



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Washington Department of Commerce selects Bainbridge Island for
Housing Accountability Act review process**

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA — January 15, 2026: The City of Bainbridge Island received notice on January 13 from the Washington State Department of Commerce that it has been selected for the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) Selected Review process.

In 2025, the Legislature adopted the HAA ([E2SSB 5148](#)), establishing review processes to help jurisdictions bring local housing plans and regulations into compliance with state law. The HAA Selected Review is a state-led process that provides technical assistance to support jurisdictions in updating their Comprehensive Plan housing element and related development regulations to meet Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements. Commerce may select up to 10 jurisdictions statewide each calendar year for Selected Review, based on criteria outlined in [RCW 36.70A.835](#).

In this first year of the program, Commerce selected from jurisdictions whose 2024 periodic comprehensive plan updates were due on or before December 31, 2024, and that have not yet planned for and accommodated their portion of countywide housing needs as required by state law. Commerce identified eight jurisdictions for Selected Review: Bainbridge Island, Beaux Arts Village, Brier, Carnation, Darrington, DuPont, Gold Bar, and Woodway.

According to Commerce, jurisdictions selected for review generally fall into one or more of these categories:

- Did not submit a draft comprehensive plan for review and did not adopt a plan by the statutory deadline; or

- Submitted a draft plan that was inconsistent with state housing element requirements and did not adopt a plan; or
- Adopted a comprehensive plan, but the housing element remains inconsistent with state requirements after Commerce review and comment.

What Selected Review means

As part of the Selected Review process, Commerce will contact City staff later this month to begin technical discussions, with the goal of supporting adoption of a housing element and associated development regulations consistent with state requirements.

“We understand the importance of meeting the state’s housing planning requirements, and we are taking focused action,” said City of Bainbridge Island Mayor Clarence Moriwaki. “The Council has adopted a time-bound work plan to complete the Comprehensive Plan update by June 30, 2026, and Council, the Planning Commission, and City staff are working diligently to complete the update and meet our state mandated requirements.”

The City is awaiting additional information from Commerce regarding next steps.

Learn more

More information about the Housing Accountability Act and housing element requirements is available in RCW 36.70A.835 and through [Commerce’s guidance on Updating GMA Housing Elements](#).

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About the Housing Accountability Act

In 2025, the Washington Legislature adopted Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5148 (Chapter 269, Laws of 2025) — known as the Housing Accountability Act — to support robust and accountable housing planning statewide. The law establishes both voluntary and selected review processes for local housing elements and housing-related development regulations, with the goal of improving alignment with the GMA and ensuring jurisdictions plan for and accommodate countywide housing allocations.

Under the GMA, cities and counties must include a housing element that plans for housing affordable to all economic segments of the population, encourages a variety of housing types and densities, and supports preservation of existing housing stock.

In 2021, [House Bill 1220](#) strengthened the state’s housing planning requirements by directing jurisdictions to “plan for and accommodate” housing affordable to all income

levels. The state also directed Commerce to project future housing needs by income level and provided new requirements for local housing elements.

Where is Bainbridge Island in updating the Comprehensive Plan?

On October 28 and November 12, 2025, the Council reviewed progress and adopted [Resolution 2025-18](#), which established key milestones, clarified roles and responsibilities among Council, staff, and the Planning Commission, and limited changes to those necessary for legal compliance. The City Council directed staff to proceed with a focused timeline to complete the update after missing the original December 2024 deadline. The Council established a revised approach and adopted a late submittal deadline of June 30, 2026.