

June 24, 1996

GRAFFITI TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of this Task Force is the eradication of graffiti using a multi-pronged, coordinated approach to prevention, education, enforcement and removal. Given this goal, the Task Force recommends that:

- (1) The City should make a continuing commitment to prevent graffiti through a variety of efforts including educating young people about the damage it causes.
- (2) In the short-term, the City's efforts should be oriented towards:
 - (a) enforcement, and the apprehension of perpetrators;
 - (b) prevention through education of youth and business owners who sell paint and indelible markers, and raising public awareness through educational materials, the graffiti hot line, and enforcement efforts; and
 - (c) the swift removal of the "tags," and other graffiti, and the provision of technical assistance to property owners who have been victimized by graffiti.¹
- (2) A graffiti hot line 349-INFO will be established, effective July 1, 1996, to ensure a coordinated, rapid response to enforcement, removal and the provision of educational materials and technical assistance (see Section V.).
- (3) As a component of Community Oriented Policing, the Police Department should identify graffiti as a "quality of life" issue and treat it as a priority.
- (4) The Courts should vigorously prosecute offenders, and the City Council and City Manager should impress upon the Courts the City's commitment to eradicating graffiti and their desire to see offenders appropriately sanctioned.

¹ At this time the Task Force is not recommending the adoption of a City ordinance requiring property owners to remove graffiti on their property (although attached is a draft ordinance that might be considered, if necessary, at a later date); rather it is recommending an aggressive approach to enforcement laws criminalizing graffiti, and the provision of education and technical assistance for property owners who have been victimized by graffiti.

- (5) One City employee should be identified as the Graffiti Coordinator (a.k.a. Graffiti Czar) to coordinate graffiti prevention, education, removal and enforcement efforts. Ideally, this person should be located in the Police Department, since the Task Force finds enforcement of laws against graffiti to be the most significant method of eradicating graffiti in the short-term.
- (6) The City of Cambridge must keep its property clean of graffiti, removing marks as soon as possible. The City will then serve as a model to other public agencies and private owners, and discourage the actions of those who place their marks on city-owned property.
- (7) The City needs to continually encourage other public agencies and large property owners (Post Office, MBTA, MIT, Harvard, MDC) aggressively enforce and remove graffiti on their premises.
- (8) The provision of technical assistance to property owners, both large and small, will be a high priority; this will include dissemination of information on removal techniques, free use of solvents, brushes, pails, etc., and even machinery (i.e. power washer), when appropriate, to aid in graffiti removal.
- (9) Citizens and property owners should be appropriately recognized for anti-graffiti efforts; as the Task Force continues to meet, it will develop recognition programs.

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**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
GRAFFITI PLAN**

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ANTI-GRAFFITI PROGRAM PLAN COMPONENTS

PURPOSE & OVERVIEW:

Graffiti is a city-wide issue that not only effects public, private and institutional property owners by damaging property, it also promotes the impression that the City is an unsafe and out-of-control place. The Boston Globe's recent editorial (May 30th) referenced crime researchers who argue "that highly visible manifestations of social decay such as graffiti and broken windows left unrepaired can accelerate the perception of a neighborhood gone bad far beyond what the crime statistics justify." As Nathan Glazer¹ has written: graffiti, even when not obscene, confronts the citizen with "the inescapable knowledge that the environment he must endure ... is uncontrolled and uncontrollable, and that anyone can invade it to do whatever damage and mischief the mind suggests."

Both graffiti prevention and removal are time consuming and expensive, and require continuous intervention. The City can play a central role in graffiti prevention and removal, but it cannot be the sole participant in a comprehensive action plan; rather, the City must work with community groups, business and residential property owners, other public agencies and institutions to effectively combat graffiti. Property owners ultimately must be responsible for their own property. However, the City can coordinate prevention and enforcement efforts; act as a clearinghouse for graffiti identification and removal; provide technical assistance on removal techniques; and set an example by providing good maintenance of its own properties.

The Police, Schools and Public Works will play key roles in this effort.

- The School Department's graffiti response efforts are critical to the success of a city-wide program not only because school buildings are often exposed to graffiti attacks, but also because the age of persons arrested for graffiti offenses are most often school-aged. The department's proven methods of identifying perpetrators and quickly removing graffiti should be useful to others. Also, increasing education and awareness in the schools of the penalties of graffiti and the value of protecting property is important.
- The Police Department has a primary role in prevention and enforcement, and will continue to benefit from the School Department's tagging logs and with the Public Works Department's knowledge of graffiti hot-spots.

¹ *The Limits of Social Policy*, Harvard University Press, 1988.

- The Public Works Department's role in a city-wide effort is to help coordinate graffiti identification and removal, and provide technical assistance to property owners and community groups, in addition to the maintenance of City property.

