The City in Colour: Alternative Approaches to Graffiti Management for Kingston, Ontario

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Executive Summary

Graffiti sits firmly in the uncomfortable and precarious intersection between art, vandalism, protest, and performance. Graffiti is a complex and contentious issue in Canadian cities that stubbornly continues to occupy city streets and polarise public opinion. Over the last ten years, a turn to multi-faceted, formalized approaches to addressing graffiti at the municipal level has emerged in urban planning in Canada and across the world. Graffiti Management Plans (GMPs) have appeared in many communities with the purpose of responding to graffiti in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

The objective of this report is to explore alternative approaches to graffiti management for Kingston, a mid-sized city in Ontario, Canada that currently has no formal graffiti management plan. This report aims to gather and present information on a contentious issue that has not yet been examined thoroughly at the local level. The analysis and recommendations contained in this report are directed for the City of Kingston, although many of these points may be relevant to other municipalities across Canada. This report takes the standpoint that graffiti is a complex issue that requires exploration and the engagement of conflicting voices. There is no “right” solution for managing graffiti in Kingston; there are only alternatives that seek to satisfy stakeholder goals.

Rationale

Graffiti has not been a priority area for the City of Kingston in the past; however, graffiti and its management are inevitably implicated in other priority areas for the City of Kingston, namely the recent imperative for cultural development, the growing call for legal graffiti spaces coming from community members, and the on-going financial costs of graffiti for the owners of public and private property. Graffiti management touches many facets of city life and it has profound implications for citizens and the public realm.
Background

For this report, graffiti is any mark or scratch applied on the surface of a building, structure, or street without consent. Graffiti encompasses a wide variety of forms that includes tags, pieces, stencils and many others. It is important to note that in Canada, gang-related graffiti is the exception rather than the rule (Toronto Police Service, 2011) though it may be a very serious issue in other countries, including the United States (Phillips, 2009). Vulgar, offensive or hate graffiti has been a problem in Kingston like in other municipalities.

The influence of the Broken Windows theory (Kelling and Cole, 1996) has informed a zero tolerance approach of regulating public space, which has resulted in the framing of graffiti as a social problem requiring strict policing. However, due to resistance from graffiti advocates and others over the past couple of decades, graffiti management has moved beyond being perceived as an issue for law enforcement uniquely. Municipalities are taking the lead in graffiti management and they have taken on the responsibility of bringing stakeholders together, coordinating action, and providing resources for various initiatives.

Figure i Four Approaches to Graffiti Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removal</th>
<th>Criminalization</th>
<th>Welfarism</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Removal on public property</td>
<td>– Fines for Graffiti Writing</td>
<td>– Education programs</td>
<td>– Murals</td>
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<td>– Removal on private property required</td>
<td>– Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td>– Youth engagement programs</td>
<td>– Temporary art opportunities</td>
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<td>– Paint vouchers/ Graffiti kits</td>
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<td>– Restorative justice programs</td>
<td>– Sanctioned walls/Designated areas</td>
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<td>– Community paint outs</td>
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<td>– Graffiti instruction</td>
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<td>– Incentives to stay graffiti-free</td>
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<td>– Community education on graffiti</td>
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<td>– Anti-Graffiti coatings</td>
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<td>– Celebrations, events or festivals</td>
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<td>– Hotlines/Apps/Online forms</td>
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Findings

This report draws on qualitative, mixed-method approach that includes three key methods: an audit of graffiti in downtown Kingston, interviews with key informants, and a document review of graffiti management strategies from across Canada.

The document review revealed a variety of tools that Canadian municipalities employ to manage graffiti. These tools were analysed according to Halsey and Young’s (2002) categorization of four main approaches: *removal*, *criminalization*, *welfarism*, and *acceptance* (Figure i). This report has found that cities across Canada engage in elements of *removal*, *criminalization*, *welfarism* and *acceptance* to differing degrees. Three trends (Figure ii) were identified through the policy analysis: the Zero Tolerance approach, the Creative City approach, and the Community-Based approach.

Interviews were undertaken with key informants in Kingston to better understand the issues related to graffiti management specific to the context of Kingston. Interview participants came from a variety of backgrounds including police, the City, the arts community, the graffiti community, property owners,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>Zero-Tolerance</td>
<td>- Removal</td>
<td>City of Calgary, City of Edmonton, City of Vancouver, Regional Municipality of Halifax, City of London</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Criminalisation</td>
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<td>Creative City</td>
<td>- Removal</td>
<td>City of Toronto</td>
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<td>- Welfarism</td>
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<td>Community-Based</td>
<td>- Removal</td>
<td>Ville de Gatineau, City of Ottawa</td>
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<td>- Acceptance</td>
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<td>- Welfarism</td>
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and the Business Improvement Association (BIA). Interview participants identified graffiti as both art and vandalism, as well as a form of activism and an alternative identity for Kingston. Furthermore, they identified spaces for new relationships and opportunities for cooperation, the importance of education and engagement, and raised the issues of accessibility in regards to arts and arts programming and the difficulty of creating a quality public realm in the development of a graffiti management strategy. Safety of graffiti artists and also those tasked with removing graffiti was another issue addressed by the interviewees.

Discussion
Kingston already has a strong removal/criminalisation strategy in place as the Public Works department, the Bylaw Enforcement department, the Downtown BIA, and the Kingston Police Force have existing procedures and programs in place. However, this report has identified a much broader spectrum of actors that are involved in and affected by graffiti management including the arts community, the graffiti community, the general public, the Kingston Police Force, the Downtown BIA, City Council, property owners, school boards, Utility companies and a wide variety of City departments, not limited to Bylaw Enforcement, Public Works, Cultural Services, Recreational Facilities, Parks and Real Estate and Construction.

Recommendations
This report proposes four main recommendations for the City of Kingston. These recommendations are intended for Kingston, but may hold relevance for other municipalities. They are not meant to be rigid, but to explore the possibilities of a formal graffiti management strategy for Kingston.
Recommendation 1: Develop a formal and coordinated graffiti strategy

Graffiti in Kingston is inevitable and the City of Kingston has an important role in managing graffiti. The creation of a Public Art Policy is the ideal time for the City to take a leadership position on graffiti management. Coordinating actions between the various stakeholders is important in order to share information and build relationships.

Recommendation 2: Broaden the concept of stakeholders

Broadening the notion of those involved with graffiti management to include the City of Kingston’s Cultural Services department, the Arts Council, and the arts community is in line with a more inclusive and coordinated approach to graffiti management.

Recommendation 3: Graffiti management should be multi-faceted

Strengthening actions and policy in the areas of removal, welfarism, and acceptance will seek to satisfy the range of stakeholder interests, including the arts community, graffiti artists, the Kingston Police, and City departments. A strategy that resembles the Creative City Approach or the Community Based Approach (see Figure ii) is recommended as it will be more likely to satisfy the diversity of stakeholder interests identified in this report.

Recommendation 4: Graffiti management requires program evaluation

The City must explore the evaluation of the formal graffiti management program, as many measures are insufficient to capture how a multi-faceted program affects graffiti.

Conclusion

This report is meant to guide the development of a graffiti management strategy for the City of Kingston. Next steps for the City will include choosing a strategy and identifying actions to support that strategy. The City may want to consider the role of a Graffiti Coordinator or a Graffiti Committee. Furthermore, as part of a graffiti management strategy, the City will also have to consider a consultation process and how to include members of the graffiti community in that process.

Further academic research on graffiti management may include the investigation of the link between economic development and graffiti, as noted by some participants in this research, the link between cultural planning and graffiti management, or how graffiti management can be used as a youth engagement tool.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Graffiti has captured public imagination for decades and has received a large degree of popular media attention over the last few years thanks to artists like Banksy and documentarians like Henry Chalfant who have brought graffiti into the media spotlight through books and films (Banksy, 2010; Banksy, 2005; Silver, 1983). Despite this mainstream attention, graffiti sits firmly in the uncomfortable and precarious intersection between art, vandalism, protest, and performance. Graffiti is a complex and contentious issue in Canadian cities that stubbornly continues to occupy city streets and polarise public opinion.

In federal law, the Canadian Criminal Code considers graffiti an offense; in addition, graffiti is controlled by municipal by-laws and policy. Over the last ten years, a turn to multi-faceted, formalized approaches to addressing graffiti at the municipal level has emerged in Canada and across the world. Graffiti Management Plans (GMPs) have been developed in many communities with the purpose of exploring alternative ways to respond to graffiti.

Kingston is a mid-sized city in the province of Ontario where graffiti can be found in back alleys and on fences, signs and utility boxes. “Graffiti is a problem in many municipalities and unfortunately Kingston is no different from the rest,” said Kingston’s mayor, Mark Gerretson, in 2011 (City of Kingston, press release Sept 26, 2011). Kingston was chosen for this study because it currently has no formalized graffiti management strategy, and although the Kingston Police, various City departments, and property owners deal with graffiti in some way, there is no overarching coordination, measurement, or clear goal.
1.2 Why is Graffiti Management a Planning Issue?

No city seems to have a department of people, pedestrians and public life, but I have seen lots of traffic departments with lots of statistics on cars in our cities. - Jan Gehl

In its broadest sense, graffiti management is an urban planning issue because it affects citizens, taxpayers, and has fundamental implications for the public realm. Over the last 40 years, the profession of urban planning has shifted away from a technical-rational approach to embrace more communicative and collaborative approaches, which has as a result widened the scope of what planning is and what planners do. Ecological integrity, cultural vitality, social and community services, and healthy communities have entered the purview of urban planning, and municipal planners often play central and coordinating roles, bridge knowledge gaps, and act within political environments.

Planners have the skills to define and analyse complex and contentious issues, and planning departments, as central places with multi-faceted roles, are ideal places to begin to examine and evaluate graffiti management programs. This report reflects this perspective of the planning profession by considering implementation, as well as documenting findings and providing analysis and recommendations. Graffiti management is a complex issue that requires savvy management, including the consideration of stakeholder interests, political environments, and realistic constraints like budgets and funding.

1.3 Why is Graffiti Management Important?

Graffiti poses no land pressures or development issues for Kingston; however, graffiti and its
management are inevitably implicated in other priority areas for the City of Kingston. Graffiti touches economic, social, cultural and environmental issues. There are a number of reasons why graffiti may become a priority here in Kingston:

- Through the Culture Plan (2010) the City of Kingston has imperatives to enhance cultural vitality. Not managing graffiti is a missed opportunity for economic development, place-making, and community engagement.

- Graffiti costs taxpayers through the maintenance of public facilities and lands and the enforcement of laws. Graffiti costs property owners through maintenance costs and fines.

- There has been and continues to be momentum from community members for sanctioned art space in Kingston.

### 1.4 Contents of this Report

The objective of this report is to explore alternative approaches to graffiti management for Kingston. This report aims to gather and present information on a contentious issue that has not yet been examined thoroughly at the local level. This report draws on a qualitative, mixed-method approach that includes three key methods. First, to better understand the specific and local manifestations of graffiti in Kingston, an audit of graffiti in the downtown area was undertaken. Second, an in-depth document review categorizes the graffiti management approaches utilized by Canadian cities. Third, a series of fourteen interviews with key informants were undertaken to gather local perspectives on the graffiti issue.
This report is arranged in seven chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 (Literature Review) tells the story of graffiti and graffiti management providing a context that outlines and ties together the different threads from the fields of aesthetic theory, criminology, political geography and urban planning theory. Chapter 3 (Methods) outlines the research methods of this report, including a discussion of the limitations of the methods. Chapter 4 (Context) establishes the context of Kingston, Ontario. For this chapter, every effort was made to place graffiti in the local context and to give space for some of the local stories that emerged through the data collection. Chapter 5 (Findings) is divided in two parts: first, it lists and categorizes the common tools currently used in graffiti management across Canada with reference to the literature, and second, the chapter summarizes the information that emerged from the interviews with Kingstonians. Chapter 6 (Discussion) explores a balanced approach to graffiti management. Chapter 7 (Conclusion and Recommendations) is a summary of the findings of the report and where two alternative strategies for graffiti management are recommended.
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is Graffiti?

2.1.1 Introduction
Most people recognize graffiti when they see it, yet closer examination of literature on the topic reveals a complex web of meanings and associations. For this report, graffiti is any mark or scratch applied on the surface of a building, structure, or street without consent. Signage or advertising, which form part of the public sphere, but are applied with consent are not forms of graffiti. Also, for the purposes of this report, graffiti does not included such messages such as ‘John was here’ and other indoor writings on bathroom walls and classroom desks sometimes called latrinalia.

Graffiti is defined as simply a mark or scratch on a surface of a building, structure, or street; however, this report requires a broader understanding of the relationships between graffiti and identity, style, and the politics of space. The literature review contained in this chapter sketches out the basic contours of the issue of graffiti by assembling writing and research from a wide variety of disciplines: aesthetic theory, criminology, political and cultural geography, and urban planning theory. It also establishes the historical precedents of graffiti as well as graffiti management, considered two related yet distinct issues.

2.1.2 A Brief History
I wonder, O wall, that you have not yet collapsed, so many writers’ clichés do you bear.
– Wall inscription, Pompeii
Anthropologists have traced graffiti heritage throughout human history (Baird and Taylor, 2011), from the rock paintings in the caves of Lascaux, France, where prehistoric man traced images on a cave wall, to the Ancient Egyptians who carved inscriptions in rock. Graffiti was also widespread in ancient cities, including Pompeii, and prevalent throughout the Middle Ages. Researchers have noted that these ancestors of contemporary graffiti often acted as a message board and simple ways to communicate (Lewinson, 2008).

Although there is continuity from these precedents, the graffiti on the streets today is most like the distinct form that emerged in the late 1950s in Philadelphia and 1960s in New York (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984; Ferrell, 1996; Austin, 2001; Lewinson, 2008). This graffiti started out as tags, and as it became more popular, style became more important and the tags evolved into more elaborate and stylized lettering called ‘wild style’. In the 70s, aerosol spray paint and marker began to colourfully decorate the New York subway trains with throw-ups and pieces (see Photos 2-2 and 2-3). By the 1980s, graffiti became associated with the hip hop culture taking shape in New York, where graffiti developed into one of the four pillars of hip hop along with DJing, rapping (MCing), and breakdancing.

Although evidence of a graffiti movement can be traced back to dispossessed youth in New York’s boroughs in the 1950s and 60s, by the 1970s and 1980s, graffiti writers were exhibiting in galleries and received significant media attention. The circulation of graffiti writers’ ‘fanzines’ and the popularization of hip-hop culture through mass media reinforced the culture of writing\(^1\) in the 80s and 90s. Furthermore, movies, such as *Style Wars* in 1983, music, videos, books and more exposed new generations in North America and across the globe to writing (Iveson, 2007). Today, graffiti is present in almost every corner of the world, and cities like Sao Paolo, Melbourne, Barcelona and London have become renowned for their alleys and walls (Manco, 2001).

