

Thousand Friends of Martinez

PLEASE RETURN TO THOUSAND FRIENDS VIA E-MAIL TO
THOUSANDFRIENDSOFMARTINEZ@OUTLOOK.COM

*****RETURN BY AUGUST 28, 2018*****

2020 MARTINEZ CITY COUNCIL/MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thousand Friends of Martinez endorses, supports and funds responsible and environmentally supportive leaders. We:

- Promote transparent government
- Promote better land use planning and the development of policies for the public benefit
- Defend parks, creeks, wetlands, open space and historic elements
- Support budgeting, ballot measures and funding for these purposes
- Educate the public about these objectives and strategies

Personal information removed - please scroll down.

Please attach a RESUME and a LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS.

I am currently endorsed by the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County. My resume is attached.

A. GENERAL

1. *Please list the three most urgent conservation/quality of life/good government issues in Martinez. Where do you stand on them? What steps would you take to address them?*

The Martinez Waterfront. As a member of the PRMCC, I think the Martinez Waterfront is a jewel and a regional draw. However, it is currently not being managed to its potential. As the Martinez Waterfront and Marina Master Plan is developed, I will be advocating for a proper balance between conservation, development, and recreation. This Master Plan will guide the decisions

made at the Waterfront for years to come.

Economic Vitality. I am a member of the community who visits downtown regularly for shopping and dining. Some businesses have been boarded up for over 5 years. It distracts from the overall charming nature of our Main Street. I will prioritize working with the Economic Development department to implement innovative solutions for a vibrant Downtown and for retail districts across the City. I also think it is imperative that these policies stretch to retail areas outside of the downtown corridor as well, to ensure that our Martinez neighbors continue to shop and play within Martinez.

Fair Representation. The lines drawn and approved in 2018 resulted in neighbors with common interests divided between gerrymandered districts. I will work to revise the districts to properly reflect the neighborhoods of Martinez. This will likely include selecting a non-biased organization to redraw the districts after the census data have been received. Additionally, our city boundaries exclude many neighborhoods who call Martinez home but are actually in unincorporated Contra Costa County. The City Council should look for ways to represent these neighborhoods and advocate for their interests as well.

2. *What issues do you intend to emphasize in this election in order of their importance to your campaign?*

In addition to the three issues listed above, my fourth Priority for this election is Diversity. We can effect change in our local government by adopting policies that increase diversity in our Council-appointed Commissions, City staff, and the Council itself. This is not a short-term effort. I will push for the Anti-Racism and Discrimination and Pro Inclusion and Equity (ARDPIE) Task Force to become a standing Commission. I will identify potential for revisions to the Martinez Municipal Code to encourage diversity on our City's Commissions consistent with the demographics of our City. I will develop an outreach plan to increase diversity on Council-appointed Commissions. Commissions are easily accessible to the public and are a great first step in political involvement.

My order of importance is:

Parks and Waterfront

Fair Representation

Diversity

Economic Vitality

B. TRANSPARENCY-- *We believe transparency in government is a cornerstone of democracy. Openness and public participation in decision-making is required for democracy to work.*

2. *What measures would you take to promote open, transparent government? Would you change the way commissioners (Planning, PMRC, Design Review, etc.) are chosen to make commissions more open and representative, and extend more City staff support to them?*

This a poignant question in light of our current ARDPIE Task Force application process. The deadline is September 1, and yet, no one knows who, if anyone, has applied. Further, there is some lack of trust that diverse candidates will be selected. A more transparent process for this and other Commissions would support the public's understanding of these positions. I would

recommend that all community volunteer forms be made available (if not the entire form and responses, but at a minimum the name and position for which they are applying). This would benefit the City by letting the public know who is applying to these positions, and how much popularity these positions have. It took me some time to get on PRMCC despite there being a vacancy and I would have benefitted knowing that at the very least my application had been received and I was in the queue.

