

# Appendix B

## Agricultural Advisory Board Recommendation

### Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board

**APPROVED 9-9-08**  
**REVISED 5-12-09**

#### **Board Recommended Evaluation of Proposals to Convert Designated Farmland to Nonfarm Purposes**

##### **Statement of Intent**

The Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board requests that Snohomish County government balance the goals and policies of the GMA and the county's GMA General Policy Plan relating to protection and enhancement of agriculture and agricultural lands.

To determine whether a proposal to convert farmland to nonfarm purposes adequately addresses the county's policies that protect and conserve agriculture and agricultural lands, an application must show that either alternative 1 or alternative 2 below are met.

##### **Conditions to be Evaluated**

###### Alternative 1:

- A. Show that there are no current publicly owned lands that could be used for any mitigation or conservation effort. Public owned lands must have been purchased prior to September 9, 2008.
- B. Show the property to be used for nonfarm purposes is the least valuable property for farming. In evaluating the land's value to farming, the ability to drain, drainage characteristics, soil logs, relative isolation from other farm property, usage by farm pests, and other relevant factors shall be used.
- C. Show that activities associated with the conversion to nonfarm purposes will not negatively impact other agricultural ground and activities, as follows:
  - 1) Any and all maintenance, flooding and drainage related activities shall not initially, or in the future, create adverse impacts to any farm ground and activities.
  - 2) Trees and other vegetation to be planted or which naturally occur must be kept back an appropriate distance from property boundaries to prevent shading and blockage.
  - 3) Proposed and introduced vegetation plantings will not negatively impact nearby farm operations.

(continued)

- 4) Any other negative impacts that may arise due to site specific conditions are addressed adequately.
  - 5) A performance bond, or equivalent, shall be required to ensure future maintenance to the above standards.
- D. Show the proposed project will include direct benefit to farmland on site and other farmland in the direct vicinity.
- 1) Benefits may be provided through an easement to ensure farming will continue on remaining or neighboring land, a commitment to drainage improvements, the funding of drainage issues elsewhere, or other supportive actions.

Alternative 2:

If the applicant cannot meet these evaluation criteria, the applicant must compensate for the loss of farmland by preserving farmland at a 1.5:1 ratio, in a manner that has met the agreement of a majority of the Agricultural Advisory Board.

**Monitoring**

It is recommended that the county monitor the applicant's progress in meeting the terms of these alternative approaches prior to, and at a reasonable point after, completion of the proposed development.

**Alternative Considerations:**

In evaluating proposals for habitat or wetland restoration/mitigation or other projects that convert designated farmlands, the county may work with the proponent to identify, evaluate and implement alternative considerations which meet the county's policies for agriculture and agricultural land protection and result in a net benefit to Snohomish County agriculture, as agreed to by the Agricultural Advisory Board.