

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

### WHY A MASTER PLAN FOR WINSLOW?

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the vision and overall framework for the future of Winslow. It is designated as the major area of urban concentration — the commercial, cultural and commuter hub of the Island. The Comprehensive Plan provides three major goals for Winslow:

- Strengthen the vitality of downtown Winslow as a place for people to live, shop and work.
- Encourage a lively community by having a strong residential component.
- Accommodate 50% (3,715 people) of the projected population growth of Bainbridge Island through the year 2012.

Higher intensity of residential and commercial activity is recommended for Winslow to 1) encourage development where public facilities and services exist or can be efficiently expanded, 2) provide choice of housing for all economic segments of the population, 3) reduce sprawl elsewhere on the Island, 4) encourage efficient multimodal transportation, and 5) encourage economic development within Winslow.

While the Comprehensive Plan establishes the overall framework for the city, including Winslow, the Winslow Master Plan is needed to:

1. Refine the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan as they relate to Winslow;
2. Develop a detailed facilities and amenities plan, including
  - pedestrian and bicycle facilities
  - an open space and trails plan
  - a transportation circulation system;
3. Prioritize funding to ensure implementation of the Master Plan;
4. Identify impacts and mitigation measures at the planning level that will allow for more streamlined approval of permit applications;
5. Identify implementation strategies; and
6. Develop a monitoring program to ensure that the Master Plan is implemented.

There are impacts on Winslow from additional population, both on- and off-Island, and from additional ferry traffic, resulting in increased pressure on the character and vitality of Winslow. The challenge of the Master Plan is to accommodate the anticipated additional growth and development and maintain and enhance the character and vitality of Winslow as the Island's economic and community center.

The Master Plan was developed to be consistent with the goals and requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA), Multi-County Policies, and the Kitsap County-Wide Planning Policies.

## **VISIONS FOR WINSLOW – KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN**

The overall goal of the Master Plan is to strengthen the vitality of Winslow as the town center in which we live, shop and work, by promoting connections between sustainability, livability and downtown business vitality, and also by enhancing pedestrian accessibility in Winslow. The Master Plan focuses on the creation of an enhanced, continuous pedestrian and bicycle experience within Winslow, linking access to retail shopping, the ferry, major public facilities, open space and residential areas through an integrated multi-modal transportation system that supports Winslow as the commercial, cultural and community center for the Island. By making pedestrian circulation easy and enjoyable, a vibrant retail core and strong residential community can be sustained and enhanced. The Plan promotes policies that encourage residential and mixed use development in the Town Center and High School Road Districts, rather than commercial-only development. Vehicular circulation is integrated with other modes of transportation and “calmed” through a variety of traffic slowing mechanisms and street design techniques.

The Master Plan addresses parking for businesses in the downtown area. The Plan also provides incentives to place the existing parking at the ferry terminal under building and create a new residential/office neighborhood consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

The vision for Winslow (as refined by *Winslow Tomorrow*, a community-based planning effort) is that:

- The Island is a complete community: Winslow develops as a sustainable, affordable, diverse, livable and economically vital downtown. Development is allowed in a manner that encourages environmentally and economically sound growth, and also protects and conserves resources and lifestyles that would otherwise be impacted in outlying areas of the Island.
- Winslow Way is the Centerpiece of Downtown: Pedestrians gather on a street with vibrant retail and attractive places. A simple streetscape retains small-town character and a “sense of place.”
- The Town Grows “Green”: Downtown grows softer, greener, taller and more vibrant.
- The Town Center Remains Vital: People choose to live in a pedestrian-supportive town center where they find a range of housing choices and convenient services.
- Transportation Choices are Available: Visitors travel to town on foot, on bicycles, in boats, using transit or in cars. Drivers are encouraged to “park once” and become pedestrians.
- The Walk-About Experience Invites Discovery: An organic grid of eclectic lanes, alleys, paths and trails encourages exploration. Visitors discover diverse businesses and unique neighborhoods where culture, history and the natural environment are celebrated.
- The Cultural & Civic Campus is Alive: People are drawn downtown to enjoy events and performances at City Hall, theatres, museums, galleries and the market.

