



# Questionnaire #1: Key Issues and Core Values

Summary of Results

*09/20/2023*



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# Summary

## Introduction and Background

The City of Marina hosted an online questionnaire (survey) to inform residents of the ongoing General Plan Update, collect feedback related to the vision for the future, and prioritize community values and concerns. The results of this questionnaire will be used to revise the vision and core values for the updated General Plan.

The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Korean on the project website—Marina2045.org—from July 21 to September 15, 2023. The survey had a total of 625 responses – 618 completed in English, 3 in Korean, and 2 in Spanish.

Below is an overview of the survey design, limitations, and outreach, followed by a summary of key findings by question. Detailed responses can be found in Attachment A.

## Survey Overview

### Survey Design

The survey was designed and conducted using SurveyMonkey, a large and reputable web-based survey platform. The survey settings were configured to only allow one survey to be completed from a single device (i.e., laptop, smartphone, tablet).

### Survey Type

The survey was conducted with a non-randomized sample—often called a convenience sample—of people who live, work, or spend time in Marina. The convenience sample method—as opposed to a random, “statistically valid” survey—was intentionally used for multiple reasons.

First, using a non-random sample for a survey is commonly used to understand the perspectives and preferences of a group of people (“population”), especially related to topics that are time-sensitive and/or not gathered through existing population surveys. Data from non-random samples can show the range of views and preferences within a population and be used as a reference point for decision making.

Second, the General Plan Team (Raimi + Associates and City staff) wanted to make sure that the entire population (and not just a sub-group of residents) had the opportunity to participate in providing comments on the vision, values, and priorities and concerns for the future of Marina. Using a statistically valid survey would leave out many residents who have expressed a desire to be engaged in the process. The General Plan Team wanted to make sure that all interested residents, business owners, and property owners could participate in the survey.

Finally, the questionnaire provides information that will help with the direction of the plan and inform decision-makers, not “vote” on a final decision.

## Limitations

The primary limitation of data gathered through a non-randomized sample is that the findings cannot be assumed to reflect the opinions of the entire population. While the data from non-random samples is often considered “non-generalizable” the following factors indicate that the data from this land use alternatives questionnaire is reliable and provides an accurate “temperature” of current public opinion in the Marina community. Factors include a very large number of respondents to the survey thus increasing reliability. Additionally, the demographic information is very close to the citywide population. While some groups are underrepresented in the survey in terms of total percentage (namely Hispanic/Latino residents and youth), the overall numbers of respondents are generally very high.

Despite the confidence, random samples (like all data) also have limitations. The primary limitation of statistically valid surveys is that participants who opt-in may not reflect the general population because certain types of people are more likely to not respond. Considering this, the overall high sample size mitigates the limitations presented by the non-random sample survey.

## Survey Outreach

The General Plan Team utilized print, online, and in-person outreach methods to raise awareness for questionnaire #1. These methods and events are listed below.

- Hard copy surveys were distributed to those without computer access (though none completed).
- Email blasts sent to the General Plan database with over 1,500 email addresses.
- One in-person GPAC meeting.
- One pop-up workshop.

## Findings

The section below provides an overview of the responses to all ten questions presented in the survey. Of the ten, 2 questions asked respondents to rank concerns and priorities, 2 questions asked for open-ended responses, and the remaining 6 questions asked for respondents’ demographics through multiple-choice response.

## Demographics

Six of the survey questions related to demographics, asking respondents for their age category, race, if you live and/or work in Marina, area of Marina you reside, tenure in city, and lastly, whether you own or rent your housing unit. Below are key findings from the demographics multiple choice questions.

- There were 497 respondents that reported their background for the English survey, 3 for the Korean survey, and 2 for the Spanish survey, totaling 502 respondents. Of those 502 respondents, 64.5% identified as White/Caucasian, 4.4% as Black/African American, 8.8% as Hispanic/Latino, 15.3% as Asian/Asian American, 1.2% as Native American or Alaska Native, and 2.6% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Additionally, 9.2% identified as two or more races, and 3.4% identified as another race not listed. The respondents came from a diverse array of backgrounds, the Hispanic population was somewhat underrepresented, making up between 23-29% of Marina’s population.

