

**Discussion draft:
Sustainable funding for Square Patrol, a 501(c)3 organization**

Purpose of this Discussion draft proposal.

This proposal is being prepared to alert organizations with an interest in keeping the streets of Austin and nearby towns safe from drunk driving.

Square Patrol, a 501(c)3 organization, is in the business of driving people home after a night on the town in their own cars.

Our goal is to achieve an “Everybody Wins” situation with customers, authorities, and stakeholders alike.

Description of the business.

Square Patrol’s main business is to drive clients home in their own cars. Typically the clients who call Square Patrol for a ride home have been drinking alcohol in sufficient quantities to either be legally drunk or otherwise uncertain of their ability to convince an officer of the law that the opposite is true.

Short Narrative.

Square Patrol drives people home from a night out in their own cars. A team of two Square Patrol drivers – one to drop off and pick up, the other to drive the customer’s car – receives phone calls or texts from prospective customers, picks them up in the vicinity of their cars, then drives them home safely.

Customers being driven home in their own cars almost always express their gratitude that Square Patrol is on the road, ready to get them home safely. There is usually an element of incredulity, mixed with euphoria, when customers realize that they will not have to go back the next day and pick up their cars, as would be the case if they had simply gotten a ride home with someone.

The level of repeat business that Square Patrol attracts is very high. One driver, on the job for three months, reports that some 75% of his customers have previously used the service during its three years of operation so far.

It is now accepted wisdom that alcohol turns automobiles into weapons. With increasingly harsh strictures against drunk driving, Square Patrol’s efforts resonate with the times.

Our non-profit organization is not able to be totally self-sustaining from client-generated revenues alone. Prospective customers tend to balk at paying anything much higher than the \$20-25 suggested donation amount. Rather than pay the rate that would sustain this two-person team operation, prospects likely seek other means to get home, including driving back drunk.

We are keen to involve stakeholders who are interested in supporting this “public good” of “safe travel”. Every single inebriated (or close to inebriated) driver who uses Square Patrol is one fewer under-the-influence driver on the road.

Demand for Square Patrol services could keep several more teams of drivers busy, especially on weekend nights.

Austin represents an excellent locale for this type of business because of its reputation as a progressive, community-based town and its interest in keeping its streets safe for both residents of and visitors to Texas' Capital City.

Prospective stakeholders.

Governmental authorities, business firms, and other interested parties as well as Square Patrol customers themselves all benefit from this service. The Austin Police Dept. has indicated that reduction of drunk and impaired driving is one of its main priorities. Bar owners themselves have a keen interest also in getting their customers home safely.

Sources of funds.

Operating inflows are needed to keep Square Patrol on the road and expanding ahead. The target consortium we have in mind consists of those stakeholders who would benefit from our presence on the streets of Austin overnight – or, more to the point, the reduction in the number of drunk drivers out there.

We hesitate at this point to fix any requested amounts since we will first seek your input as to whether and how any contributions from your organization may be justified, and how best to work with you regarding the mechanics of your organization's approach to requests of this kind.

One small donation has been received from a major distributor whose commitment to community is advertised on billboards along IH-35. The contributions from this firm might take the form of inclusion in its advertising. We have received direct word from this firm that more is coming in the future.

We would not be averse to advancing some sort of dollar ranges for prospective contributions to this program, but the structure of fundraising is open at this time. Ballpark donation amounts could be requested in line with the amounts our sponsors feel would be warranted in view of their own circumstances and benefits from our services being provided to Austin.

Uses of funds.

Square Patrol is seeking funding for expansion. These funds will be devoted to the following budget priorities:

- Base of operations
- General liability insurance
- General Manager
- Community Outreach Manager
- Systems and Data Manager

Once these budget priorities are fulfilled, Square patrol will have the capacity to service over 50 calls a night.

Prospects.

If funding by Labor Day falls short of these goals, the fallback position would be to either no office or part-time manager.

If funding is not forthcoming by Labor Day, the failure option would require closing the business.

Implementation.

1. Receive funds by September 1, 2012
2. Apply funding for facilities to be up and running by Thanksgiving 2012
3. Move toward enhanced business model, involving a dispatcher, a media-website professional and a third professional by Thanksgiving 2013.

Risks.

The risks facing this operation may be divided into two categories: the risks facing the operation itself, and the risks associated with its withdrawal from the streets of Austin.

What it is expected to accomplish.

- Reduction in the number of drunk drivers on Austin streets.
- Reduced work load for the Austin law enforcement and judiciary authorities.
- Maintenance of Austin's reputation in good standing as "The Live Music Capital of the World"