



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Linda Stewart, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS)
COPY: Community Safety and Vitality Committee (CVS)
PRESENTER: Keegan Buckley, Program Development Specialist, NCS
Vicky McLaurin, Community Wellness Program Manager, NCS
SUBJECT: Graffiti Removal Program Update
DATE: June 10, 2021

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Staff will present an informational briefing to update the Committee on the City's efforts to decrease graffiti concerns by increasing the number of service providers and targeting high impact areas throughout Tacoma.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, the City released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a graffiti removal contractor. The City determined that it is beneficial for public safety and economic revitalization to remove graffiti efficiently and effectively along key corridors. We now recognize the need for additional and more equitable services and have adjusted our model to be more responsive to community need. Graffiti removal services are now available to businesses and residential areas who meet the minimum requirements (graffiti accumulating to 25-square-feet or more on non-painted surfaces or 140-square-feet or more on painted surfaces per property).

ISSUE:

There is a growing need for graffiti removal services in Tacoma. In the first quarter of 2021, Code Compliance opened the highest number of graffiti cases since 2016. According to the Arizona State University's Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, "Graffiti contributes to lost revenue associated with reduced ridership on transit systems, reduced retail sales and declines in property value. In addition, graffiti generates the perception of blight and heightens fear of gang activity," although "graffiti offenders are by no means limited to gangs." In addition, graffiti is not an isolated concern, as it is often related to other crime and disorder problems and has a cumulative effect, as its initial appearance in a location tends to attract more graffiti (Weisel 2002). In Tacoma, there are a disproportionate number of code cases for graffiti in areas of the City that have low scores for livability and overall opportunity given the Tacoma Equity Index Data. In the first quarter of 2021, over 70% of the code cases for graffiti were in Council Districts 4 and 5.

Strategy:

- NCS will increase funding for their current graffiti contractor by \$84K using Criminal Justice Sales Tax revenue. This contractor will continue to operate in alignment with their 2021-2022 contract.
- NCS Staff has directed their current graffiti removal contractor to proactively visit Council Districts 4 and 5, using the Code Compliance Response map to assist in identifying areas reported as needing attention.



- NCS is contracting with an Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) provider for graffiti removal services to expand our provider network to more effectively address graffiti concerns.
- NCS will increase cross-departmental partnerships to address graffiti in the community.
 - This may be working with Community and Economic Development for contractor recommendations or outreach to business districts, working with the Office of Arts and Cultural Vitality to recommend locations to install murals in Tacoma where there are high rates of graffiti, notifying Tacoma Public Utilities and Public Works to remedy graffiti concerns on their assets.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The strategy includes contracting with an OMWBE service provider to restore properties after graffiti vandalism. In addition, NCS will increase funding for the current contractor. Funding is available from the Criminal Justice Sales Tax revenue.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
Graffiti Removal, Criminal Justice Sales Tax	664720	5330100	\$134,000

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an informational briefing only.

CITED SOURCE:

Weisel, D. L. (2002). Graffiti: ASU Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. Retrieved from <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/graffiti-0>