



Living by the Nooksack

A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale

Spring 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 newsletter, you will find:

- Latest updates on the Skate Park and the Thornton Overpass
- How to find out what is being built in your neighborhood
- Whether or not you can park your RV in your neighborhood
- . . . 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

Late Fees and utility shutoff for non-payment to resume in 2022.

See more details inside.



Ferndale Uses COVID Relief Funds to Jump Start Downtown

Thanks to an infusion of COVID relief funds, the City is launching a number of initiatives aimed at improving Ferndale's downtown. Of the approximately \$4.2 million the City is set to receive from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), here are some of the ways the City is using that money to support our downtown:

Main Street Program: The City has allocated \$400,000 to establish a Main Street Program, complete with events, programming and a paid executive director, to pursue economic development for our downtown core. These seed funds would help the program get established however it is intended to be self-sustaining in the following years. Rather than relying on the previous volunteer efforts of the Ferndale Downtown Association, this program can promote redevelopment efforts, beautification and bring fresh economic activity to Ferndale's downtown core.

In addition to this seed funding for the Main Street Program, the City has provided an additional \$450,000 to the program, including \$200,000 for grants or loans to incoming businesses that will support Downtown revitalization, \$200,000 for grants or loans to existing businesses which seek to grow or change in a manner that supports revitalization or who undertake improvements to respond to COVID-19, and \$50,000 for Downtown beautification efforts and/or matching funds for beautification efforts that the Program may wish to pursue. **CONTINUED ON PG. 4**

Utility Rate Increase and Returning to Normal

Annual Rate Increase Begins 2022

If you noticed your utility bill is a few dollars more this cycle, it is probably the result of our annual rate increase which went into effect January 2022.

This increase is part of Ferndale's updated utility rate structure which provides the resources needed for the rising costs of maintaining our utility system, including expanded water treatment and wastewater treatment facility and the new city well, which secures our water needs far into the future.

For more information and details, go to www.cityofferndale.org/ratestudy

Utility Shutoffs and Late Fees to Resume

With the expiration of the governor's eviction moratorium in October of 2021, the City of Ferndale is returning to normal operations when it comes to utility shutoffs and late fees. As such, late fees will be assessed and utility service will be discontinued for customers who are carrying an excessive overdue balance.

That said, there are assistance funds available for those who need them. Please contact the Ferndale Community Resource Center at www.ferndalecsc.org to apply for assistance.



Parking your Recreational Vehicle (RV)

Family or friends coming for a visit in their camper this year and they need a place to park? Don't worry, they can stay at your place!

While recreational vehicles cannot be used as a permanent living arrangement, the City does allow for the occasional or temporary visitor to stay on private property in their RV.

A visitor or guest can stay up to 15 days within a 12-month period on your property. There is no permitting requirement involved with this however, if your visitor wishes to stay for more than the 15 days within

that 12-month period, they will need to apply for an extension with the Community Development Director. This restriction applies to campers, trailers, tents, and other recreation vehicles.

Please note that the visiting recreational vehicle must be parked in the designated driveway. It cannot impede sidewalk use, be parked on the street or on City right-of-way. Be sure to check with your HOA for further restrictions related to visitors and RVs. If you have further questions, please contact the City's Code Compliance Officer at codecompliance@cityofferndale.org.

DESIGN WORK BEGINS ON SKATE PARK

The City has hired international skate park designer New Line Skate Parks to design and construct Ferndale's first full-size skate park.

Already public outreach has begun to the local skating community to get feedback on initial design concepts and essential elements for our future facility.

Scheduled for construction in 2022, Metalworks Skate Park will incorporate design and artistic features that emphasize Ferndale's rich industrial heritage. The Project will feature skatepark design principles that will allow skateboarders, BMX, and scooter riders develop their skills and will feature a mix of street and transitional-style terrain with elements designed for all age groups and ability levels, beginner to advanced.

Get the latest updates and learn how you can participate in the process at www.cityofferndale.org/skatepark or follow updates online with #sk8metalworks



Grants Sought to Give Flood Impacted Properties a Lift (Literally)

The November 2021 flooding event severely impacted residents and businesses throughout our community. As a result, Whatcom County and the Cities of Everson, Ferndale, and Sumas are leading an effort to develop a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant to mitigate properties impacted by the November flood. The HMGP provides funding to state, local, and tribal governments so they can rebuild in a way that reduces or mitigates future disaster losses.

