



# Living by the Nooksack

*A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale*

*Winter 2019*

## 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.

This is a pilot program for 2019. If you love it, let us know, if you hate it, let us know.

## Inside this issue, you will find:

- **What to do when the snow starts falling**
- **How to avoid phone scams**
- **Details on what is happening with your utility rates**
- **A closer look at the Downtown Catalyst program**
- **A list of fun winter events in Ferndale**

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)



## Citywide Community Meeting Set for Nov. 19th

Get the inside scoop on what is happening in Ferndale in 2020 directly from council members, city staff and community leaders at a Citywide Community Meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 19th at 6:30pm in the Pioneer Pavilion (2007 Cherry St). The City will be holding an open Q & A session, as well as providing opportunities for the public to give feedback on a number of upcoming city initiatives.

At this event, participants can

- Learn about the Thornton Street Overpass and Downtown Catalyst Projects (see page 4)
- Meet freshly elected council members and mayor
- Share thoughts about parks activities, downtown growth and new businesses coming to town
- Connect with community groups and non-profits
- Meet your neighbors!

Open house begins at 6:30pm, with a presentation at 7:00pm. If you have any questions, call Communications Officer Riley Sweeney at (360) 685-2353.



*Learn  
what's  
coming  
in 2020!*



## Utility Rate Study



With rising costs and scheduled expansions to the city's infrastructure, the City Conducted a rate study this year to determine a more equitable way to fund our utilities. With the help of FCS Group, a specialist in the field, the city examined our utility usage (how much water is used each day), consumer groups (residential, multi-family, commercial) and fees (flat fee, usage fee, connection fees, impact fees) to find the most equitable way to fund the city's utility system.

The FCS Group presented their results at council meetings in August and October, exploring a variety of methods to ensure that our needs are met well into the future. Council was adamant that any cost increases were fairly shared between businesses, new and current customers.

The current proposal looks at a potential increase of \$15 per month for the average residential customer in the City of Ferndale, although nothing has been finalized and individual bills vary based on usage. Residents are encouraged to share their thoughts with council via email at [citycouncil@cityofferndale.org](mailto:citycouncil@cityofferndale.org).

The final proposal will be voted on later this year as part of the 2020 budget. Full proposed utility rate changes and associated research can be found at [www.cityofferndale.org/ratestudy](http://www.cityofferndale.org/ratestudy).

## Phone Scams!

The city regrets to inform you that no, you actually did not win a free cruise or have unclaimed money waiting for you with the IRS. The truth is that phone scams are becoming increasingly more common and sophisticated.

Here are some of the things you can do to stay safe:

- Don't send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request, even if the caller has some of your information. Don't believe the Caller ID—you can always hang up and call back the correct number to verify.
- Don't pay up front for a promise. A common scam is to ask you to pay for shipping, put down a deposit or any other method to get access to your funds. Just say no or hang up.

For more information on common phone scams, check out <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts>.



## Only Rain Down the Drain

Just finished cooking your Thanksgiving turkey? It can be tempting to dump the grease down the stormdrain but it is essential that you don't.

Most stormwater is not treated before it is discharged into waterbodies in Ferndale. Local waters then drain to larger waterbodies, including the Nooksack River to Bellingham Bay, the Lummi River to Lummi Bay, and California Creek to Drayton Harbor.

Beyond that, it is much cheaper to prevent pollutants from getting into the water than to pay for the clean up.

Please help prevent pollution from entering the stormwater system and our local waters. Only rain and snowmelt down the drain.







## SNOW SEASON

Long before there is snow in the forecast, it is time to start thinking winter safety. When it comes to driving, that means **be prepared** and **slow down**. The City of Ferndale Public Works Department, which is responsible for city street maintenance, prepares for snow and ice and monitors winter weather conditions around the clock.

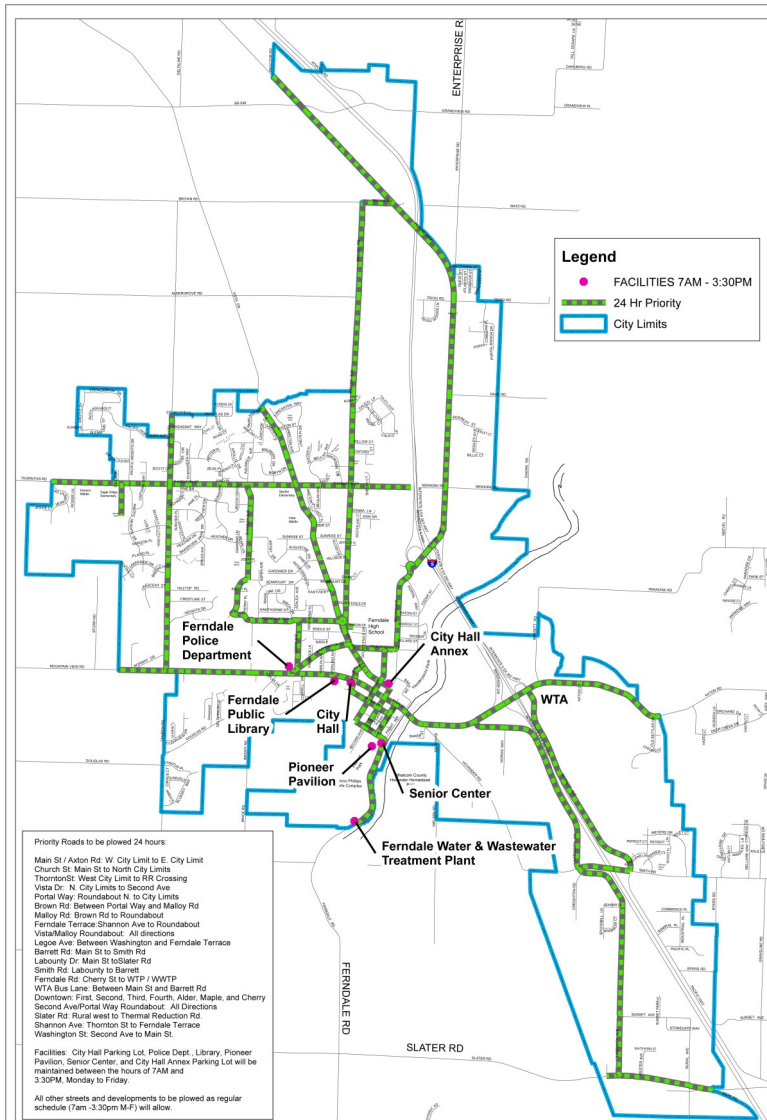
**With wintery weather on the way, our Public Works crew:**

