

# Graffiti Abatement Program

Presented to Dallas City Council and  
Dallas ISD Trustees  
by the  
Department of Code Compliance

March 21, 2007



# What is Graffiti?

---

## Texas State Penal Code

### 28.03 Criminal Mischief

(a) A person commits an offense if, without the effective consent of the owner: ... (3) he intentionally or knowingly makes markings, including inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings, on the tangible property of the owner.

### 28.08 Graffiti

(a) A person commits an offense if, without the effective consent of the owner, the person intentionally or knowingly makes markings, including inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings, on the tangible property of the owner with:

- (1) aerosol paint;
- (2) an indelible marker; or
- (3) an etching or engraving device.

# What Is Graffiti?

---

## Dallas City Code

### 31.38

- "GRAFFITI means any marking, including, but not limited to, any inscription, slogan, drawing, painting, symbol, logo, name, character, or figure, **that is made in any manner** on tangible property."
- "...An owner of...property in the city commits an offense if he fails to remove all graffiti from the property that is visible from any public property or right-of-way..."

# Penalty

---

## Criminal Mischief

- ❑ Class C – less than \$50
- ❑ Class B - \$50-\$500
- ❑ Class A - \$500-\$1500
- ❑ State Jail Felony  
\$1500-\$20,000 *OR* any amount on special locations\*

## Graffiti

- ❑ Class B - \$0-\$500
- ❑ Class A - \$500-\$1500
- ❑ State Jail Felony  
\$1500-\$20,000 *OR* any amount on special locations\*

### **\*Special Locations**

- ❑ Place of worship
- ❑ Cemetery or mausoleum
- ❑ Public monument
- ❑ Community center providing medical/social and/or educational programs
- ❑ Schools/colleges

# Why Do People “Graffiti”?

---

- For recognition
- To communicate with others who “tag” or use graffiti
- Peer pressure/to belong
- Boredom
- Culture supports it

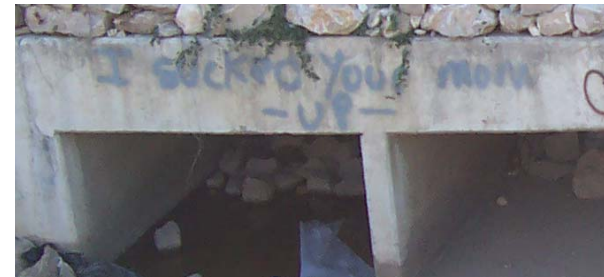
Websites, video games, magazines, soft drinks, and many more

# What Type of Graffiti is in Dallas?

---

## Generally 3 Types

- ❑ Vandalism – ethnic/religious/sexual slurs randomly placed on property
- ❑ Tagging – created by “taggers”, who “get up” their names or initials; can have “crews” (most of graffiti in Dallas)
- ❑ Gang graffiti – symbols or initials of their gang, communicate with other gangs via graffiti



# Effects of Graffiti

---

## Property owners

- ❑ Can be costly to remove/fix
- ❑ Feeling of violation and despair
- ❑ If not removed, owner can receive citation (feeling violated *again*)

## Neighborhoods

- ❑ Appeal is lowered
- ❑ May invite other undesired activities
- ❑ Lowers property values
- ❑ Businesses may not be attracted by unsightly neighborhoods

## Taggers/Graffiti artists

- ❑ Criminal citations
- ❑ Felony records
- ❑ Fines/fees
- ❑ Barred from establishments

