

## **Graffiti Transformation Program: 2000 Recommendations**

*(City Council on June 7, 8 and 9, 2000, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)*

**The Planning and Transportation Committee recommends that:**

- (1) the report (April 20, 2000) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services be adopted; and**
- (2) in view of the recommendations of the Grants Committee made at its meeting on May 11, 2000 that a further \$20,700.00 be allocated to the Graffiti Transformation Program from the additional \$500,000.00 awarded to the City of Toronto Grants Program by Council during the 2000 Operating Budget consideration, it is recommended that, subject to Council's approval of the allocations recommended by the Grants Committee, that \$15,000.00 of the recommended additional allocation of \$20,700.00 be awarded to the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre as described in the report (April 20, 2000) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services.**

**The Planning and Transportation Committee submits the following report (April 20, 2000) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services:**

Purpose:

To recommend grants to fifteen organizations for the removal of graffiti and the transformation of vandalized surfaces into murals. As a re-investment in both the liveability of urban neighbourhoods and the youth in those communities, agencies train and employ young people to carry out the work.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Funds in the amount of \$286,400 for this grant program are available in the Consolidated Grants budget. There are no other financial implications. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Grants be provided as shown in Appendix A. to community groups to engage in Graffiti Transformation. Such Grants are deemed to be in the interest of the Municipality;**
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto;**

- (3) early in 2001, the Commissioner of Urban Development Services report on the evaluation of the Graffiti Transformation Program in 2000 with particular attention to the progress of groups in former municipalities where the program is relatively new; and
- (4) the Planning and Transportation Committee advise Council that this program operates during the summer and as a result will in future require authorization of advance amounts not to exceed 50 percent of the previous years budget prior to approval of the annual Operating Budget in order for groups to begin recruitment and hiring at the end of the school year.

#### Background:

In 1996, the Council of the former City of Toronto established a program for the removal of graffiti and the transformation of the defaced sites into murals. The decision to initiate the Graffiti Transformation Program arose from presentations to the Neighbourhoods Committee of the former City of Toronto regarding the deterioration of communities caused in part by the proliferation of graffiti. Planning Division Staff were asked to investigate and comment on a presentation on the subject by the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre.

At the time, the Department also had a mandate to work on youth unemployment as well as neighbourhood planning, improvement and revitalization issues. A Community Economic Development (C.E.D.) model was designed involving the hiring of youth by local organizations to remove graffiti and resurface the walls with attractive murals. A description of C.E.D models is included in Appendix B.

Participating agencies create training and business experience for youth in the field of graffiti removal and outdoor art. In this way an opportunity is created to ameliorate neighbourhood deterioration and, since much of the graffiti is perpetrated by youth, to involve their peers in learning about the adverse effects on retail and residential neighbourhoods as a proactive intervention. In the process, valuable skills are learned in remediation methods, commercial art, business practice and community relations. This will be the fifth year of operation within the boundaries of the former City of Toronto and the second year in Etobicoke, York and Scarborough.

#### Comments:

#### Rationale for the Program:

A community suffers when areas previously enjoyed by everyone become the "property" of a group, making others uncomfortable about using the space. People will stay away when the "tagging" of an area becomes common. This can make an area feel even more unsafe, since there is none of the informal surveillance provided by those relaxing on park benches or moving through the laneway after parking their car. This in turn encourages more graffiti, creating a vicious cycle.

In 1996, the former City of Toronto Council established a program for the removal of graffiti and the transformation of the defaced sites into murals. The program was designed to enhance the affected neighbourhoods. The work could have been carried out in a variety of ways such as contracts with private muralists, by way of public competitions or by adult art clubs. Since the Departmental mandate at the time also included youth employment policy and programs it was decided to develop the program within that frame work and offer it as grants to organizations working with youth.

Staff from Urban Development Services are responsible for reviewing proposals and recommending allocations. Parks and Recreation and Works and Emergency Services as well as the Toronto Arts Council offer assistance and advice as appropriate.