\(^{1}\) In this context, ‘writing’ refers to the act of writing graffiti.
Lost Art, and Neelson, 2005; Ruiz, 2011). Two technologies continue fuel the momentum of the graffiti culture: digital cameras that allow work to be captured, and the Internet, which allows the work to be globally circulated and connects writers to one another.

Today, new industries have grown up for and because of graffiti. Specialist graffiti publications, companies that manufacture spray paint and nozzles, as well as clothing, video games and other merchandise exist for and because of graffiti. On the other side of the issue, a large industry emerged to remove graffiti. Companies like Goodbye Graffiti are nation-wide contractors and various companies exist that produce and market chemical removal products.

2.1.3 A Typology of Graffiti

Is graffiti art or vandalism? That word has a lot of negative connotations and it alienates people, so no, I don’t like to use the word ‘art’ at all. – Banksy

Contemporary graffiti encompasses a variety of specific and separate practices. Three general and fluid categories help to better understand the unique practices of graffiti found on the streets today. ‘Hip hop’ graffiti is mainly concerned with lettering and typography, as in throw ups, tagging, and piecing (Photos 2-1, 2-2, 2-3). Street art, also known as post-graffiti, is a term used commonly to refer to stencils, yarn bombing, paste-ups, or three-dimensional sculptures (Photos 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 2-7). Street art is constantly evolving to encompass new forms, such as illicit light projections or cuprocking2 amongst others. Slogans refer to legible statements, which do not fall into the categories of street art or graffiti, that convey a specific type of politically-motivated message (see Photo 2-9 for example).

2 Placing plastic cups in chain link fences to create shapes, words or patterns.
Hip hop graffiti and post-graffiti styles may differ in motivation and medium (Lewinsohn, 2008; Dew, 2010); however, other graffiti academics have noted that there is no pure style in graffiti and that the differences between the two forms is often exaggerated (McAulliffe and Iveson, 2011). There is significant intermingling between practitioners and communities, and both styles commonly utilize the same tools (spray paint) and work on the same surfaces, often next to each other on the same walls. Most importantly for the consideration of graffiti management, graffiti, street art, and slogans are officially unsanctioned and the burden uniformly falls on property owners to take responsibility.

Two other categories of qualitatively different graffiti that deserve mention are gang graffiti and vulgar, offensive or hate graffiti. In Canada, gang-related graffiti is the exception rather than the rule (Toronto Police Service, 2011), though it may be a very serious issue in other countries, including the United States (Phillips, 2009). Gang-related graffiti probably represents less than five percent of graffiti in Kingston (Personal Communication, Kingston Police Force, March 11, 2013), so gang-related graffiti is not a focus of this report. Vulgar, offensive or hateful graffiti is also distinct in intention and it is generally treated differently from both police and municipal perspectives. This type of graffiti has a history in Kingston and is further explained in Chapter 4 (Context) of this report.

Photo 2-1

Tags are stylized versions of the artist’s name.
Photo 2-2

Throw ups are simpler than pieces and more complex than tags, usually only involving two colours and simple graphics.

Photo 2-3

Pieces are the most elaborate and colourful works that require time and careful execution. They usually involve more than three colours. Sometimes called murals.

Photo 2-4

Stickers are printed or hand-drawn on adhesive paper and attached to surfaces.

Photo 2-5

With stencils, templates are made in advance, sometimes using computer technology to create the images, and then spraypaint is applied to the negative space to leave an image on the wall. Stencils can be used multiple times to reproduce an image.

All photos are author’s own unless otherwise marked.
Photo 2-6

**Yarn bombing** refers to a piece of street furniture or public art with knitted pieces. Also, yarn is woven into chain link fences to create shapes or create lettering.

Photo source: http://pleasurecraft.blogspot.ca/2010/10/kingston-yarn-bombing.html

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Photo 2-7

**Paste-ups or wheatpasting** are created on paper and then glued to exterior surfaces. They are quick to place, but are susceptible to rain and other elements.

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Photo 2-8

**Sculptures** are another form that illicit art can take form in public or private spaces.

Photo source: http://guerillagorilla08.blogspot.ca/

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Photo 2-9

**Slogans** are political messages. Where they differ from hip hop graffiti is in the legible writing which seeks to clearly communicate a message with the public.
2.1.4 Motivation

How rebellious is the art of putting up a sticker, stencil or a poster? I don’t know. But what makes it more interesting to me is the reason for putting up something, the intention. For me working on the street has always been a way to work on developing my personal possibilities, my artistic scope, and my personal expression. - EROSIE (quoted in Hundertmark, 2006: 76)

There are a variety of reasons why writers engage in the practice of graffiti (Austin 2001; Dew, 2010). For some, it may be to beautify spaces, to others it is a way to challenge dominant aesthetics or reclaim spaces from corporate interests. The practice of graffiti may provide the writer with adrenaline, or it may be for recognition or fame within a community, a way to leave a trace of oneself on the city. Other researchers have suggested that graffiti writing is a lifestyle, and the motivation lies equally in the act itself and the result (Maxwell, 1997).

2.2 The Regulation of Graffiti

2.2.1 Constructing the Graffiti ‘Problem’

I need someone to protect me from all the measures they take in order to protect me.

- Banksy

The regulation of graffiti and graffiti writing itself and are two parallel, but distinct stories (Austin, 2001; Ferrell, 1996), and both impact how people understand and experience urban spaces. Municipal responses to graffiti over the past decades have consistently promoted the idea that graffiti is a social problem and a criminal activity with the result that today graffiti is commonly perceived as a sign of anti-social behaviour and urban decay.
Since its introduction in the early 1980s, the ‘broken windows thesis’ in North America continues to influence law making and enforcement today. The theory hypothesizes that one broken window indicates a lack of care and control, and will eventually lead to widespread decay (Kelling and Cole, 1996). To these scholars, disorder is defined as:

Aggressing panhandling, street prostitution, drunkenness and public drinking, menacing behaviour, harassment, obstruction of streets and public spaces, vandalism and graffiti public urination and defecation, unlicensed vending and peddling, unsolicited window washing of cars (“squeegeeing”), and other such acts. (Kelling and Cole, 1996, p.15)

The notion of ‘disorder’ is perceived as a primary threat to urban neighbourhoods, and so, public standards regulations and zero-tolerance policing have been developed in the name of maintaining control. When graffiti is examined from this lens, it is more understandable why graffiti is often posited as a problem of ‘order’ and ‘disorder’ in cities and by city authorities such as law enforcement and governments.

While the ‘broken windows’ approach has been influential in how cities are regulated and policed, critics argue that the result is an overemphasis on policing and regulation as the solution to social ills. The approach is criticised for insufficient consideration of the effects of structural inequities or a community’s material well being (Mitchell, 2003; Harcourt, 1998; Harcourt and Ludwig, 2006).

2.2.2 New York’s War on Graffiti

Returning to the story of graffiti as it emerged in New York City, it was not until 1972 that graffiti
became a "problem", over 10 years after it began. As a response to the subway graffiti, then-
mayor Ed Koch declared a ‘War on Graffiti’ and mobilized police intelligence, created an Anti-
Graffiti Task Force (Austin, 2001), increased surveillance measures and implemented harsher
penalties for graffiti writers. The authorities researched chemical applications and other
technical solutions to remove any and all signs of graffiti from the trains. Graffiti discourse
painted the practice as dirt, garbage, pollution and obscenity as evidenced by a quote from
then City Council president Garelik, who told reporters that, “graffiti pollutes the eye and the
mind and may be one of the worst forms of pollution we have to combat” (quoted in Austin,
2001: 84).

Cresswell (1996) recounts how initial public reaction to prolific tagger TAKI 183 in a New York
Times editorial piece was generally favourable. However, Koch and the ‘war on graffiti’ rhetoric
was successful in turning public opinion against graffiti, and it became associated with the low
classes, those living in housing projects and criminals. The ‘war’ was won by the City in 1989
when subway graffiti was completely eradicated. As Austin (2010) notes, however, the war on
graffiti was effective in getting art off of the trains – what it was not capable of doing was to
stop graffiti completely. New York’s writers moved onto the streets and started bombing walls
and public property.

2.2.3 Counter Reactions
While reactions to graffiti from officials over the past several decades have been severe, a
counter movement by graffiti advocates has challenged the one-sided approach. Iveson (2007)
documents the youth advocates and people involved in the local graffiti scenes in Australia
in the 1990s who began contesting the repressive policing techniques and stereotyping of
writers. As a result, government institutions and youth centres began to create legal spaces for
graffiti and bring legitimization of graffiti as an art form. However, Iveson notes that attempts to
legitimize any form of hip hop-style graffiti as ‘aerosol art’ have met with predictable opposition in Australia. Nevertheless, claims for legitimacy have started shifting governance of graffiti from police and local authorities onto municipalities and community organizations (Iveson, 2007). This corroborates with the Canadian experience, where over the past 10 years, municipalities have begun to create multi-faceted Graffiti Management Plans (GMP), which represent a definite shift from the earlier dogmatic ‘Anti-Graffiti’ strategies. It seems that municipalities across the world are adopting formal graffiti strategies that broaden the scope of how graffiti can be managed.

2.2.4 Alternative Geographies

To express oneself outside of the ‘accepted’ context however is to risk a certain amount of criticism. After all, who am I to impose my opinions on others? I don’t pretend to have answers for anything and the complexity of the world is beyond the scope of my understanding but I still believe I have the right to ask ‘who are you to push hamburgers on me?’ or ‘who are you to pollute my air?’ or ‘who are you to tell me to go to war?’ etc. - Roadworth

From the perspective of urban geographers and others, graffiti cannot be taken for granted as a sign of social disorder or a “problem” to be solved. Instead, graffiti can be understood as a critique of contemporary daily urban life that is capable of offering alternative meanings and narratives. Cultural and political critics, such as Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1989, 1980), argue that urban space is not only physical, but a social construction produced by our values, daily routines and imaginations.

In particular, the work of Lefebvre is relevant to the discussion of graffiti because it is rooted in the idea that the city is - and should be - more than just space for the consumption and
exchange of goods: the city is just as importantly a place of play, meaning, interaction and spontaneity. His view of the city is also fundamentally dialectical, and so the creation of (and conflict over) alternative spaces is fundamental to contesting structures of power and claiming the right to the city. Thus, graffiti can be understood as a challenge to existing order and an essential part of the debate around public space.

As visual space in cities is increasingly given over to space for advertising, graffiti can be understood as a critique of the “underlying logic of profit, exchange, efficiency, control, normalcy, predictability, regulated space and time” that dominates the contemporary city (Borden, 2001: 231). Furthermore, because graffiti usually appears in alleys, on garages or abandoned buildings, the ‘left-over spaces’ of the modern city, graffiti appropriates new, and otherwise ‘unproductive’ spaces for diversion and creativity. By testing existing boundaries and limits, graffiti is thus deemed a transgressive act because it challenges existing relationships between place and what is considered ‘normal’ or ‘acceptable’ (Cresswell, 1996).

### 2.2.5 Municipal Graffiti ‘Management’ Strategies

Alison Young at the University of Melbourne studies graffiti and examines the municipal administrative responses to its occurrence. Her work stresses the complex nature of graffiti – especially in the diversity of its authors, styles and meanings. By engaging with people across both sides of the debate, her work critically examines contemporary graffiti strategies and suggests ways for municipalities to think differently about the graffiti ‘problem’.

Halsey and Young (2002), categorized Australian municipal responses to graffiti into four main approaches: *removal, criminalization, welfarism*, and *acceptance*. This categorization was the basis for a similar analysis of Canadian approaches presented in Chapter 5 (Findings). The Australian example was used for this report as it offers a clear and comprehensive structure for
the analysis of municipal policy, and because no similar type of analysis has been conducted in Canada to the knowledge of the author.

*Removal* is the most common approach to graffiti management, and is essentially a way of “re-appropriating space, both taking back the space from the graffiti writer, and returning the space to a condition of propriety” (2002: 175). Here, graffiti is constructed something dirty, ‘out of place’, or disrupted and should be removed to return space to its clean condition. Municipalities who employ this strategy focus on clean ups, which can be the responsibility of the City, private removal companies, community volunteers or property owners.

*Criminalization* refers to deterrence as the main focus, including harsh punitive measures and intimidation. Graffiti is construed as vandalism and it is linked to other forms of criminal behaviours and anti-social behaviours. Often, graffiti as a style is targeted as it is seen as a source of inspiration for criminal activity.

*Welfarism* refers to the use of social programs, such as youth employment programs and youth outreach, as a method to reduce graffiti. Graffiti programs will often promote ‘education’ as a key component, where the focus is shaping the behaviours of young people. This strategy seeks to provide alternative opportunities to divert young people from writing graffiti.

*Acceptance* is the fourth approach to graffiti management and the least common. Underpinning this approach is that graffiti cannot be stopped, and that acceptance of its inevitability means that the City should encourage writers to move away from illegal forms and move into legal and commissioned work. Some specific techniques that cities have experimented with include tolerance zones, permitted commissioned murals, celebrations of culture, or classes in graffiti.
In their study, Halsey and Young found that no cities were taking only one approach. Cities tend to use approaches in combination, but removal and criminalization strategies were the most prevalent. The authors suggest that integrating removal, welfarism, and acceptance is ideal because the multi-faceted approach acknowledges the complex nature of graffiti as well as the diverse motivations behind the practice.

### 2.4 Complexity

#### 2.4.1 Graffiti as a Complex Problem: Towards a New Framework

Urban planners Rittle and Webber (1973) coined the term ‘wicked problems’ to describe the types of problems faced by planners that are too complex to be solved using conventional scientific approaches, cost-benefit analyses, or computer models. These types of problems where the circumstances are unique and uncertain, the means and ends for finding a solution are unknown, and there are significant implications for people and property (Balassiano 2011). In these types of complex circumstances, solutions become problems again when they are formed prematurely without properly exploring the extent of the problem or engaging all the conflicting voices (Christensen, 1993). Applying conventional technical solutions to complexity creates ‘delusions’ of certainty, where the complications are only downloaded onto individuals or organizations. Christensen (1993) argues that it is vital for planners to understand the unique context of the issue and recognize organizational and actor dynamics and existing power structures in order to establish strategies for planning and management.

Graffiti is a complex problem; as presented in this chapter, it is both art and crime, and also a
form of cultural production, activism, and personal expression, and for these reasons, graffiti is often a touchstone for conflict and controversy. Because graffiti sits at the centre of the complex relationship between power, institutions, and cultural and artistic production, this report takes the standpoint that graffiti management is a complex planning problem that requires a framework that responds to its complexity. In order to propose realistic and acceptable alternatives for the City of Kingston, it is necessary to acknowledge the planning context that contains interactive decision-making by many public agencies, vested interests, experts, administrators and private agencies. A stakeholder analysis, based on the work of Christensen, is included in Chapter 5 (Findings) in order to make realistic and acceptable solutions for the specific context of Kingston, Ontario.