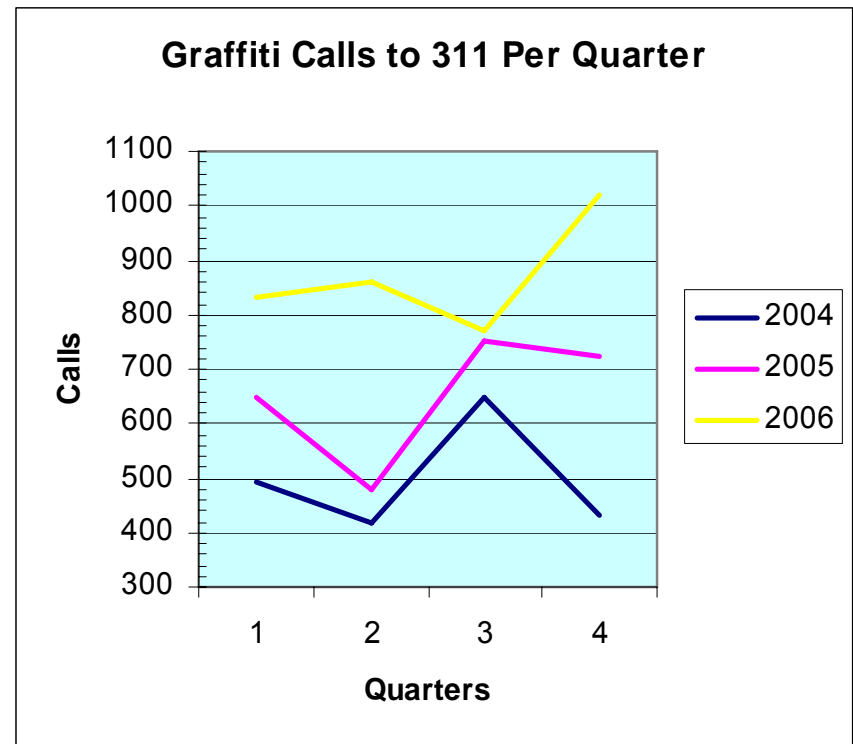
# Volume of Graffiti Calls in Dallas

## Quarterly Calls to 311 Call Center (Public and Private)

	2004	2005	2006
Q1	493	647	830
Q2	420	477	859
Q3	646	751	772
Q4	432	722	1020
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2597</b>	<b>3481</b>

Increase of 30.4% from 2004 to 2005

Increase of 34.0% from 2005 to 2006





# Volume of Graffiti Calls in Dallas

---

## 2 Theories for Rise of Graffiti Calls

### **Heightened Awareness of Graffiti**

- Citizens want neighborhoods clean
- Citizens want to sign up for Graffiti Abatement Program
- Media pieces bring to citizens' attention
- Public and/or outreach events teach citizens about crime of graffiti and to report
- Push to call 3-1-1 with City issues

### **More Graffiti Occurring**

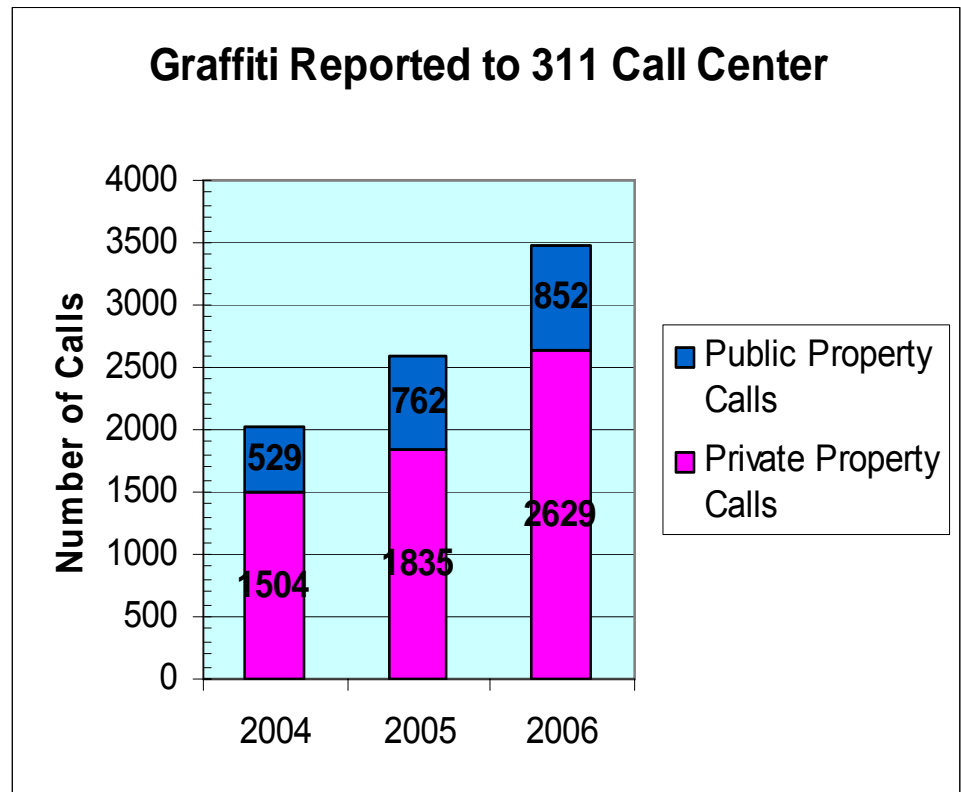
- Societal acceptance of graffiti
- More taggers than before

