



Health, Housing and  
Human Services Council

## FROM ASSESSMENT TO ACTION: *FOLLOWING UP ON BAINBRIDGE ISLAND'S HUMAN SERVICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT*

### STEERING COMMITTEE

#### Co-Chairs

Willa Fisher, MD, MPH  
Elaine VonRosenstiel

#### Committee Members

Geoff Ball  
Jeannette Franks  
Anna Garrity  
Dick Goff  
JusTina Guyott  
Jan Lambert  
Karen Monson  
Brent Peterson  
Jeanne Soulier  
Joanne Tews

### ACTION TEAM CO-CHAIRS

#### *Affordable Housing*

Karen Monson  
Catherine Whitson

#### *Affordable Medical and Dental Care*

Willa Fisher, MD, MPH  
Fred Grimm, DDS

#### *Childcare for Children with Special Needs*

Anna Garrity  
Renata Lac

#### *Senior Day Services and Affordable Assisted Living*

Jeannette Franks  
Joyce Veterane

#### *Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse*

Geoff Ball  
Brent Peterson

### PROJECT CONSULTANT

Rochelle Doan, MS

#### Contact Information

For more information about the needs assessment follow-up process or how you can participate in moving these recommendations forward, please contact Jan Lambert, HHHS Executive Director at 842-9335.

#### Health, Housing and Human Services Council

221 Winslow Way West, Suite 203  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110  
206/842-9335  
www.bihhhs.org

City of Bainbridge Island Web Site  
Human Services Element of the  
Comprehensive Plan  
www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us

6/2004

In 2002-2003, the Health, Housing and Human Services Council (HHHS) conducted a human services needs assessment on Bainbridge Island. This assessment was done as part of HHHS' responsibility for implementing the Human Services Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Human Services Element charges HHHS to "identify emerging problems in the community and assist in coordinating planning efforts to respond to the needs and assess appropriate levels of City funding." The 2002-2003 needs assessment was the first step in addressing unmet needs and aligning City human services funding with our community's most critical needs.

The needs assessment included updated demographic data, surveys of persons knowledgeable about Island human service needs, focus groups with consumers of human services, and interviews with public officials. The resulting data and information give us a better understanding of our changing population and the special challenge of substantial human service needs within a relatively affluent community. Although many of these needs are being well met by our existing human services system, several service gaps were identified. These are areas where there is a significant gap between the perception of how big the need is and the ability of providers to meet the need.

Even before the needs assessment was completed, HHHS realized that the assessment was only the beginning of our community's commitment to ensuring access to needed human services. The assessment's value went beyond identifying service gaps; it also laid the groundwork for devising strategies to address the identified needs. Between November 2003 and May 2004, over 70 community members and others have been involved in the important work of moving from assessment to action.

### **Organizing to do the follow-up work**

A Steering Committee was formed to oversee the follow up to the 2002-2003 needs assessment. The Steering Committee included representatives of Island human service agencies, the City, business community, interfaith community, schools and HHHS. It also included representatives of each action team to help assure coordination between teams and the identification of any cross-team issues.

**Five Action Teams** were formed around the service gaps identified in the needs assessment:

- Affordable Housing
- Affordable Medical and Dental Care
- Childcare for Children with Special Needs
- Senior Day Services and Affordable Assisted Living
- Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Each action team was charged with preparing a set of recommended strategies to address the identified service gap for which it was responsible. It was assumed that the recommendations might reflect a wide array of strategies, including new programs, partnerships and/or policies, as well as the need for additional information. Action team members were selected because of their knowledge and involvement in the issue being addressed by each team. Several teams included representatives from off-Island agencies, greatly enhancing the teams' understanding of county and state resources available to Bainbridge residents.

### ***Organizing to do the follow-up work, continued***

In an effort to build on existing efforts where possible, the Bainbridge Island *Just Know Coalition* was approached and agreed to serve as the Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse Action Team. Since there were a variety of groups already working on the affordable housing issue, the Housing Action Team worked to support and connect the existing efforts in addition to adding its own perspective to the issue.

### ***Clarifying and redefining identified needs***

The charge to the action teams included confirming and clarifying the perceived service gaps identified through the needs assessment. This was a critical first step since it resulted in three teams redefining the needs identified through the assessment:

- The **Senior Services** team determined that “affordable assisted living” is an unachievable goal at this time, so they reframed their work to focus on helping our community’s seniors “age in place”.
- The **Childcare** team learned that the issue is not that no providers offer childcare to special needs children, but that there are challenges for parents in seeking care and for providers in caring for special needs children.
- The **Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse** team recognized that youth substance abuse is a symptom of a broader issue – youth development. This led to a focus on the meaningful engagement of youth in our community as a key prevention strategy.

### ***Overall observations about action team work***

The five action teams accomplished an amazing amount of work in a very short time. In less than six months, each team not only researched its issue but also developed concrete action steps for addressing the issue. These steps include several that are already in the process of being implemented – giving new meaning to the term “action team”!

Several aspects of the follow-up process contributed to the teams’ ability to be so successful. First, the time was right to take on the identified needs. People were ready and eager to engage in the work. One of the most valuable contributions that HHHS made to the process was to create the “tables” at which people could come together to take on seemingly intractable problems.

Second, as noted above, the action teams included representatives from off-Island agencies and groups. This not only resulted in a much greater understanding of resources available to Bainbridge residents but it also helped break down long-standing perceptions among non-Bainbridge agencies that their help and advice is not welcomed by our community.

