

More 9/11 'truther' ads to hit buses

Free Speech? City review of ad rules not about limiting free speech, Transit chair insists

TREVOR GREENWAY
ottawa@metronews.ca

Ottawa residents can expect to see more 9/11 "truther" ads splashed across the sides of OC Transpo buses, as the group behind the ReThink 9/11 campaign announced Wednesday that a second round of advertising will hit Ottawa buses

Quoted

"Should such an activity be blocked because some in our society are uncomfortable about the implications about this building being brought down by controlled demolition?"

Isabelle Beenan, Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth spokesperson

starting this December.

The city's Transit Commission is currently reviewing its advertising campaign policies after ads like the 9/11 Truth campaign and other controversial ads have raised questions about the appropriateness of advertisements on city property.

Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth spokesperson Isabelle Beenan (the group sponsoring the ads) told Ottawa city Transit Commission members that their ads are in line with the Canadian freedom of speech laws and stopping them would be a violation.

"The goal of rethink 9/11 is to make this information widely known by running advertisements in cities around the world, encouraging the public to look at evidence and decide for themselves," she said.

"Should such an activity be blocked because some in our society are uncomfortable about the implications about this building being brought down by controlled demolitions? The Canadian charter of rights and freedoms says, 'no.'"



A photoshopped picture of what the new ReThink 9/11 ads will look like. COURTESY RETHINK 9/11

She explained that the new ad campaign, beginning the first week of December, will feature a new question that will be printed on the back of a dozens of buses in Ottawa and hundreds of subway

cars in Toronto. The question: "Have you seen the video of World Trade Centre 7's collapse?"

Commission Chair Diane Deans said it wasn't just the 9/11 truth ads that raised

questions about the city's ad policies, but other campaigns, notably an atheist campaign in 2009. She said the campaign was designed for university-aged audiences, but other people saw them.

"One of the advertising standards points to age appropriateness for advertising on our buses and I just wondered how we determine the age appropriateness of an ad campaign like that," she said.

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Special constables preparing to ride OC Transpo buses, trains

In an effort to crack down on violence against OC Transpo bus drivers, train operators and riders, the City of Ottawa announced a new program that will put special constables on transit vehicles and platforms starting in January.

The new Walk and Ride program will take the patrolers out of their cars and onto OC Transpo buses, trains and at stations. It's all about visibility, says Transit Commission chair Diane Deans, in an effort to make using transit systems in Ottawa safer for everyone.

"There has been a disturbing rise in the number of driver assaults occurring on public transit across the country," she said during a Transit Commission meeting Wednesday. "Ottawa transit operators were not immune from these incidents." Deans noted that OC Transpo recorded 59 incidents of violence against drivers last year.

She said the program supports the implementation of



OC Transpo special constables Jim McIntyre and Sabina Majury are seen in 2008. METRO FILE

Bill C-533 and C-402, which will hand out stiffer penalties to individuals who attack transit workers.

"Our transit providers have a right to a safe work environment free from violence and harassment," she said.

"Ensuring the safety and security of our employees is a top priority for OC Transpo

and is integral to the business of providing a safe and reliable transit service for our customers."

OC Transpo general manager John Manconi said the Walk & Ride program is part of the transit company's 10-point safety plan, which the city rolled out earlier this summer.

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO