



## Madison's Central Business Improvement District (BID)

### MEMO

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Date: September 6, 2012

To: Members of the Transit & Parking Commission

From: Mary Carbine, Executive Director  
Madison's Central Business Improvement District (BID)  
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Re: BID Board position on Taxis on State Street

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Dear Members of the Transit and Parking Commission:

The BID strongly supports again allowing taxis to provide "street hail" service on State Street at night for the safety and convenience of downtown visitors and residents.

The Board of Madison's Central Business Improvement District (BID) supports the ALTERNATE (*Amending Sections 12.915(8)(a) and (b) and Section 11.06(3)(r) of the Madison General Ordinances to prohibit taxicabs waiting for passengers on State Street and permits them to provide service on State Street between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.*) **with the following recommended change:** that the hours of permitted service to prospective fares on State Street (by either calling a dispatcher or hailing a cab) be between **7:00 pm** and 4:00 am.

The Board also supports the DCC position that the existence, location and hours of the current cabstands in Madison be reevaluated with input from downtown stakeholders and taxicab industry representatives.

BID Board members, business and property owners have direct knowledge of State Street, its users and traffic patterns. As a visitor services provider assisting more than 45,000 people per year, the BID has expertise in downtown visitor needs and experience. We have not received any complaints about taxis operating on State St., but we do receive complaints about not being able to find or hail a cab.

Visitors and residents expect to be able to hail a cab on the main street of a downtown shopping, dining and entertainment center of a city of our size. That one cannot hail a cab in Madison is frustrating for visitors (business and leisure) and residents. It is not self-evident to local or out-of-town visitors to State St. that they must call for cab service, what numbers to call, where to wait, or where cab stands are.

Visitors and residents value safety and convenience, especially at night. People may walk or take the bus to downtown to shop, dine or go out. On the way back they want the safety and convenience of direct transport, even if to just a few blocks away. In addition, people who drive downtown and have had something to drink often prefer to take a cab home. Thus, we recommend that the hours of permitted service start at 7:00 pm (as previously allowed by ordinance since 2001).

We recommend the taxi stands be re-evaluated with appropriate input from the industry and downtown stakeholders. Taxi stands can work in some locations (e.g., on Gilman & State), but they need to be sited carefully. The new taxi stands were implemented without public or industry input, do not seem to be used, and took away loading zones or parking spaces important to merchants and customers after 6pm.

As the 2008-09 city pilot of taxi stands demonstrated, downtown taxi stands in high demand areas at night did not work well, even when staffed. We have heard repeatedly from police that large crowds on State Street and University Ave. around bar time are a problem from a safety standpoint, and that it's best to keep people moving to their next destination rather than congregating together competing for resources (e.g., at a taxi stand).