

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: May9, 2024

From: Community Development

Subject: Temporary Wharf Use Plan

Recommended Action: Review the Temporary Wharf Plan and direct staff to apply for permits for the temporary use plan with the California Coastal Commission.

Background: The Capitola Wharf is currently undergoing significant renovations through the Wharf Resiliency and Public Access Project (Wharf Project). The Project focuses on critical elements, including widening the Wharf, addressing failing pilings, replacing the deck, and adding new restroom facilities. The Project aims to improve the Wharf's long-term resilience. Cushman Contracting began construction in September 2023 and has been making steady progress since then.

The storms in December 2023 caused additional damage to both the Wharf and its structures, necessitating the removal of the buildings and further repairs to the Wharf beneath them. In February 2024, the City Council approved the removal of the buildings and requested staff return with a Temporary Wharf Use Plan while a long-term Wharf Plan is created.

On March 27, 2024, the Planning Commission reviewed and approved an updated Capitola Wharf Design Permit which included: a new entryway arch design, enhanced lighting, bathroom design, water fill stations, benches, trashcans, viewing stations, and bike racks. The updated plans are included as Attachment 2.

On April 5, 2024, staff published an online survey to gather input from the public on temporary Wharf usage through December 2025. Further public input was gathered at a Town Hall held on April 30, 2024.

Discussion: City staff anticipates reconstruction of the Capitola Wharf to be complete by August and plans to host a grand reopening; the date of which is still to be determined. At the time of reopening, the following features will be in place:

New Wharf Entryway

- Custom design created by Fuse Architecture which incorporates historic design elements and new mosaic tile work by local artist Kathleen Crocetti.

Public Artwork

- Custom mosaic tile panels of local marine life by local artist Kathleen Crocetti.
- Bronze fish artwork inlaid on the deck by local artist Sean Monohan, creating a meandering pathway to four viewing stations.

Fishing

- Boat & Bait Shop. The City is in discussion with Boat and Bait regarding a temporary lease for a bait shop, boat rentals, and foods and drinks using temporary structures.
- Fish cleaning station.

Public Amenities

- Public restrooms at the base of the Wharf.
- 40 benches.
- 10 bike racks.
- Educational displays outlining the history of the Capitola Wharf and providing Monterey Bay marine science information.

- 4 viewing stations with binoculars.
- Water fountain/bottle filling station with foot wash.
- 10 trash receptacles.
- 10 light posts.

Memorial Plaques

- City staff inventoried the memorial plaques located on the Wharf before the 2023 storms. The previous memorial plaques will be reinstalled with the previous dedications in the same general location. Any missing plaques will be re-created in the current standard format.

Donor Recognition Panels

- Donors will be recognized within mosaic panels by local artist Kathleen Crocetti. Many Capitola residents and visitors have donated time and money to the Wharf enhancements. These contributions will be celebrated within art panels on the railing of the Wharf overlooking Hoopers Beach. The art panels will have a marine motif.
- A City Dedication Panel (containing government agency funding contributors and City Council names from 1981 and 2024) for present and past Wharf reconstruction efforts will be located at the entrance to the Wharf.

Temporary Wharf Use Plan: On April 5, 2024, a survey about temporary Wharf uses was published for two weeks and received 1,058 responses. The survey included questions about previous experiences on the Wharf, temporary uses, and open-ended input for additional ideas.

Staff created the survey questions for temporary uses using the public suggestions provided at the Town Hall Meeting held on February 11. Public input from that meeting showed interest in bringing back a fishing/boat shop, food and beverage, and live entertainment. As the City is anticipating a major renovation of the Jade Street Community Center in Fall 2024, staff also included Recreation classes as a possible use on the survey. The survey results are included as Attachment 1.

