street. They will install a colorful, interactive light canopy over the Crab Wheel Plaza in late 2026. This light canopy will complement the future light canopy above the new plaza on Taylor Street.
- **Educational Programs:** In partnership with district stakeholders, the FWCBD will be curating maritime history and educational programming for the new plaza, such as: *The History of Fisherman’s Wharf; A Working Waterfront; Sustainable Fishing Practices; Stewardship of the Waterfront.*
- **Events:** FWCBD has contracted local event producer, Into the Streets, to introduce large-scale events to the waterfront. FWCBD will host its 4<sup>th</sup> season of Pier Party at The Wharf (including a new Pier Party After Dark concept on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month), a Wine & Oyster festival, a Car and Dog Show, Fleet Fest, and a Chowder Competition, which will return for the first time since the pandemic.

## BUDGET TO DATE

On June 13, 2023, the Port Commission approved an initial sole-source grant in the not-to-exceed amount of \$2,188,446 over two years to the FWCBD. The Port Commission subsequently approved a grant amendment on June 11, 2024, authorizing the reallocation of \$400,000 from the existing budget and increasing the not-to-exceed amount by an additional \$1,032,200, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$3,220,646, to allow the FWCBD to implement a new initiative creating the Fisherman’s Wharf Promenade on the Little Embarcadero. On May 9, 2025, after evaluating the success of the partnership and recognizing the ongoing need for economic revitalization in the neighborhood, the Port Commission increased the grant by \$3,147,590 for an additional term of 18 months. The new total not-to-exceed amount is \$6,368,236, and the grant expires in January 2027.

As noted in Table 1, below, the FWCBD has a FY 2025-26 budget of \$2,589,064, which includes \$2,346,486 grant funds and \$218,776 generated by vendor partners operating on the Fisherman’s Wharf Promenade on the Little Embarcadero. To date, they have spent \$1,371,205, leaving \$1,194,057 remaining in the current fiscal year to implement the exciting stewardship, beautification, education programs, and events ahead. This will leave \$1,200,000 available for FWCBD to continue in the final six months of the grant term.

**Table 1: FWCBD Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget**

| <b>Grant Category</b>                                    | <b>FY24/25 Carryover</b> | <b>FY25/26 Budget</b> | <b>TOTAL Budget</b> | <b>YTD Expenses*</b> | <b>Remaining Balance</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Admin  | -                        | \$100,000             | <b>\$100,000</b>    | \$78,749             | \$21,251                 |
| Marketing  | \$8,000                  | \$84,250              | <b>\$92,250</b>     | \$33,834             | \$58,416                 |
| Events & Activations                                     | -                        | \$316,600             | <b>\$316,600</b>    | \$195,504            | \$121,096                |
| Infrastructure Maintenance                               | \$31,500                 | \$101,740             | <b>\$133,240</b>    | \$17,754             | \$115,486                |
| Promenade Management                                     | -                        | \$255,000             | <b>\$255,000</b>    | \$136,720            | \$118,280                |
| Beautification   | \$262,396                | \$165,000             | <b>\$427,396</b>    | \$67,806             | \$359,590                |
| Stewardship  | \$97,000                 | \$925,000             | <b>\$1,022,000</b>  | \$745,471            | \$276,529                |
| <b>Subtotal, Grant</b>                                   | <b>\$398,896</b>         | <b>\$1,947,590</b>    | <b>\$2,346,486</b>  | <b>\$1,275,838</b>   | <b>\$1,070,648</b>       |
| Partnerships - Promenade Management & Marketing Programs | \$17,740                 | \$201,036             | \$218,776           | \$95,367             | \$123,409                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$416,636</b>         | <b>\$2,148,626</b>    | <b>\$2,565,262</b>  | <b>\$1,371,205</b>   | <b>\$1,194,057</b>       |

**CONCLUSION**

The FWCBD Grant remains central to the Port’s economic recovery strategy in Fisherman’s Wharf by creating a clean, safe, and vibrant waterfront that will attract and retain visitors and tenants.

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