

4. BUS SHELTERS

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress with the installation of Adshel (advertising) bus shelters, and to provide information on the prioritising and programming of all bus shelter installations.

BACKGROUND

At present there are 275 bus shelters installed at the city's 2,150 bus stops. 71 of these are advertising shelters installed and maintained by the Adshel company at no cost to the Council. The balance of the shelters are owned and maintained by the City Council. In addition to this there are approximately 250 seats installed at bus stops.

The Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy, approved by the Council and Regional Council in 1998 set a target of installing 30 new shelters in 98/99 and 30 – 80 per year starting in 99/00. 59 new shelters have been installed since August 1998 with 25 of these being Adshel advertising shelters. (Many of the non advertising shelters were installed in the square and its surrounds as part of the Cathedral Square redevelopment.) At the time the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy was approved it was generally agreed that about 500 shelters were needed to provide an appropriate level of service to meet the strategy's goals.

In the current financial year the Council has budgeted \$125,000 for the installation of new bus shelters. This is sufficient for 12 shelters. At the time the budget was prepared it was anticipated that a further 30 plus shelters would be installed by Adshel.

The 2000 annual bus user survey, which interviews a statistical sample of 500 bus passengers, indicated that Bus Shelter availability rated very poor or poor with over 50% of the respondents. The survey provides a clear message that more shelters are required and that they should be of high quality.

POLICY ON SHELTERS WITH ADVERTISING

In November 1999 the Council revised its policy on bus shelters with advertising. This came about as a result of difficulties between City Streets Unit and Environmental Policy and Planning Unit agreeing upon what constituted a suitable location, and in recognition of the high degree of public support for shelters with advertising. This policy provides guidance with respect to where advertising shelters can be located. A copy of the policy is [attached](#).

In summary the policy allows for advertising shelters to be located in business zones and in all other areas a panel of staff (one each from City Streets and EPPU) is required to assess the suitability of locations, and be in agreement. Preferred locations (except in business zones) should be:

- Outside non-residential activities and/or
- Against high walls/fences, vegetation, embankments/hillsides, as far as practicable

The cumulative effect of advertising on bus shelters should not impact significantly on the overall amenity and coherence of the residential area (or in practice anything not in a business area). Much of the disagreement stems from this matter.

In practice the City Streets Unit provides a list of locations where it would like to see an advertising shelter installed. The site is visited by two staff one from City Streets and the other from EPPU. Both must agree on the acceptability of the site according to the policy guidelines.

To date some 146 sites have been considered under the policy and 80 have been approved- 52 by EPPU and 28 by being located in a business zone and therefore not requiring EPPU approval. These numbers are skewed as many very desirable shelter sites that are clearly outside the policy interpretations have not been submitted for approval. Sites that have not been approved include outside: parks, reserves, road reserve, community facilities, schools, commercial activities, rural areas and residential properties. Many of these sites are situated on arterial roads.

At present there are 65 sites approved for advertising shelters where a shelter is yet to be installed. Of these, Adshel have confirmed that 40 are suitable, 20 are borderline and 5 are unsuitable. Adshel plan to install shelters at 30 of these sites this calendar year.

In the view of City Streets staff it is unlikely that many more suitable advertising sites will be approved, unless there are changes in the manner the policy is interpreted and administered by EPPU.

ADSHEL

Agreement for the installation of advertising shelters was initially with 3M and was signed in 22/2/94. Adshel bought out 3M in 1998 and the Council agreed to assigning the contract to Adshel. The contract is for 15 years with a right of renewal for a further 15 years. Under the agreement Adshel install and maintain the shelters. They arrange all the advertising and the Council receives a payment of 10% of the advertising revenue at each site, which increases to 15% in February 2004. The payment in the 1999/00 year was approximately \$30,000.

The shelters are well maintained, well lit and well presented by Adshel. There have been very few complaints of poor maintenance. They are cleaned weekly in comparison to the Council shelters which are cleaned monthly or by special request. To ensure the advertising is appropriate, its content is governed by the Advertising Standards Authority.

