



GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

INTERNAL PROCESS REVIEW (IPR)

*Written by: Jen Felske, Performance Improvement Coordinator
Kim Matheson, Director of Strategic and Business Planning*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the graffiti internal process review (IPR), including key findings and recommended actions that should be taken as a result. The purpose is for internal use by key stakeholders to highlight the opportunities for improvement, to decide on the recommended options to be implemented, and to support/guide the IPR team through the action plan.

The graffiti IPE was initiated due to previous City Council reports and requests for information, which identified various areas of opportunity for improvement. The IPR primarily focused on the reporting and removal of graffiti on civic property, including the process for receiving, tracking, and responding to citizen reports of graffiti.

Prior to the IPR, the process involved multiple divisions with no clear ownership or definition of roles and responsibilities, which led to inconsistency and inefficiencies from duplicated efforts. This was apparent for some time and there was a strong desire for change; however, the tools and resources to achieve the future state were undefined with no clear path forward to support it.

The ideal future state was first defined from a citizen perspective, and then internally what the process would look like to deliver that service. Most initiatives identified were within the team members' control but require the support and direction of their Director to implement, with several action items requiring a higher level decision to be made.

Centralization of graffiti removal to one division with clear ownership was the primary recommendation. Another key recommendation was to bring forward a defined service level that highlights the current budget gap and provides several options for City Council to make an informed decision on the level of service provided for removal of graffiti on civic property through this program.

A summary of all key findings are identified in this report and can be achieved through the IPR action plan. Benefits realized through the review process include improvements to the City of Saskatoon's (City) website, including a customized form for citizens to easily report graffiti online and provide staff with information to better prioritize and respond. Service level information was also added on the website to let citizens know what they can expect from the City when they report graffiti.

This review supports the City's Strategic Goal of a Culture of Continuous Improvement by focusing on finding ways to deliver quality service in an effective and efficient manner. It also aligns with the Service Saskatoon model built on four pillars: Standards, Systems, Staffing, and Citizens.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEWS

Reviews entail inter-division groups working together to create positive change in the organization through increased communication, efficiency, and innovation. There are two types of reviews conducted at the City: Civic Service Reviews (CSR) and Internal Process Reviews (IPR). Some reviews are short in length with a focused scope and may be referred to as “Just-Do-IT” or “Rapid Improvement Events”, while others are lengthier and look at complex issues within programs or services across divisions and/or the organization as a whole.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this review was to:

- evaluate and streamline the current process for graffiti response and remediation across divisions, remove and reduce redundancies, and improve efficiency;
- gain clarity on roles and responsibilities, including a single-entry point system; and
- improve service for citizens by clearly defining and documenting the process required for the customer relationship management system (CRM) with Service Saskatoon.

BACKGROUND

In 2009, the Graffiti Tracker Database was developed to streamline the process for entering/tracking reports of graffiti on civic and other public property and forwarding them to the appropriate staff or external agency for follow-up (Graffiti Management Program Update, 2009).

In January 2016, an information report was submitted to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services in response to a City Council inquiry on graffiti clean-up and hotline statistics, including the length of time to cover the graffiti and follow-up to citizens (2017 Graffiti Management Program, November 2016). The report stated:

“Of the reports by residents, 50% were reported anonymously and 25% provided a contact phone number. The target time frame for removal of graffiti from civic property is within seven days of receiving the report; weather, safety, and resources permitting. *The current graffiti tracker database does not provide all of the information/supports required to accurately track length of completion time.* The Administration currently follows up with residents only when specifically requested by the resident. The follow-up is provided as soon as the graffiti removal is complete.”

This report outlined next steps to make improvements:

“A number of areas for improvement:

1. Identify a single-entry point system within the City to coordinate all graffiti removal on civic structures. Currently, there are a number of departments and staff involved in the removal of graffiti from civic structures with no clear coordination and accountability structure.
2. Review the existing technology options for receiving and responding to reports of graffiti to enhance reporting and tracking capabilities. The current graffiti tracker database does not provide all information/supports required, including accurate tracking of completion time and follow-up to residents.

