

SUMMER 2007

\$4.00

The Bainbridge Island  
**BROOM**

News and views about our island environment

OUR FADING ENVIRONMENT



ABC ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

**Neighborhood Groups**

Bainbridge Island Concerned Citizens (BICC)..... 842-4055  
 Boaters and Mariners of Bainbridge Island ..... 842-5313  
 Eagle Harbor Alliance (EHA)..... 780-2236  
 Eagle Harbor Condominium Association ..... 842-3367  
 East Central BI Community Association (ECBICA)..... 842-2432  
 Island Center/Gazzam Lake Neighborhood..... 842-5171  
 IslandKeepers..... 780-7888  
 Fort Ward Neighborhood Association (FWNA)..... 842-8728  
 Manzanita Neighborhood Association ..... 842-6654  
 Murden Cove Preservation Association (MCPA) ..... 842-3671  
 North Bainbridge Community Association (NBCA)..... 842-4376  
 South Bainbridge Community Association (SBCA)..... 842-4165  
 Wing Point Neighborhood ..... 780-9965

**Officers**

Dale Spoor, Pro tem Chair ..... 842-5171  
 Charles Schmid, Secretary ..... 842-5313  
 Kay Mattson, Treasurer..... 842-3671

**Board of Directors**

Susan Andersson	Lois Andrus	Terence Berggren
Warren Bocker	Neil Burnett	Robert Campbell
Jessie Hey	Kirsten Hytopoulos	Arnie Kubiak
Iver MacDougall	Vince Mattson	Kol Medina
Sandra Shopes	Dave Ullin	

**Technical Advisory Committee, Eagle Harbor Superfund Site Cleanup**

Dave Davison (Chair)	Janet Knox	Lucile Parker
Charles Schmid	Bette Kregger	Michael Dauber

Development Applications, SEPA Determinations of Forest Practice Permits and other actions affecting the environment...Vince Mattson

**Publication Information**

*The Broom* is a publication of the Association of Bainbridge Communities (ABC), which strives for the highest standards of environmental protection, natural resource conservation, and land use planning on Bainbridge Island. ABC is a member of the Washington Environmental Council and the Washington Toxic Coalition.

Guest Editor.....Tristan Baurick  
 Editorial Board.....Lew Andrus, Charles Schmid, Dave Thompson  
 Contributors Lew Andrus, Tristan Baurick, Wayne Daley, Sara Edwards, Kirsten Hytopoulos, Janet Knox, Neil Johannsen, Iver MacDougall, Bobbie Morgan, Charles Schmid, Daniel Smith, Rod Stevens, Liz Taylor, Lin Kamer-Walker  
 Design and production.....Lew Andrus  
 Printing .....Blue Sky Printing  
 Distribution.....Jo Schaffer

With the exception of editorials tagged with the ABC byline, opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the official position of ABC. Though we attempt to verify accuracy of factual information, it is not always possible to do so before publication. We welcome and publish corrections and rebuttals. Back issues may be viewed at the Bainbridge Island Public Library and the University of Washington Library, and can be purchased from the Association of Bainbridge Communities offices for \$4.00. Address all correspondence to *The Broom*, P.O. Box 10999, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or email us at [biabc2000@yahoo.com](mailto:biabc2000@yahoo.com).

and publish corrections and rebuttals. Back issues may be viewed at the Bainbridge Island Public Library and the University of Washington Library, and can be purchased from the Association of Bainbridge Communities offices for \$4.00. Address all correspondence to *The Broom*, P.O. Box 10999, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or email us at [biabc2000@yahoo.com](mailto:biabc2000@yahoo.com).

Cover illustration idea from *The New Yorker* magazine

**Volume 26, No. 2**  
 Total copies for this issue: 750



*A summer of discontent*

This summer should have been a time for us environmentalists to sit back and enjoy Bainbridge Island’s natural beauty. After all, isn’t this why we live here? To venture out into the island’s surrounding waters, look up at its wonderful trees, and savor its small town atmosphere. Instead, it turned into months of speaking out and writing documents (and in some cases blogs) full of complaints countering those who – consciously or not – are whittling away at those very pleasures which we had hoped to enjoy. Read Neil Johannsens’s discovery that the city’s effort to paint the Waterfront Park bridge had inadvertently coated part of Winslow ravine underneath (See page 16). Or the report on Daniel Smith’s discovery that the city Public Works Department had taken down some of his huge fir trees (page 9). Then there’s the city’s aggressive push to increase density and raise building heights in Winslow to 55 feet (see the various articles on the city’s Winslow Tomorrow project and development plans near the ferry terminal). And, just as we were gathering the *Broom*’s final articles from the community, a series of spiteful messages from an island developer appeared in the *Bainbridge Review*, mailers, and in recorded telephone calls. These vindictive attacks against citizens and city staff who have questioned his destruction of a Tolo Road wetland do not belong in our island’s public discourse.

Why don’t they just relax and concentrate on protecting and preserving that same environment we all hoped to enjoy this summer? It would be easy to say the cause behind their anti-environmental approach is money – maximize profits and minimize labor costs. But it’s more than that. In fact, ensuing litigation expenses and labor costs to correct mistakes soon eat into profits. Action that favors nature is the natural approach.

