

# BYRON | CONTEXT

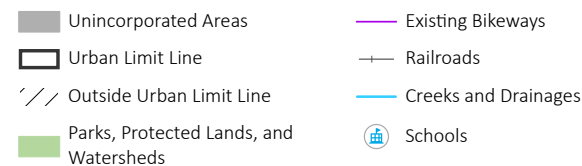
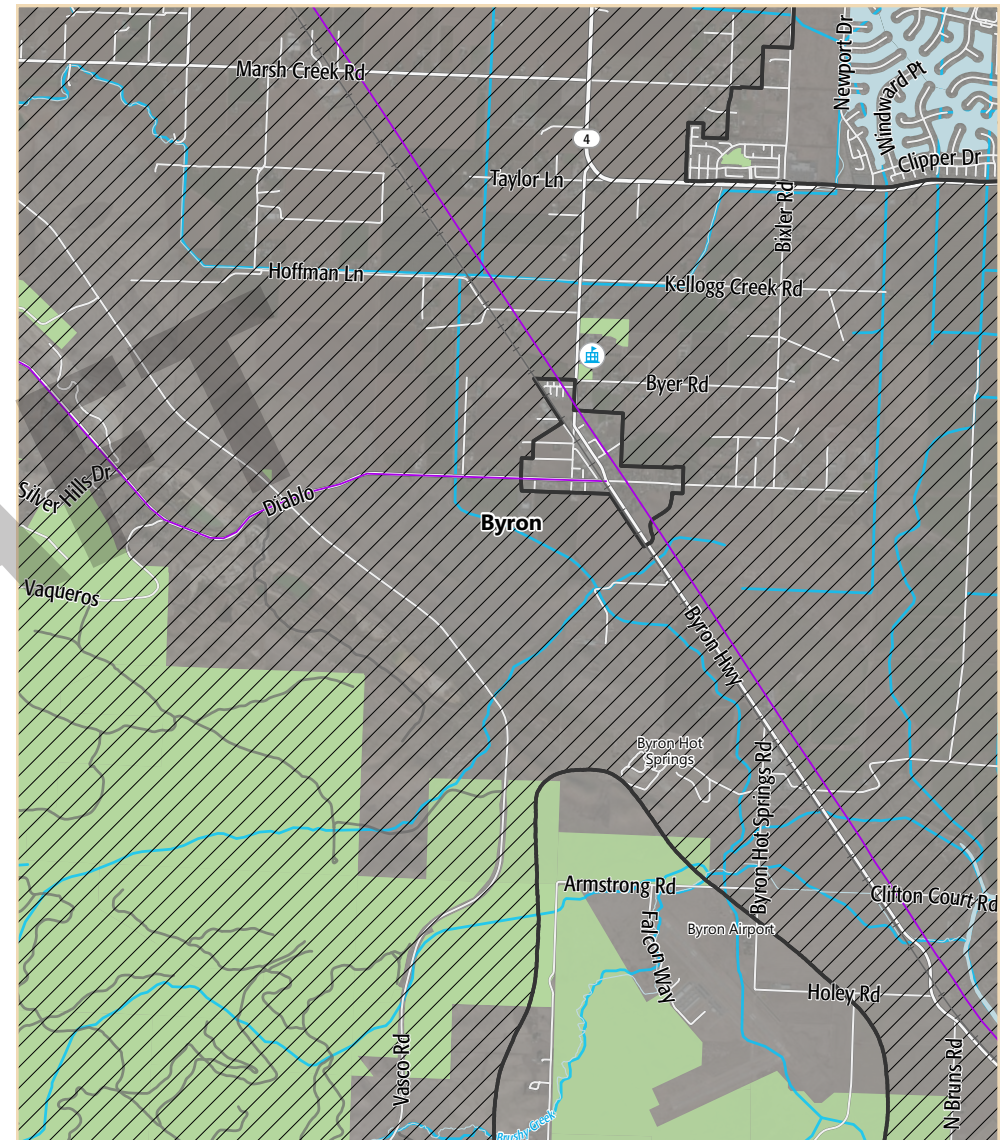
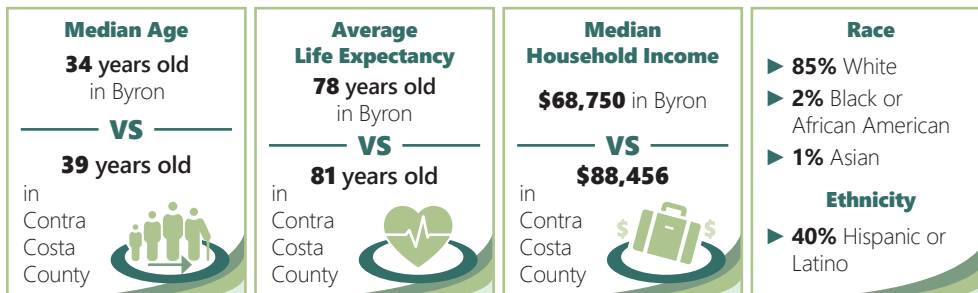
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Sitting on the eastern edge of the county, Byron is a quiet, agricultural community that prides itself in its rural roots. Settled upon discovery of the area's fertile soil, Byron was soon the site of a new Southern Pacific railroad line that allowed the community to quickly expand. Early Byron attracted visitors from across the nation to the renowned Byron Hot Springs, a resort with warm mineral pools and luxury accommodations, but this attraction closed during World War II. In 1994, the County opened the Byron Airport to the public, providing opportunities for general aviation and recreational flight operations.



