

Ferndale Planning Commission

June 11th, 2025



Neighborhood Centers Plan

Disclaimer

All proposals discussed in this presentation are conceptual and do not suggest how future development in Ferndale will proceed.

There are many options for how future development could take place.

All final decisions will go through the planning staff, the planning commission, and City Council, which is democratically elected.



Presentation Outline

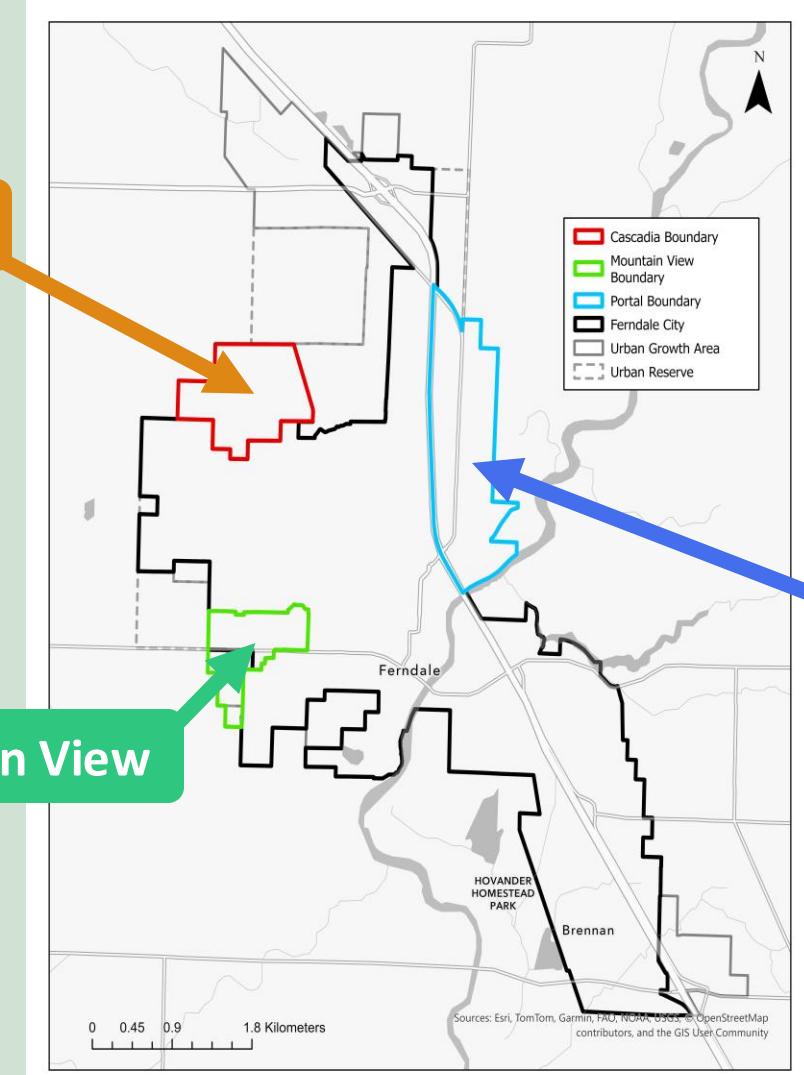
Project Background

Neighborhood Centers Implementation

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Development Phasing
- Code Revisions
- Funding & Incentives

Questions

Neighborhood Centers Map



Studio Timeline: September 2024 - June 2025

Studio I: Planning Methods

- *Getting to know Ferndale:*
Research, Analysis, &
Synthesis
- **Community Workshop 1:**
Priorities

Studio III: Implementation

- **Community Meeting 3**
- Refining Concepts
- Revising Code
- Identifying Funding

Fall 2024

April 2025

June 2025

January 2025

Studio II: Plan Development

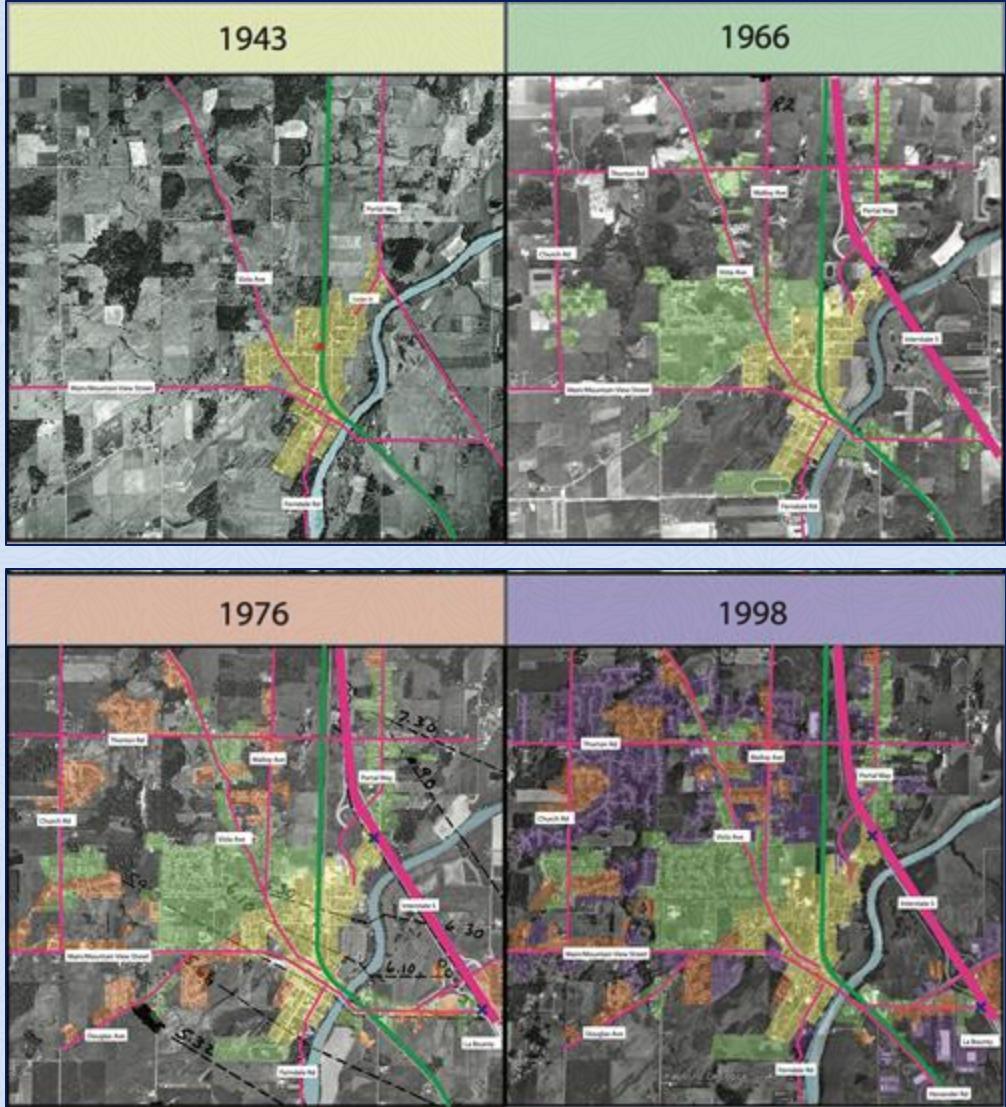
- **Community Workshop 2:**
Visioning
- Alternative development

- **Final Presentation @ Planning Commission Meeting**
- Phasing, Code revisions & Design guidelines
- Incentives & Funding



