

of drivers in all but a few communities and in spite of the fact that economists uniformly urge that larger earnings would attract more drivers, only a few regulations such as those in New York City (Sec. 2304) and Chicago (Sec. 28.22.1) take earnings of employees into account in fixing rates of fare or numbers of licenses.

Taxicab passengers are charged a fare, which is calculated by distance traveled, time, and occasionally number of passengers in excess of one. Limousines usually charge a fixed fare for the trip or time. In a few communities, taxicabs calculate the fare on the basis of zones traversed, but the possibility of improper charges has made this method comparatively rare. (Of cities having more than 200,000 population, only Washington, D.C., has zone rates in effect; of cities having more than 100,000 population, 8 cities have zone rates.)

This uniformity of method of charging indicates its general acceptance by the various communities. However, the emergence of more innovative DRT modes may create the necessity for an entirely new approach to the subject.

The obvious distinction between taxicabs and limousines on the one hand and other proposed DRT service on the other is the sharing of the ride. The vehicle and the administration of the service remain the same, the administrative expertise and financial responsibility of taxicab operators are available at lower unit cost, and the vehicle is therefore available to render service at comparatively lower cost. Clearly, any innovative DRT service that takes advantage of unused taxicab or limousine seating capacity takes a practical approach to the problem, and any DRT service that takes advantage of the expertise and financial investment already made in the taxicab industry can render its type of service at a financial advantage and at a lower cost to the community. But only if governmental regulation permits.

Rate structures must be revised so that any new DRT service can be provided, at the outset at least, by taxicabs or limousines of existing operators or other vehicles provided by those operators. Every rate-making body should keep in mind a most appropriate comment made by Avery (2) a few years ago: "It was not understood that those powers are of little avail where the carrier is so preoccupied with maintaining basic viability that seeking to extract innovation or a bold approach to risky new ventures is completely unrealistic."

CONCLUDING REMARK

After the preparation of this necessarily sketchy presentation of a broad and most important topic, I found its theme well stated in the paratransit report to which I have referred previously (1, p. 16): "An important operating characteristic of taxi, dial-a-ride, and jitney services is that, regulations permitting, they can all be provided by a common and very pervasive public transportation vehicle, the taxicab."

REFERENCES

1. R. F. Kirby, K. U. Bhatt, M. A. Kemp, R. G. McGillivray, and M. Wohl. Paratransit: Neglected Options for Urban Mobility. The Urban Institute, Rept. UI-4800-8-2, June 1974.
2. G. Avery. Public Transportation Problems in Urban Areas. HRB Special Rept. 144, 1974, pp. 12-19.

Donald G. Greyschock, All American Cab Company, Huntington Park, California

I believe that shared riding and door-to-door service will be the future in transportation no matter how sophisticated and exotic the fixed transit program becomes. I be-

lieve the taxicab industry has the flexibility, the diversification, and the expertise to provide a great portion of this door-to-door service.

In 1966 the City Council of Huntington Park, which has a population of 33,000 and is located 7 miles southeast of Los Angeles, became transportation conscious. The mayor at that time made a survey of what facilities the citizens needed, and public transportation was high on the list of needed services. That was rather strange because the Southern California Rapid Transit District runs 7 bus lines with approximately 700 buses a day through Huntington Park. It is a transportation hub.

Redwood City is close and has a fixed bus system that is operated by private carrier under contract to the city. Huntington officials thought this might be its answer, but realized after a year or so of study that door-to-door service would be more applicable.

In July 1973, the city asked for bids on a DRT program with 2 vehicles. The All American Cab Company was the low bidder. Because of my belief in shared riding, I wanted this program; and we bid at \$8.25/hour. The only other bidder, the Southern California Rapid Transit District, bid \$23.25/hour. I wish I had known that. We included no profit at all and no salaries for dispatchers or order takers because they were already on the job.

The DRT operation is so compatible with the taxicab operation that it is second nature. It took no more than 3 hours for our people to become adjusted to the program and after that it was as though they had always been dispatching, taking orders, and handling DRT.

The city uses federal revenue sharing funds to buy our services. [In Los Angeles County, we are part of the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD). RTD has the first choice of funds from state gasoline tax that can be used for transit.] We supply the vehicles and the drivers and maintain the vehicles. The city pays on an hourly basis and promotes the program. The original advertising and promotion was good and then it declined. However, the program is running fairly successfully.

The rates started at 25 cents for children under 12 and senior citizens and 50 cents for adults and are now 25 cents for everybody. We operate 2 buses from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. We average about 95 passengers/day/bus, 75 percent of whom are senior citizens. During the RTD strike, we were allowed to put a third bus on and ridership increased considerably. As the ridership grows, we should add a third bus; otherwise, growth stops. But the city has no funds for the third bus.

We had planned to use a taxicab, but the city wanted a different vehicle, and we have a 16-passenger van with air conditioning and music.

My conclusion after 9 months of operation is that, no matter how high the volume is, at our rate structure we will probably never have a profitable operation. When I first submitted my bid, I thought that at some time it would be, but we now have the highest ridership we can possibly have during the 9 hours we operate. During the RTD strike, we handled approximately 100 passengers/day/vehicle and our subsidy per passenger dropped to 60 cents, which is still not a profitable operation.

We are now trying to add a van with a lift for handling of the handicapped, particularly those in wheelchairs. But we must find funding.

Ronald F. Kirby, The Urban Institute

A number of services that could be offered by taxicabs are currently prohibited in U.S. cities by regulations enacted by public service commissions. Although relaxation of such restrictive regulations has been advocated on numerous occasions by transportation researchers, planners, local government officials, and taxicab operators themselves, little regulatory change has occurred to date. Moreover, the taxicab industry is rarely considered a potential provider for publicly supported transportation services where these are deemed socially desirable.

One of the major reasons why little innovation has taken place in the public regulation