



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INTRODUCTION

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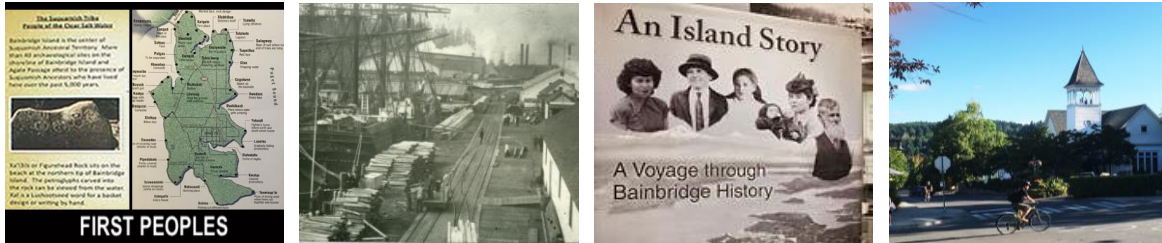
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# BAINBRIDGE ISLAND Past, Present and Future

## 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 ~~three~~ two geologic areas, with the southern third composed of sedimentary bedrock ~~thrust up from the sea~~ approximately ~~eighteen~~ 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 Pacific 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

~~The first people on Bainbridge Island were the 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. There is no written record as to when they arrived, but artifacts and petroglyphs suggest that the Suquamish were here for almost 10,000 years. Most of what is known about Suquamish life on Bainbridge Island came from Europeans and pioneer settlers who explored the area and provided written and photographic records. Approximately 38 specific Suquamish~~

communities have been catalogued on the Island, and all, with one exception, were on or near the coast.

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.

Incorporation however, has done little to slow growth, especially with increasing population pressure stemming from Puget Sound's burgeoning technology industry. According to the US Census Bureau, the median family income on Bainbridge Island (2009-2013) was \$95,481 compared to the whole of Washington State at \$59,478. The average home value on the Island (2009-2013) was \$551,700 compared to the state average of \$262,100.

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.

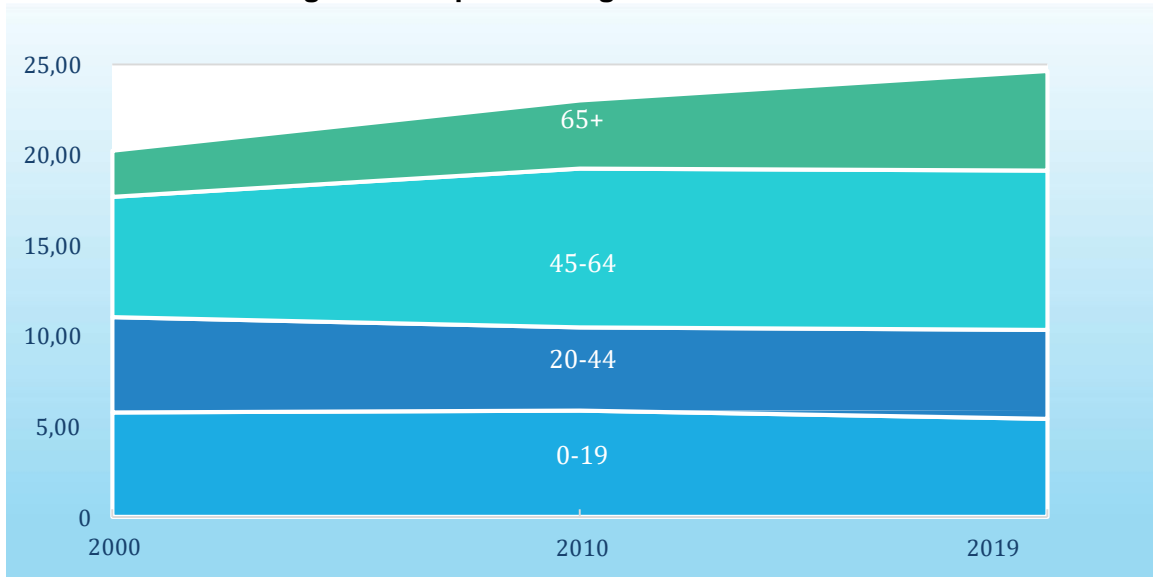
## BAINBRIDGE ISLAND TODAY

### People

The population of the Island in 2015 was 23,850, which was a modest increase from the 2010 population of 23,025. Demographically Bainbridge Island is predominantly white (91%) 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.

