

1. Describe how this proposal is in accordance with the general and specific goals and policies of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The subject property is zoned Rural Forestry and R10A and is located in the Mineral Resource Lands (MRL) overlay district where surface mining is allowed as a Conditional Use pursuant to WCC 20.73.150. The proposal is also consistent with the following general and specific goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan as described below.

Goal 7H: To promote economic diversity, continue to support resource industries as significant elements of the local economy including the employment base.

Approval of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the proposed surface mine supports resource industries related to surface mining, which is an important element to the local economy and employment base.

Policy 7H-5: Support mining, which is compatible with other land use and environmental policies, including surface mining of sand, gravel, and rock and subsurface mining of other minerals found in Whatcom County, such as gold and silver.

Approval of the CUP for the proposed surface mine is in keeping with this policy.

Goal 8K: Sustain and enhance, when and where appropriate, Whatcom County's mineral resource industries, support the conservation of productive mineral lands, and discourage incompatible uses upon or adjacent to these lands.

Approval of the CUP for the proposed surface mine will sustain and enhance Whatcom County's mineral resource industries.

Goal 8L: Ensure mineral extraction industries do not adversely affect the people and other properties in the vicinity, by establishing appropriate and beneficial designation and resource conservation policies, while recognizing the rights of all property owners.

The proposed surface mine will not adversely affect the people and properties in the vicinity of the site. The mine is proposed on approximately 70 acres within a 108 acre collective ownership area. So roughly 38 acres of adjacent land in common ownership will remain as a buffer for the proposed use. The mine will also maintain appropriate setbacks from adjacent properties. Further, the property is located within the MRL overlay district where the stated purpose is to encourage and "support the opportunity for the extraction of minerals in areas of Whatcom County designated as containing resources viable for long-term commercial extraction."

Policy 8L-1: Avoid significant impacts on adjacent or nearby land uses, public health and safety, or natural resources from mineral extraction.

The proposed surface mine will be setback from adjacent properties and will not have any significant impacts on public health, safety or natural resources.

Policy 8L-4: Where the county has jurisdiction, require reclamation of mineral resource lands to other compatible uses on an ongoing basis as mineral deposits are depleted. Best Management Practices should be used to achieve this.

The associated reclamation plan will be ultimately reviewed and approved by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), but will ensure reclamation of the site to other compatible uses such as open space, forestry or agriculture.

Policy 8L-5: As part of the mining permit process, plan for an ultimate end use for land used for mineral extraction that will complement and preserve the value of adjoining land.

The end use – post reclamation land use will be open space or forestry type use which will compliment and preserve the value of adjoining land which is also used as forestry and open space type uses.

Goal 8M: Achieve a balance between the conservation of productive mineral lands and the quality of life expected by residents within and near the rural and urban zones of Whatcom County.

Approval of the CUP for the Ranch Quarry will allow for extraction of productive mineral lands, while the site will maintain appropriate buffering and conditions so as to minimize impacts on surrounding residents.

2. Describe how the proposed development will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing and intended character of the area.

The proposed Ranch Quarry surface mine will be located on approximately 70 acres within a 108 acre property boundary in collective ownership. The proposed surface mine is therefore well contained within the property boundaries and will maintain appropriate setbacks as well. Being in the MRL overlay district, the intended use of the area is for surface mining. The proposed use is therefore harmonious and appropriate with the intended character within the MRL.

3. If located in a rural area (as designated in the Comprehensive Plan), will be consistent with rural land use policies as designated in the rural lands element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The subject site is zoned Rural Forestry (RF) and R10A. There are several rural land use policies contained in the rural lands element of the Comprehensive Plan. The only goal identified in the Comprehensive Plan relative to rural lands is Goal 2DD, which is to “retain the character and lifestyle of rural Whatcom County.” There are several policies that seek to implement this goal, varying from rural densities to setbacks and compatibility with adjacent resource lands. Since the subject proposal is not for a development, structure etc. and is for a temporary use of the property, most of these policies do not apply to this proposal.

4. Describe any activities related to this proposal that may be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future neighboring uses.

Noise and traffic associated with the proposed surface mine could potentially be disturbing to existing neighboring uses. However, since the proposed mine lies well within the underlying property, will maintain appropriate buffers and is located in an area of sparse rural development, disturbance will be minimal. The site is also setback significantly from the county road

6. Describe any public costs for facilities and services that will result from the proposal and indicate whether or not the proposal will be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

There are no anticipated public costs that will result from the proposal, nor will it be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community. Conversely, the proposed mineral extraction will be an asset to the economic welfare of the community via additional job creation and service to the local community.

7. Describe any uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions of operation that may be detrimental to any person’s property, or the general welfare by reasons of excess traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, dust, or odors.

There could be excess noise and traffic associated with the proposal than what would otherwise exist in a rural area. However, as previously discussed, the 70 acre surface mine is contained within a 108 acre underlying parcel area so impacts will be minimized to adjacent properties. Additionally, traffic generated from the surface mine is anticipated to be around 25 truckloads a day. This is less than the average traffic generated by three single family residences.

8. Describe how the sites driveway access (vehicular approaches) will be designed so as to not create interference with traffic on surrounding streets.

The proposed surface mine entrance will be off of South Pass Road and will be well separated from other surrounding county roads.

9. Describe any natural, scenic, or historic features of importance located on or near the subject site, including wetlands, shorelines and archaeological finds.

There are no shorelines or archeological finds identified on the property. There are several wetlands which have been identified on the site. There are no proposed direct impacts to said critical areas resulting from the surface mine. See accompanying wetland delineation and mitigation reports prepared by Northwest Ecological Services.