Why didn’t Public Works use a brush and place a tarp under the bridge, or take care not to cut trees on private property? The first question that should have been asked is how this will affect the environment, not just how to

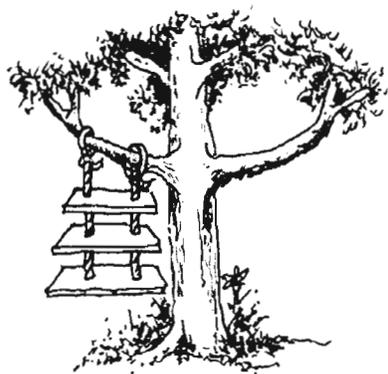
Why didn’t Public Works use a brush and place a tarp under the bridge, or take care not to cut trees on private property? The first question that should have been asked is how this will affect the environment, not just how to get the job done economically. The environment has played second fiddle, both in the field and inside City Hall. The city has adopted many ordinances over the past few years over citizen objections. But it still hasn’t produced a tree ordinance to save island trees, although this was a goal set in 2003. The city has proclaimed itself a “Tree City USA” even as trees come down and are not replanted. Unfortunately, like the cover of this issue of the *Broom* illustrates, the city actually sees itself as environmentally aware. But its Environmental Technical Advisory Committee hasn’t met since January 31st. The joint Public Works/Planning Commission group, which the mayor set up to coordinate the two department’s activities, hasn’t met in a long time as well. And finally, Winslow Tomorrow hasn’t fulfilled its original vision. But hope is not lost for

this planning initiative, as long as it concentrates on keeping what's good and stops its marketing approach to facilitate redevelopment.

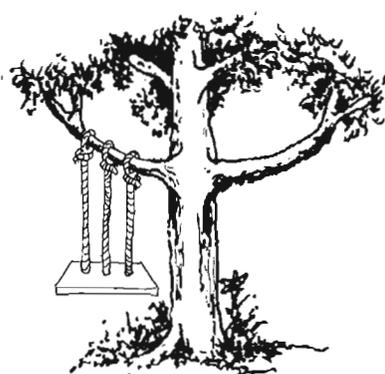
There are citizens on Bainbridge Island who *do* understand the environmental culture. Read about architect Russ Hamlet and developer Lisa Martin's efforts to build Kitsap County's most sustainable house in Rolling Bay (page 15). Or fish biologist Wayne Daley, who again is working to increase salmon habitat on the island (page 14). The city's Design Review Board took the goals of the Com-

prehensive Plan to heart and saved a historic home on Ericksen Avenue (page 23). Bobbie Morgan reports on how volunteers are turning backyards into wildlife habitat (page 18). Once again, citizens lead the way. Our city, starting at the top, could benefit from understanding how its citizens set their priorities for preserving our natural surroundings. Had the city done so, islanders could have enjoyed this summer's beauty, rather than spending the season railing against the injustices done to the island's environment.

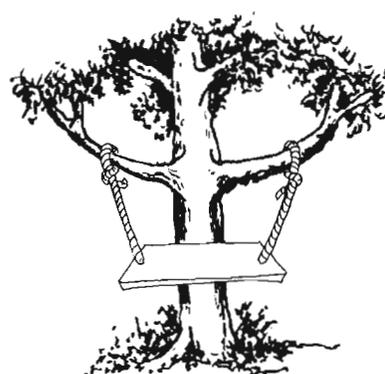
## Winslow Tomorrow Trees



As the Community Congress  
Envisioned it



As the Consultants  
Recommended it



As the City Staff Designed it



As Public Works Built it



As the Public Paid for it



What the People Wanted



As Public Works Built it



As the Public Paid for it



What the People Wanted

Concept courtesy of Daniel Smith

### CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

<i>Summer of discontent</i> .....	2,3	<i>Bridges to a healthier environment</i> .....	16
<i>The bold plans behind Winslow Tomorrow</i> .....	4,5,6	<i>Conservationists call for herbicide spray</i> .....	17
<i>Winslow doesn't need bigger, taller buildings</i> .....	7	<i>Bring your back yard back to nature</i> .....	18
<i>Growth could crowd Winslow's marine gateway</i> .....	8	<i>Pritchard Park gets a new look</i> .....	19
<i>Trees - here today, gone tomorrow</i> .....	9	<i>Citizens sound off at ABC town meeting</i> .....	20
<i>Winslow Tomorrow finances</i> .....	10,11	<i>Mayor gives special treatment to developer</i> .....	21,22
<i>Plannign for downtown parks</i> .....	12,13	<i>Neighborhood news</i> .....	20,22,23,24
<i>Hindsight on island growth</i> .....	13	<i>What's happening (and not) at Wyckoff</i> .....	25,26
<i>Tribe challenges city over environmental regulations</i> .....	14	<i>Poet's corner</i> .....	26
<i>Smoother traveling for Lynwood Center fish</i> .....	14	<i>Plan now for an island of the old</i> .....	27
<i>Taking the "LEED" in sustainable home design</i> .....	15		

# The bold plans behind Winslow Tomorrow

Kirsten Hytopoulos and Sally Adams

## Will the *real* Winslow Tomorrow please step forward?

After three years, the city's Winslow Tomorrow planning initiative remains an elusive, ever-shifting concept. Even key players can't always agree on Winslow Tomorrow's meaning and scope. While some deny that the Ferry/Gateway District and Waterfront Park plans are part of Winslow Tomorrow, those programs are listed on the city's website under Winslow Tomorrow "Current Projects." While others continue to describe Winslow Tomorrow as merely a vision, the Winslow Master Plan has been amended to include Winslow Tomorrow goals. Thirty-two specific Winslow Tomorrow "actions" were presented to the City Council and extensive Winslow Tomorrow zoning changes have gone before the city Planning Commission.

One current city councilor recently remarked, "Winslow Tomorrow designer Sandy Fischer has publicly told the City Council and the community numerous times that Winslow Tomorrow is not a development plan, and should not be used as one." But today there can be no doubt that Winslow Tomorrow is an intense and purposeful development plan of the boldest kind.

