

## Healthy Community Check-up

### FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

#### A. Number of people participating in focus groups:

Parents	Youth	Mid-Life	Seniors	Work on/ Live off	All
10	10	11	11	5	47

#### B. How well does our community fit the vision statement from the comp Plan?

Parents	Youth	Midlife	Seniors	Work on/Live Off	All
3.4	3.0	3.8	3.75	3.8	3.5

#### C. Our Greatest Strengths as a community:

**Parents:** *Quality of schools; Caring/family-oriented people; Small-size/overlapping connection – people greet you & look you in the eye. Pulling together to deal with crises & difficult issues; parks and recreation; community events (Rotary Auction, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Music in the park, etc.)*

**Youth:** *People knowing each other (small size) able to keep up on what's going on. People come together when there's a crisis; generous with cash donations for causes they believe in. Community, neighborhood and school events (July 4<sup>th</sup>, Big Read, school carnivals, Grange/Island Center concerts, etc.)*

**Midlife:** *Variety of community events (July 4<sup>th</sup>; Halloween; Rotary Auction, etc.); variety of activities (arts, culture, gardening, recreation, etc.); Human Services/Agencies (Helpline House; IVC, etc.); Peoples' willingness to volunteer/look out for each other; Island/size promotes knowing, seeing, greeting each other. **It's all here – but you have to reach out and make the connection.***

**Seniors:** *Senior Center facility, activities and programs; Helpline House; Other opportunities/activities (Music, BPA, Historical Society, outdoor activities for people of all ages, etc.); Friendly, compassionate people; High education levels. **Bainbridge offers***

***an amazing variety of opportunities for music lovers and musicians at all levels.***

**Work Ons:** *Community gatherings/events (July 4<sup>th</sup>, Rotary Auction, school celebrations, farmers market, etc.); Islander support for each other in time of need; family-youth friendly environment; Good Education system; Beautiful landscape/small town feel.*

**D. Our Greatest Drawback/Weaknesses:**

**Parents:** *Too Affluent/Cost of Living too high; Lack of diversity (race/ethnicity/income/life styles); Isolation/lack of connections/transportation for teens (esp. when both parents work); Not allowing for differences/too judgmental; Not set up for two-working-parent families, lack of options for non-college bound kids; Teen drug/alcohol use; lack of walkability/bike trails for youth. **As we get richer our sense of community diminishes and our focus on property values increases.***

**Youth:** *Lack of activities/gathering places for youth and mixed ages. Isolation; cliques/exclusiveness/lack of meaningful connections; Hard to get around the island; Drug/alcohol use/abuse among teens – no effective oversight/prevention. Parents “absent”/working. Not enough focus/support for family healthiness.*

**Midlife:** *Reaching out to welcome and integrate newcomers (esp. single people); Limited housing options/Affordability; Need for all-day transit services; Loss of younger population; isolation/lack of strong neighborhood connection; neighbor-to-neighbor contention; putting property values above community-mindedness. **It’s hard to be single or poor on Bainbridge.***

**Seniors:** *Variety of affordable housing options for seniors (especially assisted living); Transportation (flexible, all-day, affordable) around the Island; Isolation/lack of communication for some (esp. elder singles and shy people who aren’t comfortable taking the initiative); Too much affluence; Contention over growth/property values. Hard for low or even moderate income families to find housing and raise kids on Bainbridge these days.*

**Work On:** *Lack of affordable housing choices; Lack of diversity (ethnic/income); perception by some as “exclusive” and unconcerned with the rest of Kitsap County; Youth alcohol and drug problem; parents commuting not enough supervision for kids.*

**E. The extent to which / feel like a connected, contributing community member**

Parents	Youth	Mid-Life	Seniors	Work On	All
3.9	2.77	3.36	3.75	3.2	

**F. What I need/what makes me feel connected:**

**Parents:** *School & Kids Activities; Sports; Broad set of friends/connections; knowing my neighbors, being part of public decisions; Opportunities to serve/choosing to get involved.*

**Youth:** *Being involved in sports, school activities and neighborhood events; Opportunities for meaningful involvement in the community – interact with people of all ages; actually have an impact/make a difference. Knowing what’s going on. Having my opinion solicited. Community events/gatherings; family & sibling connections. BYS. BITV; Girl Scouts; tutoring younger students. **I don’t feel connected & maybe it’s my own fault. I seem to spend a lot of time alone playing video games and my guitar.***

**Mid-life:** *Being informed/notified of opportunities to get involved; Knowing that my opinion or vote really counts; Being reached out to/solicited as a volunteer; Motivating myself to reach out/help others/get involved; People showing compassion – reaching out to give me support and help in illness/family crisis. **Time and commuting are real obstacles to contributing.***

**Seniors:** *Ability to get out, get around and participate (Good health, good communication about options, good transportation and enough money.) Having my skills needed and put to work.*

**Work On:** *Having my ideas solicited and valued (as someone who works on Bainbridge Island, even if I don’t live here.) Friendships/connections on the Island; Participation in community events. **It’s nice to be wanted but not living on Bainbridge has its advantages. Besides more affordable housing, it’s nice if your neighbors aren’t your customers or students. I prefer a more anonymous and diverse living environment.***