Now an established community, residents enjoy the area's respite from busy city life, preferring Byron's quaint amenities and small-town nature. Businesses in Byron are generally concentrated in the Downtown along Camino Diablo and the Byron Highway, but there has been difficulty in business development and retention. The County's Urban Limit Line (ULL) prohibits growth outside of Byron, preserving this land for farming and open space, but residents identify much of the surrounding agricultural land as a part of their community. Meanwhile, even though the community is surrounded by open space, residents can't easily access the recreational benefits due to a lack of trail connections. In addition, while growth is constrained by the ULL, traffic through the community to nearby cities will continue to grow, impacting local roads and safety. Key roadway projects, like the Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector project, may improve connections and accommodate increased traffic throughout the area.

## WHO LIVES IN BYRON?




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




The information on this page presents a summary of hazards and vulnerabilities in Byron 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 flooding

 Drought

 Extreme heat

 Flooding

 Human health hazards

 Severe storms

## Major Vulnerabilities

Outdoor workers are vulnerable to all hazards in Byron.

The Byron Airport is vulnerable to coastal flooding, extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms.

The Byron Highway is vulnerable to coastal flooding, flooding, extreme heat, and severe storms.

Agricultural operations are vulnerable to agricultural pests and diseases, coastal flooding, drought, extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms.

Water and wastewater services are vulnerable to coastal flooding, drought, and severe storms.

