



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 24, 2015

Ray Stephanson
Mayor

Honorable Members of the Snohomish County Council:

On November 30 you will consider a contract with the City of Seattle to house up to 100 of Seattle's inmates in the Snohomish County jail. Under that contract, the County will transport inmates from Seattle to the County jail but will not transport them back to Seattle upon their release. Instead, the County will give inmates a "transportation voucher" and release them onto the streets of Everett. Inmates are then left to make their own way back to Seattle; inevitably, many will not. Instead, they will become part of Everett's growing street population.

During the Everett Streets Initiative process, the community recognized the role the jail plays in in Everett's street-level social issues. Accordingly, the Streets Initiative Task Force unanimously concluded that returning inmates to their place of origin is a priority recommendation that will make a difference in addressing the growing crisis on our streets (see Task Force Final Report, p. ii., available on our website at www.everettwa.gov/streetsinitiative.) The Task Force was especially concerned that many inmates are released from jail into homelessness.

We have also learned that contracts with other Snohomish County cities still fail to provide for the return of their inmates, contrary to our understanding that Snohomish County would rectify this problem as contracts came up for renewal. We are very disappointed that this has not been done.

We urge you not to make this unfortunate situation even worse by approving the proposed agreement with Seattle. We ask that you reject the contract as written and approve it only with strong assurances that every possible measure will be taken to ensure Seattle's inmates are returned to Seattle upon their release, such as the revisions recently provided to the Sheriff's Office by Everett Police Chief Dan Templeman. To do otherwise would be irresponsible, and unfair to this community.

Sincerely,

Ray Stephanson, Mayor

cc: Everett City Council
John Lovick
Ty Trenary
Debra Bryant
Dan Templeman