

# City of Ferndale, Washington

# NEIGHBORHOOD

# CENTERS

## Implementation

Urban Planning Studio | Western Washington University | Spring 2025

A WWU Urban Transitions  
Studio Publication

# Ferndale Neighborhood Centers

## Implementation

**City of Ferndale,  
Whatcom County, WA.**



**College of the Environment  
Western Washington University  
Bellingham, Washington 98225 USA  
Spring 2025**

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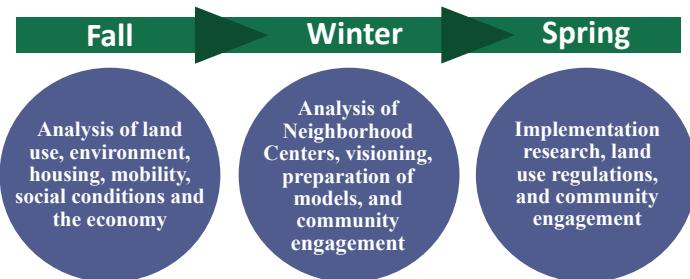
# Table of Contents



*“The best way to predict the future  
is to design it”*

Buckminster Fuller

## Planning Studio Sequence



	Page
1.0 Acknowledgments and Dedication	4
2.0 Message to the Ferndale Community	5
3.0 Introduction: Portal Way Neighborhood Center	7
3.1 Phasing Plan	8
3.2 Code Revisions	14
3.3 Design Guidelines	18
3.4 Summary	21
4.0 Introduction: Cascadia Neighborhood Center	22
4.1 Phasing Plan	24
4.2 Code Revisions	27
4.3 Design Guidelines	30
4.4 Summary	36
5.0 Introduction: Mountain View Neighborhood Center	37
5.1 Phasing Plan	40
5.2 Code Revisions	45
5.3 Design Guidelines	47
5.4 Summary	48
6.0 Funding & Incentives	49
6.1 Transportation	50
6.2 Environmental Restoration	51
6.3 Affordable Housing	55
7.0 References	58

# 1.0 Acknowledgements

## ***Student Authors:***

Jovie Anderson  
Lauren Asmussen  
Jack Bengston  
Brett Bishop  
Griffin Carlson  
Maisie Gill  
Davis Hatton  
Eric Hendry  
James Hosheit  
Joshua Khan  
Charlotte King  
Mathias King  
Terra Kyer  
Marie Langer  
Angelo Lepore  
Ciara Riordan  
Samantha Sprague  
Lark Troha  
Lauren Wright

## ***WWU Faculty Instructor:***

Tamara Laninga, PhD, AICP  
Urban Planning Program Director

## ***Office of the Mayor***

Greg Hansen

## ***Ferndale Community Development***

Michael Cerbone, Director  
Kyla Boswell, Assistant Planner

Western Washington University's Urban Planning Studio would like thank Mayor Greg Hansen for welcoming our city-university partnership to examine alternatives to Ferndale's future development to sustainably meet its projected future population growth requirements.

We especially wish to thank Michael Cerbone, Planning Director, and Kyla Boswell, Assistant Planner, for their continuing support of this investigation and for providing insights and resources throughout the study. Our gratitude is expressed to the community of Ferndale for welcoming us and providing invaluable insights to the community's preferences regarding how Ferndale might grow to accommodate its future population while improving conditions for existing residents.



*Figure 1.0.1. Spring Planning Commission Presentation*

## 2.0 Message to the Community

The City of Ferndale has estimated its projected housing needs to accommodate future population growth over the next two decades. This planning study evaluated the development potential for several sites located within the city's boundaries and its urban growth areas. The study provides an analysis of the sites' potential to support pedestrian-scale, mixed use development to meet future needs for equitable housing while improving services to residents.

Students in the Planning Studio evaluated the development potential for three site locations. Students relied on data on population growth, Ferndale's public policies, and New Urbanism planning principles that promote increased livability, housing diversity and affordability, and neighborhood-scaled retail services to create a strong sense of place.

The concept of "*complete neighborhoods*" is based on an urban development model that complies with Washington State's Growth Management Act's planning goals as well as best management planning principles. The approach to meeting future growth emphasizes urban development that is both compact and concentrated in distinct neighborhood centers providing a variety of housing and services to benefit current and future residents .

This planning studio is part of a year-long study conducted by WWU seniors in the Urban Planning and Sustainable Development major. In fall quarter 2024, Dr. James Miller instructed Studio I, an analysis of socio-ecological conditions that involved site visits and data collection. A survey

and a community workshop was conducted to gain insights and opinions regarding the future development of the city.

Dr. Nicholas Zaferatos instructed this winter 2025 Planning Studio II class, focusing on developing conceptual land use planning alternatives. This report presents the findings from the analysis and proposes three neighborhood centers in Portal Way and in the northern and western edges of the city within the city's urban growth areas.

In spring quarter 2025, Dr. Tammi Laninga, instructing the Planning Studio III class, will address refinements to the planning study based on feedback from community workshops, and develop a phasing and implementation strategy to help guide Ferndale's long term development.

### Study Content

This Study includes the following elements:

- Identification and mapping of boundaries for each neighborhood site.
- Calculation of land areas suitable for development.
- Defining the optimal land use mix for each neighborhood site, inclusive of housing, services, retail and recreational uses.
- Evaluating a range of housing densities for each neighborhood site.
- Analyzing density alternatives and housing typologies to meet projected housing demand.
- Defining a range of neighborhood services and service area boundaries.
- Evaluating the use of public rights of ways, public spaces, and critical areas.
- Identifying mobility and connectivity improvements for each neighborhood site to support multi-modal travel.
- Conducting community engagement in surveys and workshops to identify community preferences.
- Formulating conceptual site plans for each neighborhood site.
- Preparing final recommendations, site plans, and an analysis of the housing impacts based on conceptual plans.

The City of Ferndale asked students in the Urban Planning studio to study three areas in Ferndale's urban growth areas for future neighborhood center development. These areas, shown in Figure 2.01 are Portal Way, Cascadia, and Mountain View. Portal Way is fully within city limits. The Cascadia Neighborhood Center is in Ferndale's urban growth area, north of existing residential development. The Mountain View Neighborhood Center proposal spans areas that are in Ferndale's urban growth and urban reserve areas and are just east of residential development.

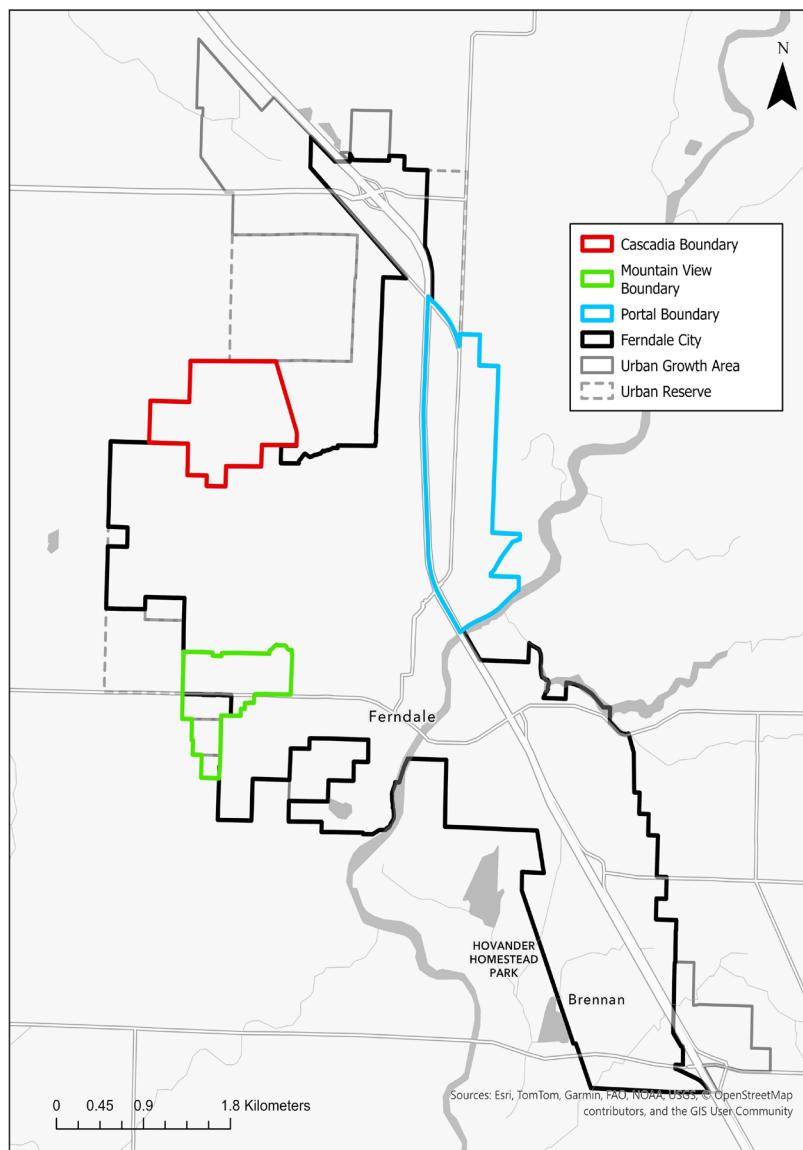


Figure 2.0.1 Future Neighborhood Centers, Ferndale, WA

# 3.0 Introduction: Portal Way Neighborhood Center

The concept of neighborhood center development is a strategy to concentrate future growth within compact, walkable centers that offers a mix of housing, commercial, civic, and recreational uses. This approach encourages complete communities that support multimodal transportation, cultivate a strong sense of community identity, and enhance local quality of life. In Ferndale, Washington the Portal Way corridor presents a unique opportunity to apply this concept by transforming a currently underutilized area into a thriving neighborhood center, or urban village, that meets the city's evolving housing, economic, and infrastructure needs. Portal Way, fully within city limits, is strategically located to support future development due to its availability of developable land, proximity to existing infrastructure, and connection to regional transportation. This corridor has the potential to accommodate a significant portion of Ferndale's anticipated population growth.

Based on feedback at our April 15 community presentation and from City staff, several updates were made to the land use and connectivity maps (see Figures 3.0.1 and 3.1.1) to better reflect community priorities and evolving development goals. Notable changes to the land use map include adjustments to zoning designations such as the reclassification of select parcels and the refinement of mixed-use areas. Additionally, civic asset locations were repositioned to align with service needs identified by residents. The connectivity map revisions included adjusting street alignments and classifications to enhance multimodal connectivity and circulation.

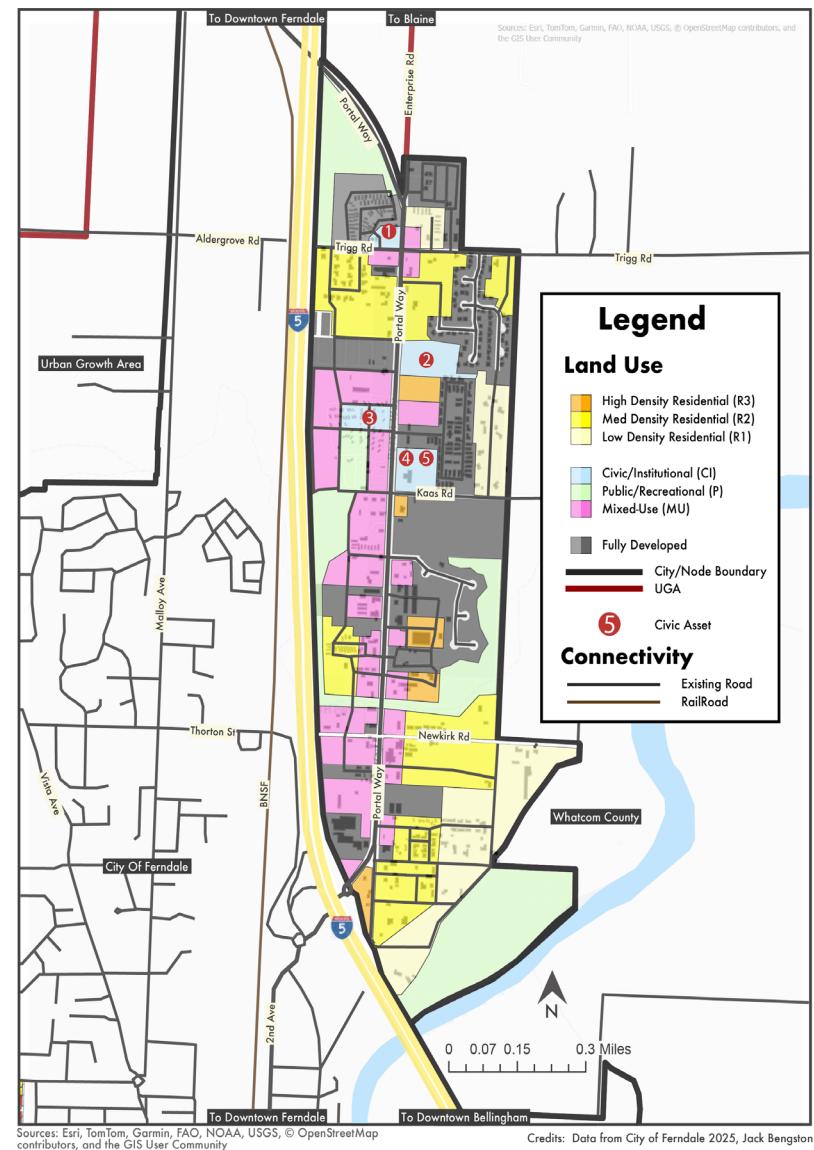


Figure. 3.0.1 Portal Way Land Use Map

# 3.1 Phasing Plan

Table 3.0.1. Portal Way Land Use Definitions

Abbreviation	Land Use	Units/Acre
R1	Low Density Residential	15-18
R2	Medium Density Residential	20-23
R3	High Density Residential	28-30

The Portal Way implementation chapter outlines a development phasing plan for the next 20 years, a proposed zoning overlay to help guide land use decisions, design guidelines to ensure cohesion within the built environment, and a set of recommended code revisions to support implementation.

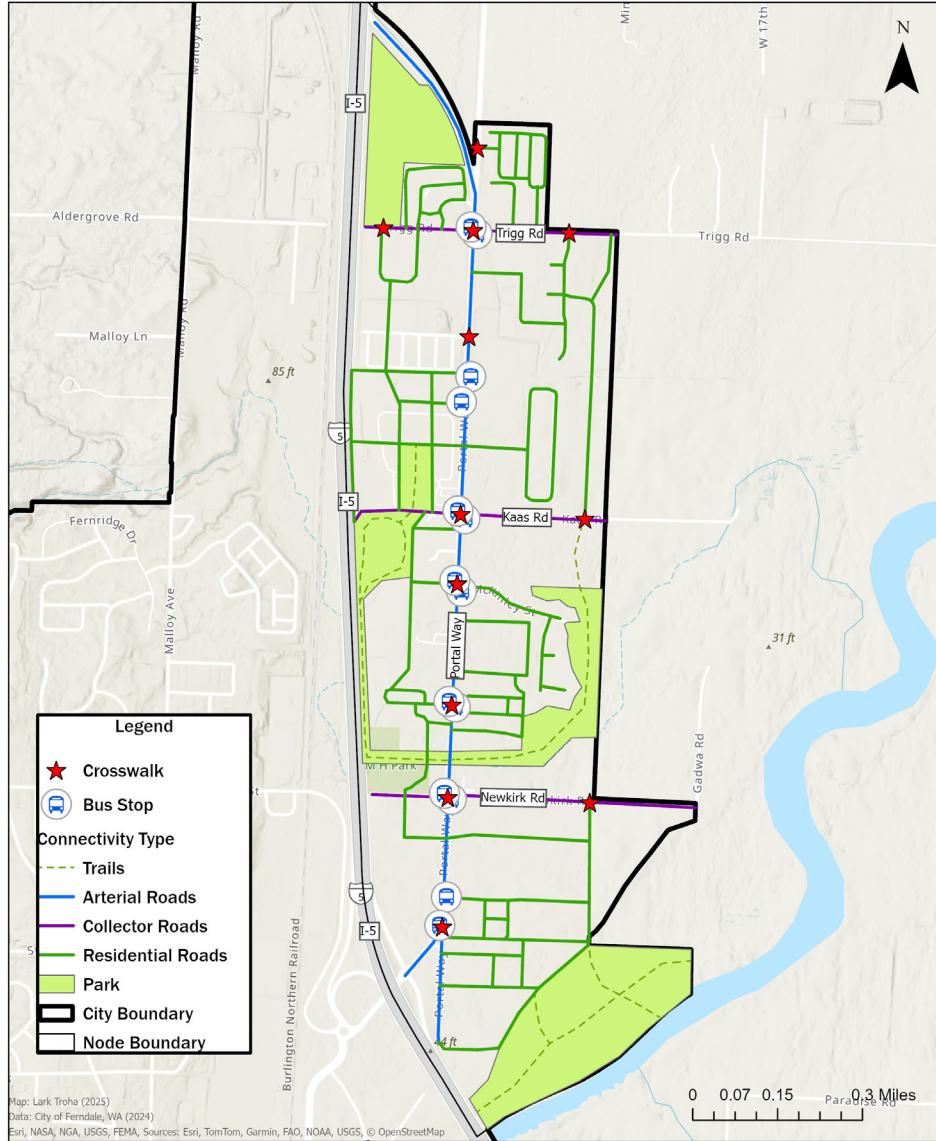


Figure 3.1.1 Portal Way Connectivity Map

## Overview

Portal Way is proposed to be developed within 20 years of plan implementation. Each phase of development involves community engagement, preservation of affordable housing, utilities improvements, land acquisition, multimodal infrastructure implementation, new construction, and renovation efforts. Each phase focuses on a separate area within Portal Way as shown in Figure 3.1.2. This proposal is entirely non-binding and is proposed as an array of options that the planning staff can research further. Any implementation would require approval from the City of Ferndale's Planning Commission and City Council.

