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June 11, 2025

Michael Cerbone, AICP  
Community Development Director  
City of Ferndale  
PO Box 936  
Ferndale, WA 98248

Re: 2025 Comp Plan Update

Dear Mr. Cerbone,

This past evening I attended Ferndale Comp Plan Update present by WWU students and faculty. They placed an impressive amount of thinking, detail and visioning into their extended presentation - an impressive body of work.

Their effort raises two concerns. Can people actually afford homes and the complexity of implementation.

The Nation is said to be approaching an 8,000,000 shortfall in housing, which we see in the pricing of homes outside middle class family income and extensive concerns with homeless individuals and families. It seems the land use planning and growth management process has left aside adequate housing for the people and families of our Nation. To witness, I have three grandchildren who have completed good 4-year college programs, have good employment and cannot begin to afford to purchase a home.

Does the work and information presented by the WWU students deliver the needed housing? Housing that families want: single family and duplexes with grass around them for kids to safely play.

At prior Ferndale planning community meetings this Spring, suggested where pictures of waterfalls and other not possible features in Ferndale.

Also, talk was of small community grocery store. I have one of these stores down the road from me at the corner of Douglas and Main Street. It has vast amounts of beer, wine and junk food. A similar "community grocery store" on the left side of LaBounty is a liquor and junk food store. Past planning and growth management process brought us these.

I asked the young college planners how they would implement the community grocery stores in view of the past outputs and if they could afford a home in the growth area as being described. They were universally baffled and not able to answer.

115 years ago, if you purchased a car it would have been individually assembled in a shop and cost several or more years in wages. Henry Ford came along with a factory, brought the price down to nominally a year's wage and cars became affordable. Today, up the street, they are building one expensive home at a time like cars in 1910. There are beautiful factory built modular homes with wonderful architecture available that will remarkably bring the price of quality housing down. I have heard nothing in the Ferndale land use planning/growth management discussion about making such homes available. There was some minimal discussion about traditional manufacture homes (I assume double and single wides) and I did not observe land so specifically set aside nor encouraged by these planners. Also, the homeless would wonderfully benefit by trailer/motor home parks as such is often their first step in moving forward.

A good part of my thesis pertains to building affordability homes and related significant land use planning and growth management. This requires a shift to welcoming affordable housing like high quality modular homes and welcoming land for mobile home courts and trailer parks. We have a serious need to house our people.

The second piece of addressing the drastic shortage of housing, is to make land available. This means opening up vast amounts of land for housing and related. The cities have been successfully expanding out into the country side forests and farm lands since the time of the Roman Empire. This means government needs to focus on building street and roads and extending water and sewer times to facilitate the new housing. Some people oppose covering woodlands and farms into housing. I suggest that those who so oppose, and live on land that was once forest or farm, should have their home torn down and land converted back to

forest or farm. If one make the rule that my Grandchildren cannot live on such land, then they need to live by their rule - Walk their talk.

Also, vastly expanding land for housing will help dramatically with good housing for our current homeless population living in vehicles and/or camping in the woods. The Church I attend, United Church of Ferndale, is open in cold weather to families and individuals as the community homeless shelter providing warm overnight sleep and hot meals. Talking with the participants, they are very often employed and cannot afford to both keep their car running to get to work and have funds for first, last and deposit for an apartment. Significantly increasing housing builds should significantly reduce the problem by freeing up housing resources.

Thus, my concern is the past land use planning and growth management effort have left us short of millions of homes. This results in the next generation not being able own a home to raise their family, too big a piece of monthly income going to housing and an incredible number of homeless families and individuals. My recommendations is to vastly increase the amount of land, yes woodland and farm land, available for homes with Ferndale building roads, sewer and water lines and other infrastructure to so support. Also, contain costs by welcoming well built modular homes, mobile homes and trailer parks. We need to house our people.

The students and faculty of WWU did amazing work putting together their draft Comprehensive Plan for Ferndale. They need to be commended. My experience in other major capital work indicates the plan is too complex making implementation confusing and difficult. A redo keeping it simple and understandable is appropriate. Also, integrate affordable built housing (modular, manufacture and trailer park) and pushing the boundaries to encompass vast amounts of land would be a step in the solution of our Nations's housing difficulty and for the future of Ferndale.

The land use planning and growth management people need to be very careful not to pull up the ladder to those who are now seeking or will be seeking homes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bill Burnell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".