



# Feasibility Report

0 Aldergrove Rd

Tax Parcel 390112 512074 0000

Whatcom County, Washington

July 2025



## Executive Summary

The primary conclusions of this report are summarized as follows:

- The property is zoned Rural R-5A and the density is 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.
- The property is approximately 16.74 acres and has 3 densities.
- No public water and sewer service is available. Any new single-family residences would require new on-site septic systems and wells.
- Possible wetlands are scattered across the property and a stream bisects the property.
- A two-lot subdivision or three-lot cluster subdivision appears feasible, which would allow for two or three single-family residences.

## Disclaimers

- All findings by Snow Creek Planning are accurate at the writing of this report, in July 2025, but are subject to Whatcom County Planning & Development review and approval.
- Any permit application to Whatcom County will require a full wetland delineation by a qualified biologist along with a survey to confirm acreage, and locations of critical areas and their buffers.



## Property Description

**Tax ID:** 390112 512074 0000

**Lot Size:** 16.74 acres

**Jurisdiction:** Unincorporated Whatcom County

**Location:** 0 Aldergrove Rd, Ferndale, WA 98248

**Description:** The property is located north of the City of Ferndale, in unincorporated Whatcom County. The property is situated on the northwest corner of Aldergrove Rd and Church Rd. To the north is a farm. Adjacent properties in all directions range in size from 1 acre to 37 acres. The property slopes from a high point in the southwest corner to a forested stream and continues sloping down to the northeast corner of the property. There are views of Mt Baker and adjacent agriculture structures, farms and single-family residences. The north and south ends of the property are predominately covered in pasture grasses, and a forested stream bisects the property with a mix of deciduous, coniferous trees, and undergrowth including blackberries. A wetland reconnaissance was completed in July 2025 by a qualified biologist, which found possible wetlands scattered across the property including two sections that would require a wet-season check as part of a wetland delineation.

## Zoning & Density

**The property is zoned for a variety of rural uses, including residential single-family development.**

**Zoning:** The subject property is zoned R5-A within unincorporated Whatcom County. This zoning permits detached single-family residential development, among other allowed uses. Multifamily and attached single-family units are not permitted.

In R-5A, density is 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. Therefore, the subject property, provided a record of survey confirms the property acreage, has three densities.

**Conventional Subdivision:** For properties in this zone that do not have public water available, the minimum lot size is 5 acres. Conventional lot dimensions for R-5A are 200 feet at the street line, 80 feet at the building line, with a minimum depth of 100 feet. Exhibit E shows a potential lot configuration with these conventional subdivision standards.

**Cluster Subdivision:** In R-5A, there is also the ability to cluster lots. In the scenario of a cluster subdivision, a minimum of 50% of the property would need to be set aside in a reserve area. The minimum lot size is 1 acre. This does not change the density of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.

The purpose of lot clustering is to provide an alternative method of creating economical building lots with spatially efficient sizes. Clustering is intended to reduce development costs, increase energy efficiency, and reserve areas of land which are spatially suitable for agriculture, forestry, or open space.<sup>1</sup> The reserve area would be established on the proposed plat if this option is selected. Exhibit F shows a potential lot configuration with the cluster subdivision standards.

## Development Standards

### Parking

Two parking spaces are required for single-family residences. Parking spaces for single-family dwellings shall be located on the same lot as the dwelling which they are intended to serve with no more than two parking spaces included within the front yard setback.

### Height

Maximum height in this zone is 35 feet.

### Setbacks

Building setbacks depend on the right-of-way classification.<sup>2</sup> Aldergrove Rd west of Church Rd is a Rural Local Access Road and all structures must be set back 25 feet from this right-of-way. Church Rd is an Urban Neighborhood Collector and all structures must be set back 45 feet from this right-of-way. Side yard and rear yard setbacks are 5 feet in this zone.

### Open Space

There is a requirement that structures not exceed a footprint of 5,000 square feet or 20% of the total lot area, whichever is greater, not to exceed 25,500 square feet.<sup>3</sup> If each lot is 5 acres, the maximum lot coverage for structures would be the greater 25,500 square feet. If a cluster subdivision is selected and lots are 1 acre, the maximum lot coverage for structures would be 8,712 square feet.

### Impact fees

Whatcom County has not adopted impact fees for new single-family residences.

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<sup>1</sup> WCC 20.36.305 Lot clustering.

<sup>2</sup> WCC 20.80.100 Minimum setbacks.

<sup>3</sup> WCC 20.36.450 Lot coverage.

## Design guidelines

There are no specific design requirements for single-family residences in unincorporated Whatcom County.

