

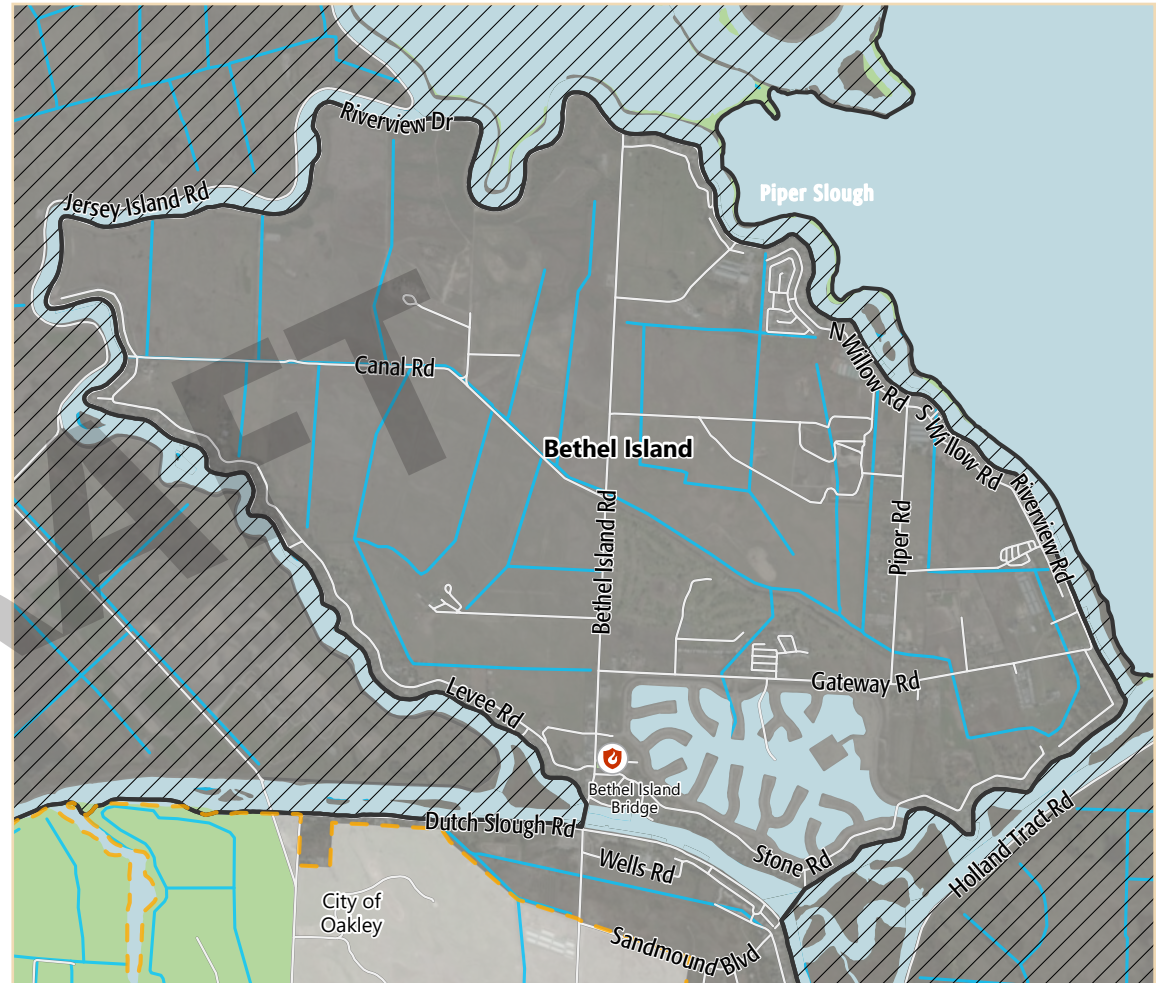
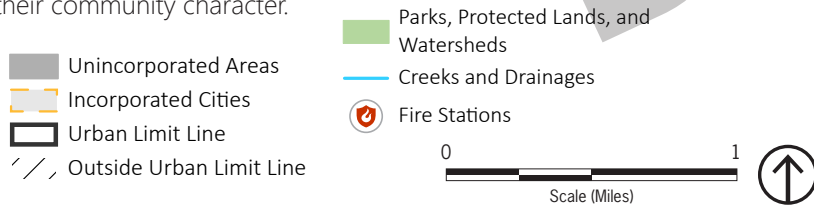
BETHEL ISLAND | CONTEXT

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Situated in eastern Contra Costa County at the heart of the Delta, Bethel Island has welcomed visitors and new residents alike since the 1930s, attracted to the small island for its water-related recreational activities and agricultural assets. The Bethel Island marinas soon developed to capitalize on a growing interest in the community's warm waters and relaxed, rural atmosphere, away from the urban bustle of San Francisco Bay.

The residents of Bethel Island today cross the Bethel Island Bridge, replaced in 2009, to get to and from home. This singular ingress and egress to the 5.5-square-mile island limits development in this contently rural town, but it also causes roadway congestion during commute hours. Given the island's low elevation, there are also significant flooding and levee issues and the need for improved infrastructure to address hazards.

