



Council Message

Leslie Schneider, Mayor



I am both honored and humbled to take on the role of Mayor for our new City Council and look forward to the workplan ahead.

Community projects of significance will simmer slowly in planning stages and quiet phases, but then “suddenly” take center stage and grab our attention. A number of such projects are poised to take shape in 2020.

The Police-Court facility is one of these. We may not have a move-in date this year, but actual work on the building will be underway in mid-2020. Adapting an existing building that already has much of the “hardening” that our law enforcement requires is the essence of sustainability and respect for our resources.

And with Council focused on doing our part to address climate change, a plan to turn around dependence on single-occupancy driving is also getting real. As I write this, we are assembling a core group to become the Sustainable Transportation Task Force. I’m so excited to see an integrated strategy for public transit and multi-modal infrastructure come together this year.

Feb. 10 workshop scheduled to discuss future of Island Center

Tucked away in the trees across from Fletcher Bay Mart, between Fletcher Bay Road and Springridge Road, lie 13 picturesque acres that Michael Loverich’s great-grandparents acquired in the 1930s and that remain in the family. Loverich grew up in one of the homes on the land and now lives in another. With Springbrook Creek running through the property, its rural atmosphere harkens back to earlier island days.

“I loved growing up here,” he reminisced. “The island was a playground. I rode my bike everywhere and I’d wander around in the woods. I went to Bainbridge Gardens all the time and the gas station to go get candy.” Needless to say, Michael is invested in the future of the neighborhood, known as Island Center.

For the past two years, Loverich (an architect) has served on the City’s Island Center Subarea Planning Committee—along with eight other Bainbridge Islanders who mostly live or work in Island Center—

to discuss what the area should look like in the future. The Island Center area is at the crossroads of the Miller Road and New Brooklyn Road intersection; it stretches north along Miller Road near Bainbridge Gardens and the Grand Forest and south along Fletcher Bay Road near Island Center Hall.



Along with Rolling Bay and Lynwood Center, Island Center is identified in the Comprehensive Plan as one of the City’s “Neighborhood Centers,” offering housing and small-scale commercial and service activity outside of Winslow.

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Planning Commission to begin review of sign code

The Planning Commission will begin review this month on new proposed rules for signs across the island. On Sept. 24, 2019, the City Council referred a draft ordinance to the Planning Commission for its review, recommendation, and a public hearing. This referral followed a

year-long discussion on how to address signs on Bainbridge Island, including the proliferation of sandwich boards.

As currently worded, the draft ordinance referred to the Planning Commission would regulate sandwich board signs and non-durable signs (e.g., smaller signs with

stakes) as follows:

- **In Winslow and Neighborhood Centers:** sandwich boards in the right of way (both commercial and noncommercial) are allowed but must be brought in at night. Other, non-durable signs are

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Island Center continued from page 1

The Comprehensive Plan directs the City to complete subarea planning for Neighborhood Centers without a subarea plan. In 2017, the City Council chose to begin the subarea planning process with Island Center (of the City’s three Neighborhood Centers, only Lynwood Center currently has an adopted subarea plan).

The City Council formed the committee (as required by BIMC 2.16.210 Subarea Planning Process) to guide the effort to consider transportation, public space, natural resource protection, utilities, and land use choices for the neighborhood. Eventually, the committee will present a draft subarea plan for Island Center to the Planning Commission and City Council. If approved, a subarea plan would become part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and would likely yield additional changes to the City’s municipal code and design guidelines.

Since the formation of the committee, members have documented the existing conditions of the area, drafted a vision statement and goals, and brainstormed alternatives for what Island Center could look like that reflect what the community wants for the neighborhood.



“One of the things we are looking at is how the neighborhood could change and evolve given existing zoning and where would we want to recommend modifications to maintain the character and neighborhood-oriented services of the area or to encourage other uses,” said Loverich.

Island Center includes a mix of commercial activities, such as a gas station, auto repair shops, a garden center, a restaurant, and two self-storage facilities.

“Island Center has done well with its current businesses and they serve the whole island well. I would love to see more

amenities come to the Island Center area to serve its residents instead of having to head to Winslow,” said Micah Strom, who serves on the committee and is the co-owner of Modern Collision, located on Miller Road near Battle Point Drive.

