

# Reflections on Real Estate

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## Transportation Planning Reaches East Contra Costa County

By Jim Gwerder

The Byron Municipal Advisory Council and 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Donna Gerber sponsored an input-gathering meeting towards the end of August regarding BART extensions to East Contra Costa County. Also attending the meeting were a representative from the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority, and a private planner who had worked extensively on community planning processes concerning BART stations. The purpose of the meeting was for Supervisor Gerber and the Transportation Authority to gauge local interest in eventually having a BART station in the Byron area, and where in particular would be the best place for one. The ultimate reasoning for this effort--which is being replicated in the other East County cities--is to create a long-term strategic transportation plan to bring forward to policy makers for funding requests.

Along with questions were statements of fact. The first precautionary statement was that good, transportation-based land use planning needs to occur around any potential BART facility. In a nutshell, high densities

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**High densities equal high BART ridership, and properly planned development can actually decrease roadway traffic.**

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equals high ridership, which should equal a transit system that pays for itself. The second statement was that, yes, properly planned development can actually decrease roadway traffic and help East County's infamous traffic woes.

Although many people in the audience had questions and comments,

much of the answers had already been provided in the Byron Municipal Advisory Council's (MAC) "Byron Township General Plan". The community-created plan calls for multimodal transit centers utilizing the wide variety of existing and potential transit corridors and all modes of transport (including trails). These include the existing rail right-of-way and the State Route 239 extension highlighted in the California Department of Transportation's State Route 4 Corridor Concept Report in 1997.

The Byron Plan addresses the State Route 239 concept with a planned expressway from Highway 4/Discovery Bay Boulevard to Byron Highway in the general location of a multimodal transit station oriented to take advantage of planned trails, the rail right of way, the Byron Airport, the Vasco Road "East

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## Governor Restricts Development of Farmland

Gov. Gray Davis has signed four bills that seek to protect farms and open space from development. The bills were authored by Assemblywomen Helen Thomson, D-Davis, and Barbara Matthews, D-Tracy, as a means of maintaining agriculture and open space to conserve the state's landscape and make farming more efficient.

Thomson's first bill extends the prohibition against residential subdivi-

sion of Williamson Act lands to agricultural lands that are protected by other state programs, such as open space easements, agricultural land conservation easements, and other land conservation programs. The Williamson Act, one of the nation's leading agricultural land conservation laws, encourages keeping land in active agricultural use.

Thomson's other bill helps protect agricultural lands from suburban sprawl by making city annexation of those

lands and other open spaces for potential development more difficult. Local agency formation commissions will be prohibited from approving a change to a local government's sphere of influence that would result in annexation of lands protected by a farmland security zone or a Williamson Act contract.

Matthews' bill requires the Department of Food and Agriculture to

*see Farmland page 2*

### Transportation continued

County Corridor” just to the west and Mountain House Community just to the south.

Due to the restrictive cost of BART trains and rail, the Transportation Authority is looking at other ways to complete the BART network. One consideration is using buses in addition to light rail on existing Union Pacific tracks. The Contra Costa Transportation Authority is already in negotiation with Union Pacific for the railroad right-of-way all the way to Tracy.

Two possible Byron BART locations were suggested: one in downtown Byron or one closer to the Byron Airport near the county line. The pros and cons of each location were discussed. The consultants were informed that the Byron MAC Plan calls for multimodal transit stations in both of those locations, and they were provided a copy of the plan.

For more information on the strategic planning for BART in East Contra Costa

County, e-mail Susan Miller at Contra Costa Transportation Authority at <[smiller@ccta.net](mailto:smiller@ccta.net)>.

### BYRON AIRPORT'S FUTURE TO BE STUDIED

Contra Costa County has started a process to update the 1986 Byron Airport

Master Plan, and to create a Business Plan for the Byron Airport. Environmental studies will also be done in conjunction with the planning effort.

The County Public Works department has received several proposals from professional airport planning and consulting firms interested in doing the Master Plan and Business Plan. A consultant should be chosen next month, with the process expected to take 12-14 months.

The direction of the Byron Airport Master Plan and Byron Airport Business Plan will be determined early on in the process with an analysis designed to study the feasibility of the Byron Airport as a potential air cargo facility.



The Transportation/Circulation portion of the Byron General Plan designates three multimodal transit centers: one near the entrance to Discovery Bay and two along Byron Highway (J4).

### Farmland continued

estimate food, fiber and livestock production and report that information to the Department of Water Resources for estimating future agricultural water usage for 20 years to meet the gap between water supply and demand. Bill Lyons, secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture,

says the measure is critical to protect the state's \$27 billion agriculture industry, and that it will take three-to-five years to come up with the first water usage estimate. There have been no previous long-range estimates of water needs and usage for agriculture, unlike estimates for residential and commercial usage.



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Brentwood's incorporated boundary currently totals 5,668 acres (1996) within a sphere of influence totaling in excess of 15,000 acres. An additional 3,000 acres are within the Brentwood Planning Area adjacent to the sphere of influence.

*City of Brentwood website*



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Available Properties in Tracy

### WEST 11TH STREET



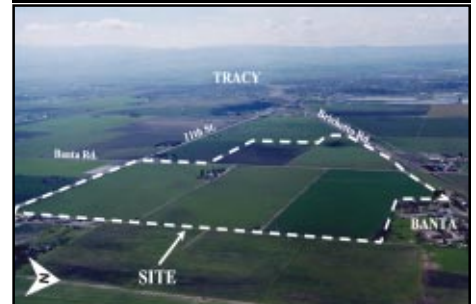
Professional office condominiums available for sale or lease in the West Park Professional Center--Tracy's newest office development; 800-4,500 SF units; a great location at 11<sup>th</sup> Street & Tracy Boulevard

### TRACY BLVD & LARCH ROAD



Two parcels of vacant land: Parcel 1 is 5.09 ac. zoned Light Industrial & Hwy Service priced at \$8/SF; Parcel 2 is 1.91 ac. zoned Hwy Service priced at \$14/SF; both parcels have great visibility and access from I-205

### 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET & BANTA ROAD



350 ac. of future development land designated as residential in the Tracy General Plan; contiguous to the Tracy City Limits; \$30,000/ac.; divisible