



Memorandum

TO: MAYOR LICCARDO

FROM: Councilmember Mahan

SUBJECT: MURALS AS GRAFFITI PREVENTION **DATE:** May 27, 2021

Approved: *Matt Mahan*

Date: May 27, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Allocate one-time funding in the amount of \$80,000 for the completion of 3 murals in District 10 with a combined area not exceeding 2,400 square feet to be funded from the Essential Services Reserve.

Proposal

Program/Project Title: Murals as a Tool for Graffiti Prevention

Amount of City Funding Required: \$80,000

This change is:

One-time Ongoing

Cost Estimate Number (if applicable):

Proposal Description, including the reason for the need and anticipated outcomes (Please describe how the proposal will affect services for San José residents, community groups, businesses, etc.):

Murals are not only beautiful art installations that can bring neglected infrastructure to life, but they are also empirically proven graffiti deterrents. A study published in *Environment and Behavior* looked at graffiti accumulation on two commonly graffitied walls after painting a mural on one of them. The study concluded that “the main control section of wall was subject to significantly higher levels of graffiti during intervention than the mural section.”¹

An article entitled “Preventing Graffiti” from the Project for Public Spaces explains why: “Research suggests that painting multi-colored designs or murals on surfaces will discourage graffiti, since tagging is more difficult. Such mural projects, especially when they involve local artists and high school students, have solved many graffiti problems.”²

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249624533_The_Mural_as_Graffiti_Deterrence
² <https://www.pps.org/article/graffitiprevent>

Murals as graffiti deterrents proactively direct resources to the root cause. By preventing graffiti in the first place, we would not need to devote staff time to continuously cleaning up graffiti and waiting for it to appear again.

After discussions with and support from BeautifySJ staff, we determined that the City should identify the 3 most graffitied sites in District 10 and facilitate the mural production process. This initiative should serve as a pilot project and should inform a future model for citywide implementation. Staff should quantitatively track the success of the program in District 10 and optimize the approach for future iterations.

Murals are a point of pride in communities. They make neighborhoods more beautiful, and bring people together. They are a creative solution to graffiti which benefit everyone. All District 10 residents and neighboring San Joseans would benefit from a cleaner, more attractive city with less blight.

Funding Source

- Essential Services Reserve: Yes
- Other (Please specify program/project/fund):

Department or Organization Contact

Please list the contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation:

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