

*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**                      **DATE: March 19, 2013**

**FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**                                      **WARDS: All**

**SUBJECT: GRAFFITI PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT PLAN - STATUS REPORT**

**ISSUE:**

The issue for City Council consideration is to receive the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan – Status Report.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council receive the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan – Status Report.

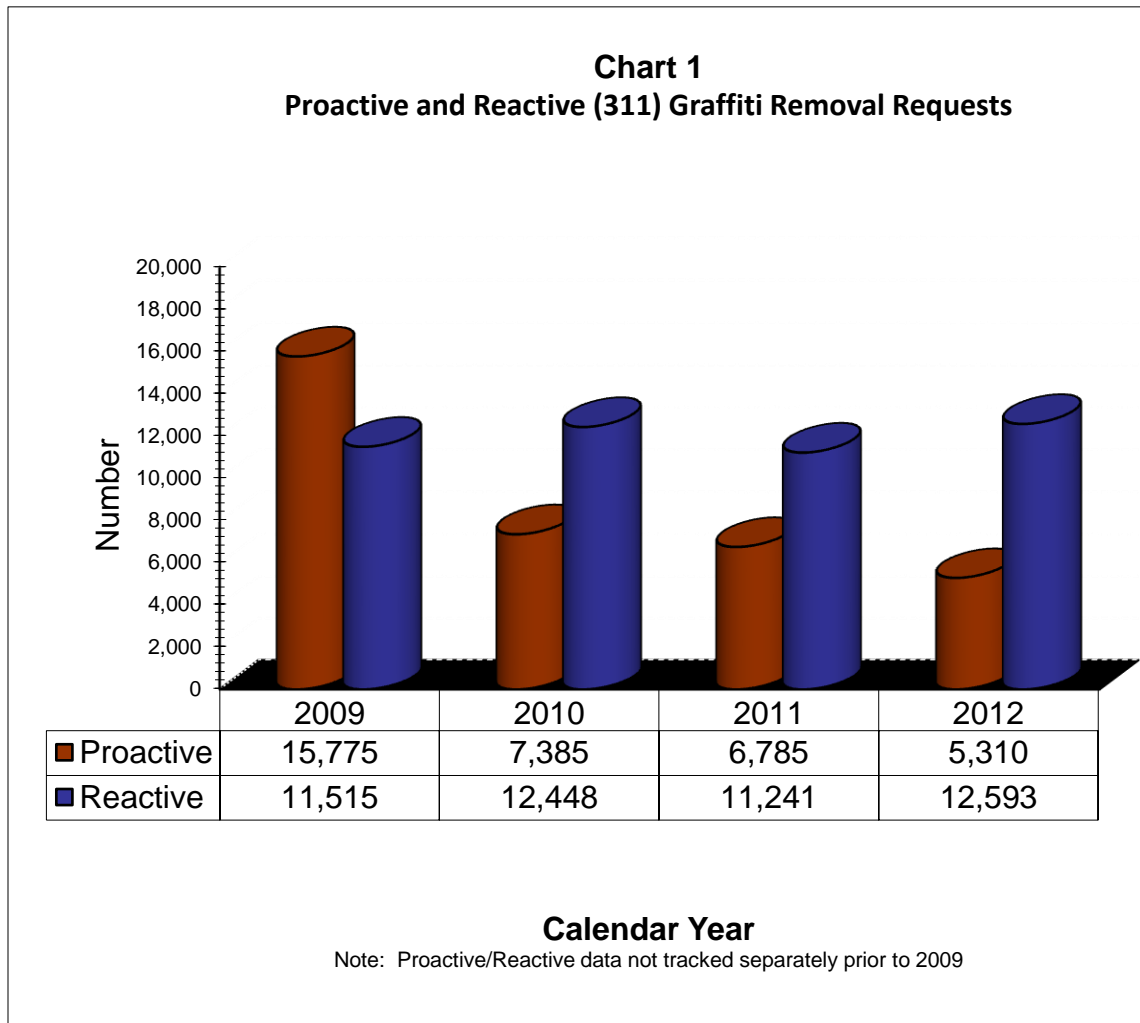
**BACKGROUND:**

On August 14, 2007, the City Council approved the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan, a multi-departmental strategy that involves Public Works (PW), Police, Information Technology, Development, Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Riverside Public Utilities, and the City Attorney’s Office. Additional partnerships