



Written responses to STAP Technical Proposal - Follow up Questions posed in an email of dated March 30, 2021

*(The questions are repasted below in blue with our responses directly following).*

## 1. How do you propose distributing the 50 sunblades citywide?

- We will focus on locations that would otherwise not accommodate a classic bus shelter and will analyze site conditions such as the existence or not of coverage from sun exposure (*i.e.* the lack of trees or buildings) and the resulting heat index while also factoring the ridership, volume and community using the location (*i.e.* *underserved or not*), and other insightful/helpful quantifiable data providing full qualitative information about the location.
- We would engage with stakeholders that have additional criteria or information including, from the CM offices, Metro, LADOT, CBO's, mobility groups and transit activists, in order to best select sites that amplify local infrastructure investments and strategic city planning. The deployment could be in conjunction with existing bus shelters to create an expanded placemaking area, and create a mobility hub. This could be a way to test how the public would interact and react to this transit innovation.
- We see the 50 Sunshades Blades as a unique LA World Premiere deployment. A quick test to prove that shade solutions are being created, engineered, and proposed to work and solve the ongoing core mission of the STAP program to provide transit riders with "maximum Shade" as a health and equity issue. The ultimate goal is to deploy thousands of Sunshade Blades structures at bus stops (with or without bus shelters) in the City of LA and LA County to expand access to shade on the streetscape and provide an equitable service to benefit most, if not all, LA transit riders.
- The Sunshade Blades functions can be rapidly and easily extended to provide a variety of convenient amenities to transit riders at their new smart "Bus Stop Poles Sign". These could include seating, real time information, timetables, wayfinding, lighting, bus company sign identification as well as other technology.
- Rollout can be phased, beginning with a smaller pilot to survey, observe and engage with users and neighbors to understand their point of view regarding the new Sunshade Blade device. For example - How do they use it? What they would like to see added (or not)? After this pilot we would make a full recommendation to StreetsLA for next phase of deployment.



## 2. How do you plan on engaging with the community and council offices to build support for STAP?

- We have deep, extensive and genuine experience and built connections with the communities we have served and continue to serve. We are Angelenos ourselves, after all. In our extensive experience as a long-time LA business and as Angelenos, we have noted that there is limited interest and even skepticism in connection with large-scale citywide programs. There is a history of large-scale citywide programs that have often been delayed and heavily modified along the way.

Rightly, community groups, Neighborhood Councils, and local activists strongly believe that LA is “their” neighborhood. Communities are unique and require local solutions tailored just for them with ongoing input and flexibility (not addressed in a broad one-stroke plan).

- We propose to activate our relationships and work processes to address local needs, with local interactions on their terms, one neighborhood at a time (but concurrently address the 15 Council Districts). Our approach will be humble, concrete and precise with a feel that is custom made. The end result, however, will be substantial and impressive as we would meet the STAP’s mission of providing equity to all.
- When we do our community art activations, many people ask us to install more bus shelters and they give us the locations they need and that they desire. Our approach for the STAP would be simply to continue our existing dialogue with our communities sharing data and visions – as much as possible we would try to get the site selections from them rather than originate the plan ourselves or from City officials – thus a true grassroots approach.
- We believe that engaging with a few local CBOs to give an organized voice to transit riders in under serviced communities will help get the message across and rebalance the discussion toward transit service and equity which will expand the discussion beyond that which is managed by a demographic that has not or will not use public transit.
- Building early support for STAP is THE critical step to the overall success of the City’s program, which is limited to a 10-year term. Our plan will require a strong and large dedicated team and leadership vision to get it done in a true LA spirit, not a corporate or administrative way. It will require time, funding and authenticity but we know that we can get it done. We see our engagement process and community work as our main focus to building a team of collaborators, growing partnerships and trust, changing perspectives, and creating opportunities for co-creative, broader, long-term thinking,



testing ideas via pilots, all while engaging the main users of the systems proposed. Enhanced quality of life, the well-being of people, equity of service and creating mutually beneficial relationships/partnerships all lay the foundation of our engagement/outreach process.

