

## NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE

August 1999 saw the introduction of the Mayor's Anti-Graffiti Task Force homepage ([www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/nograffiti](http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/nograffiti)) on NYC LINK, the City's official web site. The anti-graffiti homepage describes the activities and recent accomplishments of the Task Force, including the activities of NYPD units assigned to fight graffiti and vandalism; reproduces relevant City and State anti-graffiti legislation; lists City agency telephone numbers to report graffiti and to become involved in cleanup efforts, including the NYPD Graffiti Hotline (212-374-5914); and furnishes an online application form for the Mayor's Paint Program, which provides free paint and supplies to community members seeking to remove graffiti from their neighborhoods.

From September 1998 to the present, the Task Force has coordinated a series of neighborhood cleanup initiatives involving City agencies and community volunteers in an intensive effort to eradicate graffiti and organize prevention efforts in selected areas. Cleanup campaigns to date have been conducted or are now being organized in the Elmhurst and Bayside sections of Queens; in Harlem and the Lower East Side in Manhattan; in the Bushwick and Sunset Park sections of Brooklyn; in the Soundview and Hunts Point sections of the Bronx; and in Staten Island. Prior to each campaign, the Community Assistance Unit coordinates the collection of waivers from area merchants and residents who agree to have their properties cleaned. Volunteer cleanup efforts are assisted by agencies including the Departments of Transportation, Environmental Protection, Housing Preservation and Development, Parks and Recreation, and Probation (through the activities of its community service workers), as well as the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the New York City Housing Authority. The Department of Sanitation is a major participant in each cleanup initiative, making its special cleaning equipment available on an as-needed basis for power-washing and painting selected properties. The Human Resources Administration, through the efforts of Work Experience Program (WEP) participants, conducts separate cleanup campaigns which are coordinated with Task Force cleanups in several areas. The following describes the contributions of Task Force members during Fiscal 1999, both as part of neighborhood cleanup initiatives and in other areas.

