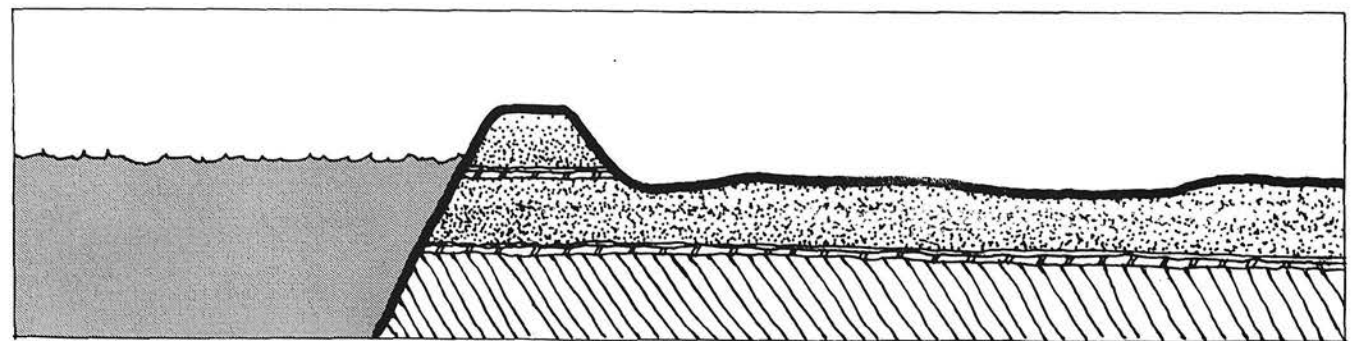
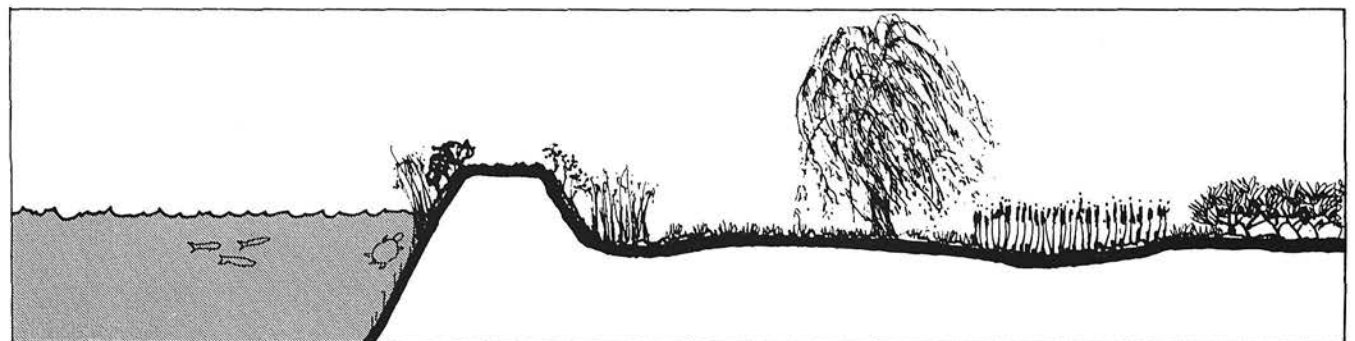
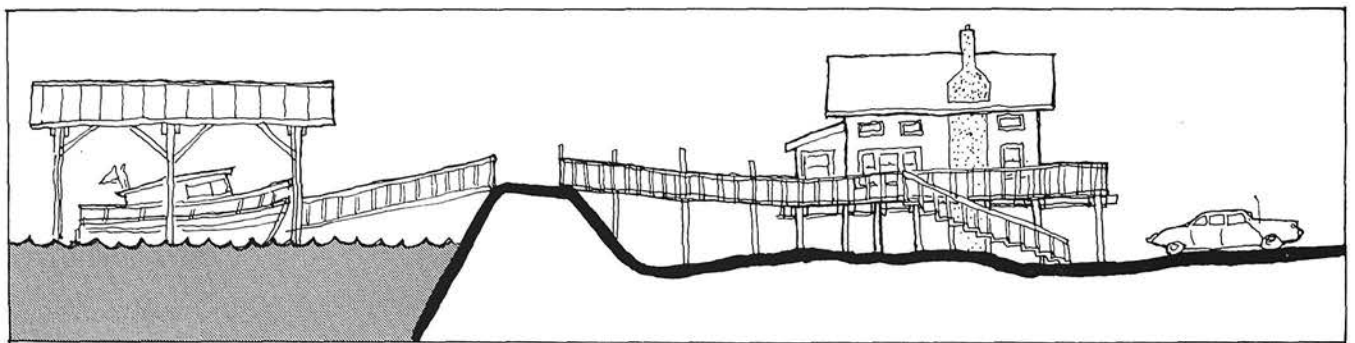
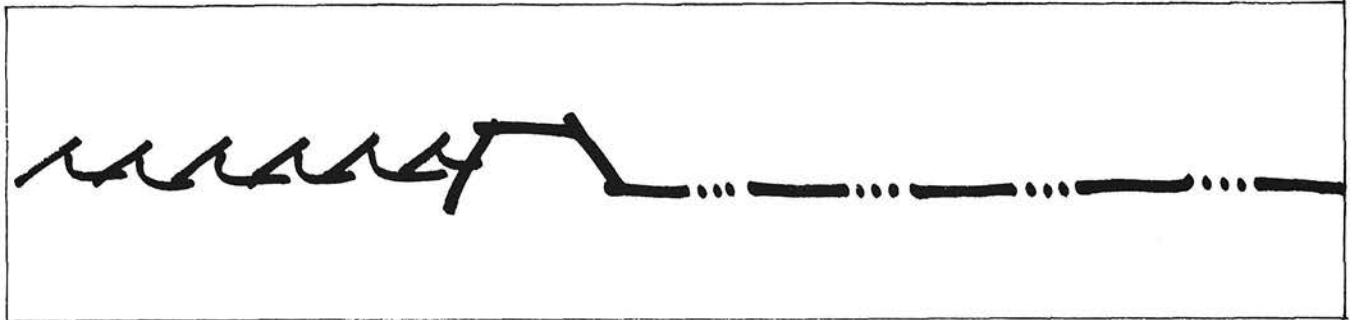


Bethel Island Area R/UDAT Report

Community & Response



A Recommendation by the American Institute of Architects R/UDAT for the Bethel Island Area, California, 1985

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BETHEL ISLAND AREA R/UDAT REPORT

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I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It has become obvious to groups and individuals who live or have interests in the Bethel Island Area that this is a critical time to address issues facing their community. As part of the East Diablo Area and subject to regional pressures for change, the Bethel Island area stands as a unique and fragile environment within the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley. Residents feel that what has always been a quiet, weekend fishing and recreation retreat is now being threatened by development pressures. Issues generated by these pressures are numerous:

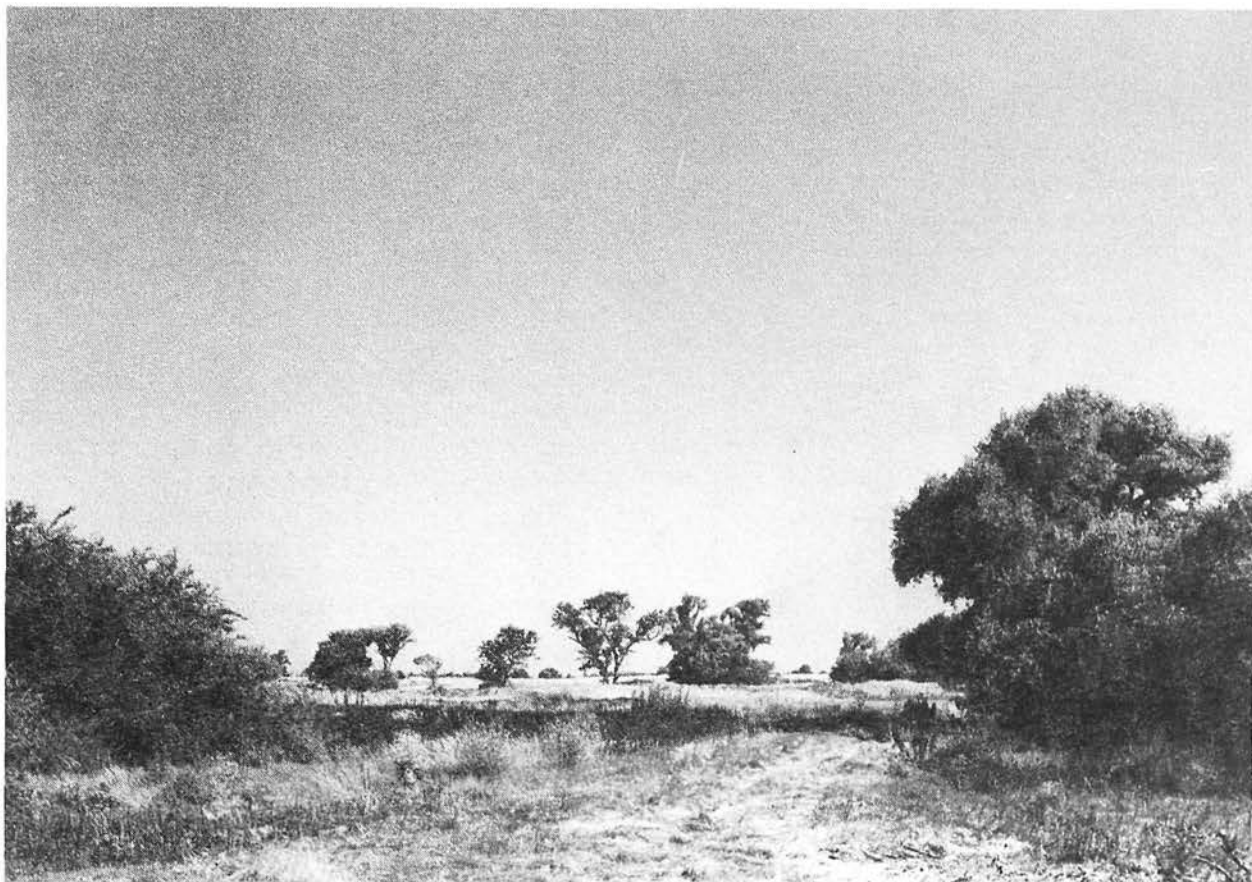
- o The threat of change in the local character, environment and economy.
- o Water quality and ground water/infiltration issues.
- o Levee/geotechnical/subsidence issues.
- o The requirement of multiple permits for new development.
- o The impact of Island developments on surrounding areas due to the single access bridge to and from the Island.
- o The need for resources and ways for funding the preparation of the specific plan.
- o The state's requirement for an EIR on any specific plan.

With these issues and others to be addressed, the R/UDAT team has asked to study the area, gather information

from agencies and the public;
and formulate directions for
the Bethel Island Area com-
munity to take in the imme-
diate future. This report is
prepared as a response to that
charge.

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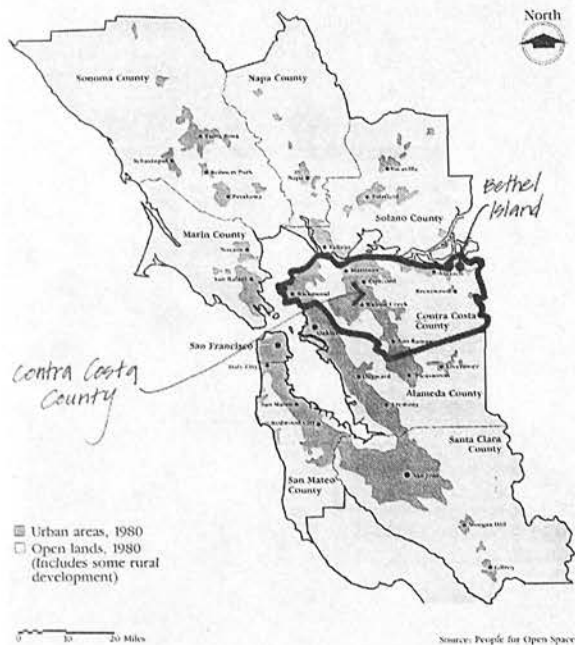


II. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Bethel Island is located at the extreme eastern end of the San Francisco Bay Area, an area comprising 9 counties and a population of 5,173,000 people. Historically, population and economic activity in the Bay Area were concentrated in the Western end of the area, along the Pacific Ocean, and the shores of San Francisco Bay. The major centers of population were the cities of San Francisco and Oakland. Within the rest of the region, population was limited and scattered; the flatland areas in counties such as Contra Costa County, outside of smaller older communities such as Walnut Creek or Richmond, were largely agricultural, while the hillsides were generally unpopulated.

This pattern began to change after World War II, when, in the massive suburbanization that took place throughout the United States, the Bay Area as well began to suburbanize. Suburban development first took place down the Peninsula and East Bay, still largely within the western part of the region. At the southern end of the Bay, San Jose, which had been a small town in an agricultural region, grew into a major city of over half a million. By the 1970's, however, development pressures had pushed development beyond the immediate San Francisco bay area, and into the more remote parts of the wider region: in the north,

The Bay Area:
Cities and Open Space



into Petaluma and Santa Rosa in Sonoma County, and in the west into Pleasanton and Livermore in Alameda County, and, most substantially, into the central core of Contra Costa County, within which Bethel Island is located.

Before turning specifically to Contra Costa County, we should note that the San Francisco Bay Region, or the smaller San Francisco/Oakland metropolitan area is no ordinary area. There are few areas in the United States that have so consistently experienced population and economic growth, and that continue to be so attractive to so many. The City of San Francisco is the major financial and corporate center of the Western United States, while Silicon Valley, running south of the City through San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, is world famous as the center of the new high-tech industry in the United States. Examples could be repeated indefinitely. The point, however, is not one of self-glorification; it is, instead, to stress that the growth pressures created by an economic machine of the caliber of the Bay Area are massive, and, to the extent that this can be true of anything, lasting. Thus, if Bethel Island has finally been reached by the development pressures engendered by the Bay Area, one can be certain that the effects of those pressures on Bethel Island will be significant, and will inevitably shape the future of the community.

Contra Costa County, in which Bethel Island is located, makes up the east-central part of the region.

Since 1970, this county has been the fastest growing county in the Bay Area, and has reached a population of nearly 700,000, an increase of roughly 150,000 people since 1970. Between 1970 and 1982, nearly 85,000 building permits for new homes and apartments were issued in Contra Costa County, or 6,500 per year.

While the simple facts of growth are impressive, two features of recent growth in Contra Costa County are particularly important, and have important implications for Bethel Island.

- The population growth has been matched by employment growth, particularly in the central core of the county running from Concord and Walnut Creek down to San Ramon and Danville. Between 1970 and 1982, over 5 million square feet of office space were added in the Walnut Creek-Concord area; in 1982, nearly 20% of the added downtown office space in the Bay Area was added in that small part of Contra Costa County.

- Within Contra Costa County, as the center of the county has become more heavily developed and more expensive, the development pressures have moved eastward, into the eastern part of the county.

