

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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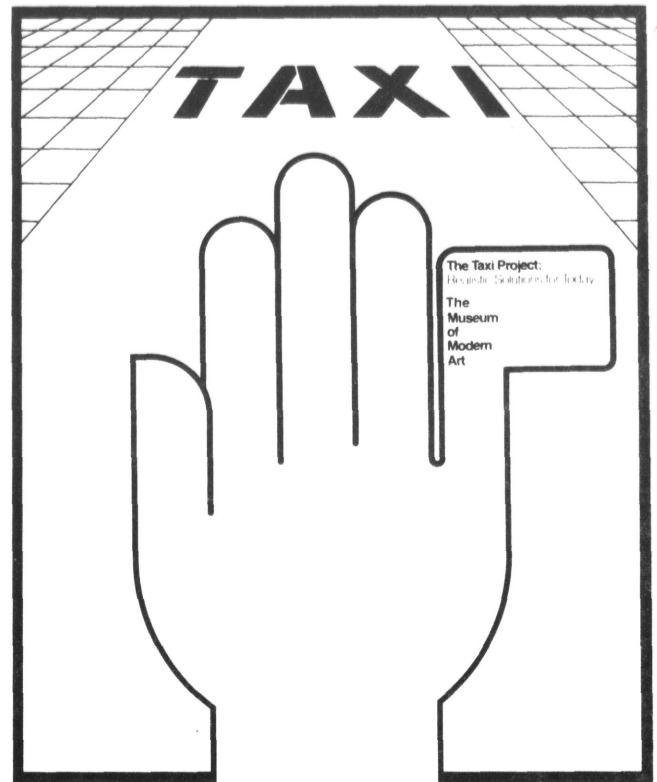
No. 29

SPECIAL TO URBAN AFFAIRS, FINANCIAL,
TRANSPORTATION EDITORS

From: Elizabeth Shaw and Linda Gordon

Re: The Taxi Project:
Realistic Solutions for Today

The attached fact sheet provides a summary of one of the most ambitious projects undertaken by The Museum of Modern Art since it first presented industrial design in the context of an art museum in the early 30s.



"The taxi prototypes presented at the Museum represent that which is possible and feasible today within the constraints of the present economy. They are practical and realistic solutions which industry can produce at reasonable prices and which can be operated economically. These taxis specially designed for meeting urban traffic conditions, might considerably improve the quality of life in the urban environment as they would use less energy, reduce air pollution and cut traffic congestion, as well as provide safe and comfortable accommodations for passengers and luggage. It is hoped that this program will promote the manufacture and introduction of a more suitable taxicab vehicle before the end of this decade."
- - Emilio Ambasz, Curator of Design at The Museum of Modern Art and Director of The Taxi Project.

The importance of improvements in the design and use of taxis is made clear by such facts as:

Taxicabs transport close to 40 percent more passengers than all the U. S. rapid transit combined, a volume representing 60 per cent more passengers than those transported by all bus transit systems combined.

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

Taxis provide an urban transit system which equals if not surpasses in term of passengers transported that of other public transportation systems now receiving subsidies while the taxi industry finances its own capital and operating costs.

Improved taxicab services could include not only specially built taxi vehicles, but also an exploration of the urban potential of low-cost systems of public transportation such as jitney cabs, subscription-taxi service, and dial-a-ride taxis.

An impressive feature of any plan to assign to taxicabs a formal role in urban transit resides in the fact that such improvements can be brought about by a comparatively small investment and would be visible in a short time.

The possibilities for the future of taxi transportation are greatly enhanced by the fact that the Urban Mass Transportation Administration of the Department of Transportation is now seriously exploring the possibilities for public transportation offered by what they refer to as "paratransit" systems and which in addition to standard taxis, also comprise jitneys, dial-a-ride, subscription services, and others. By means of research contracts and demonstration grants -- such as the one under which the two American entries in The Taxi Project were developed -- the Department of Transportation is attempting to prove the public transportation potential of taxis.

The Museum has invited public transportation specialists to propose changes which can be introduced realistically into the present restrictive requirements for private and public financing of the taxi industry. The Museum publication listing such proposals also suggests pragmatic ways for introducing new regulations that would be fair to the drivers, the industry, and the public.

See attached fact sheet.

Note: Exhibition made possible by grants from Mobil Oil Corporation and Urban Mass Transportation Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

For additional information, please call or write Elizabeth Shaw, Director, or Linda Gordon, Associate Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7501; 2648.