**G. How confident do I feel about the future quality of community life?**

Parents	Youth	Midlife	Seniors	Work On	All
3.1	2.8	3.3	3.73	3.6	

**H. Diversity?**

**Parents:** *Lack of ethnic/racial/income diversity doesn't prepare our kids well for their futures. We need a mix of age groups on B.I. Teachers/police officers should be able to live on Bainbridge.*

**Youth:** *We don't have much racial or economic diversity. Some social diversity. It's a disadvantage – being exposed to diversity makes for a richer experience/broaden your thinking. We won't be prepared for today's world. It will be culture shock when we leave the Island. Seattle is diverse and we can take advantage of that. (If our parents allow it.) Diversity seems to be linked with poverty and crime for people on B.I*

**Midlife:** ***Diversity is the fabric of society, If a community is lacking diversity that community is “less than” – even though that community might have “more than” others.** Economic diversity is important. Service workers can't really live on Bainbridge. Once Bainbridge was diverse (Japanese, Pilipino, Native American) but those groups have dwindled or been overwhelmed by white Americans. Now we may be starting to see more diversity -- adopted kids from Korea, people from India, Russian immigrants? **I'm concerned about loss of the artistic community – and loss of younger population.***

**Seniors:** ***Over the past 30 years, I've seen it go from a mix of people – hippies living in yurts, families, older people and a mix of incomes to a yuppie, middle-class, white affluent community.** When everyone seems to have so much money and sense of entitlement, it's harder for those who don't.*

**Work on:** ***Diversity if important – and there's not much here that I can see. That's one thing that would keep me from living on Bainbridge Island.** There are more mixed raced couple and adopted babies of other races. We may be seeing more diversity that way in the younger grades. **Different income levels make for a better balanced community; it would be nice if growth brought more affordable living options to Bainbridge.***

## I. Unmet Service Needs/Needed Improvements:

- Parents:** *School District addresses some special needs but parents have to work hard to get services – especially for kids with learning barriers who are not behavior problems. Focus is on high achieving college/bound kids – limited access to vocational education. If your child doesn't fit the prevailing mold, you can feel isolated. Services (e.g. swimming lessons) seem geared to having one parent at home, but cost of living means both parents work & kids can't access services. **Need an all-ages community center – where teens are welcomed & can feel connected. Around Island public transportation (not focused on commuters; safer biking and walking for kids; more housing options for families (co-housing, in-town affordable housing.)** More opportunities/more forums for debate and interaction. More emphasis on neighborliness and tolerance. less on property values*
- Youth:** *More effective drug/alcohol prevention, intervention and treatment; Apprenticeship and internship programs where kids as young as middle school could learn useful skills; More career counseling/aptitude testing; More gathering places/activities (bowling alley, mall, paintball/Air soft field; People being more friendly/neighborly tolerant of young people; Support for healthy families.*
- Midlife:** *24 Hour emergency medical care is not available. Emergency pet care is not available. Taxes are too high. **Need good around island bus service.** Diverse housing options (smaller, clustered, mother-in-law units, co-housing, etc.) affordable to a wider range of incomes. **Clustering of services/activities** (senior center, library, youth activities, etc.)*
- Seniors:** ***Around Island public transportation.** Neighborhood emergency preparedness; Need more assisted/small group living options for seniors and others with special needs also shared housing & co-housing; **Need more respite Day care;** Trader Joes; 24-hour emergency medical services; More counseling for people of all ages; **Churches provide a lot of support but not all people are connected this way.** Need more pea patches/gardening opportunities.*

## **J. Ideas for Monitoring Community Health:**

- Parents:** *School quality/educational performance; graduation rates; Amount of youth interaction with adults; after-school programs/activities; Divorce and marriage counseling rates; access to services for working families, # of families who leave/stay on B.I.' Variety of affordable housing options; miles of sidewalk/bike lanes; % of seniors who remain in their homes. Around island transportation availability/use.*
- Youth:** *Incidence of alcohol/drug use among teens; Youth time spent in school/community/family activities; # of nights families sit down to dinner; Amount of time families spend with each other (youth/parents) Divorce rates. Educational quality/performance; access to apprenticeship/work experience/training. # of family-oriented events. Connections between seniors and young people.*
- Midlife:** *Average cost of housing; Availability of housing options; # of people who both work/live on Bainbridge; Population growth; Health/performance of school system; Are there parking meters? Can you still walk across Winslow Way? Are business geared to our Bainbridge population versus tourists? Preservation of historical/community character.*
- Seniors:** *Measures of population diversity (age/income/ethnicity); Youth activities; drug/alcohol use/abuse; Transportation/access. Continuation of community celebrations/events (July 4, Rotary Auction, etc.), Library resources/facilities/use; people working on and living on Bainbridge; School system quality/use of public vs. private schools; is Public Art well and thriving? Symphony still going? Historical society? Chuckwagon (meals) program? Youth involvement in the community. Number of active pea patch plots.*
- Work-on:** *Diversity measures (income, race, age); More affordable housing options; Turn-over (how many people and who leaves the Island.) Increase in job opportunities on Island; bike lanes and sidewalks.*