

# **Fighting Graffiti: An Investigation of Causes and Solutions**

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# Fighting Graffiti:

*An Investigation of Causes and Solutions*



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Summer, 2006

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## **Introduction**

Beginning in the summer of 2005 and into the following winter, the Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association (SENA) received a number of complaints related to graffiti. In most cases, concerned residents had been vandalized (usually their garage—see Photo 1 in Appendix A for an example) and subsequently took note of the extent of graffiti in the area. In order to address the problem, SENA formed a Graffiti Task Force in March, 2006. Initial meetings were dedicated to brainstorming potential solutions and gathering information. SENA also applied to the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota for a summer research intern through the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). The research intern was hired in May, 2006 and began work in June. This report serves as the culmination of that internship and is designed to accomplish two purposes: 1) as an investigation of the problem, and 2) to provide direction for future resident and SENA action addressing graffiti.

## **Background**

The word ‘graffiti’ originally derived from the Italian word ‘*sgraffio*’, meaning scratch<sup>1</sup>. (Ganz 2004, 8) The U.S. Department of Justice defines it as “the wide range of markings, etchings and paintings that deface public or private property” (Weisel 2002, 1). There is some debate as to whether or not graffiti ought to be considered more broadly such that, for example, art exhibits of legal spray paint art would also be considered graffiti. For the purposes of this report, however, graffiti will be used to incorporate only those incidents which are illegal, as these are of particular concern to the residents of Standish and Ericsson.

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<sup>1</sup> It could rightly be asserted that the word graffiti is instead a derivative of the Latin word, , because ‘*sgraffio*’ itself is a derivative of this word.

Within the broader concept of graffiti, a few categories have been identified through academic and crime prevention literature. (Weisel 2002, 3) First, there are categories which deal with the *motivation* for the graffiti: gang, tagger, ideological, conventional, etc.

- Gang graffiti is used by gangs as a sort of publicity, serving to identify the boundaries of their ‘territory’ and to recruit new members<sup>2</sup>. Gang graffiti usually involves some derivative of the gang name and is spray painted with gang colors (see Photo 2).
- Tagger graffiti serves as a sort of individual signature. Taggers will choose a pseudonym to sign to structures around the city in a process known as “gettin’ up”, where the goal is to ensure the signature is seen by as many people as possible. “Most taggers seek notoriety and recognition of their graffiti—they attach status to having their work seen.” (Weisel 2002, 8) For this reason subway cars were a popular target during the birth of tagger graffiti in New York City in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Taggers often work in ‘crews’, organized groups of individuals who travel and tag locations together. Such crews will often have a crew tag (e.g. ISK) in addition to each individual member’s tag. The difference between tagger crews and gangs is that the primary purpose of a tagger crew is the graffiti itself (or other types of vandalism) while gangs usually participate in other sorts of more criminal activity (such as drug dealing) which graffiti is used to promote.
- Ideological graffiti conveys some sort of opinion. These opinions can range from recognized political speech (e.g. “Say No to War”) to hate speech used by supremacist groups.

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<sup>2</sup> The first claim, that graffiti is used to mark territory, is a widely accepted fact. For this reason, graffiti has been used by numerous authors to understand gang territory within a number of urban environments. This is the most common purpose of gang graffiti. The second claim, that graffiti is used as a recruiting tool, is based upon conversation with a number of police officers.

- Conventional graffiti is the kind often found in schools, public bathrooms, or parks. This includes the etching of names into desks, doors, or walls. Common examples would be “John Smith was here” or “AB Loves CD Forever”. Conventional graffiti is considered the least problematic form of graffiti because, unlike the other types, it is typically an isolated incident as opposed to being part of a systematic, repeated process.

Graffiti is also divided into categories based upon the *sophistication* of its presentation.

- The majority of graffiti is relatively basic, consisting of no more than someone writing on a particular surface (see Photo 3). Ideological and conventional graffiti tend to fall within this most basic category, as well as the simplest gang and tagger graffiti (which is called a “tag”). When an individual chooses to tag, their goal is purely communication, there is rarely any higher artistic motive. Tags are usually chosen for how quickly and easily they can be applied.
- A more sophisticated form of a tag is called a “throw-up”. Throw-ups will often be the same tag, but done in bubble letters and/or with different colors (see Photo 4). Here the graffitiist<sup>3</sup> is far more likely to take pride in the artistic nature of their work. As would be expected, creating a throw-up is a more difficult and time-consuming process, requiring the graffitiist to find a space where they will be undisturbed for a longer period of time. Throw-ups are traditionally associated most closely with tagger graffiti but can be gang graffiti as well.

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<sup>3</sup> The term graffitiist is used to avoid the charged connotations of “graffiti artist” or “graffiti vandal”. People object to the term graffiti artist for legitimating illegal behavior while people object to the term graffiti vandal for ignoring the ‘artistic value’ of the graffiti.

- The most sophisticated form of graffiti is known as a “masterpiece”, or “piece” for short. A piece is not simply letters and numbers representing the individual, gang, or tagging group, but is usually some larger picture composed of many colors in a rather sophisticated design (see Photo 5). Pieces, like throw-ups, are almost exclusively a part of tagger culture, although in rare cases they may be created by gang members. In recent decades, pieces have attracted a great deal of interest from the art community, and a number of art exhibits have been dedicated to displaying pieces. Additionally, there are a number of arts organizations, such as Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis, which provide support for such ‘artwork’.

### **Graffiti in Standish and Ericsson**

In order to develop an informed approach as to how the graffiti issue should be addressed in Standish and Ericsson, the following characteristics of graffiti in the neighborhoods will first be discussed: how much graffiti there is, who does the graffiti, where the graffiti occurs, and when it occurs.

#### *How Much Graffiti is there in Standish and Ericsson?*

Determining the number of graffiti incidents that have occurred in Standish and Ericsson is quite difficult. A combination of interviews and a survey of the academic literature indicate that a large portion of graffiti goes unreported. “As with most forms of vandalism, graffiti is not routinely reported to police. Many people think that graffiti is not a police or ‘real crime’ problem, or that the police can do little about it.” (Stahl 2000) A 1994 report by the Police Research Group in Britain estimated that 75% of household vandalism went unreported. (Barker

and Bridgeman 1994). In Minneapolis, Sgt. Donna Olson estimates that there are 175,000 incidents each year (Minnesota Daily 2006), yet only a small fraction of those are reported.

Although data from the City of Minneapolis can only provide us with a partial picture of the graffiti problem, it still serves as a useful starting point as it is the most comprehensive database available. With the assistance of Solid Waste and Recycling and Police Intelligence Sharing and Analysis, data was collected on incidents occurring within Standish and Ericsson beginning in January 2004. Overall, there have been 775 incidents reported during the period beginning January 1, 2004 and ending July 5, 2006, an average of just under six per week. The bulk of these incidents occurred in 2005 or 2006; only 87 incidents were reported in 2004. The explanation for the paucity of recorded reports before 2005 is not necessarily that there was a dramatic upturn in graffiti incidents or reporting in 2005, but could be because the Police Department prioritized other things, such as carrying out investigations, above recording reported incidents. A month by month breakdown of reported graffiti incidents (see Table 1 in Appendix B) verifies this surmise. There is a jump in the number of reported incidents in April of 2005, when Solid Waste and Recycling began fielding Graffiti Hotline calls and recording incidents. In the fifteen plus months since Solid Waste and Recycling began collecting data, there have been 632 reported incidents, or about nine and a half incidents per week.

There appears to be a trend toward an increased number of graffiti incidents, even accounting for the switch in who collects the data. City officials have indicated that there was more graffiti reported this past winter than ever before, with 247 reported incidents from December 2005-March 2006. While graffiti has declined from this peak in subsequent months, there have still been more reported incidents than during the comparable period in 2005, 102 from April-June 2006 compared to 99 from April-June 2005. Thus, while we have seen a modest

decline in reported graffiti incidents the last few months, it is not necessarily a sign that the problem is diminishing.