### From humble beginnings

The urgent calls for replacing broken sewer pipes under Winslow Way spawned the Winslow Tomorrow project. What began as a suggestion for using the opportunity to improve elements of Winslow Way grew into a "vision-creating" process for the Winslow Core District. Three years and \$4 million later, the sewer pipes remain in place, cracked and leaking, while the city tries to piggyback favored projects onto repair of this failing system. Visions of wider sidewalks and more street trees have morphed into a behemoth redesign of the entire downtown and an economic bonanza for downtown property owners.

### Winslow Canyon

The proposed 55-foot, five-story building heights along Winslow Way have been one of the most publicized Winslow Tomorrow proposals. This height increase was marketed with assurances that property owners would use design setbacks and stepbacks so no buildings would reach 55 feet along Winslow Way. However, such setbacks and stepbacks from Winslow Way are not mandated by the proposal currently working its way through the city. Many citizens confronted with images of what has come to be called "Winslow Canyon" have opposed the plan.

An associated provision allows for a near doubling of building density, also known as floor area ratio (FAR). Recent mixed-use developments such as Harbor Square, Island Crossings, Madrone Village and the Seabreeze were built under current zoning, which allows for building heights up to 35 feet, or 45 feet with underground parking, and a FAR of up to 1.5. The new density proposal would increase FARs to 2.5.

The community was told repeatedly that the additional floor space is required to comply with the city's Comprehensive Plan and the state's Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA requires that cities plan for growth so

adequate infrastructure will exist to accommodate projected population increases. It also aims to direct growth away from environmentally-sensitive areas. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the community has sought to direct 50 percent of its growth into Winslow to protect the island's rural character. City officials acknowledged that, under present zoning, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate projected growth in Winslow through at least 2025 – the current planning window.

But city administrators and consultants want *more* than adequate capacity. They want to create incentives for developers to rebuild the Winslow core. They claim that without the increased FAR, developers will not build in Winslow and that current zoning prohibits an adequate number of new residential units. This argument falls flat when one reviews current construction statistics. Even without the proposed changes, we were only 3 percent short of our Comprehensive Plan goal last year. About 47 percent of residential units built on Bainbridge were built in Winslow.

Perhaps the greatest fallacy in Winslow Tomorrow's plans is the claim that by increasing the number of residential units in Winslow we will reduce sprawl elsewhere on the island. As proposed, this upzoning would go forward without any corresponding limits on building in the island's rural areas. Thus Winslow's population will explode, while the unprotected rural areas will continue to disappear.

As this issue of *The Broom* goes to print, there is reason to believe that the increased height and density proposals along Winslow Way will fail to become codified due, in no small part, to community opposition to the proposals. That would be a step in the right direction, but residents will still have a long way to go to make sure provisions contrary to the greater community interests do not slip through. The public has just begun to scratch the surface of Winslow Tomorrow.

### The Winslow of our tomorrow

With sufficient capacity to accommodate 20 more years of growth in downtown Winslow, it's hard to explain the urgency with which Winslow Tomorrow projects are

**The Winslow of our tomorrow**  
With sufficient capacity to accommodate 20 more years of growth in downtown Winslow, it's hard to explain the urgency with which Winslow Tomorrow projects are pushing their way through the city, particularly because some new condos and storefronts remain empty.

Winslow Tomorrow related projects, including the Ferry-Gateway District and Waterfront Park plans have recently been the subject of community open houses and city Planning Commission workshops. Environmental impact statements are underway, and consultants and staff are working on plans that may include over 1,000 new condo units in the Ferry/Gateway District, hundreds of thousands of square feet of new commercial space throughout Winslow and development over and around the Winslow ravine, a protected fish habitat area. In Waterfront Park, over 80 trees have been labeled as so dangerous that they need to come down within the next year, a conclusion that has been questioned by a number of citizens and tree

*Continued on page 5*

experts who walked the area with city staff. Coincidentally, many of these trees are located in “view corridors” of the Winslow Tomorrow plans.

On Winslow Way, the public works project that started it all three years ago is now known as the “Winslow Way Streetscape” design project, with its own website and public relations firm. Meanwhile, cracked sewer pipes are potentially leaking hazardous pollutants into the groundwater, while not a shovel of dirt has been turned.

There is as much to be concerned about in what is *not* being proposed as these city plans move forward. To date:

- No green building code had been introduced or enacted.
- Trees in the Winslow core are not protected by city code or policy.
- No proposals to increase public transportation bringing islanders into a pedestrian-friendly Winslow were adopted.
- Islanders do not know whether Bainbridge has enough water to support current or future populations.
- Despite a proposed bonus structure to allow developers to buy their way to maximum height and density through affordable housing and open space add-ons, there has been no attempt to secure land on which to create those amenities.

In addition to losing the sense of place that drew most of us here, and failing in our pledge to do our best to protect the natural resources of our island home, we will continue to foot the bill. It’s been acknowledged that the cost to the city (read “taxpayers”) will top \$100 million. Some suggest that \$100 million won’t begin to cover the infrastructure necessary to address the proposed build-out, and that we must not lose sight of other pressing island priorities. What citizens do know is that \$4 million has already been allocated to cover Winslow Tomorrow costs to date, and not one of those dollars has been spent to break ground.

### Community vision or empty rhetoric?

Looking back to the Winter/Spring 2005 issue of *The Broom*, an excerpt from a Winslow Tomorrow newsletter seemed to describe a harmless, feel-good community planning exercise. Familiar and reassuring concepts like “natural resource management,” “sustainable growth” and “multi-modal transportation” suggested a path consistent with our community values and the goals of the city’s Comprehensive Plan. Then, as now, citizens were reassured that the community was well represented through the “community congress” that helped create the Winslow Tomorrow vision.

