

# RETHINKING THE CONSOLIDATED RENTAL CAR FACILITY MODEL FOR JAPAN

SPACE LIMITATIONS, VEHICLE SIZE, AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES REQUIRE CHANGES IN RAC OPERATIONS FROM THIER U.S. COUNTERPARTS

Okinawa is a popular vacation destination for Japanese people. It is located south of mainland Japan in the East China Sea. The capital city, Naha, is within a two hour flight to Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, and Manila.

Currently under construction, a monorail system will take travelers from the Naha International Airport to Downtown Naha. Also being planned, as an intermediate stop along this system, is a duty free shopping mall and consolidated rental car facility, on a four and a quarter acre site. With 260,000 square feet of shopping on three and one half levels, this leaves very little room for the consolidated rental car facility which will be home to eight of the largest

Japanese rental car agencies. The RAC facility will include area for ready/return cars, vehicle storage, car wash bays, vacuum/fluid islands, fuel dispensers, customer counters, and a luggage handling system.

RTKL International, Ltd. of Los Angeles, CA are the architectural designers of the "DFS Galleria". Albersman & Armstrong, Ltd. was retained by RTKL to assist with the design of the Consolidated Rental car facility (thought to be the first of its kind internationally) because of our experience and expertise with such projects in the United States.

The RAC facility is a six level parking deck (including grade) approx. 280'-0" x 178'-0" and is adjacent to

the shopping mall, with grade and second levels directly connected. A double-threaded express ramp is used for vertical vehicle circulation. Currently, all ready vehicles are located at grade under the second floor shopping mall. Returns occur at grade under the parking garage and adjacent to the QTA area. All agencies share these areas with no security fencing or other delineating devices. Public parking is located at the second level of the parking garage which is directly connected to the shopping mall. Rental car vehicle storage occurs on the remaining supported levels above.

The following brief description of how the facility functions will highlight some of the major differences in operations from the typical U.S. RAC facility.

## Rental function- Customers

Rental car customers arrive at the DFS Galleria from the airport via bus or the new monorail system. They then proceed to the rental car counters located near the monorail



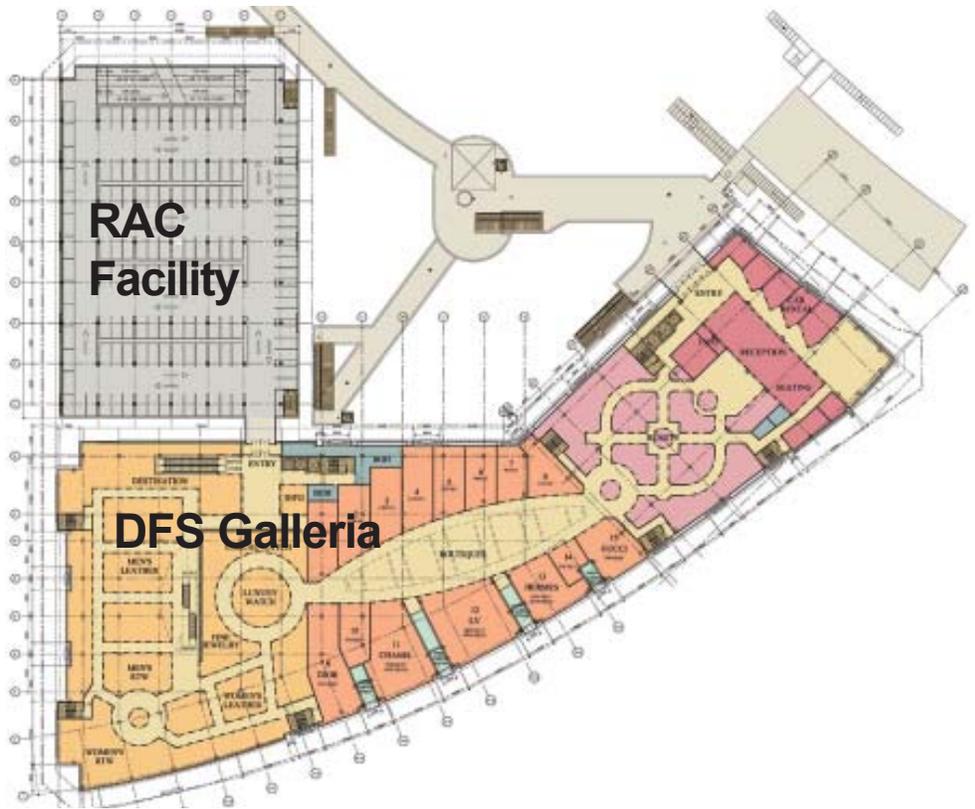
Rendering by RTKL International,

While waiting for their car to be prepared, the customer may browse the shops. A pager will indicate when the car is ready prompting the customer to proceed to the ready area. An LED display will indicate the customer's name and the parking stall number where their ready car is waiting along with their luggage.

**Rental Function - RAC attendants**

The rental car counter agent will notify their RAC attendant when a car is needed in the ready area, along with any other required information (I.E., child seat, GPS system, etc.). The attendant will take a clean car from the ready queue/storage located at one of the upper levels, drive it down the ramp and park it in one of the open/numbered ready stalls. The use of a

“common sign board” that shows the customer which stall to find his/her car, makes it unnecessary to allocate separate ready stalls to each agency.



**Return Function - Customers**

Upon returning the vehicle, the customer drives into the return car queue next to the QTA area and leaves the vehicle to pay at the counter.

**Return Function - RAC Attendants**

The RAC attendant then takes the returned vehicle through the QTA before returning the car back to the upper level ready car queue.

