

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Mr Rod Baxter
Urban Design and Projects
ACT Planning and Land Authority
PO Box 1908
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Baxter

Draft Public Transport Street Furniture Guidelines & Draft Bus and Taxi Shelter Signage Master Plan

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation process on the discussion paper – "Draft Public Transport Street Furniture Guidelines & Draft Bus and Taxi Shelter Signage Master Plan".

The discussion paper correctly identifies that the advertisements to be placed in new bus and taxi shelters in the ACT will help reduce the costs of supplying these shelters, both in terms of their capital cost and possibly also in maintaining them. This presumption is made in regard to the advertising income not being part of consolidated revenue but held exclusively for bus shelter construction and maintenance. The paper also correctly states that these shelters are in widespread use both in Australia and overseas.

Personal observations by members of the WCCC are that where these shelters are in use in other cities around Australia, they are well maintained and that the advertising itself is attractive with better design than is common for most outdoor advertising. However, these observations are against a background of widespread outdoor advertising which varies a lot in quality and which is a constant feature in other Australian cities. There is no doubt that most outdoor advertising is visual pollution which does little to add to the attractiveness of built surroundings.

These conditions do not apply in Canberra because there is a general prohibition on outdoor advertising except on the sides of ACTION buses, at the rear of taxis and within the confines of shopping centres. Even in shopping centres, our restrictions appear to be more severe than those that apply in most other communities outside of the ACT.

The WCCC's comments are made in the belief that Weston Creek will be little affected by the proposed introduction of advertising in bus and taxi shelters mainly because it is unlikely that they will be introduced in great numbers within our district, except to replace damaged and out-dated bus shelters. In Weston Creek we are fortunate that our most commercial district is screened from surrounding houses and roads by trees. This means that advertising in the commercial centre cannot easily be seen from private residences or our major traffic routes.

With this background we have some concern that the proposal to introduce advertising on bus and taxi shelters might be a "backdoor" way of introducing outdoor advertising into Canberra in places where it doesn't exist now and where it will not be welcome. Having allowed it on bus and taxi shelters it might be harder to control and manage other fixed locations or on other fixed structures.

Should advertising be introduced, the WCCC believes that it should be confined to within the shelter itself. That is, where the advertisement is to be placed on the wall of the shelter on the departure side, it will only be clearly visible to persons within the shelter and to passengers in any vehicle stopped at the shelter. The advertisement should not be clearly visible to passing traffic, as this could potentially cause a traffic hazard by distracting motorists. The advertisement also should not be clearly visible to residents living nearby. The WCCC recognises these limitations may not be acceptable to the advertisers who may want exposure to passing traffic on the road.

The WCCC also believes that any advertisements introduced into bus and taxi shelters should be 'passive' advertisements (ie no neon and particularly no moving neon signs).

However, an advantage of allowing advertising is that graffiti is considerably reduced, not only because advertisers are keen to prosecute people defacing advertisements, but also because they have an incentive to clean off graffiti to make sure that the advertising message is not obscured. This will help offset maintenance costs of bus and taxi shelters. This assumes that the advertisers will manage graffiti – not ACTION.

The WCCC again expresses its appreciation at being given an opportunity to comment on the discussion paper.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Jeff Carl
Chairperson, Weston Creek Community Council