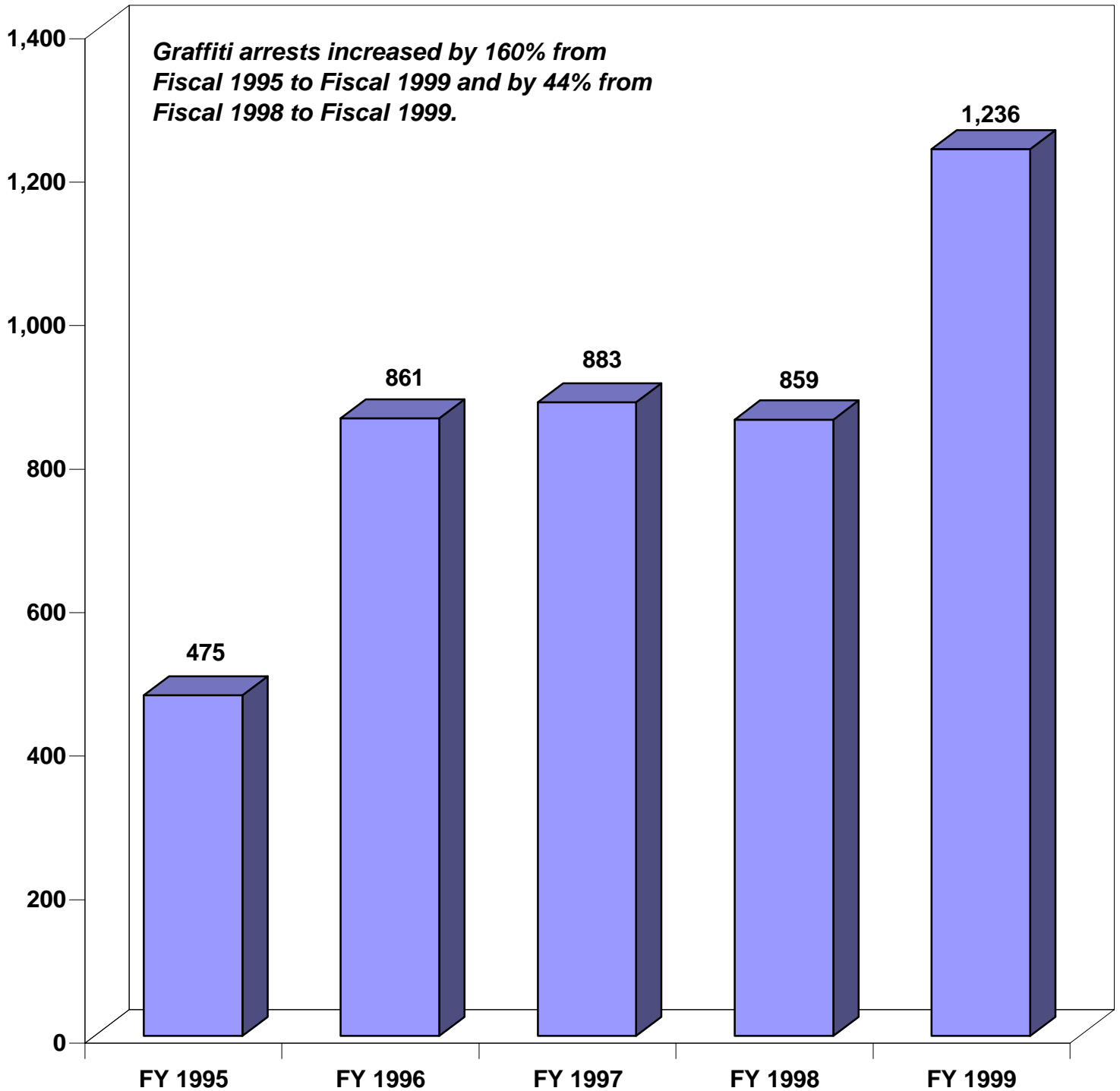
**Police Department.** The Department made 1,236 graffiti arrests during Fiscal 1999, 44 percent more than the previous year and 160 percent more than in Fiscal 1995. The Department works with community members in the aftermath of cleanup initiatives to help ensure that neighborhoods remain graffiti-free, and has made arrests by staking out cleanup sites that are likely to be revisited by graffiti vandals. The Department's Anti-Graffiti/Vandalism Unit (AGVU) collects graffiti-related intelligence, including information on graffiti arrest statistics, graffiti vandals and their identifying symbols, court dispositions, and active bench warrants, and provides assistance and information to other City agencies.

**Fire Department.** During the fourth quarter of Fiscal 1999 the Fire Department conducted anti-graffiti public education as part of its overall public safety campaign, which also targeted neighborhood problems such as litter, arson, and drugs. The intensive public outreach campaign was conducted in conjunction with smoke detector and battery giveaways, and with the joint NYPD/FDNY anti-fireworks campaign. The Fire Department prepared educational material for students and teachers on the safety problems posed by arson and graffiti in the community. The Department maintains a policy of 48-hour removal of graffiti from all 211 firehouses citywide, and painted over 200 alarm boxes in each of the last two fiscal years.

**Department of Probation.** The Department coordinates and conducts supervised work crews throughout New York City, consisting of probationers who perform community service tasks as a condition of their probation. In Fiscal 1999, graffiti was removed from 2,419 sites; a total of 193,520 square feet of roll-down gates and/or walls were cleaned. As part of the Task Force's neighborhood cleanup initiatives, Department work crews were assigned to areas including Bushwick, Brooklyn (3,840 square feet of graffiti removed); Elmhurst, Queens (2,100 square feet removed) and Hunts Point, the Bronx (5,832 square feet removed).

# New York City Police Department

## Graffiti Arrests Fiscal 1995-1999



Figures are based on preliminary data.

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**Department of Transportation.** In Fiscal 1999 the Department removed 6.6 million square feet of graffiti from the City's bridges and highways – favorite targets of graffiti vandals – compared with 5.8 million square feet the previous year. DOT notifies the Police Department 48 hours prior to removing graffiti, so that police patrols can deter repeated vandalism. DOT's program has been expanded to include 24 arterial highways, on which graffiti removal is performed on a monthly basis. The Department uses a mix of City and State funding; two crews, each consisting of six painters and one supervisor, remove graffiti from State-owned highways under the State Arterial and Maintenance program.

