

DELIVERING OUR FUTURE

PRELIMINARY

Report and Recommendations from the Community Meetings

The City's chances for success are greater if the City Council is committed to building a vision of success which is shared among Council, Staff, Boards, Commissions and the Community

**This Report prepared by the Economic
Viability Steering Committee, July 2006**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Report.....	1
Introduction to the Process.....	2-3
Setting the Stage	4-5
Summary of Recommendations.....	6-7
Specific Detailed Recommendations	8
Community Vision.....	SR-1
Action Recommendations.....	SR-2
Communication Plan.....	SR-7
Attachments.....	9
All Action Plans.....	B-1 thru B-20
Background Information.....	10
Additional Attachments.....	A-N
Road Map.....	Inside Back Cover

ABOUT THIS REPORT: Creating a starting place for action.

This report conveys to the Ferndale City Council, the results of the Council approved community meeting process. Rather than being the end of the process, **this document actually represents the beginning of a partnership** to deliver the desired future of Ferndale. The partnership is between the elected officials of the City and the citizens.

This report documents the results of the three community meetings and details specific recommendations to the City so that we can all move forward together in a partnership to deliver our desired future. **The citizens who participated in the three community meetings, the Steering Committee and Task Forces are extremely thankful to the City Council for providing this opportunity.**

In this time of great community need, reduced resources, increased expectations and perceived lack of trust of government, **Ferndale stands in a position to be able to work together** with City Government to deliver the kind of community we all desire. It is understood that there are limited financial resources and that our road to the future will be long and the work will be hard. It is the strong feeling of those who participated in the process that **our community is worth every bit of effort we can muster.**

Building an economically viable community will take time, hard work and commitments on everyone's part. This **report delivers to the City, the key and foundation laying elements to move the community in the direction that will retain the wonderful sense of community we all enjoy.** This report will help us build our legacy for future generations.

This document is an Action Plan. It is a call to community action to deliver on the many dreams and desires that we all hold for Ferndale. This document presents specific recommendations as well as a road map that we can all use to get started and move together to enhance our community over the next twenty years.

It is with great respect and thanks that we deliver this report and begin the dialogue with the City to help us deliver our desired future. This call to action provides the focus for enhanced collaboration, thought and action that are consistent and held by all.

This is a living document and not designed to sit on a shelf.

Now is the time for action!

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESS: How we did it!

The development of the community vision, action plans and this report began with the Mayor and City Council and the approved 2006 City Budget. Included in the budget was authorization to hire a consultant to develop an economic development plan, a downtown revitalization plan and to update the Parks Master Plan. So, in February of 2006, the consultant came to Ferndale and began developing the work plans for the project established by the City Council in its 2006 policy budget.

As Ferndale already had existing economic development plans and the idea for creating a downtown revitalization program already had been talked about, it was decided to change the focus to be more action oriented and less planning. On February 21, 2006, the City Council approved the work plans for the three elements of this effort, and set priorities on each element. City Council approved Downtown Revitalization as priority one, Economic Development as priority two and development of a Parks Master Plan as priority three.

Each of the work plans approved by the City Council, contained specific detail about how each element would be done, who would be involved, a completion date and the measures for success. Importantly, each work plan included the development of community relationships, conducting community meetings and working with other jurisdictions to help deliver the action plans. In addition, the City Council approved the job descriptions for both the Economic Viability Steering Committee and the Turn Out Task Force.

Once clear policy direction had been established by the City Council, the consultant and community members began recruiting citizens to attend the three community meetings to begin the process. The Turn Out Task Force developed and employed a number of strategies designed to make sure that all citizens knew they were invited and indeed encouraged to attend the community meetings. A door to door canvass in over 60% of Ferndale was used along with letters to the editor, flyer invitations in the utility bill, school mailings, posters, reader boards, and articles in both the Ferndale Record Journal and Bellingham Herald. Recruitment also took place at local schools, the Boys and Girls Club along with the Senior Center to ensure that every age and interest knew they were invited. The process did not distinguish between residents and non-residents. Because this effort was strongly aimed at economic development, non-residents were encouraged to participate because they represented potential customers for Ferndale businesses.

The initial Steering Committee membership was recommended by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. At that same time, the City Council provided the Mayor with authorization to add new members to the Steering Committee as needed. Ultimately, the Steering Committee grew to thirty six members.

Of utmost importance was the concept of making sure that everyone was invited to be a part of the three meeting process. As a result, over 300 citizens attended the three community meetings and helped create the community vision and action plans. At each

meeting, there were some new citizens in attendance and their ideas were incorporated in the vision statement. Ferndale citizens of different ages, ethnicities and thought came together to share their hopes for the future.

