

# PRESS RELEASE

## County Council



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**2008 Snohomish County Council: Chair Dave Somers, District 5; Councilmember Dave Gossett, District 4; Vice-Chair Mike Cooper, District 3; Councilmember Brian Sullivan, District 2; and Councilmember John Koster, District 1.**

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## Tough Challenges Face New County Council Leadership Team

*Transportation, growth and farmland issues top Somers' agenda*

A host of complex issues face Snohomish County in the coming year, said County Councilmember Dave Somers, D-Monroe, the newly elected council chair. Topping his list are the continuing challenges of transportation gridlock, improving the results of the county's planning and permitting process, and re-invigorating the county's farmland preservation efforts.

Joining Somers in the council's administration as vice-chair is newly elected councilmember Mike Cooper, D-Edmonds. The council selected its officers for 2008 on Wednesday, Jan. 3, shortly after Cooper and Brian Sullivan, D-Mukilteo – also newly elected – were sworn into office.

"The failure of November's roads and transit proposition," said Somers, "greatly worsened Snohomish County's transportation crisis. The county continues to grow and we will continue to fall farther and farther behind unless we have a realistic funding plan for finishing key road projects, improving traffic flow through synchronized or controlled signalization, and increasing transit service."

"It's obvious that increasing density and increasing traffic in our urban neighborhoods are on a collision course, said Cooper, who will also chair the council's public works subcommittee.

"I am looking forward to working collaboratively with the county executive to find common sense solutions to these challenges."

Somers added, “We must work with the state legislature to get key state road projects finished, including I-5, Highway 2, and Highway 522, and we will also look for opportunities to develop new transportation corridors to ease pressure on existing roads.

“Another of my top priorities,” he said, “is better – much better – urban planning. We must pass new design standards for urban and rural housing. The county has to improve our permitting process to ensure that new development enhances – rather than degrades – existing neighborhoods.

“Farms in Snohomish County are seriously at risk,” said Somers. “We continue to lose farmland to low level sprawl and development. Sprawl development in rural areas must be restricted. I will also propose and support a countywide program offering transfer or purchase of development rights. We are out of time – we must act now or we will lose forever our agricultural lands, farms, and farmers.”

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