Change over Time

Historic Growth Maps
1943 - 1998

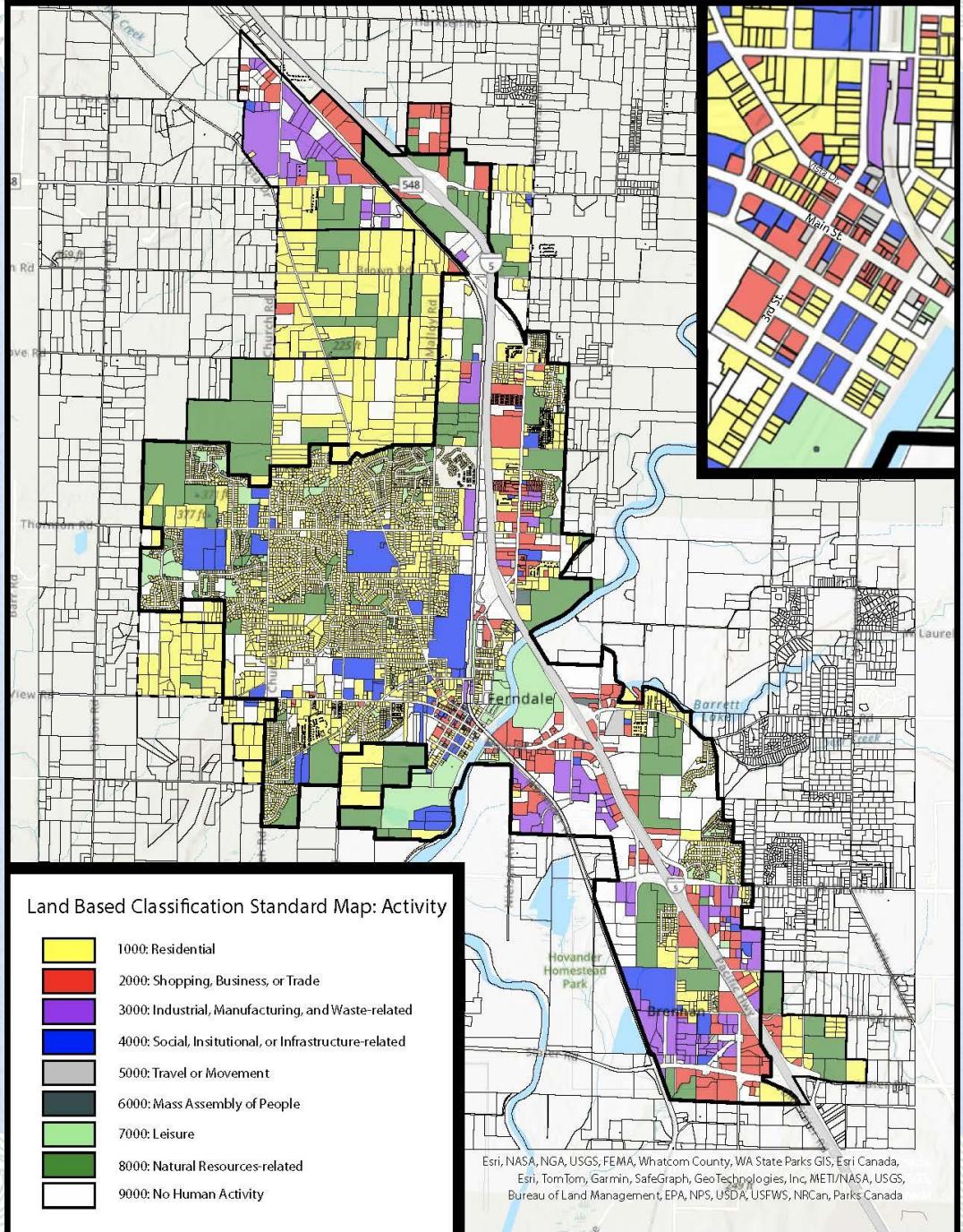


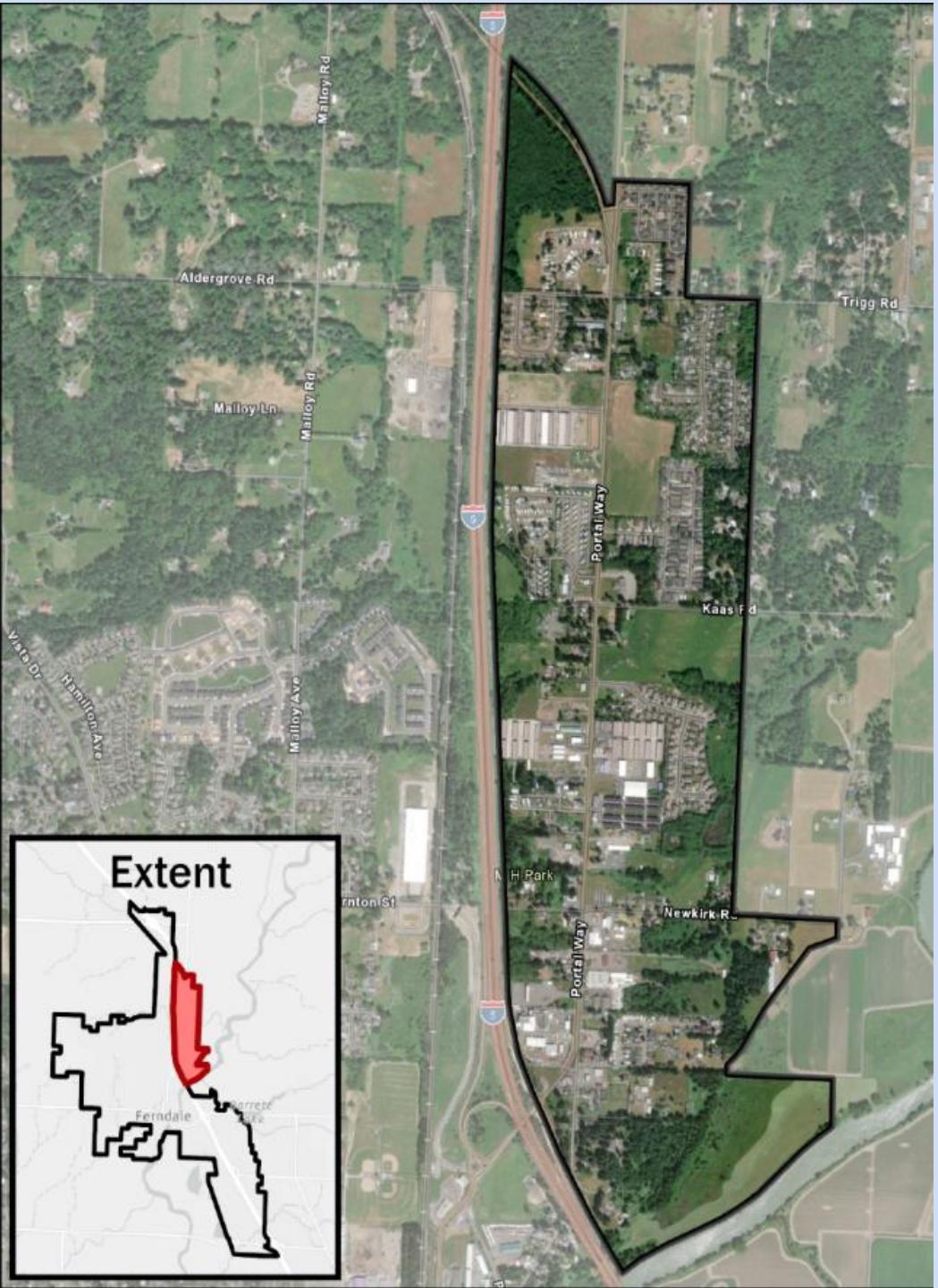
Activity Map

- Land Use by Parcel
- Industrial in North & South
- Residential – isolated from other uses
- Not a lot of park/open space or commercial uses in North Ferndale
- Slater/Portal – low access to services like government, schools, retail

Studio Project focuses on “complete neighborhoods” or Urban Villages:

- Mix of residential, commercial & services, and civic activities
- Multi-modal transportation options





Portal Way Overview & Neighborhood Context

- 468 acres, 350 developable acres
- East of I-5
- Part of the old Pacific Highway, most development follows only arterial
- Current land uses:
 - Commercial
 - High, medium, and low density residential
 - Manufacturing and Storage
 - Floodway in the South

Portal Way - Land Use and Civic Assets



Land Use

Low Density Residential (R1)

Medium Density Residential (R2)

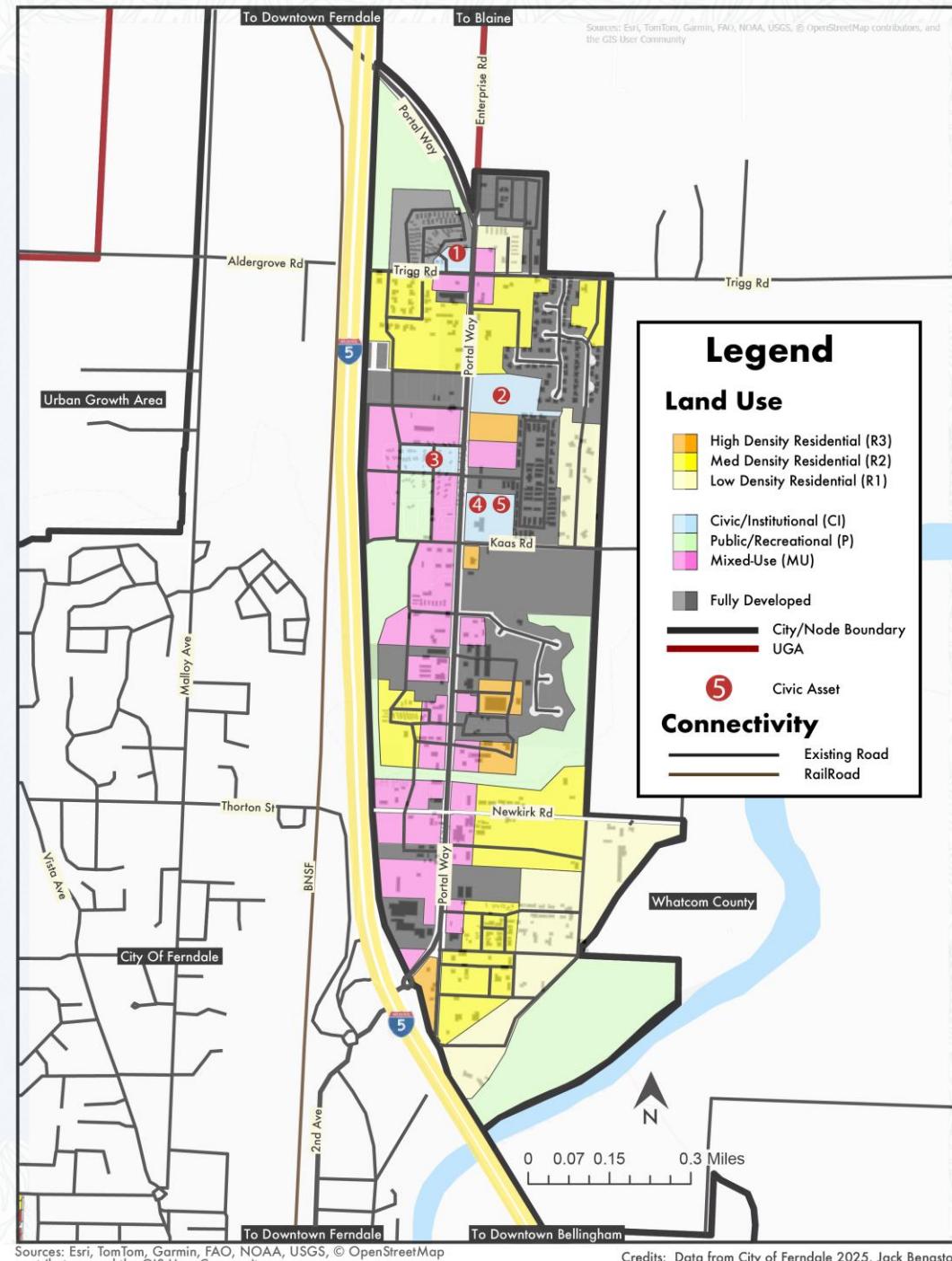
High Density Residential (R3)

Assumed Density (Du/Ac)

15-18

20-23

28-30



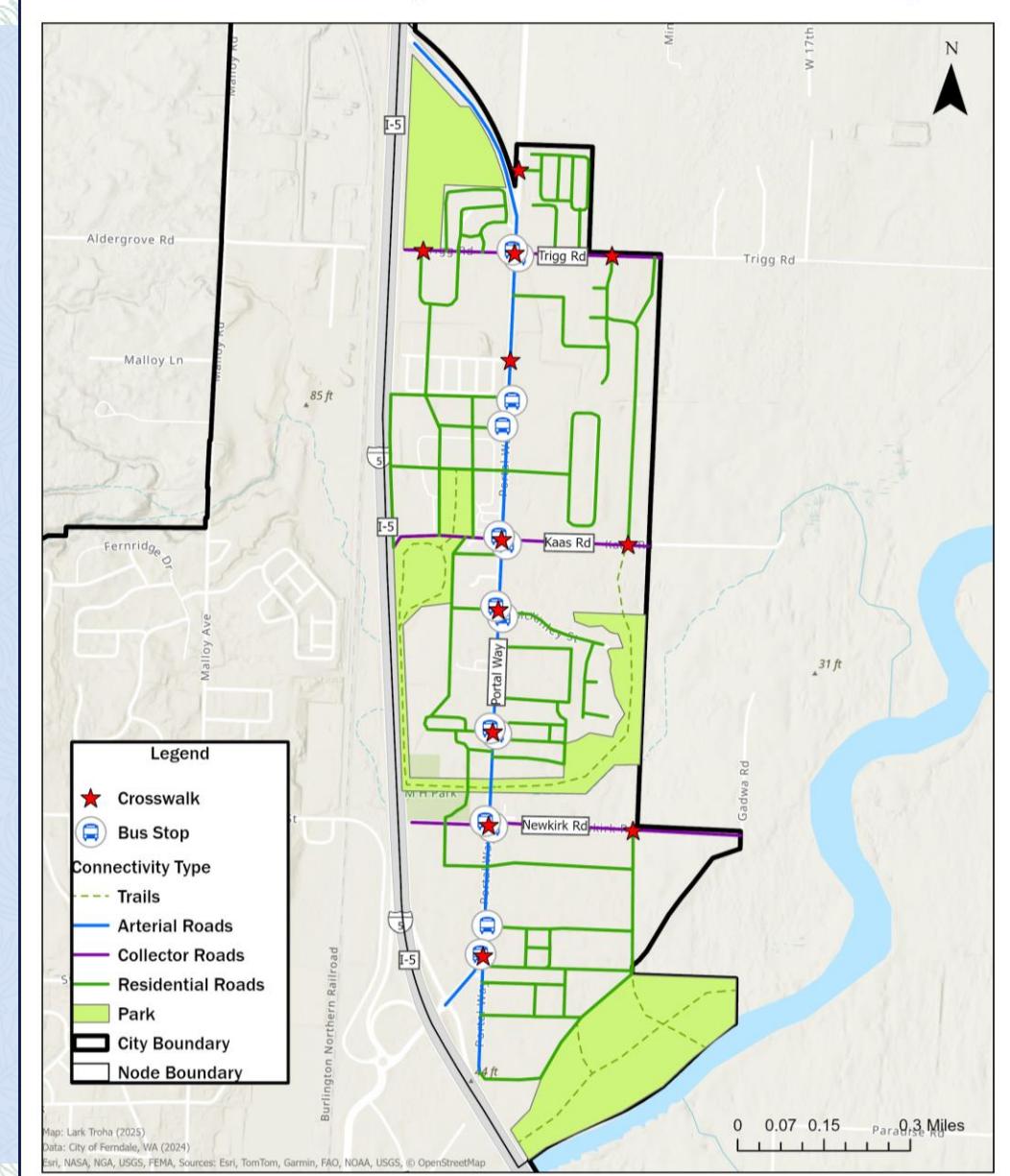
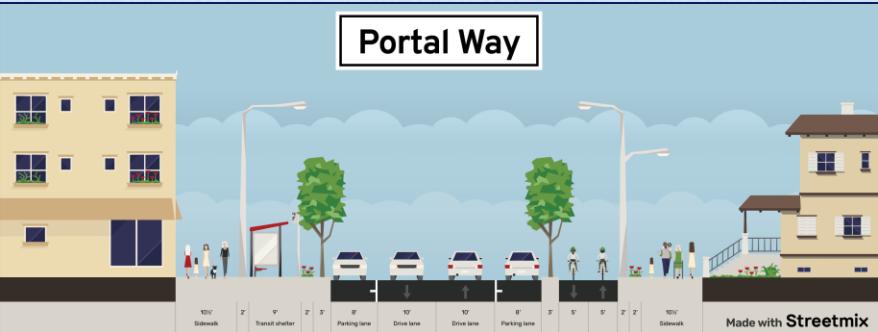
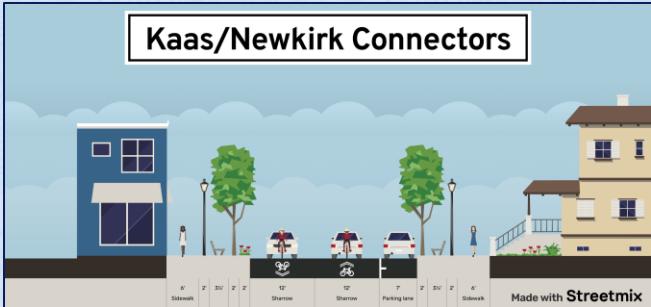
Portal Way – Land Use Mix

