

IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Accept Report of the Graffiti Abatement Program Update

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Presenter name: Juliette Muracchioli, Graffiti Abatement Program Coordinator

Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

- To brief Council on the efforts and role of the Graffiti Abatement Program and the increase of hate-related, political, and tagging moniker graffiti throughout Portland.
- To explain the need for increased abatement services for the communities of Portland using proactive graffiti removal methods, rather than the complaint-based methodology currently in place.
- To describe the impacts of graffiti on livability in Portland and how a lack of Police response is impacting graffiti vandalism victims city-wide.
- To present the power of our partnerships with local organizations like Central City Concern and others, and explaining how they enlighten the community about the impacts of graffiti.
- To propose an increase in free and reduced cost removal services for victims, reject the proposed budget cuts for FY 17-18 and improve Police response for victims needing police reports for insurance claim purposes.

Financial and budgetary impacts:

Discuss the impacts of the legislation relating to all of the following if relevant:

- The Graffiti Abatement Program's budget is proposed for a partial or complete cut for FY 17-18. This would reduce or eliminate the already minimal General Fund budget dollars dedicated to graffiti removal services for Portland communities, reducing ONI and City goals towards increasing equitable distribution of services to Portland communities.
- The budget for this program needs to be increased, not cut, in order to slow the rapid proliferation of graffiti and reach the City's equity goals.
- Our over 300 volunteers and numerous cleanup events manage to leverage nearly \$50,000 in removal cost savings, losing the coordination of these events and providing volunteers with free training and supplies would only allow graffiti volume to continue worsening.
- A budget increase would allow our program increased and faster removal services (the faster it's removed, the less likely it is to return), thereby reducing further/increased proliferation. Based on our research of other jurisdictions, systematic and proactive removal strategies are a common and effective means of reducing graffiti. Other jurisdictions have dedicated crews for graffiti removal, whether they are City employees or private contractor crews paid with City dollars to do exclusively City work. Both models could be effective.
- Other jurisdictions have dedicated crews for proactive graffiti removals in assigned districts allowing for a more equitable service system. If we were to move forward with this approach, City employees or private contractor crews paid by the City could be more powerful than the system we currently have in place which is exclusively complaint-based and disproportionately provides more services to communities well-versed in accessing City services.

Community impacts and community involvement:

Discuss the impacts of the legislation relating to all of the following if relevant. Describe who is impacted, how they are impacted, how any negative impacts have been addressed, and how the benefits are distributed. Describe how public involvement and input shaped the bureau's recommended action.

- Graffiti impacts almost every community within Portland: whether it's the alarming increase in hate graffiti all over Portland targeting our most vulnerable communities that are already dealing with the heavy burden of historical oppression, or the notable increase of small businesses dealing with worsening vandalism by taggers. Murals are being destroyed by taggers more regularly, an increase that is detrimental and expanding. Parks, PBOT and other City Staff are inundated with graffiti removals and gang graffiti continues to be a concern for the more vulnerable communities in East and North Portland who already struggle to receive the City services they desperately deserve.
- The most heavily targeted geographic areas include: East Portland, the Central Eastside Industrial District, all of Inner NE and Inner SE, City Parks throughout the East side, PBOT property (signs, retaining walls, poles, etc.), the neighborhoods of Cully, Lents, the JADE District (SE 80th-SE 85th from SE Harrison to SE Franklin) and more.
- Businesses of all sizes are impacted, as are faith based organizations, and non-profits.
- City livability is the most obvious impact on which graffiti takes a toll when it increases. While portions of the broken window theory have been debunked, graffiti's increase on/at properties that are already ripe for becoming forgotten spaces in Portland is often the first phase of worsening nuisance issues including dumped items and squatting.
- We do not anticipate any major objections to this proposed increase for services, though a handful of community members have expressed desires for more enforcement against negligent property owners. With the appropriate administrative support for the program in place (seasonal administrative support for our busy time of April-October), we anticipate increased enforcement of the Graffiti Nuisance Property Code against the most negligent property owners we encounter.
- We regularly hear from members of the community who are frustrated by the the lack of response from Police, and graffiti's negative impact on neighborhood livability. Our attempts to explain PPB's shortage of officers and how that has greatly affected PPB's capacity to deal with property crimes like graffiti is a daily conversation with constituents, and we always suggest they reach out to the Chief and our Elected Officials to voice their concerns. We believe any increase in services to address graffiti reduction and removal will be lauded.
- Groups and people testifying:
 - *Stan Penkin, Friendly Streets Board Member.
 - *Marcia Dennis, retired Graffiti Abatement Program Coordinator.
 - *Paul Watts, owner of Graffiti Removal Services who provides removal services for community members on behalf of the City of Portland.
 - *Community Volunteer Corps staff member, partner on twice monthly community cleanup events.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet

Does this action change appropriations?

- ☐ **YES:** Please complete the information below.
☐ **NO:** Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount