



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INTRODUCTION

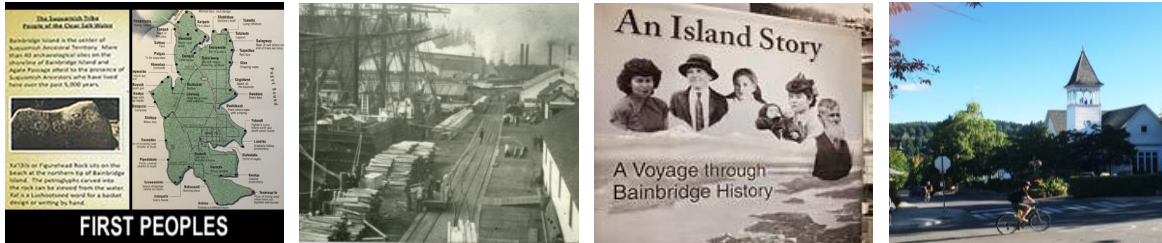
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**NOTE: WILL UPDATE PAGES NUMBERS WITH LATER DRAFT**

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND HISTORY.....	1
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND TODAY.....	3
HISTORY OF PLANNING ON BAINBRIDGE ISLAND .....	6
THE FUTURE – NAVIGATING BAINBRIDGE.....	8
VISION – BAINBRIDGE <del>2044</del> 2036.....	9
GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	11
WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS AND IS NOT.....	16

# BAINBRIDGE ISLAND Past, Present and Future

## BAINBRIDGE ISLAND HISTORY



This historical overview provides a foundational perspective to aid community planning in better understanding and preserving the rich and multifaceted history of Bainbridge Island.

### Land

Bainbridge Island is split into two geologic areas, with the southern third composed of sedimentary bedrock approximately thirteen to thirty million years ago. Lying on a seismic fault line, its most prominent feature is the steep gradient at Bill Point, a backdrop for Rockaway Beach. This fault runs from Eagle Harbor to Seattle. Together with other active faults, a 9.0 plus earthquake involving the North American and Juan de Fuca Plates is a valid disaster potential for Bainbridge Island. Fortunately, only three earthquakes over 6.0 have occurred since World War II: in 1949, 1965, and 2001.

Successive glacial periods left behind deep bodies of water and numerous islands from Puget Sound to Alaska. Resulting deep water sheltered harbors and acidic topsoil influenced human settlement. The primary concern for the Island's southern third is limited water supply caused by impenetrable bedrock. The northern two-thirds, with Eagle Harbor as the dividing line, is composed primarily of sand, clay, and gravel deposits. While still commercially extracted, their primary benefit is an easily accessible ground water source.

### People

Suquamish Ancestors first inhabited Bainbridge Island and the Kitsap Peninsula around 13,000 years ago and continue to live in the area to the present day. The Suquamish People occupied winter villages and seasonal camps throughout the island as they fished, hunted, collected shellfish, and gathered plants and other vegetation resources. Several areas on the island have religious significance to Tribal members and some areas near the marine shoreline were burial sites. Many significant cultural resources have been documented along the contemporary marine shoreline of Bainbridge Island. Inland portions of the island have not been investigated as intensively as shoreline landforms but likely have evidence of past Suquamish land use.

The “discovery” of the Island came in 1792 with the arrival of George Vancouver. The United States showed little interest in the region until the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition. In 1841 Captain Charles Wilkes entered Puget Sound to map the area. He designated Bainbridge Island as an island rather than a peninsula and named it for the War

of 1812 commander, Commodore William Bainbridge. He also named Eagle Harbor, Bill Point, Wing Point, Port Blakely, Port Madison and Point Monroe.

Non-native settlement of the Island began in 1853 when George Anson Meigs ventured into Puget Sound to establish a lumber mill to serve the San Francisco market. He purchased an existing mill near present day Kingston and relocated it to Port Madison. The treaty of Point Elliot ceded any Suquamish claims to Bainbridge Island and Meigs laid claim to the northern third of the Island through the US Patent Office. The Meigs Lumber and Shipbuilding Company was born and soon the mill town of Port Madison had all the accoutrements of a late 19th-century mill town.

Peaking in the 1870s, Port Madison declined slowly until ceasing operations in 1890. Concurrent to its demise, the Port Blakely Mill, owned by Captain William Renton, was ascending after relocating from Port Orchard in 1865. It reached its peak in 1890 as the largest lumber mill in the world. Also at this time, the Hall brothers relocated their ship building business from Port Ludlow to Port Blakely to become one of the best-known names in the business.

Port Blakely's success laid the foundation for additional industries and eventual reshaping of the Island's human geography. The mill and shipyard attracted immigrants from around the globe notably from Scandinavia and Japan. The Hall brothers expanded their operation with a move to Eagle Harbor in 1903. The Pacific Creosote Company was located across the harbor near Bill Point. Port Blakely Mill closed in 1922 resulting in a refocus of commercial activity to the Eagle Harbor area.

Commercial *agriculture* centered on strawberry *farms* developed by Japanese immigrants who originally came to work at Port Blakely. The acidic soil proved ideal for the seasonal cultivation of strawberries. Japanese families used their American born children as title holders, since immigrants were not allowed to become citizens or own property. Large tracts of wasted timberland were purchased, cleared of stumps and debris, and successfully farmed for generations. A grower's association was formed to aid marketing.

World War II abruptly altered Bainbridge Island's economy. Executive Order 9066 ordered West Coast Japanese relocated to internment camps for the war's duration. This resulted in a severe disruption of strawberry farming from which it never fully recovered. Following exclusion of the Japanese-American community, many Filipinos managed the strawberry *farms* and businesses.

### **Modern Development**

Scheduled auto ferry service from the Island to Seattle commenced in 1937 and solidified Winslow's identity as the Island's urban center. Both the middle school and high school were located there. Prior to this, passenger only ferries, locally known as the, "mosquito fleet," had made scheduled stops at a number of small coastal communities around the Island. A significant development in the initial postwar years was the completion of the Agate Pass Bridge and State Highway 305 in 1950, directly linking the Island to the Kitsap Peninsula.

Postwar Bainbridge Island transitioned from rural to suburban with the advent of a convenient commute to Seattle and the peninsula. Regional economic changes caused increasing numbers of people to relocate here, especially during the 1960's and 70's. Farming and local industries remained important, but were no longer the economic mainstay

they were historically. A proposed major shopping center and housing development in the late 1980's precipitated a move by a group of Islanders to seek local control by becoming an incorporated city.

