

Communication from Public

Name: Charles Porter

Date Submitted: 05/18/2022 04:34 PM

Council File No: 21-0600-S110

Comments for Public Posting: Re: Council FILE No. 21-0600-S110 Dear Chairman Harris-Dawson, Vice-Chair Cedillo, and Honorable Councilmembers: On behalf of members of our Coalition and United Coalition East Prevention Project, I am writing to you to express our concerns Transportation Communication Network Program (TCN) currently being proposed. Since 1996, we have been serving the Skid Row and Boyle Heights communities of Los Angeles. Our primary tenet is to work closely with the community to transform environments and discourage alcohol and other drug-related problems. We have worked hard to promote an understanding of the link between the environment and health. One of the clearest manifestations of that link is the impact on health that occurs when a neighborhood is saturated with alcohol, drugs, and related advertisements. Ads distort youth perceptions of use, encourage uptake in use, and fuel disparities, especially since these industries have a long history of targeting low-income people of color. The proposed proliferation of digital displays through the Transportation Communication Network Program and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), allowing loosely defined off-site advertising to be erected on TCN structures is an urgent safety concern for our members. First and foremost, there are no clear standards on the types of products that will be allowed or prohibited to be advertised nor are there any mitigating measures outlined. This means that potentially harmful products such as tobacco, cannabis, and alcohol could be promoted. Research shows that there is a clear link between “exposure to alcohol marketing and drinking behavior in young people ... alcohol marketing among youth is linked to more underage youth drinking, in particular, binge drinking” (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, para 2, 2017). As you already know, over 20.4% of Los Angeles’ population is under the age of 18 (United States Census Bureau, 2021), and the TCN program has the potential to increase their exposure to pro-use messaging. Moreover, studies have shown that digital advertisements distract drivers and contribute to vehicular accidents. For example, a 2017 Florida study measuring billboard impacts on traffic found a 29% higher accident rate on highways near digital billboards. Additionally, a study published in April 2022 by the American Association for the Advancement of

Science on science.org, looked at several years of data from Texas to find that the number of vehicle crashes increased by an average of 4.5% in the 6.2 miles following signs displaying year-to-date road fatality statistics. Although these signs were meant to encourage safe driving, the research suggests that they have an opposite, distracting effect. “When you’re on the road, your eyes belong on the road. Signs that take your attention away from the road and break your concentration are going to cause distracted driving and accidents, no matter what message they’re trying to convey,” said Scenic America President Mark Falzone. “This study just adds to the body of research telling us that digital signs including billboards are traffic safety hazards that don’t belong on our roadways.” On behalf of our Coalition members, we urge the City to be part of the solution and put youth first by pro-actively prohibiting tobacco, cannabis, and alcohol-related advertisements on the TCN structures. There are alternative ways to create revenue without disregarding public health. Regards,
Charles Porter Prevention Director



UNITED COALITION EAST
PREVENTION PROJECT

May 18, 2022

Planning and Land Use Management Committee (PLUM)
CITY HALL
200 North Spring Street – Room 1010
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

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The proposed proliferation of digital displays through the Transportation Communication Network Program and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), allowing loosely defined off-site advertising to be erected on TCN structures is an urgent safety concern for our members. First and foremost, there are no clear standards on the types of products that will be allowed or prohibited to be advertised nor are there any mitigating measures outlined. This means that potentially harmful products such as tobacco, cannabis, and alcohol could be promoted. Research shows that there is a clear link between “exposure to alcohol marketing and drinking behavior in young people ... alcohol marketing among youth is linked to more underage youth drinking, in particular, binge drinking” (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, para 2, 2017). As you already know, over 20.4% of Los Angeles’ population is under the age of 18 (United States Census Bureau, 2021), and the TCN program has the potential to increase their exposure to pro-use messaging.

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On behalf of our Coalition members, we urge the City to be part of the solution and put youth first by pro-actively prohibiting tobacco, cannabis, and alcohol-related advertisements on the TCN structures. There are alternative ways to create revenue without disregarding public health.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Charles Porter', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Charles Porter