DOT also dispatches a Sticker Removal Team to remove posters and stickers from City property. The unit, consisting of two DOT employees and two Work Experience Program (WEP) participants, removes stickers from approximately 100 lightpoles a week, and removes up to 120 posters a week from poles. The Department's efforts as part of cleanup initiatives in Hunts Point, Soundview, and Bayside resulted in the removal of 782 stickers and posters from lightpoles and stop-signs during Fiscal 1999. The Department removed a citywide total of 5,546 stickers and posters during Fiscal 1999.

**Department of Environmental Protection.** In Fiscal 1999 the Department removed approximately 5,000 square feet of graffiti from its facilities around the City, compared with 4,800 square feet the previous year, at sites including the Coney Island Water Pollution Control Plant and Gowanus pumping station in Brooklyn; the sewer yard located next to the East River Drive in Manhattan; and the Ontario Avenue pumping station in Staten Island.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development.** The Department continues its efforts to remove graffiti on City-owned buildings by power washing or painting over graffiti on buildings with painted exteriors. In Fiscal 1999, 68 buildings received power washing treatments and 140 buildings were treated using the paint-over method, for a total of 208 buildings. By comparison, 63 buildings were cleaned in Fiscal 1998. Since the program's inception, 93 buildings have received power washing treatments; another 252 buildings have been treated using the traditional paint-over method. As part of the second stage of this initiative, HPD began to use both private contractors and Supported Work Group providers to expand power-washing services citywide.

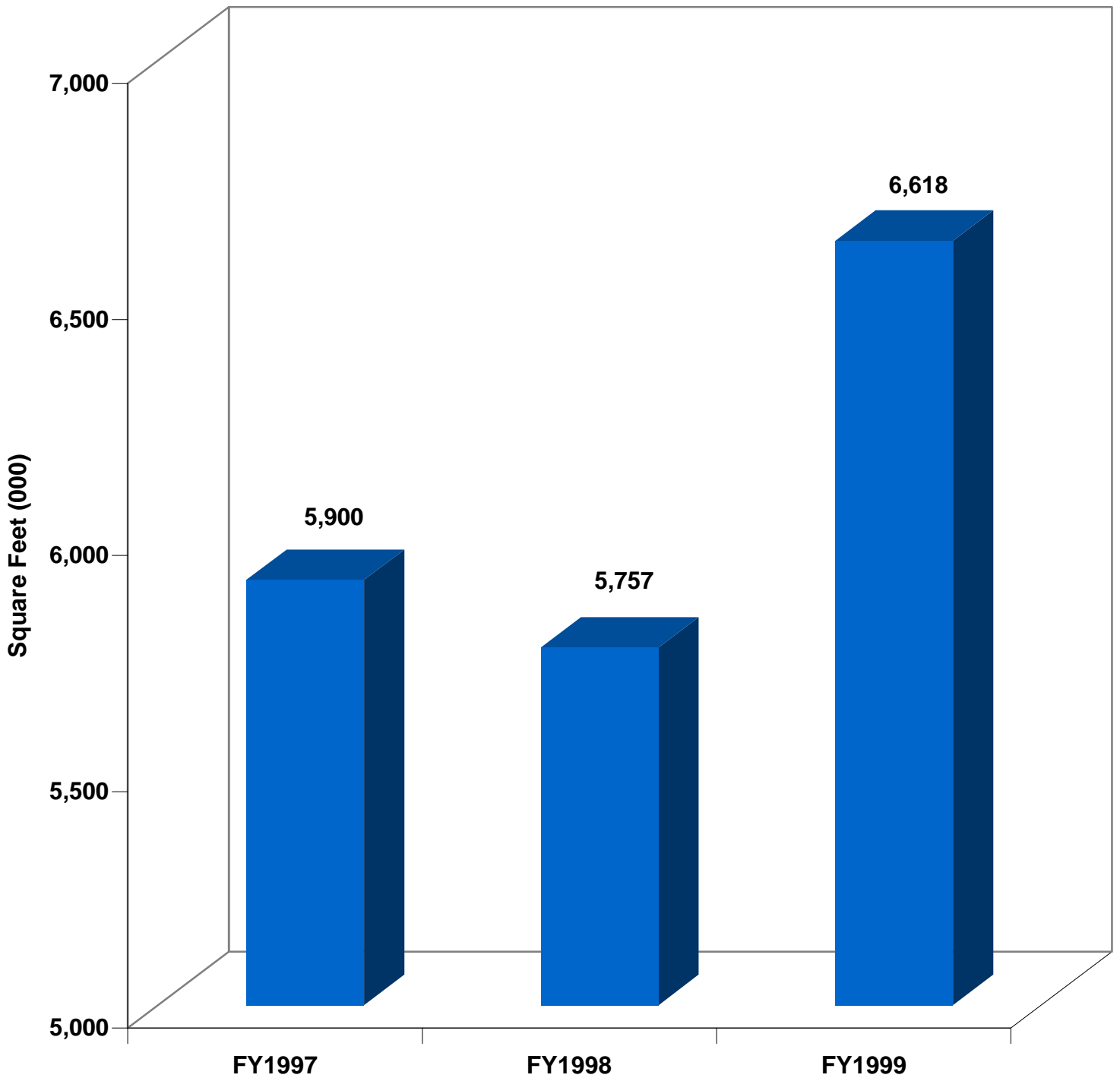
**New York City Housing Authority.** As of the first quarter of Fiscal 2000 a total of 60 public housing developments and 177 buildings are involved in the Authority's anti-graffiti program, compared with 55 developments and 168 buildings at the end of Fiscal 1998. District Attorneys' offices in each borough assign persons sentenced to community service to the Authority's anti-graffiti unit to help staff remove graffiti from Authority buildings. Fifteen Housing Bureau police officers patrol Authority buildings and investigate graffiti offenses.

