

Patti Gearhart

From: K ULRICH <dandevul@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2025 12:27 PM
To: City of Ferndale Comments
Subject: Opposition to Rezoning on Church Rd.

EXTERNAL EMAIL

City of Ferndale
Attn: Community Development Department / Comprehensive Plan Update
5694 Second Avenue (City Hall Annex)
Ferndale, WA 98248

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and City Council:

RE: Opposition to the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

I am writing as a concerned resident of Ferndale to formally express my opposition to key aspects of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update proposed by the City of Ferndale. While I recognize and appreciate the city's obligation under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to update its Comprehensive Plan by December 2025, (cityofferndale.org) I believe the current draft misses the mark in several respects and warrants major revisions before adoption.

My primary concerns are as follows:

1. Rapid Growth and Urban Expansion Without Adequate Infrastructure

According to city documents, Ferndale is projected to grow by nearly 11,000 residents and add roughly 3,500 jobs between 2025 and 2045. (cityofferndale.org) Such a pace of growth demands a clear, realistic pathway for infrastructure—roads, schools, utilities, parks, and emergency services. The draft plan lacks a sufficiently detailed or funded strategy to align this growth with service capacity, risking over-burdening existing neighborhoods and facilities.

2. Neighborhood Character & Land Use Changes

The “Neighborhood Centers” concept and associated land use proposals raise concerns that existing residential neighborhoods may be transformed too rapidly or without sufficient input. The integration of new ‘complete communities’ and higher densities might erode the character of long-established areas unless robust protections and design standards are in place. As noted in the draft analyses, several fast-growing neighborhoods currently lack sufficient sidewalks or safe pedestrian/bike routes. (cenv.wvu.edu) Without careful design, growth may degrade livability rather than enhance it.

3. Transportation, Connectivity & Mobility Shortcomings

The plan's transportation element acknowledges deficits in pedestrian/bike infrastructure and public transit in key areas such as Portal Way. (cenv.wvu.edu) If we are adding

thousands of residents and jobs, we must plan for realistic mobility—not just more traffic, but alternatives, safer walking/biking, and transit. The current proposal lacks sufficient commitment and funding mechanisms to guarantee those improvements.

4. Climate and Environmental Resilience Must Be Strengthened

It is encouraging that the plan incorporates a new Climate Element to meet the requirements of House Bill 1181. (cityofferndale.org) However, achieving meaningful greenhouse-gas reduction and community resilience demands stronger and more measurable commitments—not simply the acknowledgement of obligations. The city must ensure that climate policies translate into enforceable standards, timelines, accountability and funding.

5. Public Engagement and Transparency

While the city has held public meetings and partnered with Western Washington University’s Urban Planning Studio for engagement, (cityofferndale.org) there remains a sense among many residents that major policy changes—including zoning, densities, and infrastructure cost allocation—are developing faster than widespread community consensus. For a document that will shape the city for decades, the level of meaningful community input should be deeper and more inclusive.

Requested Actions

In light of the above concerns, I respectfully request that the City Council and Planning Commission:

- Pause adoption of the draft until a **detailed infrastructure-funding analysis** is completed and publicly reviewed, showing how services will scale with growth.
- Ensure **neighborhood protections and design standards** are incorporated, so that new land uses respect existing patterns and community character.
- Strengthen the transportation and mobility commitments with **specific projects, schedules and funding sources** to support non-automobile travel and better connectivity.
- Expand the Climate Element to include **clear GHG reduction targets, milestones, and accountability mechanisms**, so that policy moves beyond “aspiration” into action.
- Extend and deepen the **public engagement process**, including targeted outreach in underrepresented communities and a transparent record of how public feedback shaped the plan.

In summary, I believe the Comprehensive Plan is a critical tool for guiding Ferndale’s future. It must balance growth with livability, infrastructure capacity, environmental stewardship, and community voice. As currently drafted, it leans too heavily toward growth without equally ensuring that residents, neighborhoods and our sense of place will be protected and strengthened.

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns. I look forward to the opportunity to review a revised draft that reflects these important considerations and offers a balanced path forward for the residents of Ferndale.

Sincerely,