

Chapter II — Land Use

Contents

- [Purpose of the Land Use Element](#)
- [Existing Land Use Patterns](#)
- [Summary of Future Growth Projections](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [Background](#)
- [Land Use Distribution in the Ferndale Urban Growth Area](#)
- [Future Land Use Needs](#)
- [Land Use Under the Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Existing Zoning](#)
- [Existing and Projected Deficiencies in Land Use Patterns](#)
- [Environmental Challenges](#)
- [District Planning Areas](#)
- [Land Use Goals and Policies, State Requirements](#)

PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element is the heart of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The Washington State Growth Management Act states that the entire Comprehensive Plan shall be internally consistent, and that all elements shall be consistent with the Land Use Map. Additionally, the GMA requires that planning efforts for regional growth centers be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the GMA puts the Land Use Element in the central role of defining the direction of the Comprehensive Plan, and thereby defining the vision of the community.

Land is a vital and finite resource. Land drives the economy of a city, and its use determines the city's character. Growth and land development carry significant costs, not only to the developer or builder, but also to neighboring land users and the community as a whole. Developed land is an ongoing financial responsibility for the taxpaying public. Roads, water and sewer, police, fire protection, and other services have

LAND USE ELEMENT AT A GLANCE: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- Ferndale is projected to grow by 6,833 people and 4,000 employees between 2013 and 2036.
- Residential densities within the City of Ferndale will increase above historic levels
- Lot clustering, multifamily development and “infill” development will become more common
- Single family residential construction will continue to be the primary type of residential construction in Ferndale.
- The majority of single family growth will occur within the northwest portions of the City, with additional clusters of residential growth along Portal Way and LaBounty Drive.
- Downtown Ferndale and the surrounding area will be the center of multifamily and mixed-use development in the City, likely in the form of multi-story buildings.
- Downtown Ferndale's success will depend upon a combination of dense residential development, attractive and pedestrian friendly environment, mix of business uses, cultural and civic attractions or events.
- Commercial and retail development intended to serve not only local residents but the surrounding area will establish themselves in Ferndale, likely at and around freeway interchanges.
- Non-retail development on surface streets paralleling the interstate will continue to occur.
- Protection of the environment and sensitive areas will reduce the development potential of certain properties within the city.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

costs that must be considered when designating land for development. Because fiscal resources, both public and private, are limited, it is important to consider the long-term effects of land use. With careful planning, the substantial investment that is often necessary to serve land is better secured and protected. LUE 1 illustrates the variety of inputs that influence (and are influenced by) the Land Use Element. These inputs are described within this Comprehensive Plan, either in this element or in other elements and chapters.

The Land Use Element describes existing and historical land use decisions and policies but focuses primarily on future growth and the land use policies and decisions necessary to accommodate this growth. The Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan provides a detailed overview of land uses in the City, identifies appropriate and beneficial land uses, and establishes goals and policies related to land use. It includes a map identifying the Urban Growth Area (UGA) showing land use

designations throughout the UGA. The Urban Growth Area includes land both with the City limits (the incorporated UGA), and outside the city limits (the unincorporated UGA).

LUE 1: INPUTS TO LAND USE ELEMENT



The Land Use Element provides the means for achieving and maintaining a desirable balance of the use of land over a long period of time. Land use patterns determine the character of the City and the type

and location of future development. They determine where people will live, shop, work and play, and contribute to the relative success or failure of these endeavors. They determine traffic patterns and the ability to alter those patterns. They also affect the natural environment and may have positive or negative consequences that are not immediately evident. In short, the Land Use Element can direct and define the quality of life in the City of Ferndale.

The Land Use Element focuses on long-term goals but remains flexible in order to adapt to changes over time. While the City's ability to directly influence changes is substantial, other influences (State and Federal regulations, the overall economy, climate change, demographic and market shifts) will also dictate future changes. A successful



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use Element must balance and maintain reasonable goals and objectives while remaining flexible enough to react to unanticipated changes or opportunities.

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

The existing land use patterns in the City of Ferndale and surrounding area are greatly influenced by the physical features that provide both opportunities and constraints for the development of the area. The Nooksack River flows through the city dividing it along a north-south orientation. Manmade features such as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Interstate 5 further divide the city along a similar axis.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE GROWTH PROJECTIONS

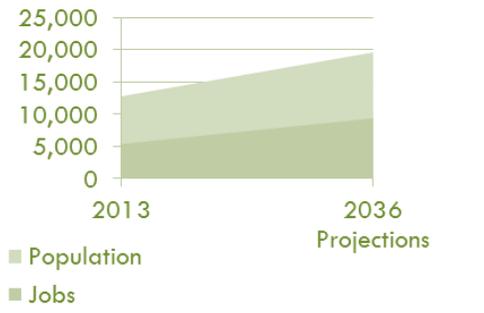
Within the lengthy and multiple discussions contained in this element and the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan, the essential issues to be addressed arise from the following question:

In what way does the City intend to manage the new and existing population and employment that will take place between now and 2036, and beyond?

The City of Ferndale and its Urban Growth Area are expected to grow from a 2013 population of 12,758 to 19,591 by 2036. This represents an increase of 6,833, or nearly 54% - and reflects an average annual growth rate of approximately 1.9%.

Ferndale's employment (including the unincorporated Urban Growth Area) is expected to grow from a 2013 total of 5,372 jobs to a 2036 total of up to 9,372 jobs, an annual growth rate of 3.2% that would increase the ratio of population to employment from .42 jobs for every resident to .48 jobs for every resident.

**LUE 2:
POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS**



INTRODUCTION

Unlike a building project which has both a beginning and an end, a community is always “in process” and never completed. In addition, those elected individuals who serve the City and who are responsible for providing direction, are themselves constantly in change. The primary function of the Comprehensive Plan in general, and the Land Use Element in particular is to provide a measure of consistency to the constantly changing conditions within the community.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court, in an attempt to help clarify the appropriate role of local government with respect to community planning noted:

"The values a community represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well balanced as well as carefully patrolled." (*Berman vs. Parker - 1954*)

Unlike a building project which has both a beginning and an end, a community is always “in process” and never completed.

Since the 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act, subsequent court decisions and an increasingly complex society have expanded on these basic land use concepts – and the role of local government in general. As Figure 1 demonstrates, the mix of inputs into a successful land use strategy can sometimes be daunting for a small jurisdiction. However, by carefully crafting the comprehensive plan to consider these and other elements, the community can have confidence that future land use – and the growth that it brings – will add to the unique sense of place of the community.

These are the types of issues that are at the core of the current effort to update and implement the Land Use Element of the City of Ferndale Comprehensive Plan.

Defining appropriate uses of land within the City of Ferndale UGA will facilitate long-term decisions by individuals and businesses. Clear land use definitions minimize costs associated with public services and preserve the qualities of life that make the area special to its citizens.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

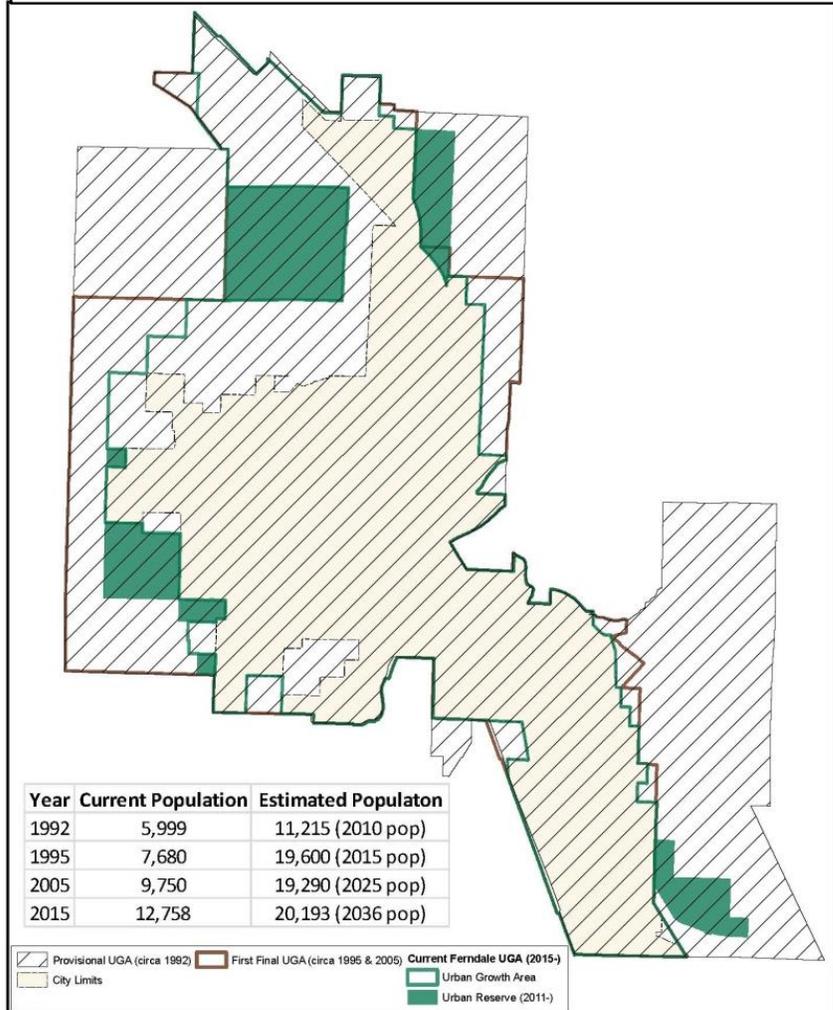
BACKGROUND

Continued growth and development is expected to profoundly alter the shape of the City of Ferndale. When the 1996 Comprehensive Plan was drafted, the population of Ferndale was approximately 6,830, and there were 2,514 housing units. In 2016, the population had increased to 12,710, and there were 5,002 housing units. The population of the City of Ferndale is expected to grow by 6,883 additional people, and up to 2,500 new housing units will be added to the City's inventory over the next 20 years, based on current household size (approximately 2.58 persons per household). This growth is expected to occur within the land area encompassed by the City's Urban Growth Area, which is approximately 50% of the size of the original UGA that was established in 1996.

The City's future growth will be denser than its historic growth, and denser than what was planned for in either the 1996 or 2005 Comprehensive Plans. Future growth will be located based on the City's Land Use Designations which are defined by this element and reflected in the [Comprehensive Land Use Map](#) of the City of Ferndale

The land use designations, which define allowable uses for each area of the City and limits on the density of development, are implemented through the

LUE 3: URBAN GROWTH AREA TIMELINE



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City's Zoning Ordinance, which is contained within the Ferndale Municipal Code. Zoning classifications are more specific than land use designations, defining not only allowable uses and densities, but also such physical restrictions as building height limits, setback requirements and the process through which these requirements are reviewed and can be achieved.

The Land Use element recognizes that growth provides both opportunities and challenges, and that a balance must be struck where growth is directed to those areas that cannot only support growth, but can flourish with it. Additionally, the expansion of infrastructure must be balanced and well-planned in order to responsibly manage taxpayer funds.

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that jurisdictions establish comprehensive plans plan for growth within the next twenty years – in this case to 2036. The majority of cities, including Ferndale, also adopt six-year capital facilities plans which provide greater focus to projects and assumptions within the first few years of the overall comprehensive plan.



LAND USE DISTRIBUTION IN THE FERNDALE PLANNING AREA

Gross Land Area

In 2016, the City of Ferndale covered approximately 3,727 acres¹, or 5.8 square miles; an increase of 32% between 2005 and 2016. Unincorporated portions of the UGA contain approximately 1,313 acres, or 2.0 square miles. The total amount of land in the Ferndale Planning Area is 5,040 acres, or 7.9 square miles. Approximately 90% of the UGA abuts the city to the west and northwest. Exhibit LUE-1 illustrates the relationship between the incorporated city limits and the Ferndale Urban Growth Area. These lands, in addition to vacant lands located within the existing city limits, are anticipated to provide adequate area to accommodate anticipated future growth in the City over the 20-year planning period of the Comprehensive Plan.

Exhibit LUE-4 illustrates the gross land supply contained within the Ferndale city limits and the Ferndale UGA.

¹ For the purposes of this discussion, this plan utilizes acreage estimates provided by Whatcom County through its Land Capacity Analysis (LCA); these acreage estimates do not include existing right of way, the Nooksack River, or Interstate Five, and therefore result in a reduced overall size assumption, compared to a calculation of the overall geographic area of the Urban Growth Area.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LUE 4: Gross and Buildable Land Supply²

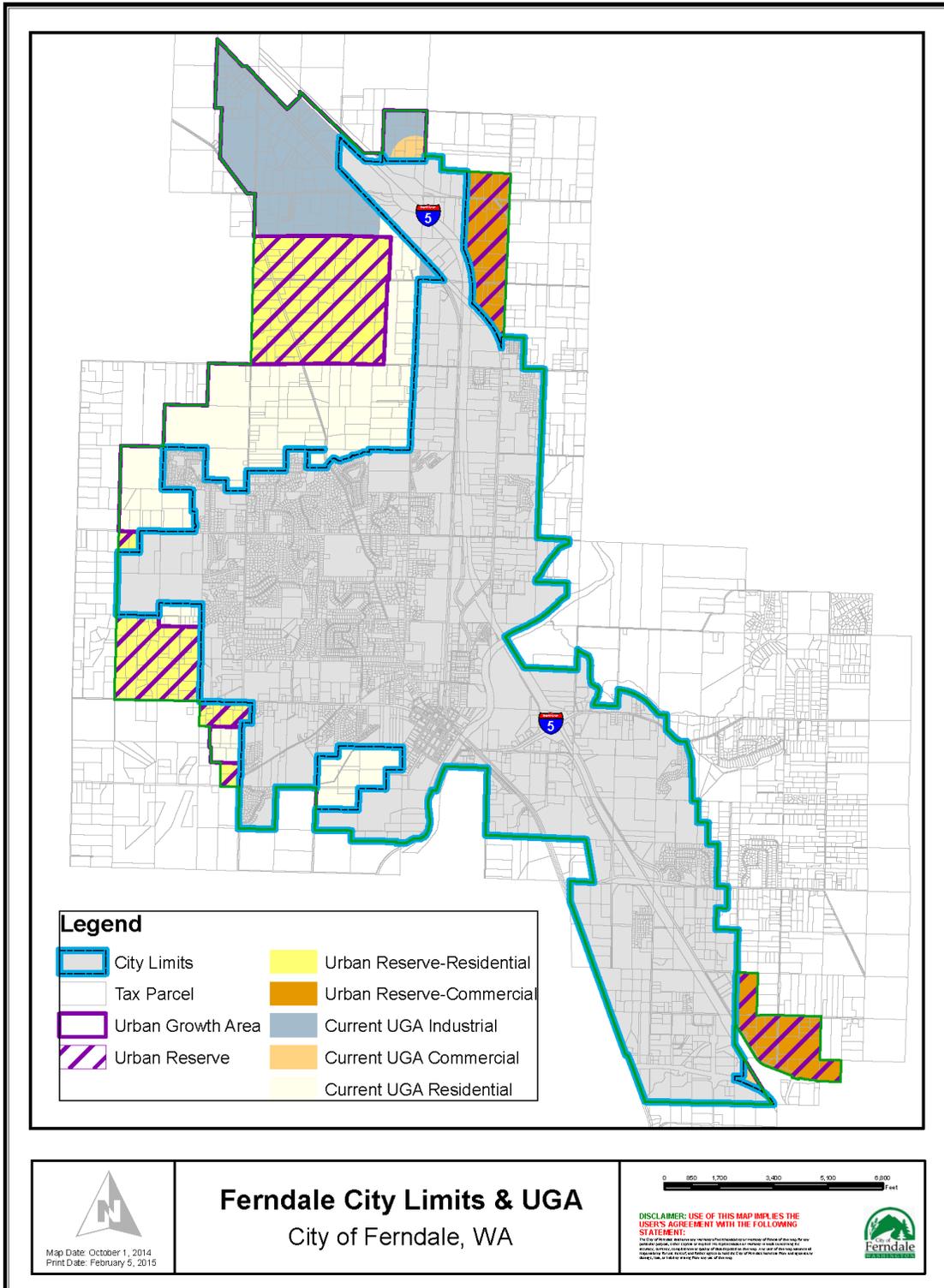
	2016 City Limits	2016 Unincorporated Area	2016 Total	2005 Analysis (City)	2005 Analysis (Unincorporated Area)
Gross Acres	3,727 5.8 miles ²	1,313 2.0 miles ²	5,040 7.9 miles ²	3,447 acres 5.4 miles ²	3,238 acres 5.1 miles ²
Developed Acres Deduction	(2,302)	(302)	(2,604)	--	--
Critical Areas and Other Deductions	(867)	(590)	(1,457)	--	--
Net Developable Acres	558	421	979	1,201	1,670
Percentage of Developable Acres	15%	32%	19%	35%	52% (Overall 43%)

² Source: Whatcom County Land Capacity Analysis (2016), City of Ferndale Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update (2007).



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LUE-5 FERNDALE CITY LIMITS AND UGA



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Buildable Land Area

The Land Capacity Analysis for Ferndale (June 2016) indicates that a total of 558 acres within the incorporated city and 421 acres within the unincorporated UGA are available for development. Overall, approximately 19% of land within the Ferndale UGA remains buildable, with 32% of land within the unincorporated Urban Growth Area also considered available for development. Exhibit LUE-6 illustrates, according to land use, the amount of land available for development within the Ferndale city limits and UGA. the amount of land by land use designation that is available for development within the Ferndale city limits and the UGA.

Since 2005, developable area and percentage of developable land has significantly decreased. In 2005, it was estimated that approximately 35% of the land within the City limits and 43% of the overall UGA could be developed. Those ratios have since been reduced by more than half.

While the methodologies used in determining buildable land have been modified, both the Buildable Lands Inventory in 2005 and the Land Capacity Analysis in 2016 were intended to achieve similar objectives. Over the ten-year period between reviews, the City has experienced significant development that has resulted in a decrease of developable land. Meanwhile, the reduction of the UGA by Whatcom County eliminated hundreds of acres that could have been developed.

Overall, the 2016 analysis still suggests that Ferndale's UGA is sufficient to support future growth projections over the 20-year planning period – and this is the deciding factor in establishing growth boundaries. This determination is made through an analysis of each land use classification, in order to determine overall capacity (land supply).



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

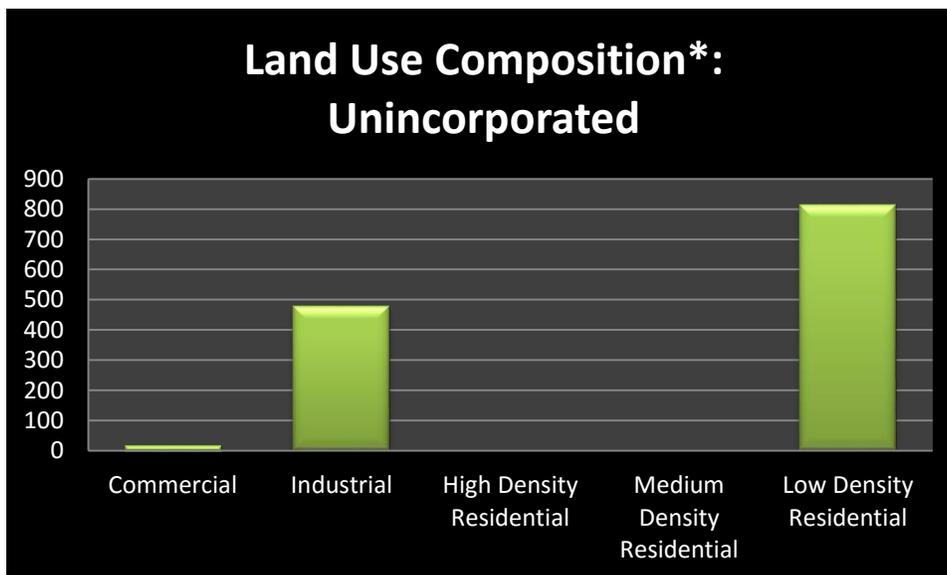
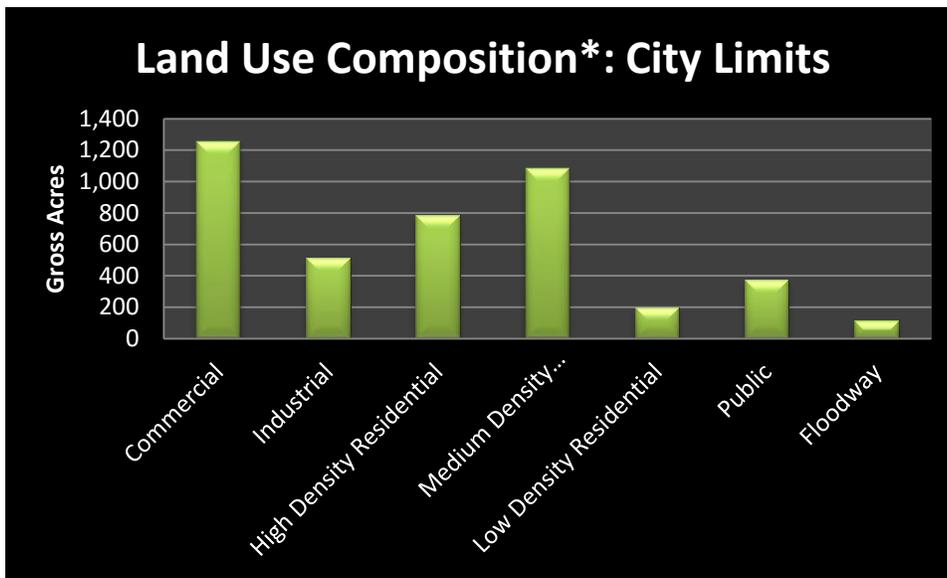
FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Supply Analysis

An essential element of any land use planning program is an analysis of existing land supply and a determination of future land use requirements. This information is necessary to adequately assess the extent and direction of community growth and as an aid in establishing utility construction and annexation policies.