**Department of Sanitation.** The Department continues to maintain all of its facilities, vehicles and equipment free of graffiti, and takes the lead in removing graffiti for other City agencies. As part of the Task Force's neighborhood cleanup initiatives during Spring 1999, the Department painted or cleaned 66,142 square feet at 86 sites to remove graffiti, and distributed paint to community residents and owners to paint over any recurring graffiti. DOS removed over 296,000 square feet of graffiti at 336 sites during Fiscal 1999.

The Department's specialized anti-graffiti equipment is a critical part of the Task Force's neighborhood cleanup initiatives. DOS designed and developed a self-contained mobile anti-graffiti unit, which can clean, prepare, and custom-paint a site to its original color. The vehicle is equipped with a computerized color matching system, and was developed in-house for approximately half the cost of outside procurement. A second mobile unit developed by the Department is used for power-washing and application of chemical graffiti remover.

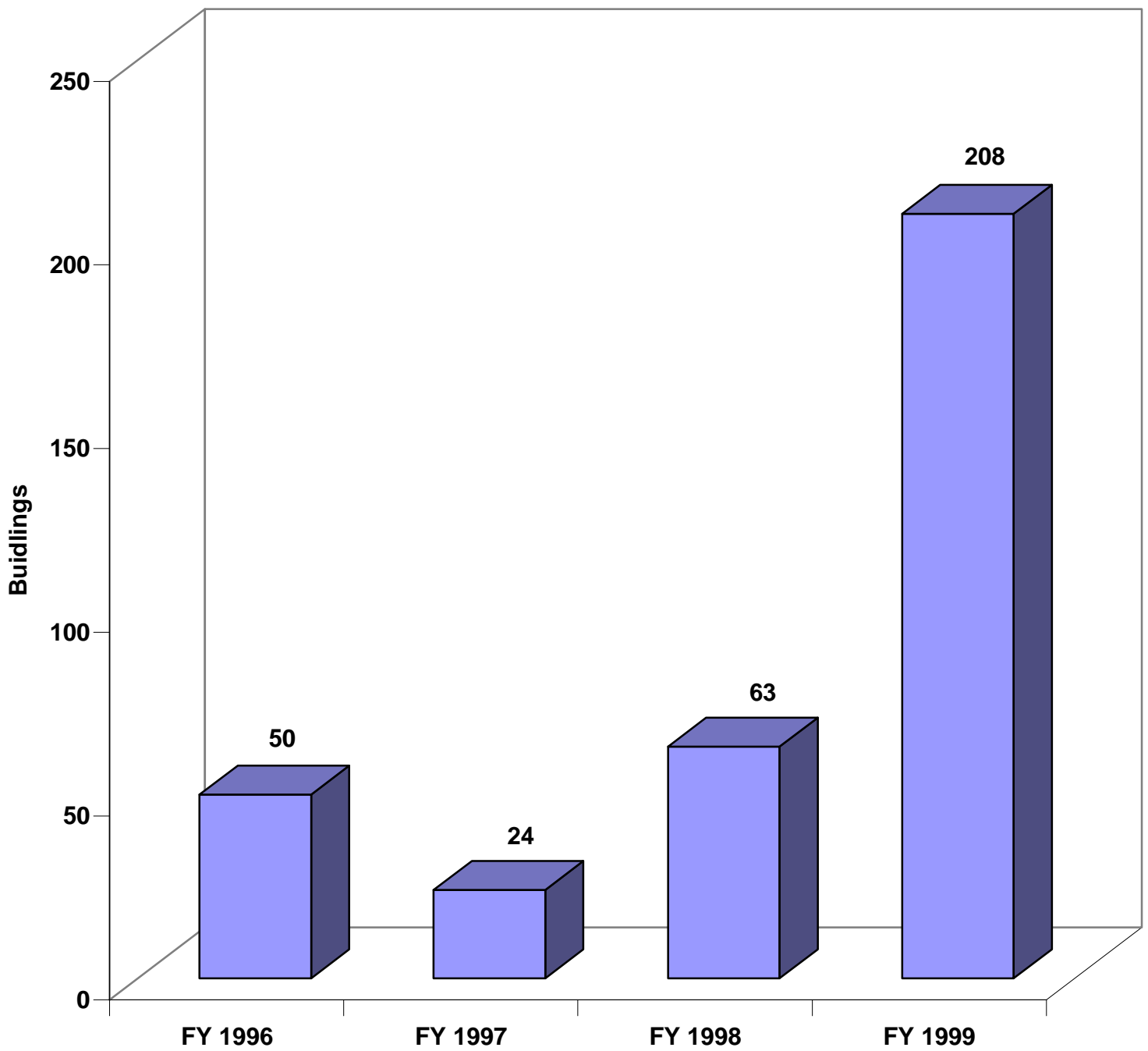
# Department of Transportation

## Graffiti Removal from Bridges and Arterial Highways



# Department of Housing Preservation and Development

## Graffiti Removal from City-Owned Buildings Fiscal 1996-1999



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**Department of Parks and Recreation.** The Department (DPR) conducts one of the most aggressive anti-graffiti programs of any municipal park system in the nation. Any graffiti discovered by maintenance and operations staff or parks inspectors is reported to Central Communications via a special radio code; members of