



Panhandling Education Campaign July 2008

Campaign Objectives:

- Develop a campaign that will:
 - Educate the public and encourage them to rethink giving directly to panhandlers
 - Provide and publicize alternative giving mechanisms
 - Increase awareness of Santa Monica's existing services
- Ultimately, we hope to see that:
 - Panhandling in Santa Monica becomes less lucrative
 - Fewer people panhandle in Santa Monica

Phase 1 Overview:

- In February 2008, the City and GMMB began **Phase 1**, aimed at **planning the public education campaign**. To date it has consisted of:
 - **Research** on what other cities are doing in their efforts
 - Extensive interviews and **meetings with stakeholders** (business, faith, neighborhoods, service providers, etc.)
 - **Intercept survey** among residents and visitors
 - Message and **creative development**
 - **Focus groups** with residents and non-residents
 - Research into **alternative giving** mechanisms
 - Exploration of possible **advertising vehicles** on City property
 - Continually seeking **buy-in and in-kind support** from stakeholders
- Still yet to be completed in **Phase 1** are:
 - **Additional focus groups** among Santa Monica residents and visitors to finalize creative
 - **Finalized advertising creative** for paid and in-kind placement
 - Delivery of an **alternative giving plan**
 - Delivery of a **campaign strategy and rollout plan**

Phase 2 Overview:

- Between July 2008 and June 2009 **Phase 2** will be implemented, thus **taking the campaign public**. Key components of Phase 2 are:
 - **Benchmark research** conducted in association with RAND to gauge our starting point for future comparison after the campaign has launched
 - **Production** and photography for a series of print ads to run around Santa Monica
 - A launch **press conference** to announce the start of the panhandling education campaign
 - Ads on the sides of the **Big Blue Bus**, provided largely in-kind
 - The production and implementation of an **alternative giving mechanism**
 - A basic campaign **web site**
 - A small **media buy** to distribute campaign messages
 - **In-kind placement** of the ads, posters and campaign brochures by stakeholders

Highlighting Compassion:

- In response to any questions regarding compassion (i.e. Is the campaign being adequately compassionate?):
 - We share concerns that a campaign aimed at reducing giving to panhandlers may not be compassionate, and may therefore reflect negatively on the City. This concern has shaped the development of the campaign. It is one of our central beliefs that we must highlight compassion wherever possible. In encouraging the public to rethink giving directly to panhandlers, our goal is to help them understand that the reason not to give is because it's actually more compassionate not to give directly. We also want to raise awareness about all that the City and community do to help the homeless population, and have this campaign reflect positively the City, not negatively. We are a compassionate place, and the campaign must reflect that.

Frequently Asked Questions:

i. **How do we know your strategies are going to work?**

1. We have committed an extraordinary level of effort toward hearing from all of the campaign's potential targets — City residents, City visitors, tourists from across the country, and even international tourists — as well as from all of the campaign's potential stakeholders and supporters, in planning this effort. With the insights we have received, we believe that the campaign messages will be effective. And to ensure that we are not just guessing about the campaign's impact, we will conduct comprehensive campaign evaluation to gauge success or failure. Starting with benchmark research conducted in association with RAND, and including additional crime metrics

and results from resident and visitor surveys, we will constantly monitor the response to the campaign and its results.

ii. Whom have you talked to during this process?

1. We have talked to a long list of individuals and organizations throughout this process, in its formative stage and as we have progressed. The business community, including Bayside, the CVB and the Chamber, have been active in this campaign throughout its existence and have been supportive of our efforts. We believe that the business community will be key in providing in-kind placement of our campaign messages to reach their patrons — City residents, visitors, workers, and tourists.

Some of the communities we have spoken to include:

1. Business (Bayside, Chamber, CVB, etc.)
2. Social service providers (including Westside Shelter & Hunger Coalition)
3. Police and Fire Departments
4. Faith leaders
5. City residents / neighborhood associations
6. Hospitals
7. Homeless individuals
8. Members of City Council

iii. What are other cities doing? Why reinvent the wheel?

1. *(Please see the complete listing of other cities' programs below.)* Numerous other cities are conducting campaigns to encourage the public not to give directly to panhandlers, but we believe that our approach is necessary for two important reasons: 1. None of the other communities undertaking similar programs is quite like Santa Monica — we are a compassionate community who does not want that idea of compassion to get lost in the shuffle, and 2. None of the other cities have conducted formative research as extensive as what we are undertaking, and so they don't really know whether their messages and ads are or were the right way to proceed. They have not tested their messages to see whether they would be effective, nor to gauge how the ads would change perceptions of the cities running them. These are all things we are taking into consideration, and the campaign will be better for it. Our goal is to reduce panhandling while also building awareness about all that this community does for panhandlers and the homeless.

Other cities' programs:

Denver

- "Give change to make change" program
- Based campaign messages on market research conducted in Calgary
- Campaign targets residents and workers, not tourists

- Large brochure and collateral material component of the campaign to educate locals about the harm done by direct giving to panhandlers
- Scope of Denver's panhandling and homelessness problems are much smaller than Santa Monica's
- Red parking meters generated \$15,000 in first year; business sponsorships generated additional \$100,000 (local businesses adopt a meter for \$1,000)
- Currently have 86 meters
- Collections go to Mile High United Way

San Francisco

- "Be a part of change. Don't give change."
- No formative or message testing research in campaign development
- Campaign directly ties panhandling into master plan to address homelessness
- Will use 10 bright orange meters to raise funds; meters not yet placed

Portland

- "Real change, not spare change" program, sponsored by the Business Alliance
- 10 parking meters around downtown area collect change
- Raised \$10,000 since inception a few years ago
- Vouchers are also available at limited locations for \$.25 that can be exchanged by a panhandler for food, bus fare, etc.

Baltimore

- "Make a change" program is oldest of parking meter collections programs, launched in late 2006
- Nine green parking meters located in Inner Harbor area, where most visitors congregate
- Raised less than \$5,000 in last year

Calgary

- "Give spare change to agencies instead of panhandlers" program sponsored by Calgary Downtown Association
- Ads are very edgy, depicting a person engaging in harmful behavior like intravenous drug use, with headlines like "Your generosity is killing me," and "Your sympathy keeps me on the streets"

Montreal

- 34 meters installed in 2007
- Proceeds from the revamped meters benefit *L'itinéraire*, a nonprofit organization started by a group of former drug addicts and homeless people in 1990. *L'itinéraire* is now known mainly for helping the homeless reintegrate into society and publishes a magazine and runs a cafe for homeless people.

Chattanooga, TN

- "Art of Change" program
- 13 meters installed in November 2007
- Two meters stolen, remaining had to be reinforced

Tempe, AZ

- Tempe Chamber of Commerce installed 11 meters in May 2008 along Mill Avenue
- Tempe Community Council distributes money locally

Ottawa

- Six “Kindness Meters” installed around ByWard Market in December 2007
- The City of Ottawa collects and distributes funds

Seattle

- “Giving Meters” flopped after homeless advocates said they were really intended to drive out the homeless

Minneapolis and St. Louis, have also recently begun parking meter collection programs

Overall, parking meter programs have not been particularly lucrative in raising funds for homeless services; however, early evaluation suggests that some cities have seen a decrease in panhandling.