2.5 Summary

The literature review has explored four main ideas related to graffiti management. First, graffiti encompasses a range of distinct but interweaving practices that manifest in unique ways. A glossary of graffiti forms has been established and is presented in Photos 2-1 to 2-9. Graffiti takes many forms, and can be executed in a variety of materials and on a variety of surfaces. Graffiti is also the result of various motivations.

Second, graffiti has been explored from the perspective of political geography as an alternative discourse and a critique of power in urban space. In particular, the work of Lefebvre has been used to understand graffiti as a complex social phenomenon, and not a simply a ‘problem’.

Third, this literature review charted the history of graffiti management, which began as a result of the zero tolerance approach of regulating public space, after being initially tolerated. As a
result of the influential Broken Windows Theory, graffiti has been framed as a social disorder and as a phenomenon indicative of crime. However, more recently, due to resistance from graffiti advocates and others, graffiti management is no longer being considered uniquely policing problem. Today, cities across the world and in Canada are adopting formal graffiti strategies that seek alternative management approaches.

Finally, this report takes the standpoint that both graffiti and graffiti management are complex issues that require multi-faceted responses from governments and organizations in order to make appropriate, effective and realistic action. This report draws on the literature of complexity theory to better understand the behaviours of stakeholders and power structures, which are essential to approaching a contentious issue such as graffiti management.
3.0 Methods

3.1 Research Methods

The goal of this report is to understand the graffiti and graffiti management in Kingston, Ontario and to present alternative approaches to the City. In order to do so, the research in this report draws on qualitative methods in data collection, analysis, and interpretation to understand the phenomena in general and in context.

Qualitative research is particularly suited to the subjective and complex issues of graffiti and graffiti management and the nature of working with unstructured data (Yin, 2009). This research employs grounded theory (Berg, 2009), which is a reversal of the traditional research process. Grounded theory is where the theory applied to the research problem is developed after data collection, analysis and reflection. The research for this report followed an iterative process, allowing the researcher to follow new avenues of exploration as they emerged.

By approaching the phenomenon of graffiti in Kingston using three different research methods, distinct aspects of this complex issue emerged and could be examined. This approach, called triangulation (shown in Figure 1), allows a “more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements” (Berg, 2009: 5). The triangulation of data and multiple sources of evidence assists with confirming data measures, validating findings and limiting bias (Bowen, 2009).
3.2 Direct Observation + Visual Documentation

The data collection for this study began with a ‘walking survey’ of the graffiti present on the surfaces of the 16 blocks commonly known as Downtown Kingston (Figure 2). The intention of the walking survey was to objectively answer the questions: What types of graffiti are present in Kingston? and Where is graffiti in downtown Kingston? Graffiti can be found spread across Kingston (see Context Chapter for other geographical areas identified), but Downtown Kingston is where graffiti is concentrated and visible. Downtown Kingston was targeted for a graffiti inventory because it serves to represent graffiti found across the city.
The graffiti inventory is based on the typology of graffiti used by academics and the graffiti artists themselves: tags, stickers, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, slogans and pieces (Halsey & Young, 2002; Dew, 2007; Paul 107, 2003). The inventory takes the form of a map that conveys the locations of incidences of graffiti and their intensity, including ‘hot spots’. The purpose of this method is to show how graffiti manifests in Kingston, not to track or identify graffiti artists. No names were recorded or documented. Photographic documentation of all graffiti was included in the inventory. These photos were selectively added to the text of this document as a way of illustrating the ideas and supporting the information presented in the report.

The inventory’s data collection was done on a single week in February of 2013. The effort was to capture graffiti, by definition a temporary phenomenon, in a single moment of time. Given the timeline of this report and that graffiti is often buffed\(^1\) in the spring, February was an ideal time for data collection. However, it should be noted that future graffiti audits should be done in the fall, as it is likely that more graffiti activity occurs over the warm summer months. Although the inventory does not effectively represent the quantity of graffiti found during the warmer months, the map clearly shows that graffiti occurs in all areas of the downtown regardless of the season.

### 3.3 Document Analysis

A document analysis of Canadian municipal graffiti management programs (GMPs) was undertaken in order to identify approaches through the analysis of specific actions. Document analysis is useful for systematically creating an inventory of graffiti management tools and evaluating the approaches. The outcome of the document analysis is a contextual map of

\(^1\) Buffed means to remove or paint over graffiti
municipal graffiti responses. The four themes used to categorize the data (criminalisation, education, welfare, and acceptance) come from an article about municipal responses to graffiti in Australia by Alison Young at the University of Melbourne (Young, 2010) (see Chapter 2 for a description of the four categories of graffiti management strategies).

Canada’s 20 largest cities were used as a starting point for analysis as they are more likely to have graffiti management programs. Of these 20 large cities, 10 were found to have formal graffiti management programs. Cities from Quebec were excluded due to the language barrier, and in the case of Montreal, the lack of unified policy due to municipal fragmentation. Additionally, four mid-sized municipalities (population of 50,000-500,000) were added to the document analysis: Cambridge, ON, Regina, SK, Victoria, BC and Gatineau, QB. Cambridge and Victoria were included as units of analysis due to suggestions by interview participants. They were considered to be suitable comparisons to Kingston. Gatineau was chosen as another mid-sized municipality due to its location in relation to Ottawa, and because it has won both Canadian and international awards for its graffiti management program. Regina was also included in order to include a city from Saskatchewan. The resultant list of 14 municipalities (Figure 3) represents a balance of large and mid-sized cities that represent a diversity of Canadian regions from East to West.

The documents analysed included graffiti management strategies published as reports or on websites. In all cases, by-laws were examined to understand how graffiti was defined. Today, the City of Kingston has no formalised graffiti management strategy, so all applicable by-laws, press releases and council minutes were analysed to understand graffiti management in Kingston. In addition, interviews with the Public Works department, Kingston Police and Downtown Business Improvement Association (BIA) were invaluable for filling in the gaps in knowledge about Kingston’s present approach to graffiti (described in Chapter 4).
3.4 Interviews

The final step in the research for this report came from a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants in Kingston. The interviews were conducted with the purpose of understanding how different groups and individuals in Kingston view and are affected by graffiti and graffiti management. An initial list of six organizations were identified for interviews and sent introductory emails. Of these, 5 consented to participate. Additionally, another 9 interviewees were identified via ‘snowball’ sampling and were then contacted for an interview. 7 interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. Additionally, 7 interviews were documented by handwritten notes, as interviewees preferred to be contacted by phone. In total, 14 interviews with key informants were held.

Interviewees represent a broad variety of organisations and individuals, and include someone from a large property management company, the downtown BIA, various members of the arts
community, people involved in activist art, an aerosol artist, graffiti writers, a member of the Police Force, and employees from various City departments (Figure 4). Interviews generally lasted from between 10 – 45 minutes, depending on how much information the stakeholder had to share and the proximity of the individual to the issue.

Due to the subjective nature of the material and the breadth of perspectives gathered, a semi-structured interview format was chosen. All participants were asked questions understand their involvement and experience with graffiti. In addition, all participants were asked to answer the same two questions: Does the City have a role to play in addressing graffiti? and In your opinion, what are the components of a graffiti management strategy for the City of Kingston?

The analysis of the substance of the interviews was informed by the inductive stage of research. Over 50 keywords were selected from the interview notes and transcripts, and these were categorized into twelve codes, which were grouped into three broad themes: (1) perceptions

Figure 4: List of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Community*</td>
<td>Local Artist 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Artist 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greg Tilson, Kingston Arts Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irina Skortsova, Local Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti Community*</td>
<td>ERON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOUXA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>Person Involved in Yarn Bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Owners</td>
<td>Carlos Fuentes, Property Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Rob Tamblyn, Downtown BIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Police Force</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Kingston</td>
<td>Luke Follwell, Recreational Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Damon Wells, Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colin Wiginton, Cultural Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Groups used to organise information, but should not necessarily be considered exclusive.
of graffiti, (2) the challenges and opportunities of a formal graffiti strategy, and (3) perspectives on alternative approaches to graffiti management.

### 3.5 Limitations and Ethics

Because this research involves human participants, General Research Ethic Board (GREB) approval was obtained. Participants were provided with a letter of information and a consent form. As well, the researcher completed a required ethics tutorial and a university ethics review. Ethical concerns of this research included the risk to participants in the study due to the illegal nature of graffiti. Some research participants wished to remain anonymous and were only required to give verbal consent in order to protect their identities. Names and contact information of these respondents will not be released under any circumstances. Other interview participants, however, were open to having their names attributed to their statements, and their names are included in the report.

The strength of the research for this report is in the steps taken to reach into the breadth and depth of graffiti as a municipal issue. Effort was taken to explore the issue through three distinct and reinforcing methods and to thoroughly explore these areas through the application of rigorous research methods. However, there are some limitations to these methods.

#### 3.5.1 Limited Timeline

This research for this report was conducted in one semester, a limited time frame for an in-depth investigation. As mentioned above, graffiti inventories are usually undertaken in the fall due to the fact that most activity occurs during the summer in Canada. Although this inventory was done in the winter, the inventory does effectively show that graffiti is a year-round issue.
3.5.2 GMPs are relatively new in Canada
Graffiti management is a relatively new consideration in Canadian cities, and often municipal graffiti approaches are copies of one another. This effectively limits the breadth of experiences and tools considered in this report. While further research could include American and other international experiences with graffiti, it should be noted that graffiti manifests differently in different places and is affected by legal, economic and political geographies, and local contexts.

3.5.3 Youth
Due to the tight timelines on this report, no research ethics consent was sought to include youth under the age of 18 in the research. Further research could include youth or programs that work with youth, like the Boys and Girls Club.

3.5.4 Generalizability
The strategies outlined in this report are not intended to be generalized to any other municipality, but the material in this report could lend understanding to similar issues in other locations across Canada.

3.5.5 Bias
Finally, the researcher would like to express a personal bias. Throughout the course of this research, the researcher gained a fuller understanding and appreciation for the art of graffiti.
4.0 CONTEXT

4.1 Establishing a Local Context for Kingston, Ontario

Despite being a mid-sized city, Kingston has graffiti just like any other Canadian city. Graffiti can be found spread across the city (Kingston Police Officer, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013). For this report, a systematic inventory of graffiti was undertaken for the downtown area. In addition, interviews revealed other areas across the city where graffiti is significant. A short description of these locations and a photo essay is included in order to fully establish the current context for this report. Also, a short inventory of public art is included in this chapter, where it is relevant to the discussion of graffiti in Kingston. This chapter concludes with a description of current municipal legislation governing graffiti and the City’s current graffiti management strategy.

4.1.1 Graffiti Inventory

The Graffiti Inventory Map (Appendix 1) is the result of two days of observing and recording graffiti on the 16 blocks that comprise Kingston’s downtown area. The colours represent the typology of graffiti described in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), and the map shows that indeed many examples of tags, stickers, characters, throw ups and pieces can be found in Kingston. The map captures both the spread of graffiti throughout the downtown area as well as the intensity of graffiti. Larger circles represent places where more graffiti was found within a 10 metre radius. Three areas identified with red circles on the downtown map show areas where there is an accumulation of graffiti. In these areas, 20+ examples of tags, throw-ups, stickers and/or stencils occurred within a 10 metre radius. These are Kingston’s graffiti ‘hotspots’ that showcase works in various styles and with varying levels of ability.
The inventory revealed that tags and stickers were more prevalent along Princess Street (Photo 4-1), Kingston's main street, whereas the back alleys and carriageways revealed more elaborate pieces, throw-ups, and stencils (Photos 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4). Tags and stickers are faster and less obvious to put up, and also it is likely that property owners are more diligent about cleaning up the front of their buildings than the back, so it is no surprised to find a higher concentration of these forms along the busy main street. Graffiti is often present on rooftops or second-storeys along Princess Street, which offer good visibility, and less chance of getting 'buffed' (Photo 4-5).

A variety of objects were hit with graffiti, both publicly-owned and privately-owned assets. Bell telephone booths, utility boxes in the right of way, streetlights, garbage receptacles and other street furniture were frequent targets (Photo 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8). Surfaces with graffiti included metals, brick, and concrete (Photos 4-9, 4-10, 4-12). The researcher noted that limestone, the historic building material associated with Kingston, was avoided in general (Photo 4-11), although were some examples of tags and throw-ups were found on this surface in the downtown area.

It was noted that slogans (see Chapter 2 for definition) were spray painted on walls or affixed with stickers. Slogans are legible and carry overtly political message, often expressing anarchistic, anti-capitalist or anti-government messages. This type of graffiti stands out as distinct from and less common than the other forms of graffiti found in the inventory in downtown Kingston. Nonetheless, slogans have a presence in downtown Kingston.

In addition to the downtown area, interview data identified four other areas as significant areas for graffiti in terms of intensity, popularity or removal issues: Kingston's Graffiti Alley, the railway bridges, Douglas Fluhrer Park, and schools and recreation facilities. This was confirmed by
observation and photographic documentation. The interviews also revealed incidents where the City of Kingston has also had issues with vulgar, offensive, or hate graffiti.

4.1.2 Graffiti Alley
Kingston’s so-called ‘Graffiti Alley’ is hidden behind the Grand Theatre, between Princess and Brock Streets (Photos 4-13, 4-14, 4-15). Today, the space is covered in tags, stencils, pieces and stickers, and is a place where people can be found hanging out or taking photos. Interview participants helped piece together the story of this space. In 2006, the Grand Theatre closed for renovations, and during this time the back door was left open and the scaffolding left up (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013). The graffiti has been tolerated in the space ever since. Graffiti covers the entire building, including the rooftop. ‘Graffiti Alley’ began with legal murals, but the subsequent layers of graffiti were not legal or sanctioned (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013). Because the location is hidden from the main street, it was easy for less skilled artists to tag the walls illegally. ‘Graffiti Alley’ was more extensive before the methadone clinic on the corner of Brock and Montreal Street was torn down, and the space was subsequently made less hidden. Today, the space does not attract as much new art.

4.1.3 Railway Bridges
Bridges under major roads also provide a place where graffiti artists can work undisturbed and put up elaborate pieces (Photos 4-16, 4-17, 4-18). Some of the pieces found here have been up for over 30 years (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013). One graffiti artist deemed these the “best” works in Kingston (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013).

4.1.4 Douglas Fluhrer Park
Douglas Fluhrer Park has a long, sectioned wall that has become a magnet for graffiti (Photos 4-19 – 4-22). A variety of graffiti styles including pieces, throw ups, stencils and tags can be
found, and there are also many slogans expressing political ideas.

Recently, a group attempted to start a graffiti project here, but because there was no policy framework for the project, it did not go ahead. The project’s goal was to engage artists and also revitalize the park by having a designated graffiti space or invite artists to put up murals on the retaining walls at the park (Irina Skortsova, Personal Communication, 14 March 2013).