LUE-6: LAND USE COMPOSITION

The projection of future land use needs is generally a function of three factors: the number of new residents, the density at which new residential development will occur, and the extent and projected type of nonresidential development. The primary purpose of a land use plan is to show in a general way the most appropriate use of the land (i.e., housing, commerce, industry, open space) and, in the instance of residential use areas, an indication of the density (typically expressed in dwelling units per acre) proposed for the area.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Uncertainty with economic conditions, changes in housing or shopping trends and other factors which affect growth make accurate projections of future population for the City difficult.

However, despite the potential inaccuracy, such projections are necessary to provide a basis for future planning of such items as water supplies, sewer treatment capacity, parks, streets, fire equipment, public buildings and facilities, and similar activities that require significant lead times. Two primary sources of information utilized in this Comprehensive Plan update are the population projections supplied by the Washington State Office of Financial Management to each county, which in turn allocates population growth to each city within the county, and the Land Capacity Analysis, prepared for the City of Ferndale. The Land Use Element also needs to consider and implement measures to ensure that the quality of life is maintained and enhanced through a quality built environment, protection of the natural environment, and accommodation of desired and appropriate uses, facilities and services.

WHAT IF?

The City is required to establish plans, including capital facilities and related infrastructure, which are necessary to support the future growth that has been allocated by Whatcom County. In some cases, significant infrastructure needs – new roads, an expanded sewer system, parks, and more – become necessary as a result of growth that is slightly more than what was anticipated. In other situations, individual properties or districts may develop at a more intensive level than what was anticipated.

For example, the City's projections may anticipate that the average development in the Downtown core will be three stories, even if taller structures are allowed. If a six-story residential structure was to be built, it could effectively double the population of that project – and could trigger additional requirements.

This plan seeks to proactively address these additional growth possibilities by assuming slightly higher growth than was allocated by Whatcom County. This approach will allow the City to forecast impacts and identify projects in order to prevent or reduce reactive modifications in the future.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

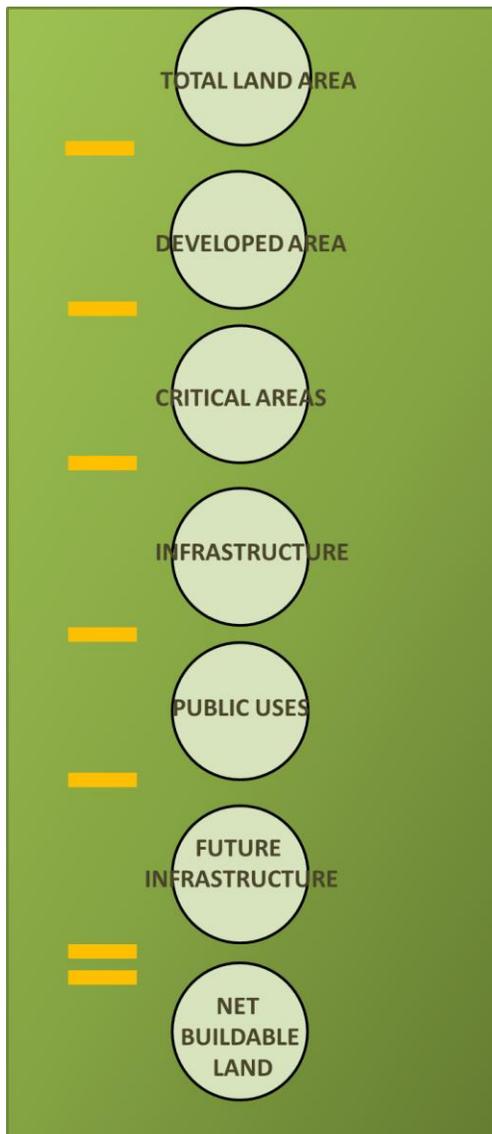
FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE NEEDS

Residential Lands

Residential land use consists of single-family and multifamily dwellings, including condominiums, manufactured housing, foster care facilities, group quarters and cooperative housing. Other land uses found within areas designated for residential use include roadways, churches, parks and open space, planned unit developments and undeveloped platted lands.

LUE -7 LAND CAPACITY ANALYSIS PROCESS



Residential Land Supply

In order to estimate the amount of residential land that will be necessary to support future growth, the City and County first sought to determine a baseline measurement, based on previous (achieved) development. This baseline was arrived at through completion of a [Land Capacity Analysis \(LCA\)](#), which was used by Ferndale, Whatcom County, and the other local jurisdictions.

While historic development trends in Ferndale reflected low-density suburban development, the Land Capacity Analysis was more forward-focused, analyzing development data from the previous decade to anticipate future development trends.

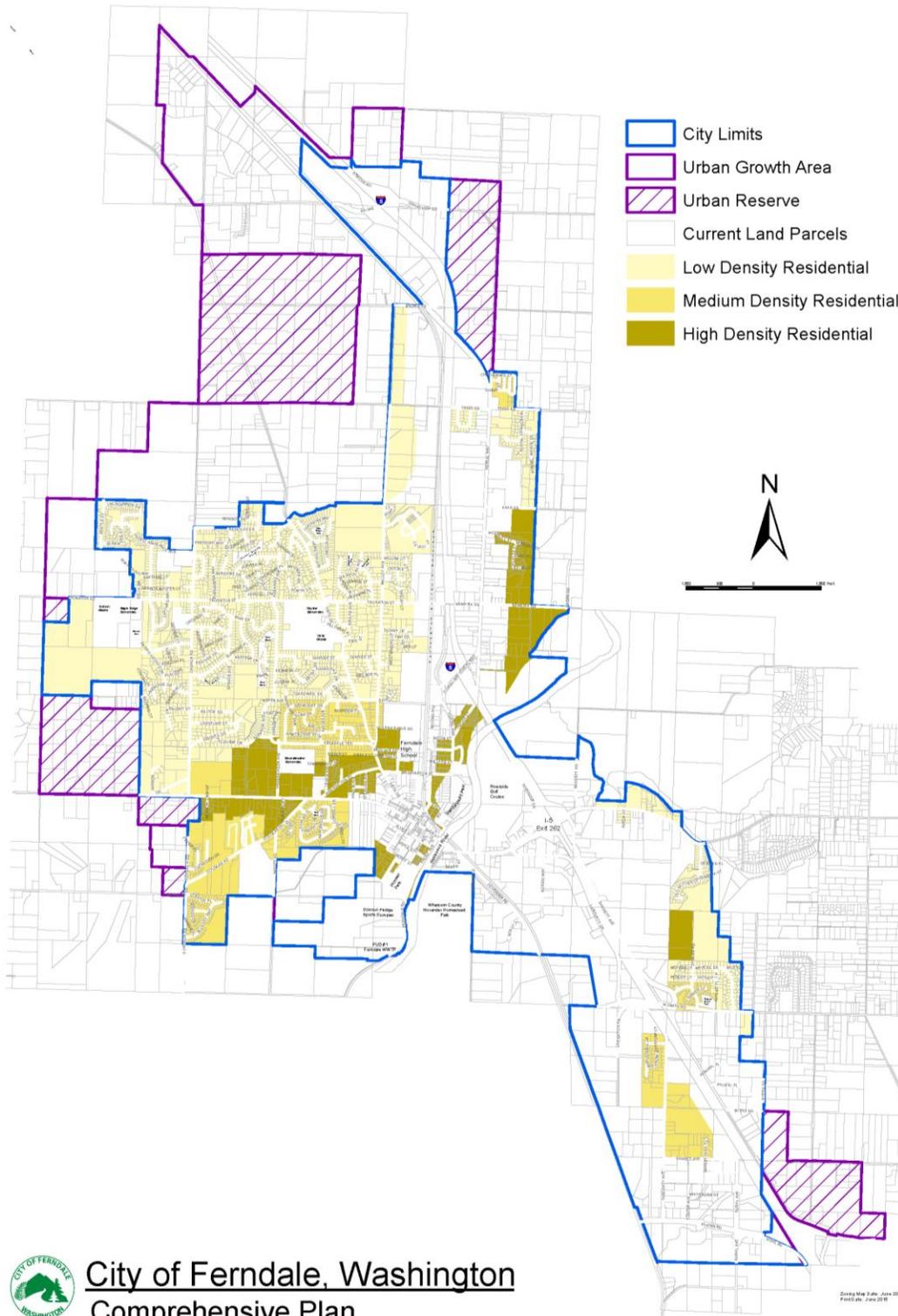
The LCA is a complete inventory of all lands classified by zone, located both within the incorporated city limits and within the unincorporated Urban Growth Area. The zoning data is then transferred to the respective land use categories. Exhibit LUE-6 on page 10 illustrates the amount of buildable land by land use category.

The LCA follows a process described by the [Washington State Department of Commerce](#), where undevelopable or already-developed land is removed from the gross land inventory, resulting in a calculation of “developable” acres. LUE-7

illustrates this process.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As with any future analysis, a number of assumptions are included in the LCA. For the most part, these assumptions are based upon existing data contained within official City maps (wetlands, critical areas), or relevant comprehensive plan chapters (Parks, Capital Facilities, School District plans). After the combined area of vacant, underdeveloped and redevelopable land in the UGA was calculated, the critical areas were deducted from that total. As noted, **the LCA concluded that approximately 19% of all land within the UGA is considered buildable. More specifically, approximately 15% of the land within the city limits is buildable, and 32% of the land located in the unincorporated UGA is considered buildable.**

Based on projected growth rates provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), the population of Ferndale is expected to grow by 6,833 over the next 20 years, and up to 2,500 additional housing units will be added to the city's housing inventory. All residential lands within the unincorporated Ferndale UGA are currently identified for low density development. Within the City itself, approximately 45% of all residential lands are identified for medium and high density residential development (seven units or more per acre). Based on development at densities identified above, the projected residential housing capacity of the buildable residential land within the Ferndale city limits was estimated, and is shown Exhibit LUE-8.

Exhibit LUE-8 Residential Housing Capacity, Ferndale City Limits

Residential Land Category	Net Developable Acres	Yield: Population	Typical Dwelling Unit Type	Assumed Population Per Unit	Yield: Total Dwelling Units
Low Density Residential (Four Units/Acre)	22	251	Single Detached Family	2.85	88
Medium Density Residential (6 Units/Acre)	130	2,223	Single Detached Family	2.85	780
High Density Residential (Twelve Units/Acre)	35	970	Multifamily	2.31	420
TOTAL:	187	3,444	--	---	1418

Source: Whatcom County Land Capacity Analysis 2016. The calculations within the LCA have been simplified and in some cases combined for this chart.

Within the Ferndale city limits, the Land Capacity Analysis calculates that there is enough capacity to accommodate over half (50.4%) of the projected 20-year housing demand.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Based on development at densities identified above, the projected residential housing capacity of the buildable residential land within the unincorporated Ferndale UGA was estimated, and is shown in Exhibit LUE-9.

**Exhibit LUE-9
Residential Housing Capacity, Ferndale UGA**

Residential Land Category	Net Developable Acres	Yield: Population	Typical Dwelling Unit Type	Assumed Population Per Unit	Yield: Total Dwelling Units
Low Density Residential (Four Units/Acre)	298	3,397	Single Family Detached	2.85	1192
TOTAL:	287	3,397	Single Family Detached	2.85	1192

Source: Whatcom County Land Capacity Analysis 2016. The calculations within the LCA have been simplified and in some cases combined for this chart.

The capacity estimates support the conclusion that Ferndale has enough residential land in its UGA to accommodate projected population growth over the next 20 years. With non-conforming units deducted, the City and the unincorporated UGA have a combined growth capacity of 6,542, or 291 people less than Whatcom County’s overall population allocation for Ferndale.

The City does not expect that this small theoretical land deficit will actually occur during the planning period, as this 2016 update to the comprehensive plan, together with recent changes to the Ferndale Municipal Code create the potential for additional infill activities and additional density in certain locations. Should the effect of these regulatory changes not materialize through subsequent development, this land use element will be re-evaluated.

While the previous section analyzed the City’s theoretical land capacity at a city-wide level, the impacts of future growth will be experienced most directly on a much smaller scale. The majority of future growth within the existing City limits will not be on the periphery of the City, but rather on lands adjacent to existing development – and sometimes on properties that have already been partially developed. In addition, properties that may not have previously been considered for development due to site constraints, development costs, or owner choice may return to the market.

The distribution of residential growth is particularly important, as that distribution will inform decisions on where to locate attendance boundaries, recreational activities, infrastructure and roads, businesses, and more.



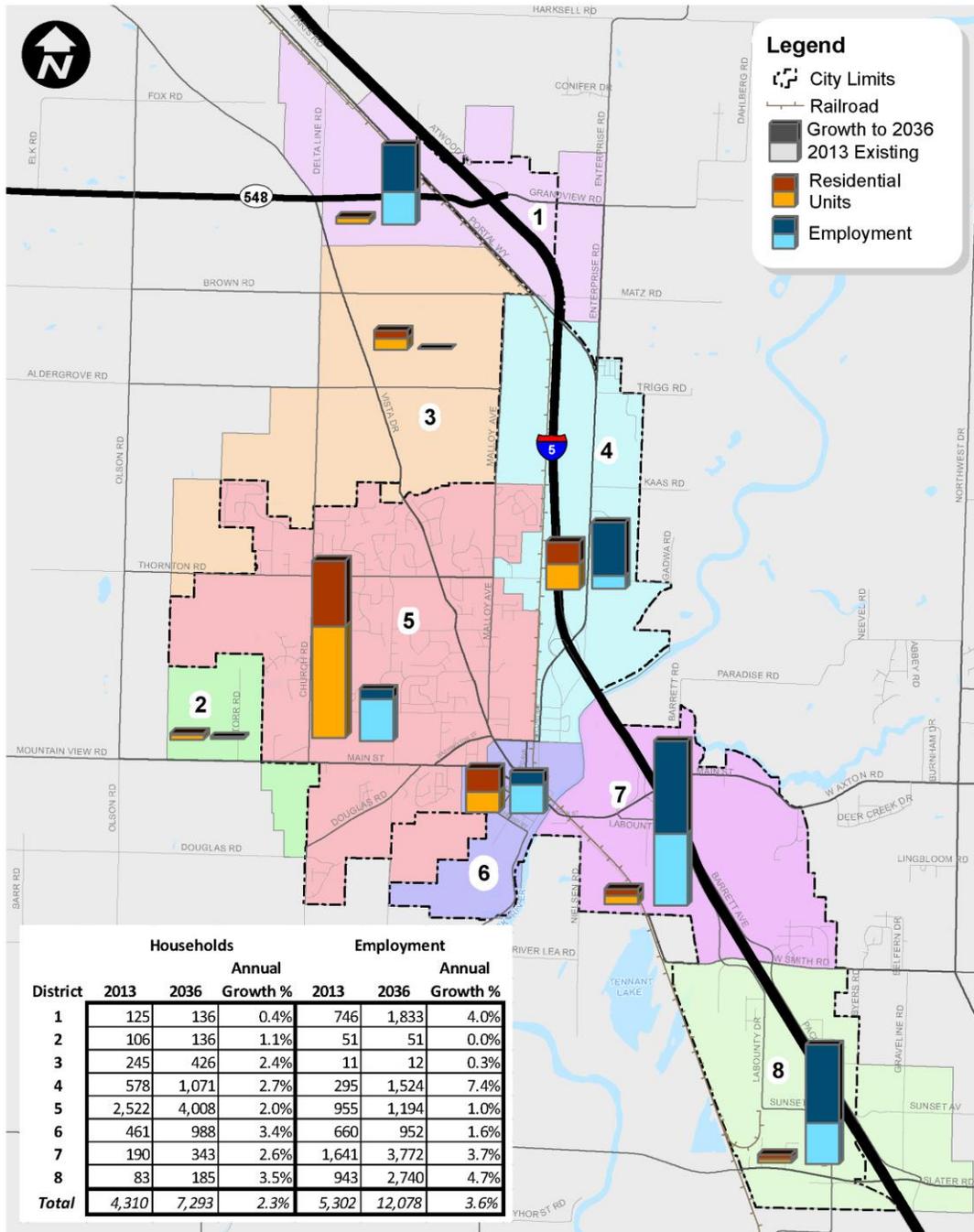
CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use Exhibit 10 reflects the City's projections for future growth, by district. It is important to note that the potential employment growth shown in this exhibit reflects the growth identified within the Main Street Master Plan, a planning document that has been adopted by the City which projects the maximum buildout of District 7. The City has elected to run scenario tests on future growth in order to determine if certain transportation or capital facilities projects become necessary due to more intensive or more rapid growth than what has been allocated by Whatcom County, but this analysis should not be misconstrued as an effort to plan for more growth than has been allocated.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FUTURE LAND USE BY DISTRICT

Q:\Projects\14\14112.00 - Ferndale Transportation Element Update\GIS\MXD\Figures\Fig08_Land Use By District.mxd



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

also consists of a number of employment types (part-time employment, temporary employment, shift work, etc.).

The County's allocation of 4,000 new employees compared to 6,833 new people equates to a jobs-to-population ratio of .48, which is above the existing ratio of .41. This ratio is an important indicator of the City's ability to sustain itself and has significant implications

for quality of life, cost of living and numerous other factors. Figure Y compares Ferndale's jobs-to-population ratio to that in nearby cities.

While the City's existing jobs-to-population ratio is not extreme, it is significantly lower than many other jurisdictions and reflects a community which loses potential employees to other areas. It is important to note that approximately 30% of Ferndale's population is above retirement age (approximately 10% older than 70), or has not yet entered the workforce (approximately 20% of the City's 2013 population is less than 17 years old). When these populations are removed from the total calculation, the City has an existing jobs-to-population ratio of .59. Even when normal unemployment and at-home residents are factored in, Ferndale does not currently provide sufficient employment

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

While jobs-to-population ratios provide some indication of intra-city dynamics, they do not tell the full story. A retail-oriented city may have a very high jobs to population ratio by virtue of a large number of relatively low-paying jobs. In contrast, a city with a concentration of high-paying jobs in a corporate campus setting may feel virtually deserted on evenings and weekends.

Ferndale's task is to ensure not only that there is adequate physical space for the projected employment allocation, but that the City has planned for a mix of employment types. This analysis begins with Commercial Land Uses.

opportunities for its population.

Unlike residential growth, where future overall densities can be projected with a relatively high degree of accuracy based on land use and zoning allowances, employment growth may vary significantly based on the type and intensity of development. For that reason, the City has analyzed future impacts based on both Whatcom County's allocation of 4,000 new employees, but has also analyzed significantly more intense growth in a variety of areas. This additional analysis provides the City with the ability to project growth beyond the twenty-year period (up to near maximum build-out), and to determine those capital facilities projects that may be necessary, should growth occur more rapidly than is anticipated.

Commercial Lands

Commercial land uses support the daily retail and service needs of the region and community and can provide a basis for local employment. There are several commercial land use zones that have been designated to accommodate various commercial uses



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

and districts. These zones are consistent with the Commercial Comprehensive Plan designation and are located on the Official Zoning Map available at City Hall in Title 18 of the Ferndale Municipal Code, and on the City's website.

While the decision to locate a specific business is in the hands of the private sector, the City plays a vital role in establishing the infrastructure, use and design requirements to ensure the widest benefit.

For example, some commercial uses may depend on convenience to transportation corridors and consumer traffic (motorized and/or pedestrian), while others depend on relative isolation. Some may flourish in a mixed-use setting in close proximity to residential areas while others may wish to co-locate with similar uses. Still other uses may combine both industrial and commercial uses at one location.