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

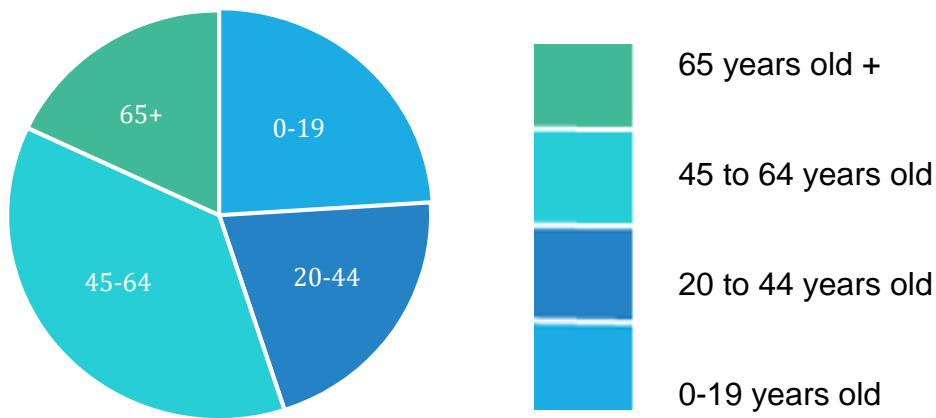
**Fig. IN-1 Population Age Cohorts 2000 to 2019**



Source: 2000-2010 U.S. Census and Experian Census Area Projections & Estimates

Bainbridge Island’s population is relatively affluent. The trend line from the years 2000 through 2019 indicates relative increases in yearly household incomes above \$100,000 and corresponding decreases in the percentage of households earning below \$100,000. 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.

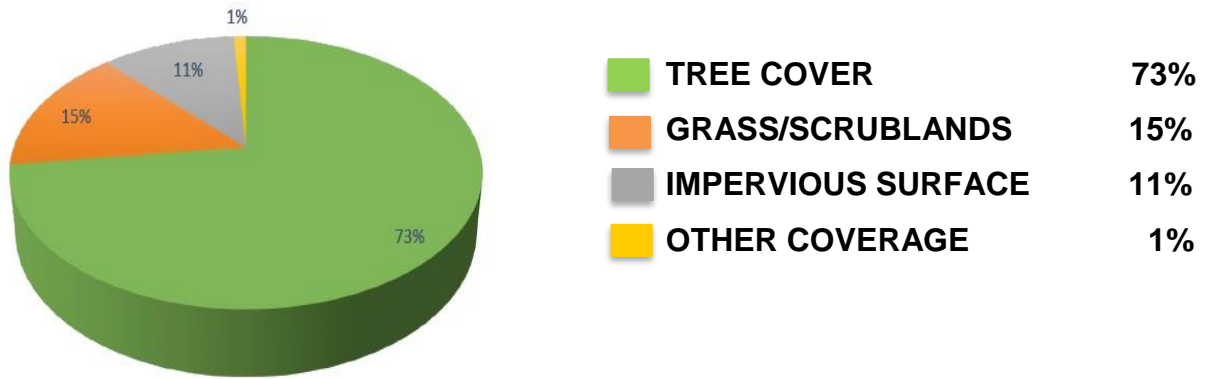
**Fig. IN-2 Population by Age Cohort in 2016**



**Island-wide Land Profiles**

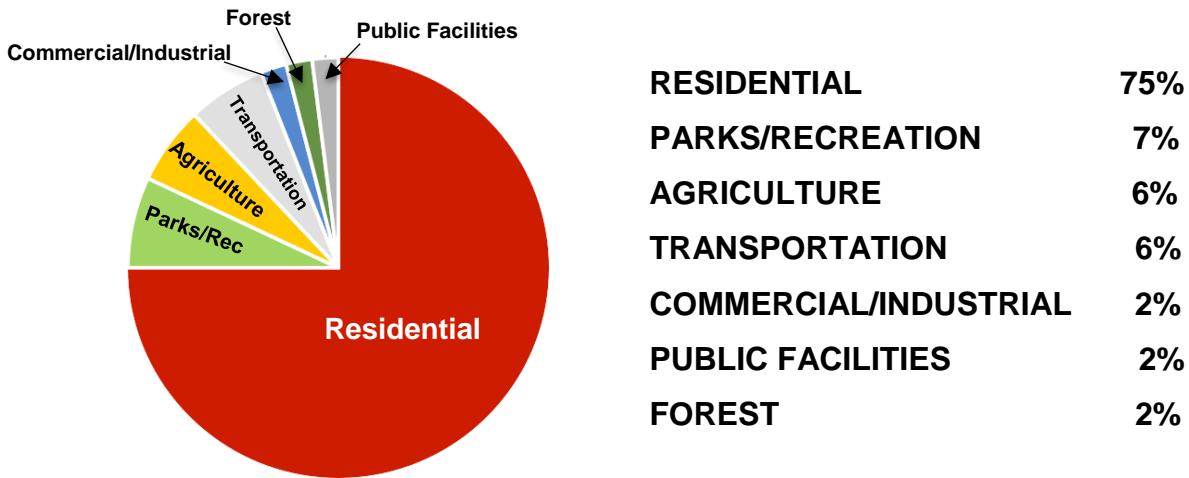
Almost 88% of the twenty-six square miles of the Island’s land coverage is either tree cover or grass/scrublands. The developed portions of the Island constitute impervious surface totaling about 11% of its land area.

