

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND REVIEW OF OTHER MUNICIPALITIES**

### **Consultation**

The Graffiti Management Plan was prepared after consultation with stakeholders including Transportation Services Roads Operations and Traffic Management Centre: 311 Toronto; Social Development Finance and Administration – Community Resources; Economic Development and Culture – Business Services (BIA Office) and Cultural Services; Parks, Forestry & Recreation; Solid Waste Management; Facilities Management; Toronto Water; City Planning and Legal Services.

Discussions were held with the Toronto Police Service representatives including the Community Mobilization Unit and staff responsible for community programs, crime prevention, auxiliary program coordination; the Public Information Unit; and the Crime Prevention Association of Toronto (CPAT).

Staff met with Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA); the Toronto Youth Cabinet (who conducted their own public graffiti consultation in the summer of 2009); and Bell Canada. Conversations were had with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation; Toronto Parking Authority; CP Railway; GO Transit; and a number of property owners and businesses that specialize in graffiti removal.

The Mayor's Special Advisor on the Arts, Jeff Melanson was consulted as were the Toronto Arts Council and self-identified members of the graffiti arts community. Eight councillors met with staff to provide their views on the graffiti and potential solutions.

### **Direct Engagement/City of Toronto Public Consultation**

A Graffiti Summit Town Hall was held on May 31, 2011, with Direct Engagement, an interactive web streaming company in conjunction with the City provided an opportunity for all to understand each other's concerns and interests. The theme was “developing a community strategy on graffiti.” The first part of the town hall included a welcome from Councillor Palacio; presentations from an Art Gallery of Ontario curator; a graffiti artist; small business owner; the Executive Director, MLS, and various community organizations. The second part of the event was an interactive panel discussion that included a small business representative, graffiti artist/business owner, Jeff Melanson, Special Advisor on the Arts to Mayor Rob Ford and Councillor Michael Thompson. Media interviewers and the audience were able to pose questions to the panel in person or online. About 170 people representing a large range of interests attended this event. The consultation provided an opportunity for all to understand each other's concerns and interests.

## **Review of Other Municipalities**

Staff investigated graffiti management and eradication practices in numerous municipalities across North America including Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. Discussions focused on approaches to enforcement, level of municipal support for removing graffiti from both private and public property and programs for-at risk youth and graffiti artists.

While each municipality had divergent approaches, the most aggressive programs involved strong civic leadership, a proactive stance, a consistent and holistic approach that merged the need for enforcement and the protection of private property rights with the need for a solid approach to graffiti art and youth. Each municipality also established a clear operational and communications authority, and the ability to ensure that every part of the system was activated.

The municipalities varied in assuming costs for graffiti removal from private property and the level to which any removal on public or private lands were delivered by civic staff or contracted out, which may reflect their respective legislated powers. In New York, Chicago and Winnipeg, the municipalities provided complete removal for every property funded from the tax base. Other municipalities offered support, from minimal, i.e. providing a list of pre-vetted contractors, to free paint programs, to one time removal. Some of these programs rely upon additional volunteer support. Widespread municipal budget pressures have led to a significant decline or fluctuation in funding for these programs.

There is frequent discussion about banning the sale of spray paint to minors. Conversations with staff in Chicago and London, Ontario, as well as the graffiti arts community, suggest that this is generally ineffective since paint can be purchased by older individuals on behalf of younger 'painters.' In those cities with the ban, most graffiti writers get their paint through the internet, and the ban becomes an additional burden and expense for business owners.