Beyond identifying geographic areas in which commercial uses may be established, it is also important to recognize the land needs of these developments, which may also vary significantly. Commercial uses, particularly office space and dining, generally utilize land

more densely than industrial uses employing the same number of people. As a result there is the potential for commercial uses to employ more people than industrial

uses while taking up less space. By strategically locating these commercial areas throughout the City, it is much more likely that the overall supply of different commercial use properties will match up with the demand.

Industrial Lands

The City's proximity to the major transportation routes of Interstate 5 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, the international border, Cherry Point Industrial area and Bellingham International Airport, as well as the affordability and availability of undeveloped land makes Ferndale a convenient location for industrial uses. Industrial uses often include the manufacture or conversion of products prior to sale to the public or other processors. In some cases, industrial users may accept those products at the end of their useful life for recycling or disposal. Frequently businesses may consolidate a variety of industrial and commercial functions at one location.

As of 2016, there were an estimated 372 acres of developable commercial or industrial land within the City Limits and an additional 123 acres of developable land within the unincorporated Urban Growth Area. It should be noted that both of these totals aggregate all developable land into one calculation, and that in some cases land identified as developable is constrained by other environmental factors onsite.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Commercial and Industrial Land Supply

The Growth Management Act mandates that cities and counties look at future population growth to determine the need for land to accommodate future growth and development. Primarily, that focus is on determining residential land supply since it can be directly related to the increase in population.

It is also necessary for cities to have adequate lands to accommodate commercial and industrial growth. Unfortunately, estimating how much commercial and industrial land a community needs is not as clear-cut as residential land analysis.

In general, commercial land uses tend to gravitate towards one another, often creating commercial centers that draw customers from a wider geographic region. The presence or absence of a commercial center may dictate the amount of land necessary to serve future commercial growth – and may vary substantially between cities of equal size.

Both the 1996 and 2005 Comprehensive Plans suggested that the City's inventory of commercial and industrial land was inadequate. Since that time the City's inventory of land has been further reduced due to development, the removal of lands from the UGA, and more-restrictive environmental protections. These factors, in addition to the acquisition of land for development purposes by the Lummi Nation south of Slater Road,

In order to plan for the next twenty years the 2016 plan cannot rely exclusively on current or historic trends to project development in 2036.

resulted in the expansion of the Urban Growth Area at the northeast quadrant of Slater Road and Interstate Five.

As described above, the amount of land necessary for future industrial and commercial development can vary substantially, and the City cannot rely on historic trends

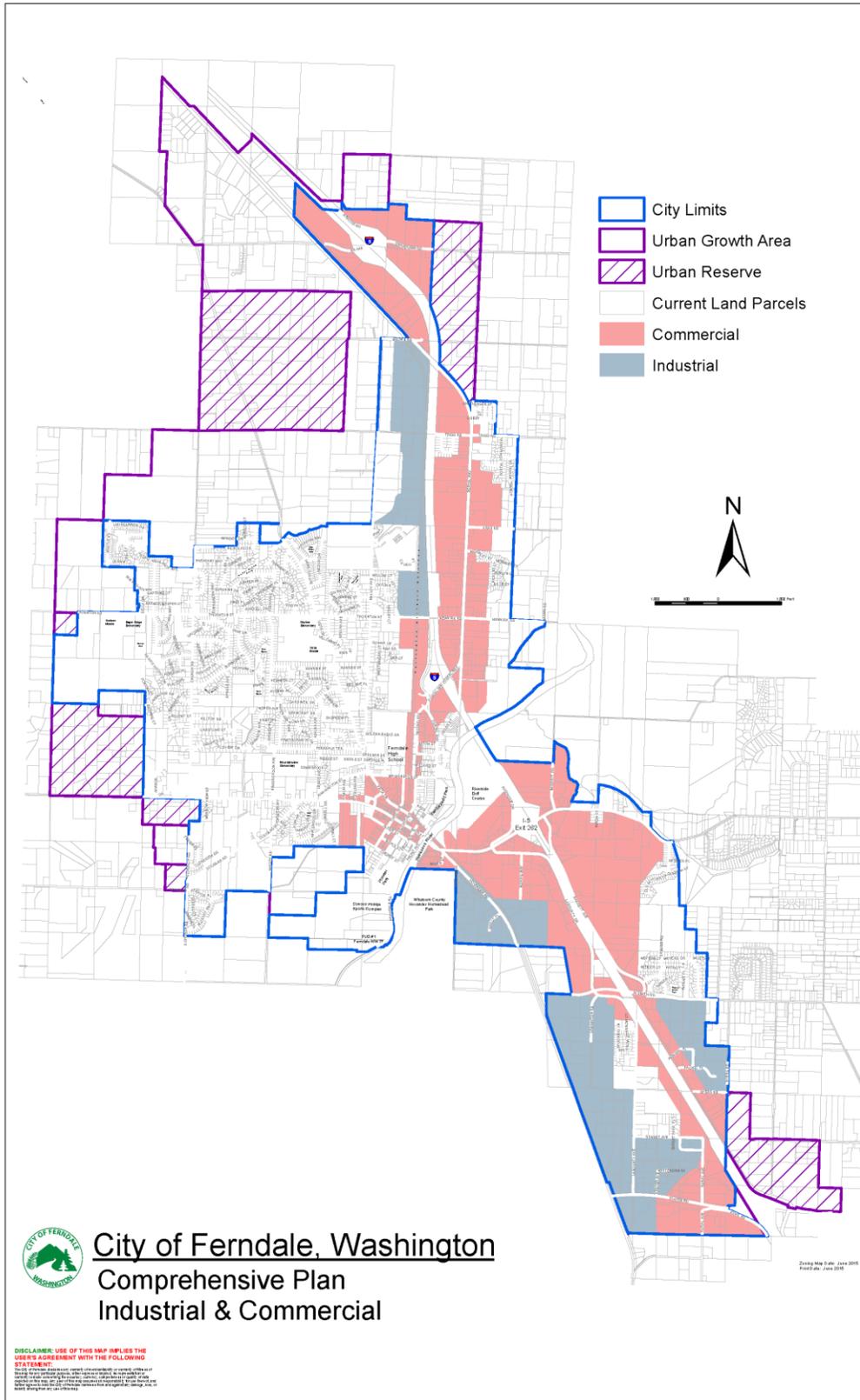
to dictate the magnitude or type of future development. For example, the 1996 Comprehensive Plan Update was written in an era when regional malls were beginning to be supplanted by large-format retail stores, or “big box” stores. The 2005 plan was written prior to the 2008-2010 economic recession, and prior to the decline of some brick and mortar stores, or the dramatic increase in internet sales. If each of the two preceding plans were written to reflect current development trends, they were both outdated within five years of their adoption.

A growth projection based only on historic shares of commercial and industrial growth would indicate that Ferndale will not need additional commercial or industrial lands within the twenty-year planning period. However, in order to plan for the next twenty years the 2016 plan cannot rely exclusively on current or historic trends to project development in 2036. Instead, the City must look to the supply of desirable land in other jurisdictions (and Canada), the relative costs of land and development in Ferndale compared to other jurisdictions, the fact that Ferndale's growth may make it capable of supporting larger or different business types, and more. These trends are discussed in more depth within the Economic Development Element of this plan. In addition, the plan cannot rely simply on



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

internal mathematical calculations to determine the location of future growth as trends experienced or initiated by other agencies may play a primary role in not only the size but the location of future growth within the City.



LAND USE UNDER THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As noted previously, the Land Use Element is required to not only address size requirements for future population and employment growth (which is ultimately the role of Whatcom County), but to determine the appropriate location for that growth within cities – which is the role of the cities themselves. Beyond simple mathematical calculations to determine capacity, the Land Use Element also seeks to ensure that land uses are oriented in a manner that promotes physical activity, protects sensitive areas and the environment, fosters economic development, results in a logical extension of services, promotes historic preservation, enlivens art and culture, and protects public safety.

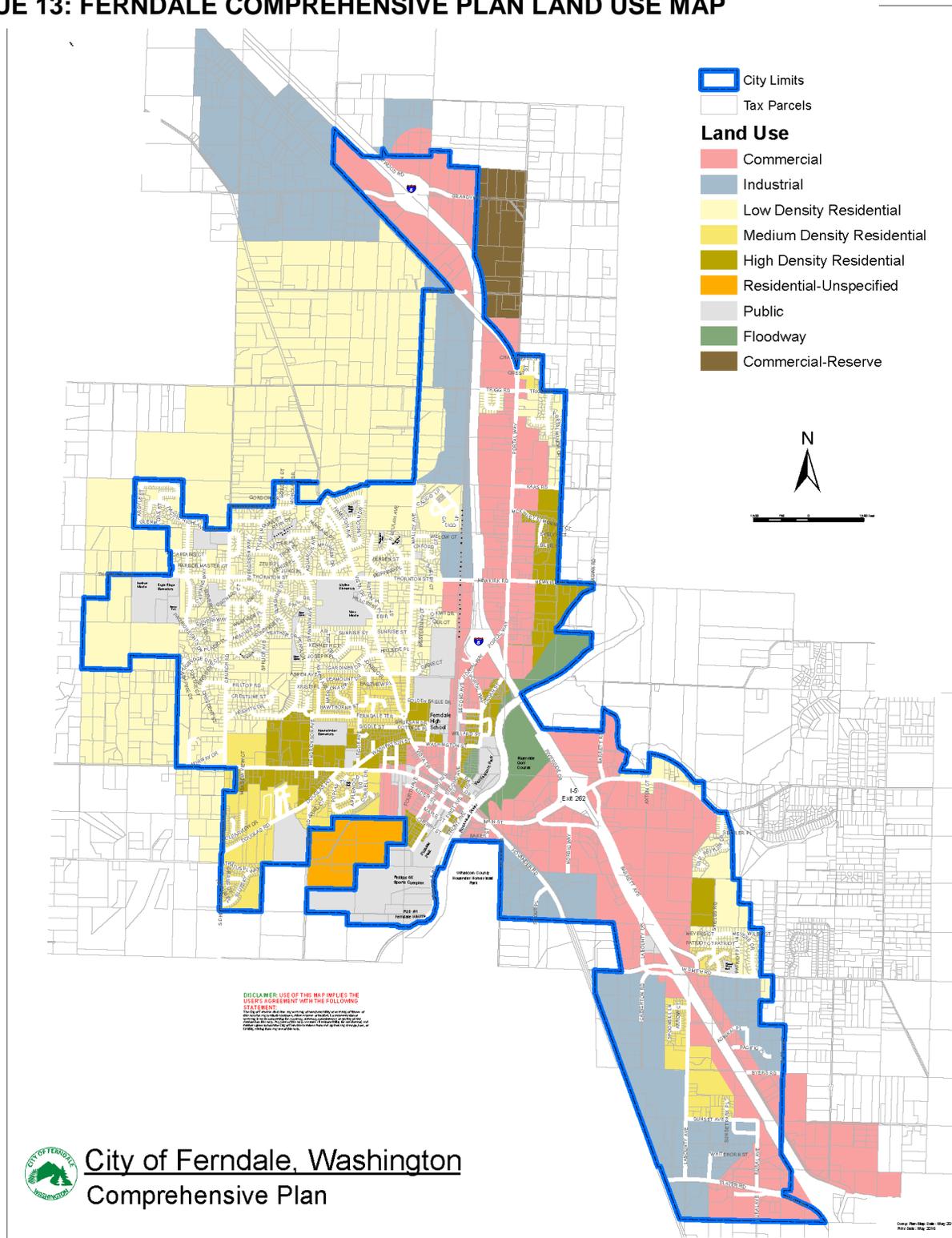
The traditional approach to land use regulation that was limited to the segregation of uses does not address many of these elements: comprehensive plans that separate uses from one another force residents to use cars to get from one place to another, thereby reducing physical activity; plans that eliminate residential uses from Downtown cores tend to inadvertently eliminate arts, culture, dining and entertainment from those areas as well. However, this does not mean that each part of the City should include a wide range of uses: a homogeneous community is just as unsustainable as a community that splits uses into rigid categories.

Land Use Exhibit 13 is the official land use map of the City of Ferndale.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LUE 13: FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE MAP



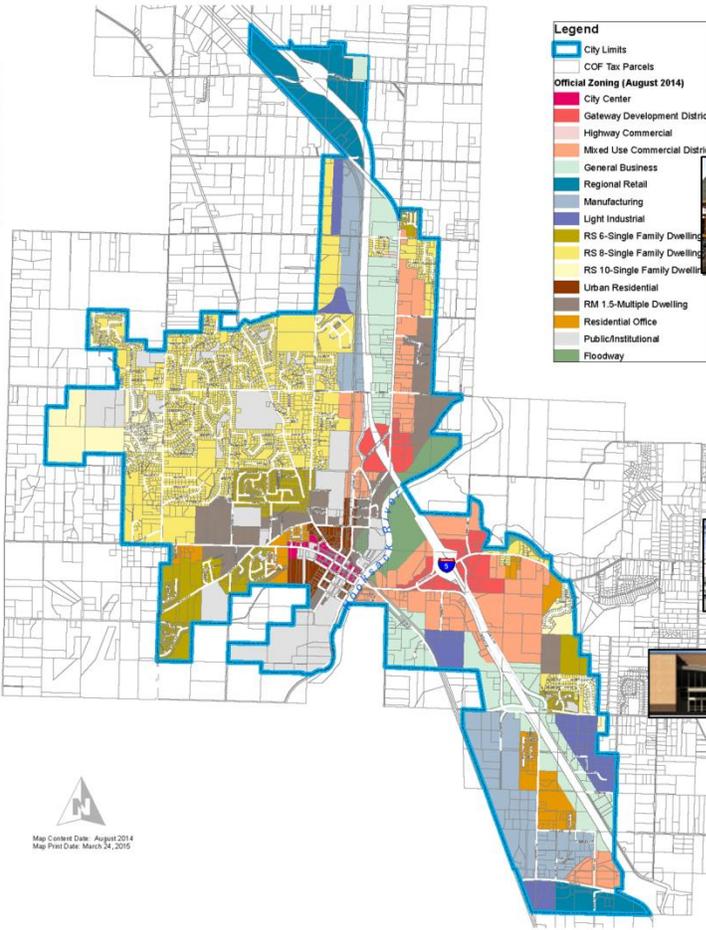
CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use Distribution: Land use designations identified in the Plan are as follows, and as shown LUE 14:

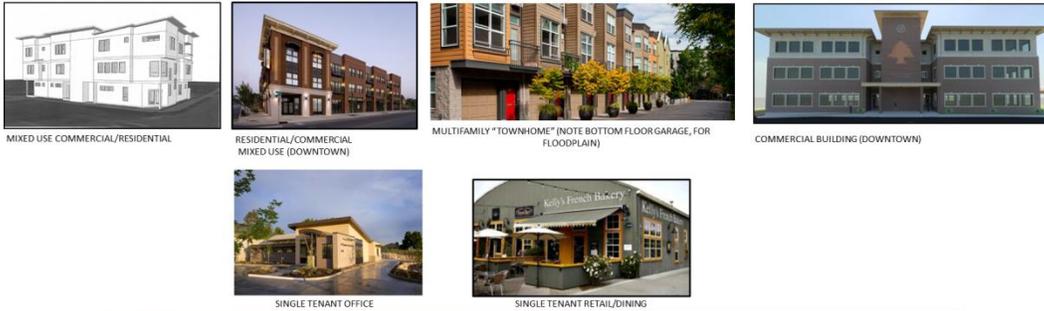
ANTICIPATED GROWTH TYPES AND LOCATIONS



RESIDENTIAL
 LESS DENSE
 MORE DENSE



COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL
INDUSTRIAL
RETAIL



MIXED USE
COMMERCIAL
RESIDENTIAL

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- **Commercial** —This category includes a variety of retail, wholesale and office uses. Depending on the specific district in which this designation is applied, the Commercial land use designation may also be combined with residential or industrial uses to establish “mixed-use” zones. The scale, form, and type of uses allowed in this designation will also vary by district and zone.
- **Industrial** — This category includes a variety of light and heavy industrial, assembly, warehousing, distribution and manufacturing land uses. It also includes uses devoted to the sale of retail and wholesale products manufactured on the site.
- **Low Density Residential** — The low density residential category includes single-family residential uses that range in density from three to seven dwelling units per net acre, with an **average density of 4 units per net acre**. The low density residential designation is further delineated into several zoning districts which provide the ability to develop at a wide range of densities and maintain a suitable living environment for low density single family residential uses.

LUE 15: PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL DENSITY RANGES

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DESIGNATION	DENSITY RANGE PER NET ACRE (UNITS)	ASSUMED AVERAGE DENSITY PER NET ACRE (UNITS)	PRIMARY HOUSING TYPES
LOW DENSITY	3-7	4	SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED
MEDIUM DENSITY	4-9	7	SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED, RANGING TO MIXED-DENSITIES AND LIMITED MULTI-FAMILY
HIGH DENSITY	8 OR MORE	12	MULTI-FAMILY

- **Medium Density Residential** — The medium density residential category includes single-family and multi-family residential uses that range in density from four to nine dwelling units per net acre. Land consumption calculations utilized in this document assume development at an **average density of 7 units per gross acre**. The medium density designation is intended to provide for multi-family living to ensure that opportunities to obtain reasonable-cost housing exist for community residents. Primary uses include multi-family housing of various types including



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, apartments, etc. Secondary uses can include single-family dwellings, adult family homes, day care, private educational facilities, utilities subject to compatibility criteria, churches and religious institutions, convalescent care and rest homes, limited office/professional buildings, and manufactured home subdivisions.

- **High Density Residential** — The high density residential category includes single and multi-family residential uses that exceed twelve dwelling units per gross acre. Land consumption calculations utilized in this document assume development at an **average density of 12 units per gross acre**. This land use category is designed to provide a wide range of housing choices in areas with existing and planned infrastructure, and to allow for infill development and the reduction of sprawl. Primary uses include multi-family housing of various and moderate density residential developments, with adult family homes, churches and religious institutions, convalescent care and rest homes, day care, and private educational facilities possible in the area, subject to additional compatibility criteria.
- **Flood Reserve Area** — This category includes certain lands subject to frequent inundation by flooding and includes lands that are designated as “floodway” by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and such contiguous areas found by the City Council to warrant protection from habitable development.
- **Public Use** – This category includes public or quasi-public land uses that provide essential services and recreation opportunities to the general public. . The Public land use designation applies to public facilities such as schools, municipal buildings, infrastructure such as regional stormwater ponds or wetland mitigation areas, parks, trails, and a variety of other publicly-owned structures or developments.
 - Public Facilities – includes existing or planned public or quasi-public land uses

EXISTING ZONING

The city zoning regulations have established and expanded land use trends in the community. Zoning regulations are established based on the broader requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, and must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Title 18 of the Ferndale Municipal Code includes the text of all zoning within the City, and the Official Zoning Map shows the location of these zoning designations. In some cases, the City may add additional zoning overlays or design standards to further modify zoning regulations in different subareas. These regulations, in combination with the City’s environmental standards (Ferndale Municipal Code Title 16 as well as the Shoreline Master Program) are the City’s primary land use controls.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Within the Ferndale Urban Growth Area

- The [Annexation Blueprint](#), or phasing plan, describes key features of the unincorporated Urban Growth Area and is adopted by reference to this element. The [Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan](#) and [Official Zoning Map](#) is another resource for additional information.

EXISTING AND PROJECTED DEFICIENCIES IN LAND USE PATTERNS

No existing deficiencies in land use patterns were identified because the City of Ferndale has adequate capacity to accommodate projected growth within the existing UGA. Land use goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan will help reduce the potential for impact from changes in the City's land use and development pattern.

This does not mean that future growth in Ferndale will not have its difficulties. Access to resources such as water (via water rights) will become limited in the future. The availability of prime building sites that do not have environmental constraints will also be reduced.

The demographics of the City will also change. Citizens of Ferndale will live longer and the elderly will require places to live and services to support them. More citizens will live in multi-family developments or non-traditional dwelling units – and these changes will alter the manner in which services are delivered.

