

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE  
COUNCIL POLICY**

POLICY: Graffiti Management

AUTHORITY: Council Resolution 2009-20-09 dated September 28, 2009

## **GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**Policy Statement:**

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.

**Definitions:**

City Property/Assets means all buildings, street pertinences, property and amenities that the City owns and/or maintains.

Exemption Zones are the areas where graffiti is allowed within the City of Whitehorse boundaries. (Appendix “D”) 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 are the 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 Recreation 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 that would 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 and amenities 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
- Graffiti artists 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 waste receptacles or other 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 Recreation Department will administer the Graffiti Management Policy in co-ordination with other City Departments. Parks and Recreation will monitor and forward all reports of graffiti to the designated department for clean up: bus shelters (Transit), pump houses (Public Works), parks and playgrounds (Parks), City owned buildings (Maintenance and Safety). All work to be carried out may be completed by designated departments or under contract.

Parks and Recreation will review work order status to ensure that clean up is completed within the designated timelines.

### **Ways to Contact the City:**

Members of the community can report incidences of graffiti to the City via e-mail to [graffiti@whitehorse.ca](mailto:graffiti@whitehorse.ca) or to the Parks and Recreation Department at 668-8325.

Incidents reported to either of these contacts will be logged and tracked for completion. Notification back to those that reported the incident will not occur unless requested.

### **Enforcement:**

The City of Whitehorse will continue to assist the RCMP to identify persistent graffiti vandals by photographing tags and relaying these to the RCMP to help in the apprehension and prosecution of vandals.

The City of Whitehorse will act as an advocate for legislative changes to give RCMP greater power to deal effectively with graffiti vandals.

The City of Whitehorse will act as an advocate for legislative changes to restrict the retail display and sale of spray cans and other graffiti-related materials to persons under 18 years of age.

Where appropriate, the City of Whitehorse will pursue enforcement action under Council's policies and Bylaws, including the provision to prosecute vandals who are caught applying graffiti to City owned properties and amenities.

**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
2. Public notice kiosks
3. Areas not directly visible to public

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