



# Living by the Nooksack

A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale

Fall 2022

## What is This?

While many of our residents follow us on social media and check our website, we know that plenty of you don't have time for that.

This quarterly newsletter is our latest effort to help you understand what is going on in your city.

## Inside this article, you will find:

- Details on the rollout of the recent downtown business grants
- What is the 100-Year Floodplain and why it matters
- Can I fix my car in my front yard?
- What parks events are planned for the fall
- A recent amusing guest of the Ferndale Police
- . . . and more!

If you have thoughts about this newsletter, please call Communications Officer Riley Sweeney at (360) 685-2353 or email him at [Rileysweeney@Cityofferndale.org](mailto:Rileysweeney@Cityofferndale.org)

Accessible online at [www.cityofferndale.org/newsletter](http://www.cityofferndale.org/newsletter)



## City, County, and State Collaborate to Strengthen Nooksack Levee

As part of a multi-year effort to improve the levee system along the Nooksack River, the City of Ferndale, Whatcom County and the State of Washington are collaborating on a levee improvement project directly adjacent to Pioneer Park. The dramatic flooding of November 2021 highlighted the need for this project in order to protect the community.

For Ferndale, this means rebuilding and strengthening the levee from Cherry Street to south of the city limits and into the county. After reviewing the potential alternatives and technical details, the City selected an option that expands the width and decreases the slope of the levee. This provides better protection from not only the height of the water, but the erosive effect of rising, fast moving floodwaters and less ongoing maintenance.

This does require a few key improvements to the area, most notably moving Ferndale Road so that it reroutes from just south of Star Park, around the Phillips 66 ballfields, before connecting to Second Avenue. This route would include traffic calming devices such as speed bumps, and would enhance and activate the space with pedestrian improvements including sidewalks and trees, and a recreation space on the far side of the ballfields.

Also, as part of expanding the levee, the City would be able to extend the Riverwalk, allowing a direct pedestrian path from Main Street to Star Park, addressing a long-term community goal of improving the resident's connection to the river. As this is a critical project for preventing future flooding, most of the funding necessary is expected to come from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

For more information on this project, check out [www.cityofferndale.org/FerndaleLeveeProject](http://www.cityofferndale.org/FerndaleLeveeProject)

## Repairing Your Own Vehicle at Home? Not a Problem

While not all of us have the ability or time to service our own vehicles, there are certainly those who might decide to take care of some car maintenance at their own home. Did you know that this is allowed as long as certain regulations are followed?

In fact, anyone can service, repair, assemble, wreck, modify or restore their own vehicle as the following requirements are met:

- The vehicle must be owned by the occupant of the residence,
- The work can only take place between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., and if you are working outside, you cannot work on it more than five days in a row.
- If you are doing the work within the walls of a shop or garage, then you can take your time.
- All work must take place in the designated driveway, garage, or shop.



Please remember that no work may take place on the sidewalk or on the street, nor should it impede the use of the sidewalk or street in any way. It is also not permitted to have any sort of vehicle repair and/or service business as a home occupation business. If you have further questions, please contact the City's Code Compliance Officer at [codecompliance@cityofferndale.org](mailto:codecompliance@cityofferndale.org).



## 2022 Summer of Fun and Upcoming Parks Events

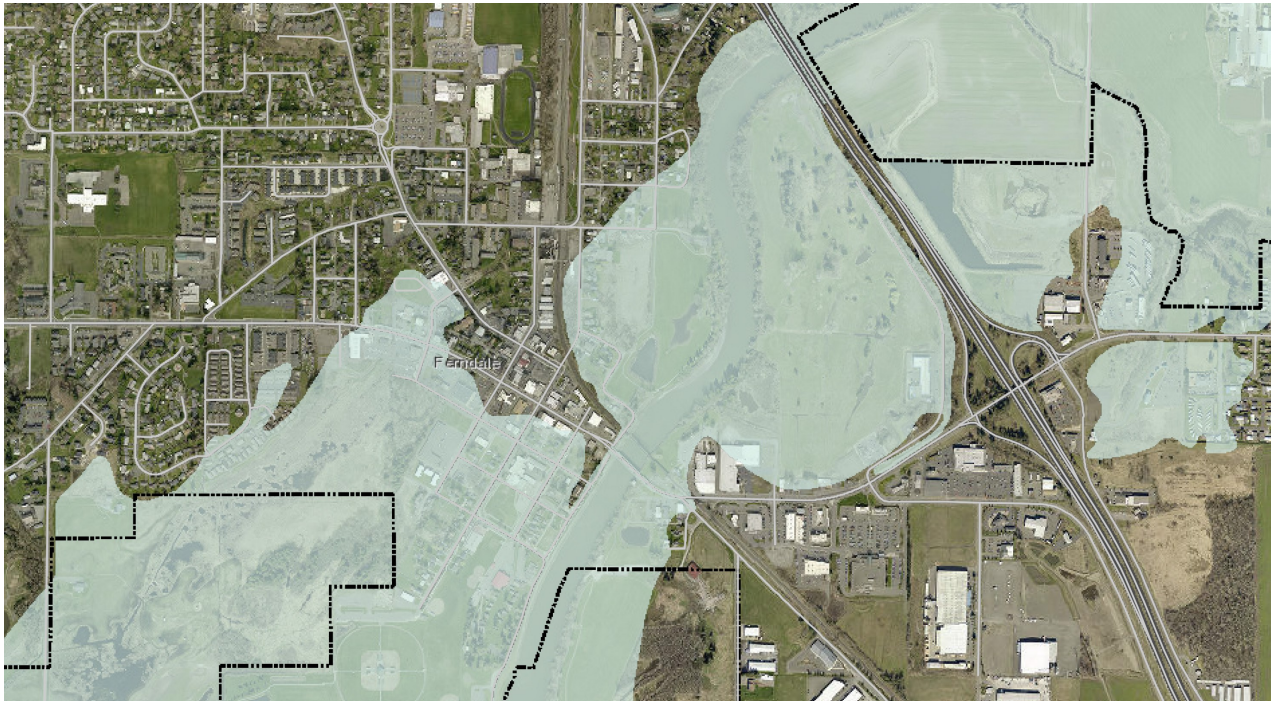
This summer, over 4,000 people came out for our 2022 Summer of Fun recreational events in Ferndale parks. Whether rocking out to the Metallica cover band "Blistered Earth" or enjoying field games or movies in the park, Ferndale relished the opportunity to see their neighbors and enjoy some community activities.