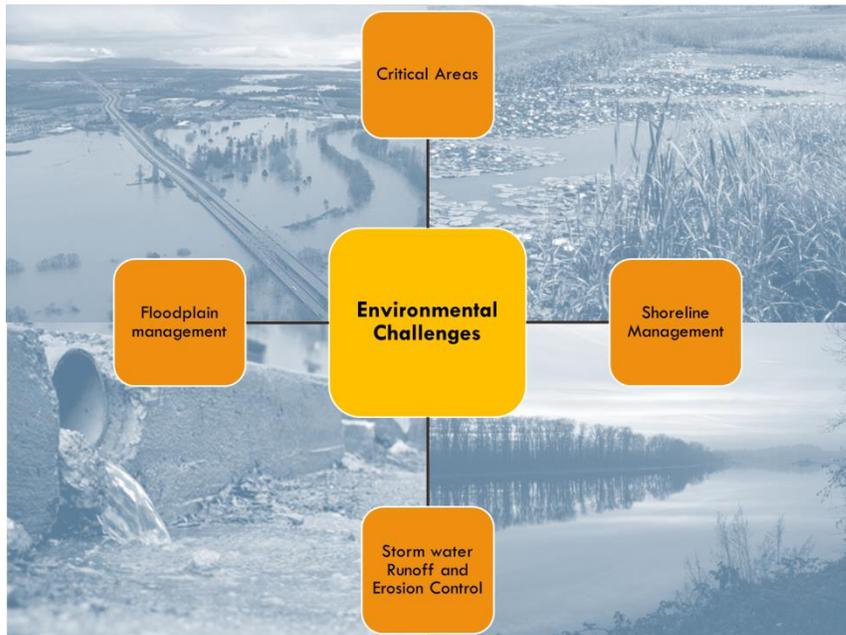
Climate fluctuations, either as part of overall climate change or pronounced seasonal shifts will also inform future land use decisions. New technologies may shift the way that citizens live, shop, work, and travel.

Ultimately, the Comprehensive Plan and this Land Use Element specifically are simply the City's best guesses for the future. This element has been designed to clarify the City's perspective at the time of adoption without constraining the ability of future decision makers to make the best long-range decisions possible, based on the information available at that time.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



The physical characteristics of the area provide both opportunities and constraints to development. Ferndale's geography is very diverse and significantly influences the value (and cost) of development of all kinds. The Growth Management Act's emphasis on infill development and the establishment of urban densities results in the development of parcels that may have environmental constraints. Meanwhile, the GMA requires that many of these environmentally sensitive areas are preserved, protected – or that unavoidable impacts are mitigated.

Added to these environmental and economic pressures is a social component: natural areas are an important part of communities. Successful cities do not isolate themselves from the natural environment, but rather integrate natural processes into the built environment.

One of the first growth management planning activities undertaken by the City was an inventory of critical areas and the constraints they place on development. The constraints to development identified were classified as wetlands, flood plains, stream corridors, aquifer recharge areas, seismic areas, and areas of landslide hazards. Exhibits LUE 10 thru LUE 16 identify generalized locations of these areas that are presently known.

Growth and development activities impact the environment. Population and employment will increase over time, and additional population growth will increase the demand for housing. Secondary indirect impacts of growth would likely include potential encroachment near natural environmental resources, increases in demand for facilities, infrastructure, and cause other effects. The level of environmental analysis is programmatic in nature, focusing on potential impact resulting from Plan implementation. Additional environmental review of future development activities will be handled project-by-project as the City receives development applications.

Some measures taken by the City of Ferndale to address environmental issues are briefly described, below.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Critical Areas

The City's [Critical Areas Ordinance](#) (Title 16 of the Ferndale Municipal Code) contains standards, guidelines, criteria and requirements used to identify, analyze and mitigate probable impacts on the City's critical areas, and to enhance and restore those areas when possible for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the area's ecological functions in appropriate circumstances, impacts on critical areas resulting from regulated activities may be minimized, rectified, reduced, or compensated for, consistent with the requirements of the ordinance.

As part of these regulatory requirements the City has also identified several locations within the City where ecological functions have been degraded – resulting in the loss of important habitats or habitat connections. In certain circumstances, the City seeks to restore and enhance these areas by using private and public funding sources, re-directing off-site mitigation to these areas, and combining wetland enhancement with low-impact stormwater mitigation and park/trail space. Enhancement areas include the Schell Marsh area southwest of Downtown Ferndale (District 6), the Schell Creek corridor within District 5, California Creek (District 1), the Nooksack River Shoreline (District 7), and Tennant Lake wetland areas associated with District 8.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Many of these environmental constraints are relatively static and not subject to significant deviation; wetlands are somewhat different. The City retains probable wetlands areas that are approximately 10 years old. In 2013, the City re-evaluated the areas with its wetland consultant and determined that the areas identified as probable in 2005 have not changed dramatically.

Shoreline Management

The Shoreline Management Act requires the development of a [Shoreline Master Plan](#) (SMP) and gives local government primary authority over shoreline development within their jurisdiction. The primary purpose of the Ferndale Shoreline Management Program (Title 3) is to protect and sustain the limited shoreline resources for the enjoyment of Ferndale citizens and visitors.

The SMP establishes additional regulations beyond those found in the Ferndale Municipal Code. Typically, these regulations limit the type or extent of land uses that are allowed within the shoreline jurisdiction and add an additional regulatory review that provides for the ability for the public and other agencies to comment on proposed actions.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

The City takes its obligations to plan for, and to protect fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas seriously. The City's Critical Areas Ordinance is intended as a tool to ensure that habitat is identified and protected as appropriate. However, as habitat is not constrained to artificial political boundaries such as the city limits, it is necessary for the



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City to work with a variety of other agencies – state, local, tribal, federal – to identify existing, potential, and historic habitat areas and corridors, and identify solutions to protect them.

In addition, the City has the continuing obligation to ensure that new development does not further constrain habitat and fish corridors. The maintenance of existing infrastructure must also continue, in order to avoid inadvertent blockages of fish and other habitat passages.

Finally, the City does not seek to protect the habitat of certain invasive species, especially when those species tend to overwhelm other species, or expand territory in a manner that prevents the reasonable use of existing properties.

Stormwater Runoff and Erosion Control

Stormwater is water that originates from precipitation (rain or snow). While the majority of stormwater on undeveloped sites infiltrates (soaks) into the soil, in developed areas or after periods of higher-than-normal precipitation, stormwater runoff can occur. Stormwater runoff may result in erosion to properties and may contribute to property or environmental damage. In developed areas, stormwater often mixes with exposed soils, oil, gas, or other pollutants left on roads or driveways, and may contaminate surface waters such as lakes and streams – resulting in serious environmental damage.

The Washington State Department of Ecology is responsible for regulating stormwater runoff and the state has developed regulations wherein local jurisdictions are responsible for the day-to-day administration of these regulations.

The City of Ferndale manages stormwater runoff and erosion control through the Department of Ecology's Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit. The Permit mandates that City staff update the Stormwater Management Program annually and enforce water quality (Water Quality – Prohibited Discharges, FMC 13.35) and stormwater drainage (Stormwater Control Ordinance, FMC 13.34) regulations. The City of Ferndale has adopted the Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington and the Puget Sound Partnerships Low Impact Development Technical Guidance Manual as the technical manuals with which development must comply. Stormwater infrastructure is addressed within Chapter VI, the Capital Facilities Element.

Floodplain Management

Portions of the City of Ferndale are within the 100-Year Floodplain of the Nooksack River, including significant portions of Downtown Ferndale. Although properties within the floodplain are still permitted to develop, costs associated with raising or flood-proofing structures may in some cases reduce the overall development potential.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City has established policies to protect both property and endangered species within the floodplain in accordance with a Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Ferndale further recognizes the importance of expanding its outreach beyond minimum regulatory standards and in 2014 joined the Community Rating System (CRS), thereby reducing flood insurance premiums within the floodplain.

Uncertainties related to floodplain modeling, the natural changes to the Nooksack River basin, the impact of climate change, the consequences of upstream development and more will all have impacts on floodplain management over the next twenty years and beyond. As a result, new development within the established floodplain will be required to adhere to more-restrictive standards in order to protect the community and promote environmental consciousness. These changes may influence the Land Use Element by placing greater emphasis on development which expands the Downtown core to the north and west, away from flood-related impacts.

Environmental Inventory

The Growth Management Act requires that the City conduct an inventory of a series of environmental elements that must be considered both when reviewing individual development proposals as well as establishing long-range planning policies. These elements range from a general inventory of wetland locations that are used to inform overall growth capacity as well as the application of the Critical Areas Ordinance to consideration of the potential impacts of tsunami floodwaters and protected aquifers. These maps are provided below and are incorporated into the City's online Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database. These maps are intended only to provide a general depiction of environmental elements and should not be used in place of site-specific analysis.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

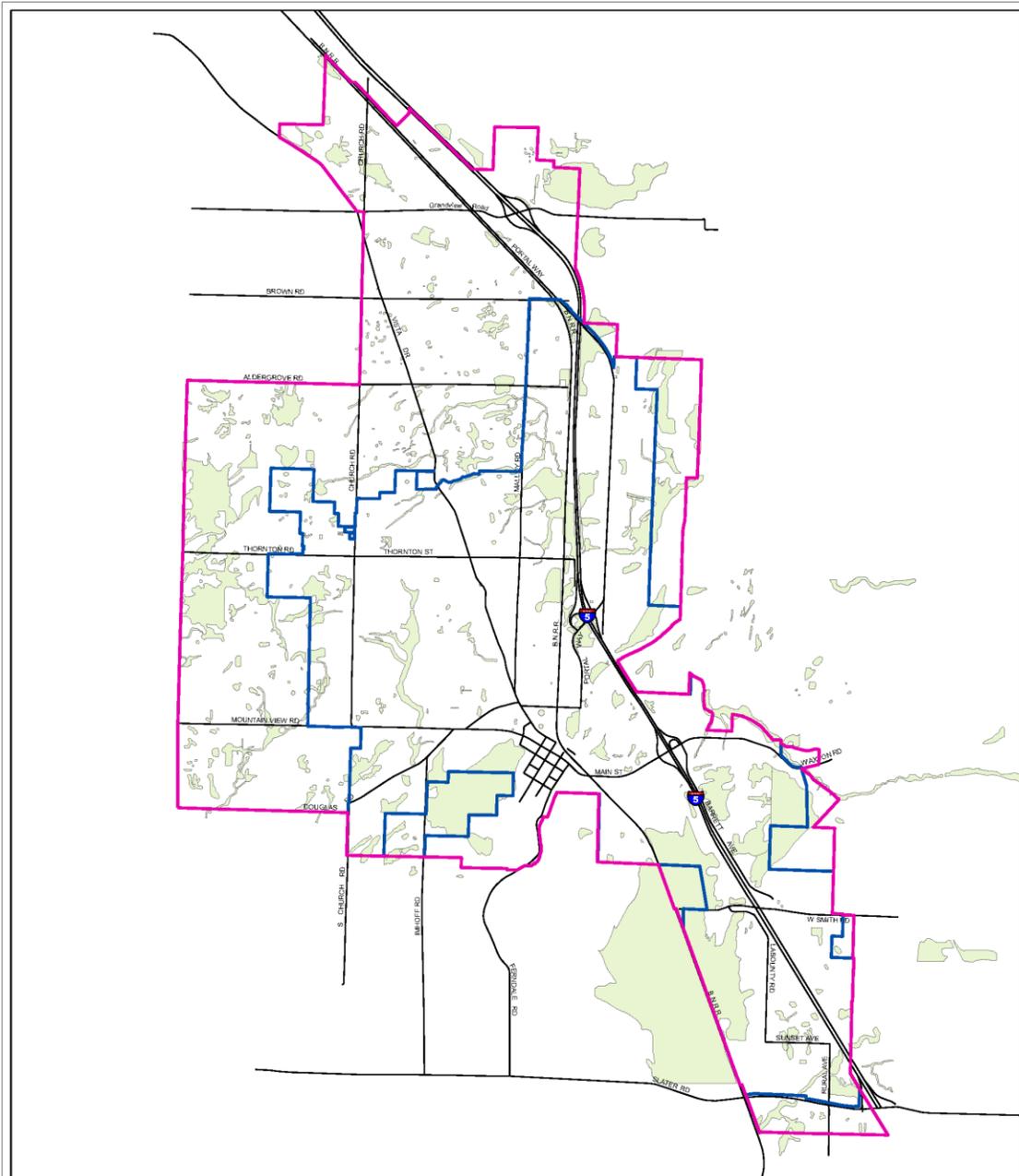


Exhibit LUE 16 - Wetlands

- Potential Wetlands Area
- Unincorporated Urban Growth Area
- City Limits 2005

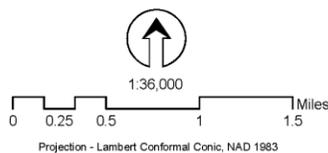
The information depicted on this map is intended to be used with the City of Ferndale's Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update document.

This map was originally produced from data maintained in the City of Ferndale's Geographic Information System.

For further information regarding maps, data sources, or the availability of GIS products and services, please contact Planning & Building at 360-394-4006 or planning@cityofferndale.org.

DISCLAIMER: USE OF THIS MAP IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

The City of Ferndale disclaims any warranty of merchantability or warranty of fitness of this map for any particular purpose, either express or implied. No representation or warranty is made concerning the accuracy, currency, completeness or quality of data depicted on this map. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use thereof, and further agrees to hold the City of Ferndale harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of this map.



City of Ferndale



Comprehensive Plan
June 2016 Update

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

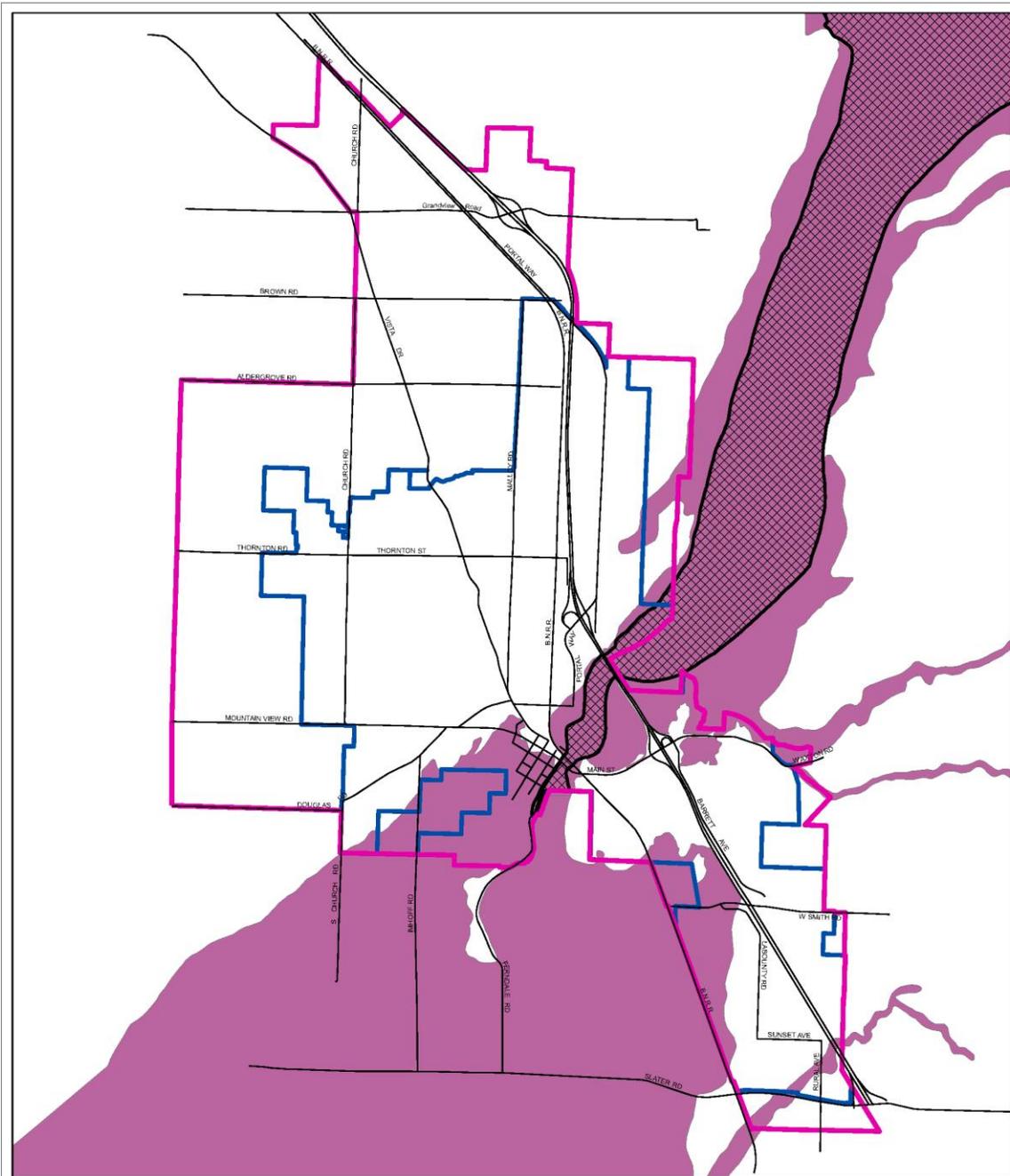


Exhibit LUE 17 - Frequently Flooded Areas

Frequently Flooded (FEMA 100yr)

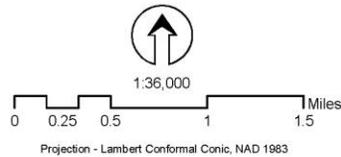
- Area inundated by 100 year flooding
 - Velocity Hazard in 100 year flooding
 - Floodway
- area that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water-surface elevation by more than a designated height.*

- Unincorporated Urban Growth Area
- City Limits 2005

Source: Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance Article IV-Frequently Flooded Areas, 2005

Frequently flooded areas (FFA) are areas located along major rivers, streams, and coastal areas where the depth, velocity, intensity, and frequency of flood water during major events presents a risk to human life, property. FFAs are subject to a one percent recurrence interval of flood water inundation or a 100 year base flood as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) as amended for Whatcom County. This includes coastal high hazards as identified and designated on the FIRM maps as Zone A, AE, A, V, or V.

The Floodway areas depicted are designated by FEMA to provide and area that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the surface water elevation more than 1 foot. Also known as the "zero rise floodway". The floodplain as well as the floodway comes from the 2004 FIRM dataset.



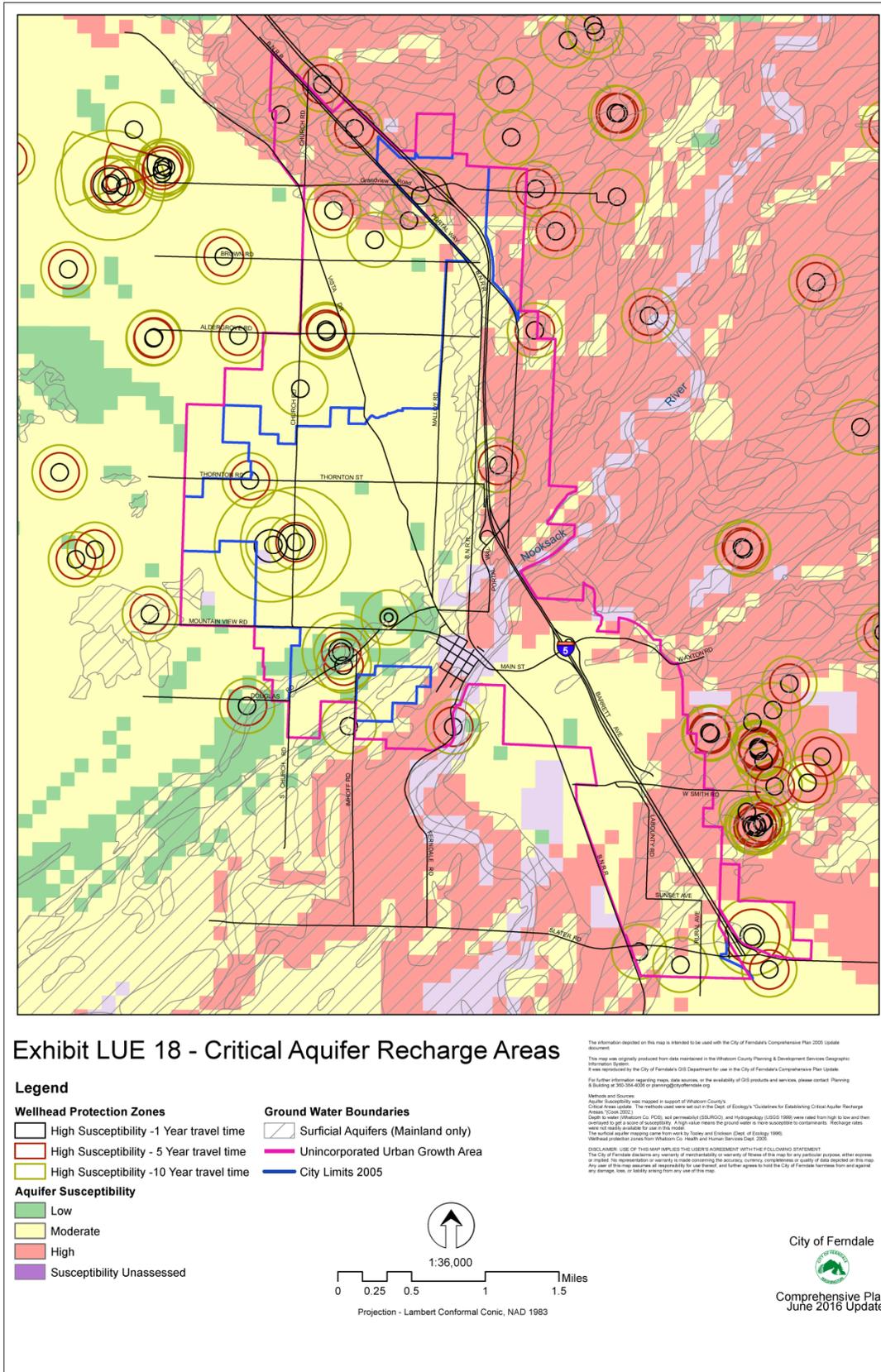
The information depicted on this map is intended to be used with the City of Ferndale's Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update document.

