

BOB BLUMENFIELD

Councilmember, Third District

Sent via email: drgarfinkle@sbcglobal.net

December 2, 2020

RE: Your Feedback Regarding Digital Advertising at Bus Shelters

Dear David,

Thank you for contacting me about the Board of Public Works hearing for StreetsLA to present their item regarding digital advertising at bus shelters. I share your concerns that bright and distracting advertising can cause real problems for drivers and pedestrians. Like you, I want to minimize risks to public safety as well as ensure the data privacy of people passing by these shelters. Please know that I shared these and my other concerns with the Department of Public Work's general manager and requested further clarification about how they would mitigate public safety and data privacy risks.

This hearing is not the final step in the process, and I am committed that there will be continued opportunities for community engagement as the final details of the program are decided upon with full transparency. In fact, I introduced a motion in City Council that calls for transparency and public dialogue to make sure stakeholders like you are involved along the way. You may be pleased to know that the general manager of StreetsLA in the Department of Public Works, per the RFP's requirements, will host a public demo of the technology and installations for public interaction and feedback.

The next step of this RFP process will bring the issue to further discussion with my colleagues and the Department of Public Works to address issues such as the policies, protocols, and limitation of data collection, data ownership, and data privacy safeguards for devices installed in our bus shelters, City facilities, and the general public right-of-way. Although there are First Amendment protections on speech and by extension, advertising, we will also discuss appropriate place, time, and manner regulations for content in conjunction with advertising program oversight policies.

Before any RFP or contract is negotiated, I hope to incorporate more community involvement and deliberation. My goal is to enhance the public safety and mobility of our streets while preserving the natural beauty and characteristics you and I have come to enjoy and expect. I'm optimistic that we can achieve the potential of the proposed program, to better serve transit riders, pedestrians, and others without sacrificing the aesthetic qualities of our neighborhoods.

These are trying times, but we will get through them. Thank you for contacting me. Stay safe. Stay healthy. Take care.