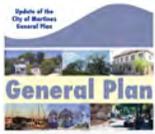


# Martinez General Plan Update Tour Booklet

Prepared for the August 25, 2010 General Plan  
Update Task Force Tour of Martinez





# Purpose and Introduction

This “Tour Booklet” provides preliminary background information and space for you to write down your notes on the tour of Martinez. The pages which follow correspond to the route of the tour — located by numbered stations — with a map of the tour route contained at the back of this booklet. Please note, that while we will tour specific sites, **the intent of the tour is to illustrate a range of challenges and potential opportunities we may want to consider during the General Plan Update.**

**In this booklet there is space for your NOTES — to write-down what you see to be the challenges and opportunities that you feel are important to be considered as part of the Martinez General Plan Update. Two main questions are posed for each tour stop or point of interest:**

- (1) WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED?
- (2) WHAT ARE POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT OR CHANGE?

You can write your NOTES directly in the booklet under that particular item (page 22 is a blank sheet for any additional notes). In addition, we have prepared a **General Comment Sheet** — which will be provided separately — for your general observations and comments. We would like to collect the General Comment Sheets to supplement the discussion that will occur when we return to City Hall to debrief the tour. Your comments during the debriefing will also be recorded on a large wall-graphic.

You can take up through the next **two weeks** to complete your comments on the **General Comment Sheet**. However, we would like to receive all comments **no later than Wednesday, September 8, 2010** so that we can prepare a complete summary of the Task Force's observations and comments from the tour. Please return your comments to Terry Blount, Planning Manager, at City Hall, 525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553. If you should have any questions, please call Terry at (925) 372-3534.

Below are the stops or points of interest along the tour corresponding to the map at the end of this booklet. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this tour! We look forward to receiving your comments.

<b>1</b>	City Hall.....	2
<b>2</b>	Alhambra Avenue Corridor.....	3
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## (1) City Hall

**Location:** 525 Henrietta Street

Starting and finishing point for the tour of Martinez.



## (2) Alhambra Avenue Corridor

**Location:** Alhambra Avenue (Contra Costa Medical Center to Highway 4)

**Background:** The Alhambra Avenue corridor is a geographically distinct sub-area of the larger Alhambra Valley, which is defined by the Franklin Hills to the west, Pine Street area ridgeline to the east, the train trestle/ Highway 4 to the south, and the Downtown area to the north. Alhambra Avenue is the focal point of this area which contains a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Most of the properties in this area not fronting Alhambra Avenue generally contain single-family dwellings. While the corridor is visually distinct from the older Downtown area north of the Berrellesa Street one-way street split (at the Medical Center), it has been associated with the Downtown since the 1973 Central Martinez Specific Area Plan grouped all areas north of Highway 4 under this one Plan. The geography of the corridor, its larger scale institutional uses, and the width of Alhambra Avenue itself all define an area with an identity distinct from the Downtown to the north. The use of alphabet street names ("A" through "K") is one unifying element of the corridor.

Within this corridor there are distinct northern and southern halves: the northern half (between the Medical Center and Alhambra Way) and the southern half (below Alhambra Way south to Highway 4). The northern half evolved between the 1900s and 1940s as a residential extension of the older City. The southern half didn't exist until the 1950s. Before that time, Alhambra Avenue turned into what's now Canyon Avenue and served as an extension of Franklin Canyon Road. In the mid 1950s, Alhambra Avenue was extended south through the middle of the area, between Alhambra and Franklin Creeks, and commercial development soon filled



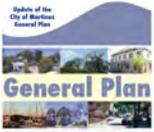
the spaces between the new road and the creeks.

The northern portion of the Alhambra Avenue corridor is dominated by the Medical Center and Alhambra High School, both on the west side of Alhambra Avenue. The east side is generally a mixture of single-family and duplex dwellings, various residential structures that have been converted to offices uses, and small scale office and commercial structures. In both the intensity of uses and the buildings' scale, this part of the corridor feels like a transition from the largely residential portion of Downtown to the north to the commercial strip south of Alhambra Way. Signs are generally small in scale, and street trees are more visually dominate than the more fully commercial area to the south. Fitting the transitional feel, one of the current General Plan's few mixed use land use designations is along this part corridor.