#### History and Results From Previous Years:

In 1996, five groups were awarded a total of \$179,589. Those groups produced 18 murals and cleaned several hundred smaller graffiti sites. The groups also leveraged a further \$124,959 from a combination of sales and other funders as well as \$10,683 in the form of free time, talent, materials and small donations. This total of \$315,231 in combined resources resulted in 80 youth directly receiving \$159,861.

Following the success of the 1996 Graffiti Transformation Program, the former City repeated the program in 1997 allocating \$286,000 to 12 groups. The program resulted in 68 murals and the cleaning of over four hundred units of graffiti where murals were not appropriate or desired. Other donations of time, materials and cash as well as sales of the service by the youth, increased the value of the 1997 program to \$394,956.61, an increase of 38 percent over the City grant envelope. One hundred eighteen (118) youth were employed in the program and paid \$205,494.88 in wages and stipends.

In 1998, in accordance with granting policy, the program budget and availability remained unchanged from pre-amalgamation guidelines. As a result, the same twelve groups participated, producing a further 51 murals, cleaning 30 sites and 625 tags from small street installations. In addition, one group now offers backlane addresses for emergency identification and several are receiving commissions for private works of art. In the process they created 117 jobs and 24 casual work opportunities for youth. Well over \$72,000 was raised by these groups from donations, sales and other funders.

1999 saw three groups added from outside the former City of Toronto as a process of expanding availability (levelling up) began. Although budget restraints allowed only a very small increase to accommodate the additional groups, the results were again impressive. All participants are to be congratulated for this achievement.

The fourteen participating organizations provided training and employment for 135 youth of whom 80 worked full time. They received a total of \$206,685 in wages. On top of the City grant, the groups raised a further \$115,171 in sales or contributions from other sources. Thirty-eight murals were executed and 1153 units of graffiti were removed along with 28 large

sites. Four community sponsored art projects were completed and some groups have begun to establish niches in the commercial and/or commissioned art market.

Over the 4 year life of the program, over 2100 tags have been removed, 58 sites have been cleaned and 175 murals have been created. Along the way, nearly 500 youth have received paying work as well as training in the technical aspects of graffiti removal, outdoor art and business skills. In addition, more groups are finding a niche market in commissioned art, both indoors and out as the skill levels increase.

In addition to the interest demonstrated by donations and sales, the youth experienced many indications of approval from their respective communities - kind words, assistance, applause - as well as being drawn into the fabric of the community in a way many may not have previously experienced.

#### Program Recommendations for 2000:

In approving the 1999 allocations report Council asked that specific attention be paid to the first year experiences of groups outside the former City of Toronto and that consideration be given to applying this community based model to other forms of vandalism.

The program works best where there is an established organization with the required expertise and capacity in administration and youth employment and training. The former Toronto is rich in these groups. In Scarborough and in Etobicoke, similar agencies came forward and were able to get the program up and running with little difficulty.

York struggled to co-ordinate a number of smaller less well-funded and staffed groups in various communities. In the end, a group in Weston was most equipped to get the ball rolling but chose to concentrate on graffiti removal locally. As a result, a second group has come forward this year with a greater capacity to do the mural aspect of the program but concentrating in the southeast area. Staff are recommending both groups this year with a reduced allocation for the group that was funded last year. Efforts to work out a co-ordinated approach will continue.

The question of using this approach to remediate the effects of some forms of vandalism is still being studied. In theory, there is no reason why this could not happen. There are a number of issues that have been identified as needing further work.

The question of a willing provider of the service and a willing buyer is primary. There is obviously more interest and excitement around a program that produces higher end artistic and business training for the youth and an attractive piece of art for the neighbourhood. It will be necessary to find a property owner and some youth to pilot such an effort. In the case of the mural work, the first "customers" were often public or non-profit sector bodies. This provided the first satisfied customers and the basis for marketing efforts.

