

What the General Plan Update misses

Martinez faces a number of serious long-term fiscal challenges, from keeping the Marina open, to keeping an adequately staffed police force, to handling Measure X sunset, to funding pensions, to funding realistic climate change and earthquake disaster plans. Martinez currently has the lowest per capita General Fund expenditure of any city in the immediate area, including Benicia, Concord, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek.

Martinez' City Hall has actually been mortgaged to enable the City to make tax payments without tapping into reserves. We're making interest-only payments to the state on our Marina debt. Before Measure X passed, our Chief of Police was actually out driving on patrol because of lack of manpower. Do we really want a future with finger-in-the-dike budgets that have diminishing ability to deal with unforeseen issues or to pursue dreams such as support for the arts?

To address these issues, as former City Manager Brad Kilger pointed out, the City needs to focus on its General Fund revenue. Since the overwhelming proportion of General Fund revenue is based on land use – property tax, sales tax, use tax – it's critical that the General Plan address the fiscal impact of land use. Does the General Plan reflect a substantive, focused economic development plan?

While there's great pressure to increase housing, housing - especially high-density, low-income housing - doesn't generate net General Fund revenue. And it's worth noting that while the Housing Element of the General Plan is not on the table now, it's critical that housing and its impacts be part of the General Plan discussion. A General Plan that balances the needs of economic development with those of housing will lay the groundwork for improved General Fund revenue and an improved future for Martinez.

Our current General Plan has been in effect for 48 years. There's no guarantee that whatever gets put in place now won't still be around in 2070. We've spent something like \$1.5M, and taken over 10 years, to get to where we are now with updating the General Plan: we need to make sure we get it right.

Get involved!

<https://www.cityofmartinez.org/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=1676&TargetID=1>

The State of California's guide addressing General Plan content as well as recommended community engagement and outreach: https://opr.ca.gov/docs/OPR_COMPLETE_7.31.17.pdf

A good, relatively recent example: Walnut Creek's General Plan. The Introduction (Chapter 1) and the Economic Development Plan (Technical Appendix, Chapter 2) are highly recommended:

<https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-development-department/planning-zoning/long-range-planning/general-plan-2025>.

Harlan Strickland

There's more commentary on Page 2 – Don't miss it.

The Revised General Plan Update will control housing development in your neighborhood and commercial and housing development in our Downtown and Marina for the next 15 years or longer. We've asked the City to give us a list of *how this new Plan differs from the current General Plan* which has served us well for decades. That just makes sense in letting us analyze the new 290-page Plan that will directly affect our quality of life.

What has been deleted from the existing Plan, and what has been added that is not in our current Plan---including *what neighborhood housing densities have been changed* in our neighborhoods, and what commercial building restrictions and housing densities have been changed in our Downtown, Marina and other commercial areas.

We've asked for this several times over the last year, including at the last City Council meeting, but *have seen nothing*.

Please e-mail the Council members and City Manager to demand this help in understanding this 290 pg. Revised General Plan Update document that will determine the future growth on our town.

Here's the link to the Home Page of the City website. <https://www.cityofmartinez.org/>

See the article on that page "General Plan Update". Click on the link at the bottom of the article, and you'll see why we are requesting this help in understanding the new Plan.