


**Halifax Regional Council**  
**February 25, 2003**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

  
George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 14, 2003

SUBJECT: **GRAFFITI STRATEGY**

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

In order to provide an overview of the magnitude of the negative social impacts of graffiti in Halifax Regional Municipality, a detailed report was requested, from both the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police (HRP), on their reactive and proactive approach to the graffiti problem. This is the first of future annual reports to be submitted.

**BACKGROUND**

During the July 16, 2002 Regional Council Session, an Information Report entitled "Community Response Initiative" was before Council referencing many requests from Council, to address a series of community issues, one of which was graffiti. It was noted that the Community Response Initiative would enhance HRM's reputation as a municipality that is clean, safe and a vibrant place in which to live and work.

## DISCUSSION

Graffiti is defined as writing, drawing, or symbols applied to any surface without the consent of property owner(s). It can have a significant effect on communities particularly if it is associated with the presence of disorder and crime. Graffiti is a crime and is to be reported as such.

In May, 2002 and again in October, Staff Sgt. Kuck, Toronto Police Service, led training/education sessions on the Social Impact of Graffiti. Staff Sgt. Kuck is recognized as an expert in the field of social and physical disorder and is the architect of the award winning Toronto Graffiti Eradication Program. The sessions were made available to HRM staff, the business community, and the public. Subsequent to these sessions, those who participated soon came to the decision that they would not look at graffiti the same way again.

*Estimated totals of the social costs associated with graffiti crime are:*

- \$1.4 billion within Canada (National Graffiti Information Centre);
- \$15 billion within the United States (Graffiti Hurts Program from Keep America Beautiful), and
- \$50 billion globally (Axel Thiel, academic researcher in Germany).

*The five recognized social costs associated with graffiti crime are:*

- cleaning/painting/chemical removal costs;
- police intervention, arrests, prosecution in courts/probation;
- psycho-social costs associated with people experiencing heightened fear and disorder in their neighbourhoods which in turn raises their costs for the installation of noise devices, alarms, extra lighting, bigger locks, guard dogs, Crime Prevention Through Environment Design audits;
- collateral crime which involves associated criminal offences which take place with the act of graffiti such as theft of paint, possession of stolen property (the paint), mischief to property (the damage), trespass to property, consumption of drugs and alcohol, the sniffing of paint fumes; and
- location danger/risk which involves injury and or death to vandals as they climb water towers, highway overpasses, and barbed wire fences - all which can incur costs of medical attention, hospitalization, death, time off work/school.

Since co-ordinating the Social Impact of Graffiti sessions, the Community Response Team (in cooperation with HRP, RCMP, HRM business units, public, and the business community) is working with schools in their graffiti eradication efforts; arranging for the painting of murals in specific locations within HRM; working with the Capital District in graffiti removal efforts; organizing a spring eight to ten week training session in the removal of graffiti for representatives from Uniacke Square area, and is currently seeking corporate sponsors to assist the Community Response Team in outfitting the community mobilization unit, such that it can be taken to communities to assist residents/HRM business units in cleaning graffiti off property.

The following is a table depicting graffiti incidents reported, number of actual arrests, and the type of dialogue both the RCMP and HRP have had with communities within their policing areas, in an effort to raise graffiti awareness.