This map was originally produced from data maintained in the Whatcom County Planning & Development Services GIS.

For further information regarding maps, data sources, or the availability of GIS products and services, please contact Planning & Building at 360-388-4265 or planning@cityofferndale.org.

DISCLAIMER: USE OF THIS MAP IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
The City of Ferndale disclaims any warranty of merchantability or warranty of fitness of this map for any particular purpose, either express or implied. No representation or warranty is made concerning the accuracy, correctness, completeness or quality of data depicted on this map. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use thereof, and further agrees to hold the City of Ferndale harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of this map.

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

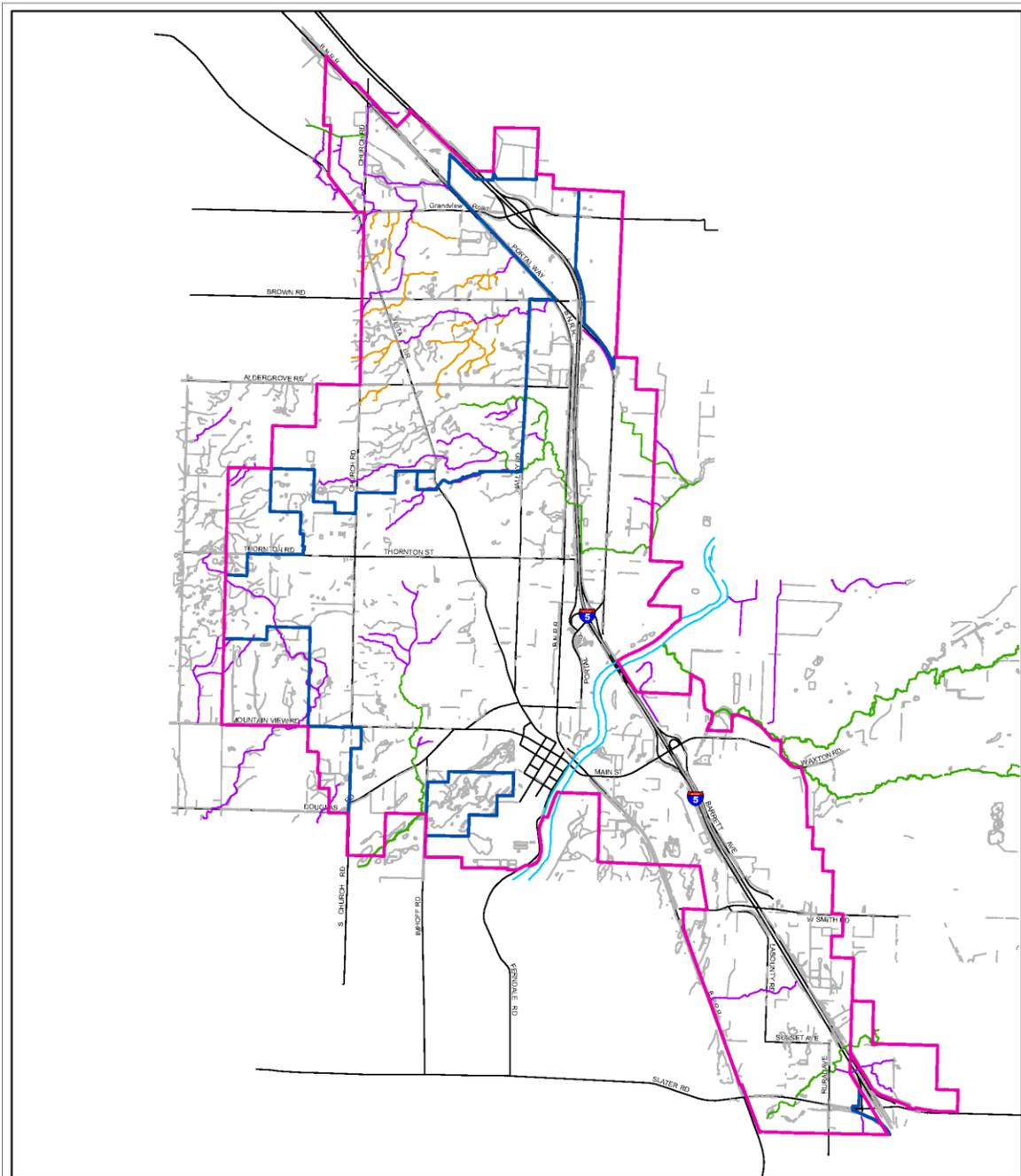


Exhibit LUE 19 - Priority Habitat, Streams

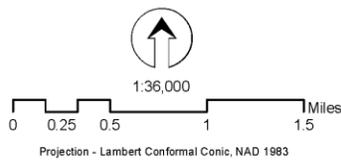
- Stream Type**
- 1
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
 - 9
- Unincorporated Urban Growth Area**
- City Limits 2005**

The information depicted on this map is intended to be used with the City of Ferndale's Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update document.

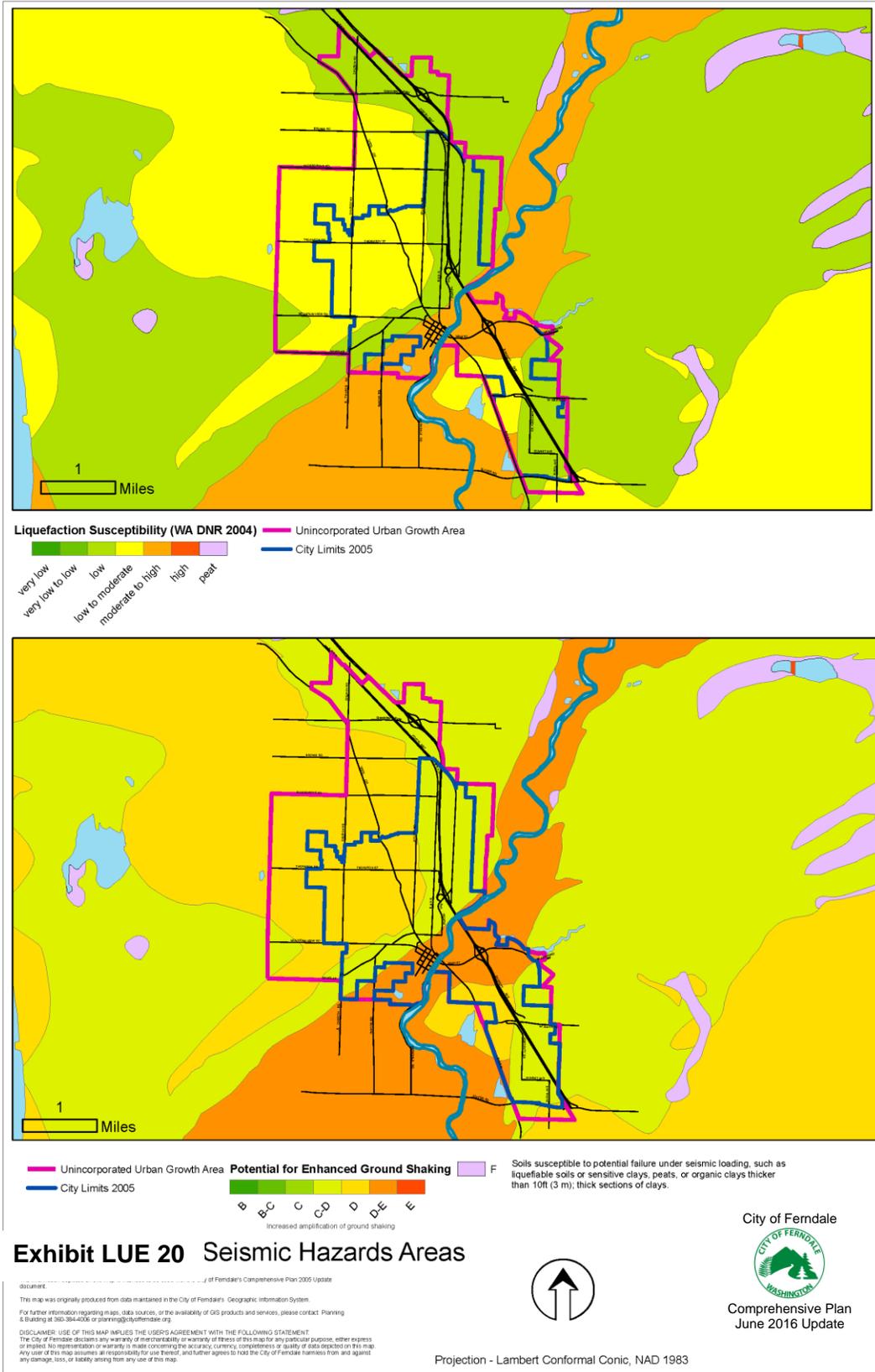
This map was originally produced from data maintained in the City of Ferndale's Geographic Information System.

For further information regarding maps, data sources, or the availability of GIS products and services, please contact Planning & Building at 360-398-4006 or planning@cityofferndale.org.

DISCLAIMER: USE OF THIS MAP IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
The City of Ferndale disclaims any warranty of merchantability or warranty of fitness of this map for any particular purpose, either express or implied. No representation or warranty is made concerning the accuracy, currency, completeness or quality of data depicted on this map. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use thereof, and further agrees to hold the City of Ferndale harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of this map.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

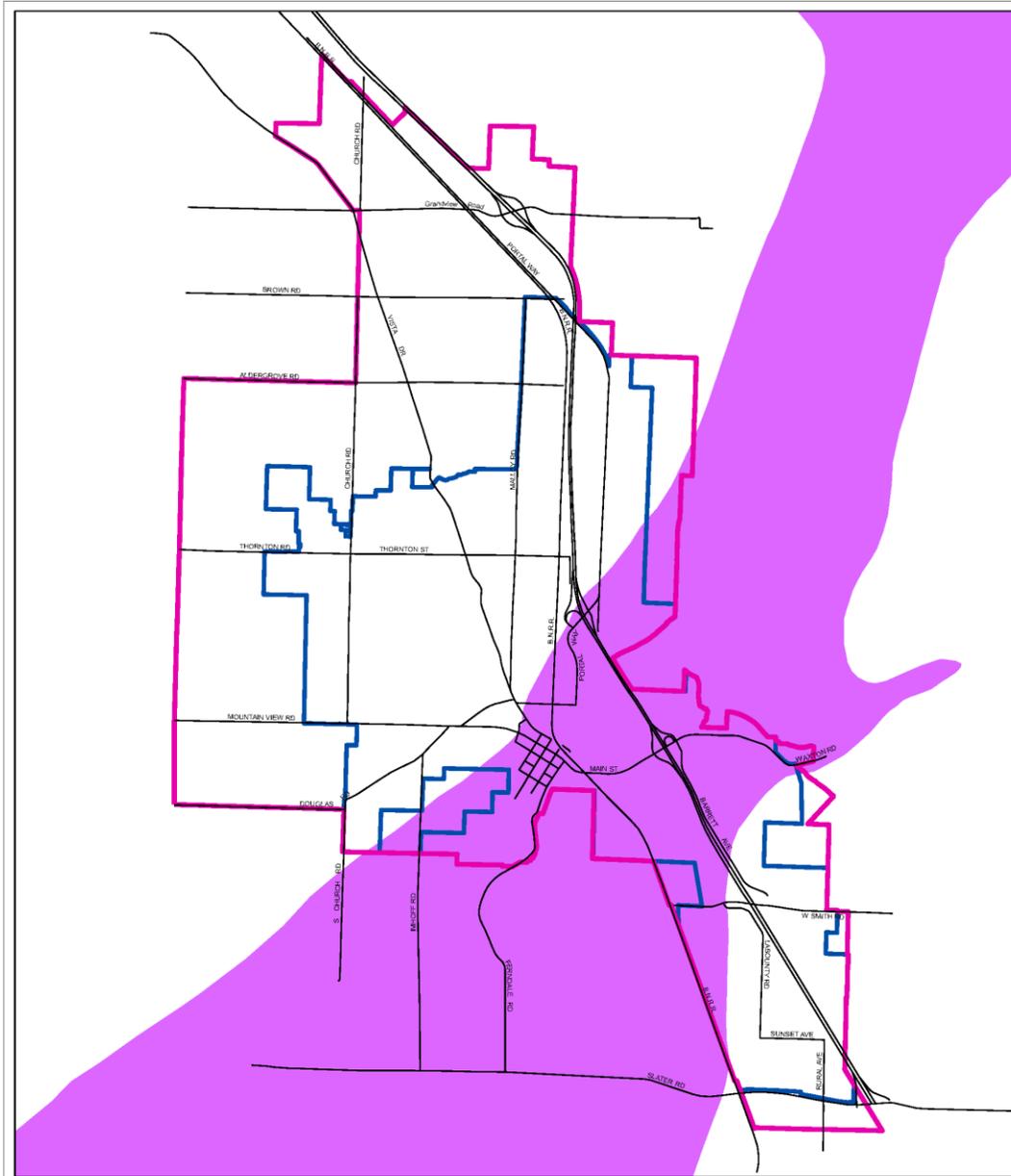


Exhibit LUE 21 - Volcanic Hazards

- Case M flows: Originate as large avalanches of hydrothermally altered rock
- Unincorporated Urban Growth Area
- City Limits 2005

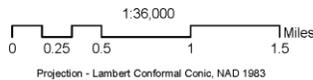
Source: Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance Article III-Geologically Hazardous Areas (GHA), 2005; Obtained from HAZARDS FROM FUTURE ACTIVITY OF MOUNT BAKER, WASHINGTON 1995 By Cynthia A Gardner, Kevin M. Scott, C. Dan Miller, Bobbie Myers, Wes Hildreth, and Patrick T. Pringle.

Only one Case M event has occurred at Mount Baker in the past 14,000 years, this is the large debris flow in the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River, identified by Hyde and Crandell (1978). Deposits from this debris flow can be mapped as far downstream as the community of Deming, but presumably this flow continued to Puget Sound.

The information depicted on this map is intended to be used with the City of Ferndale's Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update document.

This map was originally produced from data maintained in the Whatcom County Planning & Development Services GIS. For further information regarding maps, data sources, or the availability of GIS products and services, please contact Planning & Building at 360-394-4000 or planning@cityofferndale.org.

DISCLAIMER: USE OF THIS MAP IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT
The City of Ferndale disclaims any warranty of merchantability or warranty of fitness of this map for any particular purpose, either express or implied. No representation or warranty is made concerning the accuracy, currency, completeness or quality of data depicted on this map. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use thereof, and further agrees to hold the City of Ferndale harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of this map.



City of Ferndale



Comprehensive Plan
June 2016 Update

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

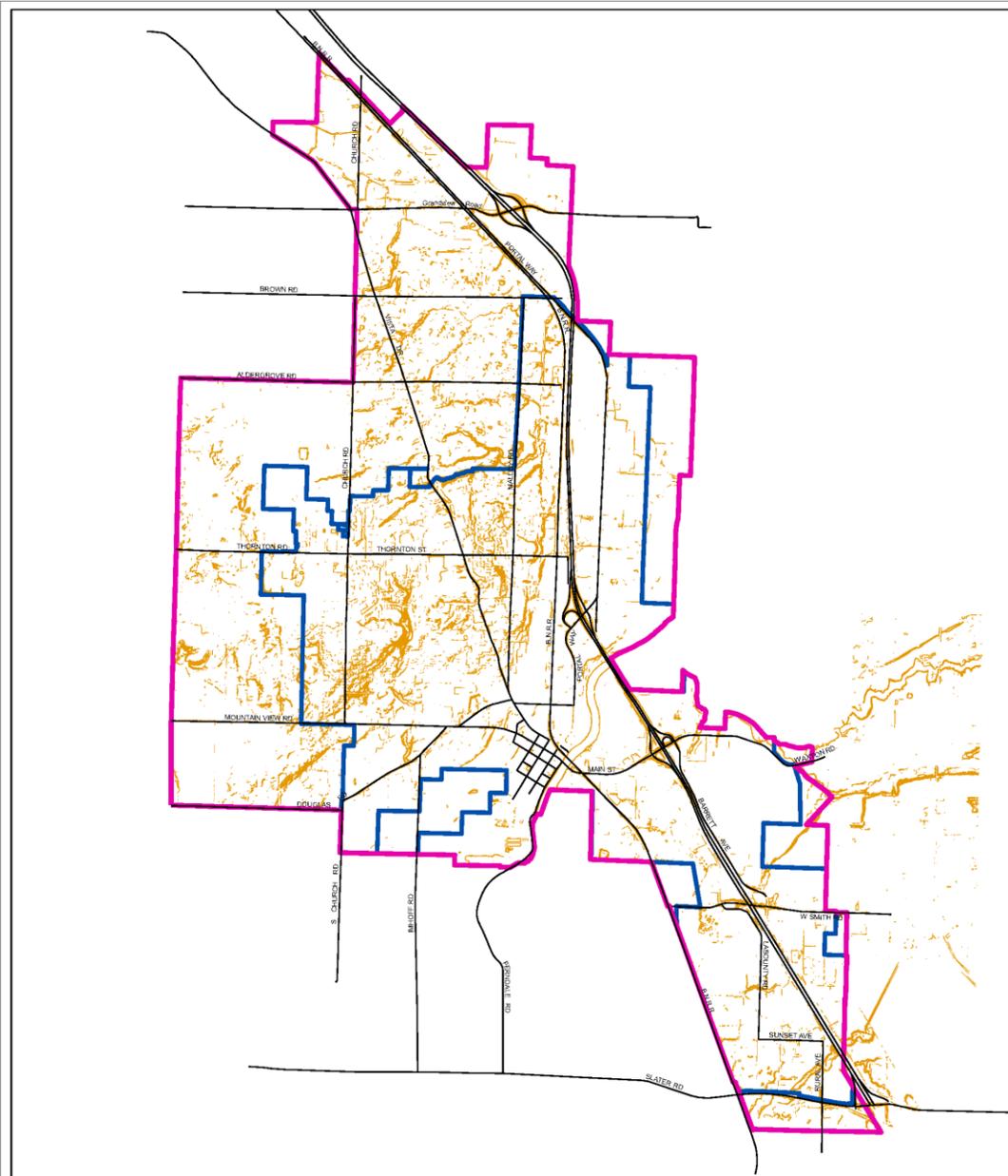


Exhibit LUE 22 - Landslide Hazard Areas

Percent Slope (Ferndale GIS 2002) ■ > 20% Slope
 Unincorporated Urban Growth Area
 City Limits 2005

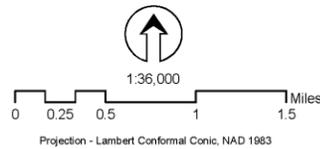
The information depicted on this map is intended to be used with the City of Ferndale's Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update document.

This map was originally produced from data maintained in the City of Ferndale's Geographic Information System.

For further information regarding maps, data sources, or the availability of GIS products and services, please contact Planning & Building at 360-394-4036 or planning@cityofferndale.org.

DISCLAIMER: USE OF THIS MAP IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

The City of Ferndale disclaims any warranty of merchantability or warranty of fitness for any particular purpose, either express or implied. No representation or warranty is made concerning the accuracy, currency, completeness or quality of data depicted on the map. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use thereof, and further agrees to hold the City of Ferndale harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of this map.



City of Ferndale



Comprehensive Plan
June 2016 Update

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District Planning Areas

The district, or sub-area planning process, is an integral part of Growth Management Act (GMA) planning. A sub-area plan is a special study of an area within a larger planning jurisdiction. The sub-area is usually a district, an unincorporated urban area, or some other area that has special needs due to growth pressures. A sub-area plan is usually part of the comprehensive plan of a jurisdiction. It could also be a plan adopted by multiple jurisdictions as a guide for dealing with future growth in the sub-area. Sub-area plans provide details on types and locations of land uses planned for district areas and urban centers, provide opportunities for a variety of residential densities, coordinate infrastructure improvements with planned uses and centers, and identify and preserve natural features, open space and critical areas.