- Of those that responded, 19.3% lived in North Marina, 40.5% in Central Marina, 25.3% in South Marina, 7.9% in Schoonover and/or Abrams/Preston Park and 7.0% in East Garrison. It should be noted that around 20% of respondents did not live in Marina, with about 15% who work but do not live in the city.
- Responses represent both longtime residents and newer Marina residents. Approximately 46% of respondents have lived in Marina 5 or less years, while 37% have lived in Marina for more than 11 years. The remaining respondents have resided in Marina for 5-10 years (approximately 19%).
- The vast majority of respondents own their housing unit (approximately 76%) while the remaining nearly 25% rent.
- All age groups except for youth (18 and under) were well represented in the survey responses. About 18% of respondents were between ages 18-34, and 17% were 35-44. Almost 40% were between 45 and 64, and the remaining 25% were aged 65 and older.

## Question 1: Issues and Challenges

The first survey question presented a handful of issues and challenges, and asked respondents to rate their concern about each issue on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = not at all concerned; 2 – somewhat concerned, 3 – quite concerned, 4 – extremely concerned). Below are the total of responses along with the weighted average for each topic. The higher the number, the more concerned residents were about the issue. Please note that not everyone rated each concern.

The issues of highest concern were future water supply, lack of resident’s influence in regional planning, and the lack of Downtown and public gathering places. The least concerning issue was by far the changing demographics and decreasing diversity of the City. This was followed by a lack of distinct identity or character and limited existing connections between North and South Marina.

Issue	Rate 1	Rate 2	Rate 3	Rate 4	Total Respondents	Weighted Average*
Concern about the future water supply	9.08% 55	16.67% 101	27.06% 164	47.19% 286	606	3.12
Lack of influence in regional planning	8.70% 53	15.93% 97	29.89% 182	45.48% 277	609	3.12
No Downtown/limited public gathering places	8.37% 51	18.39% 112	30.38% 185	42.86% 261	609	3.08
Inconsistent, generally low-quality visual appearance	8.10% 49	21.49% 130	32.89% 199	37.52% 227	605	3.00
Weak economy	8.07% 49	21.09% 128	35.26% 214	35.58% 216	607	2.98
Auto-centric corridors that feel unsafe/have perceived safety concerns for walking and biking	12.11% 74	23.57% 144	27.17% 166	37.15% 227	611	2.89
Lack of affordable housing	18.56% 113	22.82% 139	18.06% 110	40.56% 247	609	2.80
Limited activities to entice youth to stay in the community	15.30% 93	27.30% 166	29.77% 181	27.63% 168	608	2.70
Poor access to the beach and open spaces	15.68% 96	26.96% 165	29.90% 183	27.45% 168	612	2.69

Issue	Rate 1	Rate 2	Rate 3	Rate 4	Total Respondents	Weighted Average*
Lack of a variety of housing options/types	18.62% 113	30.64% 186	22.73% 138	28.01% 170	607	2.60
Traffic congestion at certain times of the day	19.84% 121	30.49% 186	20.66% 126	29.02% 177	610	2.59
Climate-related impacts (coastal erosion, wildfires, habitat loss)	19.93% 121	27.51% 167	27.68% 168	24.88% 151	607	2.57
Limited connections between North and South Marina	24.21% 147	29.84% 182	24.43% 149	21.64% 132	610	2.44
No distinct identity or character	25.62% 155	33.88% 205	23.14% 140	17.36% 105	605	2.32
Changing demographics and decreasing diversity	38.91% 235	29.80% 180	17.05% 103	14.24% 86	604	2.07

There was also an open-ended portion of the question that allowed residents to share other areas of concern. Some of the recurring themes were:

- **Homelessness:** Numerous residents expressed worries about the increase in homelessness.
- **Housing and Development:** There were various additional concerns about housing, including poorly designed projects and the need for improved city aesthetics.
- **Public Facilities and Services:** Residents expressed a desire for better recreational facilities, health clinics, and improved city facilities, such as city hall and fire stations.
- **Transportation:** Transportation-related concerns, including the need for better public transit, traffic improvements, and pedestrian-friendly communities, were mentioned by many residents.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Environmental issues, such as preserving trees, addressing hazards, and improving city landscaping, were also topics of significant discussion among residents.

## Question 2: Vision Statement

Survey respondents shared whether the vision statement represented their vision for the future, and if not, what they would change about it. Of the 360 responses, 218 (60.6%) respondents expressed some level of agreement with the vision statement.

*“Marina desires to grow and mature, along with its image, from a small town, primarily bedroom community, to become a small city which is diversified, vibrant and mostly self-sufficient. The City can and will accomplish this by achieving both the necessary level and diversity of jobs, economic activity, public services, housing, and civic life (including culture and recreation), and parks and open space.”*

The most popular proposed revisions to the vision statement were as follows:

- **Lack of Specificity:** Multiple residents felt that the vision statement lacked specificity and suggested adding more specific details and actionable items to address various concerns.