3. *REDISTRICTING - What is your opinion of our current districts? Would you vote for an ordinance establishing an independent redistricting commission?*

The current districts do not fairly represent the people and neighborhoods of Martinez. This is one of my four Priorities for running for Council. My original opinion on this topic was to work on redistricting myself as part of City Council. However, an independent redistricting task force with no bias or self interest would be even better. It is imperative that our neighborhoods are represented in a holistic, accurate way.

C. LAND USE, DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC BENEFIT-- *We love our unique town, its setting, its resources, its culture. We believe development in Martinez should enhance the quality of life for all of us. Development must serve the needs of new Martinez citizens, and also maintain or improve the quality of life for existing residents. The incessant demand for more housing presents many challenges, but better planning and design review and more citizen involvement and oversight can lead to successes for everyone.*

The Draft General Plan Update was started 10+ long years ago and has essentially lain dormant for the last five years. There are serious flaws both to the document and to the process of developing it. To serve the public, we believe the process needs to start over and incorporate clear public input. See our critiques on our website (www.thousandfriendsofmartinez.org).

4. *MARTINEZ GENERAL PLAN – What are your reactions to our General Plan Update critiques? Do you support re-opening the process and restarting the writing of the Update? If not, what would be your approach be to completing the Update?*

Although completely starting over on a 400-page document may not be the most fiscally responsible, Thousand Friends' critiques to the General Plan Update are valid. The last information on the Planning website regarding this document is from 2017, and, per your letter in July 2020, the updated document is still not available on the website.

The year of 2020 has resulted in so many changes to our town, that it is imperative that the General Plan be reevaluated to identify the major objectives of the document and to determine if the objectives are being met. A public process should always be incorporated in the preparation of these important documents. A process similar to the charette process for parks might be useful, allowing for open ended suggestions prior to a major overhaul of the text, followed by a public review process allowing for detailed review of the Plan. Additionally, as I mention above, the Waterfront and Marina is a major component of the City. Updates to the General Plan should take into consideration the conclusions made in the Waterfront and Marina Master plan document. Since California State Lands has not yet responded to the Waterfront Plan submitted in 2019, subsequent Master Plans are, and should be, in a holding pattern. Once their response has been received, efforts can be redirected to the Waterfront Master Plan and then the General Plan (with respect to the Waterfront).

5. *DOWNTOWN – On new development, would you oppose increased height and density, reduced setbacks, reduced views and parking that would be insufficient to handle the development impact? How would you ensure design compatibility with our historic buildings?*

What gives Martinez its charm is the old building fronts and small town nature of its Main Street. Due to the number of vacant buildings, doubling the number of thriving businesses downtown would not inherently result in increased construction. It would, however, put a major strain on available parking. To ensure access to new businesses and events downtown, parking is imperative. The new parking lot on Ferry Street is a good, albeit small, first step. The current zoning for the downtown core (excluding the Civic buildings to the east) is comprised of commercial zones and a downtown overlay. The planning department currently allows for no higher than 3 stories in the downtown corridor, which is consistent with the current viewscape of the town. The Downtown Specific Plan, a follow-on document to the General Plan, has not been updated since 2006 and also should be reevaluated.

6. *NEIGHBORHOODS OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN – What is your position on limiting the impact of new development on existing neighborhoods, especially in the face of neighborhood objections to significant impacts, e.g. traffic, schools, etc.? Would you give neighborhood input more weight and how?*

Ultimately, these decisions are made by the Planning Department and the City Council. However, neighborhood input has successfully addressed and prevented actions put before the Planning Commission and the City Council in our City (a recent example being the opposition to the gun range in 2019). The most important component to neighborhood input is communication. Without knowledge of an upcoming issue that may directly affect one's neighborhood, a person wouldn't know to participate in the project. An improved and directed communication plan would ensure members of the public directly affected by new development be engaged in the existing process.

