



01/18/2022

Kristopher Fortin, Project Director, Ward 5 resident
Santa Ana Active Streets
450 W Fourth St.
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Item 24. Approve an Agreement with Focus Media Group Focus Media Group, Inc. to Install, Repair, and Maintain Bus Stops/Shelters and Kiosks throughout the City, for a Ten-Year Term

Dear Members of the Santa Ana City Council and Mayor Vicente Sarmiento,

On behalf of the Santa Ana Active Streets coalition and its members, this letter is in regards to the City of Santa Ana's consideration to approve of an agreement with Focus Media Group to serve as the entity that is responsible for designing, installing, repairing, and maintaining Bus Stops/Shelters and Kiosks for the next ten years. The proposed initial ideas on behalf of Focus Media Group do not center those most vulnerable to public transportation's issues, including safety, accessibility, and comfort. **We ask the city council to vote no on this item.**

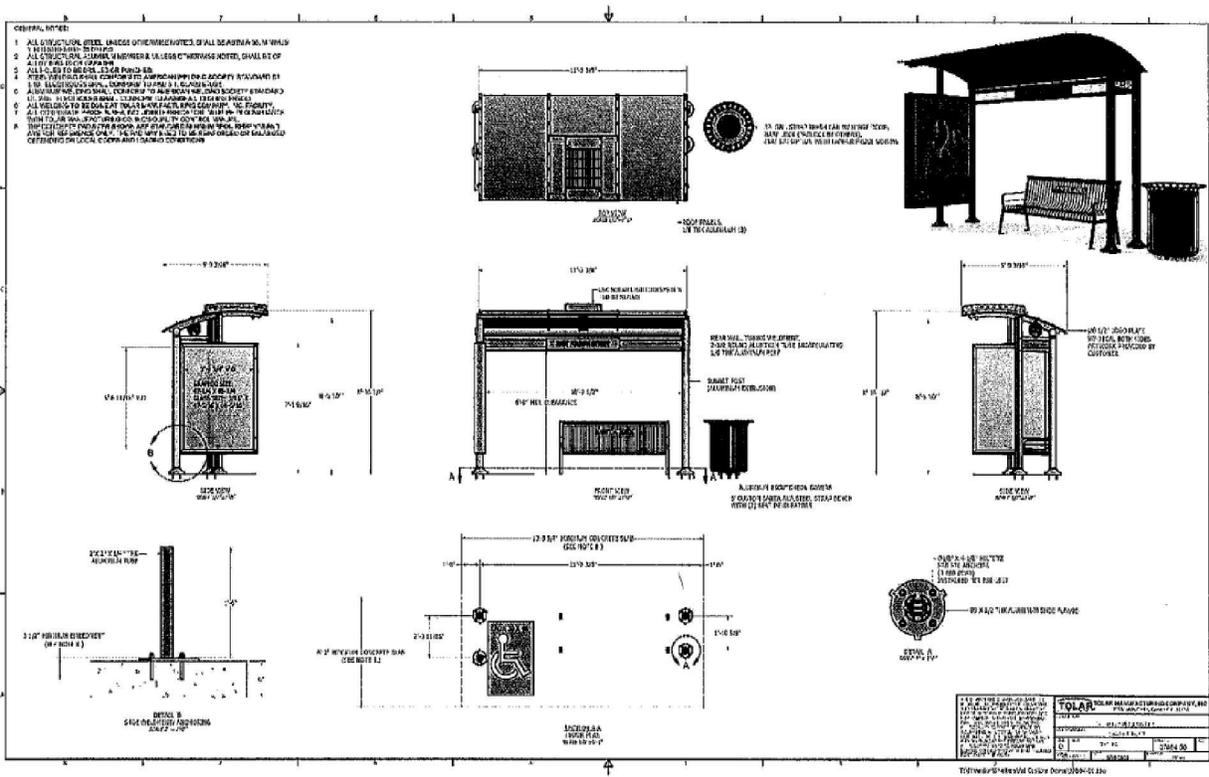
The City has installed new bus benches with armrests. While the installation of new bus benches would regularly be applauded, the inclusion of armrests within the seating area is hostile toward our houseless residents and restrictive toward our plus-sized community.



(Source: Juno Martin & Ethan Levy)



Armrests such as these are the selected design type under the proposed contract with Focus Media Group. This form of hostile architecture is common in public places that aim to create order and curb “unwanted” behavior in our community, such as loitering and sleeping. Yet, these measures are unnecessary and disproportionately target our most vulnerable community members. These armrests target those who have nowhere else to go warranting that they are unwanted. Public furniture should be designed to bring people together, but this is an act of policing public space. Hostile architecture may look like deterring use such as sleeping, but this is a false sense of credibility and distracts from addressing the real issues, specifically around providing safe, comfortable and accessible housing.



The proposed bench design places armrests within a bench that is also hostile to plus-sized individuals. Public transit is the people’s transit as it is paid for by taxpayers and is mainly used by some of our most vulnerable populations. Our public transit system doesn’t begin when we hop on a bus, but also how we arrive at a bus stop and where we sit or stand while waiting for it to arrive. The bench armrests as designed provide roughly one and a half feet of space per seat. This is insufficient space for individuals of larger body types.



The bus shelter as proposed is a standard type with shading, trash can and advertisement. Yet, a consistent concern at these shelters is how poorly lit they are. The poor lighting creates a safety issue for community members susceptible to harassment. Whatever proposal is accepted should include good visible lighting. Additionally, the advertisement panel makes the space within the shelter opaque and lessens a riders visibility around them if they are sitting in the bench area. In lieu of advertisement panels, it would help to have clear paneling without the advertisement blocking the view of the sidewalk/road.

The proposed shelter design is also a missed opportunity for aiding public transit riders during their travel. With more flexibility in the design, it would be great to see things like digital bus displays showing when buses would arrive, a call help box, and lean bars..

Additionally, the City's report does not include input from bus riders and the overall Santa Ana community. If bus riders were consulted, these and many other issues around safety and comfort could make bus shelters even better.

Sincerely,

Kristopher Fortin
Project Director

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Santa Ana Active Streets is a community-based coalition with the mission of cultivating diverse community participation in creating a safe and accessible environment for active transportation in Santa Ana. Formed in 2013, our vision is to empower residents to become engaged participants in the emerging active transportation movement in Santa Ana by hosting community events, partnering with local organizations, and working directly with city officials.