It should be noted that an attempt was made to conduct a survey to estimate the extent of unreported graffiti. Due to time constraints, the design was to have residents from different areas of the neighborhood get their neighbors to do answer questions regarding graffiti incidents at their residence during National Night Out on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The hope was that there would be sufficient geographic diversity combined with a large enough sample size to draw neighborhood-wide conclusions about the extent of graffiti. Unfortunately, the turnout for National Night Out was dampened when there was heavy rain that evening. The survey was not a complete loss. While the twenty-eight surveys collected were far short of what would be necessary to draw broad conclusions, it did provide anecdotal evidence which will be used later in this report.

#### *Who is Producing the Graffiti in Standish and Ericsson?*

While nearly all of the above types of graffiti are seen throughout Minneapolis, the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods have been afflicted primarily with the tags of gangs and tagger crews. Given the quantity of graffiti in the area, it is remarkably lacking in variety. The tags tend to be from one of a few gangs or tagger crews and are relatively formulaic in their presentation (down to the color of the spray paint used).

Gang graffiti is the greatest problem, with 71.1% of graffiti incidents (when the content of the graffiti is recorded) including some sort of gang tag. Tagger graffiti also represents a substantial problem, with tagger tags appearing in 28.9% of incidents (when the content of the graffiti is recorded), although far less than gang graffiti.

The gang responsible for the bulk of the graffiti is Surenos 13. Surenos translates as “southerners” and refers to the gang’s original territory in southern Los Angeles. Surenos 13 is a

derivative of the California prison gang, the Mexican Mafia (the 13 represents M because M is the thirteenth letter in the alphabet). The Mexican Mafia is known for being a particularly violent gang and for its presence in the illicit drug market. Surenos 13 itself was originally based in Los Angeles, but has had a strong presence in South Minneapolis since the mid-90's. Their predominant illicit activity in the Twin Cities has been drug dealing<sup>4</sup>, as it was in California. Since their arrival, Surenos 13 has been involved in a turf war with a rival Latino gang, Vatos Locos. Surenos 13 has been successful in dominating the bulk of the territory in south Minneapolis, with the Vatos Locos shifting most of their activity to St. Paul, although the territorial dispute between the two gangs continues to this day. Standish and Ericsson are currently considered outside of the main area of gang conflict, which is concentrated to the northwest in the Powderhorn Park area.

Graffiti from Surenos 13 tends to be relatively easy to identify. The most common tags are "Surenos 13", "Sur 13", "Sur" or simply "13". Occasionally "X3" will be written in place of "13". There are a number of subdivisions within the gang which have slightly different tags. The "Southside Posse" is one such subgroup, with their most common tags being "SSP 13" and "SSP". Other subgroups are "Captain Vario" (whose tag is "155 CV"), "Crooks" (whose tag is usually "Los Crooks 13") and "La Raza" (whose tag is "La Raza 13" or simply "LR 13"). Most Surenos 13 graffiti is done in blue spray paint, as blue is their gang color (reportedly due to their original geographic proximity to baseball's Dodgers in Los Angeles). However, their graffiti may be in other colors as well, particularly when they are targeting dark surfaces where blue will not show up very well.

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<sup>4</sup> This fact is based upon interviews with Sgt. Richard Duncan and Officer Christopher Gaiters. The reason, according to them, is that drug dealing is especially profitable in the Twin Cities due to its substantially higher drug prices relative to proximate metropolitan centers such as Detroit and Chicago.

No other gang is nearly as prolific in producing graffiti within Standish and Ericsson. After Surenos, the Vatos Locos produce the next most graffiti. As stated earlier, the Vatos Locos' numbers have diminished in south Minneapolis, but they still maintain a presence. Like Surenos 13, their main illicit activity and source of income is drug dealing. Vatos Locos tags are slightly less varied than those of Surenos 13 due to the lack of established subgroups within the gang. Their most common tags are "VL3" and "VL" and are usually done with black spray paint. Beyond these two gangs there are only isolated examples of tags from other gangs such as the Vicelords, Gangster Disciples and Latin Kings.

Unlike gang graffiti in Standish and Ericsson, there is no one tagger or tagger group can be identified as the center of the problem. Incidents have been scattered and irregular, coming from a number of groups. While none of these groups constitute a significant problem within Standish and Ericsson, some of these tagger groups are a problem within the broader Twin Cities area.

What types of individuals make up these groups, gangs and tagger crews? Arrest statistics for 1997 compiled by the Department of Justice indicate that 44% of vandals are under 18, and of those 88% are male. According to the study, the race of perpetrators generally corresponds to their representation in the general population (Stahl 2000). Thus, the popular image of the graffiti vandal as young and male is relatively accurate, although does not tell the whole story as there are a substantial number of older and/or female vandals. This demographic breakdown of graffiti vandals is consistent with the observations of Private Investigator Don Davis, who investigated graffiti in the Twin Cities area for a number of years.

The bulk of this demographic profile should hold for the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods—we would expect the graffiti vandals to be in their teens or twenties and

predominately male (although this is difficult to verify since so few graffitists are caught in the act). There is, however, one important difference. Because the bulk of the graffiti is produced by Surenos 13 and Vatos Locos and their members are Latino, we would expect that Latinos are responsible for graffiti within Standish and Ericsson at a rate which exceeds their representation in the population of the neighborhoods (which is 7.0% in Standish and 5.7% in Ericsson according to the 2000 Census). It is important to note that this *does not* mean that Latinos living in Standish and Ericsson are more likely to be graffitists. Particularly given that the territory of these gangs is to the northwest of Standish, it is logical to assume that some portion of observed graffiti is being produced by individuals living outside the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods.

#### *Where is the Graffiti in Standish and Ericsson?*

In order to get a handle on where the graffiti within Standish and Ericsson is occurring, data from Solid Waste and Recycling and Police Intelligence Sharing and Analysis (both pertain to the City of Minneapolis) has been plotted using GIS software. Map 1 (see Appendix C) plots incidents by address within Standish and Ericsson, with the larger circles indicating addresses which have been hit more frequently. This map, like other subsequent maps, includes only reported incidents of graffiti.

Looking at the map, a few distinct patterns emerge. The high frequency areas for graffiti appear to be the following:

- The northwest corner of the Standish neighborhood along Cedar Avenue where it borders the Powderhorn Park neighborhood. The likely explanation for this concentration is its proximity to Surenos 13 gang territory located to the northwest.
- 38<sup>th</sup> Street East in northern Standish. This street is likely targeted because it is the primary transit corridor within the neighborhood. In particular, the Hennepin-Overland

Railway Historical Society (2501 38<sup>th</sup> Street East) and Hiawatha Ceramics (2503 38<sup>th</sup> Street East), which are part of the same building, have been frequently hit by graffiti. (Photo 6 shows the Hennepin-Overland Railroad Society, Photos 7-9 show some other commonly hit buildings along 38<sup>th</sup> Street East)

- The area around Roosevelt High School, especially Our Redeemer Lutheran Church located directly across the street (at 4000 28<sup>th</sup> Street East) from the school which serves as an excellent canvas for graffiti with its large, light yellow exterior (see Photo 10).

More broadly, the graffiti problem appears to be concentrated within the Standish neighborhood. 84.6% of reported incidents in Standish or Ericsson (656 out of 775) are located within Standish. Given the magnitude of this difference, it is reasonable to assume that there are substantially more graffiti incidents in Standish and that it is not simply a product of reporting practices.

Maps 2 and 3 isolate gang and tagger graffiti incidents, respectively. These maps were created to determine if there are areas within Standish and Ericsson that are receiving more of one type of graffiti in relation to the other. No such pattern emerges from these maps. Instead we see that areas of high graffiti concentration will have high concentrations of gang *and* tagger graffiti, while areas of low graffiti concentration will usually have low concentrations of gang *and* tagger graffiti.

Map 4 tracks incidents of Surenos 13 graffiti by year. A couple of conclusions can be drawn from this map. The first is that Surenos 13 graffiti is not restricted to the northwest corner of Standish (where it borders Powderhorn Park), but is spread throughout the neighborhood. The second is that there is an especially high concentration in the area surrounding Roosevelt High School, indicating that the gang is likely using the graffiti to, among other things, recruit students.