Something went wrong along the way. Many of the plans citizens are wrestling with today contradict the spirit, if not the letter, of our Comprehensive Plan and make a mockery of the laudable goals set forth by the community congress. However, that hasn’t stopped the city from touting the plans as “green,” “sustainable” and “preserving character and sense of place” when they are not.

Perhaps by returning the city’s Comprehensive Plan, the ultimate expression of the community’s values and goals, islanders can untangle the web of missteps that have gone before us. Like the GMA, which specifically limits growth in areas where quality and quantity of potable water cannot be assured, the Comprehensive Plan refer-

ences time and again the need to preserve and protect natural resources – and water resources in particular. The Comprehensive Plan respects our unique status as an island. Because “the carrying capacity of the island is not known, the citizens of Bainbridge Island should strive to conserve and protect its natural systems,” the plan states.

### Our island, our responsibility

Another goal emphasized throughout the GMA and the Comprehensive Plan is the need for ongoing and legitimate public involvement. As much as the proponents of Winslow Tomorrow would like to shut down public dissent by claiming that “the people have already spoken” through the community congress, it is neither prudent nor ethical for the city to exclude public involvement at any stage of a major planning project.

There are many opportunities for the public to speak out and influence the process, but often it requires paying very close attention to what is happening at City Hall, and of course it requires some personal time. A number of citizens are committed to following the process and attempting to inform others throughout the island. However, the voices and concerns of more than a handful of informed islanders should be heard before the council votes on what the city will look like and how taxpayers will pay for it.

Now is the time for every citizen who shares these concerns about the future of this island to speak up, whether through:

- Writing emails to the council ([council@ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us](mailto:council@ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us))
- Writing emails to local newspaper editors ([editor@bainbridgereview.com](mailto:editor@bainbridgereview.com) or [jack.swanson@sounddsl.com](mailto:jack.swanson@sounddsl.com) for the Islander).
- By appearing at public hearings.

If the community does not act soon, it really will be too late.

Concerns about a denser, taller Winslow dominated discussions at a town meeting organized by the Save Winslow Way Coalition in May.

The large crowd who turned out for the meeting at the Bainbridge Commons expressed a broad range of concerns about changes proposed for Winslow Way and the downtown core.

#### 1. Funding

Attendees said they were concerned about how much Winslow Tomorrow will cost and how it will be paid for. It was proposed that the projected taxes for all five taxing districts be forecast over the long term and considered in conjunction with projected city expenses.

#### 1. Funding

Attendees said they were concerned about how much Winslow Tomorrow will cost and how it will be paid for. It was proposed that the projected taxes for all five taxing districts be forecast over the long term and considered in conjunction with projected city expenses.

#### 2. Zoning

Most attendees felt that current zoning is adequate. Some were critical of city proposals to increase Winslow Way’s building height allowances from 35 feet to 55 feet, or 5 stories.

#### 3. If it isn’t broke, don’t fix it.

Many agreed that downtown Winslow is working now and does not need to be “revitalized.” With regards to possible improvements, some suggested

- that the community take one issue at a time such as:
- utility and other infrastructure repairs and upgrades
  - parking for Town & Country market
  - public transportation
  - non-motorized transportation

**4. Community voice**

Many felt that a community vote should be considered for a project that will so significantly impact the community at large, both in terms of quality of life and fiscally. A community perception is that the public participation process focused on convincing the public of the “need” for Winslow Tomorrow, rather than listening to the island’s voices about their vision for the island.

**5. Growth requirements**

Some attendees asked why there is such a rush to accommodate significantly larger numbers of new residents when basic infrastructure prerequisites, natural resources (water) and community values are at risk. It was asked whether the city has taken any steps to

identify what exemptions from the GMA requirements might apply to Bainbridge Island.

**6. Sense of place**

Many in the group felt that Winslow’s small town feeling, spirit, and “sense of place” would be lost with proposed zoning. They did not want to see “Belltown on Bainbridge.”

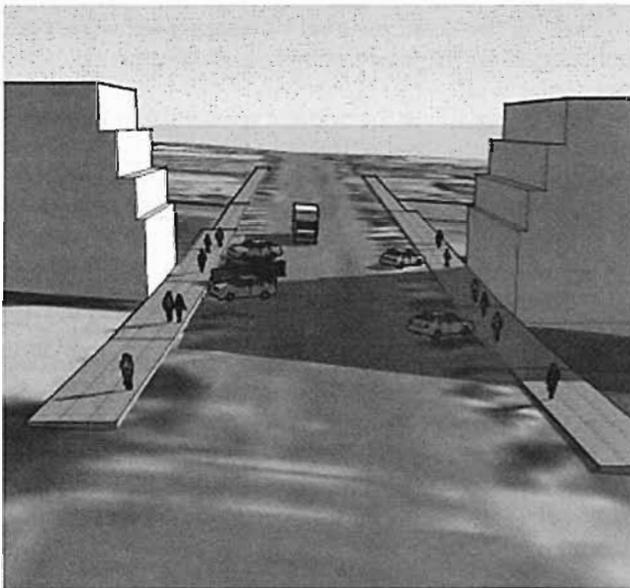
**7. Sustainability**

Concern was raised that Winslow Tomorrow’s “developer driven” changes do not address “sustainability” and that a water supply assessment is needed before significant development plans may begin.

**8. Council’s role**

Finally, the group felt that the City Council, as the policy – making body, should be dictating the direction, scope, and policy issues surrounding Winslow Tomorrow based on extensive and ongoing public input and that the project’s director should report to council, rather than the mayor.

