

DATE: April 22, 2008
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: "Stop Graffiti" Reward Program

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the attached resolution approving the "Stop Graffiti" Reward Program; and appropriates funds to support it.

BACKGROUND

Graffiti is now considered the most prevalent form of vandalism, affecting the quality of life in communities nationwide. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, about \$12 billion is spent each year in graffiti removal efforts. Graffiti devalues property, invites crime, and creates the perception that a community is unsafe and undesirable as a place to live and conduct business. The National Association of Realtors estimates that properties in neighborhoods with graffiti lose at least 15% of their value. While not all graffiti is gang-related, the Hayward Police Department estimates that 30% - 50% of the graffiti in Hayward is related to gang activity. The remaining graffiti is done by graffiti taggers, and those illegally using public and private property as their personal canvas.

In 2007, the City of Hayward spent approximately \$350,000 for graffiti removal, and enforcement activities. These activities included:

- 1,750 graffiti removals from sound walls, overpasses, control boxes, and light poles;
- 189 street signs replaced due to graffiti damage, and another 136 signs cleaned;
- 300 one-time courtesy graffiti removals on private property;
- 360 locations where graffiti had to be removed by water-blasting;
- 208 enforcement cases against property owners failing to remove graffiti from vacant and unkempt property; and
- 24 arrests for gang-related graffiti.

These City efforts are in addition to the costs borne by residents and businesses in removing graffiti from their properties; by volunteer graffiti removal through the Keep Hayward Clean and Green Task Force and neighborhood groups; by the Alameda County District Attorney and Court system

in prosecuting graffiti vandals; and by the Alameda County Probation Department in supervising juvenile offender graffiti removal and diversion programs.

DISCUSSION

While battling graffiti requires government abatement and enforcement efforts, community involvement and cooperation are essential. With an overall increase in graffiti throughout California, cities like Anaheim, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara, among others, have started programs that offer monetary rewards to the public for information leading to the arrest and conviction of graffiti vandals. These reward programs, permissible under Section 53069.5 of the California Government Code, are only one component of a comprehensive and integrated graffiti reduction program. A reward program would add a public outreach component to the City of Hayward's current graffiti removal and enforcement efforts.

Therefore, staff recommends the establishment of a "Stop Graffiti" Reward Program through which a \$500 reward will be paid for information leading to the arrest and conviction of adults and juveniles committing graffiti vandalism in Hayward.

Reward Program Overview

1. Anyone with information about graffiti vandals will be able to report that on a "Stop Graffiti" Hotline: 510-583-5500. That information will then be given to a Hayward Police investigator for follow-up.
2. If the Hayward Police Department determines that the information was helpful in leading to an arrest and conviction in a graffiti case, the caller will be eligible for the reward. The reward for one prosecuted case will not exceed \$500, regardless of the number of suspects involved.
3. The caller will be required to complete and submit a claim form to receive the reward. The Hayward Police Department will verify the accuracy of the claim, and recommend whether or not the reward is to be issued. In situations where information about one case is provided by more than one claimant, the Hayward Police Department will determine how the \$500 reward will be divided.

FISCAL IMPACT

Initially, the \$5,000 reward fund will be provided from the General Fund. Thereafter, staff will work with the Alameda County court system to replenish the funds from fines, liens, and possible restitution required of convicted adults, and of the parents or legal guardians of juvenile offenders.

NEXT STEPS

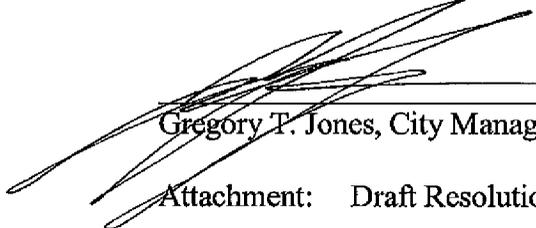
Upon Council approval, staff will proceed in implementing the "Stop Graffiti" Reward Program with a start date of Thursday, May 1, 2008. The Hayward Police Department will inform the Alameda County District Attorney's Office of the reward program and of the City's interest in the vigorous prosecution of graffiti vandalism cases.

Prepared by:



Millie Saad, Assistant to the City Manager

Approved by:



Gregory T. Jones, City Manager

Attachment: Draft Resolutions

ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk of the City of Hayward

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney of the City of Hayward

DRAFT 

HAYWARD CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. 08-

Introduced by Council Member _____

RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION 07-079, AS AMENDED, THE BUDGET RESOLUTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007-08 RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE STOP GRAFFITI REWARD PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Hayward that Resolution No. 07-079, as amended, the Budget Resolution for fiscal year 2007-08, is hereby further amended by approving an appropriation of \$5,000 in the General Fund, Fund 100 to fund the Stop Graffiti Reward Program.

IN COUNCIL, HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA _____, 2008

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS:
MAYOR:

NOES: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk of the City of Hayward

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney of the City of Hayward