



NSE AGENDA: 10/11/18  
ITEM: d(6)

# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT:** ANTI-GRAFFITI AND ANTI-LITTER  
PROGRAMS ANNUAL REPORT

**DATE:** September 24, 2018

Approved

Date

10/3/2018

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs Annual Report, and recommend this item for full Council consideration at the October 30, 2018 City Council meeting.

## OUTCOME

To provide an annual update on the Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs and the impact they have had within neighborhoods to beautify San José.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During 2017–2018 the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services' (PRNS) Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs continued to make strides to engage the community in addressing graffiti and litter-related blight. Over the past fiscal year, the programs experienced the following:

1. The Anti-Litter Program continued to grow in volunteer engagement and had a substantial increase in litter events held from the previous year.

	2016 – 2017	2017 -2018
Anti-Litter Events	306	611
Anti-Litter Program Volunteers	13, 251	19,128
Volunteer Hours	47,956	50,625
Litter Bags Collected	20,318	24,410

2. The Anti-Graffiti Program abated over two million square feet of graffiti.
3. The amount of graffiti located on private property (graffiti located on residential or business property) continues to be an issue that utilizes valuable staff resources to address.

## **BACKGROUND**

Beginning in February 2013, the Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs began operating as a component of the Department's Neighborhood Services Unit, aligning its work with that of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) to maximize community engagement efforts. This collaboration results in a more efficient leveraging of staff resources to assist with community engagement efforts as many of the litter and graffiti hot spots are located within the same communities where the MGPTF targets its services.

The Anti-Graffiti Program has utilized Graffiti Protective Coatings (GPC) as its vendor for graffiti abatement since 2011. PRNS moved to a vendor approach for graffiti abatement as a strategy to use budget resources more effectively and to meet community expectations. Since then, the City has enjoyed a strong partnership with GPC.

The Anti-Litter Program is a key component in the City's effort to keep San José beautiful. This program uses a service delivery model that relies heavily on resident volunteerism to meet program outcomes and goals. The program uses a community-based outreach and engagement strategy to foster resident, business, and partner organization support in addressing litter/trash-related blight on an ongoing basis. In February 2017, the Mayor's Office launched the "BeautifySJ" initiative that challenges residents to become more engaged in beautifying the city. Both the Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs align with this new citywide initiative and have experienced an increase in resident volunteerism (Anti-Litter Program) and reporting (graffiti via the mySanJose app). During 2017–2018, the Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Programs implemented an outreach strategy that engaged service groups, schools, neighborhood associations, and businesses to address litter and graffiti in their communities. This outreach strategy was very successful, leading to more resident volunteerism around litter abatement and an increase in business-owner graffiti abatement.

## **ANALYSIS**

In 2017–2018, both the Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs made strides, including: encouraging residents to report graffiti via the My San José/San José Clean apps; coordinating the abatement of graffiti located on City and non-City property; leveraging resources with other City departments to remove litter/trash; and, hosting community litter events to keep San José clean.

***Anti-Litter Program Updates***

The Anti-Litter Program continued to make progress in working with service groups, schools, neighborhood/business associations, and community groups to educate residents about the impact of litter and to coordinate litter cleanup events. These efforts led to a 20% increase in the amount of litter collected with residents contributing over 50,000 volunteer service hours in 2017–2018, a 5% increase over 2016–2017. Additionally, the Anti-Litter Program has aligned program services with the BeautifySJ initiative to leverage resources to better serve the city.

<b>Anti-Litter Program Data</b>	<b>2015–2016</b>	<b>2016–2017</b>	<b>2017–2018</b>
Anti-Litter Program Coordinated events	NA	306	611
Total Litter Bags Collected	10,692	20,318	24,410
Total Number of Volunteer Hours	15,545	47,956	50,625
Total Volunteers	5,772	13,251	19,128

To accomplish program goals, staff continues to collaborate with a broad spectrum of partners. These partners include the City's Rapid Response Team (Illegal Dumping Program), and external partners (ex: San Jose Water, Santa Clara County, Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, and South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition) to address litter, trash, and illegally dumped items throughout the city. In 2017–2018, program staff attended over 70 resource fairs and 55 neighborhood and community association meetings to educate communities on the resources available to support litter cleanups and to recruit volunteers. More specifically, the program focused on linking resident volunteers to neighborhood associations and community groups to encourage long-term volunteerism and foster long-term community engagement.

The Anti-Litter Program receives up to 300 complaints per month for litter, trash, and illegal dumping located on City property and property that is outside of the City's jurisdiction. The Anti-Litter Program works closely with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Santa Clara County, San Jose Water, VTA, Pacific Gas & Electric and other governmental agencies to address complaints that are not City jurisdiction.