**Citizens like their Winslow small and short**



Computer generated aerial view image representing

Computer generated aerial view image representing shadows cast by 50 foot buildings along Winslow Way at 9 a.m. on September 31



Computer generated aerial view image representing

Computer generated aerial view image representing shadows cast by 50 foot buildings with a 4 foot setback along Winslow Way at 9 a.m. on September 31

*Shadow diagram provided to the city by Eric Schmidt*

**Parking in Winslow may get worse Tomorrow**

**Unless something happens before November 1**, the parking requirement for commercial uses in the Winslow core area will drop from four spaces per 1,000 square feet of building space to two spaces per 1,000 square feet.

This means retail stores, offices and restaurants will only be required to provide half the parking spaces they must provide now. Parfitt area residents asked for (and got) more parking – three spaces per 1,000 square feet.

At their May 21, 2006 meeting, the Planning Commission voted to leave the required parking spaces in the Winslow core at four spaces per 1,000 square feet by a vote of four to one. However, recommendations by Winslow Tomorrow staff and consultants convinced the City Council to reject the Planning Commission position. The council voted to cut the requirement by half, down to two spaces.

# Winslow Doesn't Need Bigger, Taller Buildings

Reprint of an Guest Editorial by Rod Stevens from the August 1, 2007 edition of the Kitsap Sun

The generalized goals of the city's Winslow Tomorrow planning initiative should please everyone, but the actual zoning regulations now being proposed by city staff, and prepared in relatively closed meetings, would radically change the height and scale of buildings on Winslow Way.

They would turn the island's Mayberry-like main street into Belltown-on-Bainbridge. Gone would be the setting for the "Old Fashioned Fourth" many residents recently enjoyed, and gone the small-scale place that is so much a part of islanders' everyday lives.

Planners say not to worry. But consider that their regulations would allow buildings two stories taller than those at the Harbor Square mixed-use development that now towers over Winslow Way. Buildings could go to the height equivalent of five stories on the street's north side and four stories on the south side. Winslow could end up with a canyon along its main street, losing many smaller, distinctive storefronts.

The city planning department is urging decision-makers to simply "pass the package" of new regulations and let them get on with their plans. But there is little public awareness of these sweeping changes, and even less consensus.

Planners say islanders will see only a few minor changes, even though the new heights would be available on every lot. Their perspective neglects the fact that downtown property ownership is relatively concentrated.

On the north side of the street, two landowners alone control more than 40 percent of the land between Ericksen and Madison avenues. With the new regulations, these two owners could build about 250,000 square feet of new space. That amounts to more than all of the existing space in the central downtown blocks put together. Why should anyone assume developers won't build to the maximum allowed when they are doing so on the rest of the island?

Bainbridge residents are told that developers must be encouraged to replace old buildings with bigger ones and

larger parking areas to achieve the overall goals of Winslow Tomorrow. And yet parking ratios downtown are almost identical to those at the Village shopping center on High School Road. Why is it that places like downtown Kirkland, Ashland, Oregon and Los Gatos, California are keeping their low-rise main streets? Why can't islanders have theirs?

Along with these changes are proposals for more than \$100 million in general obligation bonds, for which most residents would have to pay. This is more money than the school district is planning to spend to renovate all of the schools on the island over the next six years.

To try to rationalize these changes with hard numbers, city staff assembled a volunteer group to prepare a financial pro forma.

However, I believe the cost assumptions in this pro forma are off by 30 to 50 percent, making the results meaningless. City staff continue to use the pro forma to argue for change, even though the report clearly states that "it should not be used as a decision tool."

Winslow Tomorrow has become a staff-driven process with a \$1 million bill that will likely rise to \$2 million by the start of fall. Yet not a spade of dirt will have been turned.

For the past two years, staff have shut down the public involvement process, hiring consultants and appointing "advisory committees" staffed with people who have clear conflicts of interest. Sometimes the word "stakeholder" seems to have become a euphemism for "insider."

Citizens need to take back control of the planning process and protect the small town qualities that set Bainbridge apart. Citizens need to say 'no' to the idea of much bigger and taller buildings on Winslow Way. We need to focus on the real, immediate, and specific actions that will make the rest of the central area livable. This will keep taxes reasonable, help local merchants, and protect the island's unique sense of place. It is time for citizens to take control of their future.



Balloons flying at 50' to illustrate relative heights

# Growth could crowd Winslow's marine gateway

Elise Wright

Island residents may be surprised to learn that the city is planning for more residences, commercial spaces and a new roadway for the east end of Winslow.

A slate of Ferry/Gateway District and Waterfront Park planning alternatives under consideration by city staff would dramatically increase the housing, retail and commercial capacity of Winslow. One plan would construct a vehicle roadway across an aquatic conservancy at Waterfront Park and the Winslow Ravine.

Despite the significance of these proposed changes, the participants of the Winslow Tomorrow planning initiative never had a chance to consider them.

The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that mentions the planned development will go before the City Council in September. The public will then have 60 days to comment before the EIS is finalized in December.

The time for citizen involvement is now. Don't fail to study and comment on the alternatives presented in the draft EIS when it appears.

What will be contained in the three options under consideration?

Alternative 1: This "no action" option would maintain current city Comprehensive Plan policies and zoning regulations. It allows for 475 residential units, 9,000 square feet of retail space, and 5,600 square feet of office space. The ferry terminal area could contain some mixed-use development and a small hotel.

Alternatives 2 and 3: These options would allow moderate to high levels of redevelopment in the Ferry/Gateway District, including 404 to 1,253 residential units, up to 32,000 square feet of retail space, up to 45,000 square feet of office space and a larger hotel.

Waterfront Park improvements could include docks, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant activities and improved access in conformance with existing shoreline regulations.

Under both alternatives 2 and 3, the existing private terminal area parking lots would be redeveloped for mixed-use, with underground parking encouraged. This could result in a loss of up to 25 percent of existing parking capacity.

