



City of Ferndale  
2008 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

## GREETINGS FERNDALE CITIZENS!

It is an honor and privilege to address the citizens of this wonderful community that I have called home all of my life. It is an even greater honor to serve as the Mayor, and to be able to relate to you how this thriving and vibrant City is heading into the future.

First let me say that I believe our city administration is focused on the future with these guiding principles: planning, teamwork and innovation. These talented people have a great respect for this community and I am proud to work with all of them, and I would suggest that you should be proud that they are working for you and your community.

City Administrator **Greg Young** is our own Renaissance Man, with experience in a broad and varied number of disciplines, including planning, auditing, City manager, City Administrator, and municipal consultant. Greg has the ability to look at all sides of an issue, and to give advice in a balanced and well-founded way. I value his counsel.

**Linda Knutson**, who has served seven mayors in her 15 years of service to the as City Clerk, is my go-to person for common-sense answers, and historical perspective. She embodies best what a public servant should and can be, she loves her job, and it shows. It is a real bonus that she has a great sense of humor, another thing I value.

Chief of Police **Michael Knapp** has brought our police department light years from where it was only a few years ago. Added officers, better equipment and vehicles, state of the art technology, renewed pride, and community involvement have made him an integral and respected member of this administrative team and of this community. We are a better City because of Chief Knapp.

**Dennis Rhodes** joined the City at a critical time of our growth. He helped to assemble a group of professionals who together have revitalized the Planning and Building Department, so much so that it is now the Community Development Services Department. This name change mirrors the expanded view of the City of the direction we are taking to handle growth in a responsive and innovative fashion.

Finance Director **Mark Peterson** is an experienced financial professional who has proven to be a prudent guardian of public funds. He has led the City through several years of clean audits, and has saved the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars through refinancing old bonds and sound investment practices. Mark is an invaluable member of this administration.

We added four new faces to the **Ferndale City Council** this year. **Steve Malpezzi, Connie Faria, Paul Ingram, and Lloyd Zimmerman**. They join veterans **Mel Hansen, Ken Downey, and Keith Olson**. All of these people form a team that serves with enthusiasm, integrity, and good will. They receive nominal compensation for their efforts, and serve because they love this community and want to make a difference.



## VISION FOR THE CITY OF FERNDALE

Those of you who know me know that I love sports analogies. In this year of the Beijing Olympics, I truly believe that we have put together a Dream Team of elected officials, City employees, and Advisory Groups who are leading us, through teamwork and creativity, into *the most exciting time of transformation in Ferndale's history*. Here is how the region will know Ferndale over the next few years:

1. ***A progressive city*** that makes decisions for the next generation, not the next election.
2. ***A city that invests generously and often*** in its roads, sidewalks, streetscapes, parks, infrastructure, buildings and people.
3. ***A city that makes economic development a priority*** so that high quality jobs become plentiful and so that our young people can find opportunity without having to leave our area.
4. ***A vibrant and beautiful historic downtown area*** that is alive with activity, entertainment and commerce.
5. ***A healthy and fit city*** that encourages its citizens to live well and stay active.
6. ***A compassionate city*** that meets vital human needs through a strong non profit sector.
7. ***A green city that is committed to being good stewards of the environment*** and conserving energy wisely.
8. ***A welcoming city*** that sees growing diversity in its people as a strength and opportunity.
9. ***A city that does not let older areas deteriorate***, but revitalizes those areas through effective redevelopment.
10. ***A city that thinks regionally***, knowing that certain goals such as transportation and economic development cannot be maximized without regional cooperation.
11. ***A city that will act boldly and creatively and is proud of its independent spirit.***

# TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

City Staff and Council spend a major share of their time attempting to find ways to solve the major traffic and transportation issues facing our growing community. Simply stated, what I'm hearing from you is *"We want a better, faster, and more efficient way to move through and around our City streets. We desperately need a faster way to get to work and back each day."*

If we could go back in time and plan our future, we would not consider putting the bulk of our residential areas on one side of the City with a two-lane bridge serving as the major access to Interstate-5 on the other side of the river! Your City has been planning a multitude of ways for a better commute in an attempt to correct an age-old problem. **(Please refer to the map and corresponding color codes on the facing page).**

## 1. Second Avenue to Portal Way

If we could get more people to use this freeway exchange, rather than Main Street/Axton, it would help distribute the daily traffic-trip load. For the first time in our history we have secured considerable cooperation from major landowners along Second Avenue to Portal Way, all willing to work to complete this project.

- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad is willing to improve the crossing at Washington Street and Second Avenue.
- BNSF is also in the final stages of negotiating a land donation to the City consisting of a long, wide stretch of land from Washington Street to the Simplot property (the east side of the railway) that will enable the City to construct a wide city entrance road with sidewalks and trees on both sides.
- The owner of the old Simplot property is willing to allow a new, wider, and improved Second Avenue to extend through his property and connect easily to Portal Way.
- The City is working with the Washington State Department of Transportation to improve the Portal Way Exchange to handle increased traffic loads. A traffic circle might be the answer to more efficiently move traffic queues onto Second from Portal Way. (I know how much some of you LOVE traffic circles!)
- Boundary Bay Brewery has purchased one large existing building on the Simplot property and we hope that with the new and improved road system, more quality business will locate to this area.

It is exciting to envision a new, improved Second Avenue becoming an attractive and revitalized gateway to north Ferndale.

## 2. Second Avenue to Thornton Road

BNSF has offered up to \$500,000 to construct a gravel access road from the (proposed) Second Avenue Extension to the Thornton Road. The City has moved forward with a feasibility study to determine if a crossing over the railroad at Thornton, along with improvements to Second Avenue, will allow commuters a new and more efficient way to west Ferndale. The gravel road will be a good start, and will allow

the railroad to close this dangerous intersection and allow access to the two residential properties at this crossing. Hopefully the study will show us the way to permanently connect to Thornton Road. It is certainly easy to imagine more railroad activity in the near future. It is also easy to visualize some prime retail property being utilized along this access.

## 3. Washington Street and Vista Drive

It does not take a street engineer to realize that both projects listed above will put more stress on the Washington and Vista intersection. We must begin planning for a solution as soon as possible.

## 4. Main Street: Fourth Ave. to Church Rd.

Regardless of the improvements above, Main Street will always handle the bulk of our traffic, now and into the foreseeable future. We must have sidewalks and a wider road for this important section. We have secured grant funding for a majority of this improvement and will begin construction within the next year.

## 5. Church Road: Main St. to Thornton Rd.

With all of the new housing, along with three schools, using this stretch of road, we must improve this area. I shudder every time I see pedestrians walking down a major traffic road that lacks even a basic shoulder access – let alone a basic sidewalk!

## 6. Church Road: Main St. to Slater Rd.

Though this improvement is not on our short-term planning at this point, a gaze down from the top of Church Road will give you a pretty good idea of the straight-line access to Slater Road. This is not all city-controlled land, but is certainly feasible and viable as a third major commuter option as the City grows.

