

as was mentioned by Mark Frankena, varies enormously around the country. When fares increased dramatically in San Diego, was that because fares had been held down? It may be that an increase was needed. It may or may not be something that you should be concerned about. It is very hard to get a handle on those kinds of impacts. In many cities the entry controls are not really binding. So, if you remove them, you

have a very small impact on the number of cabs. In other cities they are obviously very tightly binding, as evidenced by the instances where medallions change hands for many thousands of dollars.

Unless anyone has wishes to say anything more, I would like to close the session at this point. Thank you very much for coming. Thank you, speakers.

## New York City's For-Hire Van Services: Blessing or Curse?

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The results of a study to analyze the operational, legal, and economic impacts of for-hire vans in New York City are presented. As transit service has grown less attractive, these services have proliferated, particularly in the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. However, conflicts between for-hire van services and public transit, whose business the vans are competing for, as well as problems with traffic and licensing, have caused some to view the van services as more of a curse than a blessing. As a result of this study, guidelines for improvements in handling licensing, enforcement, and street use for van services have been drawn that, once implemented, should allow vans to become an important complement to transit.

Many urban transportation planners view privatization as a way of rationalizing transit services and reducing costs. Competition through normal market responses is seen as a means of allocating service areas better, improving transit's efficiency, and cutting, containing, or reducing subsidy needs. Unsubsidized vans carrying peak-period riders reduce public subsidies to the urban transit system, and hence become a public good.

New York City's express and local feeder for-hire vans, however, are viewed in a somewhat different perspective.

These vans, which carry more than 10,000 passengers to and from Manhattan and another 5,000 to and from outlying subway stations, are viewed as a blessing by many, but as a curse by many others.

- The van operators state that they provide a needed service that reflects market demands. Moreover, most van passengers view the vans as an improvement over the public transportation service that they formerly used; more than 95 percent of all van passengers are former transit riders.

- The New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA) has publicly estimated the erosion in revenues caused by vans at \$30 million to \$50 million a year, a figure that others view as inflated. (Conversely some planners claim that vans actually help NYCTA by carrying peak-period riders who would be difficult and costly to accommodate.)

- City officials are mixed in their attitudes. Some believe that because they provide effective journey-to-work trips or trip segments, vans are a positive influence on employment in the central business district (CBD); others would like to limit the proliferation of van services. The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) views the vans as preempting needed street space, often illegally. The city's Department of City Planning wants to rationalize and bring order to the licensing, control, and operation of the vans so that they can improve the mobility of city residents and workers and at the same time not undercut the regular public transportation system.

To place these conflicting views in a clearer perspective and to determine the city's desired posture with regard to vans, a special study was initiated in 1984 by the New York City

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Department of City Planning. The study was designed to analyze the operational, legal, and economic impacts of for-hire vans and to set forth guidelines for city policy. Included were a review of available data and documents on van travel, conversations and correspondence with governmental officials and private individuals involved with bus and van transportation, and actual on-site observations throughout the five boroughs at places where vans are heavily used.

Special surveys were conducted of express and feeder van passengers in cooperation with drivers belonging to two recognized consortiums of van operations: the South Queens Connection (exclusively feeder services) and the Five Boro Van Association (whose members mainly provide express service from Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens into Manhattan). These surveys obtained information about (a) former travel modes, (b) reasons for switching, (c) pickup and drop-off patterns, and (d) frequency of van use.

### DIMENSIONS OF VAN SERVICE

Competition between unregulated paratransit services and the city's regular public transportation operations first began in the Bronx in the early 1970s. It spread to Brooklyn and Queens by 1975 and to Staten Island by 1978. The paratransit services started in the city's lower-income areas and then spread out to encompass middle-class neighborhoods as well. Gypsy cabs and other private automobiles carrying up to five passengers (for a fare) were used at first; this later expanded to include all other types of vehicles, and vans now predominate.

Two types of for-hire van services are provided: express commuter service into and out of the Manhattan CBD and local or feeder service to outlying NYCTA rapid transit stations. This study did not include vanpools operated by groups of riders. On a typical 1984 weekday, more than 500 express commuter vans carried 10,000 passengers into or out of Manhattan. Another 250 local feeder vans carried 5,000 riders each day to or from outlying rapid transit stations.

Both express and local vans are more heavily used in the morning peak period. Evening service has grown more slowly for several reasons, including a lack of vehicle queueing space at many subway stations and increased enforcement of No Standing regulations at others.

Van services are part of a natural progression toward more varied transit services in New York City. Express buses entered "subway-poor" areas first, drawing away subway riders; local vans followed, competing with local bus routes in the same subway-poor areas. Express vans serve mainly areas without direct subway service to Manhattan.