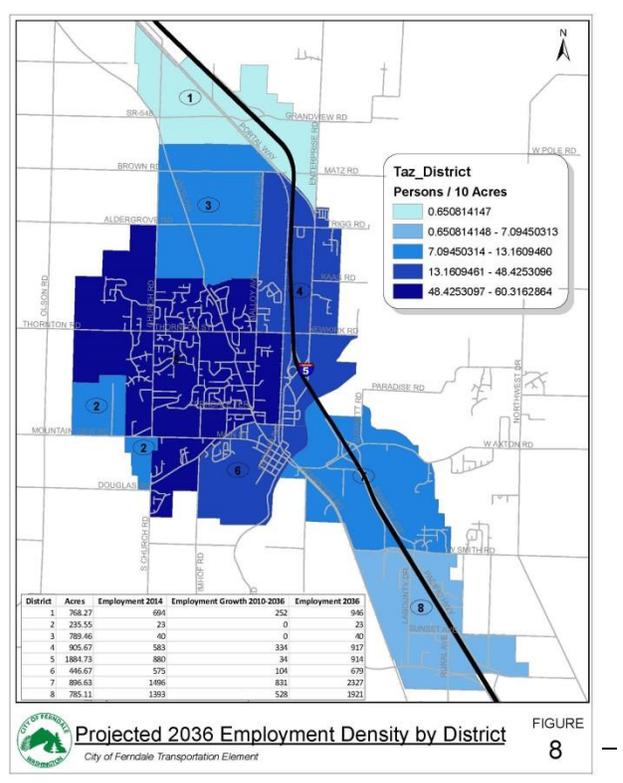
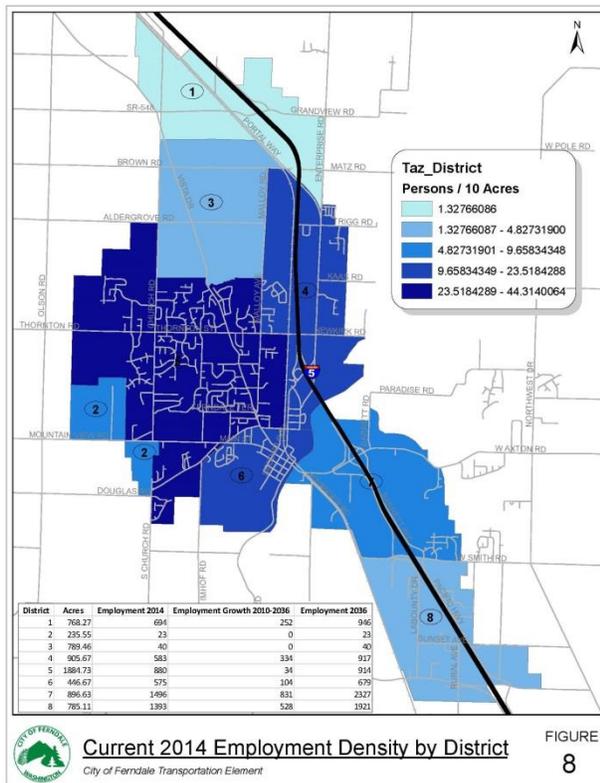
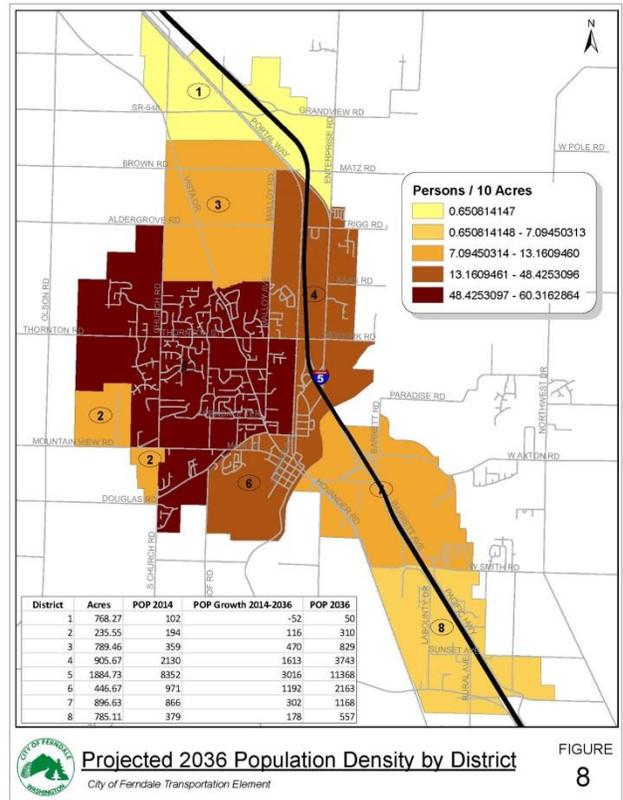
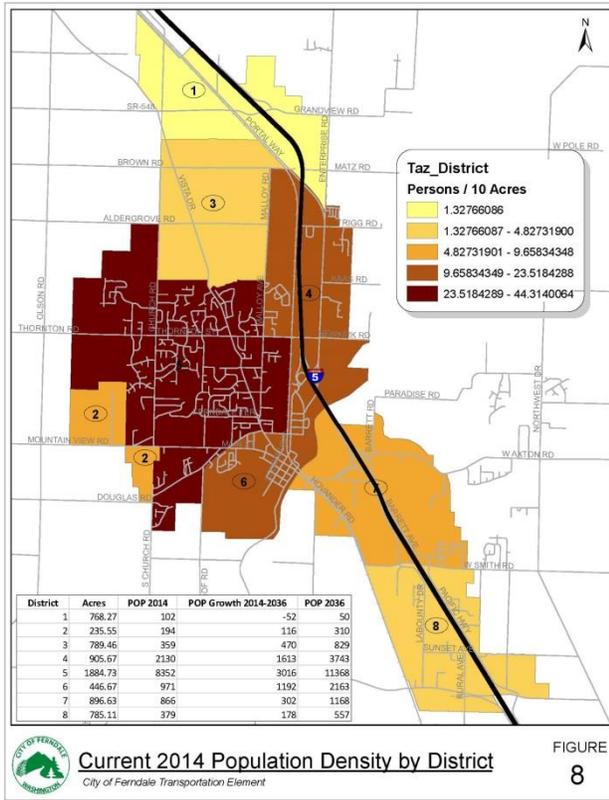
Ferndale has identified eight districts within the City limits and unincorporated Urban Growth Area. Each district may contain several sub-districts and/or a mix of uses. Due in part to Ferndale's relatively small size as well as school boundaries that have changed substantially over time, it is somewhat impractical to split the City into traditional neighborhoods with markedly different characteristics, for planning purposes. This does not suggest that these neighborhoods cannot establish themselves or that community-based planning cannot continue to thrive in Ferndale - and a number of goals and policies have been established to support these efforts.

The absence of traditional neighborhood boundaries may actually provide several advantages to community planning in Ferndale. This comprehensive plan does not intend to suggest that the districts identified in the plan are the only - or even necessarily the most meaningful - way of defining districts. Instead, this plan seeks to explore the elements that tie these districts together as well as the elements that may link multiple districts - environmentally, socially, historically, and through shared infrastructure.

The following images depict existing and projected future population and employment density in each district, followed by an area-by-area description of each district. Population growth is generally shown based on future single family residential growth densities (persons per household) of 2.48 persons per household, which is generally less than existing single family populations, but greater than multifamily or hybrid single family development.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT FERNDALDE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

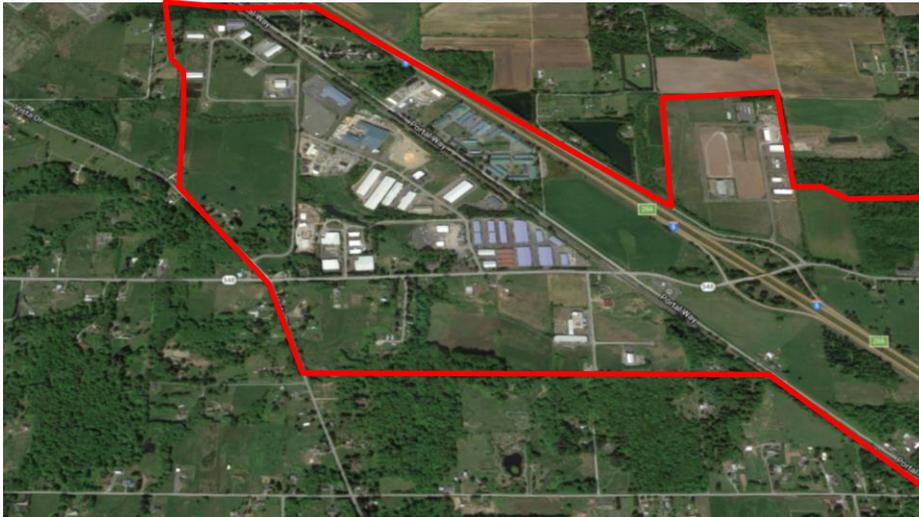


CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 1 (Grandview):

Location and General Description: District 1 is the northernmost of the eight planning districts and includes properties on both the north and south sides of Grandview Road. While there are a number of existing single family residences that would not be allowed under current zoning, future development will be predominantly commercial and industrial, and employment is expected to increase from a 2016 employment population of approximately 600 to a 2036 employment population of over 1,100. The area's proximity to Interstate Five, the Burlington Northern Railroad and the Cherry Point Industrial area – as well as existing industrial development – make it an ideal location for development that depends on access to transportation and shipping. Large properties directly adjacent to Interstate Five may support significant commercial and retail development, while surrounding properties are more likely to support industrial and business uses.



District Area Size: 768.27 Acres

Subareas Within District: See City of Ferndale Annexation Phasing Plan

Additional Reference Documents: City of Ferndale Annexation Blueprint/ Phasing Plan

History and Additional Notes: The history of development within District 1 is closely connected to the history of Interstate 5. The Grandview Business Center, bordered by Portal Way and I-5, was originally utilized as fill extraction pits and sand supply for road base materials during the construction of Interstate Five. The Grandview Business Center was first established with one 10,000 square foot building in 1993, and has since



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

expanded to over 250,000 square feet in 21 buildings. Located on the opposite side of Portal way, is the Grandview Light Industrial Park (established in 1992). Similar to surrounding areas, this area was historically composed of a mixture of single family residential, agricultural, and vacant uses until construction of Interstate Five, and later, the construction of heavy industries at Cherry Point. In 1979, the Northeast Grandview subarea was zoned by Whatcom County as a Contract Zone District, which allowed for large-scale commercial/ industrial development projects.

The area North of Grandview Road and East of I-5 was included in the first Ferndale Urban Growth Area established by Whatcom County in 1997. At that time, the properties were vacant fields that were used for hay, rather than agricultural purposes. In 2004, the I-5 Industrial Park General and Specific Binding Site Plan was recorded, and subsequent commercial/light industrial development has followed. Just south of this area is the Southwest Grandview annexation area which was historically used for farming and agriculture. In 1971 the Fairfield Mobile Home Park was established, however many barns and farm structures still remain in the area.

The Southeast Grandview annexation area was originally composed of single family residences and farm land. After being zoned for light industrial uses, the area has seen the development of several buildings, but still maintains significant horse pasture.

Properties located in the Delta Line Annexation area, located east of Delta Line Road, have historically been associated with agricultural uses prevalent in the Custer Valley. The hedgerows at and around drainage lines and California Creek bear evidence of these historic uses. In 2004 the Delta Tech Industrial Park Binding Site Plan was approved, establishing twenty-four lots as well as onsite septic, stormwater, and a private well. Since that time approximately 1/3 of the lots have been further developed.

Current Land Use Designations: Industrial, Commercial

Natural Features: There are several mid to large probable wetland areas North of Interstate Five and Grandview Road. A stream runs through the district between Vista Drive and Interstate Five. District 1 is generally very flat with no notable areas that exceed a slope greater than 20%.

Watershed: The area represents the eastern headwaters of California Creek, which ultimately drains to Drayton Harbor, a protected shellfish area. Portions of California Creek have historically been used by native salmonoid species.

Existing Utilities: As of 2016, facilities (water, sewer, storm) have not been extended to the area and will likely be necessary in order for major new development to occur. The City's Capital Facilities Element includes plans to extend infrastructure to this area.

Stormwater Basin: California Creek Basin



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Bus Routes: (and roads) Notable roads running through District 1 are Portal Way and Interstate 5, as well as State Route 548 which runs East to West through the district. There are 4 transit stops in the district which are all along the 70X route. The 70X route is a weekday commute-hour-only route from Blaine to downtown Bellingham, with Ferndale as an important stop. The 70X runs up Enterprise Road to Grandview, with three stops off of State Route 548 and continues north up Interstate 5.

Publicly Owned Parcels: There are no publically owned parcels in District 1.

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
356	383 (27)	746	1,833 (1,087)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: Commercial and Industrial, with the ability to serve both local and regional demand.

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development:

The extension of public utilities, including water, sewer and adequate fire flow is a prerequisite for significant additional development within this district. City services are a significant distance from the Grandview area, and owners of properties that have already been developed have not expressed substantial desire in participating in costs to extend services.

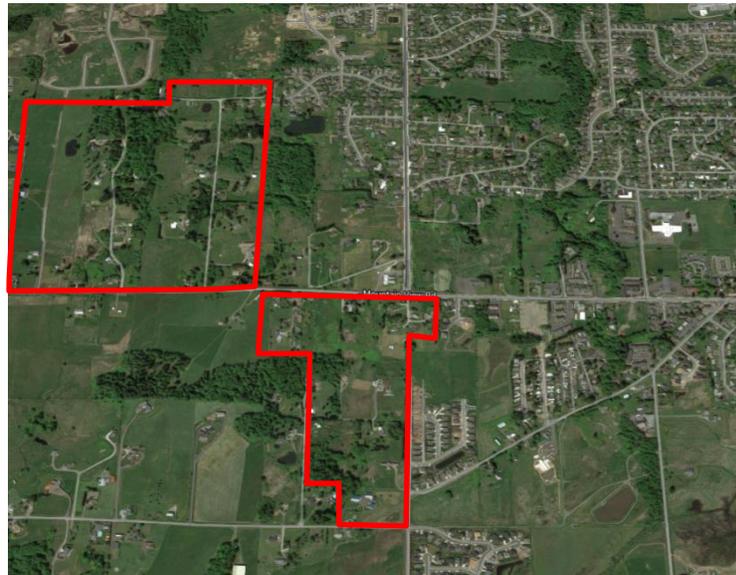


CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 2 (Mountain View):

District 2 includes properties outside of the City limits, with the majority of land within the City's Urban Growth Area Reserve. These properties are expected to be developed with residential uses. A more comprehensive analysis of these properties is contained within the City's Annexation Blueprint. As many of the properties will not be annexed into the City by 2036, only a moderate increase in households is expected during the planning period. Unlike the other districts identified in the City, properties in District 2 are not contiguous to one another. This District is included in this plan for informational purposes only, as the City is not under obligation to plan for future growth in this area until it is converted from Reserve to Urban Growth Area status.



District Area Size: 235.55 Acres

Subareas Within District: See City of Ferndale Annexation Phasing Plan

Additional Reference Documents: City of Ferndale Annexation Blueprint/ Phasing Plan

History and Additional Notes: The Mountain View subarea had previously been included within the City's Urban Growth Area until it was removed by Whatcom County in 2011. Located at the North end of Storr Road is the Nubgaard Road annexation area, located within the City's Urban Growth Area. The Nubgaard neighborhood was established in the early 1970's, and is composed of relatively large-lot single family residences. Properties within the area east of Storr Road have been developed to a much greater extent than properties to the west.

Current Land Use Designations: Low Density Residential



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Natural Features: Probable wetland areas are scattered throughout District 2, north of Mountain View Road. These areas are small in size with low connectivity. Probable wetlands are also located immediately north of Douglas Road, but none have been identified immediately south of Main Street. Topography is varied with some slopes steeper than 20% located in the upper portion of District 2 that is north of Mountain View Road, and some slopes that are steeper than 20% located in the central portion of District 2 south of Main Street. A small stream runs through the northern portion of District 2, north of Mountain View Road.

Watershed: Nooksack River-Frontal Bellingham Bay

Existing Utilities: No City utilities are currently available in the area, and will not become available until annexation occurs.

Stormwater Basin: Nubgaard Basin

Bus Routes: Mountain View Road runs through District 2 and separates the northern and southern portions of the district. Though there is no bus route that directly serves the district, Route 27 has a transit stop near the junction of Main Street and Church Road, which is near the northeast corner of the lower portion of District 2. Route 27 is the primary route connecting Ferndale and Bellingham (Cordata Station). It operates once an hour weekdays and Saturdays and serves the WTA park & ride along with downtown Ferndale, Church Road, Thornton Road and Vista Drive.

Publicly Owned Parcels: There are no publically owned parcels located in District 2.

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
302	375 (73)	51	51 (0)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: Low to mid density single family residential (Nubgaard Road and mid-Church Road areas only).

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development:

The extension of public utilities, including water, sewer and adequate fire flow is a prerequisite for significant additional development within this district. Due to the fact that



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

those areas of District 2 that are within the Urban Growth Area are separated from one another and are adjacent to larger areas of land that are not subject to the City's twenty-year plan, future development and annexation may have additional challenges.



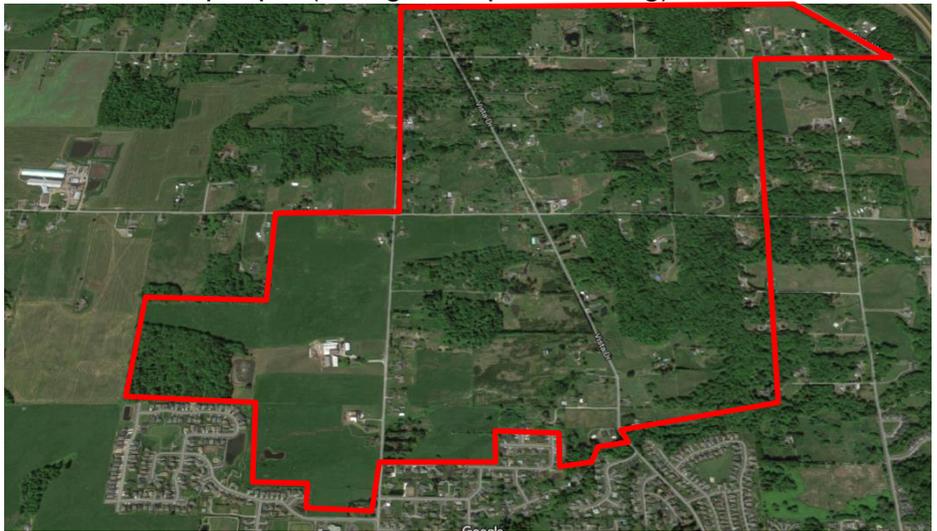
CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 3 (Brown Road):

District 3 represents the majority of the City's residential unincorporated Urban Growth Area and UGA Reserve. District 3 is assumed to provide the majority of new single family residential development in the City once the inventory of existing single family residential land within the existing city limits is diminished. The district is expected to grow by nearly 200 households (500 people) by 2036, but will likely not be fully developed by the end of the planning period. That area within the Urban Growth Area Reserve is not subject to City regulations, and no City growth is anticipated in this area prior to 2036.

With a potential for over 10,000 combined people (new growth plus existing) in this district and District 5, to the south, it may be appropriate to increase the variety of land uses in this area in order to create distinct centers of activity within the district. As per the City's Parks, Recreation and Trails Plan, a Community Park will be established within the center of District 3 within the next twenty years. It may be appropriate to combine commercial uses serving the surrounding district with this park area.



District Area Size: 789.46 Acres

Subareas Within District: See City of Ferndale Annexation Phasing Plan

Additional Reference Documents: City of Ferndale Annexation Blueprint/ Phasing Plan

History and Additional Notes: Properties along Malloy Road had historically remained undeveloped until existing residences were established. Along Vista Drive, several properties were utilized as small-scale farm operations. Relatively substantial residential development occurred in the 1980's and 1990's, but slowed significantly following the establishment of the Urban Growth Area in the late 1990's.

The North Malloy Annexation area, north of the intersection of Brown Road and Malloy, has gradually become more developed over time, but due to limitations on development within the Urban Growth Area, the annexation area has now likely been fully developed.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Central Malloy Annexation area was originally zoned as Suburban Five Acre Farming. The creation of the Ferndale Urban Growth Area in the mid-1990s preserved this intent by establishing one unit per five acre allowances without public water and sewer. These provisions have resulted in the further parcelization of the area, although historically only the northern sections were utilized for agricultural purposes.