the public can also report graffiti 24 hours a day, seven days a week using 1-800-201-PARK. All graffiti is catalogued and tracked; managers of the area in question are immediately notified of graffiti in their area. Any graffiti reported before 10 a.m. must be removed before noon on the same day, while graffiti called in after 10 a.m. must be removed before noon of the following day.

In 1994, the first year of the DPR's zero-tolerance policy, the Department removed or painted over more than 7 million square feet of graffiti. The amount of graffiti removed had fallen to 3.4 million square feet for Fiscal 1999. The Department's surveys of conditions in parks and playgrounds found 94 percent of sites rated acceptable for graffiti in Fiscal 1999, slightly worse than the 96 percent acceptable rating for Fiscal 1998, reflecting DPR's decision to tighten its standards for acceptability.

**Department of Business Services.** During Fiscal 1999 DBS and other City agencies worked with Business Improvement Districts such as those at Sunset Park-Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn, Pitkin Avenue in Brooklyn, Hub-Third Avenue in the Bronx, and Steinway Street in Queens to remove graffiti, improve cleanliness, and increase security. In addition, the Department's Business Assistance unit worked with the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit to prepare for Task Force cleanup initiatives, concentrating outreach efforts to business areas affected by graffiti in the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. Businesses benefiting from graffiti removal were located in areas including Chinatown, Soundview, Bayside, Sunset Park, and Dyker Heights.