# Volume of Graffiti Calls in Dallas

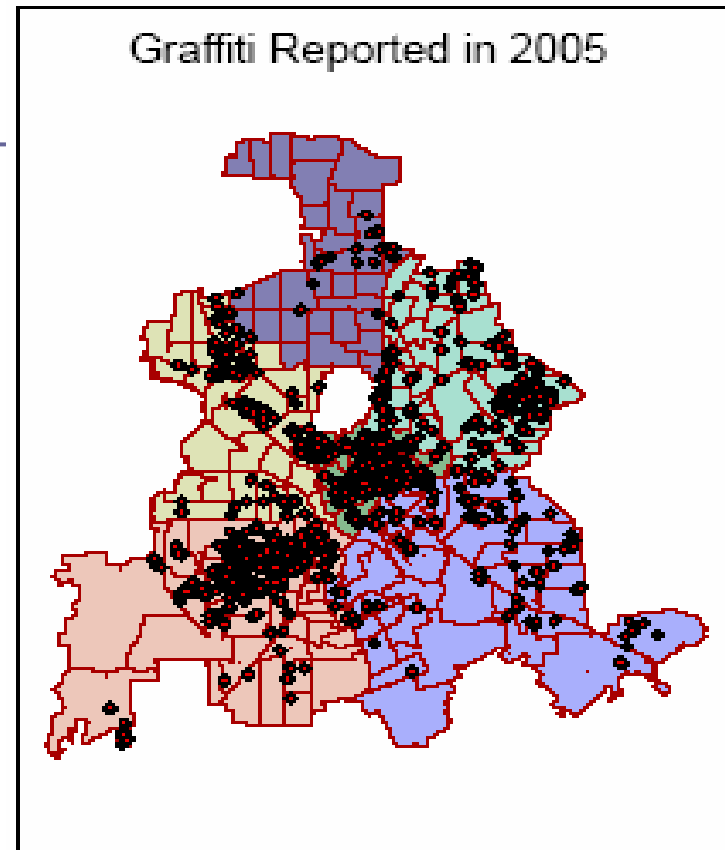
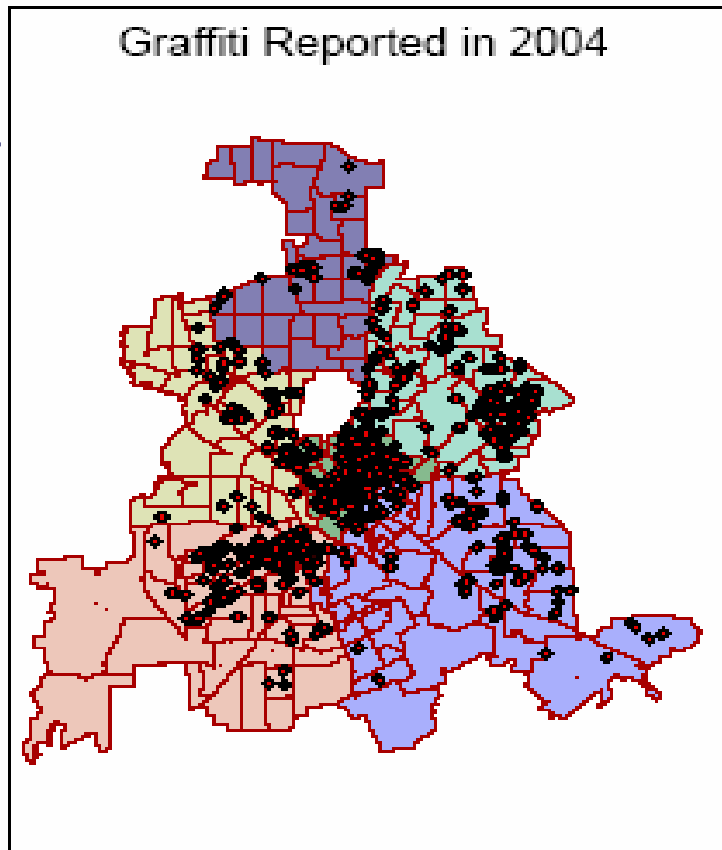
## Yearly Calls to 311 Call Center - Public and Private Property