The fifth map, Map 5, tracks incidents according to year to determine if there are emerging graffiti “hot spots” or spots which have not seen a serious concentration of graffiti in over a year. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions from the map, although it does appear that 2006 incidents tend to be clustered more around 38<sup>th</sup> Street East and Roosevelt High School. This finding further underscores the need to address those two problem areas.

In addition to these mappings of broader patterns in graffiti, Table 2 (see Appendix B) provides a list of the graffiti ‘hot spots’ in Standish and Ericsson. This table will be used later on in the report to identify potentially effective solutions for each of these addresses.

### *When is the Graffiti Occurring?*

One of the more difficult questions to answer is when the graffiti is occurring because, as stated earlier, the graffitist is very rarely caught in the act. It is possible to speak generally of when the graffiti occurs. Most graffiti is found along relatively busy streets (such as Cedar Avenue South and 38<sup>th</sup> Street East) because such streets offer the greatest publicity for the graffitist. It would be disadvantageous to tag buildings along these streets in broad daylight because there are so many people passing by who would notice and potentially alert the police. Thus, it is fair to assume that the bulk of graffiti incidents occur after nightfall.<sup>5</sup>

This is not to indicate that there aren’t graffiti incidents which occur during the day. Such incidents, on the other hand, are likely to take place in more out of the way locations such as alleys, less traveled streets and sections of parks which see less foot traffic.

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<sup>5</sup> This logical inference is supported by the observations of Private Investigator Don Davis, observations and inferences of police officers and residents, and the Department of Justice’s report, “Graffiti”. It is, however, important to note that as the DOJ states in their report, “there is little systematic analysis about this” (Weisel 2002).

## **The Cost of Graffiti**

The financial cost of graffiti is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate accurately. As indicated above, many citizens do not report incidents and even when incidents are reported it is rare that the city is provided with an account of abatement<sup>6</sup> costs. Moreover, recorded clean-up costs are divided among different departments within the city, numerous businesses and even more residents. When the cost of the time police officers spend responding to 911 calls regarding graffiti incidents is added to the equation, the net cost becomes even more difficult to determine.

Nationwide it is estimated that graffiti clean-up costs upwards of \$12 billion per annum (Weisel 2002, 2). This figure, however, likely underestimates the true cost of graffiti as it does not include indirect costs such as “lost revenue associated with reduced ridership on transit systems, reduced retail sales and declines in property values.” (Weisel 2002, 2) The costs associated with police investigation are not included in this figure either.

Within the city of Minneapolis, there is no all-encompassing estimate for graffiti clean-up. The City of St. Paul estimates that graffitiists do between \$300,000 and \$500,000 a year to public and private property. (FORCE Unit 2006) The cost to Minneapolis is likely substantially greater, however, as graffiti is a far greater problem. It is estimated that businesses in Minneapolis spend additional “millions” to clean up graffiti. (Brauer 2000)

## **Associated Dangers**

The most publicized theory relating vandalism to other types of crime is the “broken windows” theory. Originally proposed by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in a groundbreaking 1982 study, the idea is that if petty crime such as vandalism is left unaddressed it will

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<sup>6</sup> Abatement is the term used by the city to mean removing, painting over, or otherwise ensuring that graffiti is no longer visible. It is preferred to terms such as ‘clean-up’ for its all encompassing nature (i.e. painting over graffiti is not technically cleaning it up).

create an environment of disorder, and the according lack of pride in the community will be conducive to other, more pernicious types of crimes. (Wilson and Kelling 1982) The theory appeared to receive empirical verification under the law and order approach adopted by New York City Mayor Rudolph Guiliani following his election in 1994. Guiliani instructed his officers to begin enforcing “even the lowest level offenses including jaywalking, vagrancy and public intoxication” (Macallair 1999). Crime rates plummeted, and Guiliani’s approach began receiving national attention.

In recent years, the “broken windows” theory has come under heavy scrutiny. A number of scholars have argued that reductions in New York City crime rates can and should be attributed to external factors such as the passing of the crack-cocaine epidemic and falling crime rates nationwide.<sup>7</sup> Another author compared changes in the crime rates observed in New York City and San Francisco, a city known for having substantially “less strident law enforcement”, and found that these changes were nearly identical (Macallair 1999)

It is beyond the scope of this report to take sides in the “broken windows” debate. There are, however, a few clear conclusions which can be drawn without entering the aforementioned debate. First, given the role of gang graffiti as a tool for both staking claim to territory and recruiting purposes, such graffiti has the potential to increase other gang-related crime in Standish and Ericsson. The graffiti creates the potential for “turf wars” to occur within the neighborhood, as well as encouraging younger residents of Standish and Ericsson to become involved in gangs. It is impossible to determine if gang graffiti has produced these results, but the clear potential is sufficient to warrant concern.

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<sup>7</sup> The most thorough criticisms of “broken windows” are found in Bernard Harcourt’s book, *Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing* and Ralph Taylor’s book, *Breaking Away from Broken Windows*.

Second, maps of graffiti within the neighborhoods correspond strongly with maps of other sorts of crime. It is important to note that such correlation does not necessarily imply causation. It does, however, suggest that it may be advisable to pursue strategies for combating graffiti which carry over to combating other sorts of crime as well.

### **The City of Minneapolis's Response to Graffiti: Tracking, Investigating, Abating**

The City of Minneapolis's response to graffiti has consisted of three steps: recording of incidents, investigation of cases and assistance in abatement. The division of responsibilities has evolved over recent years, making it difficult to assess the efficacy of each part of the City's approach.

Until the end of 2000, there was no individual within the city who had the primary responsibility of dealing with graffiti. That changed when then-Chief Olson urged Sgt. Richard Duncan to become a full-time graffiti investigator for the Police Department. At the time all calls went directly to clean-up calls and the Police Department rarely, if ever, received any indication that a graffiti incident had occurred. Sgt. Duncan's first action was to change that practice, directing all graffiti calls to the Police Department in order to permit record-keeping. The police were in charge of tracking and recording incidents, conducting investigations and determining which city department (if any) should provide assistance with graffiti abatement. It is difficult to obtain comprehensive data on either the number of incidents during this time period or the cost to the city to fight graffiti (as the cost was spread out through so many departments). Sgt. Duncan also began tracking regular graffiti artists while learning about the graffiti subculture in order to develop an appreciation for what motivates graffiti.

In 2004, Sgt. Duncan handed off the responsibility of graffiti investigator to Sgt. Donna Olson. Shortly thereafter, in an attempt to better divide responsibilities, the city shifted the task

of tracking and recording incidents, as well as the bulk of assistance in clean-up, to Solid Waste and Recycling in May of 2005. Solid Waste and Recycling began receiving calls through the Graffiti Hotline, processing incidents and reporting them to the Police Department at the end of each day. At the time, Solid Waste and Management provided free clean-up for all public buildings (unless another public agency was specifically assigned to clean-up their own graffiti, such as Metro Transit).

In April 2006, the city began the process of phasing out the Graffiti Hotline, transferring its calls to 311 to simplify the reporting process. The transfer from the Hotline to 311 will occur automatically for the next six months (until October 2006). During the following six months, callers of the Graffiti Hotline will be informed that they must hang up and dial 311. Beginning in April 2007, the Graffiti Hotline will no longer be active in any way.

In May 2006, the city reduced the number of days that residents have to abate graffiti from twenty days to ten days after they receive notification from the city in an effort to speed up the abatement process (see the Potential Solutions section for a full discussion of rapid abatement as a graffiti prevention strategy). Once the graffiti is abated, the city requests that the resident notify the city by sending a photo to demonstrate the graffiti indeed has been abated (although such notification is not *required* of the resident). If the resident fails to abate the graffiti within this time period, the city will do so and the resident will be billed accordingly.

The city also expanded its program of free abatement to any structure which does not serve as a primary residence and begins within five feet of public space. The result is that services are available to practically all businesses as well as residents whose garage is located adjacent to an alley. Free abatement, however, is restricted to non-sensitive painted surfaces because the city wishes to avoid causing damage which is greater than the original damage done

by graffitists. Solid Waste and Recycling is planning to expand the program to cover sensitive surfaces as well, but they were still in the process of taking bids for the necessary products at the time of this was written.

