Housing Resources Bainbridge

ADVOCACY ALERT

Update

On Tuesday, August 25, 2026, City Council is expected to adopt interim development regulations for its Comprehensive Plan update. Adoption will qualify the city for an extension from the Washington State Department of Commerce for its final plan.

These development regulations were recommended by Planning Commission in February of this year and demonstrate sufficient capacity to meet the city's state-mandated housing targets at all income levels.

Background

The city of Bainbridge Island did not meet the December 31, 2024, deadline for its Comprehensive Plan update and in January 2026 was placed under review per the Housing Accountability Act. Since then, it has been working with Department of Commerce staff to align its housing plans and policies with state requirements, specifically House Bill 1220 which directs the city to plan for 1,977 new units, 1,139 of which must be affordable to 80% area median income and below. Under the review process, the city was given a new deadline of August 21, 2026, to produce and adopt a plan that is consistent with state law.

Subsequently, City Council and Planning Commission revised the February development regulations, which diminished capacity for the required homes and meant that the city was no longer on track to meet the deadline. The city requested an extension. Commerce denied the request but offered an alternative: if Bainbridge adopted the February development regulations, which *did* create the necessary capacity, by August 26, it would grant the city a 120-day extension to address the remaining compliance issues. The city has elected to include mandatory inclusionary zoning provisions recommended by Planning Commission on July 23 in its interim development regulations to be reviewed at tomorrow's Council meeting.

Being out of compliance with its comprehensive plan brings serious consequences. The city is ineligible for state grants and loans. (In fact, the state rescinded almost $800,000 in funding for stormwater infrastructure and has discouraged the city from applying for other grants altogether.) Moreover, if the city does not pass the interim development regulations, it will be subject to the Builder's Remedy, which forbids the city from denying any affordable

housing developments that meet certain affordability requirements. This is the first time in Washington that the Builder's Remedy has been invoked.

Action

Submit written comment to **council@bainbridgewa.gov** by 4:00 pm on Tuesday, August 25 or deliver comment in person or via Zoom. To give public comment in person, add your name to the sign-in sheet by the door to Council chambers. The mayor will call on you to present at the podium for up to three minutes. To present via Zoom, email the city clerk (**cityclerk@bainbridgewa.gov**) by noon on the day of the meeting. You must display your true name and keep your camera on.

Key points to include in your comment

The update process has been protracted, marked by extensive deliberation, stymied progress, and discomfort by some for the density needed to accommodate our share of the region's growth. However, the city has reached a hard stop. It can adopt the interim regulations and finalize the plan this fall. Or it can decline to adopt and face continued loss of state funding and the Builder's Remedy.

This is the time to embolden housing supporters on Council and to express enthusiasm for a comprehensive plan that will enable the housing we need. Consider the following in your comment:

- Urge Council to adopt the interim development regulations.
- Let them know you want to see more affordable housing on Bainbridge Island. The regulations under review Tuesday night are a pathway to creating housing that will make Bainbridge a strong and vital community.
- Share how the creation of more housing will improve our community and what a more inclusive community means to you.
- Thank Council for its service to the community.

Meeting details

Tuesday, August 25, 2026 at 6:00 pm
Bainbridge Island City Hall, Council Chambers
280 Madison Ave N. Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
Zoom: **https://bainbridgewa.zoom.us/j/92947338351**



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