

LIVING BY THE NOOKSACK

A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale



SUMMER 2025

While many community members follow City activity on social media and the City website, not everyone has the time or resources to do so.

This quarterly newsletter is one of the efforts of the City to inform residents and help the community understand what is going on in the City.

Inside this newsletter, read about:

- 2025 Summer of Fun
- Civic Campus
- Ferndale Feature: Chief for a Day
- Comprehensive Plan: Land Use and Transportation Elements
- Utility Discount Program

For questions or comments about this newsletter, contact Communications & Community Relations Officer Megan Juenemann at (360) 685-2353 or meganjuenemann@cityofferndale.org

This newsletter, along with past issues, is accessible online at www.cityofferndale.org/newsletter



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Are you ready for warm weather and fun in Ferndale's largest and most central park? There is something fun to do in Ferndale almost every weekend this summer, so get ready to eat, dance, and connect with your community at our Summer of Fun events in Pioneer Park!

This year, our Summer of Fun events are made possible in part by the generous support of WECU, our local credit union serving Whatcom County for over 80 years.

Friday, June 20th

Food Truck Friday with Circus Guild — 5:30 PM in Pioneer Village

Saturday, June 21st

Metalworks Skate Jam/Competition — 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM—Metalworks Skate Park

Friday, June 27th

Flicks in the Park – Moana 2 — 9:00 PM in Pioneer Village

Friday, July 11th

Flicks in the Park – The Wild Robot — 9:00 PM in Pioneer Village

Friday, July 18th

Music in the Park with County Rose — 5:30 PM in Pioneer Village

Saturday, August 17th

Yoga in the Park with Flow Motion — 10:00 AM in Pioneer Village

Friday, August 22nd

Food Truck Friday—5:30 PM in Pioneer Village

As always, our events are free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.cityofferndale.org/summeroffun2025. For questions about our events, contact Megan Juenemann at (360) 685-2353 or meganjuenemann@cityofferndale.org.

CIVIC CAMPUS ADVOCACY BRINGS RESULTS

As a result of successful advocacy (lobbying) work at both the state and federal level, the City has been able to raise over \$6.5 million from outside sources to support the construction of the Civic Campus, slated to begin in late Summer 2025.

For over two decades, the City has understood the need for a new City Hall and Court facility, and several design attempts have been made during that time. However, during this time the City had not initiated a capital campaign to raise funds for construction.



Inflation and construction costs have increased by between 19 and 28% per decade in the 2000's, including an increase of 23% in the 2020's. This means that the same ~\$20 million project that is proposed now would have cost about \$13 million in 2010, and would cost approximately \$27.5 million in 2035, if the next ten years of inflation is like the last ten years.

There is an old saying that the best time to build was yesterday, and the second best time is today. With that in mind, beginning in 2021 the City began to reduce costs and to save money to fund the project, and meanwhile sought funding support for the project from different sources in order to reduce the direct costs to the City and Ferndale taxpayers.

US Representative DelBene and later Representative Larsen each advocated for this project and were able to earmark \$750,000 and \$1 million, respectively.

At the State level, Representative Timmons, together with Representative Rule and Senator Shewmake, were able to fund \$1.5 million for the design of the campus, \$3 million for construction, and \$500,000 announced in April to fund the Electric Vehicle charging stations and solar array.

This means that the City has been able to successfully raise \$6.75 million from outside sources. Meanwhile, without raising taxes (and actually during a period in which City taxes were reduced), the City has been able to leverage strategic investments, to moderate expenses, and to freeze hiring, saving an additional \$5.75 million, for a total of \$12.5 million "cash in hand."

This level of strategic investment for a downpayment on a civic structure of this type is unprecedented in Ferndale's history. It positions the City to build the vital infrastructure necessary to prepare for growth, without burdening current and future generations in paying for the Civic Campus.

The Civic Campus project seeks to establish a central "one stop shop" for a variety of City and community services, and to "future proof" City facilities by anticipating the growth that Ferndale is expected to see over the next several decades. The campus will consist of the existing Ferndale Public Library, and a new building that will include City Council Chambers, Ferndale Municipal Court, and will serve as the new City Hall.

The existing City Hall building will be repurposed to house a variety of community service organizations such as Ferndale Community Services, the Chamber of Commerce, Ferndale Downtown Association, the Domestic Violence Victim's Advocate, Public Defenders offices, and more. These community organizations have grown in importance over the last several years, and Ferndale has the unique ability to co-locate them, which is expected to reduce costs and improve collaboration.

