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May 7, 2014

## DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT – PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES 2014-36

TO: Committee of the Whole  
SUBJECT: Graffiti Removal Services - Update  
ORIGIN: Director, Public Works Services

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

**THAT Development & Infrastructure Services Report Public Works Services 2014-36 dated May 7, 2014, regarding Graffiti Removal Services – Update, be received and the following recommendation(s) be adopted:**

- 1. THAT staff continue to contract Graffiti removal services, in the amount of \$15,000 for 2014;**
- 2. AND THAT the \$15,000 for contracted graffiti removal services continue to be included as part of the annual Parks & Property Services Operating Budget;**
- 3. AND THAT an additional \$5,000 be included in the same budget item to address graffiti on the Tom Taylor Trail markers.**

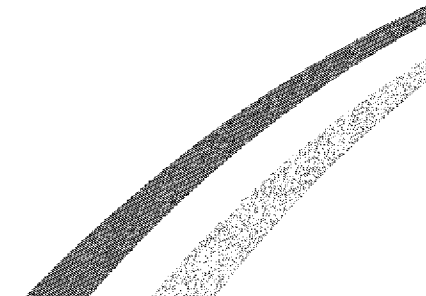
### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline the impact of contracted graffiti removal services.

### BACKGROUND

**Council approved the contracting out of \$15,000 of graffiti removal services, on a trial basis, for 2012 and 2013.**

In the fall of 2011 the Graffiti Abatement Task Force provided recommendations on a strategy to address challenges with graffiti within the Town (Community Services Report – Commissioner 2011-91). The task force worked in partnership with the York Regional Police, Town Staff, community groups, the business community and concerned residents to develop a Graffiti Abatement Program. The budget was approved in 2012 to contract out graffiti removal services in the amount of \$15,000, on a one to two year trial basis, and that a follow up report be provided back to council.



In February of 2013, a follow up report was brought forward to Council (Community Services Report 2013-09). Council approved the recommendation to continue the pilot program in the amount of \$15,000 and provide a follow up report in 2014.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Staff continues to work proactively with a number of stakeholders in an effort to address graffiti.**

Staff continues to work with a number of stakeholders in effort to collaboratively address the issue of graffiti. Below is a list of some of the primary stakeholders the Town is working with:

**YRP :** Staff continues to work and communicate with York Regional Police with regards to documenting and tracking instances of graffiti. Staff also continues to explore various opportunities with YRP to address graffiti and share information as necessary. Pictures are taken of relevant graffiti tags and sent to YRP so they can investigate appropriately.

**Newmarket Hydro:** A tentative agreement has been discussed with Newmarket Hydro, which allows the Town's contracted graffiti removal services to remove graffiti on property/utilities owned by Hydro. Costs incurred could be invoiced and subsequently reimbursed by Newmarket Hydro.

**Canada Post:** Staff have been trying to set up a meeting with Canada Post to discuss graffiti on mailboxes. These meetings will look at the ongoing graffiti issues occurring on existing mailboxes as well as the new community mailboxes being proposed as part of the phasing out of home delivery service.

## **ANALYSIS**

**The contractor graffiti removal trial continues to provide improved response time, detailed documentation, safe removals in challenging areas and increased graffiti removal throughout the Town.**

Graffiti removal services continue to be delivered both under contract and by Town staff. Removal is primarily completed on Town owned property. No removal is taken place on private property, or property owned by most utility companies. There has been ongoing discussion to have a formal agreement put in place with Newmarket Hydro to address their graffiti. The services delivered under contract have continued to provide the following enhancements to our service level:

**Improved response time** – majority of service requests are successfully fulfilled within 24hrs of notification to contractor, even during weekends.

**Detailed documentation** – all service requests are documented in detail with the date and time of request, followed by time of removal, photo documentation before and after removal, and detailed invoicing. All information is provided digitally and allows for improved record keeping. This documentation is valuable to both the Town and York Regional Police for investigative purposes as well as prosecution, and has been successfully used in investigations conducted by York Regional Police.

**Service to challenging locations** – removal can be done efficiently by the contractor in locations that present greater health and safety concerns (adjacent to or within bodies of water – ex. bridge supports), as well as areas that are not highly visible (ex. inside drainage culverts or within

woodlots). Locations such as these are often challenging for Town staff due to the significant time requirements and/or limited resources available to address low priority graffiti.

**Greater quantities of graffiti removed** – Often low profile areas or more remote locations of graffiti have not been addressed due to prioritization of staff resources. The ability to retain a contractor to address these areas allows for more comprehensive eradication of graffiti, while allowing greater flexibility of Town staff resources to be allocated to higher priority tasks. Also, the improved response times led to multiple removals in a location over a given period of time, as opposed to fewer removals in the same location, over the same amount of time. The result was longer periods of that location being free of graffiti (ex. Queen St. Bridge).

Town staff resources continue to provide graffiti removal on a smaller scale, where removal can be done quickly and efficiently, often as part of other duties (example: during playground inspections or washroom cleanings). They have also been tending to some specialized items such as the public art along the Tom Taylor Trail. In general, larger, complex and more geographically isolated graffiti is often removed by the contractor for improved efficiency and cost savings.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

**The trial program for graffiti removal by a contractor in conjunction with Town staff provided enhanced services.**

In 2012, \$14,280.00 was spent on graffiti removal by contractors, and \$14,861.00 was spent in 2013 to address graffiti on Town property.

Graffiti removal costs rose for 2013. These increased costs were attributed to three primary factors: 1) ongoing removal of graffiti in areas not normally addressed (ex. remote locations, challenging locations, repeat removals), 2) the excessive tagging by single sources (taggers such as “Volume”), which often create spikes in graffiti related costs, and 3) the ongoing vandalism and graffiti incurred by the public art along the Tom Taylor Trail.

Graffiti costs for 2012 and 2013 are as follows:

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Contractor Removal	\$ 14,280.00	\$ 14,861.00
Town Resources	\$ 8,430.00	\$ 13,177.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 22,710.00</b>	<b>\$ 28,038.00</b>

### **CONCLUSION**

The combined service delivery of graffiti removal by both contractor and Town staff, has allowed for an improvement on the service delivery of graffiti removal. Given the positive impacts associated with timely removals and more comprehensive eradication, it is suggested that the contracted services be moved from a trail program and now form part of the annual Parks & Property Services operational budget. Additional funding is also required due to the Tom Taylor Trail markers being highly vandalized articles and the specialty required to correct any defacement.

## **BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES**

### *Living Well*

Provide efficient, effective and environmentally sound maintenance services to an appropriate level that achieves Council mandated services levels, which meet public health and safety requirements and enhances quality of life while ensuring that system capital assets retain their value and are managed and funded according to sustainable, lifecycle based principles and practices.

## **BUDGET IMPACT**

### Operating Budget

There will be no impact on the approved 2014 operating budget. Funding has been approved in the 2014 PWS operating budget in the amount of \$15,000 for graffiti removal by a contractor. Additional funding will be brought forward as part of the 2015 operating budget discussions.

### Capital Budget

This report has no impact on the Capital Budget.

## **CONTACT**

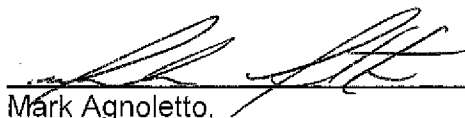
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