



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Julie Edmonds-Mares

SUBJECT: GRAFFITI PROGRAM UPDATE

DATE: May 25, 2012

Approved

Date

5/25/12

BACKGROUND

As part of Item 5.2 at the May 1, 2012 City Council meeting, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) committed to providing an update on the collaboration and community outreach efforts of the Anti-Graffiti Program. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the program's efforts to enhance graffiti eradication by leveraging resources through collaboration with the community, other agencies and city departments.

Collaboration

PRNS manages the Anti-Graffiti Program to beautify San José by preventing and removing graffiti through Community Involvement, Eradication, and Enforcement. The Anti-Graffiti Program works to create opportunities to promote a graffiti-free environment in San José. The entire Anti-Graffiti Program operates through a collaborative partnership of resources led by PRNS in conjunction with community volunteers, the San José Police Department (SJPD), other City staff, the graffiti abatement vendor Graffiti Protective Coatings, Inc. (GPC), and a number of outside agencies. Outside agency partners include:

- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Santa Clara County Probation Department
- Caltrans
- Caltrain
- Valley Transportation Authority
- Union Pacific Railroad

Staff is currently working with Caltrans, Caltrain, and Union Pacific to paint and protect the railroad bridge that crosses Highway 101 near 13th Street. This team of agencies hopes to repeat their earlier success in painting and protecting railroad bridges, such as the bridge that crosses Highway 280 near Bird Avenue, and the bridge that crosses Highway 87 near Willow Street. These projects involve many hours of preparation and planning to ensure successful and safe outcomes. Coordination with train schedules, providing extra security barriers on the bridges, highway lane closures, and the actual painting of the bridges all come together to result in long

May 25, 2012

Subject: Graffiti Program Update

Page 2

term graffiti free bridges. The green railroad bridge over Highway 280 near Bird Avenue continues to be graffiti free, well over a year after the graffiti was eradicated from it.

State highways have been significantly impacted by graffiti activity over the past year. Caltrans is the agency responsible for eradicating this graffiti and Anti-Graffiti Program staff have negotiated an improved reporting model that allows City staff to report the graffiti directly to the Caltrans local managers. This new model bypasses the normal Caltrans work order system, allowing the managers to quickly dispatch their staff as calls from the Anti-Graffiti Program come in. Under the older model, staff and residents reported the graffiti to an automated service request system, with average response times at approximately 30 days. The Anti-Graffiti Program anticipates that the new model will speed up graffiti removal on the state highways.

Anti-Graffiti Program staff continue to develop the relationships with their peers at other agencies. Caltrans, as described above, is an excellent example. Another example in progress is with the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), which is responsible for the light rail lines, bus stops, and other associated VTA structures. Recently, Anti-Graffiti Program staff met with VTA staff to discuss the City's success with restitution. City staff provided feedback and guidance to help VTA develop a restitution model so that they can be compensated for crimes of vandalism and graffiti. Anti-Graffiti Program staff anticipates that this on-going peer-to-peer relationship will help to encourage VTA to take a more active role in graffiti eradication on their property.

In addition to developing ongoing relationships with other entities, it is important for the City to make it easier for the public to understand which agency they need to report their graffiti concerns to. As part of the fall 2012 update to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee, PRNS will discuss a future workplan item to establish a region-wide graffiti reporting system. The Anti-Graffiti Program would encourage the regional use of its existing reporting system, which includes the toll free number, email, and San José Clean app.

Customer Feedback

Throughout the transition to the new vendor-based service model, the Anti-Graffiti Program continued to receive resident feedback from email and phone calls. From July through December 2011, staff addressed customer feedback and concerns about the transition as they arose. It is important to note that staff addressed all of these concerns to the greatest extent possible to ensure ongoing satisfaction with the program. Specifically, when customers identified themselves and provided contact information, staff 1) responded to the customer directly to understand their concern; 2) took the opportunity to educate them about the new service model, the transition plan, and the new issues reporting system; and, 3) forwarded the individual issues to the new vendor (or the appropriate partner agency) to address the concerns. When possible, staff contacted customers directly to confirm resolution of the issues. Since the completion of the transition in January 2012, customer response is even more efficient with the availability of the vendor's 24/7 reporting hotline and the new San José Clean Smartphone App.

To complement the efficiencies gained by the new reporting and resolution systems, the Anti-Graffiti Program customer feedback feature of the San José Clean Smartphone App provides valuable insight to customer satisfaction, as well. Since the app was launched in January 2012,

May 25, 2012

Subject: Graffiti Program Update

Page 3

1,222 people have downloaded it with 301 users submitting 2,650 service requests to-date. From those 2,650 service requests, the City has received a total of 36 responses to the app's ease of use and the services that were provided under the City's jurisdiction (3 responses were related to partner agency work and are not reflected here). Overall, the response to the City's efforts have been extremely positive, with the latest numbers showing that 94% of respondents have rated the application with a 4 or greater rating on a scale 5 (with 5 being the highest rating); and 89% have rated the Program's response time with a 4 or greater rating on the same scale. The Anti-Graffiti Program will continue to monitor customer feedback and report the findings to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee.

In addition to direct customer feedback, the Anti-Graffiti Program, with direction from the Parks and Recreation Commission, has established the Graffiti Services Review Committee. This committee, made up of two Parks and Recreation Commissioners, one Neighborhood Commissioner, and three Anti-Graffiti Program Volunteers, was established in October 2011. The committee's goal is to observe the new service delivery model, and provide feedback and recommendations to the Anti-Graffiti Program. The committee member's initial observations are that the new service delivery model, especially the eradication contractor, is providing a positive impact to graffiti eradication in San José. The next Anti-Graffiti Program Semi-Annual Report will include the findings of this committee.

CONCLUSION

After the initial transition period in July 2011, analysis of customer feedback has shown mostly positive results. Additionally, PRNS is continuing to focus on enhancing collaborative efforts with partners from other agencies, departments and the community. The Anti-Graffiti Program's review of Graffiti Protective Coating's performance is also positive, with indicators such as the City-wide Survey (as reported in the Anti-Graffiti and Litter Program Semi-Annual Report accepted by City Council on February 28, 2012) showing a 7% overall reduction in graffiti activity in San José.

The Anti-Graffiti Program will continue to monitor customer feedback and program performance, including the services provided by Graffiti Protective Coatings. Program improvements will be implemented as appropriate to encourage high customer satisfaction. Program success will continue to rely on the development of strong relationships with all partners, including partner agencies, private property owners, and Anti-Graffiti Program volunteers. Successful coordination of these collaborative relationships will support an overall reduction of graffiti in San José, resulting in a safer and cleaner city.

/s/

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For questions please contact Steve Hammack, Deputy Director, at 408-793-5579.