### **Prosecution of Graffiti Crimes**

Legally there is no such thing as a “graffiti crime”. Instead, graffitists are treated as having committed a property crime and are tried according to the damage done by the graffiti. Prosecution is then divided according to what level of crime the property damage constitutes. The City of Minneapolis prosecutes both misdemeanor (damage of \$250 or less) and gross misdemeanor (damage between \$250 and \$500) cases. Hennepin County carries out prosecution of all felony cases (damage of \$500 or more).

The prosecution process begins with the investigations carried out by the Minneapolis Police Department. Within the department there is one officer, Sgt. Olson, who has primary responsibility for dealing with such incidents. After carrying out an investigation, Sgt. Olson then recommends to the City or County (depending on the damage level) the cases which she feels are appropriate for prosecution. Although they are not necessary criteria to bring a case to trial, those recommended almost always have a combination of eyewitness testimony and recovery of materials used in the graffiti incident. The primary stumbling blocks in the investigative process are lack of eyewitness testimony, which would allow police to identify a suspect, and inability to obtain a damage estimate from the property owner because no record was kept of the cost of graffiti abatement. Since the beginning of 2004, of the thousands of graffiti incidents, 94 have been recommended (47 to the City and 47 to the County) for prosecution.

The cases referred to the City Attorney's office are handled by a prosecutor named Jessica Warren. After reviewing the information provided to her by the Police Department, Warren decides whether there is sufficient evidence to bring charges against the individual. In eleven of the 47 cases, charges were dismissed because either Warren did not feel the case was compelling enough or the property owner (of the building tagged by graffiti) refused to participate. In twelve of the 36 cases where charges were pressed, the defendant pled guilty to either a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor. In another eight cases the defendant pled guilty to other, more severe, charges (e.g. and the misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor charges for property damage were dismissed). Four cases "continued without prosecution" (CWOP), an option for offenders who have little or no criminal history and are considered unlikely to offend again. The idea is to implement a sort of restorative justice, where the offender works in conjunction with the victims of their crime to craft an appropriate punishment. If the defendant completes the punishment, which is usually a combination of restitution payment and community service, and avoids legal trouble during the following year, the charges are cleared from their record. The final twelve cases are still unresolved, with ten pending cases and two defendants out on "bench warrants", meaning that if they fail to appear in court, they can be arrested.

The penalties for misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors can be relatively severe. For a misdemeanor a graffitist can be sentenced to up to 90 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$1000. For a gross misdemeanor a graffitist can be sentenced to up to 365 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$3000. The penalties administered in graffiti-related property cases, however, are nowhere near the maximum severity. Graffitists will usually be ordered to pay restitution for the damage as well as serving a few days in jail and/or doing a few days of community service through

Hennepin County's "Sentence to Serve" (STS). In Sentence-to-Serve, individuals do outdoor work to beautify the city which includes graffiti abatement, among other tasks.

According to Warren, there are a few primary hurdles to prosecution beyond the initial obstacles faced by Sgt. Olson in investigation. The first, and most common, obstacle is refusal of the property owner to prosecute the graffitist. Without the property owner's support charges cannot be pressed. The second obstacle is the difficulty of getting eyewitnesses to take the stand. In some cases, they will refuse to testify due to fear (especially in gang-related cases). In other cases, witnesses will have moved between the occurrence of the incident and when the trial is conducted and the city is unable to track them down. The third obstacle is the difficulty in aggregating graffiti incidents to increase the severity of the charge. Suspects are only charged for those crimes which they are witnessed committing or which occurred the same day in close proximity to the witnessed incident. This last obstacle constitutes a far greater problem for the county and will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

The approach of Anne Taylor, the individual in the County Attorney's office who handles graffiti cases, is relatively similar to that of City of Minneapolis Prosecutor Warren. She deals with a handful of cases each year, most of which are pled out by the defendant for a payment of restitution, community service and, in some cases, a few weekends in jail. First time offenders are usually given a "stay of imposition of sentence" if they complete their sentence and do not have any trouble with the law during the following year. This means that the felony is reduced to a gross misdemeanor on their record to make it easier for them to apply for jobs and housing. If the offender does end up in the criminal justice system again then the original offence is still treated as though they have a previous felony conviction. Taylor stresses imposing financial restitution (which is awarded dollar-for-dollar according to how much damage was done) and

community service—as with the City of Minneapolis they channel graffitists through Sentence to Serve which, among other things, abates graffiti.

The county is able to aggregate graffiti cases if there is eyewitness testimony for each incident, but is not able to do so based solely upon testimony from Sgt. Olson that a tag name is used exclusively by one individual. This situation arose during a 2005 case. In the case, an individual was caught tagging a building in Minneapolis. It would have been a relatively simple case, as the individual was caught in the act, except the property owner chose not to provide a damage estimate. Without a damage estimate, Taylor was unable to use that tagging incident as the basis for a felony charge. Thus, Sgt. Olson was brought in as an “expert” to testify that this incident demonstrated that the individual was responsible for a number of other graffiti incidents in town and could be charged with a felony based upon those damage estimates. A “Frye hearing” was held to determine if there was a scientific basis for Sgt. Olson’s claim. The judge found that there was not, and was further convinced by the testimony of a well-respected handwriting expert, Karen Runyon, who argued that it was not possible to use handwriting analysis to determine the identity of a graffitist. The case, besides being the only instance in which Taylor was unable to get a conviction, was a huge blow to law enforcement and prosecution efforts as it means that it is only possible to bring charges against an individual for graffiti they are caught doing. This in turn means that most restitution awards will be between \$800-\$1,500, far less than the tens of thousands of dollars of damage done by some graffitists.

## **Potential Solutions: Introduction**

The second portion of the report will be dedicated to evaluating potential solutions to the graffiti problem in Standish and Ericsson. Factors considered in determining the advisability of each of these solutions will be: cost, anticipated effectiveness, ease of implementation, whether the approach requires a one-time or sustained effort, and possible additional benefits the community would derive from implementation.

Before discussing particular approaches, it is important to note that it is not simply a question of choosing one solution which will “solve” the graffiti problem. Experience from other cities in implementing strategies indicates that a combination of approaches produces success which can be measured only in relative terms (i.e. whether the amount of graffiti decreases).

Solutions to graffiti fall within two broad categories: how to protect property and how to deal with offenders.

### **Protecting Your Property**

*Landscaping.* One of the simplest and most effective graffiti prevention strategies is landscaping, which can take the form of vines, trellises, planters or thorny bushes along the outside of buildings. Such a strategy acts to prevent graffiti in one of three ways. First, it can make the wall space inaccessible to the graffitist, particularly if thorny bushes are the plants used. It is important to ensure that the wall space is truly inaccessible and not simply difficult to reach; graffitists will often take hard to reach wall space as a challenge, and take even greater pride in tagging such a site. This concern is slightly less relevant in Standish and Ericsson, however, because the majority of graffitists target easy to reach spaces, and there appear to be relatively few challenge-oriented incidents.

The second landscaping strategy is to use landscaping to hide the wall from passers-by on the street. Graffitiists would continue to be unencumbered by physical restraints, but would be unable to achieve their goal of advertising their gang or tagging crew. Here a hedge of sufficient height would serve the purpose, as long as it was dense enough that the building was not visible through gaps.

The third and final landscaping strategy is to make the wall space unusable. This would require planting vines or another climbing plant which will cover the relevant surface.

Given the relative ease and low cost of implementation, landscaping strategies are most appropriate for homeowners and small business owners seeking a quick-fix to their graffiti problems (see Photo 11 for an example of well-done landscaping on a building in south Minneapolis).

*Additional Lighting.* The other inexpensive and relatively easy prevention strategy is to install motion sensor lights. Because most graffiti incidents occur during the night under the cover of darkness, lighting can serve as an effective deterrent by scaring away potential graffitiists. Moreover, motion sensor lights could be particularly effective by not simply illuminating the area, but also startling graffitiists when they suddenly switch on.