Despite incorporation however, Bainbridge Island remains a desired place to live has done little to slow growth, especially with increasing regional population pressure stemming from Puget Sound's burgeoning technology industry. According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), the 2022 median family income on Bainbridge Island (2009-2013) was \$151,290 95,481 compared to Kitsap County and the whole of Washington State at \$93,675 and \$90,325 59,478, respectively. In 2022, tThe average home value median sales price of a single-family home on the Island (2009-2013) was \$1.5 million 551,700 compared to the state average of \$262,100. Comparatively, Kitsap County's median home sale value in June 2022 was \$600,000, about 39 percent the size of Bainbridge Island's median value.

The 2008 recession temporarily postponed a restructuring of Winslow's downtown core. The subsequent economic upturn has since seen its completion, but also fostered controversial projects such as the shopping complex at State Highway 305 and High School Road.

History is a continuum and the preservation of historic buildings and resources by a community is an ongoing autobiographical undertaking. The results of historic preservation choices become a legacy for future generations to appreciate, learn from and live by.

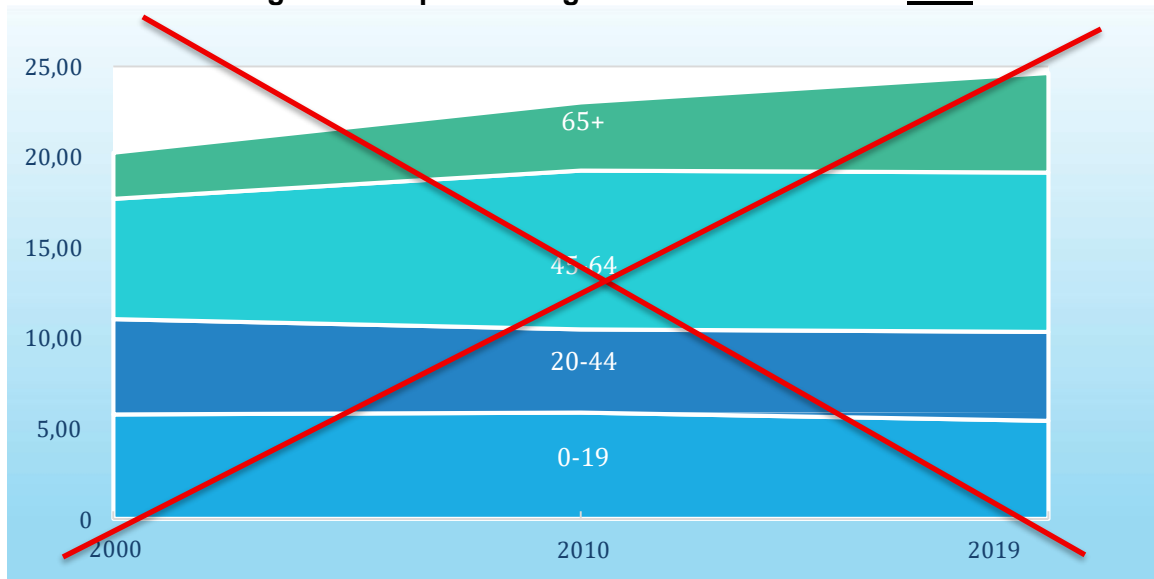
## BAINBRIDGE ISLAND TODAY

### People

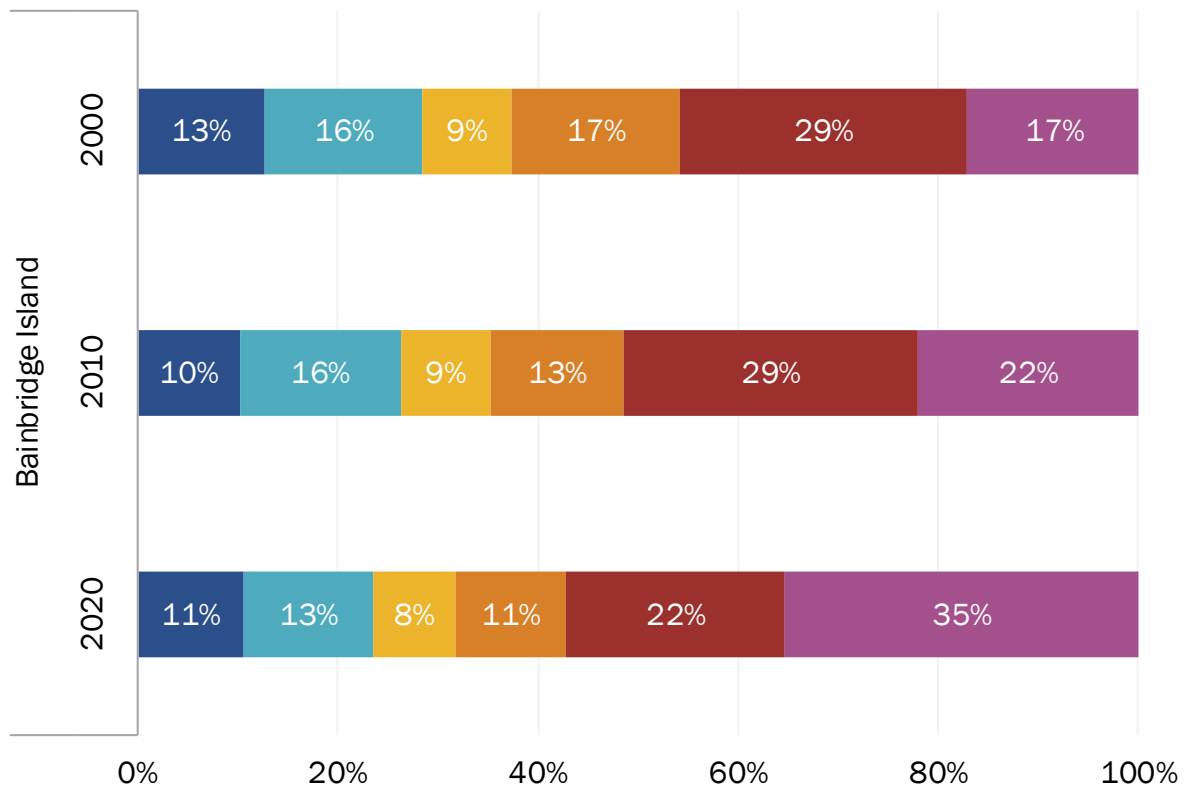
The population of the Island in 2015-2022 was 23,850 25,060, which was a modest increase from the 2010-2020 population of 23,025 24,825. Demographically Bainbridge Island is predominantly white (91-85%) while the Hispanic, Asian and mixed race portions of the population are roughly 3% each. 7.4% of the Island's population is foreign-born. Black or American Indian/Alaskan Native persons each make up 0.2%, while persons identifying as Asian or Hispanic each make up over 3% of the Bainbridge Island population. The number of people identifying as two or more races increased between 2010-2022, from 4.7% to 6.4% of the Bainbridge Island population.

