

# Flatiron/23rd St. BID makes a clean sweep

By Maciej Wroblewski

Streets are looking a lot cleaner around the Flatiron district these days, thanks to the hard work of cleanup crews put into action by the Flatiron/23 Street Partnership Business Improvement District (BID).

Launched on November 1, the BID's Clean Streets program is staffed by a crew of 13 Clean Team members who canvass the neighborhood seven days a week, securing an average of 400 bags of litter each day. Since the start of the

program, the team has also removed an estimated 90 percent of bills and stickers that had covered lampposts, mailboxes, building facades, public telephones and other fixtures in the district.

Furthermore, with the help of a specialized power washing equipment that scrubs sidewalks and removes graffiti in areas throughout the district one night each week, Clean Team members have removed graffiti from over 70 locations and repainted approximately 30 mail —

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Members of Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District's Clean Team at work on 23rd Street

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boxes, 35 lampposts, 20 alarm box stands and 24 security gates.

"The Clean Team has done an outstanding job in these first two months," said Scott Kimmins, the Partnership's director of operations who coordinates the Clean Streets program. "We are very pleased by what has been accomplished and by the impact that the Partnership's Clean Streets program has had on this area in such a short period of time."

The Clean Team is comprised of 11 cleaners and two working supervisors who are divided into two shifts. The first shift starts work at 7 a.m. and is broken into seven zones that concentrate on 23rd Street and the Avenues. The second shift begins at 11 a.m. and is responsible for the side streets.

The performance of street cleaning crews is constantly evaluated, as is the cleanliness of the streets, and scheduling and deployment adjustments are made accordingly.

"Scott walks every blockface

in the BID district on a daily basis, Monday through Friday, and I walk the district at least once each weekend making notes on deficiencies and suggested improvements," explained the Partnership's Deputy Director Timothy S. Cohen.

Cleaning efforts also rely on a program called ComNET, Computerized Neighborhood Environment Tracking, which was initially used to record graffiti, sanitation and other street-level conditions in the district in order to document neighborhood conditions, determine priorities, and assess the results of the Clean Streets program. A follow-up survey later this year will assess a broader range of conditions and help to evaluate the efficacy of Clean Streets.

The BID also receives on a regular basis a street and sidewalk cleanliness Scorecard report from the mayor's Office of Operations.

"We are currently addressing the many years of graffiti that have built up on lampposts, mailboxes,

buildings, security gates and other fixtures throughout the district," Cohen told T&V.

"Once we have established a baseline level of cleanliness, we will move to a maintenance program with new instances of graffiti quickly removed. Our goal is a one hundred percent graffiti free district."

Kimmins explained that a relatively new form of graffiti by means of acid etched markers as well as "scratchitti" that permanently defaces glass is rearing its ugly head in the neighborhood and they are actively approaching BID merchants, retailers and commercial property owners about this problem and what they can to protect their glass fronts.

Despite this new form of van-

dalism, clean up efforts have been helped by the unusually warm weather and the results have exceeded initial expectations. The west side of the district, from 21st to 28th Streets and from 5th to 6th Avenues has been virtually purged of stickers and graffiti and every mailbox and lamppost in the area has been repainted.

To complement clean up efforts, 24 new custom BID-branded litter receptacles will be placed on street corners mostly along 23rd Street.

In the months ahead, the Partnership is planning to launch a public safety program with uniformed safety officers patrolling the district. To find out more about BID programs, visit [www.discoverflatiron.org](http://www.discoverflatiron.org).