- **Less Focus on Growth:** Several residents expressed concerns about the emphasis on growth and urbanization in the vision statement, suggesting less focus on growth and more focus on other aspects of city development.
- **Concerned about Changing Small Town Feel:** Some residents were concerned that the vision statement might lead to changes that could alter the small-town feel of the city, and they recommended reducing this emphasis.
- **Increase Focus on Affordable Housing:** Many residents called for a stronger emphasis on affordable housing in the vision statement, suggesting that this should be a top priority.
- **Environmentalism:** A significant number of residents advocated for more emphasis on environmental responsibility, sustainability, and conservation in the vision statement.
- **Support for Seniors:** Several residents recommended adding a stronger focus on supporting senior citizens in the vision statement, including affordable senior housing and services.
- **Diversity and Inclusivity:** While some residents emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusivity, others expressed concerns about the emphasis on these aspects, suggesting that it might not align with their vision for the city.
- **Economic Growth and Jobs:** Some residents called for more emphasis on economic growth, job creation, and attracting businesses to the city to match housing growth.
- **Infrastructure:** Several residents highlighted the importance of infrastructure improvements, including roads, sidewalks, and other municipal services, and felt that this should be more explicitly addressed in the vision statement.
- **Education:** The need for new schools, updates to existing schools, and educational resources to match population and housing growth was mentioned by some residents.

### Question 3: Core Values

In Question 3, survey respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposed core values, and if not, to share what they disagreed with, or thought was missing. Of the 368 respondents, 209 (56.8%) expressed some level of agreement with the core values. Some respondents believed the values were duplicative or overlapping, while others noted that some values were inconsistent with the vision statement. Others wished to reorder the values or to decrease the total number of values. A few believed that they were not values, so much as objectives or assets. Below are the core values, along with a summary of expressed disagreements, changes, and concerns for each.

#### **Core Value 1: Diversity that works for everyone; a melting pot of races, ethnicities, and subcultures**

Many respondents believe the words “melting pot” should be removed, stating that it implies a need for assimilation when instead there should be a respect and recognition of all different races and subcultures. Some suggested the metaphor of a mosaic or a salad, which would imply that people’s individual cultural identities should be allowed to shine through. Some disagreed with this value altogether, stating that there should be less emphasis on diversity, especially in government policies. Others wished for more diversity amongst city electeds and representatives.

#### **Core Value 2: Friendly, welcoming, and inclusive people**

This value did not cause much conversation and seemed to be generally accepted.

**Core Value 3: Citizens who are actively engaged in civic and volunteer activities**

Some residents stated that the city should resume cultural and civic activities and encourage volunteering. Another noted that due to a decline in senior populations, volunteering is becoming less common.

**Core Value 4: Strongly working-class town full of middle-income families and retirees.**

While some agreed with this statement, others believed it was too specific and left out many groups, such as students, professionals, and academics. Another believed that the phrasing dismisses others who have joined the town more recently, and that people of all education and income levels should feel welcome. Some believed that the phrasing felt more exclusive, rather than encouraging of a diverse community.

**Core Value 5: Variety of ethnically diverse local businesses and restaurants**

While some residents asked why the City would encourage new stores when some businesses are struggling to stay open, others agreed that there was a need to create more locations to eat and shop, especially in conjunction with new housing being built.

**Core Value 6: Small-town feel with low-scale buildings and close-knit neighborhoods**

Many expressed that taller 2-3 or even 4-5 story buildings should be acceptable if the city is to grow without outward expansion. Some believed the entire value should be removed. While some hope that the small-town feel should be preserved, others believe the City has already grown beyond a small town. A few residents noted that this value seems to conflict with the Vision Statement.

**Core Value 7: Limits on sprawl and outward expansion**

There were polarizing opinions on this value. Some said that it is better to expand and use land that is not being used than to redevelop the center of the City and wished for the value to be removed. Others agreed that sprawl should be limited but wished to re-word the value to something more positive and actionable that recognizes infill, ADU permitting, and higher density housing.

**Core Value 8: Lower cost of living compared to many nearby communities**

Some respondents stated that while they wished this was true, many residents work multiple jobs and still do not qualify as middle class. Others believed that instead the cost of living should be increased and the city should be improved, along with more higher paying employers being brought into the area.