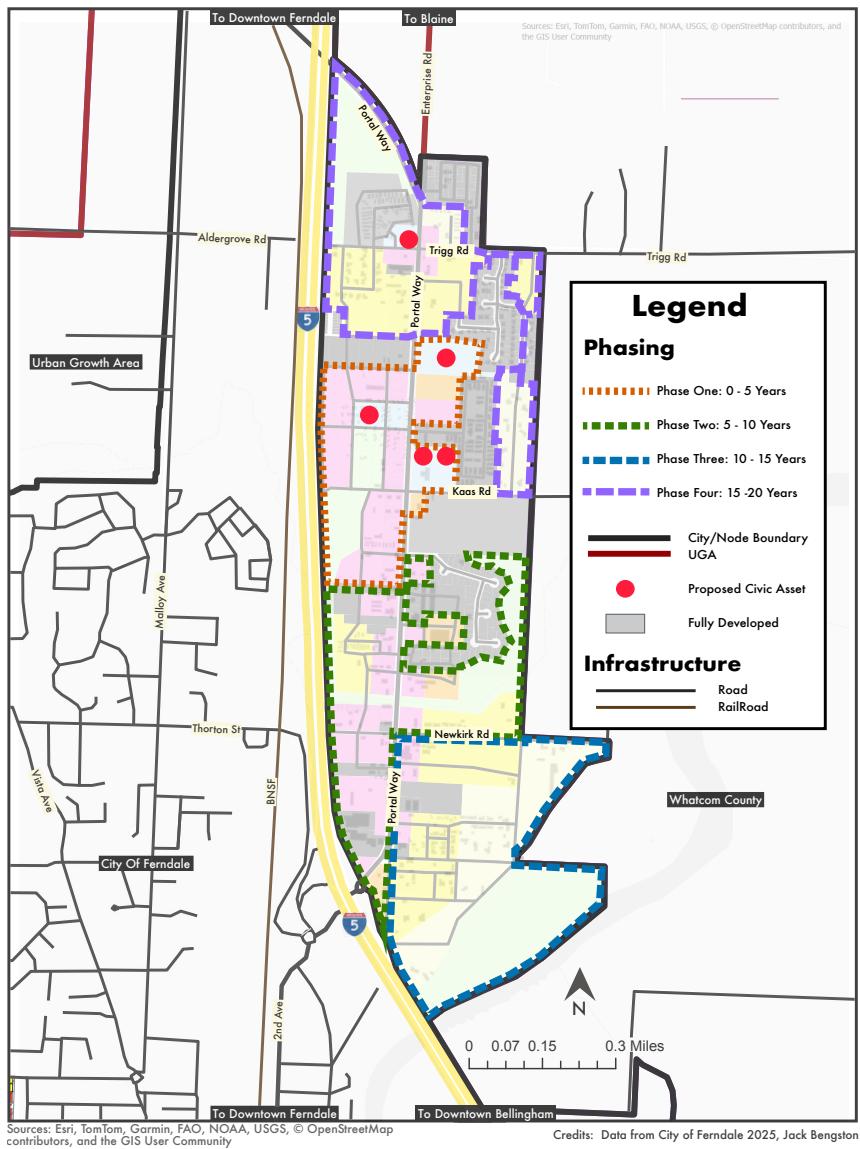


Figure 3.1.2 Portal Way Phasing Map

Phase	Key Development Focus Areas
<b>Phase 1 0-5 yrs</b>	<p><b>Location Rationale:</b> The first phase of development in the Portal Way node is around Kaas Rd, near the middle of Portal Way. This area is centrally located, several civic uses are proposed here, and the densest development is proposed for this area. Developing this “anchor area” first will be key to spurring future development in other areas. This area is also home to a large RV park with some permanent residents. Early and frequent community engagement with these residents to get their input and preserve their affordable housing will be important.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement:</b> Begin initial engagement and stakeholder process with residents of both the Phase 1 area and other areas where development is proposed to occur on or near residential areas. Provide current residents the opportunity to give feedback and modify the plan to the extent possible and connect individuals whose properties may be redeveloped with information they need to make an informed decision about selling their property. As part of this anti-displacement process, the city should allow phased development on affordable housing land so that residents are able to stay in their residences until more affordable housing is built. Develop a publicly accessible phasing dashboard for them to track progress.</p> <p><b>Land Acquisition:</b> Begin the process of acquiring land for civic and public uses both inside and outside the Phase 1 area, focusing efforts within the area. This includes subdividing the Church of Christ on Portal Way property to develop a civic center and library branch. The RV park would also be subdivided to make room for more robust affordable housing, possibly in partnership with a community land trust, who could begin constructing affordable housing.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure Improvements:</b> Study and test all utilities (sewer, water, broadband) within the neighborhood node, determine costs associated with expanding utilities to an acceptable level to support increased density. Develop utilities along the west side of Newkirk Rd in preparation for Phase 2. Use state and federal funds (see fundraising section) to build new street grid within Phase 1 area, add multimodal infrastructure (protected walk/bikeways, bus pullouts, lighted crosswalks) to Portal Way.</p> <p><b>Zoning and Policy Reform:</b> Examine current zoning and development regulations for restrictions placed upon mixed use, affordable housing, and other types of less common development. Consider adopting the new neighborhood commercial zone as developed by WWU students for the Phase 1 area as well as all other mixed-use areas in Portal Way. Consider developing an urban village overlay zone (see more details in the Code Revision section).</p> <p><b>Development Activities:</b> Encourage and permit mixed use development and high-density housing focusing primarily in the Phase 1 area but also approve developments in other areas. Ensure that development occurs at the block scale with frontage to the street (consider accepting Conditional Uses or Planned Unit Developments should they align with city priorities). Begin city or public-private partnership effort to build tiny home units within the RV park site to allow for more permanent affordable solutions without displacement.</p> <p><b>Public and Civic Assets:</b> Once land is acquired, begin development of central Community Park and wetland walkway (trail/linear space) south. Begin building civic center/library and elementary school and attempt to finish by the end of Phase 1. Implement a placemaking and wayfinding strategy for the new neighborhood as it develops (COF Parks Plan, 2021). Begin the process of identifying a 24/7 urgent care provider to locate along Portal Way in Phase 4 area with the intention of establishing the care firm by the end of Phase 4.</p>

Phase	Key Development Focus Areas
Phase 2 5-10 yrs	<p><b>Location Rationale:</b> Phase 2 is located to the south of Phase 1. It extends to I-5 on the west of Portal Way, east of Portal Way to the city limits, to Newkirk Rd. This area was deemed important for development following Phase 1 due to its proximity to Phase 1 developments, and its location closer to existing development. Significant community engagement with current residents of this area is needed before development as it is highly populated with single family structures as well as some commercial structures.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement:</b> Continue to engage with current residents to limit displacement, including delayed development of properties or direct trades of land and home for quality housing and other assets in new development. The planning process should be cyclical and able to adapt to resident needs. Conduct follow up engagement with new residents of Phase 1 area to determine if additional changes are needed.</p> <p><b>Land Acquisition:</b> Acquire any private land along the stream for future park/trail development. If a CLT was identified for Phase 1, begin TDR process for affordable housing land.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure Improvements:</b> Finish utility upgrades in the area. Add multimodal infrastructure to the southern section of Portal Way and complete a bike/walk lane underneath I-5 corridor. Develop through street to the west of Portal Way.</p> <p><b>Zoning and Policy Reform:</b> Reevaluate previous zoning changes and identify any additional restrictions to denser development that need to be removed with community input. Ensure rezoning of Phase 2 areas to develop desired land uses. Consider developing a form-based code to go along with overlay zone.</p> <p><b>Development Activities:</b> Promote and permit mixed use, medium, and high density uses as per the land use map so that development along Portal Way has street frontage and is using land efficiently. Encourage developers to build more affordable housing and public assets through development incentives (see incentives).</p> <p><b>Public and Civic Assets:</b> Once the stream is acquired, restore the creek bed to cross unimpeded below Portal Way and develop a trail system connecting to the wetland area in Phase 1 and headed east into county land towards the Nooksack River. Work with the Whatcom County to continue trail development up until the banks of the Nooksack.</p>

Phase	Key Development Focus Areas
Phase 3 10-15 yrs	<p><b>Location Rationale:</b> Phase 3 covers the remainder of developable land south of Phase 2 and is characterized by low density residential and marshland. It is the location of the largest amount of residential buildings marked for redevelopment, making it especially important to act ethically in development proceedings that actively includes community members in the plan.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement:</b> Continue the engagement process with residents of Phase 3 area that began in Phase 1, working to find actionable solutions that allow both the resident to stay in place should they wish while also allowing development to occur.</p> <p><b>Land Acquisition:</b> Continually work to acquire marsh land near the Nooksack River along with areas required for proposed right of way extensions. Residents must be given ample time to make an informed decision about the selling of their property, particularly if it is an individual owner as opposed to a LLC or other Land holding corporation.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure Improvements:</b> Complete right of way extensions within the Phase 3 Area, including frontage along the marshland and various connections between existing roadways as well as the remainder of multimodal street improvements along Portal Way. Ensure that stormwater runoff facilities are adequate for increased development so as to prevent flooding in areas within the 500 Year Nooksack River Floodplain.</p> <p><b>Zoning and Policy Reform:</b> By the end of Phase 3, most regulatory changes should be complete. Potentially develop high flood risk development regulations guide for the southern areas of Phase 3 so as to make development in this area easier to comply to objective standards. Zoning in this area should reflect an anti-displacement ethos, supporting incremental development and embedding affordability measures. Consider specific incentives for preserving a portion of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH).</p> <p><b>Development Activities:</b> Promote and facilitate medium and low density housing development, along with minimal mixed use along Portal Way. Promote townhomes, stacked flats, and ADUs with some single family homes where feasible. Areas currently holding NOAH should be developed in a phased manner and additional affordable housing redevelopment tools such as land trusts, limited equity co-ops, or public-private partnerships should be considered in these areas. Work to cluster density of housing along the new marshland park space, with some mixed use potentially developing along the park road.</p> <p><b>Public and Civic Uses:</b> Once marshland is acquired, develop a network of boardwalk trails. This walking trail should connect to the walking trail mentioned in Phase 2 further east in county land along the Nooksack, and go underneath I-5 and connect to VanderYacht Park. Additionally, develop public art in new public and civic areas, with opportunity for local artist collaboration.</p>

Phase	Key Development Focus Areas
Phase 4 15-20 yrs	<p><b>Location Rationale:</b> Phase 4 is located on the northernmost sections of the Portal Way node within city boundaries and is the most developed region of the buildable area, making its development a later priority. There is already an entire neighborhood of single family homes as well as a smaller settlement of manufactured homes on the site that are currently designated as developable, but additional fieldwork and community engagement would need to be conducted in order to determine that validity of that statement.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement:</b> Pursue extensive community engagement starting as early as Phase 1. Special care should be taken to assess the risk of displacement and to provide clear options, such as in-place upgrades, relocation assistance, or integration into affordable housing developments.</p> <p><b>Land Acquisition:</b> Complete any land acquisition efforts that have not been yet completed, potentially including the site where the manufactured homes to the east of Portal Way are located (the larger manufactured home park is proposed to remain as NOAH). This land could potentially be developed by a CLT with resident input. Acquire the wetland behind the larger manufactured home area for the purpose of a public park.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure Improvements:</b> Complete any additional multimodal improvements to north Portal Way along with Trigg Rd, including a protected bike lane headed to Grandview Exchange, completing a bike network from Downtown to Grandview through Portal Way. Any utility extensions should be completed, and additional redundancy efforts should be pursued along with continual maintenance of previously upgraded facilities. Complete any additional road connections between Portal Manor Dr and the unnamed road to the south of it as well as between Trigg Woods Ln and the previously mentioned new through road.</p> <p><b>Zoning and Policy Reform:</b> Continually reevaluate zoning map based on community input/needs, removing any barriers to development, especially of affordable housing. A particular set of code that may need to be revised for this phase is that of ADUs, as much of the densification in existing neighborhoods will occur as such, rather than redevelopment.</p> <p><b>Development Activities:</b> Encourage and permit mostly infill and ADU development, along with some mixed use or commercial used on the intersection of Portal Way and Trigg Rd. Encourage the development of mixed housing types that are still medium or low density, such as du-triplexes and townhomes to increase density without full scale redevelopment. Preserve and enhance the community character as much as possible through placemaking measures and familiar design elements that are objective and followable.</p> <p><b>Public and Civic Assets:</b> If all work is complete from the last 3 phases, begin construction of the 24/7 Urgent Care on the corner of Trigg and Portal and complete it by the end or close to the end of Phase 4. Develop the wetland to the north into walking trails (linear park). Reevaluate the entire Portal Way park and civic network through direct community engagement to identify any deficiencies or improvements to be made. Finalize the placemaking strategies and efforts for the node, implementing capital facilities projects to enhance the identity of the node.</p>

## 3.2 Code Revisions

### Overview:

We recommend establishing a Portal Way Urban Village Overlay to proactively manage growth along one of Ferndale's key corridors. As the city continues to face pressure for more housing, improved infrastructure, and equitable access to public services, this overlay code revision offers a strategic tool to guide development in a way that is compact, inclusive, and climate resilient. Modeled after Bellingham's Samish Way Urban Village, the framework encourages walkable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, local businesses, parks, and civic facilities, all connected by multimodal transportation. To support this vision, we also propose targeted updates to several sections of the Ferndale Municipal Code to remove existing barriers and ensure that the city's zoning tools reflect its long-term goals for livability, affordability, and environmental stewardship.

### Application:

- A. This article specifies regulations that apply to the use of land within the Portal Way Urban Village
- B. Should the provisions of these sections conflict with any other provision of the Ferndale Municipal Code, except the critical areas ordinance, the shoreline master program, and stormwater regulations or Chapter 15.10 Building and Construction, the provisions of these sections shall apply.

*Table 3.2.1 Portal Way Land Use Revisions*

Land Use	Purpose	Suggested Modifications
Low Density Residential (R1)	Integrate new developments into an existing neighborhood.	Upzone areas for duplexes, triplexes, and cottage housing to increase density. Prioritize ownership for current residents to mitigate displacement risk.
Medium Density Residential (R2)	Address missing middle housing.	Promote different middle housing types (e.g., Fourplexes, stacked flats). Implement inclusionary zoning and encourage co-housing or community land trust options.
High Density Residential (R3)	Maximize efficient land use and reduce cost.	Incorporate affordable housing and concentrate along the Portal Way corridor and transit nodes.
Mixed-Use (MU)	Integrate retail, office, and housing.	Require ground floor active uses with housing above (active uses include retail or businesses).
Civic/Institutional (CI)	Improve access to public facilities and community services.	Develop an elementary school, a library, emergency housing, and a civic center.
Public/Recreational (P)	Preserve critical areas and provide equitable distribution of community recreation.	Convert wetlands and floodplains into parks and trail systems. Ensure equitable distribution of green spaces.

## Chapter 18.04 – General Provisions

### Current Code:

- Defines general zoning terms.
- No specific mention of “middle housing,” “emergency housing,” or a “mixed-use overlay.”

### Proposal:

\* Add definitions:

- » Middle Housing: Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, townhouses, and stacked flats.
- » Emergency Housing: Transitional shelter accommodations with access to services.
- » Mixed-Use Overlay (Portal Way Urban Village): A district intended to integrate residential, commercial, civic, and open space uses with high connectivity.
- » Establish a new Portal Way Urban Village Overlay Zone with a purpose section encouraging compact, walkable development, climate resilience, and multimodal transportation. This overlay supersedes conflicting FMC (Ferndale Municipal Code) provisions, except critical areas, shoreline, and stormwater codes.

### Reasoning:

- Creating a dedicated overlay with clear definitions allows the City to proactively manage growth that supports inclusive housing, civic life, and sustainability goals. This structure provides flexibility for new urban forms while ensuring essential protections remain.

## Chapter 18.30 – Residential Zones

### Current Code:

- RS Zones (Residential Single-Family): These zones primarily allow detached single-family homes on individual lots. The typical allowed density is up to approximately 6 dwelling units per acre (du/ac)
- RM Zones (Residential Multi-Family): These zones permit higher-density housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, and small apartment buildings, with a maximum density of 18 du/ac.
- Middle housing types, those between single-family and large-scale multi-family, are generally restricted or require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), making it harder to build flexible, incremental housing options.

### Proposal:

- Permit middle housing by right in RS 6.5 and RS 8.5 zones within the overlay.
- Allow density up to 30 dwelling units per acre.
- Relax the minimum lot size to allow lots under 5,000 square feet for cottages and townhomes.
- Require porches, bays, and human-scale elements in middle housing design.

### Reasoning:

- These changes enable more housing diversity and affordability, especially for first-time buyers and small households. It also helps Ferndale comply with HB 1110 and expands a diverse range of housing options, duplexes, townhomes, and cottage

courts that are attainable across income levels, allowing residents to grow within the community, from renters to first-time buyers to long-term homeowners

## Chapter 18.35 – Commercial Zones

### Current Code:

- General Business Zone allows commercial, limited mixed-use (conditional use in some cases).
- Maximum height limits generally 35–45 ft.

### Proposal:

- Create a new Urban Village Land Use Framework within the Portal Way Overlay:
- Commercial Core: Mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial and upper residential. 60 ft max height, 0' front setback, 2.5/4.5 FAR (floor area ratios).
- Commercial Transition: Mixed-use with drive-throughs/light industrial in nodes. 45 ft max height, 10 ft setbacks abutting residential, 2.0/3.5 FAR.
- Residential Transition: Duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and cottages. 35 ft max height, 15 ft setbacks abutting single-family, 5,000 square feet min lot.
- Civic/Institutional Nodes: Schools, urgent care, libraries. Conditional or permitted as designated.
- Parks/Open Space: Passive recreation and stormwater.

### Reasoning:

- This tiered land use structure creates a more coherent and intentional urban form. It ensures that commercial areas are vibrant, transitions to residential areas are smooth, and key public facilities are prioritized.