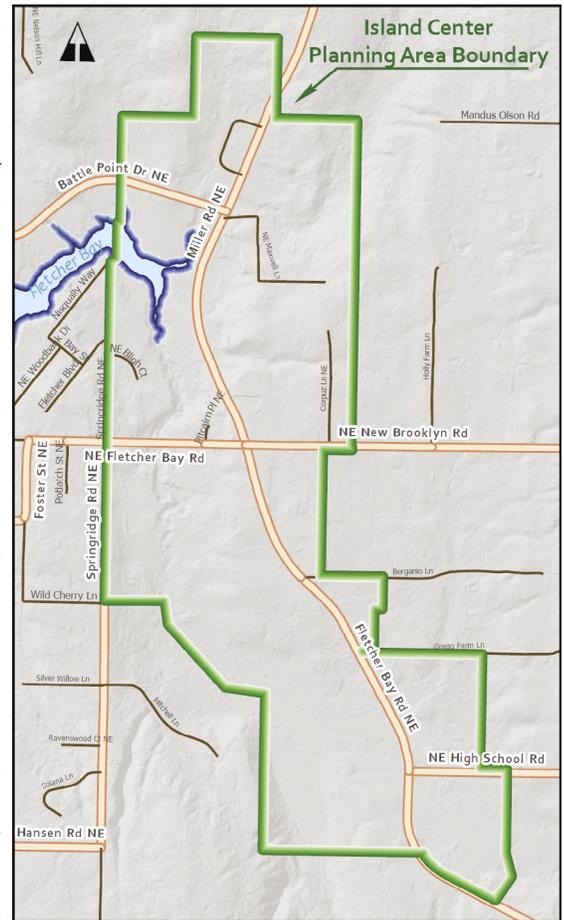
A workshop held by the committee in June 2018 revealed a range of sentiments; many of the attendees would like to see some improvements—better options for groceries, another restaurant and/or coffeeshop, and more walkable roads, sidewalks, or trails—but they want the center to retain its character of small-scale, community-oriented commercial activity.

Some attendees at the June 2018 meeting shared concerns with the committee about land use and expressed their preferences to not see any land use changes in the area. All public feedback is being considered by the committee as it prepares to present draft alternatives for Island Center to the community during a Feb. 10 workshop at City Hall.

Strom explained, “I feel we as a committee have done a good job of listening to the public and trying to put together a plan that incorporates the wishes and desires of Island Center residents. There is a wide range of feelings and ideas that we have heard and while we are not able to incorporate all of them into the plan, we feel that what we are presenting is a fairly neutral proposal.”

Despite differences in opinion on land use, the committee has heard overwhelmingly from the community that traffic safety improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers should be a priority. According to a December 2019 City traffic count, the Miller Road-Fletcher Bay Road corridor (north of High School Road) is one of the most heavily traveled areas on the island.

The committee is exploring possible traffic calming measures and ways to create safer access for everyone traveling to and between neighborhood destinations—whether it be homes or businesses or



nearby natural areas. “Island Center is much more than the existing commercial businesses on the road,” Loverich shared. “There are a lot of other really nice things about it—the Grand Forest, Fletcher Bay, wetlands and two salmon-bearing streams that run through it. It has this agrarian history, a pioneer cemetery, and also a fascinating resort history that give it a different character from the other Neighborhood Centers and make it a unique and special place.”

Loverich reiterated the importance of having the community involved in defining Island Center’s future and expressed the committee’s hope that a significant number of Island residents attend the upcoming public workshop on Monday, Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. The committee will present and request feedback on a set of new draft alternatives for the area.

To learn more about the Island Center subarea planning process, please visit the project page: www.bainbridgewa.gov/950.

Council to begin 2021-2022 budget process

Budget development is a continuous process that begins in March and culminates with the passage of a final budget in November/December. The Biennial Budget is the financial plan for the upcoming two years and funds the City's identified priorities and planned service delivery to the community.

The budget identifies financial plans for

City services such as Police, Community Development, utilities, and capital projects. Throughout the year, the City tracks the adopted budget versus actual expenses incurred to inform the next year's budget.

On a quarterly basis, the City Council considers a consolidated set of citywide budget and capital project adjustments and amends the current year's budget.

Many of Council's actions, public input, and new legislative mandates throughout the year have budgetary implications that also need to be incorporated into the future budgets. Below is an estimated timeline of the Biennial Budget process planned for 2020.



