



**A Presentation to City of St. Catharines Public Meeting
Regarding Graffiti Management Provisions**

Prepared by the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce

December 1, 2008

Good Evening Mayor McMullan, City Councillors, and members of city staff. As you know my name is Steve Cook and I am the President of the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce and Vice President of Operations at Credit Bureau Services Canada, I am joined by Walter Sendzik the Chamber’s Executive Vice President and General Manager as well as the Chamber’s Policy Coordinator Kithio Mwanzia.

We are here to provide comment on the Legal Services Department report on the city’s Graffiti Removal Strategy, and its recommendations to Council.

With the Ontario government’s Places to Grow Plan, which identifies downtown St. Catharines as a centre of urban intensification, a developing partnership between Brock University and the city that will create a downtown campus for the School’s Fine and Performing Arts and a potential influx of tourists based on a proposed wine route on St. Paul St., it is the Chamber’s opinion that managing graffiti as an important component of the aesthetic of our city is extremely important. Graffiti Management has been an issue that has been an ongoing concern for the Chamber. It is why we are pleased to be here this evening to endorse the City of St. Catharines identified graffiti management strategy.

The Chamber has worked closely with city committees, staff and councillors to bring this strategy to a point where the business community can receive significant value. We applaud the city for the proposed Graffiti Removal Assistance Program. Businesses are currently facing raising costs in a number

of areas of operation. This program will help in keeping their business graffiti free while managing costs. Similarly, establishing a dedicated graffiti removal staff, a graffiti hotline and hosting a website with deterrent information are positive steps towards successfully tackling the graffiti issue in St. Catharines.

As a Chamber with over 1100 business representing 28,000 employees, we are pleased to see that we can successful work on public policy matters that are of importance to our members and produce mutually beneficial results. While this strategy is an important first step, we cannot be complacent, moving forward the City of St. Catharines must set reasonable benchmarks for the elimination of graffiti with the view of constantly working towards a graffiti free city. Removal policies only address a part of the overall graffiti issue. We encourage the city to continue to work with community organizations and provincial legal agencies to pursue additional means into which to reduce graffiti

The Chamber is committed to continuing to work with City Council and Staff – and we appreciate the opportunity to provide input into an issue of importance to a number of our members.

Thank you.