## **Chapter 18.45 – Planned Unit Development (PUD)**

### Current Code:

- Encourages clustered development and design flexibility.
- Requires 20% open space and standard street layouts.

### Proposal:

- Tie PUDs (planned unit development) to overlay land use blocks.
- Reduce open space requirement to 15% if adjacent to preserved land or trails.
- Allow shared green spaces and native plant rain gardens.
- Incentivize parkland dedication with a bonus FAR (floor area ratio).

### Reasoning:

- Aligning PUDs with the Portal Way plan ensures cohesive development and maximizes public benefit. Reducing open space requirements in exchange for meaningful green connections supports compact development and ecological function.

## **Chapter 18.46 – Off-Street Parking**

### Current Code:

- 2 spaces/unit for residential.
- Varies by commercial use.
- Proposal:
- Residential: 1 space/unit + 0.5 per bedroom over 2.
- Commercial: 1 per 500 sf GFA.
- 30% reduction allowed near transit/bike infrastructure.
- Allow shared parking.
- Require bike parking as per Samish Way

Urban Village standards.

### Reasoning:

- These updates reduce overbuilt parking and encourage walking, biking, and transit use. They also align parking supply with actual need, freeing up land for housing and green space.

- Some limited provisions related to speed limits, signage, and intersection control exist within Title 10 (Vehicles and Traffic), but no comprehensive strategy for neighborhood traffic calming is present.
- There is also no existing framework tying street design to safety measures like chicanes, curb extensions, or vertical deflection (speed tables or humps).

### Proposal:

- Establish FMC 10.## for Traffic Calming Provisions:
- Include curb extensions, raised intersections, mini-roundabouts, and chicanes.
- Integrate WA Complete Streets best practices for slowing vehicle speeds and increasing safety.
- Encourage traffic calming near schools, parks, mixed-use areas, and pedestrian corridors.

#### *\* Street Typologies:*

- » Portal Way: 90' ROW (Right of way) with protected bike lanes, 8–10 ft sidewalks, and frequent covered bus stops.
- » Collector Roads: 60' ROW with striped bike lanes, sidewalks, and tree-lined buffers every 50 ft.
- » Residential Streets: 40' ROW with traffic calming measures and shared pedestrian/bike paths.

#### *\* Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity:*

- » Prioritize direct, non-motorized connections to green spaces, civic facilities, and neighborhood centers.
- » Require safe midblock crossings,

## **Chapter 18.76 – Design Review Standards**

### Current Code:

- Focus on landscaping and basic compatibility.

### Proposal:

- Active ground-floor use is required in the Commercial Core.
- Transparent facades at street level.
- Stepbacks of 15 ft are required next to single-family homes.
- Ban blank walls; require façade articulation.
- Require native plant landscaping and green area factor:
- 0.30 for <2.0 FAR, 0.20 for ≥2.0 FAR.
- Encourage permeable paving, bioswales, and tree canopy coverage.

### Reasoning:

- Strong urban design policies ensure that new buildings enhance neighborhood character and walkability. Green infrastructure requirements advance climate resilience and reduce urban heat impacts.

## **Chapter 10.## – Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Safety**

### Current Code:

- As of now, the Ferndale Municipal Code does not include a specific chapter or section explicitly titled 'Traffic Calming.'

enhanced lighting, and visibility treatments.

- \* *Traffic Calming Plan Implementation:*
  - » City shall develop a prioritization map for traffic calming interventions.
  - » Incorporate neighborhood input and crash data analysis into project selection.
  - » Coordinate calming elements with stormwater infrastructure and native landscaping where feasible.

Reasoning:

- Safer streets promote walkability and biking, reduce crashes, and improve quality of life. This is essential for creating human-scale, climate-resilient neighborhoods in line with state goals.

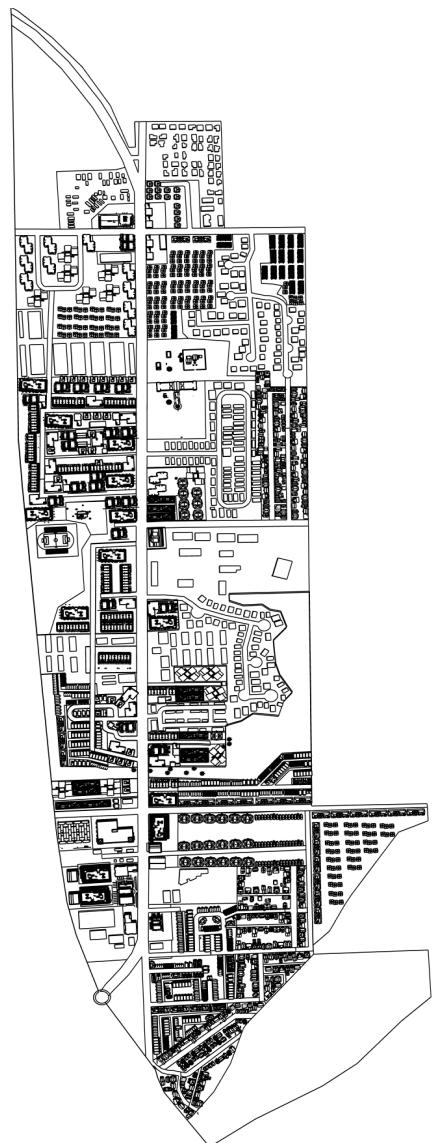


Figure 3.2.2 Portal Way Recommendation Model

# 3.3 Design Guidelines

## Overview

Portal Way's current character is largely a representation of its agricultural surroundings to the east and history as Highway 99 (the “Pacific Highway”). Development is spread out along the corridor and generally features large setbacks and small buildings with wide footprints on large lots. However, as development has intensified along Portal Way, small setbacks, wide sidewalks, and comparatively densely spaced residential units more closely resembling townhomes or small apartment buildings have begun to emerge. The development at Eastgate Loop just north of Newkirk Rd is a good example of this and features human-scale storefronts at the front of the lot with residential units and parking behind. Between Kaas Rd and McKinley St on the east side of Portal Way, a new 350-unit Planned Unit Development (PUD) called “Harrington Place” will follow a similar pattern with commercial space facing the street and residential buildings behind.

Proposed land use mix for this neighborhood node includes an increase in density, both residential and commercial, stronger connectivity throughout the region via street infrastructure improvements and pedestrian trails, and aims at creating a friendly, attractive, and walkable environment for residents. Standards outlined in this chapter most closely follow the City of Ferndale’s existing “Urban Residential Zone (UR)”, which aims to “provide a mixed commercial and high-density residential area to bolster the economic environment in the [Portal Way node] while providing neighborhood commercial and service uses in close proximity to residences,” (Ferndale

Municipal Code 18.42.010). Design guidelines will also focus on sustainability as per LEED ND principles, support dense pedestrian-oriented development, and honor the history of the area.

## Mixed-Use Guidelines

Pedestrian-oriented development standards are as follows in the Portal Way node overlay:

### Setbacks

- A. Front: Commercial development must have a front setback no larger than 15 feet from the property line.
- B. Side: Zero setback shall apply on side interior lot lines. Corner lots shall be considered to have two front property lines, and the front setback shall apply to both. Alleyways which are open to public vehicular access shall be considered a front property line. Alleyways which are closed to public vehicular access shall be subject to standard side yard setbacks.
- C. Rear: Zero setback shall apply on rear interior lot lines. When rear lot lines are adjacent to an alley that is closed to public vehicular access, a zero setback shall also apply. Fifteen-foot setback shall apply where adjacent to an alley that is open to public vehicular access.
- D. Corner: At street corners, including alleys, a pedestrian visibility setback shall be established for ground floor facades.
  - a. The pedestrian visibility setback shall, at a minimum, be an area with a radius of five feet whose point of beginning shall be the vertex of the intersecting property lines.

### Façades and Entrances

- A. Entrances. Primary entrances to mixed-use development along Portal Way must face the main street and open to public common space such as a plaza, park, or sidewalk.
  - a. Parking must not be located between the street edge and the entrance of such establishments.
- B. Façade. All ground-level retail, service, and trade use that face a public space have clear glass on at least 60% of their façade between 3 and 8 feet above grade.
  - a. If a façade extends along a sidewalk, no more than 40% of its length or 50 feet, whichever is less, is blank (without doors or windows).

### Height

- A. Maximum height shall be 55 feet, except where a height bonus applies.

### Parking

- A. No more than 20% of the total development footprint area may be used for all new off-street surface parking facilities, with no individual surface parking lot larger than 2 acres. On-street parking spaces are exempt from this limitation.

### Pedestrian Connectivity

- A. Property owners developing commercial or mixed-use space along Portal Way must include the addition of a paved sidewalk at least 8 feet wide bordering the street, providing one does not exist already.

### *Green Space*

- A. Shaded Sidewalks. Provide shade from trees or permanent structures over at least 40% of the total length of existing and planned sidewalks within or bordering the project (alleys exempted). Trees must provide shade within 10 years of landscape installation. Use the estimated crown diameter to calculate the length of sidewalk shaded.
- B. Street Tree Plantings. From a registered landscape architect, developers must obtain a determination that planting details are appropriate to growing healthy trees, considering tree species, root medium, and width and soil volume of planter strips or wells, and that the selected tree species are not considered invasive in the project context according to USDA or the state agricultural extension service.

### **Residential Guidelines**

#### *Desired Elements*

Residential zones in the Portal Way node should follow guidelines enclosed in Ferndale Municipal Code Title 18, which refers to design for multifamily development. Encouraged multifamily design elements include:

- a. Assortment of roof pitches within and between buildings.
- b. Variable facades and building design.
- c. Variety in colors and material across buildings.
- d. Dimensional elements such as porches, balconies, stairs, and landscaping.
- e. Integrated landscaping within developments.

These guidelines aim at encouraging visually interesting, pedestrian-friendly multifamily design. Increases in visual stimuli and small setbacks provide a visual narrowing effect to the street, slowing traffic and increasing pedestrian safety. In the Portal Way corridor, building design, landscaping, and streetscape all aim to slow traffic, ensuring safety for a broad demographic of residents, especially elderly people and children.

#### *Elements to Avoid*

FMC Title 18 provides guidelines on undesirable multifamily design elements, many of which create monotony, fail to contribute to neighborhood character and connection between residents, and are visually uninteresting. An excess of impermeable surfaces due to lack of landscaping is both an undesirable design element and an environmental hazard for flooding, erosion, and harmful runoff. Discouraged multifamily design elements include”

- a. Lack of variation in roof pitch, building color, or building material.
- b. Flat facades.
- c. Garage entrances facing a sidewalk or street rather than placed at the rear of the structure or recessed.
- d. Lack of vegetation or landscaping.

These guidelines are non-binding and simply provide recommendations to developers. Leaving residential guidelines relatively open-ended rather than restrictive places a decreased burden on developers intending to build multifamily housing along Portal Way. As increases in housing are a key element of smart growth in the area, minimizing barriers to development is especially important.

### **Civic/Institutional Guidelines**

Along Portal Way, civic space could include a library, neighborhood center, and school(s). FMC Title 18 provides design criteria for the existing Public/Institutional Zone (PI). These regulations focus on reducing visual disruption by avoiding harsh lighting near residential areas and locating HVAC systems, trash receptacles, and material storage outside of public lines of sight. As Portal Way is developed, civic buildings and institutions should be developed using the following design standards.

- A. Materials. Public buildings shall be constructed using durable primary construction materials such as stone, masonry, or brick.
- B. Windows. Windows must make up at least 30% of the front facade to ensure public engagement and open design. Schools are exempted from this regulation due to safety concerns.
- C. Landscaping. Landscaped buffers between surface parking facilities and buildings are required when surface parking is located between the sidewalk and the building's front entrance.
  - a. Plants chosen for landscape buffers must be considered native to Northwest Washington.
- D. Public buildings are encouraged to be constructed using recycled and/or sustainable materials and processes, such as recycled/mass timber, solar panels, permeable surfaces, and environmental design elements.

Civic buildings are regulated with the goal of attractive, friendly, and open design. Portal Way is the only node located fully within Ferndale City Limits and presents a prime opportunity to guide current development happening in the neighborhood. As a major corridor with existing infrastructure and proximity to regional transportation, this area is in an excellent position to accommodate future population growth. Both with immediate and phased development, the project team proposes a comprehensive approach to neighborhood development in the area that focuses community needs, sustainable development practices, and required housing allocations.



*Figure 3.3.1 Pedestrian Friendly Streetscape, Seneca Falls, NY.*

## 3.4 Summary

The Vision of the plan is to transform Portal Way into a complete, affordable, walkable and accessible urban village including a vibrant neighborhood center with commercial, civic, recreational, and residential uses. This plan emphasizes elevating the diversity of housing types, multimodal transit options, and recreational opportunities along Portal Way. It provides a 20 year structured phasing plan, code revisions, design guidelines, and fundraising options in order to actionably and feasibly achieve the goals of the plan.

*Key goals of the plan and its implementation is to:*

- Concentrate compact growth.
- Preserve and expand affordable housing via anti-displacement strategies.
- Provide multi-modal transportation infrastructure and safety.
- Increase housing diversity and mixed use.
- Enhance civic and recreational resources.
- Develop in a social and environmentally sustainable manner.
- Establish an overlay zone to guide development.



*Figure 3.4.1 Rendering of Future Portal Way Neighborhood*

# 4.0 Introduction: Cascadia Urban Village

This chapter discusses the Cascadia Urban Village, beginning with an overview of the neighborhood, a phasing plan, code revisions, design guidelines, a summary, funding sources, and a summary.

The proposed neighborhood is located on 296 acres, north of city limits within Ferndale's urban growth area (UGA). The land historically has been agricultural but now abuts suburban developments. The site is a greenfield development making it significantly easier to develop. Currently, the north side of town lacks many services and amenities. Most services and commercial businesses are near downtown, across the Nooksack river, or past I-5. New neighborhood commercial zones could allow for small-scale commercial that will support households in neighboring residential zones. A centrally located commercial zone could provide larger-scale commercial, like a grocery store that supports the urban village and the surrounding neighborhoods. Cascadia Urban Village intends to be a vibrant and complete neighborhood that provides opportunities to live, work, and play on the north side of Ferndale. The neighborhood can support much-needed services to current and future residents.



Figure 4.0.1 Cascadia Regional Park Model



Figure 4.0.2 Cascadia High Density Model

The Cascadia land use map (Figure 4.0.3) shows proposed land uses. The goal for the neighborhood is providing access to more retail and services in northern Ferndale, a wider range of housing types including single-family, cottage-style developments duplexes, triplexes and smaller apartments, and a new regional park, trails, and greenways. Table 4.0.1 shows the proposed housing density ranges for the Cascadia Urban Village.

Table 4.0.1 Residential units per acre

Zoning	Units/Acre
Low Density	10
Medium Density	18
High Density	22
Mixed Use	22

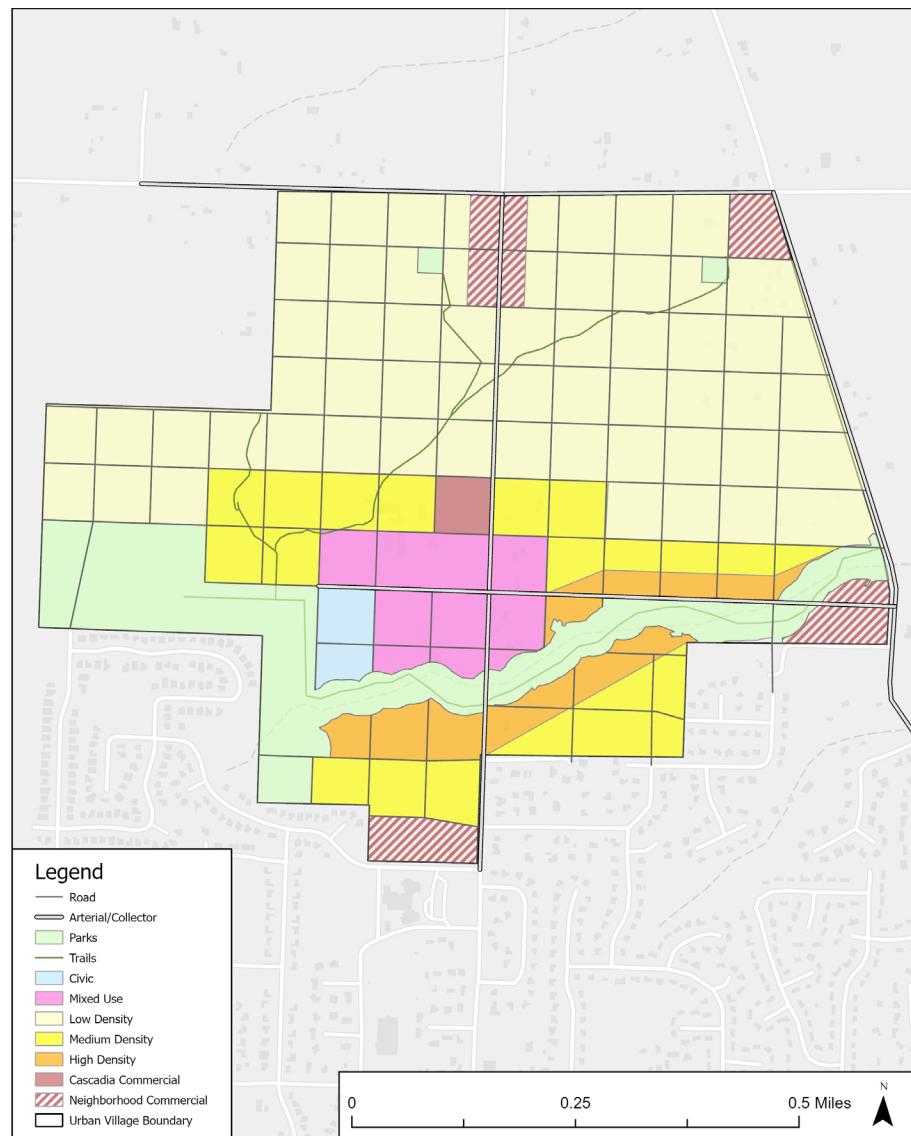


Figure 4.0.3 Cascadia Land Use Map

# 4.1 Phasing Plan

Phasing for the Cascadia Urban Village is estimated to span 20 years. the following phases detail how the neighborhood would be implemented. Figure 4.1.1 shows phasing spatially.