- Express commuter van services help to meet service voids or deficiencies, either actual or perceived, that are inherent in existing express transit operations. Like the express buses, they are keyed to the major express highways, taking advantage of the accessibility afforded. The proliferation of van services on Staten Island, for example, reflects the overcrowding of NYCTA express runs.

- Feeder vans serve areas that lie beyond the normal walking distance to subway lines or require payment of two subway fares to reach the desired destination. Feeder vans operate

either as shuttles between apartment complexes or as jitneys along high-density, heavily used feeder bus routes. Like the jitneys, many of these services take passengers from public transportation.

### Express Vans

Express vans generally charge the same fare (\$3.00) as the city's franchised express buses; many operate in direct competition with these express buses or the subway system or both. Fewer than half of the express vans have been licensed to carry passengers for hire.

Express vans average 10 to 12 passengers per trip, and 75 percent of all van passengers begin or end their trip in the city's four outer boroughs (Table 1). The Brooklyn–Staten Island, Queens, and Bronx–Westchester–Connecticut sectors each

TABLE 1 EXPRESS VAN SERVICE, NEW YORK CITY, 1984

Item	Amount
No. of van trips	
Morning	516
Evening	484
No. of passengers	
Morning	5,160
Evening	5,808
No. of passengers/trip	
Morning	10
Evening	12
Type of vehicle (%)	
12- to 14-passengers van	92
20-passenger van	8
Point of origin (%)	
Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island	75
Outside city	
Westchester and Upstate New York	16
New Jersey	7
Connecticut	2

account for about 30 percent of the total Manhattan van entries, and about 10 percent comes from New Jersey (Table 2). The specific points of entry into Manhattan are shown in Figure 1.

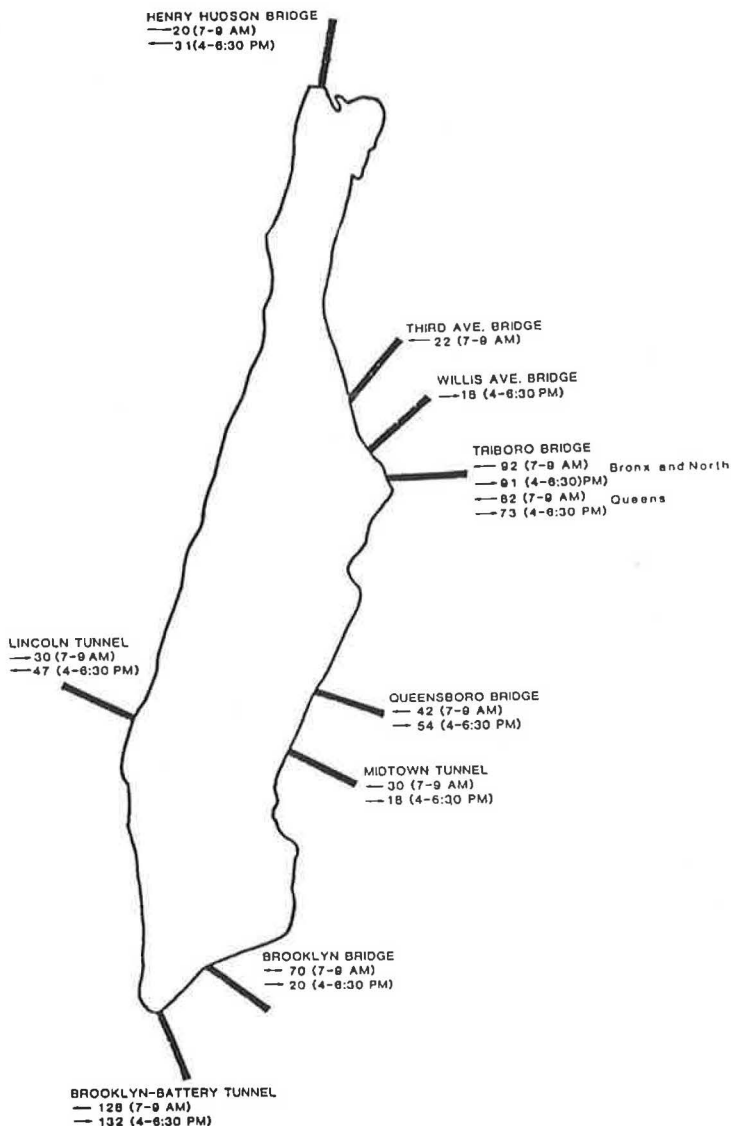
The service areas in the outer boroughs for most express vans are shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4. In Brooklyn, vans come from the Bay Ridge, Bath Beach–Crosby, and Coney Island areas; all are middle-income communities located near the Belt Parkway. In Queens, express vans come mainly from areas that lie beyond walking distance to subway stops (e.g., Jewel Avenue). In Staten Island, express vans generally serve the central and southern parts of the island.

