

**Criteria and Recommendations for the Locational Choice of Coach Terminals**

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, the market for domestic coach (long-distance bus) traffic was liberalized. Since the amendment of the Personenbeförderungsgesetz, intermodal as well as intramodal competition exists. The German long-distance bus transport is subject to approval and was restricted in order to protect local transport. Stops at a distance of less than 50 km or with parallel running rail passenger transport with a journey time of less than one hour may be approached by a remote bus, but no passenger transportation between these stations may take place.

During the first year of liberalization, there was a rapid and steady growth of the long-distance bus traffic. This refers to the number of bus companies operating in the market, the scheduled availability of bus lines, the frequency of operating certain lines and the number of possible destination points. Few cities were prepared for such a development. This resulted in provisionally established stations, which lack sustainability. The development of the market threatens to be inhibited in the future by the lack of suitable, efficient stops and sites for coach terminals. However, no clearly defined authorities exist for the development of an appropriate stop / terminal infrastructure.

The present choice of stop locations for long-distance bus transport is rarely the result of a systematic planning by considering the appropriate location criteria. Furthermore, according to a national site analysis, the main criterion of the present location choices seems to be the proximity to the main train station. Hence, access to public and private transport as well as an adequate supply of shops, restaurants and accommodation was fulfilled without an additional use of resources.

However, the objective of a good locational choice is to find an accessible location for adequately sized and equipped coach terminals. Furthermore, the location needs to be accepted by the users and enable a smooth operation including traffic safety. Both the operational as well as traffic-related features of the long-distance bus traffic must be taken into account.

The ability to refinance coach terminals is of high importance for the operators. The infrastructure of the long-distance bus transport is either not, or only to a limited extent, supported by public funds. The private long distance bus operator emphasizes the need for efficiency of its bus lines, in order to offer tickets at a reasonable price. In addition, the local authority and general public benefit from additional tax revenues and jobs due to a connection to the long distance bus network. When choosing a location, the economic potential of the location has to be taken into account.

Furthermore, the relevant legal and city planning circumstances have to be considered when choosing a location. Urban planning requirements, the avoidance of negative environmental effects, the general welfare, the local residents acceptance, the availability of space and the preservation or restoration of safety and order are crucial factors in the process.

On one hand, locational criteria can be differentiated by area-based, environmental-based and flexible criteria and on the other hand by traffic- or operational-related, economic and legal or city-planning criteria. Conflicts between locational criteria are possible. They arise especially when a locational criteria achieves an excessively high degree of satisfaction. The importance of various locational criteria may vary from city to city. By distinguishing between distinct city types, suitable locational recommendations may be given.

Cities can be categorized by means of city-specific attributes, such as city size in population, traffic volume of long distance bus lines and main function of the city or the bus stop with regards to bus lines. In addition, existing negative environmental effects should be included in the definition. The

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respective locational recommendations by city type include both the appropriate number of terminals as well as the candidates for locational alternatives.

It can be differentiated between centralized and decentralized locational alternatives. Central locational alternatives are characterized by their proximity to the city center (and a main train station). Remote sites are located near motorways, airports and commercial areas. Each of these alternative locations possesses critical locational criteria; their implementation and compliance are considered problematic due to the peculiarities of the location. The optimal location may be determined by an appropriate evaluation of locational alternatives with regards to the recommendations due to the city type and an individual weighting of the several criteria.

The choice of multiple locations instead of one single location is especially reasonable in cities with a high traffic volume and high population. In order to obtain a clear segmentation of long-distance bus companies it is recommended to choose no more than two locations that significantly vary in terms of location, facilities and service. In this case an operation of both coach terminals by a single source is desirable.

Altogether, the long-distance bus traffic in Europe is of high importance, while the degree of liberalization is more varied. The importance of long-distance bus traffic in Germany is still quite small. However, this may change in the upcoming years and with the establishment of the market. In order to develop a structured, sustainable infrastructure of terminals in Germany, a clear assignment of responsibilities is going to be necessary. Otherwise, indirect costs arise to the municipality due to the long-term absence of an adequate infrastructure, as seen for example in the American bus terminal infrastructure. A task management of long-distance bus companies itself seems only possible if the market has established itself. To preserve the safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability as well as the efficiency and quality of transport, acting on a political level in the following years may therefore not be ruled out.