



**Request for City Council Committee Action  
From the Department of Public Works  
Solid Waste and Recycling Services**

**Date:** January 19, 2010

**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

**Subject:** Issue a Request for Proposals for Graffiti Abatement Services

**Recommendation:**

That the appropriate City officials be authorized to issue a Request for Proposals for the abatement of graffiti that cannot be successfully abated by the Division of Solid Waste and Recycling staff.

**Previous Directives:**

- September 1, 2009 authorize an increase to the graffiti abatement services contract with Sani-Masters, Inc. in the amount of \$200,000, for a revised not-to-exceed amount of \$700,000.
- July 29, 2008 City Council authorized an increase to the contract with Sani-Masters Inc for graffiti abatement services by \$200,000, not to exceed \$500,000.
- December 21, 2007: Gang Graffiti Victim Relief and Abatement Timeline Improvement Approved. Allowing for no notice and no charge abatements on properties with gang graffiti, that met all summary abatement guidelines set by City ordinance.
- August 18, 2006 City Council approved a three (3) year contract with Sani-Masters, Inc to provide Graffiti Abatement Services that will expire on September 30, 2009.
- May 12, 2006: Title 11, Chapter 226 Graffiti Nuisance Property: responsibility was transferred to the Department of Public Works expanding summary abatement to include the entire structure if any part is situated within five feet of the right-of-way; simplifying non-summary abatement by eliminating the consent form; including non-summary abatement of sensitive surfaces by entering into contracts with service providers and engaging in cost recovery for non-summary abatement by using the utility billing and assessment process; establishing and operating a budget to be allocated from rollover funds, to be replenished from costs recovered; utilizing the civil, administrative adjudication process to engage in cost recovery and levy fines against property owners who do not cooperate with the City's abatement efforts and engaging in a pilot project to test the efficacy of the statute allowing for civil suits to recover costs directly from graffiti vandals.

**Prepared by:** Susan Young, Director, Solid Waste and Recycling Services 612-673-2433

**Approved by:**

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Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Susan Young, Director, Solid Waste and Recycling Services

## Reviews

Permanent Review Committee (PRC)	Approval	___	Not applicable	___X
Civil Rights	Approval	___	Not applicable	___X
Policy review Group (PRG)	Approval	___	Not applicable	___X

## Financial Impact

Action is within current department budget

## Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not Applicable

City Goals:

A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME: Guns, Gangs, Graffiti gone. Graffiti that is promptly abated sets a standard that graffiti both gang and tagger, and the vandals that have applied it will not be tolerated. By promptly removing this blight the perception of safety is restored.

Comprehensive Plan: Not Applicable

Zoning Code: Not Applicable

## Background/Supporting Information

The Division of Solid Waste and Recycling Services is tasked with the tracking and abatement of graffiti in the City of Minneapolis. Graffiti reported to SW & R through 311 or alternate means is categorized as to type (gang, tagger, snipe, etc.), surface (sensitive such as unpainted wood, brick or stucco or non-sensitive such as painted wood, metal or painted concrete), and owner (commercial, residential, Railroad, MnDOT, etc). The owners of buildings on which Non-gang graffiti is placed are notified of the need to remove the graffiti. If they do not, the City removes, or arranges for the removal of that graffiti. If Gang graffiti is on a primary residence the owner of the property is notified to remove the graffiti; if the owner does not the City removes the graffiti or arranges for the graffiti to be removed. Gang graffiti that is on or adjacent to the Public Right of Way and which is not on a primary residence is removed, or removal is arranged by the City at no cost to the property owner. Graffiti that is on railroad or MnDOT property is the sole responsibility of those entities for abatement.

City crews do not have equipment or training to remove graffiti that is high (for instance on grain elevators, bill boards or towers). Graffiti removal equipment and chemicals are constantly being improved, and the City does not have access to the latest technology for removal of graffiti from certain sensitive surfaces without damage to the surfaces, or for removal of graffiti at low temperatures. Access to enhanced protective coatings, options for multiple occasion removals for buildings that frequently have graffiti vandalism, specialized removal and deterrent techniques and environmentally sensitive removal and deterrent products are also topics that the City needs additional expertise to implement.

The City has had a contract with Sanimasters to provide certain of the above services. The current contract will expire in March 2010. It is in the best interests of the City to determine if vendors, in addition to Sanimasters, have expertise, information and services that could assist the City in graffiti abate tasks. This is best accomplished through a Request for Proposals (RFP).

The exact amount of a potential contract is not known. A breakdown of all graffiti reports received from September of 2006 through June of 2009 showed that the Solid Waste and Recycling Contractor, SaniMasters, Inc. visited 3,051 graffiti sites for abatement purposes. Of those, 22% were non-billable abatements. The remaining 78% were billable abatements. The average cost of a single abatement was \$143.65 with graffiti abatement charges varying from \$0.00, for sites where the graffiti was found to have been already removed, to \$20,000 for very high and complicated abatements. Currently, the average monthly cost of contracted graffiti abatement is approximately \$13,675.