

From: "Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council"

Date: 9/3/2025 4:12:01 PM

Subject: Graffiti Abatement Grants to BIAs

Attachments: BIA-Graffiti-Memo to Mayor Council V-FINAL.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Maria Pontikis regarding Graffiti Abatement Grants to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- This Business & Economy Office (BEO) memo responds to Council inquiries from the July 9, 2025 Standing Committee meeting regarding the 2025 Graffiti Abatement Grants to BIAs
- It outlines the three main approaches the City uses to support graffiti prevention and abatement, including contracted services, on-demand supplies, and annual grants to BIAs
- The City-managed graffiti removal program operates with a \$1M annual budget and includes a social sustainability component
- The \$500,000 Graffiti Abatement Grant is distributed across 22 BIAs and supplements their own graffiti removal budgets, which vary by area
- BIAs use the grants in different ways depending on local needs: examples include mural creation, complex removals and targeted area cleanups
- Staff will include data on the volume and scope of removals in the 2026 report to Council to provide further insight into grant usage

If you have any further questions about the memo, please contact Maria Pontikis at 604-218-6319 or maria.pontikis@vancouver.ca.

Thanks,

Karen

Karen Levitt, Acting City Manager
karen.levitt@vancouver.ca

MEMORANDUM

September 3, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Karen Levitt, Acting City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Lon LeClaire, General Manager, Engineering Services
Siobian Smith, Director, Business and Economy Office

FROM: Maria Pontikis, Chief of External Relations

SUBJECT: Follow-Up Information on Graffiti Abatement Grants to BIAs

RTS #: N/A

The purpose of this memo is to respond to Council inquiries raised as part of the July 9, 2025 meeting of the Council Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities, where Council approved issuance of 2025 Graffiti Abatement Grants to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

In response to Council inquiries at that Standing Committee meeting, the Business and Economy Office (BEO) committed to provide additional information regarding the various models and associated costs utilised by the BIAs to address graffiti prevention and abatement.

1. The City employs three main approaches to graffiti prevention and abatement; 1) An externally contracted graffiti removal program administered by the Engineering Department; 2) An on-demand program providing a set allocation of free paint supplies and removal wipes each year; and 3) An annual grant allocation to the BIAs through the City's operating budget.

- 1.1 The City-managed graffiti removal program operates within a budget of approximately \$1 million per year with an annual average of 160,000 removals. The current contract with a local company, Goodbye Graffiti, performs monthly maintenance of a list of sites and public assets owned by the City and Park Board. Within this contract is a social sustainability component, resulting in compliance with the City's Fair Wage program as well as contracting of social enterprises to provide skill building and employment opportunities.

- 1.2 The on-demand program to support graffiti removal consists of three components:

- a) Free Paint: allows property owners and tenants to access two gallons of paint and a brush from any Dulux Paints location, up to 2 times in a calendar year;
- b) Community Paint Out: up to \$2,000 per year for paint and related supplies offered to BIAs and Community Policing Centres;
- c) Free Graffiti Wipes: \$10,000 of graffiti wipes are mailed directly to BIAs and Community Policing Centres.

1.3 The Graffiti Abatement Grant from the City is intended to supplement the graffiti removal efforts funded through the annual budget of each BIA. The City grant agreement stipulates that the grant must be used for abatement activities not already covered by existing contracts. This grant program allocates \$500,000 per year to the 22 BIAs, currently allocated based on a proportional approach proposed by the Vancouver BIA Partnership.

- 2. Most BIAs dedicate funding in their annual budget for the removal of graffiti within their respective areas, often within an overall budget allocation for street beautification and street safety/security activities. Funding for graffiti removal across the BIAs varies from an average of 8% percent of annual BIA levies in Downtown Eastside (DTES) BIAs to an average of 6% for BIAs outside of the DTES.
- 3. Each BIA uses the Graffiti Abatement Grant differently in alignment with area needs. Contracts vary in length from month-to-month to full-year arrangements, specifying the frequency of removals and particulars of eligible graffiti, such as size and complexity. Typically, graffiti that falls outside the scope of a contract is treated on a case-by-case basis. Examples of different models are provided below.
 - 3.1 Remove graffiti in a certain area of a neighbourhood, above a certain size threshold, or located above a certain height;
 - 3.2 Remove complex graffiti that requires a higher level of attention to detail and time, such as removing graffiti on a mural;
 - 3.3 Creating murals as a preventative measure to deter graffiti;
 - 3.4 General funding source for removing graffiti on an as-needed basis.
- 4. In the 2026 report on Graffiti Abatement Grants for Council consideration, the BEO will seek to include information from BIAs regarding the volume and scope of removals in 2025 to enable greater insights on the use of City grant funds.

Should you have any questions about the above information, please reach out to me directly.



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