

# STAFF REPORT

## City of Lancaster

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Date: September 25, 2012

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Robert C. Neal, Director of Public Works

Subject: **Graffiti Abatement Volunteer Program**

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**Recommendation:**

Receive report and approve the implementation of a Graffiti Abatement Volunteer Program.

**Fiscal Impact:**

None

**Background:**

Graffiti is a challenge for the City, as it creates an eyesore and can negatively impact the quality of life in a community and affects people's perceptions about safety. Graffiti vandalism continues to be one of the more challenging problems that the Public Works Department is facing. Despite ongoing efforts to deal with graffiti, it continues to persist. In an effort to engage the community and instill a sense of confidence, pride, and satisfaction in residents, City staff developed the Graffiti Abatement Volunteer Program. Community involvement is the key element for a successful anti-graffiti program.

Studies have shown that graffiti prevention efforts work, and the most effective way to prevent graffiti is to remove it promptly. Immediate removal – within 24-28 hours – is the key to successful graffiti prevention and very frequently results in a nearly zero rate of occurrence. This single fact was the motivating reason for working to establish a Graffiti Abatement Volunteer Program.

Residents interested in participating in this volunteer effort are asked to contact the Public Works Department through the graffiti hotline. Upon completion of a Volunteer Interest & Information Sheet, they will be contacted to participate in training pertaining to the most common ways of removing graffiti based on the type of surface and substrate to be removed. Once trained, they will be given graffiti removal supplies color matched to the location they have chosen to adopt. Volunteers are asked to adopt a location for a minimum of three (3) months.

Staff believes that actively involving the community in graffiti prevention and removal will improve awareness and be instrumental in promptly removing graffiti thus creating a graffiti free community.

RR:pjp