

STATES OF JERSEY



NEW URBAN SQUARE IN BROAD STREET: RELOCATION OF TAXI RANK (P.96/2005) – SECOND AMENDMENTS

**Presented to the States by Deputy M.F. Dubras of St. Lawrence
and lodged au Greffe on 24th May 2005
by the Deputy of St. John**

STATES GREFFE

NEW URBAN SQUARE IN BROAD STREET: RELOCATION OF TAXI RANK (P.96/2005) – SECOND AMENDMENTS

- (1) *Renumber existing paragraph (a) as (a)(i) and after that paragraph insert the following new subparagraph –*
- “(ii) to rescind, for the same period of one year, the designation as a stand of the area previously used for controlled taxi-cabs under Article 37 of the Motor Traffic (Jersey) Law, and to designate the said area as a pedestrian road at all times in accordance with the provisions of Article 8(1) of the Road Traffic (St. Helier) (Jersey) Order 1996;
- (2) *Renumber existing paragraph (b) as (b)(i) and after that subparagraph insert the following new subparagraph –*
- “(ii) to designate, after consultation with the Parish of St. Helier and the Jersey Taxi Drivers Association and other relevant stakeholders, a number of other ranks of between two and six spaces in agreed locations within the central town area (as described in paragraph 3 of the attached report), as well as along the Esplanade and, if possible, within the Waterfront, in addition to those ranks already designated at Snow Hill, in Mulcaster Street and at the Weighbridge.”

DEPUTY M.F. DUBRAS OF ST. LAWRENCE

REPORT

General

The aim of these second amendments is two-fold: one, to ensure that all involved understand the practical consequential action required of the Committee by the Connétable of St. Helier's proposition, if approved, as is the intent of the Committee's amendment; second, to encourage the Committee, along with the Home Affairs Committee, to pursue new as well as evolving initiatives which together will, in my opinion, enhance the service to the public and be of mutual benefit and long-term satisfaction to the providers as well as to a whole range of existing and new customers.

Specifics

1. My amendment to paragraph (a) of the Proposition is intended to ensure clarity and certainty of the short-term outcome during the trial period as to what the Connétable appears to have in mind in order to achieve his purpose in complying with States' strategic objectives related to this important area of Town, with which I associate myself having worked with him on several relevant committees.
2. My amendment to paragraph (b) is the result of comment received from various user and other relevant groups as to their needs, plus my own observations over a period of time. The comments have been made both by existing taxi-cab users as well as those wanting to have more ready access to designated stands in closer proximity to the location of service suppliers or their homes. This matter is not new and has been the topic of discussion in the past between several committees and the Drivers' Association.
3. The central town commercial, leisure and residential area I envisage is that generally within the boundaries described by mentally 'walking' in a clockwise direction: starting from the Parade, moving along Union Street, Burrard Street into Minden Place; Bath Street; to Hill Street and down Mulcaster Street; to Conway Street, Broad Street, along Sand Street/Seale Street via Gloucester Street back to the Parade. This area is based on the Island Plan (2002) definition of the Town Centre.
4. For example, I have received approaches and comments as to the lack of ready accessibility during day-time hours to 'standing' taxis from those visiting the General Hospital; Cyril Le Marquand House; the Markets; States and Court facilities, quite apart from all those who use other commercial and public service providers such as Banks, the Public Library and so on. Some of these people have been elderly or physically incapacitated and found it frustrating to have to struggle to walk all the way to Broad Street, if they were carrying heavy shopping bags or briefcases and, especially in inclement weather, run the risk of finding the rank empty. Surely, it is time to take the taxi-cab service to the public rather than the other way round?
5. There are a number of new situations arising: the new 'Shopmobility' facility in the Sand Street Carpark, for example, needs to be catered for. I understand it would welcome greater support from the special-purpose taxi-cabs in conveying their passengers to and from the basement. A stand in the immediate vicinity would also serve a multiplicity of other users. The presence of new residential and business communities and medical clinics along Gloucester Street together with the Opera House, it seems to me, would justify some new '24-7' facility. I am aware that the current and previous Committees have offered to establish new stands at some of the suggested locations but the drivers indicated that the stands would not be used. Perhaps, in view of the increased demand I am predicting, the drivers will wish to review the potential benefits overall.
6. I have understood too the 'other side of the coin' as expressed by the Drivers' Association representatives and considered carefully their views. I can appreciate their perspective but, given today's customer-oriented business world, on balance I have to disagree with it. It seems to me that, rather than have one large-capacity rank, or two if one includes the Weighbridge, the Committee needs, with the full support of the States Assembly, to provide a 'de-centralised' network of stands for both day- and night-time activity. I am glad too that the Waterfront Enterprise Board is looking anew at enabling taxi-cab service 'stand' provision within its domain along with the opportunity provided by the new transportation centre and

forthcoming business park on the Esplanade.

7. Further, I wish to encourage the Committee to consider, investigate and arrange for the setting-up of a cost-effective system of road sensors and other monitoring devices to remotely inform the taxi-cab industry drivers when rank spaces are vacated or vacant, or when a customer is desirous of 'hailing' a vehicle from a vacant stand, in order to improve the efficiency and economy of the service being provided generally. While we have appreciated, more often than not, when there has been an adequate supply on hand to meet what has to be an uncertain demand on occasions, we have all had, no doubt, personal experience of times of having to wait at the Airport and the Harbours, as well as in Broad Street!

Financial and manpower considerations

There should be no additional expenditure from the amendment to paragraph (a).

With regard to paragraph (b) it is my understanding that any additional expenditure and manpower requirements for the establishment of additional taxi ranks within the town centre, which I estimate would be relatively small, would either fall within normal departmental budgets or possibly be drawn from the urban renewal fund especially if of a capital nature. The cost effectiveness of road sensor and/or other monitoring equipment requires further detailed evaluation in comparison with the cost-benefits to the taxi-cab drivers and, ultimately, their customers of a unified dispatch and information communications system.

Summary

It is clear that the thrust of the Connétable's proposition emanates from a full awareness and good understanding that there is a multi-faceted cultural change going on in Town as well as a strong desire to achieve his vision of a vibrant user-friendly and desirable place to do business, enjoy leisure and, once again, live conveniently. These amendments are designed to complement that appreciation and aspiration.

The basis of my proposal is to complement that of the Committee and enable a paradigm shift to take place in the provision of rank taxi-cab service so that from now on the 'driving force' is one of convenience to the travelling public over-riding that of long-established convenience to the drivers.