The southern Alhambra Avenue corridor has the origins of a typical highway commercial strip from the 1950s and 60s. Many uses along this portion of Alhambra Avenue are either auto service/sales or for motorists' services, such as fast food restaurants, gas stations and motels. Originally, the businesses typically had tall highway oriented pole signs out by the street with little or no landscaping. But starting in the mid 1960s (and possibly coinciding with the Federal Government acquisition of the John Muir Historical Site), the City began to implement policies to improve the corridor's appearance. Design guidelines were initially adopted in 1966 and strengthened in the mid 1990s, requiring new construction to have less dominant signs and higher quality architecture and landscaping. Over the years, public works improvements have included the undergrounding of utilities, adding a landscaped median and landscaping at the freeway off-ramp. But since the 1950s, the land uses themselves have remained primarily unchanged, with some general retail sites having been recently replaced with additional auto oriented business.





**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** While there are currently only a limited number of vacancies along the corridor, do the existing uses represent the highest and best uses? Would more significant building volumes with reduced setbacks and/or greater building heights, be appropriate? Is it desirable, from an aesthetic point of view, to have the orientation of the buildings be such that the parking is located behind or within future projects? Residential units, above the ground floor, are now permitted in the commercial areas of the corridor. Would it be appropriate to provide incentives to promote residential development as part of a mixed-use project or to allow residential only projects on properties that do not currently permit such?

(1) WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED?

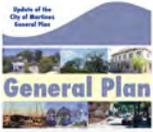
(2) WHAT ARE POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT OR CHANGE?

### (3) “Master’s Property”

**Location:** 870 Vine Hill Way

**Background:** Often referred to by the former owner's name, this 48 acre undeveloped hillside site is located on the east side of Alhambra Avenue, generally between Vine Hill Way and Alhambra Hill Drive. It is probably the largest hill form in the greater Alhambra Hills area that has neither been acquired as open space or conversely, been developed or been the subject of a development application. The current General Plan's Open Space and Conservation element designates the property's upper hillside, and ridgeline, as Visually Significant. The current General Plan land use designation for the majority of the site's steep slopes is Open Space, but the Plan does allow for the potential of approximately a dozen units along the relatively level ridge line paralleling Alhambra Avenue. Over the years, several





informal inquiries about the site's development potential have been made. Staff has informed many such inquirers that before any estimate of development potential could be given, the applicant would need to fund an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the potential geotechnical and visual impacts of development.

**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** Given the environmental constraints of developing large portions of this property for residential use, should this property be reconsidered as a permanent open space and recreation area (with the exception of portion that contains the existing single-family dwelling)? Or is the current designation sufficient, as it would conserve much of the property as open space, but would allow some development on the relatively level ridge line? This hillside site is a large prominent feature that serves as a visual divide between the areas to the north and south of this property. If it were to be designated as a permanent open space and recreation area it would continue to serve as such. Is that an issue or not?

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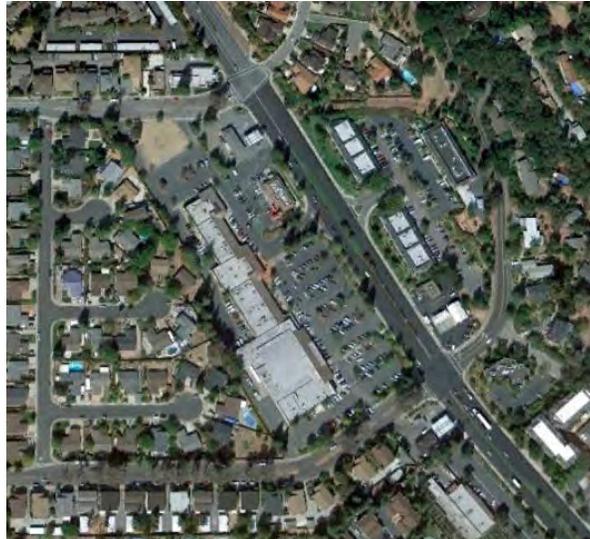
## (4) Virginia Hills Shopping Center

