



FERNDALE

City Center Plan

Whatcom County, Washington

Spring 2019
WWU Urban Planning Studio
Sustainable Communities Partnership
Western Washington University

AN URBAN TRANSITIONS STUDIO PROJECT

FERNDALE CITY CENTER PLAN
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON



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1. Introduction to the Study Area

1.1 FERNDALE/WWU PARTNERSHIP

The work in this report was coordinated through Western Washington University’s (WWU) Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP) between the City of Ferndale’s Community Development Department and Huxley College’s Urban Transitions Studio.

The partnership, initiated in fall 2018, involved three courses, three instructors, 25 students, the SCP coordinator and numerous Ferndale staff, business leaders, and community members. Figure 1.1 shows the timeline, outlining activities and key points of community contact.

1.2 FERNDALE CITY CENTER PLAN

A key partnership goal was the Ferndale City Center Plan, which identifies opportunities and strategies for downtown revitalization. During winter quarter, students collected community input during a visioning workshop and translated that information into three land use and mobility alternatives. The “Ferndale City Center Plan” is available in volume I.

1.3 IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

The information outlined in volume II, “Ferndale City Center Plan: Implementation Report,” represents consolidated and refined

recommendations informed by community and staff feedback on the alternatives. The following steps were taken to produce this report:

- Consolidate and refine alternatives into a final recommendations
- Recommend code revisions
- Prioritize actions and development phases
- Calculate costs
- Identify funding sources

In the following pages, findings from the steps are identified for the following City Center Plan elements: land use and urban character; affordable housing; mobility; plazas, parks, trails and natural hazards; and opportunity sites.

We look forward to seeing what is in store for Ferndale in the coming years. Recommendations and funding sources identified in this report could help Ferndale turn the downtown core into a lively and vibrant city center.

We extend our appreciation to members of the community that supported the planning study by attending workshops and presentations, business owners who answered student questions, and staff who gave timely and extensive feedback on alternatives and recommendations. In particular, our thanks are extended to Ferndale staff Jori Burnett, Haylie Miller, Riley Sweeney, Jesse Ashbaugh and Kevin Renz, as well as other community and business leaders including Mayor Jon Mutchler, Sara Fasett, John Rockwood, Francine St. Laurant, Claire Bertuleit, and Ramon Llanos.

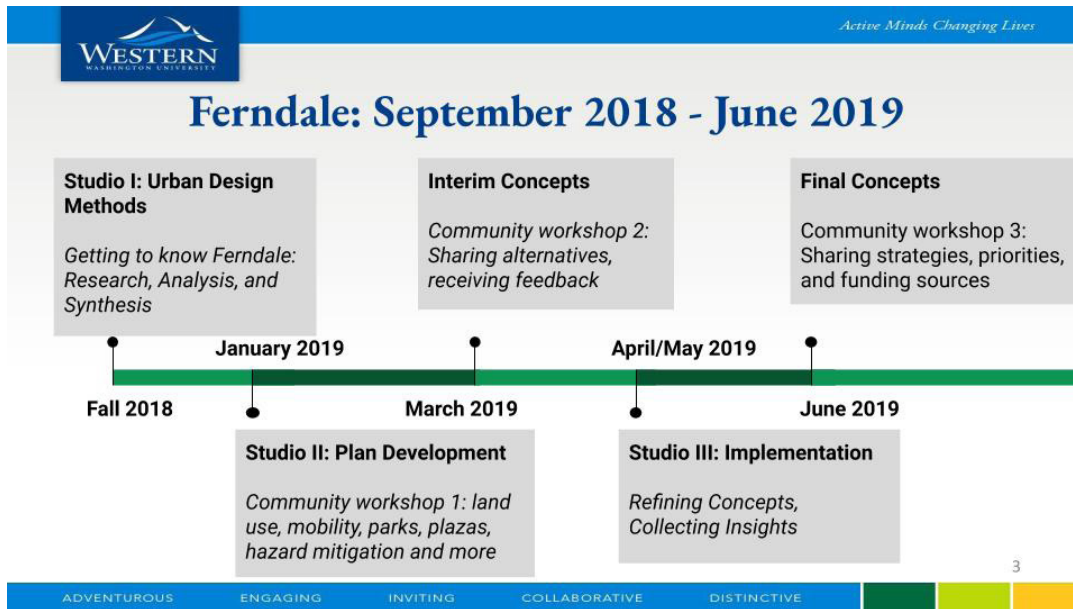


Figure 1.1 Ferndale City Center Plan Timeline

2 Land Use and Urban Character

2.1 INTRODUCTION.

The final Land Use Element of the Ferndale City Center Plan serves to guide development and establish character within Ferndale’s historic downtown. The Land Use Element includes recommendations for zoning, physical uses, land use capacity, and urban design. Land use is influenced by urban form, mobility and transportation, parks and recreation, streetscape, and natural hazard potentials, thus coordination with the teams working in these areas is crucial during the development or revision of land use regulations, zoning, phasing, and incentives. Initially three alternative land use elements were developed for the City Center Plan. The final Land Use Element consolidates the proposals of each land use alternative based on additional analysis and community feedback collected during the final planning phase (see section 2.8 for more details). The primary reason for consolidating the three Land Use Alternatives is to provide a feasibility and financial analysis for future implementation.

The primary goals for the final Land Use Element are to increase density and improve the character of existing urban development. Ferndale’s existing zoning regulations are reflective of the city’s desire to increase the number of multifamily residences and provide for a more robust stock of commercial services within the downtown. This desire is laid out in Ferndale’s Land Use Goals and Policies section within Chapter II of the Comprehensive Plan. The goals include enhancing the downtown core, mixed use development, and economic revitalization. The objective of the final Land Use Element is to ensure the effective planning of the long-range need for higher density and effective infill development in the city center.

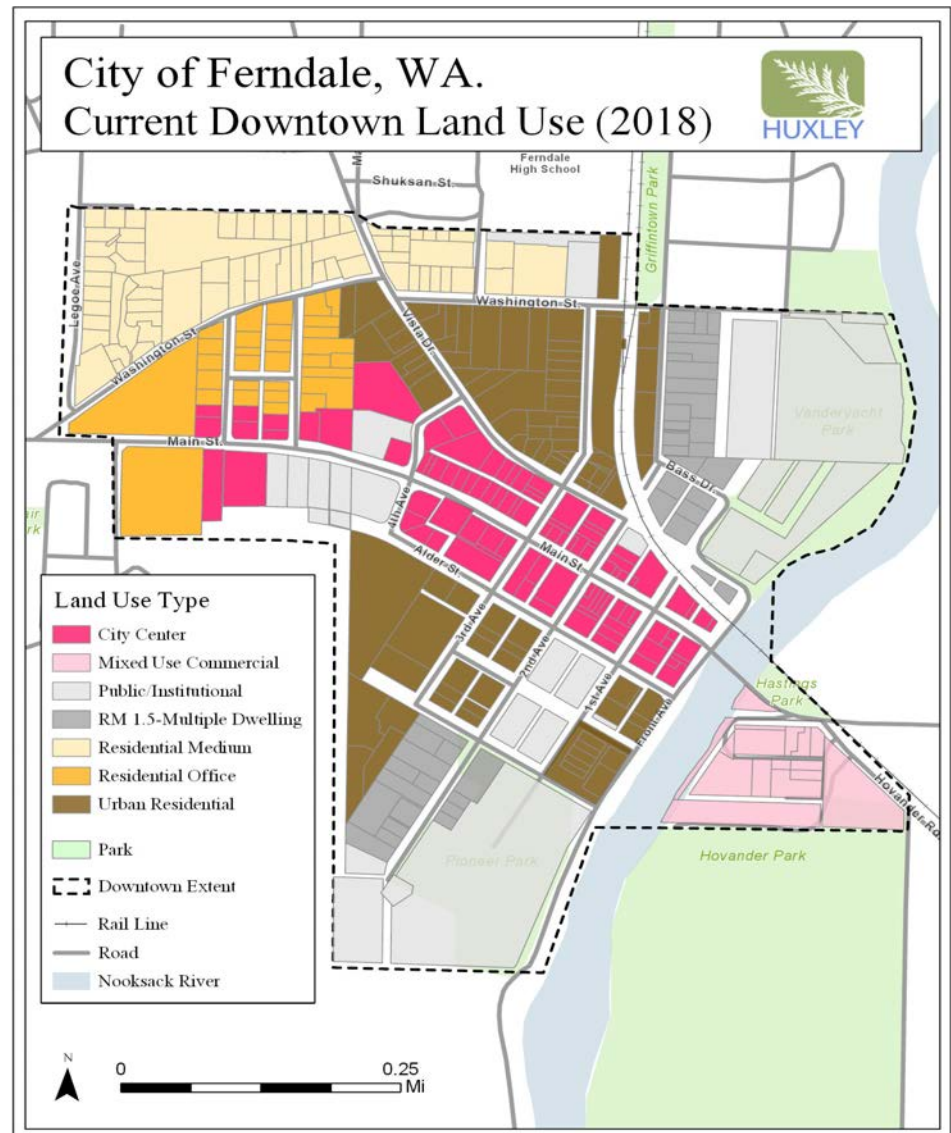


Figure 2.1. Map of current zoning.

2 Land Use and Urban Character

Table 2.1 Current density and building height requirements within the downtown

| Symbol | Essential Use | Minimum Lot Size | Density | Building Height |
|--------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| RMM | Residential Multi-Family Medium | 3,500 square feet for single-family detached residences; for all other uses, see code | 10 to 30 units per acre | 25 and 50 feet max (depending on adjacent zone) |
| RM 1.5 | Multiple-Family Dwelling | 4,000 square feet for the first dwelling unit, plus 1,500 square feet for each additional | No more than 27 units per acre | No more than 70 feet |
| RO | Residential-Office | 4,000 square feet for the first dwelling unit, plus 1,500 square feet for each additional | Not to exceed 27 units per acre | No more than 70 feet |
| UR | Urban Residential | None (15 dwelling unit per acre minimum) | | Between 35 and 50 feet |
| CC | City Center | None (15 dwelling unit per acre minimum) | | No more than 45 feet |
| MXD | Mixed Use Commercial | None | | |

2M METHOD OF ANALYSIS.

2C Current Land Use

To effectively plan for future development within the downtown, it is important to take stock of existing land use and zoning regulations (Table 2.1). Figure 2.1 shows existing zoning

concentrates commercial use into the City Center along Main Street. The surrounding Multiple Dwelling, Residential Medium, Residential Office, and Urban Residential zone classifications provide residential support in the City Center. Currently, all of the downtown’s commercial activity lies within, or just outside of, the City Center (Figure 2.2). The residential

Table 2.2 Purposed land use changes.

| Symbol | Essential Use | Density | Building Height |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| CC | Commercial Core | Minimum density of 30 units/acre | Max 70 feet |
| CT | Commercial Transition | Minimum density of 20 units/acre | Max 70 feet |
| HR | High Density Residential | Minimum density of 20 units/acre | Max 70 feet |
| MR | Medium Density Residential | Minimum density of 15 units/acre | Max 70 feet |

activity surrounding Main Street is made up of primarily single-family structures, despite there being four classes of residential zoning (Figure 2.3).

The Land Use Alternatives proposed in the City Center Plan recommend increasing the density and diversity of housing supply within the City Center and its surrounding residential zones. This includes supporting the development of mixed-use and infill housing.

2S Stakeholder Input

In order to refine and consolidate the Land Use Alternatives developed in winter 2019, stakeholder input was collected from the community during public meetings and from local business owners, the city’s Downtown Association, and public officials. See notes in section 2.8 at the end of this chapter for more details.

2F FINAL LAND USE AND ZONING PROPOSAL

To achieve the goal of increasing multifamily housing within the downtown, maximum allowed density restrictions will be removed and maximum building height requirements will remain at 70 feet. In addition, this proposal recommends the city adopt a density phasing scheme. By the year 2040, the goal of the final Land Use Element is to have a minimum requirement of 30 units per acre for all residential and residential/mixed-use development (Table 2.2).

2 Land Use and Urban Character

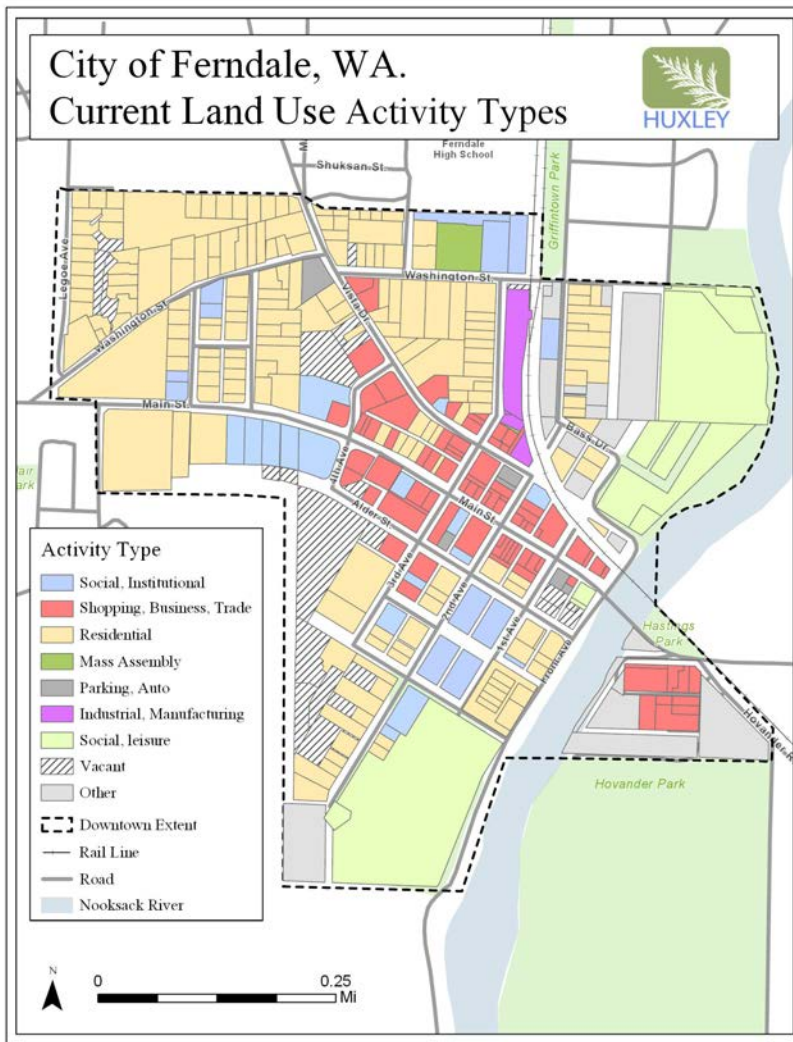


Figure 2.2. Shows the general activity for each parcel. Activity was determined based on APA Land-Based Classification Standards (LBCS). The study site is mostly residential. Commercial is mostly located along Main Street. There are several social institutions.

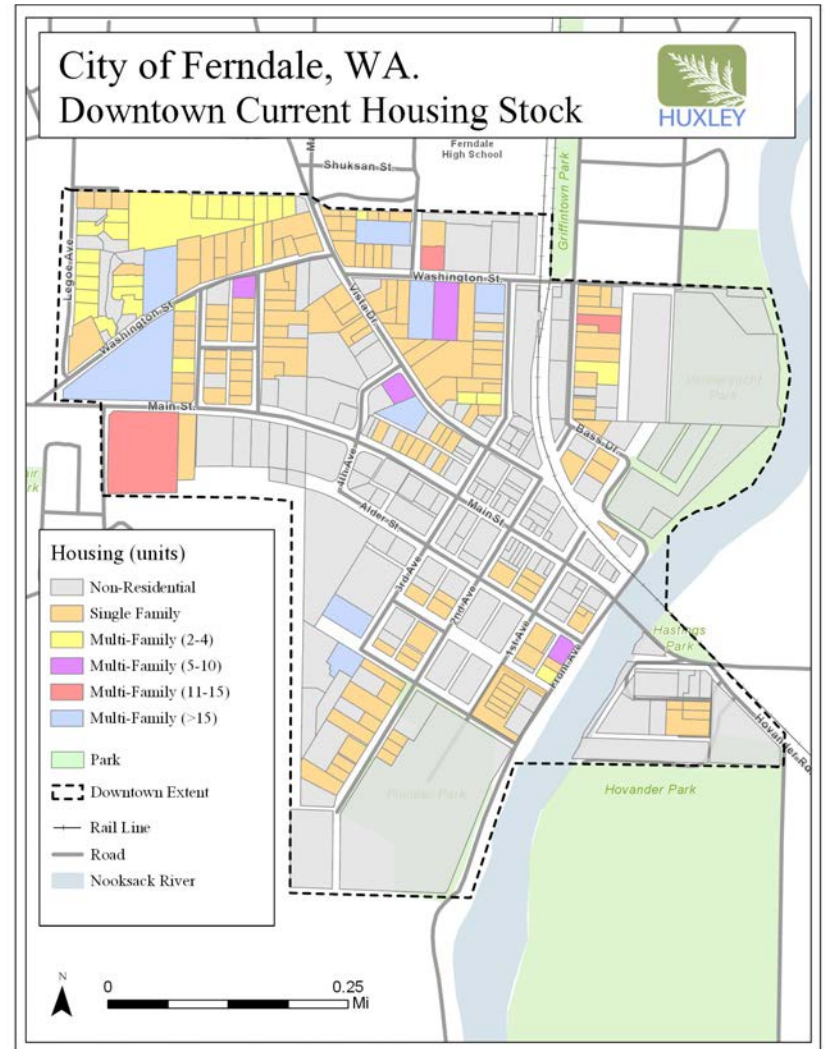


Figure 2.3. Shows the available housing stock within the study area. The majority is single-family. There is a lot of multi-family development to the northwest. There is potential for more moderately sized multi-family (5-15) throughout the study site. There is a little mixed use housing in the downtown currently.

2 Land Use and Urban Character

The plan acknowledges that this recommendation would be hard to implement under the current zoning and building requirements. A phased zoning scheme would allow for a gradual transition from existing to proposed density, during which further code updates could be made. The objective of the scheme is to advance the community's vision without overburdening developers or city staff.