8. *THE MARINA AND THE WATERFRONT – We believe the marina and waterfront are places for recreation and environmental protection, and not a profit center to support city financial needs. Do you support keeping the marina and waterfront for recreation/environmental protection and free of commercial/residential buildings, except for a small number of recreation-oriented shops and restaurants? Do you think a hotel/b&b and a meeting center is an appropriate use at the marina?*

I think the Marina and Waterfront is a regionally significant area. There is so much opportunity for increased recreational use and recreation-oriented shops and restaurants. There is a significant amount of underutilized infrastructure already within in the Waterfront park and the revitalized Nor Cal Courts is a good example of how active use of these spaces is good for the community. An environmental learning center would be an appropriate use at the marina, similar to the one in Oakley. This use could include a meeting center. A hotel/b&b doesn't seem to be the most intuitive next step for the marina.

What do you think about the parking requirements that a ferry service would impose on the marina? How would you handle train blockage to road access?

Implementing ferry service with the current infrastructure is challenging. Current train blockages regularly cause a buildup of up to 10 cars for more than 5 minutes. A time-dependent ferry cannot have this delay. An evaluation of traffic impacts is included in all Environmental Impact

Reports, the results of which may have a significant effect on the viability of ferry service at the Waterfront.

Would you oppose new housing development anywhere on the waterfront and marina? Studies show potential flooding 26 times or more per year by 2060 in areas that have been proposed for such development.

There are a few parcels north of the rail line that are zoned “L-I Light Industrial”. The FEMA flood maps show the risk for flooding all the way to the rail line (at a minimum) so any proposal for housing in this area would need to take sea level rise and flooding into consideration, in addition to a revision to the zoning in this area.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE – What are climate change threats to Martinez and what steps would you take to address and mitigate them?

The major climate change threat to Martinez is flooding. Any development or improvements to the Waterfront must take flooding into consideration. But flood risk doesn’t stop just at the rail line. It continues up through town along the creek. While new development takes flood risk into consideration, the City can evaluate areas within the watershed to increase capacity to reduce flooding, including reevaluating the effectiveness of the improvements made after the major downtown floods.

A major climate change threat throughout California is fire. Despite the luxury of the Carquinez Strait to the north and highways on two sides, Martinez is not immune from wildfires. If an evaluation has not already occurred, an evaluation of large-scale wildfire risk to the City would be beneficial.

D. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & HISTORIC ELEMENTS - We believe Martinez will be increasingly defined by its waterfront, parks, surrounding open spaces, recreational and historic elements. We support parks and more open space protection in Martinez. We oppose loss of existing parks and open spaces.

10. PINE MEADOW – It has been designated Permanent Open Space/Recreation since 1973. Development of Pine Meadow was opposed by many residents and thousands signed petitions to referend the project and its General Plan amendment. Would you support the current three-party agreement between the city, the developer and the citizen advocates to settle the Pine Meadow issue?

I will support the current three-party agreement.

11. MEASURE I - Measure I protects all Martinez open space and parks by requiring a public vote on any city council resolution to convert land designated as open space to more intensive development. Do you support the measure and its clear inclusion in the General Plan Update?

Yes.

12. ALHAMBRA HILLS - These hills comprise a unique open space connecting Mt. Wanda to Briones and to Mt. Diablo, and preserves ancient oak trees and land once owned by John Muir. Do you support negotiating with the owners to buy the Alhambra Hills as public open space? How would you actively pursue this goal? Would you support a new ballot funding measure to protect high-priority open space such as the Alhambra Hills?

I support the idea of acquiring the Alhambra Hills as public open space. A new ballot funding measure could be considered following the successful completion of the Measure H funds for

parks and open space to reduce ballot funding measure fatigue.

13. *HISTORIC ELEMENTS – Historic preservation is a particularly key issue in our downtown and the neighborhoods surrounding it. How would you protect historic resources in Martinez? In what ways do you see the Martinez general plan and other local legislation strengthening the protection of historic buildings and other historic elements?*

Historic preservation is a key component of Martinez. The City Council's role is to ensure continued funding for historic preservation, including partnering with our local non-profit organizations like the Martinez Historical Society. The Martinez General Plan should highlight historical districts to ensure legislation protecting historic buildings and elements is implemented effectively.