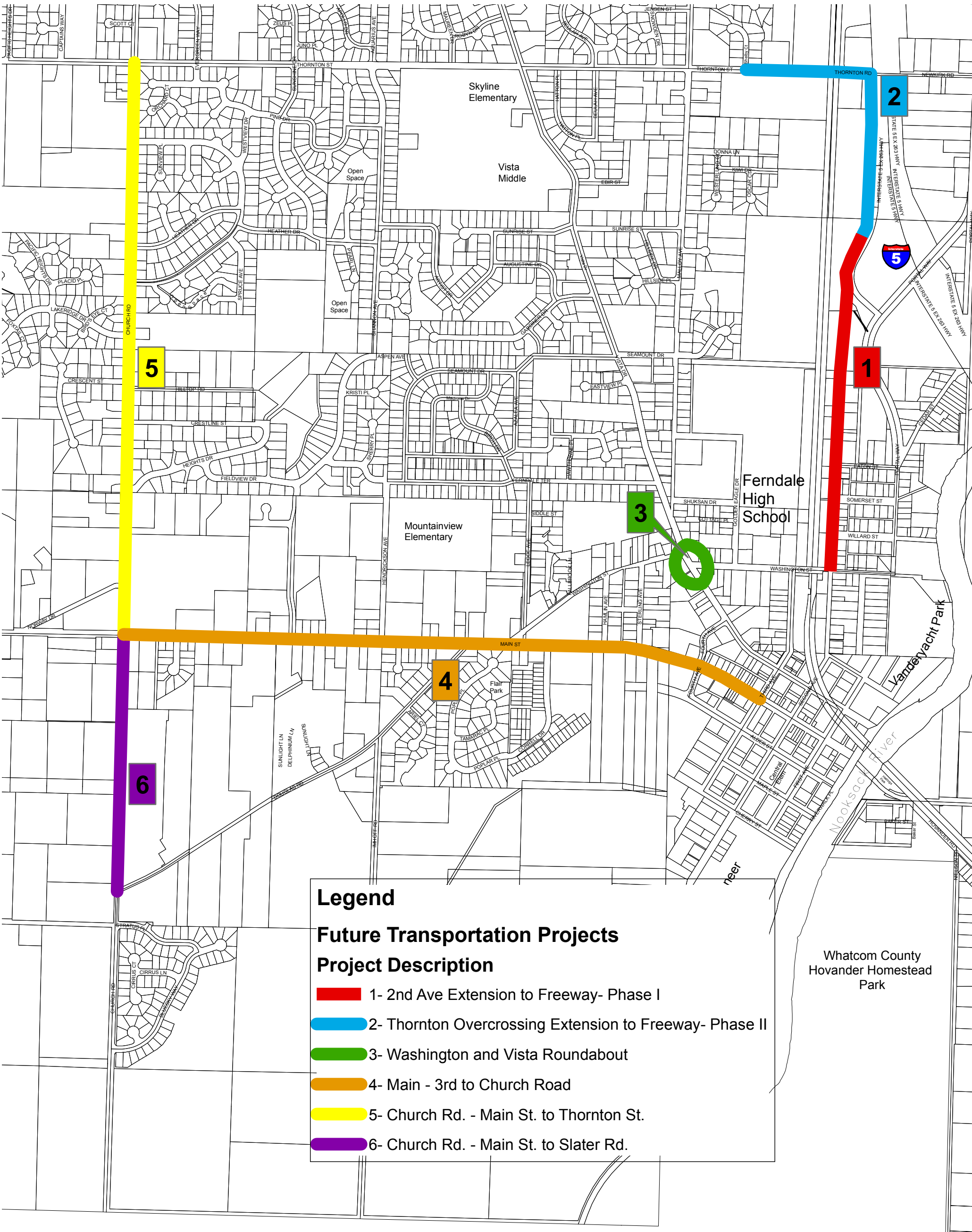
## Transportation Summary

Traffic solutions are expensive. With our limited funds we cannot complete ALL of the listed projects (and these are certainly not our only future options). Our goal is to do as much as possible for you, our citizens, with the resources that we do have.

On that note, we have openings on our newly created Traffic Committee. If you have ideas for traffic solutions and alternatives, and want to volunteer some time, please go to our website for a Boards and Commissions application, or drop by City Hall and pick one up. We'd love to see you become involved.



# Future City Street Projects



## Legend

### Future Transportation Projects

#### Project Description

- 1- 2nd Ave Extension to Freeway- Phase I
- 2- Thornton Overcrossing Extension to Freeway- Phase II
- 3- Washington and Vista Roundabout
- 4- Main - 3rd to Church Road
- 5- Church Rd. - Main St. to Thornton St.
- 6- Church Rd. - Main St. to Slater Rd.

## NEW LAW AND JUSTICE FACILITY

As most of you may know, we desperately need a new, secure facility to house our Police Department and Court personnel. We have negotiated the purchase of the old Dimitri's restaurant property adjacent to the west side of the City Hall location, along with one more parcel to the west. I am very proud to tell you that these purchases resulted in a savings of nearly \$300,000 over the price of another prominent property that had been the previous choice for a new facility.

Having a City Government Complex that shares parking lots and shared facilities is certainly a better bang for your buck! A combination Council Chambers and Municipal Court will be just one of the new features of the complex. Anyone who has sat through a Council meeting on our less than comfortable



*Ferndale Police Officers visit with a young park guest*

chairs will certainly appreciate the potential for a new meeting room. How we finally design the complex will be coming to you in the very near future. (Sorry – no pepperoni pizzas will be served as we wait – although we did give that some thought!)

## NEW LIBRARY AND MIXED USE BUILDING

A new Ferndale Library and mixed-use condominium project may occupy additional land to the west of the Law and Justice Center (with great views of Mount Baker, by the way.)

It is unfortunate that our recent improvements to Douglas and Main Streets have impacted access to the current library building. Add to that a severe lack of parking and a too-crowded library, and you see the need for a new, larger library. The way I see it, when your library, an important part of any vital city, is so small that it turns away children needing computer access, or cannot accommodate senior citizens needing parking spaces, you must begin planning for future library needs. The City is working with the Library system to justify a new, expanded library facility. As most of you know, a very generous (and anonymous) benefactor is paying for a fundraising program and has also provided seed money for this important endeavor. A new facility could act as another “gateway on this end of the City. I personally love the idea of condo owners living near a new library. Higher density (read: people living downtown), is high on my list for many reasons; one being that it will turn our historic downtown into the exciting area that it can and will be.