Islanders are relatively well-educated with 66.6 74 % of the adult population (25+ years of age) having a bachelor's degree or higher, and 34% having a graduate or professional degree. In 2020, wWith the majority of the population above 45 years of age, the composition of the Bainbridge Island population (57%) is markedly different than that of both Kitsap County (44%) and Washington State (41%). The median age of Bainbridge Islanders in 2016 2020 is 49 50 years old, which is nearly more than 10 years older than that of Kitsap County (39 years old) and 12 years older than that of Washington State.

**Fig. IN-1 Population Age Cohorts 2000 to 2019 2020**



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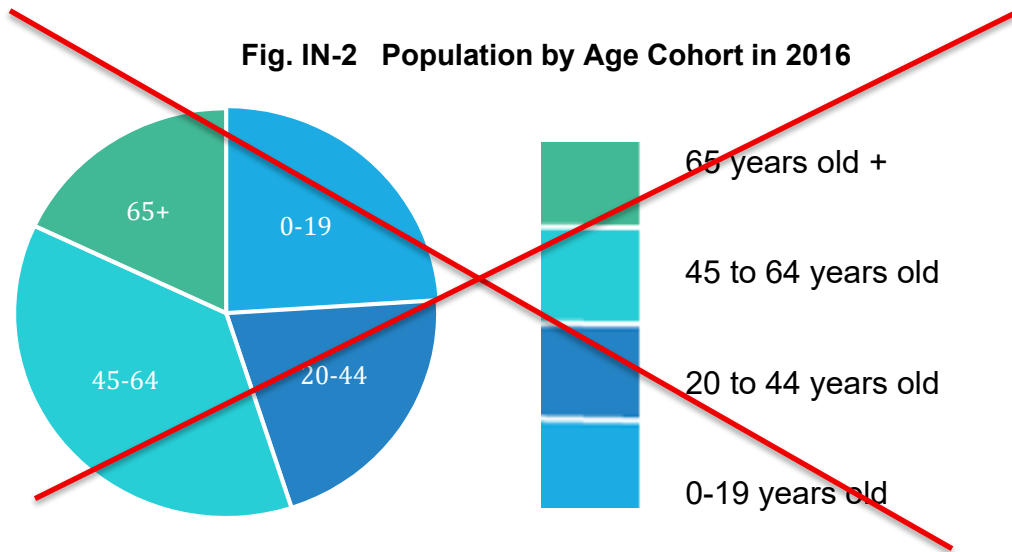


■ Under 10 ■ 10 to 19 ■ 20 to 34 ■ 35 to 44 ■ 45 to 59 ■ 60 and older

Source: 2000-2010 2020 U.S. Census and Experian Census Area Projections & American Community (ACS) 5-year data.

Bainbridge Island's population is relatively affluent. The trend line from the years 2000 2010 through 20159 2020 indicates relative a 13% increases in yearly household incomes above \$100,000 \$150,000 and corresponding decreases in the percentage of households earning

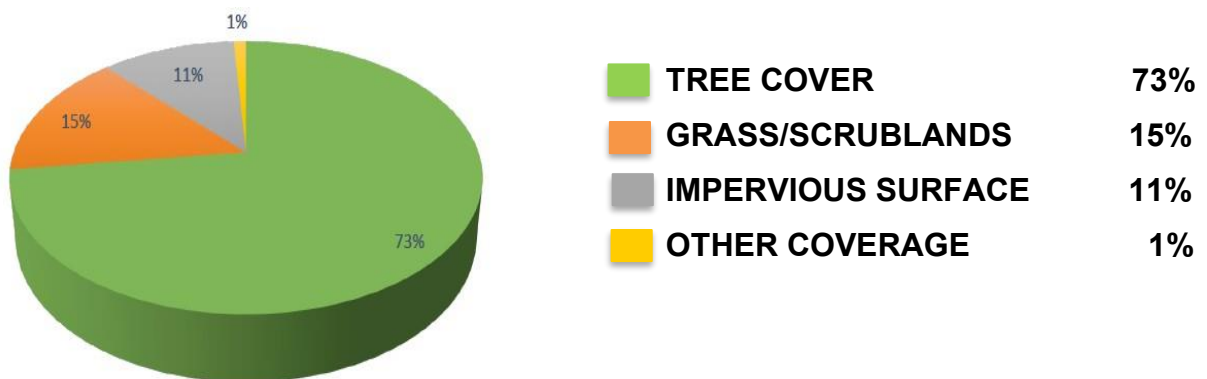
below \$100,000, from 53% in 2010 to 40% in 2020. The 20% of households earning between \$100,000-\$149,999 is estimated to have remained the same between 2010-2020. Source: U.S. Census, Community (ACS) 5-year data 2006-10 and 2016-20 estimates. More detailed data about population demographics, including household incomes and housing affordability, are presented in the Bainbridge Island Housing Needs Assessment and the Bainbridge Island Economic Profile, which are Plan Appendices C and A, respectively.