For more information on the Civic Campus Project, visit:

www.cityofferndale.org/public-works-department/capital-projects/ferndale-civic-campus/

FERNDALE FEATURE:

POLICE DEPARTMENT HONORS CHIEF FOR A DAY

On Tuesday, May 6th, the Ferndale Police Department surprised local third-grader Andy and his family and close friends with a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Department — followed by an even bigger surprise. Andy was officially invited to serve as the Ferndale Police Department's *honorary chief* for the upcoming Chief for a Day celebration in August, hosted by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC).

Chief for a Day is a heartwarming event that honors children living with chronic or life-threatening illnesses. Since 1999, WSCJTC has hosted the celebration, bringing together law enforcement agencies from across Washington to recognize these brave young individuals. For one unforgettable day, each child is sworn in as an honorary Chief or Sheriff, complete with personalized uniforms, official badges, and the full VIP treatment. The Ferndale Police Department has had the privilege of participating in this event dating back to 2010 until 2018 when the program was put on pause.

Resurfacing the program in 2025, this year's Chief for a Day event will take place on Thursday, August 28th at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien, Washington. Seventeen law enforcement agencies will be sponsoring children from across the state in this powerful day of recognition, support, and celebration.

The Ferndale Police Department is honored to participate in this cherished tradition and is proud to stand behind *Chief Andy* as he prepares to represent our community at the statewide event. We look forward to celebrating his courage and strength alongside his family, fellow honorees, and supporters from across Washington.

For more information about WSCJTC Chief for a Day, visit <https://cjtc.wa.gov/chief-day>.

A special thank you to the Ferndale Police Association, Whatcom County Fire District 7, Ferndale School District, and Hempler's for supporting the May 6th surprise event.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS

The City of Ferndale is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan and Development Code. This periodic update is required by the State and ensures the City of Ferndale is complying with all state laws that have been passed since the last update.

The comprehensive plan sets the vision for the community and is currently comprised of seven chapters, which are referred to as elements: Introduction, **Land Use**, Housing, **Transportation**, Utilities, Capital Facilities, and Economic Development.



Land Use Element: Land is a vital asset that fuels Ferndale’s economy, and as the City continues to grow, careful management of this resource becomes essential. The Land Use element of Ferndale’s Comprehensive Plan takes a deep dive into the City’s historical and current land use patterns, examining how past decisions have shaped the present and how future growth should be directed. At its core, the Land Use element seeks to identify appropriate and beneficial land uses, while addressing the impact of growth on both newly developed areas and neighboring communities.

As Ferndale grows, it is critical to manage the intensity of new buildings, ensure sustainable population densities, and safeguard the City’s natural resources. The policies set within this framework aim to promote balance between development, environmental stewardship, and community well-being, ensuring that future growth is consistent with the broader goals of the Comprehensive Plan. This element serves as a roadmap for responsible urban planning, guiding decisions to shape Ferndale’s future for decades to come.

Transportation Element: Ferndale's continued growth and development is closely tied to the efficiency of its transportation network. The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan takes stock of the City’s current transportation infrastructure, which includes highways, streets, trails, railroads, and transit services, while anticipating future needs and identifying emerging transportation trends. This element is essential to creating a balanced, multimodal system that supports both current and future developments, ensuring that Ferndale remains accessible and connected.

By establishing service level standards and assessing current system characteristics, the Transportation element highlights areas where improvements are necessary to meet the demands of a growing population. The policy framework within this section is designed to be adaptable, enabling the City to respond to new transportation challenges and opportunities. Through this approach, Ferndale aims to enhance mobility, safety, and accessibility for all residents, while maintaining an efficient and sustainable transportation system that aligns with the City’s long-term vision for growth and development.

If you are interested in learning more about this process, sign up to be included on the mailing list by sending an email to comment@cityofferndale.org and asking to be included on future notices for the comprehensive plan. Find more information about the overall project by visiting: www.cityofferndale.org/commdev/comprehensive-plan-2/2025-comprehensive-plan-update/

UTILITY DISCOUNT PROGRAM



Have you heard? The City of Ferndale offers assistance on utility bills for residents who qualify through the Utility Discount Program! This program was formally known as the Rate Assistance Program and offers either a 15% or 30% reduction on bimonthly bills. There are two ways a resident can qualify.

1. Earnings are at or below a specific Federal Poverty Level based on a submitted copy of a resident’s most recent tax return for all working adults living on the property, or
2. Is actively enrolled in the Whatcom County property tax exemption program.

To see if you qualify, please visit www.cityofferndale.org and select Utility Billing—More Information. Customers are also welcome to come into City Hall for a Utility Discount Program form.

For questions, contact the City’s Utility Billing Clerk by calling **(360) 384-4269** or sending an email to utilitybilling@cityofferndale.org.