

Madison's Central Business Improvement District Formalization of "Streatery Program"

March 2022



Madison's Central BID (BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT) supports efforts to formalize the "Streatery Program."

Created as a temporary response to COVID 19, these efforts to expand outdoor dining were essential to the survival of many of our downtown businesses. We appreciate the creativity and flexibility the city has shown during this time. This collaborative effort across city departments was unprecedented.

We all recognize that the past two years have changed the way the public engages and uses public spaces; formalization of these temporary emergency programs is vital to the economic success and the future of our downtown.

The BID Board of Directors voted at their March 3 meeting to support the forthcoming legislation while also hoping to call attention to areas that may need further review.

Items of note include:

- Storage and Amenities
 - Downtown businesses have extremely limited indoor storage space. Outdoor cafe items in other areas of the city do not have to come in and out every evening. Requiring businesses in the BID to do so adds a burden on those businesses that will make it more difficult, costly, and potentially impossible for participation in the program.
 - At the hour furniture needs to be carried into businesses, most have few employees left working. Those working may not have the physical capability to carry furniture and are at risk of injury. The quality of furniture used will have to be less to make it very lightweight, which can be problematic when windy and less attractive on the street.
 - We understand the area needs to be cleaned and snow removed. We believe with our help there are solutions to address that need and ease the burden on our small businesses and make this program as equitable as it is elsewhere in the city. Mall maintenance can schedule cleaning of specific areas, snow removal can be required as part of any approval and there are fines that can be enforced for any violations.
- Language and Process surrounding lateral expansion
 - The City of Madison should consider the perspective of the applicant and the property owners and what is in the best interest for the city. The BID was created to represent the interest of the downtown property owners. They are concerned about how the language regarding the use of public space in front of properties comes together. In general, property owners agree that an active cafe/sidewalk space is better than a vacant one. They also recognize the value cafe space brings to the downtown and to their properties.
 - **The BID supports language that requires approval of adjacent property and business owners.** We believe the best policy would be one that creates a plan to both keep the space active when the property is vacant yet would encourage new businesses to move into the district, into those vacant spaces, with the best opportunity to succeed.
- Tents, Umbrellas and Awnings
 - These items enhance and add special ambiance to the environment. We would ask for increased options and flexibility in providing these coverings for outdoor spaces, including consideration for sponsored materials.

We know there will be more work to come, more details to fine tune and more success to celebrate as we work together on this for the future.

We believe this legislation is a huge win for the city, reflective of an exceptional communal effort and an essential program for the revival of our city.

A vibrant, welcoming downtown is vital for our future.

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Madison's Central Business Improvement District represents more than 270 properties servicing more than 500 1st floor level retail, restaurant, entertainment, and services businesses. Madison's Central BID works to increase the vitality and health of the district and promote business within it. Visit downtownmadison.com