

Comprehensive Plan

BACKGROUND

Under the state's Growth Management Act, all cities are mandated to establish Comprehensive Plans. These plans act as long-term guides to help each city balance growth with the need to sustain the environment. Bainbridge Island's first Comprehensive Plan, completed in 1994, was developed with the input of a citizen Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee. The plan was updated in the winter of 2004 through a series of public meetings. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document. It serves as a blueprint for the island we envision for the future. The Plan is presently being updated with a due date for completion 2016. The City website for this update is Navigate Bainbridge which includes a video Comp Plan 101.

<http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/615/Navigate-Bainbridge-Comprehensive-Plan-U>

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN and the ZONING ORDINANCE

The Zoning Ordinance is supposed to be based on, and consistent, with the Comprehensive Plan. Unfortunately the City has neglected to carry out this relationship. This resulted in the failure to deny the Visconsi shopping center since the reasons for denial relied on the policies and goals in the Comprehensive Plan which had not been transferred into the Zoning ordinance. This was made clear by the Planning Commission unanimously recommending denial of the project in 2013? based on policies in the Comprehensive Plan. The City rejected their recommendations, and the City Planning Director used the Zoning Code to convince the Hearing Examiner to follow her recommendation for approval. Hence whatever the community wishes for its future, it is important the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented in the Zoning Ordinance to give them the full force of law.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The ten elements of the Comprehensive Plan are presently (URLs are pdf documents):
<http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/432/Plan-Elements>:

1. Land use <http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/1632>
2. Water resources <http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/1636>
3. Environmental <http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/1627>
4. Capital facilities,
5. Utilities,
6. Transportation
7. Housing,
8. Human services,
9. Cultural and
10. Economic development

Probably the first three elements are most important for citizens interested in land use and preserving the environment.

In addition, the Winslow Master Plan is part of the Comprehensive Plan. It has sections on Land Use, Open Space and Trails

<http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/431/Winslow-Master-Plan>

There are five overriding principles of the Plan are:

- Preserve the special character of the Island
- Protect fragile water resources
- Foster diversity
- Consider costs and benefits to property owners when making land use decisions
- Promote sustainable development

FINDING GOALS AND POLICIES

As mentioned above, the Comprehensive Plan has Goals and Policies which must be implemented in the Zoning Ordinance.

Here is an example of a Goal and Policies from the Framework of the Plan (Note: the three letters FRW give some idea what the policies and where they can be found – but often this is not clear or easy to find.)

GOAL 3

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes and affirms that, as an Island, the City has natural constraints based on the carrying capacity of its natural systems. The Plan strives to establish a development pattern that is consistent with the goals of the community and compatible with the Island's natural systems.

FRW 3.1

Recognizing that the carrying capacity of the Island is not known, the citizens of Bainbridge Island should strive to conserve and protect its natural systems, within the parameters of existing data. Revisions to the Plan should be made as new information becomes available.

Discussion: The carrying capacity of Bainbridge Island is determined by many factors, including the supply of limited resources (particularly water), changes in patterns of consumption, and technological advances. This Plan acknowledges that, with current information, the carrying capacity of the Island is not known.

The City's Home Page contains a search capability, but it requires some patience to use. Let's take an example to find Policy **NSC 1.5** which is the Rolling Bay Neighborhood Service Center (Page 24 of Land Use Element). Using the SEARCH box on the home page and entering "Rolling Bay" gave 248 results, many of which were just for "Bay" alone. "NSC 1.5" did find a Comp Plan request for a rezone, but apparently nothing came up from the Comprehensive Plan itself. In other words, you have to read the sections in the Comprehensive Plan which interest you.

A final note **on associated ordinances** with the Comprehensive Plan which often provides the reasoning (or lack thereof) for language found in the Comp Plan.:

<http://www.bainbridgewa.gov/430/Associated-Ordinances>

MAPS

An important part of the Comprehensive Plan are the maps which are often overlooked.

For a list of maps go to <http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/196/GIS-Mapping-Map-Gallery>

The Official Zoning map has to be consistent with the Official Comprehensive Plan Map. Hence if a rezone is requested, it first must be changed on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

Also the Shoreline Designations map shows the designations of the shorelines – which are different than the zoning of the properties on the shoreline

The Watershed map shows the watershed boundaries and locations of streams.

Additional maps are found in the Comp Plan document, which would be interesting if they weren't impossible to read.

<http://www.bainbridgewa.gov/432/Plan-Elements>

These maps include environmental aspects such as slope stability, wetlands, fish occurrence, and eelgrass. Land use maps cover open space, wildlife and view corridors, and Lynwood special planning area. The Water Resources maps have sewer and water service areas and aquifer recharge areas.

QUESTIONS

Go to Public Request tab. Xxxxxxx or contact ABC

