

LIVING BY THE NOOKSACK

A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale



WINTER 2026

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:

- Ferndale Photo Contest
- Community Logo
- Ferndale Feature: E-Bike Safety
- Planning and Development in the 100-Year Floodplain
- Stormwater Season in Ferndale
- **Save the Date**
Police Department Open House
Wednesday, January 28, 2026
4:00 PM—7:00 PM
Ferndale Police Department
2220 Main Street

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**



www.facebook.com/cityofferndale



[@ferndalewaofficial](https://www.instagram.com/ferndalewaofficial)



Photo courtesy of Klein Photography NW

SHARE YOUR FERNDALE PHOTOS!

The City of Ferndale is looking for your best snapshots to help showcase the beauty, character, and spirit of the community. Whether you are a seasoned photographer or someone who simply loves capturing everyday moments, we want to see Ferndale through your eyes.

Last year, the city launched its new website and is now looking to build a stronger, more authentic photo library that highlights what makes Ferndale so special. From community events and local landmarks to scenic views and everyday moments, your photos could help tell Ferndale's story to the world.

Images submitted now through January 31, 2026 will be entered into the City of Ferndale Photo Contest. During the month of February, contest entries will be shared on the City's Facebook page for public voting. The photos with the most "likes" will earn prizes and a feature on the City's website.

There's no limit to how many photos you can submit. After the contest window closes, submissions will still be accepted any time for possible use on the City's website and other city communications.

Help celebrate Ferndale's vibrant community through your lens and maybe see your photo featured on the City's website for everyone to enjoy!

Visit **www.cityofferndale.org** for contest information, terms and conditions, and the photo submission form.

A NEW DIRECTION FOR FERNDALE



You’ve probably noticed new “wayfinding” signage popping up around Ferndale and may be wondering, where did this come from? The answer lies in a project years in the making, designed to help both residents and visitors navigate the city more easily while celebrating the character and story of Ferndale itself.

A Path with Purpose: Over the past several years, the Ferndale City Council has identified wayfinding, along with several related projects, as one of the community’s highest priorities. According to the International Downtown Association, wayfinding is among

the top ten economic initiatives for America’s downtowns. The goal? To make Ferndale easier to explore, more welcoming to visitors, and more connected for residents.

A well-planned wayfinding system is more than just signs and does more than point you in the right direction, it helps define who we are. For visitors, it provides a seamless and trustworthy experience, creating a positive first impression of Ferndale as an organized and inviting destination. For locals, it highlights cultural and historical sites, directs traffic toward shopping districts and events, and fosters pride in the community’s shared spaces.

Designed with Ferndale in Mind: To bring this vision to life, the City partnered with MERJE Design, a nationally recognized leader in wayfinding and placemaking. The first phase of the program focuses on Ferndale’s Downtown core, the Centennial Riverwalk, and the gateway areas leading into the city. Thanks to a \$100,000 grant from Washington State and \$25,000 in support from the Port of Bellingham, Phase 1 of the wayfinding program was installed in Summer 2025.

A Symbol of Community: As part of this process, the City’s wayfinding initiative inspired something even bigger — a new community logo — now proudly released as public domain, which means this logo is able to be used and shared by anyone. This logo isn’t just an image; it’s a story. The logo blends Ferndale’s beauty, history, and heritage: fonts from historic rail signs; woven greens for agriculture and diversity; deep blues honoring the Salish Sea and Coast Salish peoples; a rising sun for opportunity; Mount Baker and the Cascades; the iconic Metallica Bridge; and a steel girder symbolizing industrial strength. Together, these elements form a symbol that belongs to everyone, a visual reflection of Ferndale’s beauty, history, and future.





Looking Ahead: The wayfinding project represents more than just new signs. It’s an investment in connection, identity, and pride. As you see the new signs and symbols appearing throughout the city in the months to come, take a moment to look closer. Every color, line, and curve tells a part of Ferndale’s story and points toward its bright future. For more information, visit: www.cityofferndale.org/173/About-Ferndale

FERNDALE FEATURE:

UNDERSTANDING E-BIKES AND STAYING SAFE

E-bikes are becoming a popular way to get around Ferndale — offering a fun, efficient, and eco-friendly way to travel. But with that convenience comes responsibility. The City of Ferndale and the Ferndale Police Department are reminding riders to understand the rules of the road and the difference between e-bikes and electric motorcycles.