<b>RCMP</b>	<b># of Incidents (estimate)</b>	<b>Arrests</b>	<b>Community Sessions</b>
Cole Harbour and Area (Eastern Passage, Lake Echo portion of Porters Lake and the Prestons)	escalation in # of incidents over the past number of years - particularly in the area Cole Harbour to Eastern Passage	0	anti-graffiti presentations made to all grade six classes. Also, info on HRM's graffiti initiative has been presented to the Eastern Halifax Crime Prevention Association - which they support.
Lr. Sackville and Area (Upper and Middle Sackville, Fall River, Waverley, Windsor Junction and Beaver Bank)	an increase in incidents albeit low in comparison to other areas of HRM	two arrests that went to Restorative Justice	anti-graffiti presentations made to all grade six classes.
Tantallon and Area (Sambro Loop, Peggys Cove and area, Hubbards, Hammonds Plains, Beechville, Lakeside and Timberlea)	an increase in incidents in recent years	0	Some elementary schools have received anti-graffiti presentations on HRM's graffiti initiative
Musquodoboit and Area (portion of Porters Lake, Ship Harbour, Clam Harbour and Meaghers Grant)	limited number of incidents	one arrest that went to Restorative Justice	Some elementary schools have received anti-graffiti presentations on HRM's graffiti initiative
Sheet Harbour and Area (Ship Harbour, Ecum Secum, Upper Musquodoboit, Mooseland and Mosher River)	no incidents	0	Some elementary schools have received anti-graffiti presentations on HRM's graffiti initiative
<b>HRP</b>			
East Division	2	0	2 Town Hall Meetings
Central Division	14	6	2 Town Hall Meetings Downtown Business Assoc Spring Garden Road Assoc. Quinpool Road Assoc.
West Division	2	2	3 Town Hall Meetings

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Each business unit will be responsible for covering costs incurred for the removal of graffiti off HRM properties.

**MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES** - N/A

**ATTACHMENTS**

- (a) RCMP Report prepared by Insp. Vern Fraser
- (b) HRP Report prepared by Supt. Stephen Sykes

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jane Nauss, Community Response Team 490-4071

Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Martin, Manager, Community Response 490-4070

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# **GRAFFITI STATUS REPORT**

**HALIFAX DETACHMENT  
RCMP**

**Sept. to Dec., 2002**

**Prepared by: Cst. Joe Taplin  
Community Policing  
Halifax Detachment**

**Submitted by: Insp. Vern Fraser  
OIC Operations  
Halifax Detachment**

**GRAFFITI REPORT  
Sept. to Dec., 2002  
HALIFAX DETACHMENT  
RCMP**

**Overview of Halifax Detachment Graffiti Status**

The Halifax Detachment Management Team has relayed the importance of graffiti awareness and related police action to our entire membership. RCMP officers have been fully briefed on the firm stand taken by the Halifax Regional Municipality Administration in tackling the graffiti problem within HRM. Cst. Joe Taplin, Community Policing Officer for our Cole Harbour Office, has been tasked with coordinating the anti-graffiti initiative for the whole of Halifax Detachment. Cst. Taplin will ensure that any form of graffiti, whether dated or recent, has been or will be photographed for retention on the related file. Ongoing information sharing of this intelligence will take place with the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) as well as the Community Response Initiative (CRI) team members. The Community Policing Officers responsible for each unit will be submitting reports to Cst. Taplin on any arrests made in conjunction with graffiti as well as information pertaining to items seized which may be linked to graffiti. A quarterly summary outlining this information will be generated for submission to the OIC of Operations for Halifax Detachment and in turn will be forwarded to the office of the HRM CAO via Mr. Gary Martin (CRI).

Graffiti related issues, specifically joint enforcement, intelligence sharing and educational initiatives, was discussed at the recent HRP/RCMP management team

meeting wherein it was agreed that address of graffiti related problems would be undertaken jointly. In this vein, Cst. Taplin and HRP Cst. Mike Landry will be meeting in early February to share in the development of an anti-graffiti educational publication for distribution throughout the HRM school system.

By way of a tracking mechanism, Halifax Detachment has established a "scoring code" which will provide an ongoing means of determining the number of graffiti related complaints being reported as well as monitoring our anti-graffiti initiatives, ie: school talks, community meetings, etc. This code will allow us to differentiate graffiti violations from other damage to property or mischief type complaints. An additional advantage of this tracking will be the ability to pinpoint high graffiti areas which will then give rise to increased enforcement and/or focused education efforts in those areas identified concerning.

## **Breakdown of Current Graffiti Status**

### **Cole Harbour and Area**

The Cole Harbour area, which includes Eastern Passage, the Lake Echo portion of Porters Lake and the Prestons, has seen an escalation in graffiti vandalism in recent years. The primary areas of this increase were found to be Cole Harbour to Eastern Passage.

