



Corporate NO: R062

Report COUNCIL DATE: March 13, 2000

REGULAR

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: March 8, 2000**

FROM: City Manager for the Chair,
Clean & Safe City Committee **FILE: 8350-000**

SUBJECT: Update on City Wide Anti-Graffiti Measures

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the information contained in this report.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Council with information relative to recent anti-graffiti initiatives undertaken by the Graffiti Task Force operating under the Safe & Clean City Committee.

BACKGROUND

In late 1999, Council directed staff to set up an Anti-Graffiti Task Force. An initial meeting between representatives of the RCMP, By-law Enforcement and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department resulted in a recommendation to the Safe & Clean City Committee that stakeholders from throughout the City of Surrey be brought together in a workshop format to brainstorm solutions to the City's graffiti problem.

On February 24, a facilitated anti-graffiti workshop was held at the Newton Community Police Station (see attached minutes, Appendix 1). The meeting was well attended by representatives from law enforcement agencies, the School District, Crown Counsel, utility companies, transit, Parks, Recreation and Culture, Councillors, Parent Advisory Committees, Surrey Crime Prevention Society, private security firms and others. The workshop focused on three primary areas:

1. Issues identification;
2. Prioritized actions to deal with the issues; and
3. Assignment of responsibility for some key actions.

Current Situation

1. Graffiti Clean Up - The City spent a total of approximately \$165,000 on graffiti clean-up and paint-over work in 1999 (Engineering: \$17 k; Facilities: \$5 k; Parks, Recreation and Culture: \$142 k). Racially-related and obscene graffiti was painted over within 24-48 hours of being reported. Clean up of civic buildings and most major park structures was generally carried out within one week of reports of graffiti being brought to the attention of those responsible for maintenance. Some exceptions included outdoor pool buildings, which were only cleaned up from the spring through the fall, and were not generally cleaned during the winter due to budget shortfalls. Further, due to the quickly rising levels of graffiti in parks during 1999, traditional clean up budgets were exhausted by the early autumn, resulting in a drop in the service level over the fall and winter months.

2. Volunteer Efforts - Until 1999, Surrey's *Partners in Parks* were not involved in removing graffiti in Surrey's parks. Volunteers did report graffiti in parks to parks staff, and their actions helped ensure graffiti was promptly painted out. A pilot program for the 1999 *Our Backyard* and *Partners in Parks* programs included the option for volunteers to remove graffiti in parks, a job previously done by staff or contractors. This 1999 pilot project had a reasonable measure of success. Based on this success, volunteer assistance will be called on in an increasing way to keep Surrey's parks safe and clean on a daily basis in 2000. In partnership with the Surrey Crime Prevention Society, Surrey Parks Division will be launching a volunteer "*Let's Stop Graffiti*" campaign in May. Surrey's *Our Backyard* volunteers will be equipped with the supplies, materials, and technical knowledge they need to keep City parks clean and safe. This program is expected to be very popular with existing and newly recruited parks volunteers. The program's goal is to support every resident, business, or organization that wants to take action to keep Surrey's Parks graffiti free. Some funding is being diverted from existing vandalism budgets to help fund this initiative, but may need to be supplemented from other sources if the program is very popular.

Currently, the Surrey Crime Prevention Society is organizing the efforts of volunteers in cleaning up graffiti on private property. Paint donated by paint dealers/manufacturers is stored at the SCPS central storage area, where it is accessible to volunteers who carry out the graffiti removal work upon request by private companies or individuals.

3. By-law Enforcement - The Bylaw Enforcement Unit is presently targeting two areas through information packages. Private businesses owners are being approached and spoken to regarding our co-ordinated efforts to remove Graffiti. At this point only the removal is being addressed, and the City's objectives are discussed with the owners with their options on how the graffiti can be removed. A complaint form is then generated, with a follow up visit as time permits by the Officer assigned to that particular area. Public utilities and street signs which have been vandalized are identified by each Officer in his/her Zone. These complaints are being recorded by zone only, with the respective utility company being contacted on a daily basis. The present program has had positive effects but we are only able to address these issues as and when the Officers have available time for pro-active initiatives, and thereby only dealing with one minor segment of the problem. In order to provide a concerted effort throughout the City, a full time dedicated Officer would be required.