DEFINITIONS

Graffiti: Any letters, numbers, word or words, writing, inscription, symbol, drawing, carving, etching or other marking of any nature, on any exposed surface on public or private property which defaces, obliterates, covers, alters, damages, mars or destroys property without the property owner's consent. Graffiti does not include the occasional and temporary marking of public streets or sidewalks with chalk for traditional children's games, nor does it include any words, letters, symbols, logos or numbers which convey information, an announcement, a direction or an advertisement which are in compliance with regulations concerning signs in the City zoning Ordinance.

Tagging: The conduct or activity, either as an individual or in a group, of spraying or applying paint with the intent to deface, mar, damage, mark or destroy any exposed surface on public or private property without the property owner's consent.

Tagger: A person who sprays or applies paint upon a building, wall, fence, sign, tablet, gravestone, monument or other object on any exposed surface on public or private property which defaces, obliterates, covers, alters, damages, mars or destroys property without the property owner's consent.

Hot Tags: A word or symbol that is racist or otherwise offensive.

I. EDUCATION

1. Target Audience

A comprehensive education program will disseminate information on a variety of topics ranging from vandalism in general to state and local laws to specific removal techniques. Pieces will be targeted to:

- community groups, on how these groups can be more actively involved in the identification and removal of graffiti;
- property owners, on responsibilities, removal techniques, and even landscaping suggestions (i.e. the use of ivy, or prickly bushes) that may discourage potential graffiti offenders;

- businesses that sell spray paint and indelible markers about the current City ordinance; and
- students, with a focus on prevention.

In the schools, the goal of this program is to:

- coordinate an anti-vandalism curriculum with the DARE curriculum (in the sixth grade in Cambridge), if possible;
- with younger students, introduce the "Captain Graffiti" program which has an overall goal of modifying students behavior by making them aware of the penalties and feelings of the victims, and by portraying graffiti writing as an activity that is not "cool" but childish; and
- in the high school, at opening of school year, review graffiti policy with students (just as school weapons policy is discussed).

In addition, for young people interested in graffiti as a means of artistic expression, the Task Force will explore making mural space available at locations throughout the City.

2. Educational Products

- a. Explore development of a logo/theme;
- b. Develop a "kit" to be used by Community Groups; and
- c. Develop appropriate media messages and technical assistance materials. Use newspapers, cable TV, the City of Cambridge Home Page on the Internet.

II. LAWS AND ORDINANCES

1. State Law

Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 266, sections 126, 126A, and 126B pertain to the defacement of natural scenery, personnel property, and tagging.

General Laws Chapter 266, Section 126 (enacted in 1965) prohibits painting or in any manner affixing to public property or the property of another any words, device, trademark, ad or notice without the consent of the property owner. An offender may be punished by a fine of up to \$100.00 plus the cost of removing the

defacement. Any defacement within the limits of the public way is declared to be a public nuisance that may be removed by any person.

For malicious painting, marking, scratching, etching or otherwise marking, injuring, marring, defacing or destroying the real or personal property of another, including but not limited to a wall, fence, building, sign, rock, monument, gravestone or tablet, **General Laws Chapter 266, Section 126A** (enacted in 1994) provides for a penalty of up to 3 years in state prison, a fine of \$1,500 or triple the value of the property marked, the cost of removal, and one year suspension of the perpetrator's driver's license.

For "tagging," **General Laws Chapter 266, Section 126B** (enacted in 1994) provides similar penalties except that imprisonment in a house of correction may not exceed 2 years. "Tagging" in the statute is defined as placing a sticker or applying paint spelling words or phrases associated with a group on a building, wall, fence, sign, tablet, gravestone, monument or other object or thing on a public way or adjoining to it, or in public view, or on private property with the intent to deface, mar, damage, mark or destroy such property.

If a violation of these statutes is motivated by bigotry or bias, it may constitute a "hate crime" as defined by General Laws Chapter 22C, Section 32.

2. Local Law

Cambridge City Code Section 9.04.010 prohibits the malicious and intentional marring or defacing of public and private property. For a first offense, restitution to the party injured is required.

Cambridge City Code Section 9.04.020 prohibits defacing public or private property and provides for a \$300.00 fine for so doing.

Cambridge City Code Section 9.04.060 prohibits the sale of aerosol spray paint cans or non-water soluble markers with brushes or applicators in excess of one-half inch to anyone under the age of 18 years. A sign saying that sales to underage people is prohibited must be posted at the point of display or sale. Violators are subject to a \$300.00 fine.

III. ENFORCEMENT

1. Crime Statistics

During the period of January 1, 1995 to June 1, 1996, the Police Department arrested 11 individuals (all male) for the crime of graffiti. One (1) individual was between the ages of 12 - 14 years old; four (4) were between the ages of 15 - 17 years old; four (4) were between the ages of 18 - 19 years old; and two (2) were

between the ages of 20 - 25 years old.

In the latter part of 1994, three (3) major arrests were made resulting in the clearance of 50 cases. The three (3) individuals were between the ages of 17-19 years old.