Cole Harbour graffiti tagging was found to be predominantly localized within the business core of the community. The shopping centers including Canadian Tire, Sobeys, Zellers, Atlantic Superstores, and Blockbusters have extensive graffiti located in the back of their structure. There is also a local skate board park located at Cole Harbour Place that has extensive graffiti on the park and buildings around the park. Pope John XXIII Catholic Church on Colby Drive has also fallen victim to graffiti vandalism. Along with this offence we have seen an increase in loitering and drug activity around the church property. Stepped up enforcement has resulted in drug related charges being laid against those frequenting the church property. Bus shelters along the Cole Harbour Metro Transit route have also been hit hard by tagging.

Based upon our review, Eastern Passage seems to have the majority of graffiti located

in the areas surrounding the Tallahassee Community School, Seaside Elementary and Eastern Passage Educational Center (EPEC). The surfaces that suffer the most tagging are street signs leading to EPEC, bus shelters and areas behind Seaside and Tallahassee Schools. The Lions Club was also tagged by graffiti this past fall. Each spring the RCMP holds a major bike rodeo in the community of Eastern Passage. As part of the educational component of the 2003 rodeo, our constables will be incorporating anti-graffiti information as well.

Without question, our most effective means of addressing the anti-graffiti message is through our Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program. DARE is being taught in all schools within the Cole Harbour area with a portion of the curriculum currently being devoted to the topic of graffiti. This information is aimed at educating the students on how graffiti destroys neighborhoods as well as the negative community issues that result from it including the drug culture and gang formations. At present the DARE program is being delivered to 900 grade six students within the greater Cole Harbour area. The ability to address this many impressionable members of our youth community on an ongoing basis is viewed as an excellent opportunity to provide anti-graffiti education.

In addition to education efforts, we are currently soliciting the assistance of local business owners who have had their establishments tagged by graffiti vandals. These business owners are encouraged to have the graffiti removed from their building as soon as possible. One example of success in this area would be the Lions Club in Eastern Passage where club members teamed up with the RCMP to have graffiti removed from their Lions Den. This example of a unified approach to arriving at a long term solution will be used as a "best practice" when speaking to other clubs and business owners within the Halifax Detachment area. One concern which was identified during our graffiti review within Cole Harbour appears to stem from a "legal" graffiti site located at a local skate board park. It is our understanding that the HRM Parks and Recreation office in Cole Harbour, with the best of intentions, has permitted graffiti to be a part of the skate board complex. Unfortunately, although youth do utilize the cement skate surface for painting, they have also resorted to tagging the buildings within the skate board park as well. This issue will be brought to the attention of Parks and Recreation for address.

The Cole Harbour Office has recently used the services of Mr. Gary Martin of the Community Response Initiative to have Crime Prevention through Environmental Design audits completed in relation to graffiti problem areas in the Eastern Passage ballpark area, Colby Village Elementary school and Pope John XXIII Catholic



Church. The degree of useful detail and information that results from these audits is greatly appreciated by the community and police. This type of initial approach is viewed as critical to arriving at long term solutions to many crime prevention issues with graffiti certainly being one.

### **Lower Sackville and Area**

The Lower Sackville area which includes Upper and Middle Sackville, Fall River, Waverley, Windsor Junction and Beaverbank have also seen an increase in graffiti over the past year, albeit low in comparison to other areas of HRM.

Lower Sackville has been tagged with graffiti in varying degrees at most of the schools within the community. Smokey Drive Elementary School seems to have suffered more tagging than the rest. The Metro Transit bus shelters along Cobequid Rd have certainly been a prime tagging target which would indicate that the vandals responsible live in close proximity to this location. That being said, we will be tasking our patrols to pay particular attention to youth hanging around these shelters.