The effect of these two trends is particularly significant for Bethel Island. As everyone living or vacationing on the island is well aware, recent large scale residential devel-

opment has very nearly reached Bethel Island. Massive development has taken place in Pittsburg, in Antioch, and even in Oakley, immediately to the south. There is no longer any significant buffer of open land between Bethel Island and the urban/suburban belt.

The second effect is that Bethel Island is now within easy commuting distance of major employment centers. As long as employment was concentrated in San Francisco and nearby cities, only the hardest commuters would drive an hour or more each way to work from the Island. Today, with thousands of jobs being added in Walnut Creek within half an hour from Bethel Island, and in Concord, which is even closer, the island is within normal commuting distance of major employment centers.

Bethel Island is not alone in being affected by these pressures. The entire eastern part of Contra Costa County is affected, the agricultural areas around Brentwood as much or more. It is not difficult to imagine a development scenario, in which the entire eastern part of the county, from Bethel Island to Byron is gradually developed, and eventually links with the Livermore-Pleasanton belt to the south, creating a continuous suburban ring around Mount Diablo. Population projections indicate a doubling in the population of the East County (including Antioch and Pittsburg) by the year 2000, with even more rapid growth projected for the rural parts

POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR EAST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

	1980	2000	
ANTIOCH	46,000	79,800	+ 73%
PITTSBURG	43,800	56,600	+ 29%
BRENTWOOD	5,800	23,600	+307%
RURAL AREA/1	13,300	43,700	+232%

1/Includes Bethel Island, Oakley, Discovery Bay, and Byron.

Eastern Contra Costa County, in our opinion, has unique and valuable attributes; the recreational and open space character of Bethel Island, and the exceptionally productive agricultural (and also open) character of much of the central and southern part of this area. If these valuable characteristics are to be preserved, and the distinctive character of this area maintained, there is little time in which to undertake careful and systematic planning, and implement serious measures for more effectively controlling the extent, nature, and pace of land development.

III. ISLAND CONTEXT

Natural Environment

Bethel Island is one of many islands situated within the Delta area of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers. Most of the unprotected lands will come and go over time and as a result, are used either to support wildlife or for incidental recreational purposes. Several islands are maintained adequately to support agriculture, with Bethel Island perhaps the best maintained of the few urbanized islands. Its 3,500 acres are completely surrounded by an extensive levee system that requires consistent maintenance and care.

The Island is about 10 feet below mean water level, while the levee top is about 0 feet above mean water level. The levees are about 20 feet wide at the top and slope 2:1 waterside and 3:1 landside. A single bridge connects the Island to the mainland which includes the Hotchkiss Tract and Sandmound areas; parts of these too are leveed. The whole area is known as the Bethel Island Area. Almost all urbanization in the area has taken place immediately adjacent to the levees; from the air development appears like a string of residential beads ringing the Island, leaving the extensive center open for agricultural uses.

The natural environment is directly affected by the Island's reclamation from the Delta river bottom. Soil composition is largely soft peat



overlying silty sand, with a very high water table; constant drainage and de-watering is required throughout the Island. Wetlands and unstable soils appear throughout the Island, with the largest of these adjacent to the levees, fed by hydrostatically driven seepage. These "wetlands" are considered to be particularly important for the support of both local and migratory wildlife. Other wildlife includes game fish, waterfowl, muskrats, pheasant, fox, etc. Natural vegetation is characterized by wet-root tolerant species of grasses and trees such as elm, cottonwood and willow. Weather on the Island is temperate, following closely the characteristic profile of the Upper San Joaquin Valley. Summer conditions are typically hot (85 to 105 degrees), mediated by a fairly wide diurnal swing and prevailing westerly afternoon winds. The periods of no breezes are uncomfortably hot. Winter conditions are cool with frequent storms accompanied by strong and gusty winds, (S to SE). "Tule fog" a thick, very low visibility situation, plagues the region during late autumn.

Water is ever present about the Island for recreational use, irrigation and domestic supply. A multitude of wells supply these latter demands. Draw-down of the aquifer appears to create no subsidence problem. However, there is no documentation that clearly indicates that ground water withdrawal is not contributing to subsidence. Specifically, "...Deep subsidence due to withdrawal of ground water and natural gas, with reduction of underground pore pressures, may contribute significantly to Delta subsid-



ence, but no accurate estimates are available."

Water quality in the sloughs has also been perceived to be a problem vis-a-vis the urbanization of Bethel Island, including storm drainage and boat discharge. It therefore makes good sense to follow county geologist recommendations to establish an independent ground water management study group for the Bethel Island Area, and that it be convened within the context of establishing a "Bay-Delta Concensus on Northern California Water Policy."

Groundwater quality is an important issue facing the Island Area. As the population of the Island increases, additional burdens will be placed on the water supply as well as on sewage disposal. All water on Bethel Island is obtained from wells that are located between about 50 and 450 feet depths. Generally, the larger producing wells on the Island are located between about 200 and 300 feet depth. Production rates are reported to be on the order of 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm) at the golf course.

Groundwater quality on Bethel Island is considered to be poor because the total dissolved solids in the aquifer are typically more than 800 parts per million (ppm). A recently completed well was drilled to a total depth of about 300 feet below the existing ground surface. After completion of the hole, the well was electrically logged using spontaneous potential and resistivity methods. Based on geophysical interpretation, the water to about 85 feet is slightly brackish, from 85 feet to 200 feet, it is very poor, and from 200 to 300

feet, it is poor.

Groundwater recharge mechanisms are not well understood for this area and are probably complex. If the water supply is overdrawn, the possibility of saltwater intrusion is increased and the potential for subsidence is also increased. Therefore, we believe that an independent groundwater quality management group is necessary to protect this all important resource.

As the population increases, waste disposal becomes an issue which also must be addressed. During one of the group meetings for this R/UDAT study, the degree of treatment from the sewage treatment plant was discussed. From the discussions, we were not able to determine if secondary or tertiary treatment was being provided. At the present time, the sewage treatment plant can physically process more liquid waste; however disposal of the effluent is a problem and is the limiting factor. If tertiary treatment can be provided, it may be possible to economically solve the disposal problem, either through overland discharge methods or possibly through injection wells to assist with groundwater recharge. In addition to traditional methods of tertiary treatment, recent advances using biological methods have been developed.

Solid waste generation will also increase with population growth. Currently we understand that solid waste is picked up once a week on Bethel Island. Increased growth will require more frequent service, additional transport

equipment, and more disposal area. As this growth is realized, we anticipate the Bethel Island/Oakley area to have industrial facilities that can use thermal heat generated by the disposal of solid wastes and biomass materials in a biofuel facility. Rather than be a nuisance to these communities, this process can be economically rewarding.

ENVIRONMENTAL - VISUAL

The Bethel Island Area character is perceived as a loosely structured rural or semi-rural community with significant open space and recreational activities. The entry into the community is via a cluttered, somewhat "funky" commercial district. From a distance, the developed edges of the Island are perceived as dense green bands, while the central area establishes the "non-urban", undeveloped character of an open countryside. This overall landscape perception is considered essential to Island identity. The acoustic and aromatic experience of the interior consistently reinforces a collective "memory" that residents and visitors alike are in a truly non-urban place.

The commercial town core disrupts this memory through lack of unifying building design criteria or signage program. The streetscape is difficult to comprehend, does not clearly reinforce a clear parking scheme, and does not encourage pedestrian flow. Visual clutter behind chain link fences, open storage and a lack of mature landscape

development contribute to an unfavorable image of place.

In conclusion, the environment of the area is unique in terms of its existing natural and ecological conditions, and is visually and experientially perceived to be decidedly non-urban.

These conditions are compounded by the contrast between this area and the rapidly expanding, suburban, Contra Costa County (sometimes referred as "ContraCostopolis"). The more the county and the Bay Region grow, the more precious and potentially impacted becomes the environment of the Bethel Island Area.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

THE LEVEES

Certainly the single greatest definition of form and character given to Bethel Island has been by its levee system. Built by Chinese farm laborers in the early 1850's, the unsophisticated techniques of placing mounds of peat and sand have survived amazingly over time. The levees of undeveloped islands throughout the Delta which were not maintained are constantly threatened by the natural forces of water and wave action, flooding, piping or fracturing, subsidence to an undetermined degree, and seismic tremors.

Visually, the levees are a prominent edge for the Island Area create from the slough side and act principally as background for dwellings when seen from the inland side. Where vegetation has matured along the developed levees, there appears to be an undulating green horizon when viewed from a distance, and lush shade and texture when viewed up close.

Such a strong form-generator deserves prominence in the visual environment-not only because of its visual characteristics, but also because it clearly protects the lives of Island inhabitants from flooding.

BIMID has efficiently and effectively provided maintenance and repairs to the levee system on Bethel Island. The levees in Sandmound Slough and Dutch Slough have been similarly maintained by Reclamation District 799. Corps of Engineer restrictions, in ad-



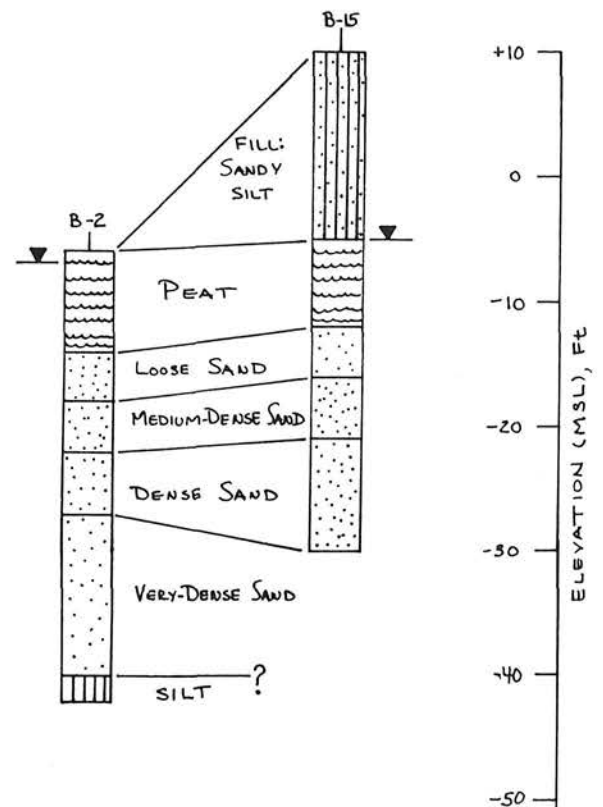
dition to standards required by the districts, attempt to further protect levees with building setbacks and prohibited construction areas and zones.

LEVEES

The levees were originally constructed in order to develop lands for agricultural uses and to provide protection from the surrounding waters. Since the first reclamation levees were constructed, levee failures have occurred frequently; many islands have been inundated at least once and some on several occasions. In 1980, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) rated the levees surrounding Bethel Island as fair. This rating places these levees as among the best in the Delta System.

When the levees were originally constructed, locally available soils were used. In general, these materials consist of silts, sands, and peat. The near-surface soils below the levees and Island typically include peat and other organic soils. These materials are underlain by sands with occasional clay layers. At shallow depths, the sands are very loose to loose, but become denser with depth. Bedrock is reported to be at least 500 feet deep.

As indicated above, levee failures have occurred and have resulted in island flooding. Although there are a number of reasons for the failures, the primary reason is overall instability. This lack of stability is due to a combination of factors includ-

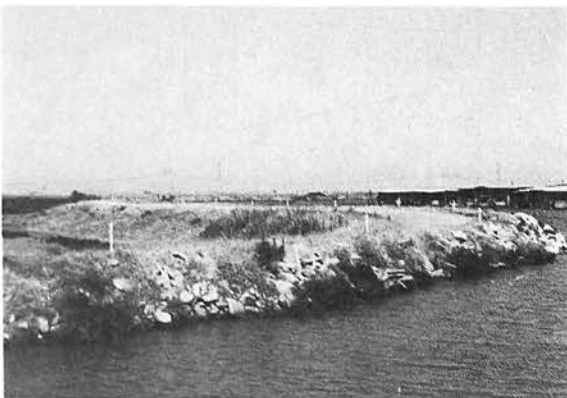


ing construction and maintenance. In the Bethel Island Area, a number of agencies share responsibility for levee maintenance including the following:

- o Army Corps of Engineers, (C.O.E.)
- o Bethel Island Municipal Improvement District (BIMID), and
- o Reclamation District 799 (R.D. 799)

According to available data, on the order of \$250,000 per year is invested in maintaining the Bethel Island Area levees. Safety of current and future residents is directly dependent on the integrity of the levee system. As a result of the importance of this system, the existing adequacy of the levees as well as proposed modifications must be investigated. Items to be considered in any analysis must include the following:

- o Site specific soil conditions,
- o Slope geometries,
- o Effects of various water levels,
- o Seismic considerations,
- o Short and long-term performance,
- o Historical performance, and
- o Consequence of failure.



Perhaps the most significant aspect for this Island is the consequence of failure and the loss of life. As a result, conservative design is mandatory to protect the population. This is a highly complex problem. Therefore, the highest quality information is required for proper and thorough analysis.

Professional analysis performed in conjunction with several proposed developments have indicated that properly designed and maintained levees have adequate factors of safety under a given set of design conditions. As part of this R/UDAT evaluation, we have heard comments that these levees have withstood earthquakes. However, geologic data and historic information indicate that large magnitude earthquakes have not been recorded in this vicinity since 1892, although they are possible. At least one of the studies performed to date indicates that liquifaction could occur as a result of an appropriately large earthquake (Richter Magnitude 6.5 to 7.0.). Therefore, we believe that current levee conditions and proposed levee modifications should be evaluated with proper consideration for earthquake loadings.

Two other potentially significant phenomena can occur that physically influence the Bethel Island Area:

- o Settlement, and
- o Subsidence.

These two terms are often confused and used interchangeably. To properly discuss the effects of settlement and subsidence, the following general definition will be used in this R/UDAT report.

- o Settlement -- reduction in ground surface elevation due to externally applied load and generally occurring over a localized area.



- o Subsidence -- reduction in ground surface elevation generally occurring over a wide area.

Reductions in ground surface elevations resulting from either settlement, subsidence, or a combination of the two can result in island flooding.

Since the Bethel Island Area levees are recognized as being among the better constructed and best maintained levees in the Delta system, it is important that they maintain an adequate elevation to protect against flooding.

According to survey information available for our review, it is difficult to estimate the nature, magnitude, or rate of ground surface lowering. This difficulty is primarily the result of insufficient survey data. In addition, for the survey data to be meaningful and directly useful, the elevation of the reference point or bench mark must be precisely known.

Settlement related movements are better understood than subsidence related elevation changes and are somewhat easier to predict. The compressible soils in the levees and below the levees are susceptible to settlement. Although it is necessary to maintain adequate elevations for flood protection through the addition of new fill, this new fill will also cause additional levee settlement. This implies that maintaining proper levee elevations is an ongoing, continuing process.

Subsidence related movements are more complex and can be caused by a number of factors. The California DWR has

studied the subsidence of the soils in the Delta area and has identified several probable mechanisms which include:

- o Biochemical oxidation,
- o Wind erosion,
- o Shallow dewatering, and
- o Gas, oil and water withdrawals.