2. Police Department

As a component of Community Oriented Policing, the Police Department needs to identify graffiti as a "quality of life" issue and treat it as a priority. All officers are responsible for taking appropriate police action when there is an observance of, or probable cause, of a violation of the laws governing graffiti

It is recommended that the Police Department adopt the following protocol for handling incidents of graffiti:

- A Police Department staff member(s) should be designated as a main contact, assigned the responsibility of investigating the crime of graffiti.
- When there is a report of graffiti, this person(s) will initiate the investigation by beginning a Police Department Investigative Report listing all data available in the complaint.
- The Police Department will respond to the location and photograph the graffiti to maintain a record of the crime within 24 hours. If the location is city-owned property, the Police will meet at the location with DPW personnel, if possible. The Police will use a digital camera to "log the tag," the picture from which is capable of being loaded on a computer; this will allow the Police Department to share this information, as appropriate.
- After the location is photographed, the Police Department will contact DPW. DPW will then contact the property owner on the incident, and provide information (and technical assistance, if desired) on successful removal techniques.
- Records will be maintained on the incident. A database is being created on graffiti crimes by the Anti-Gang Unit.
- The Police Department will conduct a full investigation for possible prosecution of the offender.

Businesses will be fully informed of the City of Cambridge ordinance (Chapter 9.04.060) forbidding the sale of spray paint or broad indelible markers to any persons under 18 years old, and requiring businesses that sell these products to display a sign indicating that such a sale is unlawful and punishable by fine.

Although it is not anticipated at this point that sting operations will be undertaken, in the future this may be a tactic used.

3. School Department

The School Department has an aggressive approach to graffiti enforcement and removal, particularly in the high school. Perpetrators, when caught, are suspended and ordered to pay restitution. The School's Court Liaison also files a complaint with the District Court.

4. The Courts

The Court System should vigorously prosecute offenders, and the City Council and City Manager should impress upon the Courts the City's commitment to eradicating graffiti and their desire to see offenders penalized to the full extent under the law. City Officials and members of the Graffiti Task Force should meet with officials in the Court System, including the presiding judge of the District Court, to impress upon them the City's commitment to the eradication of graffiti.

IV. REMOVAL

How graffiti is removed depends on the type of surface on which the mark was made. On painted surfaces, graffiti "removal" usually means painting over the surface. Other times, particularly on brick and concrete surfaces, the marks can be removed using a power washer (on paint, brick and concrete) or, less regularly, a sandblaster (on granite and concrete).

The Plan calls for a multi-pronged approach to graffiti removal.

1. "Hot Tags"

"Hot tags" on public or private property need to be photographed, logged and removed as soon as possible (within 24 hours); when the hot tag is placed on private property, the City's crews, with the property owner's consent, will assist the owner in removing the offensive remark/symbol.

2. Public Property

A recommendation of the Task Force is that the City of Cambridge keep its property clean of graffiti, removing marks as soon as possible. The City will then serve as a model to other public agencies and private owners, and discourage the actions of those who place their marks on city-owned property. It is also important that the City hold other public agencies accountable for graffiti removal on its property.

a. City-owned property (parks, monuments and City buildings)

The City removes graffiti from city-owned property by using its own maintenance crews and through the use of contractors; it often depends on the type of material used to make the tag and the surface on which the tag was placed.

The Department of Public Works either paints over or removes graffiti at parks, on benches, bulletin boards, shelters, and buildings maintained by that department. It also is responsible for removal of graffiti from monuments in the City. Since most monuments have special handling requirements, the City contracts out the removal of the graffiti in these instances.

The Water Department uses departmental maintenance personnel to paint over graffiti on property it maintains on the Fresh Pond Reservation - including the gatehouse on Huron Avenue - and Payson Park. When a surface can be painted - or removed simply - the department handles it internally. When the surface is brick or stone, the removal is contracted out.

The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department also uses its own crews to remove/paint over graffiti when possible. Personnel of the Meter Shop paint meters as a part of the annual maintenance program; personnel of the Sign Shop, depending on the material used, either remove tags from signs "in the field," or take the sign down, (replace it) and attempt to remove the tag in the shop.

b. Other public agencies

The City needs to continually encourage other public agencies (i.e. U.S. Postal Service, MBTA, MDC) to aggressively enforce and remove graffiti on their premises. A meeting was held with representatives of the US Post Office, the MBTA and MDC last month to discuss graffiti removal efforts and the development of a comprehensive plan; each agencies willingness to be responsive is encouraging.

3. Private property: Commercial, Institutional and Residential

In general, the City will take to following approach to removing graffiti on private property:

- Notification of the property owner that the premises have been vandalized by graffiti and a request that the graffiti be removed. If desired by the property owner, the City will provide information on techniques to remove graffiti, and will make available for use (free of charge) solvents to remove graffiti on certain surfaces. When appropriate, the City will also loan its machinery (i.e. power washer to owners who need to remove graffiti. [It is important to note that users of this machine need to be trained on proper usage. The Department of

the necessary liability waiver is in process.]