As is the case in Cole Harbour, the DARE program is being offered in the majority of Lower Sackville schools. In addition to DARE the school liaison officers are giving graffiti related presentations to the Millwood School and Sackville High School family of schools. There has been a total of **nine** presentations given at this time with four more scheduled for early February. The Lockview High School family of schools has had **seven** anti-graffiti presentations completed in the last quarter of 2002. School Administrators and businesses in the Sackville area were also invited to attend the anti-graffiti presentation put on by S/Sgt. Kuck in October 2002. The Community Policing officers for Fall River and Beaverbank also invited their local volunteers to the anti graffiti presentation in October 2002 which has heightened interest in monitoring and reporting newly placed tagging. The Halifax Regional School Board has cooperated with the removal of graffiti from the local schools by means of power washing. The shopping malls in Lower Sackville have their own security force which patrols the area. That being the case, there does not seem to be a graffiti concern at these sites, undoubtedly as a direct result of these ongoing patrols.

The Lower Sackville office reported the arrest of two individuals related to graffiti damage during the last quarter of 2002. Both subjects are being processed through the Restorative Justice Program in relation to these offences.

### **Tantallon and Area**

The Tantallon area which includes the Sambro loop, Peggys Cove and area, Hubbards, Hammonds Plains, Beechville, Lakeside and Timberlea have also seen an increase in graffiti in recent years.

The primary targets of graffiti taggers within the Tantallon area are certainly the schools. The Sambro Ketch Harbour Elementary School was tagged with "DIE RAT DIE" and the adjacent community center has also been similarly tagged. Other schools in the Tantallon area that have been targeted as well are Brookside Junior High, and Prospect Road Elementary. The latter was tagged with racist slurs on the back of the school. Considerable graffiti tagging was located on the old school on Highway #3 which is currently unoccupied.

The DARE program is also being offered in some schools within the Tantallon area, with the remaining schools receiving presentations specific to the topic of graffiti. The school liaison officer in the Tantallon office has met with local principals and has encouraged the removal of existing graffiti from the school building and/or structures on the property. The racist slurs at Prospect Road Elementary were removed immediately upon being discovered.

### **Musquodoboit Harbour and Area**

The Musquodoboit Harbour area which includes a portion of Porters Lake, Ship Harbour, Clam Harbour and Meaghers Grant, has had very limited graffiti tagging.

Those areas that were tagged involved highway signs from Smith Settlement to Porters Lake. There has also been some graffiti on the side of Gaetz Brook Junior High, and Eastern Shore District High School.

The Musquodoboit office has recently implemented anti-graffiti presentations in their community schools. There was one recent graffiti related arrest of a male at the Musquodoboit rink and High School. This individual was processed through the Restorative Justice Program with his penalty including removal of the graffiti which he sprayed on the buildings.

### **Sheet Harbour and Area**

The Sheet Harbour area which includes Ship Harbour, Ecum Secum, Upper Musquodoboit, Mooseland and Mosher River has no reported graffiti damage in that area.

The Sheet Harbour office is aware of the anti-graffiti program being established within the HRM, and will participate in any way to make the program a success.

### **Conclusions and Future Initiatives**

As the OIC of Operations for Halifax Detachment, I am committed to ensuring that all members of this unit actively participate in addressing the graffiti problem within HRM. Although this is a relatively recent initiative I am pleased that our Community Policing Officers have moved quickly

to incorporate the expectations of this program into our daily service delivery. That being said, we have ground yet to be covered. Through ongoing cooperation with the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Halifax Regional Police and the members of the Community Response Team, I am confident that we will reverse this concerning trend to the benefit of the HRM.

At the end of the first quarter of 2003 we will be reporting on the level of progress related to the following graffiti initiatives:

1. Increased apprehensions of those responsible for graffiti;
2. Graffiti educational presentations provided to all schools;
3. Creation of a joint HRP/RCMP graffiti educational brochure;
4. Incorporating our Citizens on Patrol (COP) members into a "graffiti watch" program
5. Utilizing CityWatch to convey our graffiti concerns to the businesses and communities;
6. Providing a contact number for HRM employees to report graffiti sightings and offenders;
7. Focused patrols in those areas currently identified as graffiti targets; and
8. Providing tracking information resulting from of our recently implemented scoring code.

