

# Thousand Friends of Martinez

PLEASE RETURN TO THOUSAND FRIENDS VIA E-MAIL TO  
[THOUSANDFRIENDSOFMARTINEZ@OUTLOOK.COM](mailto: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

Please attach a RESUME and a LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS.

Our Revolution Bay Area  
Democratic Party of Contra Costa County

### 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?*

- **Waterfront/Marina protection and redevelopment.** Climate change will present the city with a challenge of rising sea level which will inundate the shoreline and create flooding risk. Immediate action is required to mitigate this issue.
- **Preservation and accessibility of open spaces:** Permanent protect of our town's open spaces and an investment in expanding accessibility of the space for future generations.
- **Creation of a fair process to drawing electoral districts.** I support this by creating a city commission to draw the districts or by advocating for a county-wide commission that would draw all electoral districts in the county.
- **Addressing Homelessness by creating better partnerships with community organizations and county resources.** Homelessness has increased 101% in the last four years; the city must do better than just trying to manage the issue. Establishing a navigation center would be a step in the right direction.
- **Economic vitality the city needs to be more proactive in addressing redevelopment and attracting more economic opportunities to the city.**

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

- **Fair districts and transparency**

- **Open space preservation and increased livability**
- **Waterfront/Marina preservation and redevelopment**
- **City-wide economic vitality improvements**
- **Addressing Homelessness**

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.*

3. *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?*

**I would advocate to change the way appointments are made to various city committees, commissions, etc. to allow council members to forward names to be voted on. This would allow city council members to better diversify the appointment by having residents from all parts of the city included in the appointment process. I also plan to be available as much as I can, including having monthly “office hours” to meet with residents to address their concerns. I also support providing more city staff services to support the work that the commission do for the city.**

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

**The current gerrymandered districts are the worst example of electoral districts that I have seen in the entire 15 years that I have been in electoral politics. They violate state law because they are drawn to accommodate incumbent residence. I passionately believe that politicians should not be in a position where they get to choose their voters. The voters should always be the ones who choose their representatives. With that philosophy, I would push to establish either a city independent redistricting commission or push that the county establishes one to redraw all the electoral districts in the county. As the census completes its work later this year, this will be a top priority for me in the next year.**

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](http://www.thousandfriendsofmartinez.org)).*

5. *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?*

There are simply too many defects with the General Plan Update to be salvageable. It is disgraceful to terminate a process that allows residents to voice their concerns about the city and the General Plan. This feedback is absolutely crucial, and more so given that 80% of the current council lives in the downtown area, significantly underrepresenting other areas of the city. The process should be restarted by reforming at General Plan Task Force, appointed with residents from all parts of the city, a status report drafted based on where the city is in regards to the current General Plan, setting a schedule to allow lots of feedback and public comments. The drafts should be made available widely with lots of time to allow residents to digest the drafts and provide feedback.

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

The city should set a height limit based on resident feedback. New buildings or redevelopment of existing (non-historical) should be constructed so that the building remains consistent with the look of the rest of downtown. Part of the appeal of the downtown area is the small town feel and views of the surrounding hills, this should be preserved as a high priority when making planning decisions. Additionally, any developing that will have an impact of city infrastructure needs to be fully evaluated so to not adversely impact other businesses and residences in the downtown area. To ensure design compatibility I would advocate the adoption of design standards by the planning commission to use when vetting development proposals.

*7. 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?*

The city should always be open to receiving feedback and concerns about proposed development and redevelopment in all parts of Martinez. It feels that many of these decisions are made only looking at short-term impacts. However, a wise planning decision process must look at not only just adding housing stock. It must consider all the short- and long-term impacts on city infrastructure (as well as special district infrastructure, school, sewer, etc.). We must be realistic, our roads are about as wide as they can get, so any substantial development would need access to transit and/or a plan to increase the viability of transit options.