- Working with residents and community groups to schedule "Clean up days" in a particular district to removal graffiti on buildings; this approach has been particularly successful in Central Square and Area IV.
- When necessary, and as determined by the Commissioner of Public Works, use City crews to remove "hot tags" on non-city-owned property.
- Development of, education on and judicious enforcement of a city ordinance requiring property owners to remove graffiti from their premises, if necessary.

4. Other Removal Programs

- Exploration of a program run out of the Sheriff's Office whereby prisoners (convicted of non-violent misdemeanors) are used to remove graffiti.
- Coordination with Probation for "community service" for graffiti vandals. This is currently being explored. Gill Sakakeeney, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, is interested in participating in City's efforts.
- Coordination with Schools on the identification of perpetrators, and the sharing of information.
- Explore possible coordination with Summer youth employment programs to assist in graffiti clean up activities (on public and private property). Liability issues (particularly as it pertains to clean up on private property) need to be fully explored; a liability waiver of some form (to be signed by the owner) will be necessary is graffiti is to be removed from private property.
- Particularly as it pertains to commercial establishments and utilities, explore with City regulatory boards (i.e. License Commission, Pole & Conduit Commission) and the Law Department the possibility of requiring property owners to remove graffiti from their property as a condition of their license with the City.

5. Types of Products

There is a growing list of products available to not only remove graffiti, but also to make buildings and equipment resistant to paint and markers. Coating products for buildings, benches, etc. resistant to paints and markers are available and should be used. The Task Force is currently researching specific coating products; once a product is recommended, the City will then "pilot" its use.

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As new City buildings and playgrounds are constructed, the City must continue to emphasize the use of graffiti-resistant materials in construction (i.e. glazed brick, stainless steel).

Another product of which the City is exploring the purchase is the Viper (brand name) Graffiti Removal System; this is a sophisticated graffiti removal machine, currently used in Phoenix, Arizona. The Viper System, with its 525 gallon water tank, needs to be mobilized with the use of a trailer. It has the ability to use varying degrees of pressured hot or cold water; the use of baking soda or graffiti removal solvents can be tied into this system. Based on the number of options purchased, the system costs between \$9,000 - \$12,000.

V. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1. Graffiti Hot Line

The procedures for handling calls to the graffiti hot line are as follows: the hot line will actually be a voice messaging system that is checked daily by Department of Public Works (DPW) staff. The DPW staff member will forward the incident to the Police Department for investigation. The DPW will also contact the property owner about removal of the graffiti, and can supply information on removal techniques and if the appropriate removal materials (solvents) are available, DPW will advise the owner of where such materials is available. The coordinator will forward incidents to other public agencies (i.e. Post Office, MBTA) as well. Lastly, the coordinator needs to establish a tracking system to ensure the graffiti actually gets removed.

2. Work with Community Organizations

An essential element of this plan is continued involvement of community groups in the identification and removal of graffiti. Neighborhood groups such as the Central Square Neighborhood Coalition, the Area IV Crime Task Force, the North Cambridge Crime Task Force, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, the Riverside Community Network, the Porter Square Neighborhood Association and the East Cambridge Planning Team/Crime Task Force will be encouraged to conduct a neighborhood "catalogue" of sites vandalized with graffiti. The City can then work with the group in contacting property owners and providing information on property owners' responsibilities with regard to removing graffiti as well as information on removal techniques. The City will also encourage Community Groups' to sponsor Clean Up Days, and provide graffiti removal kits. A portion of the Department of Public Works' graffiti budget will be allocated to purchase removal kits that can be used by neighborhood organizations (as well as by individual residents) for graffiti removal.

3. Clean up days

The model of a Clean Up Day sponsored by a neighborhood group has been implemented successfully by both the Central Square Neighborhood Coalition (CSNC) and the Area IV Crime Task Force; both the CSNC clean-up and the Area IV clean-up were facilitated by City Year Day of Service volunteers.

CSNC put together a "fact sheet" for its cleanup day on how to remove graffiti (see Appendix A), and created graffiti removal kits, funding through a Community Oriented Police grant of \$500. Each kit produced cost approximately \$30.

The focus of the Area IV Crime Task Force's effort was on cleaning up private property marred by graffiti, most of which had been on the property for a long time. After receiving property owner's permission, the Task Force removed the graffiti. This effort involved collaboration with St. Bartholomews' Church in Cambridge and Christ Church in Boston. Rev. Fox of St. Bartholomew's, using private donations, purchased removal equipment. One draw back encountered: property marred by graffiti owned by individuals living out of state was, in some cases, not able to be cleaned because consent was not obtained. [It should be noted that in the future, the Inspectional Services Department may be able to assist in locating and talking to the property owners.]

4. Recognition for people involved in anti-graffiti efforts

The Graffiti Task Force strongly believes that individuals and businesses involved in eradicating graffiti need to be recognized for their efforts. A program to appropriately recognize these individuals will soon be developed.

