



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Kristen Drew
Communications Coordinator
kdrew@bainbridgewa.gov
206.780.3741 (office)
206.786.2342 (cell)

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

Bainbridge Island, Wash., (May, 2019) – Planning and Community Development (PCD) Director Gary Christensen announced today that he plans to resign effective May 24. Christensen, who will turn 62 in August, has indicated that he plans to retire. Christensen has led the PCD department since 2016 and has an extensive background spanning more than 30 years of service in city and county planning, community, and development services departments. Prior to his position with Bainbridge Island, he previously worked with Skagit County for 28 years in various roles.

“It has been gratifying and a privilege to serve the community of Bainbridge Island,” Christensen said. “I sincerely wish the city all the best going forward after I leave to begin my welcomed retirement life.”

Under Christensen’s leadership, the Planning and Community Development Department completed several significant projects, including:

- The City’s 2016-2036 Comprehensive Plan
- An update to the Island’s critical area regulations and Shoreline Master Program (SMP)
- An improved customer service and development review process to bring greater department efficiencies, predictability and timeliness
- Reorganized the department and hired new staff to provide improved service
- Initiated the subarea planning process for Island Center
- Started work on addressing quality of life, environmental stewardship, affordable housing, native vegetation protection, and development standards and design guidelines to promote sensible, well-managed growth that reflects the Island’s historical character and landscape
- Led the department’s extensive work during the last seventeen months to revise development policies and code related to the City’s development moratorium
- During Christensen’s tenure, the department, Council and community worked together to address several challenging and complex issues related to land use, growth management and development pressures

“Gary is a knowledgeable and skilled leader whose perspective and experience will be missed,” said City Manager Morgan Smith. “I appreciate his service to the citizens of Bainbridge Island and wish him an enjoyable, prosperous and healthy retirement.”

Later this month, the City will begin the process to transition leadership of the department.

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