4.1.5 Schools, Parks and Recreational Facilities

Interviews identified other public assets frequently hit by graffiti (Photos 4-23, 4-24). In particular, schools are often targets (Damon Wells, Personal Communication, April 5), and city-owned recreational facilities are another public asset that often must undertake actions to have graffiti removed (Luke Follwell, Personal Communication, April 15).

4.1.6 Vulgar, Offensive, or Hate Graffiti

Vulgar, offensive or hate graffiti, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), is often considered distinct from other types of graffiti and is treated as such by authorities and city departments. In the winter of 2012, the Sir John A Macdonald statue in City Park was spray painted with the words ‘colonizer’, ‘murderer’ and ‘this is stolen land’ (See Photo 4-25). In this case, Cultural Services managed the conservation issues and Public Works dealt with the removal (Colin Wiginton, Personal Communication, April 12, 2013).

This is not the first time that this type of incident has occurred in Kingston. In October of 2008, several walls on Queen’s University were spray painted with words such as “Queen's Spirit: Bigotry, Queen's Tradition: Denial”, and “Expect Resistance”. In a Queen’s Journal piece on the issue, Vice-Principal Patrick Deane acknowledged that “universities are controversial
Tags and stickers are more prevalent along the main street.

More elaborate throw ups and pieces can be found in alleys.

Kingston’s carriage-ways showcase local graffiti.
Photo 4-5 (Above) Graffiti can be seen on rooftops from Princess Street

Photo 4-6, 4-7, 4-8 Objects in the public realm are frequent targets
Photo 4-9, 4-10 Graffiti on brick

Photo 4-11 Limestone was avoided in general

Photo 4-12 Graffiti on concrete
Photo 4-13 (Above) Graffiti covers the Grand Theatre

Photo 4-14, 4-15 (Below Left, Below Right) Kingston’s Graffiti Alley
Photo 4-16 Graffiti under Division Street bridge

Photo 4-17 Piecing under Division Street bridge

Photo 4-18 (Below) Graffiti under Sir John A Macdonald
Photo 4-19 Slogans attached to a stop sign near Douglas Fluhrer Park

Photo 4-20, 4-21 (Above centre, right) Pieces and stencils along a retaining wall

Photo 4-22 (Below) Throw ups on the retaining wall below Rideaucrest
Photo 4-23, 4-24 (Above) Graffiti is found on schools and park facilities

Photo 4-25 (Below) The statue of Sir John A Macdonald was spraypainted in the winter of 2012

Photo 4-25 (Above) *Time*

Photo 4-26 (Right) *Pollution*

**Photo 4-27** Construction hoardings became temporary art spaces at Anna Lane development on Queen Street and Bagot Street

**Photo 4-28** Light installation on Princess Towers. Photo source: Christine Dewancker
Photo 4-29 Mural executed in spraypaint on Izumo Sushi on Princess Street

Photo 4-30 Mural on Frontenac Cycle on Barrie Street
Photo 4-31 Mural Front Street and Days Road

Photo 4-32 Mural on Brock Street Parking Garage
places; they’re often very passionate places because of a great range of diametrically opposed opinions. Sometimes people who are involved in some kind of contentious debate feel the need to express their opinion and they do it this way” (Quoted in Davies, 7 November 2007).

4.2 Public Art in Kingston

During the interviews, several local public art examples were brought up repeatedly that were relevant to set the context for graffiti and graffiti management in Kingston. No specific questions were asked about these projects, but the semi-structured interview structure allowed this information to emerge. The main points from these conversations were that art manifests itself in a variety of ways and that public art is just as controversial as graffiti because there is simply no single definition of what is beautiful, appropriate or benign. As it is said, ‘one man’s floor is another man’s ceiling’; there is no consensus on what is the acceptable form of art, especially when it comes to the public realm.

4.2.1 Controversial Sculptures

*Time* and *Pollution*, currently situated on Kingston’s waterfront, were sculptures donated to celebrate Kingston’s 300th anniversary in the 1970s (Photo 4-25 – 4-26). *Time*, by Kosso Eloul, was originally a gift from the province of Ontario, and it was controversial because it was deemed ugly by several citizens and politicians and it was said to block the view for residents living across the street. Today, public opinion has shifted, and this piece has become an iconic image frequently used by the City on promotional material (Local artist, Personal Communication, March 11, 2013). *Pollution*, by Yvon Cozic was originally a gift from the province of Quebec, is piece about environmental issues and consumer culture, but was, and remains, contested mainly over its aesthetic quality and execution. The concrete sewer pipes were painted as 7up and coke cans by two Kingston General Hospital employees in 1975, as a way of expressing their
disapproval of the sculpture (Local artist, Personal Communication, March 11, 2013). Today, the pipes are back to their original green colour.

4.2.2 Temporary Art

The hoardings\(^1\) on the Anna Lane development curated by the Kingston Arts Council in downtown Kingston are an example of the creation of temporary public art opportunities (Photo 4-27). There are six pieces by local artists featured on the wall, each executed on boards affixed onto the hoardings, with artist statements and biographies beside each piece. Significantly, one of the pieces is an aerosol art piece, which depicts the word Kingston spelled out in limestone blocks with Kingston’s skyline behind it. The piece has garnered over 1,000 likes on Facebook, pointing to a popular acceptance of aerosol art in Kingston.

The xcurated collective, an independent curatorial collective, has also worked to present artwork in alternative spaces in the city (Local Artist, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013). For example, the ‘Art in Public Places’ project involved negotiating permission with private and public property owners for a series of public art installations around the city.

4.2.3 Murals

The City of Kingston has few murals, though they deserve consideration because murals and graffiti are often indistinguishable. For the purposes of this report, murals differ from graffiti because they are applied with consent. Currently, murals are located around the City of Kingston. They depict local heroes, historical events, community identity amongst other things. Kingston’s murals range in quality, some are professional and others appear to be community projects.

\(^1\) Hoardings are temporary wooden walls or fences, usually put around construction sites.
Most of Kingston’s murals are affixed to private property, most likely as a graffiti deterrent as well as for aesthetic reasons. A local dance studio, a sushi restaurant (Photo 4-29) and a bicycle shop (4-30) have commission a local aerosol artist to create unique murals in spray paint on their walls. A mural on Days Road depicts hometown heroes (Photo 4-31). A convenience store on Concession Street has a mural that represents community pride. Murals adorn the barns at the Memorial Centre as well as the Hanson Memorial parking garage on Brock Street (Photo 4-32). This mural narrates the colonization of the area and appears to be poorly maintained.

### 4.3 Current Graffiti Management Approach

#### 4.3.1 Legislation

There are two levels of law that apply to graffiti: criminal and municipal. The Kingston Police Force is responsible for enforcing the federal 1985 Criminal Code of Canada where graffiti is considered vandalism, which is defined as the “wilful damage and destruction of property”. Graffiti is considered to be vandalism and is punishable as ‘mischief under/over $5,000’, and those found guilty can face prison time.

At the municipal level, graffiti falls under the control with the City’s 2005 Property Standards By-law, which states:

4.17 Written slogans and graffiti on the exterior of any building, wall, fence or structure shall be prohibited, including painted or chalked titles or messages. (Kingston Bylaw 2005-100)

The bylaw also gives the municipality grounds to fine property owners who fail to comply.
Where remedial work is undertaken by the City at the failure of the property owner to do so, the cost will be added to the property owner’s property tax bill and the City may take property owners to court.

4.3.2 Kingston’s Municipal Graffiti Strategy

Graffiti management in Kingston is treated as a deterrence issue and involves the Kingston Police Force (KPF), the Downtown Business Improvement Association (BIA), the Public Works and Bylaw Enforcement departments at the City of Kingston, as well as Utilities Kingston. Any city department that is responsible for maintaining property deals with graffiti, and so the list of City departments concerned also extends to Parks, Real Estate & Construction Services, Recreation & Leisure Services and more.

The KPF takes a firm approach to graffiti, and they actively issue cautions and make arrests (Kingston Police Officer, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013). For police, the main issue of concern is consent and they take action where paint has been applied without permission. To assist in this, they maintain a database of visual documentation and supporting information. They respond to citizen crime reports, Crimestoppers tips, or information from beat police and City staff. Police may send out units on foot to respond to an increase of reports in any specific area of the city.

The Downtown BIA acts as a conduit of information about graffiti removal for property owners (Rob Tamblyn, Personal Communication, 21 March 2013). The organization has commissioned research on chemicals and products in the past and they currently use their website to post information about removal techniques and also the importance of removal, reporting and recording incidences of graffiti. A 2005 report commissioned by the BIA in partnership with the Davis Charitable Foundation and the Community Foundation tested removal products and
offers recommendations for removal and prevention (Grubbe, 2005/2006).

For City departments, deterrence strategies mean an emphasis on removal with the goal of minimizing exposure time and sending a strong message. Public Works is responsible for removing graffiti in the public right of way and parks (Damon Wells, Personal Communication, 5 April 2013). During the summer months, Public Works runs a proactive Graffiti Program, which is a partnership with Corrections Canada where work release program inmates remove and document graffiti in the public right of way. Graffiti that is considered vulgar or profane is dealt with more speedily by City departments.

The Bylaw Enforcement department is responsible for issuing notices to businesses not in compliance with the property standards bylaw. Fines are issued when graffiti is not removed within the deadline and in some cases businesses may be taken to court when not compliant with city by-laws.
5.0 FINDINGS

PART 1: An Inventory of Graffiti Management Tools across Canada

Applying unsanctioned graffiti is illegal in Canada, and police enforce the Criminal Code and prosecute those found to be breaking the law. However, graffiti is also more than just a police issue: graffiti management involves law enforcement, the justice system, City staff, utility companies, communities, non-profits, business improvement associations, and individuals. Municipalities are often the leaders in graffiti management and they have taken on the responsibility of bringing stakeholders together, coordinating action, and providing resources for various initiatives.

The purpose of the following section is to situate how municipalities respond to graffiti in order to answer two main questions: What tools are available to Canadian municipalities to manage graffiti? and How are these tools being used by Canadian municipalities?

This information will help to identify key elements that could assist Kingston in developing a strategy and alternatives to address its graffiti ‘problem’. Fifteen cities of varying populations across Canada were analysed for this section, namely: Kingston, Victoria, Vancouver, Burnaby, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Cambridge, ON, Ottawa, Gatineau, Hamilton, and London (see Figure 3).
5.1. Policy Components

Young and Halsey (2002) have uncovered four categories of graffiti policy components in their study of Australian municipalities: removal, criminalization, welfarism, and acceptance (see Chapter 2 for description). In an analysis of Canadian graffiti policy based on Young and Halsey’s framework resulted in the documentation of 18 components were documented (Figure 5). No city in Canada takes one single approach, but rather it was found that cities tend to adopt tools that fall into a combination of categories.

5.1.1 REMOVAL

Removal on Public Property

All Canadian cities studied have processes and procedures in place for removing graffiti from City-owned assets. For example, in Kingston, this is usually undertaken by Public Works department, although not all public assets are the responsibility of Public Works, so to some degree this responsibility falls to other City departments who are responsible for property, including Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Real Estate (Damon Wells, Personal Communication, 5 April 2013).

Figure 5 Summary of Policy Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removal</th>
<th>Criminalization</th>
<th>Welfarism</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Removal on public property</td>
<td>- Fines for Graffiti Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Removal on private property required</td>
<td>- Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td>- Education programs</td>
<td>- Murals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Paint vouchers/Graffiti kits</td>
<td>- Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td>- Youth engagement programs</td>
<td>- Temporary art opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community paint outs</td>
<td>- Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td>- Restorative justice programs</td>
<td>- Sanctioned walls/Designated areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Incentives to stay graffiti-free</td>
<td>- Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Graffiti instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anti-Graffiti coatings</td>
<td>- Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Community education on graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hotlines/Apps/Online forms</td>
<td>- Controlling graffiti tools</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Celebrations, events or festivals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to note that property that belongs to Utilities companies, telecommunications companies, and Canada Post in the public right-of-way are frequent graffiti targets. These include mailboxes, telephone boxes, electrical boxes, and others. These are not the responsibility of municipalities, but in some cases, such as in Kingston, the City will partner with these companies to expedite removal from those assets (Damon Wells, Personal Communication, 5 April 2013).

**Removal on Private Property Required**

Across the country, by-laws are in place that require the removal of graffiti from private property. This requirement is usually legislated through a property standards by-law or sometimes through an ad hoc graffiti policy. Bylaw enforcement officers are responsible for issuing notices to property owners.

When property owners are non-compliant to orders to remove graffiti, the majority of municipalities analysed take on responsibility the clean up and charge the property owners to their property tax bill, as legislated in the City of Victoria’s Graffiti Bylaw, No 02-16, Vancouver’s Graffiti Bylaw 7434, Regina’s Bylaw 2008-48, London’s Bylaw PW-9, Gatineau’s Bylaw 242-2010, and in the City of Burnaby’s Bylaw 12294.

In addition, some cities may issue additional fines to property owners for failure to remove graffiti after receiving notice. These cities include the City of Kingston under By-law 2005-10, Calgary’s Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004, Edmonton’s Community Standards Bylaw 14600, Toronto’s By-law No. 1218-2010, Cambridge’s Anti-Graffiti By-Law No. 21-06, Ottawa’s Graffiti Management By-law 2008-01, Hamilton’s Bylaw No 10-118, and Halifax’s N-300. Fines vary across the country, for example, in the City of Calgary’s Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004, fines for failure to remove start at $50, although the City also offers so free graffiti removal through their Corporate Coordinated Graffiti Abatement Program (City of Calgary, nd
a). By Toronto’s Bylaw No. 1218-2011, fines cannot exceed $5,000. Many cities prefer the fines because it reinforces the importance of quick removal, which deters spread onto surrounding properties.

**Paint Vouchers / Graffiti Kits**

In order to help property owners maintain their buildings, Canadian municipalities may provide financial and material help to property owners. They may partner with hardware stores to provide low-cost paint supplies to property owners, or provide clean up kits with chemical removers and other materials for no cost.

In Vancouver and Burnaby, property owners are eligible for discount paints due to a partnership with paint stores or companies (City of Burnaby, nd a; City of Vancouver, nd). In Calgary and Regina (City of Calgary, nd a; City of Regina, nd), discount paint is available at certain retailers.

The Region of Halifax offers free graffiti removal kits including supplies, including paint, gloves and face masks (Regional Municipality of Halifax, nd). In Edmonton, these kits are provided in exchange for information about the graffiti incident including photos in order to collect data (City of Edmonton, nd).

