

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Fact Sheet

Purchase of Development Rights is...

The one-time purchase by Snohomish County of a landowner's right to develop "resource" lands (such as farmlands) for "non-resource" purposes (such as residential development). In other words, it helps preserve our agricultural land—which restricts development and benefits farmers, consumers and all citizens.

Implemented through a deed restriction, typically in the form of a conservation easement, which keeps the land in private ownership. By doing that, it restricts its use in perpetuity to its original use as resource land. In future, the owner can re-sell the land, but only for agricultural purposes and generally at the current market value for agricultural land.

One more type of measure the County can use to address unique locational, landowner, market and funding factors when helping conserve farmland. The PDR price is calculated by determining the difference between the value of the land as agricultural land and its potential development value.

Snohomish County's PDR program is...

A pilot program to determine landowner interest in PDR and to help preserve farmland that otherwise could be converted to development.

Fifty-percent funded by a Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The other 50 percent is paid to the landowner from the Snohomish County Conservation Futures Fund.

A complement to the pilot Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program adopted on December 15, 2004 as Amended Ordinance No. 04-123 ("Relating to the Transfer of Development Rights") by County Council. The ordinance became effective March 15, 2005 and currently is being implemented in the Arlington vicinity.

The Hoberg purchase is...

Snohomish County's first agricultural PDR transaction. This 30-acre parcel was selected because of its value as prime agricultural acreage. (The farm soils have been certified by the NRCS as "100-percent prime farmland.") In addition, the parcel previously had been subdivided into developable 5-acre parcels.

Founded upon on a conservation easement that allows a variety of agricultural activities on the land, but not development or any other non-farming activities.

The northernmost 30 acres of the 40-acre property purchased in 1971 by Chester Hoberg and his late wife, Janice.

An opportunity for the adjacent Werkhoven dairy farm to continue leasing the land from Chet Hoberg after the PDR transaction.

A way to preclude the development of six new homes in the heart of the Tualco valley, ensure that Chet Hoberg will realize the full value of his property, and guarantee that this key parcel will remain ag land in perpetuity.