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Corporate Plan Output: City Design & Heritage Policy	

The purpose of this report is to progress a review of Council policy relating to advertising on bus shelters (see attached Appendix 1). The views of Community Boards have been sought and market research has been undertaken to gauge public opinion about the acceptability of bus shelters with advertising on arterial roads or main roads in residential areas. A summary of the findings is outlined in Appendix 2 (attached).

This report was submitted to the Environment Committee also.

BACKGROUND

The current policy on advertising on bus shelters was adopted in October 1994. Since then decisions about bus shelters with advertising have been made in accordance with the policy. To date 56 shelters have been supplied by Adshel (with whom the Council has entered into a contract). The location of these shelters is shown in Appendix 3 (attached).

A review of the policy is now being undertaken because there is an increasing demand for bus shelters. Research in connection with the preparation of the public passenger transport policy (adopted by both the City and Regional Council in June 1998), identified that the lack of shelters at bus stops was a major concern to bus passengers.

As a result the City Council adopted a public transport policy, which included a commitment to provide between 30 to 80 new shelters each year, until sufficient shelters have been provided to meet passenger needs. It is estimated that approximately 300 additional shelters are required for existing passenger usage. This commitment has been incorporated in the Asset Management Plan for passenger transport infrastructure.

There is currently no financial provision for the installation of bus shelters in the 1999/00 year and there are only very limited funds budgeted for the subsequent four years. If the Council's commitment to providing bus shelters is to be honoured unless additional funding is provided with future budgets it will therefore need to be by other means, such as through sponsorship, funding through advertising revenue, or providing the opportunity for Adshel to provide more shelters. Extension to Adshel's representation in the city is the likely option to achieve the Council's goal on passenger transport infrastructure provision. However, to achieve the goal change of policy would be required to permit shelters with advertising in more locations.

The cost of the Council itself providing a bus shelter is approximately \$12,000 plus a \$750 per annum maintenance cost. If however, a bus shelter includes an advertising panel, then they can be provided free of charge to the Council and are well maintained at no cost to the Council the service being funded through advertising revenue (the existing Adshel contract for 56 shelters gives a return of service equivalent to \$135,000 p.a.).

Until now, bus shelters with advertising have, with one or two exceptions, been confined to non-residential zones. Exceptions have been where there are non-residential uses, such as dairies along arterial roads in residential areas. It seems that we may be reaching a point where all the suitable sites in non-residential areas, where there is a need for a bus shelter have been exhausted. Furthermore with the advent of the Orbiter bus route there is likely to be more demand for shelters within residential areas. The problem that then arises is one of locating further shelters **with advertising** in residential areas. Advertising in residential areas is a sensitive issue.

ISSUES

City Plan Policy

The City Plan restricts advertising in residential areas and confines it largely to commercial areas. Advertising is only allowed in a living zone where it does not detract from amenity values. Advertising must be related to the site on which it is situated and there are maximum size limits. For a living zone this is 0.2m² for sites fronting a local road, 0.5m² for other roads and 1.0m² in a few special circumstances. Advertisement panels on bus shelters are 1.5m² and are not site related.

Because bus shelters are located on legal road they fall within a City Plan road zone rather than a living zone. This distinction is a technical one and in reality the road is an integral part of a residential area. The control of advertising on bus shelters is by means of bylaws. It would be expected that the Council would adopt similar procedures and standards as required for private individuals in relation to advertising in residential areas. Each proposal for a bus shelter with an advertising panel should therefore be assessed as if it were a resource consent application.

Content of Advertising Panels

The advertising panel on a bus shelter is similar to an advertising hoarding. There is some concern as to whether every advertisement on bus shelter panels will be appropriate in residential areas. There is however, a clause in the existing Adshel contract (see Appendix 4 attached). Adshel's performance in this area is of very high standard and the very few complaints that have been received have been promptly attended to.

Assessing Need for a Bus Shelter

Currently the demand for a bus shelter is determined by the number of passengers catching the bus from that stop and the likely length of wait. The minimum number per week is 70, (although in practice the threshold tends to be around 120) and the wait time 30 minutes or more. It may well be that the passenger threshold is too low. Also, alternative criteria such as the degree of exposure to wind and rain of the bus stop, the number of elderly people catching the bus, whether or not there is a night time service, whether it is an interchange point, might be used to determine the need for a shelter. It might also be that the main requirement is for a seat rather than a shelter.

These issues lead to a number of questions that need to be debated as follows:

- Should there be a general presumption against bus shelters with advertising in residential areas?
- How can amenity values be balanced with the functional value of a bus shelter?
- Should the amenity assessment of a proposal for a bus shelter with advertising be similar to a resource consent application for advertising by a private concern?
- Should more controls be placed over the advertising material that is contained in bus shelter panels?
- Should criteria be drawn up which more effectively assesses the need for a bus shelter?
- Is there a limit to the number of bus shelters with advertising which should or can be provided in any given area, i.e. is there likely to be a saturation point?

- Recommendation:** 1. That in view of the high degree of public support for shelters with advertising, the following revised policy be adopted, and that the existing restrictions in the Adshel contract be confirmed:

“Revised Policy on Advertising on Bus Shelters

The policy for advertising on bus shelters is as follows:

Advertising on bus shelters is permitted on any road subject to the conditions below:

- (a) *That a panel be appointed to hear objections, pursuant to Section 339 of the Local Government Act, and to approve all bus shelters whilst ensuring their compliance with the amenity values of the City Plan.*
- (b) *That the following be assessment matters for the panel's guidance:*
- (i) *Preferred locations should be:*
- *outside non-residential activities and/or*
 - *against high walls/fences, vegetation, embankments/hillsides, as far as practicable*
- (ii) *The cumulative effect of advertising on bus shelters should not impact significantly on the overall amenity and coherence of residential areas.*
- (iii) *The established need for shelters in the area concerned.”*
2. That the panel be Councillor Thompson, the City Streets Manager, and the Environmental Policy and Planning Manager.