**Community Paint Outs**

Paint outs are community-led, municipally-supported events where graffiti is buffed from a neighbourhood or area by teams of volunteers. Often, municipalities will provide supplies, expertise and, in some cases, funds for non-profit organisations that take on clean up projects. Adopt-a-Street programs or community ‘Clean Up’ events are other examples of this kind of approach.
Most municipalities analysed offered some type of support, coordination or information for this type of project including Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, and Halifax (City of Calgary, nd a; City of Edmonton, nd; City of Hamilton, nd; City of London, nd; City of Toronto, nd a; City of Vancouver, nd; City of Victoria, nd; Regional Municipality of Halifax, nd; Take Pride Winnipeg, nd). Calgary provides a graffiti awareness toolkit that includes information about organising removal events (City of Calgary, nd). The City of Edmonton allows non-profit groups to use graffiti wipe-outs as a fundraising tool (City of Edmonton, nd).

**Incentives to Stay Graffiti Free**

The only city analysed that offered an incentive to keep buildings and structures free of graffiti was the City of Edmonton. Property owners who agree to maintain their properties graffiti-free for one year are eligible for a professional cleaning, up to $500, paid for by the City (City of Edmonton, nd).

**Anti-Graffiti Coatings**

Anti-graffiti coatings are expensive, but serve to make any marks made on a surface easy to wipe off. Municipalities support programs that print utility boxes, signal boxes, or bus stops with a decorative ‘wraps’ that make removing markers or spray paint easy, beautify urban space, and showcase local artists.

The cities of Burnaby, Calgary and Ottawa have introduced ‘anti-graffiti wrap’ programs (City of Burnaby, nd a; City of Calgary, nd b; City of Ottawa; nd; City of Victoria, nd). In the Halifax Region, a utilities company invests in anti-graffiti coatings for their property (Regional Municipality of Halifax, nd).
Hotlines/Apps/Online Forms

Municipalities may provide services for easy reporting and recording. Essentially, these services allow property owners or citizens to quickly and easily report graffiti. This strategy also allows the municipality to collect data on the number of complaints and their geographic locations. Online forms allow photographic documentation to be collected, which may be compiled and used to prosecute offenders. These programs offer a central place for reporting graffiti regardless of who owns the asset. Reports are forwarded on to the entity, such as Canada Post or a utility company, responsible for that asset.

Victoria and Burnaby have graffiti hotlines in place to make reporting graffiti easier (City of Burnaby, nd b; City of Victoria, nd). Other cities have reporting services integrated with the city’s 311 services, as is the case in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, and Toronto (City of Calgary, nd a; City of Edmonton, nd; City of Toronto, nd; City of Vancouver, nd; City of Winnipeg, nd b). While some cities have online graffiti reporting forms, such as Burnaby, Hamilton, and Ottawa (City of Burnaby, nd; City of Hamilton, nd; City of Ottawa, nd), others are experimenting with smart phone apps, like the City of Toronto and the City of Calgary (City of Toronto, nd; City of Calgary, nd a).

5.1.2 CRIMINALIZATION

Fines for Graffiti Writing

In some Canadian cities, bylaws have been enacted to fine people caught writing graffiti. These fines are in addition to any punishments ordered by the police or court system. By Vancouver’s Graffiti Bylaw 7434, the minimum fine is $500 for anyone caught writing graffiti, which is the same as the fine in Burnaby’s Graffiti Bylaw 12294. Calgary’s Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004 sets fines for applying graffiti writing at $5,000. By Ottawa’s Graffiti Management Bylaw 2008-01, the fine starts at $610.
**Controlling Graffiti Tools**

Two Canadian municipalities have passed by-laws prohibiting the sale of spray paint or markers to persons under 18 years of age: Winnipeg and London. These municipalities have enacted by-laws that will fine businesses caught selling controlled implements (City of London, Graffiti Implements Bylaw; City of Winnipeg, Bylaw 204-2007).

**5.1.3 WELFARISM**

**Public Information on Removal**

Educational programs for property owners are meant to raise awareness about the importance of quick removal as a deterrent. Also, municipalities provide information about removal techniques and other preventative measures for property owners. The majority of municipalities analysed act as central sources of information for property owners and communities about graffiti reporting, recording, and removal, and provide brochures and websites to inform. The cities that provide this type of information include Victoria, Vancouver, Burnaby, Calgary, Regina, Cambridge, Hamilton, London, Toronto, Ottawa, Gatineau, and Halifax, (City of Burnaby, nd b; City of Calgary, nd a; City of Cambridge, nd; City of London; City of Ottawa, nd; City of Regina, nd; City of Toronto, nd; City of Vancouver, nd; City of Victoria, nd; Regional Municipality of Halifax, nd; Ville de Gatineau, nd).

**Youth Engagement Programs**

Youth engagement programs are usually deterrence programs targeted at young people. Municipal-run graffiti programs, often in partnership with police, give talks at schools about the implications of breaking the law, who the victims of graffiti are, and the effects of graffiti on the community.
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The Regional Municipality of Halifax runs youth mural art programs that aim to beautify the city and prevent graffiti (Regional Municipality of Halifax, nd). In Hamilton, the Boys and Girls Club youth organisation involves young people in graffiti clean up and awareness (City of Hamilton, nd). In Gatineau, many programs are in place to raise awareness of graffiti issues (Ville de Gatineau, nd).

Restorative Justice Programs

In partnership with law enforcement or non-profits, restorative justice programs match at-risk youth or youth who have been caught doing graffiti with legal graffiti artists.

Vancouver’s restART program is an example of a restorative justice program where part of the program is getting offenders to engage in a dialogue with the property owners whose walls were used. This program also engages young people to create murals with artists and establishes mentoring relationships (City of Vancouver, nd). Other cities have similar programs in place meant to deter youth involvement in graffiti, such as Burnaby, and Gatineau (City of Burnaby, nd a; Ville de Gatineau, nd).

5.1.4 ACCEPTANCE

Murals

Mural programs serve multiple purposes including graffiti-deterrence and city beautification. The majority of municipalities analysed are involved with the full or partial funding and/or coordination of mural projects such as in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Burnaby (City of Burnaby, nd a; City of Edmonton, nd; City of Toronto, nd c; Take Pride Winnipeg, nd).
Other municipalities have mural permitting processes in place to support those interested in creating murals for graffiti deterrence, such as Victoria, Vancouver, London, Ottawa, and Gatineau (City of London, nd; City of Ottawa, nd; City of Vancouver, nd; City of Victoria, nd; Ville de Gatineau, nd).

**Temporary Art / Hoardings**
Using hoardings put up expressly for the practice of graffiti or using those put up for construction purposes as temporarily sanctioned spaces for graffiti allows opportunities for spontaneous art and practice. In Gatineau, hoardings may be expressly set up to become canvasses at events or festivals (Ville de Gatineau, nd).

**Sanctioned Walls / Designated Areas**
Also known as ‘free walls’ or ‘legal walls’, these are spaces where the municipality has sanctioned writing and painting in a limited area. City staff monitors the spaces and vulgar or profane messages are buffed. Sanctioned graffiti spaces are currently found in Edmonton, Cambridge, Ottawa, Gatineau and (City of Cambridge, 2012; City of Edmonton, nd; City of Ottawa, 2008; Ville de Gatineau, nd).

**Graffiti Instruction**
Gatineau provides support for instructional classes in graffiti technique (Ville de Gatineau, nd). The goal is to support graffiti as a form of artistic expression.

**Community Education on Graffiti**
Community education on graffiti refers to programs in Gatineau and Cambridge aim to educate community members about aerosol art as an art form and aims to uncover the misunderstandings about graffiti (City of Cambridge, 2012; Ville de Gatineau, nd).
Celebrations, Events or Festivals

Municipalities give space for events sponsored by organizations or business associations that involve graffiti. For example, Under Pressure is an internationally recognized graffiti event that attracts over 100 graffiti artists to Montreal to paint walls for one weekend and the walls are re-painted the next year. Graffiti may be one component of an event, like Toronto's Manifesto event, which is a celebration of urban arts or Hamilton's Supercrawl. In Gatineau, an annual graffiti contest is held to celebrate and showcase artists (Ville de Gatineau, nd). These events contribute to the acceptance of graffiti as an art form and provide a forum for graffiti as a form of expression.

5.2 Three Canadian Municipal Approaches to Graffiti

In reviewing the documents, distinct trends emerged in how Canadian cities approach graffiti management. In the following section, these strategies are explained in greater detail to illustrate how the techniques of removal, criminalization, acceptance and welfarism are mobilized across Canada. Three trends were identified through the document analysis: the Zero Tolerance approach, the Creative City approach and the Community-Based approach (Figure 6). Each is described in greater detail below, using illustrative examples.

Figure 6 Summary of Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero-Tolerance</td>
<td>- Removal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Criminalisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative City</td>
<td>- Removal</td>
<td>City of Toronto</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Welfarism</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Based</td>
<td>- Removal</td>
<td>Ville de Gatineau, City of Ottawa</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Welfarism</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. The Zero Tolerance Approach

* Emphasis on removal and criminalization
* Goal is eradication of graffiti

This is the most prevalent approach taken by Canadian municipalities, and its adherents include Halifax, Edmonton, Calgary and London, Ontario. Here, there is a strong emphasis on both the removal and criminalization strategies as graffiti deterrence measure. They are proactive about removal on public assets and issuing notices for removal on private property. In order to clean up graffiti on all assets, they establish partnerships with law enforcement and a variety of community partners, including utility companies and Canada Post.

The City of Calgary takes a relatively tough approach to graffiti. They encourage removal by supporting community-led clean up events and even providing free removal for small businesses (City of Calgary, nd a). The City's 311 line takes reports of graffiti and directs that information to the responsible owner, and people who witness graffiti in progress are encouraged to call 911. The graffiti management is primarily run out of the by-law enforcement office in partnership with City police. A website called ‘Graffiti Free Calgary’ run through the Calgary Police Service also provides resources for parents and youth about the implications of being caught and the negative effects of graffiti (Calgary Police Force, nd). In addition to the strict deterrence strategy, the City has committed significantly to public art. Calgary has invested in a number of murals in the downtown and utility box wraps enhance city streets and showcase local artists (nd b).

B. Toronto: The Creative City

* Combination of removal, criminalisation, welfarism and some elements of acceptance
* Goal is artistic excellence
* Expansive mural program with a graffiti permit system
The City of Toronto unveiled a new graffiti management plan in 2011, which takes a unique stance on graffiti. Toronto’s new graffiti by-law sets up a distinction between ‘graffiti art’ and ‘graffiti vandalism’:

**GRAFFITI ART** – markings made or affixed to property that are approved by the owner or occupant, where the markings aesthetically enhance the surface they cover or general surroundings, having regard to the community character and standards.

**GRAFFITI VANDALISM** – Any deliberate markings made or affixed on property that is currently exempted or regularized by the Graffiti Panel Executive Director or Council A was made or affixed without the permission of the owner; B is considered by the Executive Director to be a tag; C for which there are reasonable grounds to believe that it may incite violence against any person or identifiable group; or D. contains profane, vulgar or offensive language.

Source: City of Toronto, Chapter 485: 2

In accordance with this bylaw, a property owner may apply for an uncommissioned piece to be ‘regularized’, or exempted from mandatory removal, as long as it is deemed ‘graffiti art’ by a jury made up of members of the arts community. They are responsible for assessing the ‘aesthetic enhancement’ of the piece in question. To date, 5 pieces have been regularized by the City (City of Toronto, nd c). The regularization system allows property owners to maintain their property as they see fit, without the threat of fines.
The StART program coordinates the City’s mural program that offers grants of up to $30,000 per mural to groups interested in executing one with the property owners’ permission (City of Toronto, nd c). The City of Toronto’s StART program is under the purview of the City’s Transportation department, whose goal is to create vibrant streets. Up to 70% of the funds are provided by the City, and 5% of the total cost of the mural must go to maintenance, for which the group is responsible. The emphasis of the StART program is to enhance the quality of the visual realm and bring art to the street. The program turns the city into a gallery as walls become canvases for both local and internationally-renowned artists.

Toronto Police continue to work with the City to reduce ‘graffiti vandalism’. Police lay charges, maintain databases of taggers and work with community partners to reduce graffiti. They provide education to community agencies and divert youth from the court system through the restorative justice programs.

The StART program is a strategic departure from previous programs, such as the Graffiti Transformation Program, which provided limited funds for youth employment projects. It was found that a lack of quality art and on-going maintenance of murals was problematic. Overall, the focus of Toronto’s graffiti programming has seen a shift away from community programming and engaging youth, towards creating high quality art and commissioning professional artists to create works that enhance the visual realm. Graffiti management functions as a collaboration between police and culture promoters.

C. Gatineau and Ottawa: The Community-Based Approach

* Strong emphasis on acceptance and welfarism
* Graffiti is seen as a form of acceptance
* Youth-focussed programs
The Community-Based Approach is best exemplified by Gatineau, Quebec, and to a lesser extent, Ottawa, Ontario. These cities have a variety of community and youth programs with a focus on engagement and community development. They aim to provide opportunities for expression, including through the medium of graffiti. The Ville de Gatineau, like the City of Toronto, focuses on the permission aspect of graffiti, but accepts graffiti as a form of expression.

Graffiti is a series of images painted on a wall. Other surfaces, such as bus walls, phone booths, bus shelters, mailboxes, and urban furniture are also used. These images could have a social, political, religious, advertising or decorative purpose, and are considered urban art.

Illegal graffiti is a form of graffiti that, despite its artistic content, is painted on an unauthorized surface.

Source: Ville de Gatineau, www.gatineau.ca

The Ville de Gatineau has won awards for its unique graffiti management approach (Ville de Gatineau, nd). Gatineau aims to engage young people and improve the visual quality of the public realm. Since 2005, they have held regular graffiti contests, held urban arts festivals, and sponsored graffiti-style murals by local artists. There are 49 free walls in Gatineau and they are re-painted 4 times a year to keep the paint fresh and stop over-crowding. Graffiti programs for kids teach spray paint technique as well as respect, a key component of this program. In addition to the acceptance piece, the Ville de Gatineau works closely with police to better understand the sub-culture, and with other city departments to get unwanted graffiti removed from public and private assets.
The City of Ottawa has three designated graffiti spaces that are meant to be areas of creative expression (City of Ottawa, By-law 205-439). The House of PainT event uses these spaces once a year to celebrate the urban arts. However, the City takes a zero-tolerance approach in some areas, such as the downtown and areas frequently hit by graffiti. As part of a graffiti deterrence strategy, Ottawa also runs a mural program with limited funds that helps get youth get involved in mural making (City of Ottawa, nd b). As with many mural programs across the country, the City is the approval authority for the look and design of the murals.