The final Land Use Element recommends the following land use zones to be adopted within the next 1-2 years: commercial core, commercial transition, high density residential, and medium density residential (see Table 2.2 and Figure 2.4).

Density Phasing Strategy

Density phasing should start with Phase 1 of the Land Use Plan, and will be administered both spatially and over time (Figure 2.5). The goal of 30 units/acre in the downtown should be achieved within 15 years after implementation. All density maximums are to be removed to encourage and allow developers the freedom and flexibility to meet the goal of 30 units/acre prior to the 15 year deadline. Minimum densities will increase in five year increments. During the five year increments city staff should be actively revising zoning and building regulations in preparation for the next phase. This process is further outlined below.

- *Commercial Core Zone*: a minimum density of 30 units/acre. This will serve as the general density goal for the rest of the zone phasing. The Commercial Transition, Residential High and Residential Medium zones will phase into compliance in 5-year increments.
- *Commercial Transition Zone*: a minimum density of 20 units/acre. The minimum density should increase by 5 units/acre every 5 years until the minimum density totals 30 units/acre.

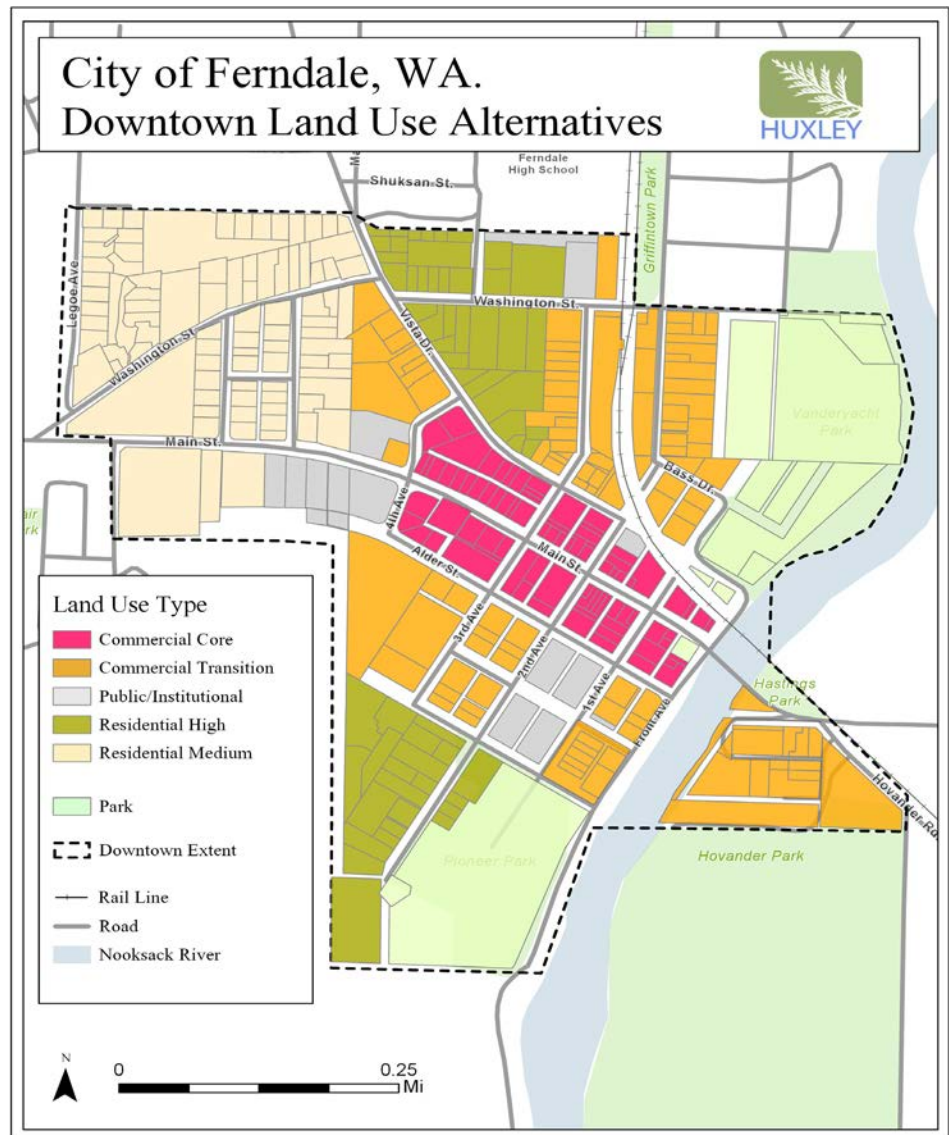


Figure 2.4. Proposed zoning map

2 Land Use and Urban Character

- *Residential High Zone*: a minimum density of 20 units/acre, with no maximum. The zone should increase minimum density requirements by 5 units/acre every 5 years until the minimum density totals 30 units/acre.
- *Residential Medium Zone*: a minimum density of 15 units/acre, with no maximum. The zone should increase minimum density requirements by 5 units/acre every 5 years until the minimum density totals 30 units/acre.

24 ADDITIONAL CODE REVISION

In order to improve the aesthetics of downtown, the city should emphasize a more cohesive form for buildings within the commercial core. Attention to design, architecture, and landscaping can help establish the downtown’s sense of place. The recently revised Title 18.47 Downtown Architectural and Site Design Standards should help to ensure greater aesthetic cohesion. In addition, we recommend additional areas for code improvements:

- Title 19 Ferndale Development Standards should be revised to allow for density increases and flexibility for infill development.
- Chapter 8.13 Tree Ordinance should be revised enhance protection and preservation of trees and other vegetation in the city.
- Chapter 18.74 Landscape Standards should be revised to require development impact mitigation with landscaping.

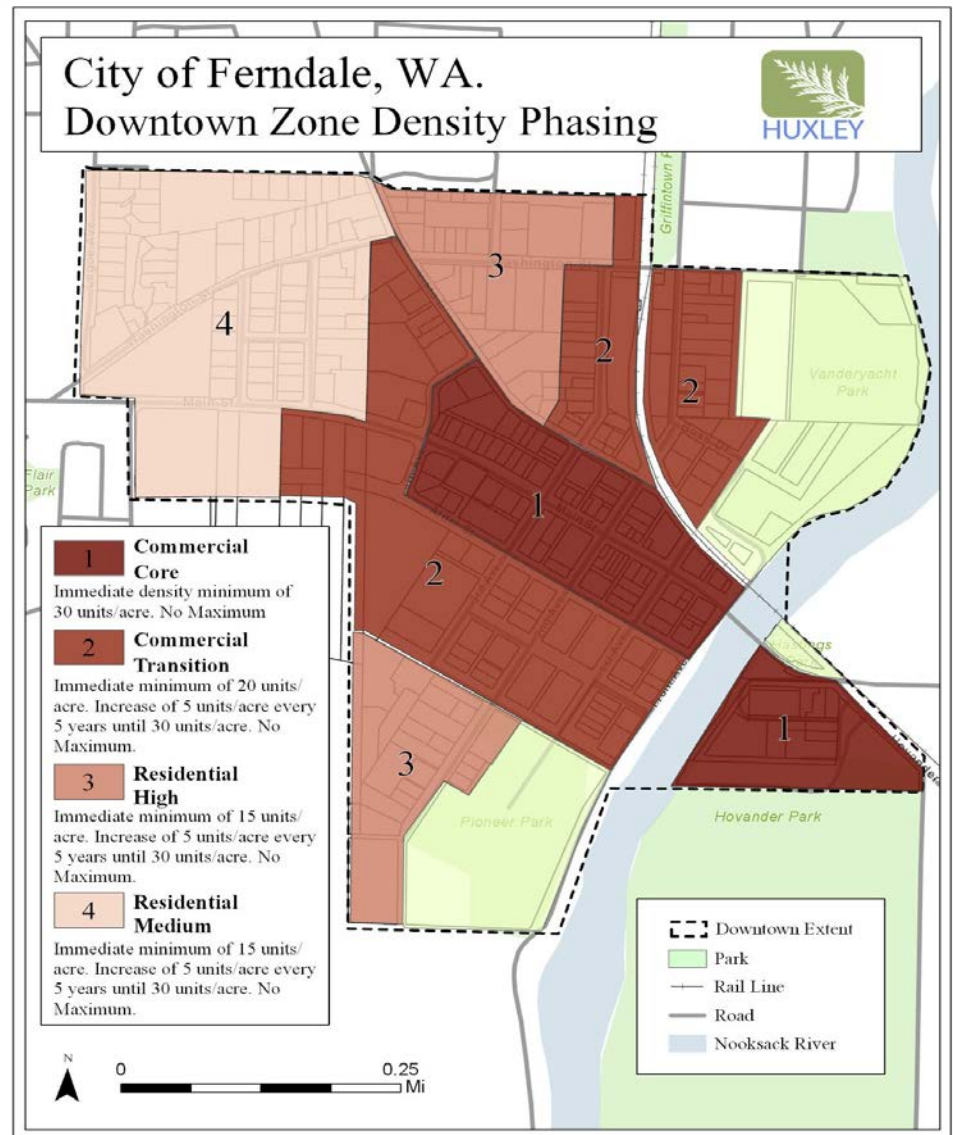


Figure 2.5. Proposed downtown density phasing

2 Land Use and Urban Character

Table 2.3 Land use related funding sources

| Program/Agency | Description | Funding Available | Uses |
|---|--|--|--|
| State & Local Funding | | | |
| Community Development Block Grant , WA Department of Commerce (DOC) | The CDBG grant assists Washington State small cities, towns, and counties in carrying out significant community and economic development projects principally benefiting low- and moderate-income persons. | \$200,000 - \$10,000,000 Depending on the size of the project. There are four project categories and budgets. | Main street development Affordable housing in the downtown core |
| Small Business Credit Initiative , WA DOC | This initiative is comprised of three resources that help improve access to capital for small businesses. The Small Business Credit Initiative works to help small business expand and create new job opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collateral Support Program • Craft3 Fund | \$19.7 Million | Small business loans |
| Community Forestry Assistance Grant , WA Department of Natural Resources | This grant focuses on programmatic development - i.e., urban forestry management plans, maintenance plans based on current tree inventory data, urban forestry strategic plans, or other critical management components. | \$15,000 per community. A 1:1 match (in-kind or financial) is required. | Streetscape (street trees) Parks |
| Frontend Rebate Program | This program allows homeowners or business owners to apply for financial assistance in the form of partial rebates to help reduce the expense of upgrading infrastructure. The city would determine the total rebate estimate applicants are eligible for. | Depending on the city's budget and ability to provide financial assistance. | Main street development |
| Federal Funding | | | |
| Community Facilities Grants , US Department of Agriculture | The Community Facilities program provides grants to public entities to assist in developing critical community facilities. This grant applies specifically to rural towns with a population under 20,000 people. | \$2 Billion | Development financing Construction |

2 Land Use and Urban Character

2.1 PHASED DEVELOPMENT

The revitalization of Downtown Ferndale is estimated to take place over a 20 year period and will occur gradually over two planning phases. The first phase targets design code revisions that support a cohesive look for Main Street, inspired by an Americana style, and establishing and developing a Main Street America program (Figure 2.6). Phase two aims to diversify the housing stock and address affordable housing.

Phase 1 Establish Main Street Urban Character (First 5 years)

- Establish zone density phasing.
- Provide incentives and funding opportunities for Main Street development.
- Make development incentives more accessible (fix website, consider language).

Phase 2 Diversify Housing Stock (Years 5-20)

- Revise zoning code - focus on increasing residential density and residential mixed-use development.
- Provide incentives for affordable housing in the downtown core. This could include developing a partnership with the Kulshan Land Trust, supporting the newly formed North Whatcom Poverty Task Force's efforts, creating a home fund, implementing inclusionary zoning and bonus density allowances, and extending existing development incentives to the construction of affordable housing.



Figure 2.6. Picture of Ferndale, California's downtown (source: <https://www.visitferndale.com/city-of-ferndale>)

- Revise land use and building regulations to appropriately meet phased zoning requirements.

2.1 INCENTIVES AND FINANCING

Table 2.3 describes funding sources available to Ferndale to use for city center development. The table provides information on the funding sources, range of funding available, and applicable uses of the funding sources. The uses vary from Main Street development, small business revitalization in the downtown district, and parks and recreation improvements. In addition to the sources provided in Table 2.3, this section includes information on bonus density incentives and the Main Street America program and their applicability to Ferndale.

2.1.D Density Bonus Incentive

Density bonuses provide increases in allowed housing units per acre, floor area, or height, which means more housing units can be built on a parcel than what is normally allowed. Typical density bonus programs allow a 10 to 20 percent increase in density in exchange for a percentage of those units being designated affordable (see Figure 2.7).

The Land Use Element recommends the city adopt a phased density bonus program over a 20-year planning horizon. The density bonus program is recommended to start at 12.5 percent of affordable units per residential development in 2020, and increase gradually over the next 20 years. By the year 2030, the percentage of required affordable units should increase to 25 percent and by the year 2040, the percentage of affordable units should be at 50 percent of the

2 Land Use and Urban Character



Figure 2.7 Visual of bonus density.
(source: <https://sfplanning.org/ahbp>)

total units built. Affordable housing is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as no more than 30 percent of annual family income going towards housing costs. Before implementing density bonus incentives, Ferndale should discuss and define what affordability means to the community and what kinds of affordable housing developers should be responsible for providing.

To implement the density bonus program, the Land Use Element recommends increasing allowed height for additional units to be created. Current code allows for buildings up to 70 feet in height. With the density bonus, heights can be

increased by a percentage of the total as long as 12.5 percent of developed units are affordable. The density bonus can also be used to increase the floor area ratio of a residential structure to create additional units with a percentage being affordable.

2.2 Washington State Main Street Program

Washington's Main Street Program is part of the national Main Street America program. Under the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, the Main Street Program is dedicated to revitalizing the economic and aesthetic appeal of downtown commercial districts. In order to be eligible for financial assistance, communities must be designated Main Street Communities. The following steps are necessary to become a Main Street Community:

- Establish an independent 501c3 or 501c6 non-profit organization dedicated solely to downtown revitalization and implementing the Main Street approach.
- Form a volunteer board of directors.
- Hire a full-time, paid Executive Director.

Ferndale businesses and industries should establish a fund with proceeds going to hire a full-time Executive Director. Becoming a Main Street Community will make Ferndale eligible for several funding opportunities. Revitalizing the downtown will benefit contributing businesses and industries by providing housing and robust services for the community they employ and support.

CONCLUSION

The Ferndale City Center Land Use Element serves to guide development and establish character within Ferndale's downtown district. By improving land use, development, and design codes, mobility and transportation networks, parks and recreation opportunities, streetscapes, mixed use development, and natural hazard protections, Ferndale's revitalization can be realized in years to come. The revision of land use regulations, modifications of zoning, implementation of density phasing, and policy incentives for developers sets the stage for Ferndale's future success.

2 Land Use and Urban Character

NOTES

Information used to guide the final Land Use and Urban Character Element.

Community Meeting

Community Character: During Ferndale community meetings, input was gathered on existing infrastructure, services and aesthetics in addition to desires for types of, and pathways for, development. The Visual Preference Survey took participants through a series of approximately 70 images of which they were asked to rate specific aspects of the built environment in each image. The rating categories were as follows: architecture, height, density, setbacks, parking, sidewalks, commercial and retail space. The responses highlighted a medium height and transitional density downtown core, with traditional influence, and a sense of place reflected in the architecture that ties the town together.

Participants also discussed desired land uses within downtown. The community's feedback highlighted more mixed-use and high-density development. There was also a desire for more social and community-based attractions.

Public Sphere: Perceptions, opinions, and preferences were gathered for existing and desired public sphere elements including parks, plazas, streetscape, and safe walking routes. A combination of methods was used to encourage participation, including three community input stations: 1) parks and 'safe walking routes' to schools, 2) streetscape, arts and culture, and 3) a generalized written questionnaire covering a broad range of subjects relating to public space. Each station provided unique interactive qualities, such as downtown site maps that were drawn upon to highlight desirable and undesirable elements; an image series providing examples of existing and potential streetscape elements that could be rated with colored stickers; and a written survey with general questions relating to the public sphere. Beyond individual physical

interaction throughout stations, group dialogue with and among participants occurred. Overall, community feedback reflected a desire to have a more pedestrian-friendly and functional downtown. Themes specific to this included wider sidewalks, parklets, benches, trees, and outdoor seating; additional public murals and artistic features; 'looped' trails from the downtown to parks; improved park amenities/services; additional clearly labeled pedestrian crosswalks; and retention of the 'small town' feel. Community participants value opportunities for community gathering and socializing with friends, family, and neighbors.

Downtown Businesses

Local businesses in the downtown core were canvassed to gather information on the community atmosphere and local business climate. The following businesses were canvassed: McKay's Antiques, Rockwood Realty, Jensen Ferndale Floral, Barb's Pies and Pastries, True Value, Morris Floors, and Interiors. Responses often reflected specific frustration with the stoplight removed at 1st and Main. Additionally, owners and workers spoke of a desire for downtown development that would attract people to get out of their cars, walk around and spend time in the neighborhood. Providing downtown housing at an affordable rate was often the desired solution to the lack of pedestrian traffic in the downtown neighborhood.

Downtown Association

In April, Western's proposed City Center Plan was presented to the city's Downtown Association. In regards to land use, members were pleased with the alternatives presented. They are also happy with the current plans adopted by the Planning Department. One participant noted the need for better coordination between Planning and Public Works. It was recommended that Public Works requirements for development within the city center be revised to allow density increases and better infill opportunities.

2.8.4 City officials

Input from City officials was collected to inform weaknesses in the City Center Plan, as well as to identify problems with the current code.