### Local Vans

Most of the local vans charge the same fare (\$0.90) as that of the city's local bus lines, and virtually none have been certified to carry passengers for hire.

**TABLE 2 ORIGINS OF EXPRESS VANS BY SECTOR AND ROUTE**

Sector	7:00-9:00 a.m.		4:00-6:30 p.m.	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
<b>Bronx-Westchester-Connecticut</b>				
Henry Hudson Bridge	20		31	
Third Avenue Bridge	22			
Willis Avenue Bridge			18	
Triboro Bridge	92		91	
Subtotal	134	26	140	29
<b>Queens (East River)</b>				
Triboro Bridge	82		73	
Queensboro Bridge	42		54	
Midtown Tunnel	30		18	
Subtotal	154	30	145	30
<b>Brooklyn-Staten Island</b>				
Brooklyn Bridge	70		20	
Brooklyn Battery Tunnel	128		132	
Subtotal	198	38	152	31
New Jersey (Lincoln Tunnel)	30	6	47	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>516</b>		<b>484</b>	



**FIGURE 1 Commuter van access and egress points in Manhattan.**

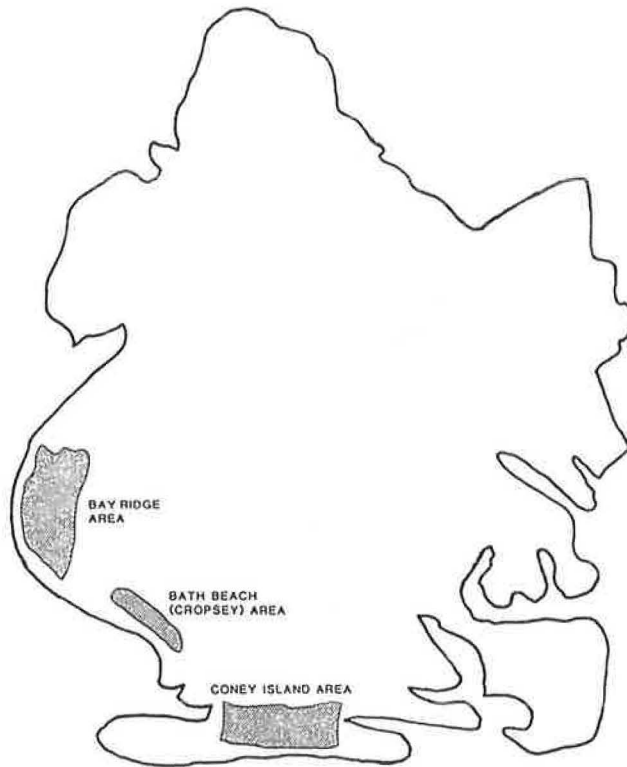


FIGURE 2 Commuter van express service areas in Brooklyn.

Peak-period feeder van service in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens is summarized in Table 3. Load factors average about six to seven passengers per van.

Feeder van services operate in the Bronx between Co-op City and the Pelham Bay rapid transit terminal via I-95 and between River Park Towers and the IRT-IND subways at 161st

Street via the Deegan Expressway (Figure 5). In Brooklyn, vans link high-density areas such as Brighton Beach and Sheepshead Bay with nearby subways, but they also traverse heavily used bus routes such as those on Flatbush and Utica avenues. In Queens, vans operate along busy bus lines to and from Jamaica.

### Reasons for Growth

The rapid rise in for-hire van services stems from several factors. These include

1. The growing population in Staten Island and other outlying parts of the city that do not have subway service;
2. Declining NYCTA service in terms of frequency, comfort, overcrowding, reliability, and accessibility;
3. Perceived problems of passenger safety on subways and buses;
4. The 1980 transit strike, during which many van operators began service;
5. High unemployment, which caused many of those in low-income areas to discover that they could make a living by driving vans; and
6. Problems experienced by city agencies in enforcing transportation operator franchise and licensing regulations.