The first three possible causes of subsidence are generally considered to be shallow forms of subsidence. It is currently believed that about 2.5 to 3.6 inches of subsidence per year can be attributed to these causes. The fourth possible cause of subsidence indicated above can be caused by gas, oil, and/or water withdrawals. At present, the amount of subsidence caused by this mechanism is not clearly known. A recently completed study by consulting petroleum engineers indicates that subsidence on Bethel Island resulting from deep (10,000 ft.) gas well depletion would be essentially negligible, less than 0.1 inches. Furthermore, we understand that no commercially feasible oil reserves are located in this area so subsidence from oil withdrawal is not of consideration. The effects of groundwater withdrawal in the Bethel Island Area have not been studied adequately, but they may be significant. Since all groundwater on the Island is supplied by wells, the potential for appreciable subsidence exists.

As indicated above, reliable survey data is not available, however, indirect methods can be used to estimate the nature of the subsidence. We believe that in

addition to establishing quality survey data, the available records pertaining to gas and water withdrawals should be obtained and analyzed to evaluate subsidence in this area. Regardless of the exact mechanisms associated with subsidence, low-lying areas become more susceptible to inundation which can directly affect the safety of the people in the Bethel Island Area.

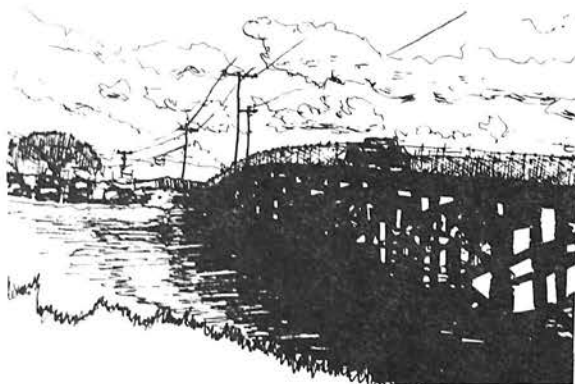
Other aspects of the Bethel Island Area can also be influenced by settlements and subsidence although public safety may not be jeopardized, economic damage can occur. Buildings, underground utilities, roadways, and other facilities can be damaged or rendered useless.

ACCESS, TRANSPORTATION

The Bethel Island Area is connected with other East Diablo/Contra Costa County communities by Hwy. 4, eastwardly to Stockton and westwardly to Antioch, Concord, Oakland and the Bay Area. Hwy 4 at Antioch connects with Hwy 160 to Sacramento, and at Stockton, connects to I-5.

Bethel Island Road enters the southern end of the Island crossing Sandmound Slough and continues north to the northern levee. This two lane bridge is the single point of access for entering or leaving the Island. For this reason and due to the age of its timber structure, the bridge has become the focus of concern for evacuation safety.

Internal roads are two lane asphalt roads, all of which are dead end. Taylor,



Stone and Willow Roads provide access to three-fourths of the residentially developed perimeter of the Island. Gateway, Piper and Sugar Barge Roads connect the central Bethel Island Road to the north-eastern sector and levee.

Available studies indicate that increased traffic, projected as a result of future development, could be accommodated by existing road capacities for the foreseeable demands, with the exception of the bridge discussed earlier. This can be seen as an expression of two assumptions.

First, that the market demands for housing are principally commuter oriented as discussed in the regional context. Secondly, single family detached dwellings would, without alternative policy positions, provide for 80% of new housing stock.

Since the General Plan of East Diablo contains no energy element nor related energy transportation policy, the assumptions could become fact. However, if a strong energy policy were adopted to minimize energy costs related to housing and transportation, evidence will indicate that a larger, majority-percentage of destination-oriented, multi-family housing development, (as an aggregate of both density and transportation energy costs) could save up to 75% of energy costs related to the two stated assumptions.

For a number of obvious reasons, the team feels that the lack of strong energy policy with related transportation directives leaves the Bethel Island Area (and East Diablo) at the whim of site specific-permit review deci-

sions on land uses without benefit of proper regional contextual considerations. To continue such a state of regional decision making can only be seen as irresponsible county government.

As discussed above, the county needs to establish integrated and comprehensive energy policy which can help to establish regional development criteria useful in developing a Specific Plan for the Bethel Island Area. Specifically, allocation of population densities with associated transportation energy requirements can help manage growth in the entire East Diablo area. Energy policy should be directed to creating as much regional and local independence as possible to the end of minimizing county-wide capital export for fuels. Various communities strategies have been articulated within this vicinity (eg. Sacramento and Davis California). Most successful strategies are based on "end-use matching" of fuel source and demand. In the instance of Bethel Island, the policy of enhancing use as a recreational destination, as opposed to a point of origination, could be articulated through minimized dwelling size, and maximum density requirements. Total dwelling unit energy consumption would fall along with permanent transportation (commuter) fuel demand.

Well developed energy policy will identify energy use patterns and will address Residential, Commercial, Industrial (including Agriculture) and Transportation Sectors as in uses. Opportunities for conservation and renewable

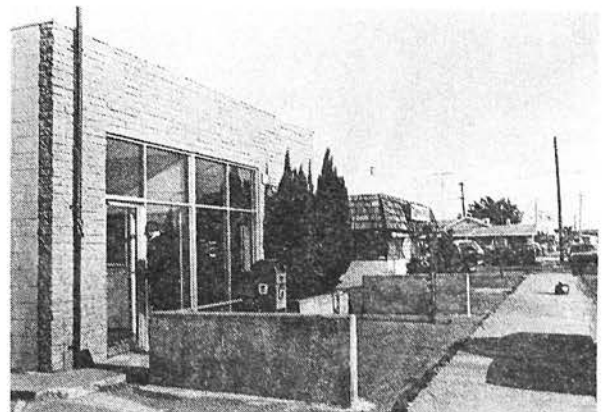
resources, such as solar energy and biomass conversion of municipal and agricultural wastes should be clarified. For the Bethel Island Area a program "weatherizing" existing housing stock (typically old and thermally leaky) and assessment of biomass opportunities could yield near and long term economic benefit. The desirability of establishing policy and implementation through a Plan are fairly clear, with fuel and capital savings most obvious. Additional benefits include reduced area-wide susceptibility to power shortages, improved air quality and "excess" power capacity made available for other local economic use.

COMMERCIAL

While commercial development within the Bethel Island Area has not grown substantially in recent past, commerce is considered good by most local business people. Two distinguishable commercial zones are present on Bethel Island: a core of restaurants, shops and service directly at the bridge, and water oriented levee establishments dispersed around the Island. Similar levee businesses for boat storage and service border Dutch and Sandmound Sloughs.

Activities at both sides of the bridge which generate pedestrian involvement offer potential for conflicts between people walking and driving. Opportunities exist for safer separations between the two, and should be pursued.

The business center at the entry of Bethel Island offers the further opportunity



for the development of a defined and comfortable town square or town center. People who gather for meetings at the Scout Hall, BIMID, the post office or come to shop or dine, could be encouraged to stay longer and enjoy visiting with friends and socializing. Further development of this concept will be addressed later as part of the specific plan discussion.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

On many Bethel Island cars there is a bumper sticker that says: "BETHEL ISLAND, I FOUND IT." Most of the people associated with the Island are indeed people who have found it. Almost all have come from someplace else, usually in search of something missing in their lives. For many, what was missing was a relaxing leisure life, a respite from the pressures and tensions and the noise and congestion of the city.

For most people associated with Bethel Island, the respite is only temporary. They come for the weekend, to spend some enjoyable time boating or fishing or simply relaxing around the water.

The community's permanent residents, on the other hand, are often people who have achieved an opportunity for a more continuously enjoyed leisure life. One of the most important groups, politically, consists of late middle aged people who are retired or semi-retired, successful enough from their working days to afford a comfortable home



in reasonably quiet surroundings near the water, and still young enough to engage in an active life of boating, home improvement and maintenance, and socializing in Bethel Island's large number of associations and clubs. Such people are typically married couples whose children are grown up and no longer live with them.

They are solidly middle-class, not poor but not extremely affluent. Bethel Island's homes are still mostly reasonably priced in comparison with other northern Californian real estate located near the water. Practically none of these residents -- the backbone of Bethel Island's social life -- are members ethnic minorities.

Such permanent residents of course, gradually turn into senior citizens. There are many residents over 65, most of whom came in the past ten or twenty years. Although they originally may have come to participate in an active leisure life, they have gradually had to curtail much of their outdoor water-related activities, they continue an active social life centered around bingo and card playing.

Essential services for the leisure-oriented Bethel Islanders are provided by a corps of middle-aged business men -- the fire fighters, store and restaurant owners, boat dealers, real estate brokers, newspaper publisher, and so forth. Most of these are local residents who show a lot of interest in community affairs and who seem generally well respected by most community members.

Feelings of the majority of Bethel Islanders toward the younger generation of local residents are somewhat more mixed, however. Many of the young couples with school aged children are people of relatively modest means, some of whom live in the Island's RV park. They do not seem, by and large, to participate actively in community affairs. (We didn't meet many of them at our community meetings.) There are concerns that some of the school age children of this younger generation are a little unruly.

A final category of Bethel Islanders comprises the dozen or so large land owners on the Island. They have come to Bethel Island, usually within the past twenty-five years or so, because they have found -- or hoped they have found -- some property with good investment potential. Most of them do not, in fact, reside on the Island, although they are actively interested in its affairs. They have high hopes for developing their property in such a manner as to both improve the quality of life on the Island and realize a profit on their investment. They are often frustrated by the maze of regulations that have been put up both under the pressure of local residents who do not want extensive development and a variety of special interests groups working at various levels of regional and state-wide government.

As far as provisions for education and public safety are concerned, the picture for Bethel Island is mixed. There seems to be general agreement that both in fighting and in preventing fires and in providing emergency medical service, the Bethel Island fire department does an excellent job for a community of this



size. As the community grows, of course, it will be important to expand the fire department commensurately. Police protection is more of a problem. The Island must rely on the County Sheriff's office for protection, and residents seem to feel that it could use more police help in controlling emerging problems such as drug use. As the community grows it will become absolutely essential to have more in the way of locally based police protection.

Although Bethel Islanders seem to feel clearly that they are getting their money's worth in fire protection, they do not think they are getting their money's worth in police protection: the county is not providing them with services commensurate with what they pay in taxes.

The school system is also a problem. Bethel Island is part of multiple school districts: an elementary school (K-8) in Oakley, and a secondary school (9-12) attended by students from Bethel Island, Oakley, Knightsen, Discovery Bay and Brentwood. They are nine and fifteen miles distant respectively. The commute time is roughly $3/4$ to $1\ 1/4$ hours each way. There are complaints that these schools are not adequately funded due to the fact that the assessments paid by developers in the surrounding communities have not been adequate to cover the numbers of new students brought by the families who have moved into the new housing developments.

As in the case of police protection, the Islanders do not feel that they are getting their money's worth in schooling. The blame in this case,



however, is laid not on the county but on developers whose concern for profit keeps them from fulfilling their responsibilities in the community.

BETHEL ISLAND: ECONOMIC SETTING

Bethel Island has been, and largely still is, a second home and retirement community. A pattern, which appears to be typical of many households, is that families or couples start out by visiting the Island, often learning about it from friends, then buy a home or lot, use the home for weekends or vacations for a number of years, and eventually move to the island, generally at the point of retirement. The opportunities for boating and fishing in the Delta, as well as the quiet and open character of the area, have made it attractive to a steady, although modest, stream of retirees as well as visitors/1.

1/ It is impossible to determine the number of visitors to Bethel Island; estimates of weekend visitors vary from under 2,000 to over 10,000. Given, however, that 200 or fewer homes on the Island are held for seasonal or weekend use, we would lean to the lowside of the above range.

Population and housing on Bethel Island have not yet been significantly influenced by the development pressures discussed earlier. As of 1980, the population of Bethel Island according to the Census was 1,774; the population of the Bethel Island Area, including Sandmound Slough, is estimated at 2,400. Since 1980, roughly 100 additional homes have been constructed, and the population today is most probably between 2,500 and 2,600.

The population is older than in most areas, as one expects from its character as a retirement area. The estimated median age of the population in 1985 is 50 years; since there are a number of children on the Island, we estimate the average age of the adult population as 60 to 65. The average household size is estimated at 2.1, again, not unexpected in a retirement-oriented community.

Although waterfront communities are generally thought to be particularly expensive, this has not been true of Bethel Island. Modest waterfront homes are available at prices between \$120,000 and \$150,000 (with houses in need of work often selling for less), a very low price compared to waterfront property in areas to the west. Newer homes, however, are often considerably more expensive, and prices for the few remaining available waterfront lots are rising. As appears to be the case with regard to Discovery Bay, some ten miles south of Bethel Island, the area is becoming more attractive to a more affluent population.



This is a logical outcome of the facts cited earlier; namely, the extent to which the Bethel Island area has been drawn into the urban/suburban network of the Bay Area. The would-be developers of large-scale residential projects on the Island expect that the lion's share of their buyers will not be retirees or second home buyers, but rather middle and upper income working household who will live on Bethel Island and commute to work to the west. These buyers will seek to combine the water-oriented character of the Island with its increasing convenience to the major employment centers where they will work. It is quite possible that these same households will come to represent a larger share, over time, of the buyers of existing houses on resale on the Island.

Based on an analysis of economic trends, a market study recently conducted for one developer concluded that there was a demand in the Bethel Island market area (an area including Bethel Island, Oakley, and Brentwood) for 800 new housing units per year between 1985 and 1990, and some 1,250 units per year in the 1990's. This demand is based on job growth, and does not take into consideration the potential additional demand for second homes and retirement residences.

We can make a rough estimate of the potential future growth of Bethel Island based on market demand factors, assuming no other constraints on development. We can assume, conservatively, that Bethel Island should be able to capture 10 to 15 percent of the

amount of job-related housing projected for the area, which would represent some 1,600 to 2,400 units by the year 2000. Continuing demand, at more modest levels, for seasonal, weekend, and retirement housing, should increase this total by as much as 25 percent. Thus, we estimate total potential housing demand to be between 2,000 and 3,000 units between 1985 and 2000.

The character of this demand will vary. The job-related housing that is being built in the area, and from which people commute to work in central Contra Costa County, tends to be modest in nature, strongly oriented to the first-time homebuyer. This market includes single family houses in the \$90,000 to \$120,000 price range, and condominiums at prices as low as \$70,000. Although Bethel Island can take advantage of its water orientation (which Oakley does not really share) to attract a more affluent population, it is not yet perceived as a "premium" location in the real estate marketplace.

The housing proposed by the various developers seeking to build on the Island represents a mix of housing types. The majority will be single family homes, but a substantial number of condominiums are also proposed. Most developers seek not to build to a highly affluent market, but to a middle and upper-middle income market, with single family homes selling between \$160,000 and \$200,000, and condominiums starting near \$100,000. It is likely, however, that if carefully planned and controlled development

takes place, in the context of a specific plan based on the R/UDAT team recommendations, the effect will be to upgrade both the image and the market character of Bethel Island. Large scale developments, therefore, may begin by seeking to attract a middle income population, and end by targeting a more affluent one.