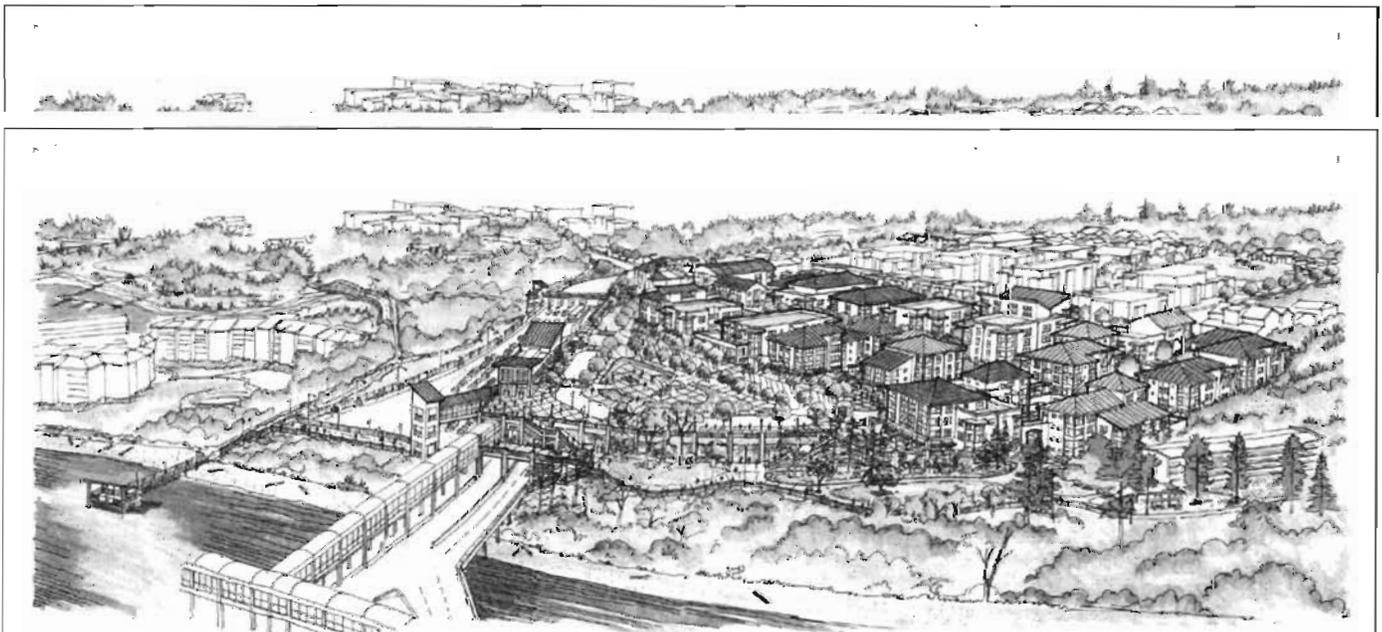
Alternative 3, the most ambitious of the options, proposes rerouting Harbourview Drive (the connector to the condominiums and the Washington State Ferries maintenance yard) along the existing waterfront trail, across the ravine at the footbridge and along the edge of Waterfront Park to join Brien Drive. This proposal would turn what is now a pedestrian bridge and path into vehicle throughway. Alternative 3 also outlines the extension of Wyatt Way across State Route 305 to Ferncliff Avenue, and a street connection between Ferncliff and Cave avenues.

City planners are also considering a pedestrian bridge or tunnel to improve travel near the intersection at Winslow Way and 305.

The objectives of the city's planning effort in these areas are described in the project overview for the EIS. They are: to facilitate mixed-use development in the existing ferry parking areas; to enhance Waterfront Park; and to add auto and non-motorized connections to the Ferry/Gateway District. Results of this planning process may include adoption of a new urban design plan for the areas, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations, traffic circulation plans, and adoption of a Waterfront Park master plan.

Many of these proposed changes would affect the character of Waterfront Park and the entrance to Bainbridge Island forever. Don't fail to make your opinions known when you have the opportunity in September.

For more information, contact Winslow Tomorrow project manager Kathy Cook at 842-2552 or on her web site [kcook@ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us](mailto:kcook@ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us)



Sketch of proposed development in Ferry Terminal District

# Here today - gone tomorrow



*Trees on Wyatt Way (between Madison & Ericksen)*



Sign that trees are slated for removal



*New Seabreeze – no trees planted along Bjune*



*Same scene on Wyatt Way after trees were removed for development*

*New Seabreeze – no trees planted along Bjune*

## Islander sues city over tree cutting

**In March 2005 the city Public Works department workers** strayed off the easement along Tanni Creek Road south of Blakely harbor and cut down eight of resident Daniel Smith's large trees. The trees ranged from 12 to 32 inches in diameter.

The city did not compensate Smith for the damage to the trees or his property. Smith sued the city in June 2007, two years after the incident. He claimed that: "despite demand, both oral and written, the city has wholly failed to restore the easement area as required."

Smith is seeking monetary damages for the trees cut down. Settlement negotiations are ongoing.

# Clearing the haze around Winslow Tomorrow finances

Lin Kamer-Walker

There have been whispers and much mystery about how much the public will pay for the city's Winslow Tomorrow planning effort. What is assured is that taxpayers have already spent nearly \$3 million for consultants, city staffing and various meetings. In addition, up to \$120 million is forecast for Winslow Tomorrow-related projects over the next 20 years, as evidenced by the 2007 city budget.

How the public will pay for Winslow Tomorrow redevelopment is still a bit shrouded. According to current City Hall discussion, the Bainbridge City Council would initially use its authority to authorize \$15.5 million in bonds. Known as a "councilmatic bonds," this funding strategy does not go before voters. Then, in 2008, a second bond requiring voter approval would ask the public to pony up an extra \$30 million of "unlimited general obligation" bonds. So, what does this mean for you?