The unattractiveness of NYCTA operations and the lack of comfortable, reliable, and accessible service are particularly pertinent for Staten Island residents and for many in the outer parts of Queens and Brooklyn where the distances to transit stops and stations are long and the competing vans offer a virtually demand-responsive service. Other factors related to NYCTA service include

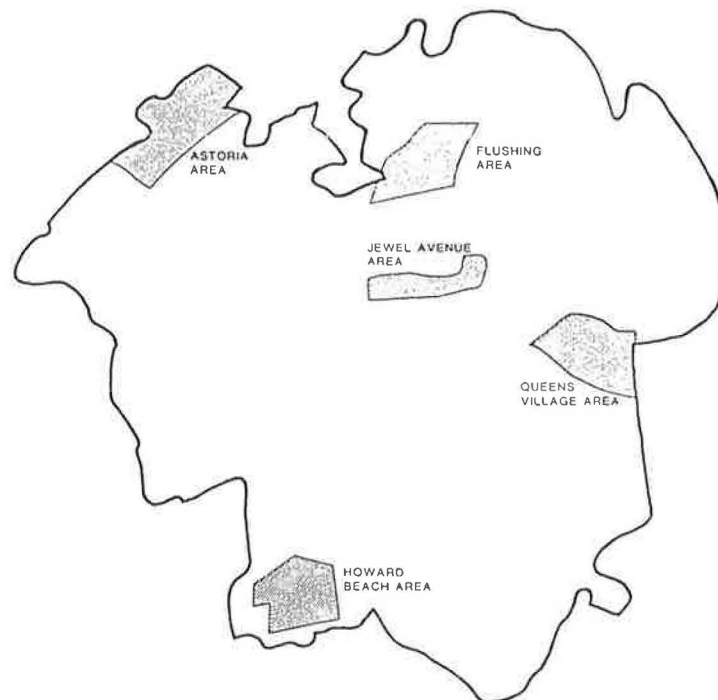


FIGURE 3 Commuter van express service areas in Queens.

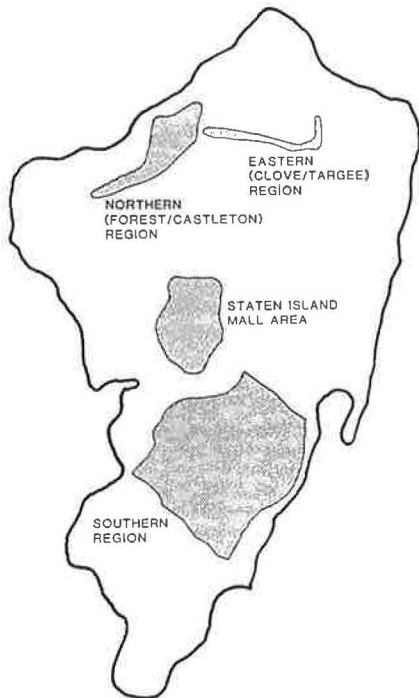


FIGURE 4 Commuter van express service areas in Staten Island.

1. Cutbacks in NYCTA service due to declining ridership, budgetary constraints, and equipment shortages;
2. Fear of crime and considerations of personal security on the subway system;
3. NYCTA's practice of not accepting \$1 bills on its express buses; and
4. The lack of seats and of air conditioning on peak-hour express buses.

Van operations have grown also because of ineffective enforcement of existing licensing and street use regulations due to a lack of enforcement personnel and the lack of authority or of interest in enforcing these regulations compared with other, more serious problems. Related factors include questions regarding the actual illegality of many van operations and lack of concern by the courts.

Finally, popular, political, and press support for van operations and their continuance without governmental interference has also contributed to their growth. There is a perceived societal benefit from van services, including reduced vehicle mileage and energy requirements. This is accentuated by the

fact that vanpooling and group riding are hailed as desirable goals in most areas of the country.

**Impacts of Van Operations**

The typical van rider in the four outer boroughs has a destination in lower or midtown Manhattan, makes a trip 5 days a week, and previously used local or express buses or the subway.

*Street Congestion*

Both express and local vans were found to contribute to street congestion. The situation is especially serious in lower and midtown Manhattan, where vans occupy valuable street space. They operate illegally in bus lanes such as those along lower Broadway, where more than 100 buses operate in the evening peak hour. Vans load passengers from the street side on one-way streets and they preempt bus stops throughout the city. These practices increase delays to bus passengers, and they result in a net increase in overall person delay.

*Revenue Loss*

The total revenue loss to NYCTA, based on 15,000 van riders per day, is conservatively estimated at about \$8,500,000 annually (see Table 4). The bus riders diverted to vans are distributed among a large number of transit bus routes. Consequently, the ridership loss on individual lines in most cases has not been sufficient to allow cost-saving cutbacks in peak-hour transit service. In most cases, it is the number of standees rather than the number of buses that has been reduced.