It is important, however, in the planning of any future development that might take place on Bethel Island to bear two considerations in mind; first, that Bethel Island has not traditionally been a community of the very affluent, and second, that the community should not be priced out of the reach of people similar to those living here now, and of the people who will hold the jobs that will come into being on the Island. The plan should seek to ensure that a varied mix of housing is built, so that a diverse population will be able to enjoy the particular features and attractions of the community.

Market conditions do not affect housing alone, but will also determine the level of commercial and recreational activity on the Island. The modest amount of retail trade and services on Bethel Island today is a reflection of its small resident population, coupled with a tourist industry which is heavily oriented to short, generally daytime visits. Any substantial increase in the resident population will increase demand for retail and service establishments. If these establishments are located in a concentrated area, as the R/UDAT team recommends, a nucleus of a business and services center

on the Island can come into being over the next ten years. The same is true of growth in future tourist and recreational areas.

The town center we envision, however, will still be a limited one, particularly in terms of major shopping facilities such as department stores and supermarkets. Residents in need of such facilities will continue to travel off-Island. It is realistic, however, to expect that facilities such as a bank, a drugstore, and a modest medical clinic could be supported by a community with the eventual population envisaged in this report.

Finally, none of the development pressures or potential changes that we have identified need necessarily lead to the end of Bethel Island's attractiveness as a recreational area and visitor destination. Indeed, the increasing size of the population living in close proximity could make the Island even more attractive, and create opportunities for new and enhanced recreation-oriented activity. If that is to be the case, however, the planning of future development of the Island must be done with extreme care to retain the visual and aesthetic character which makes the Island attractive as a tourist destination. If development is permitted to turn Bethel Island into something largely indistinguishable from any other Bay Area suburb, it may well lose its attractiveness and distinctiveness as a water-oriented recreation community.

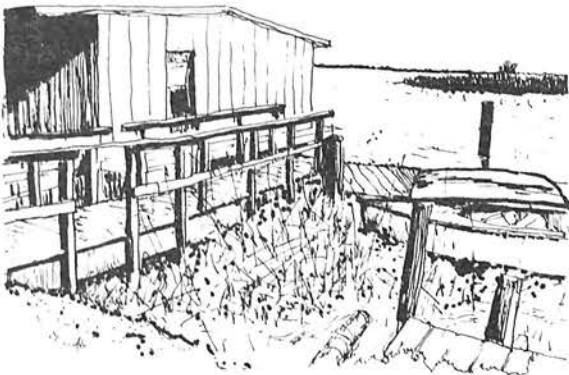
IV. VISIONS

A. Individuals

Everyone speaks of the Bethel Island Community, but it is a community in a rather limited sense. Though Bethel Islanders are of course, tied together by virtue of their sharing of a delimited living space, they have not been linked by strong common visions of their public responsibilities toward one another. The visions they do share are in fact, visions that help to keep them apart--visions of independent private life, visions of seeking fulfillment through freedom from being bothered by the demands of outsiders.

The theme "escape" came up frequently in both formal and informal conversations with Islanders. As Lloyd Pereria put it: "The Island has been everyone's great escape. Everyone has this place they want to escape to. They found this place on a weekend and this is the place they'll escape to."

The common vision of the Island as a "great escape" has, however, a heroic quality to it. The Islanders see themselves as having exercised considerable initiative, even courage, in having escaped from the urban rat-race and found a place where they could lead a relaxing life. They dared to refuse conformity to a world where everyone was supposed to live in orderly tracts of copycat houses where they would be locked in a



struggle to keep up with the Joneses. As one resident put it, they are determined to "fight to the death" to keep the congested world they have fled from catching up with them.

The problem with this shared vision of a ruggedly individualistic pursuit of private happiness, however, is that it doesn't easily lend itself to cooperation for public purposes. When Bethel Islanders do cooperate, their cooperation often takes the form of alliances with a relatively small circle of like-minded persons who are defending their particular shared hopes for private happiness against people who seem to be threatening them. Thus Islanders commonly refer to their home as "Battle Island," and do so, seemingly, with pride as well as a bit of concern. The social landscape of the Island seems to be a mosaic of contending factions (whose competition seem, however, to be carried out usually in a fairly civil manner). The one thing that seems to bring all the factions together is their common sense of being threatened by outsiders.

Thus, they are generally hostile to the county government, which they speak of as arrogant, incompetent, and exploitative; and they often speak with disdain of the kinds of people you find in neighboring communities.

Almost everyone with whom we talked spoke of the need for progress and growth. "I don't want development," said one, "but we have to have progress." In the minds of Bethel Islanders, "progress"



usually seems to refer to a gradual, reliably controlled growth that would allow them to continue to enjoy the amount of peace and quiet, open vistas and water-oriented recreation that they now enjoy--while projecting onto the community as a whole the particular kind of social situation into which they have settled.

"We want a nice quiet place," says a senior citizen. "We don't want any condos." "I would like this to become a more exclusive kind of community," says a fairly affluent resident, "a place something like Beverly Hills." People with small children, on the other hand, tend to want a place that has more facilities for their children to play in--which would imply yet a different sort of community atmosphere.

Though they speak of the need for progress, however, most residents would seem to be satisfied if there were such a stalemate of social and political forces that things would remain pretty much as they already are. Such a hope, however, is unrealistic, for the reasons discussed in this report. The citizens of Bethel Island have to build up institutions that will enable them to cooperate together to create more public visions of the common good.



B. MAJOR LAND OWNERS

Each of the major land-owners has a vision of realizing a substantial return on his investment while improving the community as a whole. "When development is over, Bethel Island will be Treasure Island," said Bud Weisenberg; and he said it in such a way as to suggest that all Islanders would enjoy some of the treasure. Bethel Island would become Treasure Island as each investor improved the community as a whole by developing his private property in such a way as to meet the demands of the regional housing market. The major demand is for water-oriented housing, which would be created in the plans of most major land owners by creating bodies of water in the property which they own in the Island's interior. (Most major landowners propose to do this by "reconfiguring" the Island's levees.) Each separate proposal envisions doing this in such a way as to occasion a minimum disruption in the lives of the rest of the Island's residents. Most current residents would not see the new developments from where they live. And the developments would take almost a generation to be completed, by which time most of the present inhabitants would be gone anyway. None of the developments, by themselves, would cause irreparable damage to the natural environment.

Each of the developments would occasion improvements in important parts of the Island's infrastructure, such as its levees. Each of the developments would benefit residents by bring such amenities





as high quality restaurants, doctors' offices, and banks to the Island, and each would increase the net revenues to Betnel Island for public services like fire and police protection and schools.

The fundamental problem with the landowners' visions, however, is that they are, in the end, each private visions of public betterment. Each, taken alone, would probably provide a net benefit to the community (some more probably than others) while yielding a profit to the landowners. But together, the cumulative effect would be harmful. If every developer followed his private dream, all open space on the Island would be gone, the aesthetic quality of area would be destroyed, and the wetlands so important to the area's wildlife might be eliminated. To be truly beneficial to the Island, the private visions of the major landowners have to be coordinated into a public system.

C. PUBLIC AGENCIES

A number of public agencies at the state and county levels are responsible for coordinating the development initiatives of private enterprise for the benefit of the public interest. Often, however, these agencies are organized as rigid bureaucracies. Officials representing a bureaucratic department often pursue courses of action that are inconsistent with another department. Thus the county planning department uses criteria for assessing the advisability of development that is partially contradictory to

those used by the Department of Fish and Game. Moreover, officials at the state and county levels often have an extremely difficult time keeping in touch with the concrete realities at the local level. Sometimes public offices are staffed by civil servants who are lazy or incompetent -- although this by and large did not seem to be true of the county officials whom we interviewed during this visit.

In general terms, state and county agencies define the Bethel Island Area as a special kind of public resource that needs to be protected. It is an area uniquely suited to water-oriented recreation and therefore should only be developed in such a way as to enhance its value to the public for such recreation. It is a fragile wildlife habitat -- an important breeding ground for certain species of wild birds for example -- that needs to be protected not simply for the benefit of the citizens of California but for those of the nation as a whole. But in attempting to protect these unique aspects of the Bethel Island Area in the public interest, the public agencies at the state and county level often generate a maze of partially contradictory, clumsily formulated and clumsily enforced regulations that frustrate the ambitions and even offend the common sense of citizens at the local level.

Regional planning bodies like EDPAC are closer to the local situation and seem to be staffed by dedicated people, and are often more flexible than county agencies. The development of such regional



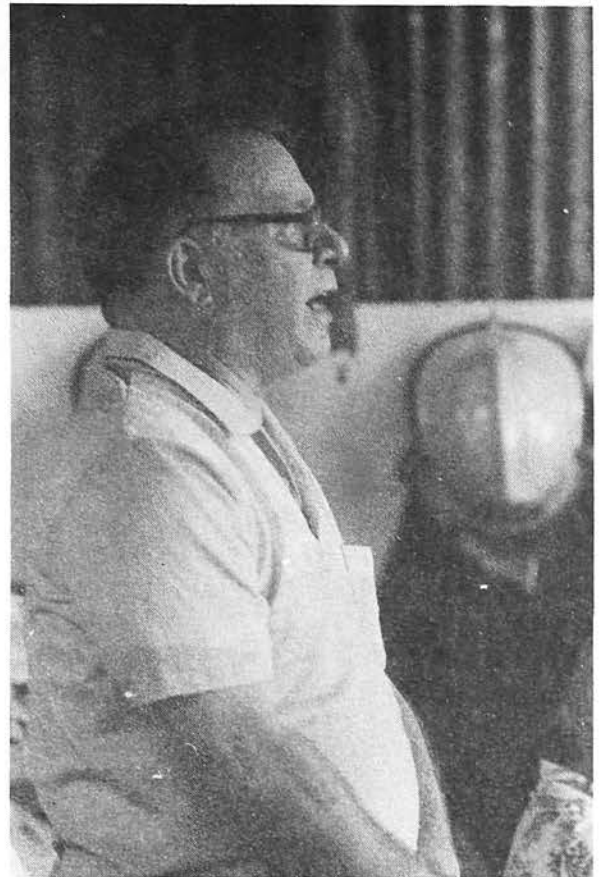
institutions, which mediate between the somewhat unorganized local level and the too-rigidly organized county level, is a hopeful step for ensuring the coordination of private visions for the future of the area into a public vision.



D.
INTERPRETATIONS OF THE R/UDAT

It is up to the citizens of Bethel Island themselves to come together in a public forum to discuss and to decide upon the future of their community in a democratic process. As outsiders to the community we have no desire, or for that matter, no ability to impose vision of the future on Bethel Island. We are happy to do what we can, however, to facilitate the process through which the citizens of the Island can themselves arrive at such a vision. As outsiders who have been privileged to listen to representatives of almost every active group of Bethel Islanders while being ourselves not committed to the perspectives of any particular group, we have been able to note the diversity of visions of the future among Bethel Islanders. We have seen enough of such diversity to become acutely aware of the need of the Islanders to get together to reconcile their private visions, and we hope that this report will provide a stimulus for them to do so.

As professionals with expertise in analysing economic, social, and political forces, we would stress the urgency of the situation for Bethel Islanders. If they do not come together to act as a community, Bethel Island is likely to be overwhelmed by the pressures creating the suburbanization of "ContraCos-topolis". And as citizens who come from almost all regions of the United States, we would stress the need of Bethel Islanders to consider their situation in the light of



their interdependence with the larger society -- the Delta region, the Bay Area, and the state of California, and for that matter with the nation as a whole. We would propose the following goals as a focus for public discussion among Bethel Islanders about their future.



V. GOALS

• Bring the whole community together to decide democratically on issues affecting the over-all character of the community, especially land use issues. This implies the attainment of some local autonomy vis-a-vis county and regional governments; but at the same time it also requires the ability to cooperate constructively with appropriate institutions at county and regional levels to plan for the resolution of issues of common concern for all within the northern California Bay Area.

• Preserve the aesthetic values and natural material resources of Bethel Island while enhancing the ability of Bethel Islanders to get maximum enjoyment out of those values and to make the most effective use of those resources.

• Allow those who have made investments in undeveloped property on Bethel Island to make a reasonable return on their investments consistent with preserving the unique and irreplaceable aspects of the natural environment and with respect for the rights of other members of the community.

• Make adequate provisions for public safety in the community -- police and fire protections.

• Improve and maintain public facilities necessary for the safety and well-being of all Islanders: levees, roads, water and sewage facilities.

Assure the availability

of adequate facilities for the education and recreation of young people. Assure the availability of adequate facilities for the well being of the elderly -- community centers, medical care, etc.

• Make the resources of the Delta region available for the public recreational needs of the Bay Area population consistent with protecting the environment and respecting the legitimate interests of community members for privacy and economic well-being.



VI. SPECIFIC PLAN

WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PLAN?

The form that planning for the future is proposed to take on Bethel Island is that of the Specific Plan, an approach to planning permitted under California law, which enables a community to exert strong control over the nature, extent, and character of the future development that may take place. A Specific Plan is a step in implementing the county General Plan, a broad document which sets forth the overall land use policies and standards, as well as policies in a series of other areas, for the county. The Specific Plan does not deal with the county, but with a small, often very small, part of the whole. It takes the general principles of the General Plan, and translates them into specific standards for the area covered by the Specific Plan, covering in detail:

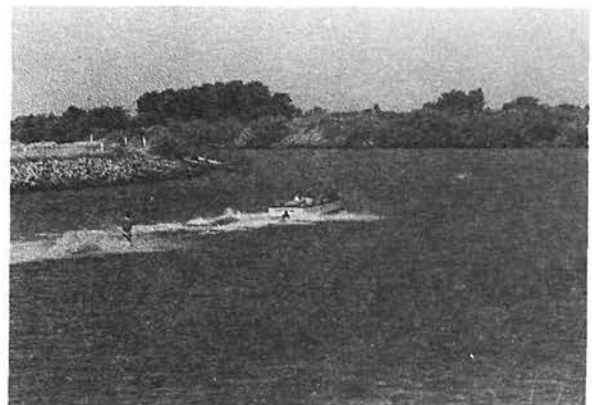
- the use of land, and the location of open space;
- all facilities, including transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other facilities located in the area and needed to support the land uses proposed;
- the standards for development, and standards for the preservation of natural resources;
- implementation measures, including regulations, public works, and financing plans;



It can become a detailed blueprint for development, specifying the nature and extent of what the developer may and may not do to an extent almost unprecedented in traditional American land use practice.

The Specific Plan is a powerful tool for a community such as Bethel Island, in that it offers a measure of control over development that is more precise and more detailed than generally available through other land use techniques; the risk, of course, is that it may be too detailed. In a community where development is expected to take place gradually over a period of 15 to 25 years, circumstances are likely to change, and to require changes in the Specific Plan over time. Particularly with such a long time period, the community, and the official agency responsible must constantly remain open to the possibility that changes to the Specific Plan may be needed; to treat it as a static, fixed, document is to misunderstand the nature of planning, and the reality of change.