A legal e-bike is a bicycle equipped with operable pedals and assisted by an electric motor. Washington State law recognizes three classes of e-bikes, each limited to specific speeds and areas of use. In contrast, many two-wheelers seen around town — particularly those without pedals or with only foot pegs — are classified as electric motorcycles. These must be licensed, registered, and operated by a rider with a motorcycle endorsement under state law (RCW 46.04.330). Most of these models do not meet those requirements and therefore cannot be legally used on streets, sidewalks, or bike paths in Ferndale. Violations may lead to fines or impoundment.

 E-Cycles What you need to know					
Type of Cycle	Max Assisted Speed	Has Throttle	Operable Pedals	Age restriction	
Class 1 e-bike	20 mph	✗	✓	None	
Class 2 e-bike	20 mph	✓	✓	None	
Class 3 e-bike	28 mph	✗**	✓	16+	
e-motorcycle*	>28 mph	✓	Varies	16+ and have valid WA license with motorcycle endorsement to ride on roadway	
<small>* Unlicensed and unregistered e-motorcycles may include e-dirt bikes and must follow the rules outlined for off-road recreation vehicles. ** Some class 3 e-bikes have a throttle, while most do not.</small>					

Beyond legality, safety is essential. Riders should always wear helmets, obey traffic laws, ride predictably, and stay alert to pedestrians and vehicles. E-bikes are powerful machines, and responsible operation helps protect everyone who shares Ferndale's roads and trails.

Tips to Keep Riders and Others Safe:

- Educate yourself on road rules and use bike paths or bike lanes whenever possible.
- A bike rider is not a pedestrian; bike riders must yield to pedestrians on sidewalks and in crosswalks.
- Wear appropriate gear, including a helmet designed for e-bike riders with chin straps secured.
- Use lights, reflectors, and warning devices such as bells.
- Slow down ahead of intersections, driveways, and hazards.
- Practice safe mounting and dismounting due to the weight of e-bikes.

The City of Ferndale and the Ferndale Police Department are committed to keeping our community safe and informed. By understanding the laws and riding responsibly, we can ensure e-bikes remain a positive part of Ferndale's transportation future.

For more information about e-bikes in Ferndale, visit: www.cityofferndale.org/426/Ebikes-in-Ferndale

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN THE 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

Much of Ferndale's lower areas lie within the FEMA 100-year floodplain. That doesn't mean flooding happens once every century—it means there is at least a one percent chance of flooding each year. If you stood in one spot for a hundred years, you'd likely get your feet wet at least once. Living near the Nooksack River means the City must take flooding seriously.

To keep people and property safe, Ferndale's Municipal Code (Chapter 15.24) sets clear rules for building in the floodplain. These regulations match FEMA's standards and require any new structures to be built above the base flood elevation or designed to be floodproof. Some property owners raise their buildings or even the ground itself to meet this standard. The goal is simple: reduce the chance of damage when the river rises.

New construction also can't worsen flooding for neighbors. Projects must prove they won't cause higher water levels elsewhere. If they might, builders must include mitigation—like extra storage for floodwater, so there is no overall increase. City staff review these details carefully before approving permits.

These local efforts connect to the federal National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which requires flood insurance for most properties with government-backed mortgages in the floodplain. FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps outline where flood zones are and how high waters could reach. They serve as a guide for both residents and City planners.

The floods of November 2021 were a vivid reminder of how quickly the Nooksack can rise. 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**

STORMWATER SEASON IN FERNDALE

As the days grow shorter and the rains return, Ferndale enters its annual stormwater season. Ferndale receives about 42 inches of rain each year, and nearly three-quarters of that falls between October and March — that's almost 4 billion gallons of water moving through Ferndale in just six months!

Much of this rainfall runs off roofs, driveways, streets, and parking lots instead of soaking into the soil. It is collected through catch basins, gutters, and pipes that make up Ferndale's stormwater system, which directs runoff to the Nooksack River, Schell Marsh, and local creeks and wetlands.



To manage all that water, the city maintains a variety of stormwater treatment and flow-control facilities such as detention ponds, biofiltration swales, stormwater vaults, and permeable pavement. These systems reduce flooding, protect streambanks from erosion, and help clean pollutants — like oil, sediment, fertilizers, and litter — from stormwater before it reaches waterways.

The Public Works Department plays a critical role in keeping this system running smoothly. Crews regularly sweep streets, clean catch basins and pipes, and maintain more than 60 treatment sites around the city. Their work prevents blockages, reduces pollution, and helps keep infrastructure resilient during the stormy season.

So next time you see Ferndale's stormwater team out working in the rain, give them a friendly wave — they're helping keep the community safe, dry, and environmentally healthy. Learn more about Ferndale's stormwater program at www.cityofferndale.org/256/Stormwater or contact stormwater@cityofferndale.org / 360-685-2357.