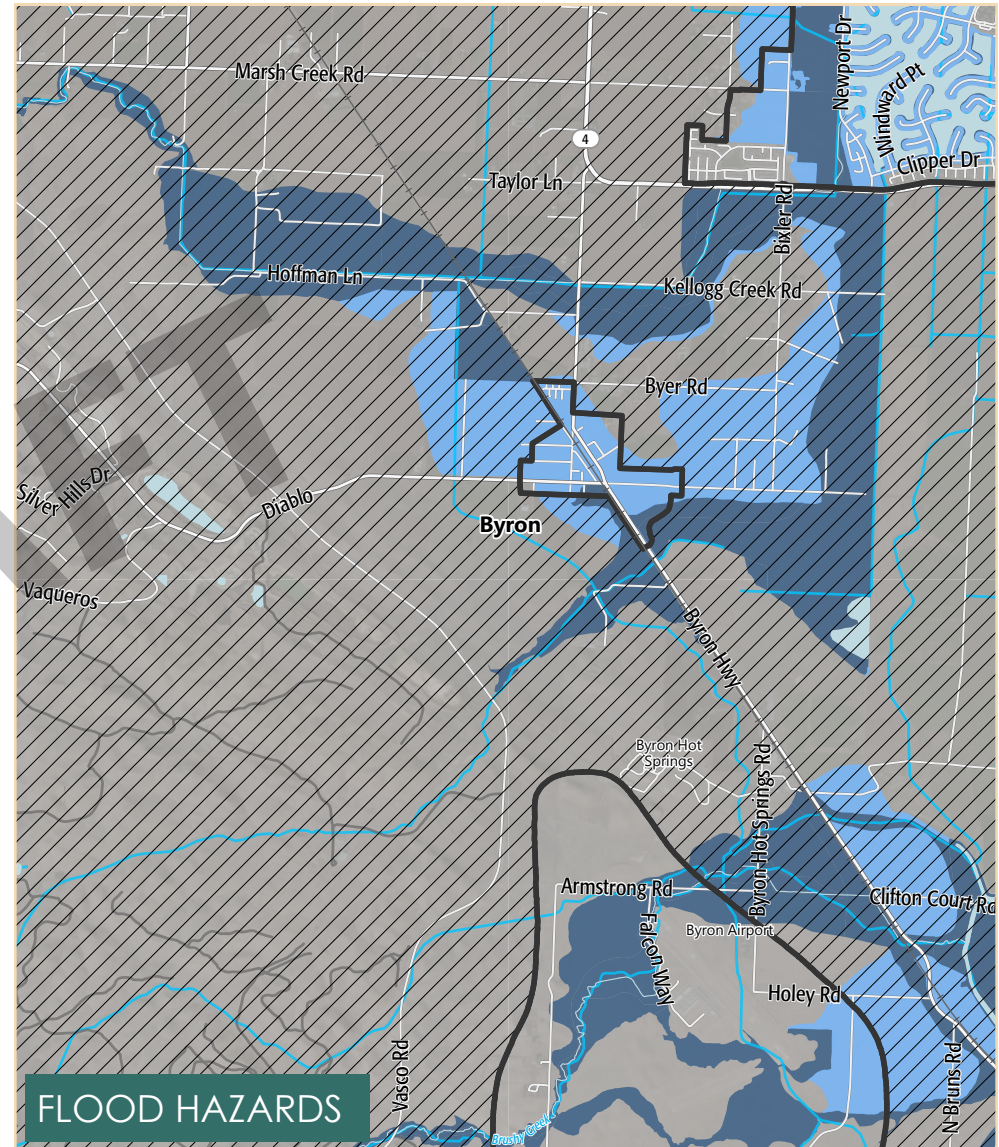
Energy delivery systems, such as high-voltage transmission lines, are vulnerable to extreme heat and severe storms.



Agricultural operations are vulnerable to hazards like pests and diseases, flooding, drought, heat, and storms.












The Byron Airport and Byron Highway are vulnerable to hazards like flooding, heat, and storms.



## FLOOD HAZARDS

### Flood Hazard Areas

-  100-Year Flood Zone
-  500-Year Flood Zone
-  Areas of Undetermined but Possible Flood Hazard
-  Water

-  Unincorporated Areas
-  Urban Limit Line
-  Outside Urban Limit Line
-  Railroads
-  Creeks and Drainages



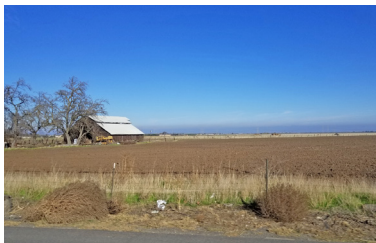
A 100-year flood zone represents a 1% chance of flooding in any given year.  
A 500-year flood zone represents a 0.2% chance of flooding in any given year.

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

## PLANNED LAND USE

Land use designations for Byron are shown on the Land Use Map and defined in the Land Use Element. In Downtown Byron, Main Street is planned primarily for commercial uses to support redevelopment that would provide a wide array of services for local residents while also boosting tourism. Throughout the Downtown area, which encompasses the triangle-shaped area bounded by the Byron Highway, Camino Diablo, and Holway Drive, the community supports business uses that both manufacture and sell goods and services, particularly those that exemplify the historic and agricultural roots of the community. Residential uses would also continue in parts of this Downtown area.