75.6% of calls are related to private property

69.8% Residence/business  
5.8% Apartments



# Volumes of Graffiti in Dallas



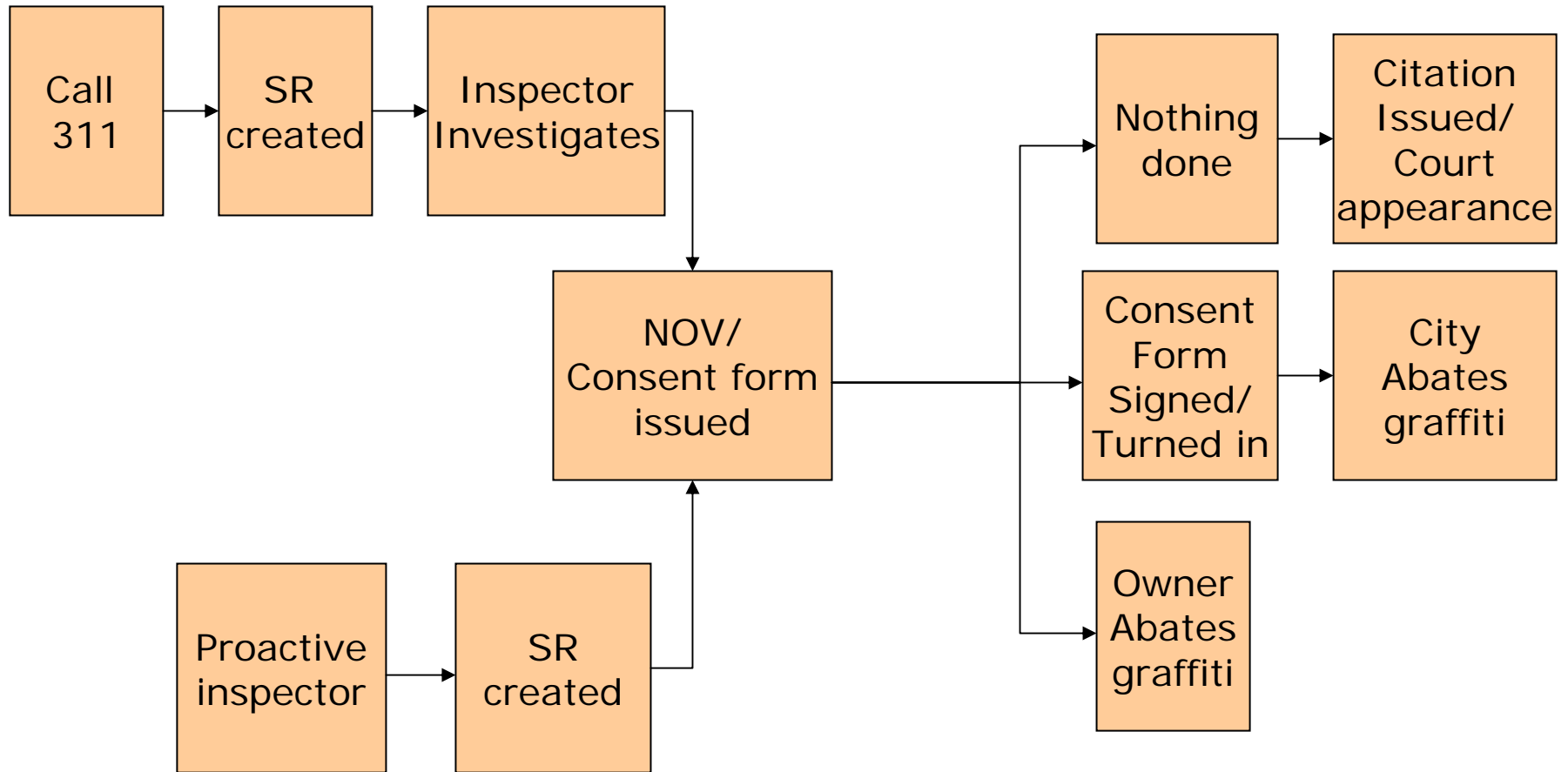
## Three Areas of Concentration

- Southwest - North Oak Cliff
- Downtown - North and Northeast of Downtown
- East/Northeast

Also along major roadways such as I-35, I-75, northern LBJ

# How Dallas Handles Graffiti

---



# What Is the Graffiti Abatement Program?

---

Free program offered by the City of Dallas to assist citizens with graffiti abatement of their property