The Specific Plan must be a reflection of the community's concerns and goals. While any interested developer should be given the full opportunity to communicate both factual information and his ideas, as an important input into the process of drawing up the Specific Plan, the process itself must be totally independent from developer control or manipulation. Neither developers nor their employees or consultants should sit on a Specific Plan advisory committee, or participate in the



selection of staff or consultants for the preparation of the plan. The statutory provisions under which a city or county can assess affected developers for their prorata share of the cost of preparing the Specific Plan should not be construed as giving those developers any special status or involvement in the preparation; they are subject to assessment because they will benefit from the existence of a Specific Plan, in itself, and not because of any provisions of that plan.

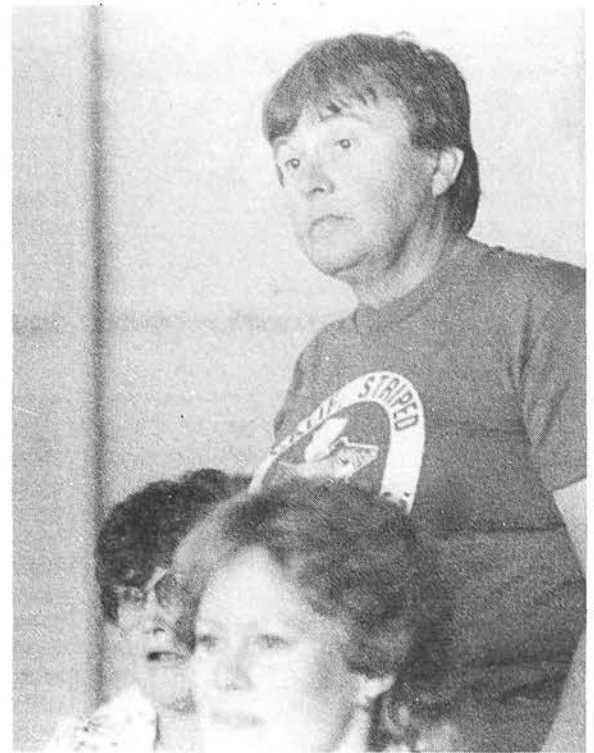
As a document prepared in the public interest, the initial funding should, to the extent possible, come from the public sector, to be reimbursed later by developers making application under the Specific Plan provisions. The R/UDAT team feels strongly that Bethel Island is an area in which the county can and should have a specific role. Acknowledging the county's limitations, both with regard to financial resources and the number of available professional staff, serious consideration should nonetheless be given to providing financial support for the preparation of the Specific Plan, in whole or part, and possibly with the use of Federal Community Development Block Grant funds; and to assignment of county professional staff to assist in the preparation of the plan, working with the plan consultants, and with the advisory committee. Since the funds, either direct outlay or in kind, will be reimbursed within at most a few years, the cost to the county, on a long-term basis, should be nominal. The benefit to the county, in terms of the quality of the planning and development that can result, will be far greater.

BETHEL ISLAND AREA CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The Conceptual Plan proposed by the R/UDAT team reflects the strong sentiments expressed by Islanders to preserve the Island's special character and its rural, non-suburban openness; it is a resolution of its own unique development challenges -- the low ground and the levees and the problematical road layout; it recognizes the assets of its natural habitats and finally, it seizes the marketplace reality that Bay Area people want to get to and enjoy the water.

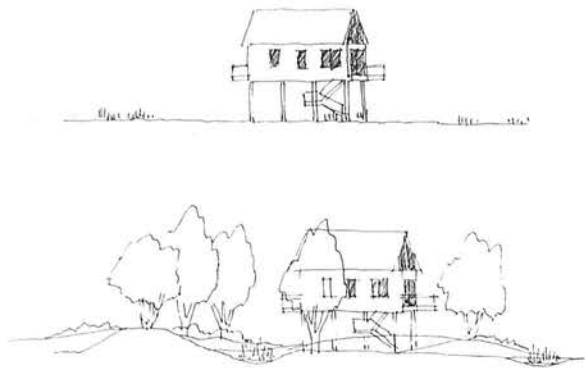
The plan is not a Specific Plan, as described in the previous section, for it lacks the detailed base information and output that makes a Specific Plan a workable and usable tool. And yet, however broadly and rapidly this conceptual plan was created, it does demonstrate the potential of resolution between the conflicting visions of Islanders, and may even provide Islanders with a practical structure on which to base the actual Specific Plan.

Over the last four days, R/UDAT has heard Islanders, including developers, speak of Bethel Island's special place in the Delta, that it should be treated differently than areas developed as tract housing. Although people did disagree on how much growth could occur before that special atmosphere and landscape were lost, low overall density and the perception of openness were commonly mentioned as critical elements of any plan.



The R/UDAT team believes that in order to achieve those goals so often expressed by Islanders, a future Specific Plan must be designed which sees that existing street-neighborhoods as social and physical areas must be preserved; that a drainage system, which is absolutely essential before substantial growth occurs anywhere on the Island, can be more than a ditch, and preferably, an extensive lake system, that the Island should be subdivided by criss-cross secondary levees for safety, that roads should be reconfigured to allow traffic to move steadily along, but to discourage speeding, that the natural features of the Island's interior have been lost and must be re-established with marshes, rolling mounds, lakes and trees added to continuous fields and pastures, and finally, that the whole Island can be benefit by the introduction of recreation alternatives in a town center, at nature observation points, along trails, and at public access points leading to the waterways.

The Conceptual Plan presented herein has included these planning objectives. Because the plan's subsequent low density (about 1.20 dwelling units per gross acre) substantial open space and sensitivity to the natural resources and systems in and around Bethel Island, the resulting environment would not resemble the geometric landscape of suburban subdivisions, nor would the existing neighborhoods be lost in new growth.



Existing commercial from the bridge to Gateway Road should be considered as the Island Center, including Fire Station, Scout Hall, Post Office, and other facilities not currently constructed such as a recreation area and expanded commercial facilities. It is important to understand that to reduce traffic on the roads, it is extremely important to confine Island commercial activities to this one area and thus provide something like one-stop shopping.

The commercial area, as it is now configured, will have to change in order to reduce the number of cross-traffic hazards and improve the pedestrian movement from the boating activities on the waterfront to the stores at the other extremity of the commercial area. Future improvements could improve the visual impact of the area by landscaping, sign control and building infill, but in the long run, parking and future expansion would have to occur behind the current structures.

Beyond the commercial area and leading to the northwest quadrant of Bethel Island, Bethel Island Road would be realigned to pull away from its current position and provide a gently curving path directly to the public water recreation and boating areas. This new road would channelize visitor traffic, and reduce demand on other Island roads.

That area, consisting of approximately 1500 acres, is envisioned to be a combination of residential densities, from 2 dwelling units per gross acre to 10 dwelling units per gross acre, the proposed inland marina, as well as com-

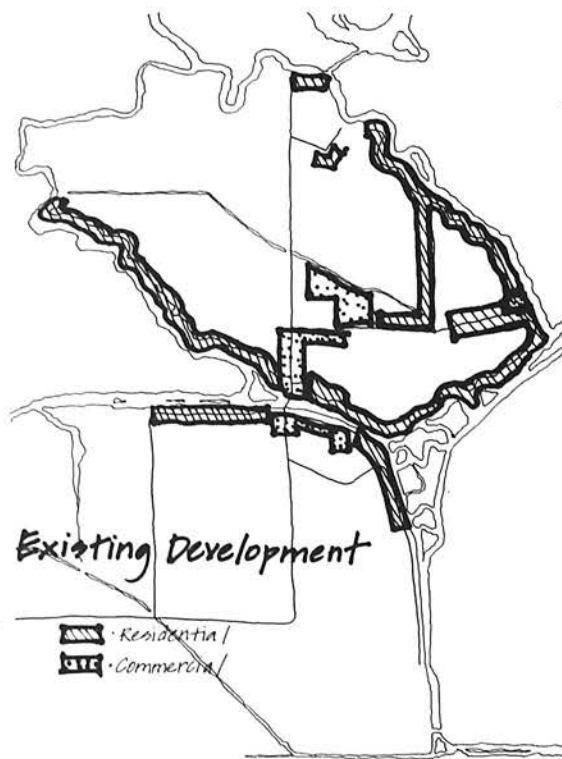


mercial uses such as a motel, restaurant, convenience store, chandlery may be appropriate, but are not envisioned to compete with those commercial uses at the Island Center area or attract purchasers from other parts of the Island. Finally, a public water access point is included as part of the general island recreational plan. To the degree that there will be public camp grounds on the Island this area may also be more appropriate than other sites in established residential areas.

The remaining property in this sector of the Island, but not physically a part of the proposed harbor area, will be a lower density, perhaps 4 dwelling units per acre, residential area surrounded by land reserved for a golf and tennis center.

The remainder of the residential development is planned as single family neighborhoods, some new and others existing, most surrounded by open space, newly established marsh, or lake, but all separated from other areas so that the apparent density will be minimized.

As part of the planning process, existing land uses were incorporated into the concept of the new plan. This does not mean that non-conforming uses should be given standing as a precedent, nor does it justify future land use variances from the Specific Plan. In areas of future development, conceptual plans were established without regard to property lines or owners. While there was not time to resolve those issues of ownership and community

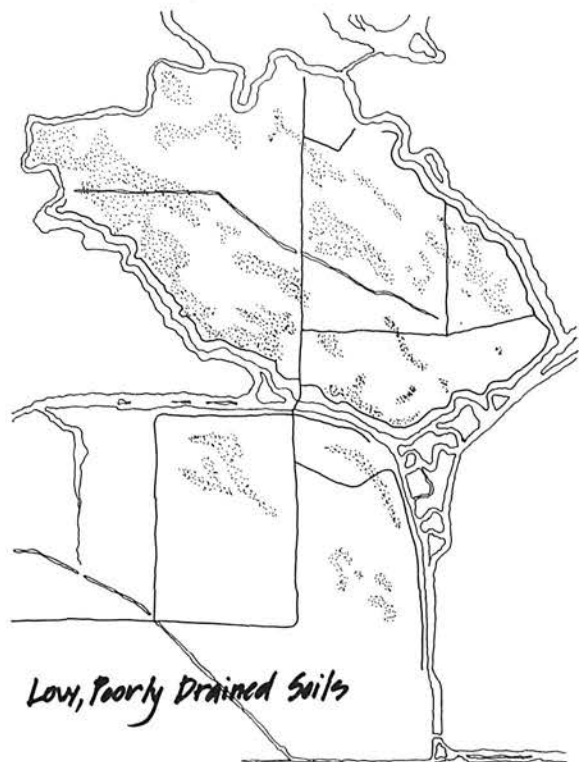


planning, the concept may, in fact, be stronger because of this.

The Conceptual Plan grew out of the premise that Bethel Island could retain its special flavor while accomodating developments done in the context of sensitive design. The R/UDAT team began with the "naturalization" of the Island's center by identifying the low, poorly drained areas, proposing their excavation in preparation for establishing a new inland, marsh habitat for wildlife, drainage and buffers between development areas. Such excavated fill would be placed in strategically located mounds which would again screen development areas, and provide the retarding levees of the back-up system. These mounds could be treed to give further separation between areas and some visual focus in the landscape and relief from wind and/or sun.

We considered the existing roads, the drainage ditch, and major uses to define still further the fabric of the new natural system. What is presented is a conceptual idea that such a multi-purpose open space network will create value and demand in Island real estate, maintain the openness of the Island, offer space for jogging, walking, hiking, and horseback riding, provide an essential drainage link to every part of the Island and extend the evacuation period during times of any flooding emergencies.

Based on the knowledge that expanded recreation and water-related activities would benefit Island residents and attract outside investment,

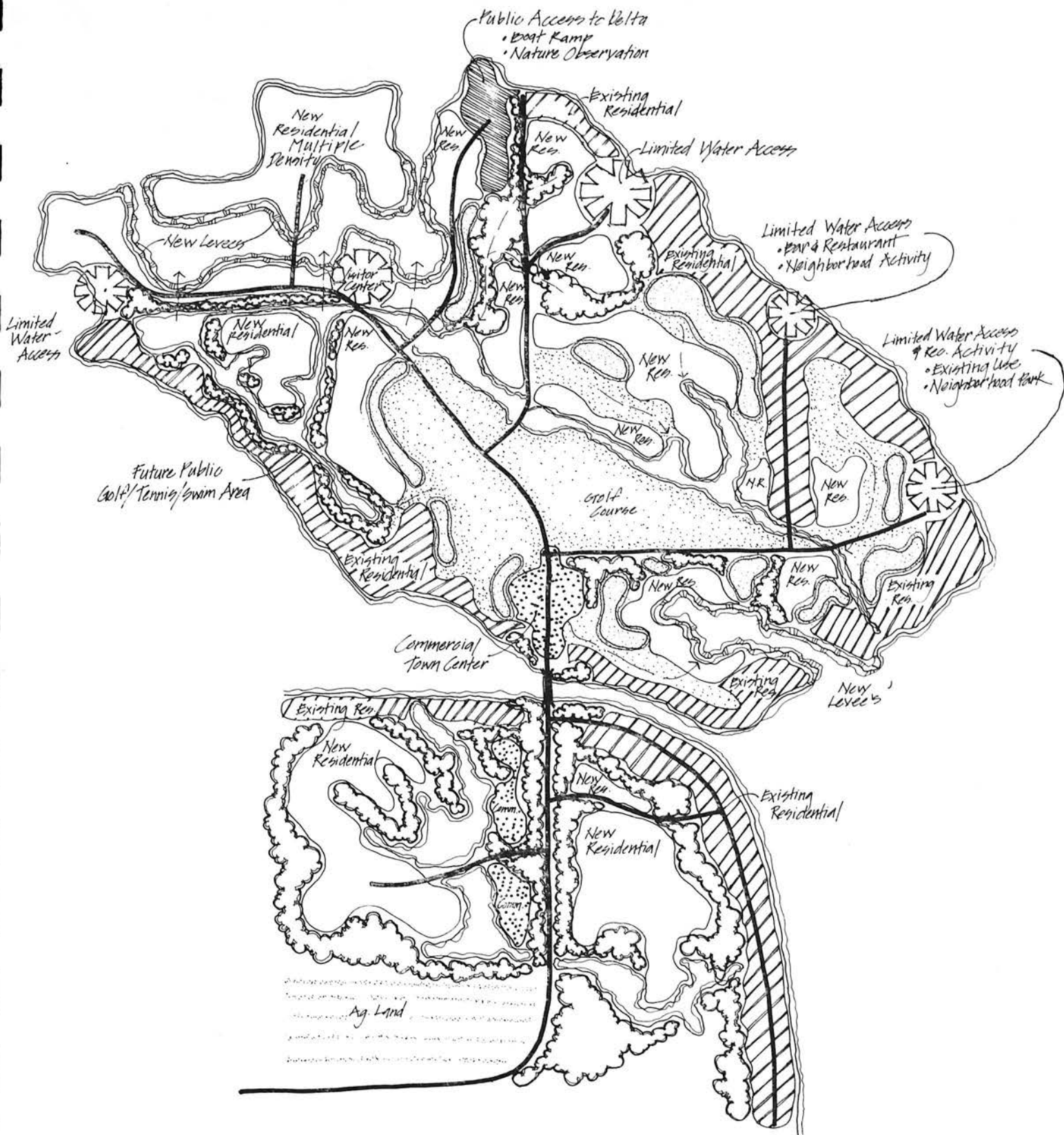


the plan incorporates two inland harbors and anticipated public access to the waterways in one of them, proposes reservation of land for a new golf and tennis area, and expand the lake system still further, this time for aesthetic reasons.