**Location:** 6606-6688 Alhambra Avenue

**Background:** The construction of the main part of the Virginia Hills Shopping Center dates back to the mid-1960s and late 1970s. Also, during that time a gas station with a mini-mart was constructed at the corner of Blue Ridge Drive and Alhambra Avenue. Today the gas station is a Chevron Station, and over the past several years the owner of the property has been contemplating adding a car wash to the site. This car wash proposal was not well received by the residents of the Virginia Hills community. Next to the gas station is a Burger King restaurant that was constructed in the mid-1980s. There is a vacant pad of underutilized land located at the north end of the Shopping Center. This vacant pad is an opportunity area for future development.

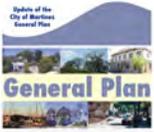


The Shopping Center consists of a number of individual parcels which are owned by different parties. It is managed by Cardoza Properties, which has worked with the City to maintain a coordinated sign program. Recently Safeway, who is major tenant of the Center, underwent interior renovations and sign changes. The minor tenants of the Shopping Center include a bank, coffee shop, pharmacy/ drug store, personal services and restaurants. The Center contains approximately 66,000 square feet of space.



### **Possible Planning Discussion**

**Topics:** When considering the challenges and opportunities for this site, it is important to note the commercial areas near the Virginia Hills Shopping Center, which include a commercial center, retail space, and gas stations located across Alhambra Avenue and Virginia Hills Drive. Also, consider how this commercial area ties into and relates to the surrounding single-family and multi-family residential neighborhoods. This Shopping Center generally serves



only the local area. Given the size of the site and the potential for increased development that could serve a larger catchment area, would it be appropriate to encourage such increased development? Are there other uses than those that currently exist that would be appropriate for this site? We are going to be visiting two other shopping centers in the City. In your opinion how does this Shopping Center, as well as the other two, compare to others in the surrounding communities (e.g. Crossroads Shopping Center [Kohl's], Pleasant Hill, CA).

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## (5) Pine Meadow Golf Course

**Location:** 451 Vine Hill Way

**Background:** Pine Meadow was privately built as a public 9-hole golf course in the mid 1960s. The property was annexed into the City of Martinez in 1970, along with the surrounding properties that were later developed as single-family neighborhoods. The Pine Meadow site was designated as Permanent Open Space/ Recreation in the Hidden Lakes Study Area General Plan Amendment December 1973. There have been no changes to the site's land use designations since.



**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** In the last few years, the property owners have indicated their possible interest in selling the property for residential development. To date, no applications have been filed. The site is currently designated as permanent open space and recreation. Only one single-family dwelling unit is permitted on any one parcel under this designation. Is the use of this property as a public golf course still desirable? Should the current owner(s) wish to cease operations, should the City consider acquisition of the property to be used as a municipal golf course? Should other uses be considered? If so, what might those be?

(1) WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED?

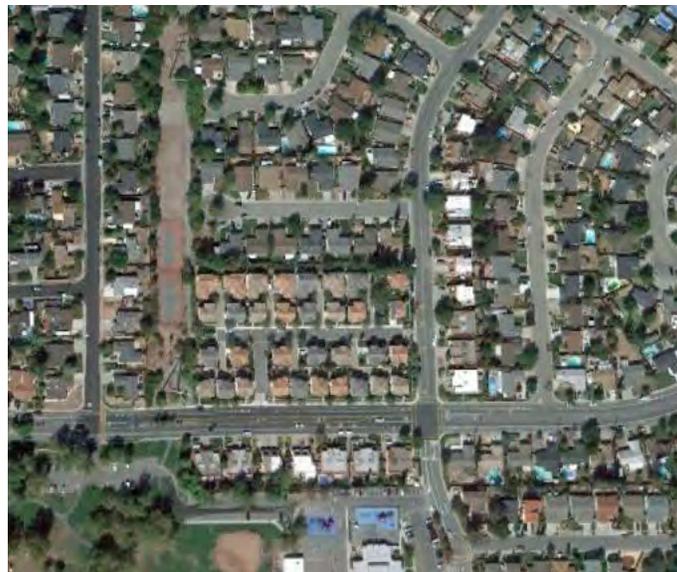
(2) WHAT ARE POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT OR CHANGE?