### 3. Why are you proposing to advertise on only 764 of the 3,000 shelters? Would increasing that number increase program revenues?

- The RFP asked for a very precise number and locations of digital bus shelters, we added 100 static ad shelters to in order to provide opportunities for with static posters which address different sales demand than the digital screens (they are not mutually exclusive and will both benefit in tandem from the revenue goal). The City of LA has a long history of rejecting out-of-home advertising in neighborhoods. This is even more so with regard to the installation of digital screens. The core outcome of the City's program has always been in the service to transit riders, provided, maintained and managed at no cost to taxpayers. Reducing the number of advertising faces is a 'game changer'. It will permit us to generate higher levels of revenue at limited key selected locations, while also minimizing digital screens.
- It is possible that adding more static advertising panels and/or screens could increase revenue over time (dependent upon what else is in the market) but it would also increase capital investment (on a very short term agreement) and ongoing maintenance costs. Of course, the potential level of additional revenue will be directly linked to the location of the new ad faces. There is no question that digital advertising is valuable, however, as we noted in our proposal, there is a negative impact on price when supply increases. From a sales point of value, it is important to balance the availability of advertising, so that the displays do not become so commonplace that competition is reducing what can be charged for the display. If the City limits the proliferation of additional advertising faces on other out-of-home medium in LA, this will have a positive impact on sales revenue for this program resulting in increased revenue to the City. For this program, additional advertising is possible and would be effective if the City limits other digital media in the close proximity of our structures. Challenges do not come only from City-controlled programs; we are aware of Metro's grand plan to deploy a very large number of digital billboards in LA. These large digital billboards will impose additional strong competition in the market and the smaller digital size screen of the bus shelters will be disadvantaged as a media, and thus, for revenue generation, as compared with large digital billboards (which represented 77.5% of the entire 2020 US

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out of home revenue vs. 4.4% generated on street furniture media).<sup>1</sup> It is important to build in appropriate flexibility in the siting of the locations, in this manner, the program could test revenue sensitivity by using the existing advertising bus shelters in the early years of the agreement and adjust later, based on this real life experience.

#### 4. How can shelter design be modified in the future as new technologies and amenities become available?

- We have intentionally in our proposal designed the six collections of bus shelters as ‘kit of parts’ based on the needs of transit riders we spoke to over the years, our own transit experience, and what we observed at LA bus stops. We drew on our extensive experience worldwide for shelter design. The collections are modular, and can adapt, and live on their own. The designs were also conceived with internal space to provide for embedding future technology and amenities.
- We have adjusted existing bus shelters (and other infrastructure) in the past as new needs arose and to include smart amenities, integrating new elements/services in an elegant manner. It has been done here in Los Angeles and worldwide. It is a process we have studied, understand and have managed from end- to-end working with municipalities, technology providers, communities and third parties.
- We lead the market in street furniture technologies integration and innovating new transit and pedestrian amenities because we think of our streetscapes and the infrastructure, we provide a holistic approach that includes flexibility for the future. Having over 50 years of experience, we know that new concepts and new technologies will become attractive and we design our programs to anticipate changes and be ready to combine and incorporate new ideas to the safest and most efficient solutions.

#### 5. How do you plan to address/manage the public's perception related to equity when less than 1/3 of the 3000 shelters will have digital media display

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<sup>1</sup>Out of Home Advertising Association of America, *OOH by Format 2020 YE*, <https://oaaa.org/Portals/0/Public%20PDFs/Revenue%20Reporting/OOH%20by%20Format%20Pie%20Chart%20-%20YE%202020.pdf?ver=2021-03-04-211522-173>. The revenues in 2020 were skewed by the COVID-19 crisis, nonetheless, in 2019, street furniture generated 6.1% of the market while billboards were almost 64% of the industry revenues (an industry that only represented 3.8% of the overall media spend in 2019). Out of Home Advertising Association of America, *OOH Market Share*, 2019, <https://oaaa.org/AboutOOH/Factsamp;Figures/OOHMarketShare.aspx>.

