

*STAFF REPORT**CITY OF OCEANSIDE*

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DATE: October 21, 2009

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Neighborhood Services Department

SUBJECT: **APPROPRIATION OF \$12,000 FROM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CONTINGENCY FUNDS FOR A ONE-YEAR RENEWAL OF THE GRAFFITI TRACKER PROGRAM**

**SYNOPSIS**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the appropriation of \$12,000 from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Contingency Fund for a one-year renewal of the Graffiti Tracker program.

**BACKGROUND**

The City Council in 2007 approved using CDBG funds to acquire a graffiti-removal van to enhance the City's anti-graffiti program. In previous years City workers painted over graffiti with a standard white or grey paint regardless of the background color of the wall, leaving many sites with a patchwork appearance. The graffiti-removal van is equipped with an on-board paint-mixing machine that can match the basic color of walls on which graffiti appears. When painted over, the wall is restored to its original appearance.

As part of the purchase contract for the van the City agreed to try the Graffiti Tracker Program for a year. Using this program City code enforcement or police officers take digital photographs of graffiti and upload the images into the Graffiti Tracker program. The program can analyze and store each photo with other similar instances, creating a virtual file with date, time and location of all instances of a particular sign. If the person is apprehended and connected with a single instance, the virtual file can be used to prosecute the person with all other instances, regardless of where each instance was located. The City of Escondido was the first in North San Diego County to use the Graffiti Tracker program and has used it successfully in the prosecution of persons. The San Diego County Sheriff's Department now uses the program in San Marcos and Vista, and in unincorporated areas, meaning that the program is used all along the SR78 corridor. Law enforcement agencies in North San Diego County have found the program to be an excellent source of information and assistance in dealing with a problem that knows no jurisdictional boundaries.

The City included graffiti removal as an objective in the 2005-2010 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development and in the annual Action Plans for 2008-09 and 2009-2010. The activity is eligible for CDBG funding under the overall objective of removing spot blight in neighborhoods and improving the neighborhood environment.

## **ANALYSIS**

The City will complete a trial year of the Graffiti Tracker Program in November 2009. Code Enforcement reports demonstrate that instances of graffiti have been reduced by almost fifty percent in the past year, due to enforcement by the Oceanside Police Department and prosecution of taggers using the Graffiti Tracker program. Appropriation of the funds will enable the City to continue the program through October 2010. Additional funds are not required for staff time for using the program, as operation of the program is part of staff's normal duties. If the City does successfully prosecute offenders through evidence from the Graffiti Tracker and is awarded compensation, the funds would go to the General Fund.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The City proposes to appropriate \$12,000 from the CDBG contingency fund (921790000237.5450) for transfer to the Graffiti Tracker Program (921115600237.5355). The CDBG contingency fund has approximately \$65,000 available for use. There is no impact on the General Fund.

## **COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REPORT**

The ad hoc CDBG Application Review Committee completed its work in March of this year and does not review proposed changes to the CDBG program during the year.

## **CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS**

City Attorney analysis does not apply.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the appropriation of \$12,000 from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Contingency Fund for a one-year renewal of the Graffiti Tracker program.

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