

Land Use Designations

Ferndale land uses include primarily Residential, and Commercial designations. The descriptions below provide details on the allowable uses for each designation and their applicable density/intensity standard. Density is typically defined as the maximum number of dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and intensity is expressed as the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR). This is the ratio of building floors (stories) relative to the parcel. For example, an area designated with a FAR of 1.0 would be allowed to construct a one-story building that covers the entire parcel, a two-story building that covers half the parcel, a four-story building that covers a quarter of the parcel, and so on.

Residential (R1, R2, R3)

Residential land use designations within the City allow dwelling units as their primary use, range from low to high density, and are intended to allow a broad range of housing types, sizes, and tenure. Limited public/quasi-public and commercial uses compatible with a residential setting may be allowed as provided by the zoning code. Historically, primary residential development in the City has been low-density single-family homes. Moving forward, the City intends to support a broader range of housing types to increase affordability and provide diverse housing options for all income levels.

Residential Low Density (R1)

The Residential Low Density designation accommodates primarily detached residential units on individual lots with private yards. One accessory dwelling unit per lot is a primary and compatible use.

Density: One primary unit and one accessory dwelling unit per lot up to a maximum of 9 primary dwelling units per acre.

Residential Medium Density (R2)

The Residential Medium Density designation is applied in areas where more density can be accommodated. This can include side-by-side or stacked units, multiple units on a lot, or other unit types that meet the defined density including attached residential units, small-lot subdivisions, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses with private open space, and cohesive multi-unit/multi-story structures with common open spaces. ADUs are also a primary and compatible use.

Density: Up to 18 dwelling units per acre. This is equivalent to two dwelling units per 5,000 square foot lot.

Residential High Density (R3)

The Residential High Density designation is applied in areas of the City that can accommodate cottage courts, townhome developments, and/or apartments typically in single structures or a collection of cohesive structures with multiple units, common open space areas and shared amenities. This designation is often located in proximity to parks, schools, and public services. Intended to compliment the character of adjacent lower density residential and neighborhood commercial development. ADUs are also a primary and compatible use.

Density: Up to 27 dwelling units per acre. This is equivalent to approximately three dwelling units per 5,000 square foot lot.

Commercial (C1, C2)

Neighborhood Commercial (C1)

The Neighborhood Commercial designation is intended to provide for neighborhood shopping centers with commercial uses for nearby residential areas, consistent with neighborhood character and design. This includes limited-scale convenience retail, restaurants, offices, and personal services, including pedestrian-oriented neighborhood retail. Residential uses are allowed on upper floors and may be conditionally allowed on ground floors. Light industrial uses such as small scale manufacturing may also be permitted as applicable by the zoning code.

Intensity: Maximum FAR 2.5

Community Commercial (C2)

The Community Commercial designation provides a full range of commercial uses for community convenience and visitor serving needs. This includes visitor-related retail, restaurants, lodging, entertainment, recreation, and tourist services, as well as upper floor residential and office uses. Intended to emphasize commercial retail and tourism-related uses, recreation, leisure activities, lodging, and upper floor office/residential uses. Primarily caters to visitors to historic and multi-story buildings with pedestrian-scaled storefronts at the sidewalks. Residential and office uses are primarily allowed only on upper floors and non-street-facing portions of buildings.

Intensity: Maximum FAR 3.0

Other Designations

Public Facility (PF)

The Public Facility designation is intended to be applied to lands owned by public agencies or to lands upon which such agencies operate public facilities. This includes public and private

institutional uses, government facilities and services, schools, courts, cemeteries, fairgrounds, and major utility facilities, as well as parks and other public recreational facilities.

Intensity: N/A

Agricultural Exclusive (AE)

The Agricultural Exclusive designation is applied in areas where agricultural use is the predominant use of land and in which it is desired to protect agricultural operations including production of crops, livestock grazing, animal and poultry raising, apiaries, dairies, stables and associated residences and farmworker housing. Timber harvest is allowed under certain conditions.

Density: One farm dwelling per four acres and applicable farm worker housing as allowed by the zoning ordinance.

Natural Resources (NR)

The Natural Resources designation is applied to areas where protection, enhancement, restoration, management, study, and passive recreational use of habitats and natural areas are the desirable land uses. It is intended to protect land that is primarily suitable for permanent habitat preservation, compatible resource related uses, nature study, and natural-resource related recreation. Public access, passive recreation, active recreation, and visitor-related facilities (such as restrooms, interpretive centers, trailheads, parking areas, etc.) may be allowed as provided by zoning ordinance.

Intensity: Nature-study related buildings/structures may be constructed with a conditional use permit.