## 4 Choices for Property Owners Who Want to Abate Graffiti


- ❑ Can abate themselves
- ❑ Can complete consent form to have City crews abate property
- ❑ Can complete consent form and purchase color-matched paint, which City crews will use to abate property
- ❑ Can request paint and supplies to abate graffiti themselves

# What Is the Graffiti Abatement Program?

## Example of Consent Form

- Consent form is in effect until owner requests *in writing* to discontinue the service OR property is sold

Property can not be abated without a signed consent form on file



CITY OF DALLAS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned property owner, hereby authorize the City Manager of the City of Dallas, or, the designated contractors, or, citizen volunteers, or judicial probationary workers or, City employees acting under the direction of the City Manager to enter upon my property at: \_\_\_\_\_ and remove graffiti. I understand and agree that the method of elimination will be by application of paint. Finally, in consideration of the removal of graffiti from my property by the City of Dallas through any of the above-described persons (the "graffiti removal"), I HEREBY FOREVER RELEASE AND DISCHARGE THE CITY OF DALLAS, ITS OFFICERS, AGENTS, AND EMPLOYEES, ALL CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS, JUDICIAL PROBATIONARY WORKERS, AND ANY OTHER PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE REMOVAL WORK ("RELEASEES"), IN BOTH THEIR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CAPACITIES, FROM ANY AND ALL ACTIONS, CAUSES OF ACTION, CLAIMS, DEMANDS, DAMAGES, COSTS, LOSS OF SERVICES, EXPENSES AND COMPENSATION ON ACCOUNT OF, OR IN ANY WAY GROWING OUT OF, ANY AND ALL KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, ANTICIPATED OR UNANTICIPATED, PERSONAL INJURY AND PROPERTY DAMAGE (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY NEGLIGENCE CLAIMS AND WRONGFUL DEATH CLAIMS PURSUANT TO §71.921, TEXAS CIVIL PRACTICE AND REMEDIES CODE, AS AMENDED) RESULTING OR TO RESULT FROM THE GRAFFITI REMOVAL. I FURTHER AGREE AND COVENANT, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE GRAFFITI REMOVAL AGREED TO ABOVE, NEVER TO FILE ANY CLAIM, LAWSUIT OR OTHER PROCEEDING, WHETHER JUDICIAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE, AGAINST THE RELEASEES FOR ANY PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE, WRONGFUL DEATH OR OTHER INJURY SUFFERED BY ME (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY NEGLIGENCE CLAIMS AND WRONGFUL DEATH CLAIMS PURSUANT TO §71.921, TEXAS CIVIL PRACTICE AND REMEDIES CODE, AS AMENDED) THAT MAY ARISE OR RESULT FROM THE GRAFFITI REMOVAL.

This authorization shall remain valid until revoked in writing by the undersigned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PROPERTY OWNER

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT) NAME OF PROPERTY OWNER

MAILING ADDRESS CITY STATE&ZIP CODE

\_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please return this form to:  
Department of Code Compliance  
1500 Marilla, Room 6CS  
Dallas, TX 75201  
(T) 214-670-5708  
(F) 214-670-3753

Address of property with graffiti

Property owner contact information

# How Did the Graffiti Abatement Program Get Started?

---

- ❑ Idea came from citizen groups in Dallas who conducted “paint-outs” in their area to get rid of graffiti

Swiss Avenue Graffiti Abatement – Oct '05



Old East Dallas Volunteer Day – Mar '06



# How Did the Graffiti Abatement Program Get Started?

---

- City of Dallas hosted its first Graffiti Wipe-Out on May 20, 2006. Over 200 sites were abated on that day.

Before



After





# How Did the Graffiti Abatement Program Get Started?

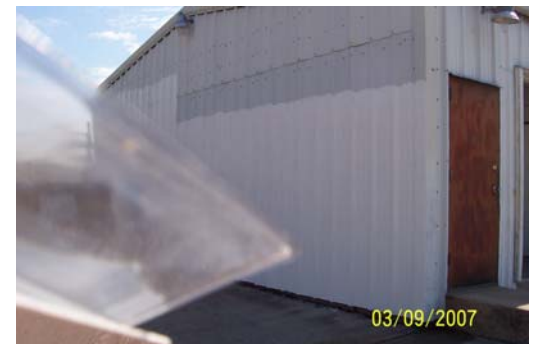
- Citizen input, volunteer organizations, and City Council influence created the Graffiti Abatement Program.