Proud of their local tourism industry and water-oriented amenities, Bethel Island residents would like to further enhance the marina to breathe life into the harbor areas with more retail uses, increased parking, and more family-oriented and/or water-related annual community events. The community also intends to retain and enhance the local agricultural vibrancy and character. The community is strongly opposed to development of heavy industrial uses, favoring light industrial or agriculture uses to complement their community character.



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2020.

WHO LIVES IN BETHEL ISLAND?

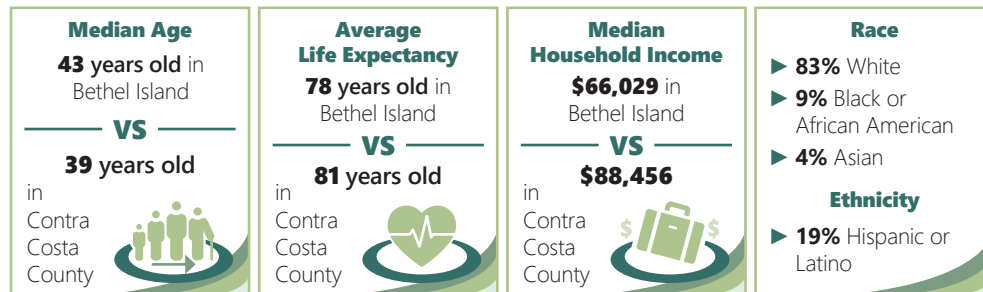












Photo by Jack Hanna.

The information on this page presents a summary of hazards and vulnerabilities in Bethel Island based on the Contra Costa County Vulnerability Assessment; please see the [online Vulnerability Assessment](#) for a full description of these hazards and vulnerabilities

Hazards

-  Agricultural Pests and Diseases
-  Air Quality
-  Coastal Flood
-  Drought
-  Extreme Heat
-  Flooding
-  Human Health Hazards
-  Seismic Hazards (Liquefaction)
-  Sea Level Rise
-  Severe Storm

Major Vulnerabilities

Cost-burdened households, households in poverty, and persons with chronic illnesses are vulnerable to coastal flooding.

The entire community is on a single access road connected via a bridge, leaving it vulnerable to coastal flooding, flooding, sea level rise, and severe storms.

Outdoor recreation and rangeland in the community are vulnerable to coastal flooding and sea level rise.









Commercial and government buildings along Bethel Island Road, Stone Road, Willow Road, and Taylor Road are vulnerable to sea level rise.

The island is vulnerable to liquefaction created by seismic hazards.



FLOOD ZONES

Flood Hazard Areas

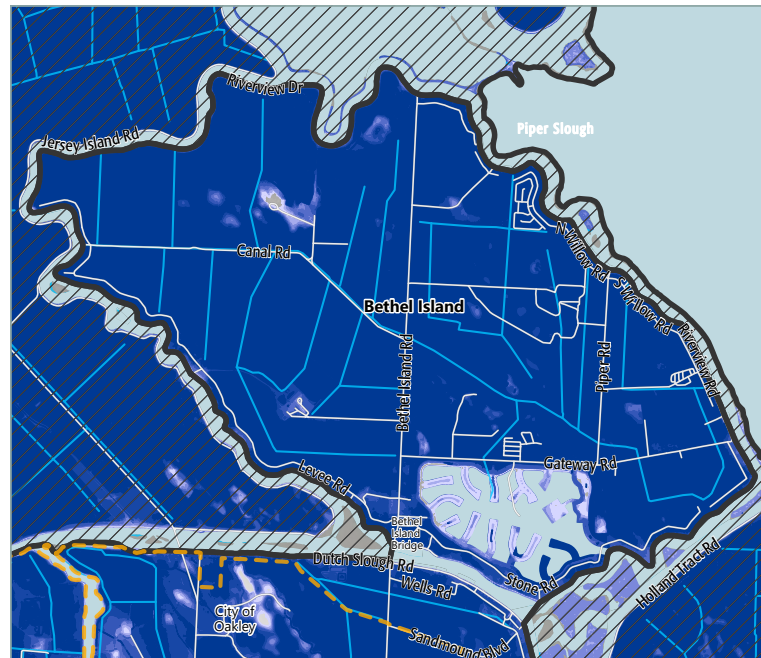
-  100-Year Flood Zone
-  500-Year Flood Zone
-  Areas of Undetermined but Possible Flood Hazard
-  Water
-  Incorporated Cities
-  Urban Limit Line
-  Outside Urban Limit Line
-  Creeks and Drainages

A 100-year flood zone represents a 1% chance of flooding in any given year.

A 500-year flood zone represents a 0.2% chance of flooding in any given year.















Source: FEMA, 2019; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2020.



SEA-LEVEL RISE

Sea Level Rise 2050 with 100-Year Storm Severity

Water Depth (feet)

-  0 - 2
-  2 - 4
-  4 - 6
-  6 - 8
-  8 - 10
-  10 - 12
-  12+
-  Water
-  Incorporated Cities
-  Urban Limit Line
-  Outside Urban Limit Line
-  Creeks and Drainages

Source: San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 2017; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2020.