Repair work is often the purview of unionized workers and agreement would have to be achieved on an acceptable way of accommodating their concerns over "contracting out". There may be an

opportunity to develop an apprenticeship program of some sort. Staff will continue to explore these and other issues and will report further when details can be further developed.

Council policy requires all programs to be made available City-wide on an incremental basis. For this year's program information sessions were held at six Civic Centres and follow-up conversations continued throughout the winter and spring with attendees and others who expressed interest. As a result, 16 proposals were received as described in Appendix B.

The two new requests came from the City of York and from a group in the Jane Finch area of North York and represent some of the problems faced in developing the program outside of the former City of Toronto.

In North York extended discussions took place among agencies and community groups from the various communities in the Jane Finch area. In the end, they were unable to find an agency with the capacity to develop and manage the program and to select a neighbourhood for a first effort in time for this year's funding cycle. They have requested that \$15,000 be reserved for use when they have resolved these questions.

Jane Finch is certainly a priority neighbourhood for expansion of the program. They have reached an agreement with M.T.H.A. with respect to a location and have just begun discussions with a second possible sponsor, the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre. They do, however, have significant work ahead of themselves and have requested that funds be put on reserve for a start-up later in the year. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to set aside funds for them at this time since the demand for allocations by groups prepared to run the program this summer exceeds the budget by a substantial amount.

Staff of this Department continue to work with the community representatives in the Jane Finch area. It is anticipated that details can be fleshed out and a workable program and sponsoring relationship can be developed to allow for a program next year.

The situation in York is discussed earlier in this report. I am recommending that two organizations be funded in different communities. Staff will work with these groups to maximize the benefit of the program throughout York.

This year, requests totalled \$330,770 as compared to a budget of \$286,400. In addition, the effort to continue levelling up has resulted in the inclusion of a second group in York. No additional funds have been provided, requiring reductions in the budgets of existing groups for the second year in a row.

Reductions have been accomplished with consideration given to factors such as the proponent's experience and ability to raise other amounts, age of and disadvantages faced by the youth resulting in higher supervision requirements and requests too small to withstand cuts without resulting in an unrealistic proposal.

The recommended allocations are shown in Appendix A.

Four of those proposals are from communities in former municipalities where the program was previously unavailable and discussions continue with residents and agencies in the Jane and Finch area of North York. No new funds are available for this purpose and the groups are to be congratulated for their co-operation in recognizing the limited resources available.

Evaluation of this year's program will be reported in conjunction with recommendations for 2001.

Finally, it is important to note that this is a good weather program which frequently employs students during the summer. The turnaround time for approvals and cheque preparation and disbursement has made it increasingly difficult for groups to recruit and train youth early enough and with certainty that they will receive an allocation.

For example, due to the timing of approval for the Operating Budget, recommended allocations will not arrive at Council until its June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Cheques cannot be issued until near the end of June although ideally, youth would have been selected and would have some preliminary orientation prior to that time.

For this reason, I am asking that Council provide a mechanism for authorizing early approval of allocations up to 50 percent of the previous year's budget for next year's budget.

Conclusions:

In order to continue the Graffiti Transformation Program in 2000, grants should be awarded as described in Appendix A. Staff will report prior to the next budget cycle with respect to further expanding the program availability as well as this year's results.

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Appendix A  
Recommended Allocations: Graffiti Transformation Program

