



Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children

June 3, 2013.

Dear City of Toronto Councillor,

RE: Toronto Street Furniture Program- Agreement Modifications and Staff Report

The City of Toronto's General Manager of Transportation Services submitted a report to City Council's Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on March 21, 2013 that recommends amending the Street Furniture Agreement with Astral Media. If approved, Astral Media will implement "creative advertising" on transit shelters. We believe that the proposed amendment will have an adverse impact on the safety of transit users across the City.

As you may already know, METRAC with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and the Toronto Police Services carried out an extensive safety audit of the subway system and selected surface bus routes in 1988. In 1989, METRAC presented the *Moving Forward- Making Transit Safer for Women* report to the TTC with 63 recommendations and 86 guidelines for future construction of the transit system. Guidelines A-42, A-71 and A-73 each stipulate that transit shelters must be built using materials that are transparent from the top to the bottom to allow for natural surveillance into and out of shelters. These shelters are now standard across the Greater Toronto Area as well as in other municipalities around Canada and the world. The City and TTC have been leaders in ensuring the safety of public transit users and we believe leadership on this issue must continue.

The present request from Astral Media to wrap transit shelters in opaque advertising that will cover both the ceilings and up to 50% of shelters is not acceptable. This will place TTC users at considerable risk for theft, sexual and physical assaults and harassment. Transit users, TTC operators, pedestrians and drivers will not have a clear view into and out of shelters that are wrapped with this type of advertising. Please find attached a brief backgrounder that explains the rationale for fully transparent transit shelters.

We urge you to vote against the motion to amend the City's Street Furniture Agreement with Astral Media to allow for creative advertising on transit shelters. At a minimum, please refer this matter back to the Public Works Committee for further study and public consultation. Do feel free to contact me with any questions or comments about this letter at safety@metrac.org or 416-392-3137.

Sincerely,

Michelle Davis
Safety Director
Encl: (3)

158 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5R 2T8
Phone 416-392-3135 | 416-392-3031 (TTY) | 1-877-558-5570
Fax 416-392-3136 | Email info@metrac.org
Website www.metrac.org | www.owjn.org