

## **AS ADOPTED by vote 17 Sept**

**November 2025**

### **Commercial Aviation Work Group 2025 Annual Report**

The Legislature created the Commercial Aviation Work Group in 2023 to build upon information and input gathered by the previous Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission. The Work Group convened in July 2024. In 2025, the Legislature refined the mission of the Work Group, directing it to

comprehensively evaluate the long-range commercial aviation needs of Washington within the broader context of state transportation needs and the specific needs of western Washington taking into consideration airport capacity in adjacent states and provinces. The work group shall review existing data and conduct research to determine Washington's long-range commercial aviation facility needs while considering alternatives to additional airport capacity.

ESSB 5161. The Legislature appropriated additional funding to support this mission. RCW 14.40.020 requires the CAWG to report to the Legislature annually on December 1, 2025.

#### **1. Meetings**

The Work Group has held four meetings in 2025 and anticipates a fifth.

- **March 7, Capital Event Center, Tumwater** – The Work Group adopted its charter, elected a permanent chair, and began discussion of a request for qualifications for a consultant to support its work.
- **May 22, Paine Field Airport, Everett** – The Work Group listened to a presentation from Joshua Marcy, Paine Field Airport Director, on its updated 2024 master plan. With current assumptions for demand as Sea-Tac Airport reaches its capacity limits, Paine Field anticipates growing its capacity to nearly 6 million passengers per year by 2040 through a phased series of terminal, airfield and landside expansions. The Work Group received training on airport citing criteria and process.
- **July 17, Virtual** – In light of expected passenger growth at Paine Field, the Work Group requested and received a briefing from Sound Transit on its Everett Link light rail extension. Sound Transit has yet to select a location for its planned station near Paine Field, but anticipates doing so in 2026. The Work Group received training on the Healthy Environment For All Act (HEAL) and Representative Jake Fey's budget proviso which requires the Work Group to identify highly impacted geographic areas.
- **September 17, Union Gap City Hall, Union Gap** – The Work Group received a presentation from Robert Hodgman, Director, Yakima Air Terminal, and appointed a committee to consider responses to the Work Group's request for qualifications

regarding consulting services.

- **December 9, Boeing Field** – Details of the meeting TBD.

## **2. Interim Recommendations**

The Work Group strongly recommends that the Legislature encourage Sound Transit to locate a Link station as near as feasible to the Paine Field passenger terminal. It is anticipated that Paine Field will be a short- to medium-term solution for additional commercial passenger air capacity in western Washington. A convenient Link station, ideally within walking distance with an optional shuttle for persons with limited mobility, will encourage passengers to ride Link to the airport. This maximizes the value of the public's investments in the airport and Link and minimizes the climate and traffic impacts of passengers and employees traveling to the airport. This results in improved connectivity, accessibility, and community resiliency.

## **3. Membership**

The Legislature directed that the Work Group be comprised of nineteen voting members appointed by the Governor and receive staff support from the Washington State Department of Transportation. As of the date of this report, seven voting members of the Work Group hold current appointments. Six members have completed their initial appointments and await reappointment while continuing to serve, and six positions are vacant.

Additionally, legislation (ESHB 1791) requires that the Work Group invite 11 non-voting members. The Work Group has sent invitations, and 4 positions have been filled. Efforts to recruit additional non-voting members will continue.

The Work Group anticipates a similar schedule of meetings and topics for 2026.

We appreciate your trust and look forward to serving the public and the Legislature with transparency and accountability.

Respectfully Submitted,

Evan Nordby, Chair

Maria Batayola  
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Ali Lee  
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