

TAXIS ARE THE UNSUNG HEROES OF URBAN TRANSPORTATION.

In the U.S., taxicabs transport close to 40 per cent more passengers than all rapid transit systems combined, or 60 per cent more than all bus systems.

Approximately 170,000 licensed taxicabs are the only form of public transportation available to more than 3,400 American communities.

In New York City alone, taxis move 800,000 passengers per day, producing a monetary turnover greater than that of the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

All this notwithstanding the taxi appears to be the only urban "transit" vehicle that is not expressly designed for its particular type of service.

Taxis specially designed for meeting city traffic conditions might considerably improve the quality of life in the urban environment: they would use less energy, reduce air pollution, and cut traffic congestion, as well as provide safe and comfortable accommodations for passengers and luggage.

Taxis fulfill an important role as supplements to existing mass transportation.

Taxis provide an important urban transit system which finances its own capital and operating costs without receiving any subsidies.

If the importance of the taxi as a public service were recognized, and if taxi operations consequently were adequately financed and regulated, cabs could be made to serve the needs of the handicapped, the old, and the poor who live around the core of central cities, in areas neglected by rail and bus transportation.

An improved taxicab and an expanded range of taxi services offer the most immediate and economical means at our disposal for improving public transportation in our cities and suburbs.

The improvement of taxi services could include not only specially built vehicles, but also low-cost systems of public transportation such as jitney cabs, subscription taxi services, and dial-a-ride taxis.

The most seductive feature of any plan to give taxicabs a formal role in urban and suburban transit resides in the fact that improvements can be brought about by a comparatively small investment and would be visible in a short time.