## *Curiosities of general obligation bonds*

Say the words "general obligation bonds" (G.O. bonds) to just about anyone and you're likely to get a blank-eyed stare. Granted, this is an unconventional conversation topic, but it is a subject that profoundly affects our daily lives and our pocketbooks.

**Q.** So, why focus on G.O. bonds, a domain of accountants and number jugglers?

**A.** Unlimited G.O. bonds are a form of municipal debt that affects our property taxes.

Municipal debt includes all sorts of curious pieces of information, but for this article it is sufficient to note that all services provided by the city are paid for from moneys that come to the city as revenue (including taxes, grants and fees for service) or loans (bonds).

When revenues and loans are insufficient to build infrastructure or make capital facilities improvements, the city has two options: 1) Ask voters to authorize new debt through "unlimited general obligation bonds," or 2) request the city council vote for councilmatic bonds paid out of existing revenues.

through "unlimited general obligation bonds," or 2) request the city council vote for councilmatic bonds paid out of existing revenues.

## *State of the city*

An examination of G.O. bonds is necessarily preceded by review of the current city finances. At this point, the reader is surely groaning with anticipation; yet it is essential to know a) what city residents are obligated to pay (current debt load) and, as importantly, b) where the city and its residents are headed financially.

To that end, one should open a copy of the city's 2007 budget, a well-organized volume of financial information. Available through the city Finance Department, the 2007 budget documents the past, present and future of city finances. Three pages make for particularly adventurous reading.

One of my favorites is the "Summary by Fund" page.

An examination of this sheet shows the city is generally in good financial health. As of now, we are meeting our expenses with incoming revenues. But the pivotal figure is the "General Fund" balance of \$2,709,306. That's our fluid cash. Conservatively, that's not much when you consider that our city spends about \$2 million in expenses in two to three weeks.

A second illuminating page is titled "Financial Capacity Analysis – Uses of Funds." The critical data on this sheet is the line "Debt Service Cost." (See Table 1.) This line shows, in millions of dollars, that our city's debt service load is projected to triple in five years. The figures include both principal and interest money incurred as a debt is paid off, much as one would pay off a credit card loan. The "Debt Service Cost" line reflects an anticipated sharp rise in municipal bond indebtedness for upcoming project expenditures.

On another page titled "Financial Capacity Analysis – Sources of Funds," we again see a five-year projection. (See Table 2.) This entire page is fascinating, but the category of "Other Sources, Voter Approved Bonds and City Council Approved Bonds" is a real standout. Within these two lines, our city is projected to take on \$31 million of voter approved unlimited G.O. bonds and \$5 million of councilmatic bonds. These projections, if funded, have real implications for property taxes and island service user fees.

## *G.O. bonds & the property tax factor*

Recognizing our relatively low business tax base (the island is primarily residential) puts us on a financial collision course seen in cities like Carmel, California, Aspen, Colorado, and Nantucket, Massachusetts. These formerly affordable communities found themselves with very little commercial or manufacturing tax bases to help offset municipal improvements.

Cities that wish to make sizable improvements, but do not have large manufacturing or commercial tax bases, request unlimited G.O. bond approval from voters or make up the costs through councilmatic bonds.

Cities that wish to make sizable improvements, but do not have large manufacturing or commercial tax bases, request unlimited G.O. bond approval from voters or make up the costs through councilmatic bonds.

However, when incoming revenue does not meet the amount a city needs to pay bond debt and interest, the city asks the county to make up the difference through increased property taxes. This is an edgy, insider city revenue strategy. Most voters never see it coming when they vote "yes" for unlimited G.O. bonds, but property taxes are a stable revenue source most often used to help pay off city debt.

Our city has an \$84 million cap on the amount of voter-approved unlimited G.O. bonds it can fund. We're already committed to \$21 million, leaving a possible \$63 million that could be added to our taxpayer credit card for further

*See General Obligation Bonds on the following page*

**General Obligation bonds**

**General obligation bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the city. If default (lack of payback) occurs, bondholders (financial groups that are to be paid back for the bond loan) have legal claim on the city's general income.**

**Councilmatic bonds** (limited tax general obligation bonds) – Issued only through a vote of city councilors. May be used for any city purpose. General fund revenues pay back these bonds because voters have not been asked to pay increased property taxes.  
**Unlimited general obligation bonds** – Approval must

be by a 60 percent majority of the voters and turnout must be 40 percent of those voting in the last general election. Only used for capital purposes. Limits the amount of debt that can be issued. Backed by the full faith and credit of the local government. Raises property taxes to pay for projects.

**TABLE 1**

CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND – 2007 FINAL BUDGET  
 FINANCIAL CAPACITY ANALYSIS – USES OF FUNDS  
 (in millions)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
DEBT SERVICE COST	3,042	4,594	5,907	7,078	8,771	10,096

**TABLE 2**

CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND – 2007 FINAL BUDGET  
 FINANCIAL CAPACITY ANALYSIS – SOURCES OF FUNDS  
 (in millions)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
OTHER SOURCES						
Voter Approved Bonds	-	-	4,000	9,000	10,000	8,000
City Council Approved Bonds	5,572	9,500	-	-	-	-

**ABC member donates land for affordable housing.**

*Tristan Baurick*

**Longtime Association of Bainbridge Communities**

**ABC member donates land for affordable housing.**

*Tristan Baurick*

**Longtime Association of Bainbridge Communities** member Lois Curtis recently donated a 6-acre downtown parcel for the future construction of affordable housing.

Valued at over \$1 million, the property sits north of the Ferncliff Avenue and Wing Point Way intersection.

