




Enhancing Senior Access to Airports and Air Transportation

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Enhancing Senior Access to Airports and Air Transportation



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Background

- Focus of aging and mobility research has been intraurban
 - Keeping people in their automobile
 - Providing alternatives when they can no longer drive
- Research also needs to be conducted on intercity mobility
- Air transportation is dominant form of public intercity transportation


Objectives

- Define accessibility problems for seniors using air transportation
- Provide insight into the unique nature of senior needs
- Identify future steps that need to be taken

The Senior Perspective

- Don't want to be considered disabled
- Cherish independence
- Embrace order, uniformity, consistency
- Find uncertainty to be anxiety provoking




Six Stages of Air Trip

- Travel to airport
- Journey to gate
- Board airplane
- Spend time on airplane
- Exit airplane
- Travel to destination





Travel to Airport

- **Private automobile**
 - Finding way to and on airport
 - Finding parking
 - Traveling from parking to terminal
- **Van**
 - Getting ready far in advance of flight
 - Getting in and out of van
- **Taxi**
 - Arriving on time
 - Drop-off point
- **Public transportation**
 - Determining schedule
 - Getting in and out of bus/rail with luggage



Curbside Check-in



Travel to Airport By Van



Travel to Airport By Bus



Journey to the Gate

- **Enter terminal**
- **Check luggage**
- **Travel to security check point**
- **Wait in line**
- **Pass through security screening**
- **Travel to and find correct gate**



Waiting at Security



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Travel to Gate



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Boarding aircraft

- Check-in at gate
- Board aircraft via passenger bridge
- Stow bin luggage
- Find seat
- Stow deck luggage

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Check-In At Gate



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Boarding Aircraft



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Pass Time on Aircraft

- Fasten seat belt and listen to instructions
- Eat snack or meal
- Travel to and from restroom

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Exit Aircraft

- Retrieve carry-on luggage
- Exit aircraft
- Ascend passenger bridge
- Travel to baggage claim
- Go to ground transportation

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Baggage Retrieval

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Travel From Airport to Destination

- **Obtain ground transportation**
 - Find automobile
 - Find taxi
 - Find rental car
 - Find van/shuttle
- **Exit the airport**
 - Identify correct exit for destination
 - Navigate off airport
 - Enter freeway or street system

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Walking Up a Grade

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Travel From Airport to Destination (continued)

- **Arrive at destination**
 - Unload luggage
 - Get to room
- **Arrive at airport of origin**
 - Find vehicle
 - Pray vehicle operates

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Exiting the Airport

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Held focus group to identify and priority problems

- **Focus Group Held at Sky Harbor Airport on February 12, 2002**
- **Participants were "Navigators" at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport**
- **Participants listed concerns independently**
- **Concerns listed, ranked and discussed**

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Senior Problems Prioritized

- **Wayfinding**
 - Reading signage
 - Hearing announcements
- **Walking**
 - Gates
 - Parking
 - Baggage claim
- **Waiting**
 - Security
 - Baggage check-in
 - Gate check-in
 - Boarding aircraft



Signage



Senior-Friendly Airport Features Currently in Use

- **Volunteers to help seniors find their way - Navigators**
- **Signage**
 - Consistently located
 - Clearly communicates information
- **Electric carts**
- **Convenient shuttle service from remote parking lots**
- **Parking services**
 - Assistance finding car
 - Assistance with vehicle



Senior Friendly Airport Features Currently in Use - (Continued)

- **Short term parking**
- **Baggage and wheelchair services**
- **Brochures for finding your way around the airport**
- **Information booths**
- **Building directories**



Senior Friendly Airport Features Currently in Use (Continued)

- **Large print overhead signage**
- **Paging phones**
- **Hard surface flooring**
- **Family restroom facilities**



General Conclusions

- **Seniors need to be recognized as a distinct market niche**
- **Wayfinding is the chief problem confronting seniors at airports**
- **No amount of signage can replace the human touch**



Recommendations for Future Action

- Conduct focus groups to more clearly define problems confronting seniors
- Hold a session at the Transportation Research Board Conference on Senior Mobility and Air Transportation
- Develop an audit form for evaluating airports in terms of senior friendliness and grade airports on how they do



Recommendations for Future Action (Continued)

- Produce a video to clearly demonstrate the problems faced by seniors at airports
- Encourage graduate-level research on mobility and air transportation
- Garner grass roots support for enhancements to make airports more senior friendly
- Establish airport familiarization programs for seniors and provide airport tours



Recommendations for Future Action (Continued)

- Work with transportation providers on enhancements to air travel for seniors
 - Airports
 - Airlines
 - Rental car agencies
 - Van/shuttle services
 - Public transportation services
- Organize a Web site and/or toll free number where all the information about assisting seniors can be found



Navigator Greeting