**Island-wide Land Profiles**

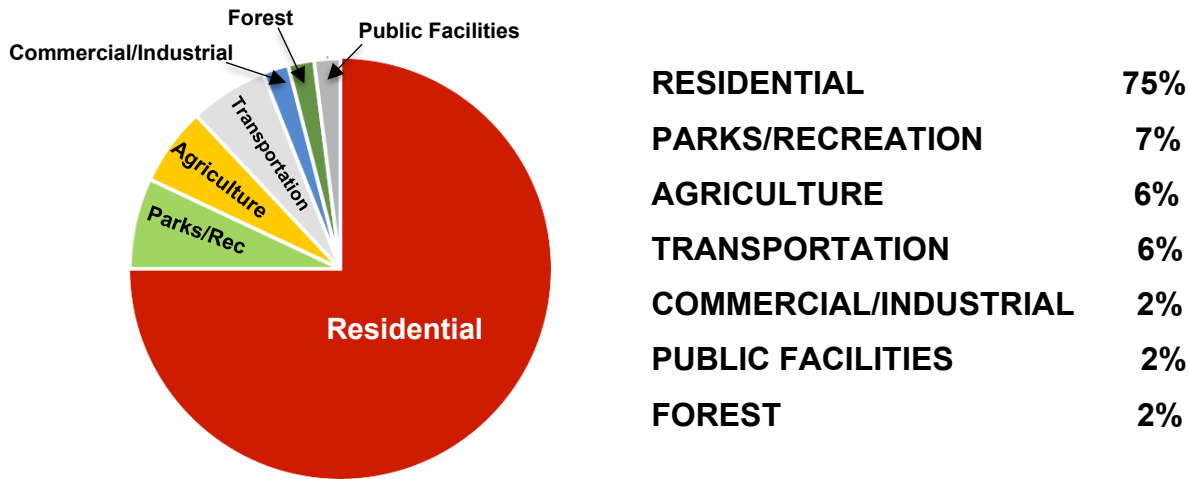
Almost 88% of the twenty-six square miles of the Island's land coverage is either tree cover or grass/scrublands. The developed portions of the Island constitute impervious surface totaling about 11% of its land area.

**Fig. IN-3 Land Coverage Types**



The predominant land use on Bainbridge Island is residential (75%), with forest, agriculture, parks/recreational lands totalling another 15%. The remaining 10% of the Island is transportation (6%), Commercial/Industrial (2%) and Public Facilities (2%). See Fig. IN-4.

Fig. IN-4 Land Use Types



The protection and support of existing *farms* and the preservation of prime agricultural lands and *farms* of local significance are important *goals* of the residents of Bainbridge Island. Agricultural lands provide *open space*, habitat, *groundwater* recharge, local food production with fewer transportation impacts and cultural value. Their protection can augment *sustainability goals*.

Farming on the Island provides economic, social, aesthetic and nutritional benefit to the community. Equally important, protection of agricultural lands will enhance the cultural and economic diversity and help retain the Island’s rural character. *Open space* dedicated to *agriculture* also conserves environmental resources.

*Farm* operations on the Island are unique. Small *farms* ranging in size from 1 acre to 40+ acres, are mostly dispersed throughout the Island with some clustering in a few locations. The specialty, high-intensity, small *farms* will continue to be an important adjunct to farming in the future.

The City currently owns sixty acres of public farmland that has been managed under contract by a non-profit organization. That organization also works with private landowners, seeking ways to increase the amount of land used for food production, and to conserve the land for agricultural uses over the long term. To preserve public farmland, the City *should* consider designating its public farmland properties as Agricultural Resource Land (ARL) consistent with WAC 365-190-050. Other non-profits are also involved in promoting *agriculture* on Bainbridge.

*Agriculture* is a vulnerable enterprise in any rapidly growing area. As land values continue to rise the economic viability of *farms* on Bainbridge Island depends on the farmers’ industry and ingenuity and on public policies that provide incentives and tax relief.

## HISTORY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ON BAINBRIDGE

The ~~2016-2024~~ Update is the ~~second~~<sup>third</sup> major revision to the *Comprehensive Plan*. The first Plan was officially adopted in 1994. Work on the first Plan began in 1990 when then Mayor Sam Granato appointed members to the *Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee* (CPAC). This was soon after residents in the unincorporated area of Bainbridge (population of 12,000; area of 17,700 acres) voted to annex into the City of Winslow (population of 3,000; area of 2,800 acres) and form the City of Bainbridge Island.

The timing for forming CPAC in 1990 was fortuitous, as the State of Washington that same year passed the *Growth Management Act*. The very first section of the GMA reads:

The legislature finds that the uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizen, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning.

RCW 36.70A.010

With the two parts of Bainbridge Island joined by annexation, CPAC was charged with creating a plan for the entire island. Twenty staff members of CPAC and 130 citizens from around the Island made a fresh start at planning for the Island as a whole. A 17-member citizen participation committee was charged with obtaining broad community participation and carried out a telephone survey and 16 focus groups.

The 1994 version of the *comprehensive plan* covered five elements (Land Use, Housing, Water Resources, Transportation and Capital Facilities). Two more elements were later added: the Cultural element in 1998 and the Economic element in 1999. Around 50 architects, engineers and other citizens contributed to a Winslow Design Workshop as part of the 1994 planning. This eventually led to the adoption of the Winslow Master Plan approved in May 1998. A sub-area ~~master plan~~ was adopted for Lynwood Center in 1997. A number of amendments to the *Growth Management Act* and the Bainbridge Island *Comprehensive Plan* have been adopted in the intervening years between 1994 and the present.

A state-mandated update of the *Comprehensive Plan* began in 2000 and was completed in 2004. A steering committee was appointed consisting of three city council members and three planning commissioners, who were supported by City staff. The update consisted of three phases. Phase One produced a "Staff Review 2000", which contained a review of actions to implement the plan and recommendations for revising some of the goals and policies. In addition, the "Community Values Survey Report" was published in July 2000. This survey showed that community values and visions had not changed significantly since 1994. The most significant changes made in 2004 were the creation of the Environmental Element (based on portions of the Land Use Element) and a Human Services Element.

'Winslow Tomorrow' was an ambitious planning process begun in 2004 that led to revision of the Winslow *Master Plan* in 2006 and the ongoing modernization of Winslow's infrastructure. Another significant milestone in the City's planning history was the issuance

in 2007 of the Final Report of the Mayor's 2025 Growth Advisory Committee. That document laid the groundwork for portions of the 2016 *Comprehensive Plan* update, including the concept of designating several centers for future growth on the Island.

The City began its work on the 2016 update the *Comprehensive Plan* in 2014. At the time, the existing land use population and employment capacity was sufficient to meet the 2024-2036 population and employment targets, therefore it was not necessary to intensify or change any land use or zoning at that time. Through this update, the City confirmed its growth strategy to focus or incentivize growth in *designated centers* and promoting stewardship in the *conservation area*. The *Plan* Vision statement was updated and Guiding Principles added. The updated *Plan* was approved by the City Council in February 2017.