In the Laurelton, Queens, Corridor, for example, about 70 buses operate in the peak direction during the morning peak hour, carrying more than 3,000 passengers. This compares with about 360 van riders. It is likely that the buses could accommodate these van riders without the addition of more buses. Moreover, NYCTA's vehicle miles of bus service has remained about the same since 1982.

**Administrative Fragmentation**

Part of the existing van problem arises from the diffusion of regulatory controls among city, state, and federal agencies.

TABLE 3 PEAK-PERIOD FEEDER VAN SERVICE, NEW YORK CITY, 1984

Borough	7:00-9:00 a.m.		4:00-6:30 p.m.			Total Passengers	Percentage
	Vans	Passengers/ Van	Passengers	Vans	Passengers/ Van		
Bronx	88	9	754	36	5	923	36
Brooklyn	75	6	420	39	6	648	26
Queens	105	7	640	38	9	970	38
Total	268		1814	113		2541	

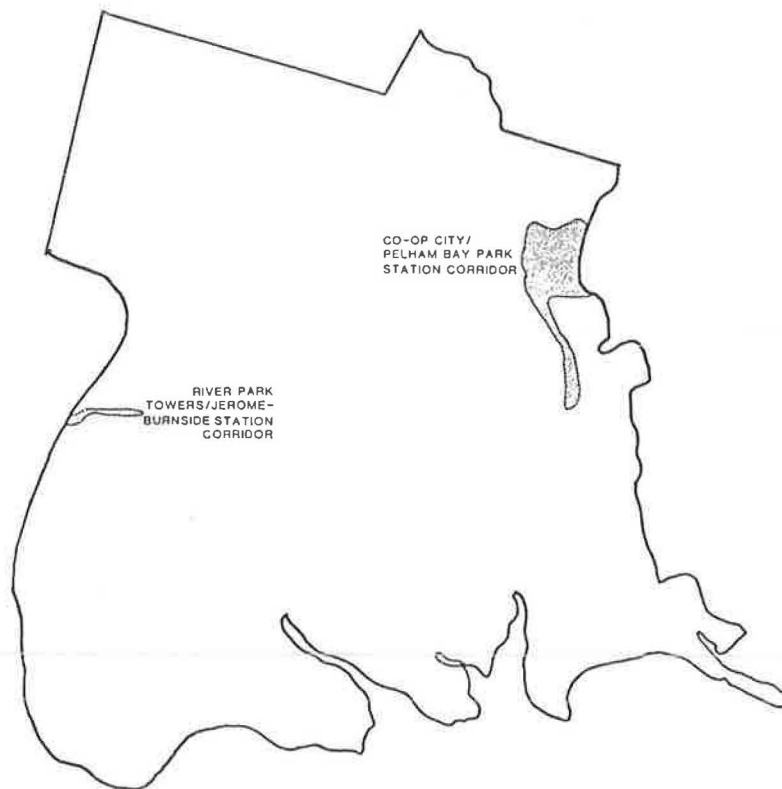


FIGURE 5 Commuter van feeder service areas in the Bronx.

There has been continued controversy as to what type of surface transportation services must be enfranchised or otherwise licensed by the city and what type can operate under certificates issued either by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) or by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) or without any special license at all.

#### *Regulation by the Federal Government*

At the federal level, the ICC is charged with the regulation of all carriers—including motor carriers of passengers—that cross state lines. The ICC's authority for regulating passenger carriers stems largely from the Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-261, 97th Congress) as incorporated in Subtitle IV, Title 49, of the U.S. Code. This act is designed to

reduce regulation of and to increase competition in the bus industry.

The ICC may certify three types of interstate passenger carriage: regular-route service, charter service, and special operations. However, under these definitions the distinction between regular-route service and special operations is not always clear. Transit bus service is clearly regular-route service; commuter van service may qualify as either regular-route service or special operations depending on the specific nature of the operation to be performed.

Van services are defined in the New York State Transportation Law, revised and effective January 1, 1984, as

a sub-classification of common carrier of passengers by motor vehicle that provides service on a prearranged regular daily basis between a zone in a residential neigh-

TABLE 4 ESTIMATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REVENUE LOSS FROM VAN OPERATIONS

Item	Express Vans	Local Vans	Total
Estimated daily ridership	10,000	5,000	15,000
Equivalent public transit revenue/trip (\$)	3.00	0.90	—
Daily revenue loss (\$)	30,000	4,500	34,500
Annual revenue loss (260 days) (\$)	7,800,000	1,170,000	8,970,000
Adjusted for 95 percent former mass transit riders (\$)	7,410,000	1,111,500	8,521,500

borhood and a location which shall be a work related central location, a mass transit or mass transportation facility, a shopping center or recreational facility, but shall not include service to or from an airport. Such service is usually characterized by the use of vehicles having a seating capacity of twenty passengers or less.

