



GRAFFITI REMOVAL AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The City of Kirkland implemented an aggressive proactive Graffiti Removal and Management Program on August 2, 2004. The Program utilizes a seasonal laborer and a vehicle containing the required materials for removal and provides a 24-hour turnaround utilizing a "search-and-destroy" tactic.

BEFORE



AFTER



II. PROJECT SUMMARY

Graffiti was determined to be a notable problem in the City of Kirkland. The Public Works Department (PW) volunteered to be the lead department to create a program to manage the graffiti problem. To include all interested parties affected, meetings were held with the Police, Parks and Planning Departments as well as the outside utility agencies (Puget Sound Energy, Northshore Utility District, Verizon, Comcast, Metro/King County, Waste Management, Burlington Northern/Santa Fe, etc.) which own some of the assets that are tagged in the City such as power boxes, telephone poles, garbage cans, benches, and fire hydrants. A Kirkland citizen also participated in these meetings.

PREVIOUS PROCESS

Previously, graffiti was reported to the Police Department. The Police Department documented the incident including photographing it. If the graffiti was on public property, the Police Department then notified the Parks or PW Department who then did the clean up. If the property tagged was not owned by the City, Police coordinated with the appropriate outside agency which then handled the removal. Major concerns with the previous process were that the removal was completely complaint-driven, response by the City and the outside agencies was slow, and follow-up to determine if removal occurred was lacking.

CURRENT GRAFFITI REMOVAL AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In response to citizen and Council requests for a program to remove and manage graffiti in the City of Kirkland, an interim Graffiti Removal and Management Program has been underway since August 2, 2004. The PW Department oversees the Program and is also the one point of contact for all graffiti reported within the City of Kirkland. The PW Department is responsible for taking a digital photograph; removal, or coordinating the removal, of the graffiti; entering service requests in the maintenance management system

(Hansen) and providing weekly summary reports to the Police Department to assist with their crime analysis efforts. The current program addresses graffiti on public property and rights-of-way as well as on private property. Graffiti is reported via the telephone Hotline ((425) 587-3TAG), an e-mail address (graffiti@ci.kirkland.wa.us) or via the Graffiti Removal Service Request Form on the Anti-Graffiti Hotline webpage located on the PW website. Most graffiti is detected in the field by the Public Works seasonal laborer while patrolling and therefore is removed immediately. The goal of the plan is to remove graffiti within a 24-hour period. The City has been given permission to remove graffiti for some outside agencies as well. For others, the City coordinates removal with the outside agencies and their response has been within 48 hours in most cases.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- With the implementation of the current Program, the emphasis changed from a reactive program that was completely complaint-driven to one that is mostly proactive seeking out graffiti and removing it. Most graffiti is removed within the City's aggressive goal of 24 hours. This supports the widely-accepted belief that immediate removal of graffiti is a great deterrent of future graffiti.
- The City has permission from some outside agencies to remove graffiti on their assets [i.e. Verizon (telephone and Internet service provider), Comcast (cable service provider), etc.] with the correct material (i.e. paint) which the outside agency provides.
- PW provides the Police Department a weekly summary of graffiti service requests with the capability to view the digital photos as needed. Recently, this data and photos have been used to pursue prosecution and determine the amount of restitution for a tagger responsible for more than 100 incidents of graffiti.
- Staff members from PW, Police and Information Technology are working to facilitate the mapping of graffiti incidents. By utilizing maps of graffiti incidents, areas that are heavily tagged can be identified providing important information to Police that may assist with patrolling decisions as well as with crime analysis and reporting efforts.
- The interim program currently underway has been expanded to manage incidents of graffiti on private property. The PW Department documents and photographs the incident and enters the information into the maintenance management system. A letter is sent to the property owner by the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning Department requesting that the graffiti be removed within two weeks.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The table below summarizes the Program's accomplishments in the first six months:

AGENCY	TOTAL INCIDENTS (AUG 2, 2004 - FEB 2, 2005)	RESOLVED	UNRESOLVED
Burlington Northern (BNSF)*	122	122	0
Comcast	57	57	0
King County Metro	5	5	0
City of Kirkland	1698	1698	0
Private Property	57	11	46
Puget Sound Energy	167	165	2
Seattle Post Intelligencer or Seattle Times	2	2	0
United States Post Office	3	3	0
Verizon	127	127	0
Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT)	8	8	0
Waste Management	23	23	0
TOTAL	2269	2221	48

The Public Works Department removes graffiti for shaded agencies.

Please note that the above summarizes the number of service requests in our maintenance management system and many service requests include multiple incidents/photos of graffiti.

CITIZEN RESPONSE TO THE PROGRAM

The response from citizens regarding the Program has been very positive. Citizens appreciate that the City has a program in place to address the graffiti problem. The seasonal employee who removes graffiti is often approached in the field by citizens with questions and comments regarding the Program and they are very thankful and express sincere gratitude for the City's efforts. Correspondence from citizens has been compiled and is attached.

EDUCATION, PREVENTION, AND RESTITUTION

An improved and more comprehensive process for public outreach to inform community members, neighborhoods, schools, and businesses regarding graffiti (the Kirkland Municipal Code, removal options, etc.) is under development. The Police Department has an officer and the Parks Department has a Youth Services Coordinator that are tasked with this responsibility.

YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT DAY

The City of Kirkland will have its first Youth In Government Day on April 28th and "How to Make Kirkland Graffiti-free" will be the topic of study. Staff is hopeful that the feedback from students will result in insight and options for possible solutions.

INTERIM GRAFFITI REMOVAL AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COSTS

The table below shows a breakdown of the number of staff hours and the costs of staff, vehicle and materials devoted to the Interim Graffiti Program in the first seven months.

	AUGUST 2004		SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER		JANUARY 2005		FEBRUARY	
	HRS	\$	HRS	\$	HRS	\$	HRS	\$	HRS	\$	HRS	\$	HRS	\$
CLERK	26.5	664	30	746	10	181	25	452	9	163	10	199	29	577
MGMT.														
ANALYST	10	336	8	269	8	269	7	235	5	168	5	188	5	188
SEASONAL LABOR	168.5	2,325	181	2,498	145	2,001	217	2,995	111.5	1,539	145	2,001	132.5	1,829
MATERIAL		1030		45		186		729		0		404		425
VEHICLE	168.5	292	181	313	145	251	217	375	111.5	193	145	251	132.5	229
TOTAL	205	\$4,647	219	\$3,871	163	\$2,888	249	\$4,786	125.5	\$2,062	160	\$3,043	166.5	\$3,248