3. Work closely with community partners to mitigate the impact of graffiti vandalism on the community in a coordinated and collaborative approach.”

The scope of this review aims to tackle the first and second noted areas for improvement by reviewing and documenting the process that is required to build into the Service Saskatoon CRM software and knowledge base (similar to the report a pothole application). This will provide better tracking of completion and follow-up with residents.

SCOPE

The graffiti IPR team primarily focused on reporting and removal of graffiti on civic property, including the following two in-scope processes:

- Citizen Service - process for receiving graffiti reports and responding back to citizens.
- Graffiti Removal Process - tracking/documenting graffiti incidents, action to remove (i.e. work orders).
- Not in scope of this review is police enforcement of graffiti.

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

CURRENT STATE

A process map of the current state of graffiti reporting and removal process across multiple divisions was completed. The map illustrated the steps in the process starting from the point where a citizen or staff reports graffiti, to the end when it is removed and the incident is closed. It was identified that there was no standard process and highlighted the following issues:

- Areas of responsibilities:
 - Facilities Management, Saskatoon Light & Power (SL&P), and Sign Shop were responsible for removal graffiti from civic property.
 - Saskatoon Fire Department (SFD) addresses graffiti on private property.
 - Community Development’s main role with graffiti management is community education and prevention; however, they do have some involvement with reporting incidents through calls or emails.
- A standard criteria or approach to using contractors is required.
- Documentation and clarity is needed regarding areas of responsibility and procedures for graffiti removal.
- The Graffiti Tracker Database was currently not being used by all divisions to enter/close incidents; each incident resulting in inconsistent and incomplete data and reporting.

AN IDEAL FUTURE STATE

Defining success sets the foundation for determining what an ideal future state of the process would look like. In terms of graffiti removal, citizens are seeking:

- Quick and efficient removal
- Quality work (i.e. paint color should match)
- Ease of reporting
- Follow-up communication
- Information/education on what to do when it happens to them

- Safe and welcoming community, attraction for tourists
- Justice and restitution for the individuals who did the graffiti
- Paint supply to cover the graffiti on private property

The values/wants from a citizen's perspective identified during defining success were used to create an ideal future state process. It was created by first considering the process from a citizen's perspective, and then internally how the divisions will deliver that service most efficiently. Key outcomes for future state are as follows:

- Citizens receive automated updates along each step in the process to improve communication. Internally, staff would better manage and track reports of graffiti by closing work orders in the field, which would instantly provide citizens an update that the incident has been completed. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system would best meet these customer service needs.
- A single entry point for citizens to report graffiti that is assigned to one division responsible for Graffiti removal and remediation, utilizing contractors when necessary.
- Transition from purely reactive process to proactively addressing graffiti around the city. Additional opportunities for social enterprise will also be explored in alignment with the City's new procurement policy.
- Police would be more involved in the process, as well as external partners.

CLOSING THE GAP: REQUIREMENTS TO ACHIEVE FUTURE STATE

Creating an optimum future state allows action planning teams to work backwards from the ideal solution, and come up with plans for how to get there from current state, separating a potentially large list into manageable and trackable sub-projects for the short, medium and long term.

Implementation of the previously recommended centralized graffiti removal program and defined service level that highlights the current budget gap and provides some options for City Council to make an informed decision were the key outcomes of this review. The defined service level will guide further business decisions on graffiti reporting and removal initiatives.

The impact of maintaining status quo is the inefficient, reactive process (internally and externally) identified in the review of current state will continue to occur, wasting time and resources. Additionally, citizen frustrations and decreased staff morale will persist as this has been a reoccurring topic that needs to be addressed and have improvements realized.

These key findings align with the corporate strategies for a Culture of Continuous Improvement and Quality of Life, and the leadership commitment of Reliable and Responsive Service.