## PARKS AND TRAILS

### Centennial Riverwalk Park

The new Riverwalk Park has been a huge success, and everyone at the City enjoys seeing our citizens gather at the fountain. The new Farmers Market has also been very successful, with more vendors and variety planned for 2009. The newly formed Arts Commission is working towards bringing artwork/sculpture to the Park in 2009.

We have begun the process of renovating the old Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center, formerly located on Riverside Drive, as a new public restroom to be located near the fountain. With

the availability of restrooms and hot water we hope that increase food vending will occur at the Farmers Market. The Chamber of Commerce is working towards providing free wi-fi access to the Park via this building. Recycling a vacant building is the ultimate “green” practice! It will be entertaining to watch the old visitors center “picked up and moved” to the Riverwalk.



*“Farmers Market Saturdays have proven to be very popular with residents and tourists. 2009 promises to be even better.” - Mayor Gary Jensen*

### Conoco-Phillips Sports Complex

One new soccer field to the south of the baseball complex should be complete and ready for use by next summer. Also, we have scheduled the completion of an irrigation/sprinkler system for a new multi-purpose field to the west of the baseball complex. Hopefully by the spring of 2009 this field will be used for baseball, softball, rugby, and other activities that require simple, open grass space.



*Conoco-Phillips Sports Complex*

### Pioneer Park

The new Boys and Girls Club will soon break ground for their new facility at the corner of the Park located near Second and Cherry Streets. We plan to move forward with the new skate park in this area after the construction of the new Club. I will take this chance to brag a little. If you've had a chance to see the plans for the new B&G Club, you will agree...Ferndale will have the best-looking Club in Whatcom County (and beyond)!

After fire destroyed the old Boys and Girls Club in early 2007, the City made the decision not to demolish the entire building, but to salvage what we can, with the help of the Old Settlers Association and the Heritage Society. (Again, that “green” idea!) I have received some very innovative and creative ideas for the future use of the salvaged building. None are written in stone, and we are interested in your feedback. Among them:

- A new multi-use facility for meetings of various civic and advisory groups, including the Ferndale Downtown Development Association, Community Coordinating Association, Heritage Society, Old Settlers, Economic Development Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Parks Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, etc., etc. A Pioneer theme would be used, and could also house a museum. It would certainly help all of our boards and Commissions if they have a permanent place to call home.
- A new spacious and ADA compliant restroom facility to service Pioneer Park on one end of the building, as renovated above.
- A home and office for our Pioneer Park tour guides. I envision Pioneer Park expanding its hours with a staff of costumed tour guides available at all times. A working "Pioneer Village" with pioneers in each cabin could be a significant tourism attraction.



- A new and expanded visitor's center.
- Office and record storage for the Old Settlers and Heritage Society.
- A fully functioning and equipped kitchen facility on the southern end of the building, which could be designed to serve/cater food to inside the building, as well as the outside areas within the Park. This could also be leased out for such uses as a funding source for the building.
- The Heritage Society purchased a very nice display of a pioneer theme from the Bellingham Children's Museum several years ago, and has been in storage ever since. A part of the building could be used to house and display these items for the entertainment of our youngsters.

As the gateway building to Pioneer Park, this building should serve as the "hub" to park activities. Certainly we need to improve on the Pioneer "look" of the facility.

### Parks Summary

It is well known that the elimination of the Parks Department several years ago was a severe blow to our parks system. With limited funds, we were able to add one parks worker in the spring of 2008. This is still not adequate, given the number of parks we must maintain, and citizens we serve. Hopefully we can build on an increased interest and usage of our parks and trails, and begin to build a parks department in the very near future.

### CITY WEBSITE / FERNDAL FORUM

It can be very difficult to get as much information as possible to you, our citizens, in a timely manner. When you sit in the Mayor's seat you would like to have a personal "chat" with each and everyone, but that is just not possible in today's busy world.

In an effort to expand our ability to communicate important issues, the **Ferndale Forum** blog has been created as part of the City's ever-expanding website. This is our first interactive attempt to fill you in on some of the projects and future plans for our city. Go to [www.cityofferndale.org](http://www.cityofferndale.org) and register for the Ferndale Forum, (real names and real email addresses are required) and give us your ideas and opinions. You may also email me personally at [GaryJensen@cityofferndale.org](mailto:GaryJensen@cityofferndale.org). Good, bad, or ugly, I want to hear from you. In addition to this first "State of the City" newsletter, we feel strongly that we are opening up avenues of communication to let everyone know (and have a say) in Ferndale's future.