VI. FUNDING

During the past year, the Public Works Department spent approximately \$38,000 to remove graffiti from city-owned structures that it maintains.

The Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department and the Water Department have also expended funds to remove graffiti from property for which it is responsible, but not a significant amount: approximately \$5,000 annually in each department.

An additional \$25,000 is included in the FY97 Public Works Department budget to support implementation of the graffiti plan. These funds will be used for: the printing and postage for educational materials; the purchase of solvents and other materials for graffiti removal kits which will be available for use by property owners and community groups; the purchase of a new Viper Graffiti Removal System (or similar product) to aid the City in its removal efforts; and outside contracts to remove graffiti from city-owned property with special handling

requirements.

Note: Community Oriented Policing (COP) grants of up to \$500 are available to grass-roots, non-profit community groups (see Appendix C) for projects which facilitate linkages between Police Officers and community groups. Graffiti Clean Up Days have been funded in the past through this program.

VII. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

It is recommended that one person coordinate graffiti prevention/control efforts. Specifically, this person will: staff the graffiti hot line, referring locations vandalized with graffiti to the appropriate jurisdiction and providing information; develop and distribute educational materials to the schools, business owners (who sell spray paint and markers), community groups and residents on state and local laws, and methods to prevent and removal graffiti; work with the Cambridge Police and Emergency Communications Departments, School security staff, Cambridge Housing Authority, and Harvard and MIT police to log "tags," and identify and arrest perpetrators; and develop a tracking system to ensure that graffiti gets removed.

In addition, City staff will be deployed to: remove graffiti from City-owned property (Public Works, Traffic, Water); use digital camera to take pictures of and log tags (Police, School); disseminate digitized images via daily crime bulletins and other methods (Emergency Communications); and use "fax on demand" technology to help disseminate information on prevention and removal techniques (currently being explored).

VIII. RESOURCE LIST

The Graffiti Hotline (349-INFO) can be called to identify and request removal for any incident of graffiti. However, the numbers below can also be called directly to request that graffiti be removed. The Graffiti Task Force has met with representatives from these utility, institutional and other public agencies and stressed the importance the City places on swift removal, and alerted the agencies to the City's intention to continuously call upon them to remove graffiti that may be placed on their property. The Task Force commends their willingness to be responsive to the citizens of Cambridge.

Dept. of Public Works (city-owned property, not covered by departments listed below)

349-INFO (349-4636)

Dept. of Traffic, Parking and Transportation (signs, meters, signals)
349-4700

Water Department (Fresh Pond Reservation, Payson Park & other Water Department facilities)
Chip Norton @ 349-4781

U.S. Postal Service (all Postal Service property including post office boxes)
Maintenance Supervisor Tom Burdulis @ 876-0620

MBTA (all MBTA property)
Complaint line: 222-3200

Cambridge Housing Authority (all CHA property)
John Keane @ 868-3020

Cambridge School Department (all school property)
Naraj Malik @ 349-6854

Electrical Department (pay phones, fire boxes)
George Fernandes @ 349-4925

ComElectric (transformers, electrical poles)
1-800-642-7070

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MIT Real Estate Office @ 253-1483

Harvard University
Harvard Real Estate Office @ 495-2234

MDC (All bridges, MDC pools (what else?))
Community Affairs Office @ 727-5114 x530

Middlesex County (All County facilities including Courthouse & Registry)
County Commissioners' Office @ 494-4100

IX. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Information Sheet and comments on Clean Up Day,
prepared by Robert Winters, Central Square Neighborhood
Coalition

APPENDIX B: Draft City Ordinance

APPENDIX C: Community Oriented Policing Grant Program description

Graffiti Task Force

Vicky Boulrice, Community Oriented Policing, Police Department

Pat Carvello, School Security

Leonard DiPietro, Police Department Sergeant

Ralph Dunphy, Public Works Commissioner

Arthur Goldberg, Legal Counsel

Venita Mathias, Community Development Neighborhood Planner

David O'Connor, Emergency Management Director

Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City Manager

Charles Sullivan, Historical Commission

Use of graffiti removal solvents and tools.

The kits that have been assembled for graffiti removal consist of the following:

- **Container of Savogram Graffiti Remover.** This is the least caustic and the preferred solvent for removing graffiti from painted surfaces and for certain types of graffiti on other surfaces. Only experimentation will determine which solvent is ideal for a given surface or type of graffiti.
- **One spray bottle.** This can be used for the Savogram solvent should the spray provided prove not to your liking.
- **Several spray cans of Jasco paint remover.** This solvent will lift several layers of paint very quickly and should be used on painted surfaces only with great care and some swiftness of hand. We have found this to be the ideal solvent for rough surfaces such as brick and stone. The instructions on the can regarding how long the solvent should be left on the surface should be taken more as a suggestion than as an absolute rule. You may find it better to let the solvent stand for a shorter time and apply abrasion with a wire brush or steel wool.
- **Goggles and neoprene gloves.** Since you will be dealing with substances that can remove paint, care must be taken to avoid contact with skin, eyes, and clothing.
- **Wire brush.** This is especially for use on rough surfaces such as brick.
- **Steel Wool.** This is for use on rough surfaces such as brick and on many other surfaces such as wood and metal.
- **A bucket, some TSP solution, and a scrub brush.** After you've removed the graffiti to your satisfaction, it is recommended that you wash down the area with a solution of TSP to remove any traces of solvent and lifted paint.
- **Paper towels.** On smooth surfaces, this may be all you need for working the solvents on the graffiti.

