

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at [NCsupport@lacity.org](mailto:NCsupport@lacity.org).

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

#### Contact Information

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(19) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(2) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 08/10/2022

Type of NC Board Action: Against

#### Impact Information

Date: 08/12/2022

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 20-1536

Agenda Date: 08/10/2022

Item Number: 8

Summary: The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council opposes the actions pertaining to Council File CF 20-1536. The Neighborhood Council is very concerned about the safety/related liability and aesthetic impacts of digital advertising screens in bus shelters. Studies have shown that changing digital ad screens are particularly dangerous as they are designed to distract drivers and results in harm to traffic safety. We adamantly oppose provisions for cell phone tracking in the bus shelter plan which potentially violates European Union [EU] regulations that include fines even when applied outside the EU. This data can be shared with the contractor for ad targeting, and we have no assurance that the data will be safely kept by the City of Los Angeles.

**Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC)**  
**Community Impact Statement (CIS) for Council File 20-1536**

**Summary:** Pertaining to Council File [CF 20-1536](#) for the Sidewalk and Transit Amenities Program (STAP). The Board of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center-Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) voted to **not support** the proposed actions in [CF 20-1536](#) for the substantive reasons stated below:

Board Vote: Yes 19                      No 0                      Abstain 0                      Ineligible 2

Board of Public Works/City Council,

The Neighborhood Council has concerns about the proposed Sidewalk and Transit Amenities Program [STAP] plan as we feel the Program does not align with what is best for our community. We must **oppose** the pending STAP program until our concerns are satisfactorily addressed. Please see our concerns and questions below:

**Safety of Digital Advertising**

Illuminated digital screens, like televisions or smart phones, can be hugely distracting to drivers, especially if the ads are being changed every 8 seconds, as proposed. Advertising is created to be distracting and catch eyes, but that’s potentially deadly when someone is in a car passing by a bus stop. These ads will likely exacerbate the problem of driver distraction. Pedestrian fatalities are already a serious problem across Los Angeles– 2021 saw more pedestrian fatalities than any other year, with 294 dying according to the LAPD. Among the leading causes of motor vehicle accidents, driver distraction accounts for 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near crashes, according to a study released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA] and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute [VTII]. In 2010 alone, distracted driving claimed the lives of 5,474 people and injured another 448,000. A study by the Swedish Transport Authority found that digital billboards cause longer glance and dwell time, but it was inconclusive on the effects of driver safety.

**Information Safety and Location Tracking**

Generally digital ads track the cell phone data from those nearby in order to “retarget” them with additional advertising later. Information on a user’s location, although anonymized, is often sold on to 3rd parties so that other advertisers can target locally. Advertising targeting can also gain information about a person’s age, gender, income, and more. The current Program offers no assurance that this data will not be shared with outside partners.

Planet Money interviewed the CEO (O’Brien) of a digital billboard advertising agency who shared this information on why digital OOH (out-of-home) advertising is so popular. He said if you go up to the third floor of a mall, they might know from your Google searches that you've

been looking for shoes. They can then command the billboard on that floor to say shoes are 20% off at Macy's. O'Brien says, don't worry - most of the data is anonymized, unless you've opted in to share your data, which sometimes just happens when you click agree on some terms and services agreement. At that point, he can track you and target ads at you very personally. O'Brien is very excited about this. He says it leads to much more relevant ads. But me [the host of Planet Money] - not so much.

There are possible fiscal consequences for LA due to fines. Since Los Angeles is a popular destination for tourists, it's worth noting that this practice violates European Union's [EU] GDPR, which applies to EU citizens when outside the EU: <https://gdpr.eu/companies-outside-of-europe/>.

### **Revenue Funds**

Past revenue from programs like the expiring street furniture program has been inadequate to serve our community's needs. The share of gained revenue was miniscule compared to invaded privacy and the public visual nuisance created. How will the funding and profits from this Program help meet the needs of Woodland Hills-Warner Center and other Los Angeles communities in a meaningful manner?

It is unclear whether these funds will be used to improve the infrastructure at bus stops, assure existing stops are ADA accessible, and fix streetscapes. All of these would help our neighborhood, especially shaded bus stops in the excessive heat of the Valley. If bus stops are getting additional funding to install digital advertising, improvements should also be made to the stop itself and ease of passenger use.

At minimum, we request that the funding estimates for the bus shelter program be made available prior to the contract being introduced to the Board of Public Works and Los Angeles City Council.

FURTHERMORE, the WHWCNC notifies the City Clerk, the City Council President, Councilmember Blumenfield, the Board of Public Works, and Councilmembers of the Public Works Committee of the NC Board's position to **oppose** the current actions being considered.