New York City is concerned that the ease of entry permitted by the act and the operating flexibility that ICC-certified carriers are granted will compound the city's street congestion, contribute to air quality and other environmental problems, and result in unfair competition for city-regulated carriers. At this time, however, less than 10 percent of the licensed vans that provide express service in and out of the city operate with ICC certificates.

*Regulation by New York State*

The New York State Transportation Law generally gives the Commissioner of Transportation jurisdiction over motor vehicle common carriers of passengers that operate within New York State. Exceptions to this jurisdiction include (N.Y. State Transportation Law, Article 3, Section 80.5) "van services operated wholly within the boundaries of a city with a population of over one million when such city had adopted an ordinance, local law or charter to regulate or franchise such operations...."

New York City has not exercised its right to regulate intra-city van services and, of course, even if it does so, the state will retain jurisdiction over carriers that operate between the city and the counties.

NYSDOT has certified approximately 40 van services to operate within New York City and surrounding areas. (The basic differences between vans and buses as defined by the New York State Transportation Law are given in Table 5.) Because a certificate does not specify the number of vehicles that the holder may operate, it is not possible to determine the

**TABLE 5 BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUS-LINE AND COMMUTER VAN SERVICE OPERATIONS (NEW YORK STATE)**

Bus Line	Commuter Van
Pick up and delivery at designated city bus stops	Use of city stops prohibited; pick up within a designated zone in the outer borough; delivery at designated van stop only
Rides without prearrangement Service operates only over designated routes or between stated termini	Rides by prearrangement only Routings not specified except as necessary for traffic control purposes in areas of high traffic congestion such as Manhattan below Chambers Street
Route numbers and destinations visibly displayed on vehicle	Routes operated, areas served, etc., prohibited from being displayed on vehicle
Service operated on a regular public schedule	Pick up times known to passengers only
Usually conducted with vehicles carrying more than 20 passengers	Usually conducted with vehicle carrying 20 passengers or less

number of vehicles that currently operate in the city with state certificates. Once issued, certificates are good forever; they do not have to be renewed periodically (as is the case with the city's franchise agreements). No certificate ever has been rescinded for failure to provide effective service.

Until 1982, NYSDOT followed a liberal policy in granting certificates to van operators because there was no specific written policy for guidance. In 1982, acknowledging that indiscriminate growth of van operations might adversely affect the city's transit facilities, the state (NYSDOT Regulation Division) issued a policy statement for van service applications that would provide transportation to commuters entirely within the city of New York.

In implementing this policy, the state adopted as the measure of need for a proposed van service that it be 1/3 mi or more from an existing bus stop.

Approximately 45 percent of the commuter vans that currently provide express services into and out of Manhattan have been certified by the state. Less than 5 percent of the vans that provide local services in the city's four outer boroughs have state certificates.

*Regulation by New York City*

A franchise from the city is required when an operator proposes to provide pickup or delivery service, or both, within New York City with the following characteristics:

1. Operated on a regular, fixed, or stated schedule;
2. Operated along a fixed route or between stated termini; and
3. Available to the general public, picking up passengers by hail at designated stops without prearrangement and on an individual-fare basis.

It is the city's contention that the type of vehicle being operated—standard coach, school bus, minibus, van, limousine, or even taxicab—should not be a determining factor.

The New York State Transportation Law defines a bus line as usually characterized by the use of vehicles having a seating capacity of more than 20 passengers and a van service as usually characterized by the use of vehicles having a seating capacity of 20 passengers or fewer. The significance and meaning of the word "usually" are being reviewed by NYSDOT.

Thus, whatever the type of vehicle, if an operator proposes to provide "bus line" service within the city, that operator must be enfranchised to do so, a process that normally takes more than a year from the date that a franchise application is submitted.

Van services do not require a franchise, and the city has not yet passed the required local law or taken the other steps necessary to take over responsibility for their licensing from the state.

*Enforcement of Existing Regulations*

The city's existing public transportation operators—both NYCTA and enfranchised private bus companies—argue that

no matter where a legally certified express van operator is authorized to operate, he will quickly shift origin zones to go where the demand warrants, regardless of the impact on existing transit services.

By their own admission, NYSDOT can neither effectively police commuter van operations in New York City nor enforce the restrictions that it places on those services that it has certified. The primary reason is a lack of enforcement personnel, because there are only seven inspectors for the entire New York metropolitan region, an area encompassing all of Long Island and the area north of the city to Poughkeepsie. Furthermore, these inspectors are concerned with all types of carriers under the regulatory jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation—trucks, buses, and household goods movers—not just vans. To date, no van service certificate has been rescinded because of illegal or unauthorized operations by its holder.