have evolved with Alvord and Riverside Unified School Districts and non-profits such as Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful, to promote education, community beautification and volunteerism. The departments collaboratively developed the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan to direct a zero tolerance and multi-faceted attack on graffiti. The impact of this approach has been substantial and includes the following elements:

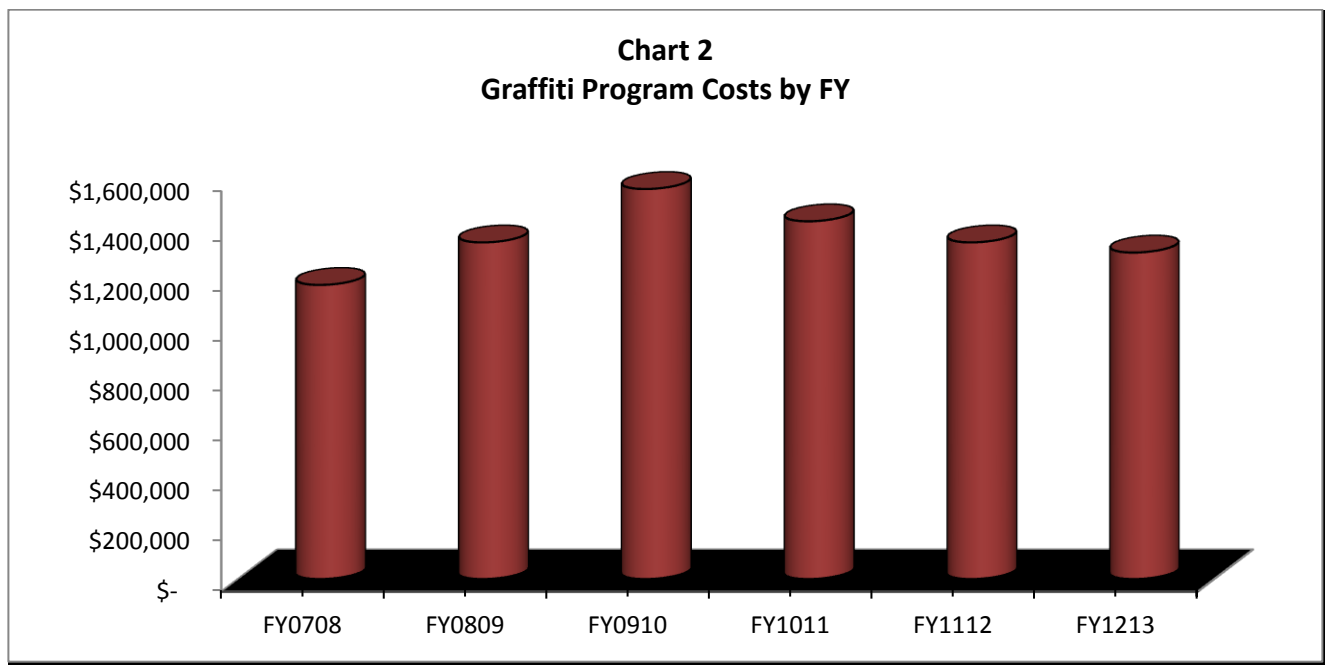
1. Public Education
2. Community Involvement
3. Rewards for public calls leading to an arrest
4. Rapid Response times
5. Documenting and tracking offenders
6. Prosecution of offenders

This update provides a summary of the achievements and challenges in 2012. During 2012, 17,903 graffiti service requests were received by the 311 Call Center (Chart 1), a 1% reduction from 2011 and 41% reduction from 2008. This was the fourth consecutive year the City has experienced a decrease in graffiti service requests.

