

Historic, Cultural, & Arts Element

4.0 HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND ARTS

4.1 Introduction

The Historic, Cultural and Arts element is designed to establish goals, policies and implementation programs that will protect and enhance the City's significant historical and cultural resources and encourage art and cultural enhancements within the City to add to the rich fabric of life enjoyed by Martinez citizens. Martinez values its historical and cultural heritage and seeks to balance preservation of those interests, with encouraging economic development, fiscal sustainability and reinvestment in the community as a whole.

Topic and Policy Order

This Historic, Cultural and Arts element is organized generally by topic.

- 4.1 Regulatory Framework** presents the applicable regulations relating to preservation of historic and cultural resources.
- 4.2 Historic Resources** presents information on historic resources and establishes goals, policies and implementation programs relating thereto.
- 4.3 Culture and Arts** presents information on cultural resources, and cultural and art opportunities in the City.

4.2 Regulatory Framework

There are several State laws (most notably the California Environmental Quality Act and the Public Resources Code) that protect historical and archeological resources in California. Senate Bill 18, signed into law in 2004, requires all local governments to consult with Native American tribes about land use decisions that could affect cultural places, including archaeological sites. A consultation process has been established by the State of California for General



John Muir National Historic Site. John Muir chose to live in the more urban environment of Martinez because his wife Louie, and her family were from here. Muir's in-laws, the Strentzels, finished their mansion after two years of construction in 1882. John Muir moved into the home with his wife and two girls in 1890. Muir lived, worked and wrote in the home for the last 24 years of his life.



Joe DiMaggio, nicknamed “Joltin’ Joe” and “The Yankee Clipper,” played his entire 13-year career for the New York Yankees. He was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1955. Joe DiMaggio was born in Martinez, the eighth of nine children born to immigrants from Italy, Giuseppe (1872–1949) and Rosalia (Mercurio) DiMaggio (1878–1951).

Plans and General Plan Amendments. To protect historic resources, the State has formed the State Historical Resources Committee. The Committee conducts the State Historic Resource Inventory and maintains the California Register of Historic Resources, which identifies historic landmarks and points of interest. The Committee also provides recommendations for the National Register of Historic Places.

4.3 Historic Resources

Historical Resources

California’s historical resources represent the contributions and collective human experiences of a diversified population spanning 10,000-12,000 years of occupancy in California. This rich heritage is embodied in the cultural and historical landscapes of California as evidenced by archaeological remains, historic buildings, traditional customs, tangible artifacts, historical documents, and public records still extant in California. All these evidences of the past contribute to the sum total of California’s history. Such historical resources provide continuity with our past and enhance our quality of life.

Martinez’s Rich History

For the early Native Americans, the Martinez area was near the boundary between two cultural groups. The Bay Miwok lived to the east of Martinez, while the Carquins, members of the Costanoan linguistic group, resided on both sides of Carquinez Strait in the area that is now Martinez, Port Costa, and Benicia. The Martinez area was within the territory of the “estrecho de los Karquines” in 1811 when Father Abella of Mission San Francisco explored the area.

Although the Spanish “discovered” and began to occupy the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1700s, little is known about the culture of the Carquins. However, it is known that the Costanoan economy was based on fishing, gathering, and hunting, with the land and waters providing a diversity of resources including acorns, various seeds, salmon, deer, rabbits, insects, and quail. The Costanoan, like many other Native American groups in the Bay Area, likely lived in conical tulle thatch houses. The early Carquin populations were reduced by disease and relocation to Spanish missions, where many

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died or were consolidated with other Native American groups.

Don Ygnacio Martinez, the early 19th century commandant of the Presidio of San Francisco, received a 17,000 acre grant from the Mexican government in the 1800s that first brought him to the Alhambra Valley. This Rancho El Pinole land grant included the southern bank of the Carquinez Strait, and it is from this land grant that the City of Martinez was created. The City was named after Don Ygnacio Martinez in 1849.

The City of Martinez is one of the oldest Anglo cities in what is now California. From its beginning as a trading post in 1849 to incorporation in 1876, Martinez was a gold rush and shipping boomtown. Early settlers of the area bought, sold, and shipped their goods to Martinez. The City catered to gold searchers who arrived on the Carquinez Strait's south shore to take Dr. Robert Semple's horse-powered ferry boat to Benicia on their trek to the gold country.