Land Use	Percent of Total Area	Acreage
Residential	37.6	131.8
Mixed-Use	17.7	61.9
Recreational/Public	27.7	96.9
Civic/Institutional	3.5	12.1
Infrastructure	13.5	47.4
Total	100	350.1



Portal Way - Transportation and Connectivity

- Increased bus stops and frequency
- Crosswalks and pedestrian safety
- Street parking, protected bike lanes



Portal Way - Housing Projections

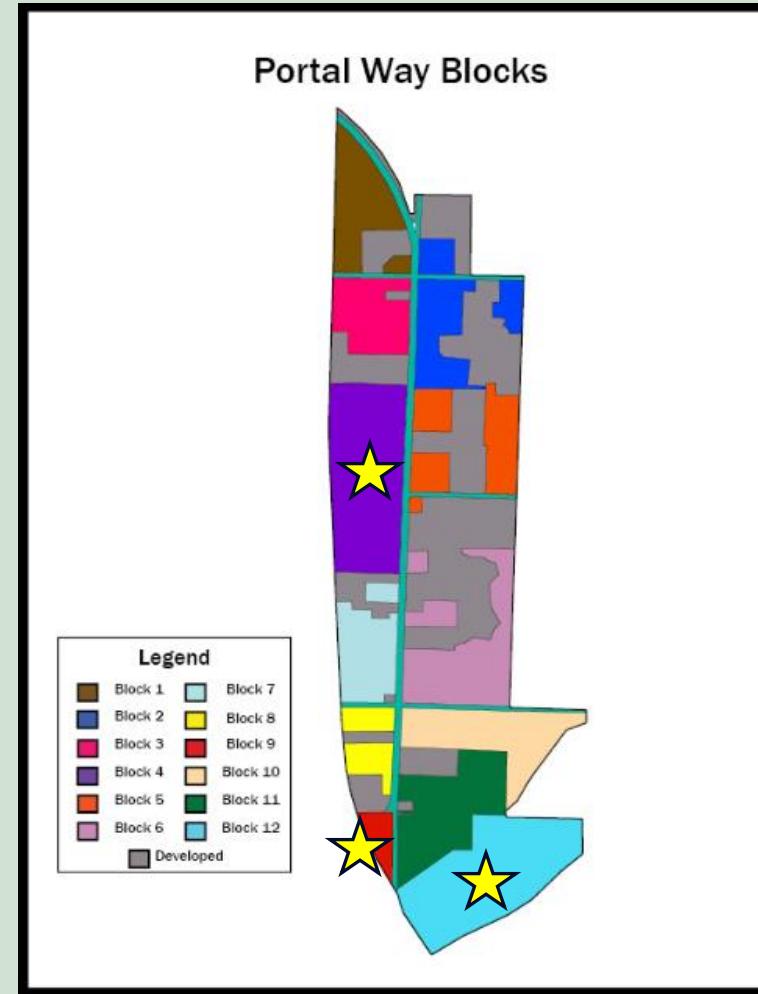
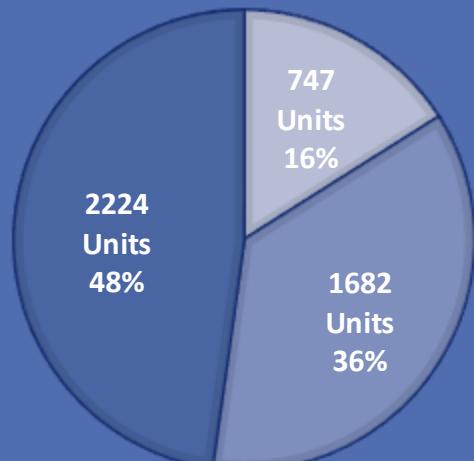
OVERVIEW

- Total Units:** 4,653 units
- Average Density:** 27.17 Units/Acre

Housing Units By Density (Units/Acre)

■ Low (15-18 Du/Ac) ■ Medium (20-23)

■ High (28-30 Du/Ac)

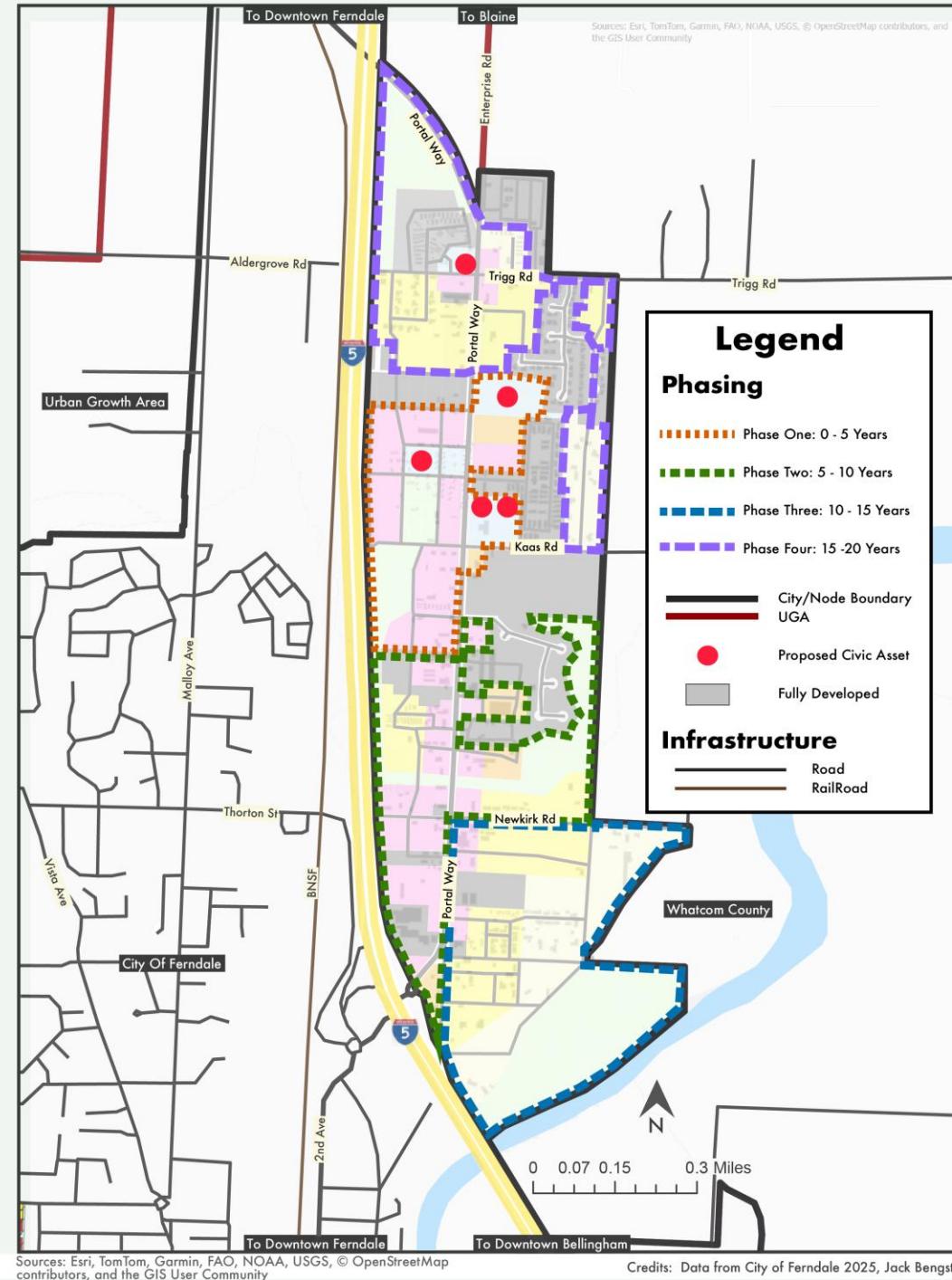


Housing Types, Units and Densities by Block – Excerpt

Block #	Housing Types	Total Units	Acres	Average Weighted Density (Du/Ac)
4	Mixed Use Apartments, Apartments, Stacked Flats	1075	45.11	31
9	MU Apartments, Apartments, Stacked Flats, Multiplexes	126	3.39	40.06
12	Duplexes, Cottages, Small Lots	173	49.53	17



Portal Way – Phasing Map



Portal Way – Phase 1

Why Here First: Centrally located, densest proposed development, key civic uses, existing RV park requires early engagement

Community Engagement: Begin outreach, support anti-displacement, launch public phasing dashboard

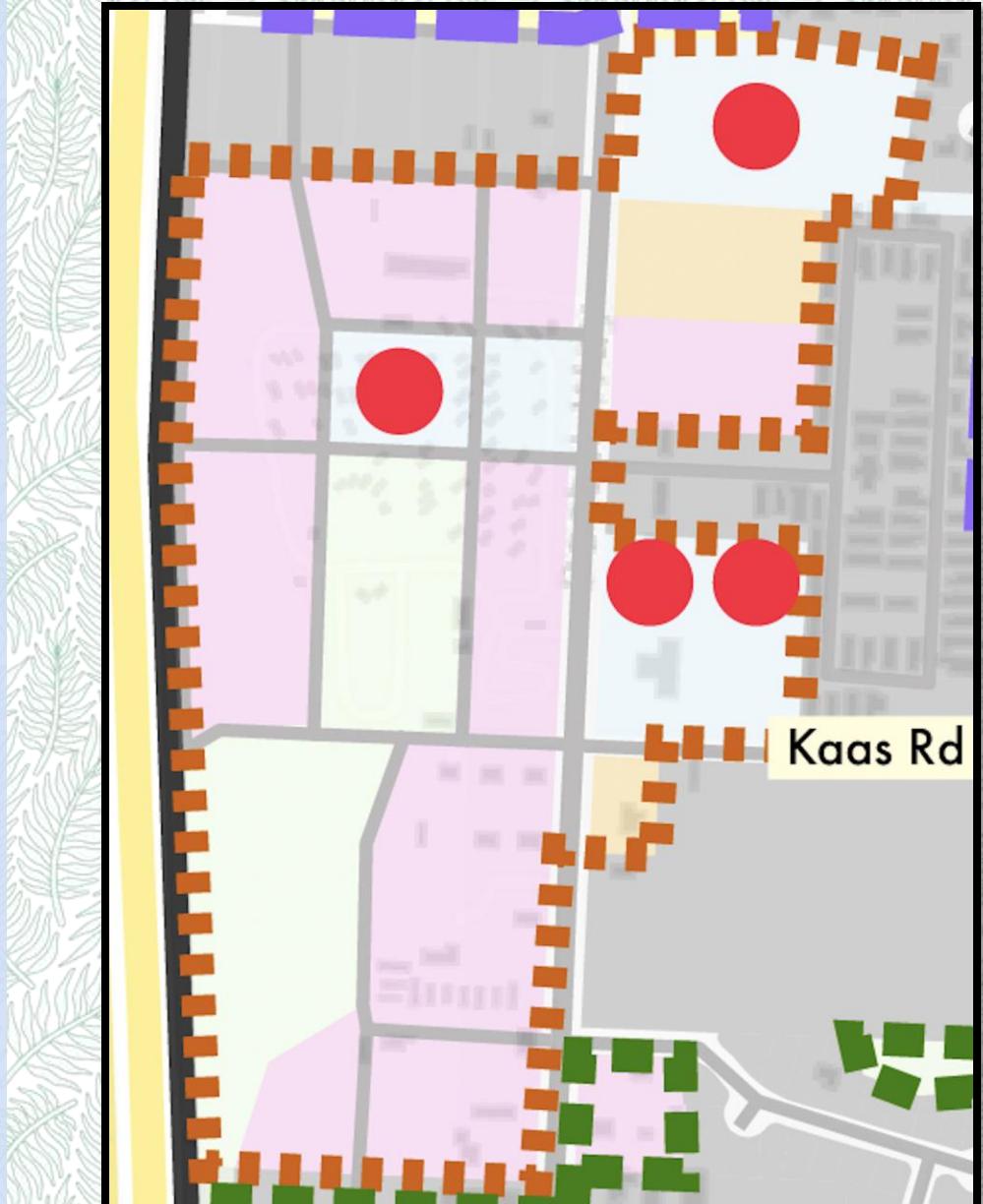
Land Prep: Acquire key parcels (RV park), partner with CLT for affordable housing