“I can’t help but be aware of the fact that employees of the city and the schools are having trouble and might like to live on the island,” said Curtis, who donated the land to the Bainbridge Housing Resources Board (HRB) in July. “This is not going to solve everything, but I think many small efforts like it might keep a good mix of people here on the island.”

The HRB will lead efforts to develop the property with residential units affordable to people who work on the island but cannot afford to buy property.

Under current zoning, the property could accommodate about a dozen residential units, or possibly 29 with the use of affordable housing density bonuses, said HRB Director Carl Florea.

Curtis hopes the affordable units will add to the island’s waning population diversity, which she says makes for a poor environment in which to raise children.

Curtis, a former Bainbridge city councilwoman and school board member, envisions a future for the property in which the land is held in trust but the homes are owned by their occupants. Generally referred to as “community land trusts,” such programs remove the land value from the price of the home, greatly reducing the cost for qualified residents.

“This is a wonderful, wonderful blessing to the community,” said Florea.

# Planning for downtown parks

Neil Johannsen

**B**ainbridge Islanders have earned a ‘green star’ for doing a great job of acquiring parkland and other open space over the past six years. Most of the success in saving critical lands can be attributed to the 2001 \$8 million open space bond, and the superb work of the Open Space Commission and the Bainbridge Island Land Trust. Over 300 acres were purchased or donated as public open space.

Combined with previous acquisitions, the island now has 1,150 acres in park district, city and state park lands.

While we’ve been busy gathering up park and other open space lands, the Winslow area has been undergoing non-stop development planning.

Efforts to prepare blueprints for our future city include:

- The Winslow Tomorrow planning initiative.
- Ferry passenger terminal planning.
- The Ferry/Gateway Urban Design Plan.
- Ferry maintenance facility upgrades.
- The Waterfront Park plan.
- The 2025 Growth Advisory Committee’s planning recommendations.

Collectively, they call for enormous growth in Winslow. City plans and policy would place half of all island population growth in the city core. Plans include five-story buildings along Winslow Way, a two-story concrete parking garage, upwards of seven more Harbor Square-size condo complexes around the ferry terminal, a vehicle bridge across the mouth of Winslow Creek and a Los Angeles freeway-style overpass spanning State Route 305 and connecting Wyatt Way to Ferncliff Avenue.

To be fair, some plan options contain more moderate and supportable development intensities. In less than 20 years, Winslow may become a town of more than 10,000 people. Some planners foresee a Winslow of 20,000 people within a few decades.

Little attention has been paid in this plethora of plans to the need for parks and open space for the people who will live, work and shop in “Winslow tomorrow.”

Of the 1,150 acres of parkland on the island, a paltry 3 percent are in the greater Winslow area. That’s less than to the need for parks and open space for the people who will live, work and shop in “Winslow tomorrow.”

Of the 1,150 acres of parkland on the island, a paltry 3 percent are in the greater Winslow area. That’s less than 38 acres. What does this mean? It means that within our lifetime, half the people on our fair green isle could be living in a little Belltown of parking lots and rooftops, of massive condo complexes and concrete. Winslow residents’ principal access to our wonderful green spaces will be by car – unless we begin to act now and add parks to the downtown landscape.

The plan Winslow Tomorrow talks about a “green” and “sustainable” community. Hogwash! Or, more accurately, green wash!

“Winslow contains very little open space that is publicly owned,” the plan states. Further, that for those who live in town who want to use the island’s wonderful open spaces, town residents will have to “drive to make use of them.”

The Winslow Tomorrow plan concludes that we should acquire a mere “2 to 3 acres” of new parks. That amount would mean very little parkland and open space to serve 50 percent of islands residents – plus the people who work, shop and visit downtown.

We need to do better than that. And we don’t have much time to do it.

Bainbridge park director Terry Lande was right when he stated, “Winslow is under-parked.” The new planning director Greg Byrne told me that “parks are the business of the park department.” Senior park district planner Perry Barrett believes it should be a “cooperative effort.”

So how badly are we “under-parked?” And, what can we do about it?

By the numbers, if one combines the 2025 growth projections for Winslow (about 10,000 people) with the standards of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), we find a deficit in everything from “tot lots” to community and large neighborhood parks. According to NRPA and other standards, we should add upwards of 40 acres of parkland to the greater Winslow area by 2025.

How do we add parkland in a reasonable way to maintain the islands quality of life? We have an excellent model right across Puget Sound. Seattle’s park system makes it one of the nation’s most livable cities thanks to the foresight of city officials who had the Olmstead brothers create a park plan for that burgeoning community.

A mini-Olmstead plan is what Winslow needs now. The good news is that such a plan is in the works, thanks to Dave Shorett.

Shorett, Bainbridge park commission chair and city Open Space Commission member, has assembled a citizen task force that is quietly and quickly preparing a plan for Winslow parks and trail easements. Look for the draft plan this fall. This plan will finally set forth some serious park proposals.

When approved by the full park commission, the Winslow park plan will become part of the city Comprehensive Plan, which is mandated by the state Growth Management Act.

When approved by the full park commission, the Winslow park plan will become part of the city Comprehensive Plan, which is mandated by the state Growth Management Act.

That’s when sparks could fly and a wrestling match could begin. Why? It’s hard to play catch up – even when it’s the right thing to do. The Winslow Tomorrow process did not include adequate planning for parks and open space, nor did the ferry gateway process.

Is it too late? Possibly, given these conditions:

- Winslow Tomorrow’s inadequate parkland planning.
- Some political resistance to any changes in Winslow Tomorrow.
- Skyrocketing land prices.
- Permits issued for more condos and commercial space.
- Taxpayer sticker shock over anything that appears to be a public work.

But where there is a strong and positive vision, there is hope.

*Continued on page 13*