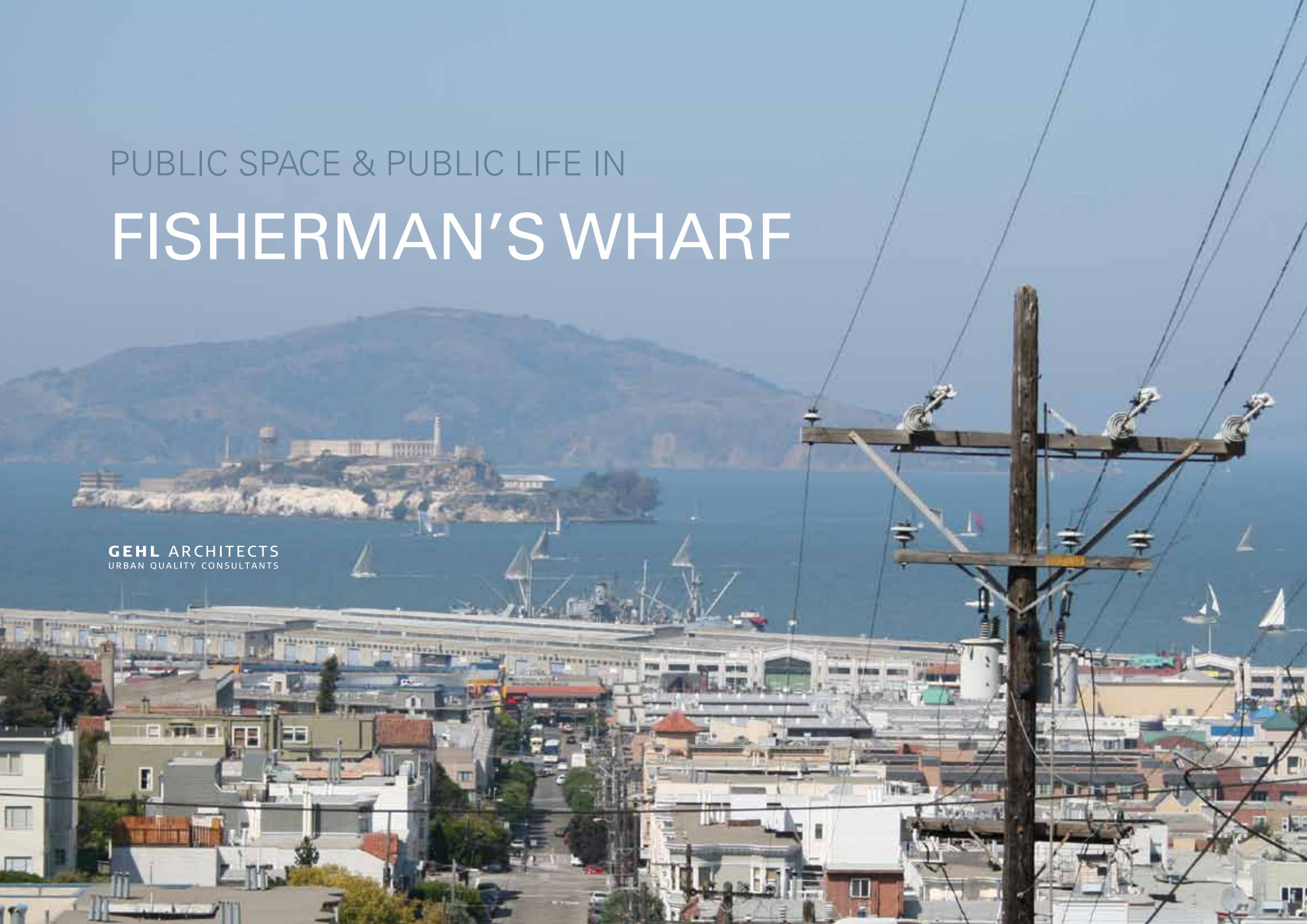


PUBLIC SPACE & PUBLIC LIFE IN

FISHERMAN'S WHARF

GEHL ARCHITECTS
URBAN QUALITY CONSULTANTS



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URBAN QUALITY CONSULTANTS

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In early 2008, the City of San Francisco engaged Gehl Architects to develop a draft proposal outlining ideas for conducting a Public Space & Public Life Study.

Building upon the first proposal from January 2008 and numerous discussions with the City of San Francisco, this document aims to finalize the scope of work and provide the basis of the contract to be executed in July 2008 between Gehl Architects and the City of San Francisco.

Gehl Architects is to utilize their experience and knowledge gained by studying public life and public space in cities around the world to perform in depth people oriented analysis of the Fisherman's Wharf study area in San Francisco. Using this empirical analysis and thorough study of the City from the point of view of pedestrians and cyclists, Gehl Architects will produce a report highlighting problems and potential of selected areas of the City.

Although international best practice forms the basis of our work, we always formulate specific projects according to the unique qualities of a place. Places are different - but given the same opportunities we believe that the people of San Francisco will appreciate the same qualities in the city environment as people elsewhere.

HOW TO READ THE DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION is a presentation of the study in a broader context, and it presents major achievements and improvements.

The Introduction illustrates the overall opportunities for Fisherman's Wharf.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES contents a more detailed description of opportunities and challenges, and an analysis of the actual physical conditions provided for people living and visiting the area. How is the area composed and organised? What are the major conflicts regarding public space and public life?

It also includes studies of pedestrian flows and activities in the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS outlines the overall proposals to improve conditions for public life in the area. The Recommendations should be seen as the vision illustrating the principles for the future design of the area regarding the identified challenges: Waterfront district, walkability, diversity and identity.

APPENDIX contains the collected public life data material such as pedestrian countings, stationary activity surveys and age distribution data.

HOW TO USE THE DOCUMENT

The Public Space & Public Life Report can be seen as a status document in an on-going and longterm proces where the document can serve as a baseline against which future surveys can be compared to identify e.g. changes in culture etc.

The Public Life survey methods presented in the report can be used in connection with future developments and thus surveys can be carried out before and after implementation af new projects as a quality assurance to 'measure' the effect on the use of the public spaces.

