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July 10, 2026

To:

Vice President Stephen Engblom
Commissioner Willie Adams
Commissioner Rich Lee
Commissioner Ken McNeely

From:

Michael Martin, Acting Executive Director

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Michael Martin
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Subject:

Informational presentation on Fisherman's Wharf waterside improvements.

Acting Executive Director's Recommendation:

Information Only – No Action Required

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Port has partnered with the Fisherman's Wharf community and invested significant resources over the past five years to support the Wharf's recovery and renewal, after the COVID-19 economic downturn and the loss of the Pier 45 Shed C to fire. Numerous improvements have been delivered to date, including the installation of the Wharf J9 float dock, removal of blighted buildings and construction of an overlook at the former smokehouse, public realm upgrades along the Little Embarcadero, and deployment of dedicated security and cleanliness ambassadors alongside enforcement of unpermitted vending activities. Highly visible projects, including the construction of a new plaza at the former Alioto's restaurant site and the design of the once-in-a-generation resilience project to secure the Taylor Street shoreline, have been the focus of prior Port Commission briefings and extensive community engagement.

In this memorandum, Port staff highlight several waterside projects that are underway and near-term and may be less visible to visitors but are fundamental to supporting the backbone of the Wharf, especially the fishers. These waterside improvements range from targeted repairs to major facility upgrades, all of which address infrastructure that fishers rely on daily. The projects have been shaped and refined through listening sessions, community meetings, one-on-one conversations with berth holders, and Port staff's operational insights.

Collectively, these efforts will materially improve Wharf operations in the near term. Key outcomes will include:

- enhanced navigation within the Inner Lagoon;
- structural stabilization of the Pier 45 west apron, the center of fishing operations and processing in Fisherman's Wharf;
- replacement of the decades-old ice machine;
- critical repairs to the fuel dock to enable re-tenancy;
- replacement of 15 fender piles within the Inner and Outer Lagoon and
- focused pile repair work on at-risk portions of Pier 47.

Additional initiatives will improve aesthetic lighting and deliver new interpretive materials so that visitors and workers alike can appreciate and reflect on the cultural and maritime heritage that continues to draw people to Fisherman's Wharf.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

The proposed item supports the [Port's 2026-30 Strategic Plan](#) by advancing the following goals:

Exceptional Service

Deliver a safe, clean, and thriving waterfront to improve the quality of life for San Francisco residents and visitors by providing well-managed waterfront assets.

Economic Growth

Grow portfolio and expand partnerships to contribute to San Francisco's long-term prosperity. Invest in maritime facilities and public spaces to maximize long-term leasing opportunities, support diverse users, enhance the visitor experience, and increase jobs.

Evolve

Enhance the waterfront experience and adapt the Port to be an equitable, accessible, and economically successful destination that supports San Francisco and the region.

Resilience

Protect people, San Francisco neighborhoods, and critical infrastructure from flooding, seismic risk, and climate change.

Equity

Strengthen equity, access, and opportunity across Port programs, spaces, and the organizational workforce to ensure the waterfront serves and reflects all San Franciscans.

BACKGROUND – FROM PANDEMIC TO FISHERMAN’S WHARF FORWARD

Fisherman’s Wharf is home to San Francisco’s fishing industry, which includes fishing boats berthed at Fisherman’s Wharf’s Inner and Outer Lagoons and Hyde Street Harbor, fish processors based at Pier 45, and the many restaurants and retail shops that serve visitors drawn to the Wharf. Most of Pier 45 is dedicated to fishing industry operations and fish handling businesses that receive, prepare, and distribute seafood throughout San Francisco, the Bay Area, and beyond. Together, these facilities make San Francisco one of the largest fishing industry centers along the California coast.

In recent years, however, the Wharf community has faced significant challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic caused major disruptions, forcing many restaurants to close and reducing tourism to the area, while the loss of Pier 45 Shed C in 2020 to fire compounded economic hardships. Also in 2020, the Port’s Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment identified Fisherman’s Wharf as one of the Port’s most densely populated areas vulnerable to earthquake, highlighting the need for long-term planning and major investment.

In response to these multipronged issues, the Port partnered closely with the Fisherman’s Wharf community and invested substantial resources to support recovery, delivering:

- improvements such as the Wharf J9 floating dock;
- public-realm upgrades along the Little Embarcadero, dedicated security and cleanliness ambassadors, and replacement of the red-tagged smokehouse with an overlook;
- enhanced enforcement against unpermitted vending;
- pop-up vendor and entertainment activations, in collaboration with the Fisherman’s Wharf Community Benefits District;
- a new lease with the Skystar Wheel to bring a new attraction to the area;
- the under-construction plaza at the former Alioto’s restaurant site;
- now-underway waterside improvements; and
- now-underway design work on a once-in-a-generation resilience project to secure the Taylor Street shoreline, backed by major City bond funding.