*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 support keeping the marina and waterfront for the enjoyment of residents and visitors as a recreational area. I support rebuilding the pier and enhancing the area with more recreational development that will be a draw for residents and visitors alike. By attracting more people to our waterfront and marina, I believe that it will have spillover benefits to the shops and restaurants in the downtown area. There could be potential for a small hotel/B & B type or a meeting center as part of an overall plan to seek improvements to the area. However, a recent city report states that the city needs

to be prepared for a 3' rise in sea level by 2050. This makes creating a plan and addressing climate change as a top priority, not only for the safety and livability of our town, but also a prerequisite to be successful in securing the investment to make improvements. I believe that these goals are not mutually exclusive but can be accomplished in tandem.

*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?*

The recently constructed bridge over the railway at the Amtrak station could be a key resource in developing a plan to address the parking needs that ferry service would require. There might be an opportunity to have a commute time shuttle service that could allow for parking to be offsite and the shuttle to take passengers to the ferry. This could be something like a park and ride type lot. This would free up the need to have large amounts of parking directly at the ferry terminal.

*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.*

Consistent with the city report, it is likely that any type of housing development would be at risk of flooding. This flooding risk also extends along Alhambra creek as well. Without a plan to mitigate and address the flooding risk, these types of projects would be a non-starter for me. I would also state that I am generally opposed to developing housing at the waterfront area.

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

As stated above, flooding from sea level rise is near-term threat to Martinez. I would advocate to empower the Parks, Recreation, Marina, and Cultural Committee to gather information, hold public workshops, and prepare a report of recommendations for the city to act on. Part of the solution will require the city to secure the necessary resources to implement the recommendations, but we will need to act quickly because the cost will never less than it is today. Additionally, climate change is affecting the fire danger that we are exposed to especially along the hills. The city needs to strengthen its partnership with the county to address the changing nature of fire risk. We need to evaluate if there is a need to change or create new access routes to the open space areas, create more defensible space, update our vegetation management programs, employ more resources during wildfire season, etc.

**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?*

If all the parties are still in support of the agreement that has been reached, then I would be in support of it. However, based on my understanding of this issue, this proposal violates the General Plan and is illegal under the wording of Measure I. No development of open space in the city should occur unless there is a vote consistent with the provision of Measure I.

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?*

**I support the inclusion of Measure I's provision in the General Plan Update.**

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 engaging in negotiations with the owners of the Alhambra Hills to purchase the land to create public open space. I would support the appointment of the City Attorney (or other competent person) to be the point person for negotiating the terms to acquire this property. Secondly, task the Parks, Rec, Marina, Cultural Commission to determine the best approach to financing the purchase of the property. Possibly through general obligation bonds, a parcel tax, or some type of grants or private means.**

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?*

**The city could establish a criteria for historical preservation and enact local ordinances that require pre-approval before modifications can be made to buildings of historical significance.**

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

**I support making our open spaces more accessible so that even more people can enjoy what Martinez has to offer. I would support adding a trail plan and new site plans when we restart the General Plan Update.**

#### **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 biggest budget issue that will face the city in the next fiscal year will be the decline in general and special fund revenues related to COVID-19 closures. This will have a dramatic impact on revenues that are based on sales and use taxes. While indirect, impacts to the payment of property tax to the county, will affect the portions that the city receives. This will require the city to reassess its priorities and reallocate the budget as necessary to meet the impending cuts.

*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 city needs a more proactive approach to economic development. The indefinite idling of the Marathon refinery in Pacheco should give the city pause. The Martinez Refinery Company is the largest single employer in Martinez, so any adverse impact to the workers will have a ripple effect to the local economy. Each refinery also contributes a significant amount of tax revenue to the county, which fund a variety of programs and services. One thing that the city can do to be proactive, is to work with the local refinery and the county to begin the process to shift production to something like biodiesel, which will be a component of California meeting its renewable energy targets. Remote work is likely to increase, as well as better, faster internet. I would push for the creation of municipal internet service, like our water, to provide affordable high-speed internet services. I also have proposed a program called Pop Up Martinez, that would create a partnership between the city, business associations, and owners of vacant storefronts. They would target companies and small businesses that offer products and services that would be a benefit to the community. It would allow these businesses to set up a pop-up shop for a short period of time to allow them to test out the location. The goal is that they would be successful and take up permanent residence, it would also give residents new reasons to patronize downtown—there being something new to see and do.

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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
- Support budgeting, ballot measures and funding for these purposes
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