This brings us to the development of the 2016 2024 *Comprehensive Plan*.

## THE FUTURE: NAVIGATING BAINBRIDGE ISLAND 2024-2044

From ~~2023-2044~~ through ~~2026-2046~~, the City of Bainbridge Island undertook the update of the *Comprehensive Plan* (the Plan). This project, led by the integrated project to update the Winslow Subarea Plan, titled “Navigate Bainbridge,” involved an extensive public outreach program that engaged hundreds of citizens in dozens of public meetings, workshops, open houses and public hearings culminating in the adoption of the Plan by the City Council.



The ~~2016-2024~~ update of the Plan was prepared pursuant to the authority and requirements of the *Growth Management Act (GMA)* which is codified in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) as Chapter 36.70A. The *GMA* has been amended to requires that the Plan be reviewed and updated at least every ~~eight~~ ten years, instead of eight years, which means the periodic update cycle for Bainbridge Island is ~~2016, 2024, 2034~~ and so on.

Since the 2016 update, the *GMA* has been amended by Washington State House Bill 1220 to require that in addition to planning for population employment growth, local governments must ‘plan for and accommodate’ housing affordable to all income levels. As such, the Department of Commerce was directed to project future housing needs for each county in the state, and to allocate projections according to income bracket (i.e. extremely low income, very low income, etc.). In 2023, the City of Bainbridge Island collaborated with Kitsap County and the other cities in Kitsap County, through the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC), to review the housing allocation methodology and ultimately establish housing allocations by income bands, to be utilized through each jurisdictions Comprehensive Plan Update process. On June 6, 2023, the KRCC Executive Board unanimously voted to add the recommended housing allocations to the Countywide Planning Policies as Appendix F.

The specific requirement to plan for lower income housing units meant that unlike the 2016 periodic update, the City would have to intensify zoning and land use in some areas and adopt additional affordable housing tools to demonstrate compliance. It has long been recognized that the Winslow area, well served by transit and utilities, is the best place to accommodate affordable housing, and the bulk of the discussion has taken place through the concurrent update to the Winslow Subarea Plan. Although these discussions have been heated at times, the changes made with this 2024 Plan update are generally already supported by Plan *goals* and *policies* adopted in the 2016 Plan update, or earlier.

Among its many provisions, the *GMA* requires that the Plan must have sufficient land capacity and urban services adequate to accommodate at least the next twenty years of growth. This Plan provides for sufficient land and urban services to accommodate the City’s growth allocation through the year ~~2044-2036~~, however it also uses a longer time horizon where appropriate. For example, policies in this Plan recognize that the life cycle of a sustainably built environment is multi-decade while planning for natural systems and addressing climate change requires a multi-generational perspective.

The *GMA* also requires that the Plan provide for sufficient *capital facilities* (e.g., roads, sewer and water, parks, public buildings) to accommodate the City’s twenty-year allocations of population and employment growth. This Plan does so. While the *GMA* does not require a *comprehensive plan* to provide *policy* direction to a jurisdiction’s operating budget,

the *Guiding Principles* of the Bainbridge Island Plan explicitly state this Plan provides direction to both the capital and operating budgets.

The Plan is organized as follows: it begins with a City-wide *Vision* that describes the preferred future for Bainbridge Island in the year 2036-2044. That is followed by eight *Guiding Principles* and associated Guiding Policies that provide substantive direction to the ten Elements (i.e., chapters) of the Plan. They also provide direction to the City's *functional plans* such as its parks, stormwater and utilities plans.

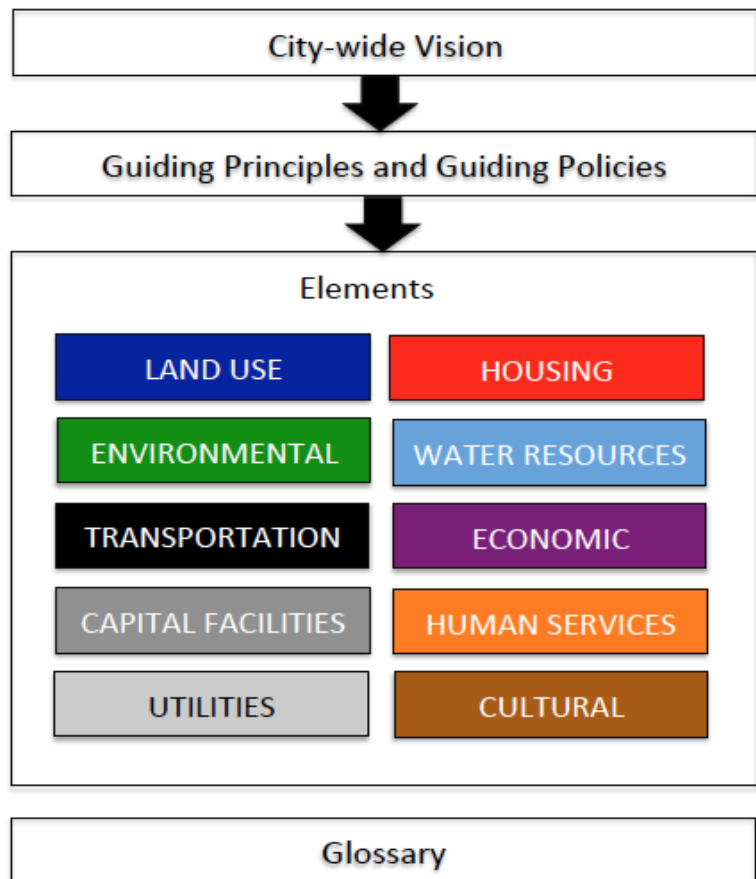
In addition, the Plan's *Vision*, *Guiding Principles* and Policies, and Elements communicate the City's priorities to the other units of government responsible for providing services to the Island community. This includes the Bainbridge Island Fire Department, Park and School Districts, and the Washington State Department of Transportation, all of which prepare functional and operating plans to provide their respective services and facilities to Island residents. The relationship between the components of the *Comprehensive Plan* is illustrated in Figure IN-5.