Council considers new affordable housing tools

The City Council is exploring tools to increase the amount of affordable housing on Bainbridge Island. During the Feb. 4 study session, City Council was scheduled to discuss two potential programs: multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) and inclusionary zoning (IZ).

These options emerged from the 2018 Affordable Housing Task Force Final Report and a subsequent economic market analysis and program feasibility study created by ECONorthwest. The City hired ECONorthwest to conduct the study to inform City consideration of adopting MFTE and IZ to support additional affordable housing.

Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE)

The MFTE is provided under Washington State law (RCW 84.14) to stimulate the construction of new multifamily housing and the rehabilitation of existing vacant and underutilized buildings for multifamily housing in urban centers. The MFTE incentivizes dense and diverse housing options in urban centers lacking in housing choices or affordability.

Through the MFTE, a local government may exempt new multifamily housing from property taxes. The tax exemption applies to the value of the residential improvement for a period of either eight or twelve years. The twelve-year exemption requires a minimum

level of affordable housing to be included in the development (at least 20% of the units or 100% if the building is solely owner-occupied). The eight-year exemption leaves the public benefit requirement flexible in both type and size. Cities must pass an ordinance to enact the MFTE and to allow applications for the exemption.

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)

IZ is a tool that requires that new residential development in certain zones must include some proportion or number of affordable housing units (e.g., 10% of total units), or meet some type of alternative compliance.

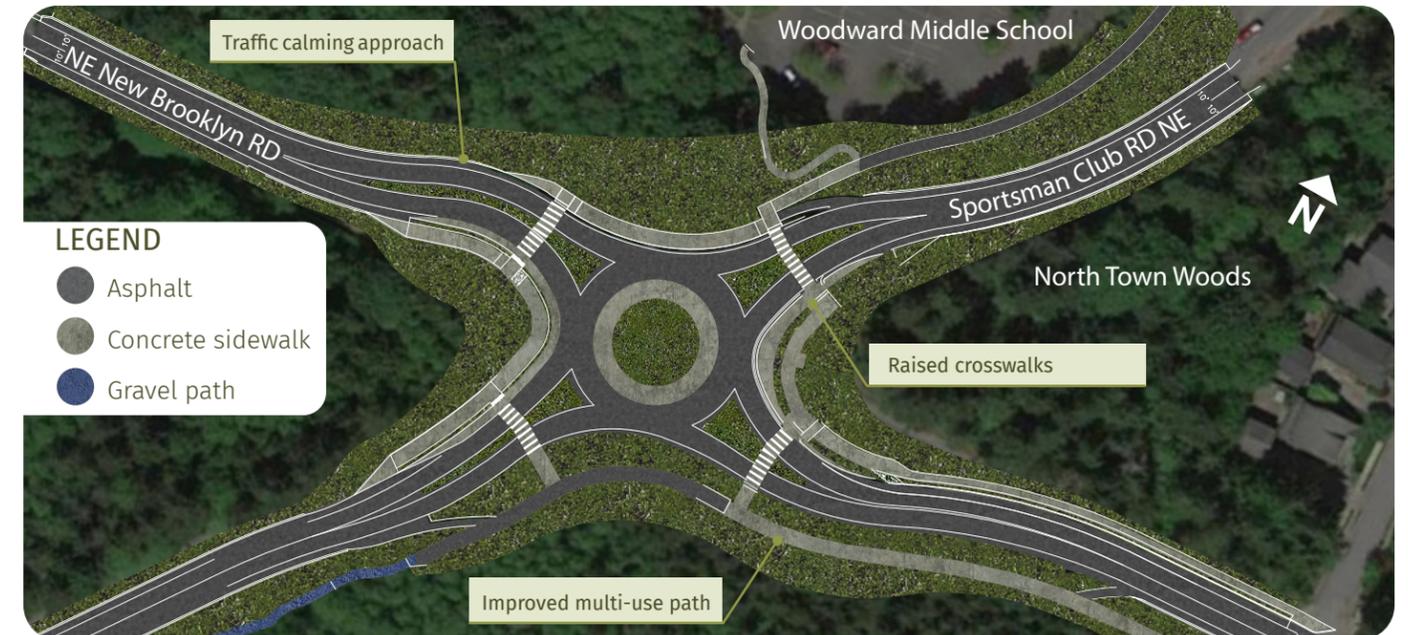
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Sportsman Club - New Brooklyn Intersection Improvements Project

Overview

At the Feb. 18 City Council Study Session, staff will provide an update on the Sportsman Club Road-New Brooklyn Road Intersection Improvements Project. The intersection is just outside the Winslow area and near many destinations that are easily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists. As congestion increases, the City of Bainbridge Island is considering a roundabout at the intersection that would enhance facilities for those who walk and bike, and also serve as a hub for connecting sidewalks and walking paths in the vicinity.

