



Living by the Nooksack

A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale

Spring 2021

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 Ferndale's newest Councilmember
- The story and arrest of the bus stop vandal
- The site of the new VanderYacht Park bathroom
- An update on the Star Park Picnic Shelter
- Why it's essential to trim your hedges
- . . . 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

Accessible online at www.cityofferndale.org/newsletter



Thornton Overpass Project Reaches Settlement Period

In February of this year, the approach to the bridge on the west side of the railroad tracks was built to its full height of 20 feet.

"Now, we just need to be patient," said Project Manager Katy Radder. For the next several months, the weight of the approaches on both sides of the tracks will compress the clay and form a stable foundation for the future overpass. During this time, geotechnical engineers monitor the settlement to ensure that the process advances appropriately..

The full settlement period could last for up to another year and a half, so the City appreciates everyone's patience as we move forward with this project.

For more details and updates about the Thornton Overpass Project, check out www.cityofferndale.org/thornton or follow #ThorntonOverpass on social media.

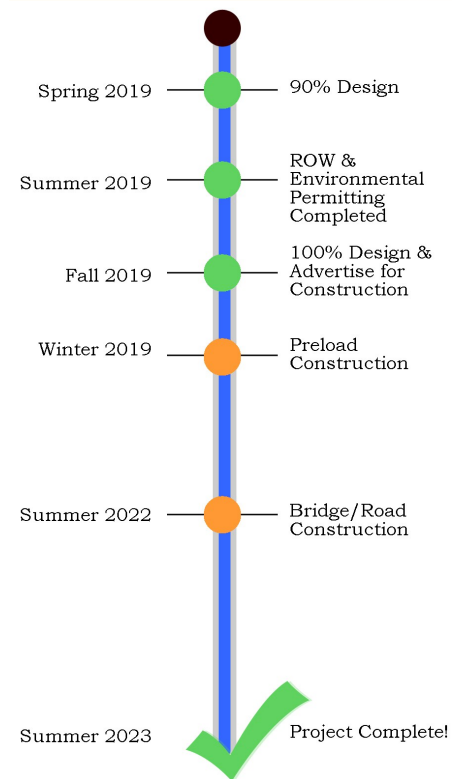
Annual Utility Rate Increase Goes Into Effect

For detailed explanation, please see page 3

Estimated Project Schedule



All dates tentative, subject to change



Need Financial Help with Your Utility Bill?

Impacted by COVID?

If you and your household have been impacted by COVID-19 and need assistance with your utility bill, there are funds available to help. The Ferndale Community Service Cooperative, in partnership with the City of Ferndale and the Whatcom Community Foundation, has created an assistance fund. The income limits are generous and they are standing by and ready to help. Please reach out early to ensure you can get the resources you need.

For more information and details, go to www.ferndalecsc.org

Utility Rate Assistance Program (RAP) Available

The City of Ferndale offers a 25% deduction on rates to customers who qualify as part of Whatcom County's Property Tax Exemption Program, as well as those who qualify based on Annual Household Income.

More details are available at www.cityofferndale.org/RAP

Due to Gov. Inslee's COVID-19 proclamation, all late fees and utility shutoffs are suspended through April 30th. The City encourages all residents to pay what they can to avoid a large accumulated bill.

Trim your Hedges

Spring is just around the corner and that means plants are beginning to grow throughout the City, including growing over sidewalks. We love plants, but what we don't want is for them to block the sidewalks or streets.

Please take a few moments to trim back your bushes, edge your lawn, and cut branches that are overhanging past your property line. It allows for easy passage on sidewalks and prevents people from walking into traffic to move around that overgrown hedge. A little bit of overgrown grass might not seem like an issue, but it reduces ADA accessibility and can affect the City's infrastructure.

Trimming your hedges is about more than being a friendly neighbor. It is actually required by City Code, which dictates that as the abutting property owner to the sidewalk, you are required to maintain the vegetation to allow free and full use of said sidewalk and/or street. If it becomes too much of a hazard, or a complaint is made, then this can also turn into a formal enforcement case, which can cost you money. So please, help your neighbors out and keep those sidewalks clear of vegetation and debris! For more information, contact City's Code Compliance Officer, Kyla Boswell, at (360) 685-2365 or CodeCompliance@cityofferndale.org



Ferndale Police Catch the Bus Stop Vandal

Recently, Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) had reported several incidents of vandalism towards their bus stops in Ferndale. Someone was repeatedly spray painting them, often several times a week.