At meetings one and two, participants were asked to form into self selecting Task Forces to work on vision elements that were important. Each Task Force was asked to develop an action plan, in a predetermined format and then report back to the whole group. It is understood that not all vision elements would lead to a Task Force at this time and that others may certainly form in the future.

At meeting three, following a review of the community vision statement and completion of the Task Force Reports, those citizens in attendance were asked to determine how they wanted to organize to work with the City to ensure that this effort was carried forward and actually delivered the vision that was developed. The gathered citizens made it clear that they wanted this effort to be carried forward and that ongoing communication was vitally important. Additionally, it was very clear that the community could meet together and develop plans and ideas and as a result, a great deal of energy was generated.

Following the completion of the third meeting, the Economic Viability Steering Committee met and reviewed all of the work that was completed by the citizens in the three community meetings. The Steering Committee then established three sub-committees to analyze the results of the three community meetings and come back with specific recommendations.

The Vision Sub-Committee took the over 70 vision elements and crafted a proposed vision statement that incorporates the ideas and energy of the community meetings. City staff working on the update process for the comprehensive plan was kept apprised as the various drafts were prepared. Through the hard work of this Sub-Committee, a one page and exciting twenty year vision statement was developed.

The Action Plan Sub-Committee reviewed all of the Task Force Action Plans and came back to the Steering Committee with recommendations ensuring the action plans result in community enhancements. The Action Plan Sub-Committee delivered a set of recommendations which grew out of the action plans that are designed to help the community, working in partnership with the City, deliver our desired future.

The Communication Sub-Committee focused on the development of a system necessary to ensure that everyone is kept informed of progress made in delivering the desired future.

All of the Action Plans and supporting information are contained in this document for information and reference.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE FUTURE: Recommendations

Based on the approved work plans as established by the City Council and the three community meetings along with the final work of the three Steering Committee Sub-Committees, the following recommendations are made to the City. These recommendations are designed to foster a collaborative relationship between the community and City. They are offered to insure that our desired future gets delivered.

These recommendations are designed to be phased into place and focused on the 2007 City budget. Ferndale is poised to grow and change. These recommendations are designed to provide us all with a community of managed growth which is consistent with our common vision.

The timing is now perfect for the City of Ferndale to develop and implement the actions that lead to the delivery of our desired future in a way that adds significantly to the livability and long term economic viability of the community. Our challenge is to move toward the desired future in a well orchestrated way that ensures the long term continuation of what is good and positive about Ferndale while capitalizing on the desired and preferred type of growth and development.

Ferndale desires to be more than a bedroom community. We are proud of our community, its history and traditional values. We desire to be our own community, with all the services and amenities that build on our past and propel us toward the future. We strive to be a self contained and sustainable community. These recommendations are designed to move us all; working in collaboration, in a direction we can all be proud. We must all remember that Ferndale is a special place, a community like no other and we must do our part to foster the ideal for future generations.

Ferndale is uniquely poised to enhance its viability and attract new business while holding on to the features that draw so many of us to Ferndale. The challenge will be to collaborate on the vision and take the actions that will ensure our livability while strengthening our business environment. Ferndale will need additional sources of revenue and jobs to be able to deliver our vision. Great care must be given to achieving such managed growth.

The recommendations delivered to the City are carefully designed to ensure that all sectors of the community have a place at the table and are fully engaged from the beginning. Collaboration, working together, open dialogue and idea sharing are the core strategies that will be used. Long term economic viability, tied to the delivery of a proactive and exciting community vision, is the goal.

The very future of Ferndale and the continued provision of high quality leadership and services, delivered within the context of the proposed vision depends on our getting this effort completed correctly. New businesses, added value and jobs will help Ferndale to financially support the kinds of services that are identified in the long range vision. It is recognized that recent voter initiatives have significantly reduced the ability of local government to provide needed services as well as placing the City in a financial bind.

Because of the citizen initiatives and the potential for more of them, it is now vitally important for the community, working in close harmony with the City and others, to step up and lead us all to the next level of success. As elected officials, your political support is needed for us all to realize long term community success. We will need your support!

Finally, let us also make a comment about the quality and responsiveness of our City employees. We have all come to call upon City Staff for additional information, guidance and ideas. We are now of the opinion that with this staff and the ideas and energy generated out of the community process, we can really create the kind of community that we desire.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Community Vision

Tentatively Adopt the Preliminary Community vision

Tentatively adopt the community vision statement that came directly from the three community meetings. Direct that this vision statement be used in the City's comprehensive plan and use it as the focus for the development of the 2007 City Budget.