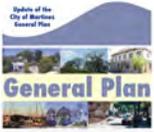
## (6) Glacier Drive/Center Avenue

**Location:** Glacier Drive/Center Avenue

**Background:** As Martinez's Hidden Lakes District developed from the mid-1960s into the 1970s, the intersection of two collector streets, Center Avenue and Morello Drive, formed a node to locate those more intensive land uses than the low-intensity (single-family and open space) uses that otherwise define the District. The local elementary school is located near the intersection's southwest corner. The District's first medium density housing, two rows of duet (semi-detached single-family) units, are located on the northeast corner and along Center Avenue next to the school.

The now residential site on the northwest corner, developed as Glacier Classics in 2002, was previously a neighborhood grocery market and pharmacy. As typical of such locally serving commercial centers from the 1970s, when the market and pharmacy were no longer viable, they were replaced with other non-residential uses (a church and discount retailer). Ultimately, even those non-residential uses vacated the site. The site remained vacant for several years until an application was filed to replace the former neighborhood commercial center in the early 2000s. Both the duet homes on the opposite sides of Glacier Drive and Morello Avenue, and the Glacier Classics development, are examples of their own era's response to market demand for medium-density housing. And just as the older duets are visually dissimilar from the styles and setbacks of their older ranch home neighbors, the Glacier Classics are again dissimilar from both the duets and the ranch homes.





**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** The Glacier Classics homes are relatively closely spaced together and have the garages facing the alleys and not toward Center Avenue and Glacier Drive. These design features are considered best practices today and represent what many consider to be highly desirable design features for a number of infill sites. Do you agree? What, if anything, about the design features of this development would you recommend changing? If nothing, would you feel that it's appropriate to provide incentives for this type of development to promote it elsewhere?

(1) WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED?

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## (7) Village Oaks Shopping Center

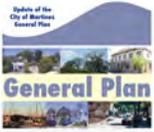
**Location:** 1125-1185 Arnold Drive

**Background:** The Village Oaks Shopping Center was constructed in the early 1980s and consists of approximately 126,500 square feet of space. The major tenants of the Shopping Center are Lucky and Rite Aid. Minor tenants include personal services and restaurants, such as the Bank of America and Togo's. There is a McDonald's with a drive-thru located at the southeast corner of the Shopping Center. The Village Oaks Shopping Center is unique from the other shopping centers in Martinez, in that there is a pathway that links the Shopping Center to the Village Oaks neighborhood located behind the Center.

The Village Oaks Shopping Center is located at a major crossroads/intersection, at the northwest corner of Arnold Drive and Morello Avenue. The Shopping Center is elevated from the street and has steep driveways that are a source of traffic issues. In the future, a traffic control at Arnold Drive such as a traffic light or four way stop would greatly benefit the traffic circulation of the Shopping Center. Similar to the other shopping centers in Martinez, the Village Oaks Shopping Center is located in a commercial node that consists of a gas station, retailers, personal services, and restaurants.

As the Village Oaks Shopping Center sits elevated, many of the businesses that are located in the Center are not clearly visible from street level. Last year the property owner, Collier Village Oaks LLC, added two multi-tenant monument signs to the Shopping Center to provide clear identification of the businesses and to provide a greater degree of identification. Also, over the past few years the property owner has improved the landscaping.





**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** As this is the second shopping center visited on the City Tour, what do you think are the strengths and weaknesses, if any, of this Shopping Center, in comparison to the Virginia Hills Shopping Center? Are there any similarities? What opportunities for improvement and/or change exist for this Shopping Center?