**PART 2: Developing a Graffiti Management Plan for Kingston.**

This report takes the perspective that a Graffiti Management Plan (GMP) for Kingston should respond to the context. The purpose of the following section is to better understand the issues related to the practice of graffiti and graffiti management specific to Kingston. In order to do this, interviews were undertaken with key informants to address these questions: *How do Kingstonians perceive graffiti?, What issues are associated with graffiti management in Kingston?* and *What would a graffiti management strategy for Kingston look like?*

### 5.3 Interviews

Research participants were chosen from an initial list of organizations or individuals that the researcher identified as impacted by graffiti in some way, and from these interviews, more lines of inquiry were opened up. In the end, a wide range of perspectives was gathered from police, City staff, the downtown BIA, the arts community, and graffiti artists.
Informants provided a wealth of information, which has not only been recorded in this section, but has also helped inform the direction and content of this report. This section outlines major themes that emerged from these conversations. Over 50 keywords were selected after the interviews, and these were categorized into sixteen codes, which were categorized into three broad themes: (1) “Perceptions” of graffiti (2) the challenges and opportunities of a formal graffiti strategy (“Issues”), and (3) perspectives on alternative “Approaches” to graffiti management.

The loose interview format was particularly suited to the task of drawing out the participants’ unique knowledge and experience. Interviews with those involved with law enforcement or coordinating removal tended to focus on understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the current strategy and where the missing pieces lie. With those participants more involved in the arts, conversations tended to be about imagining what a strategy could be and what issues need to be addressed in the creation of such a strategy. For business and property owners, the

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Figure 7 Themes and Codes for Interview Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions</td>
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<td>Criminalization</td>
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interviews revolved around their experiences with graffiti and how they have endeavoured to deal with the issue.

The interviews were a challenging part of the research because the conversations uncovered a spectrum of perspectives on this issue, rather than two opposing viewpoints. Even within organisations, groups, or communities, there was no consistent discourse. Despite the differences, there were some important overarching commonalities that united the conversations. In general, participants were keen to have a conversation about graffiti in Kingston. All conversations were conducted in a professional and open-minded manner, and all interviewees acknowledged the complexity of the issue.

5.4 Interview Summaries

5.4.1 PERCEPTIONS

Graffiti as Crime

From a downtown property owner’s perspective, graffiti feels like an “attack”, and graffiti is associated with litter and garbage (Carlos Fuentes, Personal Communication, 12 March 2013). For the Downtown BIA, graffiti is an annoyance and it gives a sense of disorder that threatens the attractiveness and vibrancy of downtown (Rob Tamblyn, Personal Communication, 21 March 2013).

These reactions are not surprising because Kingston’s bylaws place property owners in a position where they must remove graffiti or face fines. To a downtown property owner, the fines feel unfair and unjustified because they make victims of victims. The Downtown BIA supports the fines because they are the only recourse available to stop spread of graffiti onto other businesses.
Cleaning up graffiti is an issue of cost for property owners in both the public and private sectors. Depending on the surface, special equipment may be needed, which adds to the cost of removal. When graffiti is found in hard-to-reach areas, contractors must be called in as a matter of worker safety. Anti-graffiti coatings are an option to make removal easy, but the cost leaves this solution out of the reach. Police recommend that property owners use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques, such as planting shrubs or improving lighting, but again this is a matter of cost, and furthermore, there are not always opportunities to use this deterrence strategy, especially in Kingston where building stock is old.

From the perspectives of the graffiti artists who contributed their perspectives to this report, there is a distinction between “good” graffiti and “bad” graffiti. Not all graffiti is vandalism, but graffiti can become vandalism when it is in the wrong place. FOUXA, a graffiti artist, demonstrated this notion in her comment: “for me, its not about imposing something where its not wanted, its about finding a place that’s appropriate, that is public, that works, to put my art “ (Personal Communication, 6 May 2013). SAEB, another artist, similarly remarked about the distinction between graffiti on public and private property:

But when it comes to - let’s say I were to do the same thing on someone’s house, or their garage door, that’s just straight vandalism and we don’t need that. That needs to be taken care of. (SAEB, Personal Communication, 2 May 2013)

For another artist, graffiti may be understood as an inevitable part of urban life, as opposed to a malicious form of vandalism. Graffiti is just one of many types of urban nuisances that are encountered everyday:
I’ve had my wall tagged. It sucks. At the same time, when I have a business on the main street of downtown, it’s kinda like expected… it’s the same thing, I have to wash off a milkshake or spit on it. I’m not going to cry about it, I’m just going to clean it up and deal with it. Because I have to…I’ve always just figured, when you own a business, you buy graffiti remover like you buy Windex and toilet paper. You just gotta have it. The way I look at it is, if you have a business downtown in Kingston, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, there’s probably going to be a tag or two. (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013)

To Kingston Police, graffiti applied without permission is a crime regardless of where it is. A police officer offered “broken windows theory” as the rationale for this approach, and suggested the police should go further to stop graffiti (Police Officer, Personal Communication, 11 March, 2013).

**Graffiti as Art**

Because four of fifteen interviewees came from or were associated with the arts community in Kingston, there was discussion of how graffiti and public art are related. To many, bringing art in the public realm is important and interviewees offered a variety of reasons for this: to beautify space, to make streets happy and playful, to interrupt the everyday, or, more purposefully, to create conversation, or convey messages.

Interviewees noted that the definition of art is changing, as the traditional boundaries of artistic production and consumption are shifting. As Greg Tilson of the Kingston Arts Council, explains, this shifting of boundaries has implications for how graffiti is conceptualized:
Much the same as the programming and presentation, culture is changing, such as moving out of traditional spaces like the theatres and galleries and moving into the streets. How can we be part of that? And how can we expand our notion of the artist’s canvas and the community’s art canvas and how we incorporate art into our lives? (Greg Tilson, Personal Communication, 28 March 2013)

To graffiti artist SAEB, graffiti is primarily a form of art, made more powerful because of the autonomy of the artist. He defines graffiti as, “expression in its truest and purest form. There’s no real limitations, you can just do whatever you like” (SAEB, Personal Communication, 2 May 2013). To graffiti artist FOUXA, graffiti is about recognizing and being recognized, as well as about art and beautifying space. FOUXA remarked, “it is different and interesting, and it brings a splash of colour” (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013).

But art, especially in the public realm, is subjective. Interviews confirmed that one person’s art is another’s vandalism. A downtown property owner did not find any aesthetic value in the marks he discovers on the walls of his buildings. In the experience of a Police Officer, there is no artistic motivation behind the graffiti that the s/he deals with (Police Officer, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013).

Interviewees outside the graffiti subculture rarely considered tagging to be a form of art. Interviewees from outside the graffiti community tended to dislike the aesthetics of tags as something that can only be appreciated by those within the culture. However, from the perspective of graffiti artists, the issue of tagging has another side. ERON noted the role tagging plays in graffiti culture; tags are signatures, akin to calligraphy. He discussed how tags are the heart of graffiti:
It’s funny because everybody says they hate tags, but they say I like that piece. But they don’t understand that they wouldn’t have that piece if they didn’t have that tag to start with. We have to start somewhere. You hate tagging or not, but tagging is the most essential. (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013)

**Graffiti as a Style**

Given the varying perceptions of graffiti, respondents offered different understandings of the aesthetic merit of graffiti. As a member of Kingston’s arts community noted, graffiti is a variety of practices:

Graffiti artists can be defined in a number of different ways. There are taggers, who are different than someone like Banksy… so I see those as very different kinds of graffiti artists. (Local Artist 1, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013)

Some interviewees appreciated that there are forms of illicit art on the street that are not associated with vandalism or crime. As Colin Wiginton at the City of Kingston noted:

Graffiti by its definition is meant to function in the public realm in a different way, it’s meant to be about individualism and tagging and territorialism and to a certain degree and in some circumstances about gang activity, whereas street art can be more of a kind of grassroots expression of artistic ability or community ideas. (Colin Wiginton, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013)

This quote also points to the tension that exists between perceptions of ‘street art’ and ‘graffiti’, which was supported by further interviews. Legal graffiti artists noticed that there is a negative
perception in Kingston of aerosol art as a style, regardless of the issue of permission. This quote from artist ERON demonstrates his experience as a legal graffiti artist:

Yeah if you are going out if I just did this across the street on that building it is vandalism regardless of the city, you know, but Kingston’s more… old school to the point that they consider almost anything that comes out of a spray paint can to be graffiti, permission or not. (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013)

As one participant who was involved with yarn bombing in Kingston noted, there is a understanding that graffiti is threatening and street art is not, and this might be related to common perceptions about the people believed to be involved in these practices:

I think that fact that graffiti is associated with hip hop and black urban culture makes it scary to some people. I think things like yarn bombing are seen as more socially acceptable because it is associated with white women and that plays a role in its social acceptance. (Person Involved in Yarn Bombing, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013)

Some interviewees discussed how recognizing a wider variety of artists would result in broader acceptance of graffiti as an artistic practice. From the perspective of Greg Tilson of the Kingston Arts Council, legitimizing the art form and providing more opportunities for legal practices would ideally bring about a change in public perception. He wants to know how artists can be profiled and presented in such a way, “so that it’s less of vandalism and more about people that are trying to create art” (Greg Tilson, Personal Communication, 28 March 2013).
Graffiti as Activism

The fourth perception of graffiti uncovered in the interviews was the notion of graffiti as a form of personal or political expression. It was understood that some people feel compelled to use the public realm as a medium to convey a message or express something that there is no other forum for.

For some interviewees, this activism could be implicit, as any unauthorized act of taking space disrupts standard power structures and contests the idea of ownership over space. An example of this idea is illustrated by the yarn bomb in McBurney Park by a group named the Outlaw Wool Lovers; the message was not overtly clear, which may be a reason that it garnered so much discussion, including some local media attention. Graffiti can also make these messages more explicit, as in SAEB’s work around the city that comments on war and other social issues.

Interviewees also brought up the idea that regardless of the criminal consequences or even sanctioned opportunities, some people will always feel compelled to take space as a way to express their voice. First, this points to the inevitability of forms of graffiti in the public realm. Second, this has implications for the City as an institution that controls and regulates public space. As stated by someone involved with yarn bombing in Kingston, the municipality may wish to, “acknowledge that people have a right to take space, but I feel that a municipality can never really say that” (Person Involved in Yarn Bombing, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013).

5.4.2 ISSUES

Relationships

Interviewees spoke to where existing relationships could be strengthened and where new relationships could be forged between the different groups involved with graffiti. Currently,
the Public Works department works with Corrections Canada and Utilities Kingston to remove graffiti from assets around the city. To some extent, there is some cooperation with other agencies with other city departments and the police. The Bylaw Enforcement department has a relationship with the Downtown BIA and they work together to share information.

Many interviewees noted that the central role of the City is to open up and coordinate dialogue between the various players. As stated by Greg Tilson:

> The City has a role in that in mediating discussion amongst law enforcers and the arts community, and creating dialogue and discussion with neighbourhoods.

(Greg Tilson, Personal Communication, 28 March 2013)

For Colin Wiginton with the City of Kingston, a two-pronged approach to graffiti would involve collaboration between different City departments on both the enforcement and the cultural sides. He is interested in broadening the current management of graffiti to include businesses and other City departments, and “looking at policies and procedures that are about management and also at polices and procedures about facilitation or cooperation” (Colin Wiginton, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013).

Several interviewees noted that there is potential for a more coordinated approach among the existing players. A police officer noted about the relationship in place between the police and the City could be strengthened. Currently, the City departments do not record or report all incidents of graffiti to the police, and more information could be shared between these organizations.
A final point raised by interviews was how the City builds a relationship with the graffiti communities or graffiti artists. Many interviewees commented that involving these communities in the dialogues is important, but also very challenging. As FOUXA, a graffiti artist commented:

Having a discussion about their worries and concerns and our worries and concerns and how we can come to a balance of the two. I think that would be a good start. (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013)

Although many participants spoke of the need for dialogue, few had an idea what this dialogue process might look like as many participants acknowledged that traditional forums of public consultation would likely not be effective. For graffiti artists, a forum where they would not be arrested or where they could speak anonymously would be important. Interview participants pointed to a variety of key players when it comes to graffiti, including various City departments, public agencies, institutions, businesses as well as the general public.

**Education**

Interviewees also identified education and engagement as key components of a potential graffiti strategy. Currently, Kingston's Downtown BIA is the main information resource on graffiti for downtown property owners. The organisation has done research in the past and now acts as a central source of information on graffiti removal techniques and the importance of removing graffiti to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence (Rob Tamblyn, Personal Communication, 21 March 2013).
Participants noted that as the graffiti strategy moves forward, the notion of ‘education’ would likely need to expand to encompass how the public understands the role of art in the public realm. This notion was demonstrated in a comment from Colin Wiginton with Cultural Services department at the City of Kingston, who notes that education about graffiti is similar to, “just educating people about public art, we want to build awareness that public art manifests itself in different ways” (Colin Wiginton, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013).

For two graffiti artists, education for community members has a role in legitimizing to the practice of graffiti. Furthermore, there is a role for different forms of education within the graffiti community itself. Older graffiti artists, those who have been practicing for a number of years, are typically those with better skills and who also have more respect for property, said graffiti artist FOUXA (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013). For FOUXA, the problem is often that young people starting out in graffiti have no guidance or access to the developed artists. On the lack of leadership, FOUXA said:

I know that when I started I very much looked up to certain people who were older and had been writing for longer and were well-known and had good art. The problem is that they are not accessible because graffiti is illegal and they want to maintain anonymity for legal reasons. There is a private aspect to the graffiti artist that enjoys being represented by a tag name rather than their real identity. It is a way of expressing yourself humbly. (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013)

As SAEB explained, graffiti education could address the lack of knowledge transfer between developed and younger artists:
Education is what we need, in all forms. We need to be educated on different art forms... And teach respect, respect for other artists, for the walls themselves, for other people's property. (SAEB, Personal Communication, 2 May 2013)

Greg Tilson, of the Kingston Arts Council, forwarded the idea of a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, which could involve youth in community-based projects or develop mentorships between artists and at-risk youth.

**Access**

The issue of accessibility is linked to notions of social and community values, and is expressed in how a graffiti strategy has the potential to include marginalized groups. Interviewees from the arts community expressed the idea that there is an opportunity for Kingston to celebrate a diversity of forms of art and make the arts accessible, inclusive, and fair through a formal graffiti strategy. Also it was noted that it is important to provide opportunities for all types of artists.

Interviewees also noted that graffiti has the potential to engage youth the way other art forms cannot. Graffiti artist FOUXA explains why graffiti has a youth component: “I think it is a very popular way for youth who do not have another outlet of being heard to be recognized or feel recognized” (Personal Communication, 6 May 2013). From the perspective of an arts institution, there is an opportunity to harness youth forms of expression, as Greg Tilson explains:

“There's so much potential with different demographics of youth who are excited about this art form, and there's so much potential of social good that could come out of that and exploring that and encouraging that. (Greg Tilson, Personal Communication, 28 March 2013)
In a similar vein, an interviewee noted the potential for youth programming to be connected to a formal graffiti strategy. For the Cultural Services department, ideally, a relationship with the Youth Strategy would be forged to foster productive outlets for youth expression, instead of them being policing issues (Colin Wiginton, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013).

