

CITY OF WHITEHORSE

COUNCIL POLICY

POLICY: **Graffiti Management Policy**

PURPOSE: To provide a proactive approach to prevent and address graffiti vandalism in the City of Whitehorse and support the City's ongoing graffiti and street art programs.

AUTHORITY: Council Resolution # 2023 – 09- 03, passed May 8, 2023.

GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The City takes the presence and impact of graffiti seriously. The increasing presence of graffiti is of ongoing concern both for its adverse impact on the environment and streetscape and for its considerable cost in removal.

This policy will outline measures to be undertaken to prevent/alleviate graffiti vandalism on City owned property and assets.

In addition to the provisions of this Policy, enforcement of graffiti removal is carried out under the City's Maintenance Bylaw and in cooperation with other responsible authorities.

DEFINITIONS

"CITY PROPERTY/ASSETS" means all buildings, street pertinences, property and amenities that the City owns and/or maintains.

"EXEMPTION ZONES" means the areas where graffiti is allowed within the City of Whitehorse boundaries. (Appendix "B") Graffiti is not removed in these areas.

"GRAFFITI VANDALISM" means any inscription, word, figure or word design that is marked, etched, scratched, drawn, sprayed, painted, pasted, applied or otherwise affixed to or on any surface of any City owned assets, property and buildings without prior approval.

"LEGAL GRAFFITI ART" means approved graffiti commissioned by the City on City owned assets, property or buildings.

"PRIORITY 1 ZONES" means City of Whitehorse owned buildings and vehicles with direct public access or high public visibility (Appendix "A"). Once reported, graffiti will be removed from these areas within one business day.*

“PRIORITY 2 ZONE” means the area within the downtown core between the Robert Campbell Bridge to the south and Industrial Road to the north (Appendix “B”). Once reported, graffiti will be removed from these areas within three business days.*

“PRIORITY 3 ZONE” means all other areas within the City of Whitehorse boundary. (Appendix “C”) Once reported, graffiti will be removed from these areas within five business days.

**Denotes that timeframes may be adjusted due to extreme inclement weather conditions.*

BACKGROUND

The incidence of graffiti in Whitehorse, on assets, both publicly and privately owned, has a negative impact on many aspects of life within the City. From negative attitudes directed towards youth to feelings of insecurity that graffiti may evoke in community members, graffiti affects more than just the immediate victims; it creates the impression that crime exists within the community. Typical amenities that get tagged include but are not limited to: City owned buildings, control boxes, garbage cans, signage, bridges/guardrails, heritage light poles and park amenities.

Over the past two years the Parks and Community Development Department has expanded their community cleanup efforts during the month of May to address graffiti in the City. Graffiti remover has been made available at no cost to businesses and the general public, and brief partnerships set up during the month of May with Yukon Electric, NorthwTel and Canada Post to remove graffiti from their assets. Parks staff is increasingly being called upon to remove graffiti in high visible areas and the cost is considerable.

The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Justice and the Youth of Today Society partnered during the summer of 2007 for a month long pilot project called “Graffiti Clean Up Project”. The youth involved cleaned up more than fifty sites around the City.

The partners in this project considered it a resounding success. Businesses were able to phone in, report and have graffiti cleaned up; many City sites in the downtown core were cleaned up and graffiti started to disappear in Whitehorse.

POLICY

While it is not possible to eliminate graffiti vandalism altogether, the City seeks to lead by example and encourage others to follow with the proposed strategies:

All techniques used by the City for removing graffiti should be handled with ecologically sustainable development principles to minimise harm to the environment and comply with relevant environmental law and policies.

All new City assets within highly tagged areas or areas vulnerable to tagging will endeavour to be provided with surfacing to mitigate the effort in graffiti clean up.

The City of Whitehorse may from time to time entertain a legal graffiti arts program to celebrate young people’s talent and sub-culture. For example, graffiti art murals for City waste receptacles could be commissioned to young people.

The City may organize a Graffiti Management Task Force in partnership with the business community and other interested parties to participate in the rapid removal system for their downtown assets.

The City will develop a best practices guide to assist the various departments in the proper removal of graffiti from City property.

PRIORITY 1 ZONE

Priority 1 Zone contains City owned buildings and vehicles that are subjected to public traffic and tend to be the main public destinations in the City or viewed by the public. These buildings and vehicles are classified as ‘hot spots’ as they are subjected to a large amount of public traffic and visibility on a daily basis. Due to their nature, Priority 1 Zones graffiti is removed within 1 business day of identification.

PRIORITY 2 ZONE

Priority 2 Zone contains streets and City owned amenities within the downtown core from the Robert Campbell Bridge in the south to Industrial Road in the North and are subject to high pedestrian traffic or large amounts of graffiti and posters. These areas are also classified as “hot spots” and Priority 2 Zone graffiti is removed within 3 business days of identification.

PRIORITY 3 ZONE

Priority 3 Zone contains all streets and City owned amenities outside the downtown core and within the City of Whitehorse boundaries that may or may not be subject to high pedestrian traffic or large amounts of graffiti and posters. Priority 3 Zone graffiti is removed within 5 business days of identification.

EXEMPTION ZONES

Exemption Zones contain those City owned structures where graffiti is allowed within the City of Whitehorse boundaries. Graffiti is not removed in these areas.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The City Graffiti Management Policy will be implemented focusing on the following fundamentals:

Rapid Removal of Graffiti Vandalism

An effective strategy against graffiti vandalism is to remove it as quickly as possible and to persist in removing it as soon as possible because:

- Solvents dissolve paint more easily if it is not completely dried and hardened; and
- The appearance of the property is improved making it a less likely target in future; and
- Graffitiists will be deprived of the reward/satisfaction of recognition.

Incorporate Legal Graffiti Art Program into the Community

Graffiti in many cases expresses an individual character and the diversity/subculture of the community. Graffiti vandalism will be lessened if opportunities are opened up to youth for positive self-expression. This can be achieved through:

- Programs such as commissioning graffiti art on City owned assets;
- Creating spontaneous venues to showcase graffiti art such as installed surfaces at the skateboard park and other areas where youth congregate; and
- Incorporating graffiti as public art on particular amenities such as wind breaks in parks.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Parks and Community Development Department will administer the Graffiti Management Program to coordinate reporting and any required clean-up with responsible City Departments.

ENFORCEMENT

City requirements for graffiti clean-up by business or property owners are enforced by Bylaw Services under the City's Maintenance Bylaw.

APPENDIX “A”

Priority 1 Zones:

1. City Hall
2. Municipal Services Building
3. Public Safety Building
4. Canada Games Centre
5. Takhini Arena
6. Mt. McIntyre Recreation Centre
7. Frank Slim Building
8. Sport Yukon Building
9. All City vehicles including buses.

Location outline for each building is included in the attached map.

APPENDIX “B”

Priority 2 Zone:

1. The downtown core area from the Robert Campbell Bridge in the south to Industrial Avenue in the north as outlined in the attached map.

APPENDIX “C”

Priority 3 Zone:

1. All areas outside the downtown core but within the City of Whitehorse boundaries as outlined in the attached map.

Appendix “D”

Exemption Zones:

1. Skateboard Park – graffiti is not permitted on the skateboarding infrastructure (e.g. skateboard bowl, ramps, and rails)