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Mark Personius
Director

Memorandum

July 23, 2021

To: The Honorable Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive
The Honorable Whatcom County Council

From: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

Through: Mark Personius, Director

RE: Density Credit / Lot Size Zoning Code Amendments (PLN2019-00005)

The Whatcom County Council adopted Comprehensive Plan Policy 2A-14 in 2016. This policy included convening a multi-stakeholder work group to examine a variety of transfer of development right (TDR) and purchase of development right (PDR) issues.

The former County Executive appointed the Whatcom County TDR/PDR Multi-Stakeholder Work Group in February 2017. The *Whatcom County TDR/PDR Multi-Stakeholder Work Group [Final Report](#)* was issued on October 3, 2018. This report included a number of recommendations, including expanding the density credit program to the Urban Residential 4 dwellings/acre (UR4) zone in Birch Bay Urban Growth Area and accessory dwelling units.

Density credits allow development incentives, such as increased density or more floor area, in exchange for a voluntary contribution towards preserving resource lands and open space. This is accomplished through a voluntary payment of funds to Whatcom County for use in the Whatcom County Conservation Easement Program, formerly known as the Purchase of Development Rights Program, in order to access incentives specifically set forth in the zoning code.

The subject amendments would implement the Work Group's density credit recommendations. They would also modify the minimum lot size, width, depth and other requirements in the Urban Residential zone to provide greater flexibility for development.

Thank you for your review and consideration of this matter. We look forward to discussing it with you.