3. Affordable Housing

3I INTRODUCTION

To combat housing shortages and to provide affordable housing options in Ferndale, we are recommending planning strategies, tools, housing models, and goals to enhance housing stability. Renters are a demographic of Ferndale's community who are in a somewhat precarious situation. At the end of each lease (usually one year), there is a chance that their rent will be increased, making their homes unaffordable. Even low-income residents who own homes could be at risk for foreclosure. Our hope is that these options will help provide more security for those facing housing insecurity. This section covers the following areas:

- Affordable Housing Need in Ferndale
- Key Concepts
- Strategies and Recommendations
- Costs and Funding
- Phased Plan for Implementation
- Affordable Housing Opportunity Sites

3J AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

According to the US Census Bureau, households who pay more than 30 percent of their gross income are considered to be rent overburdened. In Ferndale, a household making less than \$2,843 a month would be considered overburdened when renting an apartment at or above the median rent of \$853. Based on this criteria, 54.52% of households who rent are overburdened in Ferndale (Affordable Housing Online, 2019). Thus, Ferndale already has an issue with affordable housing and this is an area that could use attention.

Currently, there are 6 low-income apartment options in Ferndale, providing 229 units. However, as the city's population grows and ages, it will demand a new supply of appropriate and affordable housing (Ferndale Comprehensive Plan Chapter III: Housing, 2016).

Addressing housing affordability is also critical given the realities of population growth in Whatcom County. Increasing population and development in Whatcom County is diminishing affordable housing options, increasing market rates for real estate markets, and increasing residency in urban areas with limited housing supply.

Ferndale can attract and sustain homeownership alongside downtown revitalization by ensuring accessible and affordable options are created within the community, particularly in the downtown core. Ferndale's comprehensive plan outlines several goals that support taking action on affordable housing.

3K FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter III: Housing Element in the Ferndale Comprehensive Plan has several goals and policies relevant to affordable housing, including goals 1, 7, 8, and 10, which are outlined below.

Goh 1 The city will work to maintain access to affordable housing opportunities by instituting a variety of programs increasing the supply of housing while maintaining the essential character of existing neighborhoods.

Goh 7 The city will seek to ensure that affordable housing is measured not only by the

initial cost of construction or rental rates, but by the actual cost of home ownership and tenancy through the lifetime of the structure.

Goh 8 Recognize that affordable housing projects may not yield the same return on investment for developers as a market-rate development, and identify incentives or other processes to encourage affordable housing.

Goh 9 Recognize special needs housing as an important and necessary element of the housing plan.

3L PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND OPINION

A post made on the Ferndale community facebook page triggered a community-wide discussion of what affordable housing looks like and means in Ferndale. The post read:

I've been thinking a lot about "affordable housing" lately! What does "affordable housing" mean for Ferndale? What role does (or should) City government play in "affordable housing" in Ferndale. Many layers. Many perspectives. (June 1, 2019)

The post, which received 104 comments, and 22 likes, indicates that the Ferndale community is thinking about affordable housing, aware of its influence in a municipality, and interested in exploring its role in Ferndale. The post generated over 100 comments and offered a collaborative space where community members could share their interests, concerns and perspectives on the topic.

3. Affordable Housing

Below are some points brought up in the comments:

- Agrihoods and neighborhood community gardens were part of Ferndale’s conversation and vision of affordable housing.
- Some turned to ADU’s as an option to create more affordable housing in Ferndale
- There was also concern that, ‘Affordably usually means zoning, rental controls, and subsidies’ meaning an increase in regulations.
- Concern regarding skyrocketing rental prices, making it impossible for some people to afford renting.
- Affordable housing is usually thought of as assistance for those under the poverty line, but Ferndale wondered what about the middle class in betweeners who could use help?
- Others wanted to carefully consider zoning as a tool to supply more affordable housing and include multi-family and mixed-use neighborhoods
- Wages and job security were discussed as very important influences on affordability.

Further evidence of community interest in affordable housing was collected from the downtown business sector. While canvassing downtown businesses, the land use team reported support from business owners for more affordable housing near the downtown core to enhance downtown residency, increase walkability to downtown businesses, and boost overall economic and social activity.

KEY CONCEPTS

Key elements of affordable housing are outlined below.

Sch e of Economy: Reflection of what local affordability means and looks like.

Equity: Distributive and restorative justice through empowering low-income (generally communities of color) with a stable, economical, comfortable, sense of place.

Momentum: Generational equity can be achieved through fixed-price homes that are purchased and sold at affordable prices, passing down stability and sense of place from one family to another. Long-term durability is what strengthens the success of affordable housing, and continuous monitoring of present and future needs will guide affordability over time.

Address/Prev nt Homelessness: Homelessness is an expanding crisis in Washington, affecting many large cities and small cities, like Bellingham. Homelessness is likely to grow in Ferndale as downtown revitalization continues to bring activity into the city. Increasing affordable housing would alleviate this issue by preventing individuals from being forced onto the streets and providing space for individuals who are economically vulnerable.

Efficiency: As intended with Washington’s *Growth Management Act*, affordable housing should be integrated with existing neighborhoods to concentrate development. Ferndale should focus on efficient use of space in the downtown core.

STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing Task Force

The Mayor could establish a group of individuals dedicated to monitoring need and options for affordable housing. A Housing Task Force would focus efforts on continuous awareness and provision of a diverse housing selection. The city may also designate these tasks to the North Whatcom Poverty Task Force, an already existing group in the city with affordable housing in their mission.

2 Affordable Housing Section in Comprehensive Plan

While navigating the Ferndale Comprehensive Plan, Chapter III: Housing Element does not indicate an affordable housing section. Including a section outlining affordable housing options, resources, and policies will increase awareness and understanding of what affordable housing in Ferndale means.

Land Trust Model

Kulshan Land Trust (KLT) is a community organization that assists communities in preserving affordability by keeping land in the trust for permanent affordable housing options. In addition to providing smart financial advising, the KLT invests in “urban vitality” by blending affordability into existing neighborhoods. One important goal expressed by the KLT is to “build momentum” by increasing affordable housing options every year, growing awareness

3. Affordable Housing

and involvement in affordable housing development, and overall putting “good ideas into action” (kulshanclt.org, 2019). The KLT already has one housing location in Ferndale, a 3 bedroom home located on Endeavor Street that sold for \$195,000. This partnership could continue to blossom in Ferndale and contribute to a robust housing selection.

The purpose of the land trust model is to preserve affordability. This works by selling



6531 Endeavor Street

neighborhood: Ferndale
home: 1578 sq ft | **lot:** 4681 sq ft
bedrooms: 3 | **baths:** 2.5

\$195,000

Figure 3.1. 6531 Endeavor St. is the only KLT property in Ferndale. (source: <http://www.kulshanclt.org/property/6531-endeavor-street/>)

homes at below market rates (most homes in the KLT are sold at 2/3, or \$50,000-100,000 less than market price), and requiring that when the homeowner is seeking to move or sell, the house is sold at the price it was purchased. This means the home remains affordable for the new buyer.

As Ferndale’s housing market fluctuates with new development and downtown revitalization, there are many concerns for the stability and predictability in cost of living. A partnership with the Kulshan Land Trust or introducing a new land trust model in Ferndale could present a new opportunity. Ferndale planners and the North Whatcom Poverty Task Force could connect with KLT to determine ideal locations for land trust sites and expand the land trust’s properties within Ferndale city limits. One idea for Ferndale to explore with this partnership would be a multi-family option in the downtown core, potentially incorporating mixed-use development encouraged within the opportunity sites, such as the Main Street Mixed-Use housing project, or the Mixed-Use Grocery Store project. Multi-family, mixed-use options would encourage efficient use of space, and foster a similar sense of place and community to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Champlain Housing Trust in Burlington Vermont is the largest Community Land Trust in the U.S. This land trust started with a small amount of seed money from the city and grew to be valued at \$144 million dollars. They have the ability to reinvest in themselves, to build new projects and to keep homes affordable by collecting 75 percent of increased equity in their for sale properties. Trust members get to choose

their own board members. The trust is currently working on developing multi-family housing units. Their existing housing stock includes 2,300 apartments, and all of the projects they had underway last year were multi-family housing projects.

3.4 Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is a tool Ferndale planners can use to promote affordable housing in the downtown core. IZ ordinances require “a share of new housing construction to be affordable to low/moderate incomes” (MRSC.org, 2019). This method can be combined with density bonuses, fee waivers, or other developmental incentives that aim to offset or compensate project costs and processes in exchange for providing affordability. Inclusionary Zoning intends to reduce segregation of affordable housing and meshes affordable options with market price housing to cultivate social and economic cohesion within housing developments (MRSC.org, 2019).

3.5 Planning Process Tools

Planning process tools are efforts targeted towards developers involved in the downtown revitalization project. Ferndale planners are working on streamlined application review for fee waivers for the development of affordable housing options. Additionally, Ferndale could consider bonus density development criteria. Ferndale can incentivize developers to increase density of housing developments and increase affordable options by offering bonus density benefits. The City of Bellingham’s code includes a bonus density measure: “Earned

3. Affordable Housing



Figure 3.2 This building in Shelburne, Vermont, is part of a neighborhood called Harrington Village, developed by the Champlain Housing Trust. The village includes 42 affordable apartments, 36 apartments for seniors, and four shared-equity homes. (Courtesy of the Champlain Housing Trust)

increased density of up to 50 percent over the otherwise allowable density in the applicable residential zone may be granted to a project if 100 percent of dwelling units in the project are provided and retained as permanently affordable owner-occupied homes” (Bellingham Municipal Code, 20.27.030). In addition, Ferndale planners could consider reducing or exempting some developer’s tax payments for implementing affordable housing. Examples of this include waiving impact fees, building/planning fees, or discounting sewage and water connection fees (MRSC.org, 2019). Lastly, allowing building or planning modifications such as revising dimensional aspects (setbacks, heights, etc.) and parking requirements on a case by case basis can attract developers seeking to implement affordability in housing development.

3.7 COSTS AND FUNDING

This section outlines strategies and examples for prioritizing and implementing affordable housing, including funding sources.

3.7.1 Property Tax Levy- Case Study: Bellingham Home Fund (RCW 84.52.105)

In 2018, Bellingham voted on a levy that would set aside \$40 million over a ten year period for developing and preserving affordable housing. The home fund is administered by the The Planning and Community Development Department, Housing and Services program. Projects and services such as production and preservation of affordable homes, rental assistance programs, and other low-income home buying efforts are made possible through the Home Fund.

The City of Ferndale could utilize an up to \$.50 per thousand dollar (defined as 50% or less of the county’s median income) property tax levy to develop a funding base for projects and efforts to enhance affordable housing in Ferndale (RCW 84.52.105). This can be incentivized to homeowners and businesses by communicating an interest in expanding the downtown through comprehensive revitalization. By sustaining

homeownership in the downtown core as it undergoes social and economic enhancement, Ferndale can boost urban vitality, local business prosperity, and stimulate overall community growth. Instituting the levy may be best to consider once the downtown revitalization project has built momentum and is witnessing positive changes in the social and economic characteristics of the downtown.

3.7.2 Land Trust Permanent Funding Options

If Ferndale is interested in investing in a land trust model in order to preserving affordability, the costs and funding options are flexible and can be arranged between the Community Land Trust (CLT) and city planning and housing departments. A CLT may establish a cooperative model for the development, allowing the CLT to obtain financing for projects without pushing the burden onto families to become individually qualified for financing. An advantage to this is “owner-occupied, resident-controlled tenure for unbankable households” (groundedsolutions.org, 2019).

One case study to reference for examining the Land Trust model is the Lopez Island Community Land Trust. Their CLT is a liaison between banking institutions that oversee mortgages and individuals that are in need of housing financial assistance. The Lopez CLT explains “Many households that needed affordable housing were not considered bankable and were not able to qualify for financing individually. However, with the backing of an established organization, a lending institution was willing to provide financing to complete Lopez’s first [land trust] project in 1992” (groundedsolutions.org, 2019).

3. Affordable Housing

Ferndale could use some revenues from property taxes to subsidize the cost of homes at below market rate prices. The funds to purchase homes can come from Ferndale's reserves, because the cost of purchasing the home will be replaced by the revenue of selling the home.

3.3 Grants

There are many grants, especially for development projects that cities are eligible for. Before considering taxes to raise revenue for a project, Ferndale should check explore the option of a grant to cover those costs.

The Washington State Department of Commerce Community Development General Purpose Grant: Available for grants up to \$750,000 in communities with populations under 50,000. This grant funds cities and towns with community and economic projects that will focus on helping moderate to low income individuals. While a housing authority may not directly apply, they can be a partner on a project.

Rural Community Development Initiative: Development grants for cities or towns with less than 50,000 residents with an award floor of \$50,000 and ceiling of \$250,000. City governments and housing authorities are eligible to apply. Improving housing is a directly suggested grant idea. This grant requires matching funds and encourages applying entities to partner with other groups in their city.

Main Street Grant Program: Funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, this grant provide grants up to 1,000,000 for communities looking to revitalize their main streets. The grant aims to redevelop,

enhance, and preserve main street areas while providing affordable housing.

3.4 PHASED PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The phased plan for implementing affordable housing strategies in Ferndale are outlined below.

Phase 1 Hire staff

Hire staff to manage the program and develop a strategic plan. The director should work closely with the North Whatcom Poverty Task Force to gather community input to craft a plan for affordable housing and to advocate for its implementation through various avenues in the city. For the downtown, mixed-use, multi-family residential options are a great opportunity to build residence alongside the downtown revitalization plans.

Phase 2 (Year 1): Adoption of affordable housing law.

Conduct focus groups with community to assess needs and preferences for location and types of homes, and how best to raise funds for the program (e.g., through property taxes).

Phase 3 (2-5 years): best sites to purchase and include in the land trust

Determine locations for land trust sites, purchase homes, sell to community members.

Phase 4 (6-10 years): Monitor and develop land trust sites

Assess how the program is done by analyzing house sales, resident testimonials, and more. This phase should also continue locating sites for the land trust.

3.5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY SITES

Two potential locations were identified in the downtown for affordable housing infill, as shown in Figures 3.3 and 3.4

3. Affordable Housing

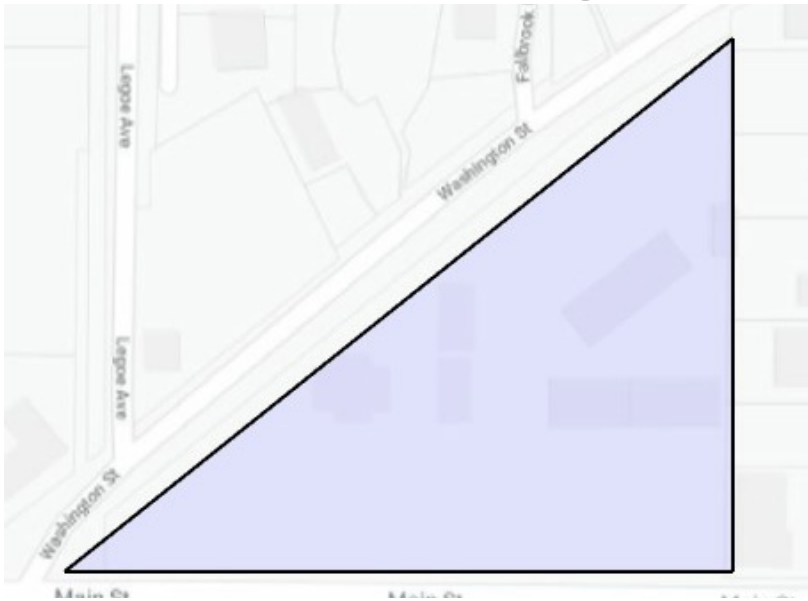


Figure 3.3 Opportunity site for affordable housing on northwest area of Main St./ Washington St. /Hamlin Ave lot

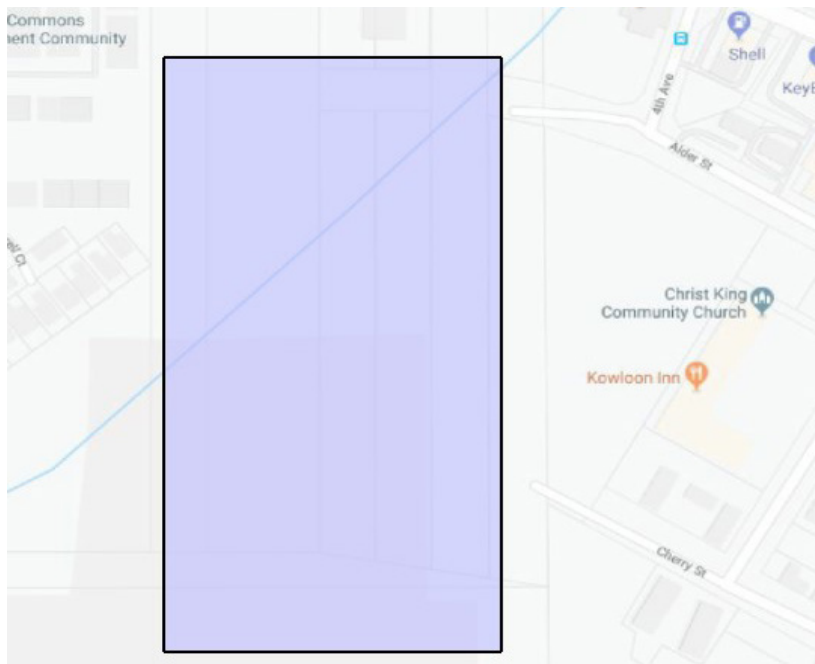


Figure 3.4 Open space on the southeast side of Main St., west of 4th, Alder and Cherry St. could be utilized for an affordable housing development site.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The mobility element of the Ferndale City Center Plan aims to increase and transform Ferndale transportation options, specifically in the downtown core. The mobility element, divided into a number of themes, has split suggestions into four phases of implementation. Each core theme highlights improvements, costs and funding sources.

4.1.1 Implementation Phases

1. Present → 2 Years
2. 2-10 Years (Post-Thornton Street Overpass Short-Term)
3. 11-20 Years (Post-Thornton Street Overpass Long-Term)
4. 20+ Years

4.1.2 Core Element Themes

- Street Network
- Parking
- Transit
- Bicycle Network
- Pedestrian Network
- Trails and Multimodal

The Mobility element calls for a downtown core that is pedestrian-friendly and promotes economic development. While autonomous vehicles can help usher in a thriving downtown that promotes pedestrian travel throughout the core, it is imperative that safety features for pedestrians are implemented prior to large-scale introduction of autonomous vehicles.