Infrastructure: Expand utilities, build internal street grid, add multimodal features

Policy Work: Adopt new zoning for mixed-use, explore urban village overlay

Development: Permit dense, street-facing housing; pilot tiny home project

Public Assets: Start civic center, school, community park, and trail



Portal Way – Phase 2

Why Here Next: Adjacent to Phase 1, closer to existing development, includes residential & commercial land

Community Engagement: Continue anti-displacement work, offer phased or exchange options; follow-up with Phase 1 residents

Land Prep: Acquire land near stream for park/trail; begin TDRs with identified CLT

Infrastructure: Finish utilities; build multimodal links (including I-5 bike underpass); construct west-side connector road

Policy Work: Reevaluate zoning; rezone as needed; consider a form-based overlay zone

Development: Permit mixed-use and high-density with strong street frontage and affordability incentives

Public Assets: Restore stream corridor; extend trail system eastward toward Nooksack River in collaboration with the county



Portal Way – Phase 3

Why Here Next: Covers remaining developable land south of Phase 1; includes marshland and high concentration of housing slated for redevelopment

Community Engagement: Continue dialogue from earlier phases; prioritize residents facing displacement and those near proposed roads

Land Acquisition: Secure marshland and ROW extensions; provide individual homeowners ample time and transparency

Infrastructure: Extend right-of-way and complete Portal Way upgrades; ensure stormwater systems address floodplain concerns

Policy & Zoning: Finalize code reforms; introduce floodplain design standards; embed affordability & NOAH preservation incentives

Development Focus: Build townhomes, ADUs, and stacked flats; phase NOAH redevelopment using CLTs or co-ops; cluster housing near marsh trail

Public Assets: Develop low-impact boardwalk trail linking Nooksack and VanderYacht Park; include local public art installations



Portal Way – Phase 4

Why Here Last: Northernmost and most developed area; existing single-family and manufactured housing requires sensitive, field-informed planning

Community Engagement: Begin early; prioritize workshops and resident-led solutions to avoid displacement and offer supportive options

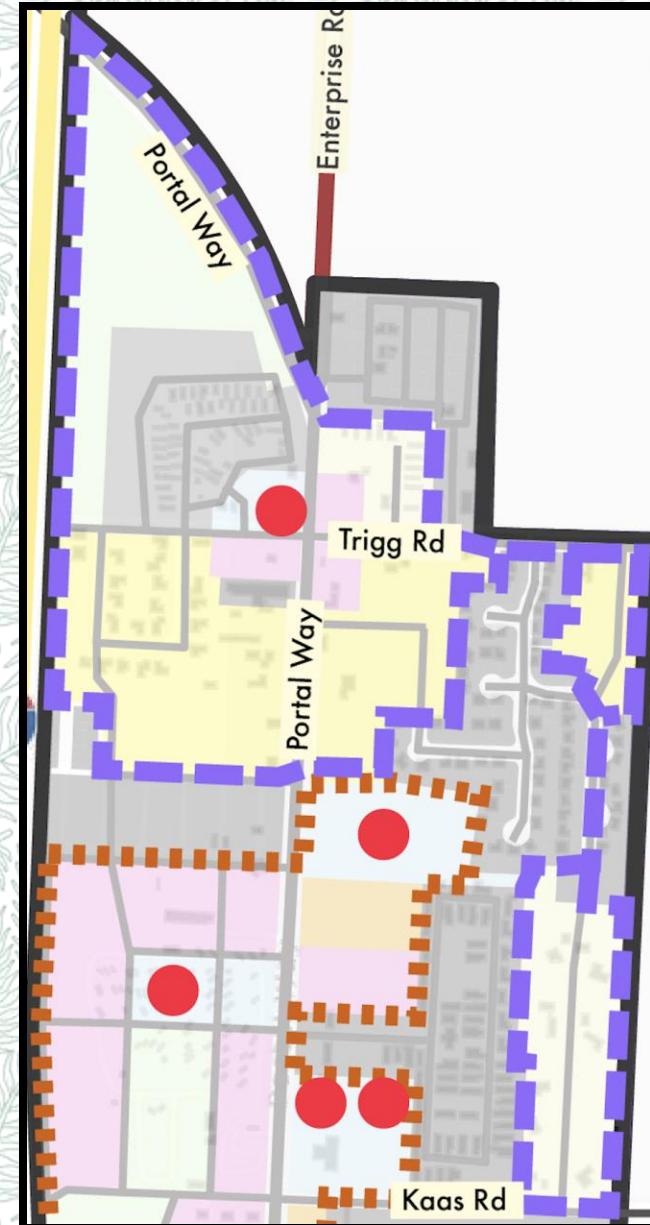
Land Acquisition: Finalize land needs, including wetland for park use and CLT-led redevelopment of select manufactured home areas

Infrastructure: Finish multimodal upgrades (bike lane to Grandview, Trigg Rd connections); improve utilities and build final road links

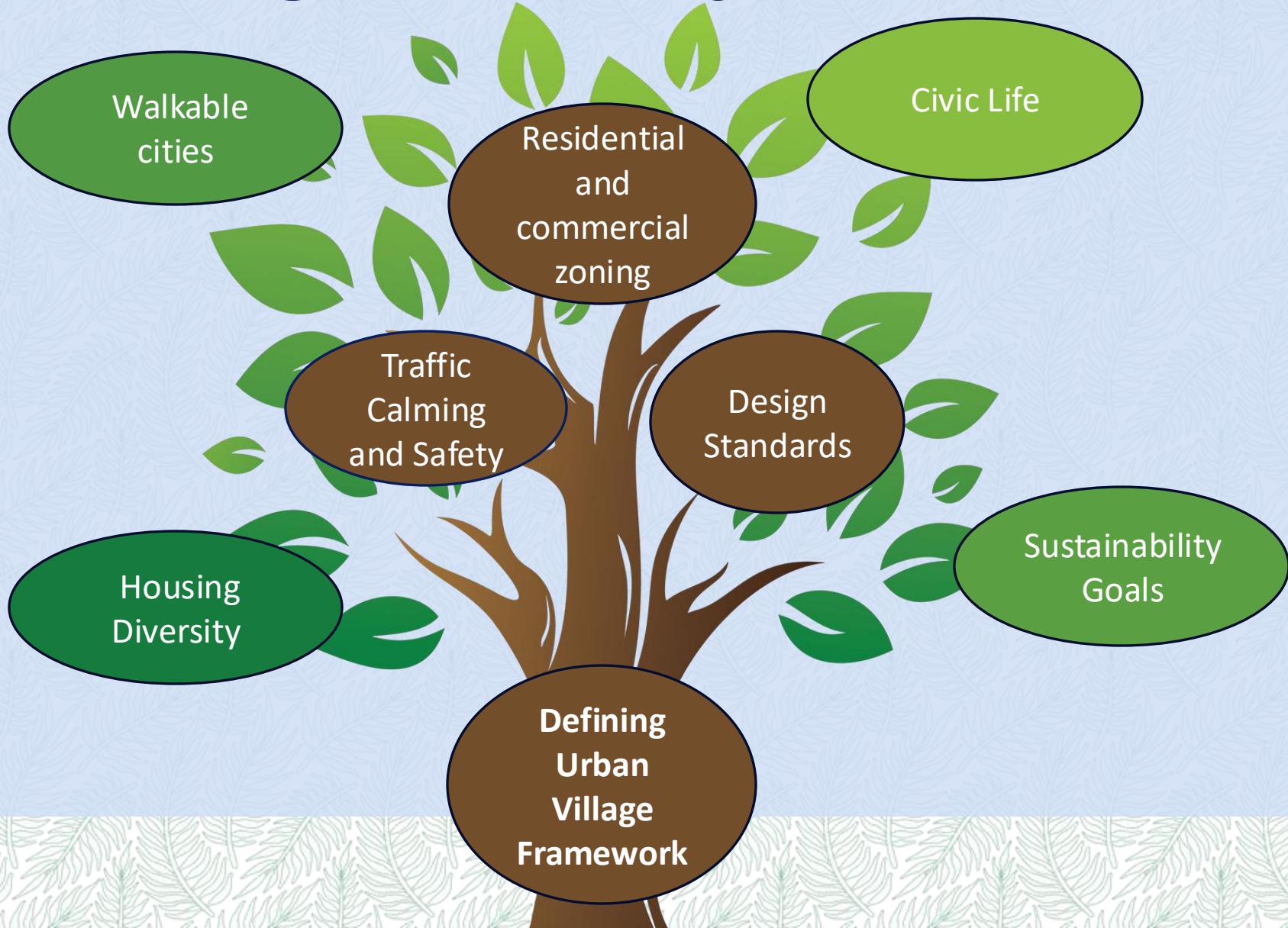
Policy & Zoning: Reassess zoning for ADUs and gentle density; align regulations with community desires and infill strategies

Development Focus: Promote ADUs, duplexes, townhomes; allow small-scale mixed use at Portal & Trigg; use familiar, community-driven design

Public Assets: Build 24/7 Urgent Care at Trigg & Portal; create northern linear park; reassess entire node for improvements; finalize placemaking



Urban Village Overlay Code Revisions



Portal Way – Design Guidelines

- Design for pedestrian-friendly streetscape
 - Small setbacks
 - Street trees & landscaped buffers
 - Large windows in street-facing storefronts
- Primary entrances face sidewalk or common space
- Limit new off-street surface parking
- Existing “Urban Residential” (UR) zone



Image: Getty Images/iStockphoto

Transportation Funding Sources

State Funding Source	Purpose
Multiuse Roadway Safety Program	Support safe, legal ATV use on public roads
Transportation Alternatives Program	Enhance non-driver mobility & infrastructure
Urban Sidewalk Program	Build safe, connected pedestrian routes in urban centers
Commute Trip Reduction Program	Reduce solo commutes, boost air quality, cut congestion
Rural Mobility Formula	Expand and improve rural transit
Community Development Block Grant	Support infrastructure benefiting low/mod-income areas
Public Works Board	Provide low-interest loans for public infrastructure



Transportation Development Incentives

Incentive	Purpose
Multimodal Transportation Impact Fees (and Reductions)	Impact fees on new development to fund multimodal infrastructure
Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	Leverage private investment to fund transportation improvements
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Increased property tax revenue from new developments to repay bonds or fund future improvements
Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay Zones	Promote compact, mixed-use, transit-accessible development, reducing vehicle trip generation and demand for transportation improvements