While effective landscaping provides a near guarantee against future graffiti incidents, lighting only serves to decrease the likelihood of incidents. A particularly fearless graffitiist could simply continue tagging. Indeed, residents have reported a handful of incidents where garages have been tagged despite the presence of lighting. Lighting, however, does have the benefit of allowing the property owner to maintain the current appearance of the building.

*Murals.* Murals rank as one of the more popular prevention strategies, having been used in a number of cities, most notably Philadelphia<sup>8</sup>. The consensus within the academic literature (supported by anecdotal observations within the Twin Cities) is that murals are effective because most graffiti artists respect their artistic qualities. Nevertheless, they do get hit with graffiti from time to time (see Photo 12). According to Don Davis, murals are particularly prone to graffiti when they are done by graffiti artists who may have rivals living within the area who will tag the mural.

Murals are, by a wide margin, the most expensive and time-consuming prevention strategy. The precise cost of a mural project is difficult to determine because it depends upon a number of factors: size of the building, type of surface to be painted, degree of community involvement and the price and hours required from a professional artist. On the inexpensive end of the scale, El Colegio, a local charter school, completed two murals at a total cost of \$7,500<sup>9</sup> (\$7,000 was spent on the artist and only \$500 on materials because the bulk of the paint was donated by Valspar). Photos 13 and 14 show those two murals produced by El Colegio.

A mural with a more involved planning process, including community feedback and possible involvement in the design, would likely be far more expensive. While she declined to give specific figures, muralist Marilyn Lindstrom indicated that such a project could run well into the tens of thousands. Moreover, she said that such a mural project would likely require a year minimum to carry out the planning, grant application and execution steps.

There is currently one building with a mural within the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods. The building is the Agape Gallery located at the corner of 42<sup>nd</sup> St. E. and 28<sup>th</sup> Ave. S. Other building owners have expressed interest in the possibility of a mural.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on Philadelphia's mural project, see Jane Golden, Robin Rice and Natalie Pompilio's book, *Philadelphia Murals and the Stories They Tell*. Jane Golden is considered the best-known mural advocate and is serving as the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program.

<sup>9</sup> Figures based upon correspondence with David Greenberg, one of the founders of El Colegio.

*Preventative Construction.* A relatively simple graffiti prevention strategy is to build structures which are not attractive targets. While this may not be an option for many current residents and businesses, it is important to keep in mind when new buildings are constructed. The strategy is to avoid any large, smooth, light-colored surfaces. This can involve strategic placement of windows to break up wall space, landscaping against large blank sides, privacy fences which have planks at alternating depths such that they don't provide a smooth surface for graffiti. Such construction can substantially reduce the risk of graffiti while avoiding costly remodeling or graffiti abatement later.

*Reporting Incidents.* As soon as you notice that there has been graffiti on your property (or other property within the neighborhood) there are a few steps you should take. First, take a photo of the graffiti. Second, call 311 (do not the Graffiti Hotline—it was rolled into 311 in April, 2006 as explained in “The City of Minneapolis’s Response”). Third, call SENA. SENA can provide you with graffiti removal products (if applicable) or contact either the City of Minneapolis or Hennepin County to obtain assistance in the graffiti removal process.

Besides expediting the process of graffiti abatement, rapid reporting aids law enforcement. It helps the Police Department gauge graffiti problem areas, designating patrols accordingly, as well as assisting in prosecutions where graffiti artists have hit multiple locations.

Finally, if you witness a graffiti incident in progress, call 911. Graffiti is considered a property crime which, when in progress, is a top priority for the Police Department. Also make sure to take down any identifiable information about the graffiti artist (height, hair color, clothing, age, etc.) as well as their vehicle, if relevant (license plate numbers, color, model, etc.).

*Rapid Removal.* Although it is commonly seen as a reactive solution, rapid removal or abatement of graffiti can have preventive qualities as well. The strategy is to frustrate graffiti artists

by erasing their graffiti before others have a chance to appreciate their handiwork. Particularly in cases where graffiti is designed to advertise the presence of a gang or tagger, this intuitively should be an effective strategy.

The most famous removal program was the clean-up of subway cars in New York City beginning in 1984, called the “Clean Car Program”. A portion of subway cars were labeled as “graffiti free” cars and were subsequently cleaned within two hours of when they were tagged by graffiti and were also locked up at night in a railyard surrounded by barbed wire to prevent graffitiists from accessing the cars. After an initial surge of graffiti incidents on labeled cars because graffitiists took this claim as a challenge, the rate of graffiti on the cars slowed to a trickle as graffitiists became frustrated with the speed of abatement. This approach is widely considered to have been a success. New York City subway cars, which had long been known for the extensive presence of graffiti, were clean and remained clean.

A rapid removal strategy has been applied in the City of Minneapolis as well. In order to increase the speed of abatement, the city has given residents only ten days to take care of graffiti clean-up. This, unfortunately, is far short of the prompt response required to produce a notable impact on graffitiist behavior. A telling demonstration for the effectiveness of rapid abatement would be the Corcoran Neighborhood, which uses rapid removal as its primary tactic (combined with, necessarily, rapid identification) in combating graffiti. There is one particularly impressive example: a white privacy fence on 33<sup>rd</sup> Street East and Cedar Avenue which was a constant target of graffiti was chosen for rapid abatement. The summer of 2005 it was tagged by graffiti twelve times and each time it was quickly painted over. After the twelfth time, it finally stopped being a target for graffiti.

This strategy is not without its limitations. Mere removal of graffiti returns the surface to its previous blank canvas state. Graffitiists may have been deterred by the presence of another's graffiti, as painting over it is considered a conflictive action. Once the graffiti is removed, however, the surface is again free to the first comer with no worry of causing offense. In Standish and Ericsson this concern is particularly relevant given that the bulk of graffiti is non-conflictive. There are no visible tagger rivalries, although there are, occasionally, visible gang rivalries (see Photo 16).

These concerns are not to indicate that a rapid removal strategy cannot work but, as the Corcoran example demonstrates, such a strategy requires a sustained and dedicated effort. If a particular property demonstrates an unwavering resolve to quickly deal with graffiti, graffitiists will eventually stop. If, however, the removal is slow or inconsistent in dealing with graffiti, the site risks continuing to be known as a good billboard for getting your gang or tagger crew's name publicized.

### **Offender-Targeted Strategies**

Property protection, if pursued in isolation from other strategies, will only produce limited success. While it can prevent graffiti at a particular location, it is likely to produce a high level of "displacement"—graffitiists, noting that a particular location is no longer a suitable canvas, will simply choose another location. This is not to indicate that such strategies are ineffective; in fact, they are the quickest and surest way to combat graffiti. However, it does indicate that they are better when pursued in conjunction with offender-targeted strategies.

Offender-targeted strategies can be divided into three groups: preventing individuals from becoming graffitiists in the first place, denying access to the means to carry out graffiti, and providing a strong deterrent to graffiti through detection and stiff penalties.

## **Preventing Individuals From Becoming Graffitiists**

A potential concern with property protection strategies is that they fail to address the root of the problem: involvement in gangs and tagger crews. Indeed, if we fail to address this underlying problem the risk is that we will merely observe displacement as a result of our efforts. Moreover, we are skirting a more important issue: the rise of gang activity in the Twin Cities. Even if graffiti abatement costs were to ebb, indicating some level of success, the community is likely to bear an increasing burden in terms of lives lost, communities undermined and additional tax dollars spent on law enforcement if the gang issue is not addressed.

A common strategy for reaching kids before they become involved in gangs is through after school and summer programs. Such programs have been demonstrated to be an effective strategy for keeping kids off the streets and away from violent behavior (Patten and Robertson 2001). There is little consensus as to what constitutes the “optimal” after school or summer program, although research demonstrates that it is best if they span from 3-6 pm as that is when “risky youth behavior” tends to occur (DeAngelis 2001). Unfortunately, due to budget cuts at the state level, schools throughout Minnesota have been cutting programs, with after school and summer programs among the casualties (MPR 2003, MPR 2004).