4.1.3 Mobility Element Goals

Goal 1 Slow down automobile traffic through Ferndale's downtown core (Street Network)

Goal 2 Extend downtown destinations to the east side of the Nooksack River (Bike lanes/ Multimodal)

Goal 3 Enhance pedestrian and cycling right of way to encourage a modal shift from automobiles downtown (Pedestrian)

Goal 4 Create a complete trail network providing easy access to parks and various downtown locations (Multimodal/Trails)

Goal 5 Improve WTA routes in Ferndale to better connect Ferndale with neighboring towns and provide more frequent service within town to reduce dependency on automobiles (Transit)

Goal 6: Determine parking reduction/increase plans as well as parking incentives for developers (Parking)

Goal 7 Align project outcomes with Smart Growth principles (All Subcategories)

4.1.4 Major Improvements

- Main Street Center Median
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements
- Bridge Bump Outs
- 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall & Plaza

4.2 STREET NETWORK

Main Street is the major thoroughfare through downtown Ferndale. According to residents and downtown businesses, Main Street causes daily grief for many people. This is the focal point for the street network section. Residents do not have viable alternatives for entering or exiting the downtown core, which causes major congestion during morning and afternoon rush hours. Along with congestion, downtown businesses are being negatively impacted because drivers want to get through the traffic, rather than stopping to shop or eat. Furthermore, due to significant vehicle traffic on Main Street, people are less inclined to use alternative modes of transportation, such as cycling or walking.

The main goals of the street network section are to 1) direct drivers around Main Street and 2) slow traffic down.

Proposals for the street network are heavily dependent on the completion of the Thornton Street Overpass project, which is beginning construction in 2019 (City of Ferndale, 2019). With current conditions, the other sections of the mobility plan will have trouble coming into fruition, as cars and trucks currently dominate Main Street. The Thornton Street Overpass will provide an alternative route to and from Ferndale's residential areas. It is crucial to ensure pedestrians, cyclists and public transit riders feel like they have room on Main Street. In the interim, minor changes to the street network are suggested.

Improvements to Main Street are outlined below:

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). ITS come in different forms. The suggest forms for Ferndale include Traffic Signal Coordination (TSC) and Transit Signal Priority (TSP). These systems rely on traditional communication-based information and electronic technologies (U.S. DOT, 2019). TSC synchronizes multiple intersections to improve traffic flow, while TSP gives priority for public transit vehicles at intersections.

Main Street Median. Adding a median down the center of Main Street, removing the center turn lane.

Traffic Calming Infrastructure. Adding raised crosswalks and speed bumps, to create safe walking routes to schools.

Level of Service. Reduce the level of service from C to D along Main Street.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

4A Implementation Phases

A number of street network improvements are recommended over several years and are outlined in the following section.

Phase 1 (Present-2 Years): Preliminary Steps, Data Collection, and Inexpensive Projects

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) The City of Ferndale can identify areas where ITS could be implemented. According to the 2016 comprehensive plan, “implementation of an advanced traffic management system (ATMS) would allow the City to improve coordination and respond to specific issues such as back-ups and traffic diversions relating to an event or a collision, while providing capabilities to make timely adjustments to signal timing remotely” (Ferndale, 2016, p. 56). Because Main Street, through downtown, experiences more back-ups than other arterials in Ferndale, it should be assessed first.

Safe Routes to School Analysis A traffic analysis should be performed on roads surrounding Central Elementary and Vista Middle Schools to identify high traffic areas that may pose threats to students. There are a number of traffic calming techniques that can be applied to streets surrounding schools and walking routes.

Phase 2 (2-5 Years): Post Thornton Street Overpass Opening and Short-Term Projects

ITS Continued Within 10 years, the City of Ferndale should complete infrastructure improvements for ITS. Main Street between the Nooksack River and the I-5 interchange would be improved by ITS and should be the next focus area. With the projected population

of Ferndale increasing by 7,000 people by 2036, it is imperative to update the street network systems.

Safe Routes to School Improvements Construct safe routes to school improvements on streets near schools during the first half of phase 2. These improvements include speed bumps, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, curb extensions, signaled crosswalks, adequate sidewalks/bike lanes and crosswalk flags. More details are provided in the pedestrian and bicycle sections.

Interim Main Street Median The City of Ferndale could paint or provide a temporary median in place of the center turn lane after the Thornton Street Overpass is completed. A median on Main Street will facilitate a sense of enclosure, which makes it uncomfortable for drivers to speed as there are more details to be attentive to. For pedestrians, enclosure gives a feeling of safety, as well as protection from the natural elements and automobile noise. According to the Complete Streets Manual, medians limit the number of left turns and points of conflict for automobile traffic. Additionally, medians provide residents with a refuge when crossing streets (Model Design Manual for Living Streets, 2019).

Phase 3 (10+ Years): Post Thornton Street Overpass Project Completion and Long Term Projects

ITS Expansion All new intersections/traffic signals installed should be synced with the citywide communication system.

Safe Routes to School Evaluation Update street network and sidewalk infrastructure based on route use.

Permanent Main Street Median The completion of the Thornton Street Overpass is expected to redirect traffic from Main Street. With less vehicle traffic on Main Street, it would be appropriate to install a permanent median. Residents will have the option of taking a U-turn where the median ends at the intersection of 4th Avenue and Main Street. During this phase, the light at 2nd Avenue and Main Street would be removed and replaced with a signaled pedestrian crosswalk. Street trees and bioswales should be added to the median to reduce and treat stormwater runoff. By the time the trees are fully grown, there should be an alternative truck route. Maintenance costs are reduced if native species are planted (Naturally Resilient Communities, 2019). Figure 4.1 shows Main Street with the proposed median and signaled crosswalk.

4B Budget

Detailed cost estimates for improvements available in the online report as Appendix A.

4C Funding Sources

Complete Streets Award. The award, from the Transportation Improvement Board, provides funds for actions and implementation of complete streets plans that accommodate all users including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists of all ages and abilities. A number of state agencies and nonprofit organizations can nominate the city for supplemental funding.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking



Figure 4.1: Main Street median

Urban Arterial Program (UAP) Eligibility for the UAP is determined based on an arterial project’s score in one or more of the following sections: safety concerns, expected growth and development, and poor physical condition and mobility. UAP funding applications are available June-August every year.

Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD). The BUILD grant, from the US Department of Transportation, aims to better connect urban and rural communities across the United States. A benefit-cost analysis is required for grant application to ensure a project will provide economic benefit to users.

School Walk Route Improvement Project. The Washington Traffic Safety Commission funds programs such as walk/bike to school activities, implementation of a crossing guard program,

and a pedestrian and/or bicycling audit.

School Zone Crossing Guard mini grant. This grant covers the costs, up to \$300, of training materials and equipment/supplies for crossing guards.

Law Enforcement Equipment Grant. This grant provides funding for the acquisition of speed feedback signs, radars and gear for motorcycle enforcement.

4P PARKING

Parking is a controversial subject in Ferndale as well as many other communities. Many residents perceive that there is a lack of parking in downtown. There are a number of actions the city can take to understand parking in the City Center. The first is to conduct a parking assessment, which can show where parking is in most demand, and areas of underutilized parking. Another step is to look for options to increase parking. Possibilities include partnering with the Ferndale library to allow free parking after hours, as well as changing some of the on-street parking to angled parking (Figure 4.2). Here are a number of suggested actions:

- Conducting a parking assessment
- Adopt “Smart Trip” incentives to encourage sustainable transportation modes.
- Add signage to promote underutilized parking.
- Collaborate with the library on parking.
- Add angled parking along 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets between Main and Alder Streets.
- Implement a fully automated parking system.

4B Implementation Phases

A number of parking improvements are recommended over several years and are outlined in the following section.

Phase I (Present-2 Years): Preliminary Steps, Data Collection, and Inexpensive Projects

Parking Assessment. A parking analysis identifies areas in the downtown where parking is underutilized. Parking assessments collect data at different times of the day and on different

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

days of the week. Based on this data, signage can be installed in key locations to direct drivers to underutilized parking areas.

“Smart Trips.” Smart Trips is a local program that encourages people to use other modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, sharing rides, and riding the bus. With this incentive, local businesses in the downtown can offer a discount for users of Smart Trips. Installing bike infrastructure is vital for Smart Trips to thrive. See bike section for budgeting.

Trail Network Signage. Currently, there is sufficient parking at trail access points. However, more parking may be needed as more access points and connectivity between parks are created. Although there is ample parking, it would be helpful to have increased signage along Main Street promoting the current parking infrastructure available. A map indicating nearby parks and the trail system could also be developed and installed in a central downtown location.

Library Parking Collaboration. There are currently 120+ parking spots at the Ferndale

Library, which are frequently underutilized. Their current hours are 10AM to 9PM Monday through Thursday, and 10AM to 5PM Friday through Sunday. There are two possibilities to allow parking for all at this location:

- Option 1: open parking after 5PM until 7AM everyday
- Option 2: open parking Friday-Sunday after hours

With the library being located in the downtown, it would be a great addition to the parking that is currently available.

Phase 2 (2021-2023): Post Thornton Street Street Openings and Short-Term Preliminary Projects

Angled parking along 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets between Main and Alder Streets Once the Main Street median is constructed, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd avenues between Main and Alder streets could be turned into one-ways south of Main Street. This would allow for angled parking on 1st, 2nd and 3rd streets (Figure 4.2 and 4.3), and allow for sidewalk widening, which would create more space for pedestrians.

Phase 3 (14-20 Years): Post Thornton Street Street Openings and Long Term Projects

Parking Reassessment. Assess downtown parking after 10 years to evaluate the impact of recommended street network, parking and pedestrian infrastructure changes. The goal is to make the downtown more walkable, as well as bike and pedestrian friendly. Increased forms of public transit could allow for a decrease in the amount of parking in the near future.

Automated Parking System. Installing an automated parking system would provide funds to cover improvement costs, as well as allowing for an in depth analysis on frequency of parking. It could also serve as an incentive for residents to use other forms of transportation when visiting downtown.

Budget

Detailed cost estimates available in the online report as Appendix A.

Funding Sources

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG): Provides funds to preserve and improve parking facilities. This grant provides flexibility in its funds with a wide range of transportation related aspects.

Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants: Funds support projects that promote safety and quality of life in both urban and rural areas nationwide. This is a highly sought out grant; \$500 million were awarded in 2016.

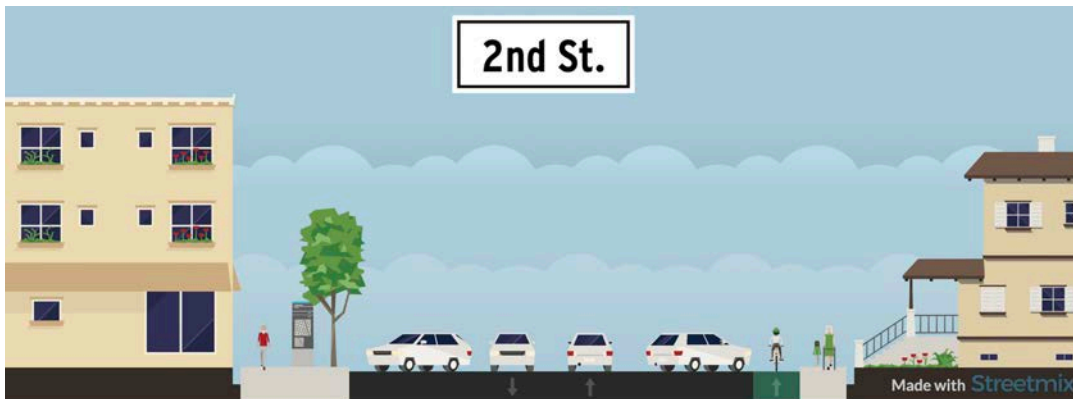


Figure 4.2 Angled parking on 2nd Street.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

4 TRANSIT

Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) operates transit services throughout Whatcom County, including the City of Ferndale. Only one bus serves Ferndale’s downtown; two other routes operate as shuttles to Bellingham and Blaine. According to Ferndale residents, the public transit options are not feasible, due to the low level of service they receive and the lack of service area in general. The idea of public transportation is to alleviate traffic congestion and provide transportation options for all at an affordable rate. Because of the lack of transportation options and poor service area, Ferndale residents are forced to drive, typically in a single occupancy vehicle.

To expand WTA Fixed Route Services in Ferndale, seven improvements to the transit network are suggested:

1. Build partnerships with public and private entities such as WTA, local businesses, and large employers in the area.
2. Conduct research and analysis to assure transit options are serving the majority of the residents in Ferndale and the residents who rely on public transit the most.
3. Design new routes and increase frequency levels in the new service areas.
4. Improve WTA’s current stops, infrastructure, and signage.
5. Adapt and increase frequency where density is increased and new housing is erected.
6. Implement fixed route services to the various parks in the City of Ferndale.
7. Install a small transit center or a more prominent bus stop downtown.



Figure 4.3 Parallel parking with widened sidewalks

Implementation Phases

The implementation phases listed below strive to accommodate the City of Ferndale’s growing population.

Phase 1 (Present-2 Years): Preliminary Steps, Data Collection, and Inexpensive Projects

Public and Private Partnerships: Within two years, identify and develop private and public partnerships for collaborative transit planning. One strategy to increase private partnerships is through advertising and sponsorships. The City of Ferndale has two large refineries that employ a number of Ferndale’s residents. Because Phillip 66 and Cherry Point refineries are such large economic engines in the area, they could donate minibuses to WTA. Each minibus could operate as AM/PM shuttles to and from the refineries as shown in Figure 4.4.

A partnership between WTA and the City of Ferndale are crucial for successful grant applications. Furthermore, it provides an

opportunity to align WTA’s Transit Development Plan with Ferndale’s Comprehensive Plan. Just about every strategy in this section is dependant on funding from grants, so it is important for the two public entities to use each other’s expertise on transit planning and city planning. WTA will be the expert at designing routes and placing bus stops, but Ferndale will be the expert on where the majority of citizens reside.

Current Service Analysis: Collect and analyze data to understand how well the current system connects with jobs, low income families, disabled individuals, families whose first language is not English, and more. WTA says, “in addition to providing access to employment, education and other essentials, it provides mobility for people with disabilities and offers an alternative to the single occupant vehicle” (WTA, 2017, p. 3). Having the knowledge and data of where people are working or even where people live who qualify as low income, is important for the design and implementation of transit routes. With this knowledge, WTA can build more efficient services and increase their ridership at the same time.

Phase 2 (2-5 Years): Post Thornton Street Operations Opening and Short-Term Preliminary Projects

New Routes and Frequency Improvement: Phase 2 recommends a new route for the City of Ferndale. Current routes do not serve Ferndale schools well and a new downtown route like that shown in Figure 4.5 would be an easy way to get from one side of town to the other. A route that circulates the downtown would be a great way for residents who live to the north to

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

access downtown and grocery stores east of the Nooksack River.

One suggestion for implementing the new mid-day circulator route through town would be for WTA to use the mini buses from the AM/PM refinery shuttles. This improvement strategy would not only provide three new bus routes, but also increase the frequency of public transit services in the downtown.

WTA's Asset Improvements: To attract new riders, and support existing riders, WTA could begin improving their assets, such as structures and benches at their bus stops. One of WTA's opportunity goals is "advocate for fully accessible walking and biking paths of travel to and from bus stops" (WTA, 2017, Pg. 36). WTA and the City of Ferndale should ensure bus stops and sidewalks are ADA accessible and designed to be inviting. Improving each stop and location could result in ridership increases.

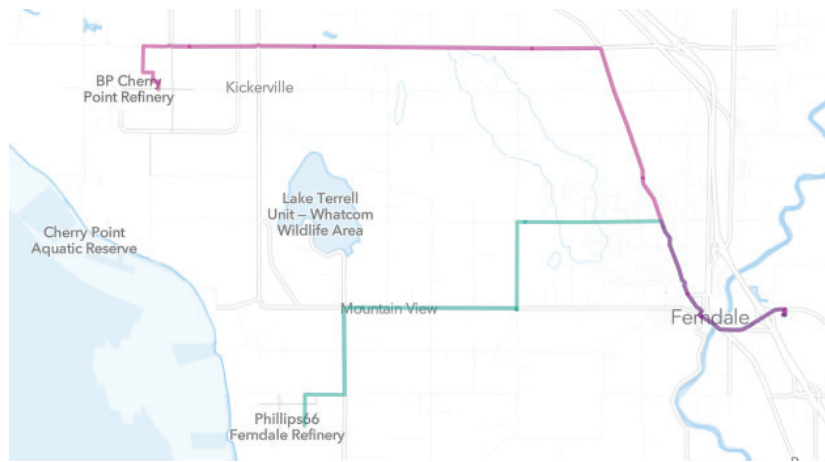


Figure 4.4 AM/PM Shuttles from Ferndale to Refineries

Phase 3 (10 Years): Post Thornton Street Overpass Project Completion and Long Term Projects

Route Modifications: As density in the downtown increases (see Land Use element for more details), the public transportation network and frequency should be reviewed and modified to accommodate the new growth in the downtown core. Continuing to increase frequency and service after ten years will allow for WTA and Ferndale to slowly adapt to a growing population.

Bus to Trails Campaign: In an attempt to give community members more opportunities to access their park system, WTA and Ferndale should create a bus to trails campaign. Having buses serve trails will attract new users to enjoy their park system, and make them accessible to more residents.

Phase 4 (20 Years): Large Infrastructure Projects into the Future

Downtown Transit Station or Center
Over the next twenty plus years, the city should consider creating a transportation station or center in their downtown. Integrating a transit hub into one of the proposed mixed-use

opportunity sites will allow the city to reduce the required amount of downtown parking spaces, and to allow for the possibility of residents living in Ferndale without a personal vehicle.

4B Budget

Detailed cost estimates available in the online report as Appendix A.

4F Funding Sources

Voter Approved Local Sales Tax Increases (RCW 36.57A): Each local transit authority has the option to ask a community to pay a percent of their sales tax and have it go toward transit needs. As of 2017, WTA has been operating with a 0.6% sales tax rate (MRSC, 2018). Ferndale should ask the local "public transportation benefit area" (PTBA) for a sales tax increase to support additional transit services in Ferndale.