Fig. IN-5 Comprehensive Plan

The *GMA* requires that a *comprehensive plan* include ~~five~~ six "mandatory" elements: Land Use, Economic, Housing, Transportation, Capital Facilities, and Utilities. The *GMA* gives specific direction about what information and local policy decisions must be contained in each of these mandatory elements. This Plan includes all the mandatory elements and sets forth the City's preferred policies in each.

Cities are authorized to adopt additional "optional" elements. This Plan includes ~~five~~ four optional elements: Environmental, Water Resources, ~~Economic~~, Human Services and Cultural.

The ten Elements in this Plan each contain three distinct components: a *Vision* Statement, Goals and Policies, and a list of prioritized Implementing Actions. Terms that are defined in this



## BAINBRIDGE ISLAND VISION 2044 2036

Bainbridge Island's people reflect a range of ages, ethnicities, household sizes, livelihoods and personal aspirations —~~we are 28,660 individuals~~ who share a strong sense of community and a commitment to environmental stewardship. We respect this legacy of the generations that came before, beginning with the Island's indigenous people, followed more recently by European and Asian immigrants who built timber, maritime and agricultural economies.

Bainbridge Island is home to a diverse mix of people including farmers, artists, students, business professionals, service employees and retirees. We are an optimistic, forward-looking and welcoming people - open to new ideas, industrious business people, new and traditional cultures, and people of all ages and backgrounds. There is no word for exclusion in Lushootseed, the language of the first peoples of Puget Sound.

Our success at balancing the inter-dependent goals of environmental stewardship, economic development and the needs of our people is evident in the many ways we have accommodated growth, addressed the impacts of *climate change* and conserved our environment.

Bainbridge Island's water resources are climate resilient and are able to sustain all forms of life on the Island. *Aquifers* are continuously monitored and managed to maintain our supply of fresh water at a level that meets the high standards for drinking. Education on water conservation has resulted in a significant reduction in the average water consumption per household and *low impact development* techniques applied to all land uses and redevelopment helps to recharge the Island's *aquifers*.

Winslow, Lynwood Center and the Island's other *neighborhood centers* have gracefully evolved into compact, mixed-use, human-scaled and walkable places. They are the thriving centers of civic life, cultural amenities, goods, services and a wide range of housing and employment opportunities. These centers are pedestrian districts, linked to each other and the region by a network of walkways, bicycle trails and *transit* that promote healthy lifestyles and reduce the Island's *greenhouse gas emissions*.

Bainbridge Island's other taxing districts, Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District, Bainbridge Island School District, Bainbridge Island Fire District and Kitsap Regional Library through Bainbridge Public Library all play significant roles in making this a healthy community.

*Affordable housing* is available for much of the local service sector workforce. Improvements in communication infrastructure have enabled more successful local enterprises, including home-based business.

The Island is a national destination for visitors to experience artistic excellence and learn about *sustainability* and resilient community development. Local employment opportunities are diverse including small manufacturing, artisanal crafts, high tech, e-commerce, arts and food. Small retailers are thriving by serving the needs of local residents as well as visitors. A robust non-profit sector strengthens *social capital* while providing services and employment opportunities.

Outside of the *designated centers* the predominant land use pattern is lower density with lower building heights which minimizes the footprint of the built environment and maximizes the protection of tree canopy, *aquifers*, surface waters and *fish and wildlife habitat*. The Island's broad conservation landscape of canopied woodlots, parks and saltwater shorelines is dotted with working *farms*, historic structures and a housing stock that has become more compact, energy-efficient and well-integrated into the landscape.

*Agriculture* is a thriving part of the Island's economy. All City-owned agricultural land is under cultivation and produces seasonal foods for local consumption. The number of *farms* on private acreage has increased and is supplementing the local food supply. Capital facilities planning has kept up with changes in the natural and built environments, meeting the needs of a population that expects a high *level of service*. All residents have reliable electric power, telecommunication services to meet their needs, potable water, solid waste and recycling services, and storm water facilities that prevent flooding and erosion while eliminating pollutants before the water enters Puget Sound.

The good will, imagination and pragmatism of our citizens foster an environment in which we engage with, listen to, and learn from one another. Bainbridge Island functions as a caring community that provides human services where needed to maintain the well-being of all its members, where every person feels connected to the community and where each individual has opportunities.

Community cultural planning sets direction for integrating the arts, humanities and history with urban design, economic development, education and other initiatives that nurture the quality of life on Bainbridge Island.

Artistic creativity and humanistic inquiry advance other community goals such as economic vitality, quality education, and community planning and design. Investments in the arts and humanities are investments in the growth of the community, enriching the lives of its residents and making Bainbridge Island a better place to live.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**NOTE:** The City's Race Equity Advisory Committee has submitted a proposal to update the *Guiding Principles*; on January 8, 2026, the Planning Commission forwarded that proposal to the Steering Committee for review and recommendation

While the *Vision* describes a preferred future outcome for Bainbridge Island, the *Guiding Principles* and associated Guiding Policies provide the *policy* direction needed to navigate toward that desired future.

### Guiding Principle #1

**Preserve the special character of the Island, which includes downtown Winslow's small town atmosphere and function, historic buildings, extensive forested areas, meadows, *farms*, marine views and access, and scenic and winding roads supporting all forms of transportation.**

#### Guiding Policy 1.1

Develop an island-wide conservation strategy to identify and apply effective methods to preserve the natural and scenic qualities that make the Island a special place, including better protection for the shoreline, trees, soils, native plants, and *farms*.

**Guiding Policy 1.2**

Accommodate new growth in *designated centers* that meet the Island's identified needs for housing, goods, services and jobs while respecting conservation and environmental protection priorities.

**Guiding Policy 1.3**

The built environment represents an important element of the Island's special character. Improve the quality of new development through a review process that implements the community *vision* and supports long-term goals for the preservation of the Island's special character.

**Guiding Principle #2**

**Manage the water resources of the Island to protect, restore and maintain their ecological and hydrological functions and to ensure clean and sufficient *groundwater* for future generations.**

**Guiding Policy 2.1**

Manage the water resources of Bainbridge Island for the present and the future, recognizing that the Island's finite *groundwater* resources [*aquifers*] are the sole source of our residents' water supply and are critical perennial sources for our surface waters and the ecosystems they support.

**Guiding Policy 2.2**

As part of long-range land use planning, consider the impacts of future development to the quality and quantity of water that will be available to future Islanders and to the natural environment. Maintain sustainable *groundwater* withdrawal, protect aquifer recharge areas, guard against seawater intrusion and prevent adverse impacts to water quality from surface pollution.