Modern roundabouts mitigate conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and are being implemented around the region near schools, most recently at Tyee Middle School in Bellevue.



Project costs

The total cost of the project is estimated to be **\$2.3 million**. The City has **\$860,000** in federal grants and **\$360,000** in City funds in the current approved budget. The project will need an additional **\$1.1 million** of City funds to complete the design and construction.

Project background and information

- Roundabouts are designed to improve safety for all users and are recommended by the Safe Routes to School program managed by the Federal Highway Administration.
- The main purpose of the roundabout is to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, but traffic congestion is also expected to improve during most of the day. Peak traffic times at the end of the school day are still expected to be congested due to surges in vehicles and pedestrians but are likely to improve from current conditions.
- The roundabout design does not propose to create more paved surface than exists at the intersection currently.
- Up to 36 trees larger than 12 inches in diameter will need to be removed on the north and west sides to accommodate the roundabout. The City is considering how retaining walls and the careful design of pathways could preserve some of these existing trees and reduce tree removal. New landscaping and trees will be planted at each corner of the roundabout and within the center islands.
- School buses, fire trucks, and other truck traffic will be able to safely travel through the roundabout.



Current Sportsman Club Rd and New Brooklyn Rd intersection

What's included in the new design?

All legs of the intersection will include:

- Improved multi-use paths:** An expanded, 10-foot wide multi-use sidewalk (or separated trail) with ramps for bicyclists who choose not to travel with vehicles in the right of way of the roundabout
- Raised crosswalks:** ADA accessible ramps and raised concrete crosswalks with rapid-flashing beacons for safe crossings
- Upgraded shoulders:** Wide, paved shoulders for bicyclists on both sides of the road within the City right of way
- Traffic calming approaches:** Curved approaches with narrowed lanes to slow down vehicles to the 20-mph design speed
- Hardscaped improvements:** Enhanced lighting and separation between the crosswalks and the roundabout to improve pedestrian visibility and traffic flow

What's next?

City Council will consider approval of the final design of the project. If the project is approved by Council, a design contract and budget amendment will be presented to Council at a meeting in March and construction will begin in **summer 2021**.

If the Council does not approve the project, the City will be required to repay approximately **\$150,000** in federal funds that were used for the initial design phases.

Stay informed

Visit our project website:
www.bainbridgewa.gov/1105

Notify Me | sign up for our email updates at:
www.bainbridgewa.gov/List.aspx

Select next to Sportsman Club & New Brooklyn Intersection Improvements

The Planning Commission: An Overview

The “Planning Commission” is mentioned in a lot of City communications (including this newsletter), but do you know what it is and how it functions? We sat down with Mack Pearl, who is currently serving his third and final term on the volunteer-led Planning Commission, for an overview.

Seven commissioners are appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. Commissioners may serve up to three terms, although a term may be extended by Council if there are workplan items to complete. Members are Bainbridge Island residents who represent an array of expertise, from architects and attorneys to scientists and affordable housing developers. All must have some knowledge of land use and how codes work. A Council member also serves as a Planning Commission liaison. In 2020, Kirsten Hytopoulos will fill this role.

“We are what they call the keeper of the Comprehensive Plan,” Pearl shared. “Everything we do is advisory, so our recommendations go on to the City Council or Planning Director or Hearing Examiner.” The Commission works on consensus and recommendations require a majority.

“The Comprehensive Plan” is another term often referred to by the City. The Plan is a long-range planning document,

initially adopted in 1994 and most recently updated in 2017, that guides the City’s growth and establishes the long-range vision for the Island. Included in the Plan are characteristics that the community desires to retain, promote, or foster, covering topics such as land use, housing, transportation and economic development, water resources, and environmental and cultural development. The Comprehensive Plan also establishes areas of the City earmarked for residential, commercial, industrial, and other land uses. The complete Comprehensive Plan is available at: www.bainbridgewa.gov/162.