Consolidated Grant Program: From the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the grant provides funding to local transit authorities. The grant funds projects that help transit services within and between rural communities, and provides transit services between cities (Transitcenter, 2018). Several of the suggested budget items fit under this category.

Formula Grant Program: From WSDOT, can be used to improve public transportation for Washington residents. The grant focuses on projects that emphasize persons with disabilities, seniors, children, and people in rural areas.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking



Figure 4.5 Mid-day Downtown Circulator

Regional Mobility Grant Program (RMGP)
 The RMGP is a grant supplied by WSDOT to help fund transit-oriented-development (TOD). This grant would be a good source of funding for a new transit center. Also, the grant is meant to help aid public transportation projects that aim to reduce traffic congestion.

both of these goals. Ferndale has limited bicycle infrastructure, with the most in the downtown core, primarily on Main Street. This is an important starting point, as most of the infrastructure improvements will begin in the downtown core. A number of bicycle improvements are recommended in this section (see Figure 4.6). These improvements include:

- Painted bike lanes
- Protected bike lanes
- Information campaign
- Wayfinding

Implementation Phases

A number of bicycle network improvements are recommended over several years and are outlined in the following section.

4.B ICYCLE NETWORK

In recent community meetings, Ferndale residents have both shown interest in, and resentment towards, cyclists. With the reduction in traffic and increased connectivity as goals for the project, this plan has identified bicycle infrastructure as something that can help achieve

Phase 1 (Present-2 Years): Preliminary Steps, Data Collection, and Inexpensive Projects

Painted Lanes: The first steps to improving bicycle infrastructure is to install bright colored bike lanes, likely green, on Alder Street, Main Street, and Vista Drive (Figure 4.6). In addition to these painted lanes, “bike boxes” should be placed at intersections along these streets. These will allow bikers to move to the front of the intersections while the light is red, helping increase visibility and the ability to safely take left turns at these intersections.

Bicycle Safety Information Campaign: A bicycle information and safety campaign should be developed to promote bicycle infrastructure. A webpage could be added to the City of Ferndale’s website to provide easily accessible safety information for cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians. Flyers could be posted in important community spaces, such as the library or schools. Additional wayfinding signs could be placed along selected bike routes to assist cyclists in navigating the new paths.

With the phasing of bicycle infrastructure onto streets in the downtown core, motorists should become comfortable with more cyclists in the city, helping provide a smoother transition in future phases of the plan.

Phase 2 (2-5 Years): Post Thornton Street Overpass Opening and Short-Term Preliminary Projects

Additional Painted Bike Lanes: Painted bike lanes should be extended north along Vista Drive and along Mountain View Road, allowing

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

for increased connectivity of residential areas with the downtown core.

Protected lanes in the downtown core: Install barriers on Alder Street, Main Street, and Vista Drive bike lanes. Protected bike lanes provide cyclists with a more comfortable environment, and would likely encourage more cycling, especially in the downtown core.

Phase 3 (10 Years): Post Thornton Street Overpass Project Completion and Long Term Projects

Multimodal Trail Loop: The city should plan to connect parks via multimodal trail loop. This could be implemented in a variety of ways, varying from hard packed gravel, or the extension of bike lanes in between certain larger parks like Hovander, Vanderyacht, and Pioneer.

Increased connectivity between residential areas and downtown: With increased density in both the downtown core and surrounding areas, bike lane connectivity will be important to newly populated areas. Depending on where development actually occurs, the plan intends to be flexible in adding additional painted bike lanes where necessary.

Potential protected lane implementation locations include:

- Washington Street
- 2nd Avenue
- Thornton Street
- Church Street

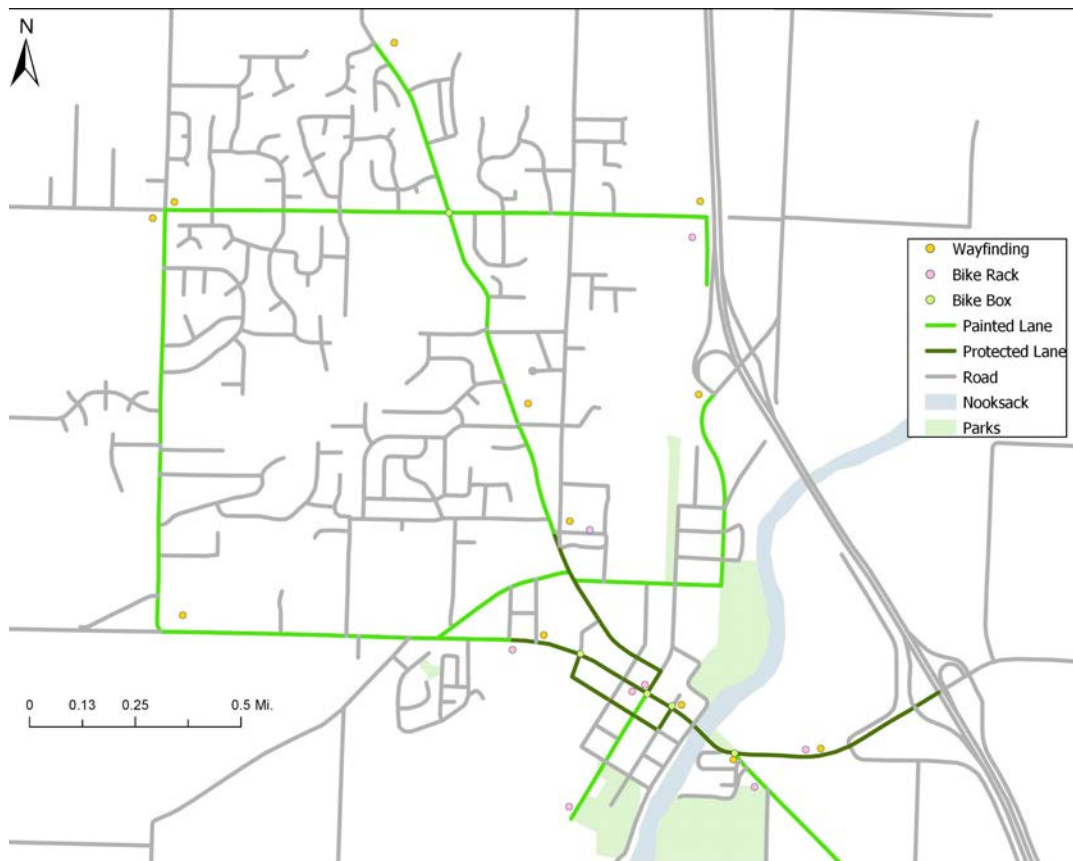


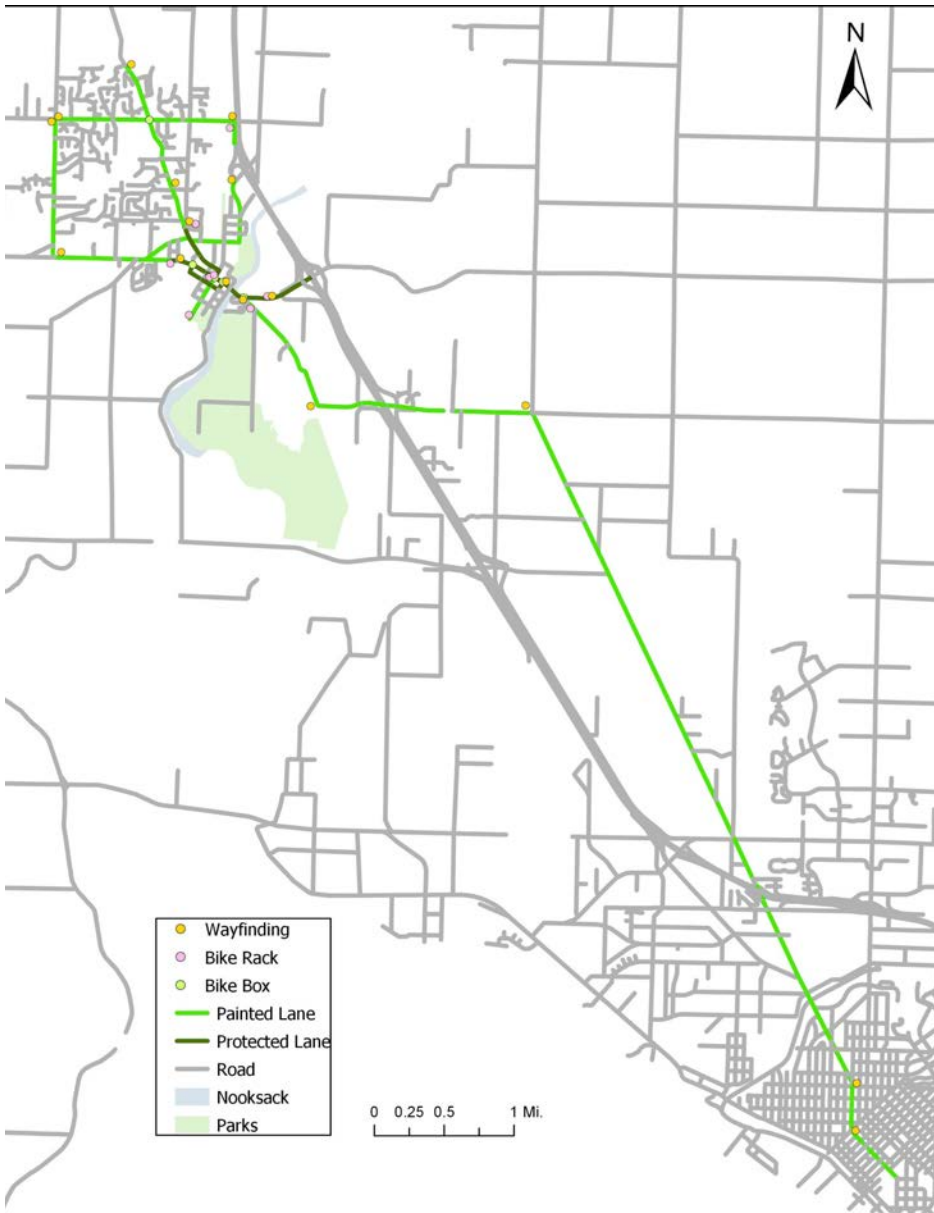
Figure 4.6 Proposed Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements in Ferndale

Phase 4 (10 Years): Large Infrastructure Projects into the Future

Regional bike route between Ferndale and Bellingham: Once appropriate bicycle infrastructure is implemented into the downtown core, as well as residential areas, the city should coordinate with Whatcom County to write a regional bike plan, and implement regional trails. Specifically working with the City of Bellingham, who has shown interest in

regional bike trails. Bellingham can assist in the implementation of trails between the two cities, creating an alternative option for residents to travel to Bellingham (see Figure 4.7). Early options for location would be the eastside of Ferndale, going down Slater Road, then travelling over I-5 to Northwest Avenue and down to Bellingham.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking



Budget

Detailed cost estimates available in the online report as Appendix A.

Funding Sources

Port of Bellingham: In 2018, the City of Ferndale was awarded \$10,000 from the Port of Bellingham to increase wayfinding and signage (Port of Bellingham, 2018). This money can be allocated to fund the wayfinding portion of future bicycle infrastructure.

PeopleForBikes: This charitable bicycle coalition offers an annual community grant up to \$10,000 for bicycle infrastructure. The 2019 grant is for efforts to get children on bicycles. To fund bicycle paths, applicants will have to apply in 2020, which would support improvements identified in phase one.

Washington State Department of Transportation: WSDOT provides funding through a pedestrian and bicycle program. The goal of the program is to encourage walking and cycling and to reduce driver collisions with cyclists. The next funding cycle will be 2020-2021, with \$20 million available to be split among all accepted projects. The funding window, and goals of the program align with phase 2 improvements.

United States Department of Transportation: USDOT offers Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Discretionary Grants (BUILD Grants). BUILD Grants have a minimum of \$1 million, and up to \$25 million for projects in rural areas. The grant defines rural as “less than 200,000 people.” Ferndale would be competitive for the grant due to the project having a specific timeline, being completed by September 31, 2021 (Phase 1), and clear project impacts.

Figure 4.7 Regional Bicycle Route

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

4.1 PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The pedestrian network emphasizes connectivity by transitioning the downtown into a pedestrian rather than automotive streetscape. The goal is improving safety and pedestrian comfort on Main Street and surrounding areas. Walkability is central to making Main Street a popular downtown destination (Quednau, 2018). Wider sidewalks provide ample space for street trees, flower boxes and vegetation, outdoor seating, as well as increased lighting and benches. Creating amenities and streets that cater to pedestrians increases safety and enjoyment, and ultimately extends the time that pedestrians linger downtown. A major goal of the project is establishing safe routes to school. Safe Routes to School is a national movement to create specified routes to keep children walking to school safe (USDOT, 2015). Safe routes also encourage walking and biking, which increases access to healthy alternatives for school commuting (National Center for Safe Routes to Schools, 2019).

Linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and shopping centers east of the Nooksack River provides the access and connectivity needed to bring people from residential areas into the downtown for shopping and leisure. A well-maintained, interconnected network of sidewalks would provides access to the downtown.

Continuous sidewalk connectivity allows people to walk from one place to another safely, and improves their confidence to do so (Federal Highway Administration, 2019).

The primary pedestrian network projects to improve connectivity and make downtown a destination include:

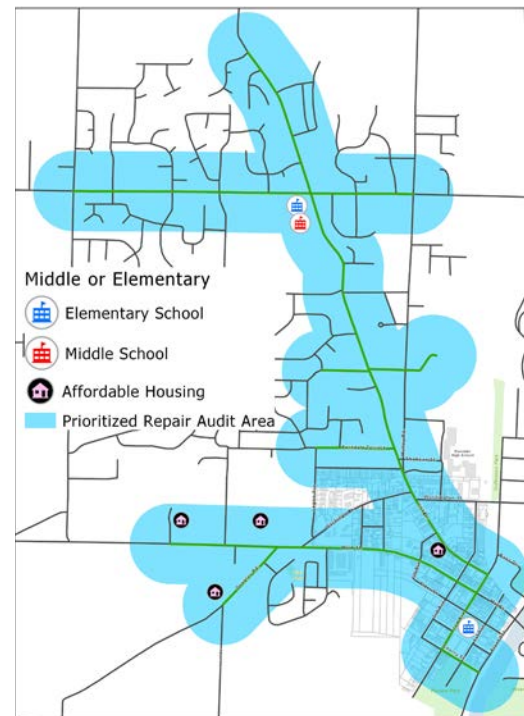
- Establishing and constructing a Safe Route between Vista Middle School, Skyline & Central Elementary schools.
- Implementing the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall and Plaza.
- Widening Main Street sidewalks from 10 feet to 14 feet.
- Repairing and constructing sidewalk connectivity outside of the City Center.
- Installing pedestrian bump outs on the Main Street bridge over the Nooksack River

4.1.1 Implementation Phases

Phase 1 (Present-2 Years): Preliminary Steps, Data Collection, and Inexpensive Projects

Safe Routes to School: The city should work with Central Elementary and Vista Middle Schools to audit common walking routes through (walking with someone from the community through area to identify problems), student commute surveys, and parent outreach.

Data will be compiled for application, consulting, and grant options for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. The safe route would also be connected to affordable housing sites for accessibility. A possible safe route is shown in Figure 4.8. Other preliminary steps include changes to municipal design codes that specify higher standards for safe route pedestrian walkways. These higher standards would be wider widths, better upkeep, and



4.8 Areas of Priority for Safety Audits

crosswalk infrastructure.

Sidewalk Connectivity and Repair Finding disconnects in the sidewalk network is the first step to identifying future construction and repair projects that are needed (Figure 4.9).

Prioritization of projects will need to be completed before Phase 2. Priorities will be organized by time and scale of projects, as well as necessity and urgency. Community outreach and participation will be essential to this process, such as community walk audits and surveys.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

Sidewalk Standards and Repair Code Revisions
The city should develop a more comprehensive set of guidelines for constructing pedestrian space to ensure continuity throughout the sidewalk network. Additional standards to be addressed:

- Guidelines and design requirements for outdoor merchandise
- Specific size of “clear zone” (FMC 12.22.050.B.13.b) to allow greater pedestrian space around outdoor seating (Phase 3 once sidewalks are widened)
- Downtown Performance Standards to simplify Maintenance and Repair Guideline (FMC 18.47.070)

Phase 2 (20 Years): Post Thornton Street Openings and Short-Term Preliminary Projects

Safe School Routes: Way-Finding, Crosswalk Safety, and Sidewalk Improvement: Once school routes are established, an initial step is posting signage that designates the route as a safe route.

Signaled crosswalks designating high-visibility crossing areas provides safety on highly trafficked roads that intersect the safe routes. Preliminary suggestions for signaled crosswalks are established from data collection in Phase

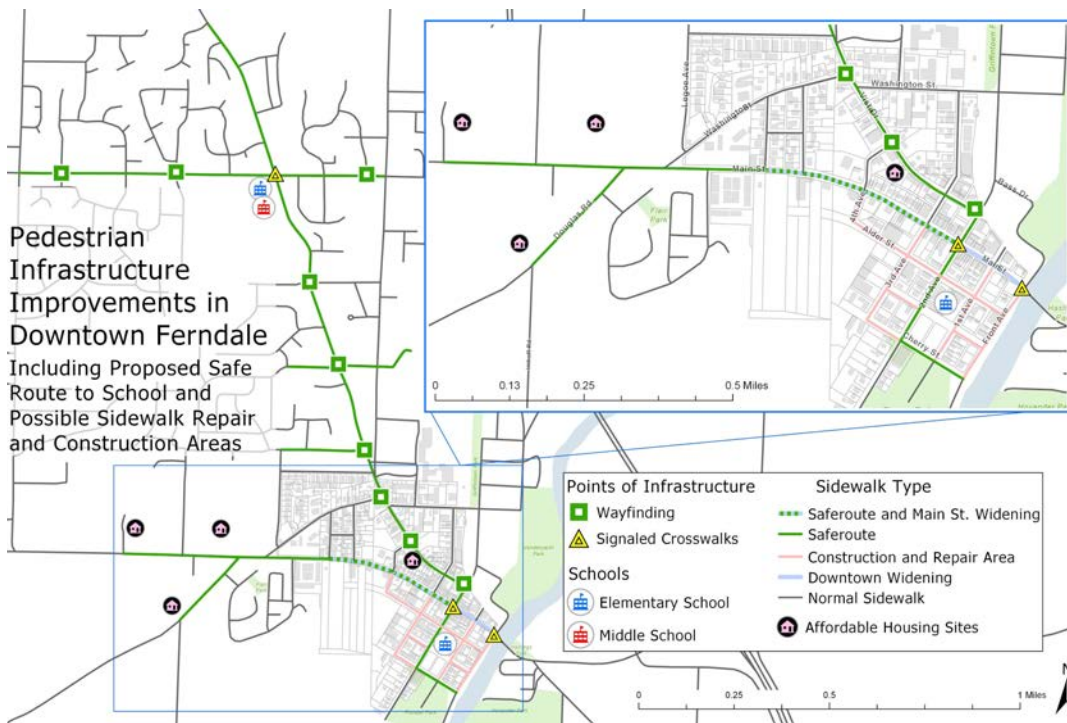
Improving and constructing sidewalks to safe route standards should be prioritized in the second phase of sidewalk construction and repair. This is discussed further in the following section.

