

To: City of Ferndale Planning Commission
Michael Cerbone, City of Ferndale Community Development Director
Kyla Boswell, City of Ferndale Assistant Planner
From: Dr. Tammi Laninga, WWU Urban Planning & Sustainable Development Program Director
Date: June 5, 2025
RE: Ferndale Neighborhood Center Overview and Recommendations

The City of Ferndale and Western Washington University's (WWU) Urban Planning and Sustainable Development Program partnered in 2024/2025 to support the city's comprehensive plan update. The goal was to provide the City of Ferndale with recommendations for how to accommodate future anticipated growth over the next 20 years.

Over the year, WWU students completed projects in several courses:

1. **Community outreach** through open houses and surveys to inform future development locations, types, and amenities (community development course).
2. **Updating Ferndale's zoning code** to allow for greater housing density through more attached and small-lot developments, more streamlined commercial uses, and to allow for neighborhood-scale commercial uses (land use regulations course).
3. **Master planning** three neighborhood centers to support anticipated future population growth in the City over the next 20 years (year-long planning studio).

At the June 11 Planning Commission, students will share their final recommendations for three future neighborhood centers in Ferndale (see Figure 1). The studio work was guided by the concept of the 20-minute city which recommends "a combination of zoning reform, transportation investment, and strategic commercial and residential expansion" (Sisson, 2023, para. 7) to support densifying suburban development.

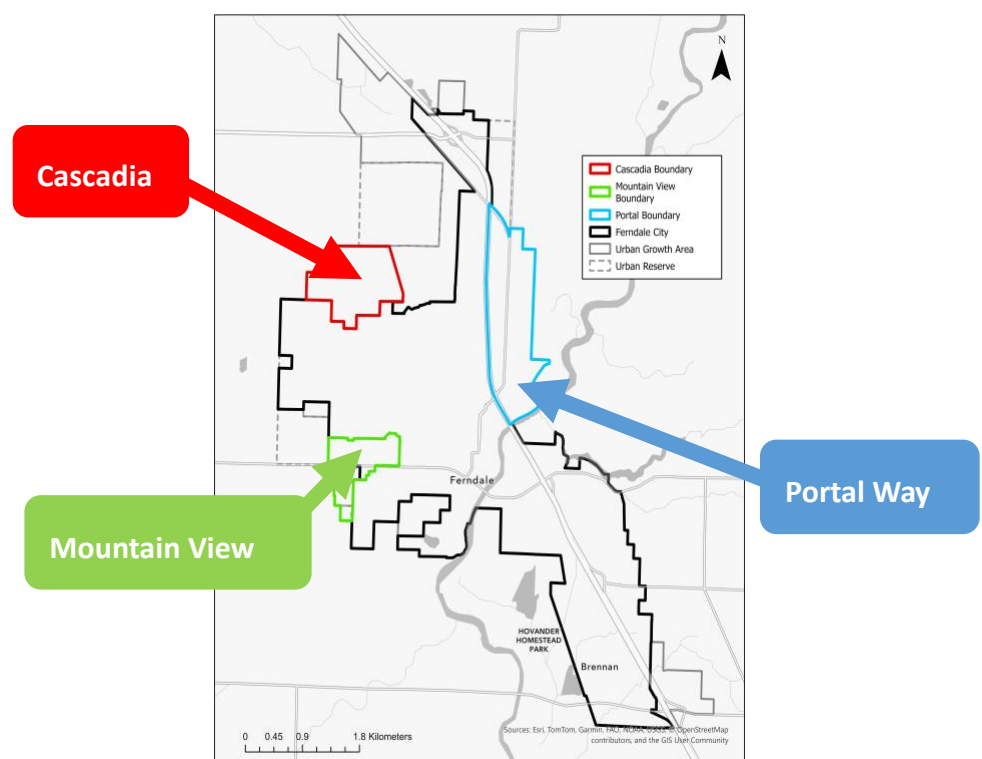


Figure 1: Ferndale's Future Neighborhood Centers

The presentation will highlight the following items for each of the neighborhood centers:

1. **Revised Land Use Map** with proposed zoning changes to accommodate higher density residential, mixed use and neighborhood commercial, new parks and open space, and other community services and amenities.
2. **Circulation Map** showing existing and proposed roads, public transportation, and pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
3. **Development Phasing Map** that shows where development should occur first and then proceed over a 20-year period.
4. **Recommended code revisions**, including adopting an urban village overlay zone, neighborhood commercial zone, and revising residential zones to simplify and increase densities.
5. **Recommended design guidelines** for new commercial and residential development, public spaces, and transportation systems.
6. **Funding and Incentive:** Outside funding sources and optional incentives the City could adopt to support/spur transportation improvements, parks and conservation/restoration efforts, and affordable housing.

Students in the Urban Planning studio look forward to sharing their final recommendations with the commission. In addition to the presentation, final reports from the studio, and the other class projects, will be shared with City of Ferndale Community Development staff.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the City of Ferndale. Students have learned a lot. We hope it provides the City's planning staff with useful materials for their comprehensive plan update, and sparks residents' imaginations for Ferndale's future.

Citation:

Sisson, P. (2023). Meet the 15-Minute City's Cousin: The 20-Minute Suburb. *Planning Magazine*. January 26. <https://www.planning.org/planning/2023/winter/meet-the-15-minute-citys-cousin-the-20-minute-suburb/>