- **The Ravine is Celebrated:** Crossing the ravine recalls the bridge that once connected the historic towns of Hawley and Madrone. Trails along the ravine link neighborhoods to town and the waterfront.
- **Greenways are Established:** A series of green spaces connect the community, define character and protect resources.
- **The Harbor is Connected:** Winslow is experienced as a waterfront town: well connected to Eagle Harbor by activities, trails, views, lanes and design details.
- **The Waterfront is Engaging:** People are drawn to waterfront parks, restored shorelines and beaches by activities and attractive lanes, pathways and watercourses. Pritchard Park, Waterfront Park and the Hall Property are linked by land and the Waterfront Trail.
- **History is Preserved:** Our awareness of history is increased through interpretive and preservation programs.

### **WINSLOW TOMORROW PROJECT**

In 2004, the community embarked on a planning process to further define the plan for downtown Winslow, with a focus on Winslow Way and the Core. This planning effort, known as *Winslow Tomorrow*, focused on sustaining Winslow as the Island's center of culture, commerce and community, with the challenge of envisioning the ideal downtown of today and the future.

The *Winslow Tomorrow* plan strengthens the vision of a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use town center as provided in the Winslow Master Plan, focusing on Winslow Way and the Core by identifying locations for new streets, green spaces and development, and proposing policies and projects that encourage higher density/intensity development, a mix of uses, more downtown residences and expanded services for a growing island population.

### **PROCESS USED TO DEVELOP THE WINSLOW MASTER PLAN**

#### **Winslow Master Plan Committee**

The Winslow Master Plan Committee (composed of representatives of the business community, neighborhood groups, and the design and development community) developed the draft Winslow Master Plan with assistance from urban design, transportation, market analysis and planning consultants and City staff.

The Committee began its work by reviewing the goals and policies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The Committee also considered the results of a Design Workshop held in February 1994 to examine the viability of the Comprehensive Plan for Winslow. (The Workshop was conducted by a group of local design professionals, members of the local business community and representatives of neighborhood groups.)

The Committee then began to develop a list of issues, which needed to be addressed in the Master Plan (*Issues Identified by the Winslow Master Plan Committee*, February, 1996). The Committee conducted a public meeting in February 1996 to obtain community comments on

the issues (*Issues Raised at the Winslow Master Plan Public Workshop*, February 26, 1996, revised March 15, 1996).

Next, the Committee examined the different ways to meet the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and to address the issues identified by the Committee and the community. Alternative solutions were explored which involved tradeoffs, prioritizing of funding of capital improvements and developing creative solutions. A second public meeting was held in April 1996 to obtain community input on possible alternatives.

After that meeting, the Committee worked with the consultants and City staff to develop a draft Master Plan. This draft Plan presented three alternatives to address future development and growth in the Winslow Study Area: 1) a preferred alternative, the Sanctuary Plan; 2) the Dispersed Alternative; and 3) an analysis of the existing Comprehensive Plan recommendations, the “No Action” Alternative.

Washington State Ferries (WSF) and Kitsap Transit, with community input, developed the October 1995 draft Ferry Terminal Zone Master Plan to address WSF proposed future plans for the ferry terminal in Winslow. WSF, Kitsap Transit and the City have worked together and with the Winslow Master Plan Committee, the Planning Commission and the City Council to integrate the WSF/Kitsap Transit draft Plan into the Winslow Master Plan in order to have one integrated plan for Winslow’s future that addresses the needs and goals of WSF and the Bainbridge Island community.

On January 30, 1997 the Winslow Master Plan Committee and the Bainbridge Island Planning Commission held a joint public hearing on the draft Winslow Master Plan and EIS. The draft Ferry Terminal Plan prepared by Washington State Ferries was also included in the Winslow Master Plan. The public hearing was attended by approximately 300 citizens. In addition to the oral public comment taken at that hearing, written comment was accepted through February 28, 1997. Based on a review of those comments, the Winslow Master Plan Committee then made revisions to the January draft Winslow Master Plan, and forwarded the revised document to the Planning Commission for review. The Planning Commission also received copies of all public comments.

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission held several study sessions to review the revised draft Winslow Master Plan. The Commission then convened a public hearing on May 22, 1997 in order to elicit further oral and written public comment on the revised Plan. This public hearing was followed by a number of Planning Commission study sessions to review the Plan in response to public comment and then revise the Plan.