Overall they have provided the Council with a very good service. Adshel's General Manager Mr Len van der Haast who was in Christchurch two weeks ago indicated that they are prepared to install 30 – 50 advertising shelters in Christchurch in the 2000/01 year provided sufficient suitable sites are available. He also indicated that Adshel envisaged 150-200 advertising shelters as an upper limit to the total number they would install in Christchurch given the current level of demand for advertising.

SHELTER SITE SELECTION

Requests for shelters come from a variety of sources: public, CCC, Environment Canterbury, bus operators, Councillors, Board members, and a result of proactive planning. Each site is investigated and the following criteria are used to assist in the prioritisation process. The same criteria are used for all shelters.

- 120+ passengers per week.
- transfer point between services
- sites where the provision of a shelter is anticipated to make a significant improvement in bus patronage (proactive planning).
- Type of people using the stop- eg. Elderly, disabled, children, those who have a heavy reliance on public transport, tourists.
- Exposure of the site to the elements.
- Proximity to schools, hospitals, public facilities, attractions etc.

Once sites have been assessed they are grouped into 4 categories. Current examples of the type of stop within each list is as follows:

Priority one: Palms Suburban Interchange
Eastgate Suburban Interchange
Peripheral Terminus Locations- Central City

Priority two: Interchange Locations
Major attractions such as shopping malls and community facilities

Priority three: High Demand Suburban stops/Large Potential Catchment Area
Moderate attractions
Schools

Priority four: Moderate demand stops/Moderate Potential Catchment Area
Minor Attractions.

Sites which do not rate highly (category four) are often referred to the seat list as an appropriate measure of addressing the particular situation given a lack of shelter resources.

Once the sites have been grouped in priority categories, each request is investigated as to whether an Adshel shelter is a possibility, and if not the site request will require to be addressed by a Council shelter.

PROGRESS

While there has been minimal progress with new bus shelters over the last financial year due to no budget allocation, a significant effort has gone into the new bus exchange at the crossing. At the same time Environment Canterbury has continued the ongoing process of reviewing bus routes. In many cases the route changes have required new bus stops and these will need to be monitored to check passenger numbers before shelters are installed. Some shelters, including advertising shelters, are having to be relocated as part of the route review.

ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIERS

Other companies have approached the Council with proposals for installing advertising bus shelters under a similar arrangement to Adshel. Few details are available about these companies but it would appear that the majority have been advertising focussed with minimal of any track record in bus shelter design, installation or maintenance.

The advantage of using another company is that it could allow for more shelters to be installed more rapidly, provided sites were available. The disadvantages are that we end up with differing bus shelter styles and a lack of consistency, and also a possible drop in advertising standards, currently set highly by Adshel. It is possible that it may also result in reducing the overall revenue the Council receives. There would also be the question as to how sites would be allocated to different companies.

The agreement with Adshel appears not to prohibit the Council from entering into an agreement with other suppliers. However Adshel may not agree with this interpretation under the terms of the existing contract.

SHELTER STYLES

Adshel can provide a number of different shelter styles and two of these have been used in Christchurch. The 'Classic' shelter has been used on the shuttle route and 'Metro' shelter on all other routes.

The City Council shelters come in a variety of shapes, sizes and ages, but all new shelters will be to the design agreed to with Environment Canterbury. It is a transparent design with grey trim and green roof. A programme of refurbishment and repainting the older shelters is to commence this year.

