



NEWS RELEASE

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HopeWorks to manage Safe Streets work crew Diversion program showing positive results

EVERETT – The Everett City Council on Wednesday approved a contract with HopeWorks Social Enterprises to manage the City’s [Safe Streets work crew](#), beginning in 2017. The diversion program, which provides alternatives to prosecution and jail time for low-level offenders, has been in place since April.

“Developing a work crew program was a recommendation of the [Community Streets Initiative](#) task force, and a part of our [Safe Streets plan](#),” said Mayor Ray Stephanson. “We’ve already seen great outcomes with participants, and we’ve received positive feedback and thanks from businesses in north Everett.”

Everett Police officers can refer individuals arrested for low-level crimes to the program. Participants pick up garbage, sweep streets, return grocery carts and clean up areas affected by street crime. They also have the opportunity to take classes and learn skills such as time management, communication and problem solving, and to be connected with treatment and service.

Between April 11 and Dec. 21, 42 individuals successfully completed the work crew program. The crews picked up more than 700 large bags of garbage in that timeframe.

“Providing meaningful work opportunities and training is the focus of HopeWorks’ mission,” said Fred Safstrom, HopeWorks chief executive officer. “For individuals experiencing homelessness, the work crew may be a critical first step toward overcoming their challenges and achieving self-sufficiency, and we’re excited to be a part of that.”

Jack Jessup, a retired Everett bike patrol officer, supervises the work crew. Participants begin their mornings near the Everett Gospel Mission and spend the day picking up trash and debris in north Everett, including along Smith Avenue and Broadway. Friendship Diversion Services has managed the contract in 2016.

“Jack and the staff at Friendship Diversion Services have done an incredible job of developing the program and creating success during this pilot period,” said Hil Kaman, director of public health and safety. “We’re looking forward to partnering with HopeWorks to enhance the program in the coming year.”

HopeWorks creates and operates social enterprise businesses designed to provide jobs and internships for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Safe Streets work crew will continue to be operated as a criminal justice diversion program, but the emphasis on developing skills that encourage personal growth and give back to the community through work and service is consistent with HopeWorks' mission.

“A criminal conviction can be a barrier to future employment, so this partnership between the City and HopeWorks to provide a diversion from the criminal justice system makes sense for both the City's Safe Streets efforts and our mission,” said Safstrom.

The work crew is part of the City's comprehensive Safe Streets plan, which focuses on housing, outreach and enforcement, diversion, and community education and engagement. Learn more about the Safe Streets work crew online: www.everettwa.gov/workcrew.

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