**Guiding Policy 2.3**

Preserve and protect the ecological functions and values of the Island's *aquatic resources*.

**Guiding Policy 2.4**

Anticipate and prepare for the consequences of *climate change* on our *aquatic resources*. These changes include sea level rise, altered precipitation patterns, as well as any other changes in climate and community response to climate in order to ensure ample quality, quantity and seasonal integrity of surface water and *groundwater* for the Island's people and ecosystems.

**Guiding Policy 2.5**

Create a Bainbridge Island surface and *groundwater* management plan for the purpose of maintaining the long-term health of our fresh water *aquifers* and surface waters.

**Guiding Policy 2.6**

Recognize the importance of our water resources to present and future generations of Bainbridge Islanders, and apply the *precautionary principle*.

**Guiding Policy 2.7**

Recognize the water resource needs of *farms*, home gardens and domestic landscapes and support planning and conservation practices that ensure the sustainable use of our Island's finite *groundwater* resources.

**Guiding Principle #3**

**Foster diversity with a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the Island and the human needs of its residents consistent with the stewardship of our finite environmental resources.**

**Guiding Policy 3.1**

Ensure a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of present and future residents in all economic segments and promote plans, projects and proposals to create *affordable housing*.

**Guiding Policy 3.2**

Make budget decisions that adequately consider the well-being of all Island residents with the goal of providing opportunities to be contributing members of the community.

**Guiding Policy 3.3**

Support, protect and enhance the value of the arts and humanities as essential to education, quality of life, economic vitality, the broadening of mind and spirit, and as treasure in trust for our descendants.

**Guiding Principle #4**

**Consider the costs and benefits to Island residents and property owners in making *land use* decisions.**

**Guiding Policy 4.1**

Respect private property rights protected by the State and U.S. Constitutions.

**Guiding Policy 4.2**

Recognize that private property rights are not absolute but must be balanced with necessary and reasonable regulation to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

**Guiding Principle #5**

**The use of land on the Island should be based on the principle that the Island's environmental resources are finite and must be maintained at a sustainable level.**

**Guiding Policy 5.1**

Regulate all development on the Island consistent with the long-term health and carrying capacity of its natural systems.

**Guiding Policy 5.2**

Recognize that the sustainable use of the Island’s finite land base is served by *green building* practices.

**Guiding Policy 5.3**

Preserve and enhance the Island’s natural systems, natural beauty and environmental quality.

**Guiding Policy 5.4**

Protect and enhance wildlife, fish resources and natural ecosystems on Bainbridge Island.

**Guiding Policy 5.5**

Recognize and protect the Usual and Accustomed fishing areas of neighboring Tribes.

**Guiding Principle #6**

**Nurture Bainbridge Island as a *sustainable community* by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

**Guiding Policy 6.1**

Promote environmental *sustainability* by supplementing the State’s mandated 20-year plan horizon with a horizon of one hundred years in order to recognize the longer-term life cycles of natural systems. Tailor *green building* practices and public *infrastructure* investments to be in line with this longer-term perspective.

**Guiding Policy 6.2**

Promote an equitable social environment on the Island by addressing basic human needs including *affordable housing*, personal health and safety, mobility and increased access to human services, civic and cultural amenities.

**Guiding Policy 6.3**

Promote economic *sustainability* and work to provide economic opportunities for all community residents.

**Guiding Policy 6.4**

Promote food production as part of the *land use* planning process.

Fig. IN-6 Sustainable Community



### Guiding Principle #7

**Reduce *greenhouse gas* emissions and increase the Island's *climate resilience*.**

#### Guiding Policy 7.1

Mitigation: Participate with state, regional and local partners to reduce *greenhouse gas* emissions consistent with the 1990 benchmark and future year targets set forth in state law, educate the public about *climate change* and incentivize Island activities including *land use* patterns and building practices that reduce *greenhouse gas* emissions.

#### Guiding Policy 7.2

Adaptation: Minimize or ameliorate the impacts of *climate change* on our community and our Island's ecosystems through climate-informed policies, programs and *development regulations*.

#### Guiding Policy 7.3

Evaluate the climate vulnerabilities and implications of City actions and identify policies that alleviate those vulnerabilities. Consider the effects of shifting conditions (sea level rise, changing rainfall patterns, increasing temperatures and more extreme weather events) and the effects they cause (altered vegetation, changing water demands, economic shifts).

### Guiding Principle #8

**Support the Island's *Guiding Principles* and Policies through the City's organizational and operating budget decisions.**

#### Guiding Policy 8.1

Promote good governance and an Island culture of citizenship, stewardship and civic engagement.

**Guiding Policy 8.2**

Update each City Department’s work program annually, allocate sufficient time and resources and provide needed policy direction to achieve consistency with and implement the *Comprehensive Plan* in a manner that is transparent and consistent with the community *Vision*.

**Guiding Policy 8.3**

Grow a diversified and vibrant local economy.

**Guiding Policy 8.4**

Nurture a healthy and attractive community including a focus on the quality of the built environment through progressive *development regulations* and reviews.

**Guiding Policy 8.5**

Build reliable *infrastructure* and connected mobility that encourages physical activity such as biking and walking while also respecting the Island’s scenic qualities.

**Guiding Policy 8.6**

Grow a green, well-planned, environmentally sustainable community.

**Guiding Policy 8.7**

Plan for a safe city where citizens, City Officials, and Law Enforcement work together in an environment of accountability and trust.

**Guiding Policy 8.8**

When implementing policies, consider longer-term, indirect or unintended consequences of decisions.

**WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS AND IS NOT**

There is an important distinction between a *comprehensive plan* and a *development regulation*. The former is a policy statement that provides direction. The latter is a control on how land may be used, which is one of the ways in which a *policy* statement is implemented.

The *GMA* definition of a *comprehensive plan* is:

"Comprehensive land use plan," "*comprehensive plan*," or "plan" means a generalized coordinated land use policy statement...

RCW 36.70A.030(4)

Thus, the Bainbridge Island *Comprehensive Plan* is a “policy statement” that provides important direction to a variety of City actions including but not limited to, the adoption of its capital budget and its *development regulations*. However, the Plan is not a “land use control” which means that it is not designed or intended to be applied directly to development permits.