Summary of Capitola Wharf Temporary Use Survey findings:

- 1,058 responses. Capitola residents (45%), SC County residents (38%), outside SC County (6%), other (5%), and Capitola business owners (3%).
- Temporary uses in order of popularity were mobile food and vendor (86%), live entertainment (79%), and recreation classes (31%).
- For food and beverage services, the majority supported allowing multiple vendors at a time, rotating vendors, and daily access. There was slightly more support for summer-only (40%) over year-round (38%).
- 84% of respondents supported entertainment on the Wharf with year-round usage (34%) slightly higher than summer-only (32%).
- Additional suggestions for uses included: artistic backdrop for social media, allowing dogs on leash, retail shops, interactive educational displays, education classes, a barge, fashion runway, zipline, and markets (farm, fish, arts).
- Concerns included impact on Village merchants; limited open public space; impacts from too many vendors; noise; durability, mobility, and aesthetics of temporary structures; fumes from generators; litter; and too many signs.

On April 30, 2024, the City hosted a second Town Hall to provide an update on the Wharf construction project, review results from the community survey, and provide an additional opportunity for public input. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting. Staff displayed ideas for temporary uses, based off survey feedback, and participants were asked to identify their top five temporary uses. Attendees were also asked to weigh in on potential concerns about temporary uses.

In summary, the public input during the Town Hall included:

- The most popular temporary activities (in order of popularity) included: entertainment, beer/wine sales, active recreation classes, interactive displays, educational classes, and mobile food vendors.
- The top concerns (in order of number of responses) were: too many vendors, litter, fumes from generators, and impacts on Village merchants.
- Other suggestions included having an identifiable beacon for boat navigation, preference for local businesses for food and beverage, prohibiting vehicles on the Wharf, and prohibiting fish cleaning on the picnic tables.

After receiving public input from the survey and town hall, staff drafted a draft Capitola Wharf Temporary Use Plan. The draft plan outlines plans for wharf usage between the grand reopening through December 2025. The draft plan incorporates supported uses while balancing concerns related to noise, over-programming, and maintenance of open space. The draft proposes options for the duration and frequency of mobile food and beverage service in response to concerns on the impacts to local businesses and the feasibility of programming food trucks. The plan also takes into consideration the feasibility of programming at a level that can be implemented with current resources and staffing.

2024	Grand Opening Event Date TBD (August)	Fall
Live Music	Yes	Monthly Events in Sept. and Oct. Dates TBD
Food trucks	3 trucks	3 trucks @ monthly event only
Beer/Wine Garden	1 vendor	1 vendor @ monthly event only
Fishing, Boat Rentals, and Buoys ¹	Allowed	Allowed
Recreation Programing		Yes (trial basis)
Education (Art and Marine Science classes)		Yes (trial basis)

¹ Dependent on agreement on temporary lease. Buoys: May 1 through September 30

2025		Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Live Music				July & August Sun 2 - 4 pm	TBD
Food trucks	Option 1		Monthly agreements with 3 trucks		TBD
	Option 2			July & August Sun 10 am - 5 pm	TBD
Beer/Wine Garden	Option 1		Temporary facility and enter short term lease		TBD
	Option 2			July & August Sun 10 am - 5 pm	TBD
Fishing, Boat Rentals, and Buoys ²		Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Recreation Programming		Yes	Yes	Yes	Reassess when Jade Street reopens
Education (Art and Marine Science classes)		Yes (trial basis)	Yes (trial basis)	Yes (trial basis)	Reassess when Jade Street reopens

Two additional components to the Draft Capitola Wharf Temporary Use Plan include prohibiting vehicles and including a local business preference for vendor selection, as legally permitted.

Next Steps: The City must apply for a Coastal Development Permit through the Coastal Commission to implement the Capitola Wharf Temporary Use Plan.

Fiscal Impact: None.

Attachments:

1. Survey Results
2. Wharf Plan Set

Report Prepared By: Katie Herlihy, Community Development Director

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager

² Dependent on agreement on temporary lease. Buoys: May 1 through September 30