

# Ads on Parking Meters: An Idea Whose Time Has Expired

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Marilynn K. Yee/The New York Times

Ads on bus shelters? No problem. Taxis? O.K., especially if it means up-to-the-minute sports scores. But hawking wares on parking meters, it would appear, took things a bit too far.

A yearlong pilot project to do just that on the Upper West and East Sides ground to a halt two weeks ago, and the city's Department of Transportation has decided to stop the project completely. The ad space was available on 500 meters, and could have raised up to \$90,000 for the city, but results were disappointing.

By contrast, the city plans to replace more than 300 sidewalk newsstands with new kiosks, which it hopes will display ad-

vertising worth millions to the city. Of the 250 available meters on the West Side, for example, about 150 had ads up, including some for an Off Broadway play and another for a real estate firm, according to David Hazan, founder of Snap Marketing, the company that had the contract.

"The sales were a bit sluggish," said Tom Cocola, a Department of Transportation spokesman. "Maybe that's due to the post-9/11 world." The city ended up making about \$50,000, he said.

Some local residents on both sides of Central Park also opposed what they regarded as more unnecessary visual clutter.

"Sidewalks are really where the whole

theater of street life takes place, and to have it invaded like that, it was really amazing," said Kate Wood, executive director of Landmark West!, a West Side preservation group. "You couldn't look at it and but think, 'What next?'"

Councilwoman Gale A. Brewer, who represents the Upper West Side and had written the department voicing disapproval, was pleased by the decision. "When you walk down the street, you need to be away from the constant barrage," she said. "I think it was a bad idea, and the commissioner realized it."

The demise of the program was no surprise to Andrew Albert, co-chairman of

Community Board 7's transportation committee. "A lot of them have been sitting empty for months and months," he said of the meters. "It's not a place your eyes normally go."

Chip Fisher, the president of Park Place media, which sold the ads on the East Side, said the pilot was too limited geographically. Mr. Hazan, of the marketing agency, agreed, saying the ads did generate interest, especially from advertisers who wanted to place ads in other parts of the city. "The length of the pilot and the geographical size of the pilot were not big enough to really tell how feasible it was." Mr. Hazan said.

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