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### panels associated with them and all of those will be reserved for high-revenue communities/locations only?

- The perception of equity is important, but more importantly the *actual equity* deliverable is about *outcome*. WHY bus shelters? HOW to deliver it? WHAT do you do with it? Is it a municipal advertising medium or a civic transit infrastructure? In LA we know for a fact that the reach and benefit of bus shelters is almost entirely provided to segment of the city's population that is in tremendous need of equitable, tangible solutions not just the public's perception related to equity. The quantity and locations of the digital media display panels were provided in the RFP and our proposal complied with the RFP requirements. The RFP and the entire STAP core program is focused on bus shelters service. We have never heard a community complain about the lack of advertising or lack of digital screens at their bus stops. And this is true for Council Offices (elected officials) and City staff as well as remarks we have heard first-hand from the community, activists, Council Offices, media, and transit agencies in general. In fact, LA Metro and smaller municipalities in many locations, including the Great Los Angeles area, have built non-advertising bus shelters for many years, providing the service but not the commercial experience, and they are proud of it.
- The high percentage of non-advertising bus shelters is a great opportunity for the City of LA to rollout the program in its entirety quickly with a substantial stakeholder "buy-in". If a few adjustments on siting needs to be done later (including increasing advertising) that is always an option.
- In our collective experience, equity can be achieved by seeking input and providing services / bus shelters that address user needs, promote public safety, tackle frequent concerns, and improve communities that may feel disenfranchised and unheard. This is a step we took when designing the six collections and the Sunshade Blade presented. We would welcome discussing how to incorporate additional digital amenities in bus shelters that we did not target for commercial digital advertising screens, should the City seek to provide additional digital amenities throughout the entire network to provide a communication network.

### 6. How will the City be able to display digital PSAs and community information in the less affluent communities that need them most (in multiple languages) without the added expense of print media?

- The existing PSA program works in the following manner: The City asks for a precise number of displays and selects the sites needed. We do not involve ourselves with the quantity or locations selected, we simply provide the free/available space.

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- Of course, more digital screens can also be added in quantity and locations selected by the City. It is a funding mechanism that needs to be discussed and agreed. Regardless of the final number of advertising faces installed, we have to be mindful that the STAP program will not meet 100% of our community as the City is vast with thousands and thousands of blocks (even 3000 locations would be a very small percentage of the entire City coverage).
- Moreover, there are significant considerations related to sustainability concerns in connection with increasing the digital footprint. Installing additional digital screens will increase power consumption and reduce the number of bus shelters powered by solar panels which will increase the City's program carbon impact. We have included 1,500 solar powered bus shelters in our proposal.
- It is correct that printed media comes with a cost, just as digital is costly to install, maintain and operate. The concession could require that the preferred vendor has to print a certain number of posters for the City in languages of the City choosing. Smaller screens and/or static posters could be also installed to reach transit riders. The Sunshade blade can also be another vehicle to display City's PSA and community messages, particularly if this less expensive solution is installed at thousands of locations throughout the bus stops of LA.
- We have displayed information at bus stops without the need of additional ad faces. We would be happy to discuss solutions with the City to be able to address this issue.

### **7. Without digital media panels in those less affluent/disadvantaged communities, how will the company(ies) plan to pursue advertising sales from local businesses and offer up local business advertising opportunities at affordable rates without the added costs of printed media?**

- We have had a strong local sales organization in place in LA for many years that generates significant local revenue, and we will expand under the new agreement. As a local business opportunity package, we provide design and printing capabilities.
- We've responded using the RFP number of digital screens and their locations selected by the City.
- We don't see the number of screens proposed as a roadblock to generating local ad revenue. Screens are expensive devices to build and maintain and require a sustainable revenue stream 12 month a year with multiple advertisers (small and large) not only a





local buyer on that block that might or might not buy advertising on them for a few weeks a year at affordable rates. Local advertisers want neighborhood- wide options in blocks surrounding their businesses not specifically one site.

