

## Communication from Public

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**Comments for Public Posting:** There can be no logical way to explain why the new street furniture program was not designed to include a minimum number of public toilets. The City has been receiving automated toilets at no charge since the current street furniture program began. Who and how was it decided that public toilets would no longer be a part of the program? Who and how was it decided that public toilets should become a General Fund expense? And, finally, how can the Public Works Committee and Public Works Commission consider funding the public toilets without a competitive bidding process? This entire situation reminds us all that the RFP for the STAP Program was released without public input and proper vetting. Instead, it appears that the program may have been designed with certain outcomes in mind. We have been told that the City deserves a "world class" street furniture program. Yet, there has been nothing presented to demonstrate that the program will be providing shade and shelter to riders on even half the current number of current bus stops! (And there will be more transit stops coming on line during the 10 or 20 year contract being awarded which means that a smaller proportion of stops will eventually have shelters.) The Council is now being asked to approve an expensive temporary public toilet program. IF the City is now assuming responsibility for a public toilet program, it would likely be wise to have an open and transparent discussion about the needs for automated public toilets beyond the 14 units now under consideration. There are NO public toilet facilities available to transit riders along any of METRO's transit lines. This is a major problem for riders traveling with young children, for the elderly and for those making long trips. The City should be working with METRO to implement a public toilet program in strategic locations accessible to riders. Any procurement of toilets in conjunction with STAP should be done to provide the toilets in support of our major transit routes and their users as well. The current street furniture contract has been extended for a year. There are very adequate toilets in place now. There is no reason to rush a procurement without bids, without contemplation of community needs, without a transparent discussion as to the short and long-term costs and where those costs will be taken from. Will these costs be charged against the proceeds from the advertising funds from the transit shelters under STAP? Has the

cost of the toilets been subtracted from projected expected earnings so that an honest calculation of expected earnings has been made? The STAP Program is mired in problems. The toilet issue is but a symptom of the larger failures to date since the RFP was written and issued without any community or neighborhood council input. We have waited 20 years for the current contract to expire. We were promised a "world class" replacement program. Thus far we have not been impressed. Questions raised at the StreetsLA so-called outreach meetings were never answered. While staff tout the many outreach sessions that they had, if they failed to honestly describe the program and instead used the Mitigated Negative Declaration document to suddenly introduce (and sneak through) major aspects of the program that were never presented, then they have failed and this program should not go forward. At none of the meetings I attended was there ever any mention of introducing a new LAMC that would allow for an undescribed and undefined number of advertising structures to be allowed to be installed on the public right-of-way. Not only is it unacceptable to introduce major program alterations in a Mitigated Negative Declaration, but the concept of opening up the public right-of-way to advertising severely compromises the City's ability to defend its hard-won court-validated authority to regulate signage. In addition, to proceed with the program as conveyed to date, the City would be in conflict with both its Mobility 2035 plan and the General Plan. While the public toilet program has grabbed the current attention of the Council, it is frustrating that concerns raised as to the public safety dangers introduced with digital signage on transit shelters have been completely and entirely ignored. How can it be that the Council is ignoring the introduction of a proven driver distraction onto our streets at a time when Vision Zero's goals get further and further out of reach? Scientific studies have proven that drivers are distracted by changing advertising messages. Has a decision been made that generating additional advertising revenues warrants risking public safety, and specifically the safety of our most vulnerable street users--our pedestrians and bicyclists? Finally, I would like to remind Council that a program of STAP's scope must require a full EIR. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was inadequate for the proposed program. Is it time to start anew?