## **Denying Access to Materials**

There are two main mediums that graffiti is done with: spray paint and broad-tipped markers. Spray paint is used to create larger tags, throw-ups and pieces on building walls, which are maximally visible to passers-by. Spray paint is preferred to other types of paint because of its portability—it fits well into large pockets or backpacks. Broad-tipped markers are used to write smaller tags on city signs, garbage cans, mailboxes, utility boxes, etc.

Due to the prevalence of the use of these two mediums in creating graffiti, they are commonly targeted in anti-graffiti campaigns. In the 1992, the City of Chicago outlawed the sale of spray paint and broad-tipped markers within the city limits in an effort to curb its availability. More recently, New York City banned the possession of spray paint and wide-tipped markers by individuals under 21 years old. Both laws quickly became the target of legal challenges. Chicago's law was challenged on grounds that it would not achieve its intended effect (limiting the availability of spray paint). New York City's law was challenged on grounds that it violated the First Amendment right of freedom of expression. Chicago's law was upheld while the New York City law is still in legal limbo. The case is currently before a District Court panel which must decide whether to enforce a lower court decision which would prevent the law from going into effect for 18, 19 and 20 year olds. The legal question is whether there is a "rational basis" to single those ages out. The legal challenge does not, however, question the ability of the city to enforce such a ban for those under the age of eighteen.

New York City and Chicago are not the only cities undertaking efforts to curb access to graffiti materials. Minneapolis, like a number of other cities, bans the sale of spray paint to minors. This law has recently come under heavy scrutiny due to its lax enforcement. As a result, City Council Member Gary Schiff, who represents the portion of Standish and Ericsson north of 38<sup>th</sup> Street East, has introduced legislation that would require spray paint to be stored in locked display cabinets with a sign reading: "We ID. No Spray Paint Sales to Minors." The legislation is designed to achieve two objectives: prevent the shoplifting of spray paint and to ensure clerks ask for identification when selling spray paint. The legislation, which is based upon similar legislation implemented in Phoenix, AZ and Austin, TX is currently before the Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee and will likely be put to a committee vote on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

Retail industry representatives have expressed concern that the law will be enforced at substantial cost and inconvenience to store owners while failing to curb the availability of graffiti materials. They instead promote a “Responsible Retailing” plan. The plan “consists of identifying all spray paint retailers, preparing guides explaining the legal restrictions and practical theft prevention considerations for the sale and display of spray paint, producing in-store signage and offering theft prevention training for retail sales staff.” (NPCA 2000) Such a plan has been implemented in a handful of jurisdictions around the country.

There has also been discussion of proposing legislation which would make the ban on the sale of spray paint to minors state-wide. The availability of graffiti materials in neighboring communities provides a further hindrance to an already difficult enforcement process for the City of Minneapolis. Such a state-wide law did exist previously, but was overturned.

### **Increasing the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement**

The largest current hurdle for effective law enforcement is the inability of the county to aggregate graffiti incidents based upon the uniqueness of each tag name. This prevents most sentences for graffiti offenses from being much more than a firm slap on the wrist. It certainly falls short of providing an overwhelming financial deterrent. It is for this reason that the Lyndale Neighborhood Association began pushing legislation, which became state law in 2004, which allows plaintiffs to receive up to triple the cost of damage done by the graffitist. In addition, the law provides that the parents of minors are liable for up to \$1,000. Since the passage of this statute, however, it has not been utilized. Concerns over the ability of plaintiffs to collect damages and other priorities have prevented the City Attorney’s office from taking on such a civil case.

## **Potential Solutions: Recommendations**

### *Recommendations for SENA:*

- Inform residents of how to report graffiti, when and how it can be abated, and the importance of rapid abatement. This can be done via the newsletter and pamphlets made available at the SENA office.
- Encourage and support efforts of local businesses to make their buildings less graffiti-friendly. Support can take the form of information, coordination of volunteers (for painting, landscaping, or whatever project the property owner desires), or direct financial support for such projects.
- Designate one person within the organization (resident volunteer or staff) to track graffiti incidents and take responsibility for ensuring the graffiti is abated. This person would contact “Sentence to Serve”, organized volunteer clean-up crews for buildings frequently tagged by graffiti, and occasionally abate graffiti on their own.

### *Recommendations for the City of Minneapolis:*

- The City should get serious about abatement. There are a few elements to this strategy:
  - 1) Continue to offer abatement for a greater number of surfaces. The addition of brick and stucco is an excellent step in this direction.
  - 2) Accelerate the abatement process. Optimally graffiti should be abated within forty-eight hours of when 311 receives the report.
  - 3) Actively encourage residents to abate graffiti on their property immediately. The bulk of graffiti on garages and houses is gang graffiti which lacks the distinctive

characteristics which would allow police to track individual graffiti artists. Thus, it is relatively unimportant to wait for the graffiti to be photographed.

- The City should pass the ordinance requiring that spray paint be sold behind the counter or in a locked case. This will help to prevent shoplifting and ensure that employees enforce the ban on sales to those seventeen and under.
- Broad-tipped markers should be added to the list of items not sold to those seventeen and under (and, hopefully, are locked up). While they do not pose the threat of inhalant use like spray paint and the other items enumerated in the current ordinance, they are responsible for thousands of dollars in graffiti damage and are easily shoplifted.

#### **Recommendations for Residents:**

- Protect your property. This is best achieved through landscaping but can also be achieved through things such as motion-sensored lights.
- When incidents occur make sure they are reported right away. If the incident is in progress, residents should call 911. Otherwise, all graffiti reports go to 311.
- Abate the graffiti as soon as possible. Graffiti is designed to be seen by as many people as possible. The sooner the graffiti is removed, the less the graffiti accomplishes, and accordingly, the graffiti artist is less likely to target that location in the future.

#### **Recommendations for Businesses:**

- Take preventative measures. Some businesses are hit dozens of times, producing a clean-up cost in the thousands of dollars. It is far cheaper to install landscaping or add a non-

sacrificial coating to the building's exterior than to continue cleaning off graffiti.

Moreover, the result is far more visually appealing.

- Abate the graffiti as soon as possible. Graffiti is designed to be seen by as many people as possible. The sooner the graffiti is removed, the less the graffiti accomplishes, and accordingly, the graffitist is less likely to target that location in the future.
- Those particularly dedicated businesses should create an alliance of "Graffiti Free Businesses". These businesses should post signs to this effect and abate graffiti within twenty-four hours of when it goes up. The result will be a short-term rise in graffiti on these buildings, followed by a rapid decline once graffitists realize the futility of tagging these buildings.

## Graffiti Removal Guide for Minneapolis Residents

The following is a list of recommended strategies for removing graffiti according to the surface. Results will vary depending upon the particular surface, what was used to create the graffiti, and how long the graffiti has been allowed to sit. **Do not forget to report and photograph your graffiti before removing it.**

*The best option is to have already applied a non-sacrificial coating to the exterior of the building* such that the graffiti will simply wash off after application of the appropriate solvent. Non-sacrificial coatings can be applied to any surface. Application can be involved and the paint is expensive (upwards of \$100/gallon) but provides for simple removal. They, unfortunately, are not available at most paint stores. Contact the SENA office at (612) 721-1601 for information regarding vendors of non-sacrificial coatings.

*Graffiti “Scrubs”, a cloth towel moistened with a chemical solvent, and “Gangbusters”, graffiti-removal spray solvent, are available free of charge at Minneapolis fire stations.* The nearest fire station to the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods is located at 3209 38<sup>th</sup> Street East. (Note: These products are toxic, and care should be taken when using them.)

- **Any Painted Surface:** Re-paint the surface after applying a fresh primer coat. Try to make the paint-over look as natural as possible (this may mean re-painting a larger section than is necessary to simply cover the graffiti), otherwise the paint-over will be obvious (see Photos 6, 7 and 9) and the building is more likely to be seen as an attractive target for graffiti in the future.
- **Brick:** The most effective method is to use “Gangbusters”. Saturate the graffiti, allow it to soak, and then to power wash or soda blast the surface. This can potentially do slight

damage to the surface, with a “shadow” appearing where the power washing occurred. Vinyl brushes can also be utilized, with intermittent rinsing using water.