## Phase 1 (0-5 years)

The first five years of the Cascadia Urban Village include the following: revising zoning for the area, extending infrastructure to support the greater site plan, and developing neighborhood commercial services and the first wave of medium and high density housing adjacent to the regional park. The creation of an additional water tower will be needed to serve the new developments, and expansion of sewer and water lines will be the first necessary steps. From there, roadways will be created to support developments as they arise.

## Phase 2 (5-10 years).

Phase two emphasizes the regional park along Whiskey Creek. Other aspects of the urban village that will be developed into the civic center that provides recreation and other services, and the majority of the mixed use core that will serve the immediate residents and greater Ferndale area.

## Phase 3 (10-15 years)

Phase three will see the completion of the mixed use area and regional commercial site. The Cascadia Commercial site could host a major grocery store that could serve all of Ferndale, and potentially attract some Canadian traffic. This phase creates lower density developments on the periphery of the core area.

## Phase 4 (15-20 years)

The final phase will see the continued development of low density housing in the northern most portions of the site. Two commercial areas will be created to serve these neighborhoods, the first being on Church Road and second being located at the intersection of Aldergrove and Vista. Additionally two small parks will be created for this northern most neighborhood, and will be connected to the main regional park by trails.

Table 4.1.1 shows breaks down the phasing time frame even more thoroughly.

Key elements of consideration for phasing and implementation are the following:

- **GMA Income Band Requirements:**

Any phasing or code revisions must consider new provisions that require the City provide affordable and emergency housing. The City may consider partners such as Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and religious organizations that focus on offering these services. Any future plans or code amendments must allow for these activities.

- **Utilities:**

When considering phasing and utilities the City should consider cost-saving measures and efficient route-planning for increased development, particularly since the area of Cascadia is currently unincorporated. Transit improvement projects, and utility routing should go together with phasing development and could be accomplished through dedications or other similar strategies.

- **Neighborhood Commercial:**

The goal of the urban village is to create complete communities, which means allowing integrated smaller-scale commercial development in/near neighborhoods. This will be key to creating vibrant pedestrian friendly neighborhoods. Updated codes, design guidelines, and new developments should allow for and encourage neighborhood commercial uses.

- **Transit Center:**

With projected population growth, and a dedication to better pedestrian and transit experiences in Ferndale, continuous monitoring and collaboration with Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) must be maintained so that Ferndale can operate more functionally by incorporating a circulator route and centralized transit hub. With aging populations, children and increased growth overall, this would provide a better quality of life for residents as the city expands and densifies.

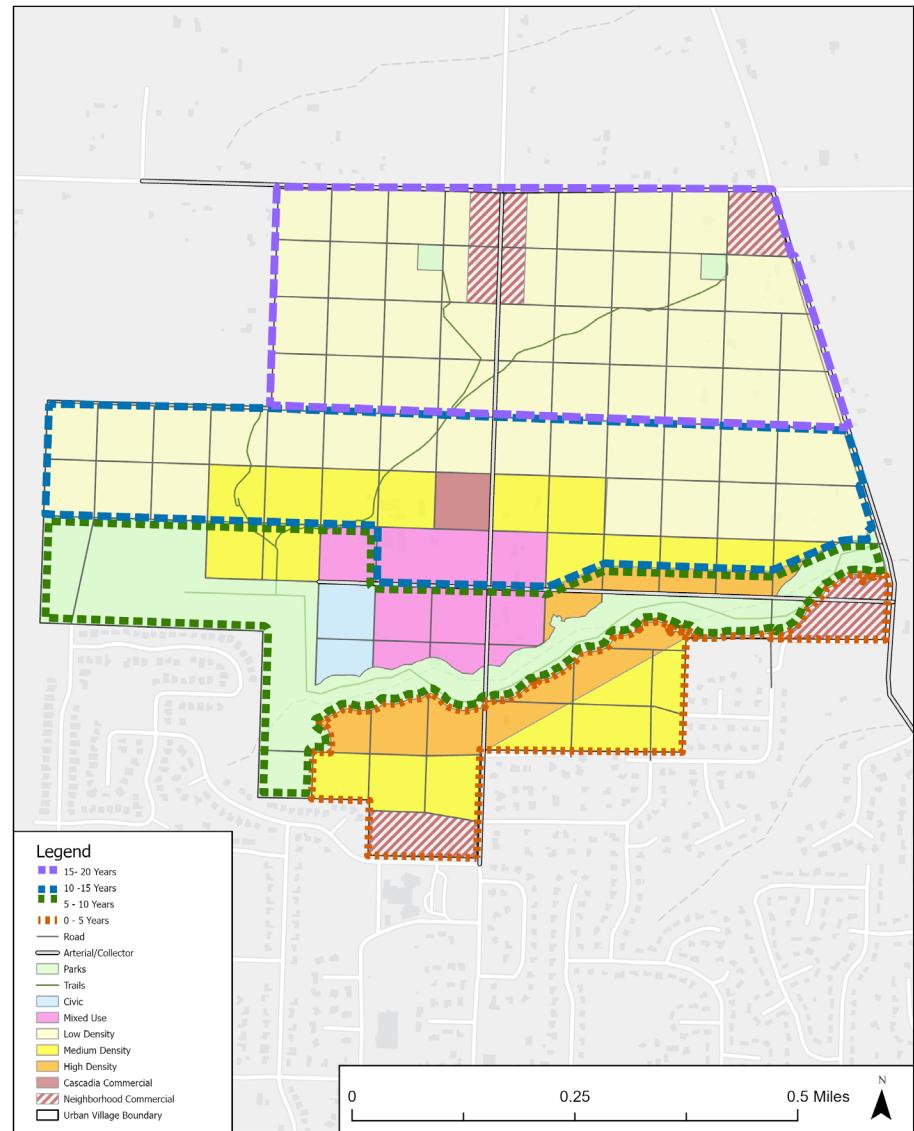


Figure 4.1.1 Cascadia Phasing Map

Table 4.1.1 Cascadia Phasing Plan

Phase	Key Development Focus Areas	Time Frame
Phase 1 0-5 yrs	Revise land use zoning to accommodate residential and commercial developments, secure funding for infrastructure expansion, prepare land for development, lay the groundwork for infrastructure, install water tower, water and sewer lines, and pave roads.	Year 0-2
	Construct neighborhood commercial spaces to support the existing surrounding residential areas to the south of the Cascadia Urban Village.	Year 2-3
	Construct medium density housing with connectivity to existing residential and high-density housing with public access to the green space that spans across the site.	Year 3-4
Phase 2 5-10 yrs	Lay groundwork for park system and create Cascadia Park Master Plan including critical area protection and recreational activity development including courts, fields, playgrounds, splash pad, and trail system. Begin development of Cascadia Park, begin drafting plan for park-adjacent mixed use to ensure permeability. Lay infrastructure for phase two development: water, sewer, internet, cable, roads, trails.	Year 5-6
	Civic area master planning and development including community center, pool, gathering space, library, emergency housing. Additionally, planning for middle housing.	Year 7-8
	Completing development of mixed use, middle housing, and development of Cascadia regional park.	Year 8-10
Phase 3 10-15 yrs	Finish development of mixed-use core. Develop general 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 and finalize trail system.	Year 11-12
	Develop remaining medium and low density residential.	Year 12-15
Phase 4 15-20 yrs	Develop commercial areas on Church Rd. Analyze needs and develop neighborhood parks.	Year 15-17
	Finish development of low-density housing.	Year 17-20+

## 4.2 Code Revisions

The proposed urban village overlay zone changes aspects of Ferndale's existing code to enable sustainable and complete development of the Cascadia Urban Village. These guidelines and code revisions ensure that development within mixed use, commercial, and civic zones work in unity to support residents, encourage multi-modal transportation, and ensure sustainable development.

### **Mixed-use General Priorities:**

- Cascadia Urban Village should prioritize public services and commercial uses within the mixed-use core.
- Commercial developments within the mixed-use core should be integrated with residential developments.
- Providing seamless access to the regional park and trail system is a requirement of all development within the mixed-use core and high-density development.
  - \* Commercial developments directly adjacent to the regional park or trail should provide a buffer while still encouraging permeability with recreationalists.

Table 4.2.1 describes proposed changes to chapter 18.45.030, mixed use commercial zone (MXD). The current requirements leave little potential for commercial development, with a current limit of only 2000 square feet. Increasing the requirements of commercial from 2.8% to 25% in the mixed-use core will provide greater access to retail and services current and future Ferndale residents living in and beyond the urban village. These commercial requirements apply to first story footprints; floors above are not included in

percentage calculations.

The current code (MXD) has been revised to streamline the allowed non-residential components to fit the needs of the urban village. Some slight changes in permitted uses enable commercial types that serve the greatest number of people and will fit within a primarily residential environment.

### **Residential General Priorities**

- Eliminate the residential single-family zones (RS LOW, RS MEDIUM, RS HIGH) and instead create a new zone.
- Create a new zone for residential uses.
  - \* Residential Low, Medium, and High (RES LOW, RES MEDIUM, RES HIGH)
  - \* Allow for a wider array of housing in all residential zones. Have a focus on missing middle housing (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, cottage housing)
- Density
  - \* RES Low 10 units per acre
  - \* RES MEDIUM 18 units per acre
  - \* RES HIGH 22 units per acre
- Ensure that housing typologies are in line with

design guidelines and within Washington State's Growth Management Act's affordably requirements.

- Increase affordability of the neighborhood and greater area.
- Ensure that commercial spaces are integrated in the residential zones seamlessly allowing residents to easily interact with services in the area.
- Eliminate setbacks in residential zones

Allowing for a wider range of housing typologies will help Ferndale meet the requirements set by the state in SHB 1110 which requires cities planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to include middle housing types at minimum densities, and SHB 1220 which requires cities planning under the GMA to plan for and accommodate housing that is affordable to all economic segments of the population.

Ferndale's current Residential Single-Family Dwelling Zone only allows for single family homes within the zone. This in conjunction with the prevalence of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) has led to low-density land use pattern with winding roads, cul-de-sacs, and generally poor connectivity. The proposed grid system in

*Table 4.2.1 Proposed Changes to 18.45.030*

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)	358934 Square feet (40% of total area)

the new Cascadia Urban Village will increase residential and commercial densities and improve connectivity, making it easier for people to navigate in and around the area.

#### **Neighborhood Commercial General Priorities:**

- Code guidance to achieve a diversity of commercial uses that will emphasize daily needs exclude industrial, storage-oriented, and maintenance/repair uses, and create greater opportunities for commercial tax base.
- Parking reductions:
  - \* Combine parking requirements for uses within Neighborhood Commercial areas that operate/are used at different hours of the day.
  - \* Consult the City of Eugene's Bicycle Parking Standards as a guideline to support proposed neighborhood's multimodal connectivity.
  - \* Avoid street-facing parking lots; have a maximum lot setback of 15 feet.

#### **Cascadia Commercial General Priorities**

- Larger, but still neighborhood scalable commercial amenities.
  - \* Exclude industrial, storage-oriented, and maintenance/repair uses.
- Code guidance to achieve a diversity of commercial uses:
  - \* Allowing greater options for site configurations and use diversity through updating language in use categories.
  - \* Remove "accessory" use category as found in Ferndale's Regional Retail zoning code and integrating chosen uses into

"Permitted Uses".

- Reduction of vehicular parking needs and impact.
  - \* Combine parking requirements for uses within Commercial areas that operate/are used at different hours of the day.
  - \* Use City of Eugene's Bicycle Parking Standards as a guideline to support neighborhood's multimodal connectivity
  - \* Avoid street-facing parking lots and having a maximum setback of 15 feet.

A commercial zone created from incorporating language and uses from Ferndale's General Business Zone (CoF 18.49) & Regional Retail Zone (CoF 18.51) for Cascadia Urban village allows for a greater span of commercial/retail services, as with the Neighborhood Commercial zone. However, based on community feedback, additional types of uses and use sizes (up to 50,000 square feet) are allowed in the Commercial Zone to accommodate a more-sized retail facility such as a larger grocery store.

In combination with proposed improvements and development of multimodal infrastructure, placing a Commercial Zone near to the center of the urban village would reduce the need for residents to travel across town and make it more accessible.

Table 4.2.2 Cascadia Land Uses

Zoning	Use	Current Density	Proposed Density	Current Setbacks	Proposed Setbacks	Considerations
<b>Low Density</b> (The only low-density zone in Ferndale is Single Family)	Residential	3-5 DU/a	10 DU/a	Front: 20 feet Rear: 10 feet Sides: 5 feet	Front: 15 feet Rear: 8 feet Sides: 5 feet	Eliminate Residential Single-Family Zones in the city and replace them with Residential Low, Medium, and High Zones that allow for all types of housing so long as the proposed density requirements are met.
<b>Medium Density</b>	Residential	Single: 4-7 DU/a Multi: 10-30 DU/a	18 DU/a	Front: 20 feet Rear: 8 feet Sides: 8 feet	Front: 15 feet Rear: 8 feet Sides: 5 feet	
<b>High Density</b>	Residential	Single: 6-9 DU/a Multi: Min. Of 15 DU/a	22 DU/a	Front: 15 feet Rear: 8 feet Sides: 5 feet	Front: 15 feet Rear: 8 feet Sides: 5 feet	
<b>Neighborhood Commercial</b>	Neighborhood-scale retail and business	N/A	N/A	Zones do not currently exist in CoF Code	Front: Max 15 feet Rear & Sides: 50 feet when abutting residential zones	Maximum size of single use within NC zone: 15000 sq ft.
<b>Commercial</b>	Commercial, retail, business.	N/A	N/A	Front: 0 feet Rear & Sides: 50 feet if adjoining residential districts	Front: Max 15 feet Rear & Sides: 50 feet when abutting residential zones	Maximum size of single use within zone: 50,000 sq feet
<b>Mixed Use</b>	Residential, commercial	N/A	22 DU/a	N/A	Front: Max 15 feet Rear & Sides	
<b>Civic</b>	Community services, aquatic facilities, recreation center, information, emergency housing, library	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Parks</b>	Recreation, connectivity	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

# 4.3 Design Guidelines

## Design Character Summary:

The intent of the design section is to provide considerations for design elements in the neighborhood. It does not aim to define what the neighborhood will be but instead attempts to discuss how different design elements can create not just a new development, but a neighborhood that serves residents, workers, and regional visitors. Figure 3 Shows Hovander Park's Boardwalk access.

## Rationale

The design guidelines discuss the following elements: nature, connectivity, and cohesion. Nature refers to the natural environment and its presence throughout the neighborhood. Connectivity refers to accessible and equitable access to the community, provides work and social opportunities for residents and visitors, and fosters a complete neighborhood, meaning access to goods and services within the neighborhood. Lastly, cohesion refers to how well Cascadia integrates with Ferndale, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the agricultural context of Whatcom County.

## Nature - Street Green-scaping:

Green infrastructure helps with stormwater management, provides habitat, supplements affordable recreation, boosts community interaction, and more. Hiring an ecologist ensures plantings are locally appropriate and do not impact eligibility for ecology grants.

- Green barriers can be used to protect residential areas from high traffic areas and to create privacy. Incorporating drought and heat-resistant trees and shrubbery can

improve the walkability of neighborhoods. A few plants recommended are Pacific Wax Myrtle, Western Redcedar, and Oregon Grape

- Rain gardens are a lower maintenance option that supplement stormwater management by filtering runoff. They are great for medians and parking lots and pair well with educational signage. A few plants recommended are Slough Sedge, Nootka Rose, and Douglas Aster.
- Bioswales are similar to raingardens. This vegetated shallow ditch can act as planted buffers and can slow and filter stormwater. Stone weirs should be included on steeper slopes. A few plants recommended are Sword Fern (in shady areas), Red-twist Dogwood, and Tufted Hairgrass.
- Vine trellises and hedges can act as visual barriers for parking in the urban village core, distinguishing and providing privacy for outdoor seating spaces. Wall-mounted trellises provide year-round, low-maintenance greenery with evergreen vines (for example, star jasmine). A few other recommended plants are Evergreen Clematis for trellises and laurels for privacy hedges.

## Nature - Critical Area Activation Trails:

Adding trails and public access to critical areas can transform them from development hinderance to local draw. Table 5 provides a brief overview of some trail designs to apply.

## Nature - Native Planting Guide:

Prioritizing native plantings creates a sense of place and is ecologically appropriate. The following is a list on native plants and the conditions they thrive in according to King County.



Figure 4.3.1 Hovander Park Boardwalk Access

Table 4.3.1 Critical Area Activation Trail Toolkit

Trail Design Type	Surface	Description
Multi-use path	Asphalt/gravel	Suitable for bikes, ADA access, and strollers. Can include labeled lanes for walking and biking.
Nature trail	Mulch/gravel	Suitable for hiking, walking, and passive access. Low maintenance.
Boardwalk	Wood/Composite	Suitable for walking over wetlands, seasonal or permanent use. See Figure 4.3.1 from Hovander Park.

## Connectivity - Alleyways

Alleys are an additional right of way (ROW) that supplement the local road network. Alleys can be used for local and emergency access and serve various utility and connectivity related purposes. Below are details of alleyway functions:

- Alleyways provide properties with additional connections and utility access.
- Alleyways should be considered for activities such as garbage/recycling collection and as loading zones. Alleyways are 20ft and additionally provide emergency access.
- Alleyways can provide access to additional parking, entrances/exits, or other activities so long they do not conflict with emergency access.
- Alleyways are paved and are maintained by the city.