(V.P. FRASER), Insp.  
OIC Operations  
Halifax Detachment

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# Memorandum



Date: February 17, 2003  
 To: A/Deputy Chief C. McNeil  
 From: Superintendent S. Sykes  
 Re: Graffiti Project

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*To Serve and Protect*

The following report is intended to outline HRP 's response to the issue of Graffiti in the context of an HRM approach. HRP recognizes graffiti is one of the many public order issues that impact the community's sense of pride and safety. HRP continues to see sustainable community problem solving as the only approach capable of eliminating such long standing public order issues.

HRM has advocated an approach to Graffiti developed by the Toronto Police Service. A series of information sessions conducted by S/Sgt Kuck of the Toronto Police Service were provided to staff and community members. HRP staff, including Community Liaison Constables, participated in the sessions.

In early September, after a meeting with Mr. George McLellan and Mr. Dan English, HRP commenced a pilot project which included targeting graffiti in the Quinpool Road area.

In October 2002, the Problem Oriented Policing unit (POP) undertook an effort to research the scope and nature of the graffiti problem in an effort to develop a response. A plan targeting the Quinpool Road was initiated. This area was selected as graffiti had been completely removed from the properties in September 2002 and there was a real commitment from the Quinpool Road Business District Association to address the issue.

Graffiti has been returning to the area steadily. Some businesses suffered graffiti damage several times after the initial clean-up. When graffiti is removed from a wall consistently and promptly, it reduces the incentive for graffiti vandals to hit that wall again. Other businesses who chose not to clean their properties promptly or at all are suffering from a build up of graffiti on their property and their neighbours' property.

The CRCP unit is in the process of developing an education package which will be delivered on three fronts;

- Front line officers;
- HRP School curriculum;
- Other institutions and community groups.

It is anticipated that the training material will be ready for use by May 1, 2003.

Since September 2002, we have not only been tracking the number of incidents of graffiti reported but, also the number of arrests. In relation to the arrests, two were the result of a passerby witnessing the activity and notifying police; two others as a result of a private property owner calling, and the last two were observed and apprehended by patrol officers. Two others were apprehended applying graffiti on

the skateboard park at Mainland Commons, but in this case the representative from HRM did not wish charges laid.

### **DIVISIONAL BREAKDOWN OF INCIDENTS AND ARRESTS**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>Arrests</b>
Central	14	6
East	2	0
West	2	2
TOTAL	18	8

A number of individuals have been identified as suspects, and a number of high risk locations have been identified. HRP will consider an operation to conduct surveillance on both the people and locations.

The activities to date continue to point to a growing problem in HRM, which requires a coordinated approach among HRM business units and the public. It has become clear that the eradication of graffiti will not occur without a strong commitment to removing graffiti promptly. Without a mechanism in place to force private property owners and a commitment from public property owners, to clean up properties, any enforcement effort would be lost.

HRP is committed to partnering with any of the business communities who wish to pursue a fight against Graffiti. Graffiti cannot be effectively combatted without cooperation from all agencies within and outside HRM, public and private. It is not enough for one property owner to clean their property. Neighbours must work together. Graffiti eradication must be a community effort and everyone has a role to play.

Each Divisional Commander has been tasked with identifying a Community Liaison Constable who will co-ordinate the enforcement efforts against graffiti in their Division. This will be in conjunction with their other duties in the community.

Changes have been made to our case management procedures to assist in identifying graffiti calls. In such cases a police officer will be dispatched and graffiti recorded. A followup investigation will be conducted where applicable.

The POP unit, as one of its priorities, will manage an ongoing project dealing with known graffiti vandals. This would provide further intelligence and would be a pro-active approach to laying property damage charges in graffiti incidents.

In closing, it is clear that the fight against graffiti continues. The war against graffiti is not just a police problem and has extended to other business units and the community at large.

Should you have any questions or require any further clarification please contact me.

Superintendent Stephen D. Sykes