- **Concrete, Pavement, Stone:** Power wash or soda blast the surface. “Gangbusters” may also be applied, although it may not be particularly effective.
- **Glass:** Paint thinner or carburetor cleaner can be used to dissolve the graffiti. A razor blade can then be used to remove any sections which do not come off well. If the glass has been etched, you will likely have to replace the glass. Contact a glass professional.
- **Metal, Aluminum Siding, Vinyl Siding, Fiberglass:** Apply “Gangbusters” and rinse with water. Begin by choosing an inconspicuous location to ensure that the “Gangbusters” does not adversely affect the primary surface. If this proves ineffective, power washing or, in extreme cases, painting over may be appropriate. (Caution: be especially careful when using “Gangbusters” on Vinyl Siding.)
- **Street Signs, Utility Boxes:** The best option is to use graffiti “Scrubs”, which are available at the SENA office (at 1830 42<sup>nd</sup> Street East) and fire stations throughout Minneapolis. Make sure to wear glove while using the “Scrubs” to avoid contact with its chemicals. See Photos 17 and 18 for a demonstration of their effectiveness. SENA also stocks the City of Minneapolis’s standardized paints for stoplight poles (green and yellow), fire hydrants (red) and utility boxes (brown). They are free of charge.
- **Stucco:** The best option is to apply “Gangbusters”, allow it to sit, and then power wash the surface. A less attractive option is to simply paint over the section hit by graffiti.
- **Wood:** Low pressure power washing or sanding is recommended.

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## Interviews:

- Angela Brenny and Susan Young. Susan is the director of the City of Minneapolis's Division of Solid Waste and Recycling. Angela is the clean city coordinator within the division.
- Don Davis. Don is a private investigator who spent a few years tracking graffiti artists. His work contributed to the arrest of a substantial number of graffiti artists.
- Sgt. Richard Duncan. Sgt. Duncan was the graffiti investigator with the Minneapolis Police Department for three years before Sgt. Donna Olson took over the position in 2004.
- Officer Christopher Gaiters. Officer Gaiters works in Minneapolis Police Intelligence Sharing and Analysis and specializes in understanding gang activity.
- Eric Gustafson. Eric works with the Corcoran Neighborhood Association and has primary responsibility for addressing graffiti within the neighborhood.
- Marilyn Lindstrom. Marilyn is an artist who has done a number of mural projects throughout the state.
- Scott Moore. Scott is a member of the Lyndale Neighborhood Association's Graffiti Task Force. Scott has worked with Jack Baker, another member of the Lyndale neighborhood, to draft and promote legislation to address graffiti.
- John Reed. John is a Crime Prevention Specialist in the Fifth Precinct of the Minneapolis Police Department who focuses on Latino outreach.
- Sue Roethele. Sue is a Crime Prevention Specialist in the Third Precinct of the Minneapolis Police Department.
- Anne Taylor. Anne is the individual within the Hennepin County Attorney's office who handles graffiti cases.
- Jessica Warren and Jay Heffern. Jay is the City of Minneapolis Attorney and Jessica is the individual within the City Attorney's office who handles graffiti cases.
- Residents of Standish and Ericsson: Rob Atkinson, Tori Hansing, Gregg Mast, George Norman, Peter Racer, and Cecilia Thompson.

## Appendix A: Photos

Photo 1: This garage graffiti incident inspired one resident to become involved with the Graffiti Task Force. *Photo taken by Gregg Mast.*



Photo 2: Surenos 13 gang graffiti on the garage of a house located on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 3: Basic gang graffiti for “La Raza 13”, a subgroup of Surenos 13. The graffiti is on the alley-side of a business located on 38<sup>th</sup> Street East. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 4: Tags along a retaining wall on I-94. *Photo taken by Don Davis in October 1998.*



Photo 5: Piece by the graffitist, "Boa", on the Intermedia Arts building in Minneapolis. *Photo taken by Don Davis in September 1999.*



Photo 6: Hennepin Overland Railroad Museum. Note that the lower eight feet or so are discolored from having been hit by graffiti and painted over on multiple occasions. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 7: Tom Thumb Convenience Store, one of the most commonly hit businesses on 38<sup>th</sup> Street East. Notice the discoloration of the stucco from repeated paint-over. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 8: Movies to Go is another commonly hit business on 38<sup>th</sup> Street East. There graffiti is for MVS 13, another subgroup of Surenos 13. “Vago” and “Brown Boy” are the nicknames of two graffitist and the upside three dots is a mocking of Vatos Locos, who use three dots frequently as a symbol. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 9: Sundem’s Carburetor on 38<sup>th</sup> Street East. Notice the exterior has had multiple paint-overs to cover graffiti. *Photo by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 10: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church as seen from across 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 11: The Qwest building located at 3301 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in Minneapolis. Landscaping was done recently in an effort to deter graffiti. *Photo taken by Bob Kambeitz.*



Photo 12: A mural which has been hit by graffiti. The mural is located at 29<sup>th</sup> Street East and Aldrich Avenue in Minneapolis. *Photo taken by Don Davis.*



Photo 13: A mural done by El Colegio in conjunction with a local artist. The mural is on the Cedar Marketplace at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street East and Cedar Avenue. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 14: Mural produced by El Colegio on 41<sup>st</sup> Street East and Cedar Avenue. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*



Photo 15: Mural on Agape Gallery at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street East and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The mural was funded by SENA. *Photo taken by Daniel Allen.*





## Appendix B: Tables and Figures

Table 1: Reported Graffiti Incidents by Month in Standish and Ericsson

Month	2004	2005	2006
January	14	10	53
February	10	19	77
March	9	25	43
April	8	33*	42
May	6	49	37
June	7	17	23
July	8	26	9**
August	15	55	
September	1	20	
October	8	41	
November	0	35	
December	1	74	
<b>Total</b>	87	405	284

Source: Combined data from Solid Waste and Recycling and Police Intelligence Sharing and Analysis.

\*April 2005 marked the transfer of recording responsibilities from the Police Department to Solid Waste and Recycling.

\*\*Number of incidents through July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Figure 1: Reported Graffiti Incidents by Month in Standish and Ericsson

