



**Snohomish County**  
**County Executive Office**  
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## **Media Advisory– January 23, 2007**

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## **County proposes new development rules**

*Planning Commission to consider new rules to regulate ‘detached condominiums’*

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County Planning and Development Services will present proposed rule changes to the County Planning Commission today that would change the way high density housing developments in Snohomish County are regulated.

The new rules target growing concerns about the quality of design and livability of some of the densest single family housing being built in the County. The rules will require additional disclosure of covenants and restrictions, require improved access for emergency vehicles, address parking concerns, improve environmental standards and promote higher quality design.

The rules will affect single family housing known as ‘detached condominiums.’ Detached condominiums are a development alternative in multi-family zones where apartments or traditional condominiums might otherwise be built.

These developments have recently been referred to as ‘LDMR’ for the Low Density Multiple Residential zone in which many are being built. The County Council recently approved an additional 90 acres of LDMR zoning by a 5-0 margin, highlighting the need for the new rules.

“It’s about planning for the future,” said Executive Reardon. “New neighborhoods need to promote the quality of life we expect in Snohomish County.”

County planning staff is working with stakeholders to review all aspects of the County’s development regulations as a part of the Unified Development Code Update. This update

will range from architectural standards and open space requirements to street widths and building separation. In late 2006, Snohomish County Tomorrow requested changes by the County to the rules regulating these developments. The design changes were the top priority of the comprehensive review of the County's development regulations.

Detached condominiums have long been allowed by County code, but have only recently become prominent as demand dramatically increased for housing and available land in Snohomish County during the recent housing boom. The first detached condominium development in the LDMR zone was proposed in 1997. These developments create 9 to 11 units per acre. Traditional multifamily apartments or condominiums in the same zone would create 12 to 24 units per acre.

County staff is working in cooperation with stakeholders representing local cities, the environmental community, homebuilders and community leaders to draft the new rules. The Planning Commission will be briefed on the proposed rules today beginning at 3:00 pm in the Administration East Building, first floor public meeting room.

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