Another main function of the Planning Commission is to review and make recommendations on major land use applications, including subdivisions, site plan review (SPR), and conditional use permits (CUP). SPRs and/or CUPs are required for commercial, mixed use, multifamily and/or institutional uses (e.g., churches, schools). Since 2019, public participation meetings or early informational meetings between the public and the applicant have also been held in front of the Planning Commission.

“What we’ve tried to do in the last year is make it so that development projects are seen by the Planning Commission

early in the process, to ensure they are in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan before the developer invests a lot of money in the project,” Pearl detailed. “Typically, the Design Review Board reviews a project first, then the Planning Commission. Larger projects have a public participation meeting, sponsored by the developer, which now takes place in front of the Planning Commission, so we can see what the public is saying and hopefully give more weight to that.”

The Planning Commission reviews and makes recommendations on land use regulations to the City Council. Currently, the Commission is reviewing regulations for wireless facilities and ADUs (see page 8 for ADU update). The City Council is the ultimate decision maker on regulations and policies.

Pearl feels it’s his civic duty to participate in keeping Bainbridge Island a great place to live. “I also like the public process and hearing what other people have to say,” he shared. Meetings are open to the public and now available to be viewed online at: www.bainbridgewa.gov/1101. The Planning Commission generally meets the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Check the Planning Commission webpage for agendas and meeting times.

2020 Planning Commissioners



Jon Quitslund grew up on Bainbridge Island. He was an English Professor at George Washington University in Washington, DC from 1964 to 2000, then returned to Bainbridge Island in 2000 for an active retirement.

Lisa Macchio works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. She has a broad-based knowledge of environmental land use issues and marine/coastal/shoreline issues and surface water quality.



Joe Paar is a real estate developer and construction manager. Recently, he has been concentrating on mixed-use apartments near mass transit for workforce and affordable housing.



Mack Pearl is an architect and has worked on the island for more than 30 years. Mack has served 10 years on the Planning Commission.



Don Doman has been a practicing architect for more than 40 years (he’s now semi-retired). He graduated from the University of Washington.



Bill Chester worked in Seattle as an architectural draftsman and designer for various firms until becoming a partner in 1983 at the Seattle firm of Shavey Chester McManigal Architecture. He worked there until starting William J. Chester Architecture LLC in 1990 on Bainbridge Island, where he continues to practice architecture today.



Kimberly McCormick Osmond is a land use attorney and has practiced since 1989. Kim is interested in energy matters, shoreline uses, and the management of environmental impacts associated with development.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT JENNIFER SUTTON, AICP / SENIOR PLANNER

Jennifer Sutton believes in working towards a more sustainable future. That passion, coupled with advice from a college professor who served on a Planning Commission, is what led her to a career in community planning. “I saw it as a proactive way to address natural resource consumption,” she said.



After completing her undergraduate work at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, she earned a master's degree in environmental studies from the University of Montana. She enthusiastically joined the City of Bainbridge Island in 2004 as a Planner after moving to Seattle

with her husband. She became a Senior Planner in 2013, focusing on long-range planning. She is proud to play a part in the City's work to understand and monitor the Island's aquifers, plan new bike lanes and better walking paths, reduce sprawl, and increase housing diversity.

One of the core projects Jennifer is working on now is affordable housing, and new rules to encourage housing alternatives like tiny houses and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Her role is to provide City Council with information needed in order to consider changes to land use regulations.

She then drafts the regulatory changes (ordinances) that are needed to enact the policy choices the Council decides to make.

Jennifer often presents recommendations to the Council in response to Council and state-mandated priorities. She also works with the Planning Commission and other

City Advisory Groups to write land use regulations, goals, and policies that govern development applications.

In addition to her focus on affordable housing topics, Jennifer is also currently facilitating the City's subarea planning process for Island Center, one of three Bainbridge Island “Neighborhood Centers” (see cover story for more information on this project).

With so many moving pieces, Jennifer's work can be complex, but her passion for planning was evident when asked what she finds most interesting about her job. “What isn't interesting?” Her face lit up. “In theory, we're considering making changes in this one little place, but those choices create a better future.” Her children are front-of-mind when she thinks about the future; she has a fourth-grade daughter and second-grade son.