- Prepares four trucks with plow attachments.
- Applies de-icing solution to key streets in advance of snow and ice.
- When appropriate, applies sand and salt to increase traction on roadways.
- Begins plowing, focused on priority routes (see left) which are cleared 24 hours a day to ensure first responders have access throughout the city.
- Access to side streets are cleared only after the priority routes are completely plowed.

**Here is what residents can and should do:**

- Clear sidewalks next to your property – the City only provides snow and ice control for sidewalks in front of public buildings (the Library, City Hall).
- Stay home if you don't need to be out. It's safer with fewer people on the streets, especially for those not comfortable in snow and ice.
- Let cold water drip from faucets served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe – even at a trickle – helps prevent pipes from freezing.

For more information about snow in Ferndale, call Ferndale Public Works at (360) 384-4006 or check out [www.cityofferndale.org/snow](http://www.cityofferndale.org/snow)



## Ferndale Winter Events

**Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony.** Dec. 6th, 4-6pm at the *Riverwalk Fountain*. Celebrate the season with your neighbors as the Ferndale Chamber lights up the holiday tree at the Centennial Riverwalk park. Free cookies and cocoa provided, Santa and Mrs. Claus in attendance.

**Old Fashioned Christmas.** Dec. 6th- 5-9pm. Dec. 7th—1-9pm, Dec. 8th—1-5pm at the *Pioneer Village in Pioneer Park*. The Ferndale Heritage Society dons pioneer costumes to greet visitors of all ages as they experience how our ancestors enjoyed the holidays. There will be hands-on crafts for children, old fashioned games, music and a working general store to purchase old fashioned gifts. Tickets \$5 general, \$3 for youth.

# Downtown Catalyst Projects

## Move Forward

In April 2019, the City Council passed the Downtown Catalyst Incentive Program. This unique program is aimed at helping our downtown come alive. Right now, retail businesses struggle downtown and very few people can be found walking around after 5pm or on the weekends. The City is committed to working with local businesses to build a downtown that is full of life, economic activity and thriving businesses.

The City has tried various incentives or programs over the last decades to support our downtown businesses, but it has had little impact. It was time for something dramatic.

One key factor that thriving downtowns all share is developments that have businesses on the bottom and housing on top. If people are living within walking distance of their downtown, they shop, eat, and play in the downtown at all hours.

The Catalyst was developed by our planning commission and Community Development staff before being discussed, revised and ratified by our council.

As part of the program, proposals must include a minimum of three stories with at least 15 dwelling units, a minimum of 5,000 square feet and be a new construction project. All residential parking must be provided onsite and downtown design guidelines must be met.

These proposals are then scored and vetted by a special subcommittee of the City Council. Council selected Planning Commissioner Greg Crim, EAGLE Board Member Sean Hegstead and Councilmembers Rebecca Xczar, Greg Hansen and Teresa Taylor for that committee. The committee will forward a recommendation on to the council which can approve zero to three of these proposals. If approved, the city will then waive one-time permit fees for the downtown project. For more information on this, including plans for the proposed projects, check out [www.cityofferndale.org/catalyst](http://www.cityofferndale.org/catalyst).

### Catalyst Options



#### Fountain Place

1985 Main Street

This four-story project includes 36 studios, 21 1-bedroom and 67 two-bedroom units for a total of 124 units. It also includes 9,203 square feet of commercial space on the first floor, with an additional public space and public bathrooms adjacent to the Riverwalk.

#### Alder Plaza

Fourth Avenue



This five story project includes 22-24 one and two bedroom residential units. It also includes 9,160 square feet of commercial space on the first floor with a parking garage installed below.



#### Twins on Main Street 2130 Main Street

The project consists of two buildings that will share access, parking and other infrastructure. The building fronting Main Street is a three story structure with 18,000 square feet of commercial space, with retail on the first floor and the middle and upper level intended for small professional office space and a larger sit-down type restaurant.

The building on the southern part of the property will include 32 residential units (one, two and three bedroom configurations) as well as a 5,200 square foot common area.