Commercial and other light industrial uses are allowed at Byron Highway's major intersections with Holway Drive and Camino Diablo. Outside of the Downtown and commercial core but within the Urban Limit Line (ULL), the land use map plans for continued residential use at a variety of densities, as well as public and airport-related uses around the Byron Airport. Beyond the ULL, the map plans for the continuation of the agricultural, open space, recreation, and public uses that already exist, and potential increases in development of renewable energy facilities.



Existing agricultural use outside the ULL around Byron.



(above) Existing commercial use at the intersection of the Byron Highway and Camino Diablo.



Existing residential neighborhood in Byron.



(left) Existing airport-related use at the Byron Airport.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

1. Byron's rural, small-town character should be preserved, in part by supporting its quaint amenities, like the post office, saloon, schools, churches, and surrounding open spaces.
2. Byron's Downtown should be re-energized by filling empty storefronts and providing more businesses and services that will invite residents to see this area as a center of activity again.
3. Byron should attract regional tourists by fulfilling its potential as a historic, railroad, winery, and agricultural tourism destination, as well as through creative re-use of Byron Hot Springs.
4. Roadways in Byron should be safe for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. Sidewalks and bike lanes should be added in central Byron. Safety improvements should be made along the Byron Highway, the Highway 4 Bypass, Camino Diablo, and the Byer Road/Bixler Road corner.
5. Trucks should be directed around Byron to minimize safety and noise impacts to residents.
6. Regional travel should be improved through projects like the Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector project.
7. Housing growth in Byron should be deliberate, incremental, and supportive of the community's economic development goals.
8. Redevelopment and development in Byron should maintain the community's rural character.
9. Byron's residents should be able to enjoy hiking, biking, and equestrian access to regional parks through a connected trail network.



## POLICIES

1. Encourage business development that supports a full range of services for local residents and that is tailored to Byron's small-town character.
2. Encourage creative, compatible residential and commercial development on vacant parcels within Byron's existing footprint.
3. Work to attract small businesses and facilitate community events in Downtown Byron.
4. Maintain and enforce regulations to curb illegal dumping and littering in Byron.
5. Encourage re-use of Byron Hot Springs that rehabilitates historic buildings, is compatible with operations at the Byron Airport, and attracts regional tourists. (3-74)
6. Support agriculture, including animal keeping and raising, as an important part of Byron's character.
7. Encourage CCTA to prioritize the completion of the Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector project.
8. Address traffic conflicts and safety concerns around U-Pick areas, including along Marsh Creek Road, Vasco Road, and Walnut Boulevard, with consideration to agricultural equipment on roads.
9. Ensure that development projects do not conflict with potential alignments for the Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector Road project. (3-77)
10. Coordinate with the California Highway Patrol to ensure effective enforcement of traffic laws in Byron.
11. Coordinate with the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to support local economic development.

## ACTIONS

1. Work with local businesses and community groups to establish an economic development strategy for Byron that includes guidance for on-going coordination of economic development efforts in the community. As part of this process, create a unique branding identity for Byron to support agricultural tourism.
2. Amend the Zoning Code to provide more flexibility for Downtown development, including relaxing parking requirements when street parking is available and expanding allowed uses to include light manufacturing uses for businesses that both manufacture and sell products.
3. Work with the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to establish a community services district to provide basic services to Byron.
4. Engage with the Byron-Bethany Irrigation District (BBID) to encourage them to provide potable water service to Byron.
5. Install sidewalks and bikeways with street trees, signage, and crosswalks that connect Downtown Byron to Saint Anne Church.
6. Maintain street trees in Downtown Byron to support walkability and a more vibrant Downtown.
7. Study the feasibility and need for traffic calming along roadways in Byron.
8. Designate a truck route to separate truck traffic from other modes of transportation in Byron, including around U-Pick agricultural areas, such as along Marsh Creek Road, Vasco Road, and Walnut Boulevard.
9. Study the feasibility of bringing passenger air transportation service to the Byron Airport.
10. Work with local and regional stakeholders to develop a trails plan that would provide local and regional trail connections for Byron, including trails that connect to local destinations like the Byron Hot Springs and trails that provide regional connections to recreational and commute destinations. As part of this planning process, consider potential recreational re-use along railroad rights-of-way as well as strategies to effectively communicate trail information to the public. (3-76)