### **City Council**

Upon completion of this process, the Planning Commission forwarded the document to City Council for review in the fall of 1997. During a number of study sessions the Council reviewed the draft Plan and the Planning Commission’s recommended changes. Issues requiring additional analysis were referred to the Land Use and Public Works committees of the Council. The Council also appointed a special Capital Facilities Task Force composed of

the chairs of the Public Works and Finance committees and a City Council member who had served on the Winslow Master Plan Committee to review the capital facilities portion of the Master Plan. On January 29, 1998 the City Council held a public meeting to obtain further comment on the draft Plan, with particular emphasis on transportation and WSF-related issues. The Council then held several more meetings to study and discuss the Plan. A second public meeting that focused on land use and capital facilities issues was held on April 16, 1998.

Extensive efforts were taken at each stage of the Master Plan process to inform and involve the public. Public workshops and meetings were publicized as much as possible. Articles and announcements appeared in the newspapers, and posters and displays were placed in prominent public locations such as the local grocery stores, the public library and the ferry terminal. Flyers were mailed out to community organizations, citizen committees, business owners, architects, builders and developers, and residents living within the study area. Announcements for two of the public meetings were inserted in City utility bills. Flyers were also distributed to drivers and passengers waiting in Seattle to board the Bainbridge-bound ferry during the peak p.m. commute hours.

City staff and consultants and WSF representatives also gave presentations and answered questions at a number of smaller meetings organized by the Chamber of Commerce, Team Winslow and the Municipal League. All of these efforts were aimed at communicating information on the Master Plan to as wide an audience as possible.

## **RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

Three alternatives to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for Winslow and to address the identified issues were considered in developing this Plan: (a) the No Action Alternative, (b) the preferred Sanctuary Alternative and (c) the Dispersed Alternative.

### **No Action**

The No Action alternative relied on the vision of the Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances that have been enacted since Plan adoption. Because the Comprehensive Plan provided for base density increases and pursued a population goal in Winslow of 3,700 new residents, it is possible that some of the Comprehensive Plan vision could be achieved. It is less likely that the vision of a vibrant town center, high level of pedestrian circulation or interesting mix of uses would be met. The No Action Alternative was retained for further evaluation, partly to act as a benchmark to test other alternatives and partly because other alternatives considered would require amendments to policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

### **The Sanctuary Plan (The Preferred Alternative)**

This approach, which was identified by the Committee as its preferred alternative, seeks to maximize pedestrian circulation in the Core through provision of a comprehensive pedestrian system of sidewalks and trails while de-emphasizing vehicular circulation through the use of traffic calming techniques and the reduction of impacts from ferry-related traffic. Residential

development densities in the Core are promoted as a means of assuring an active and vibrant village center. Transit is relied upon to aid in circulation throughout the Core.

### **The Dispersed Alternative**

This alternative proposed a certain accommodation of vehicular needs while also providing for basic pedestrian circulation. It would ease vehicular circulation through the provision of additional vehicular access (both north-south and east-west) but would also pursue some traffic calming goals. Overall density in the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road Districts would be similar to the “Sanctuary” Plan but could be more dispersed. Transit would be a key component in aiding circulation in the Core.

## **PLANNING PROCESS FOR WINSLOW TOMORROW PROJECT**

### **Community Congress**

For more than a year beginning in 2004, a group of over one hundred members of the Community Congress collaborated on a plan for downtown Winslow, known as *Winslow Tomorrow*. Appointed by the Mayor, the volunteer Congress represented a diverse group -- new and long-time residents from all parts of the Island, business and property owners, those who commute by ferry and those who work on-Island, retirees and teens, and members of many of the community's numerous commissions, organizations and interest groups. Challenged to “envision the ideal downtown of today and the future,” the first Convention of the *Winslow Tomorrow* Community Congress was held in September 2004. Together the Community Congress worked, learned and crafted a unique plan and set of recommended actions focused on sustaining Winslow as the Island’s center of culture, commerce and community.

Working with the community and staff, the Congress developed the *Winslow Tomorrow* Mission: the City will partner with the Bainbridge Island community to:

- Achieve Council adoption of a Downtown Urban Design Plan that supports and encourages private and public reinvestment and investment in downtown development.
- Implement an exemplary improvement project along and near Winslow Way that addresses infrastructure needs and incorporates place-making elements.
- Increase Islander awareness and understanding of the significance of downtown as a cultural, social, and economic hub of the island.