This review also supports and aligns with the four pillars Service Saskatoon model: Citizen Input, Systems, Standards and Staffing. Addressing each of the four pillars, this IPR resulted in:

- Documented process maps that will be used to build this service into the future CRM system, assisting Customer Service Representatives at the future corporate call center to ensure they are providing accurate and consistent information to citizens. Process maps will also be used to educate and train new graffiti team members on the process.

- A plain language format for sharing service level information added to the webpage to inform citizens what they can expect and defined service level drafted for City Council review.
- An opportunity for the Facilities Management Division to work with IT and Service Saskatoon on an interim solution for citizens to select graffiti location from a map on the website using GIS technology.

In order to ensure that a centralized model is successfully implemented as a result of this review, it was important that a clear business owner for graffiti removal and remediation be identified, and that it be understood that a multi-divisional graffiti team must work together to improve end-to-end service during the transition from the current to future state.

As a result of the IPR, improvements were made to the City's website to ensure that the process for reporting graffiti was user-friendly and provided as much detailed information as possible for the receiving division. Improvements included:

1. A customized form created for citizens to report graffiti online, including fields tailored to collect specific information required for the Graffiti Tracker. New fields include:
 - What type of graffiti it is
 - What type of surface it's applied to, and how it's applied
 - Graffiti location address
 - What type of structure it's found on
 - Attach a picture

This additional information allows staff to prioritize the incident, plan removal and determine if contractors are required, direct the incident to the appropriate removal staff (Sign Shop, Saskatoon Light & Power, or Facilities) or outside partner (School Board, Canada Post, etc.), and allows staff to easily locate the graffiti in the field, and keep picture on file for police investigation.

2. Online reported incidents are automatically directed by webmail to the appropriate two parties, depending if private or public property is selected:
 - Public – Graffiti@saskatoon.ca
 - Private – dlFireCentDispatch@saskatoon.ca
3. "What you can expect from us" and "How you can help us?" were added to the webpage. This is the standard plain language format aligned with the Service Saskatoon model for sharing service level information for citizens.

Additional recommendations to be implemented include:

- Determine and assign a subject matter expert to maintain the graffiti webpage.
- Further logic can be added to the form, but would require further review and planning prior to implementation. For example: if a citizen selects Canada Post Box as the type of structure, it could automatically send the email to Canada Post. Currently, City staff would have to re-direct this email to Canada Post.
- Continue to update/modify the online form as the removal function becomes more centralized to Facilities.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

Establish a central division responsible for graffiti* - including location, phone number, and tracking stream
Dedicate one central repair/removal force – i.e. purchase vans, hire staff
Hire seasonal graffiti clean-up staff (BIDS have this)
Contact Police to get involved; be proactive and attend Police Vandalism Training workshop
Contact external partners re: removal of graffiti on their property (i.e. utility boxes, power poles, etc.) and labelling of utility boxes with contact information for reporting graffiti on these assets
Work with IT/Service Saskatoon for online maps to better pinpoint graffiti location
Adjustment to Private Property Bylaws (8175) through City Solicitor's Office (SFD deals with all private property) to reduce time/cost - reduce number of inspections/time for issuance of order to remedy, posting of ORC (Order to Remedy a Contravention) and mail costs, Youth Work costs (approximately \$10,000), re-inspection to verify
Implement service levels for City Council approval - write program service level' communicate to City Council
Communication about online graffiti reporting form on website (specifically share with Councillors and Customer Service Representatives)
Annual reports are compiled for councillors (CY already does some)
Community Development - Education and prevention; working with Community Associations
Label City of Saskatoon utility boxes
Track hot spots to implement preventative measures (i.e. anti-graffiti coating); staff currently know hot spots, but with future centralized corporate call center, Customer Service Representatives will need to enter location information to allow for accurate tracking of hot spots

*The centralized graffiti crew would take on the current work completed by SL&P (\$30,000 for contractors to paint utility boxes) and by the Sign Shop (\$30,000 in non-contracted work for signs, walls, etc.). Some high-risk or technical jobs on bridges or overpasses would still require contractors with specialized training and equipment; approximately \$30,000 spent in 2017.