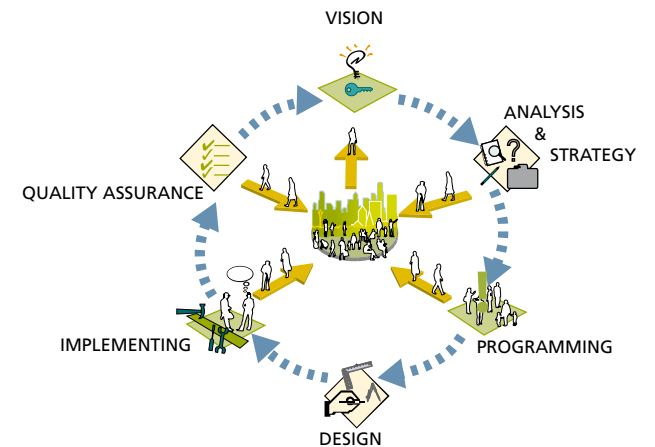


Diagram show the on-going process as a strategic tool to create public spaces of high quality for the users.

WHY GEHL ARCHITECTS?

The work of Gehl Architects is based on the public space research conducted by Jan Gehl. With the human dimension as a starting point Jan Gehl has through the last 30 years worked to improve city environments in Denmark and abroad.

The book “Life between buildings”, originally from 1971 has been translated to a number of languages and is compulsory reading in numerous architecture schools worldwide. “Life between buildings” describes the life that takes place in the spaces created by the buildings in both cities and suburbs and advocates for a stronger effort from planners and architects to understand and create the framework that provides for public life in the best possible way.

The objective for Gehl Architects is to create a greater coherence between the life lived and the planned or existing building structures. Public life is at the top of the agenda and great care is needed to accommodate the people populating our cities.

As part of a working tool Gehl Architects has developed the Public Spaces and Public Life studies (PSPL), which can be used in several contexts. In Copenhagen, PSPL surveys have been conducted every ten years throughout the past forty years. The surveys clearly and thoroughly document the gradual change occurring in this time period and provide empirical evidence of the significant improvement of the quality of city life.

Additionally, follow-up surveys have enabled the municipal government to gather information and inspiration for the further development of the urban spaces and the general public has acquired a valuable understanding and interest in the public realm. This trend has spread to other cities as well. Gehl Architects have performed follow-up surveys in Stockholm in 2005 (follow-up to a 1990 survey), Melbourne in 2004 (follow-up to a 1994 survey) and Perth in 2008 (follow-up to 1993 survey). In all cases, PSPL studies have shown that public realm improvements truly have had a large impact on the quality of public life in the city. Such evidence has proven to be vital in maintaining public interest in further improvement projects, as well as general satisfaction amongst citizens, since residents can see quantifiable evidence of improved quality of life.

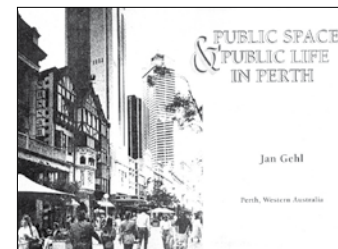
PUBLIC SPACES AND PUBLIC LIFE



Melbourne - 2004 - 3 mio. inhabitants



Adelaide - 2002 - 1.3 mio. inhabitants



Perth - 1993 - 1.2 mio. inhabitants



Wellington - 2004 - 0.3 mio. inhabitants



Copenhagen - 2005 - 1.3 mio. inhabitants



Sydney - 2005 - 4 mio. inhabitants



London - 2003 - 7.5 mio. inhabitants



New York - 2008 - 8 mio. inhabitants

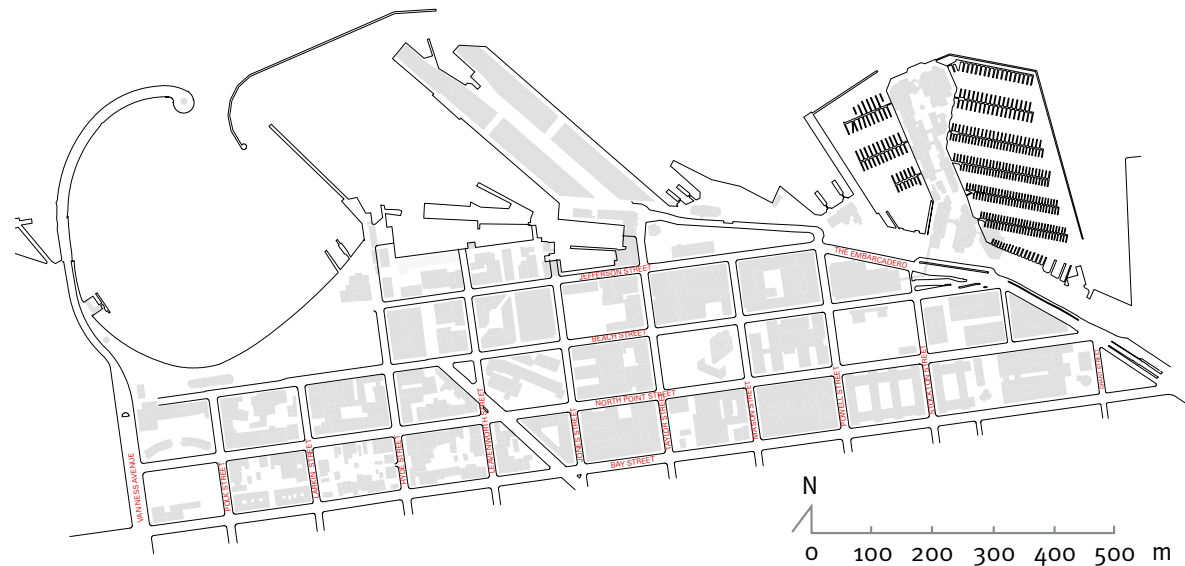
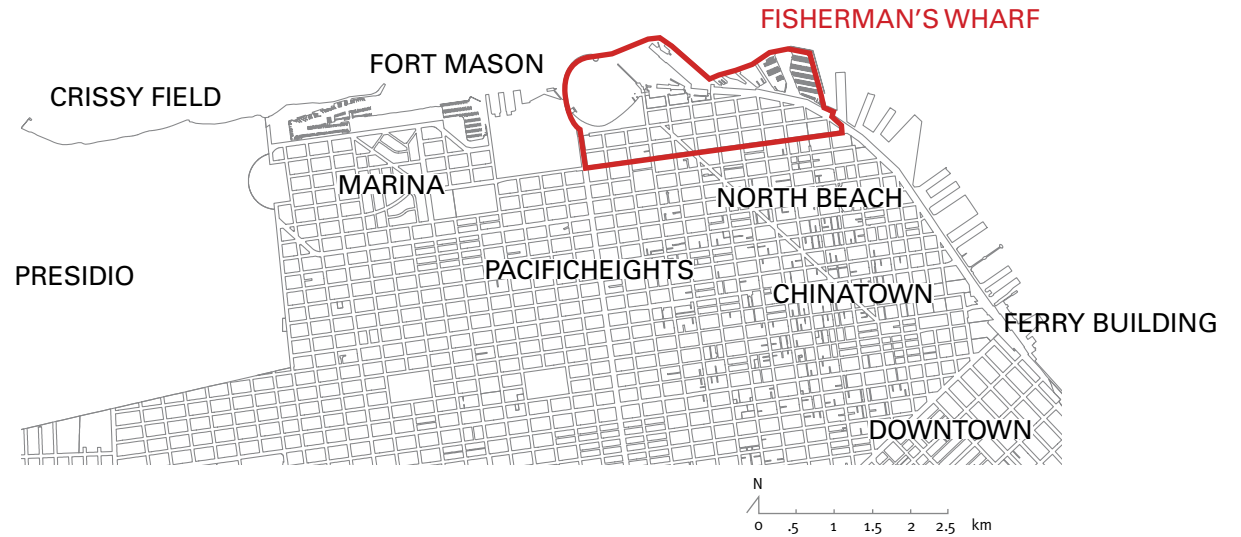
THE STUDY AREA