**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**



## HISTORY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ON BAINBRIDGE

The 2016 Update is the second 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 economics 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.

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

## THE FUTURE: NAVIGATING BAINBRIDGE

From 2014 through 2016, the City of Bainbridge Island undertook the update of the *Comprehensive Plan* (the **Plan**). This project 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 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 requires that the Plan be reviewed and updated at least every eight years which means the periodic update cycle for Bainbridge Island is 2016, 2024, 2032 and so on.

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 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. 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.

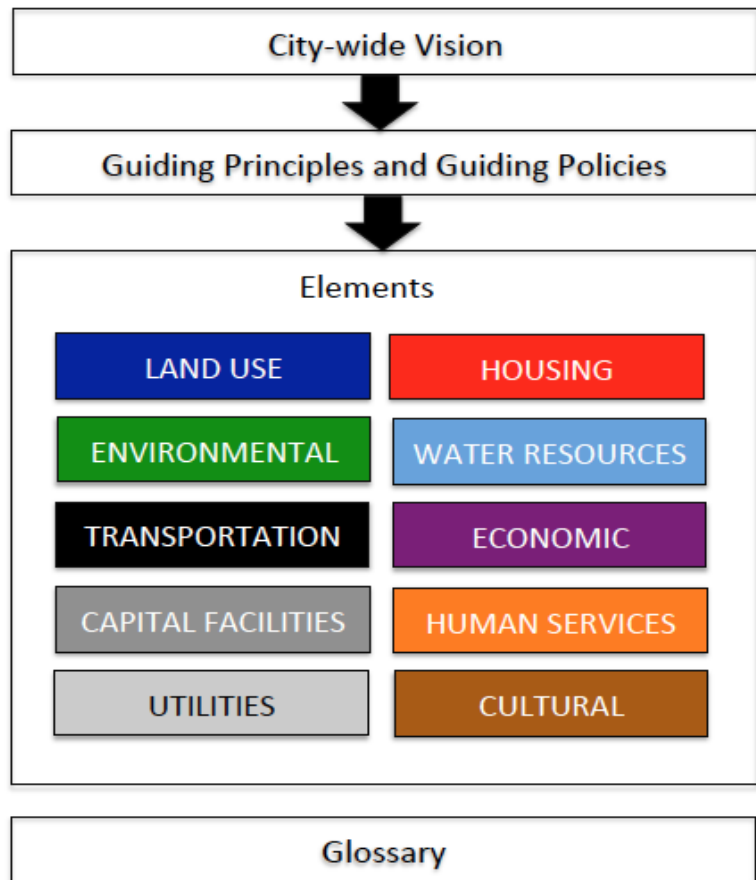


Fig. IN-5 Comprehensive Plan

The GMA requires that a comprehensive plan include five “mandatory” elements: Land Use, 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 of 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 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 Plan’s glossary are italicized.



## BAINBRIDGE ISLAND VISION 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.

~~Contemporary~~ 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 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 ~~are~~ 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*.

*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

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

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

#### 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 Policy 1.4

Review, update and fully implement the Island-wide Transportation Plan so the vision of multimodal transportation becomes reality for today's residents.

### Guiding Principle #2

**Protect the water resources of the Island.**

#### Guiding Policy 2.1

Manage water resources for Bainbridge Island for present and future generations, recognizing that the Island's finite groundwater resources [aquifers] are the sole source of our water supply.

**Guiding Policy 2.2**

As part of long-range land use planning, consider the impacts of future development to the quality and quantity of groundwater that will be available to future Islanders and to the natural environment. To that end, strive for sustainable groundwater withdrawal, conserve aquifer recharge, guard against seawater intrusion and prevent adverse impacts to ground 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**

Sea level rise Climate change may reduce the volume of our finite groundwater resources. Anticipate and prepare for the consequences of 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 and quantity of groundwater for future generations.

**Guiding Policy 2.5**

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

**Guiding Policy 2.6**

Recognizing the importance of our ground water and other water resources to present and future generations of Bainbridge Islanders, apply the precautionary principle to activities that pose a potentially adverse impact upon those resources.

**Guiding Policy 2.7**

Allow for the reasonable needs of farms, home gardens and domestic landscapes, when planning for the long-term sustainable use of the 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 a macro component of *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

**Address the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

#### Guiding Policy 6.1

Within our plan, replace 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**

Advance social equity on the Island by addressing basic human needs including *affordable housing*, personal health and safety, mobility and access to human services.

**Guiding Policy 6.3**

Seek appropriate ways to provide economic opportunities for all community residents within a diversified Island economy.

**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 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 ~~only~~ 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*.