

# LESSENING THE IMPACT OF AIRCRAFT NOISE

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport was one of the first airports in the country to establish a noise mitigation program. Since 1985, the Port has been delivering a comprehensive Airport Noise Program to minimize noise pollution around the airport. The program has three main components: residential sound insulation projects, airline collaboration and recognition, and community engagement.

## BUILDING A QUIETER FUTURE TOGETHER

As part of the Port of Seattle's long-term commitment to communities surrounding the airport, the Port offers sound insulation for eligible properties within the current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved noise remedy boundary. In 2024, the Sound Insulation Program made significant progress in all target segments.

**Apartment Units:** Nine complexes with 320 apartment units had designs finalized and the construction contract awarded. At least 200 units will be completed in 2025. An additional seven-unit complex was acoustically tested and is undergoing design.

**Single Family Homes:** Three homes were insulated in 2024.

**Places of Worship:** Three places of worship are set to start construction in 2025 after a construction contract award.

**Condominiums:** No current projects pending.

**Schools:** In 2002, a partnership was formed with the FAA and Highline School District to upgrade 15 schools through a \$100 million joint investment. 10 schools are complete, and Pacific Middle School will be the 11th with voter approval for a bond measure in November 2023. The Port and FAA will invest \$3.4 million, supporting 950 students. Pacific Middle School is scheduled to open in August 2027.

## Total Sound Insulations Completed to Date

**Single Family Homes:** 9,400+  
**Condominiums:** 6 complexes  
**Schools:** 10

## Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Study

A Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Study is a voluntary FAA program that sets guidelines for airport operators to document aircraft noise exposure and establish noise abatement and compatible land use programs. These noise abatement strategies and mitigation programs must be approved by the FAA to qualify for potential federal funding. In 2024, SEA initiated the multi-year study, the fourth undertaken since 1985. Gathering aircraft operations and land use data began this year, in addition to three successful public workshops held in Burien, SeaTac, and Des Moines. The workshops provided local residents an opportunity to engage with staff and provide written comment. We also formed a Technical Review Committee consisting of Port staff,

local city staff, community members, airlines and FAA. The group provides study guidance and input —two meetings were held in June and October.

## Repair and Replace Pilot Program

In 2024, the Port initiated an assessment of the condition of previously installed sound insulation products near SEA. The Port has managed an airport sound insulation program since 1986. In the past few years, some residents with sound insulation packages reached out to the Port to express concerns that, due to a range of potential factors, including age or durability, their sound insulation packages may no longer be effective. The 10-month, multi-faceted assessment included surveys, acoustic testing, and field assessments to gather data and insights. Almost all (99%) of the windows installed prior to 2014 are past the industry-standard expected useful life. However, none of the 30 residences acoustically tested exceeded the FAA-established interior noise threshold for sound insulation program eligibility, indicating all acoustically tested windows and doors were continuing to provide appropriate sound insulation. Learnings from the assessment will inform a repair and replace pilot program approach in 2025.

## Encouraging and Recognizing Airline Noise-Reduction Practices

The Port of Seattle's Fly Quiet Awards program celebrates airlines who go the extra mile to reduce aircraft noise and minimize their impact on local communities. Fly Quiet encourages airline compliance with noise abatement efforts by evaluating flight procedures for jet aircraft, as well as jet aircraft noise levels, and recognizing the two airlines with the best record of achievement in the scoring categories. A third award is given to an airline that showed significant noise improvement or made an impactful change that lessened their noise over the course of the year at SEA. **2024 Award Winners:** Air Canada, Frontier Airlines, and Air France

## Fostering Collaboration and Community with StART

The SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) provides the Port of Seattle with a dedicated forum intended specifically for discussing and tackling airport and aviation industry concerns from neighboring cities and their residents. StART brings together the relevant parties with a common purpose for information sharing and collaboration to achieve results. Eighteen meetings were held in 2024, including working group meetings focused on aviation noise state and federal policy.