The 2018–2019 Adopted Budget allocated ongoing funding for 2.0 FTE of Community Activity Workers and \$25,000 in funds for supplies, as well as, funding to purchase a new truck to update the program's aging fleet. The additional staff will provide the increased capacity needed to manage the substantial increase in demands for services that the program has experienced over the past two years.

***Anti-Graffiti Program Updates***

The Anti-Graffiti Program abated 2,101,804 square feet of graffiti in 2017–2018. Approximately 87% of graffiti is reported via mobile apps. While program staff continues to promote the app as the best method to report graffiti, the program also maintains a 24-hour phone line and welcomes confidential reports via email and in-person to ensure that residents

have a variety of methods to report graffiti. In 2017–2018, the City launched a new Customer Relations Management system which includes the My San José app that residents use to report graffiti. With the introduction of the My San José app, the San José Clean app will be phased out in 2018–2019. Program staff are working with residents to transition them to the new My San José app, which allows residents to easily request several blight-related services through one app. During the phase-out period, residents can continue to report graffiti utilizing either app, since having two apps does not impact the program’s ability to provide quality services or meet resident demands. The program’s goal is to make it as easy as possible for residents to request services through a multitude of forums. In 2017–2018, 94% of respondents rated graffiti-abatement services as good or better.

The program prioritizes graffiti work orders based on where the graffiti is located and what type of graffiti is being reported. Offensive graffiti (hate speech and gang-affiliated graffiti) is prioritized to be removed within 24 hours. In 2017–2018, the program abated 701,203 square feet of gang-related graffiti. The program aims to abate other graffiti on City property within 72 hours. In 2017–2018, the program removed 66% of hate-speech, offensive, and gang-affiliated graffiti within 24 hours (note: graffiti reported Friday evening through Sunday is not abated until the next business day, which extends the time), and 74% of all other graffiti was abated within 72 hours.

During 2017–2018, the Anti-Graffiti Program experienced a slight increase in abated graffiti from the previous year. This was due to two factors including: 1) an increase in “graffiti bombing” incidents throughout the city (incidents in which a tagging crew selects an area and then proceeds to tag a substantial amount of public and private property); and 2) proactively engaging with residents in neighborhoods that typically have high rates of graffiti but low rates of reporting. As illustrated in the table below, the amount of graffiti eradicated from 2012–2016 has continued to climb, with a slight decline in graffiti abated in 2016–2017.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Square Footage of Graffiti Removed by Graffiti Vendor GPC</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
2017-2018	2,101,804	5.2%
2016-2017	1,998,532	-6.3%
2015-2016	2,131,988	1.6%
2014-2015	2,098,196	0.5%
2013-2014	2,088,466	-

Over the past two years, the Anti-Graffiti Program has observed graffiti trends similar to those experienced by other large urban cities, including:

- “Graffiti bombings” throughout the city in highly visible areas;
- More offensive political graffiti throughout the city;
- Larger tags located in visible areas that take longer to remove (private businesses, freeways);
- An increase of graffiti on business and residential property, which takes staff resources to coordinate removal;

- Continued increase in gang graffiti;
- The appearance of graffiti in areas that previously had little or no graffiti; and
- More prolific tagging throughout the city and along freeways.

Additionally, approximately 33% of all graffiti abated in 2017–2018 (701,203 square feet) was gang-related, which is slightly higher than national statistics of 25%.

To combat these trends, the program works to:

- Encourage residents to download the My San José app and report graffiti in a timely manner;
- Educate the public on the impact of graffiti relative to the “livability” of the community;
- Address graffiti on private property (residential and business);
- Educate business owners on the impact of graffiti left on their property; and
- Work more closely with major property owners to abate graffiti within the city.

The 2017–2018 budget for the City of San José’s Graffiti Program was \$1,654,848, of which \$952,000 was spent on graffiti eradication services provided by Graffiti Protective Coatings, Inc. (GPC), with the remaining budget spent on staff, materials, and supplies. In 2017–2018, the cost to eradicate graffiti was \$0.46 per square foot. The current rate for 2018–2019 is \$0.48 per square foot. PRNS had an initial contract with GPC for five years for the term of June 27, 2011 through June 26, 2016. In May 2015, the City Council approved an amendment to the current agreement with options through June 26, 2020.

While the program has built upon its successes each year, there continues to be ongoing jurisdictional challenges to addressing graffiti located within the City on non-City property. PRNS continues to meet with key stakeholders (Caltrans, Caltrain, VTA, Water District, Santa Clara County, Union Pacific Railroad, and Pacific Gas and Electric) to coordinate abatement strategies on non-City property. While our partner organizations are aware of the ongoing graffiti issues, many have struggled to remove graffiti within an acceptable timeline, which often encourages additional graffiti. During 2017–2018, program staff referred over 1,250 work order requests for graffiti and litter removal to the appropriate non-City agency. To fully illustrate the magnitude of graffiti located within San José, Caltrans abated approximately 1,000,000 square feet of graffiti located on freeways in 2017–2018. Coordinating the removal of graffiti on non-City property often utilizes a substantial amount of staff time to address these issues with the agency and reporting party.

Responsibility for removing graffiti or picking up litter depends on whether it is located on City property, private property, property owned by another government agency, or an entity such as a utility or railroad. Timelines for cleanup also vary based on responsibility. These responsibilities are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Graffiti Abatement Responsibilities, Timelines, and Results (2017-2018)**

Classification of Property	Responsible Party	Eradication Timeline	Reports Received	Total Graffiti Eradicated
City Property	<u>City of San José Partners</u> - GPC (citywide contract)  - Groundwerx (downtown)	- 24 Hours for urgent, offensive, hate speech, gang graffiti  - 72 hours (all other graffiti)	29,346	<u>City Staff</u> : 10,192 square feet (urgent priority) <u>GPC</u> : 2,078,564 square feet <u>Volunteers</u> : 13,047 <u>Groundwerx</u> : over 10,000 graffiti tags
Private Property: Business and Residential	Property Owner	10 days*	2,583	Unknown
Governmental Agencies & Utilities**	Agency or Utility	Varies	Over 1,250	Unknown

\* May take an additional month for abatement if the complaint is referred to Code Enforcement.

\*\* Includes Caltrans, Caltrain, Pacific Gas & Electric, Santa Clara County Department of Transportation, San José Water Company, and Union Pacific Railroad.

As stated in previous program reports, there continues to be an increase in graffiti located on residential and business property. The program experienced a 50.6% increase in graffiti reported on private property in 2017–2018. Staff addressed 2,583 such complaints that required over 1,000 site visits to close (this does not include complaints of graffiti located on Caltrans, Caltrain, Union Pacific, Pacific Gas and Electric, VTA or Santa Clara County property). For comparison, in 2016-2017 staff addressed 1,715 graffiti complaints on private property that required 1,658 site visits to close, which was a 6.5% increase in private property complaints from the previous year. Addressing graffiti on residential and business property continues to be a workload issue for the program. While the home/business owner is responsible for removing this graffiti, the cost of removing the graffiti may be prohibitive to some home and business owners leading to longer cleanup times. Consequently, the program provides assistance in the removal of any offensive graffiti when practical (including a courtesy abatement and/or free paint). Additionally, private property owners have a longer amount of time to remove graffiti, which can encourage additional graffiti at the site.

In October 2017, the City Council voted to include Private Property Graffiti Abatement as a Council Priority, which will allow the program to develop a better process to address graffiti located on private property. Staff is still researching this process and how to best implement a program of this type. The program will provide the status of this issue in a future report.

While the program's service delivery model efficiently abates the 2,000,000 square feet of graffiti with the allotted budget, more can be done to address the behaviors that lead to graffiti

related vandalism with education and enforcement components in place. Consequently, the Department plans to bring forth a budget proposal in 2019-2020 budget process to address this.

### ***Conclusion***

While both programs have made great strides over the past fiscal year to address graffiti and litter-related blight throughout the city, there is still an opportunity for the programs to improve outreach, education, and operational efficiency. Over the past five years the Anti-Graffiti Program has continued to eradicate an average of 2 million square feet of graffiti per year, with no clear indication that this number will decrease in the near future. Currently, both programs are focused on eradication and do not include dedicated enforcement or education components. The Anti-Litter Program will continue to experience demands for services to address litter-related blight that far exceed the programs' budget and resources. Both programs will continue to focus on sustainable efforts that encourage residents to use the My San José app to report graffiti and serve as Anti-Litter Program volunteers to address litter and trash-related blight. The Department plans to recommend future budget proposals to fill these gaps in the overall strategy.

All items and resulting recommendations that stemmed from the City Auditor's audit titled, "Graffiti Abatement: Implementing a Coordinated Approach," June 2013, have been closed. Prospectively, staff will continue to report annually to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee, and recommends this is the last report to cross reference to the full City Council.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

This annual Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs report provides program performance information for 2017–2018. The next annual report will be submitted to this Committee in fall 2019.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the October 11, 2018 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

### **COORDINATION**

This report was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

9/24/18

**Subject: Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Programs Annual Report**

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**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT**

This report will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on October 3, 2018.

**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Annual Report.

/s/

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Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Neil Rufino, Deputy Director, at (408) 535-3576.