Graffiti service requests consist of reactive and proactive calls. Reactive calls are created when individuals report graffiti to 311. Proactive calls are created when graffiti crews identify and remove graffiti along their routes. Currently, two-thirds of all graffiti service requests are initiated by 311 community calls (reactive). Over the last four years, proactive calls decreased as a result of a reduction in the number of staff on each truck (from two to one), position turnover, vacancies and staff out on medical leave. Additionally, staff handled more calls internally that were previously handled by outside contractors.

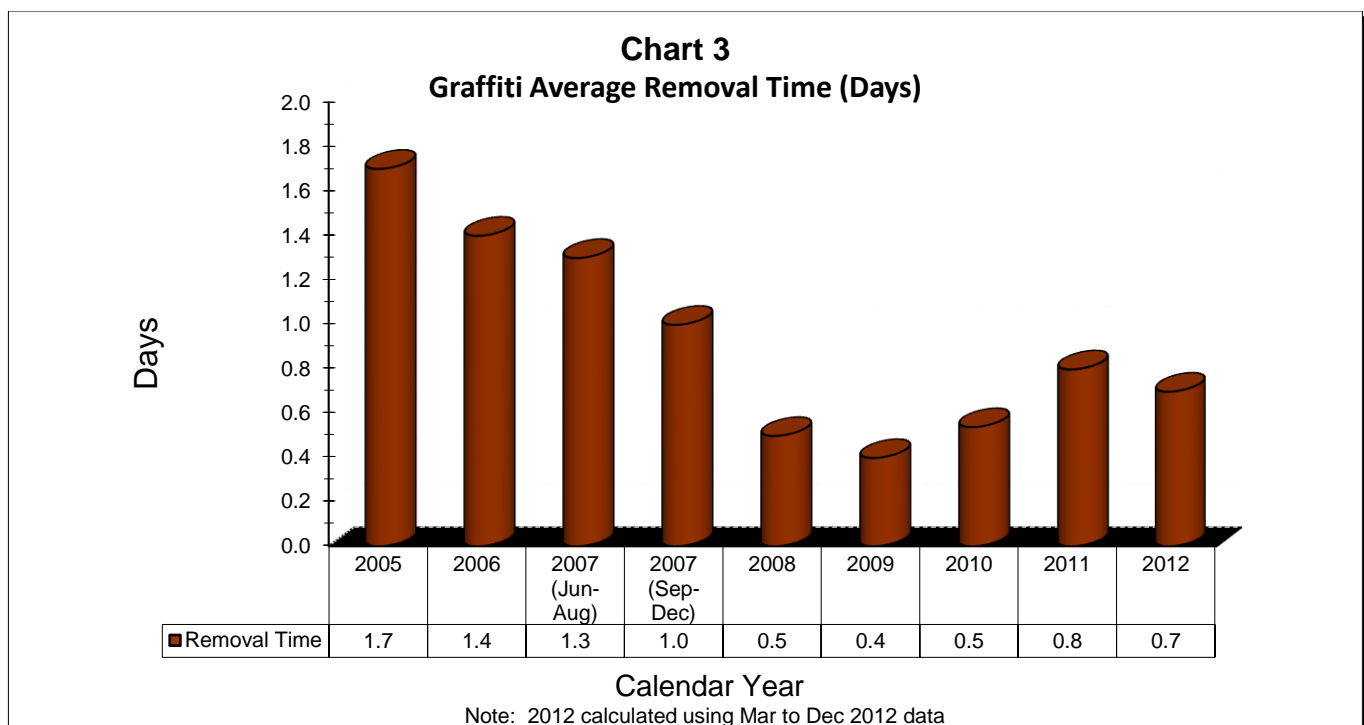


Through cost saving measures taken over the last few years to reduce the program budget, expenses have decreased annually since fiscal year 2009/10 (Chart 2). The cost reductions to the program were achieved primarily through reductions in contracted services. We previously contracted with two vendors to mitigate the most difficult graffiti on surfaces such as sidewalks, curbs, gutters, light poles, walls, and boulders at cost of \$200,000 annually. Because most of this work is now handled internally, contract costs have been reduced to \$32,000 per year.