14. *Would you support including a comprehensive potential trail plan and potential new park/open space site plan in the General Plan Update?*

Absolutely. There are several intercity trails connecting East Bay cities. While Martinez is connected in a few locations, extending and connecting these thoroughfares would benefit recreational users throughout the region. The General Plan is an appropriate place for general potential open space plans. More specific park/open space plans should be developed by the Parks Department and the PRMCC.

E. BUDGET, FUNDING, BALLOT MEASURES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

15. *BUDGET – What do you see as the biggest budgetary issues the City faces, e.g., CalPERS increases, employee raises, JPA retirement funding loan, litigation costs, General Plan Update costs, etc. How would you address funding them? What changes would you make in current spending to help reduce projected deficits? Would you oppose reducing developer impact fees?*

The 2019-2021 Budget projected \$10 million unassigned for 2020/2021. However, the impacts from the shelter in place will have ongoing impacts to these budgets and will highlight where the biggest budgetary strains are. There is no funding for the General Plan in the 2020/2021 budget. I see salaries as a major budgetary issue, which includes CalPERS increases, employee raises, and retirement funding. A reevaluation of the budget occurred in May 2020 and another such evaluation of the projected deficits and surpluses should occur in late 2020 to determine the current effects to both expenses and revenues in the budget from the shelter in place before any decisions are made. At this time, I do not support reducing developer impact fees.

16. *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Martinez will have an increasing need for a more viable business sector. The oil industry is changing and offering less employment opportunities, while the trend to remote work situations increases. While empty storefronts throughout town are a problem the issue is much broader. What ideas do you have to enhance the economic vitality of Martinez?*

The Economic Development department with the City of Martinez is engaged in economic stimulus throughout the city and has identified 13 economic districts. However, only a few of those are high profile retail districts are regularly used and seen by the public. I think retail districts on Main Street and in other areas of the city should be prioritized because the optics of a vibrant city starts where people visit, such as restaurants, breweries, and shops. One of my Priorities mentioned at the beginning of this application includes ideas for putting in motion actions to enhance and support businesses in these areas.

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About the Endorsement Process

What an endorsement means: Name recognition and campaign support

Each election, Thousand Friends of Martinez (Thousand Friends, TFM) hopes to endorse pro-conservation, pro-community candidates running for public office, and to support or oppose ballot measure campaigns which will affect our community. Once a candidate or issue is endorsed by TFM, we may decide to support the candidate or ballot campaign with funding, volunteer activity, and other resources.

Our Goal is for Thousand Friends to be seen as a highly credible source of information about candidates and ballot measures.

How the endorsement process works: Questionnaire and interview

We choose which races and issues on which to focus. Candidates should first fill out a questionnaire that we provide to be considered for a Thousand Friends endorsement. The questions cover a variety of relevant conservation and community issues and are also geared to help us assess what kind of a conservation leader candidates intend to be if elected.

Following review of the questionnaire, ideally Thousand Friends conducts face-to-face interviews with each candidate. We consider each candidate's conservation record (if they have one) and their level of commitment to protecting Martinez's environmental legacy and quality of life. We also endeavor to determine if they are a serious contender for the office they are seeking. All endorsement recommendations are reviewed and finalized by the Thousand Friends Board of Directors.

Why the Thousand Friends of Martinez endorsement matters: Voter education

Thousand Friends' endorsement is critical information voters can use to decide which candidates to trust. Many voters don't have time do in-depth research on the candidates — Thousand Friends does that important work for them.

The Mission of Thousand Friends of Martinez is to provide a stable organization which will work with residents to elect informed, conscientious representatives; promote open government; enhance our quality of life by creating a livable city; defend our parks and open spaces, and; conserve natural areas and historic elements in the greater Martinez region.

Our Geographic Focus is: The greater Martinez region, including the city and unincorporated areas, the Briones Bioregion and significant watershed lands.

Our Objectives are to:

- Endorse, support and fund responsible and environmentally supportive leaders
- Promote transparent government

- Promote better land use planning and the development of policies for the public benefit
- Defend parks, creeks, wetlands, open space and historic elements
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August 2020