

To whom it may concern,

East Bay for Everyone (EBFE) is a membership organization that advocates for equitable land use and housing policies in the region . We are engaging in housing element updates throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Ahead of the 6th cycle of the Housing Element getting underway, EBFE has reviewed Martinez's 5th Cycle Housing Element and progress to-date. We write to provide guidance to help the city meet its upcoming Regional Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) numbers in a way that could benefit current and future residents.

There are a large number of underutilized and vacant lots on the west side of downtown Martinez, many of which were not included in the 5th Cycle of the Housing Element. Those which were included in the 5th Cycle were not developed.

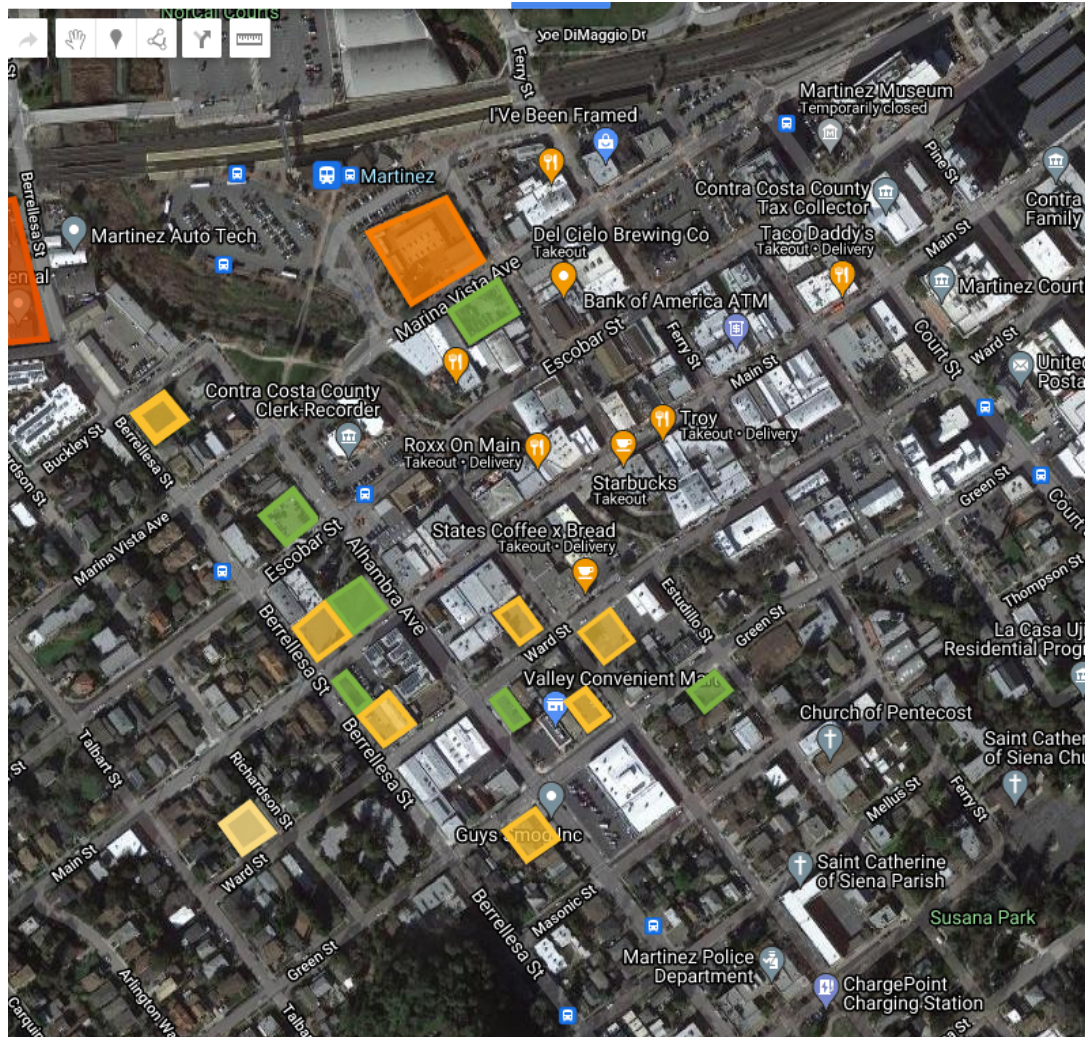
These lots present a huge opportunity to Martinez by:

1. **Improving walkability** of the downtown, which will largely benefit Martinez residents. Currently, the edges of downtown do not smoothly lead into neighborhoods. Instead there are vacant lots which are tears in the urban fabric, and make walking less pleasant and feel less safe.
 - Walking from Amtrak to Downtown (just 4 blocks) takes you past multiple fenced auto lots. The absence of active uses creates barriers for walkability and perceptions of lack of safety. Allowing mixed-use structures including ground floor retail and other commercial uses would activate these corridors and make the transition feel more safe. Increasing and encouraging this foot traffic would improve downtown businesses
 - Walking from the Rankin Aquatic Center to downtown (5 blocks) takes you from a nice residential neighborhood to downtown, but not without crossing several blocks of vacant lots.
2. **Reducing traffic** by allowing more people to live near jobs in downtown Martinez. By placing housing development near jobs, fewer will need to drive there, compared to placing more housing elsewhere in the city (the county is the largest employer in the city).
3. **Preserve green space** . Martinez is required to provide housing to meet the needs of a growing city, region and state. Many proposals call for removing Open Space and Green Space for the city, and building large lot houses(4 DU/acre). One way to preserve these open spaces is to build denser housing. Prioritizing 75+ DU/acre will help preserve these open spaces.

See table and map below for specific lots which we recommend vetting for inclusion in the 6th Cycle Housing Element:

Item number	Assessor Parcel Number	Area(acres)	Notes/Current Use:
1	373-181-001	0.83 acres	Large underutilized, directly adjacent to Amtrak.
2	373-183-003	0.22	Autobody/storage, between Amtrak and downtown
3	373-213-001	0.11	Private parking

4	373-222-004	0.11	Private and Public Parking, these 3 could be combined for a 0.7 acre lot(approximately)
5	373-222-005	0.11	
6	373-222-006	0.23	
7	373-222-007	0.23	
8	373-225-001	0.11	Private parking and autobody, could combine to form ~0.43 acre lot
9	373-225-002	0.09	
10	373-225-005	0.22	
11	373-226-005	0.17	Private parking
12	372-391-003	0.13	Vacant lot
13	373-234-006	0.22	Private parking/storage, near downtown
14	373-232-001	0.23	Vacant lot, near downtown/amtrak
15	372-092-001	0.23	Vacant lot
16	373-213-005	0.10	Private Parking
17	372-382-004	0.23	Smog check, underutilized
18	372-391-003	0.13	Private Parking



How:

- Provide greater incentives to develop higher density housing downtown
- Allow for lots to be rezoned to accommodate higher density
 - Density too low to attract development, especially for affordable housing and low income units. Need 65-75 units/acre minimum for a development to be eligible for LTC (Low Income Tax Credit)
- Prioritize townhomes, apartments, and condos over single family homes on large lots.
- Prioritize parking garages over lots
 - Parking garages allow for people to still be able to drive and park downtown, without taking up the wide swaths of land parking lots require

While downtown is not the only part of Martinez with good sites for housing development - and should not be the only part of the city responsible for building housing - it provides an excellent starting point for city planners and consultants to focus on. Taking some of the steps suggested above could increase the walkability of downtown. This, plus the access to public transit,

restaurants, shopping, and parks would make downtown appealing to young families and working professionals.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Olivia Ramacier, EB4E member and Martinez resident

Maxwell Davis, EB4E member and Oakland resident