One of the critical components of the program is to remove graffiti as soon as it appears, with a goal to remove graffiti within a 24-hour period. During 2012, crews removed graffiti within 17-hours on average (Chart 3), 58% quicker than the 41-hour removal time in 2005. Individuals within the City continue to use 311 to report graffiti so that crews can quickly respond.

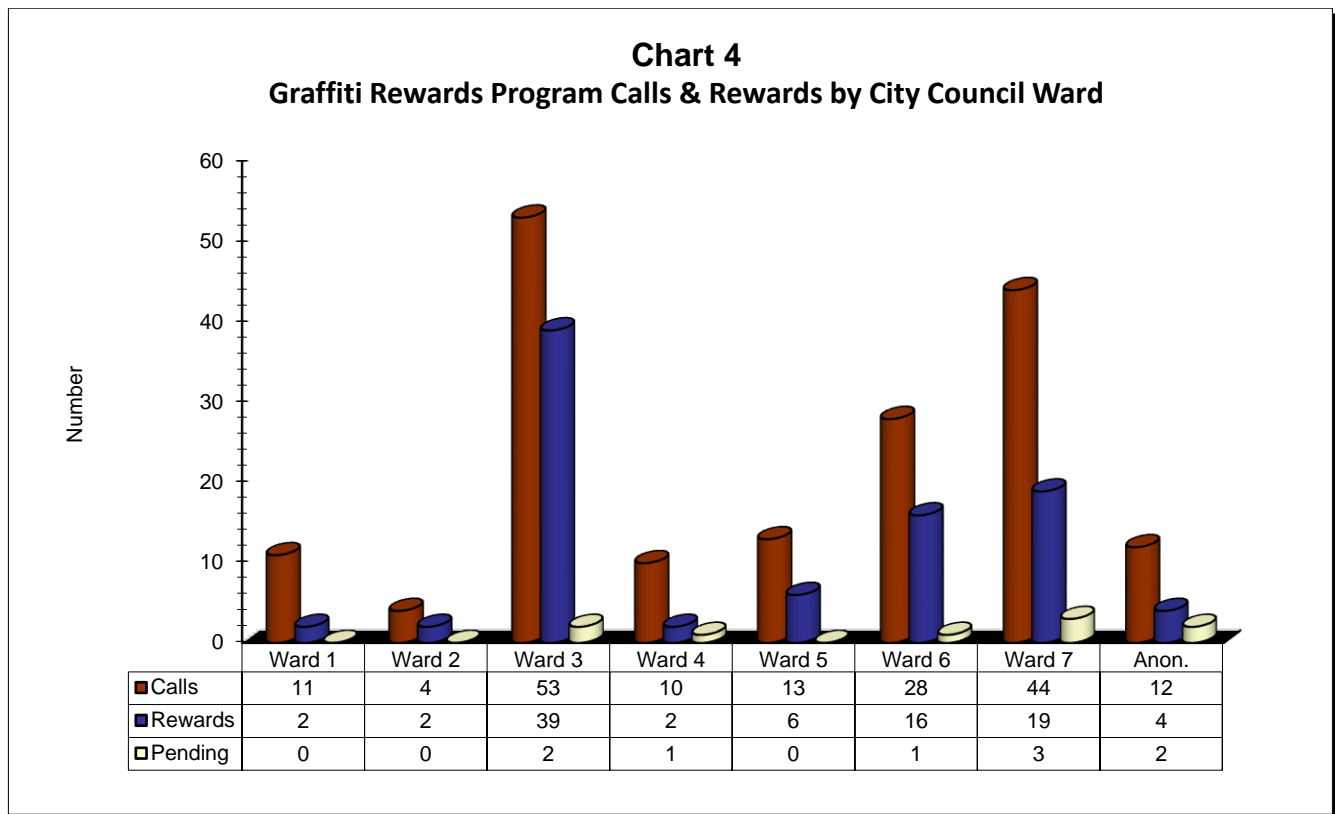
In order to further improve the program, a new Graffiti iPhone Service application was recently launched. This new application is utilized by Graffiti Field Crew's to receive service requests and track data electronically while in the field. This new app should improve response times, provide more time to remove graffiti and allow for greater tracking of graffiti related data.