FISHERMAN'S WHARF IN A CITY CONTEXT

The area of Fisherman's Wharf has a fantastic location in the city of San Francisco. Located on the northern tip of the peninsula, the views of the Bay, the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz are spectacular. At the same time, the lively downtown is within walking distance. The combination of these qualities generates truly a great potential.

The study area is 1700 m long and 450 wide with the bay in the north. The urban grain consist of a strict orthogonal grid system with straight north-south and east-west roads.

The study area offers major tourist destinations, ferry terminals, a harbour for private boats, a fishing industry, a beach, hotels and a residential area.



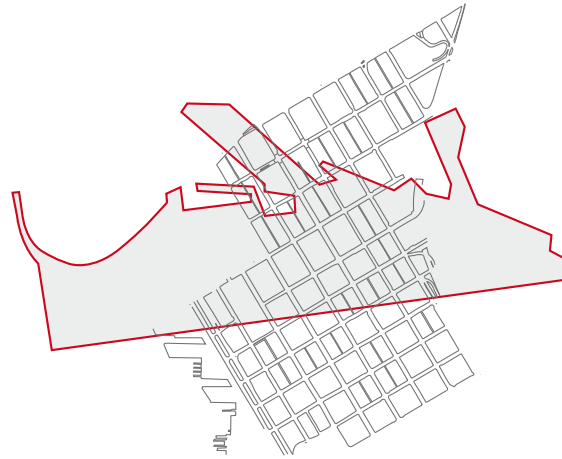
The Wharf has a fantastic location in San Francisco

SCALE REFERENCES

COMPARING; OTHER WELL-KNOWN CITIES

By comparing Fisherman's Wharf with other city districts we can get an idea of size, distances and urban grain. The compared areas are all city centres since Fisherman's Wharf in sizes and pedestrian volumes is more comparable with city centres than other non-downtown areas.

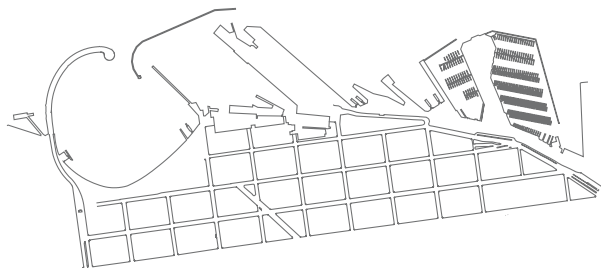
The Fisherman's Wharf has larger blocks in comparison with the shown city centres. Melbourne has similar large blocks in a orthogonal grid.



SEATTLE DOWNTOWN
0.8 KM²



COPENHAGEN CITY CENTER
1.1 KM²



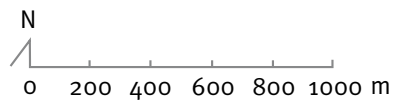
FISHERMAN'S WHARF, SAN FRANCISCO
0.7 KM²



FINANCIAL DISTRICT, SAN FRANCISCO
0.5 KM²



DOWNTOWN MELBOURNE
2.2 KM²



All maps are shown in 1 :25000

WATERFRONTS

DIFFERENT TYPES OF WATERFRONTS

Harbours and waterfronts all over the world are being redeveloped, with varying results. There is a wide range of waterfront types, from the 'waterfront theme park' of Sydney's Darling Harbour, to the more authentic, local character of Granville Island in Vancouver.

Fisherman's Wharf incorporates both the character of a tourist waterfront (Pier 39) as well as an industrial harbour (Pier 45).

Between these extremes there are a range of other types of places at the Wharf, like the quiet character at the beach where the locals swim, and the intense area where the tourists eat crab directly on the street. There is a great variety of restaurants concentrated in the central part, but also spread over the full length of the Wharf.

The particular quality or challenge of Fisherman's Wharf is to maintain the great variation and still have a sense of unity, a special place of high quality. Other waterfronts are more specialized as tourist destinations or local recreation areas. Fisherman's Wharf has the possibility to explore its great span of very different places, its great potential of truly becoming a world class water destination.



TOURIST HARBOUR



RECREATIONAL WATERFRONT



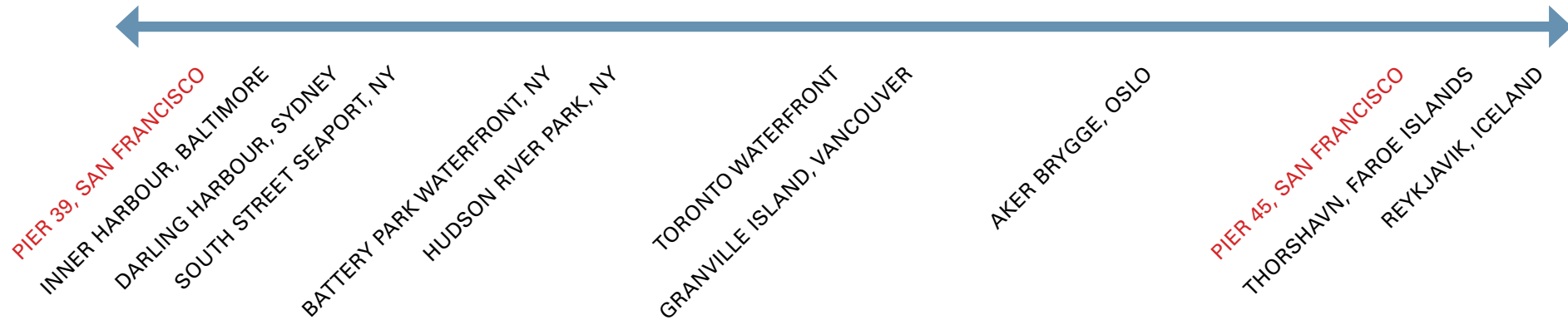
CULTURAL WATERFRONT



MULTIFUNCTIONAL CITY DISTRICT



INDUSTRIAL FISHING HARBOUR



WATERFRONTS

DARLING HARBOUR, SYDNEY
A WATERFRONT THEME PARK



Darling Harbour is a large, very commercial waterfront entertainment district with many tourist attractions. It is separated from the city by heavy road infrastructure but linked with a monorail from the downtown. All is built from scratch: A large convention centre with a big hotel, an aquarium, a ship museum, an IMAX cinema, restaurants, shopping and a Chinese park are the major attractions.