In 1850, Martinez was declared the County Seat, bringing lawyers, judges and other permanent residents. The first post office in Martinez opened in 1851 and the local newspaper began operation in 1858. In 1860, Martinez played a role in the Pony Express, where riders would take the ferry from Benicia, particularly if they missed the steamer in Sacramento. By 1860, Martinez was the shipping port for grain growers from Diablo Valley to the Livermore Valley. Grain wharves lined the shoreline from Martinez to Crockett. Martinez was the commercial heart for an area stretching from Crockett to Antioch and including what is now Pleasant Hill and out to Hercules. Martinez tried to incorporate in 1850 but did not have 200 registered voters, a state mandate for incorporation. Thus, Martinez was first incorporated in 1876.

Many of those who came in search of gold had disappointing luck, and purchased farm land in the area. Merchants came to cater to the county business as well as the new farming arrivals. Many of these new arrivals were Irish and Portuguese, who tenant farmed to save up to buy land of their own. Other arrivals to the area were Italians, who began arriving to work the mines on Mt. Diablo. In the 1880s, Italian fishermen had begun their immigration, reaching a peak in 1905. There was soon an Italian neighborhood with bakeries, groceries, and pasta factories in the City. Also, an area known as Portuguese Flats grew up around St Catherine's Church.



Italian Street Painting in Downtown Martinez

General Plan



Contra Costa County Court House, 625 Court Street Originally built as County Hall of Records in 1931. It became a Court House in the 1960's.

Further, Martinez had a number of wineries in the 1880s period and vineyards occupied much of the land in the area. The City was the site of the De La Salle Novitiate, the birthplace of the famous Christian Brothers Winery. The winery shipped wine from Martinez from the mid 1880s until 1932. It all began with 12 acres of grapes that the brothers did not want to go to waste when the land was purchased to build the school.

Also, related to beverages, local legend asserts that a Martinez resident created the popular drink known as the "Martini." The Martini Monument, located at the corner of Alhambra Avenue and Masonic Street, has a plaque that reads: in 1874, Julio Richelieo, Bartender, served up the first Martini when a miner came into his saloon with a fistful of nuggets and asked for something special. He was served a "Martinez Special." After three or four drinks however the "Z" would get very much in the way. The drink consisted of 2/3 gin, 1/3 vermouth, a dash of orange bitters, poured over crushed ice and served with an olive.

In terms of notable figures, Martinez is the home of the John Muir National Historic Site which features the home of naturalist, John Muir. Though he felt most at home in the wilderness, John Muir chose to live in the more urban environment of Martinez because his wife Louisa and her family were from Martinez. Muir's in-laws, the Strentzel's, finished their mansion after two years of construction in 1882. John Muir moved into the home with his wife and two girls in 1890. He lived, worked and wrote in the home for the last 24 years of his life.

Also located on the John Muir National Historic Site property is the Don Vicente Martinez Adobe, built in 1849 by the son of rancho owner, Don Ygnacio Martinez, of the Rancho El Pinole. Don Vicente Martinez lived in his adobe for only about four years. The adobe has a foundation made of rough stone and walls of adobe brick ranging in thickness from twenty-four to thirty inches. Originally, the roof was covered with shingles of either cedar or redwood.

Martinez is also the birthplace of Joe DiMaggio, nicknamed "Joltin' Joe" and "The Yankee Clipper," who played his entire 13-year career for the New York Yankees. He was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1955. Joe DiMaggio's Chris Craft boat is owned by the City

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and is currently being restored. Upon completion the boat will be displayed to the public in Martinez. The Martinez Museum has a small display of DiMaggio items, including his 1915 birth certificate.

Also in 1915, the arrival of the Shell Oil Company touched off a residential building boom in the City of Martinez that eventually spread to the other younger cities of the Diablo Valley. Overall, Martinez has many old homes and business buildings located near the Downtown area. However, Downtown was leveled by three fires in the 1890-1904 time periods, so most structures in the Downtown post-date that period. A number of homes located elsewhere in the City still pre-date 1880.

Today, Martinez is a City with a strong sense of history and a keen appreciation for the families that are its future. More than a dozen parks and plenty of open space are located within the city limits. The waterfront now features a fine Marina and related activities, such as fishing, hiking trails, bocce ball courts, and tournament style baseball and softball fields. Youth programs and historical museums thrive here, along with the businesses that make this City a hub of activity. These newer improvements co exist with and enhance the historic fabric of the City.

