

**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
**Planning & Development**  
**Services**  
**5280 Northwest Drive**  
**Bellingham, WA 98226**  
**360-778-5900**



**Mark Personius, AICP**  
Director

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

**THROUGH:** Mark Personius, PDS Director

**FROM:** Garrett E. Smith, Natural Resources Division Manager

**RE:** Critical Areas Review by Third Party

**DATE:** March 29, 2024

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- **Background and Purpose**

The Planning and Development Services (PDS) Department's Natural Resources Division is managing a backlog of Critical Area reviews due to staff turnover and the ongoing training of new hires in the Division. The Department has had previous contracts with third parties, providing technical review and assisting in addressing the backlog, however such contracts have expired.

PDS is looking to set up an ancillary Third-Party Contracting Review to meet the growing backlog of permit and plan reviews. PDS solicited interest from firms, identified through the MRSC roster, through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Of the three firms contacted by PDS, two firms submitted RFQ responses and are able to support the scope of the requested services. MacWhinney Environmental Consulting (MEC) LLC is one of the two responsive firms, with PDS intending to pursue contracts with both firms.

A contract with MEC would support technical relief in the form of an independent third-party review of all permit and plan types, applications, and supplemental reports related to wetland and habitat conservation areas. In addition, the scope includes PDS staff training on field verification methodologies and best available science.

Please contact Garrett Smith at extension 5937 if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.

Encl.: Contract and Contract Information Sheet