Community involvement is something she views as a responsibility to future generations. She'd like to encourage Island residents to participate more in City government, including City Advisory Groups. “Get involved! Come to a meeting and join the community conversation.”

Sign code continued from page 1

allowed if noncommercial (nonprofit events, etc.) but are not allowed if commercial.

- **Outside Winslow:** sandwich boards in the right of way (both commercial and noncommercial) are allowed but must be brought in at night. Other, non-durable signs are allowed for both commercial and noncommercial uses. Commercial, non-durable signs will require a City-issued permit to control the number of days, display times, etc.

A sign is “noncommercial” if the sign relates to more than just the economic interests of the sign's owner and her/his audience (e.g., Little League signups, children's theatre, etc.). A sign is “commercial” if it relates solely to the economic interests of the sign's owner and

her/his audience (e.g., realtor, garage sale, etc.).

The Planning Commission will discuss the sign code update during its Feb. 13 and Feb. 27 meetings. Once the Planning Commission holds a public hearing and completes its review and recommendation, the ordinance will return to Council for final review.

As an alternative to the use of sandwich boards, City staff developed a proposal to expand wayfinding signage in Winslow. The new signs will direct people to businesses, attractions and other facilities. The total cost to create and install the signs is \$36,000. The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) approved \$12,000 in funding and the



Council approved the remaining \$24,000 from the Council contingency fund.

City staff is working with the Chamber of Commerce and Bainbridge Island Downtown Association to determine what will be written on the signs and where the signs will direct people. The goal is to have signs in place before the 2020 summer tourist season.

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- **City Council Study Sessions**
 - February 4:** 6 p.m. *Suzuki Affordable Housing Project*
 - February 18:** 6 p.m. *Sportsman Club-New Brooklyn Intersection Improvement Project*
- **February 13:** Planning & Public Works- Engineering counters are closed
- **Hearing Examiner**
 - February 27:** 10 a.m. *Police-Court Facility (tentative)*
- **Planning Commission**
 - February 13:** 7 p.m. *Sign code, Police-Court Facility, Bainbridge/Hildebrand*
 - February 27:** 7 p.m. *Sign code*
- **City Council Business Meetings**
 - February 11:** 6 p.m.
 - February 25:** 6 p.m.

Meetings, times, and agenda topics are subject to change. Please see the calendar on the City's website for the latest information.

ADU subcommittee created

The Planning Commission has formed a temporary subcommittee to discuss proposed rules for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which include provisions for tiny houses. The subcommittee will discuss lot coverage, affordability, owner occupancy and zoning for ADUs. The temporary subcommittee will also discuss options for tiny house and short-term rental regulations. The subcommittee work will be brought back to the full Planning Commission for further consideration.

The proposed new regulations (Ordinance 2020-02) require common ownership of the primary residence and ADU and remove the ADU from lot coverage calculations for properties less than 40,000 square feet.

Additionally, the new regulations would allow tiny houses (400 square feet or less) as a type of legal dwelling. The Washington State Building Code Council published



updated building code requirements for tiny houses at the end of 2019.

The City Council worked throughout 2019 to develop proposed changes related to ADUs and tiny houses. In Oct. 2019, the Council sent an ordinance to the Planning Commission for review.

Once the Planning Commission completes its review and recommendation, the ordinance will return to the Council for final approval.

Affordable housing continued from page 3

The cost of providing the affordable housing is usually offset by increasing a project's development rights through elements such as increased building height or additional density. Inclusionary zoning may be applied in both ownership and rental developments, and can be tied to specific geographic areas or zoning districts.

At the Feb. 4 meeting, the Council will continue discussion on the information presented by ECONorthwest during briefings in 2019. The next decision points will be whether the City should consider adopting MFE and/or IZ programs and, if so, where these programs should be available (i.e. what

zoning districts).

Currently, the City has two affordable housing tools in place: a voluntary inclusionary zoning program (BIMC 18.21, which has not been utilized) and the Housing Design Demonstration Projects (HDDP) (BIMC 2.16.020.S) program that applies in Winslow. The HDDP program offers density incentives in return for a project that provides green building, sustainable development, and housing diversity. HDDP has produced 47 affordable housing units, including 40 at Ferncliff Village.

Additional information can be found at: www.bainbridgewa.gov/1189.

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You can also watch the meetings on **BKAT** (Ch. 12 on Comcast & Ch. 3 on WAVE).