Historic Designations

In terms of historical resources, there are a number of sites officially designated on either the National Register of Historic Places or as a California Historical Landmark in Martinez. In addition, the City adopted a Downtown Historic Overlay District to promote the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings in the Downtown and to provide for new infill construction consistent with the historic character of the District. Design guidelines and requirements are contained in the Downtown Specific Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

National Register of Historic Places: Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts worthy of preser-



Martini Monument, Alhambra Ave, Lasell Parking Lot. Plaque reads "In 1874, Julio Richelieo, Bartender, served up the first Martini when a miner came into his saloon with a fistful of nuggets and asked for something special. He was served a "Martinez Special." After three or four drinks however the "Z" would get very much in the way. The drink consisted of 2/3 gin, 1/3 Vermouth a dash or orange bitters, poured over crushed ice and served with an olive."

General Plan



Martinez Library, 740 Court Street.

In 1883, a small group of young women formed a reading society and opened a public reading room at 620 Main Street in a building owned by Dr. John Strentzel. After Strentzel's death, his wife and daughter donated a parcel of land at the corner of Estudillo and Main Streets to the Library Association. A new library was built at the cost of \$6,371. The library stayed at this location for 56 years, until it outgrew the building. In a 1938 election, Martinez voters passed an \$18,000 bond issue to fund a new library building. The present building was completed and opened to the public in 1941. The Library was renovated and expanded with funds from Measure H and re-opened on August 20, 2011.

vation because of their significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register recognizes resources of local, state, and national significance which have been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards and criteria. The City has a few sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, such as the John Muir National Historic Site located at 4202 Alhambra Avenue, and some of the older civic buildings along Court Street in Downtown. Figure XX shows all properties in the City listed on the National Register.

California Historical Resources: The California Historical Resources Information System is operated as a repository of contributed information regarding historical resources in California and is administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Historical resources are comprised of buildings, structures, objects, sites, landscapes, districts, and all manner of properties associated with past human activities.

City Ordinances: Downtown Historic Overlay District, Chapter 22.47 of the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1983 to establish a framework for treatment of structures, which significantly contribute to the cultural and architectural heritage of the City. This chapter applies to all areas within Martinez city limits, and addresses historic preservation and cultural resources. The Downtown Historic Overlay District's purpose is to establish provisions for the preservation of buildings individually listed on the National and/or State Register of Historic Places, or buildings that become so listed in the future. In addition, it establishes advisory Design Review guidelines for the rehabilitation of structures and new infill construction in the historic district. It also provides owners of qualified properties, the optional, more flexible provisions of the State Historical Building Code. The presence of a local historic district also creates the possibility for the City to establish a Mills Act program, which could provide property tax relief for owners who restore and maintain historic properties.

The Downtown Specific Plan: The 2006 Downtown Specific Plan contains policies for historic preservation through the concurrently adopted Downtown Historic Overlay District (Chapter 22.27 of the Zoning Ordinance).

Goals and Policies and Implementation Programs For Historic Resources.

Historic resources are recognized as part of California's environment. These resources can consist of archaeological sites, buildings, structures, and objects that may or may not meet criteria for historical significance at the local, regional, or national level.

Martinez is rich in history, from the Native American Carquin Indians, who were a part of the Costanoan Indian group, to the ferry boats of the 1840s, through the days of the Californian Gold Rush, to John Muir and Joe DiMaggio, to the claim of honor of the creation of the Martini. Residents appreciate this history and like the small town feel of the community that transmits its history through landmarks and care for older structures. The unique small city nature of Martinez that includes its history makes it feel different from other homogenized towns. The goals and policies that follow are intended to assure that historic resources and the historic character of Martinez are considered and appreciated by the families that are its future.

Goal

HCA-G-1 Foster protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of Martinez's historic and cultural heritage.

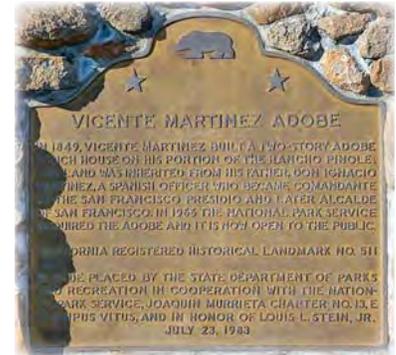
Policy

HCA-P-1.1 Promote community and visitor appreciation for the history of Martinez.

HCA-P-1.2 Strengthen and enhance the historic, natural, and cultural character of Martinez while promoting long-term sustainable economic development.

HCA-P-1.3 Encourage relocation of older buildings for preservation and restoration, rather than demolition.

HCA-P-1.4 Recognize the importance of protecting significant archaeological resources by identifying, when possible, archaeological resources and potential impacts on such resources.



