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GARCETTI**  
President, Los Angeles City Council  
COUNCIL DISTRICT 13



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## **ANTI-GRAFFITI INITIATIVE SURPASSES TWO-YEAR GOAL** **Increased Community Involvement and Police Cooperation Makes Streets Safer,** **Abates Gang Influence in Neighborhoods**

Council President Eric Garcetti announced that his district-wide campaign against graffiti, Uniting Neighborhoods To Abolish Graffiti (UNTAG), had surpassed its two-year goal of reducing graffiti in the area by half, with a reported 55% reduction in the number of visible tags over last 24 months.

“The success of UNTAG is a credit to those in the city who want to reclaim community ownership of our neighborhoods,” said Garcetti. “Abolishing graffiti is a necessary part of the effort to make our streets safe and our neighborhoods healthy.”

“The UNTAG program is clearly a success and an example of how the ‘Broken Windows’ theory of policing works,” said Chief of Police William Bratton. “By ridding neighborhoods of tagging and vandalism, community members and cops are reducing those types of crimes that can directly impact the quality of life in a neighborhood.”

“The Department of Public Works is proud to partner with Councilman Garcetti and the residents of his district to clean up graffiti and other forms of visual blight,” said Cynthia Ruiz, President of the Board of Public Works. “The UNTAG funding received by the Public Works Office of Community Beautification has been used to create a strike force of five graffiti abatement teams who are deployed in high-impact graffiti areas around the city on a rotating basis.”

“We have a very pro-active community,” said Barry Shapiro, a block captain in the Atwater Village area. “The cooperative efforts of CD13, LA Bridges, who have just been amazing, and residents have contributed greatly to the decline in tagging that we have witnessed over the last two years.”

In addition to the 55% numerical reduction, the program has had a critical qualitative impact. Tagging has noticeably declined in highly visible walls and fences, as graffiti has become more concentrated on lamp posts and fire hydrants and further from public view. “The canvas for graffiti is shrinking,” commented Garcetti. “This is perhaps the most important aspect of UNTAG’s success. As graffiti becomes less visible, neighbors feel like their streets belong to them.”

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UNTAG utilizes a network of community members who take responsibility for reporting tags to graffiti removal crews. Garcetti has recruited 533 active “block captains” who work to quickly report tags, simultaneously discouraging taggers and reducing their ability to intimidate communities.

Furthermore, Garcetti has continued to find funding for the installation of cameras at graffiti “hot spots.” This gives police 24-hour access to areas that are chronically tagged, and allows them to quickly respond to any incidents. Such technology has successfully abated frequent instances of tagging at Lake Street Park, locations along the Vermont Corridor, and businesses along Hollywood Boulevard.

The graffiti count was performed annually by Garcetti’s staff since July of 2004, using a consistent methodology to tally the number of tags in the district. The first count yielded 20,763 tags, as opposed to the 9,419 tags counted this year for a drop of 55%.

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