Current Land Use Designations: Low Density Residential

Natural Features: A small stream runs parallel to Brown Road and Aldergrove Road in the center of District 3. Another stream is located in the Southern Portion of District 3. Probable wetlands are scattered throughout the district, most are small with little connectivity, and the largest of these are located in the southern portion of the district along the streams. Terrain in District 3 is somewhat varied but in general is comprised of low rolling hills and fields. The southern and northern portions of district 3 have some areas with slopes greater than 20%.

Watershed: Wiser Lake Creek-Nooksack River, Dakota Creek-Frontal Drayton Harbor

Existing Utilities: No City utilities are currently available in the area, and will not become available until annexation occurs.

Stormwater Basin: California Creek, North Whiskey Creek, South Whiskey Creek, and Cedar Creek Basins.

Bus Routes: Notable roads that run east-west through district 3 are Brown Road, and Aldergrove Road. Vista Drive runs north-south through the district. The district's western boundary is defined by Church Road, and its eastern boundary is defined by Malloy Road and Portal Way. There are no bus routes that serve district 3.

Publicly Owned Parcels: There are no publically owned parcels in district 3.

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
698	1,134 (436)	11	12 (1)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: Low to High Density Residential Development, potential neighborhood commercial development.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALÉ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development: The Brown Road area within the Urban Growth Area has few significant obstacles to future development, beyond the relatively small average parcel size and the potential for opposition to initial annexation of the area in accordance with the City's Annexation Phasing Plan.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 4 (Portal Way):

District 4 consists of several sub areas, the majority of which are influenced by Portal Way and the Second Avenue Roundabout. The residential population of the district is expected to grow significantly by 2036, generally in the form of multifamily development. In total, an estimated 625 new housing units and over 1,600 new people are expected by 2036, including population growth from 2010-2016. Up to 330 new jobs are expected in this area during the same time period.

To the west, Malloy Road north of Thornton Street is developed with a mix of industrial and residential uses. The northern limits of Malloy Road include conforming and non-conforming single family residences on large lots. City water and sewer has not yet been extended to the area, and development has been significantly constrained as a result. This area's location in close proximity to Interstate Five and the BNSF railway provides opportunities for a variety of light industrial and business uses.

The southern portion of the district located south and west of Interstate Five is the Griffintown neighborhood, consisting of a mix of single family and multifamily development, as well as commercial development along primary roadways. Land use controls in place anticipate that new multifamily development will gradually replace many single family uses, and that mixed-use development along Second Avenue will serve the surrounding area. Griffintown Park has been established as a buffer and open space between these uses and the BNSF railway. To the north, commercial properties prepared for development as part of the Second Avenue extension will continue to be developed.

In time these properties will likely serve traffic associated with the planned Thornton Street extension. The Thornton Street extension is expected to provide primary access from the interstate to residential development in portions of District Five and the majority of District 3.

To the northeast, properties to the west of Portal Way are planned for a range of business and light industrial uses. Visibility from the freeway, access to truck routes, as well as relatively large properties are expected to increase employment in this area significantly. While City utilities are available for the majority of properties along this corridor, Portal Way itself will require improvements to establish curbs, gutters and sidewalks as well as attractive street landscaping that will tie the area together.

The City has established land use controls necessary to promote commercial development along Portal Way's eastern boundary. These commercial areas are intended to provide services and shopping to the adjacent business/industrial and residential areas, and to act as a buffer between the residential and industrial areas.

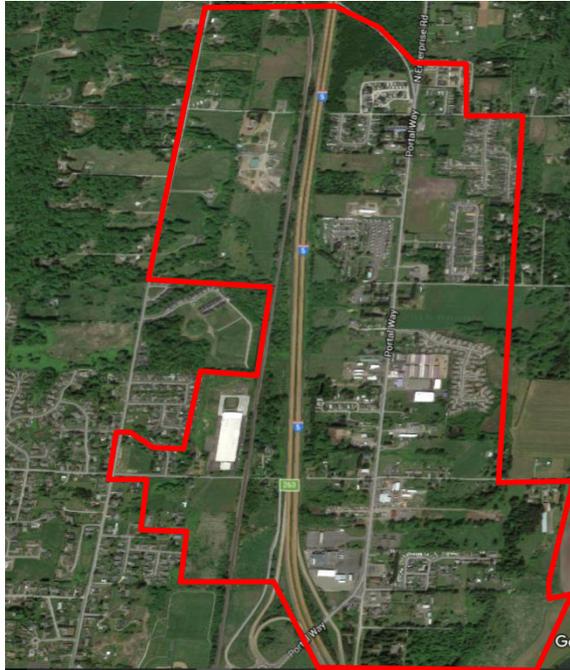
The eastern portion of District 4 is planned for multifamily residential development and includes several large single family neighborhoods to the north that were established prior to the adoption of new land use controls in the mid 2000's. The linear nature of this



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

residential area limits the potential for central features such as parks. However, a bicycle/trail corridor is planned through this residential area, and may connect with City parks to the south as well as a regional trail system along the west bank of the Nooksack River.



District Area Size: 905.67 Acres

Subareas Within District: North Malloy Avenue, South Malloy Avenue, Griffintown, West Portal Way business area, Portal Way Gateway area, Whiskey Creek, Trigg Road

Additional Reference Documents:

History and Additional Notes: In the 1980s, land in and around Portal Way became a part of the City of Ferndale. This was the single largest annexation (in terms of land area) in the City's history. The annexation included a combination of manufacturing, commercial, and both single family and multi-family zoned properties.

Current Land Use Designations:

Commercial, High Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Floodway

Natural Features: Probable wetland areas are located throughout the Portal Way district, mostly along waterways. In the Southern portion of the district, probable wetlands lie just north of the Nooksack River, as well as just west of I-5 near the Portal Way roundabout. Probable wetlands also run through the central part of the Portal way district between Kaas road and Newkirk road near the stream that runs through this area. Small streams are also located between I-5 and Malloy Ave in the central part of the district. In the northern portion of the district probable wetlands are located on either side of I-5. In the Southern Portion of the district, Conservancy Shoreline Plan Land Use designation has been established for land immediately north of the Nooksack River. On the west side of I-5, this designation proceeds to residential, and on the east side it proceeds to rural. There is another residential Shoreline Land use designation located east of Portal way and north of Newkirk road. This district is primarily flat, with some slopes exceeding 20% located between Malloy and I-5.

Watershed: Wiser Lake Creek-Nooksack River, Nooksack River-Frontal Bellingham Bay

Existing Utilities: Water, Sewer, Storm



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Stormwater Basin: Portal Way, Glacierview, and Schell Ditch Basins.

Bus Routes: Portal Way is the defining road in district 4 along with 2nd AVE. Interstate 5 also runs north-south through the district. The Portal Way district is serviced by the 70X bus route which has several stops along Portal Way including at the junction of Portal Way and Trigg Road, Portal Way and Kaas Road, and at the junction of 2nd Ave and Portal Way to the East of I-5. Route 70X is a weekday commute-hour-only route from Blaine to downtown Bellingham. Route 55 serves Portal Way as well. Route 55 is a midday local route that connects Blaine, Birch Bay, Ferndale and Bellingham (Cordata Station) with two trips on weekdays and Saturdays. In addition, there are also several school bus stops along Portal Way.

Publicly Owned Parcels: There are several public parks located within the Portal Way District. Oxford Park is located just north of Thornton St and just east of Malloy Ave. Vanderyacht Park is located in the southern portion of the Portal Way District along the western bank of the Nooksack River and continues on into the Downtown District. Griffintown Park has been established along 2nd AVE to serve as a buffer to the BNSF railway and open space for the Griffintown sub-district. Though there are no schools within the Portal Way District, Ferndale High School is located just southeast of the Portal way roundabout.

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
1,647	2,870 (1,223)	295	1,524 (1,229)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: Multifamily residential, commercial/retail, general business.

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development: With the exception of that area of District 4 adjacent to Malloy Road (which is not currently serviced), the Portal Way area has few obstacles to development. Future improvement of Portal Way with curbs, gutter and sidewalk will be necessary to establish a more-cohesive subarea.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

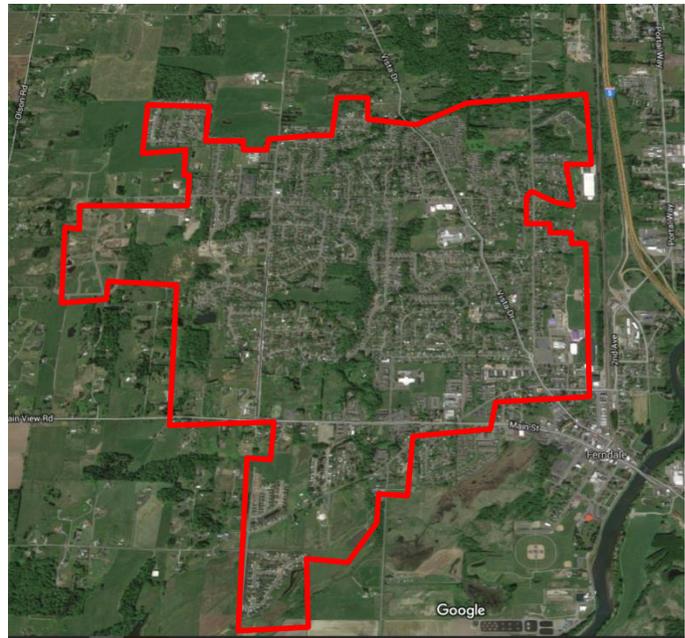
FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 5 (Hillside):

Representing the City's historic population center, District 5 includes the majority of land designated for residential purposes. District 5 also includes five (including Mountain View School) of the six elementary schools within the City limits as well as both middle schools and Ferndale High School. A variety of parks and trails have also been established in the area, and views of Mount Baker and the San Juan Islands are available for many properties.

While District 5 has been substantially developed, it will remain attractive for additional growth throughout the planning period and beyond. Almost 1,200 new households (approximately 3,000 people) are projected in this district, and while the majority of this development will be in the form of single family housing, multifamily development to the south and infill development throughout (Accessory Dwelling Units, duplexes, attached housing and Planned Unit Developments) is included in these assumptions.

With few exceptions, this additional growth will likely be accommodated on undeveloped or under-developed properties. The majority of fully developed existing subdivisions are not expected to accommodate a significant amount of additional development.



District Area Size: 1,884.73 Acres

Subareas Within District: See City of Ferndale Annexation Phasing Plan



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Additional Reference Documents: City of Ferndale Annexation Blueprint/ Phasing Plan

History and Additional Notes: In the 1970s, the City annexed several areas in the northwestern portion of the City in the vicinity of Thornton Street. The City then annexed several more areas surrounding Thornton Street in the 1990s. The majority of properties located in the annexation area of Thornton North (“Friberg Farm” Subarea 1), are owned by the Friberg Family. The Friberg Farm was operated as a private farm for many years until the 1990’s when the parcel was subdivided into its current configuration.

The Erickson family has maintained ownership of the area west of Church Road for several generations. Properties within annexation subarea 5, the “school district” annexation area, were previously part of the Erickson Farm, and continue to be used for agricultural purposes (livestock grazing and field hay). This area is just north of Cascadia Elementary. Approximately thirty acres in this subarea are owned by the Ferndale School District and are intended for future school facilities.

The North Church, “Erickson Farm”, annexation subarea 6, has been utilized for the raising of dairy cattle. The area is bordered on the east by Church Road, to the north by Aldergrove Road and residential properties outside of the Ferndale Urban Growth Area. Properties on the east side of Church Road were utilized for large lot single family residences and agricultural properties.

Current Land Use Designations: Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Public, Commercial

Natural Features: A few streams run through district 5, one to the north, one to the west, and one in the center. These streams are bordered by small areas of probable wetlands. Areas around these streams generally have slopes steeper than 20%. Some larger probable wetlands are located in and around Bender Park, and other small tracts of wetlands have been incorporated as open space in some of the residential areas in the south east portion of the district.

Watershed: Terrell Creek-Frontal Birch Bay, Wisner Lake Creek-Nooksack River, Nooksack River-Frontal Bellingham Bay

Existing Utilities: Water, Sewer, Storm

Stormwater Basin: Schell Creek, Ferndale Terrace, Schell Ditch, Schell Marsh, Nubguard, Cedar Creek, Glacierview, North Whiskey Creek, and South Whiskey Creek Basins.

Bus Routes: District 5 is serviced by the 27 Route bus. Route 27 is the primary route connecting Ferndale and Bellingham (Cordata Station). It operates once an hour weekdays and Saturdays and serves the WTA park & ride along with downtown Ferndale, Church Road, Thornton Road and Vista Drive. Within District 5, Route 27 has three stops



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

along Vista Drive, three stops along Thornton Road, three stops along Church Road, three stops along Main Street, and three stops along Washington Street.

Publicly Owned Parcels: District 5 contains five elementary schools, two middle schools, Ferndale High School, and Clearview Alternative High School. This district has a variety of parks and trails. Seven city parks are located in district 5 including Bender Park, Cedar Creek Park, and Vista ride Park.

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
7,188	10,769 (3,581)	955	1,194 (239)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: Low to High Density Residential Development.

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development: The developed nature of much of the Hillside neighborhood means that a substantial percentage of future growth will be in the form of infill development that may alter the sense of place of existing neighborhoods. As a result, there is an increased potential that existing residents will be uncomfortable with these changes.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

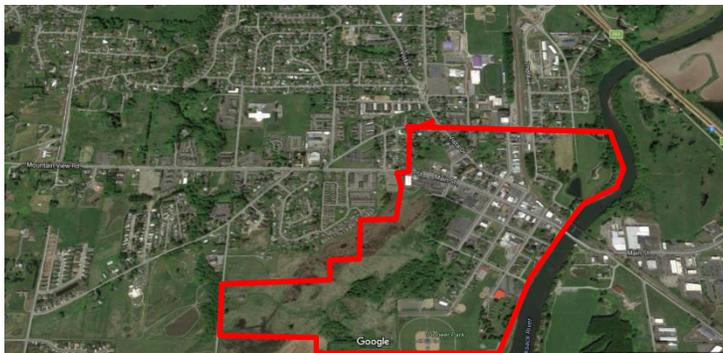
FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 6 (Downtown):

Ferndale's Downtown, constrained by Washington Avenue to the north and west, the Nooksack River to the east and the City limits to the south, is included in District 6. The Downtown district is characterized by structures dating from the early twentieth century, mixed together with multi-family and mixed-use development as well as the City's civic campus consisting of City Hall, the Ferndale Public Library and Ferndale Post Office. The area also includes the City's two largest parks – Pioneer Park and Vanderyacht Park.

Ferndale's Downtown has transitioned from the city's primary shopping district to an area that experienced dramatic declines in the 1980's and 1990's as a result of new shopping trends. It is unlikely that Ferndale's downtown will thrive based only as a retail district: the configuration of existing infrastructure and Main Street's primary use as a transportation corridor through downtown limit the ability of the district to compete with shopping districts that are built around the automobile and overall convenience.

Instead, the future success of Downtown Ferndale will depend on the re-introduction of dense residential development within walking distance of a diverse and appealing district of relatively small shops, dining, service and entertainment or recreation options. A



substantial percentage of the core business of Downtown Ferndale will be in service to residents who live within the Downtown or within walking distance of the City core.

Much of Districts 4 and 5 (including the majority of the multifamily development within those districts) is within a ten-minute walk of Downtown, and trail/sidewalk corridors exist or are

proposed to connect those districts to the core. In addition to this adjacent development, approximately 450 new housing units are expected within the core itself, adding nearly 1,200 residents to the heart of the City. This population growth will be supplemented by at least 100 new employees, a number that may vary substantially depending upon the nature of businesses that choose to locate in Downtown Ferndale.

In order for these changes to occur, a significant portion of the inventory of existing single family residences will be replaced by new development and infrastructure must be designed to accommodate future growth.

District Area Size: 446.67 Acres

Subareas Within District: None.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Additional Reference Documents: Ferndale Municipal Code (Downtown Architectural and Design Standards)

History and Additional Notes: Prior to World War II, the Ferndale City limits were located primarily west of the Nooksack River, extending from Pioneer Park north to Cedar Street, and west to the intersection of Washington and Main. A large annexation immediately following WWII expanded the residential area of the City north to Thornton Street and west to Imhoff Road. Minor residential annexations occurred in the 1950's and 1960's, generally west of the City core. Then in the 1990's Ferndale expanded the City's territory west along Thornton and Main Streets, and Douglas Road. These annexations were primarily residential in nature, but did include school district property at Thornton Street. Additional annexations took place in the northern area of Ferndale along Vista Drive and Malloy, and included a significant residential/industrial annexation along Malloy Road. The City also annexed territory west of Ferndale Road that would later become the Conoco Phillips Ballfields. Land was also added to the City in the vicinity of Smith Road, with residential area added north of Smith and commercial/industrial land to the south.

Current Land Use Designations: High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Unspecified Residential, Commercial, Public

Natural Features: The Nooksack River comprises the Downtown District's eastern border. South of Main Street, the west bank of the Nooksack has an Urban Shoreline Plan Land Use Designation, while north of Main Street the shoreline is Conservation/Residential. Schell Marsh is a large wetland conservation area located in the southwest corner of the downtown district. The northern border of this wetland is located just behind the Ferndale Public Library and provides a vista towards Lummi Island. This area includes much of the drainage basin of Schell Creek, which drains much of the central area of the City of Ferndale. Over the past several decades, drainage to this area has increased, agricultural uses once present in the area have been abandoned, and wetland areas have established themselves.

Watershed: Nooksack River-Frontal Bellingham Bay

Existing Utilities: Water, Sewer, Storm

Stormwater Basin: Schell Marsh and Schell Ditch Basins.

Bus Routes: Main Street is the primary road running through the Downtown District. Washington Street and Pacific Road comprise the northern and western boundaries of the district. Route 27 services Ferndale's downtown and is the primary route connecting Ferndale and Bellingham (Cordata Station). It operates once per hour on weekdays and Saturdays and serves the WTA park & ride along with downtown Ferndale, Church Road, Thornton Road and Vista Drive. Lummi Transit's Route B also serves part of the Downtown District, connecting it to the Ferndale Park and ride and also continuing down



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Douglas Road. Route B operates Thursday through Monday and services stops three times a day.

Publicly Owned Parcels: The Downtown District includes two large parks, Vanderyacht Park and Pioneer Park, including Star Park, as well as the smaller Flair Park. A walking trail also runs along the west bank of the Nooksack River connecting Main Street to Front Ave near Pioneer Park. Central Elementary School is located within the Downtown District.

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
1,314	2,621 (1,307)	660	952 (298)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: High-density mixed-use commercial and residential along Main Street, primarily residential development within the southern portions of the district.

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development: Existing City streets and previously-developed parcels may constrain the ability of new development to be built in a manner reflecting market demand. Real or perceived traffic congestion may also limit the desirability for new development which depends on high turnover of customers, though this impact may be reduced with increased bike and pedestrian volumes.

South of Alder Street, the 100-Year Floodplain of the Nooksack River will require that new development be built above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). In the early portion of the planning period this may raise development costs above market value for certain lots.



District 7 (East Main):

District 7 represents the City of Ferndale's primary retail shopping area, and streets in this area have the highest traffic volumes in the City. Over 800 new employees are expected in this area by 2036, with full buildout of the area estimated to be nearly twice that amount. Recognizing the potential for high growth in the area, in 2011 the City adopted the Main Street Master Plan and Planned Action Ordinance ([link](#)) which included the majority of District 7. These plans establish a framework for future development as well as the infrastructure necessary to sustain the development.

In addition to employment growth, nearly 120 housing units may be established in the area, representing population growth of over 300 people. The northwestern portion of District 7 is a former nine-hole golf course within the 100-Year Floodplain of the Nooksack River. Due to frequent flooding in portions of this area, traditional development techniques may be challenging, and the area may be redeveloped for regional recreation opportunities.

The District's location in close proximity to a freeway interchange and along Ferndale's primary transportation corridor (Main Street) will tend to increase the potential impacts of new traffic to the transportation network. As a result the City has identified several transportation projects through its Transportation Element and the Planned Action. These projects are expected to be constructed as growth occurs.



District Area Size: 896.63 Acres



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Subareas Within District: Main Street Master Plan/ Planned Action Area

Additional Reference Documents: Main Street Master Plan and Planned Action

History and Additional Notes: In the 1970's, following the construction of Interstate Five, the City annexed significant commercial and industrially-zoned properties east of the Nooksack River, including land in the vicinity of Barrett Road and LaBounty Drive. Moderate growth occurred during the 1980's, but accelerated in the late 1990's through 2016.