Thank you to our sponsor, WECU, for their support for these events and to all of our vendors and volunteers who helped make them a success.

With summer drawing to a close, it does not mean an end to community events in the parks. This fall, we have two parks events scheduled for October:

**Citywide Halloween Decorating Contest:** Do you go absolutely spooky wild decorating for Halloween? Register your house on our Spooky House Tour of Ferndale and win prizes! More details on how to sign up coming soon.

**Mystery in the Park and Downtown Trick-or-Treat, Sat. Oct. 29th:** Jump into 1930s Ferndale as local actors bring an interactive mystery to life at the historic Pioneer Village. Interview suspects, examine a crime scene and solve this Halloween-themed Mystery in the Park. FREE to all amateur gumshoes, detectives, wannabe Sherlocks and investigators. This event is done in conjunction with the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce Downtown Trick-or-Treat.



*Illustration of the current FEMA 100-Year Floodplain*

## **Planning and Development in the 100-Year Floodplain**

Much of the low-lying areas of Ferndale are within an area commonly known as the FEMA 100-Year Floodplain. This means that the area has a 1-percent chance of flooding from the Nooksack in any given year. Or, to put it another way, if you stood in that spot for a hundred years, chances are you would get wet at least once. So what does that mean for those building in the 100-year Floodplain? Would the City even grant a permit for that? The answer depends on what is being built and how.

Because the City is located next to a river that frequently floods, Ferndale has adopted a whole section of the City code specifically devoted to Floodplain Management (FMC 15.24). These regulations are fully compliant with the relevant FEMA regulations and are mandatory for anyone building in the 100-year floodplain.

These rules do allow for some development within the floodplain, provided that such development is raised above the base flood elevation (i.e. how high the water will get above sea level when that big flood arrives) and/or is flood proofed. There are several methods to meet this requirement, including raising the structure itself or even raising the elevation of the ground on which the structure sits.

Additionally, any new development cannot reduce the effective flood storage volume of the floodplain. In other words, the applicant is required to demonstrate that new developments will not result in a net increase in the flood level that may impact neighboring properties. Should the development result in a net rise, compensatory storage or mitigation measures must be incorporated to result in no-net-rise in the floodplain, and therefore, no additional flooding impacts to adjacent property owners.

These requirements and methods are reviewed and verified through the City's permitting process. Only those projects that meet these requirements may be approved.

FEMA also works with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to evaluate flood risks and to require flood insurance for those properties with government-backed mortgages within the 100-year floodplain. FEMA is responsible for preparing and distributing Flood Insurance Rate Maps which depict the assumed location of the 100-year floodplain at the local level, the various flood areas within the floodplain, and the base flood elevation. These maps are the basis for many of our permitting requirements.

The floods of November 2021 put in stark relief the need to be cautious when building near the river and adhere to permit requirements. Following the City code can assist property owners with mitigating the impacts that come from living in the 100-year floodplain.

For more information or questions about the 100-year floodplain, please call Ferndale Community Development Department at 360-384-4006 or email Community Development Director Michael Cerbone at [MichaelCerbone@cityofferndale.org](mailto:MichaelCerbone@cityofferndale.org)



# Keep your bills in line, online

Go paperless

Conveniently pay online, anytime 24/7

Save a stamp. Pay online.

With AutoPay, your bills pay themselves

Your data is secure

Save time, save a trip: pay online, on the device of your choice

[www.cityofferndale.org](http://www.cityofferndale.org)



## Preparing to Invest in Downtown Ferndale

The Ferndale Downtown Association grants committee reviewed a number of applications from our small businesses over the last month as they help distribute over \$200,000 in COVID relief funds to help revitalize and expand downtown business operations.

You can learn more about the grants that are available at <https://ferndaledowntown.com/grants/>



*Susan Duncan (COF), Sara Fassett (FDA) and Councilmember Ryan O'Larey*

## An Unusual Guest of the Ferndale Police Department

Recently, Corporal Josh Scott found this adorable lionhead rabbit hiding out behind the Shell station on 4th and Main. After assuring that this errant hare did not have any outstanding warrants, the Ferndale Police Department contacted the Whatcom Humane Society to pick up the bunny rabbit and reunite it with its family.

The City contracts with the Whatcom Humane Society for all animal control and rescue services. They are responsible for picking up stray or injured animals and investigating cruelty and neglect complaints as authorized by City ordinance.

For more details on the services the Whatcom Humane Society provides, including pet adoption and volunteer opportunities, please check out [www.whatcomhumane.org](http://www.whatcomhumane.org)