Alley activation is a tool for local businesses, residents, and organizations to use alleys in more creative ways that may otherwise conflict with existing activities. Alley activation can be used for the following but are not limited to: block parties, concerts, art installations, certain sporting events, open air markets, and other forms of public assembly.

Alley activation can utilize non-permanent structures or improvements pending approval from the city. Alley activation requests should be conducted according to Ferndale Code, Chapter 12.28 Special Event Permits.

## Connectivity - Protected Bike Lanes & Bike Friendly Streets

Bicycle safety has repeatedly been expressed as a priority of residents, especially along arterials

Table 4.3.2 Bike Lane Barrier Types

Infrastructure	Notes:
Pre-cast concrete barrier	Specialized barriers with variety of shape options. Large enough to hinder vehicle entering bike lane.
Armadillo Barriers	Specialized barrier that allows for emergency vehicle access. Made of polymer.
Large precast parking stop	Lower-cost solution which hinders small vehicles from entering bike lane. Less robust than other options but less expensive.

such as Church Rd. Vista Dr. And Aldergrove Rd. These areas are preferred places for:

### Protected Bike Lanes

Protected bike lanes are an effective tool at increasing safety for all road users. They separate types of traffic and create an additional barrier between the sidewalk and car traffic. Before implementing bike lanes, the following should be considered:

- Adequate width
  - \* protected bike lanes should be 6 ft wide when feasible. They should also have additional 3ft of space for barricades and buffers.
- Testing period
  - \* before installing substantial buffers, bike lanes can be trialed, and different configurations should be tested before implementing permanent installations.

Below are a series of potential temporary barrier options to consider.

Additionally, Table 4.3.2 Compare bike lane barrier types.

### Bicycle Friendly Streets

Bicycle friendly streets are intended to provide

low-cost safe bike infrastructure separate from main arterials. Heavily modeled off City of Seattle's Healthy Streets Program, these streets can be easily adjusted and provide an excellent way for less experienced bicyclists and families to ride in a lower stress environment.

Key points of Bike friendly streets:

- Stop signs – stop signs should be placed along all abutting streets so that riders have right-of-way.
- Bump outs, daylighting, curb-outs, chicanes, and other traffic calming measures should be considered for bike friendly streets.
- Low-cost options that use paint, or movable barricades allow for a testing period, allowing for lower cost revaluation before implementing more permanent options.

## Street Widths

Street widths meet standard requirements for fire safety in the Ferndale Code. Generally, roads allow for two travel lanes and options for the following including but not limited for parking, bioswales, curb-outs/daylighting, bike lanes or any combination of those features.

## Sidewalks

Sidewalks follow ADA recommendations with recommended minimum width of 6ft, curb ramps have high visibility tactile plates and angle correctly to their adjacent corner (Figure 4.3.3)

## Setbacks

Much of Ferndale's residential and commercial development has minimum setbacks. Setbacks provide space for pedestrians and allow for more plants and natural materials. A minimum setback may apply in low and medium densities while a maximum setback can move buildings closer to the street

## Parking Strips

When feasible, parking strips can be used to create a buffer between sidewalks and roads, also provides additional access to infrastructure in ROW.

## Building Orientation

Building frontage should face the nearest ROW, with preferred orientation toward arterials streets. Buildings in higher density zones may have maximum setbacks to bring them closer to streets.

## Corner Lots

Buildings on the corner consider architectural and

pedestrian-oriented features. Below are several features that should be considered on all walls facing ROWs:

- Pedestrian Plaza
- Artwork or Mural
- Architectural Frieze (decorated bands)
- Secondary Entrance and/or Employee Entrance
- Corner is chamfered or rounded
- Awnings
- Transparent windows (pedestrian scaled, allow reasonable view into and out of building)
- Street furniture (e.g., benches, trash cans, water fountains, etc.)
- Sunrooms and Atriums
- Semi-public outdoor areas (such as dining, beer garden).
- Planter boxes, plantings, and other natural materials.

Figure 4.3.2 shows good use of a corner lot.



Figure 4.3.2 Ferndale State Bank Building, Ferndale, WA. Google Maps Street View

## Street Ends:

Streets ends are most applicable to the greenway, near the mixed-use core and civic center. Street ends should have vehicle barriers and signage applied according to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways from the US Department of Transportation. They should also include adequate signage to denote space that is accessible to the public. Using bollards, or other traffic control devices, streets can seamlessly transition to paved trails or elevated boardwalks.

## Driveways

Driveways for new developments are currently approved at the discretion of the city engineer. They should reduce the number of intersections on the street when feasible. Figure 4.3.4 Shows an example of a shared driveway on a duplex.

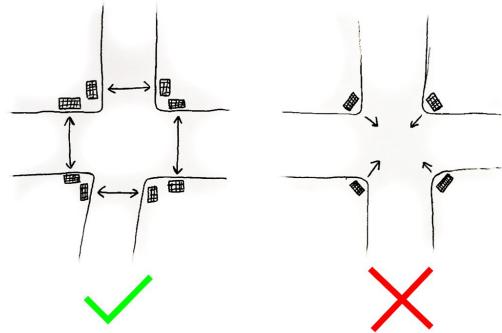


Figure 4.3.3 Tactile Ramp Diagram



Figure 4.3.4 Duplex with Shared Driveway, Bellingham, WA. Google Maps Street View



Figure 4.3.5 American Craftsman Home, Altadena, CA. Leveragere.



Figure 4.3.6 Pacific Lodge Style Home, Orcas Island, WA. Tim Bies.



Figure 4.3.7 Sandstone Vernacular Architecture, Tenino, WA. Joe Mabel.

## Cohesion

Cohesion discusses how buildings can be designed to blend better and define a more distinct character for the neighborhood. Lynden, WA for example has identified a strong Dutch-inspired historic character for their downtown. While Ferndale might not have distinct/themed architecture, it has many styles prevalent in the Pacific Northwest. Many styles of residential architecture can be used to “soften” middle housing, preserving the look of historic American neighborhoods.

## Architectural Styles

Below in Table 4.3.3 are several architectural styles that may enhance Ferndale's character. Most of these styles range from the late 1800s to mid-1940s. Many of the historical building of Ferndale have vernacular architecture, meaning use of local materials. Out of all the types, American Craftsman Style (Figure 4.3.5) seems to be the most dominant with Pacific Lodge (Figure 4.3.6) brick/stone materials (Figure 4.3.7) for commercial and mixed-use buildings.

Ferndale's neighborhood commercial can take inspiration from older cities, in some cases spot zoning allowed for unique opportunities for commercial in residential neighborhoods. Although this has become less common, many shops can exist in this kind of space that would still serve the immediate area without causing substantial disruption.

### Front Facades:

Front facades should be detailed with depth variation, overhangs, ornamentation, windows, window treatment and other stylized elements. Variations in depth such as porches, stoops, sunrooms, bay windows, and bungalows are recommended.

*Table 4.3.3 Potential Architectural Styles*

Low/Medium Density	Medium/High Density	High/Mixed Use
American Craftsman	Art Deco	Art Deco
Ranch/Cape Cod	Pacific Lodge	Pacific Lodge
American Foursquare	American Foursquare	Brick/Stone Vernacular
Mission Revival	Mission Revival	Modern Vernacular
Traditional Bungalow Revival		
Modern Farmhouse		
Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial	Civic
Art Deco	Modern Vernacular	Modern Farmhouse
Residential Vernacular with commercial add-on		Pacific Lodge

### Community Input Toolkit:

The previous design guidelines are a toolkit to be used when envisioning the Cascadia Urban Village character. The input of community members is a key step in guiding design decisions. Table 7 outlines strategies to gain community input when making decisions.

#### *Design Charettes:*

- Can be used to counter a fear of change as well as start a conversation
- Incentivize; offer childcare or gift cards, host during hours outside of 9 to 5
- Offer a remote engagement option with tailored engagement activities
- Provide visuals (maps) and hands-on materials; Legos, cutouts for map placement, kits of parts.

#### *Tabling:*

Tables at existing gatherings to meet people where they are and piggy-back off known events.

- Example locations: farmers markets, PTA meetings, church socials, summer park events.
- Activity ideas:
  - \* Provide free fruit or candy to draw people in.

Table 4.3.4 Group Engagement Activities

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 storytelling 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.

- \* Mini-charrettes: One-table version of the mapping exercise.
- \* Kids' Corner: Simple sketch-and-stamp stations where children design their own park or street.
- \* Take-Home Kits: Flyers with QR codes linking to online surveys and project updates.

#### *Stakeholder Outreach:*

Targeting businesses that benefit from a cohesive design and walkable neighborhood.

- Invite business owners and developers to discuss loading zones, outdoor seating, and design guidelines.
- Meet with school principals, faith-based organizations, and non-profits about shared-use spaces and community gardens.

#### *Online surveys:*

These have an element of accessibility and convenience that will receive broader input.

- Short, mobile-friendly questionnaires with visuals.
- Multiple language options with translations checked by a human translator (English/ Spanish).
- QR codes on flyers in bus shelters,

- trailheads, and commercial windows.
- QR flyers at any tabling events
- Social media posts and targeted ads to reach under-represented groups.
- Email blasts through neighborhood associations and city mailing lists.



Figure 4.3.8 Winter Community Engagement Event

## 4.4 Summary

The City of Ferndale is projected to see significant growth in the near future. Planning for this growth can preserve the aspects community appreciate about Ferndale while providing new opportunities and addressing existing concerns. Cascadia Urban Village aims to create a complete neighborhood with mixed-use development, housing variety, businesses, and access to services that currently are lacking on the north side of Ferndale.

Within the next 20 years, development can occur in four phases. Phase 1 addresses rezoning for medium (18 units per acre) and high density (22 units per acre), building infrastructure, and creating neighborhood commercial spaces in the southern part of the site, which connects to existing neighborhoods. Phase 2 begins the development of the greenway and civic center, which includes courts, fields, playgrounds, a splash pad, and a trail system. Phase 3 implements mixed-use (22 units per acre) and commercial developments, further integrating the neighborhood by bringing grocery stores and adding lower-density housing to the site. Phase 4 concludes with filling the remaining land with low-density housing (10 units/acre).

Code Revisions create an urban village overlay with 8 zone types: 3 types of dedicated residential, 1 mixed-use, and 2 types of commercial, civic, and park zoning. Additionally, RS (Single Family) zoning is eliminated and replaced with 3 residential zoning types; RES Low/Medium/High (10/18/22 DU/acre).

Design Guidelines address *Nature, Connectivity, and Cohesion* with the existing built and natural environment. Nature emphasizes native landscaping, rain gardens, and green buffers. Connectivity demonstrates the benefits of alleyways, protected bike lanes, bike-friendly streets, and correctly oriented tactile ramps. Cohesion identifies a variety of architectural styles, most prominently American Craftsman, Pacific Lodge, and Modern Farmhouse. All the housing could be vernacular, utilizing local source materials for details and facades. Community input on these can be done through design charrettes, dot-voting, story circles, and online surveys.

The Cascadia Urban Village requires a lot of consideration given that it is a greenfield development, however it has enormous potential for the city of Ferndale to become a destination for residents and even regional visitors. Creating a complete neighborhood would address current service shortfalls in the city, create more housing variety, accommodate more income types, and bring a higher quality of life for residents, visitors, workers, and anyone who visits Ferndale.



Figure 4.3.9 Existing Farmland Around Proposed Cascadia Urban Village, Whatcom County, WA.

# 5.0 Introduction: Mountain View Neighborhood Center

The Mountain View Neighborhood is planned as a walkable, mixed-use, green neighborhood. Through infill development and expansion into designed Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) and the UGA Reserve, this plan aims to help accommodate Ferndale's projected population growth. Development will occur in four phases over 20 years to gradually extend infrastructure, housing, and civic amenities. The plan emphasizes medium and higher-density housing, open space, and a connected street network, all surrounding a mixed-use neighborhood center. To support this vision, the city can revise its codes, promote mixed-use development, and help to ensure inclusive, sustainable growth. Key strategies of the approach include the detailed phasing plan, code revisions, use of green space, and affordable housing development in the area.

The Mountain View neighborhood boundary is located in the west of Ferndale at the intersection of Church and Mountain View roads and extends out about a quarter mile in each direction. In total, the node is made up of about 186 acres. However, due to the presence of critical wetlands and existing developments, there is only about 66 acres of developable land in this node. Currently, this area of Ferndale experiences many of the same complications that face the rest of the city, a lack of access to services and a lack of multi-modal connectivity. For this reason, increasing the proximity and access to necessary services was a focal point to the Mountain View neighborhood proposal. This neighborhood is centered around a mixed-use area which will be bifurcated by the S. Church Rd extension, leaving two mixed-use spaces on either side of the street.

In total, the area is about 6 acres of mixed-use space. Figure 5.0.1 displays the different land use designations within the Mountain View neighborhood. This node is mainly characterized by residential use with extensive public greenways and parks. These greenways are intended to be created in the location of current critical wetlands, protecting the natural ecology and processes while providing residents with access to park space. Additionally, these greenways are characterized by a system of pedestrian trails which aim to improve connectivity in this neighborhood without the use of cars. Residential use has been divided into low and medium densities. Specific land dedications for each use are shown in Table 5.0.1. While there is no specific high-density designation, all new developments are denser than current city code allows. Housing typology in medium density areas includes small apartments, duplexes and triplexes, and other multi-family housing developments.

Housing typology in lower-density areas contain both single and multi-family dwellings, mainly townhomes and cottage-style housing. The overall density in the Mountain View neighborhood is about 24 units/acre. In total, this neighborhood can provide about 1,600 additional units. Figure 5.0.2 displays the proposed connectivity features of the Mountain View neighborhood.

The neighborhood contains an extensive trail system via greenspaces and parks, providing increased pedestrian access to different areas of the neighborhood. Road amendments are also necessary to improve overall circulation in this neighborhood. Figure 5.0.2 shows some of the

new road proposals and amendments to address this issue. The extension of Church Road to S. Church Road is imperative to the development of the Mountain View neighborhood. This extension alleviates traffic congestion on Mountain View Road and increases overall connectivity for residents in this area. Figure 5.0.2 also shows bus routes and stops going through the Mountain View neighborhood. Adding more stops along the new Church Road extension are necessary to increase multi-modal transportation access. Overall, the Mountain View neighborhood provides ample opportunity to accommodate the necessary housing and improve the accessibility of services for residents and the larger Ferndale community.

*Table 5.0.1 Mountain View Zoning Acreage*

Zone	Units/Acres
Low Density Residential	12-15
Medium Density Residential	20-25
Mixed Use	6

