

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: September 15, 2008

To: Cynthia Ruiz, President
Board of Public Works

Copies: BPW Commissioners, Jim Gibson, Teri Schmidt, OCB

From: Paul Racs, Director
Office of Community Beautification

Re: OCB FISCAL YEAR STATS ... 2007-08

The mission of the Office of Community Beautification (OCB) is to create a clean, beautiful, and livable Los Angeles by forming partnerships with volunteers, residents, community based organizations, and non-profit agencies, with a focus on community beautification. OCB seeks to strengthen these community efforts by coordinating the resources available through the Los Angeles Department of Public Works and empowering volunteer beautification activities in the City of Los Angeles.

The period of July 2007 to June 2008 presented continuing challenges to OCB programs. While the support budgets remained the same, costs of providing services continued to rise, including supplies and equipment loaned to community groups and the increased costs of operating a graffiti removal program. Yet as documented below the level of services provided by OCB was not impacted.

For fiscal year 2007-08, the Office of Community Beautification provided the following services to the residents of Los Angeles. Attached to this memo are breakdowns of OCB stats by Council District, which provide insight into what parts of the City utilize our program and a comparison of stats over the past ten years. Please let me know if there are any questions or comments regarding OCB operations.

Volunteer Projects

OCB assists and supports community residents with organizing neighborhood-based beautification and clean-up events. OCB loans tools and supplies, provides logistical support through the use of Public Works vehicles and trash bins, and coordinates the involvement of LACC Clean and Green or the local OCB contractor. Based on the Living Wage rate of the City of Los Angeles, community volunteers donated the equivalent of \$1,483,262 to the neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

- Coordinated **251** community based beautification projects, involving **28,849** volunteers, who provided **134,842** volunteer hours to cleaning and beautifying their neighborhoods. Volunteers collected **69,806** bags of litter, weeds, and debris from the public right-of-way, and utilized **3,052** gallons of paint to cover over graffiti marred walls.
- OCB staff attended **424** community meetings to discuss services and support of OCB and the Department of Public Works.

Community Beautification Contractors

OCB contracts with 14 community based, non-profit agencies geographically spread throughout Los Angeles. Contractors proactively remove graffiti from major corridors, and respond to 

requests for service via 3-1-1, OCB, Council Offices, or the Mayor's Office. Contractors also provide litter and weed abatement service. Compared to the previous year, OCB contractors provided a 4% increase in the amount of square footage of graffiti removed from 6% more locations. There was an 12% increase in the number of OCB service requests. OCB staff monitors the work of the contractors on a weekly basis to ensure timely and quality removal. The program provides jobs and training for difficult to employ youth and adults.

- Contractors responded to **92,128** requests for service from the community.
- Contractors removed **31,748,959** square feet of graffiti from **653,520** locations.
- Contractors collected **130,622** bags of litter, weeds, and debris from the public right-of-way.
- OCB staff monitored **2,216** corridors for a total of **5,215** miles.

Community Beautification Grant

OCB provides cash grants of \$250 to \$10,000 to support hardscape community beautification projects. Grants are matched by the community and fall into one of the following categories: 1. Arts Projects; 2. Greening Projects; 3. Pedestrian Projects; 4. Hardscape Projects; 5. School Based Projects.

- OCB conducted **18** General Information workshops and orientation sessions regarding the grant program, reaching an estimated **297** individuals.
- OCB funded **89** Community Beautification Grant projects.
- **58** Grant projects were completed during this period.

Educational Outreach Program

OCB provides an elementary school based curriculum, focusing on community pride, neighborhood beautification, clean-up, and the negative effects of graffiti.

- OCB coordinated **245** school presentations to **197** LAUSD elementary schools, reaching **33,103** students.

Business Improvement District Support

OCB works closely with numerous Business Improvement Districts, and provides supplies to support their clean-up and beautification efforts.

- OCB provided **711,600** trash bags to BID's.
- OCB provided **1,882** gallons of paint to BID's for graffiti abatement.

Court Related Items

OCB works closely with the offices of the District Attorney, City Attorney, and LAPD to provide information and expert testimony useful in prosecuting graffiti related cases.

- OCB provided **67** graffiti abatement cost invoices to LAPD, City Attorney, or District Attorney for use in prosecuting felony graffiti vandalism cases.
- OCB staff appeared in court as an expert witness **63** times on graffiti vandalism cases.
- OCB received **\$52,917.77** in graffiti restitution payments and paid out **\$32,000.00** in graffiti rewards for information which led to the arrest and prosecution of graffiti vandals.

Nuisance Alley Program

Though the Nuisance Alley Closure Program was discontinued in 2004-05, OCB still maintains records and paperwork for the 1,100 alleys that were gated from 1993 to 2004. The Bureau of Street Services is now responsible for maintaining and repairing the existing gates. OCB works closely with BSS and serves as the administrator of documents and the point of contact for residents with issues related to alley closures.

- OCB processed **253** requests for service on existing gates.
- OCB processed **101** requests for replacement of keys for existing gates.