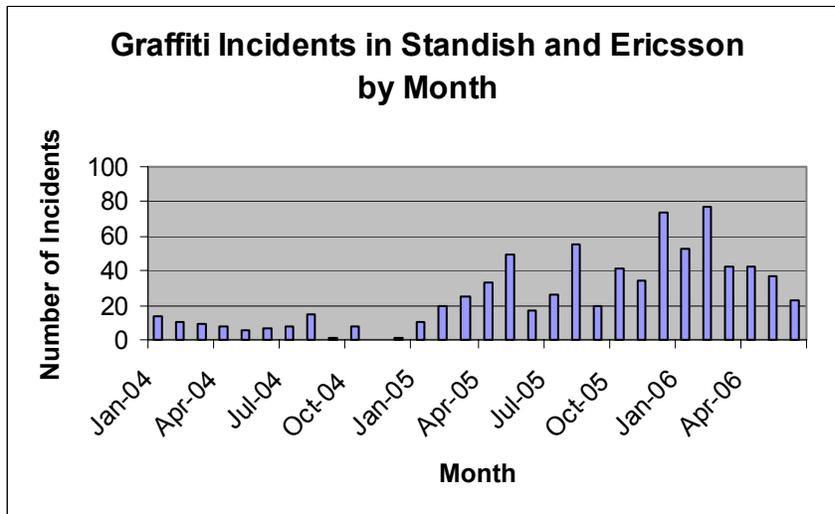


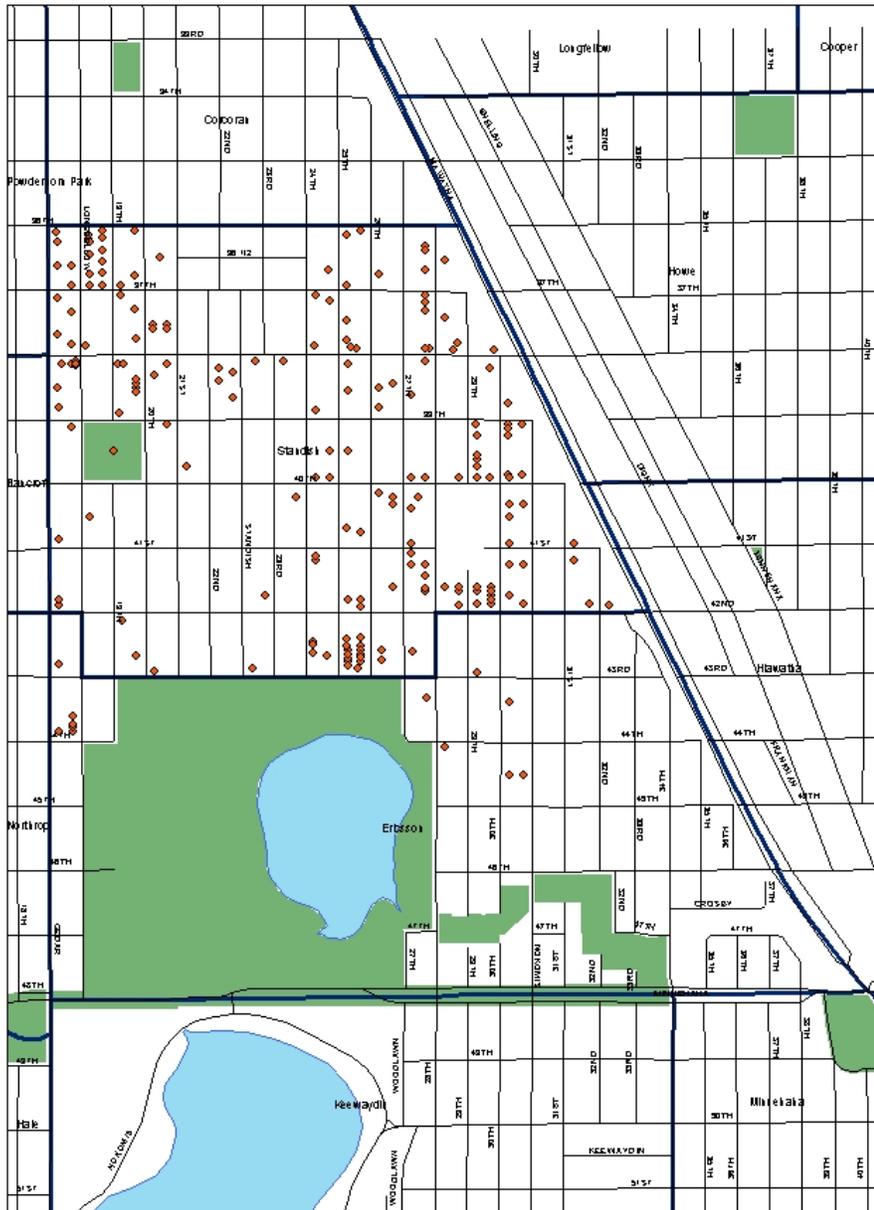
Table 2. Addresses with Most Frequent Reports of Graffiti.

Address	#	Building Type	# 2006	Location Name
2503 38TH ST E	15	Commercial Property	9	Hennepin Overland Railway Historical Society
1900 40TH ST E	12	Park	0	Sibley Field
2402 38TH ST E	10	Commercial Property	4	Tom Thumb Convenience Store
2235 38TH ST E	9	Commercial Property	5	Heart Foods Company
4000 28TH AVE S	9	Commercial Property	0	Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
1849 38TH ST E	6	Commercial Property	2	Sundem's Carburetor
3957 29TH AVE S	6	Residence	0	n/a
4164 CEDAR AVE S	6	Commercial Property	2	Cedar Marketplace, Grocery
1833 38TH ST E	5	Commercial Property	2	Everett's Foods
2301 38TH ST E	5	Commercial Property	0	J&D Movies to Go
3933 29TH AVE S	5	Residence	3	n/a
2716 38TH ST E	5	Residence	3	n/a
3600 20TH AVE S	5	Residence	3	n/a
3632 19TH AVE S	5	Residence	0	n/a
4103 24TH AVE S	5	Residence	0	n/a
3659 CEDAR AVE S	5	Traffic Sign	0	n/a
2902 38TH ST E	5	Light Rail Station	1	38th St. Light Rail Station



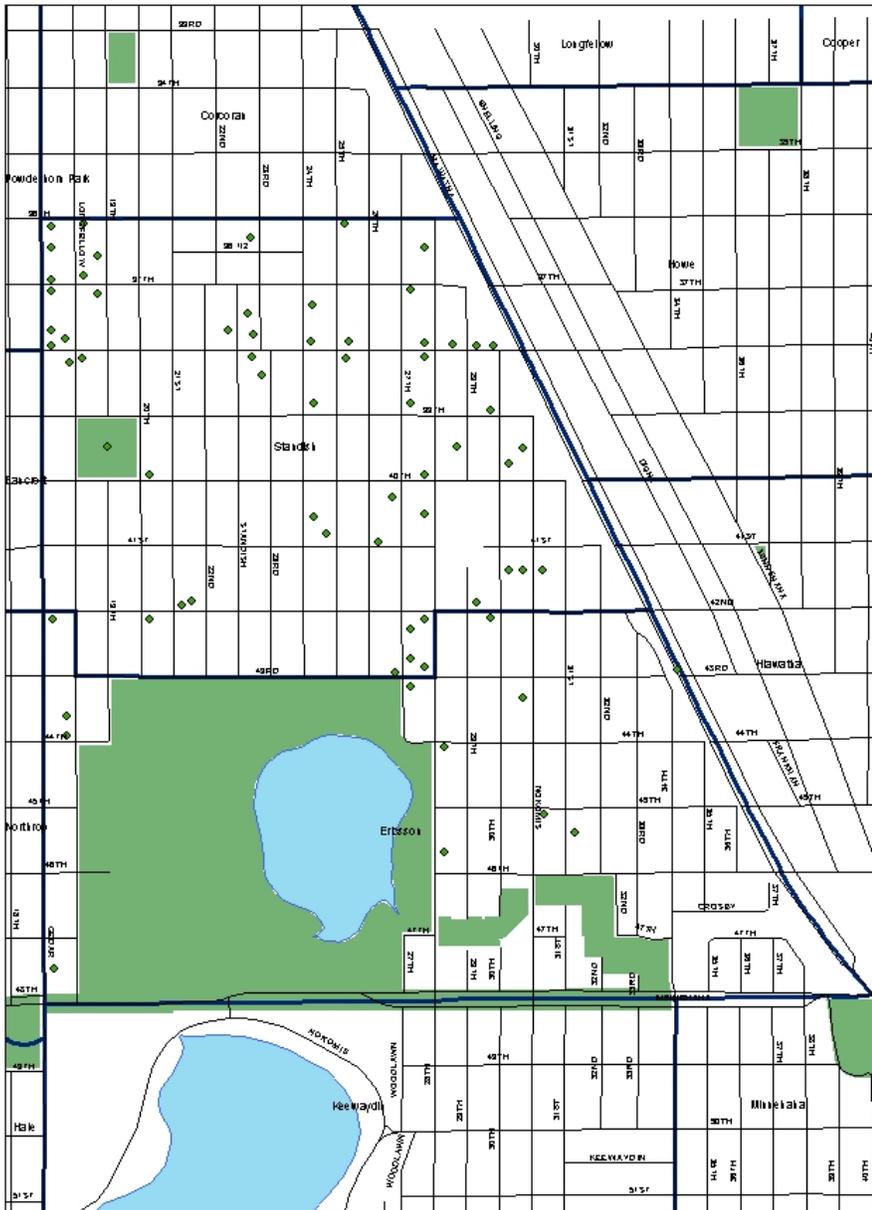
Map 2:

## Reported Gang Graffiti Incidents in Standish and Ericsson, 2004-Current



Map 3:

### Reported Tagger Graffiti Incidents in Standish and Ericsson, 2004-Current





Map 5:

## Reported Graffiti Incidents in Standish and Ericsson, 2004-Current