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## (8) Muir Station Shopping Center

**Location:** 534-560 Center Avenue

**Background:** The Muir Station Shopping Center was built in 1988 and includes approximately 118,000 square feet of commercial space. It is located close to Highway 4 and the intersection of Center Avenue and Muir Station Road. Nob Hill Foods and CVS are the major tenants. At the northeast corner of the Shopping Center are two stand alone structures that contain a Carrows Restaurant and a Starbucks Coffee. The minor tenants of the Center include personal services, retail, and restaurants, such as Beauty Source, Payless ShoeSource, and Kinder's Custom Meats. The Muir Station Shopping Center is located in a mixed use area that contains multi-family housing, a movie theatre, hotel, fast food restaurants, Contra Costa County offices, and the VA Medical Center. The Shopping Center is linked to the County offices by a pedestrian crosswalk on Center Avenue and is serviced by the County Connection buses.



**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** The Muir Station Shopping Center is the last shopping center visited on today's City Tour. What do you think are the challenges and opportunities at the Muir Station Shopping Center? Is there room for expansion, such as adding a second story?

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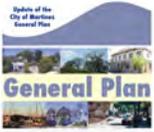
## (9) Howe Road

**Location:** Howe Road (Pacheco Boulevard south to the Parkway Drive/Old Orchard Road intersection)

**Background:** Even by the mid 1960s most of the light industrial uses associated today with Howe Road had not been established. The properties along either side of the road contained mostly fields with a few having been graded in anticipation of future development. By the mid 1970s a few more had been developed, however it wasn't until at least the mid 1980s that most of the properties along Howe Road south of Pacheco Boulevard to Parkway Drive/Old Orchard Road were developed as they are today. Except at the north end of the street there is no direct access to the residential neighborhoods directly adjacent to the east and west of Howe Road. When travelling north on the street the Shell Refinery is the most prominent visual feature. The properties along this corridor appear to contain viable businesses with buildings and related facilities in good condition.

**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** While the current uses seem appropriate for this location, in the future should other uses be encouraged to locate here replacing all or most of the light industrial uses present now? Should there be no change to the uses permitted? If the uses are to remain the same, would it be appropriate to add policies for this area that would facilitate change to the visual character of the area? These might include making improvements to the street such as adding curbs and gutters the length of it and/or requiring that all vehicles associated with the businesses be parked on-site.





(1) WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED?



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## (10) “Bisio Property”

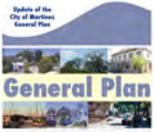
**Location:** 310 Embarcadero Street (directly west of Granger's Wharf)

**Background:** This property was once the site of the Martinez Sanitary Garbage Company. It is where the garbage trucks were stored when not in use. When the City joined with other local jurisdictions in the area in the 1980s to consolidate solid waste disposal services, the site was no longer used for this purpose. It is currently used as a materials and truck storage facility for the local cable company. This site is directly adjacent to the Martinez Regional Shoreline to the north and the Martinez Sportsmen's Club to the west, a social club whose roots go back many years and is closely associated with the City's Italian-American community. To the west is also the location of a Central Contra Costa Sanitary District pumping station.



**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** This site was studied as part of the Downtown Specific Plan, but specific decisions about the future use of it was deferred to a later date. Is the current use of the site appropriate for this location? If not, what would you consider to be the best use for this site in the future? If you believe a different use is appropriate, are there any special constraints that you see that would impede a change of use?





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## (11) “Zocchi Property”

**Location:** 330-360 Ferry Street (directly north of the Amtrak Station)

**Background:** This site was previously occupied by the Martinez Food Cannery, where among other things, tomato sauce and fish were prepared and canned for decades. The most recent commercial use was Waters Moving and Storage. What remains today are a number of unoccupied warehouse structures. This property is owned by the City. It is considering releasing a request for proposals (RFP) seeking a qualified developer to transform the large building located adjacent to the railroad tracks into a recreational center, community center, and/or athletic complex. At this time the length of the leases for both structures is unknown. The City has also assisted with the submittal of a grant application for the reuse of the other large building on the site. The funding, if awarded, would be used toward the development of a research and educational center focusing on the Carquinez Strait and Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta estuary. This is considered a long-term use.

The City acquired the property with the express goal to provide additional parking as part of phase three of its Intermodal Project. Private and/or public development of this property has been approved by Contra Costa Transportation Authority and the CalTrains Rail Division. While not all, some of the on-site parking spots will need to be used for AMTRAK passengers.

