

PRESS RELEASE



Snohomish County

County Council

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Farmland preservation program at stake they say
Somers, Reardon Ask Planning Commission to Hold Off on Development Rights Transfer Ordinance

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Responding to an urgent request from the County Council and Executive, the county planning commission pulled back a draft farmland preservation ordinance for further work.

County Council Chairman Dave Somers and County Executive Aaron Reardon signed a joint letter this week, asking the Snohomish County Planning Commission to delay a vote on the proposed Transfer-of-Development-Rights (TDR) program. Under TDR regulations, developers could purchase credits protecting farmland in exchange for increasing density in urban areas.

“Farmland preservation is too important to not get it right the first time,” Somers said. “We must have consensus first.”

Reardon added, “TDRs are an important step to making the county’s agriculture sustainability project a reality. So we’re giving farmers more time to build consensus around the issue.”

The discussion over how best to implement a transfer-of-development-rights program will return to the Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board, which offers policy suggestions to county government, the planning commission and hearing examiner.

“I strongly support the concept of transferring development rights,” Somers said, “but this proposal is complex and we need more time to carefully discuss it with county farmers, the development community and cities.”

The Transfer-of-Development-Rights program was a recommendation made by a team of farmers who developed proposals under Reardon’s Agriculture Action Plan to enhance farming and protect agriculture as a viable economic option.

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