The first step in this effort is to conduct outreach to those impacted by the floods and identify interest in mitigation measures, such as elevating a structure or acquiring a property. The County

will also develop both short and long term strategies to secure available grant funding to mitigate flood-prone properties outside of the cities in the County. The County and the Cities identified targeted areas to include in an initial grant application. The County will be sending letters to property owners that fall within our target areas, focusing on areas that experienced the most significant damage. The purpose of this letter is to gauge mitigation interest from property owners. If you receive a letter from the County, your property is located in the target area and is invited to participate in the grant application. Participation is fully voluntary. Participating in the grant application does not guarantee an award.

If you do not receive a letter, this does not mean you are ineligible for a mitigation program. We will be pursuing additional grant opportunities over the next year and we will notify you of the opportunities as they become available. Additional information on Whatcom County's HMGP application will be posted on www.whatcomcounty.us/flood (click on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program link).

The HMGP is just one way we are responding to the recent flood event. Local, state, tribal, and federal governments are working together on a multitude of other response actions to mitigate from this flood and protect the community from future floods. More information on these other actions will be provided as it becomes available. We look forward to continuing to work with the community toward a more resilient Whatcom County.



What's Being Built Over There?

Ferndale is the fastest growing city north of Everett. In 2020, our community welcomed 900 new neighbors, bringing our population to over 15,000. That growth means that private development is booming. You may see projects going on in your neighborhood and wonder, what's being built over there? Wonder no longer—we have the answer!

Each month, we create a colorful map that highlights the projects around town. On it, you will see the current development projects underway and a short description of the project—check it out at www.cityofferndale.org/devmap or by scanning the QR code right.



Many projects are reviewed and approved by staff at City Hall. Others require a higher level of review by the Hearings Examiner and sometimes even the City Council. You may have seen green Pending Land Use Action signs as you drive through town. These signs indicate that a public hearing will be held as part of the approval process. A public hearing is an opportunity to provide public testimony in response to the project and the impact it might have on the community and the environment, if applicable. The land use sign is always attached with a description of the project and the potential impacts anticipated. The sign also has contact information on how to contact staff if you have any questions about the project. We're always happy to discuss the details of a project. Please feel free to contact the Community Development Department for further information at 360-685-2359.

Ferndale Uses COVID Relief Funds to Jump Start Downtown (cont.)

Business Interruption Grants: The City has allocated \$200,000 to the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce to distribute as business interruption grants for Ferndale businesses impacted by COVID-related closures. The city anticipates that a majority of the grants will be targeted at businesses with 20 or less employees.

Supporting the Community Resource Center: The City has allocated \$400,00 to the Ferndale Community Service Cooperative to hire a full-time executive director and expand services to the city's most vulnerable who have been hit hardest by the pandemic. This is also a seed money investment with the goal of the Cooperative becoming self-sustaining at the conclusion of this grant. The Cooperative is currently working with our state legislators to secure additional funding for a community navigator position that would help those experiencing hardship navigate local resources and services.

All of these initiatives are supported by COVID relief funds and do not impact the City's general fund.

"While all of these efforts are worthwhile on their own merits, taken together, they are an unprecedented investment in Ferndale's future," said Mayor Greg Hansen. "While the impacts of the pandemic are still being felt, the decisions we make today put us on the path to come roaring back."

Thornton Overpass Bridge Construction to Begin in April



Contrary to Mom's advice about settling – we're excited to say we've thoroughly enjoyed that sinking feeling and have hit bottom!

Over the past 18 months, the soils beneath the embanked approaches to the new Thornton Overpass have compressed and settled to the point work can begin on the bridge. Work on the project hasn't been idle while the settlement period was underway. Over the last year and a half, the City's contractor, Strider Construction, completed wetland mitigation work, has built a new stormwater pond, and has installed thousands of feet of new public utility infrastructure leading up to the overpass. Even with all this work completed, the project has not quite hit the midpoint of work to be done.

In the next couple of months, construction of the bridge will begin and continue for the remainder of the project, as will the remaining utility work, paving and pedestrian improvements. At the same time, the City will be rebuilding the section of Thornton Street between Vista Drive and Malloy Drive so drivers and pedestrians will enjoy a smooth experience entering and exiting the new Overpass. Both projects are on target for completion in 2023. For more details and updates, visit www.cityofferndale.org/thornton or #ThorntonOverpass.



The Ferndale Arts Commission is excited to complete the newest temporary art installation at Griffintown Park. These pixel designs are fun to look at and a great stop for a photo op. Go strike a pose! The installation will be up until Spring.