

## **Media Advisory – Feb. 26, 2009**

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### **Reardon signs rural design standards into law**

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon has signed into law a series of changes to the county's Rural Cluster Subdivisions ordinance, which will accommodate appropriate densities while protecting an area's rural character.

Launched by Reardon in early 2007, public input included more than 20 meetings throughout the year and into 2008 with residents, special districts, developers and local city officials. These changes come on the heels of improvements to the county's urban residential design standards that Reardon signed into law earlier this month.

“Again, the county has taken steps to improve the way neighborhoods are built in Snohomish County based on vast input from citizens during a host of public meetings,” Reardon said. “Snohomish County families and landowners have been the driver behind these approved code changes.”

Among the improvements approved by Reardon and the County Council are:

- Reduction in the maximum number of lots from 30 to 13 per cluster;
- Requires retention of 50 percent of the tree canopy when possible;
- Requires use of low-impact development techniques;
- Increases the width of buffers between clusters from 50 to 200 feet;
- New landscaping standards for perimeters and between clusters;
- Increases the width of setback buffers along roads from 50 to 100 feet (200 feet if the site is meadow or pasture);
- Increases the setback for dwellings adjacent to farmland from 50 to 100 feet.

Overall, the changes will improve the site design of rural clusters. Emphasis is placed on protecting existing rural features when designing a rural cluster subdivision. The changes balance the needs of the environment and impacts to rural character with the rights of individual property owners.

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