The construction projects - the three final bullets of the above list - have been brought under a unified initiative known as Fisherman’s Wharf Forward.¹ Fisherman’s Wharf Forward is a two-phase initiative designed to stabilize aging infrastructure, support the fishing industry, and improve the public realm. Replacement of the former Alioto’s

¹ While the remainder of this memorandum expands on the improvements referred to in the last bullet above - the waterside improvements - readers may refer to previous staff memoranda for more details, see reports on:

June 10, 22, 2025 <https://www.sfport.com/media/10551/download?inline=>

and on December 9, 2025 [https://www.sfport.com/sites/default/files/2025-](https://www.sfport.com/sites/default/files/2025-12/120925_7b_auth_to_award_construction_contract_no._2894_fishermans_wharf_forward_pl)

[12/120925_7b_auth_to_award_construction_contract_no._2894_fishermans_wharf_forward_pl](https://www.sfport.com/sites/default/files/2025-12/120925_7b_auth_to_award_construction_contract_no._2894_fishermans_wharf_forward_pl)
[aza.pdf](https://www.sfport.com/sites/default/files/2025-12/120925_7b_auth_to_award_construction_contract_no._2894_fishermans_wharf_forward_pl).

building with a new public plaza and an array of waterside improvements is part of Fisherman's Wharf Forward Phase 1.²

While the construction of the new plaza is the subject of broad interest, the Port is also making investments in infrastructure and facilities that are critical to fisher and fish processing operations. The sections below summarize projects, timing, and impact of Port investments.

WATERSIDE IMPROVEMENTS

Based on berth holder input and ongoing safety and operational assessments, Port staff are implementing a series of operational and structural improvements around Fisherman's Wharf to improve in-water infrastructure and supporting facilities.

Pier 45

Pier 45 is a large, maritime hub spanning approximately 4½ acres, anchored by a 1,509-foot u-shaped concrete sheet-pile breakwater along its midsection. This significant pier stands as the northernmost historic pier in the Embarcadero Historic District and serves as the cornerstone of San Francisco's commercial fishing operations. It's home to three sheds dedicated to fish boat operations, handling, and distribution – at Sheds B and D, which also host active berths – while also housing iconic venues like the museum ship USS Pampanito and the Musée Mécanique.

- **Pier 45 apron repairs.** The most significant project on the waterside improvements list, the Port is designing apron repair and replacement for Pier 45, anticipated to cost more than \$35 million. The replacement will be phased across three years, starting in 2027. Port design teams have visited the interior tenant spaces, and staff will coordinate with tenants to facilitate ongoing pier operations during construction.
- **Pier 45 ice machine.** Another significant project, the Port is currently negotiating a contract for the purchase and installation of a new industrial-use ice machine. The multi-million-dollar contract will result in the replacement of the decades-old ice machine, with no loss of ice service during this changeover. Completion is expected in mid-2027.

Pier 47

Pier 47 is a protected pier between Hyde Street Pier and Pier 45 and is home to Scoma's Restaurant, including their main dining room, kitchens, restaurant support space, and fish receiving station. Additionally, the pier supports the fishing bait receiver, general storage buildings, fisher storage lockers, and dozens of vessel berths.

² Phase 2 will include resilience improvements around the Inner Lagoon, including Taylor and Jefferson Streets, and the Pier 45 south edge, based on the 2020 multi-hazard risk assessment findings underscoring the urgency of long-term shoreline improvements.

The Port surveyed piles in this area and identified 95 piles that are recommended for repair or replacement. A smaller selection of the most severely degraded piles among these will be included for near-term repairs this fall, which will improve the western half of the Pier.