The *GMA* definition of *development regulations* is:

"Development regulations" or "regulation" means the controls placed on development or land use activities by a . . . city, including, but not limited to, zoning ordinances, critical areas ordinances, shoreline master programs, official controls, planned unit development ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and binding site plan ordinances together with any amendments thereto . . ."

RCW 36.70A.030(7)

The GMA also states:

"Each county and city that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall perform its activities and make capital budget decisions in conformity with its *comprehensive plan*."

RCW 36.70A.120

The "shall perform its activities" phrase suggests broader application of *comprehensive plan* policies than simply codes and capital budgets. On Bainbridge Island, the City maintains a number of *functional plans*, such as the City's utility plans as well as programs it funds and administers through its budget. The City also coordinates with other units of local government, e.g., the Bainbridge Island School, Fire, and Parks districts, each of which maintains its own programs and functional or operational plans. These are inventoried in the Plan's Capital Facilities Element.

### **Types and Degrees of Policy Direction**

The Elements in this *Comprehensive Plan* consist of Goals and Policies. Goals express the high-rank order values that are most important to the Island community. They are aspirational, frequently describing desired outcomes. The Policies listed under each Goal identify strategies or specific actions to be taken to move the community in the direction of fulfilling the Goal.

Depending on the issue and the Element, the Goals and Policies may provide direction to the City Council, Planning Commission, Hearing Examiner and City Staff. Some of the actions will take the form of land use or other *development regulations*; others will be capital projects or programs; and still others may take the form of outreach, education, coordination or partnership with citizens, organizations or other units of government.

The goal and policy statements sometimes use very directive verbs such as "maintain" or "adopt." In other cases, less directive verbs are used such as "consider" or "encourage."

The more directive verbs convey a higher rank order of *policy* direction. Directive goal or policy language may call for the updating of *development regulations*, however that does not convert them into controls or conditions that can be directly applied to a permit decision.

A similar distinction can be made between the auxiliary verbs "*should*" and "*shall*." Both terms are used in the *Comprehensive Plan* and it is intended that both provide substantive direction. The difference in meaning between "*should*" and "*shall*" is one of degree rather than kind. As used in this Plan, the word "*shall*" imparts a higher order of substantive direction than the word "*should*." However as with the active verbs, the use of "*shall*"

remains substantive *policy* direction not a land use control within the GMA meaning and definitions cited above.

### **How and when may the *Comprehensive Plan* be amended?**

In addition to the ~~ten-eight~~-year cycle for the periodic review of the *Comprehensive Plan*, the GMA also includes requirements regarding potential plan amendments in the intervening years. Set forth at RCW 36.70A.130, these include:

- A *comprehensive plan* may be amended no more than once in any calendar year. The City's *comprehensive plan* amendment process allows privately initiated amendments every three years (BIMC 2.16.190).
- All proposed plan amendments, including those initiated by private parties or by the City, should be considered concurrently to determine the cumulative effect of the proposals.
- Procedures must be adopted for any interested person to suggest amendments to either the *Comprehensive Plan* or *development regulations*.
- A city must establish a means by which it will "docket" (i.e., compile and maintain a list) of all suggested plan or development regulation amendments and consider whether or not to adopt them during the amendment process.
- Public participation programs must be developed and followed for proposed amendments to the *Comprehensive Plan* or *development regulations*.

### **[VISION 2050-2040: Puget Sound Regional Council](#)**

[Puget Sound Regional Council \(PSRC\)](#) is the metropolitan planning organization for the greater Seattle area (Kitsap, Snohomish, King and Pierce counties). The Bainbridge Island-~~2016~~ [2024](#) Comprehensive Plan advances the sustainable approach to growth and future development that is the cornerstone of [Vision 2050 2040](#). [Bainbridge Island is identified as a "High Capacity Transit Community" in Vision 2050. Sustainability](#) is integrated throughout all Elements of the city's comprehensive plan. We have incorporated a systems approach to planning and decision-making that addresses protection of the natural environment. The Plan commits to maintaining and restoring ecosystems, reduce *greenhouse gas* emissions, promotes non-motorized transportation, alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel, encourage compact development and prioritizes the creation of new *affordable housing*. The Plan also has established an *affordable housing goals* for this planning period. The plan includes provisions that ensure that a healthy environment remains available for future generations in our city.

The Plan has been updated based on [population, housing, residential and employment targets that align with Vision 2050 2040](#), as demonstrated through the population and employment capacity analysis in the [Kitsap County-2014-2021 Buildable Lands Report](#), and updated citywide and Wisnlow capacity analyses completed as part of the 2024 periodic update. The City's existing residential and commercial zoning accommodates those target- see tables below.

**NOTE: TABLE IN-1 AND IN-2 UPDATED WITH PREFERRED LAND USE ALTERNATIVE NUMBERS**

<b>Table IN-1: City of Bainbridge Island Population Capacity and Demand</b>	
<b><u>2020 US Census Population</u></b>	<u>24,825</u>
<b><del>2010-2036</del> <u>2020-2044</u> Allocated Population Growth</b>	<del>5,635</del> <u>+4,524</u>
<b><del>2036</del> <u>2044</u> Residential Population Forecast/Target</b>	<del>28,660</del> <u>29,349</u>
<b>Population Capacity Under <u>Future Land Use Map</u> <del>Existing Zoning</del></b>	<del>6,814</del> <u>+7,609</u>
<b>Net <del>20-Year</del> <u>2044</u> Population Capacity (+ or -)</b>	<del>+1,179</del> <u>+3,085</u>
<b>Population Capacity/Demand Ratio</b>	<del>1.21</del> <u>1.68</u>

<b>Table IN-2: City of Bainbridge Island Employment Capacity and Demand</b>	
<b><u>2020: Employment on Bainbridge Island</u></b>	<u>8,073 jobs</u>
<b><del>2036</del> <u>2020-2044</u> Employment Growth Forecast/Target</b>	<del>2,808</del> <u>+1,927 jobs</u>
<b>Employment Capacity Under <u>Future Land Use Map</u> <del>Existing Commercial Zoning</del></b>	<del>2,941</del> <u>+3,002 jobs</u>
<b>Net 20-Year <u>Employment</u> <del>Population Capacity</del> / Target (+ or -)</b>	<del>+133</del> <u>+1,075 jobs</u>
<b>Employment Capacity/Demand Ratio</b>	<del>1.04</del> <u>1.55</u>