- The ad footprint allowed under the City RFP provides great opportunities to maximize revenue within the boundaries of the LA OOH market at a very local level in each neighborhood. Our main competition remains other forms of OOH in the LA streetscape and other ad media (digital media -social media and web banners, Ad-words and still local print, broadcast).

**8. Where and how do the companies plan to install interactive digital media panels offered up in their proposals and again address the equity question, especially if such interactive panels are only being offered in very limited quantities? (saying that they will rely upon the City and/or coordinate the implementation with the City is not an acceptable answer.) We want to know what/how they propose to address such equity challenges and/or manage the public's perception of equity in the distribution of program services.**

- We would love to install interactive screens for transit riders at their bus stops. We can select high boarding count bus stops with wider sidewalks, shade and other amenities, with ADA access, possible access to land connection. We can integrate the screen into a bus shelter structure or as a free-standing unit in the bus zone to maximize convenient access. Another solution would be to secure permits to have these interactive kiosks in neighborhoods that have historically received lower levels of civic investment. We would involve CM offices, transit advocates and few local COB leaders in their community, similar to what we've done with the Shelter Blitz program and hydration station project.
- Interactive screens could be an important communication device regarding social services for our communities. For example, installing interactive screens in close proximity to areas with a larger number of our neighbors experiencing housing instability would be beneficial to them. In Skidrow installing next to other basic street level amenities would be an important way to communicate with Angelenos who do not have access to other infrastructure information. We see the interactive screen similar to our APT service, they need to be installed where the service is needed (from Skid Row, to transit stations, to local neighborhood parks). This product would not be included to generate revenue from advertisers but would be a service on the ground for users. Community groups and advocates for people who are homeless, as well as other city stakeholders, could help us pinpoint options.



- These interactive screens would also be useful to showcase our city at tourist and visitor locations, providing information about services and events to people visiting the area, such information would involve us working with various City Departments such as LA Tourism and Convention Board, Chamber of Commerce, BIDs, merchant associations, could include details about the Hollywood Walk of Fame, LA Live area, Venice beach, DTLA, LA Harbor etc.
- We see our initial proposal as a show case demonstration in an LA street level environment that should be expanded as needed.

**9. Can you explain your understanding of Site Rehabilitation costs included or not included in your proposal? Will this include reconstruction of sidewalk needed to accommodate accessible path from walkway to transit shelters and boarding area?**

- Our understanding of bus shelter site rehabilitation is exactly the process that has been done under the current program managed by StreetsLA. We would expect to remediate the site such that we are leaving it in good condition when we have to remove a bus shelter. With the installation of new bus shelters and other street furniture amenities, we assumed that we would work with the existing sidewalk conditions
- In our proposal we have included in our budget the requirement to install the concrete pad necessary for the new street furniture element. If additional heavy construction is required (for example, including but not limited to, modification of sidewalk slopes, curb height, entire bus zone length, curb ramps, tree well, driveways, underground utilities and vaults, building entrances, and taking into consideration existing sidewalk infrastructures, such as poles, fire hydrant, traffic control boxes.), it will require a complete engineering of each site and impose greatly on site construction. We understand the need to upgrade and move older sidewalks into compliance. It is, however, a requirement that will entail much time and effort to engineer and project manage each site. It will also require substantial investment – it is a multidecade investment and not a small site rehabilitation project that can be recouped under a 10-year franchise program. This requirement is in line with a long-term project similar to the Willits settlement. Done correctly, it is a municipal strategic long-term capital investment which we would love to participate in. Although the details are idiosyncratic site-upon-site, and thus the - investment is unknow-able, we do know that it is likely to be multiple times more than the total investment required under the STAP RFP. It is impossible for any professional organization to commit to such a plan without more detailed information and specific goals.