Commemorative Plaque for Vicente Martínez Adobe. Don Vincente Martinez, son of the commandante of the Presidio of San Francisco, built this house of adobe bricks around 1849. He lived in his adobe only four years before he sold it to Edward Franklin. The foundation of the Martinez Adobe is rough stone, while the walls are sun-dried adobe brick ranging in thickness from twenty-four to thirty inches. The roof was covered with shingles of either cedar or redwood.

General Plan



Drawing of Ohlone hunting from a canoe.

- HCA-P-1.5 Avoid damaging effects to any tribal cultural resource when feasible
- HCA-P-1.6 Treat any Native American and human remains with culturally dignity when discovered during development or otherwise.
- HCA-P-1.7 Encourage new development to be compatible with adjacent historical structures in scale, massing, building materials, and general architectural treatment.
- HCA-P-1.8 Through the design review process, encourage the adaptation and compatible reuse of historic buildings in order to preserve the historic resources that are a part of Martinez's heritage.
- HCA-P-1.9 Encourage upkeep, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of private historic structures to conserve the integrity of the buildings with respect to the character of the buildings and their settings, in the best possible condition when possible and feasible.
- HCA-P-1.10 Comply with State and Federal laws to preserve and protect archaeological resources by complying with assessment and recovery of the resources.
- HCA-P-1.111 Coordinate historic preservation activities and historic preservation groups, community groups, non-profits, and grass root efforts to educate the community and visitors through tours, special events, and commemorative art.

Implementation

- HCA-I-1.1a. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Preservation of Historic Structures.

- HCA-I-1.1b Encourage the use of the State Historical Building Code where applicable.
- HCA-I-1.1c Put in place permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purpose of preserving and protecting the resource or place.
- HCA-I-1.1d Continue to update the comprehensive citywide inventory of historic resources and develop a citywide survey to identify structures that may be eligible for local state and national historic resource designation.
- HCA-1.1e Continue to work with and support the Martinez Historic Society in their efforts to archive documents, maps and photographs to properly chronicle the history of Martinez.



Old City Hall Building

4.4 Culture and Art

Importance of Culture and Art

Artistic and creative expression is pursued through a variety of outlets: theatrical performances, sculptures, murals, paintings, art shows, parades, historical displays and buildings, as well as the less formal arts such as, music events and food festivals, celebrations and informal cultural gatherings, pickup bands, and crafts groups. Together, these formal and informal, tangible and intangible, professional and amateur artistic and cultural activities constitute a community's cultural assets. These activities, which encompass a diverse set of locations, spaces, levels of professionalism and participation, products, events, consumers, creators, and critics are essential to Martinez's well-being, economic and cultural vitality, and sense of identity and heritage. Arts and culture, as a point of destination, can improve Martinez's competitive edge with other nearby cities, weaving together commerce, housing, education and civic life, and helping to make the Downtown a vibrant place to live in and visit.

Cities that are innovative have long recognized arts and cultural experiences as important components of beautification and economic success. The City of Martinez is committed to addressing the



Martinez Museum

interests and needs of the community as expressed through the cultural activities, arts, and community celebrations to provide opportunities to draw the community together and welcome visitors to share in Martinez’s unique celebrations. This section describes the City’s cultural and arts assets, provides the goals for integrating arts and culture into the City’s future, and identifies policies to address challenges and articulate opportunities to nurture arts and culture as an essential component of community life. This section also represents an important step in continuing to recognize the arts and cultural resources investment and consideration in the City’s decision-making processes.

Culture and Arts in Martinez: There is a wide variety of venues and activities available for Martinez residents and visitors to enjoy cultural and arts activities and events in Martinez. Some of these are described below.

Community Events and Activities: There are a number of community events and activities scheduled in Martinez throughout the year. The City’s special events calendar, Main Street Martinez special events, Martinez Chamber of Commerce events calendar, Martinez Historical Society events, and Martinez Arts Association calendar web pages contain information about upcoming events.

Use of Parks: Groups, organizations, companies, or families may make a park reservation through the City’s Park & Recreation Community Services Division. Fees for deposits and rentals vary, depending on the facility desired.

Sports Facilities: Reservations for City parks and athletic facilities for practice and organized league play are made through the City’s Park & Recreation Community Services Division. Use priority is given to recognized youth sport organizations and sanctioned recreation division programs. Further, the Rankin Aquatic Center contains a public swimming and diving complex.

Children’s Art and Cultural Activities: Many activities are provided for children in Martinez, including City recreation activity classes, camps and programs, special events such as the annual Lion’s Club Easter Egg Hunt, and classes and activities at the Martinez Library.