BATTERY PARK, NEWYORK
AN URBAN WATERFRONT PARK



Battery Park and the long stretch of parks on the old piers along the Hudson River are places for New Yorkers to recreate. The different parks are linked with a dedicated skate and bike route all along the waterfront. The parks are well furnished with public tables and benches and offer places to visitors with different characters. There are invitations for all ages and a great variety of places for play and relaxation.

AKER BRYGGE, OSLO
A MULTIFUNCTIONAL CITY DISTRICT



Aker Brygge is a fine waterfront destination for tourists but most of all it is a place, which is heavily used by the people in Oslo, because of its great recreational qualities: Pleasant waterfront walks and plenty of public seating. It is well linked to the city and is a mixed-use city district, which blends old and new buildings. It has lots of shops, restaurants and cafes, but also offices, housing and institutions for children. It is a living city district.

GRANVILLE ISLAND, VANCOUVER
A STRONG LOCAL CHARACTER



Granville Island is special in its dedication to local produce and the special mix of functions. The character of the former industrial site is kept and includes a working cement factory. There is a large farmers' market, an art college, a small shipyard, houseboats in a mix of artisan's studios, hotel, shops, tennis courts and a small beach. There are no chain stores and only local products are sold on the island, which give it a unique character.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

PROGRESS IN AND AROUND THE WHARF

JOSEPH CONRAD PARK NEW LOCAL PUBLIC SPACE



Joseph Conrad Park is one of few public spaces with a local character in the Wharf. It is a green, quiet space that is much needed in the area.

EMBARCADERO FROM FREEWAY TO BOULEVARD



The Embarcadero freeway was torn down in 1991 after being severely damaged in the 1989 earthquake, leaving room for a new people-friendly boulevard.

EAST & WEST PLAZAS NEW PUBLIC SPACES



The construction of the East and West Wharf Plazas has added much needed open public space in the Wharf. The plazas are located close to the water and offer plenty of public benches.

OLD PIERS REMOVED
IMPROVED WATERFRONT ACCESS



The old no longer used piers 43½ are in the process of being demolished, to improve the access to the water.

ACCESS TO PIER
IMPROVED WATERFRONT ACCESS



Hyde Street Harbour - east of Hyde Street pier - give access to see the active fishing fleet.

PROCESS FOR IMPROVEMENT
CBD, CITY OF SF & PORT INITIATIVES



The Fisherman's Wharf CBD (Community Benefit District) has initiated a number of surveys and workshops for improving the Wharf.

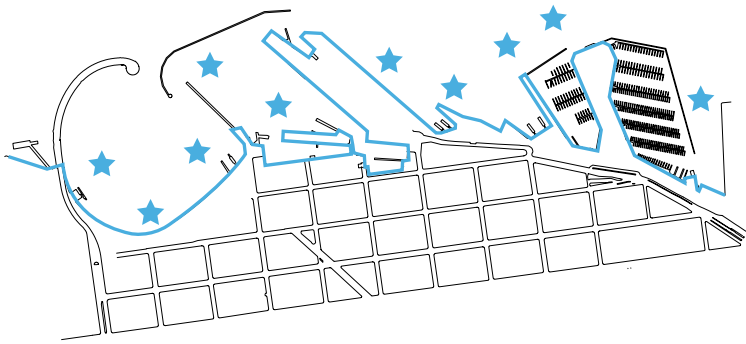
The City of San Francisco is working to improve streets and public spaces in Fisherman's Wharf as well as the City as a whole.

The Port, the main waterfront land owner, is working on a number of projects to improve the waterfront and adjacent areas.

MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

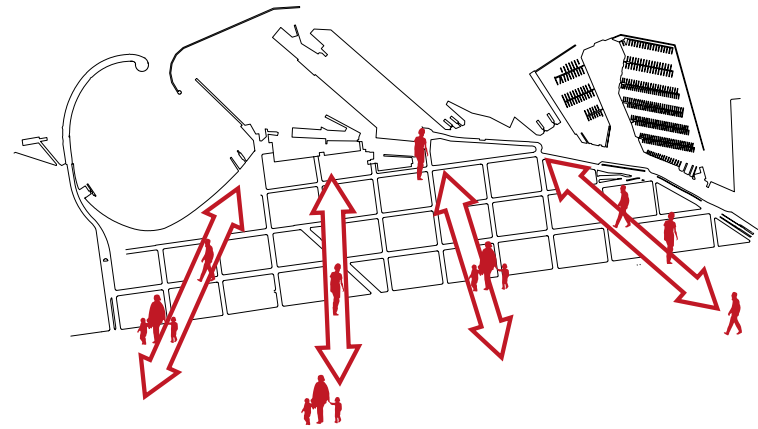
ACCESS THAT COULD BE MORE EXPLOITED

PROXIMITY TO THE BAY



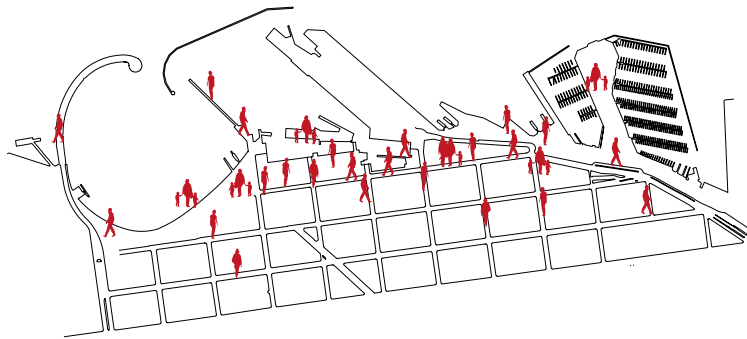
The Bay is the most important amenity of Fisherman's Wharf. The Bay provides views and scenery as well as being the obvious location for all sorts of activities.

