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Perspective

Mobility Niches: Jitneys to Robo-Taxis

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Abstract

Compared with many developing cities, urban travel choices are rather restricted in the United States, prompting most people to drive. Recently retired from the urban planning faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, Cervero draws from both personal experiences and 3-plus decades of research in making a case for opening America's mobility marketplace to free-market forces, all the more important in this age of information technology and smart apps. It is argued that a rich mix of mobility options would take form as a result, ranging from smart jitneys to station cars and automated shuttles, that would better serve America's increasingly diverse traveling public. The emergence of a host of microtransit services in recent years, like shared ride hailing and upmarket private minibuses, bears this out. More transportation choices and new mobility niches, experiences show, can give rise to less wasted and more judicious travel. Traditional urban carriers like public buses and metered taxis can also benefit from a more open, technology-informed mobility marketplace.

Keywords:

paratransit

micro-mobility

station cars

carsharing

jitneys

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Additional information

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