



October 27, 2020

RE: **Council File: 00-1073-S1** Street Furniture Contract

Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee
Chair Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember Joe Busciano
Councilmember John Lee
Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell
Councilmember David Ryu

Chair Blumenfield and Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee:

With the Outfront / JCDecaux bus shelter contract expiring in 2021, we have the ability to reimagine what we can provide to communities of color across the city.

The Outfront / JCDecaux contract only provided 663 bus shelters in 19 years, falling way short of 1,285 new bus shelters and 900 replacement bus shelters promised in the first 10 years of the contract. One of the well documented reasons why it was so difficult to obtain bus shelters was because of the 16 step approval process to install every single bus shelter. Another reason why the contract was not a success was because bus shelters' primary purpose was not to provide shade or comfort to someone waiting for the bus, but to act as a City revenue stream for advertising. This caused bus shelters to be primarily installed in wealthier neighborhoods, and the bus shelters have only raised \$78.5 million dollars in 19 years.

At Investing in Place, we are pushing for the new street furniture contract to prioritize people over profits. There is talk among city departments about prioritizing advertisements in wake of the upcoming Superbowl, College Football Championship, World Cup, and Olympic Games in Los Angeles. With the failure of this previous contract to provide a significant revenue stream, we fear that a similar

one will yield similar results - overpromising on new bus shelters and failing to deliver for the community.

Instead, Investing in Place is calling for a program that makes it easier to install bus stops, public toilets, and amenities that the community wants. The city needs a program that goes beyond this contract to provide safety, shade and dignity in our public space for all, especially those riding the bus.

Asks:

- 1. Street furniture contracts must prioritize the Angelenos who have to live with the outcomes of the City's decisions.** For two decades, transit riders in Los Angeles have suffered from a street furniture contract that overpromised and underdelivered. As the city prepares to enter into a new multiyear contract, it is imperative that the needs of people walking and riding the bus be considered paramount in the design, placement, and maintenance of street furniture assets.
- 2. Decouple provision of new bus shelters and public toilets from expectations of revenue generation.** The last 20 years have shown that street furniture is not an effective revenue stream: Los Angeles received less than \$4 million per year on average from this program over the life of the contract. But treating street furniture as a revenue generator can hinder or fully derail efforts to make the City's public right-of-ways better, safer, and more inviting spaces.
- 3. Prioritize placing bus shelters and other street furniture along Metro's Tier 1 and Tier 2 routes in the NextGen network.** Bus shelters are an integral part of the transit network. The City should not be asking its street furniture to reinvent the wheel when they can instead focus on the plan which Metro is currently implementing to bring a frequent all-day bus network to the City's busiest transit corridors. The City should direct its contractor to begin by installing new shelters along these routes in order to facilitate the development of a world-class transit network on city streets.
- 4. Return any revenue from commercialization of the public right-of-way to communities in need.** The revenues from the previous street furniture contract were split between the General Fund - where they were a drop in the ocean - and independent accounts maintained by Council District Offices. The City should instead utilize existing definitions of High Need Communities in programs such as Vision Zero and Safe Routes to School to provide funding back into communities impacted by unsafe public spaces. These monies should benefit our communities and help to make them more accessible than they have been in the past.

5. Councilmembers will always be able to provide input on projects in the districts they are elected to represent. **However, Councilmember feedback on shelter sites must be timely and not come at the expense of a comprehensive, citywide program that shelters transit riders.** Councilmember feedback should be structured with clear lines of communication between Council Office and City Departments, and it should be limited to 30 days from when shelter sites are proposed. If no feedback is received in those 30 days, the shelter site is deemed approved and City Departments and the vendor are permitted to move forward with installation.
6. **Set minimums, not maximums, for bus shelter installation.** Los Angeles needs bus shelters badly. As the City continues to warm due to climate change, the waiting environments on our streets have already become dangerous. In contrast to the last contract, this time the City should look to get as many new bus shelters installed as possible, even above the coverage of 75% of riders that StreetsLA has targeted. To accomplish this language should be tailored to set minimum benchmark progress with defined penalties for failing to meet the marks. Incentives should be provided using City dollars earmarked for transportation purposes for the contractor to exceed these minimums in every benchmark period.

Sincerely,

Laura Raymond
Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles

Jessica Meaney
Investing in Place

John Yi
Los Angeles Walks

Maryann Aguirre
People for Mobility Justice

Carter Rubin
NRDC

Attachment: [Investing in Place Street Furniture Contract Timeline](#)

- CC: Board of Public Works
- Greg Good, President
 - Aura Garcia, Vice President
 - Dr. Michael R. Davis, President Pro-Tem

- Jessica M. Caloza
- M. Teresa Villegas

Barbara Romero, Deputy Mayor of City Services

Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager, Bureau of Street Services/Streets LA