Sidewalk Construction and Repair of Linkages: Sidewalk repair and construction will begin with projects identified as the top priority during Phase 1. Sidewalks on safe routes must take priority in order to ensure their safety and continuity. Sidewalks on safe routes are set to standards higher than normal design standards. These sidewalks are necessary for safe routes, but also will improve connectivity to the downtown.

Repair and construction of connectivity will improve walkability from peripheral areas into the downtown to provide more access.

2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall & Plaza: The Ferndale City Center Plan calls for closing 2nd Avenue to vehicles, making it a primary pedestrian destination. Public space fosters social interaction and access to leisure. Creating spaces for pedestrians to linger will increase their time spent in the downtown. Additionally, creating a pedestrian-only space separates walkers from vehicle traffic and its noise pollution, further emphasizing a focus on pedestrian comfort and experience (Passchier-Vermeer W & Passchier W F, 2000; Seto, Holt, Rivard, & Bhatia, 2007).

A significant step in the construction and development of the pedestrian mall is demolishing the City Council Chambers to make room for a plaza. Preliminary grant writing



4.9 Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements and Sidewalk Repair Recommendations.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

and construction and design approvals can move forward, once a demolition date has been determined. Establishing interested parties and investors is a key aspect of the project.

Closing 2nd Avenue will be a gradual process, with its final steps being installation of amenities such as benches, trash cans, and bicycle racks. To provide a thriving destination for the downtown, ideally this project would be completed within Phase 2, but may continue into the early stages of Phase 3.

Sidewalk Widening: The goal of sidewalk widening is to create increased space for pedestrian traffic, as well as give businesses options to provide outdoor features such as seating or displays. Sidewalk widening must occur early in Phase 2, before the construction of the median begins. This will ensure adequate room for traffic flow during construction.

Widening is recommended for Main Street from 1st Avenue to Hamlin Avenue, with priority being between 1st and 2nd Avenues. On 2nd Avenue south of Main Street would also be prioritized to continue the continuity of pedestrian space from the pedestrian mall.

Phase 3 (110 Years): Post Thornton Street Overpass Project Completion and Long Term Projects

Second Avenue Pedestrian Mall & Plaza Completion: The pedestrian mall will be completed by Phase 3. Development in the area will be increasing, and the pedestrian street will create a formal destination that puts pedestrians at the center of the downtown atmosphere. *Safe*

Route Evaluation: To continue improving safe routes to school, install signaled crosswalks and continue to communicate with area residents. Collect data to review routes and update the program as needed.

Sidewalk Widening Completion: Downtown sidewalk widening will be completed and public amenities will be added.

Mid-Street Crosswalks: A smaller project that will be introduced in Phase 3 is increased crossing points across Main Street. These mid-street crosswalks will emphasize further walkability, and utilize alleyways as other routes to popular downtown plazas and parks.

Pedestrian Bump outs on Nooksack River Bridge - Preliminary Stage: Construction of bump outs on the bridge will be a long term project, but could increase pedestrian walkability to the east side of the river. Preliminary steps will be identifying funding sources and conceptual designs, followed by engineering drawings, impact assessments, and establishing a timeline of construction.

Phase 4 (9 Years): Large Infrastructure Projects into the Future

Pedestrian Bump outs on Nooksack River Bridge: Construction of the bump outs on the bridge will be completed within this phase. Construction will include creating a support system for the bump outs, while also keeping the bridge open to traffic. Final steps will include adding amenities and wayfinding.

Creating a stopping point on the river bridge will also create a place for pedestrians to take advantage of natural scenery and the beauty that surrounds Ferndale.

Continued Maintenance: Continued maintenance of pedestrian facilities for the future enjoyment of Ferndale’s walkable spaces.

4.2 Budget

Detailed cost estimates available in the online report as Appendix A.

4.3 Funding Sources

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program: Washington State Department of Transportation offers funding for Safe Route Construction. Funding is allocated to projects from a pot of \$20 million. The program also offers education to schools as well as infrastructure funding. SRTS offers consultation and extensive training courses, as well as data collection that is used nationwide (WSDOT Safe Routes to School, 2019).

BUILD Discretionary Grant: United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has \$900 million available for many types of infrastructure improvement projects. Half of the funding is set aside for rural areas. The biggest grant award is \$25 million, and there is a \$90 Million cap for an entire state (USDOT Build Grant, 2019).

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) - Sidewalk Program: The urban TIB grant for sidewalks has \$5 million available for sidewalk and ADA accessibility improvements. Projects must be on a WSDOT designated arterial or collector road. TIB specifies that projects have to be transportation focused rather than recreation. TIB has a scoring sheet for applicants that is rated on a point system for different attributes of the site area (Transportation Improvement Board, 2019).

4M MULTIMODAL TRAIL NETWORK

The City and residents have shown interest in a multimodal trail loop that would connect residents to the parks and amenities found throughout the downtown area. A multimodal trail can be used by residents and visitors who want to walk, bicycle, skateboard, or scooter. A suggested route is presented in Figure 4.10, which uses both existing trails as well as on-street bike lanes to create a loop. However, public input to identify the final trail route is critical for developing the best routes for families and visitors to enjoy. This will also ensure that any specific local knowledge residents have is included.

The multimodal trail section focuses primarily on connectivity and accessibility to the trail network rather than specific trail improvements. For specific trail improvements, please refer to Section 5: Plazas, Parks, Trails and Natural Hazards. A major piece of the trail network will be a connection between the existing Centennial Riverwalk Park and Vanderyacht Park under the Main Street bridge. Existing trails and a

potential trail route can be found in Figure 4.9. Additional improvements identified for the multimodal trail network include:

- Signage promoting existing and future parks and trails.
- Safety improvements to stop auto traffic along the trail route.
- A boardwalk through the wetlands.
- A pedestrian bridge over the Nooksack River.

4M Implementation Phases

Phase 1 (Present-2 Years): Preliminary Steps, Data Collection, and Inexpensive Projects

Identify Trail Route: Hold public meetings to identify potential alternative trail routes, and consider public input for local knowledge.

New Trail Access Points: Conduct a feasibility study to assess the potential for a connection to Flair Park and the nearby 55+ community. Providing adequate access to existing and future trails could reduce vehicle-based trips to and from recreational activities.

Wayfinding Signage: Create and install wayfinding signs. Creative signage will help solidify the trail network as a community goal.

Trailhead Parking: Install signage and conduct community awareness campaigns. People visiting the parks should be directed to park at existing trailhead parking located at Pioneer Park, VanderYacht Park, and the Ferndale Library to ensure the parking along Main Street and the surrounding blocks is available for retail and residential parking.



Figure 4.10 Proposed Multimodal Trail

Bollards at 2nd Avenue and Washington Street: Install bollards to stop vehicle traffic at 2nd Avenue and Washington Street and promote multimodal trail use only. Traffic accessing VanderYacht Park or the residential neighborhood adjacent to Vanderyacht Park will need to use Willard Street as the main vehicle entrance.

Bollards Along Front Avenue Adjacent to Rally Car Wash

Install bollards to stop automobile traffic from using the Rally Car Wash as a shortcut to Front Avenue. This will ensure pedestrian safety.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

Phase 2 (20 Years): Post Thornton Street Operations Opening and Short Term Preliminary Projects

Create Trail Network Along Washington Street and Vista Drive: Acquire right of way (where applicable), clear pathways, paint trail routes, and place wayfinding signage along the trail where necessary for trails between Washington and Vista drives.

Bike/Pedestrian Demarcation of Trail: Paint distinct pedestrian and cycling lanes along paved portions of the trail network, specifically along the Riverwalk. Separate pathways promote safety for pedestrians and users of other modes of transportation.

Riverwalk Connection - Under Bridge: Develop plans and identify funding sources for a paved underpass beneath the Main Street bridge. Connecting the riverwalk trail to Vanderyacht Park will complete the loop trail system. Beginning development of this portion of the trail system early will provide the City the best opportunity to apply for 2020 grants that can fund and complete the Riverwalk connection for access to residents in new downtown developments

Wetlands Boardwalk: Construct a boardwalk over the wetlands between the Library and Pioneer Park to provide a connection for the trail network. Construction of a boardwalk will create a destination draw for visitors looking to enjoy the trail.

Phase 3 (11-20 Years): Post Thornton Street Operations Project Completion and Long Term Projects

Riverwalk Connection (Continuation): Due to the costly nature and labor intensive requirements, the Riverwalk Connection between the plaza on 1st and Main and VanderYacht Park may require completion during Phase 3.

Phase 4 (20+ Years): Laying Infrastructure Projects into the Future

Pedestrian Bridge across Nooksack River: Construct a pedestrian bridge across the Nooksack River to connect the shopping opportunities east of the Nooksack River with downtown. If feasible in the future, converting the railroad tracks to a trail will allow direct connection between Griffintown, VanderYacht, and Hovander Parks and create a pedestrian bridge without having to construct a new bridge or wasting infrastructure

Wayfinding signage from Hovander Park to East-Downtown Shopping Area: Including wayfinding signage will be an integral part of creating a downtown area that does not rely on automobile traffic, but instead allows for travel along multimodal pathways.

Appendix B Funding

Detailed cost estimates available in the online report as Appendix A.

Appendix C Funding Sources

A number of funding sources are outlined in the following section. Additional funding sources specific to the design and execution of the multimodal trail can be found in the “Trails” Section of the Parks, Plazas and Trails Element found in Section 5.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA): Funds projects that for public access to the waterfront. The Riverwalk Connection project in Phase II is eligible for the ALEA Grant. The City can apply for the ALEA Grant in 2020, with the state providing 50% matching funds for acquisition of land or easements, development, and renovation. The maximum amount of money that can be applied is \$1 million for acquisition or \$500,000 for restoration and development. For combined projects, the total available is \$1 million with no more than \$500,000 used for development or restoration.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): Is a state grant that funds the preservation and development of parks, trails, and wildlife lands. The boardwalk and unpaved path to Pioneer Park would be ideal projects for the grant. The state provides 50% matching funds for land acquisition, renovation, and development for public outdoor facilities. The LWCF Legacy Partnership Program is designed for localities with 50,000+ people, and is a separate federal grant.

4. Mobility, Streetscapes & Parking

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP): Funds projects like the paved multimodal trail through downtown Ferndale. The WWRP is for developing recreation areas for growing populations, making Ferndale an ideal candidate. The state provides 50% matching funds to acquire, develop, or renovate non-motorized trails that provide connections to neighborhoods. Ferndale can apply for these grants in even years, making 2020 and the Phase II of development an ideal starting point.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Ferndale has the opportunity to provide its residents and visitors with a range of options for enjoying the community, from downtown plazas, to parks and trails. The scenic Nooksack River runs alongside the town, which is bordered by several parks offering people access to this valuable resource. To address future development and population growth, the Plazas, Parks, and Trails Element of the Ferndale City Center Plan outlines recommendations, phasing, cost estimates and funding sources.

Hazard mitigation for development at risk of flooding, earthquakes or other natural hazards is another element of the plan that is examined. The aim is to protect Ferndale’s residents, enhance the environment, and provide quality habitat for native salmon populations in the Nooksack River.

5.1.1 Implementation Phases

- Phase 1 within 2 years
- Phase 2 2-10 years
- Phase 3 10-20 years
- Phase 4 20+ years

5.1.2 Element Goals

Goal 1 Create an inviting public sphere for pedestrians to socialize and gather for events.

Goal 2 Provide unique and attractive recreational amenities within Ferndale’s downtown core.

Goal 3 Enhance the Ferndale trail network by ensuring connectivity and accessibility.

Goal 4 Update flood policy in Ferndale to reflect current understandings of flood risk in order to accommodate dense, mixed-use development in the downtown core.

5.2 Major Improvements

Plazas

- Beautification of streetscape
- Creation of 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza
- Revitalization of Ferndale’s downtown alleyways

Parks

- Creation of community & children’s gardens at Vanderyacht Park
- Addition & replacement of amenities at VanderYacht Park
 - Playground equipment
 - Fitness station
 - Outdoor seating
 - Grills
 - Basketball & Volleyball Courts
 - Restroom
 - Picnic shelter

Trails

- Extension of existing trails to connect with other trails
- Surface upgrades to encourage multi-modal use and flood mitigation

Hazards

- Policy Reform: Community Rating System (CRS)
- Slater Road Flooding
- Retrofit of Wastewater Treatment Plant

5.3 PLAZAS

Plazas create places to socialize and relax, as well as provide space for events, supporting a vibrant city (Low, 1997). The plaza element improves spaces for pedestrians by developing safe and walkable streetscapes along with making gathering spaces. This section discusses overall streetscape improvements, the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza proposal, and opportunities for alleyway enhancements.

5.4 Recommendations

Streetscape Improvements

Recommended streetscape improvements in the downtown include adding features such as street trees, a clock tower and parklets (Figure 5.1). Widening sidewalks along Main Street would make space for outdoor seating, bike racks and decorative planters.



Figure 5.1 Example of parklet (Rosenfield, 2018)

2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza

In addition to general streetscape improvements, a large plaza is planned as part of the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza. Outdoor seating and art sculptures will create an engaging open space for pedestrians to use in the middle of the day. For a more in-depth discussion, please see section 6 of the report.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards



Figure 5.2 Alleyway and Plaza locations.

Alleyways

Alleyways can contribute to a safe and walkable pedestrian environment, and they can contribute to building an overall sense of community when revitalized and used for activities beyond deliveries (Yoshii, 2016). Improvements to alleyways could increase the amount of usable public space, improve pedestrian connectivity, expand business opportunities,

provide environmental benefits, and enhance the human scale of the downtown (UTS, 2019). Simple additions like planter boxes, lighting, greenwalls, murals, and outdoor seating can transition underused alleys into socially viable spaces. Six alleyways within the downtown are recommended for redeveloping: Bike Alley, McKay’s Alley, Antique Alley, Bank Alley, Thai Alley, Hamlin Ave Alley (suggested names are just placeholders; the community

should ultimately decide what they should be called). Figure 5.2 highlights the alleyways in this proposal. The phased development plan identifies actions and timeframes.

Phased Development

Streetscape Phases

Phase 1 (within 2 years)

Outdoor Seating - Install benches in key locations downtown: Currently, there are few seating options in Ferndale’s downtown. Street furniture has been shown to have a positive effect on pedestrian traffic in other communities (Ewing et al., 2016), and is a fairly simple and inexpensive action to undertake (Bushell, 2013).

Street Trees - Plant street trees in the central core: Trees provide many environmental and economic benefits such as reducing stormwater runoff and air pollutant deposition as well as improving real estate values (Soares, 2011).

Flower Planters/Pots - Install flower pots and planters throughout downtown: Flowers and other vegetation can make the walking experience much more exciting. Flower pots add color, while planters on corners and bordering streets can serve as barriers for bike racks and street furniture. Creating an environment that is pleasing for pedestrians is important in cultivating the culture of Ferndale.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

Phase 2 (years)

Parklets: Parklets expand the pedestrian space farther than the sidewalk and gives residents areas to interact with one another. Many businesses have seen increases in sales after installing parklets in front of their properties (Cho, 2013).

Bulb-out: Bulb-outs provide small social spaces where they meet the sidewalk (FWHA). Street furniture, planter boxes and bike storage can be located near the bulb-outs and can direct pedestrians toward businesses or plazas.

Clock Tower: A clock tower at the entrance of downtown could be a meeting and gathering space for community members.

Phase 3 (years)

Sidewalk Widening: Increase sidewalk width for more uses by business owners and the public (Figure 5.3).

Main Street sidewalks are currently 10 feet wide but an extra few feet could help make pedestrian movement easier, and allow for additional uses on the sidewalks. For example, a larger sidewalk width (e.g., 14 plus feet) allows for outdoor seating by restaurants while pedestrians can still walk by without feeling crowded (FWHA).

Phase 4 (years)

Maintenance and Upkeep: Evaluate amenities for general upkeep, maintenance and replacement.

2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza Phases

Phase 1 (within 2 years)

2nd Avenue Closure: Close 2nd Avenue to vehicles by placing bollards and planter boxes at the intersection of 2nd Avenue & Main Street along with Vista Drive & 2nd Avenue.

Infrastructure Improvements: Install benches to provide areas for outdoor seating and promote community gathering.

Phase 2 (years)

Infrastructure and Landscaping:

1. Install lighting throughout the plaza.
2. Plant street trees to create shade, perform stormwater retention, and provide a sense of enclosure.
3. Install a bioswale bordering the railroad tracks to catch runoff.
4. Add trellises along 2nd Avenue to provide shelter for outdoor seating and vendor stands.
5. Repave the area with permeable materials to reduce runoff and minimize environmental degradation.

Phase 3 (years)

Public Art: Add public art to reflect Ferndale's culture and create a sense of identity.

Phase 4 (years)

Maintenance and Upkeep: Evaluate amenities for general upkeep, maintenance and replacement.