AGENCY	GRANT AMOUNT 1) 1999 2) REQUEST 3) <b>2000</b>
Cecil Community Centre And Harbourfront Community Centre. (joint project )	1) \$22,000 2) \$24,000 3) <b>\$22,140</b>
Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre “United Neighbourhood Artists”	1) \$23,043 2) \$24,299 3) <b>\$23,140</b>
Parkdale Village Business Improvement Area with various Parkdale groups.	1) \$15,000 2) \$18,000 3) <b>\$15,140</b>
Community Centre 55	1) \$21,000 2) \$25,000 3) <b>\$21,140</b>
Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre “Mural Express!”	1) \$22,000 2) \$22,000 3) <b>\$22,140</b>
Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Centre “Fresh Coat – Regent Park Youth Painters”	1) \$21,000 2) \$20,400 3) <b>\$17,140</b>
Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC)	1) \$23,043 2) \$23,385 3) <b>\$23,140</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> Generation Image Makers Native Child & Family Services of Toronto	1) \$28,043 2) \$28,043 3) <b>\$23,140</b>
Homo Air Ectus"	1) \$26,000 2) \$33,000 3) <b>\$23,140</b>
St. Christopher House	1) \$10,000 2) \$10,000 3) <b>\$10,140</b>
Lakeshore Area Multi Service Project	1) \$23,043 2) \$23,000

AGENCY	GRANT AMOUNT
	1) 1999 2) REQUEST 3) 2000
	<b>3) \$23,140</b>
West Scarborough Community Centre	1) \$23,043 2) \$23,043 <b>3) \$23,140</b>
Arts York	1) \$23,043 2) \$23,000 <b>3) \$19,740</b>
Scadding Court Community Centre, "Urban Artists"	1) \$6,000 2) \$6,000 <b>3) \$6,140</b>
Arts Starts	1) N/A 2) \$13,700 <b>3) \$13,700</b>
Jane Finch Family and Community Centre	1) N/A 2) \$15,000 ( reserved for fall) <b>3) \$0</b>
Total 1999	\$ 286,258
Total Requests	\$ 330,770
Total Recommended	<b>\$ 286,400</b>

Appendix B  
Community Economic Development

The establishment of local organizations to solve local problems has a long history in Toronto. More recently, strategies to include economic components in community based endeavours have received support from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments. The City of Toronto first became involved in such efforts in 1980 with a grant program providing funds for feasibility studies and start-up costs. Eventually, the City supported the development of the Community Business Resource Centre to provide development and training and the Greater Toronto Community Loan Fund to provide capital. My Department currently works closely with these organizations on a variety of programs to encourage and support self-employment, community businesses and retail strip revitalization programs.

In Community Economic Development terms, there are two basic models that are used depending on the issue being addressed, the financial scenario and the outcomes that are sought. Community based training models generally address issues of preparation for the work force and use business opportunities as a vehicle for this effort. The employees generally work in the

business until the required training occurs or their term (as determined by program guidelines) is complete. Assistance in a job search is then offered. Skills for Change and Trinity Square Enterprises are examples of this model.

Community Businesses operate on a model that emphasizes the provision of jobs in a more traditional sense. Although training occurs, the focus is on enabling the employee or member to perform well enough to stay with the business as opposed to finding employment elsewhere. Where particular employment issues are evident (for example, medical concerns, single parenthood, the need to continue formal education). Accommodations are built into the operational model to mitigate the impact of the employment barrier while allowing the person to still earn money from productive employment. AWAY Express (a ten year old courier business using public transit) and Prezents of Mind (a craft store) are examples of Community Businesses.

Both types of organizations are incorporated as non-profits (corporations without share capital) enabling them to partner with both public and private organizations as well as voluntary and private sector foundations. There is frequently overlap in the models and few are purely training or business oriented. Similarly, the best and most durable have a diverse financial base usually including formal and informal arrangements with the public, private and voluntary sectors in addition to revenue from sales.

A key component in most successful models is the ongoing involvement of public sector funders. Traditionally, Federal and Provincial agencies have played significant roles in this regard due to their employment and economic development mandates. However there is an argument to be made for Municipal involvement both from the perspective of defining issues and approaches locally and based on the view that cities suffer the most direct and evident results of unemployment, and in this instance, the social, economic and visual impact of graffiti.

It appears, after reviewing the experience of the Christie Ossington Community Centre with their staff, that a community based training model is appropriate at this point. The possibility of conversion to some form of community business in the future may be worth evaluating after an initial pilot.