# Mountain View Neighborhood Node

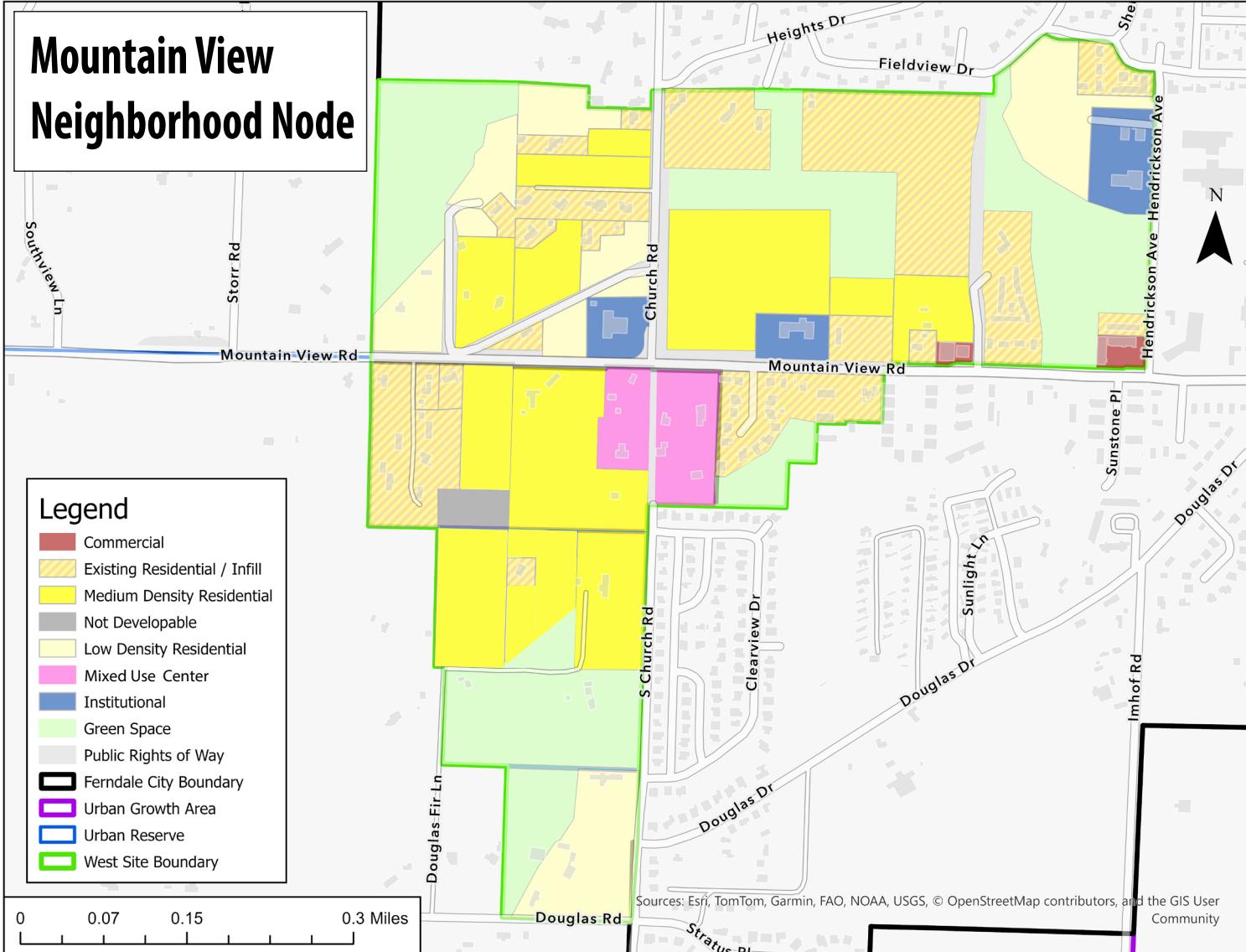


Figure 5.0.1 Mountain View Neighborhood Land Use Map

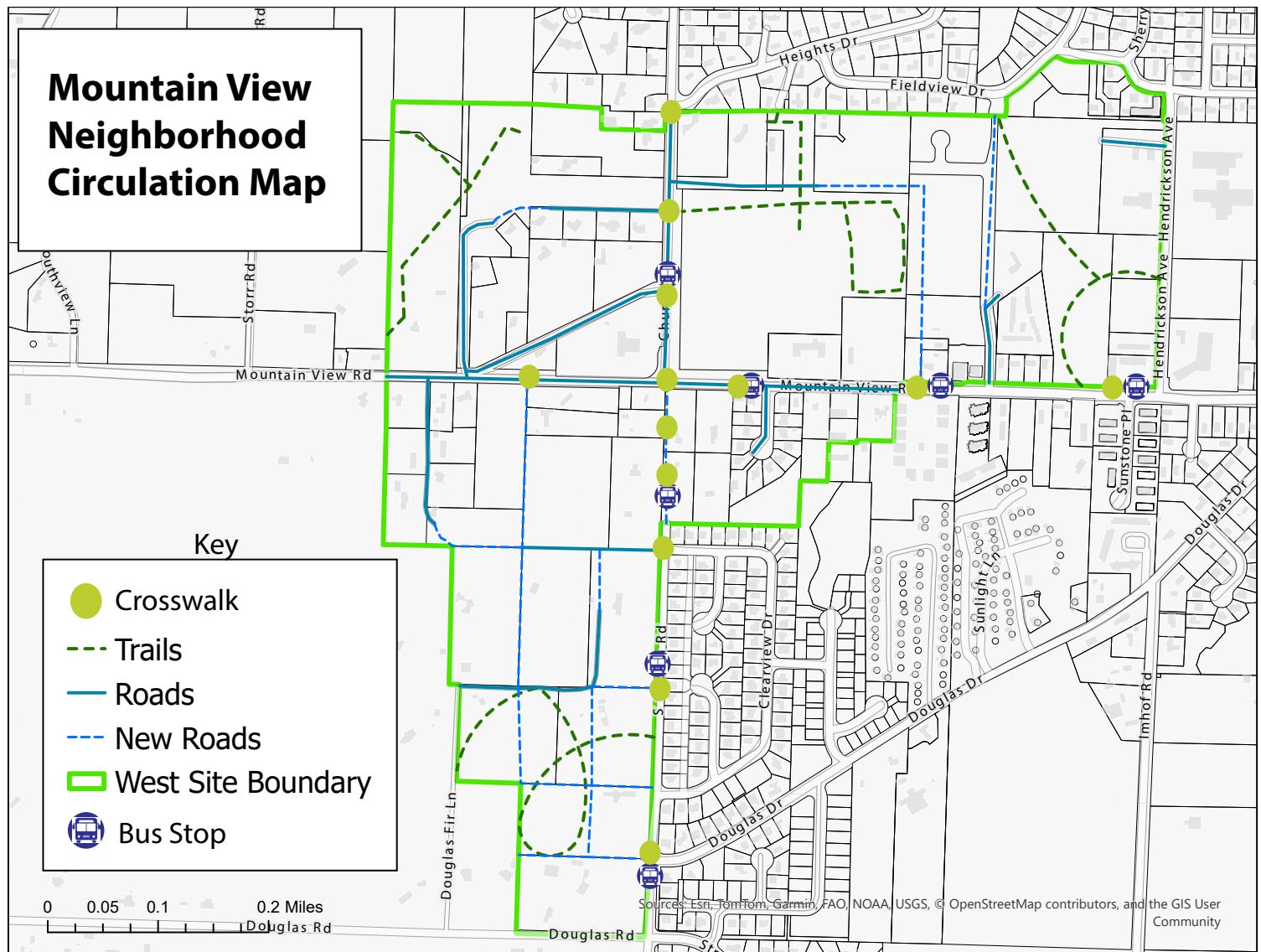


Figure 5.0.2 Mountain View Neighborhood Circulation Map

# 5.1 Phasing Plan

Phasing for development of the Mountain View neighborhood is broken into four parts. Phase 1: 0-5 years, Phase 2: 5-10 years, Phase 3: 10-15 years, and Phase 4: 15-20 years. Phasing recommendations are based on feedback from City of Ferndale staff. Figure 5.1.1 shows the phases of development overlaying the proposed land use designations. Because the Mountain View neighborhood is mainly an infill development project, much of the needed public infrastructure and utilities already exist in the neighborhood. However, the city would still need to extend current services into the UGA and UGA Reserve to fully connect the Mountain View neighborhood to the city network. Most of the land uses within the neighborhood boundary are residential, with the mixed-use center being the main commercial space. This increases overall density while ensuring access to nearby greenspaces for residents. All greenspaces in the development proposal contain pedestrian paths which connect to the larger right-of-way network. Road amendments are also necessary to improve overall connectivity for this area.

Prior to any new development in the area, Douglass Fir Ln. should be extended north, to connect with Mountain View Rd. and east, to connect to S. Church Rd. The city should also look to extend Clearwater Dr. westward to connect to the Douglass Fir Ln. These revisions improve circulation by reducing traffic congestion on current roads like Douglas. The city should also look to add a new road that provides access to the parcel that is adjacent to the Church Rd.-Mountain View Rd. intersection, because this parcel is nearly 10 acres. This improves connectivity and

supports the new housing development planned to begin in this phase. Lastly, there will be no new commercial or retail developments in these areas, although the Mountain View-Church intersection does currently allow for retail use. Public services must also be extended into the UGA to connect this area to the rest of the city network.

*Table 5.1.1 Mountain View Phasing Plan*

Phase	Key Development Focus Areas
Phase 1 0-5 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin Development in NE section off Church Rd. and Mountain View Rd.</li><li>• Annex and begin development in UGA.</li><li>• Extend City sewer and power lines into area.</li><li>• Add Douglass Fir Rd. revisions.</li><li>• Add Roads in Parcel adjacent to Church-Mountain View intersection.</li><li>• Implement code encouraging development of ADU's.</li><li>• Allow transitional and permanent supportive housing in residential zones.</li><li>• Implement urban overlay zone to promote middle housing.</li></ul>
Phase 2 5-10 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin development in NW section off Church Rd. and Mountain View Rd.</li><li>• Begin development of NE section (Hendricks Rd.)</li><li>• Add Shannon Ave. Road revisions.</li><li>• Add Norway Rd. and Viewpoint Way connection.</li><li>• Adopt Street improvement code similar to BMC 20.37.240.</li></ul>
Phase 3 10-15 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annex UGA west of S. Church Rd.</li><li>• Extend city sewer and power lines into area.</li><li>• Add S. Church Rd. Extension and new bus routes.</li><li>• Add crosswalks.</li><li>• Begin development in UGA Reserve.</li></ul>
Phase 4 15-20 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin development of Mixed-use Center.</li><li>• Adopt a Neighborhood Commercial Zone.</li><li>• Allow live-work use in Mixed Commercial Use Zone (MXD).</li></ul>

## Phase 1

The first phase of the Mountain View neighborhood plan focuses on development in the UGA (the area west of the current S. Church Rd.) as well as the parcels directly northeast of the intersection at Church and Mountain View Rd, as displayed in Figure 5.1.1. According to the city, these areas are already primed to begin development, aside from needing to further annex the UGA. Additionally, the area NE of Church and Mountain View has already been permitted to begin a planned unit development for townhomes and other single-family homes. The areas identified for Phase 1 development pertain mainly to residential use. These areas are characterized by the development of medium-density housing types with prominent, nearby green spaces.

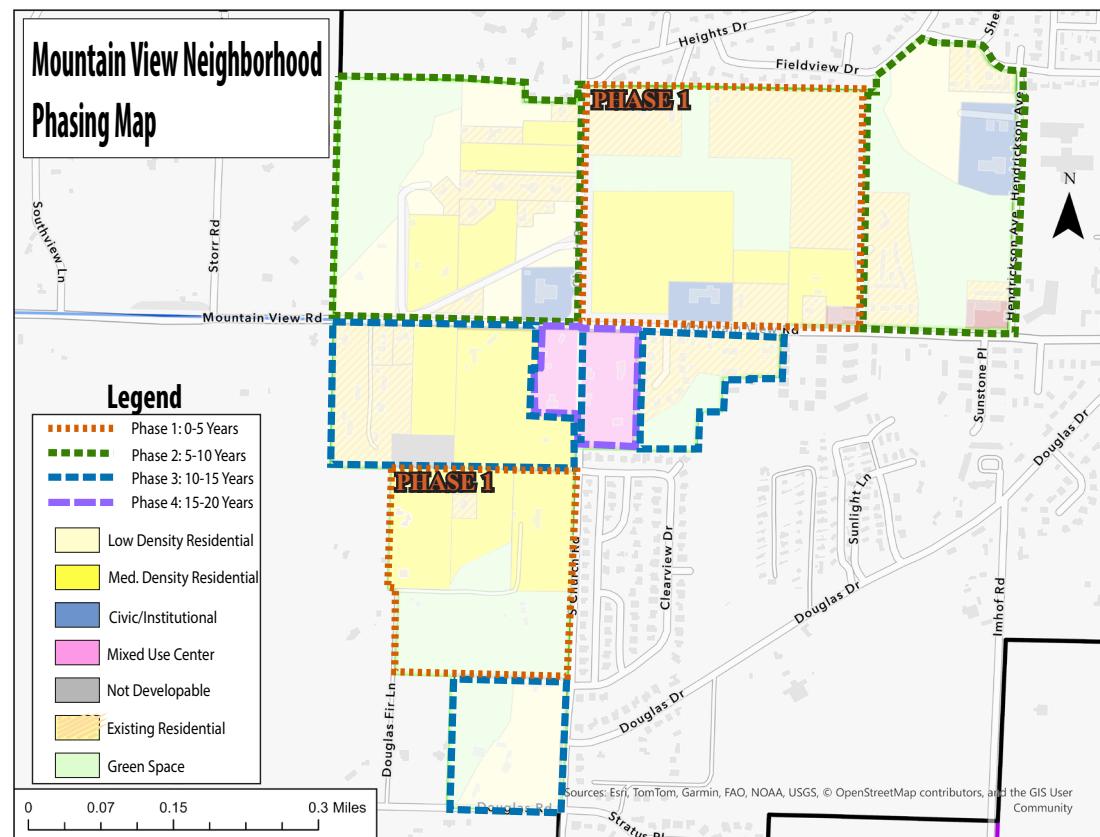


Figure 5.1.1 Mountain View Neighborhood Phase 1

## Phase 2

The second phase of the Mountain View neighborhood focuses on development in the area northwest of the Church and Mountain View Rd. intersection and the area directly west of Hendrickson Ave, as shown in Figure 5.1.2. These areas are characterized primarily by residential use. The area off Hendrickson Ave. contains a handful of existing developments in addition to a section of critical wetland. Therefore, residential development in this area is low-density. Development in this area also includes a public greenway, ensuring the protection of the wetlands while providing recreational opportunities and improved pedestrian connectivity. This greenway runs north-south, connecting Mountain View Dr. with Fieldview Dr for pedestrian access. To further improve connectivity, the city should extend Shannon Ave. north, connecting Mountain View Rd. with Fieldview Drive. The area northwest of Church-Mountain View is a mix of low and medium densities due to existing structures and residencies. The medium density developments will be located closer to the mixed-use center, while density will gradually disperse as you get closer to the existing neighborhood. To improve connectivity in this area, the city should connect Norway Rd. With Viewpoint Way. This amendment will reduce the number of dead-end streets that currently exist in this area, improving mobility for both pedestrians and vehicles. Both areas of Phase 2 development contain extensive greenways which link different areas of the city to one another. These areas also include some existing civic spaces like Triumph Lutheran Church, Ferndale Seventh Day Church, and Quest Diagnostics which will be left unchanged.

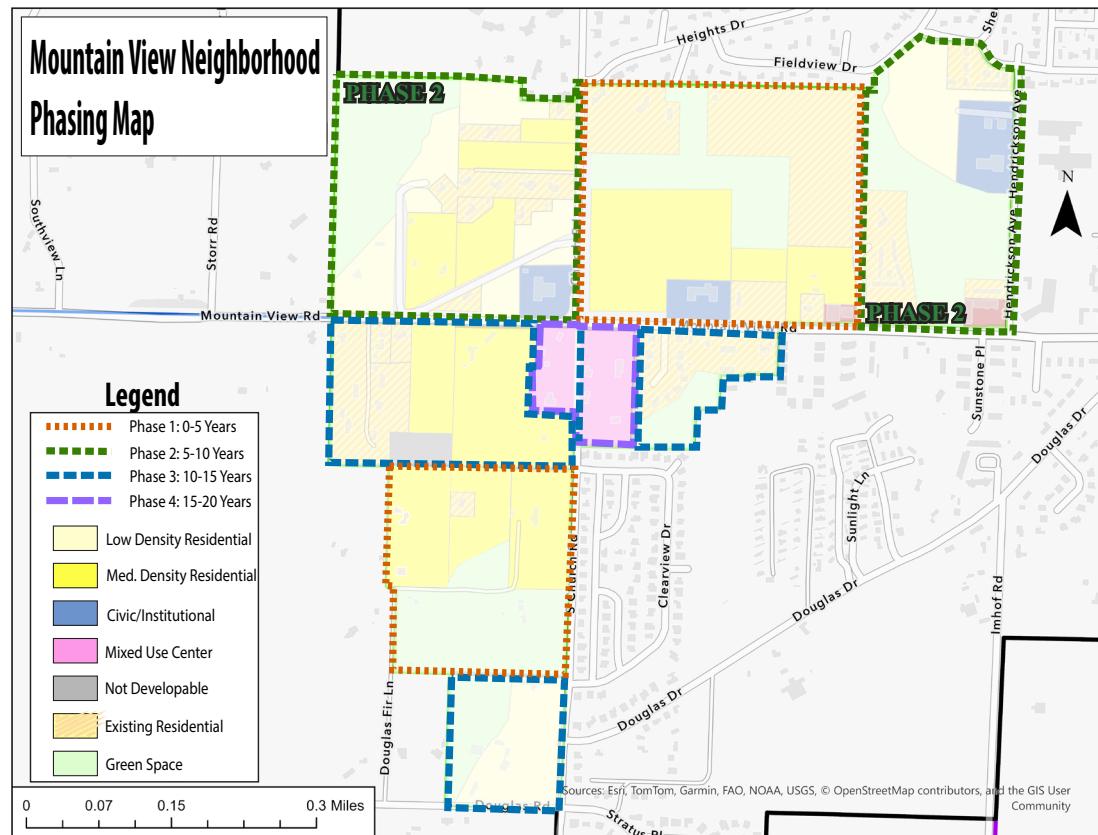


Figure 5.1.2 Mountain View Neighborhood Phase 2

### Phase 3

The third phase of the Mountain View neighborhood focuses on development in the UGA Reserves, as shown in Figure 5.1.3. These areas must first be adopted as UGAs and then eventually annexed into the city. Given this status, city services must be extended into these areas in order to accommodate the planned development. The areas of focus for Phase 3 are classified by residential use, with higher density in the UGA Reserve adjacent to the mixed-use center and lower density going south on S. Church Rd. This area does contain a fair number of existing structures and residencies, such as Grace Retirement home. As shown in Figure 2, many of these structures will be left unchanged. Another vital step of Phase 3 is to extend S. Church Rd. north to connect with Church Rd. The S. Church Road amendment is central to the Mountain View development plans, since the proposed mixed-use area will be developed on either side of the S. Church Rd. extension. Once this extension is completed, the city should look to add more bus routes and stops going south down the new Church Rd.

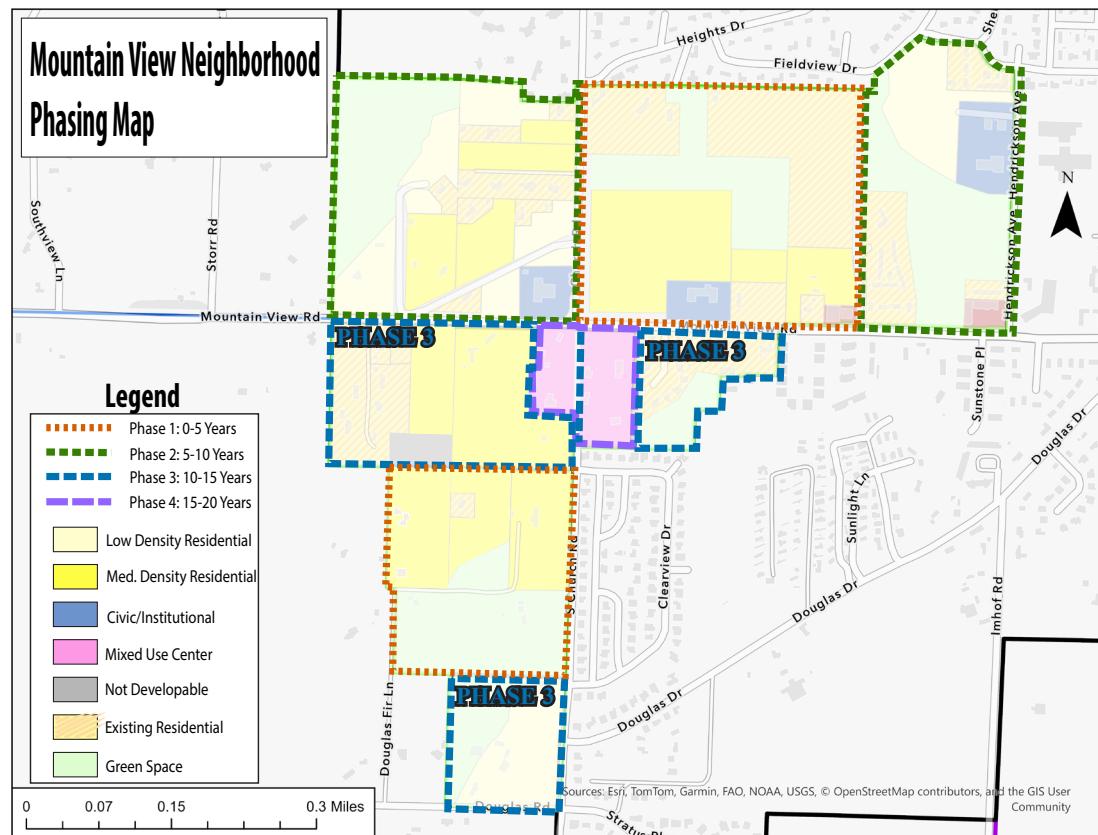


Figure 5.1.3 Mountain View Neighborhood Phase 3

#### Phase 4

Phase 4 is the final phase of the Mountain View development plan. Shown in Figure 5.1.4, this phase is primarily concerned with the development of the mixed-use center. The Mountain View neighborhood is oriented around this mixed-use center. This center will provide residents with a public recreation space as well as a variety of other uses. Currently the site identified for the mixed-use area is in the UGA reserve. This means that this area must first be converted into a UGA before then annexed by the city. Because of this, city utilities must be extended/connected to this area. Although, because there is already some development in this area, it is unlikely the city will need to construct completely new services for this space. This center will include residential spaces, retail and commercial spaces, offices, civic spaces, and more. The mixed-use center is bisected by the S. Church Road expansion, creating two distinct sides.