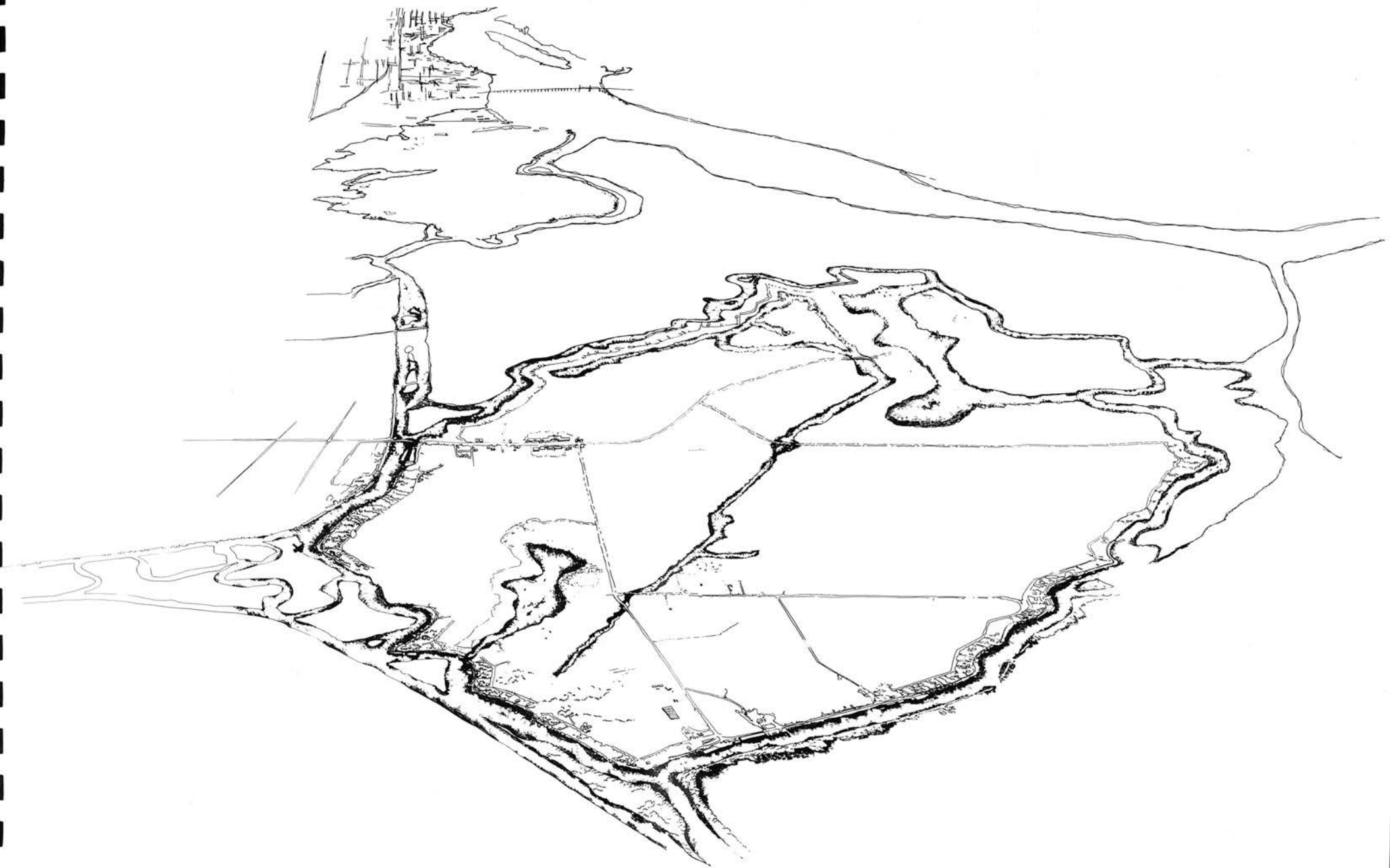
Critical to the success of this plan is the proposed improved road system, which is designed to take non-residents directly to and from the public areas of the Island, without encroaching on the quiet neighborhoods of Stone, Willow and Taylor Roads. All major roads are designed with substantial setbacks, minimum curb cuts, and planted buffer trees along them to protect the rural quality of the Island.

Proposed development areas are estimated to total only 35 percent of the total acreage. Open space, including lakes, parks, created marsh, harbors, golf course and roads represents 65 percent, or over 2200 acres.





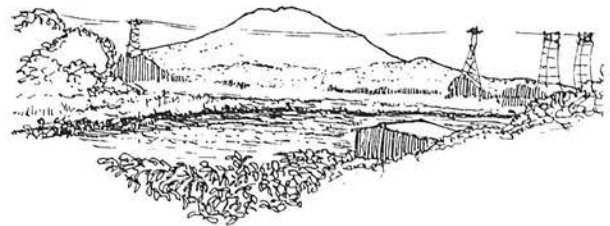
Bethel Island Area Conceptual Plan

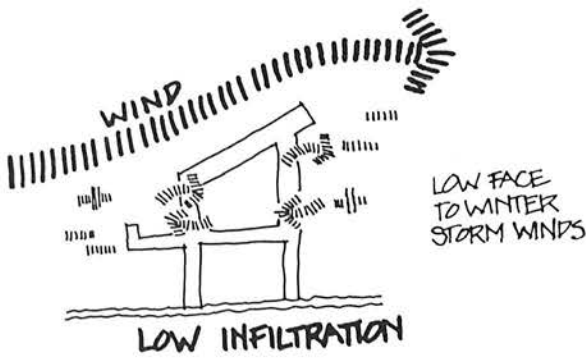
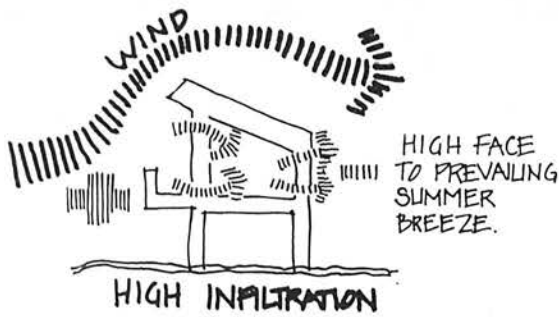


DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Conceptual Plan, which may evolve later into the Specific Plan, needs development standards to fulfill its objectives. Although these standards can only be developed and refined after more specific and detailed plans have been completed, the following categories are suggested because of their extreme importance. The guidelines are essential for Bethel Island's attempt to distinguish itself from poor, suburban development.

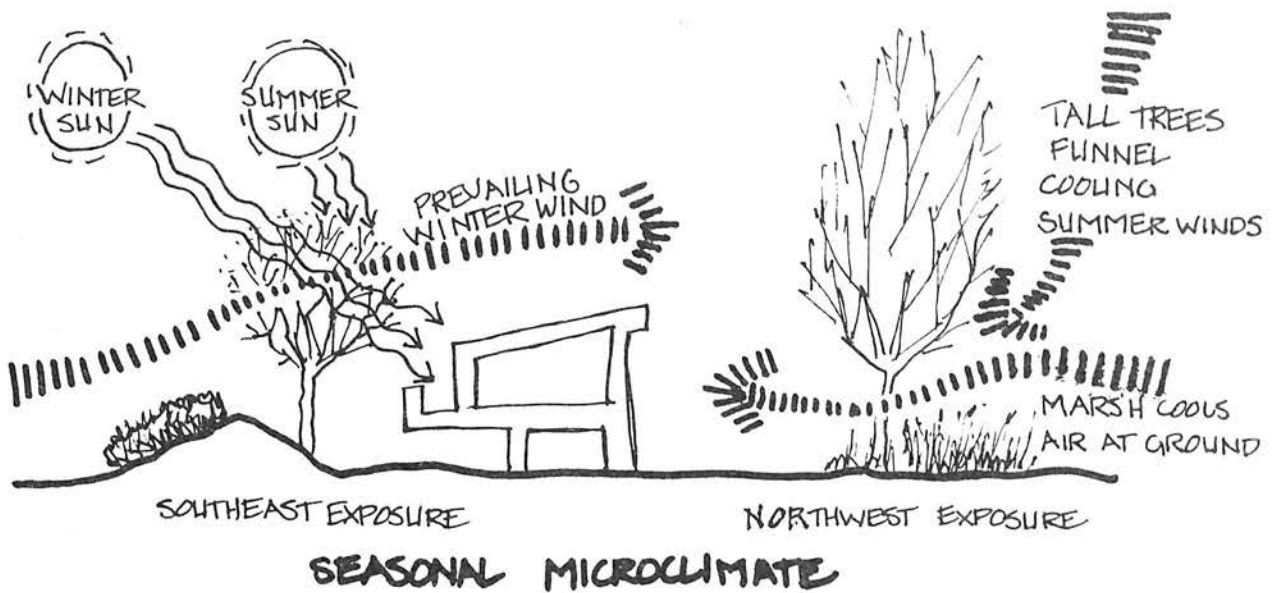
- o Setbacks from roads other than neighborhood cul-de-sac -- 150feet
- o Development Buffer adjacent to area boundaries -- 150 feet
- o Building height two stories above flood requirement
- o Curb cut - Main arterial -- 400 feet minimum
- Secondary - 300 feet except as current ownership prevents it.
- o View Corridors Established and protected over time by excluding buildings and trees from designated areas
- o Tree planting and landscape plans Encouraged
- o Signs Along roadways should be restricted by size, color, and type
- o Lighting Sources obscured horizontally
- o Landforms - Gentle mounding to create visual events; typically locate toward southeast of residential units to





deflect strong and gusty winter storm winds; plant with bushes and deciduous trees, (see illustration). Extend drainage slough system as "wetlands" behind clustered housing; plant tall, open base trees at northwest to accentuate near-ground wind movement evaporative summertime cooling, (see illustration).

- o Vegetation - Establish native grasses and related plant families in new wetland areas; wet-root trees for shading and wind deflection; dense shrubs and vines at mounds.
- o Solar access - Adjust building location and select plant materials to enhance winter collection of solar heat and minimize summer heat gain.
- o Lot orientation - Maximize lot design to allow unencumbered solar access to each building's southerly wall(s).
- o Thermal capacity - Increase thermal "weight" of buildings as much as possible to minimize interior temperature swing and inside/outside "tracking."



VII. MANAGEMENT



The preceding sections of this report have presented a policy direction through which Bethel Island can permit development, while maintaining its unique character as a water-oriented, open space community, within the urban/suburban setting of the San Francisco Bay Area. A plan, however, is only the beginning of the process of controlling and channeling development for the benefit of the community; no plan carries itself out, or anticipates the thousands of actions and decisions that must be made over the decades between today and the end of development on Bethel Island. No plan is meaningful without a strategy for its implementation, and no strategy is meaningful without a structure within which it can be carried out.

THE NEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The first question that must be asked is, specifically, what must be implemented? The short answer is, of course, the Specific Plan. That, however, is not a simple issue. To begin, the R/UDAT team sensed a strong, nearly unanimous, sentiment on the part of residents of Bethel Island for greater control, and for greater involvement in decisions affecting their destiny. There was a widespread sentiment that decisions directly and intimately affecting Bethel Island were being

made by county agencies without input, and with little interest in, the sentiments and concerns of Island residents.

Thus, a major concern is to establish a means by which decisions regarding the specific plan: approval of developments consistent with the specific plan, review and approval of future amendments to the specific plan, and the like could take place in a fashion which ensured the Island that its views would be given weight, and would be a significant factor in the final decision. The planning approach which we have recommended, however, will require more than that to be successful. It will require a mechanism for carrying out public improvements, and will require a mechanism for ensuring equity between landowners whose land is unevenly affected by the densities and open space objectives of the plan.

Public Improvements: A central element in the plan is the creation of a variety of public amenities within Bethel Island, both for specific purposes such as recreation, and for the more general objective of preserving the open environment of the Island, such as tree planting or landscaping. If the proposed Island Center, along Bethel Island Road just over the bridge, is to become a reality, it will need more than additional business - a drugstore, a bank - it will need public improvements. The specific nature of those improvements must wait until more detailed planning can take place, but a few can be illustrated: the creation of public spaces, attractively

landscaped, for recreation, for passive sitting and socializing, and for entertainment; the enhancement of the visual character of the area through landscaping and through removal of blighting uses; the improvement of vehicular and pedestrian circulation through possible creation of off-street parking, reduction of curb cuts, and the like. Machinery will be necessary to ensure that funds are raised, and properly spent for these purposes.

Not all of the public improvements, and public responsibilities during the period of development have to do with amenities and values. Some deal with the fundamental concerns of safety and preservation of the environment; ensuring, particularly during times when construction affecting the levees is taking place, that nothing can happen potentially affecting the safety of the Island and its residents, and ensuring throughout the development period that the water quality on which the Island depends is protected, both in terms of short-term measures during construction, and the long-term soundness and stability of changes in the water system in and around the Island. While the costs associated with these measures can reasonably be levied against the developers, a responsible and professionally sophisticated entity must be in place to assume these responsibilities.

Equity in the distribution of costs and benefits: A major element in the R/UDAT team's planning proposal is



the use of the Specific Plan to designate broad areas of open space, and of natural environmental and habitat protection, within Bethel Island. The team believes, furthermore, that unless it is possible to preserve open space on such a large-scale and planned basis, the Specific Plan may be unable to achieve a central goal: the protection of the open, water-oriented, character of the Island. That goal, in turn, is a central goal shared by all of those with whom we spoke: local residents, county and state officials, and many others.

Any rational plan for protecting open space, however, will inevitably cross property lines, and distribute open space and areas designated for development unevenly between different landowners. One landowner may discover that all or most of his land has been reserved for open space, while another may be delighted to find that all or most of his land has been designated for moderate or high density development. Thus, the plan inevitably benefits some owners, and harms others, potentially to a severe extent.

The R/UDAT team believes that machinery must be established to enable all landowners to obtain at least some minimum return from their property; furthermore, we believe that tools are available to achieve that objective without compromising the fundamental planning goals embodied in the policy plan presented in this report. A number of tools which are available to achieve this objective are discussed in a





later part of this section; the main point is that an approach be adopted, and be implemented.

In the following sections we discuss, first, the option of incorporating Bethel Island as an independent city, as the principal approach to implementing the planning objectives of the community; and second, the options available to the Island within the existing framework of county government. The final part of this section makes specific recommendations, through which it is hoped that Bethel Island will develop an effective strategy to achieve its goals.

