



Traffic Engineering Division

David C. Dryer, City Traffic Engineer and Parking Manager

Madison Municipal Building
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
P.O. Box 2986
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2986
(Phone) 608 266 4761
(FAX) 608 267-1158

– REVISED –

Date: May 10, 2013
To: Transit and Parking Commission Members
From: David Dryer, City Traffic Engineer and Parking Manager
Subject: 2013-2015 Taxicab Operator License Renewals

OVERVIEW

The following taxicab companies applied to renew their operator licenses: Affiliated Carriage Systems, Inc. DBA Madison Taxi; Badger Bus Lines, Badger Cab Co., Inc.; Green Cab of Madison, Incorporated; Transit Solutions, Inc.; Union Cab of Madison Cooperative, Inc. There are no new taxicab operator license applicants.

In accordance with the criteria articulated in Madison General Ordinances, Traffic Engineering staff conducted an investigation of taxicab operators. The companies were required to answer a series of written questions. The written questions were developed based on: relevant ordinances; complaints received by the Traffic Engineering Division in 2011 and 2012; and lastly, current public safety and service issues associated with the taxicab industry. Every crash on the Madison Police Department's web site involving licensed taxicab providers was reviewed.

In addition, taxi companies were asked to comment on specific drivers who were at fault in multiple crashes. Staff reviewed each company's list of vehicles to make certain that all vehicles are currently registered with the WI Department of Motor Vehicles.

All companies were asked about vehicle maintenance, driver rest periods, customer/driver complaints, driver/passenger safety, operations, taxicab rates, refusal of service, and financial results.

Lastly, the applicants submitted financial and statistical data from 2011 and 2012 in annual surveys (attached). These surveys included information about passengers, profits, crashes, complaints and other data.

INDIVIDUAL COMPANY INVESTIGATIONS

Affiliated Carriage Systems (Madison Taxi)

Type of Service: Madison Taxi operates a corporately owned, metered taxi operation. They also operate some driver-owned taxicabs.

MDOT Complaints: Madison Taxi had four complaints filed with the MDOT in 2011 and five in 2012. The vast majority of complaints (8 out of 9) took place at the Dane County Regional Airport. Seven of these complaints were for rude or unprofessional behavior and one was for a rate dispute. The one remaining complaint was for alleged unsafe driving.

Madison Taxi acknowledges that it has had some customer service issues at the Airport. Management claims that poor driver communication and “overly aggressive” drivers are the root causes. Generally, passengers have complained about Madison drivers being abrupt and rude when attempting to load multiple passengers who are sharing rides. Meter cabs are allowed to provide shared-ride service during declared peak periods. However, drivers should be very polite so as to avoid making passengers feel like they are being herded into a cab to maximize driver profits without concern for passengers.

Madison is actively working on improving Airport customer service and communication through education and driver discipline. Madison Taxi has hired secret customer service employees to provide feedback to management.

Reported Crashes: All of the crashes reported were reviewed and no systematic safety issues or crashes or were drivers were cited for usages of controlled substances were found.

Vehicle Registration: With the help of Madison Taxi management, City Staff was able to reconcile registration discrepancies in the list of vehicles initially provided by the company.

Other Information: None applicable.

Badger Bus

Type of Service: Badger Bus is a privately-owned specialized transportation service providing services to Madison Metro and local school districts. Madison Metro requires that each of its paratransit contractors be licensed with the City as a Taxicab operator.

MDOT Complaints: None reported.

Reported Crashes: None applicable.

Badger Cab

Type of Service: Badger Cab is a zoned-rate taxicab business. Badger has filed a zone map with the City Clerk and this map shows the city is divided into zones. Generally, a customer's fare is based on the number of zones he or she travels through on the way to his or her destination. Traditionally, shared-ride cabs have provided a shared-ride service. Shared-ride means that a taxicab driver may pick up a customer and subsequently transport an additional customer before taking the original passenger to his or her requested destination. A zone-rate operation works well with shared-ride rates as it is not necessary to track the distance a customer is transported in order to calculate his or her fare.

Beginning in 2013, Badger cab began allowing passengers to choose between a direct or shared ride. A direct ride means that a passenger is taken to his or her destination without picking up another passenger. The rate for this direct ride is one and one-half times greater than the rate for sharing a ride (Shared ride: \$3.00 first zone and \$1.00 additional zone; Direct ride: \$4.50 first zone and \$1.50 additional zone). The concept is that passenger may be willing to pay more to be transported directly to his or her destination. Each Badger Cab is either marked as Shared-Ride or Direct ride and has the respective rates on each door.

Badger is a leased-cab operation and each driver is an independent contractor and leases a vehicle from the company on a daily basis. Drivers retain the revenues collected during their shift but must make a lease payment to Badger for the vehicle and other services provided. The City does not regulate these lease arrangements. There are no driver-owned vehicles.

MDOT Complaints: The City received three Badger Cab driver complaints in 2011 and two complaints in 2012. Two were for rude or unprofessional drivers or dispatchers, and two were for rate disputes, and one was for the driver smoking in the taxi.

Reported Crashes: All of the crashes reported were reviewed, and no systematic safety issues or crashes involved drivers who were cited for usage of controlled substances.

Vehicle Registration: With the help of Badger Cab management, City Staff was able to reconcile registration discrepancies in the list of vehicles initially provided by the company.