Although NYCDOT has been able to effectively police the legal use of dedicated bus lanes in Manhattan and elsewhere, there are not enough traffic or parking control personnel to police restrictions on the use of bus stops or to otherwise enforce many of the other city traffic regulations, such as keeping unauthorized vehicles out of contraflow bus lanes on major expressways leading into Manhattan. Many van operators who are not authorized to do so use those lanes with impunity. Attempts by city and NYCTA police to require van compliance with existing parking and traffic regulations have produced mixed results at best. They have evoked charges of harassment from the van operators and their association, resulting in at least one court injunction to cease and desist. A large percentage of the summons issued were dismissed by the court and otherwise had little impact on the van operations. For the most part, it is the local feeder vans that operate in flagrant violation of the city's parking and traffic regulations, use the city's bus stops, and solicit passengers at bus stops and other mass transit facilities.

In sum, there is an important need for more effective franchising and enforcement arrangements.

## IMPROVING VAN OPERATIONS

The following licensing, enforcement, and street use guidelines emerged from the analyses of existing operating patterns and administrative practices.

### Licensing Guidelines

Local control of van licensing should be improved as follows:

1. The city should assume responsibility for the certification of all intracity commuter van services as soon as possible. This will make it possible to establish certification and enforcement policies that are sensitive to the city's unique transportation needs, traffic problems, and transit system capabilities. The best agency to do this is the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), which currently regulates the city's medallion taxicab and limousine industries.

2. All commuter vans that are providing de facto bus-line

type service should be required to have a franchise from the Board of Estimate or Bureau of Franchises to operate.

3. In addition to distance from competing mass transit services (for which the 1/8-mi criterion is reasonable), the following factors should be considered in evaluating the need for a proposed van service:

- Presence of significant numbers of standees on competing peak-hour express buses,
- Headways longer than 20 to 30 min during peak periods on competing local bus routes,
- Comparative routings and trip times of the bus and the proposed van service, and
- Impact, regardless of distance apart, of proposed van service on existing transit service ridership and revenues.

4. Van certificates should be issued for renewable 3-year terms on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis only. Vans should be inspected quarterly and required to carry significantly higher levels of personal injury insurance than current state-mandated minimums. Van drivers should be specially licensed by the city in the same way as taxi drivers.

5. New York City should work closely with the Regulation Division of NYSDOT to have the state impose the same requirements on state-certified intercounty carriers that the city establishes for city-certified vans. Few problems are anticipated. However, the city should control federally certified interstate van operators through traffic and parking regulations that apply to all van services.

### Enforcement Guidelines

Effective enforcement is essential to develop and maintain a rational passenger transportation system in the city, one that considers all types of service (bus lines, commuter van services, medallion taxis, base-operated liveries, etc.). The key elements are (a) a set of clear, easily understood regulations that are enforceable; (b) adequate inspection or enforcement personnel or both; (c) reasonably stiff penalties for those who violate the laws; and (d) an efficient system for dealing with offenders. Accordingly, the following guidelines emerged:

1. Outlying residential zones where vans are certified to pick up passengers should be easily identifiable, for example, a housing subdivision or apartment complex.

2. Express and feeder service operating authority should be displayed by different windshield stickers, which should be color coded by borough or smaller zone of operation.

3. Only vans certified by the city should be allowed to operate with the (state) license plate designated for use on vehicles certified to operate by the NYC TLC.

4. A prohibition against picking up and discharging passengers at city bus stops should be unequivocally stated in both city and state operating certificates.

5. Vans should not be allowed to display information as to the origin or destination zones served or the routes followed, to reduce the possibility of providing rides that are not prearranged.



Summons issued to van operators, both certified and uncertified, should be returnable to the TLC's administrative tribunal. The existence of this tribunal is a major enforcement asset because it obviates having to handle infractions in the city's court system.

### Street Use Guidelines

The city should designate routes (streets, avenues, etc.) over which vans may or may not operate. It should also designate areas where vans may not stop to pick up or discharge passengers and where vans are required to lay over. Within this framework, the following guidelines are appropriate. They are designed to minimize the conflicts between vans and buses and at the same time enable vans to serve major subway stops and passenger destinations. They organize, but do not unduly restrict, van operations. Finally, they suggest better NYCTA transit services to limit the competitive advantage of vans over the long run.

1. Vans represent an important complement to buses and cars. In terms of persons carried per vehicle, they are more efficient than cars, but less efficient than buses.