Inner Lagoon

The Inner Lagoon at Fisherman's Wharf is the historic heart of the waterfront, serving as a working harbor for fishing vessels, excursion boats, and the classic Monterey fleet. Below is a list of improvements underway and planned in the near-term:

- **Boat access ladders.** Port staff conducted a ladder survey to identify damaged ladders and later replaced the 10 damaged ladders in January 2026. Port staff is also in conversation with “front row” berth holders (i.e., berths located along Jefferson Street in the Inner Lagoon) regarding a new design for those specialized ladders to accommodate visitor use.
- **Power.** Port staff completed operational repairs, standardization of tenant power distribution, and conduit repair projects in March 2026. In addition, structural and conduit repairs at the electrical cabinet on Wharf J3 serving the berths will be completed by August 2026.
- **Operational lighting.** Port staff replaced approximately 25 berth light fixtures at J2, J3, and J4. In addition, by August 2026, 32 gooseneck lights around the entire Lagoon and on Al Scoma Way will be repainted and have their bulbs replaced for consistent lighting.
- **Pile repairs.** The Port conducted a survey of stall piles in this area and identified about 15 piles requiring immediate attention. The Port plans to repair or replace those piles by August 2026. Maritime staff will coordinate with berth holders on any required vessel relocations to facilitate the work.
- **Smokehouse demolition.** The Port completed demolition of the red-tagged Smokehouse building, strengthened a portion of the existing deck, and opened a new public overlook in May 2026. Removal of the damaged structure opened up views of the Inner Lagoon and reduced hazards to in-water infrastructure.
- **Ongoing trash management.** The Port is implementing operational changes to better manage garbage landside and in the Lagoon, including installation of new trash receptacles this summer, routine trash collection within the Lagoon, and procurement of an in-water trash capture device to be installed later in 2026.
- **Security.** Demolition of Alioto's and the dark corridors leading to the Lagoon is expected to improve security in the area by opening up lines of sight. In addition, the Port plans to install new security cameras around the Lagoon, expected to be completed by the end of 2026. The Port is also developing an updated, detailed map of Inner Lagoon berths, which can aid security response.

Fuel Dock

In June of 2026, Pilot Thomas completed remediation and repair of the fuel dock, which ceased operations in 2021 due to fuel leaks. Ongoing monitoring continues, as required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board permit. Port is now working to reactivate the Fuel Dock for diesel service and investigating the feasibility of additional fuel types, including gasoline, alternative fuels, and electrical charging service.

- **Lease.** In February 2026, the Port and Pilot Thomas began initial lease negotiations, which are anticipated to be completed in the Fall of 2026.
- **Supporting repairs to J11.** The Port has designed localized substructure repairs for Wharf J11 to maintain reliable roadway access to Hyde Street Harbor & the Fuel Dock for harbor staff, tenants, berth holders, water taxi patrons, and emergency service workers. Substantial completion is anticipated by early 2027.

Dredging

The Port has permits and a capital budget to dredge areas that provide key access routes to Hyde Street Harbor and the Inner and Outer Lagoons. This project will last approximately 2 months and is planned to be completed by the end of 2027.

Overall District Supporting Improvements

In addition to investments in the Inner Lagoon, Piers 45 and 47, ice machine and fuel dock infrastructure described above, the Port is investing in several improvements to enhance the experience of working and visiting the overall Fisherman's Wharf district.

- **Lighting.** The Port will install new, aesthetic lighting on the land and waterside around the Inner Lagoon, planned for the end of 2026.
- **Harbor Walk interpretive materials.** The Port has developed, with input from local stakeholders, a program of new interpretative materials for installation in the new plaza and around the full Inner Lagoon. The signage will include descriptions of the current and historic fishing industry, Monterey vessels, local catch, and other information for the public to learn more about the unique aspects of the Wharf. The Port plans to install these signs by August 2026.
- **Area-wide parking management.** The Port has designed and will issue new parking program tags to eligible berth holders and tenants for parking at the Wharf. In addition, the Port is partnering with SFMTA for parking enforcement. This area-wide parking management aims to clearly designate areas for permitted parking and vehicles permitted to park in restricted areas, while directing visitors to public parking areas and pay stations.
- **Fish Market.** In January 2026, the Port worked with the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District and the Crab Boat Owners Association to support a pop-up fish market to sell local fish directly to the public. The market operates

outdoors on Saturdays and, when available, provides a service to cook crab purchased off the boat as well as sells fresh filets and smoked fish. As of May 2026, the fish market is located on the overlook at the former Smokehouse site.

CONCLUSION

The Port's coordinated investments at Fisherman's Wharf are stabilizing critical maritime infrastructure while also enhancing the broader district experience for workers, visitors, and the fishing community. Waterside improvements, including pile repairs, apron rehabilitation, and upgraded utilities, will strengthen day-to-day operations and support long-term industry resilience. At the same time, new public spaces, lighting, and interpretive materials will enrich the neighborhood's cultural and historical identity. Together, these efforts position Fisherman's Wharf for a more vibrant, secure, and economically sustainable future.

Attachment A provides a depiction of all waterside improvements at Fisherman's Wharf described in this memorandum.

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Attachment A:

Waterside Improvements Map

Attachment A: Waterside Improvements Map