One final point. One essential ingredient in any implementation strategy, whatever it features, is leadership and commitment. A planning implementation strategy is not something that can speak with a thousand voices, or which can be the product of a long series of unrelated "ad hoc" decisions. While Bethel Island has many organizations dealing with specific concerns and problems, there is no single body at present clearly capable of carrying out all of the activities that must take place. Creation of such a body, and embodiment in it of the long-term commitment of the community, must be in place if the strategy is to be effective. If it is not, sooner or later it will falter, no matter how good a start is made or how well-designed the Specific Plan. The people of Bethel Island should not allow that to happen.

THE INCORPORATION ALTERNATIVE

A major question asked of the R/UDAT team was whether Bethel Island should incorporate as in independent city, and become the City of Bethel Island. This is an option that is legally feasible under California state law, and which has been exercised by many unincorporated areas throughout the state. By incorporating, a community becomes responsible for a substantial part of those services which are provided, up to that point, by county government. These include public safety, maintenance of streets and roads, and perhaps most importantly, at least in this case, the making of planning and land use decisions. While a community that incorporates takes on substantial responsibilities, it also receives potentially substantial revenues with which to carry out those responsibilities; indeed, a major issue in most, if not all, discussions of whether to incorporate is whether the revenues that will flow to the new municipality will be comparable to, and perhaps even in excess of, the cost of providing services and facilities that must now be provided.

Financial advantage, however, is rarely if ever the reason for incorporating, nor, among its advocates on Bethel Island, does it appear to be the reason here. The reason, here as generally elsewhere, is to obtain control over one or more governmental functions. In some cases, it may



be police services or road maintenance. In many cases, however, it is the control over future development and land use which is important to the community. There is little doubt that that is the issue in Bethel Island which has prompted thoughts of incorporation.

Before discussing the pros and cons of incorporation, however, it should be pointed out that, in our judgment, the proposal to incorporate arises from a concern that may potentially be resolved in other ways. If we can paraphrase the concern, it appears to be one that decisions over the future of the Island, and particularly those governing which projects are to be approved, and which denied, are being made by a body that is remote both geographically and in terms of values and attitudes. We refer, of course, to Contra Costa County, its Department of Community Development, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. Without agreeing or disagreeing with this characterization of the County, we believe that it represents a widely held sentiment, perhaps even a near-consensus, of the residents of Bethel Island. While the thrust for incorporation may arise from this concern, there may be alternatives, short of incorporation, through which the problems giving rise to this concern can be resolved. These alternatives will also be discussed below.

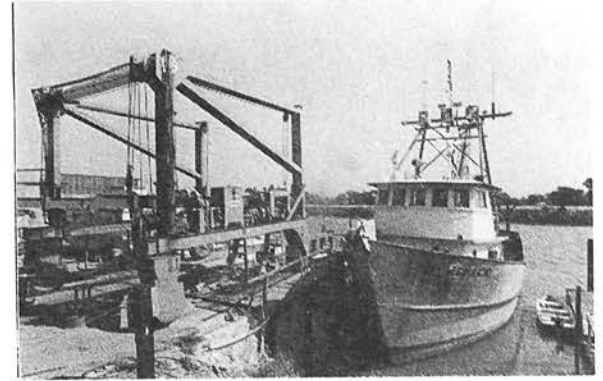
One central concern is that of the financial implications of incorporation. Here we will try to provide, in very rough and inevitably

oversimplified terms, an assessment of the financial implications of incorporation for Bethel Island. While there are many nuances and details which affect the overall picture, we do not believe that any of those details change the simplified assessment presented here to such an extent that it is unreliable /1. What may well be unreliable, however, in the absence of a detailed and systematic study, are the underlying assumptions on which the estimates of costs and revenues are based. Thus, this assessment should only be seen as an overview, and not as a substitute for a formal fiscal assessment of the incorporation alternative.

A community that incorporates receives municipal revenues through four separate sources:

- Sales Tax: Cities receive 1 percent of all general sales tax revenues collected within municipal boundaries. In the case of Bethel Island, this is the most substantial revenue area, since the boat sales taking place on the Island, coupled with sales to visitors (particularly by restaurants) yield substantially more revenues

1/These details include a variety of transitional procedures, which tend to be advantageous to the municipality; certain tax allocations of a minor nature which cannot be calculated at all without detailed information, the precise extent of fees and service charges that may be charged, etc., etc.



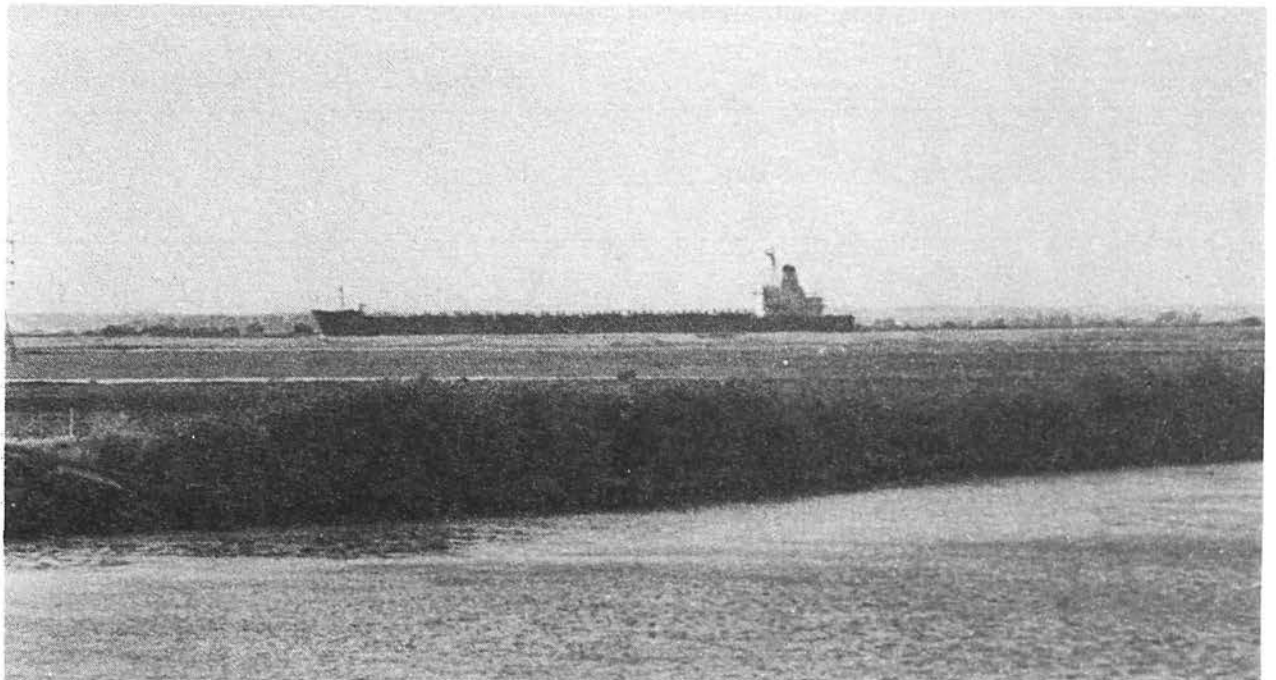
than would ordinarily flow from sales to a community of some 2,500 people.

- Property Tax: By contrast, cities generally, and Bethel Island in particular, can expect to receive substantially less in property tax revenues than may be expected. Although the total tax levy is 1 percent of market value of the property, the city's share of that is substantially less. Once incorporated, the county continues to collect the property taxes; those funds are distributed to the school district, and the various special districts, with the remainder divided between the county and the new city on the basis of the division of costs between those now provided by the city (such as police protection, or planning) and those still provided by the county (such as health or social services). The result of this multitudinous distribution is that the city can expect to receive no more than 4 to 5 percent of the property taxes collected within its boundaries.

- State revenues: In addition to a variety of state aid programs, some of which are allocated on the basis of a formula and some at the discretion of state agencies, the state redistributes tax revenues, including gas and cigarette taxes, on the basis of a formula keyed to the population in the community.

-fees and service charges:
these include application fees, licenses and permits, and fines, such as those levied for traffic violations.

We have sought to estimate the revenues from each source. It should be stressed that the hypothetical "City of Bethel Island" is not limited to the Island itself, but includes the areas of Dutch Slough and Sandmound Slough included in the R/UDAT study area, and considered part of the Bethel Island area. The revenues are given on the table below; based on our admittedly rough estimates, we believe that incorporation would result in a revenue flow between \$400,000 and \$470,000 to the new city.



 ESTIMATE OF PROJECTED REVENUE FLOWS TO CITY OF BETHEL ISLAND

1. SALES TAX REVENUES

	TOTAL REVENUES	
	LOW	HIGH
Boat sales	\$10,000,000	\$12,000,000
Accessories	1,500,000	1,800,000
Restaurants & bars	4,000,000	5,000,000
Resident sales	2,500,000	3,000,000
 TOTAL SALES	 \$18,000,000	 \$21,800,000
 REVENUES at 1%	 180,000	 218,000

2. STATE REVENUES (including gas tax, cigarette tax, etc. estimated at \$50 per capita)

2,500 x 50	125,000	125,000
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3. PROPERTY TAX REVENUES (between 3.75% and 6% of total property tax levy; levy is 1% of assessed valuation)

estimated 85-86 total valuation (including personal property) of \$143,275,080

x .000375	53,700	
x .0006		86,000

SUBTOTAL ABOVE REVENUES	\$358,700	\$429,000
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4. FEES AND SERVICE CHARGES at 10% of other revenues

	35,900	42,900
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TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	\$394,600	\$471,900
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We have also estimated the cost of municipal government, assuming, at least initially, that the new city did not seek to assume any of the functions of the existing fire district, municipal improvement district (BIMID), or sanitation district (S.D. 15). A conservative estimate of providing road maintenance service of reasonable quality, a basic police service providing one officer on duty at all

times, and general municipal overhead is given in the table below. We estimate that these costs, exclusive of the cost of carrying out the planning activities needed by the new city, would be in the area of \$400,000 per year.

 ESTIMATE OF PROJECTED OPERATING COSTS FOR CITY OF BETHEL ISLAND

Roads (estimated 20 miles at \$10,000/mile)	\$ 200,000
Police services (chief and three officers, one car, misc. overhead and fringe benefits)	150,000
General municipal overhead (clerical, services to boards and council, maintenance, etc.)	<u>50,000</u>
SUBTOTAL WITHOUT PLANNING ACTIVITIES	\$ 400,000

What these tables suggest is that the proposed new city would be potentially financially viable, but that such viability would be constrained, and would in all probability be limited to a city providing only the most basic services. The revenues may well not stretch to cover all of the services or activities which were expected to be provided as a result of incorporation. This is particularly true in the area of planning. The new city will have to prepare a General Plan, as required by statute, within a short time after incorporation. This would be equivalent to what is now contemplated in terms of the

Specific Plan for Bethel Island, under its present governmental framework. Staff or consultants, over and above those needed to prepare the plans, would be needed to provide careful review of developer submissions, carry out studies, and prepare plans for the conduct of the public improvements called for by the Specific Plan.

While in the long run, many of these costs can be covered by fees from development, the greater part of the work must be carried out before those fees have been realized. Thus, some way must be found to raise the necessary funds without reliance on developers' contributions. One potentially important mitigating factor is the transitional period mentioned earlier; under these provisions, for a period of up to one year, the new city may receive revenues while the county continues to provide the same service as before. This may provide a part of a solution, which should be carefully investigated if further consideration is to be given to the idea of incorporation.

There are issues other than financial that also affect whether incorporation should be seriously considered. Communities as small as Bethel Island have hardly ever incorporated in California. The small size of the community may make it difficult to provide services of high quality in a cost-effective manner. The cyclical nature of an important element of the municipal revenue base is another concern; roughly 30 percent of the municipal revenues pro-



jected are associated with the sales of boats and marine accessories, a luxury trade highly sensitive to fluctuations in economic conditions. Finally, there is a possibility that it will be difficult to find committed individuals to serve responsibly in all of the positions required by an incorporated city, although given the strong civic tradition on Bethel Island, we believe that this last problem is less likely to arise than in many other communities of the same size.

A final concern must be framed as a question rather than a conclusion. What is the relationship of Bethel Island to its surroundings, to the east county if not to the entirety of Contra Costa County, or to the county as a whole? While there is always an attraction to "going it alone," particularly for people with the pioneering orientation of many Bethel Island residents, it may loosen present or potential ties with other communities with which the community should have an ongoing relationship. Without attempting to answer this question, it is nonetheless one that should be carefully pondered by residents of the community before pursuing incorporation further.

ALTERNATIVES TO INCORPORATION

The alternatives available to Bethel Island are far wider than simply a choice between incorporation, or passive retention of the status quo. Indeed, California law is remarkable in the number of intermediate options that it offers; some may be irrelevant to the concerns of the Island, but others may be legitimate alternatives worth serious consideration.

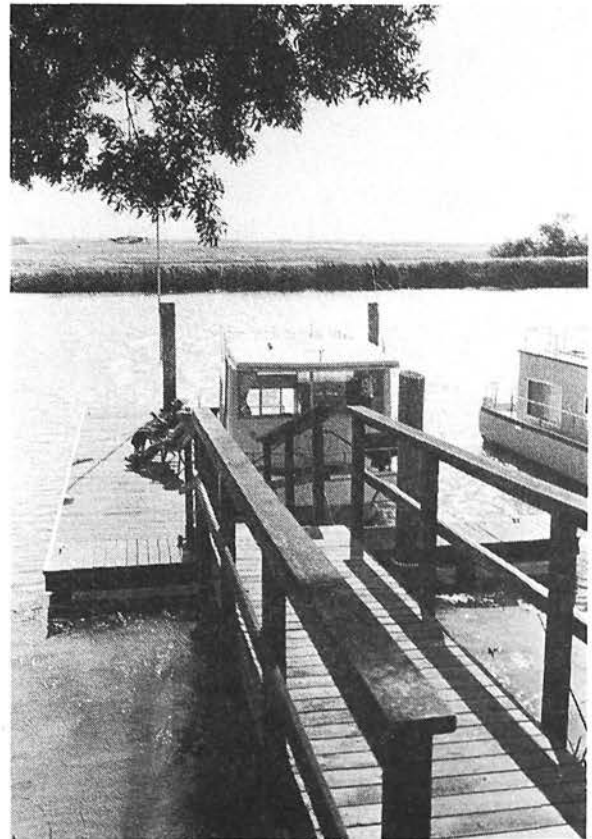
In the area of planning, two options are available. Planning Advisory Committees can be created by the Board of Supervisors, which make recommendations to that body, or to the County Planning Commission. The Bethel Island Specific Plan Advisory Committee (BISPAC) is such a body, although with a more narrowly defined purpose; the East Diablo Planning Advisory Committee (EDPAC) is a more broadly defined advisory body, for the eastern part of Contra Costa County. More substantial powers are available through the creation of Area Planning Commissions (APCs); an APC, created by the Board of Supervisors, is the Planning Commission for a designated portion of the county, with all of the powers of the county planning commission for that area. It is staffed by members of the county planning department.