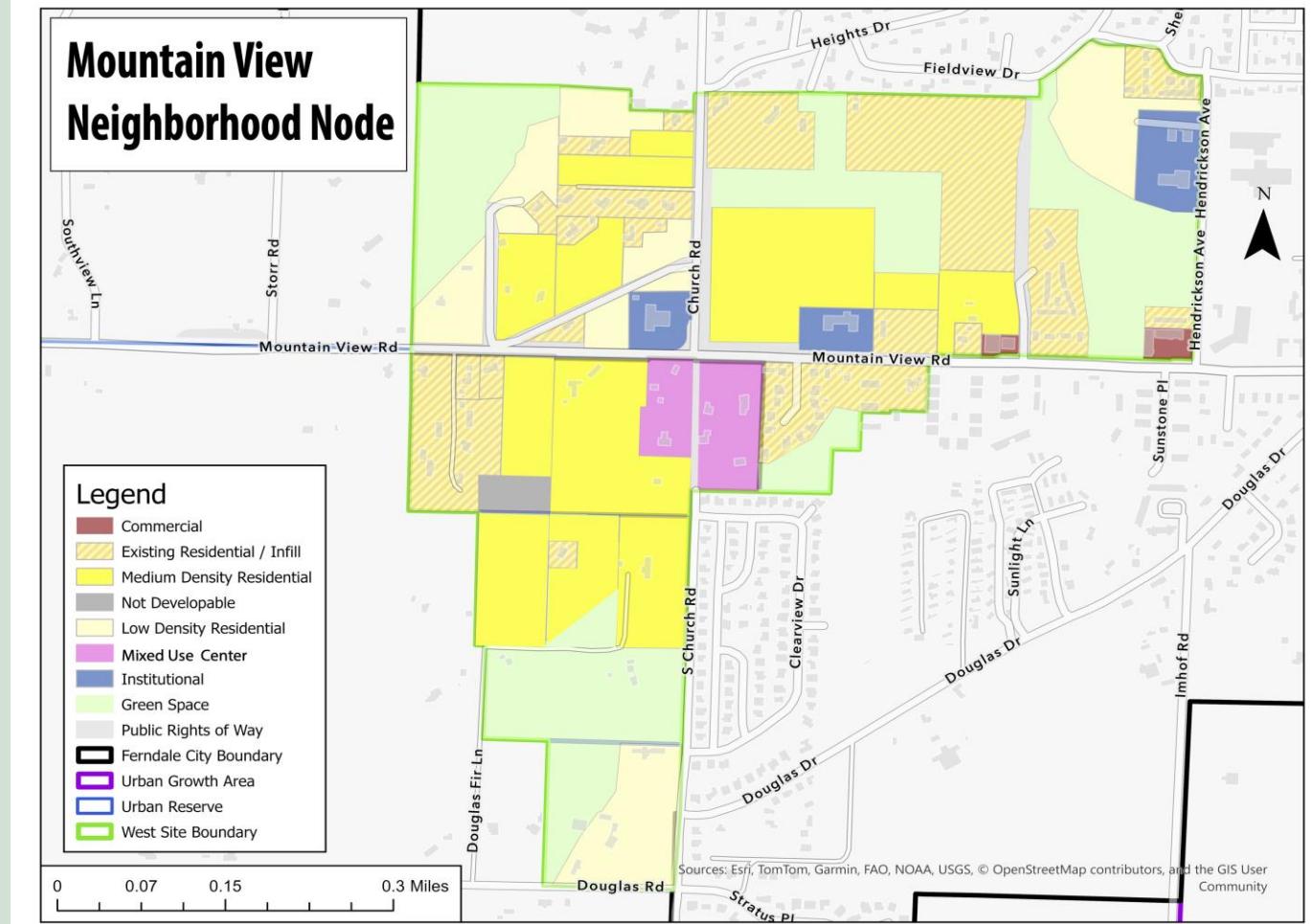
Mountain View Overview & Neighborhood Context

- 200 total acres
 - 80 developable acres
 - Mostly residential with urban center and green spaces
- West of Downtown, centered on Church and Mountain View Roads
- Current land use almost exclusively residential



Mountain View Land Use & Civic Assets

Mountain View Concept Plan



Land Use	Acreage
Low Density Residential	About 12-15 du/ac
Medium Density Residential	About 20-25 du/ac
High Density Residential	About 30-35 du/ac



Mountain View Housing Projections

Unit Type	Total	Percentage of Total
Single Family	112	7%
Townhomes	292	18.3%
Multi-Family	420	26.3%
Apartments	770	48.3%
Total	1,594	100%

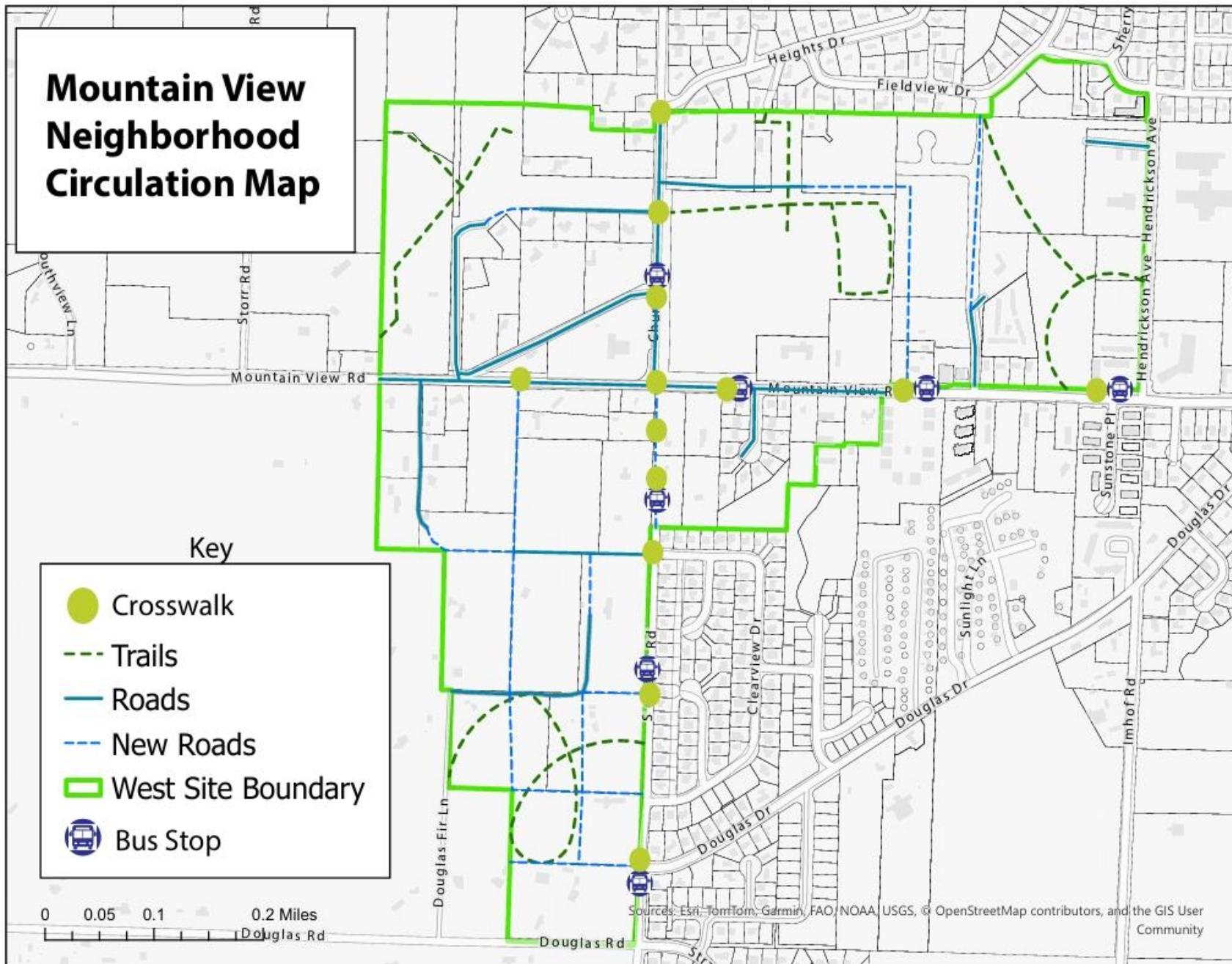
Mountain View

Transportation and Connectivity

Multimodal street upgrades

Trails and trail improvements

Added road connections



Mountain View Phasing Plan



Mountain View Neighborhood Phasing Map

Legend

Legend for the 2040 Vision map:

- Phase 1: 0-5 Years (Orange dots)
- Phase 2: 5-10 Years (Green dots)
- Phase 3: 10-15 Years (Blue dots)
- Phase 4: 15-20 Years (Purple dots)
- Low Density Residential (Yellow box)
- Med. Density Residential (Yellow box)
- Civic/Institutional (Blue box)
- Mixed Use Center (Pink box)
- Not Developable (Grey box)
- Existing Residential (Yellow box with diagonal lines)
- Green Space (Light Green box)

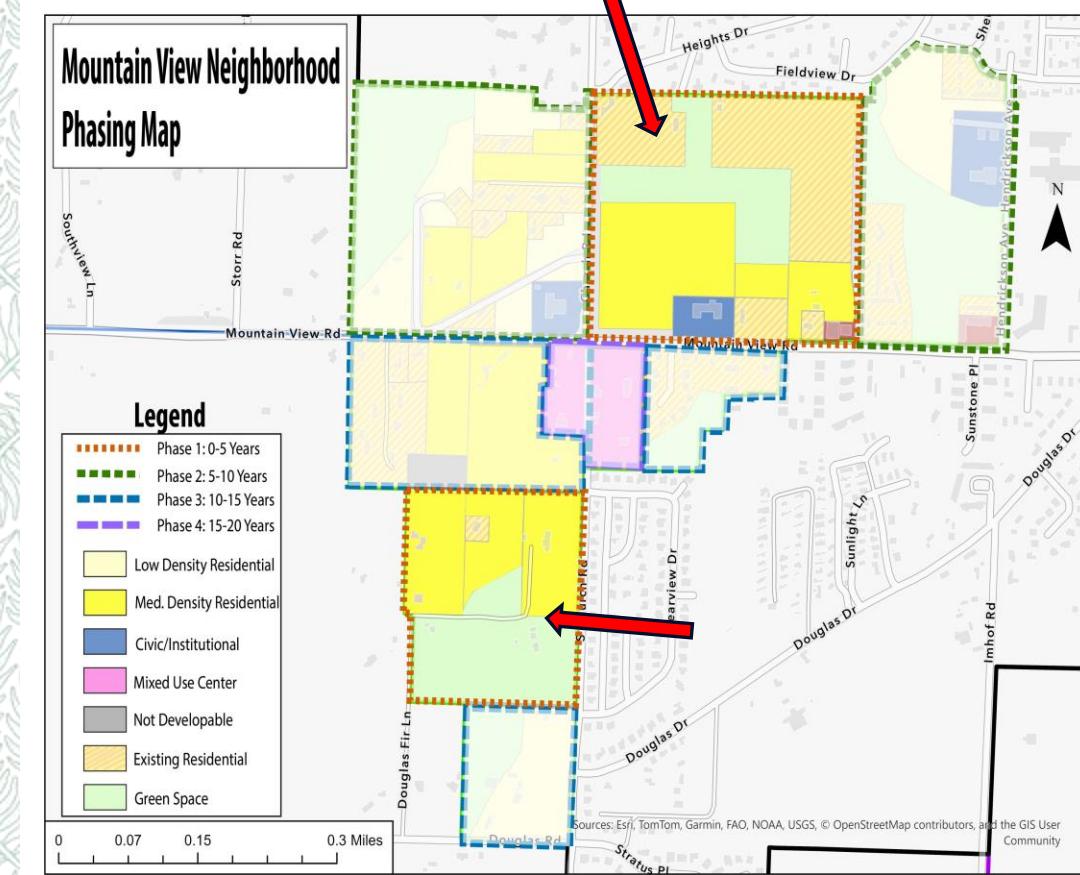
0 0.07 0.15 0.3 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User