(It should be noted that we intend to convene a fourth community meeting in September to arrive at a final vision to bring forward to the City Council.)

2. Economic Development

Establish a formal City Economic Development Commission

Twelve to fifteen members from a cross section of the community to work with and advise the City on all matters affecting the economic viability of the community. Utilize the City's normal process to recruit and appoint this group and have them in place by January of 2007.

3. Parks and Recreation

Reconstitute the Parks Board

Expand the membership to twelve to fifteen, and change the name to Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board. By prescription, allocate 50% of the seats to the general community, and then assign the balance to specific community interests selected strategically. Include all ages and interests as well as voting seats for youth. Have this new Board in place by January of 2007.

Re-establish the Department

Re-establish a Parks, Recreation and Trails Department focused on facilitation, grants and working with the community to deliver parks, programs and trails. Provide that a primary goal of the new department will be the creation of a major volunteer effort to engage everyone in the construction, maintenance and operation of our City Parks. Develop a program delivery system by coordinating the efforts of churches, Boys and Girls Club, Whatcom County and the YMCA.

2007 Budget

To assist in delivering the vision and build enhanced faith and trust with the community; include the following capital projects in the 2007 City Budget. These commitments will be extremely important in terms of building more energy and encouraging the total community to participate.

- \$75,000 for the Centennial Riverwalk
- \$50,000 to match Whatcom County for the Hovander Park-Pioneer Park pedestrian bridge.
- \$40,000 to challenge the Skate Boarders to raise sufficient funds for the Skate Park in 2007.
- \$20,000 for children's play equipment in neighborhood parks

4. Downtown

Support the creation of a Ferndale Historic Downtown Association and financially support this group for from 2 to 3 years until they can become financially independent. Consider approving the Downtown Development Standards currently under development when they come forward for City Council action.

5. Creating community partners

Reorganize the Economic Viability Steering Committee into the Community Coordinating Association to work in partnership with the City to deliver the vision. Charter this group with specific responsibilities including holding the vision, reporting monthly to the City Council, keeping the Task Forces moving forward, and communicating to the total community. Charter this group to conduct an annual "Town Hall Meeting" to review progress and assist the City in all endeavors. Make this group your community partner with responsibility to keep the energy and interest at high levels.

It is recognized that there is much to do and lots of ideas about how to achieve the results that we would all like to have. We understand that implementation, applying dollars and planning for our vision will be worked out over time and within the context of multi-year city budget processes. There is much to be done and we are here to assist with the delivery.

SPECIFIC DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS:

This section of the report deals with the three primary sets of recommendations as developed out of the three community meetings and formalized by the Sub-Committees established by the Economic Viability Steering Committee.

1. The recommended vision statement
2. The action recommendations
3. The Communication Plan

ATTACHMENTS: Section B

This section of the report provides copies of the completed Action Plans as prepared by each of the Self-Selecting Task Forces.

Background Information:

The following pages and documents provide important information regarding the process and results.

ROAD MAP:

This Road Map is intended to provide the City and the Community with a step by step outline, identifying what needs to be done initially to be successful. The Road Map provides the important first steps to be taken over the next six to twelve months. Following this road map will set the pattern and stage for ongoing success for the community. Additionally, it will tell the citizens of Ferndale that their time was of value and that we are about creating the kind of community we all want.

- Step 1:** For the City to formally accept this preliminary report as a place to begin until the final report is filed following the September community meeting. (August 2006)
- Step 2:** That the City authorize the immediate reorganization of the Park Board. (August 2006)

That the City authorizes the immediate creation of the Economic Development Commission. (August 2006)

That the City authorize that the Chartered Community Coordination Association be created. (August 2006)
- Step 3:** That the City utilize the proposed Vision Statement as the guideline for the update to the Comprehensive Plan. (2007)
- Step 4:** That the proposed Vision Statement and other recommendations be considered in the 2007 budget as well as all future budgets. (September through December 2006)
- Step 5:** Conduct a fourth community meeting in September to review the proposed Vision, proposed Downtown Plan and preliminary Park Master Plan Update with the citizens. Ensure that we heard the community and get their “buy-in” to the plans. (September 2006)
- Step 6:** For the City to formally adopt the final Vision Statement and use it as the guide for all future decisions by the City. (September 2006)
- Step 7:** For the City to receive and act on the proposed Park Master Plan Update. (October 2006)