



For Immediate Release

April 23, 2007

"Street Furniture" flies in face of Climate Change plan

City of Toronto to double illuminated advertising

This morning the City of Toronto announced its intention to hand responsibility for a major chunk of civic infrastructure to billboard company Astral Media Outdoor. This "street furniture" contract would run through 2027.

The increased electricity usage flies in the face of Toronto's ambitions to become the greenest city in North America.

Under this plan, every square foot of advertising currently on a garbage bin or bench would be transferred to a bus shelter or an "information pillar," more than doubling the amount of illuminated, eye-level advertising that is perpendicular to the sidewalk and making a mockery of Toronto's environmental ambitions.

Shelters need illumination, but regular shelter lights (such as those used in shelters that don't have advertising) can be powered with solar energy; when ads need to be illuminated, however, the only option is to hook the shelters up to the grid. With "street furniture coordination" Toronto had the opportunity to not only decrease advertising but also to conserve massive amounts of energy – but instead the City wants to double the power being used solely to light up ads. The new program proposes 4652 more bus shelters ads' worth of lighting!

City Council is clearly more concerned with meeting the needs of an advertising company than conserving energy and fighting climate change.

Contacts: Jonathan Goldsbie • jonathan@publicspace.ca • 416-730-0805 (home)
Alison Gorbould • alison@publicspace.ca