and the GIS User
Community

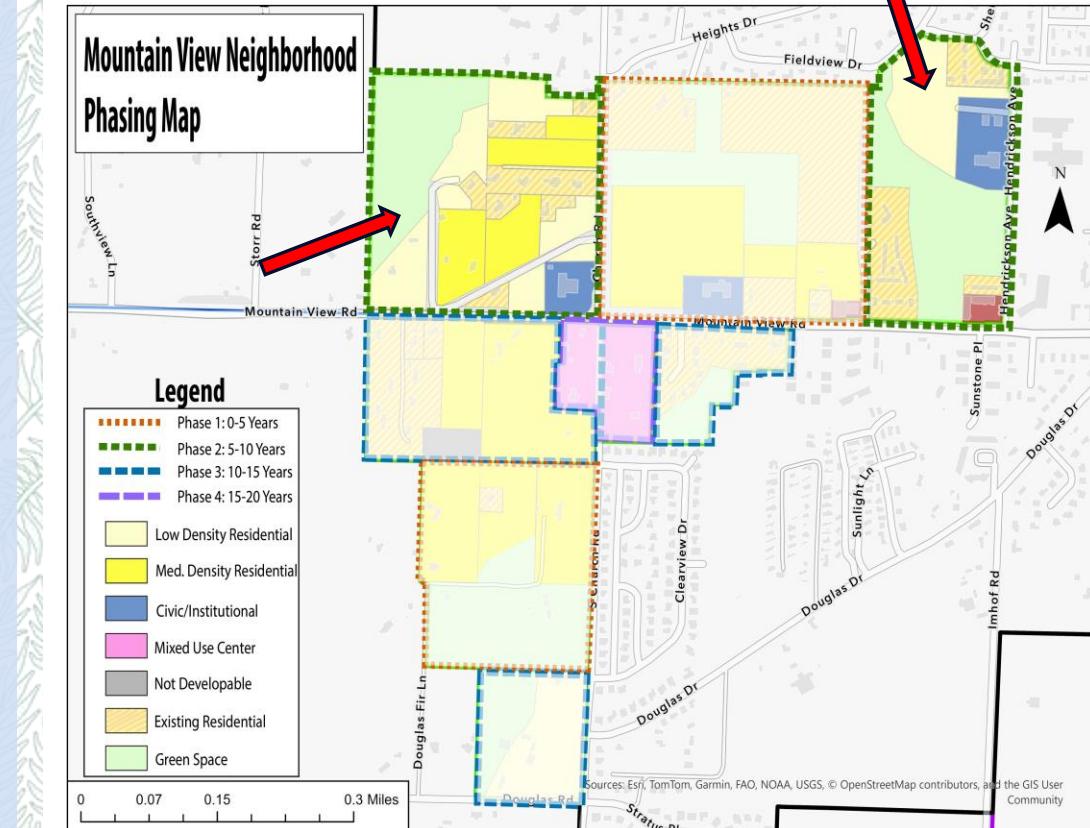
Mountain View- Phase 1

- Focuses on development in the UGA and parcels NE of Church and Mountain View Rd.
- Parcels off Church has two housing projects already in the works
- Adopt Residential Overlay Zone to permit Middle Housing in R1 zones + Adopt ADU code amendments
- Allow transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing in Residential zones
- Need to annex UGA + extend city services
- Consider road extensions of Douglass Fir Ln. to connect to larger roadways
- Consider new roads in area NE of Church-MV intersection
- Begin development of Public parks and trails
- Maintain consistent communication with current residents to avoid displacement



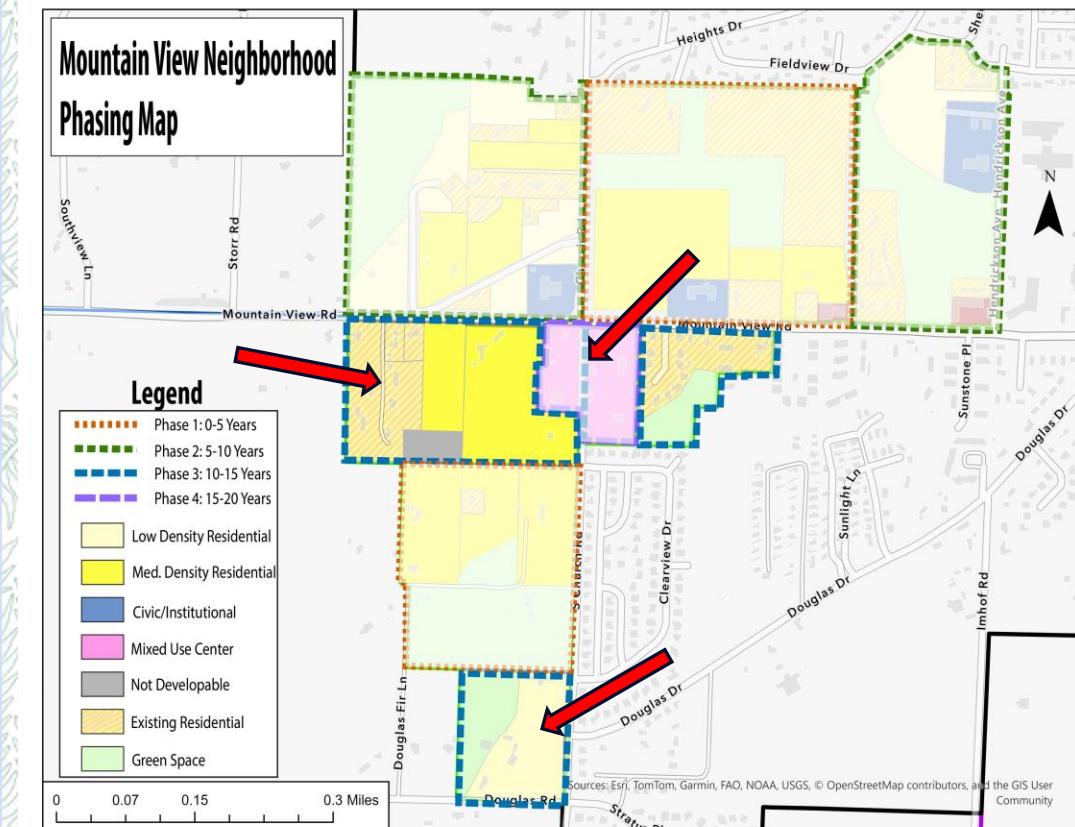
Mountain View- Phase 2

- Focuses on development in area NW of Church-MV. intersection and the area west of Hendrickson Ave.
- Begin residential development
- Begin development of public parks and trails, ensuring protection of the wetlands
- City should consider extending Shannon Ave.
- City should consider connecting Norway Rd. With Viewpoint Way.
- Existing civic and commercial spaces will be left unchanged.



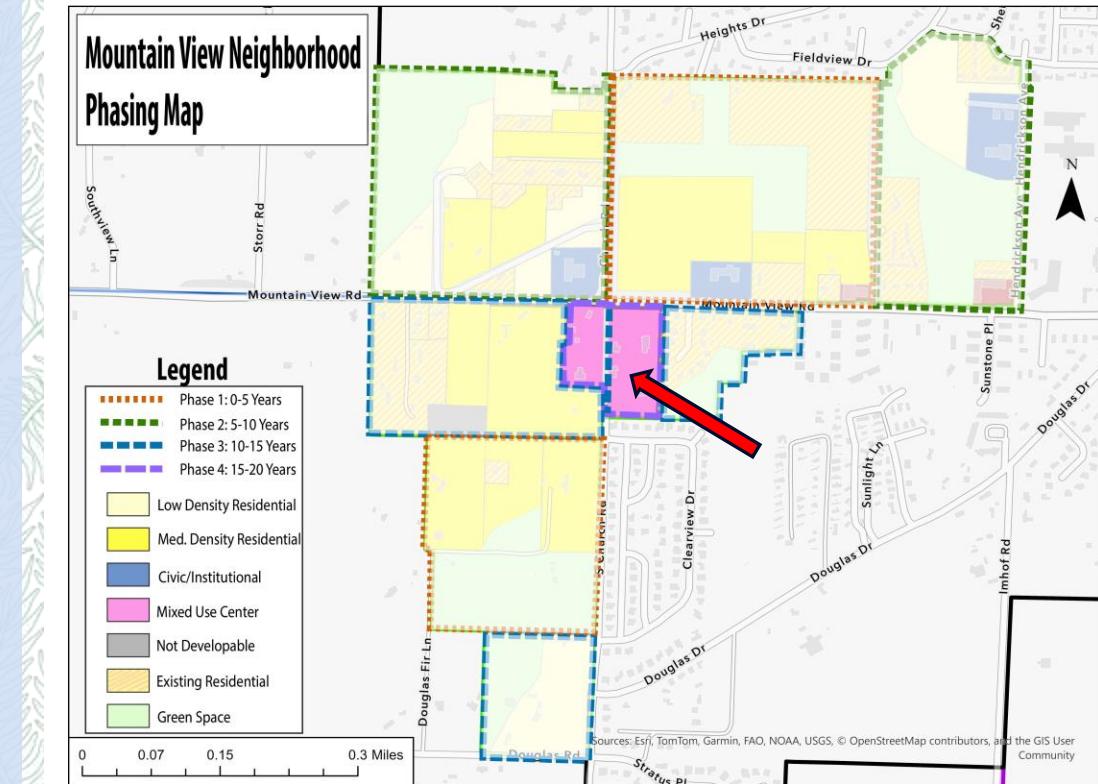
Mountain View- Phase 3

- Focuses on development in the UGA Reserves.
- These areas must be annexed into the city
- Extend city services into these areas
- Begin residential developments
- Begin S. Church Rd. Extension to Church Rd.
- Add crosswalks and new bus routes and stops once extension is completed
- Begin preparing mixed-use center site



Mountain View- Phase 4

- Begin development of Mixed-Use center (ideally would already be annexed and connected to city utilities)
- MU center is the last step because of the S. Church Rd. extension.
- Adopt Neighborhood Commerical Zone for Mixed-Use site
- Allow Live-Work in Mixed Commerical Use zones (MXD)



Mountain View Code Revisions

Neighborhood Commercial

The first floor of all buildings in the neighborhood commercial zone must be commercial. This is drawn from the requirements of Class A streets in Ferndale's Urban Residential Zone (Chapter 18.42) and the recommendations provided by the Ferndale Planning staff.

Emphasize mixed use infill and higher density residential

Can be used to apply design guidelines specific to the neighborhood commercial area

Can allow for flexible uses, art districts and commercial opportunities

Residential Overlay Zone

Permit duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes +, cottage housing and apartments by right in single-family zones

Allow transitional and permanent supportive housing in residential zones

Initiate an overlay zone to permit middle housing in all residential zones



Mountain View Code Revisions

ADUs

Implement code encouraging the development of ADU's to meet affordable housing requirements

Remove owner-occupancy requirements for ADUs

Remove off-street parking requirements for ADUs

Allow one detached or attached ADU by right on all residential lots

Equity in Zoning

Define "household" as "any number of individuals living together as a single housekeeping unit in a single dwelling unit, regardless of relationship

Consider developing a program to recruit diverse representatives within the planning committee

Develop an "environmental justice" overlay zone that applies additional review for developments proposed within or near critical areas (high emphasis on the Nooksack floodplain)



Design Guidelines

- Apply to MU Center
- Human scale development
 - Focus on satisfaction of fundamental human needs
 - Pedestrian Oriented
 - Inviting to public
 - Outdoor seating and street furniture
- Low-Impact Development
 - To protect surrounding ecology and residents
 - Urban greenery
 - Reduce impermeable surfaces
- Consider Local climate
 - Covered Public spaces
 - Incorporate natural lighting



Design Styles



Funding and Incentives

Affordable Housing

Partnerships

Work with existing organizations:

- Mercy Housing: operates Ferndale Square, an apartment complex for low-income families
- Kulshan Community Land Trust: Currently Building 50 new homes in Ferndale
- Habitat for Humanity

Transitional / emergency housing:

- Northwest Youth Services
- Opportunity Council

Additional steps:

- Affordable housing consultant
- Implement zoning standards that reduce development costs
 - Reduced permit and impact fees
 - Reduced / removal of parking standards
 - Inclusionary zoning

Grants

HUD rental programs distributed by state:

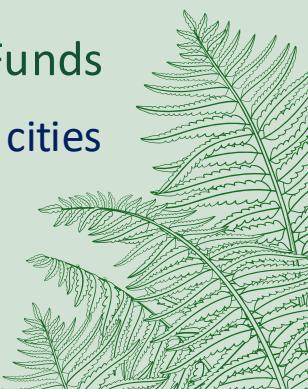
- National Housing Trust Fund Program providing extremely low-income housing (30% AMI)
- HOME Program providing low-income housing (60% AMI)

Washington State Housing Trust Fund: funding for local governments and other authorities

- Provides for housing development, preservation, rent and down payment assistance
- Two billion invested total by state, 400 million in 2023
- Has provided funding for over 58,000 housing units

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

- National program, provided to smaller counties and cities through state
- Funds housing, infrastructure programs



Funding and Incentives

Affordable Housing - MRSC Guidelines

Density Bonuses

- The City offers density bonuses through PUD and cottage housing ordinances
- No cottage housing built to date; work on enhancing feasibility & appeal

Inclusionary Zoning

- Determined to be pre-emptive for the region
- Planning to learn from and follow Bellingham's next steps

Anti-Displacement Strategies

- The city is looking to expand their MFTE to 12 years (8-year standard)

Partnerships with Nonprofit Housing Developers and Public Housing Authorities

- A partnership with Kulshan Land Trust is in the process of being added to the comprehensive plan

Surplus Public Property

- City Council was supportive in the past
- This option has been briefly discussed recently

Pre-Approved Building Plans

- Ferndale pre-approves subdivision building plans
- Limited engagement; open to suggestions



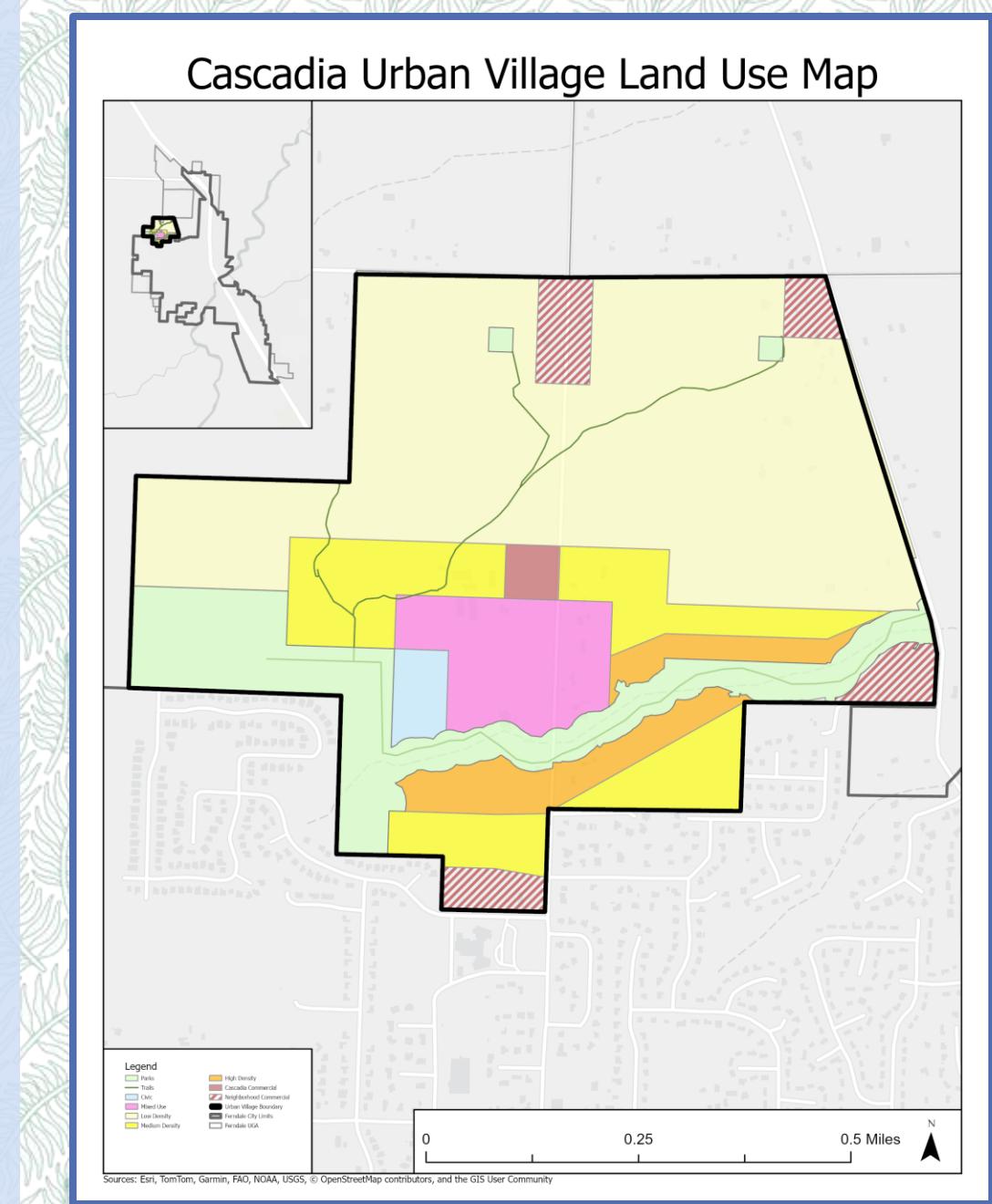


Cascadia Overview & Neighborhood Context

- Name inspired by adjacent elementary school
- Greenfield Development
 - Comprehensive design
 - Access to services and recreation
 - Grid street layout

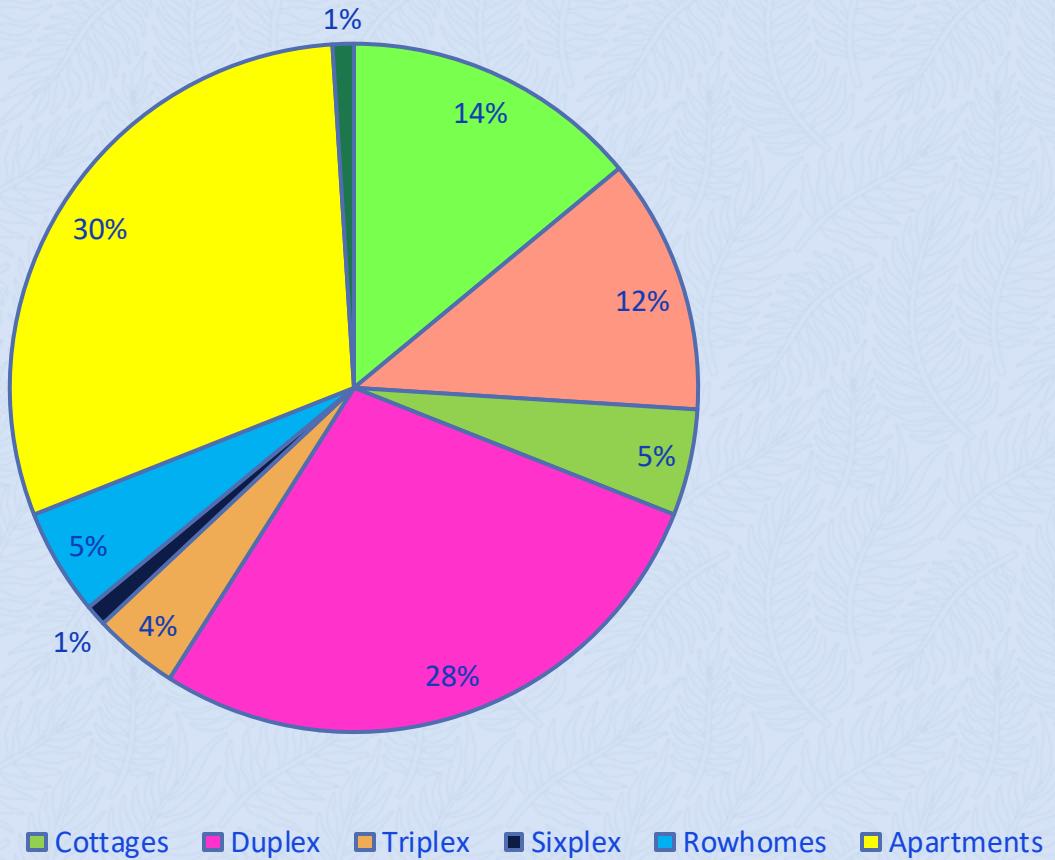
Land Use Map

Residential Zones	Acres	Units/Acre	Units
Low Density	146.3	10	1463
Medium Density	44.27	18	797
High Density	17.3	22	380
Mixed Use	20	22	440
Totals:	227.87 Acres for residential zones		3,080



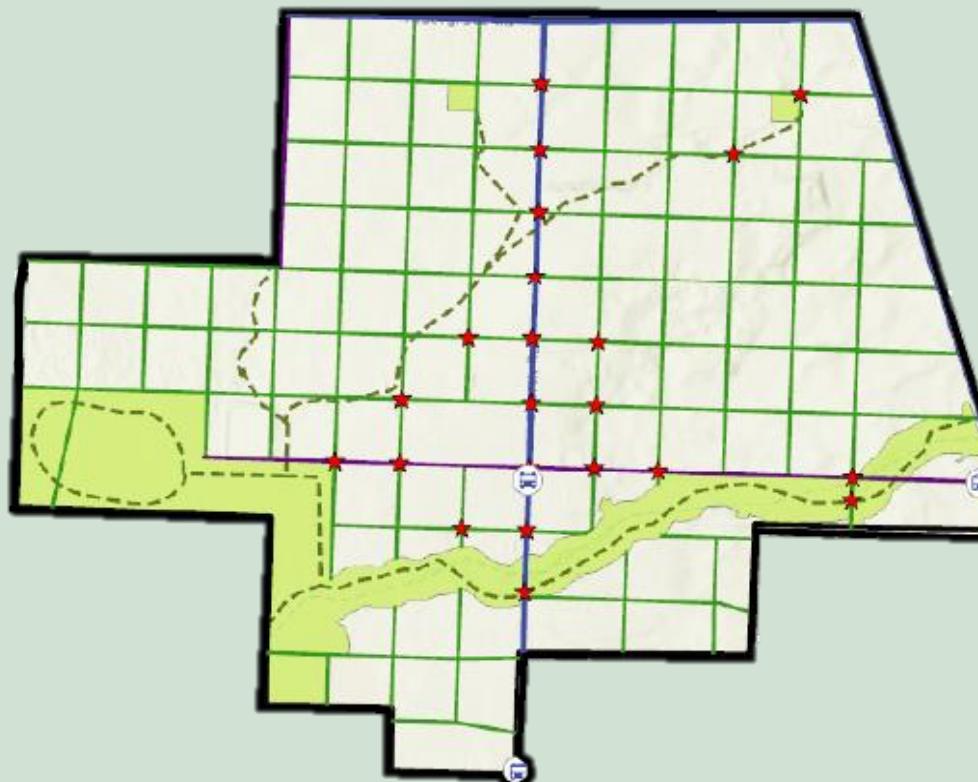
Cascadia - Housing Projections

Breakdown of Housing Unit Types by Percent



■ Single Family ■ ADU ■ Cottages ■ Duplex ■ Triplex ■ Sixplex ■ Rowhomes ■ Apartments

Connectivity

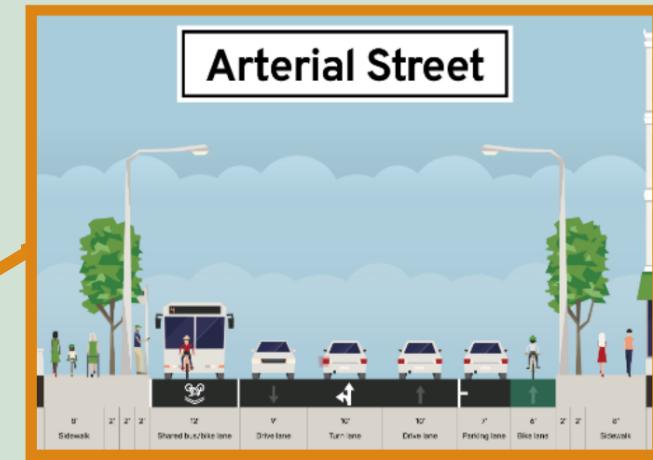


Legend

- Crosswalks
- Bus Stops
- Area Boundary
- Pedestrian/Bike Trails
- Park Space
- Arterial Streets
- Collector Streets
- Residential Streets