In response to these reports, police set up surveillance of a bus stop in the 5700 block of Vista Dr. Shortly after midnight on 02/03/2021, police witnessed a subject walking in the area. The subject was witnessed spray painting a bus stop.

The subject was detained by police and identified as David Wurtz. He had fresh black paint on his hand and fingertips as well as having a can of black spray paint in his possession. A check of other bus stops in the area found several signs had been vandalized with paint which was still wet and dripping. He was arrested for multiple counts of malicious mischief.



Utility Rate Increase Goes Into Effect

If you are looking at your utility bill this cycle and wondering why it is a little bit higher than usual while your consumption has stayed the same, that is because the annual utility rate increase for 2021 went into effect with this bill. This increase is part of the new rate structure adopted by the Ferndale City Council in 2019. This new billing structure adjusted the rates to fund the necessary utility infrastructure projects in the next twenty years and ensure that those costs are distributed in a fair and equitable way.

One of the key changes was the implementation of “sewer averaging”.

This change was implemented based on requests from the community. It ensures that residential customers will not be charged additional sewer consumption for any extra water that goes back into the ground during the summer months (i.e. watering lawns and gardens, sprinklers, filling pools) and provides customers the ability to more accurately budget their utility bills throughout the year.

This means that the **sewer** charge for this billing cycle is actually an average of your sewer consumption from all non-summer months last year; however, your **water** charge is based on your actual consumption this cycle.

BILLING DATE	SERVICE DATES	DUE DATE
Feb. 28, 2020	12/05/19-02/04/20	Mar. 16, 2020
April 30, 2020	02/05/20-04/04/20	May 15, 2020
June 30, 2020	04/05/20-06/04/20	July 15, 2020
Aug. 31, 2020	06/05/20-08/04/20	Sept. 15, 2020
Oct. 30, 2020	08/05/20-10/04/20	Nov. 16, 2020
Dec. 31, 2020	10/05/20-12/04/20	Jan. 15, 2021

Sewer charge is an average of all blue cycles from previous year

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For questions about your specific bill, please contact our utility clerk at (360) 384-4269.



VanderYacht Bathroom

Residents who use VanderYacht Park will no longer have to leave to “go”. The City installed a brand-new vault toilet next to the parking lot in VanderYacht Park. It is floodproofed in case the river rises and is ready to meet the needs of anyone using VanderYacht park.

Maralise Fegan Appointed to Ferndale City Council

At their first meeting of the year, the Ferndale City Council appointed Maralise Fegan to serve through the end of November 2021. She is filling the seat vacated by Ramon Llanos who stepped down at the end of 2020 because he was moving outside of the city limits of Ferndale and could no longer serve.

Fegan is a twenty year resident of Whatcom County and works as an immigration paralegal and office manager. In her spare time, she volunteers with the Ferndale Auxiliary Communications Services which provides ham radio support in a crisis.

She can be reached at maralisefegan@cityofferndale.org.

This council position, along with two other seats on the City Council, are up for election in 2021.



Star Park Picnic Shelter Construction Begins March 2021

Last year, the City received a grant from the State Legislature to construct a picnic shelter next to the Star Park Playground.

This facility will include seven tables, a full sink, electrical plug-ins, lights, and artistic features to compliment the unique design of Star Park.

Construction is set to begin March 2021, with the goal of the facility being completed and ready for use in time for summer activities.



You can put your name on the Star Park Picnic Shelter by purchasing a tile for the sink area. See the attached form in your utility bill for more details.

Protect Your Neighbor, Wear a Mask

We are all absolutely sick of this pandemic. Between the closed restaurants, cancelled plans, endless Zoom meetings and the general anxiety of simply making our way through each day, we are all exhausted by this virus.

Thankfully, there is hope. By the time you receive this newsletter, over 20,000 residents in Whatcom County will have received their first dose of the vaccine. This is excellent news and an amazing feat of medical technology and logistics.

That said, those that have received the vaccine can still spread the virus to those who have not and there are far too many cases in Ferndale and the greater community to let up.

Medical experts agree, the most effective tools we have to stopping the spread of the virus are in your hands. Literally. Wash your hands, wear a mask when around people outside your home and cancel that in-person unmasked social event.

We know that masks are uncomfortable, we know you all want to see each other in-person again. If we take these steps today, we can buy critical time for the vaccine to be deployed which will allow all of us to return to the life we knew and loved.

So please, wear a mask, wash your hands and cancel those plans. **Together, we can keep Ferndale safe.**