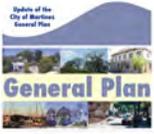
**Possible Planning Discussion Topics:** This site is currently underutilized and given its prime location adjacent to the City’s waterfront and Intermodal Station is an important opportunity site. Do you feel that the uses being considered for the site are appropriate, particularly over the long-term? What other opportunities does this site present for the City?





(1) WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED?

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## Space for Other Notes

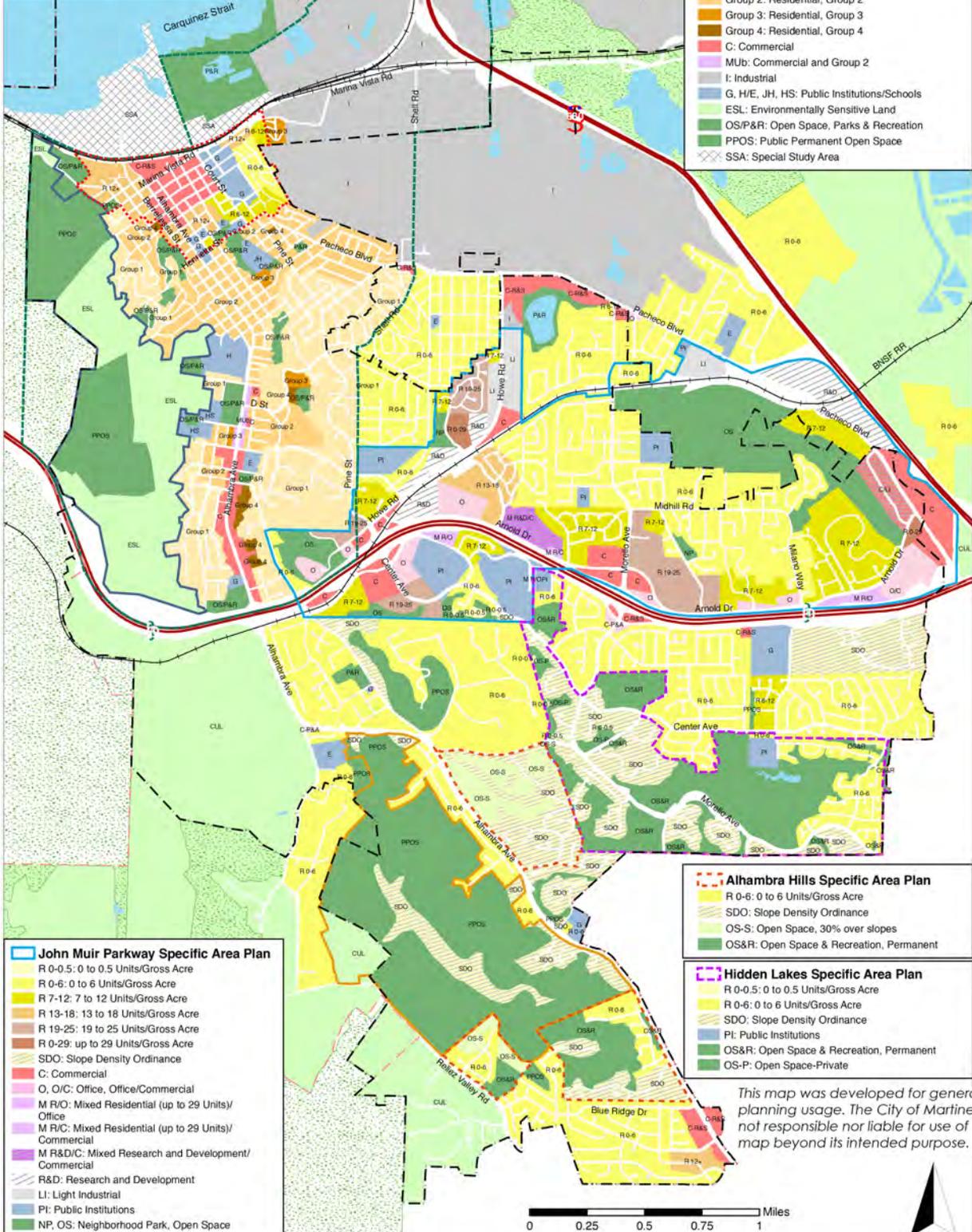
# Land Use Map

- Specific Area Plan Boundaries**  
Land Use Designations Specified for Each Area Plan
- Central Martinez Specific Area Plan
  - Franklin Hills Subarea
  - Hidden Lakes Specific Area Plan
  - John Muir Parkway Specific Area Plan
  - Alhambra Hills Specific Area Plan
- Specific Plan Boundaries**
- Downtown Specific Plan
  - Alhambra Hills Specific Plan
- City and County Boundaries**
- City Limits
  - Sphere of Influence
  - Areas Outside Urban Limit Line
- Community & Economic Development Department  
August 10, 2010 - Planning Commission Review



- General Plan Land Use Policy**  
Areas Outside Specific Area Plans
- R 0-6: 0 to 6 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 6-12: 6 to 12 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 12+: 12 and Over Units/Gross Acre
  - SDO: Slope Density Ordinance
  - C-R&S: Commercial, Retail and Services
  - C-P&A: Commercial, Professional & Administrative
  - I: Industrial
  - G, H/E, JH, HS: Public Institutions/Schools
  - CUL: Open Space/Conservation Use Land
  - P&R: Parks and Recreation
  - PPOS: Permanent Open Space
  - SSA: Special Study Area

- Central Martinez Specific Area Plan**
- Group 1: Residential, Group 1
  - Group 2: Residential, Group 2
  - Group 3: Residential, Group 3
  - Group 4: Residential, Group 4
  - C: Commercial
  - MUB: Commercial and Group 2
  - I: Industrial
  - G, H/E, JH, HS: Public Institutions/Schools
  - ESL: Environmentally Sensitive Land
  - OS/P&R: Open Space, Parks & Recreation