PROXIMITY TO DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO



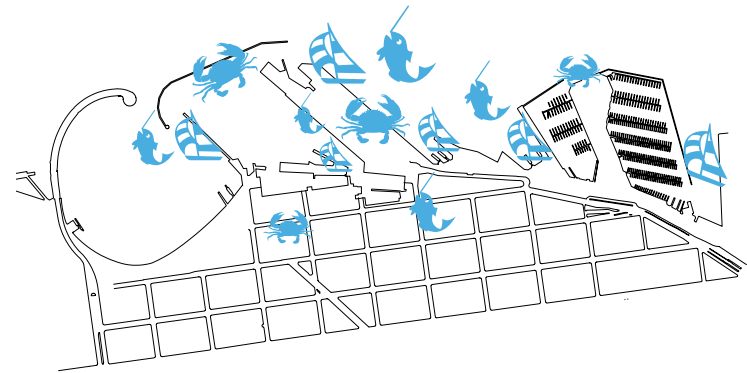
Fisherman's Wharf is close to many popular city districts and destinations. North Beach, ChinaTown and Fort Mason are well within walking distance. The recreational cycling route - The Bay Trail - is located just outside Fisherman's Wharf.

A POPULAR DESTINATION



Fisherman's Wharf is among the ten most visited attractions in the US. The large amount of people spending time in the area will make it possible to expand the many different types of activities and improve the quality of the district.

LOCAL HISTORY AND FISHING INDUSTRY



Fisherman's Wharf has a strong history of the shipping and fishing industries. Unfortunately, visitors find it difficult to access what remains of these historical industries today. There is still an active fishing fleet in the area, adding to the authenticity of the Wharf.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE CONSIDERED

WEAK LINKS TO THE WATER



- Few views
- Few attractive routes to the water

INACTIVE WATERFRONT



- No continuous route along the water
- Few attractive spaces by the water

POOR PEDESTRIAN LINKS TO DOWNTOWN



- Lack of good pedestrian links from SF - the city centre
- Few destinations in the southern part

POOR CONDITIONS FOR WALKING AND CYCLING



- Lack of coherent pedestrian network
- Narrow and congested sidewalks
- Lack of cycling network

LACK OF PUBLIC SPACE
HIERARCHY AND NETWORK



- Lack of attractive public spaces
- Undefined public realm

FEW ATTRACTIONS
FOR LOCALS



- Tourist dominated shops and attractions
- Few activities for children and locals
- Few attractions and activities out of summer season
- Segregation of functions and monofunctional zones

LACK OF DISTRICT
IDENTITY



- Weak sense of place
- No coherent identity unifying the different areas

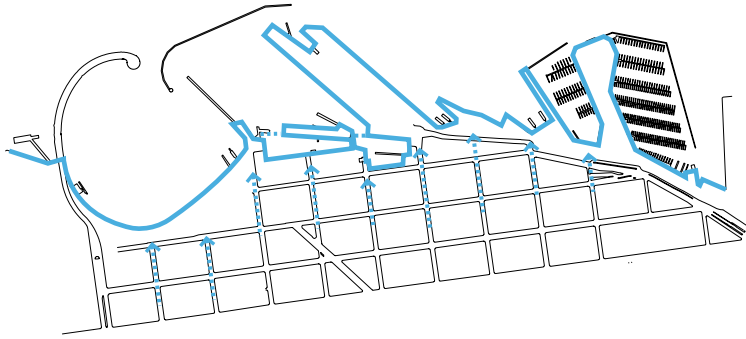
UNINVITING AND POOR
STREETScape



- Many unattractive, and closed frontages

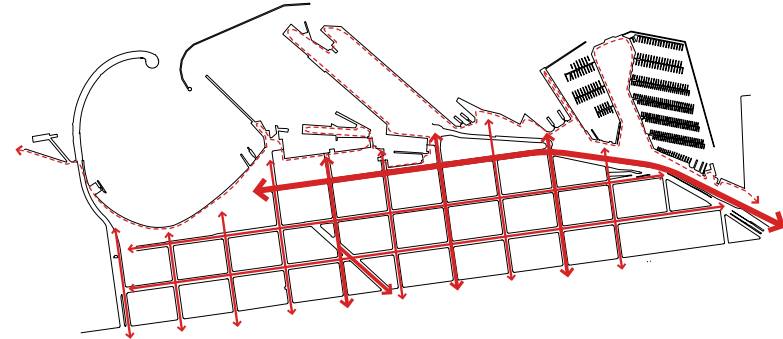
MAJOR VISIONS

A WATERFRONT DISTRICT



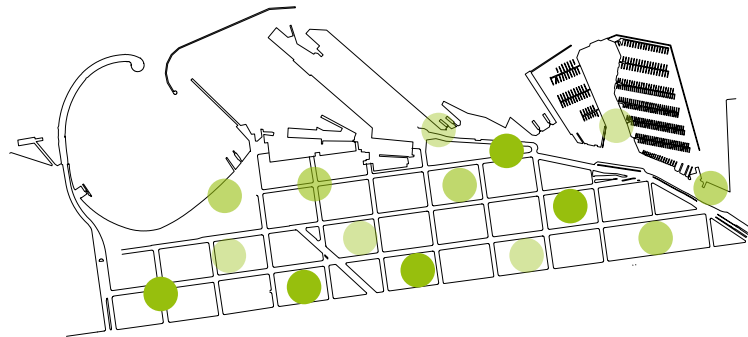
- Improve connections to the waterfront - views and routes
- Create an uninterrupted waterfront path
- Encourage Bay-related attractions, activities and functions

A WALKABLE DISTRICT



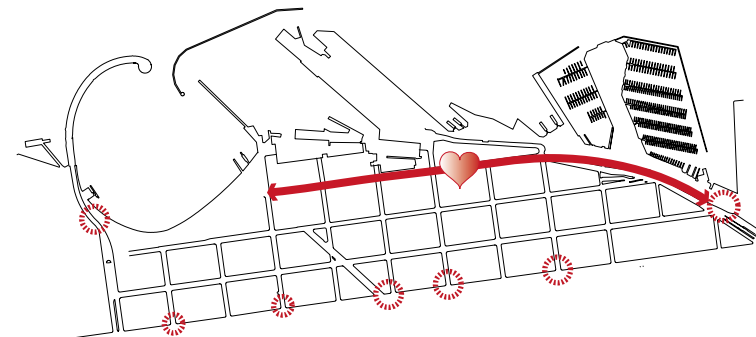
- Improve the pedestrian environment in the Wharf
- Improve the North-South connections to SF - the city centre
- Improve cycling conditions
- Make parking more efficient, remove surface parking