2. Priorities for the use of curb and street space generally should favor, in order of importance, buses; vans, taxis, and trucks; and cars.

3. Van layover and passenger pickup and discharge should be prohibited along major streets leading to river crossings (e.g., lower Broadway and Flatbush Avenue).

4. Vans should not be allowed to travel on roadways where commercial vehicles are prohibited unless they are specifically permitted to do so. However, they should be allowed to travel on parkways unless otherwise prohibited.

5. Vans should be prohibited from using bus lanes or bus zones (unless authorized to do so). They should not be allowed in bus lanes either as moving traffic or for passenger pickup and discharge, but they should be allowed to use the lanes to make an immediate right turn where such turns are permitted for other vehicles.

6. Vans should be prohibited from receiving or discharging passengers at bus stops and in No Standing areas.

7. Vans should not be allowed to pick up or discharge passengers along franchised bus routes unless specifically authorized.

8. Van access to major passenger distribution points such as subway stations or employment areas should be maintained.

9. Vans should be permitted to receive or discharge passengers only from curb lanes when van doors open on the curb side. (Most vans have doors only on the right side; therefore, they should not be allowed to receive or discharge passengers from the left curb lanes on one-way streets unless special passenger islands are provided.)

10. Off-street van storage should be required in Manhattan. Storage areas should be limited to peripheral parts of midtown and lower Manhattan (e.g., west of Church Street in lower Manhattan and west of 10th Avenue midtown). Vans should not be allowed to lay over in No Parking zones, No Standing zones, or No Stopping zones.

11. Off-street van passenger loading and unloading areas should be encouraged.

12. Outside of the area of lower Manhattan below Chambers Street, vans should be able to pick up and discharge passengers on any street, except where specifically prohibited. South of Chambers Street, vans should be limited to the streets shown in Figure 6.

13. Transit service improvements are essential to reduce the relative attractiveness of vans. They include more direct, more frequent, and faster bus service; additional capacity to reduce overcrowding; adjustments in subway routes; and fare incentives.

In sum, traffic and transit operational improvements should be implemented throughout the city wherever vans are used. Their goals are to better rationalize the use of street space, minimize van-bus conflicts, and increase the attractiveness of NYCTA bus and subway service. These improvements are straightforward. They call for actions individually or cooperatively by NYCDOT, NYCTA, and van operators. They require neither complex institutional arrangements nor extensive costs.

### IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

New York City's van operations add a new dimension to the city's complex network of public transportation facilities. They provide added transport options for passengers. At the same time they compete with the city's franchised bus and subway services, attracting existing transit riders, reducing NYCTA revenues, and further congesting many city streets, especially in midtown and lower Manhattan. Present regulatory mechanisms are fragmented among federal, state, and city agencies.

The proliferation of uncontrolled van services will adversely affect both transit operations and traffic congestion. To survive, Manhattan must continue to rely on its subway and bus systems for commuter travel. Organized and controlled van services can complement the city's transit services by benefiting riders in areas with poor accessibility, inadequate service levels, and the like.

The city should assume the basic responsibility for licensing and entry controls and their enforcement. Van use of bus stops and bus lanes should be prohibited, and transportation system management operational improvements should be provided in areas where vans are popular. These actions can be implemented with relatively little cost to the city.

Many van services reflect NYCTA transit service problems such as slow or overcrowded bus service, limited subway coverage, and lack of passenger safety. NYCTA's emphasis on keeping the existing system functioning has taken precedence over providing and marketing new services. A major challenge, therefore, is for transit to take the initiative in improving its services, responding to changing travel patterns, and aggressively marketing its services. For example, fare incentives for two-mode riders—such as special passes, transfers, or “uni-tickets”—have merit both in van-impacted areas and citywide; they represent logical considerations for a citywide transit fare policy. Once implemented, they will make feeder bus riding more attractive than vans from a cost standpoint.



FIGURE 6 Suggested van passenger loading and discharge points in lower Manhattan: 1, Vesey–Church–Liberty (clockwise loop, vans and taxis); 2, Warren west of Broadway (south side); 3, Vesey west of Church (north side); 4, Liberty west of Broadway (south side); 5, Water Street (no bus stops, both sides); 6, State Street–Peter Minuit Plaza (south side); 7, Will Street south of Morris (both sides).

Effectively implemented, they would not increase the cost of service.

The city is considering implementing these regulatory, operational, and enforcement guidelines, albeit with possible modifications. The next steps are to implement these changes, enforce them effectively, and monitor the van services. Viewed in this context, vans may emerge as an important complement to other transit services.

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*The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the city.*