Figure 5.3 Street widening leading to increased pedestrian uses

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

Alleyways Phases

Phase 1 (within 2 years)

Improvements for Bike & McKay's alleyways: Add planter boxes, window boxes, lighting, and murals.

Phase 2 (2-4 years)

Improvements for Bike, McKay's Bank, Thai and Antique alleyways: See Table 5.1

Phase 3 (5+ years)

Improvements for Thai Alley: Install bioswales to control stormwater runoff, and add rain barrels in to collect water for use at Ferndale Floral.

Costs and Funding Options

There are a number of costs associated with the recommended streetscapes. In total, the costs associated with the recommendation will cost over \$1 million. Detailed cost estimates for improvements available in the online report as Appendix A.

Surface Transportation Block Grant: The Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation Block Grant program funds projects that improve "any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals" (FHWA, 2017). Alleyway improvements may qualify for this grant.

Brownfield Grants: An On-Site Assessment Grant for brownfields can provide funding for planning activities, community outreach and cleanup plans (EPA, 2017). The 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza would qualify for this grant as

Table 5.1 Phase 2 alleyway additions

| Alleyway | Planter Boxes | Window Planter Boxes | Lighting | Greenwall | Bike Rack | Seating | Mural | Canopy | Repaving | Gateway | Walk up window | Painted Hopscotch | Rain Catchment |
|----------|---------------|----------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|--------|----------|---------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Bike | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | |
| McKay's | | | | x | | x | x | | x | | x | | |
| Bank | x | | x | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Thai | x | x | x | | | x | | | x | | | | x |
| Antique | x | x | x | | | x | | | x | | | x | |

the City Council Chambers would have to be torn down and cleaned up before being turned into the plaza.

Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)

- *Sidewalk Program:* The Washington Transportation Improvement Board takes the state's gas tax and distributes grant funding for transportation projects. Sidewalk widening and bollards placement along the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza may qualify for this grant.

AARP Community Challenge: AARP's grant program provides funds for projects related to housing, transportation and public spaces. One of the goals of these grants includes creating a livable community for all age groups. Streetscape and alleyway improvements that emphasize ADA requirements and accessible spaces for all ages would qualify for this grant.

Neighborhood Plaza Partnership Program:

In New York City plazas are created and community organizations maintain and program them. In Ferndale, for example, community organizations such as the Whatcom Horticultural Society could maintain planter boxes and run events in the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Plaza.

Heart of the Community: Southwest Airlines and Project for Public Spaces created a grant that can be used for bringing life to public spaces.

Our Town Grant: The National Endowment for the Arts provides this grant for projects that "integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities" (NEA, 2019). Projects must have a partnership between a local government entity and nonprofit organization. Funds can range from \$25,000 to \$200,000 and must be matched by the applicant.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

Made on Main Street Fund: A partnership between Main Street America and OneMainFinancial provides \$25,000 grants for beautification projects. The project must serve the community, be completed within 24 months of grant funding and within the grant budget.

Main Street Tax Credit Program: Businesses on a Main Street can donate to the Main Street Trust Fund and “may receive a credit for 75% of the value of a contribution made to an eligible Washington Main Street Community or 50% of the value of the contribution made to the Main Street Trust Fund” (DAHP, 2018).

Bench Sponsorship: Bench installation and maintenance costs can be reduced with an adopt-a-bench program. The individual who paid for the bench receives a plaque placed on the bench. Using this method could help reduce the total cost to the city for the installation of benches on sidewalks.

SPARKS

Parks provide urban residents with access to recreational opportunities. Ferndale’s parks offer a variety of unique attractions, but also contain ample open space that could be further developed. The proposal outlines ways to utilize open space within VanderYacht Park to add additional amenities, which could be appealing to more residents.

SR Recommendations

A number of improvements are recommended for VanderYacht Park, which are listed here, and shown in Figure 5.4:



Figure 5.4 VanderYacht park additions

Riverfront Improvements

- Remove and replace invasive plant species along the riverfront with native species. This would improve the view of the river and enhance habitat for fish, waterfowl and other animals.
- Install fencing along the southern half of VanderYacht’s Riverfront Trail to protect vegetation from people and animals. The fencing would end at the southernmost riverfront access point.
- Install decorative flower pots and garden

beds along the walkways. Flowers and plants species should be selected to support pollinators, for added benefits to the surrounding ecosystem.

Gardens

- Install community and children’s gardens to add space for low-cost garden plots, giving residents access to fresh fruits and vegetables, the opportunity to connect with other members of the community, and a way for kids to learn about and interact with the wonders of their local environment.

Recreation Uses

- Install a playground, basketball and volleyball courts, or other recreational amenities that allow for additional recreational spaces within VanderYacht. A workout station would complement the existing loop trail within the park, offering space where runners could stop and do pull-ups, sit-ups, and dips. A picnic shelter could offer shaded areas for gathering, and could be used to hold different events.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

5.1 Hazard Development

Phase 1 (within 2 years)

Riverwalk Trail Beautification: Remove the invasives, replace with native species, and install a fence. The fencing, added to provide a buffer, would not be continuous, and would have several openings to allow access to the riverfront. The addition of flower pots and planters would create an aesthetically pleasing landscape for visitors. Improving the view of the river from the park would encourage visitors to stop and take a break at the benches or tables that currently exist.

Riverwalk Seating & Grills: Replace picnic tables, benches, and grills.

Phase 2 (2-4 years)

Reroute frisbee golf course: The course could be rerouted around the additions or could be moved to Hovander Park.

Children & Community Garden: Community gardens allow residents to collaboratively work together to grow fresh produce for their families and local food banks (Figure 5.5). Children's gardens provide an interactive space for learning and exploration of the environment (Gertruderocks, 2019).

Playground Equipment: Playgrounds provide children with varying physical, social, and emotional benefits. They help to improve flexibility, balancing, and motor skills and provide spaces for socialization, teaching of social norms and improving social skills (Whitman, 2018).



Figure 5.5 Potential design of VanderYacht community garden

Workout station: Workout stations in parks encourage active outdoor fitness (Attwood, 2014).

Restrooms: The above additions and attractions will likely increase visitation rates to VanderYacht Park, resulting in the need for public restrooms.

Phase 3 (4-6 years)

Picnic Shelter: Install a picnic shelter. The shelter can be used to host parties, picnics, and other events. The shelter should include several tables and BBQ grills.

Sports Courts: Add basketball and volleyball courts. Currently, there are limited opportunities to play these sports outside of school grounds.

Phase 4 (6+ years)

Maintenance & upkeep: Evaluate amenities and upgrade/replace those that require attention.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

5C Costs and Funding Options

Detailed cost estimates for improvements available in the online report as Appendix A.

Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP): The Washington Recreation and Conservation Office WWRP provides funding for construction of outdoor recreational facilities. The city of Ferndale can apply for up to \$500,000 of the costs associated with adding a play area, picnic shelter, and restrooms to VanderYacht Park. The City would be required to match 50% of the award (WARCO, 2019).

Youth Athletic Facilities (YAC): The YAC grant offered by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office provides funding for sports facilities like basketball and volleyball courts. The awards range from \$25,000-350,000, with a 50% match required (WARCO, 2019).

Park Impact Fee: Parks can act as a central amenity and attraction for urban redevelopment when located in close proximity to downtowns as they offer different economic benefits including (NCCED, 2014):

- Increased property values
- Increased resident and business attraction
- Increased local spending and support of local businesses
- Improved mental & physical health

Parks surrounding Ferndale’s downtown core, like VanderYacht and Pioneer, have the potential to provide these economic benefits. The City of Ferndale could require new downtown development to pay a park impact fee to cover the costs of new amenities to VanderYacht Park, and ongoing maintenance. This fee would be used to improve the parks within Ferndale, increase visitation, and support economic development.

Community Build Program: To minimize up to 30% of the costs associated with installing playground equipment, the city could host a community build event, where residents of Ferndale work together to install the equipment themselves (Landscape Structures, n.d.).

Adopt A Spot- Volunteer Invasive Removal: The City of Arlington, VA has an Adopt a Spot program, where community members receive training in invasive species identification and removal techniques (Archer, 2015). The City of Ferndale could create a similar program, to establish volunteer events at VanderYacht Park.

Farm to School Grant Program: The Farm to School Grant Program funds projects that improve access to local foods in schools. The grant could be used to cover costs of the proposed community garden, as the project can be used as a space for agricultural education by local schools (USDA, 2019).

Washington Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): The City of Ferndale could apply for this grant to cover the costs of the proposed community garden. The grant is capped at \$500,000, and the city would be required to match 50% of the award (WARCO, 2019).

Seed Money: Seed Money is a non-profit organization that provides both grants, and a platform for crowdfunding local garden projects. It is referred to as crowdgranting, where projects can collect individual donations and are also reviewed and considered to receive grants of \$200-\$400 (Seed Money, 2019).

5I TRAILS

The goal of the trail element is to provide the downtown with an expanded multi-use trail system for pedestrians and cyclists. All new trail connections should be ADA compliant, with firm and stable surfaces, accessible from trailhead access points at various points in the downtown. Figure 5.6 shows the proposed route.



Figure 5.6 Proposed multi-modal trail system

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

5.1 Recommendation

The first step is to fill in some of the gaps among the existing trail infrastructure. This includes connecting Riverwalk Park to Pioneer Park at Star Park (where trails meet Ferndale Road). Then there is continuing the current Riverwalk under or over the Main Street bridge, and into VanderYacht Park where there will be a similar promenade style Riverwalk along the Nooksack River. From there wayfinding and signage improvements are key to helping guide people through the new trail infrastructure. As these projects become developed the focus will shift to maintenance and upkeep.

5.2 Hazard Development

Phase 1 (within 2 years)

Trail from Riverwalk to Star Park: Extend existing gravel path along Front Avenue/ Ferndale Road to Star Park entrance to connect to Pioneer Park trails.

Phase 2 (2-4 years)

Extending Riverwalk Trail: Continue the Riverwalk Trail under or over the Main Street bridge, connecting it to the existing trails at VanderYacht Park. An underpass under the bridge requires an eight foot clearance above the Nooksack River (Rails to Trails Conservancy).

The Riverwalk Trail surface should be upgraded from the south edge to Star/Pioneer Park to increase usability for multi-modal travel with a smoother, porous, solid surface.

Phase 3 (4-6 years)

ADA Compliance: Ensure and/or improve ADA

accessibility between existing and new trails.

Phase 4 (6+ years)

Trail surface upkeep and maintenance.

5.3 Funding

America Walks Community Change Grant: Supports efforts to create safe and accessible places to walk and be physically active (America Walks, 2019).

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): Funds public outdoor recreation areas and

facilities. Grants support acquisition and development of recreation areas and conservation lands. Public use is required. They provide a match up to 50% on \$500,000 (Trail Grants, 2019).

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP): Provides funds to acquire, develop, or renovate trails. The program is for non-motorized trails that provide connections to neighborhoods, communities, or regional trails. There is a 50% match required (Trail Grants, 2019).

Table 5.2 shows funding options from the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Table 5.2 Federal Trail Funding Sources

| Funding Source | Applicable Projects |
|--|---|
| Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and cyclist over/underpasses • Shared use paths/transportation trails |
| Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) (loan) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/cyclist under/overpasses • Shared use trails |
| Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/cyclist over/underpasses • Trail maps • Shared use trails |
| Assiated Transit Improvement (ATI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/cyclist over/underpasses • Trail maps • Shared use trails |
| Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) (some restrictions apply) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/cyclist under/overpasses • Trail maps • Shared use trails* |
| Highway Safety Improvement Program (HISP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/cyclist under/overpasses • Shared use trails |

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

5N NATURAL HAZARDS

The Ferndale City Center Plan calls for mitigating the risks of flooding in the downtown area. As Ferndale continues to improve their downtown through increased density and mixed-use development, flood mitigation will be crucial to ensuring that development in the area is sustainable, affordable, and most importantly, safe.

A significant portion of downtown Ferndale is in the 100-year floodplain (Figure 5.7). The plan recommends that any new development within this area should comply with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines for flood mitigation options. The City Center Plan recommends adopting FEMA's January 2019 updated floodplain maps, which encompass significantly more space in and around the downtown into both the 100-year flood area and the floodway (FEMA, 2019).

The plan also recommends taking several actions for increasing community resilience through FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). An example of an affordable action includes revising zoning ordinances, such as elevation requirements. Elevation recommendations are determined by base flood elevation (BFE), which measures the likelihood of a flood occurrence in a hundred years. Requiring building elevations above flood risk can be fairly inexpensive for homeowners and the city, and minimize loss of life and property.

5NR Recommendations

The Ferndale City Center Plan calls for several strategies to address flooding risks in the downtown, including the introduction of new floodplain policies as well as improvements to infrastructure. The plan, produced in March

2019, outlined several hazard mitigation tactics. In this section, we outline several key refinements to the proposed Hazard Mitigation Plan, which expand on strategies for encouraging dense development in the downtown core, floodplain policies as well as improvements to infrastructure.

Costs of not acting

Flood mitigation is a crucial aspect of enhancing downtown Ferndale. The economic cost of not performing flood mitigation activities is greater than the cost of flood mitigation (Woznak, 2019). Flooding can damage local businesses, residences and critical facilities, which can be damaging to the community's future growth and economic development. Flooding can shut down businesses and critical facilities for days or weeks, resulting in millions of dollars in lost revenue (Woznak, 2019). Areas that experience frequent or severe flood damage are a risk to developers.

Frequent floods that cause damage to residences may cause residents to relocate to other areas, potentially weakening the Ferndale community (Woznak, 2019). By retrofitting existing buildings and constructing residences above base flood elevation, in addition to reducing impervious surfaces, Ferndale will have the base for developing a thriving, safe community.

5P Planned Development

Phase I (within 2 years) - Ordinance Changes

FEMA provides incentives through CRS for both municipalities and property owners to participate in flood mitigation activities. There are a number of policy changes the City of Ferndale has yet to implement, which could strengthen the community's CRS status and

create opportunities for significant National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) discounts to owners of buildings in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). The following policy recommendations will improve Ferndale's CRS status:

Adopt more restrictive standard floodway mapping: Use the January mapping standards to designate floodplains. The 2003 maps are not reflective of current flood risk in Ferndale. This update will ensure owners and investors have an understanding of the risks flooding poses to the downtown area.

Incorporate flood mitigation into design standards: One of these strategies is to require elevation standards which restrict all use of space below base floor elevation (BFE). An alternative is to allow mixed-use development with a stipulation requiring wet-proofing mitigation. Wet-proofing would require mixed-use structures to control water movement through the bottom floor of the building, using flood vents and flood resistant materials.

Preserve floodplain areas as open space.

Track CRS credit improvements

Limit development in floodplains to low-density uses: Ideally no development would be located in areas which have high flood risk. However, Ferndale is a special case, in that significant portions of the downtown are located within these areas. The city should continue to expand the presence of dense development in the urban core in tandem with other floodplain requirements.

Prevent disruptions to shorelines, stream channels and their banks using appropriate setbacks.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

Adopt a one-foot freeboard requirement:

Additional height requirement above the BFE that provides a margin of safety against extraordinary or unknown risks. This reduces the risk of flooding and makes the structure eligible for a lower flood insurance rate.

Require foundation protection certificates:

Without a safe and sound foundation, an elevated building can suffer damage from a flood due to erosion, scour or settling. CRS provides credits to cities which require foundations to be approved by engineer certification.

Phase 2 Goals - Low Impact Development Standards

Require Green Infrastructure Design Standards for New Development: Green infrastructure design standards require developers to comply with Low Impact Development Standards (LIDS). LIDS consist of using permeable surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff and creating green spaces to absorb excess water (Low Impact Development Inc., 2007). The plan recommends changes to the Capital Facilities element of the Ferndale Comprehensive Plan, which can incorporate LIDS throughout the city to reduce overall levels of flooding over time and further Ferndale's progress in CRS programming.

Among the various LIDS which could be included as requirements for new developments are bioswales and rain gardens (Figure 5.8). Bioswales and rain gardens are multipurpose, they beautify outdoor spaces, help to purify stormwater runoff, and can be monitored for CRS credit due to their aid in reducing flooding severity (Naturally Resilient Communities, n.d.)

Require permeable ground materials in all new developments: Permeable concrete, permeable pavers, and bioswales are crucial to managing stormwater runoff and flood control (Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2010). Incorporating permeable surfaces into all new developments contributes to overall flooding reduction over time.

Phase 3 Goals - Slater Road Improvements

Slater Road is an essential route for Ferndale residents. According to community input, the road floods almost every year from the railroad tracks to Ferndale Road. Slater Road is located outside of Ferndale city limits, but has a severe negative impact on traffic inside of the city when it is flooded. Possible improvements include increasing and improving drainage ditches, or installing passive flood barriers to control breaks in storm surge flooding (Figure 5.8). Although these improvements are possible, much of Slater Road crosses Whatcom County unincorporated areas and sovereign Lummi Nation territory. The plan recommends further collaboration between the City of Ferndale, Whatcom County, and Lummi Nation in order to complete effective and necessary improvements to this road.

Phase 4 Goals - Protecting Critical Infrastructure

Retrofit Wastewater Treatment Plant: This structure is well below base flood elevation (BFE) and could pose serious health and safety risks for the Ferndale community if inundated by a 100-year or 500-year flood event. Many communities opt to relocate critical facilities under these circumstances, but because of the necessity to locate this facility adjacent to the Nooksack River, significant retrofits are the most

cost effective, safe solution for addressing this issue.

Replace existing surfaces with permeable materials: As Ferndale completes mitigation activities related to flooding, redevelopment of existing public infrastructure would supplement reduction of risks in the downtown core. Civil engineering firms have access to forms of asphalt, pavement, and concrete which are permeable and allow water to absorb into the ground underneath. In areas where development is safe from liquefaction, replacing existing materials with permeable ones would reduce flood risks and achieve CRS goals.

SCOSTS and Funding Options

Detailed cost estimates for improvements available in the online report as Appendix A.

FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM): The City of Ferndale is eligible for FEMA's PDM because they have a qualifying Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (FEMA, 2018). The Washington State Hazard Mitigation Officer can help with the application process and provide detailed information (FEMA, 2018).

Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA): Ferndale may apply through Washington State as a sub-applicant for this grant to receive funding for buildings insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA prioritizes communities who participate in CRS and other flood mitigation activities.

Flood Control Assistance Account Program (FCAAP): Provides funding for floodplain management planning and implementation. Qualifying projects include those following FEMA guidelines and would further Ferndale's participation in CRS.

5. Plazas, Parks, Trails & Hazards

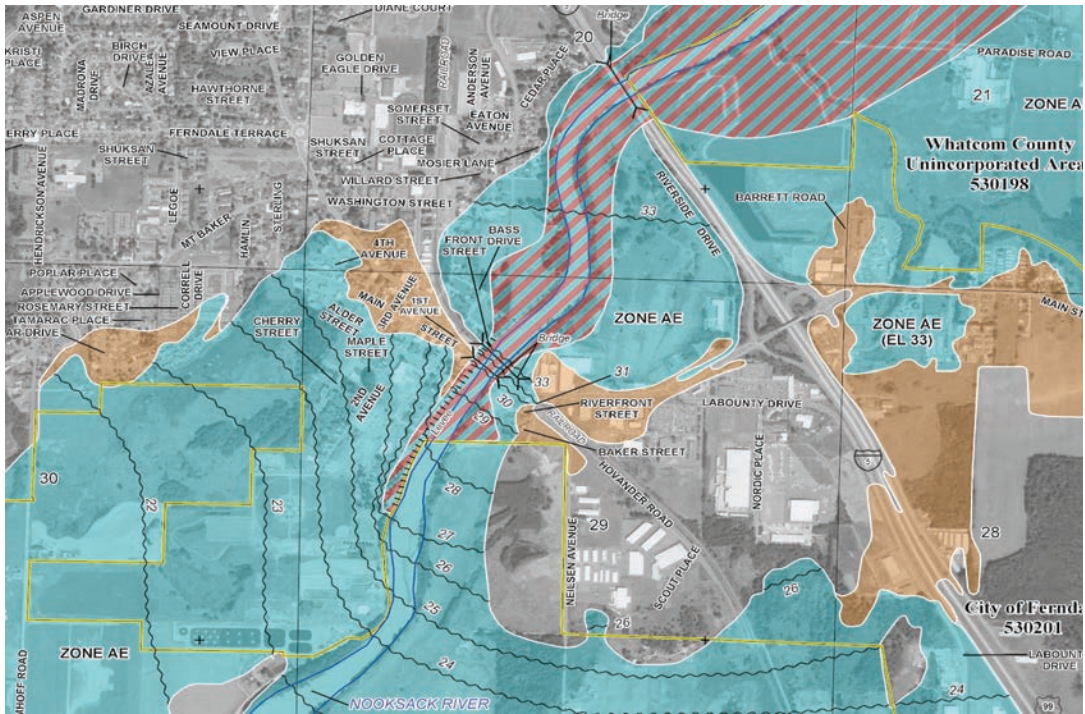
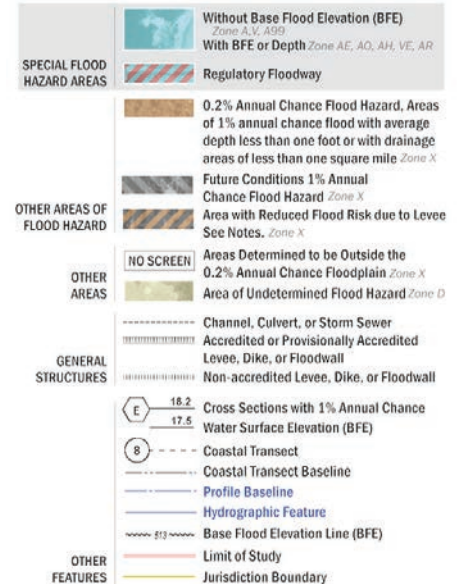


Figure 5.7 FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) of Ferndale, WA (FEMA, 2019)

FLOOD HAZARD INFORMATION

SEE FIS REPORT FOR ZONE DESCRIPTIONS AND INDEX MAP
 THE INFORMATION DEPICTED ON THIS MAP AND SUPPORTING
 DOCUMENTATION ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN DIGITAL FORMAT AT
[HTTP://MSC.FEMA.GOV](http://MSC.FEMA.GOV)



Floodplains By Design: By the Washington State Department of Ecology, funds flood hazard reduction projects with an ecological restoration element (Department of Ecology, 2015). Local governments must match 20 percent of the funds they are granted by the state.

Safe Drinking Water Grants: Local governments are eligible to apply for these grants if their drinking water is at risk of being contaminated. In a 100-year flood or greater, the water supply for the City of Ferndale is at risk of being contaminated. Governments are responsible for matching 10-50 percent of the provided funds (Department of Ecology, 2018).

Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA): The City of Ferndale may apply through Washington state as a sub-applicant for this grant to receive funding for buildings insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA prioritizes communities who more thoroughly participate in CRS and other flood mitigation activities.



Figure 5.8 Demonstration of passive flood barrier on roadway (Floodbreak LLC)

6. Opportunity Sites

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Ferndale has the potential to attract multi-use development to the downtown core. Through careful analysis of data collected from Ferndale community members, insights from the Ferndale Planning Commission, and through research performed by WWU students, the project focused on four opportunity sites which will spur multi-use development and make downtown Ferndale a more exciting and interesting place to be (Figure 6.1). The development and completion of these sites will boost confidence in the downtown, leading to revitalization and further investment by existing and new businesses.

6.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

To optimize downtown revitalization, opportunity sites should be implemented in a phased manner. To create a focal point and gathering place downtown, the first phase will be the development of a Pedestrian Mall and Plaza on 2nd Avenue. This could help developers to see the exciting potential of the downtown core. The second phase is the Ferndale Gateway project, which could give the town some renown with a memorable entrance. The third phase is a mixed use housing development on Main Street to provide affordable and attractive housing downtown. Increased density, with more residents in the downtown, will create the feasibility for a grocery store, which is proposed for Phase 4.

6.2.1 Opportunity Site Descriptions

2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall and Plaza

The proposed Pedestrian Mall and Plaza are located between Vista and Main and 2nd and Main. The Plaza would be built on the city council chambers site. It would be accessible from the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall, and the alleyway between 1st and 2nd avenues on Main Street. The Plaza would provide a centralized pedestrian space in the downtown core. The Plaza project would include benches, native plants, trees, lighting, and a circular concrete structure that could be used both as a seating area and as planter boxes. The plaza linked with the alleyway and the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall would



Figure 6.1 Ferndale Opportunity Sites

6. Opportunity Sites

provide safe movement for pedestrians as well as provide a community gathering space and focal point for the downtown.

Ferndale Gateway

The Ferndale Gateway project spans Main Street, looking at the parcels to the north (currently where the car wash is located) and south (where Lyndale Glass is currently). Because this site is at the entrance to downtown, it will have “postcard appeal” for residents and visitors, and has the potential to inspire revitalization and further development in downtown Ferndale.

We recommend consolidating the parcels south of Main Street to create a binding site plan. This would allow developers more flexibility to determine what building footprints are most cost effective. Based on the Land Use Element’s recommendations, three to four story mixed use buildings with residential or office space above first floor commercial should be built. The intent is to increase downtown residential options, more office spaces, and more on-street shopping and dining opportunities. A clock tower could be added to one of the buildings, creating a landmark to improve the site’s appearance and appeal.

On the north side of Main Street, the parcel closest to the river should remain low-lying to protect views. This could be a covered parking lot, which could also be used for Ferndale’s farmers market, expanding it from Centennial Park. This could also justify the cost of building a pedestrian walkway under the bridge or over Main Street for better pedestrian connectivity. The parcel bordering 1st Street should be reserved for a three-story mixed use building with commercial on the bottom floor and housing/office space on top. For both sides of Main Street, rooftops should be used for outdoor seating to take advantage of the Mount Baker views.

Mixed-Use Housing on Main

To increase density and residential opportunities in downtown Ferndale, we recommend replacing seven single-family houses located on Main Street between Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue with a multifamily, mixed use housing development. The new development would feature a combination of retail, commercial and food on the first floor, with the upper stories being residential apartments ranging from one to four bedrooms. With the proximity to downtown and transit, these units will be appropriate for the implementation of affordable housing. This redevelopment would help Ferndale increase density in the downtown core, as well as provide more space for businesses to move in.

Mixed-Use Grocery Store

The strip mall on the corner of 3rd and Alder is an underused retail space with a lot of potential. We recommend construction of a mixed use building with a small-scale community grocery store on the first floor and residential units on the floors above. This development would promote walkability and support the increased density of residential development in the downtown.

According to a Be Well Placer, a community dashboard website for the county of Placer, California, the required population for a rural grocery store is 0.18 grocery stores per 1,000 people. Ferndale’s population is currently just above 14,000. Using this statistic, Ferndale could almost support three grocery stores. Ferndale currently has two grocery stores and with the proposed increase in density downtown, Ferndale would be able to support this third grocery store. This project is reliant on a sufficient population density in downtown Ferndale as a result of redevelopment and is not feasible to begin until then.

6.3 SITE 1: 2ND AVENUE PEDESTRIAN MALL AND PLAZA

The City of Ferndale could jumpstart downtown revitalization efforts by implementing the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall and Plaza, as outlined in the development phases.

6.3.1 Development Phases

Phase 1: (1-2 Years)

The city closes 2nd Avenue at the intersection with Main Street and at the junction of 2nd and Vista Drive by adding bollards.

- This area is currently zoned “City Center.” It would likely need to be re-zoned or granted a special use permit.
- Add benches and street trees along the closed street.

Phase 2: (2-10 Years)

City uses property it already owns (City Council Chamber parcel # 98425) as space to build pedestrian plaza.

- Demolish and remove Council Chambers.
- Construct plaza.

Phase 3: (10-20 Years)

Plaza maintenance and upkeep

6.3.2 Location & Renderings

Figure 6.2 shows the location of the proposed pedestrian mall and plaza on 2nd Avenue, north of Main Street. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 are illustrations of what the pedestrian mall and plaza could look like.

6. Opportunity Sites



Figure 6.2 View of 2nd Ave Pedestrian Mall & Plaza

6.3C Costs and Funding

Estimated costs for the 2nd Avenue Pedestrian Mall and Plaza come to about \$300,000.

Detailed cost estimates for improvements available in the online report as Appendix A.

There are a number of funding options that could help cover the costs of the 2nd Avenue Mall and Plaza improvements, which are outlined here.

Neighborhood Plaza Partnership Program: Partnership where the Department of Transportation (DOT) builds a pedestrian plaza and contracts with a community partner to maintain and operate it. In the state of New York, the state DOT built the plaza, and contracted the operation and maintenance to the New York Horticultural Society. This is a model

the city could potentially follow, and work in conjunction with the WA DOT and the Whatcom Horticultural Society.

Our Town Grant: Local government partners with a local cultural organization to complete projects that integrate arts and design by advancing physical, economic, or social outcomes.

Washington State Main Street Program: Helps communities revitalize the image and appearance of their downtown districts around the specific community's unique heritage.

SouthWest Airlines Heart of the Community: Provides technical and financial assistance to communities seeking to bring active, vibrant public spaces to their communities.

EPA Multipurpose Brownfield Grant: Develops cleanup for brownfield sites, carries out cleanup, and develops plans for overall revitalization. This grant could be used to offset demolition costs for the council chambers.

Center for Creative Land Recycling: National non-profit which converts vacant land to assets which benefit the community. They assist in bringing grants and training community oriented specialists. They also offer many pro bono services such as feasibility studies and environmental site assessment.

6. Opportunity Sites

6.4B ITE 2 FERNDALE GATEWAY

The Ferndale Gateway development aims to create a welcoming and postcard-worthy entrance to downtown, following the development phases outlined here.

6.4B Development Phases

Phase 1 (1-2 Years)

Encourage Lot consolidation:

1. Consolidate parcels into two lots (north of Main & south of Main).
2. Create a binding site plan.
3. Establish design guidelines for future development.
4. Determine incentive packages for specific parcels.
5. Seek relevant grants.

Phase 2 (2-3 Years)

Attract Developers:

- The site owners and city should develop a marketing plan to attract developers.
- Establish a timeline that is fast and affordable.

Phase 3 (3-5 Years)

Pedestrian Bridge: City of Ferndale works with developers to build a city owned pedestrian bridge that goes under the current Main Street bridge connecting the Riverwalk and southern development to the northern parcel project and on to Vander Yacht Park.

6.4C Location & Rendering

Figure 6.4 shows the location of the proposed Gateway project; Figure 6.5 shows a site plan. Figures 6.6 and 6.7 are examples of what the



Figure 6.3 Rendering showing Second Avenue

Gateway development could look like.

6.4C Costs and Funding

Estimated costs for the Ferndale Gateway come to about \$10 million. Detailed costs for improvements are outlined in Appendix A.

i6 Challenge Awards: Available through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Regional Innovation Strategies Program, these awards provide up to \$750,000 for projects that increase regional capacity to accelerate the translation of innovations, ideas, intellectual property, and research into products, services, companies, and jobs.



Figure 6.4 Site Plan of Ferndale Gateway Project

6. Opportunity Sites

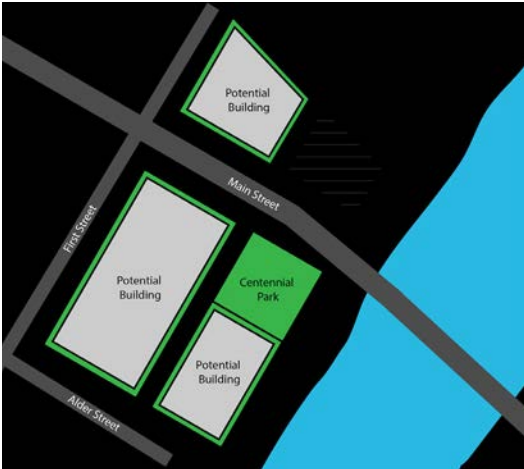


Figure 6.5 Detailed Site Plan of Ferndale Gateway



Figure 6.6 Rendering of Ferndale Gateway - Option 1



Figure 6.7 Rendering of Ferndale Gateway - Option 2

6. Opportunity Sites

6.5B SITE 3 MIXED USE HOUSING ON MAIN

The mixed use housing proposed for Main Street would increase the number of housing units in the downtown core, as well as provide more retail and office space. The development phases are outlined in the following section.

6.5B Implementation Phases

Phase 1 (1-2 Years)

The city should develop incentives and identify developers to purchase and redevelop the sites.

Phase 2 (2-3 Years)

Developers purchase the nine parcels and begin redevelopment of sites.

1. Estimated total cost of all parcels according to the county assessor is approximately \$1.8 million.
 - o Individual lot prices varying from approximately \$162,000 to \$250,000.
2. Demolishing existing homes
 - o Costs to demolish all seven homes would range from approximately \$40,000 to \$146,000.
3. Begin development of mixed used building
 - o Ensure that architectural features abide by Ferndale design standards (FMC Chapter 18.47)

6.5B Location & Rendering

Figure 6.8 shows the location of the proposed Mixed Use Housing on Main project and Figures 6.9 is an illustration of what the development could look like.

6.5C Costs and Funding

Estimated costs for the Mixed use Housing on Main come to about \$9 million. Detailed cost estimates for improvements available in the online report as Appendix A.

Washington Department of Commerce

General Purpose Grants - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): Assists cities in the development of projects that produce significant community and economic benefit primarily moderate-income persons. The city must be less than 50,000 in population. The maximum amount is \$750,000 for construction and \$24,000 for planning.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): Provide assistance for economic resilience and development projects that promote vibrant communities and benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Up to \$300,000 is available for local governments.

US Department of Agriculture

Rural Business Development Grants: Offer technical assistance and training for the development of small or emerging businesses.

Rural Community Development Initiative Grant: Provide assistance for housing, community projects and economic development.

Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program: Provide microloans to help microenterprises start up and grow, as well as providing training and technical assistance



Figure 6.8 shows the location of the proposed mixed Use Housing on Main project

6. Opportunity Sites



Figure 6.9 Rendering of the Mixed Use Housing on Main Street Project

6. Opportunity Sites

6.6 SITE 4 MIXED USE GROCERY STORE

With increased residential and retail in the downtown, Ferndale could support a third grocery store. The Mixed Use Grocery Store would have office and residential units above the store. The city could work with the developer to maintain a percentage of the units as affordable housing. The timeframe for this project starts in fifteen to twenty years, as shown in the development phases section.

6.6.D evelopment Phases

Phase I (5 0 Years)

Develop Incentives: The city should develop incentives and identify developers to purchase and redevelop the site.



Figure 6.10 location of the proposed Mixed use Grocery Store

- Approximate cost of the parcel is \$1,375,045, according to the Whatcom County Assessor.

Phase II (0 3 Years)

Begin redevelopment of parcel: Take down existing building, and construct new grocery store, with office and residential above.

6.6.2 Location & Rendering

Figure 6.10 shows the location of the proposed Mixed Use Grocery Store and Figure 6.11 is an illustration of what the development could look like.

6.6.3 Costs and Funding

Estimated costs for the Mixed Use Grocery Store come to about \$8 million. Detailed costs for improvements are outlined in Appendix A.

Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI): Provides funding to increase access to nutritious foods in communities with residents who rely on fast food restaurants and convenience stores. Funding and assistance for this initiative comes from Health and Human Services, Treasury, and the USDA.

American Heart Association - Voices for Healthy Kids: Grants are available for projects that support one of the program’s policy levers. The creation of an affordable grocery store could be aligned with the second policy lever of supporting healthy food procurement.

6.7 CONCLUSION

Working together, Ferndale’s residents and the city can steer the future of its downtown core. A town with a high quality built environment can expect to be more patronized by residents, and more attractive to investors. The opportunity sites can inspire Ferndale’s downtown revitalization by creating and enhancing public spaces, providing attractive and affordable housing, and adding amenities and attractions such as trails, pedestrian and bicycle networks, parks and more.

6. Opportunity Sites



Figure 6.11 Illustration of the Mixed Use Grocery Store

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