



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office
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Snohomish County Announces Cooperative Effort to Preserve Farmland

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SNOHOMISH COUNTY– The Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) and Snohomish County have agreed to a work program to take development pressure off of local farms and concentrates development in existing urban areas. County Executive Aaron Reardon and the Snohomish County Council are partnering with the City of Everett and other local communities on this initiative to preserve farmland.

The agreement means that Snohomish County will receive \$100,000 approved in the 2006 legislative session to expand the County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

The new project will identify transfer of development rights opportunities based on economic and market conditions that affect rural and urban landowners. In addition, a model policy and regulatory framework to implement transfer opportunities that are most feasible will be developed. This new framework for establishing a market-based TDR program for Snohomish County will be completed in the second half of 2007.

County Executive Aaron Reardon says the program is part of the county's ongoing efforts to preserve farmland and support a vibrant agricultural economy. "Protecting farmland from non-farm development keeps the land available for future agricultural uses, as envisioned by the County's Agriculture Action Plan," Reardon said.

The grant complements the existing TDR partnership with the City of Arlington and the purchase of development rights program near Monroe. By developing this framework,

up to 63,000 acres of the county's farmland could eventually transfer development to existing urban areas where they can be served by sewer, water and roads more efficiently.

Councilman John Koster acknowledged the importance of this grant to existing programs. "We already have pilot programs that will preserve selected areas of prime agricultural land near Arlington and in the Tualco Valley. This grant lets us develop an approach that we can expand to protect farmland throughout the county," stated Koster.

"This is an innovative way to preserve agricultural land in our county while promoting quality redevelopment within our urban center," Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson said. "We look forward to creating a program that will work for both farmers and developers."

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