**Graffiti Rewards Program**

The goal of the Graffiti Rewards Program implemented in October 2007 is to increase the City’s ability to arrest graffiti criminals and reward witnesses who report graffiti crime. The Program provides a \$1,000 cash reward for information that leads to the arrest of anyone for the crime of graffiti or possession of vandalism tools. Callers can remain anonymous, if they choose.

Since October 2007 the City has received 175 calls reporting graffiti activity. Chart 4 below, identifies that of the 175 calls reporting graffiti, 99 (57%) were eligible for the reward and to date \$55,000 has been disbursed to tipsters. All rewards are subject to cost recovery from graffiti vandals through restitution and community service sought by the City Attorney’s Office.



**Reimbursement for Property Damage**

To supplement criminal prosecution of graffiti criminals, the City Attorney’s Office seeks reimbursement for expenses associated with eradicating graffiti within the City. Civil Code Section 1714.1(b) provides for recovery of clean-up costs, attorney’s fees, police investigative costs, and court costs up to \$25,000 in actions brought against the parents of minors who deface property with paint or similar materials. Since 2005, the City Attorney’s Office has initiated collection action against arrested individuals and their parents or guardians, resulting in \$346,610 in repayment.

**Table 1—Restitution Received**

FY	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 (proj.)
\$	4,500	31,000	70,000	38,700	39,631	59,661	82,618	30,000