An APC is a very desirable approach to planning, particularly where a county is highly diverse, and rationally-determined sub-districts within the county exist. It is important, however, that the



area under the jurisdiction of the APC be carefully delineated so that it includes, to the extent reasonably feasible, areas which have strong mutual inter-relationships. It is our understanding that there is an ongoing effort to designate EDPAC, which would be reconstituted to conform to the relevant statutory provisions, as an Area Planning Commission for the eastern part of Contra Costa County.

In the area of service delivery, and in particular the financing of public facilities and services, the creation of community service districts, or a more recently enacted approach, the Mello-Roos Community Facilities District, both provide a small area with the means of undertaking a wide variety of public improvements, and financing them through a variety of means, including bond issues and assessments. Such a district, for example, could be a workable means of providing public improvements, such as improvements to the Bethel Island "downtown," as well as park and recreation facilities. We should acknowledge as well that the statute establishing the Municipal Improvement District (BIMID) already in existence permits that body to undertake a number of activities over and above those it currently carries out. That option should also be considered, while recognizing that there may be both practical and legal issues raised by seeking significantly to expand the functions of an agency which has acted for many years in a narrower, and specifically defined fashion.



A third area in which alternatives exist is that of coordination of municipal activities, and the relationship of the municipality to the county. We have noted the existence of many organizations, with various responsibilities, within Bethel Island, and the absence of a central organization with a clearly defined responsibility for coordinating local activities, and acting as spokesperson for the community in other forums. A vehicle for carrying out such responsibilities is the Municipal Advisory Council (MAC), a body established by the county board of supervisors, which holds public meetings, reviews proposed county actions and proposals by developers, and makes recommendations to the board of supervisors, particularly to the supervisor representing that district. A particularly attractive statutory feature of MACs is that they can be either appointed or elected bodies; elected by the residents of the district which they represent. As an elected body, a MAC can more effectively speak for the community, and can become a more legitimate level of community leadership.

The above alternatives - PACs, APCs, CFDs, and MACs - all provide legitimate approaches short of incorporation to the issues which must be addressed by Bethel Island in framing and implementing its planning strategy and its efforts to control development. It appears likely that some combination of these approaches might indeed be capable of addressing the underlying concerns of the commun-

ity with regard to the fundamental issue; namely, whether the community can exercise, to some reasonable degree, control over the nature and extent of the development that will take place within its boundaries. Without, yet, recommending whether these are indeed preferable to incorporation, we would suggest that they are worthy of careful consideration.

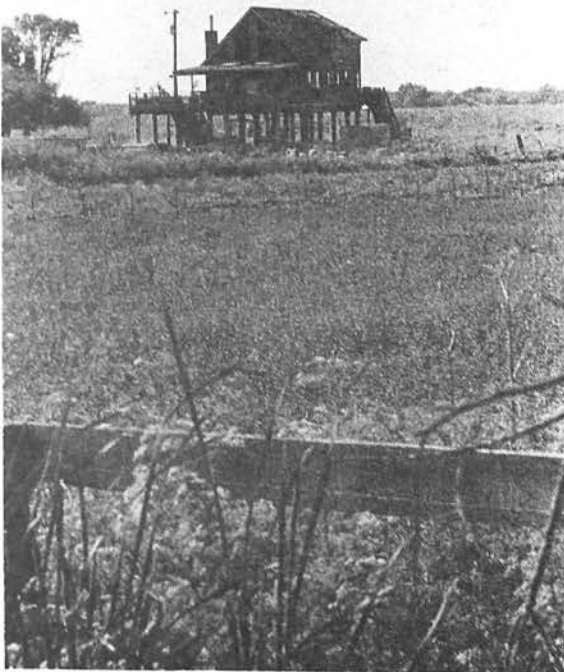
THE EQUITY QUESTION

The one area which we consider important to address, as a basic policy concern, and which is not readily addressed by any of the alternatives discussed immediately above, is the question of the equitable distribution of costs and benefits to landowners, a problem summarized earlier in this section. The problem, simply stated, lies in establishing the proper machinery for distributing some part of the benefits received by those landowners or developers disproportionately benefiting from the effects of the Specific Plan, to those landowners disproportionately harmed by those effects. Overall, it is clear that the benefits outweigh harms, by a considerable margin. At present, the overwhelming majority of the unbuilt land on the Island is zoned for one dwelling unit for every ten acres. The Johanssen property, even taking into account the higher density development now permitted along the levee frontage, has a current zoning capacity of roughly 250 units. Some owners, nonetheless, will be negatively affected by the changes in use permitted.

There are two alternative techniques available with which to address this question. One, known as the transfer of development rights (TDR) approach, provides that those landowners on whose land development will not be permitted receive transferable development rights; at the same time, the provisions of the program require that those landowners for whom the Specific Plan provides a higher density may not fully exercise their right to develop at that higher density until or unless they have bought a specified number of development rights from the first group of landowners. The actual number of development rights that must be bought, and the relationship between the development rights bought and the increase in density, is determined by a precise measurement of the respective acreages and numbers of units involved.

The advantage of TDR is that it minimizes the involvement of government in the process, since, after the program is initially calibrated and set up, it is largely self-administering, as the transactions take place between landowners, and the sole role of government is to certify that the transaction has indeed taken place, and to record the open space easement that is placed on the landowner's property after he has sold his development rights to the other. This advantage is also its weakness, since it becomes impossible to set priorities, or target the use of funds and the protection of higher priority open spaces.

An alternative, which permits the community to es-



establish priorities and control the direction of the program, is a land banking approach. Under this approach, instead of developers buying development rights directly from landowners, the developer is assessed a fee, determined on the basis of his increase in density from the present zoning, which goes into a land banking fund. The land banking fund is used by the fund administering agency to purchase development rights, or even to make land purchases outright, of lands projected for open space under the Specific Plan. A distinction might be made between land which has had its density drastically reduced, but not eliminated, where development rights might be purchased; and land which was in its entirety designated for open space, particularly environmentally sensitive land, where it might be appropriate to purchase the land outright from the owner.

Based on a preliminary reading of California law, we do not believe that the basic legal authority to carry out such a program, whether TDR or land banking, resides in any local entity other than a general purpose government; i.e., a county or city governing body. The program would have to be enacted, under present circumstances, by the County Board of Supervisors; if enacted after incorporation, should that take place, by the city council. It is possible, furthermore, that it could be enacted as an integral element of the Specific Plan, and that its implementation would, as a result, become fully bound up with the implementation of the Specific



Plan. The purchase of development rights through a TDR approach, or the payment of the assessment into the land bank, could then become a part of the conditions of approval or development agreement on each parcel approved for development. If the land banking approach were adopted, however, it would be essential that some locally-oriented body be in place with substantial input or control over the use of the funds; indeed, the principal reason for choosing the land bank approach over TDR, should it be chosen, would be to permit the exercise of control in the public interest over the acquisition of development rights and land parcels, a control which logic dictates should best be exercised at a very local level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above discussion has presented a host of alternatives, from which it is necessary to choose one or more, in order to assemble a sound, and potentially effective, strategy for guiding the future development of Bethel Island. Although much detailed and specific information is still unknown, and must remain speculative, the R/UDAT team feels that the goals of the plan itself, and the nature of the available alternatives, strongly suggest a direction in which Bethel Island can move toward such a strategy. In choosing from these alternatives, and making our recommendations, we have been guided by a somewhat conservative approach. Each alternative carries with it risks as

well as opportunities; it is not sound policy to choose on the basis solely of maximizing opportunities. The choice must be, rather, grounded in an effort to balance the risks and the opportunities, knowing that adoption of a conservative strategy today need not foreclose a more adventuresome one a few years from now. Many of the more dramatic options, however, if chosen may well cut off other alternatives. Bearing this in mind, the recommendations of the R/UDAT team are as follows:

1. WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THAT BETHEL ISLAND PURSUE INCORPORATION AS IN INDEPENDENT CITY AT THIS TIME

We consider the incorporation alternative to be a high risk strategy for the community, and one whose benefits, although considerable, are not so great as to justify the risks, which are considerably greater than those associated with other alternatives. The financial analysis has indicated that there is a substantial possibility that a City of Bethel Island could find itself in financial difficulty; at a minimum, could find that its resources were not adequate to funding the full range of activities for which it was incorporated. By incorporating, furthermore, the new city would effectively cut itself off from the resources and options that might still be available through a relationship with the county.



2. WE RECOMMEND CREATION OF A BETHEL ISLAND MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, ELECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF THE BETHEL ISLAND AREA

We believe that the creation of a Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) is the most effective available way of creating a body that will begin to coordinate the efforts and energies within the Bethel Island community with the County Board of Supervisors, as well as the administrative staff of the county. The MAC must be the agency that carries out the strategy designed to establish a better relationship with the county, and to make the county agencies focus more directly and effectively on the Bethel Island Area, its concerns, and its needs.

The second part of this recommendation, about which the R/UDAT team feels strongly, is that the MAC be elected, and not appointed. The process of electing this body, in our judgment, would represent a significant element in establishing this body, both within the community and vis a vis the county, as a legitimate body; legitimate both in the sense of its ability to bring together the many contending local factions, and in the same sense of its ability to represent the community at the county level. Bethel Island is not a community with no organizational infrastructure, in which an appointed advisory committee would represent a significant departure; on the contrary, Bethel Island citizens participate on a host of public bodies, all but one of which (BIMID) are



appointed bodies. It is unlikely that yet another such body could gain the legitimacy in the community that is needed if it is to be able to carry out the role that is most important; that is, bringing the community together so that it can effectively speak as one on issues of importance in its dealings with the outside world.

The establishment of an elected MAC, however, is inadequate without the implementation of the third recommendation, which we understand is already under consideration, the creation of the East Diablo APC.

3. WE RECOMMEND THE CONVERSION OF THE EAST DIABLO PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO AN AREA PLANNING COMMISSION, WITH FORMAL APPROVAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST COUNTY AREA

The East County represents a distinct physical and social entity, with distinct goals and concerns. It is an appropriate subarea within Contra Costa County to be placed under the jurisdiction of a separate planning body, made up of representatives of the area, in which each small part of the area - including Bethel Island - will have representation. From the standpoint of the Bethel Island community, we believe that such a body will be far more responsive to legitimate concerns of the community, by virtue of their proximity and intimate familiarity with the area, than is necessarily the case with the current county planning commission.



Furthermore, since the APC will be staffed by the County Department of Community Development, there is no serious risk that their activities and decisions will fail to take into account legitimate countywide issues. The combination of a small area board, staffed by a professional team with a countywide perspective, appears to us to be the best of both worlds in terms of the conduct of planning decision-making.

Finally, in this regard, BISPAC, or a successor agency, should remain in place as a more broadly defined Planning Advisory Council, which will, under this proposal, have its direct relationship with the new East Diablo APC rather than with the county planning commission in Martinez. Given the orientation of the East Diablo APC, we feel that it is unlikely that input from a Bethel Island PAC will be disregarded. The recommendations of that PAC may not always be followed, nor should they be. There is little doubt, however, that they will be given serious consideration.

4. A LAND BANKING PROGRAM SHOULD BE INCORPORATED IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN, WITH AUTHORITY DELEGATED TO THE EAST DIABLO APC, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE BETHEL ISLAND PAC, TO USE LAND BANKING ASSESSMENTS FOR PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS AND LAND

We believe that the land banking approach, with its opportunity for the public to control the process by which



land is dedicated for open space purposes, through acquisition of the land or the development rights on it, is preferable to the TDR approach. We feel, furthermore, that as a formally-constituted planning body which combines local orientation with professional staff services, the East Diablo APC is an appropriate body in which the authority to make decisions regarding land and development rights acquisition should be lodged. The procedures governing this program, however, should specify that that body should not take any action or spend any of the money raised through assessments for the program except after referring the proposed action to, and receiving a recommendation from, the Bethel Island PAC. As before, they are not obligated to follow the recommendation; we expect, however, that it will be given careful consideration.

These last three recommendations, in our judgment, represent an effective way in which to balance local, area-wide, and county concerns in the implementation of the planning process for Bethel Island. If fully implemented, and carried out in constructive fashion by both the people of the Island community, and the elected, appointed, and staff representatives of the county, we believe that they can overcome much of the tension and conflict that has characterized too much of the relationship between Bethel Island and the county during recent years. We urge all of the interested parties to undertake these proposals in this spirit.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1) ORGANIZATIONS

The San Francisco Foundation
Bethel Island Area Association
Bethel Island Specific Plan Advisory
Committee
Bethel Island Chamber of Commerce
East Bay Chapter American Institute
of Architects - Sandra Stickney

2) PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Supervisor District 5- Tom Torlakson
Planning Commissioner District 5 -
Leslie K. Davis

3) AREAWIDE ORGANIZATIONS

East Diablo Planning Advisory
Committee

People for Open Space - Greenbelt
Task Force

4) MEDIA

Antioch Daily Ledger
Bethel Island Beacon
Bethel Island News

5) INDIVIDUALS

Orinda - Marianne Aude
David Boone, A.I.A.
Constance Brady A.I.A., Architect
Harvey Andres
Gary Carter
Christine Thresh
Rube Warren
Bruce Paton
Fred & Evelyn Cox
Ivor & Olive Powell
Dan & Shirley Miller
Karen Sanders
Jackie Fleming
Barbara Pereria
Jerry & Virginia Donahue
Michael Cox
Russ Harris

Kirby & Renee Atterberry
Lloyd Pereria
Rachel Baldocchi

6) PUBLIC AGENCIES

Contra Costa County Community
Development
Contra Costa County Sheriff -
Delta Station
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
U. S. Fish & Wildlife
Bethel Island Municipal
Improvement District
Sanitation District #15
California State Fish & Game
Bethel Island Fire Department
Sonoma State University - Dept.
of Anthropology

7) FIRMS

Burns Engineering - Barbara Burns
MidCounty Air - David Heath
Bethel PLaza - Jasper and Anna Sipes
Swensons Offset
Service - Richard Swenson
Diablo Business
Machines - Michael
Judy's Hardware
Phillipey's Answering Service
Island Holidays Houseboats
Wilsey and Ham
EDAW

8) MAJOR PROPERTY OWNERS

L. E. Weisenberg
Filipe Johansson
Ralph Wallace
George Price
George Nakashima
Brono Scapesi
Enrico Cinquini
Joe Estrada
Ray Burk
Al & Stella Anthony
Carl Krigbaum

The team would like to acknowledge the special efforts of the students from the University of Washington, whose long work hours, good cheer, photography and graphic assistance were substantial contributions to the R/UDAT effort.

ANN HEASLY

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LINGUICA



STRANGE
CREATURES
STACK UP
IN THE
SWAMP

the members of the Bethel Island R/UDAT
team, with respect and affection, dedicate
this report to

The Bethel Island Linguica

A noble species, ill-treated, but, in the
end, triumphant.

Bethel Island
June 24, 1985