Public Art, Music, and Theatre: Various forms of public art, includ-

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ing murals and some sculptures, can be found throughout Martinez. Additionally, private music venues and performance theaters are located in Downtown. Martinez's approach to integrating the arts, music and cultural resources into the community has helped to contribute to livability and fostered a civic environment where the arts are appreciated.

Senior Community Center: The objective of the Martinez Senior Community Center is to promote educational, recreational, and social activities as well as providing services that meet the needs of the senior citizens of Martinez and surrounding cities. A membership at the Martinez Senior Center entitles seniors 50 years of age or over to receive a monthly newsletter of all our activities, tours and special events.

Martinez Library: The Martinez library, completed in 1941, is located in Downtown near the County Civic buildings. Hanging in the library are portraits of Dr. and Mrs. John Strentzel, painted by John Muir's friend and noted California artist William Keith. Also, the library houses a small historical collection that includes works by many famous local and state figures, including Martinez resident John Muir.

Martinez Historical Society: The Martinez Historical Society was created in 1973 to save the Borland House at 1005 Escobar Street, which was built in 1890, as a repository where papers, documents, photographs and artifacts could be housed. Over the years, the Martinez Historical Society has developed a comprehensive County history library and newspaper clipping file for researchers. Some of the items have include maps, the Martinez property assessment books from 1884 to the late 1940's, a large collection of historic photographs, artifacts from the City and County, and the County census from 1860 - 1920.

Martinez Arts Association: The Martinez Arts Association was founded in 1968 by a small group of local artists. The Association sponsors and participates in local art and music festivals. In 1969, they held the first Art in the Park event, which has been an annual event for over 40 years. In May 2007, several local artists from the Association formed a cooperative to open an art gallery in Downtown Martinez. The gallery houses a variety of artwork, from painting, photography, and ceramics to woodworking, jewelry, and



Independence Day Parade



Bocci Ball

fabric art. The gallery not only showcases the work of experienced artists, but benefits developing artists as well. The Association also sponsors frequent exhibits to showcase the talents of children and teenagers, troubled youth, and special-education adults.

Culture and Arts Goals and Policies

Culture and arts opportunities enrich lives of people of all ages and those who visit Martinez. In Martinez, there is desire is to invest in community facilities and focus resources to increase arts and cultural experiences. Harnessing arts and culture can be a key component of community revitalization, civic pride and identity, and reflect the unique character, social history and rich cultural diversity of a place.

Goal

HCA-G-2 Strengthen community appreciation and cohesiveness by enhancing cultural and art resources.

Policy

HCA-P-2.1 Continue to support and increase the promotion of the arts and cultural activities throughout the City for the benefit of visitors, tourists, and residents.

HCA-P-2.2 Encourage the formation of relationships between the public, artists, and private entities to create and preserve art for the benefit of the community.

HCA-P-2.3 Encourage community art projects that create a greater understanding and appreciation of art and artists throughout the community. Encourage activities, entertainment, and events that reflect Martinez's diverse ethnic and cultural heritage, inter-cultural understanding, and a greater sense of community.

HCA-P-2.4 Strategically invest in community arts and cultural facilities to enhance community quality of life and achieve economic prosperity.

HCA-P-2.5 Continue to host and coordinate public events like Earth Day, Children's Light Parade and the 4th of July

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Parade & Celebration throughout the year as appropriate and as funding permits.

HCA-P-2.6 When feasible, support and coordinate the development and maintenance of public and private cultural facilities to meet the growing and changing needs of the community as part of an overall framework for arts and cultural resources planning.

HCA-P-2.7 Require public and private participation in the support of arts and cultural events by promoting the inclusion of arts spaces and facilities in private development. Continue to expand and develop existing partnerships and forge new innovative public-private partnerships to foster and promote opportunities for maximizing funding, maintaining long-term viability programs and creating new opportunities for enhancing arts education and cultural programming in the community.



4th of July Parade

Implementation

HCA-I-2.1a Develop a program to promote cultural and historic resources in Martinez, especially in Downtown Martinez. Collaborate with downtown businesses, Main Street Martinez and the Chamber of Commerce, where appropriate, to develop and implement the program.

HCA-I-2.1b Explore the potential for defining focal areas or districts in downtown as cultural, historic or arts related.

HCA-I-2.1c Consider adopting an art in public places ordinance.

HCA-I-2.1d Consider working with the State Office of Historic Preservation to conduct periodic workshops to educate the community and city staff about historic resources and policies whenever possible.