



NEWS RELEASE

Editor's note: Time-lapse footage of a week at Smith Avenue, including cleanup by public works crews, is available at <https://youtu.be/ad2lLooi2Gs>.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Give responsibly this holiday season Public encouraged to donate to service agencies, not directly to those on the streets

EVERETT – This holiday season, the City of Everett is encouraging community members to give responsibly, by donating goods, food, time or money to local service organizations, rather than giving directly to those on the streets.

“We are fortunate to have a compassionate, generous community that gives to those in need,” said Hil Kaman, public health and safety director. “Unfortunately, giving clothes and food directly to those on the street can do more harm than good. Throughout the city, we are seeing the negative effects of unused, discarded donations.”

In some areas of the city, including Smith Avenue, direct donations to those on the street have led to accumulations of debris, creating a health hazard and an unsightly mess for neighboring businesses. For the past year, City public works crews have [cleaned up](#) the 3700 block of Smith Avenue at least three times a week, removing several tons of trash and discarded items each week – at a cost of nearly \$160,000 in staff time and dump fees.

“When you donate through a service provider – whether it’s your time, money, food, clothes or supplies – your donation goes much further,” said Kaman. “Local agencies can match your donation with multiple people and families to ensure that every item is used and doesn’t end up discarded on the street.”

Over the past few years, the city has seen an increase in the number of individuals and groups handing out food or meals to people on the streets. While such donations may meet an immediate need, they can also create waste and an unsanitary environment on the streets, as well as missed opportunities for engagement. Volunteering or donating food through a food bank or established meal program ensures meals are properly handled and offered in a safe, clean environment where people can be connected with services.

“We know many people still want an opportunity to engage directly with those on the street, and we have several great organizations in Everett where volunteers can have meaningful

connections and interactions with people experiencing homelessness,” said Kaman. He suggests volunteering with groups like Mercy Watch, which does street outreach in the Everett area.

The City’s website includes a list of local service providers, as well as opportunities for financial support: www.everettwa.gov/giveresponsibly. To see a time-lapse video of a week at Smith Avenue, visit <https://youtu.be/ad2ILooi2Gs>.

To learn more about the City’s Safe Streets plan, visit www.everettwa.gov/safestreets.

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