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THE MILWAUKEE TAXICAB REGULATION AND OPERATION STUDY: 1978-1980.

Final Report

Prepared by

Department of City Development  
City of Milwaukee

For the

Special Committee to Study the Regulation  
and Operation of Taxicab Transportation

June, 1982

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**LEG. REF. BUR.**



**GREGORY G. GORAK**

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MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53202

MEMBER:

Public Safety Committee  
Utilities & Licenses Committee

CHAIRMAN:

Taxicab Subcommittee

To the Honorable  
The Utilities and Licenses Committee

Dear Members:

The Common Council on April 11, 1978 approved resolution file number 77-2248, being a resolution creating a Special Committee to Study the Regulation and Operation of Taxicab Transportation. The committee has been in existence for approximately four years and has had numerous hearings regarding the regulation of taxicabs in the City of Milwaukee. Various recommendations were made to your honorable body, as well as revising the entire taxicab code of ordinances.

The committee has now completed its work and I am pleased to submit to you its final report. An executive summary of the report is provided on pages v through ix for your convenience.

I believe the committee's efforts have improved taxicab regulation and service in Milwaukee. I hope, with the other members of the committee, that this report will foster further improvement through the acceptance of its recommendations by the agencies to which they have been addressed.

Since this Special Taxicab Study Committee has now fulfilled the directives of the abovementioned file, it is requested that this committee be dissolved.

Respectfully,

GREGORY G. GORAK, Chairman  
Special Taxicab Study Committee

Memorandum Report: Taxicab Driver's Licenses, May 16, 1979.

Memorandum Report: Taxicab Driver Licensing, May 23, 1979

3.c

Category: Cab Operations

Problem: Vehicle Colors

Background:

On September 23, 1977, the attorney for the City Veterans Taxicab Cooperative sent a letter to the Common Council's Utilities and Licenses Committee requesting that the city regulate the body colors of taxis licensed by the city. He explained that the co-op was having a problem with taxi operators who were not co-op members but were claiming to be, had painted their vehicles the shade of blue used by the co-op, and who were "stealing" radio orders from co-op members.

Alternative Solutions:

Two alternative solutions were discussed by the Special Committee. One alternative was for the co-op to register its color, insignia and trade name with the Wisconsin Secretary of State's Office and then seek protection of those trademarks through the state. The second alternative was for the city to undertake the regulation of taxicab colors and restrict the use of particular colors to members of particular dispatching fleets.

Evaluation:

In keeping with its deregulatory inclination, the Special Committee was hesitant to recommend that the city regulate taxicab colors. However, given that the taxi industry was made up of numerous individual owner-operators and that this fact would likely render State enforcement ineffective, and that the "color problem" had consumer protection implications in that it reduced the accountability of taxi owners by allowing dispatching organizations to disclaim responsibility for the actions of drivers using their colors, the committee determined that city regulation was needed.

Various mechanisms for city regulation of taxicab colors were discussed by the committee, but it quickly became apparent that a method which made vehicle color a criteria of the twice annual vehicle inspection would be the most effective and least cost means of regulation. Vehicles arriving for inspection with the incorrect body color would be given two weeks to have the car repainted or face suspension of the operator's

permit. Industry representatives indicated that two weeks was sufficient time for repainting and that the cost of repainting should not be a hardship.

Recommended Action:

The Special Committee recommended that the Code of Ordinances be amended to:

1. Include an enforceable definition of "colors". The definitions of the National Bureau of Standards (ISCC - NBS circular 553) was recommended.
2. Empower the City Clerk to assign auto body background colors. It was further recommended that the assigning be done in consultation with representatives of taxi dispatching organizations and that three colors be reserved for unaffiliated cab owners.
3. Include vehicle color as a "general requirement" for taxicab inspection under the provisions of Section 100-54(1) (f).

(Changes 1 and 2 were enacted on June 28, 1979 as part of File Number 79-385. Change 3 was enacted on October 2, 1979 as part of File Number 79-1120.)

Study Resource Documents:

No written report.

3.d

Category: Cab Operations

Problem: Encouraging Innovative or Expanded Services

Background:

The members of the Special Committee shared the opinion that taxicabs could provide a greater variety of services than they currently provided in Milwaukee. The interest in shared ride taxi service, problem 1.a, was an indication of this concern, as was the Committee's fifth objective for taxicabs: to provide for a variety of taxi fares and taxi services when needed for different times of day. This interest was not caused by a dissatisfaction with the current level of cab service, as much as it was produced by the ideas for innovative and expanded service contained in publications like the Urban Land Institute's report, Paratransit: Neglected Options for Urban Mobility.