This leads to the final observation: It is important to find ways to continue the conversations and inter-provider communication fostered by the action teams. In fact, all teams cited the need for ongoing communication among providers and/or other interested persons, and some teams are continuing to meet on a less frequent but regular basis.

## **ACTION TEAM REPORTS**

The final reports of each action team are inserted in this document. Each report includes a background statement that describes the issue being addressed and summarizes the action team’s key findings and recommendations.

## ***Cross-team issues and suggestions***

One of the functions of the Steering Committee was to provide a forum for identifying issues and suggestions raised by more than one action team. The following needs emerged from these discussions:

- **Creative public-private housing solutions**

Both the Affordable Housing and the Senior Services teams identified the need for creative housing solutions that would be financed by public-private partnerships. The new housing would provide ways of meeting identified needs, including the need of low-income families for affordable housing and/or the need of seniors and others with physical limitations for accessible housing.

- **Improved pharmacy access/prescription drug management**

The Affordable Medical and Dental Care and the Senior Services teams each identified the need for improved access to pharmacy services and prescription drug management.

- **Improved social service/medical service communication and collaboration**

Several teams cited the need for improved communication and collaboration between social and medical service providers to help assure that client needs are met and that limited staff resources are used effectively. This could be accomplished through an expanded resource and referral system or other new models of working together.

- **Solutions to perceived transportation barriers**

Almost every team's discussion included the perception that transportation is a service barrier, particularly for off-Island appointments or appointments requiring mid-day travel. It was also noted that this perception is partly due to a lack of Islanders' understanding of the public transit options that are available to Bainbridge residents.

- **Creation of inter-generational interaction opportunities**

One of the more exciting ideas to emerge from the action team work is the interest in creating more inter-generational opportunities on the Island. These opportunities range from the development of a new community facility providing recreational activities for persons of different ages to new housing solutions that encourage multi-generational living to programs that encourage youth-senior interaction, such as tutoring or companionship services.

## **MOVING ACTION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARD**

It is very exciting that several action team recommendations are already being implemented. However, if we are to fulfill our community's vision for human services, it is important to move forward with other recommendations as well. Fortunately, the energy and enthusiasm that drove the action team work to such successful conclusion is still very much present, providing a solid base upon which to build future work. In addition, Bainbridge has the benefit of many organizations and providers interested in working together to meet our Island's needs.

### ***Human service agencies and providers***

Not surprisingly, human service agencies and providers serving Bainbridge Island are stepping up to the challenge of addressing the issues identified in the needs assessment, and several have already agreed to specific actions and exciting new partnerships in support of recommended strategies. For example:

- ❖ A new health clinic for uninsured and underinsured persons will open on the Island in August 2004. The clinic will be operated by Peninsula Community Health Services in the Kitsap County Health District location at the Commons through a sublease approved by the City of Bainbridge Island.
- ❖ A quarterly forum for persons interested in strategies for "aging in place" will be supported four agencies that serve as hubs for providing services to Island seniors: Kitsap County Area Agency on Aging, Bainbridge Island Senior Center, Helpline House, and Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers.
- ❖ HHHS will partner with the City and community organizations to sponsor a Housing Summit to educate the community on housing issues and to engage the community in solutions.

## MOVING ACTION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARD, *continued*

### **HHHS role**

In keeping with its responsibility to oversee implementation of the City's Human Services Element, HHHS will continue to shepherd and monitor the needs assessment and follow-up process. Specifically, HHHS can use its community education, advocacy and advisor-to-the-City roles to keep the work alive and promote implementation of action team recommendations in the following ways:

- Educate City officials about our community's human service needs and recommended actions.
- Develop and implement a plan for more broadly publicizing action team recommendations and garnering community support for them.
- Recruit HHHS board members from among persons who served on the five action teams, thereby assuring knowledge of and advocacy the issues addressed by the teams.
- As part of the Agency Funding Request process, solicit proposals that align with recommendations.
- Similarly, encourage the City's Housing Trust Fund to solicit proposals aligned with the Affordable Housing and Senior Services action team recommendations.
- Work with *One Call for All* and other private funding sources to create incentives for creative solutions to community human service needs.
- As requested, provide consultation to providers on human service needs, recommended actions and opportunities to incorporate recommendations into agency work plans.
- As appropriate and feasible, assume responsibility for implementing specific recommendations.
- Invite new City Administrator to attend HHHS meetings and/or meetings of the Directors' Forum.

### **Recommendations to the City**

The City of Bainbridge Island can play a significant role in moving recommendations forward. Ongoing funding and policy support is critical to successful implementation. Specific recommendations include:

- Continue to define human services as core City services and provide appropriate financial support in the City's annual budget.
- Integrate recommended strategies into the updates of relevant elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan – e.g., incorporate the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Action Team into the updated Housing Element.
- Review the City Council's annual goals and objectives against action team recommendations to determine areas of commonality and mutual support.
- Support the creation of City staff positions (such as a housing staff position) that would increase the City's capacity to address issues identified through the needs assessment process.
- Use City publications to help publicize needs assessment findings and action team recommendations.

**Contact Information:** For more information about the needs assessment follow-up process or how you can participate in moving action team recommendations forward, please contact Jan Lambert, HHHS Executive Director at 842-9335.