### Community Service Program

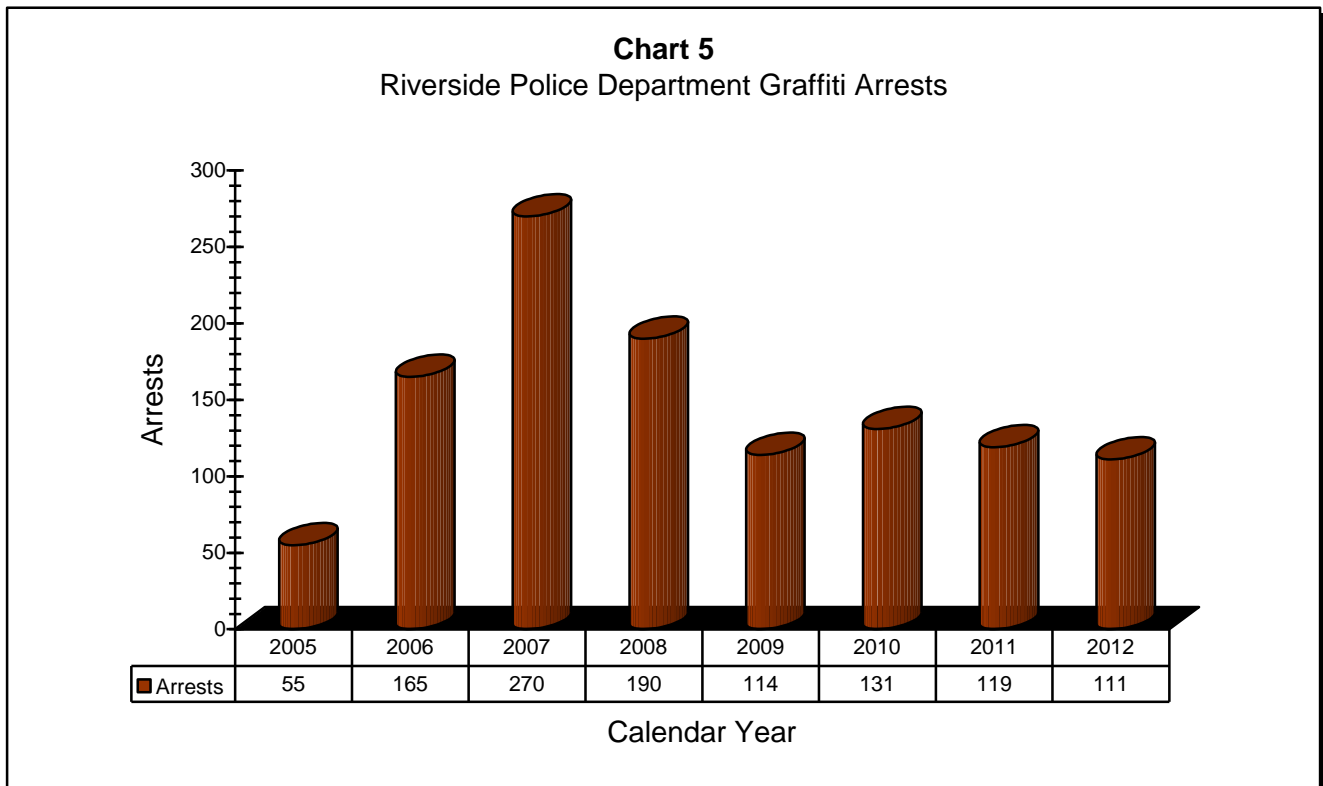
In August 2008, the Community Service Program was initiated as an element of the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan. This allows individuals arrested for graffiti vandalism to “work off” a portion of the restitution owed to the City. On March 9, 2010, the City Council made it mandatory for vandals to work off the cost of any Graffiti Reward paid in their respective cases. Work completed by Community Service Program participants consists of litter and weed abatement, filling sandbags, and tree planting for the Public Works Department. To date, arrested individuals have contributed an estimated 5,815 hours of community service.

**Table 2—Community Service Program Hours**

FY	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 (proj)
Hours	0	0	60	820	897	1,811	1,203	750

### Graffiti Enforcement & Prosecution

The Riverside Police Department (RPD) Graffiti Unit consists of two full-time sworn personnel working in conjunction with officers from each neighborhood policing center to assist with graffiti investigations within their assigned areas. RPD arrested 111 persons (Chart 5) in 2012 bringing the total number of arrests to 1,155 since 2005. Notably 935 of the arrests have occurred since the start of the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan in August 2007.



**School Education Program**

In January 2009 the Public Works Department in cooperation with the Alvord Unified School District (AUSD) and Riverside Unified School District (RUSD) launched its graffiti education program. The program educates elementary and middle school students about the adverse impact graffiti has on the community, consequences to individuals arrested for graffiti vandalism, and alternatives to criminal behavior. In 2012, 2,040 students from 24 schools participated in the School Education Program. Our 1-hour anti-graffiti presentation generates a lot of conversation from student’s often keeping public works staff at the school for up to 30 minutes longer to answer more specific questions from the students.