**Department of Cultural Affairs.** The Department focuses on education and outreach to help citizens, especially youth, form new attitudes about the use of and respect for public spaces. A total of 50 teachers and over 2,500 public school students participated in the 1997-98 CarCard Program, in which children's drawings are placed on subways and buses. The program's theme for 1998-99 is Public Transportation/My Favorite Subway Stop/Bus Stop. The program is organized annually in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Authority's Arts for Transit unit and United Federation of Teachers' Art Teachers Association. Teacher workshops are also held each year to encourage new approaches to the themes of public spaces and art.

**Human Resources Administration.** Beginning in September 1998, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) has mounted its own Graffiti Removal and Clean Buildings/Clean Streets program in or near four Business Improvement District areas: the Pitkin Avenue (in East New York/Brownsville) and Church Avenue (Flatbush) sections of Brooklyn, Upper Broadway in Washington Heights, and the Hub-Third Avenue section of the South Bronx. HRA arranged for a not-for-profit group to supervise Work Experience Program (WEP) participants assigned to clean these areas. In April 1999, in conjunction with the Task Force's initiative in the Lower East Side, HRA completed a five-week graffiti removal effort there. By June 1999 HRA's Graffiti Removal Program had expanded to 12 WEP crews operating in eight areas. The additional four areas are Tribeca, Chinatown, Bushwick, and the Woodside/Sunnyside area in Queens. At the end of Fiscal 1999, nearly 400 waivers had been obtained to remove graffiti; WEP crews swept debris and scraped stickers from light poles, traffic control boxes, and street signs on over 250 City blocks; and WEP crews had painted over graffiti on approximately 200 sites. About 150 WEP participants have participated in HRA's Graffiti Removal Program, averaging 30 participants per day for approximately 260 days. As of June 1999, the not-for-profit group assigned to supervise WEP participants in the program had placed 32 participants into permanent unsubsidized jobs. In addition, HRA designed and distributed anti-graffiti posters and arranged for them to be placed in the store windows of properties that benefited from the Graffiti Removal Program.

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**Department of Youth and Community Development.** The Department helps to distribute information about the City's anti-graffiti campaign through over 900 neighborhood-based organizations with which DYCD contracts for services. In addition, the Department's NYC YOUTHLINE, a 24-hour, seven-day information line for youth and adults, allows callers to report on the location of graffiti "hot spots" in their neighborhoods. NYC YOUTHLINE can also help connect youth volunteers with graffiti clean-up and prevention programs in their communities.

**Department of Consumer Affairs.** Since the creation of the Task Force, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) has effectively pursued enforcement of the City's law regulating the display of aerosol spray paint and large tip magic markers, and prohibiting the sales of these items to minors. Enforcement sweeps use teenage volunteers to assess retailer compliance. This method has reduced the percent of stores inspected by DCA that sell spray paint to minors from 44 percent in March 1998, to 22 percent in October 1998, to only 6 percent in March 1999. There were 26 violations issued for the selling of spray cans to minors in Fiscal 1999, compared with 19 violations in Fiscal 1998.

**Department of Citywide Administrative Services.** The Department (DCAS) is responsible for citywide anti-graffiti efforts directed at City landmark facilities, and also performs special clean-up projects in conjunction with Task Force initiatives. As part of the operation and maintenance of City-managed office buildings and courthouses, DCAS cleaned over 60,000 square feet of graffiti from public facilities during Fiscal 1999, compared with under 35,000 square feet the previous year. These efforts included clean-up of the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, as well as the Manhattan Bridge granite support structures on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

**New York City Transit.** During Calendar 1998 New York City Transit cleaned approximately 1,087,000 graffiti "hits," including 252,000 from its subway cars, 115,000 from buses, and 720,000 from subway stations. In Calendar 1999 New York City Transit expects to clean 1,413,600 "hits," including nearly one million in subway stations, almost 300,000 in subway cars, and over 100,000 on City buses. New York City Transit continues to maintain a virtually graffiti-free transit system.