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Mark Personius, AICP
Director

Memorandum

TO: Whatcom County Planning Commission

THROUGH: Mark Personius

FROM: Joshua Fleischmann

DATE: June 1, 2021

SUBJECT: PLN2017-00004 - Countywide Review of Designated Mineral Resource Lands

At the May 27, 2021 Planning Commission work session, Planning and Development Services staff provided a presentation on multiple Designated Mineral Resource Land (MRL) Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation amendments, with a particular focus on the countywide review of Designated MRLs. The goal, at the conclusion of the work sessions, is a policy level recommended approach from the Planning Commission to the County Council for directing Planning and Development Services to continue processing the docketed proposal.

The presentation included the Surface Mining Advisory Committee (SMAC) recommendation as well as several alternative mapping and regulatory approaches. As the Commissioners discussed the alternatives, they concluded their preferred approach was Alternative #2 - Localized Expansion, as presented, and as provided in the MRL White Paper background document. The Commission specifically supported limiting expansion to areas within 1/2 mile of existing MRL designations, while allowing for landowners to opt out of the MRL designation process.

In response to the Planning Commission's stated preference, and at their request, staff have drafted the following motion for Planning Commission consideration:

"After holding 2 work sessions and accepting public comment as part of the work sessions on the countywide review of Designated Mineral Resource Lands, the Planning Commission recommends the County Council request Planning and Development Services to continue processing PLN2017-00004, limiting the scope of review to the Surface Mining Advisory Committee recommendation within 1/2 mile of existing Designated MRLs. Further, the Planning Commission recommends allowing for landowners to opt out of MRL Designation process proposed through PLN2017-00004."