

Chapter 1 - Introduction

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1.1 What is a Specific Plan?

A Specific Plan is a tool authorized by the California Government Code Sections 65450 – 65457 for the systematic implementation of the General Plan in a defined portion of a community’s planning area. A Specific Plan must specify in detail the distribution, location and extent of land uses for the area; public and private facilities proposed to be located in the area and needed to support the land uses; standards and criteria by which development will proceed; standards for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, where applicable; and a program of implementation measures, including financing measures.

1.2 Specific Plan Area

The Downtown Martinez Specific Plan study area covers about 220 acres and is bounded on the north by the Martinez Regional Shoreline and Martinez Waterfront Park; on the east by the Shell Martinez Refinery and a hillside residential area accessed from Miller Avenue; on the south by Susana Street; and on the west by cemeteries, Rankin Park, Talbart and Richardson Avenues, and by Thomas Hill, the bluff to the west of Berrellesa Street. (See Figure 1-1.) The study area includes the Downtown commercial and civic core and surrounding neighborhoods.

1.3 Purpose of the Downtown Specific Plan

The purpose of the Downtown Specific Plan is to guide public and private investment to ensure that future development and infrastructure projects help realize the Martinez community’s goals and visions for the future of Downtown. The principal goals are complementary and are meant to be mutually reinforcing:

1. To enhance the quality of life for Martinez residents, and
2. To bring back commercial dynamism to the downtown business area.

The Specific Plan is thus intended to protect and perpetuate the small-town character and quality of life of downtown Martinez; revitalize its economy by strengthening the

Downtown business district as a shopping and dining destination for Martinez residents and visitors; capitalize on past investments such as the waterfront, Alhambra Creek, and Intermodal Station; create new housing opportunities for a variety of household types; and preserve and enhance Downtown’s historic small-town character.

Further, the Specific Plan is intended to promote “smart growth” and “sustainable development” in Downtown Martinez, by:

1. Providing for compact, pedestrian-oriented development.
2. Providing for denser housing within walking distance of transportation centers.
3. Taking advantage of existing infrastructure.
4. Providing for mixed land uses.
5. Requiring attractive, distinctive design for new development

1.4 How the Specific Plan Works

The Specific Plan is designed to establish a vision and development framework for the Downtown and the means to implement that vision. The Plan will be implemented through public investments and private development projects. Implementation will be regulated through detailed development standards, land use regulations, design standards and guidelines, and the City’s design review process.

1.5 Applicability and Conformity with the Specific Plan

The provisions of this Specific Plan shall apply to all properties included in the Downtown Specific Plan area. No construction, substantial modification, demolition, addition, placement or installation of any building structure shall occur, nor shall any new use commence on any lot, on or after the effective date of this Specific Plan, except in conformity with the provisions of this Specific Plan.

1.6 General Plan Consistency

This Specific Plan is not a component of the Martinez General Plan. It is a separately adopted general plan implementation document. To ensure consistency between the Downtown Specific Plan and the Martinez General Plan, the General Plan map and text will be amended prior to the adoption of this Plan to be consistent with this Plan. In addition, the Central Martinez Specific Area Plan will be amended to include the Downtown Specific Plan land use designations to replace the Specific Area Plan designations for the Specific Plan area. This is consistent with General Plan section 10.1, which provides for the periodic review and amendment of the General Plan to reflect changes in conditions and values as they occur.

Outside of the Specific Plan area, the provisions of the “Central Martinez Specific Area Plan” section of the Martinez General Plan will continue to apply to the remainder of the Central Martinez area as designated in the General Plan.

1.7 Zoning Ordinance Consistency

To ensure consistency between the Downtown Specific Plan and the City of Martinez Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Map will be amended concurrent with the adoption of this Plan to include three new zoning districts: Downtown Shoreline, Civic, and Historic Overlay. The Central Commercial zoning district will be amended for use in the Downtown Core area.

Where land use regulations and/or development standards of the Martinez Zoning Ordinance are inconsistent with this Specific Plan, the standards and regulations of the Specific Plan shall prevail. Any issue not specifically covered in the Specific Plan shall be subject to the Zoning Code and/or Municipal Code. Interpretations may be made by the Director of Community Development or referred to the Planning Commission if not specifically covered in the City's existing regulations.

1.8 Supporting Documents

Several documents were prepared as background information for the development of the Downtown Martinez Specific Plan. These supporting documents are available at Martinez City Hall and are as follows:

Downtown Martinez Economic and Demographic Survey and History
Prepared by Strategic Economics, June 2003

City of Martinez Existing Transportation Conditions
Prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, July 2003

Summary of Workshop #1 Survey Results
Prepared by Calthorpe Associates, August 2003

Downtown Martinez Infrastructure and Public Facilities Assessment
Prepared by Bellecci & Associates, September 2003

Transit Options Research in Downtown Martinez
Prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, September 2003

Downtown Martinez Opportunity Sites Memorandum
Prepared by Strategic Economics, September 2003

Downtown Martinez Parking Count Results
Prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, October 2003

Downtown Martinez Retail Market Assessment
Prepared by Strategic Economics, November 2003

Downtown Martinez Employment, Office and Industrial Assessment
Prepared by Strategic Economics, November 2003

Summary of Alternative Development Concepts and Assessments
Prepared by Calthorpe Associates, February 2004

Economic Assessment of Alternative Development Concepts
Prepared by Strategic Economics, February 2004

Traffic Impacts of Economic Revitalization Alternative
Prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, February 2004

Acknowledgements

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City Planning Commission

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Contra Costa County Capital Facilities Dept.
Martinez Chamber of Commerce
Main Street Martinez
Old Town Preservation & Beautification
Committee



Fig 1-1 STUDY AREA

LEGEND

- - - Study Area Boundary
- ++++ Rail Road
- Property Lines
- ~ Alhambra Creek
- Parks / Open Space

Downtown Martinez Specific Plan

Martinez, California



0' 200' 400' 600' 800'



Berkeley, California
City of Martinez, California