

Social Value of Air Transportation

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Dimensions of Social Value¹

- Social connection, e.g. community, family, and affiliations tying local area to external area for purposes of: education, income (production and distribution), health, welfare, security, recreation, religion, etc.
- Mutually supportive interactions, transactions
- Social status : quality of life services

1. Warren, Roland, The Community in America, Rand Mc.Nally & Company 1973, page 243.



Importance of Air Transportation to Social Development

- “Transport is seen as an important factor in the economic and social integration of Europe, and an important indicator of quality of life. The most important contribution of airports is the connectivity they provide” ².
 - Maintains external community, family, and other affiliations
 - Enables equilibrium in social status by moving toward equal access to services
 - Improves quality of life via access to needed but unavailable services

2. Airport Council International and York Aviation, The Social and Economic Impact of airports in Europe, ,www.aci-europe.org, January 2004, page 57.



How Does Air Transportation Enable Social Development?

- Facilitates interactions through affordable, frequent access
 - In remote regions, air transport fulfills an essential social function, connecting communities to essential services, such as hospital and higher education ³,
 - Availability of leisure opportunities by air can be an important quality of life indicator affecting the ability to retain skilled labor in these areas. ⁴
 - Air transport increases consumer choice to purchase goods globally ⁴

3.Ibid, page 48

4.Ibid, page 49



Right Infrastructure and Technology to Enable Social Development?

- For large, economic viable markets: perhaps
- For smaller markets: not likely.
 - Smaller aircraft would be needed to: suit lower passenger volumes, accommodate fewer frequencies, and take advantage of economies of scale



Air Transportation: Financially Sustainable ?

- For large, economic viable markets perhaps
- For smaller markets, not likely without community commitment, such as travel banks, reduced airport fees, marketing, state grants, etc.⁵
 - Airline provides limited service to a community in exchange for the community's creation of a committed, dedicated travel budget, which is drawn down by purchase of tickets.

5. United States General Accounting Office, "Commercial Aviation: Factors Affecting Efforts to Improve Air Service at Small Community Airports", GAO-03-330, January 2003, pp 55 (Pensacola, Florida) and 74 (Pellstone, Michigan).



What Do We Really Know About National and International Policies?

- De-regulation allows market forces to dominate systemic decisions of social and economic development – perhaps preserving the status quo.
- National and International Policies can channel air transportation to focused economic and social development.



What Research and Policies Are Required?

- Determine what are realistic policy goals for air transportation
- Understand the balance between government policies and laissez-faire (market forces) market forces
- Develop indicators for anticipating the need for rebalancing, government action.
- Understand implications of government actions (multi-modal strategies for diverse communities)
- Develop quantifiable and representative measures of social value
- Account for cultural differences