### THE 2009 BUDGET

Council and staff are rolling up their sleeves and sharpening their pencils in anticipation of preparing the 2009 Budget. Many budget meetings are scheduled, and like many other cities, we are feeling the increased pressure and stress of rising costs, just as you and your families are. The Council and staff are taking a "tighten the belt" approach to their budgets and are being very conservative in 2009 spending. Staff has been directed to:

1. Hold off on any vehicle purchases for 2009.
2. Hold off on major equipment purchases during 2009.
3. Trim ten-percent from each departmental budget.

Our Finance Director believes that these measures will keep us in the black during the next budget year.

On a bright note, we anticipate several new retail projects and some housing projects that will help us avoid some of the severe budget problems facing other cities. We are waiting to see how the new tax regulations regarding point-of-sale will affect city sales tax revenues.

Unfortunately, fees that developers and builders must pay for housing and other projects are rising due to the same increased costs. Now might be a good time to look at retail property in Ferndale if you are looking for a bargain.

### CLOSING

We have instigated several changes at City Hall which I feel have increased morale and productivity. We moved our opening hour from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. in order for staff to prepare for the day, hold meetings, and attend training. These measures have increased communication, as well as better service to our public. With a major turnover in our Planning Department over the past year, we are seeing many new and innovative ideas for increased service opportunities from our new planners. Public Works, always understaffed, continues to stretch resources and people as this city grows. If you have contact with any or all departments of the City, please know that changes and improvements are always being implemented, and that we strive to serve the best we can, each and every day.

Also, I would like you to **PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE CITY'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS!** Go to [www.cityofferndale.org](http://www.cityofferndale.org) for information and applications.

On a personal note, I like the "feel" in City Hall; people communicate well with each other, and there is a genuine "team" approach that increases as time goes on. I am indebted to a dedicated staff that has helped this "newbie" Mayor move forward with the best information and support possible.

I will continue to keep you all informed and involved, and I thank you for the honor and opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully,

*Gary S. Jensen*

**City of Ferndale**  
**Office of the Mayor**

2095 Main Street PO Box 936  
 Ferndale, Washington, 98248

**To:**

**CITY OF FERNDALE ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**MAYOR: GARY JENSEN**

*e-mail: garyjensen@cityofferndale.org*

**Ferndale City Councilmembers:**

**Steve Malpezzi:** *stevemalpezzi@cityofferndale.org*

**Mel Hansen:** *melhansen@cityofferndale.org*

**Connie Faria:** *conniefaria@cityofferndale.org*

**Paul Ingram:** *paulingram@cityofferndale.org*

**Ken Downey:** *kendowney@cityofferndale.org*

**Lloyd Zimmerman:** *lloydzimmerman@cityofferndale.org*

**Keith Olson:** *keitholson@cityofferndale.org*

**Council meets 1st & 3rd Mondays of each month: 7:00 pm at the City Hall Annex Building located at 5694 Second Avenue**



**Community Telephone Numbers – Quick Reference**

City of Ferndale	2095 Main St	384-4302
Ferndale Police Dept	5640 Third Ave	384-3390
City Hall Annex	5694 Second Ave	384-3263
Community Resource Center	5694 Second Ave	380-2200
Chamber of Commerce	5683 Second Ave	384-3042
Ferndale Post Office	5703 Fourth Ave	1-800-275-8777
Pioneer Park Office	2000 Cherry St	384-6461
Ferndale Boys & Girls Club	2290 Main St	384-0753
Ferndale Library	2222 Main St	384-3647
Ferndale Senior Center	1998 Cherry St	384-5113
Sanitary Service	1001 Roeder Ave (B'ham)	398-2025
Puget Sound Energy (PSE)		1-800-321-4123
Cascade Natural Gas	600 Iowa St (B'ham)	733-5980
Comcast Cable		1-877-824-2288
Verizon		1-800-483-4000
Ferndale Food Bank	1671 Main St	384-1506
DSHS (Food Assistance)		714-4000
Opportunity Council	1111 Cornwall Ave (B'ham)	734-5121
Northwest Air Pollution		428-1617
Salvation Army		733-1410
Northwest Drinking Water		253-395-6750
PSE (For burnt out streetlights)		1-888-225-5773
Utilities Underground Location	www.callbeforeyoudig.com	1-800-424-5555
PSE (For power outages)		1-888-225-5773
Mt. Baker Red Cross	211 King St (Bellingham)	733-3290
Park Rain Out Number	(After 2pm daily)	380-7462
Burn Ban Info		676-6907

Updated 9/08