Grffiti removal is not always a simple "spray it on, wipe it off" affair, especially when it involves brick or other rough surfaces or when paint has been there for a very long time. You should expect to encounter examples where the best you can do is to reduce the graffiti to faded unrecognizability, even if it is not possible to completely remove it. Try both solvents if one doesn't seem to do the trick. Don't give up too soon. Sometimes, several applications of solvent or allowing the solvent to sit for a longer time will take care of things.

Work in pairs. One person can manage the supplies and the cleanup after the graffiti has been removed. The other person can supply the elbow grease with the wire brush and steel wool. This person should be wearing goggles and gloves while working with the solvents. After a while you can trade jobs. For a location with a large display of graffiti, two pairs may make the work go faster. However you choose to work, take care to minimize contact with the solvents.

Apply the solvents in adequate amounts to lift the graffiti, but don't be unnecessarily wasteful. If you run out of either solvent, we should have more available.

If after actual or attempted removal of graffiti you conclude that the treated surface needs to be painted over, make a note of the location so that we can make those arrangements.

We have divided the project up into areas, generally one team per area. It is better to work on the more prominent graffiti first and to complete one site before moving on to the next.

Removing the graffiti that someone applied so thoughtlessly can be time-consuming. When residents see how much effort is required to remove graffiti, our hope is that they will appreciate how costly the problem can be in terms of money and labor and that they will be less tolerant of it in the future.

Above all, **your efforts are greatly appreciated**, not only by the organizers but by all the residents and business owners of the area.

Some observations, recommendations based on our Central Square experiences with graffiti:

- 1) When one engages in graffiti removal, one becomes very aware of just how much more difficult it is to remove it than it is to apply it. This is especially true in the case of rough, unpainted brick surfaces. Painted surfaces are probably best repainted, though it would be wise to have a supply of graffiti removal solvent ready for rapid response. This is also true because recent graffiti seems to be easier to remove than old graffiti.
- 2) For surfaces like mailboxes, utility boxes, steel roll-up doors, lampposts, etc., liquid graffiti removal solvent (Savogram) is the way to go. This graffiti should be removed as soon as it appears. This requires only some light duty steel wool a small spray bottle of solvent, and a cleaner like TSP to wash the area down after removing the graffiti. Very little solvent should be used if the graffiti is recent. Just spray on some solvent, lightly rub with steel wool (or even heavy duty paper towels) and then wipe clean. You'll want to use rubber gloves and lightly wash the affected area after removing the graffiti. Spray solvent, such as Jasco, is not recommended for mailboxes or other painted surfaces since it will cause so much paint to bubble up that the "cleaned" area may look worse than it did with the graffiti.
- 3) For a rough brick surface, especially red brick, we recommend a professional cleanup, using either sandblasting or other mechanical devices. Needless to say, mechanical cleaning of any kind will take its toll on the surface. It is generally too difficult to tackle a very rough surface with wire brushes and solvents, and the finished job will still bear a fair amount of the evidence of the graffiti.
- 4) For routinely painted surfaces like fences and some walls, it would be wise to have plenty of matching paint available for immediate cover-up within a day or two of the appearance of graffiti. In a business district, we recommend that some standard colors be employed in locations that are graffiti-prone and that an understanding be developed among property owners and business managers to allow for painting over graffiti quickly without having to secure permission from all affected parties. Rapid response is the key and this is only possible if the job is made as easy and automatic as possible.
- 5) We recommend that community volunteers be encouraged to maintain a small supply of graffiti removal supplies and solvents for small occurrences of graffiti, such as the tagging of mailboxes and utility boxes. This is the best way to effect a rapid response with an absolute minimum of process. For some surfaces, these volunteers may want to also have some spray paint with standard colors available for some of the more common surfaces. The best use of DPW workers and contractors would be for them to concentrate on the big jobs and the very rough surfaces and have volunteers handle the bulk of the small, scattered incidents of tagging. A motto of "gone within 24 hours" should be encouraged and frequent walks around each block recommended to stay current with any problems.

The following graffiti ordinance could be considered as new Cambridge City Code Section 9.04.080.

A. Findings.

The defacing of public and private property by graffiti has contributed to the degradation and blight of neighborhoods within the City. Such graffiti constitutes a nuisance which endangers the public health, safety and welfare. It also negatively affects property values.

