

Brianne Zorn – Martinez City Council Member



I have attempted to provide positive updates in each of my articles, but this month I am reporting on some major hurdles. In September, the fishing pier was closed to pedestrians due to safety concerns and in October the city council approved funding for emergency repairs. In December, we were notified that an emergency permit to conduct repairs on the fishing pier would not be immediately approved due to in-water work window limitations, and we received confirmation that the Prop 68 grant to make permanent upgrades to the fishing pier had not been awarded. At this time, despite plans for repairs and conceptual designs for rehabilitation, it looks as though the fishing pier will stay the status quo for the next several months. Quite the blow to the plans I had for our marina and the waterfront!

I have spent over a year with my eyes set on the Prop 68 grant, knowing its receipt would be the proverbial kindling for the fire to jump start work at the Marina. While it may have been a long shot, investing in the Marina shouldn't be. With three years left in my term, I have to be realistic but hope my presence will contribute to investment and steady change at our marina and waterfront.

Firstly, two quick definitions: I use "waterfront" to describe the natural portions of the park, including the beach, kite flying-grassy areas, and the East Bay Regional Park-managed walking trails and wetlands. I use "marina" to refer to the built up infrastructure with the boat launch, docks, live-aboard slips, guest dock, breakwaters, and adjacent fishing pier.

I want our marina to be a regional destination for folks to access the Carquinez Strait, the Delta, and the San Francisco Bay. I want the marina to be a destination for people already on the water to stop in to our guest dock, get supplies, and have lunch. Imagine if there was a restaurant built at the waterfront (accounting for sea level rise of course) with views of the Strait and of the marina? Imagine if folks from around the area made a day trip to Martinez by boat. Our downtown is a short walk from the guest dock. They could walk from the marina to our downtown businesses and still be home at the end of the day.



How about non-motorized vessels? The nearest designated trailheads for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (<https://sfbaywatertrail.org/>) access points are either in Antioch or Richmond. There are so many towns and so many people who could benefit from having a designated trailhead (with ADA accessible facilities) in Martinez. Don't forget: the City Council approved funding for a kayak launch pending receipt of the grant. We have already shown support for this idea; we only need to implement.

How about dredging? On January 5, 2022, the City Council approved the design contract for dredging the marina. What is included in this contract? The City is currently budgeting for the next dredge event to be approximately \$1 million, and the design contract we approved is for \$200K of that, which covers design, permitting, and construction management by a consultant. The cost of the dredging, the subcontractor, and the sediment disposal costs will come later. The dredge window (when in-water work is allowed by the agencies) is from summer to late fall, and the dredging will be conducted in either late 2022 or 2023. The main concerns voiced by the Council during this discussion is that dredging is a "bandaid" solution. If you have been

tracking this discussion since the marina was last dredged, you will know that this same consultant provided us a report in 2017 identifying a variety of breakwaters that are in need of repair without which we can't control the influx of sediment into our system. So, my colleagues on the council had VERY legitimate concerns that dredging is a band aid fix, and I agree. Approving dredging only without investing in repairs to any of the breakwaters is short sighted.

It is a challenge to identify which portions of the marina to repair to get the most positive impacts and it will be very expensive to make those repairs (to the tune of tens of millions of dollars to repair or replace everything). Ultimately, it may require computer modeling to determine the flow patterns of sediment to help design the most effective repairs and improvements to reduce the frequency of dredging. And we mustn't forget the emergency repairs to the adjacent fishing pier to reopen to pedestrian access is only a partial fix. Now we need to identify funding to rehabilitate the entire pier.

In light of the ongoing work on the General Plan, the Trust Land Use Plan, and the Waterfront Master Plan, I will continue to support investments in infrastructure for the residents and guests of the marina and the waterfront, with the knowledge that these investments are expensive and need to be thoughtful and strategic. In the meantime, I want you to think about and visit the marinas and waterfronts in other cities. The City of Richmond, Oakley, Benicia, and Antioch have welcoming, high functioning marinas. Do we want to add Martinez to this list? I think we do. And we need to invest in our marina to see the benefits.