In 2005, a major regional retail development (Pioneer Plaza) was proposed in the southeast portion of the district, however the project was later abandoned prior to development due to cost increases and the changing economy. From 2010-2012 the City developed a master plan in order to determine the maximum buildout of the area, and the mitigation measures (primarily transportation) necessary to serve that development.

Current Land Use Designations: Commercial, High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Low Density Residential

Natural Features: There are large expanses of wetlands in the south and eastern portions of the district. The southwestern wetland is designated General Commercial Conservancy, and part of the wetland in the eastern portion of the district is designated as urban under the Shoreline Land Use Plan. There are also wetland areas at the northern boundary of the district around Barrett Lake. The land surrounding the Barrett Lake waterway is within the shoreline jurisdiction line and has some conservation areas, as well as residential and urban designations. The Nooksack River forms part of the western boarder of the district and much of the land to the east of the river is designated conservancy. The district is by and large very flat, with northern portions located in the 100 year floodplain of the Nooksack.

Watershed: Tenmile Creek, Nooksack River-Frontal Bellingham Bay, Silver Creek

Existing Utilities: Water, Sewer, Storm

Stormwater Basin: Tenmile & Deer Creek, Creighton, Riverside Drive, Riverside Golf, Tennant, Haggen, and Pacific Highway Basins.

Bus Routes: District 7 is a primary transportation corridor and contains WTA's Ferndale Station. This facility provides parking spaces for 131 cars and is served by routes 27, 55 and 70X, as well as Lummi Transit's Route B. Route 27 makes several stops within district 7 along Axton Road. Route 27 is the primary route connecting Ferndale and Bellingham (Cordata Station). It operates once an hour weekdays and Saturdays and serves the WTA park & ride along with downtown Ferndale, Church Road, Thornton Road and Vista Drive. Route 70X is a weekday commute-hour-only route from Blaine to downtown Bellingham. Route 55 is a midday local route that connects Blaine,



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Birch Bay, Ferndale and Bellingham (Cordata Station) with two trips on weekdays and Saturdays.

Publicly Owned Parcels: This district contains two parks, Hastings Park, located on the east bank of the Nooksack River, and Michael Moore Park, located north of Smith Road. Windward High School is located on the West Side of I-5 just north of Smith Road.

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
542	921 (379)	1,641	3,772 (2,131)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: The district will be characterized primarily by commercial (retail, service, and office) uses ranging from those intended to serve the surrounding area to regional retail development. Mixed-use residential development may also occupy some of the land area, per the Main Street Master Plan.

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development: As noted in the Main Street Master Plan, traffic congestion represents the most significant challenge to future development. The Main Street Master Plan identifies those projects necessary to meet City Level of Service standards, and corresponding development impact fees are intended to pay for development's share of cost. East of the interstate, periodic flooding of low-lying areas (especially north of Main Street) may limit future development.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District 8 (South Ferndale):

South of Smith Road, the City's southern-most district is also one of its most diverse. It includes a variety of residential, industrial, manufacturing and commercial and public/institutional land uses. The United States government holds the majority of land south of Slater Road in trust for the Lummi Nation, which plans a major commercial/ retail development in that area. To the northwest of this location is the City's primary manufacturing area which includes several large industrial businesses specializing in waste transfer, recycling, and similar activities.

Whatcom County has identified approximately forty acres in the center of District 8 for the Whatcom County Correctional Facility and Sheriff's Headquarters and the United States Border Patrol offices are approximately 1,000 feet to the southeast. North of these uses are several single family subdivisions. Future residential use will be in the form of multifamily development.



Properties to the northwest are reserved for industrial uses, but the encroachment of wetlands associated with Tennant Lake (to the west) will likely make development of this area more challenging and expensive. On the east side of Interstate Five, the Pacific Industrial Park and associated lands are one of the fastest growing business and industrial areas of the City. To the southeast are lands previously included in the City's UGA Reserve that were added to the City's UGA in 2016. These lands are intended for employment purposes and have been given a Commercial Land Use Designation.

While the Whatcom County correctional facility campus has been designed to limit or mitigate physical and aesthetic impacts to surrounding properties, the development may influence future land use decisions in the immediate area. Current land use controls allow for a variety of residential and/or commercial (mixed-use) development, and the City will monitor progress in this area to determine whether or not land use or zoning controls should be modified as a result of the Whatcom County Jail.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

District Area Size: 785.11 Acres

Subareas Within District: None.

Additional Reference Documents: City of Ferndale Annexation Blueprint/ Phasing Plan

History and Additional Notes: Industrial and commercial areas North of Slater Road were annexed by the City of Ferndale beginning in the 1980s. These annexations included two major regional transfer stations north of Slater Road. Following annexation of those area south of Slater Road between 2008 and 2010, the Lummi Nation acquired the majority of land south of Slater Road within the City of Ferndale, as well as additional land within the Bellingham Urban Growth Area. The land was subsequently converted to trust land, and is no longer subject to City of Ferndale regulations. Roundabouts were completed at this interchange in 2014.

Current Land Use Designations: Industrial, Commercial, Medium Density Residential,

Natural Features: South Ferndale is largely flat. The Northwest Portion of the district contains wetland areas associated with nearby Tennant Lake. There is more topographical variation in the southern portion of the district where several small waterways run. Small areas of probable wetlands are also scattered throughout the southern portion of the district.

Watershed: Silver Creek

Existing Utilities: Water, Sewer, Storm

Stormwater Basin: Creighton, Pacific Highway, and Silver Creek Basins.

Bus Routes: District 8 is serviced by Lummi Transit's Route B. This route has one stop at the Lummi Gateway Center with connections to the Ferndale Park and Ride and Downtown Ferndale. Notable roads in this district include Interstate 5, Slater Road, Smith Road, and Labounty Drive.

Publicly Owned Parcels: Though there are no public parks immediately within South Ferndale, Tenant Lake Park is located just outside city limits to the west of the district. Tenant Lake Park offers an interpretive center, viewing tower, walking trails, and a fragrance garden.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Growth Forecast

Current Population	Forecast Population (Growth)	Current Employment	Forecast Employment (Growth)
379	534 (155)	1393	1921 (528)

Anticipated Type/ Scale of Uses: Various, ranging from multifamily residential development to public/institutional zoning (law enforcement uses), industrial and manufacturing development – and regional retail/ service uses.

Obstacles/ Improvements Necessary to Accommodate Future Development: Should major commercial development occur at or around this interchange, major transportation improvement will likely be necessary. The Slater corridor is owned or influenced by a number of public agencies which makes future decisionmaking complex. In addition, while lands owned by the Lummi Nation are not subject to City review or approval, it is expected that access to future development will be through City streets, and that water and sewer service will be provided by the City.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE? TRANSLATING JARGON USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Despite efforts to make this document more readable for the layperson, a discussion of future growth projections and the applicable laws and regulations associated with comprehensive plans requires the use of words and jargon that may be unfamiliar. The following is a translation of various words and terms used in this element.

- **Comprehensive Plan:** The long range planning document for the City of Ferndale which anticipates future growth through the year 2036. The plan includes a variety of sub-elements such as Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Capital Facilities, Utilities and Economic Development. All City regulations must be consistent with this comprehensive plan.
- **UGA (Urban Growth Area):** the area, including the existing City limits, in which the City may expand over the twenty-year planning period of the comprehensive plan. Often the UGA is used in reference only to the area outside of the City that could be annexed. The City is obligated to plan for growth within the entire UGA, including plans to serve the UGA with water, sewer, and roads.
- **Unit (Housing):** A residence with full living, sleeping and cooking facilities. The term does not imply a specific type of residence (single family, apartment, etc.) – but rather the number of overall residences within a geographic area or the City in general.
- **Comprehensive Plan Designation:** The type of developments or land uses that may be established within a geographic area. The Comprehensive Plan splits land uses into three broad categories: residential, commercial, and industrial. The Ferndale Municipal Code then establishes a variety of zones based on these broad designations that provide more specific regulations for development.
- **Zoning:** Geographic areas that are established for the purpose of identifying requires for new or existing development, including maximum height limits, types of land uses allowed, parking requirements, design or appearance standards, and more. Zoning must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Designation.
- **Critical Area:** Properties or portions of properties that contain sensitive areas such as wetlands, animal habitat, unstable soils, steep slopes or other elements that must be protected or that may restrict the ability to develop.
- **Stormwater:** Surface water that results from precipitation (snow or rain) that has not soaked into the ground. The resulting stormwater runoff may contribute to erosion, and may become mixed with mud, oils and other chemicals that result in negative impacts to the environment.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- **Watershed:** A geographic area defined by hills or ridges which separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or oceans. While all waters in Ferndale ultimately flow to the Salish Sea and the Pacific Ocean, they enter these larger water bodies at different locations.
- **Land Capacity Analysis:** Also referred to as the “LCA,” the analysis is the result of a collaborative effort between Whatcom County and the seven cities within the County. The LCA is intended to identify the land area available for development in each jurisdiction and its UGA, and to determine if additional land is needed to support the growth projected for the future.
- **Urban Reserve:** That area in which the City may expand once the Urban Growth Area is developed and/or when actual growth exceeds projections.



STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

Requirements of the Growth Management Act

When the State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA), they found that "...a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning." [RCW 36.70A.010] This finding, which summarizes the intent of the GMA, emphasizes the central role of the Land Use Element.

The Act requires the Land Use Element to designate the general distribution, location, and extent of land for various land uses, including resource lands, housing, commerce, industry, parks and open space, and public facilities. This element considers all these land uses, with the exception of public facilities and housing, which are considered in detail within the Capital Facilities Element and Housing elements, respectively. The Land Use Element also considers population densities, building densities, and estimates of future population growth. It also shall provide for protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies, and consider and mitigate the impacts of storm water runoff both in the immediate area and in surrounding jurisdictions.

The Land Use Element contains a variety of facts, analysis and other valuable information that together result in the primary policy outputs of the element as well as the Land Use Map- The goals and policies found in the Land Use Element are the product of both existing conditions and plans and policies which have previously been adopted.

Whatcom County-wide Planning Policies

The [Whatcom County County-Wide Planning Policies](#) are a further refinement of policy direction contained in the Growth Management Act, and are a result of a collaborative process between Whatcom County and the cities within the county. Ferndale's policies are consistent with the County-wide policies, and vice-versa.

The Whatcom County County-Wide Planning Policies provide a framework for both the county and its respective cities. Adherence to these policies ensures that plans within the county are consistent with one another. These policies address such issues as the designation of urban growth areas, land use, affordable housing, provision of urban services for future development, transportation, and contiguous and orderly development. The Policies have the most direct impact on land use policies in this chapter.



LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

Overall Land Use Goal:

The City of Ferndale strives to provide a healthy balance of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses to ensure the sustainability, financial well-being and quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Ferndale.

Commercial Land Use Goal

- I. **The City will promote commercial growth and revitalization that serves residents and strengthens and expands the tax base.**

Rationale: Ferndale collects less sales tax per capita than any jurisdiction in Whatcom County. Lack of retail sales tax places more pressure on citizens to pay for necessary services. As additional shopping options expand in the City, Ferndale residents will become less dependent on other jurisdictions and will begin to identify more with Ferndale as their home. The nature of new retail development will vary significantly depending on its location within the City.

Commercial Land Use Policies

- i. Establish commercial and industrial zoning and design regulations that are sufficiently from one another so as to maintain distinct subareas within the City.
 - ii. Develop policies to encourage public improvements such as street lighting, landscaping, park benches, and similar facilities in the downtown area that are compatible with the efforts of other civic groups.
- B. Create opportunities to enhance the Downtown core that do not place it in direct competition with other areas of the City.
 - i. Maintain unique Downtown zoning and design regulations intended to enhance the unique sense of place of the Downtown core, capitalizing on recreational, environmental, residential, commercial, and cultural attractions within the core.
 - ii. Establish incentives for targeted development types to ensure that development costs in the core area remain competitive.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- C. Encourage the development of retail businesses that cater to the traveling public in locations that are a convenient distance from Interstate 5 and are located within or adjacent to established commercial areas.
 - i. Provide for more flexibility in commercial zones by emphasizing form and impact, with a reduced emphasis on strict land use separation.
 - ii. Standards for commercial development should ensure that new commercial development is attractive. Standards should consider elements such as appropriate building scale, type of construction materials, landscaping, signing, and appropriate limitations on outdoor storage.
 - iii. Plan for the development of the Portal Way interchange and Thornton Extension as a transportation and commercial hub linking the Downtown, Portal Way and Hillside neighborhoods.
- D. Maintain a commercial land supply that is sufficiently large enough to meet the varied needs of commercial land users.
- E. Discourage non-compatible (particularly residential uses) land uses from locating in areas that are suitable and desirable for commercial or industrial uses, especially when land available for those uses is limited.
 - i. The City will consistently re-evaluate zoning and land use requirements to ensure that City policies address future demand and do not reflect outdated expectations.
 - ii. In some situations it may be both reasonable and desirable to allow residential uses as a sub-component of primary commercial or even light industrial uses, to establish a more-vibrant development.
- F. The City should encourage mixed use developments in appropriate areas.
 - i. The City may consider establishing pilot programs or allowing additional flexibility in certain areas in order to allow a limited number of specific uses within a particular area, or to encourage development that serves as a transition between previously non-conforming uses and those uses or architectural concepts that are contemplated for the future.



Industrial Land Use Goal

- II. **Encourage the development of new industries that provide living wage jobs for area residents.**

Rationale: Industrial and general business jobs often attract high-skill employees and offer higher wages than many retail or service jobs. These businesses may also support or be supported by other industries within the Ferndale Market Area.

Industrial Land Use Policies

- A. Maintain an industrial land supply that is sufficient in size to meet the varied needs of industrial land users.
- B. Capitalize on the assets the City has to offer to industrial land users, such as access to Interstate 5 (at Slater Road and Grandview Road interchanges), the proximity to the Burlington Northern Railroad and Cherry Point industries, and the availability of city utility services.
- C. Plan for adequate road and utility infrastructure to meet the varied needs of industrial users at the time of development.
- D. Discourage non-compatible (particularly residential uses) land uses from locating in areas that are suitable and desirable for industrial uses, while providing flexibility for mixed industrial-commercial and even light industrial/residential “make/live” developments.
- E. Encourage the development of industrial parks that provide more flexibility and options for development of industrial uses as well as provide for a mix of industrial and commercial uses.
 - i. Industrial parks have the advantage of bringing fully improved industrial land to the market while still providing maximum flexibility in lot configuration and development approval procedures.
- F. Encourage industrial businesses to limit pollution through responsible design, new technologies, and City nuisance and odor regulations.
- G. Reduce the segregation of industrial and commercial uses, when the impacts to the environment, surrounding uses, and City infrastructure are shown to be similar or less than other, existing uses.
- H. Remove obstacles and increase certainty for industrial users by establishing clear regulations based on performance and design.
- I. Maintain development regulations ensure that industrial users pay no more than their equivalent share of City costs and impacts.



Residential Land Use Goal

III. Encourage the development of a wide range of housing types and densities to meet the differing housing needs of Ferndale residents.

Rationale

The residential needs of the community are varied. The City needs to provide housing opportunities for a full range of densities and housing types that recognize environmental constraints, land use patterns and offer appropriate protection to established neighborhoods.

Residential Land Use Policies

- A. The City will support a land use strategy that maintains the quality and essential character of existing neighborhoods and that encourages cost-effective development.
- B. The City will encourage new development consisting of a variety of land uses adjacent to existing development which will take advantage of the existing infrastructure network.
- C. The City will encourage residential development patterns that reflect an orderly outward progression from the existing built environment.
- D. The City will pursue strategies to allow existing residential neighborhoods to evolve through a variety of infill or redevelopment options.
- E. Provide for clustering of residential development through a planned unit development procedure that allows for increased density within or adjacent to low-density neighborhoods, when such projects can demonstrate that adequate buffers and/or project design features will result in no detrimental impacts to existing residential neighborhoods and will protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- F. Provide opportunities for park and trail development to create a feeling of community spirit. Trails and other recreational facilities should connect neighborhood commercial nodes, schools, parks, and other local services to provide recreational activities and increase opportunities for physical activities for citizens of all ages.
- G. Encourage connections to trails and open space corridors through developments to facilitate access to the trail and park system.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- H. Recognize that housing needs and expectations may vary greatly amongst demographic groups.



Environmental Land Use Goal

IV. Encourage environmentally sensitive areas to be left in a natural state.

Rationale

Environmental constraints need to be considered in all development projects. The City should first consider the protection of the environmentally sensitive areas and second consider alternatives to allow development of the adjacent non-sensitive areas in a manner that provides property owners with a reasonable use of their land.

Environmental Land Use Policies

- A. Provide for adequate buffers surrounding stream and wildlife corridors, and ensure the perpetual protection of such corridors.
 - i. Preserve development regulations that allow the clustering of residential development away from sensitive areas without reducing the number of units that would otherwise be allowed.
 - ii. Recognize the need to protect sensitive areas, wildlife, fish corridors, and habitat. Continue to insure mechanisms for protection that do not unnecessarily burden HOA's or the City through property acquisition.
- B. Seek to encourage that impacts to sensitive areas with important ecological or habitat value are avoided. In those cases where such impacts cannot be avoided, seek to require no net loss of ecological function.
- C. Explore the use of innovative and environmentally sensitive techniques to enhance sensitive areas and corridors through the use of targeted offsite wetland mitigation.
- D. Protect aquifer recharge areas through the enforcement of water quality standards on all new development projects.
- E. Preserve flood storage capacity in those portions of the floodplain that are not protected by dikes.
- F. Prohibit development in identified geologically hazardous areas unless hazards can be adequately mitigated through measures identified by qualified technical experts.
 - i. Maintain the City of Ferndale in good standing with the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) for floodplains and floodplain management. .
- G.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- H. In cooperation with appropriate agencies, the City will identify and regulate the use of wetlands, essential habitat areas, and other critical lands within the Urban Growth Area.
- I. The City will continue to evaluate long-range growth policies in light of changing environmental conditions and will seek to maintain goals and policies that balance environmental protection and responsible growth.

Urban Growth Area/Annexation Goal

- V. Provide for the orderly expansion and development of the city as required to meet the growth needs of the community.**

Rationale

The development of the unincorporated portions of the City's urban growth area is a key to the success of the comprehensive plan. If development occurs outside the City in a manner that is inconsistent with the plan, future opportunities for expansion of the city may be lost, or result in inefficient public services or conflicting land use patterns. Compliance with the City's Annexation Blueprint/Phasing Plan is still vital.

Urban Growth Area/Annexation Policies

- A. Annexations to the City shall be comprised of logical boundaries that to the greatest degree practical:
 - i. Create regular boundaries;
 - ii. Follow topographic features or other physical features, such as streams, railroad rights-of-way or freeway rights-of-way;
 - iii. Provide for services to both sides of a city street;
 - iv. Avoid the creation of unincorporated "islands;"
 - v. Avoid "panhandle" annexations.
- B. Annexations to the City shall avoid conversion of active resource lands whenever possible.
 - i. Active agricultural lands of over 10 acres in size shall not be annexed into the City unless the property owner consents to the annexation and commits to converting the agricultural property into urban land uses within 18 months following the annexation.
- C. Annexation requests shall be reviewed by the City Planning Commission prior to completion so that appropriate zoning of the properties to be annexed can be established in conformance with this Comprehensive Plan.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE ELEMENT

FERNDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- D. The City shall conduct a cost/benefit study for all annexations over 20 acres in size or \$1,000,000 in total assessed valuation. Such study shall consider the following:
- i. Projected costs of providing services to the area to be annexed, including street maintenance, storm water runoff system maintenance, police protection, parks and recreation, general governmental services.
 - ii. Estimated costs to extend city utility services and upgrade substandard infrastructure including streets, storm water runoff systems, parks, and street lighting.
 - iii. Assessment of impact to any special districts, such as a fire district or cemetery district.
 - iv. The tax revenues that would likely be received by the city resulting from the annexation.
 - v. The tax revenues that would likely be generated in the annexed area as a result of development that would take place following the annexation.
 - vi. Any sharing of tax revenues or payment of existing capital improvements that may be present in the area to be annexed that may be required by Whatcom County as a condition of annexation.
- E. For annexations over 20 acres in size or \$1,000,000 in total assessed valuation, the City may enter into a development agreement with the proponents of the annexation that would commit the City and the proponents to installing specific improvements and approving specific development plans.
- F. The City shall work with Whatcom County to develop an interlocal agreement that deals with issues related to annexation and development within the unincorporated portions of the urban growth area.
- G. The City's long-range annexation plan is found within the Annexation Phasing Plan/ Annexation Blueprint, which is adopted by reference to this plan.