Therefore, the prompt removal of graffiti is required. In the event graffiti is not removed promptly, it is appropriate for the City to remove it, in order to abate the nuisance, and to charge the cost thereof as a lien against the property. See generally, G.L.c.111, s.125.

B. Definition of Graffiti.

"Graffiti" means any letters, numbers, word or words, writing, inscription, symbol, drawing, carving, etching or other marking of any nature, on any exposed surface on public or private property, without the consent of the owner, which defaces, obliterates, covers, alters, damages, mars or destroys the property. Graffiti

shall not include the occasional and temporary marking of public streets or sidewalks with chalk for traditional children's games, nor shall it include any words, letters, symbols, logos, or numbers which convey information, an announcement, a direction or an advertisement which are in compliance with the regulation concerning signs as set forth in Article 7.000 of the Zoning Ordinance.

C. Removal of Graffiti.

(1) It is a violation of this ordinance to apply graffiti. Any person who applies graffiti shall be responsible to pay for the cost of its removal. The manner of such removal must be approved by the property owner and the City Public Works Commissioner or his/her designee. Failure of the graffiti writer to pay promptly the cost of such removal is a violation of this ordinance. Where graffiti is applied by an unemancipated minor, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) shall be responsible for the cost of the removal up to five thousand (\$5,000.00) dollars.

(2) When the graffiti writer is unknown, the owner of the property shall remove the graffiti from all buildings, fences and other exposed surfaces on their property within 60 days following discovery thereof, or within 60 days after receipt of a certified notice from the City Department of Public Works requiring such removal, whichever occurs first.

D. Abatement of Nuisance by City.

(1) If an owner fails to remove the graffiti in a timely manner, the City may enter upon the owner's property and remove the graffiti. Prior to entering upon private property, the City shall obtain the owner's or occupant's written consent and a signed release from liability.

(2) If the City is unable to obtain the consent and release referred to in paragraph D.(1), the City may send a notice to the owner (which shall be in addition to the notice provided for in paragraph C.(2) above), by certified mail return receipt requested, stating that the owner is maintaining graffiti which constitutes a public nuisance in violation of this ordinance. The notice shall also state that if the graffiti is not removed by the owner within 20 days, the City itself proposes to remove the graffiti and the cost of such removal shall be a debt of the owner, which, if not paid within 30 days after presentation of the bill, shall be made a lien upon the property.

The owner may in writing request a hearing before the Commissioner of Public Works or his/her designee within the 20 day period after receiving the notice. The City shall not take action to remove the graffiti until after the hearing. At the hearing, any protest to the City's proposed action shall be heard and determined. The owner shall be notified in writing of the City's

decision after hearing, which shall not be appealable. Unless the owner has shown good cause at the hearing why the City should not remove the graffiti and charge the owner for the cost, the City may, after the decision has issued, remove the graffiti at issue. The City may waive payment by the owner of the cost of removal in cases of indigency or for other good cause shown.

E. Penalty.

A violation of this ordinance shall be punishable by a fine of \$50.00. Each day such violation continues may constitute a separate violation.



City of Cambridge Police Department

TELEPHONE
(617)349-3300

FAX
(617)349-3320

Harold F. Murphy, Jr.
Acting Police Commissioner

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING COMMUNITY GRANTS

David Degou
Acting Superintendent

The Cambridge Police Department announces the availability of funding for grassroots community groups to continue the implementation of Community Oriented Policing in the neighborhoods of Cambridge.

Michael Giacoppo
Deputy Superintendent

The purpose of the Community Oriented Policing Community Grants is to help establish linkages between the officers working the various beats throughout the city and the residents in those neighborhoods. In this way the officers and the residents will become resources for each other to collaboratively address the crime and safety issues in the neighborhoods. We encourage you to become familiar with the officers assigned to your neighborhood. In this way officers and citizens will truly become partners.

Yvonne Hall
Deputy Superintendent

We encourage neighborhood groups to develop innovative events and projects that are based on these goals. Any and all ideas will be considered. Groups may apply for a maximum amount of \$500 per project or event.

Thomas O'Connor
Deputy Superintendent

The following are cited as examples of possible projects:

Gloria Pimentel
Deputy Superintendent

Lt. Ronald Ellis
Quality Control

Lt. Steven Williams
Community Relations

Mr. Raymond Santilli
Planning, Budget & Personnel

Mr. Frank Pasquarello
Aide to the Commissioner

"Cops in the Community"

By providing an informal atmosphere for dialogue, police officers can interact with the community in positive ways at community events. Community events are also an effective method of bringing neighbors together and establishing safer neighborhoods. These grants could be used for a neighborhood block party, drug-free fair, safety night, youth speak-out, softball, basketball, or soccer games, bike races, chess tournament, or other community activity.

Cambridge 150th

• 1846 - 1996 •

Anniversary

continued on back

"Cambridge Clean Up"

These projects will focus attention on the impact of neglect and decay in neighborhoods (the "Broken Windows" syndrome). These grants could be used to support beautification and clean-up efforts, such as cleaning vacant lots, removing graffiti, painting, planting flowers, or removing trash and litter.

