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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Creating Solutions for Our Future

Joshua Cummings, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission
FROM: Andrew Deffobis, Associate Planner
DATE: April 11, 2018
SUBJECT: Open Space Tax Program Update

Introduction & Background

Long Range Planning staff are starting review of potential updates to portions of the Open Space Tax Program overseen by the Board of County Commissioners (Board). The program was last updated in 2004. To date, staff have reviewed existing policy documents and conducted research into other counties' Open Space Tax Programs in Western Washington.

Attached to this memo is the current Open Space Tax Program policy, adopted by the Board via resolution in 2004. Staff requests the Planning Commission review the policy document in preparation for discussions of potential amendments at their April 18, 2018 meeting.

The scope of the update includes reviewing and recommending potential updates for the categories and point system within the existing Public Benefit Rating System. It also includes updating the content of the existing policy document, such as what information is evaluated during application review, and updating language to reflect changes in County code. And lastly, staff will develop program administrative guidelines for use by applicants, decision makers, and staff.

Staff Recommendation

Provide staff with feedback on program elements to research as the Open Space Tax Program update moves forward. Also provide guidance on formation of a Planning Commission subcommittee to work on program updates.

Issues for Discussion

1. Are there additional resources that should be considered for inclusion in the categories of the Public Benefit Rating System?

2. Does the scoring system seem adequate/require any amendment?
3. What information would the Planning Commission recommend be included in an administrative manual?
4. What other amendments would the Planning Commission recommend to the Board?
5. Does the Planning Commission wish to convene a subcommittee at this time to work on program updates?