

Washington County Transportation Authority Advertising Policy

Purpose:

The Washington County Transportation Authority dba Freedom Transit (Authority) recognizes that opportunities exist to generate revenue for its services through the sale of advertisements on transit vehicles. This policy provides guidelines and standards for the sale or lease of advertising space on the vehicles, shelters and/or other property and is intended to be objective, enforceable, and consistently applied.

Policy:

The following advertising guidelines have been developed based upon input from the public. A survey of riders and the general public has concluded that the guidelines represent commercial content, in a non-public forum, that fairly represents offensive and/or acceptable speech on transit vehicles and in transit amenities. Periodically, additional surveys will take place to ensure the Authority is properly understanding what types of speech are offensive and may lead to service disruption, violence, or altercations. The agency understands that advertising is not necessary for public transit vehicles as the Transit Agency's main purpose is the transportation of its customers. Therefore, the speech that may be included in advertisement is not a traditional public forum and appropriate rules for such speech are included below. Any of the following regulations are intended to regulate content as opposed to any particular viewpoint.

1. All advertising shall comply with the spirit of all applicable laws and regulations of the various jurisdictions in which it is displayed unless the inconsistencies among the various jurisdictions prevents such compliance. Advertising will not be accepted that is false, misleading or deceptive. Generally, advertisements will be considered when selling a product or service with the limitations outlined in this policy.
2. Advertisers promoting contests shall insure the contest is being conducted with fairness to all entrants and complies with all applicable laws and regulations.
3. Testimonials should be authentic and shall honestly reflect the response of the person making them. (The sales contract shall provide for the indemnification of the Authority against action by any person quoted or referred to in any advertisement placed in the Authority's system).
4. Medical and health-related messages will be accepted only from government health organizations, or by other advertisers if the substance of the message is currently accepted by the American Medical Association and/or the Food and Drug Administration.
5. Advertisers shall avoid illustrations or references which disregard normal safety precautions.
6. Advertising offering premiums or gifts shall avoid representations which would enlarge the value of the item in the minds of the viewers.
7. Use of graphics or representations in advertising is subject to approval by The Authority and shall fit within these guidelines.

8. No implied or declared endorsement of any product or service or message by the Authority is permitted.
9. Advertisements regarding issue oriented matters intended to influence members of the public or influence public policy regarding an issue on which there are varying opinions are prohibited. Such an example of issue oriented advertisements may include, but not limited to, a particular position for or against a particular gender ideology or initiative.

A distinction may be made by the Authority for making advertisement determinations, under this particular section, based upon whether a product is endorsed as opposed to simply an ideology.

10. The advertisement of weapons or advocacy for or against any weapons, or advertising that glamorizes or otherwise promotes violence is prohibited.
11. Advertisements of tobacco and/or alcohol products are prohibited. Further, the advertisement of drugs that are prohibited by Federal Law are prohibited.
12. Advertisements that support or oppose any political party or candidate for office of any kind are prohibited.
13. Advertisements that promote or oppose any religion, religious practice or belief are prohibited. For purpose of this section, religion shall mean any language, imagery or symbols showing a belief in or reverence for a God or deity.
14. Advertisements that discriminate or encourage discrimination against people based on personal attributes such as race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, disability, and/or medical or genetic condition are prohibited.
15. Advertisements that glamorize or otherwise promote sexual conduct are prohibited.

Unauthorized Postings:

No advertisements, postings, or other materials which have not been approved and/or purchased shall be permitted on any vehicle, shelter, and/or other property and shall be subject to immediate removal and destruction without notice.

The Authority reserves the right to amend these guidelines and standards and may, at any time, declare a complete or partial ban on any or all advertising.

***Adopted by WCTA Board of Directors
October 1, 2024***