

Public Access to Competitive Ground Transportation Modes

In general the airline travelling public will be best served by having access to and competition among all forms of ground transportation alternatives. These would include, but not be limited to: taxis, (on demand and prearranged); Limousines (on demand and/or prearranged where appropriate); shared ride vans (on demand and/or prearranged where appropriate); bus (intercity and interstate where appropriate) and rail where economically feasible. The number and size of these alternatives would of course depend upon the size of the airport and the potential number of ground transportation users.

The best interests of the airline travelling public will also be served by the appropriate configuration of these potential ground transportation providers. On demand taxi services, for example, are required to be available at all times travelers may be present at the airport and thus may need to be managed through concession agreements with one or a small number of taxi service providers. Since arriving passengers most likely will have none or little experience with local taxi companies, it is the airport's responsibility to ensure that all on demand taxi drivers are properly licensed, trained, and complying with airport requirements for vehicle age, appearance, and safe operation. As this may require a concession agreement with minimum requirements such as driver appearance, dress, and behavior, these requirements should be included in such agreements as airport rules and regulations and incorporated as such in any taxi operator agreements with their drivers.

On demand airport shuttle van service should also be available to the airline travelling public should the airport be of sufficient size to support such operations. Often these operations require the grouping of a minimum of 3 to 4 passengers per trip – all heading in the same general direction to be cost effective to the user and the provider. Thus, this cost effective ground transportation alternative may only be possible and practical through the use of a single concessionaire to service the airport. Even our largest airports, such as Chicago's O'Hara International Airport are serviced by a single shared ride van operation thereby maximizing the opportunities for quick airport departures and minimum route deviations upon return to the airport. Thus, the tendency is for airports to utilize a single or a small number of these ground transportation providers.

The same rationale of the need for a concession agreement can be extended to airport limousine, black or gray car services. An airport administration may decide that these services should also be a part of the airline traveler's on demand ground transportation alternatives and arrange for companies to provide these services on demand at their airport through single concessionaire agreements.

Single taxi, shared ride van, or limousine concessionaire services for an airport does not always mean "Exclusivity". In almost all cases there are always alternative choices for the airline travelling public through the availability of prearranged ground transportation companies.

Prearranged taxi or shuttle van services, where permitted, assumes that the passenger knows and prefers this ground transportation company. While concessionaire type regulations may not fully apply to prearranged services; registration, access, and dwell time fees should apply so these operations pay a fair share of their cost of curb/holding lot operations and contribution to the overall support of the airport. Clearly, an airport needs to have the ability to bar any prearranged ground transportation company and its drivers if general rules and regulations for them are not properly followed.

Finally, airport bus ground transportation services should also be encouraged and made available to the airline travelling public whenever possible. These services, in the form of scheduled and chartered services, like shared ride van services, are economical for the user and utilize considerably less energy than the private automobile. They play an important role in bringing the airline travelling public to and from the airport – especially when longer distances are concerned. And, as the price of energy increases, will play an even larger role in providing regional ground transportation to major airports as federal government subsidized air service is terminated for smaller communities.