Application Process

To get an application form, call Vicky Boulrice at 349-3236, or write Community Grants c/o Vicky Boulrice, Cambridge Police Department, 5 Western Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139.

- Applicants must be Cambridge-based, grassroots, non-profit organizations.
- You may apply for any amount up to \$500 per project or event.
- The application form must clearly state how police officers will be involved in the event or project. If approved, it is your responsibility as a grant recipient to make the necessary arrangements for all police participation.
- If approved, the following sentence must be included in any publicity advertising the event: "Funding provided by Community Oriented Policing Community Grants, administered by the Cambridge Police Department."
- A report will be required upon completion of the project or event.
- Applications will be accepted until the grant pool is depleted.

Graffiti is a city-wide issue that not only affects public, private, and institutional property owners, it also promotes the impression that Cambridge is an unsafe and out-of-control place.

The City will play a central role in eradication of graffiti using a multi-pronged, coordinated approach to prevention, education, enforcement and removal. It is the responsibility of citizens, community groups, business and residential property owners, and other public agencies and institutions to work together to effectively combat graffiti.

HOW THE HOTLINE WORKS

- Call the hotline to report graffiti. The information will be forwarded to the appropriate agency for removal and to the Police Department for investigation.
- Call the hotline to provide information to help apprehend taggers.
- Call the hotline to receive information on removal supplies and techniques and where they can be purchased.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL RESOURCES

In addition to calling the hotline, you can also call these agencies directly to request that graffiti be removed.

Witness tagging9-1-1

Cambridge Housing Authority property.....868-3020

Cambridge School Department property.....349-6854

ComElectric: transformers, electrical poles.....1-800-642-7070

Dept. of Traffic, Parking & Transportation: traffic signs, meters, signals.....349-4700

Electrical Department: pay phones, fire boxes.....349-4925

Harvard University: Real Estate Office.....495-2234

MBTA: Complaint Line.....222-3200

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Real Estate Office253-1483

Metropolitan District Commission: bridges, MDC pools, facilities727-5114 x530

Middlesex County: Courthouse,Registry, and other facilities.....494-4100

U.S. Postal Service: Maintenance Supervisor876-0620

Water Department: Fresh Pond Reservation, Payson Park, etc.....349-4781

Private propertycontact property owner

DRAFT

LAWS & ORDINANCES

State Law: Massachusetts General Law Chapter 266, Sections 126, 126A and 126B pertain to the defacement of natural scenery, personal property and tagging. **Section 126** prohibits the painting or in any manner affixing to public property or the property of another any words, device, trademark, ad or notice with the consent of the property owner. An offender may be punished by a fine of up to \$100.⁰⁰ plus the cost of removing the defacement. Any defacement within the limits of the public way is declared to be a public nuisance that may be removed by any person.

For malicious painting, marking, scratching, etching, or other wise marking, injuring, marring, defacing, or destroying the real or personal property of another, including but not limited to a wall, fence, building, sign, rock, monument, gravestone, or tablet, **Section 126A** provides for a penalty of up to three years in state prison, a fine of \$1,500.⁰⁰ or triple the value of the property marked, the cost of removal, and one year suspension of the perpetrator's driver's license.

If a violation of these statutes is motivated by bigotry or bias, it may constitute a "hate crime" as defined by General Laws Chapter 22C, Section 32.

Local Law: Cambridge City Code Section **9.04.010** prohibits the malicious and intentional marring or defacing of public and private property. for a first offense, restitution to the party injured is required.

Section 9.04.020 prohibits defacing public or private property and provides for a fine of \$300.⁰⁰ for so doing.

Section 9.04.060 prohibits the sale of aerosol spray paint cans or non-water soluble markers with brushes or applicators in excess of one-half inch to anyone under the age of 18 years. A sign saying that sales to underage people is prohibited must be posted at the point of display or sale. Violators are subject to a \$300.⁰⁰ fine.

LOGO/THEME

RESOURCES FOR
CAMBRIDGE RESIDENTS TO
FIGHT GRAFFITI BLIGHT

DRAFT

349-INFO
GRAFFITI HOTLINE

DRAFT



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300
FAX. 349-4307

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

June 24, 1996

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Attached please find the recommendations and report from the Graffiti Task Force.

The program recommendations of the Task Force, including a Graffiti Hot Line (349-INFO), will be implemented effective July 1, 1996. Residents are encouraged to call the hot line indicating locations that have been marred by graffiti, or for information and technical assistance of how to remove graffiti. The Graffiti Task Force will continue to meet and further develop the program elements.

I welcome any comments you may have on the report and recommendations.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Consent Agenda #35

S-362

Relative to a report from the
Graffiti Task Force.

In City Council June 24, 1996

*Recommendation Adopted
Referred to Environment
Committee
sent to C. Buehler 7/1/96*