Other Information:

Below are Badger Cab's rate changes as submitted to the City Clerk for 2011 to 2012:

June 2011

First Zone \$2.75

:add zone \$1.00

:add pass \$1.00

Outer zone charges: \$0.20 per 1/10 mile

Wait charges: \$0.50 per minute

January 2012

First Zone \$3.00

:add zone \$1.00

:add pass \$1.00

Outer zone charges: \$0.20 per 1/10 mile

Wait charges: \$0.50 per minute

Optional Direct Ride (Airport only)

First Zone \$4.50

:add zone \$1.50

:add pass \$0.00

Outer zone charges: \$0.20 per 1/10 mile

Wait charges: \$0.50 per minute

December 2012

Direct Service as requested:

First Zone \$4.50

:add zone \$1.50

:add pass \$0.00

Outer Zone charges: \$0.20 per 1/10 mile

Wait charges: \$0.50 per minute

Green Cab of Madison, Incorporated

Type of Service: Green Cab began operation in September 2010. It is a zoned-rate taxicab business. Green Cab has filed a zone map with the City Clerk and this map shows the city is divided into over 250 zones. Generally, a customer's fare is based on the number of zones he or she travels through on the way to his or her destination. Traditionally, shared-ride cabs have provided a shared-ride service. Shared-ride means that a taxicab driver may pick up a customer and subsequently transport an additional customer before taking the original passenger to his or her requested destination. A zone-rate operation works well with shared-ride rates as it is not necessary to track the distance a customer is transported in order to calculate his or her fare.

Beginning in 2011, Green cab began allowing passengers to choose between a direct or shared ride. In order to avoid confusion, passengers must request a direct or shared ride at the time service is ordered via dispatch or as a passenger gets in a cab. A direct ride means that a passenger is taken to his or her destination without picking up another passenger. The direct rate is one and one-half times greater than the shared rates (Shared ride: \$3.00 first zone and \$1.00 additional zone; Direct ride: \$4.50 first zone and \$1.50 additional zone). Each Green cab has direct and shared-ride rates posted on the door of each taxicab.

Green Cab is a leased-cab operation where each driver is an independent contractor and leases a vehicle from the company on a daily basis. Drivers retain the revenues collected during their shift but must make a lease payment to Green Cab for the vehicle and other services provided. The City does not regulate these lease arrangements. There are no driver-owned vehicles.

MDOT Complaints: Green Cab had four complaints in 2011 and one in 2012: one for unsafe driving and four for rude or unprofessional behavior by a driver or dispatcher.

Reported Crashes: All of the crashes reported were reviewed, and no systematic safety issues or crashes involved drivers who were cited for usage of controlled substances.

Vehicle Registration: With the help of Green Cab management, City Staff was able to reconcile registration discrepancies in the list of vehicles initially provided by the company.

Other Information:

Below are Green Cab's rate changes as submitted to the City Clerk for 2011:

May 2011

Direct Service as requested:

First Zone \$4.50

:add zone \$1.50

Transit Solutions

Type of Service: Transit Solutions is a privately-owned specialized transportation service providing services to Madison Metro. Madison Metro requires that each of its paratransit contractors be licensed with the City as a Taxicab operator.

MDOT Complaints: None reported.

Reported Crashes: None applicable.

Union Cab

Type of Service: Union Cab is a worker cooperative, whose employees make up the board that oversees the company. Union is a metered-cab operation. Union operates more vehicles (73) than any other taxicab company. They are the only company providing non-medical on-demand accessible taxicab service, and receive no financial assistance from the other metered or zoned taxicab companies or the City of Madison for this service.

MDOT Complaints: Union had one customer complaints filed with the City in 2011 and one complaint in 2012: both were complaints were for rude or unprofessional drivers.

Reported Crashes: All of the crashes reported were reviewed, and no systematic safety issues or crashes involved drivers who were cited for usage of controlled substances.

Other Information:

Union Cab began operations in Sun Prairie on January 1, 2013. This service is a shared-ride service providing public transportation to Sun Prairie residents within three miles of the city limits. There are three specific services provided:

- East Towne Shuttle—which provides limited stop service between three locations in Sun Prairie and the East Towne Metro Bus Stop Monday through Friday three times a day.
- Corner Stops—which provides corner-to-corner service in Sun Prairie for the Sun Prairie School District.
- Shared Ride Taxi—which provides a shared service for Sun Prairie and operates up to a three-mile point from the City Limits.

Under the terms of the contract, we bill Sun Prairie for the hours that the cabs are in operation and deduct what the drivers collect. Generally, the Sun Prairie Union operation is separate from the Madison Union cab operation; however, upon occasion, the Sun Prairie Union operation may utilize Madison vehicles and personnel to meet its contractual requirements with the City of Sun Prairie.

CONCLUSIONS

Staff finds the responses to all questions acceptable. It is apparent from these questions and visual inspections that: a) vehicles are being maintained properly (there were no maintenance-related crashes in 2011 and 2012 by licensed carriers); b) drivers appear to be getting adequate rest periods; c) there has been relatively few MDOT complaints; d) driver and passenger safety is a high priority among carriers; d) refusal of service is rare; and e) the vehicles listed in each operation are currently registered or the company is in the process of replacing a vehicle listed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the operating licenses for all six of the currently licensed carriers be renewed, and that the attached resolution be recommended for approval.