Revitalizing a Historic Waterfront Asset for Maritime Innovation

Across the maritime industry, there's a growing push to modernize both how the sector operates and how it builds for the future. At the Port of Seattle, that shift is playing out at Fishermen's Terminal, where the Maritime Innovation Center brings new purpose to a long-standing waterfront structure. The building, which was damaged in the 2001 Nisqually earthquake, remained closed for more than a decade as its future remained uncertain, is now completed and set to fully open in early 2027 as a reimagined hub for maritime innovation.

The structure is also a timely example of sustainable construction principles in action, an increasingly important feature for buildings in the region.

A Hub for Maritime Innovation and Workforce Growth

Originally constructed in the early 1900s as the Ship Supply Building, the structure has been renovated and modernized into a15,000-square-foot facility designed to support a mix of tenants, and collaboration and development spaces under one roof. The center also is expected to support job creation and ongoing workforce development, contributing to long-term economic activity and community development.

Designed for Regenerative Performance

Sustainability sits at the foundation of the project. The goal from inception was to meet the Living Building Challenge (LBC), a standard that goes beyond reducing environmental impact and instead focuses on creating buildings that operate as part of a broader ecological system, resulting in a level of self-sufficiency that aligns with LBC principles.

A 360 view of how sustainable practices were applied:

- **Material choice.** Both new and reused materials supported the project's sustainability goals. Foundational concrete elements also deliver durability and resiliency, in addition to supporting the environmental aspects of the structure. Elements of the existing heavy timber structure were reused where possible, reducing the need for new wood-based materials and lowering the project's embodied carbon footprint. The project also had global warming potential (GWP) requirements for the concrete used, and the final structure features over 1,200 cubic yards of a concrete mix engineered to reduce embodied CO_2 emissions by at least 30% compared to regional GWP baselines.
- **Energy performance.** A combination of photovoltaic systems and efficient all-electric mechanical systems eliminate demand on fossil fuels while enabling net positive energy performance. A high-performance building envelope helps limit energy demand, with insulation and glazing designed to improve overall efficiency.
- **Water systems**. Rainwater is captured and stored for reuse, while both greywater and blackwater are treated on site to reduce reliance on municipal systems. Stormwater is managed through treatment measures before being discharged, helping protect nearby waterways, including Salmon Bay.

Taken together, these strategies contribute to a building that is not only efficient, but also designed for long-term resilience, operating sustainably while adapting to changing environmental conditions.

A Model for Sustainable Redevelopment

Overall, the Maritime Innovation Center reflects a different approach to redevelopment: one that focuses on both preserving existing assets and rethinking how we approach new construction. By pairing a historic structure with forward-looking design, the project brings together sustainability, economic development, and industry innovation in a single location.