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**Mark Personius**  
Director

## Memorandum

April 24, 2022

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

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Steve Roberge, Assistant Director

RE: Draft Public Participation Plan (PLN2023-00005)

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The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties to develop public participation programs for comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments. The Whatcom County Council updates the Public Participation Plan each year, after review by the Planning Commission.

The Public Participation Plan identifies statutory requirements (GMA provisions) and lists docketed comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments that have been initiated for further review by the County Council.

The Plan classifies proposed comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments as level 1, 2 or 3 projects for determining the public participation approach. The review process for each level is summarized below:

**Level 1** – Requires a staff report, notice in the newspaper, posting the proposal on the website, and sending it to the County’s e-mail list. Planning Commission holds a public hearing and issues a recommendation. County Council holds a public hearing and makes final decision.

**Level 2** – Requires all Level 1 processes, plus developing alternatives (when appropriate) and review by an advisory committee, County department, City, or agency.

**Level 3** – Requires all Level 2 processes, plus a town hall meeting.

Proposed changes from last year's Public Participation Plan include:

1. Inserting Docketed Amendments - Inserting the new comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments that the County Council initiated for review in 2023 (Resolution 2023-005).
2. Removing Amendments - Deleting amendments that were previously initiated but have completed the review process or were withdrawn.
3. Level 1 to Level 2 Changes – The Planning Commission recommended changing the following projects from Level 1 to Level 2 review (pp. 4-3 and 4-4):

D-8. Mineral Resource Land Expansion – Breckenridge Rd. (PLN2019-00002)

D-16. Mineral Resource Lands Expansion – North Star Rd. (PLN2012-00009)

Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was published in the Bellingham Herald, sent to the County's e-mail list, and posted on the County website on March 31, 2023. The Planning Commission held a hearing and recommended approval of the Public Participation Plan on April 13, 2023.

We look forward to discussing the Public Participation Plan at the Council's Planning and Development Committee on May 9. We request that Council consider a motion at the evening meeting on May 9 to approve the Plan.