

Enhancing Senior Access to Airports and Air Transportation

**Presentation to the
National Aging and Mobility Conference**

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Enhancing Senior Access to Airports and Air Transportation

Moderator

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Presenters

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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

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Travel to Airport By Van

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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

Check-In At Gate



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**

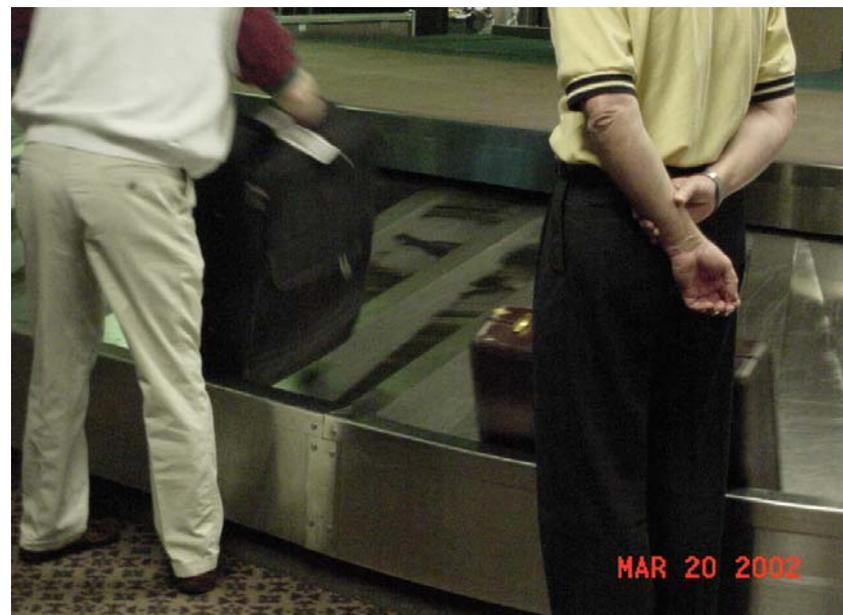
Exit Aircraft

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



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Baggage Retrieval





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

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

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



Senior Problems Prioritized

- **Wayfinding**
 - Reading signage
 - Hearing announcements

- **Walking**
 - Gates
 - Parking
 - Baggage claim

- **Waiting**
 - Security
 - Baggage check-in
 - Gate check-in
 - Boarding aircraft

Signage

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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



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