The community-based planning effort of *Winslow Tomorrow* provided a unique opportunity for the community to be visionary and to promote the Island’s economic, environmental and social sustainability by creating an integrated, long-term vision that could guide this growth, including:

- Illuminating the connection between sustainability, livability and downtown vitality, helping the community to understand environmentally and economically sound growth in Winslow as a way to protect the lifestyle and conserve resources on the rest of the Island.
- Promoting multi-modal transportation choices that are integrated systems linking Island and neighborhood residences to the business core.
- Recommending innovative and sustainable building techniques.

- Interrelating land use, transportation, place-making and environmental issues and solutions rather than dealing with them in isolation and one issue at a time.

The planning process involved four phases: Inquiry, Options, Development and Evaluation of Alternatives, and Recommendations, with periodic updates to the community and the City Council. The process was facilitated by a team of citizen volunteers and supported by City staff, including a full-time project manager. The Community Congress was involved in crafting the problem statement and developing decision criteria. The specific recommendations were developed in smaller working committees comprised of staff, members of the Congress, consultants and citizen facilitators. The entire community was invited to Community Congress conventions, Council presentations and a speaker series, “Envision Tomorrow.”

### **Inquiry Phase**

This phase focused on exploring the qualities of a successful downtown, considering character, transportation, parking, sustainability, economics, business and development. During this phase the community learned that retaining small businesses, independent retailers and relevant businesses on our main street is a priority and a challenge for the Island. Sustainability emerged as a shared value; however, throughout the process it was challenging to reconcile differing definitions of sustainability. Although there was agreement that sustainable solutions must address economic, social and ecological concerns, each community member views sustainability through different lenses and places emphasis on different aspects influenced by personal values and experiences. The Committees worked together toward balanced solutions.

### **Option Phase**

In the previous 30 years, the Island has grown by almost 10,000 people. Population projections indicate a similar rate of growth can be expected over the next 30 years. During this phase, challenges to sustaining a vital downtown and explored alternative futures were identified, including putting in place policy changes, infrastructure and amenities to allow Winslow to evolve and yet retain a strong sense of community well-being and the desirable qualities of a small town and a green island. It was recognized that the community is challenged with finding the best solution, given the growth pressure and the changes underway on Bainbridge and in the greater Puget Sound region.

### **Development and Evaluation of Alternatives**

During this phase, the community began exploring where we might build most responsibly and what form new downtown development should take. Preliminary alternatives were developed in a design charrette and community workshop where volunteer urban designers, architects and artists worked beside developers, environmentalists and city planners, ultimately finding broad agreement on eight guiding principles. There was agreement on the need for a flexible “blueprint” of what to build, as well as a “greenprint” of what to preserve and the importance of the natural landscape informing urban design. It was agreed that the plan for Winslow should be flexible, allowing the downtown to evolve organically over time rather than promoting immediate wholesale change. Urban design, transportation and finance consultants were retained to further develop and evaluate alternatives.

### **Recommendation Phase**

Recommendations were developed by smaller committees working with professional consultants. The recommendations respond to the challenges and guiding principles endorsed by the Community Congress and the City Council. These recommendations were reviewed by internal and external leadership teams comprised of City staff and Community Congress participants. The draft recommendations were presented and reviewed by the Congress and the community in a 5th Congress Convention.

### **Winslow Tomorrow Recommendations**

The *Winslow Tomorrow* plan recommends a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use town center, focusing on Winslow Way and the Core, and identifies locations for new streets, green spaces and development. Recommended policies and projects encourage higher density, a mix of uses, more downtown residences and expanded services to serve the growing island population. The plan describes the amenities and infrastructure needed to keep downtown vital, improve livability and retain character.

Implementation of the *Winslow Tomorrow* recommendations was processed by the Planning Department, converting these into amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Winslow Master Plan or Bainbridge Island Municipal Code.

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission held several study sessions to review the proposed revisions to the Winslow Master Plan related to implementation of *Winslow Tomorrow*. The Commission then held a public hearing on July 13, 2006, in order to elicit further oral and written public comment on the Plan revisions. This public hearing was followed by a Planning Commission study session to review the amendments in response to public comment. The Commission then forwarded their recommendation to the City Council.

### **City Council**

At five public meetings the Council reviewed and discussed the proposed *Winslow Tomorrow* amendments to the Winslow Master Plan.