**Core Value 9: Compact town that is easy to get around in with a car**

This was one of the most hotly contested values, and most respondents that commented on it disagreed. Most believe that it is already simple to get around the town by car, but what matters is improving the ease of getting around without a car, whether by walking or biking. Some wished for walkable neighborhoods within quarter mile of necessary amenities such as grocery stores and banks. A few noted that walkability should be considered when new developments are built.

**Core Value 10: Off-the-beaten path and not a major tourist destination**

A few disagreed with this value, wishing for it to be removed and believing that if the city is to be friendly and diverse, they should desire tourism rather than avoid it.

**Core Value 11: Easy access to the freeway and quick drive to neighboring cities**

This value did not spark much discussion. Some residents noticed that there should be better access from the freeway to Marina destinations so drivers are enticed to come in and explore.



**Core Value 12: The weather, the beach, and the surrounding natural beauty**

This value seemed to resonate with many respondents, who noted their deep respect for nature, animals, plants, trees, birds and wild creatures and encouraged the protection of the natural environment. Some noted that improved beach access would benefit the community. Some did not understand how this constituted a value.

**Core Value 13: An abundance of trails and open spaces within/around Marina**

Residents hoped to maintain biodiversity pathways and preserve Fort Ord open spaces. They also encouraged a focus on the development of local trails and mountain biking areas, which could bring revenue to the local restaurants and businesses.

**Core Value 14: Low crime and good relationships with local police**

This value resulted in a diversity of opinions. Some believed that crime is a big issue and this value should be moved higher on the list, while others that the police raise crime rates and bring injustice to the community. Respondents provided suggestions to improve safety in the community including: investing in mental health co-responders and ensuring that people are housed, fed, and have access to education, healthcare, jobs, and community connection and support.

**Core Value 15: Strong veterans' community and respect for the legacy of Fort Ord**

There was not much resistance to this value, except for the fact that some felt that emphasis on Fort Ord conflicted with the value of avoiding becoming a tourist destination.

**Core Value 16: Access to high-quality public facilities such as the library**

Respondents generally agreed with this value, under certain caveats and expansions. Some approved as long as cost did not get too high. Others pointed out the need for better recreational resources, such as a rec center with a pool and kids programs, a city sports center, tennis courts, basketball courts, and parks.

**Core Value 17: Family-friendly community with many services and programs for kids**

While most respondents did not disagree with this value, some stated that the city does not currently measure up to it. Many residents expressed the desire for public programs that also benefit adults (such as sports leagues) and seniors (such as pickleball and bus trips).

**Additional Concepts**

Respondents also listed topics they wished were covered in the Core Values. Below is a list of the most common themes.

- **Affordable Housing:** Many respondents emphasized the need for access to high-quality, affordable housing as a core value. This includes commitments to seniors, farmworkers, and those dealing with mental illness and homelessness.
- **Community Well-Being:** Respondents expressed a desire for a holistic approach to community well-being, including access to healthcare, mental health services, and childcare.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Conservation and environmental protection were frequently mentioned, with a specific reference to reducing negative environmental impacts, such as concerns about a desalination plant. Preserving trees and improving the urban forest area is also a priority.

- **Local Downtown Area:** Respondents suggested adding a value to create a true downtown area with access to food, retail, activities, and entertainment. Walkability and active transit were also mentioned as important aspects of this concept.
- **Transportation and Transit:** There were suggestions for increased quality and frequency of public transportation to neighboring cities like Monterey, Salinas, and Santa Cruz.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** Respondents stressed the importance of equity and inclusivity in the city's vision, ensuring that the needs of all community members are met.
- **Local Business Support:** Respondents recommended adding a core value to support local businesses and adopting business-friendly policies.
- **Beautification:** Respondents called for beautification efforts, such as planting trees, hiding trash cans, and improving the visual aesthetics of the city.

## Question 4: Ideas and Solutions

Respondents were presented with possible strategies that were proposed in the beginning of the engagement process and asked to rate the priority level of each on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 = essential, 4 = high priority, 3 = medium priority, 2 = low priority, 1 = not a priority/do not support). Below are the responses along with the weighted average for each concern. The higher the number, the higher priority the strategy was among residents. Please note that not everyone rated each strategy.

The strategies of highest priority were attracting new employers, creating safer Complete Streets, and promoting STEM jobs. The strategy identified as the lowest priority was, by far, utilizing natural resources to increase tourism. The next lowest priority strategy was ensuring the development of middle density housing. However, it is important to note that residents felt that everything on the list was important. Most rated each strategy at a priority level of 3 (medium) or higher, and no weighted average was below 3. All weighted averages fell somewhere between 3 and 4.

