

## **STATEMENT OF DESIGN INTENT – WINTERGREEN TOWNHOMES**

### **BACKGROUND**

The proposed project site is within a partially completed commercial center. Per the original approvals, the developable areas for this project include two parcels located at the center of the overall site. Consistent with the goals for mixed-use development within Winslow, the proposal will replace the originally approved commercial uses with residential uses.

The neighborhood, when completed, will offer 31 units as affordable residential units through Housing Resources Bainbridge's (HRB's) permanently affordable program, which units will be close to shopping and transit, a key tenant of sustainability, which is an overarching goal for design on Bainbridge. See page 16 of Design for Bainbridge 2019. Indeed, Design Bainbridge 2019 dedicates a full page to the concept of sustainability, the closing passage of which is as follows:

*If we perceive ourselves and all we create as part of an ecosystem, it is easy to understand that our community is a living system within which there are nodes of wealth: social, natural and financial. All interact as a system and are linked together through nutrient cycles and energy flows, and the maintenance and health of these networks is essential to the overall health and prosperity of our community.*

See page 9 of Design for Bainbridge 2019.

Accordingly, one of Design for Bainbridge 2019's Values + Principles is to design for health, equity and inclusion:

*Healthy housing development and expansion of educational and civic institutions support diverse and inclusive growth, and help build thriving neighborhood centers. Design can have an effect not only on the community's look and feel, but also on housing affordability for people of different means, and the comfort of people from different backgrounds. Building an accessible community that supports transit and that creates and creates a quality pedestrian experience can help grow employment locally, improve quality of life, and lay the foundation for a more diverse community.*

See page 4 of Design for Bainbridge 2019.

Accordingly, the City's Comprehensive Plan includes a high priority policy to encourage the transformation of the High School Road district from an auto-oriented, low-rise, homogeneous commercial land use district into a walkable, transit-served, mid-rise, mixed-use neighborhood with affordable housing.

The proposed project's design intent is inseparable from its goal of providing desperately-needed affordable housing. The City has, admittedly, failed to provide affordable housing over the last 15 to 20 years. All one has to do to grasp the depth of the affordable housing crisis on Bainbridge Island is review Housing Resources Bainbridge's website, which states that consistently there are more than 30 qualified households waiting to buy an affordable home, but at this writing there is only one such available home. Our community is failing to respect all nodes of financial wealth. We are becoming top-heavy socio-economically, which stifles diversity, creates imbalance, exclusion and injustice, and ultimately is unsustainable.

## SITE ACCESS AND PARKING

The original approvals established the overall pattern of site access and related traffic impacts. The primary site access is through the center of the site with a secondary connection through the Stonecress development. A portion of the project's site, the eastern parcel, also has a surface parking lot installed. The parking required for the proposed residential uses will be provided in several ways which include dedicated on-street parking, surface parking (behind buildings) and under-building parking. The only new access lane will be located on the west parcel to serve the adjacent townhouses. The proposed parking is placed behind the buildings to minimize their visibility from public spaces.

## CRITICAL AREAS AND BUFFERS

Per the original approvals the critical areas to the east were delineated and related buffers established consistent with current improvements. The proposed design is consistent with previously identified development areas. The proposed improvements are to be constructed within areas previously cleared for development. Existing natural areas occur within SR305 buffer and protected critical areas. Due to the constricted site areas, no new natural areas are proposed.

## LANDSCAPING

The vegetated buffer along SR305 will be 25' consistent with Design for Bainbridge 2019 and BIMC (specifically Table 17.12.070-1, which provides for a 25' building setback from the SR305 right of way, which thereby limits the width of the vegetated buffer to 25'). No significant trees will be removed. Additional landscape screening was provided along the east side of the site next to the Stonecress development. The proposed new landscape plantings will be focused along Wintergreen Lane, the courtyards and pedestrian pathways. The courtyards are proposed as urban courtyards accommodating a variety of uses including pea patches, lawn areas, outdoor dining, etc. The courtyards are intended to be accessible to the public.

## CONTEXT-SENSE OF PLACE

The proposed site design is surrounded by existing development, both commercial and residential. The scale of these surrounding uses is predominantly two stories. The original approved plans were based on a consistent architectural look characterized as modern agrarian aesthetic. The masterplan was altered to suit the VM clinic, which resulted in the building being shifted further north to accommodate the larger building footprint and related parking.

The proposal will establish a residential community within the larger commercial area. The sense of place will be created by defining the public streetscape and by focusing the majority of residential units onto a central courtyard. The architectural will utilize features and materials from the adjacent commercial uses to create a more cohesive district.

## PUBLIC REALM

The original concept focused the public realm along the center access lane with retail frontages and related plaza areas. The proposed concept will maintain the streetscape definition with its continuous residential façade and pedestrian realm but will relocate the outdoor spaces into courtyards to provide more direct access to residential units, consistent with subdivision standards. The public realm will extend along all residential pathways where the unit entries occur.

## RESIDENTIAL UNITS

The proposed residential unit type is an attached rowhouse, both two and three stories in height. The two-story units are placed between Wintergreen Land and the internal courtyards, with the taller units to the rear allowing underbuilding parking. The units are designed with a consistent exterior concept which expresses the massing of the individual units. All units have ground related entries facing pedestrian pathways along the street, courtyards, or open spaces. The townhouse units are a familiar building type within the mixed-use town center and are suitable for achieving higher density with ground related entries. The units are typically provided with small outdoor areas, “dooryards” adjacent to unit entries.

## CONSISTENCY WITH DESIGN GUIDELINES

The project has been designed to comply with design standards and related guidelines. See Design For Bainbridge Checklist for applicant responses to applicable standards.

## RESPONSE TO DRB COMMENTS

From the outset the applicant has continually adjusted the design in response to input from DRB. Recent changes to the site and building design include the following:

- **Reconfiguration of Community Space** into multi-function urban space including pea patches, picnic shelter, sitting areas, bike parking and locations for public art.
- **Additional Pathways** have been provided for continuous perimeter circulation.
- **Redesign of West Access Lane** into shared pedestrian access with changes in paving, flush sidewalks, street trees and vine pockets.
- **Common Area Landscaping** shall be native materials. Private gardens shall be mixed ornamental based on resident choices.
- **Exterior Material Palette** has been simplified to provide more unified appearance featuring natural cedar as common material with extent of individual unit colors limited to accent features such as bay windows.
- **Exterior trim** has been changed from white to darker tone to emphasize overall massing versus individual fenestration. Horizontal banding and changes in materials between floors has also been simplified into more unified contemporary aesthetic.
- **Exterior fencing** has been simplified to metal railings only (no picket fences)