  - PPOS: Public Permanent Open Space
  - SSA: Special Study Area

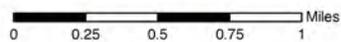


- John Muir Parkway Specific Area Plan**
- R 0-0.5: 0 to 0.5 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 0-6: 0 to 6 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 7-12: 7 to 12 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 13-18: 13 to 18 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 19-25: 19 to 25 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 0-29: up to 29 Units/Gross Acre
  - SDO: Slope Density Ordinance
  - C: Commercial
  - O, O/C: Office, Office/Commercial
  - M R/O: Mixed Residential (up to 29 Units)/Office
  - M R/C: Mixed Residential (up to 29 Units)/Commercial
  - M R&D/C: Mixed Research and Development/Commercial
  - R&D: Research and Development
  - LI: Light Industrial
  - PI: Public Institutions
  - NP, OS: Neighborhood Park, Open Space

- Alhambra Hills Specific Area Plan**
- R 0-6: 0 to 6 Units/Gross Acre
  - SDO: Slope Density Ordinance
  - OS-S: Open Space, 30% over slopes
  - OS&R: Open Space & Recreation, Permanent

- Hidden Lakes Specific Area Plan**
- R 0-0.5: 0 to 0.5 Units/Gross Acre
  - R 0-6: 0 to 6 Units/Gross Acre
  - SDO: Slope Density Ordinance
  - PI: Public Institutions
  - OS&R: Open Space & Recreation, Permanent
  - OS-P: Open Space-Private

*This map was developed for general planning usage. The City of Martinez is not responsible nor liable for use of this map beyond its intended purpose.*





# Martinez General Plan Update Task Force Meeting

## City Tour — August 25, 2010

- City of Martinez Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Areas Outside Urban Limit Line

- Brief Stop or Point of Interest Along Route
- Tour Route

- 1** City Hall
- 2** Alhambra Avenue Corridor
- 3** Former "Masters Property" (under new ownership)
- 4** Virginia Hills Shopping Center
- 5** Pine Meadow Golf Course
- 6** Glacier Drive/Center Avenue
- 7** Village Oaks Shopping Center
- 8** Muir Station Shopping Center
- 9** Howe Road
- 10** "Bisio Property"
- 11** "Zocchi Property"