Ideas and Solutions	Rate 1	Rate 2	Rate 3	Rate 4	Rate 5	Total	Weighted Average
Attract new employers and businesses that provide living wage jobs and create a better balance between jobs and housing.	5.03% 26	7.74% 40	18.57% 96	24.18% 125	44.49% 230	517	3.95
Create streets that are safe for youth and seniors through traffic calming and Complete Streets efforts.	5.23% 27	8.53% 44	16.86% 87	24.61% 127	44.77% 231	516	3.95
Promote jobs related to science and technology to leverage nearby CSUMB and UC MBEST (Monterey Bay Education, Science, and Technology Center).	4.85% 25	7.96% 41	18.64% 96	26.80% 138	41.75% 215	515	3.93
Continue the preservation of open space, natural habitats, and prime agricultural land, with no development beyond the Urban Growth Boundary.	7.50% 39	11.15% 58	15.00% 78	22.50% 117	43.85% 228	520	3.84
Balance the need for new development with the preservation of Marina's unique small-town charm and the protection of sensitive natural areas.	5.61% 29	10.44% 54	20.89% 108	23.02% 119	40.04% 207	517	3.81

Marina General Plan Update

Ideas and Solutions	Rate 1	Rate 2	Rate 3	Rate 4	Rate 5	Total	Weighted Average
Capitalize on the airport by expanding Joby and attracting other innovative engineering and manufacturing companies.	7.90% 41	11.95% 62	16.18% 84	21.19% 110	42.77% 222	519	3.79
Create a real Downtown at Reservation & Del Monte and/or other town center(s) with public places for community gathering.	8.48% 44	10.79% 56	17.73% 92	26.20% 136	36.80% 191	519	3.72
Provide more childcare and indoor/outdoor recreational opportunities for families within their immediate neighborhoods and elsewhere in the City.	5.63% 29	10.68% 55	26.41% 136	23.30% 120	33.98% 175	515	3.69
Protect the City against future climate hazards with a focus on coastal erosion, flooding, and wildfires.	7.16% 37	11.80% 61	22.44% 116	22.24% 115	36.36% 188	517	3.69
Redevelop and revitalize underutilized land in Central Marina with new housing, sit-down dining, hotels, and entertainment uses.	7.20% 37	12.45% 64	20.43% 105	26.65% 137	33.27% 171	514	3.66
Enhance the visual appearance and identity of Marina through a branding campaign, improved landscaping, gateway signage, and façade revitalization.	7.54% 39	14.70% 76	21.47% 111	22.44% 116	33.85% 175	517	3.60
Provide better public access to the beach and Fort Ord open space lands.	8.01% 41	13.87% 71	23.24% 119	23.44% 120	31.45% 161	512	3.56
Create a better-connected town through the addition of new north-to-south roads and multiuse paths/trails.	7.36% 38	14.79% 76	24.12% 124	24.71% 127	28.99% 149	514	3.53
Consider the diversity of ethnicities and cultures in future decision-making and ensure that all types of residents are engaged in key projects and plans.	11.63% 60	13.37% 69	22.48% 116	18.22% 94	34.30% 177	516	3.50
Develop Cypress Knolls in a way that meets the community's vision for public spaces, commercial services, and affordable housing.	9.82% 50	13.95% 71	23.77% 121	23.97% 122	28.49% 145	509	3.47
Ensure the development of 'middle-density' housing, including mixed use, rowhouses, courtyard housing, and walk-up apartments.	9.51% 49	14.56% 75	27.96% 144	24.66% 127	23.30% 120	515	3.38
Take greater advantage of nearby natural resources including the Salinas River to attract visitors and increase tourism.	15.46% 79	18.59% 95	28.96% 148	19.96% 102	17.03% 87	511	3.05

There was also an open-ended portion of the question that allowed residents to share other strategies. Some of the recurring ideas were:

- Improve roads, sidewalks, and traffic management.
- Invest in improving schools and education.

## Marina General Plan Update

- Provide mental health and wellness support.
- Enhance public safety services.
- Address homelessness and provide housing resources.
- Ensure affordable housing for residents.
- Encourage diverse small businesses.
- Bring in more family-friendly entertainment options.
- Improve existing parks and recreation facilities.
- Clean up city ponds and enhance public spaces.
- Promote Marina's hospitality and guest services.
- Enhance landscaping and maintenance.
- Improve all forms of public transit.
- Reduce litter in the city.
- Limit hotel construction in the town.
- Provide more affordable grocery stores.
- Extend the urban growth boundary.

# Attachment A: Raw Survey Results