**Table 3—2012 School Education Program**

Date	Alvord Unified School District	Students	Date	Riverside Unified School District	Students
1/19	La Granada Elementary	50	1/10	Frank A. Miller Middle	350
2/2	Stokoe Elementary	40	2/16	Bryant Elementary	100
3/7	Wells Middle	5	10/16	Emerson Elementary	80
3/22	Twin Hill Elementary	40	10/23	Jackson Elementary	100
3/29	Orrenmaa Elementary	45	10/25	Alcott Elementary	100
4/26	Terrace Elementary	60	11/1	Taft Elementary	100
9/13	Villegas Elementary	80	11/28	Jefferson Elementary	100
9/20	Wells Middle	80	11/29	Liberty Elementary	100
9/27	Arlanza Elementary	50	11/30	Central Middle	60
11/15	Foothill Elementary	50	12/4	Freemont Elementary	100
11/27	Collett Elementary	50	12/6	Madison Elementary	100
			12/11	Longfellow Elementary	100
			12/13	Mt. View Elementary	100

**Promoting Community Involvement**

By conducting paint-outs and green wall projects on a recurring basis, the Public Works Department encourages community awareness and involvement in the battle against graffiti.

Paint-outs provide an opportunity for the community to come together to combat graffiti vandalism. Since graffiti is removed in less than 24-hours by City crews, the Public Works Department sponsors paint-outs twice a month to uniform walls and remove graffiti from other surfaces throughout the City. The Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful (KRCB) program managed by the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce co-sponsors one of the events each month. During 2012 the Public Works Department coordinated 16 paint-out locations involving 667 volunteers.

**Table 4—2012 Volunteer Paint-Out Locations**

Date	Location	Description	Volunteers	Ward
1/19	Trautwein/Van Buren	Uniform walls	35	4
2/4	Sedgwick/Kansas	Uniform walls in alleys (2 teams)	50	2
3/3	Rutland Park & Picker/Janet	Uniform walls, poles, utility boxes (2 teams)	60	7
4/7	Martha Mclean Park (RR)	Uniform railroad trusses in S.A. Riverbed	50	1
4/28	Babb/Philbin & Picker/Janet	Uniform walls, poles, utility boxes (2 teams)	50	6
5/12	Van Buren/Gibson	Uniform walls	25	5
7/3	Dario Vasquez Park (Alleys)	Uniform walls in alleys	60	2
7/9	Park (12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> )	Uniform walls	60	2
7/10	Boundary Ln (behind housing)	Uniform walls	23	5
8/25	Monroe/Lincoln Canal	Uniform walls	38	5
8/29	Tyler/Shoshone	Uniform walls	13	5
9/20	Indiana (Pierce-La Sierra)	Uniform walls	35	6
9/20	Janet (Challen-Picker)	Uniform walls	15	6
9/29	Tyler/Shoshone	Uniform walls	13	5
10/6	SA River (Buena Vista-Market)	Uniform walls (SA River bike trail - 2 teams)	105	1
11/3	Washington/Dufferin	Uniform walls	35	4

Similarly green wall projects beautify walls and areas prone to graffiti vandalism. Ivy, trees, bushes or other plant material are planted to grow and prevent the walls and area from recurring graffiti. During 2012, Public Works staff coordinated 5 green wall beautification projects bringing an opportunity of volunteerism to 105 volunteers.

**Table 5—2011 Volunteer Green Wall Projects**

Date	Location	Description	Volunteers	Ward
3/3	La Sierra (Collett-La Sierra HS)	Green wall with vines	10	7
5/12	Victoria/Madison	Beautification with 30 Orange trees	25	4
7/10	Victoria (Madison – Grace)	Beautification with 175 roses	30	4
8/25	Lincoln/Monroe (by canal)	Beautification with 100 Ragged Robin Roses	25	5
11/3	Mary (Victoria – Frances)	Green wall with shrubs	15	4

## Public Outreach

The Public Works Department educates the public about the impact graffiti has on a community through a combination of media and outreach targeted toward three primary segments; youth, business and community. Outreach topics include eradication and prevention through various methods including:

- School Education Program
- Promotional Items
- Community Events
- Community presentations
- Flyers promoting Poster and Video contest
- Brochures and posters
- Advertisement on solid waste trucks
- Website

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact with receiving and filing the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan – Status Report.

Prepared by:	Thomas J. Boyd, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer
Certified as to	
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Approved as to form:	Gregory P. Priamos, City Attorney