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**NEWS & FEATURES**  
 By Stacy Perman

## Taxi! Five Firms Redesign the Yellow Cab

A group of experts has come together to redesign the transportation system formed by the yellow cab. Here's a look at their ideas

The year 2007 will mark the 100th anniversary of the New York City taxi, and in honor of the occasion, a group of designers, urban planners, and city officials decided it's time to rethink the cab for the next century.

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More than just an emblematic symbol of Manhattan, the taxi serves as a crucial form of transportation. Some 12,487 of these yellow medallion vehicles make an estimated 240 billion trips a year -- constituting a \$1.4 billion industry, according to Schaller.

**"NOT JUST A VEHICLE."** But for years, the taxi has consisted of little more than a reconfigured Ford Crown Victoria passenger sedan. And improvements, like the addition of legroom and passenger-side air-conditioning, have been incremental and slow in coming.

The Design Trust for Public Space, a group dedicated to improving private and public space in New York City, has decided to change that. The organization, in cooperation with the Parsons School of Design, initiated a series of public workshops to address modern taxi problems and

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reinvent the cab.

"The taxi is not just a vehicle but a system," says Deborah Marton, the Design Trust's executive director. "A system is a public-space issue. It profoundly influences the way the city moves."

**DIFFERENT NEEDS.** A year in the making, the project, called Designing the Taxi, brought together some 60 participants -- from architects to fleet owners -- to offer their input on every aspect of the taxi experience. The only variable that was off-limits: the color yellow. The Design Trust plans to publish the findings of the workshops and present an exhibition in November, 2005.

"The taxi that we have now is just a car painted yellow and given a meter," says Paul Goldberger, dean of Parsons and former architecture critic of *The New York Times*. "The taxi is not a car. It has a different set of needs and functions in a very different way."

Here is a slide show of items which demonstrate some of the concepts and ideas associated with the anniversary celebration:



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