Before



After



# Tools Used to Abate Graffiti

There are 2 trucks equipped with:

- Paint – keep 6 colors in stock which nicely compliment most palettes
- Paint Rollers – use disposable roller heads to reduce number of entire rollers replaced
- Brushes – for smaller, hard to reach areas
- Paint pans – use disposable inserts to reduce number of pans replaced
- Extension poles – allows additional 4'
- Trash bags – allows proper disposal of used materials



\*Trucks donated by Leadership Dallas  
2006 and Atmos Energy

# Tools Used to Abate Graffiti

---

## The City of Dallas DOES NOT USE:

- ❑ Power washers – may cause pollution to enter our storm drain system affecting surface water quality
- ❑ Sandblasters – may be harmful to the substrate abated and air quality
- ❑ Solvents – any residuals may be harmful to air and/or water quality

# Graffiti Abatement Team (GAT)

- ❑ Over 200 sites have been referred to the GAT for abatement this fiscal year
- ❑ Average time for abatement by GAT (weather permitting) is 24 hours
- ❑ If there are no referred sites to abate or weather does not permit painting, the GAT proactively looks for graffiti and compares addresses to list of signed consent forms



# Abatement of Public Property

---

Various City departments abate graffiti depending on location

- Streets – City owned bridges, streets, retaining walls, drainage ditches, etc.

Average abatement time - 5 days.

- Signs & Signals – Stop signs, street signs, signal boxes, etc.

Average abatement time - 4 days.

- Parks & Rec – Playground equipment, park grounds, park restrooms, etc.

Average abatement time - 3 days.

# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

---

City of Dallas will:

Continue participating in neighborhood clean up efforts

Las Villas – Oct '06



Before

After

Lower Greenville/Old East  
Dallas – Oct '06



# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

City of Dallas will:  
Continue public outreach



Mayor's Summer Reading Program Finale -  
Aug '06



Trinity River Trash Bash -  
Sep '07



City of Dallas Code Summit -  
Mar '07

# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

---

City of Dallas will:

Continue public outreach

Recent Outreach Events:

Pleasant Grove Community Health and Safety Fair – March 17, 2007

Beverly Hills Neighborhood Assoc. – March 13, 2007

Code Summit – March 10, 2007

Northeast Police Substation Crime Watch – February 8, 2007

Old East Dallas Crime Watch – January 4, 2007

Future Outreach Events:

Career Day at Johnston Elementary School – March 29, 2007

EPA EarthFest – April 20, 2007

Graffiti Wipe-Out - May 19, 2007



# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

---

City of Dallas will:

Continue expanding database of signed consent forms

- Allows for faster abatement since form already on file
- Provides wider coverage City-wide
- Prevents citizens from receiving citations for graffiti in the future
- Currently have over 500 consent forms

# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

---

Dallas ISD is encouraged to:

Spread the message by:

- Call 311 to report
- Understanding all graffiti is illegal (i.e. Class of '07, Suzie ♥ Jonnie, etc.)
- Incorporating anti-graffiti messages in lesson plans of all ages starting in '07-'08 school year

Require school groups to take ownership of graffiti abatement in their neighborhoods

- PTA meetings
- Dad's clubs
- Student Council
- Environmental Clubs

\*City of Dallas representatives will be available to speak to these groups

# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

---

Dallas ISD is encouraged to...

Conduct neighborhood clean-ups using environmentally-friendly methods

- ❑ Quarterly events
- ❑ Great for required community service hours

Set up anonymous tagger hotline

- ❑ Identify tagger directly
- ❑ Report suspicious supplies such as large quantities of spray paint, various paint tips, notebooks with graffiti designs

Continue quick abatement of graffiti on Dallas ISD grounds

# For a Successful Graffiti Abatement Program...

---

City of Dallas and Dallas ISD need to:

Continue to encourage instilling pride of a safe and clean community

Create one contact person at each agency to streamline information sharing process

Conduct quarterly meetings to share graffiti and other juvenile issues between DPD, Code Compliance, and Dallas ISD PD

Create joint projects involving after-school activities

- Make students aware of activities at recreation centers, libraries, etc. (City of Dallas)
- Work with Student Council representatives to determine best suited after-hour activities in each community (Dallas ISD)