DISCUSSION

While the policy for installing advertising shelters initially created some frustration for City Streets staff there is now a good working relationship between EPPU and City Streets. There are currently 40 sites approved for Adshel to install shelters that Adshel considers suitable. Once these are installed there will be a total of 111 Adshel shelters. However, this is still 40 – 90 sites short of the maximum number Adshel considers they could support given the anticipated demand for advertising. As mentioned earlier in the report it is unlikely that there will be many more advertising shelter sites approved without a change in the policy or at least a change in the way the policy is being administered by EPPU. It may be possible to obtain a further 10 – 20 sites under the current policy (given that it has only been in operation for 8 months) but to obtain 80 more sites would require a significant change. Of particular concern is the inability to site advertising shelters on significant lengths of the main arterial roads which carry most of the bus routes. These busy roads are also the preferred sites from an advertising perspective, as this is where there is maximum exposure.

If Adshel installs say 175 shelters this would leave the Council to install a further 125 shelters to achieve the total 500 shelters across the city.

It is possible that another supplier of advertising shelters would be prepared to install more shelters on top of the numbers Adshel considers the market can support. This would require a considerable change in the advertising shelter policy to provide sufficient sites to make it worthwhile. It would also create a more difficult climate for working with Adshel and they may hold installation of shelters in anticipation of even better advertising sites becoming available. Introducing another supplier also raises issues of consistency in shelter standards, maintenance of advertising standards, and allocation of sites. One of the reasons we have had a good acceptance of advertising shelters is due to the high quality of the shelters, maintenance and advertising on the Adshel shelters. This is because Adshel are an international company with a reputation and research background aimed at providing top quality. It is unlikely that a local company could meet the same standards, particularly in relation to the shelter maintenance and the advertising content. If the advertising shelters get a bad name then Adshel may also find it more difficult to sell the advertising with a consequential loss of revenue for them and the Council. Introducing another supplier does not appear to be a sensible approach if we are aiming to install shelters as quickly as possible.

Adshel have indicated that in other cities they are providing shelters without the advertising on the bus shelter but on other street furniture specifically designed for advertising and located in an areas where a bus shelter is not required (ie a pedestrian mall).

Another possibility for funding shelters is the bus companies. The more passengers they carry the better they do so there is an incentive for them to provide shelters which help to attract passengers. For a bus company to get maximum benefit from installing a shelter they would need to be installed at the start of the 5 yearly contracts. This should be explored with the successful tenderers for the recently tendered North Eastern routes.

If the Council were to proceed with the installation themselves then it would be reasonable to spread the work over a number of years. Installing 25 shelters a year for 5 years from July 2001 would cost \$250,000 a year. This is twice the amount provided for in the current years annual plan.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Committee establish a bus stops and shelters subcommittee of three Councillors, namely the Chairman, Councillors Stonhill, and Thompson, to make recommendations to the Committee on bus stops and bus shelters issues as they arise.
 2. That the subcommittee identify the 500 bus stops in Christchurch ('Target 500') which have the highest priority for shelters in accordance with the criteria described in the report.
 3. That the subcommittee develop an action plan to recommend to the Committee to achieve Target 500 within the three years period commencing 1 September 2000 ('the target period') based on the following process:
 - (a) Agreement with Adshel on the maximum number of additional advertising shelters it will install and maintain under the existing contract, within the target period.
 - (b) The determination, via a contestable process, of the number of advertising shelters achievable by agreement with other commercial contractors (in locations not covered by the Adshel agreement under (a) within the target period, followed by implementation contracts.
 - (c) Advice and recommendations to the Committee, for planning and budget purposes, of the gap between Target 500 and the total number of shelters achievable under 3(a) and 3(b), and how the gap should be closed within the target period using council budgets and other means.

4. That the Council's policy on bus shelter advertising be amended by:
 - (a) Permitting the installation of advertising bus shelters on all arterial and collector roads in both commercial and residential areas where the property owner concerned agrees.
 - (b) Approvals being delegated to the bus stops and shelters subcommittee on advice from appropriate city streets and EPPU staff
 - (c) Requiring, in recognition of the high degree of public support for advertising bus shelters, an even balance in choosing locations for them, between residential amenity values and the needs of the public passenger transport system.
 - (d) Policy administration by the City Services Committee.