A DIVERSE DISTRICT



- Create a public space hierarchy
- Encourage activities for people of all ages
- Encourage a mix of functions throughout the area

A STRONG DISTRICT IDENTITY

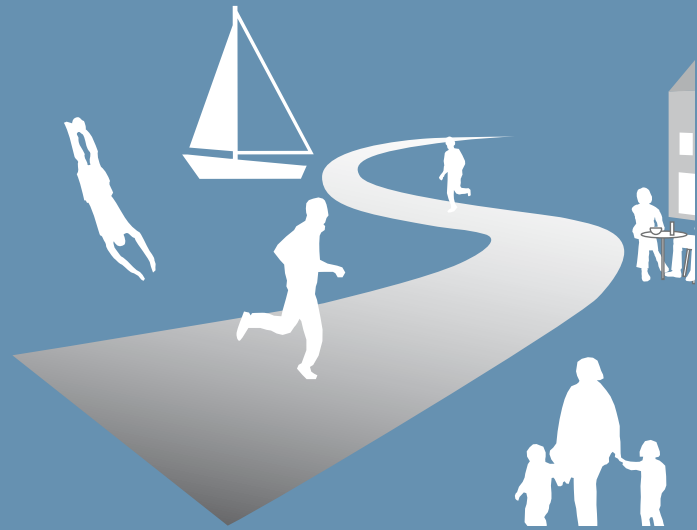


- Create the 'Heart' of the Wharf, and make Jefferson Street and The Embacadero the element that ties the area together
- Improve the 'Gates' to the Wharf
- Celebrate local destinations and character
- Improve ground floor frontage quality





OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



IDENTITY

FISHERMAN'S WHARF

A PLACE WITH GREAT COMPLEXITY

Looking towards Fisherman's Wharf from Russian and Telegraph hills, there are breathtaking views of the Bay, Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge. Seen from the Bay there are just as brilliant views of Fisherman's Wharf, with its varied buildings and piers sticking out in the water and the city as a backdrop. Simply wonderful and promising views of a great destination.

When the visitor gets down to the Wharf, it is a mixed blessing. Here are many different things to see and experience, but of very varying quality. The tourist can find shops, activities and places, which could be in any city, anywhere, and places and experiences that are genuine and rooted in the specific history and life of Fisherman's Wharf as a working urban waterfront.

Here are activities and places with a genuine history. The fishing fleet and warehouses are still here, although few tourists find them. Here are waterfront restaurants with history, as well as historic ships. Here you can eat freshly boiled Dungeness crabs right on the street or in restaurants. Surprisingly, you can not easily buy fish at the Wharf.



Looking at the Wharf and the Bay from the city.

San Francisco sourdough bread is baked here and you can see the bakers make it and you can buy the bread on the spot.

It is not so easy to take a walk along the water as one would expect from the distant views. It is possible to find a couple of places where one can walk out and see the Bay, like at Pier 39. A walk along the water, where one could experience the Bay, the fishing ships, the sea lions, the historic ships, the restaurants, which take advantage of the views to the water, and all the other water-based things worth seeing, however is not possible except in bits and pieces and with long detours. There are simply few invitations to go and experience the Wharf and its relation to the water.

Jefferson Street, which links both ends of the Wharf, runs east to west from crowded tourist destinations to local places. It runs through areas of different character, from nicely maintained places to dirty, messy places and it is the most used route through the Wharf.



Looking at the Wharf from the Bay.

When have you arrived at the Wharf? Is it at the parking structure at Pier 39, or at the corner of Jefferson and Taylor Street? Is that the heart of the Wharf? Is the Beach area just a local district or is it Fisherman's Wharf? Is the district behind Jefferson Street also Fisherman's Wharf? For the visitors this is not so clear.

Fisherman's Wharf is many things and has many activities. It sits at a beautiful location at the edge of the San Francisco Bay and the edge of the city. It has great merits, some problems, but a great potential for reinventing itself based on this setting and the specific qualities of the varied activities and sub-attractions. It is in need of a major upgrade in the public realm, where all the visitors pass through to their individual favorite destinations in Fisherman's Wharf.



Jefferson Street - the heart of the Wharf?

FUNCTIONS

LACK OF DIVERSITY

Fisherman's Wharf offers a diversity of functions but unfortunately the different functions are clustered in a way that create monofunctional areas.

There are two clear clusters. The area in the south-west is dominated by residential buildings, apart from that, there are few residential buildings in Fisherman's Wharf. The central part is dominated by hotels and parking. The major destinations and shops are predominately along the waterfront and along Jefferson Street.

This lack of diversity makes part of Fisherman's Wharf unstimulating, and attracting a multitude of people, and activities who visit at different times of the day, week and year will be hard to achieve without a greater diversity of attractions and public spaces.

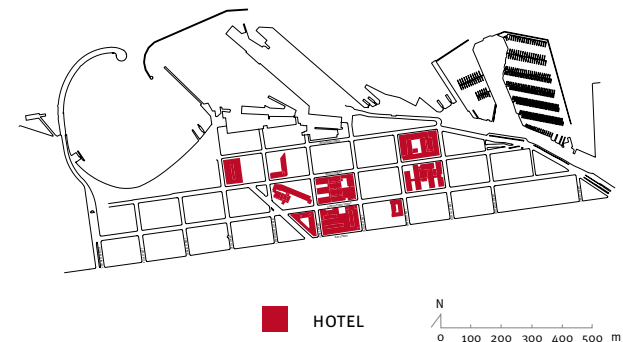
Residents, local institutions and local shops and business are crucial for establishing a sustainable neighbourhood, since they contribute to the vitality day and night, just by going about the daily tasks. Particularly in the evening, residents, even relatively few in numbers, create an image of a neighbourhood lived in and looked after.

Diverse neighbourhoods are naturally surveilled by its inhabitants and are perceived as safe. The quality of shops and restaurants is usually higher since, if they are used by locals, as they will come back again and again. An inhabited public realm that the residents have made to their own radiates a sense of place, and it's also more easy to maintain. Having residents means that you have people living and caring about the neighbourhood.