One interviewee also expressed the idea that art is not just something created by professional artists or experts, and that bringing art into the public realm means that a range of forms and qualities of art are available to be recognized (Person Involved in Yarn Bombing, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013). This interviewee also noted that community art projects have the potential to engage artists outside of traditional art circles. Furthermore, two participants brought up the importance of geographically broadening the reach of art in the City including the north and west ends in order to support community pride and improve community resilience.

**Identity**

A common thread among interviews was the association between art and civic identity. The interviews revealed a concern with how Kingston’s current public art only tells a single narrative. A community member remarked that much of Kingston’s art are glorifications of Kingston’s military and colonial history, as is reflected in this quote:

> I would love to see the hideous and offensive murals on the Brock Street parking garage taken down and re-imagined. I get that that was a community project by some high school students, but I think that some of the narratives in that are really problematic and just frankly racist. (Person Involved in Yarn Bombing, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013)
Several interviewees commented that there is the potential for the notion of public art to be expanded in the City of Kingston, which, as interviewees noted, is related back to the idea of education and awareness of what public art can be.

In some ways, graffiti is being associated with ‘cool’ and ‘edginess’ in Kingston and signalling alternative identities for the city’s institutions. As Greg Tilson notes, graffiti served as the backdrop of the Grand Theatre’s program (Photo 5-1), although graffiti is not accepted in any art institutions (Greg Tilson, Personal Communication, 28 March 2013). Other interviewees noted that Kingston’s ‘Graffiti Alley’ is ‘renowned’ and also a popular hangout where people can be found doing photo shoots or performances.

**Photo 5-1 (Right)** Image from the Grand Theatre’s program

Photo courtesy of the Grand Theatre
Artist ERON remarked that graffiti is not a large part of Kingston’s culture today, but in time, a graffiti wall could attract people to the city.

We have a lot of tourists so, in the right location, it could be considered a draw or something like that. (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013)

Another local artist voiced a concern with idea that a graffiti strategy, or public art policy, exists for the purpose of economic development or tourism. Discussions should be kept local at risk of losing their context (Local Artist 2, Personal Communication, 20 March 2013).

Quality

In the discussion of what a graffiti strategy might look like for the City of Kingston, interview participants raised concerns about the contentious issue of assessing the merit of different art practices in the public realm. Judging the quality of artistic work brings up points of tension of both theoretical and practical levels.

Some participants felt that artists are the best positioned to evaluate work, as opposed to bureaucrats or politicians. To a member of the arts community, it is important that there are people with expertise in the field to make judgements about sanctioned works in the public realm. For example, in making decisions about public art, “aesthetics is key – part of that is having a jury of peers, a jury of people who are in the field who understand the aesthetic” (Local Artist 1, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013).

To graffiti artist FOUXA, having a panel means inspiring others and cultivating more talent. She comments that having a screening process for muralists in the City would also have more
practical effects of deterring vandalism. She notes that the screening process could “inspire graffiti artists to have something to look up to and not just disrespect it, because they could have the potential to paint on a publicly placed, legally sanctioned graffiti wall in a high traffic area in the future” (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013).

However, some participants questioned the ability of fine artists to judge the value of graffiti or street art, and that having a diversity of artists would be necessary to understand the artistic merit of graffiti. Greg Tilson of the Arts Council notes:

Like in any art form, for people who to make decisions have to be informed …
I’m in no position to judge graffiti art, so to have a panel of graffiti artists, that’s where it’s at. (Greg Tilson, Personal Communication, 28 March 2013)

However, others questioned the notion that art can be judged, even by panels of experts. Buskers often have to audition for permits to create their music in public spaces. This was seen as one way to ensure certain standards are met, but to someone involved with public art, this was seen as limiting the forms and qualities of expression available in the public realm (Local Artist 2, Personal Communication, 20 March 2013).

**Safety**
Safety was an issue raised by both those creating graffiti and those removing it. From the standpoint of the City or property owners, there are liability issues when employees are asked to remove graffiti from high places or dangerous places. This is an issue for both public sector and private sector employers, and when removal is deemed too risky, contractors are brought in to provide the services.
The graffiti artists also noted the risks that they take to put up graffiti, as they often seek out out-of-the-way or abandoned places. In Kingston, graffiti artists often practice under bridges, where they can spend time to do more elaborate works. The acknowledged a variety of risks that the practice poses: falls, trains, and concerns when artists are practicing away from the public eye:

It’s dangerous being under some of them. And not just because of trains, but because Sir John A [Boulevard] is a haven for drug addicts. Hundreds if not thousands of broken needles all over that place. (SAEB, Personal Communication, 2 May 2013)

Graffiti artists recounted similar problems with the ‘Graffiti Alley’ as well, which was at one point located behind a methadone clinic. For these reasons, FOUXA expressed concern about legal spaces being in hidden areas.

5.4.3 APPROACHES

Legal Space
The idea of a designated wall space for graffiti in Kingston has been around for a number of years, and something that several interview participants cited as an alternative approach that the City could take. Legal walls are self-regulating spaces, where artists negotiate amongst themselves what gets painted over and what stays up.

From the perspective of a graffiti writer, the space is both a place for expression and practice. Legal walls give artists more time and less pressure to create their works, and thus tend to have a positive effect on quality.
So, in certain cities, like in larger cities, like Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, where they have a designated wall space, you as a result have better artists out on the street because there’s a spot to get better. (ERON, Personal Communication, 7 March 2013)

The BIA’s research pointed to the idea that legal walls might contribute to ‘bleed out’, or more graffiti in spread outside of the designated space (Rob Tamblyn, Personal Communication, 21 March 2013). However, graffiti artists argued that the opposite would happen. Instead of painting everywhere, legal spaces would contain graffiti, says artist ERON, “people are just going out and doing stuff on the street because there is no space for it” (Personal Communication, 7 March 2013). To graffiti artist FOUXA, a legal wall has a great deal of potential, but the location and size are key concerns:

Instead of it being, “here’s a legal wall, paint it whenever you want”, then it just gets messy and overflows into other areas. A good way to keep it cordoned off and sanctioned is to have it a good amount of space, spread out, in a visible area. (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013)

To artist SAEB, a legal walls is linked to the idea of engaging the arts in Kingston (SAEB, Personal Communication, 2 May 2013). A public wall could help change perceptions about what art and graffiti are, and would be a way of showcasing a spectrum of qualities of art.
Murals

Many interviewees brought up the idea of murals as both a form of artistic expression and a form of graffiti deterrence. Murals give opportunities for a variety of spectrum of artistic qualities to be showcased; however, murals are problematic in several ways.

As Colin Wiginton of the City of Kingston notes, murals “make people feel warm and fuzzy”, but are also challenging because they can polarize public opinion and come with maintenance and ownership issues (Colin Wiginton, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013). As noted earlier in this report, there is also the controversial issue of screening artists and content.

Currently, a number of businesses in Kingston have contracted murals on their walls to deter graffiti, but the City has few examples of public murals. FOUXA suggests temporary murals are a way to inspire new artists and avoid maintenance issues.

Temporary Spaces

Interviews also mentioned the possibility of re-conceptualizing the permanence of public art. Graffiti by nature lends itself well to impermanent public art projects. Providing spaces for graffiti, such as on construction hoardings or in street furniture, was suggested as a way to open up spaces for different works of art.

Temporary exhibits may be an excellent opportunity to mitigate the politics of implementing public art in a permanent way, says a community member involved in yarn bombing:
People get so riled up about public art because they feel like its permanent, and once its there they can’t do anything about it – but if we can imagine its temporary or moving, then I think people might be more open to it. (Person Involved in Yarn Bombing, Personal Communication, 12 April 2013)

**Events**

It may be possible to collaborate with local businesses and communities to integrate street art into an arts festival or other type of festival. In cities like Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa, these events are seen to have the effect of legitimizing graffiti as an art form and providing a way to showcase local talent.

Graffiti artist FOUXA explains that the internationally-renown Under Pressure event held in Montreal transforms regular city walls into legal walls for a weekend every year. The art stays up for a year, and then gets painted over again the next year. In FOUXA's opinion, Kingston could do something similar in its own way, but with much fewer artists. FOUXA thinks that “that gives you the opportunity to make it very select, and make sure that it is a collection of creative and well-executed graffiti, as opposed to just tags and [throw-ups] that can be misconstrued for vandalism” (FOUXA, Personal Communication, 6 May 2013).

**Criminalization Tools**

Finally, two other alternative approaches were suggested: more policing and the control of graffiti implements. A downtown property manager would like to see more done about graffiti in Kingston, and forwarded the idea of more policing or surveillance downtown to deter graffiti on buildings (Carlos Fuentes, Personal Communication, 12 March 2013). One Police Officer interviewed would like to see graffiti implements controlled or restricted (Police Officer, Personal Communication, 11 March 2013).
6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 Developing a Balanced Solution to Kingston’s Graffiti ‘Problem’

This report takes the standpoint that graffiti is a complex issue that requires in-depth exploration and the engagement of conflicting voices. This report takes the viewpoint that there is no ‘right’ solution for managing graffiti in Kingston, there are only alternatives that seek to satisfy stakeholder goals. Furthermore, this report is founded in the recognition that graffiti management is inherently political and requires savvy in management and programming by governments and organisations in order to be effective.

The development of a graffiti management strategy is a complex problem for planners, and so it is necessary to understand the situation in which a strategy would unfold. Christensen (1993) gives planners tools to understand their unique setting and to probe the issues in more depth. Christensen suggests that it is vital to link stakeholders to actions as a way to implement decision-making and begin to take action.

6.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Figure 8 is a tool to understand the various stakeholders in Kingston. The term stakeholder simply refers to those who impact or are impacted by an issue. The chart shows that there are a multitude of parties that involved in and affected by graffiti management. Main actors are those closest to the issue and are essential components of the process. Secondary actors are less involved in the issue but are impacted nonetheless.
Chapter 6: Discussion

In an attempt to understand how stakeholders would react and to point out where concerns could possibly be bridged, Figure 9 imagines primary stakeholders with their interests, resources and action channels. Interests are what motivate stakeholders; they are the advantages or disadvantages that the project may bring. Resources are what allow stakeholders to affect the process of implementation. Examples of resources could be power, knowledge or money. Action channels are the formal or informal means by which the stakeholders can leverage their resources to act on their interests, such as political processes, advocacy or budget cycles. Stakeholders are leaders in the development of a graffiti management strategy and actions by stakeholders will affect the development and implementation of such a strategy.

A balanced approach with actions on the that takes into consideration the varying interests of different groups including the arts community, graffiti artists, the Kingston Police, City departments, City Council and the General Public. The chart demonstrates that the graffiti writers have little access to resources or action channels, so including the voices of the arts community and the graffiti artist community in the creation of the Public Art Policy will be important, though not without challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Actors</th>
<th>Secondary Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Community</td>
<td>City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bylaw Enforcement Department</td>
<td>General Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Services Department</td>
<td>Parks Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown BIA</td>
<td>Property Owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti Community</td>
<td>Real Estate and Construction Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Police Force</td>
<td>School Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Department</td>
<td>Utility Companies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9 Stakeholder Interests, Resources and Action Channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Action Channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Community</td>
<td>Promoting artists in the community</td>
<td>Grant funding, non profit support</td>
<td>Arts Council, Arts Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating opportunities for arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making the arts more accessible and inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bylaw Enforcement</td>
<td>Deterring graffiti on private property</td>
<td>Issuing warnings/notifications to property owners</td>
<td>City Bylaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fines to property owners who fail to comply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Services</td>
<td>Implement the recommendations of the Kingston Culture Plan</td>
<td>Administer the Kingston Arts Fund</td>
<td>Public Art Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote Kingston as a Creative City</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown BIA</td>
<td>Promoting business in the downtown</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Political pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintaining property values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Police Force</td>
<td>Eradicating graffiti</td>
<td>Beat police</td>
<td>Justice System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prosecuting criminals</td>
<td>Database of graffiti Crimestoppers tips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti Community</td>
<td>Various motivations: self-expression, beautifying space, civil disobedience, recognition, etc.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Deterring/removing graffiti on public property</td>
<td>Mandate to remove graffiti on public right of way</td>
<td>City Bylaws, City Programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Funding

All municipalities analysed in this report have dedicated resources to the issue of graffiti management. The document analysis (Chapter 5) suggests that Canadian cities are spending time and money on this issue for two reasons: first, that they are already spending money in the form of removal and enforcement, and second, because culture and cultural planning are
becoming priorities for local government. Canadian municipalities have initiated task forces, formalized planning documents, or created full or partial employee positions for graffiti coordinators, and they have found funding for these positions within existing budgets.

Within the corporate organisation of local government, graffiti management may fall under the purview of a variety of departments, such as Public Works, Engineering, Planning, Cultural Services, By-law Enforcement, or it may fall to other organisations, like Police. In Toronto, graffiti management is a collaboration between Police and the StART program, which is in the Transportation department (City of Toronto, nd c). In Calgary, graffiti management falls to By-law Enforcement and Calgary Police Force (Calgary Police Force, nd) who work closely together. In Burnaby, a Mayor’s Task Force (City of Burnaby, 2007) established graffiti as a priority and created an Anti-Graffiti coordinator position. In Edmonton, the Graffiti Management Program is part of the Capital City Clean Up (City of Edmonton, nd), which is part of the City’s Environmental Services. In Regina, the Let’s Wipe Out Graffiti program is coordinated by the Planning Department (City of Regina, nd).

For the City of Kingston, graffiti management is mostly the financial responsibility of the Public Works department, Kingston Police, and property owners. Creating stronger partnerships with stakeholders, including the Arts Council and Cultural Services Department will broaden the resources available for graffiti management. A full- or part-time graffiti coordinator position within an existing department for the City of Kingston could act as a resource to coordinate actions, build knowledge capacities, evaluate and monitor programming, and bring stakeholders together.
7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

This paper has examined the graffiti issue in Kingston by providing a literature review, taking stock of the current state of graffiti in Kingston, analysing current approaches to graffiti management across Canada, and, finally, by gathering local perspectives to shed light on potential challenges and opportunities of a formalized graffiti management strategy.

Over the last ten years, a turn to formalized approaches to addressing graffiti at the municipal level has emerged in urban planning in Canada and across the world. This report has found that cities across Canada engage in elements of removal, criminalization, welfarism and acceptance to differing degrees. While some cities are focused on a zero-tolerance approach to graffiti management, others are moving towards more multi-faceted approaches.

This report found that graffiti is spread across the City of Kingston, including the downtown, schools, parks and bridges. Graffiti in Kingston manifests itself in a variety of forms: graffiti lettering style, post-graffiti, and slogans, and these findings point to a heterogeneous group of people with different motivations engaging in the practice. The current response to graffiti in Kingston focuses on the removal and criminalization aspects of graffiti management according to Halsey and Young's (2002) categorization of municipal responses to graffiti. Welfarism and acceptance are not currently part of the City of Kingston's strategy for graffiti management.