Although each side is unique, they will still share similar uses. These mixed-use spaces are intended to provide increased public access to third places. The center is the last step of the Mountain View phasing plan primarily because of the S. Church Rd. extension. The center itself is predicated on the connection of S. Church Road to Church Road, and for this reason, development of the mixed-use center must wait until the proper road amendments are completed. There is the possibility of developing one side of the space before the other, but without the Church Road extension, the mixed-use area would lack significant connectivity.

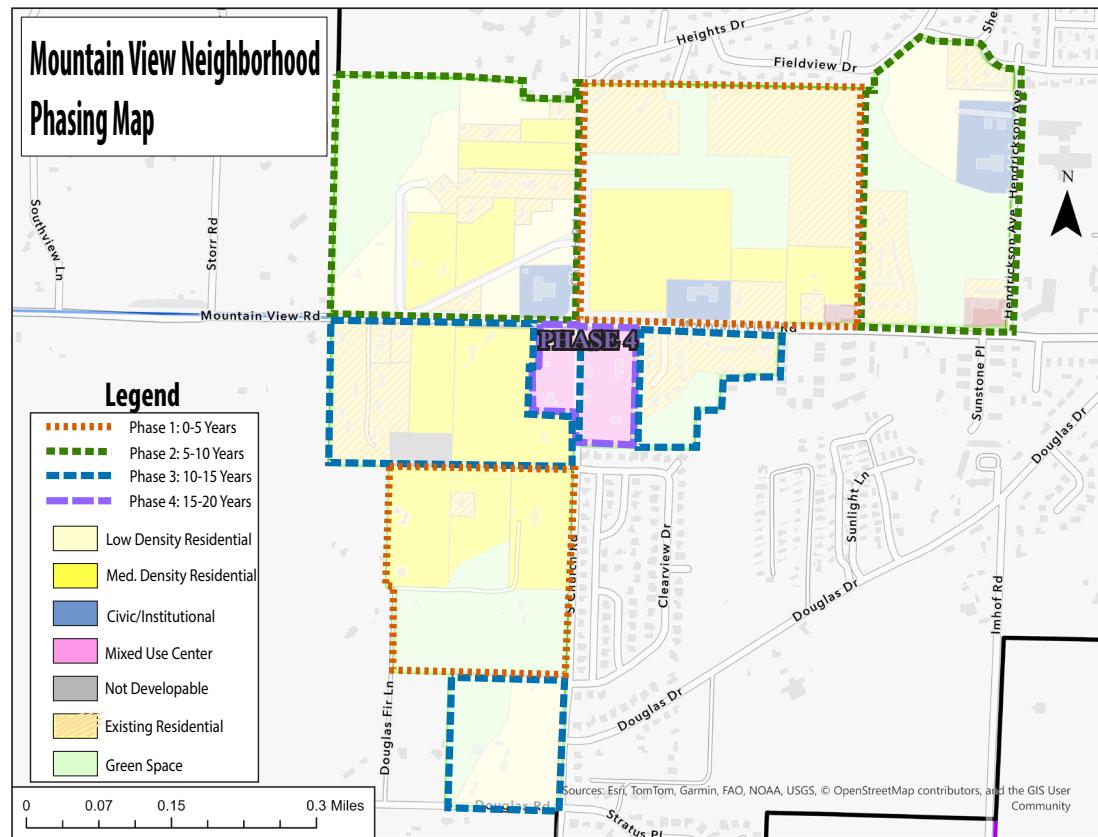


Figure 5.1.4 Mountain View Neighborhood Phase 4

## 5.2 Code Revisions

### Urban Village Overlay Zone

The City of Ferndale should adopt an urban village overlay zone for the Mountain View Neighborhood that emphasizes mixed use infill and higher density residential. This would officially create boundaries of the urban village and allow for updates to this specific area, including design guidelines, infill housing, specialized allowed uses, etc.

### Municipal Code

The City of Ferndale should add a clause similar to the City of Bellingham's code 20.37.240 Fountain District Urban Village – Street improvements, written below:

“A. Applicability. The regulations of this section shall apply to the development of any principal and/or accessory use within the commercial core or commercial transition area in the Mountain View urban village.

B. New construction or renovations of 50 percent or more of an existing structure(s) shall improve abutting streets from the curb edge to the property line. The determination of the percentage of renovation shall be based upon whether the valuation of proposed site improvements exceeds 50 percent of the assessed value of the existing site improvements.

C. Street standards shall be consistent with the Mountain View urban village subarea plan streetscape designs. The planning and public works directors may approve minor modifications. Such modifications may be granted when practical difficulties arise in

the design and construction of streets due to topographic geological limitations or other problems inherent or peculiar to the area, or where the directors find that imposition of the required street design would be detrimental to the interest of the neighborhood.”

### Commercial and Residential Zones

Ferndale's Mixed Use Commercial (MXD) zone could benefit from changes to support the developments proposed in the Mountain View Node. These changes are:

- Add handicraft manufacturing (jewelry, pottery, glass, furniture, etc.) as an allowed use; and
- Add Live/Work as an allowed use.

Ferndale should adopt a neighborhood commercial zone that can also be used in the urban village. A draft of this zone has been written by students in UEPP 374 Land Use Regulations & Technical Writing.

Ferndale's Urban Residential (UR) and Residential Multifamily – Medium Density (RMM) accommodate Mountain View node's proposed developments sufficiently.

### Compliance with House Bills 1110 and 1220

Ferndale municipal code appears to be compliant with HB 1110. This bill has different ADU requirements depending on the population of the city. Ferndale's population projections indicate that it will remain compliant for the foreseeable future, even after surpassing 25,000 population.

Ferndale municipal code appears to be compliant with HB 1220, but it may be a good idea to implement policy suggestions from HB 1220:

- Ferndale should allow transitional and permanent supportive housing in their residential zones; and
- Ferndale should implement code encouraging the development of ADU's to meet affordable housing requirements. See Section 7 of HB 1220 for examples.

### APA Equity in Zoning Policy

The second part of our code revision will analyze the American Planning Association Zoning Equity Code, which identifies policy recommendations planners can adopt to ensure equity in all aspects of planning code at city, county or state level. This code revision will compare Ferndale Municipal Code to the APA Equity in Zoning, making suggestions for revisions that will aid in developing equitable and actionable policies.

Table 5.1.3 *Equity in Zoning Policies and Recommendations*

Current Ferndale Code	APA Equity Zoning	Revision Suggestion
Chapter 18.32 Single Family Dwelling Zones (RS Low, Medium, and High) Chapter 18.32	<p>Zoning District Policy 1.</p> <p>Establish new residential zoning districts or amend existing residential districts to allow more types of housing by right.</p> <p>Permitted Use Policy 1.</p> <p>Where supported by historically disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, expand the list of residential use types permitted in those neighborhoods to include one or more of the following forms of non-traditional and “missing middle” housing that is more available to America’s diverse, aging population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes +, cottage housing and apartments by right in single-family zones.</li> <li>Initiate an overlay zone to permit middle housing in all residential zones.</li> </ul>
Chapter 18.16 Zones, Maps and Boundaries		
Chapter 18.34 Accessory Dwelling Units	<p>Permitted Use Policy 2.</p> <p>Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) without the need for a public hearing, subject to only those conditions needed to mitigate potential impacts on neighboring properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove owner-occupancy requirements for ADUs.</li> <li>Remove off-street parking requirements for ADUs.</li> <li>Allow one detached or attached ADU by right on all residential lots.</li> </ul>
Chapter 18.08 Definitions	<p>Permitted Use Policy 6.</p> <p>Replace restrictive zoning references to “family” with a definition of “household” that includes all living arrangements that function as a household living unit or define residential units without reference to a family or household.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define “household” as “any number of individuals living together as a single housekeeping unit in a single dwelling unit, regardless of relationship”.</li> </ul>
FMC Chapter 18.12 Administration and Enforcement	<p>Drafting Policy 1.</p> <p>Those framing, writing, and/or reviewing the zoning rules should reflect the demographic composition of the community and should include representatives from historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing a program to recruit diverse representatives within the planning committee.</li> </ul>
FMC Chapter 16.08 Critical Areas	<p>Zoning District Policy 5.</p> <p>Establish specialized overlay zones to improve health outcomes and environmental justice by preventing concentration of pollution or environmental hazards, including hazards related to climate change, especially near historically disadvantaged and vulnerable populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an “environmental justice” overlay zone that applies additional review for developments proposed within or near critical areas (high emphasis on the Nooksack floodplain).</li> </ul>

## 5.3 Design Guidelines

Because the majority of the proposed development in the Mountain View neighborhood is residential, specific design guidelines are not necessary for this neighborhood. However, developing design guidelines can provide aesthetic and environmental benefits to the proposed mixed-use center. Placemaking is the concept of building community by tying it to space. Creating a unique and inviting area for people to live and interact strengthens community.

The proposed design guidelines for the Mountain View neighborhood center are based on the Ferndale design manual. The manual details three different architectural styles that could be viable options for the Mountain View neighborhood center. These styles include Americana, Industrial Agriculture, and PNW Lodge, shown in Figures 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.3. The design style itself is not of extreme importance, but a consistent design theme for the neighborhood center would aid with placemaking and creating an attractive space that people want to be in. More importantly, the city should focus on Low Impact Development (LID) and other environmentally conscious designs. Incorporating design elements such as these can improve the energy efficiency of buildings, reduce water usage, reduce runoff, and provide other benefits to both the city and the environment. Climate-focused designs are also important to consider due to Ferndale's geography and weather patterns. Adding large windows and covered outdoor spaces promotes more year-round use. The City of Ferndale should consider developing environmental design guidelines for non-residential developments. These guidelines can outline specific aspects of sustainable design

that the city wants to see in future development. Lastly, the city should also adhere to universal design principles when developing the mixed-use center and neighborhood at large. Ensuring that these areas are compliant with ADA standards is crucial to providing equitable access to space.



Figure 5.3.3 Industrial Agriculture, Spearfish, SD.



Figure 5.3.1 PNW Lodge, Cle Elum Lake, WA.



Figure 5.3.2 Americana Styled Shopping Center, Arlington VA.

## 5.4 Summary

The Mountain View neighborhood is located at the intersection of Church and Mountain View roads. This area is entirely residential, mainly characterized by single-family homes and cul-de-sacs. Due to this, the current neighborhood lacks access to essential services and suffers from poor connectivity. Alongside accommodating the projected population and housing growth, improving service accessibility and (pedestrian) connectivity is a central focus for the Mountain View Neighborhood project proposal.



Figure 5.4.1 Mountain View Neighborhood Sketchup 3D Model

## 6.0 Funding and Incentives

An important part of implementation is identifying funding sources to help pay for necessary improvements and incentives to motivate developers to build desired residential and commercial developments. To ensure that Ferndale's newest neighborhoods are developed as complete neighborhoods, funding and incentives have been identified in three areas: Transportation, Environmental Restoration, and Affordable Housing.

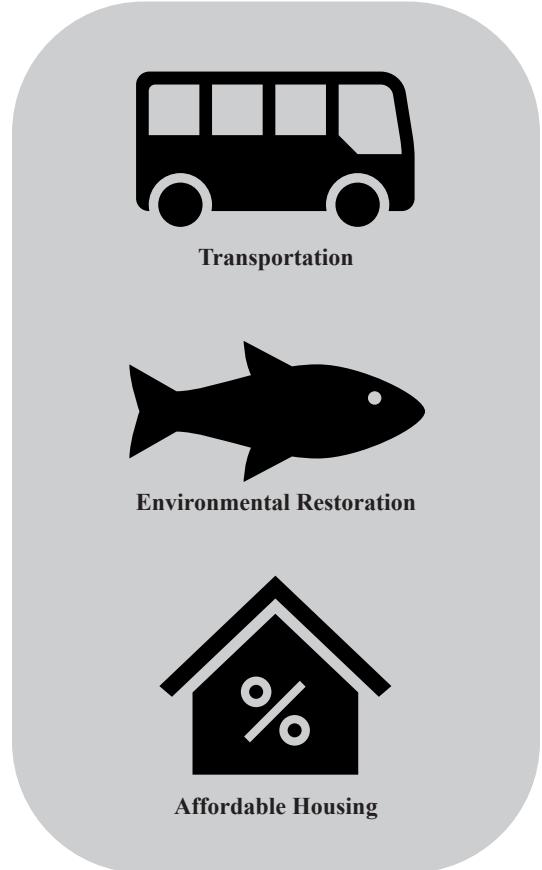


Figure 6.0.1 Different Funding Incentives

# 6.1 Transportation Funding & Incentives

## **Multiuse Roadway Safety Program**

The purpose of the state Multiuse Roadway Safety Program is to increase opportunities for safe, legal, and environmentally acceptable motorized (all-terrain vehicles) recreation on public roads. Local government agencies, State Patrol, and local law enforcement agencies in Washington are eligible to apply.

## **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program**

The Federal Transportation Alternatives Program provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off- road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and improved mobility, community improvement activities and environmental remediation; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects.

## **Commute Trip Reduction Program**

The Commute Trip Reduction Program focuses on improving air quality, reducing traffic congestion, and decreasing fuel consumption through employer-based programs that encourage alternatives to driving alone to work. Local governments are required to develop and implement plans to reduce single occupancy vehicle commute travel to large work sites and dense employment centers in congested urban areas.

## **Community Development Block Grant: General Purpose Program**

Provides grants to select rural cities/towns and counties to finance public infrastructure. Eligible projects must benefit low- and moderate-income persons and for the planning, acquisition, design, and construction of public infrastructure. Grants are open on an ongoing basis as funds are available. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## **Public Works Board, Construction Loan Program**

Provides low-interest loans for public infrastructure construction and rehabilitation. Eligible projects must improve public health and safety, respond to environmental issues, promote economic development, upgrade system performance, or other evaluation criteria. This board is authorized by RCW 43.155.

## **Urban Sidewalk Program (USP)**

The Urban Sidewalk Program establishes highly connected pedestrian networks in downtowns and activity centers. The program constructs and replaces sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety, create system continuity, link pedestrian generators, extend the system and complete gaps.

*Figure 6.1.1 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.

## 6.2 Environmental Restoration Funding & Incentives

The proposed neighborhood centers have significant costs associated with environmental restoration. When taking on these projects the city should consider both city initiated funding tools and other resources like non-profit, state, and other sources alleviate the funding difficulties of the city.

### *WRIA1 - Salmon Recovery Program (Annual Cycle)*

The WRIA1 Salmon Recovery Program provides grants to local governments for Washington State's Water Resource Inventory Area 1 (WRIA1). This encompasses most of Whatcom County including Ferndale, and the Nooksack river basin. Priorities for relevant grant funding:

- Restore fish passage at critical barriers.
- Integrate habitat protection with local land use regulations.
- Restore and reconnect isolated habitats in lowland and independent tributaries.

The 2025 deadline has past. The letter of intent for all proposals was due February 17, 2025. New opportunities will open at the beginning of 2026.

Funding is to be determined after the application deadline. For 2025, "The amount of funding available for the 2025 SRFB grant cycle is not currently known. Over the past several years, funding for the Nooksack Basin has ranged from \$720,000 to \$1,000,000."

All projects must meet requirements in the SRFB Manual 18 from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

*WA Recreation and Conservation Office - Brian*

### *Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (BAFBRB)*

State grant that provides funding for fish passage barrier removal. The BAFBRB will begin accepting new proposals October, 2025 for projects to remove barriers that prevent salmon and steelhead from swimming upstream.

Funding for design-only projects has a funding limit of equal or less than \$350,000. funding, which includes construction, have no limit however requires a 15% match for funding.

Projects requirements state it cannot be used for mitigation projects, activities, or funds for new development. (scope must address just the barrier/ road).

Projects require minimum 10-year oversight Long-term commitments detailed in RCO Funding Grant Manual 7. Examples include:

- Permanent sign acknowledging grant funding.
- Project must remain publicly owned.

### *WA Department of Ecology – Streamflow Restoration Implementation Grant*

This stream restoration grant supports the protection and restoration of streamflow to improve aquatic habitat, especially for salmonids. Eligible activities include riparian and wetland restoration, land acquisition, and infrastructure modifications that enhance streamflow.