4. Murals - Community driven mural programs began with the intent of beautifying civic buildings while replacing graffiti vandalism with murals. The projects are carried out by youth working for the Surrey Crime Prevention Society, with support and guidance from the City and from School District #36. These stunning murals make the walls of civic buildings less prone to graffiti vandalism.

Suggested New Initiatives

The following initiatives were identified in the workshop session, and are in the domain of the City, should Council decide to offer these services at the prescribed levels. For Council's consideration, preliminary cost estimates for the City providing these services is provided.

| <i>Initiative</i> | <i>Description of Initiative and Notes</i> | <i>Cost Estimate</i> |
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| Central Graffiti Co-ordinator | A position would be developed within the By-law and Licensing Section to coordinate graffiti removal within the City. The coordinator would ensure that a hot-line for graffiti removal would be established and be well publicized (possibly | \$ 60,800 |

utilizing City-Page and by placing the hot-line number on transit shelters and other high profile areas). The Coordinator would ensure that graffiti service requests were routed to the appropriate agency for prompt removal. The Coordinator would also ensure that the City's by-laws that dealt with graffiti were effectively enforced. The Coordinator will develop and support a new graffiti section of the City's web-site.

Currently, the Parks Division and Engineering Operations contribute to a term (May - September) By-law Enforcement Officer position to deal with park issues and watering restrictions (\$20,000 combined). This This program has had positive results in the City's parks and in dealing with sprinkling complaints, due to the high visibility of having By-law Officer in the parks and attending at people's homes. However, after September each year, the By-laws Unit would revert back to complaint-driven calls for the remaining eight months of the year. Additional resources would allow the expansion of the duties of the term position to include the responsibilities of graffiti co-ordination year round.

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| Increased Paint-Out Campaign | A concerted effort to clean up graffiti on City structures within a three working day turn around time will require additional resources, even with an increased volunteer commitment. The Graffiti Coordinator will very likely generate more service requests than currently experienced by the individual departments, and staff will be more vigilant in identifying and reporting problem areas if there is a Council directive to move to a higher service level than currently exists. | \$130,000 |
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| An intensive effort by the Graffiti Co-ordinator and other staff to coordinate the efforts of volunteers in carrying out graffiti removal can be undertaken. Initiatives such as the <i>Partners in Parks</i> programs could be duplicated in other areas of the City if found to be successful. By way of example, it may be possible to utilize the existing volunteer base for Engineering's <i>Adopt-A-Street</i> Program in an additional effort to clean up graffiti on transit shelters and other City infrastructure. | \$10,000 |
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| Develop More Murals on Civic Buildings | The development of additional murals will take place as long as there are suitable corporate walls to paint over, and as long as the City supports the program. Few additional resources will be required for this program. There may be an opportunity to have at-risk youth paint a mural on the climbing wall at the Bear Creek Youth Park; this is presently being explored by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission. | \$0 |
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| Removal of Climbing Wall at Bear Creek | Should the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission chose to remove the climbing wall from the Bear Creek Youth Park, there would be a cost of the demolition of the wall. | \$7,300 |
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| Anti-Graffiti Removal Vehicle | The Surrey Crime Prevention Society has been working towards getting a dedicated vehicle donated by a local automobile dealership. They need a driver on a 75% time basis. It has been suggested that the City could provide a grant for this. | \$20,000 |
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| Logo & Slogan | A logo and slogan could be developed through a schools competition. The notion is that if these are developed by children/youth, potential graffiti artists will pay | \$0 |
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more attention to them than if developed by adults. Should these be developed, the City (Parks, Recreation and Culture Graphics Section) could develop the logo and slogan to a high standard for distribution by the Coordinator and others in the community.

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| By-law Amendment | The Public Safety Committee is currently working with staff and the RCMP to add a section to the existing by-law which deals with restrictions on the possession of graffiti-related products by youth. | \$0 |
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| School Liaison RCMP | The RCMP could provide additional school liaison resources by deploying existing officer to schools on an overtime basis at times of high need. | \$45/hr |
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| Surveillance of High Risk Areas | Not endorsed by Council at this time. | |
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NEXT STEPS

A second workshop for the development of an anti-graffiti implementation plan is scheduled for Friday, March 17, 2000, 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM. This second workshop will build on the work done in the first workshop. It is anticipated that the various stakeholders will form strategic alliances for the delivery of many of the anti-graffiti initiatives brought forward from the first workshop. Council will be apprised of the results of this second workshop.

City Manager for the Chair,

Safe & Clean City Committee

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