

**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**ORDINANCE** 127349

**COUNCIL BILL** 121109

AN ORDINANCE relating to graffiti nuisance enforcement; transferring authority to enforce the City's graffiti nuisance code from the Director of Seattle Public Utilities to the Superintendent of the Department of Parks and Recreation; and amending Section 10.07.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, in April 1996, the City Council passed Ordinance 118082, which required the removal of graffiti in order to protect the public health, safety and welfare, declaring that property may become a nuisance owing to the failure of responsible parties to remove graffiti after having been requested to do so by the City, establishing a process for voluntary or involuntary clean-up of graffiti and the recovery of public clean-up expenses, creating civil remedies, and adding a new chapter to Title 10 of the Seattle Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 118082 established that the Director of the City's solid waste utility be provided the responsibility to investigate potential graffiti nuisance property and enforce graffiti nuisance code; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City experienced a significant increase in the number of reported graffiti tagging on public and private property; and

WHEREAS, in March 2021, the City launched the Clean City initiative, which combined a suite of enhanced and expanded cleaning efforts by Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Public Utilities, and the Seattle Department of Transportation, including graffiti removal to help mitigate the increase in tagging during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, by the end of 2021, the reports of graffiti had increased by 50 percent since 2019, with 19,700 reports in 2021 up from 13,000 reports in 2019; and

1 WHEREAS, in October 2022, Mayor Harrell announced his One Seattle Graffiti Plan to address  
2 this surge of graffiti through six major pillars; and

3 WHEREAS, one of the six major pillars in the One Seattle Graffiti Plan is to improve the cost  
4 efficiency of the City’s response by combining resources available city-wide for graffiti  
5 abatement and related enforcement efforts; and

6 WHEREAS, Seattle Parks and Recreation is one of the largest graffiti abating departments in the  
7 City; and

8 WHEREAS, the 2025 Adopted Budget, enacted by Ordinance 127156, transferred graffiti  
9 abatement staff and budget from Seattle Public Utilities to Seattle Parks and Recreation,  
10 including the Graffiti Rangers, a dedicated team responsible for inspection, assessments,  
11 and graffiti abatement across various city assets; and

12 WHEREAS, the 2026 Proposed Budget proposes to transfer one graffiti nuisance code  
13 enforcement position and remaining labor and non-labor budget related to graffiti  
14 nuisance enforcement from Seattle Public Utilities to Seattle Parks and Recreation, and  
15 adds a second graffiti nuisance code enforcement position to Seattle Parks and  
16 Recreation, which effectuates the consolidation of the City’s major graffiti nuisance  
17 intake, dispatch, compliance, and enforcement to one department; and

18 WHEREAS, transferring the authority to enforce the graffiti nuisance code from Seattle Public  
19 Utilities to Seattle Parks and Recreation will permit the City to administer graffiti  
20 nuisance response in a cost-effective and timely manner; NOW, THEREFORE,

21 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

22 Section 1. Section 10.07.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance  
23 127250, is amended as follows:

1 **10.07.010 Definitions**

2 \* \* \*

3 B. "Director" means the (~~Director of the Seattle Public Utilities~~) Superintendent of the  
4 Department of Parks and Recreation or (~~his or her~~) the Director's designee.

5 \* \* \*

6 Section 2. This ordinance does not affect any existing right acquired or liability or  
7 obligation incurred under the sections amended in this ordinance or under any rule or order  
8 adopted under those sections, nor does it affect any proceeding instituted under those sections.

1 Section 3. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code  
2 Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

3 Passed by the City Council the 21st day of November, 2025,  
4 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 21st day of  
5 November, 2025.

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7 President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

8  Approved /  returned unsigned /  vetoed this 24th day of November, 2025.

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10 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

11 Filed by me this 24th day of November, 2025.

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13 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

14 (Seal)