Lack of residents in the central part of Fisherman's Wharf

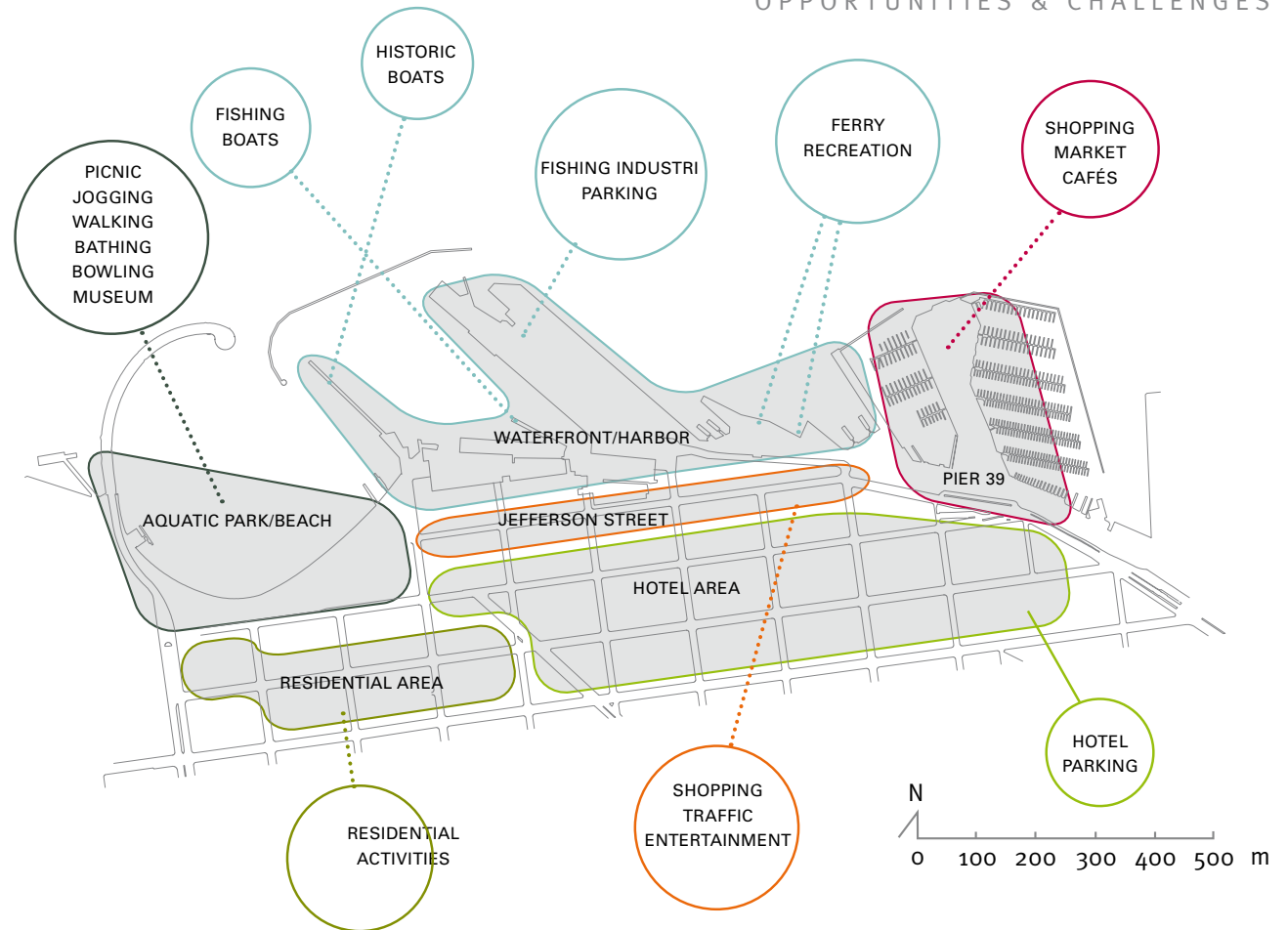
The Wharf is monofunctional and segregated. Residents in one area, hotels in another.



LOCAL DISTRICTS

CLEAR DIVISION OF AREAS

The Fisherman’s Wharf consists of a number of sub-districts with very different characters that are clearly separated from each other. From east to west, the district spans from locations with a high number of tourists to areas, that have a more local character. From the waterfront on the Northern side towards the hotels in the South the district is divided into very different zones: The central area along the waterfront is dominated by the fishing industry and its fleet, followed by the complex and lively sub-district around Jefferson Street, ending at the urban blocks dominated by hotels. San Francisco’s regular mixed use districts are following to the south of the hotel zone.



Aquatic Park



Jefferson Street



Waterfront / Habor



Pier 39



Hotel Area



Residential Area

VISITORS DESTINATIONS

WHERE PEOPLE GO IN THE WHARF

Most destinations in Fisherman’s Wharf target tourists, with few things to attract the local residents. As a tourists destination it is big; it’s the 2nd most visited tourist attraction in California after Disneyland.

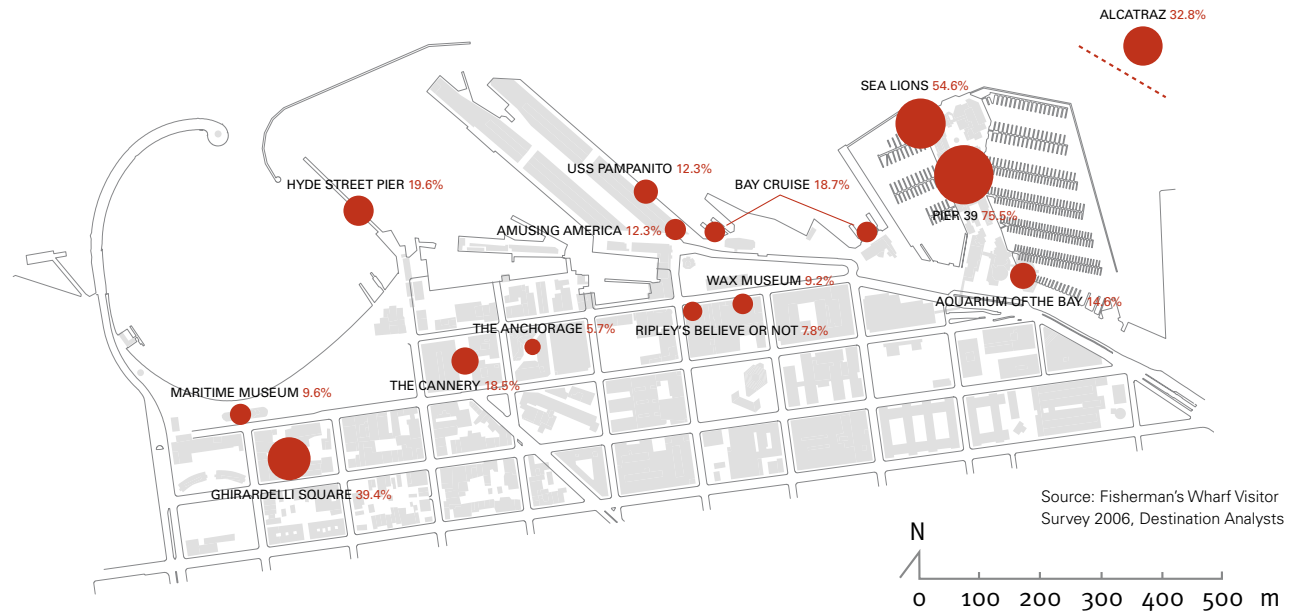
The map to the right shows the result of a visitors survey where people were asked the question “Which Fisherman’s Wharf attractions did you visit (or do you plan to visit) today?”