This is a biennial grant, and the next funding cycle opens in late fall 2025, with full applications typically due in early 2026. Awarded funds must be spent within the biennium. Past grants have been between \$100,000 and \$5 million per

project, depending on scale and impact. Funding for the next cycle depends on Washington State Legislature's biennial budget approval. additional limitations:

- Can't be used for water supply project for consumption.
- Must demonstrate measurable benefit to streamflow.
- Long term project monitoring (10-20 years out).
- Permanent signage acknowledging grant funding required.
- Project must remain publicly accessible.

### *WA Dept. of Commerce (Commerce) 2025-2027 climate planning grants*

Commerce is providing grants to local governments to include a Climate Change and Resilience element (RCW 36.70A.095) in their comprehensive plans during their next periodic update.

Funding limits have been determined for Ferndale, WA. Table 6.2.1 Shows funding already calculated allocation and potential award.

City must include a Climate Change and Resilience element (RCW 36.70A.095) in their comprehensive plans during their next periodic update. Activities related to the element may be eligible for grant including but not inclusive:

- Preparing public outreach materials and conducting public outreach activities.
- Preparing staff reports and conducting public meetings and public hearings.
- Developing a local greenhouse gas (GHG)

emissions inventory; Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita (VMT) studies; and GHG emissions reduction projections.

- Conducting transportation and VMT studies if they are in support of the GHG Emissions Reduction Sub-element
- Utilizing the University of Washington's Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington web tool and other resources to explore expected local climate change impacts, etc.

#### *WA department of Ecology - affordable housing planning grant*

This grant is meant to facilitate affordable housing efforts made by local government through zoning changes/infrastructure planning. It aims to help jurisdictions comply with state housing goals and GMA mandates, especially in areas experiencing growth pressures. Projects that promote housing near transit, emergency housing, and upzoning for affordability would be strong candidates once funding is reinstated.

This is a biennial grant, administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology. The program is not available during the 2025–2027 cycle, but is anticipated to return in the 2027–2029 cycle, potentially with revised requirements. In past years, awards ranged from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per jurisdiction depending on the project. Matching funds are not required, collaborative proposals with other jurisdictions may receive priority.

Application timelines typically open in mid-to-late fall of the starting biennium. Additionally the following is required:

- Cannot be used for construction or direct housing development
- Must produce a publicly available deliverable (like zoning updates)
- Final outcomes must be reviewed by the Dept of Ecology
- Requires public engagement throughout the planning process

#### *WA Dept. of Commerce (Commerce) Clean Building Performance Standards Incentives*

Commerce has funding incentives to encourage energy efficiency improvements earlier than future state law will require. Below are funding deadlines:

Early Adopter Tier 1 covered buildings reporting schedule:

- June 1, 2026 – More than 220,000 sq. ft.
- June 1, 2027 – More than 90,000 sq. ft. but less than 220,001 sq. ft
- June 1, 2028 – More than 50,000 sq. ft. but less than 90,001 sq. ft
- Early Adopter Tier 2 covered buildings reporting schedule:
- July 1, 2027 – More than 20,000 sq. ft. but less than 50,001 sq. ft. and all multifamily

residential buildings more than 20,000 sq. ft. Tier 1 Incentive funds are limited to \$75 million. Reference RCW 19.27A.220 the state energy performance standard for more information. Single deposit.

Tier 2 offers an incentive to owners who benchmark their buildings' energy usage, develop an energy management plan, and create an operations and maintenance program. \$150 million is earmarked for Tier 2 incentives, also single deposit.

Program funds are distributed to building owners as follows:

- Tier 1 Early Adopter Incentive Program
  - \* Available now and applies to non-residential, hotel, motel and dormitory buildings greater than 50,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, or be a multifamily residential building with more than 50,000 sq. ft. of floor area
- Tier 2 Early Adopter Incentive Program
  - \* Is still being developed but applies to buildings 20,000–50,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, including multifamily residential buildings over 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup>

*Table 6.2.1 Ferndale Planning and Construction Grant Funding Award, Commerce.*

Jurisdiction	Total Allocation for 2023-2029	Remaining Allocation for 2025-2029	Potential Grant Award for July- December 2025*
Ferndale, WA.	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$183,000

## **Green Jobs**

### WA Dept. of Commerce (Commerce) Green Jobs Grant Program 2025

Funding granted to construction projects to meet 2050 State Climate Goals. The green jobs grant program provides funding for projects include:

- Planning and predevelopment
- Design and engineering
- Construction of clean technology projects

Projects must have a minimum funding request of \$500,000 and a maximum amount of \$3,000,000 for a single project.

Applicants must have the following qualifications to be considered:

- Licensed to do business in Washington
- Be physically located in Washington State
- Be consistent with the state energy strategy adopted under RCW 43.21f and Clean Energy policies under RCW 19.405
- Must further the goals of the Climate Commitment Act as outline in RCW 70A.65.260(1)(J)
- Applications are open to local governments
- Additional limitations listed in green jobs application guide

### *Economic Development investment (Whatcom County program)*

The EDI Program offers grants and low-interest loans to public entities in Whatcom County for infrastructure projects that stimulate economic growth, including affordable housing and broadband expansion. Applications open annually on May 14 and close on June 30. The EDI Board reviews applications in August;

funding recommendations must be submitted to the County Council for approval by December. Limitations and commitments of grant:

- Funds cannot be used for private development; projects must support public infrastructure that facilitates economic development
- A minimum project size of \$250,000 is required
- A local match of at least 10% of the EDI request is required, which can be cash, in-kind contributions, or other appropriate revenue sources
- Projects must be included in an adopted regional economic strategy (CEDS), the applicant's Comprehensive Plan, or Capital Expenditure Plan
- Project must remain publicly owned
- Annual reporting is required until project completion

### *Brownfields Job Training: Summer 2025*

This grant program supports environmental job training programs in communities impacted by brownfields, aiming to enhance economic development and environmental health. Applications are due by August 15, 2024, with awards expected in spring 2025.

Up to \$500,000 per award over a 5-year period. Approximately 20 cooperative agreements are anticipated. The next cycle is likely to open in mid-2025, depending on federal budget approvals. Limitations and Commitments:

- Eligible applicants include local governments, nonprofits, and tribes
- Projects must focus on training

unemployed or underemployed individuals skills related to stormwater management and sustainable reuse of brownfield sites

### *Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program (USDA Forest Service)*

The USDA Forest Service grant supports urban forestry projects that enhance green infrastructure and community resilience. For Funding year 2024, applications were due by April 9, 2024. Future application cycles are anticipated annually, with similar timelines, but specific dates for 2025 and beyond have not been announced. Limitations and commitments of grant:

- Projects must occur on public lands or be publicly accessible; private land projects are ineligible
- Long-term stewardship commitment and tracking of outcomes are required
- Projects must include community engagement and equity considerations
- At least one State Forester sponsor is required for each application.

## **Additional Funding Considerations:**

### *Property Tax Levy for citywide green infrastructure:*

A property tax levy could provide funding for new green infrastructure or upgrading existing infrastructure to be more efficient. Both new and existing property owners would be burdened by this, however it would spread the cost more evenly. This may be more burdensome for vulnerable populations of appropriate tools for equity are not implemented with this measure.

*Development impact fees for new construction:*

These fees would shift the cost of growth to new developments. Fees would be added when permitting new construction. Fees can also be utilized to provide exemptions and exceptions for design standards for specific special uses like a large-scale grocery store(s) or big box retail. Although fees save existing property owners money, it may hinder growth or willingness to move to the neighborhood nodes. Considerations should be made for low-income and supportive housing to avoid hindering developments and to achieve a wider variety of incomes.

*Metropolitan Park District:*

A metropolitan part district would create a “junior property tax” for the service radius around the greenway and mixed-use core. A district would emphasize funding on new development with the closest proximity to the greenway and services. According to MRSC, there would need to be a public vote and 60% voter approval to implement this form of self-taxation. This levy would need to be revolted on after a 6 year period.

An example of this would be Olympia, WA has implemented a metropolitan park district in order to fund maintenance and acquiring new green spaces within the district.

**Potential for Nonprofit Collaboration**

It is recommended that the City of Ferndale and nonprofit organizations collaborate for the goals of:

- Creating community groups that can organize around specific interests, and values that create opportunities for community leadership
  - \* Creates a more productive dialogue among residents, allowing community members to advocate for real changes
- Reduces dependency for the city to orchestrate community engagement opportunities
- Provides ways for community members to socialize with other community members, may help shift the bedroom community nature of Ferndale that otherwise may isolates residents
- Reduced environmental restoration costs/ needs for additional grant funding
- Collaborative Opportunities
- Below, organizations and potential existing programs are listed for future Ferndale-area environmental restoration collaboration:
- Whatcom County Conservation District
  - \* C.R.E.P (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program).
- Nooksack Salmon Association
  - \* Stream Stewards Program
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Whatcom Community Foundation
- Metropolitan Park Districts Resources: Municipal Research and Services Center - Metropolitan Park Districts

# 6.3 Affordable Housing Funding & Incentives

## Public/Private Partnerships

Multiple organizations within Whatcom County assist residents in finding affordable housing, and in Ferndale there are multiple programs that assist first-time homebuyers. These organizations include:

- Mercy Housing, which operates the thirty-unit Ferndale Square apartment complex just east of the Mountain View neighborhood boundary. The 2–4-bedroom apartments provide housing for low-income families and are funded through the HUD Section 8 program.
- Kulshan Community Land Trust, an organization that assists low- and middle-income residents in becoming first-time homeowners. Over 140 homes are currently in the program, and fifty more are being built in Ferndale at 2039 Thorton Road, a large parcel near the freeway in the north of the City (Kulshan CLT, 2022).
- Habitat for Humanity, a national and international organization focused on building and improving housing for low-income residents. The nonprofit is currently constructing two large developments on Telegraph Road in Bellingham and downtown Everson (Habitat for Humanity, 2024).

Other programs around the county provide transitional and emergency housing assistance, including Northwest Youth Services and the Opportunity Council. While these organizations do not operate directly within Ferndale, opportunities may exist for the City to partner with them to assist residents. A list of additional affordable housing agencies is available on the

City of Bellingham website; Ferndale could partner with many of the same agencies when planning for future housing (City of Bellingham, 2019).

While it is not likely that nonprofit organizations will be able to fully meet Ferndale's housing needs, the City can take steps to encourage these organizations to expand their operations. Ferndale was looking to hire an affordable housing consultant in 2022. A person working specifically in this area would be able to develop proposals and connect with both the state and private organizations to increase the likelihood of securing support and funding for future projects (City of Ferndale, 2022). Additionally, the City could take steps to simplify and expedite development. These could include reducing impact fees, which Bellingham currently does, implementing inclusionary zoning standards, and reducing the intensity of development standards to reduce costs (e.g. by reducing parking requirements or further streamlining the permitting process). Ferndale could also transfer surplus public property to nonprofits for housing development, an idea that the City Council has supported in the past. Each of these options is discussed in greater detail in the policies section below.

## Policies

### *MRSC – Affordable Housing Techniques and Incentives*

To assess techniques and policies that Ferndale may have in place, or should implement, we reviewed the Municipal Research and Services Center's (MRSC's) article regarding affordable housing strategies and received insights from

Ferndale's Planning Director.

### *Density Bonuses*

Ferndale offers density bonuses through its Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Cottage Housing ordinances to encourage creative, higher-density housing solutions. While cottage housing has been an approved development option in the City for over a decade, no cottage housing developments have been built to date. To spur private sector interest, the City could explore ways to enhance the appeal and feasibility of these options, such as offering flexible zoning techniques (e.g., zero lot line development or cluster subdivisions) and ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses.

### *Inclusionary Zoning*

Inclusionary zoning typically requires a portion of new housing construction to be affordable for low to moderate-income households, and it's a newer concept to the region. According to the Housing Element Chapter of Ferndale's comprehensive plan, the Whatcom Housing Alliance investigated inclusionary zoning as an affordable housing technique, but they determined it may be preemptive at that time. Bellingham is currently looking into this technique, and Ferndale would like to follow in their footsteps and learn from Bellingham before they pursue this option further. This, being noted in the comprehensive plan, will open opportunities for inclusionary zoning to be expanded upon in the Ferndale area in the future.

### *Partnerships with Nonprofit Housing Developers and Public Housing Authorities*

Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are federally recognized entities dedicated to providing and

advocating for housing options for lower-income households. In Ferndale, support for affordable housing extends beyond subsidized rentals; Whatcom Skagit Housing's (WSH) Self-Help Homes program has become a new component of the City's single-family residential areas. In Ferndale, 220 Self-Help Homes have been built in Ferndale, with 145 constructed between 2005 and 2015. However, the Whatcom Skagit Housing program is only a one-time program where the original buyer benefits from affordability and then begins to create more wealth as their home value increases over time. WSH has built more housing and is working on updating their section in the comprehensive plan, amidst planning a groundbreaking on a new project on Portal Way. A partnership with Kulshan Land Trust is also in the works, which the Ferndale planning team is working on adding to the comprehensive plan, but this is a long-term approach.

#### *Permit Streamlining*

Permit streamlining alone does not create affordable housing, but the cost savings it provides can make projects financially viable for affordable housing developers. According to the City's Planning Director, Ferndale is one of the most efficient jurisdictions in the region for permitting. They push decisions to the lowest levels possible to reduce both time and costs. Most complaints voiced in terms of permitting involve concerns about applications of state standards.

#### *Reduction/Waiver of Fees*

The City of Ferndale offers reduced impact and connection fees for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) but does not waive development review

fees except through its Catalyst Program, originally recommended by WWU in 2019. Broader fee waivers are limited by Washington State's constitutional prohibition on the "gift of public funds." However, the City is open to exploring models from other jurisdictions that comply with state law and support affordable housing or other public benefits.

#### *Short Term Rental Regulations*

In Bellingham, there are significant Short-Term Rental (STR) regulations, which can be found here. We questioned whether Ferndale may have "overflow" demand from Bellingham, which could eat up housing supply. However, according to the Planning Director, STRs are usually limited to rooms in occupied units in Ferndale. He has proposed something similar before to Bellingham's STR regulations, but it was not supported. As Ferndale grows, and there is an uptick in STRs in the City, it would be worth revisiting this discussion.

#### *Surplus Public Property*

Surplus public property enables local governments to transfer, lease, or dispose of excess property at low or no cost to public, private, or nonprofit entities for affordable housing projects. The City has not implemented such a measure yet, but Ferndale's City Council was supportive in the past, and planning staff have discussed this option recently. *Anti-Displacement Strategies*

#### *The Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE)*

This exemption offers property tax breaks to developers who build or renovate affordable multifamily housing, encouraging more affordable

rental units in targeted areas. The City is currently looking to expand their MFTE to 12 years, rather than the 8-year standard.

#### *Reduced Parking Standards*

Structured parking maximizes land use efficiency but greatly increases construction costs, which are then reflected in higher rental rates or sales prices for housing units. Currently, Ferndale has parking reduction measures in both the downtown and urban residential (UR) zones (FMC18.76.090). Further reductions are likely to occur when public transportation improves throughout the region.

#### *Pre-Approved Building Plans*

Pre-approved plans benefit developers by allowing planning staff to quickly review familiar designs, speeding up the approval process. This reduces development time, saving costs on construction loan debt and enabling housing units to reach the market sooner.

The City of Ferndale preapproves subdivision building plans, which are commonly used by developers constructing multiple units, typically four to six. However, the program sees limited engagement because plan changes often require additional review. The City welcomes suggestions and recommendations for improving this process.

## Grants

Various grants are offered at federal and state levels to incentivize housing development through direct developer grants as well as those obtained by local governmental agencies. Each of these grants aims to target a need for housing development in relation to the workforce, affordability, and/or community development.

The Economic Development Investment (EDI) program through Whatcom County provides investment opportunities for workforce housing and other capital facilities projects (Whatcom County, n.d.). The county has allotted 30% of their grant money for “housing infrastructure projects”, which can be awarded to a “public entity” only. The deadline for this grant opportunity is June 30th, 2025. Despite the nearing deadline, opportunities like this may become available again at later dates.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) for projects intended to enhance quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents. HUD provides these grants directly exclusively for cities larger than Ferndale; however, the state Department of Commerce uses money allocated through the program to provide grants for more rural communities (MRSC, n.d.). Ferndale, WA could apply through the state Department of Commerce to receive funding in support of local economic development and housing efforts. These grants can be used for the planning, development, and even rehabilitation of current housing. The grant process considers everything from financial need

to equitability of the proposal (Washington State Department of Commerce, n.d.).

A program run directly by the state, the Housing Trust Fund (HTF, different than the identically named National Housing Trust Fund) provides funding for local governments, nonprofits and tribes to develop, preserve and acquire affordable housing, open emergency and youth shelters, and assist first time homebuyers with downpayments or closing costs. Over two billion dollars have been invested into the program since its inception in 1986, and the state allocated 400 million dollars for the HTF in 2023. The program has provided funding for over 58,000 thousand affordable housing units in the last 40 years. Funds must be distributed across the state, in both urban and rural areas, and preference is given to projects that show the greatestability to assist the most vulnerable, as well as a City’s commitment to improvements in related areas such as employment, education, transportation or infrastructure.

The Affordable Housing Planning Grant is an offering from the State Department of Ecology, providing up to 400 thousand dollars in funding. The grant can cover the costs of cleaning up contaminated sites as well as determining the feasibility of construction of affordable housing after cleanup (Department of Ecology, 2023). Though the grant will not be offered again until at least 2027, it could potentially both improve environmental conditions in Ferndale and open new opportunities for housing development.

Each of these grants is one potential resource to assist in increasing the amount and quality

of affordable housing in Ferndale. Like with improving relationships with nonprofits and private entities, hiring a possibly full time or longer-term consultant to research the feasibility of each of these grants would help to ensure that the City does take full advantage of this available funding and ultimately builds more affordable housing.

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WWU Urban Transitions Studio

**City of Ferndale, Washington**

**NEIGHBORHOOD  
CENTERS**

**Implementation**

*Western Washington University  
Department of Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy  
College of the Environment  
June 2025*