## Infrastructure/utilities

**Water/sewer:** There are no public water and sewer districts adjacent to this property that could serve new single-family residences. Whatcom PUD has an industrial water line that runs west toward Cherry Point Refinery along Aldergrove Rd, but this is not potable water and the district does not provide service to single-family homes. If a property owner wanted a connection for agricultural purposes, Whatcom PUD could possibly provide service. Any development would require an on-site septic system and a well.

**Roads:** The subject property abuts two public roads: Aldergrove Rd and Church Rd. These roads are 60-foot rights-of-way with no street improvements such as curb, gutter and sidewalk. The paved road width is 20 feet. Depending on the proposed lot configuration, it is likely that an easement would be needed along with construction of a private road to provide access to newly created lots. Due to the property's location adjacent to an intersection, please note there will be vision clearance requirements for the location of the private road off of either Church Rd or Aldergrove Rd, a minimum of 15 feet from the intersection. There can be no plantings, fences, walls, structures, or obstructions exceeding 2.5 feet in height within this clear vision area.<sup>4</sup>

**Stormwater:** Development of single-family residences and access to those residences is subject to stormwater management provisions.<sup>5</sup> Single-family residential and accessory uses on lots of record greater than 25,000 square feet in size is considered low land use intensity, per the Stormwater Management Table in the current Stormwater Manual. Low land use intensity of less than 7,000 square feet of new hard surfaces or less than 14,000 square feet of land disturbing activity do not need to meet minimum requirements that are often require a professional engineer. The short plat itself, and then individual building permits on newly created lots would likely not trigger stormwater requirements.

**Utilities:** Cascade Natural Gas and PSE serve properties along Aldergrove Rd and Church Rd and both could provide service to new single-family residences on the property.

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<sup>4</sup> WCC 20.80.210 (3) Vision Clearance.

<sup>5</sup> WCC 20.80.630 Stormwater and Drainage.

## Environmental

### Wetlands

Potential wetlands have been identified in a preliminary review, called a wetland reconnaissance, by a NW Ecological Services. Exhibit C shows the approximate locations of these potential wetlands. A full wetland delineation would need to be conducted to verify these findings and a wet-season check would be needed as part of the assessment. Buffers from wetlands depend on the wetland rating, which is part of the delineation process, and could be as great as 150 feet from each wetland boundary.<sup>6</sup> Buffers also require 10-feet building setbacks. On any property, the possibility of on-site wetlands impacts the usable portions of a site. Buffer reductions are possible as part of land use permitting, but require on-site mitigation and are often limited to a reasonable use of the property. Buffer impacts for the purpose of accessing residences are more likely to be accepted than buffer impacts for buildable areas. This reconnaissance along with preliminary site planning indicates there is upland area on the property that could accommodate development of two or three single-family residences. Exhibit D shows this potential developable area.

### Stream

A forested stream bisects the property, identified as a California Creek Tributary. It is likely that the buffer from this stream could be as much as 150 feet.<sup>7</sup> Habitat conservation area buffers also require a 10-foot building setback.

## Development Options

**A two-lot subdivision or three-lot cluster subdivision appear to be feasible development options for the property.**

In a two-lot subdivision, a residence could take access from Aldergrove Rd and be located in the 21,000-square-foot area shown on Exhibit D. This assumes the possible wetlands in the southwest corner are determined to not be wetlands via a wet-season check by a qualified biologist. A second residence could take access from Church Rd and located outside wetland and stream buffers in the approximately 26,000-square-foot buildable area, shown on Exhibit D.

In a three-lot cluster subdivision, two residences could take access from Aldergrove Rd and share a driveway and residences could be located in the approximately 21,000-square-foot area shown on Exhibit D. This assumes the possible wetlands in the southwest corner are

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<sup>6</sup> WCC 16.16.630 Wetland buffers.

<sup>7</sup> WCC 16.16.730 Habitat conservation area buffers.

determined to not be wetlands via a wet-season check by a qualified biologist. A third residence could take access from Church Rd and could be located in the approximately 26,000-square-foot area outside the wetland buffer and stream buffer, shown on Exhibit D.

Pursuing a two-lot subdivision or three-lot cluster subdivision would require the following permits:

- A Pre-Application Meeting
- Short Subdivision Preliminary Application
- State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist
- Natural Resources Review
- Short Subdivision Final Application
- Building Permits for single-family residences
- Encroachment Permits for access driveways from Church Rd and Aldergrove Rd

This list of permits is not exhaustive but illustrates the general permit pathway for rural subdivisions on properties with critical areas.

## Exhibits

Exhibit A: Aerial

Exhibit B: Zoning Code (WCC 20.36 Rural)

Exhibit C: Wetland Reconnaissance Map

Exhibit D: Wetland Reconnaissance Map with Buffer

Exhibit E: Concept Site Plan 2-Lot Subdivision

Exhibit F: Concept Site Plan 3-Lot Cluster Subdivision