Pier 39 is the most visited, but also the one most people are disappointed with. It’s organized as a carfree space, lined with shops, restaurants and has activities on the inside and a promenade on the outside. Everything on the inside is made in a small, human scale, with open frontages and a mix of attractions. The promenade on the outside is facing the leisure harbour, but is dominated by closed frontages and few entrances to the busy interior. It is on this outside that one of the most liked attractions, the sea lions, are sitting. The sea lions likely are the most genuine attraction, as they simply belong to the San Francisco Bay ecosystem.

The Cannery and Giradelli Square are similarly introverted complexes, but not with the same direct proximity to the water. They, on the other hand, celebrate history by recycling old industrial buildings as well as creating inviting interiors. The Hyde Street Pier and the USS Pampanito celebrate naval history.

Alcatraz is a major tourist attraction, but the ferry now departs from a pier to the south of Fisherman’s Wharf. The Red and White fleet and the Blue and Gold fleet offer tours of the Bay, as well as service to towns around the Bay.

There are few attractions in the southern part of the area and very few attractions are targeted for children.



MOST VISITED DESTINATIONS



Pier 39



Sea lions



Alcatraz

The destinations are targeting tourist, few things attract the local residents

LACK OF A CLEAR IDENTITY

WHERE IS THE CENTER OF THE WHARF?

Fisherman’s Wharf lacks a strong centre, a location that clearly identifies the area. It is the individual destinations and attractions that visitors associate with the Wharf, rather than the area itself.

Destinations like Pier 39, The Cannery and Giradelli Square together with the Hyde Street Pier and the USS Pampanito are mentioned in any tourist guide, and so are some of the fish restaurants, but Fisherman’s Wharf is hardly recognized by the visitors as one area. It falls into rather separated bits and pieces without any clear identity as a whole. There is no clear feeling of arrival and several places leave the visitor with a feeling of disorientation without any invitation to go any further. It is simply not clear that there is more to see.

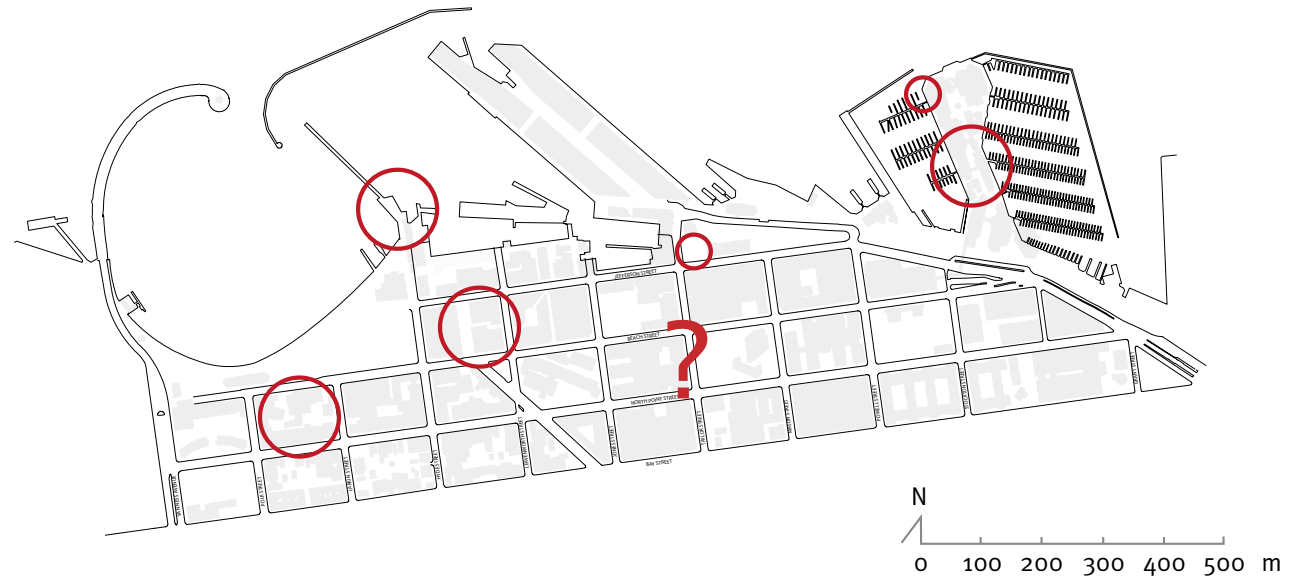
The corner of Powell Street and The Embarcadero, which needs to be inviting to attract people from Pier 39 to other parts of Fisherman’s Wharf, is rather a point of disorientation. The pedestrian survey presented in next chapter shows that most people walk along Pier 39 and along The Embarcadero west of Pier 39 but there is only 53% as many along Jefferson Street.

The corner of Taylor Street and Jefferson Street, the natural centre of the area and where the sign of Fisherman’s Wharf is placed, is uninviting and does not convey a positive image of Fisherman’s Wharf.

The most striking “invisible” part of Fisherman’s Wharf is the fishing fleet and the possibilities of walking along the water, including the great views back to the skyline of the city.

There a few views out and no clear invitation to go and explore the fantastic location.

Fisherman’s Wharf is perceived as a number of individual destinations



FISHERMAN’S WHARF IS PERCEIVED AS SEPARATE DESTINATIONS NOT AS A COHERENT DISTRICT



Where is the heart of Fisherman's Wharf?



The corner of Taylor and Jefferson is not an attractive image.



It's hard to find the way due to a lack of coherent and legible pedestrian network.