PLANNED LAND USE

Land use designations for Bethel Island are shown on the Land Use Map and defined in the Land Use Element. The majority of Bethel Island is designated for agricultural and open space uses, preserving its rural and open space character. Residential and commercial recreation uses are allowed along the eastern and southwestern edges of the island. The commercial core of Bethel Island is found along Bethel Island Road, north of the bridge; this core area also supports public, recreation, and residential uses. Another commercial corridor extends along a portion of Gateway Road. The eastern half of the island hosts the majority of the community's residential neighborhoods.



Existing agricultural uses in Bethel Island.



Existing single-family home in Bethel Island.



Existing marina in Bethel Island.



Residential street in the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles articulate the values, priorities, and aspirations for the future shared by Bethel Island community members:

1. Bethel Island residents enjoy a relaxed, rural community located away from urban areas of San Francisco and the East Bay. The small-town, family-oriented atmosphere and quiet character should be preserved.
2. Local businesses, including tourism and water-oriented recreation amenities, are an asset to the community and should be supported. There should be more opportunities for new local businesses that provide services to the community, such as a grocery store.
3. To maintain a safe community, existing public services such as the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District and police services should be supported and enhanced.
4. Bethel Island's topography and location within the Delta expose it to potential flooding hazards. The community should be protected from these and other hazards through proper emergency response planning and infrastructure upgrades.

POLICIES

1. Ensure that new development is adequately protected against current and future anticipated flood levels.
2. Retain the characteristics of Bethel Island that make it a unique place in the Delta with its own identity by limiting development to a low overall density and supporting uses that enhance the community's rural, relaxed, water-oriented character. (3-64)
3. Establish Bethel Island Road between Dutch Slough and Gateway Road, and Gateway Road between Bethel Island Road and Piper Road, as the community's commercial core.
4. Encourage establishment and growth of locally serving businesses that fulfill the needs of Bethel Island residents.
5. Allow temporary uses, such as food trucks, pop-up restaurants and retail shops, or kayak rentals, that provide visitor-serving amenities during special events like fishing tournaments and the annual lighted boat parade.
6. Prioritize roadway improvements to address traffic congestion, incorporating pedestrian, bicycle, and stormwater infrastructure improvements when feasible, to improve safety and facilitate mobility throughout the island.
7. Support improvements to fire protection services and emergency preparedness.
8. Reduce congestion on Bethel Island and directly connected public roads.
9. Limit new residential development on Bethel Island to already-approved development and one dwelling unit per legal parcel. (3-56)

POLICIES (CONTINUED)

10. Do not approve General Plan Amendments that would increase residential density on Bethel Island unless at least the following are accomplished:
 - a. A financing mechanism is fully and completely assured for improvements to the entire perimeter on-island levee system;
 - b. The levee improvement plans are approved by the Bethel Island Municipal Improvement District (BIMID) and the Army Corps of Engineers; and
 - c. Subsidence and impacts on wetlands are adequately mitigated. (3-57)
11. Prohibit levee breaches on Bethel Island unless the entire perimeter levee is improved to Army Corps of Engineers standards. (3-58)
12. Require that any internal levees meet Army Corps of Engineers standards. (3-60)
13. Require that new construction be set back from levee centerlines a minimum of 100 feet unless adequate substantiation for reduction is approved by Reclamation District 799 or BIMID. (3-60)
14. Require that new construction not protected by certified levees meet FEMA standards. (3-60)
15. Encourage rehabilitation of aging structures and reduce vegetation overgrowth, both on land and along waterways, through increased code enforcement.
16. Preserve and protect the agricultural, open space, wetland, and rare plant communities found on Bethel Island. (3-64)
17. Discourage uses that would adversely impact residents on the island.

ACTIONS

1. Rezone harbor/marina areas to allow for supporting retail uses (e.g., boating equipment, bait shops).
2. Expand commercial land use designations along Gateway Road as demand for commercial uses increases.
3. Increase the minimum lot size in agriculture zones in Bethel Island to at least 10 acres.
4. Coordinate with the City of Oakley and public safety and health agencies to create a comprehensive emergency response plan, including establishing multiple evacuation routes and an emergency shelter.
5. Identify suitable locations for additional park and recreation facilities, including kid-friendly amenities such as play structures, an expanded community gathering space, and a public access point to the water, potentially with a boat ramp. Investigate funding sources to develop and maintain the park using principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, such as lighting and vegetation management that maximizes visibility.
6. Improve pedestrian safety and roadway infrastructure by completing sidewalk gaps, installing continuous street lighting, illuminated crossings, delineated on-street parking spaces along major roads, and ADA facilities.
7. Encourage the Diablo Water District to examine the feasibility of annexing Bethel Island into their service area to improve access to a reliable source of water for fire protection services and general consumption.
8. Improve signage along waterways to facilitate wayfinding, minimize boat wakes, and reduce accidents.
9. Explore the feasibility of a centralized parking area in the commercial core.