Interviews with key informants shed light on various aspects of graffiti in Kingston. Graffiti is both art and vandalism. Kingston already has a strong removal/criminalisation piece, with
Bylaw Enforcement, the BIA, Kingston Police Force and other City departments having existing procedures and programs in place. However, the relationships between partners could be strengthened, as well as expanded to include the Cultural Services department. Interviewees raised issues of access, community, and identity with regard to graffiti management. The interviews also revealed the existing resources, experiences and talents in Kingston that can be leveraged to broaden and strengthen graffiti management. Working with the Arts Council and community associations to bring art into the public realm is an opportunity for the City to enrich arts and culture in Kingston. Quality is a complex issue when dealing with the visual realm, and will be an important part of a future GMP for Kingston. Safety is a concern for both graffiti writers and those who remove it. Providing more legal opportunities for graffiti may help to address this issue. Setting clear goals for a graffiti management strategy will be the next step for the City, and then choosing tools in line with those goals.

7.2 Recommendations

The objective of this research was to share lessons from other municipalities’ approach to graffiti management and to explore the possibilities for graffiti management in the current context of Kingston, Ontario. Four major recommendations were the result of this research. They are not meant to be rigid, but to explore the possibilities of a formal graffiti management strategy for the City of Kingston.

Recommendation #1 Develop a formal and coordinated graffiti strategy

Although the interviews revealed a variety of experiences and standpoints, there were important commonalities. All participants expressed that graffiti is inevitable in Kingston and that the City has a role in managing graffiti. Coming from this common point of view, it is apparent that
adopting a formal approach would be appropriate for the City of Kingston and the creation of a Public Art Policy is the ideal time to take a leadership position on graffiti management. A formal strategy will be able to better manage graffiti in line with a common and well-defined goal.

Furthermore, based on the information collected in this report, there is little coordination between those active in graffiti management at present. Bridging these divides and starting dialogue across stakeholders is a beneficial route for the City to take in order to share important information and build relationships. A graffiti coordinator at the City would be a central point of contact and information for all stakeholders (See Chapter 6 for discussion of responsibilities and funding).

**Recommendation # 2 Broaden the concept of stakeholders**

Currently, the majority of Kingston's graffiti management is the responsibility of law enforcement, Public Works and the downtown BIA. This report has identified five distinct groups of stakeholders in Chapter 6, and these stakeholders represent a much broader range than currently considered. Broadening the notion of those involved with graffiti management to include the City of Kingston's Cultural Services department and the arts community is in line with a more inclusive and coordinated approach.

**Recommendation #3 Graffiti management should be multi-faceted**

This report identified three distinct approaches to graffiti management: Zero Tolerance Approach, Creative City Approach, and Community-Based Approach. Based on the findings of this report only the latter two of these alternative approaches are likely to be appropriate for the City of Kingston. Both the interviews and literature review findings point to the opportunity to incorporate a balanced and integrated approach to graffiti management that emphasises the eradication of unsanctioned art, while providing opportunities for sanctioned art. Strengthening
actions and policy in the areas of removal, welfarism, and acceptance will seek to satisfy the range of stakeholder interests including the arts community, graffiti artists, the Kingston Police, and City departments. Figure 10 imagines how a formal graffiti management strategy with emphasis on removal, welfarism and acceptance would satisfy stakeholder interests.

Two alternatives for a multi-faceted approach are (1) a Creative City approach and (2) a Community-Based approach, both of which are detailed on the following page.

Figure 10 Addressing Stakeholder Interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Addressing Stakeholder Interests through graffiti management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Community</td>
<td>Promoting artists in the community</td>
<td>Creating opportunities for artistic expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating opportunities for arts</td>
<td>Engaging youth and diverse communities through art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making the arts more accessible and inclusive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bylaw Enforcement</td>
<td>Deterring graffiti on private property</td>
<td>Actively promoting removal and prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Services</td>
<td>Implement the recommendations of the Kingston Culture Plan</td>
<td>Creating opportunities for artistic expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote Kingston as a Creative City</td>
<td>Creating a vibrant city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown BIA</td>
<td>Promoting business in the downtown</td>
<td>Actively promoting removal and prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintaining property values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Police Force</td>
<td>Eradicating graffiti</td>
<td>Actively promoting prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prosecuting criminals</td>
<td>Seeking alternatives to the justice system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti Community</td>
<td>Various motivations: self-expression, beautifying space, civil disobedience, recognition, etc.</td>
<td>Creating opportunities for artistic expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Deterring/removing graffiti on public property</td>
<td>Actively promoting removal and prevention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternative 1: Creative City Approach

A Creative City Approach, which most resembles the current approach in the City of Toronto, aims to create more opportunities for art. Graffiti is considered inevitable and also a legitimate form of expression in some cases.

- Strengthen removal and reporting strategies.
- Consider ways for the City to help property owners remove graffiti on their property.
- Create a mural program with clear definitions of mural and graffiti.
- Consider a graffiti permitting system that allows property owners to be exempt of fines.
- Create ‘anti-graffiti’ wrap program that deters graffiti while creating opportunities for art.

Alternative 2: Community-Based Approach

Ottawa and Gatineau exemplify a more community-based approach to graffiti management. Graffiti is considered inevitable and also a legitimate form of expression in some cases.

- Strengthen removal and reporting strategies.
- Consider ways for the City to help property owners remove graffiti on their property.
- Create a mural program with community organisations.
- Consider implementing free walls in Kingston in partnership with a community group.
- Create public awareness campaigns for property owners, youth and businesses.
- Support programs that engage youth with art and graffiti as a form of artistic expression.
- Work with police to create a restorative justice program.
Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

Recommendation #4 Graffiti management requires program evaluation

There is no coordinated evaluation in place for the City’s current graffiti management. For example, the Kingston Police Force measures success by the number of charges and arrests, while Public Works evaluates their performance by the number of incidents cleaned up. As measurements, these are insufficient because they fail to capture the complete effects of the various actions by numerous stakeholders.

Audits are annual counts of incidences of graffiti, usually done in areas with lots of graffiti and may include intensity, type and location. While this measure is ideal for assessing removal services and bylaw enforcement, it does not take into consideration other goals of a multi-faceted strategy. Similarly, measuring the number of complaints in a given year is useful for understanding how well citizens understand the importance of reporting incidences of graffiti and quick removal of unwanted graffiti. Surveys are useful for assessing the relationships with community partners. Other useful methods of evaluation for a formal graffiti strategy will depend on the formal goals of a graffiti management strategy, and may include, for example, surveys of businesses who received support, individual staff, survey of professional partners, survey of youth to better understand how the City is meeting their needs, or counting the number of community clean up events or number of attendees at engagement events.

7.3 Conclusion

A good city is like a good party – people stay longer than really necessary, because they are enjoying themselves. - Jan Gehl
This report is meant to guide the development of a graffiti management strategy for the City of Kingston. Next steps for the City will include choosing a strategy and identifying actions to support that strategy. The City may want to identify an area for leadership on this issue, and that may include the potential for a graffiti coordinator role within the City’s organisation or the establishment of an ad hoc graffiti committee that includes various stakeholders. As part of a graffiti management strategy, the City will also have to consider a consultation process and how to include members of the graffiti community and youth in that process.

Further academic research on graffiti management may include the investigation of the link between economic development and graffiti, as noted by some participants in this research, the link between cultural planning and graffiti management, or how graffiti management can be used as a youth engagement tool.

Graffiti management is an urban planning issue that touches many facets of urban places: citizen engagement, street life, cultural vibrancy, and economic resiliency. It is an important issue that has fundamental implications for public space and merits consideration from planners, city builders, politicians, and citizens. Through coordinated local action, there is both the capacity and the potential to build more vibrant and colourful places for everybody.
8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY


City of Burnaby. (nd b) Graffiti is a type of vandalism. [brochure]. Retrieved 29 July 2013 from: http://www.burnaby.ca/Assets/city+services/bylaws+violations+and+enforcement/graffiti/Anti-Graffiti+Brochure.pdf


Exit through the gift shop. Dir. Banksy. Revolver Entertainment. 2010. Film.


London.ca/By-laws/PDFs/graffiti.pdf


APPENDIX A: Downtown Kingston Graffiti Inventory

Figure 2: Downtown Kingston, snapshot of graffiti by type and density.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removal on Public Property</th>
<th>Kingston</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
<th>Burnaby</th>
<th>Calgary</th>
<th>Edmonton</th>
<th>Regina</th>
<th>Winnipeg</th>
<th>Cambridge</th>
<th>Hamilton</th>
<th>London</th>
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Sources: City of Kingston, 2005; City of Victoria, 2002; City of Victoria, nd; City of Vancouver, 2013; City of Vancouver, nd; City of Burnaby, nd a; City of Burnaby, nd b; City of Burnaby 2007; City of Calgary, 2004; City of Calgary, nd a; City of Calgary, nd b; City of Edmonton, nd; City of Edmonton, 2008; City of Regina, 2008; City of Regina, 2013; City of Regina, nd; City of Winnipeg, 2007; City of Winnipeg, nd a; City of Winnipeg, nd b; City of London, 2007; City of London, nd; City of Cambridge, 2012; City of Cambridge, 2006; City of Hamilton, nd; City of Hamilton, 2010; City of Toronto, 2011, City of Toronto, nd a; City of Toronto, nd b; City of Toronto, nd c; City of Ottawa, nd a; City of Ottawa, nd b; City of Ottawa, nd c; City of Ottawa, 2008; City of Ottawa, 2005; Ville de Gatineau, 2010; Ville de Gatineau, nd; Halifax Regional Municipality, nd; Halifax Regional Municipality, 2006.
APPENDIX C: Definitions of Graffiti in Bylaws

City of Victoria, Graffiti Bylaw No. 02-16 2002
“graffiti” (a) means drawing, printing, or writing that (i) is scribbled, scratched, spray-painted, or similarly placed directly.
(ii) if it is on private property that is not located on public real property, is there without the consent of the owner of that private property;
(b) excludes signs for which permits have been issued under the Sign Bylaw; and (c) excludes murals;
“Mural” means a painting that is applied directly to the wall of a building with the consent of the owner of that building; and (b) that does not include any text or logo other than the name of the artist.

City of Burnaby, Graffiti Bylaw 2007 Bylaw No. 12294
“graffiti” means one or more letters, symbols, marks, designs, or drawings, however made, on any structure, place or thing, but does not include any of the following:
(a) a sign, public notice, or traffic control mark authorized by the City’s Director of Engineering;
(b) a sign authorized pursuant to Burnaby Sign Bylaw; (c) a public notice authorized by a City Bylaw or by Provincial or Federal legislation; or
(d) in the case of private real property, a letter, symbol, mark, design or drawing authorized by the owner or occupant of the property on which the letter, symbol, mark, design or drawing appears, that does not render the real property unsightly;

“Hate graffiti” means graffiti that demeans a person or group or class of persons based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation or such person or group or class of persons;

City of Vancouver, Graffiti By-law No. 7343
2. In this by-law “graffiti” means one or more letters, symbols, marks, or drawings, however made, on any structure or thing but does not include marks made accidentally or any of the following:
(a) a sign, public notice or traffic control mark authorized by the City Engineer;
(b) a sign authorized pursuant to the Sign By-law;
(c) a public notice authorized by a City by-law or by Provincial or Federal legislation;
(d) in the case of private property, a letter, symbol or mark for which the owner or tenant of the property on which the letter, symbol or mark appears has given prior, written authorization

City of Calgary, Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004
(1) For the purposes of this Part, “Graffiti” means words, figures, letters, drawings, or stickers applied, scribbled, scratches, etched, sprayed or attacked on or to the surface of any premises, Structure or other property.
(2) No person shall create or apply Graffiti on or to any (a) Premises, (B) Structure, or (c) Other property unless the Grafﬁti is not in public view and the Person who owns or occupied the Premises, structure or other property to which the Grafﬁti has been created or applied has given prior written approval for the creation or application of the Grafﬁti.

City of Regina, Property Maintenance Bylaw No. 2008-48
(f) “Graffiti” means drawings, inscriptions, or writings, however made, on buildings, accessory buildings, dwelling units or structures without prior written authorization of the owner.

City of Hamilton, Yard Maintenance Bylaw 10-118
“graffiti” means any words, figures, letters, numbers or drawings spray, scratched, etched or otherwise applied on a surface

City of London, Yard and Lot Maintenance By-law, 2012
‘Graffiti’ includes one or more letters, symbols, figures,etchings, inscriptions, stains or other markings that markings that disfigure or deface a building, howsoever made or otherwise affixed or applied on the structure or thing, but for greater certainty, does not include an art Mural.
‘Art Mural’ is a mural depicting a scene or theme for a designated surface and location that has been approved including by the property owner and deliberately implemented for the purposes of beautifying the specific location.

City of Cambridge, By-law No. 21-06
(b) Graffiti means one or more letters, symbols, marks, pictorial representations, messages or slogans howsoever made on any property, but does not include any of the following:
1) a sign, public notice, or traffic control mark authorized by the City;
ii)A sign authorized pursuant to a permit issued under the City Sign By-law;
iii) A sign, public notice, or traffic control mark authorized by Regional, Provincial, or Federal law;
iv) Letters, symbols, marks, pictorial representations, messages or slogans howsoever made on any property, authorized by the owner, tenant, or occupant of the property;

City of Toronto, Bylaw no 1218-2011
ART MURAL – a mural commissioned or approved prior to its creation by a property owner or occupant, where the primary purpose is to aesthetically enhance the surface it cover and the general surroundings.
GRAFFITI ART – markings made or affixed to property that are approved by the owner or occupant, where the markings aesthetically enhance the surface they cover or general surroundings, having regard to the community character and standards
GRAFFITI VANDALISM – Any deliberate markings made or affixed on property that is currently exempted or regularized by the Graffiti Panel Executive Director or Council A was made or affixed without the permission of the owner; B is considered by the Executive Director to be a tag; C for which there are reasonable grounds to believe that it may incite violence against any person or identifiable group; or D. contains profane, vulgar or offensive language.
TAG – A stylized signature or logo that is intended to identify an individual or group or any other marking used for a like purpose or effect

City of Ottawa, Graffiti Management By-law 2008-01
“graffiti” means one or more letters, symbols, etchings, figures, inscriptions, stains howsoever made or otherwise affixed or to a property or other markings that disfigure or deface a property but does not include a mural sign permitted in accordance with By-law No. 2005-439, the Permanent Signs on Private Property By-law;
“mural sign” means a decorative mural that is painted directly onto the exterior fabric of a building and that serves as an expression of public art;

Ville de Gatineau, No 242-2010
2 "graffiti" Forme d'art graphique, inscription, dessin grave ou peint.
6 “tags”: signature personnelle, souvent illisible (Graphique code qui constitue une signature, un signe de reconnaissance)