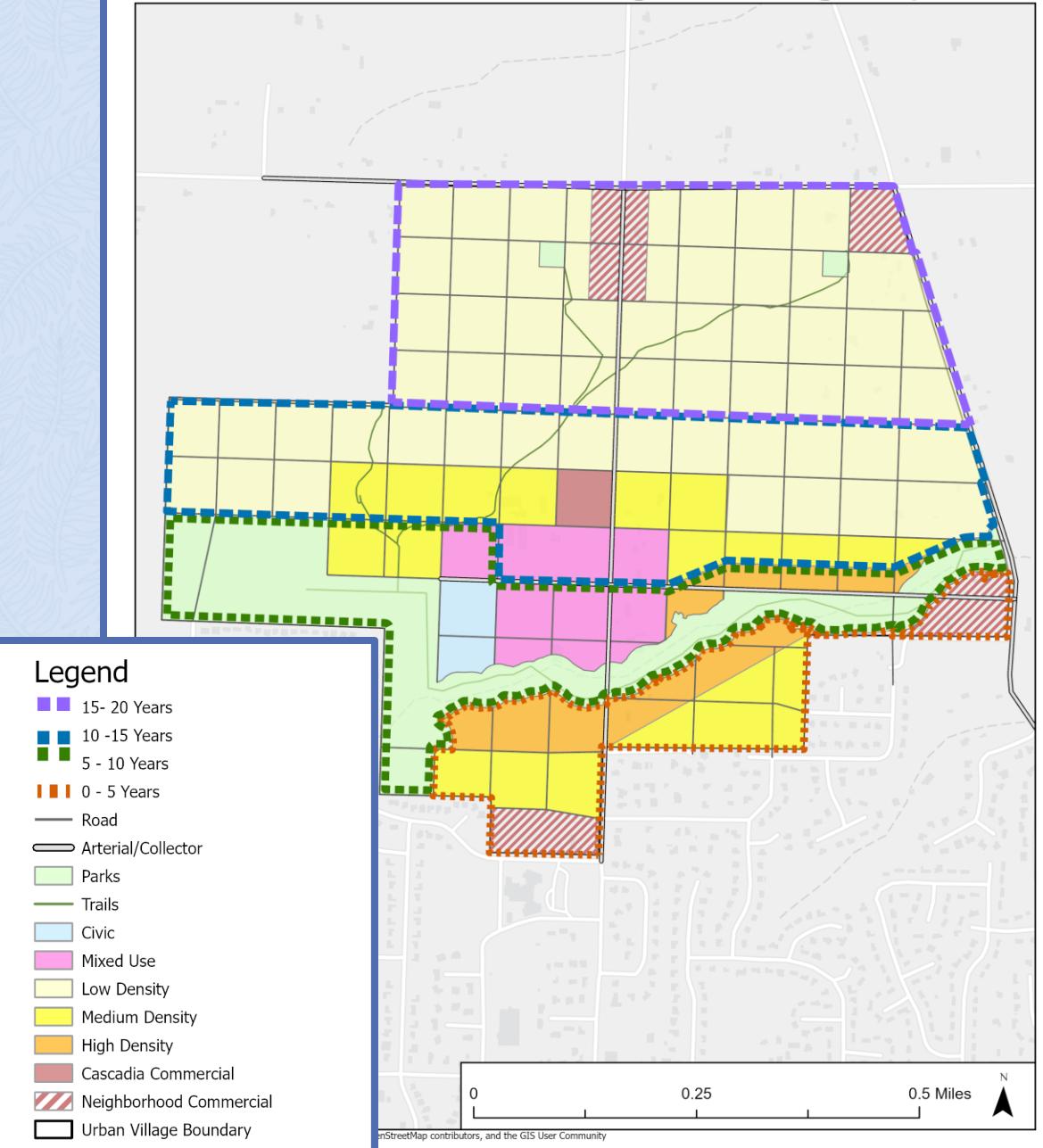
Proposed Street Types



Cascadia Urban Village Phasing

- **Phase 1**
 - Water tower
 - Neighborhood commercial
- **Phase 2**
 - Regional park
 - Mixed use core
 - Civic community services
- **Phase 3**
 - Cascadia commercial development
 - Trail system
- **Phase 4**
 - Develop commercial on Church Road
 - Develop neighborhood parks

Cascadia Urban Village Phasing Map



Cascadia Phase 1

Phase 1: 0-5 years	Time Frame
Revise land use zoning to accommodate	Year 0-2
Lay the groundwork for infrastructure	
Install water tower and water and sewer lines	



Cascadia Phase 2

Phase 2: 5-10 years	Time Frame
Lay groundwork for park system and create Cascadia Park Master Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical area protection• Recreational activity development (e.g. courts, fields, playgrounds, trail system, etc.)	Year 5-6
Draft plans for mixed use near park	
Lay infrastructure for phase two development (e.g. water and sewer lines, telecommunication lines, roads, trails, etc.)	
Civic area master planning and development: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library• Gathering Space• Pool!	Year 7-8
Complete park	Year 8-10
Complete middle, mixed-use housing	



Legend

- 15- 20 Years
- 10 -15 Years
- 5 - 10 Years
- 0 - 5 Years
- Road
- Arterial/Collector
- Parks
- Trails
- Civic
- Mixed Use
- Low Density
- Medium Density
- High Density
- Cascadia Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Urban Village Boundary

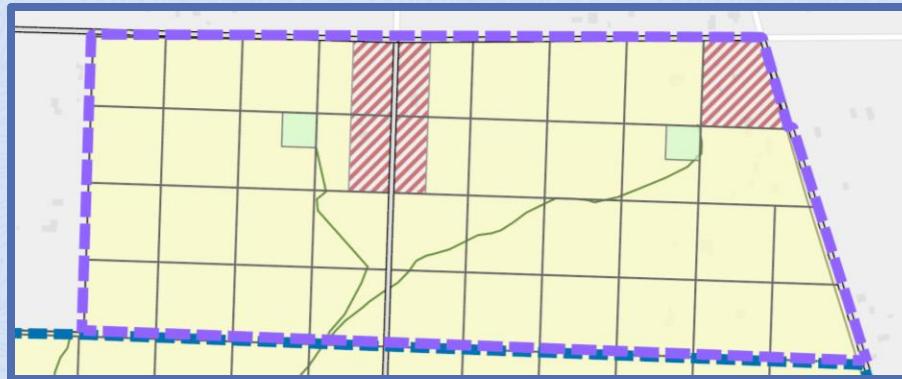
Cascadia Phase 3

Phase 3: 10-15 years	Time Frame
Finish development of mixed-use core Develop Cascadia Commercial area for a grocery or hardware store with a combination of mixed use, middle, and high-density residences	Year 10-11
Lay infrastructure for remaining medium and low density residential Finalize trail system	Year 11-12
Develop remaining medium and low density residential	Year 12-15



Cascadia Phase 4

Phase 4: 15-20 years	Time Frame
Develop commercial area on Church Road	Year 15-17
Analyze needs	
Develop neighborhood parks	



Cascadia - Code Revisions

Code	Revised	New	Cascadia	City Wide
Cascadia Commercial (general commercial)		x	x	
Neighborhood Commercial		x		x
Residential	x		x	
Mixed Use	x		x	



Cascadia - Code Revisions

New Zone type:

Cascadia Commercial

Allowance for:

- An array of uses and community-desired amenities to service north Ferndale & Greater Ferndale
- Greater site flexibility through removing requirement categories such as "Primary" and "Accessory"
 - Greater potential for moderate to moderate-high square footages for a variety of businesses to support commercial tax base resiliency
 - Does not limit potential for traditional setup of big box with accessory stores
 - 50,000 square foot max for individual uses





Pybus Market, Wenatchee, WA.



The Village at Totem Lake, WA.

Code Revisions

Revised Zone
type:

Neighborhood Commercial

Diverse array of uses to benefit community:

- assembly, business, retail, personal services
- Option for having mixed-use within zone

Provides:

- Neighborhood walkability
- Creating community gathering spaces



Nelson's Market, York Neighborhood, Bellingham, WA.



Code Revisions

New Zone: Residential (RES)

- Consolidation of current residential zones
 - Single-Family Dwelling Zones (RS Low, Medium, and High)
 - Residential Multifamily (Medium Density and High Density)
- Create new zone called Residential Zone (RES) to simplify the zoning code and allow for a wider array of housing types throughout the neighborhood and city
- Residential Zone is divided into 3 densities (RES low, RES medium, and RES high)
 - RES low density 10 units per acre
 - RES medium density 18 units per acre
 - RES high density 22 units per acre



Code Revisions

Revised Zone: Mixed use (MXD)

Higher required commercial development to serve higher density residential development

Acreage/Area	Current Commercial Requirement	Proposed Minimum Commercial Requirement	Proposed Maximum Commercial
2.5 acres (Standard Block)	2000 Square feet (1.8% of standard block)	15,000 Square feet (13.7 % of block)	43,560 Square feet, (40 % of block)
20.6 acres (Total Mixed Use)	26,000 Square Feet (2.8% of total area)	224,334 Square feet (25 % of total area)	358,934 Square feet (40% of total area)

Changes in permitted commercial uses protect neighborhood characteristics and access to services.

Newly prohibited uses include:
Automotive repair and service, drive through restaurants, fueling facilities, sports arenas, outdoor storage, hotels and motels, passive space, and bowling alleys.



Cascadia – Design Guidelines

- **Nature**
 - Green scaping
 - Green Design
- **Connectivity**
 - Alleyways
 - Bike Network
- **Cohesion**
 - Typologies
 - Green Design



Flea Market in alley, Vancouver, WA.



Hovander Homestead Park, Ferndale, WA.



Seattle Healthy Street, Seattle, WA.



Ferndale State Bank Building, Ferndale, WA.

Cascadia – Design Guidelines

Ferndale State Bank Building – precedent for town character



Additional Entrances

Ornamentation

Windows

Street Furniture



Cascadia – Land Use and Civic Assets

- Outdoor gathering, play, and court space
- Dual Community and Aquatic Recreation center
- Day care
- Library
- Emergency Housing



Hovander Homestead Park – Ferndale, WA.



Fairhaven Library, Bellingham, WA.



Arne Hanna Aquatic Center – Bellingham, WA.



Environmental Funding & Incentives

Salmon/Fish Passage Barrier Removal

- WRAI1
- Brian Abbot Fish Barrier Removal
- WA Dept. of Ecology



Planning and Construction Grants

- WA Dept. of Commerce
- WA Dept of Ecology



Green Jobs

- WA Dept. of Commerce
- Whatcom County
- Brownfields Job Training
- USDA - Forestry



Internal/City Initiated

- Property Tax Levy
- Development Impact Fees
- Metropolitan Park District
- Non-profit Collaboration



Tools for Gathering Community Input

Tools for Future involvement:

- Charrettes and Events
- Tabling at Existing Events
- Online Surveys

Reaching the Public

- Meeting people where they are at (pop up meeting at the park)
- Ensure multiple languages are represented

Activity	Description	Good for...
Community Mapping	Residents mark favorite spots, barriers, and desires on large-format maps.	Location-specific insights, easy to visualize feedback participants want to give.
Photo Stations	Participants take/ find photos of local gems and gaps, then talk about or annotate them.	Visual <u>storytelling</u> , can be used for youth engagement.
Dot-Voting Walls	Attendees use colored stickers to vote on design options like street sections or park features.	Quick prioritization, hands-on.
Story Circles	Small groups share personal experiences and aspirations for Cascadia's future.	Getting an inclusive conversation going.



Next Steps

1. Final Studio Reports:
Fall, Winter & Spring
2. Land Use Code
revisions & draft reports
for attached housing,
cottage housing,
commercial uses and
neighborhood
commercial
3. Summer Intern to
continue projects



Thank You!

